

Sinica venetiana 3

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# Linking Ancient and Contemporary Continuities and Discontinuities in Chinese Literature

edited by

Tiziana Lippiello, Chen Yuehong 陈跃红  
and Maddalena Barenghi



**Edizioni**  
Ca' Foscari



Linking Ancient and Contemporary

## **Sinica venetiana**

Collana diretta da  
Tiziana Lippiello, Chen Yuehong 陈跃红

3



**Edizioni**  
Ca' Foscari

# Sinica venetiana

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Dipartimento di Studi sull'Asia e sull'Africa Mediterranea

Università Ca' Foscari Venezia

Palazzo Vendramin dei Carmini

Dorsoduro 3462

30123 Venezia

Italia

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Tiziana Lippiello, Chen Yuehong 陈跃红  
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Tiziana Lippiello, Chen Yuehong 陈跃红 and Maddalena Barengi (edited by)

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## Introduction

Tiziana Lippiello, Chen Yuehong 陈跃红 and Maddalena Barenghi

The volume *Linking Ancient and Contemporary: Continuities and Discontinuities in Chinese Literature* reflects the desire and attempt to put side by side, compare and integrate different approaches to Chinese literature, ranging from classical to modern and contemporary literature. The volume is divided into four parts: 1. *Pre-modern and Modern Literature*; 2. *Contemporary Literature*; 3. *Poetry and Theatre*; 4. *Language and Political Discourse*.

The general topic of this collection of essays has been chosen moving from two premises. The first is that China, as most Chinese nowadays are proud to affirm, has a 'five thousand year history': that is, a strong link of continuity is perceived between China's ancient traditional heritage and the present, modernized China; the second is that, undoubtedly, no other cultural medium more than literature has ever been able to shape the Chinese cultural identity and to convey cultural continuity through the processes of historical change.

However, it goes without saying that, in its long history, and especially since its first encounter with 'modernity', China has undergone a great number of political, economic, social and cultural upheavals. In modern times, traditional Chinese cultural, intellectual and literary values have been repeatedly criticized and rejected, although they often resurfaced in many different ways, and have repeatedly been reinterpreted and reworked in order to stabilize the identity of a rapidly transforming China.

The volume aims at providing new perspectives and different viewpoints that show that elements of discontinuity recurred in many ways throughout China's long history, but never superseded the prevailing idea that Chinese history and culture was and still is characterized by a pervading thread of continuity.

The *Pre-modern and Modern Literature* section opens with some considerations on the 'Chinese golden rule' and on the interpretation of three traditional concepts which helped to define it: *zhong* 忠 (loyalty), *shu* 恕 (empathy, reciprocity) and *ren* 仁 (humanity). In fact, the so called 'golden rule', which in Chinese literature stems from the *Lunyu* 論語, was much debated through the centuries, especially by Confucian scholars. One endowed with *ren* is courageous and firm but at the same time one is mod-

est, reticent, respectful, tolerant, trustworthy, diligent and, above all, one loves and is capable of subduing one's self for the benefit of others. *Ren* is difficult to achieve, the selflessness of the Sage being a paradigm of humanity, and empathy a way to pursue it. **Tiziana Lippiello** (Ca' Foscari University of Venice) in «Measuring Human Relations: Continuities and Discontinuities in the Reading of the *Lunyu*» examines different comments and interpretations from Confucius and his disciples to Huang Kan 皇侃 (488-545), Xing Bing 邢昺 (931-1010) and Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200), up to the recent interpretation of Herbert Fingarette (1979), who equates the Chinese golden rule to the Biblical golden rule.

**Hans van Ess** (Ludwig-Maximilians University, Munich) analyses a paper written by the historian Bai Shouyi 白壽彝 (1909-2000) shortly before the Cultural Revolution, dealing with the views of the Han historians Sima Qian 司馬遷 (145 or 135 BC-87? BC) and Ban Gu 班固 (32-92). Unlike Western historians, who coined the phrase '*historia vitae magistra*' but somehow tried to free themselves from this idea, Chinese scholars, as van Ess observes, have continuously made use of the past to serve the present (*guwei jinyong* 古為今用). Sima Qian said that one of his main aims was to penetrate the changes of the past and present (*tong gujin zhi bian* 通古今之變, *Hanshu* 1962, 62.2735). In his article, entitled «Sima Qian yu Ban Gu» 司馬遷與班固, which was first published in the *Journal of Peking Normal University* (Beijing shifan daxue, 1962), then in *Renmin ribao* (1964) and in 1982 as a preface to a book on the *Shiji*, Bai Shouyi discusses the differences between the *Shiji* and the *Hanshu*. For Bai Shouyi the most important point of the *Shiji* is that Sima Qian reveals the political circumstances of his time, and criticizes the political atmosphere of intimidation, the autocratism of Emperor Wu 武 (140-87 BC) of Han and the centralist economic measures that he adopted. Ban Gu, meanwhile, is depicted as orthodox (*zhengzongde* 正宗的) and is criticized for the feudalistic contents of his work, for his eclecticism and for having erased the contents of the *Shiji*. Van Ess suggests that Bai Shouyi probably intended to criticize Mao Zedong's Great Leap Forward by using the example of the past. But obviously the editors of the *Renmin ribao* were interested in what Bai Shouyi wrote on Sima Qian because they could take it as an example of how «to use the past in order to serve the present».

**Zhang Pei** 张沛 (Peking University) in «Zhongguo zhi yi: Wen Zhongzhi de lishen yu cunxin» “中国”之义：文中子的立身与存心 (The Notion of 'Zhongguo': The Life and Thought of Wang Tong) analyses the notion of 'Zhongguo' 中國 in the work *Zhongshuo* 中說 (Doctrine of the Middle Way) by Wang Tong 王通 (584-618) and in particular the notion of 'Way of the Middle Kingdom' (*zhongguodao* 中國道), suggesting the dual implication of the expression: 'the land of Zhongguo' and 'the Way of Zhongguo'. The 'Way of Zhongguo' is the way of human culture (*renwen zhi dao* 人文之道). The land of the 'Barbarians' could also bear this name if they would

practise the 'Way of Zhongguo' in their land. Quoting from the Classics, Zhang Pei considers that the Way of human culture can also be called the Middle Way (*zhongdao* 中道): from the *Shangshu* it is evident that if the ruler exercises a government inspired to humanity (*renzheng* 仁政), he can be considered a man of virtue (*youde* 有德) and the people's favour will accord the whole world to him. Wang Tao tried to legitimize the emperorship of the Northern Wei, while cherishing the memory of the land of the South. The teachings of Wang Tong were appreciated in the scholars' milieu, and his works were included among the classics to study for state exams.

**Fu Gang** 傅刚 (Peking University), in «On the Literary Self-Consciousness of the Han, Wei, Jin, and Northern and Southern Dynasties», outlines the development of Chinese literature as an independent field of study, a process which started during the Later Han, with Wang Chong 王充 (27-100 A.D.), carried out by the Wei until terms like *wenxue* 文學 and *wenzhang* 文章 started to be used to refer to *belles lettres*. Liu Xie 劉勰 (465-520) in his *Wenxin diaolong* 文心雕龍 (The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons) stigmatized the difference between *wen* 文 (refined literature) and *bi* 筆 (functional writing) as follows: «*Wen* is rhymed, *bi* is unrhymed», whereby rhymed genres include poetry (*shi* 詩), rhapsodies (*fu* 賦), eulogies (*song* 頌), etc. During the Southern dynasties there was a tendency to overvalue *wen* and undervalue *bi*. It was Emperor Wen 文 (r. 424-453) of the Liu Song 劉宋 who established, in the year 438, the four Academies (*guan* 館): Confucian learning, *xuanxue* 玄學, Literature and History. Thus literature was established as an independent department in the bureaucracy. Cao Pi 曹丕 (187-226) in his *Dianlun* 典論 (Canonical Opinions) affirmed that «literature is the great work of managing the state, the worthy business that never fades».

Literature continued to flourish throughout the Six Dynasties period and later on, as attested in the dynastic histories. **Giulia Baccini** (Ca' Foscari University of Venice), in «Traditional Chinese Jestbooks and Ming Revival», presents an overview of the retrospectively defined 'genre' of jestbook in literary language (*wenyan xiaohua ji* 文言笑話集), as attested in the Bibliographical chapter of the *Suishu* 隋書 (Book of Sui), under the 'xiaoshuo' 小說 category (*Suishu*, 34.1011). Baccini analyses the bibliographical chapters of the official histories to see how the number of collections of *xiaohua ji* 笑話集 increased from the Song period onwards, and then focuses on the Ming period, during which this 'genre' flourished. She suggests that one of the reasons behind this flourishing can be ascribed to the republishing of the Song dynasty encyclopaedia *Taiping guangji* 太平廣記 (Extensive records from the Taiping era) by the retired scholar Tan Kai 談愷 (1503-1568). The encyclopaedia collected passages and anecdotes from texts (including jestbooks) now mostly lost, and with a structure that divided the work by thematic heading, it attracted the interest of the literati, who used it as a thematic inspiration for writing or reshaping stories.

According to Baccini, the flourishing of the 'genre' in this period must also be connected to the publishers' need to put more popular typologies of texts on the market.

From the jestbooks and their popularity during the Ming dynasty to the *Shuihuzhuan* 水浒传 and its contradictory interpretations in the same period: **Liu Yongqiang** 刘勇强 (Peking University), in «*Shuihu zhuan pinglun zhong duili siwei de sanci dijin*» 《水浒传》评论中对立思维的三次递进 (On the Three Stages of Contradictory Comments *The Water Margin*) describes different and apparently contradictory interpretations of *The Water Margin* into three periods, the Ming, the Qing and the period after the founding of the Republic. The author of *The Water Margin* exemplifies virtues as loyalty and righteousness in the character of Song Jiang 宋江, who is described as «honorable and magnanimous, a saviour of the poor», and while «he shoulders a deadly responsibility» by saving his fellow hero Chao Gai 晁盖, he continues to believe that he and his compatriots «are unforgivable in the eyes of the law». He was considered loyal and righteous and at the same time he was a rebel. *Zhongyi* 忠義 (loyal and righteous) and *huidao* 誨盜 (bandit) were apparently two contradictory notions, but in fact these were based on the same ideological system, in which keeping the existing social hierarchy was a fundamental principle. As a matter of fact, Li Kui 李逵, the fiercest rebel in *The Water Margin*, still aimed at establishing a new imperial regime.

**Barbara Bisetto** (University of Milano-Bicocca), in «Becoming a Couple: Conversations and Couple Narrative in the Novella *Jiao Hong ji*», examines the love story between two cousins in the long *chuanqi* 傳奇 narrative by Song Yuan 宋遠, dating to the Yuan dynasty (1269-1368). This story, based upon the narrative model of the Tang dynasty classical tale *Yingying zhuan* 鶯鶯傳 (The Story of Yingying) by Yuan Zhen 元稹 (779-831), acquired great popularity during the Ming dynasty, when it was adapted in several plays and reprinted in many narrative anthologies and popular encyclopaedias. Its popularity was due to its motifs of desire, marriage and the lovers' deaths, but also to the changes in the composition of the narrative, in particular the combination of prose and verse.

The analysis of the love story of two cousins is followed by «The Chapter Titles in *Xiyou ji* and *Honglou meng*: Continuity and Discontinuity», in which **Nicholas Koss** (Peking University), examines the chapter titles of *Xiyouji* 西遊記 (The Journey to the West) and *Honglou meng* 紅樓夢 (Dream of the Red Chamber), in the attempt to show the continuity and discontinuity of the chapter titles in the final version of *Xiyouji* (1592) with those in the first printed edition of *Honglou meng* (1791). Koss concludes by analysing Gérard Genette's theories in *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretations* (1987), according to which the function of titles is of two kinds: thematic and rhematic, meaning respectively 'what one talks about' and 'what one says about it'. One of the main functions of the titles is to tempt

one to read the work. Genette's theories apply to the *Hongloumeng* titles, except for one assumption, i.e. that the author of the main text also writes chapter titles.

The second part, *Contemporary Literature*, starts with «Comparative Literature and World Literature in an Age of Transcultural Dialogue» by **Chen Yuehong** 陈跃红 (Peking University), who suggests a new reading of the discipline 'Comparative Literature and World Literature' in China, wishing to overcome the so-called Euro-Centrism. He discusses the relationship between two disciplines which were separated in China until fifteen years ago, when the Ministry of Education unified them. What is the relationship between world literature and comparative literature? How can we interpret world literature in a country with such a long tradition as China? The author complains that in the academic circles of world literature, the dominating criteria are still those confirmed by Western theories and concludes that world literature in a multi-cultural environment is still an ideal; he remarks: «We feel especially frustrated to find that many disciplines in today's non-Western countries, with the discipline of Comparative Literature and World Literature in China as a case point, are basically constructed by means of integral transplant and employment of the frame of the Western disciplinary heritage. In a considerably long period of time and with much taste, we always took the West as our model, tried to imitate it, and wanted earnestly to know whether we were good students and faithful followers».

**Nicoletta Pesaro** (Ca' Foscari University of Venice), in «The Tradition of Telling and the Desire of Showing in Ge Fei's 'Fictional Minds'» examines Ge Fei's 格非 attempt to reconcile the inner world of his characters and the outward reality in his recent trilogy, *Renmian taohua* 人面桃花 (Peach Blossom-beauty, 2004), *Shanhe ru meng* 山河入梦 (Mountains and Rivers Fall Asleep, 2007) and *Chunjin jiangnan* 春尽江南 (End of Spring in Jiangnan, 2011). Ge Fei focusses on the individual search to negotiate between his/her own subjectivity and the objective world around them. Pesaro tries to show how the author, in depicting history and reality as perceived by these fictional centres of consciousness, tends to gradually move from an indirect approach to a direct one. Chen Zhongyi 陈众议 (2012) points out the inner contradiction in Ge Fei's style, which he defines as 'classical' (*gudian* 古典) and 'avant-garde' (*xianfeng* 先锋) at the same time; actually, as Pesaro points out, a sophisticated merging of both styles rather than a contradiction, «the sublimation of some modernist techniques within a more traditional, essentially Chinese, narrative frame». Ge Fei choses to narrate the human mind in its complexity and in its constant interaction with the outer world by combining traditional subjectivity and implicitness with modern devices such as stream of consciousness, the descriptions of actions and objects, and the use of poetry to represent emotions and mental activities. Thus he creates a completely new and independent narrative style, achieving both continuity and discontinuity with Chinese tradition.

**Chen Xiaoming** 陈晓明 (Peking University), in «Wanyu shiqi de Zhongguo dangdai wenxue» ‘晚郁时期’的中国当代文学 (‘The Belated Mellow Period’ of Chinese Contemporary Literature)» refers to 20th century Chinese Literature which changed dramatically in what he defines as ‘the belated mellow period’ (*wanyu shiqi* 晚郁时期). What does it mean? The author explains that its vernacular has gone through a 100-year radical change (since the May Fourth Movement), absorbing influences of Western Literature and adapting it to the unique cultural characteristic of the Chinese language. On the other hand, Chinese literature today has reached a more mature, contemplative and deeper style, becoming more independent from Western literature, evolving from the young ‘revolution writing’ of the early 20th century to the ‘middle age writing’ of the late 20th century. According to the author, it can be considered similar to the ‘late style’ of Theodor W. Adorno, who appreciates the self experience of life in Beethoven’s late music, rather than perfection and harmony. He uses the expression *wanyu shiqi* to refer to the Chinese vernacular literature after 100 years of change, a phenomenon of the Nineties characterized by a return to a national writing no longer associated directly with a specific genre or writer of Western literature.

The new perspective and role of Chinese modern literature in the 20th century is also the main topic of «The Pragmatic Tradition of Chinese Literature and the Current ‘Spirit of the Times’», by **Marco Fumian** (G. D’Annunzio University, Chieti-Pescara), who explains that the didactic role traditionally performed by history, aiming at ‘encouraging good and deterring evil’ (*quanshan cheng’e* 劝善惩恶) by ‘praising and blaming’ (*baobian* 褒贬) the characters of the past for their actions, was taken over by fiction at the dawn of the modern era. While the Chinese Marxist literary critics began in the Thirties to define literature as a ‘tool’ (*gongju* 工具) and a ‘weapon’ (*wuqi* 武器) of the revolutionary struggle, the Maoist vision of literature continued to prescribe, in the following decades, the creation of exemplary models embodying the ideal social behaviour sanctioned by the Communist Party, until the Maoist prescriptions of literature were finally repudiated by the Chinese writers at the dawn of the Deng Xiaoping era. In the Eighties, the members of the Chinese literary field began to advocate the principle of ‘pure literature’ (*chunwenxue* 纯文学), first in order to free literary practice from the obligation to serve as political propaganda, and then, in the Nineties, to shield it from the ‘contaminations’ and the ‘turbidity’ of the market and commercial mass culture. However, as Fumian has pointed out, a literature characterized by instrumental and didactic aims continued nevertheless to exist all along: one case in point being the popular genre of the so-called ‘workplace novel’ (*zhichang xiaoshuo* 职场小说) targeted to teach the readers the values and norms most suitable to flourish in the recently established ‘socialist market’.

During the period 1920-1930 Japanese literary theory dominated the

basic model and pattern of Chinese literature. **Jin Yongbing** 金永兵 (Peking University), in «Honma Hisao's model of Literary Theory and its Influence in China» analyses two works by Honma Hisao 本間久雄 (1886-1981) translated into Chinese, trying to demonstrate the European-American and Japanese parentage of Chinese literary textbooks and to explain how this model of textbook is closely associated with the emergence and development of modern Chinese literary theory. Honma Hisao graduated from Waseda University in 1909, studied in the UK in 1928 and later taught at Waseda University for several years. His two books, *Introduction to Literary Theory* and *New Introduction to Literary Theory*, have had an enormous impact on Chinese literature since they were translated by Zhang Xichen 章锡琛 (1889-1969) and they have contributed to the development of modern Chinese literary theory. Honma Hisao applied the research methods, widely citing modern Western philosophy, aesthetics and literary theory. Jin Yongbing argues that Honma Hisao established a clear and comprehensive model of literary theory. However this model is not the author's original creation, the basic framework was primarily *Winchester's Principles of Literary Criticism* (1925). The translation of Honma Hisao's work by Zhang Xichen reveals the growing interest in literature as a social phenomenon at that time. The author then describes the peculiarities of Tian Han's 田汉 *Wenxue gailun* 文学概论 (Introduction to Literature), published in 1927, which was influenced by Honma Hisao's theories and other later works on literature.

Linking ancient and contemporary: from Wang Dao's depiction of *Zhongguo* as the ideal land of culture and civilization we move to the tradition of rural utopia described in Chinese literature of the 20th and 21st century, and particularly in Fei Ming's *Qiao* 桥 and in Yan Lianke's 阎连科 *Shouhuo* 受活. According to **Wu Xiaodong** 吴晓东 (Peking University), *Shouhuo* reveals the disillusion with various forms of utopia: Chinese tradition, communism and consumerism. «The Disillusionment with the Rural Utopia in Chinese Literature» presents the historical crisis of Chinese rural society and the emptiness of contemporary cultural ideology, societal ideas and historical perspective. The story of the village Shouhuo recalls Zhuangzi's wise sayings, that only the disabled would be able to enjoy their allotted span.

The third part, *Poetry and Theatre*, opens with «Traditions and Transitions in 18th century Qu Poetry: The Case of Jiang Shiquan (1725-1785)». **Tian Yuan Tan** (SOAS, London) investigates the role of drama as a genre in the 18th century, in particular the decline of the *yabu* 雅部 (or *kunqu* 崑曲, elegant drama) and the rise of *huabu* 花部 (miscellaneous drama), with an increasing development of the performance aspects of theatre rather than using dramas as a form of literary composition. He explores the status of playwrights and playwriting in the High Qing (1723-1840), starting from one of the most interesting figures in the field of Qing dynasty drama and poetry, Jiang Shiquan 蒋士铨 (1725-1785), the last example of a literary



playwright whose works are worthy of mention in literary histories. His works reveal new trends and styles of writing, such as the tension and coexistence of elegant drama, a form of high art among literary circles and the miscellaneous group of local theatrical styles using local tunes and folk songs that were enjoyed by a wider audience, a competition which can be summarized as a form of tension between *ya* 雅 (the elegant and refined) and *su* 俗 (the vulgar and popular). Jiang Shiquan has long been considered one of the most erudite playwrights of his time; his plays are highly lyrical and literary. Moreover one of the features of Jiang's drama is 'visual drama', the creation of visual spectacles often characterized by the element of surprise. Jiang Shiquan was an elite playwright, who was also known for writing theatrical performance for imperial entertainment, able to combine textuality and visuality, elite and court theatre, popular and miscellaneous drama.

**Zhang Hui** 张辉 (Peking University) introduces the modern Chinese poet Feng Zhi 冯至 (1905-1993). Unlike his contemporaries, who preferred the young Goethe, Feng Zhi was deeply influenced by Goethe's later years. In «Feng Zhi and Goethe of Later Years» Zhang Hui analyses Feng Zhi's understanding of Goethe and the general perception of Goethe in the modern Chinese context and in relation to the cultural context of the controversy between the ancient and the modern, as for instance in the understanding of Zong Baihua 宗白华 (1897-1986) and Chen Yuan 陈铨 (1903-1969). Feng Zhi followed and admired the young Goethe until the early 1930s, at which time the spirit of the Romantic period could no longer provide relief and consolation to him; he preferred Goethe's books which «contain the profound vision of life». Feng Zhi's writings on Goethe were an attempt to present a 'complete' Goethe, with his achievements in art, literature, science and politics, a man who «dominates everything with his passion, a man who possesses something more precious than passion, a man with responsibility and self-restraint». Feng Zhi claimed that Goethe believed that 'overcoming the self' and 'doubting of everything' are the embodiment of the spirit of ceaseless striving. He admitted that Goethe influenced him in three ways: affirmative spirit, idea of metamorphosis and unity of knowledge and action.

**Sean V. Golden** (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona) analyzes Ernest Fenollosa's theory on the role of the graphic elements of Chinese writing, starting from a recent edition of the complete Fenollosa manuscripts (by Haun Saussy, Jonathan Stalling and Lucas Klein, *The Chinese Written Characters as a Medium for Poetry: A Critical Edition*, 2008) and working outside the Ezra Pound tradition. He argues that, notwithstanding the debate and criticism raised by sinologists on Pound's emphasis on the graphic elements of Chinese writing, in fact we find an early account in chapter 39 of *Wenxin diaolong* 文心雕龍 by Liu Xie 劉勰 (ca. 466-520), who refers to a literary tradition and uses «just such chirographic punning that

plays the components of the written character off against the semantic content of the world it represents, on the visual, not the phonetic plane» (Golden 1996, 1997). Golden explains that Liu Xie exploits polysemy to link the patterns of language/writing/culture and consequently the patterns of the cosmos. For Liu Xie and subsequently for Fenollosa, who was much influenced by Zen Buddhism, *wen* was intrinsic to correlative cosmology. Fenollosa, who initiated Ezra Pound to East Asia Art and played a crucial role together with F. Hirth in creating the East Asian Studies programme at Columbia University that would link D.T. Suzuki to John Cage and other artists of the avant-garde, provided an important contribution to the understanding of Chinese thought, as for instance when he affirmed that an instantaneous photo of the sea in motion is only a momentary form of a wave, just like other things are only vibrations of living substances. Or when he wrote that synthetic thinking demands a pregnant language: rich, juicy, significant, full words, charged with intense meaning at the center, like a nucleus, and then radiating out toward infinity, like a great nebula.

Taking as a starting point David Der-wei Wang's theory on lyricism, in his essay «What's the Link Between the Lyrical and Modernity in China?» **Li Yang** 李杨 (Peking University) questions the possibility of applying the term 'lyrical' to fields other than literary criticism, as «an approach to interpreting socio-political reality». As such, the subjective expression of the self in lyricism appears to be a secondary aspect and Li underlines a somehow transcendent nature of the 'lyrical' in Chinese tradition. On the basis of the idea that the lyrical tradition, predominant in Chinese literary tradition as opposed to the strong Western epic and narrative tradition, developed from a form of literature to «a cultural perspective, a value system and even a political ideology» (Wang 2010, p. 13), Li brings into discussion the notion of 'lyricism' as underpinning Chinese modernity.

**Yang Zhu** 楊铸 (Peking University), in «Poetic Taste and Tasting Poetry» examines the role of 'taste' (*wei* 味) in Chinese poetry, as a basic component of artistic enjoyment, as a criterion for the appreciation of poetry during the Six dynasties and up until the late Qing dynasty, a concept which acquired a rich and deep significance throughout the ages. Taste has its origins in people's diet; in fact, food was considered humankind's most essential material need, as we infer from the Chinese saying *Min yi shi wei tian* 民以食為天 (People regard food as Heaven, *Hanshu* 1962, p. 2108). Thus, from pre-imperial times, a particular concern for taste was felt and expressed in literature and, later on, in poetry. The aesthetic perception was, in its early stage, connected to taste. During the Late Tang dynasty, the poet Sikong Tu 司空圖 (837-908) affirmed: «In my opinion distinguishing one's tastes is a precondition to any discussion on poetry». According to Sikong Tu the most brilliant works of poetry should have that 'mellow taste' (*chunmei* 醇美) which stands beyond concrete tastes such as salty, acidic, etc. thus suggesting the Taoist notion of tasteless (*wuwei* 無味), the taste beyond

taste. Yang Zhu concludes by saying that the concept of taste in ancient Chinese poetic theory cannot be considered as a scientific notion; however, the simple word 'taste' reflects the unique features of traditional Chinese culture and well represents the essence of ancient Chinese poetic theory.

The idea that underpins **Qin Liyan's** 秦立彦 (Peking University) «Voices of the Dead» is to explore the theme of death in the writings of two poets who lived in different historical and geographical contexts: Tao Yuanming 陶淵明 (365-427) and Emily Dickinson (1830-1886). Although their ideas about the after-death world differ significantly, the two poets show a deep familiarity with the idea of death and, in both Tao and Dickinson, the boundaries between life and death are not so clear-cut. By comparing how the two poets narrate their own deaths, Qin Liyan unveils the many similarities between them.

The fourth and final part, *Language and Political Discourse*, includes three essays, dealing respectively with the role of Confucianism in shaping Chinese modernity, with the metaphorical language used in political discourse, and with the evolution of the role of the Chinese character *de* 的 from the classical *zhe* 者.

**Yang Xiaobin** 楊小賓 (Academia Sinica, Taipei) in «Modernity and Subjectivity from the Past to the Present», reevaluates the role of Confucianism in shaping Chinese modernity. Moving from a statement by Umberto Eco, which is that every age has its own postmodern, just as every age has its own form of modern, he argues that the concept of modern should not be limited to the modern age, since the idea to 'make it new' is pervasive and stems from the classical sentence *riri xin* 日日新, «to become new day by day» (*Daxue* 大學, ch. 2). Yang Xiaobin, quoting Nietzsche's idea of progress – «making people small and governable is hailed as 'progress'» – and his reference to Confucius among the greatest artists of government, remarks that even the enlightenment thinkers of the 20th century China who promoted the slogan 'Down with the Confucius shop!' ultimately adopted Confucian concepts in order to promote Chinese modernity as, for instance, the idea of great unity (*datong* 大同) advocated by Kang Youwei 康有為 (1858-1927), which paved the way for the May Fourth Movement. Also, he points out the contradiction between rejecting Confucianism and inheriting Western enlightenment while using Chinese terms such as *geming* 革命, a term from the Commentary on the *Yijing*, but imported through the Japanese translation of the word 'revolution'.

Yang argues that Chinese tradition was already modernity and that the adoption of Western Enlightenment was an implicit return to Confucianism which was appreciated, for instance, by Voltaire. In his words: «To borrow the language of Horkheimer and Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, we might say that the issue of Chinese modernity lies in the fact that tradition is already modernity and modernity returns to tradition».

**Paolo Magagnin** (Ca' Foscari University of Venice), in «The Evolution

of Metaphorical Language in Contemporary Chinese Political Discourse. Preliminary Evidence from the 12th and 18th CPC Congresses» analyses modern and contemporary political language in China, focussing on the evolution of post-Mao political discourse and rhetoric. The texts he selected for this preliminary study are the two reports delivered at the 12th and at the 18th National Congresses of the CPC respectively, as they appear on the Xinhua News website, the first delivered by the then-General Secretary of the CPC Hu Yaobang 胡耀邦 on 1 September 1982 and the second by the then-General Secretary and President of the PRC Hu Jintao 胡锦涛 on 8 November 2012, a choice of texts Magagnin makes on the basis of a homogeneity principle. The analysis, which aims at providing a tentative outline of the evolution of figurative language in post-Mao political communication, is characterized by three steps: identification of keywords, interpretation of metaphors and explanation of their discursive function. The author explains that the two texts chosen reveal the intent of favouring cohesion, building consensus and national unity, emphasizing the results achieved and the future goals in a context in which metaphorical language conveys emotional experience, intimacy and implicitly exhorts to action.

To conclude this survey, in his «Lun di lai yuan yu zhe» 论“底”来源于“者” (On the Derivation of ‘di’ 底 (‘de’的) from ‘zhe’ 者), **Yang Rongxiang** 杨荣祥 (Peking University) explores the diachronic evolution of the auxiliary particle *zhe* 者. By means of a thorough examination of the grammatical and phonetic similarities between *zhe* and *di* 底 (‘de’的), Yang aims at proving the evolution of the auxiliary particle ‘di’ (*de*) from the ancient form *zhe*.

In spite of the pervading stream of continuity, the idea of innovation is very ancient, as we understand from the passage *riri xin* 日日新, «to become new day by day» of the *Daxue*. Thus, apparently modernity does not necessarily mean rupture with the past or rejection of traditional models, either Chinese or Western or Japanese.

We hope that this collection of essays will provide evidence that throughout China’s history, within a framework of continuity, traditional Chinese cultural and intellectual values were subject to change within tradition itself.



**Part 1**  
**Pre-Modern and Modern Literature**



## Linking Ancient and Contemporary

Continuities and Discontinuities in Chinese Literature

edited by Tiziana Lippiello, Chen Yuehong 陈跃红 and Maddalena Barengi

# Measuring Human Relations Continuities and Discontinuities in the Reading of the *Lunyu*

Tiziana Lippiello

(Università Ca' Foscari Venezia, Italia)

**Abstract** In Chinese literature the *locus classicus* of what in the West has been called «the Golden Rule» is traditionally considered a passage from the *Lunyu* (Analects) in which Zigong, one of Confucius' favourite disciples, asks his Master for a principle that can guide man's behaviour. In the sentence «What you don't want done to yourself, do not do to others», the Master defined *shu*, a character variably translated as 'reciprocity', 'empathy', 'consideration of others' or 'do unto others as you would have others do unto you'. *Shu* is one of the most widely debated and controversial assertions of Confucian ethics, not only because of the alleged analogy with the biblical «golden rule», but also because of its semantic richness, as we discover from reading the *Analects* and other writings. However, *shu* alone does not fully express the Chinese notion of concern and love for others. *Shu*, *zhong* and *ren* are concepts which recur in *Lunyu* and concur to define our perception of the Chinese golden rule in Confucian thought.

**Summary** 1 Introduction. – 2 *Zhong* 忠 and *Shu* 恕: to Give Full Realization to One's Self and to Be Empathetic. – 3 But *ren* 仁 Is More Difficult to Achieve. – 4 *Cheng* 诚 (Authenticity): When the Ten Thousand Things are Complete in Ourselves We Can Attain *ren*.

**Keywords** *Lunyu*. Analects. Golden Rule. *Shu*. Empathy. Consideration of others.

## 1 Introduction

In Matthew 22,35-40 we read:

«Master, which is the greatest commandment in the law?» Jesus answers: «*Love thy Lord as your God, with all your soul, and with all your mind*». That is the greatest commandment. It comes first. The second is similar to it: «*Love your neighbour as yourself*». Everything in the Law and the prophets hangs on these two commandments.

In the Old Testament, two fundamental passages deal with the Golden Rule. One is Tobias 4,15: «Do not do to others what you do not like for yourself», the other is «You will not revenge or feel resentment against



your people's sons, but will love your people as yourself» (Leviticus 19,18). The first passage, the most recent of the two, is a clear negative formulation of the golden rule, whereas the second explicitly quotes the golden rule in its positive formulation: «[You] will love your people as yourself».<sup>1</sup>

In Chinese literature, what can be considered the *locus classicus* of what in the West has been called «the golden rule», in its negative formulation, is a passage from the *Lunyu* 論語 (Analects) in which Zigong 子貢, one of Confucius's favourite disciples, asks his Master about a principle that can guide man's behaviour:

子貢問曰：「有一言而可以終身行之者？」子曰：「其恕乎！」己所不欲，勿施於人。」

Zigong asked: «Is there an adage that can guide us throughout our life?» The Master said: «It is *shu*! What you don't want done to yourself, do not do to others». (*Lunyu* 15,24)

Confucius considered *shu* a basic requirement for a virtuous life, in conformity with the *mores* of the Sages of ancient times. *Shu* recurs again in *Lunyu* 4.15, where it is associated with another key concept of Confucian ethics: *zhong* 忠.

子曰：「參乎！吾道一以貫之。」曾子曰：「唯！」子出，門人問曰：「何謂也？」曾子曰：「夫子之道，忠恕而已矣。」

The Master said: «Shen! In my Way there is one thread binding all together». Zengzi said: «Indeed!». When the Master had left, the disciples asked: «What did he mean?» Zengzi [Shen] replied: «The Master's Way consists of *zhong* and *shu* and that's all».

Starting from these two passages from the *Lunyu*, is it really possible to draw an analogy with the Christian golden rule?

Herbette Fingarette suggests an interesting but controversial interpretation of the relation between the «Confucian golden rule» and the Biblical golden rule. He maintains that *zhong* corresponds to what is expressed in the first commandment, «Love thy Lord as your God, with all your soul, and with all your mind», whereas *shu* corresponds to the second, «Love your neighbor as yourself». The scholar's interpretation is based on his reading of the *Lunyu* 4,15 and, in particular, on the com-

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1 On the golden rule in the Judeo-Christian world, see Sandoà 2005; Vigna, Zanardo 2005. On the Chinese golden rule, see Fung Yulan 1948; Fingarette 1979; Allinson 1982, 1985; Hall, Ames 1987; Ivanhoe 1990; Nivison 1996, 2003; Roetz 1993; Wang Qingjie 1999; Sin Yee Chan 2000; Van Norden 2002; Bo Mou 2004; Lippiello 2010; Zhang Zhigang 2014.

ments of Song scholars who interpreted *zhong* as «the way of Heaven» and *shu* as «the way of man»:

忠者天道，恕者人道

*Zhong* is the way of Heaven, *shu* is the way of man. (Zhu Xi 1983, p. 73)

Fingarette claims that, just as in the teachings of Jesus, where the golden rule is the result of two components, the love of God and the love of one's neighbour, in a similar way, in the teachings of Confucius «the unifying principle» is made up of *zhong*, «loyalty», «absolute dedication to a transcendent principle», and *shu*, «love of one's fellow man» (Fingarette 1979).

In fact, the Chinese golden rule, although it is expressed in negative and positive terms as in other traditions, cannot be compared to the biblical golden rule – at least in its earliest formulation – as there is no mention or reference whatsoever to a deity. It is man and his relation to the self and to others which is at the centre of the Chinese golden rule.

As we shall see, there is no transcendental principle in the Chinese golden rule: absolute dedication is meant as true devotion to oneself in relation to the other and, ultimately, to the *dao*.

## 2 *Zhong* 忠 and *Shu* 恕: to Give Full Realization to One's Self and to Be Empathetic

Xu Shen 許慎 (ca. 55-ca. 149) in the *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字 reads *zhong* 忠 as *jing* 敬 (respect, reverence), and he adds that «to give full realization to one's heart is what is meant by *zhong*» (*jinxin wei zhong* 盡心為忠; Duan Yucai 1984, 10B, p. 25b).

We find an explanation of *jinxin* 盡心 also in *Mengzi* 孟子. *Jinxin* is the title of *Mengzi* 7 A,1. The incipit of the chapter reads:

孟子曰：「盡其心者，知其性，則知天矣。」

Mengzi said: «For a man to give full realization to his heart is to understand his own natural tendencies, and to understand his own natural tendencies means to understand Heaven».<sup>2</sup>

2 *Jinxin* 盡心 («to give full realization to one's heart-and-mind») is the title of *Mengzi*, 7A,1. See also Lau 1970, p. 265 and Van Norden 2008, p. 171.

Wang Bi 王弼 (226-249) reads it as to «fully realize one's feelings/emotions» (*qing zhi jin ye* 情之盡也).

Commenting on *Lunyu* 4, 15, Huang Kan 皇侃 (488-545) interpreted *zhong* as «to fully focus on one's heart» (*jin zhong xin ye* 盡中心也). Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200) followed the *Shuowen jiezi* and added: «To give full realization to one's heart is what is meant by *zhong*» (*jinxin wei zhong* 盡心為忠). He also used the locution «to do one's best, to exhaust oneself» (*jiejin* 竭盡), meaning that he who is *zhong* performs his tasks with absolute devotion, dedicating the whole of himself.

As for *shu*, Xu Shen defines it as *ren* 仁 (humanity, benevolence) explaining that to extend one's feelings, attitudes, thoughts to others is the way to search *ren*.

*Shu* is an original principle of *ren* and apparently is not a natural attitude; in fact, Zigong had not yet attained *shu* and therefore the Master said: «Zigong, you have not yet reached this point!» (*fei er suo ji* 非爾所己).<sup>3</sup>

Speaking of *shu*, Mengzi (*Mengzi*, 7 A, 4) is clear, as he maintains that it is the way to attain *ren*:

強恕而行，求仁莫近焉。

Strengthen your empathy and you will find that this is the shortest way to humanity.

Wang Bi comments that *shu* implies that one should reflect on one's feeling in order to understand other people's feelings:

恕反情以同物也

To reflect on one's feelings in order to have sympathy with other beings.

Huang Kan and Xing Bing 邢昺 (931-1010) interpreted *shu* in a similar way, saying that it implies «Contemplating oneself in order to measure others» (*cun wo yi du yu ren ye* 忖我以度於人也 / *cun wo yi du yu wu ye* 忖我以度於物也; *Lunyu zhushu* 1989, vol. 8, ch. 4, p. 4).

Zhu Xi described *shu* as *tuiji* 推己 («to extend oneself»), in the sense of being empathetic to others.

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3 「恕，仁也。」如己之心，以推諸仁，此求仁之道，故「恕」亦訓仁。恕，仁本一理，子貢未能至恕，故夫子以為非爾所己。(Duan Yucai 1984, ch. 10B, p. 28a).

Liu Baonan 劉寶楠 (1791-1855) commented that to take one's inner self and extend it to others is the way to search humanity, therefore the practice of empathy trains one to humanity.<sup>4</sup>

One day, Confucius explained to Ji Kangzi 季康子 (d. 469 BC), the head of the three most influential families of Lu, how a ruler should behave with the people in order to obtain respect (*jing* 敬), dedication, loyalty (*zhong* 忠) and zeal (*qin* 勤). He said:

「臨之以莊，則敬；孝慈，則忠；舉善而教不能，則勤。」

Regard them with dignity, and they will be respectful. Be filial to your elders and caring to your juniors, and they will be loyal. Raise the good and instruct those who are unable, and they will be zealous. (*Lunyu* 2,20)

Respect, loyalty, zeal and commitment is what a ruler obtains if he treats his people with dignity, filial piety and care. In the sentence «What you don't want done to yourself, do not do to others» (*ji suo bu yu, wu shi yu ren* 己所不欲，勿施於人), Confucius described *shu* 恕, a character variably translated as «empathy», «reciprocity», «consideration of others» or «do unto others as you would have others do unto you», as the embodiment of virtuous behaviour towards peers or subordinates. We can find *shu* associated with *zhong* also in *Zhongyong* 中庸 (On the practice of the mean): here, again, it is Confucius who describes the negative formulation of the golden rule:

忠恕違道不遠，施諸己而不願，亦勿施於人。

One who is *zhong* and *shu* will never stray from the Way. What he does not wish done to him he does not do to others. (*Zhongyong*, 13)

*Zhong* basically means «loyalty» to one's superior, absolute dedication which transcends all individualism, the purely personal and encourages one to achieve completeness, moral integrity, authenticity. *Zhong* is not intended as a blind obedience to a superior or to one's peer, but as an absolute commitment to preserving the integrity of one's life, of one's social role. *Zhong* is «the essence of benevolence» (*zhong, ren zhi shi ye* 忠，仁之實也), we read in the Guodian manuscript entitled *Zhongxin zhi dao* 忠信之道 (The Way of Loyalty and Truthfulness).<sup>5</sup>

4 如己之心，以推諸人，此求仁之道，故「恕」亦訓仁。恕、仁本一理，子貢未能至恕，故夫子以為非爾所及。他日問終身行之，又告以恕，皆此教也 (Liu Baonan 1990).

5 *Zhongxin zhi dao* 忠信之道, slip 8 (*Guodian Chumu zhujian* 1998, p. 163); see Li Ling 2002, p. 100; Lippiello 2010, p. 78.

Fingarette interprets *zhong* as «loyalty-fidelity» (*zhong-xin* 中信), meant as loyalty-fidelity to moral rules, to principles of justice dictated by Heaven, which he associates with God. Moreover, he emphasizes the role of *zhong* and *shu* as criteria for judging what is just and appropriate. His reading is probably suggested by a passage in the *Daxue* 大學 which defines «the Golden Rule» in terms of «measuring square» (*xieju* 絜矩), i.e. the rule to govern human relations:

所惡於上，毋以使下；所惡於下，毋以事上；所惡於前，毋以先後；所惡於後，毋以從前；所惡於右，毋以交於左；所惡於左，毋以交於右：此之謂絜矩之道。

What you dislike in your superior, do not use in treating your inferior; what you dislike in your inferior, do not use in serving your superior; what you dislike in the one who precedes you, do not use in dealing with the one who comes after you; what you dislike in the one who comes after you, do not use in dealing with the one who precedes you. This is what is called the method of the «measuring square». (Zhu Xi 1983, ch. 10, p. 10; Nivison 1996, p. 64, slightly modified)

Zhu Xi explains that the measuring square is the carpenter's square, i.e. the heart. His argument is that, in general, what man wishes corresponds to what other men wish, therefore the man of noble character knows that his heart is similar to the heart of others and consequently behaves in a way respectful of his and other people's feelings and expectations. In his words:

所謂絜矩者，矩者，心也，我心之所欲，即他人之所欲也。我欲孝弟而慈，必欲他人皆如我之孝弟而慈。[...] 是以君子見人之心與己之心同，故必以己度人之心，使皆得其平。

What is called «measuring square» is [the carpenter's] square, that is the heart. What my heart wishes corresponds to what others wish. If I wish to show filial and brotherly love and be caring to the young, I will wish that others, like me, show filial and brotherly love and be caring to the young [...] Therefore the man of noble character perceives that the heart of others and his own are similar. Hence he always uses his own heart to measure the heart of others, so that all will obtain tranquillity. (Zhu Xi 1983, ch. 10, p. 10; Li Jingde 1985, ch. 16, p. 361; Lippiello 2010, p. 84).

This theory was developed in the 18th century by Dai Zhen 戴震 (1724-1777), based on of the concept of the original goodness of human nature formulated by the *Mengzi*. Dai Zhen stated that the ethical principle (*li* 理) belongs to the Sage and coincides with his desires and expectations. The Sage is guided by a kind of moral intuition (*Mengzi ziyi shuzheng* 2002, ch. 1, pp. 21-22).

### 3 But *ren* 仁 Is More Difficult to Achieve

H. Fingarette provides the following explanation for *shu*:

*Shu* is intended to cause me to have concern for you, not to impose my tastes and inclinations on you. Therefore, to assess the situation appropriately in declining what I want, I must not imagine being in your place, I must do this in such a way as to see it *through your eyes*. To put it in a nutshell, I must not imagine myself being in your situation; I must imagine *being you*. (Fingarette 1979, p. 383)

*Shu* implies to have concern for others, not to impose our tastes and inclinations, but rather to understand and follow their tastes and inclinations. As we have seen, *shu* is explained in *Lunyu*, 15.24 with the formula «What you don't want done to yourself, do not do to others». But *ren* is more difficult to achieve, it implies to be able to help others to succeed. It implies what Confucius defined *wuwo* 無我 (no self):

子絕四，毋意，毋必，毋固，毋我。

The Master avoided four things: no wish, no will, no set, no self. (*Lunyu*, 9.4)

There are different renderings of this passage, here I have adopted the Brooks and Taoeko's translation, which seems to me more literal, but Lionel Giles' rendering is also fascinating: «There were four words of which the Master barred the use: 'He would have no «shall's», no «must's», no «certainly's», no «I's'». What the Master intends to stress here is that personal intention, preconceptions, predeterminations, certainties and egotism are to be avoided, eliminated. This means that the only certainty should derive from the relation to the other, from which humanity derives. The process involves the awareness of the self, the relation to the other, the perfection of the self in terms of generosity toward the other.

Confucius had explained to the disciple Zigong how arduous it was to be generous and help people, in fact even Yao and Shun would find it difficult:

子貢曰：「如有博施於民而能濟眾，如何？可謂仁乎？」子曰：「何事於仁！必也聖乎！堯，舜其猶病諸！」

Zigong asked: «What about him who is broadly generous with the people and is able to help the multitudes? Can we define this benevolence?». The Master said: «Why stop at benevolence? Such a person should surely be called a Sage! Even Yao and Shun would find such a task arduous!». (*Lunyu*, 6.30; Gardner 2007; Lippiello 2010, pp. 82-83)

*Ren* is a central concept in Confucian thought, it appears 109 times in the *Lunyu*. *Ren*, as noticed by D. Gardner, who renders it with «true goodness», is described in many ways, such as: «to be slow or moderate in speech» (仁者，其言也訥, *Lunyu* 12, 3), «to be resolute and firm, genuine and reticent to speak is to be close to *ren*» (剛，毅，木，訥近仁, *Lunyu* 13,27), «to be possessed of courage» (仁者必有勇, *Lunyu* 14,4), «to be free from worry» (仁者不憂, *Lunyu* 9,29), «to delight in mountains» (仁者樂山, *Lunyu* 6,23); «to subdue the self and return to the rites» (克己復禮, *Lunyu* 12,1); «to be respectful, tolerant, trustworthy, diligent, and kind» (恭，寬，信，敏，惠, *Lunyu* 17,6); «and to love others» (愛人, *Lunyu* 12,22). «In this way», he states, «Confucius gives his followers – and readers – glimpses of various dimensions of true goodness» (Gardner 2007, p. 53).

Thus, an individual endowed with *ren* is courageous and firm but at the same time he is modest, reticent to speak, respectful, tolerant, trustworthy, diligent and, above all, he loves and is capable of subduing the self for the benefit of others. These were all attitudes and behaviours that concurred at the fulfilment of *ren*: true goodness, benevolence, generosity, love, the virtues *par excellence* described in the *Lunyu*.

*Lunyu* 6,30, mentioning *ren*, clarified the meaning of the four attitudes to avoid: a man pursuing *ren* is able to avoid establishing himself in order to help others to establish themselves.

仁者，己欲立而立人，己欲達而達人。能近取譬，可謂仁之方也已。

The term *ren* means that when you desire to establish yourself, you help others to establish; and when you desire success for yourself you help others to succeed. The ability to take as analogy what is near at hand can simply be called the method of attaining humanity *ren*. (*Lunyu* 6,30; Gardner 2007, p. 55)

This amounts to saying that you long for the other what you long for yourself and that you exert yourself to achieve for the other what you would like to achieve for yourself. This is the highest expression of *ren*, meant as «to love others» (*airen* 愛人) and as «to subdue the self and return to the rites or norms of social conduct» (*keji fuli* 克己復禮).<sup>6</sup>

But how should you acquire this ability to subdue the self and achieve for others what you would like for yourself?

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6 According to Zhang Dainian (1987, pp. 159-161) the interpretation of *ren* as «to love others» (*airen*) and its explanation as «to subdue the self and return to the rites/social norms» date back to Confucius. Zhang Dainian 1987, pp. 159-161). See also Zhang Zhigang 2014, p. 8.

Zhu Xi, commenting on *Lunyu* 15,24, suggested:

推己及物，其施不窮，故可以終身行之。尹氏曰：「學貴於知要。子貢之問，可謂知要矣。孔子告以求仁之方也。推而極之，雖聖人之無我，不出乎此。終身行之，不亦宜乎？」

Extend yourself to others, and what you do unto them will be inexhaustible. As a consequence, you will be able to practice it [empathy] for the whole of your life. Mr. Yin [Tun] said: «In learning, we value knowing the essentials. Zigong's query can be said to be about knowing the essentials. Confucius told him the way to pursue humanity, (*ren*). Extend yourself, and bring [empathy] to perfection so that even the selflessness of the Sages does not surpass it. Wouldn't it make good sense to practice this for the whole of your life?». (Zhu Xi 1983, p. 166; Gardner 2003, pp. 88-89)

It is interesting to note that Zhu Xi mentions the «selflessness of the sages» (*shengren zhi wuwo* 聖人之無我) as a paradigm of humanity and explains empathy as a way to pursue humanity.

Selflessness is a prerogative of the Sage, who attains and practices *ren* naturally, without effort.

Confucius had explained to the disciple Zigong how arduous it was to attain *ren*; in fact, even Yao and Shun had found it difficult to achieve: *ren* means to do for others what you would like done for yourself. But for the disciple Zigong, even attaining *shu* was difficult. In fact, when he said to the Master that he did not intend to do to others what he did not want for himself, the Master replied:

賜也，非爾所及也。

«Zigong, you have not yet reached this point!».<sup>7</sup>

The different aspects of *ren* were commented on and elaborated through the ages, particularly by the Song scholars Cheng Hao 程顥 (1032-1085) and Cheng Yi 程頤 (1033-1107) and finally Zhu Xi, who made a synthesis of their theories.<sup>8</sup> A devoted student of their teachings, Zhu Xi preferred the interpretations of Cheng Yi. The teachings of the three masters became known as Cheng-Zhu school of *Daoxue*, known as Neoconfucianism.<sup>9</sup>

7 子貢曰：「我不欲人之加諸我也，吾亦欲無加諸人。」子曰：「賜也，非爾所及也。」*Lunyu*, 5.12.

8 For a recent and exhaustive study on *ren*, see Chen Lai 2014.

9 Zhao Shunsun (1972, p. 4a) remarked that Zhu Xi, a student of both Cheng Hao and Cheng Yi, considered the teachings of the Cheng brothers similar and, therefore, in citing them



The Masters Cheng distinguish *ren* from *shu* in commenting on *Lunyu* 4,15:

以己及物，仁也；推己及物，恕也

Moving from oneself to reach others is humanity (*ren*); extending yourself to others is empathy (*shu*). (Gardner 2007)

Zhu Xi comments that considering the self in order to understand others is the natural behaviour of the person endowed with *ren*. It means reflecting on oneself and consequently trying to understand others and act in consideration of their expectations and needs:

以己及人，仁者之心也。於此觀之，可以見天理之周流而無間矣。狀仁之體，莫切於此。

Moving from oneself to reach others is the natural intention of the person endowed with humanity. Looking at it from this point of view, we can see that the heavenly principle is all-pervasive. To sketch the substance of humanity, nothing comes closer than this. (Zhu Xi 1983, 4.15)

Master Cheng (Cheng Hao) is more exhaustive in explaining why it is so difficult to attain *ren*. Quoting *Lunyu* 6,30, he writes:

仁至難言，故止曰：「己欲立而立人，己欲達而達人，能近取譬，可謂仁之方也已。」欲令如是觀仁，可以得仁之體。

*Ren* is extremely difficult to talk about, and so here it merely says, 'that when you desire to establish yourself, you help others to establish themselves; and when you desire success for yourself you help others to succeed. The ability to take as analogy what is near at hand can simply be called the method of attaining humanity *ren*.' He (Confucius) wished to have us understand *ren* in this way so that we could understand its substance. (Gardner 2003, p. 59)

Moreover, he uses the metaphor of a healthy body to express the idea of a man endowed with *ren*, who embodies heaven, earth and the myriad things in himself: numbness of the hands and legs implies that he does not consider them as part of his body, and therefore he has no concern for them. Consequently the *qi* does not penetrate them, they lose *ren* and no longer belong to the self. The limbs are like the multitude: helping them are the achievements of the Sage and the fulfilment of *ren*:

in his commentary on the Four Books, he did not feel it necessary to distinguish between them and, therefore, used the collective «The Masters Cheng». See Gardner 2007, p. 19.

醫書以手足痿痺為不仁，此言最善名狀。仁者以天地萬物為一體，莫非己也。認得為己，何所不至；若不屬己，自與己不相干。如手足之不仁，氣己不貫，皆不屬己。故博施濟眾，乃聖人之功用。

A book on medicine considers numbness of the hands and legs to be the absence of *ren* [true goodness]. This is an excellent description. A person of *ren* regards heaven, earth, and the myriad things as one body. They all are his own self. If he acknowledges them as the self, where does he not reach? But if they do not belong to the self, then naturally they are of no concern to the self – which is like the absence of *ren* in the hands and legs. If one's *qi* no longer penetrates them, none of them belongs to the self. It is for this reason that widely bestowing benefits on and bringing relief to the multitude are the achievements of the Sage. (Wang Xiaoyu 2011, p. 15; Chen Lai 2014, pp. 260-261; Gardner 2003, pp. 58-59)

Master Cheng continues:

論語言「堯舜其猶病諸」者二。夫博施者，豈非聖人之所欲？然必五十乃衣帛，七十乃食肉。聖人之心，非不欲少者亦衣帛食肉也，顧其養有所不贍爾，此病其施之不博也。濟眾者，豈非聖人之所欲。

The *Analects* on two occasions says: «Even Yao and Shun would find this difficult». Now to bestow benefits widely is indeed what a man desires. And yet [Mengzi 1A.3 says that] people must be fifty to wear silk, and seventy to eat meat. In his heart, a Sage would surely want the young as well to wear silk and eat meat and would look upon such care [i.e. that advocated in Mengzi] as inadequate. He would find it difficult that his benefits had not been bestowed widely. Bringing relief to the multitude is indeed what a sage desires. (Wang Xiaoyu 2011, p. 15; Chen Lai 2014, pp. 260-261; Gardner 2003, pp. 58-59)

Song scholars considered *shu* a method or technique to achieve *ren*. Zigong applied himself to *shu*, but it was out of his reach; in fact, when he expressed to the Master his intention of not doing to the others what he did not want for himself, Confucius said: «Zigong, you have not yet reached this point!» Kongzi thought that Zigong had not yet attained a natural «empathy». If he was not yet able to be empathetic, how could he attain *ren*? Master Cheng thus commented this passage:

恕則子貢或能勉之。仁則非所及矣。

As for empathy, Zigong is perhaps capable of applying himself to its practice; as for humanity, it is not something he is capable of.

Zhu Xi interpreted Master Cheng's statement by saying that the fundamental difference between what is affirmed in *Lunyu* 5,12 (*wu jia zhuren* 無加諸人) and in *Lunyu* 15,24 (*wu shi yuren* 勿施於人) lies in the two negations *wu* 無 and *wu* 勿: the first negation, as expressed in *Lunyu* 5,12, by Zigong, implies Zigong's intention not to do to others what he does not wish for himself, whereas the second implies an injunction, it is the Master who exhorts his disciple Zigong not to do what he does not wish for himself.

In other words, *shu* corresponds to a rule, whereas *ren* implies a spontaneous generosity towards others, a virtue of the Sage, far from Zigong's reach.

愚謂無者自然而然，勿者禁止之謂，此所以為仁恕之別。

In my view, *wu* [not, as in «wish not»] is to be so naturally; *wu* [do not, as in «do not do unto others»] is a term of prohibition. This is the distinction between humanity and empathy. (Gardner 2003, p. 55)

Zigong put all his efforts into being empathetic to others, however he did not attain *ren*, since *ren* is a state of being one attains naturally, as in Gardner's words: «In sum, for Zhu Xi, a person is truly good when he *naturally* does not wish to treat others inappropriately. In contrast, he is empathetic when he consciously follows rules not to treat others inappropriately» (Gardner 2003, p. 56).

Zhu Xi explains that empathy is a way to attain humanity; in fact, empathy and humanity stem from the same principle, as we read in *Shuowen jiezi*; Zigong could not attain humanity and therefore the Master thought that he could exert himself to reach empathy but humanity was beyond his capabilities.

As we have seen, Fingarette, starting from the statement, «What you don't want done to yourself, do not do to others» (*ji suo bu yu, wu shi yu ren* 己所不欲，勿施於人) interpreted *shu* as the negative formula of the golden rule, whereas *zhong*, in his opinion, should represent the positive formula. In Confucian texts we can find other concepts which remind us of the golden rule. One such passage is found in the *Daxue* 大學, one of the four canonical books of the Song dynasty: here *xin* 心 is described as a measuring square (*xieju* 絜矩; Zhu Xi 1983, ch. 10, p. 10.), which corresponds to the formula «What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others». It is worth noting the use of terms such as «the measuring square», denoting the need to regulate human relations in search of harmony with the self, with others and with the cosmos.

In brief, in *Lunyu* 6,30 we can find the positive formulation of the golden rule expressed by *ren*, and in fact it is suggested that bestowing benefits on and bringing relief to the people are prerogatives of the Sage. The ability to take as analogy what is near at hand is the way to attain *ren*.

What is the meaning of «The ability to take as analogy what is near at hand» (*neng jin qu pi* 能進取譬; *Lunyu* 6,30)? It means, as Fingarette puts it, «to be able, from what is close, i.e. *yourself*, to grasp analogy with the other person, and in that light to treat him as you would like to be treated. You must imagine being in the other person's place; then, in that state, you are to ask yourself what you want or do not want done» (Fingarette 1979). This presupposes a mental exercise which is familiar to everybody: you imagine yourself in the other's shoes and become one with the other; you can see things as the other sees them, you can perceive things as the other perceives them.

However, I believe that when Fingarette equates the Chinese golden rule to the Biblical golden rule he does not consider the fundamental difference between the Christian and the Chinese message. The scholar claims that, just as in the teachings of Jesus the golden rule is made up of two essential components - the love of God and the love of one's neighbour - in a similar way in the teaching of Confucius «the unifying principle» is made up of *zhong*, loyalty, absolute dedication to a principle (the *dao*), and *shu*, love of one's fellow man. The basic difference between the Confucian precept and the biblical one lies in the identity of the transcendent principle. Probably Fingarette was inspired by Zhu Xi's interpretation, who considered *zhong* the Way of Heaven.

忠恕一以貫之：「忠者天道，恕者人道；忠者無妄，恕者所以行乎忠也。忠者體，恕者用，大本達道也。」

*Zhong* and *shu* are pervaded by a single unifying principle. *Zhong* is the Way of Heaven, *shu* is the Way of man. *Zhong* means absence of hypocrisy, *shu* is how to put *zhong* into practice. *Zhong* is substance, *shu* is function. These are the great root and the realized Way. (Zhu Xi 1983, pp. 72-73)

Thus what we may consider the Chinese golden rule cannot be simplified in the formulation found in *Lunyu* 15,24 and *Lunyu* 4,15, for it is more articulate. According to Zhang Zhigang the highest expression of the golden rule in Chinese thought is found in *Lunyu* 6,30, where the Master says that *ren* implies attaining for others what you desire for yourself, such as social position and success.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Zhang Zhigang quotes the reading of this passage by Yang Bojun 杨伯峻, Qian Mu 钱穆 and Zhang Dainian 张岱年, who consider *li* 立 the conquest of social position and *da* 达 the achievement of a goal. In this sense *ren* is to renounce to the self for the sake of others and, therefore, it is the highest expression of ancient humaneness (Zhang Zhigang 2014, pp. 7-9).

#### 4 *Cheng* 誠 (Authenticity): When the Ten Thousand Things are Complete in Ourselves We Can Attain *ren*

There is another passage where Mengzi somehow anticipates the thesis of Song scholars: the first object of knowledge and reflection is the self and not the external world. Then, in order to attain *ren* one has to strengthen *shu*.

孟子曰：「萬物皆備於我也。反身而誠，樂莫大焉。強恕而行，求仁莫近焉。」

Mengzi said: «The ten thousand things are all brought to completion in me. There is no greater joy for me than to find, on self-examination, that I am authentic. Strengthen your empathy and you will find that this is the shortest way to benevolence».

This passage, partly quoted above (see p. 26), is found in the chapter *Jinxin* of *Mengzi* 7 A, 4. Zhu Xi defines *cheng* 誠 as 實 (reality, sincerity, authenticity, genuineness; Zhu Xi 1983, ch. 13, p. 350; Lau 1970, p. 265; Van Norden 2008, p. 172). Mencius emphasizes the inner sphere, he thought that *shu* was innate in us, we should only cultivate it in order to attain *ren*. Also, he says that the ten thousand things (*wanwu* 萬物) are all in us.

Thus the individual has to look in himself (*fan shen* 反身) and he will find his authenticity (*cheng*); he has to strengthen his empathy (*qiang shu* 強恕) and he will attain humanity (*ren* 仁).

*Cheng* (authenticity) seems to be a condition necessary to attaining empathy and humanity. We can find a clear description in the *Zhongyong* 22:

唯天下至誠，為能盡其性；能盡其性，則能盡人之性。能盡人之性，則能盡物之性；能盡物之性，則可以贊天地之化育；可以贊天地之化育，則可以與天地參矣。

None but those who have attained the highest degree of authenticity in the entire world have the capacity to fully realize their natural tendencies. One who is able to fully realize his natural tendencies can thereby bring to full realization the natural tendencies of other people; one who is able to bring to full realization the natural tendencies of others is thereby able to bring to full realization the natural tendencies of all living things; and one who is able to bring to full realization the natural tendencies of all living things can partake thereby in the transformative and generative processes of Heaven and Earth. He who can partake in the transformative and generative processes of Heaven and Earth can stand with them in the cosmic continuum. (Plaks 2003, p. 44, slightly modified)

*Cheng* in this context implies the knowledge of the self, consequently of others and ultimately of the cosmos. Here the *Zhongyong* introduces an element which was very much appreciated by Song scholars and later also by the Jesuits: man's relation to heaven, to the cosmos.

誠者，天之道也。誠之者，人之道也。誠者，不勉而中，不思而得，從容中道：聖人也。誠之者，擇善而固執之者也。

Authenticity is the Way of Heaven; the process of making oneself authentic is the Way of man. Authenticity is a state of centred balance requiring no striving, complete attainment requiring no mental effort. This is a prerogative of the Sage. The process of 'making oneself authentic', by contrast, requires choosing the good and holding fast to it with all one's strength. (*Zhongyong*, 20; Plaks 2003, p. 121)

*Cheng* means authenticity, being true to our endowment of human nature, to the virtues embodied therein. For the ordinary person it is necessary to strive (*mian* 勉) in order to become authentic, true to himself and to others. The Sage, due to his virtue, attains this condition without any effort. Only those who centre the Way by exerting themselves have to constantly hold fast to it.<sup>11</sup>

The *Zhongyong* 25 continues by exhorting to cultivate our self and to bring to perfection all things in the phenomenal world. The fulfilment of our authenticity results in the fulfilment of our humanity, the fulfilment of others' authenticity results in the fulfilment of our wisdom.

誠者非自成己而已也，所以成物。成己，仁也；成物，知也。性之德也，合外內之道也。

Authenticity is not merely the process of making oneself complete and nothing more; rather, it constitutes the foundation for bringing to completion all things [with which one interacts in the phenomenal world]. Making authentic the individual self is the substance of man's essential humanity, just as the completion of all other things constitutes the foundation of wisdom. This is the moral force inherent in one's inborn nature, the Way that unites the external and the internal aspects of being. (*Zhongyong*, 25; Plaks 2003, pp. 44-45, slightly modified)<sup>12</sup>

11 誠者，真實無妄之謂，天理之本然也。誠之者，未能真實無妄，而欲其真實無妄之謂，人事之當然也。聖人之德，渾然天理，真實無妄，不待思勉而從容中道，則亦天之道也。未至欲聖，則不能無人欲之私，而其為德不能皆實。故未能不思而得，則必擇善，然後可以明善；未能不勉而中，則必固執，然後可以誠身，此則所謂人之道也。

12 See also Gardner 2007, p. 126.

When the individual becomes true to himself and complete, he is able to bring others to perfection. Thus *cheng* may also be considered another expression of the golden rule.

Zhu Xi remarks that, although *cheng* originates from the completion or perfection of the self, it belongs to human nature, it develops spontaneously and spontaneously can be extended to other beings. *Ren* is equated to «substance» (*ti* 體) whereas *zhi* 知 (knowledge, wisdom) to «function» (*yong* 用).<sup>13</sup>

Du Weiming describes *cheng* as a paradigm of humanity, arguing that the realization of humanity goes through the actualization of the way of man, of one's identity. In his words:

The person who embodies *cheng* to the utmost is also a genuine human being. It is in this sense that he completely realizes his own nature. The person who realizes his own nature to the full becomes a paradigm of authentic humanity. What he realizes, then, signifies not only his personal humaneness but humanity as such and as a whole. (Tu Weiming 1989, pp. 77-78)

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13 誠雖所以成己，然既有以自成；則自然及物，而道亦行於彼矣。仁者，體之存，知者用之發，是皆吾性之固有，而無內外之殊。既得於己，則見於事者，以時措之，而皆得其宜也 (Zhu Xi 1983, p. 34).

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## Linking Ancient and Contemporary

Continuities and Discontinuities in Chinese Literature

edited by Tiziana Lippiello, Chen Yuehong 陈跃红 and Maddalena Barenghi

# Bai Shouyi on Sima Qian and Ban Gu

Hans van Ess

(Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, München, Deutschland)

**Abstract** This article discusses a paper by the renowned contemporary Chinese historian Bai Shouyi written shortly before the so-called Cultural Revolution. Bai Shouyi's text deals with the differences between the views of the two Han historians Sima Qian and Ban Gu, at first sight an apolitical subject. A closer look reveals that when writing this article, that appeared not only in a scholarly journal but also in the newspaper «People's Daily», Bai Shouyi's probably had in mind political issues of his own day. Thus, it turns out to be a famous article of the practice of «to use the past for the present» (*gu wei jin yong*).

**Keywords** Bai Shouyi. Sima Qian. Ban Gu. Gu wei jin yong.

There is one sentence in Chinese that has been important throughout Chinese history: *gu wei jin yong* 古為今用 «to use the past in order to serve the present». History writing in traditional and in contemporary China has always had a twofold interest: on the one hand, the Chinese tradition of writing standard histories (*zhengshi* 正史) has, over the centuries, established a very efficient tool for conserving aspects of the past for future generations. On the other hand, since ancient times it has relied on a 'mirror' metaphor to describe that the writing of history was not a goal in itself.<sup>1</sup> Rather, it was seen as a means that served the goal of teaching lessons from the past that were relevant to the present. It is therefore no coincidence that Sima Guang 司馬光 (1019-1086) gave his monumental opus magnum the title A Comprehensive Mirror to Aid in Government (*Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑑). In this respect, Chinese tradition is similar to Roman tradition, which coined the term «*historia vitae magistra*». Another parallel may be found in the Western tradition of writing what has been termed *Fürstenspiegel*, or «mirror for princes», although these texts are not necessarily historical by nature.

What is peculiar about China is that scholars and historians here have continued to make use of the past in order to serve the present over most

1 The first historian to use this metaphor was Sima Qian 司馬遷 (145 or 135 BC-87? BC). See *Shiji* 史記 1959, 18.878.

of the 20th century, while historical theory in Western countries – successfully or not – has tried to free itself from this tendency. Examples may be seen in the reanimation of the Han dynasty Oldtext/Newtext controversy at the end of the 19th century (van Ess 1994, pp. 146-170), in the May 4th accounts of the scholar-literatus Qu Yuan 屈原 (Schneider 1980), and in the books by Wu Han 吳晗 (1909-1969) on the founder of the Ming dynasty, which were seen as judgments on Jiang Jieshi 蔣介石 (1887-1975) and Mao Zedong 毛澤東 (1893-1976), and which in the end may have led to the tragic death of Wu Han in 1969 (Wakeman 2009, p. 378; Farmer 1995, p. 7; Andrew, Rapp 2000, p. 29).

Many more examples could be enumerated. Sima Qian wrote a very important sentence in which he said that one of his main interests was «to penetrate the changes of the past and present» *tong gu jin zhi bian* 通古今之變 (*Hanshu* 1962, 62.2735). Many articles have been written in Chinese on this famous motto of Sima Qian's. It shows that for Chinese culture the subject, past and present is much more important than the average Western academic may realize. In the context of what has been said above, it should be interesting to look at one Chinese author who wrote an article that appeared in at least three different forms and in five different places on a subject that has received considerable attention in the long history of imperial China, namely the comparison of the *Records of the Chronicler* (*Shiji* 史記) and the *Documents of the Han* (*Hanshu* 漢書). The author is Bai Shouyi 白壽彝 (1909-2000), and the title of his article is «Sima Qian yu Ban Gu» 司馬遷與班固. What immediately attracts one's attention to this article is that, while it serves as a preface to a book on the *Shiji* that was published in 1982, there is a short comment, in brackets, telling us that it was first published in the January 23.1964 issue of *Renmin ribao* 人民日報.

This is not completely true. Actually, a longer version of the article had first come out in the fall/winter 1963 issue of the *Journal of Peking Normal University* (Beijing shifan daxue). Though actually a scholarly article, it was presented shortly afterwards to a much broader audience. This does not happen to many scholarly articles and so it seems important to find out what was so interesting in this article that it deserved to be published in *Renmin ribao*.<sup>2</sup>

Bai Shouyi begins both versions with some general information on Sima Qian and the *Shiji*, but this part is much shorter in the *Renmin ribao* than in the original version. The two versions resemble each other very closely in their second parts, which in the original is titled «The Characteristics of the Composition of the *Shiji*» 《史記》編寫上的特點. Here, Bai Shouyi moves on to tell his reader that the real importance of the *Shiji* lies in its

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2 Besides the *Renmin ribao* edition the same article is to be found in Bai Shouyi 1982a, pp. 17-33, and the longer original version in Bai Shouyi 1963, pp. 1-26. A different version of the text was published in Bai Shouyi 1979 and Bai Shouyi 1982b, pp. 1-16.

description of the Han dynasty. According to him, it is the Han-part that was the reason the *Shiji* was called a *bangshu* 謗書, a slanderous work, starting in Later Han times (*Hou Hanshu* 1965, 60B.2006). In what follows, Bai Shouyi often uses the word *xielu* 泄露 or *jielu* 揭露, to 'disclose': he says that the important thing is not how the *Shiji* draws images of people but how Sima Qian, through his speeches and actions, manages to reveal the political circumstances of that time. In writing the biography of Chancellor Li Si 李斯, the architect of the government of the First Emperor of Qin 秦始皇帝, Sima Qian 'discloses' the process of the rise and decline of the imperial state of Qin and the internal factors of that process. In writing about Han Xin 韓信 and chancellor Xiao He 蕭何, Sima Qian 'discloses' the nervous atmosphere characterized by foul and dangerous practices prevailing in the time after the establishment of the Han dynasty. Han Xin is a person who has many merits and is full of strategies but, because he is not good at hiding his intentions, eventually falls under the suspicion of Emperor Gaozu 高祖 (r. 202-194) and is killed. On the other hand, Xiao He is able to disperse the mistrust of the same emperor and ultimately manages to escape the many dangers he faces. Bai Shouyi then moves on to provide examples from the era of Emperor Wu of the Han 漢武帝 (r. 140-87 BC) and quotes from the biographies of his subjects to reveal how they cautiously tried to protect themselves, never expressing their own opinions or developing strategies to help the people. Instead, they always tried to get the attention of the emperor. For example, one of the sons of an official called «Lord Ten Thousand Piculs» (Wanshi jun 萬事君: five people in the family had a salary of 2000 piculs) used his whip to count the horses of the emperors' carriage when the latter had asked him how many horses were in front. The official, of course, knew by heart that there were six, but he was so afraid to commit a mistake that he preferred to count. Another son was afraid he would have to die because a dot was missing in the character 'horse' in a memorial that he had to present the Emperor (*Shiji* 1959, 103.2766 and 2767). According to Bai Shouyi, through these small details Sima Qian expressed his harsh criticism of the corrupt politics prevailing at Emperor Wu's court.

Why should a reader of *Renmin ribao* be interested in these small details in 1964? In his next paragraph on the «progressiveness of the *Shiji*» Bai Shouyi tells us that the *Shiji*, in putting in order important historical matters, laid special emphasis on the influence events had on the masses. Qin 秦 and Chu 楚 both fell because their leaders were brutal. Yet, Bai says that there are two chapters which show especially harsh criticism of Emperor Wu of the Han - namely, the treatise on the economy and the chapter with biographies of cruel officials. He tells us that under Emperor Wu, society was in turmoil because of the measures taken by tax authorities and he says that Sima Qian takes the fall of the Qin as a metaphor for his own times. The peasants did not have enough to eat and their

wives could not provide enough clothing for them to wear. So the peasants started an uprising and the Qin fell. There were unjust laws, and those whom the emperor wanted to be free were freed while those he wanted to condemn were condemned. In his chapter on the knight errants, Sima Qian criticized the emptiness of moral values, and in his chapter on the merchants he blamed the Confucians for perpetuating poverty at the same time as they upheld humanity and righteousness, because this was a good method for telling the people that they should not rebel even in their dire conditions. In this way, Sima Qian disclosed and criticized several aspects of feudalism, especially the aspect of autocraticism in feudalism, and he responded to the masses, especially to the political feelings of those who did not possess much.

Bai Shouyi then goes on to write about the famous two aims of Sima Qian, namely that he wanted to «investigate the border between Heaven and men and to penetrate the changes of old and new» 就天人之際，通古今之變 (Bai Shouyi 1982a, pp. 22-26). He first rightly shows that Sima Qian does not believe in the authority of Heaven, but then immediately comes back to his favorite subject, the empire's economic situation. He emphasizes that socioeconomics have their own laws of development and that the material needs of human beings demand that there should be a division of labor in production. According to Bai Shouyi – Sima Qian was of the opinion that «the needs of the material life of human beings necessarily drive forward the division of labor in the production of a society and the development of the economy of a society» and that «this is not something that could be forced by politics».<sup>3</sup> Bai Shouyi adds two more points, namely, that ownership and property decide who is an oppressor and who belongs to the oppressed, and that property decides what is moral, and the morals of the rich serve to conserve their vested rights. He then concludes that Sima Qian realized that material production was very important to social life and that wealth was vital not only to social and political relationships but also to social consciousness – a purely materialistic argumentation that, according to Bai Shouyi, is «a valuable heritage of the history of historical thought of the middle ages of our country» 這是我國中世史學思想史上珍貴的遺產。 He adds that Sima Qian criticized the idea that «Heaven decides about wealth and nobility» 富貴在天 – not man – and that with this he again expressed his resistance to the monopolistic economic policies in Han Wudi's time (Bai Shouyi 1982a, pp. 23 ff.).

It is obvious that for Bai Shouyi the main point of the *Shiji* is its criticism: of the political atmosphere of intimidation, of the autocratism of Emperor Wu of the Han, of the suspicion and injustice of Emperor Gaozu

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3 Bai Shouyi 1982a, p. 23: 人們物質生活的需要必然推動社會生產的分工和社會經濟的發展，這不是政治力量所能創造出來的。

and Han Wudi, and finally of the centralist economic measures that were adopted under Emperor Wu. When considering that some of the readers of the *Renmin ribao* article may not have known by heart the *Shiji* – which applies perfectly to all of what Bai Shouyi says – one wonders whether it must not have looked to these readers like Sima Qian had neither criticized Emperors Gaozu and Wu of the Han nor the First Emperor of the Qin, but instead Mao Zedong’s Great Leap Forward; and furthermore, that this was the real reason the editors of *Renmin ribao* found this article of Bai Shouyi’s interesting enough to republish it in a shortened form. It is of some importance to note that all of the lengthy scholarly discussions that Bai Shouyi had published in his first version of the article, but which could obviously not serve the goal we have just outlined – namely, criticism of Mao Zedong and the Great Leap Forward – were cut when the *Renmin ribao* version was printed. For example, there are two paragraphs in the original article that talk about historical thinking at the time of the change from the Western to the Eastern Han and about the contributions made by Liu Xiang 劉向 (77-8 v.Chr.) and his son Liu Xin 劉歆 (d. 23 AD). They were omitted in the *Renmin ribao* version, clearly because readers would not have found very much there that they could have compared to their own situation and their living conditions.

Ban Gu 班固 (32-92) is treated later in the article by Bai Shouyi. He describes Ban Gu as ‘orthodox’ (*zhengzong de* 正宗的; Bai Shouyi 1982a, p. 26) and then attacks him for having erased the progressive contents of the *Shiji*. Despite the fact that Ban Gu made some very important new contributions, such as the description of the territory of Xinjiang in his chapter on the «Western Regions» («Xiyu» 西域, *Hanshu* 96; Bai Shouyi 1982a, p. 30), Bai argues that *Hanshu* emphasizes the region’s feudalistic elements and its eclecticism – obviously a negative term at that time. «It waters down the disclosure of social antagonisms» (冲淡了[...] 對於當時社會矛盾的揭露; Bai Shouyi 1982a, p. 30)<sup>4</sup> and is «poor in historical thinking» (他在歷史思想上的貧困; Bai Shouyi 1982a, p. 31). Finally, according to Bai Shouyi there are many contradictions in *Hanshu*. It is obvious that Bai greatly prefers the *Shiji* over the *Hanshu*. In the original article there followed a final paragraph on the *Hanji* 漢紀 of Xun Yue 荀悅 (148-209) and how it reorganized the *Hanshu*. This section is for obvious reasons left out of the *Renmin ribao* version of the article. Of course, it does not add much to the criticism that the later version voiced. Thus, it seems to me that the editors of *Renmin ribao* were interested in what Bai Shouyi wrote on Sima Qian because they could take it as an example of how «to use the past in order to serve the present». Ban Gu was probably described in such a

4 This topic obviously was dear to Bai Shouyi because he himself was a muslim and thus very interested in the links between China and the home province of the Uyghurs where most Chinese Muslims live.

negative manner by Bai Shouyi because he was very much in favour of the political and economic measures that Sima Qian had criticized: the politics of centralization and the strengthening of the military, and especially the establishment of monopolies in salt and iron, which reminded the reader in 1963-1964 of the collectivization in agriculture and industry.

Bai Shouyi's second article on Sima Qian and Ban Gu actually went back to a lecture that he had held in Peking. Chen Qitai 陳其泰 and Lai Changyang 賴長揚 took notes which they developed into a manuscript and published in 1979 in *Shixueshi ziliao* 史學資料, a journal put out by Bei shida. The piece was then used as a preface to *Sima Qian yanjiu xinlun* 司馬遷研究新論, a book published by Shi Ding 施丁 and Chen Keqing 陳可青 in 1982 (Bai Shouyi 1982b). A major difference between this article and the previous one with the same title is that the later one starts with five pages of historical theory and a description of the economic situation in the empire. Bai argues that the main contradiction under the Han was the conflict between landlords and peasants, but he also mentions the great progress that was made in scientific development. He explains that after the demise of the slave-holder society feudalism gave individual families (*geti jiating* 個體家庭) the chance to own their own land - again, one is surprised to find vocabulary that resembles the language used in the political discussion at the time when Deng Xiaoping had started his economic reforms and was promoting the activities of *geti hu* 個體戶 (Bai Shouyi 1982b, p. 2). Bai also talks about the different questions that the two historians wanted to address: Sima Qian wanted to give answers to why the Qin fell so quickly and why the Han rose so fast, or to what the new state should look like, while Ban Gu was more interested in keeping the status quo (Bai Shouyi 1982b, pp. 7-10). Sima Qian wanted to show historical changes while Ban Gu tried to give guiding principles; Sima Qian was objective (*keguan* 客觀), scientific (*jiejin kexue* 接近科學) and politically forward-looking (*zhengzhi shang xiang qian kan* 政治上向前看), while Ban Gu was idealistic (*weixin de* 唯心的), conservative (*baoshou* 保守) and backward-looking (*xiang hou kan de* 向後看的; Bai Shouyi 1982b, p. 10). Just as in his first article, the vocabulary Bai uses for Sima Qian is always positive, while with Ban Gu it is rather negative. But the tone has changed: While the former article was written to criticize collectivization, the latter talks about the new agenda of the Deng era: open-mindedness to the world and scientific progress are the two catchwords that are now ascribed to Sima Qian.

There is one section in the article in which Bai Shouyi talks about the treatises and admits that this is the part where Ban Gu is superior because the content of his treatises was more developed and mature (Bai Shouyi 1982, pp. 14-16). Yet, Bai then adds, again, that Sima Qian is better as far as *sixiang* 思想, ideas, are concerned. Only on his last two pages (Bai Shouyi 1982b, pp. 14-16) does Bai Shouyi briefly summarize what

had made up the major part of his first article on Sima Qian in the sixties. The examples that he gives are the same as in the previous article and the conclusions are, too. Here, Bai Shouyi repeats how dangerous autocracy is and how unhealthy the political atmosphere was when the sons of Mister Ten Thousand Piculs had to be so careful and could only succeed because they never ever expressed their opinions directly. In this last part of the article Bai Shouyi implicitly looked back on the atrocities of Mao Zedong's Great Leap Forward. Yet, it is obvious that while Bai Shouyi had not changed his opinion that Sima Qian's treatment of the history of the Han was to be preferred over Ban Gu's, he certainly was no longer as interested in these subjects as he had been under Mao Zedong in the 1960s. His new focus now were Deng Xiaoping's economic reforms, which he implicitly commented on while writing on the two foremost historians of the Han dynasty.

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## Linking Ancient and Contemporary

Continuities and Discontinuities in Chinese Literature

edited by Tiziana Lippiello, Chen Yuehong 陈跃红 and Maddalena Barenghi

# ‘中国’之义：文中子的立身与存心 The Notion of ‘Zhongguo’: The Life and Thought of Wenzhongzi

Zhang Pei 张沛

(Peking University, China)

**Abstract** Wang Tong (584-618) (also known as Wenzhongzi), one of the greatest Confucians in Chinese history, has always been a controversial figure. *Zhongshuo* (Doctrines of the Middle Way), is the only extant text that records his teachings. Focusing on this work, the present paper illuminates the political philosophy of Wang Tong as shown by his outlook on Zhongguo; furthermore, it contends that this approach is cultural rather than geographical or ethnological and that it is representative of classical Confucianism.

**Summary** 1 上篇.- 2 中篇.- 3 下篇.

**Keywords** Wang Tong. Master Wenzhongzi. *Zhongshuo*. Doctrines of the Middle Way.

王通歿后，《续经》湮灭无闻<sup>1</sup>，仅《元经》与《中说》传世。《中说》一名《文中子》，原为王通门人问学记录<sup>2</sup>，由胞弟王凝整理成书，王福峙（王通第三子）编为十卷（时在贞观十九年至二十三年，即公元645-649年之间），而后刊行于世<sup>3</sup>。今本《元经》系后人伪作，不足为信；《中说》虽有窜乱，大体尚真<sup>4</sup>，《续经》之义、河汾之学犹可得而闻焉。是故“文中子”一名有三义焉：一曰王通其人（文中子）；一曰《中说》其书（《文中子》）；一曰河汾之学（如《续经》之具见《中说》者）。本文即以《中说》为蓝本，由此而论“文中子”之中国观。

1 唐人言《续经》大多语焉不详，想来未见其书。北宋司马光称“今其六经皆亡”（《文中子补传》），已有定论；而后张未称“读通所著《续经》”云云（《答李文叔为兄立谥简》），又似其书尚在；更后洪迈称“《元经》、续《诗》、《书》犹有存者”（《容斋四笔卷第十一·讥议迁史》），盖犹有残篇存世。莫名究竟，录此以待方家考证。

2 王凝曰：“夫子得程、仇、董、薛而《六经》益明。对问之作，四生之力也。”（10.28）杜淹告王凝：“昔门人咸存记焉，盖薛收、姚义缀而名曰《中说》。”（《王氏家书杂录》）阮逸《中说序》：“《中说》者，子之门人对问之书也，薛收、姚义集而名之。”《文中子世家》：“（王通）寝疾七日而终。门弟子……丝麻设位，哀以送之。礼毕，悉以文中子之书还于王氏。”

3 李翱曰：“其理往往有是而辞章不能工者有之矣，刘氏《人物表》、王氏《中说》、俗传《太公家书》是也。”（《答朱载言书》）是知《中说》中唐前已行于世。

4 李翱曰：“其理往往有是而辞章不能工者有之矣，刘氏《人物表》、王氏《中说》、俗传《太公家书》是也。”（《答朱载言书》）是知《中说》中唐前已行于世。

## 1 上篇

《续经》为王通平生最大著述，包括《礼论》、《乐论》、《续书》、《续诗》、《元经》、《赞易》六种。《续经》既成，王通慷慨陈言：

甚矣，王道难行也！吾家顷铜川六世矣，未尝不笃于斯，然亦未尝得宣其用。退而咸有述焉，则以志其道也。盖先生（按：此言其六世祖王玄则）之述曰《时变论》六篇，其言化俗推移之理竭矣。江州府君（按：此言其五世祖王煥）之述曰《五经决录》五篇，其言圣贤制述之意备矣。晋阳穆公（言其四世祖王虬）之述曰《政大论》八篇，其言帝王之道著矣。同州府君（按：此言其三世祖王彦）之述曰《政小论》八篇，其言王霸之业尽矣。安康献公（按：此言其祖王一）之述曰《皇极说义》九篇，其言三才之去就深矣。铜川府君（按：此言其父王隆）之述曰《兴衰要论》七篇，其言六代之得失明矣。余小子获睹成训，勤九载矣。服先人之义，稽仲尼之心，天人之事，帝王之道，昭昭乎！（1.1）

异日又告弟子董常：“吾欲修《元经》，稽诸史论，不足征也，吾得《皇极说义》焉。吾欲续《诗》，考诸集记，不足征也，吾得《时变论》焉。吾欲续《书》，按诸载录，不足征也，吾得《政大论》焉”。董常问：“夫子之得，盖其志焉？”曰：“然”。（1.2）是则《续经》非一人一时之作，实王氏七代继志戮力而成。

王通自云：“王道之驳久矣，礼乐可以不正乎？大义之芜甚矣，《诗》、《书》可以不续乎？”（2.33）又曰：“吾续《书》以存汉晋之实，续《诗》以辩六代之俗，修《元经》以断南北之疑，赞《易》道以申先师之旨，正礼乐以旌后王之失，如斯而已矣”。（6.29）此其著述大旨。王氏以圣人自任，乃以《元经》拟《春秋》，每将二书并举。如其谓仲弟王凝：“汝为《春秋》、《元经》乎？《春秋》、《元经》于王道，是轻重之权衡、曲直之绳墨也，失则无所取衷矣”。（3.25）又称：

1. 《元经》天下之书也，其以无定国而帝位不明乎？征天命以正帝位，以明神器之有归，此《元经》之事也。（8.11）
2. 《元经》其正名乎！皇始之帝，征天以授之也。晋、宋之王，近于正体，于是乎未忘中国，穆公之志也。齐、梁、陈之德，斥之于四夷也，以明中国之有代，太和之力也。（5.47）

王通之“正名”，即正中国之名，以明中国之道。

考诸古籍，“中国”实具二义：一曰中国之地，一曰中国之道。中国之地，乃就四方而言之天下之中。如《礼记·王制》所称：

中国戎夷，五方之民，皆有其性也，不可推移。东方曰夷，被发文身，有不火食者矣。南方曰蛮，雕题交趾，有不火食者矣。西方曰戎，被发衣皮，有不粒食者矣。北方曰狄，衣羽毛穴居，有不粒食者矣。

中国之道，谓人文之中。如《战国策·赵二》记赵公子成语：

中国者，聪明睿知之所居也，万物财用之所聚也，贤圣之所教也，仁义之所施也，诗书礼乐之所用也，异敏技艺之所试也，远方之所观赴也，蛮夷之所义行也”。

再如《法言·问道》设为宾主问答：

或曰：“孰为中国？”曰：“五政之所加，七赋之所养，中于天地者为中国”。

夷狄而行中国之道，则夷狄为中国；中国而行夷狄之道，则“中国亦新夷狄也”（《公羊传·昭公二十三年》）。是故中国之为中国，不在居中国之地，而端在行中国之道。

行中国之道，在建人文之中。《易·贲卦·彖传》：“观乎人文，以化成天下。”《国语·周语下》记单襄公语：“忠，文之实也；信，文之孚也；仁，文之爱也；义，文之制也；智，文之舆也；勇，文之帅也；教，文之施也；孝，文之本也；惠，文之慈也；让，文之材也；……经纬不爽，文之象也。”再如孔子称尧：“巍巍乎其有成功也，焕乎其有文章！”（《论语·泰伯》）称周公：“周监于二代，郁郁乎文哉！”（《八佾》）是知“文”因人而称，实即“人文”。按《易·说卦》：“立人之道，曰仁与义。”《礼记·丧服四制》：“仁义礼智，人道具矣。”是“人文”与“人道”同义。人居天地之中，如《易传》所说：

1. 《易》之为书也，广大悉备：有天道焉，有人道焉，有地道焉。（《系辞下》）
2. 天地设位，而《易》行乎其中矣。……乾坤，其《易》之缊邪？乾坤成列，而《易》立乎其中矣。（《系辞上》）

故“人道”又称“中道”。“圣人成之”，意同“观乎人文，以化成天下”（《易·贲卦·彖传》）；此圣王事业，即所谓“王道”。王通曰：“天下无赏罚三百载矣，《元经》可不兴乎？”薛收曰：“圣人达而赏罚行，圣人穷而褒贬作。皇极所以复建，而斯文不丧也。不其深乎？”出告董常，董常曰：“仲尼没而文在兹乎？”薛收曰：“皇极所以复建，而斯文不丧也”。（1.8）秉持“斯文”，所以建有“皇极”。《尚书·洪范》：“皇极：皇建其有极”。孔安国传：“太中之道，大立其有中。”是知“皇极”即中道（大中之道），亦即“王道”。荀子曰：“礼者，人道之极也。”（《荀子·礼论》）荀爽曰：“圣人建天地之中而谓之礼。”（《后汉书·列传第五十二》）王通则曰：“王道盛则礼乐从而兴焉”。（3.1）又曰：“礼其皇极之门乎？圣人所以向明而节天下也。其得中道乎？故能辩上下，定民志”。（6.26）居家不暂舍《周礼》，曰：“先师以王道极是也，如有用我，则执此以往”。（8.14）王通歿后，弟子会而议曰：“夫子生当天下乱，莫予宗之，故续《诗》、《书》，正《礼》、《乐》，修《元经》，赞《易》道，圣人之大旨，天下之能事毕矣。仲尼既没，文不在兹乎？《易》曰：‘黄裳元吉，文在中也。’请谥曰文中子”。（《文中子世家》）斯文在兹，故曰“文中”；人文之中，即是“中国”。王通以大中立言，为中国说法，此其所以为“文中”也。

## 2 中篇

自晋永熙元年至隋开皇九年（公元290-589年），三百年间南北分立，中国不一。北朝为异族政权，史称“五胡乱华”；然隋乘魏、周之势统一中国，俨为华夏正统，于是乎有“南北之疑”。王通自称“修《元经》以断南北之疑”（6.29），即在判定正统以为中国说法。判之之法，首曰“天命”：

1. 《元经》天下之书也，其以无定国而帝位不明乎？征天命以正帝位，以明神器之有归，此《元经》之事也。（8.11）
2. 《元经》抗帝而尊中国，其以天命之所归乎？（8.15）

王氏所说“天命”，非上天之耳提面命，如“天命玄鸟”、“昊天有成命”之类，实称人德而言：

子述《元经》皇始之事，叹焉，门人未达。叔恬（按：王凝字叔恬）曰：“夫子之叹，盖叹命矣。《书》云：天命不于常，惟归乃有德。戎狄之德，黎民怀之，三才其舍诸？”子闻之曰：“凝，尔知命哉！”（1.10）

按“皇始”乃北魏道武帝拓跋珪年号（公元396-398年）。皇始二年拓跋珪平灭后燕，统一北方。“天命不于常，惟归乃有德”引用《尚书·咸有一德》伊尹语：“天难谄，命靡常。常厥德，保厥位。……非天私我有商，惟天佑于一德；非商求于下民，惟民归于一德”。又《大禹谟》：“皋陶迈种德，德乃降，黎民怀之。”施行仁政而得民心，此之谓“有德”。得民心者得天下：

1. 或曰“苻秦逆”，子曰：“晋制命者之罪也，苻秦何逆？昔周制至公之命，故齐桓、管仲不得而背也；晋制至私之命，故苻秦、王猛不得而事也。其应天顺命、安国济民乎？是以武王不敢逆天命、背人而事纣，齐桓不敢逆天命、背人而黜周。故曰：晋之罪也，苻秦何逆？三十余年，中国士民，东西南北，自远而至，猛之力也”。（4.12）
2. 子曰：“苻秦之有臣，其王猛之所为乎？元魏之有主，其孝文之所为乎？中国之道不坠，孝文之力也。”（4.13）
3. 董常曰：“《元经》之帝元魏，何也？”子曰：“乱离斯瘼，吾谁适归？天地有奉，生民有庇，即吾君也。且居先王之国，受先王之道，予先王之民矣，谓何哉？”（7.10）

所

谓“苻秦”指前秦苻坚，“元魏”指北魏拓跋氏。孔子尝告弟子：“管仲相桓公，霸诸侯，一匡天下，民到于今受其赐。微管仲，吾其被发左衽矣。”又曰：“如其仁！如其仁！”（《论语·宪问》）王通称苻秦、王猛，犹孔子之许齐桓、管仲。“应天顺命、安国济民”、“天地有奉，生民有庇”，此王者之道，亦即中国之道。行中国道者，可为中国之主；主中国者，不必中国之人。孟子曰：“舜生于诸冯，迁于负夏，卒于鸣条，东夷之人也；文王生于岐周，卒于毕郢，西夷之人也。地之相去也千有馀里，世之相后也千有馀岁，得志行乎中国，若合符节。先圣后圣，其揆一也”。（《孟子·离娄下》）王通断南北而“帝元魏”、“尊中国而正皇始”（10.9），遥契孔孟之心。

宋儒严夷夏之防，故于王通之帝元魏不无訾议。如欧阳修曰：“夫帝王之统，不容有二。而论者如此，然缙绅先生未尝有是正之者，岂其兴废之际，治乱之本难言与？……文中子作《元经》，欲断南北之疑也，绝宋于元徽五年，进魏于太和元年，是绝宋不得其终，进魏不得其始”。（《原正统论》）南宋林夔孙更称：

《玄经》（按：即《元经》）尤可疑。只缘献帝（按：当为“献公”之误）奔北（按：奔北者为“穆公”，即王通四世祖王虬；“奔北”指公元479年即齐高帝建元元年、魏孝文帝太和三年王虬自齐奔魏），便以为天命已归之，遂帝魏。（《朱子语类卷第一百三十七·战国汉唐诸子》）

后人对此曾有辩驳，如明人郑晓以为：

《春秋》谨华夷之辨，中国有主也。文中子帝元魏未为非。（《今言》卷一）

清人钱曾称：

《春秋》抗王而尊鲁，《元经》抗帝而尊中国。文中子之孝文犹帝魏也，殆夫子之遗意欤？宋儒高谈性命，不达经权，数百年来抹略其书，无有扬之如司空表圣、皮袭美其人者，可不叹乎！（《读书敏求记卷三·元经薛氏传十卷》）

李慈铭亦曰：

夫通生于元魏，不帝魏而将谁帝乎？且舜生东夷，文王生西夷，然则舜与文王亦当绝之中国乎？（《越缦堂读书记·集部·别集类·升庵集》）

盖时势有异，故立论不同，此且不言；而王通岂真“绝宋不得其终，进魏不得其始”乎？按宋“元徽五年”（公元477年）即魏太和元年，是年萧道成废刘昱，两年后齐代宋立。王通自云：“晋、宋之王，近于正体，于是乎未忘中国，穆公之志也。齐、梁、陈之德，斥之于四夷也，以明中国之有代，太和之力也。”此其所以“绝宋于元徽五年，进魏于太和元年”。再如王通因穆公奔北而帝魏之说，亦不尽不实。《中说》记载：

1. 子之家庙，座必东南向，自穆公始也，曰“未忘先人之国”。（4.16）
2. 裴晞问穆公之事，子曰：“舅氏不闻凤皇乎？览德晖而下，何必怀彼也？”叔恬曰：“穆公之事，盖明齐魏”。（7.17）

所谓“明齐魏”，即“明中国之有代，太和之力也”。王通又云：

1. 太和之政近雅矣，一明中国之有法。惜也不得行穆公之道！（5.12）
2. 孝文没而宣武立，穆公死、关朗退，魏之不振有由哉！（10.1）

穆公之奔魏，盖“览德晖而下”，然“未忘先人之国”；王通之帝元魏，盖“太和之政近雅矣，一明中国之有法”，然又惜其“不得行穆公之道”，以为“信美”而“未光”（7.6）。王氏之家国情怀如此。故王通之帝元魏，初不在穆公北奔，实以大中为心而不得不然：

1. 薛生曰：“殇之后，帝制绝矣，《元经》何以不兴乎？”子曰：“君子之于帝制，并心一气以待也，倾耳以听，拭目而视，故假之以岁时。桓、灵之际，帝制遂亡矣；文、明之际，魏制其未成乎？太康之始，书同文、车同轨，君子曰‘帝制可作矣’，而不克振。故永熙之后，君子息心焉，曰：‘谓之何哉？’《元经》于是不得已而作也”。（5.50）
2. 董常曰：“敢问皇始之授魏而帝晋，何也？”子曰：“主中国者，将非中国也。我闻有命，未敢以告人，则犹伤之者也。伤之者，怀之也。”董常曰：“敢问卒帝之，何也？”子曰：“贵其时，大其事，于是乎用义矣”。（7.10）
3. 叔恬曰：“敢问《元经》书陈亡而具五国，何也？”子曰：“江东，中国之旧也，衣冠礼乐之所就也。永嘉之后，江东贵焉，而卒不贵，无人也。齐、梁、陈于是乎不与其为国也。及其亡也，君子犹怀之，故书曰‘晋、宋、齐、梁、陈亡’，具五以归其国，且言其国亡也。呜呼，弃先王之礼乐以至是乎！”叔恬曰：“晋、宋亡国久矣，今具之，何谓也？”子曰：“衣冠文物之旧，君子不欲其先亡；宋尝有树晋之功，有复中国之志，亦不欲其先亡也。故具齐、梁、陈以归其国也。其未亡，则君子夺其国焉，曰：‘中国之礼乐安在？’其已亡，则君子与其国焉，曰：‘犹我中国之遗人也。’叔恬曰：“敢问其志。”文中子泫然而兴曰：“铜川府君之志也，通不敢废。书五国并时而亡，盖伤先王之道尽坠。故君子大其言，极其败，于是乎埽地而求更新也。‘期逝不至，而多为恤’，汝知之乎？此《元经》所以书也”。（7.13）

《元经》“天下之书”（8.11），王通于此为大中立言，故属意江东而不得不尊中国，伤怀南土而不得不帝元魏。苦心孤诣，岂“弃亲昵而媚豺狼，悖逆至此”（章太炎：《葑汉微言》）<sup>5</sup>一语可以了得！叶适谓其《续经》以圣人之心处后世之变”（《水心别集卷八·王通》），王阳明言其“良工心独苦”（《传习录·上》），近人汪吟龙亦曰：“推文中子之用心，曷尝一日忘中国哉！民怀戎狄之语，叔恬盖有慨焉。文中子世仕北朝，伤心礼乐。《元经》之作，实具苦心”。《与章太炎论文中子书》皆是解人知言<sup>6</sup>。

5 章氏感激时事，故有此说；然其厚诬古人，实不足为训。

6 汪吟龙：《文中子考信录》，台湾商务印书馆，1963年，第96页。

## 3 下篇

有宋一代，文治远胜武功，此史有定论。其时中国积弱，强敌环伺，于是宋儒大夷夏之防以自持<sup>7</sup>。王通断南北之疑，正皇始而帝元魏，其不为宋儒所喜，自是意料中事。然宋儒又视王通为道统中人<sup>8</sup>，几乎众口一词。如宋初柳开以为

1. 隋之时，王仲淹于河汾间，务继孔子以续《六经》，大出于世，实为圣人矣。（《补亡先生传》）
2. 昔先师夫子，大圣人也……厥后寝微，杨墨交乱，圣人之道复将坠矣。……孟轲氏出而佐之，辞而辟之，圣人之道复存焉。……孟轲氏没……再生扬雄氏以正之，圣人之道复明焉。……扬雄氏没，佛魏隋之间，讹乱纷纷……重生王通氏以明之（下略）。（《答臧丙第一书》）

稍后宋初三先生之孙复、石介声言：

3. 吾之所谓道者，尧、舜、禹、汤、文、武、周公、孔子之道也，孟轲、荀卿、扬雄、王通、韩愈之道也。（孙复：《信道堂记》）
4. 传曰：“五百年一贤人生。”孔子至孟子，孟子至扬子，扬子至文中子，文中子至吏部……其验欤？（石介：《上赵先生书》）

理学宗师程颐自称：

1. 昔汉武笑齐宣不行孟子之说，自致不王，而不用仲舒之策；隋文笑汉武不用仲舒之策，不至于道，而不听王通之言。二主之昏，料陛下亦尝笑之矣，臣虽不敢望三子之贤，然臣之所学，三子之道也。（《上仁宗皇帝书》）

朱熹虽谓文中“其学之不足以为周、孔”（《王氏续经说》），然而又云：

1. 荀卿之学杂于申商，子云之学本于黄老，而其著书之意，盖亦姑托空文以自见耳，非如仲淹之学颇近于正而粗有可用之实也。（《王氏续经说》）
2. 邹汾（按：即孟子、王通）断简光前载，关洛（按：即张载、二程）新书袭旧芳。（《抄二南寄平父因题此诗》）

是亦推许有加<sup>9</sup>。同时提倡事功之陈亮，史称其学自孟子之后惟推王通”《宋史·列传第一百九十五·儒林六》朱熹曾言陈同父（按：即同甫，陈亮字）学已行到江西，浙人信向已多。家家谈王伯，不说萧何、张良，只说王猛；不说孔孟，只说文中子，可畏！可畏！”（《朱子语类》卷一二三）心学宗匠陆象山亦称：

由孟子而来，千有五百余年之间，以儒名者甚众，而荀、扬、王、韩独著，专场盖

7 “自持”兼自认(self-identification)与自张(self-assertion)之意。西方哲人称为政要在分别敌我(参见卡尔·施米特:《政治的概念》,刘宗坤译,上海人民出版社,2004年,第106-107页),宋儒严华夷之辨,用意正同。

8 以文中承接儒家道统始自晚唐皮日休。如其曰夫孟子、荀卿翼传孔道以至于文中子。《请韩文公配飨太学书》又曰:“复乎千世,而可继孟氏者,复何人哉?文中子王氏,讳通……较其道与孔孟,岂徒然哉!”《文中子碑》然文中子道统地位之底定实在宋代说见下。

9 李光地曰程朱身分高,又见得到,直眼大如箕。三代下所推者,不过几人:董江都、诸葛武侯、文中子、韩文公,余则称陆敬舆、郭汾阳。”《榕村语录》卷二十二可为旁证。



代，天下归之，非止朋游党与之私也。（《与姪孙浚书》）

非特如此，宋代科考兼用策论，南渡之后尤以策论取士；据《宋史·选举志》载：

绍兴元年，初复馆职试，凡预召者，学士院试时务策一道，天子亲览焉。……凡应诏者，先具所著策、论五十篇缴进，两省侍从参考之，分为三等，次优以上，召赴秘阁，试论六首，于《九经》、《十七史》、《七书》、《国语》、《荀》、《扬》、《管子》、《文中子》内出题，学士两省官考校，御史监之，四通以上为合格。

是则文中子之学不但为士林所重，更列入国家考试经典。今以王十朋（绍兴二十七年丁丑科状元）、陆象山（乾道八年进士）二人策论为例：

1. 后世有大儒王通者，鸣道河汾间，与弟子难疑答问，动以洙泗为法。《中说》十篇，犹孔氏《论语》也。（王十朋：《策问》）
2. 孟子之后，以儒称于当世者，荀卿、扬雄、王通、韩愈四子最著。（陆象山：《策问》）

窥斑知豹，犹可想见当时风习之盛。宋以积弱偏安之国而如此推重帝元魏之王通，岂非咄咄怪事？按儒家崇尚文德，以武功为次，所谓“大上有立德，其次有立功”（《左传·襄公二十四年》）。古史载禹征有苗，三月而苗民叛；舜敷文德，七旬而有苗格（《尚书·大禹谟》）。孔子称之：“无为而治者，其舜也与！”（《论语·卫灵公》）又曰：“远人不服，则修文德以来之；既来之，则安之。”（《季氏》）孟子亦曰：“以力服人者，非心服也，力不赡也；以德服人者，中心悦而诚服也。”（《孟子·公孙丑上》）所谓“文德”，即人文大中之道，说已见上。孔子曰：“夷狄之有君，不如诸夏之无也。”（《论语·八佾》）斯文在中，是为“中国”。千百年来，其说深入人心；宋室偏安一隅而自居中国，根源即在于此。文中子为大中立言，宋引为奥援，又何足怪哉！

孔子论政，以为“民无信不立”（《论语·颜渊》），言国家当取信于民。取信之方，“君子以为文，而百姓以为神”（《荀子·天论》），如“天命”、“五德终始”即是，“正统”、“道统”之说亦然；以今人视之，则亦不过当时之“国家（民族）意识形态”而已。国固不可无信，否则人心涣散，必将土崩鱼烂而后已。虽然，国家欲取信于民，唯当以可信者信之，所谓“有诸己而后求诸人”（《礼记·大学》）；不可信而欲人信，不自信而强人信，则不过愚而暴而已，此又不必烦言也。

## Linking Ancient and Contemporary

Continuities and Discontinuities in Chinese Literature

edited by Tiziana Lippiello, Chen Yuehong 陈跃红 and Maddalena Barengi

# On the Literary Self-Consciousness of the Han, Wei, Jin, and Northern and Southern Dynasties

Fu Gang 傅刚

(Peking University, China)

**Abstract** The period from the Qin dynasty (221-206 BC) through the Northern and Southern dynasties (420-589) was an important period for the burgeoning self-awareness and sophistication of Chinese literature. In this period literature gradually detached itself from the traditional fields of the learning of the Classics and historiography, so that the special characteristics of literature became evident. The major genres of Chinese literature were established, while literary groups, schools and styles were formed. Finally, literature achieved an independent status, and a solid foundation was established for the thriving literature of the Tang (618-907).

**Summary** 1 Literary Self-Consciousness. – 2 The *Garden of Letters* and the Independence of Literature.

**Keywords** Literary Self-Consciousness. Six Dynasties. Golden Tower Master. *Jinlouzi*.

## 1 Literary Self-Consciousness

The distinction between *wen* 文 (refined literature) and *bi* 笔 (functional writing) originated during the Southern Dynasties,<sup>1</sup> but between the late Han 漢 dynasty (202 BCE-220 CE) and the Wei-Jin 魏晉 (220-420) period writers had begun to have a rather self-conscious awareness of the distinction between the two types of writing. Historical evidence shows that by the late Han, people had begun to compare the different roles performed by legal officers (*wenli* 文吏) and Confucian scholars. Legal officers were thought to excel in the practical genres, such as the official letter (*jian* 箋) and petition (*zou* 奏), while Confucian scholars were seen to excel at classi-

1 See biography of Yan Jun 顏竣 (d. 459) in *Songshu* (75.1959-1967). *Wenxin diaolong* 文心雕龍 (The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons), chapter 44 «Zongshu» 總術 (General Summary) reports: «It is commonly said nowadays that there is both wen and bi. That without rhyme is bi, that with rhyme is wen. Wen is enough for writing, its principle covering both *Shijing* and *Shujing*; differentiating them by two names is something that has only arisen recently» 以為無韻者筆也，有韻者文也。夫文以足言，理兼詩書，別目兩名，自近代耳 (*Wenxindiaolong jiaoshi* 1962).

cal studies.<sup>2</sup> The motives behind both types of writing were not in any sense literary, but they did encourage literature's burgeoning self-awareness. Wang Chong 王充 (27-100 C.E.) of the Eastern Han had already made this implicit differentiation in his *Lunheng* 論衡 (Discussing Weighing), identifying the *fu* 賦 (rhapsody) and *song* 頌 (eulogy) as the genres employed by Ban Gu 班固 (32-92 C.E.), Fu Yi 傅毅 (ca. 47-92 C.E.) and other literati in their writings. This gradual process carried out by the Wei had reached the point where terms like *wenxue* 文學 and *wenzhang* 文章 began to be used to describe *belles lettres* in the strict sense of the term, which showed the beginnings of a self-conscious awareness of literature.<sup>3</sup>

The distinction between *wen* and *bi* was basically meant to divide literary and non-literary writing into two groups. This is an inevitable tendency in the history of literature and is rooted in historical causes. As literature developed over time, and the status of literature grew and became more independent, the distinction between *wen* and *bi* gradually became clearer. At the same time, the special characteristics of literature became more clearly recognizable, and during the Southern Qi 齊 (479-502) and Liang 梁 (502-557) dynasties this development became a major topic of literary criticism. The opinions of Liu Xie 劉勰 (465-520) and Xiao Yi 蕭繹 (508-554) on the distinction between *wen* and *bi* may be taken as representative.

Liu Xie, in the «Zongshu» 總術 (General Summary) chapter of *Wenxin diaolong* 文心雕龍 (The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons), summarized contemporary opinion as follows: «*wen* is rhymed, *bi* is unrhymed» (see note 1). Rhymed genres include poetry (*shi* 詩), rhapsodies (*fu* 賦), eulogies (*song* 頌), encomiums (*zan* 讚), condolences (*diao* 弔), dirges (*lei* 誄), etc., while unrhymed genres include the edict (*zhao* 詔), patent of enfeoffment (*ce* 策), proclamation (*xi* 檄), and dispatch (*yi* 移). Using rhyme to classify writing as either *wen* or *bi* is simple and clear, as it is using formal features to define the division between *wen* and *bi*. Liu Xie used

2 The basic annals of Emperor Shun 順帝 (r. 125-144) in the *Hou Hanshu* records that in 132 CE: «At the beginning, [the Emperor] commanded the local administrative regions to recommend the filial and incorrupt, limited to those over forty in age; Confucian scholars had to be familiar with the *zhangju* 章句 school of exegesis, and legal officers had to be capable of writing official letters (*jian*) and petitions (*zou*), in order to be selected» 初令郡國舉孝廉, 限年四十以上, 諸生通章句, 文吏能牋奏, 乃得應選 (*Hou Hanshu* 6.261). Also, the biography of Hu Guang 胡廣 (91-172) records: «At this time director of the imperial secretariat Zuo Xiong 左雄 recommended reforming the *chaju* system, limiting it to people aged forty or older, testing Confucian scholars in classical scholarship, and legal officers on writing of memorials» 時尚書令左雄議改察舉之制, 限年四十以上, 儒者試經學, 文吏試章奏 (*Hou Hanshu* 44.1506). For more on the conflict of Confucian scholars and legal officers, see *Chengcai* 程材 chapter 12 in *Lunheng jiaoshi* (1990), pp. 533-545. For a related discussion, see Yan Buke 1996.

3 See note by Pei Songzhi 裴松之 (372-451) in *Sanguo zhi* 三國志, quoting *Dian lue* 典略, which praises Po Qin 繁欽: «Qin not only excelled at official writings (*shu ji* 書記), but also at *shi* and *fu*» 欽既長於書記, 又善為詩賦, which already shows a clear distinction of *bi* and *wen* (*Sanguo zhi* 21.602).

exactly this standard to divide the genres he analyzes in the *Wenxin diaolong*. Of the thirty-three genres he discusses in his treatise, those from «Illuminating Poetry» (*mingshi* 明詩) to «Humor and Enigma» (*xieyin* 諧隱) are rhymed *wen* genres, while those from «Histories and Commentaries» (*shizhuan* 史傳) to «Records and Documents» (*shuji* 書記) are unrhymed *bi*.<sup>4</sup>

Unlike Liu Xie, Xiao Yi puts greater emphasis on the fundamental properties of literary composition. In the «Liyan» 立言 (Establishing Words) chapter of *Jinlou zi* 金樓子 (Master of the Golden Tower) he wrote:

There were two kinds of ancient scholars, and there are four kinds of modern scholars. The students of the various masters, who passed on their teachings one after the other, and were thoroughly familiar with the classics of the sages, were called *ru* (Confucian scholars); the followers of Qu Yuan 屈原, Song Yu 宋玉, Mei Sheng 枚乘, and Sima Xiangru, worked only with *fu* (rhapsodies), so they were called *wen*. The *ru* scholars of today are deeply learned in the various masters and the histories, but only know the facts and do not understand the principles behind them, so this is called (*xue* 學). As for those who are not good at poetry, such as Yan Zuan 閻纂, or who are good at proclamation and presentation essays, such as Bo Song 伯松, men of this ilk are called *bi*. Those who recite songs that are full of sorrow and longing are called *wen*. But most scholars are not good at composing new poems, and keep to their elaborate commentaries. They are poor at change within continuity (*tongbian* 通變), and dull at the use of the mind (*xinyong* 心用). Scholars cannot determine the truth or falsity of the rites and music or recognize the meaning of the teachings of the classics, but can only uphold the old words and have at a hand's grasp their plentiful learning. Still they draw from the current at its source (*yi yuan zhi liu* 挹源之流), and just for this they are worthy of esteem. When *bi* is lacking then writing does not deserve the name of literature; but when it is excessive then it is said not to grasp the meaning. Though its clever grace is divine (*shen qi qiaohui* 神其巧惠), this is the limit of *bi*. As for *wen*, they are spread out profusely like damask, the *gong* and *zhi* notes are subtle and fine, a perfect matching like lips meeting, so heart and spirit tremble. The ancient *wen* and *bi* are also different in origin.

4 The book *Rules of Wen and Bi* (*Wenbi shi* 文筆式) which appeared a short time later also followed a similar statement throughout: «The proper way of literary composition must be either *bi* or *wen*. As for *wen*, it may be poetry, rhapsodies, inscriptions (*ming*), eulogies, admonitions (*zhen*), encomiums, condolences, or dirges; as for *bi*, it may be edicts, patents of enfeoffment, dispatches, declarations (*zhang*), petitions (*zou*), letters (*shu*), or communications (*qi*). That is to say, with rhyme it is *wen*, without rhyme it is *bi*». *Wenbi shi* is included in *Wenjing mifu lun* 文鏡秘府論. Both Luo Genze 羅根澤 (1935), and Wang Liqi 王利器 (*Wenjing mifu lun jiaozhu* 1983), date it to the Sui dynasty.

然而古人之學者二，今人之學者有四。夫子門徒，轉相師受，通聖人之經者謂之儒，屈原宋玉枚乘長卿之徒，止於辭賦則謂之文。今之儒博窮子史，但能識其事，不能通其理者，謂之學。至如不便為詩如閻纂，善為章奏如柏松，若此之流，泛謂之筆，吟詠風謠，流連哀思者，謂之文。而學者率多不便屬辭，守其章句，遲於通變，質於心用。學者不能定禮樂之是非，辯經教之宗旨，徒能揚榷前言，抵掌多識。然而挹源知流，亦足可貴。筆退則非謂成篇，進則不雲取義，神其巧惠筆端而已。至如文者，惟須綺縠紛披，宮徵靡曼，唇吻適會，情靈搖盪，而古之文筆，今之文筆，其源又異。(Jinlou zi 9b, 1937)

Here Xiao Yi introduces the concepts of *wen* and *bi* on the basis of a contrast between contemporary and ancient scholars. The two different types of ancient scholars are Confucian (*ru*) and literary (*wen*), while the four different types of contemporary scholars are Confucian, academicians (*xue*), literary, and practical writers. This is an improved conception since it reflects the real development of literature and scholarship. For the time being we will leave Confucians and academicians aside. What is interesting here is Xiao Yi's distinction between *wen* and *bi*. He does not use the presence or absence of rhyme as a dividing line, but instead emphasizes the fundamental properties of the genres. For his definition of *bi*, he says: «When *bi* is deficient then writing does not deserve the name of literature, but when it is excessive then it is said not to grasp the meaning. Though its clever grace is divine (*shen qi qiaohui* 神其巧惠), this is the limit of *bi*», and also gives the examples «not good at poetry like Yan Zuan 閻纂, good at proclamation and presentation essays like Bo Song 伯松». Presentation and proclamation essays are of course unrhymed genres, so they would naturally belong to the category of *bi*, but Xiao Yi categorizes Yan Zuan as *bi*, thus overcoming the notion that rhyme was the fundamental distinction between *wen* and *bi*. As for the definition of *wen*, he says that «reciting popular songs, they are rich in sorrow and longing», and also that «they are spread out profusely like damask, the *gong* and *zhi* notes are subtle and fine, a perfect matching like lips meeting, so heart and spirit tremble». Here he emphasizes the rhetoric, rhythm, and sound of the words, and their emotional effect. It must be admitted that this distinction is by no means scientific, since it is not clear which writings «spread out profusely as damask, with tones of *gong* and *zhi* that are subtle and fine», or which make «the heart and spirit tremble». This is not an objective standard, but in his understanding of the fundamental nature of literary works Xiao Yi far surpassed the other critics of his day. What he is proposing is not a strict classification of genres, but the requirements and proper realm for literary works. Considering the tendency of Southern Dynasties critics to overvalue *wen* and undervalue *bi*, the status of literary works was broadly accepted to be higher than that of non-literary ones. The Biography of Ren Fang 任昉 (460-508) in the *Nan shi* 南史 (History of the Southern Dynasties) says that once Ren Fang «was known as a literary talent, people in those

days would say, 'the prose (*bi*) of Ren and the poetry of Shen (Yue)'. When Ren Fang heard this he thought it sorely mistaken. Late in life he came to enjoy composing poems, and wanted to be recognized as a better poet than Shen. But Ren Fang used too many allusions in his poetry and his compositions were not very fluid. Earlier on in Ren Fang's career, all the gentlemen of the capital had envied him, but now he strained too much, and it was said his talent was finished» (*Nanshi* 59.1455). Comparing this story to the period of Han and Wei, it can be seen without a doubt that the status and value of literature had been raised.

## 2 The Garden of Letters and the Independence of Literature

The histories include Biographies from the *Garden of Letters* («Wenyuan zhuan» 文苑傳), beginning with Fan Ye's 范曄 (398-445) *Hou Hanshu* 後漢書 (History of the Later Han). Fan Ye completed his work in the first year of the Yuanjia reign of Emperor Wen of the Song (424),<sup>5</sup> and in the fifteenth year of the same reign (438), Emperor Wen established four Academies (*guan* 館): Confucian learning, *Xuanxue*, Literature, and History. That literature was established as an independent department in this bureaucracy was a mark of its new self-awareness and independence. Fan Ye did not write a preface to the Biographies from the *Garden of Letters* section of his *Hou Hanshu*, so his purpose in making it a separate section is unclear. But in his «Letter to my Nephews from Prison» («Yu zhong yu zhu sheng zhi shu» 獄中與諸甥姪書), Fan Ye explains that in his various biographical evaluations of the authors, «for each one I had a refined intention and profound purpose». In particular, with regard to the biographical evaluations ranging from «Officials of Enforcement» (*Xunli liezhuan* 循吏列傳) to «The Six Yi» (*Liuyi liezhuan* 六夷列傳), he says that «the force of my brush was free and untrammled, and truly those were compositions deemed remarkable throughout the realm. Those essays, put together, are probably not less than Jia Yi's *Disquisition on the Excesses of the Qin*. If I were to compare my works with the writings of the Bans, it is of only these that I would not be ashamed».<sup>6</sup> From this we can understand Fan Ye's high regard for these biographical evaluations. It is thus highly regrettable that he did not write biographical evaluations for the biographies in the *Garden of Letters* section. Writers of literature in the Han had a status comparable

5 *Songshu* 69.1819: «Fan Ye was demoted in 424 to governor of Xuancheng 宣城, and felt dissatisfied, out of the various versions of the *Hou Hanshu* he compiled his own».

6 吾雜傳論, 皆有精意深旨, 既有裁味, 故約其詞句。至於《循吏》以下及《六夷》諸序論, 筆勢縱放, 實天下之奇作。其中合者, 往往不減《過秦》篇。嘗共比方班氏所作, 非但不愧之而已 (*Songshu* 69.1819).

to actors,<sup>7</sup> and Yang Xiong 揚雄 (53 BC-18 AD) once said that writing *fu* was like insect-carving and seal-script written by children, not something for adults to do. As for these famous authors of literature, historians selected those «writings whose significance was far-reaching and vast» (*Shitong tongshi* 1986, p. 123). They compiled biographies for the authors of the most famous pieces, such as Sima Xiangru 司馬相如 (179-117 BC). Although ‘establishing words’ was one of the three ways of achieving immortality in Confucianism, this usually referred to the works of the hundred schools of philosophy that clarified and expounded principles, while *fu* could not help but suffer the criticism that they were «elaborate to the point of missing the truth, wandering without limits until they forgot how to return» (*Shitong tongshi* 1986, p. 124). Liu Zhiji 劉知幾 (661-721) discusses the successes and failures of the histories with regard to their form, and with good reason, but if it were not for the compilation produced by Sima Qian and Ban Gu during the Western Han, when the bibliographical system of the Four Categories, one of which was for literary collections, had not yet been devised, it is hard to imagine how any literary works would have been preserved for later ages. In this respect the judgments of historians often seem illogical to people of later eras. During the transition from Han to Wei, Cao Pi 曹丕 (187-226) composed the *Lunwen* 論文 (Discussing Literature) essay in *Dianlun* 典論 (Canonical Opinions), publicly asserting that «literature is the great work of managing the state, the worthy business that never fades», and also that «human life some time must end, so that fame and pleasure cease with the body; the two have a fixed date on which they must expire, and cannot compare with literature which is imperishable. For this reason the writers of the past devoted their lives to the brush and ink, expressing their thoughts in their writings. They did not rely on the words of the capable historians, nor entrust themselves to fleeting forces, but their name and reputation were naturally handed down to later ages». Cao Pi, as heir to the throne, proclaimed that the value of literature was equal to that of history. Although this essay possesses certain political implications, it is still a product of the circumstances in which literature was becoming self-conscious, and is also a mark of literature’s growth and development towards independence (Cai Rongnan, Fu Gang 1986). Precisely because of this cultural shift, even though the histories did not begin to include a «Garden of Letters» chapter until as late as the Liu-Song dynasty (420-479), starting from the end of the Han the histories did frequently record works of literature, thus embodying Cao Pi’s views.

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7 According to *Hanshu*, Emperor Wu supported Dongfang Shuo, Mei Gao, and other literary men as entertainers 朔、皋不根持論，上頗俳優畜之 (*Hanshu* 64.2775).

Fan Ye did not compose a preface to his «Garden of Letters» chapter; on the contrary, the succeeding *Nan Qi shu* 南齊書 (History of the Southern Qi), *Liangshu* 梁書 (History of the Liang), and *Weishu* 魏書 (History of the Wei), etc., all supplemented the literary biographies with prefaces (*xulun* 序論) or evaluative postscripts (*zhuanlun* 傳論). Once biographies were established for authors, and literary compositions considered a means to ‘establishing words’, parallel to ‘establishing virtue’ and ‘establishing merit’ (the other two traditional means of achieving immortality), literature had truly achieved independent status.

Another mark of literature’s newfound independence and self-awareness is the compilation of individual collections and anthologies. According to the Bibliographical Treatise (*Yiwen zhi* 藝文志) of the *Suishu* 隋書 (History of the Sui), the Literary Collections category (*jibu* 集部) of the Four Category system (*siku* 四庫) originated in the Eastern Han, though some modern scholars believe that the cataloguing of literary composition began with Cao Zhi 曹植 (192-232; Yao Mingda 1957). The biography of Cao Zhi in the «Annals of Wei» of the *Sanguo zhi* 三國志, records that during the Jingchu 景初 era (237-239), Emperor Ming 明宗 (r. 227-239) issued an edict to compile all the *fu*, eulogies, poems, inscriptions, and over one hundred miscellaneous essays written by Cao Zhi, and to store copies both within and outside the palace. This is a clear example of the compilation of a literary collection. In fact, Cao Zhi also compiled his own works during his life time: chapter 55 of the *Yiwen leiju* 藝文類聚 (Categorized Collection of Arts and Letters) quotes Cao Zhi’s *Qian lu xu* 前錄序 (Preface to Former Collected Works).<sup>8</sup> People of the Han and Wei still valued the writings of the philosophers most, but literary collections were also valued by writers and society as a whole, a fact that must have influenced Cao Pi’s comment that writings can make reputation survive after death. It was in this period that the compilation of personal collections rapidly grew in popularity. By the Southern Dynasties it was said that «every family has its writings, and everyone has his literary collection» (文集盛於二漢, 至家家有製, 人人有集, *Jinlouzi shuzheng jiaozhu* 2014, v. 4, p. 659). The practice became so common that Wang Yun 王筠, for instance, made a collection for each official post he held.

The rise of individual collections in turn inspired the further compiling of anthologies. As early as the Wei, books with the characteristics of anthologies had begun to appear. For example, the *Shulin* 書林 (Forest of Calligraphy) of Ying Qu 應璩 (190-252), listed in the «Bibliographical Treatise» of

8 «When I was young I enjoyed the *fu*, what I admired was the elegant and fair, the impassioned and bold. I wrote many *fu*, but they were composed for various occasions, so many are overgrown weeds. Thus I have edited and selected them, and made a separate ‘Former Collection’ of 78 pieces». 余少而好賦, 其所尚也, 雅好慷慨, 所著繁多, 雖觸類而作, 然蕪穢者衆, 故刪定別撰, 為《前錄》七十八篇 (*Yiwen leiju* 1985, p. 996).



the *Suishu*, must have been an anthology of different styles of calligraphy. Also, Cao Pi in his «Letter to Wu Zhi» («Yu Wu zhi shu» 與吳質書) clearly states that as he recalled his departed friends Xu Gan 徐干, Chen Lin 陳琳, Ying Yang 應瑒, Liu Zhen 劉楨, and others, he «collected some of their surviving works and made them into an anthology». Although this book unfortunately has not survived, Xie Lingyun 謝靈運 (385-433) did write a set of poems entitled «Imitations of the Poetry Collection of the Wei Heir Designated in Ye» («Ni Wei Taizi Ye zhong jishi» 擬魏太子鄴中集詩), proving that Cao Pi completed the collection, and that it also survived until the Liu-Song. From the Wei and Jin onward, anthologies became more and more common. According to the Sui «Bibliographical Treatise», at that time there were 107 literary anthologies extant in 2213 *juan*. Including books that had already been lost in the Sui, the catalogue lists 249 books in 5224 *juan*. The Literary Collections Category increased in magnitude primarily because the quantity of literary works had grown, but also because of the influence of the burgeoning field of literary criticism. In Chinese literary criticism, besides the actual writings through which critics express their ideas, more often they express their opinions through the compilation of anthologies. One example is Zhi Yu's 摯虞 (d. 311) *Wenzhang liubie ji* 文章流別集 (Literary Collection Classified by Genre), of which the Sui «Bibliographical Treatise» says that it «culled the finest blossoms, and pruned the profuse». The anthology collected and edited the writings of previous eras, dividing them into categories beginning with poetry, *fu*, and the other genres. Zhi Yu expressed his opinions on historic works of literature through the process of compiling his anthology. Indeed, in this period it was often a single person who compiled several different anthologies. For example, Xie Lingyun 謝靈運 (385-433), a celebrated poet, compiled eight different anthologies, showing that he was not only a writer, but also devoted to compilation. Of these eight anthologies, four were of poetry. They were compiled in different ways so as to express different ideas about literature, and in this way literary criticism led to the compilation of more anthologies.

The new self-awareness of literature was expressed in regard to poetry with the motto 'poetry follows feeling' (*shi yuan qing* 詩緣情). Since even before the Qin Dynasty, Confucian texts emphasized the principle that «poetry expresses what the mind is intent on» (*shi yan zhi* 詩言志).<sup>9</sup> The Great Preface to the *Book of Odes*, as a seminal document of Confucian poetics, makes a comprehensive statement of this tradition. And while the essence of the phrase 'poetry expresses intention' (pinyin and characters) is that it emphasizes the political role of poetry, it does not pay adequate attention

9 See *Yaodian* 堯典 chapter of *Shangshu* 尚書 (*Shangshu zhengyi* 2015, 1.28) and *Yue ji* 樂記 chapter of *Liji* 禮記 (*Liji zhengyi* 1999, 19.1073).

to the basic characteristics of literature. Beginning with the Wei and Jin, Cao Pi, in his «Disquisition on Literature» (*Lun wen* 論文), first proposed the idea that «poetry and *fu* should be beautiful», taking beauty as the basic requirement of literature, thereby contradicting the traditional view that poetry expresses what the mind is intent on. Cao Pi's slogan was not just an idiosyncratic idea, but the inevitable consequence of literature's gradual trend towards independence. For example, in the Han, Yang Xiong had criticized the «*fu* of the rhapsodists» for being «beautiful to the point of impropriety» (詩人之賦麗以則). In the practice of the authors of this period, the fundamental principle of literature demanded that they tend towards beautiful and ornate writing. Similarly, Xiao Tong's prescription in the Preface to the *Wenxuan* was that writers should «base their writings on the facts but add luster, change the source information to make it more impressive». Although pentasyllabic verse originated in the later period of the Eastern Han,<sup>10</sup> it had already rapidly achieved a very high level of artistic accomplishment,<sup>11</sup> and this was another historical factor behind Cao Pi's pronouncement. After Cao Pi, Lu Ji 陸機 (261-303), in his «*Fu* on Literature» («Wen fu» 文賦), proposed that «poetry should trace feeling with elegant beauty» (詩緣情以綺靡). There has been continual controversy about what it means for poetry to follow feeling (Zhang Shaokang 1984), but Lu Ji had already abandoned the traditional principle that «poetry expresses what the mind is intent on». The relation of the two elements in his statement, feeling and elegant beauty, is not clear, and Zhu Ziqing 朱自清 (1898-1948) said that this was an entirely new idea (Zhu Ziqing 1990). Since the Jin dynasty, writers and critics have often extolled the principle of 'tracing feeling',<sup>12</sup> which shows how this period began to unchain itself from political indoctrination, to emphasize aesthetic values in poetry.

Flourishing literary production in turn encouraged the growth of literary criticism. During the Wei, Jin, and Northern and Southern Dynasties there were a significant number of essays and larger works that engaged in criticism based on aesthetic values in literature. The richness of these discussions and the diversity of the types of criticism established a foundation for the literary criticism of later times. The basic elements of literary criticism, such as the personality of an author, the style of a work, the process and technique of writing, the influence of social context and natural environment, the critical attitude and the differentiation of genres

10 Here I follow the conventional view.

11 Zhong Rong's *Shipin* praises the 'Old Poems' as «warm and lovely in style, their intention sorrowful but far-reaching, startling to the mind and moving to the soul: one could say each word is worth a thousand in gold» (*Lidai shihua* 1981).

12 See Xiao Zifan 蕭子範, «Qiu zhuan Zhaoming taizi ji biao» 求撰昭明太子集表, and Wang Yun 王筠, «Zhaoming taizi aicewen» 昭明太子哀冊文 (*Quan Liang wen* 1958, pp. 3084, 3338).

were all treated in depth. With regard to form, Cao Pi's «Disquisition on Literature» is a topical essay, Lu Ji's «Fu on Literature» is in the form of a fu, Zhong Rong's *Evaluation of Poetry* and Liu Xie's *Wenxin diaolong* are both critical treatises, but Shen Yue, in his «Biographical Evaluation of Xie Lingyun» from the *History of the Song*, and Xiao Zixian, in his «Biographical Evaluations of Literature» from the *Nan Qi shu*, both discussed the development of literature within an official history. From Cao Pi's isolated essay to the appearance of Zhong Rong's and Liu Xie's major treatises, the style of literary criticism grew increasingly precise and detailed. Above all, Liu Xie's *Wenxin diaolong* is a work of grand scale and elaborate design. Divided into fifty chapters, the first five chapters are the core of the entire work. The remaining chapters can be divided into two parts: the first twenty chapters discuss various literary genres, analyzing their origins and development, specifying the genre and its formal requirements, and so on, in order to «trace the origins in order to show the results, explain the name to elaborate its significance, select the writings to determine the pieces, elaborate the reasons to compose a system». The next twenty-four chapters are basically a theory of composition, primarily treating the basic theory and technique of writing, such as structure, style, rhetorical devices, the relationship between literature and social life or natural environment, and so on. The final chapter, entitled «Elaborating Intention» (*Xuzhi* 序志), is the general postface to the work. The appearance of the *Wenxin diaolong* demonstrates the level of maturity in literary criticism that was reached in this period. As to the issues treated by literary criticism since the Wei and Jin, they were all included by Liu Xie and analyzed more thoroughly than before. The establishment of a comprehensive system of literary criticism was another consequence of the flourishing literary production of this period.

The Wei, Jin, and Northern and Southern Dynasties was a period when separate Northern and Southern states opposed each other, and as a result cultural history in this period shows an uneven development. Southern culture was relatively advanced, and literary production reached a high level of achievement. The North, especially early in this period, was mainly imitating the Southern culture. Several quite famous writers were clearly earning their living borrowing from the works of Southern writers (*Bei Qi shu* 37.492).<sup>13</sup> In spite of this, Northern Dynasties writers still had a distinctive style, as the «Preface to Literary Biographies» of the *Suishu* observes:

13 «[Wei] Shou 魏收 (506-572) in his discussions would often belittle Xing Shao's 邢邵 [Xing Qiu 虬 fl.480-500] writing. Shao once said: 'Ren Fang of Jiangnan had a style fundamentally too loose. Wei Shou does not just imitate it but steals from it in large swathes.' When Shou heard about this he said: 'That guy often goes thieving amid the works of Shen Yue - what does he mean by saying that I steal from Ren Fang?'» 收每議陋邢邵文。邵又云：「江南任昉，文體本疏，魏收非直模擬，亦大偷竊。」收聞乃曰：「伊常於沈約集中作賊，何意道我偷任昉。」(*Bei Qi shu* 37.492).

«South of the Yangzi River the court and poems were advanced, and they esteemed the pure and refined. North of the Yellow River writing had an honest and upright character, emphasizing noble spirit. With a noble spirit, the idea overcame the words; pure and refined, the rhetoric surpassed the meaning. For popular use, the idea should be superior, but literary refinement is better for reciting and singing. This is the overall difference between the success and failure of Northern and Southern writers».<sup>14</sup> Overall, Northern Dynasties literature emphasized the practical, favoring Confucian doctrine in its philosophy, and up-holding ritual propriety and fixed principles, meaning that it was relatively realistic. In the selection of genres, too, it was somewhat different from Southern Dynasties literature, as the North had a preference for the applied genres. Northern Dynasties unrhymed prose (*sanwen*) was very advanced, surpassing that of Southern Dynasties writers (Cao Daoheng, Shen Yucheng 1991). But although the North and South were on hostile terms, cultural exchange was still very common, and also quite diverse in its form, including: the mutual exchange of ambassadors from North and South, Southern writers and literati taking refuge in the North for various reasons, commerce (especially cultural commerce) in the border region, the mass migrations on both sides due to war, and so on. A famous case is Yu Xin's migration from South to North. His literary style had a tremendous influence on Northerners. This not only directly helped to advance Northern literature, but Yu Xin himself gained valuable experience in the North. His compositions written in the North, expressing his longing for home, anger at the fall of his home country, and the sorrows of travel, won him undying fame in the history of literature. These works were the product of the interaction between Northern and Southern cultures. Yu Xin's success shows that Northern literature already had its own distinctive qualities, and in many respects had caught up with and even surpassed Southern literature.

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14 然南北好尚，互有異同。江左宮商發越，貴於清綺；河朔詞義貞剛，重乎氣質。氣質則理勝其詞，清綺則文過其意。理深者便於時用，文華者宜於詠歌。此其南北詞人得失之大較也 (Suishu 隋書, 76.1163).

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## Linking Ancient and Contemporary

Continuities and Discontinuities in Chinese Literature

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# Traditional Chinese Jestbooks and Ming Revival

Giulia Baccini

(Università Ca' Foscari Venezia, Italia)

**Abstract** The traditional Chinese literary view bestowed value mainly on those texts that pursued a didactic and moral purpose; however, several scholars in Chinese history composed works, recording and gathering anecdotes, to be enjoyed in leisure time. The jestbooks (*Wenyan xiaohua ji*), which had appeared in the literary landscape during the later Han/early Wei period (late 3rd century CE), became extremely popular during the Ming (1368-1644). This article provides a brief presentation of several collections through the ages, and then focuses on how they flourished during the Ming dynasty period.

**Summary** 1 Introduction. – 2 A Brief Survey of the Jestbooks Contained in the Bibliographical Chapters of the Official Histories. – 3 Jestbooks in Ming Bibliographical Chapters and Tan Kai's Woodblock Edition of the *Taiping guanji* 太平廣記 (The Extensive Records Assembled in the Taiping Era, 976-984). – 4 Ming Dynasty Jestbooks.

**Keywords** Jestbook. Jest. Humorous anecdotes.

## 1 Introduction

Traditional Chinese jestbooks, in today's histories of Chinese literature, written in Chinese, are normally defined as *Wenyan xiaohua ji* 文言笑話集;<sup>1</sup> this description illustrates a number of features of these texts: that they are collections (*ji* 集), which gather humorous anecdotes, or jests (*xiaohua* 笑話);<sup>2</sup> it also identifies the language in which the anecdotes were written,

1 To identify which texts are now defined as *xiaohua ji*, I used the following works: Hou Zhongyi 1990, Ning Jiayu 1991, Wang Liqi [1956] 1981, Zhu Yixuan 2005, but in particular, and foremost, Ning Jiayu 1996. Here the *xiaoshuo* 小說 with a humorous content (*xiexue lei* 諧謔類) are divided in: *paixie ji* 俳諧集 (collection of comic pieces), *yuyan ji* 寓言集 (collection of fables), and *xiaohua ji*. The first category identifies texts that are similar to parodic biographies, as for example the *Maoying zhuan* 毛穎傳 (Biography of Fur Point) written by Han Yu 韓愈 (768-824); the second category groups those collections of stories which, mostly, have as their protagonists animals, insects, or other creatures.

2 *Xiaohua*, as a term which precisely refers to humorous stories is attested not before the 17th century; before, the expressions *huaji yan* 滑稽言, *huaji yu* 滑稽語, etc. were frequent; cf. Lévy 1971, p. 85, n. 46.

that is literary Chinese (*wen yan* 文言). These works belong to a 'genre' retrospectively defined, and, observing the material collected according to this definition, they are, generally speaking, collections of short anecdotes grouped together for entertainment purposes.<sup>3</sup>

As far as the history of this 'genre' is concerned, the jestbooks appeared in the literary landscape at the end of Han/early Wei Dynasties, and their first specimen can be found in the *Xiaolin* 笑林 (Forest of laughs), ascribed to the late Han dynasty scholar Handan Chun 邯鄲淳 (*fl.* 150-225).<sup>4</sup>

All the works now defined as jestbooks, in the Bibliographical chapters of the dynastic histories, were classified under the «xiaoshuo» 小說 category. This category grouped all the texts which were not easily classifiable: texts in prose, for the most part negatively defined as being as unreliable as street gossip. They were considered a kind of narrative prose which was not fit to be part of the official histories and, as a category, the «xiaoshuo» was placed at the margins of the «Zi» (Masters of Thought) section. The texts contained in this section had a marginal cultural status. However, as far as the collections of jestbooks are concerned, they did enjoy popularity among the literati through the ages.

## 2 A Brief Survey of the Jestbooks Contained in the Bibliographical Chapters of the Official Histories

Works that now are regarded as jestbooks (*xiaohua ji*) appeared for the first time in the Bibliographical chapter of the *Suishu* 隋書 (Book of Sui), under the «xiaoshuo» category (*Suishu* 34.1011). They were: Handan Chun's *Xiaolin*, the *Xiaoyuan* 笑苑 (Garden of Laughs) by Wei Dan 魏澹 (580-645) and the *Jieyi* 解頤 (To Laugh) by Yang Jiesong 陽玠松 (Northern Qi). Among the three, only fragments of the *Xiaolin* remain, scattered throughout several later encyclopedias.

The *Xiaoyuan* and the *Jieyi* were already no longer listed in the bibliographical chapters of both the *Jiu Tangshu* 舊唐書 and the *Xin Tangshu* 新唐書 (The Old Book of Tang and the New Book of Tang; *Jiu Tangshu* 47.2036; *Xin Tangshu* 59.1539-1543), in which, however, the presence of possible jestbooks is still attested. The *Qiyán lù* 啓顏錄 (Record of Bright Smiles),

3 The Jestbooks are also defined as *wenyan xiaoshuo xiaohua ji* 文言小說笑話集, in which *wenyan xiaoshuo* 文言小說 (*xiaoshuo* in literary language) is a modern descriptive term in opposition to *baihua xiaoshuo* 白話小說 (vernacular *xiaoshuo*); cf. Hou and Liu 1993, p. 385. The term *xiaoshuo* is difficult to translate, here it is used to refer to texts in literary prose which Glen Dudbridge 2002, p. 16, defines as «literature of record». For a brief overview of the term in the pre-modern era see also Hegel 1998, pp. 12-13.

4 For more information about this text see Baccini 2014.

ascribed to the early Sui official Hou Bai 侯白 (581-618),<sup>5</sup> is listed in both chapters; a manuscript of this text (or part of it) was found in the caves of Dunhuang, and, dated 723, it is an interesting and understudied source with which to examine the literary landscape of the time. The *Xin Tangshu* chapter, in addition, records Liu Nayan's 劉訥言 (fl. 666) *Paixie ji* 俳諧集 (Collection of Humorous Pieces)<sup>6</sup> and He Ziran's 何自然 (?-?, Tang dynasty) *Xiaolin* 笑林.<sup>7</sup> Few texts, then, were ascribed to the Tang period (618-907), and nothing remains of their content. In contrast, during the Song period, the number of collections of humorous anecdotes increased.<sup>8</sup>

The bibliographical chapter of the *Songshi* 宋史 (History of the Song),<sup>9</sup> as far as Song dynasty works are concerned, presents the *Qunju jieyi* 羣居解頤 (Collection of Laughs Placed Together) by Gao Yi 高懌,<sup>10</sup> the *Kaiyan ji* 開顏集 (Collection of Stories to Make You Smile), attributed to Zhou Wenqi 周文玘;<sup>11</sup> the *Xiaolin* 笑林, by an undetermined scholar Lu 路氏; the *Xiyu jishuo* 戲語集說 (Collection of Jokes), by Nanyang Dezhang 南陽德張; the *Huaji ji* 滑稽集 (Collection of Humorous Pieces), by Qian Yi 錢易 and an anonymous *Linxia xiaotan* 林下笑談 (Humorous Conversations Under A Tree).<sup>12</sup> Ning Jiayu (1996, pp. 212-214) is able to identify eight more collections ascribed to this period, which however did not appear in the bibliographical chap-

5 In his biography it is said that he was renowned for his witty nature and for this quality the Emperor Wen of Sui 隋文帝 (581-604) summoned him to court; cf. *Suishu* 58.1421.

6 He was one of the leading scholars in charge of writing commentaries for the *Hou Hanshu* 後漢書 (Book of Later Han). He was also the tutor of the prince Li Xian 李賢 (653-684) of the Tang. When the emperor Gaozong 高宗 (649-683) discovered that Liu had written such a humorous text (the *Paixie ji*), and, suspecting that he had used the book to instruct his son, he sent him into exile; cf. *Jiu Tangshu* 189A. 4956.

7 Not to be confused with Handan Chun's *Xiaolin*. Analyzing the titles of the *xiaohua ji* through the ages, it appears that the title *Xiaolin* was frequently used.

8 Ning Jiayu (1996, p. 128), for the Five Dynasties period, identifies two more texts: a book titled *Xiaolin* 笑林 by Yang Minggao 揚名高, and another titled *Qiyuan lu* 啓顏錄, ascribed to Pi Guangye 皮光業 (fl. 900), who was the chancellor of Qian Yuanguan 錢元瓘 (887-941), the second King of Wuyue 吳越.

9 *Songshi* 206.5219-31.

10 Few references about his biography can be found in the «Yinyi zhuan» 隱逸傳 (Biographies of recluses) in the *Songshi* (ch. 457).

11 There is no biographical information about this author; we only know from some bibliographical indexes that he served as *jiaoshu lang* 校書郎 (editor). An old edition of the text, in two *juan*, is preserved in Ding Bing's 丁丙 (Qing) collection of rare editions (*Shanben shushi cangshu* 善本書室藏書). For more information about this text, see Huang Dongyang 黃東陽 2007. «Ci sui qing hui, yi gui yizheng-Songdai xiaoshu *Kaiyan ji* 'ya su zhi bian'shiyi» 辭雖傾回, 意歸義正 - 宋人笑書《開顏集》「雅俗之辨」釋義 (Despite being a series of ludicrous words, the contents are correct and accurate: interpretation of 'Distinguishing Elegance from Vulgarity' in the Song dynasty humorous book *Kaiyan ji*). *Taipei shili jiaoyu daxue xuebao*, 38, pp. 27-44.

12 These last four texts are all lost and no items remain.



ter of the *Songshi*. They are, instead, recorded in the *cunmu* 存目 section (texts only listed but not preserved in the collection) of the «xiaoshuo» category in the Qing dynasty index *Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao* 四庫全書提要 (Catalogue [with critical abstracts] of the [imperially authorized] Complete library of the four branches), in private catalogues, or in the *Shuofu* 說浮 (Outskirts of texts), a Yuan dynasty (1271-1368) collectanea.<sup>13</sup>

### 3 Jestbooks in Ming Bibliographical Chapters and Tan Kai's Woodblock Edition of the *Taiping guanji* 太平廣記 (The Extensive Records Assembled in the Taiping Era, 976-984)

In Ming times (1368-1644), jestbooks flourished. Despite their being removed from the bibliographical chapter of the *Mingshi* 明史 (History of Ming),<sup>14</sup> fourteen texts are recorded in the «xiaoshuo» category of the private catalogue *Qianqing tang shumu* 千頃堂書目 (Vast Hall Bibliography), written by Huang Yuji 黃虞稷 (1626-1692), on which the *Mingshi*'s catalogue was based. Even though, since the invention of printing during the Song, it was probably possible to produce more books of this kind, the bibliographical chapters of official histories became more selective about the material they presented.<sup>15</sup> The *xiaohua ji* were considered a marginal typology, so it is not surprising that they disappeared from the official catalogue.

For the Ming period, Ning Jiayu (1996, pp. 319-327) lists thirty five *xiaohua ji*,<sup>16</sup> most of which can be dated to a period ranging from the last

13 As is the case for Lü Benzong's 呂本中 (1084-1145) *Xuanqu lu* 軒渠錄 (Records of laughing), Tian Hezi's 天和子 *Shanxue ji* 善謔集 (Collection of good jokes) and Zhu Hui's 朱暉 *Juedao lu* 絕倒錄 (Records to roar with laughter), according to the items left, they were all made of funny anecdotes regarding historical figures, like their contemporaries Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037-1101) and Sima Guang 司馬光 (1019-1086) for the *Xuanqu lu* and *Juedao lu*; or people from the past like Liu Ling 劉伶 (3rd century) for the *Shanxue ji*. For the complete list, cf. Ning 1996, pp. 212-213; for the few texts ascribed to the Yuan period cf. Ning 1996, p. 214.

14 The bibliographical chapter of the *Mingshi* 明史 (History of the Ming) lists only one text regarded as a *xiaohua ji*, the *Zile bian* 自樂編 (A text for self entertainment) by Li Yuheng 李豫亨, now lost; cf. *Mingshi* 98.2434.

15 On the more orthodox approach taken by the *Histories*, especially regarding the *liezhuan* 列傳 (biography), cf. Wilkinson 2013, p. 151.

16 Wang Liqi (1981, pp. 139-432) also records thirty-five texts. However, of the texts listed by Ning Jiayu, twelve have no fragments left, and so are not quoted by Wang Liqi, who, in turn, quotes twelve additional texts which in Ning Jiayu's book have a different classification. For example, Wang Liqi classifies as a *xiaohua ji* the chapter that was made of humorous anecdotes of the *Lushu* 露書 (Book of Dew), its «xie pian» 諧篇, written by Yao Lü 姚旅 (?-1622); a book which Ning (1996, p. 285) actually classifies as a whole in the «miscellaneous category» (*zazu lei* 雜俎類).

part of the mid-Ming to the late-Ming (1436-1644). This was also the period that witnessed the beginning of the dominance of print culture over manuscripts, thanks to the «explosive growth» of the commercial printing industry (Lu 2010, p. 63). The increased number of jestbooks could well be considered an effect of this trend. There must be a connection between events, though, that might have helped this typology to flourish before it came into fashion.

Tan Kai 談愷 (1503-1568) (courtesy name, Shoujiao 守教) was a man from Xishan 錫山 (today Wuxi metropolitan area, near Suzhou). He took the *jinshi* degree in 1526 and,<sup>17</sup> once retired from office, he decided to embark upon a huge cultural project: he edited and then published (1566) the Song encyclopedia *Taiping guangji* (Extensive records from the Taiping era, published in 978), which, as we know, collected stories and anecdotes of previously lost texts, up to Tang times. In Tan Kai's time all circulating editions of the *Taiping guangji* were seriously damaged, so he decided to use his now abundant free time to create a woodblock edition (*ke ben* 刻本) of the *Taiping guangji*.<sup>18</sup> He used a manuscript copy (*chao ben* 抄本), as his base text (*diben* 底本),<sup>19</sup> against which he checked other editions. In the project he was not alone, as he enjoyed the help of three close friends: Qin Cishan 秦次山, Qiang Qicheng 強綺勝 and Tang Shidong 唐石東, who assisted him in compiling the book in its final form.<sup>20</sup>

In the preface to his woodblock edition, Tan Kai wrote a presentation of the text which described its literary nature and the reason he decided to print it. He explained that the *Taiping guangji*: «was compiled by collecting material from unofficial histories (*yeshi* 野史), transmitted records (*zhuanji* 傳記) and lesser sayings (*xiaoshuo* 小說) of all the traditions» (*Taiping guangji* 1961, p. 2) and that the literati did not give much attention to a text of that kind. Differently, he said that the *Taiping yulan* 太平御覽 (Imperial Reading of the Taiping era), the other imperially commissioned Song encyclopaedia compiled in the same period (977-984), was «a collection of passages from officially categorized texts (*jing shi zi ji* 經史子

17 Some information regarding his life can be traced to some passages of the *Mingshi* 明史 (History of the Ming), cf. *Mingshi* 171.4560, and *Mingshi* 210.5554.

18 The edition he created is now the earliest preserved. Tan's edition had several problems: in the manuscript copy transmitted to his time some chapters were missing, so he tried to fill the gap by, for example, splitting a chapter (*juan*) in two (chapter 142 was split in 141 and 142); cf. Pu 2008, p. 222. The original manuscript of the *Taiping guangji* was lost during the Northern Song and up to now it is not possible to know which was the original shape of the text. For more information about the transmission of this text, see the great scholarly accomplishment of Zhang Guofeng 2011.

19 As far as his manuscript is concerned, now we are unable to track down which edition it was; cf. Shen 2010, p. 70, n. 2.

20 *Taiping guangji* 1961, p. 2.

集)», so it was well esteemed by the educated elite of the time.<sup>21</sup> This is the reason the *Taiping yulan* was widely known and the *Taiping guangji* was neglected. Tan Kai also explains that, as he had retired from official appointments and thus had a great amount of spare time, he decided to edit this text (the *guangji*), which assembled «the unofficial stories of the *baiguan*» (*baiguan yeshi* 稗官野史) not only because «it is possible to look at them (*xiaodao keguan* 小道可觀)», but also because «they are as pleasant to read as playing *bo* and *yi* games» (*Taiping guangji* 1961, p. 2). It is evident here that Tan Kai is quoting the *Hanshu* 漢書 (Book of Han) definition of the «*xiaoshuo*» category (i.e. *xiaoshuo* are something that is possible to look at), which from its first appearance onwards, has been used as a definition for all non-official texts. The *Hanshu* states that the *xiaoshuo* were recorded because, even though superficial, they contained some worthwhile knowledge (*Hanshu* 30.1745); but Tan Kai specifies that this is not the only reason he was interested in this category of writings. These texts could also be as entertaining as playing games; this appears to be the main reason he undertook this task.

The *Taiping guangji* collects a large amount of anecdotes and stories, most of them belonging to the *zhiguai* 志怪 (records of the strange) and *chuanqi* 傳奇 (tales of the marvellous) typologies,<sup>22</sup> as well as anecdotes from those *xiaohua ji* previously listed by the official catalogues. But it is not a mere collection; since it was supposed to be an encyclopaedia, it arranges the textual material according to several thematic categories. As the Tan Kai's text was produced and introduced into the market, the *Taiping guangji* quickly gained the interest of the literati, so that during the Wanli period (1573-1619) it was already circulating widely. Its thematic structure had a strong influence on those literati who were already interested in the *xiaoshuo* (Niu 2008, p. 126); Hu Yinglin 胡應麟 (1551-1602), for example, the famous scholar who, devoting his studies to investigating the *xiaoshuo* as a *genre*,<sup>23</sup> became fascinated by it, and he is said to have owned several copies of the text (Niu 2008, p. 111-112).

As far as the categories are concerned, Zhao Jingshen (1980, p. 28) notes that the *Taiping guangji* can be considered, in a way, a collection of *xiaohua*, as it has specific categories related to humor: the «*hui xie*» 談諧 (humorous [anecdotes]) from *juan* 245 to *juan* 252; the «*chao qiao*» 嘲諷 (ridiculing) from *juan* 253 to *juan* 257, and the «*chi bi*» 嗤鄙 (sneering at) from *juan* 258

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21 For more information regarding the compilation of the *Taiping yulan* and the *Taiping guangji*, cf. Kurz 2001.

22 They are two «generic subdivisions» of *wenyan xiaoshuo*; cf. Chiang 2005, pp. 10-27.

23 He divided the *xiaoshuo* into six categories, among which *zhiguai* and *chuanqi* are included. According to Tak-hung Leo Chan (1998, p. 10) with Hu *zhiguai* and *chuanqi* «were introduced in the realm of critical discourse».

to *juan* 262.<sup>24</sup> Ming literati might have paid great attention to the analysis of the encyclopedia's content, and to its thematic subdivision. Hu Yinglin was probably influenced by the *Taiping guangji* in his categorizing of the sub-genres of ancient *xiaoshuo* (Niu 2008, p. 126), and later on, Feng Menglong 馮夢龍 (1574-1646), too, devoted great attention to the text, also using it as a repository from which he fished for stories. Additionally, not satisfied with the printed copies he was able to find in the market, he selected passages he liked and made the *Taiping guangji chao* 太平廣記抄 (Selections from the *Taiping guangji*) (1626). Collecting more than two thousand, divided into eight *juan*, Feng Menglong's text helped to disseminate the content of the *Taiping guangji* even more (Niu 2008, p. 75-76).

#### 4 Ming Dynasty Jestbooks

Literary production, however, was not only the private enterprise of an author; after the Jiajing period (1521-1567) it was, more and more, promoted by the pressure of the publishers who needed more products to put on the market.<sup>25</sup> As Tina Lu (2010, p. 69) speculates, also «the reevaluation of earlier canons characteristic of this period must have been partly a response to the pressure to produce new anthologies for the book market»; it helped, in fact, to identify and then reuse traditional literary themes and stories which were then reshaped and rearranged in new collections to meet a broad audience.<sup>26</sup> Tan Kai's woodblock edition, as we already mentioned, also served the cause, providing a book, the *Taiping guangji*, which was a treasure trove of stories about ghosts, the supernatural, love, drama, gossips, and of humorous anecdotes.<sup>27</sup> The appearance of an increasing number of jestbooks can rightly be considered part of the literary trend of this period.

Ming dynasty jestbooks were mostly derivative works, made up of stories collected from other sources. Even if they were written in lit-

<sup>24</sup> Thirteen out of the twenty-nine surviving anecdotes of Handan Chun's *Xiaolin* are contained in the *Taiping guangji*. Nine anecdotes among the thirteen are scattered inside these three categories.

<sup>25</sup> In this period the link between publishers and authors, i.e. literary production and the market, was already very strong. The creation of collections of stories was often instigated by the publishers. Feng Menglong, too, created his *Gu jin xiaoshuo* 古今小說 (Stories old and new) under such a kind of pressure. See Wang 2003, p. 35.

<sup>26</sup> Lu (2010, p. 68) explains that «more was written in these generations [the Wanli period] than in those preceding, but the explosion in publishing and book collection may be attributed more directly to repackaging and reorganization».

<sup>27</sup> Rania Huntington (2003, pp. 8-9), describes how Ming-Qing fox-stories were largely based on the nine chapters about foxes of the *Taiping guangji*.

erary language (*wenyan*), they were not necessarily addressed to a limited audience; in fact, their simple classical Chinese, like that of the *zhiguai*, «with a limited vocabulary and regular sentence structure could, for someone with a rudimentary classical language education, be easier to read than the more verbose vernacular, with its wider range of vocabulary, sentence structure and colloquialisms» (Huntington 2003, p. 21).<sup>28</sup>

Feng Menglong, apart from being one of the most prolific authors at that time, of works in vernacular language, had wide literary interests; he was also an enthusiast compiler of collections of humorous anecdotes in literary language. In this respect, he composed three works: the *Xiaofu* 笑府 (Treasury of Laughs), the *Guang xiaofu* 廣笑府 (Expanded Treasury of Laughs) and the *Gujin tangai* 古今譚概 (Outline of conversations old and new).<sup>29</sup> The *Xiaofu* is perhaps the most famous of the three. It was probably compiled around 1610-1616 and it collected seven hundred anecdotes from previous Ming sources.<sup>30</sup> According to Zhou Zuoren 周作人 (1885-1967), the text «had the insight to restore jokes, long repudiated by Confucian scholarship, to their proper place as a valuable literary genre». <sup>31</sup> Whether or not he was moved also by the desire to make profit from this kind of book is still to be corroborated, to my knowledge, by the sources, but there is no reason to doubt it.

28 Wang Ping (2003, p. 35) lists four characteristics which define the typical reader of *xiaoshuo* during the Ming dynasty: he must be able to read this kind of text, he must afford to buy it, he must be interested in reading books and have the time to do it. According to Wang, the merchants at the time met all these requirements, and they were the leading readers of the *xiaoshuo*. For more insights about merchants and cultural circles see Brook 2002, in particular pp. 124-138. See also Hsu 2012, p. 255.

29 The *Gujin tangai* was later known as *Gujin xiao* 古今笑 (Laughs old and new) or *Gujin xiao shi* 古今笑史 (history of the laughs old and new). According to Li Yu 李漁 (1610-1680) the title was changed in *Gujin xiao*, to attract the attention of readers, i.e. for marketing purposes; cf. Chen 2002, p. 523. For more insights also cf. Zhao 1980, pp. 30-34.

30 The *Xiaofu* has a complicated textual history: lost in China, it was preserved in Japan, where it became very famous. For more information about Feng Menglong and, in particular, about this work, see Hsu 1998.

31 Quoted in Hung 1985, p. 28. Zhou Zuoren perhaps applied to Feng the literary aim which was actually his own. He was in fact one of the founders of the Chinese folk literature movement which tried to reevaluate several neglected literary typologies as folksongs, children's literature, legends, jokes, etc. As far as jokes are concerned, Zhou Zuoren compiled two major works on this topic: the *Kucha an xiaohua xuan* 苦茶庵笑話選 (A selection of jokes from the bitter tea studio) 1933 and the *Ming Qing xiaohua sizhong* 明清笑話四種 (Four types of Ming Qing jokes) 1958; The first collects jokes from Feng Menglong's *Xiaofu*, Chen Gaomo's 陳皋謨 (fl. 1718) *Xiaodao* 笑倒 (Falling over with laughter), Shi Chengjin's 石成金 (b. 1659) *Xiao de hao* 笑得好 (Have a good laugh). The *Ming Qing xiaohua sizhong* adds anecdotes from Zhao Nanxing's 趙南星 (1550-1627) *Xiaozan* 笑贊 (Appraisals of laughter), in addition to several stories from the three collections previously mentioned; for more information, cf. Chen Wenxin 2002, p. 518-519.

Amongst the authors of the numerous collections composed in this period, there were also renowned scholars associated with the Gong'an school, such as Jiang Yingke 江盈科 (1555-1605),<sup>32</sup> who wrote three collections: the *Tanyan* 談言 (Talks and words),<sup>33</sup> the *Xuetao xiaoshuo* 雪濤小說 (Xuetao's stories), and the *Xuetao xieshi* 雪濤諧史 (Humorous history of Xuetao). The first collects stories of the past, in which the protagonists were historical figures (like Northern Song Li Gou 李覲, or Tang dynasty Zhang Hu 張祜); the second reunites anecdotes with unnamed characters that represented a general type (as «a man of Chu», «a doctor», etc.); the last one, his most representative work (Zhu 2005, p. 304), collects stories Jiang saw and heard, and most of which are focused on the imperial examination system. Other collections composed by famous scholars are: Li Zhi's 李贄 (1527-1602) *Kaijuan yixiao* 開卷一笑 (Reading with Laughs);<sup>34</sup> Yu Lüxing's 郁履行 *Xuelang* 謔浪 (Unrestrained jokes); Xu Wei's 徐渭 (1521-1593) *Xieshi* 諧史 (History of Humor); Liu Yuanqing's 劉元卿 (1544-1609) *Yingxie lu* 應諧錄 (Account to attract humor); Zhao Nanxing's 趙南星 (1550-1627) *Xiaozan* 笑贊 (Appraisals of laughs)<sup>35</sup> and Zhong Xing's 鍾惺 (1574-1624) *Xiecong* 諧叢 (Collection of humor).

According to Lydia Chiang (2005, p. 14) a collection «is not an accidental assembly of items. The objects of the collection reflect the taste, values, knowledge, resources, and power of the collector» – and of his own time, I would add. Similar to *zhiguai* and *chuanqi* collections, jestbooks are expressions of the knowledge and taste of a given author in a given time and they deserve their own attention in Chinese Literary history.

32 According to Tina Lu (2010, p. 100) he was drawing his sources also from the *Taiping guangji*.

33 Ning (1996, p. 324) classifies it as a *paixie xiaoshuo* even if after two lines he defines the text as composed of humorous jest and jokes (*xiexue xiaohua* 諧謔笑話); Chen (2002, pp. 517-518) and Wang (1981, pp. 231-237), however, define these works as *xiaohua ji*. Up to now, there is no shared coherence among the literary classifications produced by modern literary historians.

34 Li's work is also known as *Shanzhong yixi hua* 山中一夕話 (One Night's Talk in the Mountain); for more information cf. Lee 2012. Maybe because the attribution to Li Zhi is disputed, Ning Jiayu fails to record this book in his *Zhongguo wenyao xiaoshuo congmu tiyao* 中國文言小說總目提要 (A general index of Chinese *xiaoshuo* written in literary language) 1996. For more information, also regarding another text attributed to Li Zhi, the *Sishu xiao* 四書笑 (Jokes on the four books), see Huang Ching-sheng's unpublished PhD thesis: *Jokes on the Four Books: Cultural Criticism in Early Modern China* 1998, in particular pp. 35-49.

35 Zhao Nanxing's collection is probably one of the most peculiar among Ming dynasty collections. It gathers stories from various sources and oral tradition, as other books do, but at the end of every anecdote a comment is attached, an appraisal (*zan*) in which the voice of Zhao appears to express a judgment, so that the anecdote becomes a tool to express his own opinion about different topics; cf. Chen 2002, pp. 519-521 and Ning 1996, p. 321.

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## Linking Ancient and Contemporary

Continuities and Discontinuities in Chinese Literature

edited by Tiziana Lippiello, Chen Yuehong 陈跃红 and Maddalena Barenghi

# 《水浒传》评论中对立思维的三次递进 (On the Three Stages of Contradictory Comments of *The Water Margin*)

Liu Yongqiang 刘勇强  
(Peking University, China)

**Abstract** From the Ming dynasty to the present day, the particular subject matter of the novel *shuihu zhuan* (The Water Margin or Outlaws on the Marsh) has polarized commentary on it more than any other work of pre-modern Chinese fiction. The continuous evolution of that commentary can be divided roughly into three stages. In the Ming and early Qing periods, the argument centered on whether the novel's protagonists were 'loyal and righteous' or 'bandits', two seemingly opposing views that were, in fact, both formed in the interest of defending established ideology. In the late Qing dynasty, while society underwent violent change, and prose fiction as a whole was devalued, there were those who saw in *Shuihu zhuan* «the beginnings of democracy and civil society», but there were also opponents who found in it the roots of civil unrest and national collapse, branding it «the cancer of the Fiction lists». Over the last half-century, the newly-established government's initial championing of 'reasonable revolt' has clashed with greater support for the rule of law after Reform and Opening Up. While these three critical oppositions to *Shuihu zhuan* have not all addressed the same question, their approaches in intellectual engagement have been similar, inspired as they were by the novel's descriptions of revolt against and protection of the established order. For this reason, the three-stage, spiraling advance of the conflicting commentary on *Shuihu zhuan* reflects, from a unique angle, changes in Chinese society, thought and literature.

**Summary** 1 “忠义”说与“诲盗”说。- 2 民主、民权之萌芽与说部之毒。- 3 “造反有理”与法制精神。- 4 赘语：痴人前不能说梦。

**Keywords** *Shuihu zhuan*. The Water Margin. Outlaws on the Marsh. Pre-modern Chinese fiction.

## 1 “忠义”说与“诲盗”说

《水浒传》描写的是民众反抗黑暗政治的群体性行为，从本质上说，是对传统纲常伦理与现行法律秩序的挑战。因此，在主流文化观念中，这样挑战，一向是被视为“犯上作乱”的“盗贼”行为的。因此，早在宋元时期，当宋江故事开始流传时，创作者就试图解决这一题材与主流观念的矛盾，这也奠定明代以后水浒题材作品

发展的方向。从“盗贼之圣”<sup>1</sup>到“盗可盗，非常盗”<sup>2</sup>的标榜，历代水浒题材作品的作者们，都努力强化梁山好汉的道德品质与政治诉求的合理性，在不改变人物身份属性的前提下——这本是水浒题材作品的吸引力所在——从不同角度突出人物反抗行为的被迫性、暂时性以及终极目标与主流观念的一致性。

在《水浒传》中，通过宋江的一形象，作者将“忠义”的思想表现得极为鲜明。宋江从一出场，作者就赋予了他“仗义疏财，济弱扶倾”的品格，虽然为“义”而“担着血海也似干系”救晁盖，便他认为梁山英雄“于法度上却饶不得”。“杀惜”后，不得不投奔梁山，是“上逆天理，下违父教，做了不忠不孝的人”。因此，他一直渴望“招安”，声称“小可宋江怎敢背负朝廷？盖为官吏污滥，威逼得紧，误犯大罪；因此权借水泊里避难，只待朝廷赦罪招安。”同时，始终牢记九天玄女“替天行道为主，全仗忠义为臣，辅国安民，去邪归正”的“法旨”<sup>3</sup>，最终归依了朝廷，回归了体制。《水浒传》渲染“忠义”的努力显然得到了一定的社会认同。

明天都外臣（汪道昆）《水浒传序》认为宋江诸人是不得已而为盗，是忠义之辈，况且这些人“有侠客之风，无暴客之恶”，“惟以招安为心”<sup>4</sup>值得赞赏和褒扬。

李贽《忠义水浒传序》指出：

夫忠义何以归于《水浒》也？……然未有忠义如宋公明者也。今观一百单八人者，同功同过，同死同生，其忠义之心，犹之乎宋公明也。……独宋公明者身居水浒之中，心在朝廷之上，一意招安，专图报国，卒至于犯大难，成大功，服毒自缢，同死而不辞，则忠义之烈也！真足以服一百单八人者之心，故能结义梁山，为一百单八人之主<sup>5</sup>。

然而，上述观点主要见于小说序跋中，其中主张者包括李贽这样的所谓“异端”思想家，因此，它的代表性仍然是有局限的。而随着《水浒传》成书以后影响力的进一步扩大，有关评论也出现第一次明显地对立。如田汝成《西湖游览志余》中一段评论：

钱塘罗贯中本者，……编撰小说数十种，而《水浒传》叙宋江等事，奸盗脱骗机械甚详。然变诈百端，坏人心术，说者谓子孙三代皆哑，天道好还之报如此<sup>6</sup>！

清代龚炜《巢林笔谈》中也有这样的评论：

1 此为龚圣与《宋江三十六赞序》中对宋江的肯定之语，见马蹄疾编：《水浒传资料汇编》，中华书局，1980年版，第452页。

2 《水浒全传》，中册，上海人民出版社，1975年，第634页。本文所引《水浒传》均据此本，以下只注回数或页码。

3 本段《水浒传》引文分见第18、20、36、58、42回。

4 马蹄疾编：《水浒传资料汇编》，中华书局，1980年版，第2页。

5 马蹄疾编：《水浒传资料汇编》，中华书局，1980年版，第4页。

6 田汝成：《西湖游览志余》，上海古籍出版社，1980年版，第468页。

施耐庵《水浒》一书，首列妖异，隐托讽讥，寄名义于狗盗之雄，凿私智于穿窬之手，启闾巷党援之习，开山林哨聚之端，害人心，坏风俗，莫基于此<sup>7</sup>！

在否定《水浒传》为“忠义”之书方面，金圣叹是最突出的代表。他首先分析了《水浒》书名的含义：“观物者审名，论人者辨志。施耐庵传宋江，而题其书曰《水浒》，恶之至、进之至、不与同中国也。”因为“王土之滨则有水，又在水外则曰浒，远之也。远之也者，天下之凶物，天下之所共击也；天下之恶物，天下之所共弃也。若使忠义而在水浒，忠义为天下之凶物恶物乎哉？”“而后世不知何等好乱之徒，乃谬加以忠义之目。呜乎！忠义而在《水浒》乎哉？”“以忠义予水浒者，斯人必有恫其君父之心，不可以不察也。<sup>8</sup>”

在《读第五才子书法》中，金圣叹说：“《水浒传》有大段正经处，只是把宋江深恶痛绝，使人见之，真有犬彘不食之恨”“《水浒传》独恶宋江，亦是歼厥渠魁之意，其余便饶恕了<sup>9</sup>”出于这一判断，他在回评中处处揭露宋江的虚伪可恶。如在第十七回的评语，他说：

此回始入宋江传也。宋江盗魁也，盗魁则其罪浮于群盗一等。然而从来人之读《水浒》者，每每过许宋江忠义，如欲旦暮遇之。此岂其人性喜与贼为徒？殆亦读其文而不能通其义有之耳。自吾观之，宋江之罪之浮于群盗也，吟反诗为小，而放晁盖为大。何则？放晁盖而倡聚群丑，祸连朝廷，自此始矣。宋江而诚忠义，是必不放晁盖也；宋江而放晁盖，是必不能忠义者也。此人本传之始，而初无一事可书，为首便书私放晁盖。然则宋江通天之罪，作者真不能为之讳也。……凡费若干文字，写出无数机密，而皆所以深著宋江私放晁盖之罪。盖此书之宁恕强盗，而不恕宋江，其立法之严有如此者<sup>10</sup>。

金圣叹为什么如此痛恨宋江，胡适认为，“圣叹生在流贼遍天下的时代，眼见张献忠、李自成一班强盗流毒全国，故他觉得强盗是不能提倡的，是应该‘口诛笔伐’的”<sup>11</sup>。

不过，值得注意的是，尽管金圣叹对《水浒传》的基本倾向持批判态度，但对小说中鲁智深、武松、李逵等英雄形象，仍给予了高度评价，表现出思想中潜在的矛盾<sup>12</sup>。

明清以来的政府法令，对《水浒传》则一直是持禁毁态度的。明崇祯十五年六月严禁《浒传》的命令：“……着地方官设法清察本内，严禁《浒传》，勒石清地，俱如议饬行”；“大张榜示，凡坊间家藏《浒传》并原板，尽令速行烧毁，不许隐匿；仍勒石山巅，垂为厉禁，清丈其地，归之版籍。<sup>13</sup>”

7 龚炜：《巢林笔谈》，中华书局，1981年版，第27页。

8 金圣叹：《水浒传序二》，见《第五才子书施耐庵水浒传》卷一，中华书局1975年影印贯华堂刻本。

9 金圣叹：《读第五才子书法》，见《第五才子书施耐庵水浒传》卷三。

10 金圣叹：《第五才子书施耐庵水浒传》卷二十二。

11 胡适：《水浒传考证》，见《胡适文集》（二），北京大学出版社，1998年，第408-409页。

12 参见张同胜《水浒传诠释史论》（齐鲁书社，2009年）中的有关论述，见此书第125页。

13 王利器编：《元明清三代禁毁小说戏曲史料》，上海古籍出版社，1981年，第17页。

清乾隆十八年高宗皇帝《厚风俗》的命令更为严格：

满洲习俗纯朴，忠义禀乎天性，原不识所谓书籍。自我朝一统以来，始学汉文。皇祖圣祖仁皇帝欲俾不识汉文之人，通晓古事，于品行有益，譬将《五经》及《四子》、《通鉴》等书，翻译刊行。近有不肖之徒，并不翻译正传，反将《水浒》、《西厢记》等小说翻译，使人阅看，诱以为恶。……似此秽恶之书，非惟无益；而满洲等习俗之偷，皆由于此。如愚民之惑于邪教，亲近匪人者，概由看此恶书所致。于满洲旧习，所关甚重，不可不严行禁止。……俱着查核严禁，将现有者查出烧毁，再交提督从严查禁，将原板尽行烧毁。如有私自存留者，一经查出，朕惟该管大臣是问。<sup>14</sup>”

《同治七年江苏巡抚丁日昌禁毁淫词小说令》则将对《水浒传》的禁毁落到了实处：

淫词小说，向干例禁，乃近来书贾射利，往往镂板流传，扬波扇焰，《水浒》、《西厢》书等，几于家置一编，人怀一篋。原其著造之始，大率少年浮薄，以绮腻为风流，乡曲武豪，借放纵为任侠，而愚民鲜识，遂以犯上作乱之事，视为寻常。地方官漠不经心，方以为盗案奸情，纷歧叠出，殊不知忠孝廉节之事，千百人教之然未见为功，奸盗诈伪之书，一二人导之而立萌其祸。风俗与人心相为表里，近来兵戈浩劫，未尝非此等逾闲荡检之说，既酿其殃。若不严行禁毁，流毒伊于胡底？……此系为风俗人心起见，切勿视为迂阔之言。并由司通饬外府县，一律严禁<sup>15</sup>。

针对“诲盗说”，也并非没有反驳，明人汪道昆在《水浒传序》中，认为宋江等人“虽掠金帛，而不虏子女。唯剪焚墨，而不戕善良。诵义负气，百人一心。有侠客之风，无暴客之恶。<sup>16</sup>”而张凤翼则说：

礼失而求诸野，非得已也。论宋道，至徽宗，无足观矣。当时，南衙北司，非京即贯，非佞即勳，盖无刃而戮，不火而焚，盗莫大于斯矣。宋江辈逋逃于城旦，渊藪于山泽，指而鸣之曰：是鼎食而当鼎烹者也，是丹毂而当赤其族者也！建旗鼓而攻之。即其事未必悉如传所言，而令读者快心，要非徒虞初悠谬之论矣。乃知庄生寓言于盗跖，李涉寄咏于被盗，非偶然也。兹传也，将谓诲盗耶，将谓弭盗耶？斯人也，果为寇者也，御寇者耶？彼名非盗而实则盗者，独不当弭耶？<sup>17</sup>”

这一辩护相当全面，包含了三层意思，一，与《水浒传》的基本叙事立场是一致的，即从总体上对奸佞当道的现实政治持否定的态度，从而“礼失而求诸野”的说法，从道义上肯定了宋江等人的“反叛”；二，点明了小说的虚构性质，即所谓“其事未必悉如传所言，而令读者快心”，希望读者和评论者从精神实质

14 《大清高宗纯皇帝圣训》卷二百六十三。《元明清三代禁毁小说戏曲史料》，第43页。

15 王利器编：《元明清三代禁毁小说戏曲史料》第142页。

16 汪道昆：《水浒传序》，马蹄疾编：《水浒传资料汇编》，第2页。

17 张凤翼：《水浒传序》，马蹄疾编：《水浒传资料汇编》，第8页。

上而不是表面的描写上去把握作品的情感内涵。三，引《庄子》对“盗跖”的书写等为证，从文化传统上强调了小说的“寓言”性质。这样的辩护是符合当时一般读者的知识背景的。

有趣的是，《水浒传》续书，也表现出了“忠义说”、“诲盗说”两种不同取向。

明末清初陈忱的《水浒后传》叙述了《水浒传》中幸存的三十余位梁山好汉和部分英雄后代的命运。由于奸臣迫害，他们揭竿再起。而当金军南侵，国家危亡之际，他们又舍身忘死，奋勇抗金，表现了精忠报国的英雄气概和民族气节。但宋廷割地求和，他们报国无门，只得远赴海外暹罗国，传播中华文明。由于特定时代政治环境的原因，《水浒后传》的立场极其鲜明地突出了梁山英雄的“忠义”品质。

清中叶俞万春生当太平天国乱前，有感于当时中国受盗贼横行之苦，因而深恶盗贼，认为“既是忠义，必不做强盗；既是强盗，必不算忠义”、“孰知罗贯中之害至于此极耶”，他的《荡寇志》意在使“天下后世深明盗贼忠义之辨，丝毫不容假借。”<sup>18</sup>故而继承金圣叹仇视宋江的思想，紧接金圣叹腰斩过的七十回本《水浒传》，从七十一回写起，杜撰出一大篇宋江等如何“被张叔夜擒拿正法”的故事，即所谓“荡寇”。

《水浒传》的“忠义”说与“诲盗”说看起来是尖锐对立的，但从思想体系上说，本质上是相通的，或者说是一致的，都把维护以皇权为代表的现存秩序作为自己的出发点与基础。事实上，那怕是《水浒传》中最激烈的反叛者如李逵等，也不过是要建立一个新的皇权而已。因此，上述对立与其说是观念上的矛盾，不如说是看问题的角度不同。因此，有学者在讨论元明清时期水浒传题材戏曲的传播时就指出，儒家文化借助梁山侠士的形象是，散播到亚文化圈中，而儒家文化也借助梁山侠士的叛逆传统，实现了江湖对庙堂的修补和解读。正是这种潜移默化的互动与促进，使得水浒戏理所当然地担当起沟通精英文化与大众文化的使者<sup>19</sup>。如果说“互动与促进”的说法过于理想化，《水浒传》矛盾的思想内涵，在大众的娱乐文化中找到某种平衡点，还是有可能的。这也是《水浒传》虽然存在见尖锐对立的解读，依然流传不辍的原因。事实上，即使在上层社会，我们同样可以看到《水浒传》传播的影子。在反映贵族生活的《红楼梦》中，有“李逵负荆”戏曲的演出；在皇家园林颐和园的长廊绘画中，有“鲁智深倒拔垂杨柳”的场面。

## 2 民主、民权之萌芽与说部之毒

晚清社会政治文化发生了重大转变，思想观念也随之改变，人们对小说的认识也与此前大不相同。小说地位的明显提高，小说的社会影响力也得到了重估。在这样的背景下，明清小说被重新阐释。大多数的小说或者也可以说明清通俗小说的整体，经常被不分青红皂白地否定，只有少数名著例外，《水浒传》就是其中之一。但这并不意味着对它的认识统一了，恰恰相反，传统的对立思维在剧烈动荡的历史条件下，被以新的术语强化和夸大了。

如上所述，“忠义说”对《水浒传》的肯定其实与“诲盗说”一样，都是基于正统的主流观念的。而晚清西方文明作为一种新的文明意识的传播，却使《水浒传》的

18 俞万春：《荡寇志》，人民文学出版社，1981年版，第1页。

19 参见陈建平《水浒戏与中国侠义文化》，文化艺术出版社，2008年，第187页。

正面评价获得了一个完全不同的出发点，即不是站在“君王”而是站在民众的立场的评论。由此，也引出了对《水浒传》全新的认识。

《小说丛话》作者之一的定一说：“有说部书名《水浒》者，人以为萑苻肖小传奇之作，吾以为此即独立自强而倡民主、民权之萌芽也。何以言之？其书中云，旗上书‘替天行道’，又书于其堂曰‘忠义堂’，以是言之耳。”由于当时中国面临西方列强威胁，他从社会巨变的时代大背景下讨论施耐庵作《水浒传》的原因是“因外族闯人中原，痛切陆沉之祸，借宋江之事，而演为为一百零八人。以雄大笔，作壮伟文，鼓吹武德，提振侠风，以为排外之起点<sup>20</sup>”这些观点都反映了当时的新观念。

以类似新观念评论《水浒传》的还有一些人，如邱菽园说：“虞卿穷愁著书，此语千古被人嚼烂。……小说亦然，必有穷愁不平之心，因不得已而后著，其著乃堪传世而行远：《琵琶记》以讥时人著，《西厢记》以怀彼美著，《水浒传》以慕自由著，《三国志》以振汉声著，《金瓶梅》以刺伦父著，《红楼梦》以思胜国著。<sup>21</sup>”

燕南尚生说得更充分：“施耐庵生于专制政府之下，痛世界之惨无人道，欲平反之，手无寸权，于是本其思想发为著述，以待后之阅是书者，以待后之阅是书者而传播是书者，以待后之阅是书者而应用是书、实行是书之学说者”“施耐庵先生，生在专制国里，俯仰社会情状，抱一肚子不平之气，想着发明公理、主张宪政，使全国统有施治权，统居于被治的一方面，平等自由，成一个永治无乱的国家，于是做了这一大部书”。燕南尚生认为金圣叹评点《水浒传》专注于文法，是因为“《水浒传》者，专制政体下所谓犯上作乱大逆不道者也”，“犹恐专制政府，大兴文字狱，罪其赞成宋江也，于是乎痛诋宋江，以粉饰专制政府之耳目<sup>22</sup>”

天僂生（王钟麒）在《中国历代小说史论》也认为：“吾国政治，出于在上，一夫为刚，万夫为柔，务以酷烈之手段，以震荡摧锄天下之士气。士之不得志于时而能文章者，乃著小说，以抒其愤。其大要分为二：一则述已往之成迹，……一则设为悲歌慷慨之士，穷而为寇为盗，有侠烈之行，忘一身之危，而急人之急，以愧在上位而虐下民者，若《七侠五义》、《水浒传》皆其伦也。<sup>23</sup>”又说“（《水浒传》）社会主义之小说也；……著诸书者，其人皆深极哀苦，有不可告人之隐，乃以委曲譬喻出之。读者不知古人用心之所在，而以诲淫与盗目诸书，此不善读小说之过也”王钟麒还将施耐庵与欧美著名作家相提并论：“使施耐庵而生于欧美也，则其人之著作，当与柏拉图、巴枯宁、托尔斯泰、迭盖司诸氏相抗衡。观其平等级，均财产，则社会主义之小说也；其复仇怨，贼污吏，则虚无党之小说也；其一切组织，无不完备，则政治小说也。<sup>24</sup>”

虽然《水浒传》中也有某些看似平等、自由的观念，如第七十一回“梁山泊英雄排座次”时的一段赞语，集中体现了小说所弘扬的思想：

20 《小说丛话》，见陈平原、夏晓虹编《二十世纪中国小说理论资料》（第一卷），北京大学出版社，1997年，第98页。

21 邱菽园：《客云庐小说话·穷愁著书》，见朱一玄、刘毓忱《水浒传资料汇编》，南开大学出版社，2002年，第362页。

22 燕南尚生：《命名释义》，马蹄疾编：《水浒传资料汇编》，第55页。

23 王钟麒：《中国历代小说史论》，《二十世纪中国小说理论资料》（第一卷）第286-287页。

24 王钟麒：《论小说与社会改良之关系》，《二十世纪中国小说理论资料》（第一卷）第284页。

八方共域，异姓一家。天地显罡煞之精，人境合杰灵之美。千里面朝夕相见，一寸心死生可同。相貌语言，南北东西虽各别；心情肝胆，忠诚信义并无差。其人则有帝子神孙，富豪将吏，并三教九流，乃至猎户渔人，屠儿刽子，都一般儿哥弟称呼，不分贵贱；且又有同胞手足，捉对夫妻，与叔侄郎舅，以及跟随主仆，争斗冤仇，皆一样的酒筵欢乐，无问亲疏。或精灵，或粗卤，或村朴，或风流，何尝相碍，果然识性同居；或笔舌，或刀枪，或奔驰，或偷骗，各有偏长，真是随才器使。……休言啸聚山林，早愿瞻依廊庙<sup>25</sup>。

很明显，这里的所谓“不分贵贱”、“无问亲疏”等，是建立在“义”的基础上的，其归宿则在“瞻依廊庙”，仍然是要回归等级森严的王权社会。与西方的平等自由、民主民权、社会主义理论，存在着本质上的区别。因此，相关的评论，多半只能停留在基本思想倾向的认定上，无法落实到小说具体的情节描写中。不过，即使是表面的相似，作为新思想得以生根的土壤，《水浒传》被赋予与时代发展相适应的解读，也自有其合理性、必然性。关键不在于上述观点是否牵强，而在于社会观念的变化，总能在对传统的解释中找到自己赖以存在和传播的依托，而传统也可能因此获得与时俱进的活力。换言之，近代有关《水浒传》具有“民主、民权之萌芽”等评论，对这部小说而言，其意义可能不在于提供了一种确切的、符合实际的阐释，而在于将以往“忠义”说与“海盗”说的对立，作了一种转化与破解。

当然，由于不能与作品的情节、人物达成深度的契合，这样的转化与破解是不可能彻底的。而晚清社会动荡不安，迫使一些有识之士反思其文化上的根源，古代小说往往因此受到批判，“海盗说”仍有社会基础。1898年，梁启超《译印政治小说序》中，就把古代小说总结为“述英雄则规画《水浒》，道男女则步武《红楼》，综其大较，不出海盗诲淫两端”<sup>26</sup>。1902年，他又在《论小说与群治之关系》说：“今我国民绿林豪杰，遍地皆是，日日有桃园之拜，处处为梁山之盟，所谓‘大碗酒、大块肉、分秤称金银、论套穿衣服’等思想，充塞于下等社会之脑中，遂成为哥老、大刀等会，卒至有如义和拳者起，沦陷京国，启召外戎，曰：惟小说之故。呜呼！小说之陷溺人群乃至如是，乃至如是！”<sup>27</sup>（朱一玄等：《水浒传研究资料汇编》，南开大学出版社2002年版，第336页）把社会罪恶全部归咎于小说及其作者，认为小说是“吾中国人群治腐败之总根源”。因此，梁启超提出，“故今日欲改良政治，必自小说界革命始，欲新民，必自新小说始”。

几道、别士（严复、夏曾佑）光绪二十三年（1897）在《本馆附印小说缘起》中也说：“《水浒传》者，志盗也，而萑蒲狐父之豪，往往标之以为宗旨……盖天下不胜利说部之毒，而其益难言矣。”<sup>28</sup>

晚清名臣胡林翼曾对其亲信严渭春说：“一部《水浒》教坏天下强有力而思不逞之民。”<sup>29</sup>

25 《水浒全传》，中册，上海人民出版社，1975年，第881页。

26 梁启超：《译印政治小说序》，《二十世纪中国小说理论资料》（第一卷），第37页。

27 梁启超：《论小说与群治之关系》，《二十世纪中国小说理论资料》（第一卷），第53页。

28 严复、夏曾佑：《本馆附印小说缘起》，《二十世纪中国小说理论资料》（第一卷），第27页。

29 胡林翼：《致严渭春方伯》，马蹄疾编：《水浒传资料汇编》，第390页。



在新观念与旧思维的对立中，吴沃尧力图有所折衷。他对用新观念比附曲解的说法进行了批评，认为“轻议古人固非是，动辄索引古人之理想，以阑入今日之理想，亦非是也。吾于今人之论小说，每一见之。如《水浒传》志盗之书也，而今人每每称其提倡平等主义，吾恐施耐庵当日断不能作此理想，不过彼叙此一百八人聚义梁山泊，恰似一平等社会之现状耳。吾曾反复读之，意其为愤世之作”<sup>30</sup>。其“愤世”说，实际上又回到了传统的“忠义”理论。

林纾则以西方小说中的尚武精神诠释了《水浒传》的“不驯于法”实际“盗寇”说：“故西人说部，舍言情外，探险及尚武两门，有曾偏右奴性之人否？明知不驯于法，足以兆乱，然横刀盘马，气概凛烈，读之未有不动色者。吾国《水浒》之流传，至今不能漫灭，亦以尚武精神足以振作凡陋。”<sup>31</sup>但是，所谓“尚武精神”如果不与特定的社会理念相结合，只能是空洞的，没有说服力的。

总之，近代对《水浒传》评论中的“民主、民权之萌芽”与“说部之毒”观点，构成了一组新的对立。这一组矛盾，与“忠义”说、“海盗”说虽然存在着思想意识的重大、甚至本质区别，尤其是对所谓“民主、民权之萌芽”的认识，从根本上超越“忠义”观念的旧思想体系，与上一个阶段的基本上属于观念相通而角度不同的对立明显不同。但是，由于社会发展本身的矛盾性，注定了《水浒传》的评论不可能统一。

### 3 “造反有理”与法制精神

新中国成立以后的六十多年，意识形态方面的矛盾同样激烈，思想变化同样巨大。这矛盾与变化同样在《水浒传》的评论中得到了鲜明的体现。与以往不同的是，近六十年不仅以改革开放为标志可以分为前后两大阶段。新政权建立之初对“造反有理”观念的颂扬与改革开放以后法制精神的提倡，造成了《水浒传》评论新一轮的对立与转变。不过，在这两大阶段中，也因社会发展，存在着思想意识的不断调整。因此，对《水浒传》的评论，也在大的对立格局中，还有小的对立，——所谓大、小，其实是从影响的角度说的；如就性质而言，则无论大小，其思想的对立性，都丝毫不弱于此前的对立性评论。也就是说，随着中国社会前进步伐的加快，对立思维的螺旋式递进频率，似乎也在加快。

二十世纪五、六十年代的“农民起义说”占上峰。这一说法主要包括以下基本内容：（1）《水浒传》充分了描写奸臣当道、政治腐败、民不聊生的社会现实，揭示出农民起义的社会根源即“官逼民反”、“乱自上作”。（2）塑造了一批勇武智慧的农民起义英雄群像，歌颂他们劫富济贫、除暴安良、“替天行道，保境安民”的英雄品质。（3）描写了农民起义失败的原因与过程，说明义军领袖宋江、卢俊义等人具有浓厚“忠君”思想，他们“替天行道”和博取功名，封妻荫子的追求，最终带领将义军接受朝廷的“招安”，并导致起义失败的悲剧结局。这一观点是与共产党通过“农村包围城市”装夺取政权的社会基础与革命理念相适合的，因此，“海盗”说被正面表述为“农民起义的教科书”。

上述看法一直是改革开放前的主流，1975年毛泽东说发表对《水浒传》的评论，认

30 吴沃尧：《杂说》，马蹄疾编：《水浒传资料汇编》，第415页。

31 林纾：《鬼山狼侠传叙》，《二十世纪中国小说理论资料》（第一卷），第150-160页。

为“《水浒》这部书，好就好在投降。做反面教材，使人民都知道投降派。”<sup>32</sup>这一观点有特定的政治背景，只是《水浒传》评论中的一个小插曲。文革结束后，很快又回归到以前的看法。在主流文学史中，是这样表述的：

《水浒传》在歌颂宋江等梁山英雄“全仗忠义”的同时，深刻地揭露了上自朝廷、下至地方的一批批贪官污吏、恶霸豪绅的“不忠不义”。

但是，《水浒传》的题材毕竟有它的特殊性，不管作者如何极力把它拉入“忠义”的思维格局，以及故事在流传过程中融入了多少市井细民的意识，作品最终还是在客观上展示了我国封建社会中的一场惊心动魄的农民起义。……小说作者站在造反英雄的立场上，沿着“乱自上作”、“造反有理”的思路，揭示了封建社会的基本矛盾，艺术地再现了中国古代农民起义的发生、发展和失败的全过程，并从中总结了一些带有规律性的东西。这在整部中国文学史上是十分罕见、难能可贵的。正是在这个意义上，可以说《水浒》是一部悲壮的农民起义的史诗<sup>33</sup>。

然而，近二十年来，随着法制建设的发展与法治精神的加强，出现了很多对《水浒传》的批判，这是《水浒传》接受史上的一个新转折。1982年山东电视台拍摄了《武松》等水浒人物系列电视剧，古代文学专家吴世昌致中央电视台函，要求停播《武松》，他说：“此书最残暴、最野蛮、最无理的凶杀情节正是武松《血溅鸳鸯楼》这一回。”体现了“一种疯狂嗜血的杀人哲学”，“这种无原则、无是非、无阶级观念的凶杀，让青少年在电视中欣赏，会起到什么教育作用？”<sup>34</sup>这可能是最早对《水浒传》血腥描写表达批判态度声音。不过，吴世昌的批判应该不是针对《水浒传》全书。而随着改革开放的发展，这种批判也迅速延伸至全书的基本倾向。如武汉大学朱志方《正义与义气——〈水浒传〉的深层价值观评析》认为“《水浒传》作者站在凶手的立场写杀人，以赞赏方式描写滥杀和残杀，完全无视受害者的生存权利。”“《水浒传》作者站在黑帮的立场上写忠义。因此，《水浒传》的忠义决不是社会正义，而是地地道道的黑帮逻辑和黑帮规则。”“《水浒传》站在流氓的立场写女人。……（梁山匪首）对女人不仅没有正义，而且连黑帮内部的‘义’也不能贯彻。”“《水浒传》也许是中国特有的黑帮组织的长久不衰的教科书”，“作者在书中传达的反人道态度、盗匪逻辑和对女人的轻视等深层思想，对中国历史却起了不良的影响。”<sup>35</sup>还有人认为：“水浒世界里的很多血腥气冲鼻的行为，连追求正义的幌子都没有，完全是为蛮荒的嗜血心理所驱使。”<sup>36</sup>

32 据1975年上海人民出版社《水浒全传》首页。

33 袁行霈主编：《中国文学史》，1999年，第52页。

34 吴世昌：《关于电视剧〈武松〉致中央电视台函》，《吴世昌全集》第二卷，2003年，河北教育出版社。

35 朱志方：《正义与义气——〈水浒传〉的深层价值观评析》，载冯天瑜主编《中国文化的昨天、今天和明天——名家演讲集》，武汉大学出版社，2001年，第256-266页。

36 陈洪、孙勇进：《漫说水浒》，三联书店，2001年，第54页。

虽然也有一些研究者从不同角度为《水浒传》辩护<sup>37</sup>，但似乎不如上述观点更具影响力。对《水浒传》的批判逐渐系统化，出现了几本专著，如段德明《水浒新鉴》（云南民族出版社，2003年）王学泰、李新宇《水浒传与三国演义批判》（天津古籍出版社2004年）和刘再复的《双典批判——对〈水浒传〉和〈三国演义〉的文化批判》（生活·读书·新知三联书店，2010版）等，都对《水浒传》的暴力描写等进行了激烈的批判。《水浒传与三国演义批判》有一篇贺雄飞代序《为中国文学解毒》，以简明扼要的方式，表达了与作者相同的看法：

《水浒传》和《三国演义》则经不住现代性的审视，尽管二者在艺术上堪称一流，但其基因中的毒素太多。前者大力宣扬游民文化和暴力美学，坑害了无数“愚昧”的灵魂；后者则歪曲历史，弘扬权谋文化和奴性思想，让中国人沉浸在历史的阴冷和残酷中不能自拔<sup>38</sup>。

下面是《水浒传与三国演义批判》中一段比较有代表性的言论：

有的评论家认为梁山好汉的造反活动是对现存制度的挑战，这是不准确的。实际上，他们只是着力改变这个制度中人们的位置，并以暴力的形式实现。他们在这个变化中夺取物质利益以求得生存。这使主流社会的人们听来感到恐惧与惊奇，而在江湖上的人们看来是理所当然，因为非如此则不能生存<sup>39</sup>。

此书对《水浒传》其他与当代观念不符的内容也多有批判，如作者认为在中国古代文学作品中，像《水浒传》中这样敌视妇女的还不多见，“这种极端的对女性的敌视与漠视反映了游民对妇女的态度。”<sup>40</sup>

而在《双典批判——对〈水浒传〉和〈三国演义〉的文化批判》中，刘再复阐述了这样的基本观点：

（《水浒传》和《三国演义》）一是暴力崇拜，一是权术崇拜。两部都是造成心灵灾难的坏书。……五百年业，危害中国世道人心最大最广泛的文学作品，就是这两部经典。可怕的是，不仅过去，而且现在仍然在影响和破坏中国的人心，并化作中国人的潜意识继续塑造着中国的民族性格。……可以说，这两部小说，正是中国人的地狱之门。

如果说，《红楼梦》是真正的“人”的文化，那么，《水浒传》和《三国演义》则是“非人”的文化，是人任人杀戮的文化<sup>41</sup>。

37 如王前程《怎样看待〈水浒传〉中的暴力行为》（《明清小说研究》1992年第1期）、刘坎龙《论〈水浒传〉的“嗜杀”与化解》（《新疆教育学院学报》2005年第3期）等。

38 贺雄飞：《为中国文学解毒》，见王学泰、李新宇：《水浒传与三国演义批判》，天津古籍出版社，2004年，第1-2页。

39 王学泰、李新宇：《水浒传与三国演义批判》，天津古籍出版社，2004年，第157页。

40 同上，第133页。

41 刘再复：《双典批判——对〈水浒传〉和〈三国演义〉的文化批判》，生活·读书·新知三联书店，2010年，第5、18页。

本文无意对上述有关《水浒传》的批判作出评价，因为这些对《水浒传》的批判，既是对古代小说的新认识与阐释，更是对传统文化的批判，是着眼于当代文明的建设。从这一点来看，它与“海盗”说、指出《水浒传》为“说部之毒”一样，都顺应了某种时代的需要。当然，时代的需要也不是单纯的。如果我们略加比较就可以发现，“海盗”说和指出《水浒传》为“说部之毒”说，根本目的都意在维护当时现存的秩序，而刘再复等人的批判，却意在通过对古代小说的批判，宣传新的、具有所谓普世价值的观念。有趣的是，在近代，当西方的自由、民主思想刚刚传入中国时，《水浒传》一度被当成了这种思想的本土资源。一百年以后，《水浒传》又走到了它的反面。这固然可以说是人们思想认识的提高，但也说明，小说本身的阐释具有极大的空间，乃至可以容纳不同的思想。

时代的需要的不单纯，还表现在几乎同时，为《水浒传》叫好的声浪也很高，这同样是某种现实呼声的反映。当有学者提出应将《鲁智深拳打镇关西》从中学语文教材中剔除时，网上却出现了一片反对声音<sup>42</sup>，不能排除一些人出于对腐败现象与黑恶势力的不满，而通过为《水浒传》喝彩，发泄不满。也就是说，从中我们可以看到，从开始有人批判《水浒传》违反法制精神到肯定小说中的暴力除恶行为，只不过经过了短短的二十年；而现在，两种观点的并存，已不存在时间差了。这一方面可以说明随着中国的发展，社会的承受能力与观念的多元化都有所加强，但另一方面，激烈的批判与情绪化的肯定，也预示着社会仍然存在某种令人不安的因素。

或许是由于近代以来传播方式的改变与媒体的放大效应<sup>43</sup>，《水浒传》评论中对立思维的三次递进，一次比一次显得更严重。当人们对于一部小说的态度，与对社会现实的态度形成了某种对应关系时，我们也必须意识到，缓和和对立的思维已不能简单地从小说文本的分析中找到答案了。

#### 4 赘语：痴人前不能说梦

近年来，社会舆论与学术研究对《水浒传》，主要集中在目无法纪、暴力倾向、血腥场面、蔑视女性等几方面。应该说，《水浒传》中确实存在不少这方面的描写。特别是其中的大规模的、残冷的杀戮描写，造成了对此书评价的困扰。正如夏志清所指出：“虽然《水浒》肯定了英雄们的豪情壮举，但它同时对野蛮屠杀事实上的赞同，使得中国化学者对这一重要作品莫知所从。”<sup>44</sup>而如何面对这些现象，既是当代文明建设的问题，即文明的发展是否一定要站在传统文化的对立面；同时，也是一个如何面对古代文学作品的问题，即我们能否简单地用当代眼光、非艺术的眼光看待古代小说。对此，我以为以下几点是不能不注意的：

1. 传统文化中存在大量与现代观念不一致的东西，应加以批判，但也不能脱离特定的时代背景。
2. 《水浒传》的主导思想是“替天行道”、是追求社会公正，其中的暴力倾向等，有的是一个过程，有的是一种手段。

42 参见2010年6月3日《新京报》C11版的报道《一教授提议删除“鲁提辖”课文》。

43 高日辉、洪雁《水浒传接受史》（齐鲁书社，2006年）有专节讨论新媒体与《水浒传》的新接受问题，可参阅，见此书第338页。

44 夏志清：《中国古典小说导论》，胡益民等译本，安徽文艺出版社，1988年，109页。

3. 《水浒传》小说情景的设置是一个整体，不能孤立的看待某一描写。例如目无法纪问题，小说揭示了法制不彰的原因，借李逵之口说：“条例，条例，若还依得，天下不乱了！”<sup>45</sup>”
4. 对暴力倾向，《水浒传》并非一味赞同。如江州劫法场，李逵滥杀无辜，晁盖制止道：“不干百姓事，休只管伤人！”<sup>46</sup>”
5. 小说的娱乐性决定了小说描写的夸张性、谐谑性。对此，我赞同这样的观点：“《水浒传》毕竟是一部小说，它对某一行为和事件的描写和叙述并不能看作是某种伦理观念的直接显现。”<sup>47</sup>”

明代袁中道《游居柿录》中的有一段话可以给我们一种启示：

万历壬辰夏中，李龙湖（即李卓吾）方居武昌朱邸。予往访之，正命僧常志抄写此书（指《水浒》），逐字批点。常志者，乃赵谷阳门下一书史，后出家，礼无念为师，龙湖悦其善书，以为侍者。常称其有志，数加赞叹鼓舞之，使抄《水浒传》。每见龙湖称水浒者人为豪杰，且以鲁智深为真修行，而笑不吃狗肉者长老为迂腐。一一作实法会，初尚恂恂不自觉。久之，与其侪伍有小忿，遂欲放火烧屋。龙湖闻之大骇，微数之，即叹曰：“李老子，不如五台山智真长老远矣。智真长老能容鲁智深，老子儿不能容我乎？”时时欲学智深行径。龙湖性褊易嗔，见其如此，恨甚，乃命人往麻城招杨凤里至右辖处，乞一邮符，押送之归湖上。道中见邮卒牵马少迟，怒目大骂曰：“汝有几颗头？”其可笑如此。后龙湖恶之甚，遂不能安于湖上，北走长安，北走长安，竟流落不振以死。痴人前不能说梦，此其一证也。<sup>48</sup>”

也许，什么是《水浒传》的精神，比那些表面的描写，更值得我们思考。

45 《水浒传》第52回。

46 《水浒传》第40回。

47 商伟《〈水浒传〉英雄观念平议——兼评浦安迪教授〈四大奇书〉》（载《九州学刊》1991年4月4卷1期）。齐裕焜《对〈水浒传〉中血腥、暴力问题的思考》（《明清小说研究》2011年第2期）对此问题也有论述。

48 袁中道：《游居柿录》，上海远东出版社，1996年，第211页。

## Linking Ancient and Contemporary

Continuities and Discontinuities in Chinese Literature

edited by Tiziana Lippiello, Chen Yuehong 陈跃红 and Maddalena Barenghi

## Becoming a Couple

Conversations and Couple Narrative in the Novella

*Jiao Hong ji*

Barbara Bisetto

(University of Milano-Bicocca, Italia)

**Abstract** This paper examines the configuration of the romantic couple in Song Yuan's Yuan-period novella *Jiao Hong ji* in the context of the earlier model set by the Tang dynasty classical tale *Yingying zhuan*. It focuses on the analysis of conversations between fictional lovers in order to examine how intimacy and the characters' search for a shared experience of mutual acknowledgment are performed within the main plot. Shifting away from the model set by *Yingying zhuan*, the work of Song Yuan newly addressed the issue of love's place in Confucian sentimentality, allowing the troubled emergence of a narrative of the couple.

**Summary** 1 Introduction. – 2 The Silent Legacy of Yingying. – 3 Conversations in *Jiao Hong ji*: Towards an Aesthetic of the Ordinary. – 4 Conclusion.

**Keywords** *Jiao Hong ji*. The Story of Jiaoniang and Feihong. Song Yuan. Chuanqi. Yingying zhuan. The Story of Yingying.

## 1 Introduction

*Jiao Hong ji* 嬌紅記 (The Story of Jiaoniang and Feihong) is a long *chuanqi* 傳奇 narrative written by Song Yuan 宋遠 (zi Meidong 梅洞) and dated to the Yuan 元 dynasty (1279-1368).<sup>1</sup> It tells the love story of a young and talented man named Shen Chun 申純 and his gifted maternal cousin Wang Jiaoniang 王嬌娘, from its faltering beginning to the tragic deaths of the two lovers. The story enjoyed great success in later centuries, particularly during the

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**1** During the Ming 明 (1368-1644) and Qing 清 (1644-1911) dynasties, the novella *Jiao Hong ji* was attributed to at least two other different authors, besides Song Yuan, namely Yu Ji 虞集 (1273-1348) and Li Xu 李翹 (15th century). On the authorship of *Jiao Hong ji*, see Itō 1977, pp. 75-79; Chen Yiyuan 1997, pp. 20-27; Chen Guojun 2005.

Ming dynasty, when it was adapted into several plays and reprinted within many narrative anthologies and popular encyclopaedias.<sup>2</sup>

The popularity of this novella during the Ming was certainly linked to its focus on desire, marriage and the heroic motif of the lovers' double death, but it was also the result of formal changes in the composition of narrative, particularly in the extensive combination of prose and verse that created the textual illusion of a dramatic performance.<sup>3</sup>

In the past, research on *Jiao Hong ji* was rather limited, and it was only recently that the important role played by this novella in the history of pre-modern literature has been given due attention.<sup>4</sup> Previous studies have discussed mainly the erotic theme elaborated in

2 According to Itō (1977, pp. 83-86), the first existing attested reference to the novella *Jiao Hong ji* dates to the Yongle 永樂 reign period (1403-1424) of the Ming dynasty and is found in the story *Jia Yunhua huanhun ji* 賈雲華還魂記 (Jia Yunhua Returns from the Grave) in the collection *Jiandeng yuhua* 剪燈餘話 (Sequel to Tales Told by Lamplight) by Li Changqi 李昌祺 (1376-1452). Gao Ru's 高儒 bibliographic catalogue *Baichuan shuzhi* 百川書志 (The Book Catalogue of the One Hundred Streams, preface 1540) contains evidence of the circulation of the text in a single edition format in two juan. See Gao [1540] 1957, p. 90. During the Ming and Qing dynasties, the novella was included – at the expense of more or less significant editorial changes – in several narrative anthologies and popular encyclopedias such as *Yan yi bian* 艷異編 (Tales of Love and Wonder), *Yanju biji* 燕居筆記 (Leisure Life Notes), *Xiugu chunrong* 繡谷春容 (Spring Vistas From the Brocade Valley), *Huazhen qiyán* 花陣綺言 (Literary elegance in romance), *Yijian shangxin bian* 一見賞心編 (Beautiful Sight Compendium), *Qingshi* 情史 (History of Love) down to the late Qing collection *Nü Liaozhai zhiyi* 女聊齋誌異 (The Female Records of the Strange), to name but a few. Chen Yiyuan (1997, pp. 32-36) lists at least seven or eight dramatic adaptations of the novella from the Yuan dynasty to the Qing, among which Liu Dui 劉兌 (fl. 1383)'s *zaju Jintong yunü Jiao Hong ji* 金童玉女嬌紅記 (The Golden Boy and the Jade Girl, or the Story of Jiaoniang and Feihong, printed edition from the Xuande period, 1426-1435) and Meng Chengshun 孟稱舜 (1599-1684)'s *chuanqi Jieyi yuanyang zhong Jiao Hong ji* 節義鴛鴦嬌紅記 (The Story of Jiaoniang and Feihong and of Chastity and Integrity in the Mandarin-duck Tomb, prefaces 1638 and 1639) are the most popular ones. For an English translation of Meng Chengshun's play, see Meng 2001.

3 The novella is generally considered the first example of the narrative sub-genre known as *zhongpian chuanqi xiaoshuo* 中篇傳奇小說 (medium-length novels), a development of the short-story in classical language (*chuanqi* 傳奇) of the Tang and Song dynasties, which spread and gained popularity during the Yuan and Ming periods. See Chen Yiyuan 1996, pp. 1-33; Chen Dakang 1998; Li 2004. The two main formal characteristics of this genre are the length of the text (texts total 15-20,000 characters) and the extensive use of verse within the narrative. In terms of formal features, the novella *Jiao Hong ji* totals more than seventeen thousand characters and contains about sixty poems in all main poetical genres.

4 Zhang Peiheng, Luo Yuming (1997, vol. 3, pp. 166-172) were among the first scholars to discuss at some length the novella *Jiao Hong ji* in their history of Chinese literature. In their opinion, Song's work marked a new development in narrative creation in the context of traditional literature (p. 168). A few earlier studies dedicated to *Jiao Hong ji* included the groundbreaking work by the Japanese scholar Itō, in 1977, the first to acknowledge the important role played by this novella in the revitalization of the *chuanqi* narrative genre during the Yuan and Ming dynasties, followed by Ichinari 1995, and the article by Wang (1994) on the late Ming 'cult of *qing* 情' (passion, emotion, love). For some recent contributions see Ding 2005, Carlitz 2006, Wang 2006, Bisetto 2011.

the novella, and more recently the function assigned to poems in the overall narrative structure.

Critics have generally praised the novella for the elaborated psychological characterization of the main characters, and particularly of the female protagonist Wang Jiaoniang. The pre-eminence of the female roles in the narrative is underscored by the titles that were commonly used to designate the work, even though this aspect can also be related to the *chuanqi* narrative convention to name stories according to the female protagonist.<sup>5</sup>

*Jiao Hong ji* however is not only the story of a single heroine (Jiaoniang) and her rival-turned-helper supporting character (the maid Feihong 飛紅), but it is primarily a narrative telling the process of formation of a romantic couple and the recognition of its state of being. For all the twists and turns of the plot, the story centres firmly on the performance of the couple's narrative.

In this essay I will focus on the analysis of some key conversations between lovers in order to examine how the novella creates the world of the couple by allowing readers to linger over the crucial condition of mutual knowledge and shared experience between fictional lovers. As I will highlight in my analysis of *Jiao Hong ji*, these dialogical components are the primary place where the acknowledgement of the lovers' status as a couple is negotiated and its aliveness performed for the pleasure of the reading audience.

## 2 The Silent Legacy of Yingying

The scene of the first encounter between (future) lovers is an essential, and likely universal, feature of romantic narratives.<sup>6</sup> In *Jiao Hong ji* the encounter between Shen Chun and Wang Jiaoniang bears significant resemblance to the corresponding scene in the Tang 唐 dynasty tale *Yingying* 鶯鶯傳 *zhuan* (The Story of Yingying) by Yuan Zhen 元稹 (779-831), undoubtedly one of the most important and problematic love narratives of Chinese literature.

5 Besides *Jiao Hong ji*, other titles associated with this novella are *Wang Jiao* 王嬌 included in the anthology *Qingshi*; *Yonglu Jiao Hong* 擁爐嬌紅 (Hugging the Stove, or Jiaoniang and Feihong) in the Lin Jinyang's 林近陽 edition of *Yanju biji*; the long title of an annotated single edition format known as *Xinqie jiaozheng pinghi Shen Wang qigou yonglu Jiao Hong ji* 新鍍校正評釋申王奇遣擁爐嬌紅記 (Newly engraved, amended and annotated edition to the Story of Jiaoniang and Feihong, or the story of the marvellous encounter between Shen Chun and Wang Jiaoniang (Hugging the Stove); *Jiao Hong shuangmei* 嬌紅雙美 (The two beauties, Jiaoniang and Feihong) in the anthology *Huazhen qiyang*; *Shen Houqing Jiao Hong ji* 申厚卿嬌紅記 (The story of Shen Houqing, Jiaoniang and Feihong) in *Xiugu chunrong*; *Jiao Hong shuangmei quanzhuan* 嬌紅雙美全傳 (The Complete Story of the Two Beauties, Jiaoniang and Feihong, Qing edition). See Ōtsuka 1985; Chen Yiyuan 1996, pp. 85-88.

6 For a study on the first encounter scene in Western literature, see Rousset 1989.



The Tang era tale sets the lovers' first encounter within the context of the banquet that Yingying's mother, Madam Zheng, offers to thank Mr. Zhang for his help during the military uprising that has threatened her family. The scene is mediated by the presence of Yingying's mother, while no form of direct communication between Zhang and Yingying is exchanged, except for the ritual obeisance the girl is asked to pay to Zhang as an older member of the family. The narrative focus is on Yingying's reluctance to present herself to Zhang, which delays her entrance to the scene. A direct exchange between Zhang and Yingying is completely avoided, even though the narrator hints at the relevance of this aspect for the narrative framework when, at the end of the scene, he notes that «Zhang tried to draw her into conversation, but she wouldn't answer him» 張生稍以詞導之, 不對 (Owen 1996, p. 194).

Even a cursory reading of the scene of the first encounter between Shen Chun and Jiaoniang reveals the degree of indebtedness of *Jiao Hong ji* to *Yingying zhuan*. Except for the background details – the scene is now set in Wang's residence and not on the grounds of a temple, and Shen is visiting his maternal relatives and not meeting them by chance – the basic schema of the scene is the same: Jiaoniang refuses to enter the hall to present herself to Shen, and she eventually appears only after an angry rebuke from her mother. In this scene as well, the two cousins do not talk to each other, but differently from the Tang tale, the reader is now left with no visible hint of Jiaoniang's emotional reaction and the narrative focus rests firmly on Shen Chun.

The intertextual reference to *Yingying zhuan* in this opening section of *Jiao Hong ji* is more than a simple thematic convention. It actually projects the overall figure of Yingying (and her storyworld) onto that of Jiaoniang. To a certain extent, the author is offering the reader a shortcut to accessing Jiaoniang's (mental) fictional world, considering that, as argued by Palmer (2004, p. 41), narratologically «it is much easier to access a storyworld if the reader can apply knowledge of other storyworlds that are constructed in similar ways».

The interrelationship between the two narratives continues in the background of *Jiao Hong ji*, and it is explicitly mentioned in a quick reference to the story of scholar Zhang and Cui Yingying in the letter Shen Chun wrote to Jiaoniang after his first separation from her. But most significantly, the shadow of Yingying's storyworld continues to project itself onto the figure of Jiaoniang, particularly in her intense fear of being abandoned, which motivates the repeated pledges of love and solemn vows of fidelity she asks Shen to perform (Bisetto 2011, p. 553).

From the perspective of the whole narrative configuration, however, this intertextual link also marks the signpost of a forking path that takes the story of Jiaoniang and Shen Chun along an alternative path to the one elaborated in *Yingying zhuan*. And the primary constituent of the new narrative is represented by the couple's conversations.

The fictional pair of young cousins narrated in *Yingying zhuan*, scholar Zhang and Cui Yingying, is certainly one of the most enigmatic and fascinating couples in Chinese literature. For generations, past and present, the sudden break that brought this romantic relationship to an unsuccessful end has made readers sigh out of indignation and disappointment, while the cultural and literary legacy of this narrative continued to cast its shadow over later romantic fiction up to the 18th century masterpiece *Honglou meng* 紅樓夢 (Dream of the Red Chamber).

Part of the enduring fascination of the tale lies in the elusiveness that characterizes the world of the pair of lovers as a couple. The story is cleverly crafted so as to almost screen the world of the couple from the reader's view and to leave many questions concerning the lovers' attitudes towards each other unresolved. What is particularly striking in this narrative is the absence of performed conversations between the two lovers. Communication is either addressed to other characters, or, in the case of the two lovers, it is never represented in the form of a real dialogue but rather as a monologue. Therefore, dialogical parts show Zhang talking to his friends and to Yingying's maid (Hongniang 紅娘), while the only person talking within the boundaries of the couple is Yingying – through the poems she wrote, the harsh rebuke she gave to Zhang during their first tryst, the comforting words she spoke to him prior to his departure for the capital, and finally the long letter she wrote pleading her case after she realized that the long separation meant the end of their relationship. In all these situations Zhang is left mute. Thanks to this artful configuration of narrative discourse, the words spoken by Yingying end up having no 'partner'; they are words towards someone that is presented nonetheless as an 'other'. It is significant that at the end of the passionate night the two lovers spent together, the narrator describes the scene observing that no word was uttered during the whole night 終夕無一言 (Yuan s.d., p. 4014).<sup>7</sup>

### 3 Conversations in *Jiao Hong ji*: Towards an Aesthetic of the Ordinary

A great part of the narrative in *Jiao Hong ji* focuses on the couple's interaction in the form of dialogues and poetical exchanges. As previous studies have pointed out, dialogical scenes and poems constitute the building blocks of the rich psychological texture of the novella. The role of these

<sup>7</sup> The original text does not give a definite indication of the subject of this sentence, while in translation the subject is generally assumed to be the female protagonist, Yingying. Owen translates it: «She had not said a word the entire night» (Yuan 1996, p. 196), while Levy renders it: «Elle n'avait pas proféré un mot de la nuit» (Yuan 1997, p. 108), therefore recognizing that of Yingying as the only active voice in conversations within the boundaries of the couple.

discursive components, however, is not limited to that of textual cues in characterisation, but they also help to create the illusion – and the pleasure – of the everyday, which constitutes one of the aesthetic achievements of the work.

The overall plot of *Jiao Hong ji* turns on the progressive enlargement of the main plot of the lovers' piecemeal process of mutual knowing, or in other words, what, in my telling of it, constitutes the couple's narrative. All the events that delay or block the lovers' union – the initial opposition to marriage by the Wang family, the erotic threat represented by Feihong and later by the hungry ghost that seduces Shen Chun by assuming Jiaoniang's appearance, and even the intervention of the powerful official who, by demanding Jiaoniang's hand, puts an end to the marriage plan of the two lovers and to their lives – actually help to replicate and deepen this process of knowing in the eyes of the lovers themselves, the other participants in the storyworld, and of course the reading audience.

The length of the narrative is therefore only secondarily related to the linear progression of the marriage plot, because it rests as well on the repeated creation of episodes that complicate and replicate the basic narrative geometry in order to show the couple at play.

Conversations and poetical exchanges are the place where both plot advancement and slowness of pace are modulated in the narrative. They allow readers to witness the process of the negotiation of boundaries in the formation of the couple and enjoy the pleasure of its vibrancy and aliveness.

In her study on conversations in Western comedy, narratologist Kay Young (2001) has proposed a general classification of dialogical exchanges between fictional lovers based on two main categories defined as 'crux-conversations' and 'word-plays'. According to Young, the first type includes conversations that are event-defining moments marking the turning points in the couple's narrative. As such they represent indispensable points of arrival for the full development of the plot and function as structural nodes that create and develop both the couple and its narrative. Following the linear progression of the storyline, they may be further classified into first-time conversations, middle conversations (i.e. the mutual acknowledgment of love) and final conversations (or end-conversation) (pp. 37-63).

'Word-plays', on the other hand, allow narrative to take a rest. They do not operate in terms of plot advancement (or at least not primarily), and what they actually achieve is the piecemeal performance of the couple's aliveness (pp. 64-85).

Of course, as is always the case when categorizing, 'crux conversations' and 'word-plays' define prototypical cases of dialogical interaction between fictional lovers, while actual examples may suggest a more nuanced reality. However, they have the undeniable advantage of highlighting the different ways a narrative may use to convey the necessity and urgency of partnering.

Conversations and poetical exchanges between Shen Chun and Jiaoniang

represent one of the key components of *Jiao Hong ji*. The scene of the first conversation between Shen Chun and Jiaoniang is narrated shortly after their first encounter. It is introduced by a short narrative passage that describes the emotional response aroused in Shen by his earlier meeting with Jiaoniang and his ardent desire to reveal his feelings to her. The scene takes place one evening when Shen catches sight of his beloved cousin embroidering by the window,

一夕，嬌晚繡紅窗下，倚牀視荼蘼花，久不移目，生輕步踵其後，嬌不知也，因浩然長歎。生知其有所思，因低聲問曰：「爾何於此仁視長歎也，將有思乎？將有約乎？」嬌不答，良久，乃曰：「兄何自來此？日晚矣，春寒逼人，兄覺之乎？」生知嬌以他詞相拒，因應曰：「春寒固也。」嬌正視，逡巡引去，生獨歸室。無聊，乃書《點絳脣》一詞於寓室之東，以寓意焉。(Song s.d., p. 981)

One evening Jiaoniang was embroidering by the window. Leaning on the window, she looked at the flowers of the Rose-leaf bramble and for a long time did not pull her gaze away. The young scholar stepped silently behind her, while she, still unaware of his presence, sighed profoundly. Knowing that she was concerned about something, he asked in a low voice: «What are you doing here, looking up and sighing? Are you thinking of someone? Do you have any rendezvous?» Jiaoniang did not reply and after some time she eventually asked him: «Why have you come here? The day is already late and the spring chill is still biting. Don't you feel it, cousin?» He knew she changed the subject to reject him and replied: «The spring chill is stubborn». She looked at him squarely and withdrew hesitatingly, while he returned to his lodge. Feeling dejected, he composed a song to the tune «Dian jiang chun» on the eastern wall of the lodge to convey his feelings.

This first conversation falls neatly into the category of 'crux conversations'. It sets the couple narrative in motion, and above all it successfully develops the dynamics of shared conversations as performances that create a condition of mutual knowledge, the acknowledgment of the other as other but also as partner.

There is no doubt that this is no ordinary conversation: Its meaning exceeds the sum of the explicit verbal statements conveyed by the two participants. The set of questions addressed by Shen in his opening line stands out for the straightforwardness of his insistent enquiries, almost bordering to rudeness. They reflect his assertiveness in showing his emotional engagement to Jiaoniang, but they offer as well an interpretation of the girl's behaviour. The act of sighing is unequivocally decoded as an index of longing, an enactment of Jiaoniang's rich emotional disposition to which the narrator alluded earlier in the narrative when he noted that Shen «Observed her behaviour and found that there was always something unfathomable in her way of talking, smil-

ing and behaving. He thus knew she was a very passionate person». 生因察其動靜，見嬌言笑舉止，常有疑猜不定之狀，生知其賦情特甚也 (Song s.d., p. 981).

The reaction of Jiaoniang is also heavily charged with emotional overtones. The silence she opposes to these questions in the first instance, and the statement she adds after a while to change the subject of the conversation, both violate the rule of 'relevance' (in Gricean terms) in social interaction and try to deny Shen's power over the conversation.

Shen's reply to Jiaoniang, however, is the real turning point of the conversation as a fundamental moment of couple formation, because it is the point where he presents himself as a conversational partner. By clinging to Jiaoniang's linguistic message, but at the same time by stretching its meaning to a figurative level (the key word here is the term *chun* 春, 'spring', a conventional trope for love), he asserts once again his concern to control the topic and redirects the conversation towards the thematic frame from which he started, asking once again for acknowledgement, asking therefore to be recognized as a 'present other'.

The lovers' reciprocal acknowledgment will be fully verbalized only later in the narrative, in a wholehearted conversation in which the two cousins mutually reveal their feelings of love. This scene is commonly referred to as the 'hugging the stove' scene. It is set on a cold spring day. Jiaoniang is sitting alone by the stove, when Shen Chun enters her room holding a spray of pear flowers. The girl turns her head to look at Shen but remains seated, and consequently Shen throws down the blossoming spray. Startled, the girl slowly rises to pick up the flowers and asks Shen:

「兄何棄擲此花也？」生曰：「花淚盈量，知其意何在？故棄之。」嬌曰：「東皇故自有主，夜屏一枝以供玩好足矣。兄何索之深也？」生曰：「已荷重諾。無悔。」嬌笑曰：「將何諾？」生曰：「試思之。」嬌不答因謂生曰：「風差勁，可坐此共火。」生欣然即席，與嬌偶坐，相去僅尺餘，嬌因撫生背曰：「兄衣厚否？恐寒威相凌逼也。」生恍然曰：「能念我寒，而不念我斷腸耶！」嬌笑曰：「何事斷腸？妾當為兄謀之。」生曰：「無戲言。我自遇子之後，魂飛魄揚，不能著體，夜更苦長，竟夕不寐。汝方以為戲，足見子之心也。予每見子言語態度，非無情者，及予言深情味，則子變色以拒我，豈可不解世事，而為是沾嬌哉？諒屢繆之跡，不足以當雅意，深藏自閉，將有售也。今日一言之後，餘將西騎矣。子無苦戲我。」嬌因慨然良久，曰：「君疑妾矣，妾敢無言，妾知兄心久矣，豈敢固自鄭重以要君也，第恐不能終始，其如後患何？妾亦數月來諸事不復措意，寢夢不安，飲食俱廢，君所不得知也。」因長吁曰：「君疑甚矣，異日之事，君任之，果不濟，當以死謝君。」生曰：「子果有志，則以策我。」嬌未及答，俄然舅自外至，生因起出迎舅，嬌乃反室，不可再語。(Song s.d., pp. 983-984)<sup>8</sup>

8 This translation has been elaborated on the base of Birch's translation of the corresponding passage in Meng Chengshun's drama. See Meng 2001, pp. 65-70.

«Why did you throw these flowers down, cousin?» «The flowers are brimming with tears - replied Shen - Who knows what they are thinking? That is why I threw them away». «The Queen of the East knows what she is about. It is enough to set up a sprig of blossom to appreciate its beauty for an evening: why do you seek for more?» asked Jiaoniang. «You favored me with your promise - answered Shen - Don't go back on your word». «A promise of what?» asked the girl laughing. «Just think about it». Jiaoniang did not reply and added instead: «The spring breeze is strong, you can sit here by the stove with me». He happily reached the seat and sat down at a short distance from Jiaoniang. «Are your clothes warm enough?» asked the girl patting his back, «I am afraid the chill will strike you». «How can you be concerned about me feeling cold but not about me being heartbroken?» said Shen promptly. «What threatens to break your heart? - asked Jiaoniang laughing - I will help you think it out». «Don't tease me - said Shen Chun - Ever since we met my two souls earthly and ethereal have completely deserted me and I have lost all control. The pain is even worse at night, when I lie sleepless through the darkness hours. Your play, just now, is enough to know your intentions. Every time I meet you, over and over I analyze your words and actions, and it seems you are not without some feeling for me. But as soon as I speak of what I deeply feel your manner changes and you reject me. Can it really be your naiveté in worldly affairs that causes this? Or is it a way to put on airs? Forgive my clumsiness, I can't measure up to your delicacy of mind; it will be best for me to bury my secret thoughts deep in my heart. I will speak them this once and then take my leave. Don't tease me». Upon hearing his words, Jiaoniang heaved a long sigh and said: «Since you harbor these suspicions of me, how can I refrain from speaking out? I have long known what is in your heart, otherwise how could I express myself so openly in order to urge you? I only fear that we can win no lasting union and dread what evils may befall in the end! I too this past months have been too distraught to concentrate on anything, sleepless or with troubled dreams, able neither to eat nor to drink, but what have you known of this?» At the end she heaved a long sigh and added: «Since you harbor deep suspicions of me, all further matters are entrusted to you, and if they fail, I shall recompense you with my death!» «Since you have such a firm determination, cousin - said Shen - please help me work out a plan». Jiaoniang had not replied yet when her father came back home from the outside and Shen went to greet him, while Jiaoniang returned back to her room, having no possibility to talk any further.

This conversation shares many basic elements with the first conversation discussed above. The figurative domain is strengthened by the multiplication of textual references to the spring season (the pear blossom spray; the

Queen of the East; the spring breeze). The first part of the conversation duplicates the interactional dynamics between Shen Chun and Jiaoniang (straightforwardness vs silence) already seen at play in the first conversation. Shen's reference to the 'promise' Jiaoniang made to him in a previous meeting, when she agreed to share with him half of the lampblack she was using for her make up, is again an assertive interpretation of the girl's behaviour. The short reference to this event is important because it assigns a history to their relationship, or in other words it recovers the memory of something that has happened between the two as a moment of a partnered story. Through this reference Shen Chun is demanding recognition. Jiaoniang's reaction (her silence and the following reference to the spring breeze, as well as the mocking attitude displayed shortly after) is a softened replica of the attitude she assumed in the first conversation, in that it tries once again to weaken Shen's authority over the conversation but proves once again to be ineffective. His assertiveness is now revealed in the sincere confession of love he addresses to her. It is politely masked in the self-denigrating stance he assumes, but it is also openly revealed in the repeated use of the imperative form «Don't tease me!» (*Wu xi yan* 無戲言) at the beginning and at the end of his statement, a statement which is actually a piecemeal retracing of the history told by the narrator up to that moment. Jiaoniang's reaction is now the open acknowledgment of this history, a reality she can no longer keep silent (*Qie gan wu yan* 妾敢無言).

The trajectory of this history, from the first encounter down to the 'hugging the stove' scene, is encapsulated in the change in the forms of address used by Jiaoniang toward Shen Chun in the course of this conversation. When she starts talking after Shen's confession of love, she addresses him as *jun* 君 (you) in place of the form *xiong* 兄 (cousin) used in earlier interactions, and from this moment on she will prefer to use it almost until the end of the narrative. This shift in codes marks Jiaoniang's acknowledgment of her new relationship to Shen.

The history behind this shift is narrated in the long sequence of fleeting encounters, micro-conversations, and most of all poetical exchanges, that unfolds between these two 'crux conversations'. Here, narrative becomes 'lazy': It lingers over different manifestations of the emotional bonds between the two characters and it elects poetry as the favourite communication channel between the lovers, and what the reader is invited to experience is the ordinary story, the general story, the bit-by-bit formation of a couple.

## 4 Conclusion

*Jiao Hong ji* can be defined as a ‘lazy’ narrative in the sense that it curtails the space of action while creating another kind of space, that of the intimacy of the couple, made of tiny and recurrent moments of mutual acknowledgement between lovers. The interplay of ‘crux conversations’ and ‘word-plays’ – to borrow Young’s terminology – helps to create a narrative that – from beginning to end – rests firmly on a single element: the creation and the aliveness of the romantic couple, and the pleasure derived from it. Its obvious outcome is the pursuit of happiness, a happiness that does not necessarily belong to the world of narrative, rather a happiness that is outside the boundaries of narrative and the human world (Young 2001, pp. 8-9). A happiness that is actually and simply the point of arrival of a longer process of performance, as aptly noted by the narrator at the end of the narrative: When, the day after the lovers’ burial, the former maid Feihong catches glimpses of Jiaoniang and Shen Chun sitting in what used to be the girl’s room, chatting and smiling one in front of the other «The day after, Feihong was passing near Jiaoniang’s lodge when she had the impression to see Jiaoniang and Shen in the room, talking cheerfully to each other» 抵舍之明日，因與小慧過嬌寢所，恍惚見嬌與生在室相對笑語 (Song s.d., p. 1010), we have the final, blissful, realization of the couple’s ‘ordinary pleasure’.

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## Linking Ancient and Contemporary

Continuities and Discontinuities in Chinese Literature

edited by Tiziana Lippiello, Chen Yuehong 陈跃红 and Maddalena Barenghi

# The Chapter Titles in *Xiyou ji* and *Honglou meng* Continuity and Discontinuity

Nicholas Koss

(Peking University, China)

**Abstract** This essay will first study the chapter titles in the early chapters of *Xiyou ji* (The Journey to the West), which will be followed by an examination of the chapter titles in the first eighty chapters of *Honglou meng* (Dream of the Red Chamber). The purpose of this study will be to show the continuity and discontinuity of the chapter titles in the final version of *Xiyou ji* (1592) with those in the first printed edition of *Honglou meng* (1791). The final part of this essay will relate some of the ideas of Gérard Genette about titles and chapter titles to the chapter titles in *Honglou meng*.

**Summary** 1 Introduction. – 2 Formation of *Xiyou ji*. – 3 Ming Editions of *Xiyou ji*. – 4 Correspondence between the Zhu and 1952 *Xiyou ji*. – 5 Priority of the Zhu Text According to My Reading. – 6 Chapter Titles in *Xiyou Ji*, Chapters 1-14. – 7 How the Author/redactor of The 1592 Edition Uses the Titles from Chapters 1, 8, 13, and The 14 of the Zhu Text. – 8 Chapter Titles in Chapters 15-35 of The 1592 Edition of *Xiyou ji* and Corresponding Ones from the Zhu Text. – 9 How The 1592 Author/Redactor Uses the Zhu Titles for Some of the Titles in Chapter 15-35 of *Xiyou ji*. – 10 How The 1592 Author/Redactor Creates His Own Titles. – 11 Chapter Titles from Chapter 36 in the 1592 Edition. – 12 The Chapter Titles in *Honglou meng*. – 13 The Relationship of the Chapter Titles in Hlm to the Content of the Chapter. – 14 The Chapter Titles of Hlm as Offering a Way to Interpret the Content of the Chapter. – 15 Other Aspects of the Chapter Titles of HLM. – 16 Conclusion.

**Keywords** *Xiyou ji*. The Journey to the West. *Honglou meng*. The Dream of the Red Chamber. Gérard Genette.

## 1 Introduction

Chapter titles, often expressed in elegant couplets, are a feature of traditional Chinese fiction. These titles could have had their earliest manifestations in the announcements of Song dynasty oral story tellers who would have indicated the story or stories to be told on a particular day. This essay will first study the chapter titles in the early chapters of *Xiyou ji* 西遊記 (The Journey to the West), which will be followed by an examination of the

The Chinese text for *Honglou meng* is taken from: <http://ishare.iask.sina.com.cn/f/10344861.html> (2016-08-23).

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chapter titles in the first eighty chapters of *Honglou meng* 紅樓夢 (Dream of the Red Chamber). The purpose of this study will be to show the continuity and discontinuity of the chapter titles in the final version of *Xiyou ji* (1592) with those in the first printed edition of until the publication of *Honglou meng* (1791). The final part of this essay will relate some of the ideas of Gérard Genette about titles and chapter titles in *Honglou meng*.

## 2 Formation of *Xiyou ji*

The formation of *Xiyou ji* (hereafter XYJ) seems to have undergone a process of various ‘documents’ or ‘traditions’ being finally combined into an all-encompassing text. The traditions involved for the formation of the XYJ would include the Buddhist temple service of the Tang Dynasty (618-907) when monks would preach about Sanzang 三藏; the secular storytellers of the Song Dynasty (960-1279) who would present a cycle of stories about Sanzang; Yuan Dynasty (1260-1378) drama about Sanzang and his disciples; and Song and Ming printed ‘fiction’ about the journey to the West. All of this material would have then been brought together by the author/redactor of the 1592 Shidetang edition. Moreover, careful textual analysis should allow for the identification of which episodes or parts of episodes belong specifically to which tradition. Also especially pertinent to the study of XYJ is the suggestion that some of these formative documents might preserve oral traditions.

## 3 Ming Editions of *Xiyou ji*

There are three late Ming editions of XYJ. Only one of these editions is dated. It is entitled *Xinke chuxiang guanban dazi Xiyou ji* 新刻出像官板大字 (A Newly Printed, Illustrated, Deluxe, Large-character Edition of Journey to the West). The preface is dated *renchen* 壬辰, which is taken to be the year 1592. The publisher is Shidetang 世德堂 of Jinling 金陵, which is the Nanjing of today. This edition is in twenty *juan*, and has one-hundred chapters. It numbers approximately 450,000 Chinese characters. For centuries, however, this edition was unknown. It was only in 1927 that Zheng Zhenduo 鄭振鐸 found a copy of it in Paris (Zhao 161). Modern critical editions of XYC are based on this version, which was also used by Anthony C. Yu for his complete English translation (hereafter this version will be referred to as the 1592 edition).

Considerably shorter than the Shidetang 1592 edition is the *Xinqie quanxiang Tang Sanzang Xiyou shi ni (e) zhuan* 新鐫全像唐三藏西遊釋尼厄傳 (A Newly Printed, Completely Illustrated Chronicle of Deliverances of Sanzang of the Tang Dynasty During his Journey to the West). This version

is in ten *juan* and each *juan* has three to ten chapters. Zhu Dingchen 朱鼎臣 of Yangcheng 羊城 (modern-day Guangzhou) is listed as the compiler. His exact dates are unknown but two works with his name given as editor are dated 1584 and 1591 (Dudbridge 157) (hereafter this text will be referred to as the Zhu version).

The shortest of these late-Ming editions of XYJ is the *Xinqie Sanzang chu shen quan zhuan* 新鐫三藏出身全傳 (Newly-printed, Complete Biography of Sanzang's Career). The compiler of this edition is Yang Zhihe 陽至和 of Qiyun 齊雲. Nothing is known about who Yang is. This work is in four *juan* and has forty chapters.

#### 4 Correspondence between the Zhu and 1952 *Xiyou ji*

The textual correspondence between the Zhu and the 1952 editions is basically of three different kinds (in the references to the Zhu text the roman numeral indicates the *juan* number and the arabic number the chapter number). From *juan* I to *juan* VII:4 (with the exception of *juan* IV on the early life of Sanzang), the Zhu version corresponds very closely with Ch. 1-14 of the 1952 edition. Long passages in both versions, many over a page in length, have an almost exact word-for-word correspondence.

There is, however, a different type of correspondence between *juan* VII:5 through *juan* IX in the Zhu version and Ch. 15-35 of the 1952 edition. Here the correspondence is rarely verbatim. The episodes in both versions are fundamentally the same as far as plot is concerned, but, inevitably, a much fuller account appears in the 1952 edition. Furthermore, the 1952 edition has some scenes that are not in Zhu. An example of this kind is the episode about the Yellow Wind monster king, which forms Ch. 20-21 of 1952 and in Zhu VII:3-IX:1. The 1952 version is about 11,000 characters and the Zhu around 2,200. There are three short poems in Zhu, two of which appear in 1952. 1952 has an additional 14 longer poems. I would divide this episode into 8 main scenes. In 1952, scenes 5, 6, and 8 are considerable expansions of the corresponding scenes in Zhu, and scenes 1-4 in 1952 have much new additional material not in Zhu. For scene 7 in 1952, it is actually a sequence of scenes, most of which is not in the Zhu text.

The third kind of relationship between these two texts occurs in *juan* X of Zhu and Ch. 36-100 of the 1952 edition, where the correspondence is, at best, minimal. Generally, the Zhu version has a scanty plot outline where the 1952 edition has a fully developed episode. In some places the correspondence is simply that where a place name appears in Zhu the 1952 edition presents an episode about what happened at that place (Ch. 84, 87, and 91-92). Finally, there are episodes in this section of the 1952 edition that are not in the Zhu version: the episode about the murdered king of Black Rooster Kingdom (Ch. 36-39); the episode about a kingdom where

Buddhist monks are subjugated by powerful Taoists (Ch. 44-46); the episode in which a river monster near Chen Villange demands child sacrifices (Ch. 47-49), and the episode where Wukong confronts the mother of Red Boy (Ch. 59-61).

To get an idea of the typical relationship of the 1592 and Zhu versions of episodes in this section, let us look at the episode about a monster with a diamond snare. The Zhu version, an account of about 550 characters, presents the episode in a very short version. The 1592 version (Ch. 50-52), with over 17,000 characters, has an elaborate rendition of each scene in Zhu as well as subplots not in Zhu. Some scenes in Zhu are but a line or two in length, but in 1592 these one or two line scenes become a sequence of scenes which contain enough material almost to fill a chapter. There are also no poems in the Zhu version but twenty-two in the 1592.

## 5 Priority of the Zhu Text According to My Reading

In another study, carefully looking at the narrative material only in Ch. 1-14 of the 1592 edition and not in the Zhu edition; the style of the 1592 edition and that of the Zhu edition; the style-markers, according the classifications done by Patrick Hanan: the poetry in Zhu and 1592, and various other considerations, I reach the conclusion that the Zhu edition, or a text similar to it, was used by the author/redactor of the 1592 edition. Liu Cunren 柳存仁 is of the same opinion but Glenn Dudbridge argues for the opposite. I mention what I take to be the relationship of these two editions because it allows me to begin to discuss the chapter titles in XYJ.

## 6 Chapter Titles in *Xiyou ji*, Chapters 1-14

The title for Ch. 1 of 1592 corresponds to a single-line title from *juan* I:1 of the Zhu edition.

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	1592	Zhu
ch. 1	靈根育孕源流出 心性修持大道生 The divine root conceives, its source revealed; Mind and nature nurtured, the Great Dao is born.	大道育生源流出 (I:1) The Great Tao is conceived and born; the origin emerges.

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The titles for Ch. 2-4 of the 1592 edition not in the Zhu edition.

Ch. 2 悟徹菩提真妙理 斷魔歸本合元神  
Fully awoke to Bodhi's wondrous truths;  
He cuts off Mara, returns to the root, and joins Primal Spirit.

Ch. 3 四海千山皆拱伏 九幽十類盡除名  
Four Seas and a Thousand Mountains all bow to submit;  
From Ninefold Darkness ten species' names are removed.

Ch. 4 官封弼馬心何足 名注齊天意未寧  
Appointed a Ban Horse, could he be content?  
Named equal to Heaven, he's still not appeased.

All the title couplets for Ch. 5-14 in the 1592 text correspond almost verbatim with various single-line chapter titles in Zhu, *juan* III, V-VII (Ch. 2). This section in the Zhu edition, however, also has eleven chapter titles without any counterpart in 1592. Listed below are the titles from the Zhu edition corresponding with those in the 1592 edition. (Where the Zhu and 1592 text are the same, an English translation is given only for the 1592 title).

	1592	Zhu
ch. 5	亂蟠桃大聖偷丹 反天宮諸神捉怪 Disrupting the Peach Festival, the Great Sage steals elixir; With revolt in Heaven, many gods would seize the fiend.	亂蟠桃大聖偷丹 II:6 反天宮諸神捉怪 II:6
ch. 6	觀音赴會問原因 小聖施威降大聖 Guanyin, attending the banquet, inquires into the cause; The Little Sage, exerting his power, subdues the Great Sage.	觀音赴會問原因 III:1 小聖施威降大聖 III:2
ch. 7	八卦爐中逃大聖 五行山下定心猿 From the Eight Trigrams Brazier the Great Sage escapes; Beneath the Five Phases Mountains, Mind Monkey is still.	八卦爐中逃大聖 III:4 五行山下定心猿 III:6
ch. 8	我佛造經傳極樂 觀音奉旨上長安 Our Buddha makes scriptures to impart ultimate bliss; Guanyin receives the decree to <b>go up to</b> [emphasis by the author] Chang'an.	我佛造經傳極樂 III:7 觀音奉旨往長安 III:8
ch. 9	袁守誠妙算無私曲 老龍王拙計犯天條 Yuan Shoucheng subtly tells a fortune without personal bias; The Old Dragon King's foolish schemes transgress Heaven's decree.	袁守誠妙算無私曲 V:1 老龍王拙計犯天條 V:2



	1592	Zhu
ch. 10	二將軍宮門鎮鬼 唐太宗地府還魂 Two generals suppress demons at the Palace gate. Having toured the Underworld, Taizong returns to life.	二將軍宮門鎮鬼 V:5 唐太宗地府還魂 V:6
ch. 11	還受生唐王遵善果 度孤魂蕭瑀正空門	還受生唐王遵善果 VI:1 度孤魂蕭瑀正空門 VI:4
ch. 12	玄奘秉誠建大會 觀音顯象化金蟬 Xuanzang, firmly sincere, convenes a Grand Mass; Guanyin, in epiphany, converts Gold Cicada.	玄奘秉誠建大會 VI:5 觀音顯象化金蟬 VI:6
ch. 13	陷虎穴金星解厄 雙叉嶺伯欽留僧 In the den of tigers, the Gold Star brings deliverance; At Double-Fork Ridge, Boqin detains the monk.	三藏起程陷虎穴 VI:8 <b>Sanzang begins his journey and falls into the Den of Tigers</b> [emphasis by the author]. 雙叉嶺伯欽留僧 VI:9 [emphasis by the author]
ch. 14	心猿歸正 六賊無踪 Mind Monkey returns to the Right; <b>The Six Robbers vanish from sight</b> [emphasis by the author].	五行山心猿歸正 VII:1 孫悟空滅除六賊 VII:2 <b>At Five Phases Mountain</b> [emphasis by the author] Mind Monkey returns to the Right; <b>Sun Wukong eliminates the Six Robbers</b> [emphasis by the author]

## 7 How the Author/Redactor of The 1592 Edition Uses the Titles from Chapters 1, 8, 13, and The 14 of the Zhu Text

The title couplet for Ch. 1 of 1592 is:

靈根育孕源流出 心性修持大道生  
The divine root conceives, its source revealed;  
Mind and nature nurtured, the Great Dao is born.

The title for Ch. 1 of *juan* I of Zhu is:

大道育生源流出  
The Great Tao is conceived and born; the origin emerges

The meaning of these titles is not altogether clear, but a safe interpretation is that the Zhu title refers to the birth of Sun Wukong and that the 1592 title refers both to the birth of Sun (line 1) and his study of asceticism (line 2). The 1592 author/redactor concludes his couplet with the first four

characters in the Zhu title 大道育生 and uses the last three characters of the Zhu title 源流出 at the end of the first line of the title.

*Linggen* 靈根 at the start of the 1592 title refers to Sun Wukong. This term is rare in both the 1592 and Zhu editions. In the Zhu edition, as far as I can determine, it appears only once, this is in the episode about the tree that bears the fruit of long life (IX, Ch. 4-50, 11a-17a), and there *linggen* refers to the tree (IX, 16b). The phrase in which it appears occurs verbatim in the 1592 version of this episode (Ch. 24-26; VI, Ch. 26, 10b). 1592 also has a poem in this episode using this term (VI 9, Ch. 260, 13a).

The 1592 edition, however, also has other instances where *linggen* refers to Sun Wukong. In Ch. 71, a poem on Sun's origin has the very same phrase that is in the title couplet for Ch. 1: (XV, 7a). And, in Ch. 81, Bajie refers to Sun as *linggen* (XVII, 12b).

In my view, the author/redactor of the 1592 text (and here he is acting very much as a redactor), at the outset of his redaction of this opening chapter, decided to use *linggen* to refer to Sun and continued this use much later on in the book, even repeating the opening phrase to this title of Ch. 1 in a poem in Ch. 71.

Now let us look at the term *xiuchi* 修持. This expression means the practice of ascetic or moral discipline. I have not been able to locate this term in the Zhu text. In the 1592 text, though I have not tracked down all of its occurrences, one example of its use besides in the title for Ch. 1 does seem to be significant. In a sentence spoken in Ch. 7 of 1592 by Buddha about the Jade Emperor, it is said he 自幼修持 (II, 17b) «began practicing religion when he was very young» (Yu, I, 172). This sentence is part of Buddha's remarks on the appropriateness of the Jade Emperor occupying his exalted position. What seems to be significant is that some of these remarks are in the Zhu version; but the above sentence is not among them. Therefore, I would argue, here we have an example of a term that is favored by the redactor of 1592.

The titles for Ch. 2-5 in the 1592 edition, according to my reading of the relationship of these two editions, would represent original creations by the author/redaction of the 1592 edition. For Ch. 6-7 the author/redactor of the 1592 edition makes the titles for his version by combining two single-line titles from the Zhu version.

The next variant reading is in the title couplet for Ch. 8 of 1592, which corresponds with the title for Ch. 8 of *juan* III of the Zhu edition. The 1592 reading is:

Ch. 8 我佛造經傳極樂 觀音奉旨上長安  
Our Buddha makes scriptures to impart ultimate bliss;  
Guanyin receives the decree to **go up to** [emphasis by the author]  
Chang'an.

The titles in the Zhu edition are:

我佛造經傳極樂

Our Buddha makes scriptures to impart ultimate bliss.

and

觀音奉旨往長安

Guanyin receives the decree to **go towards** Chang'an.

The difference in meaning here is slight, «goes to Changan» in the 1592 text and «goes towards Changan» in the Zhu edition, but the 1592 reading seems to reflect more accurately what happens in the chapter in so far as much of the story concerns what Guanyin does in Changan. Accordingly, here the 1592 author/redactor would be correcting the Zhu title.

For Ch. 9-12, the correspondence between the two editions is exact. The final examples of variant readings from the Zhu text in the chapter titles for the first 14 chapter titles of 1592 are in the chapter titles for Ch. 13 and 14.

The title couplet for Ch. 13 in the 1592 edition is:

Ch. 13 陷虎穴金星解厄 雙叉嶺伯欽留僧

In the den of tigers, the Gold Star brings deliverance;  
At Double-Fork Ridge, Boqin detains the monk.

The corresponding titles in the Zhu edition are:

三藏起程陷虎穴

Sanzang begins his journey and falls into the Den of Tigers.

and

雙叉嶺伯欽留僧

At Double-Fork Ridge, Boqin detains the monk.

The second line of the title couplet for Ch. 13 is exactly the same as the corresponding single-line title in the Zhu version. But there are variants in the first line, which, in the 1592 edition, refers to two of the events of this episode: the capture of Sanzang by a tiger monster and his release by the Gold Star. The Zhu title refers only to Sanzang's capture. In looking at the two Zhu titles when placed together, we see that they are not parallel.

三藏起程陷虎穴  
雙叉嶺伯欽留僧

The caesura in the first title is after the fourth character, whereas the one in the second title is after third. Also the first title begins with the name of a person and the second with that of a place. Accordingly, the author/redactor of 1592 for the sake of parallelism, in his couplet, matches a person with a person and a place with a place.

Overall, I see the text of the Zhu version presenting an episode that comes from the oral storytelling tradition. If this is so, the titles in the Zhu version perhaps could represent titles that a storyteller in the Song dynasty might have put up to let his tentative audience know what story he would be telling.

The title couplet for Ch. 14 of the 1592 version is:

Ch. 14 心猿歸正 六賊無踪  
Mind Monkey returns to the Right; The Six Robbers vanish from sight.

The corresponding titles in Zhu are:

五行山心猿歸正  
At Five Phases Mountain Mind Monkey returns to the Right;

and

孫悟空滅除六賊  
Sun Wukong eliminates the Six Robbers.

The title couplet in the 1592 edition is in a neat, parallel form.

心猿歸正  
六賊無踪

When the corresponding titles in Zhu are placed together as a couplet, they are read this way:

五行山心猿歸正  
孫悟空滅除六賊

It is relatively easy to see how the author/redactor of 1592 took the two titles from the Zhu text and rewrote them as a parallel couplet. 五行山 would have been deleted from the first line: 六賊, to match 心猿, would have been made the subject of the second line; and 無踪 would have been added to complete the parallelism and suggest the outcome of the chapter.

Again, in my reading, I would see the versions in the Zhu text as perhaps coming from the oral storytelling tradition as the episodes in this chapter appear to be from the tradition of oral storytelling.

## 8 Chapter Titles in Chapters 15-35 of The 1592 Edition of *Xiyou ji* and Corresponding Ones from the Zhu Text

As already mentioned, there is a different type of correspondence between *juan* VII, Ch. 5 through *juan* IX in the Zhu version and Ch. 15-35 of the 1592 edition. Here the correspondence is rarely verbatim. The episodes in both versions are fundamentally the same as far as plot is concerned, but, inevitably, a much fuller account appears in the 1592 edition. Furthermore, the 1592 edition has some scenes that are not in the Zhu version.

As for the titles for these chapters in the 1592 version, Ch. 16, 18, 21-26, and 28-35 have no similar titles in the Zhu text. For me, these titles represent original creations by the 1592 author/redactor. Only Ch. 15, 17, 19-20, and 27 have some relationship to the Zhu text.

	1592	Zhu
ch. 15	蛇盤山諸神暗佑 鷹愁澗意馬收韉 At Serpent Coil Mountain, the gods give secret protection. At Eagle Grief Stream, the Horse of the Will is reined.	蛇盤山諸神暗佑 (VII:5) 孫行者降伏火龍 (VII:6) <b>Pilgrim Sun defeats the Fire Dragon.</b>
ch. 17	孫行者大鬧黑風山 觀世音收伏熊羆怪 Pilgrim Sun greatly disturbs the Black Wind Mountain: Guanshiyin brings to submission the <b>bear</b> monster.	觀音收伏黑妖 (VIII:1) Guanyin brings to submission the <b>black</b> monster
ch. 19	雲棧洞悟空收八戒 浮屠山玄奘受心經 At Cloudy Paths Cave, Wukong takes in Bajie; At Pagoda Mountain, Tripitaka receives the Heart Surtra	三藏收伏豬八戒 (VIII:2) Tripitaka brings to submission Zhu Bajie
ch. 20	黃風嶺唐僧有難 半山中八戒爭先 At Yellow Wind Ridge the Tang Monk meets adversity; In mid-mountain, Bajie strives to be first.	唐三藏被妖捉獲 (VIII:3) Tang Tripitaka is captured by a monster.

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ch. 27	屍魔三戲唐三藏 聖僧恨逐美猴王 The cadaver demon three times mocks Tripitaka Tang; The holy monk in spite banishes Handsome Monkey King	唐三藏逐去孫行者 (IX:5) <b>Tang Tripitaka banishes Pilgrim Sun</b>
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Titles in the related Zhu chapters that are not used by the 1592 author/redactor are:

孫行者降伏火龍 (VII:6)

Pilgrim Sun defeats the Fire Dragon.

孫行者收妖救師 (IX:1)

Pilgrim Sun captured a monster to save his Master.

唐僧收伏沙悟淨 (IX:2)

The Tang Monk receives Sha Wujing

豬八戒思淫被難 (IX:3)

Zhu Bajie encounters a difficulty with sex

孫行者五庄觀內偷果 (IX:4)

Pilgrim Sun at Five Villages Abbey steals fruit.

唐三藏師徒被難 (IX:6)

Tang Tripitaka and his disciples encounter a difficulty

豬八戒請行者救師 (IX:7)

Zhu Bajie asks Pilgrim to save their Master.

孫悟空收妖救師 (IX:8)

Sun Wukong captures a monster and saves the Master.

唐三藏師徒被妖捉 (IX:9)

Tang Tripitaka and his disciples are captured by a monster.

孫行者收伏妖魔 (IX:10)

Pilgrim Sun brings to submission a demon.

These Zhu titles all have characteristics I would associate with oral storytelling and are not of sufficient literary interest to the 1592 author/redactor.

## 9 How The 1592 Author/Redactor Uses the Zhu Titles for Some of the Titles in Chapter 15-35 of *Xiyou ji*

Let us first consider how the 1592 author/redactor uses the Zhu titles for the creation of the titles in Ch. 15, 17, 19-20, and 27. We will look at Ch. 15, 19 and 20. Here are the chapter title for Ch. 15 and the Zhu equivalents.

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Ch. 15	蛇盤山諸神暗佑 鷹愁澗意馬收韁 At Serpent Coil Mountain, the gods give secret protection; At Eagle Grief Stream, the Horse of the Will is reined.	蛇盤山諸神暗佑 (VII:5) 孫行者降伏火龍 (VII:6) Pilgrim Sun defeats the Fire Dragon.
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The 1592 author/redactor preserves the Zhu reading for the first line of his couplet. The colloquial Zhu title 孫行者降伏 is changed to the more literary Chinese: 意馬收韁. The emphasis is also on the horse rather than Monkey.

From the 1592 version, we can see how the author/redactor is approaching the matter of creating a chapter title. In Ch. 15 there are many instances of spirits coming to help Sanzang and Monkey. It is to all of these instances of spirits helping which the first line of the title refers. Therefore, this first line gives the motif that will be employed again and again in this chapter. The second line singles out one example of how the spirits help to provide a bridle for the wild horse.

The most important event in this chapter is that the dragon is turned into a white horse which will serve as Sanzang's mount. Yet neither line of the couplet directly refers to this, rather both lines assume an understanding of it. In this way, the author/redactor seems to prefer the chapter title not to state the main point of the chapter.

A structural device employed in this couplet is that the name of a geographical place is split so that it will better fit the couplet form. From the title itself, a reader would assume that the setting for the first line is different from that of the second. Yet from the text, it is evident that both these names refer to the same general place (166, 170). A problem in the second line is that 意馬收韁 does not take place at 蛇盤山鷹愁澗 but at a shrine 里社祠 Lishe Shrine in 西番哈必國界 Hamil Kingdom of the western barbarians. The author/redactor of the 1592 does not seem to worry about preciseness.

Ch. 19 has this title:

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ch. 19	雲棧洞悟空收八戒 浮屠山玄奘受心經 At Cloudy Paths Cave, Wukong takes in Bajie; At Pagoda Mountain, Tripitaka receives the Heart Surtra.	三藏收伏豬八戒 (VIII:2) Tripitaka brings to submission Zhu Bajie
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For the first line of his title couplet for Ch. 19, the 1592 author/redactor uses a title from the Zhu text: 三藏收伏豬八戒. In his version, however, it is 悟空 and not 三藏 who «takes in» Bajie. The first line of this couplet refers to the major episode in this chapter: how Bajie comes to be a disciple. The second line deals with a shorter episode: Sanzang's reception of the Heart Sutra. Similar to Ch. 11 the two episodes are parallel both in the title and in content. The couplet is built around two homonyms, with different tones, however, 收 and 受, which are in parallel positions.

Here is the title for Ch. 20:

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ch. 20	黃風嶺唐僧有難 半山八戒爭先 At Yellow Wind Ridge the Tang Monk meets adversity; In mid-mountain, Bajie strives to be first.	唐三藏被妖捉獲 (VIII:3) Tang Tripitaka is captured by a monster.
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The Zhu title refers to an episode in which Sanzang encounters a monster who captures him. The 1592 author/redactor uses the title from the Zhu text for his first line. but his version simply declares that Sanzang has trouble: 有難, What this trouble is stated in the list of 81 obstacles that Sanzang must overcome to acquire sutras in India: 黃風怪阻十二難.

## 10 How The 1592 Author/Redactor Creates His Own Titles

In the chapters of this section of the 1592 text, there are titles (Ch. 16, 18, 21-26, and 28-35) which have no relationship with the Zhu titles, and show how the 1592 author/redactor went about composing titles without any help from those in the Zhu version. Let us now consider the titles in Ch. 16 and 18 as examples of what the 1592 author/redactor does in this section.

Here is the title for Ch. 16:

Ch. 16 音院僧謀寶貝            黑風山怪竊袈裟  
 At Guanyin Hall the monks plot for treasure;  
 At Black Wind Mountain a monster steals the cassock.



This couplet relates the two high points of this chapter: the monks plan to steal the cassock and the monster's actual stealing of it. In the first line is given the event which sets in motion the chain of events which, ironically, leads to the theft mentioned in the second line.

怪 is placed in a parallel position with 僧. As a parallel of similarity, it may express the author/redactor's opinion of these inhospitable, indeed despicable, monks who are no better than a monster. The word 謀 of the first line is cleverly integrated into the chapter text by appearing there in the name of the monk, 廣謀, whose idea it is to steal the cassock by murdering the pilgrims (183).

Another interesting feature about this couplet is its relationship with the list of obstacles and with the poem which concludes this chapter. The two obstacles about which this chapter is concerned are:

夜被火燒第十難 The tenth difficulty: Burned at night  
失去袈裟十一難 The eleventh difficulty: The stolen cassock

The first line of the title couplet reflects this first obstacle: the monks' plan is to use fire. Then, the second line gives the same fact stated in this second obstacle but from the viewpoint of the monster, who steals the cassock, while in the obstacle this is seen from Sanzang's perspective. Something similar is done in the concluding poem of this chapter (189).

The title for Ch. 18 is:

Ch. 18 觀音院唐僧脫難 高老莊大聖除魔  
At Guanyin Hall the Tang Monk leaves his ordeal;  
At Gao Village the Great Sage casts out the monster.

The first line of this couplet refers to the opening page of this chapter, where the episode detailed in Ch. 16-17 is concluded. There is certainly enough other material in this chapter for a better first line, such as the scene where Monkey is disguised as the monster's wife, but, for some reason, this material was not used.

The second line, however, is closely linked with the chapter; this is because of the word 除. When Old Gao asks Monkey to take on the monster, he says 就煩與我除了根罷 (208). This is an allusion to the saying 剪草除根. Clearly Old Gao wants the monster killed. Monkey realizes this when he replies later 定與你剪草除根 (209).

除魔 in the title can be understood in two ways. On the one hand, the author may be attempting to give a moral interpretation of the meaning of the chapter; or it can be suggesting the first step of the process the monster has to go through to become a disciple. It is appropriate that 大聖 is used in the second line, because it is when this monster hears this name that he flees in fright.

## 11 Chapter Titles from Chapter 36 in the 1592 Edition

The third kind of relationship between these two texts occurs in *juan* X of Zhu and Ch. 36-100 of the 1592 edition, where the correspondence is, at best, minimal. Generally, the Zhu version has a scanty plot outline where the 1592 edition has a fully developed episode. In some places the correspondence is simply that where a place name appears in Zhu the 1592 edition presents an episode about what happened at that place (Ch. 84, 87, and 91-92). Finally, there are episodes in this section of the 1592 edition that are not in the Zhu version: the episode about the murdered king of Black Rooster Kingdom (Ch. 36-39); the episode about a kingdom where Buddhist monks are subjugated by powerful Taoists (Ch. 44-46); and episode in which a river monster near Chen Village demands child sacrifices (Ch. 47-49), and the episode where Wukong confronts the mother of Red Boy (Ch. 59-61). For these episodes, which will not be discussed in this paper, we can begin to see a formula being used: a complex opening title, clear titles easy to understand for the middle chapter or chapters, and a closing chapter title that suggests the moral behind the episode.

In conclusion to this first section of this essay, through an examination of the chapter titles in XYJ we can see three different approaches to the creation of the chapter title. In Ch. 1-14, the author/redactor mainly relied on the Zhu text. For Ch. 15-35, the author/redactor was creating titles for episodes that were not originally written by him. Then, from Ch. 36 on, the author/redactor is not only writing the text but also creating the titles. With these chapters, we can begin to see a formula being used by the author/redactor in composing his chapter titles.

## 12 The Chapter Titles in *Honglou meng*

Having thus seen the various ways that the author/redactor of the 1592 edition of XYJ went about making titles for the chapters of his hundred-chapter edition, let us now turn to the chapter titles in the novel *Honglou meng* (hereafter HLM). My premise for the discussion of the titles of XYJ was that the 1592 edition was based on the Zhu text. In examining now the chapter titles in the first eighty chapters of HLM, my premise is that the main text for the HLM narrative originally was not neatly divided in chapters and that the chapter titles were created by commentators or editors of the text as it was being prepared for publication. This premise requires another paper for explaining why I think this is the case. If such is the case, we therefore have an editor preparing the chapter titles rather than the author himself. Moreover, for some of the chapter titles there are many different versions; for my discussion I will limit it to the chapter titles as they appear in the first printed version of HLM.

By the time of the publication of HLM in 1791, the tradition of Chinese novels having chapter titles in the form of a couplet was clearly established. Gao E 高鶚 and Cheng Weiyuan 程偉元, the editors of the first published version of HLM, certainly were obliged to maintain this tradition but how they did so show various types of discontinuity with the earlier tradition.

In this presentation I will look at the chapter titles from the following perspectives:

1. The relationship of the chapter titles to the content of the chapter
2. The chapter titles as offering a way to interpret the content of the chapter
3. Other interesting aspects of the chapter titles

### 13 The Relationship of the Chapter Titles in HLM to the Content of the Chapter

In terms of how a chapter title relates to the content of the chapter, let us first consider the title for Ch. 13.

Ch. 13 秦可卿死封龍禁尉 王熙鳳協理甯國府

Qin-shi posthumously acquires the status of a Noble Dame  
And Xifeng takes on the management [of Ningguo House]<sup>1</sup>

Here the first line of the title couplet refers to the main episode in the chapter, which presents the conclusion to the story about Qin Keqing. What the second line does is to present a result of this episode - Xifeng having to take over the running of the Ningguo House - which will have much influence on the later development of the novel. Therefore, the first line is about the main event in the chapter while the second points out an event in the chapter that will be important later in the narrative.

A similar relationship to content is seen in the title for Ch. 65:

Ch. 65 賈二舍偷娶尤二姨 尤三姐思嫁柳二郎

At his second home Jia secretly marries Second Sister You  
Third Sister You wants to marry Liu Erlang. (Translation by the Author)

The first line deals with the main event in this episode and the second line is an element leading to the developments in the next chapter.

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<sup>1</sup> The English translations for the chapter titles are taken from the translation of David Hawkes unless otherwise indicated. Phrases in brackets represent my change to the original translation.

Other examples of the same type are the titles for Ch. 17 and 18.

This type of relationship to content is not used for XYJ as far as I can tell.

Another type of the titles' relationship to the content is when the title draws attention to two events out of the many events in the chapter. An example of this kind of relationship to the content is the title for Ch. 52.

Ch. 52 俏平兒情掩蝦須 勇晴雯病補雀金裘

Kind Patience conceals the theft of a Shrimp Whisker bracelet  
And brave Skybright repairs the hole in a Peacock Gold snow-cape.

The creator of this title couplet has decided not to refer to the illness of Qingwen 晴雯, or the plans for the next Poetry Club meeting, or to the Dai-yu/Baoyu dialogue, all of which are also of significance for this chapter. Another chapter title that selects two events out of the many in the chapter is the title for Ch. 62.

Another interesting way in which the chapter titles relate to the content of the chapter is when the title refers to the main events in the chapter but does not tell us the conclusion to these events, so we must read the chapter to discover the conclusion.

The title for Ch. 12 is a good example of this:

Ch. 12 王熙鳳毒設相思局 賈天祥正照風月鑒

Wang Xifeng sets a trap for her admirer  
And Jia Rui looks into the mirror. (Translation by the Author)

From the title we know only that Xifeng will set a trap and that Jia Rui will use a mirror but we do not know the outcome of these two happenings. We must read the chapter to understand the results. The title for Ch. 19 also takes a similar approach.

## 14 The Chapter Titles of HLM as Offering a Way to Interpret the Content of the Chapter

Some of the chapter titles suggest that we should interpret the events in a chapter as having a cause and effect relationship so that the first line of the couplet presents the cause and the second the result. Here is the title for the well-known Ch. 33 in which Jia Zheng almost beats Baoyu to death.

Ch. 33 手足耽耽小動唇舌 不肖種種大承笞撻

An envious younger brother puts in a malicious word or two  
And a scapegrace elder brother receives a terrible punishment.

In my reading of this title the first line is the cause of what happens in the second line.

Other chapter titles structured on a cause and effect relationship include Ch. 9 and 39. And in Ch. 30 and 34 each line of the title expresses a cause and effect relationship.

Another structure for the chapter titles in HLM is based on parallelism. Look at the title for Ch. 26.

Ch. 26 蜂腰橋設言傳密 意湘館春困發幽情

A conversation on Wasp Waist Bridge is a cover for communication of a different kind

And a soliloquy overheard in the Naiad's House reveals unsuspected depths of feeling.

The parallelism of meaning in these two lines suggests that we should understand the 'conversation' referred to in the first line as being opposite in nature to the 'soliloquy' in the second line. Other chapter titles structured on parallelism of meaning are Ch. 28, 35, and 52, in which the parallelism presents events of a similar nature. In Ch. 27, 29, 32, 34, 40, and so on, the parallelism has a positive occurrence balance a negative one.

If we take the chapter titles for Ch. 11-15 to be a reading of the content of these chapters, four of the titles have one or another version of the name of Wang Xifeng (鳳姐: 熙鳳, 王熙鳳 (twice), 王鳳姐). This suggests that for the author of the titles for these chapters is very much concerned about Wang Xifeng. Even though there are events in these chapters not directly related to Xifeng, it is to her nonetheless that the reader should pay particular attention while reading these chapters.

The author/redactor's concern about characters is also seen in Ch. 8:

Ch. 8 薛寶釵小恙梨香院 賈寶玉大醉絳芸軒

Xue Baochai gets a little sick at Pear Tree Court

Jia Baoyu [gets very drunk] at Red Rue Study.

This title is based on aspects of Xue Baochai and Jia Baoyu, the sickness of the former and the liking to drink of the latter. But the sickness of Bao-chai is not that important for the story in this chapter, and she seems to be better already when the episode takes place. Why would the author of the title couplet then want to mention this about Baochai. Could it be his interpretation of Baochai and how he wants the reader to look at her too?

The author of the title for Ch. 57 gives us very clear directions as to how to interpret the two characters mentioned in the title

Ch. 57 慧紫鵲情辭試忙玉 慈姨媽愛語慰癡顰

Nightingale texts Jade Boy with a startling message;  
And Aunt Xue comforts Frowner with words of loving kindness.

The author wants the reader to see Zijuan 紫鵑 as *hui* 慧 (wise) and Bao-chai's mother as *ci* 慈 (kind and merciful). This same formula of giving a one-character description for characters is also found in Ch. 52, 56 and 62.

## 15 Other Aspects of the Chapter Titles of HLM

In XYJ, at times, important words in the chapter title appear again in the text, as in the title for Ch. 1 of XYJ. I have not been able to find an example of this in the titles of HLM. For instance, here is the title for Ch. 10.

Ch. 10 金寡婦貪利權受辱 張太醫論病細窮源  
Widow Jin's self-interest gets the better of her righteous indignation  
And Doctor Zhang's diagnosis reveals the origin of a puzzling disease.

As far as I can tell, neither 貪利權受辱 nor 論病細窮源, or very similar phrases, appear in the text itself. This is also the case for all of the other HLM titles I examined in this regard.

The title for Ch. 19 is:

Ch. 19 情切切良宵花解語 意綿綿靜日玉生香  
A very earnest young woman offers counsel by night  
And a very endearing one is found to be a source of fragrance by day.

The reader must read the chapter to know that the first line refers to *xiren* 襲人 and the second to Lin Daiyu. This omission of the subject of the title is also found in the title for Ch. 43.

The title for Ch. 6 is:

Ch. 6 賈寶玉初試雲雨情 劉姥姥一進榮國府  
Jia Baoyu conducts his first experiment in the Art of Love  
And Grannie Liu makes her first entry into the Rongguo mansion.

What is interesting here is that the creator of this title already knows that Baoyu will have other «experiments in the Art of Love» and that Grannie Liu will make another visit to the Rongguo Mansion. Therefore, whoever wrote this chapter title was quite familiar with what will happen later in the novel.

From the above analysis of the titles in HLM, it is clear that the chapter titles of HLM are very different from those in XYJ. HLM continues the tradition of having a couplet as a chapter title but the structure, function and style of these titles are much different from those in XYJ, thus showing

there is both continuity and discontinuity.

## 16 Conclusion

To conclude, I would like now to turn to *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (French original 1987) by Gérard Genette. I will comment on the chapter titles of HLM using some of the ideas of Genette. First, however, I should note that there is, as Genette tells us, a French word for the study of titles: 'titrologie', which probably comes from Claude Duchet (55). The English word is 'titology'. An important founding scholar of the study of titles is Leo H. Hock (55).

According to Genette, a 'paratext', from the Greek 'para' meaning 'away from' or 'outside of', refers to things such as 'an author's name, a title, a preface, illustrations' (1). It 'is what enables a text to become a book and to be offered as such to its readers and, more generally, to the public' (1). Nonetheless, we must remember that even though the paratext is a text, it is not 'the text' (7).

As texts, paratexts have 'illocutionary force' (10), that is, an effect of communication, and can offer 'information,' an 'intention,' or an 'interpretation' (11). In our study of the titles of HLM we have indeed seen how the chapter titles offer information and interpretation. For Genette, the function of titles is of two kinds: thematic and rhematic. The thematic is 'what one talks about' and rhematic is 'what one says about it' (78). Both of these functions have been seen in the chapter titles for HLM.

Of the many functions of titles, Gerard emphasizes the function of 'tempting' the reader to read the work (91-93). This tempting of the reader is a characteristic of some of the HLM titles. Ch. 11 of Genette's book deals with chapter titles as such. He uses the word 'intertitles' for chapter titles, which means titles that are placed within a text. Genette points out one way in which chapter titles differ from book titles: «[I]nternal titles are accessible to hardly anyone except readers» (294).

In discussing the history of intertitles in the West, Genette explains that intertitles were already in Homeric epics (298). *Don Quixote* (301) was one of the first novels to employ intertitles and in 19th- and 20th century Western fiction, «divisions with short intertitles [became] the novelistic norm, always in competition with mute divisions» (306). Genette admits of not knowing anything beyond the European literature (404), but if he had, he would here have to indicate that chapter titles for novels were a part of Chinese fiction much earlier than European fiction.

In the conclusion to his book Genette is of the opinion that 'functionality' is most important for paratexts (407). Similarly, it can be claimed that for the titles in HLM, as well as in XYJ, functionality is of prime important. But one assumption that Genette makes - that the author of the main text

also writes chapter titles (408) – is not true, I would, argue for HLM and for many of the early chapter titles in XYJ.

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**Part 2**  
**Contemporary Literature**



## Linking Ancient and Contemporary

Continuities and Discontinuities in Chinese Literature

edited by Tiziana Lippiello, Chen Yuehong 陈跃红 and Maddalena Barenghi

# Comparative Literature and World Literature in an Age of Trans-cultural Dialogue

Chen Yuehong 陈跃红  
(Peking University, China)

**Abstract** It is commonly acknowledged by the history of any discipline that its border is never unchanging, but always in a constant process of birth, evolution, integration and growth. And there has never been any discipline whatsoever in human history that possesses an everlastingly stable pattern of academic research. This is also true for the discipline of 'Comparative Literature and World Literature' in China, whose development needs to go beyond the disciplinary concept of the so-called Euro-centrism for the purpose of constructing a new ecology of world literature in an age of transcultural dialogue. In this sense, the accumulated experience and the pursuit of academic value conducted during the development of world literature in China may, to some extent, serve as a useful reference to the development of a global world literature.

**Summary** 1 Introduction. – 2 On Cultural Differences – 3 Academic Identity, Paradigms and Methodologies – 4 New Perspectives for the Discipline of Comparative Literature and World Literature.

**Keywords** Comparative literature. World literature. 'Literariness'.

## 1 Introduction

I intend, in this short essay, to discuss the relationship between comparative literature and world literature in China today, and my focus will be on their 'relationship'. The motive for this topic is primarily based on my analysis on the status of Chinese world literature studies.

Comparative literature and world literature were two separate disciplines in China until fifteen years ago. Then the governmental Ministry of Education integrated them into one discipline, named 'Comparative Literature and World Literature'. At first, there was much resistance to change among scholars, who raised objections to the legitimacy of such mandatory integration, some of which were published in journals. However, as time went on, scholars in these two fields seem to have found peace, though a fully satisfactory academic consensus is yet to be reached. Moreover, the scholars dealing with comparative literature are more and more willing to cooperate with their world literature colleagues and actively participate in

the latter's academic activities. So we have good reason to be optimistic about the future development of the discipline of Comparative Literature and World Literature in China.

According to data from the *Chinese Education Yearbook* (2009), over one hundred universities out of China's more than two thousands recruit graduate students majoring in 'Comparative Literature and World Literature'. There is no doubt that this is a large number of universities with programs in comparative literature, probably the second biggest in the world, if not the biggest. At present, the number of scholars working in this discipline is over one thousand, while that of graduate students on campus, both Master and Ph.D. candidates included, is no less than two thousand, even by conservative estimates. Perhaps such a scale is not incredible only if it happens in today's China. But that number would not, in any sense, be much considerable any more if we take China's large population into account and use, for example, 1.3 billion as the denominator in our calculation.

In recent years, the debates taking place in the academic circles of comparative literature and world literature in Chinese universities generally center on the following topics: What kind of world literature should we construct from the standpoint of Chinese culture and the need of literary studies? And what is the relationship between world literature and comparative literature?

We once thought that our aim to make world literature transcend the limitations of Euro-centrism could be achieved by increasing the number of non-Western canonical works in the lists of literary classics, by adding some chapters on non-Western literature in our pedagogical practice of the history of world literature, and by supplementing certain contents of non-Western literature in the curriculum. So we naturally believed that a historic change had come when we noticed something new in *The Norton Anthology of World Literature*, which was first published in 1956 and had long listed less than one hundred writers, exclusively from Europe and North America: the change being that, in recent years, the *Anthology* had begun to include several hundred writers from several dozen different countries, including China. It seemed as if this «had not only led to the collapse of literary canons in the same strain, but also made Euro-centrism - the foci that had long been paid attention to by the comparatists - retreat» (Wang 2007, p.3; translation by the Author). But just as what David Damrosch precisely and rigorously pointed out, the consequence of such inclusion is that, on the one hand, some writers like Shakespeare, James Joyce, William Wordsworth, etc., are pushed to an even higher, 'super-canonical' position, while on the other, the honor of inclusion usually put the works of non-Western writers into the dilemma of the minority, which seem very lonely, funny and embarrassing.

The key point to this problem lies very likely in the fact that, without some fresh understanding and construction of the new concept of world literature, while depending only on minor additions of some academic content from literary texts and literary history, the only result we could expect is to let everything keep going on along the same old track. As for non-Western literature, we have no capacity to lift it from its state of impoverishment in the old pattern of world literature. What is worse, when closely examined and studied using Western criteria, and put in a position where unfair comparisons of quantity are made, non-Western literature may end up being shamefully denigrated as «conventional or naïve» because «[t]he third world novel will not offer the satisfactions of Proust or Joyce» (Jameson 2000, pp. 316-317).

## 2 On Cultural Differences

The other side of this problem is that we need to answer an important question: How can we interpret world literature in a country such as China, which has such a long tradition of Eastern culture?

The study of Hardy in China may serve as a good example to illustrate my point here. I have frequently come across essays on this well-known 19th century novelist that unfortunately give me the impression that the authors seemingly tend to ignore the current progress on Hardy studies in both British and international academic circles, and to disregard cultural differences in the process of interpreting classics. Together, studies of this kind present to me a strange scene which is peculiarly and completely outside of Hardy's works. Forty years ago, some people thought that his novels revealed the cruelty of class struggles and the evil of capitalism. Then thirty years ago, some tried to explore from within the description of alienation and the theme of humanism. Then twenty years ago, some others managed to make detailed inquiries about the war between good and evil (which have been everlastingly literary inquiries indeed). And not long ago, we began to switch our attention to the writer's depiction and love of the rural environment and tried to find all sorts of proof concerning environmental protection, as if he already had so clear an ecological and environmental notion in mind over one hundred years ago. I even suspect that some of our researchers would be very likely to dig out some theories of green revolution and evidence of Hardy's stand against genetically modified food from his novels. I would also not be surprised if they make a comparison between Tao Yuanming (365-427), a traditional Chinese poet, and Hardy by means of comparative literature, and clothe these classical writers and poets in a fresh array which is green and eco-friendly. But there arises a problem: conjectures and suspicion of over-interpretation are everywhere in such readings, whose relationship with the classical texts of Hardy is so

discursive that even if one replaces Hardy with Jane Austen or Charlotte Bronte, and Tao Yuanming with Wang Wei, the corresponding explanation also seems to be valid.

Obviously, such studies are far from what we hope for. It seems that we truly need to change the methods of our studies.

One method is, as it is suggested, to return to 'literariness'. But how much confidence do we actually have when exercising our judgment of 'literariness'? Even if we have a firm belief that the theories proposed by Jacobson, de Man, etc., are justifiable, that the differences between literary and non-literary texts can be decided at an accurate level of semantic mode analysis by means of distinguishing literary language from ordinary language, we still, when the context in which a reading occurs is a fundamentally transcultural one and hence in the real sense of comparative literature, have no confidence even to make sure whether we believe in our own analysis of literariness. Just as what Qian Zhongshu (1910-1988), a famous Chinese scholar excelling in many national literatures, tells us: «Compared with Western poetry, those of Chinese poems natively counted as 'romantic' seem to be but 'classical', and those explicit are simply implicit. The words and phrases in Chinese poems, in our opinion, suffice for their brightness and brilliancy and would be appreciated by Westerners, who are accustomed to the luxuriant profusion of luster, for their simplicity and elegance. As for the tone of the poems, what we count as being 'so loud-spoken' are but considered to be quiet voices and gentle whispering. Similarly, in the views of the readers who are bound by the traditions of classical Chinese poetry, what are considered as intangible parts in Western poetry still appear to be palpable and affected, the tranquil and remote parts to be worldly and vulgar, and the concise parts to be verbose and long-winded». (Qian Zhongshu 1985, p. 16). Obviously, up until now, we are still unable to find a common method for our literary readings which perfectly transcend the cultural differences.

### 3 Academic Identity, Paradigms and Methodologies

Perhaps this would encourage us to consider world literature more from the perspective of comparative literature.

As is known to all, comparative literature and world literature were both products of the specialization of knowledge in 19th century Europe. As a discipline, the history of their 'origin' and 'construction' has always been entangled with the history of the global rise of European capitalism and modern Western civilization. The notion of these disciplines is not so much 'global' as 'regional' or 'European'. As a matter of fact, almost two hundred years has passed since Goethe, Marks and Engels first talked about the concept of world literature, but where exactly is that ideal and

integral world literature? To this question, even Rene Wellek sighed with great pity: «Today we are possibly even further removed from such a state of amalgamation» (Wellek, Warren 1977, p. 49).

In that case, our discussion about world literature would have to go beyond the logic of monism and we would have to try to do our job from the position or perspective of comparative literature, which features pluralism and cross-culture. Based on the idea of multi-cultural literary value, world literature ought to be a multi-cultural ecology of literature. So it would not be possible to construct a real world literature in the textual and disciplinary sense without the support of multicultural standards. However, even to this day, in the academic circles of world literature, the dominating criteria are still those confirmed by the Western theories, though there resound different voices from the literary thoughts and theories in China, India, Japan, the Islamic world, and so on. They challenge and resist the domination of Western criteria, but their discourse and questions have not been taken seriously. So world literature in the multi-cultural context is still yet an ideal.

We feel especially frustrated to find that many disciplines in today's non-Western countries, with the discipline of 'Comparative Literature and World Literature' in China as a case in point, are basically constructed by means of integral transplant and direct employment of the frame of the Western disciplinary heritage. In a considerably long period of time and with much haste, we always took the West as our model, tried to imitate it, and wanted earnestly to know whether we were good students and faithful followers. With the passing of time, the model's influence gradually formed and became fixed, so some components of these disciplines, like their institutional structures, research paradigms, criteria of knowledge, methodological systems, and so on, seemed to be accepted naturally as truth in the disciplinary world and standards which were universally applicable. Furthermore, some general academic elements of these disciplines were infinitely magnified, whereas other aspects, like the dislocation of concept, paradox of values, and fundamental defects of structures within these disciplines, were covered up and compressed. As a result, the present disciplinary innovation has invisibly been understood as collocation in and supplementing of classical texts and the limited addition of chapters in literary history, i.e., by nature, to make good on omissions and deficiencies. Moreover, the pattern of academic paradigm is much the same as before, or has been but slightly adjusted, while the old criteria and system as a whole are constantly intact. The paradox is that, as far as the discipline of Comparative Literature and World Literature in today's China is concerned, few people would face up to the contradiction between the truth of its factual and regional existence and the falsehood of its global name. It seems that no one is willing to point out the illusory nature of the emperor's new clothes, and we are hypnotized by various kinds of discussion



of -isms in the Western literary canons, the history of Western literature and Western literary theory texts.

It is because of this awareness of new challenges and concerns in such an age when the academic paradigms and research ethics can change rapidly, that we need not only to break through the spiritual bondage of our own cultural and academic tradition but also to start questioning and reviewing the disciplinary consciousness, theories and ideas which have long been considered self-evident, in order to avoid falling into a self-designed logical snare and confronting the possible embarrassment - similar to what Western culture once confronted - of being questioned when more non-Western cultural others intervene in the future. In this sense, it is not merely an appeal with an ideological hue to move the originally Euro-centered world literature forward, on the basis of multi-cultural theories, to a truly globalized arena of academic research, but a tangible and innovative method to counter the inertia persisting in the history of this discipline and the interpretation of canons. We should manage to prove that, though the concept of Comparative Literature and World Literature as a discipline originated from a context which was particularly European, the studies conducted in such countries and areas like China, India, Japan, the Arab World, and so on are destined to have an epistemological ground which is obviously different from European tradition whose value target is, with a theoretical and logical starting-point that belong only to themselves. So comparatists in these countries and areas have good reason to construct their own academic identity, pattern of paradigms and system of methodology, which will push this discipline towards a reconstruction in culturally different places and to a new depth in research and turn it into a real part of the driving forces of literary studies in the era of globalization. We expect to transform ourselves from the follower to the innovator, from those influenced by others to those who raise questions and even to those who may feed back their achievement and experience to the original inventors of this discipline and help them to renew their consciousness in the study of this field.

#### **4 New Perspectives for the Discipline of Comparative Literature and World Literature**

For scholars of comparative literature and world literature in China, a special responsibility for Chinese literary classics is always ready to be borne on one's back. More specifically, they undertake to help these classics a step closer towards the world by making great efforts on transcultural interpretation. I believe that, if a Chinese scholar who aims to devote himself to the study of Tao Yuanming and is indeed very familiar with each and

every piece of his works, cannot provide the transcultural interpretation in connection with Western theories of, for example, Romanticism or the Utopia, how could he manage to guide the western readers to appreciate the beauty of the poet's works. The canonization of a literary work and its experience of unceasing growth in different historical and cultural context tell us at least one fact: What makes a canon a canon is what it can never do without not only its inner values, but also the external environment in which it exists and is a part of, and the efforts made on it by virtue of comparisons and interpretations. It is in such a process that scholars select a canon, confirm it and construct its meaning. Since the history of a canon and its fate in reality are, after all, originally so closely related to world literature and comparative literature, then the integration of these two as one discipline has justly been moving along with the global trend of academic development, hasn't it?

Destiny is such a good joker that sometimes it shuts the door, no matter how eagerly you want to enter, but allows you inadvertently to step through another door, though originally against your will. According to general value rationality, the right thing we ought to do may be to take our literary canons as transcultural capital and present them as gifts to the cultural other. But the result often tends to be different from, or even runs contrary to, your expectation: this other may not necessarily be interested in accepting the gift, but he may be willing to pay for it, after bargaining, and consider it worthwhile. So who may deny that such a paradox in transcultural communication may not serve as a link between the new comparative literature and world literature?

Then, does it mean that, besides the logic rationality of national literatures and value rationality of classical texts, there still exists an academic path of transcultural communication rationality and cross-disciplinary integration, which is close to that of Habermas? It may be the key point in our consideration of the new Comparative Literature and World Literature as a discipline. Obviously, by focusing on this knowledge, we may reasonably expect to construct, to some extent, the structure of a new methodology belonging to 'Comparative Literature and World Literature'. It is the methodology of comparative literature, and of world literature as well; or in other words, there are no essential differences between these two, which are actually the same by nature.

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## Linking Ancient and Contemporary

Continuities and Discontinuities in Chinese Literature

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# The Tradition of Telling and the Desire of Showing in Ge Fei's 'Fictional Minds'

Nicoletta Pesaro

(Università Ca' Foscari Venezia, Italia)

**Abstract** This paper aims at conducting a preliminary analysis of some results derived from Ge Fei's narrative research, through a close-reading of some narrative patterns in his recent trilogy, *Renmian taohua* (Peach Blossom-beauty, 2004), *Shanhe ru meng* (Mountains and Rivers Fall Asleep, 2007) and *Chunjin jiangnan* (End of Spring in Jiangnan, 2011). On the one hand Ge Fei tends to assimilate and re-invent the traditional patterns of Chinese novel, however, on the other hand, he doesn't ignore, and, on the contrary, tries to adopt also some narrative devices from Western fiction theory and practice. The aim of this research is to detect the evolution of his technique in defining the main characters of the three novels as full-rounded 'fictional minds', and to explore Ge Fei's strategy to link Chinese traditional fictionality with his analysis of the modern Chinese individual consciousness.

**Keywords** Peach Blossom-beauty. Renmian taohua. Mountains and Rivers Fall Asleep. Shanhe ru meng. End of Spring in Jiangnan. Chunjin jiangnan.

A good deal of fictional narrative is based on the fact that thought can be public and available to others as well as private and accessible only to ourselves.

(Palmer 2004, p. 134)

The most recent trends in narratology follow these three approaches: the cognitive, the transmedial, and the comparative. The latter is meant to be a dialogic approach and it is specifically connected with local/national contributions to narratology, in a diachronical perspective.

In this sense, recent works and studies by some prominent Chinese writers who have turned to traditional Chinese narrative patterns in order to create new ways of representing Chinese reality are worth investigation. Besides, new narratology seems to be more receptive in terms of proposing multifarious analysis grids, which can better integrate and assimilate different literary traditions and different language systems.

Basing my essay on a number of issues raised by the cognitive approach, at the same time I wish to integrate concepts from classical narratology, in order to shed light on the results of the encounter between traditional Chinese narrative and Western patterns in contemporary Chinese fiction.

First of all, I wish to explain the concept of 'fictional minds', which is a recent staple in post-classical narratology, and which defines the mental activities of human beings represented in a fictional work. The characters of a narrative (whether a novel, a film or a news item) are usually received and 'decoded' by readers through a continuous process of 'mind reading', in which they, the readers, try to grasp the meaning of the characters' actions and words according to both the direct expression and the indirect report of their thoughts and emotions in that narrative.

'Showing' and 'telling' are concepts which belong to the history of literature since Plato and Aristotle, who used the terms *diegesis* and *mimesis* (respectively *xushi* 叙事 and *mofang* 模仿 in Chinese). According to classical narratology, the binary system of 'telling' and 'showing' is «the contrast between narration proper and enactment» (Chatman 1980, p. 32) in a narrative. The strategy of telling is conducted through a mediated narration (first or third person narrator, characters' recounts, etc.), while the strategy of showing is deployed through dialogues, interior monologues or unreported speech and thought. However, according to most recent narrative theories, this dichotomy is far from being satisfactory for writers and for scholars trying to explain the complex network of elements that contribute to the creation of an independent fictional world. Neither does it fully explain the analysis of these writers' art of representation of the human mind by means of fictional devices (Rabinowitz 2005, pp. 530-531).

Over the last few centuries both strategies have been used in Chinese literature, as in Western or European literature, though given a different weight and with discontinuous interpretations. For instance, we have the debate on the supposed superiority of the mimetic approach that took place in the Western literary field at the end of the 19th century among writers and theoreticians. As stated by Gérard Genette:

One of the main paths of emancipation of the modern novel has consisted of pushing this mimesis of speech to its [...] limit, obliterating the last traces of the narrating instance and giving the floor to the character right away. (1980, p. 173)

In a similar way, Ming Dong Gu reminds us of the Chinese tradition of storytelling as a meaningfully resilient one: «It may be reasonably said that except for some short stories, practically all Chinese fictional works narrated in the storytelling fashion had the overriding aim of telling an intriguing story» (2006, p. 69).

A prominent question, often raised by Chinese scholars, is that since classical narratology is based on a strong linguistic perspective, it tended to be anchored to the structures of Western languages and thus rarely suited non-European language narratives such as Chinese. For instance, free indirect speech is traditionally defined as being built on «the use of

pronouns and tenses», which obviously is different in a language like Chinese where tense is not grammatically marked and the acting/thinking/speaking person is not clearly identifiable solely through the verbal form.

As concerns the dialectic between telling and showing, in traditional Chinese fiction the former seems to prevail. Describing the theory of fiction expressed in *Hong lou meng* 红楼梦 (The Dream of the Red Chamber), Gu states:

As is characteristic of a creative writer Cao Xueqin expresses his theory of fiction in the manner of telling a story. In the opening, the author tells us that the genesis of the novel is related to a Chinese myth; [...] This fable-like genesis of the novel, when analyzed critically and conceptually, reveals an implicit idea of fiction. Unlike the Western conception of fiction as an imitation of the natural and human world, it views fiction as a result of expression. [...] The original source of the novel, then, is not the imitation of life, but the stirring of human desire for creative activity. (2006, pp. 185-186)

According to Gu, though, in the end the great Chinese novel «established the legitimacy of pure fiction pioneered by the *Jin Ping Mei* 金瓶梅 and affirms the blending of first-order imitation and expression» (2006, p. 187). In my opinion, this blending of the two approaches can also synthesize Ge Fei's recent attitude towards this narrative pattern.<sup>1</sup>

When reading a novel, readers' primary focus is to identify what Ann Banfield (1982) calls the «center of consciousness», in other words they try to link the main thoughts and descriptions in a passage to a perceiver who is responsible for the general perspective. Connecting the many hints provided by the narrator or by the author, the reader strives to re-construct the story-world around one or more fictional minds.<sup>2</sup> Story-worlds are mental models used to understand narratively organised discourse, including characters and settings, and the relations between them.<sup>3</sup> This mind-reading activity, according to scholars engaged in this field of study, is highly valuable as a useful way to experience the world.

1 Born in 1964, Ge Fei is a contemporary Chinese novelist who emerged in the 1980s as part of the literary movement of the so-called Avant-garde fiction.

2 «Possible worlds do not await discovery in some transcendent depository; they are constructed by the creative activities of human minds»(Doležel 2010, p. 30).

3 In other words a storyworld is «the shared universe within which the settings, characters, objects, events, and actions of one or more narratives exist». Available at: <http://transmediadigest.com/2011/11/>. See also Herman 2005, pp. 569-570.

In his recent trilogy<sup>4</sup> Ge Fei, himself a writer and a scholar, tries to blend the two strategies, combining both Chinese and Western tradition, in order to overcome what he considers diachronic and synchronic narration mismatches in depicting fictional minds. In my paper I examine some of these patterns, raising some preliminary questions to be answered after further analyses: Is this blending of different narrative patterns successful in presenting to the reader the fictional minds of the characters? Which linguistics devices are activated by the writer in order to intertwine the diegetic and the mimetic functions? In which way and to what extent does Ge Fei's strategy link Chinese traditional narrativity with his aim to reveal the modern Chinese individual consciousness?

And last but not least, is the cognitive turn in narratology useful to overcoming the limits of the linguistic approach, allowing us to analyse the fictional minds in Chinese fiction through other narrative devices?

In scrutinizing his recent novels, which are based both on Ge Fei's long-standing concern for narrative structures and devices, and on his revival of traditional narrativity, we can approximately assume that Ge Fei's narrative strategy gradually moves from an indirect approach to a direct one.

Another feature of his recent literary production is a progressive merging of traditional and modernist patterns, such as inserting lines of poetry from ancient Chinese poets in a contemporary context (as he does in the novel *Chunjin Jiangnan* 春尽江南) or highlighting in bold those passages which reflect characters' inner thoughts (a main feature in *Shanhe rumeng* 山河入梦).

We can also point out that direct or indirect expressions of mental activity might not be the only or the best way to convey subjectivity in a narrative. According to Alan Palmer, it is not only the device of thought and speech (direct or indirect, free or tagged) that helps readers construct the characters' mind in a novel, but also that «action descriptions can within the situated thought paradigm be easily and informatively reconceived as consciousness descriptions» (Palmer 2004, p. 222).

As a matter of fact, another classical device exploited by the writer is intertextuality, which, as we will see, can also be a powerful device for expressing mental activity.

The three novels under scrutiny in this paper confirm Ge Fei's attitude towards the need for mapping human consciousness and its relations with the outer world, including other human beings, society, nature, and history. In all his works, his major concern is to reflect upon how the inner

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4 The name of the trilogy, *Jiangnan trilogy* (Jiangnan sanbuqu 江南三部曲), refers to the fact that the three novels are all set in Jiangnan (traditional name of the south-central area of China), historically famous for its rich intellectual history. The three novels are: *Renmian taohua* 人面桃花 (Peach-Blossom Beauty, 2004), *Shanhe rumeng* 山河入梦 (Mountains and Rivers Asleep, 2007) and *Chunjin Jiangnan* 春尽江南 (End of Spring in Jiangnan, 2011).

world of the characters, their subjective strivings and impulses deal with outward reality, but they are always shattered because of the inconsistency between the two realms of the subjective and the real.

The concept of 'life plan', which drives each character in his or her experiencing the world and shapes their mind, can be useful to understanding the development of fictional minds in the narrative space, as Giuseppe Ferrigno says:

La vita psichica è un 'insieme' dinamicamente orientato verso un fine comune: l'unificazione giunge attraverso la tensione verso uno scopo. La personalità è un tutto 'complesso', ma 'unitario', in cui ritroviamo una molteplicità di fattori, di tratti, di disposizioni, di tendenze, di funzioni, fra loro interrelate: un individuo percepisce, immagina, ricorda, desidera, sogna sotto l'influsso ininterrotto e ipnotizzante d'una mèta autocreata, il piano di vita appunto, verso il quale tende. (2005, p. 67)

The 'psychical life' is a 'whole' dynamically oriented toward a common aim: the unification comes through straining for a goal. The personality is a whole both 'complex' and 'unitary', where one can find a range of factors, traits, dispositions, trends, and mutually related functions. An individual feels, imagines, remembers, desires and dreams under the uninterrupted and hypnotizing flow of a 'self created' goal, the so-called life plan toward which he or she tends.

Since his first novel, *Diren* 敌人 (The Enemy, 1991) Ge Fei has focussed his research on the aporia of any attempt by the individual to negotiate between his/her own subjectivity and the objective world around them; this aporia is powerfully and lyrically represented in the *Jiangnan trilogy*, which is devoted to the theme of revolution and utopia in 20th century China. The first novel of the trilogy, *Renmian taohua* 人面桃花 (Peach-Blossom Beauty, 2004) is set in early 20th century China and tells the story of Xiumi, the young daughter of a landlord who disappeared after he lost his mind while devising an obscure plan of revolt. When her family is about to marry her to a rich family against her will, Xiumi is kidnapped by a gang of outlaws and ends up being mysteriously connected with plans to establish a utopia on an island in the Jiangnan area. Living through bewilderment and violence, Xiumi undergoes a sort of *Bildungs* experience, her life plan becoming that of being the unhappy spokeswoman making social and egalitarian pleas in pre-modern China. Her final defeat is but the symbolic defeat of those premature though widespread pleas. In the second novel, *Shanhe rumeng* 山河入梦 (Mountains and Rivers Fall Asleep, 2007), the central figure is Xiumi's son, Tan Gongda, who is an official of the Communist Party in the 60s, vainly pursuing the construction of great public works in his village. Here, the communist utopia is only the general frame



for a deeper and more complicated entanglement of unfulfilled desires, both personal and social. On the one hand the main character is driven by his revolutionary zeal and the utopic aspiration of improving the lives of his people (similarly to his mother), even against their will; on the other hand, his personal life plan is unsettled by the different women who attract him, and especially Yao Peipei, his smart, young secretary. In the third novel, *Chunjìn Jiāngnán* 春尽江南 (End of Spring in Jiangnan, 2011), a new temporal dimension is deployed, and the storyworld is placed at the end of the 20th century, when another utopian project falls apart: the new economic dream. The protagonist here is Tan Duanwu, an irresolute intellectual of the post-Mao era, the son of Tan Gongda, married to an ambitious lawyer, Pang Jiayu.

Each of these three protagonists holds a specific life plan, but the frailty of those plans is revealed over the course of the plot, confirming the traditional Chinese idea of the deceptiveness of all human desires and of real life in itself.<sup>5</sup>

The aim of this study is to scrutinize the evolution of Ge Fe's narrative technique by which, especially in creating his key characters, he focusses on the representation of their minds. I want to show how the author, in depicting history and reality as perceived by these fictional 'centres of consciousness', tends to gradually move from an indirect approach to a direct one: in narratological terms, he deals with the «thought report as the most diegetic» pattern, but often recurs to the «direct thought as the most mimetic mode of thought presentation» (Palmer 2004, p. 21) or narrated report of action.

In Ge Fe's novels, the more the social context approaches present day China, the more the narrative mediation gives way to a non-mediated thought presentation or, as Palmer maintains, to the direct representation of 'fictional minds' through the description of action. However, the complexity of Ge Fe's narrative strategies deserves further and more detailed analysis. Traditional patterns such as expressive devices and intertextuality are also very common in his works, along with more daring and experimental patterns.

Before I carry out my brief analysis of Ge Fe's oscillating between the 'tradition of telling' and the 'desire of showing', it would be pertinent to

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5 Zhang Qinghua believes that Ge Fe's novels share this issue with the *Honglou meng* (Dream of the Red Chamber) and other important Chinese novels: «其实《红楼梦》讲的是,世界是一场梦,宇宙、时间是一场梦,一个家族的荣华富贵是一场梦,一个人的一生,他全部的爱情、美好的经历都是一场梦» (Wang Xiaowang 2012, p. 16) (As a matter of fact, the *Dream of the Red Chamber's* main theme is that the world is a dream, the universe and time are a dream, the splendor and wealth of a clan are but a dream, the whole life of an individual, his/her experience of love and beauty, is a dream). In his opinion this same concept in Ge Fe's works «变成了一个中国人生命经验、文化经验的最经典和最敏感的部分» (becomes the most classical and sensitive part of a Chinese man's life and culture experience).

analyze how the trilogy was received by Chinese critics and their assessment of Ge Fei's narrative strategy. Soon after the publication of the third novel, many Chinese scholars pointed out the hybrid nature of the *Jiangnan sanbuqu*, which has been welcomed as an evident mark of the author's artistic maturity and literary accomplishment.

In reviewing *Peach-Blossom Beauty*, Chen Zhongyi 陈众议 (2012) points out the inner contradiction of Ge Fei's style, which he defines as 'classical' (*gudian* 古典) and 'avant-garde' (*xianfeng* 先锋) at the same time. Actually, I would define it as a sophisticated merging of both styles rather than a contradiction, or as the sublimation of some modernist techniques within a more traditional, essentially Chinese, narrative frame.

Professor Zhang Qinghua 张清华 analyses the same novel from the viewpoint of its structure,<sup>6</sup> which he sees as a re-proposal of the *Honglou meng* model. The whole trilogy, in his opinion, is structurally and thematically based on the same philosophical structure of the ancient novel.

我觉得格非的这三部书却会给我们带来类似读《红楼梦》之后的那样一种深深的绝望,一种深刻的宁静,一种哲学的处境。(Wang Xiaowei 2012, p. 16)

I think Ge Fei's trilogy can give us a similar deep sense of despair, a kind of profound stillness, a philosophical plight as when reading *The Dream of the Red Chamber*.

Chinese critics' multifarious attitude towards Ge Fei's exploits in the art of fiction, and especially about the way he deals with narrative patterns such as time, mode and structure, is more than apparent.

On the one hand, Chen Zhongyi emphasizes the tendency to adopt a range of Western techniques in creating an intricate web of narrative modes:

小说有非常先锋的生活流、意识流,或任意的延宕、有意的歧出,也有以后当如何如何的全知全能,分号、单引号,人称代词省略的明叙与暗叙或亚叙并立所造成的混乱。(2012, pp. 9-10)

The novel presents an extremely avant-garde stream-of-life, stream of consciousness, either an arbitrary delay, a deliberate inconsistency. There are also an omniscient and omnipotent telling what will happen later, semicolons as well as single quotation marks, and the confusion provoked by the coexistence of straightforward narration with omitted pronouns and metaphorical narration, or subnarration.

6 Zhang Qinghua defines Ge Fei's style in *Renmian taohua* as a 'jiiegouxing de chuli fangshi' (结构性的处理方式 structural method), in Wang Xiaowang 2012, p. 16.

On the other hand, in analysing the hybrid nature of the trilogy as well as its guiding principles and artistic effects, Lu Jiande 陆建德 underestimates Ge Fei's bond with Western narrative theory and highlights instead the Chinese 'flavour' and 'poetic structure' of the trilogy:

格非对西方文化的接受,对西方文化的阅读都是非常充分的,但是,他却没有受西方文化或者说西方小说翻译文体或者说欧化的影响, [...] 相反,却呈现出纯粹的,精致的,高雅的,书卷气的文体形态)。[...]我相信,精于小说叙事学理论的格非,他肯定会在他的理论和他的写作实践当中找到一种非常适合他的小说结构,这应该是一个诗学的结构。(Wang Xiaowei 2012, p. 27)

Ge Fei has fully absorbed and has a full reading experience in Western culture, however he is not influenced neither by Western culture and by Western novels translation style nor by the Europeanized style. [...] On the contrary, he displays a pure, delicate, elevate and bookish literary style. [...] I believe that Ge Fei, with his proficiency in narratology, will succeed in finding a suitable narrative structure between his theory and writing practice, and this must be a poetical structure.

According to Wang Kan 王侃, Ge Fei's narrative «已经回到中国文学的叙事传统和美学传统当中去了» «has completely reverted to the traditional aesthetic approach of Chinese narrative» (Wang Xiaowei 2012, p. 29).

Taking into account the positions of these scholars, who, to different extents, salute the return to Chinese tradition of one of the most prominent Chinese avant-garde writers, I would argue that he successfully combines both the traditional and the modernist approaches to narrative, especially by offering an original solution to the representation of mind activity in a fictional space. In this sense the trilogy should definitely be considered a meaningful example of «continuity and discontinuity» in Chinese literature. A recent essay by Du Huixin 杜慧心 affirms that Ge Fei's narrative strategy has reached a well-balanced (and I would say fascinating) mixture of two narrative traditions:

格非也可以说是创造了一种类似现代性的“内心时间”,赋予小说中的人物一种特殊的禀赋——在迷离、恍惚、模糊的诗性感受中把握存在和永恒,敏感地体悟并彰显人生的悲剧诗意。这种叙事的风神与特性,既可以与欧洲的意识流小说传统连起来看,当然也可以视为是《红楼梦》的现代版。(2014, p. 120)

We can also say that Ge Fei created a sort of modern 'inner time', providing the characters of the novel with a particular endowment: although immersed in a poetical set of emotions made of confusion, obscurity, and mystery, they can nonetheless grasp existence and eternity, they sensitively recognize and manifest the poetic meaning of human life in its tragedy. This specific narrative attitude can both be connected with

the European tradition of stream of consciousness and be considered as a modern version of the *Dream of the Red Chamber*.

I wish to emphasize here that this study is still a work in progress: in this phase I would like to identify the specific markers which reveal the presence of an individual consciousness, also in those cases when, as Palmer states, «presentations of consciousness» are almost inseparable from «descriptions of action» (2004, p. 15).

In developing my study on these patterns I will focus on signifiers used to mark particular passages, such as:

1. free direct speech (untagged speech/thought);
2. length of section and presence of words characteristic of stream of consciousness and indicating thinking, believing, contemplating, wondering, feeling, or interior monologue;
3. markers of subjectivity;
4. deictics (such as expressions of time, pronouns, family appellations etc.);
5. last but not least, another source of subjectivity are the so-called intercalated texts (diary, poems etc.) and intertextual insertions.

To give a few examples of this process, I will quote excerpts from the three novels, which may help us deconstruct or decode Ge Fei's representation of fictional minds. In *Peach-Blossom Beauty*, Xiumi's *Bildung* begins with her meeting with Zhang Jiyuan - an event that coincides with the disappearance of her mad father - and, later, with her reading his diary. Her reactions to both her first love experience and her first involvement in (making) revolutionary pleas are represented through a rather traditional diegetic technique, such as in the following example, where Ge Fei adopts a somewhat conventional descriptive style:

她开始在心里用最恶毒的念头诅咒他们，而每一个念头都会触及到她内心最隐秘的黑暗。(p. 29)<sup>7</sup>

She begun to curse them with the most vicious thoughts, but each thought would touch the most obscure and hidden corner of her heart.

Just a few lines above, the girl's bewilderment, stemming from her still immature knowledge of the adult world of desire, is similarly represented through a descriptive report:

<sup>7</sup> Page numbers in parentheses refer to pages of the consulted editions of Ge Fei's novels. Translation provided is mine.

她觉得所有的人和事都有一圈铁幕恒在她眼前，她只能看到一些枝节，却无法知道它地来龙去脉。(p. 29)

She felt that everybody and everything was covered from her eyes by an iron curtain, she only could see some trivial matters, but had no clue of their cause and effect.

As Chen Zhongyi notes, in the four chapters of the novel, the narrative mode undergoes an apparent shift from the first to the third person:

第一章、第二章和第四章中的第三人称明叙与第一人称暗叙的交织主要由“父亲”，“母亲”的指代及张季元日志、无引号第一人称叙述所体现；第三章则主要依靠单纯的第三人称敷衍开来，从而“父亲”“母亲”变成了老爷和夫人，女主人公秀米变成了校长。(2012, pp. 9-10)

In the first, second and fourth chapter the interweaving between straightforward narration of the third person and the metaphorical narration of the first person is mainly embodied by the use of reference names ‘father’ and ‘mother’, as well as of the first person without quotation marks in the diary record by Zhang Jiyuan; on the contrary, in the third chapter the narration is mainly based on a pure third person narrator, thus ‘father’ and ‘mother’ become ‘master’ and ‘madam’, and the protagonist Xiumi becomes ‘the principal’.

Here, however, I do not completely agree with Chen on considering the narrator in the third chapter as a ‘pure third person’ narrator: if in the first, second and fourth chapter it is through Xiumi, as the centre of consciousness, that the reader experiences the recounted events, in the third chapter the subjective centre of narration (or point of view) clearly becomes Laohu, a servant of the family who witnesses Xiumi’s evolution into a utopian leader, and the decay of her clan in the village of Puji. A clear example of this shift in point of view is the fact that it is from his status of servant that ‘mother’ and ‘father’ become respectively ‘master’ (*laoye* 老爷) and ‘mistress’ (*furen* 夫人), and Xiumi is here addressed as *xiaozhang* 校长 (she is the principal of a revolutionary school that was built in the village). Laohu’s inner emotions and thoughts are scattered throughout the narration and expressed through simple statements, such as «果然是个婊子» (p. 98) (she is indeed a whore), when Laohu is seduced by the female servant Cuilian.

No matter who is the feeling or thinking agent, all four chapters are deeply imbued with a sense of mystery and a strongly subjective mode, but these feelings and thoughts are most often represented through a telling strategy, by making abundant use of sensory verbs like *juede* 觉得, *xiangdao* 想到, *kandao* 看到, *zhidao* 知道.

Fragments of direct conscience are presented only in a dispersed manner, through free untagged discourse, especially where connected with emotionally intense scenes involving sex and fear, as when Xiumi is deflowered by the old outlaw, Fifth Master Qingde:

天哪，他竟然……竟然说出这样的话来！老头正用力地将她的腿扳开。天哪，他竟然来扳我的腿，难道他真腰…… (pp. 48-49)

Heaven, he dares... dares say such things! The old man forcibly pulled her legs open. Heaven, he dares pulling my legs open, can it be that he really wants to...

In the 'Xiumi's chapters', the more conventional telling patterns are intertwined with some free direct speech, and the 'centre of consciousness' sometimes shifts to other characters, only to reinforce the sense of bewilderment and inconsistency of the main character's life plan, by describing her aporia from a different viewpoint, such as, for instance, the one of the young maid Xique. However, the inner thought of each character is still ascribable to a 'telling' frame that introduces or comments its direct expression:

这个中年人是谁？从何而来？金蝉是怎么回事？秀米为何看见后会落泪？她为何放着好好的官家小姐不做，要去搞什么革命？可秀米的世界，不用说，她完全进不去，甚至连边都挨不着。似乎每个人都被一些东西围困着，喜鹊觉得自己也一样。 (pp. 122-123)

Who was that middle-aged man? Where did he come from? What did that golden cicada mean? Why did Xiumi cry after seeing him? And why did she give up being a well-educated young lady, to engage in what revolution? But there was not need to say, Xiumi's world was totally inaccessible to her, she could not even get close to it. Xique felt as she was besieged by something, like everybody else.

We can infer some of the female protagonist's innermost feelings and thoughts through verbal phrases and sentences, or through samples of direct speech; the text is interspersed with such subjective verbs as *juede* 觉得 (feel), 看见 (catch sight of), *benxiang* 本想 (originally think), or phrases, sentences, and interrogative clauses expressing feelings of puzzlement and embarrassment, for instance: *buzhi ruhe shi hao* 不知如何是好 (don't know what to do); *nandaoshuo* 难道说... (is it really...?), 羞得涨红了脸，她的脑子里乱七八糟的，心头扑扑乱跳 (p. 3) (her face became red with shame, her mind was in a mess, her heart beating fast).

In the novel, Ge Fei often recurs to *chengyu* in order to metaphorically describe complex states of mind. It is a highly literary, indirect but at the

same time particularly condensed way to suggest rather than explain, to evoke rather than tell. To give just one instance, the mutual gaze of mother and daughter when confronted with the upsetting news that father has disappeared is described without explicitly revealing the content of their thoughts, but hinting at their contrasting feelings through idiomatic expressions or visual imagery:

母女俩目光相遇，就如刀锋相接，闪避不及，两双眼睛像是镜子一般，找出了各自的内心。

The glazes of mother and daughter met like two knives' edges too late to avoid each other. Two pairs of eyes were like a mirror, bringing out each one's innermost feelings. (p. 29)

As we see in these examples, Ge Fei adopts a twofold technique, freely mixing the forms of telling with those of showing; but the reader is never directly immersed in the characters' subjectivity, for whenever their inner world is revealed, it is mediated, as the author provides an explanatory frame.

In the second novel of the trilogy, Ge Fei adopts the technique of highlighting certain thoughts of the central figures in the novel (the male hero Tan Gongda, and the female protagonist, Yao Peipei) using boldface characters. Here below are some examples:

谭功达一看她的脸，立刻就吃了一惊，像是被锋利的锥子扎了一下，身体软软的，难以自持。古人说的倾国倾城虽有夸张之处也不是完全没有道理。不然何以我一看到她身体就摇摇如醉。(p. 58)

As he looked at her face Tan Gongda was suddenly amazed, as if he had been pricked by a sharp awl. He felt his body softening and unable to restrain himself. **Although the ancient saying «a beauty that can ruin a country» is somewhat exaggerated, it is not completely unfounded. Otherwise, for what reason did I feel shaky as if drunk as soon as I saw her?** (Emphasis of the Author)

此刻，他的脑子里只盘算着这两个念头：第一，姚佩佩已经不在。她不在不在不在…… (p. 343)

In that moment, only two ideas kept on revolving in his mind: first, Yao Peipei had already left. **She's not here, she's not here, she's not here...** (Emphasis of the Author)

The difference with the previous patterns is apparent, though not radical: these fragments of the mental activity of the main characters expressing

their innermost though not unconscious thoughts are presented by the author and accordingly felt by the reader as their deepest and most instinctive reactions. Ge Fei himself explained the reason for adopting this pattern (which reminds us of Faulkner's and Joyce's novels, where direct thoughts are placed in italics): he wanted to overcome what he considers to be diachronic and synchronic narration mismatches, and avoid interrupting his description of the action in order to present the characters' mind activities (Ge Fei, Wang Xiaowang 2007, p. 4).

If compared with the first novel of the trilogy, *Shanhe rumeng* deploys an increasingly inward narration, the subjectivity of the main characters prevails over the plot, disclosing larger spaces of their inner life. These flashes of thought – which actually correspond more to instantaneous emotions rather than rational and well-articulated reasoning – are often inserted within socially relevant situations, their aim being to highlight the mixing between private feelings and social actions. Bruner argues that «[e]motion is not usefully isolated from the knowledge of the situation which arouses it. Cognition is not a form of pure knowing to which emotion is added». (2009, pp. 117-118). Therefore, I would argue that Ge Fei successfully constructs the story of his characters not so much through a well-developed *fabula*, as through the labyrinth of intersubjectivity, where each actor vainly pursues his or her life plan. Tan Gongda fails both as a utopian socialist and as a lover, while Peipei is defeated by her sticking to her values and beliefs. The inability to see through this labyrinth is expressed in these lines referring to Yao Peipei:

她悲哀地意识到，每个人的内心都是一片孤立的、被海水围困的小岛，任何一个人的心底都有自己的隐秘，无法触碰。(p. 189)

She painfully realized that everybody's inner life was just an isolated small island besieged by water. Everybody in the bottom of their heart kept their untouchable, hidden secret.

In addition, the author constantly provides descriptions of mind activities, through a variety of 'telling devices', as in the quotation above; in this novel reported thought is often intertwined with direct expression of mind:

佩佩听他这么说，有点不好意思，可心里倒觉得莫名其妙地畅快。他要是当官也许就能变得聪明一点。这傻瓜被撤了职也未尝不是一件好事 (p. 190)

Peipei listening to his words felt slightly embarrassed, but her mind was crossed by an inexplicable sense of lightness. **If he is not an official, he will become smarter. This fool has been dismissed from his post, this is not necessarily a bad thing.** (Emphasis of the Author)



Finally, in the third novel, the main centre of consciousness is built upon a character, the poet Tan Duanwu, who is possibly closer (both in terms of historical context and of life experience) to the author; his fictional mind is seldom represented through the patterns of free direct thought or through a mediated narration. Instead, the mind presentation is mostly based on his gestures, life preferences, free associations as well as through dialogues and actions, in a more 'mimetical' way. Palmer's analysis of unmediated presentation of the mind adequately explains this method:

Narrators make regular use of associations in thought processes such as the chains of correspondences in which memories and sensations accompany immediate experiences. It can form an important part of the presentation of mind, not just in stream of consciousness novels, but also in more plot-oriented fictions. (Palmer 2004, p. 103)

In the third chapter, as it happened in the previous novels, the centre of consciousness shifts to the other main character, Duanwu's wife Jiayu: by means of this alternated perspective, the author manages to show two different subjectivities, successfully adopting what has been defined the 'reflector mode', which interplays with the reader's activity of inference based on his or her own experience.<sup>8</sup>

In some cases Ge Fei resorts to unusual signifiers or 'mirrors' of mind activities, which belong to everyday experience and might reflect the character's subjectivity in an objectified way; I'm referring here, for example, to sensorial activities, such as smell and visual perceptions, easily ascribable to the reflector character, but plainly reported as an objective landscape:

刚过了五月，天气就变得酷热难当了。出租车内有一股陈旧的烟味。司机是个高邮人，不怎么爱说话。道路两边的工厂、店铺和企业，像是正在疯狂分裂的不祥的细胞，一座挨着一座，掠窗而过，将梅城和鹤浦完全焊接在一起。金西纸业。梅隆化工。华润焦化。五洲电子。维多利亚房产。江南皮革。青龙矿山机械。美驰水泥。鹤浦药业。梅赛德斯特许经营店…… (p. 19)

<sup>8</sup> The concept of 'reflector character' as opposed to the 'teller character' was first theorised by Stanzel (1984), in order to distinguish a narrative mode where the story is told directly by one of the characters (teller) from the one where the information is indirectly mediated through his/her conscience (reflector). In Fludernik's reworked version of this theory, these mediated instances are integrated with the possibility of a 'neutral' narrative, and reinforced with the role played by the reader in interpreting the perspective from which things are narrated: «Experiencing, just like telling, viewing or thinking are holistic schemata known from real life and therefore can be used as building stones for the mimetic evocation of a fictional world. People experience the world in their capacity as agents, tellers and auditors and also as observers, viewers and experiencers» (Fludernik 2002, p. 20).

Shortly after the end of May the weather become unbearably hot. The taxi was pervaded by an outmoded tobacco smell. The driver came from Gaoyou, he was not particularly talkative. Factories, shops, and companies on both sides of the road looked like unauspicious cells insanely splitting up, one next to one, they passed over sweeping the window, tying together the two cities of Meicheng and Hepu. Jinxi Paper Industry. Meilong Chemical Engineering. Huarun Coking. Five Continental Electronics. Victoria Housing. Jiangnan Leather. Qinglong Mining Machinery. Meichi Cement. Hepu Pharmaceuticals. Authorised Mercedes Dealer.

A mimetical reflection of mental activity (a sort of induced stream of consciousness) is the sequence of short messages – some of which are quite trivial – received by the protagonist and read together simultaneously with the notice from the hospital where his former wife has just committed suicide:

他在排队等候出租车时，手机上一下出现了好几条短信。

欢迎您来到成都！中国移动成都分公司祝您一切顺利！

若若已去上学，诸事安好。勿念。随时联络。珠。

关注民生，共创和谐。河畔生态人文景观，凸显价值洼地。南郊水墨庭院震撼面世！独栋仅售 200 万，新贵首选。送超大山地庭院果林，露台车位。

速来成都普济医院或致电黄振胜医师。(p. 356)

While he was waiting for the taxi suddenly a long list of short messages appeared on his mobile phone.

Welcome to Chengdu! Chengdu China Mobile wishes you everything fine!

Ruoruo already went to school, everything is OK. Don't worry. Call me anytime.

Care for people's livelihood. Create harmony together. Riverside Ecological Human Landscape, we give prominence to the value of depression. Shuimo Courtyard in the south outskirts, a shocking debut! Only 200 thousand for a single building apartment, priority to newcomers. We offer a huge courtyard with fruit trees on a hillside.

Please come quickly to the Puji Hospital of Chengdu or call doctor Huang Zhensheng.

Mingling life-important content with ordinary information messages and commercials allows the author to reveal the character's mind without any filter between his inner life and readers, apart from the short introductory sentence. The tragic meaning of the event he is going to learn of is thus paradoxically highlighted by the triviality of other, minor facts passing only superficially through his mind.

A striking example of the subjectivity entrusted to descriptions, or merely suggested by behaviours, appears at the end of the novel, when Tan's reactions to the suicide of his wife are revealed only through hints in his talk with the doctor,

端午一脸麻木地听他说完，中间没有插一句嘴。似乎黄大夫正在谈论的，是一个与自己毫无关系的陌生人。最后，端午感谢黄大夫在最近一个月中，对妻子给予的救治和照顾。至于说追究院方的责任，他从未有过这样的念头。何况，他也从来不为院方在处理这件事的过程中存在任何过错。(p. 358)

Duanwu listened to his words with a numb expression on his face, without interrupting, as if doctor Huang were talking about a complete stranger, someone who had nothing to do with himself. Finally, Duanwu thanked him for taking care of his wife during the last month. Concerning the possibility of suing the hospital for its responsibility, he never had this intention. Moreover, he had never thought that the hospital had committed any mistake in dealing with this thing.

or through ordinary gestures: 他戒了烟 (p. 371) (He gave up smoking).

In this novel we find that more emotionally resonant forms of mind representation are conveyed – in perfect continuity with the classical Chinese novel – by poems. Moreover, a parallel, but opposite, device is employed in order to enlighten intersubjectivity, that is, the adoption of subtexts, the so-called «inserted genres» (Michail Bakhtin), such as letters, short messages and long QQ<sup>9</sup> dialogues; in the latter case, the verbal interaction between Duanwu and his wife is particularly meaningful, as an instrument of the author's to provide the reader with information about the main characters' mental activities, thus creating a flow of communication rarely possible within their direct conversations. It is through this supposedly instantaneous and superficial channel that Jiayu informs Duanwu that she has cancer.

Regarding the use of poetry as a powerful revealer of fictional minds, Ming Dong Gu (p. 99) highlights the presence of a «lyrical preconscious» in the writing of Chinese traditional fiction as a «desire to compete and

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9 An instant messaging software service developed in China and extremely popular in the previous years, it has now been replaced by newer technologies, such as Weixin (We Chat). Compared to traditional letters and even to emails, this interaction system involves a faster, almost immediate time of reaction, and different ways of expressing thoughts and feelings.

emulate with lyric poetry». He reminds us that: «the practice of mixing fictional prose with lyric poetry is so prevalent that even storytelling meant to cater to the illiterate could not forgo it» (p. 99). In his opinion, «the lyric in Chinese prose fiction has remained a ‘dark continent’, a metaphor Freud employed to describe the unknown mechanism of the mind» (p. 100). This practice went on until the modern era, and continues to inspire contemporary novelists, like Ge Fei. Not only is the protagonist himself a poet, but the whole novel is interspersed with more or less overt quotations from ancient or contemporary poets, both Chinese and Western, as well as by poems composed by the main character himself. In particular, there are direct references to such contemporary Chinese poets as Haizi<sup>10</sup> and Zhai Yongming<sup>11</sup> and to leading Western poets such as T.S. Eliot, R. M. Rilke, and Pablo Neruda, to mention only a few. Each of the crucial events that configure (and subvert) the protagonist’s (as well as a few other characters’) life plan is marked by poems evoking the complex processes and the states of his mind, without necessarily revealing them.

The most striking example is given by the six verses written by Duanwu to Jiayu after their first night of love: the poem is merely mentioned in the first chapter and then quoted again only in chapter 2; the importance of this short text is pivotal in evoking the complicated intersubjectivity between Duanwu and Jiayu, and strongly determines their respective life plans. For them the poetic language is really a conveyor of otherwise unexpressed meanings and emotions; the few words spoken here are not only a hint of the conflictive beginning of their love story, but eventually turn out to be a tragic prophecy of its ending.

诗中“祭台”一次，还是让她明确意识到自己作为“牺牲者”的性质，意识到自己遭到抛弃的残酷事实。(p. 4)

the word ‘sacrificial altar’ in the poem made her clearly feel herself as the ‘victim’, she realised she had experienced the brutal reality of being abandoned.

The six lines of the poem are revealed only later in the novel, in the chapter devoted to the narration of Jiayu’s and Duanwu’s story from her perspective:

十月中旬，在鹤浦 / 夜晚过去了一半 / 广场的飓风，刮向青萍之末的祭台 / 在花萼闭合的最深处 / 当浮云织出肮脏的褻衣 / 唯有月光在场。(p. 140)

10 海子 (1964-1989) Representative of the post-romantic trend of Chinese poetry he committed suicide in 1989, and he is presently much revered and discussed in literary circles for his tragic poetics and life-attitude.

11 翟永明 Born in Chengdu (1955), she is one of the most important poets in contemporary China.

Mid-October, in Hepu /half of the night has passed away/the typhoon of the square blows towards the sacrificial altar on the top of green duck-weeds/in the depths of the closed flower calix/ only the moonlight is on the spot/while floating clouds weave filthy underwear.

Again, as for Xiumi in *Renmian taohua* and Peipei in *Shanhe rumeng*, these lines allude to the irremediable inaccessibility of the character's inner world, like a closed flower calix, and to the fundamental lack of mutual understanding in personal relationships.

The last time this poem is mentioned is at the very end of the novel, when Duanwu finds the old sheet of paper among Jiayu's belongings.

纸质发脆,字迹漫漶。时隔多年,星移物换之中,陌生的诗句,就像是命运故意留下的谜面。(p. 373)

The paper had become crisp and the words blurred. After so many years, things had changed, and those unfamiliar lines seemed to be a hint to solve the riddle deliberately left behind by destiny.

Jiayu's suicide is somewhat foreshadowed by her attachment to the Chinese 'suicide icon', the poet Haizi - his work is first mentioned in the second of the four chapters (which is mainly presented through her fictional mind, p. 133), and then his collection of poems is found among Jiayu's personal belongings after her death (p. 359). As if death and the group of mental reactions to it were impossible to describe by other means, another meaningful example of poetic intertextuality can be found on the same page of the novel, when Duanwu's repressed suffering for the sudden suicide of his former wife is symbolically revealed through the lines of a Tang poem comparing death to a trip:

黄泉无旅店。  
今夜宿谁家? (p. 359)

There are no inns at the Yellow Springs.  
Where, then, this evening shall I lodge?

The deep significance of this poem, 'Lin xing shi' 临行诗 (Before the execution),<sup>12</sup> has to be connected with the occasion on which it was written, as it is the last testimony of the poet Jiang Wei 江为 (fl. 10th century) before he was killed for criticising Wang Yanzheng, the king of the state

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12 The poem is collected in the *juan* (chapter) n. 741-749 of the *Quan Tangshi* 全唐诗 (Complete Collection of Tang Poetry).

of Yin. The 'Yellow Springs' is a traditional symbol for the underworld. Duanwu recalls this poem when emerging from the dull scenery of the funeral parlour where the body of Jiayu has just been burnt (p. 359). In a commentary on this poem, Li Jialin 李加林 states (2012, p. 51):

全诗未有铿锵之语，也无引典作据。四句二十字短诗，不着一个“悲”字，然大痛大悲尽含其中 [...]。加之此诗有一个特殊的前提，系诗人临刑前所发，字字句句也就显得格外有分量，读之令人怆然涕下，感叹不已。

There are no clanging words in the whole poem nor there are any quotations from the classics. Among the twenty words of the brief four-lines poem we can't find a single word expressing sadness, but the immense suffering is completely contained inside them. In addition, there is a special premise in this poem: the poet seems to measure every single word, and this makes the reader sigh and cry with sorrow.

The same effect is produced in the novel's readers by the dry and bleary gaze by means of which Ge Fei makes them see his fictional minds' inner states of sorrow and bewilderment: only through outer devices, such as visual perceptions, objects, poetry, without explicitly recurring to a conventional lexicon of emotions.

For Ge Fei, intertextuality, and poetry most of all,<sup>13</sup> is a powerful conveyor of emotions and a valid pattern for representing the human mind, as well. In the tragic ending of the novel, we cannot directly read the protagonist's mind nor can we be sure of what his real feelings are; however, the author gives readers certain hints through material details, such as the character's gestures and physical perceptions; or, as in this case, mental activity is reflected by the lines of a poem which flashes in his mind.

The coexistence of such traditional subjectivity and implicitness, along with modern devices such as stream of consciousness, as well as the description of actions and objects, or the use of poetry to represent emotions and mental activities - which is certainly not uncommon in traditional fiction - is the path chosen by Ge Fei to narrate the human mind in its fragmentary complexity and its constant interaction with outer reality. Achieving both continuity and discontinuity with Chinese tradition, he manages to create a completely new and independent narrative style.

13 «Poetry affects us more than other arts because, not in spite, of its distance from concrete imagery and its evocation of complex networks of verbal and conceptual association» (Richardson 2010, p. 40).

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## Linking Ancient and Contemporary

Continuities and Discontinuities in Chinese Literature

edited by Tiziana Lippiello, Chen Yuehong 陈跃红 and Maddalena Barenghi

# ‘晚郁时期’的中国当代文学 ‘The Belated Mellow Period’ of Chinese Contemporary Literature

Chen Xiaoming 陈晓明  
(Peking University, China)

**Abstract** 20th century Chinese literature has changed dramatically, resulting in multiple fractures. Therefore, we will try to use the so-called «belated mellow period» to explain the artistic standards and aesthetic characteristics of Chinese literature today. The «belated mellow period» refers to Chinese literature getting into such a period: For one thing, in terms of the history of Chinese literature, its vernacular has gone through a 100-year radical change, while thoroughly absorbing the influence of Western literature and shaping it to the unique cultural characteristics of Chinese language. For another, in terms of the state of literature today, China has a number of writers entering middle age. Their writing style seems calmer and their sense of innovation is deeper, tougher and more contemplative. This is the «late style» and it means Chinese literature has reached a more mature, purer realm. The most significant works of contemporary Chinese literature are moving farther and farther away from Western modernist literature.

**Summary** 1 “晚期风格”的美学内涵 - 2 青春革命与中年写作 - 3 晚郁时期的美学特征 - 4 结语

**Keywords** Belated Mellow Period. Chinese Contemporary Literature.

新世纪中国文学呈现出与上世纪八九十年代迥然不同的格局、格调和气度。不再有激烈的变革愿望；也没有焦灼的抵达现实主义高度的欲求，突然沉静下来，反倒是更加偏执地走着所谓中国的路数。八九十年代在中国文坛风起云涌的“西方”，消失得无影无踪，如今留下的是如此平静朴拙的汉语文字。当然，我这里说的是主流文学史脉络延续下来的这类文学，事实上，当今中国文学分化得相当严重，我们说“文学”时，已经很难概括所有的文学现象。另一方面的景观是青年一代作家，在网络与市场上四面出击，如鱼得水。固然这种文学可能标示着未来，开辟出中国文学完全不同的另一条道路；但也有可能峰回路转，重归故里，依然成为传统的一脉。我们这类在传统文学中讨生活的人们，可能还是秉持着传统文学观念，以历史来看今天，以今天来期盼未来。

这就使我们要去思考，进入21世纪这些年，中国文学呈现出不同的格调气质到底意味着什么？到底是一种老气横秋，锐气全无，还是有另一种韵味，另一种自由？这

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可能要以20世纪中国文学的历史语境作为背景才能看出这种韵味，同理，那个隐匿的西方现代主义文学难道真的失踪了吗？如此疏远、遗忘、逃离，难道不是另一种惦记、遥遥相望吗？

确实，汉语白话文学自从五四以来，已经有100年的历史，历经动荡、变革和更新，今天我们去总结，难道仅仅只能看到这些暮霭沉沉的景象吗？是否可以换一种思路来看这个问题呢？这就是说，随着一批中国作家走向成熟（他们也都人过中年）——中国当代文学从20世纪初期的青春/革命写作（youth/revolution writing）；转向了20世纪后期：“中年写作”（middle age writing）。或类似阿多诺和赛义德（Edward W. Said）说的晚期风格（late style）？也许用一个更富有中国意味的概念——“晚郁时期”（the belated mellow period）来理解更为恰当。这就是寻求肯定性的概念来理解历经了100年变革的汉语白话文学，“晚郁风格”这个概念或许可以使那些迷茫和颓唐都一扫而光，能够在苍凉的幽暗中看到不屈的光亮。

## 1 “晚期风格”的美学内涵

“晚期风格”这个概念受到赛义德的高度关注，据赛义德夫人玛丽安·C·赛义德所说，在上世纪80年代，赛义德就关注这个主题，并开始阅读有关资料。90年代，他写作关于音乐的论文中就有涉及这个主题。90年代初，他在哥伦比亚大学开设关于“晚期风格”的讲座，并且着手写作一部有关这个主题的著作。直至他去世前几天，他还在写作这部书。可惜，未来得及完成。现在成书的版本，在他去世后，他的学生据听课笔记整理而成《论晚期风格》一书，虽只是薄薄一本，却多有睿智灼见。

赛义德关于晚期风格的论述，受到阿多诺的影响。对音乐有精湛研究的阿多诺注意到贝多芬的晚期音乐创作有一种“晚期风格”：

晚期作品有成熟意义的艺术家不会类似那些在成果里寻找的艺术家。他们最重要的部分不是圆形的，而是向前的，甚至是毁坏性的。没有甜，苦和辛，他们不会使自己屈服于纯粹娱乐。他们缺少所有古典审美艺术作品对协和的习惯需求，他们显露出更多的是历史的而不是生长的足迹。

以这样的讨论解释这种现象，通常的观点是，他们是非抑制的主体的产物，或者，更准确说，“个性人格”，它穿透包围的形式更好地表现自身，使和音变形成为痛苦的不协和音，他们蔑视声色的魅力，控制自我精神对自由的确信。

在一定程度上，晚期作品被交给了艺术的外部区域，在文献的附近。实际上，遵循自传和命运去研究真实的晚年贝多芬很少失败。就像，面对着人死亡的尊严，艺术理论是从它的权利剥夺自身，放弃对真实的赞同<sup>1</sup>。

在阿多诺看来，晚期作品更多倾向于表现艺术家主体的个人性格，它并不是遵循完善完美的原则，而是一种生命的自我体验，这只能从他们的晚年的生命状况读出。晚年的生命体验很可能是突破性的，因为无所顾忌，甚至对现行的原则、规则都并不在意。尤其是在不在意协和与圆满这种规则，经常显露出毁坏性的能量，在这

1 参见理查德·勒普特 Richard Leppert 选编的阿多诺的音乐文集 *Essays on Music* 《音乐随笔》第564-568页 *Late Style in Beethoven* 译出，英文译者为苏珊·H·吉莱斯皮 Susan H. Gillespie. 《阿多诺全集》（1937; GS, vol. 17, pp. 12-17），中文译者：张典，译文引自《中国艺术批评网》。

里，对自由的确信是其根本要义。概括阿多诺的晚期风格，有几个要点是清楚的：1，传记性的，与生命状态相关的创作状态；2，不尊崇既定的规范，不管是个人已经完成的，还是现行的准则；3，晚期不是一个成熟圆满的概念，毋宁说是一种毁坏、反常规和越界；4，遵循个性的表达，对自由的确信或许是其唯一的要义。

阿多诺基于他的否定辩证法的观念，从贝多芬晚年作品中读出那种否定性。晚年的作品并不在意构成整体性，贝多芬晚年作品没有取得一致性，赛义德概括阿多诺的分析说，贝多芬晚期的作品不是由一种更高的综合所派生的：“它们不适合任何系统规划，不可能被协调或被分解，因为它们不可分解性和非综合性的碎片性，是根本的，既不是某种装饰性的东西，也不是某种象征性的东西。贝多的晚期作品实际上与‘失落的总体性’有关，因而是灾难性的。”<sup>2</sup>

赛义德显然十分欣赏阿多诺的观点，阿多诺关于晚期创作的言说，赛义德则给予命名，他提出“晚期风格”概念。他解释说：把焦点集中在一些伟大的艺术家身上，集中在他们的生命临近终结之时，他们的作品和思想怎样获得了一种新的风格，即我将要称为的一种晚期风格。赛义德感兴趣的问题在于：

人们会随着年龄变得更聪明吗？艺术家们在其事业的晚期阶段会获得作为年龄之结果的独特的感知特质和形式吗？我们在某些晚期作品里会遇到某种被公认的年龄概念和智慧，那些晚期作品反映了一种特殊的成熟性，反映了一种经常按照对日常现实的奇迹般的转换而表达出来的新的和解精神与安宁。

……这些作品与其说多半洋溢着一种聪明的顺从精神，不如说洋溢着一种复苏了的、几乎是年轻人的活力，它证明了一种对艺术创造和力量的尊崇<sup>3</sup>。

我们通常认为，作家艺术家的创作高峰应该在盛年，有些作家青年时代才华过人，结果只是昙花一现，再也没有持续的创造力。如《麦田守望者》的作者塞林格，《在路上》的作者克鲁亚克后来也没有什么像样的作品。青春写作的写手多半如此，依靠纯粹直接经验来写，没有虚构和把握更多生活资源的能力。但无论如何，少有人会认为，晚年会是创作的高峰期。固然，阿多诺和赛义德也没有认为晚年是高峰期，但晚年可能会创作出非同凡响的高峰作品，作家和艺术家在晚期的创作有着非常不同的自由精神，晚期摆脱了一切陈规旧序，反倒有一种彻底的解放。因此，可以把赛义德说的晚期风格（late style）理解为是与生命的终结状态相关的那种容纳矛盾、复杂却又体现自由本性的一种写作风格。

赛义德不只是简单引用阿多诺，而是把阿多诺也作为晚期风格的研究对象。赛义德注意到，晚期的概念如此惊人地出现在走向老年的阿多诺的理论言说中，几乎成为阿多诺美学的根本方面。赛义德可以从阿多诺对贝多芬的晚期风格的论述中提炼出诸多的观点，但有二个要点是特别值得注意的。其一是阿多诺就此与马克思主义的关系。赛义德说，“马克思主义的进步概念和顶点概念，在阿多诺严厉否定性的嘲弄之下不仅崩溃了，而且使人想起运动的一切东西也都崩溃了。”<sup>4</sup> 马克思主义无限进步的社会观念，转向个人的艺术风格史，显然有一个终结的时期，而这样的终结在马克思主义那里是具有革命性的，是为着未来的希望和新的开始的准备。但对于阿多诺而

2 赛义德：《论晚期风格——反本质的音乐与文学》，阎嘉译，三联书店，2009年，第11页。

3 受德华·赛义德《论晚期风格——反本质的音乐与文学》，阎嘉译，三联书店，2009年，第3—4页。

4 同上，第12页。

言，晚期就是为着晚期自身，为了它自身的存在缘故。“晚期最终是存在的，是充分的意识，是充满着记忆，而且也是对现存的真正的（甚至是超常的）意识。像贝多芬一样，阿多诺因而成了一个晚期形象本身，成了一个最终的、令人震惊的、甚至灾难性的对现存的评论者。”<sup>5</sup>

同为左派，也可以说是马克思主义的传人，赛义德寻求的是马克思的后裔们如何突破和超越马克思主义，如何给予马克思主义以新的丰富性和可能性。因而，阿多诺的“晚期”概念，拒绝了进步论，它只是向着自身，自身以晚期的形式漫长地存在，尽管这是面对衰老和死亡的存在。赛义德发掘出的阿多诺这一对马克思主义的态度，同时关联着他阿多诺理解的另一层意义。这就是其二：关于晚期资本主义的批判性立场。赛义德这代左派知识分子，在其青年时代，正是以法国“五月风暴”和中国的文化大革命为顶峰运动目标的一代激进分子。在其晚年，后马克思主义思潮已经无法找到革命的主体和革命的未来方向。在晚年读解阿多诺的立场和命运时，赛义德是否也在说着自己？也未尝不能做如是想。在杰姆逊把后现代主义定义为“晚期资本主义“时代（反之亦然）之后，赛义德显然也用这个概念来理解阿多诺。而在阿多诺那里，这样的时期不再是隐含着马克思主义的革命辩证法，无宁说只有一种否定性的美学。但这样的否定美学看不出社会革命内容，毋宁说恰恰是“去革命”的美学思辩。赛义德说：“在晚期风格中存在着一种内在的张力、它否认纯粹的资产阶级衰老，坚持晚期风格所表现出来的孤寂、放逐、时代错误的日渐增长的意义，更为重要的是，表现出要在形式上维系自身。”<sup>6</sup>在把阿多诺的关于“晚期”的思想转变为一种纯粹的美学态度后，赛义德深刻地洞悉了阿多诺对资本主义晚期的一种同情态度。尽管阿多诺的思想无疑是政治性的，终其一生他都在谈论法西斯主义、资产阶级社会大众和共产主义，但他对它们始终是批判的和嘲讽的。这就是说，阿多诺并未有一种替代晚期资本主义的社会革命方案，他只是一个在美学上与这个晚期一起放逐的老去的人。所有这些关于阿多诺的政治与美学相混淆的对资本主义晚期的态度，是我对赛义德的猜谜式的读解，甚至还有一些推理式的冒犯。赛义德显然不可能这样明目张胆地去看阿多诺，他承认他作为一个晚期风格和最后阶段的理论家的立足点具有非凡的见识；但他对于阿多诺在90年代以后被认为有着“政治上的错误”未做辩解。看来他是同意这种说法的，并且深表同情，未尝不是欣赏。晚年的赛义德政治上也不好捉摸，但对晚期资本主义任何态度都没有这样的承认重要：它或许是无比漫长的“晚期”。很长时间，当年的激进批判者要与这样的“晚期”同在，也就是一起放逐<sup>7</sup>。不合时宜的阿多诺早在他的晚期就预见到了这一点，阿多诺早就与资本主义的“晚期”同在，一起放逐。直至赛义德的晚期，这就是惺惺相惜了。

5 同上，第13页。

6 同上，第15页。

7 晚期资本主义也是革命难以确立方向和目标的时期，革命的主体再也难以塑造。就这点而言，当今西方最激进的马克思主义左派也未必能给出有效的方案，尼格尔与哈特合著的《帝国》一书，一度是21世纪初马克思主义的救世之作，但他们寄望于革命主体是青年艺术家，流浪青年和在跨国公司被压迫于最底层的员工。这一想法也不过是六七十年代，法国的德留兹和居塔里在《反俄狄浦斯情结》中表达的观点如出一辙，他们那时也寄望于激进的青年艺术家来将革命进行到底。这样的寄望的始作俑者大约是本雅明和马尔库塞。在中国（西方马克思主义者对它有很多超出实际的想象），就连艺术革命的愿望也被高速发展的经济所瓦解了，随着一批青年画家从圆明园搬到宋庄，置房子置地，俨然过起中产阶级富庶的小日子。生活得好，可能比艺术革命和其他革命来得更加实在，这附合中国千百年来来的价值观，这一切也宛如历史的回光返照。中国社会，不管从什么主义，或者一种文化，或是一种文明，它或许也是一种“晚期”。也只有从“晚期”来理解中国当今社会，所有的问题，都迎刃而解了。

关于阿多诺对“资本主义晚期”的态度，并非是我随兴而起的对赛义德观点的发挥，在本文的构思中，它可能也具有某种隐喻的意义。

很显然，本文的真正主题是讨论中国当代文学的“晚郁时期”，这样的讨论需要理论参照，而且需要某种隐喻的表述方式。

## 2 青春革命与中年写作

之所以对“晚期”这个概念感兴趣，是因为现今关于中国文学的解释，多是从理论与文学史二个角度去阐释，而少有从个人风格出发，也少有从个人的心性、经验、态度、趣味去解释文学创作与文本。“晚期”这个概念一方面对解释个人有效，同时又对群体、一代人有效。更有意味的是，在个人经验基础上建立起对一个时代、一个时期的美学风格的理解，可能更具有内在性，甚至能切入对历史坚韧的隐秘力量的理解。

关于中国现当代作家处于不同的生理心理状态所投射出来的文学风格的思考，近年学界亦多有论述，陈思和撰文《从“少年情怀”到“中年危机”——20世纪中国文学研究的一个视角》<sup>8</sup>，对这一问题做了相当全面深入的探讨。同时期笔者对发表一篇文章《“幸存”与渐入佳境》<sup>9</sup>，探讨当代作家超越现代“青春写作”，试图从中年老成的风格角度去评价当今文学的独特意义。

关于现代青春写作问题，当然不是一个新话题，如陈思和文章中指出的那样，近年来宋明炜、梅家岭、刘广涛、周海波都有著作或论文论及这一问题。陈思和的概括当然有更加明确的主题，分析了现代中国的“少年情怀”所依托的历史语境，对现代中国历史变革所起到思想推动作用。关于“中年危机”，陈思和的分析亦十分犀利，他直接点明了肖开愚等人的“中年危机”与八九十年代之交的历史变故相关。不过，这一变化在当代中国文学审美心态和风格方面引发深远影响，以及90年代以后的中国发生的深刻变化究竟如何投射在中国作家的艺术追求中，还需要进一步分析阐释。而这正是本文的任务。

回溯20世纪，中国文学几乎都是青春写作，这里并不考虑其作品的主题，仅就其实际生理年龄来看，作家诗人大都是在20出头就崭露头角，现代中国的名篇佳作几乎都出自二十几岁的年轻人之手。五四新文学运动领潮流人物，除陈独秀鲁迅年长些外，主要干将不过二十几岁的人。胡适提出文学革命论28岁，郭沫若写下《女神》20出头，茅盾主持《小说月报》不过24岁，发表《蚀》三部曲不过30挂零一点，郁达夫发表《沉沦》25岁，曹禺发表《雷雨》时23岁，巴金24岁发表《灭亡》，29岁发表《家》。路翎19岁发表《饥饿的郭素娥》，22岁出版长篇《财主底儿女们》，在此之前，他写的手稿被胡风丢失，这是 he 根据记忆重写的作品，想去他写作原稿时也就20岁。至于那时期的诗人们，如艾青等人，大多数都是20出头，而田间只有17岁就得胡风激赏。五四时期是青年奋发有为的时期，也是青年创造新文化的时期，主张“四十岁以上的都应该枪毙”的钱玄同，略为年长，与鲁迅年岁接近，但发表那些最激烈的文学革命主张时，也不过三十出头。那时的作家，鲁迅就算年长些的，或许因此，鲁迅的文笔与其他作家颇为不同。过去全部归之于思想意识方面的缘由，是否年龄不同，心性不同也是个中原因呢？

8 载《探索与争鸣》，2009年第5期。

9 载《文艺报》，2009年8月20日。

青春写作其实一直延续到1949年以后的新中国。看看50年代的那些作家，那些本来要成熟的作家，面临改造世界观，突然要重新摸索一套新型的社会主义的文学经验。他们要写工农兵，要向工农兵学习，他们又变成新手，力不从心。“百花时期”冒出来的一批作家，如王蒙，发表《组织部新来的青年人》时21岁，1958年茹志娟发表《百合花》时算得上是老作家，那一年她33岁。1954年，路翎发表《洼地上的战役》，那一年他31岁，差不多就是他的文学生命终结的岁数。胡风分子以及右派的一批人，他们青春期的朝气尚未完全消退，写作的机会就突然断送了。一晃20多年后，归来的吟唱已带着中年的苍凉，毕竟中间隔绝了几十年，续上的是五六十年代的记忆。文革时期的造反的革命文学不用说，不只是作者是青年人，而且文学作品中的物象，具有继续革命的主动性的进步形象无一不是青年人，翻翻当时唯一的《朝霞》杂志就可看到这一点。文革后的“伤痕文学”那一拨人，有一多半是青年人。卢新华24岁那年发表《伤痕》时还是在校大一学生，随后是知青一代作家风头正健，就算是老知青，也还是算在青年名份下。85新潮涌出的现代派，最具有挑战性的刘索拉和徐星，那时也都只不过刚满30岁。张炜发表《古船》时30岁，写作时大约二十七八岁。这是80年代中期最有份量的作品，迄今为止还被对当代中国文学最为苛责的一些批评家，推为最有思想，也是最有文学价值的作品。80年代后期，先锋派一批作家步入文坛，呼应西方的现代主义后现代主义，他们对汉语文学所做出的挑战无疑是激进的，也最为深远的，那时他们大都二十出头，他们在那个时期写下的作品，迄今为止也还被认为当代文学最有艺术水准的作品。

1989年夏末，肖开愚在同人刊物《大河》上发表一篇短文《抑制、减速、开阔的中年》，谈到中年写作问题。在这篇文章中，肖开愚探讨摆脱孩子气的青春抒情，要让诗歌写作进入生活和世界的核心部分，成人的责任社会。或许是经历过社会剧烈变化，时年29岁的肖开愚对诗歌的“青春写作”有所不满，寄望于进入中年写作的成熟与责任。他后来也对此解释说：停留在青春期的愿望、愤怒和清新，停留在不及物状态，文学作品不可能获得真正的重要性。中年的提法既说明经验的价值，又说明突破经验的紧迫性，中年的责任感体现在解决具体问题的能力上，而非呼声上。<sup>10</sup> 90年代初的中国思想文化面临着微妙而又深刻的转折，诗人们其实是更直接地感受到这种转折。以海子的死为标志，诗歌界在90年代初的转折带有某种内敛与精神气质，在消沉和迷茫中追求思想的纯粹性。因此，“中年写作”这种概念给诗人们提供了一种自我认同的精神空间。1993年，诗人欧阳江河在《1989年后国内诗歌写作：本土气质、中年特征与知识分子身份》一文中深入的探讨了“中年写作”这个概念。欧阳江河认为，“中年写作”这一概念所涉及的并非年龄问题，“而是人生、命运、工作性质这类问题。它还涉及到写作时的心情”。他进而解释说：

中年写作与罗兰·巴尔特所说的写作的秋天状态极其相似：写作者的心情在累累果实与迟暮秋风之间、在已逝之物与将逝之物之间、在深信和质疑之间、在关于责任的关系神话和关于自由的个人神话之间、在词与物的广泛联系和精微考究的幽独行文之间转换不已。如果我们将这种心情从印象、应酬和杂念中分离出来，使之获得某种绝对性；并且，如果我们将时间的推移感受为一种剥夺的、越来越少的、最终

10 肖开愚：《90年代诗歌：抱负、特征和资料》，参见陈超主编：《最新先锋诗论选》，石家庄：河北教育出版社，2003年版，337-338页。关于这一问题的论述参考张立群：《“中年写作”：世纪初诗歌代际划分的另一种解读》，原载：《艺术广角》2009年第4期。更早些时候，笔者在《表意的焦虑》（2002年）中探讨了当代诗人的“中年写作”。而提出“中年写作”这一问题的，可以追溯到欧阳江河与程光炜在1989年之后，关于“中年写作”的讨论。

完全使人消失的客观力量，我们就有可能做到以回忆录的目光来看待现存事物，使写作和生活带有令人着迷的梦幻性质<sup>11</sup>。

欧阳江河带着诗意解释“中年写作”的含义，十分独到、丰富而准确地揭示这个概念的内涵，显然，这是一种从现实疏离再回到诗性超越性中去的形而上态度，与肖开愚要表达的责任和成熟略有区分。或许在“成熟”这一点上他们有共通之处，这种成熟使他们可以赋予自身观察事物和思考现实拉开距离，有一种“回忆录的目光”。当然欧阳江河重视的是时间的态度，重复、从容与更加客观的认识，这就有可能对语词展开修辞学的精微把握，把自身的历史与时间消逝的感受嵌入语词的修辞中。欧阳江河还解释说：

中年所面对的问题已换成了“多或少”、“轻或重”这样的表示量和程度的问题，因为只有被限量的事物和时间才真正属于个人、属于生活和言词，才有可能被重复。重复，它表明中年写作不是一次性的，而是可以被细读的；它强调差异，它使细节最终得以从整体关系中孤立出来获得别的意义，获得真相，获得震撼人心的力量。这正是安东尼奥尼(M. Antonioni)在《放大》这部经典影片中想象揭示的，也正是布罗茨基(Joseph Brodsky)“让部分说话”这一简洁箴言的基本含义。整体，这个象征权力的时代神话在我们的中年写作中被消解了，可以把这看作一代人告别一个虚构出来的世界的最后仪式<sup>12</sup>。

“中年写作”被欧阳江河重新赋予了一种神圣性，不只是诗学的神圣性，也是一种政治无意识的神圣性。但是这种政治无意识隐含的神圣性，欧阳江河试图用修辞学来隐藏和抑制，当然也不得不在实际的写作中减弱。欧阳江河观察到：“许多诗人发现自己在转型时期所面临的并不是从一种写作立场到另一种写作立场、从一种写作可能到另一种写作可能的转换，而仅仅是措辞之间的过渡。”所谓“措辞”，也就是说“过渡和转换必须首先从语境转换和语言策略上加以考虑”<sup>13</sup>。本来是有着某种政治无意识，但这里要有中年的成熟和智慧来抑制，从而顺利转换为语言修辞。隐藏的政治无意识，实际上也就是避开和疏离的当下性。中年写作对诗的活力的理解——被认为是来自扩大的词汇及生活两个要素。这就把诗歌写作限定为具体的、个人的和本土的，仅仅依靠修辞策略就足以也更深刻地表达了知识分子的自由派立场。中年写作也就顺理成章地向“知识分子身份”延伸，欧阳江河的骨子里还是带着告别历史的态度，重新寻求90年代诗歌写作的历史起点，这个起点被改变为“中年写作”。九十年代初划定的并不仅仅是一个年代的分界线，对于这一代诗人来说，还是一个个人的生活经验和精神气质的分界线，因而也变成艺术风格和学术趣味的分界线。个人写作、中年写作以及知识分子写作，都在“语词”这一轴心上汇聚并完成了转折。欧阳江河已经给一代人重新命名：“记住：我们是一群词语造成的亡灵。”

在这里，本文并不想去深入分析“中年写作”的历史含义，只是借助在90年代初对这一概念的讨论，来看当代中国诗人如何从个人的心理态度和精神状态来重新定义文学写作，重新寻求文学转折的方向和新的诗学（美学）。90年代标示的文学转折，让

11 欧阳江河《1989年后国内诗歌写作：本土气质、中年特征与知识分子身份》，载

12 同前。

13 载《今天》1993年第3期。



诗人的敏感性把握住了，这一敏感的意义不只是转折本身，而是转折的方式。也就是汉语文学的表达方式与一代人的心理变化密切相关，而我们过去只是关注外部现实的变化，我们对文学变化的所有理解，都是外部社会现实决定论，外部社会与文本直接发生关系，我们并未考虑作家诗人主体的心理和经验的变化投射到文本上去的那种效果。

也许90年代初的“中年写作”还有些超前，这当然是历史变故的投射。这种“中年感”还带着青春的感伤，1993年，37岁的张曙光写下《岁月的遗照》一诗，这首诗后来被程光炜收入以它为题目的诗集，并置于篇首。这个选本被认为是引发“知识分子写作”与“民间写作”之间论争的文本，而在张曙光那里，却是要写出中年的沧桑感：

我一次又一次看见你们，我青年时代的朋友  
仍然活泼，乐观，开着近乎粗俗的玩笑  
似乎岁月的魔法并没有施在你们的身上  
或者从什么地方你们寻觅到不老的药方  
而身后的那片树木、天空，也仍然保持着原来的  
形状，没有一点儿改变，仿佛勇敢地抵御着时间  
和时间带来的一切……。

这首诗写得悠扬清峻，伤感却明媚。出生于1956年的张曙光在1993年也只有37岁，何以就会有如此强烈的中年感受？这是这代诗人少有的怀旧式抒情，这是时代之剧烈变化，觉今是而昨非有一种历经沧桑之感，诗里透示出一种纯净的略带失落感的中年心态，甚至是未老先衰之感。过去的消逝如此真切，只留下个人的记忆。被称之为历史的那种存在，到底在哪里呢？这里提到的历史，都是一系列个人的行为，只有它们是真实的吗？中年人回过身来，能留下什么记忆呢？只有词语，从宏大的历史记忆中摆脱出来的更纯净的词语，一种回顾个人的后历史叙事。

不管是肖开愚、张曙光还是欧阳江河，他们那时正值而立之年的年华，没有壮志凌云的情怀，却有看透世事的沧桑，甚至欧阳江河在那篇文章中还反复谈到对死亡的意识，并且引述了多位同龄诗人写死亡的诗句。正当而立，却已然知天命，确实，这就是我们要提问的依据：这些在90年代初就意识到自己是中年写作的诗人作家，如果到了21世纪，他们是一种什么心态？

进入21世纪，90年代初的“中年心态”，是否有可能变为“老年”或“晚年”呢？如果这样的说法与90年代初的“中年”说法同样有夸大之嫌的话，那么“晚中年”这种说法可能可以成立吧？这个概念解释的不只是这批作家随着岁月流逝，也不得不步入生理学的中年；同时，还有20多年的不再喧闹的中国文学的当代史。没有变革、没有流派、没有冲动、没有新理论、没有新方向的20多年的中国文学，它已然如死水一般沉静——所有的喧嚣只是岸上的喧嚣。文学本身却是沉得住气，不再做外在化的观念变革或是方法论的革新，而是作家在自己的位置深刻领会，自在地抵达自己的境界。固然，创造历史与新理论的冲动已经在90年代终结，这是个世界性的问题，是世界文学的问题。“历史终结”这种说法在社会现实领域可能会遭致怀疑，但在文学领域却是有可能得到承认的实际情况。“历史终结”对于文学来说，或许就是世界文学步入“晚期”，这才不需要与社会现实变革捆绑在一起，这才可以，也只能回到文学本身。

确实，现代白话文学历经一百年的变革与动荡，这才平息下来。这一百年的历史沧桑，相较于西方现代文学的历史并不漫长，但在频繁的历史剧烈变后的歇息岁月，它已然进入现代的晚期。相较于汉语文学漫长的古典时代的历史，这样的一种难握的平静，如同汉语文学现在真正步入“晚期”。

### 3 晚郁时期的美学特征

杰姆逊在《晚期资本主义的文化逻辑》一书中，以“晚期资本主义文化”概念来替代“后现代主义”概念<sup>14</sup>。“晚期”虽然有指称西方资本主义处于没落的含义，如果抹去杰姆逊的马克思主义批判性，则也可以看出他揭示了西方资本主义现代性的“晚期”特征。现代性文化处于“晚期”，这才有后现代主义。“晚期”的概念确实可以与福山的“历史终结”概念等量齐观（尽管它们对历史的看法上大相径庭），由此来看世界文学在现代性这一意义上，也可以称之为“晚期”。而20世纪不断变革卷入社会革命的中国文学，到了20世纪末，也可称之为走到晚期。尤其是它在21世纪初，更强烈的传统呼唤，古代传统与现代传统，它也几乎是突然才意识到自己接通了如此漫长的传统命脉。这个历史久远至今，使得它也不得不意识到身处“晚期”的命运。

21世纪初的中国文学确实有点生不逢时，也才刚刚消停踏实几年，却不想处于这样波澜不惊的现代“晚期”，真所谓穷途末路，长歌当哭。但我们也许未必要执着于断言“死到临头”，如海德格尔所说，人本来就是“向死而生”。以此来推断，一种文化类型向死而生也不是什么需要特别悲观的事，相反，坦然看到这一点，或许可以更加从容地理解当今文学自身的特性与命运，理解汉语文学自在自觉的选择。

我们或许可以从这样的角度来看走向“晚期”的汉语文学：它正是在这一时期才出现了更具有汉语特性的艺术品格。对于这一代中国作家来说，我以为最为重要的是他们有了自觉的汉语文学观念。这种观念不再是20世纪上半期在中国占据统治地位的外在社会革命与批判的概念，也不是与西方二元对立的立场和情绪——而是对当今世界文学具有更加自觉与清醒的意识，是汉语写作烂熟于心的感悟，是自在自为的文本意识。也正是具有了回到语言写作的意识，这才可能开始攀援汉语文学的高地。

对于中国这个民族来说，晚20世纪与早21世纪，确实可以理解为是孕育转机的新的历史时刻，但也相较于20世纪的历史，相较于中国漫长的历史文化而言，它又具有所有的“晚期”的特性。它在沉静木然的外表下积累各种矛盾冲突，而处在这样历史时刻的汉语文学也在潜移默化郁积底蕴<sup>15</sup>。

相比较用“晚期”来讨论世界现代性文化发展至今的历史特征；我尝试用“晚郁时期”来理解当代汉语文学的气质格调。这显然是在参照了赛义德的概念后，针对汉语文学的历史命运和当下特征而做出的概括。汉语文学历经100年的现代白话文学的社会化的变革与动荡，终于趋于停息；转向回到语言、体验和事相本身的写作。“晚郁时期”是指一批作家在过早领悟了“中年写作”命运与汉语文化

14 参见杰姆逊《晚期资本主义的文化逻辑》，三联书店，陈清桥等译，1997年。

15 日本诺贝尔文学奖获得者大江健三郎对中国著名翻译家许金龙先生说：中国有一批四五十岁的作家，他们正在走向成熟，如此整齐的队伍，如此整齐的作品，这是当今世界上任何一个国家都难以有的现象，让他惊叹。有关资料来自大江健三郎给许金龙先生的私人信件，另外的材料来自2010年底北京中日青年作家对话会议，在该会议的开幕式上，大江健三郎发来了一封很长的祝贺信，主持人宣读了这封信，笔者据当时在场的记忆所记。

的“晚期”历史情境重叠在一起，由此形成的写作处境。它是一批人、一种文学、一个时期的现象。

晚郁时期的美学特征可以归纳如下：

1. 晚郁时期的写作是回到本土的写作。它不再与西方的某个派别或某个作家发生直接关联，这些西方古典与现代文学经验，全部转化为作家个人的经验，转化为文本的内涵品质，呈现出来的则是更加单纯的汉语写作。

现代以来的中国白话文学深受欧美及苏俄文学的影响，固然传统中国文学的影响还在，但对欧美及苏俄文学的借鉴是相当强烈的要求。鲁迅算是把现代白话文学与中国传统结合得最好的作家，但鲁迅关注创作伊始就写有《摩罗斯力说》，后来对果戈理、普列汉诺夫等苏俄作家多有赞赏，对厨川白村的《苦闷的象征》也十分肯定，他的拿来主义是对现代中国文学处理与世界文学关系最为精当恰切的表述。确实，在鲁迅的小说及其他文类中，看不出多少明显的欧美及苏俄文学的痕迹，但都化作一种内涵与艺术品性融合于文本之中。郭沫若、郁达夫、茅盾、巴金、曹禺的作品之与欧美及苏俄文学就更为明显，新感觉派之与日本文学，丁玲、周立波之于苏联文学，无庸讳言，现代中国的小说在文体制与叙述方面，都可看出外来的明显痕迹。整个五十年至七十年代的文学强调的社会主义现实主义，与苏联文学的关系更加密切。文革后的80年代，改革开放与实现四个现代化，使中国文学追寻西方现代主义文学潮流成为可能，文学的创新性标志就是与西方现代主义拉近距离。很显然，那个时期的作家诗人背后都站立着一位或数位西方古典和现代作家。卡夫卡、普鲁斯特、马尔克斯、博尔赫斯、海明威、川端康成……等人是所有小说家热衷于谈论的对象。进入90年代，有些作家批评家又大加赞赏苏俄文学。在小说那里是对托尔斯泰的人道主义再度张扬；在诗歌那里是对有特殊政治指向性的波罗茨基、阿赫玛托娃、索尔仁尼琴等人的崇尚。但90年代的小说主流则是现实主义回潮，以《白鹿原》和《废都》预示的是去除西方现代主义直接影响的选择。前者是回到现实主义和传统文化，后者则是回到传统美文。没有西方现代主义作为底蕴，中国的小说有能力获得艺术上的肯定。尽管二部作品都受到不同程度的批评，但它所预示的文学转变方向，恰恰是回到本土的传统。

90年代后期以来的这些作家，也都人到中年，相比较西方文化的熏陶，他们所受的传统中国文学和文化教育要深厚得多，回归传统在90年代获得了合法性，那么中国作家回到传统也就没有压力。这是他们更为习惯的踏实的文化根基，传统以及名为现实主义的那种平实的手法，使他们更加自如地面对个体经验。这倒使21世纪初的一些作家的作品，更具有本土的本真性。这种现象当然不能说是有意识避开西方文学的直接影响而取得了值得肯定的本土性，这一切只能是历史给定的条件下作家所做出的努力。我始终坚持认为的是，不能说离开了西方文学的直接影响，中国文学就能找到更加纯粹的本土性，中国文学就有自己的创造。如果能在更为全面和综合的层次汲取西方现代文学的经验，这当然是更好的结果。但历史的选择身不由己，90年代的转折并不自觉、甚至有些被动，削弱了西方文学的影响，中国文学总算在民族本位方面有所融会创造。西方现代文学的经验是在疏离的情形下，在确立本土性的自我表达的基础上，自然地融会进文学创造的。因此，在那些乡土叙事的作品中，也看不出明显的形式的和思想观念的西方痕迹。但80年代的西方现代主义文学的洗礼始终是融合在其中，虽然淡薄，但却是必要的元素，它会在进一步的文本建制中一点点释放出来。也必然在未来的文学创造中，使这些具有本土性的作品与世界文学内在地联系在一起。

2. “晚郁时期”的写作是一种更加沉静沉着的写作。它看不到激烈的形式变革，但却是一种艺术表现的内在经验。这种经验看上去不起眼，不张扬，却是作家对自己过往经验的极有力的超出。前面讨论赛义德的观点，我们注意到赛义德的说法：“那些晚期作品反映了一种特殊的成熟性，反映了一种经常按照对日常现实的奇迹般的转换而表达出来的新的和解精神和安宁。”当然我们在这里不是套用赛义德的说法，去看中国有些作家近些年的写作，确实也有一种“和解精神和安宁”。就90年代后期以来的中国文学来说，那些有中年之感的作家或许也有和解精神和安宁，但这种状态在很大程度上是历史给予的。也就是说，中国社会的观念变革和意识形态冲突，直至90年代才趋于平息，这样的平和是历史语境变化的结果，还是作家走向成熟之后的沉着，确实难以断言，但二者可能都有关系。象莫言在《檀香刑》之后又有《丰乳肥臀》和《生死疲劳》，直至《蛙》，其艺术上的变化不可谓不大，其小说艺术性也颇有爆发力，但批评界和普通读者都并未有激烈反应。依靠文本间的对话，《蛙》重新建构了叙述人的地位，同时也对文本中的单一个体经验进行重新刻画。重要的是把个人、人物从历史的整合性解救出来。《蛙》最后一部分的戏剧如此大胆地把文本撕裂，让悲剧的历史荒诞化。《蛙》里的叙述人蝌蚪，那是很低很低的叙述，他只是一只小虫，作为一个偶然的生命，游走于历史的间隙。或者他只是一只蛙，趴在田地里，看世界与人，他充当了一个编剧者，只能是编织出荒诞杂乱的戏剧。如此低的视角，如此平静和沉着，却胆大妄为地做出这样戏剧。莫言在低处运气，象一只哈蟆在低处运气，那种小说笔法，全然没有敌手，没有要突破的方向，从书信如此自然地走向了荒诞的戏剧，透着文本自身的率性，这就是老道的自信和胆略！

同样，刘震云在《故乡天下黄花》之后，又有《故乡相处流传》、《故乡面和花朵》，以及《手机》和《一腔废话》，一部比一部激进，直至2009年的《一句顶一万句》，突然沉静，再也没有前此的骚动不安，但仔细辨析，《一句顶一万句》如此乡土味的小说，内里却是包含着相当有力的变化，几乎是一改他过去的叙述风格，回到极端平实之中，小说是一句一句写来，却又一句一句转变，一个故事总要和另一个故事相关，一句话总在转向另一句话。其艺术上的考量和功力却是细微入致地进入到构思和每一个叙述情境中。

这就是说，艺术变革的历史已经终结，并非作家不用力，也并非文本本身没有突破性，而是现实语境改变了，此一时彼一时，现今的文学史已经是一部静止的常规文学史，不再是渴求革命或变革的文学史，充其量只是改良主义。这是历史给出的语境。另一方面，作家身处这样的语境，对艺术变革不再表达历史渴望，只求个人的写作突破，有能力在自己过往经验中寻求变化。艺术创新只能孕育于变化中，80年代的这种变化是与时代观念变化，新知识冲击相呼应，现在则是个体的艺术经验的变化。恰恰是这种细微的、微妙的艺术手法的变化，扎扎实实地推进汉语小说艺术的进步（如果进步这个概念在最低的意义上还有必要使用的话）。

3. 晚郁时期的写作有一种自由品性。它也有如赛义德所说的“晚期写作”，有一种自由放纵的态度。不再寻求规范，其创作有一种自由的秉性，任性的特征。

本文在阐释在“晚郁时期”这个概念时，始终是把汉语白话文学的百年历史发展至今所处的情境与人过中年的一批作家个人的写作处境结合起来考察。文学史发展到它的晚期，那么这些伴随着文学史半个世纪变革的这代作家肯定深有体会，现在的艺术变化不再是现实发出的强烈呼吁，而是个人的想法，个人的志趣。超越文学史的羁绊，个人的艺术表达反倒获得自由，特别是对自身的艺术特点也可能了解得更加真实和深切，因此，会有一种无拘无束的自由显现出来，甚至有一种艺术上的放纵和僭越。

阎连科近些年的小说，如《受活》、《风雅颂》，以及最近的《四书》，可以看出他的小说艺术颇为用力，其实也是放纵，只有放纵才有力道出来。《受活》的构思就十分大胆，他要回答在当今中国走向市场化时代，革命遗产如何承继的问题。那些革命资源如何转化为当下的生产力，转化为当下活的精神和实践。小说的主导故事是讲述河南某地县领导谋划从前苏联购买列宁遗体建烈士陵园，供全国人民参观，以此来解决当地脱贫致富的问题。但革命遗产的继承和光大却是采取了革命原本最为痛恨的二种方式：市场经济和娱乐。内里的反讽不可谓不强大，在小说观念、叙述方式以及语言的运用方面，都可见出作者破除羁绊的力道。《风雅颂》对当今大学道义和人文文化展开批判，不可谓不激烈；但《四书》显然更加大胆，从立意，切入历史的角度，到反思历史与人性的直接性，都堪称前列。而阎连科有意与《圣经》建立起对话，在生硬中透出一种坚决的品性，不再留情，也不再躲闪，而是直接切近本质，询问天道，触摸心灵，拷问灵魂。看似生硬，实则有一种不可拘束的放纵自由。

当然，贾平凹在2011年出版的《古炉》有着另一种极致的自由。只要稍有语言和文本的敏感，就可感觉到《古炉》与《废都》的美学风格相去甚远，而与《秦腔》接近，但又更加自由，而这种自由分明是放任的自由。何以是“放任”？《古炉》是怎样的叙述？《古炉》的语言仿佛不是作者控制住的，而是丢出去的，往外随意丢到地上，就象落地的麦子一般。语言如此稠密滞重，但又有一种流动之感。如同流水落在地上，这就是落地的叙述，就是落地的文本了。这就是应了苏东坡的话“随物赋形”，不择地皆可出，常行于所当行，常止于不可不止（苏东坡《文说》）。这就是浑然天成。但《古炉》确实又有一种粗粝，随物赋形，更象落地成形，贴着地面走，带着泥土的朴拙，但又那么自信沉着，毫不理会任何规则放任自流，我行我素。其叙述之微观具体，琐碎细致，鸡零狗碎，芜杂精细，分子式的叙述，甚至让人想到物理学的微观世界，几乎可以说是汉语小说写作的微观叙述的杰作。其叙述遇到任何地上的物体生物（石磨、墙、农具、台阶、狗、猫、甚至屎……），都停留下来，都让它进入文本，奉物若神明。这就是随物赋形，落地成形，说到哪就是哪，从哪开头就从哪开头。无始无终，无头无尾，却又能左右逢源，自成一格。如长风出谷，来去无踪；如泉源流水，不择地皆可出。随时择地，落地而成形。这种叙述，这种文字，确实让人有些惊异，有些超出我们的阅读的经验，但却足以让我们感受到这种文字不可名状的磁性质地，它能如此贴着地面蠕动，土得掉渣又老实巴交，但又那么自信地说下去，什么都敢说，什么都能说，真如庄子所言，屎里觅道而已。

4. 晚郁时期有深刻内省的主体的态度，对人生与世界有深刻的认识。对生命的认识超出了既往的思想，一种传统与现代相交的哲思。

2009年，刘震云出版《一句顶一万句》，这部小说一改过去历史叙事的路数，小说讲述了一个农民半个多世纪的故事，但却并未依赖历史编年史。这里面居然看不到20世纪那些惯常有的大事件：国民革命、共产革命、抗日战争、解放战争、土改、大跃进、文革……，其时间一直到改革开放的八九十年代。但这样的历史只是以杨百顺改名的历史来展开，杨百顺、杨摩西、吴摩西、罗长礼……，最后以罗长礼这个喊丧的人的名字隐匿于西北某个不知名的处所。一个人的历史就这样的消失了，以至于他的后人无法找寻历史/个人演变的路线图。对于刘震云来说，乡土农民寻求说知心话的朋友构成了这部小说主题动机，这与现代启蒙把乡土农民写成是被启蒙和被召唤革命的阶级觉悟相比，这是是另一种现代性。但刘震云却是从乡村生活的本真性来抵达这种现代性的，它不是对历史的建构，毋宁说是回到个人生命存在的本色去超越历史的

现代性——无现代的现代性。那是生命存在自在的要求，在朴实的乡村生活中就可以自然滋生的生命伦理要求。它的困境并不是来自历史，而是人性自身，人性给自身创造无数的困境，人是自己的困境。刘震云也是知天命的年岁领悟到生命的内在渴望与不可克服的局限，这种对人的认识，对中国乡村生活的认识，对中国历史的认识，确实有着“知天命”的虚无。

张炜的鸿篇巨制《你在高原》，10卷本汇集了他在90年代以来漫长的思考。当然最后的改定在2010年出版，可以看到他在这个时期的思想状况。其中的《忆阿雅》在1995年有一个版本《怀念与追忆》（作家出版社），那也是张炜初涉中年，他就对50代人进行反思和“注视”<sup>16</sup>。这部小说不只是反思中国20世纪的历史，反思父辈的历史，对当代权势膨胀进行直接抨击，同时去写出“我们”的历史，写出50代人的命运。小说对这一代人的书写是独特的，中年人的眼光审视一代人，揭示这代人的独特性，反思、批判与同情融为一体，留下一份50代人的精神传记。

小说在对50代人进行叙述时，张炜经常写到“注视”。如此大的历史背景，如此苍茫的地质学和人文地理背景，小说却有非常细致的叙述穿行于其中，那些感受也是自我与当下的交流，我以为这就得益于张炜注重对“注视”的表现。在把90年代出版的《怀念与追忆》改为如今看到的《忆阿雅》时，其中“注视”被强调得更加充分和多样。这部小说里有目光，人的目光、我的目光、他人的目光、动物（阿雅）的目光、我与想象的精灵一般的动物阿雅交流的目光……等等。过去我们的小说叙述当然也有目光，如朱自清的《背影》，就是写父亲的目光，儿子对父亲注视的目光。张炜的叙述是他在看父辈历史，在当下经验中一直在审视，这个审视又让一种虚构动物的“阿雅”对“我”的注视介入，只有我能读懂阿雅的目光。这个动物是圣灵，在注视着我不的一切，这就是在所有的注视中，都有一种对圣灵的、神圣与神秘的注视，如上帝与命运一般。当然，实际上，张炜在注视历史，注视友情，注视我们，注视内心，注视50代这一代人。

张炜算是中国当代少数浪漫主义特征比较鲜明的作家。在张炜的叙述中自我的经验被抒写得相当充分丰富，他不回避他具有的理想性——尽管理想的内涵并不具体，但有一种精神品格是其要坚持的价值。他的叙述带着思辨色彩，情感亦很丰富和饱满。张炜的叙述同时有非常细致的和微妙的感受随时涌溢出来。那些当下的细节刻画得栩栩如生，这才是小说在艺术上饱满充足的根基。那些感情表达并不空洞，而是有着扎扎实实的生活质感。例如，前面说到的注视，那些具体的描写与自我当下的感受总是被结合得相当精当。再如在叙述与朋友的交往时，他对友情的思考，总是和对朋友的注视相关。例如，《忆阿雅》临近结尾第23章，就是写“回转的背影”。他想看清50代这代人，而林藁或许就是50代人最奇特的代表，代表了那种可变性与隐晦曲折，甚至包藏着太多的秘密。却显得那么有理想，甚至独往独来。小说在反思50代人时，实际上也是自我反思，也可以说是有一种壮士暮年之感，回望人生才有如此深刻复杂的感触。

同样，阎连科要如此偏执地写作《四书》这本书，这也是要表达他对中国当代史的强烈质询，那里面集合了他这些年思想郁积的最后能量。当然，要读解《四书》的思想内涵确实不是一件容易的事情。这部名为《四书》的作品，是由：《天的孩子》《故道》、《罪人录》以及《新西绪佛神话》等四部书构成，前面几部不断交

16 《怀念与追忆》2005年花城出版社曾经有一个再版本，15年后经过修改，同时书名也改为《忆阿雅》，收入《你在高原》全书，再由作家出版社出版。

替出现，最后一部《新西绪佛神话》只是在最后一章出现一次。《四书》虽然与中国古典典籍《四书五经》有名义上的共名，但它与我们过去所有的汉语小说写作都不一样，和已经形成规范的传统如此违背。要读这部小说，可能要从很多方面入手。如果直接从小说主题方面，我以为它是对“罪感文化”书写。我们汉语文学其实没有认真地书写过罪感文化，《四书》可能是最深刻，最直接地书写罪感文化的一部小说。土改、反右、三年自然灾害、文化大革命……，中国这半个世纪来的天灾人祸，过去这么多年了，我们的现实主义文学，主要是控诉性的文学。我们并没有去反省人作为历史主体的罪感，也很少思考我们作为一个人的存在，作为一个民族的一分子，作为一种人的历史的存在的一部分，对这样的历史要负有的责任，要承担的后果——这样的后果里面应该包含有一种罪感的反思。《四书》在追问这点，而且是非常极端不留余地地追问，确实颇为激烈。

因为“罪感”的追问，这本书明显地与《圣经》有精神上的联系，甚至可以说是《圣经》的汉语重写，是汉语对《圣经》的一次重写。这或许有点胆大妄为，甚至有点疯狂。这是在用中国传统的《四书五经》——在这部小说中，显然隐藏着这个隐喻——，与《圣经》在搏斗、较量。阎连科用的是我们的历史，我们受难的历史，我们受难的人，我们受难的传统。

汉语现代小说，在整个二十世纪的变革行程中，总是把对现实问题的揭示作为文学思想内容的首要选择，其实是没有和重大的文本对话。郭沫若的《女神》之“泛神论”的背景，曹禺的《原野》之于奥尼尔的《琼斯皇》，这是一种借鉴和对话。80年代的文学主要也是以借鉴的方式与西方现代主义对话，因而它在形而上的层面留下了思考。但总体上来说，还是对现实关注构成了思想提炼的主要来源。我们过分关注现实，但却不能深刻地关注，不能有效地关注，因为我们的关注都是浅层次的，简单重复的关注。要有伟大的传统，要有伟大的文本作为依据参照，这样的关注就是文学的关注，就是文学创造性的关注。所以阎连科的这部作品，恰恰因为《圣经》这样一个背景，几乎是顽强地要和它对话，让我们的文化来经受它的审判和考验。我觉得这是一个非常残酷的做法，我觉得他是有勇气的。我们的汉语书写，都没有足够的勇气面对这样的残酷。

5. 晚郁时期真正有汉语文学语言的炉火纯青。文学是语言的艺术，这当然不只是就文字和修辞而言，但语言作为文学的本体，肯定是起决定作用的。现代白话文学发展至今有一百年的历史，文学语言也不可以进化论来看待，不能说今天的文学语言就比20世纪初期的那些现代文学大师的语言要好，语言总是打上一个时代的特点，对于现代白话文学来说，会以更短的时效来看它的特征和艺术含量。差异性与时代表征也不是绝对的，当然还是有相对普遍的标准。

相比较20世纪的漫长的青春写作来说，汉语白话文学到了80年代才有中年写作，那就是“归来的右派”以及他们的同代人。在诗歌界，那时艾青们带着已经苍老沙哑的声音重返诗坛，在70年代末艾青历经磨难之后复出，给荒芜的诗坛猛然带来了重新播种的喜悦。1978年4月30日，上海《文汇报》刊出艾青复出后的第一首短诗《红旗》。人们把艾青复出后发表第一首诗，看成是一个事件，是诗界“新的时期”的到来。该诗刊出后，有读者致信艾青称：“……我们找你找了20年，我们等你等了20年。现在，你又出来了，艾青！‘艾青’，对于我们不再是一个人，一个名字，而是一种象征，一束绿色的火焰！——它燃起过一个已经逝去了的春天，此刻，它又预示

着一个必将到来的春天。<sup>17</sup>但这样的赞誉并未维持多长时间，年轻一代的朦胧诗群体崛起，青春燃烧的激情要冲决历史禁锢，那要比“壮岁归来”的沧桑来得更加紧迫和震撼。艾青浸含人生感悟和哲思的诗的语言则被那些“朦胧晦涩”的诗句所替代，而后者则带着穿越历史的激情掷地有声：“黑夜给我黑色的眼睛，我却用它寻找光明！”“在没有英雄的年代，我只愿做一个人！”“卑鄙是卑鄙者的通行证，高尚是高尚者的墓志铭！”这些语言说出的是历史的声音，革命与变革的年代属于青年；而平静常规的时期或许才有中老年充当文化后盾。后者的另一个含义也有可能被表述为是文化保守主义占据上风。当革命的目标难以被确立，而革命的主体也无法建构起来，世界历史都要趋向保守。

清理这样的前提，在于给予老道的磨砺语言的写作以艺术上的合法性，不同的时期，这种语言的磨砺只有负面评价。只有当革命的欲望不是那么强烈时，才会关注到文学语言的意义。80年代中期以后，反思历史与改革现实，以及追随西方现代主义的热潮有所减退，这才会关注到汪曾琪、林斤澜等人的那种以平实、白描、古朴的语言写作的小说；也是在现实变革趋于平静，才有张爱玲、沈从文在90年代开始备受关注。这就是说，在所有的“晚期”（文化的、文学的，西方的、中国的）语境中，我们才可奢谈汉语的老道。

确实，我们会看刘震云的《一句顶一万句》，这种语言与刘震云过往的语言有相当明显的差异，刘震云早在80年代末至90年代初的“新写实”时期，他的语言属于平实、白描一类，以幽默为语言特色。随后经历过相当锐利的反讽阶段，那是重写历史的《故乡天下黄花》等一系列长篇小说。《故乡面和花朵》与《一腔废话》是其高峰，这二部小说在语言表达方面不再节制，而是滔滔不绝，恣肆妄为，制造语言的奇观，以此颠覆历史与现实的理性逻辑。直至《一句顶一万句》，这才可以看出刘震云回到平实与单纯，语言洁净却又韵味十足，如同参透了语言之道而归于语言之道，不再控制语言，而是让语言自身去自由表达。

如此的经验也可从莫言的《蛙》那里看出，这么多的作家语言更加趋向于平实，这或许是与入过中年相关，也与对语言有较长时期的修炼相关。这些作家大都形成自己的语言风格，正是因为如此，总是要在超出一点的情形下，给自由表达更多的自由。莫言也从他过去的华丽放纵，转向了平实和细腻，这可以看出他的相当强的写实功力与内在韵致。

当然贾平凹的小说语言艺术一直为人称道，《废都》当年要从美文汲取养料，自有一种俊雅清逸，而《秦腔》风格一变，转向乡土质地，显出朴拙硬朗。到了《古炉》，语言在朴拙一路更见功力，信笔而出，随意道来，叙事摹物，陈情写意，自成格调。这样的汉语艺术，不只是天分，也是多少年修炼的成就，也只有老道如此，才能有此地步。然而，这样的写作决非是青春意气，自以为是，而是惶惶不安，没有方向，没有参照，没有他人，只是一个人孤寂的写，这才有与语言纯粹在一起的那种状态。2011年6月，在一次关于《古炉》的研讨会上，贾平凹回应关于《古炉》的“好读”或“难读”问题时说：“有人说我在写作过程中脑子里不装着读者。我写作确实不装着读者，我就是把作品按照自己的要求写，某种程度上，作家是为自己写。”他说，为自己写，这就是活到这份上才能明白的事理。人的一生确实干不了一两件事情，有时候一生干一件事情也干不好。从十几岁进入文坛，到现在已经是老头了，还在文坛上，又不甘心被淘汰掉，希望自己作品

17 哑默（伍立宪）：《伤逝》，见贵州民刊《崛起的一代》（油印本），1980年第2期。



写得有一点突破，会为突破想很多办法，但是突破又特别难。“《古炉》出来以后我接到好多外界的电话，说这种写法特别有意思。但是我想一想，从《废都》一直到《高老庄》，一直到《秦腔》、《高兴》、《古炉》，目前的这种写法也是经过几十年的探索。<sup>18</sup>”贾平凹自称“老头”，文坛同人也多以“老贾”呼之，并非因为他真多老，而是他写作的时间确实有些漫长了，他的写作状态确实有些老道了，不少的作家和批评家都天天叫着要为读者写作，但他根本就不知道读者为何人，读者是怎样的千千万万，千变万化。一个作家能搞明白自己就不错，还能搞明白那么多读者？只有对文学负责的人，才会回到文学中去写作，回到自己的身心融为一体的文字中去写，写自己的语言。这就是晚期写作才有的自觉，才有的无奈，“活到这份上”，才有的不管不顾；故而才有《古炉》那样自己写的语言，如此极致的汉语情状。

阎连科的《四书》在语言上同样做足了功夫。如此干净利落，给人以愈老弥坚的感觉。我也可以看出连科是在动刀子，他绝不做那种温柔的、轻灵的文字的书写，依然用刀在那里雕刻。这种简洁硬朗的文字，让人想起博尔赫斯晚年的那种小说，例如，《第三者》那种叙述。博尔赫斯到了晚年声称他想模仿英国作家卜巧林年轻时的小说，于是写了《第三者》这类极其简约直接且文字精炼的小说。阎连科写作《四书》明摆着要与《圣经》对话，事实上，他有一个《圣经》母本，那是20世纪初期的和合本《圣经》（《国语和合译本》）<sup>19</sup>，阎连科要对话还不只是基督教的那种信仰与原罪问题，同时还有语言问题。《四书》的语言（尤其是其中的《天的孩子》）如此简洁干脆，如此大量的短句式，象句子被强行掐断，叙述就很有些绝然与断然。

大地和脚，回来了。

秋天之后，旷得很，地野铺平，混荡着，人在地上渺小。一个黑点星渐着大。育新区的房子开天辟地。人就住了。事就这样成了。地托着脚，回来了。金落日。事就这样成了<sup>20</sup>。

如《圣经》开篇神之诞生，开天辟地，“地托着脚”，语言落在地上，掷地有声。短句子行使语言的干脆，就如同所有的事件进行中都别无选择，没有任何其他可能性，也无法延伸，叙述的情境总是面临终结，因而也是断裂，到此为止，每个行动、每个句子和意群，都如同面对终审判决。

这种语言，今天读来，既新奇，又古旧。和合本最早译于1890年，1919年正式出版《国语和合译本》，而这一年正是五四新文化运动爆发。五四运动倡导的白话文学革命，在此之前，已经有相当多的传教士使用浅显白话翻译《圣经》。今天看来，这些最初的白话文，既古旧又新奇，想不到阎连科又到那里去寻求白话文的重新开始，这象是孩子呀呀学语，又象是老人满口旧词。“地托着脚……，事就这样成了。”还带着豫南方言的泥土味。这只有怀旧的老人才有的语言眷恋，这是绝然眷恋，也是弃绝的眷恋。他弃绝当今流行的语言，他也遭致弃绝。这就是晚期写作的状态，孤寂的绝然，任性与坚决，走向路的尽头，把自己钉在十字架上，如天的孩子一般。

18 参见舒晋瑜《难读还是耐读？贾平凹新作〈古炉〉引争端》，《中华读书报》2011年6月16日。

19 据我的学生许若文提交给我的读书报告《〈四书〉的零因果与撕裂的现实主义文本》中提到，阎连科的《四书》受到《圣经》和合本的影响。许若文专访阎连科时，阎连科谈到他写作《四书》读《圣经》用的是《国语和合译本》。

20 阎连科《四书》，自印红皮本，第1页。

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## 4 结语

总之，汉语白话文学历经一百多年的变革、演进，其中有为时代呐喊的激烈之举，亦有困囿抑郁的焦灼挣扎，也有自强不息的创新企图……。百年白话文学，贯穿着青春动荡的激情，这是历史给定的一种命运，是给历史写作的一种命运。也只是到上世纪末，中国文学这才为历史所放弃，不如说是历史本身不再有聚集的力量，松懈的历史也不得不让文学回到自身，这才有它的孤寂和平静，这才有它对自己的经营。“晚郁时期”表达的是历史沉郁累积的那种能量与一大批作家“人过中年”的创作态度的重合，毋宁说后者领会到前者并且给予前者以表现方式。历史又以这种方式给予文学以魂魄；而文学于苍凉中重新扎根于历史，这就是中国文学的“晚郁时期”，它能以它的方式体会到世界史的晚期风格，当然也是世界文学的晚期风格，既然如此，中国文学可能会在这种情境中把握住文学最后的精气神。在这样的情形下，中国文学没有必要妄自菲薄，人过中年的写作已然有一种自由，就更有一种解脱。真所谓，“暮色苍茫看劲松”，在所有的晚期，中国文学的晚郁格调正显示出文学的本色。



## Linking Ancient and Contemporary

Continuities and Discontinuities in Chinese Literature

edited by Tiziana Lippiello, Chen Yuehong 陈跃红 and Maddalena Barenghi

# The Pragmatic Tradition of Chinese Literature and the Current ‘Spirit of the Times’

Marco Fumian

(Università degli Studi «G. d’Annunzio» Chieti-Pescara, Italia)

**Abstract** The role of Chinese writers, during the Maoist period, was mainly that of educating the masses to the official ideological values promoted by the Communist Party (CCP), in order to mould their attitudes and behaviours in accordance to the social goals pursued by the Communist state. Since the inception of the Reform Era (1978), however, and especially since the rise of the market and the consequent commercialization of the cultural production in the Nineties, the majority of the Chinese writers increasingly declined their previous role of social educators preferring to devote instead to the pursuit of a politically detached, and socially disengaged, ‘pure’ literature. The CCP, nevertheless, continued all along to encourage the Chinese writers and artists to educate the people fostering their social values and shaping their worldview according to the correct ‘spirit of the times’. How could literature continue to perform, in this period, this educational task despite the depoliticization of many Chinese writers and the commercial logic that came to dominate the literary field? What kind of social values and goals constituted the current ‘spirit of the times’? What literary genres and narratives did in fact contribute to the propagation of this spirit? These are the central questions that will be addressed in this article, whose main purpose is to observe how certain expressions of popular literature, in today’s China, are renewing some older didactic conceptions of literature in order to provide new types of teachings suitable to the demands of the current Chinese society.

**Keywords** ‘Spirit of the times’. Popular literature. Didactic conception of literature.

A continuous tradition, one that spans the ancient and the modern and is central to Chinese literary history, is that of literary pragmatism. Within this tradition, literature is seen as being instrumental in nature: it is considered valuable primarily for the effects it is able to produce, and precisely for its capacity to transmit the core values and norms of society and to shape human behaviour.

This tradition was originally carried forward and handed down by the Confucians. Pronouncements about the ‘uses’ of literature are recurrent in Confucian literary theory, starting with the master’s seminal statement that the *Book of Poetry* can «be used to inspire, to observe, to make you fit for company, and to express grievances» (Liu 1975, p. 109). The most well-known Confucian slogan about the function of literature, first put forward by Neo-Confucian Zhou Dunyi in the 11th century, affirms that «literature serves to convey the Way». Literature is thereby seen as a

*carriage*, a vehicle whose aesthetic properties, albeit important, are yet subordinated to the central task of disseminating the (Confucian) moral order of society: «Literature is that by which one carries the Way (*wen yi zai dao* 文以載道). If the wheels and shafts are decorated but no one uses it, then the decorations are in vain. How much more so in the case of an empty carriage! Literature and rhetoric are skills; the Way and virtues are realities» (Liu 1975, p. 114).

This tradition undergoes a fundamental reconfiguration at the dawn of Chinese modernity, when the onslaught of Western imperialism convinces many reform-minded intellectuals that the Confucian doctrine and its visions of social order are no longer suitable to withstand the challenges of the modern world. Liang Qichao, certainly the most prominent figure epitomizing the transition from a traditional to a modern worldview, believes that China, in order to survive, must evolve from a backward, declining 'empire' into a rich and strong 'nation'. He also believes that, to achieve this goal, China's passive, self-regarding 'subjects' must be transformed into active and responsible 'citizens'. However, as much as he discards many of the old Confucian social values on behalf of the new political principles essential to the building of the modern nation, his ideas about how to transmit these principles remain firmly embedded in the pre-existing Confucian framework, inasmuch as the task of (re)fashioning human behaviour is again entrusted to literature, viewed by Liang as an immensely productive medium with a profound power to «influence the way of man» (1902, p. 76) and «capable of shaping the world as well as establishing and nurturing the various norms of society» (p. 78).<sup>1</sup>

To reform (*gaizao* 改造) the people's mentality thus becomes the core task of modern Chinese literary pragmatism, whose instrumentalism, following a period of experimentation and pluralism in the aftermath of the May Fourth movement, becomes an article of faith in the hands of the Chinese Marxists, who from the late twenties onwards come to define the notion of literature in narrow terms as a 'tool' (*gongju* 工具) and a 'weapon' (*wuqi* 武器) of the revolutionary struggle (Yin 2002, pp. 140-142). These views become orthodoxy after 1942, when Mao, in his Yan'an Talks, lays down the guidelines that will govern the role of literature after the founding of the People's Republic in 1949. Here, Mao calls on writers to acquire a 'utilitarian' attitude, and, quoting from Lenin, declares that «proletarian literature and art» are «*cogs and wheels* in the whole revolutionary machine» and are thus «subordinated to the revolutionary tasks set by the Party in a given revolutionary period» (see Mao 1975). More specifically, the task that Mao assigns to writers is that of «uniting and educating»

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1 Obviously, the very notion of 'literature' at this point undergoes a substantial overhaul, inasmuch as it no longer refers to the traditional genres sanctioned by Confucianism, but rather to the modern literary forms imported from the West, primarily fictional writing.

the masses, so as to help them form the correct class consciousness and develop the proper proletarian attitudes needed to win the revolutionary war and to build the socialist and the communist systems.

Guaranteeing the continuity of these expressions of literary pragmatism, despite the obvious discontinuities exhibited by their different ideological and imaginative horizons, is the fact that the instrumental function of literature is attached to a number of common, enduring conceptions of the nature of the social order, the production of social behaviour and the status of the individual within society. First, although the proponents of the aforementioned notions of literature promote widely discrepant ideals of society, they all believe in the existence of a single socio-political order, or, in other words, one unifying social 'Way': that is, one overriding paradigm of society presupposing a precise axiology of values. The Confucian 'way', for example, hinges on the 'three bonds' and the 'five constants', namely the system of social relations, norms and virtues designed to guarantee the preservation of social harmony and obedience to patriarchal authority. The early modernizers, abandoning the traditional Confucian belief that the 'way' - inscribed in the immutable patterns of nature and enshrined in the scriptures of the ancient sages - is 'unchangeable', take Western evolutionary visions of history, transplant them in Chinese soil and begin to profess the conviction that the 'way' of nature (*tiandao* 天道) is, in itself, 'change' (Xu 2010, p. 51). This claim is already made by Liang Qichao's master, Kang Youwei, who from this tenet also derives the notion that every age must have its distinct social 'way' (*dao ge bu tong* 道各不同). Henceforth, the notion that history is a linear process of development, divided into clear-cut social stages and oriented towards a future *telos*, becomes a staple axiom of 20th century Chinese social thought. However, the idea that each historical period must express one singularized socio-political order remains strong (see Cai et al. 1994), as is somewhat proved by the constant preoccupation of modern Chinese intellectuals - especially evident in the cultural battles of the politically fraught Post-May Fourth period - with grasping the correct 'spirit of the times' (*shidai de jingshen* 时代的精神) and devising neatly defined axiological schemes that are valid for each new historical stage (see Davis 1992, p. 153). This view is turned into dogma by the Communists, who, claiming to have mastered the 'scientific' laws of the historical dialectic, maintain that they are the only force capable of leading Chinese society along the 'correct path' of history, towards its final *telos*, and are therefore entitled to mould the correct patterns of thought and action appropriate to each historical phase (assigning to the people the 'revolutionary tasks' required by the 'concrete' historical circumstances). Second, the assumption that there exists one unifying socio-political order and an ensuing system of virtues and norms entails the educational effort, on the part of the ruling elite, to inculcate in the people some standard behavioural patterns, in line with the dominant

social 'way', and, since the advent of modernity, its underlying historical *telos*. Individuals are therefore judged by how they enact this behaviour and how they perform their allotted social roles, to the extent that both in Confucian and Maoist societies people are sorted into social classes that are ranked according to an ideal hierarchical scale, whose positions are determined by the contribution they make to the creation of the social order or the attainment of the key social goals. This hierarchy, however, is essentially based on a moral dichotomy, inasmuch as it mainly emphasizes two opposing types of behaviour: on the one hand, 'good' behaviour that faithfully reproduces the ideal social paradigm (personified by the model figures of the Confucian 'saints' or proletarian 'heroes'), and on the other, 'bad' behaviour that deviates from or is harmful to such a paradigm (exemplified by Confucius's 'small men' or Mao's 'class enemies').

As a corollary of these assumptions, the pragmatic tradition in Chinese literature thus appears primarily concerned with the aim of teaching people the values and norms sanctioned by the ruling elite, so as to foster in them the most desirable social behaviour. In particular, given the deeply held Chinese belief that the most efficient way to transform human behaviour is by setting exemplary models (which people are considered instinctively disposed to emulate; see Munro 2000, pp. 135-157, and 2001, pp. 84-116), one typical didactic task of literature is to portray persons and events endowed with exemplary meaning, so as to display by means of concrete examples the attributes and attitudes that the people should learn to emulate. In Confucian China this role is quintessentially performed by history, wherein writings have the purpose of «encouraging good and deterring evil» (*quanshan cheng'e* 劝善惩恶) by «praising and blaming» (*bao bian* 褒贬) the figures of the past for the courses of action, positive or negative, that they are said to have taken in recorded historical events. At the dawn of the modern era, when the original educational role performed by history is to a large extent replaced by fiction,<sup>2</sup> the main function of literature still seems to remain that of providing exemplary models: «If the protagonist of the novel is Washington», affirms Liang Qichao searching for models among the heroes of the various Western national movements, «the reader will be transformed into an avatar of Washington, if it is Napoleon, he will feel himself an avatar of Napoleon; and if it is a Buddha or Confucius, he will become an avatar of Buddha or Confucius» (Liang 1902, p. 78). As for the Marxist understanding of fiction, this has among its basic aims – in accord with Friedrich Engels' famous formula – the «truthful reproduction of typical characters under typical circumstances» (Zhou 1936, p. 342). However, inasmuch as the genuine purpose of such 'typicality' is

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2 It should also be noted that the Chinese traditional vernacular fiction is strongly indebted to the traditional historical writing, from which it derives several characters and plots and of which it partially retains the admonishing nature.

not to grasp how historical reality truly is, but rather to show how it should (or shouldn't) be, according to the Communist vision of history and society, typical characters tend, in fact, very easily to become exemplary models personifying the ideal behaviour the people are called upon to emulate in the name of the revolutionary struggle. Mao, calling upon writers, in his Yan'an Talks, to «extol» the revolutionary masses who «have remoulded themselves in struggle» and to «expose» the counter-revolutionary enemies who are «harming the masses of the people», inaugurates a new 'praise and blame' tradition that divides people into two simplified moral categories: the first obviously positive and the second negative. This division is bound to grow increasingly sharp as Maoist politics become ever more radicalized from the end of the fifties onwards, until reaching the verge of fanaticism during the Cultural Revolution, when the principle that literature is 'the tool of class struggle' (*jiejī dòuzhēng de gōngjū* 阶级斗争的工具) is shouted as a militant battle cry by leftist radicals. By this time, while the enemies of the revolution are demonized as 'ox-ghosts and snake-demons' (*niú guǐ shé shén* 牛鬼蛇神), the models of proletarian virtue have instead become spotless heroes, deprived of any individuality, selflessly loyal to the Party, their attributes unquestionably «lofty, great and perfect» (see Lan 1998, p. 27).

It is the reaction to the aberrations of the Cultural Revolution, and the opposition to the strictures imposed on literature by the Yan'an Talks, that constitute the hallmark of the new literary course that emerged with the inception of the post-Maoist Reform Era, initiated by Deng Xiaoping in 1978. One of the first battles on the literary field, in fact, is against what comes to be addressed in this period as the 'instrumentalism' (*gōngjūlún* 工具论) of Maoist literary theory: namely, the complete subordination of literature to the dictates of political power and its reduction to a 'tool' of the revolutionary struggle. Over the course of the eighties, in particular, the members of the Chinese literary field increasingly embrace the principles of 'pure literature' (*chún wénxué* 纯文学) in order to free literary practice from the burden, as Shao Yanjun says, of «carrying the Way» and «effecting political propaganda» (Shao 2012, p. 18). In this way, by re-conceptualizing literature as an intrinsically aesthetic activity, no longer tied by a 'reflectionist' bond to reality, freed from any obvious practical purpose, and valued exclusively for its formal properties (the qualities of so-called 'literariness'), Chinese literary theorists and practitioners are able to carve out an autonomous space meant to shield them from the interference of political power and the pressure to perform through literature any pragmatic social task. Such a notion of literature will remain central through the nineties and even beyond, when the insignia of 'pure literature' are now held up less against the intrusion of the political sphere than against the «contaminations» of the market and the alleged «turbidity» of commercial mass culture (Li, Tao 2002). It is a discourse so powerful among



Chinese theorists and critics that it has been regarded by some scholars as no less than the dominant 'ideology' of the Chinese literary field, an ideology that tends to discredit, or even to rule out as non-literature, all those literary expressions that manifest some pragmatic, either political or commercial, inclinations (Liu 2005, He 2007).

However, in spite of the 'purity' constantly yearned for by most Chinese writers, the Communist Party, throughout the Reform period, has never ceased to supervise and discipline cultural production, and has never lost the chance to exhort writers – although of course no longer coercing them – to create literary works 'beneficial to society' and able to «educate and inspire the people» (Shao 2003, p. 194-195). As late as 2011, for example, Hu Jintao was still reminding the audience of the Writers' Association and the China Federation of Literary and Art Circles, that he «wished» the «largest number of workers in the field of literature and art» would «persevere in coupling art with morality», because «literature and the arts are a crucial force in lifting the spiritual condition and fostering the noble soul of the people». In particular, since the institutionalization of the 'socialist market economy', in 1992, and the consequent large-scale commercialization of cultural production, the Party has been very successful in hegemonizing the ideological contents of cultural production through the strategy of the so-called 'main melodies' (*zhuxuanlü* 主旋律); that is, by encouraging the production of, and giving ample recognition to, those narrative works, mainly created in the realm of literature, cinema and TV, that succeed in meeting all of the following requirements: to achieve high profits in the market, to be rich and original in artistic content, to be well-liked by the people and, at the same time, to convey 'healthy and uplifting' messages that are in tune with the didactic aims of the government (it is to the ideological 'themes' propagated by the *zhuxuanlü* products that the expression 'main melody', in a stricter sense, refers).

Thus it can be observed that Chinese literary production over the last twenty years has been influenced by two opposing forces: on the one hand the ideal of 'pure literature', promoted by a large section of the literary establishment, that in order to safeguard the autonomy of the literary field has spurred the creation of depoliticized narratives that avoid delivering positive social messages and direct social criticism; and on the other hand the principle of literary didacticism, promoted especially by the Party, that has boosted, particularly in the areas of commercial popular culture, the production of narratives aiming not only to provide entertainment but also to guide social behaviour in accord with the main ideological lines of the time. This state of affairs has also meant that although the pragmatic literary tradition seems still to be very much alive and well, it is nevertheless not easy to observe, as it is generally not acknowledged by the institution of Chinese literary criticism, which operates mainly from the perspective of pure literature.

Now, in the remaining part of this article, I want to turn my attention to a fiction genre that recently appeared in the domain of commercial popular literature: the so-called 'corporate novel' (*zhichang xiaoshuo* 职场小说). My aim here is to explore whether, and how, the pragmatic tradition manifests itself in the period that goes from the establishment of the 'socialist market economy' to the present day. Before doing that, however, as I have already noted that the main purpose of Chinese literary pragmatism is to transmit the core social values and norms of a given social order and to shape human behaviour according to those values and norms, I now need to identify, in very broad terms, the most important social principles outlined by the ideology of 'market socialism', which are also the principles that help to structure the dominant 'spirit of the times' in 'socialist market' China. It is therefore useful to remember, to quote Liu Fusheng, that «the basis of the CCP's legitimacy», after the demise of the international Communist system, shifted to achieving the double target of «promoting economic growth and maintaining national stability», so that the «beautiful promises brought by the economic development, together with the ideals of peace and unity, became the focus of the new ideology» that emerged in the nineties (Liu 2008, p. 29). Thus, in order to establish this new ideological order, the government has, since the nineties, focused on disseminating values such as personal initiative (*zhudongxing* 主动性), creativity (*chuangzaoxing* 创造性) and innovation (*chuangxin* 创新), inasmuch as they are functional to the creation of a thriving capitalist system, while simultaneously emphasising the values of discipline, harmony and social responsibility (together with the older repertoire of socialist virtues), as they are favourable to the preservation of a stable authoritarian order. In brief, the ideal citizen envisaged by the government in this period should be competitive, enterprising and professionally competent, and at the same time socially conscious and politically conservative (qualities that are quintessentially possessed, in the eyes of the Chinese government, by the emerging social group of the 'middle class').

Presumably, the popular literary phenomenon that best captures, and in fact also helps to propagandize the aforementioned human qualities, by spreading a 'middle class' mentality throughout contemporary Chinese society, is precisely that of the 'corporate novel': a commercial fiction genre dismissed by the Chinese literary establishment for its poor literary value, but which has nevertheless generated a considerable number of bestsellers and attracted a large audience of readers, while also inspiring the creation of several successful TV series based on the literary originals. This genre has emerged over the last decade, in the context of China's growing integration in the world of global capitalism, and its most typical formula contains the following pattern: a fresh graduate, normally a woman, with an ordinary family background and average physical features, is employed by a big corporation where she starts her working adventure

as a modest white collar worker. Work in the office is hard, competition is rough, deceit and intrigue are always round the corner; but a mix of ambition, resourcefulness, diligence and sense of duty – together with the help of some well-disposed senior employees willing to teach her the tricks of the trade – enable her to ignite a brilliant professional career by means of which she improves her economic and social status. The corporate novel can be therefore considered a sort of ‘economic’ bildungsroman, whose basic intent is to narrate a parable of personal growth – essentially intended as the professional development of a common but capable woman who ascends in society by means of her goodwill, honest effort and professional merits (see Xu, Zhang 2011, p. 47).<sup>3</sup>

Corporate novels, however, do not simply aim at satisfying the career fantasies of their readers, or at soothing their working life tribulations; their declared purpose, in fact, is primarily educational, as they are generally created with the goal of providing «knowledge and experience» to the white collar workers who ‘need’ to improve their professional skills in the workplace (see Yan 2010, p. 212). Indeed, many have affirmed, including some authors themselves, that these novels should actually be considered «textbooks» (*jiaokeshu* 教科书) written in fictional form so as to be easier to read, more enjoyable and, therefore, able to make their teachings more «digestible» (Zhang 2012, p. 6). The reading public, conversely, is mostly composed of university students or young white collar workers who admittedly approach these novels as «supplementary» material to increase their knowledge of the practical problems of daily ‘office’ life (Xu and Zhang 2011, p. 48). Publishers often brand corporate novels as ‘motivational’ (*lizhi* 励志), revealing that, albeit different in form, they are not supposed to have different content from that particular kind of self-help book (very popular in today’s China), that goes by the name of ‘successology’ (*chenggongxue* 成功学). It can thus be observed that the nature of this type of literature is explicitly pragmatic, as shown by the fact that while the few Chinese critics who have paid any attention to the genre agree in assigning to it no literary value, they nevertheless recognize that it has a different kind of value, found specifically in its «practical function» (*shiyong gongneng* 实用功能; see Yan 2010, p. 213). It is also interesting that this kind of novel has often been described as a ‘tool’ (*gongju* 工具): showing that even though the instrumental purpose of literature has changed considerably since the Maoist Era – in that literature is no longer a tool of class struggle, but rather one of professional career – the tendency to see literature in instrumental terms has remained unaltered.

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3 Among the most popular examples of the genre, all having similar narrative structures, there are *Chronicles of Du Lala’s Promotions* (Du Lala shengzhiji 杜拉拉升职记 2007), by Li Ke 李可, *Ups and Downs* (Fuchen 浮沉 2009), by Cui Manli 崔曼莉 and *Hate to Lose* (Bu renshu 不认输 2009), by Song Lixuan 宋丽暉.

This blatant instrumentalism is already sufficient to highlight the connection between the corporate novel and the former tradition of Chinese literary pragmatism. But there is more. As an educational tool aimed at popularizing among readers the principles and rules of the multinational corporate system, as well as the most acceptable behavioural norms typical of the Chinese working environment, this literary genre also helps to spread the principles and values of the capitalist system and the economic-instrumental rationality which is dominant in current Chinese society. This in turn helps to construct and disseminate many of the core social values underpinning the present ideological order, following a pattern of exemplarity which is not dissimilar in substance from that of the Maoist period. As I have already suggested, one of the most crucial tasks of Maoist literature was to exemplify the processes of self-transformation the people had to undertake in carrying out the transformation of China. To this end, Maoist writers very often portrayed the process of growth of a 'typical character' who through the study of Party doctrine and the help of mentors developed a steadfast revolutionary consciousness necessary to accomplishing important goals connected with the revolutionary struggle or the rise of collective production. Similarly, the parable of growth of the 'corporate' heroines is not merely professional, but also moral, to the extent that they do not just acquire technical skills or practical wisdom, but also, and even more importantly, they learn to mould themselves according to the values of the corporate system, and to pursue certain goals that, far from being narrowly selfish, are actually targeted at the growth of the system. This process of growth is generally described as one of 'personal struggle' (*geren fendou* 个人奋斗), a formula widely used in today's China, recurrent in both governmental discourses and the state media, where it is used to highlight all individual effort to make one's way in society and to achieve success by means of unremitting self-improvement. This concept is a conflation of ideas that comprise the ancient Confucian notion of self-cultivation, the Maoist imperative to overcome the obstacles impeding the achievement of revolutionary goals, and the resurgent social Darwinist dictate to fortify oneself in order to become fit to survive and thrive in an increasingly competitive society. 'Personal struggle', however, is not presumed to be advantageous only for the sake of the individual, but should also be, as many official statements love to repeat, to the benefit of society at large (see Xia 1989). In line with this tenet, corporate heroines promote values such as ambition, self-interest, initiative and creativity, which are as favourable to the achievement of personal success as to the growth of the capitalist system, as well as values like altruism, discipline and responsibility, which are beneficial not only to one's own capitalist employer but also to the socialist system as a whole.

A strong overlap can thus be detected between the qualities embodied by the protagonists of corporate novels and the main social values

advocated by the ideology of 'market socialism'; indeed, these heroines represent the most ideal citizens the government wishes to create today. This is, in a nutshell, how the 'corporate novel' has come to represent the quintessential embodiment of the pragmatic Chinese literary tradition in today's China: a successful product of the market that has attained a high degree of popularity among readers (and, via its TV transpositions, among viewers), it has helped to shape the mainstream imagination of a globalizing China; and, with its instrumental ends spreading the instrumental knowledge valuable to the current economic system, and its exemplarity aimed at creating idealized projections of the kind of personalities most valued in the Chinese social order of the age, it fulfils the objective of the ruling political elite to 'educate and inspire the people' to the core values and norms best suited to the current 'spirit of the time'.

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## Linking Ancient and Contemporary

Continuities and Discontinuities in Chinese Literature

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# Honma Hisao's Model of Literary Theory and its Influence in China

Jin Yongbing 金永兵

(Peking University, China)

**Abstract** This paper reveals the European-American and Japanese parentage of Chinese literary theory based on research on Honma Hisao's model of literary theory and its influence in China. The wide use of *Introduction to Literary Theory* by Honma Hisao, and of its many imitations and rewritings spurred the modernization of Chinese literary theory while determining the direction of its development. The research done on the influence of Honma Hisao's *Introduction to Literary Theory* has important significance in the understanding of the structure, shape and qualities of modern Chinese literary theory.

**Summary** 1 Introduction. – 2 Honma Hisao's *New Introduction to Literary Theory* and *Introduction to Literary Theory*. – 3 Translation and Publication of Honma Hisao's *New Introduction to Literary Theory* and *Introduction to Literary Theory* in China. – 4 The Influence of Honma Hisao's Works on Chinese Textbooks of Literary Theory. – 5 Tian Han's 田汉 (1928) *Wenxue Gailun* 文学概论 (Introduction to Literature): *A Model of New Type of Textbooks*. – 6 New Textbooks of the 1930s and 1940s. – 7 Honma Hisao and the Modernization of Chinese Literary Theory. – 8 The Weaknesses in Honma Hisao's Model. – 9 Conclusion.

**Keywords** Honma Hisao. Introduction to Literary Theory. Modern Chinese literary theory.

## 1 Introduction

Modern Chinese textbooks on literary theory commonly have a planar arrangement as their underlying structure, which is widely condemned and reviled by critics because it is considered an undesirable outcome of imitating the model of Soviet textbooks. Based on research done on two literary textbooks written by Honma Hisao 本間久雄 (1886-1981) that were translated into Chinese in the 1920s, as well as on the influence of the textbooks in China, this essay tries to demonstrate more fully the European-American and Japanese parentage of modern Chinese literary textbooks, and to explain how this model of textbook is closely associated with the emergence and development of modern Chinese literary theory, as well as how it has spurred the modernization of Chinese literary theory. This model has been an integral component of Chinese literary theory over



the past century and it represents the unique experiences and features of Chinese theory. Accordingly, it should be regarded as one of the significant 'properties' of modern Chinese theory, rather than one of its 'debts'.

In the early period of modern Chinese literary theory, Japanese literary theory played a critical role (Wang 1998).<sup>1</sup> During the 1920s and 1930s, Japanese literary theory dominated the basic model and pattern of Chinese literary theory. Honma Hisao was one of the most influential Japanese theorists. Honma Hisao graduated from Waseda University in 1909, he studied in the UK in 1928, and later taught English at Waseda University for several years (Zhang 2009). Because of his experience of studying, Honma Hisao was deeply influenced by modern Western thought. His two books, *Introduction to Literary Theory* and *New Introduction to Literary Theory*, have had an overwhelming impact on China since they were translated by Zhang Xichen 章锡琛 (1889-1969), and they have also propelled the formation and development of modern Chinese literary theory. Honma Hisao applied the research methods of sociology and widely cited modern Western philosophy, aesthetics, and literary concepts, while carefully presenting and explaining them in a dispassionate way. These efforts have been an enlightening force in Chinese academia which was urgently in pursuit of modernization. The selection, translation, promotion and imitation of Honma Hisao's works by Chinese academia were profoundly rooted in the social and historical context in China. Research on this topic will make significant contribution to better understanding the structure, form and features of modern Chinese literary theory.

## 2 Honma Hisao's *New Introduction to Literary Theory* and *Introduction to Literary Theory*

*New Introduction to Literary Theory* was finished in 1916. In the preface, the author puts it thus: «The study and analysis of literature, although flourishing of late, has still only rarely studied or discussed the essential issues of literature as a social phenomenon. In other words, a sociological study on the position that the composition and appreciation of literature must be compared to other sorts of spiritual activities [...] thus, on this basis, the book will explain to neophytes the fundamental requirements and reasons for the formation and existence of literature» (Honma 1925,

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<sup>1</sup> According to academic statistics, the total number of scholarly monographs and collections on foreign literary theory, translated and published from the beginning of the 20th century to +, was 110 or so. Among them, about 35 were European and American theory, about 32 were Russian-Soviet, and about 41 were Japanese. The approximate percentage of Japanese literary theory was near 40%.

p. 1). The author attempts to examine the fundamental attributes of literature that make it literature from a sociological point of view. This opens up new horizons for the interpretation and judgment of literary works. Meanwhile, by making extensive use of quotations, orderly arrangements, and rigorous judgments, Honma Hisao makes it possible for the readers to quickly grasp the basic methods for the study of literature – and this held enormous significance for Oriental academia at the beginning of the 20th century. *Introduction to Literary Theory*, a revised edition of *New Introduction to Literary Theory*, was finished in 1925. In this book, the author still emphasizes that «literature is a social phenomenon» (1925, p. 1). The purpose of writing this book is to elucidate «what status literature enjoys compared with other kinds of spiritual activities in human life» (Honma 1930, p. 1). The author's original intention in this book is generally the same as that of *New Introduction to Literary Theory*. The arrangement of the chapters is largely a combination and rearrangement of the chapters in *New Introduction to Literary Theory*. The contents, however, have quite a few additions and deletions. The chapter «On diverse literary genres», which was not in *New Introduction to Literary Theory*, is added to the new edition. Compared to *New Introduction to Literary Theory*, the revised *Introduction to Literary Theory* is more mature in style and richer in material and arguments. The book is widely known in China and is taken as a model of literary theory textbook.

From *New Introduction to Literary Theory* to *Introduction to Literary Theory*, Honma Hisao has established a clear and comprehensive model of literary theory. Nevertheless, this model is not the author's original creation. The basic framework of the book comes primarily from Cales Thomas Winchester's *Principles of Literary Criticism* (Winchester, 1925) and William Henry Hudson's *An Introduction to the Study of Literature* (Hudson, 1910). From Table 1, we can see resemblances between the four books in terms of structural arrangement:

Table 1

<b>Hudson: <i>An Introduction to the Study of Literature</i></b>	<b>Winchester: <i>Principles of Literary Criticism</i></b>	<b>Honma Hisao: <i>New Introduction to Literary Theory</i></b>	<b>Honma Hisao: <i>Introduction to Literary Theory</i></b>
Ch. I Some Ways of Studying Literature		Vol. I General Introduction to Literature	Vol. I The Nature of Literature
I. The Nature and Elements of Literature	Ch. 1 Definitions and Limitations	Ch. 1 Definition of Literature	Ch. 1 Definition of Literature
	Ch. 2 What is Literature	Ch. 2 Characteristics of Literature	Ch. 2 Characteristics of Literature
	Ch. 3 The Emotional Element in Literature	Ch. 4 Elements of Literature	Ch. 3 Aesthetic Emotion and Imagination
	Ch. 4 The Imagination		
II. Literature as an Expression of Personality	Ch. 5 The Intellectual Element in Literature	Ch. 7 Literature and Personality	Ch. 4 Literature and Personality
III. The Study of an Author			
IV. Biography			
V. The Study of Style as an Index of Personality	Ch. 6 The Formal Element in Literature	Ch. 5 Literature and Form	Ch. 5 Literature and Form
		Ch. 6 Literature and Language	
Ch. II Some Ways of Studying Literature (concluded)			Vol. II Literature as a Social Phenomenon
I. The Historical Study of Literature		Ch. 3 The Origin of Literature	Ch. 1 The Origin of Literature
II. Literature as a Social Product		Ch. 8 Literature and National Character	Ch. 3 Literature and National Character
III. Taine's Formula of Literary Evolution – The Sociological Aspect of Literature			

<b>Hudson: <i>An Introduction to the Study of Literature</i></b>	<b>Winchester: <i>Principles of Literary Criticism</i></b>	<b>Honma Hisao: <i>New Introduction to Literary Theory</i></b>	<b>Honma Hisao: <i>Introduction to Literary Theory</i></b>
IV. The Comparative Method in the Historical Study of Literature		Ch. 9 Literature and the Age	Ch. 2 Literature and the Age
V. The Historical Study of Style			
VI. The Study of Literary Technique		Ch. 10 Literature and Morality	Ch. 4 Literature and Morality
			Vol. 3 On Literary Genre
Ch. III The Study of Poetry	Ch. 7 Poetry		Ch. 1 Poetry
Ch. V The Study of the Drama			Ch. 2 Drama
Ch. IV The Study of Prose Fiction	Ch. 8 Prose Fiction		Ch. 3 Fiction
Ch. VI The Study of Criticism and the Valuation of Literature	Ch. 9 Summary	Vol. 2 On Literary Criticism	Vol. 4 On Literary Criticism
I. The General Nature of Criticism		Ch. 1 The Value, Type and Aim of Literary Criticism	Ch. 1 General Introduction to Criticism
		Ch. 2 Objective Criticism and Subjective Criticism	Ch. 2 Objective Criticism and Subjective Criticism
II. The Functions of Criticism – Inductive and Judicial Criticism		Ch. 3 Scientific Criticism	Ch. 3 Scientific Criticism and New Judgmental Criticism
		Ch. 4 Ethical Criticism	
III. The Study of Criticism as Literature-Personal Aspects		Ch. 5 Appreciative Criticism and Joyful Criticism	Ch. 4 Appreciative Criticism and Joyful Criticism
IV. Historic Aspects			
V. The Problem of the Valuation of Literature			

Note: In order to highlight contrasts, the ch.s of these books are not listed in numerical order, but are rearranged.

According to the framework above, it is clear that *New Introduction to Literary Theory* and *Introduction to Literary Theory* have borrowed from, as well as combined, the works of Winchester and Hudson. But not only these, as Honma Hisao has mentioned and quoted abundant Western thought on literature and art. His two books demonstrate the deep influence of Western learning, both in their content and their structures. A total of 123 theorists have been cited in *New Introduction to Literary Theory* (*Introduction to Literary Theory* is not counted because it does not have an index), a figure that shows the enormous amount of material the author has dealt with. From the index, we also find that the most frequently cited theorist is Hippolyte Adolphe Taine, (a total of fourteen times). Others include Tolstoy, who is cited thirteen times (his writings are often taken as a counterexample, Winchester (twelve times), Matthew Arnold (ten times), Hunt (nine times), Posnett (nine times), Aristotle (nine times), Walter Pater (nine times), Guyou (nine times), Ruskin (seven times), Brunetiere (seven times), Shakespeare (seven times, usually as illustrations of literary works), Santayana (six times), Max Nordau (six times). Any author not cited at least six times was not taken into account here. These quotations refer to social and historical criticism, realism, naturalism, aestheticism, classicism and so forth, with social and historical criticism acting as the main theme. The stress on inseparable connections between literature and society represents not only Honma Hisao's overseas experiences, but also Zhang Xichen's main motivation for his selection and translation of Honma Hisao. When China was in its historical condition of poverty and weakness, progressive intellectuals paid great attention to literature as a social phenomenon, and attempted to enlighten people's thought through literature and to evoke people's sense of nation, in order to save the country. These value demands in literary theory have largely determined the basic forms and methodological characteristics of modern Chinese literary theory.

### **3 Translation and Publication of Honma Hisao's *New Introduction to Literary Theory* and *Introduction to Literary Theory* in China**

The translation of a book is the creation of both the original author and the translator. In the translation process, the translator will more or less add his own ideas to his translation. The translator Zhang Xichen who was born in Shaoxing of Zhejiang Province, graduated from Shaoxing Primary Normal School in 1909. He worked for *Oriental Magazine*, *Woman Magazine*, *New Women* and a number of other magazines. He enthusiastically advocated new thinking and directly criticized feudal forces. Later, he initiated the founding of Kaiming Bookstore, together with Xia Mianzun 夏丕尊 (1886-1946), Feng Zikai 丰子恺 (1898-1975), Hu Yuzhi 胡愈之 (1896-1986),

Zheng Zhenduo 郑振铎 (1898-1958), Sun Fuyuan 孙伏园 (1894-1966), and others. Kaiming Bookstore represented a new force arising from the fierce conflicts between old and new, and it was a product of the May Fourth Movement (cf. Zhang, 2007). As it was with the bookstore, so it was with Zhang Xichen: he had always kept abreast of the times and followed the principles of «to honestly serve the readers, to provide new knowledge, to spread new thoughts, to overthrow empty political talks and to make every attempt to benefit the readers». The two books of Honma Hisao are a close fit with Zhang Xichen's progressive academic attitudes and his motivation for spreading new knowledge and benefiting readers. These ideas represented a kind of advanced new thought for China at that time.

According to the translator's preface, three years after the publication of *New Introduction to Literary Theory*, Zhang Xichen undertook his initial translation of the book into classical Chinese, which was completed in 1919 and published serially in 1920 in chapters in the magazine *New China*. Shortly after the first chapter «General introduction to literature» had been published, *New China* stopped publication and all the manuscripts were lost. In 1924, upon Zheng Zhenduo's urging, Zhang Xichen resumed his translation of *New Introduction to Literary Theory* in vernacular Chinese. This time, he first finished the translation of the second chapter volume, «On Literary Criticism», and published it in *Literature*, a periodical journal of the Literature Research Society. The following year, he translated the first volume once again and it was published in a collection by Shanghai Commercial Press. Meanwhile, Wang Fuquan 汪馥泉 (1900-1959) published his translation of the book in the 'Awareness' series of the *Minguo Daily* in 1924. That same year, with the publication of the Chinese translation of *New Introduction to Literary Theory*, Honma Hisao published his revised edition of *Introduction to Literary Theory*. Two years later, in 1927, Zhang Xichen started working on a translation of the *Introduction to Literary Theory*, which was finished and published by Kaiming Bookstore in 1930. The final translation deleted a significant number of quotations from Japanese literature, as the majority of Chinese people did not have enough knowledge of Japanese literature.

#### 4 The Influence of Honma Hisao's Works on Chinese Textbooks of Literary Theory

Upon publication, the Chinese translations of *New Introduction to Literary Theory* and *Introduction to Literary Theory* quickly swept the country. Under their influence, a stream of literary theory textbooks written in modern form were produced and circulated throughout China. These textbooks broke with the more banal frameworks of traditional literature studies, as they concentrate on a modern concept of literature and take that as the

object of their research. With clearly divided chapters and a theoretical analysis of literary phenomena, these books created a brand new, more systematic discipline. For the period between the 1920s and the 1940s, this trend dominated the study of literary theory in China. Perhaps most importantly, it has made a considerable contribution to the transformation of traditional Chinese literary theory and the modernization of Chinese new literature.

## 5 Tian Han's 田汉 (1928) *Wenxue Gailun* 文学概论 (Introduction to Literature): A Model of New Type of Textbooks

If Honma Hisao's two books are to be considered models of translated textbooks, then Tian Han's *Wenxue Gailun* (Introduction to Literature), which is based on Hisao's works, stands for a model of native (Chinese) textbooks and has had a direct impact on later works of literary theory in China. Tian Han's *Wenxue Gailun* (Introduction to Literature) was first published in 1927 by Zhonghua shuju. By 1932, it had been republished three times. Tian's book came out between the publication of the Chinese edition of *New Introduction to Literary Theory* in 1925 and the publication of *Introduction to Literary Theory* in Chinese in 1930. Although the translation of *Introduction to Literary Theory* had not been published yet, Tian Han must have read the original version of Honma Hisao's two books while studying in Japan for six years, a theory borne out by the contents of the book, as in Table 2:

Table 2

Honma Hisao: <i>New Introduction to Literary Theory</i>	Honma Hisao: <i>Introduction to Literary Theory</i>	Tian Han: <i>Introduction to Literature</i>
Vol. I General Introduction to Literature	Vol. I The Nature of Literature	Vol. I The Nature of Literature
	Preface	Ch. 1 Preface
Ch. 1 Definition of Literature	Ch. 1 Definition of Literature	Ch. 2 Definition of Literature
Ch. 2 Characteristics of Literature	Ch. 2 Characteristics of Literature	Ch. 3 Characteristics of Literature
Ch. 4 Elements of Literature	Ch. 3 Aesthetic Emotion and Imagination	Ch. 4 Elements of Literature

<b>Honma Hisao: <i>New Introduction to Literary Theory</i></b>	<b>Honma Hisao: <i>Introduction to Literary Theory</i></b>	<b>Tian Han: <i>Introduction to Literature</i></b>
Ch. 7 Literature and Personality	Ch. 4 Literature and Personality	Ch. 5 Literature and Personality
Ch. 5 Literature and Form	Ch. 5 Literature and Form	Ch. 6 Literature and Form
Ch. 6 Literature and Language		
	Vol. 2 Literature as a Social Phenomenon	Vol. 2 Literature as a Social Phenomenon
Ch. 3 The Origin of Literature	Ch. 1 The Origin of Literature	Ch. 1 The Origin of Literature
Ch. 8 Literature and National Character	Ch. 2 Literature and the Age	Ch. 2 Literature and the Age
Ch. 9 Literature and the Age	Ch. 3 Literature and National Character	Ch. 3 Literature and National Character
Ch. 10 Literature and Morality	Ch. 4 Literature and Morality	Ch. 4 Literature and Morality
Note: In order to highlight the contrasts, Ch. 7 and Ch. 3 of <i>New Introduction to Literary Theory</i> have been switched in the layout above.		

As can be seen, except for the fourth chapter in «Elements of Literature», which uses the same title as in «New Introduction to Literary Theory», the other chapters in Tian Han's *Wenxue Gailun* are in total accordance with *Introduction to Literary Theory*. Nevertheless, Tian Han did not adopt «On Literary Genre» and «On Literary Criticism», two chapters in Honma Hisao's *Introduction to Literary Theory*. There are two possible reasons for this. One is that Tian's book belongs to the 'Commonsense' series, which aims to provide a brief introduction to the most basic issues of literary theory. Thus the author has abandoned comparable recondite parts and issues of dispute in literary criticism. Second, as is said in the book, «when the intelligentsia is not reliable, it is through people of the lower class - namely, the proletariat - that a nation will strive for the preservation and development of its ethos» (Tian 1928, p. 96). When calls from the literati to save the country grow louder and louder, Tian Han is already a stalwart supporter of proletarian literature. He attached great importance to introducing and spreading the theory of literary creation to the workers from the lower class. Consequently, he deleted the chapters on 'literary criticism' which he thought belonged merely to the intellectuals. The 'Ten-Chapter Pattern' of Tian Han's textbook on literary theory has been



taken as a model which was imitated by followers and has enjoyed high popularity. By examining Honma Hisao's model of literary theory, it can be found that the 'plate structure' of modern Chinese textbooks on literary theory is not simply a copy of Soviet textbooks; rather, it has a more complicated, profound origin that reflects the particular needs of modern China in that particular historical period.

Tian Han's work transplanted not only the structure, but also the content of Honma Hisao's *Introduction to Literary Theory*. Tian's *Wenxue Gailun* reads more like a summary translation of Hisao's original work. The preface on literature and life in Tian's book; his statement that «emotion, imagination, taste» are the definition of literature; that «perpetuity, individuality, universality» are the nature of literature; that «emotional, imaginary, intellectual and formal» are the elements of literature; his definition of literary emotion and sympathy; the three types of literary imagination; the connection between literature and personality; «rhymes, prose, style» and literary form; the psychological impulses and genetic causes of the origin of literature; the relationship between literature and the age; literature and the improvement of national spirit; the disinterestedness of literature and morality, and its standard of evaluation. All of these seem to be a summary translation of Honma Hisao's work. Even in the order of the content, in his way of expression and in the material he quotes, Tian Han has made few changes. Although this work imitated and inherited a lot from Hisao's work, Tian Han has still added his own collection as a supplement to Hisao's book. The most valuable and estimable content added by Tian Han are various examples of modern Chinese thinking that have come into being during the process of modernization. In the chapter «Literature and national character», Tian provides two directions for the development of modern Chinese literature based on Sun Yat-sen's 孙中山 (1866-1925) 'Nationalism' and Fu Yanchang's 傅彦长 (1891-1961) concept of 'vernacular literature'. On the one hand, in order to save the nation through the improvement of national spirit, literature should serve as a medium to preserve the national ethos, to advocate nationalism and to hold the nation together by trying to unite the scattered Chinese people, whose consciousness is primarily that of family and clan. On the other hand, since intellectuals are unreliable, literature should cater to the masses, the greatest ally of the proletariat. Through popular themes and vernacular language, it is necessary to encourage the masses to participate in the creation of literary works and, at the same time, to lower the 'cultural bar' of literature, extend its foundation and popularity to the masses, expand its influence and gain adherents.

As a textbook written by a Chinese author, Tian Han's *Wenxue Gailun* has great significance in three main aspects. Firstly, Tian's work is more comprehensive and systematic than other similar works at that time, like Yu Dafu's 郁达夫 (1896-1945) *Wenxue Gaishuo* (Introduction to Literature),

which limited its discussion to a few basic issues in literature, although it was published in the same year as Tian's work. Secondly, the prominent proletarian literary thoughts in Tian Han's book have realistically pointed out a direction for Chinese intellectuals to take in order to save the nation. Thirdly, this book serves as a model for the writing of literary theory textbooks in China. Although the publication of the Chinese version of Honma Hisao's *New Introduction to Literary Theory* was earlier, the exemplary role of textbooks written by Chinese themselves is of far more importance than that of translated works. Additionally, the combination of Chinese and the West is a beneficial attempt at understanding and interpreting foreign literary thought against the backdrop of a Chinese context.

## 6 New Textbooks of the 1930s and 1940s

According to textual research, «the reason why the newly compiled and reprinted textbooks represented the continuation of the twenties lies in the rendering of the style and main viewpoints [...]. The style of such new textbooks was generally divided into eight to ten chapters, that is, the theoretical interpretation of eight or ten aspects of literature theses» (Mao, Dong, Yang, 2004, p. 85). These textbooks generally followed the style and mirrored the contents of Tian Han's *Wenxue gailun*; in other words, they were the extension of Honma Hisao's *Introduction of Literature*. The growth in the number of textbooks slowed in the 1940s, but there were still examples such as *Wenxue gailun* 文学概论, coauthored by Gu Zhongyi 顾仲彝 (1903-1965) and Zhu Zhitai 朱志泰 (the author's dates are unknown) in 1945, Zhang Changgong's 张长弓 (1905-1954) *Xin Wenxue gailun* (New Introduction to Literature), published in 1946 and Zhang Menglin's 张梦麟 (1901-1985) *Wenxue Qianshuo* (Elementary Introduction to Literature).

Starting from the names of the chapters in these new textbooks, we quickly see the relationship between them and Honma Hisao's *Introduction to Literature*. This relationship becomes evident through a comparison of two works written in the 1930s, as shown in Table 3:

Table 3

<b>Honma Hisao: <i>New Introduction to Literature</i></b>	<b>Honma Hisao: <i>Introduction to Literature</i></b>	<b>Qian Gechuan: <i>Introduction to Literature and Art (Qian 1930)</i></b>	<b>Cao Baichuan: <i>Introduction to Literature (Cao 1933)</i></b>
Vol. I General Introduction to Literature	Vol. I The Nature of Literature	Ch. Two Introduction to Literature	
Ch. 1 Definition of Literature	Ch. 1 The Definition of Literature	Ch. One: What is Literature	Ch. One: The Definition of Literature
Ch. 2 Characteristics of Literature	Ch. 2 Characteristics of Literature	Sec. Two: Characteristics of Literature	Ch. Two: Characteristics of Literature
Ch. 3 Elements of Literature	Ch. 3 Aesthetic Emotion and Imagination	Section Three: Effects of Literature	Ch. Four: Elements of Literature
Ch. 7 Literature and Personality	Ch. 4 Literature and Personality		
Ch. 5 Literature and Form	Ch. 5 Literature and Form	Section Four: Classification of Literature	Ch. Five: Form of Literature
Ch. 6 Literature and Language			
	Volume II Literature as a Social Phenomenon		Ch. Six: Literature and Life
Ch. 3 Origin of Literature	Ch. 1 Origin of Literature		Ch. Three: Origin of Literature
Ch. 8 Literature and National Character	Ch. 2 Literature and the Age		Ch. Seven: Literature and the Age
Ch. 9 Literature and the Age	Ch. 3 Literature and National Character		Ch. Eight: Literature and National Character
Ch. 10 Literature and Morality	Ch. 4 Literature and Morality		Ch. Nine: Literature and Morality
	Volume III On Literary Genres		
	Ch. 1 Poetry	Section Five: Poetry	
	Ch. 2 Drama	Section Six: Drama	
	Ch. 3 Fiction	Section Seven: Fiction	
Volume II On Literary Criticism	Volume IV On Literary Criticism		Ch. Ten: Literary Criticism

<b>Honma Hisao: <i>New Introduction to Literature</i></b>	<b>Honma Hisao: <i>Introduction to Literature</i></b>	<b>Qian Gechuan: <i>Introduction to Literature and Art (Qian 1930)</i></b>	<b>Cao Baichuan: <i>Introduction to Literature (Cao 1933)</i></b>
Ch. 1 The Value, Type and Aim of Literary Criticism	Ch. 1 General Introduction to Criticism		
Ch. 2 Objective Criticism and Subjective Criticism	Ch. 2 Objective Criticism and Subjective Criticism		
Ch. 3 Scientific Criticism	Ch. 3 Scientific Criticism and New Judgmental Criticism		
Ch. 4 Ethical Criticism			
Ch. 5 Appreciative Criticism and Joyful Criticism	Ch. 4 Appreciative Criticism and Joyful Criticism		

Note: To highlight the comparison, the sequence of the chapters and sections in this form has been altered and does not follow exactly the chapter and section numbers.

The names of the chapters and their sequence in Cao Baichuan's *Wenxue Gailun* are almost exactly the same as the ones in Honma Hisao's *New Introduction to Literature*. Cao's book merely simplified the contents of the discussion on literary criticism by merging the contents of Honma Hisao's book into one chapter while adding a new chapter named «Literature and Life». The discussion on literature and life had become a fashion at that time. Qian Gechuan's *Wenyi Gailun* was also one of the 'series of the general knowledge books'. It consisted of four chapters, «Introduction to Art», «Introduction to Literature», «Introduction to Fine Arts» and «Introduction to Music», and it briefly introduced different kinds of art forms. For reasons of length, the «Introduction to Literature» chapter merely selected several aspects of literature to discuss, perhaps to supplement Tian Han's *Wenxue Gailun*. It took a great number of words to analyze literary genres including poetry, drama and fiction, which were omitted in the chapter of «On Literature Genre» in Tian Han's *Wenxue Gailun*. Although Qian Gechuan generally followed Honma Hisao's arrangement of chapters and sections, he specifically discussed 'Romance Fiction' in his chapter on fiction, which could be regarded as an attempt to combine a foreign model with domestic literary theory.

In the 1940s, Chinese scholars' complete imitation of Honma Hisao's model had gradually been replaced by reformative and innovative ideas. Although their works still remained deeply influenced by Honma Hisao, their efforts to systematize and nationalize literature theory had become more noticeable, and this could also be found in their arrangement of chapters and sections, as in Table 4:

Table 4

<b>Honma Hisao: <i>New Introduction to Literature</i></b>	<b>Gu Zhongyi, Zhu Zhitai, <i>Introduction to Literature</i></b>	<b>Zhang Changgong, <i>New Literature Theories</i></b>	<b>Zhang Menglin, <i>Elementary Introduction of Literature</i></b>
		First: The Features of Chinese Literature	Ch. One: What is Literature
Part One, The Nature of Literature	Ch. One: Preface		Section One, The Interest of Literature
Ch. one: Definition of Literature	First: Why Literature Can Be Handed Down	Second: Definition of Literature	Section Two: Definition of Literature
Ch. Two: Characteristics of Literature	Second: What Makes Good Literature		Section Three: Literature and Language
Ch. Three: Aesthetic Emotion and Imagination		Forth: Literature and Emotion	Section Four: Literature and Life
		Fifth: Literature and Imagination	Ch. Two: Appreciation of Literature
Ch. Four: Literature and Personality		Sixth: Literature and Thoughts	Section One: Three Stages of Appreciation
		Ninth: Literature and Personality	
Ch. Five: Literature and Form	Third: The Content and Form of Literature	Seventh: Literature and Form (I)	Section Two: Preparation for Understanding
		Eighth: Literature and Form (II)	
Part Two: Literature as a Social Phenomenon			Section Three: Comprehension of Meanings
Ch. One: The Origin of Literature		Third: The Origin of Literature	Section Four: Aesthetic Enjoyment
Ch. Two: Literature and the Age		Eleventh: Literature and the Age	Section Five: Judgment
Ch. Three: Literature and National Character		Tenth: Literature and National Character	Ch. Three: Study of Literature
Ch. Four: Literature and Morality		Twelfth: Literature and Morality	Section One: Significance of Literary Study
Part Three: On Literary Genre		Thirteenth: Literature and Life	Section Two: Study on Writers

<b>Honma Hisao: New Introduction to Literature</b>	<b>Gu Zhongyi, Zhu Zhitai, Introduction to Literature</b>	<b>Zhang Changgong, New Literature Theories</b>	<b>Zhang Menglin, Elementary Introduction of Literature</b>
Ch. One: Poetry	Ch. Two: Poetry		Section Three: Study on National Literature
Ch. Two: Drama	Ch. Three: Fiction		Section Four: Study on the Age
Ch. Three: Fiction	Ch. Four: Drama		Section Five: Study on Crafts
Part Four: On Literary Criticism	Ch. Five: Prose		Ch. Four: Classification of Literature
Ch. One: General Introduction to Criticism			Section One: Lyrics
Ch. Two: Objective Criticism and Subjective Criticism			Section Two: Essays
Ch. Three: Scientific Criticism and New Judgmental Criticism			Section Three: Epics Section Four: Fiction
Ch. Four: Appreciative Criticism and Joyful Criticism			Section Five: Drama
Note: To highlight the comparison, the sequence of the ch.s and sections in this table has been altered and does not follow exactly the chapter and section numbers.			

From the synthesis of the two tables mentioned above, we can see that the common topics in introductions to books on literature published in the 1930s and 1940s were mainly about literature's definition, emotion, imagination, thoughts, forms, originality, national character, morality, life, and so on. Apart from 'life', all the other topics were the key points in Honma Hisao's *Introduction of Literature*. Among the books analyzed here, Gu Zhongyi and Zhu Zhitai's *Wenxue Gailun* and Zhang Menglin's *Wenxue Qianshuo* wrote extensively on different genres: not only poetry, drama and fiction, which had been mentioned by Honma, they also added discussions on prose and essays. Such a change represented something new, something different. At the same time, these scholars devoted considerable space to Chinese writing. Zhang Changgong's *Xin Wenxue Lilun* specifically devoted a chapter to discussing the characteristics of Chinese literature, and although it still followed the traditional pattern of annotating the classics (listing the different theories of previous scholars), he added considerable material from traditional Chinese literature, such as quotations from Confucius 孔子, Liu Xie 刘勰 and Zeng Guofan 曾国藩.

## 7 Honma Hisao and the Modernization of Chinese Literary Theory

If Wang Guowei's *Honglouloumeng Pinglun* 红楼梦评论 (Comments on *A Dream in the Red Mansion*), published in 1904, start the process of the modernization of Chinese literary theory, then it represented the beginning of the transformation from traditional to modern literary theory. But compared to a critical essay which uses modern theories, the establishment and modernization of the discipline of literary theories had experienced a long and complex course. From the establishment of new styles and the importing of new categories, to the construction of a theoretical system, it was after nearly forty years when Chinese scholars eventually came into their own achievements. We need to reiterate that foreign literary theory played an important role in the process of establishing the discipline of literary theory and the modernization of traditional Chinese literary theory: it directly introduced external modern theories to China and provided Chinese scholars with mature intellectual forms and research methods which helped them avoid much misunderstanding. Honma's two books were undoubtedly among those which made the greatest contribution. What's more, through Chinese scholars' choice of Honma's books, we see the reigning mindset of the time and we can sketch an outline of the environment in which Chinese literary theory developed over the first half of the 20th century.

The modernization of Chinese literary theory could not have been accomplished without the foundation of a modern educational system and the establishment of course on the «Introduction of Literature». Starting in the early 20st century, colleges were founded at an ever growing rate and academic disciplines were established, and over time were improved and perfected. Since the foundation of the 'Department of Literature', a course on the 'Introduction of Literature' was introduced into one Chinese college after another. In the *Education Ministry's Promulgated Curriculum Standards of Higher Normal College*, issued in 1913, colleges were required to establish Chinese language and English language departments, and to take two class hours from other courses per week to teach the «Introduction of Literature» course (Shu 1981, p. 646). Afterwards, the «Introduction to Literature» became a mandatory course for students in liberal arts colleges. After the «Introduction to Literature» course was established, the choice of textbooks became an important issue, and one which affected the development of this discipline. When Honma's textbooks and their imitators began to be more and more widely adopted, it accelerated the modernizing process of literary theory and set the path for the development of literary theory in China. Apart from providing the essential perception of modern literature (this is widely shared in most of the exotic literary theories that were introduced through translation),

the influence of these textbooks was mainly embodied in the four aspects described here below.

First, the most direct influence was to establish the discipline of literary theory. And setting the aims and objects of its research was intimately linked to the establishment of the discipline: «It is the cause as well as a symbol» (Jin 2004, p. 14). On the whole, Honma Hisao has determined the distinct objects of the study of literary theory in his book. He defines literature from two perspectives: literature itself, and the relationship between literature and society. To this end, he divides the book into two parts: «The nature of literature» and «Literature as a social phenomenon». This pattern of his has helped to make the sociological method on literary research the predominant method. In his writing Honma Hisao has raised several basic questions of literary theory, such as the definition of literature, its characteristics, elements, personality, and so on. This serves as a basic framework for the understanding and recognition of literature.

Second, Honma Hisao's work has had a great impact on Chinese textbooks of literary theory. In each chapter of his two books, Honma Hisao established and adopted the pattern of 'list - summarize - comment'. In his discussion on the definition of literature, for example, he first listed the definitions of literature made by several scholars and then he summarized and commented on these ideas. This pattern was widely imitated by Chinese theorists. After the publication of the translation of Hisao's works, nearly all Chinese literary theory textbooks adopted this model: discuss the definition of literature in the first chapter, then list different opinions from China and the West, and finally comment on and approve, or not, the ideas. This pattern was common in modern Chinese textbooks.

Third, Honma Hisao's objective, impersonal attitude is well known to Chinese academia. He wrote in the preface to *New Introduction to Literary Theory*: «In this book, I have cited numerous canonical works because I think this will help me not fall into my own arbitrary judgments of literature» (Honma 1925, p. 3). He tries to avoid subjective assumptions and to display different ideas objectively. This attitude is necessary to the writing of literary theory textbooks and is especially beneficial to Chinese literary theory in its initial stage.

Fourth, the information and material quoted by Honma Hisao in his works provide guidance on the translation of Western theories in China. As is said in the preface to *Introduction to Literary Theory*: «In this book, the author cited authoritative works of the East and the West as much as possible [...] in order to benefit the beginners of literary studies» (Honma 1930, p. 2). Honma Hisao not only introduced (to the East) numerous opinions from Western literary theory, but also quoted a vast amount of relevant material. The result is that the two books, *New Introduction to Literary Theory* and *Introduction to Literary Theory*, serve as a guide to scholars and readers. His interpretation and quotation of modern European and



American literary theory build a bridge to Western theories for Chinese translators and scholars. Hisao's two books have laid the groundwork for the later translations of Hunt's *An Introduction to Literature*, Winchester's *Principles of Literary Criticism* and the theoretical works of Matthew Arnold, Waner, and Posnett. Soon, Chinese scholars were no longer content with a brief introduction to Western theories; instead, they wanted to read the entire original works. Later, the theoretical works discussed by Honma Hisao were translated and published, and this triggered great enthusiasm for the translating of more exotic literary theories. The translation of Western literary theory has further spurred the transformation of modern Chinese literary theory.

## 8 The Weaknesses in Honma Hisao's Model

Modern Chinese literary theory, which is based on Western ideas and Western structures, has endured considerable hardship in its growth. A great many scholarly forerunners industriously in this discipline and made considerable contributions to it with their work. The new type of textbooks that grew out of Honma Hisao's *Introduction to Literary Theory*, was very popular in the 1930s, but then gradually faded out and was replaced by newer, more dynamic thinking in the 1940s. This progress stems from the pursuit of innovative ideas by Chinese intellectuals and their efforts to go beyond the old patterns. There are two main weaknesses in Honma Hisao's model of literary theory and its imitations.

One is its writing style. Honma Hisao's approach was first to choose several basic issues of literary theory, such as the definition, the characteristics and the elements of literature, then seek answers to the questions he had raised from established theories, and finally piece together the different parts. The advantage of this approach is that the ensuing writing style can be concise and explicit. It is also impersonal, and able to present various literary thoughts in an objective way. However, its weaknesses are apparent as well. First of all, this pattern lacks any innovative ideas from the author himself. It completely copies theories established by its predecessors and it is unable to provide new thoughts. This simple collection could only serve as guidance in support of further research and the advancement of academics. Yet because great efforts were made to widely promote these works, the appeal for a guided introduction to literary theory was a common thread in textbooks throughout the 1930s and 1940s, or even longer. Consequently, less attention has been paid to a more innovative creation of literary theory and this is one of the reasons that little progress has been made in the advancement of domestic Chinese literary theory. Is literary theory knowledge or method? This question remains unsolved and is still a quandary for the writing of literary theory

textbooks in China today. Additionally, this model of literary theory does not have a solid foundation because of its separation from concrete literary works. It so rigidly adheres to theory that it fails to relate theory to literary works and literary phenomena. Without this foundation, the understanding and interpretation of literary theory will result in abstract and aimless understanding, which cannot truly grasp the profound meanings of the theories. Moreover, the transformation and renovation of literary works are often ahead of theory. Therefore, to overlook literary works and literary phenomena is as if to forgo absorbing new ideas, which in the end will lead to a lack of vitality in the textbooks. Nearly all the imitations of Hisao's works inherit these weaknesses as well.

Second, the basic categories and fundamental issues are not fully systematized or specialized in Honma Hisao's works. The construction of literary theory begins with the formation of unique questions, unique ways of asking questions and unique attempts to find solutions. In other words, the questions asked by literary theory increasingly become basic issues of literary theory and gradually constitute a comprehensive and systematic framework. This framework, consisting of basic issues of literary theory, is neither a random combination of questions nor a collection of questions shared with other disciplines. What is more, its terms, concepts and categories gradually separate themselves from their original disciplines and contexts, and acquire special meanings to form systematic discourses of literary theory (Jin 2007, p. 38). Now that Honma Hisao's model applies the pattern of 'choose questions - appeal to classics - solve questions', the selection of questions is of critical importance. Hisao's *New Introduction to Literary Theory* mainly discusses the nature of literature, and literature and its social contexts, and mentions literary criticism. In *Introduction to Literary Theory*, Honma Hisao adds the chapter «On literary genres» to separate discussions on poetry, fiction and drama. However, most of the book's imitations concentrate mainly on the nature of literature and the social properties of literature, with limited discussions on literary genre, rarely mentioning the value of literature, the creation of literature, and literary criticism. The scope of these books may have seemed comprehensive at that time, but appears shallow and parochial today. They divide literary theory into two separate parts: the nature of literature, and the relationship between literature and society. These two parts are not well related or integrated, so this pattern does not provide an overall concept of literature or a comparable complete system of the basic issues of literature.

Precisely because the author does not have a clear consciousness of literature itself and its unique attributes, much of his discussion on the nature of literature is in fact about the characteristics common to all art forms, while the unique characteristics of literature are neglected. For example, when talking about the elements of literature, Hisao's discussions include aesthetic emotion, imagination, thoughts and form; these are

common to all forms of art and they are also applicable to music and the fine arts (Zhang, 2006). Much of this is due to Honma Hisao's imitating Winchester and to his frequently quoting aestheticians rather than literary critics: these include the expressionism aesthetician Bernard Bosanquet, the empiricism aesthetician Joseph Addison and the naturalism aesthetician George Santayana. Their aesthetic concepts are adopted by Honma Hisao, without alteration, to explain literary phenomena. As a result, literature is mixed with other artistic activities and loses its unique features.

## 9 Conclusion

When first introduced to China, Honma Hisao's literary categories were new to the country. Starting in the late 1940s, when new concepts in literary theory from Europe and America, as well as Marxist literary theory, became more prevalent in Chinese academia, Honma Hisao's model was gradually replaced by these new ideas. Nevertheless, Hisao's model was deeply rooted in China and has had a significant influence on the structure, character and pattern of modern Chinese literary theory. It was strengthened with the acceptance of Soviet literary theory and it is recognized as an important origin of modern Chinese literary theory.

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## Linking Ancient and Contemporary

Continuities and Discontinuities in Chinese Literature

edited by Tiziana Lippiello, Chen Yuehong 陈跃红 and Maddalena Barenghi

# The Disillusionment with the Rural Utopia in Chinese Literature

Wu Xiaodong 吴晓东

(Peking University, China)

**Abstract** The narrative of utopia in Chinese literature has been unable to break free from the literary tradition of the land of peach blossoms by Tao Yuanming. From Fei Ming's *Qiao* (1932) to Yan Lianke's *Shouhuo* (2003), there is a retrospective attribute, constructing a rural utopia with the land of peach blossoms as the basis. This paper begins by accounting for the images of the Oriental utopia with which Fei Ming's novels are imbued, then, upon close examination of Yan Lianke's *Shouhuo*, discusses the tradition of rural utopia in Chinese literature and its process towards final disillusion in the 21st century. *Shouhuo* is unique in both its narrative form and concept of utopia, especially in its description of the paradise created by the disabled; 'disability' is hence an important aspect of this utopia. Yet *Shouhuo* presents attributes of dystopia at the very end: it reveals the disillusion with various forms of utopia – Chinese tradition, communism, and consumerism – presenting the deep-seated historical crisis of Chinese rural society and the emptiness of contemporary cultural ideology, societal ideals and historical perspective. The discourse and historical practice of utopia forms an important thread in the cultural history of mankind, with utopia becoming an important motif in world literature. Chinese writers have unavoidably touched on this subject matter in various forms. This paper attempts to briefly trace the narrative of utopia in the history of Chinese literature, and then, focusing on Yan Lianke's novel, *Shouhuo*, discusses the issue of rural utopia and its eventual disillusion in Chinese literature.

**Summary** 1 Utopia in *Qiao*. – 2 *Shouhuo*: an Ideal Paradise. – 3 *Shouhuo*'s Dystopia. – 4 Return to the Land of Peach Blossoms.

**Keywords** Yan Lianke. *Shouhuo*. Utopia. Dystopia

## 1 Utopia in *Qiao*

Utopia refers to a fictitious space; the meaning of the word itself is 'nowhere'. From the source of the word, 'utopia' is a spatial concept. For instance, Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516) and Tommaso Campanella's *The City of the Sun* (1623) are both envisioned forms of utopia in a spatial sense.

Spatial isolation is an attribute of utopia in earlier Western works. In More's *Utopia*, Hythloday discovered a world of nowhere, utopia, on the American continent, while explorers today are still attempting to find Bacon's Bensalem, described in *New Atlantis*. However, utopia evolves gradu-

ally into a time-based concept over the course of Western modernization. According to Jameson, 'utopia' is no longer an arcane geographic term for a space, but has evolved into a new historical movement, hence creating a time-based mourning and not a spatial nostalgia (Yan Zhongxian 1999). American theologian Paul Tillich once distinguished two kinds of 'utopia': forward (future) looking and backward (past) looking (Tillich 1989, p. 171), a time-based differentiation. If the impulse towards utopia ultimately refers to the ideals of mankind in the dimension of time, Tao Yuanming's land of peach blossoms, which represents utopia in the Oriental tradition, differs considerably from that of the modern West. From *The Peach Blossom Land* to *Dream of the Red Chamber*, utopia in the Chinese tradition is void of time-based references. This is the 'meta-time' aspect of Chinese utopia. In *The Peach Blossom Land*, «they were not even aware of the Han dynasty, let alone the Wei and Jin», time is apparently still and everlasting, all that is left is space. And in *Dream of the Red Chamber*, with Buddhism's 'emptiness' as the underlying concept, there is no aspect of new historical concepts or forms of looking ahead (time-based reference to the future). Its ending can only be nirvana: «leaving a vast pallid land which is truly clean and plain». A Chinese utopia similar to its Western counterparts began in the late Qing dynasty, as represented by the narratives of Kang Youwei's *Book of Grand Harmony* and Liang Qichao's *The Future of New China*. Although Kang Youwei's idea of grand harmony took its reference mainly from traditional Chinese ideologies, the fact that *Book of Grand Harmony* was released in late Qing reflects the profound influence of Western utopianism. «From the perspective of literary works, perhaps China is not rich in its literary tradition of utopianism. However, if the essence of utopia is not in the literary imagination but in the concepts of an ideal society, the core of utopia not related to a personal pursuit of aspirations but an equal distribution of happiness and wealth of the entire society and a collective well-balanced harmony, then, needless to say, the tradition of Chinese culture bears many elements of a utopia in the context of the theories of politics and the practice of societal life» (Zhang Longxi 1999). *Book of Grand Harmony* and *The Future of New China* are such relevant examples, especially with respect to political theories and societal ideals.

However, in Fei Ming's novel, *Qiao*, a work of the 1920s, the Oriental utopia once again exhibits retrospective inclinations. That which was constructed in *Qiao* originates from the aesthetic utopia of China's poetic culture. It continues China's poetic heritage and draws a direct link to Tao Yuanming's *The Peach Blossom Land*. Contemporary critics remarked that «this novel has no feel of modernity, no elements of realism, all that is written are idealistic characters and realms. The author shuts his eyes to reality and constructs a utopia in his imagination [...] the fields, mountains, waters, woods, villages, weather, morning and night, all are coated with a layer of hazy hue, like a dream and fairyland. This novel leads the reader

into a 'peach blossom land'» (Guan Yin 1932). Also, *Qiao* draws a direct link to a 'ladies kingdom' described in *Dream of the Red Chamber* and *The Flower Dream*. Both land of peach blossom and ladies kingdom are Oriental utopia, and in this sense, *Qiao's* outlook on life is a mere utopian symbolic matrix of Oriental idealistic worlds, much infused with poeticism. Indeed, it is from the perspective of novel categorization that *Qiao*, as a mere 'symbolic matrix', is emphasized. «Despite having a fictitious form, the more important aspects of a utopia concern with its allusions and content» (Zhao Longxi 1999). I value the 'allusions' in *Qiao*, which are exemplified in its attempt to construct a poetic land of peach blossoms with reference to the Chinese tradition, a manifestation of *Qiao's* indulgence in the past. *Qiao* is hence enveloped by an ambience of rustic charm, indicating its connection to classical literature by absorbing the underlying classic motif of 'peach blossom land', and all of this made *Qiao* a symbol of an Oriental utopia (Wu Xiaodong 2003). From Fei Ming's perspective, utopia is not a real entity that exists in modern time and space, but something that can be attained only by looking back into the traditional world – this is the 'pastness' of Fei Ming's utopia. This 'pastness' is a historical continuation of Tao Yuanming's land of peach blossoms. Still today, in the 21st century, as *Shouhuo* demonstrates, we are living in the shadow of Tao Yuanming.

## 2 Shouhuo: an Ideal Paradise

Yan Lianke's *Shouhuo* received attention in China's literary circles immediately after its publication. It offers a rare utopian discourse and dimension in China's contemporary novels, providing what I would regard as an important introspective perspective: the utopian narrative of *Shouhuo* in its presentation of the concepts of utopia and dystopia.

'Shouhuo' is the name of a village in the novel, which came into existence as the result of an exodus of people from the Jin area during the Ming dynasty 明 (1368-1644), in the period between Hongwu 洪武 (1368-1398) and Yongle 永樂 (1403-1424). The officer in charge of this exodus, as a gesture of gratitude towards a mute old lady, acceded to her request and left behind a blind man and his disabled son, «and also left behind much silver and riches, dispatched a hundred soldiers to build houses for them, reclaimed some good tens of acres of land for farming, diverted the rivers to the edge of the fields, and, before he left, told the mute old lady, blind father and disabled son: 'this gully between the Palou ridges has ample water and fertile soil, you have silver and food, just farm and *shouhuo* here



then'». Hence 'Shouhuo' is named.<sup>1</sup> Although Shouhuo village is the result of a forced exodus, its birth out of nothing is similar to genesis mythology. The village became a paradise for the disabled, «rumor has it that a mute woman, a blind man and a disabled boy formed a family here, lived their days as if it were heaven, and afterwards the disabled from neighboring villages and precincts flocked there». The action and result of the exodus was originally a political act of the imperial court to strengthen its control over its people, yet Shouhuo village strangely escaped the entire process, turning into a place isolated from the mundane world and a paradise for the disabled. Shouhuo's tale of genesis started with a convolution of history and mythology, blending contrasting themes – healthy and disabled, governance and exodus, constraint and freedom, nation-state and autonomy – which also reveals its intricate, entwined relationship with the authority of the nation-state as it proceeds along its future course of history.

The most original scene in *Shouhuo* is its description of a world inhabited by disabled people. A world made up entirely of disabled people and where almost every villager has a unique characteristic, though these characteristics are absent in enabled people, termed 'full people' (*yuanquan* 圆全人) in the novel. In other words, it is because of their being disabled that Shouhuo villagers are equipped with special, often shocking talents that the enabled do not possess, and this alone is an alarming concept. The dialectic of the disabled and enabled is an important component of *Shouhuo's* utopia. As Shouhuo villagers are all disabled, in order for any enabled person to enter this utopia they should first have to disable themselves, which is the condition for entering this world. The county magistrates in the novel disabled themselves in exchange for the right to live in Shouhuo. The magistrate in the recounted legend would rather amputate one of his arms than leave Shouhuo, which he compared to the heavens; furthermore, he is worried that his children might be born without disabilities, commenting that «if they are 'full people', they would not understand the days here, as such they would throw away the chance of living heavenly days and roam aimlessly in the outside world, then they would suffer». Perhaps this is a continuation of the thinking we find in *Zhuangzi*, that only the disabled would be able to enjoy the natural span of their lives. Here, disability is the prerequisite to entering an ideal society. Disability is by itself an original sin, but it is also the key to salvation. Simply by being disabled would one be able to pass through the gates of utopia and, in doing so, have the chance for salvation. The 'full people' in the novel are deprived of this salvation, as they are unable to enter the world of Shouhuo; in other words, because of their 'normality',

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1 In a dialect unique to the Palou ridges, 'Shouhuo' has the meaning of enjoyment and carefreeness.

they are destined to have no affinity with utopia. The novel painstakingly depicts the inferiority and unscrupulousness of the world of 'full people', while bringing out the utopian qualities of Shouhuo. The dialectics of the disabled and the enabled is hence allegorical. The subject of 'deformity' becomes an important aspect in the novel's consideration of a utopia: it is deformity that constitutes an inherent form of 'fullness', the utopia of Shouhuo is established on the fundamentals of deformity, it is incomplete from the very beginning; it is incomplete, hence it is heaven on earth. This is the paradox of *Shouhuo*: as a world for deformities, it cannot be a real utopia, but only a deformed utopia. Hence, Yan Lianke's utopia is naturally linked with imperfections and defects. This makes a mockery of the motif of utopia, and it is precisely this that differentiates Yan Lianke's concept of utopia from that of the classics.

The histories and legends of the Shouhuo paradise are mainly recounted through a unique form of garrulous narrative. This 'garrulousness' (fanyan 絮言) in *Shouhuo* is provided by annotations applied to ongoing present tense narration. The author uses 'garrulousness' to present the origins of Shouhuo village and its myths and legends, as well as to explain dialectal terminologies and the historical accounts of the village and people. These annotations in garrulous form constitute the main subject of the novel, hence many parts of the garrulosity are individual chapters. Further garrulous annotations branch out from these, forming a profound matrix of historical time and space. Indeed, such annotations are written by a novelist, unlike rigorous academic writings. Perhaps to emphasize the difference between novel and thesis, the author terms these additional annotations as 'garrulousness'. At the same time, the term garrulousness emphasizes its nature as a fragment of history. History is narrated in fragments, the author has no intention of presenting a full chronological account of history, despite readers being able to arrange a relatively complete historical sequence from the fragments of garrulousness. Garrulousness allowed the novel to avoid being an official account of history, and so kept its distance from the grand scope of historical narrative. It uses legends, local chronicles and allegories, in which truth is mingled with falsehood, as a different narrative of Chinese rural societies and histories, while at the same time providing a new possibility to the narrative of the novel. Local chronicles, rural folklore, character sketches, allegories and historical accounts are combined in this integrated form of narrative, while providing a historical background and pre-understanding to the main thread of the narrative. It also forms a parallel world to the main narrative of the novel, perhaps also a more important world. Without this world, the meaning of *Shouhuo* is greatly diminished. One possible way of reading *Shouhuo* would be first to read its garrulousness. I find that this might even be a better way of reading *Shouhuo*. Yan Lianke has apparently found a unique way to speak of the world of legends and myths, through the form of garrulous-

ness, as *Shouhuo* paints a self sufficient and complete legendary world. Legends and myths are the rural ideologies; they are the manifestation of the imagination of the rural and might just be one of the ingredients of rural existence.

Another important function of the garrulousness in *Shouhuo* is its introspective perspective, rare in contemporary novels: the dimension of utopian discourse and practice. The historical meaning this dimension bestows upon contemporary novels must be assessed sufficiently. As Yan Lianke found his ideal method to speak of history and the legendary world, he also discovered a new and plausible way of speaking about utopia. This way of speech entangles utopian elements and historical prospects, thus enriching utopian discourse. And behind all that, it is an idea about history and utopia that belongs solely to Yan Lianke. The author's narrative prospects are determined by his idea of history, and that idea finds its means of expression in the narrative. The idea of history and narrative achieves an ideal union in garrulousness.

In its garrulousness, *Shouhuo* depicts an authentic rural paradise, a utopia of traditional agrarian society: in the words of the novel, 'heavenly ground'. 'Heavenly ground' is a keyword to the world of *Shouhuo*; it is another way of saying utopia: be well-fed and well-clothed, free and at ease as one might be, no burden of tax, no governmental constraints - very similar to Tao Yuanming's land of peach blossoms. The imagined utopia of Chinese tradition often has the attributes of an agricultural society, going back to Tao Yuanming. Zhang Longxi 张隆溪 notes that, «in *The Peach Blossom Land*, Yuanming paints an imaginative utopian way of life, one in which everyone works hard in the fields, starts work when the sun comes up and rests when the sun goes down: an agrarian society, very different from the utopias based on modern cities». «That which is worth noticing is 'in autumn all is ripe but they do not pay taxes', as Tao writes. There are no governmental constraints or taxes in the land of the peach blossoms, hence 'the children walked and sang, the white-haired were joyous, at their leisure.' The reason we state that Tao Yuanming's land of peach blossoms bears utopian characteristics is mainly that he envisioned an idealistic, harmonious society, not an otherworldly and spiritual realm». This is the ideal paradise of traditional Chinese agrarian societies and of the literati; it is also a common utopia, not just the discourse of one man. For the world of *Shouhuo*, it matches the idea of a utopia because it represents a societal practice that bears traditional Chinese characteristics, from those of the first old lady of *Shouhuo* village to those of Maozhi granny of the 20th century: all of them are utopian inhabitants pursuing the common happiness and interest of all *Shouhuo* villagers.

However, such an idea of community-based society is in actual fact retrospective; it is a return to the tradition of Tao Yuanming's land of peach blossoms. If human society follows the historical logic of evolution upon

entering the modern world, the imagination of utopia in Chinese literature has traces of retrogression. «The paradox of retrogression in Chinese literature and evolution in civilization – this mode of writing unique to the history of thoughts in classical Chinese literature – exhibits the overwhelming retrospective utopian inclination in traditional Chinese culture and literature concepts» (Xia Jing 2004). The utopian allegory in *Shouhuo* is strongly manifested in its ‘pastness’, which is a historical continuation of Tao Yuanming’s tradition of peach blossom land. This means that the idea of Yan Lianke’s utopian narrative is close to Tao Yuanming’s ideal, which implies that *Shouhuo*’s novelty is somewhat limited. The real ingenuity of *Shouhuo* is in its account of the disappointment with this rural utopia. The value of *Shouhuo* is that Yan Lianke also narrates a story of a dystopia.

### 3 Shouhuo’s Dystopia

Shouhuo villagers have vocabulary that belongs only to their community, like ‘inverted days’ and the above-mentioned ‘heavenly grounds’. The latter «is not referring to the grounds of heaven, but the much desired fields that are heavenly». The former ‘inverted days’ is closely connected to heavenly grounds, as both are forlorn longings for bygone days, and only the Shouhuo villagers would understand a way of life that only they have experienced. Its characteristics are substantial, harmonious freedom and relaxation. Shouhuo villagers see these lost beautiful days as inverted days. They also use the expressions ‘discarded days’, ‘dropped days’, and this is obviously an expression that concerns a dystopia unique to Shouhuo.

The course of Shouhuo’s dystopia is concurrent with its entering the pages of modern history. The novel emphasizes the course of Shouhuo as it enters the modern institutions of the 20th century, how it joined the cooperatives under the leadership of Maozhi 茅枝 granny, how the rural utopia was hence incorporated into communism, itself a new utopian practice. However, history proves that this is the path to a dystopia. The sorrows of a dystopia are presented mainly in the changes that Shouhuo village undergoes as it goes through the Great Leap Forward, the Natural Calamity of Three Years and the Cultural Revolution, during which Shouhuo village finds itself in a mismatch with modern politics and societal institutions. The heavenly days are but a bygone past, «all owned land and houses, the freedom of being never constrained by others, the days of being well-fed and well-clothed, have become a way of life lost by the Shouhuo villagers. A beautiful dream, or imagination, in the days that have passed and the days to come, has also become Maozhi granny’s motivation to strive, a common hopeful future that all villagers look forward to». Hence, following Maozhi granny, Shouhuo struggled

yet again, not to be incorporated into but to be detached from the cooperatives and return to the 'prehistoric' autonomist ages - a process of paradise regained.

An important plot in the novel is Shouhuo's incorporation into the course of revolutionary history and the practice of socialism. Maozhi granny is no doubt a crucial character in this plot, connecting the sequence of events. She was the youngest soldier in the Red Army Fourth Front, seriously injured while climbing the snowy mountains in the 1930s and left disabled. After losing touch with her organization, she settled in Shouhuo village and spread the seeds of revolution and collective struggle, eventually leading the Shouhuo villagers into a modern world represented by Mutual-aid Teams, Co-operatives and People's Communes. Shouhuo village was incorporated by the precinct of Shuangkui after much effort by Maozhi granny, and Shouhuo village went from an untraceable isolated village to just another village under a modern jurisdiction. After the village suffered a series of historical calamities, it was this Maozhi granny once again who led the Shouhuo villagers on a movement away from the modern world.

The disenchantment of the Shouhuo utopia seems to imply that the traditional Chinese utopia hardly stands a chance of being a universal ideology. Tao Yuanming's land of peach blossoms is a by-product of people escaping the Qin dynasty. It proves that from the time of the first emperor of the Qin dynasty, the nation-state and political authority has sought to rule citizens by incorporating them into their scope of governance. In modern history it is almost impossible to keep an area or a space entirely isolated. Shouhuo is fated to be incorporated into modern institutions. *Shouhuo* presents readers a utopia with prehistoric characteristics, and shows how it is incorporated into institutions and becomes part of them. It is 20th century communism, a more powerful utopian force, which absorbed the traditional utopia into its historical discourse; the course of Maozhi granny's efforts to organize the Party's mirrors the disintegration of the traditional utopia. Shouhuo enters modernity henceforth. Yan Lianke ultimately remarks that it would be impossible to return to the traditional utopia, which is destined to be a dystopia. The fact that the tales of the peach blossom land are perpetually narrated by the Chinese literati and commoners is simply because it could never materialize. That's why the anxiety of narrate appears.

This highlights the dystopian theme of *Shouhuo*, first presenting itself in the disillusionment of the communist utopia in its ideology and societal systems. After the reform and opening-up policy, Shouhuo village suffered from disenchantment with the second utopia, the utopia of capitalist consumerism. The county magistrate, Liu Yingque 柳鹰雀, intends to bring the Shouhuo villagers onto the path to wealth by building a mausoleum for Lenin on a local mountain and, after the purchase of Lenin's remains from faraway Russia, turning it into a tourist attraction. In order to accumulate

the huge sum of money for the purchase of Lenin's remains, the magistrate put together a special performing troupe from a group of disabled villagers who, making use of their strength derived from their living with disabilities became a popular attraction in their countrywide public performances. Shouhuo villagers hence dreamed of getting rich overnight, and indeed did earn huge sums of money, yet they were robbed and detained by the 'full people', resulting in their eventual defeat. This is the greatest blow dealt to the Shouhuo villagers. Commercial activities first promised Shouhuo villagers a chance to go from rags to riches, a utopia of desires that is stirred by the merchandized era and its opportunity for material gain. This allure is greater and more irresistible than that of any other age, as the utopia of consumerism awakens an instinctive desire in human nature. Yet, and coincidentally, in this instance as well, the Shouhuo villagers' prospect of utopia suffered an unprecedented disintegration: the tradition of rural utopia that bound generations is replaced, alienated and corrupted by new material desires and commercial activities.

Susan Sontag mentioned in an interview that:

The practice of socialism did not bring about the greatest change in the lives of people, it was the spirit of capitalism and commercialization... Traditional authoritarianism does not interfere in the cultural structures and value systems of the majority. Fascism ruled Italy for over twenty years, but it did not change the country's daily life, habits, attitudes and environment in the slightest. However, postwar capitalism changed Italy; it defaced the country. Under Soviet communism, even at the extreme of totalitarian governance, the basic lives of the majority were still rooted in the value system of the past. Hence from a cultural perspective, the consumer societies of capitalism are more destructive than totalitarian rule. Capitalism changed the thoughts and behaviors of people at a very profound level. It destroyed the past. It has impactful influences of existentialism. There is a slight irony here, as people under totalitarian rule welcome capitalism. This is understandable. They assume they would be wealthier; they would have a higher standard of living. This is better executed in China than in the former Soviet Union. However, along with the chance for prosperity, it is the most drastic change to culture. People are willing to destroy entirely their lives and value systems. This commercialization culture of capitalism is indeed astonishing. It might be the most intensive ideological trend ever, even more so than communism. (Sontag, Bei Ling, Yang Xiaobin 1998)

English theorist Terry Eagleton, in his «The Crisis of Contemporary Culture» also noted that «Bertolt Brecht once remarked that it was capitalism, not communism, which was radical, and his colleague Walter Benjamin added wisely that revolution was not a runaway train but the application

of the emergency brake. It is capitalism which pitches every value into question, dissolves familiar life forms, melts all that is solid into air or soap opera». The course of collision and destruction of Yan Lianke's *Shouhuo* world with the consumerist utopia seemingly justifies the perspectives of Sontag and Eagleton. The consumerist utopia of capitalism destroys traditional ways of living and value systems. Traditional Chinese utopia is in an utter mismatch with the modernity of capitalism. Once Yan Lianke's rural utopia enters history, institutions or the era of merchandizing, it loses its vibrancy and is quickly alienated by revolution, politics, systems and consumerist desires. The most important meaning of *Shouhuo* is its depiction of the collision, growth and decline, the clash of various ideas and the practice of utopianism, one being the traditional utopia from the time of Tao Yuanming's land of peach blossom, the second being China's communist utopia. Yet, both disintegrated in the face of capitalism and its consumerist utopia. Following the setback to communist utopian ideology and practice, and with Francis Fukuyama's «end of history», the collapse in utopian narrative is universal. As Susan Sontag said in 1996, «instead of the utopian moment, we live in a time which is experienced as the end – more exactly, just past the end – of every ideal» (Sontag 2003, p. 357). Yan Lianke's achievement is in his most incisive accounts of the impossibilities of a utopia, and in this sense, *Shouhuo* comprises a model of dystopia, elsewhere represented by George Orwell's *1984* and Huxley's *Brave New World*.

The point that Yan Lianke attempts to drive home is the impossibility of a Chinese utopia. Two utopian elements – utopia and dystopia – are entwined in the novel; furthermore, the traditional utopia is eroded by the modern utopia, displaying the course whereby rural utopia gradually loses its legitimacy in the light of modern history and institutions. In other words, while the author expresses his profound doubts on communist and consumerist utopias, he also traces the displacement of traditional rural utopia. In this sense, the author is actually presenting the deep-seated historical crisis of Chinese rural societies. Painting the existence of *Shouhuo* villagers using the discourse of utopia and dystopia, the discussions described in *Shouhuo* are elevated to a level of existentialism and anthropology. *Shouhuo*, as such, is a eulogy to the self-sufficient Chinese agrarian utopia and the land of the peach blossoms.

If the concept of 'utopia' according to Jameson is «a depiction and longing for a more reasonable societal system» (Hu Yamin 2001), in the historical context of Yan Lianke it is, on the other hand, a gradual displacement of the utopian concept and its eventual erosion by elements of dystopia. In other words, the practice of utopia itself contains elements of a counter-current which is the alienation of utopia in the grand course of history. Utopia is first and foremost an idealized existence: when it is historicized and practiced, it differs gradually from its original meaning. Yet mankind

has little resistance to the temptation of putting the ideas of utopia into practice. *Shouhuo* presents this as the villagers' seduction by the prospects of utopia. At the same time, the irony and richness of the novel is also expressed in the congregation of elements of utopia and dystopia, both unified paradoxically in the discourse of *Shouhuo*.

#### 4 Return to the Land of Peach Blossoms

In the process of his reflection on utopia, Yan Lianke also exposed his lack of a sense of history, as evidenced in his simplified account of the practice of communism. He wrote about the sufferings that this historical practice brought about, but ignored the historical reason for and necessity of China choosing communism. The idea of history behind its narrative has an inclination to abstractions, as Li Tuo points out, a lack of empathy towards the establishment of Chinese revolution and socialism (Yan Lianke, Li Tuo 2004). This has somewhat limited the novel's depth in expounding on the dimension of utopia.

That which is more worthy of discussion are Yan Lianke's Chinese characteristics. His utopia is retrospective, a result of his sources from and basis in traditional culture, consciously or unconsciously. However, it is his very practice of literature that reveals the difficulty of both Chinese tradition and contemporary culture to become the cultural ideal of the future, hence revealing the impossibility of a utopia in the future. In facing the future, Yan Lianke expresses a sense of loss and helplessness, as *Shouhuo* sighs in its last chapter, «matters of the future, are just matters of the future». At the end of the novel, *Shouhuo* villagers miraculously regain their freedom, no longer under the jurisdiction of governmental institutions. Putting aside the impossibility of this scenario in the reality of China, even if the villagers have returned to their land of peach blossom, is it a genuine reclamation of freedom? After some toil and tussle in the mundane world, despite being rejected by capitalism and the so-called 'full people' of the cities, with the Pandora's box of desire and consumerism already opened to them, would the villagers stay put in the traditional world of peach blossoms, as before? If Fei Ming's retrospection is an act of bidding farewell to a poetic tradition, then Yan Lianke's purpose is his rejection of the two Western utopias - communist utopia and consumerist utopia - and eventual rejection of the traditional rural utopia. The dystopian elements in *Shouhuo* hint at the impossibility of establishing a form of utopia in today's China. The author actually faces the predicament of an absence of the ideals of contemporary culture and society, and hence could only refer to the traditional rural utopia for ideal ways and forms of survival. This act of retrospection reflects the weakness of contemporary Chinese culture in terms of self-creation and rejuvenation. Chinese novels



are often lacking in their perspective of historical viewpoints; authors lack ideas and intellectual inquiry, are helpless in providing any form of perspective on history. This ability is not acquired simply by chatting about philosophy or philosophical ideas in the novel, but is based on introspective historical prospects. Those novels that insist on speaking about philosophy, on the other hand, due to a lack of genuine introspective prospects, appear even paler. The introspective prospect is not a philosophical matrix, but a sincere reflection on history and transcendental vision, a complicated narrative having its roots in the irony of history and reality. Modernity is a worldly practice on the level of societies and systems. Not only did it not stir imaginative prospects of utopia in Chinese authors, but it incorporates everything, expending the imaginative ability of authors; in other words, it merges imaginative ability into the structure and course of a worldwide integration into capitalism. Hence, the 20th century only brought about dystopian narratives such as *1984* and *Brave New World*. As noted by a critic, «the issue of utopia seems to be a crucial test of how much ability we have left to imagine change» (Yang Zhongxian 1999). Utopia in literature hence concerns the political and cultural imagination of a particular age; it does not come into place through pure fictitious imagination alone; it is, in actual fact, a test of authors' creativity in terms of ideas and their ability to reflect upon history in their literary imagination. Nobel Prize Laureate Ivo Andrić once said, «In the future, only those capable of depicting their own age, their contemporaries and their perspectives in the most beautiful prospects, can become real authors». And it is precisely on this point that the majority of Chinese authors are below the mark.

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**Part 3**  
**Poetry and Theatre**



## Linking Ancient and Contemporary

Continuities and Discontinuities in Chinese Literature

edited by Tiziana Lippiello, Chen Yuehong 陈跃红 and Maddalena Barenghi

# Traditions and Transitions in Eighteenth-Century Qu Poetry The Case of Jiang Shiquan (1725-1785)

Tian Yuan Tan 陳韞沅

(School of Oriental and African Studies, London, UK)

**Abstract** The 18th century marks a significant transitional period in the development of classical Chinese theater. It witnessed the decline of the *yabu* or ‘elegant drama’ (referring to Kun-style theater) and the rise of the *huabu* or ‘miscellaneous drama’ (also known as *luantan*, ‘cacophonous strumming’, referring to all other styles of regional theater). It also signalled a shift of focus from the page to the stage, with increasing attention given to the performance aspects of theater as opposed to drama as a form of literary composition. Jiang Shiquan (1725-1785) serves as an illuminating case study for our understanding of this transitional period. On the other hand, he was renowned as a classical poet, a master of *qu* poetry, and the last major playwright in the Qing dynasty. Yet, on the other hand, one can see clearly in his works new trends and styles of writing responding to the rise of local theaters. Focusing on Jiang Shiquan’s works, this paper aims to explore the competing styles of *qu* poetry as well as the changing roles and self-perception of a playwright in 18th century China.

**Summary** 1 Introduction. – 2 *Hua* 花 (Miscellaneous Drama) vs. *Ya* 雅 (Elegant Drama). – 3 Textuality vs. Visuality. – 4 Elite Theatre vs. Court Theatre. – 5 Conclusion.

**Keywords** Classical Chinese theater. Jiang Shiquan. Qing dynasty drama. Huabu. Miscellaneous drama.

## 1 Introduction

The 18th century marks a significant transitional period in the development of classical Chinese theatre. It witnessed the decline of the *yabu* 雅部 or ‘elegant drama’ (referring to Kun-style theatre 昆曲, the dominant dramatic style in the late Ming) and the rise of the *huabu* 花部 or ‘miscellaneous drama’ (also known as *luantan* 亂彈, ‘cacophonous strumming’, referring to all other styles of regional theatre).<sup>1</sup> It also signalled a shift

1 Liao Ben, Liu Yanjun 2003, pp. 106-110. For the regional developments of theatre during this period in the capital city Beijing and other urban centers such as Yangzhou and Suzhou, see Goldman 2012, esp. Chapter Three «Musical Genre, Opera Hierarchy, and Court Patronage», Mackerras 2009, pp. 207-24, and Li Mark 2009, pp. 225-244.

of focus from the page to the stage, with increasing attention given to the performance aspects of theatre as opposed to drama as a form of literary composition. The Chinese term for theatre or music-drama is *xiqu* 戲曲 formed by two characters which represent the two different aspects of Chinese theatre respectively: *xi* 戲 (literally 'play') refers to the performance art and is especially characteristic of earlier forms of Chinese theatre in the Tang and Song dynasties, whereas *qu* 曲 (literally 'songs') is about the poetic art of the sung arias which reached its height in the Yuan *zaju* and Ming *chuangqi* dramas.<sup>2</sup>

To understand how drama was perceived as a genre in the 18th century, let us begin with the official account by the compilers of the imperial library catalogue. At the head of the section devoted to lyrics and arias (*ciqu* 詞曲) one can find the following disparaging assessment:

*Ci* and *qu* are two genres that are between literature and professional skills.

They are of a rather inferior grade and are not highly regarded by writers.

詞、曲二體，在文章、技藝之間，厥品頗卑，作者弗貴。(Siku quanshu *zongmu* 1983, 198.1807).

Such demarcation between the two different aspects of drama was also evident in the actual writings on theatre by Qing elite scholars. Li Yu 李漁 (1611-1680), in his *Xianqing ouji* 閒情偶寄 (Random repository of idle thoughts), divides his discussions of theatre into two different sections - namely, the *ciqu* 詞曲 section on lyrics and songs focusing on literary aspects, and the *yanxi* 演習 section on performance practices. Even more evidently, the Qing dynasty critic Li Tiaoyuan 李調元 (1734-1803) wrote two treatises on theatre in the 18th century and gave them different titles, namely *Quhua* 曲話 (full title *Yucun quhua* 雨村曲話) and *Juhua* 劇話, reflecting their respective emphasis on Chinese drama as a poetic form (*qu*) and as a theatrical form (*xi*).<sup>3</sup>

More broadly and in a larger context, the 18th century was also a transitional period in terms of literati culture. Shang Wei has described the High Qing (1723-1840) as the final phase of traditional literary culture, during which 'literati' as a category was elusive and difficult to define as it was continuously evolving (Shang Wei 2010, pp. 246, 249). How can we understand the status of playwrights and playwriting during this historical period?

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2 For a concise explanation of these two aspects of *xiqu*, see *Zhongguo quxue da cidian* 1997, p. 3. See also Lu Wei 1986, pp. 21-28.

3 These two aspects and their respective traditions were clearly defined in Li's prefaces to the two works. See Li Tiaoyuan 1980, pp. 5 and 35.

It is in these aforementioned contexts and with these questions in mind that we shall turn to Jiang Shiquan 蔣士銓 (1725-1785), who is one of the most interesting figures in the field of Qing dynasty drama and arguably the most important dramatist in 18th century China.<sup>4</sup> Jiang occupies a unique place in the historiography of Chinese drama and could serve as an illuminating case study for our understanding of this transitional period.

On the one hand, Jiang Shiquan was renowned as a classical poet, in fact, one of the three most eminent ones in the High Qing together with Yuan Mei 袁枚 (1716-1798) and Zhao Yi 趙翼 (1727-1814). Not only was he highly praised by his contemporaries as a master of *qu* poetry in recent times (Li Tiaoyuan 1980, p. 27), he was widely regarded as the last major playwright of classical Chinese drama (Aoki Masaru 1947, p. 134). It is worth noting that by the first decades of the 18th century, the two most famous playwrights in early Qing, Hong Sheng 洪昇 (1645-1704) and Kong Shangren 孔尚任 (1648-1718) had passed away. The type of theatre we find in Yuan dynasty northern *zaju* and Ming dynasty southern *chuanqi*, which usually centred on playwrights and their masterpieces, would soon give way to a new stage centred on star performers. In that regard, Jiang Shiquan was very much regarded the last example of a literary playwright whose works are still worthy of mention in literary histories. Yet, on the other hand, one can also see clearly in the dramatic works of Jiang Shiquan new trends and styles of writing. How do we understand such changes?

In this paper I am going to approach Jiang Shiquan's drama using three pairs of binary terms as my guiding principles. With each pair of binaries, we find opposing or conflicting concepts and aesthetics. Yet, interestingly, these competing styles and forms found a way to co-exist in Jiang's works which cannot be summarised by any single monolithic style. By tracing them to the respective occasions and different theatrical traditions, I aim to show how Jiang Shiquan's dramas are best understood to be situated at the crossroads of these competing styles and developments in the 18th century. This would also inform us on the changing roles and self-perception of a playwright in 18th century China.

## 2 *Hua* 花 (Miscellaneous Drama) vs. *Ya* 雅 (Elegant Drama)

The competition between the elegant drama (*kunqu* 昆曲) and the miscellaneous group of local theatrical styles is well illustrated in a scene from Act Two of Jiang Shiquan's play *Shengping rui* 昇平瑞 (Auspicious Signs

4 For studies on Jiang, see Xu Guohua 2010, Hummel [1943] 2002, pp. 141-42; Nienhauser 1986, pp. 264-266.



of the Peaceful Age) written in 1751.<sup>5</sup> The scene is imbued with a comical tone. A puppet theatre troupe named Hupin Troupe 糊品班 was invited to give a performance at the residence of the Gao family. When asked about the origin of their troupe's name, one member of the troupe explains that the name derives from the expression *hukou* 糊口 which means literally 'to feed a mouth'. Since there were three members in the troupe, they therefore called themselves the Hupin ban 糊品班, a 'Troupe Feeding Three Mouths', since 'three mouths [*kou*] make up the character *pin*' 三張口湊成一個品字 (Zhou Miao Zhong 1993, p. 763). The troupe was then asked about the scope of their repertoire: 'Which theatrical styles do you know? What are some of the plays that you can perform?' 你們是什麼腔? 會幾本什麼戲? This leads to a catalogue of theatrical styles listed by the troupe manager:

(雜) 昆腔、漢腔、弋陽、亂彈、廣東摸魚歌、山東姑娘腔、山西卷戲、河南鑼戲、連福建的鳥腔都會唱，江湖十八本，本本皆全。(Jiang Shiquan *xiqu ji* 1993, p. 763)

(*The extra speaks*) [We can sing] the Kun-style, Han-style, Yiyang-style, cacophonous strummings (*luantan*), fish-grabbing songs (*moyu ge*) from Guangzhou, maiden-style (*guniang qiang*) from Shandong, Juan-theatre<sup>6</sup> from Shanxi, Luo-theatre<sup>7</sup> from Henan, and even those damned styles from Fujian. As for the eighteen texts widely circulated among the rivers and lakes,<sup>8</sup> we master each and every one of them thoroughly.

The information outlined above is significant, as it provides a clear picture of the vibrant theatrical scene of the High Qing during Jiang's times. A wide variety of theatrical styles were popular. These include not only *kunqu* drama which had dominated the Chinese stage for about two centuries, but also a wide range of regional styles from both the North and the South.

A word to note here is the term that refers to the singing styles from Fujian. In the modern critical edition of Jiang Shiquan's plays, the term appears as *wuqiang* 鳥腔 which seems to interpret it as a particular form

5 *Shengping rui* is one of the four plays collectively known as *Xijiang zhugu* 西江祝嘏 (*Birth-day Blessings from the West of the Yangtze river*). See Jiang Shiquan *xiqu ji* 1993, p. 1.

6 *Juan xi* 卷戲 is also known as «plays performed for family members» (*juanxi* 眷戲).

7 *Luoxi* 鑼戲 is sometimes also rendered as *luoxi* 羅戲. The two theatrical styles, *luoxi* and the abovementioned *juanxi*, can be combined in performance and are known as *luojuan xi* 羅卷戲. See Yang Liping 2011, pp. 138-140.

8 This passage is possibly the earliest source for the term «Jianghu shiba ben» 江湖十八本. See Bai Haiying 2007, p. 42.

of singing style in Fujian known as the 'Wu-style'.<sup>9</sup> There are, however, no other sources that record a singing style known as *wuqiang* in the history of Fujian theatre.<sup>10</sup> Revealingly, if we refer to the Qing dynasty printings of this play, one would realise that the word in question is indeed *niao* 鳥, pronounced as *diao* in its use as a curse word on this occasion.<sup>11</sup>

The trouper manager refers to the singing styles from Fujian in a derogatory manner which points us towards another aspect of the competition between the elegant drama (*kunqu* 昆曲), a form of high art among literati circles, and the miscellaneous group of local theatrical styles using local tunes and folk songs enjoyed by a wider audience. Such competition was also a form of tension between *ya* 雅 (the elegant and refined) and *su* 俗 (the vulgar and popular).<sup>12</sup>

Later in Act Three of the play, there is an interesting section that suggests that these various dramatic styles had their respective function and status, and could cater to different groups of audience. For example, Kun-style theatre was performed in the Grand Hall for the old lady whose birthday was celebrated. The location and the audience indicate that *kunqu* was regarded the elegant form of theatre to be performed on formal and official occasions. In contrast, puppet theatre was prepared for some other guests in another hall. The reason became clear as Jiang told us, through the words of a member of the audience:

昆腔唧唧噥噥，可厭。高腔又過於吵鬧，就是梆子腔唱唱，倒也文雅明白。(Jiang Shiquan *xiqu ji* 1993, p. 768)

Kun-style is just like the whispering of insects and it is rather detestable. But Gao-style<sup>13</sup> is also overly clamorous. Let's just get them to sing in the Clapper-style (*bangzi qiang*), that would be refined and yet easy to understand.

While *kunqu* might have been considered the elegant form suitable for the more formal occasions, it is clear that this theatrical style has already lost its popularity in the mid-eighteenth century among the wider public.

9 Based on this account, some reference works list *wuqiang* as a form of singing style. For example, see the entry on «wuqiang» in the reference work *Zhongguo quxue dacidian*, p. 64.

10 The entry in *Zhongguo quxue dacidian* cites only the single example from Jiang's play.

11 See, for example, the 1810 edition of *Xijiang zhugu* kept in the Bibliothèque nationale de France (Chinois 4406), *Shengping rui*, p. 11a.

12 For an overview of the co-existence and complementary nature of these two styles in the dramatic works of other Qing dynasty dramatists, see Wang Yongkuan 2008, pp. 86-92. On the case of Jiang Shiquan, see also Shangguan Tao 2003, pp. 44-48.

13 A variant of the Yiyang style of Jiangxi province.

The guests who were treated to the puppet theatre rejected *kunqu* and instead went for the clapper-style, one of the many types of miscellaneous drama, which is simpler and considered less sophisticated than *kunqu*.<sup>14</sup> It is worthy noting that they did not simply pick any of the miscellaneous styles. Gao-style, for example, was too noisy to their ears. Instead, they preferred the clapper-style precisely because it is both «refined and yet easy to understand».

This perhaps represents Jiang Shiquan's own aim to achieve a balance between *ya* and *su* in his own dramatic works. The local styles and tunes were regarded popular and *su*. In the preface to one of his plays, Jiang Shiquan clearly advocated the use of local tunes and the language and sounds of the local people.<sup>15</sup> This is reflected in his employment of a series of 'rice-planting songs' (*yangge* 秧歌) sung by a group of farmers in the fields in the play.<sup>16</sup>

Also related to the distinction between *ya* and *su* is the question of literary value. If we consider the ways the *huabu* and the *yabu* are represented in literary histories, plays belonging to the *ya* section such as *Taohua shan* 桃花扇 (*Peach Blossom Fan*) and *Changsheng dian* 長生殿 (*Palace of Eternal Life*) are regarded as masterpieces in literary histories. By contrast, the new regional styles of performances relied more on the actor's skills and the actors might not even need or have a script. Hence, these regional plays from the *huabu* have been largely left out in literary histories. This brings us to the second set of working ideas, that is, the competing values between the textual and visual aspects in Jiang Shiquan's drama.

### 3 Textuality vs. Visuality

At the beginning of the paper, I mentioned the shift of focus from the page (*qu* 曲) to the stage (*xi* 戲) in the 18th century. In this transition, we are dealing with two modes of theatrical performances and aesthetics, what I tentatively call 'textual drama' and 'visual drama', which we find in co-existence in Jiang's works. My primary concern here is about the different ways in which a textual drama and a visual drama relate to its readers.

The basic idea is that 'textual drama' appeals to its readers through textual, verbal, and literary means, encouraging its readers to relate to other literary works and sources. Jiang Shiquan has long been regarded as one of the most erudite playwrights whose «mind was filled with poems and books, of which he can therefore put to use at ease and everything he

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14 On the clapper-style, see Tseng Yong-yih 2007, pp. 143-178.

15 See the preface to *Yi pian shi* 一片石 (*Jiang Shiquan xiqu ji* 1993, p. 342).

16 See Act II of *Yi pian shi* (*Jiang Shiquan xiqu ji* 1993, pp. 357-358).

wrote is always cultured and distinguished» 以腹有詩書，故隨手拈來，無不蘊藉。<sup>17</sup> His plays are highly lyrical and literary. This is evident, for example, in his choice of subject matter. One of Jiang's best known works, *Linchuan meng* 臨川夢 (Dream of Linchuan), is a play that dramatizes the life of the late Ming playwright Tang Xianzu 湯顯祖 (1550-1616). It puts onstage not only Tang Xianzu himself, but also several fictional characters from his plays as well as a female reader named Yu Erniang 俞二娘 who was said to have died of heartbreak because of her obsession with the *Peony Pavilion*.<sup>18</sup> In the fictional world of the play, the author of *Peony Pavilion* (Tang Xianzu) meets his reader (Yu Erniang); in reality, the play *Linchuan meng* also functions as a literary dialogue between the author Jiang Shiquan and his readers. There is a presupposition to this dialogue: only readers who are familiar with Tang Xianzu and his literary world can full engage with the references and allusions in the play.

Another textual or verbal element found in Jiang Shiquan's drama is his use of pastiche of Tang poems (*ji Tang* 集唐), a feature which was already commonly employed in late Ming elite theatre.<sup>19</sup> One of Jiang's plays, *Yi pian shi* 一片石 (A Stone Slab), concludes with the following verse:

(集唐)  
 莫拋心力作詞人，  
 月夕煙朝幾十春。  
 此是人間斷腸曲，  
 可憐無益費精神。  
 (Jiang Shiquan 1989, p. 374)

(*A Pastiche of Tang Poems*)  
 Don't cast your mind on being a lyricist,  
 Moonlit dusks, misty dawns, decades of springs have passed.  
 This heart-breaking song in our world,  
 Alas, adds nothing but only wastes my energy.

These four lines are drawn from four different Tang poems by Wen Tingyun 溫庭筠 (ca.812-ca.866), Du Mu 杜牧 (803-852), Bai Juyi 白居易 (772-846),

17 Li Tiaoyuan 1980, p. 27.

18 See Jiang Shiquan 1989, especially scenes 4, 10, 15, 16, 17, 19, and 20. On anecdotes about the passionate female reader Yu Erniang, see Xu Fuming 1987, pp. 213-215. In *Linchuan meng*, the girl introduces herself as Yu Ergu 俞二姑.

19 On this phenomenon, see Zong Tinghu, Li Jinling 2009, pp. 141-148, and Dai Jian 2011, pp. 197-201.

and Han Yu 韓愈 (768-824) respectively.<sup>20</sup> In fact, three of the four acts in *Yi pian shi* ends with an exit verse written in the style of *ji Tang*.<sup>21</sup> In such pastiches of Tang poems, the original authors of these poetic lines are not identified on the dramatic text.<sup>22</sup> The play again relies on and assumes a common knowledge of literary sources, in this case Tang poetry, between the author and his intended readers. This is what I meant by ‘textual drama’, drama that functions as verbal text and communicates through literary means.

On the other hand, ‘visual drama’ relies on spectacular displays, which are omnipresent in Jiang Shiquan’s works as well. One of the most striking features of Jiang’s drama is his devotion to the creation of visual spectacles in terms of the use of props and elaborate settings as suggested in his very extensive stage directions. For example, one of his plays, *Daoli tian* 忉利天 (Trāyastimśas Heaven, or The Heavens of the Thirty-Three Devas), stages a Buddhist lion whose entrance on stage was given an elaborate scene with a lion dance routine accompanied by a clamour of gongs and drums.<sup>23</sup>

Furthermore, the success in creating a visual spectacle very often relies on the element of surprise. In Act II of the same play, two celestial ladies are sent to the flower market organised by Buddhahadra 跋陀羅<sup>24</sup> (359-429 CE) to gather flowers for celebrating the birthday of the Buddha’s mother, Queen Maya. Because the flowers have not fully blossomed, the celestial ladies therefore prepare to perform a newly written song to hasten the blooming of the flowers. Before these celestial ladies come onstage, the opening scene includes detailed stage directions on the preparations needed to present this visual spectacle of the flower’s sudden blooming:

(Hang a large red embroidered silk cloth onstage, behind the cloth discreetly set up an elevated pedestal, and from top to bottom encircle the pedestal with tens of layers of flowers.)

(場面掛紅錦大幃，內暗設一高座，將花數十本層層高下圍繞座下)

20 See *Quan Tangshi (zengding ben)* 1999, 579.6783 (Wen Tingyun), 524.6047 (Du Mu), 457.5213 (Bai Juyi, with *changduan* 腸斷 in place of *duanchang* 斷腸 in this version), 339.3802 (Han Yu).

21 The only exception is in Act II in which, as mentioned earlier, Jiang Shiquan consciously inserts a series of rice-planting songs to inject the language of the local folks in his play.

22 This was the same case both in Qing dynasty printings as well as modern editions. See, for example, the edition of *Yi pian shi* kept in the Bibliothèque nationale de France (Chinois 4406), Act IV, p. 20b.

23 See *Daoli tian*, Act I, in *Jiang Shiquan xiqu ji* 1993, p. 689.

24 Buddhahadra produced the first Chinese translation of the Avatamsaka-sūtra 華嚴經 (Flower Adornment Sutra).

(*Jiang Shiquan xiqu ji* 1993, p. 697)

Only after the fairies have performed a few songs with the music accompaniment of an old monk, in the middle of their conversation (played by the two female roles 旦), the decorated pedestal was suddenly revealed to their amazement:

(二旦)好說。(內暗撤去錦幃，現出花座介)呀！萬花全放，艷若雲霞。這都是老丈古音感發。多謝！多謝！(*Jiang Shiquan xiqu ji* 1993, p. 698)

(*The two celestial ladies*) Your words are too kind. (*Discreetly remove the embroidered silk cloth offstage, revealing the flower-adorned pedestal*) Ah! The myriad flowers have fully blossomed, with exceptional beauty like the rosy clouds. Sir, this is all owing to the moving quality of your ancient music. Many thanks! Many thanks!

Such designs were clearly aimed at providing a kind of visual pleasure and entertainment to the audience, which was very different from the textual and literary engagements that we saw earlier.

It has often been argued that such characteristics in Jiang Shiquan's drama reflected the contemporaneous developments of the local theatrical practices such as the use of masks or the inclusion of dances mimicking the movements of animals such as lion dance (see, for example, Lin Ye-qing 2002, p. 84, and Shangguan Tao 2003, p. 47). But another possible source of influence seems to have been overlooked. Could these visual aspects in Jiang Shiquan's drama have been influenced by the court theatrical tradition?

#### 4 Elite Theatre vs. Court Theatre

Theatrical performances had long been part of Chinese court culture and continued to flourish in late imperial China owing to great interest shown by the emperors and their families. In terms of scale, court theatre reached its height during the 18th century under the patronage of the Qianlong emperor (Lang Xiuhua 2001; Tseng Yong-yih 1993, pp. 1-23; Ding Ru-qin 2008, pp. 184-95; Yao Shuyi 2005, pp. 80-91; Yao Shuyi 2001, pp. 88-95; Zheng Wenpei 1997).

We need to consider the contrasting aesthetics and demands of elite and court theatre in late imperial China. In elite theatre we have plays written by literati playwrights for an elite audience mostly belonging to their literary circles. These plays represent the aesthetic and stylistic preferences of individual literati playwrights and, as such, can be perceived as evidence of their literary talents. By contrast, court theatre was

neither regarded as literary masterpieces, nor was it usually associated with elite authors. In fact, the authorship of most court plays remained unknown. Produced to fulfill particular social or ritualised functions such as the celebration of imperial occasions or a festivals, court theatre relied less on literary techniques but more on visual spectacles and elaborate settings.<sup>25</sup>

In Jiang Shiquan, however, we have an interesting case of a well-known elite playwright who was also involved in writing theatrical performance for imperial entertainment. In the year 1751, Jiang Shiquan, who was then only in his mid-twenties, was asked by the local authorities in Jiangxi to write four plays collectively titled *Xijiang zhugu* 西江祝嘏 (Birthday blessings from the west of the Yangtze river) for the celebration of the Empress Dowager's birthday.<sup>26</sup> In his plays, we can see a juxtaposition of the different styles and aesthetics of elite and court theatre.

On the one hand, there are traces of influences from court ritual dances and aspects of spectacular visual displays typical of the imperial theatre. This is most evident in the play *Shengping rui* which has two different versions of the closing scene in various editions.<sup>27</sup> The final scene of the 'abbreviated version' ends with the following stage directions:

(衆持燈上，舞一回下。)(*Jiang Shiquan xiqu ji* 1993, p. 781)

(*Multiple performers enter with lanterns in their hands. Perform dance sequence and exeunt.*)

But if we compare with another Qing edition kept at the Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris, we find a much more elaborate sequence:

(內奏樂，眾扮仙童持燈雲緩上，並肩立介)(王方平、蔡經暗上，立高處介)<sup>28</sup>

25 For recent studies on Qing dynasty court theatre, see Ding Ruqin 1999; Idema 2000, pp. 201-219; Zhu Jiajin 2007; Chen 2009; Ye Xiaoqing 2012.

26 See Wang Xingwu's 王興吾 preface to *Xijiang zhugu*, in *Jiang Shiquan xiqu ji* 1993, p. 659, and Liang Tingnan 梁廷柎, *Quhua* 曲話, *Zhongguo gudian xiqu lunzhu jicheng*, vol. 8, p. 273. In the collection of the National Library of China in Beijing, there are at least four different editions of *Xijiang zhugu*. The editions differ in several areas such as the inclusion of a preface, the completeness of the preface, and two versions of the ending in the fourth play *Shengping rui*. To my knowledge, the only Qing dynasty edition of the play that preserves the full preface is the copy kept in the Bibliothèque nationale de France (Chinois 4406) cited above.

27 For example, one of the copies in the National Library of China (no. XD5720) and the base text used in *Jiang Shiquan xiqu ji* belong to the 'abbreviated version' system with fewer songs. The Bibliothèque nationale de France copy represents the 'complex version' with a more elaborate closing scene.

28 *Shengping rui*, the Bibliothèque nationale de France (Chinois 4406) edition, p. 24b.

(Music offstage. Multiple performers enter slowly with 'lantern clouds' in their hands. They stand shoulder to shoulder.) (Wang Fangping and Cai Jing discreetly enters. They stand on a high spot.)

This is followed by two arias interspersed with dialogues between the Taoist adept Wang Fangping 王方平 (Wang Yuan 王遠, fl.146-195), his disciple Cai Jing 蔡經, and an immortal maiden Magu 麻姑 who later arrived,<sup>29</sup> before concluding with another slow sequence of lantern dance.<sup>30</sup> This complex edition gives us an idea of what the simple stage direction «Perform dance sequence» (舞一回) in the abbreviated version might have been fully represented in performance. As the editor of the modern critical edition pointed out, it is unclear whether this additional passage was amended by Jiang Shiquan himself or by performers.<sup>31</sup> However, we may infer from the differentiation between the abbreviated and complex versions that this kind of dance sequence with lanterns was already a commonplace in Qing court theatre performances, such that some editions could save space by simply indicating «perform the routine sequence» without the need to repeat the details. Although Jiang Shiquan's set of four plays titled *Xijiang zhugu* might have been produced in Jiangxi, it served the same purpose as court theatre performed within the imperial palace in the capital. It was also written in celebration of the birthday of the Empress Dowager and one could easily see it in the tradition of such court performances. For instance, one of the plays begins with an elaborate scene describing the auspicious signs of the conjunction of the sun and the moon and the convergence of the five planets which echoes similar performances in an earlier court play performed for the fiftieth birthday of the Empress Dowager.<sup>32</sup>

On the other hand, even when Jiang Shiquan was writing for court entertainment, there were certain textual elements in his drama that are clearly characteristics of elite theatre. For example, the use of pastiche of Tang poems discussed above was characteristic of elite theatre but rarely used in court drama of both Ming and Qing dynasties. However, it appears that Jiang's plays were not restricted by such boundaries. In one of the four plays in *Xijiang zhugu*, most characters, even including

29 This appears to have been drawn from the hagiographies of Wang Yuan and Magu in the *Shenxian zhuan*. See Li Fang 李昉, ed., *Taiping guangji* 太平廣記 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1961), 59.369-370, and Robert Ford Campany, *Ge, Hong. To Live As Long As Heaven and Earth: A Translation and Study of Ge Hong's Traditions of Divine Transcendents* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), pp. 259-264.

30 *Shengping rui*, the Bibliothèque nationale de France (Chinois 4406) edition, pp. 24b-25a.

31 *Jiang Shiquan xiqu ji* 1993, p. 781, collation n. 9.

32 See *Huang taihou wuxun wanshou chengying riyue yingxiang, rentian puqing 'guban' 皇太后五旬萬壽承應日月迎祥、人天普慶“鼓板”*, manuscript copy attributed to Zhang Zhao 張照 et al., in Wu Shuyin 2004, pp. 443-453.



an old farmer and his wife, ostensibly recite a pastiche of Tang poems as their entrance verse (*shangchang shi* 上場詩) when they came on stage. Act II alone uses this literary device six times (*Jiang Shiquan xiqu ji* 1993, pp. 667-674).

A good example of the convergence of these two different styles, namely, the elite and the court theatre, or the textual and the visual, can be found in another play of Jiang titled *Changsheng lu* 長生錄 (Register of Long Life). This play was also written for the occasion of the Empress Dowager's birthday, which may explain its choice to focus on female immortals. Act II features an unconventional female immortal Nüji 女几,<sup>33</sup> who owns a wine-shop and proclaims that her capacity for wine is far superior to the male drinkers:

([女几]挂旗介, 取酒坐飲介) 我前日把杜工部那首《飲中八仙歌》改了改, 教人知道他們都是些假量, 不免唱來做一碗下酒菜兒。

([Nüji] puts up the banner of her wine-shop, gets herself some wine, sits down and drinks. She speaks:)

«The other day I made some changes to that 'Song of Eight Immortals of the Winecup' written by Du of the Ministry of Works, so as to let people know that these lot's reputation for their wine-drinking capacity is all spurious. Why don't I sing this song to go with my wine!»

Du of the Ministry of Works 杜工部 refers to the pre-eminent Tang poet Du Fu 杜甫 (712-770), whose famous «Song of the Eight Immortals of the Winecup» 飲中八仙歌 portrays a group of Tang historical figures and poets who were fond of drinking, including He Zhizhang 賀知章 (659-744), The Prince of Ruyang Li Jin 李璣 (?-750), and also Li Bai 李白 (701-762). In Jiang Shiquan's drama, however, Du Fu's poem was transformed into a new dramatic aria sung by Nüji on the same topic but adopting much more colloquial language and set in an even more jestful tone than the original (*Jiang Shiquan xiqu ji* 1993, p. 728). This clever verbal display clearly assumes and demands the audience and readers' familiarity with Du Fu's original poem. It also showcases Jiang Shiquan's literary talent on a different level. Not only was he competent in appropriating Tang lines to form a pastiche in his various *ji Tang* poems, he also actively rewrote one of the Tang masterpieces in a different genre.

In midst of such verbal engagements, however, it is noteworthy that the very same scene also contains other elements that pay attention to visual performance as well. The reader is introduced to three other female immortals, Magu 麻姑, Maonü 毛女 (Hairy Lady), and He xiangu 何仙姑 (Im-

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33 For an account of this female immortal, see Li Fang, ed., *Taiping guangji*, 59.368.

mortal Maiden He), who later also join the drinking party and they take turns to perform some tricks. For instance, Magu waves her magic whip to summon a transformative dance procession by fishes and dragons, which can be traced to one of the court entertainments in the Han dynasty.<sup>34</sup> Another immortal, Maonü, who lives in seclusion in the mountains, gives a performance on catching butterflies (*pudie zhi xi* 撲蝶之戲), which is her favourite pastime. Catching butterflies is one of the popular performance acts in Chinese drama and folk dance involving characteristic body movements. In Jiang's play written for the imperial occasion, however, it appears to involve more elaborate props and multiple performers:

旦起舞拂子內放一大蝶飛出眾小蝶隨繞一回介 (Jiang Shiquan xiqu ji 1993, p. 731)

(Maonü rises and dances, releasing a huge butterfly that flies out from her duster. Multiple small butterflies follow in circles and perform a routine)

In these performances, the focus is no longer on engaging the reader or spectator with literary or verbal words as seen earlier with the use of Tang poems, but instead on captivating their attention with visual spectacles.

Furthermore, the distinction between textual and visual dramas, or elite and court theatres, was more than simply a question of different styles. More importantly, it relates to key questions in defining a playwright and his mode of playwriting. Elite theatre is usually linked with the playwright's self-expression. Recent scholarship has also revealed a strong autobiographical element especially in the elite drama of the Qing dynasty (Du Guiping 2006, pp. 130-141, and Wang Aying 2003, pp. 81-157). The case of Jiang Shiquan, however, presents an interesting paradox. Commonly portrayed as an elite playwright in literary histories, how shall we understand the other aspect of him as a court playwright writing under commission for a specific occasion?

Perhaps being a dramatist in the 18th century was more complicated than we sometimes assume. In Jiang's account of his own life, there is an entry in the year 1764 that is significant. In that year, when Jiang was forty years (*sui*) old, Qiu Yuexiu 裘曰修 (1712-1773)<sup>35</sup> recommended him for a post in the imperial theatrical institution Jingshan 景山 to write lyrics for the court entertainers, thinking that this could be a way for the emperor

<sup>34</sup> Jiang Shiquan xiqu ji 1993, p. 730. This form of entertainment was recorded in *Hanshu* 1964, 96.3928.

<sup>35</sup> Qiu was a native of Jiangxi just like Jiang Shiquan and was then serving as the Senior vice-minister of Revenue. See Hummel [1943] 2002, p. 172.

to recognize Jiang's talents. But Jiang Shiquan's reaction is noteworthy. He earnestly refused the proposition and soon requested leave from his duties and left the capital (Jiang Shiquan 1993, p. 2480). This is reminiscent of a similar account on the Ming dramatist and literatus Xu Lin 徐霖 (1462-1538). One source claims that the Ming Emperor Wuzong 武宗 (r. 1506-1521) once offered Xu Lin a post in the Court Entertainment Bureau, which Xu begged to decline because the position was associated with professional actors.<sup>36</sup>

Such accounts remind us of the marginal position of some elite writers such as Xu Lin and Jiang Shiquan in late imperial China: They would certainly prefer to be recognised for their talents in statecraft, and not stagecraft; they aspired to be employed in the court, but as a statesman and not as a court dramatist.

## 5 Conclusion

Using Jiang Shiquan as a case study, we can see a scholar and playwright at the crossroad of various changes and transitions in the history of Chinese drama in the 18th century. I have used three pairs of inter-related binary terms – namely, *hua* vs. *ya*, textuality vs. visuality, elite vs. court theatre – as working ideas in guiding me through the competing styles of *qu* poetry in Jiang's writings.

The fact that Jiang Shiquan was very much positioned in between all these sets of binary ideas serves as a timely reminder of the rigidity and limitation of modern categorisation of both literary forms and literary selves in scholarship and historiography. We tend to follow neat categorization of genres or types of writers. Yet, the actuality of the 18th century theatrical scene was much more complex than such categorisations could capture.

Finally, in this transitional period of the 18th century, when speaking of continuities and discontinuities of literary traditions, it is also important to realise that High Qing literati such as Jiang Shiquan displayed an acute level of self-consciousness towards these traditions. We find increasing awareness towards literary form, traditions of playwrighting, and one's own status and his different roles as a playwright.

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36 Li Xu 1982, p. 133. For a discussion on Xu Lin's various roles as a painter, calligrapher and court writer, see Tan 2010, pp. 153-159.

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## Linking Ancient and Contemporary

Continuities and Discontinuities in Chinese Literature

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# Feng Zhi and Goethe of Later Years

Zhang Hui 张辉

(Peking University, China)

**Abstract** The modern Chinese poet Feng Zhi (1905-1993) was deeply influenced by the German writer Goethe. Differing from his contemporaries who fell for the young Goethe, Feng Zhi was fascinated by the old Goethe, and focused his attention on Goethe's later writings. This paper aims to make a tentative proposal of the connection between Feng Zhi and the Goethe of his later years. It is divided into three parts: the first part discusses the discrepancies between Feng Zhi's understanding of Goethe and the general image of Goethe in the modern Chinese context; the second part examines the main intellectual characteristics of Feng Zhi's understanding of Goethe through detailed textual analysis; the third part explores the internal relationship between Feng Zhi and Goethe in the cultural context of the quarrel between the ancient and the modern.

**Summary** 1 Introduction. – 2 Goethe: A Complete Man. – 3 This is a Permanent Song: You Should Give Up. – 4 A Song of Youth in the Old Age. – 5 The No-Way-Out Predicament.

**Keywords** Feng Zhi. Goethe.

## 1 Introduction

In the early 1920s, when Feng Zhi 冯至 (1905-1993) was still a student, Guo Moruo's 郭沫若 (1892-1978) translation of *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (*Die Leiden des jungen Werther*, 1774) had already passionately resonated with him. This fascination, though, was more the 'Zeitgeist' than Feng Zhi's conscious personal choice. Indeed, despite the fact that Feng Zhi discussed Goethe in his correspondence with his friends in the 1920s and 1930s, and despite the fact that he bought two different editions of *The Complete Works of Goethe*, Goethe was not Feng Zhi's focus of attention at that time. Yet, even when Feng Zhi was involved in discussions about Goethe, his perspective in interpreting the German writer was very different from Feng's contemporaries.

A striking difference is that Feng Zhi was more concerned with Goethe's later writings than the Goethe of the 'Storm und Drang' period. More importantly, Feng had not yet reached the age of thirty when he was seized by this fascination with the older Goethe, which would stay with him for several decades.



This paper will be centered on an investigation of the reasons for Feng Zhi's 'Complex of Goethe in his Later Years'. The paper consists of three sections. Section one discusses the discrepancies between Feng Zhi's understanding of Goethe and the general image of Goethe in the modern Chinese context; section two examines, through detailed textual analysis, the main intellectual characteristics of Feng Zhi's understanding of Goethe; section three explores, in the cultural context of the quarrel between the ancient and the modern, the internal relationship between Feng Zhi and Goethe.

## 2 Goethe: A Complete Man

In modern China, Goethe has always been an important figure. For modern Chinese, Goethe is a huge spiritual fountain that empowers us to confront the dilemma of modernity. A good case in point is Zong Baihua's 宗白华 (1897-1986) idea about Goethe's meaning to the moderns: «Our world has become old, in this world the people who shouldered great responsibility have been weather-beaten and dust-clothed. All their weary eyes can see is evil, scheme, pain, and emptiness». But, all of these are less daunting because we have Goethe, the «poet of true nature». He brought people not only faith, but also the possibility of returning to our true nature. With the help of the «clean, pure soul» and «innocent, bright eyes» of the great poet, we are empowered in our filthy world to «unearth the spiritual treasure, and discover the world as brand new, bright and pure, just like the first day of genesis», and hence «touch the world of childhood again» (Zong Baihua 1994, p. 26).

This passage by Zong Baihua was written for the occasion celebrating 'The Goethe Centennial' in 1932. It reflected the mainstream understanding of Goethe in the decade following the May 4th Movement (Zong Baihua 1932). However, Zong Baihua's portrayal of Goethe as a man walking past the «period of poet in youth», «period of statesman in middle age», and «period of thinker and scientist in old age», or Goethe's change in literary style from the delicacy of Rococo to the realism of the classical, cannot represent the whole Goethe (1994, p. 4). On this question Feng Zhi took a different stand. First of all, his opinions on Goethe were a meaningful contrast to his contemporaries'. Secondly, he was fascinated with certain unique aspects of Goethe's ideas. To make this point clear, I shall here take a number of references from Zong Baihua and Chen Quan 陈铨 (1903-1969).

Zong Baihua provides the first interesting contrast to Feng Zhi. In the early 1930s, Zong had fully revealed the richness of Goethe's life, while emphasizing the meaning of the young Werther or young Goethe to the moderns. Comparatively speaking, Feng Zhi, who was also deeply moved by young Werther, was skeptical about Werther's belief that «emotion

is everything». In the 1920s he barely mentioned Goethe's works, and throughout the entire 1930s, especially the early years of the decade, he was wholly devoted to Rilke.

However, less contact with Goethe did not mean that Feng Zhi was completely immune from the influence of Young Werther. The fact is that, even though he «did not, and could not» «follow Goethe into his classical period» in the 1920s, through his identification with Werther he nevertheless followed the path of Young Werther and moved «closer to the romantic literature that emerged after the Sturm und Drang movement» (Feng Zhi, p. 195). This process continued uninterrupted until the early 1930s, at which time the spirit of the Romantic period could no longer provide relief and consolation to Feng Zhi.

It is in this context that Feng Zhi developed his own understanding of Goethe. If Zong Baihua's attempt was to attain revelation and the possibility of going back from Goethe to «the world of Childhood» in order to build a «Young China», then Feng Zhi's efforts were aimed at outgrowing the immature state of his own spirit, achieving a mature self, and consummating his self-transcendence. It is the gesture of someone progressing and moving forward, instead of regressing and moving backward. In a letter he wrote to his friend, he expressed his interest in Goethe's later works. The letter said:

比起歌德的早期作品来，我更喜欢他的晚期作品。我喜欢那些包含着深刻人生睿智的书，如《西东诗集》。您一定知道这部诗集中《幸运的渴望》这首诗，这是我最喜欢的诗。(Feng Zhi 1999, p.164)

Compared with Goethe's early works, I prefer his later works. I like those books that contain the profound wisdom of life, such as West-East Divan: Poems. You must know the poem «Lucky Desire» in the collection. This is my favorite poem. (Translation by the Author)

In another letter he also said:

数月以来，专心 Goethe。我读他的书，仿佛坐在黑暗里望光明一般。他老年的诗是那样地深沉，充满了智慧。(1999, p.137)

For several months, I devoted myself to Goethe. Reading his books was like sitting in the dark while seeing the light. The poems he wrote in his later years were so profound, and full of wisdom. (Translation by the Author)

Feng Zhi's statements are not accidental. They alert us to Feng Zhi's concern for the later Goethe's life wisdom. And the works of Goethe's that he read during this time can also provide us with some clues.

Feng Zhi chose neither *Goetz von Berlichingen mit der eisernen Hand* (1773), a book as equally sensational as *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, nor *Prometheus* (1773), a work that occupies an important position in the younger period of Goethe's creation, nor *Egmont* (1787), the book that retains the 'Sturm und Drang' style. What touched Feng Zhi most is Goethe's later work, *Dichtung und Wahrheit* (1811-1833), especially the third volume which was finished in 1813. He was profoundly impressed by the people and things in a world that stood in striking contrast to the modern one, and by a great era that appeared together with a great man in a work «so rich» and «so beautiful». For Feng Zhi, the people in Goethe's time «lived in the world of themselves, lived for themselves, while they belonged to the universe», yet modern people are «diametrically different», because «modern people lived for the collectivity, yet they are eternally lonely» (Feng Zhi 1999, p. 162).

In addition, Feng Zhi's favorite poem of Goethe's was also written in Goethe's later years. It is «Desire for Happiness» in the *West East Poems* (*West-oestlicher Diwan*, 1814-1819). «Death and Change» in this poem was regarded by Feng Zhi as 'The Ultimate Creed' (Letter to Bauer, 1934), and was used as the last line of the thirteenth poem, titled «Goethe», in this collection. In fact, this is the primary reason Feng Zhi studied *Faust* intensively, translated *Wilhelm Meister* after the war years, and became a true Goethe expert. The reason Feng Zhi focused on the later Goethe with such passion was to a great extent that he was at a stage of spiritual transformation in which he was attempting to transcend his former self, just as Goethe had done. In other words, after the 1930s, Feng Zhi was insatiable in his studies on the self nurturing by young Werther and German Romanticism, and he desired a Goethean regeneration: a new «death and change».

Nevertheless, in the 1940s Feng Zhi's focus on later Goethe was different from that in the 1930s. First of all, from the perspective of form, his understanding of later Goethe was no longer episodic sentiments, but the result of systematic study, such as his interpretation of *Reading Goethe*, published in 1948. What merits our special attention here is that among the five essays written by Feng Zhi between 1941 and 1947 that are collected in this book, there are four essays discussing Goethe's later works, one of them specifically titled «Goethe's Later Years».

Second of all, from an intellectual perspective, Feng Zhi's series of writings on Goethe was an attempt to present us a «complete Goethe», instead of the partial Goethe as presented in *The Sorrows of Young Werther* or *Faust*. The essay «Goethe and Education of Man», published in 1945, had a significant discussion on this point:

歌德在中国并不是一个生疏的名字，许多人从郭沫若和周学普的中文译本读过他一部分的作品。但人们对于他总难免有两个错误的认识：有人以为歌德是一个享尽人

间荣誉的幸福者，因为他一生顺利，享尽光荣；又有人以为歌德是一个放荡不羁、缺乏道德观念的才子，因为一般人——尤其在中国——只就《少年维特之烦恼》与《浮士德》等一二部最流行的作品看歌德。前者的认识是肤浅的，后者的认识是部分的；都不是整个的歌德。(Feng Zhi 1999, p.82)

Goethe is definitely not an unfamiliar name in China, many people have read part of his work in Guo Moruo's or Zhou Xuepu's 周学普 (1900-1983) translations. Still, though, people inevitably hold two misconceptions about him: some think him blessed, one who has enjoyed everything the world offers, while others consider him a dissolute libertine. The reason for these misconceptions is that Chinese people come to know him only through his two popular works, *The Sorrows of Young Werther* and *Faust*. The former opinion is superficial, and the latter is partial; neither of the two [represents] the complete Goethe. (Translation by the Author)

To say that *The Sorrows of Young Werther* cannot represent the complete Goethe is not hard to understand, but to say that *Faust*, a work Goethe spent almost his entire life writing, cannot represent the complete Goethe may be not be very convincing. But this is exactly where Feng Zhi's original insight lay and it is exactly why he was so concerned with the later Goethe and it attests to the richness of humanity.

In Feng Zhi's view, the reason Goethe is «the best example of human being» can be summed up by a sentence Napoleon said to Goethe: «you are a 'Man'». Precisely because he is a 'Man', Goethe «reminds us that he has blood, flesh, spirit, and soul»; and precisely because he is a 'Man', Goethe «reminds us that he is like other living beings, experiencing growth and change» (Feng Zhi 1999, p. 82). In other words, experiencing «death and change».

It is in this sense that Feng Zhi thinks that even a rich work like *Faust* cannot represent a complete Goethe, or is insufficient to fully represent the meaning of Goethe's life to the moderns. Any single interpretation of Goethe is a misunderstanding of Goethe, as well as a partial emphasis on a certain aspect of humanity, hence, it undermines «the education of man».

For Feng Zhi, the richness of Goethe lies not only in the wide range of works he completed in his eighty-three years of life experiences, or his achievements in literature, art, science and politics. What Feng Zhi thinks more important is that «his assiduous effort (outwardly) is grounded in his unrelenting effort to maintain, inwardly, his self-restraint». From a dissolute, an oppression breaker, a freedom admirer, one who dominates everything with his passion, to a man who possesses something more precious than passion, a man with 'responsibility', a man of self-restraint, this is the true greatness of Goethe. And the point is, different from the emotional flooding of romanticism or those sagging middle-agers who suffered the

severe blows of reality, «every time Goethe restrained himself, he then arrived at a new stage and achieved new growth; every sickness brought new health, every painful love brewed new drink. Even in his old age, Goethe still showed no sign of decline or weakness» (Feng Zhi 1999, p. 84).

Feng Zhi's understanding of Goethe is, on the one hand, coupled with the change in his (Feng Zhi's) artistic view, and on the other hand, related to his understanding of the Faustian spirit.

Artistically speaking, Feng Zhi obviously sided with Rilke, so it is not difficult for him to accept the Goethean 'restraint' that was formed by the inspiration of classical art. According to Feng Zhi, «the value of art lies not in the flooding of emotion, but in the compression of emotion, it is not the eruption of volcanoes, but the endurance and tolerance of the sea. For the compression and endurance, we always need to make efforts to master self-restraint» (Feng Zhi 1999, p. 8).

The artistic 'restraint' is only one aspect; what is more important is the 'restraint' of self. This not only differentiates Feng Zhi and Zong Baihua, it also forms an interesting contrast with another advocator of the Faustian spirit, Chen Quan.

Chen Quan says: «What exactly is Goethe's Faust? First of all, Goethe's Faust is a man who would forever have an insatiable hunger for the world and life; secondly, Goethe's Faust is a man who never ceases to strive; thirdly, Goethe's Faust is a man who disregards everything; fourthly, Goethe's Faust is a man who has abundant emotion; and fifthly, Goethe's Faust is a romantic man» (Chen Quan 1940). Chen Quan's generalization seemed to unfold five dimensions of Faust, but in reality, all five dimensions can come down to one single core idea: that Faust is an insatiable and romantic man.

This reminds us of another of Feng Zhi's summaries of Faustian spirit, as quoted from *Book of Changes*: «As Heaven's movement is ever vigorous, so must a gentleman ceaselessly strive» (p. 219) and reminds us of two metaphors Goethe often used: one is a snake peeling off its skin, and the other is a phoenix rising from the ashes. However, for Feng Zhi, Faust is not only a 'romantic man', and neither is Goethe.

On the contrary, Feng Zhi gave special attention to the important characteristics that are the opposite of the 'romantic man'. The first characteristic is 'pragmatism', which is an important aspect of Goethe's spirit and which is embodied in Faust. For Goethe, it is unimaginable for a young man who aims to pursue philosophy that he cannot keep his desk clean. In *Faust II* he mocked the philosophical idea that 'self' could create everything (Goethe 1999, pp. 272-278). Correspondingly, in *Wilhelm Meister* he praised highly the down-to-earth handicraft. The unadorned handicraft and the sublime spirit complement each other; the man who values practical labor is in no sense comparable to the 'romantic man'. However, Feng Zhi also pointed out that the value Goethe puts on pragmatism is

not meaningless, because he always held in high esteem «things that are uninvestigable». Overall, «though man's power expands day by day, there are always in this universe things that are beyond human power: revere these 'mysteries'. Goethe abides by this all his life» (Feng Zhi 1999, p. 85).

Secondly, Feng Zhi doubted negation. His lecture «On the Demons in Faust», delivered on the occasion of the «Literary and Historical Conference of Southwest United University» in 1943, discussed this question further. Given the fact that people read only *Faust I*, while neglecting the abstruse *Faust II*, Feng Zhi claimed that Goethe was not unaware of the meaning of negative spirit to life, and that he surely believed that) 'doubt of everything' and 'overcoming the self' are the embodiment of the spirit of ceaseless strife. However, Faust's doubt and negation is dramatically different from that of Mephistopheles. Faust's doubt and negation stems from 'reaction', whereas Mephistopheles's stems from 'nature'; Faust's reaction is temporary, while Mephistopheles's nature is long-lasting. (1999, p. 39) More importantly, Mephistopheles, as a cynical, 'modern devil', a *Schalk*, intends to lead people into nihilism in the seemingly reasonable romantic reaction against the 'time of reason'.

Feng Zhi further pointed out that Mephistopheles's negative spirit cannot understand the positive power of man, i.e., the pursuit of the impossible. He eulogizes darkness and nihilism, and sees everything as meaningless, the world is nothing but only 'emptiness' and 'nothingness'. Therefore, he cannot understand «the small difference between bestiality and humanity». He presumes that he has seen through the world and becomes insensitive to worldly things; he mocks all valuable and valueless things. As Goethe sees it, Mephistopheles's thinking and doing is a picturesque reflection of a «time of presumptuous cleverness» (18th century). On the positive side, it is «an age that esteems reason», as reason liberates people from all kinds of misconceptions that hinder progress; on the negative side, it circumscribes the range of human activities, excluding passion and understanding. It necessarily follows with negation, though not healthy negation. On the contrary, just as Goethe said in his *Chromatology*, it is a contentment of self-condescension, a rejection of everything that cannot be immediately arrived at or grasped, because of which people lose their reverencing attitude, lose their deep, profound inquiring interest in things, and lose their tolerance for fruitless efforts and patience for slow evolution. They have only the evading, observing attitude and spirit of partial negation. «This spirit occupies the heart of a clever man, and it will often destroy every effort, every construction and magnitude, leading to a state of eternal degeneration» (Feng Zhi 1990, p. 35).

Thirdly, Feng Zhi foresaw the coming of collective life. In Feng Zhi's view, the second half of the 18th century and the first half of the 19th century in which Goethe lived was a time when individualism prevailed. But, through the intuition of a poet, Feng Zhi sensed «the coming of the

collective life» (p. 85), which contrasted sharply with the Romantic Movement and the spirit of the time. This collective life has a vivid description in *Wilhelm Meister*. Although Feng Zhi translated only the first book of the trilogy of *Wilhelm Meister*, with his wife Yao Kekun 姚可昆 (1904-2003), it is also his only translation of Goethe's long piece of writing. Feng Zhi considered this masterpiece as important as *Faust*. In it, wrote Feng Zhi, «Goethe dealt in depth with a question that would be key to creating an ideal future, that is, how to educate man» Meanwhile, Goethe also proposed «a typical image of new man that fits the collective work: man that knows clearly his own business and concerns himself only with the welfare of all humankind» (p. 86).

Therefore, whether it is the Wertherian Goethe that «returns to the innocence of childhood», or Faust as the «symbol of the Sturm und Drang period» acting with «infinite pursuit and passionate emotion» (Chen Quan 1940), they cannot represent the complete Goethe in Feng Zhi's mind: that is, Goethe as a 'Man'.

Later on, Feng Zhi fell ill before he could finish his compilation of Goethe's Chronicle. But there is no question that he was trying to present us with a complete Goethe, and at the same time he was hoping to reflect, through this effort, his own deficiencies and the spirit of time. While his contemporaries were focusing on the importance of young Werther, he warned us to pay attention to the later Goethe; while others were cheering Goethe's philosophy of action, he alone pointed out the other aspect of Goethe's spirit, namely, the spirit of giving up, desistance and self-restraint.

### 3 This is a Permanent Song: You Should Give Up

The later Goethe of Feng Zhi is not a Goethe losing vitality and killing emotion; and the desistance Feng Zhi understands is not passive restraint and avoidance.

In *Goethe in Later Years*, written in 1941, Feng Zhi said that, if we should use Goethe's words to conclude his own life, then the following letter written in 1782 is the most appropriate:

人有许多皮要脱去，直到他有几分把握住他自己和世界上的事物为止。你经验很多，愿你能够遇到一个休息地点，得到一个工作范围。我能确实告诉你，我在幸福中间是在不断的断念里生活着。我天天在一切的努力和工作时，只看见那不是我的意志，却是一个更高的力的意志，这个力的思想并不是我的思想。(Feng Zhi 1941, p. 72)

Man has to peel off many layers of skin until he is capable of positioning himself and the things in this world. You are quite experienced, but I hope you could find a resting place and a working position. I shall

honestly tell you, the happy life I am living is a continual desisting from life. Every day I am pushed to work conscientiously, not by my own will but by a will of a higher power, the thinking of which is not of my idea. (Translation of the Author)

This letter may not be one of the most remarkable among the many beautiful letters written by Goethe, but it revealed a core concept of Goethe's life philosophy: *Entsagen* (Desistance). More importantly, this desistance is not simply self-circumscribing, but rather subordination to «the will of a higher power», or reverence for «un-investigable things».

Because of this, Feng Zhi thought that no matter how pathetic these words – resign, giving up – may sound, they always have a positive meaning in Goethe's works. The reason is that, for Goethe, «the richer the emotion, the stronger the power of self-restraint; these two are counter-active, and eventually they merge and shape a classical Goethe» (p. 74). This is, on the one hand, a choice, and on the other hand, a choice. As to the former, *Faust* expresses that choice most accurately in the scene «in the drawing room»:

你应该割舍，应该割舍！  
这是永久的歌声  
在人们的耳边作响。  
它在我们整整一生  
时时都向我们嘶唱。  
(Feng Zhi 1999, p. 73)

You should give up, should give up,  
This is a permanent song,  
Lingering in people's ears.  
It keeps singing to us,  
Throughout our lives.  
(Translation by the Author)

In a sense, desistance is a response to the 'permanent song' and an answer to a permanent calling; if there is no such 'restraint', there must be disastrous consequences. Just as Goethe himself said: «if I continue to be so self-willed, I'm afraid I'll destroy everything».

However, for Goethe, this kind of self-restraint obviously is not merely an instinctive reaction to certain external conditions, nor does it stem from the helplessness of life. Here, Feng Zhi cautioned us against the influences of Spinoza's philosophy. In *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, Goethe confessed that his desistance and Spinoza's philosophy were related. He said that desistance was a response to the calling of «the accidental events», and at the same derived from our bodies, our social life, customs, habits, wisdom,



philosophy, and religion.

Feng Zhi specifically analyzed what desistance means to Goethe in *Trilogy of Passion*. In the summer of 1823, before he wrote *Trilogy of Passion*, Goethe, aged seventy-four, fell in love with a nineteen-year-old girl, Ulrike. This brief love gave Goethe fresh life, and he wrote an immortal poem, «Elegy». In the poem he wrote «the togetherness, separation, the world after separation with Ulrike, and the mirage on the sky, all of these come down the core of poetry, namely, the highest ideal of love» (my translation). What concerned Feng Zhi most was that, throughout this difficult test, Goethe restrained himself and did not fall victim to desperation. After the raging mind was pacified, Goethe once again succeeded in accomplishing a difficult yet revelatory condition of desistance.

The key, Feng Zhi pointed out, is that this was the last desistance in Goethe's life. In 1824, when the fifty-year memorial edition of *The Sorrows of Young Werther* was published, Goethe was asked to write a preface for it. At this time, «the long-gone song rang itself again», and the love affair with Ulrike the previous year crawled into his heart again. More importantly, the love and separation with Ulrike was to a large extent connected with Werther's destiny half a century before. To remember the unforgettable past, Goethe wrote a mourning poem «To Werther». To Goethe, the separation from Ulrike was in a sense the last goodbye to his young days in the Sturm und Drang period.

For this reason, *Trilogy of Passion* begins with «To Werther», which marks an emotional blossoming, continues with «Elegy», to mark the disillusionment of love, and ends with «Atonement», to mark the final reconciliation. After listening to a performance by the famous pianist Szymanowska, Goethe wrote his last poem. It was a three-stanza poem, and in it Goethe expressed his ultimate happiness in overcoming all his pain:

情欲带来痛苦！——谁来抚慰  
这损失惨重的窘迫的心房？

[...]

蓦地，音乐驾着天使的翅膀飞来，  
亿万种乐音在空中交织、回荡，  
深深渗入了人的灵魂

[...]

宽慰的心儿只是战栗地感到  
它还活着，还在跳动，渴望跳动；  
真诚地感激这丰厚的赏赐，  
它乐意将自己奉献，一改初衷。  
它感受到了——愿永远永远！  
双重的幸福，在音乐与爱之中。

(Yang Wuneng 1999, pp. 314-315)

Erotic passion brings sorrow, who will comfort the distressed heart  
that suffered great losses?

[...]

All of a sudden, the music flies near with the wings of angels,  
Thousands of musical tones mingles and lingers over the sky,  
And deeply penetrate into people's souls

[...]

The soothing heart tremblingly feels that  
It still lives; it is still beating, and is longing for beating;  
Sincerely grateful for the generous boon,  
It changes its mind and is glad of self-devotion  
What it feels - it wishes forever!  
Double happiness, in music and love.  
(Translation of the Author)

The most important act of desistance by Goethe brought forth a greater harvest. In the last ten years of his life, Goethe finished the crowning work of his career: *Faust II* and *The Wandering Years of Wilhelm Meister*. Doubtlessly, it has something to do with the life attitude he took after suffering the profoundest desperation, as he became an old man working in loneliness, yet was still ceaselessly striving. Feng Zhi thus summarized: «In his lonely old years, desistance and working have become the dominant principles of Goethe's life. To him, working is more like duty and responsibility than a mere self-consolation» (p. 79).

For Goethe to conclude his later years practicing desistance and working is very reminiscent of Feng Zhi's studies on Rilke in the early years of the 1930s. Endurance and working were important principles for Feng Zhi's personal spiritual life.

However, as the starting point of Goethe's last and most meaningful new beginning, the year 1823 is simply Goethe's «year of destiny». While for Feng Zhi, it meant more than exploration of individual spirit. Feng Zhi reminded us repeatedly of the relationship between this last resignation and Helen's tragedy, and that with the last two scenes of *Faust*, Goethe was implying something (Feng Zhi 1999, pp. 74 and 79-80).

Regrettably, Feng Zhi did not have the chance to discuss it systematically. It was not until the late 1970s, when he came back to Goethe, that he picked it up again. Interestingly, the essay titled «Analysis of Helen's tragedy in Faust» was actually the earliest essay Feng Zhi wrote in his series of essays on Goethe. It was written in 1979 and published in 1980. It is a little bit surprising that Feng Zhi had not forgotten the question he had considered forty years before.

At the end of Goethe's Later Years, Feng Zhi said, if Faust is the most appropriate symbol for Goethe's life, then Faust's soliloquy on the high mountain, after the deaths of Helen and their son, can best represent

Goethe's mood. In act IV of the second part of this tragedy, Helen's clothes transformed into a piece of cloud that raised Goethe to the high mountain of the north. On the high mountain, Faust said:

Der Einsamkeiten tiefste schauend unter meinem Fuß,  
Betret' ich wohlbedächtig dieser Gipfel Saum,  
Entlassend meiner Wolke Tragewerk, die mich sanft  
An klaren Tagen über Land und Meer geführt.  
(Goethe 1949, vol. 3, p. 304)

在我的脚下望着寂寞的最深处，  
我慎重地踏上这些山顶的边涯，  
脱开我的云彩的负载，它轻飘飘  
在晴朗的日子，引我度过陆和海。  
(Yang Wuneng 1999, pp. 314-315)

Looking down the deepest loneliness under my feet,  
I stepped prudently on the edge of the mountaintop,  
Releasing the colorful cloud that is burdened by me,  
It floats lightly and leads me to cross the land and see in sunny days.  
(Translation of the Author).

Watching the cloud as it flew away and merged into the sky, Goethe, having lost Helen, felt the cloud:

把我内心里最好的东西随身带走 (pp. 314-315)  
And took away the best things in my heart.  
(Translation of the Author)

According to Feng Zhi's analysis, this is «the death of beauty, the disappearance of love», but, he soon added, what the disappearance and death left is anything but emptiness (Feng Zhi 1999, p. 79). If that is not emptiness, what is it then?

Is it lament for the impossible union of romantic Faust and classical Helen? Or is it a passionate eulogy for the spirit that forever pursues the impossible?

#### 4 A Song of Youth in the Old Age

The tragic plot of Helen in *Faust* is very simple. And the answers Feng Zhi was after are not complicated either, as they are simply the answers to the questions: «how did Helen come into the scene? How is her marriage with Faust? What did the marriage generate?» Readers who are familiar

with *Faust* should know that these three questions were respectively dealt with in the three scenes of Act III of *Faust II*.

But, if we put Feng Zhi's answers to those questions against the background of the debate over classicism and modernism, we can see a far richer and more thought-provoking spiritual vision. Feng Zhi's detailed analysis presented Goethe as one who advocated endless striving and compromise and desistance in the tension of the relationship between ancient and modern.

Clearly, Helen's reappearance is Goethe's attempt to revive ancient spirit in the modern world. But Faust has nothing to do with Greece. Faust was born out of the «folklore story» in the 16th century and he was a purely northern product. Why would Goethe have this northern figure connect with ancient Greece?

Feng Zhi's answer focused on two aspects. The first is that the element of ancient Greek in Faust is to «be consistent with the overall spirit of Faust». In other words, to Goethe, it is not sufficient to present Faust as the modern spirit, as a symbol of progress; Faust, at the same time, should know the path to return, to go back to ancient Greece three thousand years ago, where Western civilization began. The other aspect is that Helen's appearance in *Faust* is the result of Goethe's wish to create beautiful things in poetry.

Even so, what Feng Zhi learned from Goethe's creating of Helen was not always the expectation of perfection; he focused more on Helen's own paradox. This paradox consists of two aspects: one is the contradiction of beauty and virtue, and the other is the contradiction of beauty and wisdom. From this paradox, Feng Zhi further claimed that Goethe actually did not hold an affirmative attitude to the Greek spirit, unlike his contemporaries such as Winkelmann, Schiller and Hoerdlin. At least, the Goethe of the later years doubted that spirit. Looking at Helen's story, her appearance did show the sublimity of the beauty and magnitude of the Queen, though the effects of which were expressed through the chorus, which means it is a collective opinion instead of individual judgment. Feng Zhi did not think this. In his understanding, Helen herself in this tragedy felt more and more uncertain about her own fate, she could not tell if she really existed, and she realized from the very start that she was both liked and disliked.

Based on this observation, Feng Zhi made his conclusion: although Faust in this period of his life was desperately desiring and passionately pursuing Helen, even to the extent that he would not live without her, this does not necessarily mean that Greek beauty is truly like what Winkelmann called «noble pureness, serene greatness», nor does it mean that as long as you wish to realize classical beauty, you can actually get hold of it (p. 80).

Is that really true? If it is true, then why would Faust pursue inaccessible beauty? Do Helen's hesitation and doubt really mean Goethe has lost faith in classical beauty? Is it merely a «fantastic dream» to try to revive the ancient spirit in a modern world?

In his analysis on the marriage between Helen and Faust, Feng Zhi came back to his considerations on the spirit of ancient Greece. If Goethe's expectation of the regeneration of the Greek spirit is in the form of the reconciliation of classicism and romanticism, then what Feng Zhi saw was the utopian meaning of this reconciliation. Originally, the name Goethe gave to this tragedy was «classical and romantic fantasy drama». In Feng Zhi's interpretation, the place Acadia where Faust and Helen were united was emphasized. Acadia is symbolic, as Feng Zhi said: «Acadia is a place that people can never arrive at, and even if they did, they would feel bored, and they would either die 'happily' here, or come back to the real world» (p. 122). Then, can we say, was Feng Zhi against the seemingly 'unrealistic' union of classicism and romanticism? The answer is definitely no.

Just like Goethe, Feng Zhi was also mournful for the deaths of Helen and Faust's son Euphorion. He even thought that the long songs sung by the chorus at the end of Act IV are more a eulogy than mourning. In his view, this not only makes the mindless and commonplace chorus change their tone, it also creates a resounding «song of youth» out of that fabulous chanting (p. 116). Feng Zhi's approving attitude was fairly obvious.

Therefore, Feng Zhi did not completely disapprove the union of classicism and romanticism. It should rather be said that he was putting himself in the profound contradictions Goethe presented. On the one hand, he hoped to get back to reality in the fanciful dream Goethe created. He hoped to return to the battle on the sea, to the experience of the pain of ordinary people, or to the war of liberation in Greece that Byron took part in. In short, to return to these actual realities. On the other hand, he was deeply moved by Faust's spirit of «desiring the impossible». For Feng Zhi, it is tragic that Euphorion goes forward and meets his death, but this resembles Faust's own character, so it is reasonable that he is Faust's son. And Faust's pursuit of Helen, though it is a utopia in a sense, it is exactly this perseverance that makes numerous miracles in this world come true.

Surprisingly, Feng Zhi explained the contradiction of this tragedy with «romantic irony». He said, this kind of technique was seldom employed by classical writers, but was widely accepted by German romantic writers: «they make the full play of their imagination, creating an ideal wonderland, and when the wonderland attains perfection, the moment that it is farthest from reality, the author would make a sharp change and destroy the wonderland through one person or one event». In this sense, Faust's desire for the impossible and his attempt to make the impossible possible is his act of creating «an ideal wonderland»; and Metermorpheles' derision and mockery is his action of «destroying it». For this reason, Feng Zhi held, different from the opinion of many others, that Faust is not a book of anti-romanticism; on the contrary, it is immersed in romantic spirit.

Moreover, judging from Goethe's other dramas and novels, «the elements of romanticism outnumber those of classicism or realism». This conclusion obviously differs from his judgment in the 1940s.

All in all, was it a reconciliation that Feng Zhi made to solve the paradox of classicism and romanticism, or did he never give up his «ideal wonderland», of which he himself was doubtful?

## 5 The No-Way-Out Predicament

From the fragmentary accounts of Goethe in the late 1930s, to his working and thinking on Goethe in the late 1940s, Feng Zhi, forty years later, picked up this topic again in the 1980s. It is pretty clear that the later Goethe is not just Feng Zhi's preferred reading, but also an organic, integral part of his series of self-reflection and endeavor. Through Feng Zhi's presentation of Goethe, we can better understand his own paradoxical life choices.

Some researchers declare that Engel's evaluation of Goethe, that he was «sometimes a great man, sometimes a minor one; sometimes a reactionary, mocking and cynical genius, sometimes a prudent, contenting, narrow-minded, mediocre man» (1971, p. 256), in a sense «could be used to describe Feng Zhi in the 1950s» (2003, p. 190). This, without doubt, is a very significant connection. Feng Zhi, who entered the literary field by the influence of German romanticism, was also caught up in the different spiritual dimensions and sought tirelessly over the decades to become a 'complete man'.

Feng Zhi confessed that Goethe influenced him in three ways: «affirmative spirit, idea of metamorphosis, and the unity of knowledge and action». The reason Goethe's thinking in his later years became the reemerging subject in Feng Zhi's accounts of Goethe, is that Goethe's thinking provides him with theoretical grounding as well as practical methods.

And one concept contains these three aspects: resignation. Feng Zhi was fascinated with the idea of desistance as early as the 1930s, when he was still studying Rilke, and later as he focused on Goethe it became his resurgent subject. As to his overemphasis on desistance for the later year Goethe, on the one hand it presented another important aspect of Goethe's spirit, one which is totally different from that in the Sturm und Drang movement, and on the other hand cast doubt on the 'forever upward' progressive modern spirit represented by Euphorion.

From the literal meaning, it seems to be hard to connect desistance with 'affirmative spirit'. However, Feng Zhi accurately points out that, for Goethe, desistance is not giving up your will, it is subordination to a higher, a beyond-self will. In a sense, Goethe's fruitful harvests or even the rebirth of his life are based on his giving-up of his emotional self and on

his spiritual self-restraint. Moreover, it is not so only for Goethe, as Feng Zhi in the years of national crisis also benefited considerably from this spirit. Because, for Feng Zhi, desistance doesn't mean to take the world as meaningless, or to give up responsibility and succumb to reality and self-degeneration. On the contrary, it means to take on duty and responsibility in one's work.

In other words, this positive spirit, connected with resignation, is a worldly, optimistic life attitude. And this life attitude emphasizes the 'joyous rebirth' coming from the 'painful death', like snake and phoenix, which peeled themselves again and again, in order to «get rid of the old self and embrace a new self; and to be worldly is to take the responsibility of life. It needs not only the transformation of thinking, but also the connection of thinking with action. Using the ancients' words, it is the "unity of knowledge and action».

In the process of reading and researching Goethe, Feng Zhi transformed himself successfully from a lonely, meditative poet to a social activist, educationist and well-known writer in the government of a new regime. But what Feng Zhi had not expected is that the conclusion he derived from his research on Goethe came out less ideal than he thought it would be. On the contrary, not long afterwards, he was faced with the same problem we find in Helen's tragedy: «'ideal wonderland' is indeed beautiful, but it cannot escape the destiny of being 'blasted'».

Might it be that he was moved by Euphorion's brave, romantic behavior, and had to admit that it is an inevitable death?

Feng Zhi lived a longer life than Goethe, but he did not seem to be able to escape the predicament Goethe was faced with in his later years.

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## Linking Ancient and Contemporary

Continuities and Discontinuities in Chinese Literature

edited by Tiziana Lippiello, Chen Yuehong 陈跃红 and Maddalena Barenghi

# Liu Xie's *Wenxin diaolong*, Ernest Fenollosa's *The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry* and 20th Century *Avant-garde*

Sean Golden

(Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Espanya)

**Abstract** Ezra Pound's edition of Ernest Fenollosa's manuscripts for *The Chinese Written Characters as a Medium for Poetry* was a landmark in modernist European poetry and the imagist movement at the beginning of the 20th century. Pound's work has stood for Fenollosa's vision since then and has been the subject of controversy among Sinologists for its emphasis on the graphic elements of Chinese written characters. A recent edition of the complete Fenollosa manuscripts by Haun Saussy, Jonathan Stalling and Lucas Klein has made it possible to see the differences between Fenollosa's interests and Pound's interpretations and to restore Fenollosa's original intentions. Even though Sinologists have questioned the Fenollosa-Pound emphasis on the graphic elements of the Chinese writing as a component part of Chinese poetry, Ch. 39 of the classical Chinese text *Wenxin diaolong* by Liu Xie (ca. 466-520) refers specifically to this phenomenon as a mode in the composition of Chinese poetry. Case studies of work by John Cage and Jackson Mac Low show that Fenollosa's impact on 20th century avant garde literature went far beyond the works of Ezra Pound.

**Keywords** Ernest Fenollosa. Chinese Written Character. Liu Xie. *Wenxin diaolong*. *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*.

Having a professional interest in Chinese literature, I know I expose myself to trouble simply for having mentioned [Ernest] Fenollosa's name. As we learn very early in our training, Fenollosa was an enthusiast: in his wonderment at the Chinese language, he vastly overestimated the number of primary pictograms in the writing system and saw images and parables where a more sober palaeographer would have seen combinations of phonetic clues. The profession has never forgotten his error.  
(Saussy 2001, p. 38)

By chance, part of my own literary training came directly from followers of Ezra Pound and his interpretation of Ernest Fenollosa, including Charles Olson and Louis Zukfsky, but also, and separately, through Zen Buddhism directly from John Cage and Allen Ginsberg. Pound's edition of Fenollosa's *The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry* and the versions of Fenollosa's *Noh* that he did with W.B. Yeats were touchstones for modernists searching for a form for the cosmos; Cage's postmodernist

chance operations revealed in its lack of fixed form. I never imagined they might share a common source. Jonathan Stalling has expressed the shock of surprise when he chanced upon one:

In the late summer of 2004, I was leafing through the Fenollosa papers held in the Ezra Pound archive at Yale University's Beinecke Library when I happened upon a startling find: its second half. [...] no one had ever mentioned the important fact that the essay published by Pound represents only one half of Fenollosa's lectures on Chinese as a medium for poetry. [...] Yet this second lecture [...] reveals that Fenollosa possessed a far more richly textured knowledge of classical Chinese (cosmological) poetics [...] Not only did Fenollosa apparently know a great deal about Chinese prosody and poetic theory, but by following the synthesizing impulse that lies at the core of his New Buddhist agenda, he hoped to import key concepts of Chinese cosmology into both Western poetry and society more generally. (Stalling 2010, pp. 59-60)

I had experienced a similar shock of surprise the first time I read Liu Xie's 劉勰 (ca. 466-520) *Wenxin diaolong* 文心雕龍 (The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons) and discovered an entire ch. dedicated to the graphic role of the written Chinese character in the composition of literature that anticipated Fenollosa's essay by almost fifteen centuries.<sup>1</sup> First, Fenollosa (via Pound):

人見馬

Man sees horse

Chinese notation is something much more than arbitrary symbols. It is based upon a vivid shorthand picture of the operations of nature. [...] First stands the man on his two legs (*ren* 人). Second, his eye moves through space: a bold figure represented by running legs under an eye (*jian* 見), a modified picture of an eye, a modified picture of running legs but unforgettable once you have seen it. Third stands the horse on his four legs (*ma* 馬). [...] Legs belong to all three characters: they are alive. (Fenollosa 2008, p. 80)

Now, Liu Xie:

是以綴字屬篇，必須揀擇：一避詭異，二省聯邊，三權重出，四調單復。[...] 聯邊者，半字同文者也。狀貌山川，古今咸用，施于常文，則齟齬為瑕，如不獲

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1 For studies of *Wenxin diaolong* see Liu 1975, Owen 1992, Cai 2001; for translations see Shih 1959, Owen 1992, Relinque 1995, Wong et al. 1999; for the Chinese text see Liu Xie 2014.

免，可至三接，三接之外，其字林乎！單復者，字形肥瘠者也。瘠字累句，則纖疏而行劣；肥字積文，則黯黹而篇暗。善酌字者，參伍單復，磊落如珠矣。凡此四條，雖文不必有，而體例不無。若值而莫悟，則非精解。（文心雕龍，練字第三十九，Ch. 39）

In grouping words and composing a piece, a writer must be versed in the choice of words: first of all, he must avoid what is odd and strange; second, he must avoid characters with the same radical; third, he must weigh carefully his repetitions; and fourth, he must be balanced in the use of the simple and complex forms [...] By characters of the same radical is meant several characters in succession with one radical, that is, one half of each of their forms, in common. In the description of mountains and rivers, such a device has been used in all ages. But when applied to ordinary writing, the practice is a definite defect, because it offends our sensibilities. If it cannot be helped, it may be permissible for the number to grow to three in succession. Once it is allowed to go beyond three, is it not virtually a glossary? (Shih 1959, pp. 211-212)

Admittedly, Liu Xie is criticising an excessive dependence on what Haroldo de Campos called *paragraphia*, but Liu does refer to an existing literary tradition, and his own literary style often employs just such chirographic punning that plays the graphic components of the written character off against the semantic content of the word it represents, on the visual, not the phonetic plane (Golden 1996, 1997).

心既托聲于言，言亦寄形于字，諷誦則續在宮商，臨文則能歸字形矣。（文心雕龍，練字第三十九，Ch. 39）

The sound of the mind (*xin* 心) is expressed in speech (*yan* 言), and speech resides in characters (*zi* 字): when reciting, we find beauty in *kung* and *shang*, that is, «the consonance of the speech»; and when we compose, our ability is made manifest by the forms (*xing* 形) of the characters (*zi* 字) which we choose. (Shih 1959, p. 211)

Compare this to Pound's transcription of Fenollosa's notes to the lectures of Kainen Mori on Chinese poetry (Qian 2002, p. 302):

written word gives the thought  
the sung word gives it body (spatial existence)  
the tones define the body give the form of spatial  
the measure gives form to the tones. existence  
the measure harmony to the tones.

Were this a reference to Liu Xie's work, it would link them.

Fenollosa's emphasis on the nature of verbs as action is also well-known:

The earlier forms of these characters were pictorial [...] the great number of these ideographic roots carry in them a verbal idea of action. [...] A true noun, an isolated thing, does not exist in nature. Things are only the terminal points, or rather the meeting points of actions, cross-sections cut through actions, snap-shots. (Fenollosa 2008, p. 81)

What Fenollosa said is not that different from one of Liu Xie's opening statements:

易曰：「鼓天下之動者存乎辭」。辭之所以能鼓天下者，乃道之文也。(文心雕龍，原道第一，Ch. 1)

«Language (*ci* 辭)» says the Book of Changes, in connection with the language of the hexagrams, «has in it the power of motivating actions (*dong* 動) in the world (*Tianxia* 天下)». Language (*ci* 辭) can activate the world when and if it is the harmonious language (*wen* 文), the poetry, of the Way (*dao* 道). (Wong et al. 1999, p. 3)

In Fenollosa's poetics, Ezra Pound focussed on the juxtaposition of concrete images as a mechanism for generating visual metaphors, what Stalling has described in 天台 Tendai Buddhist terms as «the ideogram's aggregative nature» (Stalling 2009a, p. 26). Haroldo de Campos discovered there the semiotic possibilities for generating concrete poetry:

The «ideographic method of composition» described by Fenollosa and which he places on a par with «metaphor»: the use of «material images» to suggest «immaterial relations,» or, as Eisenstein puts it, the passage from «thought through images» to «conceptual thought». [...] (However, whereas in metaphor properly speaking, as Jakobson explains it, there is an equation at the level of meanings between a «primary» and another «secondary» meaning, in the ideogramic complex the visual or grapheme notation corroborates the metaphorical equation at the level of the *signans* as a kind of paraphasia, which can be assimilated to Jakobson's paronomasia). (De Campos 2007, p. 296)

Classical poetry offers many examples of «several characters in succession with one radical».<sup>2</sup> While passing through fragrant weeds that encumber

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2 When I first taught Fenollosa's essay to university students in China in 1981, they were surprised by his analytical approach to the decomposition of written characters, so unlike

the way to the dwelling of a hermit he intends to visit, the poet 劉長卿 Liu Zhangqing (726-788) sees how the gate he is approaching comes more clearly into view, emptied of encumbrances, until it is as clear and empty as the mind of the hermit within.

芳草閉閑門

fangcao bi xianmen

The top element 艹 of the first two characters 芳草 of this verse is a semantic indicator that means «plant/grass,» and together they mean «fragrant plants» or «fragrant weeds» or «fragrant grass». The last three characters 閉閑門 all contain the semantic indicator 門 that means «door» or «gate,» a double-leaf door hung on its hinges. The third character 閉 means «to close» or «to shut,» the final two 閑門 form a composite meaning «enclosure gate». Thus the overt meaning is that fragrant weeds block the path to the gate of the hermit's home – few visitors have trodden the path to his door – while the graphic imagery illustrates a covert meaning: the closer one gets to the hermit, the less there is to impede enlightenment. The obstacles that encumber the way disappear, leaving an empty gate through which to pass. Achieving 空 *kong* «emptiness» is a step toward enlightenment. There is a stock phrase for entering monkhood: 遁入空門 *dunru kongmen* meaning «to pass through the gate of (or into) nothingness». The final character 門 is a drawing of an empty gate. The semantic content of the words is contradicted by the graphemic or semiotic acrostic of their written form, but both meanings are apposite (see also Cheng 1982 and De Campos 2007).

What if Ernest Fenollosa knew the *Wenxin diaolong*? And what if his followers had known the complete version of *The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry*?<sup>3</sup> Although ostensibly an orthodox Confucian text, the *Wenxin diaolong* is in fact saturated with Daoism, Buddhism and correlative thinking. It begins and ends with references to the *Yijing* 易經.

人文之元，肇自太極，幽贊神明，「易」象惟先。(文心雕龍，原道第一，Ch. 1)

The origins (*yuan* 元) of human culture (*renwen* 人文) begin with the *Taiji* 太極; the deep explanation of this cosmological brightness (*shenming* 神明) is first presented in the images (*xiang* 象) of the *Zhouyi* 周易.

the way they had actually learned to read, but immediately came up with Fenollosan examples from classical Chinese poetry.

**3** These papers have now been transcribed, edited and published by Haun Saussy, Jonathan Stalling and Lucas Klein (see Fenollosa 2008, Saussy 2008 for a thorough discussion of the figure of Fenollosa). Thanks to Haun Saussy for the gift of the book and to Jonathan Stalling and Qian Zhaoming for fruitful correspondence on the subject.

位理定名，彰乎大衍之數，其為文用，四十九篇而已。(序志第五十, Ch. 50)

In sum the principles (*li* 理) and names (*ming* 名) are given a fixed place and permanence in components that are numbered with the magical number of the cosmos (*shu* 數), though the Ch.s of substance amount to only forty-nine. (Wong et al. 1999, p. 188)

The magical number of the cosmos is fifty, the same as the number of yarrow stalks used to consult the *Yijing*, one of which one is set aside, leaving forty-nine. «It is of considerable interest to note that the organization of Liu's book [...] is intended to mirror the procedures of shamanistic divination and the workings of the cosmic system» (Wong et al. 1999, p. 188).

Written characters pattern the world:

故能瞻言而見貌，即字而知時也。(文心雕龍，物色第四十六, Ch. 46)

The hope is to be able to see the face (*mao* 貌) in the words (*yan* 言), to trace the season (*shi* 時) through the written characters (*zi* 字). (Wong et al. 1999, p. 170)

Liu Xie exploits polysemy to link the patterns *wen* 文 of the cosmos with the patterns of language/writing/culture (*wen*), and thereby, the patterning (*wen*) 文 of literature (*wen*) with the ordering of the cosmos. To explain Fenollosa's understanding of *wen*, Stalling cites Stephen Owen on Liu Xie:

«*Wen* 文, aesthetic pattern, is the outward manifestation of some latent order»; and «In the human, *wen*'s outwardness does not appear on the physical body; *wen* is here manifest through the essential human characteristic mind (*xin* 心). The outward manifest form of the activities of «mind» is «writing,» *wen* – or in its essential form, «literature *wen*» Owen concludes: «Literature thus stands as the entelechy, the fully realized form, of a universal process of manifestation»

It is Liu Xie's *Wenxin diaolong* [...] that forms the foundation of this view. [...] Liu Xie ends this passage with a discussion of *wen* in relation to human language: 新生而言立，吉立而文明，自然之道也 From [Zong-qi] Cai we get: «When language was formed, the pattern became manifest. This is the Dao, the natural course of things» [...] one can see Liu Xie's attempt to link *wen* as cosmological to *wen* as human language, and, in particular, as literature/poetry *wen*. (Stalling 2010, p. 65)

For Liu Xie, and for Fenollosa, since each made use of the *Yijing*, patterning *wen* was intrinsic to correlative cosmology. «Ariga took [Fenollosa] to Michiaki Nemoto, Japan's leading authority on the *I Ching*, the Chinese

*Book of Changes* [...] Here was vivid support for Fenollosa's [...] recognition of organic flux as well; for change was interpreted by the *I Ching* as the universal principle which generates Being and the world of *Yin* and *Yang*» (Chisolm 1962, pp. 218-219).

Stalling demonstrates how Fenollosa understood *wen* in terms of correlative cosmology. In the final draft of the CWC, Fenollosa writes:

The whole delicate substance of speech is built upon substrata of metaphor. Abstract terms, pressed by etymology, reveal their ancient roots still embedded in direct action. [...] Similar lines of resistance, half curbing outward-pressing vitalities, govern the branching of rivers, and the branching of nations. Thus a nerve, a wire, a roadway and a clearing house are only varying channels which communication forces for itself. This is more than analogy; it is identity of structure [...].

Pound excised the next, and most important, line of Fenollosa's argument: «Laws of structure are the same in the spiritual and the material world. Human character grows with the same stresses and knots as mountain pine». In Fenollosa's «universal theory of literature,» *wen* is shown to be a part of correlative nature and should therefore try to harmonize with it by adopting (if not manifesting/channeling) its correlative structure. (Stalling 2010, p. 67)

The missing second half of Fenollosa's draft essay on poetics is saturated with Zen Buddhism and correlative cosmology in the context of a detailed discussion of the prosody of classical Chinese poetry. «As Pound and subsequent Pound/Fenollosa scholars have generally neglected to point out, Fenollosa never argues that characters are pictures of things, but instead says they are snapshots of natural processes or interpenetrating bundles, a distinction with very important philosophical implications» (Stalling 2009a, p. 26). Fenollosa wrote:

If we take an instantaneous photograph of the sea in motion, we may fix the momentary form of a wave, and call it a thing; yet it was only an incessant vibration of water. So other things [...] apparently more stable, are only large vibrations of living substance; and when we trace them to their origin and decay, they are seen to be only parts of something else. And these essential processes of nature are not simple; there are waves upon waves, process below processes, systems within systems; - and apparently so on forever. (Stalling 2009a, p. 33)

For Stalling, Fenollosa's poetics are profoundly influenced by his training in Zen Buddhism in Japan:



The central argument is not the perfect isomorphism of signifier and signified, which is one of the most important elements of Pound's reading of the essay, but that Western languages and logic have mistaken accuracy for truth, taxonomy for knowledge, and abstraction for reality. [...] For Fenollosa one must turn to the openness of a language infused by interrelation and conditionality rather than one closed by substance and identities. (Stalling 2010, p. 31)

Fenollosa would have been familiar with the metaphor of Indra's Net that his student and colleague Okakura Kakuzo explained in *Ideals of the East*: «For art, like the diamond net of Indra, reflects the whole chain in every link» (Okakura 1904, p. 9) «This vast web of interpenetration [...] *yintuo luowang* 因陀羅網 is envisaged as a vast web or net of interconnections where a jewel lies at every point of convergence and reflects every other jewel in the net» (Stalling 2010, pp. 15-16). There is evidence enough of Fenollosa's familiarity with the 華嚴 Kegon and 真言 Shingon schools of Zen Buddhism and his own training in the Tendai school. What is not evident is his familiarity with the work of Liu Xie.

While it is unclear whether Fenollosa's Tendai or poetry teachers introduced him to Kukai's 空海 *Bunkyū hifuron* 文鏡秘府論, which includes the most extensive (and cosmologically oriented) collection of texts on Chinese classical prosody in existence, the fact that Fenollosa uses this term 文章 (Ja: *bunsho*, Ch: *wenzhang*), not simply as the word for «literature» but as a metacritical term «synthetic harmony,» as the central term of his «universal theory of literature» makes me believe that he may have been familiar with Kukai's description of the *yin/yang* cosmological roots of Chinese poetic form[...] Even if Fenollosa did not have access to Kukai's collection on prosody, his notes include diagrams of Chinese rules for tonal prosody coded in *Yijing* symbols for *yin* and *yang*. (Stalling 2010, p. 73)

The *Bunkyū hifuron* draws upon the *Wenxin diaolong*, especially for its discussion of prosody, the subject of the second half of Fenollosa's essay on poetics. Richard W. Bodman has translated part of the *Bunkyū hifuron*. Although Liu Xie's discussion of the graphic aspects of Chinese writing does not appear, there is a tantalizing reference to it in Bodman's footnotes, when he explains the phrase «Hyperbole such as 'Rushing torrents, deluginous deluges, plummeting cataracts, surging billows and abundant inundations' has had its time» 奔激潢潦, 汨蕩泥波, 波瀾浸盛, 有年載矣 by citing the same text of Liu Xie that first caught my attention with regard to Fenollosa:

奔激潢潦，汨蕩泥波，波瀾浸盛，有年載矣。

This line does not make sense as a sentence and does not appear to be a quotation; it would seem best to regard it as a list of extravagant phrases which should be avoided.

The *Wenxin diaolong* in its section thirty-nine [...] gives the following advice: «By characters of the same radical is meant several characters in succession with one radical, that is, one half of each of their forms, in common. In the description of mountains and rivers, such a device has been used in all ages». (Vincent Shih, p. 299; Bodman 1978, pp. 471-473)

The title of *Wenxin diaolong* refers to *diaolong* the «carving of dragons», a stock phrase for embellishment, even hyperrealism, of dragons so well limned that they take flight upon completion. Laurence Binyon, who quotes Fenollosa extensively, explained this in his own book on East Asian art, *The Flight of the Dragon*: «we hear of horses so charged with life that they galloped out of the picture, of dragons leaving the wall on which they were painted and soaring through the ceiling» (Binyon 1911, p. 20). It was he who introduced Ezra Pound to East Asian art and Pound published a review of this book. Fenollosa's wife, Mary McNeil Fenollosa, published a novel entitled *The Dragon Painter* (Fenollosa 1906). Binyon mediated Mary Fenollosa's gift of her husband's manuscripts to Pound. In a letter to Ezra Pound in 1952, Achilles Fang remarks in an offhand way that suggests that Pound would be familiar with the reference, «If Guggenheim is willing to be useful, I shall try to translate Wen-hsin tiao-lung next year» (Qian 2008, p. 121). Fang had reviewed Shih's translation of *Wenxin diaolong* in the *Times Literary Supplement*. So there is evidence for Pound's familiarity with *Wenxin diaolong*, if not Fenollosa's, and Pound's proselytizing of Fenollosa was then still in full swing, as in his influence on Charles Olson, and through Olson on the American poetic avant-garde («men worth anyone's study: [...] Ernest Fenollosa!» (Olson 1997, p. 188).

Restricting his influence on the 20th century avant-garde to the publications that Pound edited gives an incomplete picture of Fenollosa's legacy. He also exerted a major influence on the visual arts through his own collection of East Asian art and the exhibitions he curated, through articles and books and public lectures on the subject, through collaboration with Arthur Wesley Dow in revolutionizing the teaching of arts and crafts, and through the role of his Japanese colleagues in disseminating Zen. Fenollosa also collaborated with Friedrich Hirth in creating the East Asian Studies programme at Columbia University, where Dow subsequently taught for many years (Chisolm 1963, p. 198). This is where D.T. Suzuki would teach Zen to writers and artists like John Cage, Allen Ginsberg and Jackson Mac Low.

In the course of Dow's thirty years of teaching he converted a generation of art teachers to Fenollosan principles [...] Fenollosa's writings provided texts and references throughout the seventeen years that Dow taught at Columbia. [...] Dow and his missionaries deserve recognition for initiating a shift in American taste [...] for all phases of modern design from Bauhaus furniture to «Mondrianesque» graphics and calligraphic paintings. (Chisolm 1963, pp. 179, 193, 238)

Fenollosa's ideas about structure and composition in art and about harmonics and overtones in music, consequent upon his study of Chinese and Japanese art, of the prosody of Chinese poetry, and of learning to sing texts from Noh theatre, prepared him to see artistic expression as an embodiment of *yuanqi* 緣起, the interconnectedness of all things, their interrelations.

Throughout Fenollosa's analysis one can detect both the spatially oriented Kegon 華嚴 definition of emptiness (all things are empty of autonomous completeness because all things are interrelated), and the more temporal-oriented Madhyamika definition of emptiness («one cause passing into another» or *pratītya-samutpāda* or dependent arising). (Stalling 2009a, p. 32)

In the first published version of his theory of poetics in *The Lotos* in 1896, Fenollosa wrote:

Synthetic thinking demands a pregnant language; rich, juicy, significant, full words, charged with intense meaning at the center, like a nucleus, and then radiating out toward infinity, like a great nebula. This is poetry, the making a word stand for as much thought and feeling as possible, and that through the mutual modifications of the successive words. [...] Refined harmony lies in the delicate balance of overtones. (Chisolm 1963, pp. 216-217, 225)

Haroldo de Campos recognised the implications of this approach: «Fenollosa was capable of recognizing in Chinese written poetry – on the graphemic level therefore – the 'harmonics' dancing before the eyes and 'colouring' all of the semantic planes, like a 'dominant chord'» (De Campos 2000, p. 42; translation of the Author).

Poetry, theatre, music and painting all provided Fenollosa with metaphors for his theory of poetics:

Here I lay a spot of red paint down on my canvas. Next I choose a green which I dot near it. The red is immediately changed, and so is the green. In contrast to the green the red has taken fire, and the green now glows

inwardly like an emerald. The reaction is mutual. [...] So I might go on creating, that is, finding added colors, each one of which would modify all the previous reactions in the way of making them all finer. [...] If, however, the magic has been accomplished [...] and ten colors, say (a modest allowance), have been mutually juxtaposed so that their multiple cross relations have only clarified and irradiated each other, then no one is cause and no one effect, for all is cause and all effect. (Chisolm 1963, pp. 202-203)

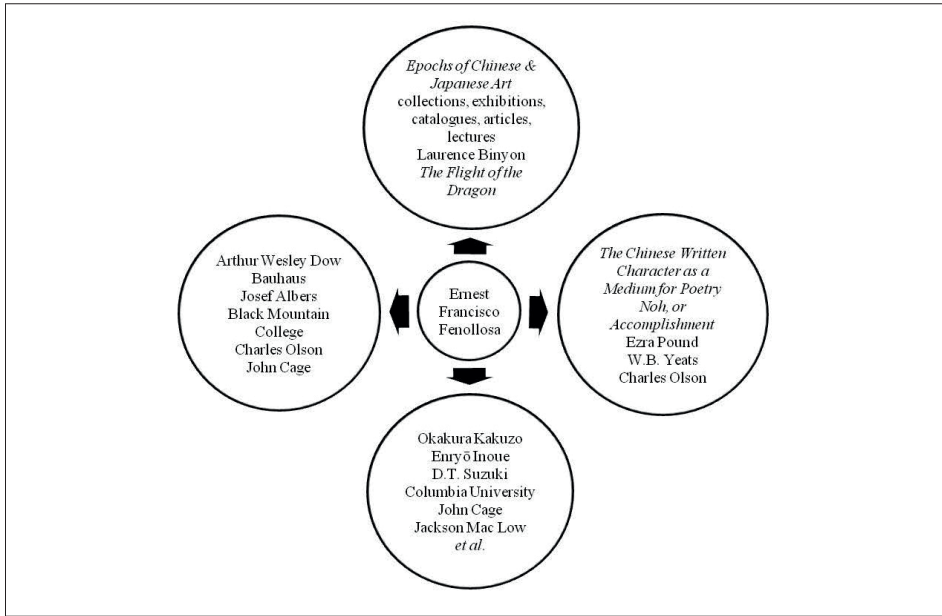
Fenollosa's influence on 20th century avant-garde writing and art is like his definition of poetry, «charged with intense meaning at the center, like a nucleus, and then radiating out toward infinity, like a great nebula». His disciples from Japan, Enryō Inoue and Okakura Kakuzo, introduced Zen Buddhism to America and Okakura's *The Book of Tea* and *Ideals of the East* were early English language guides to Zen, a subject Fenollosa commented on extensively in his own *Epochs of Chinese and Japanese Art*.

The purpose of the Zen teacher, according to Fenollosa, was to let the student's mind «build up its own view of the subtle affinities between things; to construct an organic web of new categories». In individual confrontation of nature a Zen artist might glimpse the interrelationships of all life. (Chisolm 1963, p. 217)

D.T. Suzuki (with whom Yeats corresponded) was acquainted with Fenollosa (Saussy 2008, p. 23). He became the major Zen source for a generation of writers and artists through his classes at Columbia University (part of the legacy Fenollosa initiated with Hirth and Dow). Through Dow, Fenollosa's influence reached the Bauhaus Movement, and the Bauhaus took root at Black Mountain College, along with Charles Olson and John Cage:

in 1933 Josef Albers, who also came from a long teaching experience at Bauhaus, began teaching at Black Mountain College [...] an experimental community for art education, whose body of artists-teachers included, at different times, composer John Cage and the poet of Poundian lineage Charles Olson. [...] On the reading list for Olson's class in the 50s was Fenollosa's essay on the ideogram [...] No direct link, naturally. No linearity in the process. But the synchronic eye detects the compass rose of convergences. (De Campos 2000, p. 38; translation of the Author)

Haroldo de Campos' metaphor, *a rosácea das convergências*, derived from the image of a compass or wind rose, places Fenollosa at the hub, the centre that can hold, where everything converges, from which all spokes radiate outward.



Graphic 1. The compass rose of convergences: Fenollosa's influence on the 20th century avant-garde

And this is another aspect of the interconnectedness and interrelation of all elements that finds echoes in Liu Xie's explanation of the inter-textuality endemic to classical Chinese literature. After offering examples of five writers who all use the same images or metaphors, Liu writes:

此并廣寓極狀，而五家如一。

諸如此類，莫不相循，參伍因革，通變之數也。是以規略文統，宜宏大體。先博覽以精閱，總綱紀而攝契；然後拓衢路，置關鍵，長轡遠馭，從容按節，憑情以會通，負氣以適變，采如宛虹之奮鬚，光若長離之振翼，乃穎脫之文矣。（文心雕龍，通變第二十九，Ch. 29）

The five writers of note who seem so uniform [...] must have drawn quite freely upon each other. [...] Criss-cross preserving and transforming are the ways of continuity and change and so in seeking to master the tradition and scope of literature it is politic to enlarge on the essential features. You do well to read extensively and in detail to acquire an impression of overall structure and significant forms. Then you can go on your own thoroughfare, set up your turnpikes, and, long reins in hand, you gallop forth as far as you like and at your own speed. You meet the unbroken past on your own terms and live with change according to your own temperament. (Wong et al. 1999, p. 112)

Steven Owen uses the metaphor of a «discourse machine» to describe how Liu Xie's own text emerged out of a set of rules and requirements that were independent of the author: «*Wen-hsin tiao-lung* sets in motion the machine of 5th century rhetoric and analytic technique. Liu Hsieh's genius is the skill with which he operates this expository machine» (Owen 1992, p. 184).

In this essay I would like to consider Liu Xie's arguments not as the «expression» of ideas already fully formed and fixed, but rather as a process of exposition. This process is not unitary: In many cases we can identify two «players» contending for control of the exposition. One of these players we will call «Liu Xie» a human character with beliefs, an education of received ideas, and common sense. The other main player is the rhetoric of parallel exposition, what I call the «discourse machine» which produces utterances by its own rules and requirements. (Owen 2001, p. 175)

John Cage would turn time and again to James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* (FW) to set in motion another kind of discourse machine producing utterances by its own rules and requirements. As it would happen, Joyce also knew the work of Fenollosa. In letters to Joyce dating from 1915, Ezra Pound alludes to his work on Fenollosa's theory of Chinese ideograms in a way that suggests Joyce's familiarity with it (Golden 1976, p. 53). Joyce wrote down some of Fenollosa's statements: «A true noun does not exist in nature (Fenollosa): any pronouns? phonetic theory is unsound: be careful!». These three phrases refer to three separate sections of Fenollosa's essay, suggesting that Joyce knew the whole essay (Golden 1976, p. 85). Fenollosa had written, «A true noun, an isolated thing. does not exist in nature. [...] The eye sees noun and verb as one: things in motion, and so the Chinese conception tends to represent them». This appears in FW as «For if we look at it verbally perhaps there is no true noun in active nature where every bally thing - please read this mufto - is becoming in its own eyeballs» (Joyce 1939, p. 523; Golden 1976, pp. 90-91).

Cage chose to operate by chance in his compositions as a result of an interest in Zen and the *Yijing*. («Fenollosa saw art presenting a momentary and sufficient ordering of possibilities»; Chisolm 1963, p. 247).

In the nature of the use of chance operations is the belief that all answers answer all questions [...] What I do, I do not wish blamed on Zen, though without my engagement with Zen (attendance at lectures by Alan Watts and D.T. Suzuki, reading of the literature) I doubt whether I would have done what I have done. (Cage 2009)

In the late forties I found out by experiment (I went into the anechoic chamber at Harvard University) that silence is not acoustic. It is a

change of mind, a turning around. I devoted my music to it. My work became an exploration of non-intention. To carry it out faithfully I have developed a complicated composing means using *I Ching* chance operations, making my responsibility that of asking questions instead of making choices. (Cage 1990)

In a version of «criss-cross preserving and transforming» that consisted of «writing through» the texts of others by applying chance operations based on mesostics of the author's name («not acrostics: row down the middle, not down the edge»), Cage combined Fenollosa and Joyce:

Syntax: arrangement of the army (Norman Brown). Language free of syntax: demilitarization of language. James Joyce = new words; old syntax. Ancient Chinese? Full words: words free of specific function. Noun is verbs is adjective, adverb. What can be done with the English language? Use it as material. (Cage 1979, p. 11)

Due to N. O. Brown's remark that syntax is the arrangement of the army, and Thoreau's that when he heard a sentence he heard feet marching, I became devoted to nonsyntactical «demilitarized» language. [...] This led me to want to learn something about the ancient Chinese language and to read *Finnegans Wake*. [...] I opened *Finnegans Wake* at random (p. 356). I began looking for a J without an A. And then for the next A without an M. Etcetera. [...] I then started near the end of the book (I couldn't wait) for I knew how seductive the last pages of *Finnegan* are.

my lips went livid for from the Joy  
of feAr  
like alMost now. how? how you said  
how you'd givE me  
the keyS of me heart.

Just a whisk brisk sly spry sprink  
spank sprint Of a thing  
i pitY your oldseIf i was used to,  
a Cloud.  
in pEace (Cage 1979, p. 133-134)

As chance would have it, when Cage wrote through Pound's *Cantos* his Zen, correlative and Fenollosan perspective highlighted the anti-Daoist, anti-Buddhist stance that had prevented Pound from publishing the significant parts of Fenollosa's work that inspired this study (Cage 1982, p. 112):

statE of bonZes empRess hAnged herself  
 sPark lights a milliOn strings calcUlated at sterliNg haD by  
 taozErs tho' bonZesses of iRon tAng  
 Princes in snOW trUe proviNce of greeD

Fenollosa made a fundamental impact on the 20th century avant-garde. In the generation following Yeats, Pound and Joyce, Charles Olson sought Fenollosan graphemic inspiration in Poundian terms in the images inherent in Mayan writing (Olson 1967, p. 7) and Jackson Mac Low in the images behind the Phoenician alphabet (Mac Low 1986). But Mac Low also attended Suzuki's lectures and turned to chance operations (Stalling 2009b). Haroldo de Campos found the bases for concrete poetry in his reading of Fenollosa (De Campos 2009); Sergei Eisenstein for *montage* (Eisenstein 1929). That impact continues in the 21st century avant-garde. Xu Bing 徐冰 turns Fenollosa on his head with *Tianshu* 天書 (A Book From the Sky, Spears 2012, Xu Bing 2012), whose combination of Chinese calligraphic components produces meaningless words, but returns Fenollosa to currency with *Dishu* 地書 (A Book From the Ground, Xu Bing 2014), which demonstrates the possibility of a universally comprehensible narrative based entirely on graphic symbols. His *Square Word Calligraphy* reverts Fenollosa by composing English words with Chinese calligraphic components (Xu Bing 1994), while Jonathan Stalling's *Yingelishi* 吟歌麗詩 inverts Fenollosa by using the sound of Chinese written characters to produce English language texts that simultaneously conserve Chinese semantic overtones (Stalling 2011a, 2011b). John Cayley's programmatology creates a discourse machine that generates versions of translations from the written characters of Chinese texts (Cayley 2015).

Correlation may not be causation but around the hub of Ernest Fenollosa (and perhaps his predecessor, Liu Xie) many influences converge on 20th and 21st century avant-garde writing and art to correlate a compelling *nebula* (Fenollosa's metaphor) or *rosácea* (de Campos) of *yuanqi* 緣起 or *pratītya-samutpāda*, the interconnectedness of all things, their interrelations, as if Fenollosa had been familiar with Liu Xie, as if his followers had been aware of his unpublished work, though the fullest implications of the East-West fusion he predicated may in the end be more effective in the work of writers and artists like Cage and Mac Low than that of Pound and Olson.



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## Linking Ancient and Contemporary

Continuities and Discontinuities in Chinese Literature

edited by Tiziana Lippiello, Chen Yuehong 陈跃红 and Maddalena Barenghi

# What's the Link Between the Lyrical and Modernity in China?

## A Discussion on Chinese Lyrical Modernity

Li Yang 李杨

(Peking University, China)

**Abstract** 'Chinese lyrical modernity' is an important concept that David Der-wei Wang has put forth in his writing and which follows on his famous theory of 'repressed modernities in late Qing fiction.' The way Wang approaches the concept and builds his argument can be traced directly to the work of Chen Shixiang, Kao Yu-kung and others who were well known in the United States and Taiwan for their studies on the lyrical tradition in Chinese classical literature. At the same time, Wang's theory tackles the same questions that were raised by Prusek, Hsia Chih-tsing, Leo Ou-fan Lee and others on the lyrical and the epic. Wang sought to reconstruct the 'structure of feeling' in modern Chinese culture, by merging the notion of a 'late-Qing modernity' with the age-old 'Chinese lyrical tradition'. In doing so, Wang leads us into the inner workings of Chinese thoughts and feelings, where these thoughts and feelings can be seen as the observations made by Chinese scholars outside China on the current prevailing trends in research, such as 'multi-culturalism' and 'post-theories', as well as cultural studies in the West in general. Although Wang inevitably faced a series of challenges and ran the risk of falling into various traps when using the Western concept of 'the lyric' to narrate the 'lyrical tradition' in classical Chinese literature, or when employing the antithesis between 'the lyrical' and 'the epic' to study modern Chinese history, his concept of 'Chinese lyrical modernity' has its own unique values and makes a significant contribution to the field.

**Summary** 1 Introduction. – 2 'Lyrical' (*shuqing* 抒情) and 'Modern' (*xiandai* 现代). – 3 'Lyrical' and 'China'. – 4 Multiple Modernities.

**Keywords** Lyricism. Chinese modernity. Chineseness. Historical consciousness of the lyrical.

## 1 Introduction

Following on the observations he made in his previous book, «Repressed Modernities of Late Qing Fiction», David Wang Der-wei's most recent work, which rethinks the various manifestations of Chinese modernity from the vantage point of lyricism, continues to stir debate in the academic field. Yet the lyrical, or lyricism, as defined by Wang, does not adhere to the typical understanding of those terms as a form of literary style or aesthetics; instead, their meaning has been broadened to include and to

point towards a form of cultural politics. In Wang's words, «lyricism can be defined as belonging to a certain literary genre and, especially in the Western context, lyricism is closely linked to poetry and the expression of an individual's emotions. Yet in the broader context, lyricism can embody a form of expression, a form of aesthetics, a practice in daily life and perhaps, in a more thought-provoking way, a form of engaging in conversation with politics» (Wang 2010, p. 72). Wang's core ideas, in defining lyricism this way, sought to reconstruct the modern emotive structure of Chinese literature. More importantly, Wang also drew on the work of the Marxist literary scholar Jaroslav Prusek and sought to rethink how lyricism in the Chinese literary tradition might be brought into a modern era of literature. In his view, it may be too simple to interpret the rise of modern Chinese literature as the linear evolution from the lyrical to the epic, as suggested by Prusek, Wang argued that lyricism could also be used as a powerful political expression of modern Chinese intellectuals. Therefore, he proposed that through rethinking the complex between lyricism and modern Chinese literature, one could open up a new field of study aimed at acquiring a better understanding of Chinese modernity. (Ji 2008, p. 6).

To a literary scholar, applying the principles of cultural studies means challenging established paradigms. One cannot help but ask if the term 'lyrical', as used by Wang, belongs to the field of literature, philosophy or political studies. To put it more specifically, using the terms 'lyrical' and 'lyricism' in literary criticism is a tradition that has prevailed throughout the past and present, yet their a-historical quality is constantly 'historicised' by Wang in his works when he employs those terms. We need to ask: is there a way to define 'lyricism' as belonging to a kind of style, a form of aesthetics, a way of life or a form of cultural politics? Is 'lyricism' related to what Jameson meant by the 'political unconscious'? Is the term related to Raymond Williams' 'Structure of Feeling' or to Foucault's use of 'discourse and power'? Or perhaps, does 'lyricism' simply refer to a unique kind of 'Chinese experience' that can never be described using Western knowledge, theories and concepts? I suggest that in order to answer the questions above, we need to know the context in which Wang proposed his theory on lyricism and the way he approached and constructed his argument.

## 2 'Lyrical' (*shuqing* 抒情) and 'Modern' (*xiandai* 现代)

To a scholar in mainland China, the notion of a 'lyrical modernity' is largely unheard of. However, in the study of Chinese literature as undertaken by scholars outside China, it is understandable that Wang proposes his theory on lyricism. In fact, the way Wang approached the question and constructed his argument can be traced to the arguments made by Chen

Shixiang, Kao Yu-kung and others who were well known in the United States and Taiwan for their work on the lyrical tradition in classical Chinese literature. At the same time, Wang's theory underscores the same concern that was raised by Prusek, Hsia Chih-ting, Leo Ou-fan Lee and others in their writings on the lyrical and the epic.

In the 1950s and 1960s, the Chinese academics Chen Shixiang and Kao Yu-kung were among the first few to propose the notion of a lyrical tradition in China. In his tenure at the University of California at Berkeley, Chen published a number of books that applied the study of comparative literature to literature from China and the West. Chen observed that the roots of Western literature could be traced to the epic poems of Homer and to classical Greek comedy and tragedy. He added that «unlike the West, Chinese literature did not glorify epic poems; its best works can be found in the lyrical poems where words are like music and (speak in) the inner voice of the individual, thereby establishing the lyrical tradition. All literary tradition in Chinese literature can be read as a lyrical tradition» (Chen 2008, pp. 2-6). Chen even suggested that this lyrical tradition was predominant in Chinese culture and stood in contrast to the powerful narrative tradition in Western literature. Chen's theory was developed by Kao Yu-kung at Princeton University, where he continued to apply the study of comparative literature in an attempt to affirm the lyrical tradition of Chinese literature. Kao further incorporated different Western theories and eventually broke new ground in the field of classical Chinese literature and culture. Kao's greatest achievement was to create an interdisciplinary approach in which he tried to explain the lyrical tradition as the root of Chinese culture and its applicability across different regimes in Chinese history. He created a system where Chinese classical literature was the gateway to understanding classical Chinese culture. As quoted in Wang's works, «Kao's contribution was to build a coherent world view using the lyrical tradition; the lyrical was a form of literature, then it became a genre, a lifestyle, a cultural perspective, a value system and even a political ideology» (Wang 2010, p. 13). Kao was hailed as a forerunner when he established a theory of the lyrical tradition in Chinese literature, which would have an impact on subsequent studies of Chinese literature in the West, as well as in Taiwan, for the next ten years. The immediate impact was that scholars in the West, who were formulating a new theory in order to re-think the European tradition in Western literature, looked upon the notion of the lyrical tradition put forth by Kao as a sort of inspiration. At the same time, Kao returned to teach for a year at the National Taiwan University in the late 1970s, inspiring a series of research papers written by fellow Taiwanese scholars who actively sought to dialogue with Kao on his theory. In the early 1980s, a flurry of publications by young scholars in Taiwan continued to discuss Kao's theory, testifying to the strong influence Kao had in Taiwan and to the rapid growth in popularity

of his theory in the academic field. This was also the period in which Leo Lee and David Wang were pursuing their university degrees in literature, which helps to explain why the theory of a lyrical tradition was nothing unusual to either of them.

The term 'lyrical' first became a topic in research on modern Chinese literature overseas when Leo Lee came across Prusek's article. As one of the best-known academics in the field of Sinology, Prusek published a number of important works on modern Chinese literature. One of his most important essays, «Subjectivism and Individualism in Modern Chinese Literature» (1957, Lee 2010, pp. 1-26), delved into the works of Lu Xun, Mao Dun, Yu Daifu and other modern Chinese authors, and observed in their literary works a writing style that was new to Chinese novels and which marked the start of a narrative tradition in modern Chinese literature between 1919 and 1937. Prusek's article was generally seen as having provided a panoramic view of modern Chinese literature. Lee, having studied under Prusek and also having an interest in «the romantic generation of modern Chinese writers», used the terms 'lyrical' and 'epic' to summarise the core themes of Prusek's 1957 article, while also pointing out that the terms stood in contrast to each other. Lee added that the lyrical tends to be displayed in the writer's choice of style, in a preference for subjectivity, in an individual's emotions or creative expressions. Epic, on the other hand, tends to be an adjective and not a noun, and is defined by Prusek as being applicable not only to poems but to all genres of literature. Thus, epic stood in contrast to lyrical and is seen as having different artistic approaches to portraying reality/society in literature. As such, the lyrical quality in the novels written by Yu Daifu and Lu Xun will strike one as being similar to poetry; the panoramic, objective style adopted by Mao Dun in his novels is said to display an epic quality (Lee 1987, pp. 3-4). Of course, Lee might have read too much into Prusek's meaning; in fact, the lyrical and the epic were never the core themes of Prusek's 1957 article, nor were they ever presented as a dichotomy or in opposition to one another. The only use of the term epic was in Prusek's description of Mao Dun (Lee 2010, p. 6) and it was not frequently cited in Prusek's article. Yet Lee had a preference for applying simple dichotomy in his analysis. In 1979, Lee also named the collection of essays by Prusek that he edited, *The Lyrical and the Epic: Studies of Modern Chinese Literature*. This publication was translated into Chinese in 2010 and, following Lee's rise to fame as one of the leading overseas scholars in modern Chinese literature, the dichotomy proposed by Lee gradually became accepted as the norm. To quote As Wang notes, Lee studied under T.A. Hsia and he was exceptionally close to Hsia Chih-tsing. When at Harvard, Lee also studied under Prusek. Lee is a disciple of the three most important scholars in modern Chinese literature, and his works are among the most significant to have emerged in recent times» (Wang 2009, p. 2).

To a certain extent, Wang's iteration of 'Chinese Lyricism and Modernity' came from a long tradition, as laid out above, and it can be seen as the fruits of the work done by scholars in the West whose focus was on Chinese literature. However, the bold move made by Wang was to propose a theory that could cut across classical and modern Chinese literature. When comparing Wang's work to that of Chen Shixiang's or Kao Yu-kung's, Wang stressed the possibility of the lyrical tradition being carried on into the modern era. Unlike Lee, Wang found a way to trace the roots of lyricism to culture and politics, thus adding these two dimensions to any form of meaningful literary criticism (one might want to make) on the style of modern Chinese literature.

For Wang, 'Lyricism and Chinese Modernity', or in simpler terms, the Chinese 'lyrical tradition', was a modern mode of expression. Wang commented that 'lyricism' was not unlike revolution and enlightenment, as it is a modern approach to representing modern Chinese literature and the construction of a modern entity. As opposed to Lu Xun and his disciples, who proclaimed realism as the only true approach in writing modern Chinese literature, Wang held that 'lyricism' was just as legitimate an approach in modern Chinese literature. Wang was adamant in pointing out that he believed in continuing with his theory of lyrical tradition, and even added that the modern tradition of the lyrical and lyricism clearly developed from the pre-modern era (and from classical Chinese literature). He asked, «how do we set and use the classical lyrical tradition in a modern context: what is its role in modern literature and in the socio-cultural life of modern times? How can we (re)imagine its continuity, its (re)development and its meanings?» (Wang 2010, p. 82).

### 3 'Lyrical' and 'China'

The validity of Wang's observation depended on his system of values and the legitimacy of the theories that he chose to turn to. Ironically, in the field of classical Chinese literature, the debate over a lyrical tradition continues to the present day, with doubters questioning the applicability of 'lyrical' or 'lyricism', which first began as a Western concept related to poetry, and its ability to encompass the complex aesthetics, the politics and the culture of China. Before Wang can answer how the lyrical is 'modern', he first needs to answer how the lyrical is 'a quintessential aspect of China'.

In 2005, the Taiwanese scholar Huang Jinshu wrote an important essay on 'Lyricism in China', in which he defined lyricism and its significance to the field of academic history. In Huang's opinion, lyricism in China can be read as a kind of 'Grand Narrative' that has, since the extensive exploration and research carried out by Chen Shixiang and Kao Yu-kung, matured over time to become a well-established modern paradigm that can



be readily applied to attempts at re-writing Chinese literary history or to debates in philosophy and aesthetics. Kao, especially, «gave the theory a much needed boost by analysing the lyrical tradition in classical Chinese literature through linguistics, poetics, aesthetics and history. In doing so, fellow scholars in classical Chinese literature could then readily link topics in philosophy and aesthetics to classical Chinese literature through this paradigm. The lyrical tradition also provided the logic as to why poetry was generally understood as the predominant form of expression in Chinese literature and culture». In the view of Huang Jinshu, «notions of the lyrical tradition in classical Chinese literature are just as important as the rise of Neo-Confucianism in the academic world. It is a modern paradigm that would revive and underscore the importance of classical literature as one of the impetuses to modern Chinese literature, aside from the May Fourth enlightenment» (Huang 2010, pp. 157-185).

Huang's observations were based on the approach of a 'modern construct' in which he placed the 'lyrical tradition' of Chinese literature in a theoretical structure and explained its historical context; yet, the lyrical tradition is an 'invention of tradition' (to use the words of E.J. Hobsbawm) that aims to provide an alternative to the idea of a modernity brought about by the May Fourth vernacular literature movement. «Those things which claimed to be from an old tradition generally became known as traditional from a not-too-distant period, at times, it's even invented» (Hobsbawm 2010, p. 1). In discussing modernity, comparative literature analysis aims to present the differences between cultures and, in the same vein, the idea of a 'Chinese lyricism' was created to be a kind of 'otherness' that could be deemed an alternative to the Western narrative. Evidently, Huang's method of deconstructing the Chinese lyrical tradition was influenced by New Historicism. Huang felt that one could legitimately suggest that the lyrical was the at the core of Chinese classical literature because, in his mind, classical Chinese literature was something that would effectively challenge one to reflect on the well-established May Fourth modern literature paradigm. All along, the grand narrative of the rise of the May Fourth literary movement views the complex world of classical Chinese literature as a simple, singular system. Acting in the name of science and enlightenment, a preference for histories to all else, the rigid enforcement of the vernacular, and the decline of classical language: all of these can be found at the moment in which modern Chinese literature was born. This is why it is very difficult for the classical Chinese tradition to find common ground with modern Chinese literature, as there is simply no room for it. As Huang writes, «classical Chinese literature had to belong to the ancient literary traditions, as it is not compatible with the modern mode of expression nor and there is no strong argument to suggest the contrary. It has no grand narratives of its own that could compete with the paradigm of modern vernacular literature» (Huang 2005, pp. 157-

185). Here, then, Huang believed that the 'Chinese lyrical tradition' would eventually be a kind of grand narrative that could affirm the importance of classical Chinese literature. Moreover, his theory is very much akin to how comparative literature works in the West in presenting differences and questioning the construction of identity between East-West cultural spheres. Those who worked in this field were generally comfortable with applying the techniques of a comparative world-view.

Yet the question that one should ask is whether comparative literature as a modern academic subject is a Western approach that seeks to explain the nature of the lyrical in Chinese literature. Although it is politically correct to apply a Western approach in an attempt to uncover the particularism of a non-Western subject, applying a Western approach because one assumes that this approach is a universal one can be dangerous. Just as Naoki Sakai has pointed out, while the approach is used to seek the particularism of a non-Western subject, the ultimate aim can also be seen as trying to locate something that would eventually lead to universal truths. In the article by Naoki Sakai, «those who claim a world of universalism and those who claim a world of particularism believed that they are not the same. Yet both worlds reinforce and complement each other, they do not negate one another; instead, they need to build a relationship that would allow them to strike a balance. They need to avoid a clash, a clash that, once it occurs, would topple both worlds. Ironically, both worlds were already flawed, and though they tried hard to point fingers at each other's flaws, they were silent accomplices. In other words, even if a nation were to rely on a world of particularism to assert its position, it need not necessarily reject a world of universalism or criticise it in a serious way» (Naoki 1999, p. 396).

What Naoki Sakai is saying is that the subject of modernity belongs to both a system of universalism and a system of particularism, and a unique or particular phenomenon (such as Chinese modernity) need not always negate the possibility of being universal. In fact, to be universal, one first begins as something unique. This unique subject matter would eventually be universal and, inevitably, most universal truths generally seek to encompass all unique responses. Without a compilation of a variety of unique responses, it is hard to establish a universal truth.

Following this logic, if a 'Chinese lyrical tradition' was proposed as a unique tradition that stood in opposition to the universal notion of a Western narrative tradition, this observation should be considered a product of comparative literature made by American scholars such as Chen Shixiang and Kao Yu-kung. Nonetheless, why would we believe that this notion of a unique Chinese tradition could in fact surpass the current Western understanding of China, given that the observation was first made through application of a Western theory (i.e. comparative literature)?

In emphasizing the fictional nature of a 'Chinese lyrical tradition', Gong Pengcheng boldly pointed out that this theory was, in fact, not a truthful

observation about Chinese literature; rather, it was a product of the cultural anxiety that was prevalent during a specific period of time in Taiwan. When encounters between the East and West were becoming more and more common, academics in Taiwan gradually lost their interest in applying Western theories and went back to focusing on the roots of Chinese tradition. As a result, when scholars of comparative literature in Taiwan commented on certain literary styles in Chinese literature, their aims were no longer to seek a common ground with Western literary styles. Instead, they sought to emphasize the differences; this notion of «culture at its roots was always unique» was not unlike what Yip Wai-lim had described. In Gong's article, «The Chinese Lyrical Tradition Does Not Exist», he pointed out that the theory of a lyrical tradition does not come from Chen Shixiang or Kao Yu-kung. He felt that «the lyrical tradition should be rooted in Taiwanese culture but that it was subsequently used to resolve several other problems» (Gong 2008, p. 8). Gong added that the growth and flourishing of the lyrical tradition was accepted as representing a social consensus only in Taiwan and inevitably was a product unique to Taiwan. In Gong's opinion, the 'Chinese lyrical tradition' is solely representative of Taiwan and could only answer questions concerning Taiwan, and nowhere else.

Interestingly, if we accept the proposals made by Huang Jinshu and Gong Pengcheng, who labeled the 'lyrical tradition' as being not an objective observation but a modern 'invention', Wang's question is no longer relevant. As a modern construct, Wang's theory eventually becomes pointless. However, if we are searching for answers in the Foucauldian way (in the field of epistemology), then we might ask: If the proposal of a lyrical tradition in classical Chinese literature reflected the consensus and mentality of the 'mainstream intellectuals' in Taiwan, might we not ask Wang the same question? That is, how does the theory of a 'modern Chinese lyricism' reflect Wang's mindset and the contemporary society he lived in?

#### 4 Multiple Modernities

As a research topic, 'lyricism in Chinese modernity' has grown in importance due to the rise of cultural pluralism in the West. As a result, 'multiple modernities' or 'plural forms of modernity' are acceptable. The issue of a 'Chinese modernity' can be traced to the rise of 'post-ism', cultural studies or critical theories of the contemporary world which sought to re-think the Western tendency to explain all phenomena as attesting to certain universal truths. In the field of Chinese studies, the gradual shift from Fairbanks's 'impact-response model' to Cohen's 'Discovering history in China' compels one to stop thinking about Chinese modernity through the East-West relationship and to search for the Chinese path to modernity

by looking at Chinese culture and tradition. The emergence of a 'late-Qing modernity' should be understood against this backdrop. Wang observed that the late-Qing novels that he was reading were different from those interpreted by Lu Xun, Hu Shi and Chen Ping Yuan. Wang defined the late Qing period as starting from the mid-19th century, «a 60-year period following the establishment of the Taiping Regime and ending in the last year of the Qing dynasty» (Wang 2005, p. 1). In doing so, Wang enlarged the scope of late-Qing novels clearly in order to explain that even before the intrusion of the West, an emergent form of Chinese literary modernity had already taken root in China. Wang sought to initiate his discussion from the late-Qing era and his aim was to assess the ability of classical Chinese literature to regenerate itself and progress towards modernity. Wang believed that the point of intersection between East and West during the May Fourth period need not necessarily be the only factor in the birth of Chinese modernity.

However, Wang was not alone in his quest to trace the beginnings of Chinese modernity. As early as the 1930s, Zhou Zhuoren had already pointed out that modern Chinese literature should include works from the 'late Ming'. In one of his articles, Zhou commented that the Gong-an pai and Jing-lin pai literature of late Ming should be seen as the forerunner of New Literature. In recent times, it has become increasingly popular for scholars in the various social sciences to turn to the classical China era to explain the country's path to modernity. Instead of 'discovering the history of China' from the 'May-Fourth' period onward, there were those who believed that one should turn to late Qing or even late Ming. The most extreme example, however, is the Japanese scholar Christian Uhl. According to Christian Uhl, 'contemporaneity' (rather than modernity) in China can be traced to the Song dynasty. He added that China experienced an internal contemporary development, which is different from a contemporary development that is imposed by an outside power. As a result, the birth of a contemporary Chinese society should be seen as starting from the mid-16th century. It is misleading to think that the outbreak of the Opium War in 1840 marks the birth of contemporary China (a consequence of the invasion by Western powers), and such a Eurocentric approach in dividing up Chinese history does not do justice to the internal contemporary development in China (Mizoguchi 1996, 1997 and 2002).

Wang was a step ahead when he merged the notion of a 'late-Qing modernity' into the age-old 'Chinese lyrical tradition'; in doing so, Wang also deconstructed the linear development of non-Western societies' paths to modernity and perhaps even the notion of 'modernity' itself. When he talks about late-Qing modernity as something that has risen from the «regenerative powers of classical Chinese literary traditions» (Wang 2005, p. 38), it is clear that he is referring to the 'Chinese lyrical tradition'. Wang affirms the prominence of traditional Chinese culture and this explains why he

chose to merge Chen Shixiang's and Kao Yu-kung's theories into his own. One cannot help but to expect more when Li Zehou's notion of 'Emotion Noumenon' somehow coincided with Wang's notion of an 'affective China' (Wang 2010, p. 63).

To avoid being accused of particularism, Wang differentiated the lyrical in 'Chinese lyricism' from its Western definition. In his numerous works that discuss 'Chinese lyricism',<sup>1</sup> each article begins with a chapter on 'affective history' and stresses its affinity with the 'lyrical tradition' in classical Chinese literature. Wang pointed out that «Jonathan Arac is of the view that the 'lyrical' in Western literature tends to be associated with individualism, its birth is a very recent one and it is linked to a form of expression associated with Romanticism. But in the context of Chinese literature, the 'lyrical' has a broader meaning and it is affiliated with historical narratives from classical times» (Wang 2011, p. 2). «Because the Chinese lyrical tradition is a traceable and regenerative tradition, it is able to continue into the modern era. Our understanding of Chinese lyricism and modernity should not be restricted just to its being associated with Romanticism in Western literature» (2011, pp. 41-42). «In fact, the core of the Chinese lyrical tradition is never solely about the expression of an individual (as in Romanticism); literary works may talk about one's ambition, one's emotions, but they were never meant to be a private or internal dialogue. Moreover, the writing styles *xing* 兴, *guan* 观, *qun* 群, *yuán* 怨 though lyrical in approach,<sup>2</sup> already entail a complex dialogue in politics, values, aesthetics and more» (2011, p. 72).

Clearly, Wang has redefined the 'lyrical' to be more than just something that was defined under Western Romanticism as having a subjective nature; instead, he proposed that even in the highly individualistic expression of thoughts exemplified in Chinese literature, one could find some innate reflections on history or the ruling regime. Just as Raymond Williams talks about the 'structure of feeling', Wang believed that the 'traditional'

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1 Currently, the Chinese editions include: *Shuqing chuantong yu zhong guo xian daixing* 抒情传统与中国现代性 (The Lyrical Tradition and Chinese Modernity) (2010) and *Xiandai shuqing chuantong silun* 现代抒情传统四论 (Four Essays on the Modern Lyrical Tradition). An English edition is in preparation.

2 The idea that poetry «serves to stimulate the mind [...] may be used for purposes of self-contemplation, [...] teach the art of sociability, [...] show how to regulate feelings of resentment» (Legge 1971, p. 323) was proposed by the ancient Chinese thinker Confucius to explain the social functions of poetry. Confucius believes that poetry has four functions, namely, *xing*, *guan*, *qun* and *yuán*. *Xing* refers to how the artistic images of poetry could serve to arouse the spiritual excitement of the readers and lead the readers to appreciate and enjoy the beauty of poetry. *Guan* refers to how poetry reflects social, political and moral trends authentically and allows the readers to observe the gains and losses of government and the rise and fall of social custom. *Qun* refers to poetry's ability to allow for emotional interactions and strengthen the unity of the people. *Yuán* refers to the function of literary writings that aims at intervening with real world issues and engaging in social critics.

is connotative of the 'lyrical' and, these two concepts 'somehow echo each other' (2011, pp. 19-20).

The Hong Kong scholar Chan Kwok Kou Leonard has a different opinion from that of the Taiwanese Huang Jinshu. Chan does not see the 'Chinese lyrical tradition' as a 'product of Taiwan' or as a literary trend of thought that sprang up only in Taiwan. He pointed out that even before Chen Shixiang, Lin Geng had made the same observation, and that his elders mentors, such as Wen Yiduo, Zhu Ziqing and others, share similar views, including the idea that 'Chinese literary tradition' should be viewed as a literary trend of thought that was rooted in China. Lin Geng, Wen Yiduo, and Zhu Ziqing believed that 'poetry' could transcend all genres and forms, that it could be merged into other genres and that it was the highest form of expression in Chinese literature. In other words, a 'lyrical tradition' begins with the 'lyric', it extends into lyricism, lyricality and eventually a kind of lyric aesthetics (Chan 2007, pp. 332-337). Chan's observation puts the epistemology of 'Chinese lyrical tradition' in a modern context, where Chinese intellectuals were in fact seeking a (re)understanding of their own identity, through lyricism, at a time of crisis due to the rise of Western imperialism in China. Yet Chan's opinion is not unlike Wang's, in that they both believe in the transcendent nature of the lyrical.

Wang picked five modern Chinese intellectuals, namely Zhou Zuoren, Liang Zongdai, Zhu Guangqian, Zong Baihua and Shen Congwen, when he discussed modernity and Chinese lyricism. He pointed out that intellectuals such as Zhu Guangqian and Zong Baihua lived through a period which advocated the new and the modern. Some of them also travelled overseas to further their studies, and those who remained at home were nonetheless engrossed in Western philosophy and aesthetics. «When these men 'looked back' in time to search for inspiration in the Chinese lyrical tradition, their efforts, I thought, were not to express a yearning for the traditional, but rather were a feeble attempt to express themselves in modern times - because with the new, contemporary Western resources that they now enjoyed, there is a certain limitation and, thus, their turning back to the traditional is an effort to continue a meaningful dialogue with present modernity» (Wang 2010, p. 36).

In an age where pluralism is 'politically correct', the value of 'modernity in Chinese lyricism' is undeniably attractive. The biggest challenge for Wang is, how do we apply the concept of a 'lyrical modernity' in re-writing Chinese literary history? How do we historicize 'the lyrical' or 'lyricism'? Wang sought to break new ground and break from the prevalent concepts of politics, revolution and enlightenment in reading modern Chinese literature, and to create a whole new theoretical understanding of modern China through lyricism and modernity in Chinese literature. To do so, Wang pins his hopes on Chen Yinge, Zhu Guangqian, Zong Baihua, Qu Qiubai, Hu Feng, Qian Zhongshu, Zhou Zhuoren,

Shen Congwen, Zhang Ailing, Hu Lancheng, Jiang Wen-ye, Tai Jingnong and others who once clearly belonged to the camps of 'enlightenment' or 'revolution'. Thus Wang is stuck in a situation where he first has to switch camps and establish new theories revolving around the interpretation of those authors' works.

At the same time, Wang had to turn to 'individualism' when he defined the core of 'lyricism', adding that «lyricism is the discovery of the individual and the expression of one's desires; the turn to epic is a collective cry for help and a unifying force propelling one towards revolution. Based on this, the lyrical and the epic are not just genres, they are an extension, a mode of expression, an emotive function, an approach to interpreting socio-political reality. In Prusek's view, choosing between epic and lyrical are both means for the Chinese individual to understand a modern era. In modern Chinese history, it should rightfully be recorded how the (modern) individual was first discovered and then affirmed as an individual who chose to be absorbed into collectivism. It was a move from the lyrical to the epic» (Jin 2008, p. 5). In another article, Wang continued his argument, writing that «Zhou Zhuoren and Lu Xun, the Zhou brothers, actually shared a common view that the lyrical, at its most basic, evolves from an independent individual. It is a voice, an ambition that can be traced to the individual author yet, at the same time, it speaks of enlightenment, social values, revolution and other concerns of contemporary society. It also speaks of a particular view of history that is unique in every individual» (2008, p. 8). Nonetheless, Wang is not satisfied with creating a dichotomy with his concept of 'modernity and Chinese lyricism', where the individual is always in opposition to the political. Wang believes that more could be encompassed by the concept of 'individuality' in Western theories, and he uses these words to describe what 'Chinese lyrical modernity' should ideally be:

What I wish to emphasize is that every time we discuss the Enlightenment or Romanticism in Western theories, it generally revolves around the subject of individuality. For those who are familiar with Chinese literature, the 'lyrical' or 'lyricism' which is encompassed by literature from the late Qing and May Fourth far surpass that of Western understanding. 'Lyricism' is not only a literary style, it points towards an ideology, a form of epistemology, a set of emotive symbols, a way of mimicking real life, and much more. In a way, 'lyricism' is far more capable of expressing a complex system of emotions than are the Enlightenment or Romanticism. Moreover, if Western theories seek to set up the objective and subjective world, 'lyricism' seeks to break down the boundary between these two worlds. The reflections made by May Fourth scholars such as Wang Guowei, Zhu Guangqian and Zong Baihua were precisely to break down boundaries and their reflections enriched the possibilities of modern Chinese literature. Chen Shixiang, Shen Congwen, Kao

Yu-gong, on the other hand, pay homage to the Chinese lyrical tradition, never stopping to ponder the question of modernity in Chinese literature. (Wang 2011, p. 5)

If we look at the various writings by Wang on the topic of 'Chinese lyrical modernity' and group them into one single argument, we see that Wang provides multiple case studies to narrate the depth of his theory, though he never pauses to think how the various case studies might somehow appear mismatched with certain elements that have been proposed in his theory. From this perspective, the crux of Wang's 'lyrical tradition' is never about its lineage or its subsequent development. Yet in his discussion on the various lyrical aspects of Chinese literature, Wang is careful to place it in its specific historical context. At the same time, however, he wants to tell us how it might shed light on an alternative understanding of history. Wang never fails to carry out a close reading of the subjective voice and pick out the quality that lends durability to literature across time and space. He created a 'democratic' system wherein multiple meanings can co-exist at the same time without conflict, and the 'lost voices/orphans' no longer lurk at the edge of the 'greater narrative'. As a result, under the banner of a 'lyrical tradition' everything can be seamlessly brought together to become one 'imagined community'. Those who are capable of 'lyrical expression' could ultimately create a realm of 'heteroglossia' that would add meanings to existing ones and also subscribe to truths which would otherwise remain hidden. Just as Wang describes the musician Jiang Wenye:

He (referring to Jiang Wenye) aspired to create a kind of never-before-heard music and he did it in a poignant moment of history with success - success which is measured in terms of how well he managed to play his loud music and ultimately make it heard over the predominant noises in society [...] his example shows how, in times when everyone wanted only epic pieces, the 'lyrical tradition' is found in the imagination to crave something different, to steel oneself to face the risks one must face in order to remain faithful to one's cause [...] yet ironically, because Jing's nationalism was questioned, and because he chose to remain aloof in times of national crises, the lyricism that Jiang valorizes is a fragile one. (Wang 2011, pp. 135-139)

In this description by Wang, he deliberately added a dose of 'tragic element' to Jiang's lyricism, and cleverly obscured much of the conflict which might have arisen from the way Jiang limited lyricism in the face of real-life situations. In some sense, if one chose to 'betray the politics of reality', one could never emerge as the real victor in history; yet the loser is 'condoned' and considered a winner for his bold act to 'betray or revolt against' the 'brutal politics of reality'.



However, if Wang seeks only to reflect history through the lens of those who succeeded in the face of failure, his 'underdog mentality' was more emotional than practical. He reversed the established paradigms that 'only the winner has the last word' to 'only the loser has the last word', and I cannot help but ask if this is not something that the Left has always enforced on its believers: that is, if one must always 'stand by the weakest class in society', would the result not be that only the weakest class in society can claim to have the only legitimate voices, concerns and needs? To a certain extent, the notion of a 'Chinese lyrical modernity' is perhaps more suited to a meaningful discourse on the topic of 'revolution lyricism' which Wang disapproves of. When Wang seeks to discredit the narrative of revolution in 20th century China or calls 'revolution lyricism' something that belongs to Romanticism and to the Western world, I do not think Wang is likely to succeed in persuading me to share his view. As posited in the works of Lin Yusheng, which Wang is familiar with, the source of a new mentality, one that could completely 'revolutionize' China, will always come from within. And who knows, it might be somewhat attached to the 'lyrical tradition', but not quite in its entirety.

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## Linking Ancient and Contemporary

Continuities and Discontinuities in Chinese Literature

edited by Tiziana Lippiello, Chen Yuehong 陈跃红 and Maddalena Barenghi

# Poetic Taste and Tasting Poetry

Yang Zhu 杨铸

(Peking University, China)

**Abstract** ‘Taste’ is one of the most essential features of the theory of ancient Chinese poetry. Starting from the Six Dynasties and continuing till the late Qing Dynasty, describing a poem with ‘taste’ has a prominent theoretical significance. First of all, ‘taste’ not only represents the deep relationship between the aesthetic experience and the material life, but also shows that artistic enjoyment can transcend material satisfaction. Second, having a dual compatibility, ‘taste’ can interpenetrate the fields of the theory of poetic works and the theory of poetry reading. A masterpiece of poetry has its own ‘taste’, so it must be read by ‘tasting’ it. More importantly, the ‘taste’ and ‘tasting’ disclose the poem’s aesthetic characteristics in an effective manner. The present article tries to explain and describe ‘taste’ with regard to its characteristics, so as to grasp completely the significance of ‘taste’.

**Summary** 1 Introduction. – 2 The Notion of Taste in the Chinese Classics. – 3 Taste in Chinese Poetic Theory.

**Keywords** Wei. Taste. Chinese poetry. Poetic taste.

## 1 Introduction

In ancient Chinese poetic theory the concept of taste is one of the most distinctive.<sup>1</sup>

‘Taste’ (*wei* 味) refers to both the palate and the sense of smell, but the concept of taste in ancient Chinese poetics corresponds to the former rather than the latter.<sup>2</sup>

Taste as a specific criterion for the appreciation of poetry appeared during the Six Dynasties and continued until the Late Qing Dynasty and it still echoes in more recent times. Over time, this concept has acquired a richer and deeper significance.

As a specific criterion of the appreciation of poetry, taste has a profound

1 I wish to thank Wang Qian for the translation work.

2 Admittedly, the ancient poetics involved the sense of smell, too. For instance, Qian Qianyi 钱谦益 (1582-1664) proposed the theory of ‘Scent Meditation’, but it had few echoes and did not become an influential movement.

cultural significance and an important theoretical value. An exploration of its meaning not only helps one appreciate the cultural characteristics of traditional Chinese poetry, but also helps one grasp the unique contribution of traditional Chinese poetics in revealing the laws of poetry.

## 2 The Notion of Taste in the Chinese Classics

The use of the notion of taste in the study of poetry reflects the peculiar spirit of Chinese culture that has been handed down uninterrupted since ancient times.

Taste has its origins in people's diet. Among the relatively basic material needs of early humankind, food was the most essential. The realization that, as the Chinese saying goes, «People regard food as heaven» (*min yi shi wei tian* 民以食為天, *Hanshu* 1962, p. 2108), has been around since ancient times. The earliest fishing, hunting and farming activities were all directly related to securing food provisions.

Over the course of history, human demands have gradually grown, spiritual boundaries have constantly expanded, and social structures have become multi-layered. However, even during periods of unparalleled cultural prosperity, such as the Spring and Autumn and Warring States period (770-221 BC), politics, philosophy and art were latently lead and deeply influenced by basic material needs. The particular concern for taste is a reflection of that influence.

The Pre-Qin period was an important juncture in the establishment of both the imperial system and the political ideas of ancient China. Reportedly, the early state authority was symbolized by the nine tripod cauldrons (*jiu ding* 九鼎):

Formerly, when the Xia dynasty had reached the height of its virtue, [people in] the [nine] distant regions made pictures of the strange beings [in their respective areas] and presented metal as tribute to the nine governors. With the metal, [the rule of Yu] caused cauldrons to be cast on which these beings were represented; [images of] the hundred strange beings were prepared. In this way people were made to recognize [all] spirits and evil influences, so that, when they traveled over rivers and marshes and through mountains and forests, they would encounter no adversities, and spirits such as the *chi* 魑, the *mei* 魅, and the *wangliang* 魍魎 could not bother them. By these means concord reigned between those above and those below, and the people received the favor of Heaven. (*Shisan jing zhushu* 1980, p. 1868; Campany 1996, p. 103)

In the three successive dynasties of Xia 夏 (ca. 2070-1600 BCE), Shang 商 (ca. 1600-1046 BC) and Zhou 周 (1046-221 BC), the *ding* played the most

important role among the sacrificial vessels. However, the original usage of the *ding* was that of a kitchen utensil. *The Book of Rites* (*Liji* 禮記) states: «In the beginning the rites had a close relationship with diet» (*Shisan jing zhushu* 十三經注疏 1980, p. 1415). Furthermore, in the discussion on the philosophy of good government and ruling methods, food metaphors were used, such as «to govern the state is like cooking food» (*tiaoding* 調鼎) or «mixing diverse ingredients to season a soup» (*he geng* 和羹). Other famous instances are that of Yi Yin 伊尹 (1649-1549 BCE) who «persuaded Tang 湯 (King of Shang) with the most delicious arguments (*zhi wei* 至味)» (*Lüshi chunqiu jiaoshi* 呂氏春秋校釋 1984, p. 740), and that of Yanzi who replied to Marquis Qi with ‘soup’ (*geng* 羹; «Zhao gong ershi nian» 昭公二十年, *Zuozhuan, Shisan jing zhushu* 1980, pp. 2093-2094).

The Pre-Qin period is the formative age of Chinese philosophy which suddenly emerged and acquired its essential characteristics. A hundred schools of thought, as «different roads that lead to the same goal» (*Yizhuan* 易傳, *Xici* 繫辭, *Shisan jing zhushu* 1980, p. 87) conducted philosophical speculation and exploration from different levels and angles; they debated intensely and learned from one another. Finally, through their spiritual achievements, they created an ideological model that has continued for over two thousand years. However, during this very fruitful process of growth, taste served as a special reference system and played an irreplaceable role throughout. Harmony (*he* 和) is one of the ideas most valuable to and most esteemed by pre-Qin Confucians. By emphasizing *he*, the Confucians successfully linked social ethics with philosophy. *He* differs from uniformity (*tong* 同), as is evident in the saying «The gentleman aims at harmony, not at uniformity, while the villain aims at uniformity, not at harmony» («*Zilu*» 子路, *Lunyu, Shisan jing zhushu* 1980, p. 2508). *Tong* is monotony, it signifies ossification. On the contrary, *he* indicates the well-balanced coexistence of different and complementary elements that interact and combine, thus forming a new unity at a higher level. «Harmony is fecund, uniformity is barren. To complement one thing with a different thing is called harmony, with which things flourish and join each other; yet to strengthen one thing by adding the same thing (which is called uniformity), brings an end to everything» (*Guoyu* 國語 1978, p. 515; Zhang Yanhua 2007, p. 51). The notion of *he* that Confucians hold in high regard embodies a deep knowledge of society; however, at the level of physical experience, *he* can define the final sublimation of food processing. According to *Zuozhuan*, Yanzi’s 晏子 argument for the distinction between *he* and *tong* was based upon the image of soup cooking:

Harmony can be compared to a stew. Water, fire, vinegar, mince meat, salt and plums, with which to cook the fish and the meat. It is brought to boil with firewood. Next the cook blends (*he*) the ingredients, equalizing the stew by means of seasonings, adding whatever is deficient and car-

rying off whatever is in excess. Then his Lord eats it and thus brings his heart at ease». (*Shisan jing zhushu* 1980, p. 2093; Sterckx 2011, p. 61)

One could say that without a subtle experience of food tasting it would have been difficult to generate the Confucian consciousness of 'harmony'. Pre-Qin Taoists regarded the Way (*dao* 道) as the fundament of all. The *dao*, in the eyes of the Taoist, is metaphysical, and itself means non-existent (*wu* 無); precisely because of its not existing, the *dao* is able to govern all that which is existent (*wan you* 萬有). The Taoist drew from the notion of taste in their elucidation of the *dao*. In fact, *Laozi* took a stand against taste, according to him «The five flavors dull the palate» (*Laozi*, chapter 12, *Laozi xinyi* 1978, p. 84). However, he did not reject defining the *dao* from the point of view of taste. Originally, the *dao* is non-existent (*wu* 無), therefore, the *dao* not only has no sound, no shape, no name, but also «has no flavor and seems insipid» (*Laozi*, chapter 35, *Laozi xinyi* 1978, p. 136). Subsequently, *Laozi* put forward the doctrine of «tasting the flavorless» (*Laozi*, chapter 63, *Laozi xinyi* 1978). The flavorless (*wuwei* 無味) is not considered one of the five flavors, but is rather the supreme flavor that outshines the other five, i.e. it is the *dao*. Each of the five flavors has its own distinctive savor, yet at the same time each has its flaws. Hence, only «tasting without discerning any flavor» can remove all limitations and include all flavors. Undoubtedly, this intuition is best expressed by Su Zhe 蘇轍 (1039-1112) when, in his *Laozi jie* 老子解 (Explanation of the *Daodejing*), writes: «Find taste in the flavorless and you will experience all flavors» (*Laozi jie* 老子解 1959, p. 54).

In the Pre-Qin period, ancient Chinese art achieved a certain degree of development. Art generates from man's emotions and thus its origins have a subtle connection with taste, which is also based on sensations. Mentions of vision and hearing along with taste appear frequently in Pre-Qin literature. For instance, in *Guoyu* 國語 (Discourses of the States) it is stated: «There is no music in a single note, no decoration in a single item, no relish in a single taste» («Zhengyu» 鄭語, *Guoyu* 1978, p. 516). In *The Mencius* one reads «I saw the mouths have the same preferences in flavors, ears have the same preferences in sounds, eyes have the same preferences in attractiveness» («Gaozi» 告子, *Mengzi*, *Shisan jing zhushu* 1980, p. 2749; Norden 2008, p. 151). Among the arts, music once occupied the central position of social culture for its direct connection with social rites (*li* 禮). Moreover, music maintained a strikingly close relation to taste. An example of this relation is the frequent assertion that «musical sound is also like taste», which derives from Yanzi's statement: «Musical sound is also like taste. [Music] is made up of the combination of one air (*yi qi* 一氣), two bodies (*er ti* 二體), three genres (*san lei* 三類), four materials (*si wu* 四物), five sounds (*wu sheng* 五聲), six pitch pipes (*liu lv* 六律), seven notes (*qi yin* 七音), eight winds (*ba feng* 八風), and the nine songs (*jiu ge*

九歌). Music is the fine blend of clear and turbid, small and big, short and long, fast and slow, sad and happy, strong and soft, late and quick, high and low, out and in, dense and scanty. The gentlemen listen to it to keep their minds tranquil». («Zhao gong ershi nian» 昭公二十年, *Zuozhuan, Shisan jing zhushu* 1980, pp. 2093-2094). Apparently, for Yanzi the relation between the elements which, combined and integrated, make up music is completely identical to that harmonious blend of ingredients that produces taste. Another example in which a correspondence between *yue* 樂 (music) and *wei* 味 (taste) is established can be seen in the *Liji* 禮記 (Book of Rites): «Hence the greatest achievements of music were not in the perfection of the airs; the (efficacy) of the ceremonies in the sacrificial offerings was not in the exquisiteness of the flavours. In the lute's for the Qing Miao 清廟 the strings were of red (boiled) silk, and the holes were wide apart; one lute began, and (only) three others joined it; there was much melody not brought out. In the ceremonies of the great sacrifices, the dark-coloured liquor took precedence, and on the stands were uncooked fish, while the grand soup had no condiments: there was much flavour left undeveloped». («Yueji» 樂記, *Liji, Shisanjing zhushu* 1980, p. 1528; Legge 1990, pp. 95-96). It goes without saying that art is one of the highest forms of expression created by the human spirit and in the end its taste belongs to a different realm compared with that of food. Aesthetic enjoyment transcends the level of tasting food, a fact clearly recognized already in the Pre-Qin period. Confucius, who «did not dislike to have his rice finely cleaned, or to have his meat minced» («Xiangdang» 鄉黨, *Lunyu, Shisan jing zhushu* 1980, p. 2495) was a typical gourmet. However, he was even more an expert in music. According to the *Lunyu*, «when the Master [Confucius] was in the state of Qi, he heard the melody of *Shao* 韶, and for three months he was not aware of the taste of the meat he ate. He said, 'I never dreamt that the joys of music could reach such heights'» («Shu er» 述而, *Lunyu, Shisan jing zhushu* 1980, p. 2482).

To conclude, since the Pre-Qin period, a cultural tradition with a strong emphasis on taste developed, a tradition that formed a powerful link between the construction of a spiritual culture and the gratification of material needs. It is this cultural tradition that provided the fertile soil for the growth of the notion of taste in poetic theory.

### 3 Taste in Chinese Poetic Theory

Reference to the category of taste in the appreciation of poems effectively unveils the artistic rules at the heart of poetry.

The notion of taste stems from human culinary experience, to which value judgment was gradually attributed. On the one hand, taste is one of the characteristics of food itself; on the other hand, taste is dependent



on human palate. Taste implies a relationship between human beings and food. It indicates that food not only provides the nourishment that sustains and gives continuity to human life, but also stimulates human senses. The experience of taste cannot be separated from the satisfaction of physiological demands; at the same time, taste has already penetrated and affected our sensory judgments on what is appropriate for humans.

The formation of aesthetic perception was, in its early stage, subtly interlocked with taste. Xu Shen 許慎 (ca. 58-147), in his *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字 (Explaining Graphs and Analyzing Characters), writes: «The written word *mei* 美, 'beauty', means sweet. It is a combination of the characters *yang* 羊, 'sheep', and *da* 大, 'big'. Among the six domestic animals, the sheep was raised primarily for its tasty meat» (*Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字 1963, p. 78). In Xu Shen's view, the earliest concept of beauty was related to tasty mutton, while the aesthetic sense of beauty rested on the satisfaction derived from eating mutton. The etymological interpretation of the Chinese character obviously discloses significant cultural information.

Taste, as related to humans' sense of taste, has the following two characteristics: first, the differences and variations of taste itself are always very subtle and delicate, and therefore hard to grasp and express precisely. This is what the ancients meant by saying: «The variations within the *ding* are so delicate and subtle that they defy words and conceptualization» («Ben wei» 本味, *Lüshi chunqiu jiaoshi* 呂氏春秋校釋 1984, p. 740). Second, taste is gradually released from food after its chemical decomposition in one's mouth; the manner in which taste surfaces is slow and extended over time, while gradually intensifying. These two features coincide both with the aesthetic characteristics of poetic works and with their appreciation.

As a consequence, when applying the concept of taste in the discussion of poems, ancient Chinese poetic theory did not run the risk of being rigid and forcing texts, rather it encompassed a deep understanding of poetic rules and opened a window that reveals typically oriental features to one's view.

Most noticeably, in the history of ancient Chinese literary studies, taste, with its peculiar bipolarity, links both the theory of poetic works and the theory of the reading of poetry. Indeed, excellent poems have taste, whereas the reading of excellent poems implies an exercise in taste. One could say that the concept of taste stimulated an intensification of both the writing of poetry and the reading of poetry. On the one hand, taste is a common feature of all excellent poems.

The Six Dynasties was a period of splendid accomplishments in poetic theory; it was also a period when the notion of taste was formally introduced and subsequently exerted a powerful impact on poetics. On the initiative of Liu Xie 劉勰 (ca. 467-522) and Zhong Rong 鐘嶸 (468- 518 AD) the concept of taste stood out as one of the primary criteria for judging whether a poem had aesthetic appeal. Liu Xie, in his book *Wenxin diao-*

*long* 文心雕龍 (The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons), a work notable for its «breadth and clarity» (Zhang Xuecheng, *Wenshi tongyi jiaozhu* 1985, p. 559), employs on different occasions the idea of taste to discuss poetry. In particular, he employs taste in alternative to or overlapping with the key notions of ‘invisible elegance’ (*yinxiu* 隱秀) and ‘natural scenery’ (*wuse* 物色), which are used to describe the lingering aesthetic effect of poems. For instance, the expression ‘implied aftertastes’ (*Yuwei Qubao* 餘味曲包) (*Wenxin diaolong zhu* 文心雕龍注 1958, p. 633) is used to qualify a poem that accords with the category ‘invisible elegance’ (*yinxiu* 隱秀); the expression «a taste of exhilarating lightness that refreshes and kindles the emotions» 味飄飄而輕舉，情晔晔而更新 (1958, p. 694) conveys approval for that kind of pastoral poem which, following a tradition dating back to the *xing* 興 poems in the *Book of Songs*, transforms ‘natural scenery’ into poetic images that enhance their aesthetic effect. *Shipin* 詩品 (Gradations of Poets) by Zhong Rong is a special treatise on the composition of five-character poems. According to Zhong Rong, taste is the watershed between good and bad poetry. The main reason Zhong Rong rejected four-character poems and opted for five-character poems is that «the five-character poems occupy the leading position in literature», «expound the truth and create images, express emotions thoroughly and describe natural scenery, are the most detailed and aptly worded», and «are the tastiest among all works» (*Shipin zhu* 詩品注 1961, p. 4). Metaphysical poetry (*xuanyan shi* 玄言詩) was once popular during the Jin Dynasty, but failed to grow as a mature poetic genre. The reason for this failure is thus described in the Preface: «During the Yongjia period, Huang-Lao was revered; empty talk was valued to some extent. The verses of that time, more philosophical than literary, are tasteless» (1961, p. 3). A careful review shows that, although at an initial stage, Liu Xie and Zhong Rong already described taste in poetic works as something generated from true emotions and vivid images.

Tang dynasty poems attained the acme of perfection by harmoniously blending depictions of scenery with the manifestations of emotions. Thereupon, the discussion of poetic taste became closely associated with the interaction of emotions and natural sceneries. The *Bunkyo hifuron* 文鏡秘府論 (Secret Treasury of the Mirror of Letters), compiled by the Japanese Buddhist monk Bianzhao Jingang 遍照金剛 (Henzō Kinkō) known as Kūkai 空海, preserves some Tang Dynasty materials of literary criticism on poetry from the perspective of taste. Some examples are statements like: «Poetry should not value only the philosophical content; it should rather be concerned with the scenery, for then the verses will have delicate taste [...]; if scenery and philosophy do not blend together, words will sound reasonable but (be) tasteless» («Shiqi shi», Seventeen Types of Momentum of Poetry; *Wenjing mifu lun* 1975, p. 43), or «If words merely describe natural scenery, they may be fine yet without taste» (see «Lun wen yi» 論文意, Discus-

sions on the Artistic Conceptions of Poetry; *Wenjing mifu lun* 1975, p. 131). Evidently, in these texts the blending into one of emotions and scenery is considered the source of poetic taste. The doctrine of 'Meaning Behind Taste' by late Tang Dynasty poet Sikong Tu 司空圖 (837-908) represented a further step forward for the theory of poetic taste. In «Yu Li Sheng lun shi shu» 與李生論詩書 (Letter to Mr. Li on Poetry), he writes:

In my opinion, distinguishing one's tastes is a precondition to any discussion of poetry. South of the Yangtze River and of the Five Ridges, the condiments are very strong, for example vinegar is not used to add a sour flavor to food, but to make it completely acidic; similarly, salt is not used to add a salty flavor, but to make food completely salty. People of the Central Plains only use these ingredients to alleviate their hunger, when they lack delicious tastes, but they know other tastes besides acidic and salty [...] Now your poems, contemporary poets truly feel difficult (to match them), if you pay more attention to the perfection (of the language and taste), (you) will acquire the spirit out of taste. (*Sikong biaosheng wenji* 司空表聖文集 1994, pp. 24, 26)

Hence, Sikong Tu regards 'distinguishing tastes' as the prerequisite of commenting on poems, and highlights 'meaning behind taste' to stress the fact that the most brilliant works of poetry should have that 'mellow taste' (*chunmei* 醇美) which stands beyond concrete tastes such as salty, acidic, etc. Here it is clear how the Taoists' use of the category 'Tasteless' (*wuwei* 無味) to discuss the *dao* exerted a far reaching influence. Indeed, what the Taoists call '*wuwei*' (tasteless) is nothing but '*the*' taste beyond taste.

During the Song, Yuan, Ming and Qing Dynasties, applying the notion of taste to the appreciation of poetry became very common. Thus, Song Dynasty poet Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007-1072) in «Shuigu Yexing» 水穀夜行 (Traveling at Night in Shuigu) says in praise of the poems by Mei Yaochen 梅堯臣 (1002-1060): «[Reading them] is like eating olives, their taste lasts for long» (*Ouyang Xiu quanji* 歐陽修全集 2001, p. 29). Another Song Dynasty author, Wei Tai 魏泰 (11th-12th century) in «Lin Han Yinju Shihua» 臨漢隱居詩話 (Remarks on poetry in my hermitage by the Han River), deemed that: «Any poem is like a good wine that brings unending taste, like an inexhaustible spring; no matter how long you chew it, the taste continues to grow. As for Yongshu 永叔 (Ouyang Xiu)'s poems, they show talent and consummate skill, his verses are fresh and vigorous, but unfortunately have little taste» (*Lidai shihua* 歷代詩話 1981, p. 323). In *Sui Han Tang shihua* 歲寒堂詩話 (Remarks on Poetry from the Hall for Cold Season by Zhang Jie 張戒 (ca. 12th century) one finds these comments:

[Consider these verses by Tao] Yuanming 淵明: 'Deep in an alley a dog barks, a cock crows at the top of a mulberry tree' and 'While picking

chrysanthemums under the Eastern fence, my gaze upon the Southern mountain rests'. Although these sceneries are revealed before one's eyes, it's impossible to see them without a relaxed and peaceful mind. (Yuanming's) poetic taste is beyond reach». (*Lidai shihua xubian* 歷代詩話續編 1983, p. 453)

Chen Shan 陈善 (11th-12th century): when reading Yuanming's poems for the first time they seem dull, however by reading them over and again, they will relieve they flavour.

Finally, Yang Wanli 楊萬裡 (1127-1206 AD) observes that «poems whose words come to an end but whose taste lingers on are the best ones» (*Chengzhai shihua* 誠齋詩話 in *Lidai shihua xubian* 1983, p. 137).

During the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368 AD), Jie Xisi 揭傒斯 (1274-1344) proposed «seeking the true taste from the insipid». In his opinion:

Sikong Tu of the Tang Dynasty taught people how to write poems, (emphasizing that one) should recognize the taste beyond taste. Po Gong 坡公 [Su Dongpo 蘇東坡, 1037-1101] thought highly of these words [...] People take food for its taste; if it were tasteless, who would eat it? The ancients were committed to it (i.e. the taste beyond taste). [In the opinion of the ancients, poems] should have few words but much meaning, and when approaching the end, they should give the impression to suddenly reveal another meaning. While excellent poems are endowed with evocations and implications, their delicate taste is beyond spicy, sweet, sour and salty, and it (taste) lasts longer on the tongue [...]. If one learns from Tao (Tao Yuanmin 陶淵明, ca. 365-427), Wang (Wang Wei 王維, ca.701-761), Wei (Wei Yingwu 韋應物, 737-792) Liu (Liu Zongyuan 柳宗元, 773-819) and other poets, he should seek the true taste from the insipid. At first sight one cannot sense it, but the longer one gazes the harder it is to forget it. Just like Lu Hongjian 陸鴻漸 (Lu Yu 陸羽, 733-804) who tasted all the springs under heaven and realized that Yangzi Zhongling 揚子中靈<sup>3</sup> was the best: the taste of its water was light but not bland, in fact it was the best taste in the world, and the taste of food could not match it. But people who clearly know the taste of food are rare, there are fewer who know the taste of springs». (*Yuandai shi fajiao kao* 2001, p. 321)

In the Ming Dynasty, Lu Shiyong 陸時雍 (17th century) in his *Shijing* 詩鏡 (Poetry Mirror) argued that «the ancients were skilled in expressing emotions and transferring images into abstraction, thereby (making the

3 Yangzi Zhongling, alternatively called Yangzi Zhongling 揚子中冷, is the name of a famous spring in the middle course of the Yangzi River.

reader) feel the long-lasting taste and beautiful words of their works» («Shijing zonglun» 詩鏡總論, *Lidai shihua xubian* 1983, p. 1403). Another Ming Dynasty author, Li Kaixian 李開先 (1502-1568), in «Xiye Chunyou Ci Xu» 西野春遊詞序 (Preface of the Spring Outing by Xiye) emphasized that «it is better for poems to be enduring and have an aftertaste» (*Li Kaixian quanji* 李開先全集 2014, p. 596). In the Qing Dynasty, He Yisun 賀貽孫 (1605-1688) wrote that «With regards to the poems of Li [Li Bai 李白, 701-762] and Du [Du Fu 杜甫, 712-770], and the prose of Han [Han Yu 韓愈, 768-824] and Su [Su Dongpo 蘇東坡, 1037-1101], when one reads one or two [of them] he feels he can learn and be capable of equaling them. [If he] tries to read tens [of them], then he can find that they are appealing. [If he] reads all the works, the more [he reads], the more amazement he will find. By repeatedly reciting them up to tens of times, his mouth will start drooling [for] the wonderful lingering flavor» (*Shifa* 詩筏, *Qing shihua xubian* 清詩話續編 1983, p. 135). Wu Leifa 吳雷發 (17th-18th century) in his *Humble opinions on poetry* (*Shuoshi Guankuai* 說詩管蒯) is of the opinion that poems with «taste beyond taste, stand out from the rest» (*Qing shihua* 清詩話 1963, p. 905). Shen Deqian 沈德潛 (1673-1769), who held in high consideration the seven-character quatrains of Li Bai 李白 (701-762), wrote that «the seven-character quatrains should be close to words but far from emotions, about to speak out but then hold back. These poems seem only to describe a visible scenery with spoken words, but there are overtones and the taste beyond tastes, (which make) people feel far away. Tai Bai 太白 [Li Bai] could accomplish it» (*Shuoshi Zuiyu* 說詩碎語. *Qing shihua* 清詩話 1963, p. 542). Liu Tiren 劉體仁 (1624-1684) drew support from the organization of Tang poems into early, flourishing, middle and late periods to discuss the *ci* 詞 (song lyric) genre. He thought that «the *ci* of early Ming paralleled the poems of late Tang». He thus praised the *ci*: «The fantastic taste of the *ci*, one could not even dream about it» (*Qisong tang Ciyi* 七頌堂詞繹, *Cihua congbian* 詞話叢編 1986, p. 618). Chen Tingchuo 陳廷焯 (1853-1892) in his *Baiyuzhai Cihua* 白雨齋詞話 (Song-Lyric Talks from the White Rain Studio) commented on the *ci* poems of Zhou Bangyan 周邦彥 (1056-1121), writing: «Their exquisiteness suggests while saying nothing, therefore their taste endures». He also valued Xin Qiji's 辛棄疾 *ci* poems: «Some of Jiaxuan's (Xin Qiji, 1140-1207) *ci* are simple and unadorned, however have an endless aftertaste» (*Cihua congbian* 詞話叢編 1986, pp. 3787, 3911).

In more than one thousand years of literature, it is possible to find either the single word taste (*wei* 味), or compound terms such as 'flavor' (*ziwei* 滋味), 'true taste' (*zhenwei* 真味), 'excellent taste' (*zhiwei* 至味), 'overtone, flavour' (*yiwei* 意味), 'sentiment' (*qingwei* 情味), 'lingering taste' (*yunwei* 韻味), 'divine flavor' (*shenwei* 神味), 'remaining taste' (*yiwei* 遺味), 'aftertaste' (*yuwei* 餘味), 'beyond tastes' (*wei wai wei* 味外味) [...] Taste was considered one of the elementary standards for judging the quality of poetic works:

excellent poems leave the reader with an endless aftertaste, and tasteless poems belonged to an inferior quality.

Ancient Chinese poems stem from emotions, rely on the use of images and pursue the creation of an artistic conception which «displays indescribable sceneries as if they were in front of one's eyes, containing endless meanings beyond words» (Ouyang Xiu, *Liuyi shihua* 六一詩話, *Lidaishihua* 歷代詩話 1981, p. 267). The touching, delicate and long-lasting aesthetic effect of classical poems is expressed through the concept of taste, which does not adhere to old literary conventions but precisely points out the pertinent gist of poetry with simple expression. On the other hand, it is necessary to read poetry from the perspective of tasting. Wei, as a noun, means flavor; as a verb, it indicates the sensorial process of gustation, i.e. tasting. The two meanings are interrelated: in order to distinguish a flavor it is necessary to taste, while to taste is the only way to experience a flavor.

Laozi's doctrine of 'tasting the flavorless', a notion that goes beyond the experience of food, provides the earliest instance of the use of *wei* (taste) as a verb. Thereafter, more common examples are expressions such as «tasting the Confucian Classics» 含味經籍郎顛傳 *Hou Han shu* 後漢書 80.1070), «clarifying the mind to taste the images» 澄懷味象宗炳畫山水序 *Quan Song wen* 64.2545), and so on.

Almost at the same time that the notion of taste was adopted to illustrate the aesthetic features of poetic works, the verb 'taste' entered into the field of poetic theory as the most suitable way of appreciating poems.

In the Southern Dynasties, Liu Xie and Zhong Rong while arguing that poems of high quality should have taste, advocated tasting as the best method for reading poetry. The earliest discussion on tasting poems is seen in the chapter entitled «Ming shi» 明詩 (Elucidating Poetry), in the *Wenxin diaolong*, which reads: «Zhang Heng's 張衡 (78-139) elegy, pure and elegant, is worth tasting» (*Wenxin diaolong zhu* 1958, p. 66). In this passage, the notion of *wei* is not only used to explain the profound nature of poetry, but is also transferred to the act of reading to epitomize the attitudes to be adopted in the appreciation of poetry. In another chapter of the *Wenxin diaolong*, «*Qing Cai*» 情采 (Emotion and Literary Expression), one reads that «the silk from Wu easily fades, and the blossoms of the Shun tree are beautiful to no good purpose. As for flowery rhetoric lacking genuine feeling, (one) tastes it and feels dull» (p. 539). Although these arguments are specular, both emphasize the need to taste poetry. Zhong Rong maintained a position consistent with that of Liu Xie's. After having briefly expounded the meaning of the expressive forms of analogy (*xing* 興), metaphor (*bi* 比) and description (*fu* 賦) derived from *Book of Songs* (*Shijing* 詩經), Zhong Rong stresses that one must «combine the three forms [*xing*, *bi* and *fu*], compose with vigor, then embellish [the composition] with flowery language, as well as make it enjoyable and deeply moving, [so as] to achieve the best result» (*Shipin zhu* 1961, p. 4). The reader of

poetry is defined as ‘the one who tastes it’ (*weizhi zhe* 味之者). The *Shipin* has recorded such a comment on Zhang Xie 張協 (?-307)’s poems having ornate rhetoric and sonorous rhyme, so that «those who taste them feel tireless» (使人味之，臚臚不倦). Reading poems was thus regarded as ‘tasting poems’ (*Shipin zhu* 詩品注 1961, p. 18).

Liu Xie and Zhong Rong had several followers throughout history. Moreover, the concepts of ‘detailed tasting’ (*xiangwei* 詳味), ‘carefully tasting’ (*shuwei* 熟味), ‘learned tasting’ (*wanwei* 玩味), ‘savoring’ (*pinwei* 品味), ‘recalling tasting’ (*huiwei* 回味), ‘deep tasting’ (*shenwei* 深味), ‘loud tasting’ (*fengwei* 諷味), ‘pondered tasting’ (*xiwei* 細味), ‘contemplative tasting’ (*xunwei* 尋味), ‘declamatory tasting’ (*songwei* 誦味), ‘mull over tasting’ (*juwei* 咀味) and so on, gradually evolved. For instance, the Buddhist monk Jiaoran 皎然 (730-799) of the mid-Tang Dynasty in his monograph *Shishi* 詩式 (Statutes of Poetry) illustrated how to read poetry through the notion of ‘detailed tasting.’ Another poet, Buddhist monk Huihong 惠洪 (1071-1128) of the Song Dynasty, in his book *Lengzhai yehua* 冷齋夜話 (Nighttime Chats in Cold Studio), reports this critique of the poem «Yu Weng» 漁翁 (An old Fisherman) by Liu Zongyuan 柳宗元 (773-819): «Liu Zihou’s 柳子厚 [Liu Zongyuan] poem reads: ‘At night beside the western cliff, he sleeps in his lean-to; at dawn he drinks the bright clear Xiang, burns the bamboos of Chu. The smoke is gone, the sun comes out, by now he is unseen: in crags and waters green. Far down the middle reaches he turns back and sees the view, empty of mind, and above the cliffs, the idle clouds pursue.’ (Li and Samei 2010, pp. 179-180). [Su] Dongpo [蘇] 蘇東坡東坡 (1037-1101) said that ‘poetry treasures something of peculiar interest (*qiqū* 奇趣); something of interest (*qū* 趣) may be unusual but reasonable. Carefully tasting it (*shuwei* 熟味), this poem has ‘peculiar interest’. However, the last two verses seem unnecessary» (*Lengzhai Yehua* 冷齋夜話 1988, pp. 43-44). Whether the last two sentences of Liu’s poem were redundant or not, it is a matter of preference. However, in the mind of Huihong, ‘carefully tasting’ a poem is the correct way of reading. Zhang Jie in the *Suihantang Shihua* expressed his admiration for Du Fu’s poetry, saying that «only he appreciated Confucius’ original intention in deleting the songs». He thought that «if the readers could leave his words aside, seek the implied meaning and linger over his poems, then they will experience Zi Mei’s emotions» (*Lidai shihua xubian* 1983, p. 470). In *Yougu tang shihua* 優古堂詩話 (Yougu Tang Remarks on Poetry), Wu Jian 吳升 (1097-1132 ca.), while discussing Wang Anshi 王安石 (1021-1086), observed that «as for Jinggong’s 荆公 (Wang Anshi) poems, if one «tastes them» accurately, then he can seize the sense of leisure and carefreeness» (*Lidai shihua xubian* 1983, p. 266). During the Yuan Dynasty, Yang Zai 楊載 (1271-1323) discusses the old five-character verse (*wuyan gushi* 五言古詩) and writes «observing the ancient poems of the Han and Wei dynasties, one can feel something appealing and inspiring. For instance, *Gushi shijiu shou* 古詩十九首 (Nineteen Old Poems),

should be recited and pondered over and over, then the *qu* 趣 (interest and charm) will appear» (*Shifa Jiashu* 詩法家數, *Lidai shihua* 1981, p. 731). By the Ming Dynasty, Li Dongyang 李東陽 (1447-1516) manifests in *Lutang shihua* 麓堂詩話 (Remarks on Poetry From the Hall at the Foot of the Mountain) his veiled criticism of the move to restore blindly the ancient literary conventions and writes:

Lin Ziyu's (14th century) 林子羽 [Lin Hong] *Mingsheng ji* 鳴盛集 (The Tenor of Poetry at its Best) simply stuck to the form of the Tang, and Yuan Kai's 袁凱 (14th century) *Zaiye ji* 在野集 only learned from Du [Fu]; they tried their best to imitate the words, the syntax, as well as the titles. At a first glance the works resemble the old versions. However, if one tastes their poems carefully, and wants to find outstanding poems with emotions that come from the heart, he will count very few of them. (*Lidai shihua xubian* 1983, p. 1374)

What Li Dongyang calls 'pondered tasting' is intended as the opposite of a sudden view (*zhoushi* 驟視), which represented a more detailed and deeper reading of poetry. In his *Shijing* (Poetry Mirror), Lu Shiyong selected Du Fu's seven character *lushi* 律詩, which well exemplify Du's profound and forceful poetic style, and commented: «Shaoling's (Du Fu) seven-character *lushi* are very cultured and refined. Their words resonate without saying everything, while the feelings are plentiful; emotions are projected into sceneries and sceneries contain feelings: one recitation, three sighing pauses, and an infinite aftertaste» (*Lidai shihua xubian* 1983, p. 1416). In the Qing Dynasty, Mao Xianshu 毛先舒 (1620-1688) in *Shibian di* 詩辯坻 (Discernment on Poetry) selected some famous verses that «since antiquity have been in circulation among the connoisseurs», such as «The great river flows day and night», «Clear water is like white silk», «Spring grasses come to life beside the pond», and «Swallows drop bits of mud from the desolate beams» and so on, and states: «Just tasting a few words of the verses, one can be enlightened» (*Qing shihua xubian* 清詩話續編 1983, pp. 35-36). He Shang 賀裳 (ca.1681) discusses most of the Tang and Song Dynasties poets in *Zaijiuyuan Shihua* 載酒園詩話 (Remarks on Poetry from the Carrying Wine Garden) and affirms that the poems by Liu Xiyi 劉希夷 (651-679) «leave an unsatisfied ruminative taste (*xunwei wujin* 尋味無盡)». One also has to mention poems such as *Jiuwei Shengjin* 久味生津 (With Good Relish) by Wang Changling 王昌齡 (698-756) and *Juanyong Kewei* 雋永可味 (Meaningful) by Wang Yucheng 王禹偁 (954-1001) Shen Deqian 沈德潛 (1673-1769), in the introductory notes to the *Tangshi Biecai* 唐詩別裁 (Anthology of Tang poetry) writes: «What is valued in poems is depth and what is formed by the spirit (*qi* 氣); at a first glance it seems without quality, but after tasting it for a long time, it feels permeated with charm. This type of poems belongs with the superior ones» (*Tangshi biecaiji* 唐詩



別裁集 1975, p. 5). Pan Deyu 潘德輿 (1785-1839) thought that the beautiful lines of the five-character verses of the prosperous Tang Dynasty «are all leisure and delight, every time one recites and tastes them, all melancholy disappears» (*Qing shihua xubian* 清詩話續編 1983, pp. 2127-2128). Obviously, the only way to grasp the meaning of superior poetic works is to taste them. Qian Peizhong 錢裴仲 (17th-18th century) further advocated tasting as the 'method for reading *ci* poetry' in *Yuhua'an Cihua* 雨華庵詞話 (Song Lyric Talks from the Rain Flower Hut). He emphasized: «The method of reading *ci* is to read it carefully and sensibly. First of all, one should eliminate all distractions and then devote one's heart and soul to it; stare at it, scrutinize it and taste it, and then one will appreciate the ingenuity of the ancients» (*Cihua congbian* 詞話叢編 1986, p. 3012).

Through a long accumulation of theoretic reflection, ancient Chinese poetics has established such a consensus: the finest way of reading poetry is to taste it. First, taste is feeling rather than understanding, in other words, tasting poetry is to experience it, not to analyze it rationally. In the Ming Dynasty, Xie Zhen 謝榛 (1495-1575) mentioned that «as for the poems, some are comprehensible, some are subtle, and some others do not need to be understood, like the reflection of the moon in the water and of the flowers in a mirror, which do not leave tangible traces» (*Lidai shihua xubian* 1983, p. 1137). As for poetic works, the part that «can be explained» (*kejie* 可解) is an addition; while the part that «cannot be explained and does not need to be explained» (*bu kejie* 不可解, *bu bi jie* 不必解) is the real nature. To insist on explanation brings one to interpret and read information that is not there. This is the case, for instance, Wang Wei's 王維 (699-759) poem *Guan lie* 觀獵 (Watching a Hunt), in which «Eagle's eyes scan swiftly through withered grass. Horse runs with lighter hoofs when snow thaws» 草枯鷹眼疾, 雪盡馬蹄輕 (Owen 1997, p. 386) is a metaphor indicating Sovereign and Minister in harmony. Obviously, this is a far cry from the correct reading of poetry. Second, to taste is to feel and to experience cautiously what can be understood but difficult to express exactly in words. The climax of poetic works are those in which emotions and images combine harmoniously «like the antelope that hangs by its horns leaving no traces to be followed» 羚羊掛角, 無跡可求, «a limpid and sparkling quality that can never quite be fixed» 透徹玲瓏, 不可湊泊, and «like tones in the empty air, or color in a face, or moonlight in the water, or an image in a mirror» 如空中之音, 相中之色, 水中之月, 鏡中之象, 言有盡而意無窮 («*Canglang shihua*» 滄浪詩話, *Lidai shihua* 1981, p. 688). This is what is meant by «it can be experienced, but it cannot be put in words» 可以意會, 不可以言宣 (Shen Yu 神彘 *Shige* 詩格, *Quantang wudai shige jiaokao* 全唐五代詩格校考 1996, p. 467). When reading poems, one can catch the nuances and the tacit sense but «cannot explain the beauty to others» 妙處難與君說. Third, to taste poetry is a gradual deepening process. Chinese poetry has invariably insisted on the paramount value of evoca-

tion, something which has been gaining strength since the *bi* and *xing* genres that stemmed from the *Shijing* 詩經 (*Book of Poetry*). Li Dongyang in his book *Lutang shihua* writes: «*Bi* and *xing* use objects to express emotions, since direct statements about emotions have limitations and cannot express them in depth. Only through objects – by describing and chanting them – one can express one’s inspiration: although one’s words will come to an end, the meaning is endless» (*Lidai shihua xubian* 1983, pp. 1374-1375). Li Chonghua 李重華 (1682-1755) in *Zhenyizhai shishuo* 貞一齋詩說 (Remarks on Poetry from Zhenyi Studio) also said: «The *xing* style provides much help to the poets. Suddenly they talk about plants and animals; they do not name the season but allude to it; they do not describe the scenery but hint at it; they do not speak about worldly matters but let them emerge. Therefore, the *xing* bequeaths poetry with both spirit and truth» (*Qing shihua* 清詩話 1963, p. 930). To appreciate verses that are permeated by the quintessence of *bi* 比 and *xing* 興, it is necessary to savor slowly so as to proceed from the exterior to the interior and from the shallow to the deep, rather than trying to cover too much with only a simple glance. Fourth, tasting has a character of distinct individuality. Everyone has his/her own taste and different persons may have diverse feelings about the same food; this is consistent with poetry appreciation. Reading poems means the mutual acceptance and communion between the readers and the works of poetry. At this point, the personality of the reader has been fully respected, and opinions are allowed free rein. Wang Fuzhi 王夫之 (1619-1692) in *Jiangzhai shihua* 薑齋詩話 (Remarks on Poetry from Ginger Studio) affirmed the right of readers to «search for what they wish from the starting point of their emotions» 讀者各以其情而自得 (*Qing shihua* 清詩話 1963, p. 3). Shen Deqian 沈德潛 (1673-1769), in the introduction to *Tangshi biecai ji* 唐詩別裁集 (A Collection of Tang Poetry Specially Compiled) talked about the endless meaning of the ancients’ words, which, when read by later people may be «appreciated according to each reader’s different temperament and understanding» 隨其性情淺深高下, 各有會心 (*Tangshi biecai ji* 1975, p. 5).

Adopting the concept of taste to comment on poetry is not only beneficial to the conceptualization of the characteristics of poetry and poetry reading, but also enlightens us on the fact that when we study poetry, the distinction between literary theory and the theory of reading is relative. Pondering over reading poetry cannot ignore the peculiarity of poetic works; on the other hand, when confronting poetic works, one should also pay attention to the requisites for poetry reading. To keep to one side inevitably leads to stereotypes. It is essential to link up the two positions, which in turn will lead to one’s acquiring a broader field of vision.

The concept of taste in ancient Chinese poetic theory cannot be understood as a scientific notion, as in terms of Western science, for it defies

precise definitions. However, the simple word 'taste' reflects the unique features of traditional Chinese culture and well represents the essence of ancient Chinese poetic theory.

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## Linking Ancient and Contemporary

Continuities and Discontinuities in Chinese Literature

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## Voices of the Dead

### Tao Yuanming and Emily Dickinson's Poems on Their Own Death

Qin Liyan 秦立彦

(Peking University, China)

**Abstract** Ancient Chinese poet Tao Yuanming (365-427) and American poet Emily Dickinson (1830-1886) both write poems on a peculiar theme: the post-death condition with the voice 'I' in the poems presented as already dead. This paper explores this rare theme in the two poets and analyzes their similarities and differences in this respect. Both poets are hermits, sharpening their sensitivity to life, death and the natural world. Tao's vision of the after-death world is very certain, and forms a continuous and unified narrative, while Dickinson describes a new after-death scenario each time, highlighting her uncertainty of it. Yet, after all, these poems by Tao and Dickinson perhaps tell us more about their obsession with life, rather than death.

**Keywords** Tao Yuanming. Emily Dickinson. Death.

It is easy to suppose that Tao Yuanming 陶渊明 (365-427), a fourth- and fifth-century Chinese poet, and Emily Dickinson (1830-1886), a nineteenth-century American poet, might have little in common. Yet, after careful reading, we find much significant overlapping between their works, including portrayals of nature and an acute appreciation and perception of the change of seasons and the fleeting of time. This paper will discuss some poems both poets wrote in the first person about death. For Tao Yuanming, these are the three elegies (*wan ge* 挽歌);<sup>1</sup> likewise, Dickinson has about

1 Elegy (*wan ge* 挽歌) was a common genre in the Wei and Jin dynasties, but not many elegies were written in the first person. Tao Yuanming's relationship with the literary tradition of elegies has been amply studied. His prose work «Lament for my own death» is unique in its format, showing us his liking for such subjects. For the titles of the three elegies written by Tao, there are two versions: «In Imitation of Elegies» («Niwan geci» 拟挽歌辞) or simply «Elegies» («Wan ge shi» 挽歌诗), of which the latter version is used here. Except for this, the texts of Tao cited in this paper are based on Yuan Xingpei's 袁行霈 annotated edition, *Tao Yuanming ji jianzhu* 陶渊明集笺注 2003.

ten poems in this vein. Copied here is the third Elegy («Ni wange ci» 擬挽歌辭) by Tao, along with the poem «Twas just this time, last year, I died» (no. 445) by Dickinson:<sup>2</sup>

荒草何茫茫，白杨亦萧萧。严霜九月中，送我出远郊。四面无人居，高坟正嵯峣。马为仰天鸣，风为自萧条。幽室一已闭，千年不复朝。千年不复朝，贤达无奈何。向来相送人，各自还其家。亲戚或余悲，他人亦已歌。死去何所道，托体同山阿。

The bleak grassland is vast, the white poplars are moaning. In the cold frost of September, I am taken far out of the city. Nobody lives around, and the tombs are high. The horses are neighing to the sky, and the desolate wind is blowing. Once the dark room is closed, there will be no dawn in thousands of years. There will be no dawn in thousands of years, and sages can do nothing about it. Those who saw me off return to their homes. My relatives may grieve, others are already singing. To die means to be nothing, and to entrust your body to the mountains. (*Tao Yuanming ji jianzhu* 2003, pp. 424-425)<sup>3</sup>

'Twas just this time, last year, I died.  
I know I heard the Corn,  
When I was carried by the Farms -  
It had the Tassels on -  
[...]  
I wondered which would miss me, least,  
And when Thanksgiving, came,  
If Father'd multiply the plates -  
To make an even Sum -

And would it blur the Christmas glee  
My stocking hang too high  
For any Santa Claus to reach  
The Altitude of me -

But this sort, grieved myself,  
And so, I thought the other way,  
How just this time, some perfect year -  
Themselves, should come to me -  
(Dickinson 1961, p. 214)

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2 Emily Dickinson's poems cited in this paper are based on *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson* (1961).

3 All translations of Tao Yuanming's poems are done by the Author of the paper.

Death is a perennial subject in poetry, significant in the poems of both Tao Yuanming and Dickinson. The image of Tao in history is that of a peaceful hermit, whose most anthologized and imitated poems are those about nature and a pastoral life, and whose concern for death is often neglected. Lu Xun pointed out the single-faceted nature of Tao's image, saying that Tao «could not forget death, which is often mentioned in his poems and prose. If this can be studied from another perspective, perhaps a different Tao will emerge» (Lu Xun 2005, pp. 538-539). Elsewhere, Lu Xun also argued that «in the eyes of posterity, Tao Yuanming has been graceful for too long». «He was great, exactly because he was not always solemn and quiet» (v. 6, p. 444). In poems by Dickinson, the dead, death and immortality are all recurring subjects.

Even so, among poems about death by Tao and Dickinson, the two poems presented at the beginning of this essay still seem unusual. This is first caused by their choice of narrator. Dickinson often speaks as 'I' in her poems. In many poems by Tao Yuanming, though the 'I' is not explicit there according to Chinese grammar, we can still see that the narrator is like Tao Yuanming, and the events narrated in the poems either actually happened or were externalizations of psychological states that could actually occur. 'I' appears in both poems presented here, but this narrator is narrating what happens after death. He/She is a dead narrator. In Western poetry, there are many instances of the dead speaking, for example in the *Odyssey*, *Aeneid*, and especially in Dante's *Comedy*, but in those works the dead speak to a living visitor. In Dante's *Divine Comedy*, the narrator is also the only living person. In the case of Tao Yuanming, in accordance with the Chinese tradition of writing elegies, he could choose to make the narrator a friend of the dead or a spectator, but he chose the first-person narrator. In other poems by the two poets, 'I' is living, yet in the two poems here, the narrator is already dead but can still speak, report and write a poem. This creates a distance between the poet and the narrator within the poem. In almost all works by Tao and Dickinson, the poet is almost identical with the speaker in the poems, giving an expectation of autobiographical reading. In the two poems here, the voices are still similar to Tao and Dickinson, as if the poet is narrating his/her own death, heightening the unusual impression it gives to the reader.

Both poems concern the death of the first-person narrator. Anticipating one's own death is again common in both Chinese and Western poetry, but it often takes the form of 'anticipating' a person who is positioned here and now imagining his/her death in the future. Dickinson has some poems in this vein, which stand in sharp contrast to poem no. 445. Those poems are in the future tense or the conditional mood, which agree with our own perception of time and thus appear 'normal'. Examples are «If I should die» (no. 54; Dickinson 1961, p. 29), «If I shouldn't be alive» (no. 182, p. 86), «But if I expire today» (no. 1654, p. 676). Yet in poem no. 445, Dickinson



adopts the past tense, and the death of 'I' already took place a year before. Because of this positioning in time, death, which is anticipated, now becomes something that is taking place right now or has already taken place. In such poems by Tao and Dickinson, a first-person narrator almost identical with the poet speaks from the time of dying or being already dead, and sometimes even from one year or many years after death. Such poems have a strong effect of 'de-familiarization'. They establish a new relationship with the reader, who, like Dante in the *Divine Comedy*, listens to a dead person narrating his/her death, which leads to a surprise or a shock. The corpus of work by Tao Yuanming and Dickinson is rich and colorful and multi-faceted. Their poems on life and its happiness are widely read, which somewhat balances the theme of narrating one's own death, so that it is difficult to label them as 'morbid' based on these poems alone.

These poems embody a deep concern for death, which is particularly strong in Tao and Dickinson, so that they sometimes imagine themselves as being dead. Seen from their biographies, both can be called hermits in their respective societies. Tao refused to be an official, and Dickinson decided to remain at home without leaving the family premises and without seeing strangers. Both choices went against the social mainstream. Tao Yuanming had to endure poverty and anonymity, and Dickinson had to endure loneliness. Compared with Dickinson's choice to stay in her own room, Tao Yuanming's life as a hermit was much more social. He still spent time together with his family, friends and neighbors, working, talking and drinking wine with them. Dickinson was much more isolated, withdrawing even from some important interpersonal relationships.

The two poets chose to be hermits, because, inferring from their works, we can guess that they believed that what people did in the public realms of politics or economics were secondary things or things that implied alienation. They withdrew into a private space, at the opposite end of the public sphere, in a hope to live more freely and more naturally. When the political and economic concerns and many profitless distractions having been pruned or subdued, life became simple. However, a quiet and eventless life does not mean a life that is without its problems. In their quiet and simplicity, some more fundamental problems presented themselves to the poets: existence, life and death, the relationship between human beings and nature. They had more time to spend in nature, cultivating a special spiritual support, but the problem of death was also urgent. Others, immersed in political, economic and social life, might think of death only intermittently and often find it difficult to face. Yet Tao Yuanming and Dickinson were different. They refused to compromise, made the choice of how to live and believed that choice was correct. Their way of life could be chosen, but their way of death could not. Death would take place at an unknown moment in the future, yet since their life trajectory was straight, death could be seen even from afar, and a long-time concern with it became almost an obsession.

Indeed, we can bring in Montaigne here. Montaigne also chose to withdraw from political life, and he also faced the problem of how to overcome the fear of death. For Montaigne, this was the whole point of philosophy (Montaigne 1991, pp. 89-108). He reasoned that death was fearful because it was unfamiliar; in order not to fear it, one needed to make oneself accustomed to it, think of it all the time and even wait for it all the time. Tao Yuanming and Dickinson were not philosophers, they did not choose to familiarize themselves with death on purpose, and it seems that they did not find a way to be always peaceful and reconciled. Yet their poetry vividly portrays from many perspectives the condition of facing death.

The environment they lived in also made death familiar. Death was then visible and almost public, in contrast to the situation now, when, with progress in medical science the mortality rate has drastically decreased, and when death becomes a private event, taking place in relatively isolated, structured and controlled places, not visible to outsiders. The dead now seem to have been more effectively separated from the living.

In the poems of Tao and Dickinson, the boundary between life and death was not that clear-cut. One routinely witnessed death scenes, graves and tombs. In Tao's poetry, there are many descriptions of tombs and ruins. Not only were there many tombs and ruins around his home and village, but sometimes he seemed to seek these places out. The poem «Some people enjoying themselves under the cypress tree at the Zhou tomb» (*Tao Yuanming ji jianzhu* 2003, pp. 106-108) is about a trip to a grave. The pleasure is so acutely felt exactly because of an awareness of the «person(s) under the cypress», i.e., the dead. «To think of the person(s) under the cypress, how can we not enjoy ourselves» («Gan bibo xia ren, an de bu wei huan» 感彼柏下人, 安得不為歡; *Tao Yuanming ji jianzhu* 2003, p. 106). The poet recognizes that the tomb is another world, which makes life even more precious. Also, it is easy to exchange one's position with the person lying under the cypress. The phrase in the title of the poem, «under the cypress tree at the Zhou tomb», includes both the living and the dead. In his everyday life, Tao Yuanming not only saw separate tombs, but a ruin of a once prosperous community, which did not point to one dead person, but to many. A once flourishing world now became a piece of evidence for the line «everything will come to nothing». In his travels, Tao Yuanming again often saw tombs: «I did not see people who would agree with me, but I saw only ancient tombs. Two high tombs on the roadside, those of Bo Ya 伯牙 and Zhuang Zhou 莊周» («Ni guren zhi ba» 擬古人之八; *Tao Yuanming ji jianzhu* 2003, p. 334). Not only those who competed for worldly profits and benefits die, but even respected ancient sages die too. The «person(s) under the cypress tree» and those in the ruins are often anonymous, representing everybody. There is no need to grieve much for them, but it is easy to identify with them.

In Dickinson's poems, we also see a familiarity with death. She mentions how, as children, they played on the graves, how a neighbor died, and how a family just losing one member had to cope with the loss. Besides, as a woman, she sometimes ministered the dead herself, witnessing the process of dying and the changes of a dying body. She paid close attention to these details. We can say that she was intimately familiar with death.

The human world provides evidence of death to the poets, and nature provides another kind of evidence. Tao Yuanming and Dickinson can both be described as poets of the natural world. In their life as hermits, they came into intimate contact with nature, whose trees, grass, flowers and birds often appear in their works as 'characters'. Tao Yuanming's poems about nature are widely known. In springs and summers, he rejoices with nature, and there is no shadow or anxiety in his pleasure. Everything is at home, so is he. «Plants are growing in early summer, and trees are luxuriant around the house. The birds are happily at home, and I love my own home too» (*Tao Yuanming ji jianzhu* 2003, p. 393). The poet finds himself in a situation similar to the birds. He is content with his home and the choice he has made for his life.

However, nature has another face. In his poem «Flourishing trees» («Rongshu» 榮木), Tao Yuanming writes that «the flourishing trees are rooted here. They have flowers in the morning, and lose them in the evening». The withered plants can be associated with the withering of human beings. Autumn and winter are portrayed in many ways in the two poets' works, but they often are represented as desolate and bleak, engendering despair. In the poems narrating their own death, if the poets make explicit mention of season, the season is often cold. In Taoyuanming's third elegy, we find this line: «In the cold frost of September, I am taken far out of the city» (*Tao Yuanming ji jianzhu* 2003, p. 424). In his prose work lamenting his own death, the time is also September. Scholars like Liang Qichao believed that this was historical fact (Liang Qichao 1927, p. 26). In fact, in other works by Tao Yuanming, autumn is already the time which reminds him of death. In his poem «The Ninth Day of September in the Year Yi You» (*Tao Yuanming ji jianzhu* 2003, pp. 223-226), he links autumn and plants with his own death: «The sprawling grass is no longer green, and the trees in the garden are shedding leaves [...] Changes follow changes, and isn't life laborious? From time immemorial, all go to death, and when thinking of this, my heart is full of anxiety». This is exactly September. If he wants to imagine an appropriate season for death, September, when plants wither, seems to be a good choice. The 'September' in his elegy shows that he thinks here along the same line. Also, the elegy of course was written by Tao when he was still clear minded, no matter how much time was left in his life.

A cold season is a good season for death. Dickinson also likens death to frost in a poem (no. 1136). Among several of her poems narrating her

own death, no. 158 is set when there is snow. No. 712 also takes place when the weather turns cold and dewy. In this poem, the narrator finds herself in a chariot with Death, a gentleman-like character. It is only after the sun sets that the first person narrator finds that she is cold: «The Dews drew quivering and chill - | For only Gossamer, my Gown - | My Tippet - only Tulle». Now the journey with Death turns from a pleasant trip into almost abduction. At the beginning of the poem, Death is polite and civil, and the narrator is glad to have the journey with him. However, the trip becomes colder and more uncomfortable with time, and Death is no longer courteous. Another poem, no. 445, explicitly happens in autumn. Both poems no. 712 and 445 mention the farmland and grains the dead person passes. no. 445 also refers to the yellow corn, the red apples and how the farmers are waiting to take the pumpkins in. Again, it seems as if the narrator is being abducted, unable to «get out» from the hearse or the coffin. With its bright colors and harvests, autumn thus can also represent what is most precious in earthly life. For Dickinson, autumn can be either bleak or warm, but in any case it is often chosen by her as an appropriate season for death.

In the poems of the two poets, on the one hand, there is wonder and admiration for life. On the other hand, there are conjectures about death. Earthly life is lovely and precious because it is fleeting and is bound to be lost, and the dead who are deprived of life make one treasure one's life even more. When the dead are seen as a point of reference, the most insignificant detail of life seems to be precious. In Tao Yuanming's poem «Some people enjoying themselves under the cypress tree at the Zhou tomb», the poet writes that «today the weather is good, we play flute and *qin*. Thinking of the person(s) lying under the cypress tree, how can we not be happy?» Dickinson expresses similar sentiments in the following poem:

I know of people in the Grave  
Who would be very glad  
To know the news I know tonight  
If they the chance had had.

'Tis this expands the least event  
And swells the scantest deed -  
My right to walk upon the Earth  
If they this moment had.  
(Dickinson 1961, p. 680)

If the poems narrating their own death by Tao and Dickinson are read closely against one another, some features emerge which may not be obvious when the poems are read separately. The three elegies by Tao constitute a continuous and unified narrative, following roughly in chronologi-

cal order, with the first and second elegy telling of the dead still in the house, and the third about him being taken to the grave.<sup>4</sup> The opening line, «Whoever lives must die, and to die early does not mean a short life», is an affirmative statement. In the following scenes of the narrator being taken to his grave, there are things that may or may not happen (the relatives ‘may’ grieve), but the destination of the dead is almost certain. The journey of life ends in the grave. In the first poem, we read «Where does the scattered soul and *qi* go?» (*Tao Yuanming ji jianzhu* 2003, p. 420), but this question is immediately dismissed. The following narrative in fact answers the question indirectly: the soul and *qi* do not have a separate destination from the body. The dead narrator still has feelings and desires, which are of course effects of the soul and *qi*. Tao Yuanming does not have too many questions about the process of dying. He only wants to take the fact without regrets and discontents.

Dickinson’s poems are different, depicting a new scenario each time. She wrote three poems about the moment of dying, each time imagining the critical moment in a different way. In no. 158, the first-person narrator is a girl who dies in the night when there is snow. She loses her way, and Jesus who is supposed to come does not come yet. Now she fervently hopes that her friend Dolly will come. The poem depicts a lost girl full of anxiety. Will Jesus come eventually? What will happen if he does come? For the girl, if Dolly comes, that will be a stronger support and comfort than Jesus, helping her to cope with death. no. 465 tells a different story. This time, ‘I’ lie in bed dying, waiting for ‘the King’ (either Jesus or Death, anyway the character who is in charge of the dead), yet unexpectedly there appears a fly in the room. no. 712 tells of how ‘I’ came to the grave in the same chariot with Death. The three poems are all dramatic and suspenseful, showing an anxiety of not knowing what will happen, and often end on a note of suspense. Although the poet has searched extremely far with her imagination, the situation after death seems to be in the last analysis beyond imagination and description. That the first-person narrator is often a simple child or a young woman heightens the surprise. When she is ready to die, there intervenes a fly. When she needs Jesus, he does not come. When she happily joins Death in a chariot, she is taken to a cold and unpleasant new home. In contrast, in the elegies of Tao Yuanming, there is not much drama or surprise. He does not very much doubt that death is what he imagines it to be. Yet in the poems by Dickinson, what will happen is often uncertain, with the scenarios in different poems mutually exclusive to and incompatible with one another.

Indeed in Dickinson’s poems, a bigger uncertainty concerns whether

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4 Perhaps Tao Yuanming is here following the three-poem format of Lu Ji 陸機 (261-303). Yet Lu Ji’s three poems do not unite into a single narrative since the narrator is sometimes a spectator, sometimes the dead person.

she will go to heaven or to the grave. Heaven does not exist as an option to Tao Yuanming. In Dickinson, heaven is possible but its possibility becomes slimmer and slimmer, and the grave becomes more like a place where she might find herself forever. Dickinson's religious belief is itself a complex question. Even when she has religious belief, hers is not at all the conventional Christian faith. Sometimes she does not believe. If there is heaven, it cancels death. What is noteworthy is that she never thinks of the possibility of hell. If there are heaven and hell, she believes that she will end up in heaven. If there is no heaven, then there will be no hell, and all will end up in the grave.<sup>5</sup>

For Dickinson, death is always a riddle. Although she has seen many deaths, those only involve what can be superficially seen, which does not give her much of a clue. What will her own death be like? The answer can only be revealed when she dies, and only to herself. An acute perception of her own individuality makes her stories of death unique, something that can only happen to her. It is highly improbable that when others die, a fly will appear. In contrast, in the three elegies by Tao Yuanming, the boundary between oneself and others is blurred. What is quite unique to Tao Yuanming can be found in this line: «My only regret is that I did not drink enough wine when living» (*Tao Yuanming ji jianzhu* 2003, p. 420), and the rest of the narration can be applied to himself or to many others. Tao Yuanming did not feel himself very special, and did not think that extraordinary things will happen to him when he dies.

Tao Yuanming and Dickinson also both try to imagine the grave as a 'home'. This can be partly seen in the usage of the word 'return' (*gui* 歸) in Tao's poems. When acting as a government official away from home, he was eager to return to his village, hence «return to the village» («Gui yuan tian ju, gui qu lai kui» 歸園田居, 歸去來兮). The word 'return' here not only implies a backward movement, but is a return to 'home', compared with which life outside of home is drifting on the road. Return to the village brings him quietness and happiness. However, when the problem of death rears its head, his house and his life lose their connotations of 'home', and 'return' becomes yet again drifting on the road: «My house is like a hotel, and I am the person who must leave. Where shall I go? I will return to my old home among the southern mountains» («Zashi zhi qi» 雜詩之七).<sup>6</sup> Here the grave among the southern mountains becomes a more essential home to return to. Such lines abound in Tao's poems: «Eventu-

5 Dickinson's poems about life after death in heaven are various. Sometimes she is ecstatic (no. 279), while at other times, heaven is either incredible or flawed or even cruel. There is no problem that 'I' deserve heaven. The problem is whether heaven deserves 'me'.

6 In his prose work «Lamenting my own death», Tao used similar wording: «Tao will say farewell to his hotel, and return permanently to his original home» (*Tao Yuanming ji jianzhu* 2003, p. 555).

ally return to nothing» («Zhong dang gui kong wu» 終當歸空無), «Life is sure to return to nothing» («Yun sheng hui gui jin» 運生會歸盡), «After a hundred years a return to the grave» («Bainian guiqiu long» 百年歸丘龍). In these lines, *gui* 歸 (return) points to nothingness, death and the grave, and life is a journey to the grave. The grave is the 'old home' (*jiu zhai* 舊宅) and the 'original home' (*ben zhai* 本宅), not warm or comfortable, but is inevitable. One cannot help but go there. In his third elegy, the dead person is shut permanently in this 'home', while those seeing him off return to their respective homes. They still have homes to return to, but the dead person can only treat the grave as his home. An inexorable gap now yawns between the living and the dead.

Dickinson does not believe herself at home either in the earthly world or in heaven. She imagines once a marriage with Death (no. 712), but the new bridal home is surprisingly and disappointingly low and claustrophobic. In another poem, she tries to make the grave a home to wait for her lover. However, since the lover is not yet here, the home is incomplete and empty. Her attempts to make the grave home seem futile: «The grave my little cottage is, | Where 'Keeping house' for thee | I make my parlor orderly | And lay the marble tea» (no. 1743). To liken the grave to a cottage is already an exaggeration, and there can surely be no 'parlor' in it. Also, the tea there, if any, can only be cold and 'marble'. Tidying up the parlor and laying the tea are traditional feminine functions at home, but here they unfold in a dark, narrow, closed space, evoking a sense of discomfort and claustrophobia.

The poems of Tao Yuanming and Dickinson narrating their own death are not only about death, but perhaps more about their obsession with and love for life. Death is often thought of as a deprivation and a lacking. Sometimes, Tao Yuanming can be reconciled with death. In one of his poems, the 'soul' or 'spirit' advises to «merge with the changes with neither happiness nor fear; whatever should end must end, and there is no need for worries» (*xingying shen* 形影神). In another piece, Tao writes «I will go along with the changes, and what doubts shall I have if I enjoy my destiny?» («Gui qu lai kui ci» 歸去來兮辭). In his prose work lamenting his own death, he also believes that «I can now die without regret», and «I am now attached to nothing» (*ziji wen* 自祭文). However, he has this peaceful state of mind only sometimes or only theoretically. Other times, he still has several doubts about death. In his elegies, we find an undercurrent of sorrow and regret. The first person narrator who likes drinking now cannot drink. «I want to speak but I have no voice; I want to see but there is no light in my eyes». His desires are still there but cannot be fulfilled. The desolate grassland is an uncomfortable place, and the bleak September is an uncomfortable month. Being in the grave is like being permanently imprisoned. The people who return to their own homes and the relatives who 'may' grieve all seem indifferent and apathetic, while the

singing people are even more so. Likewise, the dead in Dickinson's poems are most concerned about what is happening in the human world. These poems about death might more saliently show the preciousness of life to us as readers, when we are aware that the two poets are really dead. In addition, with Tao Yuanming living in the pre-modern era and Dickinson seen as a forerunner of modernism in the United States, this paper might help to show that the boundary between the pre-modern and the modern and between the East and the West is also shifting and blurred.

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## **Part 4**

# **Language and Political Discourse**



## Linking Ancient and Contemporary

Continuities and Discontinuities in Chinese Literature

edited by Tiziana Lippiello, Chen Yuehong 陈跃红 and Maddalena Barenghi

# Modernity and Subjectivity from the Past to the Present

Yang Xiaobin 楊小濱  
(Academia Sinica, Taiwan)

**Abstract** Neo-Confucianism has strived to demonstrate that traditional Confucian ideas can be applied to construct a prospective, progressive Chinese modernity. I would like to argue, however, that Confucianism has always and already been the foundational principle throughout the history of the 20th century China by the philosophical and literary practitioners of Chinese modernity. In addition to my re-evaluating of the 'tradition of modernity' in China, I would like to explore the 'tradition of post-modernity' in China, especially the traditions of Daoism and Zen Buddhism. At the center of these different traditions is the concept of subjectivity which defines the characteristics of various cultural and literary trends. My paper will then focus on the subjective positions in these traditions and how the roles of lyrical and narrative subject are played in modern and postmodern literature, in order to probe the inner connections between the past and the present.

**Summary** 1 Reconsidering Confucianism in Chinese Modernity. – 2 Daoism, Chan Buddhism and the Postmodern. – 3 Postmodern Subjectivity in Contemporary Chinese Literature. – 4 Conclusion.

**Keywords** Confucianism. Neo-Confucianism. Post-Modernity.

## 1 Reconsidering Confucianism in Chinese Modernity

In modern China, the concept of modernity has much to do with enlightenment reason, a socio-cultural idea striving to liberate Chinese people from the old, traditional, mythical and all pre-modern conditions. The historical imagination since the mid- and late 19th century is precisely an Eastern variation of the mode of Western modernity. Chinese modernity adopted the principle of civilization based on Western enlightenment reason, which reached its climax in the May Fourth New Culture Movement, and triggered the huge social changes in Chinese history. But to what extent was it a break from traditional culture and to what extent was it a continuation of it?

To begin with, I would like to borrow a modified dictum from Umberto Eco: «We could say that every age has its own postmodern, just as every age has its own form of modern» (Rosso 1983, p. 2). The concept of modernity is not to be limited to the modern age, since its fundamental idea to «make it new» has been prevalent at all times. «Make it new», Ezra

Pound's motto which crystallizes his modernist spirit, is simply derived from the phrase *riri xin* 日日新 (to become new day by day) in the Confucian classic *Daxue* 大学.

Scholars such as Mou Zongsan 牟宗三 (1909-1995) have observed that Confucian subjectivism, holism and progressivism are quite compatible with the historical teleology of modernity in the strict sense. Mou Zongsan, however, is not critical toward Confucianism, whereas Nietzsche, quoted in Horkheimer and Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, suggests that «great artists of government (Confucius in China, the Roman Empire, Napoleon, the Papacy, when it was concerned with power and not just with the world) [...] The self-deception of the masses in this respect – for instance, in all democracies – is highly advantageous: making people small and governable is hailed as 'progress'!».<sup>1</sup> Nietzsche regards Confucius as one of the politicians representing the idea of Enlightenment and acutely points out its instrumentalism and deception.

It is interesting that the enlightenment thinkers in 20th century China wanted to jettison Confucian ideas, certainly not as precursor of modern enlightenment, but as representative of rotten tradition. But behind the slogan «Down with the Confucian shop!» there lies a clear teleology, which is not wholly imported. In fact, the Confucian idea of 'Great Unity' (*datong* 大同) has been the intrinsic basis for Chinese modernity. The theory of 'Great Unity', especially that advocated by Kang Youwei, paved the way for the May Fourth Movement. I would like to argue that the utopian conception in the chapter «The Conveyance of Rites» («Liji Liyun» 礼运) in the *Book of Rites* (*Liji* 礼记) is based on some kind of rational order (so-called 'order of rites', *li zhi xu* 礼之序). In other words, it is the essence of traditional Chinese culture to set up some kind of rational order as the ultimate goal of society. The advocacy of such rational order was intended to rectify the deterioration of the age and its social function was to enlighten and redeem.

Other than Nietzsche, many Western scholars have examined the connection between Confucianism and enlightenment. American sinologist H. G. Creel believes that Confucianism and enlightenment are fairly similar (Creel 1949, p. 254). Voltaire highly appreciates Confucian ideas, which seem to be one of the theoretical sources of the French enlightenment movement. In his *The Philosophical Dictionary*, Voltaire admires and praises Chinese Confucianism, which to him has neither absurd legends nor dogmas despising reason and nature (Voltaire 1765, p. 154). In his *An Essay on Universal History, and the Manners and Spirit of Nations*, Voltaire, refuting various criticisms of Chinese politics and religion, and believing

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1 Friedrich Nietzsche (1904, p. 235) quoted in Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno (1972, p. 44).

that Confucian ethics is as pure and strict as that of Epictetus, calls the age of Confucian law the happiest and most admirable age (Voltaire 1759, p. 25). Voltaire's play *The Orphan of China*, subtitled «The Morals of Confucius in Five Acts», is a general praise of Chinese morality, politics and law. His interest in Confucianism indicates the hidden link between Confucian culture and rationalistic modernity.

Xu Maoyong compares Lu Xun of the May Fourth era to Voltaire of the Age of Enlightenment (a comparison widely used afterwards), without realizing the contradiction between the Confucian complex of Voltaire and the anti-Confucian spirit of Lu Xun. Nevertheless, does not the inheritance of western enlightenment by the May Fourth intellectuals seem to return inherently to the system which they attempt to overturn? Levenson believes that the May Fourth thinkers emotionally rely on Chinese tradition. I would like to argue that the tradition that the May Fourth movement strives to destroy lurks within the system it aims to construct.

Some passages of Chen Duxiu's «1916» («Yijiu yiliu nian» 一九一六年), for example, are nearly modern translations of *The Book of Changes*. He observes that human history is «a series of transitions of the new and the old, like the passing of water or the movement of arrow, continuous all the time and changing all the time» 新陈代谢, 如水之逝, 如矢之行, 时时相续, 时时变异 (Chen Duxiu 1934, p. 41). This is very much like the teaching in «Commentary on *The Book of Changes*»: «They change and move without staying (in one place), flowing about into any one of the six places of the hexagram. They ascend and descend, ever inconstant» 变动不居, 周流六虚, 上下无常, 刚柔相易, 不可为典要, 唯变所适 (Legge 1963, p. 399). Even the word *geming* 革命 is derived from the «Commentary on *The Book of Changes*» (through Japanese translation of the Western word 'revolution').

To borrow the language of Horkheimer and Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, we might say that the issue of Chinese modernity lies in the fact that tradition is already modernity and modernity returns to tradition. The latest studies on Confucianism tend to acknowledge the link between Confucian tradition and modernity. Yang Guorong, for example, states that «the Confucian rationalism and the rational demand in the recent and modern ages have doubtless similarities» (Yang Guorong 1994, p. 370). At the very least, the modern yearning for social redemption is deeply rooted in Confucianism. The desire to change Confucian tradition is derived from the historical mission and social concern (which conventional literati always have in mind), directly influenced by Mencius's determination that «he considered the Empire his responsibility» 自任以天下之重 (Lau 1970, p. 150) and «Who would be in the world except me?» 方今天下, 舍我其谁 (Su Shi 2006, p. 185), as well as Zengzi's suggestion that «The true knight of the Way must perforce be both broad-shouldered and stout of heart; his burden is heavy and he has far to go» 士不可以不弘毅, 任重而

道远 (Waley 1938, p. 134). For Confucianism, the individual subject must find his meaning only in his social identity.

The dominant trend in modern Chinese literature since the May Fourth movement is that it is subject to social function. It is more than obvious that May Fourth literature is highly laden with social orientation. Lu Xun's short story, «A Madman's Diary», the first literary masterpiece in modern Chinese literature, is universally accepted as a castigation of the socio-historical threat to individual life, which is enlarged to allegorize the national destiny of the time. The paranoid protagonist of this story, speaking as the first-person narrator, has been understood to be a messenger or a prophet who proclaims the evil of the old society and calls for redemption. As a paradigmatic work of modern Chinese literature, Lu Xun's «A Madman's Diary» is intended to modernize Chinese culture by establishing a socially-oriented subject with highly historical consciousness that fiercely criticizes the old Confucian tradition. But this rational subject is deeply rooted in the Confucian literati tradition, in which the intellectual must be a historical subject who takes the responsibility for saving the nation from its crisis.

It is interesting to note, however, that the protagonist of this story is none other than a madman. That is to say, the madman's voice is essentially unreliable, as all his interpretations of the world and society are misinterpretations. «A Madman's Diary» is thus double-edged in the sense that it establishes an omniscient sociohistorical subject on the one hand and demonstrates a subject with self-undermined, split subjectivity on the other. According to his public statements, Lu Xun is not only anti-Confucian, but also anti-Daoist; however, he is internally a successor to both Confucian and Daoist traditions.

## 2 Daoism, Chan Buddhism and the Postmodern

In any case, the transcendental subject of Chinese modernity is not only Kantian, but also Confucian. We can even say that Confucianism has paved the way for the dominance of Chinese modernity. Thus, other cultural traditions in China, such as Daoism and Chan Buddhism, can well be linked to Chinese post-modernity, which has been lurking ever since the May Fourth Movement and even prevailing over the past few decades. Lu Xun himself is a great admirer of Wei-Jin Dynasty Daoist culture, especially such literati as Ruan Ji and his cohorts who, in Lu Xun's words, are «against the Confucian code» 反抗旧礼教 (Lu Xun 1948, p. 498). Surprisingly, Lu Xun even praises the literature of that time simply because it was the «age of self-conscious literature» 文学的自觉时代, which is to be understood as «art for art's sake» (1948, p. 491).

In any case, «A Madman's Diary» is clearly influenced by the Daoist tradition of *kuang* 狂. Zhuangzi is himself more or less a 'madman' often

demonstrating eccentric behavior, such as knocking on his plate and singing at the time of his wife's death. Insisting on the non-identity of language, «He expounded them in odd and outlandish terms, in brash and bombastic language, in unbound and unbordered phrases, abandoning himself to the times without partisanship, not looking at things from one angle only» 以谬悠之说, 荒唐之言, 无端崖之辞, 时恣纵而不倦, 不奇见之也 (Watson 1968, p. 296). In the *Zhuangzi*, the concept *changkuang* 猖狂, 'demented drifting' (1968, p. 80) or 'uncouth [and] uncaring' (1968, p. 188), appears several times to indicate a kind of spirit free of rational shackles. If a madman is a typical split subject, Lu Xun's madman is explicitly a paranoid who comprehends society in an absolutist way, but implicitly a schizophrenic whose voice is full of conflicts.

Such a split subject with self-suspicious identity is certainly not Confucian but Zhuangzian. As Youru Wang has observed, «Zhuangzi dismantles the identity of the self as a thinking subject. The identity of the thinking subject presupposes two things: (1) the identity of thought, or of a conceptual system, (2) the identity of subject as opposed to its other, the object of thought. Zhuangzi points out: «Without other there is no I; without I no choice between alternatives» (Wang Youru 2000, p. 353). Zhuangzi's dialectical conception of subjectivity amounts however to desubjectification, as the subjective position is always a temporary one, ever-changing and dependent upon the Other. As one of Zhuangzi's characters once claims, «I heard it from the son of Aided-by-Ink, and Aided-by-Ink heard it from the grandson of Repeated-Recitation, and the grandson of Repeated-Recitation heard it from Seeing-Brightly, and Seeing-Brightly heard it from Whispered-Agreement, and Whispered-Agreement heard it from Waiting-for-Use, and Waiting-for-Use heard it from Exclaimed-Wonder, and Exclaimed-Wonder heard it from Dark-Obscurity, and Dark-Obscurity heard it from Participation-in-Mystery, and Participation-in-Mystery heard it from Copy-the-Source!» (Watson 1968, p. 47).

Such a concept of the subject as a void is highly suggestive of Lacan's theory. Eske Møllgaard even more directly relates Zhuangzi to Lacan:

Zhuangzi would agree with Lacan that the ego (the objectified self, the *ji* or the *wo*) is a kind of mental illness, and Zhuangzi has his own therapies such as 'fasting of the heart and mind' (*xinzhai*) and sitting in forgetfulness (*zuowang*), which withdraw cathexis from the objectified self and so make possible the emergence of the real self, or that dimension of existence that cannot be objectified as an identifiable, nameable thing but is the spontaneous force of the Other of the realm of man (*ren*), namely Heaven (*tian*). Furthermore, we find in Zhuangzi something like Lacan's view that the ego is formed through identification with the counterpart as total Gestalt. For the word *ou*, 'counterpart', can be read as *shen*, 'body', or 'oneself' (in person), that is to say, the personal representative



of authentic being in the outer (*wai*) world, the part of the self that can be perceived by others (or perceived by oneself in the mirror). Zhuangzi saw in the Confucian's identification with this completed form in the outside (*wai*) the origin of the objectified self as counterpart (the *wo*, the *ji*, or the *ou*), and Zhuangzi's praise of mutilated persons and his valuation of the incomplete over the complete are aimed at undermining this identification with the whole body (*shen*), or the objectified self inscribed in the realm of man (*ren*). (Møllgaard 2007, p. 129)

For Lacan, the ego is but a false construct, a false whole meant to be disillusioned, subject to being divided by the Other. Zhuangzi, too, proposes downplaying the conception of the self, albeit for different reasons. Zhuangzi considers that «The man who has forgotten self may be said to have entered Heaven» 忘己之人，是之谓入于天 (Watson 1968, p. 89). To both Zhuangzi and Lacan, the ego/self is not the subjective center that consciously controls and manipulates everything, not even himself. On the contrary, the subject always has a traumatic kernel within the symbolic structure.

In fact, Lacan elaborates on Zhuangzi's parable of the dreaming butterfly in his eleventh seminar, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*. To Lacan, the butterfly represents the jouissance emerging from the Real to challenge the Symbolic construct of the subject. Therefore, the subject is divided into the meaningful and the meaningless, the latter penetrating the language screen to approach the Thing.

In addition to the butterfly embodying the gaze as the void object *a*, the Dao as the master signifier is itself an emptiness. Zhuangzi's assertion that «The Way gathers in emptiness alone» 唯道集虚 (Watson 1968, p. 25), though with ontological implications, more or less echoes Lacan's observation of the essential nullity of the big Other. Despite their difference (in terms) of the ultimate concerns, for Daoism, the concept of the Dao has a dimension of language as such, containing the connotation of the Other as language in the Lacanian sense. Thus, Zhuangzi's argument that «The Way gathers in emptiness Alone» and «Emptiness is the fasting of the mind» 唯道集虚，虚者，心斋也 (1968, p. 25) links the Dao as the Other and the "heart" as the subject: the empty Other and the empty subject correspond to each other. As for Lacan, the relationship between the Other and the subject «is not the abolition of Otherness or its absorption into the subject, but the coincidence of the lack in the subject with the lack in the Other» (Zupančič 2006, p. 175).

Lacan suggests that «the Other does not exist» and must be understood as castrated, as a void. The essential emptiness of the external image is also a common theme of Zhuangzi, whose vision of the objective world is usually defined by negativity, for example: «Bright Dazzlement stared intently at the other's face and form - all was vacuity and blankness. He

stared all day but could see nothing, listened but could hear no sound, stretched out his hand but grasped nothing» 光曜不得闻而孰视其状貌，窅然空然，终日视之而不见，听之而不闻，搏之而不得也 (Watson 1968, p. 185).

Such «a type of thinking with deconstructive significance developed by Zhuangzi» (Ye Haiyan 1997, p. 25) is also the philosophical foundation for the Chinese to accept Buddhism at a later age. For Buddhism, too, «all things or phenomena are attained according to conditions. This is called the origin of conditions. Due to the origin of conditions, it is impossible for things or phenomena to have stable, unchanging quality or essence. This is the void of essence» (Wu Rujun 1993, p. 90). Like Zhuangzi, Buddhism recognizes that «the self [...] stands in essential relation to all of reality. One learns by forgetting, that is, in a stripping off of all conscious egoity from the self» (Dumoulin 1979, p. 23). The dismantling of the ego in Buddhism is correspondent to Lacan's assertion that the ego is but a false totality doomed to be shattered.

The Lacanian, postmodern subject that offers a different mode of understanding of the self and the world is also dependent on the Other. Furthermore, the subject is a desiring one and is thus forever a vacant space or position awaiting fulfillment. If the modern subject relies on his own self-consciousness, the postmodern subject is contingent not only on the symbolic Other, but also on the traumatic *object a* that triggers desire. But this postmodern subject, as I have attempted to show so far, corresponds to the Daoist-Buddhist conception of the self, especially when embodied in literary writing.

To be sure, the void of the Dao that Zhuangzi theorizes on the metaphysical level is demonstrated as lack within language and logic, or the Symbolic, on the physical level. In other words, if Zhuangzi's philosophical speculation centers on such concepts as nothingness or emptiness, his literary allegories and fables are full of fissures of irony and enjoyment of displacement. Parables such as «It's not a timber tree - there's nothing it can be used for. That's how it got to be that old» 不材之木也，无所可用，故能若是之寿 (Watson 1968, p. 30) must be read as allegory of the symbolic Other having lost its ultimate order. «Every day they bored another hole, and on the seventh day Hundun died» 日凿一窍，七日而浑沌死 (Watson 1968, p. 59) illustrates the failure of symbolizing: here, Zhuangzi does not maintain an extremely negative attitude toward the efficacy of the Symbolic Other, for the Real of Hundun (literally, Chaos) not only fails to be incorporated into the Symbolic but, on the contrary, becomes immolation during the symbolizing process. Even such a statement as «You're not I, so how do you know that I don't know what fish enjoy?» 子非我，安知我不知鱼之乐 (Watson 1968, p. 138) is intended to undermine the rational logic «A is B, so A does not know B». However, Zhuangzi does not provide any positive or affirmative conclusion, but reaches the negative goal by means of questioning («how do you know [...]»). This rhetorical question is not simply an affirmation

through the double negative, but an emptying of the original logic without leading to an absolutely correct conclusion. In other words, the collapse of the Symbolic order is exactly what Zhuangzi aims at. The metaphysical conceptions of «nothingness» and «emptiness» are established on the basis of negativity or even self-reflectivity of language. What Zhuangzi calls «diaogui» refers to paradox within language, i.e. «Words like these will be labeled the Supreme Swindle» 是其言也，其名为吊诡 (1968, p. 17), indicating that the linguistic Other is not intact but rather full of various kinds of inexplicable contradictions.

### 3 Postmodern Subjectivity in Contemporary Chinese Literature

Successors to Lu Xun, post-Mao avant-garde writers in particular, clearly demonstrate such a postmodern subjectivity. The subjective voices in Mo Yan's *The Republic of Wine*, «Joy», Yu Hua's «1986» and «The April 3 Incident», Can Xue's *Yellow Mud Street* and «The Hut on the Mountain», and most of Xu Xiaohu's short stories, more explicitly occupy a position of self-invalidation. The narrator in Yu Hua's «The April 3 Incident», for example, proves to be a paranoid voice that stumbles at every suspicion about the surrounding threats. The protagonist of Yu Hua's «1986», too, is an insane character whose voice embodies transgressive jouissance. Such a self-undermined, self-canceling subject is, if not Lacanian and Zhuangzian in the strictest sense, at least a postmodern space in which traditional Chinese thought plays a role as significant as contemporary Western philosophy.

In the field of contemporary poetry, especially in the works of Ouyang Jianghe, Zang Di, and so on, we can see most clearly how a Zhuangzian subject enjoys his postmodern freedom (*xiaoyao* in Zhuangzi's sense). An admirer of Zhuangzi, Zang Di asserts that «from the perspective of the history of poetry, Zhuangzi is still the greatest living contemporary poet writing prose poetry» (Zang Di 2012, p. 206). Like Zhuangzi, Ouyang Jianghe tends to use paradoxes in his poems to illustrate a lyrical subject doomed to be breached:

Without his knife, we would not have grown our heads  
(Ouyang Jianghe 2013, p. 22)

Except those bones, no one has been a beauty.  
(p. 47)

You have read me from a letter not yet written.  
(p. 168)

The paradoxical voice of the lyrical subject reflects the essential fissure within the Other of language, as the desire of the subject carries out the desire of the Other. In Zang Di's poetry, the self-undermining nature of language appears even more complicated:

Peacocks do not perform peacock dances.  
 But we don't concede and assert that  
 not a single peacock can evade  
 our sight.  
 (Zang Di 2008, p. 41)

Standing steadily on a rolling stone,  
 he is pushing a still stone.  
 (Zang Di 2000, p. 146)

Yes, just because there is  
 a little box left aside,  
 I become aware that your box  
 once closed so many things out.  
 (Zang Di 2002, p. 118)

In «Peacock Dance Association», the gap between peacock and peacock dance, or between nature and culture, is highlighted: this gap embodies the traumatic Real that the Symbolic cannot integrate into its order. «A User's Manual» shows how the dialectics of stillness and mobility can be understood in an almost impossible situation in which the subject is susceptible to failure. In «A Little Box» (Zang Di 2002), a deserted, marginalized box functions only to remind one of a different box that rejects and discards others. In any case, the signifier «box» becomes a sliding one that fails or refuses to stick to a single signified.

The sliding or even inconsistent nature of the signifiers in Zang Di's poetry often creates playful or comical effect, as the examples above indicate. In Zhuangzi's parables, we can find ample examples of comical passages related to wit, sarcasm, or simply joy. The «Debate at the Dam of the Hao River» («Hao Ling zhi bian» 濠梁之辩) discussed above is a typical story intended to show the inconsistency of the logical Symbolic. And the joyous actions in front of the dead, i.e. «singing in the very presence of the corpse» 临尸而歌 (Watson 1968, p. 49) «pounding on a tub and singing [when his wife dies]» 鼓盆而歌 (p. 140) – display the traumatic jouissance of the Real unable to be integrated into the Symbolic law, challenging the Symbolic authority of the Rites. From this point, we can infer that, in Zhuangzi, void or nothingness is not an ontological substance, but somewhat approaches the Lacanian «Thing», the core of traumatic jouissance, with pleasure and pain (or yin and yang) mixed up.

Likewise, in Chan Buddhism, «awakening is often accompanied by laughter» (Faure 1991, p. 46) and Chan is to be understood as «nonsensical Chan» (Wu Rujun 1993, p. 87), in order to annihilate mundane illusions. Chan Buddhism intends to expose the false identity of the ego as vigorously as Lacan does. For Lacan, as for Chan Buddhism, the illusively whole ego must be overcome and give way to its split subjectivity. Thus, the incongruity and failure of the intact ego cannot but often lead to comical effects. As Conrad Hyers observes:

Humor is therefore not only a permissible but an especially appropriate way of getting at what in Buddhism generally has consistently been identified as the fundamental folly of ignorance, desire, and illusion of self. If the ego, for instance, is understood to be one of the elements of the human problem, then humor corresponds to the realization of the comedy of the substantial ego, the refusal to take the ego seriously or absolutely in its pretension of being the one secure point of reference and consciousness – as in Descartes' philosophy where, when all else is in doubt, one retreats to the seemingly impregnable refuge of the substantial ego: *cogito ergo sum*. There is no small irony in the fact that what is taken as the most fundamental axiom of Cartesian thought is the fundamental illusion of Buddhist thought. In Zen in particular it is through humor that the ego is revealed as being only the mask that the actor puts on, or holds in front of his face (as in Greek drama, and the original meaning of *persona* as «mask»), hiding his true identity, a mask which is both a tragic mask from the standpoint of ignorance and suffering, and a comic mask from the standpoint of enlightenment and liberation. (Hyers 1974, p. 119)

Lacan is well-known for his rewriting of the Cartesian axiom *cogito ergo sum* (I think, therefore I am) with his own formula «I think where I am not, therefore I am where I do not think» (Lacan 1977, p. 126). It would be interesting, then, to compare the comical nature in Buddhism with the following statement about the mocking-comic by Žižek, who persists in Lacan's post-Cartesian stance:

In the discourse of the Master, the subject's identity is guaranteed by S1, by the Master-Signifier (his symbolic title-mandate), fidelity to which defines the subject's ethical dignity. Identification with the Master-Signifier leads to the tragic mode of existence: the subject endeavors to sustain his fidelity to the Master-Signifier – say, to the mission which gives meaning and consistency to his life – to the end, and his attempt ultimately fails because of the remainder that resists the Master-Signifier. In contrast, there is the slippery-shifting subject who lacks any stable support in the Master-Signifier, and whose consistency is sustained by

the relationship to the pure remainder/trash/excess, to some 'undignified', inherently comic, little bit of the Real; such an identification with the leftover, of course, introduces the mocking-comic mode of existence, the parodic process of the constant subversion of all firm symbolic identifications. (Žižek 2000, pp. 42-43)

Comicality also means the invalidity of the Other as the master signifier. The divided Other is transformed into *jouissance*, namely, the enjoyment of object *a*, while grave tragedy is replaced by light comedy. In postmodern literature, the Lacanian «linguistricks», i.e., the playful operation of language, destabilize the authoritative order of the Other of language. The carnival of language in postmodern literature embraces the traumatic *jouissance* that the Symbolic strives to repress. By identifying with the inner symptom and yielding to «*jouis-sens*» (enjoy-meant), the lack within subjectivity contains hilarity of freedom (*xiaoyao*). This approaches the psychoanalytic treatment of the subject on the one hand and, to a certain extent, echoes Zhuangzi's recognition of and pursuit for the Dao, on the other.

#### 4 Conclusion

The New Culture Movement in the May Fourth era strives to demonstrate its iconoclastic spirit and shatter the dominant Confucian ideology, but nonetheless retains the fundamental mindset inherited from Confucianism. The socially-concerned, redemptive impulse in mainstream May Fourth literary works reveal the inherent convention as opposed to the public proclamation. Chinese modernity as an enlightenment project is solidly based on the literati's traditional heroic stance of social obligation and self-sufficient subjectivity. In a sense, then, the post-Mao literary trend can be characterized as postmodern because the concept of subjectivity is redefined as self-divided, self-undermined or self-problematized. But this Lacanian occurrence stems from the Chinese traditions of Daoism and Chan Buddhism, both of which recognize paradoxes and illusions within the Other of language and thus advocate non-identified subjectivity.

When commenting on Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde*, composed for classical Chinese poems, Adorno suggests a highly Daoist spiritual realm with love for and sensitivity to eternal and ethereal Nature in a dialectical vision: «The song on the pavilion, which ends like a transparent mirage, calls to mind the Chinese tale of the painter who vanishes into his picture, a trifling and inextinguishable pledge. Diminution, disappearance is the guise of death, in which music still preserves the vanishing» (Adorno 1992, p. 150). We can perhaps understand this vanishing as the departure of modernity into its own impossibility, that is, into a postmodern status that rests on the disintegration of both subjectivity and the big Other alike.

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## Linking Ancient and Contemporary

Continuities and Discontinuities in Chinese Literature

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# The Evolution of Metaphorical Language in Contemporary Chinese Political Discourse

## Preliminary Evidence from the 12th and 18th CPC Congresses

Paolo Magagnin

(Università Ca' Foscari Venezia, Italia)

**Abstract** The tools provided by corpus linguistics and textometric analysis, applied to a number of official speeches delivered by the leaders of the Communist Party of China (CPC) during its Congress, provide useful insight into the evolution of the linguistic material and discursive strategies used in official communication, especially when focusing on the period between the end of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) and the present day. In the post-Mao era, the progressive construction of a new political, socio-economic, and cultural context, along with the renegotiation or obsolescence of certain concepts and models, inevitably yields its specific vocabulary and rhetorical patterns, which can be detected both quantitatively and qualitatively. One of the most interesting levels of analysis in contemporary Chinese political discourse is the use of figurative language: by resorting to a preliminary textometric analysis conducted on the reports delivered at the 1982 and 2012 CPC Congresses, the main figurative devices observable in Chinese political discourse will be located and commented upon, investigating their diachronic transformation and significance in a changing context.

**Summary** 1 Chinese Political Discourse and Figurative Language: the State of the Art. – 2 Corpus, Methodology, and Expected Results. – 3 The Characteristics of Ccpd and the Significance of Metaphorical Language. – 4 Some Preliminary Textometric Findings from The 1982 And 2012 Cpc Congress Reports. – 5 Some Observations on the Evolution of Metaphorical Language in Ccpd. – 6 Conclusions.

**Keywords** Chinese Political Discourse. Metaphorical Language. 12th CPC Congress. 18th CPC Congress.

## 1 Chinese Political Discourse and Figurative Language: the State of the Art

The analysis of political language and discourse is a well studied field of research in Euro-American scholarship (Fairclough 1989; Wilson 1990; Feldman, Landtsheer 1998; Chilton, Schäffner 2002; Chilton 2004 etc.).

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The focus on political communication also enters into several studies on figurative language, with special reference to metaphor (Kövecses 2002, Charteris-Black 2004 etc.). Moreover, a number of works have appeared that specifically investigate the use of metaphorical language in the public sphere (Musolff 2004; Beer, Landtsheer 2004; Carver, Pikalo 2008 etc.).

In scholarship focusing on China, whereas classical rhetoric has received extensive attention, the analysis of modern and contemporary political language and discourse is a comparatively recent field of research. Some of the most comprehensive article-length Chinese-language studies in this specific domain include Tian Hailong's 田海龙 pioneering work (2002) and Li Dekun's 李德昆 analysis (2010). A noteworthy contribution to this topic is Zhang Li's 张犁 (2008, 2009) research, whose merit lies in investigating some rhetorical devices – including metaphors – in contemporary Chinese political discourse (hereinafter CCPD), as well as the possibilities for their translation into English.

A number of English-language studies also contribute to research in this field. Schoenhals (1992) analyzes instances of pragmatic use of language in Chinese officialdom, whereas Hodge and Louie's (1998) work involves a section exploring CCPD from a semiotic perspective. Ji (2004) and Lu (2004) painstakingly enumerate and analyze, respectively, the characteristics and outcome of the 'linguistic engineering' that characterized the years of high Maoism, and the impact of such rhetoric on thought, culture, and communication. A special focus on the Mao era, and chiefly on the Cultural Revolution period (1966-1976), is also present in a number of previous studies centered on figurative and symbolic language, terminology, pragmatics, and semantics (Li 1958; Hsia 1961, 1963, 1964; Chuang 1967, 1968; Dittmer, Chen 1981 etc.).

Shifting the focus onto recent scholarship on the post-Mao period, Qian Gang's (2012) articles on the nature and evolution of the 'watchwords' typical of CCPD, published only weeks before the 18th CPC congress, provide interesting insights into a number of political concepts and the way they are communicated. Alvaro (2013) also investigates extensively the features of certain typical features of CCPD in English translation. In the French-speaking community, Salem and Wu (2007) have applied the tools provided by textometrics to the analysis of the reports to the Communist Party of China (hereinafter CPC) congresses. In Italian sinology, the studies by Lavagnino (2001), Stafutti and Ajani (2008), and Bulfoni (2010), which address the topic from a chiefly lexical perspective, must also be mentioned.

Perry Link's (2013) latest book devotes one chapter to metaphor and one to contemporary official discourse in the PRC. Link's in-depth analysis of rhythmic patterns and figurative devices applied to the manifold aspects of the 'language game' that can be observed in Chinese political life is highly relevant to whoever undertakes the task of investigating the

relationship between official language and metaphor, as is the case of the present study. However, with the exception of Link's monograph and a few Chinese-language studies (Liu 2007, Chen 2007), the rhetorical devices and the use of figurative language in today's Chinese public sphere remain almost unexplored both within and outside the Chinese-speaking academic community.

## 2 Corpus, Methodology, and Expected Results

The present study is part of a broader project focusing on the evolution of post-Mao Chinese political discourse and rhetoric, whose aim is to investigate the evolution of figurative language and the emergence of new political concepts and re-emergence of traditional stylemes, as well as to explore the possibilities for their translation into other languages (Magagnin 2014). To do so, it is crucial to identify metaphors in the texts analyzed, to outline their function and significance, and to suggest the possible reasons for their evolution.

The texts selected for this preliminary study are the full transcripts of the reports delivered at the 12th and the 18th National Congresses of the CPC respectively, as they appear on the *Xinhua News* website.<sup>1</sup> The first report, entitled *Quanmian kaichuang shehuizhuyi xiandaihua jianshe de xin jumian* 全面开创社会主义现代化建设的新局面 (Creating a new situation in the building of a socialist modernization in all respects), was delivered by the then-General Secretary of the CPC Hu Yaobang 胡耀邦 on 1 September 1982. The second speech, titled *Jian ding bu yi yanzhe Zhongguo tese shehuizhuyi daolu qianjin, wei quanmian jiancheng xiaokang shehui er fendou* 坚定不移沿着中国特色社会主义道路前进为全面建成小康社会而奋斗 (Firmly march on the path of Socialism with Chinese characteristics and strive to complete the building of a moderately prosperous society in all respects), was pronounced by then-General Secretary and President of the PRC Hu Jintao 胡锦涛 on 8 November 2012.

The CPC National Congress had taken place on an irregular basis since the foundation of the Party, in 1921. However, only with the 11th Congress (1977) – the first to be held after Mao Zedong's 毛泽东 (1893-1976) death and the official end of the Cultural Revolution – did the Congress begin to be held on a regular five-year basis. Moreover, starting from the 11th Congress, the report delivered by the Secretary General has maintained an essentially fixed length of about 30,000 Chinese characters (Qian 2012). The introductory speech summarizes the work carried out by the Party in

1 With the exception of all paratextual features (title, dates, names of contributors, additional information etc.) that are not part of the original speeches as they were pronounced.

all domains in the last five years, setting its guidelines for the near future. Besides its crucial significance at the political level, this specific form of public speech also carries a number of important linguistic implications. In fact, the emergence, disappearance or reworking of conventional expressions linked to a specific political discourse may signal an evolution in the political line adopted by the Party, as well as a change in its internal dynamics.

This specific form of official discourse has been selected for the purpose of this research because, as the opening act of the paramount event in the political life of the PRC, it contains and sums up the most representative features of the language used in the sphere of officialdom. The choice of the two texts, which are separated by an exact thirty-year interval, has been made on the basis of a homogeneity principle: the reports are very similar in terms of length (31,660 and 29,146 characters respectively), and both of them belong to the post-Mao period. Here, a note must be made: although the first to be held after Mao's death and the end of the Cultural Revolution was actually the 11th Congress (1977), scholars tend to consider its content a continuation of the Maoist radical agenda (Dittmer 1983, pp. 108-109), pointing out how it is still heavily influenced by the discursive features typical of the Cultural Revolution (Salem, Wu 2007, p. 8). The introductory speech at the 12th Congress has therefore been retained as the first representative congress report of the new era, allowing for the definition of a more homogeneous corpus.

By drawing inspiration from Musolff's (2004) inquiry into the use of metaphor in the public sphere of the European Union, and resorting to the notion of *conceptual domain* (hereinafter CD) elaborated by Lakoff and Johnson ([1980] 2003), a preliminary close reading of the two texts was carried out, in order to locate the keywords belonging to the different CDs and to record the number of their occurrences (*tokens*). A further verification was then conducted on such tokens, in order to identify the context in which they appear and select only those used in a metaphorical sense. Within the framework of critical metaphor analysis (Charteris-Black 2004), this first phase corresponds to that of *identification*. The second step is *interpretation*, i.e. the identification of the instances of *conceptual metaphor*, hereinafter CM (Lakoff, Johnson [1980] 2003), supplemented by an analysis of the most conspicuous diachronic variations observable in specific keywords. Interpretation is then followed by *explanation*, aimed at outlining the discursive functions of such CMs in the two texts analyzed. To do so, a number of metaphorical expressions of particular significance from the two reports will be selected and commented upon, in order to provide a tentative outline of the evolution of figurative language in post-Mao political communication.

### 3 The Characteristics of CCPD and the Significance of Metaphorical Language

Before examining the use and evolution of metaphor in the selected corpus, an outline of the peculiar features of CCPD must be provided. Chinese political language is marked by a strong emphasis on propaganda, conveyed through the use of standardized expressions (*tifa* 提法) and conventional allusions: such expressions reflect the essentially formulaic nature of such language, both at the lexical and segmental level (e.g. the repetition of specific syntactic patterns), but also act as political signals, since they trigger association with a specific political discourse (Qian 2012; Renwick, Cao 2003, p. 72). Furthermore, compared with the prescriptive language of Maoism, contemporary political communication shows a more careful use of slogans (*kouhao* 口号). The use of four-character expressions (*sizi jiegou* 四字结构) – typically *chengyu* 成语 and VOVO constructions – and pseudo-classical formations is extremely frequent. Semantic neologisms and loanwords from languages for special purposes can also be observed (Bulfoni 2010), although to a slightly lesser extent than the devices listed above. At the lexical level, a major role is played by polysyllabic Western-derived abstract nouns that, together with empty verbs (e.g. *jinxing* 进行 carry out) and recurring adverbs and modifiers (e.g. *yiding* 一定 a certain, *xiangdang* 相当 quite etc.), carry an air of scientific irrefutability (Link 2013, pp. 246-248). Lastly, what is especially significant to the present research is the massive use of metaphorical expressions, reflecting the general preference for evocative language (*yihui* 意会) over the pragmatic, as well as the use of other rhetorical devices, such as antithesis (*dui'ou* 对偶) and parallelism (*paibi* 排比) (Zhang 2009).

From the point of view of text typology, as stated above, the CPC Congress report is a particular form of political speech that is typical of the Chinese context: its main purpose is to outline the objectives already achieved (as well as the problems still unsolved) over the past five years, and to announce the political agenda to be adopted by the CPC in the near future. To use Jakobson's (1960) classification, then, the textual function of this type of political speech can be seen as chiefly *referential*, as it focuses on the extralinguistic reality; however, it also possesses a strong *conative function*, centered on the recipient of the message (in this case, CPC membership at all levels, and, more widely, the people of China). Therefore, the two texts analyzed reveal a clear proactive intent: they aim at favoring cohesion, building consensus and national unity, emphasizing the appropriateness of the results achieved and future goals. From this perspective, the reasons for the centrality and pervasiveness of figurative language, and particularly metaphor, can be easily understood: in fact, metaphorical language is mainly used to convey emotional experience, to cultivate intimacy, to establish or transform the conceptual perspective of the recipient, and

ultimately to call to action or to carry out problem-solving (Goatly 1997, p. 149). This explains why, particularly in political discourse, the function of metaphor is not so much to interpret the world as to *change* it, to echo the title of Carver and Pikalo's study (2008). The following sections will provide an account of the use of metaphorical language in the 1982 and 2012 CPC Congress reports, in both quantitative and qualitative terms, pointing out the main features of its diachronic transformations.

#### 4 Some Preliminary Textometric Findings from The 1982 And 2012 Cpc Congress Reports

After locating the keywords appearing in the two reports and subsequently grouping them into CDs, the following general classification could be outlined:<sup>2</sup>

- **journey and navigation:**<sup>3</sup> *luxian* 路线 (route), *daolu* 道路 (road), *zou* 走 (to walk), *fangxiang* 方向 (direction), *fangzhen* 方针 (orientation), *zhidao* 指导 (guidance; to guide), *jinbu* 进步 (progress; to advance), *jiakuai* 加快 (to accelerate), *maishang* 迈上, *qianjin* 前进, *tuijin* 推进 (to advance) etc.;
- **human body:** *liliang* 力量 (strength), *shengming* 生命 (life), *shengmingli* 生命力 (vitality), *jiaqiang* 加强 (to strengthen), *jingli* 精力 (energy), *huoli* 活力 (vigor), *jiankang* 健康 (health; healthy) etc.;
- **war:** *qizhi* 旗帜 (flag, banner), *dailing* 带领 (to lead into battle), *qianlie* 前列 (front rank), *shengli* 胜利 (victory; to win), *fendou* 奋斗 (struggle; to struggle), *zhanlue* 战略 (strategy), *jiefang* 解放 (liberation), *wuqi* 武器 (weapon) etc.;
- **space and size:** *tigao* 提高 (to raise), *kuoda* 扩大 (to extend), *shenhua* 深化 (to deepen), *kaizhan* 开展 (to expand) etc.;
- **building:** *jianshe* 建设, *jiancheng* 建成 (to build), *jianli* 建立 (to establish), *jichu* 基础 (foundation), *jidi* 基地 (basis) etc.;
- **family:** *tongbao* 同胞 (compatriot), *jiayuan* 家园 (home, homeland), *ernü* 儿女 (children), *pengyou* 朋友 (friend) etc.;
- **botany:** *ben* 本, *genben* 根本 (root), *chengguo* 成果 (fruit, result) etc.;

2 Given the comparatively limited size of the selected texts, this data was gathered by resorting to the tools provided by the Pages text-processing software in the Apple iWork suite, instead of using one of the concordance softwares (e.g. ICTCLAS) usually employed in the textometric analysis of Chinese-language texts. The graphs appearing in the article have been prepared using the Apple Numbers spreadsheet software.

3 Although Chinese-language scholarship using the notion of CD tends to keep the 'journey' and 'navigation' CDs separated, in the present study the two have been unified for reasons of convenience.

CDs		keywords		tokens		productivity	
		1982	2012	1982	2012	1982	2012
1	journey & navigation	122	130	594	690	72,468	89,700
2	human body	114	97	509	638	58,026	61,886
3	war	75	85	368	391	27,600	33,235
4	space & size	45	45	216	330	9,720	14,850
5	building	33	41	330	451	10,890	18,491
6	family	19	14	38	46	722	644
7	botany	18	18	88	174	1,584	3,132
8	science & technology	16	22	45	88	720	1,936
9	machine	10	11	33	85	330	935
10	chess	4	6	20	32	80	192
11	other	120	91	372	384	44,640	34,944
	total	576	560	2,613	3,309		

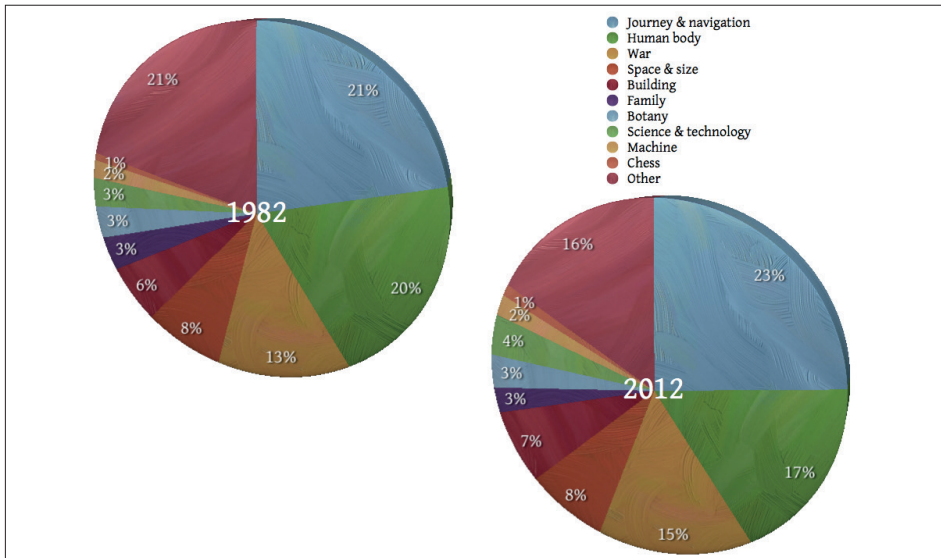
Graph 1. Keywords, tokens, and productivity for each CD in the 1982 and 2012 CPC Congress reports

- **science and technology:** *yali* 压力 (pressure), *zhongdian* 重点 (focal point), *pingheng* 平衡 (balance) etc.;
- **machine:** *dongli* 动力 (power), *jizhi* 机制 (mechanism), *yunxing* 运行 (to be in motion), *gongneng* 功能 (function) etc.;
- **chess:** *quanju* 全局 (overall situation), *jumian* 局面 (phase, situation), *buju* 布局 (position of pieces) etc.;
- **other:** *taijie* 台阶 (flights of steps), *shishi* 史诗 (epic), *huida* 回答 (answer), *guangming* 光明 (bright) etc.

After identifying the source domains and the specific keywords in which such domains are articulated, a count of the tokens was conducted in the two reports, excluding the instances of keywords used in a non-metaphorical sense (e.g. the occurrences of the word *wuqi* 武器 ‘weapon’, when used in the actual sense of a device designed for inflicting physical damage, as is the case in the sections covering the situation of China’s national defense system, were excluded from the computation). The quantitative information thus obtained for the 1982 and 2012 CPC Congress reports is outlined in graph 1 (the additional index introduced in the third column, *productivity*, will be discussed below).

What can be observed at a first glance is the fact that, although the total number of keywords suffers a slight contraction in the 2012 report, the total number of tokens in the latter is remarkably higher. At a more micro-





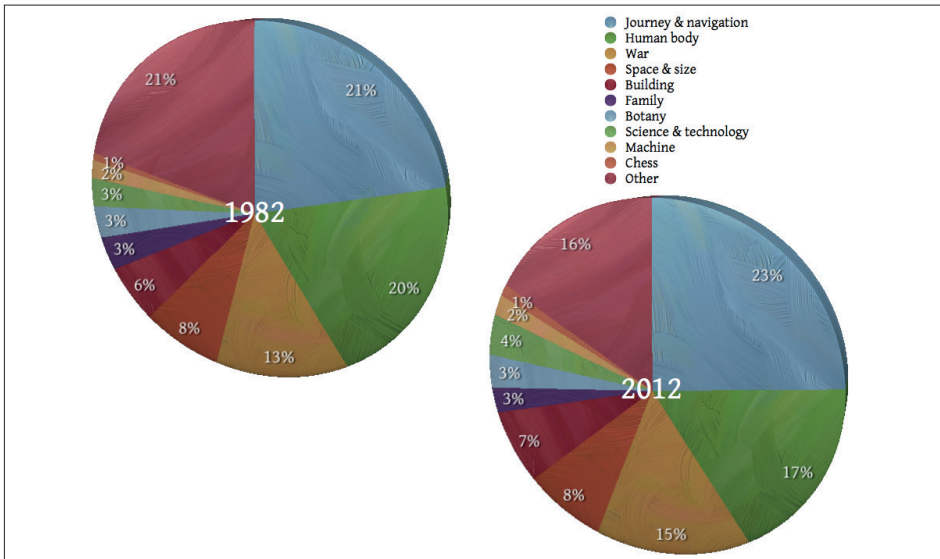
Graph 2. Keywords ratio on the total number of keywords for each CD in the 1982 and 2012 CPC Congress reports

scopic level, in 2012, a decrease in terms of keywords is recorded in some CDs (i.e. ‘human body’, ‘family’, ‘other’), whereas others (‘space and size’ and ‘botany’) remain unchanged; the number of tokens, however, shows a systematic increase for each CD. Therefore, the 2012 text presents a considerably higher metaphorical density than its 1982 counterpart, and this is all the more significant if we consider that it is over 2,500 characters shorter.

For reasons of convenience, the order of the CDs in graph 1 reflects the frequency (higher to lower) of the keywords for each CD as they appear in the 1982 report. Here we will not take into account the ‘other’ category on account of its extreme heterogeneity, which makes it not particularly significant for the purpose of this study. In terms of number of keywords, graph 1 tells us that the order of the first five CDs remains unaltered from 1982 to 2012: ‘journey and navigation’ is predominating, followed by ‘human body’, ‘war’, ‘space and size’, and ‘building’. However, in 2012, ‘family’ is found in eighth place, whereas ‘science and technology’ occupies sixth place in the list. The position of ‘botany’, ‘machine’, and ‘chess’ also remains unaltered in the two reports.

These findings are confirmed by those obtained when quantifying the overall weight of each CD in terms of keywords in the two texts. Graph 2 displays the ratio of keywords belonging to each CD, calculated on the total number of keywords for all the CDs appearing in the 1982 and 2012 speeches.

As shown in graph 2, the order of CDs in terms of keyword ratio

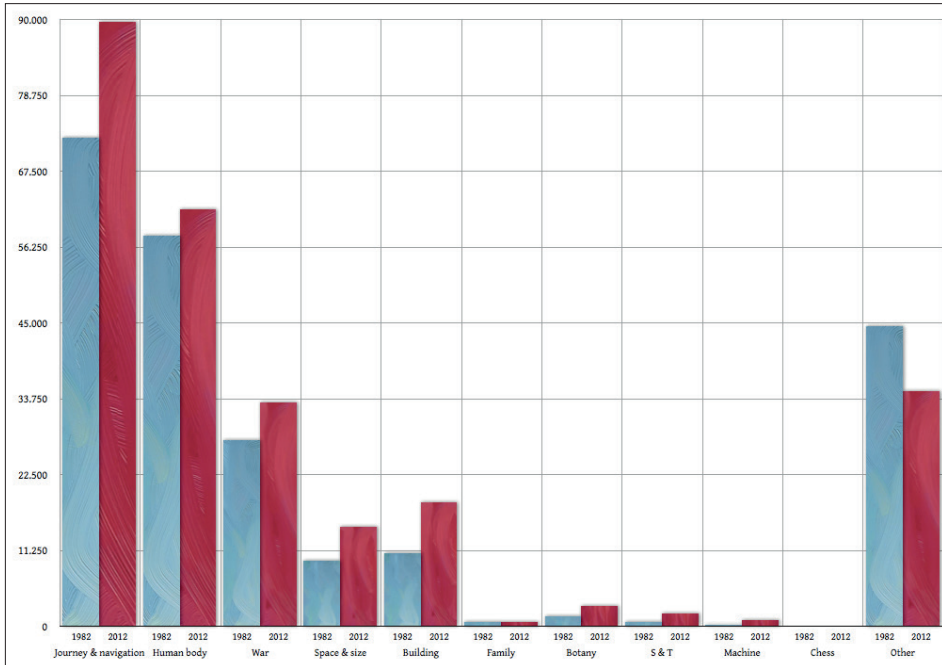


Graph 3. Token ratio on the total number of tokens for each CD in the 1982 and 2012 CPC Congress reports

reflects their sequential position in terms of keyword frequency as outlined in graph 1, with the order of the first five CDs unvaried from 1982 to 2012, whereas sixth and eighth place are occupied by ‘family’ and ‘science and technology’ respectively in 1982, and by the same two CDs, but inverted, in 2012. Graph 2 also exemplifies, in a more apparent way than graph 1, the diachronic variation in the use of certain CDs. For instance, focusing our attention only on the five first CDs, the keywords belonging to the ‘journey and navigation’ CD confirm it to be the most pervasive in terms of metaphorical items employed in the texts analyzed (21% in 1982, increased to 23% in 2012); ‘human body’ undergoes a slight decrease over this 30-year span (from 20% to 17%), whereas ‘war’ rises from 13% to 15%. ‘Space and size’ remains unaltered (8%), whereas ‘building’ also increases (from 6% to 7%).

A similar analysis can be conducted on tokens, calculating the ratio of tokens for each CD, calculated on the total number of tokens for all CDs. The findings for the 1982 and 2012 speeches are shown in graph 3.

The figures in graph 3 seem to essentially mirror the ratio situation outlined in graph 2, suggesting a substantially regular correspondence between keyword ratio and token ratio: for instance, ‘journey and navigation’ has a keyword ratio of 21% in 1982 and 23% in 2012, while its token ratio is 23% and 21% respectively; ‘human body’ has a keyword ratio of 20% in 1982 and 17% in 2012, with a token ratio of 19% and 19% respectively, and so on. However, there is a conspicu-



Graph 4. Productivity of each CD in the 1982 and 2012 CPC Congress reports

ous exception in the ‘building’ CD, whose keyword ratio is 6% in 1982 and 7% in 2012, but which shows a token ratio of 13% and 14% respectively: this means that although the number of keywords for that CD is comparatively small, the metaphorical items belonging to that same CD are extremely prolific.

The third column in graph 1 introduces an additional index – obtained by multiplying the number of keywords by the number of tokens for each CD – that accounts for the role played by a certain CD in the overall metaphorical discourse (Liu 2007) in a more accurate way, namely its *productivity*. This is exemplified by graph 4, which illustrates the productivity of each CD in the 1982 and 2012 speeches.

The productivity criterion allows us to look at the findings from a more comprehensive perspective. Besides corroborating the predominance of the ‘journey and navigation’, ‘human body’ and ‘war’ CDs in both texts, it confirms the relative growth of ‘building’ already mentioned above: in fact, ‘building’ ranks fourth in terms of productivity in both the 1982 and 2012 reports, followed by ‘space and size’. More generally, graph 4 also shows a systematic expansion (although to variable extents) in the productivity of each CD from 1982 to 2012, with the sole exception of ‘family’, which decreases slightly (‘other’ being ignored for the reasons stated above).

In the next section, a qualitative analysis will be carried out on the instances of metaphorical language that can be observed in the corpus, pointing out the significance of certain CDs, interpreting them in order to identify the underlying CMs, and providing a preliminary explanation of the discursive functions of a number of noteworthy metaphorical devices.

## 5 Some Observations on the Evolution of Metaphorical Language in Ccpd

The opening parts of the 1982 and 2012 CPC Congress reports, namely the lines presenting the main theme of the meetings, introduce most of (if not all) the dominating CDs identified through the textometric analysis illustrated above.

[1.1982] 这次代表大会的使命，就是要通过对过去六年历史性胜利的总结，为进一步肃清十年内乱所遗留的消极后果，全面开创社会主义现代化建设的新局面，确定继续前进的正确道路、战略步骤和方针政策。(my emphasis)

The mission of this congress is to summarize the historical victories obtained in the past sixty years, in order to further remove the negative consequences of the ‘ten years of internal turmoil’, create a new situation in the building of a socialist modernization in all respects, and define the correct path on which to advance, the strategic steps to be taken, and the orientation policies to be adopted.<sup>4</sup>

In this excerpt from 1982, the expressions *jinyibu* 进一步 (to go a step further), *yiliu* 遗留 (to leave behind), *qianjin* 前进 (to advance), *daolu* 道路 (road), *buzhou* 步骤 (step) and *fangzhen* 方针 (orientation) belong to the ‘journey and navigation’ CD; *shiming* 使命 (mission), *shengli* 胜利 (victory) and *zhanlüe* 战略 (strategy) to ‘war;’ *kaichuang* 开创 (to found) and *jianshe* 建设 (to build) to ‘building;’ *houguo* 后果 (fruit i.e. consequence) to ‘botany;’ *jumian* 局面 (situation) to ‘chess;’ and *suqing* 肃清 (to clean up) to ‘other’.

The opening lines of the 2012 report are equally dense in metaphorical expressions:

[2.2012] 大会的主题是：高举中国特色社会主义伟大旗帜，以邓小平理论、“三个代表”重要思想、科学发展观为指导，解放思想，改革开放，凝聚力量，攻坚克难

<sup>4</sup> The translation of excerpts from the 1982 report (for which, to my knowledge, no official English translation is available), provided for reference, is my own. The official English translation available on the *Xinhua News* website was used for the passages from the 2012 report.

难，坚定不移沿着中国特色社会主义道路前进，为全面建成小康社会而奋斗。(my emphasis)

The underlying theme of the congress is to hold high the great banner of socialism with Chinese characteristics, follow the guidance of Deng Xiaoping Theory, the important thought of Three Represents and the Scientific Outlook on Development, free up the mind, implement the policy of reform and opening up, pool our strength, overcome all difficulties, firmly march on the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and strive to complete the building of a moderately prosperous society in all respects.

The expressions *zhidao* 指导 (guide), *jian ding bu yi* 坚定不移 (unyieldingly), *yanzhe* 沿着 (to follow a path), *daolu* 道路 (road), and *qianjin* 前进 (to advance) belong to the 'journey and navigation' CD; *gaoju... qizhi* 高举旗帜 (to hold high the banner), *jiefang* 解放 (to liberate), *gongjian* 攻坚 (to storm a fortification), and *fendou* 奋斗 (to struggle) are all articulations of the 'war' metaphor; the 'building' CD is represented by *jiancheng* 建成 (to build); 'human body' by *liliang* 力量 (strength); 'science and technology' by *ningju* 凝聚 (to condense).

Even in such short excerpts, the predominance of certain CDs can be observed, namely 'journey and navigation' (6 keywords and 6 tokens in [1.1982], 5 keywords and 5 tokens in [2.2012]) and 'war' (3 keywords and 3 tokens in [1.1982], 5 keywords and 5 tokens in [2.2012]), which hold the first and third position in terms of number of keywords, number of tokens, and productivity in both the 1982 and 2012 reports.

Therefore, relatively limited portions of the two texts show an extremely high conceptual density. In particular, [1.1982] contains such CMs as THE REALIZATION OF SOCIALISM IS A ROAD and HISTORY IS A ROAD, THE PARTY IS AN ARMY and HISTORY IS A BATTLEFIELD, SOCIALISM IS A BUILDING, HISTORY IS A PLANT, THE REALIZATION OF SOCIALISM IS A CHESS GAME, and PROGRESS IS CLEANING. Most of these CMs are also found in [2.2012], which further introduces THE REALIZATION OF SOCIALISM IS A STRUGGLE, SOCIETY IS A PHYSICAL OBJECT, THE PARTY IS A LIVING BEING, and SOCIETY IS A BUILDING.<sup>5</sup> All these CMs overlap and contribute to the weaving of a solid metaphorical network, which systematically informs the two reports at a deep level.

Further evidence of the relevance of such dominating metaphors is provided by the fact that the strongly metaphorical expressions forming the

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5 Following Lakoff and Johnson ([1980] 2003), capital letters are used to distinguish CMs from other clauses.

titles of the 1982 and 2012 speeches are included unaltered into [1.1982] and [2.2012] respectively. Moreover, these CDs and the corresponding CMs deeply structure a number of crucial points in the two speeches, notably the strongly emphatic closing passages:

[3.1982] 让我们全党在马克思列宁主义、毛泽东思想的伟大旗帜下更加紧密地团结起来，让我们党同全国各族人民更加紧密地团结起来，同各民主党派和国内外全体爱国同胞更加紧密地团结起来，同世界上一切支持我们事业的各国进步力量和友好人士更加紧密地团结起来，同心同德，不屈不挠地奋勇前进！任何力量都不能阻挡我们。胜利一定是属于我们的！（my emphasis）

Let the whole Party rally more closely under the great banner of Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought, let us rally more closely and forge ahead valiantly and unyieldingly, with one heart and one mind, together with the people of all the ethnic groups of the country, with all the democratic parties and all the country-loving compatriots both in China and overseas, with all the progressive forces and friends supporting our cause all over the world! No force can ever resist us. Victory undoubtedly belongs to us!

Here, ‘journey and navigation’ is represented by *jinbu* 进步 (to progress), *qianjin* 前进 (to advance), *bu qu bu nao* 不屈不挠 (unyieldingly), and *zudang* 阻挡 (obstacle); ‘human body’ by *liliang* 力量 (strength), *tongbao* 同胞 (compatriot), *zhichi* 支持 (to support), and *tongxin* 同心 (with one heart); ‘war’ by *qizhi* 旗帜 (flag, banner), *tuanjie* 团结 (to rally, esp. troops), and *shengli* 胜利 (victory); finally, *jinmi* 紧密 (close) belongs to ‘space and size’.

Let us now consider the closing passage of the 2012 report:

[4.2012] 让我们高举中国特色社会主义伟大旗帜，更加紧密地团结在党中央周围，为全面建成小康社会而奋斗，不断夺取中国特色社会主义新胜利，共同创造中国人民和中华民族更加幸福美好的未来！（my emphasis）

Let us hold high the great banner of socialism with Chinese characteristics, rally more closely around the Party Central Committee, strive to complete the building of a moderately prosperous society in all respects, continue to win new victories for socialism with Chinese characteristics, and make joint efforts to create an even brighter future for the Chinese people and nation.

Here, the ‘war’ CD prevails and is expressed, again, by *gaoju...* *qizhi* 高举旗帜 (to hold high the banner), *tuanjie* 团结 (to rally), *fendou* 奋斗 (to struggle), *duoqu* 夺取 (to capture), and *shengli* 胜利 (victory); ‘building’ by *jiancheng* 建成 (to build) and *chuangzao* 创造 (to create); ‘space and size’ by *jinmi* 紧密 (close) and *zhouwei* 周围 (surroundings).

Besides the omnipresence of the CMs already identified above, it can be observed that the main CDs employed in excerpts [3.1982] and [4.2012] and their relative ratio essentially reflect the situation in [1.1982] and [2.2012], with some remarkable exceptions. For instance, [4.2012] stresses the 'war' CD (6 keywords and 6 tokens), whereas 'journey and navigation' disappears altogether: in fact, the increase in the use of military metaphors in the 2012 speech is confirmed by the textometric findings illustrated above, although this CD is also central in [3.1982]. Moreover, at the syntactic level, the presence of the same pattern *rang women... gengjia jinmi de tuanjie* 让我们更加紧密地团结 (let us rally more closely) in both [3.1982] and [4.2012] seems to corroborate the persisting predilection for formulaic expressions.

At a microscopic level, some noteworthy changes in the specific metaphorical items used should be pointed out. For instance, in the 'journey and navigation' CD, the 2012 speech shows a general increase in the use of keywords referring to 'speed' and 'progress' metaphors, e.g. *jiakuai* 加快 'to accelerate' (0 tokens in 1982 and 50 in 2012), *tuijin* 推进 (3 tokens in 1982 and 76 in 2012), *cujin* 促进 (15 tokens in 1982 and 49 in 2012), *tuidong* 推动 'to push forward' (2 tokens in 1982 and 53 in 2012), with some notable exceptions (e.g. *jinxing* 进行 'to carry out', 64 tokens in 1982 and only 5 in 2012). The most basic keyword in this CD, *daolu* 道路 'road' also increases in terms of number of tokens (6 in 1982 and 26 in 2012). On the other hand, the 'guide' metaphor seems to lose ground by 2012, as the decrease in the use of *fangzhen* 方针 'orientation' (29 tokens in 1982, 16 in 2012) and *lingdao* 领导 'guide' (71 tokens in 1982 and 36 in 2012) suggests.

In the 'human body' CD, the most notable diachronic variation is the general increase of keywords linked to the 'strength' metaphor, e.g. *qiangjing* 强劲 'powerful' (0 tokens in 1982 and 20 in 2012), *zengqiang* 增强 (4 tokens in 1982 and 50 in 2012), *jianquan* 健全 (5 tokens in 1982 and 41 in 2012), and *jiaqiang* 加强 'to strengthen' (46 tokens in 1982 and 77 in 2012). An interesting case is *fxing* 复兴 'rejuvenation', which is absent from the 1982 speech but appears 9 times in 2012: this is a case of 'new' metaphorical expression becoming associated with Hu Jintao's leadership, where the idea of national 'rejuvenation' is a central concept.

With reference to the 'war' CD, the 2012 speech shows a growing emphasis on the 'banner' theme, another distinctive trait of Hu Jintao's rhetoric: in fact, *gaoju* 高举 and *qizhi* 旗帜 make 0 and 1 occurrences in 1982, but 5 and 8 in 2012 respectively. A number of other keywords referring to 'defense' and 'strategy' also show a dramatic increase, e.g. *baozhang* 保障 'to safeguard' (9 tokens in 1982 and 50 in 2012), *weihu* 维护 'to defend' (12 tokens in 1982 and 33 in 2012), *zhanlüe* 战略 'strategy' (17 tokens in 1982 and 33 in 2012) etc. Conversely, the use of certain 'harsher' military terms suffers a significant contraction, e.g. *douzhen* 斗争 'struggle',

with 45 tokens in 1982 and only 3 in 2012. The change in the treatment of this specific keyword may be another indicator of the disappearance or modulation of expressions linked to a political agenda that has become obsolete: therefore, from this perspective, it is interesting to observe how the string *jieji douzheng* 阶级斗争 'class struggle', a basic concept in the rhetoric of high Maoism, appears 13 times in the 1982 speech but is absent altogether from the 2012 report.

In the 'space and size' category, the most striking transformation is the quantitative growth of the verbs *tigao* 提高 'to raise' (32 tokens in 1982 and 73 in 2012) and *shenhua* 深化 'to deepen' (0 tokens in 1982 and 38 in 2012). What can be remarked in the 'building' CD is the further proliferation of the strikingly predominant keyword in the CD, *jianshe* 建设 'to build' (140 tokens in 1982 and 192 in 2012); its quasi-synonyms *jiancheng* 建成 'to build' (1 token in 1982 and 17 in 2012), *jianli* 建立 'to establish' (15 tokens in 1982 and 27 in 2012) and so on, also show a substantial increase. Diachronic variations in other CDs are generally less conspicuous, although – again – a certain number of period-specific metaphorical expressions can be identified, and these will be discussed below.

From a broader perspective, in order to provide an explanation of the discursive functions of these instances of figurative language, the dichotomy between 'P-ideology' and 'S-ideology', proposed by Hodge e Louie (1998, p. 51), can be fruitfully adopted as an interpretative tool.

P-ideology, based on a power relationship, works according to the principle of binary opposition: therefore, it proves particularly effective in a discourse whose purpose is to solve problems, remove obstacles and eradicate or overcome events or circumstances that are presented as negative and undesirable.

The most intuitive example of figurative language based on this form of ideology is represented by military metaphors: this principle is effectively exemplified by the closing formulas of the two speeches examined above, and especially by excerpt [4.2012], where the predominance of the 'war' CD suggests a shift towards a conceptual perspective carrying the tones of a strong call to action. However, P-ideology can also structure CMs that are associated with other CDs: in 'journey and navigation', for instance, the CM THE REALIZATION OF SOCIALISM IS A ROAD entails such metaphorical expressions as *zhang'ai* 障碍 'obstacle', referring to a negative situation whose removal is presented as the target of the action of the Party or society as a whole. The 'human body' CD can also reveal instances of P-ideology, e.g. in the opposition between 'strength' (e.g. *li-liang* 力量) and 'weakness' (e.g. *ruanruo* 软弱), and so on.

The mechanism at work in the latter form of ideology analyzed by Hodge and Louie is that of solidarity, which aims at blurring or dissimulating disparities and differences. In fact, S-ideology is at play in metaphorical expressions whose purpose is to create a sense of familiarity or intimacy,



to reduce hierarchical gaps, to present certain targets as shared between those who govern and those who are governed (i.e. the producers and the final recipients of the message delivered), and so on. It is precisely this form of ideology that reveals the most noteworthy phenomena in terms of evolution of figurative language use in CCPD.

The 'human body' CD proves typically useful when cultivating intimacy and evoking unity: for instance, such expressions as *xuerou lianxi* 血肉联系 'blood and flesh ties', where *xuerou* 血肉 (2 tokens in 2012) is used to suggest the intimate connection between the Party and the Chinese people, belong to the CM THE PARTY AND THE PEOPLE ARE ONE HUMAN BEING. With reference to 'family', a typical example of a keyword serving the purpose of S-ideology is *tongbao* 同胞 'compatriot' (10 tokens in 1982 and 16 in 2012), which aims at creating unity among all the people of Chinese ethnicity by virtue of the CM THE CHINESE NATION IS A FAMILY. Again, when the status of the Chinese people is described through the expression *dang jia zuo zhu* 当家作主 'to be master of the house' (1 token in 1982 and 4 in 2012) or the like, the CM at play is THE NATION IS A FAMILY, where the people play a central role.

The centrality assigned to the people in order to conjure a sense of solidarity is by no means new in Chinese political language, but it seems to be even more emphasized in the 2012 report. The most interesting example, this time within the 'botany' CD, is the 'root' metaphor in the set expression *yi ren wei ben* 以人为本, literally 'to consider the people as the root' or 'putting people first', which is absent in 1982 but appears 5 times in 2012. This expression, grounded in the CM THE NATION IS A PLANT (but also THE PARTY IS A PLANT), represents one of the most pervasive 'trademarks' of the political rhetoric of the Hu Jintao era, but is still very influential today. The Confucian idea of 'people as root' (*min ben* 民本) often had negative undertones throughout history: however, in contemporary public rhetoric, it possesses an unequivocally positive connotation, and is broadly used on account of its extraordinary emotive content (Sabatini 2012, p. 188).

Finally, the 'building' metaphor, especially in the form of such CMs as THE REALIZATION OF SOCIALISM IS THE CONSTRUCTION OF A BUILDING and SOCIETY IS A BUILDING (incidentally, two metaphors that inform the very titles of the 1982 and 2012 speeches respectively) also offers a prolific set of images working according to the principle of S-ideology. The action of 'building' is systematically presented as a collective achievement: it is hardly surprising, then, that 'building' metaphors are often accompanied by an exhortation to an 'us' (*women* 我们) that puts on the same plane the producer and the recipient of the message, as is clearly the case in excerpts [3.1982] and [4.2012] examined above. In the conceptual perspective thus defined, the objective is presented as being achievable only through the joint effort of both the leadership and the people.

Again, excerpts [3.1982] and [4.2012] also demonstrate that the use of metaphors in which P-ideology prevails and the use of metaphors based on S-ideology are not mutually exclusive: on the contrary, although they may serve different specific functions, the two systems coexist and perform the same discursive macro-function. An even more frequent combination of such basic ideological functions seems to characterize the 2012 speech, as the following passage suggests:

[5.2012] 全党必须牢记，只有植根人民、造福人民，党才能始终立于不败之地。(my emphasis)

The whole Party must bear in mind that only by taking root among the people and delivering benefits to them can the Party remain invincible.

In excerpt [5.2012] the CM THE PARTY IS A PLANT, expressed by the metaphorical expression *zhi gen* 植根 ‘take root’, is found together with the conventional THE PARTY IS AN ARMY and POLITICS IS A BATTLEFIELD, embodied by the pseudo-classical verbal phrase *li yu bu bai zhi di* 立于不败之地 ‘to stand on a ground where one cannot be defeated’. In this passage the reference to the unity of Party and people is closely associated with the idea of resistance and struggle: the two functions described above, then, mingle together and cooperate in the shaping of a common conceptual perspective, thus maximizing the emotive impact of the message.

## 6 Conclusions

From a strictly numerical point of view, an initial close reading of the 1982 and 2012 reports shows that the main CDs used in both speeches appear to be ‘journey and navigation’, ‘human body’, ‘war’, ‘space and size’, ‘building’, ‘family’, ‘botany’, ‘science and technology’, ‘machine’, and ‘chess’ (the ‘other’ category is not taken into account because of its heterogeneity). Moreover, although the number of keywords for each CD shows variable growth from 1982 to 2012 (showing an increase in such CDs as ‘journey and navigation’, ‘war’, and ‘building’, a decrease in ‘human body’ and ‘space and size’ etc.), a systematic increase in the number of tokens is recorded in all the CDs, accounting for a much greater metaphorical density in the 2012 report. In terms of *productivity* of each CD, the predominant CDs in both speeches are (by descending order of productivity) ‘journey and navigation’, ‘human body’, ‘war’, ‘building’, and ‘space and size’. Moreover, as in the case of the number of tokens, productivity displays a systematic growth in all CDs but ‘family’ (although its contraction is very limited) and ‘other’, providing further evidence for the substantial increase in the use of metaphorical devices in CCPD.

The analysis of a number of significant excerpts (titles, opening and closing sections) from the speeches shows an extremely high conceptual density both in 1982 and 2012, reflecting essentially the main CDs already identified in terms of keywords, tokens, and relative productivity. A number of CMs (e.g. THE REALIZATION OF SOCIALISM IS A ROAD, THE PARTY IS AN ARMY, SOCIETY IS A BUILDING etc.) that inform both reports at a deep level can also be easily identified. The closing passage of the 2012 speech also exemplifies a general tendency, namely the proliferation of 'war' metaphors, which typically embody a form of ideology based on power relationships and binary opposition (P-ideology). Moreover, substantial continuity can be observed in terms of rhetorical devices, lexical items, and syntactic patterns.

Notable transformations can be observed also at the level of keywords used in the two texts. For instance, the 2012 speech reveals an expansion of lexical items related to 'speed' and 'progress', as well as of keywords related to 'strength', 'defense' etc., whereas the 'guide' and 'struggle' metaphors decrease. The emergence or disappearance of metaphorical items associated with specific policies is linked to the specific political context in which the two speeches were produced: for example, the expression 'class struggle', which appears extensively in the 1982 report and is typical of high Maoism, is absent in 2012. The 2012 report, on the other hand, makes frequent use of the 'people as root' image, one of Hu Jintao's favorite rhetorical 'banners'.

Finally, an analysis of specific passages from the two reports demonstrates that the use of metaphors based on P-ideology and S-ideology (focusing on a principle of solidarity) is not an exclusive one. On the contrary, the two forms of ideology perform the same discursive macro-function, and especially so in the 2012 speech, where such basic ideological functions seem to be combined at a deeper level, in order to guarantee the definition of a common conceptual perspective and intensify the emotive potential of the message delivered.

In order to gather more comprehensive data, a larger corpus should be used (including intermediate CPC congress reports and possibly further official materials), further indicators should be taken into account, the use of textometric analysis software should be involved, and an in-depth analysis of the connection between linguistic transformations and changes in the political agenda of the PRC should be conducted. However partial and limited in scope, this research allows for a preliminary investigation of how metaphorical language in CCPD transformed over a thirty-year time span. The findings of the present study could lay the foundations for further research on the evolution of the language used in the official sphere, in order to look beyond the texts examined here and to make broader comments on the political discourse in contemporary China.

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## Linking Ancient and Contemporary

Continuities and Discontinuities in Chinese Literature

edited by Tiziana Lippiello, Chen Yuehong 陈跃红 and Maddalena Barenghi

# 论“底”来源于“者”

## On the Derivation of ‘di’ 底 from ‘zhe’ 者

Yang Rongxiang 杨荣祥

(Peking University, China)

**Abstract** In Chinese linguistic circles, there are different opinions on whether the predecessor of the structure auxiliary ‘*di*’底 (‘*de*’ 的) is ‘*zhe*’ 者. This essay investigates the decline of ‘*zhe*’, and discusses the correspondence between the grammatical functions of ‘*zhe*’ and ‘*di* (de)’ and the overlap between the time of the decline of ‘*zhe*’ and the rise of ‘*di* (de)’; as well as the phonetic relationship between ‘*zhe*’ and ‘*di* (de)’. Lastly, the paper discusses our belief that ‘*di* (de)’ is the new written form evolved from ‘*zhe*’.

**Summary** 1“者”的衰落过程。- 2“者”与“底(的)”的功能对应。- 3“底”是“者”的口语音书写形式。- 4 四 结语。- 5 参考文献。

**Keywords** ‘*di*’ (‘*de*’). ‘*zhe*’. Grammar. Phonetic. Structure auxiliary.

现代汉语使用频率极高的结构助词“的”的早期的文字书写形式是“底”，这是很清楚的事实，“底”的前身是什么？是怎么产生的？这是汉语语法史学界非常关注的一个重要问题。关于“底(的)”的来源，很多学者认为来源于“者”，但一直有不同意见，我们认为“底(的)”确实来源于“者”。关于“底(的)”与“者”的关系以及“底(的)”的功能扩展，前辈时贤已经有很多研究成果（见冯春田1991、2000；曹广顺1995；江蓝生1999；蒋绍愚2005；刘敏芝2008等），本文所要重点讨论的问题是：（1）上古汉语使用频率极高的“者”经历了怎样的衰落过程？

（2）“者”的衰落是否与“底(的)”的兴起有关？二者在语法功能上具有什么样的对应关系？（3）“者”与“底(的)”到底是词汇兴替关系还是音变源流关系？

### 1 “者”的衰落过程

汉语语法史的研究，人们比较多的关心新的语法成分、新的语法结构形式的产生及其发展演变，而对旧有的语法成分、语法结构形式的衰落及其衰落过程关注得比较少。其实，语法的演变，就是不断地有旧质要素衰落、消亡，新质要素产生、发展，只关心新质要素的形成，不探讨旧质要素衰落、消亡的过程和原因，这对语法史的研究来说是不全面的。

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众所周知，语法具有很强的系统性，旧质要素的消亡，语法系统中往往会出现新的代偿形式，新旧形式不一定完全等价，也不一定是一对一的关系（参见杨荣祥2011）。从这个角度讲，描写、分析旧质要素的衰落过程及其原因，有利于我们对新的语法成分和语法结构形式的产生、发展作出更为合理的解释。

上古汉语十分常见的“者”到晚唐五代时急剧衰落，而这时正是“底”兴起的时候，这自然很容易让人想到，“底”的兴起与“者”的衰落是否具有必然的联系。

先看“者”的衰落过程。单从使用频率来看，从东汉开始“者”的使用就在不断减少。据刘一豪（2012），“者”战国时期使用频率最高，以每千字出现次数计，《孟子》13.7次，《庄子》17.6次，《荀子》17.9次，《韩非子》15.7次，《吕氏春秋》12.7次。到西汉《史记》降至8.3次，东汉的《论衡》比《史记》多，有8.7次<sup>1</sup>。到六朝时期，中土文献如《三国志》每千字只有4.1次，《世说新语》每千字只有2.7次；汉译佛经使用频率还比较高，那有其特殊的原因（参见刘一豪2012）。唐五代的敦煌变文（限《近代汉语语法资料汇编（唐五代卷）》所收约10万字）每千字1.9次，《北齐书》每千字2次，《祖堂集》每千字2.9次<sup>2</sup>。宋元时期，《三朝北盟汇编》每千字2.2次<sup>3</sup>，宋元话本每千字则只有0.4次。明代《金瓶梅》中，每千字“者”不到0.3次，至此，“者”在实际口语中可能除了作为构词语素外，就不再使用了。

“者”在使用频率不断降低的同时，功能却有所扩展。春秋战国时期，“者”的功能是表示指称：用在谓词性成分（动词及动词性结构、形容词及形容词性结构）之后，一般表转指，指称施事（或当事），少数情况下表自指；用在名词性成分之后，表自指（见朱德熙，1983）。但是从西汉开始，“者”陆续产生了一些新的功能：

1. 用在动词之后，提取动作的受事。如：五月，懿公游于申池，二人浴，戏。职曰：“断足子！”戎曰：“夺妻者！”二人俱病此言，乃怨。（《史记·齐太公世家》，p. 1496）  
诸侯更强，时蕃异记，无可录者。（《史记·天官书》，p. 1347）

“夺妻者”指“妻被人夺走的人”；“可录者”指“可录之事”（与“可”的出现有关）。这种用法先秦已见端倪，但仅见一例：

及吴师至，拘者道之以伐武城。（《左传·哀公八年》，p. 1648）<sup>4</sup>

“者”的这种用法后来得到了发展，如：

1 按，“者”在《论衡》中的使用频率比《史记》高，是因为《论衡》中有一些近似词化的“X者”和特殊的“X者”，如“论者”（46次）、“使者”（16次）、“当道者”（9次）、“实者”（16次）、“说（……）者”（34次）、“古者”（16次）、“帝者”（6次）、“儒者”（74次）、“王者”（68次）等，如果去除这些特殊的用法，《论衡》中“者”的使用频率要比《史记》低一些，约每千字7.6次。

2 按，其中有些高频率的“X者”，如“侍者”100次，行者59次，“来者”12次，“智者”23次等。如果去除这些用法，《祖堂集》中“者”的使用频率也只有每千字2.2次左右。

3 刘一豪文只统计了《近代汉语语法资料汇编（宋代卷）》收录部分的约5.5万字。按，其中大部分“者”都出现在叙述性语言中，当是受文言文的影响。

4 《孟子》中有“治於人者食人，治人者食於人。”（《滕文公上》）“治於人”因为本已用为受动，所以“者”只能提取受事。

于是至诸屯邸，检校诸顾、陆役使官兵及藏逋亡，悉以事言上，罪者甚众。陆抗时为江陵都督，故下请孙皓，然后得释。（《世说新语·政事》，p. 102）

后鬼恒在家，家须用者，鬼与之。（《幽明录》卷四，引自《太平广记》320卷，p. 2539）

能问童子：“适才诵者，是何言偈？”（慧能《坛经》，p. 15）

相公问曰：“是何经题？”远公对曰：“夜昨念者，是大涅槃经。”（《敦煌变文·庐山远公话》，p. 259）

融曰：“我依《法华经》开示悟入，某甲为修道。”四祖曰：“开者开何人？悟者悟何物？”融无对。（《祖堂集·卷三》，p. 82）

2. “动+者”用在名词前作定语。这种用法传世文献最先见于《史记》，是“者”的功能扩展的重要一步。如（据吕叔湘、曹广顺等引）：

又因厚币用事者臣靳尚，而设诡辩于怀王之宠姬郑袖。（《史记·屈原贾生列传》，p. 2484）

项王怒，将诛定殷者将吏。（《史记·陈丞相世家》，p. 2053）

于是平原君乃斩笑蹙者美人头。（《史记·平原君虞卿列传》，p. 2366）

孝文帝尝梦欲上天不能，有一黄头郎从后推之上天[……]觉而之渐台，以梦中阴目求推者郎。（《史记·佞幸列传》，p. 3192）

何太子之遣往而不返者竖子也？（《史记·刺客列传》，p. 2533）

据孟美菊、王建民（2002），长沙马王堆汉墓出土的《五十二病方》中有如下用例：

牡痔居窍旁，大者如枣，小者如枣核者方。

牡痔之居窍廉，大如枣核，时痒时痛者方。

此外，俞理明（2001）在《太平经》中也发现了不少“动+者”作定语的用例：

一日而治愈者方，使天神治之；二日而治愈者方，使地神治之；三日而治愈者方，使人鬼治之。（《太平经·卷五十》p. 234）

地善，则居地上者人民好善。（《太平经·卷四十》p. 169）

行，为子道学而得大官者决意。（《太平经·卷九十八》p. 400）

以上这些充当定语的“动+者”，“者”都是提取动作的施事，到了六朝时期，出现了“者”提取受事的“动+者”作定语的情况。如<sup>5</sup>：

是三千大千世界如树，动之者佛，先度者果熟，未度者果生。（姚秦译经《大智度论》）

时净饭王为王太子，造三时殿……拟冬坐者殿一向暖，拟夏坐者殿一向凉，拟于春秋二时坐者，其殿调适，温和处平，不寒不热。（《佛本行集经》）

5 以下二例据刘一豪（2012）引。

无论是“者”提取施事还是提取受事，“动+者”都和后面的名词所指相同，据此可以说“动+者”都是“同位性”定语。但换个角度看，这些“者”都可以换成文言中的“之”，似乎只是起着连接限定语和中心语的作用。

这种“者”到唐五代时期更为多见。如：

奉敕，辄到者官人解现任，凡人决一顿乃至。（张鷟《朝野金载》卷三，p. 71）

（蒋）恒总追集男女三百余人，就中唤与老婆语者一人出，余并放散。（张鷟《朝野金载》卷四，p. 102）

公既去，而执拂者临轩指吏曰：“问去者处士第几？住何处？”（杜光庭《虬髯客传》p. 2）

当时宝塔新修日，此会终无见者人。（释圆鉴《十偈辞》）

其大王见佛化为千体相，宜悟（疑悞）问言大臣曰：“那个是前来者一躯佛，交朕如何认得？”……又云：“五百生前耶输陀罗合知先来者佛。”……其臣又奏请：“罗睺之子合知先来者佛。”（《敦煌变文·悉达太子修道因缘》p. 474）

左右曰：“启将军，西边是掳来者贱奴念经声。”（《敦煌变文·庐山远公话》p. 257）

你前时耍者玉，自家甚是用心，只为难得似你尺寸底。（《云麓漫钞·卷十五》p. 265）

前五例“者”提取施事，后二例“者”提取受事。

3. “者”用在名词性成分后表示转指。这种用法先秦已见，但用例很少，且名词性成分限于“形+名”或表方位的短语。如：

楚子享公于新台，使长鬣者相。（《左传·昭公七年》p. 1289）

故解之以牛之白颡者与豚之亢鼻者，与人有痔病者，不可以适河。（《庄子·人间世》p. 97）

西北方之下者，则洸阳处之。（《庄子·达生》p. 351）

两汉以后，这种用法的“者”增多。

秦失其鹿，天下共逐之，于是高材疾足者先得焉。（《史记·淮阴侯列传》p. 2629）

中国外如赤县神州者九，乃所谓九州也。於是有所裨海环之，人民禽兽莫能相通者，如一区中者，乃为一州。（《史记·孟子荀卿列传》p. 2344）

魏武有一妓，声最清高，而情性酷恶。欲杀则爱才，欲置则不堪。于是选百人，一时俱教。少时，还有一人声及之，便杀恶性者。（《世说新语·忿狷》p. 461）

有菜名曰：“芸薇”，类有三种，紫色者最繁，味辛，其根烂熳，春夏叶，密，秋蕊冬馥，其实若珠，五色，随时而盛，一名“芸芝”。（《拾遗记·卷九》p. 203）

西有崑玉山，其石五色而轻，或似履崑之状，光泽可爱，有类人工。其黑色者为胜，众仙所用焉。（《拾遗记·卷十》p. 231）

而彼仙人寻即取米及胡麻子，口中含嚼，吐著掌中，语小儿言：“我掌中者，似孔雀屎。”（《百喻经·小儿争分别毛喻》p. 169）

我曾所睹，乃为奇特，出过汝今所见者上。[···] 我见奇特，出汝者上。（姚秦译经《日耀经》）

寮友问其故，云：“常有妇人来，美丽非凡间者”。（《幽明录》卷四，引自《太平广记》317卷 p. 2509）

南中桐花有深红色者。（段成式《酉阳杂俎续集》卷一0 p. 451）

大设珍馐，多诸异果，甘美鲜香非人间者。（戴孚《广异记·汝阴人》 p. 54）

鲁公曰：“涤烦疗渴，所谓茶也。”赞普曰：“我此亦有。”遂命出之，以指曰：“此寿州者，此舒州者，此顾渚者，此蕲门者，此昌明者，此涪湖者。”（李肇《唐国史补》卷下 p. 66）

杨贵妃生于蜀，好食荔枝；南海所生，尤胜蜀者。（李肇《唐国史补》卷上 p. 19）  
开成初，余从叔听之镇河中，自洛招致饧者，居于蒲，蒲土因有是饧。其法宁闻传得，博军人窃得十八九，故今奉天亦出轻饧，然而劣于蒲者，不尽其妙焉。（李匡乂《资暇集》卷下 p. 23）

季和将发，就食，谓三娘子曰：“适会某自有烧饼，请撤去主人者，留待他宾。”即取己者食之。（薛渔思《河东记》，引自《太平广记》286卷 p. 2280）

休祐以己手板托言他人者。（段成式《酉阳杂俎》 p. 179）

禄山曰：“某贼人也，不幸两足皆有，比将军者色黑而加大，竟不知其何祥也。”（郑縈《开天传信记》，引自《太平广记》222卷 p. 1703）

太宗骇而问之，伏迥曰：“只为官木橦贵，所以百姓者贱。”（刘肃《大唐新语》卷九 p. 146）

麦地占他家，竹园皆我者。（《寒山诗·贤士不贪婪》 p. 255）

从以上举例可以看出，“名+者”表转指的“名”从六朝开始范围逐渐扩大，出现了简单的名词和代词，如“凡间、人间、主人、将军、百姓、他人”，还有单音节的地名、代词。

文言与白话分道扬镳从东汉开始就比较明显，六朝后加剧。进入唐代后，文言虚词在实际口语中逐渐消失。为什么“者”到晚唐五代还会保有一定的使用频率呢？我们认为，一方面，今传白话文献并非纯粹的口语，总会夹杂一定数量的文言成分；另一方面，“者”在随着文言衰落的过程中，产生了上述种种新的功能。总的使用频率的消减与文言的命运一致，而新功能的产生，则给了“者”不灭并获得“新生”的可能。

## 2 “者”与“底（的）”的功能对应

结构助词“底（的）”产生于唐五代时期。已有研究成果提到的“底（的）”的最早用例有：

周静乐县主，河内王懿宗妹。懿妹短丑，武氏最长，时号大哥。县主与则天并马行，命元一咏。曰：“马带桃花锦，裙衔绿草罗。定知帏帽底，仪容似大哥。”则天大笑，县主极惭。（张鷟《朝野僉载》卷四，引自《太平广记》254卷， p. 1979）

崔湜之为中书令，河东公张嘉贞为舍人，湜轻之，常呼为“张底”。后曾商量数事，意皆出人右，湜惊美久之，谓同官曰：“知无？张底乃我辈一般人，此终是其坐处。”湜死十余载，河东公竟为中书焉。（刘餗《隋唐嘉话》下，谈刻初印本《太平广记》引作《国史纂异》， p. 49）

这两例都见于后人辑录的《太平广记》，不是同时资料，且前一例“帟帽底”也可能是“帟帽底下”，“底”是方位词（见冯春田2003，p. 425）。

接下来是敦煌变文和《祖堂集》中的例子。曹广顺（1986；1995）、梅祖麟（1988）、吴福祥（1996）、冯春田（2000）等已有调查分析。诸位学者在分析早期的“底”的用法时，都会拿吕叔湘（1943）列出的现代汉语中“的”出现的六种格式做对比。刘敏芝（2008）曾拿敦煌变文和《祖堂集》中的“底”对照六种格式进行了统计，转录如下：

	敦煌变文	祖堂集
N+底	3	17
N+底+N	0	5
A+底	0	9
A+底+N	1	6
VP+底	3	40
VP+底+N	VP底O	27
	VP底S	89
		10
合计	15	203

据此，到《祖堂集》中，“底”已经全部具有六种格式，而这六种格式，此前的“者”也都具备。值得注意的是，“底”的六种格式与“者”的用法，在出现时间的先后和使用数量上具有相当整齐的对应关系。

先看“者”出现得最多的典型用法“VP者”和“A者”。在敦煌变文和《祖堂集》中，相应的“VP底”“A底”出现得并不太多，这是因为“者”的典型用法在这个时期依然保持其惯性，书写者对这种自古沿袭而来的用法会感到更加自然和习惯。或许口语中说的是“VP+X”、“A+X”，书写时如果偏重书面学来的用法和习惯，就写成了“VP者”、“A者”，如果偏重实际语言的记录，就可能写成“VP底”、“A底”。如《祖堂集》中，据刘一豪（2012）统计，“VP者”有382例，“A者”有83例。所以晚唐五代的文献中“VP底”和“A底”还远比“VP者”、“A者”少。

再看“N+底”、“N+底+N”对应的“N+者”、“N+者+N”。如上一节所述，“N+者”先秦就有少数用例，汉代以后逐渐多见，但N限于“形+名”或表方位的短语，而在敦煌变文和《祖堂集》中的“N+底”，N也主要限于这两类。同时，六朝以后N也有了简单的名词和代词，正好《祖堂集》中“N+底”的N也有少量的简单的名词和代词（参见刘敏芝2008）。如：

国师云：“这个是马师底，仁者作摩生？”（《祖堂集》卷十五，p. 379）

师云：“我不敢瞎却汝底。”（《祖堂集》卷十三，p. 340）

“N+者+N”历代文献中少见，吕叔湘（1943）曾在唐钺的基础上举出几例，但《战国策》一例存在版本问题，《南齐书》一例可作不同的标点（参见刘敏芝2008），剩下

的也就是《汉书·艺文志》的“儒家者流”、“农家者流”9个很特别的例子，如何阐释还值得研究。此外，中古文献中有“所VP+者+N”的用例：

守尸吏暝以为大炷，置卓脐中以为灯，光明达旦，如是积日。后卓故部曲收所烧者灰，并以一棺棺之，葬于郿。（《三国志·魏书·董二袁刘传》注引《英雄记》p. 180）

试取上古人所案行得天心而长吉者文书，复取中古人所案行得天心者书策文，复取下古人所思务行得天意而长自全者文书，宜皆上下流视考之，必与重规合矩无殊也。（《太平经》卷三十七 p. 159）

李德裕作相日，人有献书帖。德裕得之，执玩颇爱其书。卢弘宣时为度支郎中，有善书名。召至，出所获者书帖令观之。（张怀瓘《书断》）

“所VP”虽然不是典型的名词，但毕竟是名词性结构，不过这种用法的“者”文献中很少。与此相对应，“底”产生后，“N+底+N”出现得最晚，《祖堂集》中的用例也最少。如：

师向大王云：“世俗中亦有志人底苗稼，佛法中亦有志人底苗稼。”（《祖堂集》卷十 p. 288）

再看“VP+者+N”和“A+者+N”。前者汉代以后就比较多见了，相应地，“VP+底+N”在晚唐五代用例就比较多。后者文献中极少见，唐钺曾举出《庄子》一例（据吕叔湘1943）：

多吾示之以天壤，名实不入，而机发於踵。是殆见吾善者机也。（《庄子·应帝王》p. 351）

但是这一例很奇怪，《应帝王》篇上下文与“善者机”对应的是“杜德机”、“衡气机”，所以“善者机”未必能看作“A+者+N”。一直到敦煌变文里，才见到一例“A+者+N”，这也就是许多论著中经常提到了例子：

其王崩后，太子二人，大者不恋云花（荣华），山间修道；小者太子丞（承）王宝位，主其天下。（《敦煌变文·悉达太子修道因缘》p. 475）  
相应的，“底”产生后，“A+底+N”早期也不多见。

根据上面对“者”的六种格式和“底”的六种格式的对应关系分析，我们发现，除了“VP者”和“VP底”，“A者”和“A底”可能因为文言用法惯性前者多后者少，其他四种格式，基本上是前代或唐五代用“者”的格式多见的，用“底”的格式在唐五代也比较多，如“VP+底+N”、“N+底”，相反，前代或唐五代用“者”的格式少见的，用“底”的格式在唐五代也比较少。这种对应关系应该不是巧合，它说明“底”与“者”之间具有必然联系，据此我们有理由推测，“底”可能就是“者”的口语读音的新的书写形式。

## 3 “底”是“者”的口语音书写形式

关于“底”的来源，早先主要有两种观点：吕叔湘（1943）、太田辰夫（1958）倾向于来源于“者”，王力（1958）主张来源于“之”。后来的学者或支持前一种观点，如曹广顺（1986；1995）等，或支持后者的观点，如梅祖麟（1988）。也有提出新观点的，如祝敏彻（1982）、俞光中、植田均（1999）主张既来源于“者”也来源于“之”。冯春田（1990；2000）认为来源于指示代词“底”，江蓝生（1999）认为来源于方位词“底”。许多学者都曾引章炳麟《新方言》中的话，说章认为“底”既来源于“者”也来源于“之”，其实章炳麟只是说白话的“底（的）”相当于文言的“者”和“之”，还相当于文言的句尾“只”<sup>6</sup>。

吕叔湘、太田辰夫倾向“底”来源于“者”，是看重二者功能上的对应关系；王力认为不可能来源于“者”，因为语音上不好解释，功能上也并非完全对应，如“底”后可接中心语；主张双来源者实际上是想调和两种不同的意见，但遇到的困难更大：说部分来源于“者”，仍要解释语音上演变的可能性，说部分来源于“之”，那么来源于“之”的部分是怎么与来源于“者”的部分合流的呢，两个不同的来源语音上会完全一样吗？既然说“底”来源于“者”或“之”都无法得到很好的解释，会不会是别的来源呢？于是有了冯春田和江蓝生提出的新观点。

前辈时贤的研究，对探讨“底”的来源打下了很好的基础，不同意见之间的讨论，也揭示了其中的一些值得进一步研究的问题。我们认为，就像许多学者所说的那样，“底”来源于“之”，功能上是无法解释的。“底”是一个功能成分，要探讨其所自来的前身，首先必须看二者在功能上是否有对应关系。从本质上说，“之”作为限定语和中心语的连接标志，是一个前附成分，这是由它来源于指示代词（张敏，2003）所决定的；而“底”从其早期用例来看，是一个后附成分。正因为“之”是一个前附成分，所以它不可能出现在“～之”这样的位置，而“底”因为是一个后附成分，所以既能出现在“～底”这样的位置，也能出现在“～底～”这样的位置。而“底”的后附成分的性质与“者”是一致的。

冯、江二位先生提出的观点，虽然既不存在语音演变的解释的问题，也不需要解释结构助词“底”与其前身的功能对应不对应的问题，但是，由指示代词“底”或方位词“底”演变为结构助词“底”的过程并不清楚，缺乏足够的语言实例的支持。我们知道，语法化理论提出了许多语法化原则（参见沈家煊1994），其中包括频率原则、渐变原则、保持原则，而说结构助词“底”由指示代词或方位词演变而来，都不大符合这几项原则。先看频率原则，指示代词“底”在结构助词“底”形成之前，用例极少，更难见到适宜于其演变为结构助词的语法分布的用例。方位词“底”的频率也不是很高，特别是同样很少见到适宜于其演变为结构助词的语法分布的用例。一个使用频率不高的成分，是不大容易发生语法化的。再看渐变原则，其实与频率原则相关，语法化是一个连续的渐变的过程，一个语言单位由A转变为B，通常可以找到一个中间阶段既有A义（包括功能）又有B义（包括功能），或者说既可以理解为A义又可以理解为B义。然而我们目前并没有发现这种情况。保持原则是

6 章炳麟《新方言》：“今人言底言的，凡有三义：在语中者，的即之字；在语末者，若有所指，如云冷的热的，的即者字（者音同都，与的双声）；若为词之必然，如云我一定要去的，的即只字。”早在元代卢以纬《语助》中就有类似的说法：“（者）或有俗语‘底’（平）字意”（“者”字条），“凡‘之’字多有‘底’（平）字义”（“之”字条）。章、卢并没有讨论“底”的来源问题（参见刘敏芝，2008），只是比较白话与文言，“底（的）”相当于“之”“者”“只”，或“者”“之”相当于白话中的“底（的）”。

说语法化发生后, B还会多少保留A的一些特点(包括意义和功能), 然而我们很难从结构助词“底”的身上看到指示代词或方位词的特点。虽然指示代词和方位词都有可能演变为结构助词, 但是就“底”的形成过程来看, 因为文献提供的实例太少, 目前冯、江二位先生的论证, 其说服力似乎还不太充足<sup>7</sup>。

我们倾向于“底”的来源是“者”, “底”是“者”口语音的新的书写形式。如前文所述, “者”与“底”在功能对应方面不存在问题。以往研究中认为“底”出现之前“者”没有或很少见“N者”(转指), 通过文献调查, “N者”并不少见。这就解释为什么“N底”出现得早而且早期用例也比较多。问题还是“者”和“底”的语音关系如何解释。

吕叔湘对“者”变“底”的语音解释说得不是很肯定: “底是否之、者的音变, 牵涉到古代语音, 难于论证。要是就之和者来比较, 之和底韵母较近, 者和底声调相同, 可能性的大小也差不多。我们现在只从用法方面来考察。”太田辰夫则根本没提“底”与“者”的语音关系。王力先生明确提出, 说“底”来源于“者”语音上解释不通。

我们认为, 由“者”到“底”, 语音上并不是完全解释不通。吴福祥(1996)曾提到, “者”“底”可能都已经轻声化, 轻声化可能导致二者的韵母趋同。这种假设当然可能存在。除此之外, “者”“底”韵母相近甚至趋同并非完全找不到证据。吕叔湘(1985, p. 241)在论证指示代词“底”的来源时曾指出: “阿堵的阿是前缀, 堵是者(这)的异体。‘堵’在《广韵》两见: 一为上声姥韵, 当古切; 一为上声马韵, 章也切, 与‘者’同音。阿堵的堵很可能是后一个音, 后来随着者字音变为底, 就写成阿底, 更后又写成兀底。宋元时代的阿底和兀底就是晋宋时代的阿堵, 宋人早已看到这一点: 朱翌(1097-1167)在《猗觉寮杂记》里说: ‘王衍见钱曰阿堵物。阿堵如言阿底。’元马永卿(?-1136)的《懒真子》也说: ‘古今之语大都相同, 但其字各别耳。古所谓阿堵者, 乃今所谓兀底也。’”(p. 241)“堵”从“者”的声, 《集韵》中“者”有“董五切”又音(吴福祥1996)。“堵”能够音变为“底”, “者”当然也可以音变为“底”。

“董五切”与“当古切”同音, 属姥韵(模上声)。唐五代时的语音系统中(主要是以敦煌资料为依据整理的西北方音), 鱼模韵字与齐韵字(“底”属荠韵, 齐韵上声)是有纠葛的。蒋冀骋、吴福祥(1997)曾引周大璞(1979)、罗常培(1933)、邵荣芬(1963)、周祖谟(1988)等人的研究成果讨论唐五代的韵母系统, 从中可以看出“者”与“底”的语音联系。

《集韵》马韵: “者, 止也切, 《说文》: ‘别事词也。’”姥韵: “者, 董五切, 语辞。”马韵“者”肯定就是上古沿用下来的文言“者”, 姥韵“者”是个什么“语辞”呢? 肯定不是文言“者”, 有可能就是由文言用法经功能扩展变异的口语读音“者”。这样, 如果能够找到唐五代前后模韵与齐韵之间的关系, 也就可以解释“者”“底”之间的语音联系了。

周大璞分敦煌变文用韵得23部, 鱼模部中的鱼韵有时与支微部(包括齐韵)通押(据蒋、吴1997, p. 63), 虽然没有模韵字与齐韵字通押, 但既然是两部通押, 说明二者韵母相去不远。

罗常培(1933)根据对音材料得23摄55韵, 齐韵在e摄e、ye、we三韵, 模韵在u摄u韵, 而鱼韵则一半与脂之支(开)同在i摄i韵, 一半与虞韵、模侯尤(唇音)、脂

7 关于来源于方位词“底”之说的疑点, 蒋冀骋(2005)辩之甚详。



之支(合)同在u摄u韵。根据变文的用韵,鱼模同部,脂之支微齐同部,而二者可以通押,说明根据对音分出的e与i、u三韵之间有某种联系。罗常培在分析鱼韵的读音时说:《切韵》时代的鱼韵应读[io],这个音“读的开唇一点就容易变成[i],读的合唇一点就容易变成[y]。这两个音在吐蕃人耳朵里都是很难辨别的,所以就拿他自己语言中固有的i、u来勉强代替。”据此,则模韵与齐韵分别是清楚的,二者的纠葛是因为押韵系联造成的。但是从罗常培先生的这段话也可以看出,对音受到对译双方语音系统的影响,并不完全能够反映汉语当时的实际音值。既然在对音中鱼韵联系着模韵和脂之支微,脂之支微又与齐韵同部,那么,模韵和齐韵的韵母应该相差不远。

再看敦煌变文的实际用韵,周祖谟(1988)对变文的用韵分析的结果与周大璞大致相同,也是23部,其中之部包括支、脂、之、微、齐几韵系和去声祭韵字,鱼部包括鱼、虞、模三韵系和尤、侯韵系的唇音字。“者”入韵均在“假摄(麻部)”,自然是马韵的“止也切”一读,而在姥韵读“董五切”的语辞“者”没有入韵的。但是,之部和鱼部可以通押,虽然未见齐韵系与模韵系直接通押,但有模韵系的字与之部通押,如“步、土、五、度、怒”等,语辞“者”的反切下字“五”就可以和之部字通押。据此,“董五切”的“者”与“底”的韵母应该是相近的。蒋冀骋(2005)曾论证:“‘底’读te,与‘者’的姥韵在方言中的读音ti非常接近,可替代。”这个论证是值得重视的。

我们推测,“者”在唐代有文白两读,文读依据语音演变规律读“章也切”,白读依据口语音读“董五切”。“董五切”与“底”声母、声调相同,韵母相近,因与“者”的正常语音演变规律不合,书写时就写成了“底”,而文读音则保持着“者”这一书写形式。

因为“者”有文白两读,在白读音写作“底”后,文献中就出现了“者”“底”同现的状况,口语中读“底”的音,书写时则既可写作“者”,也可写作“底”。冯春田(1990)曾列举许多对偶文句、同一文献中同类结构的文句以及不同文献中同类结构的文句中或用“者”或用“底”,据此冯文认为“者”“底”之间只有词汇替换关系,没有源流演变关系。我们注意到,冯文所列例句中,用“者”的都是“VP者”和“AP者”,如前文所说,在“底”的书写形式出现后,“者”仍然保持着其文言用法的惯性,特别是其典型用法“VP者”和“AP者”。完全有可能口语中说的是“底”音,书写时却不自觉地写成了“者”。

## 四 结语

“底”在晚唐五代逐渐普遍使用后,“者”的衰亡速度加快。“底”不是“者”的替换形式(词汇替换),而是由“者”演变来的新的书写形式。新形式产生后,旧形式没有立即消失,其原因是“者”有文白两读,加上文读的“者”借助文言的强大惯性,使其能够在书面语中得到较长时间的保留。而白读写作“底”后,渐渐与“者”的典型用法分家,功能也逐步扩大,特别是到了宋元之际写作“的”后,不仅具有了文言中“者”的功能,同时兼并了文言“之”“所”的功能(参见蒋绍愚,2005)。这种功能的扩展,使得“底(的)”看起来既与“者”有联系,也与“之”有联系,但从早期“底”的用法看,它最先只是继承了“者”的功能。

语法的新陈代谢,可能是词汇替换,如处置式标记“把”替换“取、将”,事态助词“了”替换“已”,新旧形式各自有自己的演化过程;也可能是传承关系,即新形

式由旧形式演变而来，只是由于书写符号发生变化，书面上写成了不同的汉字，如第二人称代词“尔”变成“你”，语气词“无”变成“吗”。“底”和“者”的关系应该属于后者。

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## Linking Ancient and Contemporary

Continuities and Discontinuities in Chinese Literature

edited by Tiziana Lippiello, Chen Yuehong 陈跃红 and Maddalena Barengli

## Biographies

### Authors

**Giulia Baccini** received her PhD degree from Ca' Foscari University (Venice) and jointly from Charles University (Prague) and now she teaches Chinese language and literature both at Ca' Foscari and Alma Mater Studiorum (Bologna). Her principal research interests lie in early medieval Chinese literature (220-581 AD), in particular, non canonical literary production, entertaining literature and practices linked to it. She is also interested in the diachronic study of joke-books as a 'genre' in the pre-modern period.

**Barbara Bisetto** is Associate Professor of Chinese Language and Literature at the University of Milano-Bicocca. Her research interests focus on classical Chinese language and pre-modern literature, and on premodern Chinese narrative. She has published essays and articles on the narrative tradition in the Ming period, and has translated *chuanqi* fiction from the Tang dynasty.

**Chen Xiaoming** 陈晓明 is Professor and Head of the Department of Chinese Language and Literature at Peking University. He specializes in contemporary Chinese literature and the theory of Postmodernism. His major publications in Chinese include: *Wubian de tiaozhan: Zhongguo xianfeng wenxue de hou xiandai xing* 无边的挑战: 中国先锋文学的后现代性 (Boundless Challenge: The Postmodernity of Chinese Avant-garde Literature), *Zhongguo dangdai wenxue zhuchao* 中国当代文学主潮 (The Main Stream of Contemporary Literature in China), *Delida de dixian: Jiegou de yaoyi yu xinren wenxue de daolai* 德里达的底线: 解构的要义与新人文学的到来 (Derrida's Bottom Line: The Essence of Deconstruction with the Coming of Neo-humanities).

**Chen Yuehong** 陈跃红 is Professor at the Department of Chinese Language and Literature and previous Head of Department of Chinese Language and Literature at Peking University. His publications in Chinese include *Bijiao shixue daolun* 比较诗学导论 (Introduction to comparative poetics), *Tong yi zhi jian: Chen Yuehong jiaoshou jiang bijiao shixue fangfalun* 同异之间: 陈跃红教授讲比较诗学方法论 (Between Similarities and Differences: Chen Yuehong's Lectures on the Methodology of Comparative Poetics), and *Wenxue yanjiu de xiandaixing yu kuawenhua suming* 文学研究的现代性与跨文化宿命 (The Modernity of Literary Study and the Destiny of Cross-culturalism).

**Fu Gang** 傅刚 is Professor of classical Chinese literature at the Department of Chinese Language and Literature Department at Peking University. His major works in Chinese include *Wen Xuan banben yanjiu* 文选版本研究 (Research on the Editions of *Wen Xuan*), *Wei Jin Nanbei chao shige lun* 魏晋南北朝诗歌史论 (On the History of Poetry of the Wei, Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties), *Xiao Tong pingzhuan* 萧统评传 (A Critical Biography of Xiao Tong), and *Han Wei Liuchao wenxue yu wenxian lungao* 汉魏六朝文学与文献论稿 (The Literature and Documents of the Han, Wei and Six Dynasties).

**Marco Fumian** is Assistant Professor at the University of Chieti-Pescara (Italia) where he teaches modern Chinese language and literature. Interested in the study of modern and contemporary Chinese culture, he focuses on the investigation of the dominant contemporary ideological trends represented through the forms of popular literature and culture.

**Sean Golden** is Professor of East Asian Studies at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB), Senior Research Associate at CIDOB Barcelona Centre for International Affairs and Associate Professor at the Barcelona Institute of International Studies (IBEI). His research work involves comparative cultural studies, the construction of political discourse in China and the development of a Chinese school of international relations theory. Co-editor of *Soft Day: A Miscellany of Contemporary Irish Literature* (1980), co-editor and translator of *100 Modern Chinese Poems* (1987), *Gu Cheng: Selected Poems* (1990), *Mala herba de Lu Xun* (1994), *Sunzi. L'Art de la guerra* (2000, 2007, 2014), *Laozi. Daodejing. El llibre del 'dao' i del 'de'* (2000, 2006), *Lao Tsé. El Libro del Tao* (2012). Author of *China en perspectiva. Análisis e interpretaciones* (2012).

**Jin Yongbing** 金永兵 is Professor at the Department of Chinese Language and Literature at Peking University. He studies literary theory, and has published in Chinese *Wenxue lilun benti yanjiu* 文学理论本体研究 (Study on the Ontology of Literary Theory), *Hou lilun shidai de Zhongguo wenlun* 后理论时代的中国文论 (Chinese Literary Theory After Theory), *Dangdai wenxue lilun fanchou daolun* 当代文学理论范畴导论 (Categories of Contemporary Literary Theory), *Zhongguo dangdai wenxue lilun* 中国当代文学理论 (Contemporary Literary Theory in China, 1978-2008).

**Nicholas Koss** holds a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from Indiana University and is currently Professor of Comparative Literature at Peking University and Fu Jen Catholic University. Among his research interests are the image of China in the West, comparative fiction, and literature and religion. His publications include *The Best and Fairest Land: Medieval Images of China* (Taipei, 1999), various articles, and numerous translations of Chinese literature for *The Chinese Pen* (Taiwan).

**Li Yang** 李杨 is Professor at the Department of Chinese Language and Literature at Peking University, specializing in contemporary Chinese literature and cultural studies. His published works include: *Liang zhong zhizhi: Kexue yu Zhongguo zhengzhi wenhua* 两种智慧: 科学与中国政治文 (Two Forms of Knowledge: Science and Chinese Political Culture), *Kangzheng suming zhi lu: 'Shehui zhuyi xianshi zhuyi'* (1942-1976) 抗争宿命之路: “社会主义现实主义” (1942-1976) 研究 (The Path of Resisting Destiny: A Study of Socialist Realism, 1949-1976), *50-70 niandai Zhongguo wenxue jingdian zuopin zai jiedu* 50—70 年代中国文学经典作品再解读 (Re-reading Canonical Works in Chinese Literature From the 1950s to the 1970s), *Wenxueshi xiezuo zhong de xiandaixing wenti* 文学史写作中的现代性问题 (The Question of Modernity in Literary Historiography), *Du dianying zhi jingdian yishu dianying* 读电影之经典艺术电影 (Analyzing Classic Art Films), and «Bai mao nü» qishi nian 《白毛女》七十年 (Seventy Years of *The White Haired Girl*). Currently he is engaged in a research project that reinterprets the visual, aural, and literary culture of Yan'an in the revolutionary period.

**Tiziana Lippiello** holds a Ph.D. from Leiden University, she is Professor at the Department of Asian and North African Studies at Ca' Foscari University of Venice and is currently Vice Rector. Her research focusses on classical Chinese ethics, divination and mantic practices. Her recent publications are: «On the Beauty of *cheng* 誠 (Authenticity) in the *Zhongyong* 中庸 and Matteo Ricci's interpretation» 《中庸 “誠” 之美与利玛窦的阐释》, in Zhang Zhigang 张志刚 (ed.), *Meimei yu gong. Renlei wenming jiaoliu yujian zhanlan* 美美与共——人类文明交流互鉴的回顾与展望 (Beauty Through Each Other's Eyes: Retrospection and Outlook on the Exchanges and Mutual Learning Among Civilizations, Zongjiao wenhua chubanshe 2016, forthcoming). Her major publications include *Auspicious Omens and Miracles in Ancient China. Han, Three Kingdoms and Six Dynasties*, Monumenta Serica, Monograph Series, XXXIX, Sankt Augustin 2001, the Italian translation of the *Lunyu* 論語 (*Dialoghi*, Einaudi, 2003, repr. 2006) and the *Zhongyong* (*La costante pratica del giusto mezzo*, Marsilio, 2010).

**Liu Yongqiang** 刘勇强 is Professor of Chinese Language and Literature at Peking University, specializing in Chinese literature, particularly in classical Chinese novels and fictions. Publications in Chinese include: *Xiyou ji lunyao* 西游记论要 (A Study of *Xiyou ji*), *Qite de jingshen manyou—Xiyou ji xinshuo* 奇特的精神漫游——西游记新说 (A Peculiar Spiritual Trip: A New Explanation of *Xiyou ji*), *Huanxiang de meili* 幻想的魅力 (The charm of imagination), *Zhongguo shenhua yu xiaoshuo* 中国神话与小说 (A Study of Chinese Myth and Fiction), *Zhongguo gudai xiaoshuoshi xulun* 中国古代小说史叙论 (The History of Classical Chinese Fiction), *Huaben xiaoshuo xulun* 话本小说叙论 (Huaben: A History).

**Paolo Magagnin** is Assistant Professor of Chinese at the Department of Asian and North African Studies of Ca' Foscari University (Venezia) and a corresponding member of the IrAsia research group at CNRS/Aix-Marseille Université. His fields of research include Chinese modern and contemporary literature (fiction of the Republican era, genre fiction), didactics of Chinese literature and culture, translation studies (translation criticism, ideology in translation, translation of figurative language), and contemporary Chinese political discourse. He is also a translator of contemporary Chinese literature, including works by Zhu Wen, Xiao Bai, Xu Zechen, Cao Wenxuan, and Chen He.

**Nicoletta Pesaro** is Assistant Professor of Chinese Language and Literature at Ca' Foscari University (Venezia). She teaches Modern Chinese Language, Chinese translation, and Modern and contemporary Chinese literature at Ca' Foscari University of Venice, where she has been the coordinator of the MA programme in Interpreting and Translation for several years. Her research interests include modern and contemporary Chinese literature, theory of narrative and translation studies. She has published many essays on Chinese narrative and on Chinese literary translation in Italian, French, Chinese and English. She has translated Chinese novels by Yu Hua, Ge Fei, Ye Zhaoyan, Ma Jian and Zhang Ailing. She is presently translating Lu Xun's first two collections of short stories (Sellerio, 2017). She recently edited a book on Chinese translation: *The Ways of Translation: Constraints and Liberties in Translating Chinese* (Cafoscarina Editrice, 2013), and her *La narrativa cinese del Novecento: autori, correnti e tematiche* (Carocci), written with Melinda Pirazzoli, is forthcoming.

**Qin Liyan** 秦立彦 is Associate Professor at the Institute of Comparative Literature and Culture, affiliated with the Department of Chinese Language and Literature at Peking University, China. She obtained her Ph.D of Comparative Literature from the University of California, San Diego. Her academic interests include relationships between Chinese and American literatures, English poetry, and Chinese film. She is also a poet.

**Tian Yuan Tan** 陳毓沅 is Professor of Chinese Studies and Associate Dean (Research) of the Faculty of Languages and Cultures at SOAS, University of London. His main areas of research include Chinese literary history and historiography, theatre and performance, and cross-cultural interactions between China and other countries. He is the author of *Songs of Contentment and Transgression: Discharged Officials and Literati Communities in Sixteenth-Century North China* (Harvard, 2010), *A Critical Edition of the Sanqu Songs by Kang Hai (1475-1541) with Notes and Two Essays* (Zhejiang guji, 2011), co-author of *Passion, Romance, and Qing: The World of Emotions and States of Mind in Peony Pavilion* (Brill, 2014), and the co-editor of *Text, Performance, and Gender in Chinese Literature and Music: Essays in Honor of Wilt Idema* (Brill, 2009), *An Anthology of Critical Studies on Tang Xianzu in Western Scholarship* (Zhejiang guji, 2013), and *1616: Shakespeare and Tang Xianzu's China* (Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2016).

**Hans van Ess** is Professor at the Institut für Sinologie and Vice President for International Affairs at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität (München), and President of the Max Weber Foundation. His main areas of research include Chinese historiography, Confucianism and central Asian studies (Mongolia, Manchuria with reference to China, 17th-19th century). He is the author of *Politik und Gelehrsamkeit in der Zeit der Han – Die Alttext/Neutext-Kontroverse* (Harrassowitz, 1993), *Von Ch'eng I zu Chu Hsi. Die Lehre vom Rechten Wege in der Überlieferung der Familie Hu* (Harrassowitz, 2003) and *Politik und Geschichtsschreibung im alten China. Pan-ma i-t'ung* 班馬異同 (Harrassowitz, 2014).

**Wu Xiaodong** 吴晓东 is Professor at the Department of Chinese Language and Literature at Peking University, studies modern Chinese literature. His works in Chinese include *Yangguang yu kunan* 阳光与苦难 (Sunlight and suffering), *Xiangzheng zhuyi yu Zhongguo xiandai wenxue* 象征主义与中国现代文学 (Symbolism and Modern Chinese Literature), *Cong Kafuka dao Kundela* 从卡夫卡到昆德拉 (From Kafka to Kundela), *Ershi shiji waiguo xiaoshuo zhuanti* 20 世纪外国小说专题 (Studies of 20th century Novels from abroad), *Jinghuashuiyue de shijie* 镜花水月的世界 (The World of Flowers in a Mirror or the Moon in the Water), *Ershi shiji de shixin* 20 世纪的诗心 (The Spirit of Poetry in the 20th century), *Jiji de shenhua* 记忆的神话 (Myths of Memory) and *Wenxuexing de mingyun* 文学性的命运 (The Destiny of 'Literariness').

**Yang Rongxiang** 杨荣祥 is Professor at the Department of Chinese Language and Literature at Peking University. His research interests are in the historical grammar and lexicon of the Chinese language. His publications include *Jindai hanyu fuci yanjiu* 近代汉语副词研究 (Study of Adverbs in Early Mandarin Chinese), «Lun 'ming er dong' jiegou de lai yuan ji qi yufa xingzhi» 《论“名而动”结构的来源及其语法性质》 (The Origin of the “N ér 而 V” Structure and its Grammatical Property), «Lun 'cilei huoyong' yu shanggu hanyu 'zonghexing dongci' zhi guanxi» 《论“词类活用”与上古汉语“综合性动词”之关系》 (Research on the Relationship Between the 'Word-class Flexibility' and the 'Synthetic Verbs' in Classical Chinese), and «Shilun zaoqi zhishiyi chuzhishi de chansheng he lai yuan» 《试论早期致使义处置式的产生和来源》 (The Emergence and Source of the Early Causitive Disposal Constructions).

**Yang Xiaobin** 楊小濱 is a Research Fellow at the Institute of Chinese Literature and Philosophy, Academia Sinica (Taiwan). He specializes in contemporary Chinese literature, film, culture, and literary/cultural theory in general. His scholarly publications (in English and Chinese) include *Negative Aesthetics* (1995), *History and Rhetoric* (1999), *The Chinese Postmodern* (2002), *Atonal Moments Cultureaux* (2011), *Exile of Language* (2011), *Labyrinth, Vaudeville, Twaddle* (2011), *Forms of Sensibilities* (2012), and *Desire and Jouissance* (2013).

**Yang Zhu** 杨铸 is Professor at the Department of Chinese Language and Literature at Peking University. His research focuses mainly on the theory of literature and ancient Chinese literary thought. His representative publications in Chinese include *Wenxue gailun* 文学概论 (Introduction to Literature) and *Zhongguo gudai huihua lilin yaozhi* 中国古代绘画理论要旨 (Precis of the Theory of Ancient Chinese Drawing).

**Zhang Hui** 张辉 is Professor of Chinese and Comparative Literature at the Department of Chinese Language and Literature at Peking University. Currently he is the Director of The Institute of Comparative Literature and Comparative Culture. His most recent research interests have been Comparative Poetics, Literary Hermeneutics, and Literature and Intellectual History. He has published *Shenmei xiandaixing pingpan* 审美现代性批判 (A Critique of Aesthetic Modernity), *Feng Zhi: Wei wancheng de ziwo* 冯至：未完成的自我 (Feng Zhi: An Unfinished Self), *Wenxue yu sixinagshi lingao* 文学与思想史论稿 (Essays on Literature and Intellectual History).

**Zhang Pei** 张沛 is Associate Professor at the Department of Chinese Language and Literature at Peking University. He was a visiting scholar at Paris IV (Sorbonne) in 2001-2002 and was a post-doctoral fellow in the School of Foreign Languages and Literatures at Peking University, 2001-2003. Publications in Chinese include *Yinyu de shengming* 隐喻的生命 (The Life of Metaphor), *Hamuleite de wenti* 哈姆雷特的问题 (Hamlet's Question), *Bijiao wenxue: Renwen zhi dao* 比较文学：人文之道 (Comparative Literature: Towards a New Humanism), and numerous translations.



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The first conference was held in Venice on 21-22 March 2013, the second will be held in Peking University on 14-16 October 2016. The volume reflects the desire to compare and integrate different approaches to Chinese literature, showing how, in different epochs, traditional intellectual and literary values have been repeatedly criticized and rejected, yet have often resurfaced in many different ways and have been reinterpreted.



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