

correlation between poetry and history. Moreover, through a separation between Qian's readings of Du Fu's poetry during different periods, the author points out that Qian identifies himself with Fang Guan (696–763), a Grand Councillor at the Tang court, under Ming rule through a particular commentary (pp. 179–86), and later compares himself with Du Fu under Qing rule through the imitation of Du's "Stirred by Autumn" poems, especially during Zheng Chenggong's (1624–62) attempts at Ming restoration (p. 203). This seems to articulate our comprehension of Qian Qianyi's "moral manoeuvrability" (a quote from *Yes Minister* TV series).

Chapter 6 is about how Qing political power intervened in the reading of Du Fu's poetry: Qiu Zhaoao's (1638–1717) commentary engaged with the official ideology, whereas Qian Qianyi's commentary was eradicated due to his personal defects in morality. However, it is a pity that the author agrees with William Hung's conclusion that "few influential and commentarial versions of Du Fu's poems" appeared during and after the Jiaqing reign (1796–1820), and this book ends in the High Qing – I would rather wish to know about these less "influential" and yet interesting (or perhaps abnormal) works on Du Fu, since other modern scholarship already suggests that the poetic field then moved into a flourishing period, especially when harsh literary inquisitions ended during the Jiaqing reign. But then, I understand this is perhaps the limit of any reception study – a selective contemplation on influential works, and a demand for more would be quite irresponsible.

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CHANG WOEI ONG:

Li Mengyang, the North–South Divide, and Literati Learning in Ming China.

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This monograph is a focused study of Li Mengyang (1473–1530), and engages with two broader issues: the so-called "north–south divide" under a sociopolitical framework; and the development of literati learning during the Ming dynasty. It is an excellent work providing not only a close reading of Li's own writings, but also an enlightening perspective in understanding the Ming literati.

This book is divided into four parts, eight chapters, followed by a long conclusion which is a reception study of Li (pp. 271–321). Chapter 1 provides a socio-political background to the Ming literati world, where a phenomenon known as the "north–south divide" is presented. The author invites us to read this phenomenon in three different layers: an actual divide of the ecological and economic sphere between north and south China, an orientated divide between northern and southern literati communities, and, more importantly, an imagined divide deeply embedded within the mind of the Ming intellectuals (p. 19; pp. 68–9). This imagined divide was rhetorical, and it was frequently used by cliques as a weapon in the competition for political power (p. 52). Furthermore, as elaborated in the conclusion, it was also the reason why Li's literary contribution was appreciated and then criticized by later generations (pp. 318–21). In short, the analysis of the "north–south divide" leads to

a careful examination of what Ming intellectuals said and why they said what they did: once a Ming intellectual was to start a north-versus-south discussion, he would surely have had an ulterior motive in achieving a self-serving goal.

Chapter 2 is a chronological summary of argumentations on literature and learning from the past, starting from the *Guwen* Movement in the Northern Song and ending in a diverse assessment of Li Dongyang's (1447–1516) literary endeavour.

The following six chapters turn to a reconstruction of the ideas of Li. Chapters 3 and 4 include discussions of Li's absorption and disposition of the Southern Song Daoxue tradition, heavily relying on texts from *Kongtongzi* that Li had written during his late years, where metaphysical issues are the primary concern. Chapters 5 and 6 discuss Li's various considerations on learning, including his claims on the proper ways of education, sacrifice, ruling, performing rituals, and observing morality. Chapters 7 and 8 are on Li's views on prose and poetry respectively.

For prose, Li disagreed with the Song scholars' approach and he took the ancient writing style as models. Here, the author uses four different subgenres of prose (a preface to a gazetteer, a travel account, a dialogue, and a tomb inscription) to support his argument that Li's prose rarely contains an "aesthetic and emotional self" (pp. 232–43). I hope this argument can take one step further, as I find the difference, instead of the similarity, between these four subgenres may be more meaningful in responding to Li's literary theory, and perhaps an analysis on the clear boundaries between subgenres of prose in Li's mind would be fruitful.

For poetry, the author has successfully cleared Li's reputation for a blind imitation of High Tang poetry, and this argument is strengthened in the conclusion (pp. 298–318). But when the author wishes to demonstrate how Li put his theories of poetry into practice in his own compositions (p. 245), he only uses three pieces of *yuefu* poetry as evidence (pp. 263–70), which is far from sufficient, since Li's 120 *yuefu* poems are quantitatively incomparable to his 192 *gexing* poems, 327 heptasyllabic quatrains, 353 heptasyllabic regulated verses, 374 pentasyllabic ancient style verses, or 548 pentasyllabic regulated verses. Again, a comparison in the differences between subgenres of poetry would be more meaningful in re-examining Li's theory of composing poetry.

Translation of Ming writings is a difficult task, and the author generally presents fluent translations, with occasional sacrifices in accuracy, for example, “千萬世後” is missing in the translation (p. 11); “若不因臨事而見” is shortened as “under normal circumstances” (p. 73); no distinction is made between “不易言” and “不言易” in a passage referring to the *Book of Changes*, and both terms are translated as “did not discuss *Yi*”, where the former is actually “did not [use] *Yi* [as reference] in discussions” (p. 119); “周” is missing in the translation (pp. 229–30); “風雲月露” is translated as “clouds in the wind or dew in the moonlight” (p. 220), but later it is curtly translated as “colorful writings” (p. 295). There are also a few cases where I hold reservations, for example, “以經學自文” is translated as “took pride in his leaning in classical studies”, but it means rather “glossed over [his inability of writing poetry by promoting] classical studies” (p. 56); “得意於鄉” is translated literally as “admired in the community” without indicating its real meaning as “passed the provincial examination” (pp. 190–1); “斐然” is translated as “elegant” but it should be “brilliant” or “outstanding” (p. 295). Also, the punctuation in the Chinese line “...資於場屋者多也故。為古文詞...” should be “...資於場屋者多也。故為古文詞...” (p. 104).

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