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Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies, Volume 70, Number 2, December 2010, pp. 355-386 (Article)

Published by Harvard-Yenching Institute



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Naturalness in Xie Lingyun's Poetic Works

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BEGINNING IN THE SONG DYNASTY (960–1279), prominent figures began to use Xie Lingyun 謝靈運 (385–433) as a foil in their evaluations of his contemporary Tao Yuanming 陶淵明 (365?–427). In his *Canglang shihua* 滄浪詩話 (Canglang's remarks on poetry), Yan Yu 嚴羽 (fl. 1180–1235) insisted that “Xie cannot match Tao because [Xie] Kangle's poetry is refined and crafted, whereas Yuanming's is plain and natural” 謝所以不及陶者，康樂之詩精工，淵明之詩質而自然耳。¹ Many later scholars accepted this distinction and ranking, though they may have used different terms. Qiao Yi 喬億 (b. 1692), for example, remarked that “if one understands that the ability to be direct is superior to the ability to polish, then one will understand that Xie is not as good as Tao” 知能率高於能鍊，則知謝不如陶。² Even the few scholars in late imperial China who perceived naturalness in Xie Lingyun's poetry saw it as a contrived effect, achieved only after some work. Shen

I would like to thank the audiences from whom I received helpful feedback during my presentations of certain portions of this paper. I am especially grateful to David Knechtges, Pauline Yu, Ronald Egan, Robert Hymes, David Schaberg, David Bello, and the two anonymous readers for their insightful comments, which have enriched my work.

¹ *Canglang shihua jiaoshi* 滄浪詩話校釋, ed. Guo Shaoyu 郭紹虞 (Beijing: Renmin wenzue chubanshe, 1998), p. 151.

² Qiao Yi, *Jianxi shuoshi* 劍谿說詩, in Guo Shaoyu, ed., *Qing shihua xubian* 清詩話續編 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1983), 1:1097.

Deqian 沈德潛 (1673–1769) argued that “Tao’s poetry is immediately natural; it cannot be matched for its genuineness and sincerity. Xie’s poetry is well planned but comes around to naturalness; it cannot be matched for its novelty and uncommonness. Tao’s poetry is superior to that of others in that it has no preconceived arrangement; Xie’s poetry is superior precisely because of its arrangement.”³

Even today, some scholars persist in opposing Xie to Tao. For them the latter epitomizes literary naturalness (*ziran* 自然), although they are, of course, aware that both have been characterized as *ziran* by critics of various periods. In this regard, they often cite a passage in the biography of Yan Yanzhi 顏延之 (384–456) in the *Nan shi* 南史, in which it is told that, when Yan asked Bao Zhao 鮑照 (ca. 414–466) how his own poetry compared with Xie Lingyun’s, Bao Zhao replied: “Xie’s pentasyllabic verse is like a lotus that has just bloomed, natural and adorable; your poetry, sir, is like a fine display of brocade and embroidery, which fills the eyes with traces of contrivance” 謝五言如初發芙蓉, 自然可愛。君詩若鋪錦列繡, 亦雕績滿眼。⁴ Modern scholars have generally dealt in an essentializing manner with the characterization of the different poetic styles of Xie and Tao as *ziran*: they argue that Song readers were the first to identify this stylistic trait in Tao Yuanming’s works, whereas critics in the Six Dynasties (220–589) had misperceived this characteristic in Xie Lingyun’s poetry or, at best, had meant it in a relative sense (as compared, for instance, to the greater degree of embellishment in Yan Yanzhi’s writings).⁵

³ Shen Deqian, *Shuoshi zuiyu* 說詩碎語, in *Qing shihua* 清詩話 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1999), p. 532. The original reads: 陶詩合下自然, 不可及處, 在真在厚。謝詩經營而反於自然, 不可及處, 在新在俊。陶詩勝人在不排; 謝詩勝人正在排。In the passage preceding this, Shen Deqian discusses how Xie Lingyun “gradually approaches literary naturalness” (*jian jin ziran* 漸近自然) through subtle craft. Bai Zhenkui 白振奎 also understands *fan* 反 in the sense of “to return,” rather than “to oppose,” in his *Tao Yuanming Xie Lingyun shige bijiao yanjiu* 陶淵明謝靈運詩歌比較研究 (Shanghai: Shanghai cishu chubanshe, 2006), p. 131.

⁴ 李延壽 (seventh century), *Nan shi* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), 34.881.

⁵ See, for example, Xu Gongchi 徐公持, *Wei Jin wenxueshi* 魏晉文學史 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1999), pp. 617–18; Yuan Xingpei 袁行霈, *Tao Yuanming yanjiu* 陶淵明研究 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1997), p. 165; Cao Daocheng 曹道衡 and Shen Yucheng 沈玉成, *Nanbeichao wenxueshi* 南北朝文學史 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1991), pp. 55–56; Shen Zhenqi 沈振奇, *Tao Xie shi zhi bijiao* 陶謝詩之比較 (Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1986), p. 127. More recently, Bai Zhenkui, developing Shen Deqian’s reading, has argued that Xie Lingyun’s poetry “comes around to naturalness” (*fan yu ziran* 返於自然) after undergoing literary craft and polish. Bai’s use of *ziran*

In light of these recent efforts to divest Xie of his old attribute of *ziran*, the view from Gu Shaobo 顧紹柏, the editor of the now-standard modern edition of Xie's collected works, becomes especially worth revisiting. Taking inspiration from the Ming critic Wang Shizhen 王世貞 (1526–1590), Gu argued that Xie achieved naturalness in poetry through artful craft.⁶ Gu generally challenged accepted views: by re-assessing well-worn judgments on issues ranging from the reasons behind Xie's lack of official success and the validity of his supposed reclusion to the interpretation of his poetic craft, he produced new readings that animated the modern discourse on the poet.⁷ Several points in Gu's reading of Xie's poetics demand special attention. First, his evaluation of the attribute of naturalness in Xie's poetry is based on his assumption that the term *ziran* is stable. Like the modern readers who find Xie's poetry to be unnatural, Gu seems not to have considered the possibility that *ziran* might have meant different things at different times; what could be more self-evident in meaning than "naturalness"? However, once we historicize the separate attributions of *ziran* to Xie and Tao, we find significant shifts in the signification of *ziran* from the Six Dynasties to the Song.⁸ Secondly, the flaws that Gu perceived in Xie's works show that he failed to see Xie's poetic decisions in context. For Gu, Xie's habit of appending philosophical meditations to the end of his poems renders them somewhat less natural than Tao's, even though the latter also had a predilection for "mysterious principles" (*xuan li* 玄理). In Gu's view, moreover, the insertion of phrases from the classics and philosophies has "affected the natural flow of Xie's poems."⁹

emphasizes mimesis of nature: through linguistic craft, "Xie the Lodger endeavored to copy nature's original look and convey the limitless energy of the natural world." Bai, however, adopts the mainstream view that, in the Six Dynasties, the characterization of Xie Lingyun's poetry as *ziran* needs to be understood as a relative assessment: in comparison with Yan Yanzhi's embellished poetry, Xie Lingyun's poetry "appears natural and heavenly wrought"; compared with Tao's poetry, "Xie's poetry of course appears refined and crafted." See *Tao Yuanming Xie Lingyun shige bijiao yanjiu*, pp. 131, 134, 137.

⁶ Gu Shaobo, *Xie Lingyun ji jiaozhu* 謝靈運集校注 (Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou guji chubanshe, 1987), p. 22.

⁷ Gu Shaobo, *Xie Lingyun ji jiaozhu*, pp. 1–44.

⁸ See my discussion of the Song conception of *ziran* and its application to Tao Yuanming in *Reading Tao Yuanming: Shifting Paradigms of Historical Reception* (427–1900) (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2008), pp. 204–10.

⁹ Gu Shaobo, *Xie Lingyun ji jiaozhu*, p. 27.

This article aims to analyze the critiques against Xie Lingyun's poetic works. In the first section, I examine the descriptive term *ziran* as it was applied to Xie Lingyun by Southern Dynasties critics and argue that, as the signification of the term changed over time, Xie Lingyun was perceived by some critics as the antonym of Tao Yuanming, who came to exemplify a new notion of *ziran* in the Song. Although the concept of *ziran* was far from stable in traditional literary criticism and was often qualified by the terms with which it was paired, it was nonetheless consistently seen as distinct from the ideal of earnest self-expression. Certain poets, such as Tao Yuanming and Du Fu, may have been equally regarded as models of earnestness by critics in the Song and later periods, yet readers generally would not characterize Du Fu's poetry as *ziran*. Similarly, critics who perceived Xie Lingyun's poetry as natural did not simultaneously hail it as an example of lyrical sincerity. I will argue that Xie Lingyun's poetry as a whole exemplifies a form of literary naturalness, as manifested in the historical context of the late Six Dynasties.

Next, I will examine how Xie's landscape works were informed by his reading of the *Yijing* 易經 (Classic of changes), an important aspect that deserves more scholarly attention. Xie Lingyun's poetic works not only were "natural" according to the standards and expectations of his time but also followed a certain natural order: his representation of the natural landscape was significantly mediated by passages from the *Yijing*. Just as the *Yijing* represented a hermeneutical system of ordering the world that bridges heaven, nature, and man, Xie Lingyun represented the world he saw and ordered his poetic works by drawing upon *Yijing* quotations. Moreover, it is in light of *Yijing* hermeneutics that one best understands the structural pattern for which readers have criticized many of his *shi* poems: Xie's practice of appending philosophical meditation to descriptions accords with the *Yijing* prescription that words be attached to images to elucidate fully the significance of the image. When Xie's *shi*-poems are seen in this context, the arrangement of the poems' various parts might appear as a natural progression. The second half of my essay thus focuses on the organization of Xie's poetic works, including his monumental "Shanju fu" 山居賦 (Exposition on dwelling in the mountains), to address the compositional role of quotations from the *Yijing*. The pronounced appearance of quotations

from the classic in his early landscape works, I would suggest, illuminates his overall poetics.

The Natural Art of Xie Lingyun

Xie Lingyun was widely imitated in the Southern Dynasties (420–589) as an exemplar of literary refinement. Since there is no evidence that Bao Zhao differed from received opinion, his characterization of Xie's poetry suggests that literary naturalness and artifice were not regarded as incompatible, so long as the latter did not turn into garishness. Xiao Gang 蕭綱 (503–551), perhaps the most important literary patron and opinion maker in the Liang dynasty, goes so far as to see naturalness and artifice as complementary in Xie Lingyun. In his "Yu Xiangdong Wang shu" 與湘東王書 (Letter to the Prince of Xiangdong), addressed to his younger brother Xiao Yi 蕭繹 (508–555), Xiao Gang explains what makes Xie Lingyun inimitable:

Xie the Lodger spewed forth words as if they had been plucked from heaven, arising from naturalness (*ziran* 自然). At times he lacked restraint, and these are his dregs. . . . Thus, when imitating Xie's poetry, one fails to achieve its essential beauty, and gets only its prolixity. . . . Xie is thus artful (*qiao* 巧) but cannot be used [as a model for imitation].¹⁰

To understand the notion of "artfulness" (*qiao* 巧) in this passage, we turn to the concept of "verisimilitude" (*xingsi* 形似), which writers often linked to *qiao* during the Southern Dynasties as either a synonym or a qualifier to express a distinct relation between the two terms.¹¹ In *Shipin* 詩品 (Grading poets), Zhong Rong 鍾嶸 (ca. 469–518) praised Xie Lingyun for his ability to capture vividly in artistic terms the appearance of natural scenes and objects, stating that Xie

¹⁰ Collected in *Quan Liang wen* 全梁文, in *Quan Shanggu Sandai Qin Han Sanguo Liuchao wen* 全上古三代秦漢三國六朝文 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1958), 11.3011a.

¹¹ For a lengthier discussion of the well-known usages of the terms *qiao*, *xingsi*, and *qiaosi* by Six Dynasties writers, such as Shen Yue, Zhong Rong, and Liu Xie, see Kang-i Sun Chang, "Description of Landscape in Early Six Dynasties Poetry," in Shuen-fu Lin and Stephen Owen, eds., *The Vitality of the Lyric Voice: Shih Poetry from the Late Han to the T'ang* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), pp. 105–29. See also the chapter "Hsieh Ling-yün: A New Descriptive Mode," in her *Six Dynasties Poetry* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), pp. 67–78.

“championed artful verisimilitude” (*shang qiaosi* 尚巧似).¹² Zhong Rong also identified this attribute in Zhang Xie 張協 (d. 307), whom he perceived as one of Xie’s models; Zhang’s works display “artfully wrought verisimilar language” (*qiaogou xingsi zhi yan* 巧構形似之言). Shen Yue 沈約 (441–513), in a brief survey of literary history at the end of his “Biography of Xie Lingyun,” extolled Sima Xiangru’s 司馬相如 (179–117 B.C.E.) “artfulness in creating verisimilar language” (*qiao wei xingsi zhi yan* 巧為形似之言).¹³

Liu Xie 劉勰 (ca. 465–ca. 522) gave the fullest elaboration to the relation between artfulness and verisimilitude in his account of contemporary literary trends in *Wenxin diaolong* 文心雕龍 (The literary mind and the carving of dragons):

In recent times, verisimilitude (*xingsi*) is prized in literature. [Writers] examine the condition of atmosphere and scene; and scrutinize the appearance of grass and tree. In what emerges from their chanting [of poetry], the intent expressed must be profound and far-reaching. To give just the right form to things, the effect is achieved by a close adherence to [the things themselves]. Thus, artful language (*qiao yan* 巧言) clings closely to the appearance [of things], like pressing a seal upon wet ink, without further carving or paring, it fully delineates details as fine as minute grass. Therefore, by looking at the language, we can see the appearance [of things]; and, through each word, we can know the moment.¹⁴

According to Liu Xie, artfulness was the instrument by which a writer could convey the appearance of things. Most remarkably, artful language was not represented as the result of poetic labor, but rather as something that was already, and spontaneously, at work. Just as a seal directly stamps an exact imprint, artful language duplicates natural forms in its immediate expression, capturing all of their minutest details without any need for further refinement.

¹² Zhong Rong, *Shipin jizhu* 詩品集注, ed. Cao Xu 曹旭 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1994), p. 160.

¹³ *Song shu* 宋書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), 67.1778.

¹⁴ Liu Xie, *Wenxin diaolong zhushi* 文心雕龍注釋, ed. Zhou Zhenfu 周振甫 (Beijing: Renmin wenzue chubanshe, 1998), p. 494. For other translations of this passage, see Stephen Owen, *Readings in Chinese Literary Thought* (Cambridge: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1992), p. 282; Kang-i Sun Chang, “Description of Landscape in Early Six Dynasties Poetry,” pp. 105–29; Vincent Shih, *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons: A Study of Thought and Pattern in Chinese Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), p. 248.

530), another popular literary model at the time, because of the latter's plain, unadorned style (*zhi* 質). Most remarkably, in Xiao Gang's lexicon, *ziran* is allied with the concept of *qiao* that is exemplified by Xie Lingyun, but not with the concept of *zhi* illustrated by Pei Ziye. Over six hundred years later, Yan Yu completely reversed the alliance by pairing *ziran* with *zhi* in his characterization of Tao's poetry, in contrast to Xie's works, which he considered inferior because they were "artful." Yan's new pairing suggests that the conception of *ziran* had dramatically changed between the late Six Dynasties and the Song period. Seen in historical context, the Song evaluation can no longer be taken for granted either as the natural norm or as an absolute value.

Xiao Gang's assessment of Xie Lingyun's poetic strengths (naturalness and artfulness) and weaknesses (lack of restraint and verbosity) distinctly recalls the entry on his poetry in Zhong Rong's *Shipin*:

It originates from [Prince] Si of Chen [Cao Zhi 曹植 (192–232)] and shows a mix of Jingyang's [Zhang Xie] style. It champions verisimilitude, but its lack of restraint exceeds its predecessor [Zhang Xie] and it is rather burdened by prolixity. Rong says: This person possesses immense learning and extensive talent, and whatever met his eyes turned into writing; internally there is no deficiency of thought and externally no objects are left undescribed. His abundant richness, then, is only appropriate.

其源出於陳思，雜有景陽之體。故尚巧似，而逸蕩過之。頗以繁蕪為累。嶸謂：若人學多才博，寓目輒書，內無乏思，外無遺物，其繁富，宜哉！¹⁷

In his comment on Xie Lingyun's uncontrolled and prolix style, Zhong Rong may have been summarizing the verdict of Liu Hui 劉繪 (*zi* Shizhang 士章, 458–502), who is credited in the first preface to *Shipin* with uttering the critical judgments that Zhong put into writing. These comments probably represented the general critical consensus,¹⁸ but are followed by Zhong Rong's own opinion ("Rong says").

¹⁷ Zhong Rong, *Shipin jizhu*, pp. 160–61. For a translation of the entries in the top and middle grades, see John Timothy Wixted, "A Translation of the *Classification of Poets* (Shih-p'in) by Chung Hung" (Ph.D. diss., University of Oxford, 1976), pp. 462–91.

¹⁸ *Nanshi* records a piece of cautionary advice from Emperor Gao 高 (r. 479–482) of Southern Qi to his son Xiao Ye 蕭暉, who had presented him with a quatrain modeled on Xie Lingyun: "[The Duke of] Kangle is unrestrained; in his compositions, one cannot distinguish a beginning or an end" 康樂放蕩，作體不辨有首尾。 *Nanshi*, 35.624.

Zhong Rong's argument offers a context in which Xie's "prolixity" (*fanwu* 繁蕪) or "abundant richness" (*fanfu* 繁富)—depending on how one looks at it—becomes the logical result of his approach to poetry. Zhong Rong weaves two distinct strands of thought into his argument: his admiration for Xie's erudition and thought, and his assessment of Xie's description of natural scenes and objects. The statement "whatever met his eyes turned into writing" is high praise, especially in light of Zhong's deep concern that contemporary poetic practice had become excessively reliant on drawing references from classics and histories.¹⁹ Zhong advocated instead immediacy in poetry, without the interference of references and rooted in the "direct pursuit [of things]" (*zhixun* 直尋).²⁰ Therein, he noted, lay the way to literary naturalness. In his second preface, Zhong lamented that in recent compositions "the lines have no empty phrases and the phrases have no empty characters. They are bunched up and patched together; the damage done to literature is great indeed. It is just that the excellent purpose of naturalness (*ziran*) is rarely encountered in anyone [nowadays]."²¹ In an earlier passage in the preface, Zhong Rong cited one of Xie Lingyun's lines ("The bright moon shines on layered snow" 明月照積雪) as an example of the "most superior phrases past and present," most of which are "neither patched nor borrowed" but "come from the direct pursuit [of things]."²² If, according to Zhong, Xie Lingyun immediately versified whatever scenes he encountered, then it is a matter of course that he should have "left out no object" in his poetic survey of the landscape. These complementary aspects of descriptive profusion and representational comprehensiveness manifest themselves in Xie's accounts of the various features of the mountains and rivers he visited, which are often so exhaustive as to approach the spirit of *fu*-writing.²³

¹⁹ See Zhong Rong, *Shipin jizhu*, pp. 174, 180–81.

²⁰ Zhong Rong, *Shipin jizhu*, p. 174.

²¹ Zhong Rong, *Shipin jizhu*, pp. 180–81.

²² Zhong Rong, *Shipin jizhu*, p. 174. The line in question is from Xie Lingyun's "Suimu" 歲暮, which is no longer extant.

²³ Zhang Bowei 張伯偉 has linked the thorough cataloguing of all the various features of mountains and waters to Xie's fondness for the *fu* genre. See his *Zhong Rong Shipin yanjiu* 鍾嶸詩品研究 (Nanjing: Nanjing daxue chubanshe, 1999), p. 369. Comprehensiveness also appears to be a goal in his sightseeing, as in "Climbing Yongjia's Green Crag Mountain": "I walked until evening, having stayed from dawn to dusk, / Even the most secluded

Given his emphasis on immediacy in Xie Lingyun's descriptions, how did Zhong Rong reconcile this with the numerous quotations and references to the classics, philosophers, and earlier poetry in Xie's works, a characteristic Zhong Rong surely recognized? Like most of the poets included in Zhong Rong's canon, Xie Lingyun drew considerably from the textual tradition. Nevertheless, Zhong ranked Xie in the top grade, making him the only poet after the Jin dynasty to receive this distinction. Zhong may well have appreciated the unmediated descriptive passages in isolation from the classical allusions and philosophical meditations, as have many readers since his time. It is nonetheless worth considering that he may have intended a more nuanced argument. His affirmation of Xie's erudition, which could only manifest itself through references to other texts, suggests that Zhong Rong found this type of allusiveness acceptable under certain conditions. If book learning was so well internalized that it expressed itself spontaneously, even brilliantly, as opposed to being merely "an epitome of books" (*shuchao* 書抄), then it could enhance artful naturalness, rather than lending artificial erudition to those lacking in true spontaneity.²⁴

Xie Lingyun's poetry epitomized literary naturalness for Six Dynasties critics who appreciated his ability to capture natural forms in an artful, verisimilar, and direct way. The literary naturalness valued in this period emphasized an expressive immediacy enhanced by a discriminating artifice. Moreover, Xie Lingyun's exemplary manifestation of this literary naturalness is inherent in his frequent use of parallel structures in his images and ideas, as well as his allusions and references. Like most of the greatly admired poetic models during the Southern Dynasties, Xie excelled in the use of parallelism. In *Wenxin diaolong*, Liu Xie describes a naturalized parallelism, by which binary language follows from binary thinking, which in turn follows from the binary forms of Nature.

Of the forms bestowed by creation, the limbs of all bodies come in pairs;
this is divine principle at work, so that things do not stand alone. When the

spots have become familiar." That he often wandered until exhaustion (of sights, interest, and daylight) suggests as much wonder and curiosity as it does compulsive restlessness.

²⁴ Zhong Rong sharply criticized works composed during the Daming 大明 (457–465) and Taishi 泰始 (465–471) reigns of the Liu Song 劉宋 dynasty (420–479): "Literary works became almost the same as epitomes of books"; *Shipin jizhu*, p. 180.

mind forms literary language, a hundred concerns are contemplated and judged: as high and low need one another, they naturally form pairs.²⁵

Since natural forms, such as bodily limbs, come in twos, writers in organizing their thoughts unselfconsciously mimic the natural order to produce paired expressions. Parallelism, as Liu Xie explains in the rest of his chapter, may be expressed as a relationship of either antithesis (as in high and low) or similarity, and it may consist of words or phenomena.²⁶ Given Liu Xie's naturalization of parallelism, the numerous examples of parallel couplets in Xie Lingyun's works would have presumably enhanced the impression of their naturalness for Six Dynasties readers.

As the literary expectations of Song readers diverged from those of Six Dynasties critics in regard to the relation between parallelism and naturalness, Xie's works fell from favor. Song readers would have agreed that excessive crafting could have no part in the direct expression so central to natural writing. But they defined natural writing in terms less of artistic parallelism than of artless communication. The exemplar of naturalness for Song readers, Tao Yuanming, was said to have shown no poetic effort, or even intentionality, in his writing. The influential Song critic Chen Shidao 陳師道 (1053–1101) summed up this general belief: "Yuanming did not create poetry; he merely expressed the subtleties in the breast" 淵明不為詩，寫其胸中之妙爾。²⁷ Tao's "naturalness" would later be linked in an integral way with other qualities prized in his works, such as being "genuine" and "even and bland."

Given the shifts in the conception of naturalness that I have outlined above, one ought to envision Xie Lingyun's *ziran* in many historical contexts, rather than in the one singled out by the Song critics alone. That way it will become clear that literary naturalness (*ziran*) as differently understood by the readers of different periods was legitimately exemplified by Xie Lingyun or Tao Yuanming. We may then begin to pose new and more constructive questions about their art.

²⁵ Liu Xie, *Wenxin diaolong zhushi*, p. 384.

²⁶ For an analysis of Liu Xie's discussion of these four categories of parallelism, see Andrew Plaks, "The Bones of Parallel Rhetoric in *Wenxin diaolong*," in Zong-qi Cai, ed., *A Chinese Literary Mind: Culture, Creativity, and Rhetoric in Wenxin diaolong* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), pp. 168–72.

²⁷ *Houshan shihua* 後山詩話, in *Song shihua quanbian* 宋詩話全編, ed. Wu Wenzhi 吳文治 (Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 1998), p. 1017.

Delineating the *Yijing* in Xie Lingyun's Landscape Poetry

Scholarship on Xie Lingyun up to the present has rarely devoted exclusive attention to the poet's extensive use of the *Yijing*, a close examination of which reveals much about the conceptual and structural framework of his mode of representation and about the way he orders the world he sees.²⁸ Although quotations from the *Yijing* in Xie's poetry do not outnumber those from the *Shijing*, *Zhuangzi*, and *Chuci*, they illuminate Xie's vision of life and the patterns by which he reads the landscape. In quantifiable terms his citations of the *Yijing* are far from few: of Xie's 102 extant poems (93 titles), 22 contain one or more *Yijing* references, making a total of 38. His work, "Exposition on Dwelling in the Mountains" (written between 424 and 426), shows Xie's sustained interest in this classic, and his reliance on it to express and frame his main points. In most cases Xie's use of the *Yijing* consists of the simple borrowing of vocabulary or symbols; but I will turn my attention to the more determinative quotations where the intertextual relation is crucial to a proper understanding of the poem's structure and system of significations. Xie's strongest quotations of the *Yijing* are found in only a handful of poems, but it is these poems, composed during the formative period of his landscape style, that dominate the corpus as representative, and they thus help us most to understand the organization of his later landscape poems.

In his landscape poetry, Xie uses quotations from the *Yijing* to name particular situations that confront him, whereas he often uses quotations from the *Shijing* and *Chuci* to describe the landscape that faces him. From the *Yijing* Xie learns not only how to make sense of nature's workings, but also how to graft them onto his own situation. For Xie, the *Yijing* duplicates and represents in textual form the

²⁸ One exception is Francis Westbrook's article, "Landscape Transformation in the Poetry of Hsieh Ling-yün," *JAOS* 100.3 (July–October 1980): 237–54, which discusses how allusions to the *Yijing*, *Shijing*, and *Chuci* radically transform the landscape in Xie's poems. Westbrook argues that the *Yijing* allusions signal a transformation in the outer and inner situations as well as a mystical interaction between the poet and the natural landscape. In an excellent discussion of the role of prior texts in Xie's poetry, Stephen Owen characterizes Xie as a "committed textualist" who reads nature "in terms of textual knowledge"; see his "The Librarian in Exile: Xie Lingyun's Bookish Landscapes," *Early Medieval China* 10–11.1 (2004): 205, 210, 225.

realm of heaven-and-earth.²⁹ It is thus a handy guide to ongoing processes in the macrocosmic realm, the study of which may aid people in determining their own course of action. The relationship between the realms of heaven-and-earth and human society, with the *Yijing* as mediator, is at times duplicated in Xie's landscape poetry by the structural sequence of natural scenes, citations from the *Yijing*, and a decision on the poet's new course of action. The quotations from the *Yijing* play an integral role in the structuring of Xie's early landscape poems; once we understand this role, it becomes clear that the use of classical citations which interrupt the natural flow of lyricism is not a flaw but requires more comprehensive critical exegesis.

Quotations from the *Yijing* occupy a pivotal position in "Climbing Yongjia's Green Crag Mountain," which Xie wrote between 422 and 423, during his tenure as the Governor of Yongjia (in modern Zhejiang).³⁰ This was a period of exile, which had resulted from Xie's involvement with the Prince of Luling, Liu Yizhen 劉義真 (407–424), in the latter's unsuccessful bid for the throne. The Prince of Luling would be assassinated in 424 along with his older brother, who became Emperor Shao 少帝 (r. 422–424), under the order of the powerful courtier Xu Xianzhi 徐羨之 (364–426). The poem is representative of Xie's remarkably creative Yongjia period, when he developed poetic tendencies and compositional strategies that would come to characterize his trademark landscape style: the repetitive pairing of descriptions of mountains with those of water; the precise observation of natural sights; the expressions of an insatiable thirst for adventure, as well as of an exhaustion of scenic spots to be visited; and—most telling for our present purpose—the apt use of classical quotations to make a major statement and the attachment of discursive meditations to preceding scene descriptions.

- 1 裹糧杖輕策 I packed some provisions and grabbed a light staff;
 懷遲上幽室 Following the winding path, I climbed to my hidden
 abode.

²⁹ See Willard Peterson, "Making Connections: 'Commentary on the Attached Verbalizations' of the *Book of Change*," *HJAS* 42.1 (1982): 67–116.

³⁰ My discussion of "Climbing Yongjia's Green Crag Mountain" and "What I Observed as I Crossed the Lake on My Way From Southern Mountain to Northern Mountain" draws from material in my "Pentasyllabic *Shi* Poetry: Landscape and Farmstead Poems," in Zong-qi Cai, ed., *How to Read Chinese Poetry: A Guided Anthology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), pp. 130–37.

- 行源逕轉遠 I proceeded upstream, the path winding further away,
 距陸情未畢 I reached the peak, my feelings not yet exhausted.
- 5 澹激結寒姿 Gentle ripples congealed in wintry beauty,
 團欒潤霜質 Bamboos glistened in frosted strength.
 澗委水屢迷 The stream wound about, its water often lost
 from view,
- 林迴巖逾密 The forest stretched far, crags ever more dense.
 眷西謂初月 I looked westward, taking it to be the rising moon,
 10 顧東疑落日 I gazed eastward, wondering about the setting sun.
 踐夕奄昏曙 I walked until evening, having stayed from dawn
 to dusk,
- 蔽翳皆周悉 Even the most secluded spots have become familiar.
 蠱上貴不事 “Harm” at the top: one values not serving,
 履二美貞吉 “Treading” in second place: one extols good fortune.
- 15 幽人常坦步 A recluse will always walk a level step,
 高尚邈難匹 His lofty aims, so remote, are hard to match.
 頤阿竟何端 A yes and a no—how far apart are they?³¹
 寂寂寄抱一 In quietude, I entrust myself to embracing wholeness.
 恬如既已交 As tranquility and knowledge conjoin,³²
 20 繕性自此出 The cultivation of one’s nature begins here.³³

Modern scholars have described the structural sequence of Xie’s landscape poems as generally comprising four distinct parts: the narration of a journey, the description of a scene, the stirring of emotion, and a philosophical meditation.³⁴ Although these scholars acknowledge that citations from the *Yijing* are at play in some of Xie’s poems, they do not treat them as a crucial structural component.³⁵ In my view,

³¹ Following Gu Shaobo, I take 阿 as an errant character for 訶 or 呵, expressive of refutation or censure. The line derives from the *Laozi* and Gu’s reading is informed by Liu Shipai’s emendation in that text of the character from 阿 to 訶. For a detailed explication, see Gu, *Xie Lingyun ji jiaozhu*, pp. 57–58 n.18.

³² I am following Gu Shaobo in reading 如 in the received text as *zhi* 知 (knowledge).

³³ Gu Shaobo, *Xie Lingyun ji jiaozhu*, p. 56.

³⁴ See Lin Wenyue 林文月, *Shanshui yu gudian* 山水與古典 (Taipei: Sanmin shuju, 1996), p. 53; Charles Yim-tze Kwong, *Tao Qian and the Chinese Poetic Tradition: The Quest for Cultural Identity* (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, The University of Michigan, 1994), pp. 128–29.

³⁵ See, for example, Kwong, *Tao Qian and the Chinese Poetic Tradition*, p. 130; Lin Wenyue, *Xie Lingyun* 謝靈運 (Taipei: Guojia chubanshe, 1998), p. 63; Li Yan 李雁, *Xie Lingyun yanjiu* 謝靈運研究 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 2005), pp. 244–45, 285–87. Lin does not address the *Yijing* quotations in her analysis of “Climbing Yongjia’s

these citations often mark the beginning of a crucial shift in momentum and narrative. Line 13 alludes to the Top Yang line of hexagram 18, “Gu” 蠱 (Harm): “Do not serve kings and lords; he sets higher his pursuits” 不事王侯，高尚其事.³⁶ Line 14 is drawn from the Second Yang line of hexagram 10, “Lü” 履 (Treading): “The path to tread on is level and smooth, and if one secluded here practices constancy, he will have good fortune” 履道坦坦，幽人貞吉.³⁷ Taken together, these quotations from the *Yijing* announce a new orientation in life: to trade the bumpy course of a courtier for the recluse’s level way, an image that signifies both the Dao and a path free from dangerous obstacles. Within the context of our poet’s life, these lines suggest that, by leaving the capital in the aftermath of the battle over the succession and leading a tranquil existence in exile, Xie will have the good fortune of remaining whole and safe from harm. These lines may also be interpreted allegorically as political criticism: the newly enthroned, dim-witted and unstable Emperor Shao and the supporting faction led by Xu Xianzhi together represent “harm at the top,” while the exiled poet is the secluded man who walks a path of secondary importance.

If we take into account the structural role of Xie’s citations from the *Yijing*, it becomes evident that the poem consists of five rather than four discrete passages. Lines 1–4 detail the process of ascent: from the preparation to the climb and, ultimately, to the arrival at the peak. Lines 5–8 describe the wintry scene from the summit. Lines 9–12 foreground a sense of confusion and obscurity, the likely result of the poet’s deep venture into the mountains. Lines 13–16 contain two *Yijing* quotations in the form of a chiasmus. Line 16 elaborates upon the quotation in line 13, whereas line 15 explains the forecast in line 14. Lines 17–20 tell the poet’s new course of action, which is described in terms loaded with Daoist meaning. The ideal of “embracing wholeness” (*bao yi*) that is symbolic of giving oneself up to the Dao occurs repeatedly

Green Crag Mountain” in *Xie Lingyun*, pp. 68–70. She does, however, interpret the *Yijing* quotations in “Fuchun Islets” as Xie Lingyun’s source of solace. Li Yan analyzes the structure of another poem that will be discussed below, “Climbing the Lakeside Tower,” but does not address the structural role of the *Yijing* quotations. See his *Xie Lingyun yanjiu*, pp. 244–45.

³⁶ Wang Bi, *Wang Bi ji jiao shi* 王弼集校釋, ed. Lou Yulie 樓宇烈 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), 1:310.

³⁷ Wang Bi, *Wang Bi ji jiao shi*, 1:273. The translation is taken from Richard John Lynn, *The Classic of Changes: A New Translation of the I Ching as Interpreted by Wang Bi* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), p. 201.

in *Laozi*,³⁸ and “cultivating one’s nature” (*shan xing*) is the title of the sixteenth chapter of *Zhuangzi*, which argues for relying on the symbiotic interaction between tranquility (*tian 恬*) and wisdom (*zhi 知*) when cultivating one’s original nature, rather than depending on the external trappings of “vulgar learning” (*su xue 俗學*).³⁹ Line 17 draws from Chapter 20 of *Laozi*, where the boundary between assent and critique, praise and censure, is blurred in characteristic Daoist fashion: “Between yes and no, how far apart are they? Between praise and censure, how distant are they?”⁴⁰ Indeed, a perspective that unifies conventional opposites and levels hierarchical values would enable one to see no distinction between court and exile, success and failure. The conclusion thus suggests that the poet intends to reconcile himself with his new lot and seek a spiritual transcendence that originates in a set of inner values.

This new orientation follows from a reading of selected *Yijing* passages. These quotations function as a pivot: the poem’s first three quatrains describe the poet’s observation of and engagement within the natural landscape, while the last quatrain reveals a spiritual transformation. The two quotations that constitute the fourth quatrain illuminate yet another change: the condition of obscurity in the third quatrain yields to a state of clarity in the fifth. The *Yijing* quotations signal above all a transition of a momentous order: the move from external to internal landscape implies that the poet perceives a signifying relation between the natural world and his own situation and, more broadly, a correspondence between the realm of heaven-and-earth and that of human affairs.

Yijing citations similarly indicate a major change in “Yu Nanshan wang Beishan jing hu zhong zhan tiao” 於南山往北山經湖中瞻眺 (What I observed as I crossed the lake on my way from Southern Mountain to Northern Mountain), though here the citations precede a new perception of the landscape rather than an inward turn leading to a philosophical resolution. To be sure, the poem concludes with a characteristic philosophical reflection, but its deferral allows the poet’s engagement with nature vis-à-vis the *Yijing* to unfold in a distinct manner.

³⁸ See Zhu Qianzhi 朱謙之, *Laozi jiao shi 老子校釋* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2000), chapters 10, 22.

³⁹ Wang Xianqian 王先謙, *Zhuangzi ji jie 莊子集解* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1987), 16.135.

⁴⁰ Wang Bi, *Wang Bi ji jiao shi*, 1:46.

- 1 朝旦發陽崖 At daybreak I set out from the sunny cliffs,
 景落憩陰峰 At sunset I rest on the shady peaks.
 舍舟眺迴渚 Leaving my boat behind, I gaze at the distant isles,
 停策倚茂松 Planting my staff, I lean against a luxuriant pine.
 5 側逕既窈窕 The side paths are dark and secluded,
 環洲亦玲瓏 While the round island gleams bright.
 俛視喬木杪 Looking down, I espy the tips of towering trees,
 仰聆大壑澗 Looking up, I hear the roar of the grand ravines.
 石橫水分流 The rocks are arrayed horizontally, dividing the
 water's flow;
 10 林密蹊絕蹤 The woods are dense, obliterating the traces of paths.
 解作竟何感 Releasing and creating: to bring about what ends?
 升長皆豐容 Climbing and growing: richly manifested everywhere.
 初篁苞綠籜 Early bamboo shoots, enwrapped by green shells,
 新蒲含紫茸 New rushes, enfolded in purple buds.
 15 海鷗戲春岸 Seagulls sport on the vernal shores,
 天雞弄和風 Golden pheasants play with the gentle wind.
 撫化心無厭 Embracing change, my heart never tires,
 覽物眷彌重 Observing these things, I cherish them even more.
 不惜去人遠 I do not regret that I am far from other men,
 20 但恨莫與同 I only lament that there is none to join me.
 孤遊非情歎 Wandering alone, I sigh not out of personal sentiment,
 賞廢理誰通 Rather because, if appreciation is lost, who else will
 understand these principles?⁴¹

This poem recounts a journey taken by the poet on his Shining 始寧 estate from Southern Mountain, the site of Xie's newly built residence, to Northern Mountain, where his ancestral home is located.⁴² A simple day trip yields extraordinary observations and insights into nature's workings and life itself. Concepts that Xie draws from the two *Yijing* hexagrams named in the middle of the poem—"Xie" 解 (Releasing) and "Sheng" 升 (Climbing)—augment sensitive observations of the natural scene to reorient the development of the poem. The quotations in lines 11–12 refer to the way in which cosmic operations, literally,

⁴¹ Gu Shaobo, *Xie Lingyun ji jiaozhu*, p. 118.

⁴² Gu Shaobo dates this poem to the spring of 425; see *Xie Lingyun ji jiaozhu*, p. 118. Lin Wenyue dates it to Xie Lingyun's second period of withdrawal to his Shining estate (after 428); see *Xie Lingyun*, pp. 121–23.

“the way of heaven” (*tiandao* 天道), reified in meteorological phenomena, effect regeneration in the sphere of terrestrial processes, or “the way of earth” (*didao* 地道).⁴³ The poet’s grasp of this principle is demonstrated by the description of springtime growth and activity in the lines following the question posed in line 11 as to the ultimate ends of the natural order.

Xie’s treatment of springtime phenomena in lines 13–16 suggests that he is now truly engaged with nature: the roving, distant eye of the first half of the poem gives way to a scrutinizing, involved observer who employs an ingenious series of “verse eyes” (*shiyen* 詩眼) to capture both the look and spirit of the scene as well as to animate the poetic lines. This effect is achieved by the selective use of pairs of verbs inscribed in the characters *bao* 苞 (enwrap) and *han* 含 (hold), which connote the careful handling of delicate new growth; and *xi* 戲 (sport) and *nong* 弄 (play with), which endow the actions of birds with a conscious, joyful dynamism. Thus, the seagulls do not mechanically forage for food in synch with the shifting tides, nor do the pheasants automatically spread their wings in response to the temperate wind.

A more dramatic shift in both style and perspective occurs with the introduction of the *Yijing* quotations. We note a sharp contrast between the broad landscape imagery and the minute plant and animal studies that follow it.⁴⁴ The first ten lines of the poem prior to this shift contain sublime scenes of mountains and waters untrammelled by the season, which is only subtly made apparent by the lines following the *Yijing* quotations that depict the purple of new rushes and the green of early bamboo. The references to the *Yijing*, moreover, initiate a change in style from antithetical binaries—such as dawn and dusk, dark path and bright island, tress below and torrents above—to the complementary pairs of new bamboo and rushes, and spring shoreline and wind.⁴⁵ This change from antithetical to complementary parallelism implies a growing intimacy between nature and the poet, which is fully and

⁴³ Line 11 draws from the *Tuan zhuan* 象傳 on hexagram 40 “Xie”: “Heaven and earth release and thunder and rain act; when thunder and rain act, the hundreds of fruits, plants, and trees all break forth.” Line 12 refers to the *Xiang zhuan* 象傳 (Commentary on the images) on hexagram 46 “Sheng”: “From within the earth grows the tree: ‘Climbing.’” See Wang Bi, *Wang Bi ji jiao shi*, 2:415, 450, respectively.

⁴⁴ Lin Wenye makes a similar observation in *Xie Lingyun*, p. 122.

⁴⁵ Francis Westbrook also notes the switch from antithetical to complementary parallelism in his “Landscape Transformation,” p. 240.

appropriately revealed through the medium of the *Yijing* allusions (lines 11–12). These not only mark the beginning of this intimacy but also prefigure the ultimate union that is disclosed in the poet's appreciative grasp of nature's principles (lines 17–18). The ordering here suggests that the *Yijing* is the catalyst for producing the harmony between the poet and nature that concludes the piece.

The poet's engagement with nature receives further elaboration in the last four lines of the poem. The referents and denotations of these lines are far from clear. Most scholars, following the gloss of Li Shan 李善 (d. 689), take *quren* 去人 in line 19 as referring to the ancients, though some note that an alternative referent may be the city from which Xie has distanced himself.⁴⁶ The meaning of *shang* 賞 has been read by some in the sense of “wandering in enjoyment,” and by others as “heart-to-heart communion with a like-minded friend.”⁴⁷ Gu Shaobo argues that the like-minded friend must refer to the then-deceased Prince of Luling, with whom communion is rendered impossible (*fei* 廢).⁴⁸ It seems to me that *quren* is best understood as “keeping at a distance from the world of men,” since *guyou* 孤遊 (lone wandering) in line 21 is more logically a function of living apart from other men (present situation) rather than from the dead ancients (permanent condition). The poet is less troubled by alienation from human society than by the absence of a like-minded companion (the Prince of Luling or any other friend) who could join him in discovering nature's wonders. However, the possibility that the principles (*li* 理) recorded in texts such as the *Yijing* and manifested in the natural world might go unappreciated (in both senses of admiring and grasping) is, for the poet, a concern that takes precedence over individual want. The poet

⁴⁶ See Xiao Tong, *Wen xuan*, ed. Li Shan (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1986), 22.1047. See also Gu Shaobo, *Xie Lingyun ji jiaozhu*, p. 120 n. 21; Lin Wenyue, *Xie Lingyun*, p. 123; J. D. Frodsham, *The Murmuring Stream: The Life and Works of the Chinese Nature Poet Hsieh Ling-yün (385–433), Duke of K'ang-lo* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1967), 2:167. Both Gu and Frodsham note the alternative gloss, for which see Zhang Fengyi 張鳳翼 (1527–1613), *Wen xuan zuan zhu ping lin* 文選纂註評林 (1580–1644? edition), 5.39a.

⁴⁷ See Gu Shaobo, *Xie Lingyun ji jiaozhu*, p. 120 n. 21. See also Ma Xiaokun's 馬曉坤 extended discussion of the puzzling term “shang xin” 賞心, which appears seven times in Xie's works, signifying different ideas and often interpreted differently by different readers. *Quxian er si yuan: wenhua shiye zhong de Tao Yuanming, Xie Lingyun shijing yanjiu* 趣閑而思遠: 文化視野中的陶淵明, 謝靈運詩境研究 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang daxue chubanshe, 2005), pp. 215–25.

⁴⁸ Ma Xiaokun, *Quxian er si yuan*, pp. 215–25.

has made it his task not only to enjoy, but also to probe into nature's workings. For Xie, nature is both a source of material pleasure and the embodiment of the Dao. The relationship between contemplating natural landscapes and becoming enlightened had been widely explored in Jin poetry.

In the following example, the structuring role of *Yijing* quotations develops in a manner that is more complex than marking merely a pivotal shift in narrative. In "Fuchun Islets," which Xie wrote while traveling to Yongjia in the autumn of 422, he combines scenic descriptions of mountains and rivers with introspective meditations divided between ambition and withdrawal creating the style that would characterize his poetry from the Yongjia period.

- | | | |
|----|--|---|
| 1 | 宵濟漁浦潭
旦及富春郭
定山緬雲霧
赤亭無淹薄 | At night we sailed across the Yupu Deep,
By dawn we arrived at edge of Fuchun town.
Mount Ding stands far off in clouds and mists,
The Crimson Pavilion offered no anchorage. |
| 5 | 溯流觸驚急
臨圻阻參錯 | Going upstream we went against the violent current,
Approaching the shore, we were hindered by rocky shallows. |
| 10 | 亮乏伯昏分
險過呂梁壑
洊至宜便習
兼山貴止託 | Indeed I lacked the determination of Bohun,
The dangers here surpassed those of Lüliang Gorge.
This flowing water teaches one to face danger,
These linked mountains show the value of keeping still. |
| 15 | 平生協幽期
淪躓困微弱
久露干祿請
始果遠遊諾
宿心漸申寫
萬事俱零落 | All my life I longed to live in reclusion,
But fallen I was, entrapped by my own weakness.
Long had I sought an official career,
At last I fulfill my plans for distant journeys.
My constant wish now is realized,
The myriad things in this world all wither away. |
| | 懷抱既昭曠
外物徒龍蠖 | My heart grows bright and expansive,
External things are to me merely a dragon, an inchworm. ⁴⁹ |

The two *Yijing* quotations that fall squarely in the middle of the poem divide the second half of the poem from the first, in terms of

⁴⁹ Gu Shaobo, *Xie Lingyun ji jiaozhu*, p. 45.

both theme and tenor. The poem begins with the geographical setting, focusing on the treacherous terrain. The poet compares the dangers of his journey upstream along the Fuchun River with those of Lüliang Gorge, whose currents are so rapid that fishes and turtles cannot maneuver through them, and confesses that he lacks the courage of Bohun Wuren 伯昏無人, who undauntedly walked backwards until his heels were suspended over a steep cliff.⁵⁰ The *Yijing* quotations that follow pave the way to a transformed state of mind. Line 9 cites the *Xiang zhuan* 象傳 (Commentary on the images) on hexagram 29, “Xi kan” 習坎 (The sink hole repeated): “Water flows on continuously to its goal: the Sink Hole Repeated” 水洊至, 習坎.⁵¹ Line 10 quotes from the *Xiang zhuan* on hexagram 52, “Gen” 艮 (Keeping still): “Mountains linked together: Keeping Still” 兼山, 艮.⁵² The second half of the poem contrasts with the first half in being devoid of any descriptions of the outer landscape and focusing instead on the inner transformation that enabled the poet to continue his journey.

The selection and placement of these two *Yijing* allusions show just how neatly the poem is structured. The coupling and positioning of these allusions not only maintain the alternation between references to mountains and waters; they also correspond to the poem’s thematic and formal structure. Lines 1–8 portray a forbidding scene of rocky shores and raging water. Line 9 sums up the preceding images by drawing upon the hexagram “Xi Kan,” whose overall theme is facing danger. Lines 11–18 emphasize assessing and holding one’s position. Line 10, with its allusion to the hexagram “Gen,” whose overall theme is stopping, sets the calm tempo of the second half of the poem. In a rare observation on Xie Lingyun’s use of the *Yijing*, the Qing commentator Wu Qi 吳淇 remarked on the way in which Xie incorporates the themes of the two hexagrams into the poem’s structure:

It is well known that Lingyun used words from the *Yijing* to write poetry, but not that Lingyun used meanings from the *Yijing* to create a poetic form

⁵⁰ See *Zhuangzi jijie*, in *Zhuzi jicheng* 諸子集成 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1954), 19.119, 21.134, respectively. Francis Westbrook calls the first eight lines a “false start.” The two *Yijing* references then mark a new start where “[Xie] can get used to the perilous gorges and, if he will but keep still, pass through them like water.” See “Landscape Transformation,” p. 241.

⁵¹ Wang Bi, *Wang Bi ji jiao shi*, 1:363. I take “sink hole repeated” to mean becoming accustomed to sink holes (i.e., dangerous situations).

⁵² Wang Bi, *Wang Bi ji jiao shi*, 2:480.

(*shige* 詩格). In this poem, for instance, the situation before he crosses the Fuchun River is compared to having to proceed in the face of danger. Thus he uses the overall theme of the hexagram “Kan” in the line “This flowing water teaches one to face danger.” The situation after crossing the Fuchun is compared to a point of stopping and knowing when to stop. Further, he uses the overall theme of the hexagram “Gen” in the line “These linked mountains show the value of keeping still.” This is a poet who excelled in the use of the *Yijing*.⁵³

Wu Qi carefully distinguished between incorporating the language of the *Yijing* into a poem and conscientiously applying the significations of particular hexagrams to the actual situation in such a way as to integrate the hexagrams into the poem’s structure. Xie aptly draws upon different aspects of the hexagrams, such as their image and overall theme, in this poem. This thorough use of *Yijing* passages encourages ever-deepening interpretation on the part of the reader. In examining the configuration of the trigrams Kan ☵ and Gen ☶, might we not say that Kan, with a single Yang line in the middle, represents the poet in the process of crossing the river, while Gen, with a single Yang line at the top, suggests the completion of this movement across the river and the arrival at a stopping point, which, given the trigram’s association with mountains, is the mountaintop? Analyzed in terms of hexagram exegesis, the central event of the poem—braving the dangers of a turbulent river, followed by the arrival at a stopping point conducive to contemplation—is condensed into a single couplet through the use of the themes and the line configurations of Kan and Gen. This couplet thus also represents a miniaturized picture of an apparent challenge and resolution.

The interpretation of the tribulation and resolution described in the poem is by no means restricted to the literal level. The perilous scene described in the first half of the poem may be read symbolically as the dangers that beset a court official.⁵⁴ Xie’s use of the two hexagrams not only images the physical dangers of crossing the river and the safety afforded by stopping in the mountains; it also metaphorically conveys the hazards of court life and the advantage to be gained

⁵³ Cited in *Xie Kangle shi zhu* 謝康樂詩註, ed. Huang Jie 黃節 (Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 1987), p. 72.

⁵⁴ See Lin Wenyue, *Xie Lingyun*, p. 63; Frodsham, *Murmuring Stream*, 2:119 n. 10.

with retreat. Contemplation of a signifying landscape, here mediated by the *Yijing*, yields applicable lessons. Xie, who had recently involved himself most unfavorably in the intrigues in the capital surrounding the succession issue, now recognizes the wisdom of adapting to danger and refraining from action.⁵⁵

To reinforce the resolution to disengage from the world, the last line, “External things are to me merely a dragon, an inchworm,” alludes to the following passage in the *Xi ci zhuan* 繫辭傳 (Commentary on the appended phrases): “The contraction of the inchworm is done in order to try to stretch itself out, and the hibernation of dragons and snakes is done in order to preserve their lives.”⁵⁶ The forward striving of the inchworm and the calculated stasis of the dragon each holds meaning for those driven by the pursuit of goals and advantage, but they have little interest for our poet, who is determined to withdraw from politics. Moreover, outward matters can have little consequence for the enlightened man.⁵⁷

Elsewhere in Xie’s writings, the poet expresses less certainty about how he is faring in his retreat from the mundane world. In his well-known poem “Deng Chi Shang Lou” 登池上樓 (Climbing the lakeside tower), Xie Lingyun cites images from two hexagrams—the “submerged dragon” from “Qian” 乾 (Pure yang), and the wild goose from “Jian” 漸 (Gradual advance)—to discuss the issue of service versus

⁵⁵ *Song shu*, 43.1332.

⁵⁶ Wang Bi, *Wang Bi ji jiao shi*, 2:562. The original reads: 尺蠖之屈, 以求信也。龍蛇之蟄, 以存身也。 I have used, in slightly modified form, Richard John Lynn’s translation in *The Classic of Changes*, p. 81.

⁵⁷ My interpretation of the last line of “Fuchun Islets” is based on the annotations in Gu Shaobo, *Xie Lingyun ji jiaozhu*, p. 47; Li Yunfu 李運富, *Xie Lingyun ji* 謝靈運集 (Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 1999), p. 33; Hu Dalei 胡大雷, *Xie Lingyun Bao Zhao shi xuan* 謝靈運, 鮑照詩選 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2005), p. 12. The original context of the dragon and inchworm reference is positive, involving perfect understanding and timely application. The *Yijing* passage continues: “Perfect concepts come about by entrance into the numinous, whence one may extend their application to the utmost”; Wang Bi, *Wang Bi ji jiao shi*, 2:562; translation modified from Lynn, *The Classic of Changes*, pp. 81–82. Han Kangbo 韓康伯 (d. ca. 385), a latter-day disciple of Wang Bi, explains that “the numinous, being utterly still, does not act, but when it responds to something, that response is perfect and thoroughgoing. Thus one is able to take advantage of all the subtle secrets that underlie the world and gain unified and complete control over their applications.” See Wang Bi, 2:562; translated by Lynn, in *The Classic of Changes*, pp. 81–82. As in many other passages in the *Yijing* and its commentaries, the implicit issues are proper timing, the understanding of which may lead to correct, advantageous decisions and, ultimately, mastery of a given situation. Xie Lingyun seems to be claiming that he has transcended concerns of calculation, advantage, and mastery.

retirement.⁵⁸ The poet acknowledges that he is neither like the “submerged dragon,” a superior man who accepts seclusion for the time being, nor like the “wild goose” that rises high in such a way as does the successful man of the world. This poem displays the many wonderful tensions in the poet: he freely admits his failure in both office and retirement and candidly addresses the sense of tedium and restlessness of life in exile. Xie Lingyun has been faulted for producing contrived poems “lacking in earnestness” (*que shao zhen cheng* 缺少真誠).⁵⁹ As such, he stands in diametrical opposition to Tao Yuanming, whose character and poetry have been admired as “genuine” since their earliest reception. I would argue instead that, whereas Xie’s poetry lays bare his sense of uncertainty and the contradictions inherent in his position on the rival claims of ambition and withdrawal, Tao’s poetry uses more concealment than Xie’s, repeatedly telling his readers that he is content in his choice, not that he hopes to be. The arrangement of Xie Lingyun’s landscape poems invites readers to trace not only the poet’s physical movements through time and space but also a spiritual landscape whose contours contain many twists and turns.

“Dwelling in the Mountains” under the *Yijing*’s Roof

Compared to the foregoing examples, Xie deploys *Yijing* quotations on a considerably larger scale in his monumental poetic work in the *fu* form, “Exposition on Dwelling in the Mountains,” in which he uses themes from the classic to organize his argument. The preface to the work deserves close attention because it, too, contains a remarkably high concentration of *Yijing* references. Through the use of three

⁵⁸ For a fuller discussion of the way in which Xie Lingyun uses quotations from the *Yijing* to structure this poem, see my “Pentasyllabic *Shi* Poetry,” pp. 135–36.

⁵⁹ See Ge Xiaoyin 葛曉音, *Badai shi shi* 八代詩史 (Xi’an: Shaanxi renmin chubanshe, 1989), pp. 197–98; Li Yan, *Xie Lingyun yanjiu*, p. 243. Li Yan adds that Xie “did not dare face his own inner world, and with great effort tried to conceal his true feelings,” resulting in a “divided personality” (*fenlie de renge* 分裂的人格) that is both engaged and detached. To my mind, rather than demanding of Xie Lingyun the consistency in motivation and simplicity of personality that we would hardly seek in ourselves, it would be more fruitful to appreciate the tensions and incongruities that humanize this fascinating figure. I appreciate Paul Kroll’s thoughts on the subject of our expectations of historical figures in a discussion following the delivery of his paper, “Personal Moments in Medieval Chinese Poetry” (at the Premodern China Lecture Series, Columbia University, February 19, 2009).

citations from the classic, Xie Lingyun introduces some of the major threads in the *fu*. The preface opens thus:

In antiquity, dwelling in nests and staying in caves is called resting on a cliff. Living in the mountains under ridgepole and roof is called dwelling in the mountains. Residing in the wooded wilds is called [living in] the hills and gardens, and in the suburbs is called [living] beside the city wall.

古巢居穴處曰巖棲。棟宇居山曰山居。在林野曰丘園。在郊郭曰城傍。⁶⁰

Xie begins his discourse by citing the *Yijing* to advance his case for dwelling in the mountains. On hexagram 34 “Da zhuang” 大壯 (Great strength), the *Xi ci zhuan* states the following:

In remote antiquity, people lived in caves and resided in open country. The sages of later ages had these exchanged for proper houses, putting a ridge-pole at the top and rafters below for protection against the wind and the rain. They probably got the idea for this from the hexagram “Da zhuang.”

上古穴居而野處，後世聖人易之以宮室，上棟下宇，以待風雨，蓋取諸大壯。⁶¹

By invoking the theme of building from the *Yijing*, Xie Lingyun cleverly anticipates at the outset the question that will inevitably arise as the *fu* unfolds. When we read “Why should life depend on a great many supplies? The principle is to find sufficiency in a full belly” 生何待於多資，理取足於滿腹，our natural response is to ask, why, then, should a recluse, who professes few desires and needs, wish to develop a mountain estate? The *Yijing* passage to which Xie alludes in the preface indicates that human habitation, under the sages’ direction, had evolved along a necessary course. In like fashion, Xie seems to be suggesting that the abode of recluses has also transformed since antiquity: a recluse need no longer hide among cliffs and caves, but may live in mountain homes, hills and gardens, and even the suburbs.

⁶⁰ All citations from “Shanju fu” are from Gu Shaobo, *Xie Lingyun ji jiaozhu*, pp. 318–34. For a complete and annotated English translation of “Shanju fu,” see Francis Westbrook, “Landscape Description in the Lyric Poetry and ‘Fuh on Dwelling in the Mountains’ of Shieh Ling-yunn” (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1973), pp. 177–337. See also Mark Elvin’s rendering in his *The Retreat of the Elephants: An Environmental History of China* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), pp. 338–67. David Knechtges has also translated this piece in an unpublished manuscript.

⁶¹ Wang Bi, *Wang Bi ji jiao shi*, 2:560; translation modified from Lynn, *The Classic of Changes*, p. 346.

Xie engages with the contemporary discourse on eremitic practices in yet another way. He raises the dichotomy between mind (*xin* 心) and phenomena (*shi* 事), thereby summoning to the fore the prevalent Jin dynasty attitude that blurs the distinction between reclusion and service. Wang Kangju 王康琚 (fourth century) aptly articulated this attitude: “Minor recluses seclude themselves in the hills and groves, / Great recluses seclude themselves in the court and marketplace” 小隱隱陵藪，大隱隱朝市。⁶² Wang’s declaration is, of course, an echo of Dongfang Shuo’s 東方朔 famous defense of his own “court reclusion” (*chaoyin* 朝隱) in the time of Emperor Wu of the Han dynasty 漢武帝 (r. 141–87 B.C.E.): “Within the palace, one can avoid the world and preserve oneself. Why must one reside in the deep mountains and thatched huts?”⁶³ Tao Yuanming would later reiterate the position that reclusion is more about state of mind than place when he portrayed himself as a recluse engaged with all aspects of rustic life:

結廬在人境 I built my hut in the midst of men,
而無車馬喧 Yet hear no clamor of horse and carriage.
問君何能爾 You ask how it can be done?
心遠地自偏 With the mind detached, place becomes remote.⁶⁴

Xie Lingyun would by no means have denied the importance of one’s state of mind. He explains in the preface: “In one’s mind, the yellow canopy may not be different from the north bank of Fen River. In actual practice, however, dwelling in the mountains is certainly distinct from [living in] the city marketplace” 言心也，黃屋實不殊於汾陽。即事也，山居良有異乎市塵。 Having the proper state of mind would enable one to see no substantive difference between active governance in the palace, implied by the yellow canopy of the imperial carriage, and non-action as practiced by the sage-king Yao, who visited the Four Masters of Mount Guye to the north of the Fen River, where he is said to have forgotten about his kingdom.⁶⁵ Xie Lingyun changes the discourse by taking the aspect of state of mind out of the immediate equation: for Xie, what really defines reclusive life and what truly dif-

⁶² Lu Qinli 遼欽立, ed., *Xian Qin Han Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi* 先秦漢魏晉南北朝詩 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), 2:953.

⁶³ Lu Qinli, *Xian Qin Han Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi*, 1:101. The original reads: 殿中可以避世全身，何必深山之中蒿廬之下。

⁶⁴ Tao Yuanming, *Tao Yuanming ji jiaojian* 陶淵明集校箋, ed. Gong Bin 龔斌 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1999), p. 219.

⁶⁵ See Zhuangzi *jijie*, in *Zhuzi jicheng*, 1.5.

ferentiates dwelling in the mountains from anywhere else are the phenomena—specifically, all the phenomena contained in *his* place, and not just any place. Indeed, the *fu* expends almost ten thousand characters to create a topography of his entire estate and to catalogue the numerous animal and vegetal varieties of life found in it.⁶⁶

Part of Xie Lingyun's argument for dwelling in the mountains consists of justifying the grandeur of his particular dwelling, epitomized by a jade hall, as well as his act of adding on to it rather than paring it down. Xie relies on two *Yijing* references to link the theme of building in section 1 to that of ornamentation in section 2 of the *fu*.⁶⁷ "If wind and dew brought distress to the nests and caves, then [the hexagram] 'Great Strength' expelled the harmful with ridgepoles and rafters. If buildings became beautiful with precious jade, then 'Plain Ornament' distinguishes itself from the world with hillside gardens" 若夫巢穴以風露貽患。則大壯以棟宇祛弊。宮室以瑤琨致美。則白賁以丘園殊世。 Xie explains in his commentary to the *fu*: "The jade hall was originally simple. Hence I say, 'Plain Ornament,' that is the top line statement." The relevant passage in the *fu* and its commentary draw upon two line statements in hexagram 22, "Bi" 賁 (Ornament):

Fifth Yin: Ornament in a hillside garden. Bundles of silk increase to great number. If one is sparing, in the end, there will be good fortune 賁于丘園，束帛戔戔，吝，終吉。

Top Yang: Plain Ornament. No blame 白賁，无咎。⁶⁸

Xie's own annotation suggests that he sees a progression from plainness to adornment: the jade hall was originally simple. Wang Bi's

⁶⁶ Situating "Shanju fu" vis-à-vis the Jin-Song geographical discourse, Cheng Yü-yü persuasively argues that the comprehensive cataloguing of items that were characteristic of Han expositions and adopted by Xie Lingyun in his exposition, far from being mere generic convention, has political and economic implications. As Cheng argues, the extensive categorization in "Shanju fu" has to do with estate management and the accounting of local items. See "Bodily Movement and Geographic Categories: Xie Lingyun's 'Rhapsody on Mountain Dwelling' and the Jin-Song Discourse on Mountains and Rivers," *The American Journal of Semiotics* 23 (2007): 193–219. For another reading of this work as a source of information about estate management in the Six Dynasties, see Zhang Yihe 章義和, "Cong Xie Lingyun 'Shanju fu' lun Liuchao zhuangyuan de jingying xingshi" 從謝靈運《山居賦》論六朝莊園的經營形式, *Xuchang shizhuan xuebao* (Shehui kexue ban) 12.1 (1993): 10–16.

⁶⁷ I have followed Francis Westbrook's numbering of the sections in "Shanju fu" in his "Landscape Description in the Lyric Poetry and 'Fuh on Dwelling in the Mountains' of Shieh Ling-yunn," pp. 177–337.

⁶⁸ Wang Bi, *Wang Bi ji jiaoshi*, 1:328.

commentary, which Xie Lingyun most certainly knew, explains the inevitable reversion from adornment to plainness: “When adornment reaches its limit, it reverts to the simple. . . . If one uses plainness as adornment, then there will be no sorrow caused by misfortune, for one has achieved his intent” 處飾之終, 飾終反素. . . . 以白為飾, 而無患憂, 得志者也.⁶⁹ In the world of *Yijing* hermeneutics, plainness and ornament are understood to operate along the same continuum: the expenditure of the one is followed by the accumulation of the other. Crucial to Xie’s purposes is the notion of using plainness as adornment, as suggested by Wang’s commentary, for it allows Xie to present his white-jade hall as a materialization of the concept “plain ornament.”

The building is further distinguished by its proximity to hillside gardens, whose association with lofty reclusion militates against what may be otherwise construed as blatant ostentation. Just as the hexagram “Great Strength” corrects the harshness of primitive living with ridgepoles and rafters, the hexagram “Plain Ornament” presents an alternative to the richness of ornate buildings with a white hall associated with hillside gardens. For Xie Lingyun, “Plain Ornament,” which has materialized in a jade hall that is actually situated in the mountains but is textually associated with hillside gardens, expresses an ideal balance: it rejects the extremes of caves and nests on the one hand, and of the city marketplace on the other; and it avoids excesses in either adornment or rusticity. Although Xie Lingyun concedes later in the commentary to section 2 that the way of the cliffs and valleys is more profound than that of hillside gardens, he nonetheless retains the positive textual associations of hillside gardens in this passage since it advances his argument.

Xie Lingyun’s exploration of the theme of plain ornament serves more than merely justifying building a jade hall: it bolsters his advocacy of mountains and rivers over parks and gardens. In section 3, after listing the names of imperial parks in earlier *fu*, such as Yunmeng 雲夢 (a hunting preserve in Chu) and Qingqiu 青丘 (a hunting preserve in Qi), he writes, “Although these were the prized parks of princes, how are they places to which one can go for timely withdrawal? Moreover, since mountains and rivers are not fully supplied, how could one discuss seeking everything together” 雖千乘之珍苑, 孰嘉遯之所遊。且山川之未備, 亦何議於兼求? Xie explains in his commentary: “Moun-

⁶⁹ Wang Bi, *Wang Bi ji jiaoshi*, 1:328.

tains and rivers cannot claim complete splendor; it all depends on what one encounters in the natural topography” 且山川亦不能兼茂，隨地勢所遇耳。He thus represents the parks and gardens as engineered, cultivated, and perfected—in effect, highly ornamented—something made beautiful by man but of little use to the recluse. In contrast, he portrays mountains and rivers as natural, unadorned, and imperfect—a place that offers rest to the recluse and infinite surprises to the wanderer.

The theme of ornamentation plays an equally prominent role in Xie Lingyun's discussion of *fu* composition in the preface. As if addressing Yang Xiong's 揚雄 (53 B.C.E.–18 C.E.) famous charge against grand, epideictic *fu*, whose rhetorical excesses ultimately nullify moral suasion, Xie argues in the preface that the ideal consists in a relative balance between form and content: “Literary form must combine both [beauty and the standard] in order to achieve perfection” 文體宜兼以成其美.⁷⁰ A few lines later, he adopts a binary, adornment/simplicity (*shi/su* 飾/素), from Wang Bi's commentary to the hexagram “Bi” (Ornament) to express his aim to “reject adornment and adopt simplicity, insofar as it accords with my mind” 去飾取素，儻值其心耳。Xie differentiates his own work from the *fu* of his predecessors, such as Zhang Heng 張衡 (78–139) and Zuo Si 左思 (d. ca. 300), both of whom wrote expositions on capitals using “resplendent diction” (*yan ci* 艷辭). From this vantage point, the “Exposition on Dwelling in the Mountains” reads like a meta-*fu*. It is deliberately situated outside the received corpus of *fu*, is distinct from and makes comments on the tradition. Xie Lingyun achieves this in part through supplying his own commentary, which he approached with a documentarian's rigor, providing details on points ranging from geography to the pronunciation of plant and animal names. To be sure, his *fu* displays itself in magnificent encyclopedic fashion, as do all respectable epideictic *fu* in the Han tradition; at the same time, it substitutes empirical experience for book knowledge and sheer imagination.

In addition to the themes of building and ornamentation, Xie Lingyun introduces an *Yijing* quotation that speaks to the relation between words and ideas (*yan yi* 言意). Representation was a topic as central to Wei and Jin philosophical discourse as it was relevant

⁷⁰ In *Fa yan* 法言 (Model sayings), Yang Xiong discusses beauty (*li* 麗) and [exemplifying] standards (*ze* 則) as two ideal components of *fu* composition. See *Fa yan zhu* 法言注, ed. Han Jing 韓敬 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1992), p. 27.

to *fu* composition. Xie states in closing his preface: “Ideas truly lie beyond words, and writing does not exhaust [ideas]” 意實言表, 而書不盡. Here he draws upon the famous passage in the *Xi ci zhuan* that describes the genesis of the *Yijing* hexagrams and their “line statements” (*yaoci* 爻辭): “The Master said: ‘Writing does not exhaust words, and words do not exhaust ideas. If this is so, does this mean that the ideas of the sages cannot be discerned’” 子曰: 書不盡言, 言不盡意. 然聖人之意, 其不可見乎? Having raised the rhetorical question, the Master then answered by asserting adequacy in the hierarchy of ideas (*yi* 意), images (*xiang* 象), and words (*yan* 言): “The sages established images in order to express their ideas exhaustively. They established the hexagrams in order to treat exhaustively the true innate tendency of things and their countertendencies to spuriousness. They attached phrases to the hexagrams in order to exhaust what they had to say” 子曰: 聖人立象以盡意, 設卦以盡情偽, 系辭焉以盡其言.⁷¹ What is interesting in the closing passage of the preface is not that Xie apologizes for the incompleteness of expression (a hyperbole that one conventionally finds in epideictic *fu* and a device that recurs in this *fu*), but that he does not apparently draw from the influential reading of this *Yijing* passage that Wang Bi offered in his *Zhouyi lüeli* 周易略例 (General remarks on the *Changes of the Zhou*): “Images are the means to express ideas. Words are the means to explain the images. To yield up ideas completely, there is nothing better than images, and to yield up the meaning of images, there is nothing better than words.”⁷² Wang Bi also borrowed from the *Zhuangzi* the metaphors of the fish trap and rabbit snare to explain the relevant passage in the *Xi ci zhuan*: “Getting the ideas is in fact a matter of forgetting the images, and getting the images is in fact a matter of forgetting the words.”⁷³ In Wang’s schema, language is reduced not only to being a mere vehicle for meaning, but to a vehicle that must eventually be discarded if one is to grasp the ideas.

However, the *fu* poet, for whom delivery is an integral part of the message, cannot accept in its entirety this attitude toward language. Words as traces or markings may not encompass ideas and things in their totality, but they remain a privileged and enchanting portal to those ideas and things. Hence the possibility of a future “appreciation” remains in the last lines of the preface, as Xie affirms: “The traces I left

⁷¹ Wang Bi, *Wang Bi ji jiaoshi*, 2:554, translated by Lynn, *The Classic of Changes*, p. 67.

⁷² Wang Bi, *Wang Bi ji jiaoshi*, 2:609, translated by Lynn, *The Classic of Changes*, p. 31.

⁷³ Wang Bi, *Wang Bi ji jiaoshi*, 2:609, translated by Lynn, *The Classic of Changes*, p. 32.

and the ideas I sought shall be entrusted to one who will appreciate them” 遺迹索意，託之有賞。 A significant contingent of these traces and ideas is organized and represented through themes drawn from the *Yijing*. The themes of building, ornamentation, and representation introduced at the beginning of the *fu* find resonances throughout the work in the descriptions of Xie's expansion of the estate and his dazling, seemingly exhaustive catalogues of plants and animals, as well as his periodic apology for not being able to provide a complete representation of the various phenomena in his mountain dwelling.

In sum, the world of the *Yijing* contains a representational, structural, and hermeneutical order that is ostensibly patterned on an understanding of the natural order. The sixty-four hexagrams representing the major situations in life are built of layers of images and attached explanations. The system inherent in the *Yijing* for decoding the world's manifestations and for building these manifestations into a cohesive structure of meaning was arguably appealing to Xie Lingyun who, like his contemporaries, saw nature's mysterious workings as the embodiment of life's truths, the mastery of which depended on the ability to understand and see order in natural phenomena.

The recurrent structural pattern in Xie's landscape poems, in which the description of a scene is followed by introspective meditation, has been called “formulaic,” “static,” and “mechanical” by some critics; others have criticized his use of philosophy to elucidate his sentiments as the origin of the “tediously long” (*rongchang* 冗長) structure of his poems.⁷⁴ As in Gu Shaobo's assessment, readers have presented these perceived flaws as impediments to the natural flow of his poems. One prominent scholar has gone so far as to fault Xie for failing to integrate scene and sentiment (which is surely an anachronistic demand inspired by Tang poetic thought). She traced the source of the “problem of being split into two branches” (having a scene description,

⁷⁴ In *Tao Qian and the Chinese Poetic Tradition*, Charles Kwong opines that this “formulaic” and “static” pattern, in combination with crafted and syntactically packed couplets and structural fragmentation, results in the “jamming” of the flow of lyricism (pp. 128–32). Kwong further argues that “no mechanical structure can adequately capture the flowing vitality of Nature or lead to the spiritual oneness, simplicity, and freedom he [Xie] so passionately wants.” In contrast, Tao Yuanming's “personal and direct voice” and “lucid style” are more conducive to this flowing vitality: “It is to Tao's credit as a nature poet that the ‘patching traces’ and ‘chisel marks’ of word-sculpturing common in his age—obscure vocabulary, jagged syntax, obtrusive allusions (especially philosophical jargon), mechanical parallelisms—are absent in his writings” (p. 156). For a similar reading of Xie Lingyun, see Li Yan, *Xie Lingyun yanjiu*, p. 243.

on the one hand, and the expression of sentiment and philosophical reflection on the other) to a “self-centered and decadent” worldview that leads the reader to perceive what may be true feelings as contrived and false.⁷⁵ If, however, we consider that this structural pattern is modeled after the one outlined in the *Xi ci zhuan*—a pattern in which words are attached to images, and images to ideas in order to ensure correct interpretations—we can appreciate the way in which discursive statements in the second half of a given poem by Xie Lingyun reinforce and augment the significations of the landscape images found in the first half. What is more, if we consider the role of *Yijing* quotations as mediators between the realms of heaven-and-earth and human affairs, and hence between scene description and personal meditation, then the structural pattern of a number of well-loved landscape poems by Xie Lingyun appears absolutely appropriate, even brilliant. Lastly, if we read the structural sequence as an articulation of his spiritual journey and discovery, then the sequence of scene description followed by philosophical sentiment, far from being a poetic flaw, becomes a testimony of experience.

Important aspects of Xie’s poetic practice grew out of a hermeneutics of the *Yijing*, which operated as a system of habits for decoding the world’s many manifestations, for building these manifestations into a structure of meaning, and for drawing an essential correspondence between the realms of heaven-and-earth and of human affairs. Xie Lingyun’s citations of the *Yijing* illuminate the structure of his works and the organization of his thoughts, as we have seen in his early landscape poems and the “Exposition on Dwelling in the Mountains.” His grafting onto his poetic works of *Yijing* hermeneutics, which imply a certain understanding of the natural order, requires that, when assessing literary naturalness in his writings, we exercise a more nuanced sensitivity than we would when encountering the overt presence of philosophy in lyric poetry. Moreover, in light of the early attributions of the term *ziran* to Xie and the changing conceptions of this term, we should once again consider Xie’s works to be “natural” in their own right.

⁷⁵ Ge Xiaoyin, *Badai shi shi*, pp. 197–98. Li Yan echoes Ge’s reading in *Xie Lingyun yanjiu*, pp. 243–44.