SOUND ICONICITY AND GRAMMAR OF POETRY
IN DU FU'S "THE JOURNEY TO THE NORTH" AND
"SINGING MY HEART OUT IN FIVE HUNDRED CHARACTERS ON
THE WAY FROM THE CAPITAL TO FONGXIAN COUNTY"

by

ANN-LEE HSIEH

B.Sc., The University of British Columbia, 2008

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
(Asian Studies)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
(Vancouver)

April 2008

Abstract

This paper is about the sound iconicity of the Late Middle Chinese entering tone in two of Du Fu’s long narrative poems, “The Journey to the North” and “Singing my Heart out in Five Hundred Characters on the Way from the Capital to Fongxian County”, as well as Du Fu’s grammar of poetry in these two poems.

In poetry, rhyme is an arbitrary and ‘visible’ figure reiterated with regulation which forms an axis of sequence, and this axis will work jointly with all the other poetic elements—semantics, images, and grammar to form the whole of a poem. In these two poems, all the rhyme characters carry a voiceless –t ending, which is classified with –k and –p endings as the entering tone in Late Middle Chinese reconstructed by Edwin Pulleyblank. These voiceless stops are short, tense, and uncomfortable to utter; when they are repeated fifty and seventy times at the end of each couplet, it naturally brings about a strong, rough, and uncomfortable feeling which correlates with the feeling of suffering in both poems. It is sound iconicity, because an icon resembles the object it stands for in an immediate and concrete manner, and the –t ending rhyme characters do have the characteristics to make the reader grasp the feeling of suffering when she reads the poems.
Abstract

In terms of Du Fu’s grammar of poetry, I used Jakobsonian methodology and found how Du Fu’s poeticity was created with lexical meaning and grammar. Although Classical Chinese does not have a huge grammatical repertoire (e.g., person, case, gender, finite, non-finite . . .) which can figure in a poem, this language still has its own obligatory categories that will provide for the ‘grammar of poetry’. Classical Chinese is already known for its grammatical parallelism in poetry, because this language is extremely isolating and analytical. However, grammatical parallelism is little in these two poems, but there are different kinds of grammatical tropes. They are mainly anti-syntactic inversions interacting with semantics. I found Du Fu a fascinating artist of grammar; he may be anti-grammatical but never agrammatical.
Table of Contents

Abstract............................................................................................................................. ii

Table of Contents.............................................................................................................. iv

List of Figures.................................................................................................................. vii

Introduction..................................................................................................................... 1

IPA Transliteration and English Translation of
“The Journey to the North 北征”.................................................................................. 5
“Singing My Heart out in Five Hundred Characters on My Way from
The Capital to the County of Fengxian 自京赴奉先縣詠懷五百字”................................. 23

Chapter One
Figure of Sound ................................................................................................................. 37
1.1. The Entering Tone ..................................................................................................... 37
1.2. The Entering Tone in “The Journey to the North 北征”........................................... 44
1.3. The Entering Tone in “Singing My Heart out in Five
    Hundred Characters on My Way from the Capital to the
    County of Fengxian 自京赴奉先縣詠懷五百字”..................................................... 49
1.4. Conclusion of Figure of Sound.................................................................................. 55

Chapter Two
Figure of Grammar .......................................................................................................... 56
2.1. Common Features at Couplet level ......................................................................... 58
    2.1.1. Couplet as a Basic Syntactic Unit ................................................................. 58
    2.1.2. Conceptual Parallelism in the Couplet .......................................................... 59
    2.1.3. Symmetry in the Couplet .............................................................................. 61
2.2. Orders and Grammatical Tropes in the Couplet .................................................... 63
Chapter Three
Global Analysis of “The Journey to the North 北征” .............................84

Section One: the Journey
3.1. The Calendar (couplets 1-2)..............................................85
3.2. The Imperial court (couplets 3-8).................................85
3.3. Trauma of War (couplets 9-12)......................................90
3.4. Treacherous Roads (couplets 13-16).............................91
3.5. Delightful Scenery (couplets 17-21)..............................93
3.6. Back to Treacherous Roads (couplets 22-24)...............96
3.7. Battlefield (couplets 25-28)........................................97

Section Two: Home
3.8. Arriving Home (couplets 29-47)....................................100

Section Three: the Country
3.9. The Uighurs (couplets 48-54)....................................106
3.10. High Hopes for the Country (couplets 55-70)..............109
Chapter Four
Global Analysis of “Singing My Heart out in
Five Hundred Characters On My Way from the Capital
to Fengxian County” ........................................... 116
4.1. Singing out the Aspirations and Discontent (couplets 1-16) ........................................ 117
4.2. The Journey (couplets 17-21) ............................................................................. 123
4.3. The Extravagant Court (couplets 22-35) .......................................................... 125
4.4. Back to the Journey (couplets 36-40) ................................................................ 132
4.5. Arriving Home (couplets 41-45) ....................................................................... 134
4.6. Suffering of Commoners (couplets 46-50) ...................................................... 136

Conclusion .................................................................................................................. 138

Bibliography .............................................................................................................. 142
List of Figures

Figure 1.1. Historical Chart of the Chinese Language ..............................37

Figure 1.2. Locations of the Vowels of the Entering Tone Characters ............45

Figure 2.1. Configurative Hierarchy of “The Journey to the North” ..............75
Introduction

When I first read "The Journey to the North", I was touched by Du Fu's account of the sufferings of war, in which the emotion is gradually intensified as the episodes and scenes move on one after another. At that time, I was reading the poem in Mandarin and thus unable to see that the poem had a rhyme in the entering tone; hence, my response then had nothing to do with the rhyme. Back then, I was first impressed by the images unfolding in a linear order reminiscent of Caesar's 'veni, vidi, vici' (I came, I saw, I conquered), in which the syntactic order of the mentioning of events in speech correlates with the temporal and causal order of the events that happened. Then, I noticed that the poem did not have any figurative language. Nonetheless, at that point, what I perceived was enough to arouse my compassion although I wondered why a poem without any tropes could be so poetically captivating. Later, I found out about the entering tone rhyme, so I began to read it in Taiwanese, one of the a few Chinese dialects that has preserved the entering tone distinctively; then, suddenly, the poem's power multiplied with the rhyme of voiceless t stops. The acoustic characteristic of the tone took me beyond the words and landed in a space, in which the poet's sadness and compassion correlate with the grating, brusque, and virile sound
of the tone. In this case, the synaesthesia, the cross sensory domain projection of meaning, is achieved not by semantic metaphors but by the physicality of sounds.

After “The Journey to the North”, I found Du Fu wrote at least forty-two poems that rhymed in the entering tone, and all of them were sad. Therefore, for this paper, I will examine another Du Fu’s entering tone poem, “Singing My Heart Out in Five Hundred Characters on My Way from The Capital to the County of Fengxian 自京赴奉先縣詠懷五百字” (will be abbreviated as “Singing My Heart out”).” I have a phonological reason for choosing this poem, because it shares the same sound feature with “The Journey to the North” by also being pentasyllabic with the same entering tone rhyme of voiceless t stops, and most of all, it has twenty-eight rhyme characters identical to those of “The Journey to the North.” Hence, it is highly plausible that the sound iconicity of poetry is the same in these two poems. In order to demonstrate my argument, I will first reconstruct the Tang pronunciation based on Edwin Pulleyblank’s Middle Chinese dictionary¹; then, I will expound the acoustic iconicity of the entering tone rhyme.

¹ Edwin Pulleyblank, *Lexicon of Reconstructed Pronunciation in Early Middle Chinese, Late Middle Chinese, and Early Mandarin* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1991)
Afterwards, I will use Jakobsonian\(^2\) methodology to examine the grammar of these two poems, because the two look much alike at the first glance in patriotism, traveling, coming home, and the sympathy towards commoners although they are dissimilar in order, overall subject-matter, semantics, layout and various tropes. However, the two are equally moving without hearing the entering tone rhyme. Indeed, the ‘visible’ images do bring about the moving force; nevertheless, I wish to argue that thanks to the grammar of poetry, the images are arranged in a poetic way so that the unique moving power may come into being.

The core of Roman Jakobson’s poetics is that in poetry “equivalence is promoted to the constitutive device of sequence\(^3\).” The equivalence can be in lexical meaning, sound, or grammar. Poeticity happens when the regulated recurrences of these equivalent elements are projected into meaningful contiguity. Although he does not exclude the importance of lexical meaning, his major argument is about the roles that sound and grammar play in the construction of poetic meaning. He points out a great range of grammatical categories (e.g., person, case, gender, mutable, immutable, finite, non-finite . . . ) that can figure in a poem,

\(^2\) Roman Jakobson (1896 –1982) was one of the most influential linguists of the 20th century. One of his major contributions is the theory of “grammar of poetry.”

\(^3\) Roman Jakobson, *Verbal Art, Verbal Sign, Verbal Time*, (The University of Minnesota: 1985), 4.
but few of them work in Classical Chinese poetry, because the language does not have the huge repertory of morphological constituents to play grammatical tropes.

Nonetheless, being extremely isolating and analytical, Classical Chinese relies almost totally on syntax for its parts of speech assignment; thus, the mechanism of poetic grammar is founded mainly in syntax, through which Classical Chinese is well-known for its grammatical parallelism. However, this typical poetic feature is not seen in these two poems; therefore, I wish to find out what obligatory categories this language has to provide the material for the ‘grammar of poetry’ besides grammatically parallel couplets. Through the syntactic meaning and sentence semantics in and between the couplets and stanzas, I wish to argue that grammar still rules—it governs the construction of the basic syntactic unit in a couplet and the conceptual contiguity between couplets, and each time the poem takes a turn, there is a grammatical mark. All in all, the second major argument of this paper is that, in these two poems, regardless of all the odds in semantics, layout, and tropes, it is grammar that harnesses the various elements so that they can interact in the poetic way to create the magnificence of the entire poem.
“The Journey to the North” by Du Fu

In the autumn of the second year of our emperor, at the auspicious [kjìt] beginning of the intercalary eighth month,

I, Mr. Du, was about to set off on a journey to the North, at a loss, wanting to find out about my family [sit].

At this time we were encountering difficulties and troubles, (during which) people in and out of the court were having little leisure time [rit].
I looked back and felt guilty about the favors that the emperor had specially graced me (as) the edict allowed me to return to my family [pjit].

I bowed and took leave when I went to the palace; feeling uneasy, I did not come out [tś'yt] for a long time.

Although I lack the quality of remonstration, (I) was afraid my ruler still has remaining faults [sit].

You (my ruler) are truly a leader of revival, (who is) indeed assiduous [vjit/vut] on the policies and planning for the country.
The rebellion of An Lushan is not yet subdued, (about which is what,) I the subject, am *firmly* [ts'lat] furious.

I wiped away my tears, yearning for the temporary capital of the Emperor, (Yet as) I set off on my journey, still, I was *at loss* [xut].

Heaven and earth contained injuries and scores. When would our worries and concerns *end* [pjit]?

Slowly, I crossed the field paths, (on which) traces of humans were indistinct and (the scene) *desolate* [şat].
Those whom I encountered were mostly covered with injuries,

Moaning and bleeding [xyat].

I turned my head back toward the Fongxiang district,

(seeing) flags and banners lightened and extinguished [mjat] in the evening.

Ahead, as I climbed the cold mountain by layers,

Repeatedly I found caves [k'ut] springs for watering horses.

At the outskirts of Bin, I entered into the ground.

In the middle of the Jing River, I shook and dashed [kjat].
Like a fierce tiger standing in front of me,
Was the green cliff, splitting [liat] open as it roared.

Chrysanthemums hung down their autumn flowers,
(and) the stones carried the wheel [trfiat] marks of ancient carts.

The blue clouds activated my high inspiration,
(Through which) the secluded things simply became delightful [jyat].

The mountain fruits and nuts were many and fine,
Growing orderly in rows and mixing together with acorns and chestnuts [lit].
Some were red like cinnabar; some were black like dots of lacquer [tsʰit].

Moistened by rain and dew, Sweet and bitter they all formed fruits [ʃit].

Thinking of the peach blossom spring from far away, Even more I sighed about the clumsiness [tʃyat] of my life.

From a hilly place, I looked towards Fuzhi (seeing that) the cliffs and valleys appeared and disappeared [mut] one after another.
I had already walked to the river bank,
(yet) my servant was still on top at the end [muat] of the trees.

Owls hooted on the yellow mulberry trees;
wild rats held their paws together in the chaotic caves [xhijat].

Late at night I passed by a battle field,
While the cold moon shone on the white bones [kut].

The million-army at the Tong Pass,
Why did they scatter so suddenly [tsut] (also ‘end’, ‘die’)?
Then, they caused half of the people of Qin To be murdered and turned into ghosts/dead beings [vjyt/vut].

Not to speak of me who fell into the dust of the Hu (barbarians), By the time I returned, I was all white-haired [fjyat/fajt].

After a year, I arrived at the thatch house, (and I saw) my wife and children’s clothes are sewn in one hundred knots [kjiat].

The pines echo their bitter cries, While the sad spring share their hidden sobbing [jiat].
The son(s) whom I have spoiled all my life
Has (have) facial complexion whiter than snow [syat].

As he (they) sees his (their) father, he (they) turns his (their) back and cries,
Dirty and greasy, with feet without socks [vjyat/va:t].

My two little daughters in front of the bed
(who dress in) patched clothes only passing the knee [sit].

The picture of ocean tears out its waves,
(and) the old embroidery moves its twists and bends [tšiat] (also ‘break’).
The water god and the purple phoenix turned upside down on the short robes [xhat].

I am in a terrible mood. Lying down, vomiting, and having diarrhea [siat] for several days.

How can I not have silk in my traveling sack to save you from the cold and shivering [lit]?

I simply unwrap a package of powder and kohl, *Displaying* [liat] (also ‘to split up’) the quilts and beddings slightly.
And my silly daughter combs [tsət] her hair by herself.

Imitating her mother, there is nothing she does not do,

rubbing [muat] the morning make-up haphazardly.

After some time, she applies rouge and white lead,

Untidily painting her eye brows broad [kʰuat].

My coming back alive and facing my children seems to make me want to forget my hunger and thirst [kʰat].
(The children) ask what happened and compete to pull my beard.

Who can immediately become angry and yell [xat] at them?

I recollect my worries in the enemy territory,

willing to endure the boisterous noise [kuat].

Newly returning home, I comfort my mind,

But how can I speak [ṣyat] of my livelihood?

His majesty is still covered with dust.

On what day will the training of soldiers end [tsyt]?
As I look up, the color of the sky changes.

While I sit, I feel the wicked atmosphere unfathomable [xuat].

A dark wind coming from the northwest; gloomily, the Uighurs [xiat] follow (the wind).

Their king wants to help us; Their customs are that they are good at galloping and sudden attacks [tut].

They deliver five thousand soldiers (and) drive (in) ten thousand (mounts [pjit] of) horses.
Their young men are valuable. All the four directions admire their bravery and decisiveness [kjyat].

Whom they use are all like eagles soaring. They defeat enemies faster [tsnit] than arrows.

The mind of the Emperor is lacking confidence, (while) the atmosphere of the contemporary court discussion is about to rob [tʃuat] the Emperor's mind.

The Yi River and Lo-Yang city will be taken back easily, The Western capital Changan is not even worth capturing [pʰat].
The government army beseeches to enter deep (into the enemy territory).
Their accumulated forces can be released [fjyat/falt] together.

This action will open up the prefectures of Qing and Xu.
Then, we will very quickly look and attack the Heng and Jie [khiat]-shi Mountain.

The autumn weather accumulates frost and dews.
Its upright spirit bears the air of solemn killing [sa:t].

The misfortune changes and it turns to be the year to get rid of the Hu.
When the situation matures, this will be the month [nyat] to capture the Hu.
“The Journey to the North” 北征

胡命其能久？皇纲未宜绝。60
xhs miajn` khi nesn` kiw`, xhsuan` kan` vjy`/vji` n` tshiyat
How is it possible that the life of the Hu will last long?
It will not be appropriate for the imperial tradition to end [tshiyat].

忆昨狼狈初，事与古先别。61
?iak tshak lan` puaj` tsh`o/tsh`u`sh, sh`ir`, ji`/ji` ka` ku` sian phiat
I remember the beginning of our troubles and difficulties that happened formerly.
The (our) affairs were different [phiat] from the ancient precedents.

奸臣竟菹醢，同恶随荡析。62
kja:n sh`in kiaj` tsha`xaj`, th`ewn` ak sh`y` t`han` siahk
(Because our) evil ministers were finally made into minced meat.
Their wicked partners were then washed away and split up [siahk].

不闻夏殷衰，中自誅褒妲。63
put vjyn/vun xhja:` in su`j, triwn` tshz,` trya` puaw that
The decline of Xia and Yin has not been heard of
(because) in the middle, they themselves executed Baosi 補姒 and Da [that] ji 妾己.
The Zhou and Han dynasties made their revivals. The Emperors Xuan and Guanwu were truly intelligent and wise.

Oh, how valiant General Chen was! Relying on his battle axe to arouse loyalty and ardor.

Without you (General Chen) all the people would be in an unbearable state (ie, being governed by the barbarians); Up to now our country is still living.

Desolate and cold is the Hall of the Great Unity; lonely is the Gate of the White Beast.
People in the capital are looking forward to the regalia; the auspicious atmosphere is going towards the golden palace gate (also 'fault').

The mausoleums certainly have their spirits. The sweeping and cleaning rituals are not missed.

Oh, how magnificent were the accomplishments of Taizong! What he set up was extremely grand and extended.
“Singing My Heart Out in Five Hundred Characters
On My Way from the Capital to the County of Fengxian”

By Du Fu

In Duling, there is a commoner who turns dull as he becomes aged.
I have been such a foolish man, (yet) secretly I compared myself with Ji and Qi.

Of course, I failed. Being white-haired, I am willing to bear with harshness.

Letting alone the matter of death, I constantly wish to achieve this aspiration.

Spending all the years, I worry about the common people, I sigh as it burns from within.
As I laugh at my peers, I sing even more fervently.

It is not that I do not have the ambition to live the life of a recluse (and) pass the day and night/moon with freedom.

(It is because) I was born to meet sagacious lords comparable with Lords Yao and Shun. If I do not refrain from my wish for reclusion, I will miss them forever.

Today, the materials to build temples are complete. How can there be short of towering material to build the mansion,
Sunflowers and pea leaves lean towards the sun.
The propensity of a being is so firm that it cannot be robbed.

(Let us) turn around and think about the gang of mole-crickets and ants (who) only wish to look for their caves.

Why should they admire the great whales (and) always imitate lying in the great oceans?

With these I realize my livelihood; (however,) I merely feel ashamed to beg for an interview for a request (of a job.)
“Singing My Heart out” 自京赴奉先縣詠懷五百字

兀兀遂至今，忍为塵埃没。

nut nut sɦy̞j` tʃi` kim, rin` yj trɦin ?aj mut

Alone, I have lived till now (and) endured being covered by dirt.

終愧巢與由，未能易其節。

tsɨwŋ kyj` tʃhəw jiâ`/jyâ` jiw, vɨyj`/vji` nəŋ ji` kɦi tsiat

After all, I feel ashamed as I face Cao and You, (because) nothing could make them change their virtue.

沉飲聊自適，放歌頽愁絕。

trɦim ?im` liaw tʃi̞t` ʂiajk, fɨyŋ`/faŋ` ka pʰuaw tʃhəw tʃhət

I may as well drink deeply for comfort; through singing, my worries are well severed.

歲暮百草零，疾風高岡裂。

syaj` muаш paːjk tʃaw` liajŋ, tʃhit fɨyŋ`/fuŋ` kaw kaŋ liat

At the end of the year, hundreds of grasses are withering, (and) the gust is splitting the high mountain ridge.
The path to the sky is dark and treacherous, (on which) the traveller starts (the journey) in the middle of the night.

The frost is so severe that it breaks the belt of my clothes. The fingers are so stiff that they cannot tie the knot.

At dawn, I pass Li Shan, having spent the night at the high and treacherous.

*Chiyou*—the evil star/atmosphere of war/fog fills the cold sky (as) I stamp on the slippery ravine.
瑶池气氛郁律，羽林相摩戛。22

Jiaw tefi kʰiʔ yut lyt, yāʔ lim siaŋ mua kja:t

The air of the heavenly pool distresses the season.
(or 'The jade pool's atmosphere abounds in melody.' )

The stars of the Yulin constellation rub and **knock** on each other.
(or 'The imperial guards rub and **knock** on each other.' )

君臣留欢娱，乐动般胶葛。23

kyn ʂhin liw xuan ɲyá, njawk tʰəʍŋ`in kja:w kat

The lord and the court officials stay in joy; the music plays in magnificence and intermingles (with the sounds of people) in **disorder**.

赐浴皆长缨，与宴非短褐。24

sz`jywk kja:j tefiŋ jojaŋ, jiaʔ/ɲyaʔ ʔjaŋ `fjyj/fji tuan`xfiat

Those who are bestowed to bathe (by the emperor) are all high nobles; those who come to the party are not commoners/**coarse clothing** wearers.
The silk allotted in the palace (to the court officials) is originally from poor women whose husband’s families are whipped (so that) the silk may be gathered and given as tribute at the castle gate of the capital.

It is said by the Dao sages that the emperor’s gifts in bamboo baskets are meant to keep the country and people alive.

If the subjects ignore this supreme law, how can the lord abandon these gifts/things (i.e., how can the lord make these gifts in vain?)?
Numerous officials fill the court.
Seeing such a condition (in which the officials are only pursuing material gains instead of working for the country), those who have conscience should tremble with fear.

Not to mention that the gold plates in the palace are all in the houses of the imperial relatives.

In the central hall, there are goddesses (the Yang sisters) dancing. Their jade-quality skin is covered with the gauze as light as fog.

(They) warm the guests with mink coats. The compassionate wind-instruments chase the clear string-instruments.
They urge the guests to eat camel hoof soup, (while) white oranges press against the fragrant tangerines.

Meat is allowed to spoil within the vermillion gate while there are bodies/bones dead from cold on the road.

The distance between prosperity and degradation is so short. My disconsolation is keen that I cannot talk about it anymore.

(As) I travel north to the meeting place of the Rivers Jing and Wei, (it turns out that) the government ferry changed its route again.
Piles of ice travel down from the west.
As far as my eyes can see, they are as tall as mountains,

which appear as if they came from the Kongtong Mountain,
(and thus) people fear that the heavenly pillars might have been broken.

Fortunately, the bridge is not torn yet, but its supports rustle.

Travelers climb and support each other
to go across the river so wide that it seems impossible to cross.
老妻寄異縣，十口隔風雪。

My old wife is sojourning in another county;
The wind and snow block me from my family of ten.

誰能久不顧，庶往共飢渴。

Who can ignore them for a long time?
I only wish to go and share the hunger and thirst with them.

入門聞號啕，幼子飢已卒。

As I enter the door, I hear loud wails.
My youngest son has already died from hunger.

吾寧捨一哀，裏巷亦嗚咽。

Even if I could refrain from grief, the neighbours still sob.
I am a shameful father who lets his son die/break young from hunger.

How could anyone know that the autumn harvest would turn out badly? (Thus,) the poor are in a difficult situation.

I am exempt from tax, and my name is not on the conscription list of war.

Nonetheless, my experiences still sadden me, let alone the misery and overwork of the commoners.
Quietly, I think about those who have lost their properties and those soldiers who are stationed in remote places.

My sorrow is as high as the Zhongnan Mountain. The sorrow is so vast that even the great water cannot rob it away.
Chapter One

Figure of Sound

1.1. The Entering Tone

![Historical Chart of the Chinese Language](chart.png)

**Figure 1.1. Historical Chart of the Chinese Language**

The above chart is based on Edwin Pulleyblank’s classification of Middle Chinese and
Figure of Sound

Early Mandarin\(^1\). I use Late Middle Chinese (LMC), a language based on the speech of the Sui and Tang capital Chang’an 長安, to reconstruct the sounds for this paper, because Du Fu’s life (712-770) fits the time frame of LMC.

In poetry, rhyme is an arbitrary and ‘visible’ figure reiterated with a regulated series of equivalent acoustic constituents, and together they form an axis of sequence which unfolds in time and is linear in nature. This axis will work jointly with all the other poetic elements—semantics, images, and grammar to form the whole of a poem. I wish to argue that the main cause that makes the rhyme notable in these two poems is the tone’s strong acoustic nature although the absence of tone meter 平仄 and strict grammatical parallelism 對仗 also help the entering tone to rule.

The consonant endings in LMC are (1) voiced nasals -η, -m, -n for 亜[xfuη], 慣[fun`], 含[xfam]; (2) voiced approximants -j, -w for 帝[tiaj`], 秋[tsiwi], and (3) voiceless stops -k, -t, -p for 恙[thiajk], 曰[rit], 乏[fha:p]. Among these sounds, only the -k, -t, -p ending sounds are classified as a tone called the entering tone. These voiceless stops are pronounced without vocal fold vibration but with a constriction completely blocking the flow

---

1 Edwin Pulleyblank, *Lexicon of Reconstructed Pronunciation in Early Middle Chinese, Late Middle Chinese, and Early Mandarin* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1991)
of air in a bilabial (-p), alveolar (-t), or velar position (-k), and then suddenly releasing an
outward flow of air. When they are at the end of a word, it takes more strength to
articulate, and thus, they are strong and uncomfortable to utter. Hence, in Sanskrit for
example, the -k, -t, -p ending sounds are the so called strong sounds, which must be softened
with sandhi to become voiced when they are followed by soft sounds (vowels, voiced stops,
semivowels and [h]). In addition, the French linguist, L. Rudrauf, creates a scale of 24
degrees for the consonantal rhymes in his Rime et sexe (Tartu, 1936), “ranging from the most
brusque and virile end syllables to the most femininely suave” (pp.12ff), in which the
rhymes with -k, -t, -p endings take the extreme masculine pole of 1°, and the rhymes with
voiced spirants ([v, ð, z, ʂ] etc.) are considered the most feminine pole of 24°. Therefore,
through the above examples, I wish to argue that the -k, -t, -p ending sounds are strong,
rough, brusque, virile, and harder to articulate.

Shao Yong 邵雍 (1011-1077) says in his Huangji jing shi 皇極經世 that he “retains a

---

3 Ashok Aklujkar, Sanskrit an Easy Instruction to an Enchanting Language, Volume I
separate entering tone category but classifies the finals derived from -t and -k with open
syllables, suggesting that these consonants had been replaced by a glottal stop. I find
his theory enlightening, because all the -k, -t, -p endings have a property of being unreleased or
released, and when they are unreleased, the cutting of air flow must be done at the glottis
when the consonant closure is made, which may evolve to a glottal stop as Shao Yong
suggests. In fact, Shao Yong’s theory does reflect the fact that in the present day Taiwanese
and Cantonese all the -k, -t, -p endings are unreleased. Therefore, it is likely that the LMC
-k, -t, -p endings were unreleased, and thus, the entering tone rhyme will be even more
uncomfortable, because without the releasing of the outward flow of air, the sounds become
more intense. As a result, the rhyme will fit in more with the feeling of suffering in these
two poems.

From my own repeated reading of “The Journey to the North” in Taiwanese, as well as

---


6 The unreleased property of consonants is common in American English, for example, the
   -t ending is often unreleased as in ‘hit’, and thus, the word ‘hit’ is realized phonetically as
   [hit].

7 Odden, Introducing Phonology, 32.
the pingtan actress’s recitation of the same poem in Suzhou dialect 蘇州話, a southern Chinese dialect that also preserves the entering tone, I experienced a highly unusual intonational structure that subverts my habit of Classical Chinese poetry reading. The customary way of poetry reading is to linger a little longer on the rhymed characters, and as the sound prolongs, an effect of singing is enhanced. However, the voiceless -k, -t, -p ends counteract this reciting convention and force the reciter to get short and tense when he thinks he should prolong and relax. Unlike the usual way of recitation, in which the reciter can set off on his preferred course of syntactic pause or pausal intonation within the metrical limit and enjoy some freedom for his own improvisation, in these two poems the tone meter is missing, and the silent -k, -t, -p ends are so strong that the intonational contour becomes very constraining. As a result, all the rhyme characters become default stresses that forbid the reciter from adding stresses anywhere else and force the reciter to place his upbeat at the end of each couplet. This characteristic makes the recitation of the entering tone rhyme unique.

I noticed another interesting feature of the entering tone rhyme, which is as the rhyme tyrannizes the recitation to get taut at the rhyme characters, the recitation also finds its compensation to ease the tension. It happens almost unconsciously: the reciter tends to hold a very short period of silence after the rhyme character is uttered; he does not continue the next line immediately—he will wait for a mora. This unique phenomenon is reminiscent of
a feature in English prosody called catalexis (Gr. leaving off), which is a moment of silence at the end of the last foot to compensate for the rhythmical time.  The following is an example of catalexis in trochaic dimetre:

\[ \begin{array}{c}
\checkmark \checkmark \checkmark \\
\checkmark \checkmark \checkmark \\
\checkmark \checkmark \checkmark \\
\checkmark \checkmark \checkmark \\
\checkmark \checkmark \checkmark \\
\checkmark \checkmark \checkmark \\
\end{array} \]

Let us, then, be up and doing,  
With a heart for any fate;  
Still achieving, still pursuing, 
Learn to labor and to wait.

—Longfellow, “The Psalm of Life”

This verse has masculine rhyme, since the last syllables are stressed as in ‘fate’ and ‘wait’. However, these two words are both monosyllabic; as a result, one syllable is missing from the meter. Hence, the one mora silence is used to fill up the rhythmical vacuum of the missing syllable. I suggest this mechanism is similar to that of the recitation of the entering tone, because when the -t end is unreleased, the vowel tends to be short, and thus, one mora of time is missing. Therefore, the reciter ‘naturally’ waits for a short moment to compensate for the missing time, which is just like an English reciter adding catalexis to a consonant ending. Although it is only ‘natural’ to have a one mora break after a very tense sound, this feature is important, because no matter how short the silence is, the wait makes the reciter dwell longer on the rhyme character, and thus, the effect of the character may penetrate more deeply into the reciter’s mind.

---

8 Mora is the smallest or basic unit of duration of a speech sound. A syllable with a short vowel lasts for one mora. If the vowel is long, the speech time is two morae. Hence, in English, ‘hat’ has one mora and ‘hate’ has two. Introducing Phonology, 249.
With the characteristics I have stated above, I wish to argue that this regulated
recurrence of -k, -t, -p endings correlates with the global message of suffering in both poems.
It can do so, because the sound has the auditory iconicity that allows us to grasp the
uncomfortable feeling of suffering. An icon is a sign that resembles the object it stands for,
and the resemblance is immediate and concrete. Icons are effortless to understand; they can
be visual, auditory or seemingly else, as long as we can understand them without instructions
as we understand the ‘folders’ and ‘documents’ on the desktop of our computer screen. The
iconic dominance of the entering tone rhyme is more immediate than semantic metaphor,
because it is not abstract but physical, and thus it projects directly from our sensory systems,
from the muscles in our mouths and the vibration of our eardrums to the feeling of pain. I
wish to argue that Du Fu must have been aware of the iconicity of the tone and chosen it for
rhyme for a purpose. It might have started subliminally, but at the end it is an intentional
deliberation, since it takes a lot of effort and knowledge in the Chinese Language to round up
seventy -t ending characters for “The Journey to the North” and fifty -t ending characters for
“Singing My Heart out”.

43
1.2. The Entering Tone in “The Journey to the North”

This poem was written when Du Fu was forty-six, which was the second year of the era of Zhide (757) and the second year of An Lushan’s mutiny, during which the entire country was in turmoil. Therefore, the poem is about the suffering of war. It can be dissected into three sections. In section one, the poet first talks about the dire situation at court; then, as the poet starts off his journey, the trauma of war is reported. Then, in section two, he arrives at home and gives the account of his family’s hardships as well as the joy of reunion. In part three, after taking some rest at home, he warns about the Uighurs and expresses his high hopes for the country. Altogether, the poem is in a well-organized single temporal order of story telling similar to that of ‘veni, vidi, vici’, and the language is straightforward; therefore, the genre of this poem is more that of history recording rather than singing out the heart. The entire poem is gloomy, except the part about the beautiful scenery on the road.

---

9 An Lushan 安祿山 started rebelling in the 14th year of the era of Tianbao 天寶十四年 (755). He was killed by his son An Qingxu 安慶緒 in the first month of the second year of the era of Zhide 至德二年 (757) which was the year Du Fu wrote “The Journey to the North”. An Qingxu concealed his father’s death and announced that his father yielded the throne to him. Therefore, when Du Fu wrote this poem, he had no idea that An Lushan was already dead.

Figure 1.2. Locations of the Vowels of the Entering Tone Characters

---

10 The rhyme dictionary for LMC is Lu Fayan 陸法言's Qieyun 切韻, yet it is incomplete nowadays. However, the Qieyun went through many re-editions and enlargements and took final shape in the Guangyun 廣韻 (Pulleyblank, Lexicon of Reconstructed Pronunciation in Early Middle Chinese, Late Middle Chinese and Early Mandarin, 1-2). Therefore, I use the Guangyun 廣韻 for my reference here.
Therefore the sound “shape” of the vowels of the rhyme characters looks like a “Y” in a right triangle as shown in figure 1.2. The mapping of the vowels has a center [ə] (schwa), which is a unique reduced vowel that occupies the neutral and central position in many languages. From the schwa, the vowels take three polarized directions: the extreme high front—[i, y], the extreme high back—[u], and the middle low—[a]. The diverging angles are equally 120 degrees from the center; as a result, they form a perfect right triangle.

Among these vowels, the high ones are very tense and uncomfortable, whereas the central and low ones are relaxed and comfortable. The absolute absence of middle vowels is fascinating; as a result, the pronunciation is either high and tense or low and relaxed. I wish to suggest that the abrupt up and down in sounds does correlate with the emotional ups and downs in the poem. My first finding is that the passage rhymes in solid high vowels do reflect a mood of solemnity and anxiety:

1. In the autumn of the second year of our emperor, at the auspicious [kjɪt]11 beginning of the intercalary eighth month.

2. I, Mr. Du, would set off on a journey to the North, at a loss, wanting to find out about my family [ʂɪt].

11 All the rhyme characters/words are high-lighted in bold face.
At this time we were encountering difficulties and troubles, (during which) people in and out of the court were having little leisure time.

I looked back and felt guilty about the favors that the Emperor had specially graced me (as) the edict allowed me to return to my family/hut.

I bowed and took leave when I went to the palace; feeling uneasy, I did not come out for a long time.

Although I lacked the quality of remonstration, I was afraid my ruler still had remaining faults.

The above passage expresses tension and worry, which corresponds to the speech tension of the high vowels. It is also striking that only at the very beginning the high vowels are strung together in a row; in the rest of the poem, they appear sporadically in random.

Therefore, this sonorous effect is conspicuous, and the location of it is meaningful: in the prelude of a suffering story and the declaration of anxious loyalty, the sounds are equally uneasy.

Du Fu wants his readers to perceive his earnestness not just in an abstract way through lexicon, but also in a physical way, through the pure hearing and utterance of vowels. The vowels in the following passages will further support my hypothesis, since no matter whether the vowel is a simple vowel, diphthong, or triphthong, there must be an [a] in it. This [a],
being a comfortable low vowel, carries a sound-iconic effect of ease and confidence that correlates with the meaning of the stanzas. The following sestet expresses the competence of the government army with optimistic high hope:

伊洛指掌收，西京不足拔[pʰaːt]. 55
The Yi River and Lo-yang city will be taken back easily, (and) the Western capital Changan is not even worth capturing [pʰaːt].

官軍請深入，蓄銳可俱發[fjyat/faːt]. 56
The government army beseeches to enter deep (into the enemy territory), (and) their accumulated forces can be released [fjyat/faːt] together.

此舉開青徐，旋瞻略恒碣[kʰiat]. 57
This action will open up the prefectures of Qing 青州 and Xu 徐州, (and) then, we will very quickly look and attack the Heng and Jie [kʰiat]12-shi Mountain.

Then, the subject-matter turns to the ending of the Hu which is also full of optimistic high hopes:

昊天積霜露，正氣有肅殺[saːt]. 58
The autumn weather accumulates frost and dews, (and) its upright spirit bears the air of solemn killing [saːt].

禍轉亡胡歲，勢成擒胡月[ŋyat]. 59
Misfortune changes and it turns to be the year to get rid of the Hu, (and) when the situation matures, this will be the month/moon [ŋyat] to capture the Hu.

12 The [kʰiat] here is a proper name, but the character means ‘standing stone, or stone tablet.’
How is it possible that the life of the Hu will last long? It will not be appropriate for the imperial tradition to end [tsfyat].

From the above examples, the repetition of [a] is so dense and regular that it becomes a noticeable figure. The vowel evokes a sonorous effect that brings about optimism and great expectation by being back, open and very easy to pronounce.

1.3. The Entering Tone in “Singing My Heart out”

This poem was written before “The Journey to the North”, at the beginning of the mutiny of An Lushan, in the 14th year of the era of Tianbao 天寶十四年 (755) when Du Fu was forty-four. Unlike “The Journey to the North,” this poem does not take the form of a ‘veni, vidi, vici’ sequence, because Du Fu is not telling history but reflecting his mind; therefore, the episodes jump around like they do in a movie. The poem can be dissected into six parts: in part one, the poet sings out his aspirations; then, in part two, he goes on a

---

13 The full title of the poem is “Singing My Heart Out in Five Hundred Characters on My Way from the Capital to the County of Fengxian 自京赴奉先縣詠懷五百字”
journey home. In part three, the journey is interrupted with the extravagant court. After that, he returns to the journey in part four. In part five, he arrives home and finds his son has died from hunger. Finally, in part six, he expresses great sympathy for the suffering commoners and finishes the poem in immense sorrow and total despair with the following coda:

憂端齊終南，潕洞不可撓 [tuat] 50
My sorrow is as high as the Zhongnan Mountain.
The sorrow is so vast that even the great water cannot rob it away.

Although this is also a poem about suffering, it is a lot sadder than the “The Journey to the North,” because in this poem Du Fu’s son starves to death. In the meantime, the semantics and the layout of episodes also intensify the feeling of pain. In order to express keen affliction, Du Fu uses the solid –t ending entering rhyme, just as he does in “The Journey to the North”. In all, twenty-eight rhyme characters are common to both poems:

| dull 拙 [tʃaːwk] | aspiration 賢 [xuat] |
| fervent 烈 [liat] | moon 月 [ŋyat] |
| lack 缺 [kʰjyat] | cave 穴 [x̚jyat] |
| sever 絕 [tsjiyat] | split 裂 [liat] |
| release 發 [fjyat/ʃat] | broad 澀 [kʰuat] |
| rob 奪 [tʃuət] | disappear 沒 [mut] |
| short robe 袴 [ʃiət] | go out 出 [tʃʰyt] |
| knot 結 [kjiat] | palace gate 閣 [kʰyat] |
| sob 呃 [ʃiət] | thirst 渴 [kʰat] |
| end 卒 [tsyt] | live 活 [ʃuət] |
Therefore, inasmuch as more than half of the rhyme characters are the same in both poems, there is little doubt that their acoustic attributes are homogeneous.

Having only fifty couplets, this poem is about one third shorter than “The Journey to the North”; hence, the distribution of vowels is less complex: the distinct regular and continuous reoccurrence of high vowels of [y], [u], [i] only exists from couplet 28 to couplet 35, which is the stanza reporting the wastefulness of the court and officials:

臣如忽至理，君豈棄此物[vjyt/vut] 28
If the subjects ignore this supreme law, how can the lord abandon these gifts/things in vain?

多士盈朝廷，仁者宜戰慄[lit] 29
Numerous officials fill the court. Seeing such a condition (in which the officials are only pursuing material gains instead of working for the country), those who have conscience should tremble with fear.

況聞內金盤，盡在衛霍室[si] 30
Not to mention that the gold plates in the palace are all in the houses of the imperial relatives.

中堂有神仙，煙霧蒙玉質[tɕit] 31
In the central hall, there are goddesses (the Yang sisters) dancing.
Their jade-**quality** skin is covered with gauze as light as fog.

暖客貂鼠裘，悲管逐清瑟 [sɒt] 32
(They) warm the guests with mink coats
(while) the compassionate wind-instruments chase the clear **string-instruments**.

勸客駝蹄羹，霜橙壓香橘 [kjyt] 33
(They) urge the guests to eat camel hoof soup,
(while) white oranges are on top of fragrant **tangerines**.

朱門酒肉臭，路有凍死骨 [kut] 34
Meat is allowed to spoil within the vermillion gate
(while) there are bodies/bones dead from cold on the road.

策枯咫尺異，惆悵難再述 [ʃɪyt] 35
The distance between prosperity and degradation is so short.
My melancholy is so keen that I cannot **talk** about it anymore.

Therefore, I wish to suggest that when Du Fu gives the account of the extravagance of the court and the rich, he also compares it with the suffering of the common people; he feels indignant, which naturally leads to emotional tension, and then, the tension is expressed in the physical tension of high vowels in the rhyme characters. This sonorous effect is very similar to that of “The Journey to the North”.

Another sound effect that is the same as that of “The Journey to the North” is the distribution of [a] in the rhyme characters. From couplets 1 to 11, the poet sings out his aspirations, using only one high vowel [i] in the rhyme characters while all the other rhyme
vowels carry [a]. It does not matter if it is a simple vowel, a diphthong, or a triphthong:

杜陵有布衣，老大意转拙 [trfi:wk].
In Duling, there is a commoner
(who) turns **dull** as he becomes aged.

許身一何愚，竊比程與契 [kʰi:t].
(I) have been such a foolish man,
(yet) secretly (I) compared (myself) with Ji and Xie.

虽然成濩落，白首甘契阔 [kʰu:at].
Of course, I failed.
Being white-haired, I am willing to bear with **harshness**.

蓋棺事則已，此志常覬覦 [xuat].
Letting alone the matter of death,
I constantly **wish to achieve/open** this aspiration.

窮年憂黎元，歎息腸內熱 [riat].
Spending all the years, I worry about the common people,
I sigh as it **burns** from within.

取笑同學翁，浩歌彌激烈 [liat].
As I laugh at my peers,
I sing even more **fervently**.

非無江海志，蕭灑送日月 [njat].
It is not that I do not have the ambition to live the life of a recluse,
(and) pass the day and **night/moon** with freedom.

生逢堯舜君，不忍便永訣 [kjat].
(It is because) I was born to meet sagacious lords comparable with Lords Yao and Shun. If I do not refrain from my wish for reclusion, I will miss them forever.
Today, the materials to build temples are complete. How can there be a shortage of towering material to build the mansion,

Sunflowers and pea leaves lean towards the sun. The propensity of a being is so firm that it cannot be robbed.

(Let us) turn around and think about the gang of mole-cricket and ants (who) only wish to look for their caves.

This [a], being a comfortable low vowel, is physically easy to pronounce; hence, it has a sound-iconic effect that conveys ease. Therefore, I wish to argue that although Du Fu expresses discontent in these stanzas, the regular recurrence of [a] indicates that he is still confident in his ability in the depths of his psyche, and moreover, singing out his mind is a ‘comfortable’ thing. A comfortable vowel [a] is used to convey such comfortableness.

This technique is much the same as his use of [a] vowels in the passage of high hopes for the country in “The Journey to the North.”
1.4. Conclusion

In my analysis of these two poems in this chapter, I have demonstrated how the entering tone is strong, rough, brusque, and hard to utter, and thus, making it a rhyme will give rise to a feeling of suffering through regular reiteration. I also have expounded how the high vowels of the rhyme characters can enhance pain, whereas the lower vowels can lessen the effect of feeling pain. Furthermore, I have pointed out how this unreleased nature of voiceless -t endings subverts conventional poetry recitation and forces the reciter to dwell a mora longer on the rhyme character; hence, the sound effect, as well as the semantic meaning of the character may penetrate more deeply into the reader’s mind.

To conclude, we do not know how the rhyme really takes place in the poet’s mind: it may be under an involuntary cognitive mechanism that happens within a micro second, or an intentional deliberation, or both; nonetheless, the rhyme and the vowels of the rhyme characters do work in tune with the meaning of the poem through the faculties of hearing and speaking. This equivalent relation between sounds and meanings is one of the elements that weave the global structure of these two poems. I will analyze the semantics of the rhyme characters in detail later in the chapters of Global Analysis.
Chapter Two

Figure of Grammar

Being extremely isolating, and analytical, the grammar of Classical Chinese functions mainly in syntax. Hence, grammatical parallelism in ‘parts of speech’ is easier to achieve than in all the other languages, and it becomes a basic technique to charge grammatical vehicles with semantic meanings so that the poetic dramatization may soar.

The parallelism of parts of speech is easy to achieve, because first, since it is isolating, thanks to the language’s monosyllabic nature, Chinese words can be easily broken into meaningful units (please refer to the example below). Secondly, morphology-wise it is highly analytical, because each character/word has only one morpheme. Therefore, we can move the characters to almost any syntactic location we please as long as it makes sense in meaning. It is the syntactic location that makes a character a noun, a verb or any kind of parts of speech without any morphological change. Take this line from couplet 35 of “The Journey to the North” for example:

海 图 拆 波 涛,
The picture of sea tears out its waves.

We grasp the meaning as “the picture of sea tears out its waves,” because the Chinese syntax is SVO, and the adjective precedes the noun it modifies. We can use the same characters and move them around to make a different meaning as the following:

Wave tear sea wave picture

波 拆 海 濤 圖

pua trʰaːjk xaj´ tʰaw tʰuǝ

Waves tear the picture of sea waves.

Or it can be like this:

picture tear sea wave wave

圖 拆 海 波 濤

tʰuǝ trʰaːjk xaj´ pua tʰaw

The picture tears sea waves.

As a result, because of this great freedom in the order of characters, grammatical parallelism becomes easy to achieve.

However, this device is not utilized by Du Fu in “The Journey to the North” and
“Singing My Heart out.” I suggest that Du Fu does not use it, because these two are long narrative poems of events: he does not want the reader to get distracted by a busy repertoire of symmetries and antitheses; instead, he wants the reader to focus on the compelling ongoing scenes and stay riveted by them. Nonetheless, grammatical application still exists in them, not in an external manner, but embedded in the sequence of the story with the images and the rhyme. Therefore, there is another axis—the sequence of syntactic construction, which effects not only the interaction of elements within a line but also between lines, couplets and stanzas.

2.1. Common Features at Couplet Level

In these two poems, at the level of couplets, there are common features in syntax, parallelism, and symmetry: all of them are grammatical.

2.1.1. Couplet as a Basic Syntactic Unit

All the couplets in these two poems are either compound sentences with two independent clauses that can be separated grammatically or complex sentences that cannot be separated. Nevertheless, it does not matter whether they are complex or compound: the two
lines always talk about the same subject-matter. In fact, the couplet can be treated as a
decasyllabic line with an obligatory caesura in the middle. I wish to argue that this
phenomenon has to do with the rhyme character at the end of line two. According to
Classical Chinese prosody, the rhyme character is an arbitrary stop; hence, grammatically, it
also functions like a period. Therefore, it represents a temporal separation and grammatical
closure that both stand for semantic and conceptual demarcation. Thus, it is ‘natural’ to
express only one concept in one couplet. As a result, the couplet can be perceived as a basic
syntactic unit that is semantically full and grammatically independent. This phenomenon
indicates that the regulated reiteration of similar sounds also regulates our abstract
construction of meaning conveyance.

2.1.2. Conceptual Parallelism in the Couplet

Harnessled by the same subject-matter, the two lines are joined together either in a
subordinate manner that line two modifies line one, i.e., line two is the adverbial which
provides further information to answer where, when, how, why, result, condition, purpose,
and so on as in the following couplet from “Singing My Heart out:”

杜陵有布衣，老大意轉拙。 1
In Duling, there is a commoner
(who) turns dull as he becomes aged.

or in coordination as two individual clauses, such as:

瘦妻面複光，癡女頭自掲. 40
(Then) radiance returns to the face of my thin wife,
(and) my silly daughter combs her hair by herself.

Consequently, there is a parallelism in sentence semantics within the couplet that line

two either completes the couplet’s meaning or makes the meaning more specific, and thus,
conceptually they affect each other and are factually inseparable. Any couplet in these two
poems will reveal this phenomenon.

The following are some examples. First, from “The Journey to the North”:

皇帝二載秋，閏八月初吉 1
In the autumn of the second year of our emperor,
at the auspicious beginning of the intercalary eighth month,

床前兩小女，補綴才過膝 34
My two little daughters in front of the bed,
(who dress in) patched clothes only passing the knees.

天吳及紫鳳，顛倒在組襟 36
The water god and the purple phoenix
turned upside down on the short jacket.

Then, from “Singing My Heart out”:

杜陵有布衣，老大意轉拙. 1
In Duling, there is a commoner (who) turns dull as he becomes aged.

霜嚴衣帶斷，指直不得結. 19
The frost is so severe that it breaks the belt of my clothes.
The fingers are so stiff that they cannot tie the knot.

所愧為人父，無食致夭折. 45
I am a shameful father (who lets his son) die young from hunger.

This form of sharing the same subject-matter demonstrates a conceptual likeness between line one and two which Du Fu follows throughout the two poems.

2.1.3. Symmetry in the Couplet

The concept between line one and two is so close that sometimes some forms of symmetry may appear. This phenomenon happens more in “The Journey to the North.”

For example, the following couplet is symmetrical in passive voice, as the poet is ‘graced’ and ‘allowed’ by the Emperor:

顧慚恩私被，詔許歸蓬華. 4
I looked back and felt guilty about the favors that the Emperor had specially graced me (as) the edict allowed me to return to my family.
Then, in the same poem, the following couplets are symmetrical in parts of speech:

菊垂今秋花，石载古車轡.  17
Chrysanthemums hung down their autumn flowers,
(and) stones carried the wheel marks of ancient carts.

鴉鳴黃桑，野鼠拱亂穴.  25
Owls hooted on the yellow mulberry trees,
(and) wild rats held their paws together in the chaotic caves.

海圖折波濤，舊繡移曲折.  35
The picture of ocean tears out its waves,
(and) the old embroidery moves its twists and bends.

送兵五千人，驅馬一萬匹.  51
(They) deliver five thousand soldiers
(and) drive (in) ten thousand mounts of horses.

凄涼大同殿，寂寞白獸閣.  67
Desolate is the Hall of the Great Unity,
(and) lonely is the Gate of the White Beast.

都人望翠華，佳氣向金闕.  68
People in the capital are looking forward to the regalia,
(while) the auspicious atmosphere is going towards the golden palace gate.

However, in “Singing My Heart out”, there is only one couplet that carries some loose symmetry:

臣如忽至理，君豈棄此物.  28
If the subjects ignore this supreme law,
how can the lord abandon these things?
All in all, none of the above is exciting, and the symmetry is so mediocre that it does not fit Du Fu’s standard. This phenomenon indicates that the poet has no intention of using symmetry as a poetic tool in these two poems; these couplets just happen to be symmetrical, thanks to the conceptual contiguity.

2.2. Orders and Grammatical Tropes in the Couplet

There are two kinds of order in a couplet: first is the hierarchy of values and status assigned by Chinese ethics, in which humans are above animals; men are above women; emperors are above their subjects; the country is above the emperor, and so on. This scale of values is part of the Great Chain of Being\(^\text{14}\) in all human cultures. The second order has to do with Classical Chinese syntax and rhyme, through which Du Fu creates grammatical tropes by inverting grammatical order.

2.2.1 The Hierarchy of Values

The scale of values assigned by Chinese ethics, in which men are higher than women; emperors are higher than their subjects; parents are higher than their children, and so on, is expressed as entities are introduced in a sequence through the metaphor FIRST IS MORE IMPORTANT\(^{15}\): the higher entities take the preceding position and the lower ones follow.

For example, Du Fu always puts the emperor and the king in line one:

1. 皇帝二裁秋, 闌八月初吉。
   In the autumn of the second year of our emperor,
   at the auspicious beginning of the intercalary eighth month.

7. 君誠中興主, 經緯固密勿。
   You (my ruler) are truly a leader of revival,
   (who is) indeed assiduous on the policies and planning for the country.

47. 至尊尚蒙塵, 幾日休練卒?
   His majesty (肅宗) is still covered with dust,
   (and thus) on what day will the training of soldiers end?

50. 其王願助順, 其俗善馳突。
   Their king wants to help us,
   (and) their customs are that they are good at galloping and sudden attacks.

54. 聖心頗虛佷, 時議氣欲奪。

---

\(^{15}\) All the metaphors and metonymies are written in capital letters in this paper.
The mind of the Emperor is lacking confidence, (while) the atmosphere of the contemporary court’s discussion is about to rob the Emperor’s mind.

煌煌太宗業，樹立甚宏達！  
Oh, how magnificent were the accomplishments of Taizong!  
What he set up was extremely grand and extended!

Nonetheless, the country is still higher than its emperor:

周漢獲再興，宣光果明哲。  
The Zhou and Han dynasties made their revivals,  
(as) the Emperors Xuan and Guanwu were truly intelligent and wise.

The country is higher than its people:

不聞夏殷衰，中自誅褒妲。  
The decline of Xia and Yin has not been heard of,  
(because) in the middle, they themselves executed Baosi and Daji.

The master is above the servant”

我行已水濱，我僕猶未末。  
I had already walked to the river bank,  
(yet) my servant was still on top at the end of the trees.

The mother is higher than her daughter:

瘦妻面複光，癡女頭自櫛。  
(Then) radiance returns to the face of my thin wife,  
(and) my silly daughter combs her hair by herself.
Du Fu abides by this hierarchy immaculately throughout the entire “Journey to the North.” It reveals that when he composes this poem his mind is riveted by loyalty to the emperor, as well as by the performance of proper Confucian conducts.

The emperor is not much mentioned in “Singing My Heart out,” because the main idea of the poem is not about the emperor but the poet’s aspirations and commoners’ suffering. Nevertheless, emperors do make appearance on three occasions. In the first two instances, Du Fu abides by the Chinese ethical hierarchy and lets the emperors enjoy the first place:

生逢堯舜君，不忍便永訖 8
(It is because) I was born to meet sagacious lords comparable with Lords Yao and Shun. If I do not refrain from my wish for reclusion, I will miss them forever.

聖人筐篚恩，實欲邦國活 27
It is said by the Dao sages that the emperor’s gifts in bamboo baskets are meant to keep the country and people alive.

However, when Du Fu criticizes the emperor, the emperor loses his first place and gets downgraded to line two:

臣如忽至理，君豈棄此物 28
If the subjects ignore this supreme law, how can the lord abandon these gifts/things?

This is the only occasion in these two poems when the emperor appears in line two. I find
the demotion fascinating—this is a conceptual condemnation by means of grammar! The emperor in the real world is always the highest, and according to Chinese convention, whenever the emperor is mentioned in formal writing, he must always appear at the beginning of the line. Nonetheless, in this couplet, the emperor is reprimanded for his misconduct, so he is ‘lesser’; therefore, Du Fu ‘dares’ to break the order he has always obeyed and demotes the emperor to a ‘lesser’ grammatical place by being neglected to the second line. What amazes me is that, Du Fu, a full hearted Confucian, is in fact, not a slave to ethical convention! He is the true lord of his poetry!

2.2.2 Grammatical Tropes in “The Journey to the North”

The second order concerns Classical Chinese syntax and rhyme, through which Du Fu creates grammatical tropes by inverting the normal order. First, the coordination or subordination between line one and line two has a temporal and causal order that fits our understanding of the world that FIRST IS MORE IMPORTANT. Secondly, Classical Chinese syntax has a hierarchy that the subject precedes the predicate which supports this metaphor; therefore, it is natural for the reader to place more weight on the elements that
appear first. Nonetheless, this hierarchy is not always obeyed in the couplet—it is constantly disturbed, because when a poem is rhymed, the constraint of the rhyme is so strong that the reader always pays attention to the rhyme characters. Hence, in every couplet, there is a competition for prominence between syntactic hierarchy and rhyme, and rhyme always wins. However, the contention is mild and works in harmony, which makes the movement work like a beat in music. Therefore, when the beat's recurrence is regulated, it becomes a rhythm, a grammatical rhythm.

However, when this rhythm is disrupted, the dislocation of regular sequence and familiar relationship will startle the reader; as a result, the element that activates the alarm will be foregrounded. Du Fu is very good at creating grammatical tropes using this mechanism; however, I must stress that he may counteract grammar, but he never composes without grammar.

The first example is:

猛虎立我前, 蒼崖吼時裂.  16
(Like) a fierce tiger stand(ing) in front of me,
(was) the green cliff, split(ting) open as it roared.

In this couplet, ‘the green cliff 蒼崖’, is the subject and ‘(Like) a fierce tiger stand(ing) in
front of me 猛虎立我前’ an adverbial that modifies the manner of ‘roar 吼’; thus, it fits
Classical Chinese word order that the modifier precedes the word it modifies\textsuperscript{16}, so it is
grammatical. Nonetheless, line one—‘(Like) a fierce tiger stand(ing) in front of me 猛虎立我前’ is a complete sentence, so when I first saw it, I naturally took it as an independent
entity, yet when I read line two, I found the couplet odd—how can a cliff roar? Hence, I
went back to line one and read it for a second time, and then I figured out that line one is in
fact an adverbial clause that modifies line two. This inversion of causal and temporal
sequence calls our attention: we always see something first; then, we find that something
looks like another thing, and when this natural sequence of understanding is disrupted, we get
alerted, through which the impression we grasp becomes more prominent.

The following couplet is more poetically dramatic:

陰風西北來， 慘澹隨回纥. 49
A dark wind comes from the northwest,
Gloomily follow the Uighurs.
(A dark wind coming from the northwest, which is the thing that the Uighurs
gloomily follow.)

This couplet introduces the entering of the Uighurs that they come following the northwest
wind. In line one, Du Fu puts the wind at the first place to emphasize the evil of the wind

\textsuperscript{16} Pulleyblank, \textit{Outline of Classical Chinese Grammar}, 147
which looks normal, but when we get to line two, the entire couplet becomes bizarre and does not make sense. To decipher the couplet we must not treat line one as an adverbial but a noun phrase that serves as the object for the verb ‘follow 隨’. This inversion of putting ‘the Uighurs 回鶻’ after ‘follow 隨’ contravenes not only the Classical Chinese syntactic law but also the pattern of coordination and subordination between line one and line two in this poem. The clash is so strong that it becomes an abrupt cacophony which startles our harmonious hearing. This couplet is striking, because it violates a major grammatical rule; nevertheless, we still understand, because it is anti-grammatical, not agrammatical.

This inversion is intriguing:

聖心鈍虛佷，時議氣欲奪。 54
The mind of the Emperor is lacking confidence, (which is the thing that) the atmosphere of the contemporary court’s discussion is about to rob.

This couplet has the same structure as the previous example of couplet 49. Similarly, the emperor is placed in line one to highlight his status and his mental state of lacking confidence, but putting the verb ‘奪 to rob’ at the end of line two is anti-grammatical. Through this violation of grammar the character ‘rob’ is stressed to clear all the possible blame on the emperor, because whatever decision he will make he cannot be blamed, since his mind is
'robbed'. Through the anti-grammatical couplets that I have examined, it is interesting to discover that the syntactic, temporal, and causal disruptions occur only within the couplet: the clash never gets in between couplets.

"The Journey to the North" is a lengthy poem, in which all the stanzas are laid out in a single temporal and causal order reminiscent of that of a historian's fashion of recording history. However, because of this well kept narration order, it is necessary to create a conflict after a few stanzas of even movement, since, without contradiction, there will be no mobility in perception, and the relationship between words and their expressions will become an involuntary mechanism. Then, the reader's mental activity turns idle, and her poetic awareness dwindles away. Nonetheless, Du Fu gives only four grammatical tropes. I wish to suggest that this is because it is a very lengthy poem: there is a lot to digest in the scenes and events, and throwing too much disorder at the reader will only make her lost in the chaos and become numb to poetic stimulation. Therefore, in order to save the reader from spending too much mental energy on decoding, Du Fu reduces the tropes to only four.
2.2.3. Why “Singing My Heart out” Does Not Have Grammatical Trope

I wish to suggest the reasons why “Singing My Heart Out” does not have grammatical tropes are, first, the emotion coming from its acute semantics is very strong, for example:

朱門酒肉臭，路有凍死骨  34
Meat is allowed to spoil within the vermillion gate
while there are bodies dead from cold on the road.

入門聞號咷，幼子饑已卒   43
As I enter the door, I hear loud wails.
My youngest son has already died from hunger.

Secondly, it has many metonymies: sun flowers 葵藿, sun 太陽, ants 蟋蟀, cave 穴, ocean 漱沚, whales 鯨, and polysemic metonymies: Chiyou 蠱尤, fog/war/evil, 瑤池 jade
pool/heavenly pool, 羽林 Yulin the Yulin constellation/imperial guard. All of these expressions bring forth tremendous figurative language. Thirdly, the story line is not in a single sequence but jumps between the journey and the court: its layout is so dramatic that it brings forth unique conceptual tropes (I will explain in detail in chapter four). All of the above mentioned reasons make grammatical tropes unnecessary in this poem.
2.3. Stanza as a Second-level Unit

As I have stated earlier, when I first read “The Journey to the North,” I read it in Mandarin, so my then reading was not affected by the rhyme, and thus, the moving powers that I experienced were from the ongoing scenes of the suffering of war. The scenes are composed of images and made into episodes in stanzas of various lengths. As the stanzas move on, I perceive the story in the order that the poet designs for me: it does not matter if the episodes are in a single linear order such as in “The Journey to the North” or jumping around in “Singing My Heart Out.”

The configurative hierarchy of both poems is that there are three strata. At the bottom stratum, each individual couplet is a basic syntactic units; the grouping of couplets into stanzas forms the second stratum; the evolution of story line separates the poem into three sections and forms the third stratum, and finally, the poem, by containing all the elements and relations, is the highest stratum of all. All the strata correlate with each other and they interact to create the gigantic whole of a poem. On the following page I drew a ‘tree’ (Figure 2.1.) to demonstrate how concepts are formed and laid out through the configuration hierarchy.
2.4. Conceptual Contiguity in the Stanza

Although stanzas are ‘visually’ divided according to the different scenes they present, underneath the scenes, there is an abstract structure that keeps the stanza as a complete meaningful unit. First is the conceptual contiguity between couplets: the internal semantics may not be as parallel as that within the couplet, but there is a contiguous causal order in strict linearity that links the meaning of the stanza. It goes in a sequence that fits Classical
Chinese syntax. For example, in the opening quatrain of “The Journey to the North,”
couplet one is the adverbial that provides temporal data for couplet two, i.e., on a certain day,
I will do a certain thing:

皇帝二載秋，閏八月初吉。1
In The autumn of the second year of our emperor,
at the auspicious beginning of the intercalary eighth month.

杜子將北征，蒼茫問家室。2
I, Mr. Du, would set off on a journey to the North,
at a loss, wanting to find out about my family.

The concept of the two couplets is so tightly interwoven that the existence of couplet two is
obligatory: without couplet two, the meaning of couplet one is incomplete. However, in the
majority of the stanzas, the conceptual linearity is in a subordinate sequence that the
following couplet functions as an information providing adverbial to its predecessor. Take
this sestet from “The Journey to the North” for example:

顧懼恩私被，詔許歸蓬蓽。4
I looked back and felt guilty about the favors that the Emperor had specially graced
me (as) the edict allowing me to return to my family.

拜辭詣闕下，惶惕久未出。5
I bowed and took leave when I went to the palace;
feeling uneasy, I did not come out for a long time.
Although I lacked the quality of remonstration,
I was afraid my ruler still has remaining faults.

The conceptual contiguity between couplets is neatly carried out in a causal or temporal order;
therefore, the reader can map the cause and effect sequence with little effort and grasp that
this is a stanza.

It is the same in “Singing my Heart Out.” For instance, in the opening sestet, each
couplet is grammatically independent, but the following one always provides information for
its predecessor.

杜陵有布衣，老大意转拙。 1
In Duling, there is a commoner
(who) turns dull as he becomes aged.

許身一何愚，竊比稷與契。 2
(I) have been such a foolish man,
(yet) secretly (I) compared (myself) with Ji and Xie.

居然成濩落，白首甘契阔。 3
Of course, I failed.
Being white-haired, I am willing to bear with harshness.

In line one of couplet three, through “Of course, I failed”, we grasp that it is his comparison
with Ji and Xie that failed, thanks to the conceptual cause and effect sequence starting from
couplet one.

Nonetheless, I must point out that between stanzas, the sequence is not always in causal or temporal linearity: only “The Journey to the North” keeps the sequence in a single linear order. I wish to argue that this is because the aim of “The Journey to the North” is to tell a section of history which Du Fu has witnessed; hence, Du Fu must do it in the fashion that the historian records history, and since history is always in a temporal line, the narration is also in single line. However, in “Singing My Heart out” the poet is telling his thoughts; thus, the poet’s mental spaces toss and turn between the realistic journey, home, and the imaginary palace. Therefore, it is impossible for the stanzas to take a single linear order. All in all, regardless of the order between stanzas, the reader always understands the story, because of the conceptual contiguity in the stanza.

2.5. Other Things That Come with Conceptual Contiguity

Conceptual contiguity also constrains the stanza to have only one location, one subject-matter, one speaker, and one time zone.
2.5.1 One Location

Conceptual contiguity curbs the location to be only one. In the following sestet of “The Journey to the North”, the location is limited to the battlefield:

夜深經戰場，寒月照白骨.  26
Late at night I passed by a battlefield,
while the cold moon shone on the white bones [kut].

潼關百萬師，往者散何卒?  27
The million-army at the Tong Pass,
Why did they scatter so suddenly (also ‘end’, ‘die’)?

遂令半秦民，被害為異物.  28
Then, they caused half of the people of Qin
to be murdered and turned into ghosts/dead beings.

The following sestet from “Singing My Heart out” locates at the court only:

中堂有神仙，煙霧蒙玉質  31
In the central hall, there are goddesses (the Yang sisters) dancing.
Their jade-quality skin is covered with the gauze as light as fog.

暖客貂鼠裘，悲管逐清瑟  32
(They) warm the guests with mink coats.
The compassionate wind-instruments chase the clear string-instruments.

勸客駝蹄羹，霜橙壓香橘  33
(They) urge the guests to eat camel hoof soup,
(while) white oranges press against fragrant tangerines.
2.5.2. One Subject-matter

Conceptual contiguity also limits the subject-matter to only one in a stanza. In the following sestet from “The Journey to the North,” fruits are the only subject-matter.

山果多瘀细，罗生杂榛栗.  19
The mountain fruits and nuts were many and fine,
growing orderly in rows and mixing together with acorns and chestnuts.

或红如丹砂，或黑如点漆.  20
Some were red like cinnabar;
some were black like dots of lacquer.

雨露之所濡，甘苦織结实.  21
Moistened by rain and dew,
sweet and bitter they all formed fruits.

In this following quatrain from “Singing My Heart out,” the subject-matter is ice:

群冰從西下，極目高晝兀  37
Piles of ice travel down from the west.
As far as my eyes see, they are tall as mountains.

疑是崆峒未，恐觸天柱折  38

17 This is an allusion taken from Huainanzi 淮子, Tienwenxun 天文訓 (Teachings of Astronomy): “In the ancient time, Gonggong and zhuānxū competed to be the emperor. They got angry and collided the Buzhou Mountain. (Thus,) the heavenly pillars were broken, and the strings that tied the earth were cut off. (Then) the sky slanted towards the northwest; hence, the sun, the moon and stars moved. Because the earth in the southeast was low, rainfall and dirt all returned to the southeast. 昔者共工與顛頑爭為帝，怒而觸不周之山。天柱折，地維絶。天傾西北，故日月星辰移焉；地不滿東南，故水潦塵埃歸焉。”
which appear as if they came from the Kongtong Mountain, (and thus) people fear that the heavenly pillars might have been broken.

2.5.3 One Speaker

There is only one speaker allowed in a stanza. The following stanzas from “The Journey to the North” are interesting, first, the first-person poet talks to himself:

顧憤恩私被，詔許歸蓬蓽.  4
I looked back and felt guilty about the favors that the Emperor had specially graced me (as) the edict allowing me to return to my family.

拜辭詣闕下，悚惕久未出.  5
I bowed and I took leave when I went to the palace; feeling uneasy, I did not come out for a long time.

Then he starts a one-way dialogue to the second-person emperor:

雖乏諫諍姿，恐君有遺失.  6
Although I lacked the quality of remonstration, (I) was afraid my ruler still has remaining faults.

君誠中興主，經緯固密勿.  7
You (my ruler) are truly a leader of revival, (who is) indeed assiduous on the policies and planning for the country.

東胡反未已，臣甫憤所切.  8
The rebellion of An Lushan 安祿山 is not yet subdued, (about which is what,) I the subject, am firmly furious.
In the rest of the poem, the speaker is the third person poet. However, the change of speaker from one stanza to the other is more seen in “The Journey to the North,” whereas in “Singing My Heart Out” the person of the speaker is vague: only in the homecoming stanza, the speaker is explicitly the first person poet, and in all the other stanzas the speaker appears to be the third person omniscient narrator.

2.5.4. One Time Zone

Conceptual contiguity also sets limit on the time zone. This quatrain from “Singing My Heart out” gives the account of the time when the journey starts:

"At the end of the year, hundreds of grasses are withering,
(and) the gust is splitting the high mountain ridge.
The path to the sky is dark and treacherous,
(on which) the traveller starts (the journey) in the middle of the night.

The one time zone restraint is more interesting in “The Journey to the North,” because the time zones are clearly separated in a temporal sequence, even though tense is not expressed
in Classical Chinese:

不聞夏殷衰，中自誅褒妲。 63
The decline of Xia and Yin has not been heard of, (because) in the middle, they themselves executed Baosi 褒姒 and Daji 姬己.

周漢獲再興，宣光果明哲。 64
The Zhou and Han dynasties made their revivals, (as) the Emperors Xuan 宣 and Guanwu 光武 were truly intelligent and wise.

桓桓陳將軍，仗鋏奮忠烈。 65
Oh, how valiant General Chen was! Relying on his battle axe to arouse loyalty and ardor.

微爾人盡非，於今國猶活。 66
Without you (General Chen) all the people would be in an unbearable state, yet now the country is still living.

The above passage can be dissected into two quatrains, not only by the different subject-matter but also by tense: the first quatrain is the remote history—the remote past, whereas the second quatrain indicates the near past. If we translate them into Sanskrit, the first quatrain will take the second past tense and the next the first past. I found it fascinating that tense is embedded in our cognition no matter our language conjugates or not: when the language does not have the morphological device to express tense, it will let syntax do the job.

All the stanzas of both poems are made according to the above mentioned formulas
2.6. Subject-matter Switch

From what I discovered above, conceptual contiguity appears to allow only one location, one temporal space, one causal line, one person, and one subject-matter. Hence, any alteration of these elements will end the stanza and start a new one. However, when the subject-matter shifts, there is always a signal before the switch that prepares the reader for the change. The signal can be a grammatical one, such as changing the person of the speaker or making the couplet into a question. It can also be a semantic one, such as the emperor or meteorological phenomenon in “The Journey to the North”. I name the switch signal ‘splinter’, because it pierces into the passage like a small foreign body, and conceptually it does not belong to any stanza. I will explain these subject-matter switches in detail when I get to the global analysis of each poem.
The poem can be dissected into three sections: the journey (couplets 1-29) is the first, in which the suffering of war is the main concept; next (couplets 30-46) is arriving home, in which Du Fu reveals his love for his family, and the third section (couplets 47-70) is about the country in which he shows his loyalty and great expectation. Thanks to the well formed stanzas, the reader can also “view” the episodes like watching a play. While the suffering of war, parental love, and patriotism are perceived with the regular reiteration of rhyme and grammatical rhythm, the sonorous effect and the equivalent abstract structure interact with the scenes, and thus, as the story moves forward, the poetic dramatization intensifies with the global interaction of all the elements from all the strata.
Section One: The Journey

3.1. The Opening Scene: The Calendar

The poem starts with a prelude quatrain:

皇帝二載秋，閏八月初吉[kjit].  
In the autumn of the second year of our emperor,

杜子將北征，蒼茫問家室[sit].  
I, Mr. Du, would set off on a journey to the North,

By giving the date at the very beginning indicates that this is an important event, an event of history. Although the speaker is a third person, it is the poet's personal announcement: I, Du Fu, am about to give you my account of history, and this is serious.

3.2. The Imperial Court

Then here comes a splinter couplet:

At this time we were encountering difficulties and troubles, (during which) people in and out of the court were having little leisure time [rit].

In this couplet, the subject-matter changes suddenly to the situation at court. I call the

19 All the rhymed characters are high-lighted in bold face.
couplet splinter, because this couplet sticks into the passage like a small thin sharp piece of ‘foreign body’. Conceptually it does not belong to any stanza, but it cuts the concept of the passage by giving an abrupt turn; the turn may be a change of subject-matter or a grammatical category. It is like the dropping of the curtain between scenes in a play. Meanwhile, as it breaks in, it tells you distinctly what will happen next, e.g., this splinter couplet announces that the coming event is at court through ‘朝  court’, so it also functions as a prelude of a new episode. Therefore, conceptually, it is needed to link the episodes together.

This is what the splinter couplet preludes:

頼懲思私被，詔許歸蓬幕[pjit]. 4

I looked back and felt guilty about the favors that the Emperor had specially graced me (as) the edict allowed me to return to my family [pjit].

拜辭詣闕下，愴惕久未出[tʂʰyt]. 5

I bowed and took leave when I went to the palace, feeling uneasy, I did not come out [tʂʰyt] for a long time.

In this quatrain, we see the poet report to the emperor at court. However, there are two changes here: first is the change of subject-matter, which is expressed through the semantics. The second change is the change of speaker: it is now the first person speaking. This is
more 'invisible', because in Classical Chinese, the subject is often hidden, and the language does not conjugate; regardless of it, the reader still can grasp the grammatical person through the concept expressed in lexical semantics and some other grammatical categories. Thus, in couplet four, through the speaker's sudden change to passive voice, we sense that it could be the poet talking now, because he is a loyal subject to the emperor, and a subject is supposed to obey his lord—to be done by his lord. Therefore, the voice is passive. After that, he regains his active voice in couplet five, and that is because he is bowing to the emperor. Therefore, through the deduction of semantics and grammatical categories, we know the speaker must be a first person.

Later, in the following sestet, the scene remains the same, but the subject-matter evolves; he is now telling us why he "感到久未出 feeling uneasy, I did not come out for a long time." In this sestet, all the elements are contiguous in semantics and grammar: there is only one location, one person, one tense, and one subject-matter, so there must be only one conceptual domain. The content is the poet making one-way dialogue to the emperor. We know the speaker now is the poet in the first person because he mentions "我 my ruler", and he calls himself "臣 I, the subject":

雖然諫諍者，恐君有遺失[site].
Although I lacked the quality of remonstration, (I) was afraid my ruler still has remaining faults [šit].

君 誠中興主, 經緯固密勿 [vjyt/vut]  7

You (my ruler) are truly a leader of revival, (who is) indeed assiduous [vjyt/vut] on the policies and planning for the country.

東胡反未已, 臣 甫愴所切 [tsʰlat].  8

The rebellion of An Lushan 安祿山 is not yet subdued, (about which is what,) I, the subject, am firmly [tsʰlat] furious.

In the above final couplet, Du Fu uses inversion to highlight his anger. Du Fu, being an unsurpassed master of antigrammatical tropes, is very careful with syntactic disruption in this poem, or in any poem. He never lets the disruption get out of the couplet: even in his most complicated antigrammatical couplet:

香稻啄餘鸚鵡粒
碧梧棲老鳳凰枝
Aromatic rice is the leftover grains pecked by parrots.
Green Wu-tong trees (Sterculia Platanifolia) are the branches that old phoenixes perch.

The disruption stays inside the couplet. This is necessary, because we need a causal order that correlates with our understanding of the world to keep the couplets and stanzas in conceptual contiguity. It is workable within the couplet, because the couplet is the basic
Global Analysis of "The Journey to the North"

syntactic unit of a poem. Once the disorder gets out of the basic unit, the poem will be in chaos and lose contact with the reader. The surrealists do not think so; thus, they become the first generation which cannot produce a new canon.

This passage has another attribute that is worth mentioning again, which is its equivalence in the vowels of the rhyme characters—except for '切 firmly[tsʰiat]' which is a diphthong of i and a, all the other ones are solid high tense vowels: i, y, u. When the high vowels are strung together in a regularly repetitive sequence, they produce a sonorous effect that brings forth a tense and crashing feeling that echoes with the poet's anxious wish for the country and the compassion for the suffering masses. Furthermore, by presenting the emperor at the beginning reflects Du Fu's ethical hierarchy in which the emperor is the most valuable human being. Moreover, the sequence also fits the syntax of Classical Chinese where the subject precedes the predicate; hence, in the global syntax of the poem the emperor is the “head.”
3.3. Trauma of War

Suddenly, a splinter sticks in; it closes the court scene by announcing that the poet is setting off on his “道途 journey”:

我拭泪悲，道途犹恍惚[xut].
I wiped away my tears, yearning for the temporary capital of the Emperor, (yet as) I set off on my journey, still, I was at loss [xut].

Then, as the journey starts, the trauma of war also starts:

乾坤含瘡痍，憂虞何時畢[pjIt]！
Heaven and earth contained injuries and scores, (and) when would our worries and concerns end [pjIt]?

靡靡逾阡陌，人煙眇蕭瑟[sat].
Slowly, I crossed the field paths, (on which) traces of humans were indistinct and (the scene was) desolate [sat].

所遇多被傷，呻吟更流血[xyat].
Those whom I encountered were mostly covered with injuries, moaning and bleeding [xyat].

What he sees on the road is a world full of injuries and desolation, a generic war scene. It is sad and painful, but somehow the poet does not want to elaborate on the atrocity of war, so he gives it only three couplets, yet ends it with a trauma—“流血 bleeding.” Du Fu is highly restrained on giving the account of gory scenes: “bleeding” is the furthest he can go.
3.4. Treacherous Roads

The journey continues, but the road condition becomes treacherous after he has left Fongxian district:

回首鳳翔縣，旌旗晚明滅[mjiat]. 13
I turned my head back toward the Fongxiang district, (seeing) flags and banners lightened and extinguished [mjiat] in the evening.

前登寒山重，屢得飲馬窟[khut]. 14
Ahead, (as) I climbed the cold mountain by layers, repeatedly I found cave [khut] springs for watering horses.

郊郊入地底，涇水中蕩潏[kyat]. 15
At the outskirts of Bin, I entered down into the ground, (and) in the middle of the Jing River, I shook and dashed [kyat].

猛虎立我前，蒼崖吼時裂[liat]. 16
Like a fierce tiger standing in front of me, was the green cliff, splitting [liat] open as it roared.

Couplet thirteen is a prelude splinter declaring that he has left Fongxian district through “回首 turning back my head.” The following sestet describes the hazard and difficulty on the road. In couplet sixteen, Du Fu uses syntax disruption for the second time to stress the treacherous cliffs.

At this stage, if we look back at the rhyme characters from couplet five to couplet
Global Analysis of “The Journey to the North”

sixteen, we will see one intriguing phenomenon, that is, all of them, except for 湮[kjyat], have negative meanings. They are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>出[tʂ'yt]</td>
<td>out; to leave; to desert</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>失[sit]</td>
<td>faults</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>勿[vjyt/vut]</td>
<td>do not</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>切[tsʰiat]</td>
<td>firmly; to cut</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>憾[xut]</td>
<td>at loss</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>畢[pjit]</td>
<td>end</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>碎[sat]</td>
<td>desolate</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>創[xyat]</td>
<td>blood</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>滅[mjiat]</td>
<td>to extinguish</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>窟[kʰut]</td>
<td>cave</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>裂[liat]</td>
<td>to split</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The poem has thirty-seven negative rhyme characters, and eleven of them are strung together in a role here in a stanza of gloom. This recurrence of equivalence in tight contiguity is not only in sound but also in meaning. It demonstrates a fact that the rhyme character, being the salient sound feature of a couplet, also possesses a great importance in the expression of meaning. Thus, the rhyme characters’ semantics and the stanza’s concept become closely related, despite that they belong to two different domains—one is purely physical and the other abstract. I suggest that this intriguing phenomenon may have to do with the fact that this poem is pentasyllabic instead of heptasyllabic, because the shorter the line, the more power the rhyme characters will have. Most of all, this phenomenon does exist in this poem,
Global Analysis of “The Journey to the North”

and it appears again and again later in the poem.

3.5 Delightful Scenery

菊垂今秋花，石戴古車轍[trfiat]. 17
Chrysanthemums hung down their autumn flowers,
(and) the stones carried the wheel [trfiat] marks of ancient carts.

青雲動高興，幽事亦可悅[jyat]. 18
The blue clouds activated my high inspiration,
(through which) the secluded things simply became delightful [jyat].

山果多秀細，羅生雜橡粟[lit]. 19
The mountain fruits and nuts were many and fine,
growing orderly in rows and mixing together with acorns and chestnuts [lit].

或紅如丹砂，或黑如點漆[tsʰit]. 20
Some were red like cinnabar;
some were black like dots of lacquer [tsʰit].

雨露之所濇，甘苦齊結實[ʃɨt]. 21
Moistened by rain and dew,
sweet and bitter they all formed fruits [ʃɨt].

The topic is now the delightful scenery on the road. This time, there is no splinter couplet
announcing the change. I suggest that it is not necessary, because the concept of the stanza
has not changed much: the topic is still about the scene on the road; hence, the location is the
same, and so is the tense. The only change is the switch of the speaker from the previous
Global Analysis of "The Journey to the North"

first person “猛虎立我前” Like a fierce tiger standing in front of me (16)” to a hidden third person narrator. It indicates that even without a splinter to prelude the change of subject-matter, any slight change of subject-matter will affect the stanza’s grammatical structure. There appears to be a parallel mechanism between stanza concept and grammar that when one moves the other must move too.

Meanwhile, as the mood lightens up, the poet begins to have the leisure for some grammatical symmetry in:

菊垂今秋花，石載古車轅[trfiat]. 17
Chrysanthemums hung down their autumn flowers, (and) the stones carried the wheel [trfiat] marks of ancient carts.

and repetitive similes in:

或紅如丹砂，或黑如點漆[tsʰɪt]. 20
Some were red like cinnabar; some were black like dots of lacquer [tsʰɪt].

Although the symmetry is slack and does not meet the standards of regulated verses, it indicates that decorative language is something to elaborate only when the poet is at ease.

Again, the rhyme words in this passage reflect a correspondence in lexical semantics with the passage concept. First, this passage presents the only pleasant scene of the entire poem; therefore, it is very natural for the poet to choose enjoyable characters to express his
mood. However, while he does so, the poetic concept affects the choice of rhyme characters. Therefore, in this scene of delightful scenery, among the five rhyme characters, two are auspicious: 悦[jyat] happy 17, 實[šiit] fruit; solid 21, and three are neutral: 輪[trhiait] wheel 17, 胸[lit] chestnut 19, 漆[tsʰit] lacquer 20. Together the characters form a pleasing and smooth feeling that correlates with the stanzas’ meaning.

It is worth noting that there are only six auspicious rhyme characters in this poem:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>吉</td>
<td>auspicious [kjit]</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>日</td>
<td>sun [rit]</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>悦</td>
<td>delight [jyat]</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>實</td>
<td>fruit [šiit]</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>月</td>
<td>moon [nyat]</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>哲</td>
<td>wise [trhiait]</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first two go to the beginning passage to reflect the auspicious wish for the journey; the second two are used to describe the only delightful scene in the poem, and the last two get to express the poet’s great expectation for the country. It appears that these characters are not dispatched randomly, because the pairs are arranged in stanzas which correlate with their semantic meanings. Moreover, their ending positions in couplets also enhance the concept of the couplets that they end.
3.6 Back to Treacherous Roads

After the enjoyable scenery, the roads become treacherous again:

絃思桃源內，益歎身世拙[tsyat]. 22
Thinking of the peach blossom spring from far away (絃 indicate something distant),
(and) even more I sighed about the clumsiness [tsyat] of my life.

坡陀望鄜畤，岩谷互出没[mut]. 23
From a hilly place, I looked towards Fuzhi,
(seeing that) the cliffs and valleys appeared and disappeared [mut] one after
another.

我行已水濱，我僕猶末[mut]. 24
I had already walked to the river bank,
(yet) my servant was still on top at the end [mut] of the trees.

Couplet twenty-two is a splinter couplet that ends the scene of beautiful fruits by sighing
about the clumsy life in a Shangri-La. As this splinter cuts the pleasant scene like the
dropping of the curtain in a play, it is also a metaphor that says LIFE IS A JOURNEY. Du
Fu’s life is like this journey which is filled with suffering. Although there are happy
moments, but they are so few and short-lived, just like the pleasing sights on the road. After
sighing, the harsh journey continues; there are great ups and downs to climb and waters to
cross. However, in this quatrain, the speaker explicitly changes to the first person through
the two “I’s 我” in
I had already walked to the river bank, (yet) my servant was still on top at the end [muat] of the trees.

Moreover, I find this couplet interesting: the poet introduces himself first and lets his servant follow him. This is a sequence corresponding to human hierarchy that the master is above his servant, since FIRST IS MORE IMPORTANT.

3.7 Battlefield

Owls hooted on the yellow mulberry trees, (and) wild rats held their paws together in the chaotic caves [xfijyat].

Suddenly, in this couplet, the night falls, because both owls and rats are nocturnal. This splinter brings an abrupt change, yet it also preludes that the coming scene will take place at night. Meanwhile, the prelude’s speaker is no longer the conspicuous “I 我”: the poet is shifting back to a third person narrator’s tone.

Then this following sestet tells us about the battlefield:

Late at night I passed by a battle field, while the cold moon shone on the white bones [kut].
Global Analysis of "The Journey to the North"

The million-army at the Tong Pass,
Why did they scatter so suddenly [tsut] (also ‘end’, ‘die’)?

Then, they caused half of the people of Qin
to be murdered and turned into ghosts/dead beings [vjit/vut].

The scene is dreadful with ghastly white bones of the dead soldiers. As the poet asks why
the million-army in Tong Pass scattered so suddenly and caused half of the people of Qin to
turn into ghosts, he expresses his deep pain caused by war. Again, in this sestet of trauma,
the rhyme characters are all bad, except 物 [vjit/vut] 28:

抽 clumsy [tșyat] 22
沒 to disappear; extinct [mut] 23
末 end [muat] 24
穴 hole, cave [xfiyat] 25
骨 bone [kut] 26
卒 to finish, to die [tsut] 27

Therefore, once more, we find rhyme characters’ semantics merges into the stanza’s concept.

If we look at this sestet only, the atrocity of war appears generic and the scene is not
very gory. Nonetheless, if we read it with the trauma sestet of scene three—Trauma of War,
the effect of war atrocity becomes penetrating. In fact, in the entire poem, there are only
two sestets talking about war: one at the beginning of the journey and the other at the end of
the journey (in the following stanza in which Du Fu comes home). These two sestets literally sandwich the journey in between. The location of these two sestets appears to be a design that what happened in between were only transitory moments, whereas the suffering of war is lasting. War makes life begin with pain and end with pain. Therefore, he encloses the journey with “流血 bleeding” and “異物 ghosts.”

In addition, the sequence of a war stanza preceding the journey stanza reflects the importance of war through FIRST IS MORE IMPORTANT. However, adding another war stanza to the end of the journey also shows a concerted effort echoing the inner order of the basic syntactic unit—the couplet, in which the end is important, since that is where the rhyme is. In short, Du Fu wants to make the journey’s end important, because every couplet’s end is important; hence, there is an inherent order that at the end of a unit, any unit, there must be some weight. Therefore, in global syntax, he also adds weight at the end of a story unit. This is a phenomenon that orders from different strata correlate with each other.
Section Two: Home

3.8 Arriving Home

The episodes at home are highly moving, because the endearing innocence of the children is so familiar to every parent, and the pain of a father who cannot provide for his children is also the feeling that every ordinary person understands. The readers’ hearts melt, simply because they can identify with the straightforward and unpretentious scenes. Therefore, there is no need for tropes.

The home arriving scene is demarcated from the battlefield by a splinter couplet which pulls the concept back to the poet himself:

况我堕胡尘，及归尽华髪(fjyat/fa:t). 29
Not to speak of me who fell into the dust of the Hu (barbarians);
by the time I returned, I was all white-haired [fjyat/fa:t].

Then, he arrives at his humble home and sees the pathetic condition of his family:

經年至茅屋，妻子衣百結(fjyat/fa:t). 30
After a year, I arrived at the thatch house,
(and I saw) my wife and children’s clothes are sewn in one hundred knots [kjiat].

慟哭松聲回，悲泉共幽咽[jiat]. 31
The pines echo their bitter cries,
while the sad spring share their hidden sobbing [jiat].
The son(s) whom I have spoiled all my life has (have) facial complexion whiter than snow [syat].

As he (they) sees his (their) father, he (they) turns his (their) back and cries, dirty and greasy, with feet without socks [vjayat/va:t].

My two little daughters in front of the bed (who dress in) patched clothes only passing the knee [sit].

The picture of ocean tears out its waves, (and) the old embroidery moves its twists and bends [t\jat].

The water god and the purple phoenix turned upside down on the short robes [xfiat].

In the above stanza, I cannot find anything semantically or grammatically spectacular; however, there is some small embellishment which is the symmetry between “海圖拆波濤” (The picture of ocean tears out its waves) and “舊繡移曲折 the old embroidery moves its twists and bends”, as well as the animation of the still embroidery in these two couplets.

After that, the scene moves to a few days later:

I am in a terrible mood, lying down, vomiting, and having diarrhea [siat] for several days.
The above couplet is a splinter, because the speaker shifts to the first person “老夫 I”, and
the temporal space is after “數日 a few days.” Thus, a new episode begins:

那無囊中帛，救汝寒凍慄[lit]?  38
How can I not have silk in my traveling sack
to save you from the cold and shivering [lit]?

粉黛亦解苞，衾禦稍羅列[liat].  39
I simply unwrap a package of powder and kohl,
displaying [liat] (also ‘to split up’) the quilts and beddings slightly.

Here, the beginning couplet of this new stanza is a question, which corresponds with the
situation of couplet ten:

乾坤含瘡痍，憂虞何時畢[pjit]!  10
Heaven and earth contained injuries and scores,
(and) when would our worries and concerns end [pjit]?

in which a question often follows the prelude couplet; therefore, it appears that when the
concept changes, the grammar must change too. After the question, the voice returns to the
indicative of stating facts about his wife and innocent children:

瘦妻面復光，癡女頭自梳[tṣat].  40
Radiance returns to the face of my thin wife,
and my silly daughter combs [tṣat] her hair by herself.
Global Analysis of “The Journey to the North”

学母無不為，曉妝隨手抹[muat]. 41
Imitating her mother, there is nothing she does not do,
rubbing [muat] the morning make-up haphazardly.

移時施朱鉛，狼籍畫眉闊[kuat]. 42
After some time, she applies rouge and white lead,
untidily painting her eye brows broad [kuat].

Seeing his daughters so cute and adorable, he is temporarily relived from suffering:

生還對童稚，似欲忘饑渴[kuat]. 43
My coming back alive and facing my children seems to make me want to forget my
hunger and thirst [kuat].

問事競挽須，誰能即嗔喝[xat]? 44
(The children) ask what happened and compete to pull my beard.
Who can immediately become angry and yell [xat] at them?

The question at the end of the above quatrain indicates there will be a change of subject, and
thus, the poet’s thoughts turn to the worries about the country:

翻思在賊愁，甘受雜亂騷[kuat]. 45
(As) my thoughts toss and turn in the worries caused by the bandits,
I am willing to endure the boisterous noise [kuat].

新歸且慰意，生理焉得說[syat]? 46
Newly returning home, I comfort my mind, but how can I speak [syat] of my
livelihood?

The above quatrain closes the children scene and preludes that the following section is
about “賊愁 the worries caused by the bandits.” Meanwhile, the second couplet is a
question, “新歸且慰意，生理焉得說?” Newly returning home, I comfort my mind, but how can I speak [syat] of my livelihood?” which further indicates that there will a change of topic.

After that, comes a splinter, which is also a question:

至尊尚蒙塵，幾日休練卒 [tsyt]? 47
His majesty is still covered with dust,
(and thus) on what day will the training of soldiers end [tsyt]? 47

As the above splinter closes the home scene, I find an interesting phenomenon that this poem has six question couplets, and four of them are in this stanza, and they all act as preludes to new scenes. Therefore, I wish to argue that the poet’s mind at home must be uncertain and full of questions.

On the other hand, although his life at home is full of uncertainty, his mind is still relaxed. I suggest so, because in this section, the vowels of the great majority of the rhyme characters (except 慬 [sit] 34 and 慚 [lit] 38) all carry an [a] in them. It does not matter whether it is a simple vowel [a:], diphthong [ia] [ya] [ua], or triphthong [jia], there is an [a]. Although the schwa [ə] of 𥡚 [tsat] 40 is not really an [a], [ə] is a central vowel and only slightly higher than [a]; the two are in fact very similar. All in all, among the seventeen rhyme words, fifteen of them carry [a]. This [a] is a low, central and relaxed sound which is
easy to pronounce; therefore, it has a sound-iconic effect that conjures up a feeling of ease, and this feeling correlates with the relaxed situation of arriving home. The grouping of \[a\] related vowels is distinct: they are not scattered sporadically but concentrated densely in one passage. Thus, I wish to repeat my suggestion that Du Fu carries out his poetry not only through lexical semantics, but also through the physical acoustics of vowels.

Next, the semantics of the rhyme characters also demonstrates a parallel relation with the passage's concept. Among the seventeen rhyme characters, fifteen of them are neither good nor bad in meaning:

| 爱 [fyat/faːt] | 29  | hair       | 纠 [fyat/faːt] | 30  | knot       |
| 雪 [syat]      | 32  | snow       | 蓝 [fyat/vaːt] | 33  | sock       |
| 终 [sit]       | 34  | knees      | 折 [tʃiat]    | 35  | bend       |
| 褐 [xeiat]     | 36  | robe       | 列 [liat]     | 39  | display    |
| 捕 [tʃat]      | 40  | comb       | 抹 [muat]     | 41  | to daub    |
| 宽 [kʰuat]     | 42  | broad      | 润 [kʰat]     | 43  | thirst     |
| 喝 [xat]       | 44  | to yell    | 话 [kuat]     | 45  | noise      |
| 说 [syat]      | 46  | to speak   |

Three of them carry negative meaning:

| 吓 [ʃiat]     | 31  | to sob    |

105
Global Analysis of “The Journey to the North”

释 [siat] 37 diarrhea
慄 [lit] 38 to shiver

As a result, we can see that in a passage which is relieved but not cheery, the majority of the rhyme characters are neutral, and only a minority of them are negative. This distribution of rhyme characters’ semantics correlates with the relaxed but somehow worried feeling of this passage. Thus, again, I wish to suggest that, the rhyme characters, being the most noticeable sound figure, are also salient agents in the expression of semantic meaning in this pentasyllabic poem.

Section Three: The Country

3.9 The Uighurs

Sitting at home, the poet starts to feel uneasy:

仰觀天色改，坐覺妖氛騫 [xuat]. 48
As I look up, the color of the sky changes,
(and) while I sit, I feel the wicked atmosphere unfathomable [xuat].

Starting from this couplet, the meteorological phenomenon becomes the other splinter in addition to the emperor. I suggest it is because the two are conceptually similar, since the
emperor is the ‘Son of Heaven 天子’, and thus, the country, the emperor, and the meteorological phenomenon become a trinity. The coinage of ‘trinity’ is founded on the logic that the country, being a collective and abstract entity, is unable to act; therefore, it makes sense to use its head, a real person, as an agent to materialize its existence; meanwhile, atmospheric phenomena, being all encompassing and all mighty, correlate with the foremost power of the emperor. In this poem, using a member of the trinity as a splinter demonstrates the trinity’s supremacy, because a splinter barges in and cuts the subject abruptly—it is a powerful intruder that turns the concept like a lord.

Then, his thoughts shift to the Uighurs:

A dark wind coming from the northwest; gloomily, the Uighurs [xhât] follow (the wind).

The inversion of the above couplet may be the most exciting grammatical trope in this poem which I have explained in chapter two, 2.2.2.

The following octet is about the Uighurs. In the first two couplets, he uses internal parallelism to express the strength and bravery of the Uighurs:
Global Analysis of “The Journey to the North”

Their king wants to help us, and their customs are that they are good at galloping and sudden attacks [tfiut].

They deliver five thousand soldiers (and) drive (in) ten thousand mounts [p'jit] of horses.

Nevertheless, the poet immediately reveals his doubts and wishes that they do not come in large numbers:

It is better that these people are in small number, (and) all the four directions admire their bravery and decisiveness [kjyat].

Whom they use are all like eagles soaring, as they defeat enemies faster [tsfiit] than arrows.

Then comes another inversion (which I have explained in chapter two, 2.2.2.) to give the emperor a high status and stresses the word ‘rob’ to remove the emperor’s responsibility for any wrong decision:

The mind of the Emperor is lacking confidence, (while) the atmosphere of the contemporary court discussion is about to rob [tsfiit] the Emperor’s mind.
Global Analysis of “The Journey to the North”

The above couplet is a splinter that closes the episode of the Uighurs, which also demonstrates that when the subject matter is the country, the splinter is either the atmospheric phenomena or the emperor. The splinter emperor may be the contemporary Emperor Suzong 肅宗, King Xuang of the Zhou 周宣王, or the Emperor Guangwu of the Han 漢光武帝.

3.10. High Hopes for the Country

In the following sestet, the subject matter switches to the cheery high hopes for the valour of the Tang army:

伊洛指掌收, 西京不足拔 [pʰia:t].  55
The Yi River and Ro-Yang city will be taken back easily, (and) the Western capital Changan is not even worth capturing [pʰia:t].

官軍請深入, 蟄銳可俱發 [fjyat/fa:t].  56
The government army beseeches to enter deep (into the enemy territory), (and) their accumulated forces can be released [fjyat/fa:t] together.

此舉開青徐, 旋瞻略恒碣 [kʰiat].  57
This action will open up the prefectures of Qing 青州 and Xu 徐州,
(and) then, we will swiftly look and attack the Heng and Jie [kfiat]²⁰-shi Mountain.

The lexical semantics of the rhyme characters from couplet forty-nine to fifty-seven also suggests that although Du Fu reveals his fear for the Uighurs, he does not really hate them, because the majority of the rhyme characters express force instead of adversity:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>終[xfiat]</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>Uighurs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>突[tfit]</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>sudden attack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>匹[p'jit]</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>single (counting unit for horses)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>決[p'jit]</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>decisiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>疾[tsfiit]</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>fast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>奪[tsfit]</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>to rob</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>拔[pfiat]</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>capture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>發[fjat/fa:t]</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>to release</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>碣[kfiat]</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>stone tablet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Then, in the following quatrain, an atmospheric phenomenon cuts the previous subject matter and introduces the cheery hope for the Tang army. After that, it leads to the wish for the destruction of the Hu:

昊天積霜露，正氣有肅殺[sa:t].  58
The autumn weather accumulates frost and dews, (and) its upright spirit bears the air of solemn killing [sa:t].

禍轉亡胡歲，勢成擒胡月[nyat].  59
The misfortune changes and it turns to be the year to get rid of the Hu, (and) when the situation matures, this will be the month [nyat] to capture the Hu.

²⁰ The [kfiat] here is a proper name, but the character means ‘standing stone, or stone tablet.’
Global Analysis of “The Journey to the North”

On that occasion, he poses a question and answers it by himself,

胡命其能久？ 皇緒宜絶 [tsfiyat].  60
How is it possible that the life of the Hu will last long?
It will not be appropriate for the imperial tradition to end [tsfiyat].

This is an emperor splinter that transfers the subject to the poet’s patriotic wish for the

country. Here, I find another interesting phenomenon which is the splinter often comes with

a question. This phenomenon begins to emerge when this splinter,

揮涕慟行在，道逺猶恍惚 [xut]  9
I wiped away my tears, yearning for the temporary capital of the Emperor,
(yet as) I set off on my journey, still, I was at loss [xut].”

is followed with a question,

乾坤含瘡痍，憂虞何時畢 [pjît] ? 10
Heaven and earth contained injuries and scores,
(and) when would our worries and concerns end [pjît]?

Then, the following splinter,

老夫情懸懤，數日臥嘔泄 [siat]  37
I am in a terrible mood,
lying down, vomiting, and having diarrhea [siat] for several days.

also has a following question,

那無囊中帛，救汝寒淶悸 [lit] ?  38
How can I not have silk in my traveling sack
 to save you from the cold and shivering [lit]?

After that, this splinter is a question by itself,
His majesty (蕭宗) is still covered with dust, (and thus) on what day will the training of soldiers end [tsyt]?

Therefore, it appears that the question following the prelude couplet is a device to improve the cause and effect transition of subject matter, i.e., there is a question here, so I must tell you the answer.

Then, from couplet sixty-one to the end, he imagines good causes for the country’s optimistic future. First, he expostulates that the present day failures cannot be compared with the historical events:

憶昨狼狽初，事與古先別[pfiat].
I remember the beginning of our troubles and difficulties that happened formerly, (and) the (our) affairs were different [pfiat] from the ancient precedents.

奸臣竟菹醢，同悪隨藻析[siajk].
(Because our) evil ministers were finally made into minced meat, (and) their wicked partners were then washed away and split up [siajk].

不聞夏殷衰，中自誅褒妲[dfiat].
The decline of Xia and Yin has not been heard of, (because) in the middle, they themselves executed Baosi 褒姒 and Da [dfiat] ji 妲己.

After boosting faith by differentiating the present from the past, he closes the past with another emperor splinter:
Global Analysis of “The Journey to the North”

The Zhou and Han dynasties made their revivals, (as) King Xuan of the Zhou 周宣王 and the Emperor Guanwu of the Han 漢光武帝 were truly intelligent and wise [triat].

Then, the time zone jumps back to present in which he praises the loyalty and bravery of General Chen:

桓桓陳將軍，仗鋌奮忠烈 [liat]. 65 Oh, how valiant General Chen was! Relying on his battle axe to arouse loyalty and ardor [liat].

Without you (General Chen) all the people would be in an unbearable state, yet now the country is still living [xfiuat].

Couplet sixty-six is a splinter that turns the subject, in which the agent that does the turning is the country, which is also a member of the trinity. Then, the poet tells what the country is like:

凄涼大同殿，寂寞白獸閭 [tʰiat]. 67 Desolate and cold is the Hall of the Great Unity, (and) lonely is the Gate [tʰat] of the White Beast.

People in the capital are looking forward to the regalia,
Global Analysis of "The Journey to the North"

(while) the auspicious atmosphere is going towards the golden palace gate [kʰyat] (also means 'fault\(^{21}\')).

The mausoleums certainly have their spirits, and the sweeping and cleaning rituals are not missed [kʰyat].

It is metonymic to use the capital to represent the country through the synecdoche of PART FOR WHOLE. Although the scene is desolate, people still keep the routine of national rituals and wish for the revival; therefore, the poet believes that the future is full of hope.

Hence, ultimately, he says:

煌煌太宗業，樹立甚宏達[tfiat]！ 70
Oh, how magnificent were the accomplishments of the Emperor Taizong 太宗！
What he set up was extremely grand and extended [tfiat].

The coda of a poem determines the thought that the reader is likely to linger afterwards.

The above coda ends the poem in the thought of the country with “the Emperor Taisong 太宗”, and the beginning of the poem is “the emperor 皇帝”. Hence, the two emperors sandwich the poem in between; accordingly, the poem is sealed in the concept of the country and the emperor. In addition, the ending character of couplet one is “吉[kjit]” and the last

\(^{21}\) 關 has only one pronunciation [kʰyat] in LMC. However, in modern Mandarin it has a few different tones and the meaning varies: when it is in the level tone, 關 is ‘fault’ as關=缺, whereas in the departing tone it means ‘the gate of the palace’. Therefore, the 關 here should carry a connotation of ‘fault’ through its sound and polysemic meaning.
character of the poem is “送[fā]”—these two auspicious rhyme characters literally wrap the poem with a lucky beginning and a prosperous future! It is hard to say whether the arrangements are intentional or subliminal; however, they do reflect Du Fu’s earnest patriotism and high hope for the country.
Like "The Journey to the North," this poem also talks about the suffering of commoners. The two poems share the same sound effect of the -t ending entering tone with twenty-eight rhyme characters in common. However, this poem is very different from "The Journey to the North" in its acute semantics, splendid metaphors ("The Journey to the North" does not have any significant metaphor), the layout of episode order, lacking war scenes and grammatical tropes. Nevertheless, it does share the same figure of grammar with "The
Journey to the North,” such as the couplet as a basic syntactic unit, order in the couplet, conceptual contiguity in the couplet and stanza, and all the other features I mentioned in chapter two. This poem can be divided into six sections:

1. Couplet 1 to 16  singing about the aspirations and discontent
2. Couplet 17 to 21  the journey
3. Couplet 22 to 35  the extravagance at court
4. Couplet 36 to 40  back to the journey
5. Couplet 41 to 45  arriving home
6. Couplet 46 to 50  suffering of commoners

4.1. Singing out the Aspirations and Discontent

The poem starts with a prelude sestet:

杜陵有布衣，老大意转拙\,[trŋə:wk]. 1
In Duling, there is a commoner
(who) turns dull as he becomes aged.

许身一何愚，窃比稷与契\,[kʰit]. 2
(I) have been such a foolish man,
(yet) secretly (I) compared (myself) with Ji and Xiê.

居然成濩落，白首甘契闕\,[kʰuat]. 3
Of course, I failed.

22 Ji 稷 was the ancestor of the Zhou and Xiê 契 the ancestor of the Shang. They were both sages.
Being white-haired, I am willing to bear with harshness.

As in “The Journey to the North,” the poet introduces the protagonist at the beginning and gives a very brief summary about what he will tell in the poem. In this stanza, we grasp that he is dejected and considers himself a loser through “I have been such a foolish man... of course, I failed...” Also as in “The Journey to the North,” he uses the third person to introduce himself. However, starting from couplet two, the person of the speaker becomes vague: it can be the first or the third.

Following the prelude is this stanza:

Letting alone the matter of death,
I constantly wish to achieve/broad this aspiration.

Spending all the years, I worry about the common people.
I sigh as it burns/heat from within.

As I laugh at my peers,
I sing even more fervently.

It is not that I do not have the ambition to live the life of a recluse (and) pass the day and night/moon with freedom.

生逢堯舜君，不忍使永訖
Global Analysis of “Singing My Heart out”

(It is because) I was born to meet sagacious lords comparable with Lords Yao and Shun. If I do not refrain from my wish for reclusion, I will miss them forever.

The beginning couplet is a splinter that ends the subject-matter of the previous stanza and announces that the following stanza is about his “wish 志.” In couplet 8, the poet mentions the lords first which reflects the hierarchy of values; meanwhile, Yao and Shun are the metonymies for the contemporary emperor, through which the poet praises his emperor for being as sagacious as Yao and Shun.

In this stanza, we can see a phenomenon which also exists in “The Journey to the North” (3.4.). It is the recurrence of equivalence in sound and meaning in the rhyme characters. It starts from that all the rhyme characters carry [a] in their vowels (1.3.). This [a] is a comfortable vowel, so physically, it has a sound-iconic effect that evokes ease which reflects that the poet must have confidence in his ability and that singing out his mind is comfortable. Then, among these five [a] characters, four of them have positive meaning:

- broad 广 [xuat] 4
- heat 热 [riat] 5
- fervent 烈 [liat] 6
- moon 月 [ηyat] 7

This comfortable sound and good meaning equivalence correlates with what I have argued in chapter three (3.4.) that the rhyme characters’ semantics and their acoustic nature may share a
common space (generic space) in which the feeling aroused by the physical sounds corresponds with the semantics of the characters.

Then, a splinter appears:

**Today, the materials to build temples are complete.**

How can there be a shortage of towering material to build the mansion?

It is a question, which not only finishes the previous concept but also aids in the transition of subject-matter: when a question is introduced, the reader naturally waits for the answer.

The question leads in a stanza of metonymies (all the metonymies are italicized):

**Sunflowers and pea leaves lean towards the sun.**

The propensity of a being is so firm that it cannot be robbed.

(Let us) turn around and think about the gang of mole-cricket and ants (who) only wish to look for their caves.

Why should they admire the great whales (and) always imitate lying in the great oceans?

In the above sestet, first, he implies that he is like the sunflower and pea, which are cheap plants; nonetheless, the lowly plants have a strong propensity to admire the sun. However,
the sun, being a metonymy for light, heat, life, and the highest status in the sky, indicates the emperor, since he is the ‘son of heaven 天子’．Therefore, what he expresses is although I am worthless, I do wish to make some contribution to the emperor and the country. Then, in couplet 11, he uses crickets and ants to denote the great majority of people who do not have any upright ambition but the thought of seeking interest for themselves. The metonymy, ants, express that these people are small, low, and in great number. In addition, the sun, being the sole source of light and warmth that nurtures all beings, is a polar opposition to the dark, damp, and disgusting cave. Through this contrast, Du Fu stresses that his aspiration is upward and noble. In couplet 12, Du Fu questions why an ant should admire whales and covet the ocean. The whale, being the greatest mammal on earth, is a metonymy for a man of great competence, and the ocean, being such a large and wonderful place that contains the whale, denotes the powerful status of the high officials. Therefore, what he expresses is “I am a man of great aspiration, and I deserve high official status which is what the ordinary small men cannot understand.” This is a strong stanza, because nearly all the metonyms in the poem are here.

Afterwards, the poet closes the metonymy stanza with “with these 以兹” in couplet 13
Global Analysis of “Singing My Heart out”

and tells us about the measures he took after he had realized himself:

以茲悟生理，獨恥事幹謁

With these I realize my livelihood;
(however,) I merely feel ashamed to beg for an interview (for a job.)

兀兀遂至今，忍為塵埃没

Alone, I have lived till now
(and) endured being covered by dirt.

終愧巢與由，未能易其節

After all, I feel ashamed as I face Cao and You,
(because) nothing could make them compromise their honour.

In the above stanza, the poet states his dilemma in which he is too proud to compromise his
honour to beg for a job, so he has never accomplished his aspiration; in the mean time, he
also has failed the high moral standard that he sets for himself. Thus, he is stranded in
between, achieving nothing. Finally, he says:

沈飲聊自適，放歌頡愁絕

I may as well drink deeply for comfort;
through singing, my worries are well severed.

The above couplet is a splinter, not just because the subject-matter takes a turn to drinking,

23 Cao 巢 is Caofu 巢父, and You 由 is Xyou 許由. Both are legendary recluses of the
Yao 堯 era. It is said that Yao once tried to abdicate the throne to You, but You declined.
but also because it finishes the entire section of the aspiration. I wish to mention again that the splinter acts like the dropping of a curtain between scenes in a play: it announce that the episode has ended and prepare the change of scene. Hence, even when the following stanza does not have a temporal or sequential order with the previous one, we still can understand, because the concept has been demarcated by the splinter.

4.2. The Journey

The following is the journey from the capital to the county of Fengxian:

歳暮百草零，疾風高岡裂 [liat] 17
At the end of the year, hundreds of grasses are withering, (and) the gust is splitting the high mountain ridge.

天衢陰 zhengrong 崙嶠，客子中夜發 [fjyat/fatt] 18
The path to the sky is dark and treacherous, (and) the traveller starts (the journey) in the middle of the night.

霜嚴衣帶斷，指直不得結 [kjiat] 19
The frost is so severe that it breaks the belt of my clothes. My fingers are so stiff that they cannot tie the knot.

凌晨過驥山，絮拂在晞曦 [njiat] 20
At dawn, I pass the Li Mountain, having spent the night at the high and treacherous.
Global Analysis of “Singing My Heart out”

Chiyou—the evil star/atmosphere of war/Fog fills the cold sky (as) I stamp on the slippery ravine.

The above stanza is about a harsh winter journey in the high mountains; the feel is intense, because Du Fu uses two bound disyllabic compound words 聚繚字—zhengrong 崆嵘 and diéniè 崆嶔 both meaning ‘treacherous’ to express the harsh road condition. Among the two, diéniè 崆嶔 is very rare. With these difficult words, the effect of difficulty is enhanced.

In addition, he uses a polysemic metonymy Chiyou 蠍尤 for fog. This expression was originally the name of the evil chief who fought Huangdi 黃帝—the Yellow Thearch, the patriarch of the entire Chinese race. Consequently, it became the name of an evil star in Chinese astrology. Furthermore, it is said in the legend that when Chiyou and Huangdi were fighting, the sky turned foggy; hence, Chiyou became a metonymy for fog and the atmosphere of war. Therefore, this proper name, Chiyou, brings about the domains of war, evil, fog, and heaven to correlate with the realistic space in the high mountains. As a result,

---

24 Chiyou 蠍尤 was the chief of the legendary Jiuli 九黎 tribe who fought Huangdi 黃帝—the Yellow Thearch (the legendary ancestor of the Chinese people) at Zhuolu 諸鹿. It was said that their decisive combat was so forceful that fog filled the sky and earth. Therefore, Chiyou has been used as a metonymy for fog or an atmosphere of war 兵氣. Meanwhile, Chiyou is also the name of an evil star in Chinese astrology.
the foggy high mountains become even more hazardous in a hostile and belligerent atmosphere of evil.

4.3. The Extravagant Court

When I first read the poem, I took the following couplet to be a part of the journey:

瑶池氣鬱律26，羽林相摩戛[kja:t] 22
The air of the heavenly pool distresses the season.
The stars of the Yulin constellation rub and knock against each other.

Then, excitement began, thanks to the polysemic nature of 

25 Although yu 鬱(pronounced as [yt] in LMC) usually means ‘exuberance’, it also may be ‘worry, distress’. In Chuci 楚辭 (The Songs of the South), Jiutan 九歌 (The Nine Sighs), in the verse “Yoku 憂苦 (Affliction)”, “…願假簧以舒憂兮, 志紓鬱而離釋… I wish to use the reed instrument to ease my worries. My mind is tangled with worries and thus it is hard to release (the mind).” 王逸注: 鬱, 憂也 (Wang Yi’s annotation: 鬱 is worry.) Huang Shouqi 黃壽祺 annotator, Chuci 楚辭 (The Songs of the South) (Taipei: Taiwan guji chubanshe 臺灣古籍出版社, 1996) 464.

26 Lü 律 [lyt] can be ‘melody 音律, 樂律’ or ‘節氣, 節令’ the 24 periods into which a year is divided, e.g., winter solstice 冬至, slight cold 小寒, great cold 大寒, start of spring 立春, and so on’. Hanyu dadian 漢語大詞典(光碟版) (Chinese Dictionary CD ROM). Hong Kong: Commercial Press 商務印書館, 2000.
Global Analysis of “Singing My Heart out”

鬱[γyt], and 律[lyt]. First, in Classical Chinese, “jade pool 瑤池 [Jiaw, trǐl]” is where the heavenly mother of gods dwells, so it is a ‘heavenly pool’. Secondly, 羽林[yā,lǐn] can be both the constellation Yulin$^{27}$ or the imperial guards. Next, although 鬱[γyt] usually means ‘exuberance’, it also can be ‘worry’. Finally, 律[lyt] can be either ‘melody’ or ‘the twenty-four periods into which a year is divided’ which is something similar to season.

Therefore, when I first read it, I naturally mapped the translation according to the context from the preceding couplet, in which the poet is climbing hazardous high mountains enclosed in the foggy cold sky and the atmosphere was vicious and hostile. Thus, I thought it was ‘natural’ for him to come across a lake, since there are lakes in the high mountains, and it was ‘natural’ to call a high lake “heavenly pond 瑤池.” Meanwhile, it was ‘natural’ for the lake’s “atmosphere 氣” to be “gloomy 鬱” owing to the treacherous weather. Finally, the poet has already mentioned the sky through “‘Chiyou—the evil star/atmosphere of war/Fog’ fills the cold sky 異尤塞寒空,” so it must be ‘natural’ for him to see the stars. At the same time, he might have been overcome by the fatigue of climbing, so he got dizzy; then, it was

$^{27}$ The majority of the stars of Yulin Constellation overlap with those of Aquarius, so it may be treated as ‘sort of Aquarius’.
‘natural’ for him to see the stars knock on each other. Therefore, with so many ‘naturals’, I grasped the situation according to my knowledge about the world and translated it as:

瑶池氣鬱律，羽林相摩戛 [kjaːt]  22
The air of the heavenly pool distresses the season.
The stars of the Yulin constellation rub and **knock** against each other.

The above translation is a smooth follow-up of couplet 21 because of the correlation in highland, gloom, season, and the sky. Nonetheless, when I read the following I found my translation problematic,

君臣留歡娛，樂動殷貉葛 [kat]  23
The lord and the court officials stay in joy;
The music plays in magnificence and intermingles (with the sounds of people) in **disorder**.

赐浴皆長繡，與宴非短褐 [xfiat]  24
Those who are bestowed to bathe (by the emperor) are all high nobles; those who come to the party are not commoners/coarse clothing wearers.

because this stanza is about the extravagance of the court; then, suddenly, I realized I must translate it as:

瑶池氣鬱律，羽林相摩戛 [kjaːt]  22
The jade pool’s atmosphere abounds in melody.
The imperial guards rub and **knock** on each other.
Global Analysis of “Singing My Heart out”

Now, this couplet goes with the stanza of the court’s extravagance.

I find my jumping between translations fascinating, because my first reading was not a ‘numb’ one: I understood all the polysemies, and it took me some poetic energy to decipher which meanings I should choose. Nonetheless, when I finished the following couplet, I found something wrong and went back to re-decipher; then, I got shaken by what I found. This shake evokes tremendous poetic force in a true reader. It alarms me that the same setting—heaven, can be put into two polar extremes: the heavens under which a traveler suffers and the heaven of hedonism. The clash between the two hits me like a bolt from the blue, and thus, my sympathy for the poet goes so much deeper and my resentment against the court gets beyond words. In the meanwhile, Du Fu teaches me that I must be alert all the time or I will become lazy and poetically dull. He alarmed me when I took the mechanism of splinters for granted. He made me realize that a splinter can be ‘visible’ and ‘invisible’, and it can be embedded in the process between two interpretations. This is a trope of anti-conceptual contiguity!

There is another fascinating fact that comes with this anti-conceptual contiguity, which is why Du Fu must cut the journey into two halves and give the half of high climbing
Global Analysis of “Singing My Heart out”

first—he wants to connect the ‘climbing high’ with the ‘living high’ and the only generic space for the two is in the polysemies “jade pool 瑤池” and “imperial guards 羽林!”

Moreover, using these two terms to express the court also gives rise to the fact that the palace is literally the heaven on earth.

In the following stanzas from couplets 25 to 30, the poet lashes out at the decadent extravagance of the palace:

形庭所分帛，本自寒女出[tsyt] 25
The silk allotted in the palace (to the court officials) is originally from poor women

鞭挞其夫家，聚敛貢城闗[kyat] 26
whose husband’s families are whipped (so that) the silk may be gathered to be given as tribute at the castle gate of the capital.

In the above quatrain the poet rebukes that the enjoyment in the palace is based on the suffering of the poor. Then, in the following octet, he chastises those high officials and the emperor:

聖人筐籃恩，實欲邦國活[xfuat] 27
It is said by the Dao sages that the emperor’s gifts in bamboo baskets are meant to keep the country and people alive.

臣如忽至理，君豈棄此物[vjyt/vut] 28
If the subjects ignore this supreme law, how can the lord abandon these gifts/things?
Global Analysis of “Singing My Heart out”

(i.e., how can the lord make these gifts in vain?)

Numerous officials fill the court.

Seeing such a condition (in which the officials are only pursuing material gains instead of working for the country), those who have conscience should tremble with fear.

Not to mention that the gold plates in the palace are all in the houses of the imperial relatives.

Afterwards, the poet gets back to the corruption and wastefulness of the court and the rich:

In the central hall, there are goddesses (the Yang sisters dancing). Their jade-quality skin is covered with the gauze as light as fog.

(They) warm the guests with mink coats. The compassionate wind-instruments chase the clear string-instruments.

(They) urge the guests to eat camel hoof soup, (while) white oranges press against fragrant tangerines.

Then, he returns to reproach with the following quatrain:

Meat is allowed to spoil within the vermillion gate (i.e., in rich men's homes) while there are bodies/bones dead from cold on the road.
The distance between prosperity and degradation is so short. My melancholy is so keen that I cannot talk about it anymore.

The transition between the above stanzas is very clear through the distinct difference in subject-matter. Although the language is very straightforward, I find calling the dancing Yang sisters “goddesses” highly metaphorical, because this is the second start of the palatial extravagance, and since the first start begins with celestial metonyms, “jade pool/heavenly pond 瑤池” and “imperial guards/Yulin constellation 羽林”, it is purposeful for the second start to begin with celestial connotation, so that each time the court is mentioned, there is a projection from earth to heaven to amplify the court’s magnificence and the polarized difference between the palace and commoners’ world.

As a result, the scenarios get more and more intense until they come to a climax at couplet 34, in which meat is allowed to rot while people freeze to death on the street. After that, comes a coda splinter that finishes the scene of extravagance by explicitly announcing the end of a subject-matter—“I cannot talk about it anymore 難再述.”

As I look back at the stanza of the court, I find Du Fu’s arrangement captivating. First is his ingenious conceptual trope using the polysemies “the heavenly pond 瑤池” and “the
Global Analysis of “Singing My Heart out”

imperial guard 羽林” to make the transition from the harsh high mountains to the high court.

Next is his insertion of rebukes into the court scene. The sequence goes like this:

court (3 couplets)—rebuke (6 couplets)—court (3 couplets)—rebuke (2 couplets)

It appears Du Fu has a concern that if the reader dwells too long in extravagance, he might fall for the allure of luxury and begins to like it; thus, the omniscient poet must wake him up at the right time and remind him of the reality. Therefore, Du Fu cuts the extravagance into two sestets, and each of them receives severe rebukes—one is that the silk at court is made by the poor women whose husbands are whipped, and the other is allowing meat to rot while people freeze to death on the street. The movement back and forth between spaces of the palace and the poet’s mind makes this stanza most outstanding.

4.4. Back to the Journey

After the extravagance at court, the poem lands back in the harsh journey, which makes the court sandwiched within the journey. This jumping of locations has its purpose: first, the abrupt change of ambience forces the reader to compare and discover that the difference is so acute. Secondly, the poet demonstrates to us that what happened in between does not
Global Analysis of “Singing My Heart out”

belong to the real world—the harsh journey is the real world, because it leads to home.

This method is also used in “The Journey to the North,” in which Du Fu sandwiches the
sometimes-pleasant-journey within the war scenes (3.7. Battlefield).

Du Fu keeps traveling on. This time, it is on the water:

北轍就涇渭，官渡又改轍[trfiat] 36
(As) I travel north to the meeting place of the Rivers Jing and Wei,
(it turns out that) the government ferry changed its route again.

磐冰從西下，極目髙崔兀[nut] 37
Piles of ice travel down from the west.
As far as my eyes can see, they are as tall as mountains,

疑是崆峒來，恐觸天柱折28[t sıat] 38
which appear as if they came from the Kongtong Mountain,
(and thus) people fear that the heavenly pillars might have been broken.

河梁幸未坼，枝撐聲窒窣[sut] 39
Fortunately, the bridge is not torn yet,
buts its supports rustle.

行旅相攀援，川廣不可越[yat] 40

28 This is an allusion taken from Huainanzi 准南子, Tienwenxun 天文訓 (Teachings of
Astronomy): “In the ancient time, Gonggong and zhuānxū competed to be the emperor.
They got angry and collided the Buzhou Mountain. (Thus,) the heavenly pillars were
broken, and the strings that tied the earth were cut off. (Then) the sky slanted towards the
northwest; hence, the sun, the moon and stars moved. Because the earth in the southeast
was low, rainfall and dirt all returned to the southeast. 昔者共工與顓頊爭為帝，怒而觸不
周之山。天柱折，地維絕。天傾西北，故日月星辰移焉，地不滿東南，故水潦塵埃歸
焉.”
Travelers climb and support each other
to go across the river so wide that it seems impossible to cross.

Except the metonymy, “the heavenly pillars”, for the stupendous sight of the ice, the
language of the above stanza is straightforward.

4.5. Arriving Home

At couplet 41, the subject-matter takes a sharp turn—Du Fu’s wife suddenly makes her
entrance; meanwhile, the speaker switches to the first person. Then, we know he arrives
home.

老妻寄異縣，十口隔風雪[syat] 41
My old wife is sojourning in another county;
The wind and snow block me from my family of ten.

誰能久不顧，庶往共饑渴[kʰat] 42
Who can ignore them for a long time?
I only wish to go and share the hunger and thirst with them.

入門聞號啕，幼子餓已卒[tsyt] 43
As I enter the door, I hear loud wails.
My youngest son has already died from hunger.

吾寧舍一哀，裏巷亦嗚咽[jiat] 44
Even if I could refrain from grief,
the neighbours still sob.
Global Analysis of “Singing My Heart out”

I am a shameful father
who lets his son die/break young from hunger.

The entire stanza is done by the first person poet: he even calls himself “I 祐” in couplet 44.

In this section, he gets home, yet he is not welcomed by children’s laughter but the cry of hunger, and most of all, his youngest son has died from starvation—the worst humiliation and the saddest sorrow that a father can suffer. Thus, the reader gets shocked and the poem reaches its climax. It appears to me that the entire layout from singing out the heart, to the journey, the court and back to the journey is designed to gradually escalate the tension to prepare the reader’s response for this couplet.

This stanza has another attribute, which is the acute stanza semantics is expressed through rhyme characters:

- thirst 惴 [kʰat] 42
- to die 卒 [tsyt] 43
- to sob 喟 [tjiat] 44
- to break 折 [tšiat] 45

This phenomenon correlates with what I have argued in 3.4. that the rhyme character’s leading position in sound also gives it an important role to express the meaning. It appears
Global Analysis of “Singing My Heart out”

in this stanza that Du Fu expresses the worst pain through not only the rhyme characters’ semantics but also the physicality of uncomfortable sounds.

4.6. Suffering of Commoners

Nevertheless, Du Fu’s utmost concern is still the common people, so he raises a question to switch the topic:

豈知秋未登，貧賤有倉卒 [tʂut]  46  
How could anyone know that the autumn harvest would turn out badly?  
(Thus,) the poor are in **difficult situation**.

And he feels apprehensive about the future of the common people:

生常免租稅，名不隸征伐 [f fj at/ffia: t]  47  
I am exempt from tax,  
(and) my name is not on the conscription list of **war**.

撫跡猶酸辛，平人因驅屠 [siat]  48  
Nonetheless, my experiences still sadden me,  
let alone the misery and **overwork** of commoners.

默思失業徒，因念遠戍卒 [tʂut]  49  
Quietly, I think about those who have lost their properties  
and those **soldiers** who are stationed in remote places.
Global Analysis of “Singing My Heart out”

Finally, being unable to help the people, he finishes the poem in immense worry:

憂端齊終南，潄洞不可掇 duō [tuat]  50

My sorrow is as high as the Zhongnan Mountain.
The sorrow is so vast that even the great water cannot rob it away.

Hence, at the end, the reader is thrown into deep sorrow, contemplating the contents of the poem.

This strong coda has a similar function to that of “The Journey to the North,” because the ending of a poem forms the thought that the reader is likely to linger after reading. This global structure of placing emphasis at the end corresponds with the heavy end on the rhyme character in the basic structure of a couplet. Accordingly, ‘rob掇’—the ending character of this coda carries a great deal of the poem’s global semantics. Through this character, I can see how Du Fu’s aspirations are ‘robbed’ by the bureaucrats; how the emperor ‘robs’ his subjects, and how commoners are ‘robbed’ by the court.
Conclusion

In this paper, I have argued that the most ‘visible’ feature of these two poems is the iconicity of the –t ending entering tone rhyme. When these taut and uncomfortable sounds are repeated fifty or seventy times, the reader’s feeling of suffering is evoked through the discomfort of pronunciation. Next, among the rhyme characters, those which carry high vowels—i, y, u tend to gather together in stanzas expressing solemnity and anxiety, whereas those which carry central and low vowels—a, ə mainly appear in stanzas expressing ease and confidence. Therefore, in these two poems, the sonorous effect, the correlation between sound and meaning, exists not only at the global level between the rhyme characters and the feeling of suffering but also at the stanza level in which the tense high vowels correspond to the anxious state while the comfortable low and central vowels correspond to the easy state.

Rhyme also affects the global structure in a syntactic way that the more important expressions are placed at the end of a story unit or at the end of the poem (3.7 and 4.6). In addition, I found that the rhyme characters hold a very important place in the expression of the stanzas’ semantics (3.4). Take “The Journey to the North” for example: in the stanzas of trauma, the various meanings of the rhyme characters are mainly atrocious and frightful,
Conclusion

whereas in the stanza of great expectation, they are auspicious. In other words, a lot of the
couplet and stanza semantics is carried out through the rhyme characters. This phenomenon
also exists in “Singing My Heart out” although it is not as prominent as in “The Journey to
the North.” To conclude, I wish to argue that it is because the Chinese language, being
monosyllabic, is highly analytical in a sense that the majority of words can be easily
separated into meaningful units. It is also extremely isolating that the language’s
morphology is almost one word per morpheme. Because of these unique attributes, it is
possible to form an isomorphic relation between the semantics of the rhyme characters and
the passage’s concept.

In terms of the grammar of poetry, I argued that it was mainly in the domain of syntax.
The Chinese language depends heavily, if not totally, on auxiliary words and syntax to run its
grammatical system. Hence, I explained why the couplet should be treated as a basic
syntactic unit through conceptual contiguity and syntactic order. Then, I explained the
grammatical tropes and various orders in the couplet. After that, I argued that the stanza
may be treated as a higher level of unit, a story unit, through conceptual contiguity.
Moreover, the tropes of syntactic disruption never get out of the couplet, so that the
anti-grammatical disorder is well contained within the couplet, and thus, each stanza may
Conclusion

stay as an undisturbed whole. Moreover, any slight change of subject-matter will affect the stanza's grammatical structure, that is, there is a parallel mechanism between concept and grammar (3.5). As I moved into the global analysis of the poems, I discovered the 'splinter' couplet (3.2), which cut into the passage like a small sharp piece of 'foreign body'. The splinter can be a question, an interjection, a mighty person—the emperor, a change of the speaker's person, or any kind of grammatical or semantic change. Conceptually, it does not belong to any stanza, but it sets the border for the change of subject-matter. It is like the dropping of the curtain between scenes in a play. As the splinter demarcates the story units, it also cements them together to form the global syntactic construction.

After I finished the global analysis for both poems, I found that these two poems may appear alike at the first sight owing to the seemingly similar lengthiness, subject-matter, journey, and arriving home scenes; however, despite the similarities, they are very different in nature. Their solid sameness is only in the rhyme: it is obvious, since sounds are purely physical, and thus, all the evidences are 'hard' and 'concrete'. When it gets to the grammar of poetry, the two are not the same in many ways. First, only "The Journey to the North" has grammatical tropes; I suggest it is because this poem does not have any 'real' semantic metaphors, and the story is in a single linear order; hence, thanks to the 'plainness' in
Conclusion

semantics and order, the anti-grammatical tropes may come into being. “Singing My Heart out” does not have any grammatical tropes, because it has many metonymies and its scenarios jump around without any sequence. Nonetheless, the way Du Fu mixes mental spaces with reality is absolutely ingenious, through which conceptual tropes may be created with the use of polysemic metonymies (4.3.). Altogether, the grammar of poetry is the same at the lower level—the couplet level so that a stanza may be formed through conceptual contiguity. However, at the stanza level, the major agent of poetic grammar is the splinter, thanks to which all the stanzas may be glued together according to the poet’s design.

All in all, in these two poems, sound, syntax, and semantics are woven together from the various strata of couplets, stanzas, and the entire poem. Through the correspondences between different levels of elements, the poem becomes a gigantic organic whole. My humble wish has been to see the rules of interrelations and try to recognize their connections to the global construction of the poem. I wish my limited findings could pay tribute to my hero, the sage of poetry, Du Fu.
Bibliography


Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan 台灣商務印書館, 1968.


