

**Poetics of Transparency:  
Hermeneutics of Du Fu (712-770) during the Late Ming (1368-1644) and  
Early Qing (1644-1911) Periods**

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## Acknowledgements

A seventeenth-century Du Fu commentator Qian Qianyi once complained to his friend in a letter about his *wenzhai* 文債 (“literary debts”) – he felt obliged to produce various writings at the request of other people. For me, however, the term *wenzhai* points to a different meaning: the connection between writing (*wen* 文) and debts (*zhai* 債). Writing itself is a process of accumulating debts to many people for their help and support, and this is especially true for writing this dissertation.

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## Abstract

Traditional Chinese poetry and poetics demonstrate a strong belief in the idea of “transparency”: within the Chinese tradition poetry was often considered as a transparent medium which grants reader a seemingly unmediated access to the historical past and the poet’s mind. In their discussion of this transparency, modern scholars tend to either dismiss it as a hermeneutic fallacy or accept it as historically true nature of traditional Chinese poetry. This study draws attention to the “thickness” of such transparency as reflected in the hermeneutics of China’s greatest poet Du Fu’s poetry during the late Ming and early Qing periods.

The dissertation consists of two parts: textual hermeneutics and life hermeneutics. Part I “textual hermeneutics” concentrates on the hermeneutic shift during the late Ming and early Qing. Such a shift is characterized by objection to previous Du Fu hermeneutics especially Song commentators’ interpretations on Du Fu. Chapter 1 gives a general picture of this hermeneutic shift and discusses three major strategies adopted by Ming-Qing commentators. I also analyze the overarching principle embraced by many commentators during this time: *yi yi ni zhi*. Chapter 2 offers a case study of Jin Shengtan’s commentaries on Du Fu. Jin elevates *jie* from a general interpretive approach (as opposed to *zhu*) to a well-defined approach which presents an interesting picture of how he deals with the hermeneutic past as well as defining relationship between self as reader and Du Fu as author.

Part II “life hermeneutics” focuses on “life hermeneutics” and begins with an examination of life hermeneutics of Du Fu during the Song dynasty. Chapter 3 discusses Qian Qianyi’s interpretation of Du Fu’s poetry. Qian’s changing relations with reading Du Fu at different stages of his life serve as a unique example for us to examine complexities of life hermeneutics during the late Ming and early Qing periods. Chapter 4 investigates Ming *yimin*’s practice of life hermeneutics and their attitude towards loyalty as well as how the Qing official ideology intervenes in the interpretations of Du Fu during the Kangxi 康熙 (1654-1722) and the Qianlong 乾隆 (1711-1799) period.

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## Introduction

### I. Literature Review

The Tang poet Du Fu (712-770), acclaimed by William Hung as “China’s greatest poet” (1952), is tremendously influential in Chinese history both as a poetic model and as a cultural icon.<sup>1</sup> However, a historical approach to the reception of Du Fu informs us of the fact that the image and the status of Du Fu have been largely constructed by later generations. Du Fu might not have been considered during his time as a great poet, and one fact frequently observed by many modern scholars is that except for one anthology, Du Fu has been completely excluded from all extant anthologies from Tang era (not even the recently discovered Tang manuscripts of DunHuang caves) have challenged the situation). In fact, currently available materials concerning Du Fu from his own time till the advent of the Song (960-1279) seem to be greatly inadequate (both in quantity and in content) to enable us to acclaim him as the China’s greatest poet with paradigmatic morality, the reputation he has enjoyed from the Song onward.

After the Song, Du Fu continually drew scholars’ attention in the Yuan (1271-1368) and Ming (1368-1644) dynasties. The late Ming and early Qing (1644-1911) becomes another golden age of Du Fu studies, a glimpse of which can be obtained through looking at the most recent encyclopedia on Du Fu. In *Du Fu da ci dian* 杜甫大辭典 (published in 2009), this period occupies the most prominent position for the number of works on Du Fu as well as for a wide variety of approaches such as annotations, philological investigation and structural examination.

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<sup>1</sup> William Hung, *Tu Fu: China’s Greatest Poet* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952).

Surprisingly, English scholarship, which began to touch on Du Fu from at least the nineteenth century, has barely treated the hermeneutics of Du Fu in this period as a topic worthy of systematic investigation, though those hermeneutics are frequently used for the purpose of translation or other academic analyses. We can roughly break the nearly two centuries of English scholarship on Du Fu into three major stages.<sup>2</sup> Although it is difficult to pinpoint when Du Fu was first introduced to the English world, from the second half of the nineteenth century interest in Du Fu began to emerge in a noticeable manner, which can be seen from the efforts made by early English scholars such as Sir John Francis Davis, William Frederick Mayers, Herbert A. Giles, and Mary Elwin. As the first stage of Du Fu's entry into English world, scholarship in this period is characterized by a brief introduction of Du Fu's life and sporadic translations of his poems (both of them are inaccurate in some cases). This situation was significantly changed in the second stage (from the early 1920s through 1970s). Scholars such as Florence Ascough, William Hung, Albert R. Davis, and David Hawkes have together contributed to a systematic investigation of Du Fu and his poetry. Du Fu studies had greatly improved both in quantity and in quality. Whereas in the last thirty years of the nineteenth century only 18 poems by Du Fu were translated into English, the second stage witnessed a huge increase in translation. For example, Ascough and Hung translate over 470 poems and 374 poems respectively. In addition to translation, Hung's monograph approached Du Fu from a historical perspective and highlighted the historical dimension of Du Fu's poetry. In

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<sup>2</sup> The following discussion on Du Fu studies in English world is based on my Chinese article "Yingyu shijie zhong Du Fu jiqi shige de jieshou yu chuanbo-jianlun Dushixue de shijiexing" 英語世界中杜甫及其詩歌的接受與傳播—兼論杜詩學的世界性, in *Zhongguo wenxue yanjiu* 中國文學研究, 2011, no.1, pp. 119-123.

contrast, Davis' later discussion put more emphasis on literary qualities of Du Fu's poetry such as poetic themes and forms.<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile, the collaboration of Kao Yu-kung and Mei Tsu-lin produced a linguistic examination of Du Fu's famous poetic cycle "Autumn Meditations". The eighties of the twentieth century announced the arrival of the third stage on Du Fu studies, in which theoretical and comparative stances in discussion were further highlighted. Du Fu and his poems occupy an important place in Stephen Owen's study of traditional Chinese poetry. As Paul Rouzer once correctly observed,

This is perhaps clearest when Owen grants the greatest level of complexity, contradiction, and sophistication to the poems of Du Fu. It is not that premodern Chinese critics universally read Du Fu in a monoglossic way; but it is obvious that Du Fu is the vital field of contention in Owen's creation of an interesting method of reading.<sup>4</sup>

Eva Shan Chou's monograph *Reconsidering Tu Fu: Literary Greatness and Cultural Contexts* is a groundbreaking study on Du Fu during this stage. Despite a brief discussion on evolution of Du Fu's reputation in the Song, it mainly deals with the issue of how to read Du Fu's poetry in a new light through the separation of the cultural and the poetic legacies of Du Fu. In all these stages, the emphasis is usually put on Du Fu and his poetry rather than their reception in later generations. Charles Hartman's recent article is a welcome contribution to this field and it has convincingly demonstrated to us three different periods in the Song reception of Du Fu and how Song literati responded sympathetically to different portions of and different voices in Du Fu's corpus.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, as far as I know, until now there is no single article or book in English

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<sup>3</sup> Albert R. Davis, *Tu Fu* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1971).

<sup>4</sup> Paul Rouzer, "Du Fu and the Failure of Lyric," *CLEAR* (Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews), No.33, 2011, p.33.

<sup>5</sup> Charles Hartman, "The Tang Poet Du Fu and the Song Dynasty Literati," *CLEAR* 30 (2008): 43-74.

exclusively devoted to hermeneutics of Du Fu from the late Ming to the early Qing, an extremely productive period for reading the poet. Chinese scholarship has paid relatively greater attention to this. In addition to some articles and book chapters, there are two monographs which exclusively deal with Du Fu studies in the early Qing period: Jian Ending's 簡恩定 *Qingchu dushixue yanjiu* 清初杜詩學研究 (*Du Fu Studies in the Early Qing*) and Chen Meizhu's 陳美朱 *Qingchu Dushi shiyi chanshi yanjiu* 清初杜詩詩意闡釋研究 (*A Study of Interpretations of the Meanings of Du Fu's Poems in the Early Qing*). Sun Wei's 孫微 *Qingdai dushixue shi* 清代杜詩學史 (*History of Du Fu studies in the Qing Dynasty*) presents a general picture of Qing scholarship on Du Fu. Another work on Du Fu studies in the late Ming and early Qing period is Zhang Jiazhuang's 張家壯 doctoral dissertation *Mingmo Qingchu Dushixue shulun—yi jizhong zhongyao de Duji wei zhongxin* 明末清初杜詩學述論—以幾種重要的杜集為中心 ("Discussion on Du Fu Studies in the Late Ming and Early Qing Periods—Focusing on A Few Important Du Fu Editions"). Zhang's dissertation is divided into two parts: the first part examines the community of Du Fu commentators during that period, and the second part investigates the three stages in Du Fu interpretations from Chongzhen 崇禎 (r. 1628-1644) era through Yongzheng 雍正 (r.1722-1735). However, whereas many modern Chinese scholars demonstrate a strong awareness of connecting social and textual levels in their approach to Du Fu commentaries during the late Ming and early Qing period, their preference to drawing on the classic hermeneutic rules such as *zhi ren lun shi* 知人論世 (know a person by discussing the world his lives) and *yi yi ni zhi* 以意逆志 (use *yi* to

trace back the authors' aims) to some extent prevents them from critically reflecting on the subtleties of the hermeneutic transparency implied in these rules.<sup>6</sup>

My participation tries to strike a balance between English scholarship and Chinese scholarship on Du Fu. Studying hermeneutics on Du Fu during the late Ming and the early Qing periods will not only contribute to centuries-long Du Fu studies in English, but it can also allow me to participate in the current discussion of the Ming-Qing transition in English scholarship from a different perspective. In Chinese scholarship, much effort has been spent on constructing a discipline named *Du shi xue* 杜詩學, in which the Ming-Qing period occupies an important position. My dissertation will also participate in such a discussion and shed a new light on Du Fu studies during that time through critical examination of the phenomenon of hermeneutics.

## **II. Theoretical Framework, General Structure, and Significance**

In the West, the study of hermeneutics has a long history that can be traced back to Greek and Roman antiquity. Western hermeneutics in its history demonstrates a general movement from specialized fields such as theological hermeneutics and juridical hermeneutics to its universal application in modern hermeneutics. Since it has been long associated with the issue of understanding, from the early stage the crucial task of hermeneutics is how to “correctly” understand the meaning of a text. This task itself is worthy of a careful examination. By centering on “how” it has already assumed three facts: first, a text is endowed with a certain meaning; second, such a meaning can be understood; third, such a meaning can be understood correctly (and, of course,

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<sup>6</sup> Due to the ambiguity of its meaning, I do not translate the word *yi* here. More discussion on *yi* can be found in chapter 1. I will discuss the hermeneutic transparency later in the introduction.

incorrectly). We can see how such assumptions have been played out in the history of Western hermeneutics. Before the advent of modern hermeneutics, hermeneutics can be divided into two main streams in terms of texts in use: biblical hermeneutics and legal hermeneutics. The former witnessed the conflicts over authority on interpreting the Holy Scripture between Catholic and Protestant. Against the Catholic claim on church authority in interpretation, Matthias Flacius Illyricus (1520-1575) argues that an individual does not have to resort to the church for understanding the Holy Scripture and instead theological conviction and sufficient knowledge will allow an individual to communicate with the Holy Spirit. Despite their ostensible conflicts, E.D. Hirsch finds that both of them belong to the same camp of “intuitionism” since they share the same fundamental premise. He defines “intuitionism” as an interpretive act which “conceives the text as an occasion for direct spiritual communion with a god or another person”.<sup>7</sup> Opposite to intuitionism is what Hirsch calls “positivism” which is historically associated with legal interpretations. The juridical hermeneutics focuses on grammatical structure and espouses the principle that the meaning of a law is exactly what is signified by the words. Thus the camp of positivism “assumes a congruence of the signified and the signifier; of that which is represented with the vehicle of its representation.”<sup>8</sup>

However, in the history of hermeneutics the boundary between the two camps designated by Hirsch is not always clear-cut. While Biblical hermeneutics still emphasizes linguistic aspects of a text in its quest for spiritual communion, juridical hermeneutics also takes into consideration the intention of the lawgiver where “the

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<sup>7</sup> E. D. Hirsch, Jr, *The Aim of Interpretation* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago press, 1976), p.20.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, p.22.

meaning cannot be understood from ordinary linguistic usage.”<sup>9</sup> Since the age of modern hermeneutics, much effort has been spent to synthesize these two fundamental premises and hermeneutic theory orients its task to approach a text simultaneously from within and without. Schleiermacher (1768-1834) proposes two hermeneutic tasks, namely, grammatical interpretation and psychological interpretation. He seeks to create a general hermeneutics as the art of understanding in which these two tasks are intrinsically related: “understanding a speech always involves two moments: to understand what is said in the context of the language with its possibilities, and to understand it as a fact in the thinking of the speaker.”<sup>10</sup> Philip August Boeckh (1785-1867) further gives a very detailed delineation of hermeneutic activities including grammatical interpretation, historical interpretation, individual interpretation, and generic interpretation. These four kinds of interpretation are interrelated, with the first two springing from the objective conditions of a text, and the second two from the subjective conditions.

Internal investigation and external investigation of a text become two important wheels of Western hermeneutics, in which interpreters often encounter the familiar hermeneutical circle concerning part and whole as well as reading a text from within and from without. Schleiermacher well draws a portrait of an interpreter who performs two related hermeneutic tasks:

In order to complete the grammatical side of interpretation it would be necessary to have a complete knowledge of the language. In order to complete the psychological side it would be necessary to have a complete knowledge of the person. Since in both cases such complete knowledge is impossible, it is necessary to move back and forth between the grammatical and psychological sides, and no rules can stipulate

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<sup>9</sup> Kurt Mueller-Vollmer, ed., *The Hermeneutics Reader* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), “Introduction”, p.3.

<sup>10</sup> Friedrich D.E. Schleiermacher, “General Hermeneutics,” *The Hermeneutics Reader*, p.74

exactly how to do this.<sup>11</sup>

It is a portrait of a diligent, responsible, and more importantly candid interpreter, and yet it is somehow a misleading portrait. His acknowledgment of the impossibility of arriving at a full understanding of a text, coupled with continuous efforts in approaching that understanding, creates an illusion of objectivism. By objectivism, I do not mean to engage myself in endless debates over whether or not a text has a stable meaning. Rather, the term “illusion of objectivism” here refers to a certain interpretive performance (contrary to the text) which neglects necessary reflections on the performance itself. As Gadamer indicates, “even in the interpretive sciences, the one who does the understanding can never reflect himself out of the historical involvement of his hermeneutical situation so that his own interpretation does not itself become a part of the subject at hand.”<sup>12</sup>

Such hermeneutic conditionality draws our attention to the interpreter and his complicated involvement with the text. The hermeneutic situation an interpreter encounters is by no means merely a private dialogue with the text. On the contrary, it is deeply inscribed by the interpreter’s historicity which includes many factors such as his personal life, contemporary events significant in shaping his interpretation, cultural heritage and hermeneutic traditions, and which as a whole, like the “mysterious historical totality” of a text to be interpreted, invites one’s attention and yet pushes away any attempts to catch it. Another issue which theoretically does not belong to the hermeneutic conditionality of an interpreter and yet practically interferes with hermeneutics is the *use*

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<sup>11</sup> “General Hermeneutics,” *The Hermeneutics Reader*, p. 76.

<sup>12</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, “The Historicity of Understanding,” *The Hermeneutics Reader*, p. 282.

of a text. Umberto Eco distinguishes between critically interpreting and using a text: “To critically interpret a text means to read it in order to discover, along with our reactions to it, something about its nature. To use a text means to start from it in order to get something else, even accepting the risk of misinterpreting it from the semantic point of view.”<sup>13</sup> Although such an opposition might be useful in a theoretical discussion, in real hermeneutic practice they are often interwoven to various degrees. It should be stressed that to “critically” (as Eco tries to emphasize) interpret a text also begs a “critical” reflection on the term “critically”. Similar to what we have observed in the “illusion of objectivism” before, the problem here lies not in the fact that one cannot interpret critically but rather in the issue of how critical such critical interpretation could be. To put it more clearly, so-called critical interpretation assumes a “model empirical reader” which insulates himself from his own historicity. Eco believes that “a text can foresee a Model Reader entitled to try infinite conjectures” and “the empirical reader is only an actor who makes conjectures about the kind of Model Reader postulated by the text.”<sup>14</sup> It seems that Eco is fully aware of the difference between a *theoretical* Model Reader and an *empirical* reader, but in fact the latter is another replaced version of the former, not in terms of infiniteness and comprehensiveness but in terms of ideality. A crucial difference between these two kinds of readers lies in the fact that an empirical reader, unlike a Model Reader, can hardly be exclusively postulated by the text. The word “empirical” reminds us of the fact that a reader’s actualization of a text will unavoidably entangle itself with external circumstances and contingencies in different ways.

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<sup>13</sup> Umberto Eco, *The Limits of Interpretation* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990), p.57.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, p.59.

Furthermore, reading subjectivity in the process of reading is not a monolithic one and instead undergoes a “split” in its interaction with a text. George Poulet argues that in the process of reading, “I” (the reading subject) is invaded by another *I* which is alien to the reading subject and yet *in* the reading subject. This *I* is the *I* of the one who writes the book, and to understand a literary work is to let the individual who writes reveal himself *to us in us*. Poulet further indicates that, despite the fusion of the consciousness of the critic and the consciousness of another being, critical consciousness does not necessarily imply the total disappearance of the critic’s mind in the mind to be criticized.<sup>15</sup> Here we see that the reading subject is split into two selves: one self becomes a prey to what “I” read (the consciousness inherent in the work is active and the consciousness of “I” is content to record passively all that is going on within me); the other self, conscious of such fusion and identification as it may be, shows non-identification with and even divergence from the consciousness in the text.

To what extent these two parts split and how they negotiate varies in different situations. For a strong critic who lives in a culture where authorial intention is highly venerated, the task is not merely to show divergence from the consciousness in the text, but to reconcile this “I” with another *I* in a genuine way to arrive at a harmony fraught with struggles and tensions. Since early times in Chinese hermeneutics of poetry, the author’s *zhi* has been singled out as an ultimate criterion. Poetry itself is the manifestation of the poet’s *zhi* (aims), which is epitomized in the slogan *shi yan zhi* 詩言志 (“poetry expresses the aims”). The concept of *yi yi ni zhi* 以意逆志 (a reader “uses his

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<sup>15</sup> “Phenomenology of Reading,” *New Literary History*, Vol.1, No.1, New and Old History, (Oct., 1969), pp. 53-60.

understanding to trace back to the author's aims") proposed by Mencius in his argument on how to correctly read *The Book of Songs* (one of the Confucian classics) sets up a hermeneutic model in which the author's *zhi* becomes the highest goal of readers' interpretation as well as a touchstone of it.<sup>16</sup> However, it takes great intellectual effort to locate the *zhi* in a text and show how an interpreter "conforms" to it. *zhi* in Chinese poetry gains its presumed stability in and beyond the text, which allows a variety of interpretations. Those interpretations, though showing differences from (or even in conflicts with) each other, together contribute to the authority of *zhi*. Authority, as Gadamer indicates, comes from dogmatic acknowledgment rather than dogmatic force.

What, however, is dogmatic acknowledgment, if not this: that one concedes to authority a superiority in knowledge and judgment and on that ground believes that it is just. On that alone, authority "rests." It prevails, therefore, not because it is blindly obeyed, but because it is freely acknowledged.<sup>17</sup>

The paradoxical nature of such acknowledgment lies exactly in the act of "freely acknowledging". The word "freely" endows such an act with elements of challenge and even rebellion against extant authority (i.e., the authority of authorial intention in hermeneutics); and yet at the same time the word "acknowledge" contributes to formal dominance of such authority. "Freely acknowledge" implies the distance between this "I" and that *I*, registers an interpreter's efforts to overcome that distance, and throws into relief constant negotiation between self of an interpreter and perceived self of the author. In fact, this sheds a new light on the "dominant" hermeneutic model *yi yi ni zhi*. Between *yi* 意 and *zhi* 志 lies the word *ni* 逆. *Ni* is an act which possesses two different meanings.

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<sup>16</sup> I provide the details of Mencius' argument and my analysis in chapter 1.

<sup>17</sup> Gadamer, "Rhetoric, hermeneutics, and the critique of ideology: metacritical comments on *Truth and Method*," in *The Hermeneutics Reader*, p. 285.

It could mean “move in an opposite direction.” While in writing an author expresses himself through words, a reader has to trace back from those words to the authors’ aims. In addition to the directional opposition between hermeneutics and rhetoric, *ni* can also mean “contrary” or “against.” Therefore, what the hermeneutic model *yi yi ni zhi* conveys is not merely loyalty to authorial intention and efforts to find it, but also deviation from or even rebellion against authorial intention in such a process.

Complexities and tensions in the model of *yi yi ni zhi* are highly animated in the field of hermeneutics on Du Fu’s poetry during the late Ming and early Qing period. In order to fully understand them, this study will investigate a series of related issues concerning the act of “free acknowledgement”: how do interpreters at that time confront the earlier hermeneutics? How do they reconcile the sense of self with highly venerated authorial intention? How do their readings and external social and historical situations interact each other? What is the hermeneutic and personal significance of such interactions?

One thing we should not ignore in our investigation is that the hermeneutics of Du Fu, though intimately associated with a certain text, is by no means limited to the textual level. Here I propose a concept of “life hermeneutics” which mainly refers to the hermeneutic practice in which Du Fu’s life and poetry is interweaves into a single narrative that can then accommodate the thread of interpreters’ own lives. The “life hermeneutics” owe greatly to the long process of associating poetry with its historical grounding in the history of Chinese poetic hermeneutics. The production of poetry was frequently framed within certain historical circumstances and considered as a response to

them. Under such situation, a poem can be best understood by being put back to its “original” context which often overlaps with a poet’s life experience. From the “Small Prefaces” to the Odes to the late Tang Meng Qi’s 孟榮 (fl. 875) *Ben shi shi* 本事诗 (*The Original Contexts of Poetry*), such hermeneutic establishes connections between a poet’s life and his poetry, which becomes a salient aspect of Chinese poetics and is epitomized in the reading of Du Fu’s poetry.<sup>18</sup> Stephen Owen has correctly observed defects of such a hermeneutic practice: “we never see the grounding of a literary text in its history; we see only the formal imitation of such grounding, the framing of the literary text within another text that pretends to be its historical ground, an ‘account’ of history”.<sup>19</sup> I agree with Owen’s argument, but here my major concern is to investigate functions of such hermeneutic pursuit for those interpreters. The “life hermeneutics” thus become a very useful tool since it draws our attention to historicity (historical grounding) of such hermeneutic practice and urges us to explore a broad array of relations and interaction between social and historical lives of interpreters and their reading of Du Fu. In this way, we can be better informed of hermeneutic complexities rather than simply dismiss it as a defective practice.

“Life hermeneutics” involves a process of re-experiencing: re-experience what Du Fu has supposedly experienced in his life (such an act also becomes an interpreter’s life experience) and re-experience that experience (or re-experience) through an interpreter’s own life which is rooted in a different social reality. Life hermeneutics and textual

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<sup>18</sup> For an English study of Men Qi’s *Ben shi shi*, please see Graham Sanders’ *Words Well Put: Visions of Poetic Competence in the Chinese Tradition* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Asia Center, 2006).

<sup>19</sup> Stephen Owen, “Poetry and Its Historical Ground”, *CLEAR*, vol. 12 (Dec., 1990), pp. 107-108.

hermeneutics aforementioned are different and yet highly correlated in terms of the way the reading operates. Understanding in *yi yi ni zhi* often moves in the reverse order of that in re-experiencing. While the former moves back from poem to poet and relevant historical contexts to locate the author's *zhi*, the latter tends to understand a poem(s) in the order of its production: external situations cause inner stirrings of our poet and he write a poem which articulates what he sees and feels in order. The role of such chronology in understanding is reinforced when an interpreter's life also experiences social upheavals similar to those Du Fu suffered. As many interpreters from Song through Ming-Qing claimed, one could truly understand Du Fu's poetry only when one experienced the moment when society was thrown into chaos. But life re-experiencing and *yi yi ni zhi* also reflect similar hermeneutic complexities in the process of reading. Just like *yi yi ni zhi* which inscribes an interpreter's deviation and rebellion from apparent conformity to the author's *zhi*, life re-experiencing evokes an interpreter's life and on the basis of previous construction rewrites relations in various ways between life and poetry (poetry-reading). These two kinds of hermeneutics can help us examine dynamics of relations between poet and reader: readers might smuggle "self" into the process of reading and ingeniously save the poet through various actualization of poetry and poet's life experience, and yet such interruptive forces (towards the parallel between reader and poet) are forestalled (at least on the surface level) by what empower them (i.e. the poet's *zhi* and life experience which engender the interpretive act of *ni* and *re*-experience). The hermeneutic act of suturing present to past in its move gives birth to ruptures which are eventually sutured again in the process of reading, though the final suture is forever

pointing to a moment of paradox: as an ultimate tool to discipline discontents, it justifies all possible ruptures in the reading process.

To sum up, this dissertation investigates what I perceive as a new narrative of hermeneutics of Du Fu's poetry during the late Ming and early Qing periods. Previous scholars often adopt uncritically the continuous insistence within the Chinese tradition itself on the idea of transparency (in which poetry was considered as a transparent medium which grants reader a seemingly unmediated access to the historical past and the poet's mind) as a historically true nature of Chinese poetry.<sup>20</sup> I draw attention to the self-conscious "transparency" implied by Ming-Qing interpretive traditions and expose its dynamics and functions in both textual and social/personal levels— this is what I call "poetics of transparency." One tendency of postmodern scholarship is to question the narrative of "continuity" and to investigate the complexities that are often suppressed by such continuity. While touching on this kind of analysis, I also draw attention to the function of "continuity" itself (the ideal of "transparency") and the way in which it is negotiated by different participants. My study will give a new orientation to looking at the way in which Chinese poetry had been read for centuries as well as offering a lens to look at intellectual life under the Ming-Qing transition.

My dissertation is organized into two major parts. Part one will deal with how interpreters in the late Ming and early Qing periods launch a hermeneutic shift in their

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<sup>20</sup> Both Pauline Yu and Stephen Owen demonstrate a tendency to emphasize such a historical true nature of traditional Chinese poetry in their works. In his article on Du Fu, Paul Rouzer mentions Haun Saussy's observation that "Yu's and Owen's arguments about the historically true nature of Chinese poem- that it allows a seemingly unmediated access to the poet- maybe a displaced version of Ernest Fenollosa's and Ezra Pound's argument about the Chinese written character and its ability to convey an unmediated sense of action." See Rouzer, "Du Fu and the Failure of Lyric," p.30.

confrontation of the Song Du Fu commentaries. Part two will focus on the social functions of hermeneutics in this special historical period and explore how these life-readings interact with hermeneutics on Du Fu. Together these two parts aim to show a nuanced and complicated picture of Du Fu hermeneutics during this time, which serves as a window of the poetics of transparency in traditional China.

## Part One: Back to the *Zhi*:

### Textual Hermeneutics of Du Fu in the Late Ming and the Early Qing

The late Ming and early Qing periods witness a strong attack against the Song interpretive approach to Du Fu's poetry. Such attack mainly focuses on two major defects of Song Du Fu hermeneutics, which has been pointed out by Song Luo 宋犛 (1634-1713) in his preface to Zhang Jin's 张晋 (1621-1678) commentary on Du Fu's poems as *zhi shi zhi bing* 摭實之病 (the defect of garnering facts) and *zao kong zhi bing* 鑿空之病 (the defect of carving emptiness).<sup>21</sup> According to Song, the first defect is caused by the fact that many Song interpreters believe every word in Du Fu's poetry can be traced back to Confucian canons, historical documents or other kinds of texts in earlier times. Influenced by such a belief, Song interpreters preoccupy themselves in their commentaries with "garnering facts" to show intimate connections between Du Fu's poetry and early cultural resources. Such an act of might have its own justifications and complexities for Song interpreters, but in many cases the search goes so far that connections made are far-fetched and even turn out to be deliberate forgeries. The second defect is brought by the conviction that Du Fu's poetry always alludes to contemporary events and situations. Many Song interpreters spent great efforts in finding and creating affinities between Du Fu's poetry and social events and historical backgrounds during his lifetime. Consequently, such allegorical readings tend to reduce Du Fu's poetry to a

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<sup>21</sup> See Song's preface to Zhang Jin's 张晋 (1621-1678) commentary on Du Fu's poems. Zhang Jin, *Dushu Tang Du shiji fu wenji zhujie* 讀書堂杜詩集附文集註解 (Taipei: Datong shuju, 1974), p.161.

single dimension and construct an image of Du Fu who never fails to show through his poetry his keen awareness of and continuous concerns with politics and society at his age.

In the late Ming and early Qing periods a new hermeneutics emerges and tries to correct these perceived defects in Song hermeneutics in order to do “justice” to Du Fu’s poetry. In front of this new hermeneutics, the previously dominant interpretive strategy of *zhu* 注 (annotation) faces an unprecedented challenge. As a common strategy in Song hermeneutics, the major function of *zhu* lies in explaining difficult vocabularies and making explicit the hidden connections between Du Fu’s poetry and earlier cultural resources or certain historical events in Du Fu’s time. The original aim of *zhu* is to facilitate the reading by solving “difficult parts” in the poems, but it turns out (in the eyes of Ming-Qing readers) that too much attention to separate details leads to loss of a “big picture”: a reader might be fully aware of “hidden meanings” here and there in a poem and yet still fail to appreciate it as a whole. This becomes especially true when it comes to understanding the general structure of a poem---why the poem structure is in a certain manner and what significance it possesses.

The new readers, though all sharing this objection to Song dynasty *zhu*, differ among themselves on how to read Du Fu. There are three major interpretive alternatives in reading Du Fu: (1) remove all previous commentaries and read Du Fu’s poetry directly; (2) maintain the format of *zhu* but to correct the errors in Song commentaries (the improvement of *zhu* is often combined with the third alternative *jie*); (3) make a shift in emphasis from *zhu* to *jie* 解 (explanation of the general structure and meaning of a poem). Despite their different approaches to Du Fu’s poetry, commentators generally embrace

the principle of *yi yi ni zhi* and in their effort in tracing back to the poet they contest the fine line often drawn between self and the poet. Chapter 1 delineates a general picture of three major interpretive approaches during the late Ming and the early Qing period and discusses the *yi yi ni zhi* which is intimately associated with these approaches. Chapter 2 offers a close reading of Jin Shengtan's *jie* approach to Du Fu's poetry to further demonstrate nuances of the confrontation between a reader and the past.

## Chapter 1 Three Interpretive Alternatives and *Yi Yi Ni Zhi*

One interpretive approach adopted by some Ming-Qing interpreters is to remove all the previous commentaries and read Du Fu's poetry as it is. This strategy echoes Zhu Xi's 朱熹 (1130-1200) experience of reading the *Classic of Odes*.

When I made my first commentary on the Odes, I follow the Minor Prefaces. When the explanations did not make sense, I made up justifications for them. Later I felt unsatisfied [with these explanations], and the second time I glossed the *Odes*, although I still retained the Minor Prefaces, I also disputed them from time to time. But in the end, I still could not see the poet's intention. Finally, I realized that I had to dispense with the Minor Prefaces altogether, and then everything went smoothly. I washed away all traces of the old explanations, and the intentions of the *Odes* lived again.<sup>22</sup>

As Van Zoeren indicates, this is one of occasions Zhu tells us about "his struggle to free himself from the tyranny of the traditional interpretation of the classic."<sup>23</sup> Zhu realizes that earlier commentaries become an obstacle for emergence of the original intentions of the poems and the removal of these commentaries will eventually help him achieve a real understanding. Zhu also expresses a similar opinion on reading Du Fu's poetry:

Furthermore, the excellence of Du Fu's poetry goes beyond usage of allusions and dictions. Only by reciting and chanting with empty mind can one perceive it. Guohua follows my words and seeks it, and even if applying (reciting and chanting with empty heart) to reading the *Classic of Odes*, it is fine.<sup>24</sup>

況杜詩佳處，有在用事造語之外者，唯其虛心諷詠，乃能見之。國華更以予言求之，雖以讀三百篇可也。

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<sup>22</sup> I use Steven Van Zoeren's English translation. *Poetry and Personality: Reading, Exegesis, and Hermeneutics in Traditional China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), p.228.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, p.228.

<sup>24</sup> "Ba Zhang Guohua suo ji zhu Du shi" 跋章國華所集注杜詩, quoted from *Gudian wenxue yanjiu ziliao huibian: Du Fu juan* 古典文學研究資料彙編：杜甫卷 (hereafter, *Du Fu juan*), (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1964), Huang Wenxuan 華文軒 ed., p.656.

For Zhu Xi, in order to communicate to the excellence of Du Fu's poetry, one has to empty his heart and chants and recites poems. *Xu xin* 虛心, literally, "empty mind," suggests that a reader should not let other things (i.e. commentaries on Du Fu's poetry since Zhu attacks forgeries in Du Fu commentaries right before this quotation) interfere in the process of reading.

Zhu Xi's words on how to read Du Fu are quoted and confirmed by Song Luo in his preface to Zhang Jin's commentaries on Du Fu. Although Zhang's work still adopts *zhu* commentaries, Song's work *Du Gongbu shichao* 杜工部詩抄 (Transcription of Du Fu's poems) is characterized by its removal of commentaries from Du Fu's poems.<sup>25</sup> Another scholar Yan Ruoqu 閻若璩(1636-1704) who wrote a preface to Zhang's work also asked:

Zhu Xi began to delete all (commentaries on the Classic of Odes) and recite and chant the original poems, which very much follow Mencius' method of *yi yi ni zhi*. In my opinion, why can readers of Du Fu not do this?<sup>26</sup>

朱文公始一切抹殺，諷詠其白文，頗得孟子以意逆志法，竊以爲讀杜者何獨不可？

Song and Yan are not the only people who apply this method to facilitate the understanding of Du Fu's poetry. Earlier than them, Ming dynasty witnesses emergence of other Du Fu anthologies without commentaries such as Zhang Qian's 張潛 *Du Shaoling ji* 杜少陵集(1512), Xu Zonglu's 許宗魯 *Du Gongbu shi* 杜工部詩(1526), and

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<sup>25</sup> Song's work, however, also contains some commentaries. See the entry of *Du Gongbu shichao* in *Du Fu da ci dian* 杜甫大辭典 (Jinan: Shangdong jiaoyu chubanshe, 2009), ed., Zhang Zhonggang 張忠綱 et al., p.588.

<sup>26</sup> The Kangxi edition (1698) of Zhang Jin's *Dushu tang Du shiji fu wenji zhujie* doesn't include Yan's preface. Yan's preface was added in the edition published in 1841. See Wang Xinfang 王新芳 and Sun Wei, "Zhang Jin Du Gongbu shiji zhujie kaolun" 張潛杜工部詩集註解考論, *Du Fu yanjiu xuekan* 杜甫研究學刊(Vol.29, no.5, 2010), p. 76. Yan's words here are quoted from Sun Wei's book, *Qingdai Dushixue shi*, p. 81.

Chen Rulun's 陳如綸 *Du lü* 杜律(1535). In his preface to *Du lü*, Chen made the following statement:

In every occasion where commentators say the line [of Du Fu's poetry] has its source and the meaning has its implications, they cite evidences from side and make a detour to prove (their claims), which is either abstract or far-fetched and makes readers confused....Use [a reader's] intention to trace back [an author's] aims, and use "I" to observe the principle. Then others and self and the ancient and the present are the same. Following what he see, each has his own understanding. What the use of *zhu*?<sup>27</sup>

凡注家謂其句有攸據，意有攸寓，旁質曲証，匪泛即鑿，俾讀者心目微纏，....以意逆志，以我觀理，則人已同題，古今一揆，隨其所見各有得矣，詎資注？

Chen is dissatisfied with the commentaries since they tend to confuse and mislead the readers. The advantage of removal of these commentaries advocated by Chen is that not only can it allow readers understand the meanings of Du Fu's poetry under the guidance of *yi yi ni zhi*, it can also produce interpretive flexibility and accommodate to diversity of readers' understandings. In other words, readers could gain more freedom in understanding Du Fu's poems after the commentaries have been removed.

Later, Fu Zhenshang 傅振商 (1573-1640) also came up with the same approach in *Dushi fenlei* 杜詩分類 (Categories of Du Fu's poems).

I am always surfeited on *zhu* and *jie* commentaries. They are by nature shortsighted, make conjectures without solid foundation, and cut [poems] and make far-fetched connections. All kinds of these problems continuously appear....therefore I completely delete them, and restore the original appearance of Du Fu.<sup>28</sup>

每厭註解，本屬蠡測，妄作射覆，割裂穿鑿，種種錯出....因盡剔去，使少陵本來面目如舊。

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<sup>27</sup> The preface to *Du lü*, quoted from *Du Fu da ci dian*, p.568.

<sup>28</sup> Fu Zhenshang, *Dushi fenlei* 杜詩分類, *Siku cunmu congshu* 四庫存目叢書(Jinan: Qilu shushe, 1997), 5:80.

It is interesting to see that Fu's attack against commentaries well echoes Chen's accusation of commentaries. The problem of commentaries does not merely lie in their various errors. More importantly, they impose limits upon potential richness in Du Fu's poems. While Chen emphasizes "each reader obtains something following what they perceive (in Du Fu's poetry)" 隨其所見各有得, Fu employs a concrete image *li ce* 蠡測 (literally, oyster shell and measure, respectively) to illustrate such limits caused by commentaries. *Li ce* means to use an oyster shell (commentaries) to measure the sea (Du Fu's poetry), and Fu believes that richness and the depth of Du Fu's poetry is significantly undermined by the commentaries. In a similar vein, Zheng Pu 鄭朴 (n.d.) explained in the preface to his *Du Gongbushi* 杜工部詩 (Poems of Du Fu) that "even though there are many *jian* and *zhu* commentaries, I delete them to demonstrate completeness of Du Fu and to express my fear of inflexibility in interpreting poetry 雖諸箋注削不以錄, 亦以昭子美之全而恐說詩之固也."<sup>29</sup>

Therefore, what makes this approach appealing to these interpreters is the fact that the "blank" after the removal of commentaries simultaneously guarantees the assumed "pristine" state of Du Fu's poetry (a rich/original text that is not diluted/misrepresented by certain interpretations) and an ideal space which can accommodate to a wide variety of interpretive possibilities by different individual readers. Each of these interpretations is justified as one of possibilities that are already present in Du Fu's poems. This reminds us of Umberto Eco's "Model Reader": "a text can foresee a Model Reader entitled to try infinite conjectures" and "the empirical reader is only an actor who makes conjectures

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<sup>29</sup> Zheng Pu 鄭朴, "Ke Du Gongbu shi xu" 刻杜工部詩敘, quoted from *Du Fu da ci dian*, p.576.

about the kind of Model Reader postulated by the text.”<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless, for Du Fu readers here, what unifies their various interpretations as a valid entity is Du Fu’s aims/intention/feelings behind and yet manifest through his poetry rather than the text itself. Interestingly, the agency of the reader is highlighted not by challenging the authority of the poet but by confirming such authority as the ultimate touchstone for any readings.

An examination of Lu Shique’s 盧世澹 (1588-1653) *Du shi xu chao* 杜詩胥鈔 (Transcription of Du Fu’s Poetry by a Subofficial Clerk) will further reveal complexities of this interpretive approach. Lu’s work is another important Du Fu anthology which is characterized by its removal of the commentaries during the late Ming. Such a decision might be associated with his well-known hobby of transcribing others’ books, but it also underlines his opinions on how to read Du Fu’s poetry. The effectiveness of reading Du Fu without commentaries is well illustrated in Lu’s remarks on one of Du Fu’s pentasyllabic poems:

There is no need for division and commentaries and there is no need for comments and singing. Wait until one chant for a dozen of times, and imagine oneself as Du Fu in his situation. Is there any person who doesn’t have a hundred thoughts interwoven in his mind and who doesn’t hold Du Fu’s hand and sigh?<sup>31</sup>

不須分疏，不須評唱，第沉吟數十過，設身處地，有不百端交集，與子美攜手唏噓者乎？

In the eyes of his friend Chen Yiwen 陳以聞 (n.d.), Lu’s interpretive approach surpasses extant commentaries since “it does not aim at making commentary on Du Fu but aims at

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<sup>30</sup> Umberto Eco, *The Limits of Interpretation*, p.59.

<sup>31</sup> Zhou Weide 周維德 ed., *Quanming shihua* 全明詩話 (Jinan: Qilu shushe, 2005), p. 4381.

Du Fu before commentary” 不以評杜，而以未評之杜。<sup>32</sup> As another friend Liu Rongsi 劉榮嗣 (n.d.) indicates, Du Fu commentaries are “either ossified or sophistic or evasive” 為執，為詭，為遁， and the purpose of Lu’s deletion, is to “wait for learners to understand by themselves” 以待學人之參會也。<sup>33</sup> Lu’s work can be divided into four major sections: 1. Du Fu’s poems; 2. “zhiji zengyan” 知己贈言 (words given by soul mates); 3. “da fan” 大凡 (general Instructions); 4. “yu lun” 餘論 (remaining remarks). Although Lu doesn’t discuss in detail his interpretive approach, the complexity of Lu’s approach can be perceived from Liu’s other remarks. Liu is a Lu’s senior colleague and one of closest friends. Liu obtained his *jin shi* degree in 1616 and served as a high official in the late Ming court. When Lu was thirty-six years old, he asked Liu for advice on studying poetry and Liu told him to read Du Fu’s poems.<sup>34</sup> Throughout his project on Du Fu, Lu constantly obtained suggestions and help from Liu, and Liu’s words were put at the very beginning of the section of “zhiji zengyan” of Lu’s *Du Du xu chao*. Liu considers Lu’s interpretive strategy as correct and necessary as opposed to Du Fu commentaries:

Since ancient times, commentators on Du Fu have made their own explanations. Even if they have some explanations of Du Fu, they merely explain his poems. What are heroic aims? What are humane sounds? What are way and dutifulness? What are loyalty and love? What is sincerity in socialization? What is seeking friends? What should [a reader] follow to trace back [to the poet’s aims]? What should [a reader]

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<sup>32</sup> “Zhiji zengyan” 知己贈言, in *Du shi xu chao* 杜詩胥鈔 (1634), p.3b. I use the microfilm of this 1634 edition from the Harvard Yenching Library.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, p.2a

<sup>34</sup> Lu Shique, “Liu Suizhou shichao” 柳隨州詩抄, *Zunshui yuan jilue* 尊水園集略, *Xuxiu Siku quanshu* 續修四庫全書 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2002), vol. 1392, p.471.

follow to delete? The only way to clearly preserve Du Fu is to transcribe his poems.<sup>35</sup>

古今之解少陵者，自為解耳。即進而有解于少陵，解其詩焉耳。孰為俠志？孰為仁音？孰為道義？孰為忠愛？孰為篤交？孰為尚友？孰從而逆之？孰從而剔之？而迴存吾少陵者，斯抄之不可已也。

Two defects of Du Fu commentaries are pointed out by Liu. The first one is that many commentaries are made merely for commentators' own sake and yet fail to contribute to the real understanding of Du Fu. The second defect is that commentators, even when they aim at the understanding of Du Fu's poetry, can barely go beyond poetry itself and thus miss significant qualities of Du Fu. On the contrary, the act of transcribing can serve as an effective strategy to suppress the self of a commentator and highlight the relevance to understanding of Du Fu. Furthermore, such a practice can free a reader from the confinement to poetry and deepen one's understanding of Du Fu. Just as Lu himself declares: "Crossing the distance of hundreds of years and meet Du Fu in a vivid manner relies on this empty heart" 越千百年而與子美炳然相見者，恃此一片空心耳。<sup>36</sup> Nevertheless, the process of reading/transcribing in this case is not mere surrender of a reader's self to Du Fu. It also poses the challenge to a reader and throws into relief the subjectivity of a reader since the reader has to decide what to follow in order to trace back to the assumed ideal Du Fu and what to delete in such a movement.

In Liu's following discussion, the subjectivity and rebellion of Lu as a reader is further empowered paradoxically in his "loyal" pursuit of and identification with the "real" Du Fu.

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<sup>35</sup> "Zhiji zengyan" 知己贈言, in *Du shi xu chao*, p.2a-b

<sup>36</sup> *Quanming shihua*, p.4392.

Nevertheless, if the person who transcribes poems is not in harmony with the person who composes poems, [the former] cannot use his intention to understand [the latter]; if they do not find each other congenial like a needle [with a magnet], mustard [with amber] and water and milk, the former cannot interpret the latter by force. However, Lu Shique continuously makes clarification and unconsciously reaches [Du Fu], just as if Du Fu lived in a thousand years later or Lu Deshui lived in a thousand years earlier.... [He has] no disagreement with Du Fu's mind, and then diverges from his poems, conforms to them, make deletions, and preserve them, which makes Du Fu's spirit further manifest and its color newer. I think if there is Du Fu, it is impossible without *Du shi xu chao*.<sup>37</sup>

然則抄詩之人與為詩之人不伯仲埴簞，不可以意而揣也；不針芥水乳，不可以強而解也。而子房累累而晰之，冥冥而達之，如少陵在千載下，子房在千載上...莫逆其心，而後分之，合之，去之，留之，使少陵精神更出，色澤倍新。覺有少陵，不可無胥鈔也。

Here the status of a reader is elevated to be the counterpart of Du Fu and Lu's harmony with Du Fu on one hand allows him to reach Du Fu and on the other hand grants him authority to deviate from Du Fu and even to delete Du Fu's poems for a better manifestation of Du Fu's spirit. Lu also argues in his *Du shi xu chao* that "there are some cases where poetry benefits from loss and becomes complete from deletion" 詩有損之而乃以益，刪之而愈以全者。<sup>38</sup> In his discussion of Du Fu's heptasyllabic regulated verses,

Lu points out:

Since Du Fu is worldly known for his poetry and furthermore the people to whom he presented poems must be of high social status, he has no other choices but to lower his aims and follow the convention to fill people's ears and eyes with some clichés.... Delete them and the real spirit of Du Fu's heptasyllabic regulated verse springs and manifests itself.<sup>39</sup>

夫子美既以詩名海內，況所奉獻、奉贈者，定是尊流，不得已降志從俗，用幾樁餽故事，以塞人耳目....銷繳此一段，而子美七言律詩之真精神躍躍出矣。

<sup>37</sup> "Zhiji zengyan", *Du shi xu chao*, p.2b

<sup>38</sup> *Quanming shihua*, p.4384. Lu claims that he has deleted twenty to thirty percent of Du Fu poems in his anthology.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid*, p.4383.

Lu's practice of "deleting poems" clearly echoes the frequently believed editorial process in which Confucius deleted the poems and produced the final (and assumedly better) edition of *the Classic of Odes*. Such a claim also confirms the fact that a reader like Lu might even surpass Du Fu in communicating his (ideal) poetry to other readers due to his perspective as an onlooker who is freed from the constraints on Du Fu in his poetic composition. Liu further describes for us an interesting movement between reader and poet in Lu's reading: not only can a reader go back to the historical past and meet Du Fu, but the poet can also travel to meet the reader at present. In this process of *yi yi ni zhi*, while Lu claims to bring himself to the "original" Du Fu who lives a thousand years ago, he simultaneously brings Du Fu to him who lives a thousand years later. A similar point is also made by Wang Ruifu 王瑞符 (n.d.) in the same section of "Zhiji zengyan": "The one who selects poems is an ancient person, Du Fu in Ming dynasty; the one who composes poems is a contemporary person, Lu Deshui in the Tang dynasty 選者古之人, 明之杜子美; 作者今之人, 唐之廬德水."<sup>40</sup> The deliberate created discrepancy between Du Fu and Lu in their identities (author/reader) and times (Tang/Ming) paradoxically aims to erase all distances and facilitates complete identification between them. But as what we have discussed, such identification is achieved through Lu's empty heart, a submission to the poet which leads to the very rebellion against Du Fu--- Lu as a reader usurps the authority of Du Fu in the process of direct communion.

While the removal of Du Fu commentaries grants a reader interpretive flexibility (as well as supposed ultimate authority based on direct communion with Du Fu), it also gives

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<sup>40</sup> "Zhiji zengyan", *Du shi xu chao*, p.10a

rise to a very practical problem in the process of reading: how could a reader understand the “real” Du Fu without even knowing exact meanings of information in Du Fu’s poetry? This problem can be perceived in Zhang Rongrui’s 張榕瑞 (the son of the Du Fu commentator Zhang Jin) response to Yan Ruoqu, who suggests reading Du Fu without commentaries: “is there such a thing in the world that one fails to know events contained in a poem and yet can obtain its meaning? “世有不得其事，而能通其意乎?”<sup>41</sup> The late Ming and early Qing period also witnesses another response to Song *zhu* commentaries: maintain the format of *zhu* and yet correct errors in earlier commentaries. Qian Qianyi 錢謙益 (1582-1664) once summarized eight major defects of Song commentaries in his monumental work *Qianzhu Dushi* 錢注杜詩 (Qian Qianyi’s commentary on Du Fu’s poetry): “One is called making forgeries and attributing them to ancient people” 一曰僞託古人; “one is called “fabricating historical events” 一曰僞造故事; “one is called making far-fetched connections with previous historical documents” 一曰附會前史; “one is called fabricating people’s names” 一曰僞撰人名; “one is called tampering with ancient works” 一曰改竄古書; “one is called turning facts topsy-turvy” 一曰顛倒事實; “one is called over-interpreting literary meanings” 一曰強釋文義; “one is called making errors and chaos in geographical information” 一曰錯亂地理.<sup>42</sup> For example, in Du Fu’s poem “You Longmen Fengxian shi” 遊龍門奉先寺 (I visit Fengxian Monastery at Longmen), Qian provides commentaries on three places and two

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<sup>41</sup> The preface to Zhang Jin’s *Dushu tang Du shiji zhujie*, quoted from Sun Wei’s book, *Qingdai Dushixue shi*, p. 81.

<sup>42</sup> Qian Qianyi, “Zhu Dushi lueli” 注杜詩略例, *Qianzhu Dushi* 錢注杜詩 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1958), pp.2-3.

of them explicitly refute erroneous commentaries by Song interpreters. One focuses on the location of Longmen and Qian cites earlier accounts such as *Taiping huanyu ji* 太平寰宇記 (Record of the World from the Era of Great Peace) and *Yuanhe junguo zhi* 元和郡國志 (Treatise on all districts from the Era of Yuanhe) to show that the Longmen should be in Luoyang rather than the one mentioned in the “Yu Gong” 禹貢 chapter of *Shang shu* 尚書 (Book of Documents). The other place centers on the word *que* 闕 (a watchtower on either side of a palace gate) in the fifth line. In fact, there have been many controversies on this word since the Song. Wang Anshi 王安石 (1021-1086) found that the word *que* 闕 in the phrase *tian que* 天闕 (literally, sky watchtower) failed to form a parallel to the phrase *yun wo* 雲臥 (literally, “clouds lie”) in the next line. Wang treated it as a textual error and thus changed *que* into a verb *yue* 閱 (literally, read/see) in order to create a sense of parallelism.<sup>43</sup> Qian uses earlier accounts, especially one couplet from Wei Yingwu 韋應物 (737-792) to dismiss Wang’s decision and declares that “Song people make changes without proof and there is no doubt about deleting them” 宋人妄改，削之何疑。<sup>44</sup> Another commentator Zhu Heling 朱鶴齡 (1606-1683) also disagrees with changes of this word made by Song people and further indicates Wang’s error from the perspective of poetry: “let alone this is by nature an ancient-style poem, so why must one be confined to parallelism” 況此本古體詩，何必拘拘偶對耶？

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<sup>43</sup> Hu Zi’s 胡子 *Tiaoxi yuyin conghua* 茗溪魚隱叢話, quoted from *Du Fu juan*, p.172.

<sup>44</sup> *Qianzhu Dushi*, p. 5.

In contrast to Song precursors, commentators during the late Ming and the early Qing adopt a more serious attitude and put much more emphasis on evidence in their *zhu* commentaries. For example, in his work *Du Gongbu shiji jizhu* 杜工部詩集輯注 (Commentaries on the anthology of Du Fu's poetry), Zhu outlines some important criteria for the production of his commentaries: "for all cited anecdotes from the past, I imitate Li Shan's commentarial style on *Wen xuan*, and always check with the books from which these anecdotes come. Among the books, I select the earliest one as evidence, which is distinct from earlier commentaries" 凡征引故實，仿李善注《文選》體，必核所出之書，書則以最先為據，與舊注頗別；<sup>45</sup> "For all explanations cited here, I always seek the person from whom the explanations originally come, and the people who later follow these explanations are not recorded. For those explanations which seem correct but actually false and yet honored and believed by the world, I identify and correct them in great detail" 引用諸說，必求本自何人，后出相沿者不錄。其似是而非、世所尊信者，辨証特詳；<sup>46</sup> "What have been quoted in my commentary are always books prior to Du Fu's time. Only on things such as geography, people's names, and anecdotes, I occasionally cite later sources as proof" 注所稱引，必舉子美以前之書。惟地理、人名、事跡之類，間援引後代以証之。<sup>47</sup> These criteria highlight Zhu's consciousness of defects in earlier commentaries as well as his effort to provide a much more solid foundation for understanding Du Fu.

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<sup>45</sup> *Du Gongbu shiji jizhu* 杜工部詩集輯注 (Baoding: Hebeid daxue chubanshe, 2009), p. 22.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22. Zhu's principle here also subtly expresses his dissatisfaction with some of Qian Qianyi's Du Fu commentaries. I discuss the competition between Zhu Heling and Qian Qianyi in chapter 4.

Nevertheless, *zhu* commentaries mainly aim to provide explanatory notes to separate details in Du Fu's poems, so in most cases its style prevent the *zhu* commentary to take a step further to demonstrate to readers deeper meanings and the major purport of a poem. Such a problem can be overcome in the form of *jie* commentary, whose major aim is to bring out the meaning as well as aesthetic and structural nuances of a poem as a whole. Modern scholar Zheng Ziyun 鄭子運 suggests that *jie* as one approach in poetic reception appears as early as the late Song and early Yuan and it gains great popularity during the late Ming and the early Qing period.<sup>48</sup> Zheng uses the term *shi jie* 詩解 and defines it as “understanding poetry as a whole and change its language into prosaic language or a paragraph(s) which analyzes artistic features of poetry” 整體把握詩作並將詩的語言轉化為散體語或分析詩的藝術特點的成段文字.<sup>49</sup> Such a definition separates *jie* from the practice of selecting one line (or certain lines) out of a poem and accordingly making commentaries as well as the practice of making sporadic comments. In addition, Zheng divides *jie* into two categories: one whose emphasis lies in explaining the meaning of poetry (*jie yi* 解義/意) and the other in explaining artistic features (*jie yi* 解藝).<sup>50</sup> Zheng admits that *shi jie* is strongly associated with interpretations of Du Fu during the late Ming and the early Qing,<sup>51</sup> and in general his definition of *jie* can be well applied to our discussion here. It should be stressed that *jian* 箋 and *ping* 評 can also be considered as different variants of *jie* as long as those commentaries possess the same

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<sup>48</sup> Zheng Ziyun, *Mingmo Qingchu shijie yanjiu* 明末清初詩解研究(Nanjing: Fenghuang chubanshe, 2010), p. 1, 6.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, p.1.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, p.4.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, p.14.

qualities as what have been described in the definition. This also applies to other commentaries which lack a clear indicator such as *jie*, *jian*, or *ping*. For example, Wang Sishi's 王嗣奭 (1566-1648) work *Du yi* 杜臆 (My Understanding of Du Fu's Poetry) and Wu Jiansi's 吳見思 (1622-1685) *Dushi lunwen* 杜詩論文 (Discussion on literary aspects of Du Fu's poetry) lie with the scope of *jie* as well.<sup>52</sup> Therefore while *jie* is exclusive enough to distinguish itself from *zhu* and other commentarial approaches, it is also inclusive enough to contain different variants which might use different terms to describe a similar approach to Du Fu's poetry.

The advantage of *jie* over the *zhu* can be perceived through an example of Wu Jiansi's Du Fu commentary. In his work *Dushi lunwen*, Wu tells how his approach is different from (and better than) *zhu* commentary: "(it) only slightly explains the content (of Du Fu's poetry) and is much clearer and simpler than those commentaries which explore the 'deeper' meanings and make far-fetched connections" 只就其文義稍加衍釋，校之鉤深鑿空者殊明白易簡焉。<sup>53</sup> This advantage is also confirmed by Chen Yuji 陳玉璣 (n.d.) in his preface to Wu's work:

Since Du Fu's poetry is valued by the world, people who make commentaries on Du Fu surge in disorder....especially due to far-fetched interpretations and ungrounded connections, [those commentaries] almost obliterate the purport of Du Fu's poetry. Although Du Fu is dead, examine his mind and he must be in grievance. Now the master Wu Qixian produces the work *Dushi lunwen*. It doesn't explore the "deeper" meanings but goes through the meaning of a poem....people who study [Du Fu's poetry] have a clear understanding and knows that Du Fu's poetry is originally straightforward like this. From now on, it has swept away other

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<sup>52</sup> Pu Qilong 浦起龍 provides a list of works on Du Fu commentary which incorporates the *jie* approach. These two works are also on the list. See Pu's *Du Du xinjie* 讀杜心解 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1961), p.6.

<sup>53</sup> Wu Jiansi 吳見思, *Dushi lunwen* 杜詩論文 (Taipei: Datong shuju, 1974), p. 121 .

commentators' defects of making fragmental interpretations and ungrounded connections. This is just as a lost person finds his way.<sup>54</sup>

少陵詩既推重于天下，由是人之注杜者樊然以起....特以穿鑿附會之故，幾使作者之旨至於磨滅。少陵雖亡，察其心必甚恨。今吳先生齊賢為論文，不事鉤棘，據詩意條貫之....學者了然心目，知少陵之詩本如是坦白，從此掃諸家支離牽合之病，如迷者得路。

Although Wu doesn't explicitly use *jie* to name his work, his approach centers on the whole poem as opposed to *zhu* and makes Du Fu's poems much easier to understand when it is compared with other *zhu* commentaries. An examination of his commentary on Du Fu's poem "I visit Fengxian Monastery at Longmen" will suffice to illustrate this point.

已從招提游， I have already finished my visit to the Buddhist monastery,  
更宿招提境。 And have further spent a night in the Buddhist realm  
陰壑生靈籟， In dark valleys, the sound of wind arises;  
月林散清影。 Among moonlit woods, pure shadows scatter.  
天闕象緯逼， Heavenly watchtowers press upon constellations;  
云臥衣裳冷。 Recline in clouds, and my clothes get cold.  
欲覺聞晨鐘， As I am going to wake up, I hear the morning bell,  
令人發深省。 Which greatly awakens me.<sup>55</sup>

As we have mentioned before, many *zhu* commentaries focus on either the location of Longmen or whether the word *que* in the fifth line is correct. Few of them discuss the meaning of the whole poem and other literary aspects. In contrast, Wu's commentary shows a different picture:

Just the first line [the line begins with "yi cong" 已從, literally "already follow"] makes a complete separation from the earlier visit, and the second line [the line

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid, pp.39, 44-5.

<sup>55</sup> *Dushi xiangzhu* 杜詩詳注(Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1979), p.1. I use Chou Zhaoao's *Dushi xiangzhu* as the standard edition for all Du Fu poems quoted in this dissertation.

begins with “geng su” 更宿, literally “further lodge”] immediately follows. The rest of the poem all discusses the scenery in Du Fu’s stay during the night. In the empty mountain it is quiet, and the sound of wind rises by itself; in the sparse woods the realm is tranquil, and shadows caused by moonlight scatter by themselves. Furthermore, heavenly watchtowers are so high and press upon the constellations. Then how can one’s clothes not get wet when one reclines here in clouds? ...between being awakened and not awakened, the morning bell strikes and one feels cool because of it. This is what is known as dharmas arising from the dhatu. Longmen is called double watchtowers, and for the details see *Dushi lunshi*.<sup>56</sup>

止“已從”一句，將以前遊覽一概撇開，即將“更宿”一句接入，下俱言夜宿之景。山空響寂，靈籟自生，林疎境幽，月影自散。且天闕之高而象緯逼近，則云臥於此而衣裳能不冷邪？...欲覺未覺之間，晨鐘一叩，為之泠然。所謂法因境生也。龍門號雙闕，詳見《論事》。

Wu first discusses the function of the first two lines in the poem, as well as how the poem is structured in general: the first line informs the readers that Du Fu has already finished his visit during the daytime, the second line serves as transition to his lodge at the temple, and the rest of the poem describe scenes he experiences during his stay. Such an explanation can help the readers immediately grasp the poem as a whole and Wu then goes further to discuss the scenery in detail. He paraphrases the third and the fourth line and shows the connection in each line by supplying additional information such as the “empty” mountain and “sparse” woods. When he deals with the fifth line and the sixth line, Wu consciously avoids being trapped in the controversial word *que* (though he still decides to select the word *que*) and instead focuses on how these two lines are connected in meaning. The last two lines are also paraphrased in Wu’s commentary, which facilitates the reader’s understanding not only by replacing the abstract phrase *shen xing* 深省 (deeply awakened) in the poem with the more sensible phrase *ling ran* 泠然 (cool)

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<sup>56</sup> *Dushi lunwen*, p. 164.

but also by connecting the dharma (and Du Fu's possible enlightenment in the last line) with his previous experience in the realm as depicted earlier in the poem.

It should be stressed that during the late Ming and the early Qing *jie* was understood by many Du Fu commentators in a relational way--- it is an interpretive approach as opposed to *zhu*. Due to the fact that *zhu* and *jie* assume different functions in explaining poetry and target different aspects of a poem, it is very common for Ming-Qing interpreters to combine these two approaches in their readings of Du Fu's poetry for a better understanding. This has been acknowledged by many interpreters during that period. Even though his work is entitled by the word *zhu*, Zhu Heling still indicates: "now in addition to investigation and *zhu* commentaries on lines and words, I either go through its main points or discuss and explore its nuances" 今于考注句字之外，或貫穿其大意，或闡發其微文。<sup>57</sup> After his *zhu* commentaries, Zhu often employs *jie* commentary (either by himself or by others, though he doesn't explicitly call it *jie*) to have readers get a better picture of Du Fu's poems. Later Pu Qilong 浦起龍 (1679-1762) also claims that "Du Fu's poetry cannot go without *zhu* commentary, and neither can it go without *jie* commentary" 少陵之詩，不可無注，並不可無解。<sup>58</sup> Pu further illustrates the significance of combining *zhu* and *jie*:

The styles of *zhu* and *jie* are different from each other: *zhu* focus on events and dictions and *jie* focuses on spirit. Spirit comes out of events and words and events and words follow the spirit as standard. Therefore it is good not to mix up their styles, but it is valuable to have their functions reinforce each other.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Zhu Heling, *Du gongbu shiji jizhu*, p.22.

<sup>58</sup> Pu Qilong, *Du Du xinjie*, p.5.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid*, p.5.

注與解體各不同：注者其事辭，解者其神吻。神吻由事辭而出，事辭以神吻為準。故體宜勿混，而用貴相顧。

In fact, when we look at all commented editions of Du Fu's poetry during the late Ming and the early Qing period, many of them adopt this approach of combination to various degrees in the process of reading Du Fu. The theory behind such an approach is to take advantage of different and yet complementary roles of *zhu* and *jie* to facilitate readers' understanding. As Pu suggests, *zhu* centers on *shi ci* 事辭 (events and diction), the relatively objective and important information (perceived by commentators) which usually serves as the basis for a "correct" understanding(s). However, a gap still exists between the knowledge of *shi ci* and the understanding of the whole poem, especially the spirit of the poem. Different from the approach of reading Du Fu without commentaries, spiritual communion with Du Fu (and his poems) in this hybrid approach relies on verbal explanations which not only target concrete and important details here and there in a poem but also directly show the spirit and its relations with the *shi ci*. The following example will demonstrate how *zhu* and *jie* complement each other in helping readers understand Du Fu's poetry.

贈李白

二年客東都，  
所歷厭機巧。  
野人對腥羶，  
蔬食常不飽。  
豈無青精飯，  
使我顏色好。  
苦乏大藥資，  
山林跡如掃。  
李侯金闈彥，  
脫身事幽討。

To Li Bai

For two years, a wanderer in the Eastern Capital;  
From what I've experienced, I'm surfeited on cleverness.  
A rustic faces the stink of cooking flesh  
And usually cannot fill himself with greens.  
Of course, I have green essence rice  
That will bring a fine color to my features;  
But I lament I lack the components of the Great Drug  
So that even my traces will be swept from mountain woods.  
Master Li, an eminence from Golden Chamber,  
Has broken free and now attends on seeking the hidden.

亦有梁宋遊，      He too travels in Liang and Song –  
方期拾瑤草。      And we have just agreed to go picking the jasper herb.<sup>60</sup>

Pu provides *zhu* commentaries on six places in this poem: 1. *dong du* 東都 (Eastern Capital); 2. *qingjing fan* 青精飯 (green essence rice); 3. *da yao* 大藥 (the Great Drug); 4. *jingui* 金闈 (Golden Chamber); 5. *Liang Song* 梁宋 (Liang and Song); 6. *yao cao* 瑤草 (the jasper herb). These six places include geographical information, Taoist terminologies, and a specific official office, whose meanings might not clear to a common reader. Pu follows *zhu* style and traces those terms back to earlier sources which help illuminate their meanings and ground them in the cultural history. Pu's *zhu* commentaries are followed by his *jie* commentaries which can be divided into two parts. The first part supplies the context of this poem (Li's dismissal from the *Golden Chamber* in 744 and his encounter with Du Fu in *Eastern Capital*) and information on Li Bai's later travel to the *Liang* and *Song* areas.<sup>61</sup> Although Pu doesn't explicitly mention *jasper herb*, he indicates at the end of the first part *jie* that "the so-called travel to Liang and Song must be the words of oath from heart during their encounter 所謂梁宋游者，必邂逅盟心之語."<sup>62</sup> As the last line of the poem tells us, the future travel agreed by Li Bai and Du Fu is to go to the Liang Song area and pick *the jasper herb*.<sup>63</sup> The emphasis lies in the second part:

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<sup>60</sup> *Dushi xiangzhu*, p. 32-3. English translation comes from Paul Rouzer's article "Du Fu and the Failure of Lyric", pp. 13-14.

<sup>61</sup> These terms are italicized by me to show how Pu's *jie* commentaries echo his *zhu* commentaries. The terms "green rice" and "great drug" in the following discussion are also italicized for this purpose.

<sup>62</sup> Pu Qilong, *Du Du xinjie*, p.3.

<sup>63</sup> Pu provides a very short *zhu* commentary on *yao cao* (the jasper herb): "a *zhu* commentary on Jiang Yan's poem on climbing the Mount Lu: *yao cao* is the jasper herb" 江淹登廬山詩注：瑤草，玉芝也。See *Wen xuan zhu* 文選注, in *Siku quanshu*, 22: 25a. Here Pu probably refers to Li Shan's 李善 (630-689)

Since Du Fu sets forth this poem as a “presentation,” Li serves as the “host” of the poem, while Du himself is the “guest.” But he first says that he is “surfeited” on “the stink of cooking flesh,” and so will dedicate his path to seeking immortality; only afterwards does he mention that Li has the ambition to “break free” and “seek the hidden.” Surprisingly, his description of himself is detailed, while that of Li is cursory, as if he had overturned the relative positions of guest and host. However, we are unaware that by talking of himself often with expressions such as “green essence rice” and “great drug,” he is preparing for the introduction of Li Bai. When he reaches “Master Li” he merely wastes a word or two to link the two parts together. And yet the “mists and clouds” of these first eight lines merely form the outline for the last four lines. The only person fit to speak of Du Fu is one who understands such use of self and other, of the abstract [lit. “empty”] and the concrete [lit. “full”].<sup>64</sup>

公述其語為贈，則李是主，身是賓也。今乃先自云“厭”“腥羶”，將托跡神仙，而後言李亦有脫身幽討之志。自敘反詳，敘李反略。則似翻賓作主，翻主作賓矣。不知其自敘處多用“青粳”、“大葯”等語，正為太白作引。落到李侯，只消一兩言雙縮，而上八句之煙雲，都成后四句之烘托。明乎彼已虛實之用，可與說杜矣。

In this case, Pu’s search for the spirit of the poem is largely a process of solving the seemingly puzzling discrepancy between the poem’s title and its main body. The poem is entitled “Zeng Li Bai” 贈李白 (To Li Bai), but Du Fu spends the first eight lines discussing his own situation and feelings and only shifts to Li Bai in the last four lines. This apparently contradicts with what the *zeng* 贈 usually suggests since it overturns the positions of Li Bai as *zhu* 主 (host) and Du Fu as *bin* 賓 (guest) in the poem. As Rouzer indicates, “Pu’s claim is that Du’s inversion of the expected priorities is in fact a striking

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commentary on Jiang Yan’s 江淹 (444-505) poem included in the work *Wen xuan zhu* 文選注 (Commentaries on the Anthology of Literature). The jasper herb appears in the fifth line of Jiang’s poem and serves as a symbol associated with Taoists and the life of recluse since the previous four lines deal with famous Taoists’ practice and immortality. There are three major reasons for Pu’s reference to Li Shan’s commentary on *Wen xuan*. First, Pu’s quotation is the same as what is in the work *Wen xuan zhu*. Second, Du Fu is well known for his familiarity with *Wen xuan*. Third, Li Shan’s commentary is frequently mentioned by Du Fu commentators during the late Ming and early Qing period.

<sup>64</sup> Pu Qilong, *Du Du xinjie*, p.3. I use Rouzer’s translation in his article “Du Fu and the Failure of Lyric,” p.15. In the first footnote on that page, Rouzer also indicates that *hong tuo* 烘托 (translated as outline here) is “a technical painting term to describe a drawing in outline that leaves the object it figures white.”

way of “outlining” Li’s very importance – that Li’s shape is formed as the hole in the middle of Du.”<sup>65</sup> Here I want to draw more attention to how *zhu* and *jie* reinforce each other in this part of *jie* by Pu. Pu’s solution to this discrepancy begins with the words *bu zhi* 不知 (lit. not know) which immediately shifts blame from the poet to the reader: it is a reader’s ignorance that turns such a discrepancy in the poetic representation into an obstacle in the process of reading. Pu further indicates that such ignorance results from lack of a correct understanding of the words like *green rice* and *great drug*, which have been explained by Pu in his *zhu* commentaries. In other words, Pu’s explanation of these two terms in the *zhu* commentaries provides a basis for his *jie* commentary. At the same time, Pu takes a step further in his *jie* and uses these terms to solve the puzzle and manifest the true “spirit” of Du Fu’s poem. As Pu tells us, although “green rice” and “great drug” are used to describe Du Fu’s situation, they actually pave the way for the later arrival of Li Bai in the poem: once the last four lines emerge, the first eight lines quickly shift from the description of Du Fu to the outline of Li Bai who has the ambition to “break free” and “seek the hidden.” So the spirit of Du Fu’s poem perceived by Pu in this case is exactly the superb poetic technique manifest in this seeming discrepancy. Finally, Pu stresses the interplay between the abstract and the concrete in Du Fu’s poetic composition, which to some extent points to the interplay between Pu’s own *zhu* and *jie* commentaries.

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<sup>65</sup> Rouzer, “Du Fu and the Failure of Lyric,” p. 41.

Nevertheless, *zhu* or *jie* or their combination doesn't necessarily guarantee the "correct" understanding of the "real" Du Fu. Huang Sheng 黃生 (1622-?) reveals to us the fact that both *zhu* and *jie* could be defective and obscure the "true spirit" of Du Fu.

Later *zhu* commentators haven't read many books and can't leave what they don't know as it is. They often distort [Du Fu's poetry] and even worse some fabricate historical events to prove. The true face of Du Fu has been obscured very much by careless commentators. As for commentators who make *ping* commentaries, they fail to have a deep knowledge of Du Fu's life, cannot look at Du Fu's poetry as a whole, and don't understand the main purport of a single poem. Therefore they discuss details and yet neglect the big picture, and discuss one single word or line and yet neglect the whole. There are really many cases in which the true spirit of Du Fu drowns in vulgar *ping* commentary.<sup>66</sup>

后之注者，讀書既不多，又不能闕所不知，往往郢書燕說，甚者乃偽撰故事以實之。杜公之真面目，蔽于妄注者不少。至其為評，不能深悉公之生平，不能綜貫公之全集，且不融會一詩之大旨，是故評其細而遺其大，評其一字一句，而失其全篇，則公之真精神，汨沒於俗評者實多。

For Huang, what really matters in the process of reading is to bring out the "true face and "true spirit" of Du Fu from his poetry. Since *zhu* and *jie* serve as a tool, they might be defective if they fail to manifest that spirit. This is especially true, as Huang indicates, when commentators lack of certain knowledge and yet discuss what they don't know or when they are trapped in minor details and miss the more important aspects. It is a very common complaint about oblivion of Du Fu's "true spirit" by other defective commentaries during the late Ming and the early Qing period, but how to get access to such spirit and obtain the "correct" understanding? In fact, behind all three major alternative approaches to Du Fu stands one widely shared hermeneutic principle: *yi yi ni zhi*.

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<sup>66</sup> Huang Sheng 黃生, *Du Gongbu shishuo* 杜工部詩說, *Siku cunmu congshu* 四庫存目叢書(Jinan: Qilu shushe, 1997), 5:340.

In the preface to his work *Du yi* 杜臆, Wang Sishi explains to the readers why he chooses the word *yi* to name his work:

*Yi* [subjectivity] is *yi* [my understanding]. “Use my understanding to trace back to the author’s aims,” which is Mencius’ method of reading poetry. While reading his poetry and discussing the age in which he lives, a reader uses his understanding to trace it back. Most of the confusion accumulated in the past has been cleared, and most of errors and misunderstandings by earlier people have been corrected. I regret that I could not resurrect Du Fu from the underground and ask him.<sup>67</sup>

臆者，意也。以意逆志，孟子讀詩法也。誦其詩。論其世，而逆以意，向來積疑，多所披豁，前人謬迷，多所駁正，恨不起少陵於九京而問之。

As an advocate for the method of *yi yi ni zhi*, Wang uses his own personal reading experience to demonstrate the effectiveness of such a method: it contributes to his understanding of Du Fu’s poetry by clearing up his confusion and correcting earlier people’s mistakes. Other Du Fu commentators such as Wu Zhantai 吳瞻泰 and Wu Jiansi 吳見思 also explicitly acknowledge this approach in their commentaries. Modern scholar Chen Meizhu 陳美朱 indicates that although other commentators such as Chou Zhaoao 仇兆鰲, Jin Shengtan 金聖嘆, Zhang Jin 張潛, and Pu Qilong 浦起龍 don’t explicitly state *yi yi ni zhi* as their approach to Du Fu in the prefaces to their works, they actually follow this approach in their practice.<sup>68</sup> In my opinion, *yi yi ni zhi* as a general principle can also be expanded to other important commentators including, but not limited to, Lu Shique, Qian Qianyi, and Zhu Heling, whose interpretations demonstrate the very process of a reader’s effort of seeking what is on Du Fu’s mind to understand his poems.

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<sup>67</sup> Wang Sishi, *Du yi* 杜臆(Beijing: Zhonghua shuju,1963), p.2

<sup>68</sup> See Chen Meizhu, *Qingchu Dushi shiyi chanshi yanjiu* 清初杜詩詩意闡釋研究(Tainan: Hanjia chubanshe, 2007), p.111-2.

To facilitate our discussion here, it might be useful for us to examine the exact meaning of *yi yi ni zhi*. This phrase first appears in Mencius' discussion on how to understand a poem in the *Classic of Odes*.

Xianqiu Meng said, "I have accepted your declaration that the Sage-King Shun did not consider Yao [who abdicated the throne in favor of Shun] to be his subject. Yet there is a poem in the *Book of Songs*:

Of all that is under Heaven,  
No place is not the king's land;  
And to the farthest shores of all the land,  
No man is not the king's subject.

I would like to ask how it could be that, when Shun became emperor, the Blind Old Mna [Shun's father] would not be considered his subject?

Mencius replied, "This poem is not talking about that. Rather the poem concerns the inability to care for one's parents when laboring in the king's business. It says, 'Everything is the king's business [and should be a responsibility shared by all], yet I [alone] labor here virtuously.' In explaining the poems of the Book of Songs, one must not permit the literary patterning (*wen*) to affect adversely [the understanding of] the statement (*ci*); and one must not permit [our understanding of] the statement to affect adversely [our understanding of] what was on the writer's mind (*zhi*). We use our understanding (*yi*) to trace it back to what was [originally] in the writer's mind (*zhi*) --- this is how to grasp it.

咸丘蒙曰：“舜之不臣堯，則吾既得聞命矣。《詩》云，‘普天之下，莫非王土；率土之濱，莫非王臣。’而舜既為天子矣，敢問瞽瞍之非臣，如何？”  
曰：“是詩也，非是之謂也；勞於王事而不得養父母也。曰：‘此莫非王事，我獨賢勞也。’故說詩者，不以文害辭，不以辭害志。以意逆志，是為得之。”  
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When Xianqiu Meng quotes certain lines from one poem in the *Classic of Odes* to create conflicts between familial hierarchy (father-son relationship) and social hierarchy (here ruler-subject relationship), Mencius immediately solves the problem by centering on the “original” *zhi* 志 and arguing that it is misunderstood by Xian Qiumeng. Owen indicates

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<sup>69</sup> *Mencius*, V. A.:4.ii. English translation comes from Owen's *Readings in Chinese Literary Thought*, p. 24. I change the romanization from Wade-Giles to pinyin.

that Mencius' critique of Xianqiu Meng "announces a central assumption in the traditional theory of language and literature, that motive or circumstantial origin is an inseparable component of meaning."<sup>70</sup> However, we should also stress that in this case Mencius' argument might be based upon information in the poem ("motive or circumstantial origin" created within the poem) rather than "motive or circumstantial origin" which lies *outside* the poem. To further illustrate this difference, let us look at the poem discussed by Xianqiu Meng and Mencius. The poem is entitled "Bei shan" 北山 (Northern Hills) and the following are the first two stanzas of the poem:

陟彼北山， I climb those northern hills  
言采其杞。 And pluck the boxthorn.  
偕偕士子， Very strenuous are the knights,  
朝夕從事。 Early and late upon their tasks;  
王事靡盬， The king's business never ends.  
憂我父母。 Bur for my father and mother I grieve.

溥天之下， "Everywhere under Heaven  
莫非王土； Is no land that is not the king's.  
率土之濱， To the borders of all those lands  
莫非王臣。 None but is the king's slave."  
我從事獨賢 Whatever is done, I bear the brunt alone.<sup>71</sup>

The poem clearly shows that the four lines quoted by Xianqiu Meng, just as what Mencius argues, are not to emphasize that everyone is the king's subject but to express the persona's complaints of the king's business preventing him from caring for his parents. Xianqiu Meng's error is to detach the lines from its context constructed *within* the text (as opposed to circumstances or motive *outside* the text). On one hand, the

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<sup>70</sup> Owen, *Readings in Chinese Literary Thought*, p.25.

<sup>71</sup> *The Book of Songs* (New York: Grove press, 1996), trans. Arthur Waley, edited with additional translations by Joseph R. Allen, p.189.

boundary between poetry and outside circumstances is often transgressed due to the hermeneutic transparency, or in the process of manifestation as Owen describes in one of his books.<sup>72</sup> On the other hand, the existence of the boundary gives rise to the ambiguities in the process of *yi yi ni zhi*. Mencius tells Xianqiu Meng the “correct” interpretive movement in reading poetry and such a movement can help a reader overcome the obstacles of the boundary (between the reader and the text and between the author and the text) and lead a reader to reach the *zhi* and understand the real meaning of a poem.

Nevertheless, Mencius doesn’t explain the exact meaning of *yi*, *zhi*, and even *ni*, and there have been many controversies concerning how to understand *yi yi ni zhi*. What is *yi* 意? Does it refer to the reader’s *yi* or the author’s *yi* or both? What is *zhi* 志? Does it refer to the author’s *zhi* (aims) or historical facts outside a poem? What is *ni* 逆? How does it work in the process of reading?<sup>73</sup> Although this phrase has been widely employed in their discussion of poetry, traditional critics fail to reach an agreement of the exact meaning of this phrase. Both Zhao Qi 趙岐 (d. 201) and Zhu Xi consider the word *yi* from the perspective of reader and thus interpret it as a reader’s understanding as opposed to *zhi* as

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<sup>72</sup> Stephen Owen, *Traditional Chinese Poetry and Poetics: Omen of the World* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press), 1985, pp.12-27. Although I agree with Owen’s description of “the process of manifestation” in traditional Chinese poetry, I think it puts more emphasis on poetic composition than the act of reading poetry. Therefore I prefer the term “hermeneutic transparency” in the current discussion since it can also draw our attention to the effort of approaching the perceived inside “core” from without rather than that of reaching out to the readers from within. In addition, the word “transparency” implies a two-way movement: from the author to readers and from the readers to the author. Since it is transparent, it grants one end access to the other end. At the same time, due to the “materiality” of such transparency, distortions and misunderstandings may also happen.

<sup>73</sup> The meaning of *yi yi ni zhi* has been increasingly drawing scholarly attention in Chinese scholarship. To name a few, Yang Hongqi 楊紅旗, “Yi yi ni zhi quanshishi yanjiu” 以意逆志詮釋史研究, *Xinan daxue xuebao* 西南大學學報, vol.33, no.3, 2007, pp.151-6; Zhou Jiachen 周甲辰, “Yi yi ni zhi sizhong guandian” 以意逆志四種觀點, *Guangxi shehui kexue* 廣西社會科學, no.10, 2006, pp. 132-5; Ding Xiuju 丁秀菊, “Mengzi yi yi ni zhi de yuyixue quanshi: jiyu xiuci lijie jiaodu” 孟子以意逆志的修辭學詮釋-基於修辭理解角度, *Shandong daxue xuebao* 山東大學學報, no.4, 2011, pp.1-7.

what is on a poet's mind.<sup>74</sup> Furthermore, sometimes *yi* 意 and *zhi* 志 even seems to have the same meaning and one is used to explain the other. This appears in the *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字, one highly influential dictionary in ancient China: “*Yi* is *zhi*. Follow the radical of heart. Examine the words and know the *yi*” 意者，志也。從心。察言而知意。<sup>75</sup> In this case, the word *yi* might probably refer to the authorial intention which equals to the author's *zhi* (aims) since one can know the *yi* through examination of the speaker's /writer's words.

Such ambiguities still persist when we turns to interpretations of Du Fu. Chen Shi 陳式 (1613-?), who entitled his work on Du Fu with the word *yi*, made the following explanation:

Why do I write commentary on Du Fu and yet name it as *yi* [intention]? The Book of Documents speaks of *zhi* [aims], Confucius speaks of *si* [thoughts], and Mencius speaks of *yi* [intention]. Generally speaking, on the production of poetry, after aims become stable the intention emerges, and after the intention becomes stable [the poet] makes use of it by means of [his] thoughts. The three merge together and after that a poem is created. When it comes to say that “use *yi* [intention] to trace back the author's aims and this is how to obtain it,” it is the best and marvelous method to read poetry since thousands of years ago.<sup>76</sup>

注杜而謂之為意者何？書言志，孔子言思，孟子言意。大約詩之為詩，志定而後有意，意定而後運之以思，三者合而後詩成。至曰：“以意逆志，是為得之”，則千古以來讀詩之第一妙法也。

Chen discusses the way to read Du Fu's poetry (and poetry in general) from the perspective of poetic composition: in the process of making a poem, the poet goes

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<sup>74</sup> See Zhao Qi 趙岐, *Mengzi zhushu* 孟子註疏, 9:16a, in *Siku quanshu*. Zhu Xi, *Mengzi jizhu* 孟子集注, in *Sishu zhangju jizhu* 四書章句集注, 5:7a, in *Siku quanshu*.

<sup>75</sup> Xu Shen 許慎, *Shuowen jiezi*, in *Siku quanshu*, 11b.

<sup>76</sup> Chen Shi 陳式, “Du Du manshu 讀杜漫述,” in *Chen Wenzhai xiansheng Dushi shuoyi* 陳問齋先生杜詩說意, quoted from Sun Wei's *Qingdai Dushixue shi*, p.139.

through three consecutive stages: aims become stable— *yi* (intention) emerges—make uses of the *yi* by means of his thoughts. Chen then quotes Mencius' words (Mencius doesn't specify whose *yi* it is) and subtly shifts to the perspective of a reader. Although one common underlying assumption in reading poetry in traditional China is the parallel between the author/poetic composition and the reader/ reading, such a shift still brings about a certain ambiguity: does the *yi* in Mencius' words quoted by Chen refer to the author's *yi* or the reader's *yi*? Such ambiguity is reinforced by another note by Chen in the same section "Du Du manshu" 讀杜漫述 (Random Notes in Reading Du Fu) included in his work *Chen Wenzhai xiansheng Dushi shuoyi* 陳問齋先生杜詩說意 (Master Chen Shi's discussion on the *yi* of Du Fu's poetry).

From now onward, I then use my *yi* [understanding] to restore the *yi* [the intention] of Du Fu. It could be said that I am able to grasp it.<sup>77</sup>

予蓋自今而後，乃以己之意還為杜之意，幾幾乎為得矣。

Here Chen makes a distinction between *ji zhi yi* 己之意 (my understanding) and *Du zhi yi* 杜之意 (Du Fu's intention), which points to the possible ambiguity inscribed in the word *yi* 意.<sup>78</sup> At the same time, the distinction made by Chen aims at an ideal identification between Du Fu's *yi* and his *yi*, which further creates an interpretive openness on the *yi*.

What lies in the center of our current discussion is not the mere existence of ambiguity but the function of such ambiguity in the seeming transparent hermeneutic process to obtain the "correct" understanding of Du Fu's poetry. Such

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid, p.139.

<sup>78</sup> I can't find a better word to translate the *yi* on the part of a reader, so I follow Owen's translation of *yi* as (a reader's) "understanding," though such translation is unable to capture the complexities implied in the word *yi*. Owen, *Readings in Chinese Literary Thought*, p.24.

ambiguity/openness reveals to us a reader's dynamic negotiation with the poet (and other Du Fu commentators as well) in the process of reading. Fang Xiaobiao 方孝標 (1617-? )

indicates in his preface to Chen Shi's work:

It is called "discussing the *yi* [intention]" because what Du Fu emphasizes lies in the intention rather than in national geography, official rankings, systems, and customs. Chen Shi possesses talents of Ji and Qi and yet suffers difficulties and impoverishment, and his experience is roughly similar to Du Fu's. Therefore sometimes [Chen Shi] uses his intention to explain Du Fu's intention and sometimes [Chen Shi] uses Du Fu's intention to explain his intention. If they match, then Chen Shi's intention is Du Fu's intention. Even if Du Fu would resurrect, he could not object to Chen Shi's intention.<sup>79</sup>

曰說意，蓋以爲少陵之所重在意，而不在國地、官爵、制度與風俗也。二如以稷契之才，遭亂困頓，遇亦略與少陵同。故有時以二如說少陵之意，亦有時以少陵說二如之意。苟得其合，則二如之意，即少陵之意，若少陵復起，亦不能違二如之意。

Fang first justifies Chen's discussion of *yi* by stating that *yi* is also the emphasis of Du Fu in his poetry. It elevates Chen's approach over other *zhu* commentary which focuses on geography, customs and other concrete information in Du Fu's poems. Fang further reinforces the identification between Du Fu and Chen Shi through their similar experiences. Paradoxically, such identification leads Fang to make a distinction between Chen's *yi* and Du's *yi* and announce that Chen not only could serve as a mouthpiece for Du's *yi* but also could use Du to explain his *yi*. After that, Fang shifts back to the identification between Chen and Du with the condition *gou de qi he* 苟得其合 (if the match is achieved), which subtly points to the possible discrepancy between Chen and Du. At last, Fang again confirm independence of Chen's *yi* on the basis of his identification with Du Fu: "Even if Du Fu would resurrect, he could not object to Chen Shi's intention."

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<sup>79</sup> Chen Shi, *Chen Wenzhai xiansheng Dushi shuoyi*, quoted from Zhou Caiquan's 周采泉 *Dushu jilu* 杜書集錄 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1986), p.187.

In the process of *yi yi ni zhi*, the ambiguity of *yi* underscores the dynamics between a reader and Du Fu: a reader's self-erasing act of identification with Du Fu is accompanied by an aggressive act of usurping Du Fu for manifestation of a reader's self.

Even though sometimes the *yi* 意 is clearly designated by a commentator as a reader's *yi*, the dynamics between a reader and Du Fu still persist in the process of reading Du Fu and culminates in the crucial word *ni*. For example, Huang Sheng suggests the reason why other commentators have incorrect understanding of Du Fu is that they couldn't follow the principle of *yi yi ni zhi*. He then employs a vivid metaphor to illustrate the act of *ni* in his commentary on Du Fu.

Mencius said: "use *yi* to trace back to [an author's] aims and it is how to obtain it." The word *ni* means "to greet"...I think the person who discusses poetry is just like leaving his house to greet the guest from afar. The guest comes from a big road, but I greet him on a small path, which cannot succeed. The guest comes from the middle way, but I greet him on the left or right way, which is not feasible...therefore one must know the way from which the guest comes and then follow it to greet him. So the guest and the host happily hold each other's arms and delightfully stay side by side. This is called *yi yi ni zhi*.<sup>80</sup>

古今善說詩者，莫如孟子。孟之言曰：“以意逆志，是謂得之。”逆之為言，迎也....余以為說詩者譬如出戶而迎遠客。彼從大道而來，我趨小徑以迎之，不得也。彼從中道而來，我出其左右以迎之，不可也....故必知其所由之道，然後從而迎之，則賓主歡然把臂，欣然促膝矣。此以意逆志之說也。

In Huang's metaphor, *yi* (here it refers to a reader's *yi*) is compared to the host and Du Fu's *zhi* (aims) to the guest, and the process of *yi yi ni zhi* becomes a process of a host greeting his guest from afar. Although Huang's definition of *ni* as *ying* 迎 is the same as that in the dictionary *Shuowen jiezi*, his metaphor echoes Zhu Xi's metaphor of *yi yi ni zhi*:

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<sup>80</sup> Huang Sheng, *Du Gongbu shishuo* 杜工部詩說, 5:335-6.

It is like a person who greets the other person on the street. Perhaps he meets [that person] today, or perhaps he will meet [that person] tomorrow; perhaps that person will come, or perhaps that person will not come; perhaps that person will come a few days later. Only this can be called *yi yi ni zhi*. Nowadays, people who read books surprisingly don't wait to meet that person. They merely catch that person by force without any concerns of his willingness. [They] further ask him not to make a sound, [and say:] "Let me speak the truth for you." The sage is already dead. He watches how you talk and yet cannot come out [of his death] to argue with you. Nevertheless, it is not the sage's *yi*.<sup>81</sup>

如人路頭迎接那人相似。或今日接著不定，明日接著不定，或那人來也不定，不來也不定，或更遲數日來也不定。如此方謂之以意逆志。今人讀書却不去等候迎接那人，只認硬趕捉那人來，更不由他情願。又教它莫要做聲，待我與你說道理。聖賢已死，它看你如何說，他又不會出來與你爭。只是非聖賢之意。

In Zhu's opinion, the success of *yi yi ni zhi* is contingent upon a reader's patience in waiting for the arrival of the author's aims/intention. Zhu criticizes the defective method of reading among his contemporaries: a reader often imposes his self upon the author (the sage) and supersedes the authorial intention with his own understanding. An ideal reader for Zhu is the one who can suppress one's self to avoid any intervention in the emergence of author's aims. This bears resemblance with one of two "I"s in George Poulet's reading subject, the "I" whose consciousness is content to record passively all that is going on within the reader and yet that is alien to the reader.<sup>82</sup> Huang's *ni* distinguishes itself from Zhu's *ni* in the following aspects. The encounter between a reader and the authors' aims in Zhu's metaphor is related to "time" since when the author's aims arrive is uncertain, but the encounter in Chen's metaphor is more related to "space" since the path by which the author's aims might come is uncertain. Such a spatial dimension also points to the more active role of a reader: Huang's reader does not merely wait there for the arrival of

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<sup>81</sup> Zhu Xi, *Zhuzi yulei* 朱子語類, in *Siku quanshu*, 137: 11b-12a.

<sup>82</sup> See the discussion of George Poulet's opinion of reading in the introduction of this dissertation.

the author's aims but choose a path and go to meet the latter. But more importantly, the spatial dimension in Huang's metaphor draws our attention to the correct and incorrect paths for the act of *ni*. Although a reader might perform the act of *ying* 迎 (greet/go to meet) on any path, Huang indicates that the encounter might not happen if the reader follows a wrong path. It is noticeable that in his words quoted above Huang only applies the *ni* to the reader who follows the correct path, albeit the fact that Huang explains the *ni* as *ying*. In this sense, *yi yi ni zhi*, as it is used by many other commentators, already becomes an idealized approach which is able to trace back to the author's aims (or authorial intention) on the right track.

In addition, Huang's metaphor underscores a moment of confrontation between the host and the guest as a symbol of success in the process of *yi yi ni zhi*. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the word "confrontation" has three meanings and the first two are: (1) The bringing of persons face to face; esp. for examination and eliciting of the truth; (2) The action of bringing face to face, or together, for comparison.<sup>83</sup> The first meaning illustrates one important connotation of *yi yi ni zhi* in reading Du Fu, that is, a host's effort of seeking an encounter with his guest (the *bringing* of persons face to face) and one of the goals in such an encounter to restore so-called Du Fu's "true face" 真面目 or "true spirit" 真精神 (for examination and eliciting of the "truth"). In addition, the confrontation also involves *comparison* between the host and the guest (and that between

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<sup>83</sup> The third meaning refers specifically to the political tension, which is less relevant to our discussion here. Furthermore, according to the quotations of *Oxford English Dictionary*, the third meaning first appeared in 1963, which is rather later than the earliest usage of the first two meanings (1632 and 1665 respectively, a time which falls in the late Ming and the early Qing period) *Oxford English Dictionary*, Second edition, 1989; online version June 2012. <http://www.oed.com.ezp2.lib.umn.edu/view/Entry/38992>>; accessed 18 June 2012.

the success of their encounter with the failure of such encounter by other commentators who follow the wrong paths as well) — for example, Fang Xiaobiao’s juxtaposition of Chen Shi’s *yi* with Du Fu’s *yi*, or the even “truer” Du Fu created Lu Shique’s deletion of some of Du Fu’s poems. Another commentator Pu Qilong depicts for us a similar encounter between Du Fu and him:

Zixia [子夏] once said: in one’s mind it is called aims; when articulated in words, it becomes poetry; the sounds forms patterning and they are called tones. Therefore when poetry emerges, the mind endows it with sounds; when it is transmitted, the mind provides a lodge for it...In my ten-year reading of Du Fu, I seek Du Fu from his poetry and yet couldn’t grasp it; I seek Du Fu from Du Fu’s poetry with commentaries by hundreds of commentators, and yet further could not grasp it. Hence I use my mind to seek communion with Du Fu’s mind. My mind silently goes and Du Fu’s mind lively comes. They encounter each other at a non-existing place, out of which my interpretations emerge.<sup>84</sup>

西河不云乎：在心為志，發言為詩，聲成文謂之音。是故詩之興也，心聲之；其傳也，心宅之....吾讀杜十年，索杜於杜，弗得；索杜於百氏詮釋之杜，愈益弗得。既乃攝吾之心印杜之心，吾之心悶悶然而往，杜之心活活然而來，邂逅于無何有之鄉，而吾之解出焉。

Although Pu doesn’t use the exact phrase *yi yi ni zhi* and puts more emphasis on *xin* (heart/mind) where the *zhi* (the author’s aims) resides, his approach still resonates the act of *ni* in the reciprocal movement: his mind goes (like Huang’s host) and Du Fu’s mind comes (like Huang’s guest). The encounter between the two minds gives rise to Pu’s interpretations and at the same time marks its success (since it gains “authority” from Du Fu’s mind). Pu further claims: “I restore Du Fu by means of poetry, I restore Du Fu’s poetry by means of mind, and I dare say that the belief in mind is not merely following my own mind” 吾還杜以詩，吾還杜之詩以心，吾敢謂信心之非師心與。<sup>85</sup> The

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<sup>84</sup> Pu Qilong, *Du Du xinjie*, p.5.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid*, p.5.

movement proceeds from Pu's own mind to Du Fu's poetry to Du Fu, in which the role of a reader's self in "restoring" Du Fu is highlighted and yet simultaneously qualified by Pu's restraints on the freedom of his mind.

To sum up, in their confrontation with the Song Du Fu hermeneutics, commentators in the late Ming and the early Qing adopt different interpretive approaches to restore what they perceive the "distorted" Du Fu. All of these approaches share a common presumption of hermeneutic transparency which grants them access to the "true" spirit of Du Fu in their restoration especially under the guidance of the principle *yi yi ni zhi*. However, in the act of moving through such transparency (the act epitomized in the word *ni*), many commentators reveal to us the thickness of such transparency through constant negotiation with regard to the relationship between the self of a reader and that of Du Fu and the relationship between one reader and other readers especially Song commentators (including Liu Chengwen who lived during the Song-Yuan transition).<sup>86</sup> The thickness of hermeneutic transparency constitutes a playground for Ming-Qing Du Fu commentators who seek to use certain interpretive approaches to ground their "correct" understanding in where the poetry originally comes from, and who seek to play out the self as a reader, or more exactly, the tension between the self and Du Fu in their confrontation through the

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<sup>86</sup> Although, as we have discussed the Song, Du Fu hermeneutics is under heavy attack during this period, it is attacked more as a general category---a category employed by commentators in the late Ming and early Qing period for necessity of their effort in saving Du Fu, albeit the fact that many defects they found in some Song commentaries have already been indicated and even corrected in other Song commentaries. For example, Qian Qianyi comes up with a detailed list of many defects of Song Du Fu commentaries, and some of them such as far-fetched interpretations and forgeries have already been pointed by other Song commentators. Zhang Jiazhuang 張家壯 also discusses the two sides of their attitude toward Song Du Fu commentaries. See his Ph.D dissertation, *Mingmo Qingchu Dushixue shulun—yi jizhong zhongyao de Duji wei zhongxin* 明末清初杜詩學述論—以幾種重要的杜集為中心, Fujian shifan daxue, 2009.

act of *ni*. The following chapter will offer a case study of Jin Shengtian and examine how he confronts Du Fu in the play-ground.

## Chapter 2 Jin Shengtān's Commentaries on Du Fu's Poems<sup>87</sup>

Although Jin Shengtān is notoriously known for his dissenting voice from the traditional way of reading, his interpretations of Du Fu witness continuous efforts in constructing a creative reception to Du Fu's poems while simultaneously registering his "submission" to the past by incorporating traditional elements and following certain canonical interpretive strategies.<sup>88</sup> The case of Jin's reading of Du Fu might illuminate the history of the hermeneutics of Du Fu's poetry in a different light: instead of simply

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<sup>87</sup> This chapter has been published in the Journal *Ming Studies* in a slightly different form. See Ji Hao, "Confronting the Past: Jin Shengtān's Commentaries on Du Fu's Poems," *Ming Studies*, vol. 2011, no. 64, September 2011, pp. 63-95. The online version of the journal can be found at [www.maney.co.uk/journals/mng](http://www.maney.co.uk/journals/mng) and [www.ingentaconnect.com/content/maney/mng](http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/maney/mng).

<sup>88</sup> In English-language scholarship, John Ching-yu Wang's monograph was the first systematic discussion of Jin Shengtān. He includes one chapter on the Du Fu commentaries: *Chin Sheng-t'an* (Twayne Publishers, 1972). In his essay "Jianjie meiguo de Jin Shengtān yanjiu," *Zhongguowenxue pingdian yanjiu lunji* (eds. Zhang Peiheng and Wang Jingyu, Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2002, pp. 351-362), Wang delineates a general picture of the study of Jin in America: earlier American scholarship before him include: the biography of Jin written by Fang Chao-ying in *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing period, 1644-1912* (ed. Arthur W. Hummel, Washington: U.S. Govt. Print Off., 1943); and Richard G. Irwin's *The Evolution of a Chinese Novel: Shui Hu Chuan* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1953). In the 1980s and 1990s, more books including discussions of Jin came out, including Robert E. Hegel's *The Novel in Seventeenth-Century China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), Ellen Widmer's *The Margins of Utopia: "Shui-hu hou chuan" and Literature of Ming Loyalism* (Cambridge: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1987), Andrew H. Plaks' *The Four Masterworks of the Ming Novel (dates on this?)*, *How to read the Chinese Novel* (ed. David L. Rolston, Princeton: Princeton University Press, c1990), Sheldon Hsiao-peng Lu's *From Historicity to Fictionality: The Chinese Poetics of Narrative* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994) and David L. Rolston's *Traditional Chinese Fiction and Fiction Commentary: Reading and Writing between the Lines* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997). From above we can see that American scholarship mostly focuses on Jin's commentaries on *Shuihu zhuan*. His commentaries on the drama *Xixiang ji* have also drawn American scholars' attention. For example, Sally K. Church's "Beyond the Words: Jin Shengtān's perception of Hidden Meanings in *Xixiang ji*," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 59.1 (June 1999), pp. 54-68. Also Ge Liangyan's excellent discussion on Jin's critical stance on the author and the textual meaning is mainly based upon Jin's two prefaces to *Xixiang ji*. "Authoring 'Authorial Intention': Jin Shengtān as Creative Critic," *Chinese Literatures: Essays, Articles, Reviews* (CLEAR), Vol. 25, (Dec., 2003), pp. 1-24. Patricia Sieber examines Jin's conception of poetry to illustrate the interplay between religious and poetic conceptions of language in the seventeenth century. However, she doesn't mention Jin's commentaries on Du Fu's poetry. "Getting at It in a Single Genuine Invocation: Tang Anthologies, Buddhism Rhetorical Practices and Jin Shengtān's (1608-1661) Conception of Poetry," *Monumenta Serica*, Vol. XLIX (2001), pp. 33-56. Chinese scholarship has paid relatively greater attention to Jin's commentaries on Du Fu's poetry. For example, Zhou Xinglu 周興陸, "Jin Shengtān dushi pijie de wenxue pipingxue toushi," *Wenhua yichan*, vol.3, 1998, pp. 96-8. Wu Zhenglan's book *Jin Shengtān pingzhuan* 金聖嘆評傳 (Nanjing: Nanjing daxue chubanshe, 2006) also gives some discussion on this topic.

dismissing the continuous effort of locating authorial intention (or *zhi*) and other long established hermeneutic practices as defective strategies, we might pay attention to the function of such hermeneutic continuity and appreciate the dynamics under the surface of the historically constructed “ahistoricity” of Du Fu.

### Unfinished Commentaries on Du Fu

“Rat liver and bug arms” -- (I’ve) long been desolate,<sup>89</sup> 鼠肝蟲臂久蕭疏  
I only cherish a few books in my breast; 只惜胸前幾本書  
Though happy that I’ve roughly analyzed Tang poems, 雖喜唐詩略分解  
what about *Zhuangzi*, *Lisao*, *Shiji*, and Du Fu?<sup>90</sup> 莊騷馬杜待何如

In his deathbed poem, Jin Shengtan expresses his regret for not being able to fulfill the ambitious enterprise of composing detailed commentaries on four of what he called “the six masterpieces of genius.”<sup>91</sup> In fact, in contrast with the other three books mentioned in

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<sup>89</sup>The phrase “rat liver and bug arms” 鼠肝蟲臂 probably comes from the “Da zongshi” 大宗師 chapter in the *Zhuangzi*. “Suddenly Master Lai grew ill. Gasp and wheezing, he lay at the point of death. His wife and children gathered round in a circle and began to cry. Master Li, who had come to ask how he was, said, ‘Shoo! Don’t disturb the process of change!’ Then he learned against the doorway and talked to Master Lai. ‘How marvelous the Creator is! What is he going to make out of you next? Where is he going to send you? Will he make you into a rat’s liver? Will he make you into a bug’s arm?’” 俄而子來有病，喘喘然將死，其妻子環而泣之。子犁往問之，曰：叱！避！無怛化！倚其戶與之語曰：偉哉造化！又將奚以汝為，將奚以汝適？以汝為鼠肝乎？以汝為蟲臂乎？ Translation from *Chuang Tzu: Basic Writings* (trs. Burton Watson, New York: Columbia University Press, 1964) p.81.

<sup>90</sup> “Deathbed Poem” (*Jue ming ci* 絕命詞). This poem appears in the *Chenyinlou shixuan* 沉吟樓詩選 (Selected Poems from Chenyin Tower), a collection of 384 poems by Jin, which include works in “old style” form, ballads 樂府, quatrains, and regulated-verse. See *Jin Shengtan quanji* 金聖歎全集 (6 vols. Nanjing: Fenghuang chubanshe, 2008), edited by Lu Lin, 2:1213. According to the preface by Li Chonghua 李重華, these poems were preserved by Jin Shengtan’s son-in-law Shen Liushu 沈六書 and only constitute a small proportion of Jin’s poems. As for Jin’s dates, modern scholar Zhong Laiyin, basing his arguments on the *Jianqutang shi xu* 葭秋堂詩序 (1659) in which Jin claims that he was fifty-three *sui*, calculates that Jin was born in 1608 (*Du shi jie* 杜詩解, Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1984, p. 7).

<sup>91</sup> Jin’s “six masterpieces of genius” are *Zhuangzi*, *Lisao*, *Shiji*, Du Fu’s poems, *Xixiangji*, and *Shuihu zhuan*. There is still some uncertainty on the order of those six masterpieces in Jin’s mind. Although less uncertainty lies with the third and the fourth masterpiece of genius (*Shiji* and Du Fu’s poems), disagreement arises over the ranking of other four books. Chen Dengyuan has contrasted different orders of “the six masterpieces of genius” in Liao Yan’s *Shengtan zhuan* 聖歎先生傳, in the *Xinchou jiwen*, and in Jin Chang’s *Xu di si caizi shu* 序第四才子書. See Chen, *Jin Shengtan zhuan*, pp. 52-53. Jin might deliberately follow a certain principle to order those books and his friend Xu Zeng 徐增 gives a brief explanation on this in his preface to *Tianxia caizi bidushu* 天下才子必讀書.

this poem, Jin did compose a fairly substantial commentary on Du Fu. While he has left a short essay expounding on the title of the *Zhuangzi* 莊子, an unfinished preface to the *Lisao* 離騷 and some short comments on the *Shiji* 史記, there is also a detailed commentary on 191 Du Fu poems.<sup>92</sup> Although they only constitute a small part of Du's corpus (and Jin's commentaries here are comparatively less systematic than those on *Shuihu zhuan* 水滸傳 and *Xixiang ji* 西廂記), these commentaries, coupled with other works by Jin, offer us the possibility of delineating a much clearer posture of Jin towards Du Fu's verse.

Most importantly, Jin's own commentaries on certain specific poems by Du Fu provide the primary materials for the present study. It is the regret revealed in his deathbed poem that moved his kinsman Jin Chang 金昌 (to whom the poem is supposedly dedicated) to publish all of Jin's manuscripts; his first step was to collect, edit, and publish Jin's commentaries on Du.<sup>93</sup> Despite the lack of prefaces and the "general instructions" on how to read Du Fu's poems that Jin would probably have composed at some point (there are three prefaces in his commentaries on *Shuihu zhuan* and two prefaces on *Xixiang ji*; in both cases, Jin introduces at the beginning "general instructions" on how to read these books), Jin's commentaries on Du's poems in general follow a constant style: comments are first given next to the title of each poem to illustrate the title, express his general impression, and/or indicate some significant characteristics of the poem; then Jin's critical remarks target lines of each poem---in most cases four lines are treated as one unit (this is intimately associated with Jin's general conception of Tang

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<sup>92</sup> The number of poems is based on *Jin Shengtan quanji*.

<sup>93</sup> See Jin Chang's preface to Jin Shengtan's commentaries of Du Fu's poems. *Jin Shengtan quanji*, 6: 94.

regulated verse, as I will explain later). Such efforts to maintain a uniform commentarial style also help to draw our attention to certain recurring elements in Jin's readings and thus give us a glimpse of his overall interpretative strategy.

The third line of the deathbed poem refers to one of Jin's finished works--- his commentaries on roughly six hundred Tang poems (more exactly, on Tang heptasyllabic regulated verse), known as the *Guanhuatang xuanpi Tang caizi shi* 貫華堂選批唐才子詩 (“*Guanhua Hall Selection and Commentary on Poems by Tang Geniuses*”). His structural analytic mode throughout these commentaries strongly echoes his commentaries on Du. Moreover, his general method has been stated in his notes and correspondence with other people and is also applicable to his readings of Du's poems. Jin himself seems to approve such transference and he sometimes directly cites lines from Du Fu in discussing his analytical method applied to Tang regulated verse in the *Guanhuatang* anthology. Moreover, if one reads his general opinions on Tang poetry found in the *Yuting wenguan* 魚庭聞貫 (“Instructions from My Father,” compiled by his son Jin Yong 金雍, an anthology of assorted letters and other writings that Jin left behind), one might conclude that his readings in the *Guanhuatang* are probably preparation for his Du Fu project to some extent.<sup>94</sup> As we know, his project of interpreting Du Fu's poems and his project on Tang regulated verse overlap both in genre

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<sup>94</sup> The term “Yuting” (“Yu in the courtyard”) comes from an anecdote in *The Analects*: Kong Li 孔鯉, the son of Confucius (whose courtesy name is Boyu 伯魚), is crossing a courtyard when his father stops him and tells him to study poetry. Later, *yuting* comes to refer to the place where a son receives his father's instructions. The allusion fits here very well, since Jin Yong's prefatory section of *Yuting wenguan* mentions that Jin Shengtian has interpreted almost 600 Tang regulated verses for him (the *Guanhuatang* anthology was compiled on the basis of these interpretations) and the content of *Yuting wenguan* exclusively centers on Jin Shengtian's general views on poetry.

and in time. In the preface to *Guanhuatang*, Jin Shengtan mentions that this project was initiated at his son's request in the spring of the seventeenth year of the *Shunzhi* 順治 period (1660) and was finished two months later. However, from many of his letters in which he mentions other people's continuing doubts about the approach of *fenjie* 分解 (an analytical method adopted by Jin and I will be discussing this at greater length below) and presents a further clarification through many vivid metaphors and examples, we can infer that his formulation of the *fenjie* method might have gone well beyond these two months. Similarly, although *Xinchou jiwen* 辛醜紀聞 indicates that Jin was engaged in writing commentaries on Du Fu's poems in the years of 1659 and 1660, we can find from his own commentaries and Jin Chang's notes on some poems that he started this project many years earlier.<sup>95</sup> The reader might conclude that it is possible that Jin tested his *fenjie* approach on the poems by other Tang poets and thereby paved the way for his commentaries on Du Fu's poems.<sup>96</sup> Therefore, when we look at his *fenjie* approach in discussions of Du, I will rely on his comments on the use of *fenjie* with Tang regulated verse to help draw a general picture of his analytic style.

### Explaining the Inexplicable

I have heard since I was a child that the person who procures coral from the sea must first believe that coral can be found in that sea and then in advance sinks an iron net into the water. He waits for several years until new branches of coral gradually grow through its meshes. Afterwards he gathers many other people, who strive with their all strength and retrieve the net from the water; and thus the coral

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<sup>95</sup> One can refer to Zhong Laiyin's preface to Jin's interpretations on Du Fu's poetry. *Du Shi jie*, pp.1-2. According to Jin Chang's description in "the preface to the fourth masterpiece of genius", Jin Shengtan showed his fascination with Du's poetry as early as his late teens. *Jin Shengtan quanji*, 6:94.

<sup>96</sup> If one compares the application of *fenjie* in Jin's commentaries on Tang poems with those on Du Fu's poems, one can find that *fenjie* approach in Du Fu's case becomes more complicated and demonstrates more variety than the former. I will give some examples when I discuss Jin's *fenjie* approach in detail in the later part of the essay.

is lifted up completely. The first two lines in a Tang regulated verse are exactly like this. Whenever you meet a topic, no matter whether it is smaller or larger, it is similar to the sea. You should first look carefully at it and think how it should start--this is similar to a firm belief in the fact that the sea ought to have coral in it. Therefore you use your vast and deep thoughts as a net, you go directly into the topic and hover there with unfettered feelings, which is similar to sinking the net in the sea for many years. Once you obtain its principle, then you hurry to write it down, which is similar to gathering people and striving with effort to retrieve the net from the sea. After you have written it down and have cast it to the other people around you, none of those people who read it will fail to show great surprise at its greatness; and this is similar to the brilliance that occurs when the coral is pulled from the sea.<sup>97</sup>

弟自幼聞海上采珊瑚者，其先必深信此海當有珊瑚，則預沉鐵網其下，凡若干年，以俟珊瑚新枝漸長過網，而後乃令集眾盡力，舉網出海，而珊瑚遂畢舉也。唐律詩一二，正猶是矣。凡遇一題，不論小大，其猶海也，先熟睹之，如何當有起句，其猶深信海之有珊瑚處也。因而以博大精深之思為網，直入題中盡意躊躕，其猶沉海若干年也，既得其理，然後奮筆書之，其猶集眾盡力舉網出海也。書之而擲於四筵之人讀之，無不卓然以驚，其猶珊瑚之出海粲然也。

Here Jin compares the process of reading the first two lines of Tang regulated verse to the process of procuring coral from the sea.<sup>98</sup> In Jin's view, the title (or topic) of a poem is like the sea and the coral symbolizes the principles of the first couplet. In order to understand its greatness, one has to spend much effort, just as when one procures coral: you sink the net into the sea, wait patiently for many years until new branches of coral grow through the meshes, and finally pull it up. Jin's discussion on reading the first couplet of Tang regulated verse reflects his general opinions on interpreting poetry.

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<sup>97</sup> *Jin Shengtan quanji*, 1:106.

<sup>98</sup> There is a certain ambiguity concerning what Jin exactly refers to here. He could deal with the process of composing a poem or reading a poem, or both. The parallel between reading and writing is a common rhetoric in traditional Chinese poetics where a typical reader will imagine the poet's writing process to achieve an assumed correct reading. Examples concerning Jin's interpretation of Du Fu in later discussion will show that Jin also embraces such parallel. Here I will focus on the part of the reading process. The image of procuring coral from the sea also appears in Tang poems. For example, the first of Li Shangyin's "Yan Terrace" poems contains this same image. See *Li Shangyin shige jijie* 李商隱詩歌集解 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1988), p. 79.

The brilliance of the moment when the coral emerges from the sea underscores Jin's belief that the wonder of the poem can be brought out and demonstrated to others. Such an argument is further explicated by Jin in one of his letters:

Last time I sent you my commentaries on forty-one heptasyllabic regulated verses by Du Fu, hoping that you could critique them right away. Nevertheless, I have been waiting for six or seven days, but I don't see any instructions from you. Could you have put them aside without reading them? Or must I wait a little longer for your answer? Ever since I was a child, I have suffered to the greatest extent from hackneyed pedants saying generation after generation that the "wonder of poetry lies right between the explicable and the inexplicable." I myself observe that none of the great men of the world have ever been willing to make this statement; but those second-rank and third rank types who just follow along with common opinion can't avoid saying this constantly. There is no other reason save the great convenience that they can obtain from this phrase. It's probably because – since what they know is so little – they can thus let their own standards perpetually escape the judgment of others. Now even if I am still waiting six or seven days to receive your comments, it doesn't matter. I only hope that you can hurry up and criticize them, and thus give me something that can be clearly beneficial. If your criticism is appropriate, I will accept it with respect; if not, I won't complain. But I definitely don't want you to make the same claim that "the wonder lies between the explicable and inexplicable."<sup>99</sup>

前呈上老杜七律分解四十一首，仰冀奮筆批駁，顛顛六七早暮矣，未見有以教我，豈竟置不盼也？抑弟尚應少俟也？弟自幼最苦冬烘先生輩輩相傳“詩妙處正在可解不可解之間”之一語。弟親見世間之英絕奇偉大人先生，皆未嘗肯作此語。而彼第二第三隨世碌碌無所短長之人，即又口中不免往往道之，無他，彼固有所甚便於此一語。蓋其所自操者至約，而其規避於他人者乃至無窮也。今弟雖更伺候先生，再至六七早暮，亦無妨也。獨願先生必賜奮筆批駁，明白有以惠弟。當則弟且拜焉，不當，弟亦不以相怨。但斷斷不願亦作“妙處可解不可解”等語。

Jin believes that the "wonder of the poetry" is in fact explicable and that the claim of its ineffability merely serves as a convenient excuse for the mediocre, who in fact don't truly understand it. The belief that the wonder of poetry is explicable as well as the efforts a critic must make to explain that wonder to other people constitutes an important part of

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<sup>99</sup> *Jin Shengtan quanji*, 1:102-3.

Jin's agenda in interpreting Du Fu's poetry and echo similar concerns from his other critical projects. For example, Jin writes two entries in the prefatory section of his *Xixiang ji* commentary:

When I was young I really hated the couplet : “I produce embroidered mandarin ducks -- you can look as much as you like. / However, I will never pass the golden needle to you.”<sup>100</sup> I said this must be a poor man praising himself, as if he were like Wang Yan, who could not bring himself to speak of money.<sup>101</sup> If one really knows how to use the golden needle, it won't matter if he “passes it on” to me a little bit. Today when you read *Record of the West Chamber* [with my commentaries] not only have the mandarin ducks already been embroidered, but the techniques of how to use the gold needle have also been passed on completely. You will then believe that people who say such things are real liars.<sup>102</sup>

僕幼年最恨“鴛鴦繡出從君看，不把金針度與君”之二句，謂此必是貧漢自稱，王夷甫口不道阿堵物計耳。若果知得金針，何妨與我略度。今日見《西廂記》，鴛鴦既已繡出，金針亦盡度，亦信作彼語者，真是脫空謾語漢。

When I was young I once heard someone tell the following joke: once upon a time there was a person who, though suffering from extreme poverty, piously worshiped the Taoist Master Lú Dongbin throughout his life. Moved by his extreme sincerity, Master Lú suddenly descended to his home. Having seen how utterly destitute he was, Master Lú couldn't help feeling a great pity and thought that there should be some way to help him. Therefore he extended one finger, pointed to a big rock in his courtyard and turned it into gold. He said: “Do you want it?” The person bowed again and said: “I don't want it.” Master Lú was greatly delighted and said: “If you really mean it, then I can teach you the Great Way.” That person replied: “That's not it. I mean what I want from you is just that finger of yours.” At the time I said to myself that it was definitely just a joke – because if it were really Master Lú, he would definitely have given his finger to that person. Now *Record of the West Chamber* [with my commentaries] is Master Lú's finger. Whoever gets it can point to anywhere and change everything to gold.<sup>103</sup>

僕幼年曾聞人說一笑話云：昔一人苦貧特甚，而生平虔奉呂祖。感其至心，忽

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<sup>100</sup> This couplet comes from one of Yuan Haowen's 元好問 (1190-1257) poems commenting on poetry.

<sup>101</sup> Wang Yan 王衍 (256-311), whose courtesy name is Yifu 夷甫, is famous for his dislike of money. Though he himself was wealthy, he could only bring himself to call it “this thing.” Jin's point here is that a mediocre writer will refuse to explain his own secrets by comparing himself to Wang Yan – i.e. that such explanation is beneath him, when in fact the truth is that he has no talent at all. See *Shishuo xinyu zhu* 世說新語注 (Commented by Liu Xiaobiao 劉孝標, Hongkong: Taiping shuju, 1966), p. 140.

<sup>102</sup> *Jin Shengtan quanji*, 2:859.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid*, 2:859.

降其家，見其赤貧，不勝憫之，念當有以濟之，因伸一指，指其庭中磐石，粲然化為黃金，曰：汝欲之乎？其人再拜曰：不欲也。呂祖大喜，謂：子誠如此，便可授子大道。其人曰：不然，我心欲汝此指頭耳。僕當時私謂此固戲論耳，若真是呂祖，必當便以指頭與之。今此西廂記便是呂祖指頭，得之者處處遍指，皆作黃金。

Jin expresses a strong aversion to any statement suggesting the ineffability of great poetry or of great works in other genres. In fact, if one takes a look at most of his criticism on earlier works, one can find that Jin is devoted to undertaking close readings that strive to make clear a hidden excellence.<sup>104</sup> Jin's interpretations of Du Fu's poems also echo his insistence of the possibility of revealing the hidden principle of Tang regulated verse in general. The metaphor of procuring coral can be regarded as an attempt to refute the claim that some of Du Fu's poems are *bu ke jie* 不可解 (“inexplicable”) in the traditional criticism prior to Jin's time.

The phrase of *bu ke jie* 不可解 may involve two levels of meaning. It can refer to the great difficulty one may have in understanding Du's poems. Du Fu proclaims that he has worn out a myriad books in his reading, and it is an entrenched belief in traditional criticism that Du Fu's vast knowledge is incarnated in his poetry, where “there is no word without a source” 無一字無來處<sup>105</sup>. Hence it is not uncommon that people are confused and find it *bu ke jie* when they read Du's poetry.

Once there was a young man who asked for beneficial advice. The Master [Han Ju 韓駒, a famous Song poet] recommended that he repeatedly read Du Fu's poetry; a few days later the young man came again and said that some of Du Fu's poems

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<sup>104</sup> For example, Sally K. Church gives an excellent exploration of Jin's readings of hidden meanings in *Xixiang ji*. “Beyond the Words: Jin Shengtan's perception of Hidden Meanings in *Xixiang ji*,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 59.1 (June 1999), pp. 54-68.

<sup>105</sup> Huang Tingjian, *Da Hong Jufu shu san shou* 答洪駒父書三首. quoted from *Du Fu juan*, vol.1, pp.120-21.

could not be understood. The master answered: for the time being read those you can understand.<sup>106</sup>

嘗有一少年請益，公諭之，令熟讀杜少陵詩；後數日復來，云少陵詩有不可解者，公曰：且讀可解者。

This anecdote suggests that the young man might not be a knowledgeable scholar and his claim of *bu ke jie* is more like an entry-level student's complaint about the difficulty of understanding basic meaning. Han Ju, who is the intellectual superior in this relationship, obviously knows that some of Du Fu's poems are not easy to read for the young man and then asks him to read those poems appropriate for his present level. The anecdote abruptly stops there and we don't know the response of the young man. He might have left satisfied with Han's suggestion and consequently put aside those difficult poems for the moment. But he might have come back again a few days later and asked Han what he should do with those poems he couldn't understand. Would those poems turn out to be understandable as his knowledge increased or would other poems which he *could* understand shed light on those difficult ones? Or are there some poems by Du Fu indeed impossible for "latecomers" to understand? How Han would answer this question remains unclear for us. Due to his intellectual authority, he might still continue to circumvent this problem, as he does when confronted by the young man's previous question. But imagine if another scholar equal to Han's intellectual position says that some of Du Fu's poems are *bu ke jie*. Han might understand the phrase in another way --- that the marvelousness of some of Du Fu's poems is inexplicable. Not everyone can understand the (supposed) marvelousness of Du Fu's poems in a general sense; and in

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<sup>106</sup> "Lingyang xiansheng shizhong yu" 陵陽先生室中語, in *Shiren Yuxie* 詩人玉屑, quoted from *Du Fu juan*, vol. 1, p.162.

many cases one can't understand it when reading specific poems. Such understanding is contingent upon one's real life experiences being similar to those of Du Fu's. The Song critic Zhou Zizhi 周紫芝 (1082-1155) says:

In the past I visited Mount Jiang and one night I climbed Baogong pagoda. At that time the sky was already dark but the moon hadn't appeared yet. As I looked over the Yangtze before me, I saw below lofty Buddhist buildings and from time to time I heard the clattering of their wind chimes. Suddenly I remembered a couplet in a Du Fu poem: "As night runs deep, the hall becomes lofty; / the wind shakes the metal wind chimes." These could have been my own words! Also, once I was travelling alone through a mountain valley, where the road was flanked by old trees whose shadows intermingled; I could only hear cuckoos calling to each other among the trees. Only then did I understand the wonder of the couplet: "On the two sides, mountain trees encircle; / Till the end of day the cuckoos chirp." Another day during the hot summer a guest and I were enjoying the cool on the bank of a stream. At that moment, when the evening sunlight lit the mountains and sounds of cicadas filled the trees, I watched two people washing horses in the stream and said: "This is what Du Fu means by: 'In the evening cool I watch them wash horses; / In the forest thicket a riot of cicadas.'" If one chants this poem on just any day, one can't see the excellence of its poetic craft. Only when one actually sees it can one begin to know its wonder. Writing poems is just to write what one sees, and it is unnecessary to use strange words.<sup>107</sup>

余頃年遊蔣山，夜上寶公塔。時天已昏黑，而月猶未出，前臨大江，下視佛屋崢嶸，時聞風鈴鏗然有聲，忽記杜少陵詩：“夜深殿突兀，風動金銀鐺。”恍然如己語也。又嘗獨行山谷間，古木夾道交陰，唯聞子規相應木間，乃知“兩邊山木合，終日子規啼”之為佳句也。又暑中瀕溪與客納涼，時夕陽在山，蟬聲滿樹，觀二人洗馬於溪中，曰：“此少陵所謂‘晚涼看洗馬，森木亂鳴蟬’者也。”此詩平日誦之，不見其工；唯當所見處，乃始知其為妙。作詩止欲寫所見耳，不必過為奇險也。

The author's personal experiences seem to contextualize the couplets in Du Fu's poems and restore the situation from which these poetic lines were created. Only when one is in that similar situation can one realize that Du Fu's poems capture the essence of a certain moment. Otherwise, without personal involvement in the real situation, it is impossible

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<sup>107</sup> *Zhupo laoren shihua* 竹坡老人詩話, quoted from *Du Fu juan*, p. 268-69.

for one to know his poetic craft. Furthermore, it also gestures towards another aspect of *bu ke jie*---one can *know* the marvel of Du Fu's poems through similar experiences, but one cannot *explain* in words what the marvel is.

This kind of *bu ke jie* is mentioned by Liu Chenweng 劉辰翁 (1231-1297), an eminent Song critic on Du's poetry who might have been the first to apply the method of *pingdian* in interpreting it.<sup>108</sup> When commenting on Du's poem "Gazing at Mount Tai," Liu writes of the fifth line "washing my breast, strata of clouds emerge": "The words *dang xiong* [washing the breast] don't have to be explicable. When one climbs up high and one's feelings expand, one will see the wonder of these words by oneself 蕩胸語不必可解，登高意豁，自見其趣."<sup>109</sup> Liu also believes in the inexplicable quality in some of Du Fu's poems and suggests that the reader engage in a similar experience in order to see the wonder of the words. Language becomes incapable (and to some extent unnecessary) in conveying the essence of Du Fu's poems and only personal experiences serve as a key to understanding the poem. Liu's phrase *zijian* 自見 (see by oneself) implies that such wonder cannot be explained to others who have not gone mountain-climbing.

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<sup>108</sup> According to the abstract for *Ji qian jia zhu Du Gongbu shiji* in the *Si ku quan shu*, Song Luo 宋犖 (1634-1713) says that the tradition of *pingdian* on Du Fu's poetry starts with Liu Chenweng. David L. Rolston has explained the term: *pingdian* 評點 consists of two parts: emphatic punctuation and evaluative comments (*Traditional Chinese Fiction and Fiction Commentary: Reading and Writing between the Lines*, p. 2). There are still controversies over when *pingdian* practices first appeared in Chinese textual history. We can witness the strong presence of *pingdian* at least since the Song dynasty. Zhang Bower 張伯偉 has a study on the origin of *pingdian*, "Pingdian suyuan," in *Zhongguo wenxue pingdian yanjiu lunji*, pp. 1-54. For an introduction to the history of *pingdian* literature, one can refer to Sun Qin'an 孫琴安, *Zhongguo pingdian wenxueshi* (Shanghai: Shanghai shehui kexueyuan chubanshe, 1999).

<sup>109</sup> *Ji qianjiazhu pidian Du gongbu shiji* 集千家注批點杜工部詩集 (Taipei: Datong shuju, 1974), vol.1, p.81.

In opposition to this view of *bu ke jie*, Jin takes an opposite stance and attempts to articulate the wonder of Du Fu's poems in his commentaries. In his coral metaphor, Jin suggests that merely *seeing* the hidden principle/excellence of the poem is not enough: without some form of articulation one can't prove that one has really understood it, not to mention show that understanding to others; excellence of the poem would still remain obscure. Therefore, once one obtains its meaning, then one has to hurry to write it down 既得其理，然後奮筆書之. Only in this way can one bring the coral out of the sea and only in this way can the brilliance of the coral be shared and confirmed by other people. The medium for understanding the wonder of Du Fu's poetry has been displaced from personal experiences to words written by a commentator; and such displacement strongly corroborates the active role of a critic in explicating the wonder. To capture a poem's significance, Jin exempts a reader from personal involvement in a similar situation and asserts that the poem itself is enough for a critical reader to recapture the essence. On Du's poem "*Yu Li shier Bai tongxun Fan shi yinju* 與李十二白同尋範十隱居 ("Li Bai and I together seek Fan's secluded residence"), Jin comments: "To read poetry one must chase out the divine principle at the time of composition exclusively through words written by the tip of the brush 看詩全要在筆尖頭上追出當時神理來."<sup>110</sup> This succinct statement demonstrates Jin's confidence in recovering the poetic/historical situation by reading the poem. On the one hand, *bi jian tou shang* 筆尖頭上 (literally, "on the tip of a brush") could be interpreted as a metonymy of the poem itself: through the words of the poem one can trace back to the divine principle of the original situation from which the

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<sup>110</sup> *Jin Shengtan quanji*, 2:620.

poem emerges. On the other hand, the critic who reads Du Fu's poetry can "chase out" 追出 (make it manifest publicly) the divine principle created at the time of composition by means of commentaries.

Here one example may suffice to help us understand Jin's practice. In his introductory note to Du's poem *You Longmen Fengxian shi* 遊龍門奉先寺 ("I visit Fengxian Monastery at Longmen")<sup>111</sup>, Jin writes:

The title is "I visit Fengxian Monastery at Longmen," and yet when one reads the first two lines of the poem, it says, surprisingly: "I have *already* finished my visit to the Buddhist monastery, / And have *further* spent a night in the Buddhist realm (*jing* 境)." The words *yi* 已 [already] and *geng* 更 [further] are methods for creating a transition from one passage to another. Now since he uses his brush in this way, could it be that this poem was composed to describe events that occurred after the visit? If so, were there two poems under this title at that time and the first one has been lost? I thought this over at great length but couldn't arrive at a reason. One day, as I sat idly with nothing to do, suddenly I knew the reason---it is because Du Fu is using this poem to warn people not to write a poem too hastily. On that day, as Du Fu was visiting the monastery, if he had wanted to write a poem at the spur of the moment, how could he not have produced something? But then, the realm of phrases like "the dark ravine" and "moonlit woods" could never have been attained. And once such a realm becomes unattainable, the poem becomes irrelevant, just as if it had never been made. Thus the Master lingered there instead of leaving, and devoted himself to understanding thoroughly its significance. Du Fu himself wrote the word "visit" in the title, but the poem must have been finished after he had spent the night at the monastery. In this way, he was able to get rid of all the vulgar, familiar, and rustic phrases normally used by shallow people when they visit mountains [and write poems about it]; only then in a unique manner did he use his hand and eye and make this piece anew. The assertion that Du Fu's poetry is the greatest verse of the past millennium is true indeed.<sup>112</sup>

題是遊龍門奉先寺，及讀其詩起二句，卻云“已從招提遊，更宿招提境。”

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<sup>111</sup> This is the same poem I discussed in Chapter One. I quote Hung's translation of this poem for readers' convenience to get a better understanding of Jin's commentaries here. "I have already finished my visit to the Buddhist monastery,/ And have further spent a night in the Buddhist realm./ The music of stillness rises in the dark ravine,/ Bright shadows scatter among the moonlit woods./ The Heaven's Gap seems to press upon the constellations. /Sleep among the clouds has chilled my clothes. / The early prayer bell struck as I was about to wake, /And I awake with my soul as well as with my senses." Hung, p.35. Some modifications (especially in the case of translation of *yi* and *geng*) are made to facilitate our discussion.

<sup>112</sup> *Jin Shengtan quanji*, 2:613.

“已”字“更”字，是結過上文再起下文之法。今用筆如此，豈此詩乃是補寫遊以後事耶？然則當時此題，豈本有二詩，而忘其第一首耶？我反復思之，不得其故。一日無事閑坐，而忽然知之。蓋此篇乃先生叫人作詩不得輕易下筆也。即如是日於正遊時，若欲信手便作，豈便無詩一首，然而“陰壑”“月林”之境必不及矣。夫此境若不及，便是沒交涉；夫作詩沒交涉，便如不曾作。先生是以徘徊不去，務盡其理。題中自標“遊”字，詩必成於宿後。如是，便將淺人游山一切皮語，熟語、村語、掀剝略盡，然後另出手眼，成此新裁。杜詩為千古絕唱，詢不誣也。

Jin's journey of "procuring coral" or "chasing out the divine principles at the time of composition" is concretized through his own experience of reading this poem. The transitional words *yi* and *geng* become perplexing due to their place at the beginning of the poem, suggesting a seeming paradox in which Du Fu starts to write his experience of visiting Fengxian monastery during the day (as *you* 遊 would normally suggest) by declaring that he has already finished such a visit and is now moving on to the topic of spending the night at the monastery. The lack of correspondence between the title and the first two lines greatly confuses Jin and even makes him suspect that this poem is the second one of a two-poem series (so the first one might dwell on the experiences of his visit). Although Jin can't figure it out at the beginning, he strongly believes that there must be a good reason that would account for this perplexing phenomenon (here it also involves a trust of Du Fu's superb poetic craft, a salient aspect of what I will call below the limitations of the "macro-matrix" created through the tradition of interpreting Du Fu's poetry,<sup>113</sup> which compels Jin to deliberate at great length on a solution that will reconcile conflicts between the title and the poem). The phrase "*bu de qi gu*" 不得其故 ("couldn't arrive at a reason") exactly reveals his firm conviction in the *existence* of a reason; he

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<sup>113</sup> I will discuss macro-limits in interpreting Du Fu's poetry later in this essay. See "Macro-Matrix as Limit," pp. 86ff.

sinks his net and thinks about it incessantly. What Jin finally discovers here is that Du Fu is telling the reader that if he himself were in a situation where he should write a poem based upon the *scenery* of a one-day visit, he might want to wait a bit to find out whether there might be something even more wonderful about the experience (a *realm*) that has yet to happen. The true beauty is the “realm” in the night (“realm” here – *jing* 境 – significantly contrasts with *jing* “scenery” 景 during the day)<sup>114</sup>, which would not have been written if he hadn’t waited to write the poem until after he spent the night there. Jin is working through the meaning of this poem by writing about his personal experience of it, the experience of reading Du Fu (instead of living an experience in the “real world”) which contrasts significantly with the earlier commentator Zhou Zizhi, who could not appreciate lines of Du Fu until he experienced the same natural scene that Du Fu did. In the end, Jin arrives at a reason which re-confirms his preceding belief in the existence of the coral (as well as the possibility of the manifestation of such coral) by extolling the superiority of Du Fu’s poetry at a general level.

Jin’s efforts as well as his strong conviction in the explicable quality of Du Fu’s poetry point to the fact that the poem bridges the gap between creation and interpretation: while earlier critics expose a deficiency of language in attempting to communicate the wonder of some of Du Fu’s poems, they suggest their own personal experiences as simulacra of the divine principle working at a certain historical moment, which then produces an alternative way to access poetic wonder. At the same time, they also

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<sup>114</sup> Jin distinguished *scenery* and *realm* in his commentaries on this poem. In Jin’s eyes, contrary to the scenery which is noisy, near and easy for common people to detect, the realm lies quiet, far and requires a piercing mind. *Jin Shengtan quanji*, 2:614.

acknowledge the fact that not only have these poems been produced at a certain historical moment, they also successfully capture and retain in themselves the divine principle of that moment and thus constitute the poetic wonder itself. The poetic wonder cannot be paraphrased<sup>115</sup> and any attempt to explicate it through language rather than through similar personal experiences will eventually destroy that wonder. The objection proposed by Jin Shengtian also demonstrates his skillful negotiation with the past. Although compared with these past criticisms Jin's strong originality lies in his argument that through the poem one can re-experience that moment and eventually elucidate it in one's own words; at the same time he concedes that such wonder is intimately associated with a certain moment during Du Fu's life and the poem which emerges at that moment also retains the divine principle of the specific experience of that moment for the latecomers to discover.

### **Only within limits can the master show himself**

#### **1. Micro-matrix as limit: the *fenjie* method**

The last step in procuring coral is to write down the principles of poetry. To write down one's understandings of the hidden principles has a pragmatic goal---besides proving one's ability of understanding, it can also tell people how to read earlier great poems as well as how to write their own. To follow Jin's metaphor on coral, we can say

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<sup>115</sup> As we saw earlier, when Zhou Zizhi climbed up high and gazed out at dusk, an experience similar to on that Du Fu used as a basis for his own poem, Liu can only cite the exact couplet written by Du Fu as if it had been written by himself. One may compare this as well to one of the basic principles of American "new criticism" -- that the essence of the poem cannot be paraphrased. For example, Cleanth Brooks argues that "most of our difficulties in criticism are rooted in the heresy of paraphrase". He indicates that if one is misled by the heresy of paraphrases, one might "run the risk of doing even more violence to the internal order of the poem itself" and also "misconceive the function of metaphor and meter". *The Well Wrought Urn: Studies in the Structure of Poetry* (San Diego, New York and London: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1970), pp.201-2.

that by showing the process, Jin attempts to inform people of the *way* of procuring coral rather than to show to them one specific reef. Jin doesn't conceal his ambition of offering a universal key to help open the door of Tang regulated verse (including Du Fu). In a letter inviting Dharma Masters Yunzai 雲在 and Kaiyun 開雲 for a visit, Jin proudly claims:

In recent days I have newly analyzed [*fen*] six hundred Tang regulated poems and have finished writing them out in good copy. Then I want to report respectfully to the great master Buddha Sakyamuni on the morning of Summer Release<sup>116</sup> in the seventh month, wishing that he can extend that day of delight so that I might pray for your visit when we can read them together. Since this is precisely the dharani that can liberate all living beings, there is no need to chant any other dharani any more!<sup>117</sup>

弟子即日新分唐七律詩，得六百首，繕寫已竟，便欲于七月解夏之晨，敬告釋迦文佛大師，望其加被廣作歡喜，仰祈法師過我共讀。蓋此便是解一切眾生語言大陀羅尼，故更不欲再誦別陀羅尼也。

The “dharani” here refers to Jin’s commentaries on Tang heptasyllabic regulated verse which inevitably involves his *fenjie* approach (here Jin uses the exact word *fen*). In order to reveal the hidden principles of poetry, Jin generously consigns his magic gold-producing finger to the readers by introducing *fenjie*. It should also be noticed that Jin is playfully teasing the monks here by equating his poetry interpretations through *fenjie* as a dharani. Rather than invite the monks over to conduct a service for the well-being of the dead (appropriate for the Ghost Festival), he invites them to the more “useful” task of reading his commentaries. In his declaration that given his omnipotent interpretations

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<sup>116</sup> Summer Release 解夏 (*jiexia*) is a Buddhist term and refers to dispersion of monks after they have been gathered together in monastery for the ninety-day summer retreat (by tradition, the fifteenth day of the seventh lunar month). In the next phrase Jin also refers to an alternative name for the day, the Day of the Buddha’s Delight. This day is more commonly known as the Ghost Festival.

<sup>117</sup> *Yuting wenguan*, in *Jin Shengtan quanji*, 1:127.

there is no need to chant any other dharani, we also feel Jin's immense confidence in his approach.

However, it seems that such an approach would not be easily accepted at that time, so that Jin often has to explain it to other people. In a letter written to his close friend Xu Zeng 徐增 (1612-?) who is strongly influenced by Jin's opinions on Tang poetry<sup>118</sup>, Jin says:

I take *jie* from the "Nourishment of Life" Chapter in the *Zhuangzi*, from the phrase *jie niu* (to cut up an ox). While there are interstices in Tang regulated verse poems, my method of dividing is without thickness. Inserting that which has no thickness into such interstices in Tang regulated verse --- it leads to a result similar to an ox, which easily falls apart into sections.<sup>119</sup>

解之為字，出《莊子·養生主》篇，所謂解牛者也。彼唐律詩有間也，而弟之分之者無厚也。以弟之無厚，入唐律詩之有間，猶牛之譟然其已解也。

In this paragraph, while *fen* can be considered as a tool to analyze Tang regulated verse, *jie* (which appears twice, if we don't count the use at the beginning of the paragraph) is a little bit confusing: in the first place, *jie* is linked with the character "ox" and is used as a verb "to slice up"; in the second place, *jie* is used as adjective and means "sliced up."

Such lack of clarity would not surprise a reader who notices that Jin's major concern here

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<sup>118</sup> Not only are Xu Zeng's interpretations of some poems of Du's "Autumn Mediation" series (*Qiu xing ba shou*) included in Jin Shengtan's interpretations by Jin Chang, Xu's *Shuo Tang Shi* also bears the strong influence of Jin's *fenjie* approach. For a further discussion on Xu Zeng's inheritance and development of Jin's theory, see Jiang Yin's article "Xu Zeng dui Jin Shengtan shixue de jicheng he xiuzheng," *Beijing shifan daxue xuebao*, vol.4, 2006, pp.90-97.

<sup>119</sup> "Cutting up an ox" refers to a story in *Zhuangzi* in which Cook Ding tells Lord Wenhui his experience of cutting an ox. I quote Watson's translations of that story to give a background to Jin's commentaries here. "A good cook changes his knife once a year — because he cuts. A mediocre cook changes his knife once a month — because he hacks. I've had this knife of mine for nineteen years and I've cut up thousands of oxen with it, and yet the blade is as good as though it had just come from the grindstone. There are spaces between the joints, and the blade of the knife has really no thickness. If you insert what has no thickness into such spaces, then there's plenty of room — more than enough for the blade to play about it. That's why after nineteen years the blade of my knife is still as good as when it first came from the grindstone." *Chuang Tzu: Basic Writings* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964), p.47. Interestingly enough, based on the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the word "analyze" in English has origins in Greek that mean much the same thing as Jin's *fenjie* here.

is to extol *fenjie* as an effective way to analyze Tang regulated verse by adeptly appropriating the language from *Zhuangzi*---- the poem naturally “falls apart” into its sections when Jin’s method is applied.

Nevertheless, when we look at Jin’s many other letters that mention *fenjie*, especially in regard to his interpretations of specific poems, we see that *fen* is often used as the verb “divide” while *jie* is often used as the noun “section” (according to Jin, there are two kinds of *jie* in Tang regulated verse: *qianjie* 前解 [the former section] and *houjie* 後解 [the latter section]).<sup>120</sup> In Jin’s conception *jie* is an appropriate unit for interpreting regulated verse poems, and *fenjie* is one significant strategy to expose the inherent structure of regulated verses by dividing each poem (usually eight lines) into two *jie* (each *jie* usually contains two couplets that have their specific functions in a certain poem). Jin further demonstrates the general relation between the former section and the latter section, even the relation between two couplets in one section.<sup>121</sup> Jin employs a number of metaphors to illustrate vividly such relations; among them, he seems to be most satisfied with the metaphor of the bow and arrow.

Yesterday when I was by the Fengxi bridge, suddenly someone asked me what my *fenjie* method is like. I immediately answered with a metaphor of pulling a bowstring and then releasing an arrow: the former section is like the method of pulling the bowstring and the latter section is like the method of releasing the bowstring. When the string of a bow begins to be pulled back, neither what the eyes focus on nor what an arrow points to go off the target, and thereafter the hand pulls the string back until it reaches the fullest extent. Now the first and the second line are just as when the string of a bow begins to be pulled back, and the eyes focus on the target and the arrows stay on it as well. After releasing the arrow, where the arrow arrives

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<sup>120</sup> For example, in Jin’s “Da Gu Zhangwan Cixu,” there are phrases “fen de qianjie” (divide and get the former section) and “fen de houjie” (divide and get the latter section). *Jin Shengtan quanji*, 1:98.

<sup>121</sup> Jin’s approach here is a bit different from traditional regulated verse analysis that focuses on and names the individual couplets. I will return to this issue later.

must hit the vital part. However, sometimes it may not hit the vital part. That's because the techniques of the hand involved in these two situations are different at the time when the string reaches its fullest extent and the arrow is about to be released. Now the seventh and the eighth lines are just as the arrow arrives and must hit the vital part, while the fifth and the sixth lines are just like the techniques of the hands deployed at the time when the arrow is going to be released after the string has reached its fullest. This metaphor is most satisfactory and I recorded it here after I returned home.<sup>122</sup>

昨在葑溪橋邊，忽然有人問某分解為是如何？某遽答以開弓放箭之喻云：前解如弓來體，後解如弓往體。蓋弓來體，在初拽開時，眼之所注，箭之所直，更無旁及，而後引之而必至於滿也。今一二，正如初拽開時，眼之所注、箭之所直，更無旁及也；三四不過如引之而必至於滿也。弓往體，在既放箭後，其所到處必中要害，而時亦有不得中要害者，則其既滿臨放之時手法之異也。今七八，正如箭到必得中要害也；五六，則如既滿臨發之時手法也。此喻最是快意，歸記於此。

Through the “bow and arrow” metaphor, Jin visualizes a *fenjie* approach that externalizes poetic dynamics in a poem, which in turn reinforces the effectiveness of his approach to those poems: the first four lines (the former section) are interrelated with the last four lines (the latter section) just like the relationship between pulling back the cord of a bow and thereafter releasing an arrow; each section, despite its function as one unity, is by no means stationary---in the former section the third and the fourth lines continue the first two lines, while in the latter section the last two lines evolve directly from the fifth and the sixth lines.

Such a depiction of poetic dynamics contributes to the universal validity of his *fenjie* approach by appreciating the operation of poetic logic within the poem (which is composed of eight lines and can be exactly divided into two halves).

I am embarrassed by your excessive compliments, and I don't dare to accept them. I know that it is inappropriate to divide up Tang poetry. However, the reason that

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<sup>122</sup> *Jin Shengtian quanji*, 1:97. According to the *Yuting wenguan*, this paragraph was inscribed by Jin Shengtian on the east pillar of the “hall of chanting classics”.

compels me is this: if I divide it and then take up the former section I am able to obtain a close look at how Tang poets start their poetry; if I take up the latter section, I am able to take a close look at how Tang poets end their poetry. As always, what experts in prose composition value most is how to start, and what they find most difficult is how to end. Unless I divide the poem into two halves, I cannot directly point out these aspects. Therefore I have reached this point under compulsion.<sup>123</sup>

辱過獎，弟乃不敢承。弟念唐詩實本不宜分解，令弟萬不獲已而又必分之者，只為分得前解，便可仔細看唐人發端，分得後解，便可仔細看唐人脫卸。自來文章家最貴是發端，又最難是脫卸，若不與分前後二解，直是急切一時指畫不出，故弟亦勉強而故出於斯也。

However, one can't help asking: if the approach of *fenjie* is illustrative of some Tang regulated verse, does this mean that it can also shed light on all other regulated verse? From Jin's correspondence to others, we know that he is accused by his contemporaries of cutting a poem into two separate parts, and he feels wronged by such a misunderstanding. At the end of his commentaries on Du Fu's famous cycle "Autumn Meditations: Eight Poems," he says:

Those who blame me say that a poem is originally a single entity, so how can it be split into two sections? But those who understand me say that when I analyze the poem in parts, the poem actually comes together as a result. In my analysis of a poem, when divided into sections, the poem actually becomes one; and that in the murky analysis of others, when the sections are put together, the poem actually falls apart.<sup>124</sup>

罪我者，謂本是一詩，如何分為二解；知我者，謂聖歎之分解，解分而詩合。世人溷解，解合而詩分也。

Although Jin tries to defend *fenjie* as an effective means to bring out the unity of the poem rather than to interrupt it, as John Ching-yu Wang astutely indicates: "because of its brevity (eight lines in all), a Regulated Verse poem usually forms a tight unit which cannot always be cut into two separate parts. Even when it can, the dividing line does not

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<sup>123</sup> "Da Gu Zhangwan Cixu," *Jin Shengtan quanji*, 1:98.

<sup>124</sup> *Jin Sehngtan quanji*, 2:784. Here I use John Ching-yu Wang's translation. See *Chin Sheng-t'an*, p.107.

always fall in the middle of the poem.” Nevertheless, instead of criticizing Jin’s mechanical application of the *fenjie* approach, it might be worthwhile for us to look at the motivation behind such a generalization. In addition to his eagerness to create a seemingly convenient reading strategy of Tang regulated poetry in order to manifest its hidden principles, Jin also consciously imposes restrictions upon himself through his consistent adherence to *fenjie*, and such restrictions provide him with an opportunity to display his rich knowledge and talent for analysis. In this sense, *fenjie* serves more as a strategy for Jin to demonstrate his creativity and to confirm his own genius than as a convenient means for *others* to read poetry, since in many cases it takes a great deal of effort to fit one’s own interpretation into the *jie* frame in a proper manner. As we have seen through Jin’s metaphor of “bow and arrow,” *jie* does not merely function as a formal division. It can also be treated as a relatively independent unit that is simultaneously geared to the logical coherence of the whole poem, which is often epitomized in the terminology of earlier regulated verse analysis, where each couplet is granted a separate term: *qi cheng zhuan he* 起承轉合 (beginning, continuation, shift, and summation).

During the Ming-Qing period, the phrase *qi cheng zhuan he* was most intensively used in the field of the essay and was regarded as a law for the composition of so-called “eight-legged” examination essays specifically. By assigning one specific function to each different part, such a system contributes to creating a well-organized structure and thus a coherent unity. In *Yuting wenguan*, Jin adeptly puts forward various metaphors and arguments to illustrate the differences and continuities among the four couplets of Tang regulated verse. Briefly speaking, Jin identifies the position of each couplet in the whole

poem and differentiates one from the other in terms of *qi cheng zhuan he*. At the same time, he also draws our attention to the internal correlations within each section (two couplets) and the correlations between the two sections.<sup>125</sup> Partly because the law of *qi cheng zhuan he* helps bridge the gap between the functions of divided parts and the wholeness of one poem, Jin readily takes advantage of this approach and applies it to poetry to prove that the poem actually becomes a unity when divided into different sections; in this way, he also criticizes the contemporary malpractice in verse writing, which only treats the two couplets in the middle as one unit.

Applying the *fenjie* approach to Tang regulated verse as well as to Du Fu's poetry shows Jin's originality in poetic reception and immediately distinguishes his commentaries from earlier interpretive approaches. To better illustrate this point, let us compare Jin with Liu Chenweng in their interpretations on Du's poem "Zeng Li Bai 贈李白" (To Li Bai).<sup>126</sup> Liu's commentary can be divided into two parts: the first part quotes previous annotations and tries to calculate the date of the poem; in the second part some brief comments related to the first eight lines are offered and are followed by other quotations from previous annotations on the meaning of certain specific terms. His own comments on the poem are quoted here:

What a rustic likes are greens, and when facing the stink of cooking flesh he thus longs for "green essence rice." If he is given the components of the Great Drug, the chance of secluding himself in mountain woods, and the opportunity of cutting

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<sup>125</sup> Besides what we see in the metaphor of shooting an arrow, Jin also explicitly indicates the relationship between the second couplet (which belongs to the former section) and the third couplet (which belongs to the latter section) as well as that between the first couplet and the fourth couplet. See *Jin Shengtan quanji*, 2:121 and 2: 105. In one of his letters Jin even compares each of the fifty-six characters in a Tang heptasyllabic regulated verse to a star, arguing that each star is in charge of its own business while at the same time communicating with others. *Jin Shengtan quanji*, 2:109.

<sup>126</sup> For the poem, see chapter one, pp.37-38.

himself off from human society, how would he be willing to behold the cleverness [of the Eastern capital]?<sup>127</sup>

野人所喜者蔬食，第對羶腥故思青精飯耳。使有大藥資，隱山林，絕人跡，豈願見此機巧者乎？

Whereas Liu's comments are less systematic and fail to present a whole picture of the poem (they cursorily paraphrase the first eight lines), Jin strongly stresses the harmonious coexistence between the each independent *jie* and the correlations between them to illuminate the general structure and the internal coherence of the poem. After the title Jin comments:

Tang poetry in most cases uses four lines as one section. Therefore, even when it comes to regulated verse poems, they must have two sections. As for longer poems, they can reach to several dozen sections [literally “several tens”]. There is no one who doesn't know the calculation of sections who can still compose poems. Take this poem for example: the first section exposes completely the revolting conditions in the Eastern capital; the second section just gives an explanation; and the third section strongly persuades him [Li Bai] to take action. Divided into three sections, the text thus has a beginning, a continuation, a shift and a summation. We can see from this that even if the number of words becomes so huge as to reach ten thousand, they are all without exception like threading flowers on a string: while a string of flowers is definitely excellent, each flower also has its own wonder. If it were not thus, there would be no place for the poet to use his skills.

唐人詩，多以四句為一解。故雖律詩，亦必作二解。若長篇，則或至作數十解。夫人未有解數不識而尚能為詩者也。如此篇第一解，曲盡東都醜態；第二解，姑做解釋；第三解決勸其行。分作三解，文字便有起有轉，有承有結。從此雖多至萬言，無不如線貫花，一串固佳，逐朵又妙。自非然者，便更無處用其手法也。<sup>128</sup>

Jin's interpretation of this poem basically follows the general rule of his *fenjie* approach: the whole poem is divided into three sections; each section performs its own function in the poem and at the same time contributes to a coherent poetic structure. Compared with

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<sup>127</sup> See *Ji qianjiazhu pidian Du gongbu shiji*, p.80.

<sup>128</sup> *Jin Shengtan quanji*, 2: 615.

Liu's commentaries, Jin's reading greatly facilitates a reader's general understanding of the whole poem. In addition, unlike Liu's commentaries, which only appear at the beginning and the end of the poem, Jin also provides commentaries after each section and explores to a great extent the subtleties in each section. For instance, after the first section, Jin draws a reader's attention to the subtlety of the word *yan* 厭, which means "surfeited." In Jin's eyes, this word ingeniously reveals Du Fu's confession of his own degeneration during his stay in the Eastern Capital, a degeneration of which Du Fu is highly and painfully aware. Such a close reading of *yan* immediately presents two different Dus: one who is easily satisfied by filling himself with greens before his arrival at the Eastern Capital and the one who cannot satisfy himself by eating greens since he has been influenced by cleverness prevalent in the Eastern Capital and accustomed to filling himself with cooked flesh; and this enhances the tension of the poem: what Du Fu suffers is not only the conflicts between him and the outside world but also the alienation inside himself. Therefore the *fenjie* strategy manifests Jin's ability to perform simultaneously two related readings on both a general and a concrete level.

Jin does not seem to be content with merely confining the *fenjie* approach to analysis of one poem. He takes it a step further and extends it to a broader level when interpreting Du's poems and argues that a group of poems with the same title constitute a logical and structural coherence in terms of *qi cheng zhuan he*. He explicitly argues that "whenever a title has been followed by a few poems, it exactly demonstrates beginning, continuation, shift and summation, which finishes one essay precisely. I have already

mentioned this repeatedly. ”<sup>129</sup> When commenting on “Autumn Mediation: Eight Poems,” Jin also illustrates interrelations among those poems in terms of *qi cheng zhuan he*. He divides these poems into sixteen sections, attends to the structural coherence, and justifies the poetic sequence of eight. By means of *fenjie*, Jin shows that the rule of *qi cheng zhuan he* operates both in each poem and in all eight poems. The last line of each poem in the sequence performs a dual function: to end the poem and to engender the beginning line of the following one. Believing that his *fenjie* approach successfully detects the textual energy flowing through all eight poems and greatly strengthens the sense of those poems as an organic unity (yet with each individual section remaining relatively independent), Jin asks: “please look at these eight poems: can they be analyzed through the *fenjie* approach or not?”

Nevertheless, one has to admit that it is extremely difficult to homogenize all of Du Fu’s poems (even the small portion of them that Jin interpreted); and for certain poems Jin’s *fenjie* approach may simply not work. However, in some cases Jin violates the general rule of *fenjie* by interpreting Du Fu’s poems in terms of *jie* that are not restricted to the four-line pattern. Such violation can be illustrative of the pragmatic aspect of his literary criticism, but it also can be seen as Jin deliberately flaunting his own rules in order to demonstrate his “creativity” – since, more often than not Jin’s violations prove fruitful. New subtleties and nuances of the poetry reveal themselves through the violation of his own rules. In “Ai Wangsun” 哀王孫 (Lament for a Young Prince), Jin draws our attention to two kinds of variant *jie*. The poem consists of twenty-eight lines and can be

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<sup>129</sup> *Jin Shengtan quanji*, 2: 681. These words come from his notes under the title to *Feng pei Zheng Fuma Weiqu er shou* 奉陪鄭駙馬韋曲二首. For the poems, see *Dushi xiangzhu*, 1:165-6.

divided into seven sections if one strictly follows Jin's general method. However, in his interpretation, while he treats the first sixteen lines as usual and divides them into four sections, through the rest of the poem he shifts to a more flexible and dynamic approach. Here I give only the section relevant to our discussion, starting from the seventeenth line.

17	I dare not have a long talk near the crossroad, I will stand a short while for you, my prince.		不敢長語臨交衢， 且為王孫立斯須。
20	Last night the spring wind blew in a stench of blood, Camels come from the east fill the former capital. The Shuofang veterans are splendid soldiers, How bold and keen they were in the past and how foolish now!		昨夜春風吹血腥， 東來橐駝滿舊都。 朔方健兒好身手， 昔何勇銳今何愚。
25	I've heard that the Crown Prince has already taken the throne, His sacred virtues subjugate the Uighur khan in the north. and slashing their faces they vow to wipe out the disgrace. We must mind what we say, with so many spies about. Alas, poor prince! Be on your guard! Propitious airs from Five Tumuli go always with you! <sup>130</sup>		竊聞太子已傳位， 聖德北服南單于。 花門斃面請雪恥， 慎勿出口他人狙。 哀哉王孫慎勿疏， 五陵佳氣無時無。

Line 17 and 18 are considered by Jin as a *banjie* 半解 (half a section). A *banjie* only consists of two lines (which is a half length of one regular section) which function as one unit independent from the lines before and after them. Although Jin doesn't explicitly explain the existence of *banjie* here, he prescribes the general formula of *banjie* when he interprets the "Nineteen Ancient Poems:" "Generally speaking, there are two reasons for a poem to employ the 'half section': one is that it serves as a principal sentence and cannot be completely explained through words; the other is that it serves as a minor sentence [bin ju] and thus there is no need to add more words." 凡詩中用半解者有二：

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<sup>130</sup> I have made some minor revisions based on David Hawks' translation. *The Little Premier of Du Fu*, pp.33-44.

有主句而不可盡言者，有賓句而不必多言者。<sup>131</sup> Jin's general formula for *banjie*, coupled with his ensuing commentaries, sheds a certain light on their existence in this case. Lines 19 through 22 is regarded as one section, under which Jin comments: “The poet dare not talk long with the young prince and thus only tells him two things, each of which serves as one section” 不敢長語，單向王孫私說二事，每一事作一解。It seems that lines 17 and 18 serve as a principal sentence and the following two events the poet tells the young prince are illustrative of the phrase *budan changyu* 不敢長語 (dare not have a long talk). Then another problem arises: if the lines 19-22 describing one event belong to one section, then lines 23-28 (6 lines) describing another event exceed the regular length of one section (4 lines). Here again by defamiliarizing the regular concept of *jie*, Jin underscores the vitality of his *fenjie* approach. Jin treats lines 23-25 as the first three lines of this section, lines 26 and 27 as insertion to this section, and line 28 as the last sentence of this section. Under lines 23-25, Jin writes: “One section has four lines, but now Du Fu only writes three sentences. He postpones the fourth sentence and inserts two other sentences between the first three sentences and the last sentence to express the poet's repeated injunctions. Only after that does he express the fourth sentence and so complete the section” 一解四句，今卻只寫三句，且停一句在後，而另自橫插兩句入來，做千叮萬囑已，然後將第四句說出足此解。Such an insertion into a regular *jie* in this case depicts Du Fu's concerns about the young prince in a vivid way and is

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<sup>131</sup> See *Jin Shengtan quanji*, 1:25. In the second and the fourth poem, Jin gives one example for each case. In the original Chinese, *zhu* (host) and *bin* (guest) also indicates the relationship between a principle sentence and a minor sentence.

complementary to the line “I dare not have a long talk,” since the warnings from these inserted sentences correspond to the situation described in line 17.

Interestingly, the regular concept of *jie* can also be violated for emotional concerns. In the poem “Journey to the North,” Jin comments on lines 26-27: “The reason why this section only has two sentences is that the sobbing cannot form coherent words and so the section cannot go on 此解止二句者，咽不成聲，不復能長也。”<sup>132</sup> As we have observed, Jin’s violation of the universal rule of *fenjie* to a certain degree elevates it to a higher complexity. Variants of the *fenjie* approach make it no longer as a mere mechanical technique but an art through which Jin’s creativity is further revealed.

However, Jin wants to emphasize that he has historical backing for the *fenjie* method, in spite of his claims for originality. From his perspective, what accounts historically for *fenjie*? He mainly attributes it to Tang poets and their poems.

Since *fenjie* is originally a constant and common principle in Tang regulated verse, how can it require further explanation? However, just because it has not been discussed for a long time, it sounds strange when I suddenly bring it up. Therefore ugly and clumsy as my interpretations might be, I attempt to apply my *fenjie* approach to all these Tang poems and analyze them one by one.<sup>133</sup>

分解本是唐律詩一定平常之理，何足多說？特無奈比來不說即久，驟說便反見怪，故弟不避醜拙，試欲盡出唐人諸詩，與之逐首分之。

Instead of claiming his own inventiveness, Jin attributes *fenjie* as innate to the poems themselves. Jin claims that he is merely illuminating a principle which is already and always present in Tang poetry but has been unfortunately relegated to obscurity due to lack of attention in later periods. Tang poetry is not *enhanced* by a *fenjie* reading but

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid, 2:664.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid, 1:96.

actually *manifests* itself in that way. In this sense, Jin defends his interpretive approach through appropriation of the hermeneutic circle as Paul de Man once described it: “far from being something added to the text, the elucidating commentary simply tries to reach the text itself, whose full richness is there at the start.”<sup>134</sup> Hence *fenjie*, the micro-matrix of poetry from the perspective of reading, is redirected back to the poetry itself.

Jin further considers *fenjie*'s failure to reemerge in later periods to some extent as a result of the rich erudition of Tang poets. Although the poets originally conceptualized regulated verse as divided into different sections, later generations who lacked the necessary erudition can hardly discern it, since the poets manipulated their knowledge in the expression of every character and concealed the traces of structural logic.<sup>135</sup> Jin even situates his interpretive approach in the traditional and canonic methods of reading poetry initiated by Mencius, namely, *yi yi ni zhi* 以意逆志. He emphasizes that *fenjie* is not to interpret the words of the ancients arbitrarily; the reader must treat them with utmost respect and let the ancients' subjectivities in the poetry flow into one's own mind.<sup>136</sup> Jin admonishes that in reading one can by no means interfere with what is in the ancients' minds by one's own thoughts; consequently Jin's *fenjie* becomes a mirror of what is in the Tang poet's mind rather than a lamp shedding its own light.

Jin could also point out that the practice of dividing one poem into different sections had a pedigree that could be traced back to *yuefu* 樂府 (Music Bureau) poems, which

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<sup>134</sup> *Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), pp.30-31.

<sup>135</sup> See Jin's letter “in reply to Min Yunqi,” *Jin Shengtan quanji*, 1:110.

<sup>136</sup> Jin's letter “To Lu Yanzhe,” *ibid*, 1:103.

predate the Tang considerably.<sup>137</sup> According to Jin, when reading earlier poems, later generations misunderstand such *fenjie* as a feature exclusive to *yuefu*, since it doesn't emerge explicitly in other subgenres:

People in later periods observe that except for ancient music bureau poems which are explicitly marked as divided into a first section, a second section, etc., all other poetry lack such indications. Therefore they arbitrarily say that the style of music bureau poetry is different from that of other poetry. They don't know that the music bureau poetry indications were meant to show actors/actresses where the rhythms of the music pause. Since scholars and officials have already known this, why take the trouble to make unnecessary explanations?

後人見古之樂府，則注曰一解二解等，餘悉不注，遂妄謂其體有異焉者。不知樂府以示伶人，使知音節停頓處耳。若學士大夫心知其事奚煩贅論哉。<sup>138</sup>

By restoring traditional elements in his *fenjie* approach, Jin strikes a balance between influence and reception and makes his commentaries a site of dynamic tension between tradition and innovation.

## 2. Macro-matrix as limit

As we have seen from the previous discussion, *fenjie* as a micro-matrix runs through Jin's interpretations of Du Fu's poetry and mainly concerns itself with internal poetic structure. In addition to the micro-matrix, Jin's interpretations also revolve around a macro-matrix which largely lies outside Du Fu's poetry but exerts its strong influences upon Jin's readings. Such a macro-matrix can be summarized as "reverence for Du Fu and his poetry," and by Jin's time that reverence had long been one salient aspect of the tradition of interpretation. In traditional Chinese poetics, where an "expressive theory"

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<sup>137</sup> Aoki Masaru mentions the usage of *jie* in *yuefu* poems. *Qingdai wenxue piping shi* 清代文學批評史 (trans. Chen Shunü, Taipei: Tanwan kaiming shudian, 1969), p.38. For an English study of *yuefu* poems, see Joseph R. Allen, *In the Voice of Others: Chinese Music Bureau Poetry* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992).

<sup>138</sup> *Jin Shengtan quanji*, 1:23-24.

dominates, a strong connection is forged between the poem and the poet; moreover, the morality of a poet and the quality of his poetry are often seen to inform each other. But since in many cases poetry is believed to be an important source for later generations to access the poet, a typical hermeneutic circle often arises: one obtains a picture of the poet from some of his poems and uses that picture as a guiding principle in reading his other poems, which in turn confirms the image of poet one had initially constructed. Later interpretations of Du Fu's poetry are often trapped within such a circle. For example, there are many depictions of "loyalty" in Du Fu's poems (in traditional terms, this means allegiance to the emperor, the house of Tang, and the empire). In addition, due to the fact that many of his poems touch on the historical realities of the time, Du Fu's poetry is often considered as a faithful reflection of that history, which further accentuates the seeming credibility of his professions of loyalty. Only a person who possessed such tremendous loyalty to the country and the emperor could write such poems, it is argued; and since loyalty is of great significance in Du Fu's poetry it cannot be ignored as a significant factor when one reads. Around this loyalty (which is a supreme moral virtue in traditional society), many other virtues (compassion, righteousness, etc.) congregate and contribute to the birth of a moral poet, to whom poetic excellence is just a natural corollary.

Reverence for Du Fu thus mainly focuses on two levels: his moral virtues (especially loyalty) and his poetic craft. Such reverence functions as the point of departure and shapes canonical reading, which in turn celebrates in his poetry the presence of both his morality and his poetic craft. The reverence has produced a fully

autonomous being before reading commences; the interpretation then merely becomes a process of “becoming,” a process of development, the goal of which is to arrive at the being that has already been pre-conceived. Jin’s interpretations also take a similar vein; yet they are in this respect not quite the same as his predecessors’ readings.

Due to his high respect for Du Fu’s poems, Jin deliberately excludes them from his anthology of Tang verse that he selected and annotated. In a letter “Reply to Han Shiyu Jiwan 答韓釋玉藉琬,” Jin gives an explicit explanation.

The reason that I haven’t included Du Fu’s poems is that I can find no semblance of a flaw in them. It is like Mencius’ relationship to Confucius – there is the desire to study [or imitate] someone else, I do not dare use the very hand that seeks to learn from someone to evaluate the poetry of that same person from whom I wish to learn.

所以不入杜詩者，吾于杜詩乃無間然，猶孟子之於孔子，所謂願學斯在者也。吾不敢以願學人之手，而下上於所願學之人之詩也。<sup>139</sup>

Not only does the exclusion of Du Fu’s poems in this case reveal Jin’s admiration (with the explicit comparison of Du to Confucius); the after-effects of such high reverence can also be felt through Jin’s deliberate arrangement of Tang poems in his anthology. Two poems by Du Shenyan 杜審言, the grandfather of Du Fu, are placed at the beginning. In addition to the role that Shenyan’s poems played as representatives of poetic excellence during the early Tang period, his identity as Du Fu’s grandfather helps him gain Jin’s favor to an even larger degree.<sup>140</sup>

Naturally, Jin’s high respect for Du Fu is brought into full display in his Du Fu commentaries. Traditional emphasis upon Du Fu’s moral virtues and his poetic craft

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<sup>139</sup> *Jin Shengtān quánjī*, 1: 126.

<sup>140</sup> These two factors can be found in Jin’s “Writing to Wang yuqing Fuyang.” See “Yuting wenguan”, in *Jin Shengtān quánjī*, 1: 126. Jin Shengtān further believes that there is a definite connection between Du Shenyan and Du Fu. In fact, such a connection is also noticed by some Song commentators. See *Du Fu juan*, p147.

exerts its influence on Jin's interpretations and to a great extent sets the tone throughout. We can see that in many places Jin's interpretations are pre-conditioned by these expectations and in turn corroborate them in the end. On the poem "Journey North 北征," Jin points out that although the title of the poem seems to be a depiction of Du Fu's return back to his family in the north, the whole poem is primarily concerned with his worries about the country. The first three *jie* (each composed of four lines) of this poem offers a glimpse of the role of such preconceptions.

The second year of the emperor's reign, in autumn  
 During the extra Eighth Month, on Beginning Luck.  
 I, Master Du about to journey north,  
 Vast, vague wonder about my home.  
 These times have brought us hardship, sorrow  
 In or out of court, there are few free days.  
 Yet (I feel shame for favor specially granted)  
 A decree permits a return to my vines and brambles.  
 I bow farewell, pay respects in the palace,  
 Fearful, alarmed a long time before I come out.  
 Although I lack the temperament to admonish,  
 I fear the Ruler may still have some errors left.<sup>141</sup>

皇帝二載秋，  
 閏八月初吉。  
 杜子將北征，  
 蒼茫問家室。  
 維時遭艱虞，  
 朝野少暇日。  
 顧慚恩私被，  
 詔許歸蓬蒿。  
 拜辭詣闕下，  
 怵惕久未出。  
 雖乏諫諍姿，  
 恐君有遺失。

<sup>141</sup> Here I follow Hugh M. Stimson's translation in the *Columbia Anthology of Traditional Chinese Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), Victor H. Mair ed., p.209. For the purpose of consistency, I have changed the Romanization in Stimson's translation from Wade-Giles to pinyin. In the first footnote on the same page, Stimson also gave further explanation on the first two lines: "The extra or intercalary eighth month in the second year of the Tang emperor Suzong's reign begins on the day corresponding to September 18, 757, of the Western calendar. 'Being Luck' is a term used in ancient times for the first week of the month, but here Du Fu might be using it for the first day." Interestingly, I found Florence Ayscough's translation of this poem follows Jin Shengtan's *fenjie* approach. See *Tu Fu: The Autobiography of a Chinese Poet* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1929), pp.268-79. The background of the poem may be summarized as follows: In 755, An Lushan rebellion broke out and rebel forces occupied the capital Chang'an in the next year. Du Fu moved his family to Fuzhou but when he later tried to join the exiled court he was caught by the rebels and taken to Chang'an. Later he managed to escape from Chang'an and was appointed a Reminder when he arrived at the court's temporary site in Fengxiang. A Reminder's function at that time was largely ceremonial rather than advisory; however, Du Fu took his duties very seriously.

Despite the fact that the first *jie* tells us that Du Fu's northern expedition is to visit his family, Jin argues, the second *jie* suddenly changes the direction from the personal (family) to the public (country).

In the second section he suddenly shifts direction. It says that at that time as far as the situation, his personal emotions and general reasons are concerned, Du Fu cannot return north. However, he personally receives imperial favor and the imperial order has already given that permission. When the master goes north, once he starts to move his brush, he immediately brings out the words "decree permitting." This is to say: the family is assuredly my family and how can I not be concerned about it? But my body belongs to the ruler. Without receiving permission by decree, how dare I leave by myself? Du Fu composes such a poem and leaves it as a model to later generations---how much growth of loyalty and righteousness can it contribute to! As for "Journey to the North," through the entire poem one should watch out for the ways that Du Fu suddenly shifts his direction, thus producing lines that can startle others with their extraordinary novelty.

二解。忽作突兀之筆，言爾時於勢於情於理，總不得北歸，然蒙被私恩，詔既許之矣。先生北征時，初動筆，便提出“詔許”二字。所謂家固臣之家也，臣惡得不念？乃身則君之身也，然則不蒙詔許，臣焉敢自去哉！作得如許詩垂示後人，不知增長幾許忠義也。《北征》詩，通篇要看他忽然轉筆作突兀之句奇絕驚人。<sup>142</sup>

Through Jin's scrutiny of the words "decree permitting" 詔許, Du Fu's northern journey to visit his family, a seemingly personal event as stated in the first *jie*, just serves as a means to bring his loyalty into relief. Interestingly, in the end Jin also associates Du Fu's loyalty with his poetic craft ("he suddenly shifts direction" – literally, "turns his brush" 忽然轉筆) in conveying such morality.

In the previous lines Du Fu says that he dare not return without receiving imperial permission. This section says that although he received the imperial permission he is still unwilling to go back home. Not only do we see the twisting movements of his brush, we also admire its immense power. However, all of these always flow from an extremely deep basis of thought. If there were not such an extremely deep

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<sup>142</sup> Jin Shengtian *quanji*, 2:662-63.

basis of thought underneath, one could never generate such strong power as well as such twisting movement.<sup>143</sup>

上云不被詔不敢歸，此云被詔已，猶不肯歸。不止見其筆勢之曲，且服其筆力之大，然總是一片極厚心地中流出來。若無此一片極厚心地，亦生不出如此大力曲勢。

In his interpretations of the third *jie*, he further emphasizes the turns of the poem: Du Fu is reluctant to go north even though such an act has already been legitimized by the court. Exposure of such reluctance testifies to his poetic craft (indicated by the terms “movement of the brush” 筆勢, and “strength of the brush” 筆力) and to his lofty morality (embodied in the phrase *ji hou xindi* 極厚心地 “an extremely deep basis of thought”, which implies a deep moral commitment<sup>144</sup>).

However, Jin’s interpretations are by no means a mere receptacle of traditional influences and don’t simply manifest themselves as the typical assumptions already prevalent in previous interpretations. His creative reception is mainly concerned with the issue of “how” rather than with the issue of “what.” Through enthusiastic exploration of “how” (namely, the means by which reverence for Du Fu is played out in his poetry), Jin distinguishes himself from his precursors by his emphasis on the close experience of the poetry. It might suffice to look at his commentary on the following poem to see his ingenuity in reconciling his originality with the tradition.

At night I leave the Chancellery Division

晚出左掖

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<sup>143</sup> Ibid, 2:663.

<sup>144</sup> In Jin’s view, *xindi* 心地 plays a significant role in composition of Tang regulated verse. Jin says that it isn’t necessarily limited to high virtues such as loyalty and filial piety and may just generally refer to sincerity. But since Jin’s commentary on this poem highlights Du Fu’s loyalty, one can easily tell that *ji hou xindi* here refers to Du Fu’s high morality. Jin also points out Buddhist connotations of the term *xindi* in some cases. See “Yuting wenguan,” *Jin Shengtan quanji*, 1:107.

The day watches reported from the clepsydra are still early,	晝刻傳呼淺，
When the spring banners are ready for the court procession.	春旗簇仗齊。
After the audience is over, people disperse under the blossoming trees;	退朝花底散，
I return to the official quarters, losing my way among the willows.	歸院柳邊迷。
The city wall is damp: the snow on the tower has melted;	樓雪融城溼，
Palace clouds depart low over the palaces.	宮雲去殿低。
Avoiding others, I burn the rough draft of my memorial	避人焚諫草，
When I mount the horse, the fowls are going to roosting in their holes. <sup>145</sup>	騎馬欲雞棲。

The first comment made by Jin right after the title reflects his general impression of the whole poem: “This poem is most difficult one to read. I only understood it after close scrutiny 此詩最難看，細玩乃得之。”<sup>146</sup> While the last four lines exactly correspond to the title,<sup>147</sup> the first four lines account for the difficulty by their apparent digression from the topic. Jin makes comments under each of those first four lines to illustrate their meaning in association with the title. The first line shows that it is the daytime rather than the evening; the second line implies that the poet has yet to enter the Chancellery; the third line means that the court audience has ended and in the fourth line the poet has just begun to enter the Chancellery. Since the title is “I Leave the Chancellery Division at Night,” why do the first four lines delineate a picture which seems prior to and less relevant to what the title suggests? Two aspects of the macro-matrix work intimately to unfold an interesting hermeneutic in Jin’s explanations. The unwavering trust in Du Fu’s

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<sup>145</sup> For the original poem, see *Dushi xiangzhu*, p.440. *Jixi* 雞棲 in the last line comes from the *Shijing* and indicates that the time is late. The whole poem is entitled “My Lord Is on Service” and the first stanza is: My lord is on service;/ He did not know for how long./ Oh, when will he come? /The fowls are roosting in their holes./ Another day is ending./ The sheep and cows are coming down. My lord is on service;/How can I not be sad? See *The Book of Songs*, Arthur Waley trans. And Joseph R. Allen ed. with additional translations, p.57.

<sup>146</sup> *Jin Shengtan quanji*, 2:652.

<sup>147</sup> In Jin’s view, the fifth and the sixth lines convey the information of evening and the seventh and eighth lines insinuate that the poet finishes official business and leaves the Chancellery Division. *Ibid*, 2:653.

poetic craft inevitably conflicts with the observation of such a seemingly unnecessary detour in this poem, which makes the first four lines perplexing for a reader. But the trust requires relinquishment (not suspension) of one's disbelief in Du Fu's poetic skills and forces Jin to fill the gap. The macro-matrix poses a problem and at the same time lends a helping hand. In this sense, we see the same trust in the poet that Jin exhibited in his reading of the visit to the Longmen temple, when he suggested that confusion between "visiting" and "spending the night" was deliberate. However, the other main aspect of the macro-matrix, persistence in revealing Du Fu's "morality," sheds further light. Jin comments:

As for the evening, it must start from the morning, proceed through noon, and then arrive at the evening. As for going out of the Chancellery (literally, "left hall"), it must start from entering the court through leaving the court, returning to Left Hall and after that going out of the Left Hall. Now if one only writes about leaving the Left Hall, then how can one express the gentleman's sincerity of thinking about his lord everyday?

夫晚，則必由早而午，而後晚也。出左掖，則必由入朝而退朝，而歸掖，而後出掖也。今若但寫晚出左掖，則君子無日不念其君之愴，將遂釋然於懷也！<sup>148</sup>

The first four lines are justified in their function to convey Du Fu's loyalty and by doing that such a detour becomes in fact an efficient poetic technique. The macro-matrix helps Jin surmount the barrier seemingly posed by the poem and finally reinforces itself through a hermeneutic process. In contrast with most of his predecessors, Jin registers his own originality in such a process of incorporating the macro-matrix into the precise details of his interpretations.

### **The Seventh Masterpiece of Genius: Life to Him Would Be Life to Me**

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<sup>148</sup> Ibid, 2:653.

Let us return once more to Jin's deathbed poem and listen to it more carefully. This time we hear a meaningful silence: Jin does not mention his commentaries on *Shuihu zhuan* and *Xixiang ji*, which he had already completed before his death. In fact, in addition to the impact of his commentary on *Xixiang ji*, Jin's commentary on *Shuihu zhuan* has been so influential since it was published that even today his name is mainly associated with his great contribution to the elevation of vernacular literature. But at Jin's time, these two books were still excluded from the literary canon and their marginal position would hardly have ensured Jin's reputation in the literary tradition. If we consider Jin's "six masterpieces of genius" as in fact one project which manifested Jin's confrontation with the past, we find that Jin again engages in a process of reconciling his creativity with the tradition. His reception of past literature lies in finding the value of seemingly minor literary works and at the same time he embraces the tradition through his efforts at rediscovering literary canons---all works mentioned in his last poem and yet not completed. The act of interpreting Du Fu's poetry signifies Jin's return to the tradition, though (as we have seen) such a return at the same time announces his deviation.

Jin's last poem articulates an anxiety over unfinished projects at the end of his life. Such anxiety reveals in fact a deep worry about posthumous reputation. In Chinese history, there is a long tradition in which written works can function as an effective means to break through the limitations of human life-span and even oppose one's

unfortunate fate.<sup>149</sup> The immense influence of Du Fu's poetry makes it an ideal vehicle for others to use in obtaining posthumous immortality; this has been pointed out as early as the Song dynasty.

A poem by Du Fu says: "At Huang Siniang's house, the footpath is covered by flowers, / and branches bend down with thousands of them." In the states of Qi and Lu there are two persons of great virtue whose names have been lost to history, and Master Yang lamented them. What kind of woman was Huang Siniang, who relied on Du Fu to become immortal? Was it just a momentary fluke?<sup>150</sup>

老杜詩云：黃四娘家花滿蹊，千朵萬朵壓枝低。齊魯有二大賢，而史失其名，楊子惜之；黃四娘何物女子，乃托子美以不朽，亦一時之僥倖也。

The passage above highlights the power of Du Fu's poetry in carrying on one's name beyond one's life: while people with great virtues have lost their names – such as the two men from Qi and Lu – the name of an ordinary woman can become immortal just because her name is mentioned in Du Fu's poetry. Taking into consideration such power, it is no wonder that to write something on Du's poetry would perpetuate a writer's name. In contrast with Huang Siniang's immortality (which is gained through a seeming accident), the act of writing commentaries on Du Fu's poetry involves highly self-conscious efforts in coupling oneself and one's writings to Du, and through the construction of a kind of parasitic relationship, one can ensure one's own immortality.

In addition, the hermeneutic strategy *yi yi ni zhi* proposed by Mencius sets up a model in which the author's *zhi* becomes the target of readers' interpretations and the validity of poetic interpretation relies on the extent that it conforms to the authorial

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<sup>149</sup> For example, in the *Zuozhuan* 左傳, there are "three immortalities" 三不朽 which refer to three means by which a person can achieve immortality in history: *lide* 立德 (establish virtues), *ligong* 立功 (establish deeds), and *liyan* 立言.

<sup>150</sup> *Du Fu juan*, p.215. The passage is originally in *Wu zong zhi* 五總志 and is credited to Wu Jiong 吳炯. Master Yang probably refers to Yang Zhu 楊朱, a philosopher in the period of Warring States. Su Shi 蘇軾 also made very similar comments on this poem. *Du Fu juan*, p.104.

intention. As we have seen, Jin places a great emphasis upon authorial intention when he applies his *fenjie* approach, arguing that he is not arbitrarily dividing up the poems of the ancients. His “sincere” commitment to authorial intention supposedly regulates the process of his interpretations, preventing him from inserting anything that does not match authorial intention.<sup>151</sup> It seems that to some extent Jin’s practice was successful. As Cai Guanluo 蔡冠洛 observes, Jin’s commentaries will survive as long as Du Fu’s poetry survives.<sup>152</sup> Through his active engagement in the tradition of writing commentary, Jin turns his interpretation into an integral part of Du Fu’s poetry; life for Du Fu would be life for him.

However, Jin doesn’t completely surrender himself to Du’s poetry since reading subjectivity in the process of reading is not a monolithic one and instead undergoes a “split” (as George Poulet argues) in its interaction with a text: one self becomes a prey to the consciousness of Du Fu in poetry and yet the other self simultaneously diverges from such consciousness. Besides Jin’s interpretive innovation (or rebellion) revealed from his *fenjie* approach, we also witness the staging of the other self of Jin in his pursuit of the consciousness of Du Fu.

On Du Fu’s poem *Fa Tanzhou* 發潭州 (Leaving Tanzhou) Jin comments:

I don’t know what great effort the master spent in order to write this poem on that day, and neither do I know what insight I may have to perceive it today. It is always true that anything the ancients couldn’t reach with the force of their minds can’t be reached by the force of latecomers’ minds; and anything latecomers can reach with the force of their minds the ancients have already attained with that same force.<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> “To Gu Zhangwan,” in *Jin Shengtian quanji*, 2:103.

<sup>152</sup> Cai Guanluo, *Qingdai qibai mingren zhuan* 清代七百名人傳 (Beijing: Zhongguo shudian, 1984), p. 281.

<sup>153</sup> *Jin Shengtian quanji*, 2: 812.

此不知當日先生是何心血做成，亦不知聖歎今日是何眼光看出。總是前人心力不得到處，即後人心力亦決不到；若是後人心力得到之處，早是前人心力已到了也。

Unlike Jin's bold claim that his reading of *Xixiang ji* makes *Xixiang ji* become his own work rather than Wang Shifu's,<sup>154</sup> he here refuses to usurp the position of Du Fu and instead emphasizes that his interpretations are just insights into Du Fu's mind and make manifest what the force of Du Fu's mind was when he composed this poem. In other words, Jin's interpretations gesture towards the fusion of the two aforementioned consciousnesses: Jin's consciousness and the so-called consciousness of Du revealed through the specific poem. However, a second reading of this quotation may direct our attention to the subtle divergence in this ostensible identification. By declaring that what latecomers can reach by their minds' force is what the ancients have already attained, Jin seems to be ready to give all the credit to Du Fu. But at the same time such an altruistic declaration also contributes to the validity of Jin's interpretations since his strong inventiveness and his appropriation of Du Fu's poetry can be justified under the name of Du Fu's consciousness. While displaying the coral he has evolved himself, Jin points to the sea as its true origin and consequently enhances its value and authenticity.

Jin's interpretations reveal an interesting dialogue between Du Fu as an author and Jin as a reader. As an author, Du's responsibility is to write a poem with the force of his mind; as a reader Jin's responsibility is to read a poem with insight. While Jin's reading aims to conform to the poem written by Du Fu, it at the same time paradoxically distinguishes itself as another act *from* the poem, or the act of *writing* the poem, in the

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<sup>154</sup> *Jin Shengtian quanji*, 2:865. Sally K. Church observes three ways in which Jin Shengtian intervenes in the text of *Xixiang ji* and in the third way Jin tempers with the less essential parts of the text or even omits or alters the whole passage. Church, pp.76-77.

process of identification. In Jin's commentaries, his efforts in *reading* a poem are frequently juxtaposed with Du Fu's efforts in *writing* a poem, and such juxtaposition often hints at the way that Jin's *jie* units separate from Du Fu's consciousness. In other words, in spite of Jin's claims that he is honoring Du's mind, the act of analysis separates reading from writing and puts them on a par.

Part of his commentary on *Xiti Wang Zai hua shanshui tu ge* 戲題王宰畫山水圖歌 (“A ballad playfully composed on Wang Zai's painting of mountains and rivers”) may give us insight into this attitude.

This painting was drawn by Wang Zai with an extraordinary force of mind, was perceived by the Master with an extraordinary force of mind, and is interpreted by me, Shengtan, with an extraordinary force of mind. In the past Wang Zai in tears expressed his gratitude to the Master, and today the Master in tears expresses his gratitude to Shengtan.<sup>155</sup>

此是王宰異樣心力畫出來，是先生異樣心力看出來，是聖歎異樣心力解出來。  
王宰昔日滴淚謝先生，先生今日滴淚謝聖歎。

Jin constructs a tripartite pattern in which he challenges the previous ostensible hierarchy displayed in the relationship between ancients and latecomers. The consciousness of Du Fu in the poem no longer dominates in the dialogue with Jin's interpretation and, on the contrary, it is through Jin's interpretations that it gains reallife. The reversal takes place: it is Jin's interpretations that provide appropriate value and authenticity to Du Fu's poetry. Jin Chang's words testify to the life of Jin's commentaries beyond Du Fu's poetry: without reading Jin Shengtan's commentaries on them, one can't claim to have read all

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<sup>155</sup> Ibid, 2:695.

canonical works.<sup>156</sup> Jin's commentaries, though intimately connected to Du Fu's poetry, gain their own independent life through saving Du Fu's poetry.

The staging of Jin's own life doesn't end here. When he interprets Du Fu's poems, Jin deliberately creates an encounter between readers and himself. In the poem *Xiaofa Gong'an shuyue qixi cixian* 曉發公安數月憩息此縣 (“In the dawn I leave Gong'an where I have lived for a few months”), Jin says:

This poem is most wicked. I can't remember what year it was – I knew it by heart as soon as I read it. Even now I find myself unconsciously chanting this poem every dawn as I lie on my pillow, half-awake. I've tried hundreds of methods to stop it, but it keeps coming back. All my white hair is a gift from this poem.<sup>157</sup>

此詩最惡，不知何年一見便熟。至今每五更枕上欲覺未覺時，口中無故便誦詩，百計禁之，而轉復還至。聖歎白髮，是此詩送得也！

The primary message conveyed by Jin's commentaries here is not about explaining Du Fu's poem so much as depicting a vivid image of Jin's own experience. By smuggling his own image into his commentaries, Jin is finding a way of using Du's poems under the excuse of interpreting his own distinct self.

### Conclusion

Jin's interpretations of Du can be read as a process of balancing the past and the present and reconciling his own individuality with dominant and stable image of Du Fu in previous interpretations. For Jin, living with the past is a double obligation in which he at once experiences pain and pleasure when maneuvering his self into the past: reading Du Fu's poetry in both familiar and unfamiliar manner. To defend familiar canonical reading rules, Jin risks the very painful consequence of letting his self be engulfed in the past; but

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<sup>156</sup> Ibid, “Caizi shu xiaoyin 才子書小引,” 6:93.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid, 2:611.

at the same time the dissociation of the self through his readiness toward “obedience” to the past, paradoxically, powerfully reinforces the sense of self and, as Jin illuminates Du’s poetry in an “unfamiliar” manner, it also provides Jin’s self with an opportunity to demonstrate its uniqueness. Jin acknowledges Du’s transcendent morality and poetic craft, and yet defamiliarizes them through the strategy of textual close-reading; he confirms the possibility of communication between readers of later periods and the poet, and yet pushes the parallel between reading and writing to a certain extremity and criticizes previous critics who believe that the sublimity of Du’s verse is inexplicable; he applies the innovative approach *fenjie* to reading Du’s poetry, and yet attempts to locate its roots in the past.

However, the fact that Jin willingly engages himself in the act of compromising between the past and his creativity is not merely to seek a successful balance between them; instead, he announces his failure through deliberate exaggeration/complication of his own critical opinion (as we have seen, for example, in his reading of “Lament for a Young Prince”). In this, Jin’s poetics may be considered a displaced version of what he once vehemently attacked---Zhou Zizhi’s and Liu Chenweng’s arguments concerning the inexplicability of Du’s verse. Jin is struggling with the reconciliation of his own self with the past and in this process he leads us to a journey fraught with tension, conflicts, and ambiguities: he attempts to bend his innovative interpretations to the past in order to surmount the gap in between, but his adept reconciliation (which creates a seemingly harmonious coexistence) at once becomes an interruptive force which derides his efforts---it is precisely the flamboyant display of Jin’s ingenuity tearing apart what this ingenuity

is trying to bring together. Out of the very process of “bring together” and “tearing apart” emerges a self who constantly celebrates a paradoxical hermeneutic moment: connecting and breaking with “ahistoricity” of Du Fu at the same time.

## **Part Two: The Making of Life Hermeneutics of Du Fu during the late Ming and Early Qing Periods**

### **The Life-reading Mode of Du Fu in the Song**

In their reading of Du Fu and his poetry, Song critics developed a special kind of hermeneutic practice, namely, “life hermeneutics”. “Life hermeneutics” involves a process of re-experiencing: re-experience what Du Fu has supposedly experienced in his life (such an act also becomes an interpreter’s life experience) and re-experience that experience (or re-experience) through an interpreter’s own life which is rooted in a different social reality. The “life hermeneutics” of Du Fu owed greatly to the long process of associating poetry with its historical grounding in the history of Chinese poetic readings. The production of poetry is frequently framed within certain historical circumstances and is often considered as a response to them. Under such situation, a poem can be best understood by being put back to its “original” context which often overlaps with a poet’s life experience. In the following section, I will examine how Song life hermeneutic of Du Fu was developed and its function during that time from two aspects: biographical chronicles and life experiences in the “real” world.

#### **(1) Biographical reading of Du Fu in the Song**

In the early reception of Du Fu during the pre-Song period, Du Fu’s poems occasionally served as a proof in the narrative. Such narratives often dealt with other

people such as Li Bai and Li Guinian rather than Du Fu himself.<sup>158</sup> In other words, during that time Du Fu's poems were seldom used for the purpose of reconstructing Du Fu's own life. The situation was changed in the Song dynasty. Along with effort in critical textual examination of Du Fu's poetry coming to their hands, Song critics gradually formed a reading pattern which greatly facilitated the life re-experiencing. Such a life-reading pattern can be perceived in two main areas: create *nianpu* 年譜 (biographical chronicles) of Du Fu and arrange Du Fu's poems in step with his life progression.

The earliest *nianpu* in the history of China was made by Song official-scholar Lü Dafang 呂大防 (1027-1097). Lü produced two works of *nianpu* at the same time, one for Han Yu and the other for Du Fu. His *nianpu* work on Du Fu is also considered as the first biographical chronicles of Du Fu.

I suffered numerous textual errors in (the transmission of) Han Yu's essays and Du Fu's poems. After I had collated and corrected these errors, I made biographical chronicles for each of them in order to offer a glimpse of the time of their composition by putting into chronological order their lives out of which the essays and poems emerged. Thus their chanting and lamenting for the time and the world, their deep sorrows and sighs, all of them can be well perceived. In addition, it can also allow readers to use [biographical chronicles] to examine their compositional styles: sharp in their youth, expanded in their maturity, and rigorous in their old age. If it were not for marvelous ability in literature, one couldn't arrive at this level.<sup>159</sup>

予苦韓文杜詩之多誤，既讐正之，又各為年譜，以次第其出處之歲月，而略見其為文之時，則其歌時傷世，幽憂切嘆之意，粲然可觀。又得以考其辭力少而銳，壯而肆，老而嚴，非妙于文章，不足以至此。

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<sup>158</sup> For example, in *Minghuang zalu* 明皇雜錄 there is a short anecdote concerning the life of the famous Tang musician Li Guinian 李龜年. At the end of the anecdote, Du Fu's poem "Encountering Li Guinian in Jiangnan" is introduced as a portrait (and testimony) of the vicissitude of Li's life before and after An Lushan rebellion. See *Du Fu juan*, p.23.

<sup>159</sup> "Du Shaoling nianpu houji" 杜少陵年譜後記, in *Fenmen jizhu Du gongbu shi* 分門集注杜工部詩, quoted from *Du Fu juan*, p.86.

For Lü Dafang, *nianpu* serve as a further step in improving readability after correcting textual errors which had occurred in the transmission of Du Fu's poems. In his mind, a *nianpu* is not simply an account of Du Fu's life since it is closely related to Du Fu poems, or more exactly, reading Du Fu's poems. In this postscript, he clearly designates *nianpu* as a way to restore the life of Du Fu and thus shed a new light on his poems. Lü claims that the first function is to manifest two kinds of hidden meanings in Du Fu's poems: *geshi shangshi* 歌時傷世 (literally, chanting for the time and lamenting for the world) and *youyou qietan* 幽憂切嘆. While *geshi shangshi* points to the social role of poetry as a response to external world in certain historical periods, *youyou qietan* emphasizes poetry as a tool for expressing internal feelings. By juxtaposing these two kinds of hidden meanings, Lü certainly confirms a resonance between the public and personal dimensions in Du Fu's poems. The second function of *nianpu* considered by Lü Dafang centers on poetic craft and its development along with the progression of Du Fu's life. Lü associates a certain compositional style with each stage of Du Fu's life and thus cements together the two functions: Du Fu's life progression is essential for readers' appreciation of his poems in terms of both meanings and craft, which eventually confirmed necessity and significance of creating a *nian pu* for Du Fu.

Lü's *nianpu* greatly encouraged a life-reading approach to Du Fu's poetry and became highly influential during the Song dynasty. Following Lü's steps, other Song scholars also began to create new biographical chronicles of Du Fu. The biographical chronicles of Du Fu made by Zhao Zili 趙子櫟 (?-1137) during the Xuanhe 宣和 (1119-1125) period was a response to Lü's *nianpu*. Zhao was not satisfied with the errors in

Lü's chronological arrangement of Du Fu's life and aimed to correct those errors as well as supplying what had been missed in Lü's *nianpu*. However, Zhao's *nianpu* erroneously dated Du Fu's life and received little attention in later generations. Later Cai Xingzong 蔡興宗 (n.d.) not only produced his *nian pu* of Du Fu but also arranged Du Fu's poems in a chronological order in his edition. A life-reading mode of Du Fu's poetry, which is suggested in Lü's practice, becomes much clearer in Cai's hands.

Among all Du Fu *nianpu* works in the Song dynasty, Lu Yin 魯豈 (1099-1175) and Huang He 黃鶴 (n.d.) greatly contributed to Du Fu's *nianpu* as well as to the formation of life hermeneutics. Just like Cai Xingzong, Lu Yin created a new *nianpu* for Du Fu and chronologically re-arranged Du Fu's poems in a new anthology. Lu pointed out a common problem in reading Du Fu at his time: "Poets and scholars all know to venerate and imitate Du Fu, all want to model on sounds and rhyming of his poetry, and yet all suffered difficulties in understanding its deep meaning and rigorous tonal regulations" 騷人雅士，同知祖尚少陵，同欲模楷聲韻，同苦其意律深嚴難讀也。<sup>160</sup> In order to help solve this problem, Lu Yin provided a biographical-reading strategy:

I separated each poem, added prefaces, and arranged them in chronological order. Then one can get a glimpse of peace and chaos of the age, beauty and vulgarity of customs, safety and danger of mountains and rivers, brightness and darkness of scenery, spaciousness and narrowness of the places where Du Fu himself lodged. It is as if one accompanies Du Fu to travel everywhere and his words are similar to face-to face talk despite the distance of a few centuries. How can one be troubled by difficulty in reading these poems? Renowned men and great scholars have created many chronological biographies, prefaces and commentaries. Their intention mostly exceeded, and various opinions were as many as spines of a hedgehog. On the basis of earlier editions I briefly edited and rearranged the poems. No matter whether it belonged to ancient style or recent style, all poems were arranged chronologically. I

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<sup>160</sup> *Caotang shijian* 草堂詩箋, quoted from *Du Fu juan*, p.323.

also chose excellent points from previous scholarship and put them under the poems, especially those that correctly investigate contemporary events, geography, time and ancient diction. As for the meaning and tonal regulation of Du Fu's poems, their status is equal to the "Six Classics" in the field of poetry. As communing with spirit and obtaining meaning vary as different readers might arrive at different understandings, I dare not give a simple account of it. After I complete this rearrangement, people who read them will be astonished as if they personally suffered harsh and thorny conditions or tigers and wolves; they will be sympathetic with commoners at that time who were exploited and trapped in misery; they will be moved by and feel sorrowful about the drifting of Du Fu's life: at the beginning he was comfortable, in middle age he was exhausted and was thus insulted by young people, and he then suddenly passed away.<sup>161</sup>

離而序之，次其先後，時危平，俗嫩惡，山川夷險，風物明晦，公之所寓舒局皆可概見，如陪公杖屨而遊四方，數百年間猶對面語，何患於難讀耶？名公巨儒，譜敘注釋，是不一家，用意率過，異說如蝟。余因舊集，略加編次；古詩近體，一其先後，摘諸家之善，有考於當時事實及地理、歲月與古語之的然者，聊注其下。若其意律，乃詩之六經，神會意得，隨人所到，不敢易而言之。敘次既倫，讀之者如親罹艱棘虎狼之慘，為可驚愕；目見當時甍庶，被削刻，轉塗炭，為可憫；因感公之流徙，始而適，中而瘁，卒至為少年輩侮，忽以訖死，為可傷也。

Although Lu Yin's anthology of Du Fu's poems has not survived, the preface above informs us of the principle and the goal of his editing work. Lu Yin breaks the generic category of ancient-style poems and recent-style poems and rearranged all of them chronologically. He further puts under each poem previous commentaries which correctly investigate the issues including historical facts, geography, years and ancient dictions during Du Fu's time. Although Lu Yin considers that marvelousness of the meaning and tonal regulations of Du Fu's poetry is not easy to pinpoint since different readers might arrive at different understandings, he does believe that his editing strategy would significantly reduce difficulty in reading Du Fu. Lu Yin employs a metaphor to illustrate the advantage of such a chronological arrangement: readers could exactly follow the steps

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<sup>161</sup> Ibid, quoted from *Du Fu juan*, p.324.

of Du Fu and become his companion in his journey to everywhere. Compared with Lü Dafang, who tries to use biographical chronicles to bring out the hidden meanings to readers, Lu Yin rather invites readers to participate in the life journey of Du Fu and erases the distance (both spatial and temporal) between readers and the poet. The imagined companion could transform Du Fu's poems from centuries ago into a face-to-face conversation, which represents a new development in Song life hermeneutics. What such transformation highlights is "to experience" rather than simply "to know" and Lu Yin further depicted a picture of emotional effects in the process of reading/experiencing: readers would feel astonished, sympathetic, moved, and sorrowful.

In summary, two tendencies can be detected from the Song biographical readings aforementioned. One is to incorporate Tang history, geography and other social and cultural aspects into readings of Du Fu's poems. Although Lü Dafang also attempted to reveal hidden meanings in his poems, his *nianpu* (as well as the *nianpu* prepared by Zhao Zili) mainly constructed a sketchy account of Du Fu's life out of his poems without employing much Tang historical and cultural information. Lu Yin and Huang He further supplied more Tang historical background and began to create a strong association between the progression of Du Fu's personal life and that of Tang history. The other tendency is the shift from "knowing Du Fu" to "experiencing Du Fu." Along with the first tendency, which tries to restore "original" circumstances for the production of Du Fu's poetry, readers are encouraged to partake in Du Fu's life experience through reading his poems in a chronological order. Such a practice presumably contributes to resolving difficulties in the process of reading by transcending the textual level and achieving more

direct (and higher) communication with Du Fu's mind. Whereas the fusion of a reader's self and Du Fu's self (poetic representation) can be perceived in this act of experiencing, we should also keep in mind that such a fusion helps reveal the reader's subjectivity, emotions and life experiences as represented under the name of Du Fu.

## (2). Experience/ re-experience Du Fu in “real” life

Many Song scholars try to establish ties between the reading of Du Fu's poetry and their own personal life experience. For example, Liu Chang 劉敞 (1019-1068) once claimed that he shared the same disease (pneumonia) with Du Fu and that was the reason for him to compile an anthology of Du Fu's poems.<sup>162</sup> Fan Chunren 范純仁 (1027-1101) also sent a poem to his younger brother after he read Du Fu's poem on thinking of his own younger brother.<sup>163</sup> Another Song official-scholar, Wang Shipeng 王十朋 (1112-1171), further interwove Du Fu's poems into his personal experience.

In the seventh month of the year of Jiashen (1164), I arrived at Raozhou and sent a memorial to the emperor to express my gratitude: although my talent is not equal to Jiang Shang and thus I cannot report administrative achievements as soon as five months after my arrival, my loyalty is similar to Du Fu and I never forget the ruler even for the time of eating a meal. Later I exchanged poems with other people with *kui* as the rhyme. Consequently, there came an official appointment and I was transferred to the Kuizhou. People considered it as prophecy. At that time, I spent some effort building a sacrificial temple, and in my dream I saw the Eight Formations. On the first day of the eleventh month, I arrived at Kuizhou. I clearly saw that water subsided and sand was exposed. Mountains and rivers I travelled across were all sceneries in Du Fu's poems.<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> *Gongs shi ji* 公是集, quoted from *Du Fu juan*, p.78.

<sup>163</sup> *Fan zhongxuan gong ji* 范忠宣公集, quoted from *Du Fu juan*, p.87.

<sup>164</sup> *Meixi xiansheng houji* 梅溪先生後集, quoted from *Du Fu juan*, p.411. For the anecdote of Jiang Shang and his administrative achievements, see *Shiji* 史記, “Qi taigong shijia” 齊太公世家, in *Siku quanshu*, 32: 1a-31a.

某甲申七月至饒州，以表謝上云：雖才非太公，不能五月報政；然忠猶杜甫，未嘗一飯忘君。”既而與諸公唱和，有“夔”字韻詩，果有易夔之命，人以為識。方力丐祠，夢觀八陣圖，乙酉十一月朔至夔，水落沙露，宛然在目，所歷山川，皆少陵詩中景物也。

In his memorial to the emperor, Wang quoted Su Shi's praise of Du Fu and compared himself to Du Fu, who possessed great loyalty to the ruler. At that time, Wang was a magistrate of Raozhou (in modern Jiangxi province) and later he noticed the word of *kui* 夔 was used as a rhyme during his poetic exchange with other people. *Kui* is also abbreviation of Kuizhou, a place where Du Fu once stayed for less than two years and yet produced one-third of his poems. In 1165, Wang was transferred to Kuizhou, which seemed to turn all previous connections with Du Fu as a prophecy of his personal life. His life continued to be entangled with Du Fu: before he arrived at Kuizhou, in his dream he saw the "Eight Formations," some stone monuments supposedly connected to strategic plans carried out by the great Shu general Zhuge Liang, and the subject of a famous Du Fu poem; and after he arrived at Kuizhou, he further observed that all the scenes he perceived were already included in Du Fu's work. Mystic verbal connections between Wang and Du Fu eventually led Wang to re-experience in real life what Du Fu had depicted in his poems and had supposedly experienced before. Wang Shipeng's experience of Du Fu was not limited to the external environment. His memorial indicated that he and Du Fu shared a specific quality: being loyal to the ruler. Wang once served as a censor in the court and strongly supported Zhang Jun's military conquest of the north. When Zhang encountered the setbacks and was punished, Wang was also demoted and transferred from the capital to Raozhou and later to Kuizhou. This made him share some similarities with Du Fu, who fulfilled his duty as Reminder by his remonstrance with the

emperor Suzong 肅宗 (711-762), which requested that he not remove Fang Guan 房琯 (696-763) from the position of Prime Minister merely because of Fang's military failures. However, Du Fu was implicated in this affair and was eventually transferred to Huazhou. Wang Shipeng's narrative shows how poetic transparency works: a reader (here Wang Shipeng) can get access to the real scenes that have been depicted in Du Fu's poems, and thus can claim the same reliable access to a poet's mind and even possess the same virtue as Du Fu. During Wang's stay at Kuizhou, he further went to visit the sites associated with Du Fu and wrote poems that praised Du Fu's loyalty. To a certain extent, his re-experience of Du Fu's experience (both poetic and real-life) served as a self-shaping strategy to highlight his own innate loyalty. Wang further wrote such re-experience into a poem (and thus created a new poetic experience for latecomers to re-experience) and put it right after the narrative quoted above. At the end of the poem, Wang claimed that his "loyalty matched Du Fu's poems in an elegant way" 忠懷雅合杜陵詩。<sup>165</sup>

Song literati begin to create a dialogue between their poetic experience of Du Fu and their life re-experiencing of it as a self-shaping strategy, and in many cases such a dialogue centers on loyalty. In his poem on a portrait of Du Fu, the Northern Song official-scholar Wang Anshi 王安石 (1021-1086) describes his experience of reading Du Fu's poetry. Wang Anshi first praises Du Fu's unparalleled poetic craft and then shifts to his life experience.

What a pity, a life of hardship!  
 topsy-turvy, you were never recognized.  
 You wore blue robes and were further excluded in old age;

惜哉命之窮，  
 顛倒不見收。  
 青衫老更斥，

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<sup>165</sup> Ibid, quoted from *Du Fu juan*, p.411.

<p>in hunger you fled across half of the country.          Your wife's emaciated body grew stiff and your son collapsed,          the clamor of bandits and thieves, a forest of weapons.          At that moment you chanted your poems,          which never neglected state affairs.          You constantly wished for a sage-emperor          with ministers like Yi Yin and Duke Zhou.          You would prefer that "my thatched hut alone is broken and          I freeze to death,"          but you can hardly bear the sight of the world suffering from cold.          Through difficulties and wrongs, you confined laments to          yourself;          I am ashamed of those who complain about their times.          Therefore when I see your portrait,          I repeatedly prostrate myself with my tears flowing.          Your heart is incomparable since antiquity,          I wish you could live again so that I could become your          companion.<sup>166</sup></p>	<p>餓走半九州，          瘦妻僵前子仆後。          攘攘盜賊森戈矛。          吟哦當此時，          不廢朝廷憂。          常願天子聖，          大臣各伊周。          寧令吾廬獨破受凍死，          不忍四海寒飈飈。          傷屯悼屈止一身，          嗟時之人我所羞。          所以見公畫，          再拜涕泗流。          惟公之心古亦少，          願起公死從之遊。</p>
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Wang laments the fact that throughout his life Du Fu had never been recognized by the emperor and subsequently presents a vivid picture of Du Fu's life. Drawing on what had been described in Du Fu's poems, Wang forms a sharp contrast between Du Fu's sufferings and his superior morality (especially loyalty): on one hand, Du Fu's life drifted through a tumultuous period and he was besieged by hunger, by threats to the lives of his family members, by bandits, and by riots; on the other hand, it was under such circumstance that Du Fu produced his poems that expressed his concerns about the court and his wishes for good government and the well-being of society. Although at first glance Wang's description of Du Fu falls into the stereotype of Confucian scholars, it simultaneously poses a challenge upon that stereotype through incorporation of the concrete life experiences of the poet and exempts him from being merely an empty

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<sup>166</sup> *Linchuan xiansheng wenji* 臨川先生文集, quoted from *Du Fu juan*, p.80.

signifier of loyalty in the general sense. Like many of his contemporaries, the life experience of the poet portrayed by Wang mostly comes from Du Fu's own poems. Nonetheless, Wang Anshi presents to us a very interesting picture of "re-experiencing." By telling us that looking at the image of Du Fu is exactly what moves him and causes his weeping, Wang suggests to us that his previous description of Du Fu's life suffering is simultaneously his own poetic journey of re-experiencing Du Fu's life. At the end of the poem, Wang wishes that he could resurrect Du Fu and thus accompany Du Fu in his life journey. Such a wish reminds us of Lu Yin's ideal reader, who could travel with Du Fu by reading his poems in a chronological way, and yet one difference can be perceived: whereas Lu Yin's re-experiencing centers on Du Fu's personal life and sufferings, Wang eventually highlights the public and political dimensions. In other words, in the case of Lu Yin, readers re-experience Du Fu more as an individual, which is in contrast with Wang Anshi, who re-experiences Du Fu more as an individualized social participant.

Wang's re-experiencing Du Fu highlights political loyalty which intimately connects him (a well-known official in the Song political arena) with the poet. Since Du Fu is also portrayed by other Song literati as a loyal subject, such an image begin to gain more currency during the Song. Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037-1101), a political opponent of Wang Anshi, has left highly influential comments on Du Fu: "There have been so many poets from ancient times until the present, and yet Du Fu is the foremost. Isn't it because he never let his meal go by without thinking of his lord, despite the fact that he drifted, suffered hunger and cold, and was never recognized throughout his life?" 古今詩人眾矣，而杜

子美爲首，豈非以其流落飢寒，終身不用，而一飯未嘗忘君也歟。<sup>167</sup> Su Shi attributes Du Fu's poetic reputation to his paramount loyalty revealed in a life of suffering and obscurity, and thereby subtly constructs a tripartite structure (loyalty, life experience, and poetic craft) in reading him. Compared with Wang Anshi, who links Du Fu's loyalty with life experiences, Su Shi introduces the element of poetic achievement and suggests the role of life experience in poetic composition. Su Shi's comments on Du Fu come from his preface to an anthology of poems written by his acquaintance Wang Gong 王鞏 (n.d.). Wang Gong was implicated in the "Crow Terrace Poetry Case" and was exiled to the remote Lingnan area (modern Guangxi province).<sup>168</sup> According to the preface, Wang later returned to Jiangxi and sent Su Shi a few hundred poems composed by him during his stay in Lingnan. Su thought highly of these poems and believed that the poems originated from emotional spontaneity and remained within the boundary of loyalty and filial piety. In the preface, Su frames Wang's poetic achievement with a large picture of his life vicissitudes, and creates a parallel between the situation of Wang and that of Du Fu. The observation of connection between poetic excellence and life experience is further endorsed by other Song literati in later period. In his preface to a revised collection of Du Fu's poems by Huang Changsi 黃伯思, Li Gang 李綱 (1083-1140) makes the following comments:

When I read Du Fu's poetry during a period of peace, I couldn't even appreciate its craft. After I experienced wars, death, and disasters, I chanted his poems as if they

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<sup>167</sup> "Wang Dingguo shiji xu" 王定國詩集敘, quoted from *Du Fu juan*, p. 99.

<sup>168</sup> For discussion of Crow Terrace Poetry Case, see Charles Hartman, "Poetry and Politics in 1079: The Crow Terrace Poetry Case of Su Shih," in *CLEAR*, vol.12, December 1990, pp.15-44.

emerged from his time, and it really touched my heart. Only after that did I know the marvelousness of his language.<sup>169</sup>

平時讀之，未見其工，迨親更兵火喪亂之後，誦其詩如出乎其時，犁然有當於人心，然後知其語之妙也。

For Li, the excellence of Du Fu's poetry can be appreciated only through knowledge of Du Fu's life experience, especially during a period of chaos. Furthermore, Li's reading involves projection of his self, since it is his similar life experience that helps him begin to understand Du's previously obscured poetic marvelousness. In another case, Li also wrote out one of Du Fu's poems to express his determination of sacrificing himself for the country as well as to encourage another person to join him in fighting against the Jurchen.

Zhang Bangji 張邦基 (fl.1131) also made a similar association between poetic marvelousness (or appreciation of such "assumed" marvelousness) and life experience in his criticism of Cai Tao 蔡條's (d. 1126) comments on Du Fu. Cai Tao once mocked Du Fu for his inability to appreciate the beauty of nature, as can be told from his couplet "I roll up the curtain, only to see white waters; I sat leaning on the armrest, green hills still in my view" 卷帘唯白水，隱几亦青山. Du Fu's melancholy in front of the beautiful landscape surprised Cai, since the latter would certainly enjoy such beauty and would willingly spend all his life in such surroundings. Zhang indicates that Cai fails to appreciate this couplet because he does not take into consideration the poet's life situation at the time when he wrote the couplet. Zhang continues to explain its inherent gloominess:

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<sup>169</sup> "Chong jiaozheng Du Zimei ji xu", in *Liangxi xiansheng wenji* 梁谿先生文集, quoted from *Du Fu juan*, p.277.

When Du Fu lived in Xichuan, he never let his meals go by without thinking of the emperor. He was anxiously concerned about the court, and lack of livelihood opportunities further put him close to death. His gloom was really deep. Therefore, when he faced green mountains, green mountains became gloomy; when he faced white waters, white waters became gloomy. His gloom lodged in all things that one would love and enjoy in times of peace.<sup>170</sup>

子美居西川，一飯未嘗忘君，其憂在王室，而又生理不具，與死為鄰，其悶甚矣。故對青山，青山悶。對白水，白水悶。平時可愛樂之物，皆寓之為悶。

Zhang further introduces Cai Tao's own life experience to support his argument concerning intimacy between poetic craft and life experience. Zhang indicates that Cai makes such comments while he is living a very comfortable material life -- and thus he yearns for a close association with nature. Cai was the second son of the once powerful and yet notorious prime minister Cai Jing 蔡京 (1047-1126) in the Southern Song dynasty. In 1126, the emperor Qinzong 欽宗 (1100-1156) came to the throne and Cai Jing was demoted and eventually starved to death on his way to his new position. The same year Cai Tao was also exiled to the south. Zhang argues that Cai would have been able to appreciate the poetic excellence of Du's poem once his life path became rugged and full of hazard.

At the end of the Southern Song dynasty, social and especially national crises on the eve of the Mongol invasion further encouraged an association between reading Du Fu's poetry and a reader's own life experience. The most notable case of this is Wen Tianxiang 文天祥 (1236-1283). Wen's experience of reading Du Fu formed a sharp contrast before and after 1275. In the early part of his life, Wen expressed his dissatisfaction with Du Fu's poetic craft: "In the past people said that thousands of *juan*

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<sup>170</sup> *Mozhuang manlu* 墨莊漫錄, quoted from *Du Fu juan*, pp.379-380.

were worn out by Du Fu in his reading, but that only helps make his poetry possess a seemingly divine quality when he wields his brush. Reading books certainly has its significance, and yet poetry does not need to possess so much divinity" 昔人謂杜子美讀書破萬卷，止用資得下筆如有神耳。讀書固有謂，而詩不必甚神。<sup>171</sup> In Wen's mind, reading books should play a vital role in promoting Confucian values and in contributing to social transformation and management; they should not be used merely to serve as a resource for poetic composition. However, his opinions on Du's poetry dramatically changed with his own life experience at a moment of national crisis. In 1276, Wen served as an ambassador on the behalf of the Southern Song court to negotiate with the Mongol troops. He was detained by the Mongols and was soon sent to the north. Nevertheless, Wen managed to escape at Jingkou 京口 and wrote of his experiences in his second preface to his poetry collection *Zhinan lu* 指南錄 (*Records of Pointing to the South*). Wen describes many critical moments in which he was brought to the verge of death; he then tells readers that he used poems to record what he had suffered. Wen largely combines narrative with poetry by frequently putting a short essay before a poem to explain his personal experiences. This easily reminds us of one prominent feature often related to Du Fu's poetry: incorporating into a poem details concerning the "real life" situations that presumably give rise to the production of the poem.

The poetic and "real-life" transference from Du Fu to Wen becomes more evident when Wen was later imprisoned by Mongols in Beijing. There he produces the collection

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<sup>171</sup> "Ba Xiao Jingfu shigao" 跋蕭敬夫詩稿, *Wenshan xiansheng quanji* 文山先生全集, quoted from *Du Fu juan*, p.974.

*Ji Du shi* 集杜詩 (*Poems that Collect Lines from Du Fu*), consisting of two hundred five-word quatrains constructed from lines taken from Du's poems.

I was imprisoned in the cell in Beijing and could do nothing. I chanted Du Fu's poems and became more familiar with them. Moved and inspired by them, I used five-word lines from Du Fu's poems and patched them together into quatrains. As time passed by, I produced two hundred poems. Whatever I want to say has already been said by Du Fu. I read his poems every day and couldn't cast them aside, only to feel that they were my poems and forget that in fact they are written by Du Fu. Thus, I knew that it was not that Du Fu who could produce poems by himself, but that he took trouble to articulate poems that were words spontaneously arising from the emotions and nature of a person. Du Fu and I were separated by a hundred years, but his words could be used by me. Wasn't it that we shared the same nature and the same emotions? People in the past commented that Du Fu's poetry is a poetic history through its use of poetic form as a means to record what has happened in real life. His praise and condemnation became so evident in his poetry that it could be called history. The poems I made out of Du Fu's poetry can offer a glimpse of the changes of the world and of human affairs since I began to suffer hardships. It was not my intention to merely produce poems. Good historians in later generations could probably investigate the past through these poems.<sup>172</sup>

余坐幽燕獄中，無所為，誦杜詩稍習。諸所感興，因其五言，集為絕句。久之，得二百首，凡吾意所欲言者，子美先為代言之。日玩之不置，但覺為吾詩，忘其為子美詩也。乃知子美非能自為詩，詩句自是人情性中語，煩子美道耳。子美於吾隔故百年，而其言語為吾用，非情性同哉！昔人評杜詩為詩史，蓋以其詠歌之辭，寓記載之實，而抑揚褒貶之意，燦然於其中，雖謂之史可也。予所集杜詩，自余顛沛以來，世變人事，概見於此矣。是非有意於為詩者也，後之良史，尚庶幾有考焉。

Here Wen shifts away from his earlier understanding of Du Fu's poetry as a minor game and instead considers it as a spontaneous expression of one's nature and emotions. Playfulness in poetic composition (piecing together lines) is replaced by sincerity, which eventually justifies Wen's use of Du Fu's poems and further reinforces Wen's identification with Du Fu in terms of emotions and nature. However, for Wen such emotions and such a nature do not stand alone. Rather, they are shaped by the

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<sup>172</sup> Ibid, quoted from *Du Fu juan*, pp.974-5.

external social environment in which a poet lives. Accordingly, poetry is not simply singing one's emotions and one's nature, but also serves as a historical record (with "appropriate" judgment) of significant contemporary events and people. Through his approval of earlier comments on Du's poetry as poetic history, Wen attempts to use poetry to mediate inner sincerity and social significance. The very practice of patching together Du Fu's lines to make "new" poems has unique advantages: on one hand, it carries the weight (poetic, historical, and moral) of Du Fu's poems and thus puts Wen on a par with Du Fu; on the other hand, it produces different poems by rearranging Du's poems and accommodates them to Wen's self in a different social reality. However, such practice also poses limits upon Wen --- he can only draw on a limited amount of poems by Du Fu (i.e. poems of five-word lines) and his self-representation is also to some extent compromised. In other words, such practice paradoxically puts Wen's self in peril in its very act of empowering him through identification. Simply rearranging Du's poetic lines might still be insufficient to connect them to Wen's life, and this is compensated by the narrative in the preface written by Wen before each poem. Each preface describes a segment of Wen's life experience, the larger political situation, and/or Wen's contemporaries. Therefore, the openness of the poem is filled in with historical specifics different from Du Fu's case. Through the mechanism of combining poetry and narrative as well as his own life experience and its representation, Wen successfully accomplishes a kind of displacement in the act of experiencing the earlier poet: In contrast with the model of biographical readings promoted by Lu Yin and Huang He (bring later readers to Du Fu's life for a better understanding of his poems), Wen to a large extent brings Du to

himself in order to fashion a better representation of the self through his re-experiencing of Du Fu. Although a similar impulse can be perceived in some of his contemporaries, it is Wen who strongly epitomizes this practice of experiencing the self. At the same time, while he stresses the historical and public dimension of Du's poetry in his reading and appropriation, Wen also acknowledges that the roots of the poetry lie in personal emotions and in a tumultuous life; thus, he tries to walk a fine line between the public and the personal (re)experience of Du Fu, though his priorities is clearly given to the former. This is especially true when we juxtapose his *Ji Du shi* and *Zhinan lu*, with the former showing on the greater effort in imitating historiography in both its general structure and in the contents of its narrative.

In short, the Song establishes a specific life-reading mode of Du Fu, which emphasizes (re)experiencing Du Fu rather than simply reading his poems. Although the course of the poet's life is often associated with contemporary historical events to various degrees, such (re)experience moves in two major directions (though they sometimes overlap with each other to some extent): from reader to Du Fu and from Du Fu to reader. In either way, this hermeneutic practice is facilitated by the mechanism of poetic transparency. Nevertheless, a potential rupture emerges in the process of (re)experiencing Du Fu: while suppressing the self and moving back to the original conditions of Du Fu's life can presumably achieve a better and more correct understanding of his poetry, a strong sense of self that emerges out of life experiences in a different historical period and a different social reality often paradoxically facilitates identification with Du Fu and thus can achieve a supposedly "true" understanding of Du Fu. Wen Tianxiang in

particular negotiates carefully between self and Du Fu, between individual and society, and between poetry and history -- most strikingly, by applying Du Fu's original lines (with aid of narrative) to address his own situation.

Du Fu's poetry gained popularity among the Song *yimin* 遺民 group (remnant subjects of a fallen dynasty or loyalists to the former dynasty). Many Song *yimin* individuals tended to compare their life experiences during the Song-Yuan transition to Du Fu's life during the An Lushan rebellion. However, their reception of Du Fu's poetry is largely manifested through poetic imitation rather than through reading.<sup>173</sup> As opposed to the situation in the Song where many anthologies of Du Fu's poetry emerge, there are only a few anthologies of Du Fu's poetry with commentaries produced by Song *yimin*. Although their poetic imitations are similar to Du Fu's verse in terms of style, the content in general is further removed from Du Fu and leads to a certain disconnection from life hermeneutics, since it becomes less tied to the issue of understanding Du's poetry specifically.

During the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368) and through most of the Ming, it is not uncommon to see a chronological arrangement of Du Fu's poems in various anthologies. Nevertheless, the life hermeneutics of Du Fu was gradually overshadowed by artistic appreciation and structural/stylistic analysis of his poetry. Such a shift in reading the poet can be perceived from two influential Yuan works, the *Du lü Yu Zhu* 杜律虞注 (*Du Fu's Regulated Verses Annotated by Yu Ji*) by Yu Ji 虞集 (1272-1348) and the *Ji qianjia zhu*

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<sup>173</sup> For example, both Wang Yuanliang 汪元量 and Shu Yuexiang 舒岳祥 are *yimin* poets known for their imitations of Du's poetry. Although their poetic compositions aim to reflect/record their life experiences after the collapse of the Song, they are not exactly engaged in the act of "reading" Du Fu.

*pidian du gongbu ji* 集千家注批點杜工部集 (*Collected Commentaries from a Thousand Commentators and Pidian on Du Fu's poetry*) by Liu Chenweng (1232-1297).<sup>174</sup> While the former focuses on Du's regulated verse, the latter adopts a new textual strategy that highlights the subjectivity of the reader and often tries to achieve aesthetic and artistic appreciation through an intuitive, if not elusive, manner. In contrast to Song commentators' practice of facilitating the re-experience of Du Fu in the process of reading, Liu tries to maintain a distance between Du Fu and himself and often prioritizes his own aesthetic judgment.

The increasing attention to Du Fu's regulated verse and his poetic techniques in the Yuan certainly influenced the Ming's reading of Du Fu. During the Ming dynasty, many works on Du Fu's poetry focused on his regulated verses; these account for around a third of the ]works on the poet produced in the Ming.<sup>175</sup> Under these circumstances, life hermeneutics continue to be weakened. In his work *Du Du yude* 讀杜愚得, Shan Fu 單復 (fl. 1371) explains the first two principles of his readings, which can be summarized as: (1) to reexamine and revise the biographical chronicles of Du Fu and to arrange his poems in chronological order to show the details of Du Fu's travels and his vicissitudes;

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<sup>174</sup> Many scholars have pointed out that the *Du lü Yu zhu* was not written by Yu Ji and in fact it largely copies another annotated edition of Du Fu's seven-syllable regulated verse, namely, the *Du lü yan yi* 杜律演義, prepared by the Yuan scholar Zhang Xing 張性. Liu Chenweng's work is sometimes dated to the Song period, which is partly supported by the fact that Liu has often been considered a Song loyalist. However, his work on Du Fu was first published in 1303, over twenty years later after the Yuan dynasty had replaced the Song.

<sup>175</sup> Jian Ending 簡恩定 divides Ming readings of Du Fu's poetry into three stages and regulated verse occupies an important position in the first two stages. Jian Ending, "Mingdai Dushixue lueshuo" 明代杜詩學略說, *Kongda renwen xuebao* 空大人文學報, No. 18, 2009, pp. 1-47.

(2) to investigate the details of what Du Fu saw and heard in his lifetime as well as explain his adept use of allusions.<sup>176</sup>

Here Shan seems to try to create a connection with life hermeneutics established in the Song. However, the emphasis in his reading is not put on (re)experiencing Du Fu's life. Shan's biographical chronicles are used by many other Ming editions of Du's poems. Despite the practice in many of them of chronologically reading Du Fu, the perceivable shift from concrete and specific information to emphasis on the general meaning of the poem tends to define Ming habits of reading Du Fu's life. Another prominent aspect of life hermeneutics, namely, extolling the poet's loyalty and weaving together his and the reader's life experiences (on political and personal levels) is also rare in the Ming. It is true that even when the majority of Ming critics (in the early and middle Ming) target on the meaning of a poem as a whole, Du Fu's loyalty is still extolled in their interpretations of certain individual poems. But such emphasis on loyalty seems to be largely detached from the act of (re)experiencing Du Fu's life, as opposed to their Song precursors, especially those who lived in periods of chaos.

It was not until the late Ming and the early Qing that interpretations of Du Fu began to gain new momentum on the level of life hermeneutics. Chapter 3 will discuss Qian Qianyi's interpretation of Du Fu's poetry: Qian's changing attitudes toward the reading Du Fu at different stages of his life serve as a unique example for examining the complexities of life hermeneutics during the late Ming and the early Qing period. The Ming-Qing transition also provides a reason for many interpreters (especially *yimin*

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<sup>176</sup> Shan Fu, "Du Dushi yude fanli" 讀杜詩愚得凡例, *Du du shi yu de* 讀杜詩愚得 (Taipei: Datong shuji, 1974), p.3.

groups) to incorporate their own life performances into their reading of of the poet and thus to announce their loyalty to the fallen Ming. While the rhetoric of loyalty becomes essential to life hermeneutics in the Ming-Qing transition, it can be perceived at the same time that the Ming *yimin*'s readings of Du Fu demonstrate other concerns that tend to distance them from issues of life hermeneutics and loyalty. Chapter 4 investigates the Ming *yimin*'s practice of life hermeneutics and their attitude towards loyalty, as well as how the Qing official ideology intervened in the interpretations of Du Fu during the Kangxi 康熙 (1654-1722) and the Qianlong 乾隆 (1711-1799) periods.

## Chapter 3 Life Hermeneutics and Qian Qianyi's Du Fu Commentaries

### The Hermeneutic Tripartite in the Reception of Qian Qianyi

A discrepancy has often been assumed inscribed in the reception of Qian Qianyi's works: Qian's expression of loyalty in his writings on the one hand and the failure of real-life integrity on the other. The year of 1645, one year after the Manchus occupied the Ming capital of Beijing, witnessed the formation of this discrepancy. In that year, Qian was Minister of Rites (禮部尚書) in the Hongguang 弘光(1645) court in Nanjing;<sup>177</sup> and yet a few months later he surrendered to the Qing when the Manchu troops swept southward. Soon he was recalled to Beijing and served as Vice Minister of Rites (禮部侍郎) in the Qing court. However, Qian quickly resigned after a short time as a Qing minister, returned to his hometown, and supposedly supported anti-Manchu activities secretly in the hopes of restoring the Ming house.<sup>178</sup> At that time, Qian also actively engaged in a series of literary activities such as verse composition, editing, and writing commentary to express his loyalty towards the Ming and his mourning for their fall.

The discrepancy between Qian's political behavior during the Ming-Qing changeover and his later expression of loyalty has invited two opposing interpretations.<sup>179</sup>

In the first one, Qian's expression of loyalty is depreciated due to the lack of integrity

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<sup>177</sup> All the translations of official titles in this dissertation are based on Charles O. Hucker's *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985).

<sup>178</sup> Chen Yinke has a long chapter on Qian Qianyi's anti-Manchu activities in his book *Liu Rushi biezhuan* 柳如是別傳 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1980), pp. 827-1224.

<sup>179</sup> For the chronology of the reception of Qian Qianyi in the early Qing, see Andrew Hsieh 謝正光, *Tanlun Qingchu shiwen dui Qian Qianyi pingjia zhi zhuanbian* 探論清初詩文對錢謙益評價之轉變, in *Zhongguo wenhua yanjiusuo xuebao* 中國文化研究所學報, 21 (1990): 277. The article is also included in Hsieh's book *Qingchu shiwenyu shiren jiaoyou kao* 清初詩文與士人交遊考 (Nanjing: Nanjing daxue chubanshe, 2001), pp. 60-108.

implied by his actions. Such a view was espoused by Qian's contemporaries, represented by the famous anti-Manchu scholar Gu Yanwu 顧炎武 (1613-1682). Under the entry *Wen ci qi ren* 文辭欺人 ("Deceptive Words") in his *Ri zhi lu* 日知錄 (*Notes of Daily Accumulated Knowledge*), Gu first condemns the two historical figures Xie Lingyun 謝靈運 (358-433) and Wang Wei 王維 (701?-761) as people who lost integrity in real life and yet hypocritically resorted to poetry to announce their adherence to integrity. After that, Gu begins to launch his attack against the contemporary situation:

Now at the time of troubles there was a person who surrendered himself to a different ruling house. Only after he was rejected [by the new dynasty] did he set forth words of loyalty and indignation. Considering that he stained his reputation through his affiliation with illegitimate authority and yet now relies on his "loyal" heart, in my opinion he is greatly inferior to Xie Lingyun and Wang Wei.<sup>180</sup>

今有顛沛之餘，投身異姓，至擯斥不容，而後發為忠憤之論，與夫名污偽籍而自托乃心，比於康樂、右丞之輩，吾見其愈下矣。

Gu's description can well be applied to Qian's case; and though it can also be applied to a general phenomenon at the time, many modern scholars believe that his insinuation here is directed at Qian.<sup>181</sup> However, his discussion of the discrepancy between loyalty and verbal expression of loyalty is not necessarily a denial of Qian's poetic achievements and his status as the leader of literary community in his lifetime.<sup>182</sup> It was through the actions

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<sup>180</sup> Gu Yanwu, *Ri zhi lu jishi* 日知錄集釋 (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1936), vol.7, chapter 19, 10b.

<sup>181</sup> It seems that such an implicit assumption is also supported by the attitude Gu showed toward Qian on another occasion. Gu was once prosecuted for supposedly killing his servant. When someone requested Qian to help Gu, Qian agreed under the condition that Gu had to consider himself a disciple of Qian. Knowing that Gu would not agree, the person secretly forged a letter and sent it to Qian to show Gu's "willingness". When Gu learned of this, it was too late to stop the letter. So he posted a message in public to clarify his denial of his Qian's discipleship. *Quan Zuwang ji huijiao jizhu* 全祖望集彙校集注 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 2000), ed. Zhu Zhuyu 朱鑄禹, p. 229.

<sup>182</sup> According to Fu Shan's annotation to the poem "Wei Li Tiansheng zuo" 為李天生作, Gu Yanwu considered that Qian Qianyi was once the leader of the literary community and that later Li Tiansheng

of the Qianlong emperor (r. 1736-95) that Qian Qianyi's poetry was proscribed due to his supposed loss of integrity. This can be clearly perceived from the Qianlong emperor's preface to the *Guochao shi biecai ji* 國朝詩別裁集 ("Selection of Poems of Our Dynasty"), an anthology of early Qing poetry edited by Shen Deqian 沈德潛 (1673-1769). In the preface, the Qianlong emperor explicitly expresses his dissatisfaction with Shen's arrangement that places Qian Qianyi above all other Qing poets in the anthology. Qianlong explained his reasons as follows:

Worse yet, Qian was an eminent Ming official, but he was also willing to serve our dynasty. Although his conduct was meant to take advantage of the situation at the time, he was not rejected by us because it was during the transition when our dynasty was newly established. However, seriously speaking, Qian cannot be reckoned as a human being. His poems have been in circulation, and we shall let that pass. Under no circumstances, however, should he be chosen to lead [the poets] of our dynasty. . . . Consider, what is poetry? Loyalty and filiality, no more and no less. If one departs from loyalty and filiality in speaking about poetry, I do not see how that can be poetry at all. As for Qianyi and his ilk, were they loyal? Were they filial?<sup>183</sup>

至身為明朝達官，而甘心複事本朝者，雖一時權宜，草昧締構所不廢。要知其人則非人類也。其詩自在，聽之可也。選以冠本朝諸人，則不可……且詩者何？忠孝而已耳。離忠孝而言詩，吾不知其為詩也。謙益諸人，為忠乎？為孝乎？

Qianlong's rejection of Qian Qianyi's poetry is exactly based on his judgment of Qian's loss of integrity during the Ming-Qing dynastic transition. Despite the fact that Qian surrendered himself to the Qing, in the eyes of Qianlong such a choice pointed to Qian's

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succeeded Qian. See Deng Zhicheng 鄧之誠, *Qingshi jishi chubian* 清詩紀事初編 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1984), p. 165. Wai-Yee Li also mentions this difference in Gu Yanwu's attitude towards Qian: see *Trauma and Transcendence in Early Qing Literature* (Cambridge and London: the Harvard University Asia Center, 2006), Wilt L. Idema, Wai-Yee Li, and Ellen Widmer eds., p. 67. Tiansheng is the courtesy name of Li Yindu 李因篤 (1631-92), a scholar who also commented on Qian Qianyi's interpretations of Du Fu's poetry.

<sup>183</sup> *Qing shi lei zhuan*, 19:1457-58. I use Lawrence Yim's English translation, see *The Poet-historian Qian Qianyi* (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), p. 61.

renunciation of the fundamental principles of poetry (i.e., loyalty and filiality) and ultimately nullifies the sincerity of his verse. Later, Qianlong was even more vexed when he read more of Qian's works, and in 1769 he issued an edict to ban all his writing.

Earlier in my preface to Shen Deqian's *Guochao shi biecai ji*, I had explicitly rebuked the errors of Qian Qianyi and his ilk, and expunged his poems from the anthology, which is of greatest significance for sustaining eternal Confucian principles. Since at that time I hadn't read all of his works, I assumed that it was tolerable to let his poetry exist. Now after I read his works the *Chuxue ji* and the *Youxue ji*, I find it is inappropriate and absurd, with many slanders against our dynasty. Were Qian Qianyi able to sacrifice himself for the Ming and to uphold his integrity, his act of slandering in his writings would be understandable. Nevertheless, since he had already served our dynasty, how can he still include this earlier nonsensical barking in his works? His intention is nothing but to use this to cover for the disgrace of his loss of integrity. It is even more despicable and shameless!<sup>184</sup>

朕從前序沈德潛所選《國朝詩別裁集》曾明斥錢謙益等之非，黜其詩不錄，實為千古綱常名教之大關。彼時未經見其全集，尚以為其詩自在，聽之可也。今閱其所著《初學集》、《有學集》，荒誕悖謬，其中詆謗本朝之處，不一而足。夫錢謙益果終為明朝守死不變，即以筆墨騰謗，尚在情理之中；而伊既為本朝臣僕，豈得復以從前狂吠之語，列入集中？其意不過欲藉此以掩其失節之羞，尤為可鄙可恥！

The emperor considered Qian's verbally expressed loyalty to the Ming (especially his slander against the Qing) after its collapse as a futile attempt to merely cover up his earlier disgrace. His condemnation dealt a deadly blow to the circulation of Qian's works: the government demanded that all copies of his works as well as the woodblocks used to print them be handed over to be destroyed, and no private possession of his writings was allowed. Later, the emperor ordered the establishment in the *Ming History* of a section entitled *Erchen zhuan* 貳臣傳 ("Biographies of Twice-serving Officials") in which Qian

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<sup>184</sup> *Qing shi lei zhuan*, 79:6577. Lawrence Yim provides a detailed English account of Qianlong's condemnation and censorship of Qian and divides it into two stages. See *The Poet-historian Qian Qianyi*, pp. 59-76. Jin Hechong 金鶴沖 briefly mentions Qian's attack on the Manchus in the *Chuxue ji* and the *Youxue ji*. See *Qian Muzhai quanji* 錢牧齋全集 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2007), ed., Qian Zhonglian 錢仲聯, 8: 971.

was classified in the inferior category as a double traitor to both the Ming and the Qing. His condemnation has played a decisive role in shaping the way readers have interpreted Qian's loyalist sentiment for the fallen Ming throughout the rest of the Qing and even into the modern era.<sup>185</sup>

In the early twentieth century, along with the collapse of the Qing, a different reading of Qian's loyalist sentiment arose and began to gain more currency. Jin Hechong 金鶴沖 (1873-1960) restored the sincerity of Qian's loyalist sentiment by offering an alternative reading of his life during the Ming-Qing transition:

The reason that the master resigned from the Qing court after his five-month service was to seek opportunities. The fact that his son and other young relatives took the entrance exam for official service in the Qing as well as Qian's socializing with Liang Tingzuo, Tu Guobao, and Liang Huafeng indicate his intentions of fulfill his ambition. After the year 1645, he set brush to paper and his words were fraught with discomfort and indignation. Those who didn't know thought he was covering up traces of his surrender and thus made words of loyalty and indignation. Nevertheless, for the subjects who had sacrificed themselves for the Ming, he certainly helped manage their families; he supplied financial aid to righteous armies, and he spent his own assets in his associations with people [for the purpose of restoring the Ming]. Were all of these actions the result of hypocrisy?<sup>186</sup>

先生入清廷，五閱月而後引退者，所以觀釁也。子姪應試，與郎廷佐、土國寶、梁化鳳周旋者，將以行其志也。乙酉以後，搖筆伸紙，多抑塞憤張之語，不知者謂其自掩投降之跡，貌為忠憤之詞，然則先生於死國之臣，必經紀其家，輸餉義師，破產結客，舉出於偽乎？

In Jin's eyes, Qian's seemingly disloyal behavior, such as his service in the Qing court and association with the Qing officials, turned out to be nothing but deliberate strategies to restore the Ming. It was on the basis of such a reinterpretation of Qian's actions that

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<sup>185</sup> Kang-I Sun Chang has pointed out that the reading of Qian Qianyi by modern scholars as a person who lost his integrity still persisted into the late 1990s. See *Trauma and Transcendence in Early Qing Literature*, p.199.

<sup>186</sup> *Qian Muzhai quanji*, 8:958.

Jin based his positive assessment of Qian's "words of loyalty and indignation". While in his justification of Qian's loyalist sentiment Jin still proceeds along a hermeneutic procedure involving the interpretation of life-personality-poetry, Zhang Binglin 章炳麟 (1869-1936) acknowledges Qian's sincerity directly through his reading of the *Toubi ji* 投筆集 (*Renouncing the Brush Collection*), a collection of poems written by Qian matching the rhymes of Du Fu's famous poetic cycle *Qiuxing bashou* 秋興八首 ("Autumn Meditations, Eight Poems").<sup>187</sup> Later, Chen Yinke 陳寅恪 (1890-1969), who believed in Qian's sincerity as expressed in the *Toubi ji*, corroborated his belief through his admirable evidential scholarship, constantly moving back and forth between Qian's poems and historical situations during the Ming-Qing transition to reconstruct a picture of Qian's devotion to the restoration of the Ming in order to redeem his earlier disgraceful surrender.<sup>188</sup> Similarly, other recent scholarship attempts to prove Qian's sincerity by identifying a resonance between Qian's anti-Manchu activities and his poetic expression after the fallen Ming.<sup>189</sup> Contrasted with the "life-determinism" in reading Qian's poetry as demonstrated in the case of the Qianlong emperor, we perceive in this kind of interpretation an increasing sense of the independence of poetry. While the fundamental assumption might remain the same (poetry as a medium transparent to historical reality), the balance in the hermeneutic tripartite "life-personality-poetry" shifts: instead of flowing smoothly from life to poetry, such a reading might also draw on what has been

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<sup>187</sup> Zhang Binglin 章炳麟, *Qiu shu* 愷書 (Taipei: Tangshi shiliao bianzhan weiyuanhui, 1968), p. 208. Lawrence Yim offers close readings of Qian Qianyi's *Toubi ji*. See *The Poet-historian Qian Qianyi*, pp.79-146.

<sup>188</sup> *Liu Rushi biezhan*, pp. 827-1224.

<sup>189</sup> For example, Lu Chuan and Sun Zhimei, "Qian Qianyi ru qing hou shi shiqiren bian" 錢謙益入清後詩詩其人辯, *Qilu xuekan*, no.3, 2010, pp. 125-130.

said as well as implied in Qian's poetry as a possible and somehow reliable access to his personality/inner sincerity and thus would contribute to a new orientation of our understanding of his life.

Such a hermeneutic tripartite structure and its mechanism is not unfamiliar to modern readers who have a certain knowledge of traditional Chinese poetics, which tends to encourage a reading highlighting both lack of mediation and internal consistency in their hermeneutics: poetry is often considered as a true reflection of a poet's personality/intention and his/her life experiences within certain historical realities; and due to the logic of manifestation that occurs among poetry, the poet's personality, and the poet's life, a reader who knows one element can get access to the other two. Nevertheless, this hermeneutic transparency is challenged whenever inconsistency or even conflicts emerge among those three elements, especially under the circumstance where poetry seems to dissociate itself from what a poet actually does in "real life." To solve this hermeneutic dilemma, two different major stances are often adopted by readers. Whereas one is to reject poetry as a kind of deliberate deception in light of the facts of a poet's life, the other attempts to disarm such a threat of inconsistency by drawing attention to interpretive complexities and by offering a reconciliation between poetry and the poet's life in order to reinstate hermeneutic equilibrium and transparency. As we can perceive in the case of Qian's reception, the discrepancy between the two ends of this hermeneutic link disturbs the supposed smooth process of manifestation from life to poet's intention and finally to poetry, and therefore makes a poet's personality/intention a site fraught

with a kind of fruitful ambiguity which could be appropriated by either side (in attack or in defense).

To some extent the hermeneutic dilemma in the reception of Qian can be associated with Qian's own awareness of the hermeneutics of transparency, and his continuous effort to complicate such transparency creates a tension between his life experience and his writings during the late Ming and early Qing period. Such an effort can be perceived from his project of composing a Du Fu commentary, which spanned over thirty years under changing circumstances from the late Ming to the early Qing.

In the beginning of the *Du Du xiao jian* 讀杜小箋 ("Minor Notes on Reading Du Fu's Poems," hereafter *Xiaojian*), Qian Qianyi describes how he started writing his commentaries on Du Fu:

After I returned to my fields I had more leisure time. From time to time, I recited Du Fu's poetry to while away the long days. Whenever I chanced to have an insight, I would share it with Cheng Jiasui. Jiasui said: "The errors and forgeries in *The Collection of A Thousand Masters' Annotations to Du Fu's Poetry* are detestable. Why don't you correct them and bequeath your changes to those who study him?" I replied: "The difficulties of annotating Du Fu's poetry have already been described in detail by Lu You (1125-1210). Since Lu You dared not annotate even Su Shi's poetry, how dare I annotate Du Fu's poetry?" We sighed to each other and dropped the project. This summer, Lu Shique from Dezhou printed a work entitled *Transcription of Du Fu's Poetry by A Minor Official* and asked Chen Wumeng to send it to me for a preface. Since I dare not annotate Du Fu, how dare I write a preface to Du Fu's poetry? . . . [I] randomly recorded several notes and titled it "Minor Notes on Reading Du Fu's poems to Be Sent to Lu" to show that it was motivated by Lu Shique. It is called "minor notes" in that I, the unworthy one, could only recognize minor aspects [of Du Fu's poetry]. I sent it to him for corrections as well as my explanation of why I dare not write a preface.<sup>190</sup>

歸田多暇，時誦杜詩，以銷永日。間有一得，輒舉示程孟陽。孟陽曰：“杜《千家注》繆偽可恨，子何不是正之以遺學者？”予曰：“注詩之難，陸放翁言之詳矣。放翁尚不敢注蘇，予敢注杜哉？”相與嘆息而止。今年夏，德

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<sup>190</sup> *Qian Muzhai quanji*, 3:2153-4.

州盧戶部德水刻《杜詩胥鈔》，屬陳司業無盟寄予，俾為其敘。予既不敢注杜矣，其又敢敘杜哉？… …漫錄若干則，題曰《讀杜詩寄盧小箋》，明其因德水而興起也。曰小箋，不賢者識其小也。寄之以就正於盧，且道所以不敢當序之意。

Here Qian Qianyi tries to portray the initiation of his Du Fu commentaries as an unplanned result (even resulting from a certain reluctance): reading Du Fu merely to while away the time, having an informal conversation with Cheng Jiasui about writing commentaries on Du Fu (and its difficulty), and then unexpectedly receiving Lu Shique's request for a preface. Qian declines the request but then writes down some modest notes (in the format of *jian* 箋<sup>191</sup>) on Du Fu, which in fact turns out to be the beginning of his Du Fu commentary project. In the following year, 1634, Qian continues working on this project and produces more commentaries, the *Du Du er jian* 讀杜二箋 ("Second Notes on reading Du Fu's poems," hereafter *Erjian*) which becomes the sequel to his earlier notes. Both of those commentaries were included in the *Chu xue ji* 初學集 (*Collection of Beginning Studies*), published in 1643.<sup>192</sup> Shortly after, of course, the Ming fell and Qian passed through his brief period serving both the Ming loyalist court and the Qing. On his way home following his resignation from the Qing government, he visited Lu Shique in Shangdong province for ten days and discussed and exchanged poems in Lu's Du Pavilion 杜亭. Du Pavilion was constructed by Lu in memory of Du Fu as well as in

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<sup>191</sup> *Jian* 箋 and *zhu* 注 are different commentarial forms. *Zhu* mainly focus on details in poetry such as difficult diction and other concrete information such as places, animals, etc.. In contrast, *jian* is more analytic and is usually engaged in a bigger picture of poetry such as the meaning of a couplet or even the whole poem. As we shall see, the difference between the two will play an important part in how Qian conceptualized his commentary in his later years.

<sup>192</sup> Qian's commentaries from 1633 and 1634 were included in *Du Du he ke* 讀杜合刻. For an introduction of *Du Du he ke*, see Wu Hongyi 吳宏一 ed., *Qingdai shihua kaoshu* 清代詩話考述 (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan zhongguo wenzhe yanjiusuo, 2006), pp. 8-10.

memory of another Song recluse, Du Wulang 杜五郎. Granted the connotations of the location, it is likely that they discussed Du Fu commentaries.

After Qian returned to his hometown, his private library caught fire in 1650 and many of his books were destroyed. He tells us that the catastrophe further convinced him to cut himself off from mundane writings and to turn to Buddhism for consolation. Later, Qian learned that Zhu Heling 朱鶴齡 (1606-1683) was also working on Du Fu commentary, and he shared opinions with him. In 1655, Qian gave the draft of his Du Fu commentary to Zhu and asked him to finish a complete draft. However, after Zhu completed the draft, Qian found that it significantly differed from what he expected and decided to complete his own draft. Qian completed his draft at the age of eighty and continued revising it until his death in 1664. According to Qian Zeng 錢曾 (1629-1701), even when Qian was struck down by illness in his last years, he still tried to clarify certain points in Du Fu's poems and asked Qian Zeng to write them down for him. Qian Zeng further describes this touching deathbed scene that showed Qian's continuing obsession:

Since he completed the final draft [of the commentaries], he have added several hundred notes were added. Right before his death, his eyes opened with tears. I wiped them away and said: "Have any of your wishes not been fulfilled yet? If you live, you will fulfill it. If you die, I will fulfill it. If I am not capable, there might be someone else. Utmost efforts will be made for it, so what regrets should you have?" After that, Qian Qianyi closed his eyes and passed away.<sup>193</sup>

成書而後，又千百條。臨屬續。目張，老淚猶濕。我撫而拭之曰：而之志有未終焉者乎？而在而手，而亡我手，我力之不足，而或有人焉，足謀之而何恨？而然後瞑目受含。

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<sup>193</sup> *Qianzhu Dushi*, p.1.

In 1667, three years after Qian Qianyi's death, Qian Zeng worked with Ji Zhenyi 季振宜 and eventually published Qian's commentaries. This edition had a strong impact on the reading of Du Fu throughout the early Qing. From the account of his production of Du Fu commentaries as described above, we can roughly divide Qian's engagement with Du Fu into two major stages. The first stage began after Qian's dismissal from the court in 1629 until 1634, when he finished the *Erjian*. The years between 1655 and 1662 formed the second stage, in which Du Fu commentaries again became one of his primary concerns. 1644 serves as a symbolic watershed in his relationship with Du Fu, occupying the middle of the twenty years between those two stages. Qian's surrender to the Qing on one hand and his claim of loyalty to the fallen Ming on the other creates the hermeneutic discrepancy that created long-lasting debates over the authenticity of such a claim. From his work we know that Qian himself was highly aware of such a discrepancy and his devotion to Du Fu commentaries in his later years could be considered as one important strategy to bridge such a hermeneutic gap between his life and his words. Chen Yinke believed that Qian's Du Fu commentaries actually points to the Ming situation through its discussion of Tang dynasty events, and so depicts the late-Ming political circumstances that Qian experienced.<sup>194</sup> Nevertheless, Chen did not take the trouble to prove such an observation, as he did in his close reading of the *Toubu ji*. Moreover, the scope of Chen's argument as well as its time frame (the late Ming period) does not do enough justice to Qian's Du Fu commentaries. First, despite their political implications, Qian's commentaries also contain other concerns, such as his responses to the contemporary

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<sup>194</sup> Liu Rushi *biezhuan*, p.1000.

literary field and to the earlier tradition of Du Fu interpretation. Second, although Qian spent three-fourths of his life in the Ming (when he published the *Xiaojian* and the *Erjian*), he also lived almost twenty years under the rule of the Qing, when he undertook his last serious efforts at Du Fu commentary. While his relationship with Du Fu experienced constant changes during the late Ming and the early Qing period, I will also contend that he put much effort in negotiating and balancing various concerns in his commentaries as his life progressed. To support this argument, I will not only relate his Du Fu commentaries to the two different stages of his life, but also explore their connections with his other works to show how he took advantage of the supposed hermeneutic transparency and "life-hermeneutics" of Du Fu to weave together his various concerns into a web: in other words, how he added "interpretive thickness" into an assumed hermeneutic transparency.

### **The First Stage:**

#### **Reading Du Fu within the Literary and Political Fields during the late Ming**

##### **1. Literary competition**

As I noted above, Qian tries to present the production of the *Xiaojian* as an unplanned and unexpected outcome. Meanwhile, he expresses great caution in annotating Du Fu's poems, a caution underscored by his heavy attack against the injustice earlier people have wrought upon them. In the same preface, he writes:

I once rashly said that, ever since the Song, among the imitators of Du Fu poetry none has been worse than Huang Tingjian, and that among commentators on Du Fu's poetry none has been worse than Liu Chenweng. Huang's imitation of Du's poetry fails to recognize from where his poetry evolved: namely, "the old

masters who flew and soared, with remaining waves intricately beautiful.” Instead, Huang proposed that there was a forcefulness in Du’s poetry, and he emphasized its strange sentences and difficult words. He thought that he had inherited Du Fu’s legacy, but his imitations were skewed and trivial.

Liu’s commentaries on Du Fu failed to recognize the major characteristics of Du’s poetry, namely, that it was “elaborate from the beginning through the end, with parallel sounds and rhymes”. Instead, he emphasized novelty and rarity in Du’s poetry and underscored the importance of single words. He thought he had obtained the marrow of Du’s poetry, but his commentaries were partial.

Imitators in the Hongzhi and Zhengde periods swallowed his poetry alive or flayed it, and their mechanical imitation suffered from the same weaknesses as Huang Tingjian’s (though the sly ones among them nevertheless criticized the Jiangxi school [represented by Huang Tingjian]. In recent times, Du’s commentators have unearthed the obscurities and selected the oddities, taking the “ghost den” as their means of living, and this is similar to Liu Chenweng’s weakness. Among them, the arrogant ones attacked Du Fu himself.

Alas! The “Greater Odes” have not been composed for a long time. Lu Deshui, a scholar from the north, resolutely makes an effort to make Du Fu’s legacy prosper. Is he going to correct the severe weakness of the Song and Yuan periods and cure the contemporary illness [in imitating and commenting Du Fu] in order to make manifest the collected efforts of the Ancients three thousand years later?<sup>195</sup>

予嘗妄謂自宋以來，學杜詩者莫不善於黃魯直；評杜詩者，莫不善於劉辰翁。魯直之學杜也，不知杜之真脈絡，所謂前輩飛騰，餘波綺麗者，而擬議其橫空排奐，奇句硬語，以為得杜衣鉢，此所謂旁門小徑也。辰翁之評杜也，不識杜之大家數，所謂鋪陳終始，排比聲韻者，而點綴其尖新俊冷，單詞隻字，以為得杜骨髓，此所謂一知半解也。弘、正之學杜者，生吞活剝，以尋擗為家當，此魯直之隔日瘡也，其黠者又反唇於西江矣。近日之評杜者，鉤深抉異，以鬼窟為活計，此辰翁之牙後慧也，其橫者並集矢於杜陵矣。嗚呼！大雅之不作久矣。德水北方之學者，奮起而昌杜氏之業，其殆將箴宋、元之膏肓，起今人之廢疾，使三千年以後，渙然復見古人之總萃乎？

Here Qian expresses his dissatisfaction with the earlier understanding of Du Fu’s poetry both in terms of poetic imitation and commentary. The Song period played a crucial role in the canonization of Du Fu through its vigorous reception. Along with numerous efforts in editing and anthologizing Du Fu’s poetry, Du Fu was gradually venerated as an

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<sup>195</sup> *Qian Muzhai quanji*, 4: 2153.

ultimate poetic model and many Song literati sought to imitate Du Fu's poetry in their own poetic practice. Huang Tingjian 黃庭堅 (1045-1105) was a prominent figure in this movement and the achievements of his poetic imitation was widely acknowledged from the Song onwards. *Jiangxi shishe zongpai tu* 江西詩社宗派圖 (*Genealogy of the Jiangxi Poetry Society*), composed by Lü Benzhong 呂本中 (1084-1145), traced the Jiangxi school back to Huang Tingjian, whose poetry was believed to be rooted in Du Fu.<sup>196</sup> Although many traditional scholars praised Huang for his excellent imitations of Du's poetry, objections have been common as well. Before Qian Qianyi, the Ming scholar Hu Yinglin 胡應麟 (1551-1602) criticized Huang's imitations as deviating from the true nature of Du's poetry, saying that Huang's poetry merely demonstrates a fondness for tonal violation and deliberate strangeness in diction.<sup>197</sup> To be sure, Huang's imitations are by no means merely mechanical copies of Du Fu and (in line with an "anxiety of influence" model) he was highly conscious of the need to appropriate Du Fu for constructing his own poetic identity.<sup>198</sup> What upset Qian Qianyi here was the fact that Huang's imitations greatly distorted Du's poetry and thus misled later generations in their poetic writing.

Qian's criticism of Huang was also driven by his own contemporary situation, where the strong voice of the *fugu* ("restoration of the ancient") literary movement still

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<sup>196</sup> *Jiangxi shishe zongpai tu* does not survive and our present information concerning it comes from quotes in other works. The date of its composition is controversial. For the Jiangxi school as well as its influence, see Mo Lifeng 莫礪鋒, *Jiangxi shipai yanjiu* (Jinan: qilu shushe, 1986).

<sup>197</sup> Hu Yinglin, *Shishu* 詩藪 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1958), p.53.

<sup>198</sup> It has been frequently observed that one major feature of Huang's poetics is to appropriate the legacy of the past for one's own uses. Huang once expressed his admiration for Du Fu's "magical transformation" of phrases from ancient writers in his own poetic composition. For an English analysis on Huang's poetic appropriation, see David Palumbo Liu, *The Poetics of Appropriation: The Literary Theory and Practice of Huang Tingjian* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993).

persisted. During the Ming dynasty, scholars represented by the "Seven Early Masters" (most famously Li Mengyang 李夢陽 (1472-1530) and He Jingming 何景明 (1483-1521) in the Hongzhi 弘治 (1488-1505) and Zhengde 正德 (1506-1521) eras) launched a *fugu* movement in the literary field that looked back to the specific past for poetic models -- among which Du Fu was highly venerated.<sup>199</sup> Later the *fugu* movement was revived in the hands of "Seven Later Masters," represented by Li Panlong 李攀龍 (1514-1570) and Wang Shizhen 王世貞 (1526-1590), for whom Du Fu again served as an exemplar in poetry. The *fugu* movement was highly influential in the Ming, and Qian himself was inevitably exposed to its influence. As Qian tells us, in his youth he greatly admired Li Mengyang's works and tried to memorize and even imitate Li's writings.<sup>200</sup> During his stay at Nanjing in 1606, Qian met Li Liufang 李流芳 (1575-1629), who playfully derided his writings' similarities to that of Li Mengyang. In Qian's later dealings with Yuan Zhongdao 袁中道 (1575-1630) of the Gong'an school and Cheng Jiasui 程嘉燧 (1565-1643), the two writers urged him to avoid the influence of Li Mengyang and of the *fugu* school in general.<sup>201</sup> The fundamental change in Qian's attitude that resulted from this can be seen in his employment of a different strategy for entering the contemporary literary field and thus for securing a position for himself. The strategy of "opposition" in the literary field is not uncommon in Chinese history, especially in Ming poetry, and an essential way for poets to find their own place. In many chronological accounts of how

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<sup>199</sup> However, it should be stressed that the so-called *fugu* school is not a monolithic category and neither is its attitude towards Du Fu monolithic.

<sup>200</sup> See "Chen Baishi ji xu" 陳百史集序, *Qian Muzhai quanji*, 8:676.

<sup>201</sup> Qian also received a message from the famous playwright Tang Xianzu, who warned him not to follow *fugu* school in literary practice. See "Tang yireng xiansheng wenji xu" 湯義仍先生文集序, in *Qian Muzhai quanji*, 2:905.

Ming poetry developed, a poetics of opposition (or rectification) is in the foreground: the so-called *taige ti* 臺閣體 ("cabinet style") dominated in the beginning of Ming; then it was opposed by the Chaling school 茶陵派 and later by the "Seven Early Masters," who advocated looking back to the High Tang and earlier periods for poetic models; such an archaic orientation was then opposed by the Tang-Song school 唐宋派, who elevated Song poetry to a higher status; the "Seven Later Masters" in the *fugu* school then again directed their eyes to the High Tang for poetic models; then, finally, in opposition to the widespread poetics espoused by the *fugu* school, the late Ming witnessed the Gong'an school and the Jingling school, which tried in turn to rectify the defects of the *fugu* school in different ways.

However, in this poetics of opposition, antithesis often runs a risk of over-simplifying poetic theories and practices on both sides. For example, it has been often assumed that Li Mengyang and other figures in the so-called *fugu* school advocated going "back to the ancients", while on the contrary the Yuan brothers of the Gong'an school turned away from the ancients to the values of self-expression. The mechanics of the poetics of opposition lies exactly in such over-simplification: by highlighting certain defects of the other, one accomplishes self-definition by correcting those defects. Such "highlighting" often turns out to be an act of "labeling" when other characteristics are eclipsed in opposition. Therefore, the discourse of the *fugu* movement and anti-*fugu* movement fails to do full justice to the complexity of both sides. For instance, while advocating that one should learn poetry from the great masters of earlier periods, Li Mengyang also believed that true poetry resided in contemporary quotidian life and

stressed the importance of the self in poetic composition (this "self" was identified as similar to the "self" of the ancients, so that both supposedly contributed to authentic and spontaneous expression in poetry).<sup>202</sup> On the other hand, Yuan Hongdao, often considered as an anti-*fugu* leader, never totally rejected the past. What annoyed Yuan was not the act of learning from the past but rather how the past was distorted through the learning of others (e.g., members in the *fugu* school). At the center of this poetics of opposition (and in every poetic position) lies the rhetoric of the past (*gu* 古, "ancient"), which simultaneously possesses hermeneutic authority and flexibility and thus can serve as an effective strategy to secure a position in the contemporary literary field. Li Mengyang claimed to follow the *fa* 法 (laws/rules) of the past, and his later debate with another leader of the *fugu* movement, He Jingming, exactly focused on how to get back to the ancients. Yuan Hongdao objected to mechanical imitation in form and advocated the expression of *xingling* 性靈 ("innate spirit") as an authentic way shared by the ancients in poetic composition.

Here the past functions as an effective strategy that simultaneously performs two opposite movements: a way of distancing oneself from the present (especially the dominant voices and tendencies in the contemporary literary field), as well as a way of connecting oneself with the present *through* such an act of distancing (a kind of participation in contemporary literary competition). As we can perceive from the different and often conflicting poetic claims in the Ming literary field, the past as rhetoric

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<sup>202</sup> In contrast with the common opinion that this piece is a late composition that shows remorse for Li's earlier doctrinaire *fugu* stance, the modern scholar Liao Kebin 廖可斌 argues that the preface was in fact composed at the early stage of Li's life. *Mingdai wenxue fugu yundong yanjiu* 明代文學復古運動研究 (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 2008), p.115-117.

possesses a certain flexibility that can accommodate various poetic practices. The issue is more how one learns from the past rather than whether one should learn from the past. It is through the very act of advocating how to learn from the past that the past is defined and redefined for different ends. If we situate Qian Qianyi's interpretation of Du Fu within the movement of the Ming self-defining confrontation with the poetic legacy of the past, we can observe that Qian, like others, took advantage of the rhetoric of the past and engaged himself in the poetics of opposition for the purpose of position-taking in the history of Chinese poetry as well as in the literary field during the Ming.<sup>203</sup>

In the Ming poetic field, Du Fu became an essential part of this rhetoric of the past and played a vital role in literary competition. One major obstacle Qian Qianyi had to deal with was the legacy of the *fugu* school. At one point, Qian explicitly says that his opinions on poetry are in greatest conflict with the Ming *fugu* leaders, literati such as Li Mengyang, Li Panlong and Wang Shizhen.<sup>204</sup> Since Du Fu was important for the *fugu* school, re-reading Du Fu would provide an excellent opportunity for Qian to dismiss their influence.

I once received instructions from my seniors and learned their opinions on learning poetry. They considered that in the way of learning poetry, none was better than the ancients and none worse than those of the present. Why? From the Tang onward, the ways and tracks of the poets were all epitomized in Du Fu. . . . After the Dali era, there was not a single poet who did not derive from Du Fu. . . . But if one searches for the way in which they imitated Du Fu's poetry, nothing can be pinpointed. . . . The reason why Li Mengyang's imitation of Du Fu misled himself and others is that he mechanically copied Du Fu without any knowledge

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<sup>203</sup> For a theoretical discussion on the competition in the cultural field, see Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), pp. 29-141. As we will see later, the case of Qian Qianyi demonstrates greater complexity due to his continuous effort to accommodate his various concerns along with changed social realities.

<sup>204</sup> *Qian Muzhai quanji*, 6:1562.

of him, and yet claimed that one must follow such a method in order to become him.<sup>205</sup>

嘗奉教于先生長者，而竊聞學詩之說。以爲學詩之法，莫善于古人，莫不善于今人。何也？自唐以降，詩家之途轍，總萃于杜氏。大曆後以詩名家者，靡不繇杜而出 . . . . 然求其所以爲杜者，無有也. . . . 夫獻吉之學杜，所以自誤誤人者，以其生吞活剝，本不知杜，而曰必如是乃爲杜也。

Qian acknowledges Du Fu's status as a poetic model since the Dali 大曆 (766-779) era and yet points out that in contrast to earlier Du Fu learners Li Mengyang was trapped in mechanical imitation and therefore failed to know the real Du Fu. To make things even worse, Qian argues that Li's adherence to such defective imitation as the only way to the real Du Fu produced negative consequences for a century and greatly misled many poetry learners during the Ming. In fact, Li Mengyang was also opposed to the mechanical imitation of the ancients. In his letter to He Jingming, Li underscores that what he adheres to in the ancients is nothing but *fa* (laws/rules), an essential and universal element in poetic composition.

If I stole meanings and forms from the ancients and then cut out their words as a way of writing, it would be appropriate to call this "shadow." Nevertheless, if I use my emotions to articulate contemporary events, strictly following the laws/rules of the ancients, and do not [merely] imitate the words of the ancients -- just as Ban follows Chui's circle and Chui follows Ban's square and yet the wood they use is different -- how could it not work?<sup>206</sup>

假令僕竊古之意，盜古之形，剪裁古辭以爲文，謂之“影子”，誠可；若以我之情，述今之事，尺寸古法，罔襲其辭，猶班，圓倕之圓，倕，方班之方。而倕之木，非班之木也，此奚不可也。

Li Mengyang here clearly draws a boundary between the self (as well as contemporary events) and the ancients and yet at the same time crosses the boundary by establishing a

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<sup>205</sup> Ibid, 2:928-9.

<sup>206</sup> "Bo Heshi lunwen shu" 駁何氏論文書, Gao Shaoyu ed., *Zhongguo lidai wenlun xuan* 中國歷代文論選 (Shanghai: Shaihai guji chubanshe, 1990), 3:48.

special connection through the internal rules of poetic composition, which rejects being a shadow of the ancients. He employs the example of the ancient craftsmen Chui and Ban to illustrate the mechanics of differences and commonalities in poetic composition between his own work and that of the ancients.<sup>207</sup> Personal emotions and contemporary events, coupled with the denial of mere copying could be considered as the “wood” which distinguishes him from the ancients. In his mind, the greatness of ancient models lies in its conformity to certain internal rules in poetic composition and therefore one’s adamant adherence to such objective and universally applicable law contributes to the creation of a good poetic craft. Such belief also allows Li to offer very concrete techniques and guidelines for the reading and writing of poetry.

Qian Qianyi accuses Li Mengyang of being a mechanical imitator of Du Fu and completely ignores his emphasis on the significance of internal law and techniques. On the one hand, such an accusation echoes earlier criticism of defects observed in Li’s imitative praxis and became widely accepted in the late Ming literary field; on the other hand Qian deliberately manipulates the poetics of opposition to highlight the perceived defects in Li’s work and thus establishes and justifies his own poetic claim. The motivation of securing one’s position by challenging prominent figures in contemporary literary field becomes much clearer when we see Qian lumping together leading figures in the *fugu* school such as Li Mengyang from the Seven Early Masters and Wang Shizhen 王世貞 (1526-1590) from the Seven Later Masters. Qian’s vehement attack plays with the rhetoric of the past and focuses on their supposed distortion of it:

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<sup>207</sup> Both Ban (i.e. Gongshu Ban 公輸班) and Chui 偁 were famous craftman in ancient China. See Li Xian’s commentary in the “Biography of Cui Yin” 崔駰傳 in the *Hou Han shu* 後漢書, 82:3a, in *Siku quanshu*.

People who studied poetry in recent periods only knew Li Mengyang and Wang Shizhen. Those who spoke of the Han, Wei, and High Tang only knew Li Mengyang's and Wang Shizhen's Han, Wei, and High Tang. Over a hundred years, from the Hongzhi to the Wanli eras, Li Mengyang's obscuring mist appeared earlier and Wang Shizhen's obscuring mist appeared later. Learners could not see the sun and moon, as if they were walking in darkness or were planted topsy-turvy.<sup>208</sup>

近代之學詩者，知空同、元美而已矣。其哆口稱漢、魏，稱盛唐者，知空同、元美之漢、魏、盛唐而已矣。自弘治至於萬曆，百有餘歲，空同霧於前，元美霧於後。學者冥行倒植，不見日月。

In Qian's opinion, the century-long *fugu* movement represented by Li Mengyang and Wang Shizhen created nothing but a mist that greatly obscured the ancients. Under these circumstances, Ming learners were merely exposed to distorted understandings of the ancients by advocates in the *fugu* movement. Such attack against influential figures in Ming literary field served as an effective strategy for Qian to distinguish himself and correct what he perceived the dominant and yet defective poetic practice.

Nevertheless, Qian Qianyi was not the only one at his time who pointed out the supposed defective imitation of Du Fu by prominent leaders in the *fugu* school. The Jingling school headed by Zhong Xing 鍾惺 (1574-1625) and Tan Yuanchun 譚元春 (1586-1637) also launched attacks against the *fugu* movement. Zhong and Tan together compiled an important poetic collection, the *Shi gui* 詩歸 (*Poems Returning [to the Past]*). As an anthology of earlier poems, the *Shi gui* consists of two parts: *Gushi gui* 古詩歸 (*Return to Ancient Poems*) and *Tangshi gui* 唐詩歸 (*Return to Tang Poems*), with

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<sup>208</sup> "Huang Ziyu shixu" 黃子羽詩序, *Qian Muzhai quanji*, 2:925.

the former dealing with pre-Tang poems and the latter focusing on the Tang. Zhong Xing and Tan Yuanchun adopted the *pingdian* 評點 style of criticism in *Shi gui* and included more than three hundred poems by Du Fu. In the preface, Zhong criticizes the poetic imitations of the *fugu* school: “Our era doesn’t lack students of the ancients. Generally speaking, what they pick is the shallowest, the narrowest and the most familiar things by the ancients, which are easy to speak and write. They wrongly assume that the ancients reside in this” 今非無學古者，大要取古人之極膚極狹極熟，便于口手者，以為古人在是。<sup>209</sup> At the same time, Zhong expresses his disagreement with the Gong'an school, which, in Zhong’s opinion tries to correct the *fugu* school and yet suffers from similar defects. As Zhong sees it, the Gong'an school attempts to differentiate itself from the *fugu* school by embracing individuality and spontaneity in the poetic voice. However, Zhong argues that the difference sought by the Gong'an school doesn't capture the true spirit of the ancients and therefore turns out to be nothing but the shallowest, the narrowest and the most familiar things by ancient people. In order to discover authentic poetry (*zhenshi* 真詩), Zhong emphasizes the meeting of the spiritual with the ancients through seeking their “hidden emotions and solitary thoughts” (*youqing danxu* 幽情單緒). Such pursuit distinguishes Zhong's and Tan’s understanding of the poetic past from that of the *fugu* leaders and manifestes itself in their interpretation of Du Fu’s poems. It is noticeable that the *Shi gui* pays great attention to less-studied details, such as the usage of single words and quotidian scenes in poems, and often makes highly subjective, rhetorically

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<sup>209</sup> “The Preface to *Shi gui*,” *Xuxiu siku quanshu* 續修四庫全書 (Shangai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2002), vol. 1589, p. 351.

captivating, and yet largely unclear comments. For example, on the first line of Du Fu's poem "Gazing at Mount Tai," Zhong notes that the last three characters obtain the spirit of the word "gazing" (*wang* 望).<sup>210</sup> The comment seems to draw readers' attention to the significance of the last three characters in their relation to the title, but it still remains unclear to a reader what the spirit of the word "gazing" is and how and why those three character successfully capture that spirit. Zhong's and Tan's work promotes a highly subjective understanding characterized by its efficiency and elusiveness: in many cases they free a reader from concrete knowledge of different kinds of information in Du Fu's poems and instead grant one an "immediate" appreciation of the assumed most essential parts, though such appreciation often relies heavily on a reader's intuition and even in many cases borders on the mystical.

The *Shi gui* was extremely popular during the late Ming period and Qian was clearly aware of its influence, as he once mentions that "every poetry learner keeps the book [*Shi gui*] at home and venerates it as if it were edited by Confucius."<sup>211</sup> In the Ming poetic field Qian immediately faced two related major tasks: correcting the assumed distortion of Du Fu's poetry (and poetry in the past in general) by the *fugu* school as well as rectifying what he considered "erroneous" correction of such distortions by the Jingling school. He argues at one point:

Those who study/imitate Du's poetry in our dynasty take Li Mengyang as the great master. He considered the imitation of Du as his very life and so misled the entire world. Only a hundred years later did people who criticized Li Mengyang

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<sup>210</sup> The first line consists of five characters *dai zong fu ru he* 岱宗夫如何 and is literally translated as: "dai-zong then like what". See David Hawkes, *Little Primer of Tu Fu*, p.3. I have changed the spelling of "dai zong" from the Wade-Giles system to pinyin.

<sup>211</sup> Qian Qianyi, *Liechao shiji xiaozhuan* 列朝詩集小傳 (Shanghai: shanghai guji, 1983), p.570.

appear. Nevertheless, the way of poetry deteriorated to a greater extent. None of them can be called good learners of Du Fu.<sup>212</sup>

本朝之學杜者，以李獻吉為巨子。獻吉以學杜自命，聳瞽海內。比及百年，而訾訾獻吉者始出，然詩道之弊滋甚，此皆所謂不善學也。

Qian also dismisses the interpretations of Du Fu's poems in the *Shi gui* as a severe deviation from Du Fu's original intention, due to their lack of learning. For example, the phrase 天闕 *tian que* (literally, "heavenly tower") in the fifth line of Du Fu's poem "My visit to Fengxian temple in Longmen" had given rise to many interpretive controversies since the Song dynasty. The meaning of it is so elusive that some Song critics even considered it as a textual error through transmission and suggested different phrases to help make it intelligible.<sup>213</sup> The *Shi gui* also focuses on this phrase and comes up with its own interpretation. Zhong Xing argues that "there is no need to explain the line of "*tian que*" and it is an extraordinary line by itself"天闕句不必解，自是奇句. His co-editor Tan Yuanchun further criticizes people who suspect that there must be a textual error in this case, blaming their suspicions on their own lack of talent. Nevertheless, neither of them is able to (or feel obliged to) demonstrate the subtleties in the phrase and the line, and thus make no substantial contribution to the reader's understanding. In contrast, Qian provides a detailed commentary to the phrase *tian que* and employs many earlier sources to argue that the phrase *tian que* is appropriate here due to its close relationship with the topic of the poem.<sup>214</sup>

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<sup>212</sup> "Zeng zhongfang shi xue" 曾仲房詩序, *Qian Muzhai quanji*, 2:928. It is worthwhile to note that the word *xue* 學 in many cases means both "study" and "imitation."

<sup>213</sup> See chapter one, pp. 29-30.

<sup>214</sup> See the discussion of *tian que* in Chapter one.

## 2. Factional struggles and setbacks in the late Ming political field

Qian's commentaries on Du Fu were influenced by his own fate in late Ming politics (as has been pointed out by many modern scholars as well as by Qian's contemporaries). He began to enter the political field in his late twenties as a promising star, a *jinshi* degree holder who secured the third position in the imperial civil service exam. Some early sources suggest that Qian was originally considered as the top candidate in the exam, and yet due to factional struggles in the court at that time he was replaced by another candidate, Han Jing 韓敬 (1580-?), who eventually became the *zhuangyuan* in that year. Some later claimed that Han Jing's identity as a member of the Xuan faction led the faction leader Tang Binyin 湯賓尹 (fl. 1568) to violate the exam rules and promote him as the top candidate rather than Qian, who was intimately associated with the Donglin faction. Although there is no strong evidence to support this anecdote, factional struggles did become one distinct feature of late Ming politics, and Qian was inevitably involved in it throughout his political career.<sup>215</sup> After he obtained his *jinshi* degree, Qian was appointed as a Junior Compiler in the Hanlin Academy (*hanlinyuan bianxiu* 翰林院編修). However, his father passed away at that time and he had to return to his hometown to abide by the mourning period. It was not until ten years later that he was able to return to the court and secure a position during the reign of the Tianqi 天啓 emperor (r. 1621-27). He was then caught in the fierce struggles among different factions in the Tianqi court and especially between the faction headed by the notorious eunuch Wei Zhongxian 魏忠賢 (1568-1627) and the Donglin faction. He was

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<sup>215</sup> For factional struggles during the late Ming and early Qing period, see Xie Guozhen, *Ming Qing zhiji dangshe yundong kao* 明清之際黨社運動考 (Taipei: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1967).

first accused of accepting bribes when he served as the principal examiner in one provincial exam. Although the ensuing investigation showed the accusation was false, Qian became frustrated and soon asked for sick leave from his post. In 1624, he was recalled to the court and served as a lecturer to the emperor. Nevertheless, he was again dismissed from the court in the following year due to enmity from the so-called “eunuch faction.” When the emperor Chongzhen 崇禎 (1610-1644) came to the throne, the eunuch faction was decisively defeated and Qian, often considered as a leading member in the Donglin faction, became a major candidate for the position of Grand Secretary. Unfortunately, the head of the Ministry of Rites Wen Tiren 溫體仁 (1573-1639) accused Qian of using his own faction to obtain the candidacy and in the end he lost his bid for power and returned to his hometown.

The preface to Qian’s *Xiaojian* is dated 1633, four years after he was dismissed from the court. However, we can tell from the preface that Qian began to focus on Du Fu’s poems shortly after he returned home. So it is not very surprising to see that his commentaries on Du Fu were to some extent influenced by his experience in the Ming political arena. In a letter to Qian, Xu Shifu 徐世溥 (1608-1657) praises Qian highly for his knowledge and his effort to make explicit the allusions in Du Fu’s poems, but he also subtly cautions him against overinterpreting the poems to make them fit his own experience in contemporary politics.<sup>216</sup> Another contemporary, Shen Shoumin 沈壽民 (1607-1675), also highlights Qian’s overinterpretation by mentioning comments from a

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<sup>216</sup> “Da Qian Muzhai xiansheng lun guwen shu” 答錢牧齋先生論古文書, in *Chidu xinzhao* 尺牘新鈔 (Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 1986), Zhou Liangong 周亮工 ed., pp. 53-54.

certain Fang Erzhi 方爾止, who supposedly told Shen that Qian deliberately used his commentaries on Du Fu to allude to the incident concerning his candidacy for Grand Secretary.<sup>217</sup> Many modern scholars, including Chen Yinke, have also suggested the connection between Qian's political setback and his commentaries, but little effort has been made to show how such a connection is played out in detail. In the following section, I will demonstrate this connection by examining historical records surrounding Qian's candidacy and what light they cast on the commentaries. Based on this, I will further argue that Qian's reading of Du Fu involves a much more complicated hermeneutic connection in the political field between his own age and Du Fu's, which goes beyond the mere identification with Du Fu that many people might take for granted.

The incident of Qian's candidacy for the cabinet is mentioned in the *Ming shi* 明史 and other historical documents, such as the *Mingshi jishi benmo* 明史紀事本末 (*A Detailed Account of Events in the Ming shi*), and in Qian's own work as well.<sup>218</sup> We can briefly summarize events as follows: in 1628, when the Chongzhen emperor came to the throne, Qian was recalled to the court and appointed as Vice Minister of Rites 禮部侍郎. At the end of that year, Qian and six other officials were recommended as finalists for the membership of Secretariat. However, Wen Tiren, the Minister of Rites 禮部尚書 at that time, who was not included in the list of the finalists, questioned Qian's qualification and accused him of violating the law when he presided over the provincial exam in Zhejiang

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<sup>217</sup> See Shen Shoumin's postscript to Zhu Heling's edition of Du Fu commentaries, *Du Gongbu shiji jizhu* 杜工部詩集輯注 (Baoding: Hebei daxue chubanshe, 2009), p. 836. Fang might have had a close relationship with Qian, who once wrote a poem praising Fang's verse. In that poem Qian also mentions a future visit from Fang. *Qian Muzhai quanji*, 1:542.

<sup>218</sup> For a brief introduction of *Mingshi Benshi jimo*, one can refer to Wolfgang Franke's *An Introduction to the Sources of Ming History* 明代史集彙考 (Taipei: Zongqing tushu, 1978), p.54.

province in 1621. Wen had a fierce debate with Qian and other officials in the court. Although the investigation showed that Qian had not violated the law at that time, Wen eventually convinced the Chongzhen emperor that Qian had established his own political faction and that his defenders belonged to it. In the end, Qian's official titles were all withdrawn and he was sent away from court with commoner status; other people who defended Qian were also implicated and punished. This setback, combined with earlier factional struggles he had participated in, revealed to him just how easily one might be driven from the political center to the periphery. In his *Xiaojian* and *Erjian*, one major feature is Qian's effort to discover from Du Fu's poems information concerning factional struggles in the Tang court. It seems that the most intriguing political incident for Qian is Du Fu's defense for Fang Guan 房琯 (696-763) whose official title as Grand Councilor 宰相 was revoked by the emperor in 757.

“The Biography of Du Fu” in the *Xin Tang shu* 新唐書 attributes Fang's demotion to two major facts: (1) Fang had been defeated by the An Lushan rebels on the battlefield a few months earlier; (2) his retainer Dong Tinglan 董庭蘭 took advantage of Fang's status to gain illegal profits.<sup>219</sup> At that time, Du Fu was serving as Reminder 左拾遺<sup>220</sup>; he submitted a memorial to the emperor, arguing that the allegations against Fang were not adequate to remove such an important official from his current position. The emperor was enraged and had Du Fu interrogated. Fortunately, due to support from the

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<sup>219</sup> *Xin Tang shu*, 139: 1a-5b. *Siku quanshu*.

<sup>220</sup> According to Hucker, Reminder is “a remonstrance official (*chien-kuan*) responsible for catching and correcting errors of substance or style in state documents; one or more prefixed Left in the Chancellery (*men-hsia sheng*), one or more prefixed Right in the Secretariat (*chung-shu sheng*).” Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China*, 5256, p.425

new Grand Councilor Zhang Gao 張鎬 (n.d.-764), Du Fu escaped severe punishment, but like Fang and other people he was later demoted to a position away from the capital.

The “Biography of Fang Guan” in the *Jiu Tang shu* 舊唐書 draws our attention to other important reasons for the demotion of Fang Guan as well as Du Fu.<sup>221</sup> Before Fang’s retainer Dong Tinglan was impeached, the Military Commissioner 節度使 Helan Jinming 賀蘭進明 (fl. 728-759) told the emperor Suzhong that Fang Guan had once suggested to the previous emperor Xuanzong that he allow each of his princes to be in charge of specific areas of conflict in response to the national crisis brought by the An Lushan rebellion -- an action that would put Suzong (who was the Crown Prince at that time) at a great disadvantage in his plans to succeed to the imperial throne. Furthermore, Helan accused Fang of establishing a political faction and thus would hardly be able to serve as a loyal minister to the emperor Xuanzong. In 757, Suzhong ordered that Fang be removed from the position of Grand Councilor for his retainer Dong’s corruption. Several officials who tried to defend Fang Guan were identified as members of Fang’s clique and were later demoted to different places outside the capital. An imperial decree issued in 758 explicitly enumerated many charges against Fang, one of which was Fang’s misconduct of establishing his political faction in the court.

The particular emphasis on this incident in Qian’s Du Fu commentaries deserves further examination. Qian’s personal experience as a candidate for Grand Secretary (equivalent to the Grand Councilor in Tang) shares similarities with the case of Fang Guan. Like Fang Guan, Qian fell victim to factional struggles and was eventually

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<sup>221</sup> *Jiu Tang shu*, 111: 4b-13b.

repelled from the center of political power. A specific example from Qian's commentaries might help us get a better understanding of how Qian created (and played with) a hermeneutic connection between his time and Du Fu's time. In his *Xiaojian*, Qian's commentaries on the poem "Xi bing ma" 洗兵馬 ("Washing Weapons and Horses") touch on three aspects: explaining the location of Kongdong 崆峒; satirizing Suzong for his lack of filial piety; and disagreeing with Suzong for being partial to the officials who followed him in Lingwu and supported him as successor to the throne. Qian does not quote the whole poem and these three aspects seem only slightly connected, with Qian's comments occurring separately after different lines. However, in the *Erjian* Qian writes a long commentary on the poem (in fact, the longest one in both the *Xiaojian* and the *Erjian*). Not only does Qian quote the whole poem, he also states the gist of the poem at the very beginning of his commentary: "Washing Weapons and Horses" is to satirize the emperor Suzong for his inability to fulfill filial piety as a son and his failure to achieve great peace in the world due to his distrust of the worthy ministers of his father" 洗兵馬, 刺肅宗也。刺其不能盡子道, 且不能信任父之賢臣以致太平也。<sup>222</sup> Qian's commentary effectively integrates the three aspects mentioned in the *Xiaojian* and revolves around Suzong's distrust of the worthy ministers and his unwise support to factional struggles. Qian further considers the mention of Kongdong as Du Fu's warning against Suzong: In 755, as the An Lushan rebellion broke out and the rebels occupied the capital of Chang'an the following year, the emperor Xuanzong fled the capital to the southwest, and Suzong (the Crown prince at that time) was proclaimed his successor at

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<sup>222</sup> *Qian Muzhai quanji*, p.2190.

Lingwu, returning to the capital after it was recovered in 757. Kongdong was a place Suzong supposedly passed on his return journey to the capital. Qian argues that Du Fu tried to remind Suzong not to forget his hardships in exile, and that such a warning grows out of instances of Suzong's misbehavior depicted later in the poem.

<p>A few heroes have emerged in response to the situation To save the world and restore it to order.</p> <p>. . . . .</p> <p>No way to oppose those who cling to dragon and phoenix,<sup>223</sup> The whole world seems to be filled with marquises and princes. You fellows barely know that it is due to the imperial favor, And should not boast of yourselves when the time comes. Grand Councilor Xiao was kept in Guanzhong, The administration repeatedly used Zhang Liang.<sup>224</sup> (ll. 17-18; 25-30)]</p>	<p>二三豪俊爲時出， 整頓乾坤濟時了。</p> <p>攀龍附鳳勢莫當， 天下盡化爲侯王。 汝等豈知蒙帝力， 時來不得誇身強。 關中既留蕭丞相， 幕下複用張子房。</p>
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On this passage Qian writes:

Putting the world in order relies entirely on a few heroes and has nothing to do with fellows in Lingwu. Those fellows happened to receive the favor of the heaven and became marquises and princes by unduly "clinging to dragon and phoenix". They further attempted to create divisions in order to generate suspicion and doubt [between Suzong and his worthy ministers]. In establishing extraordinary merit, were they not those who coveted Heaven's merit and claimed it as their own? Du Fu addresses them as "you fellows," the words showing his contempt and aversion. At that time, people such as Zhang Liangdi and Li Fuguo within the palace [that is, court ladies and eunuchs] and Cui Yuan and Helan Jinming without all catered to Suzong's dislikes and maligned those ministers who previously had followed the emperor Xuanzong to Shu. Among Xuanzong's former ministers who went to Suzong's court and who were the greatest hopes for the age, none could be compared with Fang Guan and Zhang Gao. After Fang was deposed through Helan Jinming's slander, Zhang succeeded to him as Grand Councilor and yet was soon demoted as well. Neither could stay in his position for long.<sup>225</sup>

<sup>223</sup> That is, those who attached themselves to Suzong.

<sup>224</sup> For the original poem, see *Dushi xiangzhu*, 2:514-9. The title of this poem is *Xi bing xing* 洗兵行 in *Dushi xiangzhu*. Both Xiao He and Zhang Liang played a vital role in helping Li Bang 劉邦 establish the Han dynasty.

<sup>225</sup> *Qian Muzhai quanji*, 3:2190.

整頓乾坤，皆二三豪俊之力，于靈武諸人何與？諸人徼天之幸，攀龍附鳳，化爲侯王，又欲開猜阻之隙，建非常之功，豈非所謂貪天功以爲己力者乎？斥之曰汝等，賤而惡之之辭也。當是時，內則張良娣、李輔國，外則崔圓、賀蘭進明輩，皆逢君之惡，忌疾蜀郡元從之臣。而玄宗舊臣，遣赴行在，一時物望最重者，無如房琯、張鎬。琯既以進明之譖罷去，鎬雖繼相而旋出，亦不能久于其位。

Qian clearly points out the factional struggles in the Tang court at that time: officials at Lingwu (Suzong's court) envied and expelled their peers who had originally served the emperor Xuanzong in Shu. Lingwu and Shu not only refer to different places but also represent different political cliques: those who supported Suzong as emperor and those who expressed their loyalty to Xuanzong. In his exile during the An Lushan rebellion, Suzong announced his succession to the throne without obtaining the pre-approval from his father. Thus by emphasizing the difference in the cliques, Qian also criticizes Suzong's lack of filial piety and connects it to his political motivation. In Qian's opinion, it was Suzong's desire for the imperial throne that made him suspect and eventually sequester Xuanzong in the palace, as well as to dismiss the officials who were considered by him as a clique loyal to his father.

In his commentary Qian sympathizes with Fang Guan (and Fang's perceived clique) and his description of factional struggles in the Tang court reminds us of his own vicissitudes in the late Ming. Qian's failure largely resulted from two factors: factional competition for political power and (especially) the Chongzhen emperor's suspicion of Qian's candidacy as supposedly obtained through inappropriate use of his own clique. In this reading of "Washing Weapons and Horses," Qian largely identifies himself with Fang Guan in the sense that both of them were wronged in alleged factional struggles and were removed from the political center. In his commentary on a poem cycle by Qianyi

that dwells on the incident, Qian Zeng provides us with a detailed account and further draws our attention to how opponents such as Wen Tiren and Zhou Yanru conspired against Qian in a way quite similar to their Tang counterparts:

Earlier, due to the fact that his answer catered to the desires of the Chongzhen emperor, Zhou Yanru was favored by him. When it came to recommendation for members of Secretariat, fellow officials thought of the emperor's mind and were afraid that he would make use of Zhou and suppress Qian. Therefore they tried to prevent it and didn't put Zhou's name on the list of candidates. Zhou thus secretly incited Wen Tiren to first impeach Qian. At that time, there were already people from the inner court ready to help Wen, but the officials certainly were unaware of this. When they were suddenly recalled in reply to the emperor's inquiries, all of those officials said the decision would be made on that day. Not until they entered the court did they know of Wen's memorial. During the debate in the court, Wen's words came forth like a gushing spring and Zhou further attacked Qian from the side. Therefore the emperor was deeply convinced by the accusation of Qian's act of establishing a faction of his fellow officials. Even though many officials attacked Wen one after another, the emperor set aside their memorials without examining them. Later Wen and Zhou each ascended to the Secretariat in succession, but Qian was dismissed, returned the south, and was never recalled to the court again. These were all caused by the single word "faction."<sup>226</sup>

先是陽羨以召對稱旨，爲上所眷注，及會推閣員，諸臣微揣上意，恐用周而抑公也，因扼而止之，不列其名，周遂陰嗾烏程首先訐公。是時內廷已有爲之助者，諸臣固未知也。忽蒙召對，咸謂枚卜定于是日。至入朝，方知溫疏。廷辯時，烏程言出涌泉，陽羨復從旁極力排擠。于是黨同之說，中于上者實深，雖群臣交章攻溫，上概置不省。其後烏程、陽羨，相繼登政府，公削籍南還，竟一斥不復，皆黨之一字害之耳。

Qian Zeng's commentary on Qian Qianyi's *Chu xue ji* (which includes this poem cycle) was approved by Qian. Qian Zeng's account of Qian Qianyi's candidacy for the membership of Secretariat contains enough detail on the court debate to suggest that he probably received much of his information from Qian himself.

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<sup>226</sup> *Qian Muzhai quanji*, 184-85.

Qian shares many similarities with Fang Guan in these two different accounts. While Fang Guan is slandered by Helan Jinming, Qian is disparaged by Wen Tiren. In both cases the opponents in the court and those from the inner palace conspire against them: in the case of Fang, Qian indicates that the consort Zhang Liandi and the eunuch Li Fuguo slander him; in the case of Qian, Qian Zeng points out that some of those who helped Wen and Zhou attack Qian come from the inner palace as well. When other officials try to defend Fang and Qian, they are often accused of belonging to a faction and thus receive punishment along with the two of them. These similarities help us understand how Qian interweaves his political frustration into his commentary. He highlights the fact that Fang Guan should not have been dismissed because of a minor defect (his retainer's corruption); this simultaneously functions as a defense of Qian against Wen, who tried to use the alleged bribery accusation in the past to disqualify Qian's candidacy. Qian thus implies that since he did not participate in the bribery, it was not a sufficient reason to dismiss him. Furthermore, Qian tries to vindicate himself from the accusation of factionalism through his interpretation of Du's defense of Fang: he perceives this not as an act of partisan politics but as an act which springs out of Du's inner sincerity and which demonstrates his concerns for the benefit of the country; the Tang court needed a worthy Grand Councilor and Fang possessed that ability to help the Tang achieve the peace. Qian considers Du Fu's remonstrance and his ensuing lifelong political frustration as an embodiment of Du's exemplary morality:

Because he submitted a memorial to save Fang Guan, Du Fu was removed from the position of Reminder. He drifted to the South and experienced lifelong frustration. This is the great integrity Du Fu demonstrated in his official career,

his service to his lord and his friendship with others. Nevertheless, few people in later generations know this.<sup>227</sup>

公以上疏救房琯，自拾遺移官，流落劍外，終身不振。此一生出處事君交友之大節，而後世罕有知之者。

By drawing a boundary between partisan politics and exceptional morality (loyalty to ruler and to friends) in the case of Du Fu, Qian adeptly makes his defense for the people who had defended his own candidacy for the cabinet and yet were unfortunately implicated under the name of “faction.” Since such a false accusation was approved by the emperor, at the end of his commentary he further expresses his disappointment with the Chongzhen emperor through his criticism of Suzong:

There have been many cases of political factions since the Han dynasty. But there has never been a case of a ruler forming a faction by himself, and there was no such thing as a ruler who relegated his father’s officials to one faction, employed words to create allegations, and publicized them in the court to deliberately mislead later generations.<sup>228</sup>

自漢以來，鈎黨之事多矣，未有人主自鈎黨者，未有人主鈎其父之臣以爲黨，而文致罪狀，榜在朝堂，以明欺天下後世者。

Qian Zeng’s commentary on Qian Qianyi’s poem cycle also points out Qian’s dissatisfaction with the Chongzhen emperor’s invention of a non-existent faction: in a half-pleading and half-satiric manner in one line from that poem cycle, Qianyi writes: “a bright ruler will definitely not create factions” 明主定無鈎黨禁.

Throughout this particular commentary, Qian mainly identifies himself with Fang Guan. However, the connection made by Qian in his Du Fu commentaries is by no means a simple correspondence between Fang and himself. When we juxtapose Qian’s

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<sup>227</sup> Ibid, 3:2190-1.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid, 3:2191.

commentary that portrays Du Fu's frustration after the Fang Guan incident with Qian Zeng's commentary that portrays Qian Qianyi's frustration after his dismissal, we can find instead a resemblance between Qian Qianyi and Du Fu. While Du Fu "experienced lifelong frustration," Qian "was never recalled to the court again." In other places in Qian Qianyi's commentary, his identification to some extent seems to shift from Fang Guan to Du Fu. Although Qian had already returned to private life when he wrote his commentaries, he still frequently expressed his concerns with contemporary state affairs in his writings during this period. Such concerns are often revealed in the Du Fu commentaries as combination of self-promotion and self-lament: for example, in his commentary on Du Fu's famous poem cycle "Autumn Meditations, Eight Poems," Qian's explanations of Du Fu's supposed intentions suggest such a combination, coupled with the resemblances between his own life and that of Du's. In the second poem in the series, his commentary describes the plight in which Du Fu, while trapped in Kuizhou and distant from the capital, looks to the capital every night. Like Du, Qian has been dismissed from court yet still constantly hopes to have an opportunity to return there and bring his talents into full play. Qian's lament over Du Fu's predicament exactly reminds us of his own situation: "exerting no influence upon the world, in vain only embracing his lifelong sorrow over world affairs" 無所短長于世，徒抱百年世事之悲。<sup>229</sup>

In summary, Qian's interpretation of Du Fu before the collapse of the Ming operated in two different fields at the same time: the literary field and the political field. Qian's own preface explicitly announces his commentary as a corrective to Du Fu

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<sup>229</sup> *Qian Muzhai quanji*, 3:2184.

hermeneutics in the past and that within current society. As we have seen, Qian uses Du as a strategy to secure his own position in the contemporary literary field by attacking influential figures and schools such as the *fugu* school and the Jingling school. However, his appropriation of the poetics of opposition is also characterized by a rhetoric of the past, which is also found in other competitors' poetic practice related to Du Fu: on the one hand, the authority of the past invoked by Qian (and his competitors) points to an assumed hermeneutic transparency: interpreters could obtain access to the past through poetry. On the other hand, such transparency simultaneously possesses the quality of flexibility and inflexibility: it invites various paths to the past and yet encourages also an assumption that there is only one authentic path to arrive there. Qian plays with this kind of hermeneutic transparency in his Du Fu commentary and seeks to establish his literary status through his supposedly unique connection to the poetry (this will be further developed in the commentary he composed after the collapse of the Ming).

However, in addition to literary competition, Qian incorporates a life dimension into his commentaries and associates his reading of Du Fu with his personal experience, especially his sufferings from factional struggles in late Ming politics. The identification created by Qian in his commentary is by no means monolithic as it moves between the figures of Fang Guan and Du Fu. While in the *Xiaojian* and the *Erjian* such identification mainly focuses on Fang, due to the controversy surrounding Qian's candidacy for the cabinet, we will see later that Qian primarily identifies himself with Du Fu after the collapse of the Ming. Such a change takes place concurrently with the changes in Qian's life and in the contemporary situation; it also demonstrates Qian's dual effort in rewriting

his life hermeneutics: the need to correspond to new situations and to negotiate with the past the interpretation of Du Fu.

### **The Second Stage: Reading Du Fu after the Collapse of the Ming**

Although Qian's interpretation of Du Fu during the late Ming period reveals his concerns in both the literary and political fields, these concerns are to some degree addressed piecemeal there. However, his life in the early Qing period granted him an opportunity to further re-experience Du's poems and integrate these concerns into a larger hermeneutic system that bridges the two eras. The collapse of the Ming promoted Qian to reconsider the concept of poetry and its association with the turbulent dynastic transition in which he lived. Qian was certainly not satisfied with the idea of Du Fu's poetry merely as a strategy with which to distinguish himself in contemporary literary competition. He further turned Du's poetry into a site where he could situate himself in the history of the development of poetry as a whole and also reexamine the interplay between poetry and society through his engagement in a life hermeneutics.

#### **1. Poetry has its grounding**

In many of his writings after the collapse of Ming, Qian continued his attack against the poetic theories and practices of the *fugu* and Jingling schools. Nevertheless, one noticeable difference is that in those writings Qian frequently associates his criticism with polarities defined by the the concepts of *suxue* 俗學 ("vulgar learning") and *guxue* 古學 ("ancient learning"). Such a distinction suggests that the function of Qian's Du Fu

reading after the fall of the Ming extends from a major strategy in contemporary literary competition to a way to situate himself in the historical development of poetry as a whole.

Qian mentions the experience of moving from a kind of *suxue* to *guxue* during the late Ming period. He confesses that in his youth he once erroneously identified works by Li Mengyang and Wang Shizhen as a manifestation of the ancient way and so eagerly imitated them. Later he realized his mistake, burned all his earlier writings (supposedly influenced by Li and Wang), and devoted himself instead to “ancient learning.” He further claims that when, at the age of forty he began to pay increasing attention to the ancient and to abandon the vulgar, this eventually led to the emergence of the Yushan 虞山 school (an important poetic school founded by Qian in the early Qing).<sup>230</sup>

For Qian, *suxue* refers to a kind of defective learning that is highly misleading and harmful. In one place he comments: “the defect of *suxue* is that it can make people exhaust the Classics without understanding the Classics, and study the ancients without understanding the ancients” 俗學之弊，能使人窮經而不知經，學古而不知古。<sup>231</sup> Here he reveals its dual feature: a lack of real understanding of the past/orthodox under a mask of a seeming affinity for the past. He often uses the term in opposition to *guxue* to describe the defective poetic practice prevalent in the Ming. This criticism largely echoes his earlier attacks on the *fugu* and Jingling schools: despite their differences, both schools deviated from the way of the past. But at the same time, Qian tries to take it a step further and examine the historical development of poetic practice as a whole through the lens of this opposition.

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<sup>230</sup> “Fu Li Shuze shu” 復李叔則書, *Qian Muzhai quanji*, 6:1343.

<sup>231</sup> “Zengbie Fang Zixuan jinshi xu” 贈別方子玄進士序, *Qian Muzhai quanji*, 2:992-3.

One major defect in the Ming poetic field as observed by Qian was a misconception of poetry that led to artificial periodization of the poetic past. Qian attacks this as an example of *suxue* and traces the practice back to the Southern Song critic Yan Yu 嚴羽(?):

Ancient learning is getting further away day by day, and people make themselves go astray. Heterodox models and demonic opinions were concocted by Yan Yu and Liu Chenweng in the late Song period, and broke out during the Hongzhi, Zhengde, Jiajing, and Wanli eras. When students first begin to recognize tonal mistakes, then the sounds and images of the Han, Wei, Qi, Liang, Early Tang, Middle Tang, High Tang, and Late Tang are coiled up within their breasts. They rely on others' eyes and ears to look and listen [just as an inchworm climbs], searching out the twig with crooked steps. Throughout their lives they become slaves and can never extricate themselves. Alas! It is deplorable.<sup>232</sup>

古學日遠，人自作辟。邪師魔見，蘊釀於宋季之嚴羽卿、劉辰翁，而毒發於弘、德、嘉、萬之間。學者甫知聲病，則漢、魏、齊、梁、初、盛、中、晚之聲影，已盤存于胸中，備耳借目，尋條屈步，終其身爲隸人而不能自出。吁！可悼也。

The *fugu* school, especially the “Seven Earlier Masters” headed by Li Mengyang, associated the models for poetic genres with different periods. For example, one should refer to the Han and Wei as the model for ancient-style poems and to the High Tang for recent-style poems. Such periodization of poetic development was deeply inscribed in the Ming literary field and was closely related to the elevation of Tang poetry (especially the High Tang) at the time. Qian strongly objects to this periodization, since such a practice misconceptualizes poetry and significantly deviates from his concept of *guxue*. He accuses Yan Yu of being the first one who misled later generations in their understanding of poetry. The periodization (often with an accompanying rejection of poetry after the

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<sup>232</sup> “Aiqin guan pingxuan shi wei xu” 愛琴館評選詩慰序, *Qian Muzhai quanji*, 5:713.

Tang) greatly disturbs Qian due to its disruption of the continuity and the variety present in historical poetic development.

If there is a *Classic of Odes*, then there must be a *Songs of Chu*; if there is a Han, Wei and Jian'an, then there must be a Six Dynasties; if there is a Jinglong and Kaiyuan, then there must be a mid-Tang, late Tang and Song-Yuan. Nevertheless, the entire world abides by the nonsense created by Yan Yu, Liu Chenweng, and Gao Bingli, which compartmentalizes eras and periods and fragments the rules of tonal regulation. It is like a silly fly that tries to break through the window paper and yet fails to see the world -- this is really worth our pity.<sup>233</sup>

有《三百篇》，則必有楚騷。有漢、魏建安，則必有六朝。有景隆、開元，則必有中、晚及宋、元。而世皆遵守嚴羽卿、劉辰翁、高廷禮之瞽說，限隔時代，支離格律，如痴蠅穴紙，不見世界。斯則良可憐潛者。

Qian dismisses periodization by emphasizing the continuity that extends from the *Classic of Odes* to the Ming. For him, the correct attitude towards the past is exemplified by Du Fu, who was able not only to abandon false styles but could also learn from a wide variety of predecessors from different periods. In Qian's opinion, Du Fu's practice exactly illustrates the way of *guxue*, a quality that is absent in the dominant poetic practices of the Ming: neither the *fugu* school nor the Jingling school follows real *guxue* and thus both of them became nothing but a form of *suxue*. Through his own recognition of the real spirit of *guxue*, Qian becomes an authoritative intermediary to the past by constructing and clarifying the *suxue-guxue* opposition. Qian further associates *guxue* with the essential quality of poetry. It seems to him that the genuine transmission of *guxue* is made possible when poetry has its grounding.

People who composed poems in the past have had groundings for them. The eroticism of the "Airs of the States," the complaints of the "Lesser Odes," the pain and the laments of "Encountering Sorrow," came into being through the

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<sup>233</sup> Qian Muzhai *quanji*, 6:1563.

relationships of ruler-subject, husband-wife, and friend-friend, and arose in a time full of difficulties....Thus it is called "having its grounding."<sup>234</sup>

古之為詩者有本焉。《國風》之好色，《小雅》之怨誹，《離騷》之疾痛叫呼，結管於君臣、夫婦、朋友之間，而發作於身世逼側、時命連蹇之會……故曰「有本」。

Qian believes that poetry derives its power and authenticity from its grounding. The identified groundings are specific personal life experiences and social realities that give rise to inner stirrings and are eventually manifested in words. He then goes on to list important poets in history to demonstrate that these groundings are connected to and justify various poetic styles. In contrast, contemporary poems, which merely focus the surface level, lack such grounding and are therefore ephemeral.

When we associate Qian's claim that poetry has its grounding with his approach in his Du Fu commentaries, we see that his concept of Du's "grounding" might include two related aspects: first, it refers to a poetic sincerity emerging out of the adversities of his life experiences; second, it deals with Du Fu's attitude/technique on how to learn from the poetic past. Different from his earlier commentaries on Du, Qian further stresses the continuation and connection in the development of poetry and the position of Du Fu as a poetic model in this process. Nevertheless, Qian's purpose goes beyond using Du Fu to give a new orientation to poetic development. His emphasis on *guxue* and the grounding of poetry highlights the role of personal life experiences and the social/historical environment in a poet's composition (as well as in the reading of those poems), especially in the case of Du Fu. It should be stressed that when we discuss Qian's Du Fu commentaries after 1644 we should pay more attention to the larger

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<sup>234</sup> "Zou Yuanliang laigutang hekexu" 周元亮賴古堂合刻序, *Qian Muzhai quanji*, 5:767.

hermeneutic system through which Qian tries to negotiate with his earlier Du Fu commentaries: on one hand he makes a hermeneutic shift that sheds new light on Du Fu's poems (and that accommodates changed realities after the fall of the Ming); on the other hand, he is bound by his earlier commentaries and tries to integrate them into his larger system.

## 2. From Wang Wei to Du Fu: changing models of life hermeneutics

As I noted above, Qian experienced dramatic changes in his life when the Manchus occupied the Ming capital of Beijing. Qian was summoned to Nanjing by the Hongguang court and was appointed President of the Ministry of Rites in 1645. Nevertheless, the Manchu army quickly swept southward and occupied Nanjing. Qian surrendered to the Qing court and went to Beijing, where he was appointed as Vice Minister of the Ministry of Rites.

Qian's collection of poetry from the time, *Qiuhuai shiji* 秋槐詩集 (*The Autumn Pagoda Tree Poetry Collection*) spans the period from 1646 to 1649. The title was derived from the third line of a poem composed by the Tang poet Wang Wei when he was appointed as an official at the court of the rebel An Lushan.<sup>235</sup>

Ten thousand families grieve as smoke in the wilderness rises;	萬戶傷心生野煙，
When will all the officials come to the emperor's court again?	百官何日再朝天。
The leaves of the autumn pagoda trees fall in the empty palace;	秋槐葉落空宮裡，
While pipes and strings are played by the Ningbi Pool. <sup>236</sup>	凝碧池頭奏管絃。

In the *Qianzhu Dushi*, Qian give the background to this poem:

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<sup>235</sup> “Ti qiuhuai xiaogao hou” 題秋槐小稿後, *Qian Muzhai quanji*, 7:503.

<sup>236</sup> Wang Wei 王維, *Wang Youcheng ji jianzhu* 王右丞集箋注 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1961), with commentaries by Zhao Diancheng 趙殿成 p.265.

Wang Wei was serving as a Supervising Secretary and yet could not follow the emperor and so was captured by the rebels. He took drugs to give himself dysentery and pretended to have lost his voice. An Lushan had always admired him and so he sent people to escort him to Luoyang. Wang was detained in Pushi temple and forced to accept an official post in the rebel government. After the rebels were suppressed, officials of six levels of rank who had surrendered to the rebels were punished. Because Wang's Ningbi Pool poem was heard by the court in exile, Suzong granted him a special pardon and appointed him Companion to the Crown Prince.<sup>237</sup>

維為給事中，扈從不及，為賊所得。服藥取痢，偽稱暗病。祿山素憐之，遣人迎置洛陽，拘於普施寺，迫以偽署。賊平，陷賊官六等定罪。維以凝碧詩聞於行在，肅宗特宥之，責授太子中允。

Qian's telling here basically follows the "Biography of Wang Wei" in the *Jiu Tang shu*; it appears as commentary after Du Fu's poem "Respectfully Presented To Wang Wei":

The Companion's fame has endured long,	中允聲名久，
But lately he has been far separated from us.	如今契闊深。
We all have heard that Yu Xin has been recovered;	共傳收庾信，
No need to compare him with Chen Lin.	不得比陳琳。
Ill the whole time due to your enlightened lord;	一病緣明主，
For three years maintaining this heart alone.	三年獨此心。
In the fullness of grief you must have composed verse --	窮愁應有作，
Please chant us your "Song of White Hair"! <sup>238</sup>	試誦白頭吟。

In his commentary Qian believes that Du Fu is comparing Wang Wei to Yu Xin 庾信 (513-581), who suffered the Hou Jing 侯景 (503-552) rebellion during the Liang 梁 dynasty and wrote the "Lament for Jiangnan Rhapsody" (*Ai jiangnan fu* 哀江南賦) to express his grief for the fall of the dynasty.<sup>239</sup> Chen Lin 陳琳 (n.d.-217) was a well-

<sup>237</sup> *Qianzhu Dushi*, p.335.

<sup>238</sup> *Ibid*, p.335. "Song of White Hair" is a *tilte* in *Yuefu* 樂府 and its origin is traditionally attributed to Zhuo Wenjun 卓文君 who is said to compose the song to express her grievance of being abandoned by her lover Sima xiangru 司馬相如. As the story goes, Zhou regained her lover's favor through the "Song of White Hair." See Ge Hong 葛洪, *Xijing zaji* 西京雜記, 3:7a, in *Siku quanshu*.

<sup>239</sup> For an English translation and study of this rhapsody by Yu Xin, see William T Graham Jr., *The Lament for the South: Yu Hsin's 'Ai Chiang-nanfu* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980).

known literatus in the late Eastern Han dynasty. He once wrote a diatribe against the warlord Cao Cao 曹操, who at that time represented the Han court. Qian is comparing the many Tang officials who followed An Lushan to Chen Lin, since they surrendered to the rebels and then supposedly slandered the Tang court. Due to Wang Wei's expression of loyalty through his poem, Qian differentiates him from them.

It should be stressed that at first glance Qian's commentary on this poem in *Qianzhu Dushi* (finished during the Qing) did not differ much from that in the *Erjian*, composed before the collapse of the Ming. Nevertheless, our reading of his commentary becomes different once we connect it with Qian's life and his shifting concerns. In the *Erjian*, Qian's emphasis was to criticize Suzong for his light punishment of Wang Wei. As we have seen above, Qian to some degree tried to express his dissatisfaction with the Chongzhen emperor through his criticisms of Xuanzong: "Since Wang Wei pretended to have lost his voice and refused to serve the rebel government, he had been sick for three years and yet Emperor Suzong further appointed him Companion to the Crown Prince... all of these criticize Suzong for impropriety of policies and punishments" 維既陽瘖不受僞署，一病三年，肅宗復責授中允...皆譏肅宗政刑之失當也。<sup>240</sup> The expression used by Qian is *zheng xing zhi shi dang* 政刑之失當, which literally means "policies and punishments lack appropriateness." His attitude toward Wang in his commentary deserves further examination, since it points to the discrepancy between the verbal expression of loyalty and its performance in reality. On one hand, Qian acknowledges the value of Wang's verbal expression of loyalty through the poem, but on the other hand he

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<sup>240</sup> *Qian Muzhai quanji*, 3:2194.

seems to be dissatisfied with his passive resistance through the pretense of illness, especially when later Suzong imposes only a minor punishment on him. Such an attitude indicates that Qian largely endorsed the connection/correspondence between poetic/verbal expressions and performance in real life. It is due to this hermeneutic discrepancy that Qian accuses Suzong for his indiscretion. At the same time Qian's commentary also carries his own concerns toward the situation in which he lived. The expression *zheng xing shi dang* is ambiguous, since it could refer to unduly low punishment or unduly high punishment. What Qian criticizes here is probably not the fact that Suzong should have imposed heavier punishment on Wang Wei but that the Chongzhen emperor should not have imposed such a harsh punishment on *him*.

However, the situation suddenly changed in 1645 when Qian himself surrendered to the Qing court and experienced a situation similar to Wang Wei's. Jin Hechong indicates that Qian had stopped writing verses for two years after the death of the Chongzhen emperor in 1644; the earliest poems in *Qiu huai shiji* date from 1646.<sup>241</sup> In the "Postscript to *A Small Draft of the Autumn Pagoda Tree*" ("Ti *Qiu huai xiaogao* hou" 題秋槐小蘂後) Qian explains the meaning of "autumn pagoda tree" in the title. When Qian was imprisoned in Nanjing in 1648, he exchanged poems with Lin Gudu 林古度 (1580-1660), who later collected those poems and transcribed them into standard script. The collection was entitled *Qiu huai xiaogao* 秋槐小蘂 (*A Small Draft of the Autumn Pagoda Tree*), which, as Qian explicitly claimed, derives from the third line of Wang Wei's poem.

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<sup>241</sup> The *Qian Muzhai quanji* shows that the *Qiu huai shiji* was started in 1645, but when we look at the poems in the collection, the earliest one was in fact written in 1646. *Qian Muzhai quanji*, 4:1. Jin's observation is based on Qian's own claim in the postscript to the anthology *Qiu huai xiaogao*. See "Ti *qiu huai xiaogao* hou" 題秋槐小蘂後, *Qian Muzhai quanji*, 7:503.

It seems likely that the *Qiu huai xiaogao* (compiled in 1648) is part of the *Qiu huai shiji* 秋槐詩集, which also includes Qian's earlier poems since 1646. The fact that Qian continued to adopt "autumn pagoda tree" as the title for his poems from 1646 to 1648 suggests that he probably identified himself with Wang Wei during this period and thus tried to defend his service in the Qing court. In his commentary on Du Fu's poem to Wang Wei, Qian demonstrates his keen awareness of the dis/connection between the poetic expression of loyalty and a poet's performance in real life. His situation during this period was similar to Wang's situation during the An Lushan rebellion. Both of them received official posts from the new court. While Wang exempted himself from court service by the excuse of illness, Qian eventually resigned under the same excuse. His identification with Wang Wei helped him deal with the discrepancy between the verbal expression of loyalty to the Ming and the disgrace of his surrender to the Qing in reality. The *Jiu Tang shu* considers that Wang Wei could not have followed Xuanzong and was forced to take the position in the An Lushan court. Qian also tended to emphasize that his surrender to the Qing was largely out of his control. In his *Qiu huai shiji*, he frequently uses the Buddhist term *jie* 劫 (*kalpa*) to refer to inevitable chaos and sufferings caused by the Manchu invasion. Elsewhere, he takes a further step to explain his surrender as a strategy to alleviate the common people's sufferings and to prevent more people from being killed by the Manchu army.<sup>242</sup> The function of such identification could be perceived as an effort to manifest his inner sincerity by means of verbal expressions and then to minimize the disgrace caused by his service in the Qing court.

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<sup>242</sup> “Yu yizhong xiangshen shu”與邑中鄉紳書, *Qian Muzhai quanji*, 8:823.

According to Jin Hechong's *nianpu* of Qian, the *Qian Muzhai xiansheng nianpu* 錢牧齋先生年譜 (A Chronical Biography of Qian Qianyi), immediately after the Hongguang emperor was killed by the Qing in 1646, Qian resigned from the Qing court and wrote an essay "Han Xincheng sanlao Donggong zan" 漢新城三老董公贊 ("Praise to the Han township official Master Dong of Xincheng"). This refers to certain events that occurred following the collapse of the Qin dynasty: after emperor Yi of Chu 楚義帝 was killed by the warlord Xiang Yu's 項羽 general Qing Bu 黥布, Master Dong persuaded Liu Bang 劉邦 (256-195 BC), the future founder of the Han dynasty, to mourn the death of Yi formally and to attack the murderers. Qian highly praises Dong for his emphasis on the ruler-subject relationship and implicitly connects it to his own situation:

If someone is born hundreds of generations later, encounters the death of his own ruler, does not punish the bandits [responsible] and thus take his revenge, and yet cannot bear to cut off the ruler-subject relation: even a Master Dong could do nothing about such a situation.<sup>243</sup>

生乎百世之下，遘君父之難，不討賊，不復讎，而復不忍自絕于臣子，雖董公若之何？

Master Dong served as a model who emphasized a subject's obligations to his ruler especially when the ruler was murdered. Qian was born hundreds of generations later than Master Dong, and he suffered the death of his ruler the Hongguang emperor (as well as the Chongzhen emperor) and decided to resign after only five months of service in the Qing court, which was much shorter than Wang Wei's three-year service in the rebels' court. Qian suggested that a subject should attack the enemies and take revenge for his ruler, which conveys a message of loyalty stronger than that in Wang Wei's lament. Not

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<sup>243</sup> *Qian Muzhai quanji*, 6:1424.

only did Qian try to bridge the aforementioned hermeneutic discrepancy by creating a stronger voice of loyalty, he also made an effort to reinforce the idea of hermeneutic transparency by creating a correspondence between his loyal expressions and anti-Manchu activities in real life. Jin Hechong and especially Chen Yinke have demonstrated that Qian actively participated in anti-Manchu activities, which are reflected in his works and other contemporary historical writings. Nevertheless, his writings are still open to different interpretations (as I have noted at the beginning of this chapter). Although Gu Yanwu probably considered Qian inferior to Wang Wei, since in Gu's opinion Qian's loyalist expression to the Ming merely resulted from the fact that he left the Qing court, Qian shows a different attitude towards Wang Wei. If in the *Erjian* Qian mainly used his dissatisfaction with Wang Wei to criticize Suzong (or more exactly, the Chongzhen emperor), his dissatisfaction with Wang Wei in the *Qianzhu Dushi* might be cast in a different light: he adopts a stronger verbal expression of loyalty than Wang Wei (as we can take a glimpse of his comments at the end of his praise to Master Dong) and accompanies it with anti-Manchu activities in real life. It can be observed that Qian's writings after his resignation from the Qing court increasingly show his identification with Du Fu, which might be exemplified in his imitation of Du Fu's poem cycle "Autumn Meditations." My major concern here is not to prove which judgment of Qian is correct but to demonstrate how Qian used Du Fu to negotiate changing concerns and situations during the late Ming and the early Qing and eventually integrate them into a larger hermeneutic system with aid of the idea of hermeneutic transparency.

### 3. The Re-experience of Du Fu in the Qing

Qian's re-experience of Du Fu in the Qing and its function can be examined by studying his Du Fu commentaries and his other writings related to Du Fu. His identification with Du points to the changing functions of the poet under new circumstances. Despite the controversies surrounding Qian's motivation, it has been generally agreed that Qian's use of Du Fu in the Qing is intimately associated with his agenda of expressing loyalty to the fallen Ming. Modern scholars often underscore the historical dimension in Qian's Du Fu commentary and other writings related to Du Fu. Such a historical dimension consists of two major aspects: on the one hand, his consideration of the historical memories of Du Fu himself in the Tang; and on the other, the historical records of the turbulent age in which Qian lived, both of which relate to the concept of *shi shi* 詩史 ("poet-historian" or "history in poetry").

When discussing the relationship between *shi shi* and Qian Qianyi, most modern scholars fall into two camps that are not necessarily opposed. One camp focuses on Qian's Du Fu commentary and investigates his historical approach to Du Fu's poems, which seeks to reveal interactions between the poems and the history of the Tang. The other centers on the connection between Qian's other writings related to Du Fu and his contemporary historical situation as well as his own anti-Machu activities in the early Qing period. Nevertheless, as I will show later, Qian's Du Fu hermeneutics demonstrates a complexity which can be better appreciated once we couple his Du Fu commentary before and after the fall of the Ming with the changing situation as well as connecting his Du Fu commentary with other related writings.

It might be worthwhile for us to scrutinize some changes made by Qian in his *Qianzhu Dushi* in contrast with what he writes in the *Xiaojian* and the *Erjian* composed prior to 1644. In general, the *Qianzhu Dushi* is more systematic and comprehensive than the *Xiaojian* and the *Erjian*. One important change is his deletion of many of his previous commentaries concerning the artistic effects of Du Fu's poems as well as the deletion of remarks that sound less relevant or more subjective. His commentary on Du Fu's poetic series "The Generals" 諸將 will serve as a good example.<sup>244</sup>

Qian's commentary on this poetic series can be found in both the *Xiaojian* (commentary on all five poems) and the *Erjian* (remarks only on one couplet from the fifth poem). In discussing the third poem of the series, Qian first indicates that the purpose of the poem is to criticize the appointment of eunuchs as generals and then further explains the poem through specific examples. At the end of his commentary, Qian says: "the poem establishes its intent like this and yet its words are sincere and not pointed. It is really the air of a poet" 詩之立意如此，而詞意敦厚，不露頭角，真詩人之風也。<sup>245</sup> In the *Qianzhu Dushi*, such comments were deleted; instead, Qian writes: "During the reigns of Suzong and Daizong, the country declined and could not revive again -- all of which resulted from this. Isn't this sincere advice and appropriate remonstrance, which serves as an acupuncture and medicine to save the world?" 肅代間，國勢衰微，不復再振，其根本胥在於此。斯豈非忠規切諫救世之針藥與？<sup>246</sup>

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<sup>244</sup> For the poems, see *Dushi xiangzhu*, p. 1363-70. In *Dushi xiangzhu*, the title is "Zhujiang wushou" 諸將五首.

<sup>245</sup> *Qian Muzhai quanji*, 3:2178.

<sup>246</sup> *Qianzhu Dushi*, p.517.

The deletion of stylistic comments (as seen in this case) is not uncommon in the *Qianzhu Dushi*.<sup>247</sup> Such deletion illustrates Qian's effort to further distinguish himself from the other commentators he criticizes. For example, Liu Chenweng and Zhong Xin tend to focus on the artistry of Du's poems, especially through emphasizing his word usage. Qian explicitly attacks Liu for this defect in his commentaries: "Li Chenweng's commentary on Du Fu mostly focuses on the "empty word"(grammatical function words). It merely concerns minor structure and actually contributes nothing to the understanding of Du Fu's poems" 辰翁評杜，多於虛字著眼，亦小小間架耳，於杜詩實無所解。<sup>248</sup> Despite his general disagreement with such an approach, Qian did sometimes concern himself with the usage of specific words in his earlier commentary in order to refute other commentators' interpretations. However, it becomes very clear that Qian tries to avoid that approach in his *Qianzhu Dushi*. On the sixteenth poem of Du Fu's *Qin Zhou zashi* 秦州雜詩 ("Miscellaneous Qin Zhou Poems"), the *Erjian* discusses the usage of the word *yang* 養 ("nourish") and indicates that its excellence lies in its suggestive stability rather than "sharpness and novelty".<sup>249</sup> In contrast, the *Qianzhu Dushi* deletes this note and says nothing on this poem. This example also illustrates the fact that Qian tends to make his commentary more objective and more relevant to a broader understanding of the poems. Qian's deletion of his criticism of Liu's emphasis on empty words suggests that Qian later avoided giving any criticism of other commentators if its

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<sup>247</sup> More examples can be found in *Qianzhu Dushi*; to name a few, the poem "Dongri Luocheng Bei Ye Xuanyuan Huangdi Miao" 冬日洛城北謁玄元皇帝廟, "Baisi Xing" 白絲行, "Ji Zhang shier shanren biao" 寄張十二山人彪.

<sup>248</sup> *Qian Muzhai quanji*, 3:2186.

<sup>249</sup> *Ibid*, 3:2197.

purpose was merely to critique and not to contribute to the real understanding of the poems themselves. Furthermore, it should be stressed that such a replacement suggests a shift from more "subjective" comments (Qian's impressions of Liu's commentary) to seemingly more "objective" comments that are relevant to the poem (for example, historical realities during the reigns of Suzong and Daizong).<sup>250</sup>

Qian's new self-discipline in his the *Qianzhu Dushi* is also seen in the structure of the commentary itself. Here he adopts two different approaches, *zhu* and *jian*, as opposed to the *jian*-only approach of the *Xiaojian* and *Erjian*. He mingles analysis and explanation of important terms in these earlier works and labels them all as *jian*. However, the *Qianzhu Dushi* makes a clear distinction between *zhu* and *jian* and assigns them different functions: *zhu* explains important terms and information in poems, which gives Qian an opportunity to demonstrate his rich knowledge of the historical past; *jian* presents Qian's analysis of poems, which allows him to introduce his unique perspective on the supposedly true meanings of the poems. The separation and juxtaposition of *zhu* and *jian* as well as his aforementioned revision of his *jian* points to a paradoxical aspect of Qian's hermeneutics: He seeks to make his voice heard on contemporary political situations and in his contemporary literary world, but at the same time he tries to distance himself from such engagement and create a more "professional" reading that presumably aims merely to contribute to a better understanding of Du Fu's poems.

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<sup>250</sup> Another example is Qian's deletion of his criticisms of imitation and of opinions concerning Du Fu by Li Mengyang, Li Panlong and other *fugu* school members. For example, see Qian's commentary on the last poem of the "Chengwen Hebei zhudao jiedu ruchao huanxi kouhao jueju shier shou" 承聞河北諸道節度入朝歡喜口號絕句十二首, *Du Du xiaojian*, in *Qian Muzhai quanji*, 3:2280; *Qianzhu Dushi*, p.534.

If we borrow Umberto Eco's distinction between "interpretation" and "use," we can see Qian's effort to negotiate constantly between the "use" of Du Fu's poems (to refer to contemporary realities) and the "interpretation" of Du Fu's poems (to understand the "inherent" meaning of them). In his later life Qian is actively engaged in writing a commentary while he is well aware of changes in his own life experience (which results in him changing his earlier approach to the poems). However, he also tends to create a kind of hermeneutic flexibility which helps reconcile this change with his hermeneutic pursuit of a "real" understanding of Du Fu's poetry. Therefore the hermeneutic movement in *Qianzhu Dushi* can be understood as an act of withholding: on one hand, it largely holds back Qian's expression of immediate reality; on the other hand, such act does not muffle that voice but produces a certain hermeneutic flexibility.<sup>251</sup>

In order to examine this hermeneutic movement and the interpretive flexibility it creates, I will focus on two major changes after 1644 that have had an important impact on the *Qianzhu Dushi*: (1) Qian's dispute with Zhu Heling; (2) the Manchus' conquest of China and Qian's response. Meanwhile, I will also situate them in a larger hermeneutic system established by Qian in the early Qing period.

In 1646, when Qian returned his hometown, he spent most of his time writing a work on Ming history. When in 1650 his private library, the Crimson Cloud Tower 絳雲樓,

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<sup>251</sup> In her dissertation on Qian Qianyi's Du Fu commentary, Chan Che Shan 陳芷珊 compares the *Xiaojian* and the *Erjian* with the *Qianzhu Dushi* and concludes that the change (in the poems that are often considered to satirize the emperors) made by Qian was nothing but a deletion of Qian's remarks on poetic techniques. Therefore, Chan disagrees with other scholars such as Peng Yi and Zhang Guowen who believe that Qian used his commentary on aforementioned poems to cover up the disgrace of his surrender. See Chan, *A Critical Study of Qian Jian Du Shi* (Ph.D thesis, University of Hong Kong, 2005), p. 330-333. However, neither Chan nor the scholars she criticizes observe this hermeneutic flexibility characterized in his later work.

was destroyed by fire, many rare books as well as his manuscript were lost. The accident confirmed his belief that “heaven does not rely on me to perpetuate culture.” He then turned increasingly to Buddhism for consolation and disengaged himself from all non-Buddhist writings. In fact, Qian seldom mentions his Du Fu project after the *Xiaojian* and the *Erjian* were published in 1643. As William Hung indicates, national crisis, the Ming history project, and later devotion to Buddhism all rendered Qian’s Du Fu commentaries a non-urgent project.<sup>252</sup> Nevertheless, according to Ji Zhenyi 季振宜 (1630-1674), Qian’s draft of the commentaries surprisingly survived the fire.<sup>253</sup> Since Qian’s *Xiaojian* and *Erjian* had already been published, this draft likely included some new Du Fu commentaries (this conjecture will be explored further below). In 1654, Qian and other scholars, including Zhu Heling from the Jiangnan area, held a banquet gathering at Jiawo Hall in Suzhou and exchanged poems with each other. Harmonizing with Zhu’s poem, Qian wrote a poem on Du commentaries and at the end he adds an explanatory note saying that Zhu had just began to work on a Du Fu project.<sup>254</sup> Qian also expresses his dissatisfaction with earlier commentaries and praises Zhu’s work in the poem. Later, Qian explicitly told Mao Jin 毛晉 (1599-1699) in a letter that he planned to give Zhu his own draft of commentaries:

Just a while ago in Suzhou I saw Zhu Heling’s Du Fu commentaries, which were similar to mine. Since I have already given myself to Buddhism, I no longer pay

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<sup>252</sup> William Hung, et al., *Dushi yinde* 杜詩引得 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1983), p.49.

<sup>253</sup> See Ji’s preface to *Qian zhu Du shi* 錢注杜詩, p.2.

<sup>254</sup> “Dongri jianwo tang wenyan shi” 冬日假我堂文謙詩, in *Qian Muzhai quanji*, 4:216. Interestingly, Zhu Heling does not mention his Du Fu commentaries in his record of this banquet. Chen Yinke believes that it is a deliberate omission by Zhu. *Liu Rushi biezhu*, p.1052.

attention to such matters; but I feel pity for my incomplete draft. I intend to give all of my notes to Zhu and ask him to make a book out of them.<sup>255</sup>

頃在吳門，見朱長孺杜詩箋注，與僕所草大略相似。僕既歸心空門，不復留心此事，而殘藁又復可惜。意欲並付長孺，都爲一書。

The term “incomplete draft” (*can gao* 殘藁) suggests two important points. First, it implies a possible plan in earlier years to produce a complete draft of Du Fu commentaries.<sup>256</sup> Second, it underscores his continuing work on commentaries between 1643 and 1654. If Qian did not have a plan to complete his commentaries or if he had not produced any new ones, it is unlikely that he would have felt regret -- and he would have nothing to give to Zhu Heling, since his earlier commentaries had been published in 1643 and were thus accessible to Zhu. This can also be supported by one of Zhu Heling’s preferatory notes to his own work: “Qian Qianyi’s commentaries have been in circulation for a long time. Recently he provided me with new commentaries, and I have adopted them all here” 錢太史受之杜詩箋行世已久，近復以新箋見授，具從採錄。<sup>257</sup>

Before Qian wrote this letter to Mao Jin, he might have already briefly mentioned such a plan to Zhu during their meeting at Jiawo Hall banquet. In the last couplet of Zhu’s poem to Qian, Zhu politely makes a request to serve as a private tutor in Qian’s family.<sup>258</sup> In 1655, Qian invited Zhu to come to his house as a private tutor for his son-in-law.<sup>259</sup> At that time, Qian gave Zhu his draft of Du Fu commentaries as well as some rare Song editions of Du’s work; he also frequently discussed with Zhu many commentarial

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<sup>255</sup> “To Mao Zijin”, *Qian Muzhai xiansheng chidu* 錢牧齋先生尺牘 (Taipei: wenhai chubanshe, 1969), p.216.

<sup>256</sup> Based on Qian’s guide notes attached to the *Erjian*, William Hung also concludes that Qian had made a decision to finish the Du Fu commentaries. *Dushi yinde*, pp.48-49.

<sup>257</sup> Zhu Heling, *Du Gongbu shiji* 杜工部詩集 (Kyoto: Zhongwen chubanshe, 1977), p.85.

<sup>258</sup> Zhu Heling, *Yuan xiaoji* 愚庵小集 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1978), p.170.

<sup>259</sup> See Qian’s letter to Zhu Heling, “To Zhu Changru”, *Qian Muzhai xiansheng chidu*, pp.91-92.

issues. From one of Qian's letters to Zhu written at the end of 1656, we know that the project was to be completed after a last round of editorial work.<sup>260</sup> In 1657, the project was basically completed and Zhu turned to work on commentaries on Li Shangyin's 李商隱 (813?-858) poems. After he finished his project on Li Shangyin in 1659, Zhu probably had more time to return to Du Fu. Later Zhu communicated with Qian, telling him that the Du Fu manuscript was completed and requesting a preface from him. Even without seeing the manuscript, Qian quickly wrote the preface and greatly praised Zhu for his work. Nevertheless, in 1662, when Zhu served as a private tutor in Qian's house for the second time, Qian read Zhu's manuscript and was greatly disappointed. He then marked places he thought were defective and asked Zhu for further revision. Zhu agreed to revise the manuscript with reluctance, though he suspected that the criticism actually came from Qian's disciples rather than from Qian himself. Soon Zhu sent the final draft to Qian, telling him that he had already finished the corrections and that the manuscript was ready to be published. Qian did not find a great improvement in this new draft and tried to prevent Zhu from including his preface. Due to Zhu's insistence, Qian failed. Regretting that he had composed the preface at all and feeling that he had been manipulated by Zhu, Qian decided to publish his own commentaries, closely working with his junior clan relative Qian Zeng 錢曾 (1629-1701). Later he replied to Zhu and clearly expressed his attitude: "it is very good for you to publish the Du Fu commentaries, but I feel embarrassed that you put my preface in the front. The edition of my Du Fu commentaries here may not get published; but if it does there is no harm to let our two editions circulate

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<sup>260</sup> Although the letter is undated, we can date that letter on the basis of Qian's whereabouts and his family's location mentioned in the letter. *Qian Muzhai xiansheng chidu*, p.93.

together.” 杜注付梓甚佳，但自愧糠粃在前耳。此中刻未必成，即成，不妨兩行也。<sup>261</sup> Thereafter, Qian spent great effort on his Du Fu commentaries and finished a final draft in 1661, continuing revisions until his death.<sup>262</sup> Although Zhu Heling began to publish his Du Fu commentaries even when Qian Qianyi was still alive, Chen Yinke points out that Zhu’s commentaries were published piecemeal and that any complete publication would probably date from after 1667. In the earliest version of Zhu’s Du Fu commentaries to survive, published by Ye Yongru 葉永茹 at Nanjing in 1670, Qian Qianyi’s name was still used to advertise Zhu’s book. Qian’s dispute with Zhu created a new situation for him and had a direct influence on his commentary. The following example will illustrate how this immediate concern was simultaneously reflected and deflected in his work -- a demonstration of the hermeneutic flexibility he tried to create.

The first example is how the two commentators interpret the second poem in the poetic series “The Generals.” I only quote the parts relevant to our discussion here.

In the earlier *Xiaojian*, Qian explains Du Fu’s intentions:

The first poem talks about the invasion of the barbarians [according to Qian’s commentary on the first poem, the barbarians here refer to the An Lushan rebels and the Tibetans] in order to criticize the generals; this poem further criticizes the generals because of their perverse attempt to seek assistance from barbarians [the Uighurs]. After the Uighurs allied [with the imperial forces] and recaptured the two capitals, both Prince Yong’s attack against Shi Chaoyi and Guo Ziyi’s defeat of the Tibetans made use of their strength.<sup>263</sup>

首章言胡虜入犯之事以責諸將，此又責諸將之反借助於胡也。自回紇助順，收復兩京之後，雍王之討朝義，子儀之敗吐蕃，皆用回紇之力。

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<sup>261</sup> These words were attached to the end of Qian’s earlier preface to Zhu’s Du Fu commentaries. See Zhu Heling, *Du Gongbu shi jizhu*, p.5.

<sup>262</sup> See Ji Zhenyi’s 季振宜 preface to *Qian zhu Du shi*, p.1.

<sup>263</sup> *Qian Muzhai quanji*, 3:2177.

In contrast, Zhu wrote on the same poem in his *Du Gongbu shiji jizhu*:

This poem is to criticize the generals for seeking assistance from the Uighurs. After the Uighurs allied [with the imperial forces], both Suzong's recovery of the two capitals and Prince Yong's attack against Shi Chaoyi made use of their military strength. In the end the Uighurs relied on their achievements to make trouble and unexpectedly allied with the Tibetan to invade Tang.<sup>264</sup>

此責諸將之借助于回紇也。自回紇助順，肅宗之復兩京，雍王之討朝義，皆用回紇兵力，卒之恃功侵擾，反合吐蕃入寇。

When we juxtapose these two commentaries, it is not difficult to find that Zhu's interpretation is largely built on Qian's commentary in the *Xiaojian*. However, Zhu does not give any credit to Qian. Instead, Zhu rephrases Qian's idea and attributes the disadvantaged position of the Tang army at that time to the earlier decision of seeking military assistance from the Uighurs. Qian in turn reinterprets this poem in his *Qianzhu Dushi*:

In the past I followed older interpretations and said that the poem criticized the generals because they should not have sought assistance from the Uighurs. When the barbarians [i.e., An Lushan's forces] robbed the imperial tombs and the emperor fled westward, Guo Ziyi led a single army from Shuofang to fight northward in battle after battle. Whether cutting off an ambush at Xiangji and repelling the enemy at Xiling: if it were not for the Uighurs' forceful attack, either from the rear or from the flank whenever victory was in doubt, it is impossible to know whether the two capitals ever would have been recovered. At that moment, how could one anticipate that the Uighurs would presume on imperial favor to plunder and rob, thus turning against them? Wei Bo has said: "for a family whose house has caught fire, should one first inform the parents and then put down the fire?" This is a perfect metaphor for this. Therefore I say Du's line "how can it be said that it all relied on the Uighurs" is a momentary lament rather than a criticism of an unsuccessful plan meant to benefit the state. Those shallow scholars do not understand worldly affairs, and so copy out [others'] discussions and conclusions, rashly discussing military matters. Things like this are worth a good laugh.<sup>265</sup>

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<sup>264</sup> *Du Gongbu shiji jizhu*, p.525.

<sup>265</sup> *Qianzhu Dushi*, p.515.

往余沿襲舊聞，謂責諸將不應借助于回紇，當盜發幽陵，天子西走，汾陽提朔方孤軍，轉戰逐北。香積之翦伏，西嶺之卻迴，非回紇力奮擊，或出其背，或出其後，勝負未決，兩都之收復未可知也。當此之時，能預料其怙恩肆掠，逆而拒之乎？魏勃曰：失火之家，當先白大人後救火乎？此切喻也。故吾謂“豈謂盡煩”云云，乃俯仰感嘆之詞，非以是為謀國不臧而有所彈刺也……兔園書生，不識世務，鈔略論斷，妄談兵事，如此類者，皆可以一笑也。

Here Qian "corrects" his previous interpretation and indicates that it was justifiable that the Tang court sought assistance from the Uighurs at that particular historical moment. Both Qian and Zhu deal with military strategy in their interpretation and connect it with their understanding of authorial intention. Differing from Zhu, Qian argues that one should not look retrospectively at the situation and impose one's judgment upon historical situations, since no one could have predicted that the Uighurs would cause so much trouble in the end. In Qian's opinion, the situation was as desperate as a burning house: without the immediate aid of the Uighurs, the Tang troops might have been defeated and would have failed to recover the two capitals. Qian attacks those who misunderstand this poem due to a lack of deeper knowledge of historical situations.

Although it can be clearly perceived from the commentaries above that the changes made by Qian in his *Qianzhu Dushi* probably serves as a response to and criticism of Zhu's interpretation, Qian does not explicitly name Zhu, instead using the words *ru ci lei zhe* 如此類者 ("things like this") to direct his criticism to a general level. Such an act of directing is an example of "withholding," which in turn allows Qian more interpretive flexibility. His criticism here includes two important points: one is the act of "copying out [others'] discussions and conclusions" (*chao lue lun duan* 鈔略論斷); the other is the act of "rashly discussing military affairs" (*wang tan bing shi* 妄談兵事). The

first one, situated in the context of the disputes between Qian and Zhu, immediately focuses an attack on Zhu's suspected plagiarism reflected in his commentary. However, at the same time, it also echoes Qian's criticism of people (or their poetic practice) who merely plagiarize opinions about Du Fu's poetry (and about poetry in general) from others, such as the *fugu* school and the Jingling school. The second criticism made by Qian is of greater significance for the reading of this specific poem, since he is asserting that a "correct" analysis of the military situation at that time is essential for obtaining a "correct" understanding of the meaning of the poem; this in turn allows him to demonstrate his own knowledge and shrewdness on military affairs and to suggest that he has the ability to transfer those skills to the contemporary situation of the late Ming and early Qing.

Qian discusses military affairs in many of his writings during the chaotic late Ming period. In one poem he gives a vivid image of himself:

My mind due to worries for the state feels completely drunk;      心因憂國渾如醉，  
My temples through military discussions have half turned to frost.<sup>266</sup> 鬢為論兵半有霜。

In 1643, Qian wrote a series of essays entitled *Xiang yan* 嚮言 ("directed words"), in which he discusses and analyzes the military situations and strategies that arose during critical moments of national crisis in the history of China, especially during the Tang and Song periods. His discussions are oriented toward the contemporary world, where the Ming was greatly threatened by the Manchus and by rebel groups. The military shrewdness revealed in Qian's analysis of similar situations in the past suggests his ability in handling contemporary military affairs. After the collapse of the Ming, Qian

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<sup>266</sup> *Qian Muzhai quanji*, 1:503.

continued to consider himself a military strategist who had the ability to change military situations decisively. In his writings he often employs the metaphor of chess to discuss military affairs. In a memorial written in 1649 to the presumptive Ming ruler in exile, the Yongli emperor 永曆 (1647-1662), Qian uses this favorite metaphor to analyze the military situation of the time.

Someone confronted with a situation is just like someone playing a chess game; thus, the petty skill of the playing board can serve as a metaphor for something significant. Nowadays, there are moves that contribute to the whole situation, moves that are critical, and moves that are urgent. A person who is good at playing this game observes the urgency of the situation and carefully addresses it. Currently, the move that is urgent is precisely the move that is critical, and the move that is critical is precisely the move that contributes to the whole situation.<sup>267</sup>

人之當局，如奕棋然。楸枰小技，可以喻大。在今日有全著，有要著，有急著。善奕者，視勢之所急而善救之。今之急著即要著也，今之要著即全著也。

After he lays out the theoretical foundation for his discussion, Qian goes on to analyze the contemporary situation in detail and arrives at specific strategies. The *ji zha* 急著 (the move that is urgent) emphasized by Qian as a strategic remedy for the contemporary crisis reminds us of Qian's discussion of military strategy in his commentary on the second poem of Du Fu's "the Generals" -- it is justifiable to seek assistance from the Uighurs, since it is an urgent move for the Tang to survive the national crisis.

The disputes between Qian and Zhu are also closely related to the changed situation caused by the Manchus' conquest of China as well as Qian's response to that change. In the preface to his Du Fu commentary, Zhu implicitly attacks Qian for his lack of integrity and loyalty to the fallen Ming, the very morality which has been assumed as a

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<sup>267</sup> "Bao zhongxing jihui shu" 報中興機會疏, *Qu Shisi ji* 瞿式耜集 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1981), p.105.

crucial prerequisite for the appreciation of Du Fu's poems for centuries. As we have stated earlier, Qian's own actions, especially his surrender to the Qing, might be considered a great challenge to his qualifications for interpreting Du Fu. In fact, one of possible motivations of Qian's devotion to Du Fu in his later life is to prove that his actions were justified.

Qian also modifies his earlier commentary in a subtle way to reflect his new concerns under the changed reality. A brief comparison of Qian's interpretation of the words *qing kan* 請看 ("please look") in the third poem of "Autumn Meditations" will help us see Qian's changes:

On the solitary walls of Kuizhou the setting sunlight slants;	夔府孤城落日斜，
I always rely on the southern dipper when I gaze to the capital.	每依南斗望京華。
I hear the gibbons -- tears truly fall at their third cry;	聽猿實下三聲淚，
An emissary vainly follows the eighth-month raft.	奉使虛隨八月槎。
Incense-burners in the muraled hall elude my sickbed pillow;	畫省香爐違伏枕，
Whitewashed walls of mountain buldings conceal the grieving fifes.	山樓粉堞隱悲笳。
Please look! The moonlight that lit the vines on the rocks	請看石上藤蘿月，
Already shines on the reedflowers by the islet. <sup>268</sup>	已映洲前蘆荻花。

Qian's commentary in the *Xiaojian*:

The solitary walls, the setting sunlight, and sadly gazing towards the capital. "Always rely on the southern dipper" is said because it remains the same every night. Moonlight on the rocks already shines on the beach, which is again the time for turning toward the Dipper and gazing towards the capital. The words "please look!" closely illuminates every word, with endless sorrow manifest beyond the words. It amounts to saying that another day has already passed, but when can I return the capital?<sup>269</sup>

孤城落日，悵望京華，曰每依南斗，蓋無夕而不然也。石上之月，已映洲前，又是依鬥望京之候矣。請看兩字，緊映每字，無限淒涼，見於言外。如雲又過卻一日矣，不知何年得歸京華也？

<sup>268</sup> *Dushi xiangzhu*, p.1485-6.

<sup>269</sup> *Qian Muzhai quanji*, 3:2183.

The *Qianzhu Dushi* basically keeps Qian's earlier commentary in the *Xiaojian* and adds new commentary:

Listening to the gibbons' cry and embarking as an emissary on imperial orders, lying on the pillow and hearing the sad sound of fifes, and being mournful through the long night: nothing can explain this. However, the moon that lights the vines on the rocks already shines on the reedflowers on the islet. Don't say when the dawn will arrive in the long night. Think carefully about the words "please look," which is also an expression of surprise and exclamation. Reading in this way, these words strongly invoke [the following lines]. This old man has not forgotten his lord, and I can weep together with him a thousand years later.<sup>270</sup>

聽猿奉使，伏枕悲笳，遙夜慳悽，莫可為喻。然石上藤蘿之月，已映洲前蘆荻之花矣。莫謂長夜漫漫何時旦也，細思請看二字，又更是不覺乍見訝而嘆之詞。做如是解，此二字喚起有力。此翁老不忘君，千歲而下，可以相泣也。

The *Xiaojian*'s interpretation of this poem constructs an image of Du Fu as a person who is constantly yearning to return the capital and is yet more helpless at his separation from the court. Here the words *qing kan* conveys Du Fu's great sorrow for his increasing alienation as time passes. In contrast, the new commentary in the *Qianzhu Dushi* reveals Du Fu's inner world in a very different light. Contrary to the helpless image of Du Fu in the *Xiaojian*, Qian reinterprets *qing kan* to highlight Du Fu's hope and his firm belief in a bright future and a return to the capital. The passage of time no longer imprisons Du Fu in an endless sorrow that endlessly repeats separation and disappointment night after night. It rather becomes an effective means to break through the metaphorical night, and the words *qing kan* turns into an indicator of such a strong confidence. The interpretive change from the *Xiaojian* to the *Qianzhu Dushi* can be explained by examining changed reality and Qian's own situation. After his dismissal from the Chongzhen court, Qian

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<sup>270</sup> *Qianzhu Dushi*, p.506.

stayed at home, far away from the capital. The image of Du Fu in the *Xiaojian* reflects Qian's situation during that time: eager to serve the court and yet constantly disappointed as time passes. In contrast, the changed reality in the early Qing makes Qian project a different self-image on Du Fu in his *Qianzhu Dushi*. Qian was actively engaged in anti-Manchu activities and was secretly communicating with the Yongli court. The long night in Qian's commentary can also imply China under the Manchus, and *qing kan* suggests the fact that Qian looks forward to embracing the coming dawn whose brightness (*ming* 明, the same as the name of the Ming dynasty) will dismiss the darkness caused by the Qing. At the end of this commentary, Qian writes: "this old man has not forgotten his lord, and I can weep together with him a thousand years later." It is through this vivid image of sharing sorrow with Du Fu across a thousand years that Qian (who is also an old man) expresses his loyalty.

In the fourth poem of the same poem cycle, the *Qianzhu Dushi* also adds new commentary to accommodate Qian's response to his new situation. Qian underscores a kind of "activeness" in the new commentary (in contrast with his previous commentary in the *Xiaojian*) by drawing attention to the words *ping ju you suo si* 平居有所思 ("have something in mind while living in peace"). In the second commentary, Qian uses the line to express his wish to serve as an advisor that might play a decisive role in restoring the Ming, rather than as a mere expression of lament. The relation between this change and Qian's new situation can be further illuminated by his notes concerning the end of "The Hereditary House of the Grand Master of Qi" in the *Shi ji*, where Qian implicitly models himself on Jiang Shang 姜尚, who gained an opportunity to fulfill his ambition at the age

of eighty when he met King Wen 文王 (1152-1056 BC) of Zhou. Through this new interpretation, the loyalty identified by Qian in the poetic cycle “Autumn Meditations” is reinforced with a subtle shift in emphasis from a passive state (manifest through lament) to an active state (proposing a participatory future in politics). At the same time, it can be observed that Qian’s new commentary, while responding to the change in his situation, also seeks a kind of consistency with his previous commentary. The *Qianzhu Dushi* version is largely based on the commentary in the *Xiaojian* and the *Erjian*, and the subtly changed expression of loyalty in his reading, though new, is also connected to his situation in the late Ming. The life-hermeneutics first proposed in the Song now constructs a sense of development through the understanding of Du Fu based on personal re-experience in the period of social upheaval. Let us recall the Song literati Li Gang’s words in his preface to Huang Bosi’s Du Fu collection: “After I experienced wars, death, and disasters, I chanted his poems as if they emerged from his time, and it really touched my heart.” Such rhetoric is widely embraced by many Du Fu readers during the Ming-Qing transition, and Qian also wants to show how his understanding of Du Fu’s loyalty is *deepened* through such an act of re-experiencing.

While a transparent reading of Qian's works has resulted in the accusation that he lacked integrity, Qian seems to take advantage of the hermeneutics of transparency in order to establish a larger hermeneutic system to defend himself. The *Qianzhu dushi* should be read together with his other works, such as *Liechao shiji* 列朝詩集 and the *Tou bi ji* 投筆集, and should be interpreted in light of the concept of *shi shi*; all of this reveals

his effort in weaving commentary into a much broader interpretative system where he can simultaneously address various concerns.

We know from his preface to the *Liechao shiji* that during the Tianqi era in the Ming, Qian and his friend Cheng Jiashui planned to model themselves on Yuan Haowen 元好問 (1190-1257) and collaboratively compile an anthology of Ming poetry, just as Yuan had done for Jin dynasty poets in his *Zhongzhou ji* 中州集. However, such a project was dropped after they had selected works by over thirty Ming poets. Over twenty years later, Qian returned to this project in 1646 and eventually completed a draft in 1649. In 1652, the anthology was published and Qian wrote the preface. In their discussion of the *Liechao shiji*, modern scholars either tend to emphasize its historical orientation towards the Ming-Qing transition or move to the opposite position and argue for its strictly "poetic" interests.<sup>271</sup> In fact, the *Zhongzhou ji*, the model for the project, serves as an example of an interweaving of both poetry and history. When Qian and Cheng originally worked on this project in the late Ming, they were highly aware of the dual nature of the anthology, and even divided their responsibilities, with Cheng working on the poetry and Qian on the history (i.e., the biographies of the poets). If the emphasis of the initial project prior to the collapse of the Ming was placed on constructing a history of Ming poetry, Qian's later efforts in the Qing has an interpretive openness that can accommodate his changing concerns.

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<sup>271</sup> For example, while many scholars regard the *Liechao shiji* as an expression of Qian's hope for the revival of the Ming, Yan Dichang 嚴迪昌 (1936-2003) argues that the anthology aims to provide nothing but a history of Ming poetry. See Yan, "Mengsou xinzi yu liechao shiji bianzhan zhiyi" 蒙叟心志與列朝詩集編纂旨意, *Yuwen zhishi* 語文知識, 2007, no.4, pp. 4-8.

In a letter to Zhou Anqing, Qian writes: “After the collapse of the Ming, I am afraid that the poetry in Ming will be obscured as a result. So I wish to imitate the style of Yuan Haowen’s *Zhongzhou ji*, selecting and editing Ming poems into one anthology in that hope that the essence and soul of the Ming poets can be retained on paper. It is one of the joys of my later years” 鼎革之後，恐明朝一代之詩，遂致淹沒，欲仿元遺山中州集之例，選定為一集，俾一代詩人精魂，留得紙上，亦晚年一樂事也。<sup>272</sup> As far as its content is concerned, Qian focuses on the development of Ming poetry and the development of the Ming poetic field, which echoes his own efforts in competing with other prominent figures.<sup>273</sup> Nevertheless, once it is read against the new situation in which Qian lived after the collapse of the Ming, a new significance of the anthology will immediately emerge. In his preface, Qian emphasizes what had happened between the first attempt on this project and his later return to the project: “After more than twenty years, I suffered a disaster analogous to that of the Kaiyuan (713-741) and Tianbao (742-756) periods. The world was in chaos, my books were scattered and lost, and I was on almost killed by the proliferation of legal matters. I then occupied myself once again with this anthology” 越二十餘年，而丁開、寶之難，海宇板蕩，載籍放失，瀕死訟繫，復有事于斯集。<sup>274</sup> What fills the gap in between is Qian’s personal experience, which largely accounts for his continuing effort on this project. The historical background delineated by Qian is the social turbulence similar to the period from Kaiyuan to Tianbao,

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<sup>272</sup> “Yu Zhou Anqi,”與周安期, *Qian Muzhai quanji*, 7:236.

<sup>273</sup> Zhou Jianyu 周建渝 also points out this function of the *Liechao shiji*, but he does not discuss the other “historical” dimension associated with the anti-Manchu movement. See “Liechao shiji xiaozhuan de mingshi piping jiqi yongyi”列朝詩集小傳的明詩批評及其用意, *Fudan xuebao* 復旦學報(no.6, 2008), pp. 130-137.

<sup>274</sup> *Qian Muzhai quanji*, 5:678.

a historical transition which Du Fu experienced for himself. The connection with his Du Fu project becomes even stronger when we examine Qian's comments about the organization of the anthology:

I recently compiled "An Anthology of Poems from the Ming Dynasty," which is divided into four parts: *jia, yi, bing, ding* [a way of numbering chapters equivalent to A, B, C, and D]. I composed a preface for it that says: "Yuan Haowen's *Zhongzhou ji* ends at the *gui* chapter [the 10th in the enumeration sequence]. *Gui* means "return." [that is, the word *gui* is pronounced the same as the word that means "return".] The Ming poetry anthology I compiled ends at *ding*. *Ding* means that all the things in the world greatly prosper [*dingzhuang* 丁壯] and bear fruit, and so are greatly flourishing." But I also secretly adopt the principle of "deleting poems" [used by Confucius in compiling the *Shijing*], which makes my work different from Yuan's.<sup>275</sup>

余近輯列朝詩集釐為甲乙丙丁四部，而為之序曰：“遺山中州集止于癸。癸者，歸也。余輯列朝詩止于丁。丁者，萬物皆丁壯成實，大盛于丁也。”蓋余竊取刪詩之義，顧異于遺山者如此。

After the collapse of the Jin dynasty (1115-1234), Yuan Haowen selected poems from the Jin and compiled the *Zhongzhou ji*. Chen Yinke indicates that Qian's special arrangement of the *Liechao shiji* conveys his hope for the revival of the Ming (unlike Yuan's project, which was largely elegaic).<sup>276</sup> Chen's interpretation is probably based on Qian's interpretation of the word *ding* 丁, which suggests a state of being "robust and fruitful" and indicates a promising future. However, when juxtaposed with the content of the *Liechao shiji*, such an observation, coupled with Qian's aforementioned description of the historical background, gestures towards Qian's general orientation in his major

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<sup>275</sup> *Qian Muzhai quanji*, 5:771-2.

<sup>276</sup> Chen Yinke, *Liu Rushi biezhuàn*, 3:988. Lawrence Yim also mentions Qian's emphasis on the role of poetry in the revival of the Ming. See his article "Ziwo jiyi yu xingqing xuewen shiyun: cong Fuke dao Qian Qianyi" 自我記憶與性情、學問、世運—從傅柯到錢謙益, in *Ming Qing wenxue yu sixiang zhong zhi zhuti yishi yu shehui: wenxue pian* 明清文學與思想中主體意識與社會—文學篇 (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan zhongguo wenshizhe yanjiusuo, 2005), Wang Ailing 王瓊玲 ed., pp.413-450.

projects under the rule of the Qing: a combination of distance and engagement. Qian's apparent (and more professional) concern is that the anthology consists of Ming poets and their poetry and avoids any hint of his anti-Manchu activities. But at the same time it is subtly connected to his Du Fu project not only in content (criticism of the poetic malpractice of the *fugu* and the Jingling schools) and through similar historical background, but also in the idea of the intimate connection between poetry and history.

Du Fu and his poetry have long been praised as examples of *shi shi* ("poet-historian" or "history in poetry") since the late Tang; and the concept of *shi shi* has become an influential concept in Chinese poetic tradition.<sup>277</sup> In his Du Fu commentary, Qian spends great effort in investigating the intimate relationship between poetry and history.<sup>278</sup> He shows this dynamic interaction in the case of Du Fu: on one hand, he endorses a transparent reading in which Du Fu's poetry reflects Tang history at specific periods (and such history often manifests itself through Du Fu's poetry); he then can employ this orientation to explore the "real" meaning of Du Fu's poems. On the other hand, Qian highlights the function of poetry as a means to supplement and even "correct" the official historical records of the Tang dynasty.

Why did Qian demonstrate the strong fascination in discovering/creating the connection between poetry and history in general? Qian's own life might help us answer the question. In many of his writings, Qian often mentions his identity as a historian.

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<sup>277</sup> For discussion of the term *shi shi* and its evolution, see Huang Zhihong 黃自鴻, "Du Fu shi shi dingyi de fanyan xianxiang" 杜甫詩史定義的繁衍現象, *Hanxue yanjiu* 漢學研究 (vol.25, no.1), pp.189-220; Zhang Hui 張暉, *Shi shi* 詩史 (Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju), 2007.

<sup>278</sup> This feature of Qian's Du Fu commentary has drawn much scholarly attention. For example, Hao Ruihua's 郝潤華 "Qianzhu Dushi zhong de shi shi hu zheng" 錢注杜詩中的詩史互証, in *Du shi xue yu Du shi wen xian* 杜詩學與杜詩文獻 (Chengdu: Bashu shushe, 2010); and Hao Runhua et al., pp. 231-277.

When he first passed the civil service exam in the Wanli era, he was appointed as Hanlin Academy editing whose major responsibility was to assist in the compilation of the Ming history. During the late Ming period, Qian completed a few writings regarding the early history of the dynasty. After his resignation from the Qing court, he also devoted himself to compiling a Ming history, and yet (as we have noted) his drafts and other materials were completely destroyed by fire. The late Ming and early Qing witnessed a high point in individual efforts to compile accounts of Ming history, and Qian was also part of this movement. Although it seems that Qian gave up his project after his private library was destroyed by the fire, I would suggest that Qian instead changed his way of writing the history of the Ming. Such transformation of the standard way of writing history was hardly impossible for him. He expresses an opinion on this sort of issue in one of his prefaces: “In my youth I read the *Shi shuo xin yu* 世說新語 ["Worldly Tales: New Series," a famous fifth-century collection of cultural and literary anecdotes compiled by Liu Yiqing 劉義慶], and I once said to myself: 'Liu Yiqing was an adept historian and wrote his work by changing the rules set out by [the historians] Sima Qian and Ban Gu.'” 余少讀世說，嘗竊論曰：臨川王史家之巧人也，變遷、固之史法而為之也。<sup>279</sup>

Although the fire prevented Qian from continuing his project of writing a standard Ming history, he redeemed this loss by focusing on poetry (particularly Du Fu's poetry). The *Liechao shiji* was completed before Qian turned his attention to the Ming history project and perhaps served as preparation for the latter. But after Qian's library was destroyed, Qian retrospectively modified the purpose of the *Liechao shiji* by subtly creating a

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<sup>279</sup> *Qian Muzhai quanji*, 5:689.

dialogue between it and his other works (especially the Du Fu project) through the interaction between poetry and history.

This dialogue is not merely limited to the textual level, since both history and poetry are entangled with social and personal issues. Another important part of Qian's larger hermeneutic system is his collection of poetic/historical writings entitled *Hou qiu xing* 後秋興 (*After "Autumn Meditations"*). During his engagement in the anti-Manchu movement in his later life, Qian composed this poetry cycle, modeled on Du Fu's "Autumn Meditations," consisting of thirteen groups of poems that span the period from 1659 to 1663. Zhang Binglin indicates:

[Zheng] Chenggong once studied under him [Qian]. When he led his navy into the Nanjing area, the prefectures north as far as Anhui all pledged allegiance to the Ming again. Qianyi was roused to compose "After Du Fu's 'Autumn Meditations'" as a song of triumph, in which he announces that a new Son of Heaven has emerged who will lead the Ming back to its old glory, and that he would be willing to lie down on a straw mat to await punishment. At that time, Qianyi believed that the Southern Capital could be recovered in any minute, and he could simply stay home and await the order of recall.<sup>280</sup>

鄭成功嘗從受學，既而舉舟師入南京，皖南諸府皆反正。謙益則和杜甫《秋興》詩為凱歌，且言新天子中興，己當席槁待罪。當是時，謂留都光復在俾倪間，方偃臥待歸命。

According to Zhang, Qian's "Hou qiu xing" series functioned as an immediate response to the contemporary situation: Zheng Chenggong's attack on the Manchu and the hope for a Ming restoration. If Zhang's discussion here is still more about the one-way movement (from the historical situation to poetry), Lawrence Yim has given a detailed analysis of the interaction between Qian's poems and specific historical situations at that time,

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<sup>280</sup> Zhang Binglin, *Qiu shu* 愼書, p. 208. For English translation, see Lawrence C.H. Yim, *The Poet-historian Qian Qianyi*, p.77-78.

especially Qian's role as mentor and strategist through his poems.<sup>281</sup> What I wish to emphasize is its connection with Qian's Du Fu commentary.

Qian's deliberate decision to use Du Fu's "Autumn Meditations" as a model for his own poetic composition echoes his commentary on the original poetic cycle by Du Fu: not only in terms of the interplay between poetry and history but also in terms of similar life experience, similar thoughts and feelings, and a similar articulation of such experiences, feelings, and thoughts. If Qian still tried to withhold something when he explained the phrase *qing kan* in Du Fu's "Autumn Meditations", this withholding was largely removed in his *After "Autumn Meditations,"* as Qian announces the approaching victory of the Ming restoration movement. It is through such intertextuality and hermeneutics of transparency (among life/history, poetry, and sincerity) that Qian establishes a larger hermeneutic system in which he can effectively modify Du Fu commentary to accommodate changing realities and to negotiate his various concerns.

### Conclusion

Qian's Du Fu commentary can be conveniently divided into two major stages by drawing a symbolic line in 1644 when the Manchus captured Beijing. From its beginning, his Du Fu commentary simultaneously addressed different concerns that spoke to different realities in the literary and the political fields. During the late Ming period, Qian was involved in literary competition (especially with the *fugu* and the Jingling schools) as well as political competition and factional struggles related to his frustrating experience

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<sup>281</sup> See Lawrence C.H. Yim, *The Poet-historian Qian Qianyi*, pp. 81-146. Yim discussed three cycles of "After 'Autumn Meditations.'"

as a candidate for the position of Grand Secretary. Du Fu's influence on the Ming poetic field and his own experiences of political frustration make his poems an ideal site for Qian to deal with his different concerns. After the collapse of the Ming, new situations (especially Qian's competition with Zhu Heling and his participation in the anti-Manchu movement) led Qian to modify his Du Fu commentary to accommodate the new situation. However, such an act of modifying involves a paradoxical movement: on the one hand, Qian wanted to engage his Du Fu commentary in a dialogue with his own experiences and his contemporary situation; on the other hand, his attack against the supposed misunderstanding of Du Fu by others forced him to discipline such an engagement and distance himself from personal concerns. The commentarial approach adopted by Qian also points to such a paradox: whereas *zhu* more "objectively" attends to the cultural and historical information in Du Fu's poems, *jian* aims to demonstrate Qian's exploration of Du Fu's intention, often with an implicit link to Qian's own life.

Under the new circumstances of the early Qing, Qian also had to negotiate with his earlier Du Fu commentary, which tended to address situations (both literary and political) prior to the collapse of the Ming. While Qian made some changes to engage subtly with these new situations, his commentary largely maintained a kind of consistency in order to create an impression of a seeming independence from changing realities. Through such independence, Qian tried to announce his sincere pursuit of the "real" meaning of Du Fu's poetry, which in many cases was not affected by the changing situations a reader might experience. This distance, on one hand, protected Qian from the accusation of merely using Du Fu's poetry to vent his personal grievance within the

political field; it also helped, through its claim to be seeking out Du Fu's "true" intention, to disguise the continuing competition with his peers in the literary field. On the other hand, Qian's effort of withholding his pragmatic concerns helped create a hermeneutic openness which could paradoxically accommodate his various concerns at different stages of his life.

Nevertheless, Qian also endorsed the continuing development of the idea that understanding Du Fu's poetry could go hand-in-hand with the reader's life experience, especially during a chaotic period of national crisis -- an idea that arose with the "life hermeneutics" of the Song. In contrast from the Song interpreters, however, Qian's life experience was much more complicated (especially after his surrender to the Qing) and had to simultaneously deal with multiple concerns before and after the collapse of the Ming. Qian's unique re-experiencing of Du Fu probably compelled him to pursue a path different from Wen Tianxiang, the exemplary figure of life hermeneutics in Song dynasty. Whereas Wen Tianxiang collected various lines from Du Fu's poems to make his own poems and record (within his own judgment) contemporary history and his own experiences during the Song-Yuan transition, Qian chose to write his own poetic series on the model of Du Fu's "Autumn Meditations." This decision made by Qian draws our attention to the fact that Qian tried to create connections between his Du Fu commentary and his other projects to establish a larger hermeneutic system in which the interplay between poetry and history as well as that between withholding and revealing can be brought into full display. Qian not only demonstrates an effort at transparent reading that

not only reconciles life, poetry, and person(ality) but also helps us to penetrate the paradoxical thickness of such hermeneutic transparency.

T. S. Eliot's words might be borrowed here to illustrate Qian's hermeneutics on

Du Fu:

The existing monuments form an ideal order among themselves, which is modified by the introduction of the new (the really new) work of art among them. The existing order is complete before the new work arrives; for order to persist after the supervention of novelty, the *whole* existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered; and so the relations, proportions, values of each work of art toward the whole are readjusted; and this is conformity between the old and the new.<sup>282</sup>

What Eliot depicts here is a dynamic process in which works of art in the existing system are modified by the introduction of the new work; such negotiation leads to the adjustment of a whole system to achieve the "conformity between the old and the new." Examining Qian's Du Fu commentary shows how Qian was involved in such a dynamic process and integrated various concerns into a new hermeneutic system. Interestingly, Qian highlighted a mode of "systematic" reading in both his later interpretation and imitation of Du Fu's poetic cycle "Autumn Meditations" -- reading them in light of a system. Nevertheless, he distinguished himself from Eliot's description by the fact that he breathed a "life" into his new system and created a subtle hermeneutic dis/connection and openness which could invite different interpretations among both Qian's contemporaries and later generations.

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<sup>282</sup> T. S. Eliot, *The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism* (London: Methuen & CO Ltd), p. 50.

## Chapter 4 Ming *Yimin*'s Readings of Du Fu and Official Intervention in the Early Qing

Modern scholarship tends to associate the popularity of Du Fu during the Ming-Qing transitional period with the issue of loyalty, namely, reading Du Fu (as well as the poetic imitation of Du Fu) as a social gesture to express one's inner sincerity and loyalty to the fallen Ming.<sup>283</sup> During this chaotic period, Du Fu and his poetry were enthusiastically embraced by many Han literati and in particular by the Ming *yimin* 遺民 group. For example, in his monograph on the history of Du Fu studies in the Qing, Sun Wei highlights the social and political turbulence during the Manchu conquest of China as the historical background which gives rise to the high tide of Du Fu studies. Sun observes that many Du Fu commentators come from Jiangsu and Zhejiang province and argues that the major reason for this phenomenon is that Jiangsu and Zhejiang are the places where the strongest resistance against the Manchu existed at the time.<sup>284</sup>

Such a tendency immediately asks for a greater consideration of the term *yimin* under the historical circumstances of the Ming-Qing transition. Gui Zhuang 歸莊 (1613-1673) once drew a boundary between the term *yimin* 遺民 and the term *YIMIN* 逸民 (eremitic/reclusive subjects):<sup>285</sup>

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<sup>283</sup> For example, see Sun Wei 孫微, *Qingdai Dushixue shi* 清代杜詩學史 (Jinan: Qilu shushe, 2004), pp. 58-64.

<sup>284</sup> Ibid, pp.60-1. According to Zhang Jiazhuang's statistics, Jiang Su and Zhe Jiang were the top two places for Du Fu commentators. "Mingno Qingchu Dushi xuezhe zhanji kaoshu jiqi qunti tezhi tanxun" 明末清初杜詩學者佔籍考述及其群體特質探詢, *Fujian shifan daxue xuebao* 福建師範大學學報, No.5, 2009, pp. 97-99.

<sup>285</sup> Since both terms are romanized the same, I spell "eremitic subjects" as *YIMIN* to distinguish from "remnant subjects."

Confucius honored eremitic subjects, ranking as highest Boyi and Shuqi. *The Records of Remnant Subjects* also begins with these two persons, but the intention is different. In the case of those who encompass the Way, embrace virtue, and yet are not employed in the world, they are called “eremitic subjects.” But remnant subjects exist only at the margins of decline and rise, [and the term] refers to those who are left behind by the former dynasty.... That is why the designation of remnant subjects hinges on the decision to leave or participate [in the new order] at the moment of [dynastic transition] and does not depend on the illustriousness or obscurity of a lifetime.<sup>286</sup>

孔子表逸民，首伯夷、叔齊；《遺民錄》亦始於兩人，而其用意則異。凡懷道抱德不用於世者，皆謂之逸民；而遺民則惟在廢興之際，以為此前朝之所遺也。...故遺民之稱，視其一時之去就，而不繫乎終身之顯晦。

Wai-Yee Li indicates that “the early Qing discourse on modes of surviving the fall of the Ming often maintained the distinction between ‘remnant subjects’ and ‘eremitic subjects’.”<sup>287</sup> From Gui Zhuang’s discussion here, such a distinction hinges on one’s performance during the special historical moment of dynastic transition, namely, *fei xing zhi ji* 廢興之際 (“the margins of decline and rise”). Although the moment of dynastic transition as a critical component in that distinction was widely embraced by many people in their debates after the collapse of the Ming, modern scholar Zhao Yuan points out that it is the emphasis on that particular moment that to some extent obscures the complexity and diversity of individual cases.<sup>288</sup> In addition, the boundary between *yimin* and non-*yimin* was often blurred in reality when *yimin* frequently socialized with others, especially Qing officials. Such ambiguity of social identity also exists in the case of Du

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<sup>286</sup> See Gui Zhuang’s preface to *Lidai yimin lu* 歷代遺民錄, *Gui Zhuang ji* 歸莊集 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1984), pp. 170-71. I use Wai-Yee Li’s translation; see *Trauma and Transcendence in Early Qing Literature* (Cambridge and London: the Harvard University Asia Center, 2006), Wilt L. Idema, Wai-Yee Li, and Ellen Widmer eds., p. 7.

<sup>287</sup> *Trauma and Transcendence in Early Qing Literature*, p. 7.

<sup>288</sup> Zhao Yuan, *Ming Qing zhi ji shidafu yanjiu* 明清之際士大夫研究 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1999) p. 261. Zhao mentions Sun Qifeng and Fu Shan, who were well-known remnant subjects and yet rejected to pursue political careers even prior to the fall of the Ming.

Fu, where both *yimin* and non-*yimin* read Du Fu's poetry and extolled his unswerving loyalty to the Tang.

While scholarly emphasis on historical and individual particularities helps us perceive subtleties which are often obscured under the grand narrative of social and historical transformation during the Ming-Qing transition, I want to draw attention to the interaction between the shaping force of the rhetoric of *fei xing zhi ji* (dynastic transition) and individuals' responses from the perceived *yimin* group through the study of Du Fu hermeneutics. While Qian Qiani's Du Fu hermeneutics shows how a person negotiates his reading with various concerns and changing realities (including the dynastic transition) as his life progresses through different stages, this chapter aims to demonstrate how *yimin* engaged and disengaged in Du Fu life hermeneutics during the specific moment of the dynastic transition, as well as how their seeming unanimous endorsement of Du Fu's loyalty differs to some extent and how such loyalty is appropriated by the Qing official ideology during the Kangxi 康熙 (1654-1722) and the Qianlong 乾隆 (1711-1799) period.

### **1. *Yimin*'s readings of Du Fu**

The so-called *yimin* in the Ming-Qing transition, sometimes referred as Ming loyalists, is by no means a monolithic category. Lynn Struve points out:

The term "Ming loyalist" could apply meaningfully to anyone who pointedly altered his or her life patterns and goals to demonstrate unalterable personal identification with the fallen order. The term need not be restricted to men who worked actively for a Ming revival or who clearly harbored seditious intentions. On the other hand, it

should not be used indiscriminately in reference to men who wrote or spoke with enthusiasm or admiration for heroes and martyrs of the Ming demise.<sup>289</sup>

Despite the flexibility of such a concept, Struve's definition delineates two crucial steps that must be taken in order to be considered as an *yimin*: first, the conscious alteration of one's life patterns and goals in response to the fallen order; and second, a demonstration of an unchanging personal identification with the previous order as a result of this alteration. However, the act of altering one's life patterns and goals seldom stands alone in demonstrating such identification. It is often accompanied (or mediated) by other acts in order to manifest one's identification with the fallen Ming. Reading Du Fu certainly becomes one important act for Ming *yimin* to incorporate a life dimension into textual reading and vice versa.

One important Du Fu commentator, Wang Sishi 王嗣奭 (1566-1648), started to be attracted to Du Fu's poetry in 1608 during the mourning period for his father.<sup>290</sup> In 1619, he wrote a preface to his *Dushi jianxuan* 杜詩箋選 (*Commentary on Selected Poems of Du Fu*), though the manuscript itself was unfinished at the time. In his later years, Wang continued to work on Du Fu commentaries. At the age of eighty he eventually completed his *Du yi* 杜臆 (*My Understanding of Du Fu's Poetry*) and made revisions in 1645, 1646, and 1647.<sup>291</sup> It should be stressed that Wang clearly stated the compositional period of his *Du yi* manuscript in the preface: it began on the fifteenth of the ninth month of the year of

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<sup>289</sup> Lynn A. Struve, "Ambivalence and Action: Some Frustrated Scholars of the Kang-hsi Period," Jonathan D. Spence and John Wills, Jr. eds., *From Ming to Ch'ing: Conquest, Region, and Continuity in Seventeenth-Century China* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979), p.327.

<sup>290</sup> Wang briefly described his experience of reading Du Fu in the preface entitled "Duyi yuanshi" 杜臆原始, in *Duyi* 杜臆 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1963), p. 1-2.

<sup>291</sup> Liu Kaiyang, "Qian yan" 前言, *Du yi*, p. 15.

*jiashen* 甲申 (1644) during the Chongzhen era, and was finished on the second day of the first month of the year *yiyou* 己酉 (1645). The significance of the time can be illuminated by the contemporary situation: Wang started his *Du yi* project after the Manchu captured the capital of the Ming in 1644; and such a project, especially when we take into consideration the fact that it was completed only in a few months, might serve as a response to the Manchu conquest. One anecdote recorded by Quan Zuwang 全祖望 (1705-1755) further corroborates this point:

[Wang Sishi] was eighty years old in the *bingwu* year (1646). A certain official forced him to get on the boat and pay his respect to the Manchu prince. When the master arrived at Cishui, he took advantage of the tides to escape and returned two nights later. He said: “nowadays if other people suffer ill fortune to this degree, they only pray for death. I, however, pray not to die in the hope that I could perhaps see the day of [Ming] revival.” His stubbornness is like this. At that time he just finished his commentary on Du Fu’s poetry and said: “I use this as my ferns and can endure starvation for a long time.”<sup>292</sup>

(王嗣奭)丙戌年八十矣。有司迫遣登舟朝見貝勒，先生至慈水，乘潮逃去，信宿而返。曰：今人不幸至此，但有祈死而已，予則反祈不死，或猶見中興之日。其倔強如此。時方注杜詩畢，曰：吾以此為薇，可長餓也。

The ferns here refer to the story of Boyi 伯夷 and Shuyi 叔齊 who demonstrated their rejection of a new political order by plucking the ferns on mount Shouyang 首陽 to feed themselves instead of eating food produced under the rule of the Zhou dynasty. While Wang drew on paradigmatic individuals from the past to highlight his moral integrity, he replaced ferns with Du Fu’s poetry (or the act of reading Du Fu) and turned it into a means of political resistance against the Manchu takeover. Wang clearly states his hope for the revival of the Ming, which again echoes what Du Fu expressed for the revival of

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<sup>292</sup> Quan Zuwang, *Xu yongshan qijiu shiji* 續甬上耆舊詩集 (Siming wenxian she, 1918), 44:2. Wang’s age here is slightly different from the information in Wang’s preface to *Du yi*.

the Tang in many of his poems. Wang's refusal to pay his respect to the Manchu prince, coupled with his reading of Du Fu, underscores his loyalty to the Ming and resistance against the Qing, which is epitomized in the following couplet:

My heart's blood is not dry and condenses into green jade; 心血未枯凝作碧，  
The hair at my temple is short, but I cherish it as treasure.<sup>293</sup> 鬢毛雖短寶如珍。

The first line uses an allusion from the chapter "Wai Wu" 外物 (External Things) *Zhuangzi*: "Chang Hong died in Shu, where people stored away his blood, and after three years it was transformed into green jade" 萇弘死於蜀，藏其血，三年而化為碧。<sup>294</sup>

While the first line articulates Wang's loyalty by evoking a concrete image of a loyalist from the past, the second line vividly illustrates his resistance in the contemporary situation---rejecting the Qing order to shave the head and keep his temple hair. Both of these lines employ certain things (i.e. blood and hair at his temples) as a testimony of Wang's loyalty/resistance. Similarly, Wang's reading of Du Fu's poetry during the special period also serves this purpose and objectifies Wang's loyalty.

In the *Du yi*, Wang also highlights Du Fu's loyalty to the country. For example, in his commentary on the poetic cycle "Autumn Thoughts," Wang considers the words *gu yuan xin* 故園心 ("mind [focused on] home") as the essential link of the whole cycle. Wang further explained:

The three words *gu yuan xin* is certainly the thread weaving together the eight poems. However, when one reaches the line *gu guo ping ju you suo si* [live in peace,

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<sup>293</sup> Ibid, 44:4. The couplet comes from Wang's poem "Junxian fengwen yancui hejun xiangshen fu wulin chaojian beile yuyu buwang fuci nitou dangdao" 郡縣奉文嚴催合郡鄉紳赴武林朝見貝勒余欲不往賦此擬投當道。

<sup>294</sup> Burton Watson, *Chuang Tzu: Basic Writings* (Columbia University Press, 1964), p.131. I have changed the spelling from Wade-Giles into pinyin. Watson also briefly talks about Chang Hong in his footnote on the same page.

thinking of the former nation] of the fourth poem, a reader should read differently; *gu guo si* [thoughts of the former nation] is the same as *gu yuan xin* with the change of a word *guo*. One can see that what Du Fu was thinking of was not “home” but “nation.”

故園心三字固是八首之綱。至第四章“故國平居有所思”，讀者當另著眼；“故國思”即故園心而換一“國”字，見所思非家也，國也。

The emphasis on Du Fu’s yearning for the old country (former nation) (the heyday of the Tang) during the chaotic period might remind us of Wang’s own situation during the Ming-Qing transition. Furthermore, in Wang’s opinions, Du Fu’s loyalty to the country (nation) in poetry went beyond a verbal expression and demonstrated Du Fu’s political and military abilities in real life. For example, Wang wrote in his commentary on Du Fu poetic series “Going out to the frontier” 出塞:

The nine poems in “Going out to the frontier” are the means Du Fu uses to express what is hidden in him. Reading his poetry, [one can see] the filial piety of yearning for one’s parents, the courage of venting hatred toward one’s enemies, the benevolence of showing sympathy for scholars, the strategies for military victory. It does not value martial conquest, or boast of achievements, or conceal one’s difficulties. He simultaneously possesses qualities of hero and sage. Don’t consider him a mere poet.<sup>295</sup>

《出塞》九首，是公借以自抒其所蘊。讀其詩而思親之孝，敵愾之勇，恤士之仁，制勝之略，不尚武，不矜功，不諱窮，豪杰聖賢兼而有之。勿以詩人目之。

Wang strongly disagreed with *Xin Tang shu* 新唐書 (*New History of the Tang*) where Du Fu was depicted as a person who enthusiastically produced grandiose and yet impractical discussions of state affairs.<sup>296</sup> Wang wrote:

Du Fu compared himself to Ji and Qi, but people don’t necessarily believe [his words]. Now I read his poetry (and find): during his exile his clothing and food were insufficient, but the reasons for the peace and the chaos of the country, the success and failure in employing people and planning administrative affairs, the benefits and

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<sup>295</sup> *Du yi*, p.102.

<sup>296</sup> See the biography of Du Fu in the *Xin Tang shu*, *Siku quanshu*, 201:15a.

harms to the people, military victories and defeats, [consideration of] the strategic location of forces, the barbarians' support and opposition, all of these can be found in his poetry. He put forward these in detail and with accuracy and articulated them with great sincerity. If in everyday life he hadn't paid attention to the affairs of the world, how could his poetry do this? Du Fu's poems are often intimately associated with the history of the Tang and thus people call him a poet-historian, but how can this sufficiently describe him?

杜少陵自許稷契，人未必信。今讀其詩，當奔走流離，衣食且不給，而於國家理亂安危之故，用人行政之得失，生民之利病，軍機之勝負，地勢之險要，夷虜之向背，無不見之於詩。陳之詳確，出之懇摯，非平日留心世務，何以有此？杜之詩，往往與國史相表裡，故人以詩史稱之，豈足以盡少陵哉！<sup>297</sup>

Wang's reading of Du Fu here seeks to confirm a transparent reading from poetic expression to real-life situation. Interestingly, since Du Fu had never been granted an opportunity to demonstrate his political and military abilities in real life, Wang chooses to explore the potential for poetry to facilitate such transference to real-life conditions. This emphasis on Du Fu's practical abilities, especially the manifestation of their impact on real life through poetic composition, also points to Wang's act of reading Du Fu as a gesture toward a different social reality during the Ming-Qing transition: Wang's reading of Du Fu might have no direct impact on his contemporary situation, but such an act could convey strong pragmatic concerns with the real world.

However, it should be stressed that my reading of Wang's Du Fu commentary is largely conditioned by Wang's historical actions in a chaotic transitional period similar to Du Fu's age. When discussing the Ming *yimin*'s reading of Du Fu during the Ming-Qing transition, modern scholars tend to highlight the fact that the Ming *yimin* expressed their

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<sup>297</sup> Wang Sishi, *Guantian biji waibian* 管天筆記外編 (Taipei: Guangwen shuju, 1985), pp. 24-5.

own loyalty to the fallen Ming through their praise of Du Fu's loyalty to the Tang.<sup>298</sup> It is true that similar historical situations might have led the Ming *yimin* to have more empathy with Du Fu and to facilitate their identification with him, but we should be more cautious about how such praise of Du Fu's loyalty connects or disconnects with the *yimin*'s immediate world. Unlike Qian Qianyi (who creates a strong connection among his life in the real world, his writings, and his reading of Du Fu), Wang's Du Fu commentary, in terms of its content, is much less connected to the immediate reality of the Ming-Qing transition. Wang's commentary shows more of a diachronic connection with the hermeneutic system of earlier readings of Du Fu (Wang frequently mentions the earlier interpretations of Du Fu, especially those by the Jingling school) than a synchronic connection with his contemporary situation (Wang seldom makes a comparison between Du Fu's life situation and his own in his commentaries). In other words, in its relation to the real world, the act of reading Du Fu itself carries more weight than how Wang read it (though they cannot be completely separated). Unlike Qian Qianyi, Wang splits his reading of Du Fu into two very loosely connected parts: content-reading (the reading and understanding of Du Fu's poetry) and social performance (the act of reading itself as an act of resistance).

We should avoid the common misleading assumption that the identity of Ming *yimin* always embraces a kind of "loyal" reading of Du Fu and his poetry that serves as a response to the reality in which *yimin* lived. Another example is Fu Shan 傅山 (1607-

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<sup>298</sup> This tendency is rather common in Chinese scholarship on Du Fu hermeneutics. In the case of Wang Sishi, see Zhang Jiazhuang, "Huigui yu chaoyue: Duyi yu yi yi ni zhi fa" 回歸與超越: 杜臆與以意逆志法, *Fuzhou daxue xuebao* 福州大學學報, No.1, 2008, pp. 67-72.

1685), a well-known *yimin* during the Ming-Qing transition. After 1644, Fu dressed himself differently and wore a Taoist cap as well as vermilion clothes.<sup>299</sup> However, in his “Biographical Chronicle of Fu Shan,” Ding Baoquan 丁寶銓 points out discrepancies in the accounts of Fu Shan’s relation to Taoism and suggests that Fu wore Taoist attire before 1644.<sup>300</sup> Doubtlessly, the collapse of the Ming in 1644 became a traumatic experience for many Han literati at that time, but such a moment is often dramatized in many historical and literary representations, which tends to highlight the difference in individual’s mentality and behavior before and after this symbolic time.

We can perceive this kind of dramatization in many of Fu’s writings after the collapse of the Ming in 1644. Fu frequently talks about death after the collapse of Ming. At the end of the year of 1644 (the same year when the Manchu captured the Ming capital), Fu was thirty-eight and wrote a poem which began with: “one can surely die at the age of thirty-eight; what can I say about the procrastination of my death?” 三十八歲盡可死，棲棲不死復何言。<sup>301</sup> Fu’s procrastination of his death during the Ming-Qing transition was partly due to the fact that he had to support his mother, who passed away in 1660 when Fu was fifty-four years old. In 1679, Fu was forced by the local official Dai Mengxiong 戴夢熊 to go to the capital to take the civil service exam.<sup>302</sup> Fu tried to refuse under the excuse of illness, but the officials sent servants to carry him on his bed to Beijing. When Fu arrived at the vicinity of the capital, he refused to enter the city and

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<sup>299</sup> *Zhu yi* 朱衣 (vermilion clothes) shows Fu’s loyalty to the royal family Zhu of the Ming dynasty (whose surname literally means "vermilion").

<sup>300</sup> Fu Shan, *Shuang hong kan ji* 霜紅龕集 (Taipei: Hanhua, 1978), p. 1311.

<sup>301</sup> *Ibid.*, p.295.

<sup>302</sup> *Ibid.*, p.1349.

threatened to commit suicide. Fu stayed at Yuanjiao 圓教 temple outside the Chongwen Gate 崇文門, where a dramatic moment in his relation to Du Fu's poetry took place. In Fu's poetry collection there is a poem entitled "Kumu tang du Du shi" 枯木堂讀杜詩 ("Reading Du Fu's Poetry at the Hall of Withered Wood"). Fu's note after the title indicates that at that time he was at Yuanjiao temple. Why Fu chose to read Du Fu's poetry at this special moment is a very interesting question. On one hand, the currency of loyalty that Du Fu's poetry traditionally carries would suggest Fu's negative attitude towards the Qing court. On the other hand, surprisingly, when we read that poem, it has nothing to do with the issue of loyalty; nor does it lament current chaotic situations. The poem began with the line which connects Du Fu with Buddhism: "the King of poetry (Du Fu) is like Shakyamuni Buddha" 詩王譬伽文.<sup>303</sup> The whole poem is to use Buddhism to argue that one should abandon the mechanical imitation of Du Fu in poetic composition, since avoiding imitation is what is truly close to the essence of Du Fu. Fu's poem echoes what he says in his "Du yu yulun" 杜遇餘論 (*Additional Discussions on the 'Encountering Du Fu' anthology*):

Let's compare Du Fu to Shakyamuni Buddha. If a person wants to become Du Fu, it is definitely impossible to achieve it by copying Du Fu's words. Isn't it just like a monk who can't become Buddha by learning verses from the sutra?<sup>304</sup>

譬如以杜為迦文佛，人想要做杜，斷無鈔襲杜字句而能為杜者。即如僧學得經文中偈言即可為佛耶？

Fu's criticism might be targeting the poetic practice of the *fugu* school, but it doesn't bear any direct connection with his contemporary situation at that moment. In the *Du yu yulun*

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<sup>303</sup> Ibid, 152.

<sup>304</sup> Ibid, 833. *Du yu* 杜遇 was an anthology of Du Fu's poems edited by Fu's friend Dai Tingshi 戴廷栻.

and other remarks scattered in the anthology of his writings, Fu Shan seldom highlights loyalty in Du Fu's poetry and its relation to historical reality. Different from Qian Qianyi and Wang Sishi, Fu tends to read Du Fu's poetry from the perspective of poetry rather than that from history. One entry in Fu's anthology says:

The word "history" obscures Master Du's poetry, and thus (people) read his poetry as chronicle. I don't know history, and so I still read his poetry as poetry.<sup>305</sup>

史之一字掩卻杜先生，遂用紀事之法讀其詩。老夫不知史，仍以詩讀其詩。

Fu separates history and poetry and thus distances himself from the common practice of talking about the historical dimension of Du Fu's poetry in order to allude to one's own immediate situation. Again we witness a split self of Fu Shan in his reading of Du Fu: one is reading Du Fu's poetry and one is using the act of such reading as a kind of social performance---a resistance against the Qing.

Fu's appropriation of Du Fu's poetry as a social gesture of loyalty becomes more complicated when we examine his attitude toward political service. In his "Shi Xun" 仕訓 ("Instructions on Official Service"), which is part of Fu's "Family Instructions" to his family members, he writes:

Not only should a scholar not rashly pursue a political career during an improper period, he should not hastily pursue a political career even in a proper period. Emperor, subjects, colleagues, and friends, how can one get all the right people? Taking official service ultimately relies on the word "intention." One must not fulfill one's ambition, and yet let oneself go along (merely follow opportunities?) in order to get by. How can one stay in that situation for a moment! One resorts to indignation when there is no alternative. When that moment comes, it is not necessarily beneficial to state affairs and yet one loses one's life. If one merely says that to repay the ruler by death is a matter of course, it doesn't touch on the meaning

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<sup>305</sup> Ibid, p.1148.

of serving the court. How can this issue of great significance be solved by carelessly sacrificing one's life?<sup>306</sup>

士不惟非其時不得輕出，即其時亦不得輕出。君臣僚友那得皆其人也。仕本憑一志字。志不得行，身隨以苟苟，豈可暫處哉！不得已而用氣。到用氣之時於國事未必有濟而身死矣。死但云酬君之當然者，於仕之義卻不過臨了一件耳。此種輕重經權豈一輕生能了？

At the beginning of Fu's discussion on the decision of political service, the criterion is whether the *shi* 時 (time; period) is proper or not. While this might suggest the reason for Fu's refusal of performing political service under the Qing, he quickly shifts from the external situation (suggested by time) to the internal *zhi* 志 (intention). One's decision on political service doesn't merely hinge on the specific time, and it should serve the purpose of fulfilling one's ambition. Fu highlights the significance of performing political service and its independence from the external *shi*. The time he is discussing can be well applied to the Ming-Qing transition, when many Han officials became martyrs of the fallen Ming. Nevertheless, Fu disagrees with such a "loyal" practice and personal sacrifice, since it obscures the real meaning of performing political service. Fu's attitude towards loyalty is different from what he professed in his late thirties, when the Manchu began to conquer China; here, the loyalty to the ruler shifts to the loyalty to one's own intention.

What has been revealed from Fu's act of reading Du Fu at the Yuanjiao temple is an interesting combination of distance and engagement in relation to his reality. The content of his reading seldom deals with the historical dimension of Du Fu's poetry and the loyalty of Du Fu. It seems that Fu tends to avoid creating a parallel between Du Fu's life

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<sup>306</sup> Ibid, p.696.

in An Lushan rebellion and his own situation during the Ming-Qing transition. At the same time, however, his act of reading Du Fu, especially during the moment of being forced to the capital to receive an official title from the Qing, strongly resonates with the practice of reading Du Fu as a means of political resistance during the Ming-Qing transition. Nevertheless, his appropriation of Du Fu as resistance against the Qing is greatly undermined by his attitude towards official service, since what makes him refuse to serve the Qing (as well as the Ming) largely hinges on the fulfillment of his intention rather than lingering loyalty to the fallen dynasty.

An examination of Jin Shengtian's reading of Du Fu in relation to the Ming-Qing historical transition will further illustrate the elevation of personal fulfillment in Du Fu hermeneutics as opposed to loyalty to the fallen Ming. Jin came from Suzhou prefecture and we know little about his family background, his childhood and conditions of his early education.<sup>307</sup> He spent his youth in the last years of Ming dynasty, and like many other educated students he also took the civil service exam. Many legends and stories center on his participation in the exam and, despite differences among these records and lack of certainty on what Jin did in the examinations and how many times he had taken the exams, Jin has been represented, sometimes in a very dramatic way, as a person whose participation turns out to be nothing but a playful defiance of the civil service exam and

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<sup>307</sup> While some scholars argue that Jin came from Changzhou County, other scholars believe that Jin's hometown is Wu County. One can refer to Li Jinsong's 李金松 "Jin Shengtian de jiguan kaobian" 金聖嘆的籍貫考辨, *Xueshu yanjiu* 學術研究, 2004, no.3, p.131. Scanty materials only allow modern scholars to reconstruct fragment of Jin's family background and his early life on the basis of information which scatters in Jin's writings. For example, in one of Jin's prefaces to *Shui hu zhuan*, Jin mentioned at the age of ten *sui* he went to the village school and read "The Four Books". *Jin Shengtian quanji*, 1:9.

as someone who makes it a site to distinguish himself as unconventional.<sup>308</sup> However, the year of 1644 ruined Jin's dream to serve the Ming court and it also forced Jin to make his own choice during the chaotic Ming-Qing transition. It seems that Jin's acquaintances present him with all the representative choices at the crux of the historical crisis: becoming a martyr, becoming an *yimin*, or becoming an official under the new dynasty.<sup>309</sup> But for Jin, the choice in that specific historical situation was not merely an either/or question. The following are some of Jin's comments on Du Fu's poem "Yuan" 猿 ("Gibbon"):

When a gentleman lives in the period of difficulties, it is a proper way to give one's life to attain humaneness, and yet it is an unusual alternative to become a snake or a turtle. The proper way of being doesn't do away with its alternative and the unusual alternative does no harm to the proper way. That is the reason why a gentleman becomes a gentleman.<sup>310</sup>

君子處艱難之會，殺身成仁，其正也。爲蛇爲鱉，其奇也。正不廢奇，奇不害正，君子之所以爲君子也。

When he talks about how to spend one's life in one of his prefaces to *Xixiang ji*, Jin simultaneously justifies two seemingly paradoxical existential choices embodied by Zhuge Liang 诸葛亮 (181-234) during a chaotic historical period: being alive in

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<sup>308</sup> To name a few, *Dan wu bi ji* 丹午筆記, *Xin chou ji wen* 辛丑紀聞, *Liu nan sui bi* 柳南隨筆 and *Qingdai qibai mingren zhuan* 清代七百名名人傳 all deal with Jin's experience in the civil service exam. Many of them mention that Jin composed bizarre essays in exams. Wu Zhenglan 吳正嵐 also discusses Jin's playful attitude towards the civil service exam during the Ming period and indicates that Jin wants to pursue his political career through *jianju* 荐举 (recommendation). *Jin Shengtan pingzhuan* 金圣叹评传 (Nanjing: nanjingdaxue chubanshe, 2006), pp.63-76.

<sup>309</sup> Taking into consideration that many of Jin's acquaintances either sacrificed their lives for the Ming (e.g. Wang Xi 王希) or refused to serve in the Qing dynasty (e.g. Sheng Wangzan 盛王讚) as well as some of Jin's poems, Lu Lin 陸林 acknowledges Jin's refusal to serve the Qing dynasty. However, Qian Qianyi 錢謙益, who had contact with Jin in the famous event (what is this? a poetry exchange?) *xiantan changhe* 仙壇倡和, points to another existential choice, that of cooperation with the new order through his short political career under the Qing. See *Qian Muzhai quanji*, 1:330-335, and 2:1123-1126.

<sup>310</sup> *Jin Shengtan quanji*, 2: 768.

obscurity and becoming a distinguished minister.<sup>311</sup> However, a second look will inform us of the different situations of Zhuge and Jin: while the regime Zhuge Liang later serves claims to be descended from the imperial family in the Han dynasty and makes Zhuge's political involvement a loyal gesture toward the fallen Han, the new regime Jin faces is established by the Manchu and is often considered by many Han literati at that time as one of barbarian origin. Jin resolves such conflicts by highlighting the resilience of the *junzi* 君子 (gentleman)'s behavior at the moment of crisis: one can choose to die, but one can also choose to survive.

Living in a chaotic period, Jin has more pragmatic concerns than merely being loyal to the fallen Ming. His survival might allow him to demonstrate his loyalty through Du Fu interpretations, but more importantly it endows him with an opportunity to bring into full display his own talents. The discourse of *cai* 才 (talent, genius) occupies an important position in Jin's world and functions as a central concept around which many of his writings revolve.<sup>312</sup> When he reads Du Fu's poem "Huang Yu" 黄鱼 ("Yellow Fish"), Jin says:

When I was a child, I considered myself as one with great talents and couldn't bear any frustration. It seemed as if since ancient times, only I alone am a great talent and yet only I alone am sunk in oblivion. Later, I saw a considerable number of examples of this and began to realize that tens of thousands of heroes had been drowned in oblivion since early times---how many there were! History has recorded over a hundred persons who have gained opportunities and have fulfilled their ambition. If we take them and compare with those drowned in oblivion, how can one know who is strong and who is weak? Alas! How painful it is! This is the

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<sup>311</sup> See *Jin Shengtan quanji*, 3:6. In his commentaries, Jin often expresses his admiration for Zhuge Liang.

<sup>312</sup> In addition to his "six masterpieces of genius", Jin is also credited with other works whose titles contain *cai*. In *Changjing tang yishu mulu* 唱经堂遗书目录, there are works such as *Caizi guwen* 才子古文, *Tang caizi shi* 唐才子诗, *Chengmo caizi* 程墨才子, *Xiaoti caizi* 小题才子. *Chenyinlou shixuan* 沉吟楼诗选 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1979), pp.157-158.

reason that the master [Du Fu] begins his poem “Yellow Fish” with the two words *ri jian* 日見 [literally, “daily we see”], a deep lament for geniuses in the world.<sup>313</sup>

爲兒時，自負大才，不勝侏儸。恰似自古迄今，只我一人是大才，只我一人獨沉屈者。後來頗頗見有此事，始悟古來淹殺豪傑萬萬千千，知有何限？青史所紀，磊磊百十得時肆志人，若取來與淹殺者比較，烏知誰強誰弱？嗟哉痛乎！此先生黃魚詩所以始之以日見二字，哭殺天下才子也！

Alas! If a genius establishes accomplishments and fame by means of his talents, then talents are indeed invaluable. However, if a genius suffers starvation and eventually arrives at the edge of death because of his talents, he looks back and reflects: “how do I fall short of butchers and wine-sellers that I have come to this?” Certainly one should not complain about starvation but about one’s talents!<sup>314</sup>

嗚呼！才子以才而建功垂名，則誠才之爲貴。若才子以才而終於飢餓以死，回首思之，我何遜於屠沽兒而一至於此？真不怪飢餓怪殺有才矣！

The scenario here is not a lament for historical crisis and the collapse of a certain dynasty, but for failure of the fulfillment of one’s talents. Du Fu, in Jin’s eyes, also considers the fate of the yellow fish as symbol of the fate of geniuses. A displacement of loyalty occurs, since more emphasis has been put on *cai* as well as the possibility and the impossibility of displaying it. Jin believes that certain works by the ancients, including Du Fu’s poetry, “have been disgracefully obliterated in sludge 自來辱在泥塗”<sup>315</sup> and it is his responsibility to save them from unjust treatment. The oblivion of ancient works reminds us of Jin’s own unappreciated talents and his Du Fu commentaries are at once efforts to save both the ancients and himself.

In 1660, Jin was informed by his friend of the Shunzhi emperor’s 順治 (1638-1661) praise of Jin: “This [Jin] is an expert on ancient essays, and do not look at him in the

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<sup>313</sup> *Jin Shengtan quanji*, 2:769.

<sup>314</sup> *Jin Shengtan quanji*, 2:769-70.

<sup>315</sup> “Yu Ren Shengzhi jiong 與任昇之炅”, *Jin Shengtan quanji*, 4: 40-41.

same way one looks at people who compose eight-legged essays” 此是古文高手, 莫以時文眼光看他。<sup>316</sup> Jin was moved to tears, kowtowed to the north, and composed his *Chungan bashou* 春感八首 ("Spring Thoughts: Eight Poems") in which he expressed his gratitude to the Qing emperor's appreciation, as well as his wish to serve the court.<sup>317</sup> The burden of the historical past (especially loyalty to the fallen Ming) does not form rigid constraints on him, who is eager to rescue his talents from oblivion. In 1661, many scholars in Suzhou 蘇州 took advantage of the mourning ceremony for the newly deceased emperor Shunzhi, and lamented in the local Confucian temple to complain of the magistrate of Wu county Ren Weichu 任維初 (n.d.) for his cruelty and corruption in collecting taxes and grains. Jin either voluntarily participated or was unfairly implicated in the case and was finally sentenced to death by the Qing government.<sup>318</sup> Eventually Jin is not a martyr of the fallen Ming but a protestor within the new political order, and it is said that he attempted to cry out “xiandi” 先帝 ("the deceased emperor," here the Shunzhi emperor) for protection when he was tortured under interrogation.<sup>319</sup> Jin's yearning for personal fulfillment and his attitude towards the Shunzhi emperor enable us to examine his praise of Du Fu's loyalty through a different lens. The loyalty of Du Fu extolled by Jin does not suggest Jin's commitment to the fallen Ming. Jin demonstrates a strong

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<sup>316</sup> Ibid, 2:1234.

<sup>317</sup> Ibid, 2:1235.

<sup>318</sup> Several accounts deal with Jin's death. For example, Gu Gongxie's 顧公燮 *Danwu biji* 丹午筆記 (Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 1985), pp.154-163. Cai Guanluo's *Qingdai qibai mingren zhuan* 清代七百名名傳 (Beijing: Zhongguo shudian, 1984), pp. 1740-42.

<sup>319</sup> *Danwu biji*, p. 158. Jin's behavior, if it is true, might be explained by the Shunzhi emperor's earlier praise of his writings.

willingness to fulfill his own talents, which to some extent approves transference of loyalty from the Ming to the Qing.

Wang Sishi, Fu Shan, Jin Shengtan and Qian Qianyi represent different modes of reading Du Fu (especially concerning the issue of loyalty in his poetry); they are associated with different life experiences and reveal a general picture of Du Fu hermeneutics during the Ming-Qing transition. They reveal to us that during the Ming-Qing transition the *yimin*'s reading of Du Fu is by no means a monolithic category and that the praise of Du Fu's loyalty doesn't necessarily function as a strategy of self-identification to show unswerving loyalty to the fallen Ming. (Transition here is a little awkward -- maybe a new paragraph?) Furthermore, one important feature of Du Fu hermeneutics during this period is the formation of reading communities. Many editions of Du Fu commentary often involve collaborative effort rather than the work of a single person. The following table shows three major editions and their collaborators in the early Qing.<sup>320</sup> For example, Zhu Heling's *Du Gongbu shiji jizhu* 杜工部詩集輯注 (Commentary on Du Fu's poetry) listed 46 collaborators throughout the book: Li Shi, Jin Junming; Shi Runzhang, Song Shiyang; Song Wan, Lu Shiyi; Song Quan, Yu Nanshi; Wang Shilu, Gui Zhuang; Shen Hanguang, Xu Bai; Ji Yingzhong, Wang Wan; Wang Shizhen, Baozhen; Yan Hang, Chen Hu; Peng Sunyu, Gu Youxiao; Qin Songling, Yao Zongdian; Chen Yunheng, Xu Qianxue; Qian Surun, Wu Zhaokuan; Liu Tiren, Ge Zhongzhi; Chen Weisong, Sun Yongzuo; Zhou Tiguan, Wang Guangcheng; Chen

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<sup>320</sup> The information about participants is based on each work listed in the table. However, since I don't have access to Gu Chen's work, I use the information from Sun Wei's article "Gu Chen jiqi Pijiangyuan Dushi zhujie" 顧宸及其辟疆園杜詩註解, *Du Fu yanjiu xuekan* 杜甫研究學刊, 2002, no.1, pp.36-40. Huang Sheng's edition also involves other people, especially his clan members (who are not included in the chart).

Zuoming, Xu Yuanwen; Lu Shikai, Zhao Yun; Cheng Keze, Zhou Diji; Mao Shen, Wu Maoqian; Zhou Maozhou, Lu Yuanfu; Zhao Wushi, Xu Sheng; Cheng Feng, Zhang Gongqian.

This collaboration also shows that the symbolic boundary between *yimin* and non-*yimin* is transgressed in the Du Fu hermeneutics in real life. When the Ming collapsed in 1644, Wang Shizhen 王士禛 (1634-1711), one of the collaborators in Zhu's work, was only ten years old. He spent most of his life in the Qing and served as a high official the Qing court. Zhu was born in 1606 and became thirty-eight when the Manchu conquered Beijing. Unlike Wang, who might have been too young to identify himself with the fallen Ming, Zhu strongly associated his identity with the Ming and never served the court during the Qing. Zhu highlighted the significance of loyalty in (reading) Du Fu's poetry in the preface to his work: "Among the poets since ancient times, no one is comparable to Du Fu in terms of maintaining loyalty and integrity under changes and hard straits. It is not merely knowledge that causes this but his nature and emotions that cause it" 自古詩人，變不失貞，窮不隕節，未有如子美者，非徒學為之，其性情為之也。<sup>321</sup> Zhu is often considered by many of his contemporaries (as well as by modern scholars) as a *yimin* poet, but his collaboration with Wang in Du Fu commentary suggests the fact that loyalty to the fallen Ming is not necessarily reinforced by a community that is reading Du Fu's poetry.

For many readers at that time (including *yimin*), what the community offers them is less a place to articulate their loyalty to the fallen Ming through readings of Du Fu than

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<sup>321</sup> *Du Gongbu shiji jizhu*, p.4.

as a means of socialization, a way of befriending people who share similar interest in his verse and as a way of improving their own understanding (often under the name of discovering the "true meaning" of Du Fu's poetry). In 1679, thirty-five years after the Manchu took over Beijing, the famous anti-Manchu scholar Gu Yanwu 顧炎武 (1613-1682) wrote a preface to the *Guang Song yimin lu* 廣宋遺民錄 (*An Expanded Version of Records of Song Remnant Subjects*), prepared by Zhu Mingde 朱明德 (1618-?), who was significantly expanding Cheng Minzheng's 程敏政 (1446-1499) work; the book includes over four hundred Song *yimin* loyalists.<sup>322</sup> Although in the preface Gu situates Zhu's act in the context of the Ming-Qing transition and emphasizes "shared intention" (*tong zhi* 同志) between Zhu and the Song dynasty *yimin*, Gu also draws on the rhetoric of "seeking friends through the act of reading", which can be traced back to the famous passage on *zhi ren lun shi* 知人論世 in *Mencius*:

Mencius said to Wan Chang, 'The best Gentleman of a village is in a position to make friends with the best Gentlemen in other villages; the best Gentlemen in a state, with the best Gentlemen in other states; and the best Gentlemen in the Empire, with the best Gentlemen in the Empire. And not content with making friends with the best Gentlemen in the Empire, he goes back in time and communes with the ancients. When one read the poems and writings of the ancients, can it be right not to know something about them as men? Hence one tries to understand the age in which they lived. This can be described as "looking for friends in history".'<sup>323</sup>

孟子謂萬章曰：“一鄉之善士斯友一鄉之善士，一國之善士斯友一國之善士，天下之善士斯友天下之善士。以友天下之善士為未足，又尚論古之人。頌其詩，讀其書，不知其人，可乎？是以論其世也。是尚友也。”

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<sup>322</sup> Cheng Minzheng's work *Song yimin lu* 宋遺民錄 was first published in 1479, but it didn't become popular until the collapse of the Ming. See Xie Zhengguang's 謝正光 preface to *Ming yimin zhuanji ziliao suoyi* 明遺民傳記資料索引 (Taipei: Xin wenfeng, 1990), p. 1.

<sup>323</sup> D. C. Lau, trans., *Mencius* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1984), vol.2, pp.218-9.

In their collaborative effort of befriending Du Fu, those readers in the Ming-Qing transition befriend each other and form a social network which facilitates exchanges of opinions on Du Fu's poetry and lets their reading move away from a single mode of using the historical past to insinuate the political situation at present.<sup>324</sup> Although Gu Yanwu did not systematically write commentary on Du Fu's poetry, there are dozens of entries on Du Fu in his well-known work *Ri zhi lu* 日知錄 (*Account of Daily Accumulated Knowledge*). One of Gu's letters shows how Du Fu's poetry is used as a means for social connection. The letter is entitled "A Letter to Someone" 與人札 and does not clearly identify the recipient, though it is argued that Gu probably addresses the letter to Zhu Heling.<sup>325</sup> The letter begins with Gu's description of a ten-year separation from his friend and expresses Gu's longing for him. After that, Du Fu's poetry appears in the letter:

While I was thinking of you, Pan Lei came to the north. He told me that you wrote a letter to me and yet it had been lost on his way. I only received your commentary on one *juan* of Du Fu's poems. When I read it, it seemed that I already met you even though I couldn't receive your greetings in the letter.<sup>326</sup>

正在怀思，而次耕北来，传有惠札，途中失之，仅得所注《杜集》一卷。读其书，即不得尺素之殷勤，而已如见其人也。

Here readings of Du Fu's poetry substitutes for the lost letter (one of most common means of communication at that time) and serves as a tie to connect Gu and his friend.

After reading his friend's Du Fu commentary, Gu also sent a dozen of his notes on some

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<sup>324</sup> Using the reading of Du Fu as a means of socialization can also be perceived in the phenomenon of literary parties. For instance, in 1695 Zhou Hunchen, Hu Xianghao, Chen Lian, and Dong Dalun held a party in honor of Du Fu. Zhang Huijian ed., *Ming Qing Jiangsu wenren nianbiao* 明清江蘇文人年表 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1986), p.901.

<sup>325</sup> Wu Guoping 鄔國平, "Gu Yanwu yu Du Fu shizhu" 顧炎武與杜甫詩注, *Du Fu yanjiu xuekan* 杜甫研究學刊, no.3, 2002, pp.33-37. Zhou Jinbiao 周金標, "Gu Yanwu yu Zhu Heling jiaowang kaolun" 顧炎武與朱鶴齡交往考論, *Jiangnan daxue xuebao* 江南大學學報, vol.8, no.4, 2009, pp.81-84. Earlier in his book *Liu Rushi biezhu*, Chen Yinke also suspects the recipient is Zhu Heling.

<sup>326</sup> Hua Chenzhi 華忱之 ed., *Gu Tinglin shiwen* 顧亭林詩文集 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), p.244.

of Du Fu's poems to his friend. It is the practice of reading Du's poetry that bridges the physical distance in real life and complete a two-way communication. It should be stressed that the social function of reading Du's poetry in this case can hardly be identified as a social gesture of resistance against the Qing (or homage to the fallen Ming). Furthermore, the notes Gu sent to his friend were later developed into entries on Du Fu's poems in Gu's work *Ri zhi lu*, and the content of those entries focuses on a number of earlier texts that served as the basis for Du's poems, which suggests that the notes sent by Gu probably also dealt with the "intertextuality" of Du Fu's poetry rather than with the representation of loyalty. Discussions between commentators such as Gu and his friend also to some extent contribute to moving the interpretation of Du Fu toward a more scholarly reading.

This is not to deny the fact that the *yimin* might use Du's poetry as expression of their loyalty to the fallen Ming during the Ming-Qing transition, but such a reading of his poetry should not be regarded as the dominant mode determined by historical particularities. As we have seen, the contextualization of readings of his verse during the chaotic dynastic transition on one hand draws our attention to how such readings respond to social changes, especially the collapse of Ming through its emphasis upon loyalty, and on the other hand reveals to us the possibility of a paradoxical hermeneutic movement in their responses --- how those readings disengage from the discourse of the Ming loyalists through their engagement in/distance from loyalty as well as how they participate in the immediate social reality in one way and dissociate themselves from it in another way.

## Official Intervention in Du Fu's Interpretations in the Early Qing

The diverse readings of Du Fu in the early Qing and their accompanying hermeneutic paradoxes open up a space for the intervention of Qing official ideology. There are two important stages in the process of such intervention: one in the Kangxi era and the other in Qianlong era. We will focus on how an individual commentator responds to the official ideology through his Du Fu commentary during the first stage, and then turn to the reading of Du Fu by the emperor Qianlong and the editors of the *Siku quanshu* 四庫全書 (Complete Library of the Four Treasuries) in the second stage.

### 1. Chou Zhaoao and his *Dushi xiangzhu* during the Kangxi reign

Chou Zhaoao's 仇兆鰲 (1638-1717) *Dudhi xiangzhu* 杜詩詳注 (*Detailed Commentary on Du Fu's Poems*) is generally considered as one of the most important editions of Du Fu commentary in the Qing (and perhaps the most important since the Song). In his later life Chou briefly summarized his engagement with Du Fu commentary as follows:

I started working on my Du Fu commentary in 1689, and it had been revised several times before I returned to my hometown in 1712. In the spring of 1703 it was printed. In the winter of 1694, I went to Jintai and obtained new commentary from a few persons such as my senior colleagues Wu Zhiyi and Yan Ruoqu, my friend Zhang Xiliang (who obtained the *jinshi* degree in the same year as me), and Zhang Yuan from my hometown. Each of them illuminated Du Fu's poetry in their own ways. In 1711, I retired and returned south. I finished editing on the boat, correcting omissions in my previous edition. At that time I was 74 years old.<sup>327</sup>

注杜始于己巳岁,迨乙亥还乡,数经考訂。癸未春日,刊本告竣。甲申冬,仍上金台,复得数家新注,如前辈吴志伊、阎百史,年友张石虹,同乡张迺可,各有发明。辛卯,致政南归,舟次輯成,聊补前书之疏略。时年七十有四矣。

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<sup>327</sup> *Dushi xiangzhu*, p.2097.

Chou's sketchy account of his Du Fu commentary makes such a project seem more like a kind of personal engagement, with help from other individuals. Nevertheless, it obscures a very important fact of how his Du Fu project interacts with official ideology during the Qing. Chou obtained his *jinshi* degree in 1685 and secured a post in the Imperial Academy. In 1693, the Kangxi emperor issued an edict which highlights the significance of literary works for the officials in the Imperial Academy:

The imperial decree to Grand Secretaries: officials in the Imperial Academy consider literary works as their profession. Contemporary people who like discussing *li xue* [i.e., neo-Confucian studies] often say that literary works are not a matter of great urgency. Zhou Dunyi, the Cheng brothers, Zhang Zai and Zhu Xi in the Song all have literary works. If their words followed a certain course, their deeds did likewise. If contemporary people could truly match their words and actions like the Song Confucian scholars, I will certainly reward them, and even the world and later generations will also admire them in their hearts. Transmit the edict to officials in the Imperial Academy and let them know.<sup>328</sup>

上諭大學士等曰：“翰林官以文章為職業。今人好講理學者，輒謂文章非關急務。宋之周程張朱何嘗無文章？其言如是，其行亦如是。今人果能如宋儒言行相顧，朕必嘉之，即天下萬世亦皆心服之矣。傳諭翰林官知之。”

What makes this edict interesting is not only the Kangxi emperor's emphasis on the significance of literary works but also the emphasis on commensurability between one's literary work and behavior. The hermeneutic transparency between literary representation and behavior in real life is confirmed and encouraged by the greatest ruler of the Qing. The edict was passed down to the officials in the Imperial Academy, who were asked to submit their poems and essays to the emperor. At that time Chou served as an editor in the Imperial Academy and had started his Du Fu commentary three years previously. Instead of submitting his own literary works, Chou decided to present his Du Fu

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<sup>328</sup> *Shengzu ren huangdi shengxun* 聖祖仁皇帝聖訓, in *Siku quanshu* 四庫全書, 12. 9b.

commentary to the emperor along with a memorial *Jin shu biao* 進書表 ("Memorial on Presenting the Book") stating that his own literary works were not worth reading. It is unusual for a subject to submit something different from what has been asked by the emperor, and one possible reason for Chou's decision is that Du Fu's poetry (with his commentary) could better meet the Kangxi emperor's expectations in the edict.

In the memorial Chou discusses the values of Du Fu's poetry at great length and praises him as the only poetic master of the past thousand years. Chou then attributes such a paramount poetic status to an exemplary morality manifest in the poetry: "it is because Du Fu's poetry is deeply rooted in ethical principles and concerned with relations of ruler-subject and father-son, and because his poetry can conform to the meaning of 'inspiration', 'observation', 'association', and 'grievance'." 蓋其篤於倫紀，有關君臣父子之經；發乎性情，能合興、觀、群、怨之旨。 Chou went on to provide specific examples to illustrate how his poetry embodies such ethical perfection. At the end of the memorial he writes:

When I receive your decree asking us to submit our literary works, I am only embarrassed by my shallow knowledge. I prostrate myself and think that the collection of Du Fu's poetry is truly eligible for the approach of "knowing a person by discussing his time." It can be used to see his life-long commitment to loving the country and staying loyal to the ruler; it can be used to see the accomplishments that resulted from nurturing talents and creating scholars in the Tang dynasty; it can be used to see the reasons why the Kaiyuan and Tianbao eras suddenly declined from its heyday; and it can be used to see the opportunity the Qianyuan and Dali eras had to return a well-governed state from the chaos. It interweaves together "Four Beginnings" and "Six Meanings" [i.e., the poetic and moral characteristics of the canonical *Shijing*] and combines ancient styles and recent styles. I obtain an understanding of Du Fu's poetry and take the liberty of sending it to Your Majesty.<sup>329</sup>

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<sup>329</sup> Chou Zhaoao 仇兆鰲 ed., *Dushi Xiangzhu* 杜詩詳注 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1979), p.2352.

蒙諭獻文，只慚末學。伏惟少陵詩集，實堪論世知人，可以見杜甫一生愛國忠君之志，可以見唐朝一代育才造士之功，可以見天寶、開元盛而忽衰之故，可以見乾元、大歷亂而復治之機。兼四始六義以相參，知古風近體為皆合。愚蒙一得，冒達九重。

Chou's description of Du Fu's poetry echoes the hermeneutic transparency suggested by the Kangxi emperor in his edict. For Chou, such transparency operates on two levels: the personal level and the national level. On the first level, Chou employs examples of Du Fu's poems to confirm the transparency between Du Fu's poetry and his inner sincerity, as well as Du Fu's abilities in real life. Then Chou concludes: "Du Fu's wish in daily life to help the ruler become equivalent to Yao and Shun is not empty words; a Confucian scholar discusses military and state affairs, with which he is as familiar as his own fingers and palms" 平日欲堯舜其君，非虛語也；書生談軍國之事，如指掌焉。<sup>330</sup> Here Chou directly addresses significance of literary works and indicates its impact on the real world. On the national level, Chou perceives Du Fu's poetry as a window to the achievements and the vicissitudes of the Tang dynasty. Such an effort further links Du Fu's poetry with history---not specific historical events necessarily, but broader lessons concerning governance from Tang history as seen through Du's poetic representations, which in turn contributes to the applicability of Du's poetry to real situations.

Although due to the lack of materials we are not sure about the Kangxi emperor's exact response to Chou's submission, one might infer from Chou's continuing work that the emperor was probably glad to receive it. In 1695 and 1698 Chou discussed his commentary with some friends in Hangzhou and Shaozhou respectively. In 1702 he began to have his Du Fu commentary printed in Hangzhou. In 1703 the emperor went to

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<sup>330</sup> Ibid, p.2351.

the south and stayed in Hangzhou. Chou presented to him two printed copies of the commentary and was rewarded.<sup>331</sup> Interesting enough, in the following year the emperor issued another edict and again expressed his objection to “empty words.”

An imperial decree to lecturers, saying: there have been many people who talk about *dao xue* since ancient times and in particular they like to criticize others. But they can only talk about it, and few can match their words with their actions. That is why I do not value empty words and I am definitely not unwilling to criticize the ancients. Why do I say this? The reason is that each person has his own strengths and weaknesses, and his talents can be brought into full display only by means of embracing his strengths and avoiding his weaknesses. If one demands perfection in every aspect and is ready to criticize as soon as there is some small defect, this is not the way of loyalty and reciprocity.<sup>332</sup>

上諭講官等曰：古今講道學者甚多，尤好非議人。彼亦徒能言之，而言行相符者蓋寡。是以朕不尚空言，斷不肯非議古人。何以言之？蓋人各有長短，棄短取長，始能盡人之材。若必求全責備，稍有欠缺即行指摘，此非忠恕之道也。

Chou's Du Fu project and the Qing official ideology proposed by the emperor are subtly entangled. In addition to the hermeneutic transparency between words and behaviors, the decree also stresses *zhong shu zhi dao* 忠恕之道 “Way of Loyalty and Reciprocity”) in which one should pay more attention to the strengths of other people than to their weaknesses. In fact, one frequently acknowledged merit of Du Fu's poetry lies in its synthesis of strengths of previous poets, which bears resemblance with what is stated in the edict. One of Du Fu's poems states that a major principle guiding his poetic composition is to learn from the strengths of earlier poets.<sup>333</sup> Yuan Zhen 元稹 (779-831) had already pointed out poetic synthesis as one major feature of Du Fu's poetry, a

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<sup>331</sup> Chou's *nianpu* contains the information concerning his Du Fu project. Since I do not have access to it, I rely on Fang Nansheng's article. See Fang Nansheng 方南生, “Hainei hanjian de Chou Zhaoao ziding Shangyou tang nianpu” 海內罕見的仇兆鰲自訂尚友堂年譜, *Wenxian* 文獻, no.2, 1988, pp. 147-154.

<sup>332</sup> *Shengzu ren huangdi shengxun*, 5.16b.

<sup>333</sup> See the last poem of the cycle “Xiwei liu jueju” 戲為六絕句, *Qianzhu Dushi*, p.407.

perspective was embraced by many commentators in later generations, including Chou himself.<sup>334</sup> However, Chou consciously associates his Du Fu commentary with the official ideology represented by the emperor, which illuminates his emphasis on Du Fu's poetic synthesis in a different light--- it goes beyond the mere techniques of poetic composition and resonates with the Confucian morality (especially loyalty and reciprocity) supported by the Qing court.

Chou's engagement in the official ideology can also be perceived through juxtaposition with other commentators in the early Qing. We can tell from his preface to the *Dushi xiangzhu* that he is particularly influenced by two commentators, namely Qian Qianyi and Wang Sishi. The preface mainly highlights what distinguishes Du Fu's poetry from that of others: *shi zhi shi* 詩之實 ("the substance of poetry") and *shi zhi ben* 詩之本 ("the grounding of poetry"). Chou further explains the substance of poetry through its relevance to *shi yun* 世運 ("the fortune of the world") and the root of poetry through its relevance to personality and ethical principles. This reminds us of Qian's theory of "poetry has its root" as well as one of the three essential formative components of poetry proposed by Qian---*shi yun*. In addition, Chou emphasizes the significance of *bi* 比 (metaphor) in Du Fu's poetry and argues that "even small things such as birds, beasts, grass and plants often touch on the great significance of loyalty and filial piety" 即一鳥獸草木之微，動皆切與忠孝大義. This is very similar to Wang Sishi's argument in the *Du yi*. For example, Wang's commentary on Du Fu's poem "Gui Yan" 歸燕 ("Returning

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<sup>334</sup> Yuan Zhen, "Tang jianjiao gongbu yuanwailang Dujun Muximing" 唐檢校工部員外郎杜君墓係銘, *Dushi Xiangzhu*, p. 2235-6.

Swallow") says: "Du Fu's poems on things serve as metaphor in poetry" 老杜詠物皆詩之比。<sup>335</sup> Chou highlights the usage of metaphor in the poetry and explicitly connects it to the Confucian ideology--"the great significance of loyalty and filial piety." Since Qian and Wang represent two different existential choices (and two different modes of life hermeneutics) in the Ming-Qing transition, it is interesting to look at how Chou's interpretation is different from them in its relation to Qing official ideology.

In 758, Du Fu left the capital Changan for Huazhou where he was demoted as commissioner of education. He then wrote a poem with the long title: "In the second year of Zhide (757) I went out of the capital by the Jingguang Gate and returned to Fengxiang by a side road. In 758 I was transferred from the post of Reminder to that of Clerk at Huazhou. I leave by this gate and bid farewell to relatives and friends and lament over the past" 至德二載，甫自京金光門出，見道歸鳳翔。乾元初，從左拾遺移華州掾與親故別因出此門有悲往事：

I previously took this road in my return to the capital,	此道昔歸順，
when the Barbarians were numerous in the western environs.	西郊胡正繁。
Till now I am still frightened,	至今猶破膽，
and there should be some of my souls that has yet to be summoned.	應有未招魂。
I returned to the capital in the entourage of the Emperor;	近侍歸京邑，
How can this demotion come from His Majesty's own intention?	移官豈至尊。
Not a person of talents, I grow weak and old day by day;	無才日衰老，
Stop the horse and I gaze at the imperial palace. <sup>336</sup>	駐馬望千門。

In the *Du yi*, Wang only explains the fifth line and at the end quotes Zhong Xing's comments: "This poem shows grievance, and yet there will be no profundity without such

<sup>335</sup> *Du yi*, p.92.

<sup>336</sup> *Dushi xiangzhu*, p.480. The meaning of the fifth line is controversial and I follow David Hawkes's translation of that line. *Little Primer of Tu Fu* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), p.65.

grievance” 此詩不無怨，然不怨不厚。<sup>337</sup> Qian’s commentary interprets the poem from the angle of factional struggles during the Tang court, and argues that Du Fu’s demotion resulted from the fact that he was considered by the emperor as a member of Fang Guan’s clique. Qian further emphasizes that Du Fu’s act of defending Fang Guan (which leads to Du’s following frustrating experiences) shows the great integrity of Du Fu in dealing with his official career, his service to the lord and his friendship with other people.<sup>338</sup> Nevertheless, Chou believes that in this poem Du Fu “goes over the present and thinks of the past, which shows nothing but his sincere loyalty to and love for the ruler” 撫今思昔，無非惓惓忠愛之心。In his *Dushi fanli* 杜詩凡例 (*General Instructions on Du Fu’s Poetry*), Chou also quotes the second half of this poem and indicates: “on his leave he was still attached [to the ruler]. It matches Mencius’s behavior a thousand years earlier when he left Zhou after three consecutive nights. This is the great integrity of Du Fu when he serves the ruler, makes friends, and takes his place at court” 臨去而尚惓惓，與孟子三宿出晝之意，千載同符。此公生平事君交友立朝大節也。<sup>339</sup> Chou alludes here to the following account: When Mencius was leaving Qi, he stayed three nights at a place called Zhou before his final departure. Yin Shi spoke to others about Mencius: “He came a thousand li to see the King, and left because he met with no success. It took him three nights to go beyond Zhou. Why was he so long about it? I for one find this most

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<sup>337</sup> *Du yi*, p. 72.

<sup>338</sup> *Qianzhu Dushi*, p.338.

<sup>339</sup> *Ibid*, p.25.

distasteful 千里而見王，不遇故去。三宿而後出晝，是何濡滯也？士則茲不悅。<sup>340</sup>

After Mencius heard of this, he explained:

‘How little does Yin Shi understand me? I came a thousand *li* to see the King because I wanted to. Having met with no success, I am leaving, not because I want to but because I have no alternative. True, it took me three nights to go beyond Zhou. But even then I felt that I had not taken long enough. I had hoped against hope that the King would change his mind. I was sure he would recall me if this happened. It was only when I went beyond Zhou and the King made no attempt to send after me that the desire to go home surged up in me. Even then it was not as if I had abandoned the King. The King is still capable of doing good. If the King had employed me, it would not simply be a matter of bringing peace to the people of Qi, but of bringing peace to the people of the whole Empire as well. If only the King would change his mind: that is what I hope for every day. I am not like those petty men who, when their advice is rejected by the prince, take offence and show resentment all over their faces, and, when they leave, travel all day before they would put up for the night.’<sup>341</sup>

夫尹士惡知予哉？千里而見王，是予所欲也；不遇故去，豈予所欲哉？予不得已也。予三宿而出晝，於予心猶以為速。王庶幾改之。王如改諸，則必反予。夫出晝而王不予追也，予然後浩然有歸志。予雖然，豈舍王哉？王由足用為善。王如用予，則豈徒齊民安，天下之民舉安。王庶幾改之，予日望之。予豈若是小丈夫然哉？諫於其君而不受，則怒，悻悻然見於其面。去則窮日之力而後宿哉？

Mencius’ stay in Zhou demonstrates his yearning to serve the ruler and to improve society despite the fact that he has to leave due to the lack of the king’s appreciation. For Mencius, Yin Shi is misled by the principle of the *xiao zhang fu* 小丈夫 (the little man) who mostly acts out of personal dignity and yet lacks the deep concerns with the ruler and the well-being of the world. Chou compares Du Fu with Mencius and praises Du Fu’s loyalty to the ruler and his concern for the welfare of the country, even when he was demoted to a place out of the capital. Taking a different perspective from the passage of

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<sup>340</sup> *Mencius* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1984), D. C. Lau trans., 1:88-9. I replace the romanization in Lau’s translation with pinyin.

<sup>341</sup> *Ibid*, 1:88-9. I have made a minor stylistic change at the beginning and have replaced the romanization in Lau’s translation with pinyin.

Zhong Xing quoted in Wang's commentary, Chou tries to emphasize Du Fu's love and loyalty rather than his grievance. Qian justifies Du Fu's defense as an act of straight remonstrance which reflects Du Fu's great integrity, though it is mistaken by the emperor Suzong for an act of factionalism. Nevertheless, Chou argues that Du Fu's great integrity is embodied in his lingering attachment to the ruler and the court even when he is demoted.

In comparison with the commentary made by Wang and Qian, Chou's interpretation is more geared to the needs of Qing official ideology through his strong emphasis on Du's loyalty. Chou's reading of Du Fu reflects the convergence of the principle of hermeneutic transparency and the Kangxi emperor's expectation of *yan xing xiang gu* 言行相顧 (words and behavior reinforce each other): the verbally expressed loyalty in the poem (especially the lines concerning Du Fu's assumed actions, such as his halting of the horse and his gazing on the palace precincts) guarantees Du Fu as a loyal subject in real life, which is further confirmed by Chou through his praise of such an expression/act as the great integrity throughout Du Fu's whole life. This is not to say that Chou largely serves as the mouthpiece for the Qing official ideology in his commentary. Instead, he simultaneously works with the rhetoric of loyalty in the Confucian tradition, the tradition of Du Fu hermeneutics, and the Qing official ideology under the Kangxi reign. Such an effort can be perceived from a poem composed by his friend Jin Zhi 金埴 (1663-1740), who also participated in Chou's project:

Reading *Dushi xiangzhu*

1 An abandoned old man from Duling with extraordinary talents  
is entitled Poet-historian and Poet-sage and unanimously praised.

....

讀杜詩詳注

杜陵遺老才非凡，  
詩史詩聖稱名咸。

- 9 His loyalty to the ruler and love for the country are entrusted to verses;  
 He satiates his hunger by discussing Confucian principles and longing for righteousness. 忠君愛國托聲律，  
 說理慕義飽飢饒。
- 11 The master from Yongjiang excels in reading Du Fu,  
 And removes all far-fetched interpretations by previous interpreters. 甬江先生善讀杜  
 前人穿鑿皆誅芟。
- ....
- 21 The emperor read this work and sighed many times,  
 The twenty-eight *juan* are produced under the supervision of the emperor's prestige.<sup>342</sup> 御覽茲編三太息，  
 二十八卷天威監。
- ....

The poem begins with a couplet extolling Du Fu's reputation as Poet-historian and Poet-sage in general and then moves on to praise Du Fu's poetic craft. From line 11 Jin clearly shifts from Du Fu (and his poems) to Chou (and his Du Fu commentary), and refers to him as the Yongjiang 甬江 Master. However, it is interesting that the previous couplet (line 9-10) already carries a certain ambiguity and could refer to both Du Fu and Chou, since poetry functions as a medium to embody their loyalty. While Du Fu expresses his loyalty and other Confucian values through poetic composition, Chou achieves a similar result through poetic reading, especially when we think about his action of substituting his commentary on Du Fu's poetry for his own literary works in response to the emperor's edict (in that case Chou particularly emphasizes Du Fu's loyalty and other exemplary Confucian values). Chou entangles his Du Fu commentary with a general rhetoric of Confucian values, especially loyalty, though such loyalty as a general rhetoric opens up the possibility of being interpreted in a specific manner (i.e. loyalty to the Qing).

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<sup>342</sup> *Dushi xiangzhu*, p.2316-17.

Line 11 situates Chou's commentary within the interpretive tradition of Du's poetry and announces Chou's superiority over his predecessors. In the section of "General Instructions on Du Fu's Poetry", Chou lists many commentators prior to his time.<sup>343</sup> Chou also collects commentaries from many other commentators since the Song in his *Dushi xiangzhu* and demonstrates his effort in embracing the strengths of the earlier Du Fu commentaries and at the same time avoiding their weaknesses. Line 12 echoes Chou's words on his *Dushi xiangzhu*: "delete ungrounded connections and trivialities in the old commentaries, and argue against far-fetched and disconnected aspects in novel interpretations" 汰舊注之植釀叢脞，辯新說之穿鑿支離。<sup>344</sup> Chou further connects his commentary with Confucian standards and claims that his interpretation of Du Fu is based on Confucius' and Mencius' discussion of poetry, rather than his own speculation.<sup>345</sup>

Line 21 and 22 shows Chou's commentary is approved by the Kangxi emperor, who serves as the representative of the Qing official ideology. The connection between Chou's Du Fu commentary and imperial power is again mentioned in another poem by Jin under the same title "Reading *Dushi xiangzhu*": "Appreciated and evaluated by the bright ruler, it will be transmitted and will enlighten later generations 賞鑑經明主，流傳啓後人。<sup>346</sup> Such a connection also speaks to Chou's engagement in the interpretive tradition of Du Fu's poetry. In 1704, one year after Chou presented his *Dushi xiangzhu* to the emperor who was on the journey in Hangzhou, Chou wrote a supplementary note

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<sup>343</sup> Ibid, p. 24-5.

<sup>344</sup> Ibid, p.2.

<sup>345</sup> Ibid, p.2.

<sup>346</sup> Ibid, 2317.

about his newly deceased friend Zuo Xian 左峴 (n.d.), who financially contributed to publishing Chou's commentary. Zuo obtained his *jinshi* degree in 1670 and later was promoted to the Ministry of Works 工部. When he first knew Chou's engagement in Du Fu's commentary, Zuo kindly cautioned him against the possible negative consequence of such a project: "Du Fu is a poetic master, unique in a thousand years. There have been numerous commentators who have often criticized each other. You are writing a commentary on Du Fu's poetic collection, and I am afraid that those who have eyes will surround and attack you from all directions" 少陵千載詩宗，注家林立，往往彼此譏彈。子箋此集，恐具目者且四面而環攻之矣。<sup>347</sup> Modern scholar Zhou Caiquan 周采泉 indicates that those words suggest that there might have been some criticism against Chou's Du Fu commentary at that time.<sup>348</sup> We are not sure about the exact date of those words, but according to Chou's note, Zuo spoke those words to Chou when Zuo began to work in the Ministry of Works, around the time when Chou presented his Du Fu commentary to the emperor in 1693. The fact that Chou consciously connects his Du Fu commentary to imperial power might also serve as a strategy to protect his Du Fu commentaries against contemporary criticism and reinforce its authority in the history of Du Fu interpretation.

## 2. Du Fu interpretations in the Qianlong court

Although Chou's Du Fu commentary is entangled with the imperial ideology, the official intervention in the reading of Du Fu is not as strong as in the Qianlong period,

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<sup>347</sup> Ibid, 2256.

<sup>348</sup> Zhou Caiquan 周采泉, *Duji shulu* 杜集書錄 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1986), p.201.

when Du Fu and interpretations of his poetry gain official representation in the *Siku quanshu* 四庫全書. The project of the *Siku quanshu* started in 1773 and involved the Qianlong emperor and groups of different interests. It demonstrates a parallel action towards works that had been composed until the Qianlong era, preservation and censorship, which represents a collective shaping force in constructing a representation of the “official ideology” (though one should bear in mind that such an official ideology, due to its underlying dynamics -- conflicts and negotiations among different groups and their various concerns -- is more a convenient category for discussion than a monolithic category).<sup>349</sup> In the case of Du Fu interpretation, the official intervention is further reinforced through the emperor's reading and the editorial process in the *Siku quanshu*.

Similar to the Kangxi emperor, the Qianlong Emperor also emphasized the consistency between words and action in real life. During one Classics Colloquium on the *Analects* in the court in 1753, he remarked: “Nevertheless, being able to know others is wise, but even the emperor Yao considered it difficult. That is why the sage [Confucius] constantly spoke of it in detail. Perhaps he was also afraid of ‘listening to one’s words and observing one’s actions’” 然知人則哲惟帝其難是以聖人再三丁寧而不厭其詳者抑亦有懼於聽言觀行矣。<sup>350</sup> Such anxiety of the possible discrepancy between words and

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<sup>349</sup> For discussion on the formulation of the *Siku quanshu* project and interactions among different groups in it, see R. Kent Guy, *The Emperor's Four Treasuries: Scholars and the State in the Late Ch'ien-ling Era* (Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1987).

<sup>350</sup> Ibid, 2:8b, *Siku quanshu*. The text on which Qianlong remarked comes from the *Analects*. The last words of Qianlong's comments also refer to another anecdote in the *Analects*: “Tsai Yü used to sleep during the day. The Master said, Rotten wood cannot be carved, nor a wall of dried dung be trowelled. What use is there in my scolding him any more? The Master said, There was a time when I merely listened attentively to what people said, and took for granted that they would carry out their words. Now I am obliged not only to give ear to what they say, but also to keep an eye on what they do. It was my dealings

actions relates to political demands. In another Classic Colloquium on the *Book of Documents* in 1752, he discusses the difficulty for a ruler to know other people: “there are numerous people in the world, but there is only one ruler. Numerous minds, however, wish for understanding from one person. Nevertheless, one person has one mind to respond to the minds of numerous people and yet wants to know everything. There is no need to be a wise man to know this difficulty” 天下之人众矣。人君则惟一人。以众人之心、而欲蕲一人之知。而一人持此一心、以应天下众人之心。且欲知之无遗焉。此不待智者而后知其难矣。<sup>351</sup> Such a difficulty was also mentioned by the Kangxi emperor in 1680:

The emperor issued an edict to the lecturer Zhang Yushu and others, saying: “Whether the quality of a person is wicked or upright certainly depends on subordinates, but discerning completely resides in a ruler. All the time there is much deception in human minds and it is most difficult to know. If there are some places where a ruler’s perspicacity can’t reach, it certainly cannot cause there to be nothing hidden.”<sup>352</sup>

上諭講官張玉書等曰：人品邪正，固在臣下。而鑑別全在人主。從來人心多偽，最為難知。倘人主明有未至，必不能使其無遁情也。

The hermeneutic transparency in poetics helps meet the political demand of a ruler like the Qianlong emperor to facilitate the consistency between words and actions and thus guide the minds and actions of his subjects through poetry. The emperor himself is well known for his active engagement in poetic composition: he wrote more poems than any other poet in the history of China, even surpassing the sum of all the poems in the *Quan Tang shi* 全唐詩 (*Complete Poems of the Tang*), compiled in the Kangxi era. Du Fu (or

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with Tsai Yü that brought about the change.” *The Analects of Confucius* (New York: Random House, 1938), translated and annotated by Arthur Waley, Book V: 9, p.109.

<sup>351</sup> See *Yuzhi wenji chujì* 禦制文集初集, 2:7b, *Siku quanshu*.

<sup>352</sup> *Shengzu ren huangdi shengxun* 聖祖仁皇帝聖訓, in *Siku quanshu*, 6:10b-11a.

his poetry) appears in many of the emperor's poems and frequently receives praise from him, especially for his loyalty. What particularly attracts the emperor is the fact that Du Fu never changed his loyalty, and that the loyalty manifest in his poetry and his actions in real life reinforce each other. This can be clearly perceived in the emperor's comparison between Wang Wei and Du Fu in remarks on his own poems on reading the biography of Wang Wei:

Wang Wei was accorded fame equal to Li Bai and Du Fu. Li Bai followed the Prince Lin of Yong and already lost his purity. As for Wang Wei who received the title of “Executive Assistant” in An Lushan’s court, it is no different from following the rebels. Even though he had the poem on the Congealed Jade, how can it be sufficient to cover up the loss of his integrity? Nevertheless, the emperor Suzong absolved him on the request of Wang Wei’s brother. How grave the failure of punishment is! Furthermore, Wang’s entry to the official path is also improper. How can he be compared to Du Fu, who never forgot to concern himself with the country and staying loyal to the ruler?<sup>353</sup>

王維與李杜齊名，李白之從永王璘，已為不純。至王維之受偽署給事，直是從賊。雖有凝碧之詩，豈足掩其失節。而肅宗以其弟之救，竟赦不誅。失刑甚矣！且維進身，即以不正，豈若杜甫始終不忘憂國忠君者所可同年而語哉？

For the emperor, Wang Wei violates the ideal mode of hermeneutic transparency between words and actions: he accepts the official title given by the rebels and yet writes a poem to express his loyalty to the ruler of the Tang. He even believes that Wang manipulated the rules of hermeneutic transparency and tried to take advantages of it to cover up his loss of integrity. On the contrary, Du Fu serves as a model for his consistency in such transparency. The comparison between Wang Wei and Du Fu might remind us of Qian Qianyi’s attitude toward Du Fu and Wang Wei. As we have seen in the previous chapter, Qian Qianyi’s attitude is rather complicated and is associated with Qian’s own changing

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<sup>353</sup> The poems are entitled “Du Wangwei zhuan yincheng er jueju” 讀王維傳因成二絕句, *Yuzhi shiji sanji* 禦制詩集三集, 83: 2b-3a.

life experiences. But it seems that the emperor's judgment is mostly based on one criterion: consistency between poetry and actions and Wang Wei's poetic expression of loyalty is exactly nullified by his surrender in real life. As we have seen, the Qianlong emperor also applied such a criterion to Qian Qianyi and eventually ordered Qian's works to be destroyed. He once wrote a poem after reading Qian's *Chu xue ji* -- a work that includes Qian's commentary on Du Fu (*xiaojian*).

All his life he spoke of integrity and righteousness, And yet served rulers with two different surnames. with lack of principles in both his service and recluse, How can his literary works shine? They truly deserve to be used to cover wine jars, And one frequently sees his chanting of fragrant pockets. He escaped to Chan in the end of his life, And by nature he was Meng Balang. <sup>354</sup>	平生談節義， 兩姓事君王。 進退都無據， 文章哪有光。 真堪覆酒甕， 屢見詠香囊。 末路逃禪去， 原為孟八郎。
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The first line begins with Qian's praise of integrity and righteousness and forms a sharp contrast with Qian's actions in real life depicted in the second line. The next couplet confirms Qian's lack of principles in his actions and then uses it to dismiss the achievements of his literary work. What really vexes the emperor is not Qian's claimed loyalty to the Ming but the discrepancy between such a claim and Qian's actions. In one of his edicts in 1775, the emperor also expresses his disapproval of such discrepancy.

My principles are that of absolute disinterestedness and supreme justice. The late-Ming officials who died honorable deaths for their country have my unreserved respect and praise. As for Qian Qianyi who boasted of being one of the incorruptible, but surrendered to our court without blushing, and Jin Bao, Qu Dajun and their ilk, who cravenly clung to life rather than braving death, who took orders in the monkhood merely for the sake of survival, they were, without exception, heartless, shameless. These people, if they had laid down their lives for their imperial house, would have received commendation and praise today. But they cared about nothing

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<sup>354</sup> Ibid, 87: 6a-b. According to the note after the poem, Chan Buddhism uses Meng Balang to refer to those who don't understand truth, emptiness, marvelousness, and being 禪宗以不解真空妙有者為孟八郎。

more than saving their skins. They did not sacrifice themselves and manipulated words and languages to conceal their true intentions of dragging out an ignoble existence. For this reason, we should mercilessly decry their misdeeds, so as to punish their crude and unfeeling souls. In our praise and blame, sanction and censure shall be made manifest, so that the whole world and the endless ages to come will know that I count on reason to guide my likes and dislikes. All this is to uphold the infallible and unalterable principles by which we demonstrate our encouragement and condemnation.<sup>355</sup>

朕惟以大公至正為衡，凡明季盡節諸臣，既能為國抒忠，優獎實同一視。至錢謙益之自詡清流，視顏降附，及金堡、屈大均之倖生畏死，詭託緇流，均屬喪心無耻。若果能死節，則今日亦當在予旌之列。乃既不能捨命，而猶假語言文字，以自圖掩飾其偷生，是必當明斥其進退無據之非，以隱殛其冥漠不靈之魄。一褒一貶，褒貶昭然，使天下萬世共知朕準情理而公好惡，以是植綱常，即以是示彰瘡。

The edict justifies Ming martyrs due to their sacrifice for the fallen Ming and censures Qian Qianyi and his ilk for the fact that they could not perform loyalty in real life and die for the Ming dynasty. What further irritates the emperor is that the latter attempts to manipulate the words to defend their existential choices and announce their loyalty to the Ming. The way he positions his judgment in the edict also deserves our attention: he tries to transcend the political interest of the Qing and evaluates the Ming officials based on the principles of “absolute disinterestedness and supreme justice.” Therefore, despite their political antithesis to the Qing, Ming martyrs are praised by him, not so much for their loyalty to the Ming as for their adherence to the concept of “universal” loyalty. The purpose of such a transcendent standpoint is to allow the emperor to “uphold the infallible and unalterable principles” for future generations. In other words, by distancing himself from his identity as ruler of the Qing, he expands his ideological territory and

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<sup>355</sup> *Qinding shengchao xunjie zhuchen lu* 欽定勝朝殉節諸臣錄, *Siku quanshu*, 3a-b. I use Yim’s translation, *The Poet-historian Qian Qianyi*, p.70.

constructs himself as a universal ruler.<sup>356</sup> Nevertheless, such an act of distancing is exactly grounded in his identity as a Qing ruler in reality. Through combination of those two identities, he gains flexibility to smoothly move between universal loyalty and specific loyalty (to the Qing). In the edict, he links the consistency between words and actions with universal loyalty,

In the case of Du Fu, the emperor highlights Du Fu as a model of universal loyalty in order to encourage specific loyalty to the Qing. In general, such transference of loyalty from the universal level to the specific level is sanctioned by the real world, where the emperor becomes a personification of an ideal/conceptualized ruler who is supposed to receive universal loyalty from his subjects. Occasionally, however, he needs to express his disagreement with Du Fu's opinion of loyalty in order to encourage the specific loyalty more appropriate to his demands.

On reading Du Fu's poem "Journey North"

讀杜甫北征詩因題

I am not critical of Du Fu's poems,  
But for the poem "Journey to the North" I have my doubts.  
Xuanli took advantage of the emperor's exile and yet was  
considered loyal and righteous.

予於甫也詩無間，  
獨致疑焉是北征。  
元禮乘危謂忠義，

How could Han Yu's inscription on Liu Zongyuan's tomb tablet  
be void of meaning?<sup>357</sup>

昌黎誌柳豈虛評。

In the poem "Journey to the North," Du Fu expresses his admiration of Chen Xuanli 陳玄禮 (n.d.) for his loyalty, since Chen asked the emperor Xuanzong who was on his way to

<sup>356</sup> For more discussion on Qing ideology and universalization of emperorship in Qianlong's era, see Pamela Kyle Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror: History and Identity in Qing Imperial Ideology* (University of California Press, 2002).

<sup>357</sup> *Yuzhi shiji siji* 禦制詩集四集, 9:20b, *Siku quanshu*. Taizhen refers to Precious Consort Yang, who is a favorite of the emperor Xuanzong. Yuanli 元禮 should be Xuanli 玄禮 and such a change is due to the fact that *xuan* 玄 appears in the emperor Kangxi's name and becomes a taboo. In the following quotation when Qianlong refers to the emperor Xuanzong, he also replaces *xuan* with *yuan* 元.

exile in Shu to kill Precious Consort Yang (also referred to as “Great Purity”) at Mawei 馬嵬. The Qianlong emperor disagrees with Du Fu’s opinion of Chen’s loyalty and instead considers Chen’s action as A betrayal of his ruler.

Han Yu 韓愈 (768-824) wrote inscriptions for Liu Zongyuan’s 柳宗元 (773-819) tomb tablet and said that the way of friendship was very profound and yet, once confronted with benefit and harm, one could suddenly change one’s attitude as if he had never known his friend. When a friend fell into a pit, he further pushed his friend and dropped a stone on him. One cannot do this to one’s friend, how much more can one do this to the ruler? Chen Xuanli’s behavior is what Han Yu disliked; and how can one consider Xuanli loyal and dutiful? If he was truly loyal, he should have followed the examples of Zhu Yun who requested a sword and Xin Qingji who took off his cap, and asked the emperor to kill Taizhen before the An Lushan rebellion broke out, which could be truly called loyal and dutiful. After Chang’an was taken by the rebels, the emperor Xuanzong went into exile. Chen thus took advantage of Xuanzong’s situation and forced Taizhen to die....Furthermore, the reason why the imperial shrine of the Tang was endangered was because Xuanzong didn’t diligently deal with state affairs and favored Taizhen during periods of peace. At that time he didn’t request the emperor to kill her but waited till the emperor was in exile, which was already too late. Xuanli is certainly a seditious subordinate and is not worthy of discussion. I only feel regret for Du Fu, who uses poetry to show his loyalty and dutifulness throughout his life, and yet has this opinion. (My reading) inevitably distorts his intention on the basis of words, which also expects perfection of a virtuous person [i.e. Du Fu].<sup>358</sup>

昌黎作柳宗元墓誌銘，言友道甚厚，而惡夫臨利害反眼不相識，落陷穿反擠之又下石焉者。夫友尚不可，而況其君父乎！若元禮之事，是即昌黎所惡者，而謂之忠義，可乎？使元禮果忠義耶，當效朱雲之請劍，或如辛慶忌之免冠，於祿山未反之前請誅太真，是誠所謂忠義矣。長安既陷，天子蒙塵，乃乘其危而逼太真以死...且唐之宗社所以危，在元宗承平時不勤國政而寵太真。彼時不請誅之，以致流離播遷，則已遲矣。元禮固逆臣不足論，獨惜甫一生始終託忠義於詩，而有此論。未免以辭害意，亦責賢者備之義耳。

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<sup>358</sup> *Yuzhi shiji siji* 禦制詩集四集, 9:20b-21a. Zhu Yun 朱雲 once requested for an imperial sword in court to kill the emperor’s teacher Zhang Yu 張禹, who Zhu believed was extremely corrupt. The emperor Chengdi of Han dynasty was enraged at Zhu Yun’s direct remonstrance and ordered to have Zhu killed for his offense. Xin Qingji then took off his cap to ask the emperor to pardon Zhu’s offense due to his loyalty. See *Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑒, 32:11b-12b, *Siku quanshu*.

The emperor's reading of Du Fu here reflects his perspective as a ruler: on one hand, he generally confirms poetry as a medium for the manifestation of Du Fu's loyalty and righteousness, but on the other hand his definition of loyalty differs from what Du Fu perceives in his poem. In the poem Du Fu praises Chen's loyalty for his request of killing Great Purity for the benefit of the country:

How might the general Chen is!	桓桓陳將軍，
He holds a battle axe and exercises his loyalty.	仗鉞奮忠烈。
Were it not for him, people would all be different;	微爾人盡非，
Till the present, the country still survives. <sup>359</sup>	於今國猶活。

Nevertheless, the emperor puts more emphasis on direct remonstrance during periods of peace and dismisses Chen's request of killing Great Purity as a seditious action due to the threat Chen imposed on the emperor Xuanzong during his exile. Qianlong feels it necessary to specifically redefine the loyalty in this case and highlight the ultimate authority of the ruler: any challenge to the imperial authority, even under the name of the country's benefits, should be well controlled and channeled through a regular remonstrance in peaceful times.

The emperor's understanding of loyalty as well as his reading of Du Fu greatly influenced the official intervention in Du Fu interpretive tradition in the *Siku quanshu*. Five versions of Du Fu's anthologies are included in the *Siku quanshu*, and the titles of sixteen other versions are also preserved.<sup>360</sup> The following table provides brief information about the five versions of Du Fu's poetry with commentaries preserved in the *Siku quanshu*.

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<sup>359</sup> *Dushi Xiangzhu*, 2:404.

<sup>360</sup> The number is based on Sun Wei's calculation. See *Qingdai Dushixue shi*, pp.263-4.

Title	Time of the anthology	Source
<i>Jiujia jizhu Dushi</i> 九家集注杜詩	Song <sup>361</sup>	A copy in the imperial library
<i>Huangshi buzhu Dushi</i> 黃氏補注杜詩	Song	A copy in the imperial library
<i>Ji Qianjia zhu Dushi</i> 集千家注杜詩	Yuan	A copy collected and presented by the Governor of Jiangsu province
<i>Dushi jun</i> 杜詩掇	Ming	A copy collected and presented by the Governor of Jiangsu province
<i>Dushi xiangzhu</i> 杜詩詳注	Qing	A copy in the imperial library

**Table 1: Five Versions of Anthologies of Du Fu's Poems**

Song editions were already precious in the Qianlong era and both editions were stored in the imperial library. The third anthology in the table, *Ji Qianjia zhu Dushi*, was considered significant by the editors of the *Siku quanshu*, since it preserved earlier commentaries after the Song. The Qianlong emperor also wrote poems to express his love of Du Fu after reading the first and third anthologies mentioned in the table, so it is less

<sup>361</sup> It is a composite version of Song and later periods. See Cai Jinfang, "Siku quanshu jiujia jizhu Dushi suoyong diben kao" 四庫全書九家集注杜詩所用底本考, *Sichuan shifan daxue xuebao* 四川師範大學學報 (1999), no.4, pp.71-77.

surprising to see them included in the *Siku quanshu*. The last one, *Dushi xiangzhu* was already approved by the Kangxi emperor and stored in the imperial library. In the eyes of the editors, it also stood out for its abundant citations and evidential scholarship. Among all these five versions, one might be puzzled at the inclusion of the *Dushi jun* as the only version produced in the Ming. Before it was collected in the *Siku quanshu*, there is no evidence that the *Dushi jun* had ever been published. The author is Tang Yuanhong 唐元竝 (1590-1647), a lesser known commentator who writes remarks on some five hundred poems by Du Fu. We can obtain a glimpse of his life in the *Gazetteer of Wucheng County* 烏程縣誌 produced in the Qianlong era.<sup>362</sup> The biographical account of Tang in the Gazetteer selects three important moments of his life to show what kind of the person he was. The first moment comes when his mother was struck down by illness. Tang cut a piece of flesh from his left arm and offered it to his mother. Later, when his mother died, Tang cried to such an extent that he almost lost his life. The second moment is Tang's effort in saving his father. Tang's father was once at risk of being sentenced to death; Tang went to the capital, wrote a letter in his blood to express his feelings, and knelt down at the gate of Chang'an everyday crying for his father. Eventually, the Chongzhen emperor decided to mitigate the penalty and sent his father to exile on the border. Then the biographical account moves to the third critical moment:

In 1644 he heard about the rebellion and went to the Pujing Temple to mourn (for the death of the Chongzhen emperor). That night he went to Yanguan and became a monk. On November 7th of 1647, he wanted to visit Gushan Temple. When he was crossing the Rainbow Bridge, he suddenly jumped into water but was saved. He

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<sup>362</sup> The following account is based on the *Qianlong Wucheng xian zhi* 乾隆烏程縣誌, in Beijing University Library, 6:28. I use a scanned version at <http://ctext.org/library.pl?if=en&file=25082&page=113>.

quickly walked to the temple and didn't drink a single spoon of water from then on. He died on November 15.<sup>363</sup>

甲申聞變，往普靜寺哭臨，即于是夜赴鹽官雜染。至丁亥十月十一日，欲往古山寺。過虹橋，忽躍身入水，以救免。力疾詣寺，自此勺水不入口，至十九日卒。

While the first two moments shows Tang's filial piety, the third moment highlights Tang's loyalty to the fallen Ming, which is exactly praised by the emperor Qianlong in the edict aforementioned. In the *Siku quanshu*, the editors specially mention Tang's death after the fall of the Ming: "(he) didn't eat and died after the collapse of the Ming, and people who discussed him compared him to the men who starved to death on the Mount Shouyang" 明亡不食死，論者以首陽餓夫比之。<sup>364</sup> Although there are many anthologies of Du Fu's poems throughout the Ming dynasty, Tang's action in real life helps him win the favor of the *Siku* editors, since it conforms to the Qianlong emperor's conceptualization of loyalty. The loyalty of a Ming martyr posed little real threat to the emperor's regime: it dispersed forever with the fall of the Ming and became part of the universal loyalty which could be appropriated to serve the emperor's rule.

This also points to one distinctive feature of the *Siku* editors' intervention in the readings of Du Fu: they carefully select works from previous dynasties and reconstruct an interpretive tradition of Du Fu's poetry from the Song through the Qing. At the center of such a tradition lies an effort to historicize the hermeneutic past. Du Fu as a symbol of loyalty is chronologically arranged so that each dynasty (namely, Song, Yuan, Ming, and Qing) has its own representative work(s) on Du Fu and can use Du Fu to promote a

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<sup>363</sup> Ibid, 6:28.

<sup>364</sup> *Qinding Siku quanshu zongmu* 欽定四庫全書總目提要, in *Siku quanshu*, 149:23a

different loyalty specific to each dynasty. Paradoxically, at the same time this centrifugation of loyalty (and the potential danger it brings to the Qing) is counteracted by the very act of historicizing: as time proceeds, loyalty eventually comes to reside with the Qing regime, while loyalty to other dynasties is limited to the certain historical past and is also transformed to a component of universal loyalty that continues through all the dynasties---it underscores the fact that the Qing is a legitimate successor in this lineage of loyalty and becomes the current embodiment of the idea of universal loyalty. Here the reconstruction of the Du Fu interpretation in the *Siku quanshu* subtly echoes the Qianlong emperor's agenda of promoting loyalty on the specific and the universal level.

In addition, evaluation of the interpretive approaches to Du Fu also reflects scholarly concerns of the Siku editors. In the five anthologies that appear in the previous table, *Siku* editors demonstrate a strong style of “evidential scholarship”考證 in their evaluation of those anthologies and preoccupy themselves with issues such as forgeries of commentaries, far-fetched interpretations, and investigation of cultural sources employed in Du Fu's poems. For example, the editors praise the *Jiujia jizhu Dushi* for its deletion of other forgeries of commentaries in the Song.<sup>365</sup> For the second anthology *Huangshi buzhu Dushi* compiled by Hang He 黃鶴 (ca. the 13<sup>th</sup> century) and his father Huang Xi 黃希 (n.d.), the editors use examples of Du Fu's poems to illustrate Huang He's errors in his commentary and further make the following comments:

There are dozens of commentaries like this and they all result from his careless investigation. In addition, for poems which have no clear textual evidence and whose date cannot be verified, [Huang He] also makes implausible connection based on a

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<sup>365</sup> This also echoes one of Qianlong's poems on this anthology. See *Yuzhi shiji siji* 禦制詩集四集, in *Siku quanshu*, 25:18b.

single word or a line and forces them into a chronological order, which really suffers from far-fetched interpretations. Nevertheless, the commentaries of his that have accurate and veritable evidence are often quoted by later Du Fu commentators. Therefore, everyone criticizes his work and yet eventually no one can disregard his work.<sup>366</sup>

似此者尚數十條，皆為踈于考核。又題與詩皆無明文不可考其年月者，亦牽合其一字一句，強為編排，殊傷穿鑿。然其考據精核者，後來註杜諸家亦往往援以為證。故無不攻駁其書，而終不能廢棄其書焉。

In the eyes of the Siku editors, the most important standard is the evidential basis in Huang's commentary: at some places Huang's commentary is dismissed due to lack of a strong evidential foundation, but at other places it is exemplary for its use of accurate evidence, which helps it secure a position in the history of Du Fu interpretation. Such evaluative criteria can also be perceived in the Siku editors' comments on the other three anthologies: *Ji qianjia zhu Dushi* is criticized since it “collects commentaries from various commentators and mixes the authentic and the forged” 集諸家之註真贗錯雜;<sup>367</sup> *Dushi jun*, despite its errors, is able to delete many evidentially insufficient commentaries in the past and thus significantly surpasses the farfetched interpretations of old commentaries 勝舊註之穿鑿遠矣;<sup>368</sup> *Dushi xiangzhu* is also justified for the fact that it “employs abundant evidence” 援據繁富 and overall “there are many places that can contribute to evidential scholarship” 可資考證者為多。<sup>369</sup> Such a standard is also applied to the Siku editors' evaluation of the sixteen different versions of Du Fu anthologies,

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<sup>366</sup> *Qinding Siku quanshu zongmu*, in *Siku quanshu*, 149:22a.

<sup>367</sup> *Ibid.*, 149:22b.

<sup>368</sup> *Ibid.*, 149:23b.

<sup>369</sup> *Ibid.*, 149:25a.

whose titles are kept in the *Siku quanshu*. Many of them are criticized by the Siku editors for their lack of strong evidential scholarship.<sup>370</sup>

The Siku editors also express their concerns with poetic quality and disagree with the practice of applying the method of reading “eight-legged” essays to Du Fu’s poetry. For example, when they evaluate Huang Sheng’s 黃生 (1622-1696) *Dushi shuo* 杜詩說 (*Remarks on Du Fu’s Poems*), the Siku editors accuse Huang’s interpretive approach of being shallow since Huang’s commentaries are similar to commentaries on “eight-legged” essays. The same defect is perceived in Lu Yuanchang’s 盧元昌 (1616-1693) *Dushi chan* 杜詩闡 (*Explanations of Du Fu’s Poems*) and the Siku editors clearly indicate: “Discussing poetry should never be like this and especially discussing Du Fu’s poetry should never be like this” 說詩不當如是, 說杜詩尤不當如是也.<sup>371</sup> The emphasis on the poetic quality in reading Du Fu is also revealed through the Siku editors’ attitude toward the relationship between Du Fu’s poetry and Tang history in the case of Tang Yuanhong’s commentaries.

Since Song people advocate the concept of “poet-historian” (or poetic history), commentators on Du Fu’s poetry thus use Liu Xu’s and Song Qi’s works as their script and strive to make single words or lines match the Biographies of Du Fu.<sup>372</sup> Loyalty to the ruler and love of country lie in a gentleman’s heart, and responding to events and concerns with the times constitute what a poet aims at. This is where Du Fu’s poetry surpasses that of others, but there are no more than a few dozen of such poems in his collection. They consider the moon in verse as a metaphor for the emperor Suzong and the firefly as a metaphor for Li Fuguo. If

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<sup>370</sup> For example, the Siku editors criticize Shan Fu’s 單復 *Dudu yude* 讀杜愚得 as *wu suo kaozheng* 無所考證 and Zhao Tong’s 趙統 *Dulu yizhu* 杜律臆注 as *man wu kaozheng* 漫無考證. *Dushi lunwen* 杜詩論文 is accused of the lack of detailed evidence in most cases 考證亦多未詳.

<sup>371</sup> *Qinding Siku quanshu zongmu*, in *Siku quanshu*, 174:13b.

<sup>372</sup> Liu Xu’s and Song Qi’s works refer to *Jiu Tang shu* 舊唐書 (*Old History of the Tang*) and *Xin Tang shu* 新唐書 (*New History of the Tang*), both of which include a “Biography of Du Fu.” See *Siku quanshu*, 190B: 8b-12a; 201:13a-16a.

this sort of reading were true, there would be no landscape or animals for poets to use. “Silk trousers” and the lower garments are compared to petty men and the “scholarly cap” and the upper garment to gentlemen. If so, there would no words or lines for poets to use. Although what Yuanhong discusses does not necessarily completely capture Du Fu’s meaning, he deletes farfetched interpretations, immerses himself in innate nature and feelings, and is able to understand what goes beyond the meanings and the words.<sup>373</sup>

自宋人倡詩史之說，而箋杜詩者遂以劉昫宋祁二書據為稿本，一字一句務使與紀傳相符。夫忠君愛國君子之心，感事憂時風人之旨，杜詩所以高於諸家者固在於是，然集中根本不過數十首耳。咏月而以為比肅宗，詠螢而以為比李輔國，則詩家無景物矣。謂紉袴下服比小人，謂儒冠上服比君子，則詩家無字句矣。元竝所論，雖未必全得杜意，而刊除附會，涵泳性情，頗能會於意言之外。

The Siku editors emphasize that there are no more than a few dozen poems which can be associated with Du Fu’s loyalty and his concerns with contemporary historical situations, so that most objects in Du Fu’s poems should be treated as what they are rather than as metaphors of loyalty or historical figures or events in the Tang. Therefore, Tang Yuanhong is praised by the Siku editors for his deletion of farfetched interpretations and ability to appreciate Du Fu’s poetry as poetry. Here we find an interesting dual voice in the *Siku quanshu* when it comes to interpretations of Du Fu: on one hand it echoes the Qianlong emperor’s agenda of redefining loyalty by including Tang Yuanhong’s work on Du Fu; on the other hand, the content of evaluation tends to deviate from Du Fu as a loyal and historical symbol and focus on recovery of poetic independence in Tang’s reading.

In fact, in their evaluation of twenty-one versions of Du Fu anthologies, the Siku editors seldom mention the loyalty of Du Fu and the intimacy between his poetry and history. Especially, the explicit objection (with certain concession) to such a “metaphorical” reading in the evaluation of Tang’s work not only challenges the readings

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<sup>373</sup> *Qinding Siku quanshu zongmu*, in *Siku quanshu*, 23a-b.

by Chou Zhaoao, Wang Sishi and other commentators, but also to some extent counteracts the emperor's reading of Du Fu. The so-called “official” intervention in the interpretations of Du Fu in the *Siku Quanshu* witnesses a reconstruction of the hermeneutic past on Du Fu, which reflects negotiation between Qianlong and the Siku editors. Tang's entry in the *Siku quanshu* simultaneously meets the different needs of both sides: as a reader of Du Fu's poetry, Tang demonstrates his loyalty in real life and objects to farfetched interpretations produced by metaphorical readings which intend to further prove Du Fu's loyalty and his concerns about the state.

In conclusion, the Ming *yimin*'s readings of Du Fu reveal the complexities of life hermeneutics. The hermeneutic transparency facilitates their identification with Du Fu on the basis of their own life experiences, which presumably contributes to a better understanding of Du Fu. Many of them consciously connect readings of Du Fu with their own lives under the Ming-Qing transition and highly celebrate the loyalty reflected in Du Fu's poetry. At the same time, however, they demonstrate differences in their understanding of loyalty and their simultaneous engagement in and disengagement from Ming loyalist discourse, though in general they are often grouped under the label of *yimin*. Chou Zhaoao serves as an important intermediary between the *yimin*'s reading of Du Fu and the later Qing official intervention in loyalty. On one hand, Chou brings Du Fu interpretations closer to the Qing official ideology and adeptly uses hermeneutic transparency to show his loyalty to the Qing. On the other hand, Chou tries to situate his commentaries in the interpretive tradition of Du Fu and uses its affinity with Qing official ideology to reinforce the authority of his reading. After Chou, further official intervention

in Du Fu hermeneutics appears in the Qianlong court. In addition to his emphasis on hermeneutic transparency and the consistency between words and actions, the Qianlong emperor redefines the loyalty in his reading of Du Fu under the new political circumstances which are conspicuously different from the early Qing. As an embodiment of the Qing official ideology during the Qianlong period, *Siku quanshu* demonstrates the dual movement in its reconstruction of Du Fu hermeneutics: it corroborates the emperor's redefinition of life hermeneutics and yet makes a shift in emphasis to the textual hermeneutics. This internal tension within the Qing official ideology again directs our attention to the thickness of hermeneutic transparency.

## Conclusion: Transparency Reconsidered

In recent years, (re)examining traditional Chinese poets and poetry through the lens of reception has been increasingly drawing scholarly attention. For example, in the case of Tao Qian 陶潛 (365?-427), there have been three scholarly monographs in English since 2005 and all of them to various degrees deal with the issue of reception in constructing the image of Tao Qian:<sup>374</sup> Xiaofei Tian explores the role of manuscript culture in shaping the perception of Tao Qian in later periods; Wendy Swartz approaches the reception of Tao Qian from three major aspects (reclusion, personality, and poetry) and reveals to readers historically constructed Tao as well as underlying mechanisms in such a historical reception; Robert Ashmore shifts his focus from later periods to Tao's world and tries to discover how Tao Qian was understood by his contemporaries. The reception of another great Tang poet Li Bai is also discussed by Paula Varsano in her book *Tracking the Banished Immortal: the Poetry of Li Bai and its Critical Reception*. In view of this tendency in contemporary English scholarship, it is surprising to see that Du Fu, who possesses probably the richest tradition of reception in the history of Chinese poetry, receives little systematic academic exploration from the perspective of reception.

The focus of this study is on the reception of Du Fu during the specific historical periods- the late Ming and early Qing. Through close examination of a new narrative of Du Fu hermeneutics during this period from two different but closely related aspects

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<sup>374</sup> These three works are: Xiaofei Tian, *Tao Yuanming & Manuscript Culture: The Record of A Dusty Table* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005); Wendy Swartz, *Reading Tao Yuanming: Shifting Paradigm of Historical Reception (427-1900)* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Asia Center, 2008); Robert Ashmore, *The Transport of Reading: Text and Understanding in the World of Tao Qian (365-427)* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Asia Center, 2008) .

“textual hermeneutics” and “life hermeneutics,” my study not only fills the gap in previous scholarship but also highlights the complexity of the idea of transparency, one of the fundamental rules in reading traditional Chinese poetry. “Transparency” refers to a belief within the Chinese tradition that poetry was often considered as a transparent medium which grants reader a seemingly “unmediated” access to the historical past and the poet’s mind. While indicating the fallacy of this reading to many modern Western readers, Owen at the same time argues that such adherence to transparency in reading poetry “is linked to the traditional Chinese reader’s presumption that most *shi* subgenres were nonfictional. Poems were read as describing historical moments and scenes actually present to the historical poet.”<sup>375</sup> For traditional Chinese readers, the transparent reading tends to confirm that poetry serves as “authentic” representation of the poet as man and his inner world. Therefore, the word “transparency” also points to intimacy between poetry and a poet’s morality/personality/sincerity. In other words, it is common for a traditional Chinese reader to conflate the identity of poet and the identity of man in the process of reading poetry – the boundary (between poet and poetry) often confirmed in modern Western literary criticism is frequently blurred in traditional Chinese poetic readings. In the case of Du Fu, three English monographs on Du Fu (by William Hung, Albert R. Davis, and Shan Eva Chou respectively) since the second half of the twentieth century respond to this kind of “transparency” in different ways. William Hung embraced such transparency in his book *Tu Fu: China’s Greatest Poet* and he also compared his approach with Davis’s attitude twenty years later in his review of *Tu Fu* by the latter.

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<sup>375</sup> Stephen Owen, *Traditional Chinese Poetry and Poetics: Omen of the World*, p.57. I change the Romanization from Wade-Giles to pinyin.

My work is a reconstruction of the life and times of Du Fu through a restudy of his poems, in which the emphasis is on history rather than poetry. Professor Davis says that his own effort has been “to set the emphasis on Du Fu as a poet with-out suspending my judgment of him as a man.”<sup>376</sup>

The relationship between Du Fu as a man and as a poet certainly draws Shan Eva Chou’s attention in her re-examination of Du Fu. Chou takes a step further than Davis and decides to separate Du Fu as a poet and Du Fu as man by “distinguishing between poetic and cultural factors in the legacy of Du Fu.”<sup>377</sup> Another influential study on Du Fu in English, though not a monograph, “Tu Fu’s ‘Autumn Meditations’: An Exercise in Linguistic Criticism” by Tsu-lin Mei and Yu-kung Kao is also worthy of mention here for its attention to the “intrinsic criterion” as opposed to a wide variety of external criteria employed in previous Du Fu studies..

In the past, it has been said that his greatness lies in his encyclopedic erudition, his vivid depiction of events of his time, his steadfast loyalty to the emperor and his fervent patriotism, and more recently, his moving compassion for the suffering masses. The scholarly energy spent in defending these theses is so stupendous and the evidence collected so overwhelming that, once again, it would be futile to disagree. The only caveat we wish to enter is that the criteria presupposed by these theses are, without exception, peripheral to the central concern of poetry, which is, after all, to make excellent verbal artifact.<sup>378</sup>

The tendency of distinguishing Du Fu as a poet and Du Fu as a man in recent modern English scholarship is to some extent influenced by modern Western literary criticism which frequently challenges the underlying assumptions of reading Du Fu in traditional China (from the modern or post-modern perspective). It should be stressed that such

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<sup>376</sup> William Hung, *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, vol. 32, 1972, pp.265-284. I change the Romanization from Wade-Giles to pinyin.

<sup>377</sup> Shan Eva Chou, *Reconsidering Tu Fu: Literary Greatness and Cultural Context*, p.12. I change the Romanization from Wade-Giles to pinyin.

<sup>378</sup> Tsu-lin Mei and Yu-kung Kao, “Tu Fu’s ‘Autumn Meditations’: An Exercise in Linguistic Criticism,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 28 (1968), p.73.

scholarly effort largely seeks to provide a new way to understand Du Fu's poetry and in such a pursuit traditional commentaries are often dismissed due to their erroneous belief in this transparency. Nevertheless, when we shift our discussion to the phenomenon of reading itself, the "transparent" reading in traditional China becomes more significant since it not only relates to how traditional Chinese poetry (as well as the rules of reading it) is understood in modern scholarship, but also asks us to reconsider dynamics and functions of such transparency in reading poetry in traditional China.

*Yi yi ni zhi* and life hermeneutics both underscore the paradoxical nature of this transparency: on one hand, the transparency creates an illusion that poetry can allow a reader to efficiently erase the temporal and spatial distance and thus reach the other side to discover what "really" happened in the past; on the other hand, the materiality of such transparency---"thickness of transparency" (which largely results from commentators' continuous participation) at the same time confirms the distance between Du Fu and the self of a reader. It is through this shared rhetoric of transparency that commentators on Du Fu during the late Ming and early Qing periods secure a safe ground to deal with the hermeneutic past as well as other concerns in different fields.

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