The Generic Self: Anecdotal vs. Autobiographical References to Personal History[1]

Eugene Eoyang
University of Indiana, Bloomington

Douwe Fokkema's interest in China focused on the modern rather than the traditional period, but he and I shared a profound interest in China of all eras. His interest in political theory and postmodernism made his work essential reading for anyone wishing to understand the modern period, especially in China. As Chargé d'Affaires of the Netherlands diplomatic mission in Beijing, the People's Republic of China, during the first two years of the Cultural Revolution, he had a unique first-hand exposure to contemporary life in China which few Westerners could match. We met at the meetings of the Executive Committee of the ICLA, and I came to know Douwe as a staunch defender of humanistic studies. In fact, one of my most vivid memories of Douwe was in Athens, Greece, in 1999, when I presented plans for the XVIIth Congress of the ICLA, to take place in Hong Kong in 2003 (a Congress that was postponed to 2004, owing to the SARS scare in the summer of 2003). The initial title proposed for the Congress was: "Toward the Post-Human." Douwe Fokkema proclaimed in no uncertain terms that he would not attend a conference with that title; in the end, the topic was changed to "At the Edge: Margins, Frontiers, Initiatives in Literature and Culture." In the end, Douwe did attend, and, by all accounts, enjoyed the conference. Although Douwe Fokkema concentrated on the modern as opposed to the traditional period in China, I offer this article on classical Chinese poetry as a supplement to his interests.

There is a conundrum in the modern reading of classical Chinese poetry. Most of the poems refer to the life of the poet; indeed, many poems are prefaced by colophons as to the place and date of composition, and deal with personal feelings. Yet, if one judges autobiographical poetry by its gold standard, Wordsworth's *The Prelude*, Chinese poems, despite the scholarship that misreads them from a modern point of view, are hardly autobiographical at all. Indeed, it is a convention in the writings

Canadian Review of Comparative Literature / Revue Canadienne de Littérature Comparée
CRCL SEPTEMBER 2012 SEPTEMBRE RCLC
0319–051x/12/39.3/244

of Chinese *literati* in traditional periods to strive toward absolute self-abnegation, whether it's the humility of the Confucian scholar, the non-self of the Buddhist, or the egolessness of the Taoist. Certainly, if classical Chinese poems are autobiographical, they are far from the self-absorbed meditations of many contemporary American poets. How to resolve this quandary, how reconcile the meticulous detail in many traditional Chinese poems with the fact that they are *not* autobiographical?

The answer lies in several factors: first, in the difference between the audience for traditional Chinese poetry and the audience for published poetry, which is not at all the same thing; second, in the differences between the self-image of the Chinese scholar- poet and the self-image of the Romantic or modern poet; and third, in the lexical capabilities in classical Chinese which allows pointedly for the omission of self-reference, even as it describes personal experience.

Scholar-poets in traditional China would have been thoroughly familiar with *Analects* (論語) 9:4, which reads: 子絕四:毋意,毋必,毋固,毋我。 [The Master was entirely free of four things: he had no preconceptions, no arbitrariness, no obstinacies, no ego]. Whatever one's own temperament, this would have been the image that each scholar-poet would have tried to convey. Any other persona would have been, at the very least, unworthy.[2]

The sinological misconception of Chinese poets as being autobiographical started, innocently enough, with the 1929 publication of Florence Ayscough's *The Autobiography of a Chinese Poet* and continued with the 1952 publication of William Hung's *Tu Fu: China's Greatest Poet*, in which an able historian assembled an account of Du Fu's (Tu Fu) life by using his poems as a historical source. This led many scholars to assume, almost axiomatically, that the traditional Chinese poets, with Du Fu the greatest among them, wrote autobiographical poetry. Stephen Owen is right to cite "Chinese critics from the Song Dynasty on" referring to "Du Fu as the 'poet-historian'" but he is less helpful when he claims that "Du Fu was the historian of himself"—a characterization which reflects a self-absorption that would have mortified Du Fu, and virtually every other traditional Chinese poet (Owen 413). Du Fu, like many traditional Chinese poets, wrote from personal experience, and from the commonplaces of one's personal life. But this does not, except to the post-Romantic Westerner weaned on Wordsworth, indicate an autobiographical bent. Du Fu wrote from personal experience, not because he thought his personal experiences were worth recording, but because those experiences situated him anecdotally and chronologically in history: they were the basis for being a witness to history.

The first individual poet in Chinese, Qu Yuan 屈原, wrote the most seminally personal, if not technically autobiographical poem, since it specified no historical details about himself. His commentators, however, have no doubt that the mythical world he created and the mythical plaint that he composed expressed his actual dissatisfaction with his emperor. His stance in the *Li Sao* 離騷 became the *locus classicus* to which every subsequent scholar-poet alluded when he wrote of his disaffections and disappointments. If Qu Yuan was unmistakably self-referential, his poem allowed other

poets to be self-referential by proxy, if not in fact; traditional Chinese poetry could be meticulously personal without being autobiographical. In the process, a generic self developed in the tradition, with a persona of the underappreciated, unfairly vilified, and undeservedly neglected scholar-poet.[3] The generic self was the self of the *junzi* 君子, the "scholar-gentleman." Fingarette contrasts the situation of the egoist and the *junzi*:

> To look at the ground of an egoist's will is thus necessarily to look at that ego; whereas to look at the ground of a *chun tzu*'s [*junzi*'s] will is to look not at the person but at the *tao*....the more deeply one explores the *chun tzu*'s will, the more the personal dimensions are revealed as purely formal....To understand the content of the *chun tzu*'s will is to understand the *tao*, not the *chun tzu* as a particular person. The ego is present in the egoist's will. The *tao* is present in the *chun tzu*'s will. (135)

Another factor in the absence of individual autobiography among traditional Chinese poets involves a question of audience.[4] Modern readers of published works have little or no appreciation that there was no such thing as "publication" in the periods before the advent of print. Poems were written for a known target audience, usually of one's peers, many of whom one could claim as friends. This audience of literati shared the same perspective, the same code of modesty, the same familiarity with the classics. To relate the details of one's life to this audience was no more self-important than bringing a friend up-to-date on the happenings in one's life. The "autobiographical" details were supplied with no portentous ambition of profound significance: there were no "intimations of immortality" on Westminster Bridge, even if ordinary experience, whether in Tao Yuanming or Du Fu or Wang Wei, could offer epiphanies. Furthermore, these poems were, in Stephen Owen's words, "occasional", written to commemorate certain occasions and "used in a particular social exchange"; "a poem was often as much a social act," Owen remarks, "as a literary work of art, and the capacity to compose verse with reasonable grace in a wide variety of social situations was an important accomplishment for an educated person" (371). But the poems were "occasional" in another sense. The poets regarded them as incidental and mundane; they set out to impress a select coterie, not a general public: as Owen says, they "always recall the everyday world from which they came." Yet it would be misleading to assert that all the personal details are "authentic" and without mimetic fictionality. The coterie audience guaranteed a certain in-group irony and wit, and one could be sure that one did not have to alert like-minded scholar-poets to the litotes or the hyperboles in one's rhetoric. To assert, as some have, that "The traditional Chinese reader had faith that poems were authentic presentations of historical experience" underestimates the sophistication of the literati reader, and misleads the modern reader of Chinese poetry into thinking that the traditional Chinese poet was incapable of ironic subtlety.[5]

Finally, the lexical omission of the subject in traditional Chinese poetry accounts for not only the implied self, but—as in several poems by Wang Wei—the absence of self. In some instances, it may imply not merely the subjective "I", but rather the

subjective "we", conjured up easily enough by correspondents who are like-minded and literate, as in Du Fu's exchange with Li Bai. And when the traditional Chinese poem embodies and expresses the loneliness of the poet, it does so obliquely, with a surrogate "I", and the trope evokes not only the experience of the poet-sender of the poem, but, presumably, also the experience of its reader-receiver.

Let us begin with a conventional theme. Of the countless poems on hapless official-scholars, let me choose two: one of the poems "In Praise of Scholars" 詠貧士 其一 by Tao Yuanming 陶淵明(365-427) and "Cicada" 蟬 by Li Shangyin (813?-858) 李商隱.

All creatures, each has a home:
The solitary cloud alone has none.
Here and there, into thin air, it vanishes:
When do you ever see its traces?
Morning glow breaks through night's mist;
Flocks of birds fly off together
— One by one, winging out of the woods,
Not to return again even at dusk.[6]
Know your strengths, keep to trodden ways.
Who hasn't known cold and hunger?
Those who know me: if they are no longer here—
That's it then. Why complain?

萬族各有託
孤雲獨無依
曖曖空中滅
何時見餘暉
朝霞開宿霧
眾鳥相與飛
遲遲出林翮
未夕復來歸
量力守故轍
豈不寒與飢
知音苟不存
已矣何所悲

(Liu and Lo 58; my translation)

There are several features in this satire that stand out. First, there is no direct or explicit reference to the first person singular; second, while there is no stated metaphor, there is a clear inference in the poet's identification with the "solitary cloud"; third, the familiar depiction of the poverty of scholars. On this latter point, there is no question that when most scholar-poets pleaded poverty, they were in earnest. But all such testimonies should not be taken as literally and autobiographically true. It was acceptable to write about being poor even when one was not poor. For example, Ouyang Xiu (1007-1072), among the most successful literati, nevertheless admired Meng Jiao 孟郊 751-814) and Jia Dao 賈島 (c. 793-c. 865) "because 'all their lives, they particularly enjoyed lines on poverty and suffering 平生自喜為窮苦之句; they were able to carve out words of poverty and suffering as a way of enjoying themselves"

(qtd. in Hawes 126).

Li Shangyin wrote perhaps the most memorable poem on poverty, with the title "Cicada". However, one would never guess from it that, though he did not reach the highest rank in the imperial civil service, he nevertheless enjoyed a moderate success, and was far from living an impoverished life. There is a bit of the poseur and wit in the rhetoric of the poem, a positive pride in presumed poverty.

To fly high hardly fills the belly.
Wasted effort, distressing, your useless crying
At dawn, intermittent, about to break.
A whole tree stands indifferently green.
A hapless official, flotsam floating about,
My old garden is already level with weeds.
Much obliged I am for your admonition:
I too, with my family, live on thin air.

本以高難飽
徒勞恨費聲
五更疏欲斷
一樹碧無情
薄宦梗猶汎
故園蕪已平
煩君最相警
我亦舉家清

(Liu and Lo 243; my translation)

The explicit reference in the first word of the last line to the self (我) might prompt readers to assume that this is an autobiographical reference, a literal designation of the historical I. But the "I" here is generic, not specific, and stands for all "impoverished" scholar-gentlemen—even when they are not poor. This is yet another instance when it would be misleading if not wrong to read traditional Chinese poems as "literal reactions to the world around him" (Yu 35).[7] The trouble with reading Chinese poets as reacting "literally" to the world around them is that it misses the self-deprecating wit in many Chinese poems. A Han Yu or an Ouyang Xiu enjoyed the subtlety of self-irony and of self-mockery, even, on occasion, of self-pretension.

The notion of traditional Chinese poets reacting innocently and literally to the world around them overlooks the fact that poetry in traditional China was a distinctly coterie art, and poems were addressed to known correspondents who shared not only actual experiences but the entire corpus of classical learning in Chinese. It would be unlikely that such a sophisticated audience could be addressed with "literal" earnestness.

The notion of the generic self may be explored in the sequence that Du Fu wrote to, and about, Li Bai, because in their various guises, they illustrate the permutations of the generic self, from a clear I-self self-designated, to an inexplicit self-reference shared by both addresser and addressee, to an I-self that is unstated but implied by

an explicit You-self.

To Li Po
Autumn, and we're still like the will-o'-wisp,
Not having found the elixir, like Ko Hung.

Drinking to excess, singing with abandon, idly passing the day;
Flitting here and there, flailing about, to impress whom?

贈 李 白
秋來相顧尚飄蓬
未就丹砂愧葛洪
痛飲狂歌空度日
飛揚跋扈為誰雄

(Liu and Lo 118; my translation)

What is not obvious in the translation is the fact that there is no subject reference in the original: no equivalent of "I", "you", "we", "he" or "she", and the question remains: whose actions are described in the predicates? Is it Du Fu or Li Bai? The addresser or the addressee? If we say the addresser, Du Fu, then the behavior hardly accords with our knowledge of Du Fu's temperament and character, which was far from flambuoyant. But, if it's the addressee, Li Bai, then the poem sounds almost like a recrimination by the sage and serious Du Fu of the insouciant and brilliant Li Bai. How to extricate oneself from this dilemma? Well, it's not entirely possible in English. What is clear in the poem is that Du Fu feels empathy for Li Bai, whom he regarded with both admiration and affection. It is possible to describe activities of the addressee without precluding the addresser from participating in them, at least vicariously. It is the measure of their bond that Du Fu would empathize—without censure or recrimination—with Li Bai's will-o'-the-wisp life, his drinking to excess, his irrepressible flamboyance. One might say that the addresser and the addressee in the poem share the activities described, one actually, the other virtually.

Note that, although the poem is intensely personal, and has biographical and historical value, it is distinctly not autobiographical, if by "autobiographical" one means, "a first- person narrative to represent the development of one's unique self-identity" (Wahrman 289). Du Fu in fact melds his identity vocatively with Li Bai's, and far from trying to establish the uniqueness of his own identity, Du Fu conflates his with Li Bai's.

In both the longer "To Li Bai" 贈李白 poem, as well as the two "Dreaming of Li Bai" 夢 李白 poems, the first person singular and second-person reference to Li Bai is lexically clear. In the first case, Du Fu refers to himself self-deprecatingly in the third line (野人對擅腥) as 野人 (literally, "wild man" but which, in this context, means "I, a simple man"); then, in the ninth line (李侯金閨彥), he refers deferentially to Li Bai: 李侯 ("Mr. Li"[8]). Again, while both poems are very personal (and, indeed, interpersonal), they are emphatically not autobiographical, no more than letters between friends are autobiographical. There is no search for the inner self in the details of

one's personal life, no "unified, retrospective first-person narrative to represent the development of one's self-identity."

The generic self that Qu Yuan inspired among Chinese poets is both conventionally and explicitly acknowledged in Du Fu's "At Horizon's End, Thinking of Li Po" 天末懷李白 and its shared persona:

"At Horizon's End, Thinking of Li Po"
Chill wind stirs at horizon's end:
My friend, what news?
When will the geese arrive?
Autumn swells river and stream.
Writers abhor worldly success;
Mountain demons like to entrap us.
Perhaps we should talk with the abused soul,
By sending a poem to the River Mi-lo.

涼風起天末
君子意如何
鴻雁幾時到
江湖秋水多
文章憎命達
魑魅喜人過
應共冤魂語
投詩贈汨羅

(Liu and Lo 131; my translation)

The first half of the poem presumably describes the setting of the poet; he asks for news of his friend abroad (the formation of the geese, seen as 人, connoted correspondence). The second stanza involves a shared persona, made explicit in the translation by the addition of "us" in the sixth line, and by the rendering of "we" in the seventh line (warranted, perhaps, by the 共 in the original). It invokes the time-honored image of the pure scholar indifferent to recognition or success, yet tempted on all sides with false ambition and the trappings of fame ("Mountain demons"). To strengthen one's resolve, the poet recommends recourse to a consultation with the estimable Qu Yuan who drowned himself in the river Mi-lo, rather than suffer the indignities of a court life without integrity or honor.

The "self" in the poem is neither specifically Du Fu's or Li Bai's, but the generic neglected and abused scholar-poet epitomized by Qu Yuan. Any contemporary of Du Fu reading the poem, including Li Bai, would have identified with this generic self.

Nothing exemplifies more the tendency of traditional Chinese poets to express their personal feelings without being autobiographical than their propensity to identify with certain phenomena of nature that reflected their alienation from society, whether it was a solitary boat, a solitary goose, or a solitary cloud.

In a vitriolic and bitter poem, full of bile against his enemies, the Tang poet, Lu Kuei-meng 陸龜蒙 (?- c. 881) wrote a poem titled, "A Lone Wild Goose" 孤雁 which

begins with these first two lines: "I live between heaven and earth, / A wild goose, a lone visitor to the South" 我生天地間, 獨作南賓雁 (Liu and Lo 256; translated by Robin Yates). In the process, he situates himself exiled from both heaven and earth, marginalized in each, and caught in the middle, too fine for the madding crowd, yet too mortal to be above it all. This was doubtless a feeling that many a disaffected Chinese scholar-minister might experience, and would be part and parcel of "the generic self." The trope of comparing oneself to "orphan" symbols—the word *gu* 孤 used in many of these images means not only "lonely," but in some sense, "abandoned, or "orphaned"; it isn't a preternatural loneliness, but an involuntary solitariness, an alienation that is bereft—has the effect of plaint, not self-pity, of recrimination, not self-indulgence.

Du Fu and Cui Tu (9th/10th Century) both wrote poems on the "solitary goose." Because it's less familiar, I offer Cui Tu's version:

Line after line has flown back over the border.
Where are you headed all by yourself?
In the evening rain you call to them—
And slowly you alight on an icy pond.
The low wet clouds move faster than you
Along the wall toward the cold moon....
If they caught you in a net or with a shot,
Would it be worse than flying alone?

幾行歸塞盡
片影獨何之
暮雨相呼失
寒塘欲下遲
渚雲低暗渡
關月冷相隨
未必逢矰繳
孤飛自可疑

(Bynner 166)

The solitariness of the scholar-poet has been a familiar trope throughout Chinese history (notwithstanding such gregarious exceptions as Li Bai, Ouyang Xiu, and Yuan Mei). This poem features the pitiable plight of a wild goose left behind by the flock, lost and disoriented, bereft and unmoored, a circumstance that more than a few scholars in exile could relate to. The final couplet asks, rhetorically, whether being left behind, being abandoned by the flock, isn't worse than death. Indeed, for most traditional Chinese, exile was deemed worse—certainly more shameful—than death.

The irrepressible Li Bai evoked a solitary cloud, recalling Tao Yuanming, in "Sitting Alone in the Jingting Mountains" 獨坐敬亭山:

Flocks of birds fly high and vanish;
A single cloud, alone, calmly drifts on.
We never tire of looking at each other—

Now there's only the Jingting Mountains and me.[9]

眾鳥高飛盡
孤雲獨去閒
相看兩不厭
只有敬亭山

There is a serenity in the solitary cloud that remains after the flocks of birds disappear. Li Bai, who, when he was by himself, found company in anything—moon, shadow, wine, etc., saw companions here in the singularity of a solitary cloud, as well as the populousness of the Jingting Mountains. Of course, having perhaps the strongest ego among Tang poets, Li Bai puts himself on a par not only with the single cloud but with the Jingting Mountains themselves. He was gregarious in his loneliness, and jovial in his solitude.

Du Fu, on the other hand, was of a more melancholy bent. He combined "images of the abandoned self" in one poem, "Night Thoughts Aboard a Boat" 旅夜書懷; he alludes to both the solitary boat, and to the solitary goose:

A bank of fine grass and light breeze,
A tall-masted solitary night boat,
Stars descend over the vast wild plain;
The moon bobs in the Great River's Flow.
Fame: is it ever to be won in literature?
Office: I should give up, old and sick.
Floating, floating, what am I like?
Between earth and sky, a gull alone.

細草微風岸
危檣獨夜舟
星垂平野闊
月湧大江流
名豈文章著
官因老病休
飄飄何所似
天地一沙鷗

(Liu and Lo 143; translated by J.J.Y. Liu and Irving Lo)

The first stanza sets the scene, and establishes the mood. The items selected for description appear at first to be disinterested, but they are far from random: The image of the tall-masted boat in the night easily conjures up a solitary man upright; the moon bobbing in the Great River's flow suggests the vagaries of life, its ebb and flow, its ups and downs. The poem shifts its perspective in the third couplet, which is decidedly noumenal and not phenomenal: the images in the first stanza prompt the poet to think about his life: its disappointments and frustrations. The final couplet is no longer the phenomenal scene described in the first stanza: it may be noumenal in thrust, but it borrows images from the phenomenal world. It evokes an abstract

image in the imagination, and makes reference to a solitary gull, which is not part of the actual scene, but is now a metaphoric stand-in for the poet himself.

The poet arrives at a vision of himself that is not subjective, as it would be in autobiography, but from an objective point of view. In his mind's eye, he sees himself as part of nature: the tall-masted solitary boat, the solitary gull between heaven and earth. Nature "places" him in the order of things, and the poem ends with a melancholy epiphany: the poet recognizes who he is, but he is seen from the outside, as part of Nature.

This dissolution of the subjective self, even if it's only a generic subjectivity, achieves total annihilation, of course, in the poetry of Wang Wei (701-761), and his famously Buddhist lines of "empty mountain" 空山 (鹿柴) and "empty forest" 空林 (積雨輞川莊作). For Wang Wei, the realization of positive "emptiness" is the key to inner peace: In "Answering Vice-Prefect Zhang" 酬張少府, Wang encapsulates the wisdom of "empty" knowledge:

As the years go by, give me but peace,
Freedom from ten thousand matters.[10]
I ask myself and always answer:
What can be better than coming home?
A wind from the pine-trees blows my sash,
And my lute is bright with the mountain moon.
You ask me about good and evil fortune?...
Hark, on the lake there's a fisherman singing!

晚年惟好靜
萬事不關心
自顧無長策
空知返舊林
松風吹解帶
山月照彈琴
君問窮通理
漁歌入浦深

(Bynner 119)

Witter Bynner's rendering captures the externals of the poem, the philosophical bent of the diction, the characteristic blend of objective description of nature with abstract and moral questions of life and meaning, but, inevitably, he misses the nuances of the wordplay in Chinese. In the fourth line, which Bynner renders, simplistically and idiomatically, "What can be better than coming home?" he glosses over the first two words 空知 ("Emptily knowing") which is difficult, if not impossible, to convey in English. Here, "empty" does not mean void of substance, but void of ego, void of preconceptions, void of vanity: it stands for the age-old Confucian virtues: 子絕四:毋意,毋必,毋固,毋我. [The Master was entirely free of four things: he had no preconcep-tions, no arbitrariness, no obstinacies, no ego.] The sense is more than a "home sweet home" sentiment: the line describes the poet returning home without

the trammels of worldly ambition, without the trappings of presumption, prejudice, willfulness, or self-interest. It is not knowledge but "empty knowledge," knowledge free of ulteriority, free of rational or practical interpretation. It is this kind of knowledge that makes the last line—"Hark, on the lake there's a fisherman singing!" 漁歌入浦深—not an evasion of the question, but its immanent answer. And, speaking of this last line, Bynner omits two words, 入 ("penetrate") and 深 ("deep") that have an unmistakable resonance to knowing and to the depths of knowledge. For Wang Wei, the encounter with Nature yielded wisdom only when the obstacle of the self could be effectively removed. And the insights were neither noumenal nor phenomenal: they were pre-analytical, concrete rather than abstract. There is a Daoist distrust of the false distinctions that language and logic are prone to create.

The English Romantics, on the other hand, were governed by the opposite instinct. For them the discovery of Nature led to the discovery of the self. Coleridge, for example, insisted that "In looking at objects of Nature...I seem rather to be seeking, as it were asking, a symbolical language for something within me that already and forever exists, than observing anything new." The contrast between self and Nature reinforced the notion of self, made it manifest, Wordsworth was perhaps more unabashed: "I was often unable to think of external things as having external existence, and I communed with all that I saw as something not apart from, but inherent in, my own material nature" (qtd. in Abrams 537, Taylor 301, Wahrman 291). The exploration of Nature led to a discovery of the inner self. Nature was the means to autobiographical self-discovery: the subtitle of Wordsworth's *Prelude* was, after all, "Growth of the Poet's Mind." No such abstract heuristic can be found in Wang Wei. The beginning of wisdom for Wang Wei was to *lose* one's self in Nature; the beginning of wisdom for Wordsworth was to *find* one's self in Nature. They were, of course, both right—each in his own way.

The crucial and interesting question is: what are the differences in the ways in which Wordsworth and Wang Wei are both right. That question is, of course, one that we have only just begun to explore.

Notes

1. A version of the present essay was presented at the Seventh Biennial International Auto/Biography Association Conference, 29 June 2010, University of Sussex. I am grateful to Wann Ai-jen and Gloria Shen for making corrections of a previous draft. Revised May 27, 2010 in Hong Kong.

2. Herbert Fingarette extrapolates this sentiment to Asian thought in general: "Asian thought...is perfused—not entirely, but very widely—with the teaching that the individual self or ego is the source and seat of delusion and suffering, of frustration and bondage. Our great task is to let go of the self" (129).

3. In this sense, traditional Chinese poets had a notion closer to what Dror Wahrman calls the "*ancien regime* of identity": their notion of self involved "identicality", "the collective grouping highlighting whatever a person has in common with others" as opposed to "identity", "that quintessential unique-

ness that separates a person from all others" (276).

4. There are two generic assumptions implied in the concept of autobiography: (1) that there is an individual whose unique life is worth the telling; (2) that the narrative of a life by the individual who lived it has a special, if not superior, status.

5. For a critique of this point of view, cf. Saussy 58-60.

6. Gloria Shen advises me that "未夕" is different from "既夕" and should, thus, perhaps be rendered as something like "even before dusk".

7. Cf. Zhang Longxi's critique of Yu's position (Zhang 22).

8. The term "李侯" is more than a respectful "Mr. Li" since "侯" literally means a "marquise," but a title in egalitarian American English is hard to come by.

9. Even though the last line has no reference to the subject-poet, most translators supply it; cf. Irving Lo: "Never tired of looking at each other—/ Only the Ching-ting Mountain and me (Liu and Lo 110); Xu Yuanchong: "We are not tired, the Peak and I / Nor I of him, nor he of me" (http://www.sowerclub.com/ViewTopic.php?id=265544: accessed 2010.4.25)

10. This is the traditional rendering (William Coleman: "My heart's not given to ten thousand things"). reading the compound 關心 as a morpheme meaning "to concern oneself with", "to care about", and yielding the sense that "Nothing troubles the heart" / "Ten thousand things don't trouble the heart". However, the literal sense of the words, if parsed differently, could read: "In ten thousand things, don't close off the heart". If read this way, it would anticipate the last line, and suggest that one's heart/mind should be open to all phenomena.

Works Cited

Abrams, M.H. "Structure and Style in the Greater Romantic Lyric." *From Sensibility to Romanticism: Essays Presented to F.A. Pottle*. Ed. F.W. Hilles and H. Bloom. New York: Oxford UP, 1965. 527-560.

Bynner, Witter. *The Jade Mountain*. Garden City: Anchor Books, 1964.

Fingarette, Herbert. "The Problem of the Self in the *Analects*." *Philosophy East and West* 29.2 (April 1979): 129-140.

Hawes, Colin. "Mundane Transcendence: Dealing with the Everyday in Ouyang Xiu's Poetry." *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews* 21 (Dec. 1999): 99-129.

Liu Wu-chi and Irving Lo, ed. *Sunflower Splendor: Three Thousand Years of Chinese Poetry*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1975.

Owen, Stephen. *An Anthology of Chinese Literature*. New York: Norton, 1996.

Saussy, Haun. *Great Walls of Discourse and Other Adventures in Cultural Chinese*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard U Asia Center, 2001.

Taylor, Charles. *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1989.

Wahrman, Dror. *The Making of the Modern Self: Identity and Culture in Eighteenth-*

Century England. New Haven: Yale UP, 2006.

Yu, Pauline. *Reading Imagery in the Chinese Poetic Tradition*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1987.

Zhang Longxi. *Allegoresis: Reading Canonical Literature East and West*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2005.