

THE POETIC THEORY AND PRACTICE OF

HUANG TINGJIAN

BY

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B.A., HUNAN NORMAL UNIVERSITY, 1982

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF

THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

IN

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

(Department of Asian Studies)

We accept this thesis as conforming

to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

JULY, 1991

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Vancouver, Canada

Date August 2, 1991

ABSTRACT

Huang Tingjian 黄庭坚 (1045-1105) is one of the most important poets of the Song Dynasty. He is often associated with his contemporary Su Shi 苏轼, just as the Tang Dynasty's most important poets Du Fu 杜甫 and Li Bai 李白 are linked. Huang founded the Jiangxi School 江西诗派, which exerted 150 years of influence upon the creative theory and practice of succeeding generations of poets. Huang is also one of the most controversial poets in Chinese history. His position in poetic history and the controversy surrounding him, make it worthwhile to analyze his poetic theory and practice.

This thesis attempts to summarize the main principles of Huang's poetic theory, the main content of his poetry, and the characteristics of his poetic techniques.

I begin with a biographical sketch of Huang; it focuses on his political career, and the political affairs which influence his life.

Chapter One presents an overview of Huang's poetic theory and the principles of his poetic technique. Therein, I mainly discuss his view of the content of poetry and its political criticism, and also provide a brief discussion of his ideas on poetic style. In discussing his ideas of poetic technique, I examine his method as an organic unit, and then after analyzing his comments on imitation and innovation, I summarize the

principles of his method.

Chapter Two is an analysis of Huang's poetic content. Through a survey of Huang's poetry, I explore the chief topics of his poetry. By comparing Huang's general view of poetry with the content he selects, we will ascertain whether or not there is consistency between his poetic theory and practice.

Chapter Three is a discussion of Huang's poetic technique. The discussion is dominated by what has been called by many critics Huang's "qi" 奇 (strangeness). What may be properly understood as the principles of his technique provide the foundation for his outstanding originality. The aspects of this originality that is discussed are basically associated with his method which is explored in Chapter One. Therefore, this chapter can be seen as an examination of Huang's view on poetic technique from the perspective of poetic practice.

This chapter concludes with a survey of Huang's poetic style which develops the discussion of style touched upon briefly in Chapter One. The summation of his poetic style is facilitated by the analyses of his poetic content and technique in the previous sections and chapters.

The conclusion is a summation of Huang's poetic theory and practice. I summarize the relationship between his poetic theory and practice in general and his major contribution to Chinese classical poetry.

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Biography

Huang Tingjian (zi 字 Shangu 山谷; hao 号 Shangu Daoren 山谷道人 and Fuweng 涪翁), was born in Fenning 分宁 in Hongzhou 洪州 (modern Xiushui 修水 in Jiangxi 江西 province) in the year 1045. When he was 14, his father died. His father's death brought him a hard life at his young age. In his letter to Li Jizhong 李几重, he wrote: "I lost my father at a young age and became poor. I often suffered from hunger and cold."¹ Owing to the poverty of his family, he was sent to live with his uncle Li Chang 李常 (his mother's brother), who was well-educated and a collector of books. During his stay with his uncle, he was educated by his uncle and aunt, and benefited from reading his uncle's books. Also his uncle brought him to travel Huainan 淮南 and to visit many scholars and poets, which helped him expand his mind. Thus, it can be said that his early education was completed under his uncle's guidance. Huang praised his uncle in an elegy for his uncle: "It is you my uncle who brought up and educated me."²

In 1067, Huang passed the imperial examination that enabled him to start his official career. Next year, he was appointed

1. Si Bu Cong Kan 四部丛刊 (abbreviated SBCK), Huang Tingjian, Yu Zhang Huang Xian Sheng Wen Ji 豫章黄先生文集 (abbreviated YZHXSWJ), vol.19, p.198.

2. YZHXSWJ, vol.21, p.232.

Xian Wei 县尉 (Director of Public Security) of Xie County 叶县. In 1072, the emperor Shenzong 神宗 (1068-1085) set the examination to select teachers for the Guo Zi Jian 国子监 (the Imperial College). Huang passed the examination with an excellent result, and was appointed Zhu Jiao 助教 (Assistant Instructor) of the Imperial College. For eight years from 1072 to 1080, Huang was successful in his instruction in the Imperial College, and was promoted Jiao Shou 教授 (Instructor). In the year of 1078 when he was conducting his teaching, he began his first contact with Su Shi through correspondence.

An important political event with a lasting influence on many officials and intellectuals took place in China when Huang enjoyed his teaching without worries. This event can be traced down Wang Anshi's 王安石 submitting an outline of reform to the emperor Renzong 仁宗 in 1058. After Shenzong became the emperor in 1068, he hired Wang Anshi as his Zai Xiang 宰相 (premier), and agreed with him to carry out Xin Fa 新法 (New Policies) which is historically called Wang Anshi's Bian Fa 王安石变法 (Wang Anshi's Reform). Since then, most Chinese intellectuals were divided into two wings--Xin Dang 新党 (New Party or Reformer Party) and Jiu Dang 旧党 (Old Party or Conservative Party) according to their attitude towards Reform. Those in favour Reform are named New Party, and the opposite Old Party. The two wings conflicted until the end of the North Song Dynasty. For such a long period, Chinese intellectuals' destiny was up and down along with the

changes of people who were in power in the imperial court. Although Huang himself did not directly or actively participate in the political struggle, he was involved due to his close relationship to some members of Old Party, such as Sima Guang 司马光, Su Shi, Qin Guan 秦观 and etc.

In 1080, he ended his term of teaching in the Imperial College, and was appointed a county magistrate of Taihe 太和 in Jizhou 吉州 (modern Taihe 太和 in Jiangxi 江西). In 1083, he was transferred to Deping 德平 in Dezhou 德州 (modern Shanghe 商河 in Shandong 山东) as a Jian Zhen Guan 监镇官 (Supervisor). In Deping, his colleague Zhao Tingzhi 赵挺之 wanted to pursue Shi Yi Fa 市易法 (a policy of managing market by government) in order to fit in with his immediate administrator. Yet, Huang thought that it was not appropriate to adopt the policy because people in town were very poor. Huang and Zhao had a heated argument about this matter, which became one of reasons that Huang was exiled in the future.

Zhezong 哲宗 ascended the throne after the emperor Shenzong died in 1085. Zhezong was only 10 then, and, actually, his grandmother Gaoshi 高氏, who was a supporter of Old Party, ruled the state. She hired the key figure of Old Party, Sima Guan as premier, so that most members and followers of Old Party were promoted and New Party was retaliated. Appointed as an Editor of Mi Shu Sheng 秘书省 (the Imperial Library), Huang went to the capital Bianjing 汴京 (modern Kaifeng 开封 in Henan 河南). Afterwards,

he was appointed to participate in writing Shenzong Shi Lu 神宗实录 (The Veritable Records of Shenzong). After this book was completed, he was promoted to Qi Ju She Ren 起居舍人 (the Recorder of the emperor's words and deeds) because of his achievement in this book.

After Gaoshi died in 1093, a group of followers of New Party controlled the emperor Zhezong, who was only 17. In order to exclude Old Party, New Party listed more than one thousand of political errors selected from The Veritable Records of Shenzong. As one of the editors of this book and a sympathizer of Old Party, Huang was inevitably involved in this disaster. In 1095, all editors of this book were relegated in a charge of "slandering the previous emperor". Huang was exiled to Qianzhou 黔州 (modern Pengshui 彭水 in Sichuan 四川). In 1097, he was transferred to Rongzhou 戎州 (modern Yibin 宜宾 in Sichuan).

In 1100, the emperor Zhezong died and Huizong 徽宗 became the emperor. In fact, Huizong's mother Xiang Shi 向氏 held court. The political situation changed to be advantageous to Old Party. Many members of Old Party, such as Sima Guang and Su Shi took a favourable turn. In 1100 and 1101, Huang was also appointed to several posts in the capital, but politely declined them and asked to be appointed a local official in Taiping Zhou 太平州 (modern Dangtu 当涂 in Anhui 安徽) or Wuwei Jun 无为军 (Wuwei 无为 in Anhui) because of his worries about the change of the political situation, or because of his poor health. In 1102, he was

appointed Zhizhou 知州 (Executive) of Taiping. In the same year, the emperor Huizong took over the power and hired Cai Jing 蔡京, a member of New Party, as premier. Cai Jing launched a crackdown on New Party. In the crackdown, Huang was more seriously punished. As recommended by Cai Jing, Zhao Tingzhi, whom Huang offended before, was hired as vice premier. Zhao charged Huang with slandering the state by choosing some words in Huang's writing. Therefore, after Huang worked in Taiping for only nine days, he was transferred to Hongzhou with a nominal title, where he was asked to wait for his next placement. At this time, also the last time, Huang was exiled to Yizhou 宜州 (modern Yishan 宜山 of Guangxi 广西), which was thousands of kilometre away from the centre of China and was uncivilized. In 1145, Huang died where he was exiled.

Chapter One

A Survey of Huang's Poetic Theory

Huang Tingjian was not a theoretician. He did not intend to create a systematic poetic theory, nor did he leave behind any monographs on poetics. Yet, as a poet Huang not only made a unique contribution to Chinese literature, but also provided his posterity with a controversial poetic theory found scattered throughout his remarks in letters, prose, poems, and records of his activities left by his contemporaries. One of the main reasons that vehement controversy has arisen over Huang's poetic views is they are often understood out of the context of his individual writings, and out of the context of his work seen as a whole. It is more sensible to analyze Huang's poetic theory as an organic unit. Therefore, in this chapter we will compare some typical ideas critics have about Huang's main poetic views, and analyze them through close examination of their original context. In order to obtain an overall view of Huang's poetic theory, we will also survey two major aspects: 1) Huang's own general ideas about poetic theory; and 2) his theory of poetic technique. By doing this, we hope to obtain a relatively accurate picture of his poetic theory, especially his controversial poetic views, and see how well Huang's poetic theory is integrated, that is, whether Huang maintains a balance between his poetic theory and practice.

I. - Huang's General Views about Poetic Theory

Among all the remarks Huang makes, the most important and comprehensive comments on poetic principles are presented in his "Shu Wang Zhizai Ju Shan Za Yong Hou" 书王知裁胸山杂咏后 (Inscribed After Wang Zhizai's Random Impressions about Ju Hill):

Poetry is an expression of human emotion and nature. It should not [have the style of] an intense debate within the Imperial court, of abusive complaints shouted in the street, or of the angry cursing of one's neighbours or guests. A poet should be loyal, honest, sincere, respectful, and live by embracing the Way. When a poet runs counter to the times, when he feels sorrow or joy at something that he has experienced, when even the one next to him in the same bed cannot understand him, when he cannot interact with his contemporaries, and when he can no longer contain his emotions, he releases them by producing a tune that either groans or laughs. By this he releases his heart, and those that hear him are thereby, to some extent, urged and exhorted. It is the beauty of poetry [that these tunes] can then be sung in harmony with musical laws and danced to with shields and feather fans. As for [some people who] further try to slander or make insults with such poetry, [so that they] stick their necks out under the battle axe, or remove their armour before arrows in order to release their anger of the moment, such disasters are considered by everyone to be created by poetry. Yet, this is because the poet has missed the point of poetry, and it is not the fault of poetry itself.¹

Huang's remarks contain several levels of meaning. First of all, Huang expresses his general view about poetry by answering the essential question: What is poetry?

As for the traditional definition of poetry, there were two major viewpoints in Chinese poetic theory before Huang's time.

1 YZHXSWJ, vol.26, p.296.

One, which James Liu 刘若愚 suggests be called Expressionism 表现主义,² emphasizes the self-expression of a poet's nature and emotions. In one of the earliest Chinese books, Shu Jing 书经 (The Book of History), poetry was defined in the well-known phrase "Poetry expresses intent" (诗言志).³ The idea was developed, and more clearly expounded in "Da Xu" 大序 of Shi Jing 诗经 (The Book of Songs):

Poetry is where the intent of the heart goes. Lying in the heart, it is "intent"; when uttered in words, it is "poetry". When an emotion stirs inside, one expresses it in words; finding this inadequate, one sighs over it; not content with this, one sings it in poetry; still not satisfied, one unconsciously dances with one's hands and feet.⁴

2 James J.Y. Liu, Chinese Theories of Literature, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1975, p.67.

Liu thinks that "Chinese expressive theories...are primarily focused on the relation between the writer and the literary work...the object of expression is variously identified with universal human emotions, or personal nature, or individual genius or sensibility, or moral character."

Expressionism is only the term which Liu borrows from English to define Chinese expressive theories. Although, as Liu points out, Chinese Expressionism primarily indicates a self-expression of an author's emotions or nature, the concept should be understood in terms of the development and environment of Chinese literary theory. Therefore, different from German Expressionism in the early 20 century, Chinese Expressionism is a concept contrasting Chinese Pragmatism or Political Criticism (see footnote 5), which is formed under the influence of Confucian ideology. The use of the concept Expressionism enables us to distinguish the literary view of self-expression from a dominant literary theory in China--Pragmatism.

3 Zeng Yunqian 曾运乾, Shang Shu Zheng Du 尚书正读, p.26. Trans. Liu, op.cit., p.69.

4 Chen Huan 陈奂, Shi Mao Shi Zhuan Shu 诗毛诗传疏, vol.1, p.1. Trans. Liu, op.cit., p.69.

Another viewpoint, suggested by Liu is Pragmatism 实用主义,⁵ which is an emphasis on the social, political, and moral function of poetry. This viewpoint was more prevalent than Expressionism, and has dominated Chinese intellectual ideology and the field of Chinese literary criticism. An explanation of this viewpoint contained in the commentary to The Book of Songs is:

Therefore, nothing approaches the Book of Poetry [The Book of Songs] in maintaining correct standards for success or failure [in government], in moving Heaven and Earth, and in appealing to spirits and gods. The former Kings used it to make permanent [the tie between] husband and wife, to perfect filial reverence, to deepen human relationships, to beautify moral instruction, and to improve social customs.⁶

During the Three Kingdoms 三国, Cao Pi 曹丕 (187-226 A.D.) considered literature an effective means to rule the state. He wrote in his "Dian Lun" 典论 (On Literature): "For literature is a great task [that concerns] the governing of the state, a splendid enterprise that will never perish."⁷ Later, during the Tang

5 Liu, op.cit., p.106. Liu thinks that "Pragmatic theories...are based on the concept of literature as a means to achieve political, social, moral, or educational purposes."

Pragmatism is a philosophical concept, which Liu borrows from English to define a literary theory in China. The literary theory, Pragmatism or more properly defined as Political Criticism, stresses the political function of literature, and advocates literature directly interfering in politics and society. Pragmatism is based on Confucian ideology and has the strongest and longest influence upon Chinese intellectuals and literary theories.

6 Chen Huan, op.cit., vol.1, p.1. Trans. Liu, op.cit., p.112.

7 Bai Bu Cong Kan 百部丛刊 (abbreviated BBCK), Cao Pi, Dian Lun, 1-1a. Trans. Liu, op.cit., p.113.

dynasty, Bai Juyi 白居易 (772--846 A.D.) developed this viewpoint in his "Yu Yuan Jiu Shu" 与元九书 (Letter to Yuan Jiu): "Prose should be written for the times, and poetry for current affairs."⁸ During the Song dynasty, when Neo-Confucian philosophy arose and came to dominate the field of ideology, the philosopher Zhou Dunyi 周敦颐 (1017-73) stressed the political and moral function of literature to the extreme, and raised the call: "Literature is that by which one carries the Way." (文以载道)⁹ Thus, we can see that Huang's definition of poetry is simply a repetition of a traditional view, without innovation. Yet, it is worth noting that Huang clearly says, "Poetry is an expression of human emotion and nature,"¹⁰ instead of holding the Pragmatist view, which also had a great impact on most Chinese intellectual ideology and indeed flourished during Huang's life. The importance of Huang's definition of poetry is to tell us theoretically that he is more Expressionist than Pragmatist, and he pays more attention to self-expression than social reality or political criticism.

Also, Huang's playing down of Pragmatism can be explained

8 Wan You Wen Ku 万有文库 (abbreviated WYWK), Bai Juyi, Bai Xiangshan Ji 白香山集, ed., Wang Yunwu 王云五, Taipei: Taiwan Shang Wu Yin Shu Guan, 1965, vol.2, p.27.

9 Cong Shu Ji Cheng 丛书集成 (abbreviated CSJC), Zhou Dunyi, Zhou Lian Xi Ji 周濂溪集, Shanghai: Shang Wu Yin Shu Guan 商务印书馆, 1936, vol.6, p.117. Trans. Liu, op.cit., p.114.

10 SBCK, YZHXSWJ, vol.26, p.296.

by his brief reference to the political function of poetry in the phrase, "he releases them by producing a tune that either groans or laughs. By this he releases his heart, and those that hear him are thereby, to some extent, urged and exhorted." (see p.2) Huang here deliberately uses the restrictive phrase "you suo" (to some extent) to express the limitation of the political function of poetry. The use of the verb compound "quan mian" 劝勉 (to urge and exhort), instead of more emphatic verbs such as "feng yuan" 讽怨 (to satirize and complain), "jiao" 教 (to educate) or "zheng" 正 (to correct) which are often used by the followers of Pragmatism, is an indirect negation of the views of his contemporary, Zhou Dunyi. Although Huang's reference to the political function of poetry might lead us to believe that he indeed to some extent acknowledges the necessity of Pragmatism because of the strong influence of Confucianism upon him, his attitude towards Pragmatism might be more properly explained by Liu's analysis of the development of Confucian Pragmatism:

From the time Confucianism was established as the orthodox ideology of China in the second century B. C. down to the early twentieth century, the pragmatic concept of literature remained practically sacrosanct, so that critics who basically believed in other concepts rarely dared to repudiate it openly, but paid lip service to it while actually focusing attention on other concepts, or interpreted Confucius's words in such a way as to lend support to nonpragmatic theories, or simply kept silent about the pragmatic concept while developing others.¹¹

11 Liu, op.cit., p.111.

Huang's attitude towards the political function of poetry brought strong criticism from some later critics, such as Huang Che 黄彻 (12 A.D.), Zhang Jie 张戒 (12 A.D.), and Wang Ruoxu 王若虚 (1174--1243). Huang is especially criticized by scholars of the People's Republic of China (PRC) like Liu Dajie 刘大杰 (1904--1977) who in a 1964 article levels a most serious charge against Huang in Maoist terms that he "pays less attention to the content [of poetry], escapes reality, avoids politics, and ignores the social function of literature."¹² Of course, in all fairness to Liu Dajie he does not misrepresent Huang's attitude towards the content and function of poetry, and it is logical that he would reject Huang's attitude from his Maoist perspective.

Since 1949 Huang has been regarded as a "xingshi zhuyi" 形式主义 (formalist)¹³ in China chiefly because of his emphasis on poetic technique and his undervaluation of the political function of

12 Liu Dajie, "Huang Tingjian De Shi Lun" 黄庭坚的诗论 (the Poetic Theory of Huang Tingjian), Wen Xue Ping Lun 文学评论 (Literary Review), Feb. 1, 1964, p. 65.

13 The viewpoint can be found in the following widely-used college textbooks:

Zhong Guo Wen Xue Shi 中国文学史 (Chinese History of Literature), ed. Zhong Guo She Ke Yuan Wen Xue Yan Jiu Suo 中国社会科学院文学研究所 (The literature Research Institute of Chinese Social Science Academy), Beijing: Ren Min Wen Xue Chu Ban She 人民文学出版社 1962, p. 602.

You Guoeng 游国恩, Wang Qi 王起, Xiao Difei 萧涤非, Ji Zhenhuai 季镇淮, and Fei Zhengang 费振刚, Zhong Guo Wen Xue Shi 中国文学史 (Chinese History of Literature), vol. 3, Beijing: Ren Min Wen Xue Chu Ban She, 1982 p. 61, p. 63.

Guo Shaoyu 郭绍虞, Zhong Guo Wen Xue Pi Ping Shi 中国文学史批评史 (Chinese History of Literary Critic), Shanghai: Shanghai Gu Ji Chu Ban She 上海古籍出版社, 1979, pp. 210-211.

poetry. Yet, since the liberalization of China's academic circles in the late 1970's, another point of view has developed. Some scholars have attempted to rehabilitate Huang by asserting that he accepts Pragmatism. In "Su Shi Huang Tingjian Shi Ge Li Lun Zhi Bi Jiao" 苏轼黄庭坚诗歌理论之比较 (A Comparative Study on Poetic Theories of Su Shi and Huang Tingjian), which was published in 1983 in China's most prevalent journal of literary criticism--Wen Xue Ping Lun 文学评论 (Literary Review),¹⁴ Zhou Yukai 周裕赓 quotes some lines of Huang's most frequently cited poems¹⁵ to prove his Pragmatism: "The function of [my] literary works does not help manage society, / Just like beads of dew decorating a spider web."¹⁶ and "[My] literary works do not function to manage society, / and have the style of mist in southern hills."¹⁷ The first example is most often misused as can be seen if we look at the whole poem:

14 Zhou Yukai, "Su Shi Huang Tingjian Shi Ge Li Lun Zhi Bi Jiao", Wen Xue Ping Lun, 4 Sep., 1983, p. 89.

15 Contemporary scholars Zhang Bingquan 张秉权 and Mo Lifeng 莫砺锋 also quote the same lines as examples to prove Huang's Pragmatism in their books.

See Zhang Bingquan, Huang Shangu De Jiao You Ji Zuo Pin 黄山谷的交游及作品 (Huang Tingjian's Friendship and Works), Hong Kong: Zhong Wen Da Xue Chu Ban She 中文大学出版社, 1978, p.117.

Mo Lifeng, Jiangxi Shi Pai Yan Jiu 江西诗派研究 (A Study of the Jiangxi School), Jinan: Qi Lu Shu She 齐鲁书社, 1986, p.198.

16 Guo Xue Ji Ben Cong Shu 国学基本丛书 (abbreviated GXJBCS), Huang Tingjian, Shan Gu Shi Zhu 山谷诗注 (abbreviated SGSZ), ed. Wang Yunwu 王云五, Neiji 内集, vol.6, Taipei: Shang Wu Yin Shu Guan, 1968, p.103.

17 SGSZ, Waiji 外集 vol.12, p.272.

To Kong Yifu For Fun

Guan Chengzi [a brush] is not lucky enough to eat meat,
Kong Fangxiong [copper-money] sent me a letter breaking
off our friendship.

The function of [my] literary works does not help
manage society,

Just like beads of dew decorating a spider web.

Officials like editors or writers are frequently
conferred and promoted,

Only if you know how to step onto a cart and greet
people!

Suddenly, I recall our having simple food seated on a
monk's bed,

Even in my dream, I return to East Lake with the autumn
swan-geese.¹⁸

This is a poem in which Huang describes his life and desires to his friend in a jocular tone. Huang ridicules himself as an intellectual who is not lucky enough to become an official, and get rich. His own writings do not help manage society and are only like "beads of dew decorating a spider web". The reason why he could be entitled to be a minor official such as an editor and writer is that such a position only requires one to know how to get in a cart and greet people. As for his own desires, he hopes to return to his home town and live the simple life.

It is obvious that the first, second, and third couplets are Huang's self-mockery of his destiny, writing, and career as an official. In the second couplet he does not seriously state his literary views, but only by following the subject in the first couplet (self-description) further characterizes himself as a

18 SGSZ, Waiji, vol. 12, p.272. The allusions in this poem are discussed in detail in Chapter Three, pp.129-131.

poet who writes without attempting to manage state or society. Therefore, the meaning of the two lines should be understood as Huang's summation of his own poetic content and function, but not as Huang's literary views, as Zhou Yukai and others misrepresent them out of context.

Zhou Yukai's second example is extracted from the tenth poem of Huang's "Ji Chao Yuanzhong Shi Shou" 寄晁元忠十首 which reads:

Ten Poems to Chao Yuanzhong

Overlooking the river, [I] am affected with emotion,
Spiritual communication can be obtained by inner
awakening.

[My] literary works do not function to manage society,
and have the style of mist in southern hills.

Metamorphosing insects sigh for seasons,
They have their own reasons for being happy and being
sad.

I have no hesitation,
The cuckoo persuades me to retire.

This is a poem expressing the poet's outlook on life. Although the subject in the first line is not clearly identified, it is reasonable to say that it is the first person "I", which in Chinese is customarily omitted. This is further proven by the use of the phrase "lin chuan" 臨川 (overlooking the river) which introduces the writer's recollection of his past or the writer sighing over his life. From both the context and title we can surmise that Huang is telling his friend about himself in this group of poems.

Therefore, in the first couplet Huang is displaying his own

awareness of the significance of life through a description of Taoist "spiritual communication" between man and nature. To be above worldly considerations is without doubt his main point. The second couplet is the second one of the four steps (起, 承, 转, 合: introduction, elucidation of the subject, transition to another viewpoint, and summation) in the composition of a Chinese classical poem. He thinks that his writings "do not function to manage society" and clearly compares his poetic style to Tao Yuanming's 陶渊明 (372?--427) by using the metaphor of "mist of southern hills".¹⁹ So, corresponding to the first couplet, the second couplet further explains his Taoist outlook on life. The third couplet shifts to the different interests of people through the use of a metaphorical insect, which helps to present his friend with his firm determination to be a hermit in the last couplet.

There is no doubt that Huang is evaluating his own writings by borrowing prevalent pragmatic standards in the two poems. He indicates that his writings do not fit pragmatic standards, but does not think that this deviation is a serious matter.

19 "South hills", where Tao Yuanming lived in seclusion, appeared in Tao's most remembered poetic sentence: "Picking up chrysanthemums under eastern fence, / Leisurely, catching a sight of Southern hills" 采菊东篱下, 悠然见南山. It has become a code in Chinese literature to imply an ideal eremitic place.

In our translation above, we slightly revise Hightower's "Picking chrysanthemums by the eastern hedge/ I catch sight of the distant southern hills:" See James Robert Hightower, The Poetry of T'ao Ch'ien, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1970, p.130.

Conversely, it seems to make us feel that his attitude is positive towards his own writing even when he is writing humourously. With this understanding, the two poems can be correctly explained because his own evaluation of his writing is consistent with his ideal state of reclusion, which is stressed in the endings of the two poems. Otherwise, there is a contradiction between each example and the endings of the poems if we understand each example as stating his literary views, because it is improbable that he would actively advocate influencing society through poetry while wishing to become a recluse in the same poem.

There is another example also quoted by Zhou and other critics to show Huang's pragmatism in the brief preface to his "Ci Yun Yang Mingshu Si Shou" 次韵杨明叔四首, where he states, "Writing is a vehicle of the Way as words are the ornaments of deeds."²⁰ The idea in this sentence seems to be just a repetition of Zhou Dunyi's view. So, it is very easy to mistake Huang as a typical Pragmatist when referring to this sentence out of context. The entire preface reads:

Rhyming with Yang Mingshu

Yang Mingshu, please favour me with your poems in which old convention is washed away from metrical pattern and the meanings of the words. I am so happy about your achievement that I cannot go to sleep. [Yet], writing is a vehicle of the Way as words are the ornaments of deeds. [Therefore, I hereby] repay you by rhyming with you in my four poems in

20 SGSZ, Neiji, vol.12, p.221.

order to plow deeply the field of liyi 礼仪 (propriety). Your words and deeds are in the right way. As an official you are capable and comfort common people. I place high hopes on you.

After reading the four stanzas which Huang wrote to Yang, we may say that the content is a discussion of the Way, and this includes Buddhism and Taoism in Huang's mind.²¹ His creation of this poem has certainly been influenced by "tan chan" 谈禅 (discussing Buddhism and Taoism) in Song poetry, and shows his interest in exploring Buddhism and Taoism through poetry. Yet, in the preface to the poem, Huang begins by applauding his friend's poetic techniques (which interest him most). He then suddenly shifts to introduce the Way which he goes on to discuss in the poem. How does he bridge the gap between the beginning of the preface and the subject of the poem (the Way)? A common technique in Chinese classical writing is to use well-known sayings or remarks as transitions. For such an erudite intellectual as Huang, it would not be unusual if he adopted such a technique in order to show his erudition.

The preface may logically be divided into two paragraphs that more clearly show the poet's train of thought. There is a natural division after the first two sentences, where Huang

21 Although the Way seems largely Confucian in this preface, in fact, Huang basically discusses Buddhism and Taoism in his four stanzas. This poetic style which was popular in Huang's time is "shuo li shi" 说理诗, which is characterized by discussions mainly of Buddhism and Taoism in poetry, but also includes some discussion of Confucianism.

suddenly shifts from praise of Yang's poem to the presentation of his own poem: "Writing is a vehicle of the Way as words are the ornaments of deeds". This popular phrase perfectly bridges the gap between the two parts of the preface, with the first part referring to Yang's poetic form, and the second part referring to the content of Huang's own poem, or "plowing the field of liyi". Also, the use of the conjunction "gu" 故 (therefore) makes a clear transition between the phrase and what follows. The use of the phrase plays a transitional role and shows why he wants to discuss the Way. Therefore, the phrase functions primarily as a transition within the structure of the preface, and secondarily as an embellishment of the text. It is hard to believe that here Huang seriously discusses the relation between poetic form and content.

Luo Genze 罗根泽 (1900--1960) analyzes this use of the phrase in other terms. He wrote, "As Huang does not create 'argumentative writings',²² and is opposed to poetry that would 'slander or insult',²³ he says 'Writing is a vehicle of the Way' just to keep up appearances by borrowing an old idea."²⁴ Obviously, Luo does not think Huang has made a serious literary

22 YZHXSWJ, vol.19, p.208.

23 YZHXSWJ, vol.26, p.296.

24 Luo Genze, Zhong Guo Wen Xue Pi Ping Shi 中国文学史批评史 (Chinese History of Literary Critic), vol.3, Shanghai: Gu Dian Wen Xue Chu Ban She 古典文学出版社, 1961. p.135.

statement either. The difference is that our conclusion comes from a close analysis of the text of the preface, but Luo obtains his by detecting a conflict between Huang's use of a popular phrase and an overall poetic view. Yet, Zhou ignores the entire preface and the content of the poem to interpret one sentence, and conclude that Huang expresses the same idea in the phrase as Zhu Xi's 朱熹, i.e., "The Way is the essence of prose; prose is the embellishment of the Way."²⁵ Therefore, Zhou's understanding obscures the distinction between Confucian Pragmatism and the concept of "the Way" in Huang's text, which should be understood in Buddhist or Taoist terms.

In short, Huang hardly expresses any interest in the political function of poetry beyond the conventional except for the discussion of how "to some extent" society is "urged and exhorted". Conversely, he often displays the opposite view. For example, "Writing is the most trifling activity in Confucianism,"²⁶ and "Put away the game of writing, /and engage in the enterprise of saving the nation."²⁷ In these remarks, he clearly expresses his low estimation of the political function of poetry. Therefore, although Huang might acknowledge that poetry has "to

25 Zhou Yukai, op.cit., p.89. For the original source of Zhu Xi's remark, see GXJBCS, Zhu Xi, Zhuzi Yu Lei 朱子語類, vol.8, p.279.

26 YZHXSWJ, vol.19, p.204.

27 SGSZ, Waiji, vol.17, p.396.

some extent" a political function, and he does not publicly oppose Pragmatism; Huang's poetic views negate the political function of poetry.

There is another interesting point in Huang's comment quoted above (see p.2) which relates to the function of poetry. Huang wrote: "By this (to release emotions by producing a tune), he releases his heart, and those that hear him are thereby, to some extent, urged and exhorted." Here it is worth noting that the poet and the reader are related in an intentional narrative sequence. According to the conventions of Chinese narrative, the most important point is presented first, followed by a minor one and so on, that is if the last point is not specified as the most important one. So, from the emphatic order of this quote we can see that the impact of writing poetry upon the poet, rather than the impact of poetry upon the reader, is underscored.

The meaning of the second level displayed in Huang's comment above (see p.2) is his view of poetic style. This is considered by many scholars as Huang's position on poetic content, or the political function of poetry. Thus, before we examine his view of poetic style, it is necessary to clarify Huang's original meaning in this comment.

After Huang defined poetry, he wrote: "It should not [have the style of] an intense debate within the Imperial court, of abusive complaints shouted in the street, or of angry cursing of one's neighbours or guests." Liu Dajie explains Huang's words

with, "He thinks that poetry is an expression of human emotion and nature, and cannot be employed to criticize politics and discuss right and wrong."²⁸ And when Liu explained the quote, "As for [some people who] further try to slander or make insults with such poetry, [so that they] stick their necks out under the battle axe, or remove their armour before arrows in order to release their anger of the moment...", he wrote, "If poetry expresses slandering or usurping politics, [the poet] will suffer disaster under the axe and before arrows..."²⁹ It is obvious that Liu Dajie understands Huang's words as comments on poetic content.

Zhou Yukai quoted Huang's words in a discussion of his poetic theory. He thinks that Huang's meaning is related to "The way in which poetry interferes with reality."³⁰ Although he correctly points out that Huang's view against "slandering or insulting with such poetry" is associated with Huang's aesthetic taste, he believes even more that Huang's original meaning is "to counteract strong criticism of current affairs within poetry."³¹ So, in fact, Huang's words are understood by Zhou as mainly commenting on the lack of political function of poetry.

28 Liu Dajie, *op.cit.*, p.65.

29 Ibid.

30 Zhou Yukai, *op.cit.*, p.90.

31 Ibid.

Yet, what Huang chiefly discusses in the words quoted by Liu and Zhou is poetic style. In other words, Huang discusses how a poet should express his thoughts and emotions in his poetry, not what should be expressed in poetry or how poetry functions for readers, which have both already been touched upon in Huang's definition of poetry and in his comment "those that hear him are thus, to some extent, urged and exhorted". A closer look at the text might help us to further clarify Huang's original meaning.

We know from the first sentence quoted above that Huang thinks human emotions and nature should be expressed as poetic content. In the second sentence, Huang applies human manners displayed in debating, shouting, or cursing as metaphors for a political criticism in which poetic content should not be expressed. In the next sentence, Huang's description of his ideal poet as one who "should be loyal, honest, sincere, and respectful," not only delineates the moral qualities and culture which a poet should have, but also implies a relation between poet and poetic style. In Huang's opinion, only a poet with moral qualities can write poetry in an elegant style. Then, in a positive way, Huang more clearly states his preferred poetic style by using human manners as metaphors--"to release them [human emotion and nature] by producing a tune that either groans or laughs." So far, Huang's view of poetic style is displayed through a sharp contrast between negative words ("debating, shouting and cursing,") and positive words ("a tune that either

groans or laughs.") In the discussion that follows the topic becomes poetic content and poetic style through the transitive phrase "qi fa wei" 其发为 (As for...further...). Huang's purpose is to explain that even political criticism expressed in an extreme way can be a poetic disaster.

From the analysis above, it may be concluded that poetic style is the major topic discussed in the comment. Also, Huang favours an elegant style of poetry. This view of poetic style is a very important aspect of Huang's theory of poetry, which relates to his low estimation of Pragmatism, and is consistently repeated in his other comments. For example, in "Ba Gao Zimian Shi" 跋高子勉诗 (Inscribing Gao Zimian's Poems), he praises Gao's elegant style, "You enrich your poems with your erudition, and create them in a gentle and respectful manner."³² In a letter replying to Hong Jufu 洪驹父, he criticizes Su Shi's political criticism, and suggests that Hong should not follow it saying, "Dongpo's [东坡] literal works are the most subtle in the world, but his weakness is that he tends to curse the world. You must be careful not to follow his example."³³

Perhaps the reason Huang dislikes political criticism of poetry is that it conflicts with the oblique style³⁴ he favours.

32 YZHXSWJ, vol.26, p.298.

33 YZHXSWJ, vol.19, p.203.

34 Huang's implicit poetic style is examined in more detail in Chapter Three.

In his letter to Chao Yuanzhong 晁元忠, praising Chao's avoidance of social problems, Huang clearly expresses his fondness of an oblique poetic style, "I received your poems which are profound and significant in an oblique way, and do not touch the sensitive subjects of the times..."³⁵ Also in his letter to Wang Guanfu 王观复, he repeats the same idea, "All the new poems you sent me are significant and profound in an oblique way."³⁶ The reflection of Huang's oblique poetic style in his poetic practice is accurately pointed out by Kojiro Yoshikawa, "Earlier poets have given frank expression to their passion--even the introverted Tu Fu--but this type of emotional expression Huang T'ing-chien deliberately avoided."³⁷

A third level of meaning in the comment above (p.2) is Huang's concern with poetic tunes and rhythm. He says, "It is the beauty of poetry that these tunes can then be sung in harmony with musical laws and can be danced to with shields and feather fans waving." In a related comment found in a letter to a friend he wrote, "All the new poems you sent me are significant and profound in an oblique way, but the language is rigid and does

35 Ibid., p.196.

36 Ibid., p.201.

37 Kojiro Yoshikawa, An Introduction to Sung Poetry, trans. Burton Watson, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1969, p. 126.

not fit musical laws."³⁸ In "Zai Yong Qian Yun Zeng Zimian Si Shou" 再用前韵贈子勉四首 (Rhyming with Zimian Again), he wrote, "Behaviour should be altered to compete with the light of the sun and moon, / Poetry should be sung and matched to a stringed instrument and song."³⁹ Thus, in Huang's opinion poetry should be musical and rhythmical, and this is how the beauty of poetic form should be realized. According to the characteristics of Chinese classical poetry, the tone of words, rhyme, line caesuras, and metric pattern should comprise the main elements of music and rhythm. Therefore, these elements became objects which Huang concentrated on in his poetic practice. Although Huang does not theoretically discuss how to use these elements to produce poetic music and rhythm, he considers poetic form from an aesthetic angle, realizes the importance of music and rhythm in poetry, and carries out a remarkable experiment in the innovation of Chinese poetic form which we shall discuss in Chapter Three.

II. Huang's Theory of Poetic Technique

Huang is remembered mainly for his theory of poetic technique which influenced generations of poets who came after him and brought about the formation of the Jiangxi School. In his book of poetic criticism, Yan Yu 严羽 (13 A.D.), a Song

38 YZHXSWJ, vol.19, p.201.

39 SGSZ, Neiji, vol.16, p.296.

dynasty literary critic, comments on Huang's influence on the Jiangxi School, "After Dongpo [Su Shi], Shangu [Huang] wrote poems based on his own ideas so that the style of the Tang Dynasty was changed. He concentrated heavily on poetic skills. Later on, his method became prevalent in the whole country and [his followers] were known as the Jiangxi School."⁴⁰ Also, Liu Kezhuang 刘克庄 (1187--1269) another well-known Song Dynasty critic and poet, wrote of Huang, "He absorbed all the advantages of the poetic patterns of the hundred of schools of poetry, and made a thorough exploration of the changes in poetic form through the ages. He established his own style in creating ancient verse and regulated verse by hunting for [queer] writings and something unheard-of. He does not [rashly] write poetry, even a word or half a sentence, and he was the father of the current dynasty's school of poetry."⁴¹ Here, both critics characterize Huang neither by his poetic content nor by his general view of poetry, but his poetic technique. Although their conclusions are generated from their analyses of Huang's poetic practice, the theory of poetic technique closely related to Huang's poetic practice is not neglected.

Poetic technique was extensively discussed as a major aspect

40 Yan Yu, Cang Lang Shi Hua 沧浪诗话, Taipei: Dong Sheng Chu Ban Shi Ye You Xian Gong Si 东升出版事业有限公司, 1980, p.24.

41 SBCK, Liu Kezhuang, Hou Cun Xian Sheng Da Quan Ji 后村先生大全集, vol. 95, p.823.

of Huang's poetic theory in his writings. Yet, what does Huang's theory consist of? What is its essence? In this chapter, we will attempt to answer these questions mainly through an analysis of Huang's own remarks.

A. The Content of Huang's Method

In Huang's writings, he often mentions fa du or fa 法度、法, (method) and li 理 (order). For example, in his "Da He Jing Weng Shu" 答何静翁书 (Reply He Jingweng), he wrote, "In your discussion of the ancients, the meaning is profound and briefly stated. This is the creative method (fa du)."⁴² In his "Yu Wang Guanfu Shu San Shou" 与王观复书三首 (Three Poems To Wang Guanfu), he wrote, "to strive to make unusual words is certainly a defect of literary works. Writing should take order (li) as a principle. With order (li), the use of words and sentences is smooth, and writing is naturally out of the common run."⁴³ In Huang's mind, it is obvious that fa or li is the method which a poet should follow. Although Huang does not define his method in his writings, we can see what most concerns him are zhang fa 章法 (poetic structure), ju fa 句法 (line structure), and zi fa 字法 (the rule of key words). Indeed, Huang's method basically consists of these three elements. In the following sections, we

42 YZHXSWJ, vol.19, p.198.

43 Ibid, p.201.

will examine these in greater detail and analyze the relation among them.

i. Poetic Structure

Huang's zhang fa means "poetic structure". Huang thinks that poetic structure should have a convoluted style and produce a surprising effect. Once he employed za ju 杂剧 (poetic drama) to embody the design.

Writing a poem is like making a dramatic performance. One must first set the stage, and then that having been done, one must tell a proper joke (da hun 打诨), only then can the performance begin.⁴⁴

According to Wang Jisi 王季思 (1906--), an expert in Yuan Dynasty za ju, da hun is an impromptu interlude of two roles in za ju.⁴⁵ In da hun, one actor in a role named can jun 参军, first makes comic gestures and remarks. Then another actor in a role named cang hu 苍鹘 questions him, and the can jun gives an unexpected explanation. Here, Huang compares a part of poetic

44 Wang Zhifang 王直方, "Wang Zhifang Shi Hua" 王直方诗话, Song Shi Hua Ji Yi 宋诗话辑佚, (abbreviated SSHJY) ed. Guo Shaoyu, Beijing: Ha Fu Yan Jing Xue She 哈佛燕京学社, 1937, p.14.

Translated in A.A.Richett's "Method and Intuition: The Poetic Theories of Huang Ting-chien", Chinese Approaches to Literature, ed., Richett A.A., Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978, p.100.

45 Wang Jisi, "Da Hun, Can Chan Yu Jiangxi Shi Pai" 打诨, 参禅与江西诗派, Yu Lun Xuan Qu Lun 玉轮轩曲论, Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju 中华书局, 1980, p.242.

structure to da hun. As applied to poetic structure, the part is a deliberate digression in poetic writing. By using it, a poet avoids a straightforward style. Also, after the digression is subtly responded to, an unexpected effect is produced, either surprise, excitement, or humour.

Although the authenticity of the quotation above might be questioned, there are other similar clarifications which enable us to see Huang's views on poetic structure:

The arrangement of writing must be carefully designed. When I meet the young, I always show them the convoluted expression of meaning in Yuan Dao (原道).⁴⁶

Every time a poem or prose is written, a writer must first establish the general meaning. A lengthy work should be achieved to express the meaning through intricate convolution.⁴⁷

Here, Huang clearly sets the standard of poetic structure as "intricate convolution" and "the convoluted expression of meaning," which can be considered practical techniques to achieve an unexpected effect. Thus, comparing Huang's point of view in the two comments with his point in the first one, we find that he prefers an oblique and intricate poetic structure to a simple, straightforward one (more detail in Chapter Three). Here

46 SSHJY, Fan Wen, "Qian Xi Shi Yan" 潜溪诗眼, p.399.

47 SSHJY, Wang Zhifang, op.cit., p.4.

In my translation above, I consulted Richett's English explanation of Huang's remark in her Chinese Approaches to Literature, p.100.

it reminds us of Huang's fondness for an oblique poetic style discussed above. In a sense, his oblique poetic style is reflected in his poetic creation through an oblique and intricate poetic structure.

ii. Line Structure

Among the three elements of Huang's method, ju fa (line structure) is most often mentioned in his writings. We hardly find any Chinese poet throughout the ages who stresses ju fa as much as Huang. He considered it an important measure to evaluate poetic value, and said, "The new poems which you sent me are mellow and show line structure."⁴⁸ He thinks that "If a poet does not know line structure,"⁴⁹ he is not capable of writing a line as good as Xie Tiao's 谢朓 "The clear river lies as smooth as silk."⁵⁰

Mo Lifeng thinks that "Huang Tingjian's pattern (黄庭坚体) named by his critics basically refers to his line structure."⁵¹ It is just this "pattern" that is treated like a valuable treasure by Huang's followers in the Jiangxi School. Thus, we can see the importance of ju fa in Huang's poetic theory

48 YZHXSWJ, vol.19, p.198.

49 SGSZ, Neiji, vol.4, p.76.

50 BBCS, Xie Tiao, Xie Xuancheng Ji 谢宣城集, vol.3, p.11.

51 Mo Lifeng, op.cit., p.50.

and practice.

Yet, what does Huang's ju fa consist of? First, originality is a key point. He wrote in a poem to Su Shi: "You create such a unique law in line structure, even a fortified city would surrender to you,"⁵² and "Heard of Huangzhou's [Su Shi] new line structure, / Even the old man [Huang himself] really wants to raise a white flag."⁵³ Thus, in Huang's ju fa he emphasizes what is "unique" and "new". Secondly, Huang thinks the power of poetic sentences is an important element of his line structure. He praises Yu Xin's 庾信 powerful poetic sentences, "It is Yu Kaifu's (Yu Xin) advantage that he would rather contradict poetic regulation than make a weak poetic sentence."⁵⁴ A similar view is also stated in his letter to Lei Taijian 雷太簡, "His [Lei Taijian] line structure is sharp and strict, yet mild."⁵⁵ Besides, he thinks that "Line structure should be pretty, graceful, clear, and fresh."⁵⁶ He told his student "Only by studying Du Zimei's poems written after his arrival at Kuizhou, can you find that his poetic sentences become so plain that a great subtlety is produced."⁵⁷ From these comments, we can tell

52 SGSZ, Neiji, vol.5, p.85.

53 Ibid., vol.17, p.320.

54 YZHXSWJ, vol.26, p.295.

55 Ibid., p.294.

56 SGSZ, Neiji, vol.16, p.297

57 YZHXSWJ, vol.19, p.202.

that clearness and plain are also required by Huang.

Theoretically, these points can be considered as the principle of Huang's ju fa. Yet, most scholars analyze Huang's ju fa from the angle of poetic practice, since Huang does not theoretically touch upon all the rules of line structure that are reflected in his poetic practice. Zhang Bingquan generalizes Huang's rules of line structure from his poetic practice as "the method of organizing characters or words in poetic sentences or couplets."⁵⁸ "The method" consists of three elements: powerful poetic sentences, attention to the "ju yan" 句眼 (sentential eye), and an emphasis on the couplet.⁵⁹ Mo Lifeng also points out the importance of Huang's rules of line structure and thinks it consists of the harsh tone,⁶⁰ condensed, new and strange meanings, and a prosaic tendency in sentential grammar.⁶¹ Comparing Zhang's view with Mo's, the emphasis on the couplet and the harsh tone should be considered to be Huang's fondness for imitating and developing Du Fu's ao lu (the innovative form of regulated verse [examined in Chapter Three]). The power of the poetic sentence and condensed, new and strange

58 Zhang Bingquan, op.cit., p.22.

59 Ibid., pp.126-128.

60 We will examine Huang's "harsh tone" in our discussion of his strangeness of syntactical structure and sound forms in Chapter Three.

61 Mo Lifeng, op.cit., p.49.

sentential meanings are, no doubt, Huang's pursuit of the artistic effect, which we have examined above. As for the prosaic tendency in sentential grammar, it is certainly a creative trait of Huang's, which reflects the influence of Han Yu 韩愈. Yet, the elements pointed out by Zhang and Mo are Huang's means to realize powerful and original sentences in his poetry.

iii. The Rule of Key Words

Huang's zi fa (the rule of key words) basically means a careful selection and arrangement of certain important words in a poem, which is also known as lian zi 练字 (to refine words). He states in his comment on Yu Xin's poem that Yu "prefers irregularity when using words, not words that are common."⁶² This tells us that Huang is especially interested in the use of original words because an outstanding poetic effect can be produced if "the arrangement of a word is marvellous."⁶³

Accurate selection and proper arrangement of a significant word is another standard of Huang's rule of key words. He said, "The use of allusion is firmly grounded and appropriate, and the use of words is expressive."⁶⁴ The standard is used by him as a scale to judge his student's poems, as in "His [Lei Taijian] use

62 YZHXSWJ, vol.26, p.295.

63 SGSZ, Neiji, vol.16, p.298.

64 YZHXSWJ, vol.26, p.298.

of words is firmly grounded and meaningful."⁶⁵

Also, Huang thinks that "Poetic words should draw upon vast resources, and be refined."⁶⁶ By this, Huang means the range of selecting poetic words should not be limited. Considering Huang's poetic practice, he indeed gleans poetic words from all kinds of sources, including colloquialisms, religious terms, and he is especially fond of classical works. By doing this, the poetic language becomes fresh and vigorous.

"Ju yan" (sentential eye) was discovered by Huang in Du Fu's poetry. He says, "The Reminder's (Du Fu) verses had eye, [The Magistrate of] P'eng-tse's (Tao Yuanming) meaning lay in a stringless lute [zither]."⁶⁷ "Sentential eye" means a key word in a poetic sentence, which is carefully selected and original. "Sentential eye" can highlight the meaning of a poetic sentence and bring the art of it to life as Huang says, "To arrange a word to function as the key to a door."⁶⁸

In short, it seems that we may say that Huang's rules of key words are based on accurate selection from extensive sources, and their proper arrangement in a poetic sentence. A key word should display a poet's originality. And "sentential eye" is the crux

65 Ibid., p.294.

66 SGSZ, Neiji, vol.16, p.297.

67 SGSZ, Neiji, vol.16, p.295. Trans. Richett, op.cit., p.106.

68 YZHXSWJ, vol.26, p.298.

which a poet should pay attention to.

B. The Source of Method

Huang's theory of poetry not only brought out the method discussed above, but also introduced a way to grasp this method. That way is simply to learn from ancient poets. Huang particularly underscored reading the works of the ancients. Praising Su Shi's works he said, "If [a poet] does not have 10,000 volumes of books in mind, and his brush has traces of this vulgar world in it, how can he create such works?"⁶⁹ He thought the reason that Wan Guanfu could not write good poetry was that he did "not read to tatters 10,000 volumes, and did not get all the deeper meaning in his reading of the ancient poets."⁷⁰ In another comment criticizing Wang Kuanfu's poems, he points out, "[your] language is rigid and does not fit musical laws, and the flavour of your words does not suit the original meaning," because you "have not read the works of the ancient poets carefully and extensively."⁷¹ Huang instructed his nephew Hong Jufu, "If you paid more attention to reading the works of the ancient poets, it would be easier for you to reach the [heights

69 Ibid., p.293.

70 Ibid., p.292

71 Ibid., vol.19, p.201.

of the ancient poets."⁷²

In addition to these general comments, Huang also discussed learning from the ancient poets in terms of the three elements of his own method: poetic structure; line structure; and key words. In an explanation of poetic structure, Huang took Han Yu's Yuan Dao as an example for his disciples, and analyzed Du Fu's "Zeng Wei Jiansu" 赠韦见素 (To Wei Jiansu) in order to describe how Du Fu expressed his intent in a convoluted way.⁷³ As for line structure, he asked his students to study Du Fu's poems in order to gain "the plain of poetic sentences" and produce "great subtlety."⁷⁴ He thought that Chen Shiyong 陈适用 and Chen Luchang 陈履常 also benefited from the ancient poets: "You sent me pentasyllabic poems, / They show that your line structure follows Bao Zhao's (鲍照)."⁷⁵ "His [Chen Luchang] poems originated from Old Du's line structure. The present poets cannot compete with you."⁷⁶ As for the rule of key words, Huang thought the reason "Gao Zimian used an allusion like a military order and arranged a word to function like a key to a door," was that "He takes Du

72 Ibid., p.203.

73 SSHJY, Fan Wen, op.cit., p.399.

74 See Footnote 58 at page 28.

75 SGSZ, Waiji, vol.10, p.223.

76 YZHXSWJ, vol.19, p.199

Zimei's poetry for his standard of creation."⁷⁷

In the preceding examples, Huang clearly indicates that the source of his method is to learn from the ancients. Yet, how does a poet learn from ancient poets? To answer this question, Huang proposes "evolving from the embryo and changing the bone" 夺胎换骨⁷⁸ and "changing iron into gold." 点铁成金⁷⁹ These two phrases have caused intense controversy in Chinese literary history. The members of the Jiangxi School saw this approach as a valuable technique. Conversely, certain critics curse it as stealing a trick, as Teng Chung Lung 邓中龙, a modern scholar in Hong Kong, wrote, "The so-called 'evolving from the embryo and changing the bone', is actually just like a car thief in a city who steals a car and repaints it."⁸⁰ Wang Ruoxu 王若虚, Jin 金 Dynasty poet and critic, strongly advocated the view that Huang's phrases were only fancy terms for plagiarism:

In Luzhi's [Huang] poetic comments, there are metaphors of so-called "evolving from the embryo and changing the bone," and "changing iron into gold" which are considered mottos. In my opinion, they are only good-sounding names for plagiarism. Luzhi loves to exceed others, and is ashamed

77 YZHXSWJ, vol. 26, p.298.

78 Bai Bu Cong Shu Ji Cheng 百部丛书集成, (abbreviated BBCSJC) Hui Hong 惠洪, Leng Zhai Ye Hua 冷斋夜话, vol.1, p.8. Trans. James Liu, The Art of Chinese Poetry, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962, p.78.

79 YZHXSWJ, vol.26, p.289. Trans. Liu, *ibid.*, p.78.

80 Teng Chung Lung, Song Shi Chu Tan 宋诗初探 (A Study of the Poetry of the Sung Dynasty in China), Hong Kong: Zhong Guo Wen Xue Yan Jiu She 中国文学研究所, 1985, p.76.

that his own verses derive from the classical poets, so he uses lame arguments and invents fancy terms.⁸¹

We cannot deny that some of Huang's poems are imitations of ancient poets, but Huang's main tendency is to apply his approach to create innovations of ancient poems and to illustrate his originality. We will not attempt to argue here whether or not Huang is successful in his approach, for the point we want to make clear is that Huang's ideas in these two phrases can be considered as a way to learn line structure and the use of key words from ancient poets. Now let us look at the contexts of the two phrases:

When Du Fu wrote poetry and Han Yu wrote prose, there was not a single word that did not have an origin in some place; now later men have not done much reading and so they say Han and Tu made up these phrases themselves. Those who wrote in the old days were truly able to mold 10,000 things; even though they selected the stale words of the ancients, once they applied brush and ink, it was just like a grain of the elixir of immortality changing iron into gold.⁸²

The meaning of poetry is unlimited, but man's talent has a limit. Even a T'ao Ch'ien or a Tu Fu could not seek unlimited meaning with limited talent. Thus not to change the meaning but to create one's own words to express it is called the method of changing the bone; to introduce one's own meaning but [use the original words] to describe it is called the method of evolving from the embryo.⁸³

81 CSJC, Wang Ruoxu, Fu Nan Yi Lao Ji 濟南遺老集, vol.4, 1935, p.257.

82 YZHXSWJ, vol.19, p.204. Trans. Liu, *ibid.*, p.78.

83 BBCS, Hui Hong, *op.cit.*, vol.1, p.8. Trans. Liu *ibid.*, p.78.

In the first text, Huang suggested how ancient poets made stale words innovative in their poetry and prose. In other words, he described how a poet might learn from ancient poets in terms of the use of key words, even though he overstated that "there was no single word that did not have an origin in some place." In the second text, Huang also discussed how to borrow the meaning of a word or sentence from ancient poets to create his own word or sentence, and how a poet could give his own meaning to the word or sentence of the ancient poet. Clearly, this approach refers to the rules of key words and line structures. The main point of the two phrases is the innovation of the works of ancient poets, not simply imitation. Thus, theoretically, Wang Ruoxu misrepresented Huang's meaning. Practically, Wang overstated Huang's imitation of ancient poets. Furthermore, the second quote also defines his reason for his approach. The reason (as fully quoted above) is "The meaning of poetry is unlimited, but man's talent has a limit. Even a T'ao Ch'ien (Tao Qian) or a Tu Fu (Du Fu) could not seek unlimited meaning with limited talent." In one sense, Huang is correct, because if the meaning of poetry is limited, poetry could have hardly survived in the world for thousands of years of poetic exploration. Also, an individual can never exhaust the meaning of poetry no matter how original or versatile he is. Yet, it is doubtful whether the premise follows from Huang's conclusion--"changing the bone and evolving from the embryo." There are many ways to make up for

"limited talent" to create poetry, and Huang's approach is one of them.

C. The Principle of Method

Huang's method and approach to grasping the method make several modern scholars cast him as a plagiarist. Guo Shaoyu, a well-known critic of literary history, takes Wang Ruoxu's comment (see p.35) about Huang as the "final conclusion on Shangu's poetry".⁸⁴ Liu Dajie thinks that "It is certain that [Huang] has taken the road upon which he only imitated the poetic form of ancient poets."⁸⁵ Yet, it seems to me that these scholars and critics ignore Huang's originality. If Huang were only a poet who rigidly followed rules and regulations, he would not have become a great one. In fact, he is "not willing to be a man following buffalo."⁸⁶

In our discussion of the content of Huang's method, we have seen him highlight originality in the rule of key words and line structure. In our discussion of the source of Huang's method, we have also shown his emphasis on innovation when learning from the ancients. As for Huang's dominant ideas in his theory of poetry, he stresses originality more than learning from the ancients. He

84 Guo Shaoyu, Zhong Guo Wen Xue Pi Ping Shi, p.211

85 Liu Dajie, op.cit., p.69.

86 SGSZ, Neiji, vol.16, p.294.

wrote, "Writing is a kind of art of the mind,/ There is no definite track since the old days."⁸⁷ He opposes simply imitating the ancients, saying "One is behind others if you take the principle of creation to be imitation,/The only thing real is to create your own style."⁸⁸

These show a different side of Huang. He reminds us of poets like Li Bai and Su Shi who created poetry by their own individual talent. Yet, how can we join these two seeming opposites of originality and learning from the ancients? How does Huang maintain a balance between the two. In order to clear up this question, it is necessary for us to explore what Huang learned from the ancient poets.

Huang's intent is very clear, he wants to learn the rules and regulations of poetic creation from the ancients. In "Da Hong Jufu Shu" 答洪驹父书 (Reply to Hong Jufu), he wrote: "Your prose is good, but lacks the carpenter's line marker [rule and regulation] of ancient writers."⁸⁹ Thus, to Huang there are some rules and regulations of poetry which must be acquired from the ancient poets. Some of the content of his method is the reflection of these ancient rules and regulations. Huang's remark recorded in Fan Wen's "Qian Xi Shi Yan" 潜溪诗眼 gives us

87 SGSZ, Waiji, vol.12, p.270.

88 SGSZ, Waiji Bu 外集补, vol.2, p.46.

89 YZHXSWJ, vol.19, p.203.

the clearest answer to our questions. After an analysis of a poem by Du Fu, Huang remarked;

This poem was recorded by former worthies as the very best of poetry; that is to say, its arrangement is most correct in form, just as the various kinds of government offices, mansions, halls, and side-rooms each have their set place and cannot be scattered about helter-skelter. Han Yu's "Yuan Dao" and the "Canon of Yao" in the Shang Shu are similar in this; all the rest can be called "changed form." Now changed form is like moving clouds, flowing water; in the beginning they have no definite substance. They come forth from the subtly mysterious, are wrested from heavenly creation, and cannot be sought in a mold. But if we take correct form as the basis, then natural laws operate in them. For example, in deploying troops both irregular and correct movements will occur. If, in the beginning, one does not know what is correct but rather is sidetracked into an irregular tactic, confusion will result and in the end, defeat."⁹⁰

Here, Huang clearly pointed to the rules and regulations of poetic creation within ancient works, and the relation between these rules and regulations and originality. He used two concepts to describe the creative methods of poetry. One is

90 SSHJY, Fan Wen, op.cit., p.399-400. Trans., Rickett, op.cit., p.104.

Concerning Huang's concepts "correct form", "changed form", and "natural laws" as translated by Rickett: "Correct form" basically means the common rules of literary creation, such as the four-part structure, rhyme scheme, use of antithesis, and metrical pattern in a regulated verse. "Changed form" means a poet's innovative variation of common rules. Yet, a poet cannot completely change the common rules as he wishes, and a poet's variations must follow "natural laws". "Natural laws" can never be regulated but are accepted forever, because they agree with common rules, but go beyond common rules of literary creation.

Since "bian ti" 变体 (changed form) chiefly means a poet's innovative variation of common rules, it might be better to translate this term as "variation".

"correct form", which he speaks of as "correct movement"; the other is "changed form", which he speaks of as "irregular movement". "Correct form" is the "carpenter's line marker," or the rules and regulations of poetic creation. "Correct form" is unchangeable, and can be acquired because there are "natural laws operating in them." Huang uses an example from the works of the ancient poets to sum up "correct form". His purpose is to demonstrate what a poet should learn from ancient poets.

As for "changed form", Huang thinks that it is not acquired, but comes from a poet's creative talent. With "changed form", "correct form" is no longer to be found in poetry; as Huang said "Looking at the poems written by Du Fu after his arrival at Kuizhou, and the prose written by Han Tuizhi (Han Yu) after his return to the imperial court from Chaozhou, they are naturally joined together without bothering to follow poetic rules."⁹¹

Huang also clearly explains the relation between "correct form" and "changed form." "An irregular tactic" is the "perfect realm" which can be reached through a poet's originality. But, "correct form" is the basis of "irregular tactic" which comes from a skilful mastery of "correct form". A poet must "understand the old law in order to produce what is new and strange."⁹² Without "correct form", "confusion will result, and

91 YZHXSWJ, vol.19, p.201.

92 SGSZ, Neiji, vol.7, p.122.

in the end defeat." This is why Huang always advised his friends and disciples to attain "correct form". Yet, after mastering "correct form", a poet should not adhere to it. Huang wrote, "As for a writer who wants to lift up his level of writing to the height of Tai Mountain which rises abruptly and steeply, clouds hanging in the sky, who wants to empower and magnify his writing, as waves of a river in the eighth month, and a huge fish which freely swims the seas and can swallow a boat, he should not stick to a carpenter's line marker which would make his writing vulgar."⁹³ In Huang's mind, "changing coarse into exquisite, changing old into new" is "to be ever victorious" and shows "a poet's uniqueness."⁹⁴ Huang, at the age of sixty, summarized his creative experience by describing the goal he pursued for his whole life: "Tingjian's brush is old. I begin to be aware of the difficulty of arranging verses and sentences. It is most important to find some place the ancient poets have not paid attention to. Then, my voice can go beyond others."⁹⁵

In conclusion, Huang's theory basically consists of his method, the source of his method, and the principle of his method. The method consists of the three elements: poetic structure, line structure, and the rule of key words. The

93 YZHXSWJ, vol.19, p.204.

94 SGSZ, Neiji, vol.21, p.224.

95 SSHJY, Cai Tao 蔡绦, "Xi Qing Shi Hua" 西清诗话, p.364.

method can be grasped through learning from the ancients. Yet, the principle--a poet's original creativity--should come through in the application of the method and the process of learning from the ancients.

Chapter Two

Poetic Theory and Practice: Poetic Content

The theoretical discussion of Huang's poetic views in Chapter One has prepared us to survey Huang's poetic theory through his scattered remarks, and to clear up several disputes regarding this theory. However, our approach is far from perfect, for we have run the risk of divorcing Huang's theory from his poetic practice to arrive at the conclusions in Chapter One. Therefore, in order to correct this defect, we will examine Huang's poetic practice in the following two chapters to further support our analysis of Huang's poetic theory. In this chapter, we will focus on Huang's poetic content to correspond to our discussion of his general views of poetry, i.e., his views on poetic content and political function. By doing this, not only will we underscore our conclusions on his poetic views, but we will also obtain a general view of his dominant poetic content.

Compared to other Chinese poets, Huang is prolific. Besides poems that are lost or that he burned himself, there are 1,956 extant poems.¹ Although Huang wrote a huge amount of poetry during his life, his major subjects are fairly limited. Certainly they are not as far-reaching as Du Fu's and Bai Juyi's, both of whom reflected political affairs and reality. There are

1 Mo Lifeng, op.cit., p.24.

certain subjects which he frequently adopts and which we may roughly divide into four major areas: self-expression; descriptions of nature; depictions of daily life; and discussions of philosophy.

I. Self-expression

Many scholars think that Huang is an introverted poet because he observes his internal world more than the external one. Therefore, as he himself defines poetry as an expression of human emotion and nature, a great many of his poems express his own feelings and thoughts. These are distinct from poetry that has the definite aim of reflecting political affairs. From these poems of self-expression we can obtain insight into Huang's dominant poetic content, as well as Huang himself.

Although there is great variety in the subjects Huang uses for his self-expression, we might divide these subjects into several categories. First of all, Huang often displays moral character, which is characterized by an indifference to worldly affairs. He reacts to worldly affairs with an open mind and the approach of one who sees the world as illusory. Moreover, he shows us he is a person who pursues the spiritual realm instead of fame and fortune. This is the opposite of those intellectuals whose ambition for office is molded by Confucianism. Clearly, Huang's goals were influenced by the concepts of Buddhist Emptiness 空观 and Taoist Inaction 无为. They were also influenced

by Tao Yuanming's poetry which reflects Tao's experiences in the world, and his indifference to it which is viewed by Chinese intellectuals as a virtue. Here is an excerpt from "Xi Shang Yin" 溪上吟 (Reciting Beside a Stream) which shows Huang's indifference to worldly affairs.

You uphold your reputation and moral integrity in life,
Rush about as a moth darting into a flame.
When you repent what you have done,
Everything will be in a grave covered with weeds.²

In this poem, the poet exposes his interior thoughts. He measures the limit of human life against worldly appetites in order to illustrate the worthlessness of pursuing fame and gain. Another example of this theme is found in the following poem:

Pure Brightness Festival

Peach and plum flowers smiled during this happy
festival time,
The wilds and deserted fields brought people
sadness.
The Spring thunder awakened dragon and snake from
hibernation,
With abundant rainfall, trees and grass in the suburbs
turned soft.
After begging for leftover oblations, one³ bragged

2 SGSZ, Waiji, vol.1, p.2.

3 A person of Qi 齊 state often went out to beg for leftover oblations. After he came back full of food and drink, he bragged to his wife and concubine that he had dinner with men of wealth and consequence. From the story, Mencius tells us, "few of all those who seek wealth and position fail to give their wives and concubines cause to weep with shame."

See SBCK, Mengzi 孟子, Mengzi 孟子, vol.8, p.71. and trans. D.C.Lau, Mencius, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1984, vol.1, book.4, pp.175-177.

about it to his wife and concubine,
Another gentleman⁴ would rather be burned to death than
become a high official.

Who should be seen as a worthy or a fool through the
ages?

The grave mounds covered with grasses, which both are
destined to share, meet the eye everywhere.⁵

This poem could be considered as one that expresses the poet's impression of a traditional Chinese festival. Even though in the first two couplets Huang describes the festival atmosphere and the season, the focus of the poem is what thoughts the festival inspire within him. Therefore, whatever the description of the festival atmosphere, or recollection of the festival's origins, they actually serve to display Huang's deep pondering over this world and the value of life. Huang expresses his indifference to wealth and fame through allusions, and denies traditional social standards in terms of inevitable death as in the above poems. By doing this, he shows us one who is above politics and worldly considerations.

The second aspect of Huang's self-expression can be found in his frequent longing for seclusion. This is, of course, closely related to his indifference to worldly affairs. Chinese

4 Here refers to Jie Zhitui 介之推. After he helped the king of Jin 晋 state Jin Wengong 晋文公 to rebuild Jin state, he secluded himself in the mountains. He refused Jin Wengong's offer of official title so that he was burned to death in the mountain.

See Chun Qiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu 春秋左传注, ed. Yang Bojun 杨伯峻, Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju, 1981, pp. 418-419.

5 SGSZ, Waiji, vol.1, p.10.

intellectuals were for centuries drawn to spending time in seclusion writing poetry, and this was most appropriately summarized by Tao Yuanming's depiction of the intellectual's life as a hermit, "Picking up chrysanthemums under the eastern fence, / Leisurely, catching sight of the southern hills,"⁶ These intellectuals not only took refuge in seclusion when their official careers were in trouble, but they believed they gained great moral qualities by removing themselves at regular intervals from the world. In seclusion they could appreciate the natural beauty of the world, be free from involvement in political conflict, and pursue their spiritual goals. As Li Shangyin 李商隐 (813-858) wrote, "Always remember to return to the lake with grey hair, / Longing to withdraw from the world and return to the boat [that will take you back to the lake]." ⁷ It is obvious that Huang's poetic creation is influenced by traditional ideas. Even when he was a young man and had not yet experienced much suffering from his official career, he expressed a longing for seclusion. We see this in a poem he wrote when he was only 25 years old:

Rhyming with My Classmate⁸ Pei Zhongmou

In the spring breeze, we met each other in carts

6 See footnote 19 in Chapter one at p.9.

7 Li Shangyin, Li Shangyin Shi Ji Shu Zhu 李商隐诗集疏注, Beijing: Ren Ming Chu Ban She, 1985, p.330.

8 Those who appear in the same examination grade list for the imperial exams address each other as Tong Nian 同年 (classmate).

beside Ru River,
 Bed to bed at the inn, we intimately talked on felt of
 monk sheets.
 It was only about one hundred li between Wuyang and
 Xie,
 Then you and I were both young.
 As if from seeds, grey hair will appear on our heads,
 We love to return to the green mountains, but we have
 no money to buy land,
 What a hazy, sandy, bamboo-covered Jiangnan
 shore!
 But, it has been yielded to sleeping egrets.⁹

The poem is inspired by his friendship to Pei Zhongmou. It begins
 by recalling their first encounter beside the Ru River, after he
 and his friend both had taken official posts in Xie 叶 and Wuyang
 舞阳 counties, respectively. The following three lines continue
 by describing their friendship and close contacts. Images like
 "chun feng" 春风 (spring breeze) and the use of words like "ju shao
 nian" 俱少年 (both young) evoke an atmosphere of joy. Yet, from
 the fifth line onward the poem suddenly shifts to a sad mood as
 if to create a sharp contrast with the first part of the poem.
 Although the poet should have been vigorous and ambitious at his
 age (as implied in the first four lines), what he unburdens to
 his close friend is his inner desire to return to his home town,
 described as an ideal and poetic place, and enjoy its natural
 beauty and a peaceful life.

Huang more clearly and strongly displays his personal
 interests in seclusion in the poem below written at the mature

9 SGSZ, Waiji, vol.1, p.13.

age of 39 years old.

Climbing Pleasant Tower

The idiot settled state business,
Walked east and west on Pleasant Tower,
 leaning on the clear evening sky.
Above thousands of mountains with withered trees,
 the sky is vast,
Above a line of the transparent river,
 the moon is clear and bright.
 A red string of my zither has broken¹⁰, for my
 Beauty¹¹ is absent,
I reluctantly show my welcoming eyes¹² only because of
 good wine.
Hopefully I will play a flute in the boat home,
I have made a covenant with the white gulls.¹³

The title of the poem tells us this is a poem describing
deng gao 登高 (ascending a height). Ascending a height is a
traditional custom and a common topic of Chinese poetry. A poet

10 "A red string of my zither" alludes to Zhong Ziqi 钟子期 and Bo Ya 伯牙. Bo was a good player of the zither and Zhong was the only one who could understand Bo's playing. After Zhong was dead, Bo broke his zither, and no longer played because there was no one left who understood this music.

See Lu Buwei's 吕不韦 Lu Shi Chun Qiu Jiao Yi 吕氏春秋校译, ed. Yin Zhongrong 尹仲容, Taipei: Zhong Hua Cong Shu Wei Yuan Hui 中华书局, 1958, p.13.

11 In Chinese classical writing, Beauty is often used to imply a close friend.

12 "Welcoming Eyes", literally, is "Black Eyes", which alludes to Ruan Ji 阮籍. It is said that Ruan stared at someone with his pupils in the middle of his eyes, or "Black Eyes", which expresses his good impression on someone. Showing the whites of the eyes, or "White Eyes", expresses disdain.

See Fang Xuanlin 房玄龄, Jin Shu 晋书, Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju, 1974, p.1361.

13 SGSZ, Waiji, vol.11, p.249.

could produce a lofty ideal and forget mundane affairs by enjoying a distant view at a height, just as Du Fu wrote, "Upon reaching the summit, / All mountains will be small from a birds-eye view."¹⁴ The theme of Huang's poem depicts how he was inspired upon ascending a height.

In the first two lines, Huang compares himself to an idiot who is burdened by boring office work. He is happy to have an opportunity to enjoy nature by climbing a tower. This might also be understood as the poet's escape from the mundane world to the spiritual realm with the mundane left behind on the ground. The third and fourth lines depict a view of natural beauty that is open and distant, which prepares one for the revelation of the poet's lofty spiritual realm in the last couplet. In the third couplet, Huang expresses his weariness of the mundane world, which may be seen as a poetic interpretation of his remark-- "even the one next to him [the poet] in the same bed cannot understand him, he cannot interact with his contemporaries."¹⁵ As a result, he hopes to return to nature to live a free, easy life, as he indicates through the image of playing a flute in the boat home, and the symbol of nature--white gulls in the last couplet. In the last line Huang expresses his firm, lifetime desire for seclusion by the use of word the meng 盟 (make a

14 Du Fu, Du Shi Xiang Zhu 杜诗详注, ed., Qiu Zhaoao 仇兆鳌, Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju, 1979, vol.1, p.4.

15 See footnote 1 in Chapter One at p.2.

covenant), and from the implied time which I have translated into the perfect tense (have made). The whole poem implies that the poet, by going from a low place to a high place to look out at nature has with each step ascended the heights both physically and spiritually.

Su Shi's comments on Huang further help us to understand Huang's thoughts discussed above. Su once wrote to Huang;

To judge your behaviour from reading your writing, I think that you must be a person who ignores mundane affairs and conducts himself with dignity. A person such as you cannot be appreciated by the gentlemen of today. Later on, the more of your literary works I read when I dropped by Li Gongze's in Jinan, the more I knew your personality. I think that you are free and natural, without even a little involvement in the worldly dust, so that you detach yourself from the mundane world, and you ride on wind and harness air to enable you to travel with the creator. Not only can you not be appreciated by the gentlemen of today, but even someone like me--Su Shi, who is unrestrained, who has no urge to make progress, and who removes himself from the world, cannot make friends with you.¹⁶

Herein, Su characterizes Huang as a hermit based on the dominant theme of his poetic content. It is obvious that Su also considers seclusion as a significant subject of Huang's writing. "To detach from the mundane world" and "travel with the creator", which Su uses to describe Huang are expressions for seclusion.

The last significant aspect of Huang's self-expression is an expression of universal human emotions, more specifically, his feelings towards his relatives and friends. Like most Chinese

16 WYWK, Su Shi, Su Dongpo Ji 苏东坡集, vol., 5, p.109.

intellectuals, Huang was educated with Confucian textbooks since the time he was a child. Thus, it is natural that Confucian moral values, such as filial piety and loyalty to friends, strongly influenced Huang. Furthermore, Huang's character was very kind, and he was loyal to his relatives and friends. His moral character might have developed this way because his family members had to depend on each other for survival due to his father's death when he was very young. Su Shi, in a letter of recommendation, praised Huang with: "[Huang's] filial and faithful attitude towards his relatives and friends can be compared to virtues of the ancients; [his] writings, like jade, are the most subtle of all in these times."¹⁷ The following poem illustrates these tendencies.

Impressions on Eating Lotus Seeds in Ganshang

Lotus seeds are as big as thumbs,
Dividing these sweet seeds reminds me of Mother's
affection.
The tops of seeds protruding crowded in the seedpod,
Deepens my longing for my brothers.
Inside a seed is a tiny sprout,
With fists like an infant's hand,
That reminds me of my children,
Who meet me at the gate to ask for pears and jujubes.
A seed sprout certainly is bitter,
How can I expect sweetness while eating the sprout?
With sweet things I am afraid of poison,
With plain things I feel ashamed.
Though a lotus grows in mud,
It has not the same style as mud.
Who does not enjoy eating sweet lotus seeds?
How many really appreciate the taste!
I live near Shuangjing pond,

17 Ibid., vol., 12, p. 88.

The autumn wind brings me the fragrance of lotus.
How can I find friends with the same preference,
To return home to make lotus clothes^{18, 19}

From the title, we know that Huang is inspired by eating lotus seeds to write the poem. As lotus seeds grow in the south of China, this is a reminder of the poet's home town. Also, the Chinese traditional idea of sharing comforts with relatives and friends, makes eating lotus seeds a reminder of Huang's family. In the first eight lines, the poet employs some fresh and unique images to display how much he misses his mother, brothers, and children. At first, the sweet taste of seeds is subtly used to embody "Mother's affection". The affection is imperceptible, but once it is compared to the perceptible sweetness, human emotion is perceived. With the second image, the poet draws a picture of himself and his brother's living at home, and the third image delineates the shape of an infant's hand. There, fraternal and paternal love are conveyed by crowded seeds in a seedpod and by the tenderness of a seed sprout. The images harbouring the poet's feelings towards his relatives are so vivid and moving that an affable image of the poet is presented.

18 "Lotus clothes" alludes to Qu Yuan's 屈原 (4 B.C.) Li Sao 离骚 "To make a jacket from water caltrop, / To collect lotus to make a skirt."

See Jiang Liangfu 姜亮夫, Chong Ding Qu Yuan Fu Jiao Zhu 重订屈原赋校注, Tianjin: Tianjin Gu Ji Chu Ban She 天津古籍出版社, 1987, p.38.

19 SGSZ, Neiji, vol.1, p.8.

In the following lines, while keeping the theme of the lotus seeds (the bitterness of the lotus seeds, and the environment in which they grow), the poet shifts his message to express his weariness with official life and his wish to return home with his bosom friends. Even though this new topic seems to deviate from the former expression of the poet's feelings towards his relatives, the two sections are linked by the theme of the lotus. Therefore, not only does the poem present Huang's sincere and kind attitudes towards his relatives and friends, but it ends with the idea of seclusion, as do many of his other poems.

During Huang's entire life he had a very close relationship with his elder brother Huang Dalin 黄大临. His brother accompanied him thousands of kilometres away from home to distant Qianzhou 黔州. Huang recorded the event in an essay entitled "Shu Pingxiang Xian Ting Bi" 书萍乡县厅壁 (Inscribing the Wall of County Court of Pingxiang);

[My brother] stayed here for several months and was reluctant to separate from me. Thanks to my colleague's consolation and persuasion, he finally agreed to leave. At our departure, we wiped our tears, held each other's hands, and thought that we would part in a distant land without any chance to meet again.²⁰

He also wrote the following poem describing his feelings about their separation.

Rhyming and Replying to Yuanming's Seeing-off in Qiannan

20 YZHXSWJ, vol.20, p.218.

Face to face, we forget we had stayed in the inn
 thousands of li away from home,
 The monkey's cry²¹ made our tears drop into the
 farewell wine cups.
 Previously, we dreamed of ascending to heaven as a
 morning cloud,²²
 When will we again be bed to bed listening to the
 evening rain?
 Wagtails²³ were side by side in heavy snow,
 Swan geese broke their line²⁴ in a sudden wind.
 You frequently look back in your distant boat home,
 From now on, write to me continuously to console my
 broken heart.²⁵

The poem opens with a sharp contrast between Huang's happiness and sadness, which is revealed by missing his brother. He is

21 Reference to Yuefu 乐府 (folk songs) "the Wu Gorge is the longest one among the three gorges in the east Ba, / Heard the monkey's cry thrice, one's tears wet his clothes." See Li Daoyuan 郢道元 Shui Jing Zhu 水经注, "Jiang Shui Zhu", Shanghai: Shanghai Guo Xue Zheng Li She, 1936, vol.34, p.6.

22 "A morning cloud" alludes to Chu Huaiwang's 楚怀王 story. In his dream, he met a fairy maiden who served him for a night. When she left him, she said that she lived in Wu mountain on the side of Wu Gorge, and appeared as a cloud in the morning and as rain in the evening. By using the story related to Wu Gorge, Huang implies he is "a morning cloud" who tried to obtain a high official position as the fairy maiden reached the king. Song Yu 宋玉 "Gao Tang Fu" 高唐赋, ed., Zhu Bilian 朱碧莲, Song Yu Ci Fu Yi Jie 宋玉辞赋译介, Beijing: Zhong Guo She Hui Ke Xue Chu Ban She 中国社会科学出版社, 1987. p.73.

23 "Wagtails" alludes to The Book of Songs, which says, "When wagtails appear in the field, / Brothers are in urgent trouble." From this source, the use of "wagtails" often implies the close relationship between brothers. SBCK, The Book of Songs, vol.9, p.66.

24 "Swan geese broke their line" alludes to "A father's trace is followed, / An elder brother's trace is like the line of the swan geese" in Li Ji "Wang Zhi". Therefore, "Swan geese" symbolizes brotherhood. See Wang Fuzhi 王夫之, Li Ji Zhang Ju 礼记章句, Taipei: Guang Wen Shu Dian 广文书店, 1957, vol.5, p.30.

25 SGSZ, Neiji, vol.12, p.215.

happy because his brother has accompanied him for thousands of li, but he is sad because his brother has to leave him. At this moment, Huang regrets that he dreamed of being involved in an official career which has resulted in his present exile to a post far away from his home. In the third couplet, Huang further uses "wagtails" and "heavily snowing" to imply the two brothers' past mutual help in adversity, and "swan geese" and "sudden wind" to symbolize their present separation. The only thing that they can do to console each other is to correspond frequently. From this poem, we can see that the relationship between Huang and his brother is just as Liu Weizhong describes, "Tingjian and his elder brother have a devoted relationship. In adversity, they depend on each other; at departure, they miss each other".²⁶ Moreover, we can see how Huang expresses his inner feelings in his poems.

In short, Huang's indifference to worldly affairs, longing for seclusion, and feelings towards his relatives and friends comprise the major content of his self-expression. In fact, these themes make up the most significant part of his poetry. Compared with the other themes in his poetry, Huang's poetry of self-expression directly express his thoughts and feelings. Therefore, Huang's poetry of self-expression, agrees with his own views on poetic theory, which we saw in Chapter One are more

26 Liu Weizhong 刘维崇, Huang Tingjian Ping Zhuan 黄庭坚评传, (A Critical Biography of Huang Tingjian), Taipei: Li Ming Wen Hua Shi Ye Gu Fen You Xian Gong Si 黎明文化事业股份有限公司, 1981, p.146.

Expressionist than Pragmatic.

II. Nature

As early as more than 2,500 years ago, nature was taken as a subject of poetry in China. In the The Book of Songs, nature was extensively described. In Huang's poetry, nature in the form of landscapes, animals, plants, seasons, and time is described in detail. Different from some earlier shan shui 山水 (landscape) poets, whose descriptions of nature dominate their poetic creations, (such as Xie Lingyun 谢灵运 in the Six Dynasties period or Wang Wei 王维 in the Tang), Huang's poetry on nature mainly serves to imply his own feelings and thoughts. The following poem is one which is most often taken as an example of his nature poems.

Poem on Snow for Duke Guangping

The sky with falling spring snow is as clear
as if washed,
Suddenly, it reminds me of sand visible
on the bottom of a transparent river.
At night, I heard it snowing thick and thin,
In the morning, I saw it snowing straight or angled.
The snow flakes danced with the circling wind,
Clever heaven can create snow blossoms in a minute.
Even if it lets it snow as much as it can, so the
coldness chills us to the bone,
Still it does not bother peach and plum flowers from
enjoying wonderful days.²⁷

As a Chinese traditional symbol of happiness, snow impresses us

27 SGSZ, Neiji, vol.6, p.97.

here with the beauty of nature. We can feel the poet's joyful feelings from the description of snow too, which perfectly match the symbol of happiness. Huang achieves this effect not only by subtly describing snow through his imagination, and through the senses of hearing and sight, but also by blending his feelings with the description of snowing. The beauty cannot simply be measured by physical perception, but must be appreciated through a higher level--spiritual communication with nature. Although "the coldness [of snow] chills us to the bone", it does not interfere with the enjoyment of wonderful days by peach and plum flowers. Therefore, the poet's joyful feelings inspired by the beauty of nature are revealed through the use of traditional symbols, and these images were carefully chosen.

Let us look at one more example at how Huang subtly expresses his own feelings through a description of flowers.

With grateful appreciation for Wang Congdao's present of fifty narcissuses, which I wrote this poem to praise.

The fairy maiden²⁸ riding the wave wears silk gauze
 socks stained with specs of dust,
 She lithely strolls on the water under the pale
 moonlight.
 Who on earth brought such pathos,
 And implanted it in this cold-resistant flower to
 embody his deep sadness?
 Her white, clean, fragrant form charms people,

28 "The fairy maiden riding the wave" alludes to Cao Zhi's "Luo Shen Fu" 洛神賦 (Ode to Fairy Maiden in Luo River), which says, "The fairy maiden riding the wave steps gently, / Her silk gauze socks stained with dust."

See Zhao Youwen 赵幼文, "Luo Shen Fu" 洛神賦, Cao Zhi Ji Jiao Zhu 曹植集校注, Taipei: Ming Wen Shu Ju 明文书店, 1985, p.284.

Rue is her younger brother, and plum her elder one.
Sitting facing it, lonely, I am really disturbed,
I walk out the door and laugh, for the big river lies
below me.²⁹

Departing from direct praise of the narcissus indicated in the title, Huang unexpectedly begins with a delicate description of a well-known figure in Chinese classical poetry, Luo Shen 洛神, who is the personification of the narcissus. From this image we can see narcissuses standing in a pot with water, and even the fertile soil attached to the narcissus' fibrous roots is pictured nicely. We are struck by this description not only because the conventional approach is to compare a person with a flower, not vice-versa, but also because Huang's personification helps us to picture the beautiful shape and growing environment of narcissus.

In the second couplet, by indicating that the narcissus grows from the soul of Luo Shen, the poet combines Luo Shen and the narcissus into one. Since the narcissus obtains the spirit of Luo Shen, it is natural that it is characterized as sentimental as Luo Shen is.

Narcissus is further described by its external form in the fifth line. Upon to this point, the narcissus has been characterized by a female image, and a feminine nature. Yet, in line six the use of "di" 弟 (younger brother) and "xiong" 兄 (elder brother) reveals the subtle change of the poet's feeling while he

29 SGSZ, Neiji, vol.15, p.280.

was looking with appreciation at the narcissus. Finally, the poet brings himself into the poem and lets us know he is not satisfied with just viewing the narcissus as it makes him feel lonely and sentimental. Then when he leaves, there before him is a magnificent view of a big river which brings him joy and releases his feeling of melancholy. The imagery in the poem changed from a feminine one in the beginning to a masculine one in the end. The poet's view changed from narrow to open, and his feelings changed from sentimental to cheerful. We sense that even though the poet enjoys the beauty and gentle nature of the narcissus, he is not willing to be spoiled by such fine emotions, and hopes to pursue an open and broad realm.

The examples above show us that Huang is very skilful in describing nature. Yet, his intent is not only to present the reader with beauty, a change of nature, and so on, but his emphasis is on conveying his feelings and interests through a description of nature. His feelings in his poetry on nature might not be displayed as obviously and directly as those on self-expression, but they both serve a mutual goal--to express human emotions and nature.

III. Daily Life

In his An Introduction to Sung Poetry, Yoshikawa Kojiro points out that the concern for daily life is an important trait

in Song poetry so that mundane matters are taken up as themes.³⁰ This concern significantly enlarges the range of subjects of Song poetry. Huang's poetry apparently bears the same characteristics. It could be said that this group of poems makes up the most significant portion of Huang's poetry in terms of his poetic quantity. He takes any negligible thing from daily life for his poetic subjects. He uses both trivial objects (such as a brush, a picture, tea), and trivial events (such as receiving a gift, awakening from a dream, and asking for flowers). For example, the following poem, "Qi Mao" 乞貓 might be considered a clever trifle:

Petitioning A Cat

When autumn came, rats, benefiting by my cat's death,
Peeped in jars, turned over dishes, and disturbed my
night's rest.
I heard your puss gave birth to a litter,
So I bought fish strung along a willow branch to invite
a locust-eater.³¹

There is no deep significance to this simple poem, but still Huang makes the trifling delightful and interesting through his use of simple, colloquial language. Also, the poet intentionally uses a chain of verbs to describe both the rat's behaviour, ("peep", "turn over", "disturb"), and the poet's behaviour ("buy", "string", "invite" and "bite"), so that the

30 Kojiro Yoshikawa, op.cit., pp 14-19.

31 SGSZ, Waiji, vol.7, p.150.

rats' disturbance and the poet's anxiety are embodied in verbs of action, which produces a humorous effect.

Among this group of poems about daily life, Huang composes many ti hua shi 题画诗 (poems inscribed on paintings). This might be associated with Huang's calligraphic talent and great artistic appreciation. Let us look at one of his "poems inscribing a painting".

Inscribing a Painting of Bamboo, Rock, and Buffaloes

Zizhan (子瞻) drew a bunch of bamboo and a rock of grotesque shape; Boshi (伯时) added a buffalo boy on the back of a buffalo in the front slope. These are very meaningful. I wrote this poem in jest.

In the field is a jagged rock of grotesque shape,
Beside it, green bamboo lean on one another.
A buffalo boy holds a whip three chi long,
To drive an old buffalo.
I love the rock so much,
Do not allow buffaloes to rub their horns on it.
I could reluctantly accept them rubbing their horns,
But never the destruction of my bamboo from fighting
buffaloes.³²

This is also an interesting short poem. Facing a painting, the poet starts by exhibiting his impressions of the painting. From this poem, we know that static bamboo, rock, and dynamic buffalos are three major objects in the painting. In one sense, these three objects are independent. Yet, through the description of buffalo's actions which the poet imagines, the interaction between static "bamboo", "rock", and dynamic "buffalo" is

32 SGSZ, Neiji, vol.9, p.174.

created. In doing so, the poet presents his cherished rock and bamboo, and his humour which was inspired by trifles. Chen Bogu also points out that the poet shows "the relation between static and dynamic objects, between which there is no relation, so that the poem becomes vivid."³³

As for this poem which displays the poet treasuring beauty in a humorous mood, Chen Yongzheng 陈永正, a modern scholar in China, discovers more serious and significant meaning. He thinks that the poem "circuitously expresses the poet's contradictory feelings about politics."³⁴ Yet, I think that Chen reads his preconception into this poem. It seems that Wang Ruoxu's comment on this poem is more fitting: "It is a good poem, but what kind of implied significance does it have?"³⁵

The examples above represent the major characteristics of Huang's poetry on daily life, which neither reflect nor criticize political affairs or reality. Generally speaking, the subjects employed in these poems are the trivialities of daily life. The themes of these poems are of ordinary human feelings or thoughts that have no significance for society, and the moods of the poems show both "groaning and laughing".

33 Chen Bogu 陈伯谷, Song Shi Xuan Jiang 宋诗选讲, (Selected Reading in Song Poetry), Hong Kong: The Shanghai Book Co., p.58.

34 Chen Yongzheng, Huang Tingjian Shi Xuan 黄庭坚诗选 (A Collection of Huang's Poetry), Hong Kong: Joint Publishing Co., 1980, p.170.

35 Wang Ruoxu, op.cit., p.256.

IV. Philosophy in Huang's Poetry

Since Zhou Dunyi, the Cheng brothers 陈氏兄弟 (Cheng Hao 陈颢 1032-1085, Cheng Yi 陈颐 1033-1107), and Zhu Xi made great efforts to develop Chinese philosophy, li xue (理学 Neo-Confucianism) became prevalent in the Song Dynasty. Thus, few Song poets did not write so-called shuo li shi 说理诗, (poems talking of li).³⁶ Furthermore, Huang was very interested in Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism, so that it should not surprise us that he wrote many poems discussing his philosophy. Let us take a look at his "Yi Xuan Shi" 颐轩诗³⁷ as an example. This poem is considered by Mo Lifeng to be "put together with the terminology of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism without much value."³⁸

Poems on Yi Xuan

Iron and rock are not moved by the waves,
The spirit of pine and bamboo can be realized in
the cold season.
Pondering this mortal world,
I return to observe my inner mind.

36 Here li mainly refers to those principles of Neo-Confucianism, including doctrines of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism.

37 "Yi" 颐 means "maintenance of health" and "Xuan" 轩 means "veranda". Huang quotes the six-word explanation of "Yi" from the Yi Jing 易经 (The Book of Changes), e.g. to observe [the] maintenance from [the] demand [for] appetites [and] food. He further explains that to "observe [the] maintenance" means to observe what is maintained; and that "from [the] demand [for] appetites [and] food" means to observe how one maintains himself.

38 Mo Lifeng, op.cit., p.28.

To know contentment is the miracle turtle,
All-acceptance is a gourmet's luck [maintenancel].
Thinking all kinds of things with an empty heart,
Hot and cold come from the four seasons.

No form is quintessential spirit,
Which is where six roots come from.
If you can know original nature,
Buddha will look different.

The most shamed is one with many desires,
The most happy is one with no demands.
One in his whole life should study hard,
Days pass fast like moving water.

The key is to take action without hurry,
Food should not be delicious.
Fishermen are destroyed by fishing,
Gentlemen are destroyed by appetites.

Muddy Jing River does not pollute clear Wei River,
Planting peach cannot harvest plum [food].
Cultivate the heart and discard the dust.
Then brightness will be born in the heart.³⁹

As Mo points out, the six stanzas indeed include many religious terms. Also, it is not really valuable if we judge the poem only by artistic standards. As a poem "talking about li", Huang wrote it to discuss ideas taken from religious classical works. For example, the idea of "To know contentment" 知足 in the second stanza is taken from the Taoist Dao De Jing 道德经;⁴⁰ the idea of "the original nature" 本源 in the third stanza is from the Buddhist Dao Yuan's 道源 (11 A.D.) Jing De Zhuan Deng Lu 景德传灯录;⁴¹ and the idea of "study hard" 强学 in the fourth stanza is from the

39 SGSZ, Neiji, vol.11, p.191.

40 WYWK, Laozi, Laozi Ben Yi 老子本义, vol.38, p.53.

41 SBCK, Dao Yuan, Jing De Zhuan Deng Lu, vol.30, p.10.

Confucian Li Ji 礼记. ⁴² In discussing philosophy in poetry, it is indeed easy to be "in danger of destroying the poetic harmony of the work."⁴³ Yet, poems like this one are very valuable to explore Huang's thoughts. Those scholars and critics, no matter whether they favour or are against Huang, often neglect or even condemn this important poem. In fact, the poem clearly reflects Huang's view of the political function of poetry.

In the foreword to the poem, Huang indicated his purpose: "I write this poem by using six words--observe, maintenance, from, demand, appetites, and food--to encourage and advise readers."⁴⁴ Even though Huang plays with these six words by inserting one of them into each of the six stanzas, Huang's poetic intent is to teach people how to behave. Here, let us discuss the fourth stanza in detail to see how Huang instructs his readers.

In the first couplet of this stanza, the poet states the importance of the idea of non-craving from both positive and negative aspects. This idea, or the theme of the poem, actually originates in Taoism, and dominates all six stanzas. The second couplet simply repeats the traditional idea that appears in the Book of Rites (Li Ji), which says that "A gentleman must

42 Wang Fuzhi, op.cit., vol.41, p.1b.

43 Kojiro Yoshikawa, op.cit., p.21.

44 SGSZ, Neiji, vol.11, p.191.

study hard day and night to prepare to be questioned."⁴⁵ Huang expresses his ideas directly and frankly in almost normal sentences. Considering our previous discussion of Huang's self-expression, the idea of non-craving is closely related to the often used theme of seclusion. Also, the idea of hard study is a persistent view of Huang's which we discussed in the sources of his method and poetic content. These are just the ideas that Huang used to encourage and advise his readers in his shuo li shi.

Huang's shuo li shi may be characterized as expounding Buddhist, Taoist, and Confucian ideas. It is obvious that these poems are not closely related to his ideas of poetry being an expression of human emotion and nature. Yet, we should recognize that his creation of a great number of this kind of poems chiefly results from the strong influence of the poetic fashion at that time, which few poets avoided. Furthermore, in these poems he discussed what he is interested in, and hopes that what he believes in will benefit other people. Thus, his shuo li shi seems to be the group of his poems which most shows the political function of poetry. Yet, what he mainly wants to persuade people to believe in is Buddhist and Taoist non-craving and Confucian diligent study, instead of reflecting people's sufferings and criticizing political affairs.

45 Wang Fuzhi, op.cit., vol.41, p.1b.

We have obtained an overview of the content of Huang's poetry from the discussion of his representative poems above. We can see that the major themes of Huang's poetry on self-expression, including indifference to worldly affairs, seclusion, and the sincere feelings he has for his relatives and friends are closely consistent with his view that "Poetry is an expression of human nature and emotion". His poetry on nature exposes his feelings in a more indirect way. Even though his poetry on daily life mainly expresses insignificant feelings through the description of daily trivialities, these themes do not conflict with his poetic views.

As an important part of his poetry, Huang's shuo li shi seems not to be directly related to his Expressionist views. Yet, his creation of shuo li shi is strongly influenced by the prevalent poetic style of his time, and inspired by his individual interests in philosophy and morality.

Su Shi, who has deep insight into Huang's poetry, points out, "To read Luzhi's poetry is to meet Lu Zhonglian 鲁仲连 (鲁连) and Li Taibai 李太白 (李白), we dare not talk about vulgarities. Although Huang's poetry seems not to apply to the world, that does not mean it does not help the world at all."⁴⁶ My understanding of Su Shi's "not to apply to the world" is that Huang does not directly reflect and criticize political affairs.

46 BBCS, Su Shi, Dongpo Ti Ba 东坡题跋, vol.2, p.36.

in his poetry, so that his poetry does not function in the world in one sense; Su's "does not mean they do not help the world at all" means that the moral sense discussed in Huang's shuo li shi, like non-craving and hard study, and human emotions and nature expressed in Huang's poetry, like seclusion, faith, piety, industry, and so on, still benefit his readers. The reason why "we dare not talk about vulgarities" after reading his poetry is that Huang impresses us as one who has normal human emotions and who pursues the perfection of his own moral qualities.

Chapter Three

Poetic Theory and Practice: Poetic Technique

In this chapter, we will continue our comparison of Huang's theory and practice by looking at his poetic technique, in order to further understand the relation between his theory and practice, and we will also examine his application of poetic technique. In the analysis of his theory of poetic technique in Chapter One, we concluded that originality is the basic principle of his method. Yet, most Chinese critics have regularly identified him with the phrase "strange Huang" 黄奇 (and often paired it with "unrestrained Su" 苏豪) ever since this phrase was first used by Wu Ke 吴可 of the Sung dynasty.¹ In my opinion, Huang's strangeness is basically a reflection of the principle of his method in his poetic creation. In other words, in order to be original, Huang does his utmost to individualize his poetic technique in every possible way. As Lu Zhenghui 吕正惠 writes, "The point which Huang Tingjian focuses on is how to make his poetry unusual."² The particular and intentional pursuit of making himself distinctly different from other poets results in

1 BBCSJC, Wu Ke, Cang Hai Shi Hua 藏海诗话, p.14, p.80.

2 Lu Zhenghui, Nan Song Shi Lun Yu Jiangxi Shi Pai 南宋诗论与江西诗派, (The Poetic Theory in the Southern Song and Jiangxi School), a paper presented in the first panel of "Chinese Literary Critics", 1976, p.5.

his poetry being marked by traces of strangeness. This is true, even though he also wrote poems imitating other poets, and/or based on conventional poetic rules.

Huang's strangeness has most aptly been pointed out by Fang Dongshu 方东树 (1772-1851), who wrote, "Fuweng [Huang] considers surprise and originality as marks of his strange style. His creative intention is far from others in meaning, style, realm [境界], sentences, words, allusions and sounds ..."³ In what follows, we will take his strangeness as a focal point from which we will examine how it is reflected in his method and in the application of other poetic techniques.

I. Strangeness in Poetic Structure

As we know, the arrangement of poetic structure in the creation of Chinese regulated verse normally follows the four-part structure (see p.12). Yet, a poet's creative ability can be limited by conventional patterns, and he might feel unable to give full play to his talent. Since Huang is the poet who intentionally pursues strangeness in poetic creation, he naturally does not conform to conventional patterns. Here, let look at an example of Huang's creation of unusual poetic structure:

On Curving Bamboo Painted by Huang Binlao

3 Fang Dongshu, Zhao Mei Zhan Yan 昭昧詹言, ed., Guo Shaoyu, Beijing: Ren Min Wen Xue Chu Ban She, 1961, vol.10, p.225.

Pouring wine into your heart cannot drown your
 emotions,
 You spat out dark green, ancient bamboo, that is
 lofty even in the winter.
 Like a sleeping dragon,⁴ thunder cannot awaken it,
 You and bamboo both forget about your bodily forms.⁵
 The image of the bright window has fallen into the ink in
 the hollow of your inkstone,
 The rabbit-hair brush, white as frost, swells full with
 just one slight drop of the pine-tar ink.
 The bamboo has been twisted around three rocks in the
 middle of the painting.
 For the painter fears the bamboo might fly off⁶ when
 completely painted.⁷

This is a poem describing Huang Binlao's painting of bamboo.
 Intentionally deviating from the topic announced in the title,
 Huang begins by describing the painter's mood while painting the
 bamboo. The adoption of the verbs "pour" and "spat" depicts the
 painter's inflamed emotions in a lively, intense way. In the

4 Huang often compares bamboo to dragons in his poems, such
 as in his "Cong Binlao Qi Ku Sun" 从斌老乞苦笋 (Begging Bitter
 Bamboo Shoots from Binlao), and "He Shihou Zai Zhu" 和师后栽竹
 (Reply to Shihou's Planting Bamboo). The use of comparison
 alludes to Fei Changfang's story. See BBCSJC, Ge Hong 葛洪, Shen
 Xian Zhuan 神仙传, vol. 9, p. 4.

5 "Wang xing" 忘形 (to forget about someone's bodily form),
 which originates from Zhuangzi, refers to someone who
 concentrates on something so intensively that he forgets
 everything, even his bodily existence.

See Burton Watson, The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu, New York
 and London: Columbia University Press, 1968, p. 317.

6 The last sentence alludes to Zhang Sengyou's 张僧繇 story,
 which says that Zhang paints a dragon without eyes because the
 dragon will fly as soon as its eyes are painted. The allusion is
 often used to describe how good a painter's skill is.
 See BBCSJC, Zhang Yanyuan 张彦远, Li Dai Ming Hua Ji 历代名画集,
 vol. 7, p. 6b.

7 SGSZ, Neiji, vol. 12, pp 228-229.

second couplet, the poet shifts to reveal the spiritual state of both painter and personified bamboo, asserting that neither consider their bodily forms significant any longer. At this point, the organic unity of the artistic effect of the painting and the painter's idea is built.

Unexpectedly, in the third couplet the poet imagines the surroundings in which the painter composed the curving bamboo, and the tools he used. Finally, in the last couplet, Huang describes the curving bamboo explicitly. By borrowing an appropriate allusion (i.e., the bamboo when completely drawn will be so perfect it might come to life), the poet tells us how marvellous the painting is.

Now let us examine the structure of this poem. Huang cleverly adopts a multi-angled approach to build its structure. First, he indirectly describes the painting from the angle of the painter's mood while painting. Then, curving bamboo is compared with the painter's mood from the angle of the relationship between the painter and the bamboo. Thirdly, the poet shifts to a description of the surroundings in which the painter creates. Finally, he comes back to the perspective of the appreciator of art, seated directly in front of the painting. The use of this multi-angled approach in such a short poetic form leaves many transitional gaps between the angles. As Fang Dongshu points out, "It is very important that a short piece of writing have many levels. A few sentences should affect us as much as a long

paragraph, and the gap between these sentences should be as distant as ten-thousand li. Most of Shangu's [short poetry] bears this trait."⁸ It is the description of the spirit of the personified curving bamboo that provides the main clue to the internal coherence that bridges all of these gaps. Thus, we do not feel that the structure of the poem is too loose.

The use of the multi-angled approach not only enriches the meaning of this short poem, (Fang points out), but also effectively serves to bring into focus Huang's description of the spirit of the curving bamboo. The painter's fervour, the relationship between painter and painting, and the creative surroundings of the painter that are hidden within, or happen outside of, the painting are not included in the painting. Yet, these elements are contained in the poem through the multi-angled approach. Therefore, Huang takes full advantage of the art of poetic language to include just what the art of painting does not express.

In short, we can see that this poem differs from the poems commonly inscribed on paintings, which are limited by the subject--matter of the paintings themselves. Huang not only escapes from the normal content of such poems, but also leaves behind the four-part structure such poems usually follow. Furthermore, he creates his own structure, one that aptly reveals

8 Fan Dongshu, *op.cit.*, vol.11, p.239.

his original content.

In our analysis of Huang's poetic structure in Chapter One, we indicated his preference for "convoluted expression of meaning". This can also be considered as an approach through which Huang creates originality in his poetic structures. The point might be illustrated most aptly by his poem to Su Shi, "Shuangjing Cha Song Zizhan" 双井茶送子瞻 :

Upon Sending a Gift of Shuangjing Tea to Zizhan

The wind and sun of the mortal world do not reach
this place,
Jade Hall in Heaven, forested with stacks of
rare books.
I can visualize the former Hermit of East Slope.
Wielding his writing brush, pouring forth hundreds of
bushels of bright pearl-like words.
In my home town of Jiangnan, we pick the fertile
clouds of tea leaves,
Which are ground as fine as powdered snow, and fall
thickly from under our grindstones.
Stirring up within you your dream of Huangzhou,
Of piloting, alone, a skiff towards Wu Lake^{9, 10}

After a brief reading of this poem, it almost seems as if it is pieced together with irrelevant fragments. After the subject announced by the title (sending tea to Su Shi), the subject of opening couplet appears suddenly to be a celestial academy.

9 Wu Lake 五湖 alludes to the story of Fan Li 范蠡 who retired to the seclusion of Wu Lake after helping King Yue 越王 conquer the state of Wu. Thereafter, Wu Lake became a symbol of retirement from the world.

See CSJC, Guo Yu 国语, Taipei: Shang Wu Yin Shu Guan, 1937, vol.21, p.239.

10 SGSZ, Neiji, vol.6, p.99.

Without the knowledge that the Imperial Academy is actually a fanciful description of where Su Shi is working, the reader has no idea what the poet is going to say next. In the second couplet, the poet abruptly shifts to recall Su Shi writing poetry in Huangzhou. He also gently reminds Su Shi that formerly when he was an official in exile he took the epithet "ju shi" 居士 (The Hermit). It is not until the third couplet that the announced topic is touched upon with "We pick the fertile clouds," which refers to harvesting tea. In the fourth couplet, the "convoluted" path of the poem takes an abrupt turn to a dream of Su Shi's during his staying in Huangzhou that expresses Huang's purpose in sending tea to Su Shi.

Our surface reading has illustrated how sinuous the structure of the poem appears at first sight. The reader is not only led to different locations, but is also taken to different times. The locations change from "Jade Hall" in heaven to "Huangzhou" to "Jiangnan" to "Wu Lake". The poet leads us through the present, past, present, and future. An orderly journey through space and time is not found in this poem. Furthermore, the transitions between locations appear to be quite sudden and lack clear bridges from one to another. Let us take a closer look at the poem to see how carefully the poet builds up the poetic structure.

In the first couplet, the realm of non-mortals, or the Immortals, is evoked. In fact, this image contrasts an eremitic

existence with Su Shi's return to society where he accepted an official position. This position was higher than the one he previously had when he was forced out of office. In the second couplet, the poet implicitly teases Su Shi, who had styled himself as "The Hermit" of Huangzhou. Therefore, what on the surface appear to be unconnected locations, are actually connected if we possess knowledge of Su Shi's career. Also, it seems a question is implied here: "Would you want to be the hermit who lives in eremitic existence with a high official position?"

In the third couplet, the poet directs us to his home town of Jiangnan. This is thematically in juxtaposition to the previous images which are designed to remind Su Shi to retire from society, yet the intent is to encourage Su Shi to long for his home town in Sichuan. The metaphor of "the fertile clouds" reverts back to the previous images of Immortals in heaven and of Su Shi in his cloud-shrouded mountain. In the last couplet Su Shi's dream of finding refuge from society in nature by "piloting a skiff alone" (which is a code for seclusion in Chinese classical literature), sums up the theme we have uncovered. The poet is encouraging Su Shi to keep to his former intention to become a hermit, and not forget his exile in Huangzhou.

Thus, it can be seen that the whole poem is subtly arranged in structure to elucidate the theme, which in turn binds together the internal structure. Even though the links between lines and

couplets are implicit, and the transitions abrupt, there is a rich substructure of meaning in key words, images, and the use of allusion. All of these provide the reader with hidden clues to the poet's meaning.

From our analysis of the two poems above we may then characterize Huang's poetic structure as possessing an original unity and coherence with seemingly abrupt and convoluted transitions, that are subtly linked. We have seen how frequently Huang does not stick to the conventional four-part structure, but has modified it considerably. Huang has obviously mastered this four-part structure, yet skilfully alters it in order to achieve his stated goal of coordinating "the correct form and the changed form." (see p.40) Fang Dongshu's comments on Huang's strange poetic structure is most apt:¹¹

The subtlety of Huang's poetry is due to the way his poems begin without an obvious pretext, and how the lines and couplets are linked in unexpected ways. With a pen as strong as a crossbeam, his poetic transitions occur with the swift agility of tigers and leopards. Tedious words are completely discarded and only precise, key words are used. It can appear that the distance between each line is a thousand li and irrelevant. His writing cannot be apprehended through ordinary understanding.

II. The Strangeness of Poetic Sentences

We have seen how deeply Huang is concerned with poetic sentences in our discussion of his poetic theory. His concern is

11 Fang Dongshu, op.cit., vol.12, p.314.

mainly how to make his sentences "unique" and "new". In the following section, we will explore his concern with three major aspects: a) unusual line structure; b) the strange use of key words; c) the strange use of antithesis.

a. Unusual Line Structure

Huang was obviously influenced by Du Fu in the area of line structure, although Huang is more interested in unusual structures than Du. The influence can be seen by comparing two of Du Fu's well-known lines (lit.):

Fragrant rice picks my parrot grains,
Firmiana tree perches on phoenix old branch.¹²

with Huang's

Flying snowflakes pile on a plate of chopped fish maw,
Bright pearls measure bushel boiled prickly water-lily
seeds.¹³

These lines are almost completely incomprehensible when translated literally. Actually, in Chinese, they are not easily understood either, and this is due to their unusual line structures. In both Du and Huang's sentences, the normal order between subject and object is inverted. Furthermore, in Huang's line, the subject modifiers, "Flying snowflakes" and "Bright

12 Qiu Zhaoao, op.cit., vol.4, p.1497.

13 SGSZ, Neiji, vol.7, p.135.

pearls," are separated from their respective subjects, "chopped fish maw" and "boiled prickly water-lily seeds". When the literal translation above is rearranged into a more coherent structure, the lines read:

Parrot picks my fragrant grains of rice,
Phoenix perches on old branch of firmiana tree.

and,

Chopped fish maw like flying snowflakes are piled on a
plate,
Boiled seeds of water-lily like bright pearls can be
measured by the bushel.

From these, we see Du's influence on Huang. Yet, each poet has his own purpose in creating unusual sentences. Du, who wants to express his longing for the capital--Changan, by reminiscing about "fragrant rice" and "green parasol", breaks the normal grammar by putting two objects in the beginning of the lines. Huang, like Du, also strives to highlight his subjects through putting his subject modifiers in the beginning of the lines. By doing so, he emphasizes that "fish maw" is like "snowflakes" and "prickly water-lily seeds" are like "pearls". Both similes represent a hedonistic joy in ordinary food. This sets the tone for his next line, "To indulge in pleasure one's whole life is not that bad."

Here is another example of Huang's wonderful poetic lines that are often alluded to by critics (lit.):

Peach plum spring wind a cup of wine,
River lake evening rain ten years of lantern.¹⁴

At first sight, we easily recognize how strange the line structure is. Each of the two lines consists of noun phrases without verbs. Upon reading such sentences, normal techniques of comprehension do not work due to a lack of parts of speech indispensable in most sentences, i.e., subject, predicate, and object. Of course, Huang is not the inventor of this strange line structure. Wen Tingjun 温庭筠 (812-870) is acknowledged as the first one who successfully created this line structure in his lines: "Cock's crow thatched inn moon, / People trace wooden bridge frost."¹⁵ After Wen many poets imitated his line structure, but few were successful. For example, Ouyang Xiu 欧阳修 practically imitates Wen's lines in the poem,¹⁶ "Guo Zhang Zhi Mi Xiao Gui Zhuang" 过张之秘校归庄 (Passing by Secretary Zhang Zhi's Village): "Birds sing plum inn rain, / Willow colour wild bridge spring."

However, Huang is absolutely not just an imitator of Wen. As Huang's contemporary Zhang Lei 张耒 (1054-1114) pointed out,

14 SGSZ, Naiji, vol.2, p.26.

15 Wen Tingjun, "Shang Shan Cao Xing" 商山早行, Wen Feiqing Shi Ji Jian Zhu 温飞卿诗集笺注, ed. Zeng Yi 曾益, Shanghai: Shanghai Gu Ji Chu Ban She, 1980, p.155.

16 See WYWK, Ouyang Xiu, Ouyang Yong Shu Ji 欧阳永叔集, vol.6, p.56.

this couplet is "really unique."¹⁷ Yet, we might say that the words Huang uses here are quite common, if not hackneyed, in poetry. If this is so, what makes these lines unique? It is the employment of commonly-used words in a unique structure that illustrates Huang's originality. The lines work as sentences grammatically because the words are so commonly used that there is a subtext of meaning and connectedness in the mind of the reader upon seeing these words, and this holds the sentence together. By matching commonly-used words with a strange and unique line structure, he fulfils the requirement that poetry be refined and pithy. Furthermore, an attitude, or mood, is created in the readers mind by the use of these common phrases: in the first line delight is evoked by the phrases "tao li" 桃李 [peach and plum], "chun feng" 春风 [spring wind], and "yi bei jiu" 一杯酒 [a cup of wine]; while in the second line an opposite mood of sadness is created, by the use of the words "jiang hu" 江湖 [river and lake], "ye yu" 夜雨 [evening rain], and "shi nian deng" 十年灯 [ten years under a lantern]. By condensing the happiness and sadness of human life into these two lines, Huang sharply contrasts the two extremes of human experience. He also lets us know that he is of the opinion that there is more sadness in life than happiness by using "yi" 一 (one cup of wine) in contrast to "shi" 十 (ten years under the lantern).

17 Wang Zhifang, op.cit., SSHJY, vol.1, p.64.

By comparing Huang's use of strange line structure with Wen's, and looking at a bad imitator of Wen, we can see how brilliant Huang was.¹⁸

Through the discussion above, we can see that Huang intentionally imitates predecessors like Du and Wen to achieve strangeness. Yet, though he imitates Du and Wen in the examples above, the following poem shows how Huang creates his own strange line structure, (in literal A: and literary B: translation):

Rhyming with Uncle Gong Ze

A: Past dream, golden millet half cooked,
Short talk white jade one pair.
Startled fawn desperately needs wild grass,
Calling gull naturally desires autumn river.

B: After awaking from a dream, the golden millet is only
half-cooked,
After a short talk [with the King] he was given a
matched set of white jade.
The startled fawn desperately needs wild grass,
The calling gull naturally longs to return to the
autumn river.¹⁹

The poem is written in a rarely-used poetic form, liu yan jue ju
六言绝句 (hexasyllabic verse). Hexasyllabic verse is considered

18 As for Wen's sentences, its trait is vividly to picture a quiet early morning through the eyes of a lonely traveller. We might also mention another good imitator of Wen, Ma Zhiyuan 马致远 (12 A.D.). Ma wrote a xiao ling 小令 by using the similar structure, which is "Withered ratan old tree evening crow, small bridge moving water thatched cottage, ancient path west wind thin horse, the heartbroken one is at the end of the world."

See Zhu Dongrun 朱东润, Zhong Guo Li Dai Wen Xue Zuo Pin Xuan 中国历代文学作品选, Shanghai: Shanghai Gu Ji Chu Ban She, 1982, vol.2, p.96.

19 SGSZ, Neiji, vol.1, p.8.

to be a difficult poetic form due to its unusual line structure. It follows a caesura pattern of six characters (or syllables) in three divisions of two words each (or a two-two-two pattern) per line, instead of the more popular caesura patterns of five or seven characters (or syllables) divided into two-three or four-three caesura patterns per line. In order to fit the word pattern of two-two-two, all grammatical particles, which usually show the relationship between words, phrases, and sentences are omitted. The poet can only use notional words, leaving the relationship between words implicit or implied. Thus, the poetic form obviously increases the potential difficulties in the links of poetic structure. According to Hong Mai 洪迈 (1123-1202), only 38 hexasyllabic verses are found among about 10,000 jueju 绝句 poems from the Tang Dynasty.²⁰ Compared with two of Huang's contemporaries, Wang Anshi only wrote five and Su Shi only eleven, but Huang wrote 66 hexasyllabic jueju out of 1,956 poems.²¹

Let us review the content of the poem above before examining its line structure. The first line condenses a well-known allusion about a traveller named Lu Sheng 卢生, who while taking a nap at an inn had a dream he was a highly-placed, wealthy

20 CSJC, Hong Mai, Rong Zhai Shi Hua 容斋诗话, ed., Wang Yunwu, Shanghai: Shang Wu Yin Shu Guan, 1936, vol.4, p.61.

21 Mo Lifeng, op.cit., p.46.

official.²² Upon awakening, he found that not only was it a dream, but it was so brief that the millet, which the inn keeper was cooking for him was only half done. The second line contains another allusion about Yu Qing 虞卿, who was granted a set of white jade and a high official title by a king in a foreign land who was impressed by Yu's eloquent speech and talent.²³ By these allusions Huang shows that wealth and rank, like the transient dream in line one, can be obtained as Yu Qing got his wealth in line two and are not worth pursuing for one's whole life. The meanings in the two lines actually agree that wealth and rank are merely worldly possessions.

In the third and fourth lines, the poet sharply contrasts "fawn" and "gull", two frequently used poetic symbols of seclusion, with his message in the first two lines. "Desperately" and "naturally" are key words that underscore the poet's strong commitment to seclusion.

As for the line structure in the poem, in the first couplet two sentences consist of six notional words which are carefully chosen to summarize the content of each allusion. When the meaning of each sentence is understood, the two lines are contextually linked. Although the second couplet is constructed of two normal, complete sentences, no functional word is used.

22 BBCS, Li Bi 李泌, Zhen Zhong Ji 枕中记.

23 Sima Qian 司马迁, Shi Ji 史记, Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju Chu Ban, 1972, vol.7, p.2370.

The links and transitions between all lines are completed through the reader's knowledge and imagination without the aid of relational words.

b. The Strange Use of Key Words

The strange use of key words in Huang's poetry might be illustrated by his lianzi 练字 (to refine words), an important technique in classical poetry. Huang intentionally employs rare and unusual words to the point that Zhang Jie criticized him for "concentrating on embellishing his poems with unusual words."²⁴ Yet, in my opinion, the unusual use of these words often achieves an excellent effect. Here, we will examine Huang's lianzi from the following angles: 1) the selection and arrangement of key words in sentences; 2) the use of irregular exchanges of parts of speech (the use of words for parts of speech other than their normal use, e.g., adjectives for nouns, verbs for adjectives, etc.); 3) and the collocation of words.

First, let us look at Huang's selection of key words and their arrangement in a couplet from "Ci Yun Gao Zimian Shi Shou" 次韵高子勉十首 (Ten Poems Rhyming with Those of Gao Zimian).²⁵

Artemisia pierces through snow and moves,
Willow asks for the spring and flourishes.

24 CSJC, Zhang Jie, Sui Han Tang Shi Hua 岁寒堂诗话, ed., Wang Yunwu, Shanghai: Shang Wu Yin Shu Guan, 1939, vol.1, p.6.

25 SGSZ, Neiji, vol.16, p.294.

We can immediately identify two unusual verbs, "chuan" 穿 (pierces) and "suo" 索 (asks), which link the subjects "lou hao" 茼蒿 (artemisia) and "yang liu" 杨柳 (willow) to the objects "xue" 雪 (snow) and "chun" 春 (spring). Like a painter, Huang in the first line draws a vivid picture: young artemisia is struggling to grow up out of snow covering the ground in early spring. The use of "pierces" effectively represents the abundant energy of young artemisia. Furthermore, the use of "dong" 动 (move) enriches the meaning of "pierces", and also brings the invisible growing process of artemisia before the reader's eyes. Complementing the first line, the second line describes the scene of early spring as in the first line, but takes a different approach. Huang uses "asks" and personifies the "willow" as one who pursues spring in order to flourish. Although the poet does not directly draw how the willows flourish, sprouting willow branches are evoked.

Thus, the poet's joy in the coming spring is conveyed mainly by a subtle use of verbs. The two verbs are in the so-called "sentential eye" (see p. 32) of their respective lines, which in Chinese verse is usually the third word in pentasyllabic syllable verse and the fifth word in heptasyllabic verse, and function to bring each sentence to life. Through the selection and arrangement of the two verbs, Huang indeed achieves "sentential eye".

The use of irregular exchanges of parts of speech might be illustrated by the key word "sen" 森 (forested) in the second

line in "Upon Sending a Gift of Shuangjing Tea to Zizhan" discussed above on page 82. ("Jade Hall in Heaven, forested with stacks of rare books.") "Sen" is usually used as a noun meaning forest or less commonly as an adjective meaning dense. Here, the poet changes it into a verb. It would be meaningless if the poet's only purpose was to exchange one part of speech for another, but "Sen" not only depicts stacks of books as trees in the forest, but also accurately evokes the quiet, secluded circumstances which introduces the theme of the poem.

There are many similar examples in Huang's poems, such as yun 韻 (rhyme) in "As whispering of love in a boudoir and bridal chamber, / black swallows and yellow orioles rhyme with peach and plum trees,"²⁶. Here, the noun yun replaces oft-used verbs like he 和 (harmonize) or xie 諧 (euphonize). The unusual use of the word vividly describes the musical effect of a ruan 阮 (a plucked, stringed instrument) being played like singing birds, and combines two beautiful images of nature (birds and trees).

The use of an unusual collocation of words is another crucial approach of Huang's in creating a strange effect. A good example of this is "Climbing Pleasant Tower": (see p.52)

The idiot settled state business,
Walked east and west on Pleasant Tower,
 leaning on the clear evening sky.

Normally, it is impossible to "yi wan qing" 倚晚晴 (lean on the

26 SGSZ, Neiji, vol.9, p.171.

clear evening sky). This collocation of the verb "lean on" and "evening sky" might even be considered to be a grammatical error. Yet, in writing poetry which is an art of language, the poet possesses special rights that allow him to make the impossible possible. Compared with the most oft-used poetic phrases, like "yi lan" 依栏 (to lean on a railing), or "ping chuang" 凭窗 (to lean on a window ledge) we can see how Huang intentionally strove to be different. Also, since this poem expresses the poet's desire which is "Hopefully, I could play a long flute in the boat home, / In my heart, I have made a covenant with white gulls", "leaning on the clear evening sky" implies the poet's willingness to merge with nature.

Here is another example, in the last couplet of "Qiu Huai" 秋怀 (Autumn Meditation), Huang juxtaposes "soak" and "white clouds":

The lake soaks up white clouds for no reason.
My friend's letters are cut off, not even a single swan
goose²⁷ appears.²⁸

What Huang wants to say here is he is missing his friend because there has been a loss of communication between them. Yet, the idea is indirectly conveyed through the description of the lake.

²⁷ Swan geese as a symbol for couriers originated from Su Wu's 苏武 story.
See Ban Gu 班固, Han Shu 汉书, Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju, 1972, vol.6, p.2466.

²⁸ SGSZ, Waijibu, vol.2, p.32.

For Huang, it seems that the lake should logically reflect a flying-cross of swan geese, which is a symbol for couriers who might bring him news about his friend. Yet, the lake reflects only white clouds without understanding Huang's feelings, so the lake is strange and illogical in Huang's eyes. Therefore, corresponding to his preoccupation with the couriers, Huang deliberately casts the lake in the somewhat negative light of soaking up the clouds, rather than reflecting the cross of swan geese in the sky that Huang so desires. The unusual juxtaposition of "soak up" and "white clouds" emphasizes the "for no reason". Although it is impossible for the lake to soak up the clouds, the unusual collocation of words corresponds to Huang's feelings, and thus the lake seems unreasonable. Such examples show that indeed Huang "spends much on arrangement."²⁹

c. The Strange Effect of Antithesis

Another important aspect of the strangeness of Huang's poetic sentences is his unusual use of antithesis 对偶. As a very important skill of regulated verse 格律诗, antithesis is a strict form which regulates matching sound and sense in a couplet. This means that matching sounds differ in level and oblique tones; matching words are the same parts of speech, and their meanings are linked by being opposites or complementary to

²⁹ Fu Xuanzong 傅璇琮, Huang Tingjian He Jiangxi Shi Pai Juan 黄庭坚和江西诗派卷, Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju, 1978, p.126.

each other. Therefore, it is not very easy for a poet to create an excellent antithesis because the form is so demanding and restrictive. Furthermore, the creation of antithesis had already been perfected by Tang poets, especially Du Fu, whom Huang took as his master. The difficulty in producing originality within the rules of antithesis is apparent. Yet, Huang illustrates he is different from previous poets through the way he creates antithesis. One of his approaches is to break the regulation of antithesis within a reasonable range. The following couplet is an example of how departs from the regular forms of antithesis:

Wuyang qu Xie cai bai li
Wuyang [away] from Xie only hundred li,
It was only about one hundred li between Wuyang and Xie,

jian zi yu gong ju shao nian
Humble I and you both young age,
Then you and I were both young.³⁰

This is the second couplet of a heptasyllabic regulated verse, which should be written in the form of regulated verse. In the first line of the antithesis, "Wu Yang" 舞阳 is a proper noun (a place name), "qu" 去 (away from) is a preposition, "Xie" 叶 a proper noun, "cai" 才 (only) an adverb, and "bai li" 百里 (hundred li) a noun. According to the regulation of antithesis, the words in the second line should match the parts of speech in the first

30 SGSZ, Waiji, vol., 1, p.13.

line. Yet, the words, which Huang uses in the second line, are adjective and noun "jian zi" 贱子 (Humble I) which should be a proper noun, conjunction "yu" 与 (and), pronoun "gong" 公 (you), adverb "ju" 俱 (both), and noun "shao nian" 少年 (young age). The parts of speech in the two lines used by Huang are as follows:

Line 1: proper n. | prep., | proper n., | adv., | noun.

Line 2: adj. and n. | conj., | pronoun, | adv., | noun.

Obviously, the parts of speech of "humble I" and "you" in the second line do not match proper nouns "Wuyang" and "Xie" in the first line. Furthermore, neither do the meanings of the two lines. The distance in the first line and the age in the second line are neither opposite nor complementary so that a wide gap exists between the two lines. It is rare to create such a sudden leap in antithesis not only in the poetry of the Tang, but also in that of the Song. Thus, in both form and meaning Huang breaks the normal expectation of antithesis.

However, in this couplet Huang impressively expresses his friendship with his friend. As we see, Huang chooses the short distance between the places where they are fulfilling their official duties and their young ages as ways to express his friendship with his friend. The short distance implies their previously frequent contacts, and the mention of their young ages displays the long friendship they have had since early youth. Therefore, the adoption of space and time as the narrative

perspectives is most effective. Yet, Huang does not change pronouns in the beginning of the second line, which is where Huang brings in the concept of time, to match proper nouns in the beginning of the first line. Although the antithetical pattern is broken here, the expression of the meaning of this couplet is achieved successfully. As Huang said, he "would rather contradict poetic regulation than make a weak poetic sentence"³¹

We can also examine how Huang irregularly uses antithesis from the aspect of sound. The following couplet is a good example ("-" stands for level tone and "\" for oblique tone).³²

- - \ \ \ - \
 Huang liu bu jie wo ming yue
 Yellow river can not dirty bright moon,
 Muddy Bian River can not dirty the bright moon,

 \ \ \ \ - - -
 bi shu wei wo sheng liang qiu
 Green trees for me produce cold autumn.
 Green trees make the autumn cold for me.³³

According to the tone pattern of this poem, the tones of the words in this antithesis should follow the pattern:

31 See footnote 54 at p.29.

32 All word tones which we indicate are from Gu Jin Zi Yin Dui Zhao Shou Ce 古今字音对照手册 (A Handbook of Comparative Classical and Modern Pronunciation of Chinese Characters), ed., Ding Shengshu 丁声树, Li Rong 李榕, Beijing: Ke Xue Chu Ban She 科学出版社, 1958.

33 SGSZ, Waiji, vol., 7, p.166.

- - \ \ - - \ , 34
 \ \ - - \ \ - .

As we can see, Huang uses four words with oblique tones and three words with level tones in the second line. The use of tones in the second line is against the regulated pattern, and also does not agree with the pattern in the first line. Of course, it is not possible that Huang was ignorant of the regulated pattern. His innovation in the tone pattern of antithesis breaks the harmony and balance which people are accustomed to, and this produces a new sense of sound.

Here is another example:

- - \ \ - - \ \ \ \ \ \
 qing tan luo bi yi wan zi,
 Elegant talk drop pen one wan words,
 Elegantly talking, then ten-thousand words drop
 from his writing brush,
 - \ \ - - \ - -
 bai yan ju shang san bai bei.
 White eyes raise wine-cup three hundred cups.
 Looking at the world with white eyes,³⁵ and drinking
 three hundred cups of wine.³⁶

This antithesis should follow the same tone pattern as the one above. Even though the word tones of the first, third, and fifth words are often optional, Huang consecutively uses five words

34 See Wang Li 王力, Han Yu Shi Lu Xue 汉语诗律学 (Chinese Versification), Shanghai: Shanghai Jiao Yu Chu Ban She 上海教育出版社, 1979, pp. 72-82.

35 See footnote 13 at p.53.

36 SGSZ, Waijibu, vol.3, p.65.

with oblique tones in the first line without a corresponding change in the second line. However, the use of consecutive words with oblique tones helps to form a heroic voice which embodies a characteristic of the person described in the poem.

We have briefly discussed Huang's innovation of the meaning of antithesis in our analysis above. We would also like to illustrate Huang's use of the prosaic sentence in antithesis, for example:

shi shang qi wu qian li ma
In the world, really, no Thousand-li-steed?
Is there really no Thousand-li-steed in the world?

ren zhong nan de jiu fang gao
Among people, hard to find a Nine-square-gao.
It is hard to find Nine-square-gao among people.³⁷

In terms of parts of speech, this is a very accurate antithesis.

"Shi shang" 世上 (in the world) matches "ren zhong" 人间 (among people) as both are nouns of locality, "qi" 岂 (really) and "nan" 难 (hard) are two adverbs, and "wu" 无 (has no) and "de" 得 (find) are verbs. The last two words "qian li ma" 千里马 (Thousand-li-steed) and "jiu fang gao" 九方皋 (Nine-square-gao), are matched compound nouns (the name of an animal and that of a person). Also, within "Thousand-li-steed" and in "Nine-square-gao", "thousand" and "nine" are numerals, "li" and "square" are classifier-measure words, and "steed" and "gao" are nouns. I

37 SGSZ, Waiji, vol.2, p.29.

think that the reason the poet choose "Nine-square-gao" but not "Bo Le" 伯乐³⁸ to match "Thousand-li-steed" is that he intentionally created a precise form of antithesis. Yet in this perfect form of antithesis, the meanings of the two lines are neither opposite nor complementary. The antitheses, like a prosaic sentence, combines a question and an answer which create a linear effect rather than that of opposites balancing. Fang Dongshu comments on Huang's "Climbing Pleasant Tower" (see p.52), "This style can be called upon to set the tone of a single-line form into a parallel-line one."³⁹ By this, he means that Huang applies the linear tone of ancient verse or prose to regulated verse. His comment also applies to our analysis above.

In an analysis of Huang's antitheses, the Song critic Ge Lifang 葛立方 also stresses Huang's antitheses in meaning:

The best creation of the middle two antithesis in regulated verse is that the meanings of their two lines have a wide gap, but indeed are implicitly linked...Luzhi wrote in his Da Yan He 答彦和, "Heaven's regulation of all things has destined me to be poor, /I have dedicated my intelligence to an official post entirely for my kinsfolk";⁴⁰ in his Shang Shu Fu Yi Zhong 上叔父夷仲, "The letter coming from thousands of li [tells me my] son and daughter are thin, / Walking in the

38 WYWK, Zhuangzi 庄子, Zhuangzi 庄子, Waipian 外篇, vol.3, pp. 53-54.

Bo Le was the best judge of horses during the Spring and Autumn Period. He is most often used to symbolize a good judge of character in Chinese culture. Although Nine-square-gao (Jiu Fanggao) was also a good judge of horses according to Liezi 列子 during the same period as Bo Le, he was promoted by Bo Le, and is not as significant as Bo Le in Chinese culture.

See CSJC, Liezi 列子, Liezi 列子, vol.8, p.104.

39 Fang Dongshu, op.cit., vol.20, p.451.

40 SGSZ, Waiji, vol.1, p.12.

mountain in the tenth month, ice and snow are deep"...⁴¹
Compared to those who are proud of sticking to matching words like "black" with "white", the meanings of the two lines in these antitheses depart a distance of a thousand li. Luzhi has many antitheses like these which cannot be completely cited.⁴²

Now, let us look at how Ge's comment applies to the examples which he gives us. In the first example, the first line is a conversion of Zhuangzi's statement that reads, "Heaven covers all without partiality; earth holds up all without partiality-heaven and earth surely wouldn't single me out to make me poor".⁴³ The second line alludes to Mao Yi's 毛义 story from Hou Han Shu, which says that filial Mao is happy with obtaining an official position only because his mother will be honoured.⁴⁴ The two lines seem to express two completely unrelated things from different sources, making it really difficult to join the two lines even though we have translated the allusion in the second line. In fact, after the poet puts forward his conversion of Zhuangzi's viewpoint in the first line, he shows his opinion by using the allusion in the second line. Therefore, the two lines are linked through causality. For the purpose of clearer

41 SGSZ, Neiji, vol.8, p.155.

42 CSJC, Guo Lifang, Yun Yu Yang Qiu 韵语阳秋, ed., Wang Yunwu, Shanghai: Shang Wu Yin Shu Guan, 1939. vol.1, p.6.

43 Burton Watson, op.cit., 1968, p.91.

44 Fan Hua 范晔, Hou Han Shu, Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju, 1973, vol.53, pp.1746-1748.

explanation, we might translate this antithesis into a prosaic sentence like "The law of heaven destines me to be poor, because I am happy with obtaining an official position only so my mother will be honoured, but not to make me rich and famous." The antithesis not only has a wide range of meaning, but also a prosaic structure.

In the second example, the first line expresses difficulty in communication, and thinking of a family. The second line suddenly shifts to describe the season and the hardships of a trip. It is almost impossible for us to read these two lines as antithesis because it is difficult to find a link between them. Yet, the internal link can be understood if we use our imaginations. We might consider this antithesis as a description of an official's emotional and physical suffering, which is displayed respectively in the separation from his family in the first line, and in the description of hardship in a cold season and difficult circumstances. It is certain that the conventional method of matching in traditional antithesis is completely abandoned here. This is why Huang's antithesis creates such a wide distance between lines.

III. The Strangeness of Tone Pattern, Rhyme Scheme, and Rhythm

Huang's concerns about the sound of poetry are expressed in "It is the beauty of poetry [that these tunes] can then be sung in harmony with musical laws and can be danced to with shields

and feather fans." (p.2) If we say that his theoretical viewpoint is based on a traditional aesthetic sense, which is concerned with harmonious music and balanced rhythm, then the trait reflected by his poetic practice breaks through the traditional, regular sounds of poetry. More specifically, he attempts to create strangeness by breaking the regular forms in tone patterns, rhyme schemes, and rhythms. We will discuss these three aspects in detail below.

A. Tone Patterns

The strangeness of tone patterns in Huang's poetic creation is mainly reflected in his adoption of ao lu (irregular tone pattern in regulated verse, especially in heptasyllabic regulated verse). In an analysis of the reasons Huang is fond of creating his poetry in ao lu, Liang Kun 梁昆 points out, "From the establishment of the Song Dynasty to Ou [Yangxiu] and Su [Shi], all regulated verses written by poets were in the regular tone pattern. These verses in the regular tone pattern are smooth and gentle, yet do not show any originality. Considering this, Shangu [Huang] more often writes his regulated verse in ao lu to display his uniqueness."⁴⁵ Besides Du Fu's influence on Huang, there might be another reason. Although Du is the first poet who created ao lu poetry, Du only wrote 19 ao lu poems, and

45 Liang Kun 梁昆, Song Shi Pai Bie Lun 宋诗派别论, Changsha: Shang Wu Ying Shu Guang, 1938, p. 85.

they are not as irregular as Huang's. Huang wrote 153 ao lu poems out of 310 heptasyllabic regulated verses.⁴⁶ And some of Huang's ao lu poems are hardly acceptable according to conventional standards because of their "awkward" sound. However, Huang is very brave in his experiments with ao lu, and manages to display a special beauty therein.

In his analysis of Huang's ao lu, Liang Kun has indicated three ao lu methods: dan ao 单拗; shuang ao 双拗; and wu ti 吴体. "Dan ao is the exchange between the level and oblique tones in the first line of a couplet; shuang ao is the exchange between the level and oblique tones between two lines in a couplet; and wu ti is that the tones of words in the second line of every couplet are changed to agree with the changes of those tones in the first line, and the fifth word in every second line is fixed with the level tone in order to harmonize the changes of tones above."⁴⁷ Here, we shall take one of Huang's poems as an example of how Huang intentionally creates ao lu, and how he uses these three ao lu methods. The symbols of the tone pattern used by Huang are presented parallel to the symbols of a regular tone pattern for contrast:

-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\
xing	guan	you		kong	he	shi	luo
The celestial body travelling the sky, what time fell?							

46 Si Ku Shan Ben Cong Shu 四库善本丛书 (abbreviated SKSBCS), Fang Hui 方回, Yin Kui Lu Sui 瀛奎律髓, vol.25, pp.1-2.

47 Liang Kun, op., cit., p.86.

\ \ \ \ - \ -
 zhuo di yi hua wei bao fang
 Dropping on ground, then changed into a fine monastery

 - - \ - - \ \ -
 shi ren zhou yin shan ru zuo
 Poetry writer day chants, the mountain takes seat,

 \ \ \ \ - \ -
 zui ke ye e jiang han chuang
 Drunk visitor night startles, the river shakes the bed.

 \ - \ \ - \ \ -
 mi fang ge zi kai you hu
 Honey comb one by one opens the window and door,

 \ \ \ \ - - -
 yi xue huo meng feng hou wang
 Ant nest maybe dream entitled the duke and king,

 \ - - - - \ \ -
 bu zhi qing yun ti ji ji
 Not know blue clouds, steps how many?

 \ \ \ - - \ -
 geng jie shou teng xun shang fang
 Then lend thin wisteria to search the upper place. 48

When did the celestial body travelling the sky fall?
 Dropping on the ground, it changed into a fine
 monastery.
 The poet daily chanted his poems,
 The drunk visitor was startled at night as the river
 shook his bed.
 Windows and doors of [monks' rooms like] honeycombs
 opened one after another,
 In such an ant nest, one may dream of being entitled
 Duke or king.
 I do not know, how many steps will reach those blue
 clouds?
 I would need to be supported by a thin cane to visit
 that high place.

Huang's tone pattern: Regular tone pattern:

- - - - - \	- - \ \ - - \
\ \ \ \ - \ -	\ \ - - \ \ -
- - \ \ - \ \	\ \ - - - \ \
\ \ \ \ - \ -	- - \ \ \ - -
\ - \ \ - \ \	- - \ \ - - \
\ \ \ \ - - -	\ \ - - \ \ -
\ - - - - \ \	\ \ - - - \ \
\ \ \ - - \ -	- - \ \ \ - -

From this comparison, we can see that not one line in Huang's tone pattern accords with those of the regular tone pattern. In the first couplet, Huang consecutively uses six words with level tones; the fourth word should be an oblique tone, according to the rules of regulated verse. In order to make up for the monotony of the first line, he consecutively uses four words with oblique tones in the second line. There Huang changes the level tone of the fourth word into an oblique tone to correspond to the change of the fourth word in the first line, and this is called shuang ao.

In the second couplet, the tone of the first and second words in the first line exchange with the tone of the third and fourth words, which is called dan ao. The tone of the first two words in the second line is changed into the oblique tone from the level tone to correspond to the changes of the tones of the first two words in the first line. The same change takes place with the tones of the sixth words of the first and second lines in the third couplet, and the tones of the second words of the

first and second lines in the last couplet.

Looking at the tone pattern of the whole poem, the tones of many words in every second line in every couplet are changed in order to correspond with changes of those tones in every first line. Also, the tone of the fifth word in every second line is kept level. Therefore, this poem is a typical application of wu ti.

As for the sound effect, chanting this poem sounds harsh and disharmonious because of the consecutive use of many words with the same tones in the same line and the breaking of the regular tone pattern. This is especially true for those who are used to the smooth and regular tone pattern, for the irregular use of tone patterns can evoke in them an uncomfortable feeling. In his analysis of the sound effects of wu ti, Guo Shaoyu says, "...in chanting a poem in wu ti, a roughness is produced in its irregular syllables, so that people feel an uneven, harsh, and unconventional effect."⁴⁹ "The uneven, harsh, and unconventional effect", is the very strangeness which Huang pursues in his use of ao lu.

B. Rhyme Scheme

The rhyme scheme of a poem depends on its poetic form in

49 Wen Xue Yan Jou Cong Bian 文学研究丛编, vol., 1, publ. by Gu Jun 顾俊, Guo Shaoyu. "Lun Zhongguo Wen Xue Zhong De Yin Jie Wen Ti" 论中国文学中的音节问题 (On the Syllable in Chinese Literature), Taipei: Mu Duo Chu Ban She 木铎出版社, 1981, p.71.

Chinese classical poetry. There are two main poetic forms: ancient verse 古体诗 and regulated verse.

Ancient verse has five or seven (occasionally four) characters to each line, and does not regulate the number of lines. Even though rhyming in ancient verse usually occurs at the end of even-numbered lines, a poet can either use one rhyme throughout or change the rhyme as he wishes. Therefore, a poet has much freedom in the use of rhyme because ancient verse does not have strict tonal patterns or rhyme schemes.

Conversely, regulated verse must have five or seven characters to each line, and four or eight lines in a poem. A poet must follow strict tonal patterns and rhyme schemes. Rhyming has to occur at the end of even-numbered lines, and there is the option only to insert this rhyme in the first line. Therefore, the use of rhyme in regular verse is strictly regulated.

Huang often skilfully takes advantage of the freedom of ancient verse to vary his rhyme schemes, and deliberately makes use of difficult rhymes in order to distinguish himself from other poets. Let us examine how flexibly he uses ancient verse to achieve an innovative, unconventional rhyme scheme in the following:

Watching Bo Shi Draw a House

Yi	luan	gong	zhang	tao	shi	xing,
Rite-bird	offer	tent		voracious	lice	swarm,

Han lin shi xin bao zhu sheng,
Imperial Academy wet firewood firework sound,
Feng lian guan zhu lei zong heng.
Wind certain official candle tear length breadth.

Mu chuan shi pan wei qu tou,
Wood drill rock plate no completely through,
Zuo chuang bu ao ling ren shou,
Sit window no out make person thin,
Pin ma bai xian feng yi dou.
Poor house hundred leftover meet one bean.

Yan ming jian ci yu hua zong,
Eyes bright see this jade flower steed,
Jing si zhuo bian sui shi weng,
Immediately think wave whip follow poetic old man,
Cheng xi ye tao xun xiao hong.⁵⁰
City west wild peach seek small red.

The literary translation of this poem is:

Voracious lice swarm around in visitor's tents of the
Department of Protocol,
Burning wet firewood sounds like fireworks in the
Imperial Academy,
Facing curtain and candle, tears well up.

Wood cannot drill through rock,
Imprisoned at a window, not going out, can make a
person thin,
Like a poor horse found one bean in hundreds of piles
of leftover forage.

My eyes become bright upon seeing the jade-coloured
steed,
I immediately want to wave my crop to follow you, old
poet,
To look for those red peach blossom west of the
city.

This poem consists of nine lines with a rhyme change every three lines. Each of the three units use rhyme words from the

⁵⁰ SGSZ, Neiji, vol.9, p.158.

following subcategories respectively: 1) ba geng 八庚, level tone; 2) er shi liu you 二十六宥, oblique tone; 3) yi dong 一东, level tone.⁵¹ The design of rhyme scheme here creates the overall structure of the poem, and makes the arrangement of ideas in each section clearer and more independent. The insertion of an oblique-tone rhyme in the second section between the first and third sections which have level tones effectively avoids making the poem sound monotonous. Also, the poet varies the conventional rhyme scheme, in which rhyme occurs at the end of the even numbered lines and lines are written in pairs. Hu Zai 胡仔 (12 A.D.) comments on this poem with saying, "The pattern is very new and hardly used by other poets."⁵² And Huang displays his ingenuity through the careful design of the rarely used rhyme scheme.

51 In order to find rhyming words easily, Chinese classical scholars wrote rhyming dictionaries, in which Chinese characters are classified into four categories according to the four tones in classical Chinese pronunciation--ping sheng 平声 (level tone), shang sheng 上声 (falling-rising tone), qu sheng 去声 (falling tone), and ru sheng 入声 (entering tone). In each category, characters are further classified into subcategories based on their simple or compound vowels in classical Chinese pronunciation, sometimes with a terminal "n" or "ng".

The terms we quoted above are subcategories. The rhymes "xing" 行, "sheng" 声, and "heng" 横 which Huang uses in the poem belong to ba geng 八庚; "tou" 透, "shou" 瘦, and "dou" 豆 er shi liu you 二十六宥; and "zong" 聰, "weng" 翁, and "hong" 紅 yi dong 一东. See Shi Yun 詩韻 (Poetic Rhyme), revised from Zeng Guang Shi Yun Quan Bi 增廣詩韻全璧, Shanghai: Shanghai Gu Ji Chu Ban She, 1983, vol.2, p.30; vol.4, p.47; vol.1, p.1.

52 CSJC, Hu Zai, Tiao Xi Yu Yin Cong Hua Qian Hou Ji 荅溪漁隱从話前后集, vol.48. p.329.

Huang's fondness for using ci yun shi 次韵诗 (poems rhyming with others) and xian yun 险韵 ("dangerous" rhyme or rhymes for which there are few common words)⁵³ might be considered as an approach through which he increases the difficulty of rhyming to show his strangeness. Since a poet who creates ci yun shi must use exactly the same rhyme scheme as ones used in the poem, usually from a poet's friend or relative, the poet is more restricted in expressing his ideas. Yet, Huang wrote 567 ci yun shi, which is more than one third of his poems.⁵⁴ As Pan Boying 潘伯鹰 points out, "Based on their wide reading, abundant sources, and skilful techniques, Su and Huang avoid being troubled by rhyme. They write poems freely, and overcome difficulties in expressing subtle ideas, even though they write many poems that rhyme with others' works."⁵⁵

It is very difficult for a poet to create a poem by adopting unusual rhymes, because he runs the risk of using words in a clumsy way or limiting his ideas due to an extremely narrow range of rhyming words available for selection. The following shows

53 According to the amount of Chinese rhyming words in a subcategory in a rhyming dictionary, all subcategories are classified into the following four groups: kuan yun 宽韵 (rich rhyme), zhong yun 中韵 (medium rhyme), zhai yun 窄韵 (few rhyme), and xian yun. Xian yun includes those subcategories which contain the least rhyming words among the four subcategories. See Wang Li's Han Yu Shi Lu Xue, p.44.

54 Mo Lifeng, op.cit., p.54.

55 Pan Boying, Huang Tingjian Shi Xuan 黄庭坚诗选, Hong Kong: Zhong Liu Chu Ban She 中流出版社, 1958, p.47.

how Huang uses unusual rhymes to rhyme with a work by Su Shi:

Zizhan's [Su Shi] poetry is exquisite nowadays, but he says that he imitates my poetic style. He only uses his poems to make jokes, just as Tuizhi played with writing poems to imitate Meng Jiao^{孟郊} and Fan Zongshi^{樊宗师}. I am afraid that the young do not understand Zizhan's real meaning, so I write a poem to explain it by rhyming with his poem. Zizhan wrote in "Seeing off Meng Rong", "My home town is in the north of Emei Mountain, / It is in the same state as yours." I follow that rhyme.

My poetry is like Cao and Kuai,
Too meagre to be states.
Yours is like strong Chu,
Embracing five lakes, three rivers.
Fluting in a slight wind and clear moon at Chibi,
In Jade Hall, mist drifts around the windows.
You create such a unique law in line structure,
Even a fortified city would surrender to you.
As a dry pine falling into a deep ravine,
Being dashed by waves.
Thousands of oxen cannot move the pine,
But you can carry it by yourself.
Some people gesticulate and laugh at me:
"Can you rank with Chao and Zhang!"
Only with friendship, I can stay with them,
As Kong Ming bowed to Old Pang.
I do not know what my son will be,
My friends praise him as faithful and honest.
If he really deserves to be engaged to your A Xun,
I will go to buy a red ribbon to twine the wine vat.⁵⁶

From the preface of this poem, we can see that this is a ci yun shi. There are ten rhyming words in the poem, which are "bang" 邦 (state), "jiang" 江 (river), "chuang" 窗 (window), "xiang" 降 (surrender), "zhuang" 撞 (dash), "kang" 扛 (carry), "shuang" 双 (rank), "Pang" 庞 (surname), "pang" 庞 (honest), and "gang" 缸 (vat). All rhyming words belong to the subcategory san jiang 三江 of xian

56 SGSZ, Neiji, vol.5, p.85.

yun. There are only 50 rhyming words in this subcategory of san jiang⁵⁷ as opposed to about 460 words in a more common rhyme such as si zhi 四支.⁵⁸ Furthermore, 37 words among them are exceedingly rare, such as "mang" 虫龙 (mole cricket) and "gang" 缸 (name of a bean), but Huang uses eight out of 13 common words available to him, which almost exhausts all viable word options just in one poem. Huang's talent surprised Liu Xun 刘焯 (1240-1319) so much that he says, "In Shangu's poetic creation, the use of some rare rhymes is too wonderful for words...Just in the case of the word 'xiang' 降 (surrender), who could manage to use it as a rhyme and create the air of strangeness and power which is brought out by the rhyming words."⁵⁹

Upon close examination we can understand how the poet is challenged by rhyme schemes. For example, in the tenth and fourteenth lines above, the poet inverts the normal order of a sentence and places the verbs "zhuang" (dash) and "shuang" (rank) at the ends of their sentences as rhyming words. In the sixteenth and eighteenth lines, we see how skilfully Huang uses his knowledge of history and Chinese characters to overcome the difficulty of rhyming by quoting a historical figure, "lao Pang" 老庞 (old Pang), and using the rare expression, "dun pang" 敦庞

57 Shi Yun, op.cit., vol.1, pp.10-11.

58 ibid., vol.1, pp.11-21.

59 BBBS, Liu Xun 刘焯, Yin Ju Tong Yi 隐居通议, vol.8, p.16.

(faithful and honest).

In fact, Huang did not have to follow Su Shi's rhyme to express his ideas. Even if he did, he did not have to choose Su's poem with its "dangerous" rhyme for his model. Yet he intentionally includes all these difficulties in his creation. The reason why he does so seems to be that he wants to illustrate his creative ability.

C. Rhythm

Caesura and stress (intensity of emphasis given to a syllable) are the most important elements of the caesura patterns in Chinese classical poetry. Since Chinese is a monosyllabic language, with each character a syllable, the position of caesura and stress in a Chinese poetic form are closely related to the number of characters in each line. For example, in pentasyllabic verse a caesura usually occurs after the first two syllables in each line, and a stress on the third syllable. This caesura pattern is called a "two-three pattern", standing for the number of syllables before and after a caesura. In popular heptasyllabic verse, caesuras usually occur after the first two syllables, or after the fourth syllable, and there is a single stress after each caesura. This caesura pattern is called a two-two-three pattern, standing for the number of syllables (2-2-3) divided by two caesuras. Yet, Huang does not follow the regular patterns. The following examples are given in both literal and

literary translations so that we can obtain some idea of how Huang uses his own rhythms. (/ stands for caesura)

Gong ru / da guo chu,
Yours like huge state Chu,
Yours is like Strong Chu,

Tong / wu hu san jian.
Swallow five lakes three rivers.
Embracing five lakes, three rivers.⁶⁰

Qing bo li /pen cha / qian cen,
Green glass basin penetrate thousands hills,
Thousands of hills penetrate the river as if it were a
green glass basin,

Xiang jiang/shui bi / wu gu jin.
Xiang Jiang water clear no past today.
This Xiang Jiang River has been clear through the
ages.⁶¹

In the first example, which is extracted from his pentasyllabic poem quoted earlier, the second line follows a one-four pattern (caesura after the first syllable) instead of the common two-three pattern. In the second one written in heptasyllabic form, Huang replaces the common two-two-three pattern with the three-two-two in the first line. These unusual changes of rhythmic pattern might be thought to destroy the harmony and balance of traditional rhythmic patterns. Yet, we feel that a new attraction is created by breaking the traditional rhythm because Huang skilfully makes his innovation serve his expression

60 SGSZ, Neiji, vol.5, p.85.

61 SGSZ, Neiji, vol.20, p.359.

of meaning in the poem.

As we know, the third word in the pentasyllabic verse and fifth word in the heptasyllabic verse are usually treated as key words. The main reason is that they are both positioned as stressed syllables, or are the first syllables after a caesura. In the examples above, Huang cleverly applies this rule to his innovation. In the first example, Huang attempts to praise Su's majestic and powerful poetic style. The design of one-four pattern stresses "wu" 五 (five) as the first syllable after caesura and "tun" 吞 (swallow) as a rhythmic unit with only one syllable. Yet the two words stressed in rhythm are just the ones which are effectively able to convey Huang's feeling because "tun" implies a powerful action and "wu" describes a vast range. Fang Dongshu says of Huang, "As for syllables, he uniquely creates the high, twisting, strange and uneven sounds, along with his style."⁶² Here, we can really identify Huang's heroic style through his arrangement of key words.

The second example is extracted from Huang's poem which displays his feeling in ascending a height. At the beginning of the poem a couplet describes a lake and the mountains over it from a distance. It is certain that the use of "pen" 盆 (basin) and "qian" 千 (thousands) portrays the distant view from which the lake is seen as small as a basin and the mountains as numerous.

62 Fang Dongshu, op.cit., vol.10, p.225.

Therefore, Huang adopts the three-two-two rhythmic pattern to position "pen" and "qian" as stress syllable. As a result, these two key words, which are properly underscored, help portray a distant scene.

Huang also applies innovation of rhythmic patterns to the rarely used poetic form--hexasyllabic verse, which we discussed in terms of line structure earlier. Here, let us look at a poem written in hexasyllabic form in order to examine its rhythmic pattern.

Inscribing Zhen Fan's Collected Picture

huichong/yan yu / gui yan,
Huichong mist rain returning swan geese,
Huichong's swan geese are returning in the mist and
rain,

zuo wo/xiaoxiang/dongting.
Arrive my Xiaoxiang Dongting.
Bring me to Xiaoxiang River and Dongting Lake.

yu huan/pian zhou/gui qu,
Will call little boat go back,
I will call a little boat to take me home,

gu ren / yan shi/dan qing.
Old friend says is picture.
My old friend reminds me it is only a picture.⁶³

From the word pattern of the poem we know that the rhythmic pattern of this poem has a caesura after two syllables, and two caesuras per line. This two-two-two rhythmic pattern should be considered standard for hexasyllabic verse. Compared with the

63 SGSZ, Neiji, vol.7, p.128.

familiar two-three or two-two-three patterns, the two-two-two rhythmic pattern is more even and well-balanced. Yet Huang does not satisfy the requirement of standard metrical patterns of the rarely-used form.

bu yuan zi/tangtang qu,
Not complain you freely go,
I do not complain about you leaving freely.

gai nian qun/dede lai.
Only hope you happily come.
But only hope that you come here happily.⁶⁴

gu ying/fei Huange xiang,
Bone hard not Huange luck,
With hard bone [unyielding], you will not be lucky
like Huange

yan qing/ jian Baipingzhou.
Eyes bright see Baipingzhou.
With welcoming eyes, one can see Baipingzhou⁶⁵

The first example shows that Huang changes the two-two-two patterns into a three-three and a two-four, with both having only one caesura. In the first example, the arrangement of rhythm helps to stress "tangtang" 堂堂 (freely) and "dede" 得得 (happily), which have been emphasized through repetition, so that a person's manner is vividly described. In the second example, "fei" 非 (not) and "jian" 见 (see) placed after caesuras delineate a person's firm attitude. When we chant the two poems, we

64 SGSZ, Bieji, vol.2, p.39.

65 SGSZ, Neiji, vol.14, p.258.

naturally intone Huang's rhythmic design stressing these key words without any awkwardness of sound. The reason is that Huang subtly and properly expresses meaning in his poems through the device of innovative rhythm.

Through the analysis above, we can see that Huang not only creates strangeness through changing ordinary rhythms, but also makes changes that help him to express himself.

IV. The Strangeness of Allusion

The use of allusion is one of the most apparent but controversial traits of Huang's poetic technique. He adopts many allusions in his poetry partly because he is to quite an extent influenced by the Xikun Style 西昆体⁶⁶, which was a prevalent poetic fad in the early days of the Song, and partly because of his interest in "changing the bone and evolving from the embryo." Besides, it cannot be denied that his erudition in Chinese classical books helped develop this fondness.

His use of allusion is criticized by many scholars since he sometimes goes to extremes in the pursuit of unique effects. Indeed, some of Huang's poems are hardly understood because of the adoption of too many strange and rare allusions.

66 The Xikun Style is an important poetic school in the early days of the Song. Poets of this school regard Li Shangyin 李商隐 of the Tang as their master, and pay great attention to the use of antithesis, allusion, and flowery words in their poetic creation.

Occasionally, the artistic value of the poem is destroyed. Yet, it is worthy to note that he successfully innovates and develops traditional skills in his practice. As the result of the extensive use of allusion, it might be said that he almost exhausts all the potential functions of allusion in his poetry, and maximizes the sources of allusion. Here, we will attempt to explore only how Huang reaches strangeness through allusion.

First of all, Huang often seeks allusions which were rarely used by his predecessors and found in obscure books. Here is the first couplet in a poem which we quoted in Chapter One.

Guan Chengzi [brush] does not have the luck to eat
meat,
Kong Fangxiong [copper-money] sent me a letter to break
off our friendship.

The couplet contains four allusions. The first one is from Han Yu's essay "Mao Ying Zhuan" 毛颖传. Han wrote, "The emperor Qin [秦始皇] bestowed on Meng Tian [蒙恬] the land Tangmu and conferred Guan City upon him. Thus, he was called Guan Chengzi 管城子."⁶⁷ Here Huang applies Guan Chengzi's misfortune in becoming an official to himself. Besides, "guan" 管 can be used as a measure word to modify a slim, long, round object such as a writing brush. Here the poet subtly uses the meaning above to imply that he himself is a person who spends his

67 Han Yu, Han Chang Li Wen Ji Jiao Zhu 韩昌黎文集校注, ed., Ma Tongbo 马通伯, Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju, 1964, vol.8, p.325.

life on trifles such as playing with a writing brush. Furthermore, it prepares the reader for the appearance of his official titles as a writer and editor.

The second allusion can be found in "Ban Chao Zhuan" 班超传. A fortune teller told Ban Chao 班超, "[You] have a swallow-like chin and tiger-like neck. It looks as if you will be able to fly and eat meat. This is the look [luck] of a ten-thousand-li high official."⁶⁸ Thus, "shi rou xiang" 食肉相 (a look of having meat to eat) really means "the luck to become an high official."

"Kong Fangxiong" 孔方兄 alludes to Lu Bao's 鲁褒 "Qian Shen Lun" 钱神论 (On the Money God). Lu, in a humorous mood, describes Chinese classical coppers as "friendly as brothers, and their polite name is Kongfang [square hole]."⁶⁹ And, "breaking-off letter" 绝交书 alludes to a well-known story, which is that Xi Kang 嵇康 wrote a letter, entitled "Yu Shan Juyuan Jue Jia Shu" 与山巨源绝交书 (A Letter Breaking Relations With Shan Juyuan), to Shan Tao 山涛. In the letter, Xi announced that he was ending his friendship with Shan because he was afraid that Shan would recommend him to be an official.⁷⁰ Without the knowledge of the sources above, we can hardly comprehend the couplet, as Liang Kun comments, "Really, those lacking learning will not understand

68 Fan Hua, op.cit., vol.47, p.1571.

69 Fang Xuanlin, op.cit., vol.94, p.2437.

70 WYWK, Xi Kang 嵇康, Xi Zhongsan Ji 嵇中散集, 1955, vol.2, p.16.

what Huang means."⁷¹ Two allusions among them are especially uncommon--"Guan Chengzi" is rarely used by other poets, and "Kong Fangxiong" is from an obscure source. This is just how Huang achieves strangeness. In one sense, Wei Tai's 魏泰 (11 A.D.) comment on Huang's use of allusion is not completely wrong. He wrote "Huang Tingjian...only seeks allusions which are not used by the ancients, and one or two rare words to weave into his poetry."⁷²

Now, let us examine Huang's innovative skill in making allusions fit his own special imagery. An original image can be directly appreciated without referring to an allusion, or it can be developed to explore its deep implications through allusion. Huang's innovative allusions have been defined as "evolving from the embryo." The effect of flexible or double meaning in an allusion produces Huang's strangeness. This point of view can be illustrated best by his "Yi Qi Liang Shou Zeng Ren Gongjian" 弈棋兩首 贈任公漸 (Two Poems about Playing Chess Sent to Ren Gongjian), the third and fourth lines:

Mind like a piece of web drifting in the clear sky,
Body like a cicada slough ossified on the withered
branch.⁷³

There is no doubt most readers would be able to understand these

71 Liang Kun, op.cit., p.86.

72 CSJC, Wei Tai, Lin Han Yin Ju Shi Hua 臨漢隱居詩話, p.8.

73 SGSZ, Waiji, vol.2, p.26.

two images. An abstract mental state is visualized in a concrete and precise image "a piece of web", and a physical posture is embodied by the unexpected "a cicada slough." The use of these two images is already good enough to evoke surprise.

Let us now go a step further and look at the second image's allusion. "A cicada slough" hides an allusion to the Zhuangzi, which includes a story of a rickety old man who is good at catching cicadas and attracts them by posturing his body as a withered trunk with his arms resembling withered branches. The author of Zhuangzi is attempting to illustrate the importance of concentration as a method of study through the image of an old man. So he concludes, "No matter how huge heaven and earth, or how numerous the ten thousand things, I'm aware of nothing but cicada wings."⁷⁴ Yet, Huang conversely uses the image "cicada" instead of "a rickety old man". A cicada slough is more accurate to describe a chess player's bending, rigid body. Furthermore, "a cicada slough" corresponds to "Mind like a piece of web drifting the clear sky" which implies the detachment of the spirit from the player's body.

Huang displays a skilful use of allusion. He can subtly weave some seemingly irrelevant allusions into a poem without any apparent trace of design. And the irrelevant allusions perfectly match each other in structure or meaning. Here is his most often

74 Burton Watson, op.cit., p.199.

quoted "He Da Qian Mufu Yong Xingxing Mao Bi" 和答钱穆父咏猩猩毛笔 :

Reply for Qian Mufu about Brush of Pongo's Hair

Loving drinking, the Pongo-ape easily gets drunk,
And can speak human language so as not to keep a
secret.
How many pairs of sandals can it wear in its life?
Five carts of books are left after its death.
The brush can be found by reading "Lords' Meeting",
The achievement of the brush is in Shi Qu.
Pulling out a hair can benefit the world,
This truth should be told to Yang Zhu.⁷⁵

This poem contains of seven allusions. The first one, the Pongo's love of drinking, is taken from Pei Yan 裴炎 "Xingxing Ming" 猩猩铭 (Inscription on Pongo). It is written that the Pongo loves drinking and wearing sandals, so that some hunters put drinks and sandals along the roadside as bait to catch him.⁷⁶ The allusion in the second line is taken from Li Ji 礼记, which says "Pongo can speak, but still is no different from an animal."⁷⁷ The third one is extracted from a story about Ruan Fu 阮孚 who liked sandals and made them himself. Yuan said, "I do not know how many pairs of sandals I can wear in my life."⁷⁸ The fourth one alludes to Zhuangzi, in which Zhuangzi said, "Hui Shih

75 SGSZ, Neiji, vol.3, pp.60-61.

76 GXJBCS. Pei Yan, "Xingxing Ming", Tang Wen Cui 唐文萃, ed. Yao Xuan 姚玄, Taipei: Tai Wan Shang Wu Yin Shu Guan, 1968, vol.78, p.1259.

77 Li Ji Chang Ju, ed. Wang Fuzhi, Taipei: Guan Wen Shu Ju, 1956, vol.1, p.3.

78 Fang Xuanlin, op.cit., vol.49, p.1364.

惠施 (Zhuangzi's friend) was a man of many devices and his writings would fill five carriages."⁷⁹ In the fifth line, "Lords' Meeting" 王会 should be understood as the title of one chapter in Ji Zhong Zhou Shu 汲冢周书. In that chapter, its commentator Zheng Xuan 郑玄 (127-200) wrote, "After the King's city is built, the King meets all lords and the delegates from neighbouring countries."⁸⁰ In the sixth line, "Shi Qu" 石渠 is another term for a library. The source can be found in Ban Gu's Xi Du Fu 西都赋 (The Rhymeprose of The Western Capital), which says, "Shi Qu is the place where ancient books and records are collected".⁸¹ The last couplet contains a comment on the founder of Yang Zhu School of Chinese philosophy or Egoism, which is recorded in Mencius 孟子, where it says "Yang Tzu chooses egoism. Even if he could benefit the Empire by pulling out one hair he would not do it."⁸²

We have discovered all the allusions in the above poem. Now, let us examine how Huang organically integrates the seven allusions into the poem to display his multi-levelled meaning.

Instead of the subject of the poem--the brush, from the

79 Burton Watson, op.cit., p.374.

80 SBCK, Ji Zhong Zhou Shu 汲冢周书, ed., Kong Chao 孔晁, vol.7, p.42.

81 Ban Gu, "Xi Du Fu", Quan Shang Gu San Dai Qin Han San Guo Liu Chao Wen 全上古三代秦汉三国六朝文, Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju, 1965, vol.1, p.603.

82 D.C. Lao, op.cit., vol.2, p.275.

poet's friend, which inspires him to write this poem, the poem starts by describing the Pongo's love of drink and wearing sandals, and that it keeps no secrets because it speaks like a human being. The starting point can be traced back to the subject through a roundabout way, from Pongo's traits to Pongo to Pongo's hair, to the writing brush which is made of his hair. So the intricate link between the writing brush and Pongo's traits is bridged through two allusions.

Also, the description of Pongo's traits could be understood to symbolize the Chinese intellectual. Pongo's loving drink and telling secrets remind one of the Chinese intellectuals' fondness for drink and criticism of political and social affairs. The meaning of this level is further developed.

In the third line, continuing the topic from the first couplet, the poet jokes about the Pongo's weakness: loving sandals, which makes him an easy prey for hunters. In the fourth line, the topic changes to the writing brush, which shows the bad luck of the captured Pongos whose hair was used to make writing brushes. Yet a deeper meaning could be understood as a satire of intellectuals' coveting petty gains, ("How many pairs of sandals can it wear in its life?") in the third line since Huang herein deliberately quotes the intellectual Ruan Fu's words in a satiric mood. Also, the forth line could be understood to characterize intellectuals ("Five carts of books are left after its death") since the original meaning of allusion is to praise

the contribution of the intellectual Hui Shi. Therefore, the second level of meaning in the first couplet is developed here. It is noticeable that the subtle use of allusion in the third line functions to link the surface meaning and to bring out the second level of meaning in the first and second couplets, even though Huang's fondness for sandals has nothing to do with Pongo's. Also, the fourth line brings out the subject of the poem--the writing brush--through the idea that the book is written with a brush.

By following the topic of the writing brush, the fifth line implies the foreign source of the brush which Qian Mufu might obtain from a foreigner in a meeting such as a "Lords' Meeting". The sixth line tells us the brush's function is to write books through an explanation from Ban Gu. As for the second level meaning, the adoption of the chapter title--"Lords' Meeting" in the first allusion and of the source of the second allusion--famous prose expresses the chief achievement of an intellectual, a book.

In the last couplet, Pongo, the brush, and intellectuals are combined together. On the surface, "Pulling out a hair can benefit the world" means that pulling out a hair from Pongo can make the brush with which to write books that benefit the world. In the second level, it means in a humorous way that intellectuals can still make some contribution to society even though they are engaged in unimportant enterprises like writing

books with brushes. Yang Zi's egoism which instructs people only to think about themselves should not be accepted. Here Huang uses a different the word "hair" to link Pongo's hair to the brush, to Zhu Zi's well-known phrase as a whole. Once more, we see how Huang originally and subtly weaves some irrelevant things into one.

The poem is formed by means of two clues which present two levels of meaning: the surface one which develops from Pongo to the brush to an intellectual; and the second level which describes intellectuals. The use of the last allusion in the last couplet delicately joins the two levels of meaning into a description of an intellectual. And the successful creation of the structure and multi-levelled meanings in this poem all result from the subtle and original use of unrelated allusions. Although this is a poem full of allusions, we do not feel that it is clumsy or is pieced together. It is not surprising that Ji Yun 纪昀 (1724-1805) thinks the poem can be used as "the standard for using allusion."⁸³

V. A Brief Survey of Huang's Poetic Style

Finally, I would like to end this chapter with some concluding remarks about Huang's poetic style. We can more

83 Fang Hui 方回, Ji Pi Ying Kui Lu Sui Kan Wu 纪批瀛奎律髓刊误, com. Ji Yun 纪昀, Xian Hua An Chong Kan Ben 纤花庵重刊本, 1788, vol.27, p.6.

clearly evaluate his poetic style now, after our study of his poetic practice, i.e., his use of techniques such as "diction, sound patterns, rhythm, figures of language, figures of thought, and figures of speech."⁸⁴ Therefore, we now know his preference for an oblique instead of a frank style of poetry through our analysis of his strangeness, especially in poetic structure, unusual line structure, and allusion. Here we intend to give some more examples which will show how Huang's poetic style is formed, in order to provide an overall view of his oblique style. First, let us take a look at his "Xu Ruzi Ci Tang" 徐孺子祠堂. ⁸⁵

The Shrine of Xu Ruzi

Tall trees surround the recluse's three-mu shrine,
 Today, with whom can the significance of that bunch of
 fodder be discussed?
 Twined wisteria is in the ascendant, assaulting
 the clouds and sun,
 Who has a mind to treat him with wine during fluting
 and drumming.
 Maybe then, no Ruzi in a hut,
 Certainly there is no lack of Chen Fans in official
 mansions!
 Our forefathers were unambitious, and are derided by
 our contemporaries,

84 N. Friedman and C.A. McLaughlin, Poetry: An Introduction to Its Form and Art, New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1961, pp.135-143.

85 Fan Hua, op.cit., vol.29, p. 1294.
 According to Hou Han Shu, Xu Zhi 徐稚 (zi Ruzi 孺子) is very poor and supports his family by his own labour. He is respectful, modest and forbearing, and refuses employment by the imperial government.

Yet, waves in the lake reach their former marks.⁸⁶

In this poem, Huang expresses his respect for Xu Ruzi's virtue and lack of ambition. The theme is illustrated by some of Huang's typical techniques.

First, his use of allusion. After a description of the environment of the shrine in the first couplet, Huang uses an allusion, "that bunch of fodder", which is from Hou Han Shu. When Xu consoled his friend Guo Tai 郭泰 upon the loss of his mother, Xu put a bunch of fodder in front of the mother's tomb and left. Bystanders did not understand Xu's action. Guo explained, "It is read in The Book of Songs, 'A bunch of fodder, / [which symbolizes] the person [who receives it] is like jade.'⁸⁷ I am not virtuous enough to deserve it."⁸⁸

In the sixth line Huang uses another allusion, Chen Fan, who is the magistrate of Nanchang 南昌 and an admirer of Xu. Whenever Xu visited Chen, Chen sat Xu on a couch. After Xu left, Chen reserved the couch for Xu by hanging it from a beam, in order to show his respect for Xu.

As in other examples discussed in the Chapter Three, the use of allusions in this poem increases the difficulty of comprehending it. For example, in the first allusion Xu's virtue

86 SGSZ, Waiji, vol.1, p.11.

87 Chen Huan, op.cit., vol.4, p.67.

88 Fang Hua, op.cit., p.1294.

is delineated by an allusion from The Book of Songs, which is also enclosed in Xu's story. The sandwiched allusion enriches the connotation of its words so that the poem becomes more implicit.

We also note that Huang employs rhetorical sentences to coordinate the allusions in the first and third couplets. In the second line, the question sentence is a pun, which superficially refers to Guo Tai's explanation to the confused bystanders in Xu's story, and actually expresses Huang's worries about moral decay since the virtuous recluse Xu is no longer respected and understood. His negative mood toward the times is expressed through a rhetorical question, but not in a straightforward way. In the third couplet, what Huang wants to express is that there are still many virtuous people like Ruzi, but it is hard to find admirers of these virtue like Chen Fan. Yet, the affirmative meaning in the fifth line is expressed through a negative expression "no", and the negative meaning in the sixth line is expressed through an affirmative one "not lacking" (two negatives). The combination of allusion and rhetorical sentence further complicates the poem.

Furthermore, many symbols are used in the poem, for example: "wisteria" which stands for villains, "the clouds and sun" for officials in high positions and the emperor, "hut", the place where virtue lives, and "official mansion", the place where officials live. The use of symbols embodies the poet's feelings

in a convoluted way.

Finally, Huang ends his poem with a description of a scene that displays his idea, which is a typical method he uses to convey his thoughts to his readers. Because of the implication of the method, Huang's idea in the last line can be understood either as there are still people who follow virtue regardless of what others' deride, or as virtue like Xu's will be fairly judged by history.

From the analysis of the poem, we can see that Huang's oblique poetic style is formed by a deliberate and careful use of all kinds of poetic skills, especially the method with which he consciously ends his poem in order to avoid a frank expression of meaning. The closure is so important in Chinese classical poetry that we can usually obtain the major idea of a poem from it.

Here is another example which shows us how Huang deals with strong feeling:

A Picture of Ant and Butterflies⁸⁹

A pair of butterflies flying freely,
Happen to die in a web.
A swarm of ants rush to carry their dropped wings,
And return to Nanke⁹⁰ in triumph.

89 SGSZ, Neiji, vol.16, p.298.

90 BBCS, Li Gongzuo 李公佐, Nan Ke Ji 南柯记. It says that Chun Yufen dreamed of visiting the Kingdom of Da Huaian 大槐安 and became governor of the Nanke 南柯 (south tree) area. After awakening, he realized that the kingdom was only an ant nest under a Chinese scholar tree on the south side of his

This might be a poem through which Huang strongly displays his anger at the immorality of the ants who rush in to devour the ill-fated butterflies. Although Huang is almost in a mood to curse, his feelings are still controlled through poetic technique. The theme of the poem is illustrated through three dominant symbols: butterflies, spiders, and ants, which might be considered as naive victims, hunters, and immoral people, respectively. Through an accident in nature in which the three insects are involved, a complex human relationship is embodied. The use of allusion in the end is perfect and subtle, for it not only fits the description of ants, but also conceals the poet's satire of "those ants" whose desire will be only a fond dream. Although the poet has a strong hatred for the immoral ants, his feelings are implied through a well-known allusion, "Nanke." It reminds us of Huang's criticism toward Su Shi's cursing social affairs. For Huang, even if his anger becomes white hot, it seems he would rather release it in his own manner--implicitly.

In addition to this oblique poetic style, it is important to note that Huang also writes many humorous poems, as he himself states "producing a tune that either groans or laughs". Wang Jisi says, "The fashion of Song poets using poems to make jokes began with Dongpo...There are more humorous interests in Shangu's poetry. Yet, his humorous interest is not as obvious as

house.

Dongpo's, so careless readers often do not catch it."⁹¹ Zhang Bingquan also points out that Huang produces a humorous effect by his poetry, as Su Shi and Tao Yuanming do.⁹² His humorous style might be associated with his adoption of trifles and daily life as poetic subjects. We should have actually realized Huang's sense of humour in our analysis of poems such as "Petitioning A Cat" and "Reply for Qian Mufu on the Brush from Pongo's Hair". Most of the poems he writes "for fun" (xi 戏) produce a humorous effect. Here let us take a look at his "Xi Da Chen Yuanyu" 戏答陈元與.

Reply to Chen Yuanyu for Fun

As far as I have heard about you Chen Dingzhou,
 Harvests year after year in the county run by you,
 even locusts do not invade.
 We first knew each other when you were granted the
 official title at East Gate,
 It is lucky that our hair has not turned grey like old
 men's.
 You are tired of fish and meat in formal parties with
 officials,
 But you are sleepless from drinking thick tea, and have
 to face the empty hall in the autumn night.
 You say that you do not dream of Beauty any more,
 Already as dry and insensitive as a numb person.
 I am only worried that the red flower with a smile
 welcomes you at the door,
 At night, outside the window, cold rain beats the
 slanting wind.
 Taking off your autumn clothes, dry them on the
 fumigator with burning signaloe.
 Behind the silver screen, you toss about in bed,
 It is as hard to pull up the root of your affections

91 Wang Jisi, op.cit., p.245.

92 Zhang Bingquan, op.cit., p.56.

as to pull out green onion roots.⁹³

Huang wrote this poem in a humorous mood. Since Chen was an official in charge of receiving guests and preparing food for official parties, who did "not dream of Beauty any more", Huang made fun of him. Even though the poem touches upon Chen's private life, Huang properly deals with this sensitive topic in Chinese classical literature by combining seriousness and humour.

However, as we have pointed out, the main tendency of Huang's poetic style is oblique, and humour is another aspect of this style. His main tendency is closely related to his emphasis on poetic technique, and his humour reflects his personal interests. Of course, we must not overlook the fact that some of his poems are obscure. This results from his excessive pursuit of strangeness or originality in words, sentences, poetic structure, sound effects, and especially allusion. However, as Hu Yunyi 胡云翼, a specialist in Song poetry, says, "The defects of poetic strangeness and obscurity can be found in Huang's poems, but are not very apparent."⁹⁴

93 SGSZ, Neiji, vol.8, p.145.

94 Hu Yunyi 胡云翼, Song Shi Yanqiu 宋诗研究 (A Study of the Song Poetry), Shanghai: Shang Wu Yin Shu Guan, 1933, p.91.

Conclusion

In the preceding chapters we presented a comparative discussion of Huang's poetic theory and practice. We analyzed his general views of poetry in Chapter One, Part I--focusing on his concerns about poetic content, which were further examined in terms of poetic practice in Chapter Two. We analyzed his principles of poetic method in Chapter One, Part II and explored them in detail in Chapter Three under the "strangeness," his use of major poetic techniques. Therefore, we have provided a clear look at his major theoretical ideas, his main characteristics in practice, and the relation between his theory and practice.

However, as we have mentioned many times, Huang's theory and practice are examined only in terms of his main tendencies. This means that it is quite possible that he presents us with deviations from or even a contradictions to his main tendencies in his theoretical or practical writings. Based on this viewpoint, it is easy for us to accept the fact that he wrote a few poems criticizing political affairs and a few poems in regular poetic patterns, and even imitated others without any innovation or originality. Yet, certainly, it is not these defects which make him a great Chinese poet. Generally speaking, Huang pays less attention to poetic content than to poetic technique. This leaves a larger range for him to work on his poetic style, poetic form, and poetic technique. Thus, Huang's

contribution to Chinese poetry is chiefly his innovative poetic technique. Although his theory influenced the formation of the Jiangxi School of poetry, which was prevalent for several hundred years, and occupies an important place in Chinese poetic theory, he is known more as an artist than a theoretician.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- BBCK--BAI BU CONG KAN 百部丛刊
BBCSJC--BAI BU CONG SHU JI CHENG 百部丛书集成
CSJC--CONG SHU JI CHENG 丛书集成
GXJBCS--GUO XUE JI BEN CONG SHU 国学基本丛书
SBBY--SI BU BEI YAO 四部备要
SBCK--SI BU CONG KAN 四部丛刊
SGSZ--SHAN GU SHI ZHU 山谷诗注
SSHJY--SONG SHI HUA JI YI 宋诗话辑佚
WYWK--WAN YOU WEN KU 万有文库
YZHXSJY--YU ZHANG HUANG XIAN SHENG WEN JI 豫章黄先生文集

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Cai Tao 蔡绦. Xi Qing Shi Hua 西清诗话. SSHJY.

Cao Pi 曹丕. Dian Lun 典论. BBCK.

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Dao Yuan 道源. Jing De Zhuan Deng Lu 景德传灯录. SBCK.

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