Self-Representation in Early Medieval Chinese Poetry: The Literary Selves of Ruan Ji, Tao Yuanming, Xie Lingyun, and Bao Zhao

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Self-Representation in Early Medieval Chinese Poetry:

The Literary Selves of Ruan Ji, Tao Yuanming, Xie Lingyun, and Bao Zhao

A dissertation presented

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Self-Representation in Early Medieval Chinese Poetry:

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Abstract

Self-Representation in Early Medieval Chinese Poetry describes the emergence of personalized poetic speakers in classical Chinese poetry. The dissertation shows how Ruan Ji 阮籍 (210–263), Tao Yuanming 陶淵明 (c. 365–427), Xie Lingyun 謝靈運 (385–433), and Bao Zhao 鮑照 (c. 414–466) crafted literary selves in their poems by considering the specific means each writer uses to manifest particular, though sometimes varying, conceptions of selfhood. These means include the representation of thoughts, actions, behaviors, characteristics and emotions, the representation of past experiences, often in the form of a life narrative, the representation of work and career, and the representation of important relationships and places. This project further considers the ways in which these writers developed distinctive authorial styles that constitute other, indirect, means of self-representation. Contextualizing these strategies in relation to the emerging culture of poetic authorship, the shifting of genre boundaries and purposes, and the development of new styles, modes, and forms of poetry, this dissertation argues that the self-representational dimension of early medieval Chinese poetry was an innovation that constituted a significant departure from previous poetic practice and established patterns that would be of great consequence for later classical poetry.

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Introduction

This dissertation is about the emergence of personalized poetic speakers in classical Chinese poetry, and about the new poetic styles that developed in conjunction with these speakers. Ancient poetry had been, for the most part, written in the voice of an "everyman" or "everywoman": an anonymous speaker who expresses the concerns and desires of the community rather than those of a single individual. A new mode of poetry arose at the end of the Han 漢 dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE) when authors began to include details about their lives and professions in their poems and poem titles. The development of a new self-representational style was neither instantaneous nor smooth, however, and it was only after the fall of the Han that early medieval period (c. 200 CE–600 CE) authors ventured more ambitious stylistic experiments as well as larger bodies of work using new techniques. This dissertation is about that period, those works, and these new techniques; and, since most of these detailed poetic speakers are also representations of their authors, it is also a study of how writers represent themselves.

This dissertation examines the self-representational poetry of the early medieval period through the work of four of the period's most significant writers: Ruan Ji 阮籍 (210–263), Tao Yuanming 陶淵明 (c. 365–427), Xie Lingyun 謝靈運 (385–433), and Bao Zhao 鮑照 (c. 414–466). It explores how these poets exemplify the development of self-representational poetry, examining their construction of literary patterns and styles that would go on to be crucial to much of later classical poetry. In addition, the study is also an introduction to selected "major poets" of the period, one that uses the example of these four authors to frame the emergence of autobiographical poetry as a stage in the larger development of classical Chinese poetry.

Each of the dissertation's chapters explores the depth and variety within one writer's body of work. Collectively, by juxtaposing four authors, the dissertation examines the extent to which these writers share particular strategies and the extent to which they pursue divergent strategies. No project of this type could, of course, tell the full story of the rise of authored poetry in China; equally, no project that examines four authors can approach the level of depth possible in a single-author study. Nonetheless, with these chapters I aim to present some of the issues that are central to early medieval authored poetry while also examining certain major stylistic developments that take place in poetics of this period.

If this dissertation emphasizes the crafted nature of the writings under consideration, this emphasis is intended to offset certain attitudes that are frequently and perhaps unconsciously taken toward very famous of works of art and literature. We often regard the structure and contents of "great works" as perfect and inevitable. These assumptions seem to develop almost by accident; they emerge out of our admiration for these works and from our habit of seeing them in the context of a longer narrative of literary history, in which our perspective on individual texts is colored by our knowledge of later developments which the earlier writers did not predict and could not have foreseen.

The process that leads writers and artists to create works that are fundamentally new and, in certain key respects, unlike the work of their predecessors and contemporaries, is easily obscured. For this reason, the present study emphasizes that the literary self-representations of Ruan Ji, Tao Yuanming, Xie Lingyun, and Bao Zhao are not unmediated emanations of personality, but rather crafted constructs: literary selves created in skillful dialogue with myriad social, ideological, and—of course—literary contexts. In order to understand these authors' innovations as fully as possible, it is necessary to examine how they deploy the many resources

of poetic self-depiction; these include what kind of personal information is mentioned, what personal history is given, whether the poem shows what the speaker is thinking and feeling, and so on. Analyzing these variables helps us to see how early medieval poets craft *specified* poetic speakers: speakers that—unlike those in previous poetry—represent particular individuals, located at particular times, in particular spaces, with particular histories and personalities.

The chapters that follow will consider the range of techniques each author uses to represent himself in his work. Therefore, in addition to looking at the attributes of the speaker himself, I will also consider how depiction of setting and context contributes to poetic self-representation, analyzing what (if any) location is described, what (if any) occasion or time frame is given, and so on. These chapters take into account the degree of variation each author's work and also consider how certain poetic genres and themes may contribute to the unity or multiplicity within each author's self-representation. Each chapter also addresses a work of "poetic exposition" (*fu* 賦) in order to provide an additional point of comparison when presenting a given writer's literary self-representation.

In order to explain why this study begins where it does we must look briefly to the writers of the Jian'an 建安 era (196–220 CE)—the final period of the Han dynasty. The Jian'an poets are an important point of reference for this study because they were among the first authors to write about their own particular lives in their poems. To a greater extent than in previous poetry, the poetic speakers of the Jian'an poems manifest subjective emotions in the context of occasional contexts[1]—contexts which are sometimes specified in a poem's title.[2]

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[1] As I discuss below, the degree to which scholars see "subjectivity," "individuality," and "personality" in the poetry of this period is the subject of some debate.

[2] We cannot know whether the titles that survive were written by the author of the poem, and sometimes poems survive with multiple variant titles. In addition, as discussed in Chapter 2, it is not until Tao Yuanming writes poems whose titles include dates that we see a higher degree of occasional specificity in poem titles.

At the same time, the speakers of Jian'an poems still closely resembled the typological poetic speakers of anonymous poetry, and if they impart the feeling of specificity, this is often through context provided by the poem's occasional title rather than through details incorporated into the body of the poem. Although their speakers are not yet highly specified, the Jian'an poets are widely understood as signaling a new direction in classical Chinese poetry with their steps toward greater specification and the ways in which they adapt various popular and anonymous literary forms to the purposes of authored poetry.[3] However, it is not until the subsequent period that writers began to develop the genuinely differentiated and individualized writing styles that are the focus of this dissertation.[4]

The social roles of poetry, and poetry's position within the hierarchy of literary genres, were also in flux during the period discussed in this dissertation. Poetry was held in high esteem in ancient Chinese culture, a position illustrated by the status of the *Shijing* 詩經 (the *Book of Odes*) as a revered Confucian classic. Ancient poetry was regarded as a repository of cultural experience and knowledge, as a tool for communication and diplomacy, and as an expression of the concerns of the common people and of the times in which they lived. Poetry continued to hold a high position in early medieval culture, but its functions and its position in relation to other genres changed.

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[3] Of course, there is a great deal of ambiguity in how we make these distinctions; Note 13, below, discusses scholars who question the way that Jian'an literature has been characterized as time when "lyric subjectivity" develops. Another way of approaching the ambiguity of how we characterize stylistic changes that occur throughout the Han dynasty and the Early Medieval period is by looking at the example of specific texts. See, for example, Zeb Raft, "The Beginning of Literati Poetry: Four Poems from First-century BCE China," *T'oung Pao*, Second Series, 96, no. 1/3 (2010): 74–124. Raft discusses the way in which four four-character-line poems from the first century BCE dynasty display characteristics that we usually associate with the literati poetry written in later periods.

[4] It is worth noting that the Jian'an era marks a turning point in the development of Chinese literary criticism as well as in the development of classical Chinese poetry, as I discuss very briefly below.

During the early medieval period poets were often writers patronized by the ruling elite. Writers employed in this way were expected to perform a wide range of social and authorial roles; they produced literary pieces in a variety of genres, and their writings are deeply shaped by the court contexts in which they wrote.[5] While many writers sought employment at court, some chose a life of reclusion instead. The career of the recluse (*yinzhe* 隱者) became an increasingly popular way of life during the early medieval period, and some medieval poetic self-representations depict the poet's choice to accept or reject an official career. The defining example of this approach is Tao Yuanming, who writes about his choice to leave his official career in order to live as a recluse. Some writers chose to write about their *longing* for reclusion instead of actually becoming recluses; thus, the discourses of early medieval poetry enabled authors to express social, personal, and political views and desires without necessarily changing their ways of life at all. In treating such topics, poetry became a medium through which members of the educated class represented and reflected on the roles and identities that were available to them.[6]

The social and political turmoil that followed the end of the Han dynasty created an environment in which competing ideologies flourished. While Confucianism had been the dominant philosophy of the Han, the subsequent period witnessed the rise of Buddhism, the intertwining of Buddhism and Daoist thought, and the development of new intellectual cultures and practices. Poetry was deeply influenced by these movements, not least because the powerful

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[5] Note 19, below, presents recent academic studies of early medieval Chinese court literature.

[6] *Patterns of Disengagement: The Practice and Portrayal of Reclusion in Early Medieval China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000) by Alan J. Berkowitz examines how the discourse and tradition of reclusion inherited from ancient texts was reinterpreted in the early medieval period, giving rise to the creation of new textual genres and cultural practices; this presentation of reclusion provides an important perspective on the discursive context in which early medieval authors crafted their poetic self-representations.

and wealthy elite who patronized poetry were in many cases also students of Buddhism and hosts to Buddhist practitioners. In whatever context they wrote, writers during this period were indelibly shaped by the flow of new texts and ideas into Chinese culture and the reshaping of extant traditions in relation to this material.[7]

While poetry was changing, taking new shapes and forms during the transition between antiquity and the early medieval period, other genres were shifting as well. One consequential change is the slow decline of "Masters Literature" (*zishu* 子書), the genre of philosophical texts made up of transmitted collections of philosophical teachings and writings and named after the "masters" (諸子) whose teachings they preserved. Works of Masters Literature were written less and less frequently towards the end of antiquity and during the early medieval period, and as Xiaofei Tian discusses, the decline of Masters Literature corresponds with the rise of the authored "collection" (*ji* 集).[8] This type of literary collection, which included a writer's work across a wide variety of genres, became the primary mode of presenting oneself and one's accomplishments as an author, and these collections usually contained works in several genres of poetry. Therefore, when reading the authored poetry of the early medieval period we must bear in mind that many of these poets wrote with the expectation of presenting their work in a collection of this kind.

I have mentioned the intention to begin with the first lengthy bodies of authored poetry that include specified poetic speakers. This criterion is of course compromised by the accidents

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[7] A variety of studies address aspects of the culture of the period; broad overviews include: Albert Dien, ed., *State and Society in Early Medieval China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990) and Charles Holcombe, *In the Shadow of the Han: Literati Thought and Society at the Beginning of the Southern Dynasties* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1994).

[8] See Xiaofei Tian, "Twilight of the Masters: Masters Literature (*zishu*) in Early Medieval China" *JAOS* 126 (2006): 465–487, and Xiaofei Tian, "Collections *ji* (集)" in *The Oxford Handbook of Classical Chinese Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), ed. Wiebke Denecke, Wai-Yee Li, and Xiaofei Tian.

of historical survival and by the fact that we cannot know what additional "lengthy" collections of authored poetry were written but not transmitted to the present day. In addition, I choose writers who are not historical outliers but rather who appear to be participants in broader movements in poetry following the innovations of the Jian'an period. This study is, of course, not a comprehensive one, and in selecting these four authors in particular I have sought to illustrate the major innovations in the authored poetry of the early medieval period while also contextualizing this poetry in relation to the wide variety of literary forms, genres, and styles in which these authors were expected to be proficient.

Almost inevitable subjects for consideration in a study of this kind are Tao Yuanming and Xie Lingyun, the subjects of Chapters 2 and 3. These writers are often used as exemplars of early medieval poetry, and any overview of the poetry of this period would feel askew without them. Although Ruan Ji and Bao Zhao are major poets with a great deal of influence on the later tradition, it would be possible to envision a similar project in which different authors were selected as subjects for the first and last chapters. I have chosen Ruan Ji and Bao Zhao for a number of reasons, among these the intention to illustrate the variety within early medieval writers' output. Thus, Chapter 1 examines Ruan Ji's single long collection of poetry in which the poems are all written in a similar style, while Chapter 4 considers the wide range of styles and genres of poetry contained in Bao Zhao's body of work. Though this dissertation will not be able to examine questions of genre in depth, I hope that its treatment of these two authors will help to convey a sense of the generic contexts that produced the works discussed in this study.

One model for this dissertation is *Six Dynasties Poetry* by Kang-i Sun Chang, a book that includes individual chapters on Tao Yuanming, Xie Lingyun, Bao Zhao, Xie Tiao 謝朓 (464–

499), and Yu Xin 庾信 (513–581).[9] The present study adopts a similar structure, but while Chang emphasizes the dialectic between tradition and individuality in each of the writers she examines, this dissertation takes a different view of individual creativity and selfhood. In particular, the present study emphasizes that these writers' literary selves can be understood only in relation to their historical contexts and to the literary discourses in which they are designed to communicate.

The terms "individual" and "individuality" may have a mildly distorting quality, and yet I have come to accept their inevitable use to describe the way that authors differentiate themselves and their writing styles. Therefore, it is necessary to state that with these terms I do not mean to suggest that premodern people adopted modern notions of individuality or ascribed to philosophies of individualism that emerged in the early modern era. Early medieval Chinese thought includes a wide range of philosophical perspectives on the self, but it is important that we distinguish these philosophical views from views adopted by later historical actors.

I will also take this opportunity to distinguish the approach taken in this dissertation from that adopted in studies of "literary self-awareness" (*wenxue zijue* 文學自覺). The use of this term in academic study stems from an essay by Lu Xun 魯迅 (1881–1936) on the subject of

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[9] Another book that addresses a similar range of material but begins earlier in literary history is Zong-qi Cai's *The Matrix of Lyric Transformation: Poetic Modes and Self-Presentation in Early Chinese Pentasyllabic Poetry* (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 1996). Cai's study includes chapters on five-character-line poetry, Han *gushi* (古詩 "old poems") and *yuefu* (樂府 "Music Bureau") poetry; on the poets Cao Zhi 曹植 (192–232) and Ruan Ji; and on what Cai refers to as "Poetic Modes and Changing Forms of Self-Presentation." An additional study that deals with several of the authors treated in this dissertation is Timothy Wai Keung Chan, *Considering the End: Mortality in Early Medieval Chinese Poetic Representation* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2012), which contains chapters on Ruan Ji, Tao Yuanming, and Xie Lingyun.

Wei–Jin[10] (220–420) literary culture.[11] A wide body of scholarship exists that makes use of the language of "literary self-awareness," and this scholarship deals with significant ways in which early medieval literature reflects contemporaneous changes in literary practice, intellectual life, and understandings of selfhood.[12] However, the terminology of "literary self-awareness" can appear to suggest an essentializing, transcultural and transhistorical notion of what it means to be aware of oneself *as* a self, and therefore I follow other scholars who avoid this language and use other terminology to describe early medieval understandings of selfhood.[13]

Turning to other scholarly treatments of early medieval selfhood, we find relatively little scholarship specifically on the topic of autobiographical writing. While focusing on the writings of Ge Hong 葛洪 (c. 283–343), *To Die and Not Decay: Autobiography and the Pursuit of*

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[10] The "Wei-Jin" period refers to the Wei 魏 dynasty (220–266), which also called the Cao Wei 曹魏, and the Jin 晉 dynasty (265–420). The Jin dynasty is divided into two major periods: the Western Jin (266–316), which had its capital in the north, and the Eastern Jin (317–420), which relocated its capital to the south after the conquest of the north.

[11] Lu Xun writes, "from the perspective of contemporary literature, we might say that Cao Pi's time was one of 'literary self-awareness,' or you might say the contemporary 'art for art's sake' school." 魏晋风度及文章与药及酒之关系 ("Wei–Jin Behavior and Letters, and their Relation to Drugs and Alcohol"), in *Lu Xun quan ji* 鲁迅全集, 3 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1981), 501–517. Cao Pi 曹丕 (187–226) was a prominent writer as well as the founder of the Cao Wei; the son of the warlord Cao Cao, Cao Pi founded the Cao Wei in 220 CE.

[12] For discussion of "literary self-awareness" scholarship and examination of its origins see, for example, Huang Weilun 黃偉倫, *Wei jin wen xue zi jue lun ti xin tan* 魏晉文學自覺論題新探 (Taibei: Tai wan xue sheng, 2006) and Zhang Chaofu 張朝富, *Han mo Wei Jin wenren qunluo yu wenxue bianqian: guanyu Zhongguo gudai "wenxue zijue" de lishi chanshi* 漢末魏晉文人群落與文學變遷：關於中國古代「文學自覺」的歷史闡釋 (Chengdu: Ba Shu shu she, 2008).

[13] For example, most of the scholars cited in this dissertation seem to avoid the language of "literary self-awareness" and to choose other terminology. The following texts provide useful perspectives on these terminological choices: Christopher Connery, "Late Han Poetry and the Subjectivity Question" in Chapter Four of *The Empire of the Text: Writing and Authority in Early Imperial China* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1998), 146–153, and Paul Rouzer, "Poetry and Literati Self-Fashioning" in Chapter Three of *Articulated Ladies: Gender and the Male Community in Early Chinese Texts* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2001), 75–85. Connery is particularly critical of the priority often given to Jian'an poetry (as opposed to other literary genres) and of scholars' tendency to see this writing as newly "self-conscious" (149). Rouzer emphasizes the social and professional dimensions of literati writing and points out that poetic "self-confession" does not "form an 'individual' (in the modern sense of the term) so much as a literatus, a man defined by a particular social and cultural concerns and with certain privileges within his own society" (82).

Immortality in Early China by Mathew V. Wells offers a valuable perspective on the kinds of autobiographical texts that were written in the early medieval period. In particular, Wells considers that "writing an autobiography may be seen as a process of self-creation rather than a vehicle for self-discovery, as the self exists through—rather than prior to—the reflexive act of writing."[14] This dissertation adopts a similar approach to the way in which poets construct their literary selves. Additionally, certain studies of individual authors take up questions of autobiography and self-representation.[15]

Expressions of selfhood are guided and shaped by the genres in which they are written. A variety of studies focus on specific genres of early medieval poetry, including the genres of *shi* 詩 ("lyric" poetry), *yuefu* 樂府 ("Music Bureau" or "ballad" poetry), and *fu* 賦 ("poetic exposition").[16] Among many works on early medieval literary genres, *The Making of Early Chinese Classical Poetry* by Stephen Owen is particularly relevant to the topics addressed in this dissertation. Examining the formal features of early classical poems, Owen's study investigates the complex relationship between authored and anonymous poetry and considers new ways of understanding how texts have been organized and classified into particular categories.

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[14] Wells, 7.

[15] Two studies are of particular importance to this dissertation as a whole and its approach towards the autobiographical element of self-representational poetry. These are Xiaofei Tian, *Tao Yuanming and Manuscript Culture: The Records of a Dusty Table* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005) and Stephen Owen, "The Self's Perfect Mirror: Poetry as Autobiography," in *The Vitality of the Lyric Voice*, ed. Lin Shuen'fu and Stephen Owen (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 71–102. As I will discuss in Chapter 2, Tian's book provides a model of how close reading—and, in particular, attention to textual variants—suggests surprising alternate readings of certain poems and of their author. Owen's article focuses on Tao Yuanming and Du Fu 杜甫 (712–770) and considers how we not only of the "involuntarism of the *shi*" but also the "elements of motivated and voluntary self-presentation" within poems (75).

[16] Works focusing on *shi* poetry are the most numerous and are addressed elsewhere. As for *yuefu*, Joseph R. Allen, *In the Voice of Others: Chinese Music Bureau Poetry* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, 1992) is a recent study of the genre from its beginnings through the Tang dynasty. Because early medieval *fu* tend to be long as well as dense, they are often the subjects of individual studies; studies of the *fu* discussed in this dissertation will be mentioned in the chapters where they appear.

Another area that informs our understanding of early medieval literary style is the study

of Chinese literary thought. The works of literary criticism and theory that survive from the early

medieval period are extremely important to our ability to understand the contexts in which

surviving texts were written, read, and copied. For example, Cao Pi's *Dianlun* "Lunwen" 典論論

文 ("Essay on Literature" in *Normative Essays*) is of particular relevance to this study because its

author expresses interest in how the temperaments of contemporary writers are expressed in their

writings.[17] This essay is regarded as a major development in literary criticism, and scholars of

early medieval literature frequently use it to exemplify a significant change taking place in

literary thought near the start of the early medieval period.[18]

Each of the poets treated here was a significant writer during his life who went on to

achieve wider and greater fame after death. Raised to canonical status, these authors' works were

collected, anthologized, and commented upon, and each author has been the subject of extensive

study and research for hundreds of years. Because the studies of individual poets are too

numerous to survey in this introduction, I restrict the contents of this section mainly to discussion

of larger trends in the scholarship of the early medieval period here.

Some of the primary areas of inquiry in the field of early medieval literary studies include

the role of court culture in the practice of classical literature;[19] Eastern Jin literary culture

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[17] Cao Pi's critical approach to literature is often understood in relation to the early medieval interest in evaluating personal qualities and characteristics. The most explicit evidence of this interest is the "Nine Rank" 九品 system, which was used to evaluate candidates for office (for more on the "Nine Rank" system see Holcombe, 77–81).

[18] Note 13, above, discusses scholarship that is skeptical of the view of the Jian'an as a time when lyric subjectivity appeared.

[19] Recent examples include Meow Hui Goh, *Sight and Sound: Poetry and Courtier Culture in the Yongming Era (483–493)* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010); David R. Knechtges, *Court Culture and Literature in Early China* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2002); Ping Wang, *The Age of Courtly Writing*: Wen xuan *Compiler Xiao Tong (501–531) and His Circle* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2012); and Fusheng Wu, *Written at Imperial Command: Panegyric Poetry in Early Medieval China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008).

including the *xuanyan shi* 玄言詩 ("metaphysical poetry");[20] the trajectories of northern and southern literature[21] and especially the literary culture in the south, including the compilation of major anthologies,[22] and the evolution of "mountains and rivers" 山水 poetry (often referred to as "landscape" poetry) in the early medieval period.[23] Studies of Xie Lingyun's "mountains and rivers" poetry are especially numerous,[24] and Xie Lingyun is widely regarded as the originator of

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[20] See Wendy Swartz, "Revisiting the Scene of the Party: A Study of the Lanting Collection" *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 132.2 (2012): 275–300; Xiaofei Tian, "Seeing with the Mind's Eye: The Eastern Jin Discourse of Visualization and Imagination," *Asia Major*, 3d ser., 18.2 (2006): 67–102; Wang Shu 王澍, *Wei Jin xuanxue yu xuanyan shi yanjiu* (魏晉玄學與玄言詩研究) (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2007); and Nicholas Morrow Williams, "The Metaphysical Lyric of the Six Dynasties," *T'oung Pao* 98.1–3 (2012): 65–112.

[21] A long tradition of criticism regards the southern poetry of the Six Dynasties 六朝 (c. 220–589) period as decadent or morally corrupt, and this discourse continues to influence some contemporary scholarship; see, for example, Fusheng Wu, *The Poetics of Decadence: Chinese Poetry of the Southern Dynasties and Late Tang Periods* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998). The studies discussed in Note 22 also address this issue.

[22] An important area of scholarship examines the way sixth century compilers and critics shaped the way in which the literary output of the previous centuries would be read. For a brief treatment of these issues see David R. Knechtges, "Culling the Weeds and Selecting Prime Blossoms: The Anthology in Early Medieval China," in *Culture and Power in the Reconstitution of the Chinese Realm, 200–600*, ed. Scott Pearce, Audrey G. Spiro, and Patricia Ebrey (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2001), 200–241. For a comprehensive study of this important period see Xiaofei Tian, *Beacon Fire and Shooting Star: The Literary Culture of the Liang, 502–557* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2007).

[23] See, for example: J. D. Frodsham, "*The Origins of Chinese Nature Poetry*," *Asia Major*, 8.1 (1960): 68–103, which discusses the origins of landscape poetry and presents a different development trajectory than the one suggested by the contents of sixth-century anthologies; Donald Holzman, *Landscape Appreciation in Ancient and Early Medieval China: The Birth of Landscape Poetry* (Hsin-chu, Taiwan: National Tsing Hua University, 1996), which considers how broader intellectual shifts contributed to the development of landscape writing; and Lin Wenyue 林文月, *Shan shui yu gu dian* 山水與古典 (Taibei Shi: San min shu ju, Min guo 85 [1996]), which contains essays on a variety of topics concerning the landscape poetry of Tao Yuanming, Xie Lingyun, and Bao Zhao.

[24] Studies of Xie Lingyun's "mountains and rivers" poetry include: Richard B. Mather, "The Landscape Buddhism of the Fifth-Century Poet Hsieh Ling-yün," *Journal of Asian Studies* 18 (1958–1959): 67–79; Stephen Owen, "The Librarian in Exile: Xie Lingyun's Bookish Landscapes," *Early Medieval China* 10–11.1 (2004): 203–226; Xiaofei Tian, "Xie Lingyun, Poet of Purgatory" in *Visionary Journeys: Travel Writings from Early Medieval and Nineteenth-Century China* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard Asia Center Press, 2011); and Francis A. Westbrook, "Landscape Transformation in the Poetry of Hsieh Ling-yün," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 100.3 (1980): 237–254.

an important tradition of landscape writing that was taken up by later writers including Bao Zhao

and Xie Tiao 謝朓 (464–499).[25]

Other studies focus on individual periods and groups of writers; for example, Ruan Ji is

often addressed in the context of a group of writers and intellectuals referred to as the "Seven

Sages of the Bamboo Grove" 竹林七賢. The Seven Sages are famous for engaging in "pure

conversation" (*qingtan* 清談), a style of philosophical discourse that became popular in the Wei–

Jin period, and their iconoclastic behavior is immortalized in the anecdotes of the *Shishuo*

xinyu 世說新語 ("A New Account of Tales of the World") by Liu Yiqing 劉義慶 (403–444).[26]

Tao Yuanming is the subject of a particularly large body of scholarship, including several recent

monographs.[27] In addition to works that treat Tao Yuanming alone, many essays and accounts of

literary history compare and contrast his work with that of Xie Lingyun.[28] Finally, while Bao

Zhao's landscape writing is mentioned above, Bao Zhao is most often studied in terms of his

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[25] A variety of studies discuss Xie Lingyun's influence on Bao Zhao's landscape writings; see, for example, Lin Wenyue,「鮑照與謝靈運的山水詩」in *Shan shui yu gu dian* and Jui-lung Su, "Bao Zhao's Landscape Verse," *Hanxue Yanjiu* 17, no. 2 (1999): 345–377.

[26] For a presentation of this group see, for example, Donald Holzman, "Les Sept Sages de la Forêt des Bambous et la societé de leur temps," T'oung Pao 44 (1956): 317–346. A recent selection of essays on the Seven Sages is Jiang Jianjun 江建俊, ed., *Zhulin mingshi de zhihui yu shiqing* 竹林名士的智慧與詩情 (Taipei: Liren shuju, 2008). Xu Gongchi's 徐公持 *Ruan Ji yu Ji Kang* 阮籍與嵇康 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1986) introduces the work of the two most famous of the Seven Sages, Ruan Ji and Ji Kang 嵇康 (223–262).

[27] Four recent studies of particular note are: Robert Ashmore, *The Transport of Reading: Text and Understanding in the World of Tao Qian (365–427)* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2010); Charles Yim-tze Kwong, *Tao Qian and the Chinese Poetic Tradition*: *The Quest for Cultural Identity* (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 1994); Wendy Swartz, *Reading Tao Yuanming: Shifting Paradigms of Historical Reception, 427–1900* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2008); and Xiaofei Tian, *Tao Yuanming and Manuscript Culture: The Records of a Dusty Table*.

[28] Wendy Swartz notes that this first became common practice among prominent Song dynasty (960–1272) writers. See "Naturalness in Xie Lingyun's Poetic Works," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 70, no. 2 (2010): 355.

contribution to the genre of *yuefu* poetry.[29] Further discussion of scholarship individual authors may be found in the chapter on that author.

Turning now to an outline of the dissertation, Chapter 1 examines Ruan Ji's "Poems Singing of My Cares" *Yonghuai shi* 詠懷詩, one of the earliest surviving collections of authored poetry and a work whose form, length, and subtle manipulations of style transform the conventions of anonymous poetry into a recognizable and distinct form of literary self-representation. The chapter considers stylistic patterns that appear throughout Ruan Ji's collection while also examining how the collection's form guides our reading of stylistic variations within the text. In addition, the chapter calls attention to the historical ambiguity of who arranged the poems in the surviving versions of the collection. In highlighting this ambiguity, I emphasize that acknowledging the way in which premodern texts have been shaped by an unknown number of people—editors and copyists, in addition to the "original" author—need not prevent us from being able to analyze the strategies of literary self-representation at work in an author's corpus.

In contrast to Ruan Ji's "Poems Singing of My Cares," which carefully excludes most specific information about the speaker's location, relationships, and real-world circumstances, many of Tao Yuanming and Xie Lingyun's writings include specific information about themselves and their activities. Chapters 2 and 3 emphasize that while these poets' self-representations seem disarmingly candid—tempting us to read them as unmediated expressions of self—the information they include is carefully curated and chosen in order to create particular effects. Analyzing the strategies each writer employs to represent himself focuses our attention

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[29] For example, Bao Zhao's writing features prominently in Allen, *In the Voice of Others* and in most studies of *yuefu* poetry that include the early medieval period.

on the way that their most personally revealing and psychologically acute poems are not merely emotionally candid, but are also the products of disciplined craft and formal experimentation.

Chapter 2 examines Tao Yuanming's innovative use of the occasional poem, considering Tao Yuanming's work in this form in the context of his radically experimental approach to self-representation in a variety of literary genres. As mentioned above, it is often the case that the most successful masterpieces of literature are the hardest to see clearly; this is certainly the case with Tao Yuanming, whose writings remain popular today and can be said to set the standard for recluse poetry. The chapter will analyze the craft with which Tao Yuanming constructs his famous poetic self-representations, focusing in particular on the manner in which he incorporates his life's narrative into his works and on the way in which he frequently depicts himself in relation to a home space and in terms of his daily routines and activities.

Critical discourse often characterizes Tao Yuanming and Xie Lingyun as the poet of "fields and gardens" 田園 and the poet of "mountains and rivers" 山水, respectively. Chapters 2 and 3 collectively present an alternate version of this characterization by focusing on the importance of settings and locations to each poet's occasional self-representation. Thus, while each author does indeed write about particular locations and types of location, I emphasize that this content is as much "about" the author as it is about the location described in the poem.

Chapter 3 draws on this scholarship to emphasize the way that Xie Lingyun uses his depiction of his journeys through the landscape as a means of representing himself. In particular, I discuss how these journeys structure the speaker's representation of his passion for experience and his ambivalence about his commitments to other people, to work and settled routines, and to society in general. The chapter also emphasizes the way in which Xie Lingyun makes new use of

the occasional poem form, using occasions of travel as a means of presenting the self as a

constantly changing, rather than a static, entity.

Chapter 4 considers certain outer limits of "self-representation" through an examination

of works by Bao Zhao, an author whose poetic speakers include both representations of himself

and of fictional characters. Bao Zhao's body of work exhibits a high degree of formal and

stylistic variety, and this variety helps to remind us that poetic self-representations are shaped by

craft as much as they are by any biographical circumstances and facts. Using examples from Bao

Zhao's writing in a variety of poetic genres and styles, Chapter 4 also considers a particular

mode of representation that is central to his work: the depiction of human interconnection as the

core of many of his poetic speakers' identities and self-understandings. Bao Zhao's writing

provides an especially vivid example of how an author engages with his discursive context by

adopting and modifying pre-existing forms; his work reminds us that far from revealing

themselves to the reader in an unmediated way, early medieval Chinese poets craft self-

representations based on deep knowledge of the norms of literary practice as well as daring,

original use of models of selfhood and experience drawn from the wider culture.

Chapter 1

The "Obscure" Speaker of Ruan Ji's *Yonghuai* Poems

Ruan Ji's "Poems Singing of My Cares" *Yonghuai shi* 詠懷詩 have fascinated readers since their first circulation. The speaker—who is read, following *shi* poetic tradition, as the author—"sings" 詠 of his "cares" 懷, putting his brooding, vacillation, and indecision on display throughout the collection's eighty-two poems.[1] However, despite his frequent expressions of emotion, this speaker does not tell the reader exactly what he is concerned *about*. In this way, the real-world dimensions of his "cares" remain almost entirely—and very conspicuously—unspecified.

Readers and commentators have long sought an explanation for the *Yonghuai* speaker's mysterious trials and tribulations. Aiming to provide context, they consistently turn to Ruan Ji's biography, supplementing what is "missing" in the poems with biographical information or speculation. In particular, commentators and critics often claim that the turbulent political context in which Ruan Ji lived is the direct cause of his speaker's anxiety.[2]

However, as is often the case in the study of medieval Chinese texts, hard evidence about the author and his life is difficult to come by. As a result, the *Yonghuai* poems themselves, along with anecdotes about the author from other sources, are regularly enlisted as description of the

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[1] The final section of this chapter discusses the number of poems included in the collection. While modern editions of the collection often append additional poems in the four-syllable-line, these additions vary; the eighty-two poems in the five-syllable-line constitute the larger part of the collection and are understood as its core.

[2] The following section will discuss the beginning of this interpretive tradition during the centuries after Ruan Ji's death; in addition, the final section of this chapter discusses the way in which Donald Holzman, the author of an authoritative modern study of Ruan Ji, participates in this interpretive lineage. Stephen Owen provides an overview of the elements of Ruan Ji's historical and political context that have been important to literary critics and commentators in his Introduction to *The Poetry of Ruan Ji (210–263)*, in Owen and Swartz, trans., *The Poetry of Ruan Ji and Xi Kang* (Boston: De Gruyter, 2017). A very brief summary of the dominant critical approaches to Ruan Ji's poetry appears in David R. Knechtges and Taiping Chang, eds., *Ancient and Early Medieval Chinese Literature: A Reference Guide*, Part One (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 762–63.

historical person. Over time, the process of reading literature, history, and anecdotal history together has created a mythic, composite "Ruan Ji"—a figure who continues to enter deeply into interpretations of the *Yonghuai* poems. In taking for granted the idea that the poems refer to specific political and historical circumstances, however, these interpretations overlook certain formal features of the collection. And though modern and contemporary scholars often contest the allegorical interpretations of individual poems, they rarely take issue with the established framework of interpretation on a larger scale.[3]

This chapter outlines an alternative approach, one that brackets the question of what "real-world" events provoke its poetic speaker in order to analyze the formal features of individual poems and of the collection as a whole. In so doing it considers how repeated use of specific literary techniques, as well as the form and length of the collection, combine to create the distinctive features that critics have often imputed to the author's life and circumstances. A single chapter does not provide adequate space to develop this approach in depth or to account fully for the variety within the collection. Nonetheless, it may be sufficient to suggest how formal analysis can yield valuable descriptions of the techniques at work with in the *Yonghuai* poems and also bring them into closer dialogue with the complex literary history of the period.

The chapter begins by presenting the *Yonghuai* poems in two contexts: that of early medieval criticism and that of early medieval poetic practice. The second and third sections analyze the text's formal features and consider how these operate on the level of the collection as a whole as well as on the level of the individual poem. Finally, the last section looks one of the

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[3] For example, Donald Holzman's *Poetry and Politics: The Life and Works of Juan Chi, A.D. 210-263* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976) attempts to limit allegorical interpretation to those instances where Holzman sees sufficient evidence, but he does not call into question the allegorical model of interpretation.

four-syllable-line poems that is attributed to Ruan Ji and often included in modern versions of the collection.

Ruan Ji's "Obscure and Evasive" Style

Not all of the poems in the *Yonghuai* collection describe their speaker; many tell stories about mythical or historical figures, or present abstract and philosophical speculation.[4] However, where the speaker does talk about himself, he does so in a particular and restricted way. On the one hand, he refrains from presenting specific and unique details about his circumstances and his surroundings; for example, when he mentions his dwellings and journeys, these settings and activities remain generic, stripped of identifying features and place-names. On the other hand, with some exceptions, he also refrains from making generalizations about his personality and from providing information about his past experiences, his education and career, and other kinds of identifying content.[5] As a result, and in comparison with most of the poetic speakers discussed in later chapters, Ruan Ji's speaker is underspecified: he is a generic character about whom we know relatively little—except for his association with the author Ruan Ji and whatever else we may learn from paratexts and other sources.

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[4] In order to describe which subjects appear most often in the collection, I have counted the number of poems that present the speaker in a time-and-place setting. What I call time-and-place setting refers to a poem in which a time is given ("night" 夜) and also, some sense of a location (here a chamber with a window and a curtain). This approach is, admittedly, idiosyncratic and therefore of limited use, as it relies on highly subjective judgments about what constitutes a "time-and-place setting." Nonetheless, it does give a rough overall picture of the composition of the collection, because the poems with time-and-place settings tend to be those that focus most directly on the speaker. According to this count, seventeen of the eighty-two poems present the speaker in a time-and-place setting, while forty of the poems offer no setting and twenty-five offer an ambiguous setting. Therefore, it is helpful to bear in mind that the most active and embodied representations of the speaker are contained in about seventeen poems.

[5] A few poems in the collection—such as *Yonghuai* No. 7, No. 19, and No. 47—do refer to the speaker's youth and provide some details. However, even while we read these poems biographically, they closely follow conventional patterns that are familiar from the repertoire of early medieval poetry; therefore, one does not read these as particularly revealing of the author's particular experience.

Yonghuai No. 1,[6] the most widely cited and anthologized of the *Yonghuai* poems,

presents a vividly realized scene while at the same time exemplifying the non-particularized

mode of self-representation that appears throughout the collection:[7]

夜中不能寐	I could not get to sleep at night,
起坐彈鳴琴	I sat up and plucked my zither.
薄帷鑒明月	The thin curtain gave the image of the bright moon,
清風吹我襟	a cool breeze blew on the folds of my robes.
孤鴻號外野	A lone swan cried out in the wilds,
翔鳥鳴北林	winging birds sang in the woods to the north.
徘徊將何見	I paced about, what might I see?—
憂思獨傷心	anxious thoughts wounded my heart alone.

Unlike many of the *Yonghuai* poems, this one establishes a time-and-place setting that persists to

the end of the poem.[8] Having introduced this setting in the opening couplet, the poem goes on to

use imagery and sense data that allow the reader to feel what the speaker might in this situation.

Nonetheless, the content remains generic.

If the poem reveals no highly distinctive details about the speaker, it does suggest

something about his state of mind. He appears restless in the first couplet, lines which imply that

because he could not sleep he moves about and then settles into the activity of "pluck[ing] my

zither" 彈鳴琴. Restless activity appears again in the final couplet, where we find the speaker

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[6] A note on the numbering of the *Yonghuai* poems: as I will discuss below, the poems appear in different orders according to the edition. Here I follow Stephen Owen's English translation of the collection in numbering the poems according to the order in which they appear in the 1543 edition by Fan Qin 范欽.

[7] The texts of *Yonghuai* poems in this chapter are from the modern critical edition by Lu Qinli 逯欽立, *Xian Qin Han Wei Jin nanbeichao shi* 先秦漢魏晉南北朝詩 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983). The English translations are adapted from Stephen Owen, trans., *The Poetry of Ruan Ji (210–263)*. *Yonghuai* No. 1 appears in Lu Qinli, *Wei shi* 魏詩, 10.496; Owen, *The Poetry of Ruan Ji,* 27.

[8] See Note 4, above. While I have not been able to offer a detailed analysis of Ruan Ji's "time-and-place settings" in the chapter, it is important to note that the "times" and "places" mentioned in the *Yonghuai* poems are often vague rather than specified. For example, in *Yonghuai* No. 1, the time is "night" rather than "at 11:40 pm" or "between 8:00 pm and 5:00 am"; as for place, we only see certain features of the place rather than being given a name for the location that he is in (such as "at home" or "in my bedchamber").

"pac[ing] about" 徘徊, as if distracted by the "bright moon" 明月, the "cool breeze" 清風, and the sounds of the birds. The question that follows, "what might I see?" 將何見, takes an unexpected turn; we might at first understand this as asking, literally, "what will I see next?" However, rather than supply any image or material object that might be seen, the final line's reply redirects us towards the speaker's interior world: a place that contains "anxious thoughts" 憂思 which "wound" 傷 his "heart" 心. The reader can see the impact of these thoughts on the speaker, but not their actual content.

Before continuing with this analysis, however, I interrupt it to consider the range of interpretive choices that diverge when we read this poem. Various interpretive practices have arisen around the *Yonghuai* collection, and these derive, in large part, from different ways of categorizing texts and of understanding the history of early classical poetry.

Early medieval works are available to us only via texts written and printed in later periods; limited survival—as well as the uncertain dating and provenance of works that do survive—makes it especially difficult to characterize the poetic world from which the *Yonghuai* collection emerges. Further complicating matters, centuries of hand-copying produces scribal errors and lacunae—resulting in variants and multiple versions.

When reading a poem ascribed to a named author, premodern commentators often look to the author's biography to develop interpretations. This practice means that an authored work can be read in a very different way from an anonymous work, even if the actual texts and writing styles are similar. Yan Yanzhi's 顏延之 (384–456) comments on the *Yonghuai* collection, written by just over a century after Ruan Ji's death, are an example of biographical reading. The oldest surviving comments on the collection, these are preserved in Li Shan's 李善 (d. 689)

early-Tang commentary on the *Wen xuan* 文選 (*An Anthology of Literature*), an important sixth-century anthology that includes seventeen of the *Yonghuai* poems.

The first comment attributed to Yan Yanzhi reads, "They say that in the age of Prince Wen of Jin,[9] Ruan Ji was worried that disaster might befall him and thus produced these songs" 說者阮籍在晉文代常慮禍患，故發此詠耳.[10] Yan Yanzhi presents Ruan Ji's poems as the product of the author's troubled state of mind. Though he does not offer a significant amount of detail, he does suggest that the author's biographical circumstances—and in particular, his fear of "disaster" 禍患—are central to the poems' creation. Further, he indicates that this view is already widely held.[11]

Li Shan develops the biographical approach into a more complex interpretation of Ruan Ji's poetic project in his comments following *Yonghuai* No. 1 in *Wen xuan*:[12]

> Ruan Ji served a dynasty in turmoil and feared meeting disaster through slander. Because of this he produced these songs, always sighing with worry for his life. Although his aims were to criticize, his expression is obscure and evasive, so that after a hundred generations, they are hard to fathom. Thus we may roughly understand the general meaning and get the concealed point only incompletely.
> 嗣宗身仕亂朝，常恐罹謗遇禍，因茲發詠，故每有憂生之嗟。雖志在刺譏，而文多隱避，百世之下，難以情測。故粗明大意，略其幽旨也。

Like Yan Yanzhi, Li Shan asserts that the difficult conditions under which Ruan Ji lived are the motivating force behind his poetry. However, his interpretation goes further, delving into questions of genre, style, and content. For example, he describes features of the poetry itself:

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[9] Prince Wen of Jin is Sima Zhao 司馬昭 (211–265); the Sima 司馬 clan controlled the later years of the Wei dynasty from behind the scenes until Sima Yan 司馬炎 (236–290) founded the Jin 晉 dynasty (265–420).

[10] This comment appears directly after the title given to the seventeen poems ("Poems Singing of My Cares"). Xiao Tong 蕭統 (501–531), comp., *Wen xuan* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chuban she, 1986), 23.1067. Owen's translation, *The Poetry of Ruan Ji*, 10.

[11] Beginning his comment with "they say" 說者 or "it was said," Yan Yanzhi appears to ascribe this view to others.

[12] Xiao Tong, ed., *Wen xuan*, 23.1067. Translation by Owen, *The Poetry of Ruan Ji*, 11.

these include the way the speaker is "always sighing with worry for his life" 每有憂生之嗟, and also the fact that Ruan Ji's "expression is obscure and evasive" 文多隱避. In this latter comment we find the useful hint that seventh-century readers did *not* find the poems lucid and self-evident.[13]

Li Shan's attempt to explain Ruan Ji's choice of an "obscure and evasive" style suggests that he regards this style as problematic and, possibly, as surprising. We see this attitude in his insistence on the presence of a deep "concealed point" 幽旨; here, Li Shan posits the existence of another level of meaning in the poems, one that was central to the author's conception of them. This view is also evident in the statement that Ruan Ji's "aims were to criticize" 志在刺譏; this refers to two traditions: first, the one whereby a poet expresses his "aims" 志 or "intentions" in poetry, and second, the tradition of poetry as a form of political "critici[sm]" 刺譏. By placing the *Yonghuai* collection in the lineage of political poetry, Li Shan implicitly characterizes the poems in terms of the ancient social and ethical agendas of that mode of writing.[14]

Association with the tradition of political poetry enables Li Shan to solve a problem he has posed indirectly: that of why Ruan Ji's poetic style is so obscure. Li Shan's interpretation has much to recommend it, not least the fact that certain expert readers and writers living much

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[13] This perspective is valuable to us because it suggests that the difficulty that modern readers experience may be part of the poems' original style, and not be only due to textual corruption and lost understanding of an original reading context; without indication that early medieval readers also found the poems difficult we might assume that our contemporary difficulties are largely the result of textual variants and lacunae. Of course, as we see in both Yan Yanzhi's and Li Shan's comments, these early medieval readers already saw themselves as historically distant from Ruan Ji's time.

[14] This term ("criticism" *ci ji* 刺譏) refers to a tradition of political critique that stems from the *Shijing*; according to this tradition, those in power were able to infer the people's well-being from the tone and content of the songs they produced. Following in this tradition, later writers took seriously the idea that literary writing serves an important political and ethical function in society.

closer to Ruan Ji's time than we do found it convincing. Nonetheless, this reading may seem incomplete in a contemporary context, as it neither describes the characteristics of Ruan Ji's style in detail nor relates the *Yonghuai* collection to some of the most important developments in early classical poetry. Looking back on a long poetic tradition from our belated perspective, contemporary scholars may require other interpretations on order to integrate our understanding of Ruan Ji's poetry with our understanding of the other poetic traditions developing at the same time—in particular, that of the five-syllable-line poem.

The approach taken in this chapter allows that the *Yonghuai* poems may indeed allude to political circumstances of Ruan Ji's day, but it proposes a mode of analysis that sidesteps the political almost entirely. Taking seriously the observation that Ruan Ji's style appears "obscure and evasive" to many readers, this chapter analyzes the obscurities of the text without recourse to biographical explanation. In other words, while we might not agree that what has been left out of the poems is political, most readers do feel that *something* has been omitted or left out of them. The sections that follow seek to describe this strategy of omission in formal terms and to understand it as a central element of Ruan Ji's poetic style. Of course, the variety among the eighty-two poems makes it impossible to characterize the collection fully or completely; nonetheless, outlining the formal features at work in the *Yonghuai* collection provides a foundation for understanding some of the crucial features of self-representation in early medieval poetry.

The Shared Repertoire of Early Medieval Poetry

Almost all surviving early medieval poetry was collected and edited in the fifth and sixth centuries. Given that scholars are dependent on later texts in order to read earlier ones, we are

inevitably influenced by the editorial choices made by these editors and compilers. The resulting bias towards fifth- and sixth-century conceptions of literary history creates a range of problems, as the categories and distinctions made in later periods often obfuscate some of the most salient relationships between poems written earlier. In order to counteract this bias, Stephen Owen suggests that we regard material from this early period as "one poetry."[15] This approach enables us to see early medieval texts in new ways, revealing patterns that can be obscured when groupings are arranged by genre and author.

For example, Owen points out that Ruan Ji's *Yonghuai* No. 1, above, shares much in common with two other early medieval poems; both "Nineteen Old Poems" 古詩十九首 XIX and Cao Pi's "Unclassified Poem" 雜詩 (beginning "Gradually the autumn nights grow long" 漫漫秋夜長) are also examples of the common "sleepless at night" theme, and all three poems make use of shared content including moonlight and pacing or walking around.[16] If the similarities between these three poems are not often acknowledged, that is in large part because these poems rarely appear side-by-side. Early poems are usually organized in chronological order according to their author (or anonymous author, as in the case of "Nineteen Old Poems" XIX) and genre. As Owen points out, readers and scholars depend on the practice of arranging poems in chronological order, and it would probably be unwise to dismantle this established custom.[17] At the same time, we must acknowledge that this mode of organization propagates certain fictions about literary history.

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[15] Owen writes, "by setting aside a putative history of differences of genre and author, we can see that in many ways this was 'one poetry,' created from a shared poetic repertoire and shared compositional procedures" (*The Making*, 3).

[16] Owen discusses these poems in *The Making*, 79–82.

[17] Owen, *The Making*, 1–2.

One outcome of this analysis is that *Yonghuai* No. 1 appears distinctly *not* unique on the

level of its style. This may surprise some readers, because *Yonghuai* No. 1 is the first poem in the

collection and also an often-quoted and anthologized piece;[18] reading it, for many, will seem to

conjure up the image of Ruan Ji's particular persona. Nonetheless, this analysis shows that while

readers might be inclined to assume that this poem's style is characteristic of its author, the

reverse appears to be true: ascription of authorship appears to have added definition to an

otherwise fairly generic piece of writing.

Unlike the biographical and allegorical account of Ruan Ji's poetry, this analysis brings

to mind the possibility that Ruan Ji may not have been purposefully excising specific content

from his poems. Instead, he might have simply been writing poems in a shared poetic style—one

that did not regularly include specific historical and circumstantial content. If *Yonghuai* No. 1

shares certain elements in common with other poems, these are the elements that characterize the

shared repertoire of early classical poetry. As Owen describes, early Chinese classical poetry as

"a kind of shared poetic practice"[19] that appears in the second century. He suggest that the poems

in this group are written using a limited range of themes, and that they can be analyzed in terms

of certain conventional elements and patterns; certain topics tend to be grouped together in

themes, and certain themes tend to lead to other themes.[20]

Ruan Ji appears to adopt many of these linkages and patterns in the *Yonghuai* collection.

However, while *Yonghuai* No. 1 may not be unique on the level of style, a significant portion of

the poems in the collection do diverge from the patterns established in the shared poetic

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[18] Here I depart slightly from my intention to leave the order of the poems out of my analysis; this exception may be justified by the fact that *Yonghuai* No. 1 appears first in almost all of the surviving versions of the collection.

[19] Owen, *The Making*, 8. Owen adds that "What this poetry share are themes, topics, sequences of exposition, templates, and a range of verbal habits" (*The Making*, 9).

[20] Here I follow Owen's use of the terms "theme" and "topic," discussed in *The Making*, 16–17.

repertoire. These divergences are central to the collection but difficult to characterize in precise terms. Assessing the *Yonghuai* collection's specific similarities to and differences from the shared poetic repertoire helps us to understand what makes it unique. To this end, I will turn to another one of the "Nineteen Old Poems" here.

The "Nineteen Old Poems" serve as an important point of comparison because the "old poems" 古詩 are widely considered to be a key link in the development of early classical poetry. Drawn from a larger repertoire of anonymous poems,[21] the "Nineteen Old Poems" were included in *Wen xuan* as an anonymous set. In *Wen xuan* and elsewhere, the term "old poems" took on a specific meaning for early medieval editors and compilers who sought to tell the story of how the early classical poetic tradition had come into existence. The "old poems" are a group of poems and fragments written in the five-syllable line, and which we now believe were written before the end of the third century. These poems were associated with the Eastern Han dynasty, and they were often presented as predecessors to the authored poems of the Jian'an period. However, though early medieval critics and compilers gravitated towards the idea of a linear development from anonymous to authored poetry, it remains likely anonymous and authored poetry were written concurrently.

We have mentioned that "Nineteen Old Poems" XIX is stylistically similar to *Yonghuai* No. 1. However, "Nineteen Old Poems" IV would stand out from the collection. "Nineteen Old Poems" IV is spoken from the situation of a feast—a type of occasion that occurs frequently in poems from this period:[22]

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[21] Zhong Rong (ca. 468–518) mentions a group of fifty-nine anonymous "old poems," praising them highly and placing them in the highest category in his *Grades of Poets* (Shipin) 詩品. This set of fifty-nine "old poems" may represent the larger group from which the *Wen xuan* editors selected poems to include in their anthology.

[22] Lu Qinli, *Han shi* 漢詩, 12.330. Translation by Stephen Owen, *An Anthology of Chinese Literature: Beginnings to 1911* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1996), 255.

	今日良宴會	A fine feast we hold this day,
	歡樂難具陳	its pleasures are hard to fully tell.
	彈箏奮逸響	Plucked zithers give forth trailing echoes,
	新聲妙入神	popular tunes, so fine they belong to the gods.
5	令德唱高言	One of fine virtue sings forth noble words,
	識曲聽其真	those who know the song heed its truth.
	齊心同所願	Hearts equal, we share the same wish,
	含意俱未伸	the sense held back, not fully expressed.
	人生寄一世	Man's life sojourns in a single age,
10	奄忽若飆塵	it fleets by like dust tossed by the wind.
	何不策高足	Why not whip on a high-hoofed steed,
	先據要路津	be the first to seize the ford.
	無為守貧賤	Don't stay poor and of low degree,
	轗軻長苦辛	struggling and ever suffering from hardship.

The opening couplets establish the feast setting: the first through assertion, and the second two through a description of the music. The treatment of the music underlines that the guests are not passive receivers of a purely aesthetic experience; instead, "those who know the song" 識曲 will actively "heed its truth" 聽其真. By implication, then, those who "know the song" will be connected not only to the social world represented at the feast, but also to the "gods" 神.

Having established the setting, the poem goes on to describe the feeling of community shared by the guests. The speaker implies that having "the same wish" 同所願 makes the guests' "hearts equal" 齊心. The guests also share an attitude of restraint. Presumably, the speaker is one of them, and his knowledge of his own heart enables him to describe what is "not fully expressed" 俱未伸. Moreover, the force of equivalence is such that in this group—as well as in this culture and its poetics—the speaker can assert the fundamental likeness of the hearts of the other guests.

The couplet (lines 7–8) offers an oddly emphatic moment of reflection, an effect made more resonant by its position at the mid-point of the poem. Here, the speaker turns inward

towards the hearts and minds of the guests not once, but twice: the line "Hearts equal, we share the same wish" 齊心同所願 asks the reader to turn from the larger scene of feasting and music to imagine the sameness in the hearts of the many guests. This image is further complicated by the ambiguous emotion expressed in the following line. With its clipped form, the two-syllable phrase "The sense held back" 含意 enacts formally what it describes semantically. The rest of the line ("not fully expressed" 俱未伸) describes the initial phrase more completely, while also echoing the idea—mentioned in the poem's second line—that it is difficult to describe experience fully in language. The couplet's form—a positive assertion in its first line followed by a negative assertion in its second—is almost a model for the poem as a whole. While the first half of the poem displays fullness—pleasures, music, and company, the second half of the poem is darker, and takes the form of a warning of what *not* to do.

The remaining lines of the poem turn to the topic of life's brevity. This section makes use of common tropes in its comparison of life to dust in the wind in the fifth and seventh couplets. Between these we find the exhortation: "Why not whip on a high-hoofed steed, / be the first to seize the ford" 何不策高足, 先據要路津. Raising the possibility of one person being singled out before the others presents a departure from the model of social cohesion suggested earlier in the poem, whereby all guests or members of the implied community are equal ("hearts equal" 齊心 or "of one mind").

The possibility of coming "first" 先, subtle though it may be, resonates with certain details that appear earlier in the poem. For example, the third couplet also separates groups of people, rather than describing everyone as sharing common characteristics: "One of fine virtue sings forth noble words, / those who know the song heed its truth" 令德唱高言, 識曲聽其真. These lines imply a system of values without spelling it out in great detail (moreover, the tone of

festivity masks the possibility of threat—what it would mean to *not* "know the song" or "heed its truth"). But after reading the competitive suggestion of the penultimate couplet, we may hear the threatening undertone of the earlier line. Thus, although spoken from the perspective of a generic speaker, the poem nonetheless reflects on what it would mean to separate from the group and to ascend in a hierarchy. Crucially, this ascent is imagined within the context of a shared system of values; the speaker does not hope to defy the values of the culture, but rather to come "first" 先 within that system.

Having looked at "Nineteen Old Poems" IV, we might ask whether this poem could be distinguished from the *Yonghuai* poems. Like the speaker of *Yonghuai* No. 1, this speaker is a generic character. And again like the speaker of *Yonghuai* No. 1, he possesses the ability to single himself out and consider his experience as an individual person. Nonetheless, the speaker of "Nineteen Old Poems" IV doesn't seem to "fit" the model of Ruan Ji's *Yonghuai* poems. To provide an explanation, we must look first to the level of theme; while the "Nineteen Old Poems" include depictions of a variety of occasions, including joyous ones like feasts, Ruan Ji's poems almost never depict celebratory or lighthearted occasions. This feature alone would potentially make "Nineteen Old Poems" IV seem out of place in the *Yonghuai* collection.

When the speaker of the *Yonghuai* poems makes reference to his state of mind, he expresses grief, lament, uncertainty, critique, or an attitude of seeking, yearning, or planning something. Though this list contains a great deal of variety, certain major categories are excluded; for example, Ruan Ji's speaker only experiences pain and worry, not pleasure. That is, while a typical early medieval speaker can enjoy a feast *and* worry about the brevity of life in one poem, it seems that Ruan Ji's can only do the latter. Some pleasures do appear scattered

throughout the collection; however, these occur in the description of historical or mythical figures, or, in a few instances, in discussion of the speaker's former self.[23]

This observation would suggest that Ruan Ji chooses topics from the repertoire of early medieval poetry selectively, and that he chooses those that usually feature "negative" emotions rather than positive ones. Thus, we might suggest that Ruan Ji builds his poetic speaker's character around occasions of uncertainty and emotional distress, delineating his speaker through his choice of the occasions on which he represents him. This provides one way of explaining the observation that *Yonghuai* No. 1 is at once a stylistically unoriginal poem and also taken as characteristically and quintessentially representative of Ruan Ji's poetic style and persona. Though incomplete, this explanation provides a starting point for considering how Ruan Ji creates a unique, recognizable poetic voice while maintaining many of the conventions of a generic poetic speaker.

The Extended Space of the Authored Collection

Setting aside, for the moment, the question of stylistic innovation within individual poems, two additional features of the *Yonghuai* collection constitute a milestone in the development of

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[23] While the speaker of the *Yonghuai* poems recognizes and refers to pleasures, these are usually possessed by others or by the speaker's former self. A representative example is when the speaker of No. 56 wonders, "How can one emulate those youths on the road / who jaunt about hand in hand?" 豈效路上童, 攜手共遨遊 (Lu Qinli, *Wei shi*, 10.502). Additional examples include No. 4, which retells the *Biographies of Immortals* 列仙傳 story of Zheng Jiaofu's attraction to two "carefree" 逍遙 nymphs; No.7, where the speaker describes himself as a "young man" 少年 and comments, "Before my pleasures had been enjoyed to the fullest, / the bright sun suddenly slipped away" 娛樂未終極, 白日忽蹉跎 (Lu Qinli, *Wei shi*, 10.497); and No. 22 , which speaks of "pleasure" 樂 in the abstract, contrasting "pleasure" and "sorrow" 哀. No. 12 is also noteworthy in that it presents proximity to entertainment quarters (the "strange dances" 奇舞 of the "Northern Ward" 北里); here the speaker seems to hold a disdainful attitude towards what might otherwise be described in terms of pleasure-seeking. This list does not include poems that feature two discourses that suggest the possibility of pleasure: these are the discourses of love and longing and of the wish to go off roaming; however, the speaker usually only expresses desire for these, rather than their fulfillment.

classical Chinese poetry; these are its length and its structure. The collection's length provides an unprecedentedly protracted space in which to develop its central character, the poetic speaker.[24] At the same time, the collection's structure—that of an authored text subdivided into eighty-two individual poems—gives definition to the whole and provides compartmentalized spaces in which to address new topics and to shift settings.

As a whole, the text is unified by a pattern of similarity and difference: the reader is stimulated by the frequent presentation of new scenarios within poems and between poems, but sustained by the relative continuity of the character of the speaker. Length thus creates the space in which variation becomes possible; the repetition of certain representations of the speaker enables the reader to know and recognize him from one poem to the next, even if the poems do not divulge specific details about him.

Reading the collection now, it would be impossible not to be influenced by these features. At the same time, we do not know when or how the text arrived at this form—or exactly who to credit this form to. In particular, we do not know whether Ruan Ji circulated the poems during his lifetime, or if he selected which poems to include, their order, or the collection's title. While it is likely that a later compiler or editor is responsible for some of these decisions, this too is unknown.

What we do know is that the *Yonghuai* collection appears to have circulated as part of Ruan Ji's collected works until this disappeared from the textual record between the late Song and the mid-16th century. New editions of Ruan Ji's *Yonghuai* collection appeared in the late-16th and 17th centuries; based on either one or two original source texts, these contain many variant

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[24] This is in contrast to the length of a single long poem, which is usually more dependent on overarching narrative. Some early examples would be the *Li Sao* 離騷 and "Southeast Fly the Peacocks" 孔雀東南飛.

characters and also present the poems in different orders.[25] In particular, while the *Wen xuan* selection of seventeen poems appears at the beginning of most modern editions, the 16th century edition prepared by Fan Qin 范欽 with a preface by Chen Dewen 陳德文 preserves an alternate ordering.[26] Bearing in mind these differing arrangements of the poems, this chapter avoids analysis based on the order in which the poems appear.[27]

Though much is unknown, certain textual evidence enables us to make inferences about the collection's relation to the larger poetic tradition. Firstly, as we have seen, Yan Yanzhi wrote comments on the poems not long after Ruan Ji's lifetime, and seventeen of the poems were later included in *Wen xuan*. Yan Yanzhi, Xiao Tong, and some of the additional figures who commented on Ruan Ji's poems are among the preeminent figures in early medieval literature, and their attention shows that Ruan Ji's work was held in high esteem.[28]

The selection in *Wen xuan* also provides tentative clues about the way in which Ruan Ji's poetry was read. For example, the poems' placement at the start of a multi-author section entitled "Singing of Cares" 詠懷 suggests that Ruan Ji's poems were already regarded as the beginning of a lineage,[29] and it also shows that that this title was already in place in the sixth century, even

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[25] For a more comprehensive overview of the text's history see Owen, *The Poetry of Ruan Ji,* 19–23.

[26] This might represent the order of the poems in the complete collection of Ruan Ji's work, which was lost.

[27] At the same time, it is worth noting here that while the "original" order of the poems is unknown, their style and content makes it difficult to imagine an order that would substantially alter our understanding of the collection. For example, it would be difficult to imagine an order that would give the poems the kind of narrative development that are found in some poem sequences and which the *Yonghuai* poems appear to lack. Here I am drawing on the observation, above, that the *Yonghuai* poems contain primarily anxious, lonely occasions; it seems that no amount of reordering the current group of poems would alter this predominance of anxious, lonely scenes.

[28] Notably, Zhong Rong also comments on Ruan Ji's poetry in his *Grades of Poets* (Shipin).

[29] Two early medieval imitators of Ruan Ji's poetic style are Jiang Yan 江淹 (444–505), who wrote fifteen poems imitating Ruan Ji, and Yu Xin 庾信 (513–581), who wrote a series of twenty-seven poems known as "Emulating 'Singing of My Cares'" ("Ni Yonghuai" 擬詠懷). Nicholas Morrow Williams summarizes this imitative tradition in "Pathways in Obscurity: Jiang Yan and Ruan Ji," in *Imitations of the Self: Jiang Yan and Chinese Poetics* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 210–46.

if it did not originate with Ruan Ji himself. Additionally, the inclusion of many of Ruan Ji's

poems in *Wen xuan* suggests that the poems may have been read in larger groups, not as

selections of only a few poems.

Though this account leaves many questions unanswered, it does substantiate the

Yonghuai poems' important position in the early medieval literary tradition. And if we cannot

specify exactly how the collection first appeared, or exactly what that moment's poetry looked

like and how it might have been impacted by Ruan Ji's poems, we can still consider how the

collection participated in broad changes taking place in early medieval literature. Two literary

trends are of particular importance to the *Yonghuai* collection; these are the rise of authorship

and the growing popularity of the five-syllable-line poem. Both of these developments stem from

the Han dynasty, a period during which literature was impacted by the reorganization of extant

systems of preserving and transmitting knowledge.

In the increasingly centralized world of the Han dynasty, texts were gathered in an

imperial library, production of paper increased, and new literary genres became popular. The

prestige of authorship grew, and some texts in many genres, including in *shi* poetry, gradually

came to be circulated with authorial ascriptions.[30] The occasional poem emerged alongside the

rise of authored poetry. While the occasions depicted by anonymous poems are generic, authors

possess the ability to name specific occasions in the titles of their poems, or even to include

specific content in the body of the poem itself. With only slight modification, the techniques of

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[30] This was a significant change, because while the tradition of classical *shi* poetry had existed for over a thousand years, the poets themselves remained anonymous during the greater part of its history. Authorship conceived broadly (for example in terms of the provenance of the texts, or of the traditional ascription of editor) had long been central to the Chinese poetic tradition, but the collection of a large group of poems by a single author was still a rare phenomenon. For example, earlier poetry collections such as the *Shijing* had long been circulated under a single title and with a traditional editorial ascription, but the poems themselves derived from myriad ancient sources, and only one or two of them have been transmitted with the name of their writer.

anonymous poetry could be adapted for the depiction of specific occasions—and this is exactly what authors began to do.

The Han dynasty was also the period during which the five-syllable-line poem appears to have become popular. Arising at first as an anonymous genre, the form was soon taken up by authors, including the poets of the Jian'an period (196–220) at the end of the Han dynasty. In the hands of the Jian'an poets, the five-syllable-line poem became more personal, emotional, and autobiographical.[31] During the centuries that followed, this form seems to have replaced the four-syllable line poem as the preferred form for writing classical poetry.

Certain cultural shifts were also important to the development of literature in this period. During the decline of the Han dynasty through the Wei and Jin dynasties, rulers and aspiring rulers began to use writing and literary patronage as key elements of their image-making and propaganda. In a time of uncertainty and war, literature became an important tool to claim legitimacy and also generate and manifest cultural identity. This pattern was established by Cao Cao, the de facto ruler of the Jian'an period, and his two sons, Cao Pi and Cao Zhi 曹植 (192–232). These figures and the writers they patronized left behind sizeable collections of poetry and other literary works in their own names, and Ruan Ji and his contemporaries were indebted to their precedent.

These examples demonstrate that the parameters of the literary genres in which Ruan Ji was working were by no means fixed, and poetry in particular was experiencing a period of transformation. To a certain degree, this transformation seems to have been driven by new practices of authorship and new interest in authored texts. Other phenomena, such as the new

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[31] For example, Williams comments that while the shorter *fu* was often used in the Han as a "vehicle for personal emotions," the speakers of these *fu* were usually a fictional substitute, not the author himself (*Imitations of the Self*, 112).

interest in personality, character, and individual literary style, would also seem to support this inference.[32] For example, the Jian'an period produced one of the first reflections on personalized literary style, Cao Pi's *Dianlun* "Lunwen" 典論論文 ("Essay on Literature" in *Normative Essays*). Though writers' styles were as yet not highly individuated, Cao Pi's essay shows that this kind of individuation was certainly of interest to intellectuals in this period.

Another example of larger shifts in literary culture during the early medieval period is the gradual decline of Masters' Literature (*zishu* 子書)[33] and the rise of the authored literary collection (*ji* 集). The Masters' Literature tradition was a revered means of preserving and transmitting wisdom and knowledge during the ancient period. However, as Xiaofei Tian discusses, works of Masters' Literature became less and less common in the early medieval period; meanwhile, the authored literary collection gradually became the most prestigious means to showcase literary talent.[34]

Without examining these areas and contexts in greater depth, however, we may observe that authorial ascription profoundly shapes the way poems are grouped and transmitted, and thus the way they are read.[35] For example, single anonymous poems establish their speaker and

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[32] Ruan Ji is also well-known for his eccentric and iconoclastic behavior; many anecdotes about him survive in histories and other texts, and he is also remembered as one of the "Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove" 竹林七賢, a group of third-century writers and musicians who are said to have spent time drinking and philosophizing together. While many of these accounts survive from later periods and are probably exaggerated or fictional, it seems likely that some genuine historical critique of conventional ritualism and behavior lies at the root of these anecdotal traditions.

[33] Works in this genre were typically named after the writer or "master" with whom they are associated; many such texts, especially those from the ancient period, were not written by the "master" himself but rather collected from the notes and recollections of disciples.

[34] See in particular Tian, "Twilight of the Masters: Masters Literature (*zishu*) in Early Medieval China" (*JAOS* 126, 2006): 465-487 and also Tian, "Collection *ji* (集)" in *The Oxford Handbook of Classical Chinese Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), ed. Wiebke Denecke, Wai-Yee Li, and Xiaofei Tian.

[35] Of course, mere ascription of authorship did not guarantee accuracy of ascription—but it did structure the way in which a given poem would be read. See Owen, *The Making*, Chapter 1.

occasion within a relatively short space. In contrast, poems in a series by one author, or even a group of poems ascribed to the same author, often ask to be read intertextually; these poems will be understood in the context of the larger set—and perhaps in light of biographical information or lore about the poet. Over time, the practice of authorship may also influence how poets write: at some point authors compose with the expectation that readers will look at multiple of their poems together, either in selections or in volumes of collected works.

The *Yonghuai* collection is an early and unusual example of how the organization of poems into an authored collection can shape and contribute to their overall meaning and impact. As I have discussed, we cannot be sure to whom to attribute specific features of the *Yonghuai* collection, but we can nonetheless make inferences from the versions that have been transmitted. In particular, we can consider how patterns that appear throughout the collection function as part of its representational (or self-representational) strategy.

Traversing the Material and Immaterial Realms

Like many early medieval poems, Ruan Ji's often present the speaker moving through linked series of actions and activities. Rather than focus on a single activity and location, a poem of this type tends to include multiple actions and, sometimes, multiple locations. However, the kinds of actions the speaker engages in vary widely. Here it is useful to distinguish between physical actions—movement in the material world, where the speaker is assumed to be physically; and mental actions. By mental actions I indicate sections of the poem that do not describe the physical location of the poet or his movements in space; this category includes philosophical rumination and questioning, allusion to historical figures, quotations from classics, and generalized laments.

Poems that consist primarily of mental actions often contain little or no physical setting. Some posit no setting at all, while others, such as *Yonghuai* No. 65, include one whose relation to the speaker remains obscure:[36]

有悲則有情	Whoever has sorrow has feelings,
無悲亦無思	sorrow's absence is likewise absence of longing.
苟非嬰網罟	So long as we are not caught up in a net,
何必萬里畿	why need one have a region of ten thousand leagues?
翔風拂重霄	The whirlwind brushes the upper tiers of cloud,
慶雲招所晞	auspicious vapors invite that which burns them away.
灰心寄枯宅	When the heart, turned to ash, lodges in a withered dwelling,
曷顧人間姿	why should we look back to the charms of the human realm?
始得忘我難	But I have just discovered the difficulties of forgetting self,
焉知嘿自遺	how can I understand silent self-abandonment?[37]

Like so many of the *Yonghuai* poems, this one gestures toward the circumstances that give rise to its composition without divulging the specifics of those circumstances. However, while many poems show the speaker moving between physical settings, or present another figure in a setting, the ruminations in this poem are especially abstract. In this poem and others, Ruan Ji treats Daoist themes in a style that draws on poetry about immortality.[38] In particular, these poems are distinguished by their lack of a clear physical setting along with the preponderance of philosophical and theoretical content.[39]

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[36] Lu Qinli, *Wei shi*, 10.508. Translation adapted from Owen, *The Poetry of Ruan Ji*, 113.

[37] An alternate translation of the final two lines would read: "At last I begin to be able to make my family forget me / but how can I leave my self behind?" This translation hinges on the phrase *wang wo* 忘我: while it is usually translated as "forgetting the self," the following passage of Zhuangzi 莊子 would suggest the alternate translation: "To forget parents is easy; to make parents to forget you is hard. To make parents forget you is easy; to forget the whole world is hard" 忘親易，使親忘我難；使親忘我易，兼忘天下難 (Guo Qingfan 郭慶藩, ed., *Zhuangzi jishi* 莊子集釋 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1995), 5.14.498–99). Translation from Watson, *The Complete Works of Zhuangzi* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 109.

[38] Owen discusses these poems in *The Making*, 139–41.

[39] Ruan Ji's use of Daoist content is also what causes his collection to be regarded as a model and precursor for the writing *xuanyan* 玄言 poetry, which became popular in the Eastern Jin (317–420).

The first line suggests, obliquely, that the speaker is feeling "sorrow" 悲. However, "sorrow" is presented as an item in an abstract discourse rather than as the speaker's own embodied emotion. This uncertainty is not alleviated until the penultimate line, when the speaker admits that he has "just discovered the difficulties of forgetting self" 始得忘我難—finally asserting that some personal and temporal reality does underlie his philosophizing. This comment suggests that we read the poem as a series of meditations in response to a particular situation, but as usual, it omits the situation itself.

Before the final couplet, the speaker's thoughts take the form of general meditations—considerations that might apply, theoretically, to any person. These thoughts turn principally on the question of which realm a person ought to dwell in: the "human realm" 人間 or a transcendent space of "forgetting self" 忘我. Acceding to the wisdom of Lao-Zhuang discourse, the speaker acknowledges that the transcendent realm surely must be superior. However, the poem's final turn suggests that the speaker cannot, after all, accept this wisdom and transcend the specific worldly conditions to which he is accustomed.

The subject of physical space appears throughout the poem. In contrast to the worldly domain of "ten thousand leagues" 萬里畿 (4), the third, central couplet (5–6) presents a scene in which "The whirlwind brushes the upper tiers of cloud, / auspicious vapors invite that which burns them away" 翔風拂重霄, 慶雲招所晞. Despite its ethereality and its apparent disconnection from the speaker, this serves an important function as the most concretely evoked setting in the poem. Certainly, the speaker does not claim that he is present in the "whirlwind" scene, or even that he can see it. Rather, and in keeping with the tone of philosophical discourse, it appears to be a hypothetical illustration. Nonetheless, description of actual material interactions and transformations—wind "brushing" 拂 the air and vapors "inviting" 招 rays of

light—make this feel real rather than merely poetic. Here, the elements of this remote place seem to form their own non-human drama and point of reference at the center of the poem.

The following couplet (7–8) turns back to the human world: "When the heart, turned to ash, lodges in a withered dwelling, / why should we look back to the charms of the human realm?" 灰心寄枯宅, 曷顧人間姿. Unlike the "whirlwind" couplet, these lines do not evoke a realistic scene. Here, each of the central imagistic units combines physical and conceptual elements: the heart turned to "ash" 灰 is literally an "ash-heart" 灰心,[40] and the "withered dwelling-place" 枯宅 uses the "dwelling" 宅 to indicate the human body or soul in which the "heart" 心 dwells. These metaphors creates a sense of the heart and the body that is at once tangible and abstract; the heart and the body in which it resides can only be described with reference to material forms (the "ash" 灰 and the "dwelling" 宅)—but these are not made realistic or placed in any particular setting. In contrast, the image of wind and vapors in the second couplet remains lodged in the reader's mind as a spatialized scene.

In the absence of another concrete setting, the images of the swirling wind and the vapors assume an eerie importance; they may even become for the reader, through association, the setting of the speaker's mental actions. If this is so, it is because the speaker seems to project himself—or his imagination—into this remote place. The speaker's odd relation to this place, and his evocation of it, force us to consider whether it is part of the tangible, material world, or rather of a spiritual world beyond "the charms of the human realm" 人間姿. Although it offers

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[40] This expression derives from Zhuangzi: "Can you really make the body like a withered tree and the mind like dead ashes? The man leaning on the armrest now is not the one who leaned on it before!" 形固可使如槁木，而心固可使如死灰乎? 今之隱机者，非昔之隱机者也 (*Zhuangzi jishi*, 1.2.43). Translation from Watson, *The Complete Works of Zhuangzi*, 7.

no resolution, the structure of the poem forces the reader to think through the intricacies of such questions.

The poem's closing lines stage the predicament of both speaker and reader. The action of "silent self-abandonment" 嘿自遺 parallels "looking back to the charms of the human realm" 曷顧人間姿 in the previous couplet. In both scenarios, the speaker presents *himself* (for lack of a better word) as an entity at a certain distance from the human realm in general and from his own self. But this distance is not absolute—he is still near enough to the human world to observe "the charms of the human realm" and feel some ambiguous attachment to his old "self" 自.

Thus, is not only a poem without a clear setting, but also one in which ambiguity about setting becomes a central preoccupation. The poem dramatizes the question of where the speaker is located: of what physical, metaphysical, and mental entities constitute him, and of whether these are external to or internal to himself. In this sense, the poem incorporates and responds to complex spiritual and philosophical questions while also remaining vitally a poem.[41]

As I have mentioned, only some of the *Yonghuai* poems fail to specify a single concrete physical setting in which we might imagine the poet. However, the presence of such poems within the collection broadens the reader's sense of the ambiguous relation between the material and immaterial realms thematized throughout. The variation between these poems contributes to the collection's creation of a new kind of poetic speaker. Like a real person, he moves through many contexts—not just physical, but also social, political, and spiritual. As we have seen, the structure of early medieval poetry lends itself to this proliferation of contexts because it presents the poetic speaker passing through multiple actions or scenarios in a single poem. However,

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[41] Of course, this statement involves a good deal of subjective judgment. Here, the subjective judgment is not only mine, but also that of the fifth- and sixth-century compilers who disliked (and failed to preserve) much of *xuanyan* verse while at the same time preserving and continuing to value Ruan Ji's poetry.

Ruan Ji's collection radically expands this form by replicating it on a larger scale: the speaker moves through scenarios not only within individual poems, but also *between* poems. Of course, the speaker's movement between poems is not stable or linear; instead, this movement is determined by the path that the reader takes and how the reader is guided by important editorial decisions.

The Rhythm of Pausing and Moving Forward

When considering the degree of variation in the *Yonghuai* poems, we might ask whether the reader feels that there may be one poetic speaker in the collection, or eighty-two, or some number in between. The ascription of authorship and the classical stipulation that the poet is the speaker of the poem precondition readers to look for one poetic speaker—one who they can identify with the figure of Ruan Ji. However, the process of moving from one short poem to the next will challenge the reader's sense of continuity; she may struggle to identify the speaker of each new poem with the "Ruan Ji" she has thus far imagined, stretching that conception to include new subjects, physical scenes, and intellectual contexts. In this sense, the long poetic collection makes different demands on the reader than a single long poem and also offers a different kind of reading experience.[42]

Certain stylistic features shape the reader's perception of continuity between the *Yonghuai* poems. Foremost among these are representations of the speaker's alternating physical actions of moving and pausing. This rhythm of starting and stopping is a dominant mechanism of

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[42] The apparent consistency of one speaker throughout Ruan Ji's *Yonghuai* collection contrasts with the multiplicity of voices in certain other early collections of poetry; for example, Cao Zhi's collection of poetry contains poems in the voices of different speakers. Observing these differences between surviving collections enables us to speculate about the development of different fashions and modes of writing during this period, even if we cannot have a more comprehensive view.

continuity within individual poems and throughout the collection; it is a rhythm of moving, pausing to think, asking a question, observing something, recalling a past historical figure, and moving again. As long as this pattern continues, the reader still feels connected to the speaker, even if she now and then finds herself in the midst of a poem that makes no reference to the speaker at all.[43]

Moving and pausing offer variation and relief from the mental actions of the speaker while also staging contexts in which mental actions become more meaningful. The speaker's movements and pauses are described explicitly in *Yonghuai* No. 46:[44]

獨坐空堂上	I sat alone in the empty hall,
誰可與歡者	who would join me in pleasure?
出門臨永路	I went out the gate and looked out on the long road
不見行車馬	and saw no carriages or horses passing.
登高望九州	I climbed a height and gazed at the Nine Regions,
悠悠分曠野	I made out the broad wilderness stretching on and on.
孤鳥西北飛	A lone bird flew to the northwest,
離獸東南下	a stray animal came down to the southeast.
日暮思親友	At sunset I thought on friends and kin,
晤言用自寫	by talking face to face I would express myself.

The opening of this poem emphasizes the feeling of aloneness by overlaying the emotional and physical senses of the words "alone" 獨 and "empty" 空. The initial thematization of aloneness, both emotional and spatial, is underscored by the second line: "who would join me in pleasure?" 誰可與歡者. This doubled emptiness—the poet's aloneness (emotional and spatial) and the hall's emptiness (spatial)—rapidly establishes a claustrophobic mirroring of inner and outer states in the poem.

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[43] Of course, Ruan Ji created this style in relation to extant traditions, not in a vacuum; in order to understand his divergences from previous poetry we must consistently compare his poems with anonymous poems and works by other authors.

[44] Lu Qinli, *Wei shi*, 10.500. Translation adapted from Owen, *The Poetry of Ruan Ji*, 87.

As if motivated to break out of his aloneness and find someone with whom to share "pleasure" 歡 (or intimate friendship, as the variant *qin* 親 would indicate), the speaker changes his location in the second couplet. Here, again, the possibility of social connection is not fulfilled, and the speaker remains alone even after going "out the gate" 出門. In the third couplet, the speaker moves yet again: he "climbs the heights" 登高, an action that requires more effort than walking "out the gate" 出門 and certainly more than sitting in the hall. But when he gazes out at the land of the "Nine Regions" 九州, instead of seeing populated areas or towns, he sees only "wilderness" 曠野.

The fourth couplet breaks with the established pattern whereby each couplet begins with the speaker's movement or action. Here, we find instead the movement of a bird that "fl[ies] to the northwest" 西北飛. Significantly, the phrase "lone bird" 孤鳥 echoes the phrase "sat alone" in the first line of the poem. The parallelism suggests that the bird may be loosely a figure for the speaker; as if extending the speaker's gaze, the bird seems to fly in search of companionship, carrying the burden of aloneness across the landscape.

If the "lone bird" and the "stray animal" 離獸 seem to echo and elaborate on the first line's image of the speaker "sitting alone," the final couplet might be read in relation to the poem's second line, "who would join me in pleasure?" This question introduces the possibility of an encounter with another person but leaves it dangling and unsatisfied. The mention of "sunset" 日暮 suggests that the speaker may still be standing on the hill that he climbs to earlier in the poem, and that the bird in the intervening couplet may indeed have been a figure for himself. Addressing us from this position, the speaker returns to the subject of human emotions and closes the poem with the poem's most concrete evocation of a human interaction: he "th[inks] on

friends and kin" 思親友 and imagines how "by talking face to face I would express myself" 晤言用自寫. Here the speaker allows himself to imagine a state that is the opposite of loneliness: no longer isolated, he imagines that communication and companionship would enable him to "express" 寫 himself—a verb that carries the particular sense of "to pour out" and "to divulge."

But rather than satisfy its speaker's deep desire to communicate, the poem presents a kind of tragic farce in miniature; while the speaker redoubles his efforts to escape his isolation, he meets with failure again and again. The alternation of physical actions and mental actions creates a subtle dramatic narrative; the reader watches the evolving story of the speaker's actions while also tracing the development and gradual disappointment of his expectations. In this process, the reader comes to expect the alternation between movement and pause—or movement and mental reflection—that is so characteristic of the *Yonghuai* poems.

Part of what makes *Yonghuai* No. 46 so memorable is that it presents at least three separate physical settings, as well as emotional states that correspond with each of these settings. Moreover, the poem shows us how these emotions shift in response to the situations and spaces that are described. Ultimately, while the speaker easily escapes the physical space of the "hall" 堂, the poem as a whole reinforces the sense that he is not able to escape the feeling of isolation that haunts him.

However, as I have mentioned, many poems in the *Yonghuai* collection are made up of primarily mental actions. If these can be said to maintain a rhythm of pausing and moving forward, it is with limited use of physical actions and physical settings. Poems such as *Yonghuai* No. 65, above, constitute an example of this type. These poems tend to be abstract and philosophical; rather than take up a traditional theme such as traveling or feasting, they seem to occupy a more vague territory that one might call simply ruminating, without any particular

implied setting or context of activity. In these poems movement and pausing are often replaced with asking a question, expressing uncertainty, and expressing a wish. One of the most frequent wishes is to "roam" (*xiaoyao* 逍遙 or *you* 遊)—an activity associated with Daoism and the search for immortality, and which sometimes included supernatural dimensions. In these poems, the wish to travel provokes us to share in the speaker's fantasy of liberating motion and release from binding conditions, even though this motion is not actually happening in the poem.

Speaking generally, we might also note that Ruan Ji's more philosophical and abstract poems seem to be anthologized less. For example, the poems included in *Wen xuan* are more concrete. This may be overdetermined; on the one hand, the more philosophical *Yonghuai* poems may have been deprioritized because the taste of fifth- and sixth century compilers had turned against philosophical verse.[45] On the other hand, it is possible that the more concrete *Yonghuai* poems had special appeal for the editors of *Wen xuan* because they more directly represent their speaker and illustrate the title "Singing of My Cares."

Poems that represent the speaker stabilize our sense of him as a character and dramatize our sense of his predicament. By relying on more conventional tools, such as depiction of scene and character, these poems create the context in which less conventional poems (that is, more philosophical poems, and poems on topics other than the speaker) can be read and interpreted. In other words, these poems offer an interpretive structure in which individual poems, especially the more "abstract" ones, can be connected to a larger structure of meaning.[46] Meanwhile, the "abstract" poems enable the collection to illustrate the imaginative and the supernatural realms

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[45] Ruan Ji's treatment of "roaming" and related topics is seen as laying the foundation for *xuanyan* 玄言 poetry, a style of poetry defined by its use of philosophical discourse. Though some *xuanyan* poetry survives, much of it was lost, and the majority of scholars and critics came to regard it in a negative light until very recently.

[46] Further, a predominantly abstract poem might be *more* challenging and puzzling when read in a smaller grouping––such as the selection of poems in *Wen xuan*—than when read in the collection as a whole.

while at the same time compartmentalizing this area, maintaining the collection's implied

orientation toward the "real world."[47]

<u>Indirect Representation</u>

Although some of the *Yonghuai* poems are more frequently quoted and anthologized than others,

it would be difficult to maintain that these poems are more representative of the *Yonghuai*

collection.[48] Given our limited knowledge of the text's early history, it is more feasible to regard

text's meaning as a product of its many components—even if we cannot know which of these

components are "original." This means that although the present chapter privileges poems that

explicitly represent their speaker, those poems that do not represent the speaker directly must be

considered of equal importance to the collection as a whole. Here, I address some of the ways

that such poems can be understood as contributing to the speaker's self-representation.

Many of the *Yonghuai* poems that mention figures from myth and history actually focus

on these figures, making little or no reference to their speaker. These poems have a particular

effect on the collection, as the way they are dispersed within it means that the reader often turns

from a poem about the poetic speaker to a poem about another figure. This jump often gives the

impression that the reader is seeing what the speaker is thinking about or entering into one of his

intense mental reveries.

As I have indicated, the *Yonghuai* poems generally show the speaker's thoughts in greater

detail than his surroundings. That is to say, while the speaker's real-world circumstances remain

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[47] Of course, whether the collection is after all oriented towards the "real world" is somewhat open to debate; clearly, the dominance of the political interpretation has created bias in favor of this view.

[48] In any case, an argument of this type would have to be highly specific, made on the basis of particular historical receptions of the text. I do briefly discuss such arguments when addressing the importance of the set of poems included in *Wen xuan*, and in the final section of the chapter, which focuses on Ruan Ji's four-syllable-line poems.

obscure, he does include specific information—such as personal names, place names, and other details—when he discusses figures from myth and history. This exacerbates the reader's feeling of being drawn into the space of the speaker's thoughts. Therefore, even if we don't necessarily know *why* the speaker is pondering a particular story or legend in a poem, we often find that it appears vividly before us, while the speaker's surroundings remain blurry and obscured. This representational contrast contributes to the peculiar air of mystery surrounding the speaker; we are more immediately connected to him than to the characters he tells us about, but the content he shows to us in greatest detail is not specifically about him at all.

Of course, there is a great deal of variety within the group of poems that I refer to here. Some treat subjects other than the speaker until the final couplet, where the speaker at last turns back to the subject of himself; others, such as *Yonghuai* No. 62, combine self-reference and self-representation with discussion of other figures. Although *Yonghuai* No. 62 begins with a loose physical and seasonal setting, I consider it in the context of indirect representation because what is stated directly about the speaker is extremely vague, especially in comparison with what is shown indirectly. Therefore, through the process of reading, the reader relies on indirect representation to refine an otherwise blurry picture of the poem's speaker:[49]

	朝陽不再盛	Dawn light does not reach fullness a second time,
	白日忽西幽	the bright sun suddenly hides away in the west.
	去此若俯仰	It leaves this place as if in the nod of a head,
	如何似九秋	how is it that it's already autumn's end?
5	人生若塵露	Human life is like dust and dew,
	天道邈悠悠	Heaven's Way goes on and on forever.
	齊景升丘山	When Duke Jing of Qi climbed that mountain,
	涕泗紛交流	his tears flowed down in abundance.
	孔聖臨長川	The Sage Confucius stood by the long river,
10	惜逝忽若浮	and regretted things passing on, suddenly as if adrift.
	去者余不及	I will never reach those who are gone,

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[49] Lu Qinli, *Wei shi*, 10.503. Translation adapted from Owen, *The Poetry of Ruan Ji*, 109.

	來者吾不留	and I will not stay for those to come.
	願登太華山	I wish I could climb Mount Taihua,
	上與松子遊	and roam above with Red Pine.
15	漁父知世患	The Fisherman understood the world's ills,
	乘流泛輕舟	riding on the current in his light boat.

The first three couplets combine perceptions of sunlight and the seasons (couplets one and two) with dramatic statements about human life's brevity in the face of heaven's permanence (couplet three). We cannot place the speaker of this section in a specific location; although he seems to be looking at the sky, it is not possible that it is both morning and evening at once. Thus, while we can assume that the speaker truly feels the coming of autumn (the subject of the second couplet), the references in the first couplet seem highly abstract or generalized.

The first concrete situations in the poem are allusions. Each of the two figures, Duke Jing of Qi 齊景 and Confucius, expresses emotion; the first with a visible flood of tears (8), and the second with "regret" 惜 (10). The imagery intensifies from one line to the next: tears "flow down in abundance" 紛交流 (8), crossing Duke Jing of Qi's face—but these streams appear in a much larger scale when Confucius watches the waters of a full-sized "long river" 長川 (9) passing him by.

These figures and their affects are still fresh in our minds when we turn to the following couplet, where the speaker considers his own actions. When the speaker turns to himself in this poem it is to say what he cannot do, rather than what he can: "I will never reach those who are gone, / and I will not stay for those to come" 去者余不及, 來者吾不留 (11–12). This disavowal forms the emotional core of the poem, and alludes to emotions that the speaker does not or cannot express directly. Such a construction forces us to imagine the process he has undergone in order to reach this resigned admission of his isolation from those he wants deeply to connect to.

The poem concludes with a subtle shift in direction. The closing couplets reiterate ideas similar to those already in play in the poem, but suggest a gentler, Daoism-inflected response to the harshness of time. As if exhausted by his personal, though limited, disclosure, the speaker turns to his hopeful wish to "climb Mount Taihua, / and roam above with Red Pine" 登太華山, 上與松子遊 (13–14). The transition away from focus on 'himself' and back toward other figures is completed in the final couplet, which turns to the legendary figure of the "Fisherman" 漁父.

Most closely associated with the *Chu ci* poem "The Fisherman" 漁父, the Fisherman figure is alluded to frequently in subsequent literature as a spokesperson of Daoist ideals. Here, the speaker selects a character who (like the immortal "Red Pine" 松子) can transcend the mortal limitations that apply to himself and even, to a lesser extent, to Duke Jing of Qi and Confucius. The Fisherman allows for a provisional resolution in the poem, offering the reader a way to close the gap between man's brief life and the eternal way of heaven that was opened in the third couplet.

The point in a poem in which the poet chooses to make an allusion can be as revealing as the choice of allusion itself. Ruan Ji's references to legendary figures establish foils to the poet's own actions, at once implying similarity and difference. Often the precise contours of similarity and difference are not spelled out precisely in the poem. For example, the lamentations of the figures he presents in the poem above highlight the fact that the speaker himself does not lament, and in a way also suggest that he does. In this manner, allusions assert relations between characters and situations but leave it to the reader to imagine the precise content of those relations. This use of allusion enables the poet to point towards truths that perhaps could not be articulated or approached head-on, or whose resonance might be diminished by being

represented directly. In this way, the poet's omission of "real world" situations and his restless variation in describing the speaker's inner world go hand in hand.

Characteristic Uncertainty: The Enigma of Ruan Ji's Poetic Speaker

The phrase "Singing of My Cares" 詠懷 is an analogue for the classical definition of poetry: poetry "articulates the intention" 言志. Thus, even before we begin reading the collection's first poem, its title has evoked this canonical model.[50] However, while the rhetoric of the title aligns itself with tradition, the form of the *Yonghuai* collection challenges and modifies this tradition.

The classical theory of poetry dictates that a poem arises when some incitement in the world provokes a response in the poet. This model is concerned with the relation between the writer, the poem, and the world; it emerges from a world in which poets were anonymous, and it does not consider what happens if a particular writer is to continue writing additional poems after the first one.[51] However, with the rise of authorship, new sets of poems are generated, as it were, spontaneously, as poems attributed to the same author are grouped together. Whether written in response to one event or multiple events, poems by the same author are—theoretically at least—associated in a group and, perhaps, bound for inclusion in that author's collected works.

Working within this new literary context, writers in the early medieval period begin experimenting with different ways of referring to (or omitting) the "inciting occasion" of their poems. These experiments relate to the appearance and development of "occasional" poetry during the late Han dynasty and afterward. For example, Chapter 2 of this dissertation considers

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[50] Of course, as I discuss above, we cannot be sure that this title was Ruan Ji's own.

[51] Not only were authorial ascriptions uncommon in the ancient world, but the writing of poetry was not considered a vocation; rather, under the circumstances outlined by the classical theory of poetry, poems were written by ordinary people. Moreover, such poems were not understood as being written in a particular style.

how Tao Yuanming develops a variety of different occasional framing strategies, thereby

expanding possibilities of occasional poetry. In contrast, while Ruan Ji's *Yonghuai* poems are

numerous, they are similar to each other in that none of them specify a highly particular, dated

time-and-place setting; they are all occasions of "singing of my cares," an activity that does not

correspond to any specified time or named place in the real world.

The collection's title allows that the speaker's "cares" may be singular or plural (that is,

in the original Chinese), and that these may be connected to one inciting event in the world or

many. This means that while the entire collection could be read as a response to a single

experience, we might instead read each poem as a response to a different event. Alternately—and

perhaps most plausibly—we might assume that there are multiple aggravating events but that

these somehow form, for the speaker, a unified set of "cares."[52] In any case, the *Yonghuai*

collection leaves these multiple possibilities unresolved, creating uncertainty and suspense. This

feature generates a wide variety of expressive possibilities that the writer exploits in the extended

format of the collection and the poems' many variations on its dominant themes and topics.

Meanwhile, though the reader entertains the likelihood that there may very well have

been a particular occasion that spurred the composition of a given *Yonghuai* poem, this

possibility is offset by the fact that from the second poem on, the collection as a whole is already

underway. This collection is—as its title declares—itself an occasion, an articulation or

"singing" of "cares," and this "singing" is sustained by the patterns described above: of pausing

and moving forward, and of questioning, ruminating, and manifesting uncertainty.

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[52] The longstanding political interpretation accords with this impression; that is, the political interpretation would regard Ruan Ji as responding to individual incidents as well as to the troubled political situation as a whole.

At times, when the speaker arrives at a moment of reflection, he describes or asserts uncertainty itself. As in the ending of *Yonghuai* No. 1, where the speaker declares his anxious state, these assertions have the effect of seeming candid while at the same time keeping the cause of anxiety or uncertainty out of view. In such instances the speaker tends to tell us that he is uncertain or that he does not know, or he demonstrates uncertainty and indecision with a physical action. These patterns enable to reader to know and recognize the speaker through his recurring attitudes while also creating and sustaining the speaker's veil of obscurity and evasiveness.

Yonghuai No. 2 is one of several poems in which the speaker demonstrates his uncertainty and indecision physically: [53]

誰言萬事囏	Who says everything is troublesome?—
逍遙可終生	one may spend all one's days roaming free.
臨堂翳華樹	Looking out from the hall, I am screened by flowering trees,
悠悠念無形	on and on, I brood on formlessness.
彷徨思親友	As I pace about, I think of kin and friends,
倏忽復至冥	and all of a sudden it is dark again.
寄言東飛鳥	To send word by the bird flying east
可用慰我情	would comfort how I feel.

This poem focuses on thinking—one might even say obsessive thinking. The first couplet presents the speaker reflecting on the conditions of life in the abstract. Countering the notion that "everything is troublesome" 萬事囏 (1), he asserts that "one may spend all one's days roaming free" 逍遙可終生 (2). However, the bravado and confidence of these lines seems to evaporate as the poem continues.

The second couplet presents the speaker in relation to a particular but ambiguous spatial configuration. Because the speaker is positioned "looking out from the hall" 臨堂翳華樹, we

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[53] Lu Qinli, *Wei shi*, 10.503. Translation by Owen, *The Poetry of Ruan Ji*, 27.

have the sense that he is indoors looking outward. But instead of taking in vistas, his gaze seems to be blocked or, more specifically, "screened" 翳 by "flowering trees"華樹 (3). The blockage that takes place in this line corresponds to a shift in mood that persists to the end of the poem. Whereas the speaker had been previously been confidant about "roaming free," he now becomes pensive and "brood[ing]" 念 (4). While the speaker continues to consider deep and remote space in this line, but now he is thinking about "formlessness" 無形 rather than about the activity of "roaming free" in the external world.

The final two couplets illustrate the speaker's sense of isolation. These lines contain a construction similar to that in the line of *Yonghuai* No. 46, "A lone bird flew to the northwest," 孤鳥西北飛 (above). Here, in *Yonghuai* No. 2, the speaker defines his relationship to the bird rather than just describing its flight. The poem thus ends on a note of compromise: while the speaker cannot "roam free" 逍遙—an ideal state associated most strongly with Zhuangzi—he imagines improving his situation in a less dramatic way, by using expression in "word[s]" 言 to "comfort" 慰 his strong feelings (7–8).

The image of "send[ing] word" evokes the sense of movement through expansive space that was present in the first half of the poem. However, the pensive, hypothetical way in which the speaker considers this option suggests that he may not actually do it.[54] Thus, while the speaker's assertive attitude in the opening couplet seemed to deny difficulty in general and any impediment to free movement in particular, these lines show that movement and action now seem difficult or impossible to him. The darkening of the visual field (6) echoes the feeling of

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[54] Or, even if he will communicate, the fact that he is spending time pondering this option indicates that it is not easy or automatic. This lack of ease in and of itself contradicts the attitude proposed in the poem's first couplet.

blockage established earlier and emphasizes the way in which the speaker is separated from "kin and friends" 親友 (5). Moreover, the final couplets show that succumbing to this sense of difficulty would result in the speaker's being isolated and cut off.

In other poems the speaker names his uncertainty more specifically. One of the collection's most dramatic exclamations of doubt comes at the ending of *Yonghuai* No. 70:[55]

	天網彌四野	The Net of Heaven extends over the wilderness-girt world,
	六翮掩不舒	a set of wings folded and unspread.
	隨波紛綸客	A tangled mass of travelers moving,
	汎汎若浮鳧	floating along like wild ducks.
5	生命無期度	Life has no measured span,
	朝夕有不虞	the unforeseen can happen from dawn to dusk
	列仙停脩齡	The Undying have halted their long years,
	養志在沖虛	they nourish their purposes in still void.
	飄颻雲日間	Wind-whirled between clouds and sun,
10	邈與世路殊	they are remote and distinct from the paths of the world.
	榮名非己寶	Glorious fame is not what they prize,
	聲色焉足娛	the senses' pleasures give them no delight.
	採藥無旋返	They picked herbs and never turned back,
	神仙志不符	but accounts of immortality do not tally up.
15	逼此良可惑	Pressed by this, I am truly unsure,
	令我久躊躇	it causes me to hesitate long.

This poem contains similarities to *Yonghuai* No. 65, above; the speakers of both poems are torn between the worldly, material realm and the possibility of an otherworldly, immaterial realm. But while *Yonghuai* No. 65 ends by articulating uncertainty in the form of a question ("how can I understand silent self-abandonment?" 焉知嘿自遺), the speaker of Yonghuai No. 70 emphatically states his uncertainty. Further, in addition to declaring himself "truly unsure" 良可惑, the speaker of *Yonghuai* No. 70 also manifests this state in the behavior of "hesitat[ion]" 躊躇.

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[55] Lu Qinli, *Wei shi*, 10.504. Translation by Owen, *The Poetry of Ruan Ji*, 119–121.

It may be counterintuitive to say that the speaker's manifestations of uncertainty make him especially present to the reader. However, in the context of the collection and its "obscure and evasive" qualities, expressions of uncertainty often seem vivid and real. In such moments, the speaker's expressive language and candor can make the reader to feel that she is hearing the words of a flesh and blood human being. At the same time, in avoiding reference to the outside world and its characters and events, the poems evoke a sense of the speaker's inner world, a place in which the passage of time becomes blurred and vague. In this context, certain actions undertaken by the speaker—such as his "hesitat[ing]" at the end of *Yonghuai* No. 70—seem to take place on an interior stage of the mind rather than in a setting in the real world.[56]

Internality, or, the Realm of "Cares"

Due to the poems' limited reference to the real or external world, we not only fail to see what experiences or events the speaker is responding to, but we also have very little sense of the speaker's position in relation to time, space, or other people. The omission of realistic surroundings and of specific inciting circumstances fosters the collection's depiction of an internal, subjective realm. Additionally, the effects of this style are exacerbated by the extension of the series through so *many* poems.

Here I hazard one observation about the order of the poems. Though we cannot know their original order, it would seem that many orderings would create similar effects; though some of the poems are more abstract than others, all are internal in the sense of failing to situate the speaker in any clear relation to other actual people. Some tell stories and discuss topics—

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[56] This effect may be fostered by the fact that in *Yonghuai* No. 70, no realistic "setting" has been given; as in *Yonghuai* No. 65, the most realistic scene presented in the poem is one that takes place in the sky, in a place specifically described as "remote and distinct from the paths of the world" 邈與世路殊.

somewhat relieving our sense of disorientation—but these poems equally do not tell us where the speaker is and what precisely he is doing there.

This strategy is in a sense the opposite of one I will discuss in Chapter 2: that of the occasional poem which specifies the date and circumstances of its composition in its title. Both of these strategies were deeply influential in the later poetic tradition: subsequent poets wrote *Yonghuai* poems after the style of Ruan Ji,[57] just as they also wrote poems that specified the date and occasion of composition in their titles. In this sense, it would seem that the rise of authorship creates new possibilities of specification at the same time that it provokes poets to refine divergent approaches to these possibilities.

Further, the *Yonghuai* poems demonstrate that the possibility of specification in authored poems does not translate into the automatic use and adoption of specificity, despite the appeal of the linear literary-historical narrative mentioned above. Li Shan's political interpretation, discussed at the start of this chapter, might imply that Ruan Ji would have included more specific circumstances in his poems if not for the climate of fear and censorship in which he lived. However, the actual style in which the poems are written is one that does not specify the speaker's circumstances—and it is this style that has been influential on the subsequent poetic tradition.

As we have seen, Ruan Ji's speaker is a generic one. But while the terms "generic" and "unspecified" might suggest a mode that makes readers feel distant from the speaker, we instead feel close to him. This sense of proximity is in large part the result of what we might refer to as an "interior" view of the speaker's mental world. Previously, I discussed how what we might call "interiority" can be possessed by "generic" speakers as well as specific speakers. We might

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[57] See Note 29, above.

recall that the "generic" speaker of "Nineteen Old Poems" IV reflects on his interior state in a variety of ways: first through finding himself in harmony with other guests at the feast, then through considering how someone might advance beyond the common lot of hardship and suffering. A similar principle is illustrated by the *Shijing* poem "Boat of Cypress" 柏舟, whose generic speaker asserts the reality and the importance of her emotions.

Although differing from Ruan Ji's poems in many respects, "Boat of Cypress" provides something of a precursor to the "obscure" style of Ruan Ji's *Yonghuai* poems in that it dramatizes the speaker's inner, subjective world, highlighting the speaker's feelings rather than focusing on the real-world occasion has provoked them:[58]

汎彼柏舟	That boat of cypress drifts along,
亦汎其流	it drifts upon the stream.
耿耿不寐	Restless am I, I cannot sleep,
如有隱憂	as though in torment and troubled.
微我無酒	Nor am I lacking wine
以敖以遊	to ease my mind and let me roam.
我心匪鑒	This heart of mine is no mirror,
不可以茹	it cannot take in all.
亦有兄弟	Yes, I do have brothers,
不可以據	but brothers will not be my stay.
薄言往愬	I went and told them of my grief
逢彼之怒	and met only with their rage.
我心匪石	This heart of mine is no stone;
不可轉也	you cannot turn it where you will.
我心匪席	This heart of mine is no mat;
不可卷也	I cannot roll it up within.
威儀棣棣	I have behaved with dignity,
不可選也	in this no man can fault me.
憂心悄悄	My heart is uneasy and restless,

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[58] *Mao shi zhushu* 毛詩注疏, 2.74a–75a. In Ruan Yuan 阮元 (1764–1849), ed., *Shisanjing zhushu* 十三經註疏 (Commentary and Subcommentary to the Thirteen Classics) (Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 1965). Stephen Owen's translation, *Anthology of Chinese Literature*, 47.

慍于羣小	I am reproached by little men.
覯閔既多	Many are the woes I've met,
受侮不少	and taken slights more than a few.
靜言思之	I think on it in the quiet,
寤辟有摽	and waking pound my breast.

日居月諸	Oh Sun! and you Moon!
胡迭而微	Why do you each grow dim in turn?
心之憂矣	These troubles of the heart
如匪澣衣	are like unwashed clothes.
靜言思之	I think on it in the quiet,
不能奮飛	I cannot spread wings and fly away.

Here, the poem's form directs our attention to the speaker's inner emotional world. In particular, the speaker's discussion of her "heart" 心 in the first lines of each of the middle three stanzas ensures that her feelings take center stage. Each of these lines present the heart in terms of a different metaphor; additionally, the "mirror" 鑒, the "stone" 石, and the "mat" 席 also describe the environment in which the speaker lives. Along with the "unwashed clothes" 澣衣 in the final stanza, these everyday items evoke a sense of the speaker as a thoughtful person who fashions her understanding in terms of the domestic world with which she is familiar. While alluding to the "external" world, these items at the same time become features of the "internal" environment that the poem creates.

Of course, "Boat of Cypress" is an anonymous poem, rather than a poem in an authored collection, and it does contain explicit hints as to what the speaker's "real-world" situation must be.[59] Nonetheless, some of the features "Boat of Cypress" uses to depict and dramatize subjective interiority also appear in Ruan Ji's *Yonghuai* poems. For example, in the final lines,

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[59] In addition to indicating that the speaker is a woman, the first stanza also tells us that she has fought with her brothers, who are in a "rage" 怒 with her and certainly unsympathetic to her feelings. Witnessing this account of family conflict, we may surmise, along with most commentators, that the speaker has been forced to marry against her will.

the speaker "think[s] on [her situation] in the quiet" 靜言思之. This construction underscores the extent to which she takes her emotional reality seriously; here the world of thought and emotion appear as a kind of alternative time to the real world. We see that the speaker's emotional dilemma is constantly alive: it has become her reality, for as she says, she "cannot spread wings and fly away" 不能奮飛. With these techniques, the speaker of "Boat of Cypress" shows us how her inner world has become vivid, real, and all-encompassing to her.

In Ruan Ji's *Yonghuai* collection, the vast canvas of eighty-two poems enables him to create many variations based on the use of similar elements. For example, *Yonghuai* No. 3 and No 18 both seem to contrast the "external" and the "internal" world, though they arrange this contrast in different ways. We might say that *Yonghuai* No. 3 is organized into two sections, the first treating the external world and the second treating the internal world:[60]

嘉時在今辰	The finest time is this morning now,
零雨灑塵埃	with falling rain sprinkling down the dust.
臨路望所思	By the road I gaze toward the one I long for,
日夕復不來	who by evening still has not come.
人情有感慨	Human feelings can be moved to torment,
蕩漾焉能排	how can we smooth out this undulation?
揮涕懷哀傷	Weeping tears, I harbor misery and pain,
辛酸誰語哉	to whom can I speak this bitterness?

The opening couplets provide a realistic, if not highly specific, setting: a "road" 路 and "falling rain" 零雨. This setting is perceived by the speaker, who is waiting throughout the day for the "one I long for" 所思; the lines indicate that the speaker is static, hopeful though perhaps losing hope as the "morning" 辰 gradually turns into "evening" 夕.

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[60] Lu Qinli, *Wei shi*, 10.503–504. Translation adapted from Owen, *The Poetry of Ruan Ji*, 29.

The poem's second section describes the more turbulent internal world of personal feeling. The speaker evokes chaotic, billowing natural forms when he asks: "Human feelings can be moved to torment, / how can we smooth out this undulation?" 人情有感慨, 蕩漾焉能排. These lines suggest that "human feeling" 人情 can move or "undulate" uncontrollably; to "smooth out" 排 or regulate such forces may not be possible. In the final couplet, the speaker's tears seems to present an expression or outburst of his inner emotional "undulation" 蕩漾. At the same time, though, he says that he "harbor[s] misery and pain" 懷哀傷, indicating that he keeps these feelings constrained inside himself. This sense of holding back is reinforced in the final line, where the speaker asks, "to whom can I speak this bitterness?" 辛酸誰語哉. As so often in the collection, the speaker shares certain elements of his predicament with us while at the same time suggesting that he may be holding back much more.

Like the speaker of "Boat of Cypress," Ruan Ji's speaker is driven into a world of internal grief after experiencing disappointment. For the speakers of each of these poems, the internal world has become the primary or dominant reality, and they cannot find ways to reconcile the inner world with the outer one. The speaker of "Boat of Cypress" appears to seek reconciliation when she expresses herself to her brothers, but this only incites their "rage" 怒. And when Ruan Ji's speaker asks "to whom can I speak this bitterness?" the question itself suggests the extent to which there is no one with whom he can communicate.

In *Yonghuai* No. 18, the speaker shifts his attention back and forth between the internal and external realms, rather than treating one and then the other:[61]

開秋兆涼氣   Autumn's onset begins the cool air,

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[61] Lu Qinli, *Wei shi*, 10.499. Translation adapted from Owen, *The Poetry of Ruan Ji*, 49–51.

蟋蟀鳴床帷	crickets sing by my bed curtain.[62]
感物懷殷憂	Moved by these things, I feel great cares,
悄悄令心悲	filled with distress, it causes my heart sorrow.
多言焉所告	Much to say, but where to vent it?
繁辭將訴誰	fulsome phrases, but to whom to complain?
微風吹羅袂	A light breeze blows on gossamer sleeves,
明月耀清暉	the bright moon shines with clear glow.
晨雞鳴高樹	When the morning rooster sings high in the trees,
命駕起旋歸	I will order my carriage to set off and go home.

Like *Yonghuai* No. 46 (beginning "I sit alone in my empty hall" 獨坐空堂上), this poem uses the speaker's stillness and motion to represent the speaker's states of feeling trapped and of attempting to escape being trapped. However, while in *Yonghuai* No. 46 the speaker's motions begin in the second couplet of the poem, the speaker of *Yonghuai* No. 14 appears to be relatively still until the poem's final line, when he declares his intention to "set off and go home" 起旋歸.

Before the speaker "order[s] [his] carriage" 命駕 in the final line, the poem presents him in terms of his being influenced and acted upon by the outside world. This cycle begins with the poem's second couplet, in which the speaker declares that he is "moved by […] things" 感物 in such a way that he "feel[s] great cares" 懷殷憂 well up within himself. These "things" 物 appear to be the external elements of the world mentioned in the previous couplet: the "cool air" 涼氣 and the "crickets sing[ing]" 蟋蟀, both features associated with the "autumn" 秋. Rather than look back to the elements that provoke his feelings, the speaker looks within in the third couplet, describing the overflow of emotion in his internal world. Like the speakers discussed above, this one despairs of being able to give expression to what he feels. In particular, he describes an

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[62] "Crickets" reinforce the sense of season and evoke the *Shijing* poem "Seventh Month" ("Qi yue" 七月): "In the ninth month, crickets enter the door; in the tenth month, [they] get underneath my bed" 九月在戶，十月蟋蟀，入我牀下.

excess of language within himself: he has "much to say" 多言 and also "fulsome phrases" 繁辭. Here, as in *Yonghuai* No. 18, the disorderliness and multiplicity of the internal is part of what makes it impossible to externalize.

Despairing of language and of the possibilities of expression, the speaker turns his attention outward a second time. As in the first couplet, he once again notices and is moved by elements of the outside world. Here, the "light breeze" 微風 echoes the "cool air" mentioned in the opening line, and the cry of the cock echoes the earlier singing of the crickets. However, this scene is described more fully than the earlier one; now the wind "blows on gossamer sleeves" 吹羅袂 and a "bright moon shines" 明月耀. Finally, the speaker turns in a different direction in the closing couplet, announcing a resolution to "set off and go home" 起旋歸 the following day. While we don't know how the speaker arrives at this decision, or indeed if he will follow through on it, it nonetheless appears to signal a break with the passive and despairing attitudes exhibited earlier in the poem.

The poem's structure is characteristic of the *Yonghuai* poems in being ambiguous on a variety of levels. For example, while we can read the ending as a hopeful indication that the speaker overcomes his inertia and arrives at the point of decisive action, other readings are possible. Among these is the possibility that the speaker no longer wishes to face the inner turmoil inside himself and merely hopes that a change of location will cause some positive effects. And, in either case, whatever he does or does not do tomorrow, telling himself that he will take action in the future may simply be a way of seeking relief in the present, where he finds himself facing his worries in the middle of the night.

Of course, there is no need to choose among the many possible interpretations of this poem. I outline multiple scenarios simply to emphasize the way in which the poem participates

in larger patterns whereby the poems in the collection represent states of interiority and uncertainty. Here it is not the outcome that is important, but rather the process that the speaker goes through. Throughout the collection certain modes of representation—such as that of the speaker's physical actions and movements, on the one hand, and of his isolation within his internal world, on the other—are combined in a seemingly endless array of variations. Overall, this variety creates the impression that no larger, structural solution is available to treat the speaker internal sufferings; only intermediary options present themselves, such as staying put or changing location. At the same time, while the speaker remains more or less disconsolate, this variety contributes to the artistic success of the poems as each poem creates formal resolution in a slightly different way.

Loneliness, isolation, and the inadequacy of words to communicate are common topics in the early medieval poetic repertoire. Ruan Ji's explorations of these topics in the *Yonghuai* collection repeatedly dramatize the divide between the internal and the external world; and as we have seen, they also experiment with different ways of representing this divide. *Yonghuai* No. 33 provides a particularly vivid illustration:[63]

	一日復一夕	A morning and then an evening,
	一夕復一朝	an evening and then a dawn again.
	顏色改平常	My complexion changes from what it was,
	精神自損消	my spirit melts away into ruin.
5	胸中懷湯火	In my breast I hold boiling water and fire,
	變化故相招	transformations constantly instigate one another.
	萬事無窮極	The thousands of things that happen are endless,
	知謀苦不饒	our knowledge and plans are woefully inadequate.
	但恐須臾間	I fear only that in an instant
10	魂氣隨風飄	my soul will be whirled away in the wind.
	終身履薄冰	To the end of my days I tread on thin ice,
	誰知我心焦	who knows how my heart is scorched?

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[63] Lu Qinli, *Wei shi*, 10.503. Translation by Owen, *The Poetry of Ruan Ji*, 111.

First half of the poem shows how the speaker suffers the effects of time but is more vividly occupied by the endless "transformations" 變化 occurring "in [his] breast" 胸中. However, despite his seeming indifference to days passing, the speaker fears changes and transformations that could occur at any time, "in an instant" 須臾間.

Contrasting heat within and the ice outside, this poem's final two lines dramatize the relation between inner and outer realms in the speaker's life. This speaker suffers from a variety of causes: not only is his heart "on fire" 焦, but in addition, it seems that this experience causes him to become socially isolated and alone. No one "knows" 知 of his experience, and therefore, by implication, no one "knows" him. This predicament is encapsulated in layered metaphors: the speaker endures his "scorched" 焦 heart, the agony of "tread[ing] on thin ice" 履薄冰, and also the knowledge that his inner heat makes him especially likely to break through the ice.

The "fear" 恐 presented in the penultimate couplet presents an odd variation on a wish that appears frequently in the *Yonghuai* poems. That is, while this speaker is afraid that his "soul will be whirled away in the wind" 魂氣隨風飄, the speakers of other poems actually wish for and gladly experience almost that exact thing.[64] This variation suggests that it is the recurrent suggestion of being "whirled away" that is crucial to the poems, not the question of whether the speaker truly fears or wishes for this. In fact, the speaker sometimes longs for such a state and at other times fears it; he sometimes imagines such a state as the ultimate bliss or freedom, while at other times, as in this poem, he seems to imagine that state as even worse than the suffering he is familiar with already. These variations call our attention to the speaker's awareness that his link

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[64] Here I mean to indicate the similarity between being "whirled away in the wind" and the Daoism-inflected experience of flying through the air, expressed in poems including *Yonghuai* No. 40 and No. 57. Other poems express the desire to go off and "roam" in the closing couplet.

to his mortal life and material conditions are tenuous. He can imagine being released from these conditions in either a positive or a negative light; what he does not seem to imagine is having a more stable or enduring relation to his mortal life and his real material conditions.

Authenticity and Specificity: Ruan Ji's Four-Syllable-Line Poems

As we have seen, our reading of Ruan Ji's self-representation in the *Yonghuai* collection is destabilized by uncertainties about the text. Nonetheless, while we cannot read an "original" version of the text, awareness of these variables helps us to better understand what the "original" collection might have been. For this reason, I turn to one further area of uncertainty: the number of poems in the collection and the inclusion of poems in the four-syllable line.

Although the *Yonghuai* collection is often referred to as containing eighty-two poems, most modern editions also include three poems in four-syllable lines. This format was challenged, however, when ten additional four-syllable line poems attributed to Ruan Ji were published in 1983 in Lu Qinli's authoritative modern critical edition, *Xian Qin Han Wei Jin nanbeichao shi* (*Poetry of the Pre-Qin, Han, Wei, Jin, and Northern and Southern Dynasties*). Here ten newly rediscovered poems appear together with the three previously published four-syllable-line poems, creating a set of thirteen.[65]

Neither the external evidence nor the texts of the poems themselves provide conclusive proof of whether these poems were originally part of Ruan Ji's collection. It is widely accepted that some of Ruan Ji's collection was lost—and it is possible that the rediscovered poems, which appeared at some point after the seventeenth century, survived separately. Alternately, however,

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[65] These are preceded in Lu Qinli's text by a textual note by Huang Jie 黃節, who also published the thirteen four-syllable-line poems in *Ruan Bubing Yonghuai shizhu* 阮步兵詠懷詩注 in 1984.

the poems could be forgeries produced during a time when recovering and printing rare texts was in vogue.

Various premodern sources describe the collection as containing different numbers of poems. For example, while the *Jin shu* 晉書 (648 CE) speaks of "eighty-odd" 八十餘 *Yonghuai* poems in total[66]—a number which matches the eighty-two and eighty-five poem versions of the collection—a thirteenth-century source writes of a ninety-three poem version of the *Yonghuai* collection. This later source mentions thirteen four-syllable-line poems and eighty five-syllable-line poems.[67] Although some would regard this as evidence that the rediscovered four-syllable-line poems are genuine, this is not necessarily the case.[68] For example, it is possible that some of the four-syllable-line poems were not necessarily lost, but rather discarded on purpose because they were considered not genuine.

My purpose in discussing the four-syllable-line poems is not to evaluate the evidence of their authenticity, but rather to consider how these poems call attention to our basic preconceptions about the *Yonghuai* collection. For example, in his analysis of the four-syllable-line poems, Donald Holzman finds that they are far less "personal" than the five-syllable-line poems and suggests that if they were written by Ruan Ji, they must have been written when he was "very young."[69] On the one hand, Holzman identifies features of the five-syllable-line poems that are missing in the four-syllable-line ones: he writes that they are "nothing like the

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[66] This description is found in Fang Xuanliang 房玄齡, *Jin shu* 晉書 (Taipei: Dingwen shuju, Min guo 69 [1980]), 49.1360–61.

[67] This description is found in Chen Zhensun 陳振孫, *Zhi zhai shulu jieti* 直齋書錄解題, 19.1a.

[68] Donald Holzman observes that while Huang Jie appears to take for granted the authenticity of the thirteen tetrameter poems the historical record is ambiguous.

[69] Holzman, "On the Authenticity," 191. Holzman also cites the "almost purely Confucianist" philosophy of the four-syllable-line poems as evidence of their difference from the five-syllable-line poems, and possibly of their composition early in Ruan Ji's life (190).

pentameter poetry which is filled with hesitations, doubts, bitterness, and frustrations, and is

abstract and highly personal at the same time." But then he concludes this thought by writing,

"the pentameter poetry… can only be explained by Ruan Ji's biography, precisely, I believe,

because it is written 'from the heart.'"[70]

Here Holzman shifts into the language that has often been used to describe Ruan Ji's

poems. Rather than describe the formal features he has identified, Holzman reenters the circular

logic of biographical explanation: the poem must be by Ruan Ji because it *sounds like* Ruan Ji.

Following convention, Holzman evaluates authenticity by gauging the work's stylistic proximity

to the five-syllable-line poems, which are implicitly regarded as an ultimate expression of Ruan

Ji the empirical person. This would suggest that not only the four-syllable-line poems but also all

of Ruan Ji's other works (including his *fu* 賦 and *lun* 論) are somehow less quintessentially

"Ruan Ji."

Though we may expect a poem by Ruan Ji to contain a distinctive "Ruan Ji" tone, our

expectations can lead us astray. Usually, what we think of as a poet's distinctive voice is in part

formed by the tradition of the poetic form or genre that he is writing in. For example, as I discuss

in Chapter 4, Bao Zhao—like many other poets—writes in multiple distinct voices, each one

associated with a particular poetic genre. Looking at one of Ruan Ji's four-syllable-line poems,

we see that the question of its style and authorship is also a question of form—of how a four-

syllable-line poem inevitably sounds different from a five-syllable-line poem. Here I take as an

example one of the three four-syllable-line poems that were often included with the *Yonghuai*

collection during the modern period:[71]

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[70] Holzman, "On the Authenticity," 190–191.

[71] Lu Qinli, *Wei shi*, 10.493–94. Translation adapted from Owen, *The Poetry of Ruan Ji*, 141. See also Holzman, *Poetry and Politics*, 68–69.

	天地絪縕	Heaven and Earth have generative vapors,
	元精代序	the Primal Essence changes in its sequence.
	清陽曜靈	Clear and bright is the shining Numen,
	和風容與	the balmy air circulates leisurely.
5	明月映天	The bright moon shines in the sky,
	甘露被宇	sweet dew covers the world.
	蓊鬱高松	Thick and full is the tall pine,
	猗那長楚	ah, how plentiful the kiwi!
	草蟲哀鳴	Insects sing mournfully among the plants,
10	鶬鶊振羽	the oriole shakes its feathers.
	感時興思	Being stirred by the season gives rise to thoughts,
	企首延佇	on tiptoe I gaze for a long time.
	於赫帝朝	How awesome is our imperial court!
	伊衡作輔	Yi Yin serves as advisor.[72]
15	才非允文	My talents are not literary and cultured,
	器非經武	my abilities are not military.
	適彼沅湘	I will go off to the Yuan and Xiang,
	託分漁父	entrusting my fate to being the Fisherman.
	優哉游哉	Relaxed! Content![73]
20	爰居爰處	there I will lodge, there I will stay.[74]

In the first half of this poem, broad views of the heavens and the passage of time yield to observations of the world closer at hand—a movement similar to that of many *Yonghuai* poems. The second half of the poem also contains gestures comparable to those in the five-syllable-line *Yonghuai* poems; these include "being stirred" 感時, gazing "for a long time" 延佇,[75] and the desire to turn to a life modeled on the traditional role of the Fisherman. However, despite these similarities, the poem doesn't sound quite like the five-syllable-line *Yonghuai* poems.

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[72] Yi Yin 伊衡 was the chief advisor to 湯 Tang, the founder of the Shang dynasty (c. 1600–1046 BCE).

[73] This line appears in the *Shijing* poem "Cai shu" 采菽, which celebrates a visit of "princes" (*junzi* 君子) at court.

[74] This line appears in the *Shijing* poem "Ji gu" 擊鼓, which is spoken from the position of soldiers preparing to fight a difficult battle.

[75] The phrase "to stand for a long time" (*yanzhu* 延佇) does not appear elsewhere in the collection, but the character *yan* 延, "to prolong, delay, or protract," does appear many times.

Here we must reckon with the shaping influence of form. The pressure of the four-syllable-line is such that it will guide an author towards a particular style; two prominent features of this form are the brevity and constriction of its line and the fact that this shorter line alludes more directly to the ancient poetic tradition than the five-syllable-line. We see this in the way that the lines become less and less distinct from tradition as the poem reaches its conclusion. Throughout the poem, the four-syllable-line form seems to restrict the poet's ability to personalize the lines; however, it is of course difficult to characterize this quality. More to the point, in the final couplet the poet's style becomes completely impersonal to the extent that both lines are quotes from *Shijing* poems. Here, the poet's voice has ceded to the voice of tradition.

This poem is also longer than most of the *Yonghuai* poems, which range between six and eighteen lines. While the poem's lines are short, its gestures often seem doubled or protracted; for example, the first couplet introduces a broad, celestial scene that encompasses "Heaven and Earth"天地. However, the next meaningful shift does not arrive until the third couplet, which presents "moon" 明 and "dew" 露 (5–6), suggesting a nighttime scene. Meanwhile, the intermediate couplet seems to describe aspects of the celestial environment presented in the first lines without offering a significant shift in perspective. Similarly, the final couplet of the poem seems extend the ideas announced in the penultimate couplet, only using a different language (in this case, language borrowed from the *Shijing*). These are, admittedly, subjective observations, but they do suggest that this poem's style and progression differ from those of the five-syllable-line poems. However, it does not seem possible to indicate whether these features derive from its authorship or its form.

If we turn from the perspective of form towards that of content, we find additional grounds on which to contrast this poem with the five-syllable-line *Yonghuai* poems. The

speaker's sensitivity to the world around him, and in particular his sadness, are implied by the lines, "Insects sing mournfully among the plants, / the oriole shakes its feathers" 草蟲哀鳴, 鶗鴂 振羽 (9–10). Following this line, the speaker invokes his feelings explicitly, writing that "Being stirred by the season gives rise to thoughts" 感時興思 (11). While these lines would appear to match the sentiments of the *Yonghuai* poems in many respects, the lines that follow (13–16) seem to offer more of a narrative explanation or backstory than other poems in the collection.

I have described above how the *Yonghuai* speaker discusses his thoughts and emotions, dramatizing them while at the same time preventing the reader from seeing their content or understanding their particular worldly cause. The speaker of this poem seems to take a slightly different course, one that offers more explicit hints about what the speaker's troubles are. In particular, two couplets after the speaker's discussion of his "thoughts" (11) suggest the narrative of the exiled, loyal political advisor. That is, in praising the court (13), mentioning a famous ancient advisor (14), denigrating his own lack of talent (15–16), and finally declaring his intention to follow the model of the Fisherman (18), we find the suggestion that we should read the speaker according to this role type. Of course, certain elements of this self-presentation do occur elsewhere in the collection, in particular the expression of wanting to follow the Fisherman. But, I would suggest that this section nonetheless stands out from the patterns that appear elsewhere. For example, other poems in the collection that portray the speaker in the form of a conventional role type explicitly frame the role as a feature of the speaker's youth.[76]

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[76] The subject matter of *Yonghuai* No. 19 and No. 47 are especially relevant here because these poems explicitly treat the speaker's youthful cultural pursuits (No. 19) and military training (No. 47). The speaker of *Yonghuai* No. 19 writes, "in my aspirations I loved the Poems and Documents" 志尚好書詩; and No. 47 begins with the lines, "In my younger years I studied swordsmanship," 少年學擊刺. However, while both of these poems end with strong repudiations of the speaker's former ambitions, they do not suggest that the speaker *lacked* talent; in fact, they suggest that the speaker had a great deal of talent (especially in the case of swordsmanship), but that he regrets his course of action for other reasons.

The vocabulary used in this section may also contribute the way this poem seems to differentiate itself from the dominant patterns in the collection. Notably, the terms "literary" or "literary and cultured" 文, "talent" 才, and "military" 武 do not appear in the five-syllable-line poems. Additionally, while the graph 朝 (*zhao* or *chao*) appears frequently in the collection, it appears in the five-syllable-line poems as "morning" or "dawn" (*zhao* 朝), not in the meaning of "court" (*chao* 朝), as in this poem. We might interpret their appearance here as evidence of a different style and principle of selection at work.[77]

In sum, while I agree with Holzman that the style of this poem, and of the four-syllable-line poems in general, differs from that of the five-syllable-line *Yonghuai* poems, I would describe this difference formally rather than in terms of its putative relationship to the empirical Ruan Ji. If we are able describe the dominant formal patterns that appear throughout the collection, we should be able to consider whether other poems share these patterns, and in what ways—regardless of their authorship. This shift enables us to consider more clearly not only Ruan Ji's self-construction in poetry, but also the various practices of poetic self-representation evolving at this time.

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This chapter has explored the formal features of the *Yonghuai* collection, showing how they operate in conjunction with one another to produce a distinct type of literary self-representation. The variety of styles represented in the collection, along with the uncertainties of its textual history, naturally make it difficult to characterize as a single entity. Nonetheless, it is precisely as

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[77] More subjectively, we might consider the avoidance of these words elsewhere in the collection as part of the strategy of omission and obfuscation described above. When the speaker names these generalizing and empire-centric terms here, he seems to be setting before us the "real" world of political power and networking that he avoids describing so directly elsewhere.

a single entity—or as many versions of this entity—that the collection has made its impact on the history of classical poetry.

Therefore, while we do not know exactly when or in what form the text was circulated, we can nonetheless regard it as a crucial step in the development of poetic self-representation. In particular, the collection demonstrates how the framework of authorship can shape the poetry written in the voice of a generic speaker. Far from simply referring to the name attached to the text, "authorship" in this sense suggests a mode of writing that develops through a large body of work and in which unique attitudes, styles, and personae play a significant part.

For the purposes of this dissertation, the formal properties of the *Yonghuai* collection are of special interest because they show the way in which unique self-representational styles can develop even where poems do not present specific information about the speaker. The collection's speaker is not marked by any highly personal or specific attributes, unless we consider the movement of thought and the juxtaposition of subjects as personal or specific. Instead, by manipulating the conventions of the "generic" speaker throughout the space of an authored group of poems, the collection evokes a subjective world that feels both deeply personal and distinct from the preexisting tradition. When in later chapters we consider authors who do include specific details about themselves in their authored poems, it will be instructive to bear in mind Ruan Ji's earlier example, and to consider how some of the same techniques that animate his "obscure" poetic speaker are also central to more personalized and realistic self-representations.

Preface to Chapters 2 and 3

Chapters 2 and 3 consider the writings of Tao Yuanming and Xie Lingyun, respectively. Each was a prominent poet during his lifetime who became a major figure in the classical literary canon during the centuries following his death. Additionally, as a pair, these two have often served as exemplars of early medieval poetry. While critical discussion tends to emphasize the differences between them—characterizing Tao Yuanming as the poet of "fields and gardens" 田園 and Xie Lingyun as that of "mountains and rivers" 山水, the following two chapters focus on the underlying commonality that makes comparison of their works possible; this is the self-representational character of each writer's body of work. Of course, the comparison between Tao Yuanming and Xie Lingyun's works only extends so far, and the chapters that follow will pay attention to their many differences. For the purposes of this preface, however, I outline features that these two bodies of work have in common.

Tao Yuanming and Xie Lingyun appear as vividly *real* people in their poetry: not only do they have specific hopes, fears, and dreams, but they also live in complex social, geographical, and political worlds. Given Tao Yuanming and Xie Lingyun's prominence as characters in their own poems, it is remarkable each of these writers is popularly known not for representing himself, but for representing a certain kind of environment. It is less often commented that when each writer represents these environments, far from providing neutrally observed descriptions of landscape, he represents them in relation to himself. The chapters that follow analyze how each

writer depicts and dramatizes his relation to the environments with which he has become associated.[1]

Classical literary theory suggests that classical poets wrote about experience as it was, without distortion. This orientation encouraged premodern readers to accept the content of writers' self-representations at face value and to reserve criticism and commentary for matters of style and diction.[2] Thus, Tao Yuanming and Xie Lingyun's modes of self-representation are rarely discussed in premodern times, but commentators do praise and criticize various aspects of their work. For example, Tao Yuanming is lauded for the naturalism and simplicity of his writing, while Xie Lingyun is sometimes criticized for artifice.[3]

However, even if we accept that poets portray their own experience truthfully and accurately, we may still acknowledge that they exercise choice in terms of *what* they represent and *how*. Rather than accept that these authors unreflectively represent the "selves" that they experienced in their everyday lives, the following chapters describe Tao Yuanming and Xie Lingyun's self-representations as innovative artistic creations.[4] These poets use settings— including "fields and gardens" and "mountains and rivers"—to stage occasions of self. Some of these occasions are dramatic and others mundane; they sometimes suggest personal

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[1] Of course, even when critics do not describe the work as "self-representational," self-representational dimensions are often implied. This is especially the case with Tao Yuanming; for example, Yuan Xingpei writes that Tao Yuanming's "fields and gardens" poetry makes him "the first writer in the history of Chinese literature to make his own bucolic life the main content of the poem." In Knechtges and Chang, eds., *Ancient and Early Medieval Chinese Literature: A Reference Guide*, Part Two (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 1098.

[2] In addition, an implicit form of criticism is also exercised by those who preserve and copy certain works while allowing others to drift into obscurity.

[3] See Wendy Swartz, "Naturalness in Xie Lingyun's Poetic Works," for examples and summaries of some of these views.

[4] A classical Chinese poet's literary self-construction is inextricably bound to his "real-world" self, and choices that the poet makes in his literary self-presentation may guide his choices that he makes in his "real world" life—and vice versa. At the same time, it is especially difficult to examine the relationship between literary persona and "real life" persona in the cases of authors who lived in the distant past and whose lives were not documented in detail.

transformation, and at other times suggest constancy. In particular, the chapters consider how these poets construct the "occasions" of their poems by manipulating variables such as time-frames, locations and settings, and including or excluding references to the poetic speaker's feelings and life history. These occasional settings present specific contexts in which poets use detail and nuance to create realistic and psychologically acute portraits of themselves. Considered together, these strategies constitute not only a new direction in classical poetry, but also a new way of representing the self in literature—one that is closely connected to the shifting conceptions of personhood and of the role of the poet in the early medieval period.

Chapter 2

Tao Yuanming: The Poet Thinks of Home

Traditional criticism locates a single, essential persona at the core of Tao Yuanming's writing—a persona who is famously "natural" (*ziran* 自然).[1] This chapter builds on recent scholarship that suggests a modified way of reading this author: rather than interpreting his writings in terms of the traditionally-discerned single persona, it traces multiple personae and strategies of self-representation within his poems and prose.[2]

Much of Tao Yuanming's writing represents elements of the author's day-to-day life. In these works Tao Yuanming presents himself as a gentleman farmer, a reader and intellectual who has retired from official service in order to live more simply. This evokes the ancient Chinese model of the recluse (*yinzhe* 隱者) and provides a basis for the view of Tao Yuanming as an emblem of the genuine and the authentic. Diverging in part from this view, the present chapter suggests that we might more accurately describe Tao Yuanming as an author who writes about

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[1] This characterization of "traditional criticism's" view of Tao Yuanming is meant to indicate a wide range of critical views that originated in the early medieval period and continue to the present. For example, as Charles Yim-tze Kwong writes, "The appraisals of the traditional critics thus vary insofar as they focus on different elements of Tao's composite sensibility. What they all share implicitly or explicitly, however, is the basic Chinese literary-critical axiom that 'poetry expresses sentiments' 詩言志." Kwong, "Naturalness and Authenticity: The Poetry of Tao Qian," *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews* 11 (1989), 36. The approaches of "traditional criticism" are of course broad and varied, although I will not be able to address them in depth. Two recent books that deal substantially with premodern views and interpretations of Tao Yuanming are Xiaofei Tian, *Tao Yuanming & Manuscript Culture* and Wendy Swartz, *Reading Tao Yuanming*. Kang-i Sun Chang gives a concise version of this history in "The Unmasking of Tao Qian and the Indeterminacy of Interpretation," in Zong-qi Cai, ed., *Chinese Aesthetics: The Ordering of Literature, the Arts, and the Universe in the Six Dynasties* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004).

[2] While this is far from the first study to suggest an alternate approach to Tao Yuanming's writing, the persistence of "traditional" views may warrant my returning to them as a starting point here. In its approach to the question of Tao Yuanming's self-representation this chapter draws in particular on Ashmore, *The Transport of Reading*; Owen, "The Self's Perfect Mirror: Poetry as Autobiography"; and Tian, *Tao Yuanming & Manuscript Culture*.

the process of considering what is genuine and authentic; when Tao Yuanming's speakers think deeply about how they face significant human questions, they are by no means simple avatars of virtue.[3] In particular, the chapter suggests that this poet's innovation in the occasional mode of representation enables him to create newly complex—and newly compelling—representations of human psychology and behavior.

Some would suggest that the distinction highlighted here is insignificant, or even incorrect.[4] In response, I suggest that appreciation of Tao Yuanming's highly nuanced self-representations is crucial to understanding his role in the development of classical poetry. If we mischaracterize Tao Yuanming's literary artistry, we run the risk of misunderstanding not only his work, but also the poetic tradition in which he plays such an important part.

As I have mentioned, literary critics have reasons for de-emphasizing artistic innovation in literature. However, in the modern context, where the experimental drive of Tao Yuanming's writing across multiple genres can be clearly seen, it becomes difficult to deny his original, technically ingenious, and self-aware representational choices. The present chapter investigates these choices and considers how Tao Yuanming crafts a variety of interwoven self-representations through the variation of certain dramatic patterns and paradoxes.

The chapter's first section emphasizes how the occasional framing of certain poems shapes the representation of their speaker, creating dramatic contrasts between the speaker *in the moment* and the speaker as he imagines himself at a later moment or during an ongoing period. It further suggests that one type of location in particular—the home—is central to many of Tao

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[3] Chang describes how one text in particular, Tao Yuanming's "*Fu* on Calming the Passions" 閑情賦, has consistently presented a challenge to critics who wish to see Tao Yuanming as "an upright Confucian who would never concern himself with a romantic passion for women" ("The Unmasking of Tao Qian," 181).

[4] These debates can become quite heated, as Xiaofei Tian discusses in *Tao Yuanming & Manuscript Culture* (see in particular 228n28).

Yuanming's occasions. The chapter's second and third sections examine how various types of occasional self-representation operate in Tao Yuanming's poems, poem sequences, and prose works. Finally, the fourth section reads the poem "On Naming My Son" 命子詩 and the series "Returning to Dwell in Gardens and Fields" 歸園田居詩 as related but contrasting approaches to the construction of personal history and identity in Tao Yuanming's longer, multi-section works.

In the Moment: The Speaker and the Occasion

Like other writers of his day, Tao Yuanming was guided by the traditions and conventions of poetic genres; molded by these conventions, his literary voice and self-representation can vary from one genre to another. At the same time, certain personal interests appear across Tao Yuanming's works. In particular, he consistently returns to questions of identity, investigating how particular incidents, accidents, and choices contribute to a person's manifestations and understandings of self. One of the primary techniques that Tao Yuanming uses to present these topics is the "occasional poem."

The classical Chinese "occasional poem" is a poem about a particular event or circumstance. While in the context of Western literature "occasional poem" often indicates a poem written *for* a particular occasion, the Chinese "occasional poem" most commonly indicates a poem that has been written in response to an occasion or as a reflection on it.[5] Appearing in the

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[5] This distinction is by no means a hard and fast one; instead, it reflects the origins and emphases of each of these poetic traditions. The Western origins of occasional verse are usually traced to Greek and Latin literature and to the poetic forms of the epithalamion, the elegy, and the ode. While the European idea of the "occasional poem" gradually expanded to include poems prompted by an event and written after it, the term still tends to evoke the image of a poet presenting a poem written for a public occasion. See, for example, *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), ed. Preminger and Brogan, s.v. "occasional verse."

late Han dynasty, poems of this kind are a signature element of the classical Chinese poetic canon.

The "occasional poem" altered significantly when poets like Tao Yuanming created newly detailed and vividly realized poetic speakers. Tao Yuanming's dated titles provide one illustration of his influence; he was, as far as we know, the first poet to use dates extensively in the titles of his poems. These dated titles include other information as well, often specifying a place, occasion, and the name of a companion or guest. With these details, such titles present the poem's mise en scène while also creating an intimate, diaristic tone.

At the same time that Tao Yuanming writes "occasional poems" about specific, dated occasions he also writes occasional poems about what I will refer to as "non-specified" occasions. For example, each of the poems in the series "On Drinking" 飲酒 focuses on a particular occasion of drinking, but we are not told at what particular time or place the events in the poem occur. Of course, a poem's inclusion in one or the other category depends largely on its title, and we cannot be sure that any title is certainly the original one.[6] Nonetheless, the presence of various groups and sets of poems in Tao Yuanming's collection indicate that he paid careful attention to the expressive and self-representational possibilities that occasional framing devices create. In particular, the variety in occasional framing devices that he uses suggests that occasional techniques were central to his writing practice.

In order to appreciate Tao Yuanming's choice to write at least two kinds of occasional poem—that of the specific, dated occasion on the one hand and of the non-specified occasion on the other—we must look back to the conventions of anonymous poetry. Most anonymous poems contained little specific detail, and could therefore be reused on various different occasions with

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[6] Additionally, many poems survive in multiple versions and with variant titles.

little or no modification.[7] During the Han dynasty and afterward, however, the rise of authorship creates new possible dynamics in the relation between the poem and the writer. The named author *may* continue to write poems that can be re-used on other occasions: poems whose time and place details are vague enough to apply to a variety of recurring instances. Alternately, however, the named author may insert specific details into his poem—details that narrow the poem's scope to one specific event or occasion.

The second of Tao Yuanming's two poems entitled "In the Fifth Month of the *Gengzi* Year [400], Returning from the Capital, Blocked by Wind at Guilin" 庚子歲五月中從都還阻風於規林, serves as an example of dated "occasional poem." After the first poem relates the situation narrated in the title, the second extends into more general personal reflection:[8]

	自古歎行役	Since ancient times men have complained of travel
	我今始知之	I am now beginning to understand why this is.
	山川一何曠	Streams and mountains—how they stretch forever,
	巽坎難與期	wind and water are difficult to predict.
5	崩浪聒天響	The clamor of breaking waves resounds to the sky;
	長風無息時	the constant wind never comes to rest.
	久遊戀所生	The long-traveling one yearns for his place of birth[9]—
	如何淹在茲	how is it that I am held up here?
	靜念園林好	When I quietly reflect on how nice my garden is,
10	人間良可辭	I would gladly give up the world of human affairs.
	當年詎有幾	How many years are left of my prime?
	縱心復何疑	I shall follow my heart; how can I doubt anymore?

Here the weather has interrupted the speaker's return home; but however inconvenient and annoying the situation, his chatty tone suggests that he is not deeply worried—after all, the title

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[7] Stephen Owen mentions the relation between lack of specificity and reuse in *The Making*, 220.

[8] Lu Qinli, *Jin shi*, 16.982; translation adapted from James Robert Hightower, *The Poetry of T'ao Ch'ien* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 101.

[9] *Suo sheng* 所生 can be read either as "place of birth" (the translation used above) or as "the one who gave birth to me."

indicates that the hold-up is only temporary. Meanwhile, the speaker's wandering thoughts depict not only his experience of the present moment, but also hint at an ongoing state of mind and even a way of life.

With characteristically understated wit, Tao Yuanming uses the constraints of the situation to create a revealing self-portrait. Here, the speaker's complaints about travel quickly give way to expression of longing for home. However, like many tired travelers, he allows his perceptions to be colored by his immediate feelings. The home he imagines is extremely one dimensional: in this state of mind, his "nice" 好 garden becomes an emblem of domestic peace and isolation from the "world of human affairs" 人間 and a perfect contrast to the endless and unpredictable landscapes of travel described earlier in the poem. This garden (and the life associated with it) is imagined as comfortingly static and removed. Finally, inspired by his daydream of a peaceful, isolated domestic life, the speaker suggests that he would like to give up "the world of human affairs" 人間 and "follow [his] heart" 縱心.

This is not one of Tao Yuanming's best-known poems. However, the themes of longing for one's "place of birth" 所生 (or alternately, "the one who gave birth to me"), desire to give up "the world of human affairs" 人間, and the will to "follow my heart" 縱心 are familiar from the author's most famous works. In fact, these are some of Tao Yuanming's most characteristic attitudes and expressions, and one might venture to say that they are the very same expressions that constitute the pure and simple persona that commentators have enshrined as the real Tao Yuanming.

But here we meet a central difficulty: is the stated intention to give up "the world of human affairs" 人間 and to "follow my heart" 縱心 the same as actually doing those things? As most of us know all too well, it is not; the act of making a resolution bears only a tangential

relation to the act which one has resolved to do. Here, as so often in classical poetry, the poem articulates the speaker's wishes and intentions; it is precisely in the form of fantasy and wish that such descriptions communicate to us about the speaker. To lose this nuance is to lose a significant element of classical poetic self-representation, because Tao Yuanming's poems often map out the complex relationship between their speaker's actions, intentions, and fantasies. In his depiction of the character in the occasion, the writer incorporates both astute perceptions about human nature and seasoned wariness of the vagaries of the material world—that is, its tendency to intrude on human plans.

Returning to the poem, we find its greatest degree of ambiguity in the closing couplet: moved by his image of his garden, the speaker declares his intention to "follow [his] heart" 縱心. But even this line betrays fresh uncertainty: the question "how can I doubt anymore?" 復何疑 alerts us to the presence not only of doubts, but of doubts that are already familiar to the speaker. These closing lines suggest that the urgency of the speaker's longing has clarified his feelings about home, but that once home, the question of how to spend his time will become even more complicated.

Here, as in many poems, Tao Yuanming deploys a subtle psychological realism in showing how the speaker's perceptions are shaped by his circumstances. Temporary exile from home allows the speaker to imagine an artificially idealized situation—one in which it might be possible to give up "the world of human affairs" 人間 and "follow my heart" 縱心. But even in the midst of this daydream, the speaker begins to sense that reality is more complex than the pared-down model of home life he has fondly imagined. This daydream, and the speaker's revealing reaction to it, constitute a self-representation—the means by which the reader comes to know the speaker in this poem. As we will see, Tao Yuanming's self-representations often echo

each other, but with subtle differences and variations—a process of layering and elaboration that creates a rich and complex overall portrait.

"Returning from the Capital, Blocked by Wind at Guilin" centers on a self-representational pattern that recurs throughout the poet's work: this is Tao Yuanming's technique of representing himself by representing the speaker's relation to a home space. Home appears regularly at the broad or general level of Tao Yuanming's, where it features prominently in his overall life narrative, and at the specific level, serving as the setting of many of his poems. Through these interlocking pictures of the speaker at home and thinking about home, the author develops an internally continuous persona throughout a body of work.

Tao Yuanming often returns to the theme of longing for home while at the same time showing how the speaker's relation to the idea of home—and of himself—changes depending on the situation he finds himself in. In such works, as in the poem above, the speaker's experience in the occasion forces him to address his conceptual understanding of himself; this encounter can take the form of self-questioning, self-critique, or the formation of a new resolution. However, the speaker's view in the occasion is always more limited than the view of the author writing the poem; and by curating and framing the reader's view of the speaker, the author often allows us to see more than the speaker can see himself. In particular, the author sometimes shows us how occasional experience provokes the speaker to subtly shift his conceptual understanding of himself. Recognizing this pattern in multiple works enables us to see how Tao Yuanming's self-representational method encompasses this drama, resulting in newly complex pictures of the poet.

Tao Yuanming also uses occasional framing to make his treatment of home dynamic. Even when the poetic speaker is at home, his relation to it is active and his patterns of activity are

structured and constrained by various circumstances. In contrast, in the poem above, the speaker's very human, very understandable longing is to simply *be* at home. What he complains of in the natural world is its ceaseless motion: the wind does not "come to rest" 息; the streams and mountains have no beginning or end. But of course, the speaker knows that when one is actually *at home*, one is rarely at rest either. Almost inadvertently, the speaker acknowledges this when he refers to the "doubts" 疑 that may accompany his day to day activities. In this way, Tao Yuanming uses *home* as a point of reference central to the speaker's day-to-day sense of identity. Measuring the distance between himself and home, or describing the way he occupies himself at home or away from it, is a rhetorical and conceptual activity that the speaker uses to identify and represent himself.

Theoretically, this technique could be used with other emotionally significant locations; but in practice, Tao Yuanming for the most part limits himself to a repertoire of settings and themes—foremost among which is *home*. For example, following the speaker's expression of "yearn[ing] for his place of birth" 久遊戀所生, the speaker pivots to the subject of himself: "How is it that I am held up here?" 如何淹在茲, and then turns to the image of his own home: "When I quietly reflect on how nice my garden is" 靜念園林好. Through this quick three-line maneuver, the thick layer of emotion that the "long-traveling one" 久遊 feels comes to rest squarely on the speaker's unassuming "garden" 園林.

By indicating that a person's basic feeling of affinity for his "place of birth" 所生 (or "the one who gave birth to me") is transferred onto his successive homes, the poet has taken a traditional sentiment and applied it to a new, more vivid and current situation—that of his speaker. This passage—and the poem—are typical in that they depict the speaker's world of

feeling for his home without specifying *exactly* what he is referring to (beyond simply the garden). In Tao Yuanming's work, as in language and life, the concept of "home" is not limited to an actual dwelling and surrounding physical spaces; "home" can also encompass domestic routines, family, personal habits, social activities and more. Through this set of discursive practices, Tao Yuanming consistently represents the subjective self of the poet-speaker in terms of the world around him, and also turns each episode or moment of the speaker's relation to home into an *occasion*.

While Tao Yuanming's discourse of home provides large-scale frameworks that make the author consistently visible and intelligible to the reader, it also allows for great subtlety and nuance in his depiction of his character. "Returning from the Capital, Blocked by Wind at Guilin" takes up the subject of longing for home with a relatively lighthearted attitude, but Tao Yuanming also uses the same basic structures and themes to construct some of his most sober works. The following section will read two such poems, considering how they represent the speaker's self through occasional treatments of the theme of home.

The Drama of Return

Tao Yuanming rarely presents his speaker as simply *at home*; instead, he constantly makes references to occasions of departure and—especially—return. However, these occasions of return are not all of equal significance.

I have mentioned that Tao Yuanming writes at least two kinds of occasional poem—that of the specific, dated occasion and of the non-specified occasion. However, in order to appreciate Tao Yuanming's occasional technique we must broaden our discussion of his methods yet again. Tao Yuanming's use of occasional framing is not limited to his poetry; as I will discuss below,

occasional devices are also central to his prose works. In addition to the types of occasion discussed above, there is one other type that is especially important to Tao Yuanming's writing. This is the *life moment*: an event of particular importance to the speaker's life-story and self-understanding, and which may be difficult to frame in terms of an exact beginning and ending point. One such occasion stands out in Tao Yuanming's work: this is the *life moment* of returning home represented in both the poem series "Returning to Dwell in Gardens and Fields" and the poetic exposition (*fu* 賦) "The Return" 歸去來分辭.

Each of these works makes specific claims about the importance of one episode to Tao Yuanming's life considered as a whole. Significantly, Tao Yuanming draws on preexisting conventions in order to frame this return as a life moment. The trajectory of retirement from official service to rural life is deeply embedded in premodern Chinese thought, and Tao Yuanming's conformity to this pattern places him squarely within the recluse tradition. At the same time, the way in which he dramatizes and animates his experience is unique, causing him to stands apart from this preexisting tradition of writing about recluses in many respects.

In ancient times, stories of recluses were more fantastical than realistic. Over time, and as the practice of reclusion took shape, the kinds of stories being told about recluses changed. For example, Alan Berkowitz writes that in the Han dynasty "we begin to find individuals with historical veracity whose names and conduct are linked by their contemporaries and near contemporaries with reclusion as a way of life."[10] Biographical accounts of recluses became especially popular from the Wei dynasty onwards. However, most of these stories followed a particular pattern, and as Berkowitz notes, with the notable exception of Tao Yuanming "extant accounts of hermitage were rarely descriptions of actual states of reclusion and equally rarely

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[10] Berkowitz, 9.

composed by men who exemplified life in reclusion."[11]

Berkowitz comments that the lack of texts written by recluses themselves is in part due to the loss of texts from the period. However, this lack also points to important differences between texts written *by* recluses and texts written *about* recluses. Here certain rhetorical norms and social and discursive practices come into play; in particular, we might observe that while praise can be extremely meaningful and persuasive when it comes from a third party, the same content will usually sound meaningless or self-involved if it comes from the person himself. Thus, while a biographer's praise of an interesting recluse may make for stimulating reading, that recluse's account of his own practice would have to take a quite different literary form in order to avoid coming across as tedious, distorted, and vain. The association of reclusion with high moral value means that representing oneself as a recluse is intrinsically bound up with this rhetorical dilemma.

But whatever the practices of other recluse-writers, Tao Yuanming's nuanced self-representation constitutes a unique solution to this difficulty. In particular, he distances himself from any claims to represent moral virtue with humility and self-deprecation that is, in large part, what makes it possible for others to attribute virtue to him. In these representations of himself, Tao Yuanming adapts elements of the traditional Confucian recluse role to his own ends. One of the ways he does this is by emphasizing the importance of return without necessarily spelling out precisely what these returns mean; return thus becomes an emotional experience, but not necessarily an ideologically determined one. And, as I will discuss later in the chapter, Tao Yuanming draws on sources other than the Confucian tradition to craft his nuanced adaptation of the recluse life-story.

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[11] Berkowitz, 13.

Returns appear throughout Tao Yuanming's writing. On a larger scale, we find the specific life moment that is the subject of "Returning to Dwell in Gardens and Fields" and the poetic exposition "The Return." On the smaller level, Tao Yuanming creates dramas such as the one presented in "Returning from the Capital, Blocked by Wind at Guilin," above. These interlocking stories of *returning* home, on the large and small scale, create a coherent pattern that resonates throughout Tao Yuanming's work.

On some occasions of return, the distance that must be crossed to reach home is more figurative than literal. This is the case in "In the Sixth Month of the *Wushen* Year [408], Encountering Fire" 戊申歲六月中遇火詩:[12]

	草盧寄窮巷	My thatched hut sat in a narrow lane
	甘以辭華軒	where I gladly took leave of elegant carriages.
	正夏長風急	But in high summer when the strong wind blew fiercely
	林室頓燒燔	the grove and the house suddenly burned.
5	一宅無遺宇	Of the entire home, nothing was left;
	舫舟蔭門前	a boat sheltered [us] in front of the gate.
	迢迢新秋夕	Vastly, the early autumn evening spread;
	亭亭月將圓	distantly, the moon was approaching fullness.
	果菜始復生	The fruits and grasses started to sprout again
10	驚鳥尚未還	when the startled birds had not yet returned.
	中宵佇遙念	In the middle of the night, standing for a while in thought,
	一盼周九天	my gaze makes a circuit of the Nine Heavens.
	總髮抱孤介	Since childhood I've embraced moral uprightness
	奄出四十年	And suddenly forty years have passed.
15	形迹憑化往	A person's form leans in the direction of change,
	靈府長獨閑	the mind alone is lastingly free.
	貞剛自有質	Loyal and firm, it is true to its nature;
	玉石乃非堅	neither jade nor stone is as solid as this.
	仰想東戶時	I consider the time of Donghu's rule[13]

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[12] Lu Qinli, *Jin shi*, 17.995. Translation adapted from Burton Watson, *The Columbia Book of Chinese Poetry: From Early Times to the Thirteenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 133–34.

[13] Donghu Jizi 東戶季子 was a legendary ancient ruler. For further comments see John S. Major, Sarah A. Queen, Harold D. Roth, and Andrew Seth Meyer, trans. and eds., *The Huainanzi* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 371n75.

20	餘糧宿中田	When surplus grain was left overnight in the fields.[14]
	鼓腹無所思	Then, drumming their bellies, people had no worries.
	朝起暮歸眠	They rose in the morning and at evening returned to sleep.
	既已不遇茲	Since I have not encountered circumstances like that,
	且遂灌西園	for the time being, I will water my west garden.

This speaker's dislocation from home is all the more jarring because of how unforeseen it is. Unlike a homesick traveler who can imagine his cozy home unchanged, the speaker is forced to confront material evidence of a new reality at the exact spot where his house used to be. The tragedy of this poem is not being away from home, but being forced to encounter proof that not only this home, but all homes, are frail and impermanent.

The fire tears the speaker away from familiar habits and exposes him to the natural elements: the beauty of the evening, and the perception of how plants and animals live. But while the title focuses on the event of the fire itself, the actual destruction of the house is conveyed in only one line. Rather than dwell on the specifics of this incident, the speaker proceeds to what happened next, reflecting in a calm, speculative vein. Thus, the "encounter" 遇 to which the title refers turns out to be a more abstract consideration of the ways in which life—the speaker's own, internal mental life, and also the cycles of nature—continue.

The opening couplet makes use of a theme that appears in several of Tao Yuanming's poems: the situation of the speaker's house away from the noise of traffic. Here and elsewhere, this spatial location functions as kind of synecdoche for the poet's mental life, indicating that the speaker is glad to be removed from the chaos and hubbub of affluence. However, unlike the other poems which investigate this dynamic further, this theme is undercut in this poem by the

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[14] The content of line twenty appears in almost exactly the same wording in the *Huainanzi* 淮南子, where it serves as an illustration of the great security created by Donghu's rule. See Liu Wendian 劉文典, ed. *Huainanzi* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1989), 10.331.

destruction that follows: a fire burns the entire house, and the speaker shelters in a boat. The urgency of this situation forces the speaker to consider—or reconsider—his life-choices and his identity, and to conclude the poem with a new articulation of intent.

While the speaker in "Returning from the Capital, Blocked by Wind at Guilin" could imagine his garden as a stable, isolated ideal, the speaker of "Encountering Fire" no longer has this option. Instead, he looks outward to the skies and to history for models of stability. The difficulty is that these models are so distant as to be altogether out of reach; while the speaker is endowed with a mind that can take in the entire "Nine Heavens" 九天 in a glance, he is trapped in a world of impermanent things. And similarly, though he might fantasize about past a time "when surplus grain was left overnight in the fields" 餘糧宿中田, he acknowledges that he has "not encountered circumstances like that" 不遇茲. In this sense, the speaker of "Encountering Fire" is more clear-sighted than that of "Returning from the Capital, Blocked by Wind at Guilin"; he does not indulge the hope that some material dwelling will provide complete safety and comfort.

At the end of the poem the speaker finally comes to a resolution about how he will resume the life-sustaining patterns of behavior with which he identifies. The decision to water his garden—stated in the poems final line—is at once a practical and a philosophical acknowledgement of the limitations of mortal life. However free the speaker's mind may be, it is nonetheless dependent on the body and on the material world more generally. Unlike deciding to give up "the world of human affairs" 人間 or "follow my heart" 縱心—the resolutions of the speaker in "Returning from the Capital, Blocked by Wind at Guilin"—this speaker's intention is more humble. Comparing these two poems, we see how Tao Yuanming's skill in self-

representation enables him to show different types of experience impacting the same person in different ways and with different degrees of intensity.

Both "Returning from the Capital, Blocked by Wind at Guilin" and "Encountering Fire" participate in the theme of *return*. As different as the two poems are, in each of them longing for and displacement from home provokes a speaker to reflect on who he is: who he has been in the past and who he intends to be in the future. The theme of return evokes strong feelings associated with home, but in an abstract, non-deterministic way. Through his use of this theme and its application to a variety of occasions, Tao Yuanming asks complex questions about what specific items might be able to satisfy the basic human longing to return home.

The verb "return" 歸 means "to return [home]" or "to return [to where one belongs]"; directionality *and* a place of proper or original belonging are implied. This verb locates the speaker as *away* from this place of belonging, in a situation where his imagination of home is necessarily more vivid than its actuality. However, while previous poetry for the most part presented typological characters returning to typological homes, Tao Yuanming presents specific poetic speakers returning to specific homes. As we have seen, this can create a compelling dramatic scenario—especially if and when the speaker is forced to encounter a real home that differs from what he had imagined.

The remainder of this section considers the tension between the speaker's actual presence *at home* and the distance implied by the concept of "return" in the first poem of "Returning to Dwell in Gardens and Fields." This tension is expressed in multiple levels in the series, and specifically the poet's daily movements away from his suburban home and back again (these movements take place in poems two through five, discussed in the final section of this chapter).

The preface to the poetic exposition "The Return" makes specific autobiographical

claims about the significance of Tao Yuanming's life moment of return—claims which have become central to the traditional image of the poet. While "The Return" emphasizes the emotional and ethical content of the poet's strong choice to return home, "Returning to Dwell in Gardens and Fields" relies more on the speaker's occasional emotions and its depiction of the milieu of home. These differences are also closely tied to the difference in genre: "The Return" is a poetic exposition, and "Returning to Dwell in Gardens and Fields" is a sequence of five-syllable-line poems.

Two layers of occasional framing govern the poetic series as a whole. The first is the life moment of return announced in the title and contextualized by the life story told in first lines of the poem:[15]

少無適俗韻	In my youth I was ill-suited for the common world
性本愛丘山	by nature I loved the hills and mountains.
誤落塵網中	I erred and fell into the dusty snares,
一去三十年	went away for thirty years in all.

This section introduces an autobiographical frame—a larger "back story" that the speaker brings to his present occasional situation and understanding of himself. The second layer of occasional framing is that constituted by the specific activities and events described in each poem. The interlocking of these two cycles of life—the larger life story and the daily routine—is a dominant structuring principle, and is also emblematic of how Tao Yuanming curates the reader's overall perception of the speaker.

Before the following poems describe the speaker's regular trips to and from home, the first poem does the work of situating the poet *at home* (continued directly from the opening, above):

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[15] Lu Qinli, *Jin shi*, 17.991–992. The translation (of the full poem) is based on Xiaofei Tian's in *Tao Yuanming and Manuscript Culture: The Record of a Dusty Table* (Seattle: University of Washington, 2005), 97–101.

5	羈鳥戀舊林	The caged bird craves the woods of old,
	池魚思故淵	a fish in a pond fancies former depths.
	開荒南野際	Clearing wastelands at the edge of the southern wilds,
	守拙歸園田	I abide by my clumsiness and return to my gardens and fields.
	方宅十餘畝	My estate spans more than ten *mou*,[16]
10	草屋八九間	my thatched cottage contains eight or nine rooms.
	榆柳蔭後簷	Elms and willows shade the back eaves;
	桃李羅堂前	peach and plum spread in the front hall.
	曖曖遠人村	The distant community is lost in a haze;
	依依墟里煙	smoke from the village hearths lingers in the air.
15	狗吠深巷中	A dog barks in the deep lanes
	雞鳴桑樹巔	on top of a mulberry tree a rooster crows.
	戶庭無塵雜	There is no dust or disorder in house or yard;
	虛室有餘閑	the empty chambers are filled with leisure.
	久在樊籠裏	For a long time I have been in a cage,
20	復得返自然	now again I return to the natural way of life.[17]

Immediately following the autobiographical framework of the opening, animal metaphors and spatial categories map out the emotional dimensions of the speaker's home landscape. The following lines (7–8) establish the outer limits of the poet-speaker's "gardens and fields" 園田 (8)—the area which we might call his comfort zone. Here we see that the "southern wilds" 南野 are not only the limits of his property, but also a place that can only be occupied with the great effort of "clearing wastelands" 開荒 (7).[18]

Having outlined one physical boundary of his home, the speaker turns to specific details about his estate and his house. Here, the numbers of *mou* 畝 (a Chinese unit of land

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[16] *Mou* 畝 is a Chinese unit of land measurement, equal to about 0.16 acres. Due to the regional variation of this measurement in ancient China, Tao Yuanming's estate of about ten *mou* would have been somewhere between about 0.8 and 3.2 acres in size.

[17] As I discuss in Note 20, below, this line can be read "How can I return to the natural way of life?" 安得返自然 if we take the variant "how can I" *an de* 安得 instead of "now again" *fu de* 復得 (see discussion in Tian, *Dusty Table*, 95–110).

[18] As Tian emphasizes, *Dusty Table*, 99 (and, relatedly, 105). Owen discusses the phrase "clearing wastelands" 開荒 in analysis of Xie Lingyun's poetry ("The Librarian in Exile," 218).

measurement, equal to about 0.16 acres)[19] and rooms indicate that the speaker is striving for exactitude and accuracy. Analogies to the "caged bird" 羈鳥 and "fish" 魚 have already provided animal correlatives for the human narrative of return; but here he seems to struggle to articulate his emotions directly. Finally, the speaker turns to another type of description—the relationship between the house and the village "lost in a haze" 曖曖.

Through his subjective impression of the village, the speaker maps his relationship to the nearby community and comes closer to describing what it *feels like* to be at home. At the same time, this turn suggests the impossibility of ever being truly contained and at rest at home (the fantasy of the traveler in "Returning from the Capital, Blocked by Wind at Guilin"). While the village itself is not visible to him, the "village smoke" 煙 "lingers" 依依 and forms part of his environment. This smoke—like the sound of the dog barking from within "deep lanes" 深巷— shows how the world of other people is part of even one's most private home environment.

While this poem begins with a relatively clear way to understand the speaker—via the frame of the life moment of return—it complicates and undercuts these structures as it progresses. In particular, as the poem defines the speaker and his home environment, it alerts us to areas of ambiguity at the boundaries of these definitions. These areas of ambiguity include the "wasteland" spaces that border the speaker's property and the visible signs of his neighbors. In addition, as Tian Xiaofei's analysis has shown, an important variant character in the poem's final line hints at the speaker's own personal ambivalence. Tian's analysis of this poem—and of the

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[19] See Note 16, above.

series as a whole—emphasizes that the poet-speaker's "return" 返 to the "natural way of life" 自然 may be read as far from untroubled.[20]

If the speaker is involved in a complex act of self-representation, the reader engages in a parallel act of interpretation. By telling the reader explicitly that the speaker is at a crucial juncture in his life, the poem series involves the reader in an interpretive process whereby she attempts to shape the details she is given into a larger narrative of return. In this way, the smaller and more occasional details and observations of each poem are linked to the larger framework of return, and, via this framework, these poems enter into dialogue with certain other works in which Tao Yuanming addresses similar themes.

Stepping Out of Time

Tao Yuanming's use of occasions, large and small, enables him to represent himself as a person who both changes and stays the same. Thus, even while Tao Yuanming's emphasis on his life moment of *return* indicates that the speaker undergoes lasting transformations, he indicates that this significant life moment can be broken down into smaller units that are less unique. These units include repeatable activities such as clearing the wastelands and looking towards the nearby village. This blending of single, once-only occasions and repeatable occasions—and the choice to draw no hard line between the two—gives his literary persona the complexity of real persons: persons who participate simultaneously in daily routines and in more abstract narrative constructions of meaning.

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[20] As Tian shows, restoring a single variant character—"how" (*an* 安) in place of "again" (*fu* 復)—at the start of the poem's final line brings into view a far more complicated version of the poet than most critics imagine him to be. With this variant character the final line reads: "How can I return to the natural way of life?" See Tian, *Dusty Table*, 95–110.

When considering Tao Yuanming's representation of human complexity, we must bear in mind the conventions that structured previous literary representation of individual people's lives. For example, Masters' Texts are full of anecdotes, and these often feature interesting and unusual characters. However, rather than present an overview of a person's whole life, these stories tend to focus on a particular event or encounter. While many legendary characters would have been well known in the discourses of ancient culture, the tradition of writing these people's life stories as narratives did not develop until Sima Qian 司馬遷 (c. 145 or 135–86 BCE) formulated the deeply influential tradition of biography in his *Records of the Grand Historian* (太史公書). As I will discuss, Tao Yuanming responded directly to this tradition. However, it is important to note other influences on Tao Yuanming's understanding of life narrative and character development, including his awareness of Buddhist texts and stories.

The introduction of Buddhism into China in the early medieval period involved a massive influx of texts and ideas into Chinese culture. During the early medieval period, the concepts, stories, and narrative forms in these texts had a significant impact on Chinese literature. In particular, Buddhist stories of religious conversion provoked Chinese writers to write their own conversion stories. At the same time, and more subtly, the idea of having a *conversion*—an experience of profound internal change and redirection—seems to have entered into Chinese literature and thought at this time.[21]

According to classical thought, the ideal Confucian man was expected to serve an honorable ruler but to retire from an unjust government in order to live as a recluse. This change

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[21] These comments are based on content and discussion in a seminar taught by Xiaofei Tian at Harvard University, Fall 2012: Topics in Early Medieval Literature (ChiLit 229r), which surveyed early Chinese autobiographical writings. See also Xiaofei Tian, "Tao Yuanming's Poetics of Awkwardness," forthcoming in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to World Literature*, volume III.

of occupation—from official service to reclusion—would reflect constancy of character and adherence to a set of moral values. Thus, a man of this type could change occupations several times and be regarded not only as internally consistent but also as a moral exemplar. Buddhism presents a different model of the person of moral and spiritual worth. In particular, exemplary Buddhists—and most notably the Buddha himself—usually undergo a dramatic religious conversion. This conversion takes place on an internal level of understanding and belief, but it often manifests outwardly as well, resulting in changes to how the person dresses, behaves, and situates himself (or herself) in relation to society as a whole. By emphasizing how a changed inner state can manifest outwardly, Buddhist stories and Buddhist philosophy seem to have provoked interest in writing about people's inner beliefs, motivations, and intentions, and about how these could be manifested in life choices.

Though Tao Yuanming does not frame his departure from official service in Buddhist terms, he does suggest that it corresponds with deep and important internal shifts in his inner life. Thus, in writing about the inner life as a complex site with an ambiguous relation to action and intention, Tao Yuanming appears to be influenced by the variety of discourses about the self that were developing at this time.

The life moment of returning to home and to a "natural way of life" stands out in Tao Yuanming's work as his most dramatic illustration of personal change. Nonetheless, the meaning of this moment is highly ambiguous. It is unclear whether Tao Yuanming regards his choice to return home as a fundamental break with his earlier self, a deep internal shift; or whether his decision to return home only presents the appearance of change, when in reality he is in essence the same person he has always been. These models are both implied in Tao Yuanming's works, and their coexistence is fundamental to his self-representation. Often, these two models—that of

the person who changes at a specific time, and the person who exhibits continuity and changelessness—act as foils to one another. In such cases, the dynamic tension between them creates dramatic narratives and also illustrates the condition of being mortal (as, for example, in "Encountering Fire," where Tao Yuanming contrasts the constancy of the mind with the time-bound fragility of the body).

"On Drinking" V, one of Tao Yuanming's best-known poems, provides another example of the tension between constancy and change. The occasion presented in "On Drinking" V comes close to embodying a type of moment I have described via the traveler's fantasy in "Returning from the Capital, Blocked by Wind at Guilin": the poetic speaker's ideal of being completely at home and at ease in his garden, with no stated expectation of having to go anywhere or do anything. This, then, is the ideal occasion—one almost without worries and anxieties, and where the experience of being mortal borders closely on the experience of being immortal—with access to timeless beauty and insight:[22]

結廬在人境	I built a cottage right in the realm of men,
而無車馬喧	yet there was no noise from wagon and horse.
問君何能爾	I ask you, how can that be so?—
心遠地自偏	The mind far away, its place becomes remote.
採菊東籬下	I picked a chrysanthemum under the eastern hedge,
悠然見南山	off in the distance gazed on south mountain.
山氣日夕佳	Mountain vapors glow lovely in twilight sun,
飛鳥相與還	where birds in flight come together and return.
此還有真意	I have a sense of some truth in this:
欲辨已忘言	I want to expound it but have forgotten the words.

This poem presents an occasion of beauty and tranquility, one that the speaker experiences alone in his own garden. However, even here, subtle tensions suggest what this speaker might have in common with more anxious speakers in Tao Yuanming's other poems.

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[22] Lu Qinli, *Jin shi*, 17.998; translation by Owen, *An Anthology*, 316.

The central conceit has to do with the location of the house—a trope that also appears in the opening of "Encountering Fire." In an opposite construction from that poem, the house in "On Drinking" V is in a place where the speaker might easily encounter disturbances, but in fact he encounters none (this he credits to his mind's being "far away" 遠). The first couplet establishes this paradox by emphasizing that despite being located directly in the "realm of men" 人境, there is "no noise from wagon and horse" 無車馬喧. The poem develops this scenario with the description of an outdoor scene devoid of people. (This, again, is in contrast to the structure of a poem like "Returning to Dwell in Gardens and Fields," poem one: there the speaker has ostensibly removed himself to a relatively remote location, but even at home he sees and hears signs of village life.) In "On Drinking" V, the only creatures the speaker encounters are wild: birds in flight.

The poem establishes the speaker's tranquil state of mind in relation to his physical location. However, even at this idyllic remove from other people, the speaker faces an ambiguous aporia. Though there is no interference from other people or even from the natural world, at the end of this poem he reaches a state of having "forgotten the words" 忘言; even if this is an ecstatic moment, it is still, on some level, an occasion of mixed feelings and of loss.

In "On Drinking" V, home is a point of departure for an exploration of the freedom of the mind. As in "In the Sixth Month of the *Wushen* Year [408], Encountering Fire," the speaker emphasizes the mind's independence—perhaps even its ability to engage with an immortal realm. The poem moves quickly beyond the framework of home, showing how the speaker's position in the midst of apparent calm and stability creates the conditions in which he can approach the sublime. However, the poem's final couplet alerts us to the fact that the

speaker has become destabilized. Thus, the surprising drama of "On Drinking" V inheres in

its representation of the self as it approaches, and then moves just beyond, its normal limits.

These lines show us that the speaker has managed to capture something of the infinite just as

it fades out of the reach of mortal perception and language.

The poems "On Drinking" focus not on specific dated occasions, but on a group of

drinking occasions. Being tipsy or drunk enables one to sidestep social norms—to

experience time, space, and other people in a slightly (or drastically) different way. Within

Tao Yuanming's work, this activity takes on a certain set of associations: when he is

drinking, he seems to be especially happy and carefree—and abler than at other times to step

outside of the rigid confines of time and place.

Moreover, the desire to experience time differently is not confined to Tao

Yuanming's writing about drinking. The fantasy of stepping out of time appears throughout

Tao Yuanming's work—in his prose as well as his poetry. Perhaps the most explicit

example of this phenomenon is the prose preface to the poem "The Peach Blossom Spring"

桃花源詩[23] (referred to below as the "Tale of the Peach Blossom Spring" 桃花源記). This

piece describes a man's accidental discovery of a charmed land that seems to have fallen out

of the cycle of dynastic time.

Although the village in the "Tale of the Peach Blossom Spring" seems almost

magical or surreal, the story can, in any case, also be understood as fully "realistic."

Certainly, the juxtaposition of *normal* and uncanny elements is important within the story

itself: after having accidentally discovered an isolated village where the people don't even

know what dynasty it is, a man who catches fish for a living eventually returns to the real

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[23] Lu Qinli, *Jin shi*, 16.985–86.

world: the world of empire, where people are embedded in the kind of historical, dynastic time that the villagers have escaped.

While in "The Tale of the Peach Blossom Spring" and elsewhere Tao Yuanming introduces the fantasy of timelessness—of human life as a continuous, uninterrupted cycle—he does not indicate that this fantasy is attainable in a lasting or permanent way. Unlike the people during the "time of Donghu's rule" 東戶時 who "drummed their [full] bellies and had no worries 鼓腹無所思 in the poem "Encountering Fire," Tao Yuanming's poetic speakers can never quite seem to enter—or remain in—that kind of idyllic, prelapsarian state. Instead, they seem to have more in common with the man in the "Tale of the Peach Blossom Spring"—a person who is unable to find the enchanted place a second time and is therefore banished to the "real" world of struggles and political turmoil.

Nonetheless, even if Tao Yuanming's poetic speakers can't escape time, they do fantasize about such an escape. "Untitled" 雜詩 IV (one of the group of "Twelve Untitled Poems" 雜詩十二首) provides an example:[24]

	丈夫志四海	A real man makes the world his goal,[25]
	我願不知老	but I just want not to feel old:
	親戚共一處	all my family in one place
	子孫還相保	where sons and grandsons help each other;
5	觴絃肆朝日	with cup and song to start each day
	樽中酒不燥	the bottle never going dry;
	緩帶盡歡娛	with loosened belt relax and enjoy;
	起晚眠常早	get up late and go to sleep early.
	孰若當世士	Why be like the men of today,
10	冰炭滿懷抱	their breasts crammed full of ice and fire?

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[24] Lu Qinli, *Jin shi*, 17.1006; translation adapted from Hightower, 189.

[25] This line appears in Cao Zhi's 曹植 (192–232) poem "Presented to Cao Biao, Prince of Bai-ma" 贈白馬王彪詩, part six; Cao Zhi's poem focuses on kin relations and reflects on the intensity of his feeling for his brother, his own "bone and flesh" 骨肉 (Lu Qinli, *Wei shi*, 7.452–54).

百年歸丘壟	A hundred years and they go to the grave,
用此空名道	following the road of empty fame.

Invoking and abruptly dismissing the model of the "real man" 丈夫, this poem's speaker says

that he just wants to avoid feeling the effects of age and to be together "in one place" 一處 with

his family. Contrasting himself with the abstract "real man," the speaker articulates a different

and more personal set of desires; while the "real man" 丈夫 of the poem's first line "makes the

world his goal" 志四海, the speaker's simply desires to live in a continuous cycle of

uninterrupted ease—each day more or less like the next. Significantly, the word used for the

man's "goal" (*zhi* 志), is also central to the traditional theory of poetry (where it is translated as

"intention" and "purpose"). Though *zhi* 志 does not necessarily evoke the traditional theory of

poetry here, it does carry a sense of serious and deep commitment to a purpose. Tao Yuanming

distances himself from the formality of this phrase and this model of ambition it suggests,

presenting instead the fantasy of living in the leisurely comfort of a multigenerational home for

as long as possible.

In contrasting himself with the "real man," the speaker draws attention to his alternate set

of values. At the same time, however, these values—and their difference from conventional

ones—remain ambiguous. For example, the speaker's presentation of what he wants seems to

suggest a certain laziness and lack of ambition. At the same time, he does value at least one

difficult and traditional enterprise—that is, having a family. Moreover, the poem suggests that

the speaker values family not out of a sense of duty, but from a more immediate sense of

personal desire; the "want" or "wish" (*yuan* 願) he expresses in the poem's second line.[26] The

speaker expresses his values in another way when he critiques the "men of today" 當世士 in the

poem's closing couplets (9–12). With this disdain for people who follow the "road of empty

fame" 空名道 (12), we find an unexpectedly sharp bitterness behind the speaker's innocent,

charming wish for a simple life.

The occasion of "Untitled" IV is an offhand moment of thought that the speaker has at an

unspecified time. Here significance arrives—or appears to arrive—unexpectedly. This is related

to the type of occasion that we find in the series "On Drinking"; for example, in "On Drinking"

V, above, the poet has a solitary, unscheduled experience with something like the sublime. To

isolate these regular, un-dramatic moments constitutes a profound questioning of what kind of

stories and activities are, on the one hand, literary, and, on the other hand, relevant or important

to identity. Tao Yuanming's ability to harness the potential of such moments is in no small part

due to his ability to frame them as occasions; this enables readers to interpret them intertextually,

in light of his other writings and the self-representations therein.[27]

Tao Yuanming's prose writings have had considerable influence on how his poems are

read. This is especially the case because the personae of his prose writings seem to complement

and enhance the representations of himself in his poems. One such prose piece is "The

Biography of the Gentleman of Five Willows" 五柳先生傳, in which Tao Yuanming thinks

deeply—and skeptically—about how history and identity are constructed. The subject of the

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[26] Also, the family members mentioned in the poem are descendants, not parents—therefore, the poem may suggest that the speaker would be especially able to enjoy leisure because he would be in a senior position in the household he imagines.

[27] Owen emphasizes how unusual and surprising Tao Yuanming's choice to write non-social occasional poems is ("The Self's Perfect Mirror: Poetry as Autobiography," 83).

piece is a man who has managed to step out of time—a man who may or may not represent Tao

Yuanming himself:[28]

> We don't know what age the master lived in, and we aren't certain of his real name. Beside his cottage were five willow trees, so he took his name from them. He lived in perfect peace, a man of few words, with no desire for glory or gain. He liked to read but didn't try too hard to understand. Yet whenever there was something that caught his fancy, he would be so happy he would forget to eat. He had a wine-loving nature, but his house-hold was so poor he couldn't always get hold of wine. His friends, knowing how he was, would invite him to drink. And whenever he drank, he finished what he had right away, hoping to get very drunk. When drunk, he would withdraw, not really caring whether he went or stayed. His dwelling was a shambles, providing no protection against wind or sun. His coarse clothes were full of holes and patches; his plate and pitcher always empty; he was at peace. He often composed literary works for his own amusement, and these gave a good indication of his aims. He forgot all about gain or loss, and in this way lived out his life.
> The summation: Qian-lou's wife once said, "Feel no anxiety about loss or low situation; don't be too eager for wealth and honor." When we reflect on her words, we suspect that Five Willows may have been such a man—swigging wine and writing poems to satisfy his inclinations. Was he a person of the age of Lord No-Cares? Was he a person of the age of Ge-tian?
> 先生不知何許人也。亦不詳其姓字。宅邊有五柳樹。因以為號焉。閒靜少言。不慕榮利。好讀書。不求甚解。每有會意。欣然忘食。性嗜酒。家貧不能恆得。親舊知其如此。或置酒而招之。造飲輒盡。期在必醉。既醉而退。曾不吝情去留。環堵蕭然。不蔽風日。短褐穿結。簞瓢屢空。晏如也。常著文章自娛。頗示己志。忘懷得失。以此自終。贊曰。黔婁有言。不戚戚于貧賤。不汲汲于富貴。其言茲若人之儔乎。酬觴賦詩。以樂其志。無懷氏之民歟。葛天氏之民歟。

This piece could only exist in a cultural context where the form of the biography had already

become standardized. Sima Qian pioneered the genre of biography in his *Records of the Grand*

Historian, a work of history that spanned the ancient period through the Han dynasty, and which

set the standard for future works of this kind. Each of Sima Qian's biographies appeared

complete with a historian's comment—similar to the final comment in this piece—at its end.

Biographies were an important element of all subsequent dynastic histories, and they had a deep

impact not only on historiography and literature, but also on the way that people thought about

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[28] Yan Kejun, *Quan Jin wen*, 112.2102b. Translation by Owen, *An Anthology*, 314–15.

and discussed professional accomplishment, character, and identity. Familiarity with this genre makes the play on its norms in Tao Yuanming's text especially funny, surprising, and meaningful.

The short biography encapsulates a person's life in a formulaic way—namely, via the listing of his accomplishments and positions. In essence, it presents an individual's life according to his contribution to the larger scholarly, bureaucratic, and ritual projects in which he engaged. But Tao Yuanming's biographer—as I will call the narrator of this piece—faces an unusual task. The "Gentleman of Five Willows" doesn't fit the pattern of a scholar or civil servant, and he appears to be at every step almost evading the narrator's grasp—living a life just out of reach of the literary technology seeking to ensnare him.

Although "The Biography of the Gentleman of Five Willows" has long been read autobiographically, the piece itself does not make this claim.[29] In fact, the biographer begins by stating—admitting, almost—that he doesn't know the real name of his subject. This is the ostensible reason that the biographer uses what he says is the man's own name for himself: the "Gentleman of Five Willows" 五柳先生. Insofar as the "Gentleman of Five Willows" chooses his own name, this piece embodies another kind of fantasy, different from but similar to that in "Untitled" IV. It would indeed be a remarkable achievement to succeed in naming oneself in an official dynastic history; to accomplish this would mean not only escaping the family name and lineage associated with one's clan, but also and creating a separate identity worthy of being recorded and passed down to posterity.

"Five Willows'" 五柳 choice of name gives some indication of what this separate

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[29] This is a core element of early biographies of Tao Yuanming. See Tian's translation and discussion of the biography by Xiao Tong 蕭統 (501–531) and of others in the *Book of Jin* (*Jin shu* 晉書), the *Book of Song* (*Song shu* 宋書), and the *History of the Southern Dynasties* (*Nan shi* 南史) (*Dusty Table*, 68–69).

identity might be. Like many of the occasions that Tao Yuaming chooses to write about in his poetry, these "five willows'" are at once generic and specific. Further, the speaker's name suggests that he may care more about the natural features around his home than about the dwelling itself. This inference accords with the fact that Five Willows' house is extremely run-down; we are told that "His dwelling was a shambles, providing no protection against wind or sun" 環堵蕭然, 不蔽風日. While we might regard this as in large part the result of poverty, it also seems likely that Five Willows is unbothered by this situation (as we are told he is "at peace" 晏如 with regard to his tattered clothes and lack of food and drink). If we read Five Willows' name as a suggestion of his love of the outdoors, we might even imagine that he prefers a house that does not block out the elements.

Needless to say, much about Five Willows remains obscure. Even the fact that he himself chose this name is uncertain, as the statement "so he took his name from them" 因以為號焉 could also be understood in the passive voice: "so his name was taken from them." We cannot be sure if this name was used by the man himself, or if, perhaps, it was used by others—the larger community that wished to tell stories about him. Finally, even if this name was of his own choosing, we are not certain of how he wanted to use it. Although Five Willows writes literary works, we are told explicitly that he has "no desire for glory or gain" 不慕榮利; therefore, whether he would want to appear in a biography—and have a posthumous reputation—is highly uncertain.

Five Willows and the biographer are locked in an unresolvable struggle: competing indirectly to represent Five Willows. Like the town in "The Tale of the Peach Blossom Spring"––an impossibly secluded and idealized place—Five Willows seems to embody an ideal of constancy and timelessness. Characters in each of these works—that is, Five Willows and the

group of villagers who live in Peach Blossom Spring—succeed in stepping out of time. And like the man who struggles to understand and return to the town described in "The Tale of the Peach Blossom Spring," the biographer who narrates "The Biography of the Gentleman of Five Willows" is attempting to capture something—in this case, someone—who has escaped time. Moreover, Five Willows has escaped time in multiple ways, not just by living in an undated or unspecified period. Even within his own life, he seems to have avoided the kind of narrative shaping that most people submit to.

Five Willows' life forms a timeless routine—somewhat like the ideal life imagined in "Untitled" IV, though without mention even of family members. In this sense, Five Willows is the opposite of the authorial persona in "The Return" and the poetic speaker of "Returning to Dwell in Gardens and Fields." The speakers in those works are strongly invested in an overall shaping narrative for their lives: in both cases, the narrative of returning home. In contrast, even the biographer insists on the continuity of Five Willows' life: this is described not as a specific sequence of events, but as a series of habits and routines that recur. Any sense of when or how the subject "stepped into" his peaceful life and routine—including any mention of parents or youth—is notably absent. And while the piece acknowledges that Five Willows is certainly mortal, his inevitable death is presented in as undramatic a way as possible: he "lived out his life" in this manner until the end 以此自終.

Though one might read the biography as a celebration of Five Willows and a mockery of the role of the biographer, the relation between the subject and the narrator is more complex. The author appears to identify with both roles; for while certain resemblances between Tao Yuanming and Five Willows are undeniable, the biographer is also portrayed sympathetically. The biographer's desire to understand his subject—his reaching out towards this vague and

remote person—is conveyed with particular sensitivity.

The struggle between these two figures turns on the question of how the individual life is conceived of and narrated. The biographer believes that a life is an occasion: one shaped by certain ambitions and achievements as well as certain inevitabilities. But a biography cannot be accomplished without reference to time and place—and those details are not fully known. So instead of fully conforming to the norms of biographical writing, the biographer makes concessions, framing the piece in terms of the occasions that make up Five Willows' own life. The biographer's acceptance of Five Willows' name seals the two in a kind of compromise: with no other name to give him, the biographer accepts the man's name for himself. Significantly, the biography opens with this capitulation to Five Willows' self-representational choice.

Five Willows appears to manifest an alternate set of values. The pattern underlying his actions, the biographer suggests, is not the search for fame and accomplishment, but something more interior and elusive: "to amuse himself" 自娛. We see this in the listing of activities he enjoys: drinking, reading, and writing. At the same time, the reader is told that he writes literary works which "gave a good indication of his aims" 頗示己志; here the biographer alerts us to the fact of these works but not to their contents, showing us that Five Willows' "aims" 志 remain just out of view.

The biographer ends with questions about his subject. He asks, "Was he a person of the age of Lord No-Cares? Was he a person of the age of Getian?" 無懷氏之民歟, 葛天氏之民歟. These questions show the biographer still struggling to understand Five Willows in terms of known or nameable contexts. But while he never appears to enter into Five Willows' way of seeing the world, the piece suggests that there is a meaningful point at which two realities—the continuous, moment-to-moment reality of subjective experience and the man-made reality of

textual, historical knowledge—intersect and make each other visible.

Shifting Time-Frames:

Tao Yuanming returns repeatedly to the question of how people relate to time, considering

whether there are different kinds of time and whether people live in one time register or move

between several. While "The Biography of the Gentleman of Five Willows" and "The Tale of the

Peach Blossom Spring" dramatize conflicts between characters who occupy different kinds of

time, some of Tao Yuanming's poems show how the speaker moves between different time-

rhythms during his everyday routine.

When considering the question of different kinds of time, it may be helpful to recall the

importance of reclusion as a cultural practice during the early medieval period. Although the role

of the recluse had existed since the ancient period, it became newly relevant in the centuries after

the collapse of the Han dynasty. By Tao Yuanming's time, the notion that an educated man of a

certain status might remove himself from urban life in order to cultivate spiritual or intellectual

life was already well established[30]—to the point of being a cliché. Reclusion was the dominant

model for an alternative lifestyle (that is, an alternative to court and bureaucratic service). But at

the same time, Tao Yuanming's writings show that he was far from being a passive consumer of

pre-existing ideals of reclusion. Instead, his writings resist simplistic, self-satisfied models of the

recluse life and its values.

One way in which Tao Yuanming's poetry complicates pre-existing literary depictions of

reclusion is by showing details of his lifestyle and emphasizing the necessities on which he

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[30] For example, Mark Edward Lewis writes, "The Northern and Southern Dynasties witnessed a proliferation of new spaces and of groups acting in those spaces—new 'intermediate' organizations and activities that lay between the family and the state." *China Between Empires* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 45.

depends to survive. In the poem "In the Eighth Month of the *Bingchen* Year [416], Harvest at the

Farmhouse at Xia Sun" 丙辰歲八月中於下潠田舍穫詩, the speaker leaves an unspecified

location and embarks on a brief trip through a natural landscape:[31]

	貧居依稼穡	A poor man relies on sowing and reaping,
	勠力東林隈	and all my strength went into East Grove plot.
	不言春作苦	I will not say the springtime work was bitterly hard,
	常恐負所懷	I only dreaded the failure of my hopes.
5	司田眷有秋	The Warden of the Fields notes the harvest
	寄聲與我諧	and sends the word I want to hear;
	飢者歡初飽	The hungry man will gladly eat his fill
	束帶候鳴雞	and sits with tightened belt to wait for cockcrow.
	揚楫越平湖	With waving oars I cross the level lake
10	汎隨清壑迴	and follow the clear twisting valley stream.
	鬱鬱荒山裏	In the dense growth of wild mountains
	猿聲閑且哀	the apes' cry is lonesome and plaintive.
	悲風愛靜夜	The melancholy wind loves a quiet night
	林鳥喜晨開	the birds in the grove rejoice in the break of day.
15	曰余作此來	Since I have been involved in this
	三四星火頹	twelve times the Fire Star has declined.
	姿年逝已老	With the years my frame goes toward old age
	其事未云乖	but not once have I stayed away from work.
	遙謝荷蓧翁	Tell the Old Man with the Hoe for me,
20	聊得從君栖	I have managed to do what he did.

This two-setting poem illustrates the continuity of the speaker's consciousness as he moves

between activities. Though his frame of mind changes as he moves from thinking about the "East

Grove plot" 東林隈 to the boating scene, the ending of the poem emphasizes that the work of

farming is never far from his mind, no matter where he is.

This poem depicts both the speaker's specific, occasional experience of his role as a

farmer and also his general understanding of this role. In terms of his general understanding,

speaker emphasizes both the total duration of his time as a farmer ("Twelve times the Fire Star

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[31] Lu Qinli, *Jin shi*, 17.996–97; translation adapted from Hightower, 122–23.

has declined" 三四星火頹, 16), and his single-minded commitment to that role ("But not once have I stayed away from work" 其事未云乖, 18). However, in the process of articulating this commitment, the speaker shows that this role is a source of deep anxiety. In particular, he tells us at the opening that he has put his strength into the land (2); and at the end of the poem, even after his brief trip on the lake, he appears if anything *more* anxious about his farming than before. This communicative urgency suggests the extent to which the speaker is trapped by his own limitations as well as those of the land.

This speaker is in a sense the opposite of Five Willows and other figures in Tao Yuanming's work who step out of time. Even when this speaker rows on the lake, he seems to encounter only melancholy there. In fact, the speaker of this poem actively resists the fantasy of stepping out of time; when the implicit possibility of shirking work looms near, he pushes it away defensively, declaring "not once have I stayed away from work" (18).

Using occasional techniques, the poet evokes the speaker's complicated feelings by presenting him in a series of situations. The situational narrative is not explicitly stated, but the reader must assume that after the speaker receives the message from Warden of the Fields, he departs in order to inspect the harvest at Xia Sun. Following the speaker on this trip, the reader experiences some of the struggle and discontinuity that the speaker feels.

The subject of moving between different activities enables Tao Yuanming to describe how character is made up of private hopes and fears—not just the successes and failures that are documented in official biographies. In order to track his speaker's inner life, Tao Yuanming accounts for and represents different kinds of time to show how the speaker remains continuous—himself—even while moving between different scenarios. In a sense, a pattern for this kind of continuity already existed in anonymous works such as the "Nineteen Old Poems,"

which show generic characters moving through sequences of activities. However, those writers had not described how a *particular* person would undergo such an experience. Unlike previous writers, Tao Yuanming emphasizes his speaker's vacillation and variability, creating an intuitively human and newly convincing mode of self-representation.

Self as Occasion, Self as Sequence of Occasions

The sections above discuss how Tao Yuanming repeatedly uses certain models for conceptualizing the self: namely, the self as changing; the self as staying the same; and the self as longing for home, stability, and a place of sustenance and origin. Many of Tao Yuanming's literary works center on an occasion during which the one or more of these three models of the self is active. This section addresses two longer poetic works that combine these models in contrasting ways: the ten-stanza poem "On Naming My Son" and the ending poems of the series "Returning to Dwell in Gardens and Fields." These works offer two different models of how a series of poetic units can represent a larger, aggregate identity.

Divining a Name: Tao Yuanming's "On Naming My Son"

Like "The Biography of the Gentleman of Five Willows," "On Naming My Son" is explicitly concerned with what it means to have a name: a linguistic label that reflects and affirms certain norms. Unlike the name "Five Willows," the name divined in "On Naming My Son" is a conventional one that Tao Yuanming's son receives directly from his father. The transmission of this name—through history and into the occasional present—is the story that the poem tells.

The first stanza begins in the furthest reaches of recorded time—more in myth than in history:[32]

i

悠悠我祖	Ancient are our ancestors,
爰自陶唐	descended from Tao Tang.[33]
邈為虞賓	In the remote past there was the guest in Yu;[34]
歷世重光	successive generations added to their glory.
御龍勤夏	Dragon Driver served the Xia,[35]
豕韋翼商	Boar-Thong supported the Shang.[36]
穆穆司徒	Majestic was the Minister of Instruction;[37]
厥族以昌	through him our clan gained fame.

These lines establish the clan's origins in the Xia (c. 2070–c. 1600 BCE) and its rise to prominence in the Shang (c. 1600–c. 1046 BCE) dynasty. Meanwhile, the poem's content and form places it at the intersection of three generic traditions: the four-syllable line poem, the description of one's family lineage, and genre of "family instructions" (*jia xun* 家訓)—advice usually given by a father to his sons.

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[32] Lu Qinli, *Jin shi*, 16. 970–71; translation adapted from Davis, 26–29 and Hightower, 33–35. See also Yuan Xingpei, *Tao Yuanming ji jianzhu*, 40–53 and Tian, *Dusty Table*, 57 and 89–90.

[33] Tao Tang 陶唐 is an epithet for the ancient ruler Emperor Yao 堯 (r. 2333–2234 BCE); this name provides the ground for the dubious claim that Tao Yuanming's clan was descended from Yao. The name is said to have come from combining the name of Yao's place of origin (Tao hill 陶丘) with a position acquired later on (Marquis of Tang 唐侯) (Yuan Xingpei, *Tao Yuanming ji jianzhu*, 44n1).

[34] According to Yuan Xingpei, Yao's successor Shun 舜 treated Yao's son Dan Zhu 丹朱 with the courtesy one shows to a guest. Dan Zhu was called a "guest in Yu (虞)" because Shun was known as Shun of Yu (Shun's fiefdom was in Yu) (Yuan Xingpei, *Tao Yuanming ji jianzhu*, 44n2).

[35] "Dragon Driver" is a translation of the title Yulong 御龍; according to the *Shi ji* account, Liu Lei 劉累 was a dragon-tamer who received this title from Emperor Kongjia 帝孔甲. The title was later inherited by the lords of Shiwei 豕韋. See *Shi ji* (Taipei: Ding wen shuju, 1981), 2.86.

[36] "Boar Thong" is a translation of the name Shiwei 豕韋; the *Zuo zhuan* indicates that the lords of Shiwei, who served the Shang dynasty, were related to the Yulong family, whose ancestors served the Xia dynasty. See *Zuo zhuan, Shisanjing zhushu*, 35.608b.

[37] The "Minister of Instruction" 司徒 refers to Tao Shu 陶叔, another of Tao Yuanming's ancestors (Yuan Xingpei, *Tao Yuanming ji jianzhu*, 45n4).

On the one hand, the four-syllable line sets an archaic, ceremonious tone. More compressed than the five-syllable line, the four-syllable line remained in use after the five-syllable line became popular and is particularly suited to formal and official occasions. On the other hand, the telling of a family history was, at this time, not common in poetry. In his choice to write this poem, Tao Yuanming was likely influenced by a well-known early work, Wei Meng's 韋孟 (2nd C. BCE) "Poem of Remonstrance" 諷諫詩.

Stanzas two through four recount episodes in the family's history up to just before Tao Yuanming's time:

ii

紛紛戰國	There was turmoil among the warring states[38]
漠漠衰周	with the collapse of the declining Zhou.
鳳隱于林	The phoenix hid in the grove;
幽人在丘	the recluse stayed in the hills.
逸虬遶雲	Soaring dragons coiled about the clouds,
奔鯨駭流	dashing whales put fear into the waters.
天集有漢	Heaven had conferred success on the Han house,
眷余愍侯	and looked with love on our Lord Min.[39]

iii

於赫愍侯	How glorious was Lord Min!
運當攀龍	It was his fortune to climb with the dragon.[40]
撫劍風邁	Gripping his sword, with steps like the wind
顯茲武功	he displayed his martial skill.
書誓山河	His ruler swore by river and mountain[41]

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[38] The opening two lines refer to the Warring States (c. 475–221 BCE) period of the Zhou (c. 1046–221 BCE) Dynasty.

[39] The Lord Min 愍侯 of Kaifeng 開封 was Tao She 陶舍. See Ban Gu's 班固 (32–92) *Han History* (*Han shu* 漢書), 16.491.

[40] "To climb with the dragon" means to have one's fortunes rise with the dynastic founder, here Han Gaozu 漢高祖 (r. 206–195 BCE), founder of the Han dynasty.

[41] This line refers to an oath that Han Gaozu swore to his ministers; "river and mountain" 山河 refer to the Yellow River and Mount Tai (*Han shu* 漢書, 16.1a–b).

啟土開封	and granted him a fief in Kaifeng.[42]
亹亹丞相	Unwearying was the Prime Minister,[43]
允迪前蹤	he followed his predecessor's tracks.

iv

渾渾長源	The constant spring flows pure and clear,
鬱鬱洪柯	the tree branch is lushly adorned;
群川載導	the many streams flow in the right direction,
眾條載羅	the massed twigs spread out like a net.
時有語默	As times demand, we are voluble or silent;[44]
運因隆窊	following chance, we rise and decline.
在我中晉	In our own Eastern Jin Dynasty,[45]
業融長沙	the heritage shone out from Changsha.

Stanza two maps political and geographical landscapes in terms of one another. The stanza alludes to the classical notion of reclusion as a justifiable political choice, signifying the extent of political chaos by showing how it extends to the natural realm. In stanza three, the poet turns from large-scale history to a narrower, more regional concern. Finally, in stanza four, the poet traces the history of his family from the Han to the Eastern Jin Dynasty.

Family lineage was an all-important fact of life in the Southern Dynasties. A person's place in the wider culture was almost wholly determined by one's clan, and therefore one's personal identity could not be considered separately from one's clan membership.[46] But while this speaker's interest in his clan is conventional, it is an interest that most of Tao Yuanming's other poetic speakers don't seem to share. Moreover, as we will see, the poem shifts in tone as it

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[42] This refers to Tao Shi, Lord Min, being enfeoffed in Kaifeng (Yuan Xingpei, 45n11).

[43] The Prime Minister is Tao She's son Tao Qing 陶青, who was also Lord of Kaifeng.

[44] The phrase "voluble or silent" 語默 refers to the *The Book of Changes* (Yi 易) (*Shisan jing zhu shu*, 7.151b).

[45] This line reads, literally, "In our own middle Jin"; the "middle Jin" 中晉 was a term used for what we now call the Eastern Jin (317–420), the period that began after wars brought an end to the Western Jin (266–316) and forced Emperor Yuan, Sima Rui 司馬睿 (r. 318–323), to relocate the capital to Jiankang.

[46] For a discussion of this aspect of early medieval culture, see, for example, Lewis, *China Between Empires*, Chapter 2.

progresses; in its later sections, the poem seems to call into question the significance of the lineage it described with such veneration earlier on.

Stanza five gives a picture of Tao Yuanming's most prominent relation, his great-grandfather Tao Kan 陶侃 (259–334), the Duke of Changsha:

v
桓桓長沙	Bold and valiant was the Lord of Changsha!
伊勳伊德	He was deserving, he was virtuous.
天子疇我	The Son of Heaven rewarded him,
專征南國	making him sole charge of the southern march.
功遂辭歸	His task accomplished, he took his leave and returned home;
臨寵不忒	enjoying favor, he still did not err.
孰謂斯心	Who will say a heart like his
而近可得	can be found today?

This stanza foreshadows the occasional, present-day section of the poem (stanzas seven through ten)—where the poet-speaker discusses his failings—by emphasizing the traditional, ideal conception of Tao Kan's character. In particular, the speaker emphasizes that Tao Kan remained pure and virtuous even when he could have taken advantage of the emperor's trust.

Stanza six moves on to discuss the characters of Tao Yuanming's immediate predecessors, his grandfather and father:

vi
肅矣我祖	Full of dignity was my grandfather,
慎終如始	careful to end as he began.
直方二臺	He was a just and upright minister;[47]
惠和千里	his benevolence reached a thousand miles.
於穆仁考	Oh kindly was my late father,
淡焉虛止	he was retiring and modest.
寄迹風雲	He cast his lot with wind-blown clouds—
冥茲慍喜	his angers and joys were always obscure.

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[47] This line has been understood in multiple ways; in particular, the variant "three" 三 in place of "two" 二 creates the Han dynasty term "the three levels" *san tai* 三臺, which refers collectively to three official positions: "minister" 尚書, "censor" *yushi* 御史, and another type of official (the *yezhe* 谒者).

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Here, the influence of Tao Yuanming's grandfather can be felt extending outwards, "reaching a thousand miles" 惠和千里. This model conforms to the Confucian ideal whereby a single person's proper performance of his role can stabilize society as a whole. The speaker also presents his father as a figure worthy of respect; a "retiring" 淡 and "modest" 虛 character, his father either keeps his "angers and joys" 慍喜 "obscure" 冥, or, following a variant, "casts [them] away" 寘.[48]

As the poem develops, it brings the discourses of family history and instruction into dialogue with a third discourse: that of the speaker expressing himself in an occasional context. Stanzas seven through ten focus on the poet-speaker's present-moment situation as he divines a name for his son. This section begins in stanza seven, where the speaker turns at last to himself, contrasting his character with those of his grandfather and his father:

vii

嗟余寡陋	I, alas, am lacking and lowly;
瞻望弗及	I gaze after them but cannot reach their level.[49]
顧慚華鬢	Looking back [at myself], I'm ashamed of my white temples;
負影隻立	carrying my shadow, I stand alone.
三千之罪	Of all the three thousand crimes,
無後為急	the worst is to fail to have a successor.[50]
我誠念哉	I have truly thought about this
呱聞爾泣	when I hear your infant cry.

The speaker describes himself as alone in a state of guilt, self-consciousness and self-blame.

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[48] Lu Qinli cites this variant (*tian* 寘) as appearing in multiple sources, including the Su Shi edition of Tao Yuanming's works (Su xie ben 蘇寫本).

[49] This line appears in the *Shijing. Mao shi zhushu*, 2.77b.

[50] Lines five and six refer to two sayings about the duty to have an heir in *The Classic of Filial Piety* and in *Mencius*. See *Xiao jing zhushu* 孝經注疏 in *Shisanjing zhushu*, 6.42b and *Mengzi zhushu* 孟子注疏 in *Shisanjing zhushu*, 7.137a.

However, for all his self-reprimand, we find out at the end of the stanza that the speaker is actually *not* guilty of the "crime" 罪 he mentions: "to fail to have a successor" 無後.

Stanzas eight through ten express the speaker's cautiously hopeful attitude towards his son. This section suggests that while the speaker is glad to have an heir, his view is not as straightforward as that of the ancient texts he mentions in stanza seven. In these stanzas the speaker expresses particular concern about his son's character:

viii
卜云嘉日	I divine; the day is auspicious.
占亦良時	Cast lots; the time is lucky.
名汝曰儼	To you I give the name Yan,
字汝求思	and with it the appellation Qiusi.
溫恭朝夕	Mild and respectful, from morning to evening
念茲在茲	reflect on it, ponder it.
尚想孔伋	Still bearing in mind Kong Ji,[51]
庶其企而	may you aspire to be like him.

ix
厲夜生子	The leper whose child is born at night
遽而求火	rushes out to seek a torch.[52]
凡百有心	Everyone has such an impulse,
奚特於我	so how could this be unique to me?
既見其生	Once you have seen the child born,
實欲其可	it is natural to want him to be able.
人亦有言	Others have also said this;
斯情無假	these feelings are not put on.

x
日居月諸	As the days and the months go by,[53]

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[51] Kong Ji 孔伋 (483-402 BCE), courtesy name Zisi 子思, was Confucius' grandson and an important early Confucian philosopher; the speaker is presumably thinking of Kong Ji because of the similarity between his courtesy name and the one he has chosen for his son (Qiusi 求思).

[52] These two lines refer to a story in the *Zhuangzi* in which someone fetches a torch in order to examine his or her newly born child; the person fears that he or she may have passed on either ugliness or disease to the child (this choice depends on how one reads the character *li* 厲, which appears in the *Zhuangzi* passage as well as in this line of the poem) (*Zhuangzi* 5.12.450).

[53] This line appears in two poems in the *Shijing* (*Mao shi zhushu*, 2.75a and 2.78a–79a).

漸免於孩	gradually you will leave childhood behind.
福不虛至	Good fortune does not arrive for no reason,
禍亦易來	and, what's more, troubles come easily.
夙興夜寐	"Early to rise and late to bed"[54]—
願爾斯才	I hope you may have this capacity.
爾之不才	And, if you aren't capable,
亦已焉哉	well then, that's that!

Character emerges as the poem's core subject in these stanzas. While the father's, grandfather's, and great-grandfathers' characters are praised earlier in the poem, the poet-speaker's own character is derided, and the infant's character is yet to be determined. Slipping from his predecessors to himself, the poet brings together discourses that are often separated: the moralizing, somewhat formulaic expression of appreciation for one's ancestors, and the occasion-based poetic self-representation discussed earlier in this chapter.

In this poem the framework of *home* that dominates so much of Tao Yuanming's writing has, in a sense, been replaced by *family*. And, just as Tao Yuanming's treatment of home reveals home to be both a meaningless and meaningful category, depending on how the speaker invests it with significance, here family serves a similar function. Although his presentation acknowledges the extent to which family is considered important, the speaker emphasizes its limitations, too. In particular, it cannot transmit character; the speaker emphasizes that despite being endowed with a family lineage at birth, his son could have any kind of character at all. If he wants to develop virtues, he will have to "aspire [to catch up]" 企 (viii, 8).

Even while stanzas one through six of the poem treat a chronological sequence of ancestors, the poem as a whole casts doubt on the ultimate meaningfulness of the hierarchy implied by this structure. If each life in the series is fundamentally guided by a combination of

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[54] This line is a set phrase that appears multiple times in the *Shijing* as well as in other ancient texts.

chance and hard work—the picture the speaker paints for his son—then there is little room left for sentimental narratives of collective family identity. In fact, if any allowance is made for a collective identity in the latter part of the poem, it is in emphasizing what all parents—not all family members of a given clan—have in common with each other. That is, by comparing himself with the "leper" 属 (ix, 1),[55] the speaker suggests that both are men subject to the whims of chance, and that on becoming fathers, they share a basic human mixture of hope and fear for their newly born child.

In these ways, "On Naming My Son" juxtaposes family narrative and personal narrative. On the level of family, the poem offers a list of lives in succession. However, the speaker does not discuss birth or childhood until he reaches his own life and the naming of his son. The speaker dramatizes this event in stanza seven, acknowledging that the birth of a son is significant to him because it frees him of the crime of having no heir. And yet, this is not represented as a life moment of great personal transformation, such as in the literary works, discussed above, that represent the author's life moment of return. All the reader knows for certain is that with the birth of a son, the speaker has transformed himself with regard to social values and expectations. In this section of the poem, Tao Yuanming suggests that success in life is more complex than just having an heir; even if having an heir makes him less ashamed before others, each person—both the father and the son—still must aspire to virtue on his own.

Thus, while ostensibly telling the story of his family lineage, Tao Yuanming also tells the story of how personal agency and identity are bound tightly together with social norms and conventions. A person might be able to create and live his own occasion—as Five Willows purportedly does—but even so, someone still might discover his "real name" and place him back

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[55] See Note 52 for a discussion of this word and its source in *Zhuangzi*.

in the context of his family tree. Only the status of being a fictional character would make Five Willows invulnerable to this threat.

With its emphasis on family and its unusual structure, "On Naming My Son" stands out in Tao Yuanming's body of work. Here, rather than make use of the more delimited time-frames that structures so much of Tao Yuanming's poetry, this poem uses two larger time-schemes: those of dynastic time and of the slow evolution of his clan. Still, on a deeper level, "On Naming My Son" remains a poem about seeking the "place of one's birth" (*suo sheng* 所生)[56]—the phrase used by the speaker in "Returning from the Capital, Blocked by Wind at Guilin." In "On Naming My Son," the concept of family is substituted for the home—the metaphorical center of the self in much of Tao Yuanming's work. However, the speaker finds that family lineage is able to provide this stabilizing, originary function only to a limited degree.

Returns within the *Return*: The End of "Returning to Dwell in Gardens and Fields"

Unlike the sections of "On Naming My Son," which are arranged so as to tell a chronological story, the poems of "Returning to Dwell in Gardens and Fields" are organized thematically. Echoing the dramatic life moment of return referred to in the title and the opening of the first poem, discussed above, the series also contains many other more immediate, daily departures and returns. After the first poem describes the speaker's "gardens and fields" 園田 residence, the second poem goes on to address social relations between the villagers, and the third poem treats farming and the rhythm of leaving and returning home each day.

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[56] As mentioned in Note 9, this phrase has a double meaning and can also be translated as "the person who gave birth to me."

The final two poems in particular dramatize the process of departure and return. Poem four describes a family outing, and in the final poem the speaker returns and hosts a feast at home. Poem four repeats the autobiographical frame of the first poem in the context of a new activity:[57]

	久去山澤游	Long have I left wandering in hills and marshes,
	浪莽林野娛	deprived of the pleasures of woods and moors;
	試攜子姪輩	now taking along my sons and nephews,
	披榛步荒墟	pushing back the thicket, we walk to a ruined village
5	徘徊丘壠間	we linger among the grave mounds:
	依依昔人居	vaguely recognizable are the places where people once lived.
	井竈有遺處	There are remains of wells and hearths,
	桑竹殘朽株	rotten stumps of mulberries and hemp,
	借問採薪者	I ask someone gathering firewood,
10	此人皆焉如	"Where did all the people go?"
	薪者向我言	the wood gatherer says to me,
	死沒無復餘	"All is dead and gone—nothing is left"
	一世異朝市	In our lifetime court and market change—
	此語真不虛	these truly are not empty words.
15	人生似幻化	Human life is like a conjured illusion:
	終當歸空無	in the end it will return to nothingness.

Referring, presumably, to his thirty years living elsewhere, the speaker says that he has "for a long time" 久 been away from two types of landscape: "hills and marshes" 山澤 (1) and "woods and moors" 林野 (2). The vocabulary he uses—of "wandering" 游 (1) and "pleasure" 娛 (2)—indicate that he expects these landscapes to be simple and enjoyable. However, as in the first poem, his actual experience of the landscape turns out to be more problematic.

Immediately, the group finds themselves not in unmarked wilderness, but among "grave mounds" 丘壠 (5) in "a ruined village" 荒墟 (4) . The speaker seems uneasy as he "lingers" 徘徊 (5) and directs a question toward the wood gatherer. Like the village smoke in the series' first

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[57] Lu Qinli, *Jin shi*, 17.991–92. Translation modified slightly from Tian, *Dusty Table*, 97–107.

poem, the traces of villagers are described here with the same binome: *yiyi* 依依 (translated here as "vaguely recognizable," 6). But while the villagers in the first poem were alive and well, producing smoke from their kitchens, these villagers have long since vanished. In the meantime, their homes have been transformed into wilderness—a place where the woodsman gathers wood. Rather than offer the simple "pleasure" 娛 he expects to find on this outing, this place confronts the speaker with the fact that "human life" 人生 (15) in the end "will return to nothingness" 歸空 無 (16), a larger and more permanent return than the "return to live in fields and gardens" 歸園 田居 that the series ostensibly treats.

The fifth and final poem of the series begins in a solemn mood continuous with that in which the previous poem ended:[58]

悵恨獨策還	Dejected, I return alone, staff in hand,
崎嶇歷榛曲	walking on a rugged road through the thickets.
山澗清且淺	The mountain brook, clear and shallow,
遇以濯吾足	is where I wash my feet.
漉我新熟酒	Straining some new wine,
隻雞招近局	I invite my neighbors with a chicken.
日入室中闇	The sun goes down, the room gets dark,
荊薪代明燭	firewood replaces bright candles.
歡來苦夕短	Growing cheerful, we suffer from the brevity of the evening,
已復至天旭	already the sun is rising once again.

The speaker in poem four began the poem accompanied by his family but ended in a lonely contemplation of human life's illusory nature; here the reverse takes place as the speaker begins alone but ends up surrounded by company.

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[58] Lu Qinli, *Jin shi*, 17.992. Translation modified slightly from Tian, *Dusty Table*, 107.

Perhaps more than the other poems in this series, this one contains explicit echoes of the earlier poetic tradition.[59] And at the same time that the poet's voice becomes mixed with those of past poets, the speaker enters into a group of his neighbors. Though Tao Yuanming's poems contain many references to his interactions with neighbors and farmers, this one is unusual in its lack of insistence on the speaker's separation from the group; at the end of the poem, the speaker shares feelings of "cheer" 歡 and "suffer[ing]" 苦 with his guests (9).[60] Here, many returns are overlaid: explicitly, the speaker returns home after his walk. This return creates a sense of closure for the series, echoing and reaffirming the larger movement of return named in the sequence's title. On an implicit level, he "returns" in the sense that this poem presents his embeddedness both in a community of neighbors and a community of poets, storytellers, and human users and shapers of language.

At the same time, Tao Yuanming's series presents the impossibility of returning home truly and completely. In a kind of Zeno's paradox, the dramatic homecoming announced by the title and the opening of the first poem are thoroughly broken down into a series of smaller, more mundane departures and returns. At any of these moments, the speaker may question whether he truly belongs—as he questions in several nuanced moments, including one version of the end of the first poem.[61] Only if we look at the story on a broader, more generalized level can we see a true or simple homecoming. The final poem offers us a glimpse of this story: there, in the domestic evening "dark" 闇 (7) lit with "firewood" 荊薪 (8), the speaker's separateness is blurred at last. For a moment, the speaker is almost subsumed within the timeless warmth of

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[59] Tian discusses the echoes of the *Chu ci* in *Dusty Table*, 107–8. Also, the theme of feasting and lamenting the brevity of life was common in early medieval poetry.

[60] Tian discusses this line in *Dusty Table*, 108.

[61] See Notes 17 and 20, above.

social activity—but this moment ends when he notices that the next day has arrived already. The image of social cohesion disappears like the vanished villagers and the "conjured illusion" 幻化 (15) of human life in poem four.

With its depiction of daily, occasional returns, this series creates a new perspective from which to consider the speaker's larger life moment of return. Its sequence of episodes and occasions demonstrates that the speaker's identity is not pre-given and stable, but rather is an in-process, developing composite of roles and activities. While this presentation does not undermine the importance of the return to home as a larger life moment, it does emphasize the degree to which the speaker's ability to represent himself depends on the shifting elements that make up the place where he lives, the people who live there, and the language that he uses.

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This chapter has sought to describe the variety of ways in which Tao Yuanming describes himself in his writing. Through individual poems, stories, and other linguistic expressions, Tao Yuanming analyzes his speakers and himself via different role-types, activities, and experiences. At the same time, his method of occasional framing indicates that he does not regard such distinctions as fundamentally lasting. Rather, these are fleeting, occasional categories. They are, however, the necessary conditions under which we write, live, and experience our more lasting selves, whose essence Tao Yuanming hints at when he refers to ancient longings for home or for a return to our birthplace.

Tao Yuanming uses similar strategies not only to represent himself, but also to represent his family members, fictional characters, and others. Thus, with these strategies, Tao Yuanming not only represents *himself,* but also various aspects of the human condition and of the conditions of life during the period in which he lived. In particular, Tao Yuanming incorporates acute

observations about human psychology and behavior into his writing; as we have seen, he observes how people interpret and respond to experience while it is happening, and also how their understandings of themselves change over time. The framing devices he uses enable him to incorporate these dimensions into his poetry, creating new kinds of realism and representation.

I have suggested that emphasis on Tao Yuanming's naturalness has lead scholars to overlook one of the central aspects of his literary technique: his sensitivity to and understanding of the way people change under different conditions. There is also, however, an appealing paradox here. Tao Yuanming's literary techniques enable him to create portraits of human nature that are so vivid that they make readers feel that they know "the real person" and that this person is appearing directly before them—as if unmediated by literary art. This impression is itself a proof of Tao Yuanming's craft. To an extent, then, the antithetical perspectives on Tao Yuanming may be reconciled.

Tao Yuanming is, on close examination, and read in his historical context, by no means a simple or unreflective writer; at the same time, his sentimentality is neither deceptive nor insincere. Instead, he presents versions of himself that are products of the humorous, realistic, and psychologically acute ways in which he exploits all the resources of literary technique. One reason Tao Yuanming remains so widely read and beloved is that he does not seek entirely to dismantle our sense of an essential self. In the end, despite his full grasp of changeability and self-doubt, his exploration of traditional notions of "return" invokes some of the oldest traditions and stories wherein people seek to return once again to their most natural selves. But Tao Yuanming doesn't locate this natural self in any single feature of identity or experience. Even as he dramatizes the search for an origin, he undermines the possibility of ever perfectly concluding that search. He asks how might we return to a place of origin, but he knows that the answer will

depend on the questioner's location in place, time, and life. Even if many of his literary personae

seem sure that one particular moment of return has been irreducibly significant to them, they

constantly rethink, rediscover, and rearticulate what that significance actually is.

Chapter 3

"Steadying the Heart": Xie Lingyun and the Self in Motion

Xie Lingyun is celebrated for his role in establishing "mountains and rivers poetry" (*shanshui shi* 山水詩), a kind of poetry that foregrounds the description of natural landscapes. Readers have consistently been enthralled by this element of his works, and a large portion of the critical response to Xie Lingyun focuses on the artistry and innovation of his "mountains and rivers" passages. These certainly merit the attention they receive; however, the dominance of the *shanshui* discourse has often focused attention on the *shanshui* passages within poems more than on other elements, such as their occasional frameworks and the structure of each poem as a whole.[1]

The present chapter begins from a different premise: that Xie Lingyun's body of work, like Tao Yuanming's, is fundamentally self-representational. This chapter will examine how individual poems and groups of poems depict their speaker and his activities, considering in particular how Xie Lingyun uses occasional frameworks to depict unique, personal, and

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[1] For overviews of the development of landscape poetry see, for example, the three texts mentioned briefly in Note 23 of the Introduction: Frodsham, "*The Origins of Chinese Nature Poetry*," Donald Holzman, *Landscape Appreciation in Ancient and Early Medieval China,* and Lin Wenyue, *Shan shui yu gu dian*. Of more particular relevance to this chapter, Swartz discusses critical attitudes towards the crafted nature of Xie Lingyun's poetry in "Naturalness in Xie Lingyun's Poetic Works." Other studies that have been of importance to this chapter include Yü-yü Cheng, "Bodily Movement and Geographic Categories: Xie Lingyun's 'Rhapsody on Mountain Dwelling' and the Jin-Song Discourse on Mountains and Rivers," *The American Journal of Semiotics* 23.1–4 (2007): 193–219; Harrison Tse-Chang Huang, "Excursion, Estates, and the Kingly Gaze: The Landscape Poetry of Xie Lingyun" (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2010); David R. Knechtges, "*How to View a Mountain in Medieval China*," *Hsiang Lectures on Chinese Poetry*, Centre for East Asian Research, McGill University, 6 (2012): 1–56; Wendy Swartz, "There's No Place Like Home: Xie Lingyun's Representation of His Estate in 'Rhapsody on Dwelling in the Mountains,'" *Early Medieval China* 21 (2015): 21–37; Xiaofei Tian, *Visionary Journeys*; and Francis Abekin Westbrook, *Landscape Description in the Lyric Poetry and "Fuh on Dwelling in the Mountains" of Shieh Ling-yunn* (PhD diss., Yale University, 1973), 190.

emotionally charged experiences. To the extent that *shanshui* passages feature in this analysis,

these are considered as an element of Xie Lingyun's larger self-representational project.

Xie Lingyun's literary self-representation centers on his depiction of himself as a

traveler, explorer, and wanderer. Unlike Tao Yuanming's speaker, who identifies strongly with

the houses in which he lives and the routines he inhabits there, Xie Lingyun's speaker identifies

with looser, more spontaneous patterns of wandering and traveling. This speaker's points of

reference are constantly changing, and he is often carried away by his emotions. However,

though these traits make Xie Lingyun's speaker difficult to characterize as a person, this should

not dissuade us from analyzing the literary patterns that structure our view of the character and

his experiences.

Related to the "recluse," the wanderer type is deeply rooted in the literary and

philosophical tradition.[2] In Xie Lingyun's self-representations, the wanderer becomes the

framework for a character who orients himself in relation to his journeys. Examining the

different kinds of journey the speaker takes, this chapter will emphasize that Xie Lingyun's

representations of himself as a traveler depend, in part, on depictions of himself *at rest*. While

casting himself in the role of the tireless wanderer, Xie Lingyun's literary oeuvre also shows his

speaker's inevitable, human need to pause, take a break, or occasionally to settle down. With

these depictions Xie Lingyun's self-representations become especially complex, compelling, and

human. Through his acknowledgment of and concessions to his limitations, Xie Lingyun creates

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[2] As I will discuss below, Xie Lingyun seems to craft his wanderer persona with reference to the lifestyle represented by the recluse Xiang Zhang 向長 (fl. 1st century CE), who famously roamed the five sacred mountains. However, the peripatetic or "wandering" recluse does not appear to be a distinct or otherwise common type; moreover, during much of his career Xie Lingyun cannot fully identify as a recluse, as the main criteria of reclusion is renunciation of office.

a unique self-portrait, one that emphasizes the dialectical process of manifesting identity in the way one moves through the world and towards one's ideals.

Taking the emotionality and variability of Xie Lingyun's speaker as a starting point, this chapter will analyze the ways in which the speaker constructs, inhabits, and discards forms of self-definition. The first section considers how Xie Lingyun represents the speaker's longing for the outdoors on an occasion when he is stuck indoors, convalescing from illness. The second section examines two kinds of travel or movement: the speaker's relocations, on the one hand, and his wandering and wilderness excursions on the other. The third section discusses works that combine these two kinds of travel in their representation of occasions when the speaker pauses or settles in a particular place.

Facing the Empty Forest

Many of Xie Lingyun's poems depict occasions of change and transition. Filled with agency as well as anxiety, the speaker appears to be constantly discovering, creating, and looking for himself. These transformations often take place outdoors, and the sections that follow examine poems in which outdoor environments predominate. Before turning to those works, however, this section reads a poem in which the speaker is situated inside. "Climbing the Tower by the Pool" 登池上樓 presents the speaker's experience of early spring when he has recently recovered from an illness:[3]

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[3] Lu Qinli, 宋詩 *Song shi*, 2.1161. Translation adapted from those by Stephen Owen, *Anthology of Chinese Literature,* 321; Xiaofei Tian, *Visionary Journeys: Travel Writings from Early Medieval and Nineteenth-Century China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2011), 124; and Frodsham, *The Murmuring Stream*, vol. I, 121. See also Gu Shaobo 顧紹柏, ed., *Xie Lingyun ji jiaozhu* 謝靈運集校注 (Zhongzhou guji chubanshe, 1987), 63; and Huang Jie 黃節, ed., *Xie Kangle shi zhu*, *Bao Canjun shi zhu* 謝康樂詩注, 鮑參軍詩注 (rpt. Beijing: Zhonghua, 2008), 69–70. The poem was written in 423; the tower and pool in the poem are said to be in Yongjia (modern Zhejiang) where Xie Lingyun was sent to serve as the magistrate after he was banished from the capital.

	潛虯媚幽姿	Submerged dragons make beautiful their hidden forms;[4]
	飛鴻響遠音	flying geese, their echoes sound in the distance.
	薄霄愧雲浮	[The geese] strike the heavens, making me ashamed before the floating clouds;
	棲川怍淵沈	[the dragons] rest in rivers, making me embarrassed before the deeps.
5	進德智所拙	To advance through virtue is where my wisdom is too clumsy;[5]
	退耕力不任	but my strength will not bear retiring to plow the fields.
	徇祿反窮海	Seeking a salary, I have returned to the far-off sea
	臥痾對空林	lying sick, I faced the empty forest.
	衾枕昧節候	Amid blankets and pillows, I was ignorant of the season;
10	褰開暫窺臨	I lifted them off for a moment to peek out.
	傾耳聆波瀾	I inclined my ear to listen to the waves and breakers;
	舉目眺嶇嶔	I lifted my eyes to gaze at the towering peaks.
	初景革緒風	The early spring does away with the leftover wind[6]
	新陽改故陰	the new yang changes the old yin.
15	池塘生春草	The ponds give rise to spring bushes;
	園柳變鳴禽	the garden's willows change their crying birds.
	祁祁傷豳歌	The flourishing calls up sad thoughts of the Bin ode[7]
	萋萋感楚吟	amid full and luxuriant growth, I am touched by the song of Chu.[8]
	索居易永久	Living alone, it easily feels like a long time has passed[9]

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[4] "Submerged dragons" 潛虯 refers to a line statement (*yaoci* 爻詞) on the hexagram "pure yang" (Qian 乾) in the *Classic of Changes* (*Yijing* 易經): "A submerged dragon does not act" 潛龍勿用 (*Shisanjing zhushu*, *Zhou yi* 周易, 1.8-1). Translation from Richard John Lynn, *The Classic of Changes: A New Translation of the I Ching as Interpreted by Wang Bi* (New York: Columbia Press, 1994), 132.

[5] The phrase "to advance through virtue" 進德 appears in the commentary on the words of the text of the hexagram "pure yang" (Qian 乾) in the *Yijing*: "The noble man fosters his virtue [or "advances his virtue"] and cultivates his task" 君子進德脩業. *Zhou yi*, 1.14-1 and 1.14-2; translation from Lynn, 135–6.

[6] This echoes lines in "Crossing the River" 涉江, one of the "Nine Pieces" 九章 in the *Chu ci*: "Climbing the height at E-zhu I looked back, / Ah! The last breath of autumn and winter's chill" 乘鄂渚而反顧兮，欸秋冬之緒風. Hong Xingzu 洪興祖, ed., *Chu ci bu zhu* 楚辭補注 (Beijing: Zhonghua shu ju, 1983), 4.129. Translation from David Hawkes, *The Songs of the South: An Ancient Chinese Anthology of Poems by Qu Yuan and Other Poets* (London: Penguin Books, 2011), 160.

[7] "Bin ode" 豳歌 refers to the *Shijing* poem "Qi yue" 七月; this allusion suggests homesickness by referring to the lines that describe a woman leaving her community on a spring day to become the wife of a prince: "The spring days are drawing out; / They gather the white aster in crowds. / A girl's heart is sick and sad / Till with her lord she can go home" 春日遲遲、采蘩祁祁。女心傷悲、殆及公子同歸. Translation from Arthur Waley, *The Book of Songs: The Ancient Chinese Classic of Poetry* (New York: Grove Press, 1996), 120.

[8] This refers the *Chu ci* poem "Summoning the Recluse" 招隱士: "A prince went wandering, and did not return / in spring the grass grows, lush and green" 王孫遊兮不歸，春草生兮萋萋 (*Chu ci bu zhu*, 12.233; translation adapted from Hawkes, 244). This allusion also suggests homesickness and the passage of time.

[9] This line and the following line are based on lines in the *Rites* (*Liji* 禮記) in which Zi Xia 子夏 says "I left the group to live alone, and it has already been a long time" 吾離群而索居，亦已久矣 (*Shisanjing zhushu*, *Liji*,

20   離群難處心   leaving the flock, it is difficult to steady the heart.
      持操豈獨古   How could it be those who had constancy and integrity are all in the past?
      無悶徵在今   The portents of a life without worries are found today.[10]

"Climbing the Tower by the Pool" describes the speaker looking out at the flourishing activity of nature from the perspective of an indoor convalescence. In an inversion of the pattern of Xie Lingyun's excursion poems—those which often chart the speaker's forward progress through the natural world—this speaker stays indoors. For example, even the speaker's "climb" 登 (mentioned in the title) takes place inside, within a tower. At the same time, this speaker *is* in motion; we see this when we compare the two positions in which the poem shows us the speaker: sick "amid blankets and pillows" 衾枕, and "climbing" 登 the "tower" 樓 in the title. Though the poem does not spell out the meaning of the move between these two positions, the reader infers its significance from the poem's account of the speaker's illness and recovery. And more explicitly, the "climb" mentioned in the title appears to be a physical enactment of the longer process of recovery described in the poem.

The poem's first lines present ostensibly wild creatures—the "dragon" 虯 and the "geese" 鴻—in their natural habitats. The reader follows the speaker's train of thought as the speaker first positions himself in relation to these creatures and then articulates his feelings about himself and his livelihood. Only in line eight do we see the speaker in the present: here we find him not in the situation presented by the title but in a much more vulnerable one, "lying sick, facing the empty

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7.129a). In this passage Zi Xia not only describes the loneliness of living apart from the group but also suggests that being on his own has contributed to critical lapses in judgment and mistakes.

[10] This line refers to the commentary on the words of the text of the hexagram "pure yang" (Qian 乾) in the *Yijing*: "He hides from the world but does not regret [or "worry about"] it" 遯世无悶 (*Zhou yi*, 1.13b; translation from Lynn, 132).

forest" 臥痾對空林. This stark image emphasizes the speaker's divide from the landscape while also suggesting the extent to which he remains connected to it even when he is shut up indoors.

The speaker's feelings of being "ashamed" 愧 and "embarrassed" 怍 before the dragon and the geese operate on multiple levels. Most explicitly, these creatures demonstrate their strength and confidence as they easily traverse the extreme reaches of the natural world; comparing himself to them from his weakened position, the speaker becomes especially self-conscious about his inadequate "strength" 力. Unlike the dragons and the geese, the speaker has no habitat that he feels he can naturally or successfully occupy. However, as the poem progresses, the speaker's natural energy and curiosity get the better of him. Even if he is still "ashamed," he can't help but "peek out" 窺臨, beginning to reconnect himself with the outside world. In the second half of the poem he gradually achieves a renewed relationship with nature; and although he can't "strike the heavens" 薄霄 like the geese, he seems to accept that climbing the tower and looking out is the best he can do, at least for now.

Nonetheless, despite his improved health, the speaker's hesitation and discomfort do not disappear. In the final section of the poem the speaker reflects on the fact that as he experiences the change of season and his renewed health, he does so alone. Xie Lingyun's poetic speakers frequently express longing for a companion or regret about the absence of a community. Often these expressions come at the end of a poem, when the speaker has already described his experience of a particular situation; then, entering into a reflective mood, the speaker indicates that he would like to share this experience with someone else.[11] In this poem, the phrase "leaving

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[11] Xie Lingyun's longing for a companion often takes the form of wishing for a "confidante" or (more literally) "appreciative mind" *shang xin* 賞心; for example, expression of the lack of this figure occurs in the final couplet of the poems "Visiting South Pavilion" 遊南亭, "Setting Out to the Province from the Capital (422 AD)" 永初三年七月十六日之郡初發都, and "I've Put in Orchards and Groves South of the Fields, Opened up a Stream and Planted Trees" 田南樹園激流植援. He also uses many other constructions to express his loneliness and desire for

the flock" 離群 (20) alludes to a passage in the *Rites* (*Liji* 禮記) in which Zi Xia suggests that a lapse in his adherence to ritual is the result of his isolation from the community that once sustained him.[12] Xie Lingyun does not explicitly develop the moral theme of this story; instead, his phrase "it is difficult to steady the heart" 難處心 draws attention to the emotional experience of living alone. This line dramatizes how the speaker tries—with only limited success, it seems—to steady himself despite the absence of a community's stabilizing influence.

These lines are particularly poignant coming directly after a couplet that mentions the Bin ode 豳歌 and the song of Chu 楚吟—allusions which not only recall other lonely figures, but also remind readers of the way in which poetry functions as textual communities, helping people to articulate and stabilize meaning. These are ancient poems that had been sung and read for centuries; their meanings were broadly shared among a cultural group—and thus to experience emotion via these symbolic structures is to participate in that group. Xie Lingyun's depiction of his efforts to "steady the heart" suggests that the speaker frequently struggles to achieve emotional composure and to orient himself in relation to the world.

Like many of Xie Lingyun's poems, this one ends in meditation and self-questioning, without a clear resolution. Sickness, of course, is destabilizing, and requires bed-rest. But at the same time, resuming activity and re-entering the world is not in itself a stabilizing solution. Rehabilitation makes the speaker vulnerable to the regular cycle of seasonal change and to fresh emotions—those he refers to with reference to the Bin ode and the song of Chu. These teeming

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companionship; for example, in several poems he asks with "whom" 誰 can he share what he has experienced, and in another construction, in the final couplet of the poem "All Around my New House at Stone Gate are High Mountains, Winding Streams, Rocky Torrents, Thick Forests, and Tall Bamboos" 石門新營所住四面高山迴溪石瀨脩竹茂林詩 he writes that he "hopes to talk all this over with the wise" 冀與智者論 ("the wise" 智者 are in explicit contrast with "the common herd" 眾人 in the previous line).

[12] See Note 9, above.

springtime thoughts are harder to control than those of dull winter, when he "faced the empty forest." The reader can infer that the forest had appeared empty not only because of the bareness of the trees during winter, but also because of the speaker's distance and physical remove at that time. Here, as the speaker regains his ability to interact with the world, the world he perceives becomes, in turn, more complex.

Like Tao Yuanming's "Returning from the Capital, Blocked by Wind at Guilin," "Climbing the Tower by the Pool" shows how the speaker's occasional predicament shapes his outlook in the moment. Each speaker is stuck somewhere and longing to be somewhere else, and each one is overwhelmed, emotional, and uncertain of himself. However, unlike Xie Lingyun's speaker, Tao Yuanming's finds security in thinking of "how nice my garden is" 園林好—taking refuge in the thought that, sooner or later, domestic repose will put an end to his difficult journey. In contrast, Xie Lingyun's speaker denies himself the pleasant bubble of domesticity that might make the violence and vacillation of the world seem less threatening.

While Tao Yuanming's speaker indulges in the image of his garden as a privileged space separate from the distressing and unpredictable natural environment, Xie Lingyun's looks out directly on the garden below and sees that it is continuous with the wider world. Not only do the "ponds give rise to spring bushes" 池塘生春草, but the garden also hosts transient creatures (as we see in the line "the garden's willows change their crying birds" 園柳變鳴禽). And while Xie Lingyun's speaker does refer to one source of stability—the "flock" 群, it seems unlikely that the speaker will seek out actual human company. Instead, the closing lines indicate he intends to contemplate the figures of the past who lived with "constancy and integrity" 持操 and in so doing form a kind of spiritual community with them.

Xie Lingyun's and Tao Yuanming's poems each end with their speaker's reflecting on the occasion they have just undergone; however, the lessons they draw are almost the opposite of one another. Tao Yuanming's poem ends with the speaker's somewhat unrealistic declaration of that he will try to live better going forward; in contrast, Xie Lingyun's speaker does not expect things to get easier or simpler. Though his speaker's health has improved and the spring has come, the end of the poem finds his hope and idealism tempered by expectation of future difficulties.

Relocation and Wandering

Like the poem above, several of Xie Lingyun's other works—including the poetic exposition (*fu* 賦) "Dwelling in Mountains" 山居賦, discussed at the end of this chapter—also present situations in which physical impairment limits the speaker's ability to enter into and explore the world. These works stand out in Xie Lingyun's writing, examples of a self-representational strategy in which occasions of illness cause the speaker to reflect, in one way or another, on his identity as a traveler and wanderer. Before returning to these later on, however, I will address Xie Lingyun's more dominant self-representational strategy: that whereby he depicts himself an active participant in the world, a person moving between places and observing and interacting with elements of the world around him.

Poems that show the speaker engaging in some kind of movement or travel make up the bulk of Xie Lingyun's corpus. In these works the speaker's near-constant activity enables him not only to maintain his orientation towards the outdoors but also to enter into and move through it. This section analyzes these poems in terms of two representative categories: those about trips, including journeys undertaken in order to move or relocate; and poems about outings or

excursions. While this distinction might at first sound arbitrary, we find that these two kinds of poems are actually relatively distinct sets in Xie Lingyun's work. The primary difference between them is that the "trips" depicted in the former category are about travel undertaken for practical or professional reasons. In contrast, works in the latter category are about journeys undertaken, apparently, for the purpose of pleasure, leisure, exercise, or amusement. These excursions have no stated purpose at all, and they fit a loose category that we might describe in terms of hiking, exploring, and outdoors activity.

These two types of poem have further distinguishing features; for example, poems in the first category—that of the "trip"—tend to offer key pieces of social and biographical context, presenting the occasion of the poem in relation to information about their speaker's life circumstances and the situation that has motivated him to travel. In contrast, works in the latter category—that of the "excursion"—tend to eliminate most elements of social and biographical context. These poems focus on the experience of the excursion itself, often including more *shanshui* passages and settings. As I will discuss below, many of the "excursion" poems focus on the speaker's experience of an area he describes as especially remote and pristine, excluding most references to rural or populated areas.

Some of the differences between the "trip" poems and the "excursion" poems could be understood merely as the result of their different subject matter. For example, if one explains that a certain trip is undertaken for work, that explanation necessarily contains elements of social and biographical context. While this may be the case, the discussion below considers how poems in these two groups participate in distinct self-representational strategies. The repetition of these patterns across multiple poems encourages one to see these differences not merely as different of content, but as part of two contrasting self-representational techniques.

Poised Between There and Here

The speaker of "On Leaving My District" 初去郡 uses the occasion of a departure to reflect on his life choices in the past and to consider the turning point where he finds himself in the present:[13]

	彭薛裁知恥	Peng and Xue had just developed a sense of shame;[14]
	貢公未遺榮	Mr. Gong had not yet given up the pursuit of honors.[15]
	或可優貪競	Though better far than the greedy contenders for office[16]
	豈足稱達生	they could not be praised for their understanding of life.
5	伊余秉微尚	I still held on to my petty ideals;
	拙訥謝浮名	stupid and slow-tongued, I said farewell to empty renown.
	廬園當棲巖	My hut and garden served instead of a perch on the cliffs;
	卑位代躬耕	my lowly office replaced pulling a plough. [17]
	顧己雖自許	Looking upon myself, though I approved myself,
10	心迹猶未并	my heart and my path had not yet become one with each other.
	無庸方周任	Like Zhou Ren, I felt quite devoid of merits;[18]
	有疾像長卿	like Zhangqing, I was an invalid.[19]
	畢娶類尚子	I had married off my son like Master Shang.[20]

[13] Lu Qinli, *Song shi*, 3.1171; translation adapted from Frodsham, *The Murmuring Stream*, 134. See also Gu Shaobo, 97 and Huang Jie, 87–91. The poem was written in 423 when Xie Lingyun left Yongjia.

[14] Peng Xuan 薛宣 was an Eastern Han official who resigned when Wang Mang came into power, using the excuse of old age. Peng Xuan's request for retirement was granted, but he did not receive the usual honors. Xue Guangde 薛廣德 was also an eastern Han official who retired from his position. Gu Shaobo writes that Xie Lingyun criticizes these two figures for resigning from office too late and thereby incurring shame.

[15] Gong Yu 貢禹 (123–44 BCE) tried multiple times to retire from office and finally did so with honor.

[16] This echoes the *Li Sao* 離騷 line, "They all press forward in greed and gluttony" 眾皆競進以貪婪兮 (*Chu ci bu zhu*, 1.11; translation adapted from Hawkes, 69).

[17] This line alludes to a line in the *Rites* stating that officers of the lowest rank in the feudal states are entitled to an emolument equal to that of the husbandmen whose fields are of the highest quality: "the salary is sufficient to do away with the ploughing" 足以代其耕也 (*Liji*, 11.214a).

[18] This line refers to *Lunyu* 論語 16.1 in which Confucius says, "there are the words of Zhou Ren, 'When he can put forth his ability, he takes his place in the ranks of office; when he finds himself unable to do so, he retires from it'" 周任有言曰：陳力就列，不能者止 (*Shisanjing zhushu, Lunyu,* 16.146a).

[19] Zhangqing 長卿 is the courtesy name of Sima Xiangru 司馬相如 (c. 179–117 BCE); this prominent writer attempted to avoid office with the excuse of illness.

[20] Master Shang 尚子, known as Zhang Ziping or Xiang Zhang 向長, lived in retirement until he had married off his sons and daughters. Afterwards, it is said that he "followed his whims and with his friend Qin Qing of Beihai went

	薄遊似邴生	I was ready to wander off like Master Bing.[21]
15	恭承古人意	I paid respectful attention to the ancients' ideas
	促裝返柴荊	and hurriedly packed to return to my brushwood hut.
	牽絲及元興	In the Yuanxing period [402–404] I first wore silk seal-cord,
	解龜在景平	In the Jingping [423–424] I laid the tortoise seal aside.[22]
	負心二十載	For twenty years I went against my heart;
20	於今廢將迎	now my official duties are at an end.
	理棹遄還期	The boat was ready, soon it was time to depart;
	遵渚騖修坰	hugging the shore, we hurried through the marshes.
	遡溪 終水涉	We pushed upstream then hastened no more by water
	登嶺始山行	but began to climb along the mountain roads.
25	野曠沙岸淨	In the vast wilds, sandy shores lie pure;
	天高秋月明	in the high heavens, the autumn moon is bright.
	憩石挹飛泉	I rest on a rock, scooping water from a cliffside stream;
	攀林搴落英	I climb into the forest and cull the withering blossoms.
	戰勝臞者肥	Through winning their inner struggles the lean grow fat;[23]
30	鑒止流歸停	still water becomes a mirror as the flowing ceases.[24]
	即是羲唐化	What I have done makes me think of the transformations of Xi and Tang;[25]
	獲我擊壤情	so it seems to me as if I were playing [the game] *rang*.[26]

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to roam the five sacred mountains. No one knows what became of them in the end" 於是遂肆意，與同好北海禽慶俱遊五嶽名山，竟不知所終 (*Hou Han shu* 後漢書, 83.2759).

[21] Gu Shaobo identifies Master Bing 邴生 as Bing Manrong 邴曼容, an Eastern Han official who was interested in self-cultivation. He was dismissed from office for being noncompliant, and in the end became more famous than his brother Bing Han 邴漢 (See *Han shu*, 72.3083).

[22] The "tortoise" (*gui* 龜) refers to the seal of office, which had a tortoise-shaped handle.

[23] This refers to a passage from *Han fei zi* 韓非子 in which Zi Xia 子夏 says: "I am fat because I have won the battle" 戰勝故肥也; he makes this comment during an exchange where he explains that he grew lean when he was inwardly torn between righteousness and riches, but once righteousness won out, he then became fat. *Han fei zi* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1958), 7.416.

[24] Here the speaker examines himself in a mirror created by a pool of still water. This line alludes to *Zhuangzi*: "Confucius said, 'Men do not mirror themselves in running water—they mirror themselves in still water. Only what is still can still the stillness of other things.'" 仲尼曰：'人莫鑑於流水而鑑於止水。唯止能止眾止'. Guo Qingfan 郭慶藩, *Zhuangzi jishi* 莊子集釋 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1995), 2.193. Translation from Watson, *The Complete Works of Zhuangzi*, 35.

[25] Xi 羲 and Tang 唐 refer to Fu Xi and 伏羲 and Tang Yao 唐堯, legendary ancient kings who made significant reforms.

[26] This line is usually understood as the speaker recalling a simpler, ancient way of life (see Gu Shaobo, 101–102). *Rang* 壤 was an ancient game that was played during the time of Tang Yao 唐堯; *jirang* 擊壤 evokes the "*Ji rang*" song 擊壤歌, which Tao Yuanming alludes to in his two poems "In Praise of Ancient Farmers" 癸卯歲始春懷古田舍.

Like "Climbing the Tower by the Pool," "On Leaving My District" delays the direct presentation of its speaker; instead of opening with himself in his current position, he begins by comparing himself to various historical figures and describing himself in terms of dwelling places, occupations, and ways of life. With its litany of comparisons and distinctions, this part of the poem contrasts strongly with the second part; there the speaker travels into the outdoors, using language and themes that closely resemble those in Xie Lingyun's excursion poems.

The speaker's summary of his past life and activities is full of exasperation and self-criticism. In this section, his inability to find a way of life that suits him parallels his inability to settle on any single model or formulation of his situation. Finally, he frames his problem quite explicitly when he states, "my heart and my path had not yet become one with each other" 心迹猶未并 (10) and then turns to a series of allusions. Here it seems that he can only discuss his position through the example provided by others, cobbling together allusions to describe the situation he is in. These examples take up a large part of the poem; the speaker compares himself to nine historical figures, and this excess of historical models—combined with the speaker's continual self-criticism and the fact that he is traveling between places—creates the feeling of a radically decentered speaker.

The mode of representation in this section—in which the speaker compares and contrasts a variety of different locations and occupations—is one that I refer to as contextual representation. This is a version of the "autobiographical framing" previously discussed in the context of Tao Yuanming's poetry. However, Xie Lingyun's poems tend to juxtapose a number of locations—more than the two categories of "home" and "away from home" that Tao Yuanming often uses. Also, in addition to discussing areas where he personally lives or has lived in the past, Xie Lingyun's speaker sometimes includes examples of other locations or ways of

life. This dramatizes and complicates his juxtapositions, creating a network of comparison and contrast that illustrates a variety of lifestyles, activities, and circumstances.

Past the midpoint of the poem, however, the speaker sweeps aside his earlier, tortured convolutions and makes assertive, unqualified statements about his life. Arriving at the present, the speaker illustrates the scene of his departure by boat. Then, progressing along a multi-part journey, he engages in some of the signature gestures of Xie Lingyun's excursion poems; here time slows down as the speaker progresses towards a wilderness setting at the heart of the poem, describes this setting, and reflects on classical culture and inherited tradition.

The turning point in the poem (lines 19–20) is a paradigmatic example of the "autobiographical frame"—a device which Xie Lingyun may use here with Tao Yuanming in mind.[27] Here the speaker declares his break with his previous life in lines that have much in common with those in "Returning to Dwell in Gardens and Fields," poem one: "I erred and fell into the dusty snares, / went away for thirty years in all" 誤落塵網中, 一去三十年.[28] Like the speaker of Tao Yuanming's poem, Xie Lingyun's speaker describes decades spent following an oppressive way of life. In addition, each of these poems is concerned with a recent break with that oppressive path and a turn towards the natural world and rustic experience. However, while "Returning to Dwell in Gardens and Fields" shows the speaker embracing the life of a farmer, "On Leaving My District" indicates that its speaker escapes a settled existence—that in his "hut and garden" 廬園—in order to simply wander.

Here as elsewhere in his work, Xie Lingyun avoids characterizing his "wanderer"

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[27] Chapter 2 discusses the "autobiographical frame." In a related comparison, Owen writes about the resemblance between the opening of "Returning to Dwell in Gardens and Fields" and lines in Xie Lingyun's poem "Stopping by My Villa in Shining" 過始寧墅. "The Librarian in Exile: Xie Lingyun's Bookish Landscapes," *Early Medieval China* 2004.1 (2004): 203–226.

[28] Lu Qinli, *Jin shi*, 17.991–992. The translation is based on that by Tian, *Dusty Table*, 97–107.

lifestyle in terms of any specific routine. In this he differs from Tao Yuanming, who often represents the repeated actions and activities that make up his daily life. As I have discussed, Tao Yuanming frequently writes about nonspecific, recurring occasions, and the representation of these occasions has a strong impact on the reader's overall impression of Tao Yuanming's literary persona. In particular, Tao Yuanming's representation of himself in mundane and domestic situations encourages us to picture him in these normal everyday scenarios. In contrast, Xie Lingyun does not offer this kind of a domestic depiction of himself. Of course, it is extremely likely that this writer also spent time drinking, musing in his garden, etc.—however, he does not embrace these attitudes and activities as part of his literary persona. Nor does Xie Lingyun present his outdoor excursions as normal, repeating activities; even though these excursions seem to occur frequently, the poems and their titles present these outings as singular and specific.

If Xie Lingyun's speaker does not embrace the aesthetics of the normal and the everyday, this is in keeping with his idealization of the wanderer type. After all, it would not suit the wanderer to have an everyday routine. "On Leaving My District" emphasizes the physical freedom and spontaneity of the wanderer by contrasting it with the physically enclosed and delimited nature of conventional life. In particular, the speaker emphasizes that his former way of life was sedentary and confined; for example, we see that during the time that he follows "petty ideals" 微尚 he also identifies with dwellings and occupations and seems to be tethered to his "hut and garden" 廬園 (7). And by explicitly suggesting infirmity or physical disability, the allusion to Zhangqing (Sima Xiangru) (12) further accentuates the feeling of being stuck. Later, however, the speaker attains his freedom; here the choice to "rest" 憩 on a "rock" 石 in the outdoors indicates that he is no longer dependent on man-made huts and dwellings in order to

make his way in the world.

To the extent that "On Leaving My District" does characterize the wanderer way of life, it is largely through the speaker's allusions to "Master Shang" 尚子 and "Master Bing" 邴生. Xiang Zhang's biography in the *Hou Han shu* 後漢書 describes how he lived in poverty until he had married off his sons and daughters, after which point he "followed his whims and with his friend Qin Qing of Beihai went to roam the five sacred mountains" 於是遂肆意，與同好北海禽慶俱遊五嶽名山. The biography adds: "no one knows what became of them in the end" 竟不知所終.[29] This account emphasizes that once his family duties were taken care of Xiang Zhang became free to take on a new role, renouncing his former responsibilities and making the outdoors his home as a wanderer. Stories such as this one have a kind of mythic or tall tale appeal, and their brevity is part of what enables them to endow their subjects with mystery.[30] However, although Xie Linyun invokes stories such as this one as models, he also consistently shows how his own life diverges from these ideal patterns.

Xie Lingyun gravitates towards models of reclusion that emphasize freedom and wandering. Here we must look briefly towards the variety of models within the recluse tradition; for example, Alan Berkowitz's analysis of the patterns and thematic archetypes of the recluse begin with the "Moral Hero," a figure who he describes as the "prototype exemplar of so-called Confucian reclusion."[31] This figure advances into human society and retreats into the landscape based on when the Way is ascendant; though this model involves changing roles according to the

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[29] *Hou Han shu*, 83.2759.

[30] That is, they have a fairy-tale-like sense of unreality, but they do not actually defy reality. A more comprehensive account of Master Shang's life would have to fill in the details and answer questions about what a life spent wandering in the mountains would actually look like and consists of.

[31] Berkowitz, 20.

circumstances, it often presents the recluse as relatively centered and stationary with regard to his natural habitation. In contrast, the "untroubled idler" behaves in a way that is less schematic. Many of Xie Lingyun's poetic speakers seem to embody this type: a man "who shuns the centers of civilization" and who "eschews employment and conventional society […] but does so without the Paragon's moral stance or flagrant immaculacy."[32]

However, the "untroubled idler" type does not capture the specifics of Xie Lingyun's persona. This figure does not usually take up a peripatetic way of life, and many literary recluses—including Tao Yuanming—are considered to be direct manifestations of the "untroubled idler."[33] Thus, in his "wanderer" persona, Xie Lingyun appears to draw on the "untroubled idler" type while also emphasizing the example of Xiang Zhang's roaming. In addition, Xie Lingyun's self-representations regularly take into account the fact that he is conflicted about reclusion. The primary criterion of reclusion is the rejection of office, and therefore his career often disqualifies him from being a "real" recluse. At the same time, by adopting the practice of wandering and explicitly invoking the example of Xiang Zhang, he suggests that he can adopt some of the attributes of this life some of the time.

Many of Xie Lingyun's poems show an anxious and troubled side of his wanderer persona. This version of the "idler" type acknowledges the speaker's limitations and weaknesses, blending idealism and realism in complex ways and seeming to express Xie Lingyun's indecision about his lifestyle and about official service. Returning to "On Leaving My District," we find that the second half of the poem contains an unusually tranquil self-representation: here, wandering after explicitly rejecting official duties, the speaker embraces a recluse persona.

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[32] Berkowitz, 59.

[33] Berkowitz, 13.

Though the poem contains conflicted elements, the speaker's troubled self is relegated to the pre-reclusion first half of the poem. However, the straightforward depiction of himself as the "untroubled idler" is rare in Xie Lingyun's work; even when Xie Lingyun depicts himself wandering in his excursion poems, the speaker is often conflicted.

"My Neighbors Saw Me Off at Mount Fang" 鄰里相送方山詩 is another poem that presents the speaker moving from one place to another, and like "On Leaving My District" it also contains a central episode in which the speaker encounters the outdoors:[34]

	祇役出皇邑	Accepting my service I left the Imperial city;[35]
	相期憩甌越	soon enough I expect to repose in Ou and Yue.[36]
	解纜及流潮	Undoing my moorings, I catch the tidal currents,
	懷舊不能發	attached to old friends, I cannot depart.
5	析析就衰林	Whistling, whistling—the forests approach their decline,
	皎皎明秋月	glistening white—the bright autumn moon.
	含情易為盈	Harboring emotion, it is easy to fill up;
	遇物難可歇	encountering things, it is difficult to rest.[37]
	積痾謝生慮	Repeated illness has made me decline concerns about livelihood.
10	寡欲罕所闕	When one has few desires, then one seldom lacks anything.
	資此永幽棲	Possessing these, I shall stay in seclusion forever,
	豈伊年歲別	for this is no parting to be measured in mere years.
	各勉日新志	Let each of you strive for the "daily renewal of the will";[38]
	音塵慰寂蔑	your news will comfort my loneliness and solitude.

[34] Lu Qinli, *Song shi*, 2.1159. Translations consulted: J.D. Frodsham, *The Murmuring Stream*, 117 and Tian, *Visionary Journeys*, 123 (the latter includes only the poem's opening four lines). See also Gu Shaobo, 40 and Huang Jie, 53–55.

[35] This echoes a line by Cao Zhi 曹植 (192–232): "In the clear dawn I set out from the imperial city" 清晨發皇邑 (in "Presented to Cao Biao, Prince of Bai-ma" 贈白馬王彪詩).

[36] Ou 甌 and Yue 越 refer to Yongjia, which had been the commandery of Dong Ou 東甌 during the Han; the capital there was held by a king who originally came from Yue 越.

[37] Lines seven and eight seem to refer to *Daodejing* 道德經, 39: "If the spirits lacked what made them numinous they might cease their activity. If the valley lacked what made it full it might run dry" 神無以靈，將恐歇；谷無以盈，將恐竭. Zhu Qianzhi 朱謙之, *Laozi xiaoshi* 老子校釋 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1984), 157. Translation from Ivanhoe, *The Daodejing of Laozi*, 42.

[38] This refers to the Commentary on the Judgments (*tuanzhuan* 彖傳) of the hexagram "great domestication" (Da xu 大畜) in the *Yijing*: "In *Daxu* we find the hard and strong and the sincere and substantial gloriously renewing their virtue with each new day" 大畜，剛健篤實輝光，日新其德. *Zhou yi*, 3.67b; translation from Lynn, 299.

While the speaker of "On Leaving My District" discusses several locations and examples of ways of life, "My Neighbors Saw Me Off at Mount Fang" presents just two places and the journey between them. This poem introduces these two locations in the first couplet and goes on to illustrate the speaker's anxiety about leaving the "Imperial city" 皇邑 and committing himself to a "secluded" 幽 way of life in "Ou and Yue" 甌越. While articulating the conventional anxieties and regrets that one expresses at parting, the poem also uses description of the natural world to portray a complex picture of the speaker's psychology. Encapsulating the speaker's experience of this moment, the poem's depiction of his encounter with the outdoors also suggests how the speaker's unsteadiness may extend into his new life in another place.

This poem shows the speaker's capacity to be not only moved by nature, but also deeply moved by it—significantly and possibly dangerously stirred. For example, the poem's first section describes the speaker's departure and the chaotic feelings that accompany it; we are shown that once the traveler has "undone [his] moorings" 解纜 he is at the mercy of sensory assaults from sound and sight (the "whistling" 析析 and "brightness" 皎皎). As if overwhelmed by these impressions, the speaker turns away from the immediate scene, describing his situation in generalized but still evocative terms: now he is "filled up" 盈 with "emotion" 情, and it is "difficult to rest" 難可歇 when "encountering things" 遇物.

As a whole, the poem dramatizes the conflict between the speaker's emotions and his rational decision-making faculties. Xie Lingyun frames this paradox in the second couplet: although he has already "undone [his] moorings" 解纜, he still claims that he nonetheless "cannot depart" 不能發. But of course, even despite his "attachment to old friends" 懷舊, the boat "catches the tide" 流潮 and moves on immediately. In response to his emotional discomfort

the speaker makes resolutions and compromises. He first seeks to frame the situation in terms of permanence and absolute principles, saying "I shall stay in seclusion forever" 永幽棲. This gesture of renunciation occurs repeatedly in Xie Lingyun's work; even though, here and elsewhere, his isolation is cited as a primary source of his instability, the speaker seems to grasp at a provisional form of stability with his assertion of his intent to remain *permanently* in isolation.

The poem, and the encounter with nature in particular, highlight the speaker's risk of losing stability. The loss of his friends establishes his condition of vulnerability, and the encounter with nature illustrates the way he has become exposed to myriad feelings associated with his situation. Here, as in many other poems, Xie Lingyun emphasizes the way in which being unstable and in transition make his speaker especially receptive to stimulus in the outside world. Though he tries to assert the guidelines that he would live by, the poem shows the extent to which these efforts are thwarted by the nature of experience. However much he might like to organize his emotions, the poem shows that the situation strains his ability to do so and therefore also limits his ability to understand and define himself in a coherent way.

The Structure of a Wilderness Excursion

The outdoors appears often—almost constantly—in Xie Lingyun's writing. Insofar as readers are told, Xie Lingyun's poetic speaker never grows weary of venturing into it: these excursions appear to be the poetic speaker's primary source of happiness, diversion, and variety, and the poems suggest that the speaker succumbs to inaction only when illness strikes.

We might compare this orientation towards the outdoors to Tao Yuanming's orientation towards "home" throughout his body of work. In particular, while Xie Lingyun's excursion

poems show the speaker engrossed in the natural world, his other poems never show him delighted to be indoors.[39] For example, Xie Lingyun's poem "Reading in My Study" 齋中讀書, does refer to an indoors activity—but even this poem doesn't idealize the particular experience of just *being* at home, relaxing or drinking in the way that Tao Yuanming's speaker is wont to do. Instead, "Reading in My Study" actually begins by conjuring up both "hills and gorges" 丘壑 and "mountains and streams" 山川 to describe the setting.

Of course, Xie Lingyun does not depict himself as consistently delighted while on his travels; as we have seen in "My Neighbors Saw Me Off at Mount Fang," he does have complaints. However, as I will discuss, he appears to develop a distinct discourse in his poems about "excursions" into the natural world—a discourse which only includes complaints of a specific kind. Due to their exclusion of locational distinction-making and autobiographical frames, almost the entire focus of the excursion poems is placed on the time span of the occasion. Rather than situate the speaker in relation to a job, residence, or past experience, these poems rely on the occasion of the poem itself to provide a context for the speaker. The "occasion" of the excursion becomes the organizing principle of the poem, holding the speaker's perceptions and reflections into a structure and perpetuating a sense of urgency and forward motion.

This mode of representation differs subtly from the one Xie Lingyun uses in poems that describe journeys undertaken for practical purposes, where the speaker is free to mention—and complain about—more worldly cares and circumstances. On Xie Lingyun's excursions into the natural world, his mind is concentrated on more abstruse and philosophical matters. Of course,

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[39] Though Xie Lingyun occasionally express homesickness or being weary of travel, I don't think he ever actually expresses loss of interest in the natural world. One poem that expresses an uncharacteristic nostalgia for idleness is "While Traveling I Think of the Time I Spent in the Mountains" 道路憶山中.

the speaker's degree of concentration and absorption in the landscape varies, as I will discuss. In addition, we might say that these poems present Xie Lingyun's speaker experimenting with a form of reclusion, somewhat in the way that he does in the second section of "On Leaving My District." While Xie Lingyun's trip poems sometimes show the speaker disparaging himself, as in the earlier part of "On Leaving My District," his excursion poems seem to create isolated occasions on which he can enact a more idealized version of himself and his relation to the world.

Turning to one of Xie Lingyun's excursion poems, this section describes the features that define this group of poems and distinguish these works from poems on "trips" In particular, I will consider the way in which the remoteness of the locations the speaker seeks out and the effort of reaching these spots define his experience. "What I Saw When I Had Crossed the Lake on My Way from South Mountain to North Mountain" 於南山往北山經湖中瞻眺 opens with the beginning of the excursion specified in the poem's title, eschewing further context or explanation:[40]

	朝旦發陽崖	In the morning I set out from the sun-lit shore
	景落憩陰峯	when the sun was setting I rested by the shadowy peaks.
	舍舟眺迴渚	Leaving my boat I gazed at the far-off banks,
	停策倚茂松	halting my staff, I leant against a flourishing pine.
5	側逕既窈窕	The narrow path is dark and secluded,[41]
	環洲亦玲瓏	yet the ring-like island is bright as jade
	俛視喬木杪	Below I see the tops of towering trees,[42]

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[40] Lu Qinli, *Song shi*, 3.1172–73. Adapted from translations by Frodsham, *The Murmuring Stream*, vol. I, 146 and Wai-lim Yip, *Chinese Poetry: An Anthology of Major Modes and Genres* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 190–1. See Gu Shaobo, 118–21 and Huang Jie, 74–77.

[41] Although there is a great deal of ambiguity as to its original meaning, the term *yao tiao* 窈窕 is famously glossed by the Mao commentary (*Mao shi* 毛詩) as "dark and secluded" 幽閒.

[42] "Towering trees" 喬木 refers to a phrase in the *Shijing* poem "Han guang" 漢廣 ("The Han So Wide"): "Tall are trees in the south country, / They give no shade to rest in" 南有喬木、不可休息 (*Mao shi zhushu*, 1.42a; translation from Owen, *Anthology*, 31).

	仰聆大壑淙	above I hear the meeting of wild torrents.[43]
	石橫水分流	Over the rocks in its path the water divides and flows on
10	林密蹊絕蹤	in the depth of the forest the paths are free from footprints.
	解作竟何感	What are the results of "Release" and "Becoming"?[44]
	升長皆丰容	Everywhere is thick with things pushed upward and growing.[45]
	初篁苞綠籜	The first bamboos enfold their emerald shoots.
	新蒲含紫茸	The new-born rushes hold their purple flowers.
15	海鷗戲春岸	Sea-gulls play on the vernal shores,
	天鷄弄和風	the heaven-cock plays on the gentle wind.[46]
	撫化心無厭	My heart never tires of these transformations;
	覽物眷彌重	the more I look on nature the more my feelings deepen.
	不惜去人遠	I do not regret having gone far from other people;[47]
20	但恨莫與同	I am only sorry I have no one as a companion.
	孤遊非情歎	I wander alone, sighing, but not from feeling—
	賞廢理誰通	appreciation stops; with whom can I share the principle of things?

In a form that appears several times in Xie Lingyun's excursion poems, the opening couplet

describes the course of a day's journey, from morning to sunset, in brief.[48] The day's excursion

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[43] This most likely refers to the line in the *Shijing* 詩經 poem "Fu yi" 鳧鷖: "The wild-ducks are where the streams meet" 鳧鷖在渚 (*Mao shi zhushu*, 17.608b; translation from Waley, *The Book of Songs,* 250).

[44] This refers to the Commentary on the Judgments of the hexagram "release" (Xie 解) in the *Yijing*: "When Heaven and Earth allow Release, thunder and rain play their roles; when thunder and rain play their roles, all the various fruits shrubs and trees burgeon forth" 天地解，而雷雨作，雷雨作，而百果草木皆甲坼. *Zhou yi*, 4.93b; translation from Lynn, 381.

[45] This refers to the Commentary on the Images (*xiangzhuan* 象傳) of the hexagram "climbing" (Sheng 升) in the *Yijing*: "Within the Earth grows the Tree: this is the image of Climbing. In the same way, the noble man lets virtue be his guide and little by little becomes lofty and great" 地中生木，升；君子以順德，積小以高大. *Zhou yi*, 5.107b; translation from Lynn, 424.

[46] The "heaven-cock" (*tian ji* 天鷄) is a name for the "golden pheasant" or "Chinese pheasant."

[47] The phrase translated here as "having gone far from other people" (*qu ren yuan* 去人遠) can also be interpreted as "far from the ancients," following the gloss by Li Shan 李善 (d. 689): "This says that he is alone in the mountains without anyone to travel together with him. 'People' here means 'the ancients'" 言獨在山中，無人共遊。人謂古人也 (*Wen xuan*, 22.1047).

[48] At least six of Xie Lingyun's poems present a version of this framework in the opening two couplets. This structure frames the poem that follows as taking place during a day (from dawn to dusk) or a night (from dusk to dawn): "On a Journey to Red Rocks I Sail Out on the Sea" 遊赤石進帆海, "Written on the Lake, Returning from the Retreat at Stone Cliff" 石壁精舍還湖中作, "On Climbing the Highest Peak of Stone Gate" 登石門最高頂, "What I Saw When I Had Crossed the Lake on My Way from South Mountain to North Mountain" 於南山往北山經湖中瞻眺, "Fuchun Isle" 富春渚, and "Overnight at Stone Gate Cliffs" 石門岩上宿. Other poems begin with lines that refer to dawn or the evening but do not mention the other item at all or do not do so until later in the poem.

has in fact been completed by the second line—making the rest of the poem an elaboration, a second take. However, the content of this "second take" differs from that of the first. Not only is it—clearly—much longer, but it also ends in a different way. Combined with the speaker's shifting emotions at the end of the poem, the difference between these two accounts suggest the impossibility of knowing definitively even oneself and one's own experiences. Furthermore, the poem's wild natural setting and the lack of reference to any specific life context mean that it leaves itself open to a variety of interpretations. Poems such as this one lend themselves to being read metaphorically, with the "excursion" standing in, perhaps, for the "journey" of life itself. When read in this way, the speaker's vacillations also take on larger significance. Rather than simply representing what happened on one particular day, the poem is structured so as to evoke larger truths about the human condition—among these the quick succession of elation and sorrow that characterizes human experience.

Taken together, the first three couplets dramatize the speaker's approach, via multiple stages, toward the natural landscape whose description forms the core of the poem. The excursion poems often dramatize the approach to this kind of a core setting and emphasize its remoteness. Xie Lingyun contrasts light and dark in the opening lines: in the morning we see him in sunlight, and in the evening, instead of returning home, as we might expect, we see him resting among "shadowy peaks" 陰峯. The third couplet reverses the light-and-dark structure of the opening lines: passing through a dark "narrow path" 側逕, the speaker at last emerges into the vision of a "ring-like island" 環洲 "bright as jade" 玲瓏.[49] The intervening couplet provides

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[49] Here, the phrase used to describe the path, "dark and secluded" 窈窕, may recall the "lady" or "maiden" 淑女 in the *Shijing* poem "Fishhawk" ("Guan ju" 關雎), who is described using this same phrase. Once we have "Fishhawk" in mind, the "ring-like island" 環洲 may also recall the "island" 洲 in "Fishhawk." With this language, Xie Lingyun seems to subtly associate the special location the speaker reaches with the "lady" or "maiden" 淑女 in "Fishhawk." This pattern relates to one that appears in a few of Xie Lingyun's poems, which use the ancient theme of meeting

something of a narrative for this progression through light and dark: after leaving behind his

"boat" 舟—a thing we might associate with man-made and instrumental world—the speaker

encounters the natural and uncarved "flourishing pine" 茂松, which appears as if in

compensation. These details support the reader's sense that the speaker is moving away from the

human world and towards something more deeply natural.

The speaker emerges into a fully dimensional scene in the fourth couplet; here the field of

vision expands as the speaker looks down then up, up then down. The first things that he sees are

again trees: the "tops of towering trees" 喬木杪. Like the "wild torrents" 大壑淙 in the next line,

these are on a scale that seems larger than that of the human world. The epic scale of this world

is in contrast to what has come before: the earlier lines contained the promise of something

special and hidden but did not yet offer a full view of it.

After offering a taste of this wider field of vision, the speaker turns back to where he

stands and announces, "in the depth of the forest the paths are free from footprints" 林密蹊絕蹤.

This line tells us explicitly that the speaker has arrived somewhere *different*: though he never

mentioned the footprints on the path previously, we are told that he recognizes a significant

change through their absence here. This detail emphasizes that the space the speaker has reached

is somehow pristine and untouched. Thus, when the speaker reaches the "ring-like island" 環洲

"bright as jade" 玲瓏 in the following line, we see this area not only in terms of the contrast

between light and dark that has been established in the poem, but also in terms of the language of

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with an immortal or other magical beings to suggest that a landscape is enchanted (or disenchanted). Owen discusses this dynamic in the poem "Entering Huazi Hill, the third valley of Hemp Stream" 入華子崗是麻源第三谷 ("Bookish Landscapes," 208).

the pristine. These descriptions dramatize the "core setting" of the poem and use specific

representational patterns to set it off from the "normal world."

Before engaging in broader reflection at the end of the poem, the speaker deepens his

description of the "core setting." Immediately after announcing the discovery that he has arrived

somewhere free from human intervention, he refers to two *Yijing* hexagrams. In this sequence of

events, the speaker's recognition that he has entered into a special or different kind of space

seems to provoke him to compare what he sees to the *Yijing*. That is, the speaker seems to

assume that in a place such as this he can ask, "What are the results of 'Release' and

'Becoming'?" 解作竟何感, and then look directly at the environment around him to seek the

answer.

These lines reflect a crucial difference between the "trip" and the "excursion" in Xie

Lingyun's writing; the trip, as we have seen, is defined in terms of mundane, worldly goals and

contexts. On his trips the speaker can be moved and affected by nature, as we have seen, but the

occasion is not framed in such a way that it would be natural for the speaker to delve into a full

philosophical questioning and contemplation of life's meaning. In contrast, by bracketing out the

details of the speaker's mundane life, the "excursion" poems create the ideal framework in which

the speaker can to enter into a dialogue with deeper philosophical principles via the intermediary

of the natural world.

The two subsequent couplets, in which the speaker describes nature directly, do indeed

seem to provide an answer that corresponds to the *Yijing* commentary.[50] In the Commentary on

the Judgments (*tuanzhuan* 彖傳) of the hexagram "release" (Xie 解) we find that "When Heaven

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[50] This is an instance where, as Owen writes, "Nature is read in terms of textual knowledge, texts which make authoritative claims on the meaning of Nature's images" ("Bookish Landscapes," 225).

and Earth allow Release, thunder and rain play their roles; when thunder and rain play their roles, all the various fruits shrubs and trees burgeon forth" 天地解，而雷雨作，雷雨作，而百果草木皆甲坼. This "burgeoning forth" 甲坼 encapsulates what the poetic speaker sees when he turns to the "first bamboos" 初篁 and "new-born rushes" 新蒲, and then to the "sea-gulls" 海鷗 and "heaven-cock" 天鷄. These plants and animals are depicted as active—"playing their roles" or "becoming" 作, and thus seeming to act in accordance with the principle of the hexagram to which the line eleven alludes.

The poem's final three couplets enter into an abstract, reflective mode. At first the speaker seems elated; he declares, "My heart never tires of these transformations" 撫化心無厭, an exclamation that seems to celebrate the experience he has just had. The line that follows also seems to convey a sense of positive emotion; the reader assumes that the "deepening" 彌重 or increase of "feeling" 眷 is a good thing. However, the four lines that conclude the poem undermine this interpretation and take a turn in another direction. In these lines the speaker expresses a complex form of regret that centers on the question of companionship.

While different readings have been offered for the line specifying what the speaker "does not regret" 不惜,[51] what he is "sorry" 恨 about is clear: that he has "no one as a companion" 莫與同. The final couplet is also explicit: the speaker "wander[s] alone" 孤遊 and "sighs" 歎, but he specifies that this is "not from feeling" 非情. Rather, the cause of the sigh seems to be explained in the poem's final line: "appreciation stops; with whom can I share the principle of

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[51] Note 47 above, comments on the ambiguity of this line and specifically of the phrase "gone […] from other people" *quren* 去人, which has been taken to refer to other living people (Xie Lingyun's contemporaries) or to the ancients. Swartz discusses this ambiguity and mentions various critics' divergent readings of it in "Naturalness in Xie Lingyun's Poetic Works," 373.

things?" 賞廢理誰通. Without someone with whom to "share" or "communicate" 通 his deep "appreciation" 賞 for what he has experienced,[52] the speaker feels that this appreciation "stops" or "is abandoned" 廢. In this way, the positive sense of abundance in the line "my heart never tires of these transformations" 撫化心無厭 turns negative; the speaker seems unable to resolve this abundance or translate it into human meaning—and thus the poem ends with him still in motion, "wander[ing]" and "sigh[ing]."

The turn at the end of "On My Way from South Mountain to North Mountain" underscores ambiguities that underlie the poem as a whole. Here, as in other works, Xie Lingyun's excursion brings his speaker towards a dramatic encounter with the pure and natural forces of the outdoor world. Before reaching the final turn, the speaker does seem to experience some kind of apotheosis—almost an ecstatic one—when he engages in this experience. And yet, the height of the experience cannot last; even before the moment seems to be fully over, the speaker's self-consciousness intrudes and he begins to regret his lack of companionship.

The speaker's destabilization at the end of the poem is heightened by the ambiguous itinerary of the excursion itself. As mentioned above, the first two lines outline the time-period of the excursion and of the poem from morning to evening. Here we aren't told explicitly how he gets home or where the journey ends—all we know is that "When the sun was setting [he] rested by the shadowy peaks" 景落憩陰峯. The poem ends with the speaker still in motion and still overwhelmed by feeling that he cannot fully articulate. It is an incomplete closure; though it feels final and firm on a structural level, the reader senses that the speaker's wistfulness and longing continue, finding no secure outlet.

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[52] Note 11, above, briefly discusses other poems by Xie Lingyun that end with the speaker's reference to "appreciation" or the "appreciative mind."

"On My Way from South Mountain to North Mountain" dramatizes both the possibilities and limitations of human consciousness in a manner specific to the excursion framework. While Xie Lingyun's "trip" poems are limited and explained by the worldly, contextual content they include, the speaker of the excursion poems provide a context that is more distanced from the social and political world. This type of occasion enables the speaker to redefine himself more completely because he does so in relation to non-human elements. At the same time, however, the solitary nature of his experiences on excursions can make them seem somehow unreal real. The speaker often returns to the theme of his loneliness, explaining that without a companion to share his experience with, he struggles to confirm what he sees and to convert it into lasting insight or knowledge.

I have tentatively referred to the occasion of "On My Way from South Mountain to North Mountain" as a "wilderness" excursion—rather than just an excursion—because of the poem's emphasis on the remoteness of the locations it describes and the near-complete exclusion of reference to the social world throughout the poem. Of course, the speaker does refer to the *Yijing* and speak of his longing for a confidante—but while these signify connections to the world of other people, they are connections that can be reconciled to the speaker's view of the wanderer-recluse.

"On My Way from South Mountain to North Mountain" is representative of a group of "wilderness excursion" poems in Xie Lingyun's body of work. These poems *only* refer to "wild" settings—that is, they exclude specific reference to agricultural land and towns, and they focus on the speaker's progress through the natural world. Moreover, they exclude the kind of autobiographical frames and discussions of other locations and occupations that appear in Xie Lingyun's other poetry. These poems often contain certain features and follow a loose pattern;

for example, the beginning of the poem regularly presents a journey in multiple stages; the speaker describes these stages only very briefly, creating a sense of anticipation as he moves towards a core setting that he will describe in greater depth. The speaker describes the core setting using parallel couplets, and often develops these descriptions with references to classical texts. Finally, the speaker often turns to a meditative mode and considers very broad issues of time and experience, sometimes making reference to his longing for a companion.

The "wilderness excursion" poems regularly signal the occasion of an excursion in their titles or opening lines, and several of these poems begin with an occasional framework that presents the duration of the journey.[53] Additionally, the titles of these poems often present the itinerary of the outing or name a sight encountered along the way. These titles, and their focus on remarkable spots, underscore the reader's sense that the excursion is undertaken for pleasure or diversion, rather than for a particular practical purpose such as work or travel. Xie Lingyun never spells out the purpose of these "excursions" in practical or ideological terms, and just what they mean to the poetic speaker is by no means self-evident. This ambiguity is central to their drama—and it forms a contrast with "trip" poems discussed in the previous section, in which the context of and reason for travel is often specified.

While the "wilderness excursion" poems fit the description given here, other excursion poems include encounters with the nature that are not specifically isolated from inhabited landscapes, social interactions, and connections with the wider world. And while these poems include landscapes that might be considered "wild," their remoteness is not always emphasized. The following sections will look at some of these works, considering how they show the world of other people intersecting with the natural world that Xie Lingyun's speaker explores.

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[53] See Note 48, above.

A Note on "*Shanshui*" and the Wanderer Type

We might characterize the poetic speaker of Xie Lingyun's excursion poems as a person fundamentally oriented towards the outdoors as an undifferentiated category: someone who understands himself specifically in terms of his desire to move into and through outdoors landscapes. At the same time, many of these poems do emphasize the speaker's interest in landscapes that are specifically presented as remote from human influence and civilization, and this observation may prompt us to divide the "outdoors" into multiple categories.

However, any discussion of distinctions between different kinds of landscape necessarily evokes the often-used term *shanshui* 山水 and its companion term, *tianyuan* 田園. As a literary term, *shanshui* seems most precise when it is used to refer to the particularly artful, complex form of parallelism in which Xie Lingyun pairs a line depicting "mountains" *shan* 山 with one depicting "waters" or "rivers" *shui* 水, creating tightly wrought couplets that demonstrate technical accomplishment while conveying keen and surprising observations of the natural world. Often, the content is described in such a way as to simulate what the speaker would see if he looked looking first up and then down from a particular position outdoors. However, the term "*shanshui* poetry" is also used more broadly to refer to the poetry about landscape and nature that became increasingly prevalent during the fifth century and afterward.

Further difficulty arises if we introduce the related term "fields and gardens" *tianyuan* into the discussion. As has been discussed previously, Tao Yuanming and Xie Lingyun are often referred to as the poets of "fields and gardens" and "mountains and rivers," respectively. Though these descriptions do convey something about the milieu of each of these writers, the

juxtaposition of these terms also creates an anachronistic and limited picture of the way in which they conceived of the physical world.

Although there are some exceptions, it would seem that Xie Lingyun does not regularly differentiate between "fields and gardens" and "mountains and rivers" landscapes in his *shi* poems. For example, in "Climbing a Tower by the Pool," above, Xie Lingyun seems to present nature as a continuous space that would encompass the "wild" outdoors as well as the human-tended space of the garden. In contrast, in the poem "I've Put in Orchards and Groves South of the Fields, Opened up a Stream and Planted Trees" 田南樹園激流植援 the speaker presents his garden as specifically set off and isolated from the wilderness in the distance. This spatial construction, similar to the one we find in Tao Yuanming's "Returning to Dwell in Gardens and Fields," is not the norm in Xie Lingyun's work.[54] However, as we have seen, Xie Lingyun's "wilderness" excursion poems do seem to invite us to picture landscapes that are especially untouched by human influence.

If I pause to address types of landscape classification here, it is in order to highlight a point of divergence with the dominant *shanshui* discourse. With its emphasis on particular descriptive passages, the *shanshui* discourse seems to suggest these passages are the defining ingredient of a *shanshui* poem and to avoid discussion of the way that the speaker's motion, activity, and state of mind impact his description of the world around him. Taking a contrasting approach, this chapter calls attention to the excursion occasions that frame Xie Lingyun's most dramatic descriptions of outdoors landscapes. In particular, looking at the "wilderness" excursion

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[54] Additionally, we might note that this view of nature occurs in conjunction with the speaker's representation of himself as ill—a combination that suggests that in his normal good health the speaker might not be inclined to isolate and distance himself from nature in this way. This mode of representation contrasts not only with that in "Climbing a Tower by the Pool," but also with that in "Dwelling in Mountains," discussed below.

poems enables us to see the way that Xie Lingyun's *shanshui* passages often occur in the context of the speaker having exerted unusual effort in order to reach a special and remote location. Xie Lingyun repeatedly chooses to represent himself by charting these unusual efforts and—as we will see in the following section—by showing what these efforts cost the speaker and how he shapes his life to accommodate them.

Rather than regard Xie Lingyun's speaker as engaged in any kind of objective landscape classification, we might see him as making subjective observations that set the stage for certain kinds of discourse. In particular, the speaker's emphasis on the remoteness and specialness of particular locations may be read in terms of the association of remote landscapes and reclusion. As Berkowitz writes, "The association of withdrawal and life in the wilderness existed from the outset: the wilderness was the place where a man could uphold his principles and preserve his virtue intact."[55] Though Xie Lingyun may not identify directly as a recluse—or even as someone who succeeds in preserving virtue "intact"—by specifically staging his encounters as taking place in the wilderness he frames them as exercises in reclusion of a certain kind.

The poem "Fuchun Isle" 富春渚 includes a relevant articulation of Xie Lingyun's interest in reclusion. The speaker comments, "All my life I've had an affinity for plans of reclusion; / Floundering and stumbling, I've been trapped by my feeble weakness" 平生協幽期, 淪躓困微弱.[56] These lines seem to acknowledge that while the speaker has not formally enacted reclusion as a way of life, he continually strives towards this ideal in a "floundering and stumbling" 淪躓 kind of way. Thus, if Xie Lingyun emphasizes remote contexts, this is not necessarily because he regards certain landscapes as intrinsically more meaningful than other landscapes; instead, we

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[55] Berkowitz, 56.

[56] Lu Qinli, *Song shi*, 2.1160.

might say that he uses remote contexts to signal a certain kind of distance from ordinary life and from his ordinary self. In Xie Lingyun's representations of his excursions, "floundering and stumbling" become part of a coherent, recognizable persona—that of the wanderer. Though he may not achieve perfect virtue—and though we may not know quite what to expect from him— these self-representations show the way in which his efforts are nonetheless part of a larger ongoing process and identity.

Wayposts

Xie Lingyun's wilderness excursion poems strip away the speaker's connections to society and other people, staging dramas of self-discovery in wild and remote natural settings. Meanwhile, many of Xie Lingyun's other excursion poems show Xie Lingyun negotiating his identity as a solitary wanderer, constructing this identity not just in opposition to the world of other people, but also in relation to it. In particular, many of these negotiations take place on occasions when the speaker stops and rests.

As discussed earlier—in the context of the speaker's rest on a rock in "On Leaving My District"—taking a rest in nature can be emblematic of the wanderer's freedom from social norms and from dependence on social structures. Images like that one in "On Leaving My District" support the fantasy that maybe one could just step away from human civilization and live comfortably and contentedly as a wanderer. Xie Lingyun could have chosen to represent himself as that kind of a character throughout his work; and, by selecting certain occasions and not others, he would not necessarily have to distort or fictionalize in order to do so. For example, one can imagine a version of a Xie Lingyun poem that contains *shanshui* passages and

wandering, but no mention of loneliness, tiredness, or the need to take a break for the night. And yet this is not the self-representational route that Xie Lingyun uses. Through representing his loneliness as well as his need to take breaks, Xie Lingyun deepens his portrayal of himself and shows how he maintains connections to the world of other people. This section looks, first, at three poems in which the speaker takes a rest while wandering. Second, it turns to two works that address the choice to settling down in a particular place for a longer period.

Like "On My Way from South Mountain to North Mountain," the title of "Stopping by Bai An Pavilion" 過白岸亭 points to the a single spot that the speaker encounters part-way through a journey or excursion. However, the landmark here is architectural—man-made rather than natural; and instead of describing the journey as a whole the poem focuses on the speaker's experience at this location alone:[57]

	拂衣遵沙垣	Walking along these sandy dikes I shake the dust from my clothes
	緩步入蓬屋	and leisurely enter the thatched house.
	近澗涓密石	Through the rock-strewn gorge a nearby stream goes trickling
	遠山映疏木	while distant mountains glint through the sparse trees.
5	空翠難強名	So hard to find words for their airy kingfisher blue;[58]
	漁釣易為曲	so easy for a fisherman to make his song.[59]
	援蘿臨青崖	Grasping the creepers I look out at green cliffs.

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[57] Lu Qinli, *Song shi*, 2.1167; translation adapted from Frodsham, *The Murmuring Stream*, vol. I, 125. See also Gu Shaobo, 74–76 and Huang Jie, 41–42.

[58] See *Daodejing*, 25: "I do not know its proper name; I have styled it 'the Way.' Forced to give it proper name I would call it 'Great'" 吾不知其名，字之曰道，強為之名曰口 (*Laozi xiaoshi*, 101). Translation from Ivanhoe, *The Daodejing*, 25); this translation follows Zhu Qianzhi's emendation, reading the character *da* 大 "great" in place of *wei* 口 "surround."

[59] The word translated as "song" in this line (*qu* 曲) can also be used to mean "crooked" (*qu* 曲), a term that has a special set of resonances in the ancient tradition. For example, *Daodejing*, 22: "Those who are crooked [*qu*] will be perfected. Those who are bent will be straight" 曲則全，枉則正 (*Laozi xiaoshi*, 91; translation from Ivanhoe, 22). And also *Zhuangzi*: "Others all seek good fortune; he alone kept himself whole by becoming crooked [*qu*]." 人皆求福，己獨曲全 (*Zhuangzi jishi*, 10.1095; translation adapted from Watson, *The Complete Works of Zhuangzi*, 295). With this meaning in mind we might alternately translate line six as: "So easy for a fisherman to be crooked."

	春心自相屬	Spring feelings are connected to each other.[60]
	交交止栩黃	*Jiao jiao* call the yellow birds on the oak;[61]
10	呦呦食萍鹿	*you you* cry the deer feeding on duckweed.[62]
	傷彼人百哀	I am pained thinking of those men of a hundred sorrows,[63]
	嘉爾承筐樂	but your delight in the baskets you received is good.[64]
	榮悴疊去來	Flourishing and withering repeat: these come and go in turn.
	窮通成休慼	Success and failure eventually become happiness and sorrow.
15	未若長疏散	It would be better to be lastingly at my leisure,
	萬事恒抱樸	with all things permanently grasping simplicity.[65]

This poem contains many of the themes and patterns that appear in "On My Way from South Mountain to North Mountain," but in compressed form. For example, rather than present a lengthy approach to a "core setting," the opening lines present the speaker having already arrived at a remote spot surrounded by nature. Further, while the natural setting is a key element of the poem, the speaker does not engage with it as extensively or as directly as he does in many excursion poems. Instead, while looking out at this landscape he uses allusions to ancient poetry

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[60] "Spring feelings" or the "spring heart" 春心 suggest melancholy; this phrase alludes to the close of the *Chu ci* poem *Zhao hun* 招魂: "The eye travels on a thousand *li*, and the spring heart breaks for sorrow" 目極千里兮，傷春心 (*Chu ci bu zhu*, 9.215; translation modified from Hawkes, 230).

[61] Though the allusion in this line is ambiguous, the subsequent lines suggest that this alludes to the poem "Yellowbird" ("Huang niao" 黃鳥) in the Airs of Qin 秦風: "*Jiao jiao* sings the oriole / As it lights on the thorn-bush" 交交黃鳥、止于棘 (*Mao shi zhushu*, 6.243a; translation adapted from Waley, 103). The poem laments the death of the "Three Worthies" (三良 *san liang*), men who died as sacrifices at the funeral of Duke Mu of Qin 秦穆公 (r. 659–621 BCE).

[62] This line alludes to the *Shijing* poem "Deer Cry" ("Lu Ming" 鹿鳴): "*You, you* cry the deer, / Nibbling the black southernwood in the fields" 呦呦鹿鳴、食野之苹 (*Mao shi zhushu*, 9.315b; translation from Waley, 133). The poem is about welcoming guests and about the hospitality and generosity that a lord owes to his subjects.

[63] "Men of a hundred sorrows" 人百哀 alludes to the *Shijing* poem "Yellowbird" (mentioned above); "hundred sorrows" 百哀 seem to refer to the sorrow caused by the death of the "Three Worthies" and also to the *Shijing* poem's refrain, which states that each of the "Three Worthies" was worth a hundred men.

[64] This alludes, again, to the *Shijing* poem "Deer Cry," which includes the line "Take up the baskets of offerings" 承筐是將 (*Mao shi zhushu*, 9.315b; translation from Waley, 133). The poem describes a Zhou tradition whereby powerful lords would invite their subjects to a feast and present them with ceremonial gifts.

[65] *Daodejing*, 19: "Manifest plainness. Embrace simplicity. Do not think just of yourself. Make few your desires" 見素抱樸，少私寡欲 (*Laozi xiaoshi*, 75; translation from Ivanhoe, *The Daodejing of Laozi*, 19).

to reflect on how to live one's life and on seemingly inescapable social patterns of "failure and success" 窮通.

We might read the first two lines of the poem as a version of the approach that takes place in other excursion poems: rather than present a journey in multiple stages, here the speaker simply steps through a charmed entranceway, emerging into his encounter with nature in the second couplet. Instead of seeing anything inside, the reader finds in the remaining lines of the poem landscape description, allusions, and reflection. This suggests to the reader that the pavilion is merely a frame: the speaker considers it important not so much in itself, but rather because of its surroundings and the lifestyle it represents. The title encourages this reading in that it emphasizes the limited duration of the time spent at this spot; one can "stop by" 過 a place for hours or even days, but whatever the duration of the stay, we know it is not permanent.

The opening lines describe the speaker crossing a boundary between one kind of space and another. The gesture of "shak[ing] dust from clothes" 拂衣 is associated with reclusion, and its performance here indicates that the speaker is purposefully disassociating himself from the world of other people when he enters the pavilion. "Strolling" 緩步 inside in the second line, the speaker seems to adopt a casual attitude. However, even after having "entered" 入 this space, the speaker's attitude remains fraught.

At first, the speaker turns to describe the landscape, picking out details that resonate with frail beauty rather than rich abundance. The "tiny stream" 涓 is almost buried among "dense rocks" 密石, and the "glint" 映 or "shine" of the mountains is "distant" 遠. But then he changes course; contrasting himself with the "fisherman" 漁釣 type, the speaker comments on the difficulty of articulately describing what he sees: while he finds it "hard to find words for the

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airy kingfisher blue" 空翠難強名, it is apparently "easy" 易 for the fisherman figure "to make his song" 為曲 (6). Traditionally, the fisherman is understood as the epitome of simplicity and the embodiment of a lifestyle attuned to the "Way." This comparison indicates that the speaker is attempting to perform the attitude appropriate to a recluse, but that he feels he is not deeply suited or habituated to this role.

Describing himself as "grasping creepers" 援蘿 and "look[ing] out at green cliffs" 臨青 崖 (7), the speaker begins to use allusion to help him overcome his stated difficulty in "finding words" 強名 (5). First, he uses the phrase "spring feelings" 春心—which originates from the closing lines of the *Chu ci* poem *Zhao hun* 招魂[66]—to evoke melancholy. Then, while it is possible that the speaker hears the cries of "yellow [birds]" 黃 and "deer" 鹿, these creatures call up the content of *Shijing* poems more vividly than they do any actual animals. In particular, these lines allude to the traditional discourses about the relationship between a lord and his subjects.

The first allusion—to the "birds" (9)—recalls the *Shijing* poem "Yellowbird" ("Huang niao" 黃鳥), which laments the fate of the "Three Worthies" (三良 *san liang*) who died as sacrifices at the funeral of Duke Mu of Qin 秦穆公 (r. 659–621 BCE).[67] The subject of the "Three Worthies" became a standard topic in poetry, one that carries with it the troubling question of just how much a loyal subject owes to his lord. This topic was greatly relevant during the early medieval period, when loyalty to one's ruler was, still, often a matter of life and death.

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[66] See Note 60, above.

[67] The Mao commentary to "Yellowbird" indicates that Duke Mu was regarded as cruel and was criticized for "using men to follow him in death" 以人從死. The Zheng commentary seems to attribute more agency to the men when it writes that their deaths were "suicide" 自殺. See also Martin Kern, "The Formation of the *Classic of Poetry*," in Fritz-Heiner Mutschler, ed., *The Homeric Epics and the Chinese Book of Songs: Foundational Texts Compared* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2018), 61–62.

The second allusion—to the "deer" (10)—refers to the *Shijing* poem "Deer Cry" ("Lu Ming" 鹿鳴), which describes a Zhou tradition whereby powerful lords would invite their subjects to a feast and present them with ceremonial gifts.

The subsequent couplets show the speaker considering what lesson should be drawn from each of these poems. The speaker weighs both sides of the question: on the one hand, he is "pained" 傷 (11) when he thinks of the situation described by "Yellowbird"; on the other hand, he acknowledges that it is "good" 嘉 (12) to be served and honored by a lord. From this analysis he turns to the general observation that "flourishing and withering repeat: these come and go in turn" 榮悴疊去來. The speaker arrives at the conclusion that because "withering" 悴, "failure" 通 and "sorrow" 慽 cannot be avoided, it makes more sense to choose independence than service to a lord.

While the speaker does come to the conclusion that it would be "better to be lastingly at [his] leisure" 未若長疏散 than in service to a lord, it is not clear whether this conclusion indicates a positive resolution or course of action. This ambiguity matches the suggestion of role-playing earlier in the poem. As the speaker has shown us in the poem's first line, he engages in a ritualized shift in attitude when he enters this house. Thus, if he "grasp[s] simplicity" 抱樸 here, that does not mean that he necessarily does the same elsewhere (in fact, by associating his special behaviors with this particular location, the poem suggests the opposite).

This speculative, experimental attitude recalls Tao Yuanming's fantasy of entering into an endlessly renewable temporal rhythm in "Untitled" IV (from the series "Twelve Untitled Poems"). Each of these poetic speakers imagines living removed as far as possible from the vicissitudes of the world; but while Tao Yuanming's speaker imagines a life at home with his

family, Xie Lingyun's speaker seems to contemplate the possibility of living alone in a more remote setting. These two poems emphasize that imagination and experimentation may be central to the self—to its formation and understanding of the world. However, while Tao Yuanming's fantasy remains a fantasy, Xie Lingyun's speaker actually goes through some of the motions of making his fantasy real.

This ambiguity in the poem makes it strange and compelling—and it also illustrates the way in which Xie Lingyun's wandering creates a platform for him to experiment with his identity. For Xie Lingyun's speaker the wanderer role is not static; instead, the wanderer is a template that the author uses to create a wide variety of self-representations. Thus, while some of Xie Lingyun's excursion poems could be described as occasions on which the speaker leaves behind almost all thought of the social world, this poem presents the speaker withdrawing physically but specifically continuing to think about that world.

"On Climbing to the Stone Dwelling to Give Food to Monks" 登石室飯僧詩 is another poem that shows Xie Lingyun's speaker experimenting with a specific way of life associated with a specific place. However, instead of encountering a landscape devoid of other people, here the speaker travels to a landscape cultivated and inhabited by monks. Emphasizing the short duration of his stay, the poem opens with a two-line summary of the excursion itinerary:[68]

迎旭凌絕巘	Greeting the rising sun, I crossed the steep hill;
映泫歸澂浦	amid flowing reflections, I returned beside the water.[69]
鑽燧斷山木	To make fire they cut down mountain trees;[70]

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[68] Lu Qinli, *Song shi*, 2.1164; translation adapted from Frodsham, *The Murmuring Stream,* vol. I, 124. See Gu Shaobo, 90 and Huang Jie, 69–70.

[69] Gu Shaobo glosses *xu pu* 澂浦 as "waterside" or "water's edge" 水边 (90n3); Huang Jie glosses *xu* 澂 as "waters edge" or "river mouth" 水浦 (69n2) and *pu* 浦 as "a branch from the headwaters that pours in a river into the sea" 水源枝注江海邊; Xupu 澂浦 is also the name of a place which appears in the poem "Crossing the River" 涉江, one of the "Nine Pieces" 九章 in the *Chu ci*.

[70] Gu Shaobo glosses *zuan sui* 鑽燧 as "drilling wood to produce fire by friction" (钻木取火).

	掩岸墐石戶	[their cells] cover the riverbanks; their stone doors are plastered.[71]
5	結架非丹甍	Their joined rafters are not scarlet beams;[72]
	藉田資宿莽	to till as fields, they are provided with *sumang*.[73]
	同遊息心客	We roam together; I am the monks' guest.
	曖然若可睹	In the dusky haze, it is as if something can be seen.
	清霄颺浮煙	In the clear sky, floating smoke rises up.
10	空林響法鼓	In the empty woods, the Drum of the Law echoes.
	忘懷狎鷗鮍	Forgetting cares, one can become intimate with seagulls and fishes;
	攝生馴兕虎	nourishing life can make rhinoceros and tiger docile.
	望嶺眘靈鷲	Looking at these mountains, I long for Vulture Peak.[74]
	延心念淨土	I draw out my thoughts, thinking on the Pure Land.
15	若乘四等觀	If I were to adopt the outlook of the Four Virtues[75]
	永拔三界苦	I could forever uproot the suffering of the Triple Realms.[76]

This poem—like "Stopping by Bai An Pavilion"—ends with the speaker extolling a particular

way of life and even considering whether he should adopt it himself. However, as discussed

above, the way such proposals are presented within the context of an excursion indicates that

they are temporary—the product of imagination or passing enthusiasm, rather than a lasting

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[71] This line is ambiguous; commentators cite the line "the doors are plastered" 塞向墐戶" in the *Shijing* poem "Qi yue" 七月 as a parallel.

[72] This line contrasts the rustic architecture of the monks' dwellings with the decorative, painted "scarlet beams" 丹甍 that would adorn the ceilings of the wealthy.

[73] *Su mang* 宿莽 is an edible plant that is mentioned elsewhere in literature, particularly in the *Li Sao*: "In the morning I gathered the angelica on the mountains; / In the evening I plucked the sedges of the islets" 朝搴阰之木蘭兮，夕攬洲之宿莽 (*Chu ci bu zhu,* 1.6) (translation from Hawkes, 68). Wang Yi identifies this as a type of grass that does not die in the winter.

[74] "Vulture Peak" 靈鷲 refers to a mountain site in India where the Buddha preached sermons including the Lotus Sutra (also known as the "Vulture Peak gāthā" 鷲峯偈). *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, s.v. 靈鷲山, accessed March 20, 2018, http://www.buddhism-dict.net.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?97.xml+id(%27b9748-9df2-5c71%27).

[75] The "Four Virtues" 四等 are also known as the "four immeasurable states of mind" 四無量心. These are the mind of bestowing joy, the mind of saving others from suffering, the mind of seeing others freed from suffering, and the mind of impartiality (rising above the emotions). *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, s.v. 四無量心, accessed March 20, 2018, http://www.buddhism-dict.net.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?56.xml+id(%27b56db-7121-91cf-5fc3%27).

[76] The "Triple Realm" (*san jie* 三界) is a Buddhist term referring to the "desire realm" 欲界, the "form realm" 色界, and the "formless realm" 無色界. *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, s.v. 三界, accessed March 20, 2018, http://www.buddhism-dict.net.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E4%B8%89%E7%95%8C

choice. Even if such episodes recur in the speaker's life, this recurrence does not seem to indicate that he is any more likely to permanently adopt such lifestyles. Instead, the poems suggest that the process of considering other ways of life and even participating in them briefly during the context of an excursion is what is important to their speaker.

"Stopping by Bai An Pavilion" and "On Climbing to the Stone Dwelling to Give Food to Monks" each present the speaker visiting a place where he can participate in a particular way of life for a limited period of time. The lifestyles represented in these poems are distinct and are associated with particular landscapes; while "Stopping by Bai An Pavilion" seems to depict a remote or wild location, "On Climbing to the Stone Dwelling to Give Food to Monks" depicts an environment where the natural and human worlds blend together. For example, the poem shows how the monks transform and manipulate the natural world, felling trees to make fire (3) and "joined rafters" 結架 (5), using natural materials to insulate the "stone doors" 石戶 of their cells (4), and filling the woods with the sound of their "drum" 鼓 (10). In these images the conventional categories of "indoors" and "outdoors" merge, and the entire outdoors world seems to be contributing to the monks' way of life. In addition, the speaker notes that the monks' lifestyle incorporates both farming and roaming activities.

If "Stopping by Bai An Pavilion" and "On Climbing to the Stone Dwelling to Give Food to Monks" present different landscapes and ways of life, they do share a similar sense of temporality. In both poems, the speaker indicates that he is merely visiting; however much he appreciates the ideals represented by these locations, he maintains a certain distance from them. "On Climbing the Highest Peak of Stone Gate" 登石門最高頂 presents a more committed attitude towards visiting; here the speaker spends the night in the landscape rather than returning

to a home or dwelling somewhere else. The time spent in this location is matched by a deeper

seriousness in the speaker's consideration of what it means to him:[77]

	晨策尋絕壁	At dawn with staff in hand I climbed the crags;
	夕息在山棲	at dusk I rest in my mountain perch.
	疏峰抗高館	Sparse peaks contend with this lofty dwelling;
	對嶺臨廻溪	facing the crags, it overlooks winding streams.
5	長林羅戶穴	A vast forest stretches in front of its doorway
	積石擁階基	while boulders lie around its very steps.
	連巖覺路塞	Encircled by mountains, it seems like the roads are blocked,
	密竹使徑迷	and the path gets lost among dense bamboos.
	來人忘新術	The people who come forget the new path
10	去子惑故蹊	and when they leave they can't find the way/footpath.
	活活夕流駛	Raging torrents rush on through the dusk;
	噭噭夜猿啼	clamoring monkeys shrill calls throughout the night.
	沈冥豈別理	Deep in meditation, how can I part from the truth?
	守道自不攜	I abide by the Way and will never leave it.
15	心契九秋幹	My heart embraces the late autumn tree;
	目翫三春荑	my eyes play among spring's tender sprouts.
	居常以待終	I stay in a constant state and obtain the usual end,[78]
	處順故安排	I quietly submit, content with my place.[79]
	惜無同懷客	I regret that there is no guest who shares my concerns
20	共登青雲梯	with whom to climb this ladder into the clouds in the blue.

This poem loosely follows the "excursion" pattern described in "On My Way from South

Mountain to North Mountain," but the speaker focuses on how his visitors approach instead of

describing his own journey. Similarly to how "On My Way from South Mountain to North

Mountain" describes the special, almost charmed area that the speaker reaches on his excursion,

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[77] Translation adapted from Frodsham, *The Murmuring Stream*, vol. I, 144; and Westbrook, "Landscape Transformation in the Poetry of Hsieh Ling-yün," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 100.3 (1980): 239. See also Gu Shaobo, 178 and Huang Jie, 72.

[78] See *Lie zi* 列子: Rong Qiqi 榮啟期 says to Confucius, "Poverty is the constant state for a gentleman, and death is every person's end. If this end is common, then what is there to worry about?" 貧者士之常也，死者人之終也，處常得終，當何憂哉. Yang Bojun 楊伯峻, comp., *Liezi jishi* 列子集釋 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1979), 1.23.

[79] This line refers to *Zhuangzi*: "Be content to go along and forget about change, and then you can enter the mysterious oneness of Heaven" 安排而去化, 乃入於寥天一 (*Zhuangzi jishi*, 3.275). Translation from Watson, *The Complete Works of Zhuangzi*, 51.

this poem uses the difficulty traveling to and from the house to emphasize that it is located in a special and remote place.

The poem also thematizes stillness and motion in unexpected ways. Like many of Xie Lingyun's excursion poems, it opens with a couplet summarizing the day in terms of morning and evening.[80] However, instead of traveling back to an implied other world in the evening, the speaker remains in his house in the mountains, centered in the remote location described in the second couplet. And while the occasion of the poem specifies a visit of only one night, the discussion of visitors to the site indicates that he has spent significant amounts of time here, observing the way in which others come and go.

While emphasizing the speaker's situatedness, the poem also shows motion taking place all around him. The speaker's language of staying and holding mirrors his commitment to this house and this spot, but he also continues to identify strongly with motion and change. For example, he describes the evening and night animated by the flow of "raging" 活活 waters (11) and the calls of monkeys (12) before turning to himself and asking "how can I part from the truth?" 豈別理 (13). In this manner, the poem provides an especially dynamic illustration of what the speaker means when he says, "I abide by the Way and will never leave it" 守道自不攜 (14). The lines that follow this statement show him entering into motion yet again, transforming this abstract vow of constancy into identification with seasonal change as his "eyes play among spring's tender sprouts" 目翫三春荑. In this way, Xie Lingyun describes the speaker occupying the house actively rather than passively or in a static manner.

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[80] I discuss this pattern in Note 48, above.

But however much pleasure Xie Lingyun's speaker takes in his surroundings, his closing words are bittersweet. Though he claims that he "finds peace through accepting the flux of things" 處順故安排 (18), he brings up his loneliness in the final couplet. Fittingly, the poem ends with the speaker still in motion; having already "climbed" 登 the "highest peak of stone gate" 石門最高頂, the final line presents him still climbing, though this time in his imagination—ascending a "ladder of clouds into the blue" 青雲梯 with an imagined companion. As in "On My Way from South Mountain to North Mountain," this poem's closing image sits uneasily with the first couplet's presentation of events. While the second line told us that the day ends with the speaker "resting" 息, the final lines describe not rest but longing for company and thoughts of wandering.

In this poem the speaker's restless nature is brought to bear on the subject of occupying a house or a home. Unlike a regular home, this one doesn't seem to be the speaker's primary place of residence, but even so, he shows a certain level of commitment to and familiarity with it. Moreover, this place, like the locations in "Stopping by Bai An Pavilion" and "On Climbing to the Stone Dwelling to Give Food to Monks," is one where a man-made structure is presented as continuous with—rather than opposed to—the natural environment. These three poems present idealized, harmonious relationships between the natural and the man-made worlds; however, the temporary nature of the speaker's visits to these places suggests that this harmony may not be sustainable in the long-term.

Dwelling in Mountains, Not in the Marketplace

The poetic exposition "Dwelling in Mountains" is perhaps Xie Lingyun's most extensive exploration of the relationship between wandering and rootedness to a particular place.[81] This work examines the author's life in reclusion in his estate in Shining; a location that appears throughout his poetry and which was also important to his family history.[82] Xie Lingyun's presentation of himself as ill appears multiple times in both the opening and closing sections of the work;[83] and while the *fu* expands quickly beyond this self-representation, the image of the ailing, aged writer colors our reading of the intervening sections of this piece, which are taken up with extensive descriptions of the estate. In particular, by alerting us to his weakened state, the author suggests that his accounts of his lands may be read as journeys of the mind as well as—or perhaps instead of—journeys of the body. Presenting landscapes and routes he knows so well, the author may in fact be depicting imaginative excursions undertaken as he writes, reads, and thinks at home; this suggestion is made more explicitly in the poem's final section.

The early part of the *fu* presents the author's illness three times: first in the general preface, and again in sections one and five. The first mention of this state occurs mid-way through the preface, where Xie Lingyun writes: "Being ill, I incline towards [a life of] leisure /

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[81] Studies of this *fu* that have contributed to this discussion include Yü-yü Cheng, "Bodily Movement and Geographic Categories: Xie Lingyun's 'Rhapsody on Mountain Dwelling'"; David R. Knechtges, "*How to View a Mountain in Medieval China*"; Wendy Swartz, "There's No Place Like Home: Xie Lingyun's Representation of His Estate in 'Rhapsody on Dwelling in the Mountains'"; and Westbrook, *Landscape Description in the Lyric Poetry and "Fuh on Dwelling in the Mountains" of Shieh Ling-yunn*.

[82] See the discussion of Xie Lingyun's grandfather Xie Xuan 謝玄 (343–388) in Note 91, below, and in the Appendix.

[83] Certainly, officials seeking to retire would regularly request permission to do so because of age and illness, and Xie Lingyun's insistence on presenting his lifestyle choice in this way is not without political meanings. For a related self-representation by Xie Lingyun see his memorial "An Account of Myself Presented at the Palace" 詣闕自理表; his self-presentation here begins with the statement "embracing illness, I have returned to the mountains" 臣自抱疾歸山 (Yan Kejun, *Quan Song wen*, 32.2610a–b). Also, "On Returning to My Old Gardens; For the Perusal of the Imperial Secretaries, Yan and Fan" 還舊園作見顏范二中書 begins with the speaker "retiring on grounds of illness, not waiting for years to pass" 謝病不待年 (Lu Qinli, *Song shi,* 3.1174).

where I can yield to my nature and feelings" 抱疾就閑, 順從性情. This passage underscores the author's acceptance of his situation: rather than fight against illness, he "yields to" 順從 it, following his "nature and feelings" 性情.

Before looking at the complete preface—a forceful text which describes what it means to "dwell in mountains" 山居 by contrasting this with life in other environments—we turn to the second mention of the author's illness, which occurs in the preface to part one:[84]

謝子臥疾山頂	I, Master Xie, was lying sick on a mountain peak,
覽古人遺書	perusing books passed down by men of old
與其意合	and feeling in accord with their sentiments.
悠然而笑曰	With a sense of far-off detachment, I laughed and said […]

This passage reiterates the condition of illness while situating it in a physical spot: on a "mountain peak" 山頂. Here we see that while illness may limit the author's physical activity, it does provide him with ample time to "perus[e] books passed down by men of old" 覽古人遺書 and feel especially "in accord with their sentiments" 意合. Thus, when the author mentions his "far-off detachment" 悠然, we understand this not only in terms of his identification with a remote spot, but also as a factor of his identification with the books he is reading.

This reference to the author's involvement with texts echoes lines in the general preface to the *fu,* in which Xie Lingyun talks about his engagement with the literary tradition and gives his longest and most elaborate explanation of his project. Here I present the preface in full:[85]

古巢居穴處曰巖棲	Residing in nests and lodging in caves of antiquity may be called cliff-resting.
棟宇居山曰山居	Living in the mountains under ridgepole and roof I call "dwelling in the mountains."
在林野曰丘園	Residence in the wooded wilderness we may term "hills and

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[84] Yan Kejun, *Quan Song wen*, 31.2604a; translation modified from Westbrook, *Landscape Description*, 190.

[85] Yan Kejun, *Quan Song wen*, 31.2604a; translation modified from Westbrook, *Landscape Description*, 186–87.

		gardens,"
	在郊郭曰城傍	and in the suburbs, "beside the city-wall."
5	四者不同	That these four are not the same
	可以理推	can be deduced by reason.
	言心也	In one's mind
	黃屋實不殊於汾陽	the yellow canopy [of the imperial carriage] may not seem substantially different from the north bank of the Fen;
	即事也	yet in actual practice
10	山居良有異乎市廛	there is all the difference between dwelling in the mountains and the city marketplace.
	抱疾就閑	Being ill, I incline towards [a life of] leisure
	順從性情	where I can yield to my nature and feelings.
	敢率所樂	Venturing to indulge my pleasure,
	而以作賦	I have composed a *fu*.
15	楊子雲云	Yang Ziyun said,[86]
	詩人之賦麗以則	the *fu* of the ode writers are beautiful but maintain standards.
	文體宜兼	Form and content should be complementary
	以成其美	in order to create beauty.
	今所賦既非京都宮觀遊獵聲色之盛	What I now put to *fu* is not the splendor of metropolitan capitals, palaces, and towers, hunting excursions, and the tunes and hues of gala revelry.
20	而敘山野草木水石穀稼之事	Rather, I describe such things as the mountain wilds, plants and trees, streams and boulders, and crops and farming.
	才乏昔人	I lack the talent of the ancients,
	心放俗外	but my mind dwells beyond the crowd.
	詠於文則可勉而就之	In giving form to my rhapsody, it is only with effort that I can strive to approach them;
	求麗邈以遠矣	If I seek [to have the] beauty [of their writing for my own], then I am very far away from it.
25	覽者廢張左之豔辭	[I hope] those who read [my rhapsody] will discard the voluptuous words of Zhang and Zuo,[87]
	尋臺皓之深意	and instead try to seek the profound intent of Tai and the Four Hoaryheads,[88]
	去飾取素	taking leave of ornamentation and adopting simplicity;

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[86] Ziyun 子雲 is the style name of the writer Yang Xiong 揚雄 (53 BCE–18 CE).

[87] Zhang Heng 張衡 (78–139) and Zuo Si 左思 (250–305) each wrote canonical poetic expositions on capital cities.

[88] Tai Tong 臺佟 was a Han recluse who refused to serve in office. *Hao* 皓 refers to the "four hoaryheads" (*si hao* 四皓), famous Qin dynasty recluses who went into retreat on Mount Shang 商.

	儻值其心耳	with [this kind of reading] they may grasp my mind.
	意實言表	Truly ideas lie beyond the realm of words,
30	而書不盡	and writing is an incomplete form of expression.
	遺迹索意	Discard the traces and seek the intent:
	託之有賞	I entrust these to one who will appreciate them.

Like "On Leaving My District" and other poems by Xie Lingyun that juxtapose various locations and occupations, this *fu* begins with a lively comparison of different places where one could live. After listing four residential categories, the writer goes on to suggest how he believes these locations are constitutive of certain ways of living and being. Finally, he turns to the subject of himself and his present creation, providing an account of what this work means to him.

The classification presented in the opening lines (1–4) is notable for its resemblance to and difference from the kinds of distinctions we see in Xie Lingyun's poetry, as well as for its oblique relationship to the *shanshui* vs. *tianyuan* framework. The first three categories are associated with different kinds of natural terrain: the first with "caves" 穴 and "cliffs" 巖, the second with "mountains" 山, and the third with "wooded wilderness" 林野 and "hills and gardens" 丘園. The items in this list seem to be arranged, loosely, in order of descending verticality as well as decreasing remoteness: thus, as we descend from cliffs and "nests" 巢, we also come gradually nearer to urban life. Finally, elements of the natural world disappear altogether when we reach the fourth category: "beside the city-wall" 城傍.

This progression also has historical and temporal components: beginning with antiquity and the mythological figures who resided in nests, the approach towards the city carries the suggestion of an approach towards the modern and contemporary world. Thus, when the author defiantly chooses to identify with the second of his four categories—"dwelling in mountains"—

this can also be understood as choosing an older way of life.[89] Progression towards the city can also be measured in the association of each residence with natural materials that might support or constitute a dwelling. Trees and stone are the primary materials included in this list, and the figures of antiquity he mentions live directly in them (in "nests" and "caves"). Neither the "mountain dweller" 山居 nor those who reside among "hills and gardens" seem to have so unmediated a connection to the natural world, but they do appear to be immersed in nature—either "living in the mountains under ridgepole and roof" 棟宇居山 or "in the wooded wilderness" 在林野.

Having established these four categories, the writer goes on to discuss their importance. First, he acknowledges that his emphasis may not at first seem especially compelling; after all, he writes, "the yellow canopy [of the imperial carriage] may not seem substantially different from the north bank of the Fen" 黃屋實不殊於汾陽. However, he insists that when it comes to "actual situations" or "actual practice" 即事, where one lives makes a substantial difference. He illustrates this point with the strongest contrast he can muster, writing, "there is all the difference between dwelling in the mountains and the city marketplace" 山居良有異乎市廛. Crossing into the urban world here, as he did not previously, Xie Lingyun uses a scene at the very heart of urban life to make his point. In this construction, "dwelling in the mountains" becomes the antithesis to urban life—its opposite in terms of the way people occupy, inhabit, and shape it.

At this point the writer turns to the situation of his illness and his choice to compose the *fu*. Reflecting on the traditional purpose and contents of the poetic exposition, he first states that

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[89] In section two Xie Lingyun does specifically address the question of why he advocates "dwelling in mountains" instead of "cliff-resting"; he writes "nests and caves cause distress from wind and dew" 巢穴以風露貽患 and that by dwelling in mountains "excess both in ornateness and rusticity is avoided" 而饰朴兩逝 (Yan Kejun, *Quan Song wen*, 31.2604a).

he will *not* address the traditional subject matter of the genre: "the splendor of metropolitan capitals, palaces, and towers, hunting excursions, and the tunes and hues of gala revelry" 京都宮觀遊獵聲色之盛. He continues, "Instead, I describe such things as the mountain wilds, plants and trees, streams and boulders, and crops and farming" 而敘山野草木水石穀稼之事. This list is capacious, seeming to take in the landscapes surrounding all four of the residential categories he has listed. Thus, the author announces that while the traditional province of the *fu* is largely within the city walls, what he aims to depict is entirely another area—the realm measured in degrees of remoteness from the urban that he has already outlined.

With these assertions, the writer assures us that he is not describing natural scenery by chance or on a whim, but that he is choosing it specifically. He then goes on to describe the nature of his ambition; though he inserts certain phrases of humility, he makes it clear that his *fu* is based on lofty ideals. He emphasizes the great degree of effort he puts in, writing that he is "striv[ing] to approach [the ancients]" 勉而就之 (23) and exhorting his reader to "seek the profound ideas of Tai and the Four Hoaryheads" 尋臺皓之深意 (26). This language encourages the reader to join the author in striving towards deeper understanding and ancient ideals. Moreover, this striving is similar to the striving of Xie Lingyun's excursion poem, which brings the speaker into remote areas that offer insight into ancient principles.

Xie Lingyun concludes the preface by writing, "I entrust these [traces] to one who will appreciate them" 託之有賞. Here, as elsewhere in his work, Xie Lingyun maintains hope and expectation that he will engage with the idealized and longed-for figure of the "confidante" *shang* 賞 or "appreciative mind" *shang xin* 賞心. This statement entails a kind of paradox, because in this section as in other works, Xie Lingyun shows that he has taken great pains to isolate himself from most other people. And yet, despite his desire to move away from or beyond

other people, Xie Lingun often expresses an equal and opposite desire to move closer towards a confidante.

This dynamic is illustrated by parallels between Xie Lingyun's presentation of his position in space and of his mental relation to others. In particular, Xie Lingyun emphasizes his mental or intellectual distance from other people when he writes, "my mind dwells beyond the crowd" 心放俗外 (22). Thus, it seems that he hopes "dwelling in mountains" will move him away from others mentally as well as physically, and that this shift, in turn, will help him to move closer towards the confidante. This figure is placed in the future, as if the mirror image of the writers of the past who Xie Lingyun feels himself to be in harmony with. And of course, the suggestion stands that the reader may possibly be the one to fulfill this role.

Turning to the Xie Lingyun's third representation of himself as ill, in section five, we find further expression of the author's identity in terms of his chosen self-isolation:[90]

仰前哲之遺訓	Looking up to the example handed on by that former worthy[91]
俯性情之所便	and down to what suits my own nature,
奉微軀以宴息	I gave myself over to "rest and recuperation"[92]
保自事以乘閑	and stuck to "self-service" to profit from my leisure.[93]
愧班生之夙悟	I bow before Master Ban's early enlightenment[94]

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[90] Yan Kejun, *Quan Song wen*, 31.2604b; translation modified from Westbrook, *Landscape Description*, 213.

[91] Westbrook interprets this line as referring to Xie Lingyun's grandfather Xie Xuan, who is discussed further in the Appendix. This interpretation is supported by Xie Lingyun's commentary on this section, which begins by saying that "the example of building a home in these mountains has been handed down to posterity" 謂經始此山。遺訓於後也.

[92] "Rest and recuperation" 宴息 refers to the Commentary on the Images of the *Yijing* hexagram "following" (隨 *sui*): "The noble man when faced with evening goes into rest and leisure" 君子以嚮晦入宴息. *Zhou yi*, 3.65b; translation from Lynn, 242.

[93] 自事 *zi shi* ("self-service") refers to a phrase in *Zhuangzi*, as I discuss below.

[94] "Master Ban" refers to Ban Si 班嗣; an uncle of the famous historian Ban Gu 班固 (CE 32–92), Ban Si studied Confucianism as well as the Daoist school of thought and strongly favored Daoist approaches.

慙尚子之晚研	and am shamed by Shang's late perception.[95]
年與疾而偕來	Old age and illness both have come upon me,
志乘拙而俱旋	but my will, availing itself of simplicity, at the same time is being restored.[96]
謝平生於知遊	I've made a life-long departure from my companions
棲清曠於山川	to retire to purity and vastness in mountains and rivers.

Here the theme of yielding is reiterated in the writer's "acceptance" (or "offering") 奉 of "rest" 宴息 for (or to) his "body" 軀. Taking advantage of this time of "rest," the writer cultivates a removed, meditative perspective, one that is again illustrated with the writer's situation in a remote natural place.

This passage begins with parallel construction reminiscent of Xie Lingyun's outdoors-viewing poetic speakers; he "looks up" 仰 and "looks down" 俯, though what he sees are not landscape elements but rather conceptual abstractions: "the example handed on by that former sage" 前哲之遺訓 and "what suits my own nature" 性情之所便. Somewhat surprisingly, this construction puts the self on equal footing with the model of the ancients, suggesting explicitly that the writer's own "nature" 情 might be just as good a guide as the teachings of ancient figures. Further developing this idea, the author writes, "I stick to self-service to profit from my leisure" 保自事以乘閑.

The notion of "self-service" (*zi shi* 自事) forms a contrast with the traditional Confucian model of serving others—the model of virtue celebrated in the two poems "Telling of the Virtue of My Forefathers." The phrase "self-service" appears in several ancient sources, but the most

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[95] See Note 20, above; known as Master Shang 尚子, Zhang Ziping or Xiang Zhang 向長 also appears in the poem "On Leaving My District."

[96] In this translation I follow Westbrook, who uses the character "will" *zhi* 志 (which appears in the *Song shu* 宋書) instead of *chu* 出, which appears in Yan Kejun's text (however, Yan Kejun notes that we should "take *chu* as *zhi*" 出 當作志).

direct association is probably with a passage in *Zhuangzi* in which Confucius replies to Zi Gao's 子高 request for advice. In this exchange Zi Gao, a high minister, is anxious about a mission that he has been assigned. Confucius tells him that the two "great decrees" 大戒 are to love one's parents and to serve one's ruler; beyond this, he says, it remains to:[97]

> Serve your own mind so that sadness or joy does not sway or move it; to understand what you can do nothing about and to be content with it as with fate—this is the perfection of virtue.
> 自事其心者，哀樂不易施乎前，知其不可奈何而安之若命，德之至也。

This statement presents a union of traditionally Confucian and Daoist viewpoints: Zhuangzi's Confucius emphasizes the Confucian values of filial piety and duty to one's ruler—but he also adds a third consideration. This is the mentality of "self-service" 自事 or "serving one's own mind" 自事其心 so as to "understand what you can do nothing about" 知其不可奈何 and become "content with it" 安之. Here Xie Lingyun draws on the ancient philosophical tradition to emphasize the possibility of following one's own path at the same time as one follows in the path of the ancients. In addition, the idea of "serving one's own mind" provides an alternate model of motion and activity—one that is mental rather than physical.

The *fu* as a whole, and particularly its opening and closing sections, suggest that meditation, writing, and study provide journeys analogous to journeys undertaken on foot. By framing the *fu* with the title and topic of "dwelling in mountains" 山居, and by opening with the perspective of "I, Master Xie, lying sick on a mountain peak" 謝子臥疾山頂, the descriptions of the landscape become expressions of *dwelling* as much as of exploring. When the writer describes the landscape, we see his excitement as well as his familiarity with places he has

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[97] *Zhuangzi jishi*, 2.155; translation from Watson, *The Complete Works of Zhuangzi*, 27.

returned to examine again and again. His treatment of this material shows that, for him, the activity of "dwelling in mountains" 山居 includes his indoor activities as well as his outdoor ones; his mental meditations as well as his physical activity. As physical activity becomes, presumably, increasingly difficult for the writer, we see that these activities may come to replace actual excursions into the outdoors. And though the narrator does not specifically address the difficulty of venturing outdoors, his self-representations ensure that the reader follows this implicit narrative.

Though I will not be able to address the larger part of the *fu* here, I turn to an overview of its final sections in order to discuss the way in which they extend and modify the author's earlier self-representations. In the closing sections of the *fu* the writer turns back to himself and moves successively through various themes from literature and poetry. He first turns to ageing: "Declining years are easily lost; / Rubbing my temples I become sorrowful" 頹齡易喪; 撫鬢生悲 (section 41),[98] and goes on to describe seeking herbs of immortality—or, more modestly, as he adds in his own commentary, herbs that he hopes will "dispel sickness" 消病. But this concern with his physical frailty is pushed aside in the next section, where the peaceful changing of the seasons is foregrounded along with the continuous practice of the monks and the universality of Buddha's Law. As in the endings of so many of Xie Lingyun's poems, the final sections of this *fu* (43–47) turn to a series of introspective meditations. In section forty-three he signals this turn explicitly, writing:[99]

好生之篤	One who is true in loving life
以我而觀	looks into the self;
懼命之盡	fearing that his days are coming to an end

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[98] Yan Kejun, *Quan Song wen*, 31.2608a.

[99] Yan Kejun, *Quan Song wen*, 31.2608a; translation modified from Westbrook, *Landscape Description*, 317.

吝景之懽	he prizes the pleasures in his life.

In the following sections he contemplates how this kind of introspection and love of life are exercised in the practices of study and literature. In section forty-four he reflects on the wisdom of the ancients and his life spent in study of them. Here, after listing all the great categories of text—the six classics, the philosophers (except for Laozi and Zhuangzi),[100] the histories, the biographies, and more—he makes a dramatic declaration:[101]

或平生之所流覽	My whole life I've poured over such matters
迨於今而棄諸	and now I discard them all.
驗前識之喪道	It is proved how past knowledge lost the way
抱一德而不渝	I will never stray from the virtue of embracing the one.

While Xie Lingyun might have concluded the *fu* here, the following sections go on to expand our sense of what this declaration means. In particular, we see that the author's dismissal "past knowledge" 前識 is not so simplistic or so complete as these statements might indicate when in the following section (number 45) he addresses his lifelong love of literature and practice of writing.

Finally, Xie Lingyun concludes the *fu* in sections 46 and 47. The organization of these two sections has an effect that might be compared with that discussed above in "On Leaving My District": section forty-six is crowded with allusions to great men of antiquity—layered thickly one after another. This crowding makes the spareness of section forty-seven especially resonant:[102]

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[100] Xie Lingyun's commentary to this section explicitly states his view that "these two books [those of Laozi and Zhuangzi] above all others conform to the natural order" 云此二書最有理, and that "outside of these, all the teachings of the sages are abandoned by those who go their own way" 過此以往。皆是聖人之教。獨往者所棄.

[101] Yan Kejun, *Quan Song wen*, 31.2608b; translation modified from Westbrook, *Landscape Description*, 319.

[102] Yan Kejun, *Quan Song wen*, 31.2608b–2609a; translation modified from Westbrook, *Landscape Description*, 335.

暨其窈窕幽深	Here is obscurity in deep seclusion
寂漠虛遠	solitude in empty remoteness.
事與情乖	Worldly affairs and the inner emotions clash,
理與形反	natural order and external form are opposed.
既耳目之靡端	Since the ears and eyes provide no clue,
豈足迹之所踐	how is one to proceed by footsteps?
蘊終古於三季	All time is collected into the final years of decline;[103]
俟通明於五眼	I await the illumination of the five eyes.[104]
權近慮以停筆	I'll bridle my parochial thoughts and halt my pen,
抑淺知而絕簡	suppress my shallow knowledge and cease writing.

This section enacts the discarding of texts and examples that the writer announced in section forty-four. As many poets had in the past, Xie Lingyun acknowledges the limits of language and expression, finally "halting his pen" 停筆 after having described so much. But Xie Lingyun indicates how that even after he sets aside his writing, he still doesn't come to a full stop. In particular, the question "how is one to proceed by footsteps?" 豈足迹之所踐 suggests that the author has, in fact, discovered other means by which to proceed—and this suggestion enables us to feel the momentum of Xie Lingyun's poetic speaker continuing to press forward.

This section indicates the degree to which, for Xie Lingyun, the forward progress of the will is primary. Though he often makes his progress on foot, he recognizes here and elsewhere that on a higher plane—one expressed in Buddhist terms—one may require other forms of insight in order to continue. The opening of this section describes a kind of core setting: a place of "obscurity in deep seclusion" 窈窕幽深. We sense that the speaker would like to proceed in his usual manner—that is, on foot—but he must confront the fact that in this reality "the ears and

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[103] The "three final [eras]" 三季 refers to the last years of the Three Dynasties: the Xia, Shang, and Zhou.

[104] The "five eyes" 五眼 is a Buddhist term that refers to five kinds of vision; these are "earthly eye" 肉眼 , the "heavenly eye" 天眼, the "wisdom eye" 慧眼, the "Dharma eye" 法眼, and the "Buddha eye" 佛眼. Each of the five eyes offers insight into a particular condition; collectively these are referred to as the "Five Contemplations" or "Five Conditions" 五觀. *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, s.v. 五眼, accessed March 20, 2018, http://www.buddhism-dict.net.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E4%BA%94%E7%9C%BC.

eyes provide no clue" 耳目之靡端. Nonetheless, the expressions of restraint here emphasizes that an undercurrent of energy that still emanates from the author: though he must "await" 俟 illumination, "bridling" 權 his thoughts and "suppress[ing]" 抑 his "shallow knowledge" 淺知, these words only underscore the sense that he remains engaged, alert, and inclined to be active. The writer has long since abandoned any mention of his ailing body—therefore, the strength that we see here presumably the strength of his "will" 志 (that which was described earlier in the *fu* as being "restored" 旋 at the same time that illness and age advance).[105]

Looking at the opening and closing sections of "Dwelling in Mountains" allows us to make observations that inform our reading of Xie Lingyun's self-representation in his other poetry. In particular, we have seen how vehemently Xie Lingyun endorses a specific way of life —"dwelling in mountains"—and how he describes this way of life in terms of its opposition to the city marketplace. Further, as we have seen, the author relishes the opportunity to reject the traditional subject matter of the *fu,* instead embracing a new subject that encompasses the "mountain wilds, plants and trees, streams and boulders, and crops and farming" (see the general preface 20, above).

Here we should distinguish between the rhetoric of renunciation and the particular content that is renounced. Turning first to the rhetoric of renunciation, we see that Xie Lingyun appears to delight in the opportunity to defiantly make his own way. Gestures of renunciation as self-definition appear throughout his poetry, in particular in the poetic speaker's renunciation of comforts and of the stabilizing support of friends and community. "Dwelling in Mountains" repeats this pattern and also develops it in a distinctive way, in particular through showing that

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[105] See section five of "Dwelling in Mountains" on page 180, above.

Xie Lingyun is willing to discard the model of the ancients in order to follow them more fully. This appears multiple times in the *fu*, but most explicitly in section forty-four, above, where he writes of Confucian traditions, "now I discard them all" 今而棄諸, adding: "It is proved how past knowledge lost the way / I will never stray from the virtue of embracing the one" 驗前識之喪道. 抱一德而不渝. Here, the author dramatically dismisses the textual record of wisdom-seeking in order to more fully embody this search in his own person.

Xie Lingyun also pairs the rhetoric of renouncing with the rhetoric of embracing, and the content that he most often embraces is that which may be described as the natural world or landscape. From today's vantage point, where marveling at the wonders of the natural world has become commonplace and often clichéd, it may be difficult to bear in mind the strangeness and novelty of this choice. Though recourse to additional texts and historical documents would enable us to develop a better contextual perspective, the vehement tone of Xie Lingyun's preface to the *fu* does suggest the extent to which what he is doing is unusual. Further, Xie Lingyun indicates in the preface that his choice is not merely idiosyncratic, but that it is carefully chosen to suits his artistic aims—which, he suggests, follow traditional lines.

Due to the historically sensitive meanings of concepts like "landscape" and "nature," it is important to consider carefully what Xie Lingyun means when he turns towards his subject of "mountain wilds, plants and trees, streams and boulders, and crops and farming." As we have seen, in the preface to "Dwelling in Mountains" Xie Lingyun defines himself and his interests in opposition to the "crowd" and the "marketplace"—contexts that would seem to signify philosophically inert, mercenary, and commonplace transactions and ways of life. Xie Lingyun indicates that the category of "dwelling in mountains" represents the opposite of all these. From his presentation of the four residential categories, we can infer that "dwelling in mountains"

makes available to him a natural world that is valued for its complexity, subtlety, and capacity to foster the author's philosophical development. For him, the natural landscape is an arena of beauty of a particular kind: it is elusive, complex, and surprising, and the author must train himself to be alert and subtle himself in order to appreciate it. It is also an instructive tool—one that he can use to further his development even when he is resting indoors.

Finally, "Dwelling in Mountains" articulates the way in which Xie Lingyun treats identity as an ongoing process rather than a set pattern. The premise of the *fu*—"dwelling" in some particular spot—would seem to preclude the possibility of continuous change and transformation. And yet, Xie Lingyun finds a way to describe his occupation of this site in terms of movement rather than stasis. At first seeming to embrace the wisdom of "books passed down by men of old" (in the preface to section one), Xie Lingyun finally casts off their wisdom in order to better define his own path. This dialectical self-presentation is characteristic of Xie Lingyun: here he first uses the wisdom of previous authors to define his path, but then, at a later stage, he pushes them aside in order to further his own journey. In the final section of the *fu,* Xie Lingyun is even willing to depart from his usual methods of forward progress, "halt[ing]" 停 his pen as if to begin a new kind of mental journey. This depiction of the self in motion is analogous to the emphasis on the self experienced through wandering and traveling that we find in his *shi* poems.

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This chapter has argued that Xie Lingyun's strategies of self-representation are deliberate, complex, and worthy of scholarly attention. It has focused in particular on how Xie Lingyun consistently individuates his poetic speaker via an emphasis on the speaker's capacity to progress. To be a self in Xie Lingyun's poetry is to constantly strive, to question oneself, and to

seek further understanding and change. Through innovation in the occasional poem, Xie Lingyun develops ways of representing these changing, mobile selves.

Both Tao Yuanming and Xie Lingyun use occasional frameworks, detail, patterning, and psychological realism to craft intricate self-portraits in their poetry, and each of their bodies of work maintains a sustained dialogue with traditional models of recluse life. However, beyond this point, the two bodies of work take very different approaches. Tao Yuanming's speaker identifies strongly with his choice to become a recluse, and, by extension, with his home and his routines there. We might understand Tao Yuanming's self-representation as temporally structured: his speaker regards his choice to become a recluse as formative and irrevocable, and when challenged or otherwise affected by new contexts, though he continually revises his self-image, he consistently refers to this pre-set conception of himself.

In contrast, Xie Lingyun's speaker changes location frequently and does not consistently identify with any particular profession or way of life. Though yearning for certain aspects of reclusion, he seems unwilling or unable to settle down. We may picture Xie Lingyun's self-representation as taking place on a spatial axis: the speaker moves through the world and has memorable experiences in different places, but does not unify these experiences into a chronological narrative or consistent life-story. However, even without such a narrative self-understanding, Xie Lingyun's speaker is able to achieve a heightened sense of himself in particular contexts. Most specifically, Xie Lingyun's excursion poems show that in eschewing self-definition via social contexts such as professions, friendships, and regular residences, he can embody the wanderer type for certain durations of time.

Though Xie Lingyun's adoption of the wanderer role can only ever be incomplete, the variety of self-representational strategies that he uses throughout his poetry enable his poetic

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speaker to wrest self-definition from the scattered experience of his life, actively reframing the chaotic social world in ways that enable him to pursue his ideal of self. Though this can lead to frightening, disorienting experiences,[106] Xie Lingyun emphasizes that there is much to value in this identity, and that openness to experience enables him to continuously revise his understanding of himself and of the world. In this sense, Xie Lingyun's famous *shanshui* couplets can be understood as being in fact an element of his self-representation. Ostensibly descriptions of natural phenomena, these lines are not background, separate from the speaker's "self": rather, they show the speaker moving towards his future self through the acts of closely observing the world and internalizing the content of what he observes.

Further, we may observe that Xie Lingyun's writing about landscape is not only "about" landscape. Xie Lingyun's self-positioning in relation to the natural world is also a way of positioning the selves of his poetry in relation to the human world and of articulating complex and novel attitudes towards the traditional ideals of reclusion, government service, and participation in civilized culture as a whole. Collective social life thus makes itself subtly felt throughout Xie Lingyun's work even as it is purposefully pushed to one side.

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[106] Here I mean to indicate that beyond analyzing what he sees in nature and being "moved" by these sights, the speaker can also be upset and overwhelmed by what he sees. Though I am not able to address this phenomenon in greater depth, I wish to note that the ways in which Xie Lingyun is moved by what he sees are complex and varied. An example of an ambiguous and partially negative encounter with nature is the speaker's being overwhelmed in "My Neighbors Saw Me Off at Mount Fang," discussed above.

Chapter 4

Bao Zhao's Intersubjective Turn

A virtuosic writer who excelled in many literary genres, Bao Zhao is best known for his work in

yuefu 樂府, a form of popular song that developed into a canonized genre of poetry during the

early medieval period. Bao Zhao himself is largely responsible for changes within the *yuefu*

genre; in particular, he developed the practice of writing *yuefu* that take on the perspective of a

fictional persona as their speaker.[1] Drawing from a traditional repertoire of characters including

travelers, soldiers, and abandoned or otherwise compromised women, the experiences this

speaker relates are also guided by traditional themes.[2] Bao Zhao's *yuefu* brought a new degree of

performativity and artifice into the elite poetic canon—and while these qualities may have been

latent within the *yuefu* tradition itself, Bao Zhao can to a large degree be credited with their

exploration and with the subsequent prominence of this genre in classical poetry.

Much of the poetic accomplishment of the writers addressed in the previous chapters can,

as I have discussed, be described in terms of their dynamic and innovative exploration of the

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[1] Influential *yuefu* writers in the period before Bao Zhao, such as Lu Ji 陸機 (261–303) and Xie Lingyun, tended to write from the perspective of speakers who are more like themselves and therefore less blatantly fictionalized. In his use of personae, Bao Zhao's *yuefu* would seem to draw on the practice of Jian'an writers who write poems from the perspective of figures who are explicitly not the author himself. Among such figures, the "abandoned woman" appears to have been the most popular persona to assume (see *The Cambridge History of Literature*, vol. 1, 175–76); Cao Pi and Cao Zhi write as the "abandoned woman," while other poems by Cao Pi show interest in exploring the lives of other people in society; for example, the poem "At Qinghe I Saw a Soldier Boat-Hauler, Newly Married Bidding Farewell to His Wife" 於清河見挽船士新婚與妻別, attributed either to Cao Pi or Xu Gan 徐幹 (171–218), takes on the persona of the figure described in the title; another poem of this type is Cao Pi's "Seeing the Boatmen Brothers Saying Farewell" 見挽船士兄弟辭別詩.

[2] *Yuefu* poems are written to preexisting song titles, resulting in lineages of many poems written to the same title or closely related variations over a period of centuries. Beginning these titles (and preceding the name of the "original" song) one finds either the character *dai* 代 or *ni* 擬, both of which are translated as "imitating" or "written to."

possibilities of the five-syllable line *shi* poem.[3] Bao Zhao's career follows a different pattern. Responding to Bao Zhao's oeuvre, the present chapter modifies the method I have used previously, considering not only Bao Zhao's representation of *himself* in his *shi* and *fu*, but also his representation of the *selves* of his *yuefu* speakers. This approach allows the chapter not only to accommodate Bao Zhao's *yuefu*, but also to reflect on the wider landscape of the genres of premodern poetry.

Medieval writers participated in a varied, complex field of generic norms and expectations. The formal features of most classical poetic genres are highly regulated, and style and subject matter were further constrained by literary traditions and the social milieu of the intended audience. In the case of the latter, court culture and the practice of patronage caused the themes and sentiments expressed in works intended for certain audiences to be highly prescribed. These contexts produced authors whose bodies of work can, to modern readers, appear to contain work by several different people. Bao Zhao is such a writer; his *shi*, for example, appear to be governed by at least two distinct voices: that of the fairly impersonal landscape poems,[4] and that of the more personal poems about day-to-day experiences. Further complicating this picture, Bao Zhao's *fu* are far more personally detailed and emotional than even his "personal" *shi*, and therefore often seem to present a more vivid self-representation of the author.

Poets like Bao Zhao who write in distinct "voices" present multiple *versions* of an author that, while not necessarily incompatible with one another, may not seem especially related. One

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[3] Of course, Ruan Ji, Tao Yuanming, and Xie Lingyun all wrote in genres other than *shi*, and might even have considered their work in other genres more important; however, it should not be too much of a stretch to say that later periods have on the whole valued these writers most for their *shi* poems.

[4] I will not be able to address Bao Zhao's landscape poems in this chapter; these draw directly on the model of Xie Lingyun, as various scholars discuss; see, for Lin Wenyue 林文月, "Bao Zhao yu Xie Lingyun de shanshui shi" 鮑照與謝靈運的山水詩, *Wenxue pinglun* 2 (1980).

might choose to analyze any one of these literary selves, considering how it constitutes a distinct self-representational strategy; however, this chapter adopts a different approach. Examining selected *shi*, *fu*, and *yuefu*, it considers patterns in Bao Zhao's representation of his speakers that appear across these three genres, calling attention to two consistently-present but little-discussed elements of Bao Zhao's representation of his speakers and characters: these are their close attachments to other people, and their habit of understanding themselves and the structure of their lives and identities in terms of these attachments. Together these comprise what I refer to as the "intersubjective" element of Bao Zhao's writing, which I regard as one of Bao Zhao's major innovations and contributions to the subsequent poetic tradition.

The first half of the chapter examines Bao Zhao's poetic depictions of close relationships between two people. The latter half turns to works that depict relationships between individuals and society in order to consider how Bao Zhao depicts people in terms of their connection to—and, sometimes, disconnection from—larger networks and groups. Though the approach taken here does not encompass or apply to all of Bao Zhao's work, it does illustrate the degree to which Bao Zhao engages with and contributes to the long tradition of classical poets who represent not just the personal, individual self, but also the self of the everyman, the everywoman, and the community as a whole.

The Intersubjective Path

With their focus on lower-class characters and such characters' experiences in cities, villages, and the frontier, *yuefu* bring a panorama of social life into the elite artistic sphere. *Yuefu* had been popular for centuries, but Bao Zhao's *yuefu* were innovative and challenging in their form, their content, and likely in their original presentation as well.

Yuefu were still being performed live during Bao Zhao's time, and his position in court

suggests that his *yuefu* would have been sung to musical accompaniment for audiences of the

elite. Apart from his other formal and stylistic innovations, Bao Zhao appears to have been

unusually bold in setting these poems to contemporary music that was, presumably, considered

too "popular" for other poets to deploy in similar contexts.[5] Unfortunately, historical records on

these points are few and far between, and we can only surmise the way in which the poet's *yuefu*

were performed and received during his lifetime. Nonetheless, surviving hints of controversy

suggest that performances of some of Bao Zhao's *yuefu* may have caused something of a splash,

or even a sensation.

  Whatever their original reception, the popularity of Bao Zhao's *yuefu* grew during the

centuries following his death, securing his position as a canonical writer and shaping the future

of the genre. Though Bao Zhao's works do not solidify the writer's own image in the way that

the works of Xie Lingyun and Tao Yanming have done for those authors, certain parallels are

often drawn between Bao Zhao and his work. In particular, Bao Zhao's relatively humble origins

are often seen as motivation for his choice of lower-class speakers, and he is sometimes

represented as something of a man of the people. Certainly, one can see where these perceptions

might have originated; Bao Zhao's enthusiasm for the popular genre of *yuefu* and his vivid

depiction of his lower-class speakers would have been enough to secure this reputation. Further,

Bao Zhao often concludes his *yuefu* with forceful complaints made against the injustice

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[5] Rui-lung Su addresses the question of why Bao Zhao was "especially receptive to […] popular poetic forms" (311). Su examines the available evidence in detail, and acknowledges that "the scarcity of extant historical materials regarding the activities between Bao Zhao and his patrons does present some difficulties in studying Bao in the context of the court" (311–12). In addition, Su discusses the way in which seven-syllable-line poetry would have been considered a "vulgar" (321) poetic form and interprets the fact that Xie Lingyun and Yan Yanzhi did not write in this form as an indication that it "had not attained an orthodox position in the literary arena" (320). Su, "Patrons' Influence on Bao Zhao's Poetry," in Kroll and Knechtges, eds., *Studies in Early Medieval Chinese Literature* (Provo, Utah: T'ang Studies Society, 2003), 303–29.

perpetrated by the powerful, and it is difficult not to read these as expressing the opinions of the poems' author.

This view captures several elements that are important to Bao Zhao's writing, but it overlooks the status of Bao Zhao's poems as specifically literary and artistic pieces. Swept up, perhaps, by the spirited rhetoric that appears in his *yuefu*, readers and critics sometimes seem to read these poems as primarily social and political, rather than aesthetic works. However, when we suggest that Bao Zhao writes primarily out of a feeling of empathy we neglect the status of poems as artworks made for an intended audience. This approach can cause us to over-simplify the interaction of aesthetic and political commitments, and to avoid the question of what makes these poems compelling or distinctive as literary pieces.

While Bao Zhao does write about the class status of many of his poetic speakers, he represents other of their qualities as well. One of these, as I have mentioned above, is the central importance of his characters' social relationships. Rather than present people as isolated units, dependent on themselves alone in order to achieve or not achieve their goals, Bao Zhao consistently emphasizes interdependence on the structural level and intersubjectivity on the emotional and psychological level. In many of his works the assumption that people are defined by their connections with others, and that close connections are the height of human experiences and of human life, appear to be the core of his representation of a character.

One of the Bao Zhao's most memorable depictions of a relationship is that presented in the poem "Sitting up Chanting at Night" 夜坐吟, which focuses on a single occasion of intersubjective connection:[6]

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[6] Lu Qinli, *Song shi*, 7.1280; translation adapted from Joseph Allen, *In the Voice of Others: Chinese Music Bureau Poetry* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1992), 117, and Robert Shanmu Chen, "A Study of Bao Zhao and His

冬夜沈沈夜坐吟	In the deep winter night you sit chanting.
含聲未發已知心	When the sound has not yet emerged, already I have understood.
霜入幕	Frost enters the curtain.
風度林	Wind blows through the forest.
朱燈滅	The rosy lamp is extinguished.
朱顏尋	Your rosy face is seeking.
體君歌	I experience your song;
逐君音	pursue your sound.
不貴聲	It is not the sound that I value;
貴意深	I value the depth of the meaning.

This relatively short piece focuses on a relationship between two people who are often interpreted as the speaker and someone who is "chanting" 吟. The poem doesn't reveal basic information we usually consider important when learning about an interpersonal situation: for example, we do not know if these two are friends, relatives, lovers, or something else—nor do we know the gender of either person. Instead, the poem communicates something more ethereal and abstract: the quality of the strong connection between the two figures. Beginning with a couplet in seven-syllable lines, the poem then shifts immediately to the extremely brief three-syllable line form. The first couplet uses traditional constructions of intimate connection to establish its subject matter, while the remainder of the poem moves, in a sense, beyond these precedents into its own articulation of what this intimate connection is like.

The opening couplet uses the space afforded by the seven-syllable line to set out the poem's occasional and emotional situation, one that is conveyed in particular through the phrase "I have understood" 知心. Translated literally as "understanding the heart" 知心, this phrase, which appears in the Confucian classics as well as in Li Ling's 李陵 (d. 74 BCE) letter to Su Wu

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Poetry: With a Complete English Translation of His Poems" (PhD diss., University of British Columbia, 1989), 329. See also Huang Jie, *Bao Canjun shizhu*, 276 and Qian Zhonglian, *Bao Canjun jizhu*, 252.

蘇武 (c. 140–60 BCE),[7] indicates the deepest kind of mutual understanding between people. In addition, it is similar to another classical expression: "knowing the sound" 知音, an ancient phrase that became a regular expression via the story of the close friends Bo Ya 伯牙 and Zhong Ziqi 鍾子期.[8] According to legend Ziqi often listened to Bo Ya's *qin* 琴 playing and could understand his friend perfectly through his music; through reference to this relationship, "knowing the sound" 知音 took on the meaning of "one who knows the sound": a close friend who understands the other person fully and deeply. Due to the intensity of the relationship described in "Sitting up Chanting at Night" 夜坐吟—and the centrality of music as a mediator between the two people—a reader encountering "I have understood" 知心 in the second line will probably also hear an echo of the expression "knowing the sound."

The distinctive rhythm of the three-syllable lines is shaped around the repetition of certain characters. These structure and underscore the reader's experience, creating a chain of meaning that the reader can follow in a process that parallels the speaker's "follow[ing]" 逐 the singer. Thus, after the "rosy" (*zhu* 朱) of the lamp and the "rosy" (*zhu* 朱) face we encounter "you" (*jun* 君) in the same position in both lines of the penultimate couplet, and in the concluding two lines we encounter another repetition, this time of the character translated as "value" (*gui* 貴). These lines are especially difficult to translate because no subject is specified for the verbs "seeking" 尋, "experience" 體, and "pursue" 逐; thus, various interpretations are

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[7] *Wen xuan,* 41.1847–56. According to Knechtges, "most scholars do not consider this letter genuine"—but that does not mean that it was not in circulation during Bao Zhao's time. See Antje Richter, ed., *A History of Chinese Letters and Epistolary Culture* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 200.

[8] See *Han shi wai zhuan* 韓詩外傳 (Taipei: *Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan*, 1986), 9.369.

possible.[9] However, it is worth noting that absence of clear specified subjects in these lines enforces the sense that even while the performer is the one "chanting" 吟, what is happening happens collectively, involving both of the people present. Finally, at the end of this chain of meanings, the reader finds the speaker's most direct explication of the relationship between himself and the performer.

The second and third couplets frame the characters' intersubjective world, offering faint glimpses of an external realm. The second couplet presents active elements of nature: "frost enter[ing]" 霜入 and "wind blow[ing]" 風度. However brief, these lines furnish the only depiction in the poem of the world beyond the room containing the speaker and the performer. The third couplet presents a final detail that is outside the "interior" psychological world of the two figures: this is the "lamp" 燈. The dimming of the lamp coincides with the disappearance in the poem of the world outside of the two characters. Further, this transition occurs at the mid-point of the poem, and is underscored by the repetition of *zhu* 朱, the character that describes the "rosy" or "red" 朱 "lamp" 燈 as it is "extinguished" 滅, and also by the "rosy" 朱 face in the following line. This parallelism emphasizes the shift from the "external" or "real" world of regular time and spatial relations to one of interiority—the world of the connection between the two speakers.

The sixth line's combination of the singer's glowing, "rosy" 朱 face and her active "seeking" 尋 present her as a directional beacon.[10] She claims attention, though not just as static

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[9] Some of the terms in this poem are especially difficult to translate into English, especially in the context of such an abstract and elusive poem. I have avoided translating certain uses of the same character into different words in English, but two different characters (*yin* 音 and *sheng* 聲) are both translated here as "sound."

[10] As I mention above, this translation reflects a subjective interpretation—it is not necessarily the performer who is "seeking." Also, the choice made here of the gender of the performer is arbitrary.

brightness, but also—as emerges in the following lines—as a leader and guide. The world outside the two people—appearing very briefly with the mention of the frost and the wind— seems to darken and fade as the speaker's concentration flows back towards the singer. At the same time, action of "seeking" 尋 evokes images of a directional pathway, a metaphorical route. This sense of directionality is reinforced by the previous actions of "frost enter[ing]" 霜入 and "wind blow[ing]" 風度.

The fourth and fifth couplets appear to describe the experience from the speaker's point of view, at first experientially, then more analytically. The fourth couplet presents the directional imagery mentioned above from the speaker's perspective: in response to what we assume to be the performer's "seeking" 尋, the speaker not only "experience[s]" 體 but also "follow[s]" 逐, a verb that again suggests a path or route.

Then, in the final couplet the speaker returns to the paradox presented at the opening of the poem. The speaker says in the first couplet that even though the sound has "not yet emerged" 未發 he has "already understood" 已知, indicating that the sound itself is either secondary to or irrelevant to his understanding. This paradox is in keeping with the classical understanding of "knowing the sound" and the kind of relationship exemplified by Bo Ya and Ziqi. While the middle of the poem departs from the metaphorical structure of the first couplet, establishing a different form of representation as it moves into a language that is simultaneously terse and flowing, the final couplet returns to the riddle of understanding and its relation or non-relation to sound.

Here the speaker states his attitude to sound even more explicitly than before; he says, "It is not the sound that I value" 不貴聲, and goes on to elaborate: "I value the depth the meaning" 貴意深. These parallel statements, one negative and one positive, each use the verb *gui* 貴, "to

value" or "to cherish." The brevity and grammatical clarity of this structure creates a maximum of forcefulness. Thus, while the precise difference between the spheres of "sound" 聲 and "depth of the meaning" 意深 may remain abstract to the reader, it is difficult not to be moved by the speaker's presentation of them as utterly distinct.

This distinction—between what we might call the material realm (here represented by "sound" 聲) and the immaterial realm of meaning or feeling—appears elsewhere in Bao Zhao's work and is one of the ways in which he represents the world of intersubjectivity. Here, relegating the world of sound and material interactions to a lesser status, Bao Zhao describes a world of "feeling" 意 and presents it as deeper and more valuable than the coarser, material world. By implication, this poem suggests that the two people can transcend their status as separate material beings and achieve a more absolute form of togetherness in the intersubjective realm.

Of course, though, the elegance of Bao Zhao's poem is that he avoids making any such explicit and banal formulations. If concepts such as "understanding the heart" 知心 and "knowing the sound" did not already exist in classical culture, it might have been impossible for Bao Zhao to depict this kind of relationship in a single poem, especially such a brief one. However, by using the phrase "understanding the heart" at the outset, Bao Zhao quickly and elegantly establishes the conceptual premise that his poem goes on to develop.

"Sitting up Chanting at Night," unlike most of Bao Zhao's *yuefu*, gives us very little information about the worldly life conditions of the characters who appear in it. The fact that one person chants and the other feels deeply about it tells us nothing about the occupation of either character, and the small amount of scene-setting detail in the poem does not tell us where or how they live. The odd, narrow focus of the poem may be a significant part of its ability to evoke the

intangible, immeasurable value of deep interpersonal connection. While Bao Zhao's other poems represent intersubjectivity using similar techniques, most do so in the context of showing characters whose life stories and material circumstances are presented in greater detail. Before turning to those works, however, the following section will read another *yuefu* poem that also withholds details about its characters, but which does so using a different set of techniques.

Art, Performance, and Influence

Many of Bao Zhao's most explicit depictions of intersubjective connection are in works that show speakers in the presence of—and under the influence of—other people. The most direct precedents for this kind of poem are perhaps found in the *shi* subgenre of the "parting poem." A parting poem focuses on a scene of leave-taking: an occasion that enables the poet to show the speaker's fondness for, and dependence on, another. Such poems often represent the emotions that overcome the speaker as he or she first anticipates and then experiences the shift from being together with a beloved person to being alone.

      While *shi* poems are limited to the author-speakers' points of view, Bao Zhao's *yuefu* are spoken by personae.[11] Drawing on characters other than that of the author, these personae present different and in certain respects greater opportunities to evoke the variety of connections that occur between people. Moreover, in addition to relating to characters *within* the poem, the speaker of a *yuefu* sometimes addresses the audience directly, and may also discuss or otherwise refer to aspects of his performance. With these gestures, Bao Zhao's *yuefu* explore the ambiguity between the point of view represented by the speaker's live-performer-persona, who sometimes addresses the poem's audience in the present or refers to the *yuefu* as a pre-existing work, and the

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[11] See Note 1, above, for discussion of some poetic precedents.

point of view of a hypothetical "original" speaker of the *yuefu*. Many of Bao Zhao's *yuefu* make

use of the potential split between these two figures to create newly complex and dynamic

structures of intersubjective connection.

For example, in the first poem of the sequence "Imitating 'On the Road of Adversity'" 擬

行路難, the speaker addresses a single person but also, by implication, the audience of a

performance of the *yuefu*. The ambiguous intertwining of these forms of address enables the poet

to create multiple layers of meaning, an especially useful feature in a poem that begins a

sequence. These layers of meaning allow the poet rapidly to present an unusually large number

of relationships and potential relationships within the poem:[12]

奉君金巵之美酒	I present to you, my lord, a golden vessel of vintage wine,
瑇瑁玉匣之雕琴	an engraved zither in a jade case decorated with tortoise shell,
七綵芙蓉之羽帳	a seven-colored silk and lotus flower feathered canopy,
九華蒲萄之錦衾	and a nine-flower grapevine-pattern brocade quilt.
紅顏零落歲將暮	The rosy countenance withers as the year reaches its close,
寒光宛轉時欲沉	and the cold light becomes mild as the hours sink down.
願君裁悲且減思	I wish you could dismiss your sadness and reduce your brooding
聽我抵節行路吟	as you listen to me beating time and singing "On the Road."
不見柏梁銅雀上	Don't you see on the Cypress Beam and Bronze Bird Terraces,[13]
寧聞古時清吹音	how can one hear the clear music of ancient times?

The speaker's address to the "you" 君 in the first line establishes the poem's primary subject, a

relationship between the speaker and a single "you" 君. But this relationship is transformed in

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[12] Lu Qinli, *Song shi*, 7.1274; translation adapted from Chen, 320. See also Huang Jie, 255 and Qian Zhonglian, 224.

[13] "Cypress Beam Terrace" (*Boliang* 柏梁臺) was a large structure constructed under the direction of Emperor Wu of the Han. According to the preface attached to the "Cypress Beam Terrace Poem" 柏梁臺詩, Emperor Wu summoned officials in 108 BCE to write seven-syllable-line poems celebrating the construction of this terrace. "Cypress Beam Terrace" was a model for "Bronze Bird Terrace" (*Tongque* 銅雀臺), a structure that Cao Cao commissioned at Ye. Beginning on its completion in 212 Bronze Bird Terrace became a popular subject for poetry and an enduring symbol of the Jian'an legacy. Xiaofei Tian examines the literary life of the Bronze Bird Terrace in Part 2 of *The Halberd at Red Cliff: Jian'an and the Three Kingdoms*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2018).

the final two couples, when the speaker "breaks the frame" by referring explicitly to his performance. Here he not only refers to himself as "beating time" 抵節 and "singing" 吟, but also names the song itself: "On the Road" 行路. This metapoetic gesture complicates the structure of address in the poem; though the speaker *could* still be performing just for the single "you" 君, the possibility now arises that the speaker is addressing a larger group—the audience of a *yuefu* performance or even the readers of the *yuefu* in text form. Thus, what the first line leads us to interpret according to the fiction of overheard speech takes on another life as a work aware of its own crafted status—a piece with a title that the speaker-performer himself refers to.

Additional features of the poem also guide the reader toward this secondary interpretation. These include a lack of precise specification in the relationship between the I and the "you" 君 and the lack of specification in the setting. Though the poem establishes the speaker's attention to and desire to help the addressee, the singular "you" 君, it gives little sense of degree of connection between the two figures and does not indicate whether the addressee is at all responsive to the speaker. These qualities make it possible for the reader to reinterpret the "you" 君 as either a live audience or the readers—figures who would have little possibility of responding to a performer.

Further, the poem does not indicate where its action takes place, and it divulges only a very general sense of time: when the "year reaches its close" 歲將暮. However, before the poem even reaches this temporal description, it gives an extraordinary amount of detail about the four lavish objects "present[ed]" 奉 in its opening lines. The presence of these objects in the poem— and in the series as a whole—may at first seem puzzling or even superfluous. But when we

consider what the poem would be *without* them, we may begin to see how they serve it on multiple levels.

Structurally, the specific, the material details of these items provide something like a sense of place: we imagine the bright metals, liquids, and silks gleaming; we feel the architecture of the "canopy" 帳, the distinctive arc of feathers, and the textures of "brocade" 錦 and "engraving" 雕. But this sense of place is not tied to any particular geography or dimension in a fictional or nonfictional space. Without limiting the poem to a specific context, these heavily-worked surfaces can be interpreted as either real or metaphorical—and the poem activates and makes use of both of these possible interpretations. With this type of description, Bao Zhao seems to display the influence of the *Chu ci* and particularly of *Zhao hun* ("Summoning the Soul"), an ancient poem in which lavish and extensive description is used as a form of enticement and persuasion.

Finally, the objects in Bao Zhao's poem also serve as a source of information about the relationship between the speaker and the "you" 君. As the receiver of such ornate gifts, the reader may infer that the addressee is a person of high position and social standing. But when the speaker reveals himself to be a *yuefu* performer—and therefore most likely not wealthy—the reader may begin to doubt that he would be able to afford such gifts. While this might lead us to imagine that the speaker could be presenting or re-presenting gifts given by others, it also encourages us to consider a figurative interpretation of the items.

Looking back to the earlier part of the poem from this perspective, the objects in the opening four lines now seem to serve as metaphors for works of poetry and song. This reading is bolstered by the fact that each of these items is functional as well as ornate. Not only do the descriptions suggest that the highest-quality materials and workmanship have gone into the

items, but the "vessel" 卮, a "zither" 琴, a "canopy" 帳, and a "quilt" 衾 each have an ostensible

practical use in addition to their status as objects of aesthetic appreciation. The poems are gifts to

the reader, just as the objects are gifts to the fictional "you" 君. At the same time, the speaker's

reference to himself or herself as the singer of a song or *yuefu* called "On the Road" 行路 further

undermines the reader's sense that these objects are "real," because it calls attention to the status

of the previous lines as a performance.

This interpretation builds on the lines that directly follow the descriptions of the objects

themselves, in which the speaker shows concern for the wellbeing of the "you" 君 and indicates

his or her intention to help. Here the reader is confronted with a feeling of precariousness and

delicacy, a setting illuminated by "cold light" 寒光 "becom[ing] mild" 宛轉 as hours "sink" 沉,

and in which someone's "rosy countenance" 紅顏—possibly that of the "you" 君, or possibly

that of the speaker himself or herself—"withers" 零落. The speaker seems to be filled with

sympathetic fear, speaking of a "sadness" 悲 that he or she hopes can be "dismiss[ed]" 裁. But

rather than become dejected or pessimistic, the speaker manifests a strong response in the form

of exhortation, performance, and music. Like the performer in "Sitting up Chanting at Night,"

the speaker-performer in this poem is a leader, someone with the strength both to see a path that

others do not and also to make it real to others.[14]

However, while the potential relations between the speaker of "Sitting up Chanting at

Night" and its audience are not referred to explicitly in the poem, these possibilities are activated

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[14] In each case, the performer becomes the guide for the other person, and the character "red" or "rosy" 紅 is used to evoke a sense of a person's inner animation and vitality. Even the language used to evoke the two scenarios is similar: the shift from describing decorative objects to a "rosy countenance" 紅顏 mirrors—inversely—the movement from the extinguished lamp to the bright face in "Sitting up Chanting at Night" 夜坐吟, above.

and brought to the fore in the first poem of "Imitating 'On the Road of Adversity.'" Through the *yuefu* device of the direct address, as well as the manipulation of setting and detail, Bao Zhao activates a dizzying array of possible meanings and relationships in this poem. In particular, this poem suggests the fundamental importance of intersubjective connection, whether it is between the speaker and the "you" 君 or between the speaker-performer and a larger audience or readership. Additionally, rather than accept a conventional model of performance as entertainment, the poem also offers a particularly idealistic agenda for the performer-audience relationship. Usually, the audience and the performer are strangers—of no particular relation to each other. But here the performer is deeply invested in the "you" 君; the artist wants to impart something of intimate value, something truly invigorating, vivid, of lasting significance, and connected to the greatest traditions of the past.

In both of the poems discussed in this section, Bao Zhao represents both the performer and the listener as at least potentially active parties. In "Sitting up Chanting at Night" the speaker actively "follow[s]" 逐 the performer, and the speaker's final lines addressing the "you" 君 in the first poem of "Imitating 'On the Road of Adversity'" indicate that the "you" 君 will have to respond actively if he or she wishes to "dismiss" 裁 "sadness" 悲. In both cases the performer offers powerful guidance, but effort is also required of the listening party if he or she is to share in the experience presented by the performer.

This representational choice is closely connected to a strand of ancient tradition represented by the legend of Bo Ya and Ziqi, mentioned above. According to the legend, when Ziqi died, Bo Ya vowed never to play his instrument again. This element of the story underscores the reciprocity of the relationship: both parties were essential for the music to be created, and communication itself is presented as of equal importance to music, or more important. In

addition, as I have mentioned, Bao Zhao also seems to draw on the ancient *Chu ci* poem *Zhao hun* ("Summoning the Soul"), in which the speaker takes on the voice of a kind of spiritual guide or shaman.

In reviving, re-presenting, and re-enacting these traditions in his *yuefu*, Bao Zhao offers a passionately idealistic view of human communicative possibilities. These poems not only emphasize people's capacity to understand and to share in one another's feelings; they also suggest that people can profoundly influence one another and shape one another's lives. In this way, Bao Zhao's representations of intersubjectivity emphasize the extent to which the self is not static and autonomous but rather fluctuating and highly dependent on connections with others—both individuals and larger groups. Even and especially in his depictions of himself—that is, as the speaker or narrator in genres that require narration by the empirical author—Bao Zhao consistently emphasizes his dependence on individual others as well as his relations to larger social structures.

However, people's dependence on interconnection also makes them vulnerable, and disconnection can be as much a feature of a person's intersubjective life as connection. The following section turns to Bao Zhao's depictions of disconnection: the impact on his speakers and characters of being separated from a loved one by distance or death.

The Threat of Disconnection

Bao Zhao's writings celebrate intimate connections while emphasizing the extent to which these are precious and finite, bounded by the limitations that constrain all human life. While certain of his works emphasize that death will terminate every intersubjective connection, others show that separation can be just as cruel.

Some of Bao Zhao's most explicit renderings of the pathos of disconnection are to be found in poems that show a speaker undergoing his own death. The hyperbolic, dark style Bao Zhao uses to represent the post-mortem speaker in "Imitating 'The Graveyard Song'" 代蒿里行, "Imitating 'The Pallbearers' Song'" 代挽歌 and "Ballad of the Pine and Cypress" 松柏篇 grows out of the tradition of the "Pallbearers' Song" (*wan ge* 挽歌), a kind of dirge or elegy. Originating with Han funeral songs, this tradition developed into a type of poetry that had, in the words of A. R. Davis, "by [Tao Yuanming's] time become a vehicle through which the poet might express his own feelings of the shortness of life and the long night of death."[15]

The earliest preserved examples of *wan ge* are "The Graveyard" 蒿里 and "Dew on the Onion Grass" 薤露.[16] Originally Han funeral songs, these were later performed at banquets in a form of entertainment that seems to have contributed to the later development of the "Pallbearers' Song" as a poetic topic. However, as A. R. Davis discusses, this development is not linear, and the limited survival of texts gives us only an outline of how the tradition formed.[17] The *Wen xuan* selection of "Pallbearers' Songs" contains works by three writers: Miao Xi 繆襲 (186–245), Lu Ji 陸機 (261–303), and Tao Yuanming. Though these poems differ from each other in some of their features, they all convey a person's sadness about his death and the process of physical decay. The shared features of the *Wen xuan* selection suggest that a particular mode of writing *wan ge* developed in the third and fourth centuries; in contrast to these later works,

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[15] Davis, 165.

[16] These two poems appear in *Yuefu shiji* 樂府詩集 (the main premodern source of *yuefu* poetry) and in other premodern sources; see Owen's *An Anthology* for English translations (278).

[17] Here I follow Davis' analysis and outline of the *wan ge* tradition. See also Timothy Wai Keung Chan's discussion of the *wan ge* tradition in *Considering the End: Mortality in Early Medieval Chinese Poetic Representation* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 160; and Xiaofei Tian in *The Cambridge History of Chinese Literature*, vol. 1, 207–8.

earlier *yuefu* written to the titles "The Graveyard" 蒿里 and "Dew on the Onion Grass" 薤露 by Cao Cao and Cao Zhi do not share these same features.[18] In particular, the earlier compositions by Cao Cao and Cao Zhi do not share the unrelenting darkness and concern with depicting the dead body that characterizes the later tradition.

Bao Zhao's poems about death follow closely in the tradition of Lu Ji and of Tao Yuanming. Lu Ji's three "Pallbearers' Songs" 輓歌詩 were most likely the best-known models of this genre in Bao Zhao's time; however, the full range of *wan ge* poetry written in this period is not known. For example, as Davis discusses, we find in Yan Zhitui's 顏之推 sixth-century text *Yanshi jiaxun* 顏氏家訓 ("The Family Instructions of Master Yan") the suggestion that Lu Ji wrote a large number of *wan ge*—more than the selection of three in the *Wen xuan*.[19] This suggestion relates to the open question of whether Lu Ji's three *wan ge* poems included in *Wen xuan* were written separately or as a sequence of three.[20] In any case, Bao Zhao's three surviving works in the *wan ge* tradition are individual poems, not a sequence. Here I discuss two of these works, 'The Pallbearers' Song'" 代挽歌 and "Ballad of the Pine and Cypress" 松柏篇, both of which depict the speaker's mental and physical life after death.

Drawing on previous conventions, these two poems by Bao Zhao have a distinctive way of dramatizing their representations of the post-mortem speaker's isolation and loneliness. Both show their speaker's mind as eerily unaffected by death; a condition which makes the prospect of

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[18] Cao Cao wrote lyrics for each of these titles and Cao Zhi wrote lyrics for the title "Dew on the Onion Grass."

[19] Davis, 170.

[20] Davis discusses the view presented by Ikkai Tomoyoshi that "[*wan* ge] from [Miao Xi] to [Tao Yuanming] were generally written in series of three, treating respectively the carrying out of the coffin, the progress to the tomb, and the internment" (167–8); however, Davis believes that surviving poems and poem fragments do not necessarily substantiate this view.

confinement, isolation and physical decay all the more awful. The long poem "Ballad of the Pine and Cypress" 松柏篇 touches on a range of *wan ge* topics and emphasizes on the speaker's loss of intersubjective connection and longing for his family. The shorter poem 'The Pallbearers' Song'" 代挽歌 skips the scene of the funeral and focuses on the speaker's material conditions and point of view after his burial:[21]

	獨處重冥下	Dwelling alone deep in the netherworld,
	憶昔登高臺	I recall when I used to ascend tall terraces.
	傲岸平生中	I am proud that throughout my whole life
	不為物所裁	I did not reduce myself to the material world.
5	埏門祇復閉	The tomb door is shut and filled
	白蟻相將來	but termites keep coming in.
	生時芳蘭體	In life my body was fragrant with orchid;
	小蟲今為災	now it is plagued by little worms.
	玄鬢無復根	My black hairs are no longer rooted to my temples;
10	枯髏依青苔	my withered skeleton lies on green moss.
	憶昔好飲酒	I remember how I used to love drinking wine
	素盤進青梅	and I would drink from a plain plate with green plums.
	彭韓及廉藺	Peng and Han, Lian and Lin[22]
	疇昔已成灰	long ago [they] became ashes and dust.
15	壯士皆死盡	Those heroes have all died out—
	餘人安在哉	where are the rest of them now?

This poem develops several topics from the *wan ge* tradition, perhaps most notably the contrasting of the speaker's past life and his present conditions, and the description of the body decaying underground.

Ever mindful of intersubjective connection, Bao Zhao's speaker seems to wonder who will visit him in his final resting place. The answer he comes up with—"termites" 白蟻 and

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[21] Lu Qinli, *Song shi*, 7.1258; translation adapted from Chen, 293. See also Huang Jie, 196 and Qian Zhonglian, 142.

[22] This line refers to four figures: Peng Yue 彭越 (fl. 3rd C BCE) and Han Xin 韓信 (fl. 3rd C BCE) were generals who allied their forces with Liu Bang 劉邦 (256–195 BCE) before he became Emperor Han Gaozu; Lian Po 廉頗 (fl. 3rd C BCE) and Lin Xiangru 藺相如 (fl. 3rd C BCE) were vassals of the state of Zhao and also loyal friends.

"little worms" 小蟲—is repellent and sad; such visitors are clearly worse than no visitors at all. Insects also appear in Lu Ji's third "Pallbearers' Song" 輓歌詩 included in *Wen xuan*. These creatures constitute a vivid means of elaborating on the theme of bodily decay that appears earlier in the tradition, for example in Miao Xi's *wan ge* poem, also included in *Wen xuan*. Miao Xi writes: "My body's form is gradually destroyed, / My hair and teeth soon have fallen out" 形容稍歇滅，齒髮行當墮.[23] Bao Zhao's "Pallbearers' Song" develops this element further, including "termites" as well as "worms," and also mentioning his detached hair and "withered skeleton" 枯髏 (or "withered skull").

Bao Zhao contrasts the awfulness of the speaker's experience underground with his pleasant circumstances in life; in the past, not only was his body "fragrant with orchid" 芳蘭, but he also "used to ascend tall terraces" 昔登高臺 (2) whose heights represent the opposite of the depths in which he now resides. A similar contrast of height and depth appears in the second of Tao Yuanming's three surviving *wan ge* poems:[24]

	在昔無酒飲	In the past I had no wine to drink;
	今但湛空觴	only now, in vain, do they fill the goblet [for me].
	春醪生浮蟻	Spring ale produces a thin floating layer;
	何時更能嘗	when may I taste this again?
5	肴案盈我前	Tables of offerings are piled before me;
	親舊哭我傍	relatives and friends weep at my side.
	欲語口無音	I would speak but my mouth is without sound;
	欲視眼無光	I would see but my eyes are without sight.
	昔在高堂寢	I used to sleep in a high hall;
10	今宿荒草鄉	now, I rest in the village of the wilds.
	一朝出門去	One morning I went out of the gate,
	歸來夜未央	but as for my return, this night has not yet ended.

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[23] *Wen xuan*, 28.1332.

[24] Lu Qinli, *Jin shi*, 17.1013; translation adapted from Davis, 173. The *wan ge* poem of Tao Yuanming's that is included in *Wen xuan* is usually placed third in this sequence of three.

This poem contains several parallels to Bao Zhao's "Ballad of the Pine and Cypress" 松柏篇, discussed briefly below, as well as to Bao Zhao's "Pallbearers' Song." The "high hall" 高堂 (9) forms something of a parallel to Bao Zhao's "tall terraces" 高臺, above, although unlike Bao Zhao's couplet Tao Yuanming's does not also emphasize the depth of his current position. In addition, both poems include a couplet that discusses drinking.

While Tao Yuanming's poem opens with the irony of being deprived of drink both in life and in death, Bao Zhao presents a purely fond and happy memory of drinking in life (11–12). The differences between these scenarios illustrate the different representational strategies underlying the two poems. Tao Yuanming's opening lines acknowledge that his life included certain hardships, but the following couplet emphasizes that the complexity of life only increases the speaker's attachment to it. We see this in the way the speaker savors the distinctive film that forms on the surface of spring ale; in his account of this pleasure, the speaker shows that he has a taste for the *particularity* of experience, not just the life's most overt joys. Bao Zhao also refers to the pleasure of drinking, but his pleasure is presented as a somewhat more straightforward one. In this example as elsewhere in the his poem, the joy that Bao Zhao's speaker experienced in life is definite and uncompromised. Thus, while Tao Yuanming represents his attachment to life in a more subtle and particular fashion, Bao Zhao's representational strategy differentiates the pleasantness of life from the misery of death in an especially stark way.

The "Ballad of the Pine and Cypress" 松柏篇, included in full in the appendix, represents a slightly more nuanced picture of the speaker and his life, showing how it contained difficulties as well as happiness. Less macabre but more tragic than Bao Zhao's "Pallbearers' Song," this poem contains the most explicit account of the author's illness and his attempts to cure it. The

speaker discusses how his treatment "exhausted the family's savings " 傾家, but to no avail. As the poem develops, it consistently returns to the theme of how the speaker's intersubjective connections develop after his death. Arriving at the scene of his own funeral, he describes how "close and distant relations grieve together " 親疏同共哀, and then how he finds himself "reluctant to leave, linger[ing] fondly in [his] house" 低回戀庭室 afterward. Finally, where the speaker dramatically describes his death and states that his "human affairs henceforth conclude" 人事從此畢, we might expect the end of the poem—and yet this is only the middle.

Now, in lonesome quiet, the speaker ruminates on how he lived his life. Somewhat surprisingly, he represents himself as enduring regular human time, rather than being released from it in any way. Alone, he watches as "on top of the grave mound, grass daily grows more plentiful" 冢上草日豐. Poignantly, the ending of the poem returns to the subject of the speaker's separation from his family:

家世本平常	My family lineage is ordinary;[25]
獨有亡者劇	only the dead experience this extreme hardship.
時祀望歸來	I hope [my family] will return on time for the regular sacrifices,
四節靜塋丘	though the cemetery will be quiet and still in all four seasons.
孝子撫墳號	My dutiful son touches the grave and weeps
父子知來不	asking whether his father knows to come or not.
欲還心依戀	At the point of returning home, he is still reluctant to leave;
欲見絕無由	he wants to see me, but we are cut off and there is no way.
煩冤荒隴側	Miserable and frustrated beside the desolate mound,
肝心盡崩抽	his heart has fallen apart completely.

This ending develops the theme of how family members go on after the loss of a loved one, and the implicit question of whether they go back to their normal lives or continue to suffer from

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[25] Or, alternately: "My family's life is now as usual."

grief.[26] Earlier in the poem, Bao Zhao writes, "the anguish of this will persist in the hearts of the living" 事痛存人心. Here we see only the anguish of his son, who, we are told "wants to see [his father]" 欲見 even though they "are cut off and there is no way" 絕無由. The simplicity of this statement and the way in which it captures the tragedy that has taken place is characteristic of Bao Zhao's depiction of meaningful intersubjective connections. This is a type of representation that emphasizes the ordinary rather than the extraordinary. Bao Zhao does not claim that he or his family members are unusual, and therefore he implicitly acknowledges that his loss is just like the losses that most people suffer. But instead of diminishing our sense of tragedy, this emphasis only heightens it, reminding us of the way that loss shapes ordinary people's lives and evoking a larger picture of shared devastation.

Other poems by Bao Zhao represent the losses occasioned by death from other perspectives. While a speaker who has undergone death himself can report on his experience with strange vividness, a living speaker mourning the death of a loved one presents different expressive potential. Bao Zhao's *fu* "Lamenting the Departed" 傷逝賦 is written from this perspective. One of Bao Zhao's most movingly personal works, it describes the author's loss of either his sister or his wife and the way in which this event constitutes a loss of part of himself.[27] After an opening that invokes classic works and sets an autumnal scene, the author turns quickly to the subject of his grief:[28]

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[26] Tao Yuanming in particular touches on this theme in his *wan ge* poem included in *Wen xuan*; he writes, "My relatives may have further grief; / the others for their part are already singing" 親戚或餘悲, 佗人亦已歌 (*Wen xuan*, 28.1337; translated by Davis, 173).

[27] There is some ambiguity about whether this *fu* laments the death of his wife or rather that of his sister, the writer Bao Linghui 鮑令暉, whose dates of birth and death are unknown.

[28] Yan Kejun, *Quan Song wen*, 64.2687-2 to 2688-1; translation adapted from Su Jui-lung, "Versatility within tradition: A study of the literary works of Bao Zhao (414?–466)" (PhD diss., University of Washington, 1994), 149–155. See also Qian Zhonglian, 9.

	晨登南山	In the morning I climb the southern mountain
	望美中阿	and gaze towards the beauty in the hill.
	露團秋槿	Dew gathers on the autumn hibiscus,
	風卷寒蘿	the wind shrivels up the cold dodder.
5	悽愴傷心	Sorrowful and anguished,
	悲如之何	how sad I am!
	盡若窮煙	She has expired like spent smoke,
	離若翦弦	and departed like a cut-off string.[29]
	如影滅地	She is like a shadow erased from the earth,
10	猶星殞天	and a star fallen from the sky.
	棄華宇於明世	Having deserted the splendid edifice of the bright world,
	閉金扃於下泉	she is enclosed behind the metal gate in the nether spring.
	永山河以自畢	Although mountains and rivers are eternal, her life came to an end,
	眇千齡而弗旋	and even after one thousand years she will never return.
15	思一言於向時	Recalling a word she said in the past,
	邈眾代於古年	it is as if it was spoken many generations ago, in ancient times.

This section, like the piece as a whole, balances its presentation of the speaker's grief with representations of the object of grief. Rather than linger only on the quality and quantity of his emotion, the narrator turns again and again to the subject of his wife. Throughout the *fu*, the speaker considers the traces of her that remain both in his mind and in the world—each time failing to summon her into the present.

The *fu* introduces this subject with two metaphors: "spent smoke" 窮煙 and "cut-off string" 翦弦.[30] While the smoke indicates that the previous existence of a fire that is now gone, the string demonstrates the fact of mortality more simply and more absolutely. "A shadow erased

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[29] Here I take the line as it is presented in Qian Zhonglian, with the character *jian* 翦 in place of *jian* 箭 (the character that appears in Yan Kejun's text). "Cut-off string" (*jian xian* 翦弦) indicates the strings of a zither. Following Yan Kejun and taking *jian* 箭 instead of *jian* 翦 would change the phrase to mean something like an "arrow [shot from bow-] string." Another variant, from *Chu xue ji* 初學記, has the character "cut off" *duan* 斷 instead of either *jian* 箭 or *jian* 翦.

[30] See Note 29, above.

from the earth" 影滅地, his wife's material existence is gone, taking with it the means of establishing and maintaining intersubjective connection.

Throughout the *fu*, the author dwells on his loss, attempting to access his connection to his wife through memories and traces of her. The lines directly following those above give a more material example of traces she left behind than the spoken "word" 言 (above) that exists only in the author's memory:[31]

覽篇迹之如旦	I read her writing until dawn;
婉遺意而在兹	she gracefully put meaning into it, where it now remains.
忽若謂其不然	Then suddenly it's as if it's all untrue—
自惆悵而驚疑	I am disconsolate, startled and bewildered.

Here the concrete materiality of her writing—its tangible existence—contrasts with the speaker's volatile state and shifting conception of his relationship to his wife. Immersed in her writing, the author seems to have momentarily forgotten the present circumstances; transported by reading, he enjoys the brief feeling of his wife's presence. But then the present situation all comes rushing back to him—what he reads is in fact "all untrue" 不然, made false by the fact of her death—and so the narrator is returned to his grieving, "disconsolate" 惆悵 state.

The piece concludes with a final lament, one that brings together general conclusions about the nature of life and the enduring presence of traces left behind by the beloved:[32]

共甘苦其幾人	Together sharing joys and sorrows—how many people can experience such a life?
曾無得而偕老	Many have not been able to grow old as husband and wife.
拂埃琴而抽思	I stroke my dusty zither and pour out my thoughts,
啟陳書而遲討	I open old letters and search through their distances.
自古來而有之	Since antiquity there have been circumstances such as this;

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[31] Yan Kejun, *Quan Song wen*, 64.2687-2 to 2688-1; translation adapted from Su Jui-lung, "Versatility within tradition," 149–155.

[32] Yan Kejun, *Quan Song wen*, 64.2687-2 to 2688-1; translation adapted from Su Jui-lung, "Versatility within tradition," 149–155.

夫何怨乎天道　　　　　how can I blame the way of Heaven?

The structure of "searching through [the] distances" 遐討 of the letters evokes the scenario of "Chanting at Night" 夜坐吟, in which the speaker "follows" 逐 the performer. In that poem the performer is physically present and available, and it is that presence that seems to make it possible for the speaker to fully "experience [her] song" 體君歌. The narrator of the *fu* attempts to follow his wife in a similar way, but his efforts are bound to fail—or at least to succeed only in a painfully limited way, as his wife is not there as a living guide to help point the way.

In the final two lines the author tries to make sense of his experience by referring to the tragic patterns of human life and history. However, the speaker can find no consolation in these generalizations. The final statement—"how can I blame the way of Heaven?" 夫何怨乎天道 suggests that the narrator *does* in fact blame the way of heaven, even if he reproaches himself for doing so. Like the speaker's son in "Ballad of the Pine and the Cypress," the narrator does not experience death and disconnection as natural and inevitable. Instead, he remains "startled and bewildered" 驚疑, unable to accept the loss of a connection that he regards as so fundamentally a part of himself.

This *fu*—like Bao Zhao's *fu* in general—is replete with detail and includes biographical elements that are specific to the empirical author. However, the themes as well as the specific structures that Bao Zhao uses here appear, in more abbreviated and condensed form, in his *yuefu* poems spoken by other characters. For example, while "Lamenting the Departed" directly depicts the complex feeling of loss and of retaining the memory of a loved one, the "Song of Separated Cranes" 代別鶴操 transposes those feelings onto animal characters:[33]

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[33] Lu Qinli, *Song shi*, 7.1262; translation adapted from Chen, 299. See also Huang Jie, 210 and Qian Zhonglian, 163.

	雙鶴俱起時	When the two cranes first took off,
	徘徊滄海間	they flew back and forth over the blue ocean.
	長弄若天漢	Their steady singing spread like the Milky Way,
	輕軀似雲懸	and their light bodies drifted like suspended clouds.
5	幽客時結侶	These recluses then became companions;
	提攜遊三山	each guiding the other, they roamed over the three mountains.[34]
	青繳凌瑤臺	But the dark string encroaches on jade terraces[35]
	丹羅籠紫煙	and the red net envelops the purple mist.[36]
	海上悲風急	The baleful wind over the sea was swift
10	三山多雲霧	and the three mountains were covered with clouds and fog.
	散亂一相失	Scattered and dispersed, they soon lost each other.
	驚孤不得住	Startled and alone, they did not stay long anywhere.
	緬然日月馳	Into the distance, days and months flew past.
	遠矣絕音儀	How remote! The sound of each companion cut off.
15	有願而不遂	They hold on to hope but find no fulfillment.
	無怨以生離	Without complaint, they are separated while alive.
	鹿鳴在深草	The deer cry in the deep grasses.[37]
	蟬鳴隱高枝	Cicadas shrill, hidden on high branches.[38]
	心自有所存	The heart has its own cherished reserve—
20	旁人那得知	how can others understand?

While "Lamenting the Departed" presents a story of separation from the perspective of the widowed husband, the "Song of Separated Cranes" is told from the third-person point of view, describing the formation and dissolution of a partnership chronologically. Throughout the poem the birds are anthropomorphized; described in near-human terms, the birds are presented as a metaphorical representation of a human couple. In particular, the phrases to "become

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[34] The "three mountains" 三山 are the sacred mountains of Penglai, Fangzhang, and Yingzhou.

[35] The "string" (*zhuo* 繳) is a silk string attached to the end of an arrow used for shooting birds. "Jade terraces" 瑤臺 appear in the *Chu ci* poem *Li Sao*.

[36] The "net" (*luo* 羅) is a net used to catch birds.

[37] This line refers to the *Shijing* poem "Deer Cry" 鹿鳴. Also, Qian Zhonglian notes that this line echoes one in Su Wu's 蘇武 (c. 140–60 BCE) "old poem" (*gu shi* 古詩): "the deer cries thinking of wild grasses" 鹿鳴思野草.

[38] Qian Zhonglian cites Cao Zhi's "Poetic Exposition on the Cicada" 蟬賦 in relation to this line.

companions" 結侶 (5) and "guiding" or "leading by the hand" 提攜 (6) are very human terms of intimacy.

Having been presented with the birds' mutual attachment, the reader must also face the seriousness of their separation. In fact, the process of grief that the birds undergo parallels the one the narrator describes in "Lamenting the Departed." There, reading his wife's writing, the narrator is once again and "suddenly" 忽 surprised by the recognition of what has happened. This "surprise" illustrates the traumatic and disorienting experience of loss; the way that losing one's closest companion can call into question the very nature of a person's reality. Unlike the narrator of "Lamenting the Departed," the birds do not have tangible mementos of one another, and we are told that they accept their loss "without complaint" 無怨. Nonetheless, in its description of the birds "hold[ing] on to hope" 有願, the poem insists that they remember and long for one another indefinitely.

Turning away from the cranes, the poem closes with four lines that address the subject of intersubjective connection more abstractly. In an oddly layered structure, the cries of the deer and the cicadas replace the sound of the cranes, which has been "cut off" 絕. The deer and cicada sounds come from concealed presences, like the sound of the crane would if the crane could still be heard but not seen in the mist. Here the poem reinstates lost sound, asserting that even if the communicative voice of the beloved has been lost in external world, it will nonetheless continue to exist in the world of the "heart" 心. Following this reasoning, the poem concludes that the world of the heart is therefore such that "others" 旁人 or more literally "those beside a person" cannot understand—even if they are literally present. By implication, these "others" 旁人 cannot

hear the true content of one's "heart" 心: the "cherished reserve" 所存, a personal place where intersubjective connection can be maintained even after the beloved is physically gone.

This poem, therefore, revisits structures and ideas central to "Sitting up Chanting at Night" as well as to "Lamenting the Departed," works in which "inner" and "outer" realities are contrasted. Like "Sitting up Chanting at Night," "Song of Separated Cranes" asserts the reality of an inner world and asserts the primacy of this world over an outer reality of daily experience and superficial relations. At the same time, the poem also describes how, tragically, the "inner" reality is dependent on the "outer" one, because even the most beloved connection is terminated if the other gets lost or dies. One can maintain the memory of that connection, but the other is nonetheless gone, unable to share or to create new experiences.

Phantom Unions

The works discussed above show how a relationship can continue to be an important part of a person's identity even after a loved one is gone from the physical world. Most of the losses in those works are one-directional; once lost, the living presence of the other cannot be regained. This section looks at two of Bao Zhao's works that contemplate other possible patterns of connection and loss.

Although very different from one another, "Dreaming of Return" 夢歸鄉詩 and "Song of Spring Days" 春日行 each represent ambiguous connections that fall somewhere on the spectrum of the psychic or empathetically supernatural. Neither work depicts its characters as physically present to one another in the poem, but in each case the poem asserts and represents a connection.

A traveler separated from his wife, the speaker of "Dreaming of Return" 夢歸鄉詩 faces

a rough and forbidding frontier landscape in the opening of the poem. However, after the first six

lines the poem takes an unusual turn when it begins to recount a dream in detail:[39]

	銜淚出郭門	Holding in tears, I leave through the city gate.
	撫劍無人逵	Gripping my sword I pass through deserted thoroughfares.
	沙風暗塞起	A sandstorm rises, darkening the frontier;
	離心眷鄉畿	the traveler's heart is strongly attached to his homeland.
5	夜分就孤枕	At midnight I go to sleep on my lonely pillow
	夢想暫言歸	and in an instant fall into a dream of returning home.
	孀婦當戶歎	My wife, living like a widow, sighs at the door
	繰絲復鳴機	while drawing silk from cocoons and reeling it to the spinner.
	慊款論久別	We talk about our long separation to our hearts content,
10	相將還綺闈	then retire together to our elegant bedchamber.
	歷歷簷下涼	The dripping from the eaves is desolately chilly;
	朧朧帳裏輝	the light in the bedchamber shines cozily and dimly.
	刈蘭爭芬芳	The cut orchid contends with her aromatic sweetness;
	采菊競葳蕤	the plucked chrysanthemum competes with her flushed freshness.
15	開奩奪香蘇	She opens the mirror case to take out sachets of fragrance
	探袖解纓徽	and stretches hands out of sleeves to untie her lacy garment.
	寐中長路近	In dreaming, the long way home has become much shorter;
	覺後大江違	awakening, I find myself still separated by the great river.
	驚起空歎息	Rising up I sigh vainly in astonishment;
20	恍惚神魂飛	my mind flies, in a trance.
	白水漫浩浩	The swirling white waters rush ahead,
	高山壯巍巍	the high mountains stand out eminently.
	波瀾異往復	The ebb and flow changes the tidal waters,
	風霜改榮衰	the wind and frost make flourishing things wither.
25	此土非吾土	This land is not my homeland—[40]
	慷慨當告誰	to whom shall I tell my impassioned sentiment?

The opening lines compress familiar elements of journey and frontier poems. The three settings

that appear at the ends of each of the first three lines—the "city gate" 郭門, "deserted

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[39] Lu Qinli, *Song shi*, 9.1303–4; translation adapted from Chen, 374. See also Huang Jie, 374 and Qian Zhonglian, 384.

[40] This line echoes Wang Can's 王粲 (177–217) "Fu on Ascending the Tower" (Denglou fu 登樓賦), which appears in *Wen xuan*: "Though truly beautiful, it is not my home" 雖信美而非吾土.

thoroughfares" 無人達, and the stormy "frontier" 塞—outline a familiar narrative. But directly

after this opening the poem shifts to introduce elements of slightly different subgenres of poem:

those of the waiting wife and the return home. These maneuvers are made possible by the dream;

where a more conventional poem would stick with the tone and setting that it began in, this poem

switches register multiple times. These shifts enable the poem to create a unique picture of its

speaker and his state of mind. In particular, by depicting the relationship that the speaker values

most, the poem makes the speaker's "typical" homesickness and longing newly real and vivid.

The dream opens with a vision of the speaker's wife living as a "widow" 孀婦 and

spinning silk. The reunion between husband and wife is enacted in two parts: first a lengthy

discussion, and then their retiring together to the bedchamber. In the bedchamber section the

register of the poem shifts again; these three couplets are written in the style of the romance or

boudoir subgenre. Finally, awakening from his dream, the speaker is overcome by another

sensual experience—this time not a pleasant one. Realizing that he is "separated" 達 from

everything contained in his dream, he is "startled" 驚起 and upset. I have discussed other

examples in which Bao Zhao describes a moment of surprise when a character realizes that he is

disconnected from a loved one. As in those other cases, this speaker's surprise is followed by a

sense of bewildered disorientation.

The speaker's startled state of mind seems to dominate the perceptions that follow, in

which the landscape appears before him in an almost surreal way. The waters and mountains

appear blunt, forceful, and all-consuming; they are neither aesthetic nor appealing, but instead

just obstacles or even enemies that "separate" 達 the speaker from the things he values most.

Encountering this landscape devoid of human meaning and connection, the speaker laments that

there is no one with whom he can share what he feels. Bao Zhao here represents how lack of

intersubjective connection makes him unsteady, unable to feel like the self he knows from his life in his "homeland" 吾土.[41]

By stretching literary conventions to include the speaker's imagined encounter with his wife, the poem performs an unusual act of characterization. Contrasting the speaker's experience while traveling with his imagined return home, the poem shows us who the speaker is in terms of his most significant relationship. It does this not by describing any subtly unique character traits or experiences, but by creating a structure that enables the reader to see the lonely speaker in an intersubjective context. We do not know the circumstances of the speaker's career, or why he is forced to travel, but the conventions of the genre and the details the speaker provides about his feelings certainly suggest that this long separation is much against his wishing, and is most likely an act of financial necessity. Only in the dream can he be the self he wants to be—the one he is when he is together with his wife.

Bao Zhao's poems often implicitly posit or presume characters' deep loyalty to one another. For example, the speaker of "Dreaming of Return" envisions his wife eagerly waiting for him, living as a "widow" 孀婦 and "sigh[ing]" 歎 as she awaits his return at the "door" 戶 of their home. Of course, this scenario can be easily interpreted as a wishful fantasy—after all, it is explicitly presented as a dream, and one that appears to manifest the speaker's ideal form of happiness. But this pattern also appears in non-dream scenarios throughout Bao Zhao's work. For example, among the poems discussed above, the son in "Ballad of the Pine and the Cypress" 松柏篇 does not forget his dead father, and the birds in the "Song of Separated Cranes" 代別鶴操 maintain hope that they will be reunited. In these scenarios, characters' loss of their loved

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[41] See Note 40, above.

ones is made all the more tragic by the fact that betrayal, neglect, or forgetfulness appear to be impossible or inconceivable to them. Bao Zhao leads us to believe that these relationships *would* have endured, except for the terrible intervention of cruel circumstances and realities. This representation of people as fundamentally loyal to their core intersubjective connections makes the pathos of these situations especially poignant.

Betrayal does occur in one category or subgenre of Bao Zhao's works: poems about romance, often written from the female perspective. This set of works falls somewhat outside the scope of this chapter because, while such poems ostensibly treat intersubjective connection and its loss, these connections are presented according to a distinct set of conventions. These works are often spoken by a woman who fears that she has lost the favor of her patron or lover, and it is often implied that the woman has indeed been abandoned by this person. Rather than explore the meaning of the connection that these two people had and lost, the poems do not so much comment on the nature of the connection as emphasize the difficult circumstances in which these women find themselves.[42]

However, I do include in this chapter one poem written in a playful and highly decorative style. "Song of Spring Days" 春日行 contains elements of the subgenre I describe above, but like many of Bao Zhao's poems, it defies the regular norms and expectations of genre. While almost the entirety of the poem describes a pleasure outing on a bright spring day, the final couplet turns to a mysterious articulation of intersubjectivity and disconnection:[43]

獻歲發　　　It is the beginning of a new year,[44]

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[42] This is by no means meant as criticism of these poems—it is simply one reason why I do not consider them here.

[43] Lu Qinli, *Song shi*, 7.1280; translation adapted from Chen, 330. See also Huang Jie, 276 and Qian Zhonglian, 253.

[44] This line quotes the opening of the closing section (*luan* 亂) of the *Chu ci* poem *Zhao hun* 招魂 ("Summoning the Soul"): "At the beginning of the new year, as spring began, we set off for the south" 獻歲發春, 汩吾南行. The closing section of *Zhao hun* emphasizes the excitement of new endeavors, emphasizing how expeditions pull people forward into unknown territory while also reminding us of dangers that are more fully articulated in the body of the

	吾將行	and I am about to depart.
	春山茂	The spring mountain is luxuriant
	春日明	and the spring sun is brilliant.
5	園中鳥	The garden is full of birds;
	多嘉聲	all sing beautiful songs.
	梅始發	The plum begins to flower,
	桃始榮	the peach tree starts to bud.
	泛舟艫	The long boat is floating,
10	齊棹驚	rapid with oars of united effort.
	奏采菱	The music of "Gathering Water Chestnuts" is played.[45]
	歌鹿鳴	And the ode "The Deer Cry" is chanted.[46]
	風微起	The breeze gently rises.
	波微生	The light ripples spread.
15	弦亦發	The string music disperses.
	酒亦傾	The wine pours out from the goblet.
	入蓮池	Entering a lotus pond,
	折桂枝	someone picks cassia twigs.
	芳袖動	As the scented sleeve waves,
20	芬葉披	the fragrant leaves are scattered.
	兩相思	We both miss each other,
	兩不知	but neither one realizes it.

Although this poem is light, playful, and clever on the surface, a complex and sad emotional situation appears suddenly at its end. Here the use of the spring theme and the form of the three-character line perfectly offsets a difficult subject matter. We have no sense of who the characters involved are, and the sadness of a missed connection is glimpsed only through the highly polished, aesthetic, and almost joyful surface of the poem. At first lured in by the playful tone of

poem. Drawing on *Zhao hun,* Bao Zhao hints at a dark side to the feelings of hopefulness and expansiveness of spring that he articulates; as I discuss below, this foreshadowing resolves into the troubling sense that something important can be lost by accident. Unlike the overtly described risk of being lost articulated in *Zhao hun*, Bao Zhao's poem seems to articulate a more subtle way in which the soul can be lost.

[45] The title "Gathering Water Chestnuts" 采菱 appears in *Yuefu shiji*; a traditional type of song from the south, this title is associated with a carefree attitude and was supposed to have evolved from the songs sung by women while gathering water chestnuts.

[46] "Deer Cry" 鹿鳴 is a *Shijing* poem that was often performed at banquets and other celebrations.

the poem, the reader realizes suddenly and almost too late that something serious may be at stake.

The poem is filled with adornments and classical allusions. At first, these are not distinct objects, but the natural beauties of a spring day: the sun in the sky, the luxuriant foliage. As the poem progresses the beautiful things in it become more and more material and distinct. For example, the plum flowers and willow buds, while being an organic part of the natural world, are also the sort of tiny, detailed objects that are singled out by human culture to be admired and imitated in art. The next adornments to appear in the poem are man-made: the song "Gathering Water Chestnuts" 采菱 and the poem "The Deer Cry" 鹿鳴. Performed in the scene of the poem, these also serve as adornments to it. Nature and artifice comingle here, and Bao Zhao's use of extremely short lines makes it especially difficult to isolate one from the other.

The last couplet arrives suddenly. Although the speaker uses a pronoun, "I" 吾, to present himself in the second line, no further pronouns appear in the poem. The scene described in the middle section appears to be one in which multiple people are present: the rowing of the boat and the playing of music both reinforce this sense. But only in the final couplet does the poem once again specify its subject: the beginning of each of these lines use the single character "two" 兩 to indicate "the two of us" or "the two of them"—the reader cannot be sure which meaning is intended. Arriving now at the end of the poem, the reader realizes it is too late to learn anything about this relationship. All we know is that there are two people who "miss each other" 相思 while "neither one realizes it" 兩不知. In addition, the contents of the poem suggest that it may be too late for these people to become aware of their connection. Though we are not sure whether the "I" 吾 is in fact one of them, the fact that he is "about to depart" 將行 suggests that

change is imminent and distance is inevitable.[47] Poetic logic suggests that if he is one of the "two" 兩, he is unlikely to meet the other person again to develop their relationship.

The bittersweet sadness of this ending is somehow heightened or defined by the beauty and delicacy of the scene, and in particular by the ornaments that have been singled out for the reader of the poem to enjoy. Lost in admiration for these details, it seems that the speaker has either missed out on his own potential relationship with someone, or it may be that *he* is the one who has noted that two *other* people do not realize that they are "miss[ing] each other" 相思. In either case, the reader cannot know how the "I" 吾 at the beginning of the poem relates to the "two" 兩 in the final couplet, or which, if any, of the people participating in the pleasure outing fill these roles. Perhaps, after all, the "I" 吾 is a speaker who only observes the activities of others in the poem, while not realizing that he is the one missing someone else who is also missing him.

Like "Dreaming of Return," "Song of Spring Days" juxtaposes a "real," literal world with a secondary or imagined one. In both poems the secondary world is the one in which connection is possible, but while the connection in "Dreaming of Return" is vividly depicted in a dream, in "Song of Spring Days" the secondary world is barely depicted. Instead, it is merely hinted at—but from whose perspective we cannot be sure. The final lines seem to be spoken with a deeper knowledge than the earlier part of the poem—suggesting the voice of an impersonal narrator rather than the "I" 吾 speaker. This narrator seems to be the only one aware that, as Bao Zhao writes in "Song of Separated Cranes," "the heart has its own cherished reserve" 心自有所

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[47] This suggestion relates to the opening line's allusion to the *Chu ci* poem *Zhao hun*. See Note 44, above.

存. The characters of the poem, however, appear to remain trapped in the "real," literal world of appearances and material relations.

The sense of missed connection in "Song of Spring Days" suggests that the poem itself may be the only place where the "two" 兩 people will be brought together in a lasting way. Similarly, by conveying its speaker's dream, "Dreaming of Return" becomes an imaginative vehicle in which husband and wife are united. Bao Zhao seems to be interested in poetry's capacity to function in this way—as a place in which to create such "phantom" encounters and also to immortalize relationships that are limited by human constraints. Though the fantastical nature of these encounters is especially present in the two poems discussed in this section, similar dynamics are at work in poems such as the first poem of "Imitating 'On the Road of Adversity,'" discussed above, in which readers "meet" a speaker-performer and also listen for the sounds of the music of the past.

Self and Society

The *shi*, *yuefu* and *fu* examined thus far in this chapter show close relationships between people: connections that are not merely circumstantial elements of these people's lives but rather constitutive parts of their selves. Other poems of Bao Zhao's take a broader, more worldly, focus, entering into less detail about the nature of people's relationships and instead describing the structural factors that shape people's social and political existence. This section will consider the strategies that such poems use to represent intersubjectivity as a fundamental element of life. In particular, it discusses how Bao Zhao represents people's relation to society as a product of their connection or lack of connection with multiple—as opposed to individual—others. After

considering examples of Bao Zhao's *yuefu,* which use fictional speakers or personae, I will turn

to examples of his *shi* and *fu,* in which the speaker-narrator is the author himself.

<u>Personae Poems: Exploring the Margins</u>

Bao Zhao's *yuefu* tend to depict types rather than specific or uniquely characterized individuals.

However, even while he represents "types," Bao Zhao in his *yuefu* nonetheless deploys

techniques that make his characters unusually vivid. In particular, his insistent presentation of

these figures' need for intersubjective connection is original. Underscoring the common needs

and desires that all people experience, this device makes the deprivations undergone by these

characters seem more urgent and more terrible. Further sharpening this dimension of his *yuefu*,

Bao Zhao's speakers often direct complaints towards the government and their superiors. These

complaints usually draw on the speaker's story, demonstrating how ordinary people are isolated

and victimized by larger power structures.

One such poem is "Imitating the "Song of Dongwu"' 代東武吟, a *yuefu* spoken by an old

man giving account of his career:[48]

	主人且勿諠	Lend me your ears, my lord,
	賤子歌一言	and allow me to sing a word.
	僕本寒鄉士	I was originally a man from a poor region
	出身蒙漢恩	but under the Imperial Han's grace, I entered the public service.
5	始隨張校尉	At first I followed Colonel Zhang;[49]
	占募到河源	responding to the drafting call, [I went] to the spring of the yellow river.
	後逐李輕車	Later I rode after Commander Li, general of light chariots,[50]

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[48] Lu Qinli, *Song shi*, 7.1261; translation adapted from Chen, 298. See also Huang Jie, 208 and Qian Zhonglian, 159.

[49] "Colonel Zhang" 張校尉 refers to Zhang Qian 張騫 (fl. 2nd C. BCE), an official and diplomat who served the Han dynasty and collected a great deal of information about Central Asia.

[50] "Commander Li" 李輕車 refers to Li Cai 李蔡 (fl. 2nd C. BCE), a Han dynasty general who led an expedition against the Huns.

	追虜窮塞垣	pursuing the Huns all the way to the Great Wall.
	密塗亘萬里	Even a close-distance expedition extended ten thousand *li*,
10	寧歲猶七奔	and we received seven missions even in a peaceful year.
	肌力盡鞍甲	I exhausted all my strength on saddle and in armor,
	心思歷涼溫	and my heart experienced every kind of warmth and coldness.
	將軍既下世	Now the general has descended into the nether world,
	部曲亦罕存	and barely any of his troops survive either.
15	時事一朝異	As soon as time and circumstances became different
	孤績誰復論	who was there to talk about our lonely achievement?
	少壯辭家去	I left my family when young and vigorous
	窮老還入門	but have returned now old and poor.
	腰鎌刈葵藿	With the sickle by my waist I collect greens and beans;
20	倚杖牧雞豚	while leaning on a staff I pasture pigs and chicks.
	昔如韝上鷹	Formerly I was like an eagle on the armlet of a falconer,
	今似檻中猿	but now I am much like an ape behind bars.
	徒結千載恨	Conceiving futilely an everlasting bitterness,
	空負百年怨	I harbor vainly a life-long resentment.
25	棄席思君幄	I long for your tent like an abandoned mat;[51]
	疲馬戀君軒	like an exhausted horse, I am attached to carriage.
	願垂晉主惠	I wish you would confer upon us the Duke of Wen Jin's benevolence[52]
	不愧田子魂	so you won't feel ashamed before Tian Zi's [compassionate] spirit.[53]

This poem charts one man's career path from "a man from a poor region" 寒鄉士 to soldier and

then to farmer. In his current role he feels much depleted: he is now like "an ape behind bars" 檻

中猿, whereas formerly he was "an eagle on the armlet of a falconer" 韝上鷹. With the

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[51] The "abandoned mat" 棄席 in line 25 and the "exhausted horse" 疲馬 in line 26 are associated with the two figures mentioned in the following couplet (lines 27–28).

[52] According to legend, Duke Wen of Jin 晉文公 (the ruler of the state of Jin between 636 and 628 BCE) demonstrated loyalty by choosing to not discard his old mat *or* his old followers when he returned to power after a long exile (See *Han zi* 韓子).

[53] Tian Zi 田子 refers to Tian Zi Fang 田子方, a Warring States figure who appears in *Zhuangzi* and other texts; it is recorded that he once commented that a benevolent person would not forsake an old horse that had done its duty (See *Han shi wai zhuan*).

metaphor of the eagle, the speaker revisits a central feature of his story, which is his relationship to Commander Li or Li Cai.[54]

Though the speaker probably did not know Li Cai personally, he seems to identify with the man himself as well as with the time he served under him. First, the speaker indicates that this service was the only time in which he had a full and expansive experience of life. Stretching his abilities to the utmost, he tells the reader that he was rewarded by being able to "experience[e] every kind of warmth and coldness" 歷涼溫. Despite all the difficulties he faced, he tells us that he cannot be happy now that this period is over. Further compounding this loss is the fact that after the general's death there was no one left to "talk about" 論 and remember their "achievement" 績. The speaker's role in the military—one in which he felt useful and like a part of something—has vanished along with any account or memory of it except his own.

In the process of telling his life story, then, the speaker also represents the importance of one relationship in his life and the cost of losing it. However, unlike the relationships in the poems discussed above, what renders this one important is not its emotional valences or subjective dimensions, but the way in which it connected the speaker, however tenuously, to a specific position in society. Though he is only one among thousands of soldiers, he can nevertheless be proud of "exhausting[ing] all [his] strength on saddle and in armor" 肌力盡鞍甲 in order to share in this larger undertaking. But, unlike the leaders he serves under, the speaker is too lowly in rank to have a title or accomplishments that will be recorded and remembered. Now that he is "poor and old" 窮老, he feels that there is no trace left of his sacrifices or accomplishments, and he becomes engulfed in bitterness and resentment.

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[54] See Note 50, above.

Here, as in several of Bao Zhao's other works, the speaker describes having begun a career with an idealistic attitude but ending up bitter and worn down. At first the speaker seems to assume that there will be a place for him in the world; but gradually he has become disillusioned, forced to realize that he was simply an expendable resource, made use of by people higher up on the social ladder. This message is made explicit in the poem's final couplet, in which the speaker uses allusions to appeal to and also criticize his superiors. This ending picks up on the situational frame presented very briefly in the first couplet, where the speaker refers to his performance as "sing[ing]" 歌 and uses conventional terms of address to direct his story towards a "lord" 主人. The ending finds the speaker once again addressing this unspecified listener, someone who is presumably of higher social standing than himself. This time, however, he has a lesson; he says, "I wish you would confer upon us the Duke of Wen Jin's benevolence" 願垂晉主惠, adding the suggestion that failure to do so should make his interlocutor "feel ashamed before Tutor Tian's [compassionate] spirit" 愧田子魂.

"Imitating 'The Song of Dongwu'" shows how lack of recognition and understanding causes the speaker to suffer. If he were awarded honors of some kind, he might be able to understand his sacrifices as worthwhile—but without acknowledgment, he can only feel old, tired, and bitter. In particular, the speaker seems to suffer from the fact that these experiences cannot be validated or acknowledged by the society in which he lives. Perhaps the most affecting detail of the poem is how the speaker's final address indicates that he maintains hope that some kind of acknowledgment or "benevolence" 惠 might be forthcoming. He seems to imagine that this kind of intersubjective recognition could give meaning to his memory of having "experienced every kind of warmth and coldness" in his service to the state. The *yuefu* form means that the address ostensibly directed to a "lord" 主人 is in fact received by the audience of

a performance or an audience of readers—people who will be unable to supply the desired favor, even if they wished to. Nonetheless, the speaker's wishful fantasy, never to be fulfilled, appears to help him preserve his sense of his own selfhood in the face of adverse conditions.

As discussed in the previous section, one of Bao Zhao's techniques involves description of the chaotic and disorienting way people actually undergo difficult experiences. Both in his poems about social hardship and in his poems about intersubjective loss Bao Zhao's speakers' experiences of difficulty are intensified by their inability to share these experiences; examples include "Dreaming of Return," and also "Imitating 'The Song of Dongwu,'" discussed above. Both of these poems make reference to the hardships of military service, a frequent theme in *yuefu*. However, both contextualize those experiences with some description of other phases or aspects of the speaker's life. Other *yuefu* restrict the scope of their story to a period of shorter duration, focusing directly on the period of greatest strain. One such work, "Imitating 'The Song of Suffering from Heat'" 代苦熱行, shows its speaker overwhelmed by experience, plunged in a nightmarish situation he cannot fully comprehend:[55]

	赤阪橫西阻	Red hills stretch forbiddingly across the west.
	火山赫南威	Fiery mountains menace threateningly in the south.
	身熱頭且痛	The body suffers from a throbbing headache and burning fever,
	鳥墜魂來歸	while birds above fall and wandering souls return.
5	湯泉發雲潭	Hot wells spring out from the lake of vapor,
	焦煙起石圻	scorching smoke arises from rocky cliffs by the water.
	日月有恒昏	The moon and sun are perpetually obscured here
	雨露未嘗晞	And [the land] has never been exposed to the dew and the rain.
	丹蛇踰百尺	There are red serpents exceeding one hundred feet in length[56]

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[55] Lu Qinli, *Song shi*, 7.1266; translation adapted from Chen, 306. See also Huang Jie, 223 and Qian Zhonglian, 184.

[56] Lines 10 and 11 draw on imagery in the *Chu ci* poem *Zhao hun*; the "Red serpents"丹蛇 resemble "red ants" 赤蟻 as well as snakes that appear in *Zhao hun*, including a "large and thick adder" 蝮蛇蓁蓁 and a "venomous snake with nine heads" 雄虺九首.

10	玄蜂盈十圍	and black hornets with a ten arm-span girth.[57]
	含沙射流影	Holding in sand, demons then shoot it at passing shadows.[58]
	吹蠱病行暉	Flying insects sicken the traveling light.[59]
	瘴氣晝熏體	Miasmal vapors fumigate the body in daylight.
	菡露夜霑衣	Toxic dew soaks into one's clothes at night.
15	飢猿莫下食	Even the hungry monkeys do not take it as a feeding ground.
	晨禽不敢飛	The morning birds dare not to flutter or hover around.
	毒涇尚多死	The poisoned Jing River has already killed many;
	度瀘寧具腓	wouldn't crossing the Lu make them all sick?
	生軀蹈死地	Living bodies step through the dead land
20	昌志登禍機	and burgeoning aims are caught in snares of misfortune.
	戈船榮既薄	But the honor conferred on the Spear Boat [Commanders] was slight,[60]
	伏波賞亦微	and the reward bestowed on the Wave Subduer General was also small.[61]
	爵輕君尚惜	The peerage is light, yet you begrudge it,
	士重安可希	the men's lives are weighty; how can you seek them out?

Though the rugged setting suggests that the narrator is describing the experience of soldiers or travelers, the speaker does not explicitly identify himself or his subjects at the beginning of the poem. Before any people are mentioned, the opening two lines present a landscape of relentless heat and harshness. Then, in the third line, a subject position is introduced when we read that here "the body suffers from a throbbing headache and burning fever" 身熱頭且痛. The word

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[57] These "black hornets" 玄蜂 recall the oversize insects that appear in *Zhao hun,* which include "wasps as big as gourds" 玄蜂若壺 and the "red ants" 赤蟻 mentioned above (which are compared to "elephants" 象).

[58] This line refers to a creature that shoots poisonous sand; it appears in several ancient texts, where it is referred to as *sheying* 射影 ("shooting at the shadow") or Yu 蜮.

[59] *Wen xuan* includes the variant *tong* 痛 ("painful") in place of *bing* 病 ("disease").

[60] "Spear Boat" 戈船 refers to the title of "Spear Boat Commander" 戈船將軍, which was conferred on commanders of expeditions undertaken during the Han dynasty; these two expeditions failed, and therefore the commanders were not honored.

[61] "Wave Subduer" 伏波 refers to the Han dynasty military title "Wave Subduer General" 伏波將軍, which was given to leaders of Han dynasty campaigns in the south. Ma Yuan 馬援 (14 BCE–49 CE) was a "Wave Subduer General" famed for subjugating areas that are now part of northern Vietnam; in his biography in the *Hou Han shu* he refers to Lu Bode 路博德 (c. 119–109 BCE), an earlier "Wave Subduer General," and comments on how Lu Bode's rewards were diminished.

"body" 身 emphasizes the specifically physical, rather than emotional or psychological, dimension—and indeed, physical experience is the main focus of this poem.

In its description of the physical experience of extreme conditions, the poem suggests that these conditions preclude nearly any form of personhood other than the physical. In its account of the soldiers' experience, it emphasizes that hardships such as these reduce people to their basic needs: their thoughts are only of exhaustion, illness, fear, and food. This is in a sense the extreme opposite of Bao Zhao's depiction of ideal intersubjective connection, a state in which people transcend their physical selves and achieve mutual understanding. Here, the soldiers' faculties are, apparently, too compromised for them to notice one another, let alone offer any kind of mutual comfort or assistance.

Though the narrator of the poem does not identify himself as a soldier, he does seem to take on the perspective of a soldier during most of the poem. We seem to see through the eyes of a body that is perhaps becoming delusional—a possibility brought to the fore by the mention of "headache and burning fever" in the third line. Delusion or hallucination seem particularly plausible as the poem develops into a kind of a troubled dream-vision; drawing on the language and imagery of the *Chu ci,* the narrator speaks of serpents "exceeding one hundred feet in length" 踰百尺 and hornets that take on "a ten arm-span girth" 盈十圍. This kind of distortion emphasizes the depth and extremity of what a person—any person—would most likely undergo in such circumstances. The poem suggests that if there is distortion, it is caused not by any abnormality or weakness in the person, but more likely because of that person's *normality*—his conformity to the regular limitations of the human body and what it can endure.

Thus, even with these exaggerated descriptions, we are inclined to believe in the basic truth of the speaker's message. This is especially the case when he moves into an objective tone

at the end of the poem, discussing the situation using real place names as well as specific military roles and awards. Emerging from the fever-vision of the earlier part of the poem, this section ends with the speaker describing how the soldiers approached their task in good faith, with "burgeoning aim" 昌志 , even if they faced an impossible situation and leadership that offered them too little in return.

As in "Imitating 'The Song of Dongwu,'" this speaker indicates that some form of recognition or reward would indeed improve the lot of people who have undergone difficulties. But unlike the speaker in "Imitating 'The Song of Dongwu,'" this speaker does not insist that he himself has undergone the experience he describes, or suggest that those who have retain any hopes for the present or the future. Rather than emphasize the perspective of survivors, the poem seems to suggest that the "deadly place" 死地 has either actually killed those who traveled through it, or else permitted them to survive while extinguishing their capacity for meaning.

By focusing on characters on the lower rungs of the social ladder and in the furthest reaches of the empire, Bao Zhao shows the way in which people can lose—or be robbed of— what makes them human. On the one hand, he shows that certain physical conditions can reduce people to the point where they are no longer fully themselves—and certainly no longer capable of engaging in meaningful intersubjective relationships. On the other hand, he shows that even people who are willing to endure such difficult conditions for the sake of the empire are not rewarded and granted a place in society afterward. Emphasizing characters' desire for recognition, rather than just monetary compensation, these *yuefu* encourage readers to consider these characters' intersubjective dimensions as well as their more basic needs.

Market and Court: The Center of Society and the Social World

As mentioned above, the style and tone of Bao Zhao's *shi* poems varies a great deal according to the subgenre in which he is writing. This feature of Bao Zhao's work may be most pronounced in his landscape poems, which are written in a distinct style that draws heavily on Xie Lingyun. The various voices and modes of Bao Zhao's works suggest the extent to which he developed his writing as a craft, carefully considering the norms of each subgenre and the intended effect on an audience. In particular, we find evidence of Bao Zhao's interest in craft in his "imitations" (*ni* 擬) of other poets. Though literary imitation was a recognized form of literary practice in early medieval China, the quality and number of Bao Zhao's imitations suggests how seriously he studied the work of earlier writers and modeled his own works on theirs.[62]

Though not all of Bao Zhao's *shi* poems fit into recognizable subgroups, many do. These groups include landscape poems, poems about reclusion, and poems written to imperial command. This section looks at two *shi* poems that fit into no recognizable subgroup other than their own. I have chosen them because they present intersubjectivity in a more ambiguous way than the works discussed above.

The first of these poems, "Going Out to Circulate the Medicine's Effects I Reached the City's East Bridge" 行藥至城東橋, presents most of the information it gives about its speaker in its title, which refers to a medical practice that was common in the early medieval period. After taking a certain medical powder, one would go out to walk in order to "circulate the medicine's

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[62] The practice of "imitation" 擬 was common in Bao Zhao's time and previously as a method of composition and also of poetic training and study. The accidents of survival make it difficult to gain an objective sense of who wrote imitations and how many they wrote, but the survival of many imitations in Bao Zhao's corpus indicate, at the very least, that this was an important part of Bao Zhao's process. However common or not the practice of imitation may have been, we know that Bao Zhao's choices of who to imitate and how to imitate them were somewhat unusual. For example, he is cited as one of the earliest literary figures to see Tao Yuanming as an important writer and predecessor. Moreover, when we consider the interest Bao Zhao shows, in his poems, in interpersonal relationships, we cannot help but imagine that he saw literary imitation as a chance to engage closely with the writer whose work he was imitating—to treat the writer as a performer guiding him somewhat as performers guide listeners in "Sitting up Chanting at Night" and the first poem of "Imitating 'On the Road of Adversity.'"

effects" 行藥.[63] This poem reflects the speaker's mood and personality only indirectly—through

his thoughts and observations—until a final emotional outburst in the last couplet:[64]

	雞鳴關吏起	At the cry of the rooster, gate officers rise,
	伐鼓早通晨	beating the drum for the early traffic in the morning.
	嚴車臨迥陌	Preparing my carriage, I come upon the long road
	延瞰歷城闉	and look down along the city's wall.
5	蔓草緣高隅	Creeping plants climb over the high battlement corners;
	脩楊夾廣津	the broad thoroughfare is lined with tall poplars.
	迅風首旦發	At this very dawn arises a swift breeze—
	平路塞飛塵	and the level road is covered with the flying dust.
	擾擾遊宦子	Travelers in search of office hustle and bustle,
10	營營市井人	while the people in the marketplace are busy and hasty.
	懷金近從利	Cherishing gold, they seek nearby profits,
	撫劍遠辭親	or, holding their swords, they prepare to go further and take leave of their relations.
	爭先萬里塗	Striving to be ahead of others on the ten-thousand *li* road,
	各事百年身	each tries to take care of a life of one hundred years.
15	開芳及稚節	Flowers open in time for the young season [one's prime];
	含綵吝驚春	contained colors [in the buds] begrudge being startled by spring.
	尊賢永照灼	Forever dazzling and bright are the worthy and the noble;
	孤賤長隱淪	always forgotten and lost are the poor and the humble.
	容華坐銷歇	Gradually, my countenance and complexion wither.
20	端為誰苦辛	For whom, indeed, do I endure the hardship and suffer?

While depictions of soldiers laboring at the margins remind us of the vast scope of the empire

and the effort required to create and maintain it, the city represents the empire in miniature. Bao

Zhao's approach to the topic of the city combines representations of wealth and power with hints

at their dark side. In this poem, despite the presence of great numbers of other people, the

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[63] This medicine, called "Five Stones Powder" 五石散, is discussed in Lu Xun's well-known essay "Wei–Jin Behavior and Writings, and their Relation to Drugs and Alcohol" 魏晋风度及文章与药及酒之关系 (mentioned above). Five Stones Powder, which is first mentioned in Han dynasty texts, became increasingly common in the early medieval period. The drug was highly toxic, and the practice of walking after having taken it was supposed to help prevent side effects. See Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China, Volume 5, Part 3: Spagyrical Discovery and Invention: Historical Survey, from Cinnabar Elixirs to Synthetic Insulin* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 45.

[64] Lu Qinli, *Song shi*, 9.1301–2; translation adapted from Chen, 370. See also Huang Jie, 363 and Qian Zhonglian, 372.

speaker appears to be lonely and alone; in his apparent solitude, he takes special notice of the life of the city, seeming to regard it as a phenomenon worthy of special consideration and analysis.

A somewhat voyeuristic onlooker, the speaker's interest seems to be captivated most by his observations of other people and his meditations on the lives that they live. Ultimately, turning back to the subject of himself in the final couplet, the speaker asks "for whom" 為誰 he endures the difficulties of experience. This question—directed to no one other than the reader—underscores our sense of the speaker's isolation and suggests an ambiguous intersubjective frame. That is, in announcing that he wants to understand his suffering as meaningful "for" 為 someone, the speaker presents his own disconnection as a central preoccupation. And yet the question of who he is disconnected from, or who he wishes to be connected to, remains obscure.

The poem begins with the authoritarian presence of the city gate officers whose drums govern the passage of traffic in and out of the city. The lines convey a sense of the speaker's curiosity as he "come[s] upon the long road" 臨迴陌 and "looks down along the city's wall" 延瞰歷城闉. The following two couplets continues this description of the border between the city and what lies beyond, providing details first about the architecture and plants, and then about the wind and dust that sweeps through the scene. Having set the stage of this border-place, the speaker now populates it. We not only see "travelers" 遊 and "people in the marketplace" 市井人, but we also learn about their attitudes of haste and business, and their activities of seeking, striving, and bidding farewell. The descriptions begin in a neutral tone, but this gradually turns melancholy. The speaker emphasizes that while each person tries to arrange his life as best he can, striving for "a life of one hundred years" 百年身, social norms and patterns ensure that some shine while others fade.

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Unlike Bao Zhao's more unfortunate *yuefu* speakers, this speaker apparently has enough wealth to own a "cart" 車 and to buy medicine. Of course, since this poem is presumably spoken by the author himself, we may think of Bao Zhao's writings that make reference to the gouging expense of medicine and realize that he does not see himself as very well off or materially secure. Nonetheless, the poem suggests that this is an urban person of some means, and someone who also has enough familiarity with the urban social milieu to analyze the different kinds of people he sees with some level of insight.

In contrast with the busy people on the street, the speaker seems to exist in a time frame of his own: while they appear to be governed by the gatekeeper's drums, the speaker operates as if independently—according, apparently, to the agenda described in the title. The title suggests that the speaker may very well be sick, if he is taking medicine, but we hear nothing about his strength or weakness until the final lines. Only when he mentions his "wither[ed]" 銷歇 appearance do we see that he too is one of these people—someone striving to prolong his life and make the best of it.

While attempting to preserve his own life through the consumption of medicine, the speaker peers over the border of self, as it were, into the lives of others. Whether this is motivated by loneliness, listlessness, or something else, what he sees there doesn't comfort him, and he turns back to his contemplation of his own life and "self." The traditional role of the *shi* poet is to "articulate the will" 言志, but beyond the will to preserve life, this speaker seems to struggle to find additional meaning. Then, as if seeking to alleviate or escape his predicament, he asks "for whom" 為誰 he suffers. Though the form and speaker are very different from those of "Imitating the 'Song of Dongwu,'" this final gesture is reminiscent of that poetic speaker's plaintive, hopeful request for recognition. The speaker seems to hope for some connection that

will explain or validate his experience—even while he knows that no such connection is likely or possible.

"On History" 詠史 is another *shi* poem that provides a wide-eyed view of urban life, but this time from a more neutral point of view:[65]

	五都矜財雄	People in the five capital cities all boast wealth and power,
	三川養聲利	men along the three rivers cultivate reputation and profit.
	百金不市死	With a hundred gold taels one will never die at the market place,
	明經有高位	while a man well versed in classics can obtain a prominent post.
5	京城十二衢	Along the twelve thoroughfares of the Capital
	飛甍各鱗次	flying rafters are each ordered in rows like scales.
	仕子影華纓	Officials flap their splendid long tassels;
	游客竦輕轡	visitors gently give their horses the bridle.
	明星晨未稀	When the bright morning star has not yet faded,
10	軒蓋已雲至	high carriages like clouds have already arrived.
	賓御紛颯沓	Guests and their attendants proceed with great commotion,
	鞍馬光照地	saddled horses shine and illuminate the earth.
	寒暑在一時	Winter and summer each have their time,
	繁華及春媚	flourishing glories must be in time for the enchanting spring.
15	君平獨寂寞	Only Junping the recluse is solitary and lonesome,[66]
	身世兩相棄	for he and the world have renounced each other.[67]

This speaker presents brief scenes and images of city life but provides no occasional setting or information about himself and his perspective. Instead, he begins directly with the kind of

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[65] Lu Qinli, *Song shi*, 8.1293–94; translation adapted from Chen, 355. See also Huang Jie, 330 and Qian Zhonglian, 326.

[66] Junping 君平 appears in the *Han shu* 漢書; a resident of Chengdu who made a living telling fortunes, he gave up his livelihood in order to follow the teachings of *Lao zi*.

[67] This line alludes to the phrase "abandoning the world" 棄世 in *Zhuangzi*: "He who wants to avoid doing anything for his body had best abandon the world. By abandoning the world, he can be without entanglements" 夫欲免為形者，莫如棄世。棄世則無累 (*Zhuangzi jishi,* 2.632; translation from Watson, 145).

observation of people and society that appear later in "Going Out to Circulate the Medicine's Effects."

Despite certain similarities of style and subject matter, this speaker is quite different from the speaker of the previous poem. Not only does he say nothing about his own circumstances or feelings, but in addition he neither identifies with the poor and downtrodden nor directs complaints towards the social system. Rather than conclude with reference to the speaker, as the previous poem did, the final couplet of this poem turns in another direction—towards the recluse Junping 君平. Only Junping, the couplet tells us, is "lonesome" 寂寞. The fact that no character has been foregrounded in the poem so far—not even the speaker—makes Junping's appearance here particularly strange and unexpected. Moreover, rather than being connected to the scene we have just experienced, we are told that he is important precisely *because* of his lack of relation to it: because "he and the world have renounced each other" 身世兩相棄.

Up to the last couplet, the poem is entirely occupied with describing a culture driven by the pursuit of "wealth and power" 財雄 and "reputation and profit" 聲利. While these descriptions do portray cities as places where money is of paramount importance, they are not critical or negative. Rather, from the third couplet onward, the poem begins to sound like a celebration of the city. The speaker seems awed by the visual splendor before him, highlighting the beauty of certain sights and the spectacle of the crowds.

However, when the speaker turns to Junping in the last couplet, the laudatory tone he has taken vanishes all at once, and he returns to something like the neutral tone in which he began the poem. Junping is not presented as especially virtuous or worthy of our devotion; instead, we are told quite flatly that he is "solitary and lonesome" 寂寞 because he has chosen to "renounce" 棄 the "world" 世. The neutral presentation of this situation creates a challenging interpretation

for the reader, who must decide how he is to understand the last couplet in terms of the poem as a whole. This situation is all the more unusual because of the way in which it takes the reader by surprise.

Bao Zhao's poems are rarely critical of individual persons, but they do critique systems, civilizations, and structures of power. Without denouncing anyone in particular, the two poems discussed above cast aspersions on the social environment of the city and suggest that a person in such a place—and in these poems that person is Bao Zhao—might struggle to feel connected to the culture and its people. Further, considering the example of Junping, the speaker clearly worries that to feel connected to or embedded in a culture such as the one he describes might not be a good thing. The way that the poem becomes more warm and enthusiastic as it develops suggests a speaker who wishes to be cool and objective, but who finds himself intrigued and drawn in by the culture of the city. Perhaps recognizing that he has lost his neutrality, and also recalling that the "enchanting spring" 春媚 cannot last all year, the speaker turns to Junping at the end of the poem to remind himself of another perspective on life.

In writing such a poem, Bao Zhao presents a highly nuanced picture of his dual role as an individual as well as an author. Though the more human, emotional narrator of "Going Out to Circulate the Medicine's Effects" may struggle with loneliness, the neutral voice of "On History" seems to overcome feelings of personal loneliness in order to reflect critically on the values of the society of which he is still a part—and which Junping has chosen to take leave of.

The Performer and the "Ruined City"

However, many of Bao Zhao's poems are more positive about the overall value of human connection and of human society. The speaker of the first poem of "Imitating 'On the Road of

Adversity'" 擬行路難, for example, acknowledges life's hardships and the weaknesses of human nature while at the same time expressing faith in the possibility of reaching out to other people.[68] Further, as I describe above, this voice actually claims to make connections itself—reminding readers that they are being put in contact with other people and other worlds through the medium of the *yuefu.*

Bao Zhao's famous "Poetic Exposition on the Ruined City" 蕪城賦 also makes such claims, especially in its final section, where the narrator explicitly names his song, deliberately bringing his active role as performer into focus at the end of the piece. Before doing so, however, this narrator of this *fu* describes the city in its days of glory:[69]

當昔	In the past
全盛之時	during its age of consummate splendor,
車挂轊	chariots rubbed axle-hub to axle-hub
人駕肩	men bumped shoulder to shoulder
廛閈撲地	settlements and ward gates covered the land,
歌吹沸天	singing and piping pierced the sky.
孳貨鹽田	It multiplied the wealth of its salt fields,
鏟利銅山	dug profits from the copper hills.
才力雄富	In talent and man power it was strong and rich;
士馬精妍	warriors and steeds were well-trained and well-fitted.

Like "Going Out to Circulate the Medicine's Effects" and "On History," this section of the *fu* on the "Ruined City" represents humanity in terms of urban culture and the drive towards life, wealth, and profit. Here, the pursuit of wealth is linked specifically to labor, and we see how the natural resources of "salt fields" 鹽田 and "copper hills" 銅山 are utilized to the utmost in order

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[68] While this faith is certainly modulated in the later poems of the sequence, the final poem's strong carpe diem message ensures that the bleak hardships the sequence represents are tempered with a sense that there is still some pleasure, meaning, and interpersonal connection to be had in life.

[69] Yan Kejun, *Song wen*, 46.2687-1. Translation adapted from David R. Knechtges, trans., Wen xuan or *Selections of Refined Literature, Volume II* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 253–61. See also Qian Zhonglian, 13.

to generate revenue. If Bao Zhao's descriptions of affluent societies often imply that some people may be profiting more than others, he nonetheless makes sure to emphasize that this particular culture is wealthy not only in terms of money, but also in "talent and man power" 才力.

Such a society has the ability to use the natural resources to its own advantage, and this passage suggests that that is a great strength. Thus, like many of Bao Zhao's representations of humanity, this one embraces commerce, seeming to suggest that people's drive to improve their own circumstances can also benefit the collective as a whole. In the passage above, for example, the image of many "chariots" 車 and "men" 人 clustered together transitions into an image of "singing and piping pierc[ing] the sky" 歌吹沸天, a line that evokes a sense of unity, joy, and collective expression.

In the following section, however, the sound of singing is replaced by that of wind howling through the ruins of the city. Bao Zhao describes the sight of collapsed structures and the way in which they have been occupied by plants and animals; then, in the last section of the *fu*, he turns to consider the former glory of the city once again and to the question of how this can be remembered or commemorated:[70]

若夫藻扃黼帳	As for carved gates, embroidered curtains,
歌堂舞閣之基	sites of singing halls and dance pavilions;
琁淵碧樹	carnelian pools, prase trees,
弋林釣渚之館	lodges of fowling groves and fishing isles;
吳蔡齊秦之聲	the music of Wu, Cai, Qi, and Qin,
魚龍爵馬之玩	amusements of the dragon-fish, ostrich, and horse:
皆薰歌爐滅	all have vanished in smoke, all have been reduced to ashes,
光沈響絕	their brilliance engulfed, their sounds cut off.
東都妙姬	Exquisite consorts from the Eastern Capital,

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[70] Yan Kejun, *Song wen*, 46.2687-1. Translation adapted from Knechtges, Wen xuan or *Selections of Refined Literature, Volume II*, 253–61. See also Qian Zhonglian, 13.

南國麗人	beauties from southern states,
蕙心紈質	with hearts of melilot, complexions of white silk,
玉貌絳脣	jade features, scarlet lips:
莫不埋魂幽石	of these, there is none whose soul rests unburied in somber stones,
委骨窮塵	whose bones lie unscattered in bleak dust.
豈憶同輿之愉樂	How can you recall the joyful pleasures of sharing the carriage,
離宮之苦辛哉	or the painful misery of the sequestered palace?
天道如何	Heaven's way: how is it
吞恨者多	that so many swallow grief?
抽琴命操	I grasp my zither and name a tune;
為蕪城之歌	I play "The Song of the Ruined City."
歌曰	The song goes:
邊風急兮城上寒	border winds are fierce; above the wall it is cold
井逕滅兮丘隴殘	wells and paths have vanished; hillocks and mounts are destroyed.
千齡兮萬代	A thousand years, ten thousand ages,
共盡兮何言	everyone is gone—what can one say?

With its delineation of what is missing and absent, the narrator conjures up the presence of a fantastical lost world. This paradox of rhetoric—that negative statements nonetheless call to mind their opposite, positive versions—is central to this *fu*. In each of its sections, absence and presence are paired: the terrible facts of loss and destruction are held up against the imperative to remember, and the basic human need for music, poetry, and communication is acknowledged and satisfied even in the process of describing of what has been lost.

Here, Bao Zhao adopts a strategy similar to the one that he and other writers use in the "Pallbearers' Song" tradition. In the *wan ge* poems, the speaker considers the value of life from the position of having already lost it, and this gives him an unusually acute view of his priorities. In such a situation, the after-death occasion is explicitly a literary device, an experience that the writer imagines but does not actually undergo. And as we have seen, those poems create occasions on which the speaker reflects on his life and finds that human connections are what was most valuable in it. Perhaps ironically, it is the fact of having lost these connections that makes the speaker see so starkly that they were what made him himself.

Bao Zhao creates a similar structure in the "Ruined City." The occasion of viewing what the city has become gives the speaker an opportunity to reflect on what the city was in previous days. This process of description and reflection provokes him to acknowledge that the city was more than its architecture and its wealth; it was also the people who lived in it and contributed to it in ways that can never be measured. In this way, Bao Zhao presents the kind of devastation that he depicted in the "Pallbearer's Song" on a much larger scale. Among all those former residents, "there is none whose soul rests unburied in somber stones, / whose bones lie unscattered in bleak dust" 莫不埋魂幽石, 委骨窮塵. In contemplating this, Bao Zhao finds a means by which to articulate the value of collective social life; one that acknowledges loss but also attempts to remember.

Music, in particular, is this narrator's chosen means by which to communicate and to represent the connections that bind members of a shared community. Like the speaker of the first poem of "Imitating 'On the Road of Adversity'" this performer wants to listen for ancient music—in this case "the music of Wu, Cai, Qi, and Qin" 吳蔡齊秦之聲. However, unlike that *yuefu*, this piece looks squarely at the immense obstacles to the desired reawakening. At each phase of the *fu*, descriptions of what once was are paired with reminders of the "ruin" 蕪 that the city has become. Rather than insist, over-optimistically, that these treasures can be recovered, the poem meditates respectfully on the question of how it is possible that so much has disappeared, "engulfed" 沈 and "cut off" 絕—how so many "swallow grief" 吞恨.

Finally, the narrator declares, "I grasp my zither and name a tune; I play 'The Song of the Ruined City'" 抽琴命操, 為蕪城之歌. This metapoetic gesture suggests that even in light of his inability to understand all that has disappeared, the narrator nonetheless chooses to sing and to create a song that is specifically about the topic of the ruined city. Without actually claiming to

bring back what is gone, the performer explicitly defends the choice Bao Zhao made when he chose to write a *fu* on this topic.

With the final line's acknowledgement that "everyone is gone" 共盡, the narrator asserts his fundamental disconnection from the former inhabitants of the city and the hopelessness of ever really reaching them. Nonetheless even as he says this, the song-within-a-song structure of the ending suggests that the music continues to recall the city's former inhabitants and to link them together with the author and with future readers. This structure suggest that despite the irreducible dislocations of history, the narrator still finds a sense of urgency in the story of the ruined city and a sense of justification for representing it. Without articulating this justification explicitly, the piece indicates through its form that the narrator remains committed to the process of communicating and reaching out to others—even and especially others who are "cut off" from him. In this sense, the *fu* becomes a broader meditation not only about the narrator's distance from the inhabitants of the ruined city, but about anyone's capacity to imagine and empathize with people who we will never know.

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This chapter has considered the variety of ways in which Bao Zhao's *shi*, *fu*, and *yuefu* represent people by reflecting on how selves are inescapably part of, and even formed by, social circumstances. Many of Bao Zhao's representations of intersubjective connection follow a pattern whereby he measures the value and meaning of a social connection by reflecting on a scenario where its loss is felt. In some cases, such as in the "Pallbearer's Song," the loss of connection is hypothetical; in other cases, it is fanciful, as in "Spring Days," or allegorical, as in the "Song of Separated Cranes"; and in still other cases, such as in the *fu* on his wife, the loss is terribly real. However, even in depicting losses that are deeply personal, Bao Zhao tends to

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emphasize not what distinguishes himself and his situation, but what he, and everyone, has in common; this emphasis makes his representations of himself, on my reading, neither specific nor generic, but universal.

In Bao Zhao's *yuefu*, the theme of intersubjective connection plays out not only in the lives of the poems' characters, but also in the way that the speaker positions himself as a performer or an intermediary. As we have seen, the speaker of these texts often performs an active engagement with an interlocutor, offering advice and moral lessons, and also continuing to assert the value of music. This role owes much to the *Chu ci* tradition, and particularly to *Zhao hun* ("Summoning the Soul"), in which a concerned speaker tirelessly beseeches the soul to "come back," using a variety of descriptive means to embellish his arguments and, hopefully, to save the soul of the person he is summoning. In many of Bao Zhao's *yuefu*, music becomes a figurative means of considering how people can connect with each other in the present and also reach out towards the people and cultures of past eras. This theme, moreover, appears not only in Bao Zhao's *yuefu*, but also in his *fu*, as I have discussed in the case of the "Ruined City."

Though many writers before and after Bao Zhao represent the community as a whole, these specific strategies distinguish the set of writings discussed in this chapter. Drawing on the hopes and fears that all people harbor and suffer, Bao Zhao immerses readers into an experience of connection and continuity with the characters he presents, including himself. While many of Bao Zhao's works seem to represent intersubjective connection as an ideal, perfect state, they do so from the perspectives of characters in relationships. Other works adopt a more neutral or ambivalent tone, looking at society as a whole—and by implication society's effects on human experience and the possibilities of connection—with a more critical eye.

In addition, rather than regard intersubjective connection as a static feature of human life, these texts of Bao Zhao's consistently investigate the *degree* to which people can understand each other, influence each other, and reach each other. Much of the drama of the works discussed in this chapter inheres in the way that Bao Zhao does not offer simple answers to questions about how a person might continue to influence us after they have died, or how losing a community undermined a person's sense of self, or how past civilizations weigh on us in the present. Instead of offering simplistic views of people's "humanity," these works interrogate the nature of that humanity with examples and illustrations that neither idealize nor demonize human behavior.

Turning briefly to Bao Zhao's influence on later poetry, we find that his greatest legacy is that of his *yuefu* speaker-performer—a persona who appears most extensively and distinctly in the sequence "Imitating 'On the Road of Adversity.'" This persona is the start of a tradition in itself, one that reaches a particular height in the Tang dynasty in Li Bai's 李白 (701–762) *yuefu* poems. With this speaker, Bao Zhao explores the possibilities of expression and humanity in a way that is neither specific nor generic. This persona is a storyteller, a confidante, and a guide; making use of distinctive and forceful rhetoric, he is full of character—and yet we never focus on his particular life more than on the lives of other characters he discusses.

Thus, the discussion of Bao Zhao returns us, unexpectedly, to Ruan Ji—the creator of one of the earliest distinct poetic speakers, one who is distinguished in part by his seeming to withhold personal circumstances and information. In Bao Zhao we find another poet who makes use of a strategy of selectively sharing personal information in order to create a distinct and powerful poetic speaker. And if we observe this feature in Ruan Ji's work, we must turn back to Tao Yuanming and Xie Lingyun as well. However much we feel that we know these authors

through the details about themselves that they present writings, it is equally evident that we know only what they have specifically chosen to share.

Thus, we find that all of these poets are actually sharing details about themselves only insofar as it suits the self-representations they hope to create and the artistic ends they hope to achieve. While the variety within Bao Zhao's writings provide us with a particular opportunity to observe this, the crafting of self-representational patterns through literary style and selective use of autobiographical detail is by no means unique to his work, but is rather a feature of early medieval poetry and literary culture.

Conclusion

This dissertation has argued that the means of self-representation deployed by the four early medieval poets read here are inventions rather than inevitabilities. Taking these strategies as an object of study, it has sought to consider them on their own terms and independently from biographical narratives and lore that survive in other texts in order to examine how authors actively create themselves on the page.

Regarding the self as a construct that emerges from the attributes of the text should not in any way diminish our sense of the importance, influence, and value of the selves created and articulated by early medieval poets. If anything, the opposite is true: such a revised view better enables us to appreciate writers' agency in creating their literary selves and to understand them in their historical and cultural contexts. Additionally, this view helps us critique the received narratives that have grown up around texts during their long histories of transmission and reception. As Xiaofei Tian emphasizes in *Tao Yuanming & Manuscript Culture*, we must be sensitive to what we cannot know about a premodern culture that is distant from our own and that survives only in selected pieces. Remaining openminded and curious about these poets and their work allows us to see that some surviving fragments may in fact suggest entirely different narratives from those we have been conditioned to expect.

This project could have been organized in a variety of different ways. A broader version of this study would provide a more comprehensive overview of the variety of early medieval poetic self-representations. Such a project would be more encyclopedic and would require an exceptionally wide and deep engagement with the surviving poetic texts of the period. Another version of this dissertation would investigate the historical context that provoked writers to craft these self-representations. Such a project would be a study of intellectual and social history as

much as of literature, and it would examine the culture of literary patronage, the development of autobiographical literature, *xuanyan* culture, the influence of Buddhism on early medieval thought, and the practice of reclusion more deeply than has been the case in these pages.

Restricting its scope to four poets, the present study has sought the benefits of a narrower perspective. Devoting more space to each poet than would be possible in a broad survey, I have investigated how readers' perceptions of authorial affect and persona emerge from authors' literary crafting, patterning, and skill. At the same time, the characterizations offered in these chapters are still highly provisional. Each of these chapters is only able to address a small portion of the surviving work by each writer, and moreover, we cannot know how closely the texts we have reflect those that the authors wrote or what other writings by the same authors have been lost.

My aim, though, has not been to suggest that these authors felt an imperative to articulate a perfectly cohesive unity of self in their poems, or that they sought to discover such selves in their writing. In observing self-representational patterns at work in their various writings I endeavor to consider the degrees of freedom and constraint that authors exercised when shaping material from their lives into literary forms. Chapter Four's readings in particular may serve as an example of how one author can present himself in multiple ways; Bao Zhao's oeuvre, considered alongside the collections of other writers, attests to the early medieval enthusiasm for literary craft and suggests that audiences were by no means perturbed by seeing different styles of self-representation in the work of a single author.

Another central element of this dissertation is the examination of the occasional poem form. This dissertation has emphasized how occasional framing enables early medieval poets to endow their speakers with new vividness, realism, and psychological acuity. Beginning with

specified occasional titles to poems, authors quickly discovered that specifying the time and place of events they are writing about brings a whole variety of representational tools and choices into play. The device of the occasional poem enables authors, for example, to show their speaker considering figures from the past as models for his own behavior and modifying his own ideals and his worldview in "real time." This development opens up the possibility of representing a vast and crucial realm of human behavior: the ambiguous spaces of belief, uncertainty, wavering, and self-doubt. In depicting this realm, early medieval poets acquire the ability to represent themselves in newly complex, realistic, and convincing ways.

In contrast to Qu Yuan and other ancient speakers, the speakers of the poems considered in this study question whether they actually are the people they think they are. To do this, they often compare their occasional, present selves to recognizable types and models; in their dialogues with these models, they develop particular discourses about the type of person that they may be. As we have seen, some of these self-representational discourses include specific autobiographical information, while others—for example, Ruan Ji's—specifically exclude most autobiographical detail. These discourses are therefore differentiated by the specified content they include or exclude, as well as by the particular literary styles in which they are articulated.

Though the writers treated here all subscribe to certain basic literary and cultural norms, a wide variety of ideologies and intellectual interests flourished in the early medieval period, and poetry reflects this variety. The preceding chapters have suggested that these poets show their speakers' interest in the variety of roles available to them through dramatizations of their choices to occupy certain roles and not others. As in any culture, the options available to early medieval persons were limited by the structure of the society. However, the educated class to which canonical poets belonged did enjoy *some* measure of social mobility, and their poems often

represent the poetic speaker's awareness of his options and his efforts to consider the ramifications of particular choices.

At the same time, not all social roles are equally interesting to poets. Reclusion is an especially prominent subject in early medieval poetry because reclusion provides poets with a means to reflect on individuals' relationship to society, civilization, and the bureaucratic system as well as to reflect on life ideals by considering it as an alternative to official service. If reclusion is something of a totalizing life-pattern, one that asks its members to decline certain aspects of society, other patterns are more inclusive. Bao Zhao's *yuefu* poems bring a wide spectrum of other role types—including women and soldiers—into poetic discourse; and, as Chapter Four has argued, Bao Zhao presents many of his characters, including himself, as fundamentally social beings who have no "self" left when they are cut off from others.

Apart from social behaviors, several other behavioral patterns are central to the self-representations of the poets discussed in this study. These include "mental" patterns—recurring thoughts and patterns of thought—and patterns of movement or physical action described in the poem. For example, Ruan Ji's speaker's characteristic actions of pausing and moving forward make this elusive figure especially vivid and recognizable. Similarly, Xie Lingyun's speaker makes himself known to the reader through characteristic behaviors of traveling, exploring, observing nature, and expressing loneliness. By contrast, Tao Yuanming's and Bao Zhao's speakers make themselves known to us by frequently expressing longing for their family members and their homes.

With these observations I do not mean to suggest any deep similarity between Ruan Ji's work and Xie Lingyun's, or between Tao Yuanming's and Bao Zhao's. Rather, I point out the relationships between these patterns in order to observe that some patterns are emphasized more

than others, and that these greatly impact our understanding of a writer's persona. Observing these features in conjunction with the particular literary styles that writers use enables us not only to better understand their work, but also to better understand their transformative influence on various themes, topics and poetic forms passed down from previous eras and inherited by the subsequent classical Chinese poetic tradition.

Appendices

Xie Lingyun's "Telling of the Virtue of My Forefathers"

Xie Lingyun's two poems "Telling of the Virtue of My Forefathers" 述祖德詩 present an unusually family- and clan-centric view of their author.[1] Like Tao Yuanming's "On Naming My Son" 命子詩, this work shows the poet engaging deeply with family lineage, a topic that is barely mentioned in most of his surviving poetry. The first poem reflects on the conduct of the wise and virtuous man, presenting the poet's paternal grandfather Xie Xuan 謝玄 (343–388) as an exemplar of Confucian virtues. While the first poem describes how Xie Xuan he entered into public service, the second poem describes Xie Xuan's departure from service and entry into reclusion. These purposeful transitions between public service and reclusion, as well as Xie Xuan's exemplary virtue and efficacy as a leader, make him an example of the "Moral Hero"[2] type discussed above.[3]

I

| 達人貴自我 | The virtuous man values the self; |

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[1] Xie Lingyun's representation of Xie Xuan in these two poems shares some features with his representations of himself in other works. In particular, the depiction of Xie Xuan's relation to the natural landscape in the final lines of the second poem resembles many of Xie Lingyun's self-representations in its emphasis on an active relation to the outdoors. The major difference between Xie Lingyun's representation of Xie Xuan and his representations of himself is the depiction of Xie Xuan as a Confucian hero. Xie Lingyun presents Xie Xuan's choices as expressions of moral rectitude that contribute directly to public welfare; in contrast, Xie Lingyun presents his own choices in more humbling and self-deprecating ways. We see this, for example, in "Dwelling in Mountains," where the author emphasizes his physical frailty as the reason for his reclusion (even though we see that he also has strong ideological and aesthetic reasons for preferring this form of life). Again, this may relate to different conventions when writing from the first person and the third person point of view.

[2] See Chapter Three (page 143, above).

[3] Lu Qinli, *Song shi*, 2.1157; translation adapted from Frodsham, *The Murmuring Stream*, vol. I, 113. See also Gu Shaobo, 104, and Huang Jie, 19–23.

	高情屬天雲	his magnanimity joins with the clouds in the sky.
	兼抱濟物性	He embraces the nature of aiding all people
	而不縈垢氛	but he doesn't become entwined in the filthy atmosphere.
5	段生蕃魏國	Mister Duan guarded the state of Wei,[4]
	展季救魯人	Zhan the younger saved the people of Lu.[5]
	弦高犒晉師	Xian Gao entertained the Jin troops,[6]
	仲連卻秦軍	Zhonglian drove back the Qin army.[7]
	臨組乍不緤	Yet they would not accept the official cords;
10	對珪寧肯分	facing the tally they preferred not to divide it.[8]
	惠物辭所賞	Benefitting others, they declined reward;
	勵志故絕人	resolute in their intentions, they therefore surpassed others.
	苕苕歷千載	Far, far, from a thousand years ago,
	遙遙播清塵	their pure reputations spread across great distance.
15	清塵竟誰嗣	Who could inherit this reputation for purity?
	明哲時經綸	A man of brilliant wisdom who made order out of chaos.[9]
	委講輟道論	He left off lecturing and ceased discussing the Way;
	改服康世屯	changing his clothing, he pacified a troubled world.[10]
	屯難既云康	Once these difficulties were settled,
20	尊主隆斯民	he showed respect to his lord and caused the people to flourish.

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[4] This refers to Duangan Mu 段干木, a recluse in the state of Wei during the Warring States period. He was famous for repeatedly declining official appointment and nonetheless receiving honors.

[5] Zhan the younger refers to Zhan Qin 展禽, or Liu Xiahui 柳下惠, a person who lived in the Spring and Autumn period state of Lu 魯. Zhan Qin was a judge who is mentioned in *Analects* 18.2; he is credited with saving Lu when the state of Qi invaded because of the exchange that he had with the invading duke.

[6] Xian Gao 弦高 was a merchant of Zheng 鄭 during the Spring and Autumn period; he distributed goods among the Jin 晉 (or Qin 秦) army, thus giving them the impression that Cheng was prepared and dissuading them from invading.

[7] Lu Zhonglian 魯仲連 lived during the Warring States period and was present in Zhao 趙 when it was besieged by Qin 秦. Lu Zhonglian persuaded Wei to attack Qin forces, thus saving Zhao.

[8] Lines nine and ten refer to the ways the figures in the previous lines decline honors; the "cords" *zu* 組 refer to ribbons or strings attached to official seals that would confer status and property; the "tally" (*gui* 珪) is a jade token that is divided into two parts and which serves as an authentication of an agreement or promise when enfeoffing a subject. Both lines describe declining reward, as is reiterated in the couplet that follows.

[9] "Made order out of chaos" is a loose translation of "the warp and the woof" 經綸, a phrase that appears in the Commentary on the Images (*xiangzhuan*) of the hexagram "birth throes" (Zhun 屯) in the *Yijing*. The commentary states, "Clouds and Thunder: this constitutes the image of Birth Throes. In the same way, the noble man weaves the fabric of government" 雲，雷，屯；君子以經綸. *Zhou yi*, 1.22a; translation from Lynn, 153.

[10] The phrase *shi zhun* 世屯 is translated here as "troubled world." *Zhun* 屯, an *Yijing* hexagram, is translated as "birth throes" and associated with change and transformation, and the phrase as a whole is understood as meaning "troubles" or "disasters" in the world.

II

	中原昔喪亂	On the central plains in former times—death and disorder.
	喪亂豈解已	Death and disorder, when will it end?
	崩騰永嘉末	Collapse came at the end of the Yongjia reign [307–313].
	逼迫太元始	We were hard pressed at the start of the Taiyuan period [376–396].
5	河外無反正	In the region beyond the Yellow river there was no reinstatement of Power.[11]
	江介有蹙㠀	The land girdled by the Yangzi was diminished by defeat.
	萬邦咸震懾	The ten thousand states trembled and were frightened;
	橫流賴君子	all relied on that gentleman [Xie Xuan] to rescue them from disaster.
	拯溺由道情	He saved the drowning based on moral sentiment;
10	龕暴資神理	to contain violence depended on the divine principle.
	秦趙欣來蘇	Qin and Zhao rejoiced when he came to give them life again
	燕魏遲文軌	Yan and Wei were waiting for him to bring them unity.
	賢相謝世運	Yet when the wise minister [Xie An][12] left the vicissitudes of this world,
	遠圖因事止	his long-term plans were halted by the turn of affairs.[13]
15	高揖七州外	[Xie Xuan] bowed deeply saying farewell to the seven provinces
	拂衣五湖裏	he shook the dust from his clothes among the five lakes.[14]
	隨山疏濬潭	Following the mountains he dug deep pools.
	傍巖藝枌梓	Along the crags he planted elms and catalpa trees.
	遺情捨塵物	Casting off attachments he abandoned this dusty world,
20	貞觀丘壑美	and gazed, with an enlightened view, on the beauty of hills and gorges.

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[11] That is, dynastic power was not restored in the area around the Yellow river, including the Western Jin capital of Luoyang. See Guo Shaobo, 108–109n36.

[12] Xie An 謝安 (320–385) was Xie Xuan's uncle; Xie An served as the Prime Minister of the Jin and is credited as one of the main figures who contributed to the survival of the dynasty when it was attacked from the north by the Former Qin 前秦 (351–394).

[13] Following Xie An's death, the plans he had made to recapture land in the north were called off.

[14] The "Five Lakes" 五湖 refer to Taihu 太湖, in Jiangsu. Like Fan Li 范蠡, Xie Xuan leaves political life and goes into reclusion in this area (see Gu Shaobo, 109n47).

Bao Zhao's "Ballad of the Pine and the Cypress"[1]

I have been suffering from beriberi for more than forty days. An old friend previously borrowed the Collected Works of Fu Xuan from me, and since I am seriously ill, he came to see me and returned it. I opened the book covering and happened to see the "Ballad of the Tortoise and the Crane." Reading these elegiac words in my critical state of health filled me with grief and sorrow. This terrible illness is constant and unremitting; my breathing is labored and wheezy. When I raise my eyes, everything looks woeful; therefore, in the intervals between heat treatments and medications I wrote this imitation.[2]

余患腳上氣四十餘日。知舊先借傅玄集。以余病劇。遂見還。開裹。適見樂府詩龜鶴篇。於危病中見長逝詞。惻然酸懷抱。如此重病。彌時不差。呼吸乏喘。舉目悲矣。火藥間闋而擬之。

	松柏受命獨	The pine and the cypress are imbued with a special nature;
	歷代長不衰	for generations they grow steadily and do not wither.
	人生浮且脆	But human life is floating and fragile;
	駃若晨風悲	swiftly, it passes like the mournful morning breeze.[3]
5	東海逝逝川	The eastern sea bursts forth from the dying of rivers;[4]
	西山導落暉	the western mountains guide the decline of the sun.[5]
	南郊悅籍短	The southern suburbs happily receive the short-lived;
	蒿里收永歸	the graveyard takes in those who make an eternal return.
	諒無疇昔時	I cannot expect to live on as in former times;
10	百病起盡期	a hundred ailments signal that my end is near.
	志士惜牛刀	As a man of integrity cherishes the ox-knife,[6]

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[1] The poem includes a preface written in prose. Lu Qinli, *Song shi*, 7.1264–65. Translation adapted from Chen, 303–6.

[2] Bao Zhao refers to a medical treatment involving heat in the preface and in line 15, below, where he refers to "heated stones" 火石. He seems to be referring to a form of traditional Chinese medicine that relates to practices of acupuncture and moxibustion. Huang Jie cites a passage of the *Han Feizi* 韓非子 that refers to treating disease: "those in the flesh and skin can be reached by metal or stone needles, those in the intestines can be reached by boiled medicines" 在肌膚，鍼石之所及也；在腸胃，火齊之所及也.

[3] This alludes to the *Shijing* poem "Chen feng" 晨風, which is about the grief of separation and of being left behind by a romantic partner.

[4] This alludes to lines in the anonymous *yuefu* "Chang ge xing" 長歌行 (Long song ballad): "The hundred rivers flow east to the sea, / when will they return back to the west?" 百川東到海, 何時複西歸.

[5] This alludes to lines in Yang Xiong's 反離騷 *Fan li sao* ("Against the 'Li Sao'"): "He went down to the Milou [River] and threw himself in; why did he fear the sun was nearing the western mountains?" 臨汨羅而自隕兮，恐日薄於西山.

[6] This refers to Confucius' question in the *Analects* (*Lunyu*), "Why use an ox-knife to kill a chicken?" 割雞焉用牛刀. Confucius directs this question to his disciple Ziyou, who is at the time the Magistrate of a town. Here, the "ox-knife" is a metaphor for the use of ritual and music; Confucius is asking—possibly in jest—why Ziyou bothers to use these high-level tools in a small place.

	忍勉自療治	with effort and determination I have endeavored to cure myself.
	傾家行藥事	We've exhausted the family's savings on medical care;
	顛沛去迎醫	destitute, I stop soliciting the help of doctors.
15	徒備火石苦	In vain I suffered through hot stone treatments[7]
	奄至不得辭	but delaying the end won't change it at all.
	龜齡安可獲	The longevity of the tortoise cannot be obtained,
	岱宗限已迫	and already it is time [to return to] Daizong.[8]
	睿聖不得留	Even the wise and the sage cannot remain [in life],
20	為善何所益	so what advantage can there be in doing good?
	捨此赤縣居	Giving up my residence in this land,[9]
	就彼黃壚宅	I'll go to the house under the Yellow Spring.[10]
	永離九原親	Taking eternal leave, I become familiar with the "nine regions,"[11]
	長與三辰隔	I am forever cut off from the three celestial bodies.[12]
25	屬纊生望盡	The silk [indicates when] my life approaches its end;[13]
	闔棺世業埋	in the closed coffin, a life's career is buried.
	事痛存人心	The anguish of this will persist in the hearts of the living
	恨結亡者懷	while the departed one holds onto knots of regret.
	祖葬既云及	The ancestral funeral rites have been arranged;
30	壙燧亦已開	the coffin pit and tomb passage have been opened.
	室族內外哭	My family members weep inside and outside the tomb;[14]
	親疏同共哀	close and distant relations grieve together.
	外姻遠近至	My cousins and relatives by marriage arrive from far and near;
	名列通夜臺	their names are announced over the grave.
35	扶輿出殯宮	Supported on a carriage, my coffin is carried out in procession;
	低回戀庭室	reluctant to leave, I linger fondly in my house.

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[7] "Heated stones" 火石 refers to the use of a traditional Chinese medical treatment; see Note 2, above.

[8] It was believed that after death the soul would travel to Daizong (Mount Tai), where it would face judgment.

[9] "This land" translates literally as "Chi County" 赤縣, the abbreviated form of the phrase "The Divine Land" (*chi xian shen zhou*) 赤縣神州. This is as a name for China which first appears in the *Shi ji*, 74.2344.

[10] The "Yellow Spring" 黃壚 refers to the underworld or the world of the dead.

[11] The phrase "nine regions" 九原 has several meanings; it took on the meaning of cemetery or graveyard through its connection to an ancient mountain that was used as a cemetery. The association of the "Nine Regions" with the dead traces back to a passage in the *Liji*.

[12] The "three celestial bodies" 三辰 is a collective term for the sun, the moon and the stars.

[13] The phrase *zhu kuang* 屬纊 indicates a practice whereby cloth is placed near the face of a person approaching death in order to indicate (by its movement) whether the person is still breathing.

[14] Or, alternately: "family and members of our clan weep side by side."

	天地有盡期	Even heaven and earth will come to an end;
	我去無還日	but for my departure, there is no date of return.
	居者今已盡	The inhabitant now has truly died
40	人事從此畢	and all my human affairs henceforth conclude.
	火歇煙既沒	When a fire goes out, the smoke soon disappears;
	形銷聲亦滅	when the body is used up, sound is also extinguished.
	鬼神來依我	Ghosts and spirits come to accompany me
	生人永辭訣	and the living take their leave forever.
45	大暮杳悠悠	The vast twilight is dim and obscure;
	長夜無時節	the long night has no measure.
	鬱湮重冥下	Down in the dense darkness of the underworld,
	煩冤難具說	the frustration and distress are beyond expression.
	安寢委沈寞	Resting, I submit to deep loneliness;
50	戀戀念平生	with passionate attachment, I think back on my life.
	事業有餘結	Among my undertakings, some were left unfinished;
	刊述未及成	my writings were not yet collected and published.
	資儲無擔石	We have no grain reserved in storage[15]
	兒女皆孩嬰	and my son and daughter are both still children.
55	一朝放捨去	In one day to just leave and abandon them;
	萬恨纏我情	[this thought] tangles me up in a thousand regrets.
	追憶世上事	In recollecting my affairs in the world,
	束教以自拘	I have learned to control myself and exercise restraint.
	明發靡怡念	I used to set out in the morning without delight,
60	夕歸多憂虞	and in the evening return with many worries.
	轍閑晨逕荒	My drive is empty; daybreak shines on an overgrown path.[16]
	輟宴式酒濡	At feasts I used to heed the warning about drinking.[17]

[15] This line uses the term *dan shi* 擔石 or 儋石, a unit of measurement defined in terms of its capacity to hold a "stone" (*shi* 石). In its use of this phrase the line echoes the *Han shu* biography of Yang Xiong: "Although his family property included no more than ten *jin* [of money] and lacked even a *dan shi* [of grain] in storage, they were peaceful and at ease" 家產不過十金, 乏無儋石之儲, 晏如也.

[16] Lines 61 and 62 contain several variants. Here I follow the variant "desolate" *huang* 荒 in place of "flow" *liu* 流; *huang* 荒 appears in the sixteenth-century *Poetry Compilation* 詩紀 of Ping Weine 馮惟訥 (1512–1572). I also take the variant "rut" or "track" *zhe* 轍, preserved in *Yuefu shiji*, instead of *che* 撤, presented in Lu Qinli's version of the text (see *Yuefu shiji*, 930).

[17] This line alludes to the Commentary on the Images of the *Yi jing* hexagram *Weiji* 未濟 ("Ferrying Incomplete"): "If this one were to get his head wet from drinking wine, it would be because he does not know enough to keep the rules of propriety" 飲酒濡首, 亦不知節也 (translation from Lynn, 550). *Chuo* 輟 appears as *zhe* 轍 in Ping Weine's *Poetry Compilation*; Lu Qinli favors *chuo* 輟.

	知今瞑目苦	But now that I know the bitterness of death[18]
	恨失爾時娛	I regret that I missed out on so much enjoyment in life.
65	遙遙遠民居	Distant and remote, I live far from people;
	獨埋深壞中	buried alone, I am deep in the midst of soil.
	墓前人跡滅	In front of the tomb, traces of people have vanished;
	冢上草日豐	on top of the grave mound, grass daily grows more plentiful.
	空床響鳴蜩	The sound of cicadas spreads over the empty bed,[19]
70	高松結悲風	mournful winds tangle in the tall pines.
	長寐無覺期	This long sleep is without a time of awakening;
	誰知逝者窮	who comprehends the destitution of the dead?
	生存處交廣	In life, my dealings and associations were extensive;
	連榻舒華茵	[to entertain, we would] link couches and spread magnificent carpets.
75	已沒一何苦	[But that] is gone, and all is bitterness;
	楉哉不容身	this wood [box] is no place in which to live.
	昔日平居時	In those past days, I had a period of ordinary life;
	晨夕對六親	every morning and night I spent with my family members.[20]
	今日掩奈何	Now I am enclosed and shut in here;
80	一見無諧因	there is no way to see them even just once.
	禮席有降殺	The custom of rituals mats can decline and weaken,[21]
	三齡速過隙	and the gap of three years may speed by quickly.[22]
	几筵就收撤	The stool and mat will soon be taken away[23]
	室宇改疇昔	and the household will return to how it was in former times.
85	行女遊歸途	The departed woman travels back to her home,[24]
	仕子復王役	the official returns to the service of his ruler.

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[18] A more strict translation of this line reads "now that I know the bitterness of closing my eyes in death." A variant in the *Poetry Compilation* 詩紀 replaces "closing the eyes [in death]" 瞑目 with "dark days" 瞑日 or "days of closing the eyes [in death].

[19] *Yuefu shiji* contains two variant characters in this line: "forest" *lin* 林 and "two" *er* 二 in place of "bed" *chuang* 床 and "sound" *xiang* 響.

[20] The "family members" (*liu qin* 六親) is literally translated as "six relations"; this generic term refers to the six main components of one's family group: the father, mother, elder brothers, younger brothers, wife, and children.

[21] This line relates to the discussion of differences and variations among types of ritual mats in the *Rites* (*Liji*).

[22] This refers to the traditional three-year period of mourning and in particular to a passage from the *Rites* (*Liji*): "Thus three years of mourning come to an end after twenty five months, like a four-horse carriage passing over a crevice" 則三年之喪，二十五月而畢，若駟之過隙.

[23] "Stool and mat" *ji yan* 几筵 refers to items that are used in the funeral and then placed in the shrine of the ancestors at the end of the first month after the funeral. The *Rites* (*Liji*) describe how these are used at the grave site: "officials leave out a stool and mat with the necessary offerings to the left of the grave" 有司以几筵舍奠於墓左.

[24] This refers to a woman's return to her husband's household after mourning for her parents.

	家世本平常	My family lineage is ordinary;[25]
	獨有亡者劇	only the dead experience this extreme hardship.
	時祀望歸來	I hope [my family] will return on time for the regular sacrifices,
90	四節靜塋丘	though the cemetery will be quiet and still in all four seasons.
	孝子撫墳號	My dutiful son touches the grave and weeps
	父子知來不	asking whether his father knows to come or not.
	欲還心依戀	At the point of returning home, he is still reluctant to leave;
	欲見絕無由	he wants to see me, but we are cut off and there is no way.
95	煩冤荒隴側	Miserable and frustrated beside the desolate mound,
	肝心盡崩抽	his heart has fallen apart completely.

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[25] Or, in an alternate interpretation: "My family's life is now as usual."

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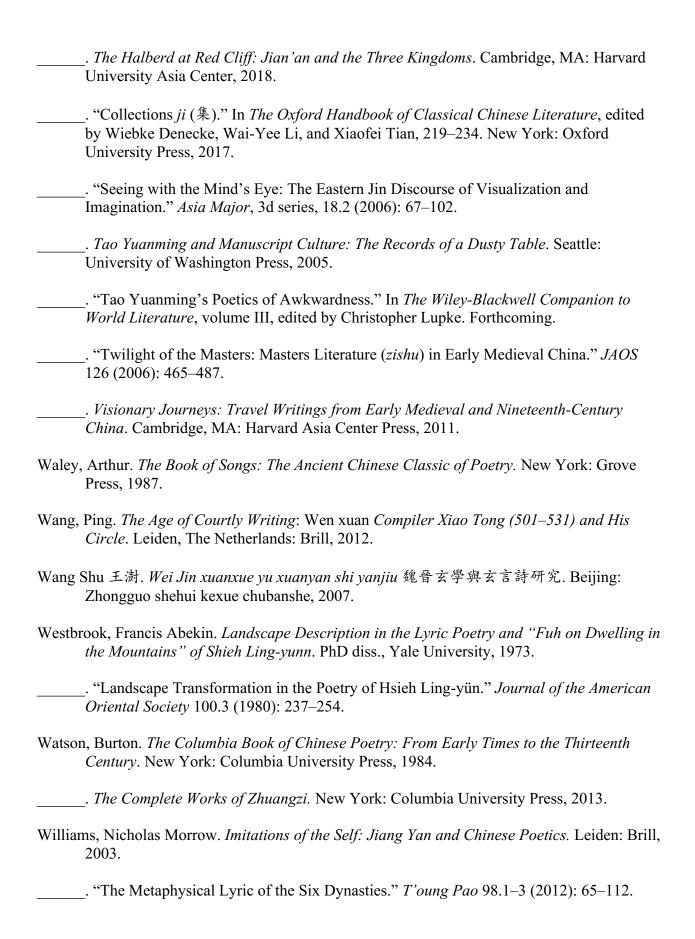
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