

An Appraisal of Cai Yong's *Fu* from His Innovations

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Abstract: Cai Yong is one of the most accomplished and prolific *fu* writers in the Han dynasty, whose *fu* oeuvre as a whole greatly expands the scope of traditional *fu* writing and re-defines *fu* as a literary genre with his constant experiments with both form and content. Embedded with his life as is recorded in his official biography and modern scholarship, this paper re-evaluates Cai Yong's *fu* from his innovations, and argues that there are four innovations that can be firmly established in his *fu*: 1, the broadening of the scope of *fu*, enabling it to convey more emotions than only frustration; 2, direct engagement with politics of his time; 3, his metrical innovations in the rhythm of *fu*; 4, his creative borrowing from the *Shi jing*.

Keywords: *Fu*; Cai Yong; literary innovation

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1 Cai Yong: A Life

The second-century writer Cai Yong (133–192 C. E.) is a native of Chenliu commandery (in modern Henan province). What we know today about his life is mostly from the biography of his recorded in the *Hou Han shu* (The History of Eastern Han), from which we learn that the polymath Cai Yong was already an acclaimed literary figure during his lifetime. Among many achievements, he was an esteemed Zither player, astronomer, historian, calligrapher, memorial eulogy writer, and also a *fu* writer. (Fan 1965: 1975–2013).

But the erudite scholar Cai Yong was probably too righteous to play dirty political tricks and too blunt for the sophisticated political game of the house of cards, unfortunately never possessed the political acumen, a quality that is of utter importance for surviving in the turbulent late Eastern Han dynasty. We find at least two times when his political naivety nearly cost him his life, and he did not survive the third time. The first time was when counselled by the emperor, he boldly named dozens of powerful eunuchs and consort of clans that he

believed should be immediately sacked. There came immediate and overwhelming revenge. Cai Yong was arrested shortly after for a malicious attempt to sabotage the regime and was sentenced to death. He was spared because his ally literati group pleaded for him and made the emperor have a second thought. He was pardoned to return to his hometown in Chenliu and before leaving the capital he attended a dinner arranged in his honour. This time it is not the enemy, but his potential friend and ally that he managed to offend. The arrogant host Wang Zhi, who was the brother of a high official Wang Fu in the imperial court, felt humiliated when Cai Yong refused to return favour for him and defied him overtly when he danced for Cai Yong:

「酒酣,智起舞屬邕,邕不為報。… 詬邕曰:『徒敢輕我!』邕拂袖而去。」(Fan 1965: 2003).

“When drunk, [‘Wang’] Zhi danced for [‘Cai’] Yong. [‘Cai’] Yong did not return the favour. ... [‘Wang Zhi’] scolded [‘Cai’] Yong: ‘How dare you belittle me!’ [‘Cai’] Yong wielded his sleeves and left.” (Translated by the author of this article)

Wang Zhi’s fury materialized in his indictment against Cai Yong for defaming the government when he was in prison. This time, knowing the imminent danger of death punishment, Cai Yong fled and, according to the official biography, hid in the Wu area for at least a dozen years. He led an idle life and had fun with the ancient books during this period before his reluctant consent to serve Dong Zhuo, the infamous warlord. After Dong Zhuo was assassinated, Cai Yong made one final political mistake that finally cost his life. Again, at a dinner, Cai Yong lamented the death of Dong Zhuo, which was considered treasonous by the host Wang Yun, and he was soon sentenced to death for collaborating with Dong Zhuo. He died in prison.

Cai Yong was no doubt unfitting for politics. But in the meanwhile, his virtues, such as his integrity and audacity, were well attested in these incidents. We will find later that these real and rare traits of his find their way into his oeuvre of *fu*, especially in his “Fu on Recounting a Journey” (“Shu xing fu”) and earned him great posthumous fame.

2 The Under-researched Cai Yong as a *Fu* Writer

Despite Cai Yong’s significance in so many aspects, there are few academic studies on him and his writings, and even fewer studies on his *fu*.

In the Chinese language, the information about his life comes from his biography in *Hou Han shu*. For the text of his entire oeuvre of *fu*, there are two very helpful reference books on the Han *fu* compiled by two of the most senior professors in this field: the *Quan han fu pingzhu* (Comments and Annotations on the Entire Han *fu*) by Gong Kechang (Gong 2003) and *Quan Han fu jiaozhu* (Annotations on the Entire Han *fu*) by Fei Zhengang (Fei 2005). As for the *fu* of Cai Yong, these two books sift through various editions of his writings and, for the first time, provide comparably reliable texts and preliminary annotations. So far, there are no traditional or modern monographs solely devoted to Cai Yong’s *fu* or his other writings, but there has been a small stream of pertinent articles since the 1970s. Most of these articles deal with one theme or one *fu* of Cai Yong’s and lack thorough study. And if compared with Gong Kechang’s seminal short analysis of Cai Yong, we find most of these

articles are mostly repeating Gong and have differed very little.

In the English language, there are even fewer studies on the *fu* of Cai Yong. There are two monographs dealing with Cai Yong: Enno Giele's *A Study of Cai Yong's Duduan* in 2006 and *A Significant Season: Cai Yong (ca. 133–192) and His Contemporaries* by Mark Laurent Asselin (Asselin 2010). The former investigated Cai Yong's historical work *Duduan* and did not bother itself with his *fu*. It is the latter that was endowed with a serious scholarship towards some but not all of the *fu* of Cai Yong and which this paper refers to and responds to in many cases. The book was a revision edition of Mark Asselin's Ph. D. dissertation in 1997, but his interest in Cai Yong started even earlier. He also wrote the biography of Cai Yong in the *Hou Han shu* as his MA thesis. Apparently, he was also familiar with Gong Kechang's writings on Cai Yong. In 1990 when Gong's *Han fu yanjiu* "Studies on the Han *fu*" was translated into English, Asselin, then a graduate student of David R. Knechtges's, was the one who translated the chapters on Cai Yong's *fu*. In Asselin's 2010 book, he devoted two chapters to the study of six *fu* of Cai Yong's and provided English translations for them. Another interesting and important pertinent aspect is worth pointing out. The influential *Cambridge History of Chinese Literature* gives roughly two pages to Cai Yong's *fu*, based almost solely on Asselin's Ph. D. dissertation and *Studies on the Han fu* by Gong Kechang. Most of Asselin's arguments or judgements on Cai Yong's *fu* do not deviate from Gong Kechang's. Given the fact that most recent Chinese articles on the same topic almost all follow Gong, as is observed above, it could be fairly concluded that Gong Kechang's arguments are dominant in the studies of Cai Yong's *fu*. These arguments, together with variants that appeared in Asselin and others, will be briefly discussed, and the aim of this paper is to propose several new interpretations and analyses, rather than simply parroting.

3 A Survey of Cai Yong's *Fu*

In the biography of Cai Yong in the *Hou Han shu*, which should be considered the most authoritative material of his life, unfortunately, there is no mention of the number of his *fu* or any specific *fu* except "Rebutting Admonition" ("Shi hui"). Nor do the various editions of his work collections provide all the *fu* of Cai Yong because there are sporadic *fu* ascribed to him found in other literature collections. In ascertaining the oeuvre of Cai Yong's *fu*, the serious scholarship by Fei Zhengang and Gong Kechang finally provided us with reliable texts after going meticulously through all the possible sources that could contain Cai Yong's *fu*. *Comments and Annotations on the Entire Han Fu* by Gong Kechang lists 16 *fu* while *Annotations on the Entire Han Fu* by Fei Zhengang lists 18. The two *fu* not included in Gong's book are "Fu on Restraining Emotions" ("Jing qing *fu*") and "Fu on the Beginning of Harmony" ("Xie chu *fu*"). But Gong has made convincing arguments that "Fu on Restraining Emotions" turns out to be a different name from "Fu on Curbing Excess" ("Jian yi *fu*") and "Fu on the Beginning of Harmony" is an essential part of another *fu* of Cai Yong's, "Fu on Harmonious Marriage" (Xie he hun *fu*). (Gong 2003: 864–876). This essay goes along with Gong's list.

We can now establish the complete list of all of the 16 *fu* of Cai Yong: "Fu Recounting a Journey" ("Shu xing *fu*"), "Fu on the Han River" ("Han jin *fu*"), "Qingyi *fu*" ("Fu on the Green-dressed Girl"), "Fu on Short People" ("Duan ren *fu*"), "Fu on Writing Brush" ("Bi *fu*"), "Fu on Zither" ("Tan qin *fu*"), "Fu on Grieving over the Old Chestnut Tree" ("Shang gu li *fu*"), "Fu on Cicada" ("Chan *fu*"), "Fu on Pellet Chess" ("Tanqi

fu”), “Fu on Harmonious Marriage” (“Xie he hun *fu*”), “Fu on Blind Musician” (“Gu shi *fu*”), “Fu on the Downpour” (“linyu *fu*”), “Fu on Curbing Excess” (“Jian yi *fu*”), “Fu on the Round Fan” (“Yuanshan *fu*”), “Fu on Obscure Article” (“Xuan biao *fu*”), “Rebutting Admonition” (“Shi hui”).

Except “Fu on Obscure Article”, which only contains the title and one sentence and is thus of no use in the discussion, the rest *fu* are more or less intact.

A few obvious characteristics of these *fu* can be immediately detected even for non-expert readers of *fu* in the late Eastern Han. First, none of these *fu* is epideictic *fu* (*dafu*), the well-known genre of *fu* which has a pre-eminent role until a few decades before Cai Yong. Clearly, there has been a shift in trend of *fu* composing in the time leading up to the end of Eastern Han. And in this regard, Cai Yong’s *fu*, with all their experiments and given their huge influence, helped redefine *fu* in his time. Like the epideictic *fu*, Cai Yong’s *fu* also has basic features like the use of rhymed and unrhymed verses, repetitions of synonyms, extensive parallelism, elaborate description and overstatement. But unlike those epideictic *fu*, his *fu* does not contain endless showy obscure words and allusions and are in a less ornate style.

Second, Cai Yong writes on the most extensive subjects in his *fu*, compared with all other *fu* writers of all time. Just take a look at the titles of these *fu*, and we will find that there were almost no themes expressed in the form of *fu* before him. For example, his “Fu on Han River” is the first *fu* about rivers. Also, his “Fu on Pellet Chess”, “Fu on Harmonious Marriage”, “Fu on the Round Fan” and “Fu on Short People” are all pioneering works that have inspired later *fu* writers to write on these same objects.

Great writers attain their greatness not only by acing the standard norm. They also innovate, experiment and explore. In this regard, Cai Yong is beyond doubt a great *fu* writer.

4 Cai Yong the Great *Fu* Innovator

There are various types within the genre of *fu* and the criteria of demarcation are more often than not very arbitrary. Three major categories are the Shi style *fu*, the Sao style *fu* and prose *fu*. Already indicated by their names, Shi style *fu* is the type of *fu* inspired by the typical four-character verse of *Shi jing* (The Book of Songs). Sao style *fu* are after Qu Yuan’s “Encountering Sorrows” (“Li sao”). Cai Yong’s seminal contributions to the development of the genre of *fu* lie in his Sao style *fu*. Sao style *fu* arose from imitating the songs of Chu, either in content or the stylistic features. The making of a Sao style *fu* usually necessitates it to contain the caesura marker *xi* and in content is usually about the author’s lament on his talents not being valued by the world, the most famous example being Jia Yi’s “Lament for Qu Yuan” (“Lament for Qu Yuan”). In this regard this subgenre is also called “Fu on Frustration”.

The contribution of Cai Yong to Sao style *fu* or to the genre of *fu* generally is broadening the scope of it, enabling it to convey different emotions other than only frustration. The evolution did not begin with Cai Yong, but he could be credited to having broken the boundary of Sao style *fu* and pushed it to a higher level.

We can illustrate how he changes the way Sao style *fu* is written through the example of his “Fu on short People”. The title alone tells us that it has nothing to do with the author’s frustration, although in stylistic features it strictly follows what is expected of a Sao style *fu*. It is a *fu* that ridicules dwarfs and has received very little

scholarly attention perhaps because of its embarrassing content for modern people's eyes. The preface of this *fu* tells us the origin of dwarfs in China. In short, Cai Yong believes that dwarfs are ugly, stupid and alcoholic creatures that come from barbarian foreign places and come to China to be Sinicized. He then added that his intention is to vividly describe them in the *fu*. The *fu* itself is short:

雄荆雞兮鶩鶩鶩，鶩鳩鶩兮鶩鶩雌。冠戴勝兮啄木兒，觀短人兮形若斯。熱地蝗兮蘆即且，繭中蛹兮蠶蠕須。視短人兮形若斯，木門閭兮梁上柱。敝鑿頭兮斷柯斧，鞞鞞鼓兮補履屨。脫椎柄兮擣衣杵，視短人兮形如許。(Gong 2003: 840)

Jing cocks, fledgling grebes,
Pigeon chicks, quail hens,
Crested hoopoes and woodpeckers:
Observe the short people: Their appearances are like these.

Ba-Peaks horse, Xiaxia ponies,
Locusts in hibernation under ground, crickets in reeds,
Chrysalides in cocoons, silkworms wriggling hairs.
Regard the short people: Their appearances are like these.

Wooden door middle-posts, beam-top supports,
Damages chisel heads, broken-handled axes.
Pita hand-drums, mallets for repairing shoes,
Slipped-off hammer handles, pestles for pounding garden shallots.
Regard the short people: Their appearances are like so. (Asselin 2010: 361–366)

In each line divided by the caesura marker *xi*, the basic syntactic structure that pours from the beginning till the end is XXX *xi* XXX, XXX *xi* XXX. Except in the last verse in every stich “Regard the short people: Their appearances are like these”, each *xi* serves as a separation marker of images. By comparing dwarfs to woodpeckers, broken handle axes and pita hand-drums and so on, this is a *fu* cataloguing similes that describe exhaustedly the way dwarfs talk, walk, curse, and how laughable their miniature stature is. Unlike cataloguing of, for example plants in “Encountering Sorrows”, the images here do not arouse any sense of beauty but rather depicts ugliness. Sao style *fu* usually deploys a sad tone but we clearly see from this example Cai Yong consciously challenged this concept and shown expertly that Sao style *fu*, with its characteristic musical rhythm, could be used to explore and express entirely something else, like comic effects of satirizing.

The second important innovation, and hence contribution to the genre of *fu*, is his direct engagement with politics in his *fu*. Rather than deploying indirect suasion like piles of epideictic *fu* before him do, Cai Yong is the writer who would go all out attacking what he believes to be injustice. This is epitomized in his “Fu Recounting a Journey”. Even the preface alone would suffice to demonstrate his courage in his relentless criticism:

延熹二年秋，霖雨逾月。是時梁冀新誅，而徐璜左官等五侯擅貴于其處。又起顯明苑于城西，人徒凍餓，不得其命者甚眾。白馬令李雲以直言死，鴻臚陳君以救雲抵罪，璜以余能鼓琴，白朝廷敕陳留太守遣余到偃師，病不前，得歸。心憤此事，遂託所過，述而成賦。(Gong 2003: 817)

In the autumn of the second year of the Yanxi 延熹 era [‘159 C. E. ’], it rained steadily for over a month. At this time, Liang Ji having just been put to death, the Five Marquises Xu Huang, Zuo Guan, and the others arrogated exalted positions in his place. Moreover, when they were building the Park of Manifest Yang to the west of the city, the labourers froze or starved and those who lost their lives were legion. The prefect of Baima 白馬, Li Yun 李雲, died on account of his forthright statement. The Grand Herald, Lord Chen, was punished on account of his coming to Yun’s aid. Huang told the court about my ability to play the zither. [‘The emperor’] commanded the governor of Chenliu 陳留 to dispatch me. When I arrived in Yanshi 偃師, I became ill and being unable to proceed, I obtained leave to go home. My heart was so filled with resentment towards this affair that, based on the places I had passed, I wrote this *fu* recounting it. (Translated by the author of this article)

Cai Yong’s heart was indeed “so filled with resentment” that he even dared name the corrupt consort clans and eunuchs. This *fu*, probably the most famous one in his oeuvre, recounts his journey from Chenliu to Yanshi, where he decided he should proceed no more and return home. It is highly possible that the preface was written after the main body of the *fu* and the illness in Yanshi a mere excuse. In the main body, generally the couplets alter between historical places (and their associations with corrupt officials in the old time) and physical places (bad weather, unpleasant road conditions, tired body and soul). For example, the couplet “I make a journey to capital Lo/ And encounter a long spell of incessant rain. /The road is arduous and obstructed/ Flooded with standing water, creating a disaster. 余有行于京洛兮，遭淫雨之經時。塗屯遭其蹇連兮，潦污滯而為災。” and “At dusk, I stayed in Daliang. / I reproach Wu Ji’s being praised as a god. /Lament over Jin Bi’s guiltlessness, /And despise Zhu Hai’s seizing the General. 久余宿于大梁兮，誚無忌之稱神。哀晉鄙之無辜兮，忽朱亥之篡軍。” The gloomy and rainy weather was giving Cai Yong a hard time travelling westwards to the capital. More depressingly, the places he passed by reminded him of those saddening historical incidents. The harsh physical conditions and unpleasant socio-historical context merged into altered lines of outcry.

From his biography in the *Hou Han shu* we know too well that Cai Yong is not the type of person who restrains himself from criticising in the face of political revenge. And his outspoken verses in this have enriched the expression of social realism in the *fu* genre.

The third major contribution of Cai Yong’s *fu* endeavours to explore is his metrical innovation in the rhythm of *fu*. Shi style *fu*, following the tetrasyllabic stichs from the *Shi jing* has four characters in each stich. There is either with the *xi* caesura marker in the fourth character or sometimes without. Sao style *fu*’s stichs usually have seven syllables in each stich with or without *xi*. The tetrasyllabic-septasyllabic-alteration lines form the basic pattern of the rhythm of Cai Yong’s *fu*. But he successfully and consciously introduced new patterns, mostly subtle and easily going unnoticed, to create a more vibrant rhythm in his *fu*. Let’s first consider his verses with *xi* the caesura marker. There are six varying patterns of stich observed in his lines.

1. XXXX, XXX 兮。

E. g., 跋涉遐路, 艱以阻兮。I have trudged and waded distant roads, / That was difficult and hazardous.

2. XXXXXX 兮, XXXXXX.

E. g., 余有行于京洛兮, 邁淫雨之經時。I make a journey to the capital Luo, / And encounter a long spell of incessant rain.

3. XXXXXXXX 兮, XXXXXXXX.

E. g., 經圃田而瞰北境兮, 晤衛康之封疆。While passing through Putian, / I behold its northern limits, / And remember it as Kang of Wei feudal bounds.

4. XXXXXX 兮, XXXXXXXX.

E. g., 僕夫疲而劬瘁兮, 我馬虺隤以玄黃。The driver is enervated, fragged from exertion, / My horses, haggard, stagger, turning from sloe to fallow.

5. XXXXXXXX 兮, XXXXXXXX.

E. g., 博六經而綴百氏兮, 建皇極而序彝倫。Well-versed in the six Canons and connecting a hundred masters/ We build the imperial grandeur and set principles in order.

6. XXX 兮 XXX, XXX 兮 XXX.

E. g., 脫椎柄兮擣衣杵, 視短人兮形如許。Slipped-off hammer handles, and pestles for pounding garden shallots. / Regard the short people: Their appearances are like so.

As observed above, patterns 1 and 2 are the most frequent. The rest patterns' frequencies vary from a dozen occurrences (pattern 6) to several occurrences (patterns 3 and 4), to a single occurrence (pattern 5, in "Fu on the Writing Brush"). In most *fu* of Cai Yong, he deploys a combination of these patterns. For example, in "Fu Recounting a Journey" alone we could find an interchange alteration of patterns 1–4. The stich patterns without the caesura marker *xi* are prose verses most frequently as pattern 1 and pattern 2. We could see examples in "侏儒短人, 僬僥之後. 出自外域, 戎狄別種 (Pygmies are short people, / Descendants of the Wren-men, / Who emerged from the outer regions, / And are a branch race of the Rong and Di.) and "普天壤其無儷, 曠千載而特生. Throughout all heaven and earth, she has no match; / Only once in a millennium is one like her born." In most of his *fu*, Cai Yong combines the use of Sao style verse with all its variant patterns and prose verse to make a symphony of rhyme. Flowing from one pattern to another, the rhythm goes with the process of alteration and helps make Cai Yong's *fu* rich in various emotions these verses denote. And we can feel certain to assert that in this regard, the musician Cai Yong gives the *fu* writer Cai Yong an impeccable, elegant and delicate choice of rhythm.

The fourth literary innovation in Cai Yong's *fu* involves his creative borrowing from the *Shi jing*. Being an

erudite classics scholar, Cai Yong must be very familiar with the *Shi Jing*, which can be easily attested by the fact that Cai Yong used images and ideas from the *Shi Jing* extensively in his *fu*. For example, in “Fu on a Green-dressed Girl” alone, there are at least 15 references to *Shi Jing*, when the whole piece of *fu* contains only 264 characters. And also, the *fu* is written in Shi style *fu*, using tetrasyllabic stichs from the beginning to the end.

The first way is directly borrowing words from *Shi Jing*. Let’s see, for example, the second line of “Fu on the Green-dressed Girl”: 歎茲窈窕，產於卑微。（“O this coy and comely one, / Is born in lowliness and humility!”）When Cai Yong praises the green-dressed girl and tries to make a contrast between humility and noble, he borrowed the phrase 窈窕 (yao tiao, “beautiful”) and hence the denoted image from *Guan ju*, the first poem in the Zhou Nan section in the *Shi Jing* (“窈窕淑女，君子好逑” There is a good maiden fair, / Whom a young man is wooing). The second example, also found in this *fu* is in the line 兼裳累鎮，輾轉倒頽（My layered robes are burdensome and oppressive, / I wheel and stagger, stumble and fall). The word 輾轉 (turning) is also a borrowing from “*Guan ju*” (But tosses all night long, / So deep in love, so deep! 悠哉悠哉，輾轉反側). When the male persona cannot attain his love for the green-dressed girl, he, like the gentleman in *Guan Ju*, cannot sleep at night with emotions running wild in his mind.

The direct borrowing from *Shi Jing* is powerful and adept. Served as an allusion, it not only re-shows the images he borrowed, but also invokes the readers’ knowledge and feelings for the original poem when they encounter these borrowings.

The second way is the use of metonymy, borrowing the titles of poems in the *Shi Jing* as substitutes for what these poems stand for. We find the example in “Fu on Harmonious Marriage”: “葛覃恐其失時，標梅求其庶士。” (“Kudzu Vines Spread” fears missing opportunity, / “Dropping Plums” seeks after gentlemen.) *Ge tan* (“Kudzu Vines Spread”) is the title of a poem in Zhou Nan, which implies a woman’s wish to go back to visit her parents, while *Biao mei* (“Dropping Plums”) is the title of a poem in Zhao Nan section, which indicates the maid’s wish to be pursued by a gentleman. (“求我庶士，迨其吉兮!” If you love me at all, / Woo me a lucky day!).

Although the reference to “Kudzu Vines Spread” is somewhat obscure, the reference to “Dropping Plums” clearly shows that the bride in this *fu* is eager to have a merry wedding and a husband. The use of poem titles in the *Shi jing* to refer to the content of these poems is a concise as well as an intelligent way to incorporate images into the *fu* verses and enrich the meanings.

The third way, which I believe best demonstrates Cai Yong’s masterful literary skills, is the re-writing of lines from the *Shi jing*. Examples are prevalent in his *fu*. Let’s see, for example, how he rewrites lines from the *Shi jing* to praise the beautiful, humble maid in “Fu on the Green-dressed girl”:

盼倩淑麗，皓齒蛾眉。玄髮光潤，頰如螭蟻。縱橫接髮，葉如低葵。脩長冉冉，碩人其頤。（Gong 2003: 833）

An engaging smile and animated eyes, a fair beauty, / Gleaming teeth, lovely brows, / Black hair, shiny and sleek, / Neck long and white like a grub. / Across and down, touching her hair, / Are leaves like falling mallow. / Longish and dainty-delicate, / ‘A stately woman of goodly height.’ (Asselin 2010: 367–369)

These eight stichs are rewritten from the second stanza of the poem “The Duchess Zhuang Jiang” (shuo ren, 碩人) from *The Airs of Wei* (衛風) section:

手如柔荑。
 膚如凝脂。
 領如蝥蠐。
 齒如瓠犀。
 螭首蛾眉。
 巧笑倩兮。
 美目盼兮。(Zhou 2002: 82)

Like lard congealed her skin is tender,
 Her fingers like soft blades of reed;
 Like larva white her neck is slender,
 Her teeth like rows of melon-seed,
 Her forehead like a dragonfly’s,
 Her arched brows curved like a bow.
 Ah! Dark on white her speaking eyes,
 Her cheeks with smiles and dimples glow. (Xu 2013: 78)

Here Cai Yong rewrites what in the original poem descriptions of lady Zhuang Jiang to applaud green-dressed girl’s fingers, neck, hand, manner, eyebrows and smile. He adds new images and rearranges originals images into a symphony of beauty. And by comparing the lay girl to the noble lady Zhuang Jiang, he daringly disregards the social taboo. All is done too well within only eight lines through his rewriting. We also see in the end another example of his rewriting forms the *Shi Jing*: “I think about you, muse about you, / Aching for satisfaction, I’m utterly famished.” (思爾念爾, 惄焉且饑.) This line is rewritten from *Ru fen* (“Leave Me Not”): “未見君子, 惄如調飢.” (My lord cannot be seen, / I feel the hunger great.) The female persona’s hunger for her husband to come back is rewritten in this *fu* to represent the male persona’s miserable longing for the green-dressed girl.

The naturalness and conciseness of the expression in the *Shi jing* inspire the ways Cai Yong writes about women and love. He adeptly uses these three different ways to borrow images from the *Shi jing* to express his own inner feelings and makes his *fu* rich in emotions.

5 Conclusion

Cai Yong’s *fu* fundamentally changes literati’s conception of what could be written about in *fu*, encourages a way of direct and bold expression in the subgenre of political *fu*, and helps to inspire a flow of the rhythm in *fu* that is more elegant, delicate and more sophisticated, but also showcases how classics such as the *Shi jing* can

contribute to one's own writing in innovative ways. It would be fair to conclude that Cai Yong is one of the most important innovators of *fu* writing in the late Eastern Han.

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