Summer 2010

"Hoisting one's own banner:" self-inscription in lyric poetry by three women writers of late imperial China

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“HOISTING ONE’S OWN BANNER:” SELF-INSCRIPTION IN LYRIC POETRY BY THREE WOMEN WRITERS OF LATE IMPERIAL CHINA

by

Haihong Yang

An Abstract

Of a thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the Doctor of
Philosophy degree in Comparative Literature
in the Graduate College of
The University of Iowa

July 2010

Thesis Supervisor: Associate Professor Maureen Robertson

ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the innovative subjectivity of feminine voices constructed in poetry by three women writers from seventeenth- and early nineteenth-century China: Li Yin, Wang Duanshu, and Wang Duan. Drawing primarily on their individual collections, I argue that the writers fashion poetic selves that deviate from literati representations of feminine subjectivity through the writers' intertextual dialogues with mainstream literary and cultural traditions and also their poetic exchanges with contemporary women writers. I explore specific methods employed by the three writers to create distinctive voices of their own and specify modes that distinguish the alternative feminine voices in their writings, contextualizing my reading of poems from their collected works and of *mise-en-scenes* in the case of exchange poetry. My close reading of the three late imperial Chinese writers' poetry reveals that subject positions in their collected works, different from those of feminine voices constructed in literati poetry, are the result of the gendered writing self seeking voices to express lived experiences, deeply felt emotions, desires, anxieties, and pleasures. These positions in turn allow the writing self to have serious intellectual exchanges with their contemporary writers, create self-definitions beyond the normative roles as prescribed by the Confucian gender system and the literati poetic tradition, and realize personal transformation in poetry.

Abstract Approved: _____
Thesis Supervisor

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Date

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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PH.D. THESIS

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This is to certify that the Ph.D. thesis of

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To My Mother and Father

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Maureen Robertson, my mentor and friend, for her guidance, her contagious enthusiasm to Chinese women's literature, and her generous support in my bitter-sweet journey as a Ph.D. student at the University of Iowa. I have benefited enormously over the years from her instruction, solid criticisms, and careful reading of my work. I have also benefited greatly from the help and expertise of my committee members: Kevin Kopelson, Rudolf Kuenzli, Alvin Snider, and David Wittenberg, who generously took time to read my research papers, prospectus, and dissertation, and provided insightful written or oral comments.

I would also like to thank the Graduate College and the Department of Cinema and Comparative Literature of the University of Iowa for generously funding my graduate study.

I am deeply grateful to my mother and father, who have never failed to provide me with their unconditional love and encouragement. This dissertation is dedicated to them. I am also more grateful than I can express to my husband for his unfailing companionship and dedicated support.

Despite the ample help I have received from teachers, the dissertation necessarily has many remaining shortcomings, for which I alone am responsible.

ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the innovative subjectivity of feminine voices constructed in poetry by three women writers from seventeenth- and early nineteenth-century China: Li Yin, Wang Duanshu, and Wang Duan. Drawing primarily on their individual collections, I argue that the writers fashion poetic selves that deviate from literati representations of feminine subjectivity through the writers' intertextual dialogues with mainstream literary and cultural traditions and also their poetic exchanges with contemporary women writers. I explore specific methods employed by the three writers to create distinctive voices of their own and specify modes that distinguish the alternative feminine voices in their writings, contextualizing my reading of poems from their collected works and of *mise-en-scenes* in the case of exchange poetry. My close reading of the three late imperial Chinese writers' poetry reveals that subject positions in their collected works, different from those of feminine voices constructed in literati poetry, are the result of the gendered writing self seeking voices to express lived experiences, deeply felt emotions, desires, anxieties, and pleasures. These positions in turn allow the writing self to have serious intellectual exchanges with their contemporary writers, create self-definitions beyond the normative roles as prescribed by the Confucian gender system and the literati poetic tradition, and realize personal transformation in poetry.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

After Embroidering *Xiuyu xucao wujuan* 绣余续草五卷
Bamboo Laughter *Zhuxiaoxuan yincao* 竹笑轩吟草
Innate Love *Ziranhaoxuezhai shichao* 自然好学斋诗钞
Lamenting Red Flowers *Yinhongji* 吟红集
Ming Authors *Ming sanshijia shixuan chuji* 明三十家诗选初集
SKQS *Siku quanshu* 四库全书
Weft of Poetry *Mingyuan shiwei chubian* 名媛诗纬初编
XXSKQS *Xuxiu siku quanshu* 续修四库全书

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation investigates the subjectivity of feminine voices constructed in poetry by three late imperial Chinese women writers: Wang Duanshu 王端淑 (*zi* 字 (courtesy name) Yuying 玉映, *hao* 号 (literary name) Yuying 玉映（1622–after 1702); Li Yin 李因 (*zi* Jinsheng 今生, 1616-1685); and Wang Duan 汪端 (*zi* Yunzhuang 允庄, 1793–1838), drawing primarily on their published collected works (*bieji* 别集).[1] I examine the three writers' poetic works through the critical lens of subjectivity, endeavoring to answer the following questions: how does the textual representation of subjectivity by late imperial Chinese women writers of the governing class deviate from that in the writings of the contemporary mainstream literati (educated men of governing class). How do these writers negotiate innovative subject positions for the feminine voices in their poetry through their intertexutal links with established literati culture and also their poetic exchanges with other writers, drawing on their gendered experiences? Although the three writers all belong to the governing class, either by birth in the case of Wang Duanshu and Wang Duan, or by marriage in Li Yin's case, they differ in education, life experience, political stance, and personality. Their similarities and differences make it possible for the approaches used and findings obtained in this study

[1] The line "Hoisting one's own banner" in the dissertation title is from a poem by Wang Duan entitled "丙子孟陬上旬，与小云夜坐，以澄怀堂集、自然好学斋诗互相商榷，偶成二律。*Binzi mengqu shangxun yu Xiaoyun yezuo yi chenghuaitang ji ziranhaoxuezhai shi huxiang shangque oucheng* erlü" ("One night at the beginning of the first month in the year Bingzi (1817), I discussed poems from *Chenghuaitang ji* (*Collected Poems of Pure Sentiments Hall*) and *Ziranhaoxuezhai shichao* (*Collected Poems of Innate Love of Learning Studio*) with Xiayun and completed two regulated poems at random."). *Innate Love*, 3.6b. For the discussion of the whole poem, see Chapter Four.

to be applied to reading poems by other governing-class women writers in late imperial China, starting from the late Ming dynasty (around 1550-1644) until the end of the Qing dynasty (1911).

In the following pages, I will argue that subject positions and feminine voices created in the works by the three writers exceed in scope, intensity, and diversity the representation of the feminine voices in literati poetry. In other words, the textual self is, in many cases, the effect of the writers' negotiations with the normative gender and cultural conventions on the one hand, and the writers' participation in the ongoing construction of gender and cultural discourses on the other. In the case of exchange poetry between women, the textual self is produced in the actual poetic dialogues that aim to bond and consolidate their collective identity while allowing the self to bear individual markers at the same time.

This dissertation joins in the vigorous scholarly conversation on late imperial Chinese women's culture and literature since the early 1990s. In her 1989 article on letters to and by women collected in three anthologies of literati letters published in the seventeenth century, Ellen Widmer explores gentry women's writing communities constructed through epistolary exchanges in the late Ming and early Qing period, literati ambivalence toward writing women and women's talents, and the mutual support and nurturing among women. Her informative examination of five women writers, including Wang Duanshu, is among the earliest studies of individual women writers of the seventeenth century in English.[2]

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[2] Ellen Widmer, "The Epistolary World of Female Talent in Seventeenth-Century China." *Late Imperial China* 10 (1989): 1-43.

Widmer's 1989 article raises three important issues in the field of late imperial Chinese women's literary culture: women's talents, communities of women writers, and the literati's relationship with writing women and women's writings. Dorothy Ko also approaches the issue of women's talents from a cultural historian's perspective.[3] She inquires into the emerging new concept in the seventeenth century that women's talents and virtues were not believed to be necessarily mutually exclusive. After an investigation of women's crucial roles in educating other women, she argues that this expanded practice of women's education in late imperial China was based upon some women educators' beliefs that women's talents and virtues were compatible and mutually reinforcing. Kang-i Sun Chang (1997) gives a historical account of the talent/virtue issue regarding pre-twentieth-century Chinese women. She traces the debate on the relationship between women's talents and women's virtue from the Han dynasty (206-220 B.C.E.) to the early nineteenth century. She notes that the ideal of "talented woman" emerged as a popular figure in the Ming, a role that was at first played by courtesans. In the late Ming period, the antithetical concepts of talent and virtue were less estranged, though not reconciled. As the eighteenth century witnessed a decline in courtesan culture, gentry women created a new image of the "talented woman." Some of the governing class writers, such as Wanyan Yunzhu 完顏恽珠 (1771-1833), claimed that the value of a poetic text lay in its moral power instead of the strength of the author's creativity.[4] Susan Mann's study of women in eighteenth-century China reaches the same conclusion

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[3] Dorothy Ko, "Pursuing Talent and Virtue: Education and Women's Culture in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century China." *Late Imperial China*. 13 (1992), 9-39.

[4] Kang-i Sun Chang, "Ming-Qing Women Poets and the Notions of "Talent" and "Morality"." *Culture and State in Chinese History: Conventions, Accommodations, and Critique*, eds. Theodore Hunters, R Bin Wong, and Pauline Yu (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997) 236-58.

as Chang's observation that some eighteenth-century gentry women writers believed that women's scholarly and moral authority rested in their poetry.[5] Some eighteenth-century women writers were influenced by the Confucian concepts that literature was the vehicle of "Way," which could be understood as the Confucian moral teaching. However, the whole question of to what extent women writers of this historical period acquired authority was not settled.

Widmer's (1999) inquiry into Hou Zhi's 候芝 (1764-1829) dilemma on talent further complicates the scholarly conversation. Hou Zhi is known as a poet and *tanci* 弹词 writer (*tanci* is "a form of narrative written in verse and prose,"[6] derived from the practice of oral storytelling by professionals). In this article, Widmer examines the tension between Hou's elite social standing and the popular nature of her *tanci* writing and how the latter was circulated. She argues that the theme of her *tanci* work *Zai zaotian* 再造天 (*Heaven Recreated*), which is the notion that ambition does not pay, is a camouflage for the writer's own ambition to be known for her talent and suggests that the story's debt to vernacular fiction contrasts with its morally uplifting tone.[7]

Maureen Robertson's 1992 essay is among the first literary studies of late imperial Chinese women's literature. In this article, Robertson inquires into the feminine voice constructed by women writers. Juxtaposing the feminine voice created by male writers in their poetry with the feminine voices in women's writing, she argues that

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[5] Susan Mann, *Precious Records: Women in China's Long Eighteenth Century* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997) 97.

[6] Ellen Widmer, "The Trouble with Talent: Hou Zhi (1764-1829) and her Tanci Zaizao Tian 再造天 of 1828." *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews*. 21 (1999):131.

[7] Widmer, 1999, 133.

women writers refigured conventionalized representations of women's voices and she also shows that traditional literati poetry frequently represented women in ways that satisfied a desire for scopophilic pleasure of the male writer and reader.[8] Grace Fong (1993), in her essay on the feminine voice and image in song lyricss, also examines the male gaze in Chinese lyric poetry. She traces the development of the feminine coding of song lyricss (*ci* 词) as a genre of poetry, and argues that such coding opened up possibilities for song lyricss as a poetic form that seemed "natural" for women. Her close reading of women's poetry reveals that women writers in late imperial China appropriated the feminized space of the genre to recreate themselves.[9] Later, Robertson (1997) investigates the self-representation by women in their authors' prefaces and their lyric poetry and ballads. She argues that the woman author's preface to her collected works is the site of a potentially contradictory representation of being a writer and a virtuous woman, because in the preface the author often explores ways to rationalize the circulation of her poetry, which is inhibited in the Confucian gender system. Women writers enjoyed more freedom in fashioning a selfhood in lyric poetry through innovative engagement with literati voices, images, and concerns.[10] In her book-length study of women's writings in late imperial China, Fong examines how in writing, women writers

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[8] Maureen Robertson. "Voicing the feminine: constructions of the gendered subject in lyric poetry by women of medieval and late imperial China." *Late Imperial China*. 13.1 (June 1992): 69-72; 79-99.

[9] Grace S. Fong. "Engendering the Lyric: Her Image and Voice in Song." *Voices of the Song lyrics in China*, ed. Pauline Yu (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993) 107-44.

[10] Maureen Robertson. "Changing the Subject: Gender and Self-inscription in Authors' Prefaces and "Shi" Poetry." *Writing Women in Late Imperial China.* Eds. Ellen Widmer and Kang-i Sun Chang (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997) 171-217. *Writing Women in Late Imperial China* is a collection of thirteen articles offering important scholarship on rarely studied texts in the Ming and the Qing dynasties from a gender study perspective.

of this historical period opened up alternative subject positions transcending those in their normative gender roles, which were strictly prescribed in terms of speech, behavior, women's works, and subordination in a patriarchal system.[11]

A significant discussion of canonization and women's anthologies in late imperial China was initiated by Kang-i Sun Chang's 1997 article. Chang gives brief introduction to twelve anthologies of women's poetry published in the Ming-Qing period. She argues that male scholars, rather than female writers themselves, served as "the major editorial brains" of these anthologies and endeavored to canonize women's writings.[12] As a response to Chang's view on the role of literati in publicizing women's writings by compiling women's anthologies, Clara Wing-chung Ho contends that the support of women through publication by the opposite sex was only minimally motivated by the men's conscious recognition of the literary value of women's works. In many cases, they published women's writings simply in commemoration of some women with whom they were close or knew.[13] A more vehement criticism of Chang's foregrounding the literati's pivotal role in "canonizing" women's writings can be found in Grace Fong's (2004) "Gender and the Failure of Canonization: Anthologizing Women's Poetry in the Late Ming." As the title suggests, Fong claims that anthologizing women's poetry "inhibited significantly the construction of a canon of women poets." A generalized idealization of

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[11] Grace Fong, *Herself an Author: Gender, Agency, and Wring in Late Imperial China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008).

[12] Chang, Kang-i Sun. "Ming and Qing Anthologies of Women's Poetry and Their Selection Strategies." *Writing Women in Late Imperial China*. Eds. Widmer, Ellen and Kang-i Sun Chang (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997) 147-170.

[13] Ho, Clara Wing-chung. "Encouragement From the Opposite Gender: Male Scholars' Interests in Women's Publications in Ch'ing China – A Bibliographical Study." *Chinese Women in the Imperial Past: New Perspectives*. Ed. Zurndorfer, Harriet T. (Leiden: Brill, 1999) 308-353.

women's poetry in literati prefaces and the lack of consistent standards in collecting women's writings left out "any consistent evaluation of differences among particular women poets or between particular women poets and male poets, the "naming" of which is such an important aspect of canon formation."[14] However, Fong does not take into account the element of male editors' scopophilic pleasure, which was an ingredient in the collection of women's writings, as Robertson points out in her 1992 article.

Two collections of articles published in mainland China include important scholarship on dynastic Chinese women's literature in the Chinese-speaking world in the past two decades. *Ming Qing wenxue yu xingbie yanjiu* 明清文学与性别研究 (*Literature and Gender in Ming-Qing China*) includes fifty-four articles on women's literary texts in various genres, from lyric poetry, narratives including folklore and *tanci*, to essays and love letters approached from critical perspectives of gender study.[15] *Gudai nüshiren yanjiu* 古代女诗人研究 (*A Study of Classical Women Poets*), published in 2002, collects essays featuring close readings of works by rarely studied writings by women, critical examination of the literati's role in the so-called "talented women's culture," and the issue of women's writings viewed in its relation to the mainstream literary tradition. In their preface to this volume, the editors present a critical historical survey of anthologies of important literary texts by women, criticisms from the Ming and Qing *shiping* 诗评 (commentaries on poetry) and *shihua* 诗话 (notes and comments on poems and poets), and contemporary scholarship of imperial Chinese women's poetry

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[14] "Gender and the Failure of Canonization: Anthologizing Women's Poetry in the Late Ming." *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews*. 26 (2004): 129-149.

[15] Zhang, Hongsheng, ed. *Ming Qing wenxue yu xingbie yanjiu* 明清文学与性别研究 (Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 2000).

published in journals and books in mainland China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. The collection's substantial bibliography is a valuable research resource.[16]

Scholarship on late imperial Chinese women's culture and literature in the past two decades facilitated and was in turn supported by the translation and publication of anthologies of women's writings in dynastic China. In 2008, scholars in mainland China edited and published *Jiangnan nüxing bieji* 江南女性别集, an anthology that includes thirty-nine collected works by thirty-six women writers from the Jiangnan area in the Ming-Qing period. It is the first anthology to reprint the complete collected works by late imperial Chinese women.[17] The recently published anthology of collected works by writers of the Qing dynasty also includes the complete collections of some Qing women writers.[18] Ninety collections of writings by women of the Ming-Qing period in the holdings of the Harvard Yenching Library constitute the online digital archive, whose introduction and search interface are in both English and Chinese.[19]Among the anthologies of translations into English of Chinese women's writings, three anthologies are representative: *Women Writers of Traditional China: An Anthology of Poetry and Criticism*, the 1999 anthology of imperial Chinese women's poetry and criticism by women and of women's writings edited by Kang-i Sun Chang and Haun Saussy; *Under*

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[16] Zhang Hongsheng and Zhang Yan, eds. *Gudai nüshiren yanjiu* 古代女诗人研究 (Wuhan: Hubei jiaoyu chubanshe, 2002).

[17] Hu Xiaoming and Peng Guozhong, eds. *Jiangnan nüxing bieji* 江南女性别集 (Hefei: Huangshan shushe, 2008).

[18] Congshu bianzuan weiyuanhui, eds. *Qingdai shiwenji huibian* 清代诗文集汇编 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2009).

[19] *Ming Qing Women's Writings*. McGill: Harvard-Yenching Library. http://digital.library.mcgill.ca/mingqing/english.

Confucian Eyes: Writings on Gender in Chinese History, the 2001 smaller-scaled anthology of eighteen short excepts of longer pieces of classical Chinese texts from the mid-ninth century to the late nineteenth century edited by Susan Mann and Yu-yin Cheng; and *The Red Brush: Writing Women of Imperial China*, the 2004 anthology of women's writings including poetry, essays and letters, drama, religious writing, and narrative fiction, edited by Wilt L. Idema and Beata Grant.[20]

Dorothy Ko's study on seventeenth-century gentry women's literary and social communities and Susan Mann's investigation of women's roles and gender relations in eighteenth-century China challenge the ahistorical perspective, which regards patriarchy and women as "monolithic entities."[21] Their works exemplify a sophisticated approach to the inquiry of femininity as a historical production and to the question of how our understanding of the late imperial Chinese history would change when women were placed at the center of scholarly study.

Ko and Mann's studies are important to my study of the three writers because they provide a panoramic view of women in a social and historical context specific to late imperial China. At the same time, this dissertation deviates from their social historical approach, which draws on the poetry and other literary writings by late imperial women writers as historical sources. As historians, Ko and Mann are interested in re-describing women as historical figures, treating the women writers' literary creations as evidence,

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[20] Kang-i Sun Chang and Haun Saussy, eds. *Women Writers of Traditional China: An Anthology of Poetry and Criticism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999). Susan Mann and Yu-yin Cheng, eds. *Under Confucian Eyes: Writings on Gender in Chinese History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001). Wilt L. Idema and Beata Grant, eds. *The Red Brush: Writing Women of Imperial China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2004).

[21] Ko, 1994, 3; Mann, 1997.

and they focus on something common to the historical writings so that they can use them to describe social or cultural phenomena. My examination of the subjectivity in the three writers' works is a literary study concentrated on their lyric poetry. This dissertation gives more attention to the innovative subjectivity produced through the writers' conscious or unconscious interaction with literati poetic conventions, including natural images, thematic concerns, emotional registers, and poetic devices. I am attracted to the differences in topic, content, and mode of the three writers' poetry, and the poetry itself as the discursive site for the writers' personal transformation.

My study is especially indebted to Maureen Robertson's essays on feminine voices and the gender position in authors' prefaces and lyric poetry by medieval and late imperial Chinese women writers, as well as Grace Fong's study on gendered agency and subjectivities produced in poetry, autobiographies, travel writings, and poetic criticism by Ming and Qing women writers. Robertson illustrates how late imperial Chinese women writers re-inscribe themselves through negotiating with masculinized language and scripted feminine voices in literati writings, and examines various new textual positions created by certain Ming and Qing women poets. Fong's project inquires into how writing and reading allow women in Ming and Qing dynasties the agency to open up alternative subject positions beyond their normative roles.[22]

This dissertation continues Robertson and Fong's inquiry of the gendered subject in Ming and Qing women's writings. I further explore specific methods employed by the three writers to create distinctive voices of their own, and specify modes that distinguish

[22] See Robertson, 1992 and Fong, 2008.

the alternative feminine voices in their writings, drawing on poems from the writers' collected works and their exchange poetry. In this dissertation, I aim to examine how innovative subject positions are generated when the three writers engage feminine voices in conversation with the masculinized language of which they speak. I will also investigate how these feminine voices are fashioned through the writers' interaction with mainstream literary tradition and their poetic dialogues with other contemporary women writers.

Poetry discussed in Chapter One, Chapter Two, and Chapter Three are taken from the collected works of each of the three writers, namely, Wang Duanshu's *Yinhongji* 吟红集 (*Collected Works: Lamenting Red Flowers*, hereafter *Lamenting Red Flowers*), Li Yin's *Zhuxiaoxuan yincao* 竹笑轩吟草 (*Draft Poems from Bamboo Laughter Studio*, hereafter *Bamboo Laughter*), and Wang Duan's *Ziranhaoxuezhai shichao* 自然好学斋诗钞 (*Collected Poems from Innate Love Studio*, hereafter *Innate Love*). Poems in Chapter Four can be found in *Mingyuan shiwei chubian* 名媛诗纬初编 (*Weft of Poetry by Renowned Ladies: First Collection*, hereafter *Weft of Poetry*), an anthology of women's poetry compiled by Wang Duanshu.[23]

[23] For *Lamenting Red Flowers*, I use the microfilm reproduction of 30 *juan* 卷 (chapter) edition held in the East Asian Library of Washington University, St. Louis. This edition is undated. Attached to the edition of Wang Duanshu's collection is a collection by a certain male writer named Wang Shihan 王士瀚, who came from the same area of Shanyin as Wang Duanshu. Wang Shihan dated his own preface 1707. This edition has four prefaces by Wang Duanshu's uncle Wang Shaomei 王绍美, Wu Guofu 吴国辅, Wang Dengsan 王登三, and Wang Duanshu's husband Ding Shengzhao 丁圣肇. It also includes "*Ke Yinhongji xiaoyin* 刻吟红集小引" ("A brief introduction to printing *Yinhongji*") with a list of forty-four members of *Tongqiushe* 同秋社 (Share the Autumn Society) who contributed funds for publication of the collection. This edition includes a colophon by Xin Xizhen 邢锡祯. The 2009 edition of *Lamenting Red Flowers* is a reprint of an edition published in the Qing dynasty. This edition does not include any of the prefaces or the colophon except for "A brief introduction to printing *Yinhongji*." In addition, the list of contributors is missing. The last four *ci* poems of the thirtieth chapter are also missing from the 2009 edition. According to *Qing ren shiwenji zongmu tiyao* 清人诗文集总目提要, a copy of the Kangxi edition of *Lamenting Red Flowers* is held

Writing Women in Late Imperial China

Before the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), only a small number of women's writings were preserved compared to the large corpus of writings in various fields of Confucian classics, philosophy, history, and literature by male writers. The inconspicuousness of women's writing was a result of the normative gender roles in the patriarchal society. In women's conduct books, biographies of exemplary women, and family instructions, women were urged to be filial daughters and daughters-in-law, chaste wives or secondary wives, and virtuous mothers, but not writers. Some of them also played the roles of grandmothers who shouldered the responsibilities of early education of younger generations. Some were chaste widows who, though they did not commit suicide after their husbands' deaths, devoted the rest of their lives to raising children and taking care of their parents-in-law. In most cases, they were also expected to contribute further to the

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in Hunan Provincial Library in Changsha with a colophon by Wang Lipei. See Ke Yuchun, "*Yinhongji sanshijuan* 吟红集三十卷," *Qing ren shiwenji zongmu tiyao* 清人诗文集总目提要 (Beijing: Beijing guji chubanshe) 59. Poems from *Weft of Poetry* are from the 1667 edition published by Qingyintang 清音堂 and digitized on the *Ming Qing Women's Wrings* website sponsored by McGill Harvard Yenching Library. See *Mingyuan shiwei chubian*, ed. Wang Duanshu, 1667, http://digital.library.mcgill.ca/mingqing/search/results-work.php.

I use a 2003 reprint of *Bamboo Laughter* published by Liaoning jiaoyu chubanshe. *Bamboo Laughter* includes three collections of Li Yin's poetry: the first collection, the continuation, and a third (*chuji* 初集, *xuji* 续集, *sanji* 三集). According to their prefaces and colophon, the first collection was first published in 1643. The second and the first collections were published together after 1645, and the third collection was originally published in 1683.

For *Innate Love*, I use the 1873 ten *juan* edition edited by Mao Jun 冒俊 (1828-1881) held in the University of Chicago Library. According to Hu Wenkai, the first five chapters of *Innate Love* were edited by Wang Shisun 汪适孙 (fl. nineteenth century) and published by Zhenqitang 振绮堂 of the Wang family in 1839/40). See Hu Wenkai, *Lidai funü zhuzuo kao* 历代妇女著作考 (Shanghai: Shanghai shangwu yinshuguan, 1957) 275. According to Ke Yuchun, *Innate Love* was republished with seven chapters in the beginning of the Tongzhi Reign (1862-1875). See Ke Yuchun, "*Ziranhaoxuezhaishichao shijuan* 自然好学斋诗钞十卷," Ke Yuchun, 1280.

family economy by spinning, weaving, embroidering, and managing servants.[24] Learning was generally thought to be useless to women and did not belong to women's virtues (*fu de* 妇德). Women were not expected to write, let alone to circulate their writing, which was thought to be fame-seeking and therefore inappropriate. For male scholars writing was their business, and bestowed meaning on their lives as officials, in their private lives and social relations. In contrast, a woman's identity was associated more with the self-regulation of her body. Women's virtues were generally regarded as incompatible with talent, especially when their talents were presented publicly. Excluded from the civil service system, women's duties were confined to the inner sphere of the household: management of the household economy, maintenance of the ancestral shrine, and production and education of the next generation so that male family members could pursue their careers in the outer realm. Before the Ming, women's writing was often regarded not only as useless, but a dangerous sign of an inappropriate ambition to invite fame and attention, and these attitudes persisted in some families until into the early twentieth century. While a literatus was expected to write so as to endow his life with meaning, a woman writer had to justify why she wished to write at all. This explains why many women writers gave their individual collections such titles as "*Xiuyu* 绣余" ("Drafts Written after Embroidering") or "*Fenyu* 焚余" ("Remnants of What Has Been Burned").[25]

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[24] An example of popular conduct books in late imperial China is *Nü sishu* 女四书 (*The Four Classics for Women*), which was first published with commentaries by Wang Xiang 王相 in 1624.

[25] For example, Wang Fengxian 王凤娴 (fl. late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries) entitled her collection *Fenyu cao* 焚余草 (*Remnant Drafts of What Has Been Burned*). See Hu Wenkai, 73. Wu Qi 吴琪 (fl. seventeenth century) called her collection *Xianggu fenyu cao* 香谷焚余

The late Ming and early Qing dynasties witnessed a sudden increase in the publications of anthologies and collections of women's writing, mainly their poetry. Hu Wenkai's monumental bibliography of traditional women's writing lists more than four thousand women writers of all dynasties. As many as thirty-five hundred of the four thousand writers are from the Ming-Qing period.[26] Several socio-historical factors contributed to the proliferation of women's anthologies and collections during this historical period. In her study of women and culture in the seventeenth century, Dorothy Ko observes that an expansion of commerce, an increase in urbanization, and a drastic increase in the number of scholars who took the imperial civil service examination threatened the privilege of the elite class. When the number of examinees significantly exceeded that of those who were able to hold official posts, and the newly rich sought after promotion in social status after their economic success, the elite class families who used to depend on their male members' serving as scholar-officials began to keenly feel the threat of class mobility. It is against this social background that the literary talents and reputation of gentry women began to be viewed as cultural capital of elite families. Women who demonstrated "*jiaxue* 家学" (a tradition of family learning) helped to consolidate the class boundary.[27] In addition, urban growth and increased literacy made printing commercially viable. The role of male scholars in publishing and promoting women's writings is a complicated issue and has attracted scholarly attention and

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草 (*Fragrant Valley's Remnant Drafts of What Has Been Burned*). See Hu, 83. Ding Yuqin 丁玉琴 (fl. seventeenth century) entitled her two volume collection *Xiuyu ouyin erjuan* 绣余偶吟二卷 (*Poems Chanted at Random after I Finished Embroidering: Two Chapters*). Hu, 170.

[26] See Kang-i Sun Chang, 1997, 237.

[27] Dorothy Ko, *Teachers of Inner Chamber: Women and Cultural in Seventeen Century China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 19-23; 38-9.

research. I agree with Clara Wing-Chung Ho's argument that men's support of an individual woman's works did not necessarily guarantee their endorsement of women's literature. They anthologized and published women works out of an interest that combined their appreciation of women's work, and their commemoration of some women to whom they were close. When reading women's works of late imperial China, we need to be cautious to remember that they were mostly written either by literate women of elite class or cultivated courtesans, because in this historical period, writing women only constituted a tiny portion of the whole population of women.

Feminine Voices in Literati Poetic Tradition

The literary construction of female voices has a long tradition in China, as elsewhere, and was conventionalized in lyric poetry by literati. Qing dynasty critic Tian Tongzhi 田同之 (*zi* Zaitian 在田, 1677-1756) calls the male writer's impersonation of a female voice in a *ci* poem "*nanzi zuo guiyin*男子作闺音" (literally, a man utters the sound of a woman).[28] Maureen Robertson points out that male writers' construction of a female literary voice is "narrow."[29] Basically, most feminine voices in male writers' poetry can be categorized as either *sifu* 思妇 (the longing woman) or *qifu* 弃妇 (the lonely abandoned woman). Female voices in literati poems usually assume the subject position of a woman who either longs for an absent loved one, or laments bitterly her

[28] Tian Tongzhi, *Xipu cishuo* 西圃词说. *Cihua congbian* 词话丛编. Ed. Tang Guizhang (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986) 1449.

[29] Robertson, 1992, 64.

desertion by a lover.[30] In her book-length study of male writers' impersonation of the feminine voice in classical Chinese literature, Zhang Xiaomei recapitulates critical explanations of the literary phenomenon. According to her, literati cross-gender performance is often politicized. The relationship between the longing female voice and her absent lover is analogized to that between a ruler and an official whose worth has not been recognized by the former. Other critics view the impersonation as the male writers' sympathy with women or the androgynous nature of emotion.[31] Feminist critics such as Mei Jialing argue that male writers' impersonation of a female voice lacks the individuality and subjectivity of the female voice.[32] Robertson observes that because traditional literati poetry assumes the male reader, the feminine voice and image constructed by men and addressed to men is an empty signifier that invites the male gaze, into which "the male author/reader may project his desire."[33] Feminine voices and womanhood are valorized in literati discourse on women based upon a repertoire of

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[30] The subject position here and in most of the other places in this dissertation refers to the discursive position occupied by the speaking subject of a poem. For the theoretical discussion of the term "subject" and its related terms of "existential/historical subject," "authorial/writing subject," and "textual/speaking subject," see Robertson, 1997, 176-9. For the discussion of images of "the longing woman" and "the abandoned woman" earlier in the lyric tradition, see Wang Guoying, "*Han Wei shi zhong de qifu zhiyuan* 汉魏诗中的弃妇之怨," and Mei Jialing, "*Han Wei shige zhong 'sifu wenben' de xingcheng jiqi xiangguan wenti* 汉晋诗歌中 '思妇文本' 的形成及其相关问题," *Zhongguo funü yu wenxue lunji dierji* 中国妇女与文学论集第二集. Ed. Wu Yenna (Taibei: Daoxiang chubanshe, 1999) 31-65; 67-114.

[31] Zhang Xiaomei, *Nanzi zuo guiyin: zhongguo gudian wenxue zhong de nanban nüzhuang xianxiang yanjiu* 男子作闺音：中国古典文学中的男扮女装现象研究 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 2008) 1-6.

[32] Mei Jialing, "Shui zai simian shui 谁在思念谁？." Zhang Hongsheng and Zhang Yan, 142.

[33] Robertson, 1992, 69.

images, allusions, and themes, largely distant from the real experiences of women writers.

Innovative Subject Positions in the Collected Works by Wang Duanshu, Li Yin, and Wang Duan

My close readings of Wang Duanshu, Li Yin, and Wang Duan's poetry reveal that these writers produced feminine voices that occupy subject positions distinctive from those constructed by literati. These subject positions are innovative because they deviate from the writers' personal experiences and are produced by the writing selves' dialogues with the literati tradition and their contemporary writers. Subject positions in the three individual collections are the result of the gendered writing self seeking a voice to express not only her lived experience and her deeply felt emotion, but more importantly in many cases, her desire, anxiety, and pleasure. These positions in turn allow the writing self to have serious intellectual exchanges with their contemporary writers and create self-definitions beyond her normative roles in everyday life. When Maija B. Smei questions the possibility that "women entering a literary world would speak in a language other than that which existed at the time" and asks if a poem that betrays a subjectivity complicitious to the literati feminine voices should still be valued, she ignores poetry as a discursive space that accommodates subject positions created by women not as completed and consummated products, but more as symptoms caused by the tension between the masculinized language and literati tradition and the other's

desire, which requires a different representation.[34] Smei also overlooks the agency of the female writing self who participates in the construction of the poetic discourse of femininity; though she cannot and should not totally escape the influence of the existing literary and cultural conventions if she wants to be recognized as a poet.

This dissertation delves into the questions of where the subject positions of the feminine voices in the poetry by the three writers deviate from subject positions of feminine voices in literati verse, how these positions are constructed in the poetic context, and whether the poetic formulation of these positions ushers in aesthetics different from those of the normative literati lyrics. I draw on the notion of the gendered subjectivity constructed through the writers' interaction with the mainstream discourse and other writers for its theoretical potential to emphasize relating and negotiating positions, responding to concrete particulars, and associating on multiple levels.[35] I will analyze subject positions occupied by the dialogic selves constructed through the writing selves' use of allusion–one of the most important poetic devices of classical Chinese lyric poetry – the environmental discourse of living space, and the subgenre of women's friendship poetry.

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[34] Maija B. Smei, *Gendered Persona and Poetic Voice: The Abandoned Woman in Early Chinese Song lyricss* (Lanham: Lexington Books) 21-2.

[35]For the notion of subjectivity in dialogues, I draw upon the model of feminist understanding of dialogism suggested by Roxanne J. Fand. I focus on the three writers' intertextual links with writings by literati and other women writers. In this sense my usage of dialogism differs from Bakhtin's notion, which refers to a constant engagement of stratified languages and voice in dialogues usually within a novel. In her study of female subjectivity in Woolf, Lessing, and Atwood's works, Fand points out that dialogism appeals to feminists for three reasons: it emphasizes relating and negotiating rather than isolating and polarizing positions. Second, it emphasizes responding to concrete particulars rather than acting on abstract principles. Third, it is a mode of thinking that does not use strictly linear ways of structuring meaning, but is capable of scanning multiple levels of association. See Roxanne J. Fand, *The Dialogic Self: Reconstructing Subjectivity in Woolf, Lessing, and Atwood* (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 1999), 35-6.

In this project, I select Wang Duanshu, Li Yin, and Wang Duan for a case study and suggest modes and paradigms to assess, read, and interpret their poetry. Due to the diversity of the three writers in class, political standing, life experience, and historical period, they exemplify how late imperial women poets might construct diverse subject positions, fashion their own voices, and acquire agency. This dissertation will contribute to the literary studies based in the collected works of late imperial Chinese women writers, showing how these writers transcended literati models and created alternative subjectivities.

Loyalism and Women Writers' Self-Inscription

Wang Duanshu, Li Yin, and Wang Duan all utilize the discourse of loyalism during imperial transitions in their self-inscriptions, though in different degrees. Loyalism serves as a discursive site where the writers create alternative subject positions, trespass into the public sphere, and fashion their identities as writers.

The association of dynastic loyalism with women in imperial China is questionable and demands elucidation. Loyalty, or *zhong* 忠, usually refers to a subject's loyalty to his ruler. It is immediately gendered as masculine, as women were warded off from public service. Consequently, the word *zhong* is seldom applied to commending women's virtues. Within the assigned quarters of the inner apartments, a woman was expected to remain loyal to her husband. *Zhen* 贞 or *jie* 节, which can be translated as "chaste" and means abstinence from unlawful sexual behaviors and complete submission to her husband's, or her husband's family's interest, replaces *zhong* in describing a

women's loyalty to her husband. Dynastic loyalism, therefore, belongs to the public sphere and is associated with the identities of male scholar-officials.

The three writers are all motivated by dynastic loyalism for the construction of subject positions in their poetry for distinct reasons and in various ways. Wang Duanshu's and Li Yin's lives were drastically influenced by the Manchu conquest in 1640s, the Jiangnan resistance movement, and pro-Ming activism for many years after the death of the Ming Chongzhen Emperor in 1644. Wang Duanshu and Li Yin were witnesses and victims of the violence during the Ming-Qing conflicts in the Jiangnan area, which suffered severely from outrageous devastation by the Manchu conquerors, as well as ravages during armed conflicts between the Manchu troops and local resistance forces. The atrocious slaughter by Manchu conquerors in the Jiangnan area is exemplified by the massacre of Yangzhou in 1645. Manchu troops led by the Manchu prince Dodo (1614-1649) encountered tenacious resistance by the Southern Ming troops under the command of Grand Secretary Shi Kefa 史可法 (1601-1645). After the fall of the city, Dodo ordered his troops to slaughter the Southern Ming soldiers and civilians in Yangzhou. The massacre was recorded in *Yangzhou shiri ji* 扬州十日记 (*An Account of Ten Days in Yangzhou*) by Wang Chuxiu 王楚秀, an inhabitant of Yangzhou and witness of the massacre. According to Wang, rapine and slaughter lasted for ten days and eight hundred thousand people died in the massacre. Wang Chuxiu laments that only three out of eight family members survived the catastrophe. On the streets of Yangzhou after the slaughter, survivors "had sword gashes all over their bodies, the blood from which had clotted in patches, and their faces were streaked with trickles of blood like tears from burning red candles." Many other cities in the Jiangnan area including Jiading, Jiaxing,

Kunshan, and Haining suffered from similar carnage.[36] In the Ming-Qing conflicts, Wang Duanshu lost her father Wang Siren 王思任 (*zi* Jizhong 季重, 1576-1646), who was said to have abandoned his house in the city of Shaoxing when it fell into the hands of Manchu troops in 1646, escaped to Qingwang Mountain, refused to eat or to take medicine for his illness, and died there.[37] He had financially supported many of his children, including Wang Duanshu and her husband Ding Shengzhao丁圣肇 (fl. mid-seventeenth century). The couple had lived with him after they married. Her father's death deprived Wang Duanshu and her husband of their comfortable source of financial support. As described in many of her poems in *Lamenting Red Flowers*, Wang and her family had suffered from poverty for many years after 1644. Similarly, Li Yin suffered from straitened circumstances after her husband Ge Zhengqi葛征奇 (?–1645) died shortly after the Manchu conquest. Though lacking solid evidence, we can still speculate that Ge's death was partially precipitated by his depression at the news of the fall of the Ming and a family calamity that was probably associated with the armed conflicts between the Southern Ming and Manchu troops in 1645-1646.[38]

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[36] For the English translation of *An Account of Ten Days in Yangzhou*, see ""Horrid Beyond Description:" The Massacre of Yangzhou," *Voices From the Ming-Qing Cataclysm: China in Tigers' Jaws*. Ed.& trans. Lynn A. Struve (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993) 28-48. For the examination of Manchus' invasion into the Jiangnan area, and the resistance movement in the southern part of the country in English, see Frederic Wakeman, Jr. "The Fall of Nanjing" and "The Jiangnan Resistance Movement," *The Great Enterprise: The Manchu Reconstruction of Imperial Order in Seventeenth-Century China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985)1:509-680.

[37] Zhang Dai 张岱 (1597-1679), "*Wang Xue'an xiansheng zhuan* 王谑庵先生传," *Zhang Da shiwen ji* 张岱诗文集 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1991) 290.

[38] For the discussion of Wang Duanshu's and Li Yin's difficult financial situation during and after 1644, see my discussion in Chapter One.

Wang Duanshu displays her dynastic loyalism overtly in poems collected in *Lamenting Red Flowers*. Similar to many male Ming loyalists, she resorts to *yin* 隐 (seclusion) to pursue a cultural identity as a loyalist. Seclusion, which in dynastic Chinese culture referred to a scholar-official's voluntary withdrawal from public service, was appropriated by Ming gentry loyalists to demonstrate their refusal to cooperate with the Manchu conquerors.[39] She also performs her loyalism in poems on paintings representing the rise and fall of former dynasties and on women who lost their families or were kidnapped by Manchus as their trophies. Compared to Wang, Li Yin is more implicit in showing her dynastic loyalism. Her longings and regrets for the fallen dynasty are mostly shown in her poems recalling her past experiences, lamenting the death of her husband, and expressing her concerns for people in her neighborhood who, like herself, were constantly threatened by potential violence.

Dynastic loyalism provides Wang Duanshu and Li Yin with new topics for their poetry and legitimates their authorship to a certain extent. Wang Duanshu and Li Yin are motivated by their Ming loyalism and use loyalist discourse to establish their identity as writers. As Ellen Widmer points out, loyalism "may have been the principal reason [Wang Duanshu] began to publish" poetry.[40] The financial contributors to the publication of *Lamenting Red Flowers* and its prefacers were mostly male loyalists such as Zhang Dai 张岱 (1597-1679), which indicates the loyalist nature of her target

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[39] For a nuanced discussion of male loyalists' strategies for establishing their cultural identities, see Zhao Yuan, *Ming Qing zhi ji shidafu yanjiu* 明清之际士大夫研究 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1999) 257-401.

[40] Ellen Wider, "Ming Loyalism and the Women's Voice in Fiction After "Hong lou meng"." *Writing Women in Late Imperial China.* Eds. Ellen Widmer and Kang-i Sun Chang (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997) 373

audience. Li Yin's prefacers also praise her "longings and regrets for the fallen dynasty" to foreground the moral values of her poetry and justify the publication of *Bamboo Laughter*.

Wang Duan's dynastic loyalism is greatly influenced by the conservatism in the eighteenth century and the formation of women's writing tradition in the past one hundred plus years. Eighteenth-century scholars were interested in popularizing the classical model of learned women as moral instructors.[41] While the legitimacy of women's authorship was still a controversial issue, women writers and anthologists such as Yun Zhu 恽珠 (z*i* Zhenpu 珍浦, 1771-1833) sought to legitimate women's poetic voices by establishing a moral as well as aesthetic orthodoxy.[42] Many of Wang Duan's poems are on historical figures who were loyal to the fallen dynasties in the Yuan-Ming (1271-1368) and the Ming-Qing transitional periods. . As a writer who spent most of her time in her quiet studio in the peaceful and affluent Jiangnan area in the eighteenth century, Wang Duan is fascinated with dynastic loyalism mostly as a historian. Instead of describing her own loyalist sentiments or regretting the fall of dynasties, Wang Duan tends to pass moral judgment on the historical figures in terms of their degree of loyalty to the rulers, or in the case of women, in terms of their degree of loyalty to their husbands. In the mid-eighteenth century, the Qing had thoroughly established its control throughout the country. The Qing court sought to solidify and further legitimate its

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[41] For the discussion of women's writing and the classical revival in the eighteenth century, see Susan Mann, *Precious Records: Women in China's Long Eighteenth Century* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997) 76-120.

[42] For the discussion of Yun Zhu and her anthology exemplify Qing women's relationship with to literary power and discourse, see Li Xiaorong, "Gender and Textual Politics during the Qing Dynasty: The Case of *Zhengshi ji*." *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 69 (2009):75-107

governing by commending the Ming loyalists and condemning the Ming court officials who transferred their allegiance to the new Manchu rulers. The Qianlong emperor ordered *Erchen zhuan* 贰臣传 (*The Biographies of Turncoat Officials*) to be compiled and published in 1776. Wang Duan's loyalism, therefore, conforms to this mainstream political discourse of loyalism. The moral undertone of her poetic evaluation of historical figures and her contemporary women writers serves as one of her major strategies to empower the poetic voices and create the subject position of a poet-historian.

The Chapters

Women writers' involvement in the social and cultural formation of women's selfhood in late imperial China was a complicated process that engages not only their writing, but the collection and circulation of their writing. In Chapter One, I explore the three individual collections (*Lamenting Red Flowers*, *Bamboo Laughter*, and *Innate Love*) as discursive spaces where the writers experiment with various subject positions that conspire with or deviate from social and cultural norms of femininity generated through the dialogues between the collected poems on the one hand, and the prefaces, colophons, and writers' biographies by male writers included in the collections on the other. I argue that subject positions of the feminine voices constructed in the collections are contingent not only on the tension between the social and cultural context in which the poets wrote and published their collections, but also on the writers' poetic self-exploration and self-narratives.

Chapter Two investigates how Wang Duanshu and Wang Duan re-inscribe themselves through the use of allusion, which is an important rhetorical device of

classical Chinese lyric poetry. In constructing new subject positions through allusion, Wang Duanshu resorts to the interaction between overt cross-gender identification and the covert same-gender identification, and the synthesis of formerly incompatible subject positions for feminine voices in literati's poetry for the construction of alternative women's subjectivity. A century and a half later, Wang Duan strives for agency with her speaking voice of a poet-historian who consciously and actively involves herself in the construction of a women's history through appropriating and challenging the stories and images constructed by male writers, and also through consciously building a new repertoire of women's stories and images constructed by women themselves.

In Chapter Three, I analyze how Li Yin and Wang Duanshu's poems on their dwelling places articulate dynamic subject positions of both belonging and displacement through the writers' reciprocal engagement with dominant literati's discourse of selfhood and dwelling. Their poems on dwellings give expression to the everyday, intimate consequences of the Ming-Qing conflict in the middle of the seventeenth century on the writing selves. The dynastic upheavals literally crumbled the walls of Li Yin and Wang Duanshu's inner chambers and forced them to seek a new relationship with their dwelling places. The fallen walls of these inner chambers also facilitated their conversations with a sympathetic audience who shared similar mentalities as the Ming "*yimin* 遗民" (remnant subjects),[43] and contributed to their fashioning innovative subject positions. In their poems on their dwellings, new subject positions are generated through the depiction of

[43] In other places of the dissertation, I use "Ming loyalists" alternatively with "Ming remnant subjects."

interactions between speaking voices and their dwelling places, and the women writers' reaction to the aesthetics of "dwelling" in literati culture.

Chapter Four examines two sets of occasional poems: one set includes composition by Wang Duanshu, Huang Yuanjie, and Hu Zixia 黃媛介 (*zi* Jieling 皆令, fl. seventeen century) and胡紫霞 [44] (*hao* Fucuixuan zhuren 浮翠轩主人 (Mistress of Floating Green Studio), fl. seventeen century) at a lantern festival gathering hosted by Hu. The other set of poems were written by Wang Duan and Gui Maoyi 归懋仪 (*zi* Peishan 佩珊, 1765-?) during more than seven years of their mutual acquaintance. This chapter demonstrates how the writers inscribe themselves through their poetic dialogues with other women writers. Because the representation of a speaking self in an occasional poem is strongly performative, the speaking voice occupies a subject position contingent on both her audience and writing context, and the ruptures between an expected self-image in a specific writing context and the actually accomplished one in the poems.

[44] Her name appears as Wu Zixia 吴紫霞 in Wang Duanshu's *Yinhongji*. *Hu* 胡 and *Wu* 吴 share the same pronunciation in *wu* dialect which Wang Duanshu spoke.

CHAPTER ONE SUBJECT POSITIONS IN THE THREE COLLECTED WORKS

In the mid-late Ming period, the emergence of women writers was an important cultural phenomenon for two reasons: women's writing opened the way for how women viewed and represented their own social, cultural, and emotional lives that were mostly neglected or described for them by the literati. At the same time, women's literary creations also actively participated in the discursive construction of femininity and women's identities. Their involvement in the social and cultural formation of women's selfhood in this historical period was a complicated process that engaged not only their writings, but the collection and circulation of their writings. This chapter will examine the three individual collections as discursive spaces where the writers experiment on various subject positions that conspire with or deviate from social and cultural norms of femininity.

In this chapter, I investigate the subject positions of the feminine voices constructed in the poetry of the three collections by juxtaposing them with prefaces, colophons, and the authors' biographies collected in the collections. I argue that these positions hinge on the tension between the writing selves' desires and anxiety and the gender and cultural norms specific to the late seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Chinese gentry class women writers.

Wang Duanshu's *Lamenting Red Flowers*

A very productive writer and scholar, Wang Duanshu is the author of at least six individual collections, and the editor of three anthologies of women's writing: one of women's poetry, one of women's prose, and the other of the Ming dynasty women's *qu* 曲 writing.[45] Out of her six individual collections, only *Lamenting Red Flowers* is extant. All writings collected in *Lamenting Red Flowers* were produced before or shortly after Wang Duanshu was 30 *sui*[46], which is an important fact to consider when looking at the nuanced study of selfhood constructed in this book. Wang Duanshu, those who wrote the prefaces to her collection, and those who financially contributed to the publication of *Lamenting Red Flowers* were all Ming loyalists, as they expressed their loyalty to the fallen Ming dynasty and refusal to cooperate with the Manchu rulers in one way or another. Many of them called themselves the Ming "*yimin* 遗民," which literally means "remnant people." They regarded themselves as survivors of the conquered dynasty, subjects who somehow remained alive without an acknowledged ruler. Only a few pieces of writing from the collection are dated due to Wang and her prefacers' traumatized notion of time. The latest dated work in *Lamenting Red Flowers* is entitled

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[45] According to Hu Wenkai, Wang Duanshu authors *Yinhongji* 吟红集, *Liuqieji* 留箧集, *Hengxinji* 恒心集, *Wucaiji* 无才集, *Yilouji* 宜楼集, *Yuyingtanji* 玉映堂集, and *Shiyu* 史愚. Her three anthologies are respectively *Mingyuan shiwei* 名媛诗纬, *Mingyuan wenwei* 名媛文纬, and *Mingdai furen sanquji* 明代妇人散曲集. The former two are recorded in Hu's book. See Hu, 1956, 196. For introduction to Wang Duanshu's life and works in English, see Ellen Widmer, "Introduction to Selected Short Works by Wang Duanshu (1621-after 1701)," *Under Confucian Eyes: Writings on Gender in Chinese History*, eds. Susan Mann and Yu-Yin Cheng (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001) 180-2.

[46] In classical China, age was calculated by taking the lunar year of one's birth as year one and adding a year at each lunar New Year's Day. A Chinese child is about a year older in *sui* than he/she would be if his/her birthdays were counted by the Western pattern.

"*Yingranzi xiaoxiang zan* 映然子小像赞" ("Appreciation Inscribed on the Portrait of Master Yingran"[47]):

庚寅季末　At the end of the year of *gengyin* (1650)
辛卯岁始　And the beginning of the year of *xingmao* (1651),
花甲之半　At the age of thirty *sui* after having recovered from an illness,
病起初拟　She drew the portrait
淡墨含烟　With soft ink delicate as mist
寒绡横水　On a simple silk resembling clear water.
昧于女红　Ignorant of needlework,
徒解书史　She understands books and histories, though only in vain.
不履不衫　She wears no robes or shoes,[48]
超出簪珥　Nor hairpins or jade earrings.
采兰采蕨　She collects orchids and tender leaves of ferns.
素纨秋月　Her white silk fan is like an autumn moon.
(Wang Duanshu, "*Yingranzi xiaoxiang zan*," 27.1a-b)

The poetic appreciation as an inscription on a self-portrait embraces several important aspects of the selfhood constructed in *Lamenting Red Flowers.*

The first aspect of the self characterization is closely related to time, both social and political, personal and gendered. Like much writing by other Ming loyalist authors, few pieces of writing in *Lamenting Red Flowers* are dated using the year of an emperor's reign. For example, there are three ways to mark the year of 1650. it can be the calendar year *gengyin* as said in Wang's eulogy. This expression employs a standard calendar system and is neutral in political standing. The year of 1650 can also be called the fourth year of the Yongli reign of Emperor Gui of the Southern Ming dynasty (1645-1662), the exiled court with ever-shrinking influence in the southern part of China after the fall of

[47] Yingranzi 映然子 (Master Yingran) is Wang Duanshu's *hao* 号 (literary name).

[48] *Bulü bushan* 不履不衫, literally "wearing no robes or shoes," means "improperly dressed."

the Ming in 1644 in northern China. For those who acknowledge the legitimacy of the Manchu's government, 1650 is the seventh year of the Shunzhi reign (1644-1661) by Emperor Shizhu of the Qing dynasty. Reign names designate political time.[49] Wang Duanshu and her prefacers' refusal to date their writings with Qing reign names may signify their traumatic sense of time. On one hand, living in the Jiangnan area under the firm control of Manchu government made it too risky to date their writings with the reign name of the Southern Ming emperor. On the other, their political standing as Ming loyalists made the Qing emperor's reign name unacceptable. It is interesting to note that more than ten years later when Wang Duanshu wrote her preface for *Weft of Poetry*, an anthology of women's poetry, she used both Emperor Shizu's reign name and the calendrical system in dating it, a normal practice in dynastic China.[50] When reading Wang's writing collected in *Lamenting Red Flowers*, the reader needs to be aware that the subject positions in the collection cannot be understood without taking Wang's loyalist sentiments in this specific period into consideration.

In the poetic eulogy, Wang's attachment to the fallen dynasty is echoed by the allusion to "*caijue* 采蕨" (collecting tender leaves of ferns) in the eleventh line. The phrase *caijue* alludes to the two ancient Yin dynasty (fourteenth century – eleventh

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[49] When explaining differences between time in dynastic China and that of elsewhere in the world, Craig Clunas lists two factors: first, time in dynastic China is a non-teleological time without a single point of origin and it headed to no Apocalypse when time would end. Second, while it was possible for anyone in dynastic China to know what the date was ten years ago, no one could know for sure what the date would be ten years from then when using reign names to designate a year. People, and not just highly educated people, were aware of what year of what emperor's reign they were living through, and these provided important temporal markers. See Craig Clunas, *Empire of Great Brightness* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007) 21-2.

[50] Wang Duanshu dated the author's preface of *Mingyuan shiwei chubian* as "*Shunzhi xinchou* 顺治辛丑 (the year of xinchou of Shunzhi Reign) (1661/2)." Wang Duanshu, "*Zixu* 自序 (Author's preface),"*Weft of Poetry*, http://digital.library.mcgill.ca/mingqing/english/index.htm, 4b, not successively paginated.

century B.C.E) loyalists Bo Yi 伯夷 and Shu Qi 叔齐. According to Sima Qian, Bo Yi and Shu Qi withdrew to a remote mountain area after the fall of Yin. Having vowed not to eat grains yielded by the land owned by the new Zhou dynasty (mid-eleventh century – 256 B.C.E), they ate tender leaves of ferns collected in the mountain and finally starved themselves to death. *Caijue* in literary writings of later generations became a standard allusion to loyalism, fallen dynasty, or seclusion due to one's loyalty to a fallen dynasty.

The word *caijue* invokes the image of a loyalist recluse who voluntarily suffers from starvation and destitution. In this sense, poverty constitutes an essential element of Wang's poetic discourse of selfhood. Wang's natal family belonged to Kuaiji's (today's Shaoxing of Zhejiang Province) local gentry class, and so did her husband's, though the latter might not be as financially successful since her father-in-law Ding Qianxue 丁乾学 (?-1625) was framed and killed in 1625, long before Wang married in 1636. Both families were prominent and involved in severe social and political struggles in the late Ming period. Wang's husband Ding Shengzhao 丁圣肇 (fl. mid-seventeenth century) lived in Wang's home after they married.[51] The Ming-Qing conflict in the 1640s might have devastated the Wang family financially. Wang's father Wang Siren 王思任 (*zi* Jizhong 季重, 1576-1646) was said to have abandoned his house in the city of Shaoxing when it fell into the hands of Manchu troops in 1646, escaped to Qingwang Mountain,

[51] For the death of Ding Qianxue, see Gu Yingtai 谷应泰 (1620-1690), "*Wei Zhongxian luanzheng* 魏忠贤乱政," *Mingshi jishi benmo* 明史纪事本末 (Taibei: Sanmin shuju, 1985) 801. It was unusual for a man from the gentry class to live with his wife's family after they married. Normally he would be regarded as less successful and expected to lose some of his privileges (such as to have his wife wait upon his mother).

and died there.[52] In the poem "*Kunan xing* 苦难行" ("A Song of Hardship"), Wang Duanshu contrasts the affluent community of her hometown and her carefree life before the "*Jiashen zhi bian* 甲申之变" (calamity in the year of Jiashen), when the last Ming emperor committed suicide, with her devastated life after the calamity:

甲申以前民庶丰	Before the year of *jiashen* common people were prosperous.
忆吾犹在花锦丛	I remember when I was as if among clusters of flowers.
莺嘧帘栊日影横	When the sun shone upon the windows and the orioles twittered,
慵妆倦起香帷中	I rose languidly and dressed myself behind the fragrant curtains.
……	
暗喜生从矢上归	Silently I celebrated my narrow escape from the arrows.
报赧羞颜何所倚	Blushing and embarrassed, I could find nobody to depend on.
墙延蔓草扉半开	Weeds crept all over the walls; the gate was half open.
吾姊出家老父死	My sister became a nun and my elderly father died.
骨肉自此情谊疏	Kindred of my own flesh and blood were estranged.
侨寓暂且池东居	Having rented a room east of the pond, I settle down for the moment.
……	

(Wang Duanshu, "*Kunan xing*," 3.2a, lines 1-4; 3b-4a, lines 35-40)

Judging from this poem, it may be concluded that the death of Wang Siren initiated the deteriorating financial situation that Wang Duanshu and her husband were going to face, at least before *Lamenting Red Flowers* was published. Although it was a common practice for literati to exaggerate their economic hardship in their poetry, Wang's distress over the family's financial straits expressed in many writings in *Lamenting Red Flowers* seems to be urgent and real.

In *Lamenting Red Flowers*, there are an overwhelmingly large number of poems and lines referring to poverty. In many cases, Wang Duanshu's descriptions of poverty concern shabby cottages in remote areas, lingering illnesses that haunt her and her

[52] See Zhang Dai 张岱 (1597-1679), "*Wang Xue'an xiansheng zhuan* 王谖庵先生传," *Zhang Da shiwen ji* 张岱诗文集 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1991) 290.

husband, and physical and emotional loneliness. Situated in these real life and literary contexts, poverty invokes a selfhood closely related to that of loyalists and recluse-scholars who are unfairly treated by the world because of their refusal to sacrifice their principles. In a poem about a dream of hers, Wang Duanshu records her complicated feelings about poverty:

产完喜已绝征胥	Owner of no property, I am happy at the disappearance of tax collectors.
推是兵年事事除	Or perhaps in turbulent years of war, everything has changed.
为畏严冬怜敝帽	Alarmed at the severe winter, I cherish my shabby hat.
欲成新句捡残书	Hoping to complete some new lines, I pick up my tattered books.
寒鸦窗外悲枝冷	Outside the window winter crows lament that branches are cold.
饥鼠梁间叹室虚	Among the beams hungry mice sigh: the room is so empty.
堪叹宵来痴幻处	When night comes, how stupid my illusive dream is!
梦中催上七香车	In my dream I am urged to step onto a fragrant carriage.

(Wang Duanshu, "*Menghuan* 梦幻" ("A Dream"), 9.4a)

Constructed in this poem is a recluse-scholar who does not have enough clothes to warm herself or food to satisfy her hunger. The poet insinuates her suffering from cold and hunger through the depiction of the cold winter crows outside her window and hungry mice in her room. The only thing that she can do to comfort herself is reading and writing. At the same time, privation also ushers her into the world of many recluse-scholars as early as Yan Hui 颜回 (*zi* Ziyuan 子渊, 521-481 B.C.E), one of Confucius's famous disciples who was praised by his mentor for sticking to his moral aspirations even in destitution.

To Wang Duanshu's contemporaries, her virtues lay both in her loyalty to her husband and to the fallen dynasty. In his preface to her collection, her husband Ding Shengzhao praises her enjoyment of a simple, impoverished life when the couple lived in seclusion after the fall of the Ming, describing her as "wearing a thornwood hairpin and a

hemp skirt." Sometimes the family ran out of food for a while, and the rice steamer was covered with dust. Nonetheless, she was completely indifferent (to worldly concerns).[53] Another writer who wrote a preface to *Lamenting Red Flowers* employs similar diction and praises her "serving her husband wearing hemp clothes and her hair in a simple bun."[54] Her loyalty to the fallen dynasty is depicted as keenly felt. Wu Guofu 吴国辅 (fl. seventeenth century), who also wrote a preface for *Lamenting Red Flowers*, characterizes women's writing as "*zhen* 真" (genuineness) and "*leng* 冷" (dispassionateness). He argues that women's writing is "genuine" because women are excluded from the civil service examination system and therefore do not expect to earn fame through writing. Women do not contribute to the state government; therefore, their words are indifferent to the rise and fall of a dynasty. He then commends Wang Duanshu and her writing:

> Totally free of [weak feminine style of] face powder and rouge, her writing is full of grievance and indignation and almost emulates poetry of the Tang dynasty.[55] She does not sit for the imperial examination, yet she possesses the talent [for it]. She has no impact on the rise and fall of the dynasty, yet she has been moved. Her faithful accounts express her genuine feelings; while her dispassionate writing constitutes her veiled criticism.
>
> 其所著，牢骚激愤，绝去腻粉胭之状，而直追三唐，不应科制而居其才，不与兴亡而有其感者也。真者其直笔，而冷者为微辞……
>
> (Wu Guofu, "*Xu* 序" (preface), Wang Duanshu, not paginated)

As implied in this comment, Wu's attitude to Wang Duanshu as a female Ming loyalist is two-fold. On the one hand, he regards her as an outsider in the political system and

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[53]. Ding Shengzhao, "*Xu* 序" ("Preface"), *Lamenting Red Flowers*, not paginated.

[54] Wang Dengsan. "*Xu* 序" ("Preface"), Ibid.

[55] During Wang Duanshu's time, the Tang dynasty was generally regarded as the historical period that witnessed the most and best poetry in Chinese history.

therefore only passively involved in the dynastic cataclysm due to her gender. On the other, he is also empowering the gendered selfhood in the collection through politicizing the reading of her writing. He cautions the reader that even Wang's apparently dispassionate pieces may insinuate some political and social criticism.

In her own poems, Wang Duanshu constructs a selfhood who is unequivocally an insider and participant in the resistance to the Manchu invasion. Her poem "*Kunan xing*" records in detail how she and her young children fled and struggled their way to where her natal family lived, only to find that her father had died and her cousin, now a widow, had become a nun. In another poem "*Xunan xing dai Zhenzi* 叙难行代真姊" ("A Song Describing Our Hardship, on Behalf of Sister Zhen"), Wang delineates the calamities of both the state and her sister's family. A widow with a three-year old son and elderly parents-in-law, her sister was threatened by the family's enemy and Manchu troops who plundered their way through villages and towns. She pawned her clothes to rent a shabby cottage in the mountains and buy food for the family. Out of fear of losing her chastity, she even shaved her head.[56] Wang Duanshu might not have been interested in the state government before 1644. In both poems mentioned above, the dynastic calamity is said to fall upon her and her sister unexpectedly. The abrupt change is indicated by "*yi* 一," a character implying immediacy of an action in "*Kunan xing*" (line 5), and "*hu* 忽," which means "suddenly" or "unexpectedly" in "*Xunan xing dai Zhenzi*" (line 1). Enjoying a quiet and affluent, yet secluded life in the inner apartments of the "women's quarters," she might have had her attention focused on reading and writing, although she could not be untouched by her father's political views and the persecution and miserable death of

[56] Wang Duanshu, *Lamenting Red Flowers*, 4.9b-10a.

her father-in-law.[57] The dynastic transition literally destroyed the walls of her chamber and threw her to the personal and political conflicts.

In *Lamenting Red Flowers*, Wang's loyalty to the fallen dynasty is in most cases highlighted, while loyalty to her husband is minimized, if not entirely silenced. The fall of the Ming provides Wang Duanshu a chance to attribute her exclusion from the state government to her loyalism: the speaking self exiles herself and chooses to live in seclusion not because she is denied the chance to serve the state, but because she is faithful to the fallen dynasty and is waiting for the proper time to enter politics. In a poem written as a reply to a female friend who paid her a visit, Wang says:

上元后二日，刘子端司李室蔡音度过访，以诗见赠，索和。
Two days after the fifteenth day of the first lunar month, Madame Cai Yindu, wife of Liu Ziduan of the Court of Judicial Review, came for a visit. She presented me with poems and asked for matching poems.

（一） (I)

权变英雄事 Heroes adopt varied tactics in varied circumstances.
才疏到老闻 Inadequate in talent, I am obscure until old age.
云孤吹野月 A single cloud is blown across the wilderness moon.
冢垒若荒山 Piles of burial mounds resemble deserted hills.
汉史原推蔡 In the *History of Han*, Cai Wenji shall be held in esteem.[58]
椒花愧数班 In composing congratulatory new year's odes, I am ashamed to be inferior to Ban Jieyu.[59]

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[57] Wang Duanshu wrote poems and prose on the life and death of her father-in-law in "*Xianweng Wenzhonggong xun dang jishu* 先翁文忠公殉珰记述" (An account of my deceased father-in-law Master Wenzhong's martyrdom caused by the eunuchs). The writing, however, is not dated. Wang Duanshu was betrothed to the Ding family when she was seven *sui*. Both her biographers in *Mingyuan shiwei* claim that she dreamed the death of Ding Qianxue before the family received Ding's obituary. As Ding Qianxue died in the ninth lunar month of 1625 when Wang was only five *sui* and had not been betrothed, their accounts seem to be not accurate. See Wang Duanshu, in "*Xianweng Wenzhonggong xun dang jishu*," *Lamenting Red Flowers*, 4a-b; Wang Dingyou's 王定猷, "*Wang Duanshu zhuan* 王端淑传" (*A biography of Wang Duanshu*) and Meng Chengshun's 孟称舜 "*Ding furen zhuan* 丁夫人传" (*A biography of Madame Ding*), *Weft of Poetry*, not paginated.

[58] Cai Yan 蔡琰 (?177- ?) is a renowned woman scholar and poet who was said to have written by memory more than four hundred pieces of classical writing which had been destroyed in war. See Fan Ye 范晔 (398-445), "*Chen Liu Dong Si qi* 陈留董祀妻," *Hou han shu* 后汉书 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1965) 2800-3.

陋居栖病骨　I perch my sick bones in a humble residence,
孰敢望循环　How dare I expect to have good fortune again?
(Wang Duanshu, "*Shangyuan hou erri Liu Ziduan sili shi Cai Yindu guofang yishi jianzeng suohe*," poem no.1, 8.8a,)

In this poem, Wang Duanshu introduces several frames of reference to construct selfhood. In line 1, she analogizes her life in seclusion and poverty to that of heroes in history whose wisdom allowed them to choose proper tactics according to circumstances. This analogy can be read as a defense for her life choice as a female loyalist: to live on in poverty and seclusion instead of committing suicide for the sake of the fallen dynasty. Performatively identifying herself with a "*shi* 士," signifying a male scholar, Wang Duanshu must have shared many Ming loyalists' anxiety about having to justify their survival.[60] Her decision to live on may have something to do with two factors: her critical attitude toward the fallen dynasty, and her understanding of her gendered role as a woman. In many of her poems, Wang expresses her indignation at the corruption or cruelty of officials, the pursuit of fame and money of (male) scholars, and sometimes indirectly the Ming emperors' unfair treatment of their worthy scholar-officials. At the

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[59] The line alludes to two ancient Chinese women writers: Chen Cuo 陈错 of the Jin dynasty (266-420) and Ban Jieyu 班婕妤. Chen Cuo was said to have composed a poem entitled "*Jiaohua song* 椒花颂" ("Ode to the pepper flower") and presented it to the emperor on the first day of a lunar new year. Later the phrase "*jiaohua*" is used to refer to congratulatory New Year's poetry. See Fang Xuanling 房玄龄 (578-648), "Liu Zhen qi Chen shi 刘臻妻陈氏," *Jin shu 晋书* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974) 2517. "*Ban* 班" alludes to Ban Jieyu 班婕妤 (given name unknown, fl. first century B.C.E). Jieyie is a title for imperial concubines in Han dynasty. Ban Jieyu was known for her poetic talent and moral integrity. It was said that as a victim of power struggle in the court, she was disgraced and died in loneliness. For her story, see Ban Gu 班固 (32-92), "*Waiqizhaundi di liushiqi xia xiaocheng Ban Jieyu* 外戚傳第六十七下孝成班婕妤," *Han shu* 漢書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962) 3983-3988.

[60] Scholar-officials were revered as martyrs if they committed suicide at the fall of the dynasty and the death of the emperor. Those who served as high officials in the court of Chongzhen Emperor (1628 - 1644) were expected by their contemporaries to kill themselves. For the mentality of "*shi*" (governing class men) in the Ming-Qing dynastic transition, see Zhao Yuan, *Ming Qing zhiji shidafu yanjiu* 明清之际士大夫研究 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1999).

same time, as a Confucian scholar, she obviously regards the preservation of Confucian teachings as the more important mission. In the beginning of "*Beifen xing* 悲憤行" ("Song of Grief and Indignation"), she says:

凌残汉室灭衣冠　Slaughtered were the Han royal families and destroyed the Confucian teachings.
社稷丘墟民力殚　The state altar is now a burial mound and the people are exhausted.
勒兵入寇称可汗　Deploying troops and invading our land, he granted himself the title of Khan.
九州壮士死征鞍　Heroes from all parts of the empire died on their war horses.
(Wang, "*Beifen xing*," 3.1a, lines 1-4)

From these lines, the reader can find that the poet grieves over both the fall of the dynasty, suggested by the destroyed state altar, and the destruction of Confucian teachings, because the new ruler is a Khan and does not belong to the *han* ethnic. It is suggested in these lines that it is even worse when the crumbled state altar is destroyed by some "*yizu* 异族," or an ethnic alien. In such a social and historical context, it seems more necessary for the speaking self to live on so as to preserve *han* Chinese culture than to commit suicide as a martyr. Wang Duanshu joined many other Ming loyalist scholars who chose to live on rather than to die in loyalty to the fallen dynasty so that they could carry on Confucian teachings and *han* Chinese culture under the reign of the Manchus.[61]

Wang Duanshu and many other loyalist scholars faced identity crises after the fall of the Ming. In dynastic China, serving as an official was not only the most respected career that a Confucian scholar could have, in many cases it was the only way he could make a living for himself and his family, though in the Ming, the monumental increase in the number of scholars who took the imperial civil service examination and the very

[61] For the study of the late Ming and early Qing scholars' various opinions on committing suicide, See Zhao Yuan, 23-48.

small number of those who passed left many with no choice but to work in other professions such as teaching or business. For male loyalist scholars in early Qing, their refusal to serve at the Qing court essentially defined who they were. However, they and their family had to pay a dear price for their loyalty, because they had to find other ways to remain members of the cultural elite and to financially support their extended families. Many of these scholars resorted to writing, associating with other loyalists, and self-denial, sometimes even self-destruction, as the three common means of self-definition. Ding Shengzhao, is described by Wang as such a loyalist scholar in "*Jiupi sanren zhuan* 酒癖散人传" (*The Biography of Idler Wine-Addict*). The speaking voice describes herself as Ding's "*shi jiu zhi jiao* (诗酒之交)" (a friend with whom one writes poems and drinks wine) who, though she is close to him, does not know his real name or where he is from. The disguise as her husband's male friend allows Wang Duanshu to narrate Ding's life after the fall of the Ming in an objective and convincing way and gives both the narrator and the biography's subject recognition as loyalist scholars. After a vivid depiction of Idler Wine-Addict and his family's straitened situation after the Qing conquest, the narrator tells the reader how different people react differently to Idler Wine-Addict's self-exiled lifestyle:

> His neighbors grieved for him and passers-by wanted to shed tears at seeing him. His relatives felt ashamed while those knowing ones pitied him. Whatever others' attitudes, Idler Wine-Addict was calm and at ease.
>
> 里人为之酸鼻，行人观之欲泪。亲者耻之，知者怜之，而散人自若也。
>
> (Wang, "*Jiupi sanren zhuan*," 20.10a)

Idler Wine-Addict's composure contrasts sharply with others' sadness, shame, and pity for him. People in this community would never show the same feelings to a person of lowly status and humble origin, no matter how poor he was. They grieved and pitied Idler Wine-Addict because they knew that, as a scholar, he could have lived a better life had he chose to serve the new emperor. His relatives' attitude could have caused great pressure on him: his self-exile even disgraced some of the extended family who belonged to a respectable class. Idler Wine-Addict's loss of his economic and social privilege caused so deep an anxiety that he had to capitalize on his cultural identity, which was performative to a certain extent. This anxiety is also revealed at the end of the biography when the narrator boasts of Idler Wine-Addict's eminent connections at the court and his grandiose mansions in the capital. However, judging from the information obtained from Wang Duanshu's biography, Ding's family was most probably not as economically successful and politically prestigious as she brags in the biography.

The crumbled walls of Wang Duanshu's inner chamber forced her to seek a new identity embracing that of an exemplary daughter, wife, and mother, a Ming loyalist scholar in a dire situation, and a writer who aspired to carry out the ethical teachings of Confucius. The three roles are subject positions most frequently occupied by the speaking voices in *Lamenting Red Flowers*. Different from the anxiety of male scholars like her husband, her concerns dwell most on her stepping out of the inner chamber to earn a living for herself and her family. The new identity encompassing the three roles enables her to justify her "unusual" way of life as a woman of the governing class. The following poem addressing her friend Hu Zixia illustrates her identity anxiety and how she copes with this anxiety by creating a new role for herself:

答浮翠轩吴夫人	In Reply to Madame Wu of Floating Green Studio
素守清贫只自知	Maintaining integrity despite poverty, only I know myself.
世人欲杀忌才思	People of my generation are murderous with envy of talent and intellect.
狂蜂口压红颜污	Furious wasps stain rosy cheeks with their stings.
断魄身归青冢期	If the spirit is severed, then the body will return to a green grave.[62]
寂寂烟分如绿柳	Silently the wisp of smoke forks like green willow twigs.
飞飞余不及黄鹂	I am not as carefree as those orioles soaring up and away.
此情愿博芸窗史	Longing to win a name in the history of scholars,
故向朱门做女师	I serve as a lady instructor for the inner chambers behind red-lacquered gates[63].

(Wang, "*Da Fucuixuan Wu furen*," 10.11a-b)

Every couplet of the poem addresses one aspect of this new identity of the speaking self. Illustrated in the first two lines is a talented scholar whose integrity is set off by contrast with reduced circumstances and whose distinguished talent incurs envy. The imagery in the second couplet relates to the story of Wang Qiang 王嬙 (bettern known as *Zhaojun* 昭君, fl. first century B.C.E). Wang Zhaojun was originally a woman in Emperor Yuan of Han's harem. According to an anecdote in *Xijing zaji* 西京杂记, Wang Zhaojun refused to bribe the palace painter whose portraits of palace maids were presented to the emperor so that he would pick up the most beautiful and confer favors on them. Having missed the chance to be chosen as the emperor's concubine, Wang Zhaojun

[62] Writers of later generations composed many poems on Wang Zhaojun, among which Du Fu's "Yonghuai guji qisan 咏怀古迹其三" ("On ancient relics, the third poem") is the most famous. "Qingzhong 青冢" (the green grave) in this line of Wang Duanshu's poem alludes to the poem by Du Fu. According to Qiu Zhao'ao's 仇兆鳌 (1638-1717) commentaries to Du Fu's poem, when all grass in the border areas withers and turns white and yellow in autumn, grass on Wang Qiang's tomb remains green. That's why Du Fu and writers call Wang Zhaojun's tomb "the green grave." See Du Fu 杜甫 (710-770), "*Yong huai gu ji wu shou qi san* 咏怀古迹五首其三" and Qiu Zhao'ao's 仇兆鳌 (1638-1717) commentary no. 3, Du Fu, Dushi xiangzhu 杜诗详注 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1979) 1502-3.

[63] *Zhumen* 朱门, or red-lacquered gates, refers to wealthy families.

volunteered to marry the chief of a nomadic tribe as the princess of the emperor when the Han court sought to make peace with the tribe in the northwestern border area by marriage.[64] In the second couplet of this poem, Wang Duanshu analogizes herself to Wang Zhaojun, whose beauty causes resentment and is "stained" by evil persons like the palace painter. The imagery of soaring orioles in the third couplet helps to portray a traveler who laments having to leave her hometown and travel to a hostile state. The flying orioles allude to poem no. 187 from *Shijing* 诗经 (*The Book of Odes*), in which the first-person speaker entreats the orioles not to eat up his grains and expresses his longing to leave the hostile foreign state and return to his homeland. At the time of writing this poem, Wang Duanshu was also traveling around and serving as a teacher for children of wealthy families to make a living. When she bitterly says in the sixth line that she is "not as carefree as the flying orioles," she is also insinuating the pain of being unable to fully and publicly express her longing for the "lost state," like the first-person speaker in the *Shijing* poem. In the last couplet, the poet bestows more agency on the feminine voice. The straitened economic circumstances, jealousy of the contemporaries, forced traveling to a strange place, and homesickness are all transformed into precious assets that may enable her to establish a name in the history of scholars. In actuality, traveling and serving as an inner-chamber teacher was not esteemed and was only barely tolerable for a woman from the governing class like Wang Duanshu. However, the writer claims it is her choice to teach to establish a name as one of those worthy scholars.

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[64] Ge Hong 葛洪 (284-364), "*Hua gong qi shi* 画工弃市," *Xijng zaji* 西京杂记 (Taibei: Diqiu chubanshe, 1994) 57-60.

Generally speaking, the self-image in "In reply to Madame Wu of Floating Green Studio" is typical of those throughout *Lamenting Red Flowers*. This image is informed by the writer's pride in her talent and "*jiaxue* 家学" (family learning); her anxiety about her mobility and lost economic privilege as a gentry woman, and her loyalty to the fallen dynasty. Wang Duanshu resorts to the repertoire of famous talented gentry women of earlier centuries and the discourse of Ming loyalists to construct selves in the collection. The subject positions of the feminine voices in Wang's collected works, therefore, are synthesized through alluding and role performing.

Li Yin's *Bamboo Laughter*

As Wang Duanshu's contemporary, Li Yin's life was also critically influenced by violent events during the Ming and Qing conflict in the mid-seventeenth century. Her extant poems from the three collections of *Bamboo Laughter* can be roughly divided into two categories: those written before the death of her husband Ge Zhengqi 葛征奇 (?–1645), and those written after. Before exploring the subject positions in poems from the two categories, I will briefly examine the context of the publication of the collections as suggested in the prefaces, the arrangement of poems in the collection, and the poetic styles of her writing.

Bamboo Laughter consists of three collections: the first, the continuation, and the third. The three collections all include prefaces; the third one also contains a colophon. Prefaces by Wu Bentai 吴本泰 (fl. mid-seventeenth century) and Li Yin's husband Ge Zhengqi to the first collection reveal that Ge played an important role in selecting and publishing the poems in the first collection in the autumn of 1643. Li Yin was Ge's

secondary wife. According to Ge's preface, Li Yin and he encountered a mutiny by troops in Suzhou 宿州 on their way from the capital city of Beijing--where he served as *Guanlusi shaoqing* 光禄寺少卿 (the Vice Minister of the Court of Imperial Entertainments)--back to Haichang 海昌, Ge's hometown[65]. Wounded, Li Yin refused to flee for her life and looked for her husband in spite of the danger. In the crisis, Li Yin abandoned everything except for her poem drafts. Moved by her loyalty, bravery, and passion for poetry, Ge edited her poems and published the first collection.[66] Ge's preface provides limited information about Li Yin's natal family background and the congenial marital relationship between the husband and wife. Wu Bentai was Ge Zhengqi's disciple. Wu's preface echoes Ge's description of his married life with Li Yin and Li's commendable behavior during the mutiny. Although Wu explains the origin of the name of Li Yin's studio, he does not mention anything about how Li's poem drafts survived the misadventure.[67] Both Wu and Ge depict Li Yin first of all as an ideal female companion for a scholar like Ge. She is talented in painting and composing poetry, has exquisite taste in art and literature, is not polluted by vanity and never indulges herself in "rouge and powder," is ready to express her indignation and heroic passion at hearing stories about corrupted current affairs, and most importantly, she faithfully follows her husband, even in danger.

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[65] Today's Haining in Zhejiang province.

[66] Ge Zhengqi, "*Xu Zhuxiaoxuan yincao* 叙竹笑轩吟草" (Preface to *Bamboo Laughter of Bamboo's Laugh Studio*), *Zhuxiaoxuan yincao* 竹笑轩吟草 by Li Yin (Shenyang: Liaoning jiaoyu chubanshe, 2003) 5.

[67] Wu Bentai, "*Zhuxiaoxuan yincao xu* 竹笑轩吟草叙" (Preface to *Bamboo Laughter of Bamboo's Laugh Studio*), ibid, 2-3.

The preface by Lu Chuan 卢传 (fl. mid-seventeenth century) indicates that the first collection of *Bamboo Laughter* and its continuation were once published together sometime after Ge died in 1645. Lu Chuan was another disciple of Ge Zhengqi. In his preface, Lu focuses on describing how Li Yin remained loyal to her deceased husband and lived a simple life in poverty, and how poems in the continuation faithfully express her loyalty and moral integrity. Lu compares Li Yin to the famous ancient beauty Xi Shi 西施 and analogizes Li and Ge to a loyal minister and his lord:

> Once Madame Xi Shi was called the loyal subject of the Yue State.[68] She has been eminent for thousands of years not merely for her great beauty. As in the case of Madame Li, she abandoned all of her clothes, money and luggage in the trials and tribulations as if they were just straw sandals. However she held tight in her hand a volume of poem drafts by my teacher and could not bear to drop it even when she was close to death. We, the disciples of our teacher, are all indebted to Madame Li for our teacher's poems, which we have and honor today. Therefore, Madame Li can be called a minister who has rendered outstanding service and is extremely loyal to our teacher…
>
> 昔西子称越之忠臣，表表千古，非仅以色传。若夫人从患难中来，一切衣资囊箧，弃之如屣，独手持吾师诗稿一卷，濒死不忍舍。余小子辈今日之得以从而表章之者，皆夫人力也。则谓夫人为吾师之功臣也可，为吾师之忠臣也可……
>
> (Lu Chuan, "*Zhuxiaoxuan yincao xu* 竹笑轩吟草叙," Li Yin, 1)

Interestingly, in Lu's narration of the couple's experience during the military munity, the poem drafts that Li Yin rescued were said to have been written by Ge instead of by Li Yin herself. Together with Li's poems written after the death of her husband, this

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[68] Xi Shi was said to be selected by Goujian 勾践 (? 520 – 425 B.C.E.), the King of Yue and offered to Fuchai 夫差, the King of Wu (? – 473 B.C.E.) as a part of tribute to the latter after the State of Yue was conquered by Wu. Xi Shi used her beauty to distract Fuchai from state governing for many years. Finally Goujian's army defeated the Wu and Fuchai committed suicide. Then Xi Shi skipped town with Fan Li, a *Wu* minister and her lover, jumped in a boat, and never came back. She had had enough of loyalty to the state and just followed her heart. For the story of Xi Shi, see Zhao Ye 赵晔 (fl. first century), "*Gou Jian yinmou waizhuan* 勾践阴谋外传," *Wuyue chunqiu* 吴越春秋, *Ershiwu bieshi* 二十五别史 (Jinan: Qilu shushe, 2000) 6:84-5, not successively paginated.

anecdote becomes evidence of Li Yin being "a minister who has rendered outstanding service and is extremely loyal" to Ge Zhengqi.

The third collection of *Bamboo Laughter* includes prefaces and a colophon dated on the sixth lunar month of the year *Kuihai* (1683). According to the preface by Zhu Jiazheng 朱嘉征 (*zi* Mingzuo 岷左, *juren* 举人[69] 1642), a scholar from Haining, Ge's disciples and descendants sent Li Yin's poems to press.[70] Huang Fei 黄斐 (fl. late seventeenth century), the other prefacer, mentioned that he wrote the article partially to pay homage to Ge Erzhou 葛迩周, Ge Zhengqi's grandson.[71] Yang Dejian 杨德建 (fl. late seventeenth century), the author of the colophon, married a granddaughter of the Ge clan. In the colophon, he stated that his family had been dwelling in Haining for many generations and that his uncles used to exchange literary writing with Ge's sons and nephews. In her later years, Li Yin constantly showed him poems that she had recently composed.[72] Judging from the information from the prefaces and colophon, we can conclude that Li Yin lived not far from the extended Ge family in Haining in her later years, circulated her writings among, as well as beyond, the family members, most probably edited the poems in the third collection by herself, and had a respectable reputation at least in the local area when the third collection was published.

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[69] *Juren* was a successful candidate in the imperial examinations at the provincial level in the Ming and Qing dynasties.

[70] Zhu Jiazheng, "*Xu* 叙" ("Preface"), Li Yin, 49.

[71] Huang Fei. "*Xu* 序" ("Preface"). Li Yin, 50.

[72] Yang Dejian, "Ba 跋" ("Colophon"), Li Yin, 102.

The three pieces by the literati prefacers share their commendation of Li Yin for her chastity and loyalty to her deceased husband, and her mortal integrity in spite of tough circumstances. In Zhu's preface, the reader finds yet another version of the story about the couple's experience during the mutiny: Li Yin was said to be wounded severely when she covered Ge with her body in the attack. In addition, although this article is a preface to Li Yin's literary writing, Zhu Jiazheng emphasizes how Li herself spoke slightingly of her poems and paintings and paid more attention to entertaining her husband with stories of worthy ministers of earlier generations. Moreover, Zhu celebrates Li Yin's seeking pleasure and comfort from Buddhism rather than in editing her poetry.[73] Zhu is employing a rhetoric commonly used in literati's prefaces to women's collected works, a rhetoric emphasizing a woman writer's virtue to offset her writing and its public circulation. Through highlighting Li Yin's piety and virtue, Zhu implies a guarantee that Li Yin is not just seeking fame by having her poetry published. Huang Fei's preface argues that Li Yin, together with her exquisite poetry, serves as convincing evidence for the prosperity of the Haining area under the Qing emperor's government and as a demonstration of Ge Erzhou's preeminent learning and talent.[74] Huang's glorification of Li Yin's poetry is so general and overstated that it could be applied to any poetry. He is giving credit to local (male) governors and Ge's male families instead of to Li Yin. Yang Dejian even claims in his colophon that because he had to discontinue his studies at an early age, he does not know how to appreciate poems, and therefore does not dare to offer compliments to Li Yin's poetry. His essay, therefore, focuses on narrating

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[73] Zhu Jiazheng, 49.

[74] Huang Fei, 50.

his acquaintance with Li and commending Li Yin's chastity and high moral standards demonstrated by her preference for writing about plum flowers, which, in this cultural tradition, are symbols of perseverance and moral integrity.[75]

The prefaces and colophon by literati depict a mixed image of Li Yin as the author of *Bamboo Laughter*, one that prioritizes Li Yin's social position as the secondary wife of a scholar. Her loyalty and chastity become the primary virtues that the writers commend. Her poetic writing serves, first of all, as evidence of these virtues and qualifies her as a worthy companion to her husband and as a proof to the family learning of the Ge clan. The literary value of her poetry is regarded as too trivial to deserve serious evaluation. This situation can be taken as a fair example of the kind of reception many women writers' work received at the hands of "sympathetic" literati readers.

Li Yin, however, inscribes a writing self who takes her poems seriously, as any earnest writer does. According to Ge Zhengqi's narration, she valued her poem drafts more than her own life and called them what she had produced by "spitting out her heart and draining her blood out" (*ouxin kuxue* 呕心枯血). She actively circulated and edited her poems, and had probably asked for help from Ge's disciples and male family members to publish them. Even for the first collection, whose poems Ge claimed to have selected by himself, he also admitted that it was Li Yin who "urged [him] to send it to press."[76]

As shown in my description of the prefaces and colophon, poems in the first collection of *Bamboo Laughter* were written before the autumn of 1643. Those in the

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[75] Yang Dejian, 102.

[76] Ge Zhengqi, 5.

second collection were probably written between 1643 and shortly after Ge's death in 1645. But because none of the poems from the three collections are dated, it is hard to determine the exact year when they were written. A close examination of the prefaces and the content of the poems in the third collection shows that Li Yin wrote these poems after the death of Ge and before the summer of 1683 when the collection was published. It is also worth mentioning that the earliest poems in the first collection were written after Li Yin married Ge Zhengqi when she was around fourteen *sui*.[77] Unlike Wang Duanshu's *Lamenting Red Flowers*, where many of her poems are about her natal family, *Bamboo Laughter* contains no poems referring to Li's life before her marriage, or to any of Li Yin's natal family members. According to Ge, Li Yin's natal family was so poor that she had to "write on mosses and read by the light of fireflies," a common saying used to praise determined study by those without resources.[78] In his biography of Li Yin, Huang Zongxi 黃宗羲 (1610-1659) compares Li Yin to Wang Wei 王薇 (*zi* Xiuwei 修薇, fl. mid-seventeenth century) and Liu Shi 柳是 (*zi* Rushi 如是, 1618-1664), Li's two contemporary courtesan writers who later married the eminent scholars Xu Yuqing 许誉卿 (*jinshi* 1612) and Qian Qianyi 钱谦益 (1582-1664) as secondary wives.[79] From this comparison, one could speculate that Li Yin was from a humble family and had made a living as a courtesan before she married Ge. This would explain why the mentioning of her natal family became taboo in her writing. That Li Yin was a courtesan before she

[77] According to Lu Chuan's preface, Li had been married Ge since she wore hairpin at the fourteenth *sui*. Lu Chuan, 1.

[78] Ge Zhengqi, 4.

[79] Huang Zongxi, "*Li Yin zhuan* 李因传" (*The biography of Li Yin*), Li Yin, 103-4. For the article and its translation, see Appendix C.

married Ge is also supported by the fact that her first poetry collection contains six groups of poems addressing other courtesans, including Liu Rushi. Although scholar-officials' wives from prestigious family backgrounds of the late Ming period did exchange poems with famous courtesans, they would rarely include numerous such poems in their collections. Only secondary wives from backgrounds similar to those of courtesans would be willing to bring into the open their associations with courtesan friends.

Judging from the subject matter, most of the poems in *Bamboo Laughter* are chronologically arranged. The three consecutive collections of *Bamboo Laughter* include poems written within almost a sixty year period, roughly from 1624 to 1683. Unlike *Lamenting Red Flowers*, where poems are arranged both chronologically and according to different genres, *Bamboo Laughter* does not categorize poems by genre. The two writers made different choices in arranging the poems due to the scope of their collections and the number of genres included. *Lamenting Red Flowers* has altogether thirty *juan* (chapters), including genres varying from *fu* 赋 (poetic expositions), *yuefu* 乐府 (ballads), *wuyan qiyan gutishi lüshi* 五言七言古体诗律诗 (five-character-line and seven-character-line poems in ancient styles,[80] and tonally regulated modern styles), to *zoushu* 奏疏 (memorials), *jishi* 纪事 (records of events), and *jiwen* 祭文 (eulogies). Compared to *Lamenting Red Flowers*, *Bamboo Laughter* is smaller in scope and more limited in genre. Among the 602 writings from *Bamboo Laughter*, twenty-two are *ci* 词 poems and the remaining 587 are all lyric *shi* poems. The dominant subgenre of *Bamboo*

[80] Classical poems in ancient styles do not follow rules governing tonal patterns and parallelism.

Laughter is *lüshi* 律诗 (regulated poems): only three out of 587 *shi* poems are not in *jinti* 近体 (modern styles). Around four hundred poems are seven-character-line quatrains (*qiyan jueju* 七言绝句) and ninety five are five-character-line regulated poems (*wuyan lüshi* 五言律诗).

Many poems composed before the death of Ge Zhengqi share the motif of traveling. According to Ge Zhengqi's preface to the first collection, Li Yin accompanied him on travels across the country for fifteen years after their marriage. The speaking voices in these poems take the subject position of a traveler, especially one who travels from one official post to another as a (male) scholar-official. This position, with its conventional moods and reflections, recurs in classical poems through history. The speaking self is expected to lament his homesickness, his helplessness to avoid having to leave his hometown, the transience of life, the fleeting moments of gathering with family and friends, and the unpredictability of an official career. However, as a secondary wife to a scholar-official rather than the official himself, Li Yin expresses, in her poems on travel, more gratification at the sensations and pleasures inspired by the natural landscape and the freedom as a traveler. Even when she does complain about having to travel or about the vanity of the struggle for achievement, she does so more out of sympathy for her husband, who is the only family she has, and she no longer has a home or a family she can claim to be her natal one. The following two poems illustrate how Li Yin deviates from the conventional subject position of a traveling scholar-official:

舟发百草湾，次家禄勋韵
The boat left the Baicao Bay. I composed the following poems using the same tonal pattern and rhyme characters as those by my husband Luxun.

（一） (I)

壮怀十载岂应灰 How can the ten years of passionate aspiration be dampened?
发白多因归思催 Your hair has turned grey because you crave to go home.
古驿风吹凉月净 At the ancient post station, wind blows and unveils the cool clear moon.
空城角动旅魂哀 In the empty town, the blowing horn shakes the travelers' spirits.
路岐自抱杨朱泣 At the crossroads, one weeps as Yang Zhu once did.[81]
宦拙谁怜贾谊才 As a clumsy official, who would treasure the talent of Jia Yi?
五载客尘愁寂寂 Five years' dust of alien land witnesses your silent sorrow.
故山猿鹤肯惊猜 The gibbons and cranes in the mountains of your homeland will be startled [if they see you back].

（二） (II)

曙光清露片帆开 In dawn light and fresh dew, the slip of sail is raised.
两岸荒残见绿苔 The wild land on the banks is interrupted by green moss.
事到客途怜短发 On the way to a new official post, travelers pity their thinning hair.
诗多佳句自浮杯 Producing many a good line, we float the cups by ourselves.
读书拟筑新梅屋 I plan to build a new house among plum trees where I will read books.
品水先登古钓台 To taste the quality of water, I will climb onto the ancient fishing pier.
只有渔人闲似我 Only the fisherman is as leisurely as I.
秋风湖上是蓬莱 In the autumn winds, the lake hosts Penglai, where immortals live.

(Li Yin, "*Zhou fa Baicaowan ci jia Luxun yu*," poems 1 and 2, 28)

In the first poem, Li Yin applauds Ge Zhengqi's diligence in local management and his aspiration to be a distinguished scholar-official, analogizing Ge to Jia Yi 贾谊 (200–168 B.C.E.), the political commentator and writer of the Han dynasty. Jia Yi was esteemed for his insight into economic and political affairs and his insightful suggestions on carrying out social and political reform. However, Jia was also known for his misfortune in his official career. His talent incurred envy and hatred from other ministers and the emperor's favorite courtiers. He was exiled to a remote area where he remained for several years before he was summoned back to the capital. Li Yin's analogy of Ge

[81] For my discussion of the allusion to Yang Zhu, see page 53.

Zhengqi to Jia Yi can be read as her praise for Ge's talent and achievements and her solace for Ge's misfortune in his official career. In the first line, Li also encourages her husband to stick to his lofty political aspirations. Furthermore, she expresses her sympathy and understanding of the ups and downs in his career by alluding to Yang Zhu in the fifth line. Yang Zhu was a philosopher during the Warring period (476-221 B.C.E.) of the Zhou dynasty. According to a famous story in the *Xunzi* 荀子, Yang Zhu wept sadly at an intersection of many roads, saying: "If I take a wrong step here, then I will have walked for a thousand of *li* on the wrong way before I realize it."[82] By alluding to Yang Zhu, Li Yin tells her husband that she understands the reasons for his depression and hesitation when he is about to set out to a less advantageous official post--the unpredictability of the coming days and the potential danger of failure in his future career. The danger of the trip is also implied by the horn blowing over the empty town, a sign of war or turbulence. It is in this context that she mentions his and also her longing to go back home and live a simple and peaceful life, rather than simply a conventional expression of nostalgia for her native place.

Even in such an uncertain and saddening moment of travel, the poet is still sensitive to the beauty of the bright moon and the pleasant sensation of a cooling wind. In the second poem under the same title, the speaking self is more concerned with the pleasant autumn view on the river: the glittering water in the early morning glow, the crystal dew drops on the sail, the green moss interposed with withered grass. The beautiful landscape inspires her, and probably her husband, to compose poems. Then they

[82]Xunzi is an ancient Chinese philosopher. Li Yin shows her familiarity with the classics in her use of allusions here. See Xunzi 荀子 (340-245 B.C.E), "*Wang ba* 王霸," *Xunzi yizhu* 荀子译注 (Ha'erbin: Helongjiang renmin chubanshe, 2003) 214.

drink wine to celebrate the beautiful poetic lines that they have produced. The leisurely and enjoyable moment on the boat also activates her imagination of a future life when she will read in a room surrounded by flowering plum trees and taste tea boiled in water drawn from a river where she lives as a recluse-scholar. When she is finally brought back to reality by seeing a fisherman on the lake, she finds such a great satisfaction from the serene and beautiful view that the lake becomes a wonderland where immortals dwell.

While Li Yin's poetry written before the death of Ge Zhengqi is mainly on traveling-- mostly by boat--and her stay in various places as a visitor, her poems composed after his death in the autumn of 1645 take as their themes her mourning for her deceased husband, her lonely nights of major festivals when other people celebrate with their families, the flowers outside of her windows in four seasons, and her daily life in some villages. In the poems before 1645, the reader finds a feminine voice constantly on the road, whose enjoyment of the freedom and beautiful landscapes is from time to time interrupted by a longing to settle down. The poems from the second and the third collections, however, feature a voice that calculates her time according to the trees and flowers seen out of her windows and the lunar New Year's eves that she spends awake by herself. Her cherished memory of the past and her deep-rooted loneliness alternate with her celebration of the small pleasures of everyday life and her wonder at the vitality of the natural world. The subject positions of the feminine voices in her poems are more complicated and sophisticated than that of a virtuous widow ascribed by the authors of prefaces and colophon.

The recurrent themes of poems in the second and third collections of *Bamboo Laughter* are best illustrated in the following poems:

自慰	Comforting Myself
（一）	(I)
安贫何计遣愁魔	Content with my lot, yet how can I drive away the evil spirit of sorrow?
节序频催似掷梭	The four seasons pressingly rotate like a weaver's shuttle flying to and fro.
睡去不知身共我	In my sleep I know not if my body belongs to me.
浮生蕉鹿梦中过	My floating life is spent in a dream like the one about covering a deer with firewood.[83]
（七）	(VII)
树老垂阴盖草堂	The drooping branches of an old tree cover my humble cottage.
晨炊麦饭菜羹香	I cook ground wheat in the morning; my vegetable soup is delicious.
老来自幸身无累	Rejoicing at having no burdens in my old age,
闲共儿童话夕阳	I chit-chat with children in the evening glow.

(Li Yin, "*Zi wei*," poems no.1 and 7, 85-6)

The speaking self in the two poems exemplifies how Li Yin creates a self-image that seldom has been depicted by the authors of the prefaces. In their glorification of Li Yin as a loyal wife, Li's prefacers praise her for her upholding moral integrity even in reduced circumstances. However, it is in Li Yin's poetry that the reader finds her occupying various subject positions other than that of merely a chaste widow.

Writers of the prefaces of *Bamboo Laughter* constantly depict Li Yin as calm and at ease in difficult circumstances. The subject positions constructed in Li's poems belong to a feminine voice whose attitudes to poverty are more complicated and closer to the actual experience that a widowed secondary wife like her might have had in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. In the first poem of "Comforting Myself," the

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[83] *Jiaolu* 蕉鹿, literally "firewood deer," refers to a story recorded in *Liezi* 列子. According to the story, a wood gatherer accidentally killed a deer. He hid the deer in a dried pond so that it would not be found by others. Unable to not find the hiding place later, he believed that the whole affair was just a dream he had. Later, *jiaolu* becomes an idiomatic expression for dreams. See Liezi (fl. late sixth century), "*Zhoumuwang* 周穆王," *Liezi yizhu* 列子集注, comp. Yang Bojun (Ha'erbin: Heilongjiang renmin chubanshe, 2003) 75.

speaking self confirms expectations by saying that she is "content with my lot." Nonetheless, she immediately complains that she is haunted by "the evil spirit of sorrow." The character of "*chou* 愁" (sorrow) recurs in the poems written during Li Yin's widowhood (the third collection). There are two groups of poems focusing on the poet's description of her sorrow. The six poems of the first group share the title "*Suimo jichou* 岁暮记愁" ("Recording My Sorrow at the End of the Year"), and the second group of four poems is titled "*Shangyuan qianchou* 上元遣愁" ("Relieving My Sorrow at the Lantern Festival").[84] According to these poems, her sorrow is related to poverty, loneliness, and her nostalgic memories of the fallen dynasty and of her married life.

In many lines of Li Yin's poems, her suffering is associated with poverty. In the first and third poems of "I Record My Sorrow at the End of the Year," the poetic persona describes how she shivers in the dead of winter, wearing an unlined coat with one patch over another. Rather than staying calm with poverty and loneliness, she laments and regrets: unable to afford warmer clothes, she is vulnerable to the coldness in her shabby room. In the third poem, she begins to worry about her thin and worn-out clothes when the sun is setting. Even during a lantern festival when other people are celebrating by lighting firecrackers, hanging beautiful lanterns, and walking around the town and appreciating decorated lanterns with their families, she cannot even afford to light a candle. The bright moon in the sky is her only companion.

Li Yin and Ge Zhengqi's marriage did not leave her any children. This is why in the third line from the seventh poem of "Comforting Myself" she consoles herself that though she is lonely, she has at least "no burdens in [her] old age." As a childless,

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[84] See Li Yin, 83.

widowed secondary wife, Li Yin was no longer protected by Ge's family. Her economic difficulties and her loneliness are closely connected. According to the poems, prefaces, colophon, and her biography included in *Bamboo Laughter*, she lived in the same city where Ge's extended family dwelt. However, she obviously did not live with them. The financial support from the Ge clan, if there was any, barely kept her from hunger and the cold. Huang Zongxi even mentions in his biography that she sold her paintings to feed herself. Although she tries to convince herself to be content with simple food and worn-out clothes, the absence of close families constitutes a significant part of her sorrow. The fifth poem of "Recording My Sorrow at the End of the Year" vividly depicts her loneliness during a new year's night:

岁暮记愁	Recording My Sorrow at the End of the Year
（五）	(V)
倚槛愁闻爆竹声	Leaning against the window sash, I listen sadly to the firecrackers.
凄凉情景百忧生	The desolate scene in the room arouses many worries.
世间孤苦无过此	No one is more forlorn than I am,
拨尽寒灰到五更	Stirring the cold ash until the dawn comes.

(Li Yin, "*Su mu ji chou*," poem no.5, 83)

As stated in the first poem of "Comforting Myself," a sound sleep is always a blessing to Li Yin. In her sleep, she forgets her worries for hunger, cold, and loneliness. She cannot even feel her body in her dream. She begins to suspect that her whole life is nothing but a dream-- transient, unpredictable, and full of fluctuations. Her sorrow, therefore, is intensified especially when she recalls the happy old days when her husband was still alive, and it contrasts with other people's celebration of festivals or her memories of the past. The second poem of "Relieving My Sorrow at the Lantern Festival" describes the sharp contrast between the past and the present, the happy others and the desolated speaking voice:

上元遣愁	Relieving My Sorrow at the Lantern Festival
（二）	(II)
六街灯火管弦声	When music wafts from brightly lit busy streets,
独自支颐对短檠	I face alone the small lamp with chin on my hand.
忆得昔日今夜月	Recalling the same moon on another night long ago,
不关愁处也愁生	I grieve though I should have nothing to grieve at.

(Li Yin, "*Shangyuan qianchou*," poem no.2, 83)

At the end of the poem, the speaker in the poem fails to meet the purpose of the title: though she would like to talk herself out of sadness, the bright moon in the lonely night of the festival only reminds her of the happy moment of a congenial marriage where she was cared for and loved, and the days when she was totally carefree from economic concerns.

Ge Zhengqi died in 1645, shortly after the fall of the Ming dynasty. As indicated by the prefaces and poems in *Bamboo Laughter*, Ge Zhengqi and Li Yin left the capital city of Beijing for Haichang in 1643. After April 1644, the couple fled from Haichang to Shaoshang 苕上 [85] after a family calamity. It seems that Ge died while the couple was away from Haichang, and Li Yin later escorted his coffin to his native place. Lacking solid evidence, it is hard to determine the nature of the family calamity. However, we can be certain that it was closely connected to the fall of the Ming dynasty and that it deprived the couple of their social and economic privileges. In a poem entitled "*Zi zao jianan tong jia Luxun jiji shaoshang* 自遭家难同家禄勋寄迹苕上" ("Since the family calamity, my husband Luxun and I have sojourned at Shaoshang"), Li Yin mentioned that they were driven from Ge's hometown after the fall of the Ming, and they suffered from poverty and illness. She also complained that Ge's fellow townsmen refused to protect

[85] Shaoshang is today's Huzhou in Zhejiang province.

them, probably due to their fear that Manchu troops would come searching for important Ming supporters.[86]

The turning point of Li Yin's life overlaps with the fall of the Ming dynasty. As a witness and a victim of the dynastic transition and its turmoil, Li Yin's sorrow, which permeates her poetry in the second and third collections of *Bamboo Laughter*, is inseparable from her mourning for the fallen dynasty. Li Yin's writing about her experience during and after the political and physical upheaval allows her to construct subject positions of a feminine voice who conscious transcends her personal gains and losses, and extends her concerns and sympathy to people and affairs outside of her chamber and even her local community. In a group of twelve poems entitled "*Yixi* 忆昔" ("Recalling the Past"), Li Yin records her traumatic experience beginning from the couple's experience in 1643 to many years after the subjugation of the Ming in the north and the resisting Southern Ming dynasties by the Qing. The twelfth poem from the series says:

忆昔　　Recalling the Past
风雨寒宵，穷年暮景，追想兵火之变，同家禄勋避乱，小舟往来芦苇间。禄勋有言，唯以死报国。余云杀身成仁，无救于时。对泣欷歔，万感交集。由今思昔，正所谓痛定思痛耳。聊尔抒怀，并记流离之苦。
On a cold rainy night when the wind blows outside and I am declining in years, I recall that during the fire of mutiny, my husband Luxun and I took refuge in a small boat in the reed marshes. Luxun said that he wanted nothing but to lay down his life for the dynasty. I said that even if he sacrificed his life for a lofty ideal, it would not help the situation. We sobbed and sighed to each other, all sorts of feelings surging up in our hearts. Today when all has passed, I again recall my painful experience. For the time being, I just express my feelings and record the pain of being homeless and wandering from place to place in the following poems
（十二）　　(XII)
乾坤曾暂定　Heaven and Earth have been stable for a while.
不改旧山河　Rivers and mountains stay the same.

[86] Li Yin, 41.

相国徒殊锡　The prime minister received special royal favors, but in vain.
将军孰凯歌　Which general sang the song of victory?
冢荒嘶石马　Stone horses neigh before overgrown graves [of the eminent].[87]
陵废哭铜驼　Bronze camels weep among abandoned imperial tombs.
满眼兴亡事　My own eyes witnessed the rise and fall of a dynasty.
回思恨转多　Thinking back, my unresolved grievance only grows stronger.
(Li Yin, "*Yi xi*," poem no.12, 68)

The feminine voice in this poem occupies the subject position of a social critic who regrets the irrevocability of dynastic transit and wisely understands its reason. This subject position grants the speaker more agency: she is not merely a stereotyped virtuous widow, but more vividly a sophisticated thinker whose criticizes the corruption and cowardice leading to the fall of the Ming, a scholar whose sense of social responsibility makes her transcend her self-pity and extend her concerns to others. The poetic persona harbors a complicated feeling when she recalls the past. After a long period of disorder, she feels relieved when the Qing dynasty achieved firm control of most of the country. However, she also grieves at the fact that, although rivers and mountains remain the same, they politically belong to a new royal house. Disappeared from the scene are the emperors and ministers of the fallen dynasty to whom she had been deeply attached due to her husband's loyal service and her life with him. In the second couplet of the poem, the speaking voice insinuates criticism of the ministers and generals of the Southern Ming dynasty (1644-1662). The prime minister in the third line probably refers to Ma Shiyin 马士英 (?-1646), who won special favors from the Hongguang Emperor (1644-1645) of the Southern Ming. However, Ma abused the royal favor and his power for personal gain. As a mediocre minister, he failed to save the dynasty from falling into

[87] Stone horses were usually displayed in front of the tombs of emperors or eminent ministers in dynastic China.

immediate subjugation.[88] Many generals of the Southern Ming also spent more time pursuing their own interests and dealing with conflicts between the Southern Ming princes who fought for power than on battling the Qing. The third couplet portrays a picture where the once magnificent palaces and awe-inspiring imperial tombs now turn into wasteland. The bitter memory recalled by the scene of the same "rivers and mountains" constitute another important ingredient in Li Yin's sorrow.

This sorrow also is partly caused by a feeling of powerlessness, an awareness of her limitation due to her gender, as well as her economic and social conditions. Heroic sentiments can be found throughout the three collections of *Bamboo Laughter*. An earlier poem from the first collection records how she regrets being unable to serve the country as a woman. In the seven-character-line quatrain "*Lujing* 虏警" ("Enemy Alert"), the speaking voice depicts herself as holding a sword when tears stream down her cheeks while she hears that an enemy troop of a hundred thousand soldiers are approaching the border, wishing she were a legendary swordswoman and could save her country.[89] In a later poem, she expresses similar sentiments:

有感	Thoughts When I am Moved
忧时看发短	In my sorrow I find my hair turning short.
老病为贫增	In old age, ail the more so as I grow poorer.
枵腹同饥鼠	My empty stomach rumbles like a hungry mouse's.
颓颜似冻蝇	My aged face has the look of a chilly fly's.
从戎非我辈	People like me could not follow the career of a soldier.
狙击更能谁	Yet who would be able to ambush the enemy?
悲感前朝事	I am moved to sadness by the fate of the former dynasty.
愁归夜半灯	Only the lamp at midnight knows my sorrow.

[88] See Zhang Tingyu 张廷玉 (1672-1755), "*Ma Shiying zhuan* 马士英传," *Ming shi* 明史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974) 7937-45.

[89] Li Yin, 25.

(Li Yin, "*You gan*," 81)

The first two couplets reiterate her reduced circumstances and decline in old age. The remaining two couplets, however, contextualize a suffering and sorrow that transcends her personal concerns. Her anguish also belongs to a group of people who vainly cherish heroic sentiments and yet found themselves powerless in saving the dynasty.

Despite the numerous poems in the second and third collections, in which Li Yin depicts those unhappy moments during her widowhood, the two collections also accommodate lines and poems on the pleasures of daily life. The seventh poem of "Comforting Myself" illustrates an ordinary summer's day when the elderly poetic persona is content with simple food and the serene and cheerful moments when she chit-chats with children in the evening glow.

Bamboo Laughter is smaller in scope and less diverse in genre than *Lamenting Red Flowers*. While the selfhood in Wang Duanshu's collection is informed by her strong political inclination as a Ming loyalist, the speaking voices in *Bamboo Laughter* are more concerned with everyday experience: sensual pleasure brought by beautiful landscape during her trips, serene village life where the sense of time is almost always related to the scenery outside of her windows, desolate old age when festivals bring sadness and intensify her loneliness, and her memory of the old days associated with the fallen dynasty. While Wang Duanshu's writing in *Lamenting Red Flowers* was all composed before she was thirty-years old, Li Yin's poems span almost her whole adulthood. As a poet-scholar by birth, Wang Duanshu resorts to a repertoire of allusions to talented gentry class women of earlier generations for the construction of subject positions of the

feminine voices in her poetry. Because Li Yin came from a humbler background, the reader finds fewer allusions to talented women in history.

In constructing alternative subject positions to the ones ascribed to them by their literati readers and the normative Confucian gender system, Wang Duanshu and Li Yin employ various tactics. The feminine voices in Wang Duanshu's poetry are engaged in conversations with the dominant political discourse of Ming loyalism. Their subject positions are achieved through the writer's appropriation of the cross-gender allusion juxtaposed with allusions to the women's writing tradition. The selfhood in Li Yin's poetry is generated through the tension between the images created by the prefaces and colophons by literati writers, and those represented in her own poetry. The feminine voices in her poetry occupy subject positions more complicated, sophisticated, and three-dimensional than being merely a chaste widow as described by the male literati. In both Wang's and Li's cases, their collected works serve as discursive spaces where alternative subject positions are constructed in the dialogues between the writers' poetic creations and the dominant literary and cultural discourse as suggested in male writers' prefaces, colophons, and biographies.

Wang Duan's *Innate Love*

The feminine voices in Wang Duan's *Innate Love* often assume the subject position of a poet-historian in a peaceful studio who is consciously engaged in establishing a women's writing and cultural tradition through alluding to women writers of earlier generations, passing moral judgments on historical women figures, and establishing names for her contemporary women writers. Born approximately two

hundred years later than Li Yin and Wang Duanshu, Wang Duan spent her life in the Jiangnan area during the period when the Qing dynasty had long since established its power throughout the country, and the Jiangnan area, a former site of resistance and devastating violence, witnessed political stability and economic development. Wang Duan received privileged academic training in classics, history, and literature at an early age from her father Wang Yu 汪瑜 (*zi* Tianqian 天潜, ?-1809), a learned scholar, as well as from her maternal aunt, the highly regarded writer Liang Desheng 梁德绳 (*zi* Chusheng 楚生, 1771-1847) and Liang's husband Xu Yanzong 许彦宗 (*zi* Jiqing 积卿, 1768-1818). Her later poetry was also influenced in terms of subject matter by her father-in-law Chen Wenshu 陈文述 (*zi* Tui'an 退庵, 1775-1845), a well-established scholar and mentor of several women writers.

In terms of subject matter, *Innate Love* differs from *Lamenting Red Flowers* and *Bamboo Laughter* due to the absence of poetic descriptions of everyday life. The subject matter of most of the poems in Wang's ten chapter collection fall into three groups: poems on historical figures or events, poems inscribed on paintings or in dedications to another's collected works, and exchange poems. As a scholar, Wang Duan is fascinated with historical events and how historical figures and events were recorded and evaluated. She is aware of the power of the historian in participating in the construction of social discourses, and is eager to join in the conversations by compiling and introducing anthologies and individual collections. In an interesting essay that served as a preface to *Ming sanshijia shixuan chuji* 明三十家诗选初集 (*Selected Poems by Thirty Ming Authors: First Collection*, hereafter *Ming Authors*), an anthology of poetry by male writers of the previous dynasty compiled by Wang Duan, she records a dream that she

had soon after she completed the anthology. In the dream, she found herself in a grand temple with many Buddhist-style statues. An old woman told her that the statues were those of the Ming officials and scholars whose poems Wang Duan had collected in her anthology. At the end of her essay, she mentioned that Gu Sili 顾嗣立 (fl. early eighteenth century), the compiler of *Yuanshi xuan* 元诗选 (*Selected Poems of the Yuan Dynasty*), upon finishing his project, dreamt that several hundreds of scholars in ancient attire expressed their gratitude to him. Wang Duan suggests that the earlier writers came to her dream also to thank her for her unbiased re-evaluation of their poetry and promotion of their names.[90] The speaking voice of the essay is confident in her literary connoisseurship and her keen insight into a person's qualities. This confidence may be due in part to the gradually increased presence of women's authorship in the past two hundred years. The feminine speaker assumes a subject position that allows her to participate in the construction of her contemporaneous social and cultural discourses through writing poems on historical figures and events, and exchanging poems with other writers, both male and female.

The image of a learned woman scholar-poet is vividly depicted in the poem "*Zhong xiao* 中宵" ("Midnight") written shortly before she was married to Chen Peizhi 陈裴之 (1794-1826) in 1810:

中宵	Midnight
酒醒中宵漏鼓迟	At midnight, I wake up sobered of wine at the steady beat of the watchman's drum.
嫩寒如水逼罗帷	A light coldness like water presses up to my bed curtain.
辞柯落叶原无累	Detaching from branches, fallen leaves become carefree.

[90] Wang Duan, "*Ji meng* 记梦" ("Record of a Dream"), *Ming sanshijia shixuan chuji erji* 明三十家诗选初集二集, 1873, 2b, not successively paginated.

弔月啼蛄何太悲　　Why are crickets so sad, crying and condoling for the moon?
宋宪一生惟好学　　Song Ruoxian was fond of learning all her life.
左芬早岁最耽诗　　Zuo Fen indulged herself in poetry at an early age.
迂疏任被时人笑　　Bookish and impractical, I ignore laughter of my contemporaries.
剩有秋怀卷里知　　My reflections on autumn will be known only by my poems.
(Wang Duan, "*Zhong xiao*," 2.12b)

In this poem, the image of a woman scholar-poet is constructed, individualized, and further complicated by the four allusions employed in the second and third couplets. The third line alludes to Xin Qiji's 辛弃疾 (1140-1207) song lyrics (*ci*) poem "*Pozhenzi: Shaoshi chunfeng manyan* 破阵子：少时春风满眼" ("To the Tune of Pozhenzi: In my younger days I saw only spring breeze").[91] In this poem, Xin mourns for the fallen leaves in autumn as a symbol for his approaching old age. The fallen leaves sadly remind him of his unaccomplished ambition expressed in those songs that he once sung when he was drunk. The image of chirping crickets alludes to Tang poet Li He's 李贺 (790-816) poem "*Gongwa ge* 宫娃歌" ("The Song of a Palace Maid"). In the context of Li He's poem, chirping crickets are associated with the maid who suffers from loneliness in the isolated palace and dreams of going back to her hometown.[92] Wang Duan employs the two images of fallen leaves and chirping crickets in her own poem to depict the early autumn night. However, she transforms the coding of the images, refashioning them to help construct a self-image different from that of a hero who laments his unaccomplished ambition in old age, or that of a lonely homesick palace maid. Instead, the speaking voice

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[91]Xin Qiji 辛弃疾 (1140-1207), "*Pozhenzi: Shaoshi chunfeng manyan* 破阵子：少时春风满眼，" *Jiaxuan changduanju* 稼轩长短句, *Songji zhenben congkan* 宋集珍本丛刊 (Beijing: Xianzhuang shuju, 2004) 64:551.

[92]Li He 李贺 (790-816), "*Gong wa ge* 宫娃歌," *Li He shige jizhu* 李贺诗歌集注 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1977) 129.

celebrates the leaves falling from trees: it is only natural that leaves complete their life cycle and can now fall to the ground without having to assume any burdens in this "floating world." In her ears, the crickets' cries are not necessarily sad. As the speaker cautiously distances herself from the scene, which is haunted by the sensibilities of Xin Qiji's line, she impresses the reader as a sober and judicious connoisseur of nature instead of an over-impressionable reader.

Such a speaking voice is confirmed and further explored in allusions to two earlier women scholars in the third couplet. Song Xian in the sixth line refers to Song Ruoxian 宋若宪 (?-835). Song and her four sisters were known for their wide classical learning and unusual poetic talents. They were summoned to the palace and exchanged poems with emperors and their ministers. It is said that Song Ruoxian was appointed secretary to Emperor Wen of the Tang dynasty 唐文宗 (827-840), who had a high regard for her literary writing skills and insightful discussion of current affairs.[93] Zuo Fen 左芬 (?-300) in the seventh line, the sister of Han writer Zuo Si 左思 (250-305), also came from a family with a rich literary tradition. Her poetry is commended for its erudite allusions and elegant diction. Identifying with the two earlier women writers, the feminine voice in "Midnight" occupies the subject position of a talented woman poet, an inheritor of her rich "family learning."

Wang Duan is aware of the fissure between the socially determined role of a woman and the feminine voice that she constructs for herself in the poem. The feminine voice departs from a conventional woman image: she drinks herself to sleep and is not

[93] For a brief biography of Song Ruoxian, see Zhong Xing 钟惺 (1574-1624), *Mingyuan shigui sanshiliu juan* 名媛诗归三十六卷. 1621-1644. 10.1b. http://digital.library.mcgill.ca/mingqing/english/index.htm. 10.1b.

melancholy at the autumn scene. Typically autumn could be expected to invoke melancholy sentiments in a poem, especially for a woman who conventionally is shown in earlier literati verse and the lyrics of popular entertainers to be reminded of her fading youth and beauty, or the absence of a lover. Wang prefers to avoid the stereotypes and introduces learned women from the past. The speaking voice then confirms her as being a misfit, calling herself "*yushu* 迂疏" (bookish and impractical) and knowing that these qualities in a woman are unattractive to her contemporaries. Her identity is forged through distinguishing herself from the ordinary, siding with earlier women writers, and empowering them as models.

Many speaking voices in *Innate Love* occupy the subject position of a woman scholar-poet exercising her literary talent and taste, scholastic training, and judgment on historical figures and events as well as on current affairs. This confidence allows the feminine voices to be at peace with their gendered social rules. The feminine voices in Wang Duan's collection seldom empower themselves through performing the role of a literatus as consistently as Wang Duanshu and, from time to time, as Li Yin. In two poems on writings by herself and her husband, Wang Duan portrays a self-image that had rarely been found before the last two centuries of dynastic China–the image of a woman scholar-poet in a congenial, companionate marriage:

丙子孟陬上旬，与小云夜坐，以澄怀堂集、自然好学斋诗互相商榷，偶成二律。
One night at the beginning of the first month in the year Bingzi (1817), I discussed poems from *Chenghuaitang ji* (*Collected Poems of Pure Sentiments Hall*) and *Ziranhaoxuezhai shichao* (*Collected Poems of InnateLove of Learning Studio*) with Xiayun and completed two regulated poems at random.

(I)

不将艳体斗齐梁	We write no flowery lines to outshine poetry from Qi and Liang.
不务虚名竞汉唐	Nor do we strive for empty names and compete with poets of Han and Tang.

月下清钟闻泰华	The sound of a clear bell on Hua mountain can be heard in the moonlit night.
雨中斑竹怨潇湘	Mottled bamboo in the rain sheds tears by the River Xiang.
诗张一帜原非易	It is indeed difficult to hoist one's own banner in writing poetry.
胸有千秋未肯狂	Cherishing lofty aspirations, one yet refuses to be haughty.
论罢人才筹水利	After evaluating talented writers, we map out water economy.
立言岂独在词章	How can we establish our words only in belles letters?
（二）	(II)
明珠翠羽非吾好	Bright pearls and iridescent kingfisher feathers have never been what I am fond of.
善病工愁未是痴	Good at falling ill and skilled in being melancholy, I am not yet a simpleton.
花落琴床春展卷	When petals fall on the zither on a spring day, we open our books.
香温箫局夜谈诗	Having rekindled the fire in the aromatic stove, we talk about poetry at night.
班昭续史他年志	Ban Zhao continued the History - I aspire to do so too in coming years.
伏胜传经往事悲	Fu Sheng passed down the classic – How mournful the past is!
流俗何须矜月旦	Why do we have to care for the opinions in current fashion?[94]
与君得失寸心知	In our hearts, we two know best what counts as our success and failure.

(Wang Duan, "*Binzi mengqu shangxun yu Xiaoyun yezuo yi chenghuaitang ji ziranhaoxuezhai shi huxiang shangque oucheng erlü*," 3.6b-7a)

The first poem accommodates a poetic persona who is a literary critic and an ambitious Confucian scholar in a marital relationship with a partner who is equally talented and motivated. In the first couplet, Wang Duan praises both her and her husband's literary talent in composing poetry equal to that of outstanding writers of earlier generations. In the second couplet, Wang Duan comments on the styles of their poetry. The bell from the Hua Mountain alludes to a specific poetic style called "*gaogu* 高古" (lofty and ancient) by Tang critic Sikong Tu 司空图 (837-908). Sikong employs

[94] "*Yudan* 月旦," literally the first day of a lunar month, is the short form for "*yuedan ping* 月旦评" (to evaluate [people] on the first day of every lunar month). It is a set phrase from the story of Xu Shao, who used to meet with his friends and evaluate important people in the local Runan area on the first day of every lunar month. See Fan Ye, "*Xu Shao zhuan* 许劭传," 2234-6.

the image of a jade-green moonlit night in the Hua Mountain reverberating with the clear sound of a bell.[95] Using the same image, Wang Duan praises her and her husband's poetry as lofty and noble. Corresponding to the image of the clear bell in the paralleled line four is "mottled bamboo in the rain." According to *Shuyi ji* 述异记 (*Accounts of the Strange*), Ehuang 娥皇 and Nüyin 女英, daughters of legendary Emperor Yao, shed tears on bamboo on a river bank and drowned themselves in the Xiang River after their husband, the legendary Emperor Shun, died. Later, speckled bamboo is said to be stained forever with the hot tears of the two wives. [96] It is possible that by alluding to the image of mottled bamboo, Wang Duan wants to demonstrate the delicate and profound style of the couple's poetry. She is also possibly searching for a rather romanticized and poeticized image of marital fidelity.

In the second half of the poem, the speaking voice assumes the subject position of a loving wife in a congenial marriage who shares the same political aspiration and enthusiasm to poetry with her husband. Acknowledging each other's talent, the wife and husband encourage each other to blaze his or her own trail in poetry and at the same time remain modest and eager in learning. The young couple's confidence and their mutual appreciation led them to believe that they could apply their learning to serving the state in a public arena such as "water economy," a code often used for service to the state and people in an important matter, and ultimately establish their names not only as poets, but

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[95]"太华夜碧，人闻清钟." See Sikong Tu 司空图 (837-908),"*Gao gu* 高古," *Shipin* jijie 诗品集解, *Shipin* jijie *xu shipin zhu* 诗品集解续诗品注, ed. Guo Shaoyu (Hongkong: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1965) 10-2.

[96] See Ren Fang 任昉 (460-508), *Shuyi ji* 述异记, *Siku quanshu* 四库全书, hereafter, SKQS, 1047:615.

as Confucian scholars who make achievements in managing state affairs. It seems that the speaking voice is so confident of her knowledge and talent that she does not regard her female gender as an obstacle at all. This mentality is shared by many young male scholars like her husband before they stepped out of their well-protected studios; confident in themselves, they are ambitious to extend their talent in literature to politics. While literati can easily justify this ambition, because many of them did go on to serve as scholar-officials in central and local governments through the imperial civil service examination system, Wang Duan's self-assurance may suggest her belief that talented women can transgress into the public sphere, participating in the construction of social and literary discourse by writing, editing, and publishing in literature, classics, and history.

Wang's role as a woman Confucian poet-scholar is articulated in further detail in the second poem. The speaking voice immediately differentiates herself from the stereotypical woman image and the "boudoir women writers" in the first couplet. She claims to be indifferent to jewelry and accessories, which call attention to the body. In this literary tradition, lingering illness and melancholy have been regarded as positive physical qualities of a poet, especially in a woman poet, because they suggest that she is more sensitive and impressionable. Though admitting she is often ill and sad, the feminine voice in this poem refuses to indulge in self-pity. In the third couplet, she expresses her aspirations by alluding to two women scholars in Chinese cultural history: the historian Ban Zhao 班昭 (?–116 B.C.E.), and the *Shujing* 书经 (*The Classic of History*) expert Fu Ji 伏姬 (fl. mid-second century B.C.E.). Ban Zhao took over the compilation of *Hanshu* 汉书 (*The History of Han*) when her brother Ban Gu 班固 (32-

92) died and left the book unfinished.[97] She wrote *Nü jie* 女戒, a treatise on women's conduct, in which she recommended education for women as well as defining women's virtues. Fu Ji was the daughter of Fu Sheng 伏胜 (260-161 B.C.E.), who was famous for his expertise on the *The Classic of History* and the important role that he played in preserving the classics during the Qin dynasty's (221-207 B.C.E.) persecution of Confucian scholars and suppression of Confucian teachings. During the reign of Emperor Wen of Han (180-157 B.C.E.), Fu Sheng became one of the few experts on *The Classic of History* and passed his knowledge to other scholars. Fu Ji served as his interpreter because of the dialect her father spoke and because, due to his old age, he could not clearly enunciate.[98] Fu Ji and Ban Zhao are both highly esteemed as women scholars who were critical to the preservation and transmission of Confucian teachings. Aspiring to follow the path of these women scholars, the speaking voice anticipates a place in the public sphere by contributing to the studies of history and classics.

The subject position of a woman scholar has the second dimension of being a partner in a congenial marital relationship. Wang Duan implies that bonding between the husband and wife is built and strengthened on spring days when they "open their books" together, and during nights when they talk about poetry by the stove. Congeniality is also constructed through their mutual appreciation and encouragement. In the last couplet of the second poem, the tacit mutual understanding between the husband and wife allows them to ignore pursuit of current fashions and become aesthetically and emotionally self-sufficient.

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[97]Fan Ye, "*Fufeng Cao shishu qi* 扶风曹氏叔妻," 2784.

[98]Jiang Boqian, *Shisanjing gailun* 十三经概论 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1944) 102.

The subject position of a woman scholar-historian-poet is realized through Wang Duan's textual interaction with her contemporary writers and her participation in the reconstruction of discourses on historical events. Beside *Innate Love*, she also compiled the anthology of *Thirty Authors*, the collected works of *Chenghuaitang quanji* 澄怀堂全集 (*The Complete Collection of Pure Sentiments Hall*) by her husband, and *Lanxuexuan yishi* 兰雪轩遗诗 (*Remaining Poems from Orchid Snow Studio*) by her sister-in-law, Tang Xianglü 汤湘绿. She also authored *Yuanming yishi* 元明逸史 (*An Unofficial History of the Yuan and the Ming Dynasties*), possibly a historical novel, which Wang Duan burnt later in life. A series of poems on certain historical figures during the Yuan and Ming transition, together with their brief biographies, which are originally from *An Unofficial History of the Yuan and the Ming Dynasties*, have been included in *Innate Love* under the title "*Zhangwu jishishi* 张吴纪事诗" ("Poems Relating What Happened in the Wu Area under the Reign of Zhang Shicheng").[99]

Wang Duan's desire to be a historian-poet must have been solidified when she witnessed the successive deaths of her family members and friends. Her mother died when Wang was a baby. Two years before she married at seventeen *sui*, she lost her elder brother and father. When she paid her first visit to her natal family after her wedding, she presented a poem to her aunt Liang Desheng, who had raised and protected her during the family calamity. In lines from the following poem, she expresses her gratitude for Liang's profound maternal love and her suffering at losing her parents and brother:

辛未春日，反棹武林，赋呈楚生姨母，即用赐题明湖饮践图元韵

[99] Wang Duan, *Innate Love*, 6.1b-18b.

On a spring day in the year of Xingmo (1811), I returned to Wulin[100] by boat. I composed this poem to present it to Aunt Chusheng, using the rhyming characters from her poem inscribed on my painting "Drinking at a Farewell Party by Ming Lake)

……

端也幼失恃　I lost my mother when I was young.
飘摇忍悉数　Swaying in the wind, how can I bear to list [all the pains that I've suffered]?
寒林鹊何依　In the cold woods, how can the magpies find their rest?
废沼鱼相呴　In a dried up pond, fish wet each other [in order to survive].
长兄没锦城　After my elder brother died in the city of Jincheng,
衰门运舛互　Misfortunes struck one after another at my declining family.

.....

(Wang Duan, "*Xinwei chunri fanzhao Wulin fucheng Chusheng yimu yi yong ci ti Minghu yinjiantu yuanyun*," 2.20a, lines 11-16)

The tragic experience of losing her family may have strengthened the urgency in her to bring them back to life in poetry so that they would not be forgotten and perish forever. In the second half of the poem that Wang Duan wrote to commemorate her sister-in-law's collected works after the latter's death, she says:

桃鬟旧婢悲妆阁　Your old maid with peach flowers in her hair mourns in your chamber.
葛帔遗雏食砚田　Wearing a robe made of ko-hemp and caring for the fatherless children, you made a living by writing.
不厌一编勤校阅　Tirelessly I read and edit your collection,
玉台名永望他年　Looking forward to see your name on jade terrace in the future.[101]

(Wang Duan, "*Yichou mengdong yu jiaoke Xianglü saoshi Lanxuexuan yishi yijuan ji wei zhi xu fu ti yu hou ji yong qianyun* 己丑孟冬，余校刻湘绿嫂氏兰雪轩遗诗一卷，既为之序，复题于后，即用前韵" (In the mid-winter of the year of Jichou (1829), I collated and sent to press *Remaining Poems From Orchid Snow Studio* by my sister-in-law Xianglü.I then wrote a preface followed by a poem using the previous rhyme characters), 7.18a-b, lines 5-8)

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[100] Today's Hangzhou of Zhejiang Province.

[101] Jade Terrace refers to *Yutai xinyong* 玉台新咏 (*New Songs of the Jade Terrace*), an anthology compiled by Xu Ling 徐陵 (507-583). It includes many poems representing women.

In the last line of the poem, Wang Duan articulates her intention of editing and publishing Xianglü's poem collection, which will establish her name in the history of women's literature. Her belief in perpetuating one's life through writing and publishing is not limited to her family members. In a seven-character line quatrain presented to Gui Maoyi, she urges her friend to take good care of herself as "only a few talented women now survive" when she heard of Madame Chenlan's obituary.[102] To Wang Duan, writing not only empowers herself by giving her agency to express her feelings and desires, but also endows her with a means to resist death as the ultimate nullification of the meaning of life. In a poem about a certain Madame Xu who committed suicide after the death of her husband, Wang Duan says:

愧我草生伤独活　　I feel ashamed at my life which drags on all alone like grass.
遗书手定泣斜晖　　Having edited his posthumous works, I weep in the slanting rays of the setting sun.
([自注]余方编订小云澄怀堂全集付梓) ([Author's note:] I just finished editing Xiaoyun's *The Complete Collection of Pure Sentiments Hall* and sent it to press.)

(Wang Duan, *Innate Love*, "*Xu liefu shi* 许烈妇诗" ("Poem on the Chaste Madame Xu"), 7.17b, lines 7-8)

Here, writing, editing, and publishing even help to justify her survival and confer meaning to her painful existence in the world.

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[102] Madame Chenlan refers to Li Peijin 李佩金 (*zi Renlan* 纫兰, fl. early nineteenth century), the author of *Shengxiangguan ci* 生香馆词 (The *Collection of ci Poetry from Fragrant Hall*). Wang Duan probably was acquainted with Li after she married into the Chen family. The poem that she wrote for Li's collection can be found in *Innate Love*. See Wang Duan, "*Ti Shengxiangguan ci hou ji cheng Qinhe Li Chenlan furen* 题生香馆词后即呈琴河李晨兰夫人" (Inscribed at the End of *Collection of ci Poetry from the Fragrant Hall*, the Poem is Presented to Madame Li Chenlan), *Innate Love*, 2.14b. (Li Chenlan should be Li Renlan. *Chen* 晨 and *Ren* 纫 share the same pronunciation in *wu* dialect that Wang Duan spoke.) For Wang Duan's poem addressing Gui Maoyi, see Wang Duan, "*Qiuye ji peishan* 秋夜寄佩珊" ("Composed on an Autumn Night to Send to Peishan"), *Innate Love*, 3.11a, poem no. 2.

Although Wang Duan pays close attention to historical figures regardless of their gender, the women's writing tradition especially kindles her enthusiasm as a historian-poet. In a series of poems on thirteen women writers of earlier generations, she gives precise and appropriate comments on the writers' poetic styles and their contributions to the development of classical Chinese poetry.[103] Her sensitivity as a historian also leads her to preserve and promote poems by her contemporary women writers. Her later poetry is strongly influenced by her father-in-law Chen Wenshu, as she constantly exchanged poems and paintings with his women disciples and joined in the poetic conversations with Chen and his literati friends about promoting of women's writings by publishing anthologies, building tombs and memorial sites for historical women figures, and composing poems on paintings of women or by women.[104]

A close reading of the following poem will help us understand how Wang Duan writes what I would call "poetic biographies" for her contemporary women writers. The following is the first poem of a series of our poems entitled "*Shu jian Wu Xianglun zi, ji ti Xiaoxianlou shiji hou* 书柬吴香轮姊，即题晓仙楼诗集后" ("A letter to Sister Wu Xianglun, written as the colophon for *Collected Poems from the Lodge of Bright Immortals*"):

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[103] See Wang Duan, "*Lun gongweishi shisan shou, he Gao Xianyun nüshi* 论宫闱诗十三首，和高湘筠女史" (Thirteen Poems on Palace Chamber Poetry, in Response to Madame Gao Xiangyun), *Innate Love*, 3.7b-10a.

[104] For example, in a poem entitled "*Ti Chen Qinian furen ji* 题陈其年妇人集" ("On Chen Qinian's *Collections of Women's Writing"*), Wang Duan mentions that Chen Wenshu sent the book to press and his secondary wife Guan Xiangyu wrote a preface. See Wang Duan, "*Ti Chen Qinian furen ji*," *Innate Love*, 4.12b. For examples of Wang's poems on women's portraits, see my discussion of her poems "*Ti Miwu xingying tu hou* 题蘼芜香影图后" ("Written after the Fragrant Portrait of Miwu") in Chapter Two.

松声黛色近华阳　When the darkness of night falls and the wind soughs in the pine woods near Huayang,
写韵辰楼翰墨香　Ink sends off fragrance in the splendid residence where paintings record natural charm.
秋水芙蓉师越女　Like a hibiscus flower by an autumn lake, you acknowledge Lady Yue as your master.[105]
春风蛺蝶谱滕王　As Prince Teng, you paint exquisite butterflies in spring breeze.[106]
（[自注]姊工剑术，写蛺蝶最工。）([Author's note:] Sister Wu is skillful in swordsmanship and well-versed in drawing butterflies)
寄衣远塞玫砧急　Before clothes are sent to the one in the remote border area, brisk sound is heard from the jade washing block.[107]
负土空山翠袖寒　Carrying soil all by yourself [to bury your parents-in-law] in a deserted mountain, you are cold in green silk sleeves.
（[自注]姊适顾羽仙大令，尝从军西域，姊独力营葬翁姑于吴中，人称其孝焉。）([Author's note:] Sister Wu is married to Magistrate Gu Yuxian. When her husband joined the army and served in a remote western border area, she buried her parents-in-law in Wu all by herself andwas praised for her filial devotion to her parents-in-law.)
绝似兰陵有唐素　Exactly like Tang Su of Lanling,
生花双管赡高堂　She provides for her elderly parents with her gifted painting brush.
（[自注]姊两尊人年近八旬，诸弟幼弱，乃迎养之。售画以易甘旨，与昆陵唐孝女素相类云。）([Author's note:] Sister Wu's parents are both near eighty *sui* and her younger brothers are all fragile. She looks after them at her home and exchanges her paintings for delicacies [to treat her parents]. In this respect she resembles the filial daughter of Tang family in Kunling[108].)

(Wang Duan, "*Shu jian Wu Xianglun zi, ji ti Xiaoxianlou shiji hou*," 8.2a-b)

This is a poetic biography of Wu Guichen 吴规臣 (*zi* Xianglun 香轮, fl. early nineteenth century), as it selectively presents some important moments in Wu's life. The

[105] Lady Yue refers to a woman well-versed in swordsmanship from the state of Yue (202-110 B.C.E). See Zhao Ye, 6:87-8, not successively paginated.

[106] Prince Teng 滕王 refers to Li Yuanying 李元婴 (?-684) who was an expert in painting butterflies. See Sun Ta 孙鼏, "Li Yuanying 李元婴," *Zhongguo huajia renming da cidian* 中国画家人名大辞典 (Shanghai: Shenzhou guoguangshe, 1944) 183.

[107] The line describes how Wu Xianglun washes clothes by beating them on a hammer block before she sends them to her husband in the remote border area.

[108] Kunling and Lanling are both aliases of today's Dantu county in Jiangshu province.

first couplet is a poetic vision of the husband and wife who, though they live in separate places, share the same aesthetic aspiration. In the first line, Huayang refers to the place in the western border area where her husband serves as a county magistrate. In the paralleled lines of the first couplet, the reader finds a woman painter and a wife who picks up her brush and paints in her serene studio every evening while her husband is far away. The second couplet introduces Wu's specialties as a swordswoman and an expert in butterfly painting. In the third and fourth couplets, Wang Duan praises Wu Guichen's moral integrity as a caring wife and filial daughter.

In writing short "poetic biographies" like this poem for Wu Guichen, Wang Duan constantly resorts to author's notes for elaboration and explanation. She is fully aware of the limitation of regulated lyric poetry in representing a person from all angles because of the brief scope, required tonal pattern, and strict rules of semantic grammatical parallelism in the middle couplets of a regulated poem. As Wang's poem shows, the conventions of poetry dramatize and aestheticize everything. Author's notes, therefore, help to confirm the poem's statements, expand the scope, and add more information. They refer directly to real life and become a subtext that enriches the poetic text.

Wang Duan's moral judgment is also noticeable in these poetic biographies. Her training in Confucian classics as well as in poetry produces an inevitable moralizing in her biographies. In her preface to *Thirty Authors*, Cao Zhenxiu 曹贞秀 (*zi* Moqin 墨琴, 1762-?) applauds Wang Duan as being able to strike a perfect balance between her aim "to preserve poetry through its poet" and "using poetry to convey the poet and using the

poet to convey the poetry" (*yishi cunren yiren chunshi* 以诗存人，以人存诗).[109] In other words, Cao regards Wang Duan's standards in selecting poems for the thirty poets as nondiscriminatory because, as a compiler, Wang takes both the moral integrity of a poet and the aesthetic values of his poetry into consideration. In her own poems on other women writers such as Wu Guichen, Wang Duan employs similar standards, introducing to the reader both the writer's talent in literature and other fields, and her moral integrity, hoping that her poems, together with their biography's subjects, will establish and perpetuate their names in the history of women's literature.

The feminine voice in Wang Duan's *Innate Love* assumes the subject position of a women historian-poet. Assertive and confident, the subject position is contingent to the writer's conscious construction of a women's literary tradition and active participation in the construction of discourse on historical figures and events.

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[109] Cao Zhenxiu, "*Xu* 序" ("Preface"). Wang Duan, *Thirty Authors of the Ming Dynasty*, 1a, not successively paginated.

CHAPTER TWO SELF-INSCRIPTION AND LITERARY ALLUSIONS IN POETRY BY WANG DUANSHU AND WANG DUAN

As a poetic device, allusion is intrinsic to classical Chinese lyric poetry. Through the borrowing of lines, phrases, or images from earlier texts, or echoing certain themes of a text by a precursor, allusion introduces historical dimensions into a poem and expands the discursive space otherwise limited by the lyric genre. However, around thirty years of contemporary scholarship on women's poetry in dynastic China seems to be oblivious to the study of this significant poetic device as employed by women writers. Traditional poetics considered the use of allusion as an index of a poet's craft and erudition. Most women writers suffered from the prejudice that they were less learned and knowledgeable than their male counterparts. The neglect of allusion in the studies of women's poetry either suggests the silent approval of such a prejudice, or, perhaps because contemporary scholarship is deeply influenced by poststructuralism, it regards theoretical examination of allusion as what Jonathan Culler calls "source study of a traditional and positivistic kind" and therefore not rewarding.[110]

I would argue that that a nuanced investigation of allusion in women's poetry, at least in the poems found in the collected works by Wang Duanshu and Wang Duan, contributes significantly to our understanding of how they inscribe themselves through participating in the discursive construction of the culture. Both writers did allude. It is

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[110] Jonathan Culler. *The Pursuit of Signs: Semiotics, Literature, Deconstruction (*London: Routledge, 2001) 201

hard not to as the conventionality of diction and image is constitutional to the lyric genre. However, we need to be aware that women writers such as Wang Duanshu and Wang Duan not only write within the literary culture which excluded--or at best, marginalized--them, but they also write back against the conventions. In his illuminating study of allusion, Gregory Machacek urges scholars who study allusions to "acknowledge how the recognition and interpretation of a verbal echo are culturally mediated and do not automatically occur in a transhistorically stable and predictable fashion."[111] He then proposes a theoretical approach that coordinates the study of diachronic textual interrelations with the synchronic treatment of allusions as a part of a contemporaneous cultural system.[112] Our study of the allusions in the poetry by the two women writers will benefit most if we not only examine earlier writers or texts to which they allude, but also inquire into questions such as: How do they employ and appropriate the allusions? Into what context do they introduce the images, phrases, or themes? Are there any differences between the signifying function of diction, imagery, thematic adaptations, and their origins? If so, how can we account for the differences? Examination of the questions ultimately will allow us to account for the pivotal concerns of our study of allusions in the two writers' poetry: How do the writers inscribe themselves through alluding? Have new gendered subject positions been achieved through the process of alluding?

This chapter includes four parts. While the first part examines the dilemma that women writers such as Wang Duanshu and Wang Duan encountered in late imperial China, the second part is devoted to a discussion of their allusions to recluse-scholars

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[111] Gregory Machacek, "Allusion," *PMLA* 122 (2007): 534.

[112] Ibid. 522-536.

(*yinshi* 隐士)—or scholars who retreated from public service—in Wang Duanshu's poems. In the third section, I will explore and illustrate the creation of new subject positions in a poem by Wang Duanshu through a collage of allusions. The fourth part will be an examination of allusions to the female literary precursors in Wang Duan's poems, a cultural and literary phenomenon that is significant to understanding an early conscious participation in constructing and advocating a woman's writing tradition in seventeen-century China.

Allusions and Women Writers' Dilemma in Late Imperial China

For male writers, literary allusions establish a connection between poetic creation and the normative, educated governing class male cultural conventions. Such a connection plays a significant role in defining the male intelligentsia's cultural and social identities. The Confucian classics, history, philosophy, and poetry of earlier generations constitute what Shen Deqian沈德潜 (1673-1769) calls the "*yuan* 源" (headwaters) of one's poems.[113] Use of literary allusions indicates a command of the canon, and an ability to participate in the continual construction of literary culture.

To literati writers, allusions build bonds between the reader and the writer. These bonds hinge upon the recognition of allusions and the emulation in employing and detecting them. When allusions are pivotal to understanding a poem, recognition of a

[113] Sheng Deqian claims that only allusions from the classics, philosophy, and history save poetry from being rootless. Allusions to other poems will only make a poem banal. See Shen *Shuoshi zuiyu* 说诗晬语, *Xuxiu siku quanshu* 续修四库全书 (hereafter XXSKQS) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1995) 1701:1.

shared knowledge of traditions and a body of texts that belong to traditional learning is necessary. The capacity to employ and to recognize allusion implies years of training in reading, memorizing, and understanding the works in four categories: classics, history, philosophy, and *belles lettres*. Therefore, employing allusions becomes a challenge and a reward offered by the poet, and adds to the pleasure of reading for the reader who recognizes them. In this way, allusion brings the reader and the writer into the same frame of reference, and sometimes even links them through mutual identification. At the same time, because allusions cannot be employed in writing or recognized in reading without proper training, they signal possession of knowledge. When reading and writing put this knowledge into circulation, the possessors of it struggle to emulate and outdo each other. This competition excludes those who lack the required knowledge and therefore is normative in terms of the competitors' identities.

When a woman poet in late imperial China employed allusions, she faced a dilemma. On the one hand, some male scholars in late imperial China, such as Zhong Xing钟惺 (1574-1642), claimed that women's writings were worth reading and anthologizing because of their quality of being "*qing*清," literally meaning "clean," "fresh," or "unsoiled." As a poetic term, *qing* appeared frequently in literary criticisms of the late Ming. Hu Yinglin 胡应麟 (1551-1602) claims that *qing* is the most valuable characteristic of poetry. He then enumerates four kinds of *qing*: clear style (*ge qing* 格清), clear quality (*diao qing* 调清), clear thoughts (*si qing* 思清), and clear talent (*cai qing* 才清).[114] Zhong Xing, whose poetics focus on the creative writer, advocates women as

[114] Hu Yinglin 胡应麟 (1551-1602), *Shi shu wai bian* 诗薮外编, XXSKQS, 1696:156.

his ideal writers by assigning to them the quality of *qing*. In his preface to *Mingyuan shi gui* 名媛诗归, Zhong idealizes genteel women as unpolluted by worldly affairs, unburdened with worldly concerns, and free from influence by the edicts of schools. He argues that women writers are therefore capable of composing poems that possess "*ziran zhi sheng* 自然之声" (the sound of nature).[115] Zhong implies that these essentialized qualities of *qing* is realized by women writers in their poetry, where the poet's expression of her innermost feelings is not impeded by following artificial rules, or eagerly displaying her erudition. Such an assumption serves as the underlying logic in an analogy between women's poetry and folksongs in late imperial China, as exemplified by Zhu Zhifan's朱之蕃 (?-1624) to an anthology of women's poetry.[116] This analogy indicates aesthetic criteria different from male writings when women's poetry is concerned. Like folksongs, women's writings are essentialized as worth reading because they are straightforward, plain, and free of deliberate use of poetic techniques, including allusion.

Consequently, *qing*, the much applauded characteristic of woman writings by literati critics such as Zhong Xing, when viewed in a more negative light, could also suggest "*ruo* 弱," or weakness, in both content and style. To be "weak" in content means a woman writer's incapacity to transcend her immediate living situation and write on

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115 "若夫古今名媛，则发乎情，根乎性，未尝拟作，也不知派……盖女子不习舆马之务，缛苔芳树，养叕熏香，兴为恬雅." Zhong Xing, "*Xu* 序" (preface), *Lidai funü zhuzuo kao* 历代妇女著作考, ed. Hu Wenkai (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1957) appendix 41.

116 In his preface to *Mingyuan huishi* 名媛汇诗, Zhu says: "Even if [some women's poetry] resembles those [decadent songs of] Sangjian upon the Pu River, they can be immortal when later generations take warning from them." [后先女史之词]……纵同濮上桑间，鉴戒可垂百代. See Zhu Zhifan, "*Xu* 序" ("Preface"), Hu Wenkai, appendix 39-40.

topics other than limited "boudoir" motifs. In style, weakness would include a lack of refined language, apt allusions, and poetic devices that maximize the tension between the explicit and implicit meanings of a text to the extent that they can express what the poet intends to say in an accurate, yet oblique way. Opposite to *ruo* is what Zhong Xing and Tan Yuanchun 谭元春 (1586-1631) advocated as "*hou* 厚" (weighty or profound). Though Zhong celebrates women writers' ability of being "clear" in their poetry, in his later literary career he resorts to the notion of "profundity 厚" as the ultimate criterion for good poetry. He argues that though a writer's aptitude is essential to good poetry, only the profundity acquired through reading and learning can guarantee subtle beauty (*yinxiu* 隐秀) in poetry.[117] Imaginably, the highest acclaim that a woman writer could receive would be "a scholar without wearing the comb [to fasten one's hair]" *buzhi shusheng* 不栉书生. *Zhi* 栉 is the comb that a man uses to fasten his hair. *Buzhi shusheng* thus refers to a woman scholar, emphasizing that her learning is as profound as, if not better than, a male scholar. In Jiang Jixiu's 蒋机秀 (fl. late eighteenth century) introductory remarks to *Guochao guixiu shi xiuzhen* 国朝闺秀诗绣针 (The Embroidery Needle: Women's Poetry of Our August Dynasty), a collection of women's poetry, he aestheticizes the action of women's writing as "the (pure) heart and wrist of an orchid giving off fragrance while touching the paper." He then warns women against writing with an air of "rouge and powder" and grades those *buzhi shushing* who have an intimate knowledge of the

[117] Zhong Xing regards *yinxiu* 隐秀(subtle beauty) to be the most desirable aesthetic quality of poetry. He names both his abode "*Yinxiu xuan* 隐秀轩" (Subtle Beauty Studio) and his individual collection "*Yinxiuxuan ji* 隐秀轩集 (The collection of Subtle Beauty Studio) with the phrase. For Zhong Xing's exposition on profundity, see Zhong Xing, "*Yu Gao Haizhi guancha* 与高孩之观察," *Zhongguo lidai wenlun xuan* 中国历代文论选, ed. Guo Shaoyu (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1979) 3:216-217. For studies on Zhong Xing and Tan Yuanchun's poetics, see Chen Guanghong, *Jinglingpai yanjiu* 竟陵派研究 (Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 2006) 317-415.

classics and history as superior to the women writers who are not.[118] On the one hand, Jiang celebrates the "naturalness" of women's writings, as the metaphor of orchid (*hui* 蕙) implies, and on the other, he condemns their potential deterioration into extreme femininity signified by "rouge and powder," and encourages women writers' assimilation to the literati writing practice. This passage connotes the critic's reserved recognition of the other, an intention to confine the subject positions of women writers within a prescribed limit, and insists upon critical standards that stereotype femininity in literati culture and marginalize women's writings.

Women writers themselves are aware of their dilemma. On the one hand, they are tempted by opportunities for self-expression and inclusion in the highly valued literati culture, and in some extreme cases, such as that of Wang Duanshu, they even deliberately called themselves "*shi* 士" (male scholar). On the other, their gendered roles constitute the obstacle that makes any attempted assimilation to the literati culture a conscious performance at its best. This dilemma and the women writers' anxiety related to the dilemma may attest to the allusions often found in their poetry. A close examination of the poets' particular deployment of allusions will reveal their struggle for self-empowerment through the creation of new subject positions by exploiting the tension between the literary culture and their gendered writing position.

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118 予谓征才闺阁，蕙心兰腕，着纸生芬。儿女情不必无，脂粉气特不可有也。其有淹通经史者，宛同不栉书生，则更上一层楼矣. Jiang Jixiu, "*Liyan* 例言" ("Editor's Remarks"), Hu Wenkai, appendix 71.

Seclusion, Cross-Gender Allusions, and Experiments with Subject Positions in Wang Duanshu's Poems

A surprising number of poems in Wang Duanshu's individual collection *Lamenting Red Flowers* alludes to famous literati recluses in Chinese history, among whom Tao Qian 陶潜 (or Tao Yuanming, 陶渊明, *zi* Yuanliang 元亮, posthumous name Jingjie 靖节, ?-427) is the most celebrated and appears most frequently. Wang's poems extensively allude to various images found in Tao Qian's poems, such as chrysanthemums, the scarf made of a coarse hemp cloth, and homemade wine. This section is a study of how the cross-gender allusions to literati-recluses generate new subject positions for the woman writer in her poems.

By the time of the Ming dynasty, Tao Qian's reputation as the exemplary self-exiled loyal subject of the Jin dynasty (266-420) had been secured by generations of scholars and historians.[119] Reception of Tao Qian in the late Ming China was also partly

[119] By the time of the late Ming, generations of Tao's biographers, commentaries on Tao's poems, poetic allusions, and poems written on the same themes as those of Tao Qian's poems have firmly established Tao's irreplaceable status as a cultural icon. A famous example is Su Shi 苏轼 (1037-1101), the famous Song poet and scholar, who composed dozens of poems on the same themes and in the same rhythms as those by Tao Qian. These poems by Su Shi almost exhaust all the themes in Tao's poems. Scholars of the Ming and Qing dynasties were interested in diverse aspects of Tao Qian's life and work. Many scholars believed that Tao Qian lived in seclusion because he was ashamed to serve the new dynasty after the fall of the Jin dynasty (316-419). Shen Yue's 沈约 (441-513) *Songshu* 宋书 (*The history of the [Liu] Song Dynasty*) popularizes the anecdote of how Tao refused to serve as a petty official when his senior official carped at his etiquette. Shen also claimed that the underlying reason for Tao's refusal to serve in the Southern Song (420-478) government is that he regarded himself a remnant subject of Jin. See Shen Yue, "*Yinyi zhuan* 隐逸传," *Song shu* 宋书 (Taibei: Ershiwen shi biankanguan, 1956) 93:14a-19b. Shen Yue, for the first time in history, established Tao as the model of being a recluse out of his loyalty to the previous dynasty. Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200), the renowned and much respected Song scholar, called Tao "*gu zhi yiming* 古之逸民 (the one who escaped from the world in ancient times)" (Yulei, 4222) who, as the descendant of a Jin prime minister, was ashamed of serving the new dynasty. See Zhu Xi， *Zhuzi yulei* 朱子语类, *Zuzi quanshu* 朱子全书 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2002) 18:4222; and Zhu Xi, *Chuci jizhu* 楚辞集注, *Zuzi quanshu*, 19:272. The Ming and Qing scholar argued over whether Tao's refusal to date certain works with the emperors's reign titles indicates his loyalty to the Jin. For the Ming scholars's

influenced by some literati's world view, which advocated attachment to the pleasure of this world.[120] Scholars who were influenced more or less by such a hedonistic world view usually found themselves more attracted by Tao Qian's poetic descriptions of his lifestyle, his appreciation of chrysanthemums along his autumn fence, the long and serene days in an isolated village, and the pleasure of becoming slightly inebriated after drinking cups of village wine.[121]

Wang Duanshu may sympathize with Tao Qian because of her life experience as a Ming loyalist writer.[122] Allusion to Tao Qian as the Jin loyalist will definitely contribute

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argument over why Tao refused to use the emperors's reign titles to date some of his works, see Song Lian 宋濂 (1310-1381), "*Ti Yuanming xiaoxiang juan hou* 题渊明小像卷后," Lang Yin 郎瑛 (1487-1566), "*Tao shi ji jiazi* 陶诗记甲子," and Xie Zhen 谢榛 (1495-1567), "*Siming shihua si ze* 四溟诗话四则," *Tao Yuanming ziliao huibian*, eds., Beijing daxue zhongwenxi, et al. (Bejing: Zhonghua shuju, 2005) 1:132-133, 138, and 140. However, most Ming scholars associate his withdrawal from public service with his moral integrity as a scholar-official, whose primary duty is his loyalty to the emperor. Other scholars, especially those who survived the dynastic turmoil in the late Ming and early Qing period, such as Zhu Heling 朱鹤龄 (1606-1683), resorted to a rhetoric which describes Tao's seclusion as a way to preserve his life and talent while at the same time avoid going along with evil trend. (130) For the construction of Tao Qian by his biographers in the Southern Dynasties (420-589) and early Tang (618-907), see Wendy Swartz, "Rewriting a Recluse: The Early Biographers' Construction of Tao Yuanming," *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews* 26 (2004): 77-97.

[120] For the late Ming literati culture and their mentality, see Xia Xianchun, *Wanming shifeng yu wenxue* 晚明世风与文学 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1994); Zhou Mingchu, *Wanming shiren xintai ji wenxue ge'an* 晚明士人心态及文学个案 (Beijing: Dongfang chubanshe, 1997).

[121] Yuan Hongdao 袁宗道 (1560-1600), for example, in an interesting poem comparing Tao Qian and the Tang poet Bai Juyi 白居易 (772-846), claims that he admires the former for his free and elegant lifestyle – playing a zither without strings, filtering wine with his scarf, and standing aloof from worldly gains – yet he felt that himself might not be able to endure the great poverty which Tao suffered. See Yuan Zongdao, "Yong huai 咏怀," *Baisuzhai lou ji juan er* 白苏斋镂集卷二, XXSKQS, 1363:254.

[122] Though undoubtedly influenced by both discourses on the scholar-recluse, Wang Duanshu may also have had a more personal reason to be attracted to Tao Qian. In 1622, her father Wang Siren wrote a series of thirty-four poems of the same rhythms as those found in Tao Qian's poems. In the preface to the poem series, he told his readers that he had always been fascinated and touched by Tao's poetry. After having been dismissed from office three times, he found that Tao's poems struck a deep chord in him. See Wang Siren's self preface to his collection of thirty-four poems of the same rhythm as the ones written by Tao Qian. Wang Siren, "Lu Tao xu 律陶序," *Wang Jizhong*

to her self-inscription as one who believes in and earnestly practices Confucian teachings, whose father committed suicide after the fall of the Ming dynasty, and whose husband refused to serve the new dynasty. Such an allusion also serves as a defense for her choice to live a life in seclusion and poverty, yet still indulging herself in small pleasures in everyday life. Wang Duanshu's cross-gender allusions to the famous literatus-recluse dissolve the boundaries between *shi* 士 (male scholar) and *nü* 女 (women). While Tao Qian's image of self-exile paradoxically allowed his poetry to become canonized, Wang Duanshu employs the same rhetoric for the purpose of self-definition through gender performance achieved in her allusions to the male-recluse. This performance suggests an anxiety resulting from her awareness of being doubly marginalized as a female Ming loyalist writer. However, the dual marginalization can also lead to a trespass into the public sphere, a forbidden zone to women in this particular historical period.

The most conspicuous aspect of Tao Qian, to which Wang Duanshu often alludes, is his retirement from political life. Tao Qian's self-exile to rural areas, far away from the power struggles in the capital city, certainly bears some similarity with women's physical and social isolation within women's quarters. Tao Qian and Wang Duanshu both appropriate their physical isolation paradoxically to empower their voices, rather than undermine them. In both cases, seclusion is both a mode of self-protection and an indication of oblique social and political criticism. Alluding to Tao Qian as the Jin

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xiansheng shizhong 王季重先生十种 (Taibei: Weiwen tushu chubanshe, 1977) 771-74. For Wang Siren's life and chronology, see Chen Feilong, *Wang Siren wenlun ji qi nianpu* 王思任文论及其年谱 (Taibei: Wenshizhe chubanshe, 1990).

loyalist recluse, Wang Duanshu employs a voice that suggests a criticism of their forced isolation due to her own political stand as a Ming loyalist and her identity as a woman.

Wang Duanshu's allusions to Tao Qian suggest a conscious self-empowerment through a verbal performance across gender. She seems to utterly deny her gender role when she calls herself "*Shanyin sou* 山阴叟" (the old man of Shanyin)[123], or "*hanshi* 寒士" (the poor scholar). By alluding to Tao Qian and identifying with him across the gender division, Wang Duanshu creates subject positions blurring the line between scholar (*shi* 士) and woman (*nü* 女), the secluded (*yin* 隐) and the illustrious (*xian* 显). Her cross-gender identification with Tao and other scholar-recluses is illustrated here in a poem series entitled "*Yin pi* 隐癖" ("Addiction to Seclusion"):

（一）

云封曲径草萋萋	Lush green grass grows along the winding path blocked by clouds,
人爱偏幽路欲迷	I love the quiet recess where one might go astray.
飞落寒萤投败壁	Cold fireflies fly onto the broken walls.
吹凋残叶委新泥	Blown from the trees, withered leaves are discarded in the fresh mud.
灯分余焰随心昭	Threads of last flames are blazing on the lamp wick.
诗到清空好处题	Clear and empty, it befits for me to write a poem.
幸得蓬门无俗驾	Luckily no vulgar carriages stop at my wicker door.
癖如鸥鸟愿同栖	Compelled, like seagulls we want to perch together.

（二）

烟墟寂立一掾低	Silently the chimney stands by a low rafter.
曲径云封寒士栖	By the winding path blocked by clouds a poor scholar lives.
洁僻泉流堪作镜	Clean and secluded, the spring can be used as a mirror.
吹归落叶可书题	Blown from the trees, fallen leaves are where I write lines.
素情甘向於陵老	I cherish the simple wish to spend the rest of my years in Yuling.
傲骨羞向北海迷	Innately proud, I am ashamed to drift in Beihai.
最爱更阑啼鸟静	I most love the deep night when calling birds are still.
月明黄卷独相携	In bright moonlight, I hold only a yellow scroll in my hand.

[123] Shanyin 山阴 is Wang Duanshu's hometown. See Wang Duanshu, "*Diao Xiling nüzi* 吊西陵女子," *Lamenting Red Flowers*, 2.3b.

(Wang Duanshu, “Addiction to Seclusion,” 9.3a-b)

In the two poems, the poetic persona is said to be a poor scholar, an appellation reserved for a male. This poor scholar is depicted as sharing similarities with Tao Qian and other renowned recluses such as Chen Zhongzi 陈仲子 (fl. third century B.C.E) in various aspects.

The scholar in the two poems identifies with the renowned recluses through a discursive construction of the natural environment. She lives in an out-of-the-way and secluded place, most likely a recess in a hill, because the only meandering path leading to it is blocked by clouds. That she carefully chooses to dwell in such a remote place bespeaks her intention to stay far away from the hustle and bustle of the world. Like other recluses, her solitude is magnified by natural images such as withered leaves, the spring stream, and fireflies, together with the winding path and clouds. The natural environment depicted is more desolate than that in Tao’s “*Gui yuantian ju* 归园田居” (“Returning to Live on Farmstead”) poems. In Tao’s poems, at least the speaking persona can hear dogs barking and see cooking smoke spiraling from chimneys far away. In Wang’s poems, however, the scholar seems to be totally cut off from the outside world. She exaggerates her solitude to the extent that she even seems to be beyond this mortal world, as she uses the spring as a mirror and fallen leaves as paper.

The poetic persona is not only a scholar, but also a recluse who cares for no material gains and is even proud of being poverty-stricken (*han* 寒). However, like Tao’s empty room where there is no dust or clutter, and where the speaking self spends his

leisure time,[124] here the scholar who is "addicted to seclusion" finds that the cleanliness and emptiness of her living space endow her poetry with the same characteristics. Her subject position as a recluse-scholar is further strengthened by her claim that her favorite time of day is when silence reigns in the still of the night, reading alone in the moonlight, as if the seclusion itself is not enough to underline her longing to be away from the crowd.

The recluse-scholar overtly states that what motivates her to live a life as a destitute scholar in complete seclusion is her "*suqing* 素情" (true feelings) and "*aogu* 傲骨" (innate pride). When she congratulates herself for having no vulgar visitors, she indicates that she does have guests. Only, these guests must have been persons with similar feelings and pride. In the first poem, her aspiration is indicated by the three words that involve feelings: *ai* 爱 (love), *xing* 幸 (feel lucky), and *yuan* 愿 (hope). Though direct statement of feelings is not always considered desirable, as it may undercut the subtlety of a poem, these characters underline a bias celebrated by the title as an "addiction" to living in seclusion. The words help to construct a subject who exiles herself from the vanity, vulgarity, and corruption of the world and takes pride in being an outcast.

In "Addiction to Seclusion," Wang Duanshu creates subject positions through cross-gender identification, alluding to Tao Qian in the first poem and Chen Zhongzi in the second[125]. However, this identification differs from assimilation into the positions

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[124] 户庭无尘杂，虚室有余闲。Tao Qian. "*Gui yuantian ju diyi*" 归园田居第一, *Tao Yuanming ziliao huibian*, 2:47.

[125] Chen's name as a recluse appears in *Mengzi* 孟子 (*Mencius*). He was said to be a recluse living in Yuling. Sima Qian 司马迁 (145?-86? B.C.E.) describes Chen Zhongzi as refusing to serve as

occupied by literati writers. Undeniably, Wang realizes the ineffectiveness and powerlessness with which a woman's poetic voice is associated. By categorizing herself as one of the scholars, she automatically endows herself with power denoted by the category--namely, the discursive power to participate in public affairs. Like Tao Qian and Chen Zhongzi, her pose as a poverty-stricken recluse-scholar bespeaks a similar intent of hers. It is an aspiration of "*da zhangfu* 大丈夫 (the great man)," whom Mencius describes as the one who is "not to be corrupted by riches or honors, nor to depart from principles despite poverty or humble origin, nor to subject to force or threat. This great man will influence government when he achieves his ambition (e.g. being in power); otherwise, he will follow the Way alone".[126] By assuming the subject position of a recluse-scholar, Wang implies that the definition of the great man does not necessarily hinge upon his gender; the definitive element is his or her moral integrity.

Before further exploration into the subject positions constructed through cross-gender allusions to recluse-scholars, an examination of how the literati in late imperial China viewed women recluses will shed light on our understanding of Wang's choices of poetic allusions. In a preface to *Yingluanji* 影鸾集 (*The Collection of Shadow Phoenix*), a Ming collection of *ci* poetry by four women writers, Xu Shiqi 徐石麒 (fl. mid-seventeenth century) calls women writers "*yinjun* 隐君 (the honorable recluse)":

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high official in the Qi court and making a living by watering others's gardens. For the story of Chen Zhongzi, see Sima Qian, "*Lu Zhonglian Zou Yang liezhuan di ershisan* 鲁仲联邹阳列传第二十三," *Shiji* 史记 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959) 8:2475.

[126]富贵不能淫，贫贱不能移，威武不能屈。得志于民由之，不得志独行其道。 Mengzi, *Mengzi* 孟子 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987) 44.

> The luster of certain things is doomed to be hidden from our view by something. Therefore, that a jade as large as a *chi* 尺 [127] is sheltered in uncut jade, and a pearl of one *cun* 寸 [128] in diameter is buried in deep waters, is the way it is. Those who do have luster, yet whose luster is concealed, certainly have something immanent to them to bring the concealed into the light. Hence the mountain where the jade is buried cannot totally obscure the jade's brilliance, and the river where the pearl lies cannot eclipse the pearl's glow; this is also the way it is. I have been living by the lake for over a decade. However, I have not made an acquaintance with those so-called honorable recluses. It is difficult to get their surnames. How can I expect to see their graceful bearing or to read their works? If this is the case, how can I even expect to know those happily married ones in the women's quarters, who exchange poems in chambers hidden in long, narrow lanes or some out-of-the-way houses? One may well say that that these honorable recluses are indeed secluded.
>
> 物之光者，必有以所隐之。故盈尺之璧，韫于璞，径寸之珠溷于渊，理也。乃物之光而能隐者。又必有以光之。故玉韫而山不能掩其辉，珠藏于川不能掩其媚，亦理也。吾湖居十许岁，未识所谓隐君者。夫求其姓字不可得，况欲睹人之风仪，披阅其人之著作乎？夫欲睹其风仪，披阅其著作，且不可得，况欲问起伉俪于闺阁之中，唱酬于委巷曲房之内者，为何如人乎?隐君之隐，可谓深矣！
>
> (Xu Shiqi, "*Xu Yinluan ji sijuan* 序影鸾集四卷," Hu Wenkai, appendix 47)

The honorable recluse described by Xu differs from the recluse-scholar such as Tao Qian in various respects. First, the idealized recluse-scholar usually selects a recess in a hill or a remote area far away from the crowds as their location of seclusion. Therefore, mountains, waters, and farmsteads are their protections, screening them from the vanity of the world. In the case of Xu's "honorable recluse," her seclusion is secured

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[127] *Chi* is a unit of length, equaling one third of a meter.

[128] *Cun* is a unit of length, equaling 1/30 meter.

by meandering lanes and walls of big mansions. The metaphors of jade and pearl also indicate passivity in the seclusion of the honorable recluse. To the recluse-scholar, living in seclusion is a serious choice, because his primary identity as a Confucian scholar originally demands that he serve in the government. His abandonment of civil service, which very likely leads to fame and wealth, bespeaks an agency. In the honorable recluse's case, her seclusion is expected and conforms to social and cultural norms, rather than challenging them.

What further distinguishes the honorable recluse from the recluse-scholar involves their distinct writing positions. For the recluse-scholar, writing about his secluded life implies a social criticism. His identities as a scholar and as a recluse become referential. There exists a tension between what he is expected to do as a scholar, and what he has to do as a principled recluse. According to Mencius, to serve as an official is as immanent to a scholar's identity as farming is to a farmer.[129] A scholar who avoids public service, therefore, is not an unlearned man, but a recluse. To certain extent, the recluse-scholar is a paradox. However, his paradoxical position salvages him, removing him from the marginal back to the central. He defies the relationship between the ruler and the subject, the first of the five Confucian cardinal relationships (*wulun* 五伦). However, the recluse-scholar highlights his agency not by overthrowing the established Confucian regulation of this relationship, but by redefining who his ruler should be. Such a redefinition only underscores and reinforces the relationship. Therefore, the recluse-scholar achieves agency through both defiance and compromise.

[129] Mengzi, 44.

The “honorable recluse,” as described by Xu Shiqi, is a woman. Her seclusion is both physical and discursive. Especially in a literary tradition where writing is regarded as self-exposure, women writers need to justify their writing position, while men are accused of keeping themselves and their writings away from the public. In contrast to the assertive way that the recluse-scholar utters his voice and has it heard, the female honorable recluse waits to be found and explored. She is the wonderful myth belonging to the past, a discursive construction mystified dually by time and space. In his preface, Xu repeatedly emphasizes the women writers’ fantastic talent and their uncommon stories. He also takes great pains to explain how, purely by chance, he found *Yingluanji*, the collection of their writings in a mess of books sold in a basket at a very low price, and how he searched every corner of the city for people who might know these writers and have any clue of where the collection is from, to no avail. He then concludes that it is only by providence that the honorable recluses, like jade or pearls, were discovered and shown to the world by him, a connoisseur. Such a description deprives the honorable recluses of any agency and objectifies them as exhibits.

Wang’s use of allusions to famous male recluse-scholars gives agency to the subject positions in her poems and differentiates them from the honorable recluse as described by Xu Shiqi. The speaking voices in her poems who identify themselves with the recluse-scholar, but whose gender is deliberately blurred, elucidate their secluded lifestyle as a personal choice due to their values, rather than something that they have to do. At the same time, allusions in her poems contribute to the agency of the subject positions through more than mere cross-gender identification. They empower the speaking subjects by bringing a register of the speaking voice’s aspiration, which is open-

ended rather than rigorously fixed, into the descriptions of natural images and actions of the poetic personas.

In Wang Duanshu's "Addiction to Seclusion" poems, allusions to Chen Zhongzi and Tao Qian facilitate subject positions that are innovative in several aspects. The poetic persona is a scholar who straddles gender identities. She is the analogy of a male Confucian scholar in her wish to be a recluse-scholar, which is underscored by the depiction of her poverty. In many other places in *Lamenting Red Flowers*, Wang describes her desperate economic situations. In a poem entitled "Enduring Poverty" (*Nai pin* 耐贫), she depicts a night when the speaking self is writing alone in a humble room. Similar to the environment in the "Addiction to Seclusion" poems, the setting of the poem features complete loneliness, even with a hint of mysterious air:

夜深黄鼠偏为祟　　Deep in the night brown mice haunt the room.
坐久青毡欲变妖　　I sat so long that the black felt rug almost metamorphosed into a sprite.

(Wang Duanshu, "*Nai pin* 耐贫" ("Enduring Poverty"), lines 5-6, 9.6b)

It is against such a background that the poetic persona finally utters her aspiration:

陋巷不堪人共惜　　Humble lanes are too shabby to be cherished by everyone.
清幽余爱乐箪瓢　　I value the happiness of simple life in a quiet and secluded place.

(Ibid, lines 7-8)

To express her aspiration in the last couplet, the poet alludes to *The Analects*, in which Confucius praises Yan Hui 颜回, a favorite disciple of his:

> [Yan] lives on a basket of rice and a gourd dipper of drinking water [every day], and resides in a humble lane. Other people can't bear to suffer [from living such a simple life]. Yet Hui always takes delight in it. Hui is virtuous, indeed

一箪食，一瓢饮，在陋巷，人不堪其忧，回也不改其乐。贤哉回也.[130]

The absence of intentional words in the first three couplets of Wang's poem thus sets off the word "*ai* 爱" (love), a word not only involving strong intention but vigorously manifesting her values. The statement of her aspiration made at the end of a poem, which devotes most lines to describing a speaking self in a trance, seems to imply that such an aspiration is almost a second nature, something rooted in the unconscious of the poetic persona. As her aspiration follows Yan Hui's example, the speaking self assumes the subject position of a Confucian scholar. The gender aspect of the scholar, which is essential to the identity of a scholar in other contexts, is deliberately ignored in this poem. Wang transposes the gender implication of the scholar through exaggerating the contrast between the destitution of her living condition and her life's pursuit, and between other people's appreciation of worldly gains and her contempt of them, signified by her secluded lifestyle.

Subject positions of the speaking voice in Wang Duanshu's two poems are further complicated by underlying dimensions of the allusions to Yulin and Beihai, the dimensions that highlight courage, wisdom, and moral integrity in the women characters in the stories. For the case of Yulin, Wang would expect most of her audience to be acquainted with an earlier version of Chen Zhongzi's story, which appears in Liu Xiang's 刘向 (77?-6? B.C.E.) *Lie nü zhuan* 列女传 (*Biographies of Exemplary Women*). In the story, Chen Zhongzi consulted his wife after he was asked by the King of Chu to serve as prime minister. His wife pointed out to him that their current life was full of the pleasure

[130] He Yan 何晏 (?-249), annot. *Lun yu* zhu shu 论语注疏, SKQS, 195:580.

of reading and playing the zither. The material gains from serving as prime minister could never compensate for the worries and troubles accompanying his duty. Moreover, to serve in such turbulent days almost always meant disasters for the family. Chen could easily lose his life if involved in political struggles. After listening to the words of his wife, Chen Zhongzi declined the king's invitation, fled the State of Chu with his wife, and made a living by watering gardens in Yuling.[131]

The subtext of Chen Zhongzi's story empowers the speaking self in Wang Duanshu's poem not as a woman who asserts her intent under the mask of a scholar-recluse, but as a married woman who, like the wife of Chen Zhongzi, though without a name of her own and known to the public as merely the wife of a certain man, nonetheless exhibits great courage and wisdom in the face of the temptations of fame, power, and money. During turbulent times, the wisdom of Chen's wife in evaluating people's characters and abilities and the situation (*zhiren lunshi* 知人论世) earned her respect from her husband.

Wang Duanshu's allusion to Beihai in the sixth line of the second poem of "Addiction to Seclusion" also contains subtext directed to courage and wisdom in women--this time, a seven-year-old girl, daughter of Kong Rong 孔融 (153-208)[132]. After the death of her father, Kong Rong's daughter showed intelligence and courage

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[131] Liu Xia, *Lie nü zhuan* 列女传, *Gu Lie nü zhuan zhu zi suoyin* 古列女传逐字索引, ed. D.C. Lau (Hong Kong: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1993) 21.

[132] Kong Rong, also known as Kong Beihai 孔北海 because he once served as the prefect of Beihai 北海, was killed by Cao Cao 曹操 (155-220) who felt threatened by Kong's hailed reputation and people's popular confidence in him. For the story of Kong Rong and his daughter, see Fan Ye 范晔 (398-445), "Kong Rong zhuan 孔融传," *Nan Song chong kan ben Hou Han shu* 南宋重刊本后汉书 (Taibei: Ershiwu shi biankanguan, 1956), *Liezhuan juan di liushi* 列传卷第六十, 4-18. Not successively paginated.

beyond her age. She scolded her nine-year-old brother when he enjoyed drinking meat broth soon after their father was killed, saying that as they could not expect to be spared, why should he be so ignorant as to still care for the taste of broth. She was fearless even when she was to be executed and said that she would wish for nothing but death if it meant reunion with her parents.[133]

In the subtexts of both allusions, the women's understandings contrast with their husband's, brother's, and father's. Chen Zhongzhi is described as tempted and hesitating in the face of the allure of material gains and fame. Kong's son, though two years older than his sister, is totally incapable of estimating the situation. In Chen's case, the wife is said to unwaveringly cherish the Confucian values, wisdom and moral integrity. As for Kong Rong, the speaking voice's attitude to the Han scholar-official in Wang Duanshu's poem is stated by the character "*xiu* 羞" (to be ashamed). In other words, she regards Kong's achievements in managing state affairs as vain and pointless. His pride in his political achievements and enjoyment of popular opinion only shows that he lacks the wisdom to make the proper judgment of the situation, a wisdom with which his seven-year-old daughter possessed. In many other versions of the two women's stories told by later literati writers, the women are either absent, like Chen's wife in *Mencius*, or depicted only as a good wife or daughter, whose virtues and wisdom underscore more of their husband's or father's worthiness, as Kong Rong's daughter in a poem by Song poet Lin Tong 林同 (?-1276).[134] The subtexts of the two stories interact with the text and

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[133] Ibid.

[134] Lin Tong's poem on Kong Rong's daughter is one of his twenty poems on filial women in history. The poem imitates the voice of Kong's daughter, who expresses her fearlessness in the face

allow a possible deconstruction of the cross-gender allusions to the scholar-recluse and scholar-official in appearance. Consequently, the allusions enable the speaking voice of the poems to disassociate the culturally defined (male) gender implication from the notions of recluse (*yin* 隐), scholar (*shi* 士), and aspiration (*zhi* 志).

A comparison between Wang Duanshu's "Addiction to Seclusion" and the second poem of a series with the title "*Xiao guixiu shi bo shen* 效闺秀诗博哂" ("Imitating Poems By Talented Women Writers For Your Entertainment," hereafter "Imitating Poems") further illustrates how the cross-gender performance in "Addiction to Seclusion" facilitates agency for the speaking selves. The following couplets from "Imitating Poems" describe a lonely boudoir in a spring day:

镜光尘蔽拭重揩	The mirror dusted, I wipe it again and again.
粉褪容消冷竹钗	My facial powder fades, my beauty vanishes. Cold is my bamboo hairpin.
鹦鹉不传香阁恨	The parrot does not spread the words of regret of fragrant chambers.
花枝偏向绮窗排	The blooming branches willfully slant towards the exquisite window frame.

(Wang Duanshu, "*Xiao guixiu shi bo shen*," poem no. 2, lines 1-4, 9.5b)

Similar to the "Addiction to Seclusion" poems, the scenario in the above couplets also features solitude and seclusion. However, it differs from the former in three aspects. The speaking self in the poems, imitating those by gentry women authors, is described as secluded in her boudoir. However, unlike the recluse-scholar in the seclusion poems, whose gender is deliberately concealed, the gender of the poetic persona in these poems

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of death and consoles herself that she would soon see her parents after death. See Lin Tong's "Kong Rong nü," *Xiao shi* 孝诗, SKQS, 1183:248.

is underscored and even exaggerated by the depiction of selected furnishings in the chamber:

慵翻绣被拂重茵　　Languidly I lift my embroidered quilt and caress the thick mattresses
寂寞深闺似小春　　Spring in the lonely boudoir is like late autumn.
(Ibid, poem no. 1, lines 1-2, 9.5a)

Beside the quilt and bedclothes, almost all other images in the two poems highlight her femininity: the mirror, the fragrant chamber, the windows shaded with exquisite gauze, the embroidered shoes, the parrot, the blooming branches, the swallows, the flowers, and the butterflies. These images relate to each other and together they constitute a subject position consistent with conventional poetic personas created by male literati in *gongti shi* 宫体诗 (poetry in palace style) where lonely women always long for the companionship of their lovers in their exquisite boudoirs. The overstated gender of the poetic persona in Wang's "Imitating Poems," just like that in the palace poems, addresses that stereotypes of feminine gender are constitutive to the subject position of the speaking self, exclusively determining who the self is, what she shall say, how she shall say it, and why she says it.

In "Addiction to Seclusion," the cross-gender allusions, the blurred boundary between genders, and the subtexts of allusions to women represented in earlier texts, create new subject positions due to the discrepancy between literary culture and Wang's position as a woman writer. In the "Imitating Poems," however, the consistency between all of the images and the palace poetry of which Wang imitates, addresses a subject position that is self-referential and closed. The action of looking at herself in the mirror is undoubtedly a performance for a male audience who is expected to sympathize with her

in regards to her wasted beautiful appearance. She is a conspirator in the voyeuristic game. Even the act of speaking itself becomes parroting, as indicated in the third line. When the parrot in the poem refuses to pass on the words of regret of the fragrant chamber, the speaking self takes over its job. The imitation is two-fold: the parrot being acquainted with the regret of the speaking self implies her utterance of this feeling as completely redundant. Her utterance of the regret is also nothing new. She is just repeating what has been said and expected.

The title of the above poem series adds a third dimension to the theme of imitation poetry by talented women. Wang not only states in the title that the two poems are imitations of talented women's poetry, but surprisingly claims that her purpose in writing is "for your entertainment." Wang seemingly does not consider her own original poems to belong in the category of "*guixiu shi* 闺秀诗" (poetry by talented women). As indicated by the title, she holds a disdainful, if not hostile attitude toward poems with such a label. In the poem series, she employs conventional images to describe a conventional mood. It is obvious that she defines "poetry by talented women" by laying particular emphasis on the character *gui* 闺, literally women's quarters. The gendered privacy and seclusion suggested by the character is required and determined by social and cultural norms, and aestheticized by poetic conventions. Wang's parody of this type of poetry betrays her anxiety caused by her desire for agency, and her awareness of her gendered writing position. With her poems titled as imitations, Wang is able to distance herself from the stereotyped "talented woman writers." To a certain extent, her denial indicates identification with literati, as she displays an awareness of how many literati typically view women's poetry, and an ability to write such poems to meet their

expectations. At the same time, by refusing to be categorized with the stereotypical *guixiu* poets, and creating a rupture between the speaking and writing selves, she consciously suggests possibilities for women's poetry other than the stereotyped model. A compiler of a thirty-eight *juan* anthology of women's poetry and another anthology of prose written by women since the Ming dynasty, Wang was undoubtedly well versed in both the tradition of women's writings and the trend of talented women's poetry in her own time. Her imitation in the two poems just for her readers' entertainment implies a criticism of *guixiu* poetry, as such a poetic performance with the script already written is treated merely as a game with images and words. Such a poem is a closed semantic system, static and inaccessible to changes.[135]

Wang's light-hearted imitation of stereotyped women's poetry and her cross-gender allusions may suggest her anxiety as a woman writer. This anxiety sometimes results in her deliberate performance of a male scholar subject. In the poem "*Linfu* 邻妇" ("The Neighbor Woman"), she describes her young beautiful neighbor:

鸟声初啭堕花春	When birds twitter for the first time in the mating season, flowers fall to the ground in a spring day.
静女幽妆采落苹	Wearing elegant make-up, the girl of gentle beauty collects the fallen clovers.
脸映芙蕖娇且艳	Side by side with water lilies, her face is tender and charming.
眉修清月淡无尘	Delicate and long, her eyebrows resemble fine crescents.
一泓秋水留西子	Limpid as autumn waters, her eyes belong to Xishi[136].
半幅轻绡写洛神	Her long silk garment outlines the silhouette of the Goddess of Luo River.
秀色供食饥可乐	Feasting my eyes on her beauty, I am happy to go hungry.
不才忝已在东邻	I, the clumsy, have the honor to be her neighbor to the east.

[135] "She pointed out that poems written by women had a tendency to be flowery and lack gravity." See Wang Duanshu's biography in Clara Wing-chung Ho, ed., *Biographical Dictionary of Chinese Women: The Qing Period, 1644-1911* (New York: An East Gate Book, 1998) 218.

[136] Xishi 西施 is a famous beauty in the Spring and Autumn Period (770 -476 B.C.E.).

(Wang Duanshu, "*Linfu*," 9.7b)

In depicting the woman's beauty, the poet alludes to Xishi, the concubine of King Fuchai of Wu 吳王夫差 (?-473 B.C.E.) who is well-known for her unrivaled beauty, and the Goddess of the Luo River, whose beauty and sexual appeal are glorified in Cao Zhi's 曹植 (192-232) "Rhapsody on the Luo Goddess (*Luoshen fu* 洛神賦)." [137] Such allusions bespeak a curious voyeuristic desire that totally identifies the speaking self with a male writer. The desire is overtly acknowledged in the ending couplet. The poetic persona proclaims her/his desire in such a hyperbolic and shameless way that the speaking self almost sounds hysterical. If the parody of stereotyped women's poetry is intended to criticize them, the imitation of the male writer strives to demonstrate a competence in writing like the literati. However, the exaggeration signifies an anxiety: the speaking self's desire is so misplaced that she becomes confused and uncertain. Consequently, she has to employ such clichéd allusions as Xi Shi and the Goddess of Luo, as well as the idiom "*xiuse kecan* 秀色可餐" (an attractive woman is a feast to the eye), which is too hackneyed and barefaced to be regarded as suitable for poetic discourse. The unusual banality in diction, the collage of worn-out images, and the lack of sincere admiration or sympathy may suggest more of a misplaced desire and anxiety than a controlled appropriation of dominant (literati) models in search for a feminine

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[137] *Fu*, rhyme-prose or rhapsody, is a literary form very much in vogue from the Han dynasty (206 B.C.-A.D. 220) to the Northern and Southern dynasties (420-589). For the exploration of *fu* as a genre and its specimens collected in *Wen xuan*, see David Knechtges, Introduction, *'Wen xuan': or 'Selection of Refined Literature'* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982) 1-70.

voice of friendship in women writers's friendship poems examined by Maureen Robertson.[138]

Allusions, Synthesis, and Generation of Subject Positions in the Poem "Lack of Food"

In Wang Duanshu's *Lamenting Red Flowers*, allusions contribute to the construction of new subject positions by way of synthesizing traditionally distinct old ones. These positions incorporate Wang Duanshu's gendered roles as a woman, mother, wife, friend, and those of a Confucian scholar, recluse, and Ming loyalist. As these roles could be considered incompatible with each other, the poetic personas' self-definitions show the writing self's defiance of the limits. The speaking self in "*Dong da Surou guofang fachui* 董大素柔过访乏炊" ("Lack of Food When Surou, the First Daughter of Dong family Came for a Visit," hereafter "Lack of Food") exemplifies several subject positions that she occupied:

荒墟尘寂冷茅室	Near the quiet overgrown burial grounds stands a cold thatched cottage.
秋风乍起微寒栗	At a sudden gust of autumn wind, I shiver with a chill.
竹窗初晓犹朦胧	The first light of morning is still dim at the bamboo window frame.
露封径草良人出	When dews still cover the grass on the path, my husband leaves.
自君之出归暮迟	Since he left, he won't be back until late in the afternoon.
闺伴访予厨乏炊	My girlhood companion comes for a visit; yet there is no food in my kitchen.
诗书疗饥果不胜	We cure our hunger with poetry and books, only in vain.
弃却诗书无所宜	Having put down the poems and books, we find nothing suitable to do.
卜儿未谙口喃喃	I suppose my son babbles because he is too young to know this world.
望女添愁声唧唧	Looking at my little daughter muttering, I am sadder.

[138] Robertson, 1992, 99.

轻嘱我儿弗浪啼	Softly I tell my children not to indulge in crying
米薪娘解罗衣质	You mother will pawn her garment of thin silk for rice and firewood.
膏粱子弟不识书	Children of wealthy family do not know how to read.
狐裘良马大厦居	Yet wearing fox-fur robes and riding fine steed, they live in grand mansions.
箫鼓追随食甘味	Surrounded by music of bamboo flutes and drums, they eat delicious food.
丰粮盈积多饶余	With barns full of plentiful grains, they always have surplus supplies.
人略聪明天亦嫉	When a person is just slightly intelligent, even Heaven is still jealous.
誓必焚书并瘗笔	I swear that I will burn my books and bury my brush.
富贵羞闻歌戺豦	Ashamed to be known for wealth and rank, I sing "The Song of the Door Bolt."
咏此无炊记今日	And with this poem I record today's dearth of food.

(Wang Duanshu, "*Dong da Surou guofang fachui*," 5.4b-5b)

In this poem, Wang Duanshu employs three allusions, bending and transposing them in the poetic context to construct new subject positions. The first allusion appears in the fifth line. The first four characters *zi jun zhi chu* 自君之出 in this line is a well-known *yuefu* caption. Literally, it means "since you, my honored one, left." They originally come from the seventh line of the third poem of Xu Gan's 徐干 (179-217) poem series titled "*Shi si* 室思" ("Longing in a Chamber"):

自君之出矣	Since you left,
明镜暗不治	My bright mirror has been neglected, growing dull.
思君如流水	My longing for you is like a flowing river,
无有穷已时	Never having an end.

(Xu Gan, "*Shi si*," poem no. 3, lines 7-10, 84)

Poets of later generations composed poems using the same first line and theme. A famous example of imitation is by Zhang Jiuling 张九龄 (673 or 678-740):

自君之出矣	Since you left,

不复理残机　　I've never touched the loom where cloth is still unfinished.
思君如满月　　My longing for you is like the full moon,
夜夜减轻辉　　Night after night, losing its brightness.

(Zhang Jiuling, "*zi jun zhi chu yi* 赋得自君之出矣" ("Composed on the Assigned Theme "Since You Left""), 608)

Both poets imitate the voice of a woman and create a gendered speaking voice commonly labeled as "a woman who longs for her lover" (*sifu* 思妇). Undoubtedly, the poems may express sincere sympathy of the poets. Xu and Zhang depict a universal pain when one is separated from his or her beloved. It is yet also undeniable that the poetic personas in their poems are confined within the identity of women who long for their lovers. Their gender role is restricted by the everyday images of mirror and loom. Looking into the mirror and weaving – the two routine rituals of women that are being neglected – signify the speaking voices' longing for their beloved one. In the patriarchal society of late imperial China, the mirror is usually a gendered image because the only moral purpose of a woman's looking into the mirror was to please her male lover. The act of weaving indicates the status of a woman in the family economy. In the two poems, the women's neglect of these rituals conceals who they are instead of defining who they are, because their incapability of performing the rituals results from what Mei Jialing calls a generalized lovesickness dictated by a literary prototype, and therefore lacking in individuality in both the yearned for and the yearning.[139] In addition, the comparison of the lovesick women to the river and the moon imply an anesthetization of the pain and a universalization of such pain. In this sense, I agree with Mei Jianling that the literati poets' effort to speak for the "subaltern" only dissolves the subjectivity of the speaking

[139] Mei Jialing, 2002, 142.

voice. At the same time, the act of yearning suggests a powerful relationship between the yearning and the yearned for. The prototypical female images and feelings have turned the position of the yearned for into a signifier without the signified so that both the male writer and the male reader can satisfy their desire through occupying the object of the yearned for.

Wang Duanshu transposes the line "even since you left" in a particular poetic context. Contrary to the reader's expectation that the speaking voice is going to tell the reader about her lovesickness, the line is employed in a less romantic and even mundane context. When the speaking woman bids her husband farewell, she does not tell the reader why he leaves and where he goes. Judging from their humble living conditions in the thatched cottage, it is possible that the family has been out of essential supplies for a long time. Most likely, her husband leaves home to seek help or to earn money. This is not the only place in *Lamenting Red Flowers* where the poet mentions the almost desperate economic situation of the family. In his preface to *Lamenting Red Flowers*, the author's husband, Ding Shengzhao tells the reader that after the fall of the Ming dynasty, the couple returned to the Jiangnan area and lived in poverty in some mountain area. Though employing set phrases, Ding may not be exaggerating too much, as in a ballad by Wang entitled "*Chumen nan* 出门难" ("Hard to Leave My Home"), Wang recounts her straitened circumstances to her brother:

上衣不蔽身　　My outer garment cannot cover my body.
朝餐不及夕　　Having had my breakfast, I don't have food left for dinner.
(Wang Duanshu, "*Chumen nan*," lines 19-20, 2.2b)

The poetic persona in Wang Duanshu's "Lack of Food" differs from the feminine voices in the poems by Xu and Zhang in several aspects. First, while the reason why the

beloved ones leave is kept unsaid in both poems, the absence of the husband makes the woman in "Lack of Food" sad for practical reasons. Therefore, the sadness in this poem is less romantic, and portrayed in a matter-of-fact tone. The woman here is troubled not only by the fact that her beloved one leaves home, but by what forces her husband to leave. She does not even mention a mirror. Because her primary concern is the basic needs of the family, she either cannot afford, or as a partaker of the economic burden of the household, finds that there is no need to care about her appearance. The absence of the loom is of more interest. Because spinning, weaving, and embroidering are the basic ways with which women in Wang's time participated in the family economy, they are commended as one the four virtues and become constitutive of a woman's identity. However, in Wang Duanshu's case, though she claimed that she learned needlework at the age of fifteen *sui* 岁,[140] her husband tells the reader in the preface of *Lamenting Red Flowers* that she "slighted needlework."[141] In "Hard to Leave My Home," Wang herself excused her neglect of women's work by saying:

汝妹病且慵　　Your sister is sick and languid,
无能理刀尺　　incapable of managing scissors and ruler.
(Wang Duanshu, "*Chumen nan*," lines 19-20, 2.2a-b)

In "Lack of Food," books of poetry replace the loom upon which the poetic persona and her visiting friend centered their activities. They used poetry reading to allay their hunger and even found it as the only proper thing that they could do. The replacement of the loom with poetry in Wang's "Lack of Food" grants the speaking voice

[140] See Wang Duanshu, "*Beiqu* 北去" ("Leaving for the North"), 2.4a.

[141] 不屑女红. Ding Shengzhao, "Preface."

subject positions that might be incompatible elsewhere. She is not only a recluse-scholar, but also the wife of a recluse-scholar, and a mother of two small children.

The second allusion Wang employs in "Lack of Food" is related to her subject position as a mother. The poetic persona and her girlhood companion could at least distract themselves with reading poetry. Her two small children, however, suffering from starvation, could do nothing but mutter their complaints and wail. To pacify them, the mother had to promise them that she would pawn her silk garment for rice and firewood. It is at this moment that, to complain at the unfairness of fate, she alludes to Su Shi 苏轼 (*zi* Zizhan 子瞻, *hao* Dongpo jushi 东坡居士, 1037-1101), the renowned scholar and poet of the Song dynasty (960-1279). She compares her children, who suffer from destitution, to the ignorant sons of wealthy families and accuses fate of envying her cleverness. She is so indignant that she even swears that she will stop reading and writing. Similarly, Su Shi complains about his "being intelligent" in a poem written on bathing his son on the third day of its birth:

人皆养子望聪明　　People all wish that their sons will be bright.
我被聪明误一生　　I fell victim to my intelligence all my life.
生儿但愿愚且鲁　　I wish my son to be slow-witted and ignorant.
无灾无难到公卿　　Smoothly, he shall rise to be the chief minister.

(Su Shi, "*Xi er xi zuo* 洗儿戏作" ("Playfully Written at the Bathing of My Son [on the third day of his birth]"), 2535)

Su's wish for his son is partly serious and partly ironic. As one of the greatest scholars and poets in Chinese literary history, he did not find his knowledge and intelligence helpful to his official career. Meanwhile he is also indicating that there is something wrong with this world: that only the foolish and the ignorant can rise to

power.[142] Wang Duanshu expresses a similar sentiment in her poem. She regrets, more explicitly, that because her intelligence and literary talents have not even won her life's necessities, she might as well get rid of book and brush.

Unlike Su Shi who seems to treat "intelligence" as something inherent, Wang in her poem points out that she becomes "intelligent" through reading and writing. The poets's genders play a pivotal role in their different treatment of intelligence. To Su, it is simply redundant to mention his intelligence and knowledge were acquired through reading and writing. As a male scholar-official, reading and writing are intrinsic to his identity. In Wang's case, however, "intelligence" in a woman refers, by default, to an inborn status that has nothing to do with reading and writing. The writer here implies that she voluntarily chose the life of seclusion and poverty, though it is possible for her to have power and wealth with her "books and brush." In Wang's time, reading and writing was the essential way for a male scholar to be an official through the civil service examination system. Wang skillfully contextualizes her intelligence with that of Su Shi's through allusion and achieves a self-empowerment. She indicates in this poem, in an oblique way, that reading and writing signify power and wealth to women too; she probably does not know exactly how, though in a poem she does mention Huang Chonggu 黃崇嘏, a legendary woman in the Five Dynasties period (907-959) who disguised herself as a man and served in the local government.[143]

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[142] This poem was written when the poet just barely escaped death. He offended powerful and influential officials, was banished from the court, and relegated to Huangzhou, a border area in Sichuan province.

[143] In "Hard to Leave My Home," the speaking voice implies to her brother she might follow the example of Huang Chonggu and find a way to support herself. See Wang Duanshu, "Hard to leave my home," *Lamenting Red Flowers*, 2.2b. For the biography of Huang Chonggu, see Wu Renchen 吳

The third allusion to “The Song of the Door Bolt” in Wang’s poem endows the speaking voice with a subject position echoing that which appears earlier in the poem--the position of a recluse-scholar’s virtuous wife who is herself a recluse-scholar and is determined to go through thick and thin together with her husband. “The Song of the Door Bolt” is said to have been first composed and performed by Baili Xi’s 百里奚 (fl. eighth century B.C.E.) wife. Baili Xi, a former slave of Chu, was ransomed by King Miu of the state of Qin 秦缪公 (?-776 B.C.E.) and was made the prime minister of Qin. Somehow, his wife came to work as a servant in his mansion without his knowledge. One day, when Baili Xi and his guests were enjoying music at a banquet, his wife volunteered to play the zither and sing a song. In her song, she described how, on the day of Baili’s departure, she cooked a laying hen and burned the door bolt as firewood. “The Song of the Door Bolt” is now often used to refer to a woman who goes through difficult times with her husband.[144]

In the poem, the poetic persona claims that she sings “The Song of the Door Bolt” because she feels ashamed to be known for wealth and rank. Due to her sadness as a wife who sees off her husband on an early morning, a hostess who fails to put food on table for her guest, and a mother who feels helpless when her children are starving, her shame can be twofold: “The Song of the Door Bolt” expresses her loyalty to her husband who lives a life of destitute seclusion. The second allusion to Su Shi indicates that such a lifestyle is also her personal choice. Therefore, her shame at being known for wealth and

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任臣 (1628?-1689?), “*Huang Chonggu Li furen zhuan* 黄崇嘏李夫人传,” *Shiguo chunqiu* 十国春秋 (Taibei: Guoguang shuju, 1962) 45: 5a-b.

144 See Ying Shao 应劭 (fl. 189-194), *Fengsu tongyi* 风俗通义, *Fengsu tongyi zhuzi suoying* 风俗通义逐字索引. Eds. D.C. Lau (Hong Kong: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1996) 147-8.

rank refers to her resentment of those who are rich yet ignorant, and her sense of moral superiority. At the same time, however, she may also feel ashamed at her poverty, a sentiment subtly suggested by her complaints about unfair Fate. In another poem about a dream of hers, she describes a cold winter's day when even the mice in her house are hungry and sighed because of a lack of food. She ends the poem with a couplet depicting a fond dream where she steps into a carriage decorated with fine ornaments.[145]

Wang Siren, Wang Duanshu's father, committed suicide by starving himself to death when his hometown Shaoxing fell to the hand of Qing armies in 1646. Like her father, Wang remained a Ming loyalist her whole life. Her loyalty and her competent reading and writing skills together allowed her to identify herself with male scholars, as illustrated in her allusions to scholar-officials or scholar-recluses. However, her desire and anxiety resulting from her position as a woman writer are revealed in the subtexts of the allusions and those symptomatic moments of her poetry. In addition, because practicing her political loyalty in everyday life means the involvement of her proclaimed roles as a scholar, daughter, wife, mother, and friend, these roles are interwoven and give rise to subject positions that bear tension due to the incompatibility of these roles in terms of social and cultural norms.

Wang Duan's Allusions to Women Writers in Poems on Liu Rushi

Wang Duan, as a life-long writer, differs from Wang Duanshu due to her constant acknowledgement of women's writing traditions preceding her. While Wang Duanshu

[145] 梦中催上七香车. Wang Duanshu, "*Meng huan* 梦幻" ("A Dream"), line 8, 9.4b.

consciously empowers the subject positions in her poetry by identifying, at least on the surface, with male writers, Wang Duan does so by acknowledging, applauding, and sometimes criticizing her women predecessors. It is noteworthy that Wang Duan seldom employs allusions either to male or female writers of previous generations for the purpose of identification. Rather, the allusions in her poems contribute to her reconstruction of historical figures and demonstrate her re-evaluations of them in a poetic way. The agency of the speaking voice in her poems comes from her contextualization of the allusions carefully selected and collaged together to reconstruct and re-evaluate a historical figure as poet-historian. Her poems on women writers of previous generations usually allude extensively to women figures in history other than the main woman subject. These allusions function in a bilateral way: the allusions to women figures facilitate the reconstruction of the central female figure of a poem. Meanwhile, the allusions themselves have to be re-interpreted when they are contextualized in the poem. Consequently, the reader has to inquire into the multifold aspects of the stories of the women alluded to before interpreting the importance attached to the woman in the text. In this section, I will examine Wang Duan's allusions to historical women figures in her poems on Liu Shi柳是 (1618-1664, also known as Liu Yin 柳隐, *zi* Miwu 蘼芜, Ruishi 如是, *hao* Hedongjun 河东君, Wowen jushi 我闻居士), the famous woman writer, painter, and Ming loyalist.[146]

With allusions to renowned male recluse-scholars or scholar-officials of previous generations, as well as to historical women, Wang Duanshu empowers the speaking

[146] For detailed biography of Liu Rushi, see Chen Yinke, *Liu Rushi zhuan* 柳如是传 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1980).

voices in her poetry, in as much as the poetic voices not only transcend gender restrictions through cross-gender performance of the roles, but in a certain sense re-write and therefore enrich the denotation of the recluse and the scholar. Compared to Wang Duanshu's overt identification with the *ru* 儒 (Confucian scholar), Wang Duan is less assertive and more critical of the social and cultural roles of Confucian scholars. While Wang Duanshu's identification indicates a gender anxiety, Wang Duan's critical attitude suggests that she is more comfortable with her position as a woman writer, critic, and historian. There is a span of more than one hundred years between the two writers. This historical period witnessed a continuing flourishing of the so-called *guixue wenxue* 闺秀文学 (literature of talented women[147]). Despite violent criticism and opposition from conservatives like Zhang Xuecheng 章学诚 (1738-1801)[148], women writers like Wang Duan in the eighteenth century had many more predecessors whose writings were accessible to them in various anthologies and individual collections. Born into a scholarly family and later married to Chen Peizhi 陈裴之 (1794-1828), the son of Chen Wenshu 陈文述 (1775-1845), a renowned literary personality, Wang Duan received academic training in literature, history, and even astrology. Unlike Wang Duanshu, Wang Duan did not have to worry about food and clothing. She lived a more secluded life in the women's

[147] Most of the talented women were from governing class, though courtesans were also prominent mainly in late Ming and early Qing. For the marginalization of courtesans and their writing in the eighteenth century, see Susan Mann, *Women in China's Long Eighteenth Century* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997) 121-42.

[148] In *Fu xue* 妇学, Zhang Xuecheng bitterly accuses his contemporary women writers for being corrupted in Confucian ethics because of their poetry writing (今之妇学转因诗而败礼). See Zhang Xuecheng, *Fu xue*, *Bai bu cong shu ji cheng* 百部丛书集成 (Taibei: Yiwen yinshuguan. 1972) coll. 35, case 2, 6: 9a.

quarters and did not experience dynastic transition or any social turmoil.[149] She was obviously influenced by the conservative trend in the mid-eighteenth century and was, from time to time, emphatic in passing moral judgment on historical figures in her poetry. Due to her academic training, life experience, and personality, her poetry is less defiant of social norms. Economically secure, a beloved wife in a harmonious marriage, an eager student of her father, uncle, and father-in-law (who were in turn her first and most important readers), Wang Duan's performance of "self" mostly complies with what is expected of a "talented woman," or at least it seems at first glance. Her training in literature and especially history enables her to have a critical view of Confucian scholars. Therefore she is not as eager as Wang Duanshu to identify with them. Wang Duan's critical stance influences the subject positions of the speaking voices in her poetry. In terms of allusions, her poetic voices usually assume the position of a historian who keeps a critical distance from the persons or events alluded to, rather than empowering herself through identification, as in Wang Duanshu's case.

In Wang Duan's *Innate Love*, there are nine poems on Liu Shi. The first four poems appear in a poetry series written in 1810 when Wang was newly wedded into Chen Wenshu's family.[150] According to the preface to the series, Wang's father-in-law, Chen Wenshu, visited Yushan 虞山 in Zhejiang province and repaired Liu's tomb in the

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[149] For Wang Duan's biographies, see Chen Wenshu, "Xiao hui Wang Yiren zhuan 孝慧汪宜人传;" and Hu Jing 胡敬, "Wang Yuzhuang nüshi zhuang 汪允庄女史传," Wang Duan, *Ziranhaoxuezhai shichao*, not paginated.

[150] For the poetry series and its English translation, see Appendix A.

spring of the year *gengwu* 庚午 (1810).[151] He also carved an inscription on a stone tablet on the tomb, painted a picture of Liu entitled "*Miwu xiangying tu* 蘼芜香影图" (Miwu's[152] Fragrant Portrait), and invited his literati friends and his women disciples and relatives to write poems about the painting,[153] among which is the poem series by Wang Duan. Her second series is similarly entitled "*Ti Hedongjun xiaoxiang* 题河东君小像" ("Written on the Top of the Miniature Portrait of Madame Hedong").[154] The four poems in the series appear in the seventh volume of her collection. The poems in *Innate Love* are basically chronologically arranged, thus the poem series must have been written after the mid-winter of the year *wuzi* 戊子 (1829),[155] around nineteen years after the first series.

In the second poems of the first series (1810), Wang Duan employs allusions in almost every line to construct the speaking voice of a historian who expresses her veiled criticism of Qian Qianyi 钱谦益 (1582-1664), a Ming scholar-official who had held an

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[151] See Wang Duan's preface to "*Ti Miwu xingying tu hou* 题蘼芜香影图后 (Written behind the Fragrant Portrait of Miwu)," *Ziran haoxue zhai shichao*, 2.16b.

[152] Miwu is one of Liu Rushi's courtesy names.

[153] See Shu Wei 舒位 (1765-1815, *zi* Tieyun 铁云), "Preface to "On the Fragrant Portrait of Miwu, Four Poems" (Miwu xingying tu si shou 蘼芜香影图四首)," *Wowenshi shenggao fulu shicilei* 我闻室剩稿附录诗词类, ed. Yuan Ying, XXSKQS, 1391:581.

[154] Hedongjun (Madame Hedong) is Liu Shi's *hao* (style name). For the poem series and its English translation, see Appendix B.

[155] In "*Wuzi zhongdong xu ke Ziranhaoxuezhai jinzuo er juan gaocheng gan fu ji shu ji Yishan, Lanshang, Feiqing, Gengwan zhuzi* 戊子仲冬续刻自然好学斋近作二卷告成感赋即书寄怡珊兰上飞卿耕畹诸姊" ("In the mid-winter of the year *wuzi*, the block-printing of the recent two *juan* continuation of *Ziranhaoxuezhai* were completed. Moved, I composed a poem and sent it to my sisters Yishan, Lanshang, Feiqing, and Gengwan."), Wang Duan mentions that two chapters of *Innate Love* were completed in the mid-winter of the year *wuzi* 戊子 (1829). See Wang Duan, 7.5a.

official post (though for a short period of time) in the new Qing dynasty, and her praise of Liu Shi, a famous courtesan writer and painter, Qian's concubine, and a devoted Ming loyalist:

堂开半野足风流	Opening on partly uncultivated land, the hall is elegant and romantic.
墨妙茶香丽句流	Her beautiful line on the exquisiteness of ink and the fragrance of tea has been handed down.
绮阁新妆评玉蕊	In her exquisite chamber, wearing fresh make-up, she comments on the article of "Jade pistil."
画帘春雨写银钩	On a rainy spring day. She hangs the decorated curtain and drew a bright moon.
捐躯世竞夸毛惜	The whole world competes in praising Mao Xi who sacrificed her life.
忍死人犹吹沈侯	Those who drag on living are still complimenting Marquis Shen.
地下未忘家国恨	Even in the other side of the world you have never forgotten your remorse for the family and nation's calamity.
月明还共七姬游	In bright moonlight you will wander with the seven women.

(Wang Duan, "*Ti Miwu xingying tu hou* 题蘼芜香影图后" ("Written behind the Fragrant Portrait of Miwu"), poem no. 2, 2.16a)

Wang's criticism of Qian Qianyi's betrayal during the dynastic transition is suggested by the allusion to Marquis Shen. Marquis Shen, or Shen Yue 沈约 (441-513), was a scholar-official who successively served as a high official in three dynasties: the Song 宋 (420-478), the Qi 齐 (479-501), and the Liang 梁 (557-589). He is a so-called *erchen* 贰臣, or a court official who transferred his allegiance to a new ruler. According to Confucian moral standards, *erchen*, or the act of not remaining loyal to one's ruler and serving his successor, is condemned as the most unacceptable moral corruption. The compilation and publication of *Erchen zhuan* 贰臣传 (*The Biographies of Turncoat Officials*) by the order of the Qing Emperor Qianlong 乾隆 (1736-1796) influenced people's understanding of those disloyal Ming officials, among whom Qian Qianyi is

listed.[156] Although both scholar-officials are hailed for their literary achievements, Wang Duan here obviously does not approve of their transferred allegiance; in the poem she compares their betrayal to the loyalty of the women: Mao Xi, the seven women, and finally, the central figure of the poem – Liu Shi.

Mao Xi's heroic death is recorded in "*Lie nü zhuan* 列女传" ("Biographies of Exemplary Women") section in *Song shi* 宋史 (*The History of Song Dynasty*). Mao Xi was a palace entertainer. At the fall of Song, she was captured by the enemy troops. Ashamed to serve the enemy, she refused to sing and was killed.[157] The phrase "seven women" refers to the seven concubines of Pan Yuanshao 潘元绍 (?-1367).[158] During the siege of Pingjiang city, Pan warned them that they should be prepared to defend their chastity at the fall of the city. At hearing his words, one woman hanged herself to show her loyalty to him. She was then followed by the other six.[159] Wang Duan recorded the deaths of the seven women in "*Zhang Wu jishi shi* 张吴纪事诗" ("Poems Relating What Happened in the Wu Area under the Reign of Zhang Shicheng").[160]

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[156] For Qian Qianyi's biography in *Erchen zhuan*, see *Guoshiguan shanben Erchenzhuan* 国史官缮本贰臣传, 1776, reprinted, *Qingdai zhuanji congkan* 清代传记丛刊, comp. Zhou Junfu (Taibei: Mingwen shuju, 1985) 57:631-639.

[157] Tuo Tuo 脱脱 (1314-1355), eds. "*Lie nü zhuan* 列女传, " *Yuan ben Song shi* 元本宋史 (Taibei: Ershiwen shi biankanguan, 1956) 16b. Not successively paginated.

[158] Pan Yuanshao was Zhang Shicheng's 张士诚 (1321-1367) son-in-law. Zhang Shicheng established the Dynasty of Dazhou 大周 (1354-1357) which lasted for only three years. Pan Yuanshao was the Left Minister (*zuocheng* 左丞) of Jianzhe Province. See Zhang Huizi, et al. *Zhongguo lidai renming dacidian* 中国历代人名大辞典 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1999) 2524.

[159] Wang Duan, 6.12b-14a.

[160] According to Wang Duan's biography written by Chen Wenshu these poems are excerpted from a eighty-volume novel by Wang entitled *An Unofficial History of the Yuan and the Ming* (*Yuan ming yi shi* 元明逸史). Wang Duan later burned the novel, and it is not extant.

Similar to Wang Duanshu's principles, Wang Duan's values are deeply rooted in Confucian teachings. In the biography for his daughter-in-law, Chen Wenshu recorded how she refused to read Daoist classics because she regarded them as against the teachings of Confucius. To both poets, the bound duty of a Confucian scholar is to observe and defend the Confucian ethical code.[161] Therefore, they rank loyalty as one of the most important moral obligations. Inevitably they inherit the (male) traditional ideology and discourse, which analogizes a woman's loyalty to her husband to that of a subject's to his ruler. In the first poem series, Wang Duan employs this rhetoric, attaching the same value to the seven women's deaths as to the death of their husband in loyalty to his country, and calls both the wives and the husband *jielie* 节烈 (people of moral integrity and eminence).[162]

In the second poem of "Written behind the Fragrant Portrait of Miwu," Wang Duan vigilantly keeps a critical distance from the Confucian scholars such as Shen Yue and Qian Qianyi. Even in poems where she alludes in more positive terms to male scholars, she seldom identifies herself with them. To her, a Confucian scholar is by no means necessarily a man of moral integrity. In one poem, she severely criticizes Confucian scholars who, once having achieved wealth and rank, forsook their moral principles to secure personal gains:

儒生昔未遇	Once a Confucian scholar had not gained recognition from the ruler.
兀兀研经书	Diligently he studied the classics.

[161] Such as "*san gang wu chang* 三纲五常" (three cardinal guides (ruler guides subject, father guides son, and husband guides wife) and five constant virtues (benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom and fidelity).

[162] Wang Duan, 6.5b.

立身希稷契	In conducting himself, he looked up at Ji and Qi as his models.[163]
发言祖唐虞	He swore to follow the examples in Tang and Yu.
一朝跻轩冕	Once he had climbed up to be a senior official,
昔志皆成虚	All his former aspirations vanished.
心如饮贪泉	His heart was desirous, as if he had drunk from the Spring of Greed.
地见迁明珠	His mind was blind, as if he has lost his bright eyes.
既为权相犬	He followed the powerful minister as a lackey,
复作中官奴	And served the court eunuch as his slave.

(Wang Duan, "*Ni gu* 拟古" ("Poems Modeled on the Style of the Ancients"), poem no. 9, lines 1-10, 5a)

To Wang Duan, Confucian knowledge and training do not necessarily make a scholar a man of honor. Nor do his worldly achievements. With such a critical stance, it is impossible for Wang Duan to look up indiscriminately at Confucian scholars as her model.

There are other reasons for Wang Duan's refusal of cross-gender identification. First, in the case of Wang Duanshu, the fall of the Ming meant devastation of both her country (*guo* 国) and her home (*jia* 家). She lost her father. Both her natal family and her husband's family lost their male members's role in the government, and thus the family's social status and economic resource. Consequently, as the speaking voices of her poems suggest, Wang Duanshu was urgently seeking a worthy identity. The cross-gender identification with male scholars grants her an anchor. Unlike Wang Duanshu, Wang Duan lived in times of peace and prosperity. Both her natal family and her husband's family were well-off. She spent her life in a more secluded domestic environment. She received orthodox training in Confucian scholarship from her father, uncle, aunt, and

[163] Ji 稷 and Qi 契 are the two worthy officials of Tang 唐 and Yu 虞, the two legendary dynasties in ancient times of prosperity.

father-in-law, and her acceptance of Confucian teachings made her avow her identity as a daughter, wife, and daughter-in-law. In her poems, she overtly acknowledges this gendered identity and was obviously comfortable with it. Second, Wang Duanshu's poetry and prose attest to her constant association with literati: She was few of the female members of "*Tongqiu she* 同秋社" (Shared Autumn Society), a society which included renowned writers and Ming loyalists such as Zhang Dai in Zhejiang province.[164] Her collected works contain a great number of poems that she wrote to her husband's literati friends on behalf of him. In such a context, the discursive performance of being a male scholar may have facilitated her social activities. In Wang Duan's case, however, her social contacts were mostly limited to the family circle, and her father-in-law's female disciples. As most of these contacts were female, a self-acknowledged cross-gender identification would impede, rather than facilitate, her interpersonal communication. Third, as a historian, Wang Duan was acquainted with stories and records concerning many historical figures. Her courage and insight as a serious historian enabled her to form her own judgment over historical figures and events. She earnestly defended and praised the ruler and officials of Zhang Shicheng's court. Her indignation of Zhu Yuanzhang's 朱元璋 (1328-1398)[165] cruel persecution of his followers after the

[164] For the name list of some of the members of the Shared Autumn Society who contributed to the block printing of Wang Duanshu's *Lamenting Red Flowers*, see "*Ke Yinhong ji xiao yin* 刻吟红集小引" ("A Brief Introduction to the Block Printing of *Yinhong ji*"), *Lamenting Red Flowers*, not paginated. I did not find any information about the Shared Autumn Society elsewhere except in *Lamenging Red Flowers*. Wang Duanshu mentioned in "*Xuanhua zi tongqiu shi xuan xu* 玄华子同秋诗选序" ("Preface to Master Xuanhua's *Selected Poems of the Shared Autumn*") that a poem selection by a woman writer named Xuanhua zi 玄华子 is entitled *Selected Poems of the Shared Autumn* (*Tongqiu shixuan* 同秋诗选). So I speculate that Xuanhua zi might be one of the few women writers beside Wang in the society. See the poem in Wang Duanshu, 18.3b.

[165] Zhu Yangzhang 朱元璋 is the first emperor of the Ming dynasty.

establishment of the Ming dynasty blinded her from a fair evaluation of Zhang Shicheng and his courtiers. However, her endeavor to rehabilitate Zhang's court bespeaks her independent thoughts and refusal to judge a person according to his worldly success or failure.

In the second poem of the series "Written after the Fragrant Portrait of Miwu," the speaking voice is that of a historian who uses allusions not to identify with historical figures, but to create a critical distance from them. The allusions in this poem indicate the speaking voice's desire to trespass the boundary established by social norms for women. By examining the complex mechanism of the employment of allusions and comparing them to similar ones in poems on the same subject by Wang's contemporary literati, we can map how the feminine voice acquires agency as a historian in detail.

The second poem of "Written behind the Fragrant Portrait of Miwu" is a seven-character-line regulated poem, following strict rules for patterning of tones, even line rhyming, and semantic parallelism in couplets. To convey a coherent message while observing the formal restrictions, the poet has to carefully select images and combine them in a way that new meaning is generated through their interaction with each other within the poem. In the first two lines of the second poem of the series on Liu Shi, the writer introduces the names of two places that are loaded with cultural and historical significances. In the first two couplets of the poem, two allusions to buildings foreground Liu Shi as a writer and a painter, and qualify her as the compassionate companion of

Qian Qianyi: *Banye Tang* 半野堂 (The Hall on Partly Uncultivated Land) and *Yurui Xuan* 玉蕊轩 (Jade Pistil Studio)[166].

Wang Duan is not alone in alluding to the Hall on Partly Uncultivated Land when Liu Shi is concerned. According to "*Hedongjun* zhuan 河东君传 (*A Biography of Madam Hedong*)" by Gu Ling 顾苓 (fl. mid-seventeenth century), when Liu Shi, dressed as a man, paid her first visit to Qian Qianyi, she was received at the hall.[167] Liu Shi did write a poem entitled "*Banye tang chu zeng shi* 半野堂初赠诗" ("I Present a Poem for the First Time at the Hall on Partly Uncultivated Land").[168] Chen Wenshu and Zhao Yunsong 赵云嵩 (1727-1814) are among the literati who also allude to the hall in their poems on Liu. Advertising himself as a mentor of women writers and a promoter of women's poetry, Chen was obsessed with visiting places associated with women writers who existed either in reality or merely in fiction, repairing their former residences or tombs, or establishing steles or tombstones. He wrote a few *shi* and *ci* poems on Liu Shi. His allusion to the Hall on Partly Uncultivated Land focuses on the sensual story of Liu's visit:

忆昔初寻半野堂　　I recall that back then she sought out the Hall on Partly Uncultivated Land for the first time.
玉颜乌帽学男装　　Dressed like a man, the jade-face woman wore a raven-black hat.
扁舟夜泛琴川水　　A small boat floated on the Qin River at night.

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166 Qian Qianyi built the two buildings. He also wrote an essay in honor of the Jade Pistil Studio. See Qian, Qianyi, "*Yurui xuan ji* 玉蕊轩记" ("On the Studio of Jade Pistil"), *Muzhai chuxue ji* 牧斋初学集, XXSKQS, 1390:20.

167 Gu Lin, "Hedongjun zhuan 河东君传," *Wowenshi shenggao fulu shicilei*, XXSKQS, 1391:571-2.

168 Liu Shi, *Wowenshi sheng gao* 我闻室剩稿, XXSKQS, 1391:568.

万树梅花接影香　　Their blossoms' shadow joining together, thousands of plum trees sent forth their fragrance.

(Chen Wenshu, "*Liu Rushi chu fang Banyetang xiaoxiang* 柳如是初访半野堂小像" ("On the Portrait of Liu Rushi on Her First Visit to the Hall on Partly Uncultivated Land"), lines 5-8, 579)

In this poem, Chen not only alludes to the story of Liu's visit, but enriches it with a beautiful picture. The romance of Liu and Qian is further sensualized by the boat floating on the moonlit river, the fragrant plum blossoms, and the jade face of the woman under a raven-black hat. The vivid picture of the carefully selected images and the dramatization of Liu's visit designates the speaking voice's voyeuristic desire and fascination for novelty as it is extremely unconventional in imperial China for a woman to seek acquaintance of a man, and Chen's desire to identify with Qian, the love object of the woman. If Liu Shi did seek the acquaintance of Qian as Gu's biography describes, she certainly did something unusual, even for a courtesan. There are, however, other accounts about Liu's marriage to Qian. Niu Xiu 钮琇 (?-1704), for example, simply says that Liu married Qian at the age of twenty.[169] According to a brief biography of Liu in *Zhongxiang ci* 众香词 (*Song lyricss from the Fragrant Crowd*), Qian Qianyi tried every possible means to take Liu as his concubine.[170] To be the love object of a famous courtesan well-known for her beauty and literary talent remains a fantasy for literati. Both Gu's story and its allusion employed by Chen Wenshu betray such a fantasy. Male

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[169] Niu Xiu, "*Hedong jun xiao zhuan* 河东君小传" ("A Brief Biography of Madam Hedong"), *Wowenshi shenggao fulu shicilei,* XXSKQS, 1391:572.

[170] Xu Shumin 徐树敏 and Qian Yue 钱岳, ed. *Zhongxiang ci*, quoted in Chen Yinke, *Liu Rushi bie zhuan,* 1: 108. Chen Yinke agrees with Xu Shumin and Qian Yue on Liu's marriage to Qian Qianyi.

writers's admiration for the boldness of Liu and their envy of Qian are more explicitly expressed in Zhao Yunsong's poem on Liu:

女假男装访名士　Dressed as a man, she visited the famous scholar.
绛云楼下一言契　With a single word, she made a promise under the Crimson Cloud Mansion
美人肯嫁六十翁　The beautiful woman was willing to marry an old man of sixty.
虽不须眉亦奇气　Even though not a man, she had the unusual spirit.
妾肤雪白鬓乌云　Her skin was snow-white, her hair like black cloud,
伴郎白鬓乌肌肤　she consorted him who had white temples and dark skin.

(Zhao Yunsong, "*Ti Hedongjun xiang* 题河东君像" ("On the Portrait of Madam Hedong"), lines 1-6, 576)

Like Chen, Zhao Yunsong indulges himself by imaging Liu's bold act. Both poems help to reinforce the actuality of the story. The details that the writers added to the visit as if they have witnessed it indicate a voyeuristic pleasure. At the same time, their participation in the reconstruction of this romance also suggests an imagined identification with Qian Qianyi, the hero of the story, as both poets were renowned scholars of their times, like Qian. What fascinates them in the romance seems to be the fact that a male scholar's talent, even though he was physically undesirable, could still attract a talented beautiful woman like Liu. Therefore, their allusions to the places relating to Liu such as the Hall on Partly Uncultivated Land always focus on the beauty of the woman, and the novelty of her action.

Wang Duan employs allusions to the Hall on Partly Uncultivated Land and the Jade Pistil Studio in a way different from the literati writers. Instead of centering on the romance, her poem highlights Liu as a writer and painter with heroic and noble sentiments. While the first line endows the Hall on Partly Uncultivated Land as a romantic and elegant place, its purpose is to introduce the second line, which is quoted from the poem written by Liu Shi at the hall: The first two phrases of the line - the

exquisiteness of ink and the fragrance of tea (*miaomo chaxiang* 妙墨茶香) -- are quoted from the second couplet of Liu Shi's "I Present a Poem for the First Time at the Hall on Partly Uncultivated Land":

一室茶香开淡黯　　The fragrance of tea in the chamber dispelled the gloom.
千行妙墨破溟蒙　　Hundreds of lines in exquisite ink cleared the mist.
(Liu Shi, "*Banye tang chu zeng shi*," lines 3-4, 568)

In the two lines, Liu Shi picks up the two everyday images of tea and ink to commend Qian's fine taste and literary achievements. Quoted in Wang's poem, the two images qualify Liu as a writer equivalent in taste and literary achievements to Qian. In the second couplet of "Written on the fragrant portrait of Miwu," Wang alludes to the Jade Pistil Studio. According to Qian Qianyi, Liu Shi viewed the flowers of jade pistil, or *Shanfan* 山矾, as her favorite because they are "graceful but not arrogant, fragrant but not seductive."[171] Her comments on the flowers are no doubt an expression of an ideal self-image. While Qian's essay on the Jade Pistil Studio records how he named the building, Wang's use of the allusion applauds Liu's ideal, though the splendid chamber, the decorated curtain, and the spring rain in the poem also draw a picture of marital harmony.

The serene and happy tone of the poem is then changed in the last two couplets, which contain allusions to other historical female figures who, similar to Liu Shi, died heroic deaths during dynastic turmoil and outshone many male scholar-officials who dragged on living in shame. Mao Xi, the seven concubines, and Liu are glorified by Wang Duan to be the ones who never forgot the calamity of both their homes and their dynasties. The loyalty of Liu, therefore, is by no means taken to be a verbal performance.

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[171] "山矾清而不寒，香而不艳." See Qian, Qianyi, "*Yurui xuan ji* 玉蕊轩记, " *Muzhai chuxue ji* 牧斋初学集, XXSKQS, 1390:20.

Like Mao Xi and the seven concubines, Liu carried out what she believed in action during the dynastic and familial crises. According to Gu Lin, she had urged her husband Qian Qianyi to commit suicide at the news of the fall of the Southern Ming in 1645. After Qian apologetically said that he could not do it, Liu dived into a pool. She was pulled back by her husband. Shortly after Qain's death in 1664, his clansmen extorted money from Liu. Liu hanged herself in protest the same year.[172] Liu, together with the other women in this poem, constitutes a sharp contrast with Shen Yue and Qian Qianyi, to whom the former alludes , as both of them not only "dragged on living" after the fall of the dynasties where they served as high officials, but eagerly served the new emperors.

The second poem of "Written behind the Fragrant Portrait of Miwu" is a poetic narrative that establishes connections between historical figures of various times and contains a clear statement of orthodox Confucian values. The speaker's lack of voyeuristic curiosity allows her to focus on the literary achievements or heroic aspirations of the female historical figures. While literati writers like Chen Wenshu and Zhao Yunsong view Liu primarily as a wife, or at best as Qian's beautiful bosom friend (*hongyan zhiji* 红颜知己), Wang Duan's poetic voice acknowledges her as the one who, together with other women mentioned in the poem, sets a model for carrying out the most important Confucian teaching: being faithful in ethical relationships. The women's loyalty to their husbands during dynastic turmoil allows them to symbolically and literally transcend the confinement of *jia* (home) and brings them to the public sphere of *guo* (country). The narrative based on the connections between these women may indicate the poet's desire of participating in the construction of ideology by selecting

[172] Gu Lin, 571-2.

historical figures, connecting them discursively, and evaluating these figures to advocate her values.

If in “Written behind the Fragrant Portrait of Miwu” Wang Duan focuses on Liu Shi’s married life and her tragic death, in “Written on the Miniature Portrait of Madame Hedong” poems after about twenty years, she re-examines the famous woman writer under a historical lens, which allows a more thorough and critical evaluation of Liu Shi. Allusions employed in the second poem series involve more women figures than those in the first one. Because the first poem series is a conscious participation in the poetic conversation on Liu Shi initiated by Chen Wenshu, and joined mainly by literati-writers as well as Chen’s female disciples, the four poems in this series still revolve around Liu’s marriage and death, though the poet is more interested in Liu’s literary talent and martyrdom than her beauty and talent, which are described in many poems by literati-writers as a kind of rare commodity worth admiring and desiring. The “Written on the Miniature Portrait of Madame Hedong” poems demonstrate Wang Duan’s more sophisticated evaluation of Liu’s life and death in a context of many more women historical figures. Though it is certainly a projection of contemporary feminist mentality on the writer in the late imperial China to say that Wang Duan consciously constructs a women’s history by alluding to women figures (either her contemporaries or from previous generations), the extensive and persistent allusions as exemplified in the poems on Liu Shi of the second series do urge the reader not only to understand Liu in the context of other women figures, but to reconsider the latter in the light of the former. This intertextuality thus gives rise to the agency of the speaking voice as a woman poet-historian.

The first poem of “Written on the Miniature Portrait of Madame Hedong” narrates the life of Liu Shi:

红粉成灰证四禅	That rouge and powder turned into dust verifies the four dhyanas:
衣冠妹喜掌书仙	Moxi in man’s clothes and hat, and the goddess in charge of books.
耦耕花落沧桑后	Flowers of the Plowing in Tandem Hall fell after seas became mulberry fields.
半野芸香劫火前	Rue of the Hall on Partly Uncultivated Land sent forth fragrance before the fire of the predestined disaster.
不羡张秾膺紫诰	You did not envy Zhang Nong’s honorary title conferred by imperial mandate.
岂输葛嫩殉黄泉	Nor were you outshined by Ge Nen who died in loyalty to her husband.
玉儿完节东阳丑	Pan Yu’er achieved her moral integrity, while the Dongyang Prefect brought shame on himself.
末路才人亦可怜	Talented women in dire straits are worth pitying.

(Wang Duan, “*Ti Hedongjun xiaoxiang*,” poem no. 1, 7.12b-13a)

Similar to the poems in “Written on the Fragrant Portrait of Miwu,” this poem alludes to Liu Rushi’s married life and her martyrdom. In the second couplet, the two halls - the Plowing in Tandem Hall[173] and the Hall on Partly Uncultivated Land - serve as the witnesses to the mutability of human world. Similar to the poems in the first series, Wang Duan again employs the allusion to Shen Yue to refer to Qian Qianyi.

Most historical women figures in the poems alluding to Liu Shi significantly differ from the heroic women such as Mao Xi and the seven concubines of Pan Yuanshao in “Written on the Fragrant Portrait of Miwu.” The female historical figures in the first poem of “Written on the Miniature Portrait of Madame Hedong” can be categorized into two groups: enchanting imperial concubines who wrecked the empires, and beautiful

[173] See Qian Qianyi, “*Ougengtang ji* 耦耕堂记” (“On the Plowing in Tandem Hall”), *Muzhai chuxue ji*, XXSKQS, 1390:16.

courtesans. Moxi in the second line and Yu'er in the seventh belong to the first category. The former is the famous concubine of King Jie 桀, the last ruler of the Xia dynasty (around twenty-first century – sixteenth century B.C.E.). Ban Gu 班固 (32-92) accused Moxi of causing the king to be exiled after the Xia was replaced by the Shang dynasty (around sixteenth century – eleventh century B.C.E.). In his annotation to Ban Gu's *Han shu* 汉书 (*The History of the Han Dynasty*), Yan Shigu 严师古 (581-645) describes Moxi as:

> beautiful in appearance, yet having few virtues. She was of women's morals, yet had a heart of a man. King Jie often put her on his knees, listened to her and took her advice. Dazed and confused, he lost the Way
>
> 美于色，薄于德，女子行，丈夫心。桀常置于膝上，听用其言，昏乱失道.[174]

In her poem, Wang Duan is particularly alluding to the line from *Jin shu* 晋书 (*The History of the Jin Dynasty*): "Moxi wore a man's hat. The King of Jie lost his empire."[175] Yu'er was the favorite concubine of the Marquis of Donghun 东昏侯, the King of the Qi Dynasty (479-502) who was later killed by his eunuch. She and the marquis were said to live a dissipated life, which ended in the death of the latter and the

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[174] For Ban Gu's comment on the King of Jie and Moxi, and Yan Shigu's annotation, see Ban Gu, *Han shu* 汉书, Yan Shigu 严师古, annot. (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1962) 12:3933-4.

[175] "妹嬉冠男子之冠，桀亡天下。" Fang Xuanling 房玄龄 (578-648), ed. *Jin shu* 晋书 (Taibei: Ershiwen shi biankanguan, 1956) 27:219 b.

suicide of the former when she was forced to remarry a general of the new king.[176] The goddess in charge of books in the second line refers to Cao Wenji 曹文姬, a Tang dynasty (618-907) courtesan in Chang'an 长安. Cao Wenji, together with Zhang Nong and Ge Nen in the third couple, constitutes the second category. Cao's elegant name as the goddess in charge of books appears in a poem written by Ren Sheng 任生 collected in *Quan Tang shi* 全唐诗 (*Complete Collection of Tang Poetry*). In the poem she was called the goddess in the court of the Jade Emperor of Heaven.[177] According to Wang Duan's authorial annotation, Zhang Nong was Zhang Jun's 张俊 (1086-1154) concubine who was later had an honorary title conferred upon her by imperial mandate. *Yutai shushi* 玉台书史 (*The History of Books of the Jade Terrace*) portrays Zhang Nong as a famous courtesan in Qiantang 钱塘 before she was taken as the favorite concubine of Zhang Jun. When her husband went away to the battlefield, she wrote a letter encouraging him to serve the country with selfless loyalty. The emperor was greatly pleased when he read her letter presented to him by the husband, and rewarded her with the honorary title of the *Yongguo furen* 雍国夫人 (Lady of Yong State).[178] As for the story of Ge Nen, Wang Duan in her annotation directs her readers to consult the allusion of Ge in Yu Huai's 余怀 (1616-?) *Banqiao zai ji* 板桥杂记 (*The Miscellaneous Records of the Plank Bridge*). Yu

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[176] For the biography of the Marquis of Donghun 东昏侯 and the story of Pan Yu'er 潘玉儿, see Yi Yanshou 李延寿 (fl. seventh century), et al, eds. *Nan shi* 南史 (History of the Southern Dynasties) (Taibei: Ershiwen shi biankanguan, 1956) 4:13a-24b.

[177] "玉皇前殿掌书仙." See Ren Sheng's 任生, "*Tou Cao Wenji shi* 投曹文姬诗 (A poem sent to Cao Wenji)," *Quan Tang shi* 全唐诗), Peng Dingqiu 彭定求 (1654-1719), et al. eds. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1996) 22:8844.

[178] Li E 厉鹗 (1692-1752), *Yutai shushi* 玉台书史, XXSKQS, 1084:401.

Huai speaks of the beauty of Ge Nen, the former Yangzhou courtesan and later the concubine of Sun Kexian 孙克咸 (?-1644), Yu's friend, in glowing terms. The couple was captured during the dynastic turmoil. Ge Nen was killed after she violently resisted the sexual approach of an enemy general.[179]

The juxtaposition of these historical women figures indicates Wang Duan's complicated and sophisticated criticism of Liu Shi. Unlike such literati writers as Gu Lin and Zhao Yunsong, who in their writings admire Liu's unconventional behavior of dressing herself like a man and visiting male scholars without invitation, Wang Duan severely criticizes Liu Shi because her behavior challenges and subverts the proper social order by ignoring the Confucian ethical code. Just like the example of Moxi, Liu Shi's challenge to social conventions conveys to Wang Duan a bad omen of Liu's era and her family. Allusions to Moxi and Pan Yu'er also contain Wang's denunciation of the women's fatal attraction to men. While many male literati admire Liu's beauty and celebrate her boldness, which made her more accessible to men, Wang Duan assumes an orthodox attitude, censuring Liu's unconventional courtesan's lifestyle as a disturbance to the proper Confucian social order.

Wang Duan nonetheless applauds Liu Shi's courage and loyalty to the Ming dynasty during the dynastic turmoil, though allusions to Moxi and Yu'er imply her disapproval of Liu's life before her marriage. Wang's acclaim of Liu Shi is unmistakably expressed by the negation and the rhetorical question in the third couplet. Comparing Liu to Zhang Nong and Ge Nen, the poet celebrates the three women's political integrity at critical moments of their lives.

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[179] Yu Huai 余怀 (1616-?), *Banqiao zai ji* 板桥杂记, XXSKQS, 1272:4.

Wang Duan's evaluation of Liu Shi as a historical figure, by way of alluding to many other women in history, designates her criteria in passing judgment on a person as a historian: a person should be evaluated according to his or her reactions to major issues at critical moments of one's life. At the same time, one's behavior in daily life should also be taken into consideration. The task of a poet-historian like herself is to present various aspects of a person before a fair judgment is made.

As a poet-historian, Wang Duan has a mixed feeling towards Liu Shi and the other historical women figures. Her condemnation of their unconventional behavior is subtly indicated by the allusions to the notorious imperial concubines, and her eulogy of the women's courage and sense of responsibility is overtly stated. When contextualized in the poem, even the notorious imperial concubines have the chance to be reconsidered in a more positive light: Though they ignored the Confucian ethical code and led a dissipated life, both Moxi and Yu'er remained loyal to their husbands. Wang Duan even overtly glorifies Pan Yu'er as a woman who, unlike Shen Yue and Qian Qianyi, achieved her moral integrity protesting the forced remarriage by committing suicide.

All of the women are symbolized by what Wang calls in the opening line "rouge and powder." As a poet-historian whose husband died several years before she wrote the poem[180], her attitude towards the enchanting material world is tinted with nihilism. She might feel that the tragic stories of these women whose beauty and talent all ended in vain, and whose love and hate vanished without any trace, only verify that the Realm of Kama-dhatu has nothing but suffering. The first and the last lines of the poem are the

[180] Her husband died in the spring of 1828. For the year of her husband's death, see her poem and its preface of "*Ti Chenghuaitang yiji hou* 题澄怀堂遗集后" ("Inscribed after the Posthumous Collection of Clear Bosom Hall"), *Innate Love*, 5:21b-22a.

only lines that are free from allusion. They constitute the frame work that not only allows the stories of the women from various historical periods to relate to each other, but accommodates the poet's attitude and comments on the women. The use of the Buddhist phrase "four dhyanas" in the first line designates a sympathetic attitude of the poet to all the historical women figures in the poem. Buddhism holds that the four dhyanas belong to the Realm of Form, the realm which is above the Realm of Kama-dhatu hosting people's desires, such as desires to love and to indulge in sensual enjoyment. Only through the four dhyanas can one transcend the Realm of Kama-dhatu. The choice of the phrase here suggests that Wang Duan believes that these women's tragedies are predestined as a result of their innocent attachment to the illusions of material and sensual enjoyment. This attitude is echoed and reinforced by the last line where Wang Duan expresses her compassion for the women with beauty and talent that, however, did not grant them a happy ending.

Unlike "Written After the Fragrant Portrait of Miwu," which are poems written on a portrait of Liu Shi drawn by her father-in-law, poems in "Written on the Miniature of Madame Hedong" seem to be written on a portrait of Liu painted by Qian Pu 钱璞 (*zi* Shouzi 寿之, *hao* Lianyin 莲因, one of Chen Wenshu's women disciples. In the second poem of the series, Wang Duan mentioned that although the only things Liu left behind were her tomb and her poems, luckily there are still some women artists who cherish her:

赖有玉台勤护惜	Owing to the jade terrace who earnestly treasures her,
春风小影美人云	In the miniature of spring breeze, the beautiful woman is like a cloud.

(Wang Duan, "*Ti Hedongjun xiaoxiang*," poem no. 2, lines 3-4, 7.13a)

In the authorial annotation, Wang Duan tells the reader that the jade terrace in the poem refers to Lady Lianyin 莲因女士. According to the preface of a poem on Qian Pu by Chen Wenshu, Qian was a good painter.[181] Judging from the context, Wang's second series was most probably written on a miniature of Liu Shi painted by Qian Pu.

While the first poem of "Written on the Miniature Portrait of Madame Hedong" deals with Liu Rushi's life and death, the next three of the series are Wang Duan's critique of Liu's literary and artistic achievements. Similar to the first poem, Wang introduces into the poems not only allusions to Liu's own poems and paintings,[182] but more importantly other women poets and artists including Qian Pu, the painter of Liu's miniature, and Gu Mei顾媚 (1619-1664, *zi* Meisheng 媚生, *hao* Hengbo 横波). These allusions create a poetic space where individual women writers and artists in different fields and from various historical periods interact with each other and form a community. The third poem contains four lines:

婵娟闺集费搜罗	You strenuously collected poems in the graceful intercalary volume.
翠羽兰膏指摘多	Yet too often you criticized the beautiful kingfisher's feathers and orchid's cream.
冷雨幽窗图倩影	In the quiet windows on a cold rainy day, she painted a picture of a beautiful woman.
爱才终让顾横波	Your passion for talent is finally emulated by Gu Hengbo.

(Ibid, poem no. 3, 7.13a)

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[181] According to Chen, Qian's given name is Ying 荫. Later she changed her name into Shoupu 守璞. Her *zi* is Ouxiang 藕香 and her *hao* Lianyin 莲因 or Lianyuan 莲缘. See Chen Wenshu, "*Cuiluyuan huai Qian Lianyuan* 翠渌园怀钱莲园" ("Cherishing the Memory of Qian Lianyuan in Jade-Green Garden"), *Xilin guiyong* 西泠闺咏, *Congshu jicheng xubian* 丛书集成续编, 64:594.

[182] For example, the second line of the second poem alludes to the title of Liu's poem collection *The Remnant Drafts of Having-me-heard Chamber* (*Wowenshi shenggao* 我闻室剩稿). The first line and its note in the fourth poem allude to Liu's painting entitled "*Yu di yanliu hua juan* 月堤烟柳画卷" ("A scroll of misty willow trees on the moon-lit river bank").

In this poem, Wang Duan affirms the great effort that Liu Rushi and Qian Qianyi exerted in collecting poems by women of previous generations in the intercalary section (*Runji* 闰集) of *Liechao shiji* 列朝诗集 (*Collection of Poems from Former Dynasties*) and writing biographies for them. However, although Wang regards the collection of women's poetry as basically "*chanjuan* 婵娟" (graceful), she expresses her criticism of Liu by pointing out in the second line and its authorial annotation that Liu is too harsh in her comments on some poems that, according to Wang Duan, are as precious and elegant as kingfisher's feather and orchid's cream. In her annotation, Wang Duan especially mentions that Liu's denunciation and derision of Lu Qingzi 陆卿子 (fl. sixteenth century), Liang Xiaoyu 梁小玉 (late Ming period), Xu Jingfan 许景樊 (late sixteenth, early seventeenth centuries), and Xiaoqing 小青 are unfair and unkind.[183] The second couplet compares Liu Rushi to Gu Mei. Gu Mei is Liu's contemporary courtesan artist, a renowned painter and poet who married Gong Dingzi 龚鼎孳 (1615-1673), a famous scholar-official who served in both the Ming and the Qing courts.[184] In the authorial annotation, Wang Duan explains that she praises Gu Mei for her passion for talented women because Gu painted a portrait for Xiaoqing, who, according to Liu and Qian's biography, is actually only an invented figure.[185] Wang Duan is obviously not interested

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[183] For Liu Shi's criticisms of Lu Qingzi, Liang Xiaoyu, Xu Jingfan, and Xiaoqing, see Qian Qianyi, "*Fan Yunlin qi xushi* 范允临妻徐氏," "*Langhuan nüzi Liang shi* 琅嬛女子梁氏," "*Xu mei shi* 许妹氏," and "*Nülang Yu Sulan* 女郎羽素兰," *Liechao shiji xiaozhuan* 列朝诗集小传 (*Brief Biographies for the Collections of Poems from Former Dynasties*) (Taibei: Shijie shuju, 1965), 751-2; 771-3; 813-4.

[184] For the biographical information, see "Gu Mei," Ho, *Biographical Dictionary of Chinese Women*. 48-52.

[185] For the story of Xiaoqiang, see "*Xiaoqing zhuan* 小青传" ("A Biography of Xiaoqing"), *Yuchu xingzhi* 虞初新志, Zhang Chao 张潮 (1650 -?) comp. *Guben xiaoshuo jicheng* 古本小说集成

in the debate over whether Xiaoqing did exist or not. Her attention is focused on the talent of a woman at least existing discursively. Wang Duan's advocacy of the passion for talent in other woman literary figures and her acclaim of Liu's achievement in compiling the collection of women's poetry bespeak her awareness of the importance of women's literary tradition and community in their emerging interaction with prevalent literati discourses. Such awareness is further confirmed in her literary practices in compiling and publishing poetry collections by her female relatives, inscribing paintings by women painters, writing prefaces and dedications on literary works by women writers, and exchanging poems with her women friends.

(Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubenshe, 1990) 679:1:14a-20b. For modern Chinese scholarship on Xiaoqing, see Pan Guandan, *Feng Xiaoqing: Yijian yinglian zhi yanjiu* 冯小青：一件影恋之研究, *Pan Guandan wenji* 潘光旦文集 (Beijing: Bejing daxue chubanshe, 1993) 1: 1-66; Ellen Widmer, "Xiaoqing's Literary Legacy and the Place of Women Writers in Late Imperial China," *Late Imperial China*, 13.7 (June 1992): 111-155.

CHAPTER THREE DWELLING AND WOMEN'S IDENTITY: LI YIN'S AND WANG DUANSHU'S POEMS ON LIVING SPACE

This chapter is devoted to the examination of the construction of gendered subjectivity in poetry on dwelling by Wang Duanshu and Li Yin. I will investigate how the two writers' poems on their dwellings articulate a dynamic of belonging and displacement, how their writings give expression to the everyday, intimate consequences of dynastic turmoil and social forces, how they write about their dwelling places without, as well as within, the male literary context, what aesthetic achievements their poems have achieved, and finally what new subject positions these poems generated through their depiction of the interaction between the speaking voices and their dwelling places.

In imperial China, gentry women's identities were closely related to the places where they dwelt. In the case of women writers, they were usually called "*guige shiren*" (闺阁诗人). *Guige*, translated as "boudoir," or more preferably, "women's quarters," refers to a woman's dressing room, bedroom, or private setting room. As the "door" radical of the two Chinese characters suggests, women's quarters are always spatially segregated, and visually hidden behind walls and doors. In the mainstream literati tradition, women's relationships with *guige* are stereotyped. In many poems by literati writers on women who are usually alone in their quarters, the reclusiveness of *guige* guarantees the male writer his scopophilic privilege.[186] The picture of a woman alone in

[186] Maureen Robertson in her 1992 article conducts a nuanced study of the literati-feminine voice in three poems by pre-Tang literati writers. She astutely points out that both female voice and the place that she alone occupies are non-referential, iconic. Upon them the male author/reader may project his desire. See Robertson, 1992, 63-100.

her chamber may not accord with many women's real experiences. Francesca Bray points out that not only women's quarters are protected by high walls and many doors from intruding glances, but they would not be intruded upon or shared casually even by their husbands or other male family members.[187] However, gentry women were for most time of a day, accompanied by other female family members, their maids, and nannies. The repeated scene of a woman alone in *guige* betrays the male writers' exploitation of women's quarters as the locale of their scopophilic desire. When women writers such as Li Yin and Wang Duanshu pick up their "red brushes" and write, their writings represent a new relation between their living space and themselves as dwellers and writers.

A Space of Lack in Li Yin's "Dwelling in the Suburbs" Poems

Li Yin's poems in the continuation and third collection of *Bamboo Laughter* were mostly written after her husband Ge Zhengqi died in 1645.[188] Their marriage left her no children. After the death of Ge, Li Yin supported herself by selling her paintings,[189]

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[187] Francesca Bray, *Technology and Gender: Fabrics of Power in Later Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997) 122-41.

[188] In his preface to the third collection of *Bamboo Laughter* Zhu Jiazheng 朱嘉征 says that Ge Zhengqi died out of grief and loyalty to the fallen Ming dynasty. In Li Yin's poem series written in memory of Ge, she extols that he fell for the Ming dynasty. See "*Daowang shi ku Jikan di sanshi yi* 悼亡诗哭介龛第三十一" ("Forty-Eight Mourning Poems for Jiekan," poem no. 31, 44). It seems that Ge did not commit suicide right after the fall of the Ming dynasty. However, his grief and desperation at the Qing troops' victory may have precipitated his death in 1645.

[189] See Huang Zongxi 黄宗羲, "*Li Yin zhuan* 李因传" ("A Biography of Li Yin"). *Nanlei wending qianji* 南雷文定前集. *Nanlei wending* 南雷文定 (Taibei: Shijie shuju, 1964), 165-6. Not successively paginated. For the entire article and its translation, see Appendix C. For Li Yin's paintings and a discussion of her works as an artist, see Marsha Weidner, et al., *Views From Jade Terrace: Chinese Women Artists1300-1912* (Indianapolis: Indianapolis Museum of Art, 1988) 58-9; 102-5.

living in Haining 海宁, Ge's hometown, a county that belonged to the Jiaxing 嘉兴 prefecture of Zhejiang. This is a place that suffered from a long period of severe "*binghuo* 兵祸" (soldiers' calamity) during the transition between the Ming and Qing dynasties.[190] According to evidence from Li Yin's own poems, the turbulent period lasted at least from 1644 to 1659, when she "had spent forty-nine years" in this world.[191] As an heirless widow living in an area repeatedly plagued by violent conflicts between the Qing and the Southern Ming troops, the peasant revolts, and the local bandits, her situation was unimaginably difficult. Her attachment to and regret for the fallen dynasty, which is closely associated with her personal prosperity and happiness, and her childless widowhood may signify a dual identity crisis. As a victim of military violence and witness to the sufferings of common people in this turbulent time, she deeply feels the pain of displacement in a city that she used to be familiar with and attached to. As Ge's concubine without children, the death of her husband meant not only

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[190] For the description of the chaotic situation caused by the fall of the Ming dynasty, the conflicts between the Qing and the Southern Ming, the serf revolts in Jiangnan area during the Ming-Qing transitional period, see Federic Wakerman, *The Great Enterprise: The Manchu Reconstruction of Imperial Order in Seventeen-Century China* (Berkeley: University of Californian Press, 1985) 1:591-680.

[191] In the preface to a poem series, Li Yin says that after Ge's death in the autumn of 1645, she sought shelter in the Li Village when troops approached Haining city. There she unexpectedly saw a painting by Ge Zhengqi in 1635/6. For the series, see Li Yin, "*Fenghuo weicheng shenjing fenghe jieju beijiao lishizhuang jianyou Jiekan yihua jian ti jueju wei Yihai nian suozuo jin shizai yi bujin qiran yilei hemo yiyun liujue.* 烽火危城，身惊风鹤，借居北郊李氏庄，见有介龛遗画兼题绝句，为乙亥年所作，今十载矣，不禁凄然，以泪和墨依韵六绝" ("In the besieged city where beacon-fires flame, I am as startled as a crane scared by wind. I rented a place in the Li village north of the city and found there a painting with a seven-character line line quatrain on it by Jiekan ten years ago, in the year of Yihai. I couldn't help feeling sad. With tears and ink, I wrote the following seven quatrain using the same rhyme characters as those in Jiekan's poem."), 46. In a poem from another series entitled "*Yixi* 忆昔" ("Recalling the Past"), Li mentions the approaching flames of war to the (city at the) seashore when the Sage Emperor was killed (67). In a series with the title "*Xianyong* 闲咏" ("Leisure Chanting"), the poet, saying that she has spent forty-nine years in this world, laments that she is still constantly startled by the "jackals and tigers all around the village ruins" (91).

the loss of financial support, but also the lack of most other kinds of support from and connection with her husband's extended family.[192]

In a poem on escorting Ge's coffin home, she depicts the miserable situation in which she finds herself:

一望无长物　There is nothing superfluous wherever I look.
颓垣瓦砾馀　Only crumbling walls and broken roof tiles remain.
饱鹰冲碧汉　Well-fed hawks dart into the blue sky.
饥鼠奔空厨　Hungry mice scurry in the empty kitchen.
童仆掉头去　All servants leave without looking back.
园亭异姓居　People of different surnames occupy the garden and pavilions.
旧时黄犬在　The yellow dog from the old days is still alive,
为我守蓬庐　And guards the shabby cottage for me.

(Li Yin, "*Yi xi fuchen guilai yougan sanshou* 忆昔扶榇归来有感三首" ("Thoughts on Remembrance of Once Coming Home Companying My Husband's Coffin, Three Poems"), poem no. 3, 57)

This poem epitomizes the space that Li Yin constructs in the second and third collections of *Bamboo Laughter*. This is a space defined by lack of *changwu* 长物 (amenities) and an excess of the undesirable. However, even such a desolate space is no longer hers. As a defenseless widow, she can do nothing but see her garden and pavilions occupied by the powerful. Paradoxically, this space plays a pivotal role in the speaking voice's reconstruction of a gendered self after its having been deprived of identity due to the fall of the Ming dynasty and her loss of income and status in her husband's family. In her poems, her management of the lack and the excessive transforms her marginal dwelling space into one where she voluntarily chooses to live, a space allowing self-empowerment.

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[192] In his biography, Huang said that Li Yin was in a difficult family financial situation after the death of Ge, though in the colophon, Yang Dejian 杨德建 implies that Li lived near or with Ge's extended family. Yang's colophon is dated 1683. See Huang Zhongxi, "*Li Yin zhuang*," Li Yin, 104. Yang Dejiang, "*Ba* 跋" ("Colophon"), Li Yin, 102.

Among poems on her dwelling places collected in *Bamboo Laughter*, there are two poem series on "*jiaoju* 郊居" ("Dwelling in the Suburbs"). Both were written after 1643 when Li Yin returned to Haining.[193] This section of the chapter is a study of the second series centered on her experience in seeking shelter from the "soldiers' calamity" in the suburbs.[194] In the twelve poems of this series, the poet depicts various scenarios of her everyday life in a remote village that is threatened by approaching troops and harassed by local bandits. In the opening poem, the speaking voice explains to the reader why she chooses to live in the suburbs and close her door in the broad daylight of a spring day. The following poems draw pictures of peaceful village life alternating with approaching war flames and threats of possible gate-crashers.[195] In the last poem, she laments that even such an out-of-the-way village cannot be spared battles, forced conscription, and heavy taxes. At the end of the last poem, she grieves:

浮生如梦幻　This floating life is like a dream and illusion.
无处避风波　Nowhere can I escape from the turbulent wind and waves.

(Li Yin, "*Jiaoju zayong shi'er shou* 郊居杂咏十二首" ("Twelve Miscellaneous Poems on Dwelling in the Suburbs"), poem no. 12, lines 7-8, 89)

The dwelling place constructed in the twelve poems is a liminal space that enables Li Yin to create a range of self-fashioned roles beyond the culturally defined ones. This

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[193] Li Yin mentions in the title of the first series that it was written with the same tonal pattern and rhyme words in response to poems with the same title written by two Tang (618-907) poets Pi Rixiu 皮日休 (*zi* Yishao 逸少, ?834 - ?881) and Lu Guimeng 陆龟蒙(*zi* Luwang 鲁望, ? - 881) collected in *Songling ji* 松陵集 (*The Pine Hill Collection*), a collection of exchange poems that the two writers wrote to each other using the same rhyme sequence. For Lu Guimeng's ten poems as a reply to those presented to him by Pi Rixiu, see Pi Rixiu and Lu Guimeng, *Songling ji*, *Congshu jichang xubian* 丛书集成续编, 154: 357-8.

[194] The complete title of the poem series is "*Jiaoju za yong shier shou* 郊居杂咏十二首" ("Twelve Miscellaneous Poems on Dwelling in the Suburbs").

[195] For the complete poem series and its translation, see Appendix D.

liminal space is situated on the borders between the private sphere and the public sphere, the peaceful and the turbulent. Li Yin's poems highlight the limits that this space inserts on the speaking voice; namely, the lack of ownership, the absence of the superfluous things, and the circumscription of activities. Paradoxically, she appropriates the limits to experiment with new subject positions: she is a dweller instead of an owner. Her limited physical activities and impact on the dwelling place help to represent a righteous scholar who voluntarily sticks to her moral principles and chooses to live in poverty, rather than sacrifice her moral integrity to seek worldly success. This series further complicates the image of Lin Yin as a scholar. The dynamic space is constructed by the poetic descriptions of alternate peace and violence. The speaking voice in this dwelling space is a social critic who extends her concerns with personal sufferings to other disadvantaged groups. She is represented as an aged hero who, though finding it difficult to achieve her ambitions, cherishes the hope to save the people and the dynasty. The first four lines of the twelfth poem vividly depict such an image of an elderly hero with concerns that go beyond her personal interest:

隐迹深村里　I conceal my trace in a remote village.
终非安乐窝　It turns out to be no lotus land.
携笻问时事　Carrying my bamboo stick I ask about current affairs.
倚剑待挥戈　Leaning upon my sword I wait to wield my dagger-ax.
(Li Yin, "*Jiaoju zayong shi'er shou*," poem no. 12, lines 1-4, 89)

In the Ming period, literati viewed gardens and dwellings not only as living space, but as amenities that are to be appreciated, altered and transposed, possessed and circulated.[196] Male scholars could thus possess subject positions as the owners of these

[196] For studies of the change in literati's view of their relations with places, especially with gardens as reflected in mid-Tang poetry, see Stephen Owen, "Singularity and Possession," *The End of*

spaces. Their ownership in turn allowed them to demonstrate their cultural identities through transforming and circulating the spaces. Li Yin's poems were written against a discourse that constructs the cultural identity of literati as hinging upon their ownerships of amenities and dwelling places.[197] The Ming dynasty witnessed a change in many literati's attitude to material objects and places. Possession, transformation, and circulation of material objects including gardens and even natural landscapes, which are not necessaries of life, play a pivotal role in literati's self-definition. In these lines from a regulated poem "*Xiaoyuan jishi* 小园即事" ("On My Small Garden, Written to Express My Feelings on the Occasion"), Yuan Zhongdao 袁中道 (1570-1623) tells the reader:

买鹅为鹤伴　I bought geese to accompany the cranes.
芟竹作兰床　I felled bamboo to make a fragrant bed.
怪石新移槛　Exotic stones were recently moved near the banisters.
小舟初下塘　The small boat was launched into the pond for the first time.
(Yuan Zhongdao, "*Xiaoyuan jishi*," lines 3-6, 502)

Yuan Zhongdao in the two couplets describes his project of transforming the natural landscape into a garden to serve his interests and satisfy his taste. The cranes,

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the Chinese 'Middle Ages:' Essays in Mid-Tang Literary Culture (Stanford: Stanford University, 1996) 12-33. Owen claims that the mid-Tang period (791-825) witnessed the emergence of a sense of identity closely connected to "empirical and discursive acquisition and possession." (33) Yang Xiaoshan's study of gardens and objects in Tang-Song poetry develops Owen's claims. After a close examination of the relationship between possession in the private sphere and a person's singularity, Yang points out that the former makes the latter possible. At the same time, the singularity cannot be achieved until his ownership of the private sphere is publicized. See Yang Xiaoshan, *Metamorphosis of the Private Sphere: Gardens and Objects in Tang-Song Poetry* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2003). Craig Clunas argues in *The Fruitful Sites*, an important project on garden culture in Ming period, that gardens of this period changed from sites of production to that of consumption. See Craig Clunas, *The Fruitful Sites* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996) 71. When gardens became goods, they were also turned into the objects of possession and circulation.

[197] For an exploration of the meaning of *changwu* 长物 (amenities), see Mao Wenfang, *Wu, xingbie, guangkan – mingmo qingchu wenhua shuxie xintan* 物、性别、观看 – 明末清初文化书写新探 (Taibei: Xuesheng shuju, 2001) 57-59.

which may be native to the pond, are said to be in want of company. The pond itself will be a tedious scene without a boat floating on it. In the series of actions, the speaking voice becomes the center; bamboo is felled to make him a fragrant bed, while the exotic stones add beauty to the view near the banisters. This poem exemplifies an important attitude of some Ming literati to the physical world: they were no longer satisfied with the role of spectators, taking pleasure in merely looking at the physical world when they traveled into it. They longed for a more accessible nature; moreover, a nature that was transposed into the human world and became a part of their mundane life. In this nature, material objects and places are categorized and encoded, ready to be reorganized, valued, and incorporated into a code system to signify the literati values – their ownership, their comfort, their taste, and their cultural and political aspirations.

In most cases, men rather than women controlled family economy. Women, especially secondary wives like Li Yin who themselves were regarded as the possessions of their husbands in their married lives, and who lost the power of purchase at the deaths of the husbands and the dynastic cataclysm, might find it difficult to occupy subject positions as owners of their dwelling places. In the twelve poems, Li Yin constructs a self-image as the dweller instead of an owner of the space. As a dweller, she neither idealizes her dwelling place nor refers to efforts to transform it to demonstrate her cultural identity. Consequently, the place feature dynamic and open-endedness, defying the aesthetics of enclosure and completeness. In addition, the dweller's latency paradoxically designates a voluntary choice to live in poverty with strong moral integrity, a choice that accentuates her self-fashioned cultural identity as a female Ming loyalist writer.

The space described in Li Yin's poetry is defined by both what the speaking voice has (*you* 有) and has not (*wu* 无). Many literati of this period celebrated their singularity as the owners of spaces with amenities, things that are not life necessities, but involving taste and existing for the purpose of display, such as with vases and paintings. In the world constructed in Li Yin's "Twelve Miscellaneous Poems on Dwelling in the Suburbs," seldom do amenities come into the picture. For example, the second and third poems of the series say:

（二）　　(II)
到处干戈遍　Fighting broke out all over.
残村惊虎哮　The dilapidated village is startled by a tiger's roar.
人归悲故里　Having returned, I mourn for my neighborhood.
鸟返噪枯巢　Coming back, birds call in their withered nests.
废圃唯蔬菜　In the deserted garden only vegetables are left.
荒畦尽苦匏　The uncared-for land is overgrown with bitter gourds.
乱离愁几许　In war and separation how sad one can be!
静坐泪痕交　Sitting quietly, I am all tears.
（三）　　(III)
寄身惟僻径　I entrust my body only to reclusive paths.
避世畏人知　Away from the bustling world, I fear to be known by people.
品水供茶癖　I savor water to satisfy my addiction to tea.
看花乏酒赀　I appreciate flowers, but lack money for wine.
出篱挑野菜　I step outside the fencing to collect wild herbs,
扫叶作晨炊　and sweep up leaves for morning cooking.
独仿王摩诘　Alone I imitate Wang Wei's style,
闲吟画里诗　Leisurely composing poems for paintings.

(Li Yin, "*Jiaoju zayong shi'er shou*," poem no. 2 and 3, 88-9)

The speaking voice in these poems is by no means an owner of the space where she stays. The absence of ownership is illustrated syntactically by the verbs, which designate the speaker's actions with limited resources. The second poem of the series includes only two verbs with the speaking voice as the actor: *bei* 悲 (to mourn) in the third line and *zuo* 坐 (to sit) in the last. The two verbs designate static action of the poetic

persona. The poem seems to be what the speaking voice sees and mourns while she returns to her familiar lanes, sitting quietly alone. Nothing that she sees, hears, or tastes is pleasant.

The third poem begins with the phrase *jishen* 寄身, which literally means to entrust her body or life. The verb *ji* thus indicates that the speaker is unable to protect herself without some shelter. In the second couplet, the key verbs of the two lines are *gong* 供 (to satisfy) and *fa* 乏 (to lack). But both lines suggest what she has to do without the necessary resources. She drinks water only because she cannot afford tea, though she is addicted to tea. She knows that wine will enhance the pleasure of flower appreciation, yet wine is a luxury that she cannot afford. Her poverty is also accentuated by her burning leaves for cooking, which indicates that she cannot afford firewood. *Fang* 仿 (to imitate) and *yin* 吟 (to chant, or compose poetry) in the last couplet finally reveal an ironic attitude and self mockery. Wang Wei 王维 (*zi* Mojie 摩诘, 701 - 761), the Tang dynasty scholar-poet, is renowned for his image as a recluse-scholar constructed by his poetry. The poetic representation of his indulgence in nature and leisure life has its solid material foundation: A successful official until later in his life, Wang Wei had been wealthy enough to afford a villa near the capital city.[198] The speaking voice in a straitened circumstance constitutes a sharp contrast with Wang Wei. Therefore, her imitation of the latter bears a sarcastic tone.

As a dweller rather than an owner of her dwelling place, the speaking voice's lack of resources and the excess of the undesired in the suburbs result from the fact that:

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[198] For Wang Wei's biography, see Ouyang Xiu 欧阳修 (1007-1072), *Xin Tang shu* 新唐书 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975) 18:5764-6.

无计驱戎马　Having no ways to drive away the war-horses,
谋生整钓纶　I straighten out my fishing line to make a living.
(Ibid. poem no. 1, lines 5-6, 88-9)

As illustrated in the two lines, living in the countryside is neither a cultural pose nor a voluntary choice of the speaking voice. Such a way of life is nothing but her struggle for survival. Verbs signifying material insufficiency and lack of action are contextualized in a space where the tiger's roar interrupts the serenity of the village, and people mourn over separations from their family members because of wars. These verbs contribute to the construction of the speaking voice's self-image as a witness to people's sufferings brought on by wars and bandits, and as a scholar who would rather stick to her moral principles and endure hardship, while still striving to enjoy minute pleasures of everyday life. What the reader finds in these poems is a social critic who laments that "[t]alented men became fish and meat on others' chopping blocks/ Tigers and wolves chased after rosy checks;" a scholar who, following the doctrine of the golden mean, defends her seeking shelter in the countryside as "[t]he brilliant and heroic rise from grassy marshland/ The inadequate and clumsy stay near woods and springs;" and an aged and disillusioned hero who though deeply grieved at the people's sufferings, feels helpless facing the situation.[199] Her complicated mentality mixed with grief, anger, and powerlessness is shared by many Ming loyalists, male and female. Huang Zongxi 黄宗羲 (1610-1695), for example, employs a similar strategy in the first poem of a series entitled "*Shanju zayong* 山居杂咏" ("Miscellaneous Poems on Dwelling in the Mountains"),

[199] "俊杰为鱼肉/红颜逐虎狼." Li Yin, "Twelve Miscellaneous Poems on Dwelling in the Suburbs," poem no. 4, lines 5-6, 89; "英雄起草泽/疏拙守林泉." Ibid., poem no. 7, lines 1-2, 89.

resorting to a space of lack for the re-establishment of his identity as a Ming loyalist scholar:

锋镝牢囚取次过	Knife's cutting edges, arrowheads, and prisons I have all experienced, one after another.
依然不废我弦歌	Yet never have I cast aside my songs to my stringed accompaniment.
死犹未肯输心去	I would even die before I give up my heart.
贫亦其能奈我何	What can poverty do to me?
廿两棉花装破被	Twenty *liang*[200] of cotton is put in my worn-out quilt.
三根松木煮空锅	Three pieces of pine wood burn under an empty pot.
一冬也是堂堂地	For the whole winter this is even so a grandiose place.
岂信人间胜者多	How can I believe that there are many better places in the world?

(Huang, "*Shanju zayong*," poem no. 1, *Nanlei shi li* 南雷诗历, 31)

Both Huang Zongxi and Li Yin are aware of the lack of amenities in their everyday lives and the marginality of their dwelling places. Yet it is this lack and marginality that enable them to claim their cultural identities and agency.

The speaking voice in Li Yin's poetry series on dwelling in the countryside depends on a mechanism other than the demonstration of ownership and domination of the environment for the construction of its agency and subjectivity. In Li's poems, the poetic persona experiences a dynamic of uncertainty and conflict, rather than the closure and stagnancy of an idealized space common in writings on rural lives. A striking semantic feature of the poem series is the alternation of peace and violence within couplets, individual poems, and the series as a whole. The juxtaposition of the peaceful and the vicious constructs a space as a realistically observed and experienced place during the dynastic cataclysm. This space facilitates the portrayal of a poetic persona oscillating between pleasure and leisure in country life, and anxiety and powerlessness

[200] A unit of weight. One *liang* equals fifty grams.

during a dynastic upheaval. The third couplet of the first poem, as mentioned before, exemplifies the juxtaposition of the conflicting elements:

无计驱戎马　Having no ways to drive away the war-horses,
谋生整钓纶　I straightened out my fishing line to make a living.
(Li Yin, "*Jiaoju zayong shi'er shou*", poem no. 1, lines 5-6, 88-9)

In this couplet, the war-horses are grammatically parallel with fishing lines, and the two images semantically form an antithetical pair. In many poems in the series, descriptions of the peaceful countryside are interrupted by the speaking voice being startled by war alarms, or her worries about turmoil. The fourth poem of the series begins with a disturbing scene of war:

烽火临城警　Beacon-fires near the city signals alarm.
人居草莽傍　People dwell by the rank growth of grass.
(Ibid. poem no. 4, lines 1-2, 89)

Nonetheless, in the next couplet, such a life in the desolate land threatened by a war nearby is depicted as pleasant and appealing:

新刍村酒美　The newly strained wine of the village tastes delicious.[201]
野菜蕨薇香　The wild herbs give out appetizing fragrances.
(Ibid. lines 3-4, 89)

However, the peaceful and simple everyday life of delicious homemade wine and fragrant wild herbs is immediately shadowed by a dark picture in the third couplet:

俊杰为鱼肉　Talented men become fish and meat on others' chopping blocks.
红颜逐虎狼　Tigers and wolves chase after rosy cheeks.
(Ibid. lines 5-6, 89)

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[201] In the book, the second character of this line is "刍 *chu*," which means to cut grass. It must be a mistake, as the character does not fit the context. It should be "篘" with the radical of bamboo, which means a kind of wine filter made of bamboo. 新篘 is commonly used in literary Chinese.

The space in the poem series constructs a speaking voice who transgresses the boundary of subject positions prescribed to women. The space of the lack is appropriated to demonstrate the poetic persona's concern transcending the narcissistic sentiments that are typical images of women created by literati. This appropriation suggests self-empowerment through imitating the *shi* 士 (male scholar) who, at the beginning of their formation, built their group identity on the basis of their concerns beyond personal matters.[202]

Living Elsewhere: Dynamic of Dwelling in Wang Duanshu's Poem Series

Ming loyalists' writings are permeated with "*jiaguo zhi si* 家国之思" (the longing for [one's lost] family and state). As suggested in the term, to women writers like Wang Duanshu, this longing is spatial as well as emotional. After the fall of the Ming dynasty, Wang Duanshu and her husband Ding Shenzhao wandered from place to place, as Ding had lost his official position as *tuiguan* 推官 (judge) in Hu prefecture in Quzhou under the old Ming dynasty, and Wang's father Wang Siren refused to serve the Qing emperor and starved himself to death.[203] In his preface to Wang Duanshu's *Lamenting Red Flowers*, Ding Shenzhao mentions that the couple first stayed with Wang's natal family for a while and then moved to live in the *Baima yan* 白马岩 (White Horse Rock) in

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[202] For the study of the history of the Chinese *shi* class. See Yu Yinshi. *Si yu zhongguo wenhua* 士与中国文化 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1987).

[203] Clara Wing-chun Ho, eds, *Biographical Dictionary of Chinese Women The Qing Period, 1644-1911* (Armonk: An East Gate Book, 1998) 217.

Hangzhou.[204] Though suffering from dislocation in the first thirty or forty years of her life, Wang Duanshu acquired an experience with *ju* 居 (a dwelling place) unique to the gentry women of the historical period of dynastic transition, as most of them in peaceful times lived much less mobile lives. A modern reader may regard traveling helpful in expanding a person's view. However, to many women in late imperial China, it was more likely to suggest insecurity and looming danger as a consequence of leaving their familiar dwelling places that, though inflicting spatial restrictions on them, provided protection and a sense of security. Wang Duanshu's attitude toward traveling and her dwelling places is a complex mixture. She was reluctant to travel to make a living or to live away from her extended family, either because she was aware that it was improper for a gentry woman to travel to support herself and her immediate family, or because of her attachment to her parents. In a poem entitled "*Chumen nan* 出门难" ("Hard to Leave My Home"), the reader can learn the social bias against a gentry woman's traveling from the accusation by the speaker's brother in the following passage:

出门难，出门难， It is hard to leave home, hard to leave home.
出门转羞涩 I was shy and embarrassed as I stepped out of the gate.
长兄诘小妹 My elder brother asked his younger sister reprovingly:
匆匆何负笈 "Why do you carry your book chest and leave home so hastily?
昆弟无所求 Asking for nothing from your brothers,
但问诸友执 Yet you consulted many of our friends.
且父海内名 Moreover our father's name is well-known in the world.
如何人檐立 How could you stand under other people's roofs?"

(Wang Duanshu, "*Chumen nan*," lines 1-8, *Lamenting Red Flowers*, 2.1b)

[204] Ding Shengzhao, "Xu 叙" ("Preface"), Wang Duanshu, *Lamenting Red Flowers*, not paginated.

In reply to her elder brother's accusation, we know that the speaking voice chooses to leave home reluctantly to make a living, because according to her, she did not have enough food to eat and clothes to cover herself in the previous year: "My garment cannot cover my body / Food in the morning won't last till evening."[205] Even under this circumstance, the brothers still regard it as shameful that she decides to "stand under others' roofs." In other cases, she left her natal family to live with her husband's family in Yanjing 燕京, or chose to live in genteel seclusion in an "isolated village" (*gucun* 孤村).[206] In the former case, she laments being the one who, rootless and drifting along, is unable to serve her parents with the other twelve sisters and brothers.[207] In the latter one, she expressed her envy when a female friend visited her during the friend's first visit to her own natal family after her wedding:

羡君还故址　I envy that you returned to your former home,
怜我守孤村　and pity myself staying in an isolated village.

(Wang Duanshu, "*Guiyou Zheng'er Mingzhan shi ning hui guofang* 闺友郑二明湛始宁回过访" ("My girlhood companion Mingzhan, the second daughter of Zheng family, visited me during her first visit with her parents after her wedding"), lines 5-6, 8.7a-b)

Whether it is a decision made out of the exigencies of the situation, or a voluntary choice, leaving her old home (*jiuju* 旧居) is always traumatic for Wang Duanshu. However, stable dwelling places, as they are depicted in Wang's collection, even when

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[205] 上衣不蔽身/朝食不及夕. Wang Duanshu, "Hard to Leave My Home," lines 19-20, *Lamenting Red Flowers*, 2.2a.

[206] See Wang Dingyou's 王定猷 "*Wang Duanshu zhuan* 王端淑传" (*A Biography of Wang Duanshu*) and Meng Chengshun's 孟称舜 "*Ding furen zhuan* 丁夫人传" (*A Biography of Madame Ding*) in *Mingyuan shiwei*, not paginated.

[207] 昆仲十三人/此身何漂泊. Wang Duanshu, "*Beiqu* 北去" ("Going North"), lines 15-6, *Lamenting Red Flowers*, 2.3b.

they provided a comfortable shelter for the family, are still a source of anxiety for the writer. These dwelling places can physically circumscribe her activities and, more importantly, obstruct her communication with the outside world.

Wang's complex attitude toward her dwelling, a mixture of longing for stability and security and, at the same time, anxiety about being limited and concealed, serves as a source of tension, a persistent dynamic in her poems depicting her dwelling places. A close reading of the three poems in her poetry series entitled "*Xinju* 新居" ("New Dwelling") will show her mixed feelings. In the first poem of the series, she seems to be content with her new home, celebrating it as an ideal place to shelter a recluse like herself:

幽谷今才出　It has just appeared in this deep and secluded valley.
奚夸绿野堂　How shall I praise the green wilderness hall?
近池多雪漉　The pond nearby often sparkles with snow.
远榭映邻光　The terrace of grand houses afar reflects neighbor's light.
但有牛横笛　There is only a flute played by someone riding an ox,
而无马控缰　And no one holding the rein of a horse.
贪叨清供富　Fond of good food, I have abundant vegetables.
晨起饱禾香　At dawn the plump standing grain sends forth sweet scent.
(Wang Duanshu, "*Xinju*," poem no. 1, 8a)

The poem vividly depicts the serene delight that the poetic persona enjoys when her "green wilderness hall" is newly built. Hidden in a deep and secluded valley, her new residence harmonizes with its surroundings. The two characters "*fu* 富" (rich) and "*bao* 饱" (to be satiated) in the ending couplet signify abundance and plentitude. They are among the rare cases of *Lamenting Red Flowers*, where most poems and essays are records of her straitened circumstances, as her husband refused to serve the new dynasty

and most probably lost the Ding family's property and lands after his father's death during the invasion of the south by Manchu armies after 1645.

This poem series compares interestingly with one on a similar topic written by Qian Chengzhi 钱澄之 (1612-1693), Wang Duanshu's contemporary literatus who was also a Ming loyalist. After the fall of the Ming dynasty in the north, Qian joined the Ming army in the south to resist the advancing Qing troops. According to his poems, he and his family also lost their lands, houses, and belongings during the turbulent years of the dynastic change. Among his collected poems, there is a poem series depicting his newly built "*tianjian caolu* 田间草庐" (thatched cottage in the fields). In the first of the six poems, the poet, like Wang Duanshu, expresses the joy brought by the completion of a dwelling place for the family. He calls the thatched cottage "the residence of Tao Qian in Chaisang" and "Shao Yong's nest of peace and happiness.[208]

Wang's and Qian's dwelling places, together with the attached lands, provide both poets and their families shelter from coldness and hunger, and therefore give them an essential dignity as human beings. More importantly, these so-called "humble" habitations in relatively secluded surroundings serve as perfect stages for the projection of their self-images as scholar-recluses, as suggested by Qian's allusions to Tao Qian and Shao Yong, and Wang's depiction of the bamboo flutes. Both of them also find that the

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[208] 元亮柴桑宅/尧夫安乐窝." Qian Chengzhi, , "*Tianjian caolu chucheng yiju* 田间草庐初成移居" ("Upon Completing and Moving into the Thatched Cottage in the Fields"), poem no. 1, lines 5-6, *Tianjian shiji ershiba juan* 田间诗集二十八卷, XXSKQS, 1401: 402. Yuanliang 元亮 is the courtesy name of Tao Qian, who retired to live in genteel seclusion in Chaisang (near today's Jiujiang 九江 of Jiangxi Province) in the later years of his life. .Yaofu 尧夫 is the courtesy name of Shao Yong 绍雍 (1011-1077), the Song dynasty scholar who built in Luoyang a residence named "*Anle wo* 安乐窝 (literally: the nest of peace and happiness)." He then gave himself the appellation of "*Anle zhuren* 安乐主人 (The master of peace and happiness)." See the entry of "*Anle wo* 安乐窝," *Hanyu da cidian* 汉语大词典, eds, Luo Zhufeng, et al. (Shanghai: Shanghai cishu chubanshe, 1986) 3:1330.

roofs of their newly built houses allow them to focus more on their roles as educators of the younger generations of the family. To Qian Chengzhi, although his cottage is not spacious:

拟作课孙塾　I plan to use it as a family school to teach my grandsons
馀年第一椿　In the first year of many years to come.
(Qian Chengzhi, "*Tianjian caolu chucheng yiju* 田间草庐初成移居（"Upon Completing and Moving into the Thatched Cottage in the Fields"）, poem no. 2, lines 7-8, 402)

The speaking voice, by calling the first year that he is going to spend in his new home as "the first year in the count of *chun* trees," is both celebrating his long and happy years to come in the house, and his capability to function as a father figure, supervising his grandsons' education after the family's long period of wandering.[209] Similarly, Wang Duanshu says in the third poem of her series:

间架无多地　Though the house does not occupy much land.
秋空有旷天　In autumn, over it arches a vast sky.
残篇饶课子　The fragments of texts are enough for me to teach my sons.
啜茗学参禅　Sipping tea, I learn to meditate on zen.
(Wang Duanshu, "*Xinju*," poem no. 3, lines 3-6, 8.2a)

Setting her humble, small home under the vast sky of autumn, the poet celebrates what she has rather than what she does not have. The roof of her home spares her from wandering, an experience bitterly described by her ballad poem "Hard to Leave My Door." The stable living environment promised by the new house enables her to function

[209] The character *chun* 椿 in the last line has two layers of meaning. According to *Zhuangzi*, *chun* is a kind of legendary tree that "counts eight hundred years as a spring, and another eight hundred as an autumn." Therefore, *chun* becomes a symbol of longevity. Later it is also used as an honorable way to refer to one's father. For the story of *chun*, see Zhuang Zi, "*Xiaoyao you* 逍遥游" ("Free and Easy Wandering"), *Zhuangzi jijie* 庄子集解 (Taibei: Shijie shuju, 1967) 2.

as a mother and a scholar: The fragmentary texts that survive the family's previous drift are now used by her as her sons' textbooks.

Wang's poems on her new residence differ from the poem series on the same topic by Qian Chengzhi in three respects. The discrepancies reflect the poets' disparate views on their relations with their dwellings as places and spaces. Wang's poems represent her new dwelling as a platform on which she could perform various roles as scholar, recluse, mother, and hostess. The emphasis in her poem is focused on how she feels and what she does with the house and within it. Throughout the three poems, only two lines directly concern the house, though the series itself is entitled "New Dwelling." Interestingly, the action of construction in Wang's poems is condensed to the character of "*chu*" 出in the first line, which literally means "to appear." It has just appeared in this deep and secluded valley. Without a human initiator and with the house as the implied subject of the verb "to appear," the poet's choice of the word "*chu*" conceals the human effort in building the house and naturalizes its emergence as if it grows from the soil like grass or trees, and is therefore in total harmony with the "deep and secluded valley." In Qian's series, however, more lines are devoted to detailed description of the action of construction. The first couplet of the series says:

结构三间小　To construct three small rooms
经营两月多　It took me more than two months to manage.
(Qian Chengzhi, "*Tianjian caolu chucheng yiju*," poem no. 1, lines 1-2, 402)

The omitted initiator of the two verbs "*jiegou* 结构" (to construct) and "*jingying* 经营 (to manage)" is most probably "I." In the fifth and sixth poems, the speaking voice reveals more details concerning the construction of the house. In the fifth poem, Qian

tells his reader that he has exhausted all his economic sources to build this house. The sixth poem ends the series on the completion of the new dwelling with reiteration of the construction process, the straitened economic situations of the family due to the construction, and his future plan to construct the family's ancestral temple:

累旬佣土木　Engaged in construction for tens of days,
衣蔽履频穿　I wear threadbare clothes and shoes with holes.
开囷无多米　Opening the door of the barn, I find no much grain left.
看囊剩几钱　I look at my purse: only a few coins remain.
未防冬事逼　I haven't been prepared for the winter affairs though they are pressing.
且得雨中眠　For the while, I am just able to sleep when it rains.
祠宇规初定　I made an initial plan for the ancestral temple.
成应在隔年　It should be completed in the year after next.
(Ibid, poem no. 6, 403)

While Qian's poems mainly explore the poet's anxiety concerning the family's straitened circumstances, Wang Duanshu mentions the building of her house only in passing. Qian's description of the time needed to complete the project, the humbleness of the house that is sparely furnished, his regret that his elder brother's family still lacks a dwelling of their own, and his plan for an ancestral temple, all represent his authority as the head of the family, his responsibility for disposing the family's economic resources, his awareness of ownership of the land, and his duty to the extended family. To Wang Duanshu, her new house buried in a deep and secluded valley can be a source of double anxiety. As a woman writer, she has always aspired to be heard and to communicate with other writers, male and female. As a scholar whose Confucian philosophy values services to the state, she regards their life in seclusion as a personal choice to demonstrate a political stance as a Ming loyalist. In other words, as both a woman writer and a Confucian scholar-recluse, her pivotal interest while writing poems is in how to represent

herself as the one whose concerns transcend her immediate environment and living conditions. For example, the second poem in the series begins with a couplet referring to how her peaceful life in the deep valley helps to cure her illness:

却病居幽僻　Dwelling in the distant and tranquil, I was cured of my disease.
烹茶拂净瓯　Wiping clean the cups, I boiled water for tea.
(Wang Duanshu, "*Xinju*," poem no. 2, lines 1-2, 8.2a)

Appreciation of tea and life in a remote, serene place is closely associated with the recluse culture in dynastic China. The opening couplet thus immediately informs the reader of the speaking voice's identity. A well-read audience is expected to instantly know that the speaking recluse in the poem must cherish some "intent" beyond life in seclusion. This couplet, together with the second and third couplets in the third poem, describes the appeal (*qu* 趣) of living in genteel seclusion, such as enjoying the vast autumn sky, teaching children, tasting tea, and meditating. In contrast, Qian's opening poem of the series denies the reader the particularization of what the *qu* is for Qian in living in his thatched cottage in the fields:

不知茅屋趣　If one does not know the pleasure of living in a thatched cottage,
于此定如何?　What is he going to do anyway with this hut?
(Qian Chengzhi, "*Tianjian caolu chucheng yiju*," poem no. 1, lines 7-8, 403)

Wu Weiye 吴伟业 (1609-1672), another contemporary literatus and also a Ming loyalist writer, wrote a poem entitled "*Yuanju* 园居" ("Dwelling in the Garden")[210]. It begins with lines on construction and fencing, similar to those of Qian's poem:

傍城营小筑　I built a small abode near the city.
近水插疏篱　Close to the water, I erected some sparse bamboo fence.

[210] *Yuan* 园, though usually translated as "garden," in literary Chinese basically means a designated land where trees and vegetables are cultivated.

(Wu Weiye, "*Yuanju*," lines 1-2, 268)

Wu's poem also ends in a similar way:

自领幽居趣　Only I myself appreciate the appeal of living in a quiet and tranquil abode.
无人到此知　No one comes here and nobody knows.
(Ibid, lines 7-8)

The final couplets of both poems by the male writers assign the appreciation of the *qu* of humble yet serene, genteel seclusion exclusively to themselves. Such exclusion plays a twofold role: it highlights the speaking voices' ownership of their dwelling places. The poetic representation of the construction process in the beginning of their poems and the images of a lonely self against the background of a small house in a secluded place creates an enclosed discursive space where the reader is both invited and simultaneously excluded. Both the invitation and the exclusion are necessary to the establishment of the speaking voice's ownership. The exclusion in the last lines of the poems also legitimizes the poem's writing itself. Without the last line, all of the poetic accounts of their labor, time, and money invested in their moderate dwelling places will not be worth mentioning. The *qu*, which is claimed to be appreciated by no one but the speakers themselves, distinguishes their dwellings from those, say, of their neighbors' dwellings: there might be many humble abodes in secluded areas like theirs. However, because they are the only connoisseurs of the *qu*, the poetic depiction of the construction processes is not only justifiable, but serves as a bond between the poet and the reader, as the reader of the poems is allowed to share their knowledge of the *qu*.

Compared to the poems discussed on dwelling places by literati writers such as Qian Chengzhi and Wu Weiye, the poems in Wang Duanshu's "New Dwelling" establish a feminine space less enclosed and more dynamic, with more uncertain relations between

the space and the speaking voice. The first poem in Qian's poem series on moving into the thatched cottage begins with a couplet describing the size of the abode and its construction. In its last couplet, the speaking voice celebrates himself as the one who understands the political and philosophical implications and the aesthetic appeal of dwelling in a humble cottage in the countryside. The two couplets structurally and semantically define an enclosed poetic space that claims exclusive ownership and provides a sense of stability. The third poem of "New Dwelling" by Wang Duanshu begins with a larger picture in front of her dwelling:

门开千亩碧　My door opens to a thousand *mu* of green land.
何必定吾田　Why does it have to belong to me?
间架无多地　Though the house does not occupy much land.
秋空有旷天　In autumn, over it arches a vast sky.
(Wang Duanshu, "*Xinju*," poem no. 3, lines 1-4, 8.2b)

The beginning couplet immediately places her small house in an agreeable environment, and shifts the attention from the small land occupied by her abode to a panoramic picture of which her house is just a tiny part. The clear and vast autumn sky above the house applies more colors to the beautiful picture of a cottage in the embrace of green mountains. Qian's emphasis on ownership and stability represents his anxiety as the male head of a family who suffered from years of hunger and cold.

Wang Duanshu and Qian Chengzhi's poems differ in their attitude to their new dwellings, due to their distinctive understanding of the political situations during the dynastic transition. In the first poem of "*Tianyuan zashi yi* 田园杂诗" ("Miscellaneous Poems on Fields and Gardens"), Qian mentions that he returned home after ten years of wandering, only to find that his home was burnt, and his brothers were sheltered by a

thatched shed near the ruins.[211] Wang Duanshu also suffered from destitution and homelessness after the fall of the Ming dynasty. Her poems on moving into a house of her own are undoubtedly resonant with joy and happiness. However, while Qian Chengzhi retreated into his cottage after he had experienced disillusion in the South Ming reigns, giving up all hope of restoring the Ming dyansty, Wang Duanshu's choice of living a life in genteel seclusion did not exclude her hope that things might be changed for the better, although she evidently did not have a clear idea of how and when. In an essay entitled "*Meng Yang Zhonglie gong xiaoji* 梦杨忠烈公小记" ("A Brief Account of a Dream of Mr. Yang Lian"), Wang recorded a dream in which she went into a majestic hall and saw, sitting on the throne, Yang Lian 杨涟 (1572-1625), a Ming official and friend of Ding Qianxue 丁乾学 (?-1627), Wang's father-in-law, both of whom were victims of an unjust verdict by Wei Zhongxian's 魏忠贤 (1568-1627) faction of eunuchs and their followers. In the dream, she cried out in distress, telling the spirit of Yang how her husband had suffered from hunger and destitution for years. Yang Lian asked her to be patient and wait for the proper time. Although his words were too vague to mean anything definite, Wang obviously obtained great comfort and encouragement from the dream, because she mentions at the end of the essay that she believed that her intelligence and integrity had allowed her to be able to communicate and be trusted by gods.[212] She had the dream in 1651, the seventh year after the fall of the Ming dynasty. It is hard to pin down the year when this poem series "New Dwelling" was written. But it is still safe

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[211] Qian Chengzhi, 378.

[212] Wang Duanshu, "*Meng Yang Zhonglie gong xiaoji* 梦杨忠烈公小记," *Lamenting Red Flowers*, 17.4a-7a.

to say that for a long time after 1644, she hoped for the restoration of the Ming so that her husband and/or even she herself could serve in the government, or to be involved in public affairs in some way.

Her optimism even on the most desperate occasions may partly explain why the speaking voice refuses to focus her attention all the time on her new home or to make definite plans of expanding and renovation as Qian did in his poems. In Qian's poems on moving into the new house, the lines of vision are centripetal, always going back to the abode. In the fourth poem of the series, the poet describes the view outside of his door as:

柴扉不择向　My brushwood gate does not choose which direction to face to.
只对远峰开　It opens only to the peaks afar.
日月当门出　Sun and moon rise in before the gate.
江山抱屋来　Rivers and mountains embrace my rooms.
(Qian, "*Tianjian caolu chucheng yiju*," poem no. 4, lines 1-4, 403)

In depicting the landscape around his dwelling, the poet positions his new abode in the center. No matter how far he allows the reader's eyes to go, he always directs them back to the brushwood gate and room of his house. In Wang Duanshu's poems, however, the lines of sight are centrifugal. The first two couplets of the third poem lead the reader's eyes beyond her house, to the green land stretching forward, and up to the crystal autumn sky. Similarly, the second couplet of the second poem says:

云飞出岫远　Clouds fly out of the distant mountain peaks.
月为小窗留　The moon stays for the sake of my small window.
(Wang Duanshu, "*Xinju*," poem no. 2, lines 3-4, 8.2a)

Staying inside the building, she always casts her eyes to the outside, indulging in the beauty of the distant mountains veiled in clouds and the lingering moon against a clear sky. Unlike Qian Chengzhi, who complains about the humble appearance of his abode,

the sparely furnished rooms, and the cramped kitchen, Wang Duanshu celebrates her new dwelling as a place with blurred boundaries, which in turn allows her house to be only a part of a bigger picture.

As literati writers and Ming loyalists, Wu Weiye and Qian Chengzhi have writing anxiety different from that of Wang Duanshu, though all the poets struggled against being silenced by their contemporary political oppressors and reached an audience beyond their immediate time and place. Their anxiety while writing poems on their dwellings stems from the uncertainty of their ownership and the possibility of losing their identity as scholars when they voluntarily chose to live in seclusion, and in the case of Qian, to live by farming. For Wang Duanshu, her writing anxiety comes from her gender. The male poetic tradition establishes a stereotypical relationship between the representation of women and their dwelling places, as exemplified by the following poem by Wu Yu 吴玓 (fl. sixteenth century):

答闺人徐简简寄怀	In response to Xu Jianjian, the one in women's quarters, I composed a poem to express my feelings
东风妆阁敞檐牙	Eaves of the inner chamber bare their projected tiles in the east wind.
春锁重扉树树花	Behind the many locked doors, flowering trees blossom in spring.
自是王孙归未得	Certainly the noble gentleman has not returned.
漫随芳草到天涯	Following wherever the fragrant grass takes him, he goes to the end of the world.

(Wu Yu, "*Da guiren Xu Jianjian jihuai*," 279)

Wu Yu wrote this poem as a response to a poem sent to him by his concubine, Xu Jianjian. In this poem, as in many other poems written by literati on women in their boudoirs, the woman is represented through her absent body, her bodiless longing and wanting of the other, and her complete silence in her dwelling place.

In the case of this poem, the inner chamber of the woman plays a pivotal role in constituting the relationship between the speaking voice and his addressee. In the first couplet, it constructs a space immediately enclosed but open to the speaking voice as the voyeur. The bird's-eye perspective gives the poetic persona a privilege of seeing what cannot be seen by those on the ground. It is a languid spring day. In the soft spring breeze from the east, the eaves of the inner chamber bare their tiles as if to welcome his gaze. The many doors leading to the chamber of the woman are locked, blocking the gaze of all but that of the speaking voice, who, to his pleasure, overlooks trees after trees of flowers in full blossom. The speaking voice obtains his pleasure not only from gazing at the eaves of the inner chamber and the blooming flowers, but from the absent-presence of the female body existing solely in the implied ground of the metaphors of inviting chamber and beautiful flowers, because in the poetic tradition flowers have been an established metaphor for beautiful young women, and spring has been used for their transient youth, and hence also their desire to be loved. Such an absently present female body is subdued to complete silence: the flowers bloom, lonely and quiet in the yard behind the locked door.

The speaking voice soon gives an explanation of why even the most beautiful flowers in profusion cannot lure the woman out. And as if the answer is self-evident and known by all readers, he says that it is *certainly* because the gentleman has not returned home yet. The voyeur finally turns his gaze to the woman who is said to be, most probably, standing by the window and looking outside. Her inner chamber must be in a tall building so that she can see over the walls. Outside, fragrant grass stretches endlessly to the distance. He follows her silent gaze and reveals to the reader the ultimate

explanation of the enigma of the silent and absent female body: at such a moment, she can wish for nothing but that the grass could bring her to the end of the world where the gentleman is.

Wu's poem depicts a relationship between women and their dwelling places that is typical in thematically similar poetry by literati writers. In these poems, women's quarters have to feature selective enclosure, so that not only are women's bodies approachable to the male voyeurs, but the latter's voyeuristic pleasure can be prolonged and then consummated. In addition, as most of the women remain silent and sometimes present only by being absent, their dwelling places replace their physical bodies and become the desirable, yet unattainable other. In the process of replacement, the dwelling place itself is reduced to the hackneyed and the unreal. Exclusively highlighted are the many closed doors, silk window screen, embroidered curtains, and flowers outside the window or in vases. Such a place is abstracted and twisted, losing all its quotidian functions and vividness. It is a doll house, hosting absently present female bodies who are mostly solipsized by the literati writers. Women in most of these poems do nothing but lament their loneliness and longing for their departed lovers. However, as normal human beings, they must have done something else in their dwelling places. They may play with their children, chat with their friends and family members other than their husbands, or eat and sleep without thinking of their absent loves every time. They must have some pastimes; sometimes they receive visitors, and some of them have to work, to weave or to embroider. If so, they may have to focus on their work, thinking how to improve their weaving or embroidering; or sometimes they may bicker with other family members or servants, or feel frustrated over a stiff neck in the morning. Few of the above-mentioned

activities and women's relationships with other women in the household are fairly represented in poems on women's quarters written by the male literati writers.

Wang Duanshu's anxiety while writing about her dwelling is reflected in the speaking voice's gendered performance and the open endings of the poems in the series. In depicting her new home, she highlights the serenity, remoteness, and humbleness of her abode. The features are intended to conjure in the reader's mind an immediate association with famous scholar-recluses such as Tao Yuanming. In addition, the poetic persona's activities in the dwelling, such as boiling water for tea, composing poems, enjoying the fragrance of grain, and Zen meditation are all typical of genteel recluses. Examples of women recluses can be found in Du Fu's "*Jia ren* 佳人" ("A Beautiful Woman"). She lives in a deep and secluded valley, sends her maidservant to sell her pearls to repair her thatched cottage with cypress vine, and collects flowers and cedar leaves[213] Wang Duanshu chooses to represent herself more as a scholar-recluse than in the role of a beautiful woman who, though deserted by her husband, remains faithful to him by exiling herself to live a hard life in seclusion.

The neutralization of gender markers in Wang's poems transforms the dwelling place into a space distinctive from the enclosed women's quarters where the female dwellers do what they are expected to do, and from the loci of the secluded life of a literatus, such as Tian Chengzhi's thatched cottage, whose ownership is much emphasized and reaffirmed in their poems. This is a space where the dweller experiments with activities that emphasize her sensual experiences rather than those of an observer,

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[213] 侍婢卖珠回/牵萝补茅屋/摘花不插发/采柏动盈菊. Du Fu 杜甫, "*Jia ren* 佳人" (A Beautiful Woman), lines 19-22, *Du Fu shi xuan zhu* 杜甫诗选注 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1998) 129.

claims her aesthetic obsession and pleasure, and synthesizes previously incompatible roles as a mother and a recluse-scholar.

Wang's dwelling place as depicted in her poetry is a place that not only has blurred boundaries, but it is also impossible to set a limit on its associated meanings. After describing the beautiful scenery out of her windows, and mocking her own poems as one sticking to the ancient ways, the poet suddenly says:

草庐肥豚足　If my thatched cottage has sufficient thriving herds of pigs,
三顾敢希求　How could I dare to expect three personal calls?
(Wang Duanshu, "*Xinju*," poem no. 2, line 7-8, 8.2a)

"Thatched Cottage" and "Three Personal Calls" both allude to Liu Bei's 刘备 (161-223) three visits to Zhuge Liang's 诸葛亮 (181-234) cottage to solicit his help. "*San gu maolu* 三顾茅庐," or "three visits to the thatched cottage," later would become a set phrase referring to repeated and sincere requests made to a talented person for help especially in state affairs. This ending couplet is inconsistent with the message conveyed elsewhere in the poem series. In this poem series celebrating the new home for Wang's family, most lines express her delight in the picturesque landscape in which her abode is built, the sufficient supplies of vegetables and grains that keep her carefree, and the aesthetic activities allowed by a roof over her head and enough food on the table. However, the last two lines of the second poem mentioned above impart an understated desire to be involved in state affairs. Qian's secluded life as a farmer-scholar is a choice that he made after he had experienced many years of ruthless political power struggles, and began to seriously abandon his identity as a scholar-official. As attested by many poems, he chose to live by farming after he retreated to his hometown and also urged his children to farm and study instead of seeking official positions through study. Compared

to Qian, Wang Duanshu's confidence in her political talent and ambition and her idealist vision of participating in state affairs is undercut by her lack of actual practice in political struggles. However, her confidence and vision endow her poems with a dynamic open-endedness. The inconsistency between the ending couplet of the second poem and all the other lines in the series suggests that her new dwelling place may not be a container that can hold all the meanings usually associated with the lifestyle of a scholar-official who chooses to withdraw from political life. The female dweller is struggling for a new relationship with the place in which she finds herself. At her hand is a repertoire of allusions, images, and literary norms that used to exclude women writers such as herself. The messages that she was trying to convey to the reader are still partly confused and uncertain. But what is certain is that her new dwelling refuses to signify what it is supposed to do. It is from this refusal and uncertainty that the new relationship between the female speaker and her dwelling is constituted.

Living in a Picture: Visionary Dwelling Places in Poems by Wang Duanshu and Li Yin

The collections by Wang Duanshu and Li Yin contain poetic representations of two kinds of dwelling places. Li's poems on dwelling in the countryside and Wang's on moving into a new abode constitute the more "realistic" category, dealing with routine concerns and everyday experience. In this section, I will investigate the two writers' poems on "ideal" dwelling places, which are rooted in visionary characteristics, and examine how the reconstructed spatial relationship between the female speaking voices

and their ideal dwellings in these poems helps redefine women's desire and consequently their subject positions.

My study of visionary dwelling places will center on two poems. The first is entitled "*Fang Yinranzi yinju dai Zhenzi zuo* 访映然子隐居代真姊作" ("Visiting Master Yingran's Secluded Residence, on Behalf of My Elder Sister Zhen") by Wang Duanshu:

流云淡淡接疏林　Pale floating clouds touch the scattered trees in the woods.
半堕晴光绿水沉　In the lingering light of the setting sun, the green water is deep.
蝉静不喧巢叶稳　The quiet cicadas stop their clamor; their nest leaves are unstirred.
人幽多管抱琴吟　The recluse usually holds her zither, plucking and singing.
泥封径草随音觅　The mud covers grasses by the road: I look for her following the music.
杖拨闲花带笑寻　Separating the carefree flowers with my stick, I search for the path with a smile.
月冷一椽寒影隔　In the chilling moonlight, a rafter's cold shadow block my way.
轻烟香已出松阴　In a light haze, scent comes from the pines' shades.

(Wang Duanshu, "*Fang Yinranzi yinju dai Zhenzi zuo*," 10.5a-b)

The following poem is the third out of four poems in a seven-character line regulated poem series written by Li Yin entitled "*Shanju sishou* 山居四首" ("Dwelling in the Mountains, Four Poems"):

寄迹烟霞性倍幽　Sojourning in the mist and clouds, I enjoy more delights of seclusion.
此身之外复何求　What do I seek outside this body of mine?
千章古木隐茅屋　A thatched cottage is hidden in hundreds of ancient trees.
万壑奔泉藏钓舟　A fishing boat is moored on a rushing spring buried in thousands of valleys.
砌荚生时推日月　When pods by the steps grow, I calculate time.
岩花开处辨春秋　As flowers on cliffs bloom, I tell spring from autumn.
闲行倚仗看云起　Walking leisurely, I lean upon my stick, and watch the emerging clouds.
独笑山禽有白头　All alone, I smile at mountain birds who are white-headed.

(Li Yin, "*Shanju sishou*," poem no. 3, 76)

Though titles of both poems contain the character *ju* 居, which literally means "residence," the dwelling places are visionary due to two factors. First, dwellings in both poems do not accommodate routine activities and everyday experience. Absent from the poems are Wang Duanshu's constant laments on illness, which haunts her most of the time, as well as her rage at her husband, who neglected her for a concubine whom Wang bought for him after she pawned her jewelry. The reader also cannot hear Li Yin's sighs over her loneliness in long winter nights, or see her painting when the plum trees blossom outside of her windows. Unlike Li Yin's poems on dwelling in the countryside or Wang Duanshu's on moving into her new home where they boil water for tea, cook, teach their children, or collect leaves as firewood, the two poems position the dwellings in some extraordinary environments and describe either elegant artistic activities, such as plucking a zither in Wang's poem, or walking high in the mountains where hundreds of ancient trees grow and springs race in thousands of valleys.

Besides the non-quotidian activities of the dwellers in the poems, the representation of the residences is visionary due to the picturesque quality of the scenery in the poems. Structurally speaking, both poems resemble a landscape painting in a hanging scroll or hand scroll. Indeed, a regulated poem is structurally reminiscent of a hanging scroll or a hand scroll because their viewers all experience a process of unfolding.[214] On a hanging scroll of a landscape painting, such as with Zhang Hong's 张宏 (1577-after 1652) "Landscape with a Studio by a Stream" (dated 1629)[215], the top is

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[214] A regulated poem is traditionally written vertically from right to left without punctuation.

[215] For the painting, see James Cahill, *The Compelling Image: Nature and Style in Seventeenth-Century Chinese Painting* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982) 24.

usually either as vacant as the sky, or with peaks of mountains that occupy a small space of it. Painters usually use this vacancy for inscriptions and seals. Many landscape paintings create a line-of-sight gazing upward from a distance. The upper section usually has less detail than the lower, as the lower is usually closer to the viewer. Human figures, if there are any, and residential houses also consequently appear in the lower section, while sometimes Buddhist and Daoist temples with fewer details and in smaller scales are positioned in the upper section. Either for a hanging scroll or a hand scroll, good painters always strive to achieve balance between images and vacancy, the detailed and the sketchy, the dark and light ink, and the vertical and horizontal lines. Consequentially, the landscape in such a painting is less a realistic depiction of nature than a visionary "nature" so arranged as to advocate the painter's aesthetic values.

A close reading of the two poems reveals that in representing the places, Wang Duanshu and Li Yin, who are both writers and renowned painters themselves, follow similar aesthetic principles in balancing the antithetical elements and creating similar aesthetic experience. Both poems start with lines providing background information, general comments, or sketchy images that serve as a framework for more detailed images in the following lines. Wang Duanshu's poem, for example, begins with the line literally depicting the clouds in the sky and the trees afar. Together with the second line, which describes the lingering light of the setting sun and the dark green water, the first couplet is the frame within which more detailed images will be located. In the first couplet of Li Yin's poem, no specific information about the mountains or her dwelling place is mentioned. It is only vaguely mentioned that she stays in the "mist and clouds" and feels mentally and physically self-sufficient. The generality and vagueness of the two couplets

therefore resemble the vacancy and the sketchy space of the upper section of a Chinese landscape painting. Details about their dwellings, such as the rafters, and small natural images, such as flowers and pods, appear in the third or the ending couplets. Similar to viewing an unfolding hanging scroll, readers of the poems move their eyes from the upper, larger, and vaguer distance to the lower, smaller, and clearer images nearby. In Wang Duanshu's poem, the horizontal lines constituted of clouds floating in the sky coordinate with the vertical one of a path on which mud covers the grass; the slanting lines of rafters outlined in the moonlight are softened and reconciled by the haze from the shady pine woods. In Li Yin's poem on dwelling in the mountains, the static plane of ancient trees screening the thatched cottage is interrupted by the racing springs, and the newborn clouds are decorated with dots of mountain birds with white heads. Images in regulated verse are almost always carefully selected and deliberately arranged. However, in the poems by Wang Duanshu and Li Yin, the non-quotidian activities accommodated by the places and the images are so meticulously arranged to convey an aesthetic experience similar to that of a landscape painting that the representation of the dwelling places is most probably idealized.

Questions remain: if the writers idealize their dwellings, what kind of desire is suggested by the utopian character of the scenario in the two poems? How does the aesthetic representation of the dwellings generate subject positions? How do these subject positions deviate from the ones of feminine voices in boudoirs depicted in literary poetry?

Gaze plays a pivotal role in the construction of the dwelling place and subject positions in Wang Duanshu's poem. This poem is about her elder sister's visit to her

secluded residence. Interestingly, Wang Duanshu borrowed the eyes of her sister and wrote the poem on behalf of her. What the reader sees in the picture is a place seen by a woman who imagines that this must be what another woman sees. The textual subject therefore plays a fourfold role as the dweller, the object of the gaze of the other, the other whose gaze she simulates, and the writing self. The idealized dwelling place is constructed in the web intricately spun with the threads of gaze and desires.

The idealized place constructed in the network of gaze both from the female self and a female other is a gendered space that accommodates the mutual pleasure of both the self and the other. The gaze in Wang Duanshu's poem offers an interesting contrast with that in a poem by You Tong 尤侗 (1618-1704), Wang's contemporary literatus writer:

访冯静容校书	Visiting Feng Jingrong, the Collator[216]
曲巷低迷油壁车	In the winding lanes the lacquered carriage loses its way.
旁人争指小怜家	Passers-by are all anxious to show the way to the house of Xiaolian[217].
湘江香草传青管	Over the fragrant grasses by the Xiang River comes the music of the flute.
巫峡行云隐碧纱	Behind the green screen looms the floating cloud of the Wu gorge.[218]
有意抱琴歌婉转	With tender feelings you sing sweetly with the zither in your arms.
无缘灭烛醉天斜	It was not my fate to douse the candle, intoxicated as the sun went down.

[216] *Jiaoshu* 校书, literally the collator, is a polite name for courtesans in late Ming period.

[217] Xiaolian, or Feng Xiaolian 冯小怜, was the concubine of the last king of the Northern Qi dynasty (550-577). She was said to be good at playing *pipa* 琵琶, a plucked string instrument with a fretted fingerboard, singing and dancing. Later Xiaolian is used to refer to a courtesan who is good at music. For her story, see Li Yanshou's 李延寿, "*Qi houzhu fengshufei* 齐后主冯淑妃" (*The Biography of Lady Feng, the Kind and Gentle Imperial Concubine of the Final Emperor of Qi*), "*Houfei zhuan xia* 后妃传下" (*The Giographies of Imperial Concubines, Part Two*), *Bei shi* 北史 (*The History of Northern Dynasties*) (Taibei: Ershiwu shi biankanguan, 1956) 14.11a-13a.

[218] For the allusions to the Xiang River and Wu Gorge, see my discussion on page 178.

闲情久作沾泥絮　　For a long time, your mood has been that of the willow catkins in mud.
又逐东风杨白花　　When the east wind blows, you are chased again like the white willow blossoms.
(You, "*Fang Feng Jingrong jiaoshu*," 340)

In this poem on a literatus's visit to a courtesan's dwelling, the absence of the depiction of the dwelling itself and the woman's body is conspicuously similar to that in Wang Duanshu's poem on appearance. In Wang's poem, the woman dweller and her abode also disappear under the gaze of another woman. In the lingering light of the setting sun, clouds are floating right above scattered trees. The green water is tinted with darkness. Yonder, beside the woods and the water, a meandering path with dense flowers on both sides leads to a house where someone is plucking the zither. The moon rises and the silhouette of the house is softened by the haze rising from the pine woods nearby. However, for most of the poem, both the abode and the dweller are absent from the picture, and replaced only by a rafter of the former and the sound of the zither played by the latter. Similarly, both the courtesan and her dwelling in You Tong's poem are lost in the poet's description of the winding valley, fragrant grass, flute music, and window screen.

What differentiates the gaze in You Tong's poem from that in Wang Duanshu's poem is the fact that You's poem is unilateral, while Wang's poem is mutual. The annihilation of the woman and her dwelling in Yu's poem depends on what Lacan calls "the register of desire" immanent to the gaze (83). The subjugating gaze in this poem is unidirectional, without the knowledge or acknowledgement of the gazed upon female. The first couplet formulates the dyad of the gazer and the gazed in a typical situation. At the very beginning, the male visitor loses his way in the baffling labyrinth of avenues and

lanes among which the female body is hidden. He soon finds his way out with the help of the passersby who vie to be the first one to show him the way to the woman's house. The competition between the enthusiastic guides immediately places the woman's dwelling and her body in the middle of the "scopic field," the point of intersection of many male gazes.[219] The relief from the disorientation and exultation of being the obtainer of the much desired and envied target is reflected in the sensually pleasant images used in describing the woman and her dwelling: the flutes, the fragrant grass, jade green screen, and the floating cloud. Moreover, the Xiang River and the Wu Gorge are two sexual allusions, as the former evokes the two beautiful wives of the legendary ruler Shun 舜. The two women are said to have become the spirits of the Xiang River after drowning themselves in grief at the death of Shun. The Wu Gorge alludes to the goddess of Wu Mountain, who was said to have made love to the King of Chu in his dream. As the object of the gaze, the woman is imaged to be singing gracefully and tenderly for him, oblivious of the gaze. Or, being the much desired object and the reward of the conscientious search, even if she knows, she is hushed up by the speaking voice. Her innocence and silence so annihilate her that not only her dwelling totally disappear in the last three lines, but her body is transformed into the willow blossoms, rootless and therefore fickle, ready to give in to some other love affair.

The gaze in Wang Duanshu's poem, however, is mutual due to the interchangeable positions of the gazer and the gazed. The visitor who takes pains to find the dwelling and gazes at it is immediately both the recluse-dweller herself and her elder

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[219] It may be a reasonable speculation that most passersby on the street in the seventeenth century were mostly males.

sister. From other poems in *Lamenting Red Flowers*, we know that the visitor whose eyes are borrowed by the writing "I" is most probably the elder sister or cousin of Wang Duanshu. In "*Xunanzing dai Zhenzi* 叙难行代真姊" ("A Song Recounting the Hardship, Written on Behalf of Elder Sister Zhen"), Wang describes how her sister lost her husband during the fighting between the Manchus and the Ming loyalist troops in the Jiangnan region in the 1640s. Even worse, she, together with her mother-in-law and her three-year-old son, was deserted by her husband's family, and they were all forced to take refuge in mountains. She even had to sell her clothes to pay for the rent. When learning that rampaging troops were approaching, she cut her hair to preserve her chastity.[220] Later, she became a nun.[221] According to Wang, Elder Sister Zhen also lived a life in seclusion and dwelt in an ancient temple in a remote village.[222] The sisters share similar life experience, similar sufferings in the dynastic turmoil, and similar choices in choosing their dwellings. In a poem describing an unexpected visit of Elder Sister Zhen, Wang Duanshu rejoices at the tacit, mutual understanding between the sisters. As if knowing that Wang suffered from loneliness and missing her, Sister Zhen came over for a visit:

正抱怀师念　I was just thinking of you longingly when you came.
深蒙顾我情　Deeply I cherish your kind concerns for me.
(Wang, "*Yi Zhen zi* 忆真姊" ("Missing My Elder Sister Zhen)", lines 5-6, 8.9b)

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[220] For Elder Sister Zhen's experience in the Ming-Qing conflicts in the 1640s, see Wang Duanshu, "*Xunanzing dai Zhenzi* 叙难行代真姊" ("A Song recounting the hardship, written on behalf of Elder Sister Zhen"), 4, 10a-b.

[221] Wang Duanshu mentions in "*Kunanxing* 苦难行" ("A Song of Tribulation") that her elder sister became a nun after the turmoil in 1644. See Wang Duanshu, 3.2b-3b.

[222] See Wang's "*Yi Zhenzi* 忆真姊" ("Missing My Elder Sister Zhen"), 8.8a.

In Wang Duanshu's poem on her visionary dwelling place, the sisters' mutual understanding and similar life experience establishes the reciprocal relations between the gazer and the gazed. The recluse who plucks the zither knows of the coming and the gazing of the visitor, as she meticulously illustrates what the visitor must have seen on her way to her dwelling. The sound of the music serves as the guide in Wang's poem, whereas the guide in You Tong's poem is the male gaze. The one who is "seeing another see oneself" is unlike the one in Lacan's scheme: a polarized self whose constitution is contingent on the diminishing self under the gaze that he cannot comprehend.[223] The gaze in Wang's poem does not catch the object of the gaze unexpectedly and unknown. Nor is the gaze generated by the anxiety of the polarized self, or result in her vanishing. Rather, writing on behalf of Sister Zhen itself is a gesture of inviting and expecting.

To reiterate the differences between the gaze in You Tong's poem and in Wang's poem, I would like to point out first that gazing in both poems is dual. In visiting a courtesan in You's case, or depicting an imagined visit by assuming the voice of another woman in Wang's poem, each poet describes his/her own experience. The writing selves constitute their subjectivities through gazing at him/herself or the imaged other, who, in turn, gaze toward the courtesan or the writing self. Though the dual gaze in both poems plays the same role in constituting the subjectivities of the writing and the speaking selves, what differentiates the male gaze in You's poem from the female gaze in Wang's poem is their desires as projected in the subject's relation to the place and body at whom he or she gazes.

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[223] Jacques Lacan, *The Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis* (New York: Norton, 1981) 83.

In You Tong's poem, the male speaking self enjoys a scopophilic pleasure in finding and gazing at the courtesan's dwelling and body. the male speaker enjoys the pleasure of the tenderly sung song accompanied by the zither in the courtesan's arms. The agency of both the speaking and the writing selves is acquired at the expense of the fragmentation of the woman's body and dwelling when she is caught unsuspecting and unaware. In Wang Duanshu's poem, however, the spectator's pleasure is mutually enjoyed by both the speaker as the imagined woman, and the writing self who gazes at the speaker through writing. While the gazed at/gazing writing self's pleasure of expectation and invitation is demonstrated by the zither music, the gazed at/gazing speaking voice proclaims her pleasure with her actions of looking for her way to the house by following the music, separating the flowers covering the path with her stick, and her smiles while walking. The absence of the dweller's body and the metonymical depiction of the building, therefore, designate a lack of scopophilic curiosity, a mutual knowledge, and a pleasure in the game, rather than a power relationship between the gazer and the gazed.

The idealized dwelling place in Wang Duanshu's poem is thus constituted through the mutual gaze between the dweller and the visitor, the speaker and Elder Sister Zhen, the target audience whom this poem directly addresses, accommodating the pleasure of both the spectator and the spectated. In Li Yin's poem on her dwelling in the mountains, the dwelling place is also constructed in a net woven with the gazes of the speaking self, the writing self, and the reader.

Attempting to locate these gazes in the poem by Li Yin is tremendously difficult because of the non-specific location of the dwelling, the stereotypical landscape, and the disrupted connections between couplets. The poem begins with the problematic couplet:

寄迹烟霞性倍幽　　Sojourning in the misty clouds, I enjoy more delights of seclusion.
此身之外复何求　　What do I seek for outside this life of mine?
(Li Yin, "*Shanju sishou*," poem no. 3, lines 1-2, 76)

As I said in my previous analysis of the idealized nature the landscape, the poem is not likely a depiction of a real place where Li Yin stayed. Nowhere in the title or in the poem series does the poet mention the name of the mountains or their location. Neither do we know any specific reasons for her to stay in the mountains, as opposed to her poems on dwelling in the countryside. In the fourth poem of the same series, the poet includes the image of an ape-man practicing Zen meditation in an ancient cave (猿封古洞参禅定), and describes herself as looking for precious herbs and signs of immortals (为寻瑶草求仙迹).[224] In a poem from a five-character -line poem series also entitled "Dwelling in the Mountains," after depictions of a secluded abode in the mountains, tame deer, fallen pine nuts, mountain flowers, shoals, and rapids, she suddenly says: Splashing ink, I draw a spring flying down from above (泼墨谱飞泉).[225] Together with the unearthly images, this line indicates that Li Yin most probably views the landscape as if it were a painting, or the poems in the two series of dwelling in the mountains are "*tihuashi*

[224] Li Yin, "*Shanju sishou* 山居四首" ("Dwelling in the Mountains, Four Poems"), poem no. 4, line 3 and 7, 76).

[225] Li Yin, "*Shanju liushou* 山居六首" ("Dwelling in the Mountains, Six Poems"), poem no. 1, line 8, 76.

题画诗” (poems written on paintings), which usually correspond with the images on the paintings.[226]

In the third poem of Li Yin’s seven-character-line poem series on dwelling in the mountains, the landscape and the dwelling in the picture are gazed at by both the speaking self and the writing self. While the speaking self in the picture can be the one who sojourns in the beautiful mountains and enjoys the serenity and beauty by gazing at the landscape, the writing self (who can also be the painter if the poem is written on a painting) obtains her pleasure from gazing at the imaged “misty clouds,” and the speaking self as a human figure within the landscape painting. The rhetorical question in the second line – What do I seek for outside this body of mine? – therefore, can be understood in two ways. It can be a question that the speaking self asks herself. When facing magnificent scenery and awe at the beauty of nature, she feels ultimate satisfaction as a human being who can see, hear, smell, taste, and feel. The landscape in view and the speaking voice constitute a mutually sufficient system, which tends to exclude anything outside of the system. However, the balance of the self-sufficient system is doomed to be broken by the interference of the writing/painting self. While the speaking self can, for the time being, perform a role that is neutral in gender and vague in social class, the writing/painting self cannot afford such an identity. The writing/painting action itself suggests that the question “What do I seek for outside of this life of mine?” is no longer a rhetorical one. Her gaze at the landscape in the painting, which serves for her as a virtual journey and brings her pleasure, may have reminded her of the very lack of such a

[226] For a case study of the relationships between poems on paintings and paintings by artists from Suzhou in the mid-Ming period, see Wang Di, *Ming zhongye Suzhou shi hua guanxi yanjiu* 明中叶苏州诗画关系研究 (Shanghai: Shanghai wenhua chubanshe, 2007).

journey and pleasure. Judging from Li's poems collected in *Bamboo Laughter*, Li Yin seldom traveled after her husband's death, except for seeking refuge in the countryside of Haining. Logically, she most likely lacked the money and opportunity to travel in the mountains. Therefore, perhaps a potential answer to the question in the second line is: "I am seeking a dwelling in such beautiful scenery." But the questions remain: Why does such a dwelling matter? How does the writing/painting self relate to the speaking self--the human figure in the picture?

Such an idealized dwelling may matter because it allows her to forget, though only temporarily, her sufferings as a heirless widow who attends spring and moon festivals alone, missing her beloved husband, as a Ming loyalist who feels helpless and hopeless at the fall of the old dynasty, and as an artist haunted by poverty who makes a living by selling her paintings. Describing a dwelling in the "misty clouds," she finally finds a symbolic space that can accommodate her ambition:

乾坤未了英雄志　　Between heaven and earth, there is still the heroic aspirations.
宇宙能容隐逸家　　This universe is big enough to make a place for reclusive talents.

(Li Yin, "*Rushan xianyong* 入山闲咏" ("Recited at Leisure When I Entered the Mountains"), lines 5-6, 78)

Facing the utopian landscape, she finds a harmony with the material world, an abstracted world whose tremendous breadth and depth match her heroic ambition.

This ambition that projects itself on the boundless and endless universe and the grand landscape spatially defies the women's quarters. In his passionate preface to *You huan* 游唤 (*The Call of Traveling*), a collection of travel notes, Wang Siren, Wang Duanshu's father, who was himself an ardent traveler, ridiculed those so-called worthy

men (*xianzhe* 贤者) who refuse to step out of their studios and travel into the natural world:

> Yet the so-called worthy men are just like young girls who stay within the doors of their boudoirs and dare not to move a step into the openness and the vastness. They are but bees and ants, indeed!
>
> 而所谓贤者，方如儿女子守闺阀，不敢空阔一步。是蜂蚁也。
>
> (Wang Siren, 634-5)

According to Wang Siren, women who are confined in their quarters and worry about nothing but everyday routines lose their human identities and deteriorate into the categories of insects, as both live merely for the sake of living and reproducing thoughtlessly. In the preface, Wang argues for the value of traveling into nature, claiming that the ability to appreciate the beauty of nature differentiates human beings from other animals. In addition, Wang also points out that the aesthetic appreciation of the physical world means not just seeing and hearing. More importantly, it means one's ability to verbalize that appreciation. To Wang Siren, because immortalization designates a human recognition rather than a temporal perpetuation, one's writings can immortalize nature.[227] Wang's interesting exposition of the relation between one's writings and the natural world is echoed by Chen Jiru 陈继儒 (1558-1639).[228]

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[227] Wang Siren argues that heaven and earth put human beings in between because "people are what the grand sky, land, mountains and waters depend on for immortality" (人也者，大天大地大山大水所托以恒不朽者也). See Wang Siren, *Wang Jizhong zazhu* 王季重杂著 (Taibei: Weiwen tushu, 1977) 631.

[228] See Chen Jiru, "Xu 序" (preface), Wang Siren, *The Call of Travelling*, *Wang Jizhong zazhu*, 637-643.

Earlier critics such as Liu Xie 刘勰 (465-522) elevated writing, claiming it as "natural" and "immortal as Heaven and Earth."[229] Wang Siren and Chen Jiru developed Liu Xie's argument and allowed landscape writers unprecedented agency. As their contemporary, Li Yin may be aware of such a cultural discourse. Writing about a self voluntarily situated in a landscape, albeit an imagined one, empowers her as the writing/painting self through her participation in the discourse on landscape advocated by Wang and Chen. The empowerment of the writing/painting self is also achieved through her privilege of a prospect view. The second couplet of the discussed poem says:

千章古木隐茅屋　　A thatched cottage is hidden in hundreds of ancient trees.
万壑奔泉藏钓舟　　A fishing boat is moored on a rushing spring buried in thousands of valleys.

(Li Yin, "*Shanju sishou*" poem no. 3, lines 3-4, 76)

The eyes who are gazing at the hundreds of ancient trees and thousands of valleys must belong to the writing/painting self rather than the speaking one because of the scale of such a view. The commanding view grants the gazing eyes agency.

The writing self acquires agency at the expense of the speaking self fading into the picture as, among the trees and the springs, an insignificant figure who is deprived of the privilege of a prospect view. The disruption between the gaze of the writing self and that of the speaking one in the first two couplets is subtle yet significant to the gender identity of both selves. Seldom do we find such a disruption in poems on ideal places and criticisms on landscape paintings by the literati. Dong Qichang 董其昌 (1555-1636), a famous Ming artist, in his comments on landscape paintings by Li Cheng 李成 (？919-

[229] See Liu Xie 刘勰 (465-522), "*Yuandao diyi* 原道第一," *Wenxin diaolong jinyi* 文心雕龙今译, ed. Zhou Zhengfu (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1992) 9.

967), says that in Li's paintings "the Studios are spacious and elegant, [allow people in them] for looking leisurely into the distance; the roads are long and meandering, indicating dwellings in seclusion." Every time when he sits quietly and looks at the paintings, he always forgets where he is and feels as if he is among "hundreds of rocks and thousands of valleys."[230] The aesthetic pleasure of the viewer of a landscape painting, therefore, comes from his identification with the figure in the painting. Such a pleasure is in the first place generated by the projection of the painter's understanding of the landscape that he creates. Li Yin's contemporary artist Tang Zhiqi 唐志契 (1579-1651) claims that landscape paintings should aim at catching the spirit of the object and expressing the painter's impression or mood.[231] Dong's and Tang's words are part of a dominant discourse that regards a landscape painting as the site of convergence of the intent and pleasure of the (male) painter, the (male) audience, and the (male) figure(s) within the picture.

In landscape poetry by literati, we also constantly find converging gazes on the poetic landscape from the speaking subject, the writing self, and the audience. In a poem from a series Yuan Zhongdao wrote to celebrate his purchase of the Resonant-Water Pool (*xiangshuitan* 响水潭), no rupture can be found between the writing self and the speaking one:

岫色当门易　It is easy to find a place with the door facing beautiful mountains;

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230 "营丘作山水……轩畅闲雅，悠然远眺。道路深窈，俨然深居。用墨颇浓而皴散分晓。凝坐观之，烟云忽生。澄江万里，神变万状。余尝见一双幅，每对之，不知身在千岩万壑中。" See Dong Qichang, "*Huachanshi suibi* 画禅室随笔," *Ming dai hua lun* 明代画论, ed. Pan Yungao (Changsha: Hunan meishu chubanshe, 2002) 208.

231 Tang Zhiqi, "*Shanshui xie qu* 山水写趣," *Ming dai hua lun*, 247.

泉声绕屋难　Yet hard to have a house echoing with a resounding spring.
飞湍鲜草木　The flying rapids moisten trees and grasses,
发响撼峰峦　producing sounds that reverberates among the peaks.
正好风前听　It is best desirable to listen to the spring when wind is blowing.
偏宜月下看　The scenery is more appealing to the eye in moonlight.
从兹溪畔石　From now on, there will always be
常有两蒲团　two rush cushions on the rock by the pool.

(Yuan Zhongdao, "*Dumen de Xiangshuitan jiang jie'an zuolin zhixi liushou* 度门得响水潭将结庵做邻志喜六首" ("I obtained the Resonant-Water Pool at the Dumen and plan to build a hut nearby. The six poems were written to celebrate this happy event"), poem no. 1, *Kexuzhao qian ji* 珂雪斋前集, 479)

In this poem, the writing self joins the poetic persona in gazing and appreciating the beautiful scenery of the pool in the mountains. Their gaze is proprietary and self-congratulatory, celebrating their ownership of the landscape that is "hard" to possess. The gaze invites the reader to join so that their ownership can be envied and thus reconfirmed. The third couplet, therefore, indicates both an invitation and an instruction for the reader to find the best time to "listen to" and "see" when the landscape is the most attractive. The two empty rush cushions on the rock by the pool are also waiting to be occupied by the speaking/writing self, a friend of the owner, and the reader.

The visuality in Li Yin's poem, however, suggests a fissure between the gaze of the writing self and that of the speaking self. In the first two couplets, the speaker's gaze is subdued. The prospect view grants the writing self a privilege of agency. However, the speaking "I" resumes her gaze in the third couplet:

砌荚生时推日月　When pods by the steps grow, I calculate time.
岩花开处辨春秋　As flowers on the cliffs bloom, I tell spring from autumn.

(Li Yin, "*Shanju sishou*" poem no. 3, lines 5-6, 76)

Unlike the commanding view of the grandiose in the second and the third lines, the two lines in the third couplet juxtapose the ephemeral with the eternal, and configure the

temporal into the spatial. The speaking self's gaze at the minute and the detailed level, such as the pods by the steps and flowers on cliffs, generates her action of calculation (*tui* 推) and distinguishing (*bian* 辨). In the ending couplet, the speaking "I" continues to look away from the gaze of the writing self. Raising her head, she looks at the clouds rising from the caves and the white-headed birds of the mountains:

闲行倚仗看云起　　Walking leisurely, I lean upon my stick, and watch the emerging clouds.
独笑山禽有白头　　All alone, I smile at mountain birds who are white-headed.
(Ibid, lines 7-8)

The resumed gaze of the speaking voice complements that of the writing/painting self and adds a temporal dimension to the spatial one. In the last four lines, the speaking self's gaze at the minute details directed the attention of the writing self and the reader to the spatial configuration of time. To male writers/painters, the convergence of the gazes of the speaking self, the writing/painting self, and the audience is spatial, as it is realized in the poetic/picturesque creation. The poem becomes the site where the experience and desire of the three are identified. Such identification hinges upon the assumption that the three parties are members of the male intelligentsia. It is unlikely that a woman writer like Li Yin ever had the chance to travel or live all by herself in mountains. The neutralization of the speaking voice's gender bespeaks the writing self's dilemma. If the speaking voice is already a man, how can the woman writer know that he seeks nothing outside of his body, as she can never relate any of her experience as a widowed and heirless concubine to him? If the speaking self is a woman, then her being situated in "the mist and clouds" itself is imaginary and even legendary. How can the writing self acquire agency from identifying with such a speaking voice? In this sense, the fissure between

the gaze of the speaking self and that of the writing one in a poem about an idealized dwelling place is inherent

The disruption between the gazes, however, introduces a poetics of temporal space, that is, a space whose meaning relies on both the delineation of the place and the time. The sun and the moon, spring and autumn, clouds rising from mountain caves, and the white-headed birds all designate a natural time rather than a human time. To people in dynastic China, time never referred only to the alternation of the day and the night, or the succession of the four seasons. Time was also calculated by the reigns of emperors, and the generations within a patriarchal extensive family. The speaking voice's denial of human time may designate Li Yin's defiance as a Ming loyalist. It may also imply a criticism of the social predicament that an heirless and widowed concubine suffered. A poem written on her seventieth birthday ends with the following lines:

幸无身后儿孙累　　Luckily I won't be burdened with children after I die.
古木坟头啼杜鹃　　Cuckoos will crow on my tomb under ancient trees.

(Li, 88, "*Qixun chudu yougan* 七旬初度有感二首" ("Thoughts on My Seventieth Birthday, Two Poems"), poem no. 2, lines 4-5, 88)

The self-consolation in the couplet also indicates a dismal awareness of being nothing but a passerby in life, one whom nobody will remember after she passes away, having no offspring to make her spirit sacrificial offerings during holidays or the anniversaries of her death. Li Yin's understanding of human time enables the speaking and the writing selves to construct a utopian place within a frame of reference both spatial and temporal.

CHAPTER FOUR RHETORIC OF CONVERSATION: SUBJECT POSITIONS IN WOMEN'S OCCASIONAL POETRY

As a subgenre, "occasional poetry" can be loosely defined as poems written for particular occasions such as dedications, birthdays, farewells, or social gatherings. Examples of occasional poetry include poems on imperial command (*ying zhi shi* 应制诗), poems singing in harmony with those by other writers (*chang he shi* 唱和诗), and poems exchanged as gifts (*zeng da shi* 赠答诗). Due to the social function of occasional poetry, artfulness is less important than the subject matter and the addressee. Consequently, as a Chinese scholar observes, millions of occasional poems constitute a sharp contrast with a very limited number of criticisms of these poetry throughout Chinese literary history.[232]

In this chapter, I will examine two sets of occasional poems: one set consisting of poems exchanged between Wang Duanshu, Huang Yuanjie, and Hu Zixia 胡紫霞at a lantern festival gathering hosted by Hu, and the other set consisting of poems exchanged between Wang Duan and her friend Gui Maoyi 归懋仪 (*zi* Peishan 佩珊, 1765-?). A careful investigation of poems in Wang Duanshu and Wang Duan's collected works reveals that more than half of them can be categorized as occasional poetry: they were written variously in dedication to the publication of collected works by another woman writer, in reply to a poem presented to them by a friend, to celebrate a relative or friend's

[232] Dong Xiangfei. 董向飞. "*Shici changhe de lishi yanjiu yiyi ji yanjiu xianzhuang gaishu* 诗词唱和的历史、研究意义及研究现状概述," *Hubei daxue chengren jiaoyu xueyuan xuebao* 湖北大学成人教育学院学报，19.5 (Oct. 2001): 33.

birthday, at a gathering with women or literati friends, and at a family reunion. Occasional poetry occupies an important position in our understanding of the women writers' self-inscription. When writing an occasional poem, the writer immediately situates herself in a conversation. In this chapter, I will investigate the re-inscribed selfhood achieved through the poetic dialogues between women writers. I will inquire how the two sets of exchanged poems provide the writers a precious opportunity to experiment with alternative subject positions, refute the gender system to which they were subordinate, magnify their voices by consolidating mutual interests, form a collective identity with other gentry women writers, and at the same time leave what Paula Backscheider calls "an individual signature" on their poetic work.[233]

Mutually Consolidated Identities: Poems Written at a Lantern Festival

On the night of Lantern Festival in 1655, the moon shone upon Lady Hu Zixia's garden and cast the shadows of blooming plum tree flowers on the walls. The mansion in the garden lit up with candlelight was resonant with cheers and laughter. Then for a while, everything fell quiet. Through the gauze on the decorated windows, one can see several ladies: some of them sitting at a round table, some standing by the window gazing at the plum trees in the yard, and others pacing to and fro in the room.

This is a picture portrayed in poems written by Wang Duanshu and her two friends Hu Zixia and Huang Yuanjie when they gathered together at Hu's place to celebrate the festival. Wang Duanshu does not include the two poems she wrote on this

[233] Backscheider, 24.

occasion in *Lamenting Red Flowers*.[234] All of the poems can be found in *Weft of Poetry*, an anthology of women's poetry compiled by Wang Duanshu. A close reading of the four poems will provide us an insight into how women writers create a collective identity through textual interaction and mutual acknowledgement. This identity features women's authorship and the writers' desire to transcend the normative roles of gender. At the same time, it also accommodates individual differences including disparate aspirations and hierarchical positions determined by social status and decorum.

The four poems are five-character-line poetry in ancient style (*wuyan guti shi* 五言古体诗), using the same rhyming words on even-numbered lines. As the hostess, Hu Zixia initiated the composition with the following poem:

上元雅集，同黄皆令、王玉隐、玉映、陶固生咏。
At the scholars' gathering on the day of the lantern festival,[235] I composed a poem with Huang Jieling, Wang Yuyin, Wang Yuying, and Tao Gusheng.

挹揖迎仙珮　Bowing with hands clasped, I welcome immortals wearing jade pendants.
清光满上元　The moon's pure radiance fills the lantern festival.
高才同道蕴　Your lofty talent is like Daoyun's.[236]
逸志等东园　Your carefree mood equals that of the visitors' to East Garden[237].
续史颁彤管　For you to continue the writing of History, I distribute red brushes.[238]

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[234] It is probably because poems in *Lamenting Red Flowers* were mostly composed before 1651 when Wang was thirty *sui*. For the discussion of the dates of poems in *Lamenting Red Flower*, see Chapter One.

[235] *Shangyuan* 上元, *or shangyuan jie* 上元节, refers to Lantern Festival which falls on the 15th day of the first lunar month.

[236] Xie Daoyun 谢道蕴 (349-409) was a renowned woman poet of the Jin dynasty (266-420).

[237] See 欧阳修, (*zi Yongshu* 永叔, *hao Zuiweng* 醉翁, *Liuyi jushi* 六一居士, 1007-1072), "*Dongyuan ji* 东园记" (On the East Garden) and its translation in Appendix E.

[238] This line alludes to Ban Zhao 班昭 (*zi* Huiban 惠班, ?49-?120) who completed *Hanshu* 汉书 (*The History of Han*) which her father Ban Biao 班彪 (3-54) and brother Ban Gu 班固 (32-92), the prominent Han historians, left unfinished when they died.

评文降玉轩　To discuss literature, you descend from the jade-decorated carriages.
十年穷赋学　You spend ten years exhausting the art of composition.
三百灿词源　The three hundred poems shine at the source of the stream of poetry.
皓魄开星户　Bright moonlight gleams through the apertures in rocks.
明珠入夜樽　The moon's bright pearl enters our nocturnal wine cups.
凝寒惟促字　The numbing cold only urges us to write,
多病未抽轮　Because of frequent illness, I haven't written poems on the moon.
凤楮来佳韵　Beautiful lines appear on paper from mythical mulberry trees.
鸡窗共讨论　In my study where the legendary rooster talks we exchange opinions.[239]
唱酬吾未敢　I dare not venture a poem to reciprocate your kindness.
风雅尔犹存　You have preserved classical mode in writing poetry.
何当又把袂　When can we again hold each other's sleeves?
一醉醒诗魂　Once intoxicated, our spirits of poetry are awakened.

(Hu Zixia, "*Shangyuan yaji tong Huang Jieling Wang Yuyin Yuying Tao Gusheng yong*," *Weft of Poetry*, 12.5b)

Wang Duanshu chimed in with two poems:

上元夕浮翠吴夫人招同黄皆令、陶固生、赵东玮、家玉隐社集，拈得"元"字。
On the night of the Lantern Festival, Madame Wu invited Huang Jieling, Tao Gusheng, Zhao Dongwei and my sister Yuyin to gather together. We picked up "*yuan*" as the rhyme character by drawing lots.

（一）　(I)

上元逢雅集　On the lantern festival a gathering of refined talents is held.
诗律重开元　The rhythm character coincide with "*yuan*" of the Kaiyuan Reign[240].
丽藻归彤管　Beautiful lines belong to our red brushes.
逍遥拟漆园　Leisurely and carefree, we are like Zhuangzi in Lacquer Garden[241].
墨香浮画栋　Scent of ink drifts to the decorated pillars.
花气袭明轩　Perfume of flowers assaults the bright-lit studio.

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[239] The line alludes to a story about a scholar named Song Chuzong 宋处宗 of Jin dynasty. He had a rooster who was very smart and talked intelligently with Song. Song loved the rooster and put it by the window. Later, the phrase "*jichuang* 鸡窗 (the rooster's window)" becomes a set phrase meaning a scholar's study. For the story of Song and his rooster, see Ouyang Xun 欧阳询 (557-641), *Yiwen leiju* 艺文类聚, *Tangdai sida leishu* 唐代四大类书, ed. Dong Zhi'an (Beijing: Qinghua daxue chubanshe, 2003) : 1346.

[240] The Kaiyuan Reign 开元 refers to the historical period from December 713 to December 741, heyday of Li Longji's 李隆基 entire reign (712-756), as well as of the Tang dynasty (618-907). This period witnessed economic and cultural prosperity and the emergence of distinguished poets.

[241] Lacquer Garden, or *qi yuan* 漆园 refers to the place where Zhuangzi served as a petty official. See Sima Qian 司马迁, *Shiji zhuyi* 史记注译, ed. Wang Liqi (Xi'an: Sanqin chubanshe, 1988) 1618.

彩笔千秋梦　From the versatile brushes come the bright dream of a thousand years.
黄河万里源　From its source, the Yellow River flows ten thousands *li*[242].
疏灯摇翠竹　The lanterns' light flickers on the scattered bamboo.
修月对清樽　The renewed moon[243] looks down at the pure wine in the goblets.
检韵调丝茧　We examine the rhymes instead of silkworm cocoons[244].
空华转法轮　In the world of illusory prosperity, the Wheel of Dharma is constantly turning.
寸心谁自得　Who knows well the innermost truth of one's own heart?
五字共深论　Together we profoundly discuss the five characters.
兢发春宵思　Vigorously we express our thoughts of a spring night.
相期古道存　We all expect to preserve the ancient ways.
奇情追左鲍　With extraordinary feelings close to those of Zuo Fen and Bao Linghui,[245]
招有落梅魂　We summon the spirit of fallen flowers from the plum trees.[246]

（二）　(II)

佳气延春日　The beautiful weather ushers in a spring day.
和风霭上元　The gentle breeze brings light mist to the lantern festival.
拂花开绮席　She dusts off fallen flower petals and sets up an exquisite banquet.
爱客近文园　Her cherished guests approach Wen Garden.[247]
拨篆香分玉　Fragrance rises from the jade incense burner when stirred.
挥毫翠落轩　As they take up their brushes to write, kingfisher's feathers fall on the railings.

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[242] *Li* 里 is a Chinese distance unit. 1 *li* = 500 meters.

[243] The renovated moon (*xiuyue* 修月) refers to a legend according to which the moon is made of seven precious stones. The moon is under constant renovation by 82,000 families on the earth. See Duan Chengshi 段成式 (?-863), *Youyang zazu* 酉阳杂俎, SKQS. 1047:645.

[244] Silkworm cocoons (*sijian* 丝茧) refer to women's domestic responsibilities including, but not limited to, silkworm cocoon cultivation and silk reeling. *Liji* 礼记 prescribes women's duty as "holding flax, dealing with silkworm cocoons, spinning and weaving (执麻枲，治丝茧，织紝组紃)."

[245] Zuo Fen 左芬(?-300) and Bao Linghui 鲍令晖 (fl. fifth century) are renowned ancient Chinese women writers.

[246] For the discussion of allusions in this line, see pages 204-6.

[247] The Wen Garden (*wenyuan* 文园) refers to Sima Xiangru 司马相如 (? –118 B.C.E.), the famous writer who once served as the Commander of the Wen Garden (the tomb park of Emperor Xiaowen 孝文帝). He was sometimes called by later generations as "*Wen yuan ke* 文园客" (Guest of the Wen Garden). In this line, Wang Duanshu pays compliment to the hostess of Hu Zixia by analogizing her to Sima Xiangru and describes the visitors as attracted by Hu's literary talent and reputation. See Sima Qian, "*Sima xiangrui liezhuan* 司马相如列传," 2443-2481.

红灯辉彩袖　The lanterns' warm glow shines upon colorful sleeves.
素影耀清源　Pale moonlight sparkles on clear stream.
四壁悬名迹　On the four walls hangs calligraphy by famous people.
多年寄酒樽　Many years are entrusted to the wine goblets.
峰峦云入座　On the top of the mountain, clouds take their seats at the banquet.
天汉月盈轮　By the River of Heaven, the moon waxes to a full circle.
把臂留清契　Holding each other's arms, we make a vow of pure friendship.
含颦憬异论　With slightly knitted brows, they are awakened to the truth in the unusual opinions.
兰亭书可续　The essay on the Orchid Pavilion[248] can now have its sequel.
莲社韵犹存　The gracefulness of the Lotus Society is preserved.
况忆传柑会　Recalling the custom of giving oranges[249], alas,
将相欲断魂　We are all overwhelmed with grief.

(Wang Duanshu, "*Shangyuan xi Fucui Wu furen zhao tong Huang Jieling Tao Gusheng Zhao Dongwei jia Yuyin ji nian de yuan zi*," *Weft of Poetry*, 42.7a-b)

Huang Yuanjie composed her poem with a more detailed description of the gathering in her preface:

乙未上元，吴夫人紫霞招同王玉隐、玉映、赵东玮、陶固生诸社姊集浮翠轩。迟，祁修嫣、张婉仙不至。拈得"元"字。
On the lantern festival of the year of Yiwei (1655), Madame Wu Zixia invited sisters in the club – Wang Yuyin, Yuying, Zhao Dongwei, Tao Gusheng – to gather in the Floating Green Studio. I was late. Qi Xiuyan and Zhang Wanxian did not come. We drew lots and picked up the character of "*yuan*" [as the rhyming character].

握麈同仙侣　Holding a whisk in my hand, I stand side by side with my immortal companions.
开庭值上元　The gate to the garden is open at the lantern festival.
才华推阁学　In literary talent, the secretaries of the Grand Council excel.
风雅集梁园　People of letters gather in Liang's Garden[250].

[248] The Orchid Pavilion (*lanting* 兰亭) was in today's Zhejiang province. In the year of 353, famous writers including Wang Xizhi 王羲之 (303-361) and Xie An 谢安 (320-385) gathered in the Pavilion, drank wine and wrote poems. For the descriptions of the gathering, see Wang Xizhi, "*Lanting ji xu* 兰亭集序" (Preface to The Collection of the Orchid Pavilion).

[249] The passing orange party (*chuangan hui* 传柑会) was an ancient custom in the court on lantern festivals. On the night of the fifteenth day of the first lunar month, the emperor would invite his courtiers to drink and give them oranges as gifts. Imperial relatives would also exchange oranges as presents. For the earliest record of the custom, see *Yuanjian leihan* 渊鉴类函, eds. Zhang Ying 张英 (1638-1708) et al. (Taibei: Xinxing shuju, 1967) 1: 256.

竹翠遥分径　In the distance green bamboo delineate the paths.
花香近绕轩　Up close, perfume of flowers embrace the studio.
盘如行玉馔　Laid on the plates are jade-like delicacies.
坐拟似桃源　People seem to sit in the haven of Peach Flower Spring[251].
画烛重添炬　Again painted candles are added to the torch.
琼浆屡泛樽　The cups are filled with nectar many a time.
月圆开宝镜　In the full moon, a round mirror decorated with precious stones is uncovered.
灯灿转珠轮　In the bright lamplight, the moon's pearl turns.
佳句谁先得　Among us who will be the first to obtain the beautiful lines?
元思共欲论　Together we want to discuss profound thoughts.
相看言未已　We look at each other – words haven't been all said.
分手意犹存　After we part company, cordiality exists in our hearts.
归棹各南北　The returning boats each pursuit their own courses.
偏多惊旅魂　Most of them accommodate alarmed spirits of travelers.

(Huang Yuanjie, "*Yiwei shangyuan Wu furen zhao tong Wang Yuyin Yuying Zhao Dongwei Tao Gusheng zhu shezi ji Fucui xuan chi Qi Xiuyan Zhang Wanxian buzhi nian de yuan zi*," *Weft of Poetry*, 9.21b-22a)

A characteristic shared by the feminine voices in the four poems is their apparent immortality. Hu and Huang's poems both begin with lines that call the guests and hostess "immortals." In the first couplet of Hu's poem, she describes herself courteously welcoming the female immortals who wear jade pendants. Similarly, Huang Yuanjie depicts herself and her companions as immortals holding whisks in hand. Wang Duanshu, in her second poem, situates the banquet on the top of a mountain where clouds are also among the guests of at the banquet. The immortality of the lyric personas is also

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[250] Prince Liang's Garden (*liangyuan* 梁园) is Prince Liu Wu's 刘武 (184 -144 B.C.E, conferred title "Prince Xiao of the Liang State" (*Liang Xiao wang* 梁孝王) garden. The garden is famous for its grand scale and it being the place where the prince constantly received such renowned writers as Sima Xiangru and Mei Cheng 枚乘 (?-140 B.C.E.). For Prince Liang and his garden, see Sima Qian, "*Liang xiaowang shijia* 梁孝王世家," 1563-1570.

[251] Peach Flower Spring refers to an ideal haven of peace and simple living as described in Tao Qian's famous poem and its preface entitled "*Taohuayuan ji bing shi* 桃花源记并诗" (Peach Flower Spring).

underlined by the depiction of a wonderland in the poems. The gathering is said to take place in an exquisitely decorated studio situated in a beautiful garden. As a guest, Huang Yuanjie portrays a view from the afar to the near: in the distance, jade-green bamboo lines the many paths in the garden. When strolling near the studio, she is greeted by the fragrance of flowers. The images that Wang Duanshu employs in her poems stress the visionary quality of the environment: the brightly lit studio with decorated pillars, the scent of ink, the precious calligraphy by renowned artists, the exquisite table covered with fallen flower petals, and the coils of incense smoke, which resemble seal characters. Because the poems are written to celebrate the lantern festival when the moon waxes full for the first time in the lunar new year, many lines from the four poems refer to the beautiful full moon and the moonlit banquet: the glittering moonlight through the apertures in rocks in the garden, the radiant moon shining upon the stream, and the full moon by the River of Heaven. The moon thus depicted in the poems is not only proper to the occasion, but helps to contextualize the banquet in the heavens where *xianren* 仙人, or beautiful people who will live forever of pure bodies and spirits, dwell. The environment further accentuates the immortality of the attendees at the gathering.

The celestial environment depicted in the four poems is an imagined haven that shelters the women writers from the male gaze and also women's normative gender roles in everyday life, and allows them a break from their struggle for survival and recognition as atypical gentry women who traveled to earn bread for their families, especially in the case of Wang Duanshu and Haung Yuanjie. Female immortals and banquets featured with cocktails of colored clouds, and exquisite delicacies and wine are recurrent themes in "*youxian shi* 游仙诗" (wandering among immortals poetry), a poetic subgenre

flourished from the Wei (220-265) to the Tang (619-907) dynasties. Wandering immortal poems, which are usually written by literati, often relate encounters between a masculine voice and immortals who are, from time to time, Daoist female figures such as the Queen Mother of the West (*xiwangmu* 西王母).[252] Though the heavens described in the aforementioned poems indicates a similar wish to transcend the imperfect and unsatisfactory reality, the poems by the three women writers imagine a safe women-centered space with the feminine voices and their companions as the female immortals themselves rather than as the other. Acknowledging each other as immortals, the hostess and her guests depict the sensuous pleasure brought by the dainties, the moonlit garden, and the splendid studio. The setting of the gathering is described as idealistic and romantic, but not totally otherworldly. Its atmosphere is festive and harmonious and the attendees of the banquet are relaxed and joyful. The speakers in the poems express their satisfaction of keeping each other company, the poetry games, and the exquisite wine.

In poems from *Lamenting Red Flowers,* which address Wang's women friends, the speaking voices are usually angry, gloomy, or lonely. An interesting poem entitled "*Da mouzi ci moushi shi* 答某子刺某氏诗" ("In Answer to a Certain Man's Derision of a Certain Woman") harbors anger and contempt. Though keeping the content deliberately obscure, Wang Duanshu seems to write this poem in response to a male writer's attack on her writing. In this poem, Wang also addresses Hu Zixia, who admired her poetic talent and witnessed the verbal attack. Although this poem also deals with composition, the tone significantly differs from the delighted and enthusiastic poems written at the lantern

[252] For the study of wondering immortal poetry, see Li Fenglin, *You yu you: Liuchao sui tang youxian shi lunji* 忧与游：六朝隋唐游仙诗论集 (Taibei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1996).

festival gathering. She portrays herself being alone on a long night, lamenting the unfinished poem that incurred insult from a man:

虚楼乏烛守漏永　　In the empty residence I keep watch by the dripping water clock,
痴听啼鸟点夕曛　　Fascinated by the calling of birds dotting the twilight sky.
(Wang Duanshu, "*Da mouzi ci moushi shi*," *Lamenting Red Flowers*, 5.9b, lines 9-10)

Later in the poem, overwhelmed with frustration and indignation, the speaking "I" can no longer hold back her tears:

玉碎花凌石下飞　　Like shattered jade, the withered flowers flow down to under the rocks.
子规应笑莫须归　　Laughing, the cuckoos are not calling me to go home.[253]
残痕半逐香光断　　The remnant traces disappear in the fragrant air.
雨满庭除泪满衣　　The courtyard is flooded with rain; the garment is tinted with tears.
君不见　　Don't you see:
班姬薄命悲纨扇　　The unfortunate Lady Ben lamented the silk fan,
耻与低微论是非　　Ashamed to squabble with the mean and ignoble.[254]
(Ibid, 5.10a, lines 23-29)

Unlike the angry poem, Wang Duanshu's two poems written at the lantern festival feature a safe and carefree environment in which writing consolidates the friendship between women poets and enhances the pleasure of a beautiful night of early spring. The unworldly setting provides Wang Duanshu and Huang Yuanjie a precious chance to transcend their everyday lives haunted by economic concerns, daily housework, and

[253] In ancient China, people interpreted cuckoos' callings as "go home."

[254] The last two lines refers to the story of Ban Jieyu 班婕妤 (given name unknown, fl. first century B.C.E). Jieyue is a title for imperial concubines in Han dynasty. Ben Jieyu was known for her poetic talent and moral integrity. It was said that as a victim of power struggle within the court, she was disgraced and died in loneliness. For her story, see Ban Gu 班固 (32-92), "*Waiqizhaundi di liushiqi xia xiaocheng Ban Jieyu* 外戚傳第六十七下孝成班婕妤," *Han shu* 漢書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962) 3983-3988. For the complete poem by Wang Duanshu and its translation, see Appendix F.

child-raising. On this beautiful festival night, they are scholars, writers, congenial friends, and *xianren*, the roles that have mostly been denied to them in their everyday life.

The otherworldly setting creates a literary sphere where the identities of the hostess and her guests as scholars and poets are repeatedly highlighted. Verbs associated with the poetic personas' actions in the four poems are almost all related to writing. These actions vary from the hostess's distribution of red brushes (颁 *ban*) (Hu, line 5), hostesses and guests exchanging critical opinions (讨论 *taolun*) (Hu, line14), their taking up their brushes (挥毫 *huihao*) (Wang, poem no. 2, line 6), and obtaining the beautiful lines (得[佳句] *de [jiaju]*) (Huang, line 13). The unusual emphasis on their roles as writers is not common in poems by their contemporary male writers on social gatherings, but is frequently found in the writing by late imperial Chinese women. Li Yesi's 李邺嗣 (1622-1680) "A Song Written on Sitting in the Moonlight in Temple of Benevolent Blessings with Other Gentlemen" and Huang Zongxi's "On the Gathering of Scholars at Prefect Gu's Official Residence" are representative of literati's treatment of composition in their poetry. [255] In the two poems by the male Ming loyalist writers, only one word in each poem is related to poetry writing. The marked role of the writer in the Wang Duanshu and her friends' poems may first of all indicate women poets' writing anxiety: they need reassurance from themselves and their inner-chamber peers to fortify their

[255] Li Yesi 李邺嗣. "*Zhongqiu tong zhujun ji cifusi zuoyue ge* 中秋同诸君慈福寺坐月歌" ("A song Written on Sitting in the Moonlight in Grace-and-Bliss Temple with Other Gentlemen)," *Gaotang shiwen ji* 杲堂诗文集 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 1988) 69. In this poem, the only word associated with writing is "*cheng* 成," or "to complete [writing]" in the last line. Huang Zongxi, "*Jiu yu ba ri Gu junshou yaji* 九月八日顾郡守雅集" (On the Gathering of Scholars at Prefect Gu's Official Residence), *Nanlei shi li* 南雷诗历, *Nanlei wending* 南雷文定 (Taibei: Shijie shuju, 1964) 85, not successively paginated. In this poem, only "*cheng* 成," or "to complete [writing]," in the fourth line refers to poem writing.

trespass into the sphere reserved for male scholars by social norms. However, the way in which references to writing is embedded in these four pieces also conveys a message beyond mere anxiety caused by their gender.

In the four poems, the three women writers treat writing poetry as a means to consolidate their bonds of friendship between women scholar-poets with matched talent and like minds. The poems achieve this consolidation through their combined effort in discursively creating a sphere that empowers the speaking voices and straddles the division between the public and the private. Judging from the prefaces, the writers chose "*yuan* 元" from others as the rhyming sound. As the hostess, Hu Zixia initiated the composition with her poems of eighteen lines. Wang Duanshu and Huang Jielin then composed theirs using the same rhyming characters as in the nine couplets of Hu's poem. In line four of each of the four poems, the names of four gardens well-known in classical Chinese literary history appear: East Garden (*dongyuan* 东园) in Hu's poem, Lacquer Garden (*qiyuan* 漆园) and Wen Garden (*wenyuan* 文园) in Wang's poems, and the Liang's Garden (*liangyuan* 梁园) in Huang's poem. Together these gardens are appropriated to construct a space that in turn grants the talented women a chance to participate in the discursive construction of literary history and current affairs, and to acknowledge both the common ground and different sections occupied by the speaking voices.

Hu's allusion to the East Garden establishes an intriguing trope for the women's festival gathering. The garden, in today's Jiangsu province, is famous because of the essay "*Dongyuan ji* 东园记 (On East Garden)," written by prominent Song dynasty writer and scholar Ouyang Xiu 欧阳修 (1007-1072). According to Ouyang, he had not

visited this garden in person when he wrote the essay. The garden was built by three officials who served in the local government of Zhenzhou (today's Zhenyi of Jiangsu province). When Xu Zichun 许子春, one of the officials, came to the capital, he showed Ouyang Xiu a painting of the garden and asked him to write a commemorative essay. East Garden, therefore, came into being as a collective construction of the three officials, the painting, and Ouyang Xiu. In his request, Xu Zichun said: "What the painter was incapable of drawing in the painting is also what I cannot describe in words. Could you please write briefly about it?"[256] In other words, Ouyang's essay is expected to compensate for what is lacking in the painting and Xu's oral description. According to Ouyang, the garden is said to serve two purposes: it is open to the "guests from the four directions (*sifang binke* 四方宾客)." People of the future generations are also expected to enjoy "the ever-renewed ponds and studios and the ever-flourishing grass and trees." The garden is also constructed as a reminder of the political and aesthetic achievements of the three local officials.

Hu Zixia's allusion to East Garden, therefore, creates a discursive space where bonds of friendship between the women writers are facilitated through drinking, moon appreciating, and poetry writing. While the three officials transformed the previously deserted land into a garden, the place where Hu Zixia hosted the festival gathering is also reconfigured into a space where with nocturnal wine cups in which the moon's pearl is reflected, talented women brought up their red brushes and continued the unfinished "historical book" like their ancient predecessor Ban Zhao. In Ouyang's essay, the three

[256]凡工之所不能画者，吾亦不能言也，其为我书其大概焉。Ouyang Xiu, "*Zhenzhou dongyuan ji* 真州东园记," *Ouyang Xiu sanwen quanji* 欧阳修散文全集 (Beijing: Jinri zhongguo chubanshe, 1996) 578.

officials are commended as “talented” and “worthy,” and their talents are said to complement each other so that the local people lived in peace and plenty. In addition to their wise governing, they also built East Garden to share with other worthy gentlemen. Hu’s allusion to East Garden indicates the speaking self’s awareness of the discursive nature of the space jointly constructed in the poems written by her and her guests. While the friendship between the officials was consolidated through building and visiting the garden, the congeniality between the women writers is fashioned as that between people who visited Hu’s garden at the lantern festival, spent the night drinking and writing together, and shared the same passion for poetry and erudition in learning. In Ouyang Xiu’s essay, the leisure that allowed the officials to build and enjoy the garden, and their willingness to share the garden with local gentry now and in the days to come, in return verifies their political capacity and worthiness as local governors. Hu’s allusion to East Garden equally allows the gathering place to become a spatially and temporarily open space. This is a space that is willing and eager to accommodate not only Hu’s three talented guests, but also all talented women in history. The women writers who have spent ten years on the study of poetry are now standing on the threshold of the past and future: Chinese poetry is said to originate from the three hundred poems collected in *Shijing*诗经 (*The Book of Odes*); many of which were believed to be written by women writers.[257] The women at the gathering are depicted as possessing the same talent and knowledge as their predecessors in history, including Xie Daoyun, who outshone her

[257] It was a prevalent discourse in the late Ming and Qing periods that some of the pieces from *The Book of Odes* was written by women. Tian Yiheng 田艺衡 in “Author’s Preface” to *Shi nüshi shisi juan* 诗女史十四卷 (1557), a collected of women’s poetry of early generations, mentioned that though some of poems from *The Book of Odes* were written by women, no textual evidence exists to verify this, since all pieces in this ancient work are anonymous. Hui Wenkai, 1957, appendix 37.

brothers and male cousins in composing poems at a family gathering, and Ban Zhao 班昭 (?49-?120), who completed *Hanshu* 汉书 (*The History of Han*), which her father Ban Biao and brother Ban Gu, the prominent Han historians, left unfinished. In this garden, the poets at the festival party are described as the heiresses of women's literary legacy, and must carry on the mission of Confucian discourse left unfinished by their male counterparts. Their poetry writing, mutual evaluation, and discussion belong to both the public and the private sphere.

Hu's allusion to East Garden only initiates the discursive construction of the sphere that grants Hu and her guests a collective identity. Wang Duanshu and Huang Yuanjie participate with their poems using the same rhyming characters as that in their hostess's poem. Wang's and Huang's participation in production of spatial construction feature their tribute to the hostess and their conscious self-empowerment through their association with her. Wang analogizes Hu's garden to Wen Garden, an allusion associated with Sima Xiangru 司马相如 (?-127 B.C.E.), a talented Han dynasty writer who once served as Commander of Wen Garden (*wenyuan ling* 文园令). In her poem, Huang Yuanjie invokes Liang's Garden (*liangyuan* 梁园), another allusion relating to Sima Xiangru and his literati friends, implicitly comparing it to Hu's garden where the women's festival gathering is taking place. In Chinese literary history, Liang's Garden is esteemed for its owner Prince Xiao of Liang (*Liang xiao wang* 梁孝王) (?-144 B.C.E.), the emperor's brother, and his well-known guests. Prince Xiao enjoyed a reputation for refined taste in literature and was a great patron of men with literary talent. His garden hosted renowned scholars and writers, including Sima Xiangru and Mei Chen 枚乘 (?-140 B.C.E). Wang Duanshu and Huang Yuanjie's allusions are salutations to their hostess

and an acknowledgement of the hierarchy between the hostess and themselves, due to social decorum. According to Wang Duanshu's brief biography of Hu Zixia, Wang served as the teacher for Hu's sons and daughter.[258] Huang Yuanjie at that time was visiting the literary woman Shang Jinglan 商景兰 (1605-?) and her circle in the town of Shangyin,[259] where Hu Zixia and Wang Duanshu also dwelt. Both Wang Duanshu and Huang Yuanjie were lower in the social ladder than their hostess. Wang Duanshu was even economically dependent on Hu.

A close reading of the four poems further reveals that this space, with the combined effort of the three friends, is not only where every participant consciously occupies her lot according to her social status and relation to the others, but it is also a space able to accommodate differences in the writers' understandings of friendship, poetry composition, and missions as women writers. In Hu's poem, she regards herself and her guests as fellow students who have spent years on diligent study of writing poetry and rhymed prose. The hall where they gather together for the festival celebration, therefore, becomes the "study where the legendary rooster talks" and where they "exchange opinions" (Hu, line 14). As the hostess, she praises her guests as having "preserved classical mode of writing poetry" (line 16) and being capable of continuing the historical book (line 5). To Huang Yuanjie, writing poetry at the gathering implies a friendly competition. Hence she raises the light-hearted question of who is going to be

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[258] Wang Duanshu, *Weft of Poetry*, 12.4b-12.5a.

[259] Clara Wing-chung Ho, *Biographical Dictionary of Chinese Women: the Qing Period, 1644-1911* (Armonk, New York: East Gate, 1998) 84.

the first to obtain beautiful lines (Huang, line 13). Like Hu, she also celebrates the discussion of some "profound thoughts" (line 14).

Wang Duanshu differs from her two friends because of the strong political undertones of the poems, her overt challenge of women's normative roles, and a complicated feeling mixed with happiness, melancholy, and heroism. Many of the allusions that Wang employs in the two poems are related to the fall of a dynasty and its survivors. In the last line of her first poem, she describes the composition of poetry at the gathering as "summoning the spirits of fallen flowers from the plum trees." (*Zhao you luo mei hun* 招有落梅魂) (Wang, poem no.1, line 18). She is alluding here to Jiang Jie's 蒋捷 (fl. late thirteenth century) song lyrics "*Xiao Jiaxuan ti zhao luomei zhihun* 效稼轩体招落梅之魂" ("I follow the style of Jiaxuan and summon the spirits of the fallen flowers from the plum trees"). Jianxuan 稼轩 is the literary name of Xin Qiji 辛弃疾 (1140-1207). Both Xin and Jiang are renowned *ci* poets of the Song dynasty (960-1279). A poet, scholar, official, and warrior, Xin wrote in patriotic and heroic modes. He spent most of his life after Jin invaded the territory north of the Changjiang River, established the Jin dynasty (1115-1234), forcing the Southern Song (1127-1279) court to retreat to the south and remove its capital to today's Hangzhou. In one of his poems[260], Xin Qiji introduces the rhyming character "些 *xie,*" which appears in "*Zhao hun* 招魂" ("Summoning Spirits"), believed by some scholars to be written by Qu Yuan 屈原 (340-278 B.C.E.). Qu

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[260] See Xin Qiji, "*Shuilong yin yong xie yu zai ti Piaoquan geyi yinke shengyun shen xie ke jie weizhi lei* 水龙吟，用些语再题瓢泉，歌以饮客，声韵甚协，客皆为之釂" (In the tune of Shuilong yin. I composed the poem on the Gourd Ladle Spring, using *xie* [as the rhyming character], to entertain my guests. The music of the song was so harmonious that all my guests poured out a libation for it.), *Jiaxuan changduanju* 稼轩长短句, *Song ji zhenben congkan* 宋集珍本丛刊 (Beijing: Xianzhuang shuju, 2004) 64: 524.

Yuan, Xin Qiji, and Jiang Jie share loyalty and attachment to their home states, which were either in danger of being subjugated or had already fallen. Jiang Jie is also a well-known Song loyalist who, after the Mongol's conquest of the Southern Song in 1279, withdrew from public service and refused to serve in the Mongol's court.

A closer examination of the three poems by Xin Qiji, Jiang Jie, and Wang Duanshu yields similarity on two aspects. They are all related to drinking and gathering. In his poem commemorating Gourd Ladle Spring (*Piaoquan* 瓢泉), Xin celebrates the limpid spring and praises it for allowing him to use the water to either brew wine or boil tea[261]. As suggested by its title, the poem was also written at a gathering where Xin's guests "poured out in libation" at the song made out of the poem. Jiang's poem begins with the speaking self inebriated after drinking the delicate wine from cups floating on a meandering stream,[262] indicating that he is drinking with a group of literati friends.[263] In Wang Duanshu's poem, the poet also depicts the limpid wine in the crystal moonlight at the gathering of the women scholars. In addition, the three poems by Xin, Jiang, and Wang are all permeated with a certain degree of mournfulness and helplessness. Imagining that the spring water will finally merge into the sea, Xi laments that it will feel powerless in front of the huge waves.[264] Jiang Jie grieves in his poem that the beautiful

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[261] 冬槽春盎，归来为我，制松醪些。其外芬芳，团龙片凤，煮云膏些。Ibid.

[262] 醉兮琼瀣浮觞些. Jiang Jie, "*Shui longyin xiao Jiaxuan ti zhao luomei zhihun* 水龙吟效稼轩体招落梅之魂," *Zhushan ci* 竹山词 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1989) 12.

[263] "*Fushang* 浮觞" (Floating cups) alludes to an ancient custom. On a certain day of every third lunar month, people would gather by a meandering stream on which they put cups with wine and let them float with the stream. One would then take a cup as it passed and drink. The custom was recorded by Wang Xizhi 王羲之 (303-361) in his essay "*Lanting ji xu* 兰亭集序."

[264] 大而流江海，覆舟如芥，君无助，狂涛些。Xin, 524.

white plum tree flowers will be defiled in the dusty wind.[265] In her poems, Wang Duanshu appropriates the allusions to the lines by the three male writers of previous generations and juxtaposes her loyalist sentiments and her beliefs in women writers' role in carrying on the Confucian teachings under the subjugation of an ethnic alien. The feminine voice celebrates the "versatile brushes" of talented women writers like her and her friend as they are capable of writing about the "dream of thousands of years to come" (Wang, poem.1, line 7). At the same time, as remnant people of a fallen dynasty, they write only to "summon the spirits" of an irrevocable past.

The last two couplets of Wang's second poem also contribute to the construction of the subject position of a female Ming loyalist. In the sixteenth line, Wang analogizes the women scholars' gathering to that of the "*Lianshe* 莲社" (Lotus Society), a society organized by Monk Huiyuan and other Jin dynasty loyalists among whom Liu Yimin 刘遗民 (fl. early fifth century) was the most prominent. Liu was a recluse-scholar and renowned as a devoted lay Buddhist who changed his name to "Yimin," which literally means "the remnant people," later his life. His name obviously demonstrated his loyalty to the fallen Eastern Jin dynasty (317-420). Later generations even call the Lotus Society the "*Yiming she* 遗民社" (Remnant People's Society).[266] The political overtone is further strengthened by the last two lines: "Recalling the custom of giving oranges, alas / They are all overwhelmed with grief" (Wang, poem no.2, lines 17-18). The Passing

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[265] 野马尘埃，污君楚楚，白霓裳些. Jiang Jie, 12.

[266] For the reason why Liu changed his name, the political inclination of the Lotus Society, and later generations's response to this cultural phenomenon, see Cao Hong, "*Zhonggu lushan yinfeng yu houdai yimin shijing* 中古庐山隐风与后代遗民诗境," *Jiangxi shehui kexue* 江西社会科学, 1 (2007): 68-74.

Orange Party (*chuangan hui* 传柑会) was an ancient custom in the Sui (581-618) court at lantern festivals. On the night of the fifteenth day of the first lunar month, the Sui dynasty emperors would invite his courtiers to drink and give them oranges as gifts. Imperial relatives would also exchange oranges as presents. Wang then ends the poem written on the celebration of the lantern festival with a touch of heavyheartedness, as the participants are reminded by the very date of the festival that this ancient custom will never be observed because the new emperor and his court are of an "*yizu* 异族" (alien nationality).[267]

Wang Duanshu's skillful use of the multiple allusions to fallen dynasties and their loyalist survivors generates subject positions of a feminine voice by placing her in a public literary and political context. The political undertone also justifies Wang's celebration of the participants examining "the rhymes instead of silkworm cocoons" (Wang, poem no.1, line 11). If writing at the gathering is to "summon the spirit of the fallen flowers from the plum trees" (line 18), it allows them to reconfigure their identities as those famous loyalist-scholar-poets such as Qu Yuan, Xin Qiji, and Jiang Jie. In addition, the note of sorrow consolidates their friendship based on their shared loyalty to the fallen Ming dynasty, lively passing of Han Chinese cultural tradition, and mutual appreciation of each other's literary talent.

[267] I am indebted to Professor Maureen Robertson for this insightful observation of Wang's implied indignity of the Manchu emperor.

Bosom Friends in the Red Chamber: A Poetic Narrative of Female Friendship Between Wang Duan and Gui Maoyi

Wang Duan's ten chapter collection of poetry serves as strong evidence of the flourishing cultural phenomenon of gentry women's writing and their increasingly frequent interaction with each other in late imperial China. More than one third of the poems in this collection are Wang Duan's exchange poetry with her contemporary women writers. In her study of seventeenth-century Chinese women and culture, Dorothy Ko argues that women's networks in this historical period were mostly made up of family members or established through expanded sympathetic readings of each other's writings without face-to-face interaction.[268] Wang Duan's era, which was the early nineteenth century, about two hundred years later than the historical period described by Ko, witnessed a gentry women's community more consciously and actively constructed, sought out, and expanded beyond female family members and through face-to-face contact. In the case of Wang Duan and Gui Maoyi 归懋仪 (*zi* Peishan 佩珊, 1765-?), whose literary friendship is going to be the central topic of this section, their acquaintance and friendship were made possible by two factors. As a "*guishushi* 闺塾师" (teacher of inner chambers), Gui Maoyi had physical mobility of traveling between her hometown and her patron's families. According to Tao Shu's 陶澍 (1779-1839) preface to her collected poems *Xiuyu xucao wujuan* 绣余续草五卷 (*Continuation of Drafts After Embroidering: Five Chapters*, hereafter *After Embroidering*), during her later years Gui

[268] Ko, 202-214.

was invited by many families to mentor their female family members.[269] Gui's own poetic works attest that she traveled extensively in the Wu area, serving as a teacher for daughters and sisters of local gentry families to make a living for her and her family. Around the year of 1809, she traveled from Shenjiang 申江,[270] where she and her husband lived, to the Wu area and met Wang Duan in Suzhou. Their meeting was also facilitated by Wang Duan's extensive association with other writers through her natal and husband's families, which boasted of prominent men and women writers including Liang Desheng 梁德绳 (*zi* Chusheng 楚生, 1771-1847), Wang's maternal aunt and renowned poet and novelist, and Chen Wenshu, Wang's father-in-law and a well-established writer and advocate of women's writing.

In the poems exchanged between Wang Duan and Gui Maoyi, the subject positions of the feminine voices as talented writers, appreciative readers, and literary friends are generated, developed, and fortified. Fourteen poems from the second and third chapters of Wang Duan's collection reveal her acquaintance and friendship with Gui Maoyi. Because the poems in *Innate Love* are chronologically arranged, it can be inferred from where these fourteen poems appear in the collection that Wang and Gui met for the first time shortly after Wang was married in 1810, and that they lost contact approximately after the year 1817.[271] Their written communication began even before

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[269] Tao Shu, "*Xu* 序," *Xiuyu xucao wujuan* 绣余续草五卷. Gui Maoyi. http://digital.library.mcgill.ca/mingqing/search/results-work.php, not successively paginated.

[270] Today's Shanghai.

[271] For Wang Duan's poem on her first meeting with Gui, see Wang Duan, "*Qinhe Gui Peishan furen Maoyi guo yu Baihuanhuage zhuojiu fenlan yanhuan jingxi qie chushi suozhu Xiuyu xucao yinshu silü yu juanshou fengda jianzeng zhizuo* 琴河归佩珊夫人懋仪过余白环花阁，酌酒焚兰，言欢竟夕。且出示所著绣余续草，因书四律于卷首，奉答见赠之作" ("Madame Gui Peishan (Maoyi) of Qinhe visited my White Ring Bellflower Studio. Drinking wine with incense

1810. In chapter two of her collected works, four poems by Wang Duan on historical figures can be found in reply to Gui's poems.[272]

Wang Duan's four poems on her first meeting with Gui are pivotal to our understanding of how women poets in this historical period endeavored to legitimize their identity as writers through creating a discursive space in which they negotiated, empowered, and expanded their gendered writing positions and subjectivity in poems exchanged with other women writers. To a certain extent, the four poems are also Wang's attempt to create a poetic history of a fellow woman writer and their mutual friendship. The four poems share the title "*Qinhe Gui Peishan furen Maoyi guo yu Baihuanhuage zhuojiu fenlan yanhuan jingxi qie chushi suozhu Xiuyu xucao yinshu silü yu juanshou fengda jianzeng zhizuo* 琴河归佩珊夫人（懋仪）过余白环花阁，酌酒焚兰，言欢竟夕，且出示所著绣余续草。因书四律于卷首，奉答见赠之作。" ("Madame Gui Peishan (Maoyi) of Qinhe[273] visited my White Ring Bellflower Studio. Drinking wine with incense burning, we talked amiably for the whole night. She even kindly showed me

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burning, we talked amiably for the whole night. She even kindly showed me her *Drafts Written After Embroidering: Continuation*. I respectfully wrote four seven-character line regulated poems on the first page of her collection in reply to her poems presented to me as gifts."), *Innate Love*, 2.16a-b. The last poem addressed Gui and her work appears right before the dated poem "*Dingchou renri ganjiu zuo* 丁丑人日感旧作" ("On the seventh day of the first lunar month of the year of Dingchou (1817), I composed the poem moved by recalling the past days"), 3.11b. Gui's poems presented to Wang collected in *After Embroidering* are not dated.

[272] For the four poems, see Wang Duan, "*Yonggu sishou he Qinhe Peishan furen* 咏古四首和琴河佩珊夫人" ("On Four Distinguished Historical Figures, Matching Rhymes to Those on a Similar Topic by Madame Gui from Qinhe"), *Innate Love*, 1.1b-2a. Gui's poems on similar topics appears in *Xiuyuxucao fu Tingxuexuan ci* 绣余续草附听雪轩词. See Gui Maoyi, "Qingbo 秦伯" ("Earl of Qin"), "Huaiyinhou 淮阴侯" ("Marquise of Huaiyin"), "Jia sheng 贾生" ("The Scholar Jia"), "Wu hou 武侯" ("Marquise of Wu"), and "Yuezhonghou 岳忠侯" ("Loyal Marquise of Yue"), *Xiuyuxucao fu Tingxuexuan ci* 绣余续草附听雪轩词, *Jiangnan nüxing bieji chubian* 江南女性别集初编. Eds. Hu Xiaoming and Peng Guozhong (Hefei: Huanshan shushe, 2008) 679-80.

[273] Today's Changshu of Jiangsu province.

her *Drafts Written after Embroidering: Continuation*. I respectfully wrote four seven-character-line regulated poems on the first page of her collection in reply to her poems presented to me as gifts," hereafter "Madame Gui Peishan (Maoyi) of Qinhe visited my White Ring Bellflower Studio.")

（一）	(I)
料得前身住十洲	In your previous life you must have lived in the Ten Islets[274] where immortals dwell.
湖山清气一编收	Your collection embodies the fresh air of mountains and lakes.
春风鹤市新吟馆	In spring you chant poems in your new chamber at Crane Market[275].
夜月琴河旧画楼	Your old splendid residence stands in the moonlight by the Zither River[276].
拔俗词华偏忤俗	Free of all vulgarity, the beauty of your lines challenges vulgarity.
悲秋心事怕逢秋	Melancholy in autumn, your heart fears to encounter autumn.
怪来笔底无金粉	No wonder your brush never writes of flowery ornaments and face powder:
嵩岱曾为万里游	You've already traveled thousands of *li* to the Song and Dai mountains.
（二）	(II)
列戟门庭记谢王	With halberds displayed at your doorway and courtyard, your family ranks with those of Wang and Xie.[277]
虞山耸翠海山苍	The green peaks of Yu and Hai mountains soar skyward.
蠹余遗墨珠玑丽	The remnant ink traces that survived bookworms shine as brilliant pearls.
（[自注] 君母李夫人著有蠹余吟草）([Author's note:] Madame Li, Madame Gui's mother wrote the *Poetry that Survived Bookworms*)	
鸿宝新编蕙芷芳	The newly completed precious volume is as fragrant as orchids.

[274] The Ten Islets are where Daoist immortals dwell. See Dongfang Shuo 东方朔 (154 – 93 B.C.E), *Hainei shizhou ji* 海内十洲记, SKQS, 1042: 273-287.

[275] The Crane Market refers to today's Suzhou of Jiangshu province. See Zhao Ye 赵晔 (fl. first century), *Wuyue chunqiu* 吴越春秋, *Ershiwu bieshi* 二十五别史 (Jinan: Qilu shushe, 2000) 6: 27.

[276] The Zither River is in today's Changshu of Zhejiang province.

[277] In classical China, only noble and eminent families were allowed to display halberds at their doorways and courtyards. Wang and Xie were two prominent families in the Six Dynasties (222-589).

（[自注] 君姑杨夫人著有鸿宝楼集）([Author's note:] Madame Yang, Madame Gui'smother-in-law, composed the *Collection of Precious Volume Tower*)

文淑才名并卿子　Wen Shu's reputation for talent is side by side with that of Lu Qingzi.[278]

宛君家学授琼章　Shen Wanjun passed her family learning to Ye Qiongzhang.[279]

闺门自有渊源在　A long tradition exists within doors of your inner chamber:

不独心香奉小仓　It is not only because you offered your earnest respect to Master Xiaochang.[280]

（三）　(III)

赁庑皋桥又几年　In a rented room by Gao Bridge, you spent several years.[281]

歌离吊梦亦辛酸　Chanting the song of *Lisao* and lamenting your dream, you tasted the miseries of life.

女萝古屋青灯澹　In the old house covered with beard lichen, a black oil lamp burns dimly.

修竹闲庭翠袖寒　In the quiet yard with slim bamboo, the jade-green sleeves feel cold.

鸾凤无心怜瘦鹤　Even phoenixes would unwittingly love and pity a thin crane.[282]

茅蒲何事妬芳兰　Why would creeping weeds envy fragrant orchids?

才人自昔悲遭际　Talented people from old days have grieved at their hard circumstances.

莫恨娥眉称意难　Regret not that few women with delicate eyebrows are gratified.

（四）　(IV)

十载芳徽系梦思　For ten years your fragrant flag has frequented my dreams.

相逢喜值试灯时　Happily we met when the lanterns were tried for the festival.[283]

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[278] Wen Shu 文淑 (fl. late sixteenth century) is Lu Qingzi's 陆卿子 (fl. mid-sixteenth century) daughter-in-law. Both are prominent writers and painters. By comparing Gui Maoyi and her mother to Wen Shu and Lu Qingzi, Wang Duan compliments the mother-in-law's and daughter-in-law's literary achievements and the rich literary tradition of the family of Gui's husband.

[279] Shen Yixiu 沈宜修 (*zi* Wanjun 宛君, 1590-1635) is Ye Xiaoluan's 叶小鸾 (*zi* Qiongzhang 琼章, 1616-1632) mother. Both mother and daughter are renowned poets. The other two daughters of Shen are also known for their talents in composing poems. By alluding to the mother and daughter of the Ye family, Wang Duan pays a tribute to Gui Maoyi's family learning.

[280] Master Xiaocang refers to Yuan Mei 袁枚 (*zi* Zicai 子才, 1716-1779). Gui Maoyi is one of Yuan's women disciples.

[281] This line alludes to Liang Hong 梁鸿 (fl. first century), the scholar-recluse of the East Han dynasty. During his seclusion, he and his wife rented a hallway room from a local eminent family headed by Gao Botong 皋伯通 in Wu area. For Liang's story, see Fan Ye 范晔 (398-445), "*Liang Hong zhuan* 梁鸿传," *Hou han shu* 后汉书 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1965) 2765-2768.

[282] Both phoenixes and slander cranes are associated with immortals. They are also used to refer to outstanding and talented scholars and worthy people.

看君甲帐书唐韵	Poems in Tang style are written on your curtains.
共我辰楼读楚词	Together we read *chuci* poems during the day.
古瑟清和湘女赏	The clear and harmonious music from my ancient zither is appreciated by the Spirit of Xiang River.
疏梅澹泊素娥知	The fair maiden of the moon appreciates the quiet and simple beauty of plum trees with sparse branches.
同心敢说忘年友	Though we are with one heart, how dare I call us "friends despite the difference in age."
合向纱帷礼导师	Dutifully I shall salute you as my mentor.

（[自注]君以兰谱赠余，约为姊妹，愧不克当。）([Author's note:] Madame Gui presented me her drawings of orchids and kindly invited me to be her sworn sister. I am embarrassed at such an honor.)

(Wang Duan, "*Qinhe Gui Peishan furen Maoyi guo yu Baihuanhuage zhuojiu fenlan yanhuan jingxi qie chushi suozhu Xiuyu xucao yinshu silü yu juanshou fengda jianzeng zhizuo,*" 2.16a-b.)

The four poems in this series are carefully arranged in a sequence, with each poem focusing on a different aspect of the addressee's life: her poetic art, and the friendship between her and the writer. As a series, the four lyric poems acquire a new dimension of time. As far as content is concerned, the lines of the first poem start with the writer's speculation on the other woman poet's previous life and end with the meeting of the two friends. In other words, the poem series consists of selected imagined moments of Gui's life until her meeting with the writer. Chronologically arranged, these moments introduce a temporal dimension so that the series can be read as Wang Duan's attempt to create a poetic biography for Gui Maoyi.

Wang Duan's poetic biography for Gui Maoyi features three characteristics. First, all imagined moments of Gui's life are associated with her writing. In the first poem, for example, Wang represents Gui as an immortal living in the legendary Ten Islets. The two

283 Chinese celebrate the Lantern Festival on the fifteenth day of the first lunar month. Lanterns are often displayed several days before the festival.

parallel lines of the second couplet describe two buildings in special contexts: her new chamber in Hangzhou in a spring day, and her splendid residence under the moon in Qinhe where her natal family lived. The two locations are significant because they are where Gui composes and chants poems in Wang Duan's imagination. The first poem ends with Wang's comment on Gui's poems as those free from clichéd feminine verse since she traveled and has seen something of the world. In the third poem, Wang laments Gui's economical predicament, which in turn testifies her poetic talent and moral integrity. The first couplet of the poem describes Gui's rented residence and humble dwelling side by side with her gift for poetry, as suggested by the allusion to Liang Hong 梁鸿 (fl. first century), the scholar-recluse of the Eastern Han dynasty (25-220), and her loyalty to her husband and her refusal to complain while living in poverty, as indicated by the allusion to Du Fu's "*Jiaren* 佳人" ("The Beautiful Woman") in the second couplet. The poem's fifth line directly alludes to Gui's poem series on a crane collected in her *Xiu yu xiao cao* 绣余小草 (*A Few Drafts Written After I Finished Embroidering*) under the title of "*He fei lai* 鹤飞来" ("Here Fly the Cranes").[284] These moments in the poems serve to acknowledge Gui's identity as a distinguished poet and in turn consolidate the speaking voice as belonging to an understanding and sympathetic fellow writer.

This poem series by Wang Duan also serves to construct a space where the bonds of friendship between the two women writers is built through the poet's acknowledgement of Gui's literary legacy inherited from her female family members and Wang's tactic of including Gui in the category of "unfortunate talented women." The

[284] Gui Maoyi, "*He fei lai* 鹤飞来, " *Xiu yu xiao cao* 绣余小草, *Jiangnan nüxing bieji chubian* 江南女性别集初编 (Peng Guozhong and Hu Xiaoming eds., Hefei: Huangshan shushe, 2008) 651.

second poem of the series is completely devoted to tracing Gui's female literary genealogy. After admiring Gui's noble natal family in Changshu, Wang skillfully introduces and praises the poetry by Gui's mother and mother-in-law. In the third couplet, Gui Maoyi's literary legacy is analogized to two pairs of women writers of earlier generations – Wen Shu and her mother-in-law Lu Qingzi, and Shen Yixiu and her daughter Ye Qiongzhang. These comparisons lead to the conclusion in the seventh line: Gui Maoyi's talent and achievement in poetry are thus described as part of a family tradition "within the inner chamber." That Yuan Mei, the famous Qing dynasty literatus, was Gui's mentor, has been addressed emphatically by Gui herself in her collections and other writers in their dedication poems and prefaces appearing at the beginning of her collections. The last line of the second poem by Wang Duan, however, suggests that Gui's literary achievement may be more influenced by her women mentors in her family than by Yuan Mei. Wang's unambiguous partiality to the maternal literary heritage is bold, especially considering the fact that Chen Wenshu, her father-in-law, like Yuan Mei, saw himself as a mentor of his women disciples. Through analogizing Gui Maoyi and her maternal mentors and female literary predecessors to their counterparts in earlier generations, Wang creates a space accommodating and validating a women's literary tradition.

It is important to notice that Wang acknowledges elsewhere in her collection her gratitude to her maternal aunt Liang Desheng, a distinguished poet and *tanci* writer, her mentoring in her literary education. In a long poem she composed as a reply to Liang Desheng's poem inscribed on a painting, Wang Duan affectionately describes her natal family's first visit after her wedding:

牵衣话离悰　Holding your sleeve, I express my longing for home when leaving.
语语出肝腑　Every word I said was from the innermost of my heart.
更呈近作诗　I further present my latest poems,
欲乞津梁渡　Hoping that your suggestions will be my guide as the ferry and bridge over troubled water.
招携来西苑　Holding my hand, you lead me to the west garden.
尚记读书处　Where, I still remember, I used to read.
感念教育慈　With deep emotion I recall your kindness in educating and cultivating me.
长此中心注　For a long time, your love fills my heart.

(Wang Duan, "*Xinwei chunri fanzhao Wulin fucheng Chusheng yimu ji yong ci ti Minghu yinjian tu yuanyun* 辛未春日，反棹武林，赋呈楚生姨母，即用赐题明湖饮践图元韵." ("On a spring day in the year of Xingmo (1811), I returned to Wulin[285] by boat. I composed this poem to present to Aunt Chusheng, using the rhyming characters from her poem inscribed on my painting entitled 'Drinking at a Farewell Party by Ming Lake'"), 2.21a, lines 109-116)

Through acknowledging Gui's literary inheritance from her female family member, Wang Duan establishes a bond between Gui and herself due to their similar family and educational backgrounds and empowers both writer and the reader by creating a women's writing tradition and a niche not only for themselves, but the women writers in their families in this tradition.

As a well-versed literary historian, Wang Duan is sensitive to women writers both of the previous generations and her own times. This sympathy plays a significant role in her poems addressing friendship with other women writers, including Gui Maoyi. In many of her friendship poems, she employs the prevailing rhetoric in describing talented women as doomed. This rhetoric allows her to create an inclusive circle where women's literary talent, fame, life experience, and writers' identity are connected and legitimated through interactions with each other. Such an inclusive circle is usually constructed with Wang's sincere compassion for the hardship and unfair treatment that her friend

[285] Today's Hangzhou of Zhejiang province.

encounters. In the case of her poems to Gui Maoyi, Wang Duan solidifies Gui's writing identity and their friendship by drawing the boundary between "them" and "us." The fifth line in the first poem of "Madame Gui Peishan (Maoyi) of Qinhe visited my White Ring Bellflower Studio," for example, contrasts Gui's outstanding poetic talent with the mediocre, and accuses the latter for stifling the former when it is defied. Similarly, the sixth line from the third poem criticizes the creeping weed's begrudging the fragrant orchid, two metaphors that refer respectively to the mediocre "them" and the talented woman friend. In the following couplet, Wang endeavors to comfort her friend who suffers from the economic difficulties and unhappy life experience, pointing out that "talented people" (*cairen* 才人) and beautiful women "(*emei* 蛾眉," literally meaning "delicate eyebrows resembling a moth's antenna") have always suffered from hardship, generation after generation. In this way, the misfortune and vicissitude that Gui experienced legitimate her literary talent and poetic achievement. At the same time, the poet also further consolidates her bond with Gui as a friend who is capable of sympathizing with her experience and appreciating her talent. Wang's sympathy and appreciation were earnestly reciprocated by Gui Maoyi. In a poem entitled "*Yueye yi xiaoyun furen* 月夜贻小蕴夫人 (On a moonlit night, I composed this poem to present to Madame Xiao Yun as a gift)," Gui says:

金炉沈水夜深焚	Deep into the night, aloeswood incense is burning in the bronze censer.
仰视青天无片云	I look up at the sky – no single cloud in the dark blue.
消到花魂余一缕	Exhausted, the flower has only thin fragrance left.
照来人影瘦三分	Looking into the mirror, I see a shadow even thinner.
飘蓬身世君怜我	You pity me for my life as drifting tumbleweed,
多病心情我忆君	While I think of you as both of us suffer from constant ailments.
执手匆匆才数语	Holding hands, we said only a few words.
暮霞残照又离群	In the receding sunset glow, we again bid farewell.

(Gui, "*Yueye yi xiaoyun furen*," *Xiuyu xucao wujuan*, 3.16a)

In this poem, the self-pitying sentiment of the speaking voice in the second couplet is transcended as an indispensable prerequisite leading to the friendship between the two friends. Gui's misfortune and emaciated figure arouse sympathy in the friend, and in turn, allow her to understand and sympathize with her friend who, like her, also suffers from constant ailments.

The bonds of friendship between the two women writers are created by Wang Duan in her poems by constructing an inclusive circle where women's poetic talents and adversity become mutually defined. Their friendship is also consolidated by the poet's deliberate identification with her friend. In the friendship poetry between Wang Duan and Gui Maoyi, the most frequent word is "*tongxin* 同心" (with one heart). A close reading of these poems also reveals that the two friends are not only metaphorically "with one heart," they are so consciously identified with each other that sometimes it is hard to distinguish one from the other. In the fourth poem of Wang's series on their first meeting, Wang Duan describes how, in her imagination, Gui writes poems on the curtains of her chamber. As a poet herself, it is also possible that she herself does the same thing. The shifting between the real situation and the poet's imagination of the friend's is so smooth and natural that the boundaries between the real and the imagined, the one belonging to the speaking voice and that to the direct audience, are blurred. The moment of their happy union when the friends read poems of *chuci* allows Wang to imagine how Gui, like herself, composes poems when she stays alone in her chamber. The lines where Wang depicts their mutual appreciation of poems and talents make the difference between the friends more obscure: either of them can be the harmonious music or the simple and

beautiful plum trees, metaphors for the objects of aesthetic appreciation; or both of them can be the Spirit of the Xiang River (*xiangnü* 湘女) or the Maiden of the Moon (*su'e* 素娥), the understanding beholders of beauty. It is at this moment that the poet courteously admits that although she and her friend are with one heart, she would salute Gui as her mentor instead of her friend because Gui is her senior. Bonds of friendship, sympathy, and writers' identity interact as both cause and effect. This interaction not only legitimizes the poet's imagination of the friend's situation, but enables her writing of poetry as a discursive construction of similar emotional and aesthetic experience.

The bonds of friendship established in Wand Duan's poem series on her first meeting with Gui Maoyi are also expanded beyond the two friends. Wang Duan pushes the boundary of the inclusive circle so that it also embraces other women writers of earlier or contemporary generations. In the second poem of a series entitled "*Qiuye ji peishan* 秋夜寄佩珊" ("Composed on an Autumn Night to Send to Peishan"), Wang says:

前身合是黄皆令	In your former life you must have been Huang Yuanjie,
垂老穷愁托咏歌	Committing your unprosperous and sad days of declining years to poetry.
一语寄君需自爱	Please take care of yourself! This is a message to you, my honored one:
扫眉才子已无多	Only few talented women now survive.[286]

（[自注]近闻晨兰夫人之讣） ([Author's note:] I just heard of Madame Chenlan's[287] obituary.)

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[286] For the complete poem series, see appendix IV.

[287] Madame Chenlan refers to Li Peijin 李佩金 (*zi* Renlan 纫兰, fl. early 19th century), the author of *Shengxiangguan ci* 生香馆词 (*Collection of ci Poetry by the Fragrant Hall*). Li's poem inscribed on a painting associated with Chen Wenshu is collected in *Xiaotanluanshi huike guixiu ci* 小檀栾室汇刻闺秀词. Wang Duan probably was acquainted with Li after she married into the Chen family. The poem which she wrote on Li's collection can be found in *Innate Love*. See Wang Duan, "*Ti Shengxiangguan ci hou ji cheng Qinhe Li Chenlan furen* 题生香馆词后即呈琴河李晨兰夫人" ("Inscribed at the Back of the *Collected Ci Poems by the Fragrant Hall* and Presented to Madame Li

(Wang Duan, "*Qiuye ji peishan*," poem no. 2, 3.11a)

In comforting, praising, encouraging, and caring for Gui Maoyi, Wang Duan introduces into this poem two women writers: Huang Yuanjie from the earlier generation, and Li Peijin, who is their contemporary. Both of them are widely recognized women poets. Similar to Gui, Huang Yuanjie also traveled to serve as a "teacher of inner chamber" to earn a living in old age. In this circle of "*saomei caizi* 扫眉才子" (talented women scholars), the attachment between the two friends is extended to the shared sympathy and salutation to all women writers. The attachment and bonds thus established actively participate in the construction of a woman's writing tradition.

As mentioned before, because all of the poems in Wang's collection are chronologically arranged, a study of the sequence of her poems addressing Gui Maoyi yields a discernable trajectory of their friendship. Wang's first poems addressing Gui are a series on four distinguished historical figures as a reply to Gui's poems with similar topics. This poem series was written before their actual meeting in Changzhou[288] described in the series discussed above. Her poem "Composed on a New Autumn's Day to Send to Peishan" was written when both of them were in Changzhou. Upon Gui's leaving for her home in Shenjiang,[289] Wang composed a farewell poem entitled "*Song Peishan gui Shenjiang* 送佩珊归申江" ("Sending Peishan off to Shenjiang"). They seem to have never met again after Gui's departure. Their exchanged poems written during the

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Chenlan"), *Innate Loveg*, 2.14b. (Li Chenlan should be Li Renlan. *Chen* 晨 and *Ren* 纫 share the same pronunciation in *wu* dialect, which Wang Duan spoke.)

[288] Today's Suzhou of Jiangshu province.

[289] Today's Shanghai where Gui and her husband's family lived.

separation include Gui's poem on her way back to Shenjiang[290] and a poem that she wrote probably when she served as a teacher of inner chamber somewhere away from her home[291]. During this time, Gui sent her manuscript of poems to Wang Duan, asking for Wang's opinion. Wang recorded this event in "*Peishan shulai yi sigao zhu wei dianding ti yilu guizhi tong Xiao Yun zuo* 佩珊书来，以诗稿嘱为点定，题一律归之，同小云作" ("Peishan sent me a letter with her manuscript, asking me to provide suggestions for improvement so as to finalize it. I wrote a five-character-line regulated poem on the manuscript and returned it to Peishan. Xiao Yun wrote a poem too"). Wang then composed the two poems under the title "*Qiuye ji peishan* 秋夜寄佩珊" ("Composed on an Autumn Night to Send to Peishan") obviously after she heard the news of Li Peijin's death. Her last poem to Gui Maoyi is the one inscribed on Gui's painting named "*Langao miju tu* 兰皋觅句图" ("Searching for Poetry on a Bank Grown With Orchids"), upon which many other contemporary writers of Gui wrote inscription. Wang's first poem addressing Gui was probably written shortly before 1809 when her second brother passed away, and her last poem to Gui can be dated shortly after the year of *dingchou* 丁丑 (1817). In the poems on their first meeting, probably in the year 1810, Wang said: "For ten years your fragrant flag frequents my dreams." It is possible that as a famous woman poet, Gui Maoyi was well known, admired, and most probably established as a local role model by Wang Duan at an early age when she began to receive training in composing poetry.

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[290] Gui, "*Guizhou ji Xiao Yun* 归舟寄小韞" (To Xiao Yun, Composed on My Boat to Home), *Xiuyu xucao wujuan*, 3.23b.

[291] Gui, "*Kezhong yuye wumei ji Xiao Yun* 客中雨夜无寐寄小韞" ("To Xiao Yun, Composed in a Rainy Night When I Failed to Fall Asleep in a Guest House"), ibid, 4.3a.

Although Wang employs the rhetoric of "unfortunate talented women" and the establishment of an inclusive circle to consolidate the bonds of friendship and create a collective identity for writing women, her poems also accommodate individual differences between her and her friend, especially when their friendship matures. Poems written at the beginning of their acquaintance provide a distant view that only allows a sketch of their knowledge about each other's family, life experience, and poetic style. At this stage, both Wang and Gui resort to the rhetoric of mutual understanding and identification for establishing attachment. With the development of their friendship, the reader finds more detailed close-ups of their life experience and emotional moments. Earlier in her *Xiuyu xiucao wujuan*, Gui briefly summarizes her friendship with Wang Duan as:

感君珍重意　I cherish how you treasure me,
古调思翻新　Composing new poems to the ancient tune.
我有同心侣　I have a companion with whom I share a heart.
天生绝代人　She is peerless in beauty and talent.[292]

(Gui, "*Xiao Yun furen zengshi ci yun* 小韞夫人赠诗次韵" ("Using the Same Rhyming Characters From Madame Xiao Yun's Poems Presented to Me as a Gift"), *Xiuyu xiucao wujuan*, poem no. 3, 3.20a.)

The four lines are uninformative: they describe the mutual attachment and good-will toward each other. They also represent a companion with unparalleled beauty and talent. However, they could describe any friend or friendship. Later in Gui's collection, however, the poem "*Kezhong yuye wumei ji Xiao Yun* 客中雨夜无寐寄小韞" ("To Xiao Yun, Composed in a Rainy Night When I Failed to Fall Asleep in a Guest House") depicts a more individualized picture of the two friends:

[292] For the complete poem series, see Appendix V.

又是吴江枫落天　　Again it is a day when leaves fall from the maple trees by the Wu River.
拥衾听雨不成眠　　Huddling under the quilt and awake, I listen to the spattering rain.
暮年作客元非计　　I have never expected to be a guest at my old age.
末路求名亦可怜　　How pitiable it is to seek after fame in dire straits.
（[自注：]外子犹复俯俛首帖括）([Author's note:] My husband is again engrossed in studying for the imperial civil service examination.)
摇曳乡心易怅触　　My fluttering heart longing for my hometown is easily seized with melancholy.
入秋衰病倍缠绵　　In autumn I am declining with lingering ailments.
知卿亦抱幽忧疾　　You, my friend, also suffer sleeplessness from grief.
终岁丛残手自编　　Night after night you collect and edit scattered fragments of poetry.

(Gui, "*Kezhong yuye wumei ji Xiao Yun*," *Xiuyu xucao wujuan*, 4.3a)

From this poem, the reader acquires detailed information: on a sleepless night in a guest house, the feminine voice laments her lingering ailments and longs to go back to her hometown. Such a painful night reminds her of her friend who, like herself, suffers from insomnia and is addicted to composing and editing poems. Her regret for her straitened situation, which leaves her no choice but to travel in old age, her pity for her husband who struggles to pass the civil service examination to improve the family's economic situation, and her sympathy for her friend who also could be sleepless tonight, reading and writing poems, contribute to the construction of a vivid and unique human being in a particular situation.

The development of their friendship also allows Wang Duan to candidly express her opinions on Gui's poetry. More than thirty years senior to Wang, Gui shows unusual trust and admiration in asking the latter to provide suggestions for her manuscripts of poetry so as to finalize them. Wang does not disappoint her. The candid exchange of opinions on poetry deepens Wang's admiration of Gui as a fellow writer and a bosom friend:

一纸瑶华气胜兰	Precious jade shines on the pages - they are more fragrant than orchids.
论诗愧说两词坛	I am not entitled to comment on both *shi* and the *ci*.
吟残画阁秋风冷	You compose poems until autumn wind chills your elegant chamber.
坐到罗帷夜月寒	You sit within the silk curtains until the night's moonlight makes them cold.
白璧微瑕容我指	The slightest flaw in white jade – you would allow me to point it out.
红闺知己似君难	It's hard to find a bosom friend like you among women in red chambers.
从今绝代生花笔	The flowers that spring from your unrivalled brush
莫付纷纷俗眼看	Should not be given to that crowd of vulgar eyes to see.

(Wang Duan, "*Peishan shulai yi sigao zhu wei dianding ti yilu guizhi tong Xiao Yun zuo* 佩珊书来，以诗稿嘱为点定，题一律归之，同小云作" ("Peishan sent me a letter with her manuscript, asking me to provide improvement suggestions so as to finalize it. I wrote a seven-character line poem on the manuscript and returned it to Peishan. Xiao Yun wrote a poem too."), 3.6b)

Gui is a writer of both *ci* and *shi* poetry; while Wang Duan focuses on *shi*, especially seven-character-line regulated poems. This is why she admits her limitation in critiquing both genres in line two. In the second couplet, she commends Gui's commitment to poetry. In her imagination, Gui devotes her days and nights to composing poems. She then acknowledges Gui's generosity and tolerance in accepting different opinions from a junior, which in turn further consolidates their bonds of friendship. Her poems, therefore, become the treasure of both. The writer of the poems and the reader/editor form an inclusive yet immediate exclusive circle. In the center of the circle are their mutual poetic creations connecting the friends and fellow writers who share the understanding and appreciation, and exclude vulgar eyes. In this poem, Wang Duan constructs the subject position of a friend to another woman, whose friendship based on mutual appreciation, support, and association contributes to the building of a women's literary and cultural tradition

It is not known why the two friends stopped writing to each other. However the exchange of poems between them for more than seven years reveals how gentry women writers of this historical period could construct a new subject position of being a friend to another woman. This subject position achieved in the actual textual conversation of poems exchanged between women writers illustrates who women could develop friendships with beyond the thresholds of their family clans, how manuscripts were circulated among women writers and readers, how these writers created a collective identity that at the same time accommodates individual differences, how they fostered and developed a women's writing tradition, and how they viewed the interaction between this tradition with the dominant literati discourse, though their opinions were only obliquely expressed.

CONCLUSION

In a poem on her self-evaluation of *Lamenting Red Flowers*, Wang Duanshu says:

阅吟红集　Reading *Lamenting Red Flowers*
墨泪愁中损　Ink and tears are used up when I write in sadness.
红啼怨已深　Crying, [fallen] flowers are deeply resentful and grieving.
孰知嵇叔夜　Who truly understands Ji Shuye?
偏解断肠音　Yet only he can appreciate the heart-breaking music.
(Wang Duanshu, 11.9b)

In translating the character *hong* 红 in the title of Wang Duanshu's individual collection, I feel obliged to take her Ming loyalist sentiments into consideration. Literally meaning "red," *hong* in classical Chinese was used to refer to flowers. Because the royal family's name of the Ming dynasty is *Zhu* 朱, which can also mean "red" in literary Chinese, to a Ming loyalist like Wang Duanshu, *hong* becomes a euphemism for the fallen dynasty. While flowers are coded feminine, and lamenting fallen flowers is a prevailing thematic theme in poems about women, Wang Duanshu employs the image of fallen flowers to insinuate a speaking voice informed by her political stance. The red flowers crying and bemoaning in the second line of "Reading *Lamenting Red Flowers*" thus epitomize a dominant mood of the speaking voices in the whole collection.

A close examination of the speaking voice in this poem recapitulates the important aspects the speaking voices have in the poetry by these three imperial Chinese women's writers. The speaking voices in their poems are constructed through the writers' interaction with literary conventions and social norms, and are therefore deeply engaged in a conscious conversation with their immediate social and cultural contexts. Fallen flowers and sadly written poems by women are, in literati poetry, topoi of beautiful women lamenting their transient youth and beauty. Speaking voices constructed through

images like these are usually de-contextualized and therefore universalized. The writing self of "Reading *Lamenting Red Flowers*" is fully aware of the conventional interpretation of the image. New subject positions are produced through the writing self's maneuvering of the tension between the poetic conventions, gender norms, and the poetic context into which they are transplanted. The female speaking voice who cries over the fallen flowers as the symbol of the fallen dynasty trespasses into the sphere of political discourse and thus occupies the subject position of a woman loyalist.

The re-contextualization of conventional images and discourses associated with women plays a critical role in these writers' construction of innovative subject positions. Wang Duanshu, Li Yin, and Wang Duan all refuse to isolate the speaking voices in their poetry within the finite space of women's quarters. They are fully aware of the emotional, intellectual, and political connections between their personal experiences and the world before and around them. Consequently, the speaking voices are able to occupy the subject positions that are in constant conversation with historical figures, natural images, and the direct and indirect readers of the poetry.

The poem by Wang Duanshu on reading her own poetry collection also reveals that the speaking voice is contingent on the reciprocity between her, the other voices constructed in literary and cultural history, and her reader. Ji Kang 嵇康 (*zi* Shuye 叔夜, 223-263) in the third line of the poem is a renowned recluse-writer who refused to cooperate with Sima Zhao 司马昭 (*zi* Zishang 子上, 211-265), who, at that time the most powerful minister of the Wei State, paved the way for his son to finally usurp the throne and establish the Jin dynasty (266-420), and was prosecuted and killed by Sima Zhao. Before he was executed, Ji Kang played the song of *Guanglin* 广陵散, a zither song that

nobody in the world but Ji Kang knew how to play.[293] The rhetorical question of the third line of Wang Duanshu's poem suggests that the speaking voice expects an ideal reader who fully understands her heartbroken poetry. The construction of the speaking voice is achieved on two levels: analogizing herself to the historical figure Ji Kang, and her poetry to Ji Kang's exquisite and esoteric music, and bonding with her readers through including those who are her *zhiyin* 知音---ones who can truly appreciate her poems.

For the three writers, poetry is the discursive space where they construct innovative subject positions by responding to the world around them. Their emotional and personal experiences are explored in their poetry, entwined with their concerns for current affairs and their awareness as being spatially and temporarily positioned in history. In a poem that Wang Duan wrote to her women friends after she finished editing the latest volumes of *Innate Love*, she explains her grief over her husband's death and her sadness and loneliness as a widow. At the end of poem, she says:

惟将逸史千秋感　　I can only entrust my feelings above a thousand years' unofficial history
并作疏窗五夜吟　　To my chanting of poetry by the latticed windows late into the night.

(Wang Duan, "*Wuzi zhongdong xuke Ziranhaoxuezhai erjuan gaocheng ganfu ji shuji Yishan Lanshang Feiqing zhuzi* 戊子仲冬，续刻自然好学斋近作二卷告成，感赋即书寄怡珊、兰上、飞卿诸姊" ("In the mid-winter of the year of Wuzi (1828), I completed the woodblocks for the printing of the latest volumes of *Innate Love*. Moved by the event, I composed a poem and sent it to my sisters Yishan, Lanshang, and Feiqing."), 7.5a, lines 7-8.)

A literary historian with an independent mind, Wang Duan is fascinated with unofficial history as well as the official histories. Judging from the subject matter of the

[293] Tong Qiang, *Ji Kang pingzhuang* 嵇康评传 (Nanjing: Nanjing daxue chubanshe, 2006) 253-61.

poems collected in *Innate Love*, her "feelings above a thousand years' unofficial history" may refer to those historical figures or events that have not received proper evaluation or recognition in official history. In this poem written upon the completion of the latest volumes of her individual collection, Wang Duan produces a speaking self whose bereavement and feelings of being unfairly treated by fate allow her to be more closely connected to historical figures and the immediate readers of her collection – her women poet friends whom she knows will understand and appreciate her feelings entrusted to her poetry.

In her discussion of eighteenth-century women writers' imagination of being warriors and scholars, Susan Mann argues that these women who cross over and take on men's roles do not "foreshadow a revolution in gender roles."[294] My study of the innovative subject positions in the poetry by the three late imperial Chinese women writers reveals that in the field of lyric poetry, the women writers not only question the gender norms prescribed in literary and cultural discourse, but endeavor to create new paradigms for the gendered speaking voices in their writing. At least at a discourse level, they provide the possibility for new gender roles that the speaking voices in their poetry can assume.

In this dissertation, I examine a large number of poems in the context of the three collected works of the important women writers in late imperial China. My study of the poems included in the individual collections mainly edited by the writers themselves leads to the convincing argument that the women writers of this historical period created alternative subject positions through appropriating masculinzed language and

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[294] Mann, 207.

experimented on new topics and themes. In these four chapters I show that these writers inscribe their gendered identities deviating from the feminine voices created in literati writing. Their success is contingent on their capability in using and manipulating allusion, their sensitivities in generating in their poems a discourse of dwelling different from "women's quarters," and their conscientious effort to build a collective identity in a writing women's community. The topics and modes that I use to examine the three women's poetry and its relationship to mainstream literati culture and literature have a potential application to poems by other women writers of late Imperial China.

As a set of case studies, my examination of the innovative subjectivity in the three writers' poetry has its limitations in two respects: the scope of the project set a limit on investigating the writers' interaction with other aspects of literary conventions and cultural discourse. For example, all three writers use the image of the recluse-scholar in their poetry. How do the various speaking voices in their works enact their subject positions through responding to the discourse of *yin* 隱 (withdrawal from public service) in late imperial China? Although I touch upon this topic in the second chapter, I have not by far exhausted the potential of *yin* as the organizing trope of a gray area between public and private, and its relation to the construction of female subjectivity in this historical period. The study is also limited due to the number of poets selected for this project. My dissertation is a preliminary study to the observations and critical approaches of the oeuvre of a significant number of women writers of this historical period, which await reinforcement, revision, and improvement after a systematic study. It only partly answers the question of how we deal with the special challenges that women present in writing a new history to late imperial Chinese poetry. Among the challenges is to understand how

women's poetry participates in and influences certain literary and cultural discourses. Going back to the question asked by Isobel Armstrong and quoted by Grace Fong and Paula Backscheider, this dissertation suggests some "productive historical ways of thinking about female poets."[295] However, much remains to be done in reconfiguring and reassessing late imperial Chinese women's writings on a much broader scale.

[295] Paula R. Backsheider, Eighteenth-Century Women Poets and Their Poetry: Inventing Agency, Inventing Genre (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005) 401.

APPENDIX A WRITTEN AFTER THE FRAGRANT PORTRAIT OF MIWU

题蘼芜香影图后
By Wang Duan

庚午春日，翁大人摄篆琴河，访得河东君墓于虞山之麓，即拂水山庄故址也。为加封植，立石碣以表之，事载颐道堂文集。江左士女多有题咏。因成四律。

In a spring day of the year of Gengwu (1810), my respected father-in-law visited the tomb of Madame Hedong at the foot of Mountain Yu where he acted as Deputy in Qinhe County. The tomb is in the former site of Caressed-by-Water Mountain Villa. He had the tomb repaired and decorated with trees, and erected a tombstone in recognition of Madame Hedong's deeds. The event is recorded in *The Prose Collection of the Nourishing-Dao Hall*. Many gentry men and women from the areas south of the lower reaches of the Changjian River wrote poems on the event. I, therefore, also wrote four seven-character-line poems in regulated verse.

（一） (I)

黄土何年葬绿珠	In which year did yellow soil bury Green Pearl[296]?
落红香絮绣平芜	Fallen red flowers and fragrant willow catkins embroider the plain overgrown with grass.
留仙馆圮辞春燕	In spring swallows bid farewell to the House of Hosting-the-Immortals[297] and the bridge nearby.
花信楼空泣夜乌	At night, birds cry in the empty Florescence Tower[298].
缟袂偷生殊阿纪	No one is like Aji[299] who lived in humiliation wearing white clothes like a bereft woman.

[296] Green Pearl (Lüzhu 绿珠) was Shi Chong's 石崇 (249-300) concubine. Shi refused to give her to Sun Xiu 孙秀, a powerful courtier and Lüzhu's admirer. As a consequence, Shi was executed by Sun. Before his execution, Lüzhu committed suicide jumping from a tower. See "*Jingu duolou ren* 金谷堕楼人" (The one who jumped from the tower in Golden Grain Garden), *Lidai diangu cidian* 历代典故辞典, ed. Lu Zunwu, et al. (Bijing: Zuojia chubanshe, 1990) 317.

[297] *Liuxian guan* 留仙馆 (The House of Hosting-the-Immortals) is one of Qian Qianyi's villas. He wrote an article to record its building and naming. See "*Liuxian guan ji* 留仙馆记" (On The House of Hosting-the-Immortals), *Muzhai chuxue ji* 牧斋初学集, XXSKQS, 1390:19-20.

[298] *Huaxin lou* 花信楼 (The Florescence Tower) is also Qian's estate. For its building and naming, see Qian Qianyi, "*Huaxin lou ji* 花信楼记" (On The Florescence Tower), ibid. 1390:19.

[299] Aji 阿纪, sometimes also Afei 阿妃, was Xie Renzu's 谢仁祖 (fl. fourth century) concubine. After Xie's death, Aji swore not to remarry. Xi Yun 郗昀, a high official who coveted her beauty, plotted to get her as his concubine. Though married to Xi, Aji refused to say a word to her

玉颜殉主有清娱　Women with jade faces like Qingyu's[300] died in loyalty to their lords.

尚书若解捐簪黹　Had the Minister[301] wisely given up his ceremonial hairpin and gown,

应共垂竿老尚湖　They would have spent the rest of their days fishing together on the Shang Lake[302].

（二）　(II)[303]

堂开半野足风流　On partly uncultivated land, the hall is elegant and romantic.

墨妙茶香丽句流　Her beautiful line on the exquisiteness of ink and the fragrance of tea has been handed down.

绮阁新妆评玉蕊　In her elegant chamber, wearing fresh make-up, she comments on jade pistils.

画帘春雨写银钩　On a rainy spring day, she hangs the decorated curtain and draws a bright moon.

捐躯世竞夸毛惜　The whole world competes in praising Mao Xi who sacrificed her life.

忍死人犹吹沈侯　Those who drag on living are still complimenting Marquis Shen.

地下未忘家国恨　Even in the netherworld she doesn't forget her remorse for the families' and nation's calamity.

月明还共七姬游　In bright moonlight she wanders with the seven concubines.

（三）　(III)

北里妆成旧擅名　Wearing make-up, she is well-known in the Northern Neighborhood[304].

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husband all her life. See *Yi wen lei ju* 艺文类聚, comp. Ouyang Xun 欧阳询 (557-641), reprinted in *Tang dai si da lei shu* 唐代四大类书 (Beijing: Qinghua daxue chubanshe, 2003) 2:1062.

[300] Qingyu 清娱, full name Sui Qingyu 隨清娱, was said to be Sima Qian's 司马迁 (145-? B.C.E) concubine. The name first appears in Zhu Suiliang's 诸遂良 (596-659) article "*Gu han taishi sima gong shiqie Sui Qingyu muzhiming* 故汉太史司马公侍妾隨清娱墓志铭" (An Epitaph for Sui Qingyu, concubine of late Grand Historian Qima Qian of the Han Dynasty). Sui recorded a dream of his in which a beautiful woman called herself Qingyu and asked him to write an epitaph for her. She told him that she died from grief at hearing the news of Sima Qian's death. See *Quan Tang wen* 全唐文 (Taibei: Datong shuju, 1979) 4:1907.

[301] Qian Qianyi was appointed as the Minister of Rites by the Southern Ming dynasty in 1628.

[302] The Shang Lake (*Shang hu* 尚湖) is near Yushan of Zhejiang province.

[303] For the allusions in this poem, see my discussion of the poem in Chapter Two.

[304] *Beili* 北里 (Northern Neighborhood) originally refers to *Pingkang li* 平康里, a residential district in the northern part of Chang'an in the Tang Dynasty (618-907) inhabited by prostitutes and entertainers. Later the phrase "Northern Neighborhood" is used to allude to any place inhabited by

南都罗绮尽销沉	All the fine silk gauze in the Southern Capital has decayed and disappeared.
金丸影散黄华卷	Gold pellets[305] have scattered and disappeared; the petals of golden chrysanthemums curled.
贝叶香埋锦树林	The fragrant Buddhist scripture is buried in the beautiful woods.
慷慨独君完大节	Ardently and heroically she alone achieved her moral integrity.
苍凉有冢傍遥岑	Her desolate tomb nestles against the distant hill.
何时径泛琴河棹	When can I row a boat on the Qin River?
拂水桥西结伴寻	And join in the search west to the Caressing-Water Bridge?
（四）	(IV)
鸣琴初暇正残春	On a late spring day when he took a leave from his official duties[306],
携酒禺阳酹夕曛	Carrying wine to Yuyang[307], he poured a libation to the setting sun.
夜雨久荒江令宅	Minister Jiang's[308] residence has long been deserted in the night rain.
丰碑重勒诸公文	On the grand monument are once again inscribed the gentlemen's writings.
梦中环佩留新咏	In his dream, the woman wearing jade pendants leaves him her newly composed poems.[309]

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prostitutes and entertainers. See the entry of *Beili* 北里, *Tangdai shici yuci diangu cidian* 唐代诗词语词典故词典, eds. Gu Guorui 顾国瑞 et al. (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 1992) 34.

[305] The gold pellets allude to the story of Han Yan 韩嫣, a court official in Emperor Wu's (156-87 B.C.E) favor. He used gold pellets for his slingshot. Children in the capital city used to follow him and picked up his gold pellets. The image of scattered gold pellets is used in the poem to refer to the extravagant life of Liu Shi before the Manchu conquest. See "*Han Yan jin dan* 韩嫣金弹" (Han Yan's gold pellets), Liu Xin's 刘歆 (?-23), *Xijing zaji jiaozhu* 西京杂记校注 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1985) 170-1.

[306] The literal translation of the first two characters "*mingqin* 鸣琴" should be "sounding a zither." The phrase is a literary allusion to a local official's proper and simple government that ensures social stability and popular content. Wang Duan uses this phrase to commend her father-in-law's achievements in his political career. For the allusion of "*mingqin*g," see its entry in *Tangdai shici yuci diangu cidian*, 1210.

[307] Also written as 虞阳 in today's Changshu of Zhejiang province.

[308] Minister Jiang refers to Jiang Zong 江总 (519-594), a scholar-official who served in the courts of the Liang (502-557), the Chen (557-589) and the Sui (581-618) dynasties. See the entry of "Jiang Zong 江总, " *Zhongguo lidai renming da cidian*, 713.

[309] The following four lines refer to Sun Fen's 孙蕡 (1338-1394) tale and poems on Zhaoyun 朝云, the beloved concubine of Su Dongpo 苏东坡 (1037-1101), renowned writer and artist of the Song dynasty (960-1276). According to Sun, he saw Zhaoyun write poems on a wall in the

画里湖山冷暮云　　The evening clouds above mountains and lakes are cold in the painting.
不数西菴当日事　　The official does not recount the old tales of Xi'an who
秋宵凭吊子霞坟　　Paid a visit to Zixia's tomb on an autumn night.
（[自注：]事见本事诗。子霞朝云字。[Author's note:] For the tale of Xi'an, see *Poetry and Their Tales*. Zixia is Zhaoyun's courtesy name.

Qichan Temple (*Qichan si* 栖禅寺) where he stayed for a night during his visit of the West Lake and which stood close to Zhaoyun's tomb. Sun Fen wrote a poem entitled "*Xian jishi* 西庵纪事" ("A Narrative Poem by Xi'an [Sun's style name]") and recorded Zhaoyun's poems made up of lines from various poets ("*Zhaoyun jiju* 朝云集句") which he claimed to see on the wall of the temple after their encounter. For Sun's story and the poems by him and Zhaoyun, see Xu Gui 徐轨,ed. *Ben shi shi shier juan* 本事诗十二卷 , XXSKQS, 1699: 235-237.

APPENDIX B WRITTEN ON THE MINIATURE PORTRAIT OF MADAME HEDONG[310]

题河东君小像
By Wang Duan

红粉成灰证四禅	That rouge and powder turns into dust verifies the four dhyanas:
衣冠妹喜掌书仙	Moxi in man's clothes and hat, and the goddess in charge of books.
耦耕花落沧桑后	Flowers of the Plowing in Tandem Hall fall after seas became mulberry fields.
半野芸香劫火前	Rue of the Hall on Partly Uncultivated Land sends forth fragrance before the fire of the predestined disaster.
不羡张秾膺紫诰	She doen't envy Zhang Nong's honorary title conferred by imperial mandate.
岂输葛嫩殉黄泉	Nor is she outshone by Ge Nen who died in loyalty to her husband.
玉儿完节东阳丑	Pan Yu'er achieved her moral integrity, while the Dongyang Prefect brought shame on himself.
末路才人亦可怜	Talented women in dire straits are perhaps worth pitying.

前诗意有未尽，更题三绝
Not having had fully expressed myself in the previous piece, I composed the following three quatrains.

（二）	(II)
蘼芜琴水留香冢	Miwu leaves her fragrant tomb by the Qin River.
兰茧瑶篇剩我闻	Her fine poetry written on fragrant silk remains in the What-I-Have-Heard collection[311].
赖有玉台勤护惜	Owing to the jade terrace who earnestly treasures her,
（[自注：]谓莲因女士。[Author's note:] [The jade terrace] refers to Madame Lianyin.	
春风小影美人云	In the spring breeze miniature, the beautiful woman is like a cloud.
（三）	(III)[312]

[310] For allusions in this poem, see my discussion of the poem in Chapter Two.

[311] What-I-Have-Heard (*Wowen* 我闻) is the name which Liu Shi gave herself as her style name, and which she used to name her studio and poetry collection.

[312] For the allusions in this poem, see my discussion of the poem in Chapter Two.

婵娟闺集费搜罗　She strenuously collects poems in the graceful intercalary volume.
翠羽兰膏指摘多　Yet too often she criticizes the beautiful kingfisher's feather and orchid's essence.
（[自注：]河东佐选明诗闺集,于徐小淑、梁小玉、许景樊、小青等多寓讥贬，非笃论也。[Author's note:] Madame Hedong assisted [Qian Qianyi] in collecting *the Intercalary Collection* of the Ming poetry. [In the collection,] she often ridicules and depreciates poets like Xu Xiaoshu, Liang Xiaoyu, Xu Jingfan, and Xiaoqing. Her remarks on these poets are not appropriate.
冷雨幽窗图倩影　In the quiet windows on a cold rainy day, she paints a picture of a beautiful woman.
爱才终让顾横波　Her passion for talent is finally emulated by Gu Hengbo.
（[自注：]横波尝写小青像。[Author's note:] Hengbo once painted a portrait of Xiaoqing.

（四）　(IV)
月堤烟柳又飞花　Catkins fly again in the misty willow woods on the moonlit riverbank.
（[自注：]河东有月堤烟柳画卷。[Author's note:] Madame Hedong painted the hand scroll "Misty Willows on the Moonlit Riverbank."
本事诗成感梦华　I sigh at the vanished past, having composed the poems about real events.
影散紫珍苔绣碧　Purple Curio, the magic mirror,[313] had disappeared without a trace leaving behind beautiful green grass.
河东妆镜落谁家　Now who owns the mirror of Madame Hedong?
（[自注：]舒铁云有河东妆镜曲。[Author's note:] Shu Tieyun wrote "The Song of Madame Hedong's Mirror."[314]

[313] Purple Curio (*Zizhen* 紫珍) is the name of a magic mirror in Wang Du's 王度 (late sixth- and early seventh- centuries) "*Gujing ji* 古镜记" (The Story of an Ancient Mirror), a famous Tang romance. In the story, Wang Du, the first person narrator, obtains an ancient mirror by chance. The mirror's magic power helps him and his brother eliminate evils and bring peace to people. At the end of the story, the mirror bids the brother of Wang Du farewell in his dream and vanishes. For the whole story, see Wang Du, "*Gujing ji* 古镜记, " *Tang Song chuanqi jingdian* 唐宋传奇经典, comp. Bian Xiaoxuan 卞孝萱, et al. (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian chubanshe, 1999) 1-12.

[314] For Shu Yu's 舒云 (*zi* Tieyun 铁云) poem, see "*Hedong zhuangjing qu* 河东妆镜曲" ("The Song of Madame Hedong's Mirror"), *Wowenshi shenggao fulu shicilei* 我闻室剩稿附录诗词类, ed. Yuan Ying 袁瑛, XXSKQS, 1391:581.

APPENDIX C THE BIOGRAPHY OF LI YIN

李因传
By Huang Zongxi

Li Yin, *zi* Jinsheng, *hao* Shi'an, is a native of Qiantang. Beautiful and graceful at an early age, she was adept at painting and writing poetry soon after her parents allowed her to learn the crafts. She had been well-known for her poetry and painting when she was fourteen *sui*. A famous line from her poem on plum blossoms goes: "A branch is withholding its blossoming until late of the year." After reading the line, Ge Zhengqi of Haichang said: "I will be the one to fulfill the poetic prophecy." He then took Li Yin as his concubine. In the early years of the Chongzhen reign (1628-1644), Ge served as an official in the capital, accompanied by Li Yin. In the clean and grandiose official residence, the husband and wife were also teacher and student, or friends to each other, dealing with inkstone boxes. Together they took delight in appreciating unusual books, famous paintings, antique vessels, and Tang dynasty inscription rubbings. No wonder that Li Yin was supposed to be Li Qingzhao in a former life.[315] In her leisure time, Li Yin made landscape and flower-and-bird paintings which, though [so] cherished by the painter [that she was reluctant to give them to others], became popular as soon as they were out of her hand. In the year of *Kuiwei* (1643), the couple left the capital. When they unexpectedly encountered a mutiny in Suqian, Li Yin shielded her husband with her own body. Awed at her beauty, the soldiers dared not to hurt her. Ever since then, Ge Zhengqi had had no interest in serving as an official. Either on the terrace for zithers or in the vale of flowers, when wind breezed or moon shone, music of stringed and woodwind instruments could constantly be heard. Li Yi added more charm to this (aesthetic) life with her ink and brush. At that time, Li Yin joined Liu Rushi of Yushan and Wang Xiuwei of Yunjian who were both well-known to the world for being their husbands' elegant romantic companions. The much-told stories of these women were even admiringly known to country bumpkins and rustic porters. Soon birds migrated with the billowy sea, and cutting edges and arrow heads were scattered everywhere. After the death of Ge Zhengqi, the family's financial situation severely deteriorated. Devastated by grief, Li Yi had to stand all by herself. Her poems are permeated with the pain of Zhang Liang whose family served the State of Han for three generations.[316] In the past thirty years, Li Yin's paintings have enjoyed growing popularity and become essential as local gifts of Haichang. Li managed to make a living from painting. Consequently more than

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[315] Li Qingzhao 李清照 (*hao* Yi'an jushi 易安居士, 1084-1155) is a famous poet of the Song dynasty (960-1276). She and her husband Zhao Mingcheng 赵明诚 are admired for their marital harmony and common interest in collecting ancient epigraphies, books, scripts, and paintings.

[316] Zhang Liang 张良 (?-186B.C.E.) helped Liu Bang 刘邦 (256-195B.C.) establish the dynasty of Han (202B.C. E.-220A.D.). According to *Shiji*, he devoted himself to Liu's overthrow of the Qin dynasty (221-207B.C.E.) in order to revenge Qin's subjugation of the State of Han which his family served for many generations. See Sima Qian, "*Liuhou shijia* 留侯世家" (The Hereditary Houses of Marquis Liu), *Shiji* 史记 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959) 6: 2048.

forty persons in Haichang counterfeited her paintings. Li Yin evaluated these painters' skills and arranged them in order according to their craftsmanship, saying: "Those who are not on the top of the list shall not call themselves my disciples and corrupt my reputation." Even her remnant fragrance could be of benefit [to others] like this. My friend Zhu Renyuan analogized Li Yin to Lady Guan:[317] Both of them traveled to the capital with their husbands who served as officials; they both experienced dynastic transitions; both Li Yin and Lady Guan are good at writing [poetry]; both women's writings and paintings are prominent. What differentiates them from each other is Li Yin's forlorn old age. I once read a biography of the Lady of State Wei. The essay portrays her grand reception by the royal family: When she was summoned to the Xingsheng Palace, the empress dowager granted her to sit down and bestowed food upon her; the emperor asked her to write a one-thousand-word essay and ordered it to be mounted with a polished jade scroll and collected in the Palace Repository. In contrast, Li Yin, mournful for the fallen dynasty, is accompanied only by an oil lamp burning before a statue of Buddha every long night and attended by elderly Buddhist nuns. Both [Li Yin's] songs of a fallen dynasty and [Lady Guan's] music of celebration will stay forever between heaven and earth. Whether they are sad or joyful, the songs in both cases were produced out the vital energy of the intelligent and beautiful poets. It is said that Li Yin wishes that I write a biography for her. She offered birthday congratulations to my mother with two poems, two lines of which say: "You write with ease and verve, sparing no energy./Respectfully following the Heaven's Daughters, you scatter flowers." My mother once dreamed that she was Yuzha, the fourth daughter of Heaven who was sent down to earth as a punishment. She takes Li Yin as her bosom friend at reading the poems. Therefore, I write this biography to repay the favor on behalf of my mother.

李因，字今生，号是庵，钱塘人。生而韶秀，父母使之习诗画，便臻其妙。年及笄，已知名于时。有传其咏梅诗者：一枝留待晚香开。海昌葛光禄见之曰："吾当为渠验此诗谶。"迎为副室。崇祯初，光禄官京师，是庵同行。禁邸清严，周旋砚匣，夫妇自为师友，奇书名画，古器唐碑，相对摩玩舒卷，固疑前身之为清照。暇即泼墨作山水，或花鸟写生。是庵雅自珍惜，然脱手即便流传。癸未出京，至宿迁，猝遇兵哗，是庵身幛光禄，兵子惊其明丽，不敢加害，光禄自是无仕宦意。琴台花坞，风轩月榭，丝竹管弦之声不绝，是庵以翰墨润色其间。当是时虞山有柳如是，云间有王修微，皆以唱随风雅，闻于天下，是庵为之鼎足。伧父担板，亦艳为玉台佳话。亡何，海运而徙，锋镝迁播，光禄捐馆，家道丧失。而是庵茕然一身，酸心折骨，其发为诗，尚有三世相韩之痛。三十年以来，求是庵之画者愈众，遂为海昌馈遗中，所不可缺之物。是庵亦资之以度朝夕，而假其画者，同邑遂有四十余人。是庵闻之，第此四十余人之高下，不在高第者，毋使败我门庭，其残膏剩馥，尚能沾溉如此。吾友朱人远，以管夫人比之。其宦游京师同，其易代同，其工辞章同，其翰墨流传同。差不同者，晚景之牢落耳。余读文敏魏国夫人之志，夸其遭逢之胜，入谒兴圣宫，皇太后命坐赐食，天子命书千文，敕玉工磨玉轴，送秘书监装

[317] Guan Daosheng 管道昇 (*zi* Zhongji 仲姬, 1279-1319) was a woman calligrapher, painter, and poet of the Yuan dynasty (1280-1367). The emperor conferred the honorary title of the Lady of State Wei on her.

池收藏。而是庵方抱故国黍离之感，凄楚蕴结，长夜佛灯，老尼酬对。亡国之音与鼓吹之曲共留天壤。声无哀乐，要皆灵秀之气所结集耳。人远传是庵欲余作传，以两诗寿老母为贽，有“不惜淋漓供笔墨，恭随天女散花来”之句。老母尝梦注名玉札，为第四位天女降谪人世，故读是庵之诗而契焉。余之为此者，所以代老母之答也。

APPENDIX DTWELVE MISCELLANEOUS POEMS ON LIVING IN THE SURBURBS

郊居杂咏十二首

By Li Yin

（一）	(I)
世乱人逃窜	People run away in panic in troubled times.
郊居昼掩门	Living in the surburbs, I close my door in broad daylight.
锄茅开僻径	I hoe the weeds to open up a path,
叠石护篱根	And pile up stones to reinforce the brushwood fence.
无计驱戎马	Having no ways to drive away the war-horses,
谋生整钓纶	I straighten out my fishing line to make a living.
春来归燕子	Swallows return when spring comes.
社酒满前村	The air is thick with the fragrance of village wine.
（二）	(II)
到处干戈遍	Fighting breaks out all over.
残村惊虎哮	The dilapidated village is startled by a tiger’s roar.
人归悲故里	Having returned, I mourn for my neighborhood.
鸟返噪枯巢	Coming back, birds call in their withered nests.
废圃唯蔬菜	In the deserted garden only vegetables are left.
荒畦尽苦匏	The uncared-for land is overgrown with bitter gourds.
乱离愁几许	In war and separation how sad one can be!
静坐泪痕交	Sitting quietly, I am all tears.
（三）	(III)
寄身惟僻径	I entrust my body only to reclusive paths.
避世畏人知	Away from the bustling world, I fear to be known by people.
品水供茶癖	I savor water to satisfy my addiction to tea.
看花乏酒赀	I appreciate flowers, but lack money for wine.
出篱挑野菜	I step outside the fencing to collect wild herbs,
扫叶作晨炊	and sweep up leaves for morning cooking.
独仿王摩诘	Alone I imitate Wang Wei’s style,
闲吟画里诗	Leisurely composing poems for paintings.
（四）	(IV)
烽火临城警	Beacon-fires near the city signals alarm.
人居草莽傍	People dwell by the rank growth of grasses.
新刍村酒美	The newly strained wine of the village tastes delicious.
野菜蕨薇香	The wild herbs give out appetizing fragrance.
俊杰为鱼肉	Talented men become fish and meat on others’ chopping blocks.
红颜逐虎狼	Tigers and wolves chase after rosy cheeks.

道路傍荼毒	Havoc is wreaked along the road:
逢人莫斗强	Better not to strive to outshine others.
（五）	(V)
甘处蓬茅老	I am content to grow old in a humble thatched hut.
闲门即隐居	Within the quiet door, I live in seclusion.
浮云遮宇宙	Floating clouds cover the sky.
明月照丘墟	The bright moon shines upon meadows on hills.
阁帖遭馋鼠	My calligraphy copies on the shelf attract greedy mice.
藏书饱蠹鱼	My collected books feed bookworms.
苟全丘壑里	I manage to survive in a deep valley.
隐步胜安车	Walking in seclusion surpasses riding in a carriage at ease.
（六）	(VI)
草满藏狐兔	The grasses are full of foxes and rabbits
从无人往还	Where people no longer go.
桑田四五亩	There stand only four or five *mu* of mulberry trees,
茅屋两三间	and two or three thatched huts.
荆棘遍郊野	Thistles and thorns grow everywhere in the countryside.
渔舟傍水湾	A fishing boat moors in the bay.
避秦不知汉	The original refugees from Qin do not know the Han.[318]
蓑笠一身闲	Wearing a large straw hat, he lives a quiet life.
（七）	(VII)
英雄起草泽	The brilliant and heroic rise from grassy marshland.
疏拙守林泉	The inadequate and clumsy stay near woods and springs.
净几翻禅诵	By the clean tea table, I read and chant Buddhist scripture.
研朱点易篇	I grind vermilion and use its red ink to punctuate the *Changes*.
隔篱听犬吠	A dog barks beyond the brushwood fence.
近浦过渔船	Fishing boats sail past the river mouth nearby.
戍柝多传警	The watchman’s clapper sends out alarm signals.
披衣夜不眠	I put on my clothes and stay awake the whole night.
（八）	(VIII)
数椽茅屋静	Nothing stirs in a few thatched huts.
尽日掩荆扉	For the whole day, the brushwood gate is closed.
路僻人烟绝	No trace of people or cooking chimney can be seen on the byway.
林荒鸟语稀	Seldom can birdsong be heard in the desolate woods.
寺钟催月上	The ring of temple’s bells urges the moon to rise up.

[318] This line refers to Tao Yuanming’s 陶渊明 story of “*Taohuyuan ji* 桃花源记 (Peach Blossom Spring).” This story relates a stray fisherman’s accidental discovery of a haven of peace and simple living. People in the hidden society tell the fisherman that their ancestors fled from the turbulent Qin. They are also said to have no knowledge of the existence of the Han dynasty. For “Peach Blossom Spring,” see Tao Yuanming, “*Taohuyuan ji* 桃花源记, ” *Tao Yuanming ziliao huibian* 陶渊明资料汇编 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2005) 2:338-9.

渔火拨船归　　Scattered lights on the river pull the fishing boats back home.
与世无荣辱　　Standing aloof from honor or disgrace in this world,
知余久息机　　I know that I have long rested eagerness for worldly success.
（九）　　(IX)
村幽无俗事　　The quiet village is free from vulgar affairs.
汲水自烹茶　　I draw water from the well to boil tea by myself.
牧竖歌牛背　　An oxherd boy is singing on the back of the animal.
渔翁理钓车　　A fisherman is arranging his fishing tackle.
居荒子猷竹　　Bamboo loved by Ziyou[319] grows on the desolate place.
园熟邵平瓜　　Melons like those grown by Shao Ping[320] ripen in my garden.
野色开新霁　　The sky over the open country clears up after rain.
林梢挂晚霞　　Tree-tops are hung with rosy clouds of evening.
（十）　　(X)
触处多荆棘　　Touch and one will be hurt by thistles and thorns.
逃名坐钓矶　　To escape fame, I sit on the project rock for angling.
场头看禾黍　　I look at standing grains in the fields.
信步送斜晖　　Idly strolling, I send off the slanting rays of the sun.
牧笛村前过　　The oxherd boy's bamboo flute sounds across the front of the village.
樵歌屋后归　　Singing a song, the woodcutter returns to his home behind my hut.
夜来防暴客　　When the night falls, on alert for unexpected ferocious visitors,
呼犬守柴扉　　I call my dog to guard my brushwood gate.
（十一）　　(XI)
穷僻无人径　　In remote places, paths remain untrodden.
藤床晓梦残　　On a cane bed, dreams are incomplete at dawn.
疏星垂四野　　Thinly scattered stars hang low towards the fields.
旭日上三竿　　Soon the sun is three poles high.
橘柚笼霜熟　　Covered with frost, oranges and shaddocks ripen.
蒹葭滴露寒　　Cold dew drops from the reeds.
河清老难俟　　It is hard for an old person to wait till the River is clear.[321]

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[319] Wang Huizi 王徽之 (*zi* Ziyou 子猷, ?-386) is a well-known scholar-recluse of the Jin dynasty (266-420). He is said to be a great admirer of bamboo. Liu Yiqing's 刘义庆 (403-444) *Shishuo xingyu* 世说新语 contains two stories depicting Wang's addiction to bamboo. See Liu Yiqing, *Shishuo xingyu jianshu* 世说新语笺疏, annot. Yu Jiaxi 余嘉锡 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1993) 2:759; 775-6.

[320] According to *Shiji*, Shao Ping 邵平 (fl. third century B.C.E.) refused to serve the new dynasty after the fall of the Qin which conferred the honorary title of Marquis Dongling on him. He made a living by growing melons in the suburb of the capital. For Shao's story, see See Sima Qian, "*Xiao xiangguo shijia* 萧相国世家," *Shiji*, 6:2017.

[321] The River here refers to the Yellow River. According to an ancient story, the Yellow River will become clear once every a thousand years. *Heqing nansi* 河清难俟 is an idiom which is

长啸倚栏杆	I lean upon the railings, whistling long into the air.
（十二）	(XII)
隐迹深村里	I conceal my trace in a remote village.
终非安乐窝	It turns out to be no lotus land.
携笻问时事	Carrying my bamboo stick I ask about current affairs.
倚剑待挥戈	Leaning upon my sword I wait to wield my dagger-ax.
羽檄征求急	Urgent military documents pressingly impose grain levies.
人民涂炭多	The people are plunged into misery and suffering.
浮生如梦幻	This floating life of mine is like a dream.
无处避风波	Nowhere can I escape from the turbulent wind and waves.

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usually used to express one's regret for something that takes too long time to be accomplished. Usually it also implies one's regret for the ephemeral life of a human being. See the entry of "*Heqing nansi* 河清难俟," *Hanyu chengyu cihai* 汉语成语辞海, ed. Zhu Zuyan 朱祖延 (Wuhan: Wuhan chubanshe, 1999) 556.

APPENDIX E ON THE EAST GARDEN OF ZHENZHOU[322]

真州东园记
By Ouyang Xiu

Located at the intersection of waters in the southeast, Zhenzhou is under the government of the Transport Commissioners of Jianghui and East and West Zhe. Shi Zhencheng, the Auxiliary Academician of Dragon Diagram Hall, and Xu Zichun, the Attendant Censor, were appointed as the commissioners. They obtained Ma Junru, the Probationary Investigating Censor as their Administrative Assistant. Enjoying each other's company, the three of them transformed a deserted camp of the Army Supervisor into East Garden in their leisure time and went to visit it every day. In the eighth month of this year, Zichu came to the capital on official business. He had a painting made of East Garden. He came to show me the painting and said: "The garden extends to a hundred of *mu*[323]. A river flows in the front of the garden. In the west there is a limpid pond and in the north a high platform rises. On the platform we built a terrace so high that it almost touches the clouds. By the pond, we constructed a bright pavilion. We had a decorated boat lie at anchor on the water. Inside the boat is a hall for vegetarian dinners. A garden is cultivated behind the boat to entertain our guests. Dew drops from petals of water lilies, while orchids send out sweet scent. Planted side by side, beautiful flowers and elegant trees mingle their shadows on the ground. In earlier days, this place was overgrown with brambles, overcast with clouds, mist, and dew. Rafters of high buildings are reflected in the water with the sun. The reflections of shadows rise and fall with the waves. The buildings are so spacious and tranquil that they echo the sounds from afar and generate breeze. In earlier days, there were broken walls, decayed houses, and deserted ruins. On pleasant days, gentry men and women of Zhenzhou will pluck strings and sing songs [here]. In earlier days, only slashing rain and whistling wind in darkness, and sounds made by weasels, flying squirrels, wild birds and beasts could be heard. We have truly exerted efforts [into transforming this place]. What the painting has recorded is just one or two tenth of the garden. When one climbs to a high place, he will see the rivers and mountains far and near. When one boats on the water, he will chase the fish up and down. All kinds of people who climb to a mountain or come by a river obtain different views and joys. What the painter is unable to draw is also what I fail to express in words. Could you please write a brief essay on the garden?"

He then continued to say: "Zhenzhou is a hub of transport of our empire. We share the pleasure brought by the garden with guests and travelers from all directions. How can the garden belong only to the three of us? The pond and terrace are being renovated day after day. Trees and grass are ever-flourishing. More and more people come to visit the garden every day. There will be a time when we will leave. How can we

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[322] Today's Yizheng of Jiangshu province.

[323] *Mu* is a Chinese unit of area equal to 1/6 of an acre.

not feel attached to the garden! If you do not write on it, whom of the coming generations will know that we created the garden?”

I think that the three gentlemen complement each other in talent, worthiness, and official duty. They understand the priority of their various duties so that people under their rule live a life of plenty, and none in the southeast grieves over or complains of the hardship and bitterness of life. In their leisure time, they enjoy themselves with other worthy gentlemen from all directions in this garden. All this is commendable. I therefore wrote this essay for them. Written by Ouyang Xiu of Luling.

真州当东南之水会，故为江淮两浙荆湖发运使之治所。龙图阁直学士施君正臣，侍御史许君子春之为使也，得监察御史裏行，马君仲涂为其判官。三人者，乐其相得之欢，而因其暇日，得州之监军废营，以作东园而日往游焉。岁秋八月，子春以其职事走京师，图其所谓东园者，来以示予曰□“园之广百亩，而流水横其前，清池浸其右，高台起其北。台,吾望以拂云之亭；池，吾俯以澄虚之阁；水，吾从以画舫之舟；敞其中以为清讌之堂，辟其后以为射宾之圃；芙渠芰荷之滴沥，幽兰白芷之芬芳，与夫佳花美木，列植而交阴；此前日之苍烟白露而荆棘也。高甍巨桷，水光日影，动摇而上下；其宽闲深静，可以答远响而生清风；此前日之颓垣断堑而荒墟也。嘉时令节，州人士女，啸歌而管弦；此前日之晦冥风雨、鼯鼠鸟兽之嗥音也。吾於是信有力焉。凡图之所载，皆其一二之略也。若乃升於高，以望江山之远近，嬉於水，以逐鱼鸟之浮沉；其物象意趣，登临之乐，览者各自得焉。凡工之所不能画者，吾亦不能言也；其为吾书其大概焉！”又曰□“真天下之冲也，四方之宾客往来者，吾与之共乐於此，岂独私吾三人者哉。然而池台日益以新，草木日益以茂，四方之士，无日而不来；而吾三人者，有时而皆去也，岂不眷於是哉！不为之记，则后孰知其自吾三人者始也”。予以为三君子之材，贤足以相济，而又协於其职，知所后先，使上下给足，而东南六路之人，无辛苦愁怨之声。然后休其馀闲，又与四方之贤士大夫，共乐於此，是皆可嘉也，乃为之书。庐陵欧阳修记。

APPENDIX F IN ANSWER TO A CERTAIN MAN'S DERISION OF A CERTAIN WOMAN

答某子刺某氏诗
By Wang Duanshu

鹦鹉鸣春草木香	In the twittering of parrots, trees and grass send off sweet scents in spring.
柳烟初发日初长	In the first shadows of green willows, days begin to linger longer.
含毫落句愚人嫉	Having warmed my brush between my lips, I write lines envied by fools.
残篇空冷旧寒缃	The unfinished poem stays cold on the aged light yellow silk.
自知学业久疏荒	For a long time I've idled, away from my scholarly work.
好月不到愁人墙	The beautiful moon never sheds its light on the grieving one's walls.
豪家车马如层云	Rich people have carriages and horses as many a clouds.
好客从无平原君	Yet none of them is as hospitable as Lord Pingyuan[324].
虚楼乏烛守漏永	In the dark empty tower I keep watch by the water clock in a long night,
痴听啼鸟点夕曛	Fascinated by the calling of birds dotting the twilight sky.
金闺亦有扫眉士	In golden inner chambers there is also a woman scholar
喜赋爱吟香口齿	Who loves perfuming her tongue with poem chanting.
读予红草慕予深	Having read my drafts on red flowers, she deeply admires me.
目观谗真非属耳	She witnesses the slander instead of overhearing it.
坐谈感慨果清神	She talks and sighs; my spirit is indeed refreshed.
翠轩诗绣天孙针	Her poems from Greeness Hall are embroidered with a needle of Heaven's daughter.
予愧菲才服君德	I, the untalented, am convinced by her worthiness, and
羡君量智胜头巾	Admire her being more tolerant and intelligent than those who wear kerchiefs.[325]
幽窗评句乍拗愁	Commenting on lines by the tranquil windows, we are suddenly overwhelmed with grief.
共惜芙蓉恨染秋	Cherishing water lilies, we both lament the autumn days.

[324] Lord Pingyuan refers to Zhao Sheng 赵胜 (? – 253 B.C.E), son of King Wuling of Zhao 赵武灵王 (340-295 B.C.E) and younger brother of King Huiwen of Zhao 赵惠文王 (310 -266 B.C.E). He was a distinguished politician and renowned for his hospitality for talented people. See Sima Qian, "*Pingyuanjun Yuqing leizhuan* 平原君虞卿列传," *Shiji zhuyi*, 1811-1814.

[325] "Those who wear kerchiefs" refer to male scholars.

猜嫌意恐黃鹂见	We are afraid that the yellow bird will see us and harbor suspicious,
花落帘垂不上钩	Flowers fall to the ground and curtains drop, not rolled up on the hooks.
玉碎花凌石下飞	Like shattered jade, withered flowers fall over the rocks.
子规应笑莫须归	Laughing, the cuckoos are not calling me to go home.
残痕半逐香光断	A few remnant traces chase after the fragrant air and dissappear.
雨满庭除泪满衣	The courtyard is flooded with rain; the garment is tinted with tears.
君不见	Haven’t you noticed:
班姬薄命悲纨扇	The unfortunate Lady Ben lamented the silk fan,
耻与低微论是非	Ashamed to defend myself before the mean and ignoble.

APPENDIX G COMPOSED ON A NEW AUTUMN'S DAY TO SEND TO PEISHAN

新秋书寄佩珊
By Wang Duan

叶堕疏桐暮霭收	Leaves fall from the scattered tung trees; the evening mist drops.
西风又到古长洲	The west wind again blows in the ancient city of Changzhou.
愁中远笛吹凉月	In the cold moonlight, a bamboo flute whistles sadly in the distance.
花里明河近画楼	Among flowers, your painted residence is close to the Ming River.
几日同心成小别	We, though with one heart, separate from each other for a while.
四时多感是新秋	Among the four seasons, the new autumn stirs the most feelings.
知君绣幕题诗夜	I know that on the night when you write poems on your embroidered curtain,
怕见清光上玉钩	You will fear to see the crystal light on the jade hook of the new moon.

APPENDIX H COMPOSED ON AN AUTUMN'S NIGHT TO SEND TO PEISHAN

秋夜寄佩珊
By Wang Duan

（一）	(I)
秋雨疏篁夜湿萤	The autumn rain dampens the fireflies among the sparse bamboo.
兰釭星焰照罗屏	The sparkling light of the fragrant candle shines upon the silk screen.
西风落叶寻常事	Though it is common for leaves to fall to the ground in the west wind,
一忆知音不耐听	I can't bear the sound when I recall a bosom friend.
（二）	
前身合是黄皆令	In your former life you must have been Huang Yuanjie,
垂老穷愁托咏歌	Committing your unprosperous and sad days of declining years to poetry.
一语寄君需自爱	Please take care of yourself! This is a message to you, my honored one:
扫眉才子已无多	Only few talented women now survive.

（[自注]近闻晨兰夫人之讣） ([Author's note:] I just heard of Madame Chenlan's obituary.)

APPENDIX I USING THE SAME RHYME CHARACTERS FROM MADAME XIAO YUN'S POEMS PRESENTED TO ME AS A GIFT

小韫夫人赠诗次韵
by Gui Maoyi

（一）	(I)
三复高山调	Three times I compose to the tune of "High Mountains."[326]
中宵起梦思	At the midnight, I miss you in my dreams.
同心怅离阻	With one heart, yet we are sadly separated.
叹息此良时	I sigh at this beautiful moment.
（二）	(II)
浮世原难合	That it is indeed hard to be together in this floating world
微生感受知	Is felt and understood by this insignificant being.
嗟彼独活草	How pitiful that grass who struggles to live all alone!
愿附乔松枝	It would be happy to lean upon a tall pine tree.
（三）	
感君珍重意	I cherish how you treasure me,
古调思翻新	Composing new poems to the ancient tune.
我有同心侣	I have a companion with whom I share a heart.
天生绝代人	She is peerless in beauty and talent.

[326] This line alludes to the story of friendship between Boya 伯牙 and Zhong Ziqi 钟子期. Boya is a zither player. His music expressing his aspiration as the high mountains and limpid running rivers was fully understood and deeply appreciated by Ziqi. See Liezi,. *Liezi jishi* 列子集释, ed. Yang Bojun 杨伯峻 (Beijing: Zhonghua shujun, 1979) 178-179.

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