

In Others' Words: A Study of Italian Quotations in the Comparative Method of Qian Zhongshu

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书

In Others' Words: A Study of Italian Quotations in the Comparative Method of Qian Zhongshu

Tesi di Dottorato in Civiltà, Culture e Società dell'Asia e dell'Africa
- Curriculum Asia Orientale - Ciclo XXIV

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比较文学的最终目的在于帮助我们认识总体文学(littérature générale) 乃至人类文化的基本规律，所以中西文学超出实际联系范围的平行研究不仅是可能的，而且是极有价值的。这种比较唯其是在不同文化系统的背景上进行的，所以得出的结论具有普遍意义。

钱钟书

The ultimate intent of comparative literature is to help us to grasp the littérature générale, going so far as to the basic principles of human culture. In this way not only the parallel study of Chinese and western literatures that oversteps the limits of the real contacts is possible, but is also of great value. This kind of comparison is precisely to be carried on with a background of different cultural systems and the results thus obtained have a universal significance.

Qian Zhongshu

A che scopo riformulare maldestramente ciò che bravi scrittori hanno già detto così bene prima di noi?

Why express clumsily what good writers have already masterly written before us?

Simon Leys

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Abstract 1 (English)

Chinese comparative literature has a great representative in the contemporary scholar and writer Qian Zhongshu (1910-1998). His comparative method tends to escape every categorization and his massive use of quotations in seven different foreign languages, main characteristic of his style, creates a collage of literary motives and genres that constitutes a fertile field for analysis to grasp the general principles of world literature, as outlined by the author.

Chinese scholars have established a discipline, the Qian Xue (Studies on Qian), that since the eighties of last century researches on Qian Zhongshu's achievements and methodology and that plays an important role to get a full understanding of the author's approach to writing and literature. The contribution of western scholarship is nevertheless a due and necessary investigation in the work of such a complex and varied literary production and a step that needs to be further developed, since western literature constitutes a great part of Qian's thematic choices. The number of languages involved in the analysis and the huge number of cross references in Qian's work require a set of skills of which this work tries to be a tiny, yet necessary, part, analysing the contribution of Italian literature to the comparative method of Qian Zhongshu.

The work tries to outline the threads that move Qian Zhongshu in the choice of authors and works that constitute, in quotation, the core of his method. As in a case study, through a punctual and meticulous analysis of all the Italian quotations that appear in Qian's literary essays, the present study tries to answer questions on the necessity of such a consistent use of quotations and on the role that foreign literatures, with a focus on the Italian one, have in the definition of a comparative method that seems to be all-inclusive and difficult to grasp.

A deductive method is here aimed at in order to delineate the comparative method and the general principles that guide the author through the study and analysis of single quotations.

To seize an understanding of the principles that lead global literatures in an enhancement of mutual comprehension between countries and peoples seems a desirable yet unreal desire: Qian Zhongshu, through his use of quotations to establish a dialogue between different historical epochs and distant spatial settings, wants to demonstrate that this desire is, after all, attainable.

Abstract 2 (Chinese)

当代著名学者和作家钱钟书（1910年-1998年）是中国比较文学界的一位代表人物。他研究比较文学的方式与众不同，主要特点在于能在作品中大量地利用七种不同外语的引文，从而创建了一种中外文学主题和体裁的“拼贴”方式，开拓了进行比较分析的一个广阔领域，以此把握世界文学创作的一般性原则。

中国学者八十年代已建立了一门叫做“钱学”的学科，该学科的主要目的是研究钱氏的成就和治学方法。中国“钱学”的价值在于能够使人们更多了解作为学者和作家的钱钟书的创作意义，不过尽管如此，西方学者的研究仍然是一个必要的补充，因为钱钟书的创作中很多方面涉及到了西方文学，而面对如此一位学识博大精深的作家，西方的研究需要进一步的发展。

因为需要分析的内容包括不同语言和大量的交叉引用，研究钱钟书对世界比较文学的贡献是一个宏大的课题，本论文的尝试只是其中是一个微小的，但却是必要的一部分，它主要分析意大利文学对于钱钟书的比较文学方法的贡献。

本论文通过对钱钟书论著中意大利文引文部分的分析，研究钱钟书在其作品中所引用的意大利作家和作品，最终的目的在于探究钱钟书比较文学研究方法的内质。

本论文的研究方法主要以案例研究为主，通过细致解析钱钟书散文中所出现的意大利语引文，进而把焦点集中在钱钟书与意大利文学的关系上，从而试图回答以下几个问题：钱钟书的著作为什么能旁征博引，贯通古今，融会中西？他作品里出现的外国文献主要作用是什么？今天的研究者以何种途径入手才能全面了解其包罗万象，看似难以把握的比较方法？论文以演绎的方式剖析作为学者的钱钟书论著的比较方法，并进一步挖掘其研究方式的内质。

要抓住世界文学创作的一般原则，加强不同国家和不同国家人民之间的相互理解，似乎是一个过于理想化的愿望。不过钱钟书，这位知识渊博的中国学

者，通过在他的著作中精确地援引世界文献，成功地帮助全球文化开展了跨越时空的对话，他希望能够证明实现这一愿望虽然任重道远，但毕竟是有可能的。

Abstract 3 (Italian)

Nel panorama degli studi di letteratura comparata in Cina, lo scrittore ed erudito Qian Zhongshu (1910-1998) ricopre un ruolo di primo piano. Il suo metodo comparativo si avvale di un uso massiccio di citazioni in sette lingue diverse che rappresenta la principale caratteristica dello stile dello scrittore. Il collage di motivi e generi letterari così ottenuto costituisce un fertile terreno d'analisi per comprendere i principi generali della letteratura mondiale, così come illustrati dall'autore nel corpus della sua opera.

Gli studiosi cinesi negli anni ottanta dello scorso secolo hanno dato vita a una disciplina, la Qian Xue (Studi su Qian Zhongshu) che conduce ricerche sul metodo comparativo di Qian Zhongshu e sul suo contributo in ambito letterario. La Qian Xue gioca inoltre un ruolo fondamentale per comprendere appieno l'approccio dell'autore alla scrittura e alla critica letteraria. Il contributo degli studiosi occidentali alle ricerche su una produzione letteraria così variegata e complessa è tuttavia doveroso e indispensabile ed è un percorso che necessita di ulteriori sviluppi e analisi anche in considerazione delle scelte letterarie di Qian Zhongshu che ricadono in maniera consistente sulle letterature occidentali. Il numero di lingue utilizzate in citazione e la notevole quantità di riferimenti extratestuali nell'opera di Qian richiedono competenze ad ampio spettro. La presente ricerca tenta di contribuire in modo circostanziato all'analisi dell'opera dell'autore, analizzando l'apporto e l'influenza della letteratura italiana al suo metodo comparativo e proponendosi di delineare i motivi che lo guidano nella scelta degli autori e delle opere che costituiscono, in citazione, il nucleo del suo lavoro. Attraverso una puntuale e dettagliata analisi delle citazioni in italiano nei saggi letterari si vuole motivare la necessità di un uso così massiccio di citazioni e

il ruolo che le letterature straniere rivestono nella definizione del metodo comparativo elaborato dall'autore.

Riuscire a delineare i principi generali alla base delle letterature globali per una promozione della comprensione e della conoscenza fra culture e popoli diversi sembrerebbe un obiettivo auspicabile, per quanto irrealizzabile, e tuttavia Qian Zhongshu, attraverso un uso delle citazioni che vuole essere una forma di dialogo fra diverse epoche storiche e luoghi lontani, vuole dimostrare che questo obiettivo è, dopo tutto, raggiungibile.

Introduction

Range and purpose of the study

During a great part of last century, the work of Qian Zhongshu has been more analyzed and acknowledged outside China, as the large number of translations of the novel *Wei Cheng*, 围城 (Fortress Besieged) 1947, might prove.¹ Nowadays there seems to be a reversal of this trend and, while in China the *Qian Xue* 钱学 (academic research on Qian Zhongshu) is flourishing since the eighties of last century, much needs to be done outside China, where the studies on this author still have to be enhanced.

Among the many aspects of Qian Zhongshu's work which could be studied, and all the points of view under which his scholarly and literary activity could be possibly analyzed, this work has chosen to focus on the comparative method used in the majority of the works of the author. The core of the research lies in the analysis of one particular aspect of this method, one that permeates profoundly the same idea of literature and creative activity for Qian Zhongshu: the use of quotations. A further step

¹ Among the main translations, I will mention: *Fortress Besieged* trans. in English by Nathan Mao and Jeanne Kelly, 1979, reissued in 1989, 2003, 2006; *Wei Cheng*, trans. in Russian by V. Sorokin, 1980; *La Forteresse assiégée* trans. in French by Sylvie Servan-Schreiber and Wang Lou, 1987; *Jiehun Kuangshi Qu (Wei Cheng)* trans. in Japanese by Huang Jingjian, 1988; *Die umzingelte Festung*, trans. in German by Monika Motsch and Jerome Shih, 1988, reissued in 2008; *Wei Cheng*, trans. in Uighur by Sima Yili and Aizi Maiti, 1991; *La Fortaleza Asediada*, trans in Spanish by Taciana Fisac, 1992; *Wei Cheng*, trans. in Korean by Wu Yunshu, 1994.

Theodore Hutters in his *Qian Zhongshu*, 1982, talks of Qian Zhongshu as "out of harmony with the main intellectual current of the times" due to his "fiction's detailed descriptions of the urban upper crust and his criticism's evident appeal to patrician taste" (p.1).

into the study of Qian Zhongshu's use of quotations is undertaken when looking at quotations coming from Italian authors as the leitmotif and the core of this work. The aim of the analysis is particularly to reveal the role and the importance of Italian literature in the definition of Qian Zhongshu's scholarly ideas and, on a more general level, to show, as in a case study, the author's contribution to world literature and to the enhancement of cultural and literary contacts between east and west in the fields of comparative literature and cultural exchanges.

Methodology and material

Among those that approach Qian Zhongshu's work and that analyze his scholarly career, it happens to be the method of many, probably due to the same influence coming from the reading of Qian's works, to evaluate his achievements using his proper method, paying a strict attention to examples and to a close textual analysis. Illustrating theories and literary motives with the help of direct textual references makes possible to avoid empty pronouncements and baseless assumptions.²

The present work tries to pursue this method: the core analysis rests on quotations and on the way in which quotations are used. The comparative method of Qian Zhongshu is exposed and discussed through the same quotations that constitute nearly the whole body of Qian's work.

The works chosen and here presented for analysis include all the essays contained in the collections *Xie zai rensheng bianshang* 写在人生边上 (Writing on the Margins of Human Life) 1941, *Rensheng bianshang de*

² See "Qian Zhongshu's theory and practice of metaphor" a dissertation by Zheng Zhining for a master of art degree at the University of British Columbia, Department of Asian Studies, April 1994. Zheng Zhining's work exposes, with a close eye set on Qian's works, his theory about metaphor, the use that he does of this rhetoric device and the uniqueness of Qian's style achievements. Every point is appropriately supported by relevant examples from Qian's works.

bianshang 人生边上的边上 (On the Margins of the Margins of Human Life) 2001, *Qian Zhongshu Xuanji – Sanwen Juan* 钱钟书选集散文卷 (Collected works of Qian Zhongshu, essays) 2001, *Qi Zhui Ji* 七缀集 (Collection of Seven Patches), 1985, *A collection of Qian Zhongshu's English essays*, 2005, *Qian Zhongshu Sanwen* 钱钟书散文 (Essays by Qian Zhongshu) 1997, and the two masterpieces *Guan Zhui Bian* 管锥编 (The Tube and Awl Collection) 1979 and *Tan Yi Lu* 谈艺录 (Discourses on Art) 1948.

As for the corpus of essays, only those in which Italian quotations are present are picked out for examination, the same principle is adopted for *Guan Zhui Bian* and *Tan Yi Lu*, where all the Italian quotations that Qian Zhongshu happens to make use of are dissected and analyzed.

Even if primary sources necessarily constitute the main target of analysis, and the reading and dissecting of Qian Zhongshu's essays make up for the core of this study, their approach has constituted only the second phase of the research. The first phase has been focused on a survey on general studies on the author and on his role in comparative literature, both with reference to Chinese and to western sources. The inquiry into primary sources has then proceeded from a first approach to the creative works of the author, to advance further with the analysis of the corpus of essays. Even if of marginal interest for the definition of Qian's comparative method, because they lack of those quotations that constitute the main concern in the essays, creative works account for an important source of information on Qian's life and writing style. The analysis of the essays has then been supported by the huge amount of critical studies provided by the *Qian Xue*, the academic discipline that leads the "studies on Qian" which, due to social and political reasons, results sometimes crammed full of praising and superficial remarks and lacks of a true critical spirit. The

skimming of those studies and the possibility to meet personally some of the most important scholars and researchers on Qian Zhongshu and on Chinese modern comparative literature, has allowed the present study to define the targets and the objectives of the research that focuses on Italian quotations. Italian quotations and the influence of Italian literature on the comparative method of Qian Zhongshu are specifically the main concern of this analysis, and are a topic never before dealt with in mainland and overseas *Qian Xue* studies.

The participation to two international seminars for the commemoration of the one hundred years of Qian Zhongshu has proved fundamental both for the collection of material and for the definition and investigation of the scope of the research. A detailed account of those seminars will be given later on in this work. Of the utmost importance has also been an academic year, the third of my PhD course, spent as exchange student at the Department of Chinese Language and Culture at Beijing University in mainland China, which has been possible thanks to a grant from the European Union, as part of the LISUM exchange project.

All the quotations reported in the present study have been transcribed in the body of the text exactly as they appear in Qian's essays, and have been double-checked in their original sources. The incidental mistakes in Qian's quotations have been thus rectified in footnotes. Whenever it has been possible to recover them, the check of the source texts has been based on the same edition indicated by Qian, also thanks to a careful work of digitalization of old and recent editions of books on such websites as www.openlibrary.org; www.pelagus.org/it/libri; www.archives.catholic.org.hk; www.gutenberg.org; www.letturelibere.net, www.liberliber.it and www.books.google.it. All the quotations have then been translated in

English and, when the source text of the translated version is not indicated, the translation is by the author of the present study. Sometimes the same work (i.e. the *Divine Comedy* by Dante Alighieri) has been consulted in different editions (for example the original Italian and the translated English one) and it is thus quoted in footnote, according to the edition used and indicated by Qian Zhongshu.

Organization of the work

In order to provide the work with an organic and systematic organization, a brief introduction on the history of comparative literature in the east is given to define the field of studies to which Qian's work might be ascribed and to create the background for Qian's scholarly career. Since biographical studies on Qian Zhongshu are already available in English,³ only a brief outline of his life and work is here presented in order to understand the development of his career and the reason for many of his thematic and literary choices. A step further toward the main interest of this study is then made in tracing the roots of Qian Zhongshu's method and in the illustration of the way in which Qian's works, with their massive usage of quotations, set an important advancement in the practice of Chinese comparative literature. Attention, through close examples of the usage of quotations, is then given to the various functions that they have in the corpus of essays of the author. In this first analytical section both Italian and non-Italian quotations are involved into an explanation of Qian's method, touching the roots of his stylistic and thematic choices. The

³ One of the most complete and reasoned biographies of Qian Zhongshu in English is the one by Theodore Hutters, *Qian Zhongshu*, Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1982. As for works in Chinese, particular attention has been devoted to *Yingzao Babita de Zhizhe: Qian Zhongshu zhuan* by Zhang Wenjiang, Shanghai: Fudan Daxue Chubanshe, 2011 (first published 1993).

vice grips then on Italian authors and works, who come on the scene in a chapter in which the quotations examined are divided into two main paragraphs according to a chronological principle: “From Dante to Leopardi: past theories into the present”, where quotations from Italian authors up to the end of the 19th century are used to discuss themes that cover a huge span of time up to the contemporary political situation, and “From Pascoli to Eco: present ideas to shed light on the past” where the focus is on the way contemporary Italian authors comment on Chinese classical texts. In every chapter, paragraphs are named after the authors quoted for every one of the two time blocks. Italian quotations are the main target of this study that tries to analyze them explaining their function and offering a translation from Italian, especially when they are not translated in Qian’s texts, identifying their source text, the literary genre, the historical period⁴ and, most importantly, trying to single out the reasons why Qian has chosen them and the role each one has in the panorama of Qian’s literary and aesthetic theory. Not much attention is given to quotations that are only present in footnotes in Qian’s works, and are not directly functional to the advancement of the motives discussed, nor is their translation offered. A paragraph is then dedicated to outline the *Qian Xue* and to illustrate the latest outcomes of this branch of studies in Chinese literature up to the activities to commemorate the one-hundred years of Qian Zhongshu in 2010. Among those activities, we count two important international seminars, the first at the National Central University in Taiwan in December 2009 and the second at the Canadian University of British Columbia in Vancouver in December 2010. The

⁴ While quotations are always accompanied in Qian’s works by the indication of their authors, the same does not happen for their translation from Italian into Chinese and for their source texts and composition details.

author of the present research has been granted the honour to take active part in the two seminars, which have been source of great inspiration for the present work and of encouragement, especially on the side of Chinese scholars, as for the utility of such an analysis for a complete understanding of Qian Zhongshu's thematic and stylistic choices.

Since the scope of this research lies in an explanation of the Italian quotations, in the closing remarks summarizing notes try to point out which are the preferred quoted authors and which are the historical literary trends more examined and taken into consideration by Qian, aiming at giving more clues to the comprehension of the author's scholarly formation and literary erudition.

Three appendixes find their place at the conclusion of the dissertation: the first one pertains to comparative literature studies in the west to offer a background to the development of the discipline in China, the second is a list of the Italian authors quoted and the third is a collection of letters and emails from which this study has profited. In particular, the third appendix contains a letter sent from Qian Zhongshu to his comrade Lü Tongliu in which we find a certain proof of strong contacts between Qian and the Italian cultural and literary world and a letter by Yang Jiang in reply to mine on questions regarding both her work and Qian's method and content choices.

Limits of the study

The huge span of Qian Zhongshu's literary interests and the width of his scholarly career account for the impossibility for the present work to offer a comprehensive account of his method and ask for a further investigation in the matters dealt with in this study. Many are the aspects that would deserve better attention as, for example, an analysis of the evolution of

Qian's use of quotations and of his reference to Italian authors in his different works, to get if Qian's quotations in his initial works differ from the ones in the last phase of his writing career, or the link between his reading notes, published in a scanned version in 2001 with the name *Rong'an Guan Zhaji* 容安馆札记 (Notes from the Rong'an study), and his essays, that take form after the reading notes, just to name some. The richness of Qian Zhongshu's literary and aesthetic panorama and the numberless implications that lie behind and inside his works constitute a spur to further pursue research and to fill all the large gaps left uncovered.

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The person to which I owe the same idea of starting a PhD research, and which I immensely thank, is Professor Federico Masini, professor of Chinese, former Dean of the Faculty of Oriental Studies at Rome University and tireless example of dedication to research and of personal

and scholarly advancement since my first day as a student of Chinese language at Rome University “Sapienza”.

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CHAPTER 1

Brief outline of comparative literature studies in China

To set an introduction and a base to place Qian Zhongshu's scholarly career in the right perspective, a brief outline of the main trends of comparative literature studies in China will be offered. Besides, this will serve as a background for Qian's work that will help us explain why the author is not a comparatist in the usual sense of the term and what is his original contribution to the discipline. To shed some light on the links and contacts between Chinese and western comparative studies, an appendix to this work will trace an outline of comparative literature in the west.

1.1 Chinese Comparative Studies

Yue Daiyun 乐黛云, former professor of Chinese contemporary literature and comparative literature at Beijing University, helps us to set an eye on comparative literature studies in China that, as the case has been in the western world, have followed a path towards freedom from provincialism. The analysis of locally and temporally delimited literary phenomena has in fact advanced towards the investigation of encounters that span outside space and time and that even surpass the borders of different and apparently far-off disciplines.

As the appendix on comparative literature in the west will explain, the credit for this development is to be attributed to the American School that

influenced Chinese comparative studies, and it is from this school that the need to set aside space and time in combining literatures belonging to different cultural worlds originates.

During the nineties of last century, the works on comparative literature in China that answer to the need of an interdisciplinary character and of multicultural intents have followed a trend of constant growth and a continuous deepening of interests. The two-hundred sixty-six works published in 1990 reach in 1991 the figure of three-hundred twenty-eight and in 1992 they are two-hundred seventy-one, as reported by Xie Tianzhen 谢天振 in the article “Le tendenze più recenti della comparatistica letteraria cinese (1990-1992)” (Recent trends in Chinese comparative literature 1990-1992).⁵

Noteworthy studies are: *Xifang Wenyi Sichao Yu Ershi Shiji Zhongguo Wenxue*⁶ 西方文艺思潮与二十世纪中国文学 (Western literary and artistic trends and Chinese literature in the 20th century) edited by Wang Ning and Yue Daiyun in 1990 and *Lun Ouzhou Wenxinzhuyi* 论欧洲文心主义 (Discussing Euro-centrism) published in 1990 and 1991 on *Zhongguo Bijiao Wenxue*⁷ 中国比较文学 (Chinese Comparative Literature) by Yang Zhouhan 杨周翰, who has as his main point the need to cancel western critical and thematic rules, the so called Euro-centrism, in the practice of comparative literature. In *Lun Ouzhou Wenxin Zhuyi*, Qian Zhongshu is referred to as the scholar who has offered a great contribution to the

⁵ Xie Tianzhen, “Le tendenze più recenti della comparatistica letteraria cinese (1990-1992)” *I Quaderni di Gaia* VI, 9 (1995): 73.

⁶ Yue Daiyun and Wang Ning, edit. *Xifang wenyi sichao yu ershi shiji Zhongguo wenxue* (Tides of Western literary thought and twentieth-century Chinese literature). (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1990).

⁷ Yang Zhouhan “Lun Ouzhou Zhongxinzhuyi” (Discussion on literary Euro-centrism) in *Zhongguo Bijiao Wenxue* (Chinese Comparative Literature), Shanghai Waiyu Jiaoyu Chubanshe n.1 (1991): 21-46.

practice of comparative literature⁸ with the elaboration of a method capable of conciliating local differences with universally valid principles. Yang Zhouhan affirms that if we analyse ideas present in one literature with a perspective different from the usual one we might obtain a great advantage in discovering things that we would not have seen otherwise. This is exactly what Qian Zhongshu did, reaching a *mutual illumination* between Chinese and western literatures from the comparative literary analysis, giving a great contribution to east-west comparative literature. Other authors as well (Sun Jingyao 孙景尧 1991, Gan Jianmin 甘建民 1991, Liu Bo 刘波 1992) are for the setting aside of Euro-centrism in Chinese literature and in global comparative literature in general.

An essay by Qian Niansun 钱念孙, *Bijiao Wenxue Xiaowang Lun – Cong Zhu Guanqian Dui Bijiao Wenxue De Kanfa Tanqi* 比较文学消亡论—从朱光潜对比较文学的看法谈起 (Discussion on the fading out of comparative literature starting from Zhu Guanqian's point of view on the discipline) in *Wenxue Pinglun* 文学评论 (Literature review) 1990, gave the start to the debate if comparative literature should exist at all, stating that it is a discipline without a specific field and definition and that it cannot be defined a scientific discipline. A proof to support this point of view is that the same Qian Zhongshu did not define himself a comparatist. A reply to this essay has been given by Du Wei 杜卫 who states that we do not have to mix up comparative literature and comparative method, the second one pertaining to one specific literature, the first one being a study on intercultural mediation.

⁸ See also Xia Zhiqing, "Zhonghui Qian Zhongshu Jishi", in *Qian Zhongshu Pingshuo Qishi Nian* ed., Yang Lianfen (Beijing: Wenhua Yishu Chubanshe, 2009), 69. Xia affirms that Qian has offered to sinologist studies a new platform for research on comparative literature.

Xie Tianzhen, in the final remarks of the above-mentioned essay, foresees an increasing development of comparative studies in many and different fields like studies on translation and translated literature, studies on popular and folk literature, studies on television, radio and media, studies on overseas Chinese literature.

Nevertheless, the increase of comparative literature studies in China does not necessarily correspond to their quality and value. Meng Hua 孟华, former professor of comparative literature at Peking University, notes that it is advisable to distrust the “present generation of Chinese comparatists” that quite often are not even able to read works in the original language and lack of those linguistic and literary competence that new generations will be able to gain thanks to the possibility of travelling abroad to pursue further specialization. Even today, this competence stays the privilege of scholars like Qian Zhongshu that, before the Cultural Revolution, had the possibility to acquire the necessary intercultural skills to pursue comparative literature research.⁹

Qian Zhongshu wanted to give to the study of literature and literary critic the status of a scientific discipline, and in order to do so he was aware that it was necessary to avoid any point of view spoiled by both the ethnicism that corrupts critical views and by the blind adoration of everything that was foreign, and to abandon every criticism devoid of significance to move forward to a real comparison.

The publication of works like *Tan Yi Lu* and *Guan Zhui Bian*, notes Ning Yunfeng 宁云峰,¹⁰ made Chinese comparative literature gain a place in world literature and has been of sure impact on the direction followed by

⁹ Interview by the author, Beijing, 11-08-2009.

¹⁰ Ning Yunfeng, “Shilun Qian Zhongshu de Bijiao Wenxue Guan” *Yun Cheng Gao Zhuan Xuebao* 3 (1992): 32-37.

the discipline in China. Up to the eighties of last century, continues Ning, Chinese comparatists had missed the true aim of comparative literature, namely to understand the universal laws that lead the development of art and literature through comparison, together with the peculiarities related to space and time, up to the individuation of a general principle that permeates the development of human civilization. Qian Zhongshu, thanks to a deep critical spirit, analyzed artistic-literary phenomena without ever leaving aside written texts. He affirmed that he has not talked about comparative literature; he has only applied a method.

While Qian Zhongshu and his method are our last step in outlining the development of Chinese comparative literature, tracing the roots of this discipline in China, beside the recent influence of a western point of view, brings us to Wang Guowei 王国维 (1877-1927), one of the forerunners of Chinese comparative literature studies. Wang's forerunner article *Hong Lou Meng Pingxi* 红楼梦评析 (Criticism on *The Dream of the Red Mansion*) was serialized on the magazine *Jiaoyu Zazhi* 教育杂志 (Education Review) in the June-August issues of 1904. Wang Guowei has been one of the first to use western theories to analyze Chinese literature. Since then, comparative studies in China have reached great achievements thanks to other scholars like Lu Xun 鲁迅, who examined the functions of literature comparing features of literary traditions in different cultures, Mao Dun 茅盾, who has been the first to compare literatures from England, France and Russia, Zhou Zuoren 周作人, Zhu Guanqian 朱光潜, Guo Moruo 郭沫若, Wang Yuanhua 王元化 and Qian Zhongshu, each one with his own theory and appreciation. In this advancement Zhu Guanqian and Qian Zhongshu particularly have been two milestones with a method that shares similarities such as a great erudition in classical learning and a deep

knowledge of western sources. However, their method also carries some differences;¹¹ Zhu Guanqian's method can be defined a unidirectional explication coming from the idealism by Benedetto Croce, as it was usually thought, or by Nietzsche, as Zhu himself affirmed. He can be without any doubt considered an exponent of the western aesthetic philosophy. Qian Zhongshu's theory instead can be considered as belonging to Structuralism, a twentieth century western critical theory which focused on character and identity of traditional concepts. While Zhu Guanqian's principles are mostly an explanation of others' theories, Qian's are the demonstration that everything can be directly deduced from texts with the help of aesthetic principles. Both scholars, each in his own way, have contributed to the enhancement of comparative literature studies in China and the same Zhu Guanqian affirmed that Qian Zhongshu has been one of the pioneers in introducing Chinese traditional critic into western literary critic.¹²

I.A. Richards was the first one to use the term "comparative literature" in China during some lectures held at Qinghua University in Beijing, where he was teaching in the late twenties and early thirties. Qinghua is considered by Yue Daiyun a University that at the start of the 20th century trained a good number of outstanding scholars in comparative literature studies among which she counts Wu Mi 吴宓, Robert Winter, Chen Yinke 陈寅恪, Ji Xianlin 季羨林, Li Jianwu 李健吾, Yang Yezhi 杨业治, Qian Zhongshu and Zhu Guanqian, all trained in Chinese and western literatures and busy with courses and studies in comparative literature. Yue Daiyun considers Zhu Guanqian's *The Psychology of Literary Appreciation and Poetics*

¹¹ Wu Chao, "Zhu Guanqian yu Qian Zhongshu bijiao shixue zhixue fangfa zhi qubie", *Wexue Jiaoyu* 03 (2008): 138-139.

¹² See Wu Taichang, *Wo renshi de Qian Zhongshu*, (Shanghai: Shanghai Wenyi Chubanshe, 2005), 78.

(1936) and Qian Zhongshu's *Tan Yi Lu* (1948) the most outstanding achievements of comparative literature's studies, praising *Tan Yi Lu* for "its wealth of citations from both Chinese and foreign literatures that were used as evidence to explain and criticize principles and theories".¹³

Qian Zhongshu's *Guan Zhui Bian*, 1979, is considered by Yue Daiyun a milestone of the revival of Chinese comparative literature and she sees its main achievement in the illustration of the interaction between various subjects of the humanities transcending boundaries between disciplines, time and space. Another aspect Yue Daiyun particularly appreciates in Qian's masterpiece is his theory about translation and his idea of "transformation" as the right vehicle for the good translation.¹⁴

The achievements of *Guan Zhui Bian* were in a way decisive for the development of key concepts in Chinese comparative literature; in his work Qian Zhongshu warned to be very careful when speaking of origin and influence, since sometimes there are similar theories in contexts that have never been in contact, while big differences arise from ideas sprung from the same origin. He also advocated a reciprocal usage of each other's theories between west and east to interpret literary phenomena.¹⁵ Since its appearance, *Guan Zhui Bian* has had a great influence on Chinese artistic and literary discussion and critical studies. According to Yu Mingfang 俞明芳, all discussions on Chinese literary criticism should consider what suggested by Qian Zhongshu in his masterpiece.¹⁶ Chen Ziqian 陈子谦, author of a study on Qian Zhongshu, expresses his firm belief that *Guan Zhui Bian*, already entered in the domain of the international scholarly

¹³ Yue Daiyun, *Comparative Literature and China - Overseas Lectures by Yue Daiyun*, (Beijing: Beijing University Press, 2004), 6-7.

¹⁴ For Yue Daiyun's appreciation of *Guan Zhui Bian* see her *Comparative literature*, 7.

¹⁵ See Yue Daiyun, *Comparative Literature*, 97.

¹⁶ Chen Ziqian, *Lun Qian Zhongshu*, (Guilin: Guangxi Shifan Daxue Chubanshe, 2005), 77.

world, will become a point of reference for the Chinese cultural world and the pride of the critics of art, stating itself as a model for the cultural critique on Chinese culture and civilization. Chen Ziqian continues: “If a discipline of ‘comparative literature’ has been started, then we might consider him (Qian Zhongshu) as the founder of said discipline” because he never conducts an abstract comparison, there is always a practical appraisal to assess people, understand the real meaning of words and to know the general mood. Qian himself has compared the need of comparative literature to the need of a discerning attitude for people looking at a cat in a pitch-black night, or to the need for the capacity to distinguish colours for a cat looking at things at daytime. Western critics, lacking the help of comparative literature, tend to look at the multicoloured old Chinese poetry seeing it as being grey coloured, because when people accustomed to a particular kind of poetic tradition try to consider a different one, they often make no distinction.¹⁷ Differentiation and understanding are possible only with the support of a discipline able to link this literary realms and state points of contacts and appreciation.

An important point Yue Daiyun makes in her essay¹⁸ is about the legacy of Qian’s work, especially aroused by the publication of *Guan Zhui Bian*, after which four professors from Peking University published outstanding works in comparative literature.¹⁹ *Guan Zhui Bian*, notwithstanding its difficulty and obscurity in a way, was still a work that for Yue Daiyun

¹⁷ Chen Ziqian, *Lun Qian Zhongshu*, 187.

¹⁸ Yue Daiyun, *Comparative Literature*, 98.

¹⁹ Yue Daiyun (*Comparative Literature*, 98) reports of four works published in the wake of *Guan Zhui Bian*, these are: *A Stroll in Aesthetics* (1981) by Zong Baihua, *Collected Writings on the History of Chinese and Indian Cultures* (1982) by Ji Xianlin, *Collected Writings on Comparative Culture* (1984) by Jin Kemu and *Whetstone: Collected Critical Essays* (1984) by Yang Zhouhan.

gave a great contribution to Chinese comparative literature, bringing new ideas and influencing other scholars to pursue a new formulation of comparative literature studies. As Xia Zhiqing 夏志清, literary critic and academic, remarks in an essay written on the same year of publication of *Guan Zhui Bian*, Qian's work, even with his scanty number of readers in China due to its difficulty, stands for the most outstanding achievement in the field of comparative literature studies.²⁰

October 1985 is a fundamental date for Chinese comparative studies since it sees the first conference of the Chinese Comparative Literature Association (CCLA) in Shenzhen University with the cooperation of fourteen distinguished comparatists from the entire world,²¹ with a total number of 121 papers received by the congress. Interesting is that the development of comparative literature studies, following the CCLA conference, saw the discipline to take different directions in academic circles of different parts of China, each giving more importance to some aspects: the Beijing School focused on international literary and cultural relations and interdisciplinary studies, the Shanghai and Hunan School on theories of intercultural relations as the theory and history of translation, and so on.²²

In 1981, the first step for future developments of studies in comparative literature had already been carried on at Peking University by Professor Ji

²⁰ Xia Zhiqing, "Zhonghui Qian Zhongshu Jishi" in *Qian Zhongshu Pingshuo Qishi Nian*, Yang Lianfen edit., 69.

²¹ Yue Daiyun, in her *Comparative literature* (2004) pag 8-9, ascribes a great significance to the conference held in Shenzhen and relates of fourteen comparatists from Europe, North America, Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong among whom were present Earl Miner, honorary President of the International Comparative Literature Association (ICLA) and Douwe Fokkema, ICLA President. The conference saw discussions about comparative literature's scopes, methodologies, demarcations.

²² For a complete account of Yue Daiyun's description of the different trends in Chinese comparative studies and on the activities of the CCLA see her *Comparative literature*, 11-13.

Xianlin and Professor Qian Zhongshu, director the first and advisor the second of the newly established Peking University Comparative Literature Association.

Yue Daiyun in her essay carries on a discourse on the need to pursue the idea of “diversity in harmony” that comes as far as from the Confucian thought and she sustains that, based on this concept, comparative literature is a mean for understanding diversity and building harmony.²³

“Notes on Comparative literature at the turn of the century”²⁴ by Yue Daiyun casts a glance at “the last ten years”²⁵ and the way in which Chinese comparative literature has been approaching maturity, stating that the name comparative literature is no longer sufficient to express the complexity of this discipline that goes through the fields of the inter-cultural and inter-disciplinary. These are, continues Yue Daiyun, the tasks as well as the challenges of comparative literature at the turn of the century. Both Orientalism, the cultural hegemony of the west on the east, and isolationism, a mere return to the roots of Chinese culture, should be avoided. Comparatists in the 21st century should consider that every nation, undoubtedly and inevitably, bears its own culture and is affected by it, and that the most important feature of the century should be the confrontation between those cultures.

Yue Daiyun foresees that in this century culture will play a fundamental role in the study of comparative literature and that it will be a culture considered in its most real aspects, thanks to a knowledge of its characteristics that is real and not only based on supposed superstitions. China, in this new perspective, will play for the author an important role,

²³ See Yue Daiyun *Comparative literature*, 23-24.

²⁴ Yue Daiyun *Comparative literature*, 63-72.

²⁵ Yue Daiyun refers to the period 1994-2004.

reaching a mutual benefit and understanding with other cultures. A possible canon of the study of comparative literature in China would, as explained in the essay "Teaching Literary History in China and the Canon of Comparative Literature",²⁶ start from all those authors that have set up Chinese modern literature absorbing from outside China what has enriched their contribution to national literature, like Mao Dun and Lu Xun.

René Étiemble, at the Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association held in Paris in August 1985, delivered a speech on Chinese comparative literature expressing praise for its rapid growth since the eighties and full faith in its future achievements already prefigured in its international orientation and in its tendency to link theory and practice. Its role, affirmed Étiemble, would have been important for the rectification of previous concepts about Oriental literature and for the developments of world literature.²⁷

Zhang Longxi 张隆溪,²⁸ Chair Professor of Comparative Literature and Translation at City University of Hong Kong, on the other end, notes that in China the development of comparative literature as a discipline still needs many efforts.

Wang Ning, Professor of comparative literature at Qinghua University in Beijing, reflecting on globalism and the impact on Chinese comparative literature, notes that especially post-modernism, in counting commercial and popular literature among the field of proper literatures, has caused cultural and comparative studies to be interested in a kind of literature previously underestimated or ignored:

²⁶ Yue Daiyun, *Comparative Literature*, 73-80.

²⁷ Yue Daiyun, *Comparative Literature*, 89.

²⁸ See Zhang Longxi *Qian Zhongshu tan bijiaowenxue yu wenxue bijiao*. <http://www.aisixiang.com/data/28340.html>.

*The artificial demarcation between high culture and literature and low culture and literature has thereby been obscured and gradually deconstructed.*²⁹

The strength of Chinese comparative literature is for Wang Ning exactly an encouragement for scholars to pay a closer attention to the situation of popular culture and literature in all of its aspects and perspectives.³⁰ The challenge that China needs to exploit in a time that goes both towards globalism and nationalistic urges is to avoid a closure in a mere east-west opposition and to reinforce the dialogue between the two poles, trying to make Chinese literary world known to the west in a perspective different from the usual one that studies the east from a western and third-world standpoint.³¹

As remarked by Monika Motsch,³² former Professor at Bonn University, both western and eastern comparative literature today follow three different patterns: the first one aims at highlighting differences, the second at highlighting similarities and the third tries to dismantle the two. The first method, derived from the Opium war and the unequal treaties, makes east and west distant and without points of contact. Yan Fu 严复 has been the first to think that the strength of the west did not come from the cannons and the naval army but from the vision of the world of Faust and Prometheus. He thought that the fight between east and west was a fight between passive and active, negative and positive, and that while the

²⁹ Wang Ning, "Comparative literature and globalism: a Chinese cultural and literary strategy", *Comparative Literature Studies*, Vol. 41, No. 4, (2004), 591.

³⁰ Wang Ning, "Comparative Aspects of Contemporary Popular Literature in China" in *Comparative Literature Now Theories and Practice*, Selected papers ed. by Tötösy de Zepetnek and Milan V. Dimic with Irene Sywenky (Paris: Honoré Champion Éditeur, 1999), 448.

³¹ Wang Ning, *Comparative literature and globalism*, 584-602.

³² Monika Motsch, "Qiannülihun-Qian Zhongshu Zuowei Zhongxi Wenhua de Qianxian Ren" in Yang Lianfen, *Qian Zhongshu Pingshuo Qishi Nian*, 326-337.

west represented the right side, the east was the backward and wrong side, passive and servile. In the excessiveness of its assumptions, this point of view stimulated discussions; Yan Fu wanted to wake up Chinese people. The second method, the inclusive one, finds his representative in Lin Yu. He has been the first to put on the same level for analysis western novels and Du Fu 杜甫, Sima Qian 司马迁, Li Bai 李白. Even Wang Guowei thought the two realms had something in common. However, the first to seriously analyze and carry on comparative studies and research has been Wu Mi. The third pattern, continues Motsch, is the one that sees the presence of three thematic spheres: the Chinese, the western and an intersection of the two. Muriel Détrie is a strong supporter not only of the possibility of the dialogue between east and west but also of the fruitful encounter between the two. In the article *Où En Est Le Dialogue Entre l'Occident Et l'Extrême-Orient?* (Where Is The Dialogue Between West And Far-East?), Détrie demonstrates that eastern literatures that encountered the western world in the 20th century were not passive receivers of influences but were able to work out new literary patterns from a fusion of new examples with local socio-economical and literary conditions. Détrie shows in his article that the dialogue between east and west is possible and is a fruitful field of analysis between the two worlds in an intercultural context.

1.2 Qian Zhongshu and comparative literature

Qian Zhongshu did not like to be considered a comparatist and was often very particular about the definition of comparative literature, a different discipline for him from what was usually intended. However, in the essay

Meiguo Xuezhe Duiyu Zhongguo Wenxue De Yanjiu Jiankuang 美国学者对于中国文学的研究简况,³³ (Brief introduction on American scholars' research on Chinese literature) published by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, he affirms that his major interest was the study of Chinese classics, but his lingering interest was comparative literature. In this essay, we have important statements made about the utility and interest of comparative literature. He affirms that comparative literature is important first to understand one's own literature. Every country's literature, he continues, has its specificities as for artistic aspects and particular developments, and it is thanks to the analysis of differences between various traditions that similarities emerge. Similarities, in turn, make differences come to sight. Therefore, a comparative analysis could give to the study of literature and art the universality of scientific disciplines.³⁴ This is a noteworthy assumption, since it proves the faith that Qian Zhongshu has in comparative literature and in its scientific value. Another benefit that comparative literature studies have, in the opinion of Qian, is the help that the analysis of literary phenomena relevant to one literature bring to the study of a different literature.

Qian Zhongshu's ideas on comparative literature, as expressed in the essay, focus on the belief that comparative literature is nothing else than the first requisite for the study of literatures in a global perspective. He affirms that the first step for China in comparative literature studies should have been to arrange and reflect on its own literature. Exchanges with other cultures in China, he notes, had started with Buddhism during the Han dynasty and had been reinforced by the arrival of Marco Polo in

³³ Qian Zhongshu, *Qian Zhongshu Xuanji - Sanwen juan* (Haikou: Nanhai Chuban Gongsi, 2001), 69-73.

³⁴ Qian Zhongshu, "Meiguo Xuezhe Duiyu Zhongguo Wenxue de Yanjiu Jiankuang", 1979 in *Xie Zai Rensheng Bianshang de Bianshang* (Beijing: Sanlian Shudian, 2002), 186.

the 13th century. During the Renaissance age, the *Milione* was the most influential book in the west on the eastern world. Qian also notes that in the history of literary and cultural exchanges between China and the west the play *Zhao Guer* 赵孤儿 (The Orphan Zhao) had influenced many French and German authors, and had been used by the Italian Pietro Metastasio (1698-1792) who, in the starting presentation of the play, had also mentioned its source.

As for the influence of western literature on China, it had started since the Opium wars, to continue with Lin Shu and Yan Fu's translations. A full consciousness of this process had been reached with the May Fourth New Literature Movement. Many authors of that period, like Guo Moruo, Wen Yiduo 闻一多, Ba Jin 巴金, Lu Xun, Mao Dun, Yu Dafu 郁达夫, admitted that they had taken nourishment from western literature and had put many efforts in translations and studies on western authors. This is the reason why today it is impossible to analyze Chinese modern literature without being aware of the foreign languages that often lie at its basis.³⁵

In the 1945 essay *Tan Zhongguo Shi* 谈中国诗 (Discussion on Chinese Poetry) many of those ideas are reflected upon and there is a great deal explaining what comparative literature is and why it is important to skip between languages and times to appreciate global literatures. The curse of Babel has been the starting point of men not understanding each other, says Qian with a Biblical reference, and the greatest influence the curse has had is the one over literatures; that is why we need translators to appreciate other literatures. However, translators should not substitute writers; they should be instead like the crafty matchmakers that unveil only partially the beauty of a woman in search of a husband, causing in

³⁵ See Zhang Longxi "Qian Zhongshu tan bijiaowenxue yu wenxue bijiao".

the spouse, as in the reader, the curiosity to meet the woman, or to read the original text. Nevertheless, it is not easy to study languages only to appreciate literatures, and Chinese language happens to be the most difficult in the world. The encounter of Chinese and Anglo-American literatures, continues Qian, seems to be doomed, and it has been an early one with the first Chinese poem to appear in the 1589 *The Arte of Poesie* by George Puttenham and the first English poem to be translated in Chinese as *A Psalm of Life* by Longfellow. The reason why in an essay called *Discussion on Chinese Poetry* we find answers on comparative literature is that to be able to summarize on a country's literature is necessary for Qian Zhongshu to have an overall understanding of it and it is impossible to see the whole of something if not through the confrontation with something else. The logical deduction is that to talk about the general imprint of Chinese poetry implies a step into the realm of comparative literature.³⁶

Chinese poetry has been precocious since it has not gone through the steps of historical poetry and drama. It has, in contrast, directly reached the maximum beauty of lyrical poetry, and we can understand this point only if we compare it to other poetical traditions. It is beautiful in its brevity and, since this is a distinctive characteristic, we might appreciate it only through the confrontation with other longer poems. Chinese poetry is full of hints and suggestions and it implies more than it states: this point is particularly appreciated by western readers and critics. It uses the interrogative tone a lot; this emerges through the confrontation with western poetry that does not use questions largely. Likewise, the confrontation with the use of punctuation in western poetry explains why in Chinese classical poetry the use of punctuation marks would kill the

³⁶ Qian Zhongshu, "Tan Zhongguo Shi", in *Xie Zai Renshen Bianshang de Bianshang*, 162.

nebulous beauty of a slippery and versatile meaning. The tone of Chinese poetry is subtle and light, bearing nothing of the heroism and strength of western poems. This has also something to do with the characteristics of each language. French poetry for instance, is not strong and powerful like the German one and the German one has not the richness in tone of the Latin one. The conclusion is nevertheless that the “poetic” that is inside Chinese poetry exceeds his “Chineseness”. The common spirit that lies hidden inside the apparent diversity is traceable only through confrontation and the appreciation of one’s own literary realm is even more complete and pleasant when we look to something different.³⁷

Qian Zhongshu thinks that the comparative analysis of the theories of art and literature and the comparative poetics terrain are important and very promising fields of research and the main task of comparative poetics should be to make the terminology of Chinese traditional theory of literature and the terminology of western literature explain and enlighten each other. The confrontation between terminologies and literary ideas has in fact always been one of the biggest problems.³⁸ Qian Zhongshu has gone deeper into the analysis of literature to reach the philosophical principles lying at its core and, showing the possibility to compare those principles and the underlying theories, he has demonstrated the possibility to compare two literary realms. As Hu Heqing poetically remarks,³⁹ Qian embodies in quite a representative way both the western

³⁷ Qian Zhongshu, “Tan Zhongguo Shi”, in *Rensheng Bianshang de Bianshang*, 159-168.

³⁸ See Zhao Yiheng, “Guan Zhui Bian Zhong de Bijiao Wenxue Pingxing Yanjiu”, in *Du Shu*, No. 2 (1981): 41-47. Professor Zhao brings the example of the literary concepts linked to the idea of romanticism and realism that have unconsciously become part of Chinese literary critic.

³⁹ Hu Heqing, “Qian Zhongshu lun” in *Qian Zhongshu Pingshuo Qishi Nian Yang Lianfen* edit., 280-290.

Mephistophelic spirit of negation and the eastern White Butterfly of *Zhuangzi* origin, of which work Hu defines Qian as the better expert.

Translation is also a fundamental part of comparative literature in the opinion of Qian⁴⁰ who considers “change” (*hua* 化) as the highest standard for translation; the sublime is reached when a text does not show traces of a stiff interpretation and still maintains the flavour of the original text.

Among the two main trends in comparative literature, namely the American, focusing on a parallel analysis, and the French, giving more attention to the influences between literatures, since traditional Chinese criticism had always treasured the “concrete evidence” (*shijing*), quite often Chinese critics embraced consciously or unconsciously conceptions from the French School. Cultural exchanges treasured by the American School are instead the milestones in Qian Zhongshu’s ideas on a comparative analysis of literatures, on linguistics and on the comparison of languages, fields yet to be explored by scholars and researchers on Qian.⁴¹

Qian Zhongshu offers an answer to the question if it is possible, in spite of great differences, to compare Chinese and western literatures, stating through the writing of *Guan Zhui Bian* that not only the said comparison is possible, but also that thanks to this comparison the two realms can mutually enlighten each other⁴² and, through the practical work of comparing, applicable to the most different and varied spheres of

⁴⁰ See the essay “Lin Shu de Fanyi” in Qian Zhongshu, *Qi Zhui Ji* (Beijing: Sanlian Shudian, 2002), 77-114.

⁴¹ Gong Gang and Yue Daiyun ed., *Qian Zhongshu: Aizhishe de Xiaoyao*, (Beijing: Wenjin Chubanshe, 2004), 93

⁴² See Monika Motsch, “A New Method of Chinese- Western Comparative Literature: Qian Zhongshu’s *Guan Zhui Bian*” in *Chinese literature and European context*, ed. by M. Gálík, (Institute of Asian and African Studies of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, Bratislava, 1994), 35-42.

literature, it is possible to show the *shixin* 诗心, poetic heart or the *wenxin* 文心, literary heart, common to world literature, that happen to be the basis for the comparative method.⁴³ This is a clear escape from the historical determinism and it is a demonstration that possible relations between texts and ideas can be something else than historical, in “an empirical but experimental challenge to the assumption of Chinese uniqueness”.⁴⁴

The will to escape a materialistic trend common during the “Band of Four” period is overtly sustained in a speech made in 1980 at the Japanese “Aizhi University”⁴⁵ where there is an overt opposition by Qian to the literary critique in China during those years. The only literary critical trend, says the author, followed a Marxist and materialistic tendency and no other school was even taken into consideration. Comparative literature, formalism, and the school of psychology were not legitimate. In the western world instead, critics have summed up quite a number of critical schools, as exemplified by Grisenbach, that counted six schools, the Italian Cesare Segre who, in his *Methodi Attuali Della Critica Italiana*⁴⁶ (Italian criticism’s Actual Methods), counted seven schools (he is also recalled in another 1979 essay together with Maria Corti),⁴⁷ and Fokkema with four schools. What was happening in China after the “Band of Four” period, states Qian, was hopefully a similar proliferation of theories and points of

⁴³ See Chen, Shengsheng. *Qian Zhongshu yu Bijiao Wenxue Piping*. Hunan Shanxueyuan Xuebao (xuang yue kan), vol. 7 n. 4 (2000): 78-80.

⁴⁴ Haun Saussy, *Comparative Literature?* In PMLA, Vol. 118, No. 2 (Mar., 2003), 339.

⁴⁵ See Qian Zhongshu, “Fencui ‘Si Ren Bang’ Yihou Zhongguo Wenxue Qingkuang” in *Rensheng Bian Shang de Bianshang*, 190-195.

⁴⁶ The title should be *I Metodi attuali della critica in Italia*, the spelling mistake in the title is here reported as in the original text by Qian. See Corti, M. e Segre, C. *I metodi attuali della critica in Italia*. (Torino: ERI, 1970)

⁴⁷ Qian Zhongshu, “Meiguo Xuezhè Duiyu Zhongguo Wenxue de Yanjiu Jiankuang” in *Xie Zai Rensheng Bianshang de Bianshang*, 184.

view, since in the humanities, differently from what happens with natural sciences, more theories can coexist and they can be really like the “one hundred flowers blossoming”, not one hundred flowers from the same plant, but one hundred different flowers from one hundred different plants.

To find common trends in world literatures should not in the least be considered part of the globalization of literature, remarks Zhao Yiheng 赵毅衡,⁴⁸ but is an attempt to form, through comparison, a common literature, an *yiban wenxue* 一般文学, tracing the anthropological roots of common stories and common trends.

Important is, remarks Qian Zhongshu, not to consider these common trends as uniformity and to aim through confrontation to a *concordia discors* because: “unison, after all, may very well be not only a synonym of, but also a euphemism for, monotony”.⁴⁹

These words come from a speech by Qian Zhongshu on the occasion of the Sino-American Symposium on Comparative Literature, firstly published in 1983 on the magazine *Wenyi Lilun Yanjiu* 文艺理论研究 (Studies on the Theory of Art and Literature). Qian’s proclaimed hope is that said symposium could be for both Chinese and American scholars a field for confrontation and for comparison both “of literature and of comparatists” in a sure enhancement for “a better understanding of cultural diversity and contextual relativism”.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Zhao Yiheng, *Guan Zhui Bian Zhong de Bijiao Wenxue Pingxing Yanjiu*, 41-47.

⁴⁹ Qian Zhongshu, “A speech by Qian Zhongshu” in *Qian Zhongshu Sanwen* (Hangzhou: Zhejiang Wenyi Chubanshe, 2006), 562-564.

CHAPTER 2

"It is commonly said that human life is a big book": life and works of Qian Zhongshu

1910-1935 From Wuxi to Beijing



Qian Zhongshu's ⁵⁰ life and work⁵¹ cover a great part of the 20th century: he was born in Wuxi⁵² in 1910 from a cultured and conservative family and died in Beijing in 1998. His father, Qian Jibo, was an historian, and his mother was the sister of a popular writer at the time. According to the usage

(原名) is recorded as Yangxian 仰先, his courtesy name 默存, his alternative courtesy name, his former pen-name (biming 笔名) as

Zhong Shujun 中书君.

⁵¹ Biographical notes on Qian Zhongshu are mainly based on: Yang Xiaobin, "Qian Zhongshu" in *Dictionary of Literary Biography--Chinese Fiction Writers, 1900-1949*, Theodore Hutners, *Qian Zhongshu*, 1982 and Zhang Wenjiang, *Yingzao Babita de Zhizhe: Qian Zhongshu Zhuan*, 2011.

⁵² The house in which Qian Zhongshu spent his childhood up to the middle school age is a traditional construction with a typical *Jiangnan* 江南 (South of the Yangtze river) architecture. It has been transformed in a museum in 2001 following a decision of the local city government. Since then the number of visitors has been in constant growth, reaching the figure of 5000 visitors in peak holiday seasons, as a proof of a renewed interest in the personality of the writer.

of the time, at the age of one Qian Zhongshu was made to undergo the *zhuazhou* (抓周), grab in a circle: he was presented a number of different objects and, as a one-year old child, he grabbed the one that most captured his attention. This object, a book in the case of Qian, was said to foretell the future of the child and would become his “given name”. Qian Zhongshu’s grandfather decided that this child would be adopted by his uncle, who had not male heir, and that would have been an exigent master. He attended alternatively public and private-home education for health reasons that kept him away from public school, and started to read Chinese classics under the guidance of the father, and popular traditional novels following the interests of his uncle. When Qian Zhongshu was nine-years old his uncle, a mild and cheerful tutor, died and he was again under the responsibility of his father, a more strict and serious mentor. At the age of eleven, it was thanks to Lin Shu’s translations that he encountered western literature and, soon after that, he was able to read English language literature in the original since he attended a middle school affiliated to the American Episcopal Church. At the age of sixteen, during the summer vacation, under the guidance of his father, he begun to compose prose and poetry in a perfect and elegant classical style and was even asked to occasionally ghost write for his father.

He entered Qinghua University, one of the most prestigious schools in China, as a student of the Department of Foreign Languages, and it is said it was his perfect performance in Chinese and English language that allowed him to be enrolled at Qinghua, notwithstanding his inadequate marks at the math entrance test. The years at Qinghua were marked by excellent fellow students as Li Jianwu 李健吾 and Ji Xianlin 季羨林, by a literary intercourse with outstanding professors like Ye Gongchao 叶公超,

editor of *Crescent Moon* as well as professor at Qinghua, I.A. Richards and Wu Mi, that Qian admired particularly for his synoptic knowledge of European literary history and for his advocacy in including traditional Chinese literature in the study of comparative literature.⁵³ Qian Zhongshu, considered at the time one of the most outstanding students of the Department of foreign languages at Qinghua, used to write essays and book reviews for magazines like *Xinyue*, *Dagong Bao*, *Qinghua Zhoukan*. Even from these early works, it is possible to notice that Qian's focus was on aesthetics and poetics more than on contents.

After graduation in 1933 he refused to continue his studies as a postgraduate at Qinghua, preferring instead to move as a teacher of English literature at Guanghua University in Shanghai, where his father was chair of the Chinese Department. In the summer of 1935, Qian married the playwright, translator and essayist Yang Jiang 杨绛, which left us a great amount of information on her life with Qian Zhongshu and on his personal and artistic experience. It was with Yang Jiang that Qian Zhongshu left to England.

1935-1938 Years abroad

In England Qian studied English Literature at Exeter College of the University of Oxford. His research resulted in a thesis on the image of China in seventeenth and eighteenth centuries English literature, which granted him a First Class Honours Degree, one of the few awarded to a Chinese student at the time.⁵⁴ The years at Oxford were fundamental for Qian Zhongshu since he could use the huge resources of the Bodleian

⁵³ See Qian Zhongshu, "Correspondence", *Tian Xia Monthly* Vol IV n. 4 April (1937), 427.

⁵⁴ See Theodore Hutters, *Qian Zhongshu* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1982), 5.

Library where he used to sit with Yang Jiang reading incessantly, filling his notebooks with the notes that will constitute the core of his more mature essays. He also had the possibility to deepen his knowledge of western literature and languages since Oxford University required at least four foreign languages in its curriculum. Qian Zhongshu and Yang Jiang's only daughter Qian Yuan 钱媛, considered by Yang Jiang the real masterpiece of her life, was born in Oxford in 1937. The same year, refusing the offer of a job as Chinese literature lecturer at Oxford University, Qian Zhongshu moved to Paris where Yang Jiang attended courses at Sorbonne University while he sat as an auditor, enjoying one year of further study and acquaintance with the western cultural world. In 1938, following the breaking out of the Sino-Japanese war and an offer of a job as English literature teacher from Qinghua University, Qian Zhongshu and Yang Jiang headed back to their homeland.

1939-1949 From Shanghai to Beijing

The first half of the century was for the writer a very fruitful period and a preparatory one for the more mature works that came into life after the Cultural Revolution. He would read all the books that he happened to find in libraries, writing notes of all the passages that he would think noteworthy. He would thus gain all the experience abroad and in China that would constitute a background for his major works, a background that sometimes is more evident sometimes veiled and well masked.⁵⁵

In 1939, after a brief experience in Hunan first and Kunming later, working for the *Xinan Lianda Daxue*, an institute made up by the merging

⁵⁵ For the commitment of Qian to reading, see the introduction by Jin Hongda in Yang Lianfen ed., *Qian Zhongshu Pingshuo Qishi Nian*, 1-3.

of three Beijing universities among which Qinghua University, Qian moved in Baoqing, Hunan Province, to help establish the Department of Foreign Literature at the Lantian Normal College. The atmosphere and human panorama of Baoqing County in Hunan were the basis on which Qian created most of the characters and setting of the novel *Wei Cheng* (1947).

The essays: *Xie Zai Rensheng Bianshang*

In 1941 Qian returned to Shanghai to live in the Foreign Concession with his wife Yang Jiang. In Shanghai Qian published *Xie Zai Rensheng Bianshang*, a collection of ten essays, mostly written during his stay in Kunming, that deal with the most disparate topics around cultural conventions. The leading idea that moves Qian Zhongshu throughout his essays is that nobody can offer definitive and ever valid concepts, and since this is what usually literati and scholars want to do, they are susceptible of being laughed at. His essays are thus full of witty satire and sharp humour, the same satire we find in his collection of short stories.

Long and short stories: *Ren Shou Gui* and *Wei Cheng*

In 1946, Qian Zhongshu took the position of editor of the journal *Philobiblon* at Nanjing National Central Library. In the same year *Ren Shou Gui* 人·兽·鬼 (Humans, Beasts, Ghosts), a collection of four short stories, was published. The collection is interesting both for its style, elegant, refined and not in the least trivial, and for its sociological and political concerns. The stories are full of sharp sarcasm towards the vanity, greed

and hypocrisy of society and the tragicomic family tragedies. The first short story of the collection, *Shangdi de Meng* 上帝的夢 (God's Dream), is an allegorical and satirical account of the creation of men and sees God overcome by human emotions like solitude, anger, joy, boredom. In Qian's narration, God would have created humanity out of pure vanity, the consequences being the exact contrary of what he would have expected. *Linggan* 灵感 (Inspiration), second one of the short stories, sketches out the image of a man of letters, representative of a whole social class, embracing all the paradoxes and vanities of this category of people. In this story, a writer that ends up in Hell is hunted by his characters, who want him to pay for that entire he had made them suffer in his works, characterizing them very badly. The writer is put on trial and condemned to become a character in the work of another worthless writer.

The couple of the third story, *Mao* 毛 (The Cat), embodies all the faults of cultured people, xenophiles and boring, that will be the main subject of the novel *Wei Cheng*.

Jinian 纪念 (Souvenir), concluding story, is probably the only one in which characters are granted some compassion and sympathy that softens the stingy sarcasm of narration. The very precise description of characters, with all their insecurities, makes their human nature to emerge.

All the four stories are overwhelmed by a sensation of total lack of response between characters' intentions and the outcome of their actions. The author's eye comments on the events through metaphors and descriptions that characterize the inner soul of characters and places more than their outward appearance, contributing to a narration closer to the reader and to the general sense of human life.

Wei Cheng, 1947, probably the work that made the success of Qian Zhongshu, constitutes his acknowledgement as one of the greatest Chinese writers. It was initially serialized on the magazine *Wenyi Fuxing* (文艺复兴) starting from February 1946 for a full year, accounting for the journal's success.⁵⁶ The language of the novel is full of wit and rhetoric figures that built up the reputation of Qian as a great stylist. Dennis Hu and Ted Hutters have studied in—depth Qian's rhetoric inventions noting how the whole novel is informed by extremely able rhetoric imagery. The novel is a stingy narration of a young returnee from abroad with a fake diploma, and his disastrous attempts to cope with a society in which pressures from family and academy are too hard to face for his weak attitude. Symptomatic of the attitude of Qian towards his works is the capacity of the author to control everything in the novel and the incapacity of the characters to control anything. The novel is under the influence of noble predecessors and, if the title comes directly from a French saying, the similes of which the novel is full find their sources in the Homeric imagery⁵⁷ and in Diogene Laertius, while the stile and the satirical touch, expressed in the will to expose hypocrisy and stupidity, have their roots in the English novelists Henry Fielding and W.S. Maugham⁵⁸. In the intentions of the author, *Wei Cheng* was not the only novel he had planned to write, in fact while in Shanghai he had started the composition of a novel called *Bai He Xin* 百合心, Heart of Artichoke, of which two thousand characters had already been written. Unlikely, the manuscript went lost in 1949 during the moving from Shanghai to Beijing and the new hard

⁵⁶ See Theodore Hutters, *Qian Zhongshu*, 8.

⁵⁷ At the end of the Sino-Japanese war, Qian taught in Shanghai Jinan Daxue. One of the courses he was in charge of was "Choice of Euro-American reading" and one of the texts chosen was Homer's *Iliad*.

⁵⁸ See Zhang Wenjiang, *Yingzao Babita de Zhizhe* (Shanghai: Fudan Daxue Chubanshe, 2011).

political setting did not allow Qian to keep pursuing his project. If the manuscript had not gone lost, Qian affirmed in an interview,⁵⁹ this novel would on one hand surely have been superior to *Wei Cheng*, on the other even more liable of critic and censure under the years of the Cultural Revolution.

Discourses on Art: *Tan Yi Lu*

Collecting an enormous amount of notes and the literary critical analysis of the previous decade, *Tan Yi Lu* was published in 1948 by the *Kaiming Shudian Chubanshe*. The title explains the structure of the book and tells us that art is the main object of analysis even if, running through the volume up to its conclusion, we learn that art and history can be explained together and that every epoch contains seeds of all the others in a contemporaneity that is not necessarily simultaneity. Different time lapses merge and with them all that is part of an epoch: the thought of its people, the events together with the theories and concepts to which they give origin to and the different layers of influences of past on present. *Tan Yi Lu* is a magistral and mature piece of work in which Qian Zhongshu, using the peculiar comparative method that characterizes his work and that constitutes the object of analysis of the present work, quotes extensively to discuss themes and create a canon of references on art extensively intended. In this work, Qian gives much importance to the historical sense of present and he tries to realize his intent of creating an independent literature, incorporating both the capacity of expression of individuals and

⁵⁹ See Yan Huo, "Qian Zhongshu Fangwen Ji", in *Qian Zhongshu Ping Shuo Qishi Nian*, 91-96.

the cultural heritage of tradition.⁶⁰ In *Tan Yi Lu* Theodore Hutters identifies two main motives and feelings: a critical spirit on Chinese traditional literature and an aesthetic mood that lies behind the ideas expressed. The point in which everything converges is the idea about what literature is, and this idea comes from a mixture of Chinese and western concepts that prove that literature, to be so, should be independent from political and ideological utility.⁶¹

1949-1969 Years in Beijing

In 1949, upon the takeover of Shanghai by the Communists, Qian moved to Beijing at Qinghua University and in 1950 was appointed as head of the translator committee of Mao Zedong's *Selected Works* in English. This position, while saving him from severe critics and anti-rightist campaigns, helped the Government to control and restrain him in a way. Translation for Qian Zhongshu was a duty more than a choice and the translation of *Selected Works of Mao Zedong* and *Mao Zedong's Poems* was for the author supposedly a great compromise between political and artistic matters.⁶²

Besides Qian's practice of translation, it is also interesting to read his ideas about it in essays like *Lin Shu de Fanyi* 林纾的翻译 (Lin Shu's Translation, 1963), in which he talks about Lin Shu's translation method, or *A Note to the Second Chapter of Mr Decadent*, appeared in the September 1948 issue of *Philobiblon* and discussing the translation of *Laocan Youji* 老残游记 (1905) by Liu E 刘鹗 made by Yang Xianyi 杨宪益. Particularly this last

⁶⁰ See Theodore Hutters, "Traditional Innovation: Qian Zhong-shu and Modern Chinese Letters," Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1977.

⁶¹ See Hutters, *Qian Zhongshu*, 37-69.

⁶² Zheng Xiaodan, "A study on Qian Zhongshu's translation: sublimation in translation" in *Studies in Literature and Language*, vol. 1, No. 2 (2010), 70-83.

mentioned work, even if appreciated on some regards, is slightly pedantically criticized starting from the translation of the title, which Yang renders as "Mr Decadent" and Qian corrects as "Taking rest and eating the *resles*".⁶³

Nevertheless one of the main sources of information about Qian's translation theory rests in his thousands of translated bits and pieces quoted from foreign literatures in his masterpieces of comparative literature *Tan Yi Lu* and *Guan Zhui Bian*. His fellowship with Beijing University Institute of Literature resulted in a membership with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in which the Institute converged as a division. In 1953, he was appointed vice president of the Academy while moving to Beijing University after an adjustment in the organization of the departments and faculties of Qinghua University, which specialized in scientific disciplines, and Beijing University, home for the humanities.

The poetic side: *Songshi Xuanzhu*

In 1958 *Songshi Xuanzhu* 宋诗选注, an anthology of Song verse, and a work that demonstrates Qian Zhongshu's profound understanding of Chinese aesthetics, was published. The collection of Song poems is considered one of the masterpieces of the author. He probably chose Song and not Tang poetry because there were already many anthologies of Tang poetry and because there was a lack of good commentaries on Song poetry. He included in the collection 365 poems with a particular attention to poems

⁶³ C. S. Ch'ien (Qian Zhongshu 錢鍾書), "A Note to the Second Chapter of *Mr Decadent*", China Heritage Quarterly, China Heritage Project, The Australian National University, 25 (2011). URL: <http://www.chinaheritagequarterly.org/tien-hsia.php?searchterm=025decadent.inc&issue=025>. This page last updated April 21 2011 14:59:09.

whose subject was the difficult condition of common people. This choice, not in the least casual, bears a great significance in relation both to Qian's ideas on poetry and to his link with a particular time and a certain political condition: nothing strange, then, that the book was initially banned from circulation. He often includes authors that other collections do not incorporate with a vast inclusion of poems that seem plain at a first and careless view while able to disclose a meaning behind the words to a more careful reading.

He chooses more new poems (近体 *jinti*) than old ones and predominance is given to short poems instead of the long ones. There are 307 seven characters poems (七言 *qiyán*) on a total number of 365 poems. This is a really strange percentage if we think that in the anthology of 300 Tang poems *Tang Shi Sanbai Shou* 唐诗三百首 the number of seven characters poems and of five characters poems is nearly the same.

1969-1972 Years down-under

Notwithstanding his position as official translator of Mao Zedong's works, Qian and his family underwent severe hardship during the Cultural Revolution and in August 1966 Qian was denounced for having made derogatory comments about the published works of Chairman Mao. Qian and Yang Jiang were labelled reactionary academics and appointed to trivial works as cleaning floors and public toilets.⁶⁴ In 1968, they were "uncovered" as *zichan jieji xueshu quanwei* 资产阶级学术权位 (bourgeois

⁶⁴ See Ronald Egan, *Limited Views: Essays on Ideas and Letters*. (Cambridge: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1998). The most heartily and accurate account of Qian and Yang Jiang's years in the school for cadres is given in Yang Jiang's *Ganxiao Liuji* (Beijing: Sanlian Shudian, 1981).

academic authority) and were sent to the school for cadres in the countryside in Henan for reeducation through labor. Qian left eight months earlier than Yang Jiang, who arrived in the cadre school only in July 1970, when they could finally be reunited, even if forced to live in two different places. They could not be back to Beijing up to 1972, thanks to a request made by Zhou Enlai who made the “old, weak, sick and disabled” to go back to their former lives. Access to books was nearly impossible and Qian and Yang had to struggle to maintain alive their attachment to literature and to creative and productive research.

1972-1998

The relation between the historical and social setting in which a writer lives and his literary production is always a close one; this is true for every historical phase, but is inevitable whenever the external conditions are more unstable and in rapid transformation. Qian’s thought and ideas have not been influenced by the controversial period in which they generated, since he has remained the same “out of the scheme” scholar and literate notwithstanding all his different life experiences. He moved to Europe for a couple of years and returned to China, he underwent experiences both in the best “urban” university in Beijing and in the countryside, he was appointed as translator of the works of Mao Zedong and was criticized as a bourgeois *zhishifenzi*⁶⁵. The production of his works in terms of quantity and time, though, has been deeply influenced by the events of his life rooted in the Chinese society of the 20th century.

⁶⁵ *Zhishifenzi* (知识分子) is the term under which all the literates were classified during the Maoist Cultural Revolution and which indicated their belonging to a social class that needed thought rectification and re-education.

Among the many obituary notices appeared on Chinese and international press in December 1998, only a Taiwan based newspaper, the *Zhongguo Shibao*, in praising the life and work of Qian Zhongshu like all the others newspapers, makes also the point of Qian's activity as a scholar and writer during the Cultural Revolution. It reports that from 1949 to 1979 many intellectuals from the continent preferred to devote themselves to scholarship than to creative fiction because scholarly works were less under any political interference.⁶⁶ The apparent silence of Qian Zhongshu and his not open opposition to the current politics has been criticized by critics like Ge Hongbin 葛红兵, who in an interview titled *Qian Zhongshu: bei shenhua de 'dashi'* 钱钟书：被神话的“大师” (Qian Zhongshu: the mythicized 'master'),⁶⁷ contested to Qian the use of a method which does not bring anything new to Chinese literary criticism. He defines Qian's ideas as being moved by the “philosophy of the turtle” (*wugui zhexue* 乌龟哲学), saying that he did nothing else than to read and copy from other authors. Qian, says Ge, is a parasite of literature incapable of creating new trends and of taking part to the debate on culture and politics in the second half of last century. Ge seems obviously blind to the necessity for Qian to express his ideas in a more veiled way and to look for a compromise to survive, giving thus birth to witty and sarcastic pieces of works. Moreover, affirms Wang Meng 王蒙, “a writer in the PRC should have the right to remain silent if the official policies are repugnant to him”.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ He Hui and Fang Tianxing, ed. *Yi Cun Qian Si: Yi Qian Zhongshu Xiansheng* (Liaohai Chubanshe, 1999) 12.

⁶⁷ Full text at <http://www.confucius2000.com/poetry/qzsbshdds.htm>. Accessed on November 25, 2011.

⁶⁸ Leo Ou-Fan Lee. “My Interviews with Writers in the People's Republic of China: A Report”, in *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews* (CLEAR), Vol. 3, No. 1 (Jan., 1981), 137-140.

The masterpiece: *Guan Zhui Bian*

Wang Rongzu⁶⁹ analyzes the link between Qian Zhongshu's composition of *Guan Zhui Bian* and *Tan Yi Lu* and the atmosphere in which they were composed made of distress and sufferance. He sees a strong link between difficult times, the bearing of sufferance and literary composition. *Tan Yi Lu* was thought and composed during the War of Resistance against Japan, when the pressure and attack to society was an external one. Even more difficult to sustain and face was the pressure of the Cultural Revolution after the setting up of the Popular Republic, when the irrationality of an internal pressure operated on Qian's vision of the world. The mass became stronger than the individual, whose liberty was greatly limited and whose personality nearly cancelled. Qian could not avoid feeling the agitation and restlessness caused by such a setting, notwithstanding being like an hermit out of the world and keeping his old habits of reading books and writing *wenyanwen* 文言文, never having the feeling that the new *baihua* 白话 should take its place, never thinking that the country's old written language was good for nothing. For many intellectuals of the first half of the 20th century like Qian Zhongshu and Zhou Zuoren, to keep using classical prose was a way to state their aloofness from the current political situation and keep their individuality out of the immediate social context.⁷⁰ Qian Zhongshu believed in the power of both languages, the classical and the new one, but was worried that in such a big country, after

⁶⁹ Wang Rongzu, "Ai huan yu buchang: shi tan Tan Yi Lu yu Guan Zhui Bian de xiezuo xingqing", in *Qian Zhongshu Shiwen Congshuo* ed. Wang Rongzu, (Taiwan: Airiti Press, 2011), 281-306.

⁷⁰ See Edward Gunn, *Rewriting Chinese: style and innovation in twentieth century Chinese prose* (Stanford: Stanford University Press 1991).

the new language had taken its solid place, less than sixty people were still able to write in the old language. The contradiction to the current trend in Qian's use of *wenyanwen* is very strong. If the Cultural Revolution wanted to break with the old culture and old traditions, then *Guan Zhui Bian*, both for form and for content, wanted to enhance studies and annotations on the classics on which traditional culture was based. *Guan Zhui Bian* is a work that fills the gap and the void left by the difficult times China had to overcome, putting Chinese traditional and contemporary literature in a global setting and finding relief through art and criticism. It is fundamental to note the contribution of this comprehensive work in a period in which the appreciation of literature and the critical appreciation were seriously compromised. *Guan Zhui Bian* gathers literary treasures when their survival was not considered important. It is a book that touches the *shinian dongluan* 十年动乱 era (the ten years of disorders)⁷¹ and it is bred by the context in which it is born, full of references to social politics, points of view and contemporary issues.⁷²

The formation of Qian Zhongshu makes the language he uses a combination of classical and spoken language. Qian tried to inject classical language with the logic and the fluidity of spoken language, and wrote in a spoken language with the concision and the essentiality peculiar to the classical one, avoiding empty words and coming up with a very dense expression.

As for the form of *Guan Zhui Bian*, even among Chinese scholars it has been considered too dense and with an “unpredictable” organization.

⁷¹ See Chen Ziqian, *Lun Qian Zhongshu*.

⁷² For a specimen of those references see Hu Fangzhu and Chen Jiakuan “‘Guan Zhui Bian’ suo Yunhan de Shihui Pipan Yishi” in Ding, Weizhi ed. *Qian Zhongshu Xiansheng Bainian Danchen Jinian wenji* (Beijing: Shenghuo-Dushu-Xinzhi Sanlian Shudian, 2010) 61-76.

Guan Zhui Bian is in fact a five-volume work which, starting from ten Chinese classics (the classics *Zhou Yi* 周易, *Mao Shi* 毛诗, *Zhuo Zhuan* 左传, the historical work *Shi Ji* 史记, the “Zi” works: *Laozi* 老子, *Liezi* 列子, and the collections *Yi Lin* 易林, *Chu Ci* 楚辞, *Taiping Guangji* 太平广记, *Quan Shanggu Sandai Qin Han San Guo Liu Chao Wen* 全上古三代秦汉三国六朝文)⁷³ comments on aesthetic, art, poetry, moral and cultural customs, literature and society, to mention just a few of the realms exploited, quoting extensively both from Chinese and from western literatures. The work is made up by sections whose relation is to be joined in a way that what comes before is the origin of what follows, but not necessarily what follows derives from what precedes. The aim is more to go deep into details than to reach a superficial exposition of different ideas. Usually the first item of every commentary is the theme of the section and expresses the opinion of the writer, the following items are commentaries constructed mainly through disparate quotations from every possible tradition and in different languages on very specific passages of the book. It is thus hard to derive from *Guan Zhui Bian* a rationally exposed system of thought when the framework of the book is more an encyclopedic investigation of different entries without the claim of organicity. The leitmotifs of the work are what could be called the *datong zhongxi, ronghui gujin* 打通中西, 融汇古今 (break through China and the west, melt old and new) and a continuous reflection and analysis of the different meanings that every word and idea can bear. The same opening of the book with the discussion on *yi zhi san ming* 易之三名 “the three names of the *Yi*, the Change” is emblematic and presents a concept on which the

⁷³ The translated titles of the ten books which are commented on in *Guan Zhui Bian* are: The Book of Changes, The Book of Songs, Zuo Tradition, Records of the Historian, Laozi, Liezi, The Forest of Changes by Jiao, Songs of Chu, Records of the Taiping Era, The Complete pre-Tang Prose.

author will come back once and again: the changing and the different meanings embraced in one sole concept or in a single word.

The work does not need a reading from beginning to end and each of its parts could be considered the beginning as well as the ending point. Even if miscellaneous, *Guan Zhui Bian* is not messy, it is *za er bu luan* 杂而不乱, to use an expression by the same Qian Zhongshu which means “mixed and not chaotic”.⁷⁴ The book touches a multitude of themes and subjects, but the leitmotiv is literature, and the texts analyzed have mainly been considered with a literary eye. *Guan Zhui Bian* is a book on men; it is not “to write at the margin of human life” but “to write in the deepness of human life”.

The return to Beijing from the countryside in 1972 sets the last phase of literary composition for Qian Zhongshu. After the publication of *Guan Zhui Bian* in 1978, in 1985 Qian’s essays find one of their best expressions in the collections *Qi Zhui Ji* (Collection of Seven Patches). This is a collection from two previous works: *Jiu Wen Si Pian* (旧文四篇) 1979 and *Ye Shi Ji* (也是集) 1984 which the author himself assembled in 1985, to make up for the difficulty in finding editions of the said previous collections. Qian Zhongshu was convinced that this collection would have become representative of his peculiar method of comparative literature and of his conception of literature in the broadest sense. This is also the reason why in the present work, together with *Guan Zhui Bian* and *Tan Yi Lu*, a particular attention will be given to those essays. *Qi Zhui Ji* is made up by seven essays written in *baihuawen* whose composition spans through a lapse of time that goes from 1940 with the essay *Zhongguo Shi yu Zhongguo Hua* 中国诗与中国画 (Chinese Poetry and Chinese Painting) to

⁷⁴ Chen Ziqian, *Lun Qian Zhongshu*, 78.

1983 with the essay *Yi Jie Lishi Zhanggu, Yi Ge Zongjiao Yuyan, Yi Pian Xiaoshuo* 一节历史掌故，一个宗教寓言，一篇小说 (An historical anecdote, a religious allegory, a novel) which is a specimen of Qian's translation theory and practice.⁷⁵

We will also mention the posthumous collection of English essays *Yingwen Wenji – A collection of Qian Zhongshu's English essays* (2005) and *Rensheng Bianshang de Bianshang* (At the Margins of the Margins of Human's Life, 2001).

At the beginning of the nineties Qian, due to a strong fever, enters the hospital, where he spends the last years of his life, attentively looked after by Yang Jiang and his daughter Qian Yuan until March 1997, when Qian Yuan, to whom a cancer has been diagnosed, dies. Yang Jiang remains the sole sustain of Qian Zhongshu, who slowly understands the fate of his beloved daughter even if Yang Jiang tries to avoid giving him such disconcerting news. On December 19th 1998 Qian Zhongshu leaves this world and his lifetime companion. All the formalities of the departure are handled in the most common and simple way, without any funeral rite, without flowers and bursts of cry, following Qian's same will of going away without too much ado. When asked about an eventual book of memoirs, Qian had replied that a man is different from a dog that goes back to smell his pee to find the traces he has left.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ The other essays of the collection are: *Du "Laaokong"* (Reading Laokoon, 1962); *Tonggan* (Synaesthesia, 1962); *Lin Shu de Fanyi* (Lin Shu's Translation, 1964); *Shi Keyi Yuan* (Complain in Poetry, 1981); *Han Yi Di Yi Shou Yingyu Shi "Rensheng Song" Ji You Guan Er San Shi* (The First English Poem in Chinese Translation and Two or Three Relevant Problems, 1982).

⁷⁶ He Hui and Fang Tianxing, ed. *Yi Cun Qian Si*, 7.

CHAPTER 3

Tracing the roots of Qian Zhongshu's method: a long time legacy

The comparative method of Qian Zhongshu, even though innovative, is still the heir of a tradition rooted into the Chinese literary world. This tradition seems to be the extension of the quotation method in the Han School of textual studies (朴学 *Pu Xue*) during the Qing era. Qian's method, continuing on one hand the search for a spirit of concrete evidence of that school, on the other hand pursues confirmations and authority through eastern and western authors' quotations.⁷⁷

As for its form, *Guan Zhui Bian* collects the inheritance of a long tradition of *zhaji* (札记) that, starting from the Northern Song dynasty, became a characteristic form of the Qing era. It's the heir of Gu Yanwu (1613-1682)'s *Ri Zhi Lu*, Qian Daxin (1728-1804), Wang Niansun (1744-1832), Yu Zhenxie (1775-1840) and Chen Li (1810-1882).⁷⁸ These authors's *zhaji* are the highest representatives of Qing culture. Even if they did not quote western works, *Guan Zhui Bian* is very similar to them in length and in structure; all of these authors' works have small parts that seem disconnected and that offer the author's point of view on many aspects of culture and thought. The *zhaji* or *biji* 笔记 from the Song up to the Qing, even in their extreme variety and slippery definition, are an informal prose style in that they

⁷⁷ Gong Gang, *Qian Zhongshu: aizhizhe de xiaoyao*. Edit. by Yue Daiyun (Beijing: Wenjin Chubanshe, 2004) 115-119.

⁷⁸ See Ronald Egan, "Tuotai Huang: Guan Zhui Bian dui Qingru de chenzhui yu chaoyue", in *Qian Zhongshu Shiwen Congshuo* ed. Wang Rongzu, 211-226.

were not produced for special events and a special public and they use a free and clear prose style without prosodic rules. *Guan Zhui Bian* is thus both the heir of the form used during the Song and Qing dynasties, especially of the *shihua* 诗话 and of the “critical *biji*”, sub-genres of the *biji*, and a modern advancement of it.

There are differences between the Qing antecedents and *Guan Zhui Bian*, as there are differences between their views on literature and Qian’s. He was dissatisfied with Qing scholar’s absolute faith in a literature subservient to history, sustaining instead the autonomy of literary creation. The greatest literates are the ones able to portray what is not linked to a particular time or space or a specific social setting, but the ones able to touch the inner core of a situation or of a category of people, applicable to every time and space. Qian Zhongshu in his satirical works touches on the *zhishifenzi* 知识分子, the intelligentsia of every epoch, those who believed themselves to be the highest and most sagacious part of society.

If we use only political parameters to analyze and judge the value of a literary work, we will not get that work’s real value. Literature is not the appendix of politics or history; it is a reflection of society, of the actual situation of knowledge, and an instrument of art. Literature has its inner values in that it exceeds time and space limits. Literature obeys to its inner commands, and it is not subject to society or politics.⁷⁹ Moreover, differently from what Qing scholars did, Qian Zhongshu chooses particular and less important texts instead of the canonical ones, dedicating to those non-canonical texts even longer commentaries than the ones dedicated to the great classics; this is something Qing scholars would never have done. The main difference with Qing scholars is also that Qian

⁷⁹ Ze Ming, “Xie Zai Rensheng Bianshang de ‘Ren Shou Gui’” in *Qian Zhongshu Yanjiu Caiji* vol.2, ed. Lu Wenhua (Shenghuo, Du Shu, Xinzhi, Sanlian Shudian, 1996) 224-244.

had strong suspicions towards great systems of thought and complex theories; he often might speak ironically about those. With regard to this it is worth recalling the opening of an essay by Qian titled *Shi Wenmang* 释文盲 (Explaining Illiteracy) where Qian affirms that to find sentences with the value of a literary work in works that have not great value is like finding money forgotten in a pocket when tidying up old clothes.⁸⁰

Another point for which Qian criticized Qing scholars is that they used to focalize on the main ideas of other scholars or on their major works, neglecting secondary opinions and minor works. Qian sustained that the thought of an author needs to be considered in its whole without dividing it into grades of importance. Another big difference between Qian and his antecedents, this time linked to the historical periods concerned, was his knowledge of western languages and the opportunity he had profited from to get in touch directly with the western world. Notwithstanding those big discrepancies, still the *biji* form chosen by Qian is the heir of Qing tradition and bears advantages like flexibility and the possibility to mould passages in short or long forms, with simple or more elaborated contents without the need to be consistent with a definite style or thematic coherence.

A different opinion is the one expressed by Li Hongyan 李洪岩⁸¹ who wants to demonstrate that Qian's masterpieces *Guan Zhui Bian* and *Tan Yi Lu* are not at all written in the *biji* form: this form has never been considered high-level literature in Chinese people's opinion and has been disregarded as lacking of organicity. To ascribe Qian's writing method to this literary form is equal to affirm that his works lack a solid construction,

⁸⁰ Qian Zhongshu, "Shi Wenmang", in *Xie Zai Rensheng Bianshang*, 47.

⁸¹ Li Hongyan, "Ruhe Pingjia Qian Zhongshu", in *Qian Zhongshu Pingshuo Qishi Nian*, 157-174.

have a random content and do not devote any care to rhetoric expression. If Qian's works had been written in Qing's times, probably Li's analysis would have been correctly formulated. Since they are not, we may well link them to this literary form.

What just affirmed is not only valid for the masterpiece *Guan Zhui Bian* but is a characteristic of Qian's writing style and is thus also true for the other scholarly works of the writer, as is the case of *Tan Yi Lu*, a great part of which is devoted to the comment of Yuan Mei 袁枚's *Sui Yuan Shi Hua* 随园诗话. We have to note that the *shi hua* 诗话 form is an antecedent of the style and literary form of Qian's *Tan Yi Lu*. In giving so much attention to such a work Qian is justifying, confirming the authority of the *shi hua* form, and is stating his continuation of such a tradition.⁸²

If on one side Qian Zhongshu is thus considered the heir of the Qing tradition, on the other Theodore Hutters, in analysing with a clear eye his prose style, puts it in continuity with the reform of the prose of the first half of the 20th century. Qian's essays have a deep sense of the European "coupé style", or Baroque style, exposing an idea often at the beginning of the essay, giving the impression that the subject does not need any further discussion, to go on with the enrichment of that idea with new meanings and facets of the same topic.⁸³

A firm point in the illustration of Qian's prose is the link between form and content. The Baroque prose style serves Qian to express paradoxes and ideas in constant contradiction because it is strong the need to express doubt and distrust in fixed and absolute statements. The reader is left as in front of windows open to discussion and reflection more than in front of truth offered for a blind acceptance.

⁸² Hutters, *Qian Zhongshu*, 61.

⁸³ Hutters, *Qian Zhongshu*, 78-79.

It is quite emblematic that Hutters puts Qian's style in direct contact with the May Fourth movement, and frees the author from most of the accusations he has encountered as a coward shutting himself up in the classical style and staying aloof from the contemporary historical and social situation. Qian Zhongshu is a son of the May Fourth Literary Revolution just as Hu Shi 胡适 or Chen Duxiu 陈独秀 because he actively participates to the then actual debate on the meaning of literature, on the style to be used and the themes to be touched in literary works. He is modern just like all the other literates of his generation are, because like them he ponders on problems and debates of his time. The answer he finds though is in a way different from the one of both the sustainers of *baihua* and of *wenyan*. His use of *wenyan* is well studied and bears its own reasons, among the others the necessity to demolish literary theories that saw in history, geography, etymology and so on the starting point of literary movements, together with the need to state the independence of literature. In *Tan Yi Lu* he has given an answer to the debate about old and new language affirming that, if enriched by new vocabulary, *wenyanwen* would have been capable exactly like the *baihua wen* to express new concepts. Those who opposed this theory confuted instead that while *baihua wen* had all the necessary capacities to be "spoken language", *wenyanwen* could have never been adopted as the common spoken language.

The meaning of Qian's particular choice for what concerns the language will be analysed further on in the course of the dissertation with examples rooted in the literary texts.

A distinctive characteristic of Qian's style is its concision. The discourse touches different themes following a line of thought that is peculiar for its

massive usage of quotations; that is why Qian's works are different from modern literary pieces both for contents and for form. Due to their thematic variety, it is impossible to analyse the content of Qian's works dividing it according to the usual classification of works of history, philosophy, classics and literary collections. However, even while innovating, Qian stays a tireless defender of tradition, ratified and surpassed at the same time through a great number of quotations and a comparative study that serves to explain traditional Chinese conceptions.⁸⁴ The use of quotations is an old rhetoric device. Since the *Nan Bei Chao* 南北朝 (North and South Dynasties) during the 4th and 5th centuries it was a common practice and it has been used by many literates (Wang Anshi 王安石, Su Shi 苏轼) up to the May Fourth movement, when Hu Shi made the "do not use quotations" one of the eight pronouncements. The New Literature though did not sign a real break with the practice of quoting, since literates such as Lu Xun 鲁迅 and Qian Zhongshu after 1919 continued using textual references.

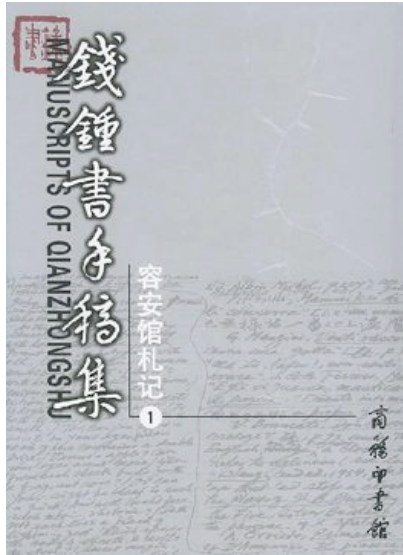
It is impossible both to write only using quotations "*wu yi zi wu lai chu* 无一字无来处" (there's not a word without a source) as Qian Zhongshu quotes from Wang Jianjian 黄庭坚,⁸⁵ and to abolish their use, since quoting is a rhetoric device peculiar to literary style and a way of expressing ideas. The same Qian Zhongshu in the thirties had discussed the appropriateness of using quotations in the essay *Lun Bu Ge* 论不隔⁸⁶ (On non estrangement). In this essay about translation theory, the author

⁸⁴ See Zhang Longxi, "Zhongxi jiaoji yu Qian Zhongshu de zhixue fangfa", in *Qian Zhongshu Shiwen Congshuo* edit. by Wang Rongzu, 187-210.

⁸⁵ Huang Jianjian (1045–1105), Chinese literate during the Song dynasty, used this expression meaning literally: "there is not a word without a source" quoted in Qian Zhongshu, "Songshi Xuanzhu' Shiren Dianping" in *Qian Zhongshu Xuan Ji*, 107.

⁸⁶ Qian Zhongshu, "Lun Bu Ge" in *Xie zai Rensheng Bianshang*, 110-113.

affirms that if we do not accept quotations we should throw away many literary works.



3.1 The *Rong'an Guan Zhaji*

Taking as our starting point Qian Zhongshu's defence of quotations as a literary device, we advance further towards the analysis of how quotations become for him the same core of literature and of the exposition of ideas and concepts. We thus

try to inquire into his working method. On this regard the collection of scanned writing notes published in 2003 by the Commercial Press, commonly known as the *Rong'an Guan Zhaji* 容安馆札记 (Notes from the Rongan building), constitutes a source of precious information. It illustrates the process that from the choice of books to read proceeds to the reading and to the activity of taking notes, up to the reworking of the notes and their becoming part of Qian's works in the form of quotations. The collection, also named *Qian Zhongshu Shougao Ji* 钱钟书手稿集 (Collection of manuscripts by Qian Zhongshu), in three volumes, is the outcome of a meticulous job of collection and reorganization of Qian's notebooks primarily conducted by Yang Jiang with some support from other helpers like Professor Monika Motsch. The introduction to the collection, by Yang Jiang, tells us how Qian Zhongshu in Oxford spent much of his time in the Bodleian Library, whence books could not be lent, reading and taking notes. He read much of the books even a second or a third time, convinced that only then interesting sentences and passages

could be noticed. Qian and Yang, during their years abroad and even after their return to China, did not have a fixed home. This could be another reason why Qian used to borrow books and to keep only the notebooks with all his handwritten notes. Qian Zhongshu's preferential readings were from English literature, French literature from the 15th to the 19th century, German literature, and Italian literature. He also gave much importance to periodicals and critical works, building himself a solid construction in many different foreign literatures. Taking notes was his preferential way of reading, and he often would read the more significant passages to the same Yang Jiang, stating nevertheless that they were of no usage for anybody if not for himself. The outcomes of this job are one hundred seventy eight notebooks that account for a total number of 34.000 pages in the foreign languages German, Italian, French, English, Latin and Spanish,⁸⁷ plus some typewritten pages. Yang Jiang writes that she had a certain difficulty in arranging all the notebooks for posthumous publication because she did not understand German, Italian and Latin, and it has been thanks to the cooperation of Professor Monika Motsch, who has devoted summers in Beijing to the job, that the notebooks have been organized and then published as the *Rong'an Guan Zhaji*. The first volume of the collection, that includes a great amount of Chinese notes, and it is not only in foreign languages as Yang Jiang introduction might let us suppose, would have been used by Qian Zhongshu to write a book in English. This is something Qian will never achieve, presumably⁸⁸ because

⁸⁷ Greek language is quoted as well, but not mentioned in Yang Jiang's preface.

⁸⁸ Yang Jiang states this quite clearly in the introduction: "Qian Zhongshu in both home and abroad universities read carefully works belonging to foreign literatures; his teaching appointments were also on foreign literatures. After the "Reorganization of Faculties and Departments" was done, he ended up belonging to the Literature Research Institute's Research Group on Foreign Literatures. But for many years he has been given other jobs and even transferred for a time to the Classical Literature Research Group, never to go

of various subsequent appointments that brought him closer to the fields of Chinese ancient literature and of translation, instead of the foreign literature he was used to teach and research on.

The second volume of the collection is made of two different parts merged together: Qian Zhongshu's Chinese literature writing notes and his diary. The reason for this, as explained in the same preface, is that during the first "ideological remoulding" Qian came to know through a rumour that the students were authorized to check the diaries of the "old gentlemen" (*lao xiansheng*, 老先生) and, fearing that his personal matters would become known to the public, he started to cut the diaries in many pieces, pasting them onto the notebooks to disguise them. The amount of these Chinese notes is, more or less, equal to the foreign languages ones.

The third volume is made up of the *rizha* (日札), the daily notes, which collect Qian Zhongshu's reading reflections and start from the "ideological remoulding". Qian appears in them with many different pen names and the same notes have different names and titles like: *Rong'an Guan Rizha* 容安馆日札 (Notes from the Rong'an building), *Rong'an Shi Rizha* 容安室日札 (Notes from the Rong'an place), *Rong'an Zhai Rizha* 容安斋日札 (Notes from the Rong'an studio). All these names refer to the name of the small one-floor house where Yang Jiang and Qian had been living after the

back to the Research Group on Foreign Literatures. He had in his mind the composition of a work in English on foreign literatures, and he could never satisfy this will. Those notes in foreign languages, as to what he kept affirming, are 'of no use'. The original text is: "钟书在国内外大学攻读外国文学, 在大学教书也教外国文学, "院系调整"后, 他也是属于文学研究所外国文学组的。但他多年被派去做别的工作, 以后又借调中国古典文学组, 始终未能回外文组工作。他原先打算用英文写一部论外国文学的著作, 也始终未能如愿。那些外文笔记, 对他来说, 该是"没用了" in *Qian Zhongshu Shougao Ji Rongan Zhaji*, vol.I, (Beijing: Shangwu Yinshuguan, 2003) page 2 of the Introduction. The book Qian intended to write on foreign literatures, and particularly on ten major foreign writers, has been the topic of an exchange of e-mails with Professor Zhang Wenjiang, which I herewith copy in appendix n. 3. References to it have been also made in chap. 5 (Italian quotations in Qian Zhongshu's works: a mutual illumination) of the present study.

division of departments and schools that had been carried on in 1953 at Qinghua University. Qian refers to the house using a line from a poem by Tao Yuanming 陶淵明 that says: “*shen rongxi zhi yi an*” 审容膝之易安, “in this small place I feel nice and comfortable”, which abbreviated becomes *Rong’an Zhaji*.⁸⁹ The third volume is made up by twenty-three notebooks, two thousand pages in total in eight hundred and two entries that carry numbers as titles. This third kind of notebooks is mainly in Chinese but with a certain amount of foreign languages inside and it includes material from all times and all countries and from every literary genre. All this material will help Qian to form the core of his major works like *Guan Zhui Bian*, which draws much from these apparently chopped notes. What Yang Jiang points out is that in the *Zhaji* there are many passages remoulded in Qian’s other works, but there are also many other passages that do not appear in other books. This means Qian did not have time and possibility to use all the material he had collected in his notes. Professor Zhang Wenjiang, in his biography of Qian Zhongshu,⁹⁰ talks extensively about a supposed book in English Qian Zhongshu intended to write, the same mentioned by Yang Jiang, as reported above.

The material contained in the *Rong’an Guan Zhaji* is extremely vast and is representative of the whole reading life of Qian Zhongshu; it spans from the years in Oxford at Exeter College up to the nineties.⁹¹ As mentioned above, the collection of reading notes is in a scanned form and, notwithstanding what has been for sure a painstaking work on the side of Yang Jiang and Monika Motsch, still the notes are handwritten, they have

⁸⁹ See Qian Zhongshu *Shougao Ji*, vol. I, 1-3.

⁹⁰ See Zhang Wenjiang, *Yingzao Babita de Zhizhe*, 85-102 and the chapter *Italian quotations in Qian Zhongshu’s works: a mutual illumination of the present study*.

⁹¹ See Guo Hong, “Shou Gao Shi Yi Zhong Jingshencaifu – Ji Qian Zhongshu *Shougao Ji* de Chuban” Beijing: Beijing Observation data n.7 (2003): 62-63.

many layers and the reading is definitely difficult. They appear as a main body that follows the normal structure of the paper to which many other sentences and references have been added. The final aspect is that of notes on notes on notes, which sometimes require the reader to turn the book many times while reading it because they are just inserted in the main text occupying every small blank centimetre of the sheet, going in every possible direction. To read the manuscript poses then incredible difficulties due to the structure of the texts and to the handwriting, which especially in the late notes is made more frail and uncertain due to the age and the bad health of the writer.⁹² It is furthermore difficult for the reader to guess the Pindaric flights Qian's thought was continuously undertaking. Much is yet to discover and to extrapolate from the web of literary, social, philosophical, cultural references Qian "reflected on" while taking notes from his extensive readings, and great would be the gain for east west comparative literature research if only the connections Qian has been delineating in his notebooks and the links he has set would be further analysed and reflected upon.

⁹² Guo Hong, "Shou Gao Shi Yi Zhong Jingshencaifu", 62-63.

CHAPTER 4

Writing *marginalia* on the book of human life: the use of quotations in the comparative method of Qian Zhongshu

Qian Zhongshu was a scholar, able to read and understand Latin, English, German, Spanish, Italian and French, who put together works in different languages from different contexts. He used to juxtapose passages as to make them mutually enlighten each other's meanings in a series of astonishing connections that gave west and east the possibility to see themselves reflected through the eyes of other traditions.

Monika Motsch singles out three phases of Qian's method: dissection, contacts and looking back. The phase of "dissection" is the one in which Qian Zhongshu cuts Chinese literature in many small pieces and quotes extensively from the most disparate works, and it does so according to his theory of *liangbing duobian* 两柄多边 (two handles, many sides). *Liangbing* stays for the two opposites of positive and negative, *duobian* stays for the many facets these positive and negative can give origin to.⁹³ In this phase Qian Zhongshu goes deeply inside the analysis of the themes analysed, looking for eventual references in all of the epochs and the traditions he has the possibility to grasp. Usually the quotations he comes up with are *duanzhang* 断章 (cut chapters), quotations out of context and apparently either disconnected from the rest of the discourse or extrapolated from the source text and used in a new composition without any relation to it. In

⁹³ See Monika Motsch, "A New Method of Chinese - Western Comparative Literature".

Guan Zhui Bian we find for example a quotation in note by Giambattista Basile (1566–1632) that, inserted in a discourse about onomatopoeia, has nothing to do with the meaning it had in the source text. The quotation reads: “la campane di Manfredonia dice *dammi e dotti*”⁹⁴ (the Manfredonia bell says: *give me* and *I’ll give you*). While Qian Zhongshu uses Basile’s quotation as an example of a peculiar onomatopoeia, two verbs used to signify the sound of the bell, Basile had used what is an Italian proverb to say that only he who does something good to others might receive good in turn. Qian does not in the least consider the meaning of the quotation and brings our consideration and attention only to its onomatopoeic implication.

The phase of “contacts” is the one in which Qian tries to show all the points of contacts, synchronic and diachronic, between different traditions, and this is when the reader is often shocked by ideas and links he would have never imagined. Finally, the “looking back” is when past is used to explain the present, west is used to explain east and vice versa.

The value Qian ascribes to the fragmentary is fully explained in the introduction of the English translation of selected passages of *Guan Zhui Bian* by Ronald Egan, who states:

“Behind both the expository form Qian Zhongshu has chosen in *Limited Views*, which has a long history in Chinese letters, and the peculiar way he has reconstructed it, there lies a distinctive mentality or predilection. This mentality is marked by an aversion to intellectual systematization as

⁹⁴ The quotation bears a mistake since the plural *campane* (bells) has no grammatical accordance with the singular article *la* (the): the correct quotation would have been *la campana*. See Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 197.

it is usually done in literary or intellectual history, and, contrariwise, a faith in the value of the particular original utterance".⁹⁵

The love for the fragmentary makes Qian treat the works on which he comments in *Guan Zhui Bian* in a very peculiar way, going through passages very often other critics had neglected or pointing to small and trivial matters. He thus brings to life and to light important pieces of thought sometimes neglected but fundamental to the creation of a more general idea.

Ronghui 融汇 (melt together), *canhu* 参互 (mix) and *datong* 打通 (get through) are the Chinese expressions that better illustrate Qian Zhongshu's comparative method and that allow us to understand why quotations are so numerous in the work of this author and why they are always reported in their original language.

Qian's method of the *datong* (juxtaposition), like in a stream of consciousness or in a last century avant-garde movement painting, juxtaposes both to create a more complete and universal understanding and to find relationships where they are not the least expected. To juxtapose means to express ideas and concepts avoiding every possible connective element. The reader needs therefore to exploit and dissect the different languages and different codes of interpretation he is confronted with in order to understand the whole and more general meaning. *Datong* is not meant just to see similarities, but also to see differences and the initial affinity from which differentiation could be appreciated: *xiangfan xiangcheng* (相反相成), to be both opposites and complementary at the same time. Reality is multiform and ever changing and needs a complete scheme to be observed. The same *xiangfan xiangcheng* is said to be the main

⁹⁵ Ronald Egan, *Limited Views*, 10.

principle enhanced by the Italian Renaissance writer Giordano Bruno (1548-1600) who in *Guan Zhui Bian* is quoted when explaining the “coincidenza dei contrarii” (coincidence of opposites) saying that “non è armonia e concordia dove è unità”⁹⁶ (there is no harmony nor agreement where there is unity).

Datong is applied in Qian’s essays in a clear way, and Italian literature is a leitmotiv that carries the reader through most of the essays and whose finality is to illuminate Chinese literature with that *mutual illumination* expounded in the essay *Yizhong Wenxue De Huxiang Zhaoming: Yi Ge Da Wenti, Ji Ge Xiao Lizi* 意中文学的互相照明:一个大题目, 几个小例子⁹⁷ (The mutual illumination of Italian and Chinese literature: a big problem, some small examples). In this essay Qian Zhongshu states and proves with many examples that in order to study the literature of a definite place or time it is necessary first of all to shift the attention from that literature to one different and far away. Only as a second step it is then possible to go back to the first object of attention. The analysis thus derived from the consideration of different points of view results clearer and more complete. This belief brings Qian Zhongshu to see and analyze Chinese literature with the help of logical patterns that come from outside Chinese literature and makes quotations the core of his writing practice. In this general scheme, Italian literature occupies an important role.

A proof that Qian Zhongshu’s method is to give a fundament to all the theories set forth is the way in which he embodies both the literate and the scholar. His scholarly practice and critical theories find the perfect fulfilment in the way in which he creates literary pieces and in his unique

⁹⁶ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian* I, 393. See Giordano Bruno, *Opere di Giordano Bruno*, vol 2 (Lipsia: Weidmann, 1830), 438.

⁹⁷ Qian Zhongshu, *Qian Zhongshu xuanji*, 65-68.

style far away from the rigor of the scientist and close enough to the fantasy and the imaginative power of expression of the artist. He strongly believed that only a good writer could become a good critic and that, vice-versa, no critic is a good one if he is not a writer himself.

What Qian Zhongshu wanted to escape with his method of juxtaposing and his flying away from theories not embodied in a proof of validity, was a comparative literature made up only by the study of influences and similarities, what René Wellek called the “foreign trade of literatures”. He wanted to pursue, just as Wellek did, “the final objective of comparative literature (that) is to help us to know the basic principles of the general literature (literature générale) up to the ones of the culture of human beings, that’s why to overstep the boundaries and scopes of a parallel analysis between Chinese and western literatures’ practical relations it’s not only possible but indeed valuable.”⁹⁸

Qian, using J.M.Carré’s words, affirmed: “comparative literature is not the comparison of literatures”. The new comparative method of Qian is not to state similarities and differences but to set up a discussion between motives and writers. Monika Motsch calls this method the *regard regardé* or the *young lady that died of love*: she likens the comparative method to the behaviour of a Chinese coming from abroad that reflects upon China with a new consciousness or to a lady that died of love, whose body lies dead at home while her spirit flies back to look for her lover.

Motsch affirms that Qian Zhongshu is a link between China and the west and he has been the sole scholar with such a wide scope of analysis and understanding of both the Chinese and the western contexts. She also adds that to read *Guan Zhui Bian* is an eye-opening experience, which

⁹⁸ Translated from: Zhang Longxi “Qian Zhongshu tan bijiaowenxue yu wenxue bijiao”. <http://www.aisixiang.com/data/28340.html>

could bring profit not only to the Chinese but also to the western readers, offering a ready available field for dialogue and discussion.⁹⁹

Xiaoshuo Shi Xiao 小说识小 (1945)¹⁰⁰ is a good evidence of the comparative method of Qian Zhongshu. It is an essay focusing on what we could call side stories or simply motives of novels and short stories belonging to different epochs both from western and Chinese literatures. Twenty are the motives involved and every motif is explained through two or more stories that exemplify it with huge leaps in time and space. Three are the references to Italian authors, but only one is a direct quotation from the source text.

“Quivi due filze son di perle elette, che chiude ed apre un bello e dolce labro”¹⁰¹ (there are two strings of chosen pearls opened and closed by sweet lips) is the sentence from the *Orlando Furioso* by Ariosto quoted to enhance the theme of teeth like pearls. The motif starts with a quotation from the novel *Der Abenteuerliche Simplicissimus* by Hans Jakob Christoffel von Grimmelshausen where the teeth of a beautiful woman are said to be like “having been chopped from a turnip”, a quotation from the *Shi Jing* follows, with teeth like melon’s seeds and it precedes a reference to E. About and his *Histoire de la Grèce* and J.J. Brousson with *France en Pantoufles*, both with teeth like piano’s keys. The theme is further exploited through quotations from Du Mu, Boswell, Taine, and the *Jurnal de Goncourt*, all writing about teeth as “those of an old English lady”.

No conclusion is brought forth, and a simple juxtaposition of literary themes and authors serves the scope of demonstrating common processes

⁹⁹ Motsch, Monika, “Qiannülihun fa, Qian Zhongshu Zuo Wei Zhong-Xi Wenhua de Qianxianren”, in *Qian Zhongshu Pingshuo Qishi Nian*, 326-337.

¹⁰⁰ Qian Zhongshu, “Xiaoshuo Shi Xiao” in *Qian Zhongshu Sanwen*, 518.

¹⁰¹ Qian Zhongshu, *Xie zai Rensheng Bianshang*, 142. See Ludovico Ariosto, *Orlando furioso*, (Milano: Garzanti, 1992) (XIII edizione), 84.

in the treatment of literary themes. The other two references to Italian literature, following the same pattern, are from Giovanni Papini (1881-1956) and his critical work *Dante Vivo* (Dante Alive) and to Calandrino, memorable character from Boccaccio's *Decameron* who, exactly like Pigsy in *Xi You Ji* 西游记, thinks to be pregnant, and does not understand how to manage, being a man, to give birth to a child.

In the eastern, as well as in the western world, quotations have always had their preferential sphere of usage and have been authoritatively used. Aristotle and Quintilian, in the western rhetorician tradition, understood they had a dialectical or logical function, supported by the importance of imitation, the Greek *mimesis*.

According to Antoine Compagnon, French scholar and author of a treatise on quotations, quotations have the function of a standard for validity, of a control for statements, of a device for regulation or self-regulation, of the repetition of the already said; a good one qualifies and a bad one disqualifies.¹⁰² This assumption endorses and explains the role that quotations have in Qian's works. Quotations are not details of the book whence they come; they are, on the contrary, a corner stone or a strategic practice to rely on what he calls the "practice of paper", nothing else than a pair of scissors cutting and mincing a sheet of paper. To cut a strip from a piece of paper is a simple action that makes us possess it, just like copying and pasting from a written text makes us masters of the text and combines reading and writing in one single achievement. To read and extrapolate from the text something worth maintaining helps us to write contents with a fundamental and solid base. Thus, to read doesn't mean to

¹⁰² "La citation a le statut d'un critère de validité, d'un contrôle de l'énonciation, d'un dispositif de régulation, par fois d'autorégulation, de la répétition du déjà dit: 'bonne', elle qualifie; 'mauvaise', elle disqualifie", Antoine Compagnon, *La seconde main ou le travail de la citation* (Paris: aux éditions du Seuil, 1979), 12.

passively receive content, but to extract and re-use it with an awareness that indicates we have eaten and digested what the writer meant to express, and are now able to take the energy and the nourishment from our “food” to give them a new life. When, while reading, we find something to retain, we are urged to take it from the text; quoting is the exact reproduction of that urge, and conveys in writing the passion that startled us during reading.

Quotations in the west find their paradigm for usage in various theories and literary conceptions that justify and give strength of validity to the usage of this literary device to convey meanings rooted in the reality of things. If we think of Robert Frost and his theory of “ulteriority”, saying one thing and meaning another, or of what T.S.Eliot was doing with his theory of the objective correlative, they might well remind us of the way in which Qian Zhongshu was using quotations.¹⁰³ F.O.Matthiessen reports Eliot writing in an unpublished lecture on the method of Ulysses (1933) that “In some minds certain memories, both from reading and life, become charged with emotional significance. All these are used, so that intensity is gained at the expense of clarity”.¹⁰⁴ It would be difficult to find a definition more apt to describe that density and “intensity” which Qian’s works reach through quotations to express the deepest feelings expressed through literary works that lie at the core of human experience. The reader is then asked to use his set of references referring to worldly phenomena to get, from that concatenation of events, a summing up and all-enclosing conception. The necessity to study the usage of quotations in literary works is urged by the need to analyze the authors’ academic ideology,

¹⁰³ See Huang Weiliang, “Liu Xie and Qian Zhongshu: Common poetics”, in *Qian Zhongshu Shiwen Congshuo*, edit. By Wang Rongzu, 249-280.

¹⁰⁴ F.O.Matthiessen “The ‘Objective Correlative’ in Harold Bloom, Bloom’s Bio-critiques, T.S.Eliot. (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 2003), 83.

their aesthetic standpoint and their linguistic style, since all of these factors are exemplified and expressed, among other literary devices, also by the way in which quotations are used in literary works. As Wang Peiji remarks, the method of the usage of quotations is one of the important problems and factors for analysis both in the linguistic and in the philological fields.¹⁰⁵

As economy studies how to obtain the greatest profit with the fewest means, literature studies how to convey the greatest meaning with the most concise language; nothing is more true and representative than the language and the style full of quotations of Qian. The *datong*, with its striking connections and lack of connective elements, is possible only thanks to the archetypes that lay on the basis of world conceptions and ideas. Those archetypes are the justification that allows the play of cross references and links.¹⁰⁶ Without this common soil, it would in fact be impossible to weave the net of allusions that help us grasp a universal meaning from quotations that sweep over time and space. To analyze the way in which Qian quotes is a way to understand both his stylistic and his content choices together with the motives he singles out across different traditions.

Guan Zhui Bian is Qian Zhongshu's scholarly masterpiece in which western quotations amount to two thousand approximately, from nearly one thousand different authors, and the Chinese ones are several times as large, coming up to a total number of quotations that reaches nearly one hundred thousand.¹⁰⁷ To understand the link between all the quotations

¹⁰⁵ Wang Peiji, "Yinyong Yishu Xin Tan", in *Hanzi Wenhua*, 2 (2006), 31.

¹⁰⁶ Huang Weiliang, in his already mentioned *Liu Xie and Qian Zhongshu* links Qian Zhongshu's *datong* to Northrop Frye's archetypes in *The anatomy of criticism*.

¹⁰⁷ Ronald Egan, *Limited Views*, 16.

and trace a panorama of their sources, Zhang Wenjiang¹⁰⁸ has analyzed their origin and has come up with a four-sided spectrum whence Qian has quoted: the Four Books of the Chinese literary tradition, The Buddhist texts translated in Chinese, The Taoist material and the western sources.

The reasons for such an extensive use of quotations are both theoretical, Qian pays the utmost importance to the study of the texts and considers futile to talk about what is beyond a poem without a close reading of the poem itself,¹⁰⁹ and methodological, Qian Zhongshu chooses a theme and, through quotations, demonstrates how different authors in different times have developed and exploited it. Quotations become for Qian Zhongshu a method in his writing practice and the way in which he chooses to express his own ideas, giving to the generality of theoretical assumptions a touch of tangible proof of validity based on the words of others. The particularity of this method is that very often Qian does not explain in his own words what others have said, but prefers to insert the original utterances and expressions of those authors directly into his text, cutting and pasting to develop his thought. In the above-indicated process, Qian rarely makes abstract comparisons; he starts always from a sentence, a tangible idea, a word, and from them explores universal concepts.

This method has often been misunderstood and many scholars have not seen the reason for such a mingling of chopped pieces, thus contesting to Qian's system of thought a lack of organicity.¹¹⁰ Others convey that

¹⁰⁸ See Zhang Wenjiang, *Yingzao Babita de Zhizhe*, 94-102.

¹⁰⁹ Yue Daiyun, *Comparative Literature*, 96.

¹¹⁰ Zhang Longxi in his *Zhongxi jiaoji yu Qian Zhongshu de zhixue fangfa* tries to put an halt to negative critique towards Qian Zhongshu as in the case of Li Zehou (李澤厚) that has affirmed that writers like Qian have culture and knowledge but lack of a system of thought. Professor Zhang affirms that to consider Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao, Chen Duxiu, Hu Shi and Lu Xun key protagonists of Chinese literary world and neglect Qian Zhongshu means to read history with the eyes of the then political conscience. All those who have criticized Qian Zhongshu, continues Professor Zhang, have done it basing their

nobody should have the right to criticize the work of the writer if he does not understand the languages in which he quotes because this would account for a partial analysis.

To all those that affirm that Qian Zhongshu does not deserve a place in Chinese literature, or that *Qian Xue* is nothing else than coarse research, or that Qian is not a thinker but a mere scholar because he did not appoint a system of thought, or that he stayed in the sphere of Chinese classical literature and gave no contribution to other fields of research, Li Hongyan,¹¹¹ Professor at Chuanmei University in Beijing, gives well documented answers with counter arguments. Professor Li affirms that whoever does not read and understand all the books on which Qian's learning and ideas are based, cannot express a derogatory opinion on the writer because he has not the means to understand his method. *Qian Xue*, continues Li, cannot be considered as a whole, because the contributions to this discipline are many and different. As for the creation of a system of thought, this is precisely what Qian opposed. It must in fact be considered that during the 19th and 20th centuries the "magic weapon of systematic doctrines" was being replaced by analytical research. The field of Chinese classical literature then, is of course the point from which Qian sets off, but is only a starting point that brings his analysis to cover the range of Chinese contemporary as well as of western literature. Nothing different could have happened both because of the May Fourth Movement and because of the exposure of intellectuals of Qian's generation to western education and culture.

judgements on misunderstandings and evaluation mistakes like Gong Pengcheng who has completely misunderstood the meaning of Qian's essay *Zhongguo Shi yu Zhongguo Hua*. See *Qian Zhongshu Shiwen Congshuo* edited by Wang Rongzu, 187-210.

¹¹¹ Li Hongyan, "Ruhe Pingjia Qian Zhongshu" in *Qian Zhongshu Pingshuo Qishi Nian*, 157-174.

The usage of this particular method is the reason why we cannot consider Qian Zhongshu a comparatist in the usual sense of the term. He does not compare themes and works to find similarities and differences; instead, he rather creates dialogues between authors and works of the past to discover social and psychological reasons behind the motives¹¹² he analyses. He quite often even involves contemporary developments of the themes or possible links to other disciplines that might have a connection to the same topics.

Another difference between Qian's comparative literature and the "usual one" is that Qian does not compare entire works or poems; instead, he juxtaposes single lines or ideas or a particular literary metaphor or motif.

Quotations in Qian's works may fall in the categorization that Compagnon proposes of all the possible functions quotations might have in literary texts:¹¹³ 1) function of erudition, when we cite other authors and works to show our knowledge and adorn our writings with an halo of importance; 2) invocation of authority, when we quote to demonstrate that our ideas had been asserted previously and they take from other authors the strength and the proof of their validity; 3) function of amplification, when they are meant to expand on a concept, and 4) ornamental function, when they embellish the text with other's appropriate and well written sentences. The first two functions, erudition and authority, are external to texts, or inter-textual, since they move the attention of the reader to references outside the texts; the latter, function of amplification and ornamental function, are internal or textual, since they tend to keep the attention on the main ideas expressed, and refer to other texts in a

¹¹² Motsch, "A New Method of Chinese- Western Comparative Literature".

¹¹³ Compagnon, *La seconde main*, 99

marginal way. As for the form of quotations, Tian Jianmin 田建民¹¹⁴ divides them in encyclopaedic and linguistic quotations. The first form includes all the quotations that come from historical works, from parables or myths; the linguistic ones come from expressions or sentences from the Chinese classics. As for the degree of difficulty to understand on the reader's side, quotations can be divided in familiar and rare allusions. As for their usage, there are the clear allusions and the veiled ones. Qian often pursued the technique of quoting without letting the reader have the feeling of it. In the novel *Wei Cheng* there are numerous quotations of this kind, where the words quoted merge completely into the new linguistic setting and become one with it.

Of course the classification just presented is not a fixed one and one kind of quotation can merge into the other: the rare allusions, as an example, can be transformed in familiar quotations from a repeated usage and the quotations familiar at a certain time can become rare allusions if the text from which they are taken becomes unpopular. To this classification, we may add other functions of quotations in Qian's works that have their origin in his already mentioned re-elaboration of a peculiar Chinese literary style and in his mixing it with theories coming from contemporary western influences. This work will try to illustrate those usages of quotations particular to Qian's comparative method with the help of a close analysis of a specimen of quotations in his works, and we will see how those usages have, in a way, Chinese characteristics. The main questions we will try to answer in the following paragraphs are: which is the use of quotations in Qian Zhongshu's works? Why is he constantly borrowing others' words to develop and dissect a theme?

¹¹⁴ Tian Jianmin, "Yongshi bu shi ren jue - Qian Zhongshu yongdian yanjiu zhi yi" in *Qian Zhongshu Congshuo* edited by Wang Rongzu, 311-330.

The point in using quotations is, for Qian Zhongshu, to build solid foundations for his construction, he does not like empty theories that are not based on real and practical proofs. He thinks that in order to speak about something it is necessary to provide proofs of examples of previous assumptions concerning the theme of the discussion. Gong Gang 龚刚, associate professor of the Department of Chinese at the University of Macao, divides Qian's quotations in two different kinds: sentences that need quotations (*yan bi you zheng* 言必有证) and proofs that need examples (*zheng bi you li* 证必有例) .¹¹⁵ Thus, quotations have the function of erudition and of invocation of authority at the same time, but they are also an extremely accurate insertion of other languages into the texture of Chinese sentences, resulting precious stones in a golden setting, ready to ornate the whole jewel. Sometimes they are also presented in sequence, each one to confirm and add a new turn to the previous one, to amplify it. This study aims at singling out and illustrating, through examples, usages of quotations peculiar to Qian Zhongshu that serve him to build his comparative method. Starting from the above-mentioned functions of quotations, Qian, using the technique of *datong*, enriches quotations of the following characteristics: 1) they serve to compare ideas and theories to highlight different opinions or just the many sides and implications of one literary theme; 2) they are the mean to express new ideas as the tesseras of a mosaic work that give life to new figures 3) they stay for the voice of their authors to overcome time and place in roundtable discussions; 4) they are the way to discover unprecedented links and common concepts; 5) they act as a mirror that helps to see one's own image in a clearer way; 6) they are the elements that prove and confirm mistakes discovered by the

¹¹⁵ Gong Gang, *Qian Zhongshu: Aizhizhe de Xiaoyao*, 115.

author in previous works and literary theories and, most surprisingly, 7) they might be a kind of secret code to conceal to somebody the meaning conveyed while unveiling it to others.

4.1 Comparing through quotations

Qian Zhongshu did not possess many books; Wu Taichang 吴泰昌, in his *Wo Renshi de Qian Zhongshu* 我认识的钱钟书 (The Qian Zhongshu I know¹¹⁶), describes Qian's house as empty of books and full of writing notes. We may thus assume that Qian Zhongshu, while reading, mostly underlined mentally and used to transcribe what he considered worth maintaining on his notebooks. He had an extraordinary visual memory that allowed him to read and keep in his mind whatever he read, or at least whatever he would have underlined, to become his mental property. This treasure preserved in his mind gave Qian Zhongshu the insight that allowed him to make comparisons in order to touch upon many spheres of knowledge. Everything was ready and available in his mental library, and striking evidences and parallels could emerge through the analysis of phenomena belonging to the most diverse fields of human experience.

In Qian's works, Tian Jianmin finds a strong literary talent and a great aroma of books,¹¹⁷ and both characteristics are embodied in the great amount of quotations the author makes use of.

Talking about mystical philosophies in *Guan Zhui Bian*,¹¹⁸ Qian Zhongshu analyses these philosophical movements through a number of quotations from mystical thinkers and philosophers and eventually explains that the

¹¹⁶ Wu Taichang, *Wo renshi de Qian Zhongshu*, 87.

¹¹⁷ Tian Jianmin, "Yongshi bu shi ren jue - Qian Zhongshu yongdian yanjiu zhi yi" in *Qian Zhongshu Congshuo* edited by Wang Rongzu, 311-330.

¹¹⁸ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian* (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju 1979) 2: 463-465.

parallels offered are meant to show that Daoism, Buddhism and the mystical philosophies of the West “derive from the same human inclination but have acquired different names. [...] Nevertheless, similar as they may be, there is no need to force them together as one.”¹¹⁹ This sounds more as a reminder from the author that we need to look at different phenomena with a comprehensive mind to strike connections, but we also have to pay attention to local and specific conditions that helped to differentiate them in the course of history.

To be aware of different traditions is sometimes also a necessary condition for the right evaluation of poetic images; and it is through a quotation in footnote in *Guan Zhui Bian* by Torquato Tasso “la regia moglie, /che bruna è sì ma il bruno il bel non toglie”¹²⁰ (the king’s wife /that is brunette being beautiful all the same) and, among the other references, by the Chinese “modified” saying “Yuji Xuefu 玉肌雪肤”¹²¹ (fresh as jade, white as snow) that Qian demonstrates that a woman, to be considered beautiful, should have a dark complexion in some traditions and should be white as snow and jade in others.

What sometimes Qian Zhongshu wants to stress are not differences, but common trends, as in the entry¹²² which illustrates through quotations from the *Extensive Records from the Taiping Era* (Taiping Guangji 太平广记), from Dong Qichang, Bo Juyi, Pei Xie, Wang Ling, Friedrich Hebbel, Henri A. Junod, Ernst Cassirer, Plinius, Boccaccio, and many others, that the image reflected in a mirror or in a painting has always been considered as embodying the spirit of the person there reflected and represents a kind of

¹¹⁹ Ronald Egan, *Limited Views*, 306.

¹²⁰ See Torquato Tasso, *Opere*, vol 1 (Venezia: Unione Tipografico Editrice, 1722), 522.

¹²¹ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 182. The Chinese saying actually is *Bingji Xuefu* 冰肌雪肤 and Qian substitutes the word *Bing* 冰, ice, to the word *Yu* 玉, jade.

¹²² Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, II, 1123-1131.

captivation for which the soul of the person portrayed or reflected is meant to end up being imprisoned in its portrait. This common concept, the same in all quoted authors and works, explains and justifies not only many literary themes that we find in eastern and in western literature, but is also an explanation for a number of sociological and anthropological behaviours such as, for example, the fear that primitive people, like the Bantu tribe in Africa, have for photography.

Another literary cliché is the one of “the other shore” in *Guan Zhui Bian* where both Dante and Gabriele D’Annunzio (1863-1938) are quoted to support the idea that happiness always lies on the opposite bank of a river, on the opposite shore: “Ella ridea dall’altra riva dritta” (standing on the opposite bank she smiled); “tre passi ci faceva il fiume lontani”¹²³ (the river made us three steps apart)¹²⁴ and “La gioia è sempre all’altra riva”¹²⁵ (Joy is always on the other shore). The motif is present in western as well as in eastern literatures; quotations here have the sole function of supporting and proving a similarity. What is worth noting is that while Qian quotes Dante in Italian, his reference in footnote is from the English translation of Dante’s *Divine Comedy*.

In the third volume of *Guan Zhui Bian* the entry *Quan San Guo Wen Juan Yi Ling* 全三国文卷一〇¹²⁶ demonstrates that emotions merge one into the other and it was common in Song and Yuan dynasties to designate a spouse or a lover with expressions like “loathsome fellow” or “he (or she)

¹²³ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 209. See Dante Alighieri, *La Commedia secondo l’antica vulgata* a cura di Giorgio Petrocchi, 3 volumi. (Milano: Mondadori Editore, 1966-67), 260.

¹²⁴ Dante, *Purgatorio* 28, 67-70 from *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri* translated By Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Vol III, Leipzig Bernhard Tauchnitz, 1867.

¹²⁵ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 209. See Gabriele d’Annunzio, *Alcyone* a cura di Pietro Gibellini, (Torino: Einaudi, 1995), 119.

¹²⁶ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, III, 1676.

who wrongs me” exactly as in Renaissance literature to find expressions like “sweet foe, o dolce mia guerriera, la mia cara nemica”¹²⁷ (sweet foe, oh my sweet enemy, my sweet enemy) and “ma douce guerrière” (my sweet enemy), quotations from Geoffrey Chaucer, Francesco Petrarca and Pierre de Ronsard.

It may also happen that, while comparing, one or the other term of the comparison is enhanced, while the shortcomings of the other are put in evidence as it strangely happens with a line from Dante’s *Paradise* and two *Fu* 賦: the *She Zhi Fu* 射雉賦 and the *Zhi Dai Jian* 雉帶箭. The three works are quoted to highlight the way in which animals’ movements are described. Even though the works analyzed are similar in technique and literary skill, the *Fu*, concludes Qian, is better apt than western lyrical poetry to this kind of descriptions, giving them more flavour. Dante, always quoted as an example of an artistic ability that surpasses every other example, is here quoted instead only as a term of comparison for the Chinese poetic form of the *Fu*. Dante’s lines are: “Tal volta un animal coverto broglia, /sì che l’affetto convien che si paia /per lo seguir che face a lui la ‘nvoglia”¹²⁸ (Sometimes an animal covered with a cloth moves /as to show /its feelings through its movements). This might be taken as an example of Qian’s literary integrity in considering genres and literary works out of the western-centrism by which many Chinese intellectuals of the first half of the 20th century were spoilt.

¹²⁷ See Francesco Petrarca, *Rime*, (Pisa: Tipografia della Società Letteraria, 1805), 21; 56.

¹²⁸ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, III, 1856. See Dante Alighieri, *La Commedia secondo l’antica vulgata*, 391.

4.2 Quoting as a mean of original elaboration

If we imagine asking Qian Zhongshu his idea about the necessity and the function of quotations, we might find the answer to the question in two passages from *Guan Zhui Bian* that illustrate in practice what the theory is all about. The first passage we are going to pay attention to suggests that quoting is somehow represented in nature by the production of honey made by bees: bees take from different flowers the substance that becomes honey, just as writers, through quotations, take from different books the substance that will become their book, a different product yet made from already existing content. To prove this assumption Qian Zhongshu quotes Zhang Fan 张璠, that in his introduction to the *Yi Ji Jie Xu* 易集解序 (Comments on the Book of Changes), writes about bees and their way to obtain honey, and Pei Songzhi 裴松之, in *Shang San Guo Zhi Zhu Biao* 上三国志注表 (Memorial Presenting the Commentary to Records of the Three Kingdoms) writes that embroiderers use different colours to obtain a fine embroidery just like bees use different flowers to create a product that tastes even sweeter than the elements from whence it comes. We find the same simile in western literature. Isocrates, Lucretius, Horace, Seneca, Quintilian, Montaigne, Eckermann and the Italian Daniello Bartoli¹²⁹ (1608-1685) have all written about bees, honey and the work of writers that “gather useful knowledge from every source”.¹³⁰ We have, in only two pages, ten different authors quoted to confirm and prove the truthfulness

¹²⁹ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, IV, 1968. Bartoli’s quotation reads: “Il lettore deve essere un’ape che colga il miele delle ingegnose maniere di scrivere, dell’imitazione, delle poetiche forme del dire” (The reader that is able to pick up the witty manners of writing, of imitation, of poetic expression). See Daniello Bartoli, *Dell’Huomo di Lettere, Difeso et Emendato, Parti due*, (Venezia: Presso Nicolò Pezzana, 1672), 147.

¹³⁰ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, IV, 1966.

and validity of the initial statement. Quotations are in Chinese, English, Latin, French, Italian and German. Seneca, Montaigne and Eckermann in particular, stress that not only bees and writers are similar in their activities, but that the result of both labours is a new original product, completely made up on their own, and whose origin from pre-existent components is not to interfere with the originality of the outcome.

From Isocrates in the 4th century B.C., to the Latin poets from the 1st century before and after Christ up to Zhang Fan and his quoted work from the 3rd century A.D., to Montaigne, 16th century, Daniello Bartoli, Italian Jesuit from the 17th century and Eckermann, 18th century, a span of twenty-two centuries is covered, running from the eastern boundaries of the world to the nest of western civilizations. The straightforward and striking sequence of quotations from authors that cover such a huge span in time and space goes outside the written page and is nearly able to touch our hearing sense. It is like hearing all those people chatting and expressing their ideas on the theme proposed by the author, a virtual journey between all those sages of the past to whom Qian Zhongshu refers in order to create the solid foundation he needs to corroborate his idea.

The second passage in which Qian Zhongshu expresses his ideas on quotations is one that analyses the practice of quoting out of context, that is, of using quotations extrapolated from a text for one's own proper aims, giving the quoted passages a new frame in which to bring new unexpected nuances of meaning. This, specifies Qian, is the technique used in Song parallel prose which had passages made up from "collected lines",¹³¹ with every line coming from a previous composition. Quotations follow to "demonstrate that the practice of 'breaking off a verse' (*duan*

¹³¹ Ronald Egan, *Limited Views*, 222.

zhang) was accorded a place alongside other types of superior writing and conversation, that clever transformations of earlier sayings were not considered inferior to original formulations, and that it was never required that what one said or wrote had to be entirely one's own"¹³². Alongside this practice of quoting out of context to build new and original compositions, and keeping the original meaning at a distance from the scope it was first intended to fulfil, there remains the more common practice of quoting to corroborate a specific idea, bringing attention to the first handling of a said utterance without any turn in meaning. What is important, remarks the author to conclude his entry, is that the reader needs to be able to differentiate the two activities and to treat them as two different ways of quoting, understanding if a quotation is meant to bring a new elaboration of an idea, resulting in an original creation, or if it stays simply as an invocation of authority to reinforce and prove a concept. Only being aware of these two functions of quotations, implies Qian Zhongshu, may a reader not be deceived while trying to get the meaning of quoted passages.

A remarkable example of "quotations out of context" is the treatment Qian reserves to a quotation from Dante's *Paradise* and to one from Milton's *Paradise Lost* in the second volume of *Guan Zhui Bian*¹³³. Here the content of the quotations, explained by Qian Zhongshu, comes before the direct quotations. Milton's words are: "in multitudes, /The ethereal people ran, to hear and know". Dante's text reads: "come 'n peschiera ch'è tranquilla e pura /traggonsi i pesci a ciò che vien di fori /per modo che lo stimin lor

¹³² Ronald Egan, *Limited Views*, 222.

¹³³ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, II, 988-989.

pastura”¹³⁴ (as in a fishpond which is pure and tranquil /the fishes draw to that which from without /comes in such fashion that their food they deem it).¹³⁵ The quotations are noteworthy in that Qian uses them to reverse their original intent. Dante’s *Divine Comedy* is a poem deeply rooted in a Christian context; Hell is the place where guilty men encounter their punishment, Purgatory is the expiation field and Paradise is the place where all the joy and the beatitude are preserved for the enjoyment of all the purest and lofty men. No reference is ever made in Dante’s poem to the boredom that might be experienced in such a perfect place as Paradise. Such an idea might in fact be considered sacrilegious since one cannot define boring the place where God lives. Conversely, the entry of *Guan Zhui Bian* in which these quotations find their place wants to prove that people in Heaven are bored and wait for distractions. For those weary people a living man happening to pass by is an amusement able to attract their attention and is similar to a handful of feed attracting fishes in a fish bowl. Qian describes the behaviour of the inhabitants of Paradise as seeking amusements in living beings because of the boredom of the place they live. This unexpected explanation can be considered an “implication behind the words”,¹³⁶ or simply a “quotation out of context”, used by the author with a turn in the original meaning, since Dante and Milton would have never implied that to be in the Grace of God could be a boring thing.

An antecedent to this quotation from Dante is another line taken from the seventeenth *canto* of the *Paradise* and cited by Qian Zhongshu with the same “out of context” purpose to demonstrate that Paradise was a boring

¹³⁴ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, II, 988. See Dante Alighieri, *La Commedia secondo l’antica vulgata*, 304.

¹³⁵ Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, transl., *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri*, Vol III, 5. (Leipzig Bernhard Tauchnitz, 1867), 100-102.

¹³⁶ Ronald Egan, *Limited Views*, 336.

place. We find it in a 1926 essay titled *Lun Jiaoyou* 论交友 (Discussing friendship).¹³⁷ The quotation reads “che non pur ne’ miei occhi è paradiso”¹³⁸ (paradise is not only in my eyes) and it is a sentence with which Beatrice, Dante’s beloved, urges him to divert his attention from her and consider what else is happening around him. Qian, following what had already been stated by A. E. Taylor in his *Faith of a Moralist*, notes that if paradise was such a beautiful and interesting place, Dante (Dante as a character, not Dante as a writer) would have been more like a countryman going to the city for the first time, than like a sad and pensive lover in search only of the sight of his beloved lady. The assumption about paradise, already derived from A. E. Taylor, is supported in the essay by quotations from the medieval French sung-story from the 13th century *Aucassin et Nicolette* and from Renan’s *Feuilles Détachée*.¹³⁹ Thus, the divergent meaning that comes from the quotation out of context is here supported by other quotations that provide it with authority and justification.

4.3 Quoting as a debate between sages of the past

Again in *Guan Zhui Bian*,¹⁴⁰ a passage about personal conduct and literary style expresses the idea that it is not possible to know a man from his writings, since a dissolute man might produce upright statements, while immoral compositions might be the product of an ordinary and discreet

¹³⁷ Qian Zhongshu, *Xiezai renshang bian shang*, 73-81.

¹³⁸ See Dante Alighieri, *La Commedia secondo l’antica vulgata*, 355.

¹³⁹ Ernest Renan, *Feuilles Détachées: faisant suite aux souvenirs d’enfance et de jeunesse*, (Paris : Calmann Lévy éditeur, 1892)

¹⁴⁰ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, IV, 2157-2158.

fellow. Given the starting assumption, Qian goes on with “three subsequent statements [...] to expand among the notion”.¹⁴¹ To *expand* is thus the function of the sequence of quotations that follows; it is an invocation of authority and at the same time an amplification of further proof given to the reader to convince him on the basis of opinions “certified” by the centuries and directly spoken by their authors. There we hear the discussion between Yuan Haowen 元好问 and Huang Dashou 黄大受 from the 13th century, Wang Duo 王铎 from the 17th century, Zhao Lingzhi 赵令畤 from the 12th century and the Italian critic Benedetto Croce from the 20th century. Croce’s quotation is here worth analyzing since it has a characteristic that is somehow useful to note in Qian’s method; it is made up of two appellatives, two Italian expressions, inserted in the Chinese text without a direct translation in Chinese and preceded only by their Chinese explanation. Egan’s English version reports: “Thus, the so-called *persona poetica* should not be lumped together with the *persona pratica*”,¹⁴² where *persona poetica*, as Qian explains, is the writer that creates essays, and *persona pratica* indicates the man that ‘conducts himself in society’.¹⁴³ Quoting with the direct insertion of words and expressions in a language different from the one in which the text is written might be startling enough for the reader but even more effective, resulting like a turn of voice. This technique might be compared to the offstage voice, i.e. the voice of the author, which leaves the scene to the direct interpreters of the *pièce*, resulting in a more enhancing representation. The discussion goes on between those sages and it comes, with discordant opinions, to the point of debating whether or not a writer needs to have experienced

¹⁴¹ Ronald Egan, *Limited Views*, 42.

¹⁴² Ronald Egan, *Limited Views*, 42.

¹⁴³ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, IV, 2158.

what he writes about. Surprisingly enough, a final quotation by Kant seems to be the peacemaker between the antagonists and seems to summarize the terms of the dispute carrying on the same idea that belongs to the off-scene author: “knowledge must originate in experience, but it does not derive entirely from experience”.¹⁴⁴ This time the German text is supported by the Chinese translation, probably due to an impelling necessity of being understood in the final point of the discussion. Supported by the Chinese translations are also the voices of Philip Sidney, Giordano Bruno, Giambattista Vico, C.K.Ogden and I.A.Richards¹⁴⁵ who in the debate between the true and the false in poetic creation all agree on the necessity to distinguish the practical truth “vero fisico” and the poetic truth “vero poetico” as in the words of Vico, or what has been called by Bruno the metaphorical sense “detto per metafora” and the true sense “detto per vero”.¹⁴⁶ We should not forget that assumptions in poetry are made basing their truthfulness on a level that might well be only a metaphorical one.

Another interesting debate is recorded in an entry¹⁴⁷ in which Wang Rong 王融, in his *Memorial Requesting to Give Books to the Barbarians*, sustains that it is thanks to the learning that comes from books that even barbarians could become more civilized, their fierceness could be tamed and their military capability could be weakened, leaving to Chinese people the way to conquest. In full accordance with him we find Du Ben 杜本, poet from the Yuan dynasty, a passage from *Zhuangzi* 庄子, Yang Xiong 扬雄 from the Han, and Edward Gibbon, English historian from the 18th century. It is

¹⁴⁴ Ronald Egan, *Limited Views*, 46.

¹⁴⁵ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 167.

¹⁴⁶ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 167. See Giambattista Vico, *Opere*, (Firenze: Poligrafia Italiana, 1847), 55 and Giordano Bruno, *Opere* (Lipsia: Weidmann, 1830), 174.

¹⁴⁷ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, IV, 2090-2092.

Gibbon to report an episode from ancient Greek history when the Goths defeated the Greeks and decided not to destroy their books; it was precisely thanks to the distraction coming from books that the Greeks did not apply themselves to the exercise of arms. It is also because of books, remarks Montaigne, that Rome, in becoming more cultured, saw its warfare successes diminish and that, as the Italian historian Machiavelli¹⁴⁸ states in his *Histories from Florence (Historie Fiorentine)*, after a warlike state drops its weapons and passes through to a peaceful period, it sees its power and strength diminish since books soften its valour and bravery. On the other hand a completely different position is maintained by Yu Xiulie 于休烈 in a memorial where he advised that to give books to barbarians means to give them knowledge and understanding even in warfare matters, and that the best thing to do would be to leave them ignorant about the Chinese literary classics and the important principles treasured in them.

This time, the reader is not given any final key to interpret the argument, and the discussion between the sages of the past on the wisdom of giving books and learning to barbarians is left open to further debate. In another passage of *Guan Zhui Bian* the focus is on the word and concept of “barbarian” and a quotation in footnote by the Italian humanist Benedetto Varchi (1503-1565) analyses the meaning of the word “barbarian”: “Questo nome *barbaro* è voce equivoca...quando si riferisce all’animo...alla diversità o lontananza delle regioni...al favellare”¹⁴⁹ (This term *barbarian* is

¹⁴⁸ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian* (2001), IV, 2092. Machiavelli’s quotation reads: “Perchè, avendo le buone e ordinate armi partorito vittorie, e le vittorie quiete, non si può la fortezza degli armati animi con più onesto ozio che con quello delle lettere, corrompere” (After good and regular arms have caused victories and victories has caused peace, the strength of armed souls is corrupted most of all by literature).

¹⁴⁹ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, II, 821. See Benedetto Varchi, *Delle Opere di Messer Benedetto Varchi*, vol. 6, (Milano: Società Tipografica de’ Classici Italiani, 1804), 215.

ambiguous...when it refers to the soul...to different and far away regions...to speech).

All played among Italian poets, with a short participation of the Latin poet Horace, is the debate that starts from Nietzsche's assumption that happiness sometimes comes from forgetfulness or ignorance of the actual situation. The debate is articulated enough as to recount, with insertions of quotations, a whole poem by the Italian poet Carlo Innocenzo Frugoni (1692-1768) famous for his prolificity in blank verse poetry. The poem is called *Poeta e Re* (Poet and King) and we here quote the full text. The lines that Qian translates and gives directly in Chinese have been underlined while the lines in bold are the ones quoted in Italian and translated in Chinese by the author. A translation of the whole poem is offered in footnote:

Vi fu un pazzo, non so quando,
che somiglia un poco a me,
che sul trono esser sognando,
comandava come un Re.

Nell'inganno suo felice
conducea contento i dí;
ma per opra degli amici
medicato egli guarí.

Guarí, è ver; ma sé veggendo
pover uomo qual pria tornato,
disse lor quasi piangendo:
- Voi m'avete assassinato!

Col tornar della ragione
da me lungi se ne va
un error, ch'era cagione

della mia felicità.¹⁵⁰

Qian chooses to quote the poem partly in Chinese partly in the original Italian version for stylistic as well as for content reasons. He does not differentiate the quotations from the body of the text because his method is of speaking through other authors' words, and he does not want to put himself out of those words, and does not want equally to take distance from them as to insert them in quotation marks; the Italian in the text is, on the other hand, a strong link with the source text, it suggests the reader that even if the original text comes from afar, it is nevertheless very close to the main theme being discussed. Frugoni's poem is preceded by lines with the same subject by Giacomo Leopardi (1798-1837) and Guido Gozzano (1883-1916). Both quotations are not translated. Leopardi's lines are from *Canto Notturmo di un Pastore Errante dell'Asia* (Night-Song of a Wandering Shepherd of Asia): "O greggia mia che posi, oh te beata, /che la miseria tua, credo, non sai!"¹⁵¹ (Oh my herd that rests, O flock at peace, O happy creatures, /I think you have no knowledge of your misery!). Gozzano's lines have the same intent, even if this time the ignorant animals are geese and not a herd of cows: "Penso e ripenso: - che mai pensa l'oca /gracidante alla riva del canale? /Pare felice! .../.../Ma tu non

¹⁵⁰ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, II, 762-763. See *Poesie scelte dell'Abate Carlo Innocenzo Frugoni*, tomo IV (Brescia: Daniel Berlandis, 1783), 172. A free translation of the poem is: There was a lunatic, and I don't know when, /somewhat similar to me, /he was dreaming to be on a throne, /and gave orders as a king does. /Happy in his deceiving / was happily leading his life; /but thanks to his friends /he was cured and recovered. /He recovered, that is true; but finding out he was back to /his previous normal life, /he told his friends in tears /You have killed me! /I have regained the use of my reason /but I have lost /the belief in a mistake that accounted for /my happiness.

¹⁵¹ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, II, 762. Giacomo Leopardi, *Canti*, (Firenze: Le Monnier, 1860), 75.

pensi. La tua sorte è bella!”¹⁵² (I think once and again: - what does a goose think /cackling on the canal’s bank? /It seems to be happy!.../.../But you do not think. Great is your fate!). The poet Ariosto, in a footnote a few lines later, answers to the poets saying that he who looks for what he does not want to find is a lunatic (Ben sarebbe folle /chi quel che non vorria trovar cercasse).¹⁵³ More than a real debate, we find here consent of intents in affirming that oblivion and forgetfulness are source of happiness, because to know the truth is a cause of distress and of sad awareness.

Ariosto is one of the characters in another debate that starts from a common theme in literature and social customs: women become old earlier than men, and the marrying age should thus be different for the two. In order to have throughout their life the same vigour and strength, it is necessary in fact that a man and a woman in a couple have a different age. The starting assumption comes from Du Qin 杜钦 who writes that men at fifty still like women, while women at forty are already in a declining phase. The answer to Du Qin comes from Chinese as well as western authors among which Euripides and Aristotle both affirm that there should be a gap in the age of the marrying couple and Ariosto identifies this ideal gap in ten or twelve years:

“de dieci anni o di dodici, se fai /per mio consiglio, fia di te minore; /.../perchè passando, il migliore /tempo e i begli anni in lor prima che in noi”¹⁵⁴ (ten or twelve years, if you /want to listen to my suggestion, she should be younger than you; /.../because the best /years of life expire for them earlier than for us).

¹⁵² Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, II, 762. See Golino C. ed., *Contemporary Italian poetry: an anthology* (London: University of California Press, 1962), 2.

¹⁵³ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, II, 763. See Ludovico Ariosto, *Orlando furioso*, (Milano: Garzanti, 1992), 710.

¹⁵⁴ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, III, 1501-1502. See Ludovico Ariosto, *Satire*, (Milano: Rizzoli, 1990), 36.

Balzac suggests the gap should be of fifteen years and the English poet Frederick Locker, with a more complicated calculation, says: “a wife should be half the age of her husband with seven years added”.¹⁵⁵ Which one is the age that sets the turning point for women then? For Hanfei 韩非 it is thirty, for Du Qin it is forty, for Italians, adds Qian, it is thirty-five, as Giordano Bruno, in his comedy *Candelaio*, writes:

“Voi siete cosa da cimiterio, perché una femina che passa trentacinque anni, deve andar in pace, *ideste* in purgatorio ad pregar Dio per i vivi”¹⁵⁶ (You are fit for the cemetery, because a woman that is more than thirty-five should go in peace, or to the Purgatory to pray God for people that are still alive).

Western and Chinese seem not to agree on the age at which a woman’s beauty declines; an agreement is instead found on the idea that, no matter how old men or women are, they are beautiful and enchanting as long as they are noble or powerful. Stendhal affirms it, supported by Lorenzo Magalotti (1637-1712), Italian baroque poet, that writes:

“Il viso dal mezzo in giù è assai stretto, onde il ne rimane aguzzo, la bocca è grande e i denti spaventali. La regina è bella perché non s’è mai sentito in questo mondo che una regina sia brutta. Il re d’Inghilterra se fusse un privato cavaliere sarebbe brutto, ma perché gli è re arriva passar per uom ben fatto”¹⁵⁷ (The lower part of her face is narrow and sharp, her mouth is big and her teeth are scaring. The queen is beautiful because there has never been an ugly queen. The king of England would be ugly if only he

¹⁵⁵ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, III, 1502.

¹⁵⁶ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, III, 1503. See Giordano Bruno, *Opere di Giordano Bruno*, (Lipsia: Weidmann, 1830), 65.

¹⁵⁷ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, III, 1504. See Lorenzo Magalotti, *Relazioni di Viaggio in Inghilterra, Francia e Svezia*, a cura di Walter Moretti, (Bari: Laterza, 1968), 20.

had been a private knight, but since he is the king of England, he has a fair appearance).

The same opinion is the one of the counsellor Zou Ji 鄒忌 in the *Zhanguo Ce - Jice* 战国策·齐策 (Strategies of the Warring States – Strategies of Qi) who affirms: “My wife praises me as beautiful because she loves me, my concubine praises me as beautiful because she fears me”.¹⁵⁸ And, with the formula Qian likes to use when he finds links and resonance, he adds “*ke xiang faming* 可相发明” they can mutually expound.

4.4 Juxtaposition in quotations: “datong” and striking combinations

In another passage of *Guan Zhui Bian* we might observe still a different way of quoting. This time it is as if Qian Zhongshu wants to give proof that all the literary realms are linked together, and the accordance of the quoted opinions becomes more striking due to the difference of languages in which those opinions are expressed. The concept involved here is that the more distant and inaccessible the goal, the more the sense of longing and the desire to reach it is strengthened by the distance itself. Just as all “the various western phrases”¹⁵⁹ prove: “la lontananza; à la nostalgie d’un pays on joint la nostalgie d’un temps; cette nostalgie du pays qu’on ignore; distance lends enchantments; die unendliche ferne, die Entfernung”¹⁶⁰ (distance; to the longing for a country the longing for a time is linked; this nostalgia of an unknown country; distance lends enchantments; the distant infinite, the distance). These sentences, from Leopardi, Edmond et Jules de Goncourt, Baudelaire, Lascelles Abercrombie, Fritz Strich, express

¹⁵⁸ See Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, III, 1504.

¹⁵⁹ Ronald Egan, *Limited Views*, 79.

¹⁶⁰ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, II, 1413.

basically the same concept of distance and nostalgia, and the author puts them together through juxtaposition to prove that “it is as if these statements all came from one mouth”.¹⁶¹ What is important for Qian here, is to demonstrate that there lies a common spirit between the artistic realms of different times and spaces and that some literary concepts are universal.

Juxtaposition (*datong*) between east and west, between cultural thought of different epochs and between different disciplines are the three major patterns of this technique used by Qian Zhongshu and are a means to obtain the maximum meaning through the minimum use of language.¹⁶²

The striking combinations made by Qian in his quoting from miscellaneous authors and works are the ones that cause in him what he calls the “shock of recognition”¹⁶³ which he defines:

*In a national literature which apparently never had any truck with the literature of one's own tongue, one often unexpectedly lights upon certain close parallels or similarities to the techniques, themes, dramatic situations and doctrinal formulations found in the literature of one's own country. One has the feeling of seeing a familiar face in a strange land. In affective tone, it is not unlike the literary experience summed up by De Sanctis in the words 'Ecco una vecchia conoscenza!' in his masterly essays on Hugo's poems.*¹⁶⁴

¹⁶¹ Ronald Egan, *Limited Views*, 79.

¹⁶² Huang Weiliang, “Liu Xie and Qian Zhongshu: Common poetics” (paper presented at the International Conference in Centennial Commemoration of Professor Qian Zhongshu, National Central University, Jong Li, Taiwan, December 18-19, 2009).

¹⁶³ Qian Zhongshu, “The Mutual Illumination of Italian and Chinese Literature” in *A collection of Qian Zhongshu's English essays*, (Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 2005), 403; and Qian Zhongshu, “Yizhong wenxue de huxiang zhaoming: yi ge da timu, jig e xiao lizi”, in Qian Zhongshu, *Xie zai Rensheng Bianshang*, 172.

¹⁶⁴ Qian Zhongshu, “The Mutual Illumination”, 404.

where the sentence by the Italian critic De Sanctis means “here we are an old acquaintance!”. This quotation by De Sanctis, quoted in Qian’s essay, had been already quoted in *Tan Yi Lu* LXXXII¹⁶⁵ where, preceded by Qian’s translation, it is used to support a slightly different theory from the one of *The Mutual Illumination*. This time Qian Zhongshu is talking about the genesis of art and the creative process of the artist who in creating something new needs nevertheless to give the reader the impression of finding an old acquaintance in the piece of art he is confronted with. Only in this way, when arousing such a sensation of familiarity and closeness, can poetry be considered true poetry. This concept can also be extended, explains Qian Zhongshu through the words of Coleridge a few lines further, from the reading phase to the creative process, and the writer, in his expression by artistic means, needs to produce something that, under new robes, contains the seeds of something buried inside himself that comes to life again. The process is expressed through a metaphor in a poem by Luigi Carrer (1801-1850) quoted in Baldacci’s (1930-2002) *Poeti Minori dell’Ottocento* (Eighteenth Century Minor Poets) titled “La Sorella” (The sister) and quoted a few lines later by Qian: “Quel ch’io provassi la prima volta che di vederti m’accadde, ascolta. /Pareami averti scontrato ancora, /maignoti il loco m’erano e l’ora”¹⁶⁶ (What happened to me the first time I saw you, listen. /It seemed I had already met you, /but unknown where the place and the time).

In the above-mentioned essay, *The Mutual Illumination*, there are many examples of old acquaintances between Chinese and Italian literatures, which will be briefly mentioned to illustrate Qian Zhongshu’s notion of

¹⁶⁵ Qian Zhongshu, *Tan Yi Lu*, 631. The quotation comes from *Saggi Critici* (Critical Essays) by Francesco De Sanctis in the edition edited by Luigi Russo (Bari: Laterza, 1965).

¹⁶⁶ Qian Zhongshu, *Tan Yi Lu*, 633. See Luigi Carrer, *Opere Scelte*, vol I, (Firenze: Le Monnier, 1859), 3. *Maignoti* should be spelled *ma ignoti*.

“striking combinations”. Qian Zhongshu talks about Machiavelli, perfect representative of the Italian Renaissance, and about his contrast between *Fortuna* (fortune) and *Virtù* (virtue /ability). This contrast had already been discussed by the Chinese Mozi 墨子 during the 3rd century B.C. and by Liezi 列子 in the 4th century. Machiavelli was not acquainted with either Mozi or Liezi. Still their common discussion should not be surprising since, like Qian Zhongshu states, talking about the same arguments is part of the “*condition humaine*” (human condition). The surprising “connection” is that while the Machiavellian *virtù* rarely finds a good translation in other languages, its meaning is rendered perfectly by Mozi and Liezi. They translate it as *li* (力) or *qiang* (强), which both indicate the capacity of man to face the opposing events he has to experience and not simply the “virtue” that might be implied from a translation in English. Similarly, the concept implied by Machiavelli with the word *fortuna*, “fortune”, corresponds precisely to the Chinese concept of *ming* 命. The same example is recalled in the entry about the two words, *li* and *ming*, in the *Guan Zhui Bian*’s commentary on *Liezi*.¹⁶⁷

Another example of striking combinations is the fact that Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) in the 15th century used to suggest to his students to observe walls with stains or stones to get inspiration if having to paint sceneries, and the Chinese painter Song Ti 宋迪 gave exactly the same suggestion in the 11th century to his disciples. Other examples are quoted of similar stories narrated by the Italian novelist Boccaccio and the Chinese poet Yuan Mei 袁枚, of a similar anecdote about the Chinese writer Kung Rong 孔融 of the 3rd century and a Florentine Renaissance boy narrated in the *Liber Facietiarum* by the Italian Poggio Bracciolini (1380-

¹⁶⁷ See Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, II, 781.

1459), which Qian quotes by mistake only with the name Poggio, or in *Il Trecentonovelle* (Three-hundred Short Stories) by Franco Sacchetti.

The question left open by Qian Zhongshu in the conclusion of the essay is if those connections and similarities come from willing influences or just from similar responses to similar questions. This will give enough material for dissertation, advises Qian, and will end up in a mutual illumination between the two (in this case the Italian and Chinese) national literatures.¹⁶⁸

What seems evident is that whenever Qian Zhongshu expresses a concept through unusual combinations and juxtaposes sentences in striking sequences, in the nearly totality of the cases this is meant to show unexpected similarities more than differences. Another example for this is presented in *Guan Zhui Bian* where a quotation from the Buddhist classic *Dapan Niepan Jing – Fanxing Pin* 大般涅槃经·梵行品 (Sutra of Nirvana-Sanskrit work) affirms that words of rage seem to be engraved on the everlasting stone while words of praise seem to be inscribed on water and flow away in a short time. The same concept is expressed by Stefano Guazzo, Italian Renaissance writer and author of the *Dialoghi Piacevoli* (Pleasant Dialogues): “scrivono i beneficii nella polvere e l’ingiurie nel marmo”¹⁶⁹ (they write good things on dust and offences on marble) or by A. Arthaber, contemporary scholar, who in his *Dizionario Comparato di Proverbi* (Comparative Dictionary of Proverbs) reports: “Chi offende scrive in polvere di paglia, /Chi è offeso, nei marmi lo sdegno intaglia”¹⁷⁰ (Who brings offence writes in straw’s dust, /the offended engraves his indignation in marble). The *datong* is unexpected for the distance in time

¹⁶⁸ Qian Zhongshu, “The Mutual Illumination”, 404.

¹⁶⁹ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 315.

¹⁷⁰ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 315.

and literary genres and serves to point out a common and everlasting truth.

4.5 Quotations as a looking glass

The perception of ourselves we happen to get through a looking glass is sometimes different from the one that is based only on self-appreciation: that is why to understand better ourselves, it is useful and suitable to refer to others for a confrontation and an appropriate reconsideration of previous views. This is one of the main usages of quotations that occur in Qian Zhongshu's works, since most of his studies are analysis of Chinese literature considered and re-considered with the help of the different perspectives offered by foreign literatures and authors.

Talking about similes and analogies, in the first book of *Guan Zhui Bian*, the author distinguishes between similes in philosophical and in poetic writings. There are plenty of similes in *Zhuangzi* as well as in *The Book of Changes*, and the treatments they undergo are different and should be attentively considered. Similes in a philosophical work need to remain well separated from the object to which they refer, otherwise the original meaning could be mistaken for the simile itself, as explained by Han Feizi 韓非子 with the similes of the jewellery case that was more highly praised than the pearl it contained, or of the attendant maid that supplanted her mistress in the mistress' husband eyes.¹⁷¹ Similes in a poetic work instead need to be linked to the object they refer, because they are part of the general meaning conveyed by the poetic image. After quoting and referring to Chinese literature, Qian puts it in front of the mirror of

¹⁷¹ Ronald Egan, *Limited Views*, 136.

western literature with appropriate quotations: Bertrand Russell once criticized Henry Bergson for his abuse of metaphors and Russell defended himself asserting that he used such a great number of metaphors to prevent anyone of them to become a fixed reference to the object referred to. The same concept had been expressed by Freud. Qian Zhongshu concludes: “It is tempting to evaluate the ancient philosopher by this modern rationale: if we attribute to *Zhuangzi* the same intent, we might not be far off”.¹⁷²

Another clear example of the usage of quotations as a mirror to reflect and clarify concepts and ideas belonging to Chinese tradition and literature is the explanation of the rhetoric figure of synaesthesia that we find both in the essay *Tonggan* 通感 (Synaesthesia)¹⁷³ and in *Guan Zhui Bian*. In Chinese ancient poems synaesthesia is very often present, Qian states, and thanks to the elaboration and explanation of this rhetorical figure created by western criticism we are now able to see the point in linking a colour – reddish- with a name belonging to the sense of hearing – noise- in Chinese classical poetry as it is the case in lines like “*hongxing zhitou chunyi nao* 红杏枝头春意闹” (the noise of spring is on the reddish branches tips) in Song Qi 宋祁’s *Yu Lou Chun* 玉楼春¹⁷⁴ or in the famous poem by the poet Giovanni Pascoli (1855-1912) called *Il Gelsomino Notturmo* (Night jasmine) recalled both in *Tonggan* and in *Guan Zhui Bian*, which we will mention further on in the paragraph dedicated to the poet.¹⁷⁵ Quotations from Buddhist texts, as well as from *Liezi* and *Zhuangzi*, contain claims of the possibility to interchange the senses of perceptions, the same claims we

¹⁷² Ronald Egan, *Limited Views*, 138.

¹⁷³ Qian Zhongshu, “Tonggan”, in *Qi Zhui Ji*, (Beijing: Qian Zhongshu Ji, Sanlian Shudian, 2001), 62-76.

¹⁷⁴ Qian Zhongshu, “Tonggan” in *Qi Zhui Ji*, 62.

¹⁷⁵ See paragraph 5.2.1 “Pascoli”.

find in western authors like Shakespeare, Baudelaire and D'Annunzio. Thus, an eye set on western criticism gives a new perspective to the analysis of Chinese ancient classical texts as when in *Guan Zhui Bian* the "I" of the *Sang Zhong* 桑中 in the *Book of Songs* 毛诗 is explained like "nothing else than a rough copy of this kinds of roles", that is the role of the libertine, quoted as *l'homme à femme* from G.G.de Bévotte, in the *Don Juan* by Mozart. The libretto by Lorenzo da Ponte (1749-1838) from Mozart's *Don Juan* is quoted by Qian Zhongshu in footnote without translation in Chinese with two lines that tell how the libertine Don Juan had a notebook with a list of all the women he had conquered and the list was so long as to be called a catalogue (*catalogo*).¹⁷⁶

The mirror of western authors and works is also used to cast light upon an intrinsic particularity of Chinese literary critic as in the 1926 essay *Zhongguo gu you de wenxue piping de yi ge tedian* 中国固有的文学批评的一个特点¹⁷⁷ (An intrinsic particularity of Chinese literary critic). The essay wants to point to a peculiar aspect of Chinese literary criticism that has always been a distinguishing characteristic and that could be exportable to the western world: it is the humanization of written texts, that is, of speaking of literary texts as having flesh, bone and spirit.

In dealing with Chinese literary criticism, Qian Zhongshu presents a passage with an extensive amount of western quotations in English, Italian, Latin, Greek, French and German. An impressive *collage* of western terminology and sentences is the mirror in which Chinese literary criticism reflects itself. Quotations show that whenever western critics and writers have described written texts in terms of flesh and bones, they have never meant to ascribe to the written text the same flesh, blood and spirit that

¹⁷⁶ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 151.

¹⁷⁷ Qian Zhongshu, *Xie zai Rensheng Bianshang*, 116.

men possess. Instead, they have described those texts as having characteristics belonging to people like Cicero did with his *venustatem muliebrem, dignitatem virilem*,¹⁷⁸ or they have linked a distortion of the style to a peculiarity of human body, for example, Longinus saying that “writings should be like people’s body, they shouldn’t have swelling”.¹⁷⁹ Again, they have linked writings and human bodies in metaphors such as Ben Jonson: writings are *likened to a man*, they have *structure and stature, figure and feature, skin and coat* or Wordsworth: people use essays like a *dress* for thought.¹⁸⁰ According to western critics, spirit is attached to writings but they remain two different things. Chinese literary critical essays and other writings instead, are not “like having a soul”, they properly have it. Without the help of more than one hundred quotations and expressions from western literature in not more that twenty pages, Qian’s assumption would not have been so convincing and would not have had such a solid base to prove what he is stating. The great achievement of Qian Zhongshu’s method is that a large part of his statements is made up of a careful and well-founded dismantling of eventual counter-arguments to his thesis that confirm and reinforce his argument. While reflecting itself in the mirror of the words of some of the most influential critics and writers in the western literary canon, Chinese literature becomes aware of a distinguishing and substantial feature that has always “intrinsically” (*guyou*) characterized it. The starting point of the essays is that very often what is typically western is considered eastern and vice-versa. The witty example is the Pekinese dog called *yang gou* 洋狗

¹⁷⁸ Qian Zhongshu, *Xie zai Rensheng Bianshang*, 120. The quotation means: grace of women, dignity of men.

¹⁷⁹ Qian Zhongshu, *Xie zai Rensheng Bianshang*, 122. The Greek word quoted by Qian Zhongshu to mean “swelling” is “*όγκοι*”.

¹⁸⁰ Qian Zhongshu, *Xie zai Rensheng Bianshang*, 124.

(foreign dog) in China, and “Pekinese dog” in the west. What is considered a characteristic peculiar to just one place happens sometimes to be a motif in common with other places. Take for example the concept of *zhong 忠*, the loyal and superior loyalty without interests and implications that is usually considered a “typically Chinese conception”. This, remarks Qian, is not a “typically Chinese concept” since western criticism as well has discussed ideas that, like *zhong 忠*, have implications that surpass the literal meaning of the word and need a higher level of comprehension. Proof is offered through a quotation from Dante’s *Convivio* taken from an English translation of the Italian work.¹⁸¹ The quotation stays in Italian in Qian’s text and is about the “senso anagogico” that words may have. This anagogical meaning is one of the four meanings of words discussed in the *Convivio*, the others being the literal, allegorical and tropological ones, and this stands for the utmost level of comprehension of a meaning since it indicates the sense above the sense that raises the soul to the divine salvation. Not an easy concept, but exactly the same principle, states Qian Zhongshu, of the *Changzhou Ci Pai 常州词派*, the Changzhou School of Words.

Again starting from a comment on the *Quan Sanguo Wen 全三国文* in *Guan Zhui Bian*, the mirror of western literature explains and justifies the phenomenon of attributing a meaning to words according to their sound. The bat is a symbol of good omen in China, while in the west it is used to describe ominous beings like, in the *Divine Comedy*, Satan: “Sotto ciascuna uscivan due grandi ali, /quanto si convenia a tanto Uccello; /.../non avean penne, ma di vivistrello era lor modo”¹⁸² (Under each shot forth two

¹⁸¹ Qian Zhongshu, *Xie zai Rensheng Bianshang*, 117.

¹⁸² Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, III, 1679. Dante Alighieri, *La Commedia secondo l’antica vulgata*, 142..

mighty wings, /enormous as became A bird so vast. /.../ No plumes had they, But were in texture like a bat)¹⁸³ or in *Orlando Innamorato* by Matteo Maria Boiardo “il negromante Balisardo” (the necromancer Balisardo) who had huge bat wings, and his hands were sharp like a hook, his feet were like a goose’s and his legs like a bird’s, his tail was long as a monkey’s): “E l’ale grande avea di pipastrello, /E le mane agriffate come uncine, /Li piedi d’oca e le gambe de ocello, La coda lunga come un babuino”.¹⁸⁴ The fact that in China the bat is a good symbol is, then, only linked to the sound of the words as in Chinese *fu* 蝠, bat, sounds like *fu* 福, fortune. This is what happens with the Latin word *lepos*, beauty, similar to *lepus*, hare, that made ancient people believe that to eat hare helped beauty! This is the phenomenon that in English is called “verbal homeopathy”¹⁸⁵ and expressed in *Quan Sanguo Wen* by the sentence “ming sheng jian yi” 名声见异.

4.6 Quotations as a proof for truth: unveiling mistakes

The attitude of Qian Zhongshu in linking east and west is of not passively considering the two traditions praising one and criticizing the other. Nor his attitude is the one common in China at the beginning of the 20th century of using western scientific and technological expertise maintaining Chinese morals and customs. He considers the two different traditions pointing out their achievements and shortcomings as it happens,

“vivistrello” should be spelled “vispistrello”.

¹⁸³ Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy*, (The Harvard Classics. 1909), 14.

¹⁸⁴ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, III, 1679. See Matteo Maria Boiardo, *Orlando Innamorato* a cura di Aldo Scaglione, (Torino: Classici Italiani UTET, 1984), 532. “oncine” should be spelled “oncino”.

¹⁸⁵ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, III, 1680.

for example, with the lack of tragic commitment in Chinese tragic works when compared with their parallels in western tradition.¹⁸⁶

Sometimes this condemnation is not overt and clearly expressed and, as in many other cases already examined, other authors' quotations speak instead of the author.

In a particularly long entry in *Guan Zhui Bian*¹⁸⁷ the term of the debate is a discourse on "resonance" in art and literature. Xie He 谢赫 had written in the sixth century a treatise called *Gu Hua Pin* 古画品. This critical work enumerated at its very beginning six canons for painting. Xie He's "canons" have been known throughout the centuries through a quotation by Zhang Yanyuan 张彦远 (ninth century), a quotation that, due to a mistake in punctuation, completely missed the initial intents of Xie He. In the western translations that Qian Zhongshu had happened to see, he states that Herbert Giles, Raphael Petrucci, A.C. Coomaraswamy, O.Siren, had all misunderstood Xie He, considering him "as nonsensical as someone talking in his sleep". The mistake, proven by quotations from the Chinese as well as the western incorrect versions, is rectified by Qian Zhongshu's rendering of the canons through correct punctuation marks. More importantly, the meaning that had not been understood is here supported by quotations that come from French, English, Italian, Greek and German literatures that support and build a solid and indestructible foundation for Qian's theory and rectification of the mistake.

At the very beginning of *Guan Zhui Bian*,¹⁸⁸ and taken up in the second volume of the same work (*Guan Zhui Bian* II, 689), a fierce and nearly sarcastic critique is aimed at the German philosopher Hegel. In his

¹⁸⁶ See Qian Zhongshu, "Tragedy in Old Chinese Drama" in *A Collection of Qian Zhongshu's English Essays*, 53-65.

¹⁸⁷ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, IV, 2109-2113.

¹⁸⁸ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 1-2.

ignorance of the Chinese language, for which he should not be blamed, states Qian, Hegel maintained that German had words capable of expressing two opposite meanings and a semantic richness that even Latin could not reach, let alone a language like the Chinese one, which he considered unsuited for logical reasoning. To oppose this conception of the German philosopher, Qian replies using quotations from the *Analects*, *Mozi*, *Laozi* and many other Chinese classics. To offer further proof that his contradiction of Hegel has a foundation rooted not only in Chinese language but in other languages as well, Qian quotes from Heraclitus, Plotinus, St Augustine, Francis Ponge, Shelley, Wordsworth and Coleridge that, like in German, are able to convey different and contradictory meanings in just one single word. What Hegel is culpable of is to have seen a difference where there is a similarity, and to have based on this supposed difference a distance between eastern and western languages comparable to the long distance between horses and oxen on the northern and southern limits of the sea. This remark by Qian Zhongshu, and the counter-argument posed against Hegel's assertion, enhance studies on languages and give both east and west a further chance to appreciate differences and understand that they are a way to a mutual enrichment, not a way to despise and refuse what we rate as inferior only because we do not fully grasp the core of it. Through the criticism on Hegel and the demonstration that the concept he attributes to German language is also part of the Chinese language, Qian Zhongshu also demonstrates that in both the philosophical and linguistic contexts it is possible to have speculative philosophy and that comparison is possible.¹⁸⁹ In the second

¹⁸⁹ See Zhang Longxi, *Zhongxi jiaoji yu Qian Zhongshu de zhixue fangfa*, paper presented at the International Conference in Centennial Commemoration of Late Professor Qian

volume of *Guan Zhui Bian* the criticism on Hegel is discussed again with a further investigation of its meaning that, from a mere rectification, becomes construction of proofs for validation and pretext to build up comparisons and *datong*. The starting point is the statement in *Laozi* that every opposition ends up in affirmation. The word opposition, *fan* 反, has different and opposing meanings; if on one hand this contradicts Hegel affirming that Chinese words have no semantic richness, on the other hand confirms and validates his quoted statement that the negation of negation results in an affirmation and ends up in a circular movement. Laozi and Hegel, then, are on the same track and many other quotations from western authors (Blake, Plato, Plotino, Proclus and Meister Eckart) follow to reinforce Laozi and Hegel's initial statements. Dante is the one that opens the series of quotations with his lines from the XXV canto of the *Divine Comedy* "e fassi un'alma sola, /che vive e sente e sè in sè rigira"¹⁹⁰ (becomes one soul that lives and senses and revolves in itself) freely translated by Qian as "the chaos that revolves becomes soul and the same soul revolves in itself". More appropriately as for its literal meaning, we have: the revolving that goes back to its origin. The quotation is probably lacking the sense of opposition and contrast that Qian was trying to point out in all the other quotations of the entry.

As it happens with the philosopher Hegel, rectification and critic also lie behind the words directed to the English critic Herbert Read in *Tan Yi Lu*¹⁹¹ (Discourses on Art), where Qian calls the critical analysis made by the English critic a superficial one. Read had criticized the French priest

Zhongshu, College of Liberal Arts, National Central University in Jhong-Li, Taiwan, December 18-19, 2009.

¹⁹⁰ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, II, 691. See Dante Alighieri, *La Commedia secondo l'antica vulgata*, 249.

¹⁹¹ Qian Zhongshu. *Tan Yi Lu (buding ben)*, (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1984), p.268-271.

Henri Brémond for his supposed attribution to himself of the definition of *poésie pure* (pure poetry) and had made the examples of Shelley, Poe and Pater to sustain that it was a definition to be attributed to the Anglo-Americans. Qian proves with an incredibly high concentration of quotations¹⁹² that the same Brémond not only had never boasted the invention of the definition, but had referred to the Anglo-Americans in talking about *poésie pure* with many more examples than the three made by Read.

Through the words of the Italian critic Benedetto Croce, Qian operates another rectification (*buque* 补阙) to a theory considered too simplistic about literary creation expressed by the 3rd century writer and calligrapher Lu Ji 陆机 in his *Wen Fu* 文赋. Qian affirms that to rectify Lu Ji's mistake it is necessary to state a difference between the immediate or symptomatic expression *espressione immediata o sintomatica* and the poetic or spiritual expression *espressione poetica o spirituale*.¹⁹³

4.7 In others' words

Qian Zhongshu does not speak explicitly about the existing link between the content of his works and the contemporary historical setting, which is why this link often passes unnoticed. However, looking closely, his patriotism, humanitarianism and his anti-feudal ideas become known from his analysis of past events. In this analysis, it is true that his main

¹⁹² In the entry 88, whose first pages are about Brémond and la *poésie pure*, much more of half of each page is occupied by quotations and their authors' names; see: Qian Zhongshu, *Tan Yi Lu*, 268-271.

¹⁹³ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian* (2001), III, 1878. The immediate or symptomatic expression is only a potential expression while the poetic or spiritual expression is a knowing emotion through which poetry connects the particular to the universal. See Benedetto Croce, *La Poesia* (Bari: Laterza, 1966) 6-14.

intent is not to display his point of view on contemporary politics, but to correct partial and popular conceptions to get objective and correct ideas and theories. If we look at the treatment of the evaluation of Tang and Song poetry for example, Qian affirms that Tang and Song poetries are not only the product of two different dynasties as they are usually considered. They are first of all the expression of two different styles and two different literary genres that may not have precise historical demarcation. Tang poetry is outstanding for emotional sense, Song poetry for concrete and energetic ideas and it may well happen that Tang poets write in a style more typical of the Song, and vice versa. This point of view is reliable, new and revolutionary in a sense, and is a correction to the mistake of considering Tang poetry superior to the Song one.¹⁹⁴ We then see that thanks to quotations from Tang and especially Song poets, Qian attempts to rectify a contemporary wrong literary conception.

In the erudite “Foreword to the Prose-poetry of Su Tung Po”,¹⁹⁵ first published in 1935, in talking about the art of the Song, with an intriguing deep penetration in the critical spirit of the age, Qian writes:

The most annoying thing about them is perhaps their erudition and allusiveness, which make the enjoyment of them to a large extent the luxury of the initiated even among the Chinese (46)

The allusiveness here is the same that will characterize most of the prose of Qian Zhongshu up to the point of becoming a method of writing. We

¹⁹⁴ See Qu Wenjun, “Shilun Qian Zhongshu Datong de Siwei Moshi” in *Lilun Xuekan* (2) 1999, CNKI.

¹⁹⁵ Qian Zhongshu, “Foreword to the Prose-poetry of Su Tung.P’o” in *A collection of Qian Zhongshu’s English Essays* (Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 2005) 43-52.

may wonder if Qian imagined that the allusiveness of his work would have become the reason of a certain lack of popularity for his writings, and that various critics in China would even have found his style annoying for the excess of quotations and erudite allusions considering it a boastful method of writing.

In all likelihood, he was probably aware of it, and that the reason why he admired Song prose was also because of the style it adopted, and that among other millions of reasons he probably chose this method both because he wanted to demonstrate that quotations gave a solid structure to theories and assumptions, and because he wanted his writings to be intelligible only to those people who were able to understand its deep meaning.

That is why the two main characteristics of *Guan Zhui Bian* surprise the reader at first sight. Firstly, it has been written in *wenyanwen*, the classical language, even if the language in use at the time of its composition was the *baihua wen*, the modern language. Secondly, it quotes from seven different languages, with the obvious difficulties that derive for readers in understanding the words and grasping their meaning. To place the composition of this masterpiece in a historical period might help explain, at least partially, this double particular choice. *Guan Zhui Bian* was composed during the 1970s, during the Maoist Great Cultural Revolution, when writers had a rather difficult time and to express ideas that were not in full accordance with the ongoing political trend was something that could not be done light-heartedly. *Wenyanwen* and quotations in foreign languages were probably for Qian Zhongshu the code language he needed to shield himself from critiques and from the watchful eye of political control. They were the “others’ words” to express the author’s feelings.

Guan Zhui Bian bears many references to Cultural Revolution but at the same time Qian strongly condemned all those writers that made literature just a satellite of history or of politics, believing that literature was exactly as important as other disciplines and should have had its own independence. In breaking the borders among past and present Qian *Zhongshu*, even if in a veiled way, meant to use past in the present, without any grade of importance and predominance.

In the first book of *Guan Zhui Bian* we find an entry titled *Li Si Liezhuan* 李斯列传,¹⁹⁶ where the author uses Li Si's words to start his argument of condemnation of those who despise ideas and doctrines with the mere reason that they are foreign. Qian says that the *Memorial to the Qin Emperor* in which Li Si had brought forth this concept is known to many, but it has never been duly considered as the source of the idea that served in many other historical phases to defend foreign doctrines from the contempt of conservative people. There were two main periods in which Li Si's words served as a defence of foreigners, and these were the time when Buddhist doctrine entered China and was hampered by Confucians and the 19th century when the New Learning was refused by conservatives. Not only are passages by Chinese authors like Mu Rong, Li Shizheng, the monk Qi Song, Jiao Hong, Zhao Ming, Tan Sitong and others used as appendix and corroborating statements for Li Si's words, but also quotations from the Greek Philostratus or the German Goethe. These are meant to demonstrate that it would be silly and inconsistent not to use the wise suggestion of Li Si to avoid rejecting theories that come from outside China without any other reasoning than that they are foreign. The power of ideas and books that come from outside China's borders, and that are considered capable

¹⁹⁶ Qian *Zhongshu*, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 530-536.

of mastering people's mind, remarks Qian Zhongshu in an already mentioned entry in *Guan Zhui Bian*,¹⁹⁷ is something that even ministers of "cultural exchange" in modern times fear.¹⁹⁸

The words by Montaigne, Dickens, Giordano Bruno and Boiardo in the entry *Ji Ci* 藝辭 in the first volume of *Guan Zhui Bian*¹⁹⁹ also affirm that the time the author was living in was a difficult one and needed a great amount of caution. To step further and go forward, say the quotations from the four authors, it is first necessary to step back and have a temporary halt. To overcome obstacles sometimes it is necessary to pause and wait for times that are more favourable. The Chinese quotations that comment on the *Yijing* and the western quotations, says Qian Zhongshu, have a different form but a similar heart: to win with a counter-attack is first necessary to surrender and yield. The affirmation may easily be seen as an expression of Qian's state of mind.

¹⁹⁷ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, IV, 2090-2092.

¹⁹⁸ Ronald Egan, *Limited Views*, 383.

¹⁹⁹ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 86-87. Bruno's quotation "un fosso da passare, trapassando un fosso" is not directly translated and means "a ditch to cross, crossing a ditch". See Giordano Bruno, *Dialoghi Italiani*, (Firenze: Sansoni, 1985), 13; Boiardo's quotation follows and is in footnote: "al fin delle parole un salto piglia: / Vero è che indietro alquanto ebbe a tornare/A prender corso..." and could be rendered in "at the end of his speech he jumped: and he had to step back before to take a run-up"; See Matteo Maria Boiardo, *Orlando Innamorato* a cura di Aldo Scaglione, 494.

CHAPTER 5.

Italian quotations in Qian Zhongshu's works: a mutual illumination

In 1946, in one of his articles on the review *Philobiblon*,²⁰⁰ Qian Zhongshu states: "It is a pity that not many Chinese writers read Leopardi".²⁰¹ This was quite an unusual statement in a time when not many Italian authors and works were known in China.

Giuliano Bertuccioli, Italian scholar and sinologist, had the chance to meet Qian Zhongshu in 1985 at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, and affirmed later on that, together with Zhu Guanqian 朱光潜, they were the sole two Chinese authors to deal with Italian literature in a serious and competent way.

The role Qian Zhongshu ascribes to Italian literature is what this work is meant to investigate and it is considered not a marginal one. Given the importance Renaissance in particular, among the many other periods covered, has in Qian Zhongshu's choice of authors and works for quotations, the overall impression we get going through Qian's works is that quotations of Italian authors and works cover nearly one fifth of the total number. This percentage, which we get through a general analysis of Qian's work, is demonstrable in a specimen form from some information

²⁰⁰ *Philobiblon* is a review published by the Chinese National Central Library of the Nationalist capital of Nanjing from 1946 to 1948 for which Qian Zhongshu acted as main editor commuting from Shanghai.

²⁰¹ See Giuliano Bertuccioli "Qian Zhongshu: lo scrittore e lo studioso che si interessa alla nostra letteratura", *Mondo Cinese*, 1 (jan 1986- anno XIV).

we have about a work Qian never published, that would have complemented and clarified much of the method used in other works like *Guan Zhui Bian* or *Tan Yi Lu*. Information on this not published work come from Zhang Wenjiang,²⁰² who reports of a study by Qian Zhongshu on ten major western authors that would have been more filled with quotations even than *Guan Zhui Bian*. The book, called *Ganjue-Guannian-Sixiang* 感觉·观念·思想, “Feelings, Ideas, Ideologies”²⁰³ was meant to reflect on two Italian works, the *Divine Comedy* by Dante and the *Decameron* by Boccaccio, on two English works, the *Collection of plays* by Shakespeare and the *Paradise Lost* by Milton, on two French works, the *Essays* by Montaigne and another one not identified, two German works, the *Faust* by Goethe and another not identified and on two Spanish works, the *Don Quijote* and a not-identified second one. Zhang Wenjiang remarks then that the unavailability of *Ganjue-Guannian-Sixiang* accounts for the fact that all that we know about Qian’s quoted authors and about his preferences can be deduced only from an analysis of the main trends in *Guan Zhui Bian*. As for Italian literature, continues Zhang, we can notice that the authors Qian Zhongshu quotes most are Machiavelli and Leopardi.

5.1 From Dante to Leopardi: past theories into the present

Through the explanation and exemplification of Qian Zhongshu’s comparative method, it has become evident that the programmatic intent of his system is to melt and draw near ideas from different and distant

²⁰² Zhang Wenjiang, *Yingzao Babita de Zhizhe*, 85-102.

²⁰³ The name *Ganjue-Guannian-Sixiang* comes from the “Qian Zhongshu” entry in a dictionary of modern Chinese writers as confirmed in an e-mail from Professor Zhang Wenjiang sent in reply to mine on April 14th 2011 which may be found in appendix to the present work.

times and places. This aims at looking for and finding the threads of a global literature and a universal thought. The way in which Qian operates is not a casual and unruly one, and a twofold trend could be traced for analysis and further consideration. One of the directions in which his method moves is to use modern authors and their quotations to refer to past ideas, and this intent will be farther on discussed in the paragraph “From Pascoli to Eco: present ideas to shed light on the past”. “From Dante to Leopardi: past theories into the present” is here meant to illustrate the way in which quotations from authors of past centuries become the pretext to talk about the present and to discuss contemporary issues. From Dante, 13th century, to Leopardi, 19th century, the themes that Qian discusses, to name just a few, are debates about art and nature, the capacity of words or paintings to express the artists’ true feelings, the role of literature, the difficult and tricky relations between governors and subjects and the behaviour of governors, the use of torture, the role of metaphor and poetic imagery, the role of women in society opposed to that of men, the way in which historians leave imperfect testimonies of their times (and this has a direct influence on present views of past epochs and events), and the importance of money for people. Quotations from past authors shed their light on the present to help readers understand the inner reasons that, for example, make torture today a useless and cruel mean used by rulers to extract information or to punish their subjects²⁰⁴ (or citizens).

²⁰⁴ See paragraph “The light of reason: Vico, Muratori, Verri, Beccaria”.

5.1.1 Dante

Qian Zhongshu's quotations of Dante seem quite a tribute to the Italian poet (1265-1321) who is considered from the author a genius of world literature. We have the neat impression that Dante's quotations have the function of an invocation of authority for Qian, because when he quotes the Italian poet it is to give the reader a proof that what he is assuming has a solid foundation. One of the most evident examples is in *Tan Yi Lu* LXI, where Dante's assumptions follow in a sequence without translation in Chinese. Qian is affirming that in painting, as in poetry, the expression of the intended meaning is often impossible and it is blocked from the finiteness of expressive means. He says that Dante has proclaimed many times that words cannot capture the true meaning of concepts and ideas and the expressive effort does not directly follow the artist's intentions. In brackets follow Dante's words with the indication of the source texts that are *The Convivio* and *The Divine Comedy*: "L'altra ineffabilità" (the other ineffability); "cioè che la lingua non è di quello che l'intelletto vede, compiutamente seguace" (that is to say that language is not a perfect follower of what intellect can see); "che molte volte al fatto il dir vien meno"²⁰⁵ (that often language is not up to events); "chi poria mai pur con parole sciolte ecc."²⁰⁶ (who could ever be able even in prose etc.); "s'io avessi le rime aspre et chioce ecc."²⁰⁷ (could I command rough and hoarse rhymes etc); "nel ciel che più della sua luce prende ecc"²⁰⁸ (in Heaven that more of His light partakes); "trasumanar significar per verba non si

²⁰⁵ See Dante Alighieri, *La Commedia secondo l'antica vulgata*, 18.

²⁰⁶ See Dante Alighieri, *La Commedia secondo l'antica vulgata*, 116.

²⁰⁷ See Dante Alighieri, *La Commedia secondo l'antica vulgata*, 132.

²⁰⁸ See Dante Alighieri, *La Commedia secondo l'antica vulgata*, 286.

poria”²⁰⁹ (Words may not tell of that trans-human change); “vero è che, come forma non s’accorda /molte fiatae all’intenzion dell’arte /perchè a risponder la materia è sorda”²¹⁰ (it is true that often the form is not in accordance with the design of art, because matter fails to reply); “da quinci innanzi il mio veder fu maggio ecc”²¹¹ (from then on I was able to see more etc); “omai sarà più corta mia favella ecc”²¹² (my words will be shorter etc); “oh quanto è corto il dire e come fioco /al mio concetto! ecc”²¹³ (oh my words are so short and ineffective to what I would like to express! etc); “all’alta fantasia qui manco possa”²¹⁴ (to the fantasy that was short of power). Quotations are very accurate and all of them extremely pertinent to the theme discussed. One of the above quotations is even re-quoted some chapter later in an extension of the theme of the limits of language. Qian first talks about mystic poetry and about the process of creation. To produce poetry, poets have to abstract themselves from reality to see what other people cannot see. They have to reach a state of consciousness that is nearly an encounter with mystical entities. Qian quotes here extensively from western authors that prove that the mystic experience the poet has undergone in the process of creation is difficult to explain and even recollect. It is a state similar to being in a land of dreams, once awake the vision becomes confused, the remembrance is blurred and the words are insufficient to express what has just been experienced. Dante had a firm belief that the process of creation in poetry undergoes the just mentioned

²⁰⁹ See Dante Alighieri, *La Commedia secondo l’antica vulgata*, 288.

²¹⁰ See Dante Alighieri, *La Commedia secondo l’antica vulgata*, 289.

²¹¹ See Dante Alighieri, *La Commedia secondo l’antica vulgata*, 419.

²¹² See Dante Alighieri, *La Commedia secondo l’antica vulgata*, 420.

²¹³ See Dante Alighieri, *La Commedia secondo l’antica vulgata*, 421.

²¹⁴ Qian Zhongshu, *Tan Yi Lu*, 530. See Dante Alighieri, *La Commedia secondo l’antica vulgata*, 421. *manco* should be spelled *mancò*.

stages and the quotation is again from *Paradise XXXIII* and is the full quotation of a shorter passage already quoted in *Tan Yi Lu* (530):

“da quinci innanzi il mio veder fu maggio /che il parlar nostro ch’a tal vista cede, /e cede la memoria a tanto oltraggio. /Qual è colui che somniando vede, /che dopo il sogno la passione impressa /rimane, e l’altro alla mente non riede, /cotal son io, ché quasi tutta cessa /mia visione, ed ancor mi distilla /nel cor lo dolce che naque da essa”²¹⁵ (From that time forward what I saw was greater /than our discourse, that to such vision yields, /and yields the memory unto such excess. /Even as he is who seeth in a dream, /and after dreaming the imprinted passion /Remains, and to his mind the rest returns not, /even such am I, for almost utterly ceases /my vision, and distilleth yet /within my heart the sweetness born of it).²¹⁶

A similar intent of amplification have the similes of men that look as worms that become butterflies quoted from the *Purgatory* “non v’accorgete voi che noi siam vermi /nati a formar l’angelica farfalla”²¹⁷ (you are not aware that we are worms /born to create the heavenly butterfly) where Dante is quoted among the other western writers J. Dunlop, Coleridge, I. Disraeli, Santa Teresa de Jesus. All of them had expressed this same simile. Talking about another simile of life like a run towards death “ai vivi /del viver ch’è un correre alla morte”²¹⁸ (to the living /of life that is a run towards death), Dante’s quotation is accompanied by Seneca, Jorge Manrique, Henry King, Musset and F.H Bradley.

²¹⁵ Qian Zhongshu, *Tan Yi Lu*, 705. See Dante Alighieri, *La Commedia secondo l’antica vulgata*, 419.

²¹⁶ Translation in English in <http://www.online-literature.com/dante/paradiso/33/> last accessed on 22/03/2011.

²¹⁷ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, IV, 2219. See Dante Alighieri, *La Commedia secondo l’antica vulgata*, 186.

²¹⁸ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, IV, 2237-2238. See Dante Alighieri, *La Commedia secondo l’antica vulgata*, 282.

In the second entry commenting on *Laozi* 老子 in *Guan Zhui Bian*,²¹⁹ Dante and Croce are quoted to reinforce and comment on a passage which states that sometimes words are not able to express the meaning one would like to convey. The quotation, which comes from Dante's *Il Convivio* and reads: "Il parlare per lo quale dal pensiero è vinto"²²⁰ (Speech that is overpowered by thought), is not translated by Qian Zhongshu, who only writes about its meaning. As for Croce, he is mentioned in a footnote in reference to a quotation in German taken from his critical work *La Poesia*.²²¹ Croce and Dante, together with Metastasio, are quoted in another one of the entries commenting on literary creation, the role of the writer and the best way to convey poetic and literary meanings, and it is one of the longest entries of the third volume of *Guan Zhui Bian*, commenting on the already mentioned *Wen Fu* by Lu Ji.²²² We are already familiar with the idea that words can hardly convey an intended meaning, a further advancement of this concept is that after having tried to express an idea, the author enters in the world just created and it is difficult for him to distinguish between creation and reality. "Sogni e favole io fingo; e pure in carte /Mentre favole e sogni orno e disegno, /In lor, folle ch'io son, prendo tal parte /che del mal che inventai piango e mi sdegno"²²³ (Dreams and fables I fashion; and even if on paper /I sketch fables and dreams, /I so much participate in them like a mad man /that I cry and get angry for what I made up) are Metastasio's words to testify the author's immersion

²¹⁹ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, II, 632-641.

²²⁰ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, II, 637. See Dante. *Opere minori*, tomo I - parte II *Convivio*. A cura di Cesare Vasoli e Domenico De Robertis, (Milano-Napoli: Ricciardi 1988), 40.

²²¹ Ronald Egan, *Limited Views*, 262

²²² Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, III, 1862-1904.

²²³ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, III, 1877. See Pietro Metastasio, *Opere*, a cura di Mario Fubini, Milano- Napoli: Riccardo Ricciardi Editore, 36.

in the fictional world he has made up. It is, besides, necessary for a literary author, as it is for a painter, to be able to enter the created world and to act the part of the painted or described things to give it a feeling of truthfulness. "Poi chi pinge figura, /se non può esser lei, non la può porre"²²⁴ (Who paints needs to become the thing painted) affirms Dante a few lines later commenting on the opinion of Lu Ji who says that just to experience joy and sorrow is enough to write a piece of literature.²²⁵

It is also true that the result of the poetic creation needs not to be perfect and lyrical in every moment because only if there is plain there is a relief, and only with a lapse of seeming calm there can be an instant of violent emotion. "Senza il piano, non si può avere il rilievo; senza un periodo di apparente calma, non si può avere l'istante della commozione violenta"²²⁶ are Croce's words to comment on literary creation. The comment continues some lines later with the image of those plain lines as a wooden bridge to pass from one verdant bank to the other "quei versi sono un ponticello di legno per passare dall'una all'altra sponda verdeggiante".²²⁶

Following the discussion about art and nature in which Ludovico Antonio Muratori had been quoted as representative of the school that believed that art overcomes the beauty of nature, Dante is quoted in *Tan Yi Lu* XV to sustain this same idea with a verse from the *Paradise* of which Qian gives the reader an explanation more than a translation. The verse reads: "Ma la natura la dà sempre scema, /similmente operando all'artista /c'ha l'abito dell'arte e man che trema".²²⁷ Dante's meaning is expressed with a

²²⁴ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, III, 1878. See Dante Alighieri, *Opere minori*, tomo I - parte II *Convivio*, 60.

²²⁵ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, III, 1862-1878.

²²⁶ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, III, 1894. See Benedetto Croce, *Conversazioni Critiche* vol.1, (Bari: Laterza, 1950), 66.

²²⁷ Qian Zhongshu, *Tan Yi Lu*, 155. Dante Alighieri, *La Commedia secondo l'antica vulgata*, 336.

metaphor in which nature is compared to an artist that would like to create something in a certain way but has a trembling hand (man che trema) and cannot fully express himself. Nature, explains Qian, needs the help of man to rectify its expression and adjust it to the canons of beauty and art, which, in a quotation at the end of *Guan Zhui Bian* by Giordano Bruno, are considered everlasting and never changing, while nature changes and declines:

“Cossì, come là la pittura ed il ritratto nostro si contempla sempre medesimo, talmente qua non si vada cangiando e ricangiando la vital nostra complessione”²²⁸ (As in a painted portrait we always look the same, our aspect equally does not change again and again).

The quotation devoid of its context is not very clear in Italian, since it lacks the question mark that in the original text makes it a question addressed to Venus: “do you think” asks her a man, “that as in a portrait we do not change and become older?”.

At the nearly beginning of *Tan Yi Lu* Qian discusses about the senses of hearing and of sight, and quotes particularly passages from Chinese Song poetry in which it is the sense of hearing that supplies what view cannot help, or in which it is sight that helps itself. Dante, quoted at the beginning of the annotation as the first poet cited, describes in the *X canto* of the *Purgatory* an engraving into a rock of people chanting, and the sculpture results so vivid that he himself has the neat impression of hearing those people’s song. Qian translates Dante’s passage saying that “one sense said ‘no song can be heard’ and the other ‘yes, there is one’”. The Italian text

²²⁸ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, IV, 2370. “Cossì” should be spelled “così”, see Bruno, Giordano, *Opere di Giordano Bruno*, Lipsia: Weidmann, 1830, 128.

reads: "A due miei sensi /faceva dir l'uno 'No', l'altro 'si, canta'" (Purg.X. 59-60).²²⁹

The quotations about the contrast between sound and silence when admiring a painting inadvertently slide into other passages from Chinese poets and from the Greeks Homer and Philostratus, which discuss the contrast between colour and non-colour, between black and multicoloured. Qian wants here to reflect on the senses of view and hearing in paintings, in some paintings, we need the sense of hearing to supply and complete our visual understanding of a scene and we imagine hearing noises related to the scene. Other paintings, and these are the highest and more eloquent, are the ones that use only visual imagination to supply meanings not otherwise expressed, as the face of a negro painted in white chalk, the one described by Philostratus.²³⁰ Between the many quotations sustaining one theory or the other, Qian's opinion seems to praise the utmost result with the less expenditure of means, and this is considered a characteristic of Dante's poetics that Qian particularly admires.

Colours again are the topic in an entry commenting on the *Taiping Guangji* 太平广记 where many quotations convey the sense that very often poets create images in which similar colours are overlapped, to obtain highly poetic imagery. Among Shakespeare, Jules Renard, Alphonse Allais, we find Dante and Marino, both with lines that play on the image of white on white. Dante's quotation is from the third *canto* of the *Paradise*: "sì che perla in bianca fronte /non vien men tosto alle nostre pupille"²³¹ (that a pearl on a white forehead is not less easily distinguished by our eyes).

²²⁹ Qian Zhongshu, *Tan Yi Lu*, 28. See Dante Alighieri, *La Commedia secondo l'antica vulgata*, 134. *miei* should be spelled as *mie'*.

²³⁰ Qian Zhongshu, *Tan Yi Lu*, 30.

²³¹ See Dante Alighieri, *La Commedia secondo l'antica vulgata*, 294.

Similar in intents is Marino's²³² quotation "Ninfa mungitrice [...] ne distinguer sapea /il bianco umor da le sue mani intatte, /ch'altro non discernea che latte in latte"²³³ (A Nymph that while milking [...] was not able to distinguish in her hands the white liquid, /seeing nothing else than milk in milk).

The theme of sound and descriptions, in words this time rather than in paintings, is recalled in a quotation from Boiardo's *Orlando Innamorato* in *Guan Zhui Bian* where the portrayal of the sorceress Circe accounts for her face being so coloured as to suggest hearing her voice: "Era una giovanetta in ripa al mare, /sì vivamente in viso colorita, /che chi la vede, par che oda parlare."²³⁴ (She was a young woman on the shore so coloured in her face /that anyone that saw her had the impression of hearing words coming out of her mouth). Whenever suggestions of sounds come out from paintings and poems, those are considered by Qian evidences of a well-conceived piece of art.

In the essay *Du "Laaokong"* 读《拉奥孔》 (Reading "Laocoon") from the collection *Qi Zhui Ji Qian Zhongshu* notes that Lessing, the author of the *Laocoon*, particularly appreciates the great Italian poet Dante for his capacity to obtain great results with the least effort: "ottiene il maggiore effetto possibile coi minori mezzi possibili".²³⁵ The quotation is from Giuseppe Giusti (1809-1850) and his essay *On two lines of the Divine*

²³² For a detailed description of Marino's quotations see chapter 5.1.6 "Marinisti: Italian baroque poetry".

²³³ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, II, 1186-1187. Giovanbattista Marino, *Poesie Varie* a cura di Benedetto Croce, (Bari: Laterza, 1913), http://www.archive.org/stream/2poesievariecura00mariuft/2poesievariecura00mariuft_djvu.txt. Accessed December 10, 2011.

²³⁴ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, II, 696. See Matteo Maria Boiardo, *Orlando Innamorato* a cura di Aldo Scaglione, 95.

²³⁵ Qian Zhongshu, "Du 'Laaokong'", in *Qi Zhui Ji*, 51.

*Comedy*²³⁶ in which the author analyses two lines from two different *canti* of the *Divine Comedy*. Qian Zhongshu talks particularly of the line from the V *canto* of the *Hell* which narrates the story of the two lovers Paolo and Francesca: “Quel giorno più non vi leggemmo avante”²³⁷ (That day we did not read anymore): *Na yi tian women jiu bu du xiaqule* 那一天我们就不读下去了, translates Qian. Dante’s poetic economy creates the right situation to keep the reader interested and let him imagine a possible and natural conclusion to the story without telling anything explicitly. This narrative technique is defined a “cliché” (*laosheng changtan* 老生常谈) in *Guan Zhui Bian* and Dante again is quoted to give examples of it with the conclusion of the XXXIII *canto* of the *Purgatory* with a line that says “ma perchè piene son tutte le carte /ordite a questa cantica seconda, /non mi lascia più ir lo freno dell’arte”²³⁸ (But inasmuch /as full are all the leaves /Made ready for this second canticle /The curb of art no farther lets me go).²³⁹

As for the second line that Giusti tries to interpret and explain, it comes from the XXXIII *canto* of Dante’s *Hell* and Qian comes into it in *Guan Zhui Bian*. This time Qian does not comment on the formal aspect and the rhetorical function of Dante’s line, but inserts it as the last quotation in a chapter that discusses the relation between sorrow and eating. The quotation reads: “Poscia, più che ‘l dolor, potè il digiuno”²⁴⁰ (Fasting was

²³⁶ See Giuseppe Giusti, “Di due versi dell’Inferno in Scritti vari in prosa e in verso di Giuseppe Giusti, per la maggior parte inediti” in *Scritti Vari in Prosa e in Verso di Giuseppe Giusti per la Maggior Parte Inediti* (Firenze: Successori Le Monnier 1866), 235-241, and is not the one Qian Zhongshu read.

²³⁷ Qian Zhongshu, “Du ‘Laaokong’” in *Qi Zhui Ji*, 51. See Dante Alighieri, *La Commedia secondo l’antica vulgata*, 23.

²³⁸ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, II, 1136. See Dante Alighieri, *La Commedia secondo l’antica vulgata*, 284.

²³⁹ Dante, *Purgatorio*, from *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri* translated By Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Vol III (Leipzig Bernhard Tauchnitz, 1867) 139-141.

²⁴⁰ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 397. See Dante Alighieri, *La Commedia secondo l’antica vulgata*, 138.

more effective than sorrow) and wants to support the idea that whenever a person is in a sorrowful state of mind, even if common sense suggests not to eat, the body requires food. The instinct of eating is always stronger than the will of obeying to the convention of not eating because in a distressed state of mind.

Another theme discussed, supported by a quotation from Dante, is to mistake somebody else's image for one's own. This sounds the same as mistaking one's image for somebody else's, as demonstrated a few lines earlier by Qian and supported by Dante's quotation: "tali vid'io più face a parlar pronte, /perch'io dentro all'error contrario corsi /a quell ch'accese amor tra l'omo e il fonte".²⁴¹ This quotation in Qian's work presents great difficulties for not Italian speaking readers for a double reason, Dante's Italian is not a modern one and needs an understanding of the classical language and, most of all, Qian does not provide the translation of the quotation, but only the summing of its content and the source in footnote. Thus, the translation offered might be: "Such saw I many faces prompt to speak, /so that I ran in error opposite /to that which kindled love 'twixt man and fountain".²⁴²

Again in the second volume of *Guan Zhui Bian* we find a reference to Dante and one of the three kingdoms of his *Comedy* brought forth by quotations supporting two different points of view about ghosts and their second death. There are ghosts who can die and be dead forever (Liu Daoxi in *Taiping Guangji*) and ghosts that would like to die, but are deemed to live forever. This second motif is supported by quotations by

²⁴¹ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, II, 1196-1197. See Dante Alighieri, *La Commedia secondo l'antica vulgata*, 294.

²⁴² Dante, *Purgatorio*, *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri*, III, 139-141.

Dante and his verse from *Hell*: “che la seconda morte ciascun grida”²⁴³ (each one crying out for his second death)²⁴⁴ and Ariosto who has the sorcerer Alcina complaining: “e per dar fine a tanto aspro martire, /spesso si duol di non poter morire. /Morir non puote alcuna fata mai”²⁴⁵ (to end such a bitter martyrdom, /often complaining because it is impossible to die. /No fairy can ever die) quoted by Qian Zhongshu in the source language without the Chinese translation. Dante’s trip to the supernatural world is often connected to the *Taiping Guangji*: both have ghosts and dead or mysterious souls as their preferential subjects and those characters happen to share, in the two works’ imagery, the same characteristics as the one of not having a shade and of being made of immaterial substance. Dante, in the *Purgatory*, is the only living being and the dead souls surrounding him find it out because his body interrupts the rays of the sun, creating a shade: “il lume che era rotto” (the light that was blocked), quotes Qian in footnote in *Guan Zhui Bian* or “fai di te parete al sol” (you make yourself a shield to the sun).²⁴⁶

A study on differences, and not only of striking similarities, is the parallel stated between a novel in the *Taiping Guangji*, the *Dongyang Yeguai Lu* 东阳夜怪录 (Notes on the Night Ghost) with Dante’s *Paradise* and San Francesco’s *Il Cantico delle Creature* (Canticle of Creatures). San Francesco (1182-1226) is one of the main figures of Catholic hagiography and his works, whose nearly totality was dictated by the saint to his disciples, has gained him a solid place among medieval authors. The reference is to the expressions of family relationships through natural elements as the moon,

²⁴³ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, II, 1242. See Dante Alighieri, *La Commedia secondo l’antica vulgata*, 6.

²⁴⁴ Dante, *Inferno*, from *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri*, I, 117.

²⁴⁵ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, II, 1242. See Ludovico Ariosto, *Orlando furioso*, 135.

²⁴⁶ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, II, 1154. See Dante Alighieri, *La Commedia secondo l’antica vulgata*, 162 and 251.

the sun, the earth, the wind and the fire. If in the Chinese novel whirling snow represents the role of the father and the bamboo resonating in the wind is linked to a gentleman, there's nothing strange in San Francesco's calling sister the moon, brother the wind, sister the water and brother the fire "sora luna, frate vento, so'acqua, frate focu"²⁴⁷. The strange thing, curious and bizarre according to Qian, is to have called the earth both sister and mother "sora nostra matre terra"²⁴⁸ as in the saint's words, and even stranger is what Dante writes in his *Paradise* where Holy Mary is called virgin mother, daughter of her son, both humble and high more than anybody else "Vergine madre, figlia del tuo figlio, /umile ed alta più che creatura".²⁴⁹ The words of the French Edgar Morin seem to offer a new explanation. He states that in the concept of nation, the maternal and the paternal are mixed together, as in the expression "mere-patrie" (motherland-fatherland) and this words might, for Qian Zhongshu, come as well from an old explanation, the ancient Chinese sayings *fumuguo* 父母国 and *fumuzhibang* 父母之邦, precisely "country of mother and father". The oddity of San Francesco and of Dante's "new" expressions that mix more than one family relationship in one sole character, are here reconciled and explained through ancient Chinese terms.

An ancient Chinese image is this time "illuminated" through a quotation from the medieval Dante when the view of the earth as small, commenting on the *Hua Shan Fu* 花山赋 (The *fu* of Mount Hua) by Yang Jing 楊敬 in the *Quan Tang Wen* 全唐文, is lead forth to Dante's description in the *Paradise* which says: "col viso ritornai per tutte quante /le sette spere, e vidi questo

²⁴⁷ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, II, 1367. See San Francesco d'Assisi, *Cantico delle Creature*, http://www.liberliber.it/mediateca/libri/f/francesco_d_assisi/il_cantico_di_frate_sole/pdf/il_can_p.pdf, 3. Accessed December 10, 2011.

²⁴⁸ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, II, 1367.

²⁴⁹ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, II, 1367. See Dante Alighieri, *La Commedia secondo l'antica vulgata*, 418.

globo /tal ch'io sorrisi del suo vil sembiante;²⁵⁰ L'aiuola che ci fa tanto feroci" (I turned my face on the /seven spheres, and I saw this globe /I smiled for its vile aspect; the small garden that makes us so fierce). Other western quotations follow on the same theme: Milton, Middleton and D.G. Rossetti at the end of the entry. Invocation of authority seems to be, again, the usual function of Dante's quotations.

5.1.2 Petrarca

After Dante, Francesco Petrarca (1304-1374) is one of the most meaningful Italian poets between 13th and 14th century. His importance is attributable particularly to the development of Italian vernacular poetry and to the development of prosody rules. He is the author of the *Rime* (Rhymes), important collection of poems and source whence Qian draws material when discussing about metaphor. As it happens with other poets, figures of speech are precisely what interest most Qian Zhongshu and what he likes to examine and quote in Petrarca's verse. Petrarca, like Marino, an author we will examine further on, is the beginner of a poetic school, the *Petrarchismo*, a sentimental school whose poems Qian compares in *Guan Zhui Bian* with the Chinese odes (*pianshi* 篇什). *Petrarchismo's* poems, remarks Qian, bear nevertheless some differences compared to the Chinese odes. When talking about the relation between love and sleep, for example, the Italians say that poets loose sleep when sad for love reasons. In loosing sleep, they also loose the possibility to meet their loved one in their dreams. The two poetic schools are, on the other side, similar when they say that meeting the loved one in dreams causes a great

²⁵⁰ See Dante Alighieri, *La Commedia secondo l'antica vulgata*, 374.

disappointment on the waking up.²⁵¹ The amount of quotations from Petrarca, one of the greatest Italian poets, is scanty up to the point that in a whole volume of *Guan Zhi Bian* we may happen to find one sole quotation from his work exactly as other poets considered from literary criticism “minor” poets. This is the proof that Qian Zhongshu did not establish any hierarchy among literary authors. Marginal, or considered so, authors and works, provided they were remarkable for stylistic and content characteristics deemed relevant by Qian, were exactly as important as those literary geniuses like Dante or Homer. We happen to find quotations from poets, great ones like Petrarca or minor like the Marinisti poets, particularly when Qian reflects on the figure of metaphor, as in the annex to the XXV chapter of *Guan Zhui Bian* where two lines, not translated, are from two of Petrarca’s poems, the 129 and the 219, and are metaphors about the light of the sun, of the moon and of the stars. Petrarca is here quoted together with both Chinese and western authors. The quotations are: “come le stelle, che’l sol copre col raggio” (like the stars that are covered by the rays of the sun) and “Il sole far sparir le stelle e Laura il sole” (sun makes stars disappear and Laura does the same to sun).²⁵² Qian Zhongshu is bringing examples to prove that when there are two or more bright bodies, the more luminous one ends up always obscuring the less bright one. The same theme is the one exploited in *Guan Zhui Bian* through a quotation from the Italian poet Trilussa (1871-1950), famous for his poems using the dialect of Rome. The glow-worm here laments with the cricket that the moon is too bright and obscures its smaller light. The eight lines poem is all quoted in Qian’s text, but while the first four lines are

²⁵¹ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, III, 1653.

²⁵² Qian Zhongshu, *Tan Yi Lu*, 225. See Francesco Petrarca, *Rime*, (Pisa: Tipografia della Società Letteraria, 1805), 189.

directly reported in the Chinese translation, the last four are quoted in Italian, right after their translation:

“Lucciola, forse, nun ha torto /se chiede ar Grillo: -Che maniera è questa? /un pò va bè: però stanotte esagera! - /E smorza el lume in segno di protesta”²⁵³ (The glow-worm maybe is right /if it laments with the cricket: - This is not the way /a little bit might be fine: tonight it is too much though! - /and turns out its light to protest).

It is surprising and praiseworthy the quotation in a contemporary Italian dialect commenting on *Zhuangzi* with a startling and witty effect. As it often happens with quotations from minor poets, or simply with poets less quoted in Qian’s works, as it is the case with Trilussa, this quotation comes from a text of literary critic: *Scrittori D’Oggi* (Today’s writers) by Pietro Pancrazi (1893-1952). A farther advancement of the theme is in *Guan Zhui Bian* where Dante is quoted to explain that the same luminous body may end up obscuring itself:

“e col suo lume sè medesimo cela; Sì come il sol, che si cela egli stessi /per troppa luce; che mi raggia dintorno, e mi nascon de /quasi animal di sua seta fasciato”²⁵⁴ (and with his light hides himself; Like the sun that hides itself /with too much light; that irradiates around me /like a worm wrapped in silk).

The politicians, warns Qian right before the quotation, do exactly as Dante in his *Purgatory* and *Paradise* describes, they wrap themselves with too much glory, as the silkworm does with silk threads and the sun with his irradiating light, and disguise their same features and real appearance.

²⁵³ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, IV, 1974. See Trilussa, *Tutte le Poesie*, (Milano: Mondadori, 1963), 30.

²⁵⁴ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, II, 904. See Dante Alighieri, *La Commedia secondo l’antica vulgata*, 244; 305; 315. The correct spelling of the last quotation is “che mi raggia d’intorno, e mi nasconde /quasi animal di sua seta fasciato”.

Qian clarifies in footnote that the silkworms mentioned by Dante were raised in Italy after Marco Polo introduced them from China, even if their eggs had arrived in Rome in the 6th century.

The concept gives way to what may seem a contradiction; a person that wants to be important and covered with glory often ends up being hidden by the same glory. Far from being an incongruity, this process is described by Benedetto Croce in his *Estetica*, and is quoted in footnote: “Lo stesso principio di contraddizione non è altro, in fondo, che il principio estetico della coerenza”²⁵⁵ (The same principle of contradiction is nothing else than the aesthetic principle of coherence). Nothing strange then, if an arrogant and immoderate behaviour leads to a result that is the opposite of the one aimed at. The thread that brought us here from Petrarca’s poems might seem long and tangled, but the striking combination obtained is probably what Qian might have aimed at in composing *Guan Zhui Bian*.

Silkworms appear again in a comment on a line from the *Jiuzhang* 九章 (Nine chapters) of the *Chu Ci* 楚辞 (Songs of Chu) that speaks of “an heart blocked and tied that does not understand, a thought obstructed that is not released”.²⁵⁶ The same feelings, of an heart tied as with a knot and of the thought as a flowing stream that, obstructed, cannot flow freely, is expressed, among the westerners, by Dante, Montaigne, Goethe, Tasso, Shakespeare, Webster, Petrarca. Petrarca had written in his *Rhymes* “Nè per suo mi riten nè scioglie il laccio”²⁵⁷ (She neither retains me as hers, nor she unties the lace), Dante’s quotations are “la tua mente ristretta di

²⁵⁵ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, II, 905. “contradizione” should be spelled “contraddizione”.

²⁵⁶ See Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, II, 940.

²⁵⁷ See Francesco Petrarca, *Rime di Francesco Petrarca*, con l'interpretazione di Giacomo Leopardi e con note inedite di Francesco Ambrosoli, (Firenze: G. Barbera editore, 1886), 116.

pensier in pensier dentro ad un nodo” (your mind with its thoughts tied in a knot) and “della mente il fiume”²⁵⁸ (the stream of mind).

Poets, concludes Qian after the sequence of quotations, have a spirit of observation that greatly overcomes the one of scholars.

5.1.3 Italian tales: Boccaccio, Franco Sacchetti, Basile, Bandello

As Kong Fangqing 孔芳卿 reports²⁵⁹ in his account of Qian’s speech in Japan in 1980 as part of a delegation from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Qian affirmed that during the previous years he had been reading a lot of Italian short stories from the 16th and 17th century, finding their style extremely similar to the one of Chinese anecdote short stories. One of the examples Qian advanced in his speech was Franco Sacchetti’s *Il Trecentonovelle* (Three-hundred short stories). Sacchetti (1332-1400) was considered by Qian one of the greatest Italian novelists and is often quoted especially when Qian is dealing with imagery, figures of speech or literary images. In *Guan Zhui Bian* his main work *Il Trecentonovelle* is quoted with the literary figure, quoted also from other Chinese and western authors like Petronius, Thomas Nashe, Cervantes, of meat dishes made by animals stuffed with other animals. The example from Sacchetti is the one of a goose stuffed with larks and other fat birds: “una oca piena d’allodole e d’altri uccelletti grassi”.²⁶⁰

One of the figures Qian analyses more than one time is the one of fruit crying like human beings, and one of the quotations among many from

²⁵⁸ See Dante Alighieri, *La Commedia secondo l’antica vulgata*, 311; 197.

²⁵⁹ See Kong Fangqing, “Qian Zhongshu Jingdu Zuotan Ji”, in Yang Lianfen, ed., *Qian Zhongshu Pingshuo Qishi Nian*, 82-83.

²⁶⁰ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, II, 1158. See Franco Sacchetti, *Il Trecentonovelle*, Roma: Einaudi editore 1970, 225.

the Marinisti poets in *Tan Yi Lu XI* is from Franco Sacchetti and his *Il Trecentonovelle*²⁶¹. This time the brief quotation is translated and Qian recalls that in Sacchetti's work there is a boy that believes that figs have tears "avevano la lagrime" and that before picking a fig to eat it, the boy thus spoke: "Non pianger, no"²⁶² (don't cry, don't). This, concludes Qian, is a true metaphor even if there is a little exaggeration. The implication of the many metaphors brought as examples of this simile in these pages, is the belief for Qian of their importance. All the quotations aim at demonstrating that metaphor is an effective rhetoric device, which Qian affirms to be the basis, or a peculiar characteristic, of literary language.²⁶³ Other quotations in *Guan Zhui Bian* come from *Il Trecentonovelle*. A quotation from Sacchetti is for example in footnote and reads: "Il tradimento mi piace, ma il traditore no"²⁶⁴ (I like treachery but not the traitor), and is in accordance with a sentence from Plutarch's *Lives* that says "he loved treachery but hated traitors". Another quotation is in the entry about different perceptions in wake and sleep. In it a man is said to be dreaming to be surrounded by gold and coins "era fra oro e moneta" but on the waking up in the morning he finds out to be covered by cat's excrements "e la mattina si coperse di sterco di gatta".²⁶⁵ Apart from similes, whenever Qian draws from Italian novelists, the other aspect of their language that attracts his attention is the rich use of common sayings and of proverbs. We find it, for example, in the comment on the *Yilin* 易林 in *Guan Zhui Bian* where the only western quotation in the paragraph is a

²⁶¹ A very precise reference is given about the *Trecentonovelle* with edition and page number.

²⁶² Qian Zhongshu, *Tan Yi Lu*, 137. See Franco Sacchetti, *Il Trecentonovelle*, 130.

²⁶³ Chen Ziqian, *Lun Qian Zhongshu*, 38.

²⁶⁴ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 547. See Franco Sacchetti, *Il Trecentonovelle*, 9.

²⁶⁵ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, II, 759. See Franco Sacchetti, *Il Trecentonovelle*, 199.

proverb from *Il Trecentonovelle* “egli avessono preso un cane per la coda”²⁶⁶ (as if they had taken a dog from its tail). Proverbs and common sayings are, in fact, a characteristic of the style of 15th century short story writers, and constitute an aspect of figurative language that attracts Qian’s attention because it is part of that substratum of universal conceptions and knowledge that comes from popular wisdom through which a global literature is possible. Other proverbs are used to explain hexagrams from the *Yilin* 易林, as the one quoted farther on from Dante that says “tra male gatte era venuto il sorcio”²⁶⁷ (among bad cats the mouse had come) to comment on the hexagram *dun* 遁 and the comment on the hexagram *cui* 萃 that uses a proverb from the already quoted *Dizionario dei Proverbi* by A.Arthaber to say that: “tante volte al pozzo va la secchia, /ch’ella vi lascia il manico o l’orecchia”²⁶⁸ (The bucket that goes many times inside the well sooner or later loses in it a handle or other small parts).

The quotations from Giambattista Basile are often connected with metaphors through all of Qian’s works. In one of *Guan Zhui Bian*’s commentaries on the *Shi Jing* 史经 (Classic of History), Qian brings many quotations²⁶⁹ as examples of living beings functioning as coffins. We have the whale with the Prophet Jonah in its belly, as reported in *Leucippe and Clitophon* by Achilles Tatius; the wolves eating men in *Lauda delle Malattie* (Laud of Illnesses) by Jacopone da Todi (1233-1306) (Elegome en sepultura/ Ventre de lupo en voratura ²⁷⁰ - Choose for my burial, The belly

²⁶⁶ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, II, 824. See Franco Sacchetti, *Il Trecentonovelle*, 191.

²⁶⁷ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, II, 870. See Dante Alighieri, *La Commedia secondo l’antica vulgata*, 90. *sorcio* should be spelled as *sorco*.

²⁶⁸ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, II, 879.

²⁶⁹ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 604-605.

²⁷⁰ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 604.

of a wolf who shall devour me);²⁷¹ Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* (nè chi sepolcro dia /se forse in ventre lor non me lo danno i lupi – nobody who will bury me, if not for wolves who will maybe give me a burial in their belly)²⁷²; people eating people as in C.Lamb and E. Goudeau; a person being the burial of himself in Milton's *Samson Agonistes* or a pan and a belly as respectively coffin and burial, as in Basile's *Il Pentamerone* (ti sarà cataletto una padella e sepoltura un ventre ²⁷³ – A pan will be your coffin and a belly your burial). All of these images are the counterpart to the initial commented quotation about You Meng, a famous and clever actor who used to play tricks on the king of the state of Chu during the Spring and Autumn period. He convinced his king, who cherished his horse more than anything else in life, not to hold a funeral for his horse as he intended to do by advising him to do the contrary: to hold a funeral like the one of a king. He thus operates a *reductio ad absurdum* or apagoge,²⁷⁴ a syllogistic method for which the truthfulness of a thesis is proved by demonstrating the falsity of consequences of the contrary thesis.

At the very beginning of the *annex* that follows, there is another non-translated quotation by Basile and his *Il Pentamerone* in the edition translated by the critic Benedetto Croce. It reads: “alcuni fichi freschi, chi con la veste di pezzente, il collo d'impiccato e le lacrime di meretrice”²⁷⁵ (fresh figs, with beggar clothes, hanged men's necks and whores' tears) and it is, in Qian's words, a pertinent remark and another example of figs having tears like whores. A quotation that in a very brief entry in *Guan Zhui Bian* acts as a counterpart to the comment on the *sui* 隨 hexagram of

²⁷¹ Translated from Italian by Joan M Bruce-Chwatt in *British Medical Journal* Vol. 285, Dec 1982, 1803, 18-25.

²⁷² Ludovico Ariosto, *Orlando furioso*, 130.

²⁷³ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 605.

²⁷⁴ See Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian* (Zhonghua Shuju) I-56, 694-698.

²⁷⁵ Qian Zhongshu, *Tan Yi Lu*, 137.

the *Yilin* 易林 is from the introduction to the *Pentamerone* by Croce. It presents the image of a monkey with clothes that are an undue and inappropriate component indeed, “si sa che la scimmia, per calzarsi gli stivali, restò presa pel piede”²⁷⁶ (it is known that the monkey that wanted to wear boots had its foot trapped). This is exactly the same image, remarks Qian in concluding the entry, that we find in *Taiping Guangji* where the orang-utan was caught when trying to wear its clogs.

The other quotation from the *Pentamerone* by Basile taken from the eighth tale of the fourth day is not only translated but even explained. No reference to the source text is given here, and we do not know if the edition Qian consulted is the same from the previous quotations, but assume so. This time “time” is the topic and its circularity is proclaimed and proved with many quotations from western literature (Tieck, Dryden, Shelley, Basile, Marino) that compare the circularity and infinity of time to a snake biting its tail. Basile’s quotation reads “dove vedrai un serpente che morde la coda, un cervo e un fenice”²⁷⁷ (where you will see a snake biting its tail, a deer and a phoenix). Qian explains that the deer has a quick pace and represents time that flies, the phoenix, once it is dead, rises again like the continuous alternation between sun and moon, day and night, and the snake biting its tail is the symbol of a non-beginning and non-end.

Another image taken from the *Pentamerone* by Giambattista Basile is the one of the good females that never smile represented by three quotations in a chapter that comments on the *Shi Ji* 史记. The quotations are not

²⁷⁶ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, II, 863.

²⁷⁷ Qian Zhongshu, *Tan Yi Lu*, 281. “Un fenice” should be spelled “una fenice” for the feminine concordance between article and noun.

translated in Chinese and, as usual, have a very precise bibliographic reference even if two of them bear spelling mistakes:²⁷⁸

“Zoza mai non si vedeva ridere; non c’era ricordo che fin allora [Vastolla] aveva mai riso; per lo spazio de sette anni continui [Milla] non si era più veduta ridere”²⁷⁹ (Zoza was never seen laughing; There was no remembrance of Vastolla laughing; for seven continuous years nobody had seen Milla laughing).²⁸⁰

The intent of the 27th entry that comments the *Taiping Guangji* is to point out large scale similarities and small variations of the same theme and to incite scholars fond of culture comparative studies to study the differences between European themes and Chinese counterparts.²⁸¹ In this entry, the author points at striking similarities like the one of a Buddhist story that narrates of a person that mistakes another person’s reflection in a pond for one’s own and the author finds the same subject in a story by Giambattista Basile. Qian reports it in the text quoting names in the source language (“la schiava nera”, Italian for “the black slave”) and even reporting a whole sentence: “Quale vedere, Lucia sfortunata, ti così bella stare, e patruna mandare acqua a pigliare; e mi sta cosa tollerare, o Lucia sfortunata”²⁸² (What see, poor Lucia, you so pretty and mistress sends you water fetch. Poor Lucia, me not stand it longer). The English translation here presented by Ronald Egan tries to render the language poor of grammar of the Italian sentence pronounced by the slave.

²⁷⁸ The right quotations are: “Zoza mai non si vedeva ridere; non c’era ricordo che fin allora [Vastolla] avessa mai riso; per lo spazio de sette anni continui [Milla] non si era più veduta ridere”.

²⁷⁹ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 420.

²⁸⁰ For a comment on this see: Zhang Wenjiang, *Guan Zhui Bian Dujie, Cengdingben* (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 2005), 101-102.

²⁸¹ Ronald Egan, *Limited Views*, 183.

²⁸² Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, II, 1196.

The last piece of essay of Qian Zhongshu's collection of seven patches *Qi Zhui Ji* is *Yi Jie Lishi Zhanggu*, *Yi Ge Zongjiao Yuyan*, *Yi Pian Xiaoshuo* and it is the one in which Italian literature is most massively present. A whole short story from the Italian novelist Matteo Bandello (1485-1561) is entirely translated by Qian as the short story, the *xiaoshuo* 小说, of the title. Bandello is an Italian novelist of the 16th century whom Qian Zhongshu points at as the third, after Boccaccio (1313-1375) and Sacchetti, Italian greatest novelist of Boccaccio's School. His tale is the nearly exact reproduction of one of the episodes that the Greek historian Herodotus narrates in the work *Histories*, and it represents the *lishi zhanggu* 历史掌故 of the title. Bandello's tale, being a piece of fiction and not an historical account, is much more adorned and full of narrative colours, even if, Qian writes in a footnote, Ser Giovanni Fiorentino (14th century), other Italian novelist, in his *Il Pecorone* adds even more details to the same historical episode.²⁸³ Herodotus' narration is one in which the author is quite apart from the content and wants to unload himself of all responsibilities about the truthfulness of what has been said. In both cases, the two authors use a formula meaning that what has been narrated is quite abnormal, and the reader has the full right not to believe it. Qian finds the same behaviour in Ariosto's and Boiardo's *Orlando Furioso* and *Orlando Innamorato*.

The excursus in Italian short-story writing makes Qian Zhongshu quote one of the more translated and renowned author in China: Italo Calvino (1923-1985) and two of his short stories whose theme, inheritance, is the same as Bandello's tale.

We find another example of this same rhetoric device at the end of the second volume of *Guan Zhui Bian* where the Greek Lucian, and then

²⁸³ Qian Zhongshu, "Yi jie lishi zhanggu, yi ge zongjiao yuyan, yi pian xiaoshuo" in *Qi Zhui Ji*, 182.

Dante, Boccaccio, Lewis Carroll and Shakespeare are all quoted with expressions in their works through which they want to inform the reader that something unbelievable and marvellous is going to enter the narration. Dante's lines, from the *Hell*, say "Sempre a quel ver c'ha faccia di menzogna /...ma qui tacer uol posso; e vidi cosa, ch'io avrei paura, /sanza più prova, di contarla solo"²⁸⁴ (always with that truthfulness that seems falsehood /...but here I cannot hold my tongue; I saw something I would fear /to tell if I had not any proof);

Boccaccio's sentence reads:

"il che se dagli occhi di molti e dai miei non fosse veduto, appena che io ardissi di crederlo"²⁸⁵ (if this had not been seen by many eyes and by myself I would hardly believe it).

The conclusion of the above mentioned essay about literary narration is that all these foreign writers have more or less paid attention to the historical truth and to the creation of a "not-me", a *fei wo* 非我 literary character on which authors can unload responsibilities when what they narrate has a doubtful literary or historical value.

What Qian notes in the *Shengjing* 生经 instead, a Buddhist work that stays for the religious parable, *zongjiao yuyan* 宗教寓言 of the title, and in other Buddhist works, is that they are boring and often far away from whatsoever feeling of truthfulness, which makes them not appealing to the reader. They do not state, in Qian's opinion, the right distance between reality and fantasy, mixing the two realms with the result of being very unreliable, both as fiction stories and as true accounts of facts.

²⁸⁴ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, II, 1344. See Dante Alighieri, *La Commedia secondo l'antica vulgata*, 68. "uol" should be spelled as "nol".

²⁸⁵ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, II, 1344. See Giovanni Boccaccio, *Decameron*, a cura di Vittore Branca; correzioni di Natalino Sapegno, (Firenze: Le Monnier, 1951), 26.

Qian quotes Bandello also in *Tan Yi Lu* where, in an excursus on authors that have written about war and military practice, he is quoted while writing about the Italian Renaissance author Niccolò Machiavelli. Machiavelli had written a treatise on the art of war, *Dell'arte della Guerra* and in Bandello's tale²⁸⁶ he is made fun of because notwithstanding his authorship of the treatise, he is not able to apply its contents in real situations. The quotation reads:

“Messer Niccolò quel dì ci tenne al sole più di due ore a bada per ordinare tre mila fanti secondo quell'ordine che aveva scritto, e mai non gli venne fatto di potergli ordinare”²⁸⁷ (That day Sir Machiavelli made us stand in the sun for more than two hours to draw more than three thousand infantrymen in the order he had arranged on paper, and he never succeeded in doing it).

A name for this kind of military generals that can discuss strategies but cannot apply them is offered by G.Giusti who calls them “strateghi da caffè”²⁸⁸ (coffee shop strategists).

Again Bandello and Boccaccio we find in *Tan Yi Lu* XXXIX where Qian discusses the ugliness of imitation. Boccaccio's quotation from the *Decameron* is preceded by the Chinese translation by Qian Zhongshu, while Bandello's, being only a corollary to Boccaccio's quotation, is only cited in Italian with all the relevant references to the source text. It reads: “il suo viso teneva un poco di quelli di Baronzi”²⁸⁹ (her face had something similar

²⁸⁶ From “Il Bandello al molto illustre e valoroso signore il Signor Giovanni de Medici” in *Le novelle*: edit. Gioacchino Brognoligo (Bari: G.Laterza, 1910).

²⁸⁷ Qian Zhongshu, *Tan Yi Lu*, 337.

²⁸⁸ Qian Zhongshu, *Tan Yi Lu*, 338.

²⁸⁹ Qian Zhongshu, *Tan Yi Lu*, 346. See Matteo Bandello, *Novelle*, parte seconda, (Milano: per Giovanni Silvestri, 1813), 336.

to the Baronzi's, i.e. she was ugly). The Baronzi are a family in the medieval Florence of which Boccaccio's novel relates like one of the most ancient families and, being an old stock, they had been made by God when he had not yet learned well how to paint, so they were quite ugly, but old and gentle.

A little bit farther goes Qian Zhongshu in the analysis of imagery and poetic language when recalling Boccaccio in his *Decameron* and the woman that, making fun of her lover who had spent the whole night out for her, asked him if the fire he always said to have in his heart had not been enough to keep him warm! This time Qian does not quote directly but narrates the content of Boccaccio's short story, as a few lines before he had done for Giambattista Marino and his *La Ninfa Avara* in the often quoted *Marino e i Marinisti* who, all the same, affirmed that poets have much wealth in their hands but do not exactly know how to use it to save themselves from hunger and cold.

All the ideas in these passages, concludes Qian, are similar.²⁹⁰ Quotations here have the simple function of reinforcing and supporting a global and general assumption and a literary cliché. Another quotation from the *Decameron* has this same function. Here Qian is commenting on the *Chu Ci* and on the use of the word "I" that sometimes represents the same subject talking on account of the person one is talking to: "e cominciò in forma della donna, udendolo elia, a rispondere a sè medesimo"²⁹¹ (and he started to answer himself on account of the woman that was hearing him). Boccaccio's quotations, like the other short story writers', are nearly always focused on similes and literary clichés. Through them Qian proves

²⁹⁰ Ronald Egan, *Limited Views*, 169.

²⁹¹ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, II, 915. See Giovanni Boccaccio, *Decameron*, 363. "elia" should be spelled "ella".

the continuous existence from the past to the present of common literary and cultural themes that makes those writers timely and modern. In *Guan Zhui Bian*,²⁹² for example, the modernity of Bandello appears through the quotation from one of his short stories in which he wishes that the world went the other way round and that it was women to rule men instead of the usual contrary way. Another example is Boccaccio's quotation in footnote, not translated, that proves the existence, with Ippolito Nievo, Héliodore, Fouqué, Corneille and other Chinese authors, of the theme of the strong tie, called blood tie, between members of the same family: "quasi da occulta virtute mossi, avesser sentito costui loro àvolo essere; da occulta virtute mossa, cominciò a piagnere"²⁹³ (as moved by a hidden virtue, 'cause they felt he was their ancestor; moved by a hidden virtue he stated crying).

Cheat of women on men and the litigious relationship between husband and wife is instead the theme of the short story by Bandello from *Le Novelle* (Short Stories) quoted in *Guan Zhui Bian*. In this story, a misunderstanding in a married couple causes a servant to find himself in bed with his mistress and when she tries to hold him believing it was her husband, he rejects her causing her rage:

"Ma il barbagianni le diede una gran fiancata, di maniera che ella stizzosa e in gran còlera montata gli strinse fieramente i sonagli"²⁹⁴ (The fool gave her a blow in the side, so that she was greatly upset and hit him).

5.1.4 Epic poetry in literary criticism: Ariosto, Boiardo, Tasso

²⁹² Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 44.

²⁹³ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, III, 1585. See Giovanni Boccaccio, *Decameron*, 651.

²⁹⁴ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, IV, 2210.

As with other poets from various literary realms, epic poets are quoted by Qian Zhongshu especially for their interest in poetic imagery and rhetoric figures. Their lines pass very often through the lens of literary criticism and are functional to the exposition and the analysis of literary techniques and rhetoric devices.

In nearly every work of Qian Zhongshu, we find a quotation from the *Orlando Furioso* (Mad Orlando) by Ludovico Ariosto (1474-1533), epic poem that had a great influence in Italian pre-enlightenment literature. Ariosto lived like an independent thinker even as a Renaissance courtier poet and stated the autonomy of literature in a subtle and clever polemic with the contemporary world. The first time Ariosto is mentioned in *Guan Zhui Bian* is to prove that society has always used two different criteria of judgements for men and women since a man can be dissolute and do as he pleases even in choosing a very young spouse in old age, while a woman must keep her chastity and is always subject to the will of man. “Sia maledetto chi tal legge pose”,²⁹⁵ says Ariosto quoted by Qian, that means “damned the one that set this rule”. A very modern concept in the Italy of the 16th century, and one that can easily be quoted without being considered outmoded in 20th century.

As it often happens with the Italian philosopher Machiavelli, quoted when the subject is war and military administration, the same inevitably happens with Ariosto, whose main epic poem *Orlando Furioso* is recalled when Qian needs to reinforce concepts about soldiers and war. In *Guan Zhui Bian* a short sentence from *Orlando Furioso* “chi per virtù, chi per paura vale”²⁹⁶ (somebody is brave for virtue somebody for fear) wants to reinforce the concept exploited in the whole entry that often soldiers are

²⁹⁵ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 44. See Ludovico Ariosto, *Orlando furioso*, 52.

²⁹⁶ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 318. See Ludovico Ariosto, *Orlando furioso*, 281.

induced to be brave more because they fear they superiors than because they are valuable combatants.

Tan Yi Lu is a field of discussion about art and poetic criticism and a great part of the work is devoted to the analysis of metaphor and of its usage. Discussing metaphor Qian Zhongshu comes to analyze allegory and demonstrates, with the usual support of quotations, that allegory is best used in didactic poetry and it embellishes contents otherwise boring and "bitter". This is what the Italian poet Torquato Tasso (1544 –1595) demonstrates with his metaphor of a child drinking a bitter medicine from a vase on which rims a sweet liquid has been sprinkled. Tasso's words, as quoted from Qian Zhongshu from the poem *Gerusalemme Liberata* (Jerusalem Delivered) are:

"così a l'egro fanciul porgiamo asparsi /di soavi licor gli orli del vaso:
/succhi amari ingannato in tanto ei beve, /e da l'inganno suo vita riceve"²⁹⁷
(in this way we offer to the sick child the vase's rims sprinkled with a sweet liquid: deceived, he drinks bitter medicine and from this deception he takes his life).

Qian wants thus to demonstrate that the moral teachings and the didactic function of poetry are often hidden behind more pleasant words, and this is something that is not often grasped. In ancient Greece, for example, some philosophers thought that Homeric epic was empty and in China, historical poetry is misunderstood for the romantic one. The surface form of poetry needs to be analysed in order to grasp the contents hidden under the apparent sweet flavour with which poets like to disguise their teachings.

²⁹⁷ Qian Zhongshu, *Tan Yi Lu*, 570. See Torquato Tasso, *La Gerusalemme Liberata*, Milano: Feltrinelli, 1961, 3.

From *Gerusalemme Liberata*, and from the same edition published by Riccardo Ricciardi quoted in *Tan Yi Lu*, comes another quotation in the first volume of *Guan Zhui Bian*: “rapido si, ma rapido con legge”²⁹⁸ (quick but in a regulated way) singularly posed as the only western quotation at the end of many Chinese sentences from Hanfeizi, Xunzi, Sunzi, to describe the shape and characteristics of armies. Both Tasso and the Chinese philosophers had described soldiers as a flowing stream moving in a compact and regular way. Quoted in an “army” background is again the sentence that follows from Tasso and *Gerusalemme Liberata* in *Guan Zhui Bian* that is meant to the exposition of a narration mode that Qian Zhongshu praises and considers an expression of high literary talent. In Tasso, like in Dickens, in the *Zuo Zhuan* 左传, in Homer and in the *Yuan Mi Shi* 元秘史, the narrator is outside the text and writes in a way that makes the events advance even without directly mentioning the movements. We thus know things happen thanks to the eyes and ears of the characters in the narration and the more we are forced to read the reactions of the characters to the situation to know what is going on, the more the narration technique is taken at its utmost realization. “Conosce Erminia nel celeste campo /e dice al re”²⁹⁹ (...recognizes Erminia in the heavenly field /and tells the king) writes Tasso in *Gerusalemme Liberata*. The narrator’s comment, wants to demonstrate Qian Zhongshu, makes us know that somebody is walking down on the battle field, it is Rinaldo, and Erminia steps further and talks about him with the king. Erminia’s eyes are thus functional to the advancement of the action. The whole scene is more interesting because the movement enhanced is shown to us through Erminia’s eyes and not through the direct mention by the author. We

²⁹⁸ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 263. See Torquato Tasso, *La Gerusalemme Liberata*, 33.

²⁹⁹ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 345. See Torquato Tasso, *La Gerusalemme Liberata*, 38.

should note though that this quotation is extrapolated in an unusual way from the text since it leaves behind the object of the verb at the beginning of the quotation. *Conosce*, recognizes, is devoid of object, what Erminia recognizes is the bearing and the white beard of one of the warriors and presents him to the king. This way of quoting is atypical since Qian Zhongshu generally ends up with quotations carefully cut and chiselled in the new text, without imperfections that make us wonder about his full understanding of the quoted piece.

One of Torquato Tasso's works, a *pastorale*, is the *Aminta*, a lyric poem describing a peaceful and hedonistic golden era. We find the *Aminta* quoted two times in the unfolding of a literary theme through western and Chinese quotations. Epic poems, so full of imagery and based on the narration of conventional events and of ever-told stories, are often the object of analysis for Qian Zhongshu when looking for common motives in different literary traditions. This time the starting quotation is from the *Taiping Guangji* and analyzes the theme of a rhino looking at itself in muddy water, coming out with an unpleasant image.³⁰⁰ The poetic trend of mirroring in water is a common image in Chinese and western literatures and among the Italians Tasso, Boccaccio and Leopardi find their place in the entry commenting on the theme. This is another case of quotations to enforce a concept and to give authority and justification to the author's thread of thoughts.

Following the literary trend that Qian finds in Dante of creating expectation in a piece of writing without fully explaining everything, Qian discovers it as a distinctive characteristic of Renaissance street singers' (*cantastorie*) popular sung poems of ballads and even of dramas. It was

³⁰⁰ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, II, 1327.

common in these kinds of poems, remarks Qian Zhongshu in the essay *Du Laaokong*, to end episodes or stanzas with a sentence that created expectation or suspension and made the reader expect the continuation of the story. For a reference Qian quotes several times the Italian famous epic poems *Orlando Innamorato* (Orlando in love), 1495, by Boiardo (1440-1494) and its sequel *Orlando Furioso*, 1516, by Ariosto. In the essay *Du Laaokong*, *Orlando Innamorato* is even strangely quoted without translation in Chinese:

“Però un bel fatto potreti sentire, /Se l’altro canto tornareti a odire;
Nell’altro canto ve averò contato, /Se sia concesso dal Signor supremo,
/Gran meraviglia e più strana ventura /Ch’odisti mai per voce, or per
scrittura”³⁰¹

(But a good story you might hear /if you keep listening to the following *canto*; in it I will narrate, /if the Supreme Lord would agree, /marvellous things and the strangest deeds /you would have ever heard in speech or in writing).

Or “Ed ecco un altro canto che si interrompe col fiato sospeso!” (Here you are another *canto* ending with a suspense) which Qian translates as: *Zhe you shi bu yikouqi jiang wan de yipian* 这又是不一口气讲完的一篇。³⁰¹

Again from *Orlando Furioso*:

“Poi vi dirò, signor, che ne fu causa, /ch’avrò fatto al cantar debita
pausa;”³⁰² Ma differisco un’altra volta a dire /quel che seguì, se mi vorrete
udire”³⁰³ (I will tell you later, oh Lord, the cause of it /right after a pause in
speech; But I will tell you another day /what happened, if you still want to
hear)

³⁰¹ Qian Zhongshu, “Du ‘Laaokong’” in *Qi Zhui Ji*, 55. See Matteo Maria Boiardo, *Orlando Innamorato* a cura di Aldo Scaglione, 35.

³⁰² Ludovico Ariosto, *Orlando furioso*, 41.

³⁰³ Ludovico Ariosto, *Orlando furioso*, 158. *differisco* should be spelled *diferisco*.

translated by Qian as *Qing rang wo xianyixia sangzi, ranhou zai jiang laiyou*, 请让我歇一下嗓子，然后再讲来由。³⁰¹

In the major work *Guan Zhui Bian* not only Boiardo's version of *Orlando Innamorato* is quoted; when talking about the relation between hand, mind and tools in a creative process, Qian quotes a whole *stanza* from the *Orlando Innamorato* by Berni, a 16th century recasting of Boiardo's work. The version Qian quotes³⁰⁴ is from an English translation by John Hoole.

Woman and her deceiving attitude is the subject of the last quotation by Boiardo in *Guan Zhui Bian* anticipated by Qian's explanation and not translated in full "[Origille] era la dama di estrema beltate, /Malicïosa e di losinghe piena; /Le lacrime teneva apparecchiate /Sempre a sua posta, com'acqua di vena"³⁰⁵ (Origille was a woman of the utmost beauty, /artful and full of allurements; /She had tears always ready at use /as flowing water).

The quotation finds its place in an annex commenting on two Chinese passages from the *Wei Shu* 魏书 (Book of Wei) and the *Shi Ji* 史记 in which two scenes of crying are artfully described, exactly as is the case of Boiardo.

5.1.5 Renaissance men: Leonardo, Lorenzo De Medici

To be acquainted with Qian Zhongshu's life and works does not only mean to know the circumstances of his life experience, but also to be able to perceive his sphere of preferences and his fields of interest. Renaissance represents for Italy, and for the European culture the same, a period of great achievements and a time in which brilliant theories and ideas were

³⁰⁴ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, II, 780.

³⁰⁵ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, IV, 2235-2236. Matteo Maria Boiardo, *Orlando Innamorato* a cura di Aldo Scaglione, 386.

elaborated; man was the centre of the universe and his experiences the axis of interest. Qian was attracted by Renaissance personalities, and when he quotes from authors like Leonardo da Vinci or Lorenzo de Medici (1449-1492) it is often for a request of authority, being their voices the voices of the age of the rejuvenation of art and literature, as the Chinese word for Renaissance indicates. Leonardo, for example, is quoted in *Guan Zhui Bian* to support Aristotle's assumption that perception is not wrong but the judgements on it may be incorrect. His quotation is accompanied by the Chinese translation: "La sperienza non falla mai, ma sol fallano i vostri giudizi"³⁰⁶ (experience never fails, your judgements do).

The two opening essays of the collection *Qi Zhui Ji -Zhongguo Shi yu Zhongguo Hua* and *Du Laaokong-* are two treatises on traditional Chinese critical appreciation and discuss the relation between poetry and figurative arts, denying their equality. This equality had been previously asserted in the course of Chinese history as the poet Su Shi (11th century) had sustained, affirming that poetry and painting move from the same principle, "*Shi Hua Ben Yi Lu* 诗画本一律",³⁰⁷ influencing the history of Chinese aesthetic.

Qian Zhongshu notes that this idea is present in western tradition too, but it is there that he finds material to support his denial of this assumption. In *Zhongguo Shi yu Zhongguo Hua*, after noting that sometimes critics misinterpret concepts and ideas, making them the same when they are different and distinct, Qian introduces the main theme of the essay, poetry and painting have often been considered sisters, sometimes even twin sisters; instead, they are two different disciplines. Simonides of Ceos and

³⁰⁶ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 469. See Leonardo da Vinci, *Aforismi, novelle e profezie* (Milano: Newton Compton, 1993), 4. The correct quotation should be: *La esperienza non falla, ma sol fallano i nostri giudizi*.

³⁰⁷ Qian Zhongshu, "Zhongguo Shi Yu Zhongguo Hua", in *Qi Zhui Ji*, 7.

Cicero are quoted, followed by Leonardo da Vinci's quotation from his *Treatise on painting* which reads: "la pittura è una poesia muta, la poesia è una pittura cieca" (painting is dumb poetry, poetry is deaf painting, *hua shi zuiba ya de shi, er shi shi yanjing xia de hua* 画是嘴巴哑的诗, 而诗是眼睛瞎的画).³⁰⁸ In Qian's opinion, this reinforces what said before and puts poetry and painting on the same level. It seems here, as also noted by Wang Linlin 王琳琳,³⁰⁹ that Qian's understanding is strangely short-sighted, since it does not consider Leonardo's full meaning, which is not of putting the two disciplines on the same level, but of praising painting more than poetry. Poetry lacks sight, and sight is the most important sense in Leonardo's opinion. Painting is meant for sight appreciation while poetry is directed to the hearing sense. Sight is a nobler sense than hearing, so it is particularly from painting that a harmonic proportion comes out. That proportion is what poetry lacks, due to its lack of appeal to the sense of sight. Qian misinterprets Leonardo, stating that he belongs to the category of people who saw painting and poetry on the same level.

The same focus on painting is reported again in *Guan Zhui Bian* where Benvenuto Cellini (1500-1571), high representative artist of Italian Renaissance, is quoted with a sentence from his autobiography where he affirms that poetry is nothing else than falsehood and that an excellent painter, just as a liar, wants to disguise falsity under the robes of truth (la pittura non vuol dir altro che bugia; un pittore eccellentissimo, sì come un bugiardo, s'ingegna di somigliare la verità).³¹⁰ The passage does not want to transmit despise for painting; on the contrary, the main message is the

³⁰⁸ Qian Zhongshu, "Zhongguo Shi Yu Zhongguo Hua", in *Qi Zhui Ji*, 6. See Leonardo da Vinci, *Trattato della Pittura*, Vaticano Urbinate 1270.

³⁰⁹ Wang Binbin, "Qian Zhongshu Liang Pian Lunwen Zhong de San ge Xiao Wenti", *Wen Yi Yanjiu*, vol 3. (2008).

³¹⁰ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, II, 1125. See Benvenuto Cellini, *I trattati dell'oreficeria e della scultura*, (Firenze: Le Monnier, 1857), 230-231; Giovanni Boccaccio, *Decameron*, 739.

power painting has to be the exact representation of truth. The quotation is among many other western assumptions on the same concept and follows a sentence by Boccaccio saying that there was a kind of painting who induced people to believe something painted as true “che il visivo senso degli uomini vi prese errore, quello credendo esser vero che era dipinto”³¹⁰ (that men’s sight was mistaken believing what was only painted as true).

In a long series of *buding* (notes) and *buzheng* (corrections) to chapter 2, the discourse is carried, through quotations, on the *carpe diem* and the importance to live fully the present since the future is uncertain and unpredictable. The only quotation in a foreign language among the many Chinese poems that invite to make good use of the present because of the uncertainty of tomorrow, is the famous and over quoted sentence by Lorenzo de Medici from the *Trionfo di Bacco e Arianna* (Triumph of Bacco and Arianna): “Chi vuol esser lieto sia: /di domani non c’è certezza”³¹¹ (Whoever wants to be happy, let him be so: there's no knowing tomorrow), translated in Chinese by Qian. The series of quotations ends with a sentence by the author that seems to justify and explain the need to put so many different voices one close to the other. Qian says *Xin suo tonggan, sui ru yan chu yi kou er* 心所同感，遂如言出一口耳 (the hearts feel the same emotions, and it is as if the voices all came from one mouth).³¹¹

At the end of *Guan Zhui Bian* Marino’s *Adone* is quoted on the same theme (and we will dedicate next paragraph to the analysis of quotations from Marino and from his poetic school) but with a sadder note, since man is put in comparison with nature and its ever-renewing spring, while his life appears hopeless in that it decreases and can never be born again: “pur col

³¹¹ Qian Zhongshu, *Tan Yi Lu*, 62. See Lorenzo il Magnifico *Poesie*, (Milano: Bur, 1992), 178.

nov'anno il fiore e la verdure /de le bellezze sue fa novo acquisto; /ma l'uom, poichè la vita un tratto perde, /non rinasce più mai, nè si rinverde"³¹² (with the new year flowers and greens /reacquire their beauty; /but man, since he loses life, is not born anew, and does not become green again).

5.1.6 Marinisti: Italian Baroque poetry

The Marinisti poets are here included in one single paragraph since all the many quotations from this group of 16th century Italian poets come most probably from one single text, *Marino e i Marinisti* edited by G.G.Ferrero. The page reference is always indicated and, supposedly, Qian knew the text well enough to have quotations from the Marinisti poets ready at hand any time the discourse required a quotation to sustain it.

Giambattista Marino (1569 – 1625) is considered the greatest representative of Italian Baroque poetry, named *marinismo* after him. He takes the merits of a clever use of metaphors, the musicality of his verses and a rich imagery, and the demerits of a lack of refined taste and an excessive use of poetic devices in the poetic trend he started. He was much admired and imitated in his times not only in Italy, but also in France, Spain, Germany and Poland. During the 18th and 19th centuries, Baroque poetry was often despised, while in the 19th century, with a careful reevaluation made by critics like Croce, Marino and Baroque poetry have slowly been rehabilitated in the artistic realm of good literature. We may suppose that Qian Zhongshu read Marinisti's poetry thanks to Croce and

³¹² Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, IV, 2306. See Giambattista Marino, *Tutte le opere di Giovan Battista Marino*, volume 2, tomo 1, a cura di Giovanni Pozzi, (Milano: Mondadori, 1976), 718.

was able to appreciate it due to the rich use of metaphors that has always been a preferential sphere of analysis and interest for the author. Proper of the Marinisti was a particular usage of the artifice of metaphor that was meant to create strange and bizarre images, completely out of the schemes and different from the ones that Petrarca and his poetic school had enhanced. No more blonde and ethereal beauties, but red-haired, ugly but prosperous, humpbacked women with squinting eyes with glasses, sometimes with lice or fleas on their bodies, with breasts like rocks; their lice are like gems or ivory beasts wandering around.

It is talking about metaphors and their usages that sometimes differ, sometimes are similar in western and Chinese poetry, that Qian quotes from Italian poetry, and from that particular kind of poetry, the Marinisti's one, so full of imagery and artistic devices.

The Marinisti are also well known for their capacity of elaboration of old poetic themes and introduction in Italian poetry of new ones and they are quoted in the fourth volume of *Guan Zhui Bian* as the first in 17th century Italian poetry to introduce the subject of glasses: Giacomo Lubrano (1619-1693) and his poem *L'Occhialino* (Spectacles) and Giuseppe Artale (1628-1679) and his *Bella Donna Cogli Occhiali* (Beautiful lady with glasses) are quoted together with Bernardo Morando (1540-1600) and his sonnet *Amante Vagheggiator Con Gli Occhiali* (Suitor with glasses) and Paolo Zazzaroni (17th c.) and his theme of the beautiful lady with glasses (*La bella donna che portava gli occhiali*).

In the eleventh chapter of *Tan Yi Lu* is the time for Cesare Abelli and Federico Mennini (1636-1712), to be quoted, with excerpts from two poems not translated by Qian in Chinese. Cesare Abelli quotation reads:

“de li occhi aprendo il lagrimoso varco”³¹³ (opening the tearful passage of the eyes) and nothing, if not the title of the poem, “Vindemia” (Grape Harvest) seems to give a clue that Qian is talking about some “western poets”. Together with Abelli and Mennini we find Sant’Agostino (354-430) quoted, who talked about the liquids coming out of fruit just like tears that come out from the eyes. Mennini’s quotation from the poem *Gli Alberi E La Sua Donna* (Trees and his woman) is: “per dolcezza d’amore il fico piange”³¹⁴ (fig cries for sweetness of love) alluding to the white milk coming out from figs. Figs and grapes cry, the liquid coming out of them is like tears, and these tears are similar to the orchid’s dew, which, in turn, is compared to tears in the words of Li He and to autumn leaves, representing cry, in *Liezi*.

The relationship between a man and a woman is described many times in *Guan Zhui Bian* as a relation between the sky and the earth, that is loved by the sky, “ama la terra il cielo e il bel semblante”³¹⁵ (the sky loves the earth and the good appearance) says the quotation from Marino or, with Bruno’s words, “più di sette mesi sono, che non me ci ha piovuto”³¹⁶ (it is already seven months it did not rain on me) where rain stays for man and woman is the earth receiving “man’s rain”; or again this relation between men and women is perfectly represented in a long poetic tradition, both Chinese, Li Shangyin 李商隱 and *Taiping Guanji*, and western, Robert Burton, J. Dunlop, Keats, Hugo and Marino, through the interweaving branches or roots of trees: “E due piante talor divise stanno, /ma sotterra però con la radice, /se non co’ rami, a ritrovar si vanno” (And two trees are

³¹³ Qian Zhongshu, *Tan Yi Lu*, 137.

³¹⁴ Qian Zhongshu, *Tan Yi Lu*, 137.

³¹⁵ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, II, 982. See Giambattista Marino, *Tutte le opere di Giovan Battista Marino*, 227.

³¹⁶ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, III, 1402.

sometimes afar, /but under the ground with their roots, /if not with their branches, they find each other) is the quotation from *Marino e i Marinisti* and the poem *Dipartita* (Departure) by Marino.

Not translated again is another quotation from the same text edited by G. Ferrero, a passage from *l'Adone* by Giambattista Marino whose quotation is:

“Sta quivi l’Anno sopra l’ali accorto/che sempre il fin col suo principio annoda, /e’n forma d’angue inanellato e torto/ morde l’estremo e la volubil coda”³¹⁷ (there rests the Year careful on its wings, and it always ties its end with its beginning, and with the shape of an annulated and twisted snake, bites its ending and the mobile tail).

The quotation is part of a longer discussion about time and its never ending cycle, similar to a snake biting its tail, that has been previously analyzed in the chapter about Basile and the Italian novelists. If time is like a snake, eyes are like mouth in that they can express feelings without talking:

“Fanno ufficio di la labra /le palpebre loquaci, e sguardi e cenni /son parolette e voci, /e son tacite lingue, /la cui facondia muta io ben intendo; facondia muta e silenzio loquace”³¹⁸ (Eloquent eyelids /act as mouth, while glances and hints /are words and voices, /they are like silent tongues, /whose dumb eloquence I understand; dumb eloquence and eloquent silence). Marino’s quotation here is not translated literally; its meaning, instead, is given right before the quotation. Other two quotations on the same theme in note to Marino’s are equally not translated. They are by Petrarca “è un atto che parla col silenzio”³¹⁸ (it is an act talking silently)

³¹⁷ Qian Zhongshu, *Tan Yi Lu*, 281. See Giambattista Marino, *Tutte le opere di Giovan Battista Marino*, 7.

³¹⁸ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, IV, 1925. “di la labra” should be “di labra”; “eun” should be “ed un”.

and by Tasso “e’l silenzio ancor suole /aver prieghi e parole”³¹⁹ (Silence still /can be prayer or words). The two quotations, presenting exactly the same figure of silence that is capable of being eloquent, add nothing new to Marino’s lines and are thus in footnote with a function of redundancy and amplification.

The quotation Qian uses to prove that artists often make the mistake of looking for inspiration in the work of other authors, while everything they need is already inside them, comes from *L’Adone* by Marino. This quotation is juxtaposed for resonance to a commented verse from *Laozi*, which affirms that wise men move without going out and know without moving.³²⁰ Marino’s passage, without translation in Qian’s text, is: “Quel che cercando va, /porta in se stesso, /miser, nè può trovar quel ch’ha da presso”³²¹ (What he is looking for /he keeps in himself, /and he cannot find what is just beside).

No other Italian author in Qian’s work is quoted in the original without the Chinese translations as often as Marino, and we find in the fourth volume of *Guan Zhui Bian* another long quotation by Marino, accompanied by parallel quotations by Torquato Tasso, Sir Philip Sidney, Webster and Keats, about the image of trees on the shore of streams that seem to establish a relation of mutual protection with the stream, joining in a common effort as friends do. This theme was a common one to Marinisti poets who were keen on seeing love as a force that permeated earth as a whole and that manifested itself in strong ties between every natural element. Western quotations in this short entry of *Guan Zhui Bian* have an effect of redundancy and create the round table around which the

³¹⁹ See Torquato Tasso, *Opere*, (Roma: Newton Compton, 1995), 29.

³²⁰ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, II, 697.

³²¹ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, II, 700. See Giambattista Marino, *Tutte le opere di Giovan Battista Marino*, 137.

authors discuss without any interference by Qian, chairperson of the discussion. Tasso's words are: "bagna egli [il canaletto] il bosco e' il bosco il fiume adombra, /col bel cambio fra lor d'umore e d'ombra"³²² (the stream washes the wood and the wood shades the stream, /in a mutual exchange of moisture and shadow). Marino echoes saying:

"quello [l'arbore] con gli spaziosi rami della sua prolezione favoreggiando questo [il ruscello], e questo porgendo a quello con le vive acque della sua feconda vena vita immortale" (that one [the tree] with its wide branches favours this one [the stream], and this one gives to that one immortal life with its fertile living water).

The other western quotations that, all together, echo and reinforce the Chinese starting quotation from the first emperor Xiao Yi 萧绎 of the Liang dynasty in his *She Shan Qi Xia Si Bei* 摄山栖霞寺碑 (The stele of the Qixia temple on the She mountain) all play around the same idea.

The passage quoted in the expansion n. 3 to the first note in the first paragraph of *Guan Zhui Bian* comes again from the text edited by G.Ferrero. In it Qian talks about the "activity of immobility" attributed to God, and quotes many other examples of this paradox. We read for example about the running fountain which seems iced in Materdona's (1590-1650) poem *La Fontana di Ponte Sisto in Roma* or a fountain that seems still like crystal in M.Barberini's poem *Sopra una Fonte di Bell'Artificio* quoted from J.Rousset and his *Circè et le Paon*.³²³ J.Rousset is a French critic to which it is attributed the rediscovery of Baroque poetry in France,

³²² Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, IV, 2174. See Torquato Tasso, *La Gerusalemme Liberata*, 250. *col* should be spelled *con*.

³²³ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 12. The reference to the poet Barberini is imprecise since his name is Maffeo, and does not start with N as reported, and the poem's title is *Sopra una Fonte di Bell'Artificio* (On a Fountain of Good Craftsmanship) and not simply *La Fontana* (The fountain). Under the identity of Maffeo Barberini is disguised Pope Urbano VIII. It was the habit, for Marinisti poets, to use a penname for their literary career.

Giovan Francesco Maia Materdona and M. Barberini are two Italian minor Baroque poets. The quotations from such minor poets from this poetic school confirm the interest Qian had for imagery in poetry and his careful reading of Italian Baroque Marinisti poetry.

Lorenzo Casaburi belongs to the southern Marinisti poets and we find a quotation from his poem in the first book of *Guan Zhui Bian* with a witty line, translated in Chinese by Qian Zhongshu, in which a woman tells her husband willing to go to war that on his coming back his head might have been adorned by horns!³²⁴

Wit, humour and rhetoric figures are what Qian appreciates from the literary trend of the Marinisti. His appreciation and use of their lines juxtaposed to both Chinese and western authoritative verses could well be source of a rethinking and reconsideration of that poetry, not necessarily to appreciate it but at least to look at it in a new light and with a new literary background, praising the novelty and wit typical of the school. This is what Qian Zhongshu aimed at in a way in commenting on Chinese literature through other literatures' quotations, to have a mirror in which to reconsider one's own tradition with a glance not spoiled by that same tradition, in order to be the most objective and have a new fresh vision.

5.1.7 Historians and philosophers between Renaissance and Baroque : Machiavelli, Guicciardini, Bruno, Campanella, Castiglione.

Philosophy, religion, history are the disciplines that after aesthetic and poetic criticism recur more often in Qian Zhongshu's works. If the preferential area for quotations about philosophy is the German one, the

³²⁴ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 63.

author draws more often sentences and ideas to weave his own thread of thoughts from Italian, Latin, Greeks and British historians and thinkers.

Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527), Italian Renaissance philosopher, humanist and writer, is considered one of the founders of modern political science. Qian reads directly from his works, often from a collection published by Riccardo Ricciardi in Naples, and quotes him as an example of rational thinker and wise expert of civil and social matters even if he is not always in accordance with his ideas. In discussing about religion and the faith in sayings about demons and God, Machiavelli and Tommaso Campanella (1568-1639) are quoted and translated in *Guan Zhui Bian*³²⁵ to prove that when wise men say they believe in religion is only because they have to pretend to do so, and are instead muttering against it in the enclosure of their lodgings.

Further on in the same chapter Machiavelli again is quoted in a witty passage that links past and present in the blink of an eye. The passage starts with the Chinese Wang Anshi and the Latin Svetonius, both of them talk about celestial phenomena like comets that are said to foretell bad omens for the rulers. It happened then, reports Qian Zhongshu with a three lines quotation from *Il Principe* (The Prince) by Machiavelli, again in the Ricciardi edition, that while ruling on the province of Romagna in the Italy of the 15th century, Cesare Borgia appointed a very cruel man called Messer Remirro de Orco to the administration of the province. This governor was so harsh in carrying on his duties that all the people felt unhappy and unsatisfied. Borgia then, to keep his power on the territory and to avoid insurrection, had the poor man killed in public view saying that “if any cruelty had followed, it had not been his fault but the

³²⁵ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 32-33.

minister's, whose nature was still immature" (volle monstrare che, se crudeltà alcuna era seguita, non era nata da lui, ma della acerba natura del ministro [messer Remirro de Orco]).³²⁶ We will mention that after Machiavelli's account of Cesare Borgia's hypocrite behavior, the same is attributed to the American President Richard Nixon, in office from 1969 to 1974 and to his theory, the "Nixon formula", quoted and translated by Qian: "I am responsible; the others are to blame".³²⁷ Governors, then, affirms Qian Zhongshu supported by Wang Anshi, Svetonius, Machiavelli and contemporary American politicians, are used to find scapegoats for their crimes and this happens in every state and every time. The melody does not change and history explains a present that was under the author's eyes and was deeply marking the course of his life. Governors are not considered examples of moral coherence and principles trustworthiness, and Machiavelli is the one that gives them advices on how to survive and defeat the possible opponents. One of the suggestions could be to change and adapt to the different conditions from time to time and to prove that Machiavelli had said it various times, Qian quotes the different expressions used by the Italian writer and by Francesco Guicciardini (1483-1540), putting them in a row without Chinese translation: "temporeggiarsi; procedere con le qualità de tempi; accomodarsi alla diversità de' temporali: si concordano col tempo; [...] si discordano e tempi; si discordano dai tempi"³²⁸ (wait for a favorable

³²⁶ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 36. See Niccolò Machiavelli, *Il Principe*, (Firenze: Le Monnier, 1848), 22. It needs to be pointed out that the quotation carries two graphic mistakes and the right spelling would be: volle monstrare che, se crudeltà alcuna era seguita, non era nata da lui, ma dalla acerba natura del ministro [messer Remirro de Orco]. See Niccolò Machiavelli, *Opere Complete*, (Firenze: Passigli, Borghi e Compagni, 1831), 300.

³²⁷ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 36.

³²⁸ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 430.

opportunity; to act according to time; adapt oneself to the diversity of time; they adapt to time; being time at variance; being at variance with time). The same theme, and again through Guicciardini's words, is presented in *Guan Zhui Bian* in an entry where Bacon and Montesquieu are quoted as well on the same motif. This quotation seems to have the function of an invocation of authority since the author, in talking about the advisability to wait for the right moment for action and the way in which this moment in Chinese literature has been called the "ripe moment", remarks that Italian political commentator Francesco Guicciardini had given advices on the necessity to wait for the times to be ripe: "aspettare la sua maturità, la sua stagione"³²⁹ (wait for his ripeness, his season) exactly as the authors of the *Shi Ji*, the *Mengzi*, the *Han Shu*, the *Yi Jing* or the *Li Ji* had done.

Together with Machiavelli is Guicciardini then the other Italian historian that talks about the difficult and tricky relation between governors and subjects. In *Guan Zhui Bian* Qian reports Guicciardini's words in saying "Se e principi, quando viene loro bene, tengono poco contode' servidori, per ogni suo pericolo interesse gli disprezzano o mettono da canto, che può sdegnarsi o lamentarsi uno padrone se e ministri, pure che non manchino al debito della fede e dell'onore, gli abandonano o pigliano quelli partiti che sieno più a loro beneficio?"³³⁰ (If princes take little account of their servants and scorn them or push them aside for the slightest reason whenever they please, why should a lord be offended or complain when his ministers –provided they do not fall short of their

³²⁹ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 277.

³³⁰ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 528-529. The quotation carries a few orthographical mistakes and, as in the *Ricordi* edited by Giorgio Masi (Mursia, Milano 1994) should be: "Se e principi, quando viene loro bene, tengono poco **conto de'** servidori, per ogni suo **piccolo** interesse gli disprezzano o mettono da canto, che può sdegnarsi o lamentarsi uno padrone se e ministri, pure che non manchino al debito della fede e dell'onore, gli abandonano o pigliano quelli partiti che **siano** più a loro beneficio?" .

debts of loyalty and honour – leave him or take up with those parties that better serve their interests?).³³¹

If princes want their subjects to be faithful and complying, they should know them, advises Guicciardini, and treat them exactly as they want to be treated.

To get subjects' appreciation and faithfulness and make the country prosper, suggests Emperor Taizong in the *Song Shu* 宋书 (Book of the Song), governors should behave in a way as not to forget the good deeds of the subjects, even if they have been done long before and the same subjects have carried on bad deeds after the good ones. It is not proper to forget good actions, even it is necessary not to do so. The same necessity, reports Qian Zhongshu, is interpreted in the opposite way in the work of the Italian Machiavelli where the word "necessity" is present many times: "E' necessario; uno principe necessitato; obbediscono alle necessità; è bene necessario; non è cosa più necessaria"³³² (It's necessary; a prince needs to; obey to necessity; it's aptly necessary; there's not most necessary thing). What Machiavelli, and Qian, want to state here is that princes and governors most of the times obey to the sole principle of necessity, forgetting every moral code of behaviour. As for the subjects, the suggestion given by many authors like Tacitus, Montaigne, Philippe de Commine and Machiavelli, is to avoid devoting to princes favours too big to get a reward, because who is so good as to obtain enormous results in favour of a prince is from the same prince feared and looked at with suspicion. "Una regola generale la quale mai o raro falla: che chi è cagione

³³¹ The translation of the passage is from Francesco Guicciardini, *Maxims and Reflections of a renaissance Statesman*, translated by Mario Domandi (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1965), 42.

³³² Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 544. Two small mistakes are present in the spelling of the quotations that should be: "E' necessario; **un** principe necessitato; obbediscono alle necessità; è **ben** necessario; non è cosa più necessaria".

che uno diventi potenti, ruina”³³³ (A general rule rarely failing: who determines the greatness of somebody else will be ruined in turn) and “è impossibili ch’egli usino gratitudine a quelli che con vittoria hanno fatto sotto le insegne loro grandi acquisti” (it is impossible that gratitude will be bestowed on those who have contributed to their greatness) because suspicion is aroused (nasce da il sospetto).³³⁴ Necessity is recalled other times as in *Guan Zhui Bian’s* commentary on the *Shi Ji*, when again Machiavelli’s *Principe* (Prince) and his “necessità, necessario” (necessity, necessary) are quoted together with his core idea of the need to follow the practical truth of things, the way things are, and not the imagination, things as they are supposed to be: “andare drieto alla verità effettuale della cosa che alla immaginazione di essa”³³⁵ (to follow the effective truth of things and not its imagination).

Wit and cheat, this time operated by armies, are again the subject of another of Machiavelli’s quotations from the *Discorsi Sopra la Prima Deca di Titio Livio* (Discourses on Livy) published by Riccardo Ricciardi, in which Machiavelli states “Ancora che lo usare la fraude in ogni azione sia detestabile, nondimano nel maneggiar la guerra è cosa laudabile e gloriosa”³³⁶ (Even if the use of cheat is always execrable, nevertheless in war matters it is laudable and glorious to use it). Many examples and quotations in previous pages both from western (Virgil, Xenophon, Plutarch) and from Chinese literature (Hanfeizi 韩非子, Sima Qian 司马迁) had been in accordance with this opinion who Qian Zhongshu seems to support.

³³³ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 544. See Niccolò Machiavelli, *Il principe*, 13.

³³⁴ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 544. See Niccolò Machiavelli, *Il principe*, 152. It should be “dal sospetto”.

³³⁵ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 609. See Niccolò Machiavelli, *Il principe*, XXXII.

³³⁶ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 311. See Niccolò Machiavelli, *Il Principe*, 407. *Ancora che* should be spelled *ancorachè* and the word *nondimanco* is misspelled as *nondimano*.

The philosopher and poet Francesco Guicciardini is quoted after a quotation about pleasure from the Italian Pietro Verri, with a sentence that says “Molto maggior piacere si truova nel tenersi le voglie oneste che nel cavarsele; perchè questo è breve e del corpo, quello – raffredo che sia un poco lo appetito – è durabile e dell’animo ecoscienza”³³⁷.

The quotation, devoid of a translation like the ones that follow about the same subject by Pascal, Chassignet and Flaubert, means: there is much more pleasure in keeping the honest desires than in satisfying them, since this pleasure (the one that comes from the satisfaction of desires) is short and belongs to the body, the other pleasure (that comes from keeping unsatisfied desires), once craving is diminished, is durable and belongs to conscience and soul. The concept at the basis of this assumption is the same expressed in the novel *Wei Cheng*: who is in wants to be out and who is out wants to be in. When you have not achieved something, you long for it, and when you have got what you were craving for and have your desires satisfied, then you are fed up with the object of your craving and want to get rid of it. At the basis of this idea lies the belief proper of Wang Guowei, after Shopenhauer, that happiness is born from desire and desire is due to the lack of something. Men desire because they lack something, and the search of this something has its mean in the satisfaction of desire and the filling up of the previous deficiency. Nevertheless, the happiness thus reached is fleeting and it is soon followed by disillusion and sadness.

³³⁷ Qian Zhongshu, *Tan Yi Lu*, 75. See Francesco Guicciardini, *Ricordi*, <http://www.filosofico.net/ricord1iguicciard1nifs.htm>. Accessed December 12, 2011. The quotation has two spelling mistakes; the correct sentence is: “Molto maggior piacere si truova nel tenersi le voglie oneste che nel cavarsele; perchè questo è breve e del corpo, quello – raffredo che sia un poco lo appetito – è durabile e dell’animo e coscienza”.

This is Wang Guowei's opinion, and Qian follows this idea that life, desire and sufferance are on the same level.³³⁸

The opinion that to consent to pleasures is source of unhappiness is discussed also in the third volume of *Guan Zhui Bian* through quotations by John Selden, Aristotle, Crébillon le fils, and is seen by Qian as a concept belonging and supported by Christianity. An opposed secular opinion is among the westerns supported only by Italian authors; Dante and Tasso are quoted to explain that in a good golden age "bella età dell'oro"³³⁹ there was a happy and golden law made up by nature itself, that if you like something, then that "something" is legitimate "ma legge aurea e felice /che natura scolpì: S'ei piace, ei lice".³³⁹ To say it with Dante's words "Che [Semiramis] libito fè licito in sua legge" (That [Semiramis] made legitimate what she was longing for).³³⁹ Semiramis is a Babylonian queen said to be led by the law of luxury. The point Qian Zhongshu wants to make is that no matter if consenting to pleasures or running away from them, no man that does not consent to pleasures can be considered virtuous if he does not know what pleasures are about.

Qian points at the same literary theme of a neat distinction between body and soul and the different laws that rule the two in quoting in footnote,³⁴⁰ without any translation, as it often happens when quotations are in footnote, Boccaccio and Machiavelli. The two authors offer a proof of the

³³⁸ See Chen Ziqian, *Lun Qian Zhongshu*, 3-6. See Dante Alighieri, *La Commedia secondo l'antica vulgata*, 18.

³³⁹ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, III, 1463.

³⁴⁰ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, II, 669. Machiavelli's quotation is from the drama *La Mandragola* (Torino, Einaudi, 1964), 24, and reads: "perché la volontà è quella che pecca, non el corpo" (because the real sinner is will, not the body). Boccaccio is quoted with two passages both from *Il Decamerone*, 414; 1190: "perciò che ella [la santità] dimora nell'anima e quello che io vi domando è peccato del corpo" (santity dwells in the soul, what I ask you is sin of the body only); "per questa volta il corpo ma non l'animo gli concedo" (this time I only grant him the body, and not my soul).

common notion that mind and body are two different entities and that the only true sin is the one done with the mind. Thus, if the will is pure, it does not matter if the body sins. The three quotations go directly into the argument and are perfectly fit to demonstrate this literary theme.

In *Guan Zhui Bian* Pietro Aretino (1492-1556) and Giordano Bruno³⁴¹ are mentioned together with Virgil, Anthony Hamilton, Mérimée and Dante Gabriele Rossetti, since in their works there is reference to the same *meidao* 媚道 (technique of allurement) which we find in the *Records of the Grand Historian* by Sima Qian quoted at the beginning of the entry. Another quotation from the *Degli Eroi Furori* (*On Heroic Frenzies*, 1585) by Giordano Bruno, again, refers to a narrative technique, or a recurrent image in literature “se non è vero, è molto ben trovato”³⁴² (if it is not true, it is well conceived) which used to be so popular in Italy as to have become a common saying. It refers to behaviours of fictitious characters that disguise in a perfect way a contrary intent. Qian takes another passage from the same work by Bruno: “per tema che difetto di sguardo o di parola non lo avvilsca”³⁴³ (with the fear that a fault in his look or words might debase him) that fits perfectly in a discussion starting from *Laozi* saying that the one who knows stays silent, while the one that does not know speaks. Bruno’s passage comes from a discussion about blindness and demonstrates that there are people who refuse to see only because they fear of seeing in the wrong way, and do not speak being afraid of

³⁴¹ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 484. Giordano Bruno’s reference comes from the *Candelaio* in *Opere di Giordano Bruno e di Tommaso Campanella*, 92-93; as recorded in footnote by Qian Zhongshu, the reference for Pietro Aretino is: Pietro Aretino, *I Ragionamenti*, part I, pp.215-216. Another quotation from Giordano Bruno is mentioned in the paragraph *In others’ words* of the present work.

³⁴² Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 507. See Giordano Bruno, *Dialoghi italiani*, II, *Dialoghi morali* (Firenze: Sansoni, 1985), 89.

³⁴³ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, II, 704. See Giordano Bruno, *Dialoghi italiani*, II, *Dialoghi morali*, 104.

committing mistakes while speaking. This is also the behaviour, adds Bruno, of those recognizing the superiority of the object they have in front of them (if this object is God, for example) and avoid interacting with it for fear of doing it in the wrong way, leaving everything unsaid yet expressed by the same silence.

Another quotation from Giordano Bruno is linked with the speech and silence theme and with the simile of the not-speaking and not-knowing person as a withered tree and a dying ember. Bruno's quotation comments on an obscure passage from *Laozi* that affirms that ignorance can be defined saint (santa ignoranza), madness divine (divina pazzia) and stupidity superhuman (sopraumana asinità).³⁴⁴

History, as with Machiavelli, is also the subject of the discussion when the philosopher and historiographer Francesco Guicciardini is quoted with a sentence that is accompanied by a quotation by the French scholar Jules Michelet who regrets the silence of historical writing. Guicciardini says:

“Parmi che tutti gli storici abbino, non eccettuando alcuna, errato in questo che hanno lasciato di scrivere molte cose che a tempo loro erano note, presupponendole come note”.³⁴⁵

The translation, not supplied by the author, might be: “it seems to me that all historiographers, without any exception, have made the same mistake of omitting many things that they considered obvious in their times”. A historiographer from the 16th century, Guicciardini, is juxtaposed to a historiographer from the 19th century, Michelet, and both comment on a sentence from the *Records of the Grand Historian* by Sima Qian, Chinese historiographer from the 2nd century b.C.

³⁴⁴ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, II, 783.

³⁴⁵ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 493. See Francesco Guicciardini, *Ricordi* n.143, <http://www.filosofico.net/ricord1iguicciard1nifs.htm>. Accessed December 12, 2011.

Sima Qian, considered a great historiographer and one that was perfectly aware of the society and the events of his time, is nevertheless pointed at as having forgotten or consciously omitted to talk about the background of the events, leaving us in front of a representation where we can see the actors but not the background scene. Writing an historical account without describing in details all those particulars and usages that, being of the time, were considered obvious, causes a great loss to future generations that will not get all the particulars that the historiographer has omitted. Daily and trivial usages and details are deemed, as a matter of facts, to get lost, since they change rapidly and there remains no trace if nobody takes note of them to transmit them to future generations. Up to twenty centuries after Sima Qian, the mistake recorded by Guicciardini and Michelet is still the same, and the warning against committing it is here presented by them together with Qian Zhongshu.

The quotation from Guicciardini that follows an assumption by the Greek historian Plutarch comes from the work *Ricordi*. All the previous remarks from Chinese literature, as well as Plutarch's quotation, say that enemy and evil can be sometimes source of happiness and well-being. Guicciardini quotation reads:

“La buona fortuna degli uomini è spesso el maggiore inimico che abbino...Però è maggiore paragone di uno uomo el resistere a questa che alle diversità”³⁴⁶ (Good fortune can often be men's greatest enemy...and it is more difficult to resist than adversities).

Again this is a quotation that seems to be an invocation of authority and a proof of a universal truth.

³⁴⁶ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 359. See Guicciardini, *Ricordi* n.164, <http://www.filosofico.net/ricord1iguicciard1nifs.htm>. Accessed December 12, 2011.

Baldassarre Castiglione (1478-1529), author of *Il Cortegiano* (The Courtesan), is quoted in the eleventh chapter about metaphor. Qian had already talked in a more extensive way about metaphor³⁴⁷ and about Li He's method. A metaphor, he says, can be elaborated between objects that have something in common but are not precisely the same thing because if they were the same, there would not be any need to compare them through metaphors. Castiglione's quotation is taken from a novel narrated by Qian Zhongshu that tells the story of merchants doing business with clients while standing on a different side of an iced river. The weather was so cold that even words iced before reaching the other bank of the river and they could not be heard. Finally a fire was lit in the middle of the river, up to where the words were supposed to arrive before becoming iced and "Le parole che per spazio d'un'ora erano stato ghiacciato, cominciarono a liquefarsi e discender giù mormorando come la neve dai monti il maggio"³⁴⁸ (Words that for an hour had been frozen started to melt and to flow down, murmuring like snow from mountains in May). The quotation is from the 1928 edition of the Biblioteca Classica Hoepliana and it brings a mistake in concordance between a feminine noun (*parole*, words) and a participle that should be in the feminine form and is in the masculine instead (*stato ghiacciato* instead of *state ghiacciate*). The quotation is thus probably recollected by heart or copied from not well readable notes. The same source has another quotation in *Guan Zhui Bian* where Castiglione, in accordance with other quoted writers (Herodotus, W. Hildesheimer, E. Frenzel) affirms that women are often source of calamities and disgraces: "spesso le bellezze di donne son causa che al mondo intervengon infiniti mali, inimizie, guerre, morti e distruzioni; di che pò far bon testimonio la

³⁴⁷ Ronald Egan, *Limited Views* "metaphor has two handles and several sides", 121-129.

³⁴⁸ Qian Zhongshu, *Tan Yi Lu*, 134.

ruina di Troia”³⁴⁹ (often women’s beauties are source of infinite evils, enmities, wars, deaths and destruction; proof of this is Troy’s ruin). Like the previous quotation from *Il Cortegiano* this one brings as well two mistakes in concordance (verb *intervegon* instead of *intervengan*) and in spelling (*inimizie* instead of *inimicizie*). Not only women, but also men in general might bring great damage to the world, and we may as well read here a criticism to Qian’s contemporaneity. At this purpose is also quoted the Italian philosopher of the 17th century Tommaso Campanella with the French Georges Eugène Sorel (1847-1922) and Guillaume Apollinaire (1880-1918) as the three examples from the western literary world to comment and reinforce a simile from the Taoist classic *Taiping Jing* 太平经 where men are compared to lice, as small in comparison with earth and sky and as injurious to earth as lice are to men. Campanella’s quotation, accompanied by a free translation by Qian, reads:

“Il mondo è un animal grande e perfetto, /statuo di Dio, che Dio laude e simiglia: /noi siam vermi imperfetti e vil famiglia, /ch’intra il suo ventre abbiam vita e ricetto. /.../ Siam poi alla terra, ch’è un grande animale /dentro al massimo, noi come pidocchi /al corpo nostro, e però ci fan male”³⁵⁰

(The world is a big and perfect animal, /statue of God, similar to him, /we are imperfect worms and base family /living in his womb /.../ Compared to earth, that is a big animal, /and we are animals living in it, we are like lice living on /our body, and very injurious too).

³⁴⁹ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 354.

³⁵⁰ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, III, 1719-1720. The quotation carries two spelling mistakes *statuo* for *statua*, *grande* for *gran*. See Tommaso Campanella, *Il Nuovo Prometeo*, Bologna: Edizioni Studio Domenicano, 1993, 46-47.

A strong attack, it seems, in an age where men considered themselves absolute rulers of the territory they governed and did not confer to nature any right to interfere with their plans.

5.1.8 The light of reason: Vico, Muratori, Verri, Beccaria.

The love for concrete references and practical assumptions brings Qian to read and appreciate Enlightenment works, quoted for their capacity to throw light on phenomena and events of the world. Vico, Muratori, Verri and Beccaria are the most quoted Enlightenment personalities, together with a reference to the playwright Carlo Goldoni (1707-1793), renowned for his “popular Enlightenment” and his sustain for a rational and regulated society in which each social class accepts its role and works for the harmony of the whole system.

Giambattista Vico (1668 – 1744) and his *Principi di Scienza Nuova* (New Science) are quoted when referring to the images from *The Book of Changes* that are emblematic, abstract references to signify abstract concepts: “I caratteri poetici, che sono generi o universali fantastici”³⁵¹ (poetic characters that are imaginary or universals types). This idea is based on the same process of conveying intents by borrowing concrete things³⁵² much used in Chinese poetry. No poetry could do without the help of imagery; all the quotations in the entry of *Guan Zhui Bian*³⁵³ would demonstrate that. We find again a quotation from *Scienza Nuova* in *Guan Zhui Bian* when Vico’s assumption serves only to confirm what stated in the entry, the common order of ideas should proceed in accordance with

³⁵¹ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 19. See Giambattista Vico, *Opere*, (Firenze: Tipografia Italiana, 1847), 56.

³⁵² Ronald Egan, *Limited Views – essays on ideas and letters by Qian Zhongshu*, 134.

³⁵³ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 15-24.

the order of things: “L’ordine dell’idee dee procedere secondo l’ordine delle cose”.³⁵⁴

Vico, as representative of the light of reason, is the one we find in *Guan Zhui Bian* when, in a series of Chinese and western quotations that comment on the fact if one should eat and drink when in grievance, he brings forward in his *Scienza Nuova* an opinion opposed to the majority of the opinions from other writers. In commenting on what Homer wrote about his heroes, Vico considers despicable their eating and drinking attitude when their soul is full of grievance, and considers it unfit to the characterization of whatsoever heroes’ behaviour: “sono afflittissimi d’animo, porre tutto il lor conforto in ubbriacarsi”³⁵⁵ (they are in deep grievance and put all their consolation in getting drunk).

Qian Zhongshu quotes Ludovico Antonio Muratori (1672-1750) from *Genesis of the Romantic Theory in the Eighteenth Century* by J.G. Robertson in a discussion about aesthetic and the relation between art and nature. Muratori states that art has to “far eminente la natura”³⁵⁶ (to make nature distinguished) taking the position of those that, like Plotinus, Bacon, Horace, Baudelaire, Dante, believe that man has to force nature. Man, in fact, cannot only imitate and needs instead to add something to create works that embellish and overcome nature.

A personality much representative of Italian Enlightenment is Cesare Beccaria (1738-1794), who became known to the philosophic and intellectual world of his age thanks to a booklet called *Dei Delitti e delle Pene* (On Crimes and Punishments) published when he was only 25. The aim of the booklet was to demonstrate that the current juridical system

³⁵⁴ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 85. See Giambattista Vico, *Opere*, 58.

³⁵⁵ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 396. See Giambattista Vico, *Principj di Scienza Nuova*, (Milano: Editore Fortunato Perelli, 1862), 305.

³⁵⁶ Qian Zhongshu, *Tan Yi Lu*, 155.

was absurd and could not guarantee the righteousness of state administration. Beccaria contests particularly the death penalty and the way in which both innocents and culprits were tortured to confess crimes. “La tortura”, torture, states Beccaria, “è il mezzo sicuro di assolvere i robusti scellerati e di condannare i deboli innocenti”³⁵⁷ is the assured way to acquit strong wicked men and to condemn weak innocents. Beccaria’s words are just one of the pieces of the condemnation of torture with the help of logical reasoning that, together with examples from Chinese (*Taiping Guang Ji*) as well as from western literature (Quintilian, Montaigne), seem to convey Qian Zhongshu’s ideas about the absurdity of the treatment that governments carry on to establish the guilt or innocence of people. Under torture, says Qian through Quintilian, who is able to endure sufferance, does not confess the truth, and who cannot endure physical pain confesses the false just because the body in distress is forced to do so. The temptation to link this criticism with the political and historical situation during the years immediately preceding the publication of *Guan Zhui Bian* is immediate if with torture we identify also the mild form of physical sufferance that many had to undergo wearing a donkey hat and a poster confessing inconsistent crimes.

The starting point for a discussion about joy and sorrow are the Italian philosopher Verri (1728-1797) and one of his important works, *Il Discorso Sull’Indole del Piacere e del Dolore* (Discourse on pleasure and sorrow). This work is recalled with the translated quotation that reads: “Il piacere non è un essere positivo”³⁵⁸ (pleasure is not a positive essence). No further indication is given about Verri’s text, apart from the translated title. The

³⁵⁷ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 536. See Cesare Beccaria, *Dei delitti e delle pene*, (Firenze: Tipografia di Luigi Pezzati, 1827), 83.

³⁵⁸ Qian Zhongshu, *Tan Yi Lu*, 75. See Pietro Verri, *Scritti vari*, (Firenze: Le Monnier, 1854), 5.

sentence comes from an introduction by Verri to an edition of his treatise written in 1781 and the fact that Qian Zhongshu does not give indications about the edition of the book may signify that the sentence is taken probably from Qian's previous notes or from other texts whence it had been quoted. Verri explains and demonstrates, with the support of other important philosophers and thinkers like Magalotti, Platone, Montaigne and Locke, that pleasure is born from a lack and a temporary suspension of sufferance.

The Enlightenment playwright Goldoni finds his place in an entry of *Guan Zhui Bian* commenting on the *Taiping Guangji* about a literary theme Qian finds common to many epochs and places: the swindler that wants to cheat collectors with fake curio and antiques. After many Chinese quotations that spread in the course of two pages, Goldoni's famous drama *La Famiglia dell'Antiquario* (The antique dealer's family) is present with two quotations on the swindler who says an old shoe to be the slipper of the Emperor Nero, the same slipper with which he is said having kicked Poppea: "la pantofola de Neron, colla qual l'ha dà quell terribil calzo a Poppea". The swindler also boasts a hair plait to be the one that Sesto Tarquini took from Lucrezia Romana's head in a fight "la drezza de cavelli de Lucrezia Romana, restada in mano a Sesto Tarquini".³⁵⁹ We might find the two episodes of cheat even more ironic if we think that both the kick of Nero to Poppea and the fact that Sesto Tarquini pulled a plait away Lucrezia Romana's head are most probably historical falsehoods.

³⁵⁹ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, 1188. See Carlo Goldoni, *Opere*, (Milano: per Nicolò Bettoni, 1831), 99.

5.1.9 Leopardi, Manzoni and 19th century poetry and novels

Zibaldone by the great Italian poet Leopardi is a work made of *biji*, notes, and Qian loves to recall it. Leopardi was much appreciated by the author who wrote that it was a pity not many Chinese would read the Italian writers' works. In *Tan Yi Lu* Leopardi is quoted the first time in a discussion about poetry, the lyric and the dramatic one. A quotation by Leopardi says that dramatic poetry is not real poetry, since real poetry is the spontaneous overflow of emotions, and this cannot be reached by a writer that needs to reverse his personality in another fictitious character. Leopardi's quotation is:

"L'estro del drammatico è finto, perchè ei dee fingere... Così delle Orazioni di finta occasione. Or che altro è la drammatica? Meno ridicola perché in versi?"³⁶⁰ (The inspiration of the dramatist is false, since he has to simulate...It is like odes written for fake occasions. What else is dramatic poetry? Is it less ridiculous just because it is written in verses?)

The quotation is preceded by a Chinese explanation that renders the sense of Leopardi. Notwithstanding Qian's appreciation for Leopardi, we find he is not in accordance with this opinion of the Italian writer. If, says Qian, dramatic poetry is not the real type of poetry, how comes that the most important literates from Ming and Qing dynasties took dramatic poetry as an example to study the composition of the *bagu* 八股 (eight parts essay to be written for the exams in imperial China)? We wait, adds Qian, scholars willing to do research to answer this question!

Pages later, we find Leopardi again in a discussion about poetry, and he is in the company of many other western poets: Baudelaire, Poe, Whitman,

³⁶⁰ Qian Zhongshu, *Tan Yi Lu*, 96. See Giacomo Leopardi, *Pensieri di varia filosofia e di bella letteratura*, (Firenze: Le Monnier, 1921), 2924.

Max Jacob. This time western quotations are not, as usual, preceded by the Chinese ones, and serve to explain and reinforce a characteristic belonging to Chinese literary tradition. The many voices say that good poems cannot be long and Leopardi affirms: “la poesia sta essenzialmente in un impeto; i lavori di poesia vogliono per natura esser corti”³⁶¹ (poetry is essentially an outburst; the essence of poems is brevity).

Pages later a definition given by Leopardi, the one of poetry as “vera e pura poesia in tutta la sua estensione”³⁶² (true and pure poetry in all its extension) from the *Zibaldone* is a proof of the existence and canonization of the definition of “pure poetry” to which Qian is devoting the whole CXXXVIII chapter of the *Tan Yi Lu*.

We might observe that in *Guan Zhui Bian* Qian Zhongshu wants to prove through juxtaposition that all literary realms are linked together and that there is a common spirit in literatures and cultures belonging to different epochs and places. He wants to demonstrate that many concepts and ideas are universal.

A proof of this universality of concepts and themes is offered in *Guan Zhui Bian* commenting on a passage of the *Guixi* 诡习 in the *Taiping Guangji* and the already quoted *Zibaldone*. In his work Leopardi describes a child born without arms capable of using feet to perform all the operations he should have done with hands and a girl able to embroider with feet:

³⁶¹ Qian Zhongshu, *Tan Yi Lu*, 511. See Giacomo Leopardi, *Pensieri di varia filosofia e di bella letteratura*, 2925.

³⁶² Qian Zhongshu, *Tan Yi Lu*, 673. See Giacomo Leopardi, *Pensieri di varia filosofia e di bella letteratura*, 2796.

“Io ho veduto un fanciullo nato senza braccia, far coi piedi le operazioni tutte delle mani; ho inteso di una donzella benestante che ricamava coi piedi”³⁶³

(I have seen a child born without arms, and he was doing with his feet all the operations for which usually hands are used; I have heard of a well-off girl that embroidered with her feet).

The same image is the one Qian comments from the *Guixi*.

In the first volume of *Guan Zhui Bian* Qian quotes Leopardi’s most famous poem, *l’Infinito* (The Infinity) that would also have suggested ideas of distance that enhances the sense of longing. The quoted incipit of the poem here evokes an image of distance amplified by a near object that shields the view of the far expanding horizon, “Sempre caro mi fu quest’ermo colle,/ e questa siepe/ che tanta parte dell’ultimo orizzonte il guardo esclude”.³⁶⁴ As for an Italian reader this passage would evoke a sense of extreme familiarity and participation, for all the others it would surely be obscure and puzzling since the translation of the passage is not provided, and there is only the explanation of its content with the reference in footnote to the Italian version of Leopardi’s collection of poems *I canti*.

Leopardi’s technique of having a small object (the hedgerow) placed close to the field of vision to make as a counterpart to the infinity of space is considered a skill in a poetic practice from Vincenzo Cardarelli (1887 – 1959), quoted with his *Momenti e Problemi di Storia dell’Estetica* (History of aesthetics: moments and problems) edited by Carlo Marzorati.³⁶⁵ The book

³⁶³ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, II, 1122. See Giacomo Leopardi, *Pensieri di varia filosofia e di bella letteratura*, 1484.

³⁶⁴ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 234. See Giacomo Leopardi, *Opere*, (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1877), 50.

³⁶⁵ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 234.

is present today in the catalogue of the Bodleian Library, main source of documents for Qian in 1937-1938, but since the book is dated 1959, it is impossible Qian had read it during his stay at Oxford. It would be a very interesting object of analysis to understand how and where Qian Zhongshu had the possibility to access such rare and not much widespread works like this one during the sixties and seventies of last century.

Leopardi is quoted again when talking about obscurity in poetry; the passages come from the *Zibaldone*:

“idée e pensieri vaghi e indefiniti; confonde l’indefinito coll’infinito; una piccolissima idea confusa è sempre maggiore di una grandissima, affatto chiara; il lasciar molto alla fantasia ed al cuore del lettore; descrivendo con pochi colpi e mostrando poche parti dell’oggetto, lasciavano l’immaginazione errare nel vago; sono poetissime e piacevoli, perché destano idee vaste, e indefinite; è piacevole per il vago dell’idea”³⁶⁶ (vague and indefinite ideas and thoughts; mistakes the indefinite with the infinite; the smallest confused idea is always bigger of a big unclear one; to leave much to the fantasy and the heart of the reader; to describe with few strokes disclosing only small parts of the objects, leaving imagination to wander in vagueness; they are poetic and pleasant because they arouse big and indefinite ideas; it is pleasant because its idea is vague).

Many different bites and pieces are brought together from Leopardi’s work using the same technique of juxtaposing that Qian uses in his works with the many quotations that cross the various fields of artistic creation.

Obscurity in poetry, and the sense of indefinite that poets pursue, is what Qian finds in a work quoted in footnote: *Fronde Sparte* (Scattered brances)

³⁶⁶ Ronald Egan, *Limited Views*, 108. See Giacomo Leopardi, *Pensieri di varia filosofia e di bella letteratura*, 111; 411; 1046; 90; 134; 1236; 2868. *poetissime* should be spelled *poeticissime*.

by Giulio Natali, a collection of notes and sketches similar to the same *Guan Zhui Bian* but only based on literary critic.

Nature is a leitmotif that Qian Zhongshu seems to pursue when reading Leopardi, who states in a quotation from the poem *La Ginestra* (The Genista) in *Guan Zhui Bian* that nature is “madre è di parto e di voler matrigna”.³⁶⁷ In a paraphrase more than a translation from Italian, Qian explains, “As for its procreation and nurturing, nature is man’s loving mother, while as for its aims and desires, nature is man’s step mother”.³⁶⁸ The theme is again recalled further on in the third volume of *Guan Zhui Bian* where Leopardi laments nature being not compassionate with men: “La natura [...] pietosa no, ma spettatrice almeno”³⁶⁹ (Nature [...] not compassionate but at least witness). The hint Qian seems not to notice in this quotation from Leopardi’s poem *Alla Primavera o delle Favole Antiche* (To Spring or on Ancient Fables) is that Leopardi seems to leave a small opening to nature, saying that if it is not compassionate, it could at least be spectator and participate in a way, even if a shallow one, to the destiny of men. *La Ginestra* again is quoted in the fourth volume of *Guan Zhui Bian* with a reference to nature that is well inscribed in the more general panorama of other western quotations on phenomena that happen in nature and that often go unnoticed. Leopardi’s words, preceded by Qian’s Chinese translation, are: “tuoi cespi solitari intorno spargi, /odorata

³⁶⁷ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian* II, 652. See Giacomo Leopardi, *Opere*, (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1877), 106. The right quotation should be: “è madre in parto ed in voler matrigna”.

³⁶⁸ Ronald Egan, *Limited Views*, 270.

³⁶⁹ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian* III, 1859. See Giacomo Leopardi, *Canti*, (Firenze: Le Monnier, 1870), 31.

ginestra, /contenta dei deserti"³⁷⁰ (You scatter around your solitary bushes, /fragrant genista, /happy with deserts).

Another reference to nature comes from the *Dialogo della Natura e di un'Anima* (Dialogue between Nature and a Soul) from Leopardi's *Operette Morali*. Here both a quotation from Leopardi and one from Arturo Graf (1848-1913) are meant to reinforce or offer an opposite view to a concept present in Chinese (Li He, Yuan dynasty, Song dynasty)³⁷¹ and western (Babbitt, Schiller, Pascal, Coleridge, Schmack, Keats, La Fontaine) literatures as well.

Literature and the creative process of literary works is a theme that recurs often in Qian's whole work, from the short story *Linggan* 灵感 (Inspiration), where a petty writer goes to hell and is pursued from the characters of his novels because he had handled their lives in a poor way, to *Guan Zhui Bian*, where in many entries Qian comes to discuss literary creation. In the third volume in the entry *Fa fen zhu shu* (发愤著书) Qian supports with quotations and examples the opinion that happy and satisfied people are the less apt to artistic creation, while literates usually are unhappy people. Jakob Burckhardt in his *Die Kultur der Renaissance in Italien* (Renaissance culture in Italy) had quoted, and his recalled by Qian, the work *De Literatorum Infelicitate* (On literates' unhappiness) by Piero Valeriano ³⁷² (...-1302), Italian Humanist who wrote this book in a dialogical form. It is most probable Qian just heard of the book by Burckhardt since he would have otherwise quoted from the original instead of reporting in footnote the book whence the reference happens to come.

³⁷⁰ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian* IV, 2106-2107. See Giacomo Leopardi, *Opere*, (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1877), 103.

³⁷¹ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 254-257.

³⁷² Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, III, 1494. In Qian's quotation, both the name of the author and the name of the work are wrong, he reports *De Infelicitate Literatorum* by Pierio Valeriaino.

As for literature, the same is for music, and for the appreciation of music in particular, as in the entry *Hao yin yi beiai wei zhu* 好音以悲哀为主³⁷³ where Qian expressly states that he will go through the subject with a few quotations to add clues to the treatment already carried out. A passage from Leopardi's *Zibaldone* here intends to demonstrate that the fact that music, good music, is linked to sadness, while being a truth, is also something that only advanced and civilized people might grasp. Leopardi's quotation reads:

“In somma, generalmente parlando, oggidì, fra le nazioni civili, l'effetto della musica è il pianto, o tende al pianto...Ora, tutto al contrario di quello che avviene costantemente fra noi, sappiamo che i selvaggi, i barbari, i popoli non avvezzi alla musica...in udirne qualche saggio, prorompono in *éclats* di giubilo, in salti in grida di gioia”³⁷⁴

(In general terms nowadays among civilized nations the effect of music is cry, or goes towards crying... Now, contrarily to what usually happens among us, we know that barbarians, savages and people not used to listening to music...when they hear it, they are happy and have *éclats* of joy, they jump and cry for happiness).

Thus, Leopardi's quotation brings forward the point Qian wants to make: it is possible to be happy when hearing good music, but to be happy is not the sign of appreciation that wise people would demonstrate. Those people that express joy while hearing good music are not the right ones to enjoy the best of it.

Other quotations that follow in *Guan Zhui Bian* are again about feelings, this time pertaining to the sky instead of human beings. In nature, the

³⁷³ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, III, 1506-1511.

³⁷⁴ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, III, 1508. See Giacomo Leopardi, *Pensieri di varia filosofia e di bella letteratura*, 2070. *Oggidì* is here misspelled in *oggiadl*.

creatures less conscious of their life, “fornito di minore vitalità e sentimento”³⁷⁵ (having less vitality and consciousness) reads the quotation from Leopardi, are the ones that live longer and do not grow old because they are not spoiled by feelings, grievances and passions. Li He wrote in a poem that the sky would grow old if it had feelings and Arturo Graf in his poem *L’Azzurro* (Sky-blu) wrote that the sky “tal ieri, tal oggi, tal sarai domani” is the same today, as it was yesterday and as it will be tomorrow. The quotation continues: “e tu, privo d’amor, privo di senso”, and you, without love and without consciousness, “Tu sol, tu solo incolume, immortale,/incorrotto, glacial come un coverchio/ smisurato d’avel pesi sul mondo”,³⁷⁶ (You, only you, undamaged, everlasting,/ uncorrupted, iced like the huge cover/ of a coffin weight on the world). All these ideas about the sky as being unchangeable and immortal thanks to its lack of feelings complete one another, says Qian Zhongshu, and make the vision of the sky to become a comprehensive one. Moreover, to consider both authors’ views (Li He and Arturo Graf) and their different spatial and time conditions enriches our point of view.

What is to notice here is that Qian translates the poem by Arturo Graf, which comes from a work edited by Baldocci called *Poeti Minori dell’Ottocento* (Minor Poets of the Nineteenth Century) and his interpretation of a word like “avel” classical form of the world “tomba” (tomb) is precise and well translated in Chinese.

Du “Laaokong”, 1962, is a wonderfully developed essay that brings us naturally inside Qian Zhongshu’s net of thoughts.

³⁷⁵ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 220.

³⁷⁶ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 220. See Arturo Graf, *Le poesie*, (Torino: Loescher, 1922), 133.

The main theme here is the way in which painters can render poetic figures, and the link between poetry and painting. Talking about metaphor and rhetoric figures Qian cannot avoid quoting from Italian criticism. There appears a distinctive characteristic of Qian Zhongshu's mastering of quotations: he quotes very often minor literati, sometimes unread even from Italian scholars: Benedetto Menzini (1646-1708) is an Italian poet belonging to the Academy of Arcadia cited in one of Leopardi's minor works: *La Crestomazia Italiana* (Italian anthology). The quotation does not even come from one of Menzini's major poems but from a critical treatise on the irregular construction of the language of Tuscany, the region of Florence. Menzini affirms in this essay that "Figura è un errore fatto con ragione".³⁷⁷ (Simile is a consciously made mistake).

Lin Shu de Fanyi is a long and interesting essay about translation that starts with a quotation from Leopardi and his *Zibaldone* where the poet says that to obtain a good translation the source and the target text should seem not compatible or even contradictory (paiono discordanti e incompatibili e contraddittorie) and the translator should pretend (ora il traduttore necessariamente affetta) to follow the truthfulness and spontaneity of the source text (inaffettato, naturale o spontaneo)³⁷⁸. Qian is even able to quote a popular Italian saying "traduttore-traditore" (translator-traitor)³⁷⁹ about the changes a text undergoes when translated in another language. Qian's view on translation, in accordance with Leopardi's point of view, is that "faithfulness requires 'meaning grasped, words forgotten' (*de yi wang yan*

³⁷⁷ Qian Zhongshu, "Du Laokong" in *Qi Zhui Ji*, 45. The quotation is from Menzini, *Della costruzione irregolare della lingua Toscana, trattato di Benedetto Menzini*, Firenze, 1837, quoted in Giacomo Leopardi, *Crestomazia italiana*, (Napoli: Stamperia del Vaglio, 1866), 110.

³⁷⁸ Qian Zhongshu, "Lin Shu de Fanyi" in *Qi Zhui Ji*, 78. See Giacomo Leopardi, *Pensieri di varia filosofia e di bella letteratura*, 310.

³⁷⁹ Qian Zhongshu, "Lin Shu de Fanyi" in *Qi Zhui Ji*, 78.

得意忘言)”, the meaning should be conveyed in such a perfect way that words should be an instrument for it without obstructing it with their strangeness or encumbrance.³⁸⁰

The one above is not the only quotation from Leopardi’s translation related ideas. In *Guan Zhui Bian*, following a discussion about imitation on one side and artistic or literary creation on the other, Leopardi contributes to the conversation saying: “Questo è imitare...non è copiare nè rifare...Quella è operazione pregevole, anche per la difficoltà d’assimilare un oggetto in una materia di tutt’altra natura; questa è bassa e triviale, per la molta facilità, che toglie la meraviglia”³⁸¹ (This is to imitate...it is not to copy or to redo...That one is a valuable operation, even due to the difficulty of transposing an object in a completely different material; this one is a low and trivial activity because it is too easy and bears no wonder). The kind of imitation that means reworking and that does not simply try to follow a given pattern is thus the most appreciated. This quotation is in line with the preceding one in demonstrating that the translator, as well as the follower of whatsoever artistic trend, needs to recreate to produce an outcome that seems spontaneous and is valuable for itself.

³⁸⁰ Zheng Xiaodan, *A study on Qian Zhongshu’s translation*, 70-83. Zheng Xiaodan in his article offers an example of Qian’s translation practice for a good rendering of meanings and forms in translation with this example: in *Selected Works of Mao Zedong* we find this sentence: “There is a household Chinese saying “*San ge chou pijiang, ding ge Zhu Geliang* 三个臭皮匠，顶个诸葛亮”. If we translate it as “even three common cobblers can surpass Zhuge Liang”, we can deliver the surface literal meaning, but its true meaning is unmanifested. Besides, few western readers know Zhuge Liang. Even if a reader happens to know who Zhuge Liang is, he might not be able to figure out why Zhuge Liang is connected to cobblers. If we translate with the English proverb, “many heads are better than one” or “collective wisdom is greater than a single wit”, the meaning is correct, but the two particular Chinese images of “Zhuge Liang” and “cobblers” are lost. Qian translated it into “three cobblers with their wits combined equal Chukeh Liang, the master mind”. This translation avoids the loss of meaning or images in translation. Thus, we can learn from Qian Zhongshu’s creative translation ways.”

³⁸¹ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 424-425. See Giacomo Leopardi, *Pensieri di varia filosofia e di bella letteratura*, 1806-1807.

In talking about the different expressions caused by joy and sorrow, Qian quotes the Italian poet Leopardi, who in his *Zibaldone*³⁸² says that joy causes expansion while sorrow narrowing (questa tendenza al dilatamento nell'allegrezza, e al restringimento nella tristezza); many expressions in Chinese have the same semantic likeness: *xinhua nùfāng* 心花怒放 (to be elated), *kaixin* 开心 (happy), *kuaihuo de gutou dou qingle* 快活的骨头都轻了 (the happy bones become light), *xinli da ge jie* 心里打个结 (a knot in the heart), *xinshang youle kuai shitou* 心上有了块石头 (a stone on the heart), *yi kouqi bie zai duzili* 一口气别在肚子里 (Separate without a break in the stomach). To demonstrate community of intents in literary themes, Qian quotes Leopardi's *Zibaldone* again with a sentence about the caducity of beauty and its link with love:

“il veder morire una persona amata, è molto meno lacerante che il vederla deperire e trasformarsi nel corpo e nell'animo da malattia. Perché nel primo caso le illusioni restano, nel secondo svaniscono”³⁸³

(to see the death of a beloved person is less painful than to see this person decay and be completely devoured by illness. In the first case illusions stay, otherwise they disappear).

The quotation expresses what other cited authors in the same paragraph state: when beauty disappears, love disappears with it and it is better to die young and beautiful than to wither and become unattractive to the same eyes that have once adored the beauty that now is gone. The author does not express his opinion, and the quotations in a row are just the demonstration of poetic trends common to east and west, past and present.

³⁸² Qian Zhongshu, “Shi Keyi Yuan” in *Qi Zhui Ji*, 124. See Giacomo Leopardi, *Pensieri di varia filosofia e di bella letteratura*, 106.

³⁸³ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 525. See Giacomo Leopardi, *Pensieri di varia filosofia e di bella letteratura*, 415.

In *Guan Zhui Bian* another sentence from Leopardi's *Zibaldone* reinforces what written by other Chinese and western authors and quoted by Qian about a person's eyes being the utmost representative of his soul:

"la parte più espressiva del volto e della persona; come la fisionomia sia determinata dagli occhi"³⁸⁴

(face and person's most expressive part; eyes determine physiognomy).

An expansion on the notion comes from a quotation from Benvenuto Cellini, (1500-1571) sole western quotation of the entry, together with a French saying, and it says that an oblique glance is like the one of a pig "Giunto al papa, guardatomi così coll'occhio del porco, cioè biecamente"³⁸⁵ (looking at me with pig's eyes, obliquely). A person's glance thus gives him a precise characterization that is not only a physical one.

The first quotation from Leopardi's *Pensieri* (Thoughts) is in a footnote in the LVII chapter of the first book of *Guan Zhui Bian*: "Colpa non perdonata dal genere umano, il quale non odia mai tanto chi fa male, nè il male stesso, quanto chi lo nomina"³⁸⁶ (Not forgiven fault of the human race, which does not hate who does any evil deed, nor hates evil, it hates instead who of evil speaks). The quotation finds its place in a discussion about truth and the appearance of truth where other quotations bring the attention on things that are and things that appear.

Qian's work does not quote much of Italian 19th century poetry, apart from Leopardi. Romantic poetry, too based on imagination and on the reaction of readers to poetic images, with a minimal grasp on reality and factual things, was not one of the preferential areas for Qian Zhongshu's readings.

³⁸⁴ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, II, 1127. See Giacomo Leopardi, *Pensieri di varia filosofia e di bella letteratura*, 1112.

³⁸⁵ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, II, 1141. See Benvenuto Cellini, *La vita di Benvenuto Cellini*, (Firenze: Le Monnier, 1852), 114.

³⁸⁶ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 608.

Exceptions are Leopardi, highly appreciated by Qian, and the young poet and critic Giuseppe Giusti (1809-1850), that often appears in Qian's works on various themes. An example of allegory in *Tan Yi Lu* comes from Giusti. With Giusti and his witty poems called *La Chiocciola* (the Snail) many other poets are quoted in the allegory of a snail that brings its home always with itself and that in the words of the metaphysical poet John Donne in his letter to Sir Henry Wotton³⁸⁷ represents the universe. The same image in the *Euphues* by Lyly³⁸⁸ represents women and in *Fables* by Arnault³⁸⁹ represents an egoist and self-sufficient person. Qian Zhongshu quotes in full the second strophe of the seventy-two lines poem by Giusti:

“contenta ai comodi /che Dio la fece /può dirsi il Diogene /della sua specie; /per prender aria /non passa l’uscio; /nelle abitudini /del proprio guscio /sta persuasa /e non intasa: /viva la chiocciola /bestia da casa”³⁹⁰
 (Happy with the premise /that God gave it, /it is the Diogenes /of its species /In order to breathe /it need not leave its door; /it is used /to live indoor/and it is well contented /and does not disturb /blessed be the snail, /housebound creature).

A strong poetic image provides also the other poem by Giuseppe Giusti quoted in *Guan Zhui Bian* called *Gingillino*. *Gingillino* is the name of the main character of the long poem and represents all the people that reach important positions through frauds and evil deeds. It is toward them that Giusti's satire is directed. *Gingillino* is said to believe in mint

³⁸⁷ Qian Zhongshu, *Tan Yi Lu*, 572.

³⁸⁸ Qian Zhongshu, *Tan Yi Lu*, 573.

³⁸⁹ Qian Zhongshu, *Tan Yi Lu*, 573.

³⁹⁰ Qian Zhongshu, *Tan Yi Lu*, 573. See Poesie di Giuseppe Giusti, http://www.archive.org/stream/poesiedigiuseppe00gius/poesiedigiuseppe00gius_djvu.txt. Accessed December 12, 2011.

and in her son, called sequin:³⁹¹ “io credo nella Zecca onnipotente/ e nel figliuolo suo detto zecchino”.³⁹² All the quotations that precede and follow are meant to illustrate how people do everything for money, and that notwithstanding what commonly believed, to stay honest and avoid cheating for money pays back more than fraud and enrichment through every mean.

The theme of money is also present in the fourth volume of *Guan Zhui Bian* through a quotation by Cecco Angiolieri (1257-1313) commenting on a *fu* 赋 of the western Jin period titled *Qian Shen Lun* 钱神论 (Saint discourse on money), a satire on mammon, the insane and greedy love for money on everything else. Angiolieri is a contemporary of Dante, and an interesting personality contrasting the *dolce stil novo* (Sweet New Style) then in vogue, the golden and gentle poetry exploring the philosophical, spiritual, psychological and social effects of love in the vernacular from Tuscany. Angiolieri’s poem, quoted by Qian, similarly to the *Qian Shen Lun*, satirizes on money calling it the best relative ever: “I buoni parenti, dica chi dir vuole, /a chi ne può aver, sono i fiorini: /quei son fratei carnai e ver cugini, /e padre e madre, figlioli e figliole”³⁹³ (True relatives, /for whoever may have them, are fiorins: /those are blood brothers and true cousins, /fathers and mothers, sons and daughters). From the western Jin (265–316) to 13th century’s medieval Italy the theme is the same and Qian Zhongshu seems to speak through the mocking tone of the two authors. It is worth noting that the

³⁹¹ Ancient golden coin.

³⁹² Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 613. See *Poesie di Giuseppe Giusti*, http://www.archive.org/stream/posesiedigiuseppe00gius/posesiedigiuseppe00gius_djvu.txt. Accessed December 12, 2011.

³⁹³ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, IV, 1939. See Cecco Angiolieri, *Rime*, (Milano: Bur, 1979), 59.

quotation comes from Enrico Maria Fusco's critical work on Italian lyrical poetry *La Lirica*, again literature visited through the critical filter. As with romantic poetry, an even less quoted literary genre is modern romantic novel. Contemporary novels will find their place among Qian's cited works, while scanty references are directed towards big authors of past centuries like Alessandro Manzoni (1785-1873), author of *I Promessi Sposi* (The Betrothed), absolute masterpiece of Italian literature. The first reference to Manzoni is in *Guan Zhui Bian* and is from the said novel, the second is from a letter, the *Lettera a Carlo D'Azeglio* (Letter to Carlo D'azeglio). The quotation from the novel finds its place in a sequence of quotations that focus on the same concept and that are arranged as an invocation of authority, and does not constitute the focal point of the entry in which it is inserted, being one of a series of similar sentences. It says:

“Fu, da quel punto in poi, una vita delle più tranquille, delle più feici, delle più invidiabili; di maniera che, se ve l'avessi a raccontare, vi seccherebbe a morte”³⁹⁴

(It was, from then on, one of the most peaceful, happy and enviable lives; so that if I ever wanted to narrate it you would find it deadly boring).

The quotation is preceded by its translation and accompanied by page and edition reference. The second quotation, with the same function of the previous one, to reinforce a said opinion, reads: “il trasgredir le regole è stato un mezzo di far meglio”³⁹⁵ (To infringe rules has been a mean to act in a better way).

³⁹⁴ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, II, 1036. “feici” should be spelled as “felici”.

³⁹⁵ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, III, 1882.

Various reasons are probably the cause for Qian's low consideration of Manzoni: it is a notably religious author, it belongs to a school he did not particularly appreciate and it was one of the great masters that for Qian were not the best examples of literature and literary trends: better for him to focalize on less known and important authors. A data we cannot determine is the time he read Manzoni's works, because it might as well be a matter of time if he did not quote the author in previous works and did not add much in *Guan Zhui Bian*. We cannot forget considering though that most certainly the Bodleian Library, well from which Qian drew out most of his readings, could not but store in its catalogue works by such a renowned author as Manzoni.

5.2 From Pascoli to Eco: present ideas to shed light on the past

If the amount of quotations from 20th century literature is scanty, due to time reasons and to the difficulty of obtaining reading material in 20th century China, they are the most surprising and fascinating for their striking connections with the past and for the witty combination of references in which they are inserted. This is the case, for example, of the references to the American President Richard Nixon or to Umberto Eco and Luigi Pirandello's novels. Their presence in Qian's work, as well as the absence of other authors' quotations, on one side might give us a clue on which where the contemporary western authors and works already present in China before the eighties, on the other might act as a guide for us to study the influence of Qian Zhongshu for the introduction of western literature in 20th century China. It is also interesting to note the way in which these western contemporary quotations are functional to the

explanation of ancient Chinese classics in a paradigm that might have seemed quite heretical to some of the more traditional Chinese commentators and critics. The striking contrast originated by the explanation of Chinese classics through western contemporary authors is exemplified in the already mentioned 1926 essay *Zhongguo gu you de wenxue piping de yi ge tedian*³⁹⁶ where, reflecting itself in the mirror of the words of some of the most influential critics and writers in western literary canon, Chinese literature becomes aware of a distinguishing and substantial feature that has always “intrinsically” (*guyou*) characterized it. One of the most illuminating examples of Qian’s method of using western literature to explain Chinese concepts is exemplified in the mentioned essay *Tonggan* (Synesthesia) on the figure of synaesthesia in eastern and western traditions. “Le allodole sgranavano nel cielo le perle del loro limpido gorgheggio” (Skylarks released in the sky the pearls of their clear warble), translated by Qian as *Yi qun yunquàn míngkuài liúli de xixiguagua, zài tiānkōng lǐ sàkāile yī kēkē zhūzi* 一群云雀儿明快流利的咕咕呱呱，在天空里撒开了一颗颗珠子),³⁹⁷ is the quotation from Francesco Perri (1885–1974) extracted from Dino Provenzal’s *Dizionario delle Immagini* (Dictionary of figures of speech), and in which similar images are presented from the Italians D’Annunzio, Mazzoni (1878-1928) and Paolieri (1878-1928), recalled from Qian in footnote.

Also in footnote, Qian mentions Rostagni’s (1892-1961) comment on Aristotle’s *Poetic*, and it does so when talking about the *sillogismo scientifico* (scientific syllogism) and the *entimema immaginativo e sensitivo* (sensitive and imaginative enthymeme)³⁹⁸.

³⁹⁶ See paragraph 4.6 “Quotations as a looking glass”.

³⁹⁷ Qian Zhongshu, “Tonggan” in *Qi Zhui Ji*, 66.

³⁹⁸ Qian Zhongshu, “Tonggan” in *Qi Zhui Ji*, 75.

5.2.1 Pascoli

Together with Goethe, Novalis, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Dickens, Flaubert and Nietzsche, Pascoli is quoted to sustain the aesthetic principle that it is acceptable and praising to create something new from the old and to arrange ordinary and common things into an elegant and unusual aspect. Pascoli's quotation is taken from his poem *Il Sabato* (Saturday) and had been quoted in *Momenti e Problemi di Storia dell'Estetica* (The history of aesthetics: moments and problems) by Marzorati. Qian reports it as follows: "La poesia è nelle cose. Il poeta presenta la visione di cosa posta sotto gli occhi di tutti e che nessuno vedeva"³⁹⁹ (Poetry is inside things. The poet presents the vision of things under everybody's eyes but that nobody sees).

It is the duty of the artist, poet or painter, to express the meaning that is beyond objects or words, because the things that are the most difficult to write or to represent are the ones with a boundless meaning, hence more difficult to express in a finite language.

During the brief account of the usage of synaesthesia in the history of western literature, every century and every literary movement considered is supported by a relevant quotation: 15th and 16th century Baroque loved to use "certi impasti di metafore nello scambio dei cinque sensi" (some mixture of metaphors in the exchange between the five senses of perception) as F.Flora (1891-1962) wrote, quoted from *Marino e i Marinisti*

³⁹⁹ Qian Zhongshu, *Tan Yi Lu*, 38. The complete and correct quotation from *Pensieri e discorsi* di Giovanni Pascoli, MDCCCXCV-MCMVI second ed., Nicola Zanichelli, Bologna 1914, would be: "La poesia è nelle cose: un certo etere che si trova in questa più, in quella meno, in alcune sì, in altre no. Il poeta solo lo conosce, ma tutti gli uomini, poi che egli significò, lo riconoscono. Egli presenta la visione di cosa posta sotto gli occhi di tutti e che nessuno vedeva".

edited by G.G. Ferrero.⁴⁰⁰ In Italian poetry, stars are associated very often with a noise or a buzzing, as in an already quoted famous poem by Pascoli called *Il gelsomino notturno*:⁴⁰¹ “La Chiocchetta per l’aia azzurra / va col suo pigolio di stelle”⁴⁰² (The small hen walks in the azure barnyard with his stars peeping). The same line is quoted in *Guan Zhui Bian*,⁴⁰³ with the same purpose.

In the critical essay by Natale Busetto (1877-1968) *Giosuè Carducci: l’Uomo, il Poeta, il Critico, il Prosatore* (Giosuè Carducci: man, poet, critic and prose writer) it is recorded that for the Italian poet Giosuè Carducci (1835-1907) Romantic poetry is a “secrezione naturale”⁴⁰⁴ (natural secretion), in the sense that it is negatively an uncontrolled outcome of sentimentalism. In *Tan Yi Lu* the same essay is quoted⁴⁰⁵ when Carducci affirms that in poetry the sound and the rhythm are more important than the words used to express whatsoever content. It is interesting to note that again Qian Zhongshu has not quoted the poet directly, but has read his works and analyzed his outcomes through literary criticism.

5.2.2 Literary critics in the essays: Croce, De Sanctis, Provenzal

We have many proofs in the works of Qian Zhongshu of his reading the Italian critic Benedetto Croce (1866-1952). When Croce is quoted, or when a quotation from literary critics is made, often it is not properly of quotations we might speak of, but of references, since the name of the

⁴⁰⁰ Qian Zhongshu, “Tonggan” in *Qi Zhui Ji*, 72.

⁴⁰¹ Pascoli, *Il gelsomino notturno*, 1901.

⁴⁰² Qian Zhongshu, “Tonggan” in *Qi Zhui Ji*, 72. See Giovanni Pascoli, *I canti di Castelvecchio*, (Milano: BUR, 1983), 56.

⁴⁰³ See Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, II, 745.

⁴⁰⁴ Qian Zhongshu, “Shi Keyi Yuan” in *Qi Zhui Ji*, 119.

⁴⁰⁵ Qian Zhongshu, *Tan Yi Lu*, 716-717.

critic is recalled together with the title of his work and the content to which Qian Zhongshu is referring.

In the essays collected in *Rensheng bianshang de bianshang* we also find numerous translations of critical passages, like the ones by the Italian critic Francesco De Sanctis (1817-1883). In the 1962 essay *Fu De Sangketi qi wenlun san ze*⁴⁰⁶ 弗·德·桑克梯其文论三则 (Three principles in the essays of Francesco De Sanctis), the idea that the results of the work of a writer do not correspond often to his intentions is brought forth from the author and demonstrated through three passages by De Sanctis, two of which are chosen from a collection by Luigi Russo (1892-1961) titled *Gli scrittori d'Italia* (Italian writers), and one from Walter Binni's *I Classici Italiani nella Storia della Critica*⁴⁰⁷ (Italian classics in the history of critics).

In his introduction to the three translated passages, Qian defines De Sanctis "the most important critic of the Italian nineteenth century", stating that his influence on the contemporary literary world has been wide and not only limited to Italy. All the outcomes the Anglo-Americans got with their concept of the "intentional fallacy" have been nothing else than an expansion of this concept previously expounded by De Sanctis. The three passages then translated are about Dante, Manzoni and Leopardi, undoubtedly three of the main Italian writers, and demonstrate that the three writers wrote for a scope and with an idea different from what they ended up obtaining. The point to note here is the accordance of the author with the writers quoted and translated and his knowledge and mastering of their theories and works. The essay on De Sanctis, apart for its importance in the development and exposition of Qian Zhongshu's

⁴⁰⁶ The essay had been firstly published in the review *Wen Hui Bao*, 15-08-1962, see Qian Zhongshu, *Rensheng bianshang de bianshang*, 377- 381.

⁴⁰⁷ Walter Binni, *I classici italiani nella storia della critica*, Firenze, La Nuova Italia, 1970.

ideas on the relation between writers and literary composition, is also important as one of the main achievements for the author in his translation practice.

The same gap between intent and result is quoted in footnote in *Guan Zhui Bian* when De Sanctis' sentence from *Storia della Letteratura Italiana* (History of Italian Literature), who Qian fully read (see Xia Zhiqing, *Zhonghui Qian Zhongshu Jishi*), incites to distinguish intentions from reality: "si ha a distinguere il mondo intenzionale e il mondo effettivo".⁴⁰⁸ A few lines earlier exactly the same concept had been expressed through the already mentioned passage from Machiavelli: "andare dietro alla verità effettuale della cosa che alla immaginazione di essa"⁴⁰⁹ (it is necessary to follow the practical truth and not the imagined one).

A further expansion on the theory of writers obtaining something different from what they wanted to express is the idea that even disciples of great masters reach an outcome that is a depreciation of their masters' theories. This is what Qian Zhongshu demonstrates in *Tan Yi Lu* L with the help of quotations from Renard, Nietzsche, Burckhardt and De Sanctis.

De Sanctis' words, preceded by a translation in Chinese, and from the same above-mentioned *Gli Scrittori d'Italia* edited by Luigi Russo, are:

"Ma che cosa è una scuola? Una scuola è la decomposizione del caposcuola. E ne nasce troppo spesso che tutto quello che nel caposcuola è difetto, ma tenuto a freno dalla forza del genio, per certuni si ritiene bellezza e diventa *maniera*"⁴¹⁰

(What is a School? A School is the decomposition of its leader. It often happens that what in the leader of a School is considered fault and is

⁴⁰⁸ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 609 e IV, 1923.

⁴⁰⁹ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 609. See p. 151.

⁴¹⁰ Qian Zhongshu, *Tan Yi Lu*, 452-453.

restrained by his genius is instead considered beauty from others and becomes a *trend*). Again, the same idea expressed in a different manner is the one in *Guan Zhui Bian* when Qian quotes De Sanctis in footnote without translation in Chinese and comments on the concept that writers may be influenced by other artists that have preceded them. Thus, their works and mind are not pure and innocent, but rely on previous creations. The quotation to support this idea is from the literary critic Francesco De Sanctis again, who, in his *Storia della Letteratura Italiana* wrote:

“lo scrittore non dice quello che pensa o immagina o sente, perchè non è l'immagine che gli sta innanzi, ma la frase di Orazio e di Virgilio”⁴¹¹

(the writer does not say what he thinks or imagines or feels, since what he has before his sight is not an image, but Horace and Virgil's words).

A quotation from Momigliano (1908-1987) comes from *La Critica Letteraria Contemporanea* (Contemporary Literary Critic) edited by Luigi Russo, “Noi sentiamo la poesia soltanto quando tutto tace dentro di noi”⁴¹² (We feel poetry only when everything else is silent inside ourselves). This reinforces and supports other quotations from Chinese and western authors affirming that the utmost level of art is reached when there is complete silence around and inside the reader and the artist as well. The same concept had been expressed in the essay *Yi Ge Pianjian* 一个偏见 (A prejudice) where Qian sustains that from noise and confusion only prejudices, that are a state of lack of reason for the brain, can be aroused, while good and rational thoughts are originated by silence, where silence is not meant as the complete lack of sounds, which would spring only from death, but from a transparent state of the sense of hearing.⁴¹³ To

⁴¹¹ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 898.

⁴¹² Qian Zhongshu, *Tan Yi Lu*, 671.

⁴¹³ See Qian Zhongshu, *Yi Ge Pianjian*, in *Xie Zai Rensheng Bianshang*, 44-45.

reinforce the assumption that lack of silence means death Qian quotes Dante affirming that Hell is the place where even the sun is silent “dove il sol tace”.⁴¹⁴

Another work by Luigi Russo, *Antologia della Critica Letteraria* (Anthology of Literary Criticism), is the one from which a quotation from Francesco Redi⁴¹⁵ (1626-1697), preceded by the translation in Chinese by Qian Zhongshu, comes. The quotation implies that there is no greater enemy of “good” than the will to change the status of things to pursue “the better”; the quotation is inscribed in a discussion on the need to keep changing and modifying artistic works, poems and paintings the same. The amount of quotations in this LIX chapter of *Tan Yi Lu* suggests that to change too much is not of any help for the sake of good artistic works and seems to point to the author’s point of view, “to make perfection more perfect is like to add feet to the drawing of a snake”.⁴¹⁶ The same concept had been reinforced a few lines earlier, among other quotations, by a quotation from Vasari’s (1511-1574) *Le Vite de’ più Eccellenti Pittori, Scultori, e Architettori* (The lives of the most excellent painters, sculptors and architects) quoted in Pareyson’s *Estetica: Teoria della Formatività*⁴¹⁷ (Aesthetic: theory of Formativity) who all the same affirmed that sometimes drafts born from an artistic outburst are full of strength and expressivity while the works revised too many times are without any taste. Creative process is also the subject of another quotation from the same *Estetica: Teoria della Formatività*

⁴¹⁴ Qian Zhongshu, *Yi Ge Pianjian*, in *Xie Zai Rensheng Bianshang*, 45. See Dante Alighieri, *La Commedia secondo l’antica vulgata*, 4.

⁴¹⁵ See Qian Zhongshu, *Tan Yi Lu*, 587. Francesco Redi (1626-1697) is an Italian doctor and literate. He carried on important researches on viper’s venom and was a member of the Italian *Accademia delle Crusca*, the more acknowledged association for studies on the Italian language.

⁴¹⁶ See Qian Zhongshu, *Tan Yi Lu*, 586.

⁴¹⁷ Qian Zhongshu, *Tan Yi Lu*, 586.

where Pareyson's expressions "l'intenzione formativa" (creative intention) and "la materia d'arte"⁴¹⁸ (material for art) have been quoted to better clarify and explain the meaning of the Chinese words *xin* 心 and *wu* 物 respectively, words that in Chinese combine many different meanings, and acquire clarification from the explanation that the Italian philosopher offers in his work. At the same time his sentence "caricano l'operazione utilitaria di una intenzionalità formativa"⁴¹⁹ (give to the utilitarian action a creative intent), quoted in the second volume of *Guan Zhui Bian*, explains the divination process of the *Yi Lin* 易林, derived from the classic *Yi Jing*.

In *Guan Zhui Bian* a quotation from Luigi Russo and his *La Critica Italiana Contemporanea* (Italian Contemporary Criticism) proves that to paint according to the words of poetry would make up for a painting by a mad man. Words by Giosuè Carducci are quoted at this regard when he writes "l'aria è plumbea e l'afa pesante"⁴²⁰ (the air is like lead and the sultriness is heavy). The weight that concepts have in words, expressing an emotional feeling, and ideas have in paintings, expressing a sensation feeling, is always different and should be attentively pondered.

In 1979 the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences published a study titled *Waiguo Lilunjia Zuojia Lun Xingxiang Siwei* 外国理论家作家论形象思维 (Foreign Critics discuss the thought in terms of images)⁴²¹ in which Qian Zhongshu, Yang Jiang, Liu Mingjiu 柳鸣九 and Liu Ruoduan 刘若端 translated passages from most European and American critics about some crucial concepts in literary critical studies such as fantasy, imagination and their links with literary creation and the work of mind in understanding the physical and imaginative world. The choice of the authors to be

⁴¹⁸ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, II, 775.

⁴¹⁹ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, II, 816.

⁴²⁰ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 215.

⁴²¹ Qian Zhongshu, *Rensheng bianshang de bianshang*, 382-470.

translated among the classical authors from western Europe was conducted by the four authors jointly. Qian Zhongshu and Yang Jiang choose the authors from contemporary Western Europe and America. The content and the translations were revised by Qian Zhongshu and Yang Jiang. On a total number of thirty-five authors, six are the Italians, all classical but one, contemporary, and, among those, three were translated from English and the others directly from Italian. Among the classical Italian writers we find Bernardino Tomitano (1517-1576) and his *Della Lingua Thoscana*⁴²² (On the Language of Tuscany), 1545, translated from B. Hathaway's *The Age of Criticism*, G. Mazzoni with *Della Difesa della Commedia di Dante* (On Defence of Dante's Comedy), 1587, translated from A. H. Gilbert's *Literary Criticism: Plato to Dryden*, L.A. Muratori and his *Della Perfetta Poesia Italiana* (On Perfect Italian Poetry), 1706, translated from E.F. Carritt's *Philosophy of Beauty*. All of them talk about the difference between fantasy and rational thought and about the different way in which they interact to create poetic images.

We may be quite sure of Qian Zhongshu being in charge of the translations from Italian of Vico, Leopardi and Croce, since the source texts are editions and works whence Qian Zhongshu has quoted from quite often.

We also suppose that the same Qian Zhongshu has been the author of the introduction to the second part of the study about contemporary American and European criticism, since only he and Yang Jiang were in charge of this part and in its introduction we find a precise and praising account of the contribution of the Italian critic Benedetto Croce to western aesthetic. Croce, writes the author of the passage, has been able to clarify

⁴²² It should be *Della lingua Toscana*.

the confusion of the aesthetical School between thought in terms of images (intuitive knowledge) and abstract thought, he has also clarified ideas related to thought in terms of images and has enriched the field of western aesthetic.⁴²³ Given the numberless quotations of Croce in the whole work of Qian Zhongshu, we may take this assumption as his profession of appraisal for the Italian philosopher and literary critic, notwithstanding an initial disapproval of his conceptions. At the end of the translated passage, there is a small summary of Croce's life and main works⁴²⁴.

With regard to this, it is necessary to specify that we find a twofold appreciation of Croce on the side of Qian Zhongshu. If the praising account just mentioned of the Italian critic is from a corpus of essays written in 1979 and belongs to the mature phase of Qian's elaboration and reflection on literary themes, opinions on Croce in works of the pre-Cultural Revolution period, like *Tan Yi Lu*, are not equally happy about the critic's thought. A comment on this offers Xia Zhiqing in his *Zhonghui Qian Zhongshu Jishi*⁴²⁵ where the author reports of Qian telling him that he was not so happy about some opinions expressed in *Tan Yi Lu* where, for example, sometimes the treatment reserved to the Italian Croce had not been a thorough one and that, after reading the whole corpus of Croce's works, he had been moved to appreciation of the critic's scholarly views.

Anyway, even in *Tan Yi Lu* Croce is mentioned for an invocation of authority. If we read, for example, the LXI chapter of the work, the critic, together with Dante, is quoted extensively about the interesting relation

⁴²³ See Qian Zhongshu, *Xie zai Rensheng Bianshang*, 440.

⁴²⁴ We find the same opinions on Croce's influence on the aesthetic thought and of his contribution to the clarification of the difference between intuitive thought and abstract thought in the chapter that Zhu Guanqian dedicates to the Italian critic in his *Xifang Meixue Shi* 西方美学史. Since the expressions used and the opinions involved are nearly the same, we may suppose Zhu Guanqian has been a source for Qian Zhongshu.

⁴²⁵ See Xia Zhiqing, "Zhonghui Qian Zhongshu Jishi", 60-76.

between ideas and their representation and the capacity of verbal or pictorial expressions to render in practice what had been only an imagined entity. Croce, whose quotation is not translated here by Qian, says that “ogni vera intuizione o rappresentazione è, insieme, espressione. L’attività intuitiva tanto intuisce quanto esprime” (every real intuition or representation is an expression. The activity of intuition senses exactly what it expresses), and “intuire è esprimere: e nient’altro (niente di più, ma niente di meno) che esprimere”⁴²⁶ (to sense is to express: nothing more (and nothing less) than to express). A few lines later Croce is quoted again in his reference to *Le Lettere di Michelangelo Buonarroti 1875* (Michelangelo Buonarroti’s correspondence, 1875) by G. Milanesi, where the painter Michelangelo (1475-1564) is said to have written in his letters: “lo rispondo che si dipinge col cervello e non con le mani”⁴²⁷ (painting comes out from brain, not from hands). Qian Zhongshu makes this statement to be complemented by a number of quotations from the poet Dante who sustains that expression does not follow necessarily words because it lacks the power to do so. Qian seems then to use Croce to make the initial question for the debate: is expression equal to intuition? Dante gives the answer in saying that no, expression is not the exact counterpart to intuition, and Croce again is said to have quoted often artists, painters or poets, who affirmed the torment of the inexpressible (*questo tormento dell’inesprimibile*).⁴²⁸ One of the artists quoted by Croce happens to be Manzoni, Italian novelist of the 19th century who said “Ch’io sento come il più divin s’involò, / nè può il giogo patir della parola”⁴²⁹ (I sense that the

⁴²⁶ Qian Zhongshu, *Tan Yi Lu*, 529.

⁴²⁷ Qian Zhongshu, *Tan Yi Lu*, 529. The correct quotation would have been: “Io rispondo che si dipinge col cervello e non con le mani”.

⁴²⁸ Qian Zhongshu, *Tan Yi Lu*, 530.

⁴²⁹ Qian Zhongshu, *Tan Yi Lu*, 530.

divine flies up and cannot stand the entrapment of words) where again words do not have enough means to express what is preserved in the minds of the artists. We find a further expansion on this concept in *Guan Zhui Bian*'s commentary on the *Mao Shi* where Croce is said to sneer at all those that believe to the words of the poets that praise their lovers, and that if only they had the possibility to meet the various Lesbia and Cinzia, or Beatrice and Laura, they might think that their attentions had been misplaced: "far la conoscenza personale di Lesbia e di Cinzia, di Beatrice e di Laura"⁴³⁰ (personally meet Lesbia and Cinzia or Beatrice and Laura). This time the subject of the debate is not the lack of a correct correspondence between intention and expression but between expression and reality. We find the same inequality exploited in *Guan Zhui Bian*, when Tommaso Campanella tells wounds and grazes to be beautiful, with an evident contrast of intents; he is quoted by Croce in his *Estetica*: "belle ferite" (beautiful wounds) and "belle scorticature e slogature"⁴³¹ (beautiful grazes and dislocations). Both Croce and Qian Zhongshu demonstrate that sometimes ugly and hideous things are beautiful in one's eyes because they find a resonance in feelings and interests.

One of the most appealing usages Qian makes of quotations is to arouse questions and discussions through imaginative dialogues between writers whose words he juxtaposes in a striking succession. In *Tan Yi Lu*'s discussion about allegory, the English writer Samuel Johnson happens to say that "allegory is perhaps one of the most pleasing vehicles of instruction". Francesco De Sanctis echoes, saying that allegorical poems

⁴³⁰ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 157. Lesbia is the woman to whom the Latin poet Catullo dedicated much of his love poetry in the I century b.C.; Cinzia was chanted by the Latin Propertius in the same age; Beatrice is the beloved muse of the poet Dante (1265-1321) and Laura was loved and celebrated in the poetry of Francesco Petrarca (1304-1374).

⁴³¹ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 357.

are: “poesia allegorica, poesia noiosa”⁴³² (allegorical poetry, boring poetry). In considering the two points of view, Qian Zhongshu suggests we should consider the particular historical and literary circumstances to which the authors belong. Croce, at the same time, wrote a lot about allegory in his *Filosofia, Poesia, Storia* (Philosophy, Poetry, History).⁴³³ The sentence that seems to solve the debate according to Qian is the opinion Milton expresses on Eve in his *Paradise Lost*: “Her loveliness, so absolute she seems / And in herself complete”.⁴³⁴

Art is complete in itself, it bears its value and its meaning. This is, in the opinion of Qian, what Croce should consider before doubting the utility of allegorical art.

Coming to the evaluation of different artistic currents and artists, Qian Zhongshu talks extensively about the painter and poet of the Tang Dynasty Wang Wei (王维) 701-761 who, even if considered a great poet, compared to Du Fu ended to be a small poet. In this comparison Qian borrows the expression that the Italian critic Benedetto Croce uses in defining the poet Pascoli: *da de xiao shiren* 大的小诗人⁴³⁵ (un grande-piccolo poeta, o, se piace meglio, un piccolo grande poeta)⁴³⁶. With these words the Italian critic wants to debase Pascoli since he does not like his poetry because he considers it too sentimental, too artificial. Qian Zhongshu, on the other side, borrowing Croce’s expression, would like to affirm that even if Wang Wei is a big poet, near Du Fu he seems to be a small poet. As it has happened for the quotation from Leonardo da Vinci about the

⁴³² Qian Zhongshu, *Tan Yi Lu*, 571.

⁴³³ Qian Zhongshu, *Tan yi Lu*, 571. Qian writes 甚資考鏡 (Shen zi kao jing) It’s worth to analyze this material. Croce’s work title is misspelled in *Filosofia, Poesta, Storia*.

⁴³⁴ Qian Zhongshu, *Tan Yi Lu*, 571.

⁴³⁵ Qian Zhongshu, “Zhongguo Shi yu Zhongguo Hua” in *Qi Zhui Ji*, 22.

⁴³⁶ Benedetto Croce, *La letteratura delle Nuova Italia: saggi critici*, (Bari: Laterza, 1922).

relation between poetry and painting,⁴³⁷ Qian does not get here the full meaning of Croce's expression, but is still able to de-contextualize a quotation and to use it for his sole scope. An interesting point to make is that years later in *Guan Zhui Bian* the same opinion on Pascoli by Croce is recalled in a comment on the theme of "playing music to oxes" or giving something valuable to whom cannot appreciate; this time, thought, the grasping of Croce's opinion on Pascoli is complete and it is got through a critical essay on the Italian critic by Fausto Nicolini (1869-1965). Pascoli, explains Qian, wrote a whole poem, *I Due Vicini* (Neighbours), in response to Croce who despised his poetry. In the poem Pascoli compared the critic to a donkey that appreciates in a vegetable garden only the cauliflowers born from its excrement "i cavoli nati dal suo fimo"⁴³⁸ and considers of no utility the beautiful flowers in the same garden. At the same time the donkey, i.e. the literary critic, cannot even be pleased about the song of the nightingale because he says that its song is a waste of time. Instead of wasting that time singing, the donkey, exactly as the literary critic, employs it in a more fruitful way, thinking. Qian quotes: "Oh! Il tempo perso! Canto io forse? Io penso"⁴³⁸ (Oh! That waste of time! Do I ever sing? I think). These quotations come after a series of other western examples in which the above mentioned theme of giving valuables to people that cannot appreciate them is discussed in a comment on Hui Tong 慧通 and his *Bopo Daoshi* "Yi Xia Lun" 驳颇道士《夷夏论》. Among the Italians, Ludovico Ariosto is the one quoted with two works in which he makes the comparison between a dumb person and a donkey. The quotation from *Orlando Furioso* (Mad Orlando) is "Tanto apprezza costumi, o virtù

⁴³⁷ See paragraph 5.1.5 "Renaissance men: Leonardo, Lorenzo de Medici".

⁴³⁸ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, IV, 2084. See Fausto Nicolini, *Benedetto Croce*, (Torino: Unione tipografico - Editrice torinese, 1962), 225.

ammira, /quanto l'asino fa il suon della lira"⁴³⁹ (He appreciates morals or virtue /as does a donkey with the sound of a lyre) and the one from *Il Negromante* (The necromancer) is "e sa di questa e dell'altre scienze / che sa l'asino e'l bue di sonar gli organi"⁴⁴⁰ (and he knows about this and other sciences /as a donkey or an ox knows how to play organs). Both quotations from Ariosto are preceded by Qian's translation in Chinese, but the second one carries an annex added secondarily by Qian in which he says that his translation carries an inaccuracy, since the particularity of Ariosto's simile, that cannot be found in Qian's rendering of his lines, is that the donkey is not only incapable of understanding but incapable of doing something, that is to play lyre, adding an important nuance of meaning to the theme discussed.

Croce again is recalled when talking about usages and ideas so consolidated as to become tradition. Qian affirms that changes have necessarily to occur even in traditional ideas and concepts or in new trends, and that these changes need to look for compromises in order to have some influence on a fixed tradition. These compromises are what Croce in his *Estetica*⁴⁴¹ calls "ipocrisia letteraria" (literary hypocrisy), *wenyi li de liangmian pai jia zhengjing* 文艺里的两面派假正经⁴⁴² in Qian's translation, to show that tradition is not rigid and has to be flexible, both stating rigid regulations and giving these regulations the possibility to be violated by new trends.

⁴³⁹ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, IV, 2083. See Ludovico Ariosto, *Orlando furioso*, 424.

⁴⁴⁰ See Ludovico Ariosto, *Il Negromante*, http://www.liberliber.it/mediateca/libri/a/ariosto/il_negromante/pdf/il_neg_p.pdf. Accessed: 10 december, 2011. *scienze* should be spelled *scientie*.

⁴⁴¹ Benedetto Croce, *Estetica come scienza dell'espressione e linguistica generale*, (Bari, Laterza, 1908).

⁴⁴² Qian Zhongshu, "Zhongguo Shi Yu Zhongguo Hua" in *Qi Zhui Ji*, 2.

Qian Zhongshu, reflecting on metaphor and on how it can be rendered in paintings, in *Du Laaokon* recalls Charles Philipon's caricature of King Louis Philippe whose face is transformed in a pear (1834). He also mentions some modernist paintings like the one in which a bicycle is rendered as an ox head with horns as handles, or the one of a nice girls' face whose lips, seeming a sofa, make the whole face similar to a room, as recorded in Mario Praz's (1896-1982) work *Beauty and Oddity* (*Bellezza e bizzarria*).⁴⁴³ Praz's example reminds Qian Zhongshu of the portrait of Li Duanduan in Cui Ya's 崔涯 poem *Chao Li Duanduan*⁴⁴⁴ 嘲李端端. Both the Italian Praz and the Chinese Cui Ya are examples of how painting tries to give a physical aspect to words. Words, on the other side, need to be effective enough as to give readers a tangible feeling of reality. The critic Mario Praz is recalled again with his essay *La Grandezza dei Traduttori* (Translators' greatness) where he states that the more a translation is a mess, the more interesting it is.⁴⁴⁵

Dino Provenzal (1877-1972) is an Italian critic and literate whose interests are directed towards analysing the particularities and curiosities of Italian language. He is author of many books for children and translator from German of Grimm's tales. *Perchè si dice così* (Why do we say so?) is a book in which Provenzal explains common and popular sayings and Qian quotes from it in *Guan Zhui Bian* to reinforce the concept that the opposites are complementary. The upper and lower jaws, for example, are opposites, and when we bite, even if they go one against the other, neither is harmed from the movement. In modern times, Qian writes, the opposites that do not harm each other have been compared both to scissors and to our jaws

⁴⁴³ Qian Zhongshu, "Du Laaokong" in *Qi Zhui Ji*, 59.

⁴⁴⁴ Qian Zhongshu, "Du Laaokong" in *Qi Zhui Ji*, 59.

⁴⁴⁵ Qian Zhongshu, "Lin Shu de Fanyi" in *Qi Zhui Ji*, 82.

in mastication. This finds its parallel in the Italian language where the two opposing parts in a quarrel are said to be like the blades of the scissors, “le lame delle forbici”⁴⁴⁶ as Provenzal wrote, since they receive the attacks of the other part but are not offended and the only harmed person is the defendant between the parts.

Dino Provenzal’s *Dizionario delle immagini* (Dictionary of figures of speech) is an often quoted reference book by Qian Zhongshu who sometimes gets from it very particular and seemingly trivial references like the quotation from Vitaliano Brancati’s (1907- 1954) *Don Giovanni in Sicilia* (Don Juan in Sicily) “Quel pezzo di donna che fa fermare gli orologi”⁴⁴⁷ (That sort of a woman as to make clocks stop) referring to an astonishingly beautiful woman, so beautiful as to make the hands of a clock stand still. The metaphor is used to reflect on how sometimes the same image is used with opposite aims, since the same metaphor of the clock had been also used to describe a woman so ugly as to make a clock stop from working.⁴⁴⁸ In *Tan Yi Lu* XXXIX another image from Provenzal’s dictionary is recalled to signify a very ugly woman: “un pentimento d’uomo, una donna brutta come un rimorso”⁴⁴⁹ (a man like a repentance, a woman like a remorse). The quotation, not translated, finds its place in a discussion about the ugliness of imitations.

Another quotation from Provenzal’s *Dizionario delle immagini* is reported in the fourth volume of *Guan Zhui Bian* where other western authors seem to use in a consonance of voices the image of writing as on a (blue) sky. After Iona and Peter Opie’s quotation from *The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery*

⁴⁴⁶ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 41. See Dino Provenzal, *Perché si dice così*, (Milano: Hoepli, 1958).

⁴⁴⁷ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 66.

⁴⁴⁸ Ronald Egan, *Limited Views*, 124.

⁴⁴⁹ Qian Zhongshu, *Tan Yi Lu*, 346.

Rhymes, where the sea is seen like ink and the world as paper, Qian quotes Leonardo Giustinian (1388-1446) from a critical study by E.M.Fusco, *La Lirica* (Lyrical poetry), with his simile of trees that can speak, leaves that are like tongues, ink like seawater, earth like paper and grass like pens. The author comments that even if these similes became reality, nothing could be enough to sing the beauty of his lady:

“Se li arbori sapessen favellare, /E le lor foglie fusseno le lingue,
/L’inchostro fusse l’acqua dello mare, /La terra fusse carta e l’erbe penne,
/Le tue bellezze non potria contare”⁴⁵⁰

(If trees could speak /and their leaves were tongues, /if seawater was ink,
/earth was paper and grass was pens, /even then I could not tell your
beauty).

Then Claudian’s *De Bello Gildonico* and Curtius, with Robinson Jeffers, find their place ending the series of western quotations. The one before the last is Vitaliano Brancati again from Provenzal, writing “Nel cielo azzurro le rondini scorrono come una veloce scrittura” (In the blue sky swallows run like a quick calligraphy).

It is emblematic that Italian authors, more than the others, are the majority belonging to the field of literary criticism and that the Italian one is a literature that quite often is, in Qian Zhongshu’s works, analyzed through the critical filter.

5.2.3 20th century poetry and novel

Since criticism is often the starting point for Qian Zhongshu’s reading choices, and in criticism he finds clues about novelists and poets, it is

⁴⁵⁰ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, IV, 2303. See Alessandro D’Ancona, *La poesia popolare italiana*. http://www.archive.org/stream/lapoesiapopolare00dancuoft/lapoesiapopolare00dancuoft_djvu.txt Accessed December 12, 2011.

possible that reading Croce's appreciation for Carlo Collodi's (1826-1890) novel *Pinocchio* in 1903, appreciation that ratified the novel's role in Italian contemporary literature, Qian was inspired to read it. A quotation from Collodi finds its place in a sequence of Chinese and western quotations that, commenting on the *Yilin* 易林, describe all situations in which two deficiencies supply one another and make for a functioning body, "La Volpe, che era zoppa, camminava appoggiandosi al Gatto, che era cieco, si lasciava guidare dalla Volpe"⁴⁵¹ (The Fox, that was lame, leaned on the Cat, that was blind, and that was led by the Fox). "Dialogue between sages of the past" might be the category in which this quotation falls together with the others that precede and follow, because according to the previously given definition they all express the same concept notwithstanding time and space gaps.

In the footnote to one of Leonardo's quotation in *Zhongguo shi yu Zhongguo hua*, which we have already analyzed in the paragraph 5.1.5 "Renaissance men: Leonardo, Lorenzo De Medici", Qian Zhongshu quotes Gabriele D'Annunzio's novel *Il Fuoco* (*The Fire*) with a passage in which the author says that it is well known the favourite sentence of da Vinci

"ci appare evidente la sentenza preferita da quel Vinci cui la Verità balenò un giorno co' suoi mille volti segreti: - La musica non ha da esser chiamata altro che sorella della pittura.- La lor pittura non è soltanto una poesia muta ma anche una musica muta"⁴⁵²

(It is clear the favourite sentence of Leonardo Da Vinci whom Truth, with its thousand of secret faces, manifested one day: Music is nothing else than

⁴⁵¹ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, II, 834. See Carlo Collodi, *Pinocchio*, (Milano: Feltrinelli, 1993), 78.

⁴⁵² Qian Zhongshu, "Zhongguo Shi yu Zhongguo Hua", in *Qi Zhui Ji*, 30.

painting's sister. Their painting is not only mute poetry but also mute music).

D'Annunzio here intends to praise painting calling it similar to music, and music, notes Qian Zhongshu, during romanticism was more important even than poetry or painting. D'Annunzio is then in full accordance with Leonardo da Vinci, and both, even if unconsciously, may support Qian Zhongshu in not considering poetry and painting on the same level.

D'Annunzio's quotations, even if not consistent in number, are somehow worth analyzing since the Italian author, that reached China during the twenties and thirties of last century, was later forgot and banned during the years of Cultural Revolution and Communist China as a symbol of a clear link with Fascism. Lü Tongliu was the first scholar in China to repropose D'Annunzio's work in translation with the publication of one of his short stories, *Chuanfu* 船夫 (The Ferryman) on the journal *Zhongshan* 钟山 (Mountain Bell) in 1982.⁴⁵³ His choice was guided by a consideration of the writer's literary and artistic merits that eluded his commitment with the rightist party. Qian Zhongshu, before Lü Tongliu, without considering the negative role attributed to D'Annunzio, quoted his work inserting it in the general panorama of the literary debate.

Guan Zhui Bian, published in 1978, has been nevertheless revised and republished many times. Not only Qian kept correcting and adjusting minor mistakes of the text but, following his usual attitude of taking notes, he added to later editions new references and quotations from his continuous readings. We find one of the latest additions in *Guan Zhui Bian*

⁴⁵³ Barbara Leonesi, "La Cina, la letteratura italiana e Lü Tongliu. Un progetto di traduzione lungo una vita" in *La Cina e il Mondo Atti dell'XI Convegno dell'Associazione Italiana Studi Cinesi*, Roma, 22-24 Febbraio 2007 a cura di Paolo De Toia, Roma: Sapienza Università di Roma, 2010, 445-446.

where an interesting web of quotations winds into a ball of references starting from the Buddhist sentence “to go off on the shore leaving the raft”, which can be interpreted as a metaphor of the ingratitude just like the English saying “to kick down the ladder one rises by”.⁴⁵⁴ The German philosopher Wittgenstein in his *Tractatus logico-philosophicus* in 1978 has something similar to the meaning conveyed by the just quoted metaphors and Umberto Eco (1932-), Italian contemporary literary critic and novelist, in his masterpiece *Il Nome della Rosa* (The name of the Rose) edited by Bompiani in 1980 (Qian used an edition dated 1986), quotes Wittgenstein just like Qian Zhongshu, pretending it to be a quotation from a mystic of the Middle Ages. Eco then, in the note to the text, explains this particular usage of quotations that he de-contextualizes and extrapolates from their time attributing them a new and fictitious epoch: “mascheravo citazioni di autori posteriori (come Wittgenstein) facendole passare per citazioni dell’epoca”⁴⁵⁵ (I disguised quotations of later writers (like Wittgenstein) as quotations of that time). A double jump across time occurs here: Wittgenstein and Eco inside Qian Zhongshu’s work, Wittgenstein and Middle Age inside Eco’s novel.

The other quotation by Eco’s *Il nome della rosa* is again in an *annex* with precise indications of the edition used and of the chapter’s name and page reference. This time the quotation comments on the *Jiu Ge* 九歌 of the *Chu Ci* 楚辭 and recounts of two monks debating in the novel about irony and laughter, with one of the monks saying that they make the world appear the contrary of what it should be: “mostrano il mondo al contrario di ciò che deve essere”⁴⁵⁶ and that laughter and this topsy-turvy world should be

⁴⁵⁴ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 447.

⁴⁵⁵ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 447.

⁴⁵⁶ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, II, 918.

avoided more than anything else because they even debase God's deeds and will to obtain an upright world. Other quotations from Burton, Curtius and Rousset tell the same about a world that is upside-down. Eco's quotation, being an *annex*, is clearly only a reference to the main theme and is the only example from a novel among other western poems. With an eye towards western criticism, Qian Zhongshu gives always a new perspective to the analysis of Chinese ancient classical texts as in *Guan Zhui Bian* when D'Annunzio and his lines "sotto il cielo bigio, il giallo grida, il rosso squilla"⁴⁵⁷ (under the grey sky the yellow screams, the red blares) are drawn near to quoted lines by Yang Wanli 楊萬里(1127-1206) and Yan Suicheng 嚴遂成(1694- ?). To quote what sometimes results as trifling bits and pieces of literary works might seem a controversial way of analysis. The explanation for this comes once again from Qian himself who states:

"I have bored holes in these many texts to string selected passages together, hoping thereby to call attention to a single literary technique that manifests itself in a thousand different ways".⁴⁵⁸

A variation of a theme already presented through Leopardi's words is supported by a quotation from the Italian poet Ungaretti (1880-1970) that reads: "Balastrata di brezza /per appoggiare stasera /la mia malinconia"⁴⁵⁹ (gentle breeze balustrade /on which to lean tonight /my melancholy). It is always about sadness and Ungaretti, among the others, expresses in poetry the concept that being in a high brings forth the latent sense of sadness that one might prove. Sadness and weariness come also

⁴⁵⁷ See. *Guan Zhui Bian*, 744. D'Annunzio's lines are from the poem "Notturmo" quoted and discussed in Eurialo De Michelis *Tutto D'Annunzio*, once more Qian Zhongshu accesses a poet through a critic essay on the poet.

⁴⁵⁸ Ronald Egan *Limited Views*, 177

⁴⁵⁹ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, III, 1412

out of another quoted poem by Ungaretti, *Vita d'un Uomo* (Life of a man) where the poet says "Si porta l'infinita stanchezza /dello sforzo occulto /di questo principio /che ogni anno /scatena la terra"⁴⁶⁰ (Brings the eternal weariness /of the hidden effort /that every year /arouses the earth).

Qian Zhongshu continues quoting Aldo Vallone (1916-2002) and his *Aspetti Della Poesia Italiana Contemporanea* (Aspects of Italian Contemporary Poetry) in which the author observes that what expressed by Ungaretti is "strikingly similar to the mood and scenes so often evoked in our nation's poetry".⁴⁶¹

Another theme that Qian finds in Chinese and western literatures all the same, inserted in a comment on a passage from *Laozi* about the contrast and the relation between body (*shen* 身) and fame (*ming* 名), is illustrated by passages from *Zhuangzi* 莊子, *Bai Juyi* 白居易, *Fan Zhongyan* 范仲淹, *Tang Yin* 唐寅, Edward Gibbon, Eckermann and La Bruyère among the others, and involves a contemporary Italian writer, Tomasi di Lampedusa (1896-1957) and another one of the Marinisti poets, Tommaso Gaudiosi (17th sec.). Life, for long as it might be, is extremely short if for true life we count only the happy moments. Quotations are freely translated into Chinese and their assonance is complete: "Dieci lustri di vita o poco meno /porto sul dorso; e se ricerco quante /son l'ore lieta, a numerar l'istante, /posso a pena formarne un di sereno"⁴⁶² (I am nearly fifty years old; and if I look for happy hours in my life I hardly can count them up to one day) is the quotation from the poem *L'Infelicità Umana* (Human Sadness) by Gaudiosi and

⁴⁶⁰ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, IV, 2306.

⁴⁶¹ Ronald Egan, *Limited Views*, 78.

⁴⁶² Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, II, 792. "lieta" should be spelled as "liete".

“Ho settantatrè anni, all’ingrosso ne avrò vissuto, veramente vissuto, un totale di due...tre al massimo. E i dolori, la noia, quanto erano stati? Tutto il resto: settant’anni”⁴⁶³

(I am seventy-three years old and I have probably lived only two or three years. Pains, boredom, how much do they amount to? All the rest: seventy years) is the sentence from *Il Gattopardo* (The Leopard), world-known novel by Tomasi di Lampedusa. The only way to make life longer, seems to suggest Qian through a quotation by Blake a few lines later, is to pursue one’s desires trying to increase the amount of happy moments: “He who desires but acts not, breeds pestilence; Sooner murder an infant in cradle than nurse un-acted desires”.⁴⁶⁴ As for the meaning of these happy moments and the way to fulfil desires, an incredibly actual survey draws from *Harrap’s Slang Dictionary*, 1984, quoted in an annex, and mentions that Lsd (Lysergic Acid Diethylamide) is considered a way to reach immediate satisfaction. It then goes on by quoting a Portuguese-Italian philosopher, Leone Ebreo (1460-1530) who in his *Dialoghi d’Amore* (Dialogues of Love) suggests that copulation is the way to reach beatitude: “l’atto copulativo de l’intima e unita cognizione divina; copulazione è la più propria e precisa parola che significhi la beatitudine”⁴⁶⁵

(Copulation of the intimate acquaintance with God; copulation is the most appropriate and precise word to signify beatitude).

Another passage from Ungaretti in *Tan Yi Lu* LVII, that follows the western quotations from Rambler and Reverdy, reads: “La poesia moderna si propone di metter in contatto ciò che è più distante. Maggiore

⁴⁶³ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, II, 792. See Tomasi di Lampedusa, *Il Gattopardo*, (Milano: Feltrinelli, 2005), 210.

⁴⁶⁴ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, II, 794.

⁴⁶⁵ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, II, 798.

è la distanza, superiore è la poesia"⁴⁶⁶ (Modern poetry wants to link what seems to be very far away. The more the distance, superior is the outcome of poetry). Ungaretti's passage comes from an essay by G. Mariani reported in the proceedings of the Second International Congress of Italian Studies about Stylistic Critic and Literary Baroque. All the quotations in this passage serve to prove what Qian Zhongshu believes to be true: it is very important for the sake of good poetry to make antithesis and striking connections, to link different realms and make them the same in a way that astonishes the reader both for its unlikelihood and for its originality and well-founded relationship. What is true about poetry is also true about a method of work, the one of the author and his *datong*.

Remarkable is the reference to Luigi Pirandello's novel *Uno, Nessuno, Centomila* (One, No One and One Hundred Thousand), because is a reference to a work that still does not exist in a full text edition in Chinese. Luigi Pirandello (1867-1936), notwithstanding being an author of the utmost importance for 20th century literature, has not been much known in China and, if the existing translations in China mainland include only two collections of narrative,⁴⁶⁷ it is a good sign that a performance of his *Sei Personaggi in Cerca d'Autore* (Six Characters in Search of an Author) has been enthusiastically greeted when performed by the Shanghai Theatre Academy at the Shanghai 2010 expo. Qian quotes from one of Pirandello's most representative works in an entry that takes its move from *Liezi's* sentence about the need to pursue truth continually.⁴⁶⁸ Men need to keep searching for truth and for the *dao* 道 because they themselves always

⁴⁶⁶ Qian Zhongshu, *Tan Yi Lu*, 478.

⁴⁶⁷ Pilandelou 皮兰德娄, *Zisha de gushi: Pilandelei Duanpian Xiaoshuo Xuan* 《自杀的故事：皮兰德娄短篇小说选》，Liaoning Jiaoyu Chubanshe, 2000 and *Pilandelei Zhongduanpian Xiaoshuo Xuan*, 《皮兰德娄中短篇小说选》，Zhongguo Wenlian Chubanshe, 2009.

⁴⁶⁸ See Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, II, 727-736.

change in a continuous metamorphosis: “Riconoscerete forse anche voi ora, che un minuto fa *voi eravate un altro?*”⁴⁶⁹ (You too will now admit that a minute ago *you were another person*). Pirandello’s quotation is followed by many other sentences with a similar meaning, and all of them confirm and support *Liezi*’s assumption.

In opposition with the Chinese traditional filial piety, *xiao* 孝, are instead all the quotations that from Chinese and western authors come from the mouths of both parents and children to exclude every sense of gratitude or respect due to the reciprocal role.

Alberto Moravia (1907-1990), Italian contemporary novelist, is quoted with a sentence from his short stories spaced out from Qian’s translation: “Guarda che non dovresti rispondere così a tuo padre, [...] alzava le spalle, [...]. Io non avevo chiesto di venire al mondo. Mi ci avete fatta venire”⁴⁷⁰ (You should not answer your father this way, [...] shrugging her shoulders, [...] I did not ask to come to the world. It was you to give birth to me). Qian’s words in concluding this entry are critical enough toward the lack of filial piety.

A few lines later, in the following entry, another quotation from the same work by Moravia echoes all the others (among which an expression used by Michelangelo, “la figura serpentina” – serpentine figure) on the image of woman like a snake: “La donna...era flessuosa come un serpente; camminando dimenava le anche e dondolava di testa”⁴⁷¹ (the woman...was sinuous like a snake, she wiggled her hips and swung her head).

⁴⁶⁹ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, II, 734-735. See Luigi Pirandello, *Uno, nessuno, centomila*, (Firenze: Giunti editore, 1994), 33.

⁴⁷⁰ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, III, 1630. See Alberto Moravia, *Opere complete*, (Milano: Bompiani, 1976), 581.

⁴⁷¹ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, III, 1634. See Alberto Moravia, *Opere complete*, 177.

If the operation of explaining the present through the past is something critics, historians and observers of society have usually carried out, the same cannot be said of the reverse operation of explaining the past through the present. This can be seen as an original contribution offered from Qian Zhongshu in terms of methodology, and is probably the part of his theories that might give new clues to a thorough and in depth examination of Chinese and world literature.

CHAPTER

Closing remarks

The roundup conducted in the present study of Italian authors and works in Qian Zhongshu's works gives us the possibility to come to some remarks about the way in which Qian Zhongshu deals with foreign languages quotations, with a focus on the Italian literary world.

We may distinguish the different spheres of language, historical period, authors and contents of quotations.

6.1 Language

As for the language used when quoting, Qian Zhongshu quotes all the authors in their original language, nearly always accompanied, especially when quotations are in the main body of the text and not in footnote, by a Chinese translation, which follows or precedes the Italian text. This clear indication of his understanding Italian language is supported by many other proofs like his link with Italian scholars and literates. Professor Lionello Lanciotti affirmed it in an interview,⁴⁷² Qian wrote in a letter to Professor Lù Tongliu about his having received articles from some Italian popular magazines (see appendix n. 3), Wu Taichang reported in his *Wo Renshi de Qian Zhongshu* that in 1984, on the occasion of the fourth National Meeting of Representatives of Chinese Writers, Qian filled in a form in which one of the fields to fill in was "foreign languages" and he

⁴⁷² Interview with author, Rome, February 17, 2009.

wrote: English, French, German, Italian,⁴⁷³ just to name some of those proofs.

Being able to read foreign works in their original language makes a real comparatist, one that can get the flavour of texts without being deviated by misunderstandings due to translation mistakes. The *Guangming Ribao* of December 22, 1998, reports in Qian Zhongshu's obituary pieces of interviews to Qian's comrades from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. In an interview Dong Heng, expert in American literature, affirms that he used often to help Qian to borrow books and that he found out that he would borrow books in English, French, German, Italian, Latin, Greek, and that this method of reading texts in the original language was of great inspiration for all his comrade scholars.⁴⁷⁴

The present study has tried to demonstrate that to read and quote texts in their original languages is one of the main characteristics of Qian's method, and one that helps us to place him in the field of comparative literature without fear of being mistaken, being that one the main condition one has to fulfil in pursuing comparative studies. Quotations in Italian, an Italian that sweeps over classical times and contemporary years, are always perfectly chiselled in the main body of the text, and they surprise us for their refinement and accuracy.

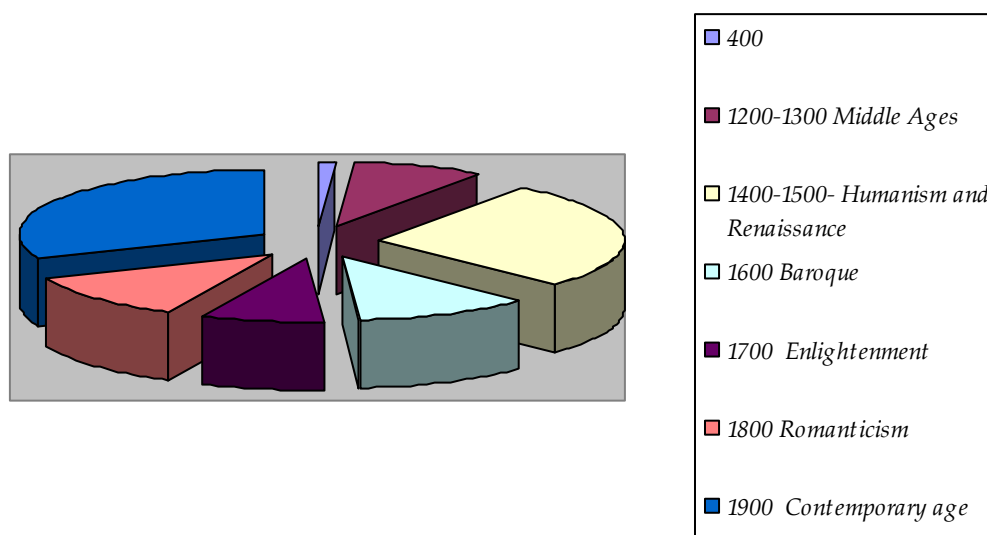
6.2 Historical Periods

The Italian that Qian Zhongshu was able to read and understand, and this brings us to the second point of our remarks, is the contemporary language of the 20th century for thirty-two authors out of a total number of

⁴⁷³ Wu Taishang, *Wo Renshi de Qian Zhongshu*, 116.

⁴⁷⁴ He Hui and Fang Tianxing, ed. *Yi Cun Qian Si*.

one-hundred-two Italian authors encountered, and the language from the 15th to the 16th century, the centuries of Humanism and Renaissance, for the great majority of the remaining part (twenty-eight authors). The 17th century, the century of Baroque and Marinisti poets, is represented with twelve authors. In twelve cases, as with the poet Leopardi or the writer Manzoni, is the language of 19th century's Romanticism to be quoted. Ten are the authors belonging to a pre-Renaissance age, going as far as to Saint Augustine in the 5th century A.D. Eight are the authors of the 18th century's Enlightenment age, having as main representatives philosophers and thinkers like Beccaria, Verri, Vico, or writers like Goldoni, Frugoni, Metastasio, with their elegant and classical oriented language. The languages from the Middle Ages and Baroque Italy are the less easy to understand for not native speakers without a specific training or without a great familiarity with those codes, since the first is the most distant from whatsoever contemporary usage of the language, and the latter is the most affected by imagery and rhetoric figures.



Three are essentially the periods that Qian Zhongshu appoints as preferential areas for his readings: the Humanism and Renaissance period

from the 15th to the 16th century, the first half of the 20th century, and the Baroque age in the 17th century. Let us briefly see what happens in these periods in Italy. The 15th is the great century of Renaissance, the movement that began in Italy in the Late Middle Ages and spread to the rest of Europe up to the 17th century, leaving indelible and long lasting changes in the cultural and social sphere of a vast area of the western world. The great genius of Leonardo da Vinci duly represents the Renaissance man, and is a clear symbol of the progress reached by society based on a continuous and fruitful training in classical learning and education, with a firm belief in the power of art to transmute a sense of eternity in the deadly world, as Qian proves with a quotation at the nearly end of *Guan Zhui Bian* where Da Vinci affirms that “cosa bella mortal passa e non dura” (a beautiful mortal thing passes and does not last) and “cosa bella mortal passa e non d’arte”⁴⁷⁵ (a beautiful mortal thing passes away, but not if it belongs to art). The Italian language was solemn and preciously carved in every one of the literary pieces of work, slowly evolving in the Baroque elaborate and artificial love for figures of speech and plays with words.

The first half of the 20th century was the period in which our author lived and operated. It was an age of extraordinary and irreversible transformation in the history of the western as well as the eastern world. It was marked by two atrocious world wars, the end of the Chinese empire and a new global asset, which characterized completely the social and cultural order. In the cultural crisis that affected society, a need for new values emerged and literature played a fundamental role in the process.

The creative writers and the literary critics reasserted the centrality of literature as a guide to the perplexities of the age. The sense of doubt

⁴⁷⁵ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, IV, 2284.

developed into a spirit of revolt and experimentation in an attempt to create a new system of reference. New methods were exploited as well as a new language to create rich patterns of meaning to explore modern experience and consciousness. Modernism was in fact a powerful international movement reaching through western cultures, dominating the sensibility and aesthetic choices in literature. Most movements emphasised the loss of the sense of continuity between past and present through a radical break with tradition, whereas some intellectuals held back tradition, which coexisted with innovation. The past was remoulded in an original way by writers and poets that were influenced by contemporary authors from abroad, making literature become cosmopolitan. This is a period in which literature seems to search for a new language to express new feelings, western modernism impresses the language and the expression of ideas and critics try to understand and explain this revolution of culture.

The Baroque age in the 17th century is the age in which authors loved to play with words, all the artistic realms were over adorned and decorated and language became full of rhetoric figures. The main intent was to astonish, to exaggerate to speak to the senses as to communicate involvement and grandeur. This is the time of metaphors and allegory. In Qian Zhongshu's appreciations for authors of this time, we might as well see a kind of rehabilitation of this often-despised style.

6.3 Authors and contents of quotations

Apparently most of Qian Zhongshu's readings are guided by a critical more than a narrative eye: he quotes the Italian critics Mario Praz, Dino

Provenzal, Benedetto Croce, Giuseppe Giusti, and through them accesses Dante, Leopardi, Pascoli, D'Annunzio, Ariosto, Boiardo, or talks about Italian poetry and its characteristics as found in critical treatises about it as in *Poesia Bernesca e Marinismo* (Berni's poetry and Marinismo) whose author, R. Macchioni Jodi, is quoted with examples taken from the poets Francesco Berni (1497-1535) and Torquato Tasso which describe beautiful women as having ebony teeth and silver eyes or hair.⁴⁷⁶

Qian Zhongshu himself writes in *Zhongguo Shi yu Zhongguo Hua* that from the critical appreciation it is possible to understand the flavour of one author and his work just as from the rippling of water or sand we can understand the direction in which the wind blows.⁴⁷⁷ This is a concept that occupies an important part in Qian Zhongshu's ideas about literary appreciation and on which he will come back in *Guan Zhui Bian* where he states that nothing could really be extrapolated from the context. The implications of this are that to understand the meaning of a sentence it is necessary to understand the origin of characters, that to understand the sense of a text it is necessary to understand the meaning of the sentences by which it is made up and only then the concepts and the ideas of the writers can be deduced. The small clarifies the big and from the big and the general, we can understand the small and the particular; from the final implications, we need to consider the starting principles and from the basic principles, we have to go to the details. The bigger frame, which is the prevalent style of writing in the period when a work is composed, or the critical and rhetorical trends in which an author writes, are in Qian's opinion fundamental to understand him, and only with a full picture in

⁴⁷⁶ See Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, III, 1656.

⁴⁷⁷ Qian Zhongshu, "Zhongguo Shi yu Zhongguo Hua" in *Qi Zhui Ji*, 2. '...好比从飞沙、麦浪、波纹里看出了风的姿态'.

mind the meaning of particular sentences and even words can be analyzed. The interesting side motif to this, as Hu Fanzhu 胡范铸 and Chen Jiaxuan 陈佳璇 note,⁴⁷⁸ is that if the background is important to understand every act of speech, it is also true that as soon as an act of speech is pronounced, it goes to modify the background in which it has been generated.

Pareyson (1918-1991) is an Italian philosopher who supported last century the introduction of the German existentialism⁴⁷⁹ in Italy and who sustained that the understanding of reality is a matter pertaining essentially to the individual capacity of interpretation. Giordano Bruno (1548-1600) is a philosopher whose ideas were considered heretical and condemned by the Church, since he assumed the God was a pantheistic divinity in which thought and substance merge without distinction. The quotations by these two authors that help Qian Zhongshu to prove the validity of his assumptions come from the work *Estetica: teoria della formatività* by Pareyson and *Spaccio de la Bestia Trionfante* (The expelling of the Triumphant Beast) by Bruno and are, not translated, in footnote. Pareyson's quotation, accompanied by an opinion by the German philosopher W.Dilthey (1833- 1911), reads: "La parte è contenuta dal tutto solo in quanto a sua volta lo contiene, e il tutto è formato dalle parti solo in quanto le ha esso stesso reclamate e ordinate"⁴⁸⁰ (The single part is contained in the whole only to the extent to which itself contains the whole, the whole is made up by the parts only to the extent to which itself has demanded and arranged them). Bruno's assumption, which finds its perfect counterpart in a line from the *Huayanjing* (The Avatamsaka Sutra

⁴⁷⁸ Hu Fangzhu, Chen Jiaxuan, "'Guan Zhui Bian' suo Yunhan de Shihui Pipan Yishi" in Ding, Weizhi ed. *Qian Zhongshu Xiansheng Bainian Danchen Jinian wenji*, 61-76.

⁴⁷⁹ For the influence of existentialism on Qian Zhongshu see Wang Ning, "Confronting Western Influence: Rethinking Chinese Literature of the New PeriodAuthor(s)" in *New Literary History*, Vol. 24, No. 4, (Autumn, 1993), 916.

⁴⁸⁰ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 281.

Scripture) is: “La unità è nel numero infinito ed il numero infinito nell’unità; l’unità è uno infinito implicito, e l’infinito è la unità explicita”⁴⁸¹ (Unity is in the infinite number and the infinite number is in the unit; unity is an implicit infinite and infinite is the explicit unity). Nor the parts can be understood without the whole, nor the whole without the parts, unity and infinite converge. These passages are without any doubt illuminating to understand that quotations in Qian’s work are justified only at the light of their context and of the general critical atmosphere which surrounds literary works, and that the intent of the author is well far away from a fragmented reality without cohesion and coherence.

The point of view Qian Zhongshu makes his own is the aesthetic and critical one, and his focus is on rhetoric, artistic commitment, literary criticism more than on contents and narrative scopes, his main intent is to pierce into the artistic conception of Chinese and western works to look for common principles, a common poetic or artistic spirit. It is nevertheless true that a good critic is for Qian only the one who can understand poetry because he would be able to write it, and that if a poet can be a good critic, the contrary is not always true.⁴⁸²

The reason why in his essays we find quotations drawn from the 15th and 16th centuries is probably that in the Italian Renaissance Qian Zhongshu finds the expression of the spirit he wanted to disclose in his difficult times. He thought that during the Renaissance with its cult of the classical world, the need for a revival of the old culture lived within a new and revolutionary spirit. Italian Renaissance and authors like Machiavelli,

⁴⁸¹ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, I, 283. The quotation is from *Opere di G. Bruno e di T. Campanella* in the edition published by Riccardo Ricciardi from which Qian quotes often.

⁴⁸² See Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, III, 1665-1677.

Ariosto, Boiardo, offered Qian Zhongshu the words he could not directly utter.

20th century, on the other hand, is the expression of his proper time, Italian man of letters could, in that historical phase, oppose the contemporary society. Once more Qian Zhongshu uses the mouth of Italian authors to say what he could not have said directly with his own voice.

It is interesting to note that all the Italian works are functional to the analysis of Chinese traditional literature: Bandello, Boccaccio, Sacchetti and Calvino, the Italian novelists, are quoted to make some observations and criticism on the Chinese narrative pieces in religious works, when Qian Zhongshu says that all these Italian novelists created in their works a *feiwo* 非我 (not me) character, that had the function of creating a distance between the author and the things narrated, so as to give to the *mirabilia* described a feeling of truthfulness. This feeling, warns Qian Zhongshu, is what Chinese religious literary works, like the *Jiusheng Jing* 舅甥经 of the last essay of the collection *Qi Zhui Ji*, lack, and it is a necessary ingredient that should be supplied to narrative works.

Or, again, the theory of “literary hypocrisy”⁴⁸³ from the *Estetica* by Benedetto Croce is used to legitimate changes and revolutions produced on traditional ideas, while Dante and his method, highly validated by Ariosto and Boiardo,⁴⁸⁴ of creating expectation in a piece of art, whether a painting, a literary work or a sculpture, is what justifies and explains all the suspension created in Chinese serial novels, and in some way legitimates these works as literary artistic works, able to create expectation and pleasure of a noble kind.

⁴⁸³ Qian Zhongshu, “Zhongguo shi yu Zhongguo hua” in *Qi Zhui Ji*, 2.

⁴⁸⁴ Qian Zhongshu, “Du ‘Laaokong’” in *Qi Zhui Ji*, 51-55.

Even if the works of Qian Zhongshu for their complexity, their *biji* form and the huge span of time they cover, among many other reasons, seem to be, and in a certain sense are, all inclusive, it is still possible to find recurrent themes and a choice of authors and literary trends that stay as weaving threads going through all the fabric of Qian's essays.

Going through Qian's works firstly analysing the function of quotations and secondly dividing and grouping those quotations according to the quoted authors, we have tried to show that nearly anything is left to pure chance and that it is possible to find an order and a cause-effect sequence in the comparative method of the author.

The already discussed theme of the relation between men and women is, for example, a theme that recurs many times. We saw quotations by Boiardo and Ariosto on the injustice of the different treatment the two sexes receive from society and we find the longest passage on this motif, and particularly on the motif of the possibility for women to compose poetry and be scholars, at the end of the second volume of *Guan Zhui Bian* where many quotations, both Chinese and western, demonstrate that this behaviour has been unjustly perpetrated in the course of history as all the quoted authors demonstrate. The Italian poets Giosuè Carducci and Gaspara Stampa (1523 –1554) stand on the side of the Chinese, the French, the German, and the British. Carducci's quotation, echoing the others, is "Nel mio codice poetico c'è questo articolo: ai preti e alle donne è vietato far versi"⁴⁸⁵ (in my poetic code there is this clause: women and priests are forbidden to be engaged in poetry). A quotation out of context this is, since the continuation of the sentence, a piece of a letter sent by the poet to

⁴⁸⁵ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, II, 1315. See Giosuè Carducci e Annie Vivanti, *Addio Caro Orco*, (Milano: Feltrinelli, 2004), 18; Gaspara Stampa, *Rime*, (Milano: Bur, 1978), 7.

a poetess he appreciated, is that he would abrogate this clause for her. The quotation from the Sonnets (*Sonetti*) by Gaspara Stampa is only a reference to herself as a despicable and vile woman (così come sono abietta e vile /donna).⁴⁸⁵ The theme was an important one for Qian if he mentioned it so many times and the dryness with which he presents it, without value opinions, is even more a call for the reader's judgment.

More than in other essays, Italian literature is massively present in the essay *Tonggan* where from many authors (Pascoli, Perri, D'Annunzio, Carducci, Paolieri, the Marinisti poets) Qian Zhongshu derives the explanation of a rhetoric figure ever present in Chinese literature but never fully understood from previous Chinese commentators, as our author notes at the very beginning of the essay affirming that in Chinese poetics there is a narrative technique that critics and rhetoricians of the past have somewhat not understood or did not know.⁴⁸⁶ This is a fundamental contribution to that mutual understanding which Qian Zhongshu wishes, and it is functional in demonstrating that it is thanks to this literary and critical exchange that this figure has been understood in China.

Figurative language attracts Qian for its evocative power and the capacity to play with words and their meanings, to give life to inanimate objects and to give rationality to irrational things, or simply to draw close in a metaphor things that are usually distant for attributes and semantic fields. Most of the Italian authors quoted seem to be masters of figurative language, from the Marinisti poets with their rich use of imagery to Dante, absolute excellence in Italian literature for his similes; from the novelists of

⁴⁸⁵ Qian Zhongshu, "Tonggan" in *Qi Zhui Ji*, 62. The original text is: *Zhongguo shiwen you yi zhong miaoxie shoufa, gudai pipingjia he xiucixuejia sihu dou meiyou lijie huo renshi* 中国诗文有一种描写手法, 古代批评家和修辞学家似乎都没有理解或认识。

Boccaccio's School with their fables and metaphors, mostly functional in arousing amusement and a sagacious rethinking of popular themes, to the most subtle figures of Italian medieval and romantic poetry, more intimist and meant to an enrichment of descriptions and an evocative language.

Since the present work focuses on the contribution of Italian literature to the comparative method of Qian Zhongshu, a mere analysis of Qian's use of quotations of metaphors and similes falls out of the scope of this research, and would nevertheless be a field of study full of promising outcomes since those are one of the main vehicles to guide the choice of authors and works for the author. We thus explain why *Marinisti's* poetry, often condemned as empty in Italian literary criticism, is so present in the selection of quoted lines. A point is necessary to make is that Qian's theory about metaphor, as demonstrated throughout his works and particularly explained in *Guan Zhui Bian*,⁴⁸⁷ is of western derivation. A theorist on western metaphor is I.A.Richards, and we know that Qian had the opportunity to have a literary intercourse with the British critic and poet during the time spent at Qinghua University. Richards made the point of metaphor as the expression of an interaction between vehicle and tenor, and the whole western opinion about such a rhetoric device might be well expressed with Goodman's words that metaphor is "a matter of teaching an old world new tricks",⁴⁸⁸ a matter of unknown and unprecedented links: the more an author is capable of finding similarities and complementarity between different and distant things, the more able he is considered. Synthesis based on antithesis, reconciliation on opposition, juxtaposition and the focus on differences and opposition is what, warns Michelle Yeh,

⁴⁸⁷ Ronald Egan, *Limited Views* "metaphor has two handles and several sides", 121-129.

⁴⁸⁸ Michelle Yeh, "Metaphor and Bi: Western and Chinese Poetics" in *Comparative Literature*, Vol. 39, No. 3 (Summer, 1987), 244.

we find in the western idea of metaphor and not in the Chinese. In Chinese metaphor is called *bi* 比 and the same etymology of the word carries the meaning of complementarity, of phenomenological, not ontological differences.⁴⁸⁹ Things appear different, but their essence is the same and, quotes Qian Zhongshu from Ma Rongzu 马荣祖, it is like form and image, they combine without the need of a medium.⁴⁹⁰ This quotation is at the end of an entry in the third volume of *Guan Zhui Bian* on metaphor and its origin and function. The entry starts with an excursus on the image of the circle opposed to that of the square and continues with all the implications these two images have given way in the course of the history of ideas. Knowing the characteristics ever attributed to the circle and the square we can thus get why a man can be defined a “square man” and why fortune is associated to a circular entity (see *La Ruota della Fortuna* – The wheel of fortune - by Sacchetti and his quotation “tu sè nel colmo della rota e non ti puoi muovere, che tu non scenda e capolevi. Per questa cagione io t’ho recato quello aguto, acciò che tu conficchi la rota” – you are at the top of the wheel and you cannot move for fear of getting down. That is why I brought you a stingy thing to drive it into the wheel).⁴⁹¹ Metaphor, seems to imply Qian Zhongshu, is a combination of two images that seem juxtaposed and reveal unprecedented links but at the core of whom lies a common idea elaborated through the history of literature and of thought, it might seem surprising to call fortune a wheel, but it derives from the

⁴⁸⁹ Michelle Yeh, “Metaphor and Bi”, 247.

⁴⁹⁰ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, III, 1481. “*Ru xing yu ying, he bu dai mei* 如形与影, 合不待妹”.

⁴⁹¹ Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, III, 1477. See Franco Sacchetti, *Il Trecentonovelle*, 239. Other Italian quotations support the image of Fortune as a circular object like Machiavelli, who lets the personified Occasion say that it stands on a wheel “è perch’io tengo un piè sopra una rota” to mean that it goes quickly away and Marino who in his *Adone* defines Fortune as a “volubil palla”, a changeable ball.

idea of the circle as something that slips and turns. The two connected objects are not the same nor they are completely different and the authors have to be skilled enough as to recover from the common ground of world literature the justifications to make two different objects as one.

Qian is following the western conception of metaphor, even if slightly merged with some Chinese theory at its core, and is applying it to Chinese classical and traditional literature; he is looking at Chinese things interpreting them with a western eye and, as with synaesthesia, he is making more accessible to western readers Chinese literature, offering a key for its interpretation while explaining, with his *regard regardé*, aspects of Chinese literature with a new eye.

A side choice of foreign elements, but one that helps us understand the deep link Qian had with other cultures is the entrance of cultural elements in his specimen of quotations. For cultural elements, I here mean all those words and expressions that may be found in books but are most commonly simply part of daily conversation as elements that indicate the specificity of a culture as, for example, proverbs or words indicating objects or things normally used. In *Guan Zhui Bian* III, 132 it is surprising for an Italian reader to find words as “capelli d’angelo” (angel’s hair), “fiocchetti” (ribbons), “ravioli” (ravioli), “tortello” (tortelli), all falling in the category of “la pasta”⁴⁹² (pasta) associated to Chinese dishes made of flour, *mian* 面, and translated by Qian both literally and semantically with the individuation of Chinese kinds of pasta that correspond to the Italian ones. In order they are presented by Qian as *simian* 丝面 (noodles) or literally *tianxianbi* 天仙发 (hair of a heavenly immortal), *maoerduo* 猫耳朵 (cat’s ears) or *yunpian* 云片 (slices of clouds), *hundun* 混沌 (wanton) and

⁴⁹² Qian Zhongshu, *Guan Zhui Bian*, III, 1850.

jiaozi 饺子 (dumplings). It is still more surprising to find these words in a comment on the *Bing Fu* 饼赋 by Shu Xi 束皙 of the Three Kingdoms era in the 3rd century a.D.

We have already mentioned in the course of the study the use made by Qian of Italian proverbs that sometimes come from the *Dizionario comparato di Proverbi* (Comparative Dictionary of Proverbs) by Augusto Arthaber, sometimes are simply recalled by the author, as in the opening of his speech *Shi Keyi Yuan* 诗可以怨 pronounced in 1980 in a Japanese University, when Qian affirmed that to talk about Chinese literature in such a gathering of sinologists was a deed of great courage and the probable consequence might be what, using an Italian saying, he reports as the exclamation “Ha inventato l’ombrello”⁴⁹³ (he has invented the umbrella), saying used in Italy to laugh at somebody that is convinced to bring new ideas and to make new inventions and discoveries which are indeed well known to everybody else but him.

The pertinent use of proverbs and cultural items in Qian’s essays is thus a further proof of his being acquainted with the social atmosphere of the literatures from which he quoted. He quoted, as to say, in full cognition of the facts.

⁴⁹³ Qian Zhongshu, *Shi Keyi Yuan*, in *Qi Zhui Ji*, 2002, p.115. To support his quotation Qian Zhongshu explains what is behind this saying: a man was walking on a country road when suddenly was surprised by rain. He then took a stick and placed on it a piece of cloth that was carrying by chance: this clever stratagem prevented him from drenching his clothes. He then thought the world should profit from his invention, and went to the Patent Office to register his trick. When the desk clerk saw his invention started laughing and exclaimed “he has invented the umbrella!” Qian feels like that useless inventor in making a speech about Chinese literature within a context in which this subject was so well known. It is strange Qian Zhongshu uses such an unknown saying. Italians like to say “he has invented hot water” when talking about a well known truth that bears no new and unknown content, and I have not been able to find out whether this is a quotation Qian had learnt by direct contact with Italians or from some written reference. (See Tiziana Lioi, “Yidali Sixiang Duiyu Qian Zhongshu Zhengti Siwei de Gongxian”, 2011, 381-400.)

To keep studying the way in which Qian Zhongshu used foreign literatures to analyse Chinese literature for a mutual understanding allowing a more comprehensive grasp of cultural and literary phenomena is certainly a topic that might bring great advantages to the study of literatures in a global contest. It might undoubtedly help illuminating the mutual comprehension between horizons that might seem distant and different while they only need to come in contact to discover that it is only through a perspective different from one's own that we can better understand the others and ourselves. At the light of this idea, Huang Weiliang 黄维粮, in his *Liu Xie yu Qian Zhongshu* 刘勰与钱钟书 (Liu Xie and Qian Zhongshu), states in a most actual way that the *datong* Qian applies in his works should have been worth for him a Nobel prize for peace!⁴⁹⁴

6.4 Quotations to stand the erosion of time

If it is true that big theories and constructions are often not able to stand the erosion of time, then it is with a meticulous job of building piece by piece that Qian wants to give a more solid foundation to his flow of ideas. Quotations in his works, like bricks in a house or like trees in a forest, are the solid elements that constitute the whole. Basing the explanation of general theories on so many tangible elements would help avoiding the dangerous peril of seeing the forest and not the trees, to use a metaphor by the same Qian Zhongshu, having general theories without substantial concepts to build on, or of seeing the trees and not the forest, having small pieces of ideas without the capacity to link them in a more general context

⁴⁹⁴ See Huang Weiliang, *Liu Xie and Qian Zhongshu*, 2009.

that surpasses time and space boundaries. This last behaviour is the one Qian seems to ascribe particularly to his fellow writers, incapable of having a view that surpassed time and space.⁴⁹⁵

Nevertheless, to quote what sometimes is only a trifling passage of a source text might seem a controversial and narrow-minded method, but still the justification for this process can be inferred once again from Qian's direct words: "I have bored holes in these many texts to string selected passages together, hoping thereby to call attention to a single literary technique that manifests itself in a thousand different ways"⁴⁹⁶.

6.5 *Becoming a study field: Qian Xue 钱学*

In the short story *Linggan*, Inspiration, published in 1946 in the collection *Ren Shou Gui*, Qian Zhongshu makes fun of a writer so famous that his "name was completely obscured by the reputation"⁴⁹⁷ he had acquired. In the year of publication of *Guan Zhui Bian* in 1979, Zheng Chaozong, literate and friend of Qian Zhongshu, proposed the name of *Qian Xue*, Qian Studies, to indicate the whole field of research on the author.

In 1988 the first issue of the *Qian Zhongshu Yanjiu* 钱钟书研究 (Research on Qian Zhongshu) Journal was released and, since the eighties, the term *Qian Xue* has been widely used to indicate that Qian Zhongshu has a corpus of works worth the founding of a new discipline.

Dealing with such a personality and such a great amount of learning and wit, it has been hardly avoidable for scholars of Qian Zhongshu not to converge in a trend of studies on the author, ending up in the creation of a

⁴⁹⁵ See Song Xinli 宋新丽, "Cong 'Du Laokong' Guankui Qian Zhongshu de Wenyi Jianshang Guan" 从《读〈拉奥孔〉》管窥钱钟书的文艺鉴赏观, in *Zhongguo Xibu Keji, Science and Technology of West China*, 2008 vol 7, n.15.

⁴⁹⁶ Ronald Egan, *Limited Views*, 177.

⁴⁹⁷ Translation by Dennis T. Hu in *Human Beasts and Ghosts – Stories and Essays by Qian Zhongshu* edited by Christopher G.Rea, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 153.

study field that did not please the author nor had been aimed at. Qian has always disapproved studies on him and his works, he has always been critical on critical studies and biographies in general and in the course of his life has discouraged many critics who wanted to do research on him. Nevertheless, *Guan Zhui Bian* and *Wei Cheng* were such great achievements that notwithstanding the opposing political situation and the will of the author to stay away from fame and academic honours, nothing could be done to avoid their influence on literature and their incentive to critical analysis.

The years subsequent to the publication of *Guan Zhui Bian* saw the growth of Qian Studies with many publications on the subject, among which it is important to recall for their representative value the above-mentioned *Qian Zhongshu Yanjiu* magazine published from the *Wenhua Yishu Chubanshe* 文化艺术出版社 (Culture and Art Publishing House) and the collection of research material on Qian edited by Lu Wenhua in several volumes. The eighties saw authors analyze Qian Zhongshu's life and works from the most varied points of view belonging to fields like translation, comparative literature, philosophy, intercultural studies, linguistic, history and so on, posing solid bases for future research. *Qian Xue* is, in fact, a discipline that embraces all the fields related to Qian Zhongshu's works, from the seven different languages in which Qian used to quote in his works up to philosophy, religion, history, exegetic, folklore, rhetoric, cultural studies, psychology, comparative studies, etc.

After the death of Qian, all the appreciation and remembrance from the literary world, together with the various articles published on the Chinese

national and international press, have been collected in *Yi Cun Qian Si* ⁴⁹⁸ 一寸千思 and in *Bu Yiyang de Jiyi* ⁴⁹⁹ 不一样的记忆.

As for the American and European appreciation, remarkable and forerunner of ensuing critiques is the opinion expressed from Xia Zhiqing in his *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction*.⁵⁰⁰

“The Besieged City is the most delightful and carefully wrought novel in modern Chinese literature: it is perhaps also its greatest novel” .⁵⁰¹

These words on *Wei Cheng* by Xia Zhiqing were a starting point for outside China research and translations that have inspired scholars like Nicolas Chapuis, Christian Bourgois, Ronald Egan, T. D. Hutters, Monika Motsch among the others. In fact, since research on Qian Zhongshu and his works started in China, many western countries have started as well to pursue research on this author and have opened research doctoral classes. At the beginning of the eighties, a western scholar defined Qian “the greatest sage”, with an epithet previously reserved to the Greek philosopher Socrates. This, remarks the critic Chen Ziqian, is something Chinese people can be proud of, even if the same Qian Zhongshu was not interested in compliments and praises. Scholars of *Qian Xue* hoped that this discipline could spread and become popular, but popularization means also vulgarization, because it is rarely linked to deep understanding. The same Qian Zhongshu has always denied authority to Schools made up after novels or authors, and even if not willing to comply with his desire to refrain from scholarly research on his life and works, at

⁴⁹⁸ He Hui and Fang Tianxing, ed. *Yi Cun Qian Si*.

⁴⁹⁹ Cheng Bing edit., *Bu Yiyang de Jiyi - Yu Qian Zhongshu Zai Yiqi* (Dangdai Shijie Chubanshe, 1999).

⁵⁰⁰ Xia Zhiqing, *Zhongguo Xiandai Xiaoshuo Shi*, (Xianggang Zhongwen daxue Chubanshe, 2001).

⁵⁰¹ C.T. Hsia, "Ch'ien Chung-shu" in *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction*. 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), 441.

least it is necessary to conduct this research according to those criteria he has indicated: a careful study should precede any pronouncement. It is important to deeply understand and be acquainted with Qian's works before professing to be scholars belonging to the *Qian Xue*.

From the publication of the study *Qian Xue Lun* 钱学论 by Chen Ziqian in 1992 for the *Sichuan Wen Yi Chubanshe* 四川文艺出版社 (Sichuan Art Publishing House), the term *Qian Xue* has been widely used and has started to appear on many articles giving even way to jokes on the meaning of the name that play on the homophony of the surname Qian and the Chinese word for money, *qian* 钱, thus translating the name *Qian Xue* as "the art to earn money" as in the literary magazine *Hebei Wenlun Bao*.⁵⁰²

The development of the discipline has nevertheless started only in the second half of last century although most of Qian Zhongshu's masterpieces were written in the forties of last century. Qian's literary achievements were not recognized until the eighties, acquiring a complete recognition for his work only during the nineties. The same Xia Zhiqing ironically relates that Qian Zhongshu came to know about his appreciation of *Wei Cheng* only in Italy in 1978 when, attending a meeting on Sinology in the Italian city of Ortisei,⁵⁰³ an Italian scholar, since Qian's name seemed a familiar one, told him: "Oh, you're a chapter in a certain Xia's book". Moreover, that was also the moment when Qian came to know about already accomplished or planned translations of *Wei Cheng* in

⁵⁰² Chen Ziqian, *Lun Qian Zhongshu*, 238.

⁵⁰³ About the attendance at the Italian meeting see Wu Taichang, *Wo Renshi de Qian Zhongshu*.

French, Russian, Czech and English languages⁵⁰⁴ of which he was not aware before.

December 1990 saw the broadcast of the television series *Wei Cheng* by the director Huang Shuqin 黄蜀芹. This adaptation of the homonymous novel won Qian Zhongshu's praises as a work done better of what he might have thought.⁵⁰⁵ The series won the author a renewed interest in mainland China, since up to that period he had been if not neglected, surely not appreciated. Zhang Wenjiang, author of a biography of Qian Zhongshu which this work has paid attention to for its accuracy and authority, explains the initial lack of interest in Qian's work, with particular reference to the novel *Wei Cheng*, with the difficulty of categorization for literary accomplishments that went so much out of the borders of the main trends set by the Literary Revolution of the first half of the 20th century. *Wei Cheng*, more than according to Chinese tradition, had to be analysed at the light of world literature. Literary critics were bewildered and confused in having to express an opinion on the novel, and the easiest path was to ignore it. For the contemporaries, the encounter with the novel was, concludes Zhang, like the encounter with an extraterrestrial.⁵⁰⁶ The opinion of Ted Hutters on the matter is, instead, that Qian Zhongshu was not such a prolific writer as Ba Jin and Shen Congwen 沈从文, he did not identify himself with the right nor with the left, he did not choose a particular language nor a particular literary genre and, more than other, he has always expressed negative comments on his fellow-writers staying aloof from the contemporary literary stage.⁵⁰⁷

⁵⁰⁴ Xia Zhiqing, "Zhonghui Qian Zhongshu Jishi", 60-76.

⁵⁰⁵ See Wu Taichang, *Wo renshi de Qian Zhongshu*, 103.

⁵⁰⁶ See Zhang Wenjiang, *Yingzao Babita*, 48-49.

⁵⁰⁷ See Hutters, "Traditional Innovation".

Gong Gang divides the *Qian Xue* in two big thematic sections: research on creative works and research on scholarly works, and in four time phases: the *Minguo* 民国 or Republican period, in which interest in Qian's work was aroused; the phase from 1949 to 1979, year of publication of *Guan Zhui Bian*, that has been the bleakest period; the period from 1979 to 1998, as the period of a suddenly rise and growth of interest and the last period from 1998 on as the time of the cherishing of the memory and of a more fruitful and in-depth research.

In the first phase, Qian Zhongshu did not have a leading role among the scholars and literates of his time, and masterpieces like *Tan Yi Lu* were classified as fragmentary and full of contradictions.⁵⁰⁸ The publication of the novel *Wei Cheng* in 1947 caused contradictory opinions: positive or negative as they might be, Qian Zhongshu was, with Zhang Ailing, one of the most prominent and popular writers in the Shanghai of the war of resistance.

In the period from 1949 to 1969 there is nothing remarkable in the history of the *Qian Xue* but an episode with political connotations: the collection of Song poems, *Song Shi Xuanzhu*, was criticized as leftist from the *Guangming Ribao* 光明日报 of December 14, 1958.

Even if the whole corpus of *Qian Xue* has many repetitions and is redundant, it has been important in the first phase of its development to stimulate the interest on the writer and set the pattern for the research on his works.

The majority of publications came during the eighties and the nineties up to the beginning of the 21st century. What happened after the start of the new century is a phenomenon of crystallization of the study field: new

⁵⁰⁸Gong Gang, Yue Daiyun ed., *Qian Zhongshu: Aizhishe de Xiaoyao*, 25.

publications continue to appear, but they are nearly always reprints of previous collections or collections of essays previously published on magazines or newspapers by the same well-known names in the trend of the “commemoration literature”, like one of the last publications edited by Yang Lianfen and published by the *Wenhua Yishu Chubanshe* in 2009 (with preface and afterword dated 2010) called *Qian Zhongshu Pingshuo Qishi Nian* 钱钟书评说七十年 (Seventy years of comments on Qian Zhongshu) which again collects existent and already published material or the *Qian Zhongshu Xiansheng Bai Nian Danchen Jinian Wenji* 钱钟书先生百年诞辰纪念文集 (Collected works in commemoration of the one hundred years birthday of Mr Qian Zhongshu) published at the end of 2010 by the *Sanlian Shudian Chubanshe*, just to name some.

6.6 One hundred years of Qian Zhongshu

2010, a date that will stay fundamental in the whole development of *Qian Xue*, marks the one hundred years since the birth of the writer, and is an anniversary that has been duly commemorated with two international conferences in Taipei and in Vancouver and a meeting behind closed door in Beijing.

The Taipei “International Conference in Centennial Commemoration of Late Professor Qian Zhongshu” has been held at the College of Liberal Arts of National Central University in Jhong-Li, Taiwan, in December 18-19, 2009 and has been organized by Professor Wang Rongzu from the same university. The meeting, the first of this range for importance and official character, has seen contributions from many expert scholars on

Qian Zhongshu from continental China, Taiwan, Macao, America and Europe.⁵⁰⁹ Yang Jiang, who is often quite reluctant to concede authorizations to hold meetings on her husband and herself, has approved personally the name list of participants to the meeting. The Taipei conference, with its range of selected participants and its deeply scholarly attitude, has been a unique occasion to reflect on the achievements of Qian Zhongshu and on his influence on Chinese contemporary literary world. Much more devoted to the future of studies and research on Qian Zhongshu and Yang Jiang has been the workshop “Qian Zhongshu and Yang Jiang: A Centennial Perspective”⁵¹⁰ held in Vancouver on December 10-12, 2010, exactly one year after the Taipei conference. An otherwise hardly to get occasion to exchange ideas, the workshop has been organized by Professor Christopher Rea from the Canadian University of British Columbia and has been meant to set a firm point in *Qian Xue* since its intents, far from a mere commemoration and rethinking on Qian’s works, have been set in the collection of scholarly expertise to write a book

⁵⁰⁹ The roster of participant scholars to the Taiwan conference includes: Ye Jiaying, Nankai University; Wang Rongzu, Taiwan National Central University; Zhang Longxi, Hong Kong City University; Huang Weiliang, Foguang University; Monika Motsch, Munich University; Wang Cicheng, Taiwan National Central University; Zhang Jian, Taiwan Chinese Culture University; Jian Jinsong, Taiwan Chinese Culture University; Ronald Egan, University of Santa Barbara, California; Tian Jianmin, Hebei University; Zhang Gaoping, Taiwan Chengong University; Fu Jie, Shanghai Fudan University; Gong Gang, Macao University; Tiziana Lioi, Rome University Sapienza; Yu Guangzhong, Sun Yat-sen University, Shanghai.

⁵¹⁰ The roster of participants to the Vancouver workshop includes: Judy Amory, Independent scholar; Amy Dooling, Connecticut College; Ronald Egan, University of California, Santa Barbara; Jesse Field, University of Minnesota; Alexander Huang, The Pennsylvania State University; Ted Hutters, University of California, Los Angeles; Ji Jin, Suzhou University; Wendy Larson, University of Oregon; Tiziana Lioi, Rome University Sapienza; Christopher Rea, The University of British Columbia; Carlos Rojas, Duke University; Yaohua Shi, Wake Forest University; Wang Yao, Suzhou University; Wang Yugen, University of Oregon; John B. Weinstein, Simon’s Rock College at Bard; Zhang Enhua, University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

that, at the time of writing of the present dissertation, has the provisional title of *China's Literary Cosmopolitans: Qian Zhongshu, Yang Jiang, and the World of Modern Letters*. The book is meant to explain to non-China specialists why Qian Zhongshu and Yang Jiang deserve their attention. This is a passage long waited for and strongly necessary and recommended for a discipline, the *Qian Xue*, that only through the opening to the outside world could advance and be faithful to the same intents of Qian Zhongshu's practice of literature and literary critics: to break borders through disciplines, time and space without being crystallized in empty pronouncements.

The *Qian Zhongshu Xiansheng Bai Nian Danchen Jinian Hui* 钱钟书先生百年诞辰纪念会 (Meeting in commemoration of the one-hundred years birthday of Mr Qian Zhongshu) has been a gathering behind closed door held in November 2010 at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing, after which the *Qian Zhongshu Xiansheng Bai Nian Danchen Jinian Wenji* 钱钟书先生百年诞辰纪念文集 (Collected works in commemoration of the one hundred years birthday of Mr Qian Zhongshu) has been published at the end of 2010 by the *Sanlian Shudian Chubanshe*. The editor of the collection of essays Ding Weizhi 丁伟志, associate Dean of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, stresses in the foreword that the fundamental task for all scholars of Qian is to spread the knowledge of the author and of his works and, quoting Feng Youlan about the Confucian School of idealist philosophy "we should not speak in accordance with it, but take over it".⁵¹¹ That should be the wish and the aim of the 21st century *Qian Xue*: to gather Qian's legacy and keep applying a method that has brought new contents to Chinese and world comparative literature.

⁵¹¹ Ding Weizhi ed., *Qian Zhongshu Xiansheng Bainian Danchen Jinian wenji*, 3.



Among the series of activities and publications for the commemoration of the one hundred years of Qian Zhongshu and Yang Jiang, the may 30, 2011 issue of the *Nanfang Renwu Zhoukan* 南方人物周刊⁵¹² edited by the Southern Press Communication Corporation (*Nanfang baoye chuanmei jituan* 南方报业传媒集团) has dedicated its cover to the couple of writers

offering them the position of the magazine dedicated to the “cover people”. Twenty-one pages of the issue in a popular article by the journalist Li Naiqing 李乃清 disclose to the general public the lives of the two writers with pictures mostly related to the private life of the two attached.

⁵¹² Li Naiqing. “Duimian Renwu, Cover People, Bainian Jiazhu Qian Zhongshu yu Yang Jiang” in *Nanfang Renwu Zhoukan*, 30-05-2011, n. 17, 26-47.

Appendix 1: Western Comparative Studies

The origin of western comparative literature could be traced back to the Roman Empire, even if it is only in the thirties and forties of the 19th century that it has started to develop itself as a discipline in France and Germany. The first step each country undertakes in pursuing comparative literature studies is always to settle and arrange its own literature and the contacts with literatures and authors of other countries. This is what has happened to France that has developed a study on “the practical and real contacts” between literatures, or to Germany, whose first moves in comparative literature have been to research on the history of literature’s comparisons.

In its relatively short history, four different phases could be traced to mark the course of comparative literature in the western world: at the beginning of the 18th century it was common practice to compare two or more literary traditions on a regional basis and with a set timeline, following the same historiographical method; in the second half of the century the start of the second phase of the development of the discipline could be attributed to the French School, for which to compare literatures meant to look for influences of one author or of one literary work on another, trying to inscribe a national tradition in a more global scheme. The aim was to make comparative literature a scientific subject with the study of national literatures through quotations, sources and references to other works. A fundamental contribution to the development of the discipline in the west has been an article by the Italian critic Benedetto Croce who stated that comparative literature should have a scientific foundation and should study national literatures in a global setting.⁵¹³

⁵¹³ Gnisci and Sinopoli, *Manuale storico di letteratura comparata* (Roma: Meltemi, 1997), 77.

The third phase of comparative literature studies is the so-called “American season of the New Critics”, whose leading characters are scholars like Wellek and Étiemble. This is the time when intercultural hints appear and there is an opening towards non-European literatures. Wellek affirms⁵¹⁴ that comparative literature should not have limitations in space, time and purposes, challenging in a way the limitations imposed by an historic and factual method.

In 1963 is Étiemble⁵¹⁵ the first to insist on the necessity to move towards an intercultural perspective, leaving aside the mere Euro-American borders. Étiemble profiles the characteristics of the “ideal comparatist”: a scholar possessing scientific and aptitude qualities that make him a historian and a sociologist and that provide him with common knowledge about general culture. He should be an expert of music and art; he should have encyclopaedic inclinations and should be able to read with intelligence and acumen every text in its original language.

The great achievements of the American School have been to make comparative literature less provincial, giving it the status of an intercultural discipline. Wellek’s approach to comparative literature sprung from a critique and opposition to the French comparative literature tradition that, in his opinion, had confined comparative literature’s scopes to the study of trade contacts between literatures. Absorbing the main points of Wellek’s critique, Étiemble gave a new start to the discipline affirming that its main scope was the promotion of mutual understanding between people and that the comparative study of literatures which had never been in contact might have been significant and capable of enhancing the progress of mankind on a general level. That is why

⁵¹⁴ Gnisci and Sinopoli, *Manuale storico*, 93-108.

⁵¹⁵ Gnisci and Sinopoli, *Manuale storico*, 28-29; 109-113.

comparison in Wellek and Étiemble's method was not the main mean of analysis for literatures, instead they sustained that methods like description, interpretation, narration, explanation and evaluation should be used.⁵¹⁶

The fourth and more mature phase of comparative literature as a discipline is the one focusing on cultural studies. Critics belonging to this phase insist on the necessity to loosen comparative literature studies from every territorial and temporal limitation and to put different traditions on the same level being careful to avoid both the Euro-American centrism for western critics and the Sino centrism for eastern critics, as Yue Daiyun, former professor of comparative literature at Peking University, notes the tendency had been for postcolonial China. The cultural studies phase sees an important contribution by Earl R. Miner with his article *Etudes Compares Interculturelles* (Comparative intercultural studies) in 1989⁵¹⁷ reflecting on some specific aspects to which it is necessary to pay attention in cultural studies, like lexicon and methodology of research. When talking about literary genres, for instance, Miner warns that it is necessary to be aware of fundamental differences in different cultures and that it might be illusory to think to find the same "tragedy" or "novel" in different traditions. This warning is supported by Miner's analysis of basic concepts in world literatures: the western Greek *mimesis*, theorized by Aristotle and the Roman Horace, as imitation of the world by the poet, and the eastern concept of permeation of nature by the artist, based on the same artist's sensations.

It thus seems to emerge that Qian Zhongshu's ideas can be traced back to the American School as theorized by Wellek and Étiemble, and that there

⁵¹⁶ Yue Daiyun, *Comparative Literature*, 84-85.

⁵¹⁷ Gnisci and Sinopoli, *Manuale Storico*, 145-181.

is full accordance on his side with such an open and intercultural view of the discipline. His ideas nevertheless merge without any imperfection in the cultural studies phase, since one of the main points to which Qian has tried to bring the readers' attention, in his turning the pages of world literature, have been the specificities of each tradition, and the importance to pierce into cultural, sociological and historical motives as an integral part of literary analysis. The true benefit coming out of his scholarly career is the way in which he has conducted this analysis and is the "comparative method" this work has tried to delineate through the specific focus on Italian quotations. This is also the contribution his studies have brought to the discipline of global comparative literature.

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Appendix 3: Correspondence

3.1 Qian Zhongshu and Yang Jiang letters

In August 2009, while attending a refreshing course for teachers of Chinese at Beijing Language University in Beijing, I happened to read an online interview to Yang Jiang, dated a few years before. Being in Beijing, I thought it would have been of sure interest to meet the writer personally to ask her some questions that kept coming to my mind while reading Qian and Yang's works. I thus started my treasure hunt to get her phone number. The hunt brought me in various parts of the city and I finally happened to reach the right person to ask for the number and for a phone call introducing my visit. I could get the first but not the latter; moreover, the person asked me not to tell anybody she had given me the phone number. I thus did, and called myself Yang Jiang.

A middle-aged woman picked up the phone and with a very reassuring but firm voice started answering my questions about the health of Yang Jiang and her conditions. When I asked for an appointment she asked Yang Jiang, and the negative answer I could even hear from the phone was sweetened by the promise to answer my letter, if I ever intended to post one to her. The woman was Yang Jiang's nurse, and she assured me that due to the old age, she was 99 years old at that time, the writer was used to reject any visit because her feeble hearing could not allow her to conduct a proper conversation. I started writing my letter as soon as I hung up; it was August 9, the content, followed by the English translation, being the one I here transcribe:

杨绛女士：

您好！

我能有给您写信那么珍贵的机会我十分高兴而且觉得这是我一辈子忘不了的经历，所以首先我想非常感谢您同意接受我的信。我真希望给您打电话的时候没有太打扰您！

首先我想自我介绍：我是罗马智慧大学的一个博士生，目前我在北京语言大学上一个月的老师进修班，来到北京的目的是我的博士论文。我博士论文的题目是关于钱钟书先生的作品，就是在钱先生的作品中出现的意大利文学。我想钱先生非常看重文化与文化的关系，估计这个题目可能会得到他的批准！我看他和您作品的时候不能不确信你们是世界上非常珍贵的人，很少能有机会见到的两个天使。我的中文水平真的不够让我说出来我心里对您的崇敬。我想研究钱先生的思想也是因为我希望在意大利更多人能够认识到您们的宝贵作品和思想。

我不要太耽误您的时间，希望问您一些问题不是特别麻烦您的一件事儿。如果您愿意回答我的研究肯定能得到很大的帮助。

关于钱先生的作品我想了解：

- 1) 在钱钟书英文文集的序言您写了 1952 年钱先生要离开他在外文研究所的任务，所以他以后没办法实现他的梦想。他的梦想是什么？
- 2) 钱先生和您好像在文化大革命的时候不爱关心政治方面的问题，那您觉得为什么你们遇到过那么多困难？
- 3) 钱先生的思想没有一个系统的说明所以有的学者说他没有一个思想：您觉得这么做是因为文化大革命的时候说出来一个人的理论不太合适还是因为他认为没有必要写一个系统的说明？
- 4) 有人说钱先生在他的年代有着特殊，全新的评论看法，您觉得他给中国文学的最大贡献在哪个方面？
- 5) 钱先生对西方文学看法在哪个方面与他的年代最主流的看法不一样？
- 6) 您觉得为什么钱先生不同意被称为一个比较文学家？
- 7) 您的《我们仨》还有《孟婆茶》都开始在一个梦境的气氛。为什么？
- 8) 如果您有忘记文化大革命经历的选择，您会选择吗？您想喝这个孟婆茶还是您想保留所有的回忆？
- 9) 钱先生对意大利文学有什么看法？

最后我感谢您和您的先生给文化世界作出珍贵贡献。我在罗马的时候和 Lanciotti 教授谈到您，他还记得钱先生给他送的围城电视剧，很亲切的回忆！

再次感谢您抽出宝贵的时间读我的信。期待您的回复。

此致

敬礼

Tiziana Lioi

09-08-2009

Dear Mrs Yang Jiang,

I am extremely pleased to have the opportunity to write You: this is a chance I will never forget. I want first to thank You for having accepted to receive my letter, and I hope my phone call was not too much of a disturbance.

A few words to introduce myself: I am a PhD student from Rome University "Sapienza" and I am presently attending a teachers' refresher course at Beijing Language University. The main reason of my coming to Beijing though is that I am writing a PhD dissertation on the influence of Italian literature in the works of Qian Zhongshu. I believe Qian Zhongshu attributed a great importance to the connections between cultures and I think this topic would have gained his approval. When reading Your works, I am convinced both of You are two precious figures, two angels that is a rare opportunity to meet. My poor Chinese is not sufficient to express all my appreciation towards You, and I would like to research on Qian Zhongshu's works also to let more people in Italy know and understand your valuable works and ideas.

I do not want to take much of Your time and I hope it will not be inappropriate to ask You some questions. If You would accept to answer, it will surely be of great advantage for my research.

As for Qian Zhongshu's works, I would like to ask:

- 1) *In the introduction to the "Collection of English Essays", You wrote that Qian Zhongshu in 1952 had to leave the position he occupied in the Research Department on Foreign Languages, and that after that he could not realize his dream. Which was his dream?*
- 2) *It seems that during the Cultural Revolution both You and Qian Zhongshu did not pay great attention to political questions; why then did You suffer so many hardships in that period?*
- 3) *Qian Zhongshu's ideas have not undergone an organic exposition, so that some scholars affirm that he did not create a complete system of thought: what do You reckon about it? Do You think it was not appropriate during the Cultural Revolution to openly expound a theory, or do You think that he did so because that was his method?*
- 4) *Some people affirm that Qian had peculiar and new critical insights in his epoch; which do You reckon was his main contribution to Chinese literature?*
- 5) *Which is the main distinctive feature of Qian Zhongshu's ideas on western literature if compared to the main trend of his time?*
- 6) *Why do You think Qian did not agree on his being called a comparatist?*
- 7) *Both Your "Women Sa" and "Mengpo Cha" start with a dream atmosphere. Why?*
- 8) *If You could choose to forget all the experiences of the Cultural Revolution, would You do so? Would You choose to drink the "mengpo cha", the tea of oblivion, or would You rather keep all of Your recollections?*
- 9) *Which was Qian Zhongshu's idea on Italian literature?*

Let me finally thank You and Your spouse for the great contribution given to the world of letters. In Rome, I once mentioned You in a talk with Professor Lanciotti,

he still keeps the sweet memory of Qian Zhongshu's giving him as a present the television series version of the novel Wei Cheng.

Thank You again for having spent your precious time reading my letter.

Waiting for Your kind reply,

Best regards,

Tiziana Lioi

Who would have ever imagined that only four days later I would have got the punctual reply to my letter handwritten by the same Yang Jiang? She answered my questions talking both about her experience and about Qian Zhongshu's. I have been pleasantly surprised by her gentle manner and the sympathetic way in which she wished me good luck with my thesis and my health. Probably the answer that most reveals her ironic and calmly sharp view of life has been the one to my question if she would have chosen to forget about the Cultural Revolution had she had the choice to do so. "The Cultural Revolution has been a great calamity" she has written, "and in China we say that we have a great calamity once every six-hundred years; this has been a rare encounter and one difficult to get. How could you ever want to forget it?" I here let her letter speak directly, my transcription follows every one of the three pages and the English translation comes in the end:

中国社会科学院外国文学研究所

狄霞娜女士：

您好！

谢谢您来信，您的中文信写得真好！我又欣赏，又惭愧我的外文信若能写的像你这样好，我该多么得意呀！

我敢尽力回答你提的问题。

1. 钱先生是专门研究西洋文学的。他想写一部有关西洋文学的学术论文集，至今未能实现。
2. “文化大革命”是革“老先生”（从旧社会过来的知识分子）的命。^{知识份子}所以第一是打倒“老先生”。
3. 钱先生不主张空洞的理论，就事论事，就文论文，所以显得支离破碎，没有系统。
4. 他打通了中西文化。

狄霞娜女士：

你好！

谢谢您来信，您的中文信写得真好！我又欣赏，又惭愧我的外文信若能写的像你这样好，我该多么得意呀！

我？？尽力回答你提的问题。

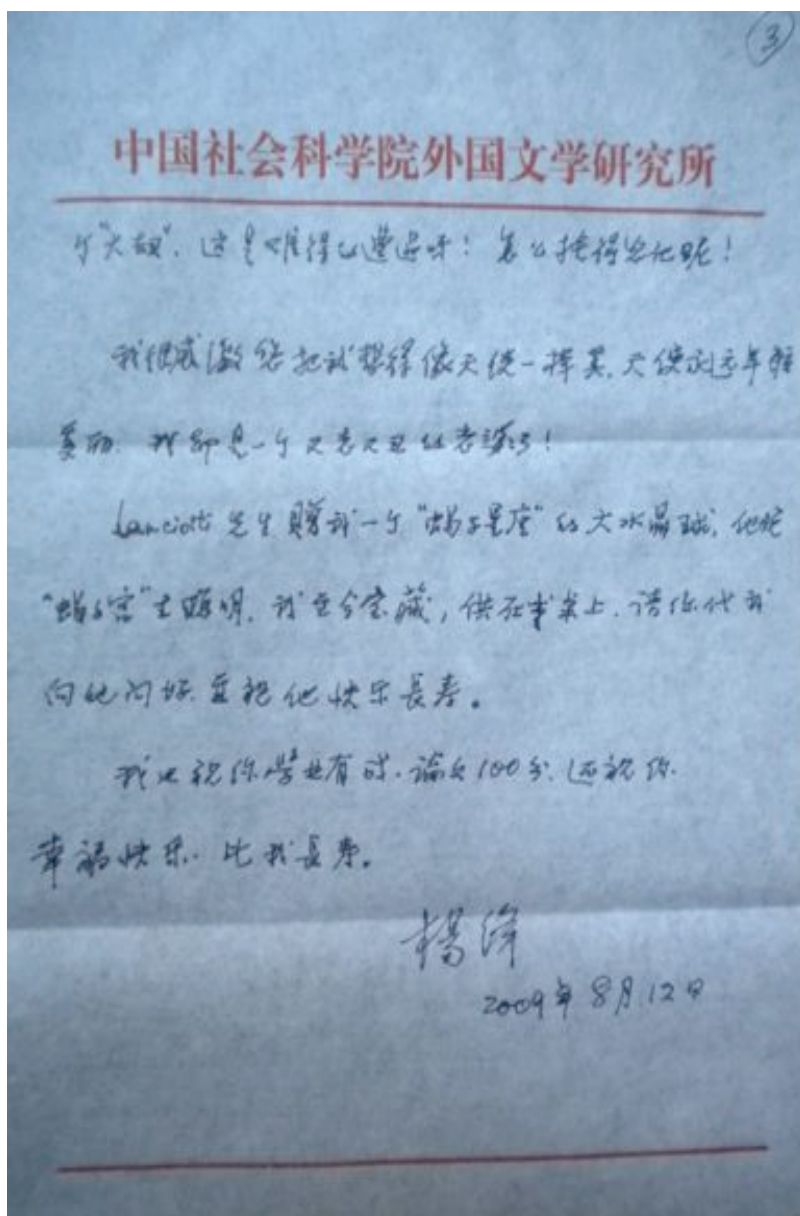
- 1) 钱先生是专门研究西洋文学的。他想写一部有关西洋文学的学术论文集，至今未能实现。
- 2) “文化大革命”是革“老先生”（从旧社会过来的知识分子）。所以第一是打倒“老先生”。
- 3) 钱先生不主张空洞的理论，就事论事，就文论文，所以显得支离破碎，没有系统。
- 4) 他打通了中西文化。

中国社会科学院外国文学研究所

5. 钱先生那个时代，对西方文学还没有主流看法。
6. 钱先生那个时代，对“比较文学”还不了解。他是在打通东西方文学，不再比较。
7. 我不懂意大利文，不能回答。
8. 《我们仨》是一部创作。借一个梦境补充说明实际生活中无法实现的现实。
《孟婆茶》是一篇短的教文。我说想我死以后任何学术领域都没有我的地位，我却又不是“尾巴”上的人物，（指微不足道的）。这多少有点像 Cervantes 说“船上没有我的座位”，旁人教他把大衣叠起，坐在大衣上。Cervantes 说，他连大衣也没有一件。
9. “文化大革命”是“大乱”，中国经济滑坡，由三年雪原-

- 5) 钱先生那个时代，对西方文学还没有主流看法。
- 6) 钱先生那个时代对“比较文学”还不了解。他是在打通东西方文学，不再比较。
- 7) 我不懂意大利文。不能回答。
- 8) “我们仨”是一部创作。借一个梦境补充说明实际生活中无法实现的现实。“孟婆茶”是一篇短的教文。我说想我死以后任何学术领域都没有我的地位，我却又不是“尾巴”上的人物，（指微不足道的）。这多少有点像 Cervantes 说“船上没有我的座位”，旁人教他把大衣叠起，坐在大衣上。Cervantes 说，他连大衣也没有一件。

9) “文化大革命”是“大劫”。中国传统说法，每六百年有一



个“大劫”。这是难得的遭遇呀！怎么舍得忘记呢！我很感激您把我想得像天使一样美。天使永远年轻美丽的。我却是一个又老又丑的老婆婆！

Lanciotti 先生赠我一个“蝎子星座”的大水晶球，他说“蝎子宫”主聪明。我至今宝藏，供在书桌上。请你代我向他表示问好，并祝他快乐长寿。

我也祝你学业有成，论文100分。还祝你幸福快乐。比我长寿。

扬绛

2009年8月12日

Dear Miss Tiziana,

Thank you for your letter. It is really well written! I feel both admiration and shame: if only my letters in a foreign language could be written so well as yours, how would I be proud of myself!

I will try my best to answer your questions.

- 1) Mister Qian was doing research particularly on western literature. He would have liked to write a scholarly collection of essays on western literature, and he could not do it.*
- 2) The Great Cultural Revolution was against the “Old Gentlemen” (the intelligentsia belonging to the old society), that is why its first goal was to overthrow these “Old Gentlemen”.*
- 3) Mister Qian did not stand for empty theories, he considered something just as it stood, he talked about literature as it was, that is why his thought seems smashed and broken, without a systematic organization.*
- 4) He got through Chinese and western cultures.*
- 5) At Mister Qian’s times, there was not yet any common view on western literature.*
- 6) At Mister Qian’s times, there was not an understanding on “comparative literature”. He was getting through Chinese and western literatures, he was not doing comparisons.*
- 7) I do not understand any Italian and I cannot answer this question.*
- 8) “Women Sa” is a creative work. It uses a dream world to explain the realities that one cannot be aware of in real life. “Mengpo Cha” is a short educational piece of work. There is in it the idea that after my death there will not be a place for me in any of the artistic disciplines and I would not even be a “secondary character” (of no account). This is in a way the same image given by Cervantes, who writes: “on the boat there is no seat” and*

the others tell him to fold his jacket and seat on it. Cervantes writes he does not even have a jacket to seat on.

- 9) *The “Cultural Revolution” has been a “great calamity”. In China, we say that there is a great calamity once every six-hundred years; this has been a rare encounter and one difficult to get indeed! How could you ever want to forget it?”*

I really thank you for having thought about me as being as beautiful as an angel is. Angels are forever beautiful and young, while I am an old and ugly granny!

Mr Lanciotti once gave me as a present a crystal ball with the zodiac sign of the scorpion and he told me that the scorpion is master of intelligence. I kept it until today and still treasure it on my bookshelf. I would appreciate if you could bring him my regards and my wishes of happiness and long life.

I wish you success with your studies and I wish you to get full scores for your dissertation. I also wish you happiness and a life longer than mine.

Yang Jiang

12-08-2009

Two years later, I happened to attend a meeting on Chinese-Italian translation organized by Beijing Foreign Languages University. The host of the meeting, Professor Wen Zheng 文铮, from the same organizing university, in a coffee break asked about my research and made me jump in surprise when he told me he stored in his mobile the picture of a letter handwritten by the same Qian Zhongshu in which Leopardi and the Italian popular magazine *L'Espresso* were mentioned. I asked professor Wen the authorization to use the precious source to reinforce and sustain a basic affirmation on which this whole research stands: the competence of Qian in the Italian language and his love and interest for Italian authors; Professor Wen kindly consented, and here follow picture and

transcription of the letter sent by Qian Zhongshu to Lü Tongliu (1938-2005), major in Italian Literature and personality significantly involved in the research and translation of Italian literature for over 40 years.⁵¹⁸



同六同志：

承和张羽同志遇谈，甚快！那天提起翻译 Leopardi 的计划，我鼓掌赞成，顺便吹了个小牛，说我早在四十多年前引征了他的作品。口说无凭，而且也记不起在哪篇东西里引的是什么了。昨天忽收到意大利寄来一篇文章，没想到作者把我的吹牛查究落实。送你一笑。阅后请交鸿时同志掷还。几月前 L'Espresso 载导演 Bertolucci 诗同我的一篇报导，夸大过当，就不送你寓目了。蔡蓉同志健康，祝已康复！请代问好。张羽同志处也问好。即致。

敬礼！

钟书、杨绛同候

⁵¹⁸ For an account of the role of Lü Tongliu in the introduction of Italian literature in China see: Leonesi, Barbara, "La Cina, la letteratura italiana e Lü Tongliu. Un progetto di traduzione lungo una vita" in *La Cina e il Mondo Atti dell'XI Convegno dell'Associazione Italiana Studi Cinesi*, Roma, 22-24 Febbraio 2007 a cura di Paolo De Troia, Roma: Sapienza Università di Roma, 2010, 441-450.

十三日

Comrade Tongliu,

I am really happy for having met comrade Zhang Yu! That day we discussed the project of translation of Leopardi's works, which I approved with the greatest enthusiasm. I want also to add that I had quoted Leopardi's works 40 years ago. I cannot offer proofs of that though, since I have forgotten what have I quoted and where. Yesterday I have suddenly received an article from Italy, and I have been surprised to read that the author has tried to verify that boasting of mine, ascertaining it as true. I herewith send it to you for fun. Please give it to comrade Hongshi after having read it so that he can give it back to me. A few months ago "L'Espresso" has published some poems of the director Bertolucci in an article which mentions me. Since this last one is a little too exaggerated, I do not send it to you. Please give my regards to Mrs Cai Rong, I hope she has recovered already! Give my regards to comrade Zhang Yu as well.

Best regards,

Zhongshu and Yang Jiang

13

It has been interesting to read, after having based a whole research on the punctual explanation of all the Italian quotations in Qian's works and on the annotation of when and where he quotes who, that Qian himself remembered having quoted Leopardi, but could not prove where and what of Leopardi's work he had quoted.

The letter stays nevertheless as an example and a proof of the link Qian had with the Italian cultural and literary world, if he could even receive a copy of the popular magazine *L'Espresso* in which he had been quoted together with the director Bernardo Bertolucci and a copy of another

magazine or newspaper, of which he unlikely does not specify the name, in which his quotations of Leopardi had been verified and checked.

3.2 E-mails

Many have been the e-mails sent during my PhD to inquire about questions that needed the direct reply of scholars and experts. The most representatives, and the ones I want here to leave track of, are a couple of letters sent in reply to mine from Professor Zhang Wenjiang from the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences. In reading Professor Zhang's biography of Qian Zhongshu, the well informed and complete account of Qian's life and works titled *Yingzao Babita de Zhizhe: Qian Zhongshu zhuan* 营造巴比塔的智者 钱钟书传 firstly published in 1993, some questions came to my mind about a study Qian Zhongshu would have published on the contacts between Chinese and western literatures. The only way to get answers to my doubts was to direct my questions directly to the author of the biography. Here follows my email to Professor Zhang Wenjiang.

Email n. 1

12/04/2011 请转发给张文江研究员

Da: tiziana lioi (dixiana78@hotmail.com)
Inviato: martedì 12 aprile 2011 05:12:58
A: wxs@sass.org.cn

张文江教授：
您好！

不好意思通过上海社会科学院给您发邮件。
首先我自我介绍：我是一位意大利罗马大学博士生，叫狄霞娜。目前在北京大学从事进修。我的博士论文是写钱钟书的意大利语引文。最近两年参加过台湾中央大学的《錢鍾書教授百歲紀念國際學術研討會》以及加拿大温哥华《Qian Zhongshu and Yang Jiang: A Centennial Perspective, Department of Asian Studies - The University of British Columbia》研讨

会。两次会议中我的文章跟钱钟书引用意大利作品和他的比较方法有关。我刚看完了您的《营造巴比塔的智者钱钟书传》。您著作给我的贡献不少，它分析钱钟书的作品用非常清楚，有理的方法。我首先想感谢您给我研究提供的贡献。

我给您发邮件也是想了解一下《感觉·观念·思想》的出版情况。您是否了解著作何时能够出版？按照您的介绍书里面钱先生谈但丁和薄伽丘两个意大利作家。这个跟我的研究有很大的关系，看此作品能帮我得到一个更权的研究范围。

我非常感谢您的耐心，抱歉打扰您的工作。

祝您：

春安！

狄霞娜

Tiziana Lioi
PhD student
Rome University Sapienza
ISO Institute for Eastern Studies

Translation of Email n. 1

12/04/2011 Please forward to Professor Zhang Wenjiang

From: tiziana lioi (dixiana78@hotmail.com)

Sent: martedì 12 aprile 2011 05:12:58

To: wxs@sass.org.cn

Dear Professor Zhang Wenjiang,

I am sorry to disturb You through the email of the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences. I would like first to introduce myself: I am a PhD student from Rome University and my name is Tiziana Lioi. I am presently at Peking University doing research for my PhD dissertation, whose subject are the Italian quotations in Qian Zhongshu's works. In the last two years I have attended the "International Conference in Centennial Commemoration of Late Professor Qian Zhongshu" at Taiwan National Central University and the conference "Qian Zhongshu and Yang Jiang: A Centennial Perspective, Department of Asian Studies - The University of British Columbia" . Papers presented for both

conferences have dealt with Qian Zhongshu's Italian quotations and his comparative literature method. I have just finished reading your "Yingzao Babita de Zhizhe: Qian Zhongshu zhuan" which has provided me with important insights into Qian's scholarly activity, thanks to a clear and effective analysis of his works, for which I would like to thank You. The reason why I am writing You is about the presumed publication of the work "Ganjue-Guannian-Sixiang" 感觉·观念·思想. Do you happen to know anything about it? As for your account, the book should be about the Italian writers Dante and Boccaccio, and this has a great importance for my research. The book could surely support the field of my analysis. I thank You a lot for Your patience and I am sorry for any disturbance to your work.

Best regards,

Tiziana Lioi

PhD student Rome University Sapienza

ISO Institute for Eastern Studies

After just one day came Professor Zhang's reply:

Email n. 2

Date: Wed, 13 Apr 2011 16:17:06 +0800

From: zwj@sass.org.cn

To: dixiana78@hotmail.com

Subject: 感觉·观念·思想

狄霞娜:

谢谢你中文那么好，也谢谢你研究钱钟书。《感觉·观念·思想》是钱先生拟写的著作，最后没有成书，有关材料可能在他的西文笔记中。钱先生的笔记目前只出版了中文的《容安馆札记》，西文笔记因为难以整理，出版可能遥遥无期。

你如果参考我的《钱钟书传》，请使用复旦大学出版社 2010 版，此书比上海文艺出版社 1993 年版减少了一些错误。

祝
成功!

张文江

Translation of Email n.2

Date: Wed, 13 Apr 2011 16:17:06 +0800

From: zwj@sass.org.cn

To: dixiana78@hotmail.com

Subject: Ganjue·Guannian·Sixiang

Dear Miss Lioi,

Thank you for your very good Chinese, and Thank you for your research on Qian Zhongshu. The book Ganjue·Guannian·Sixiang is a book Qian Zhongshu intended to write and never succeeded in doing it. The material relevant for his composition is maybe in his notes in western languages. Only the Chinese part of these notes has actually been published as the Rong'an Guan Zhaji. As for the western part is difficult to arrange it is difficult to predict when they will be published. If you read my biography of Qian Zhongshu please use the 2010 edition since the previous 1993 edition brings some mistakes.

Wish you success,

Zhang Wenjiang

I replied the following day:

Email n. 3

14/04/2011 RE: 感觉·观念·思想

Da: tiziana lioi (dixiana78@hotmail.com)

Inviato: giovedì 14 aprile 2011 12:44:47

A: zwj@sass.org.cn

张教授：

您好！

非常感谢您那么耐心得回我的问题。

我有《容安馆札记》，而且也开始看，里面找意大利语的引文。就是说因为笔记里面提到了很多不同作家我不太明白哪个地方钱钟书说他的《感觉·观念·思想》里面会谈到 10 名作家。而且《感觉·观念·思想》这个名字哪儿出现呢？

不好意思又打扰您了！

我看的您的钱钟书传就是两个月之前买的复旦大学版本。谢谢您的书给我提供的帮助，真不少！

再次感谢您的回复，

狄霞娜

Tiziana Lioi

罗马大学中文系，

北京大学中文系

Translation of Email n. 3

14/04/2011 RE: Ganjue·Guannian·Sixiang

From: tiziana lioi (dixiana78@hotmail.com)

Sent: Thursday April 14th 2011 12:44:47

To: zwj@sass.org.cn

Dear Professor Zhang,

Thanks for having replied my questions so patiently. I have the Rong'an Guan Zhaji and have started to analyse them looking for Italian quotations. The problem

is Qian in these notes quotes so many Italian authors that is difficult to understand why Qian would have said that his Ganjue·Guannian·Sixiang was only about 10 Italian writers. Then I also do not get where the name Ganjue·Guannian·Sixiang comes from.

So sorry for disturbing You once more!

The edition of Qian biography I am reading is precisely the one published by Fudan University. Thanks for the help you are providing me with your book, it is a consistent one!

Thank You again for Your reply,

Tiziana Lioi

Department of Chinese at Rome University

Department of Chinese at Peking University

Professor Zhang's second reply follows:

Email n. 4

14/04/2011 外编

Da: zwj@sass.org.cn

Inviato: giovedì 14 aprile 2011 16:23:18

A: tiziana lioi (dixiana78@hotmail.com)

狄霞娜:

《感觉·观念·思想》书名，出现在一本现代作家辞典“钱钟书”条中（出版于上世纪八十年代），大概仅此一见。当时判断这条记载的材料，来自钱先生本人。记得其中提到但丁、蒙田、莎士比亚，辅助以《管锥编》序言的“外编”预告（参见《传》89页），故判断为此书。在这三个人之外其余作家，是我读《管锥编》时对自己思想的整理，不是钱先生拟写的事实。

祝好！

张文江

Translation of Email n. 4

14/04/2011 Foreign Language Edition

From: zwj@sass.org.cn

Sent: Thursday April 14th 2011 16:23:18

To: tiziana lioi (dixiana78@hotmail.com)

Dear Tiziana,

the name of the book Ganjue·Guannian·Sixiang appears in the entry “Qian Zhongshu” in a dictionary by a contemporary writer published during the eighties of last century and has that as its only occurrence. The material to determine that piece of information came from the same Qian Zhongshu. I remember that he announced Dante, Shakespeare and Montaigne as the subject of the “edition in foreign languages” as in the preface of Guan Zhui Bian (see the biography, p.89). I came out with the names of the other writers reading Guan Zhui Bian, without any specific indication by Qian himself

Best regards,

Zhang Wenjiang

It has been interesting to read Professor Zhang’s words affirming the will of Qian Zhongshu to come up with a book on foreign literatures in which Dante occupied an important role: a further confirmation of his involvement with Italian literature and of his consistent appreciation of one of its main representative figures.

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