

Apotheosis of Poets: Two *modi operandi* of the Reasoned Exercise of Literary Taste

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SUMMARY

This essay playfully compares the critical theories (poetics) of the 5th-6th century Chinese Zhong Hong and the Renaissance Italian Scaliger. The two thinkers have some interesting parallels in their critical approaches or methodologies, as well as some key differences. Thus while Zhong Hong thought that any kind of formalized poetic writing interfered with the direct expression of feelings and the beauty of natural sound, Scaliger, in the rhetorical tradition of Aristotle and Horace, finally considered the poet's moral purpose, his power of persuasion, to be paramount. And while Scaliger tried to create a systematic and objective classification of poets through his tripartite division into psychological (poetic inspiration), temporal (age) and topical (subject) categories, Zhong Hong attempted to standardize and objectify critical value judgements through his schematized order of grades of poetry grounded in an "aesthetic judgement" concerned only with the "Quality" of a poem.

KEY WORDS

poetics
taste
systematization
quality
universal validity

aesthetic judgement
formalized
delight
didacticism

高

Whenever we read early Chinese poetry, we often come across Zhong Hong's 鍾嶸 (467?-518) short critiques of poets and their pentasyllabic oeuvre recorded in the *Shipin* 詩品, written in the early sixth century.²

In this book, frequently translated as *Evaluation of Poets* or *Grading of Poets*, Zhong Hong classified more than 120 poets and their pentasyllabic oeuvre into three grades: *shang* 上, *zhong* 中, *xia* 下 -- upper, middle, and lower grade. In his critiques of individual poets, he analysed their idiosyncratic styles, discussed their strengths and weaknesses in terms of content and mode of expression and, for the most distinguished poets discussed, he drew lines of stylistic derivation from the archetypes *Shijing*/*Guofeng* 詩經國風, *Shijing*/*Xiaoya* 詩經小雅, and *Chuci* 楚辭, which are seen as sources (*yuan* 源) of specific poetic styles.³

In his three prefaces (*xu* 序), which I read as one theoretical treatise with normative tendencies, he outlined his poetological concept, sketched the development of the genre *shi* 詩, analysed the modes of poetical expression, elaborated on his aesthetic criteria, postulated his literary ideals, and expressed his disapproval of the euphonic regulations identified today with the name of Shen Yue 沈約 (441-513). In Zhong Hong's view, any kind of formalized poetical writing interferes with the direct expression of feelings and the beauty of natural sound.

As the evaluation of poetry was dominated by subjective pseudo-aesthetic value-judgements of some contemporaries

unqualified as critics, Zhong Hong attempted to standardize the value-judgements by establishing a binding yardstick--to say it in the terms of Greek thinkers--a *kriterion* (tool) to guide from the *doxa* (opinion) to the *episteme* (knowledge).⁴

On the other hand, when we study European Latin poets, whether classic or neo-Latin, we meet with a phenomenon that has notably influenced the history of reception: the creation of canons (*Kanonbildung*). Literary critics compiled catalogues of those poets they found to be the best, the most widely read, the most influential.

One of the most significant milestones in the development of the creation of canons are the *Poetices libri septem* of Julius Caesar Scaliger (1484-1558), posthumously published in 1561.⁵

These seven books are, undoubtedly, the sixteenth century's most outstanding aesthetico-literary work, influencing European literary criticism far into the eighteenth century. Not only the composition of neo-Latin poetry but also the evaluation of classic Latin poetry and even the Poetics in the various national languages were lastingly influenced by this "formidable summa of more stylistic and rhetorical devices, more forms, genres, classifications and subclassifications than anyone ever assembled before or since."⁶

Scaliger's *Poetices libri septem*, as well as Zhong Hong's *Shipin*, may be divided into two parts: a dogmatic or theoretical and a critical or practical part.⁷

In the first four books, Scaliger attempted to develop a compulsory terminology for his poetological criticism. In the following two books he applied this primarily to classical authors, especially focusing on Virgil, and tried to demonstrate his critical skills on other, particularly neo-Latin writers. The seventh book of his *Poetices libri septem* is a posthumously compiled supplement, which contains statements contradictory to the first six books.⁸

Scaliger's literary observations may be classified into

three groups: (1) general literary theories or motifs, (2) critical comments on ancient writers, (3) critical comments on Renaissance writers; his method can be divided into two steps: (1) he evaluates the products of poetry according to his aesthetical principles, (2) he compares them with each other.⁹

Before we plunge *in medias res*, please allow me a short remark: in this brief investigation, I've been following an unorthodox methodology. It seems to be a reasonable assumption that Julius Caesar Scaliger never heard anything about Zhong Hong or his *Shipin*, to say nothing of his ever having seen any of the *artes poeticae sericae*.¹⁰ But in this essay, I endeavour to present some of my reflections on Zhong Hong's *Shipin* and Julius Caesar Scaliger's *Poetices libri septem* in the light of a fictive intercultural meeting between Mr. Scaliger and Mr. Zhong's book. This entirely constructed situation may seem a little *risqué*, yet I assume the freedom to move freely and unconstrained within time and space. By using this sleight of hand, I feel I can better elucidate my subject.

Julius Caesar Scaliger, whose original name was Giulio Bordon, was born in 1484 into a craftsman-family, got his humanistic education from his father, started a career as a soldier in the armies of Emperor Maximilian (reg. 1493-1519), participated in the battle of Ravenna in 1512, retired some years later and began what he called his "better life."

After some studies at the oldest European university at Bologna, which was founded in 1117, he went back to his native town of Padua where he finished his university studies in 1519. His *Wanderjahre* guided him through various Italian towns, partly as a protégé of a family genealogically connected with the family della Scala, which, as a member of the local nobility, ruled Verona from 1260 to 1387.¹¹ In 1526, after publishing some translations from Latin, Giulio Bordon migrated from Verona to Agen. Upon arrival in this southern French town, he connected his genealogy to a side-branch of the family della Scala and his surname consequently "some-

how changed" into Scaliger or Scaligerius.

For the rest of his life, he made his living as a *docteur en médecine* in Agen, where he felt himself completely isolated from any cultural life and displaced in a barbarian area, surrounded by country-bumpkins. As far as we know, he never left Agen except to gather up books and manuscripts for his vast personal library.

As late as the age of forty-seven, he started to work seriously on his reputation as a humanistic scholar. He became a respected authority for his research on Aristotle and Hippocrates and thus attracted many disciples and erudite scholars. Although the humanistic writers of the time were campaigning for enrichment and illustration of the vernacular through translation and innutrition from Latin, Scaliger was such a Roman at heart that he begrudged any efforts in this direction. As an armchair general in the literary warfare of the golden age of literary feuds, he was involved in at least four feuds with scholars like Desiderius Erasmus (1469-1536), who psychoanalyzed Scaliger as one who provoked antagonism himself.

His acquaintance with Michel de Notredame, known as Nostradamus (1503-1566), the celebrated stargazer and writer of prophecies, physician at Agen and medical disciple of Scaliger, brought Scaliger under the suspicion of heresy. Another one of his antagonists in these debates was the well-known French monk Francois Rabelais (1494?-1553), who also had apparently studied medicine under Scaliger at Agen. He was a worthy antagonist endowed with that most deadly weapon, a sense of humor, and denounced Scaliger as a godless slanderer.¹²

With this background-data in mind, we may well imagine the southern-French town of Agen, where the retired officer Julius Caesar Scaliger lived now as a medical doctor and humanistic scholar. We find Scaliger sitting in the bosom of his family--in 1529 he married a young French lady and in the

meantime they have had more than a dozen children--pouring over his books. For the last decade of his life, he has worked intensively on his *Poetics*, which he wants to be understood as a successor to Aristotle's *Poetics*, Horace's *Letter to the Brothers Piso* and Marcus Hieronymus Vida's (1485-1566) *De Arte Poetica*.¹³

After his numerous feuds with eminent scholars, Scaliger has become known as a pugnacious and disputatious know-it-all. No wonder the flood of learned guests and friends to his house has run quite dry.

During one of the countless afternoons on which Scaliger buries himself in his books, one of his few remaining friends pays a visit to his lonely ivory tower. The two scholar-friends discuss the progress of the critical expertise of the host, who again and again lectures on his corrections of a poem written by his *deus poetarum* or Number-One-Poet of all neo-Latin writers. As he is labouriously trying to unfold his *dicta*, his calm friend takes a small booklet out of his pocket and hands it over to Scaliger, who is totally absorbed in his speech.¹⁴

After cursorily paging through the booklet, he puts it aside continuing his elaborations. Shortly after, he picks it up once again, turns over the pages and begins to read. His friend, a humanistic *savant* himself, introduces the book to the poetologist:

"I received this booklet from an antiquarian bookseller. As far as I could learn in our library, it was written by a certain Zhong Hong, who lived in the "Land of Silk." He was born approximately fifteen years after Attila and his Huns invaded northern Italy (452) and died some years before Boethius (480?-524), the well-known translator of Plato and Aristotle, was imprisoned and handed over to the executioner. Zhong Hong was the scion of a reputed patrician family which was deprived of power and influence by disastrous fate. After finishing his studies at the Imperial Academy, his journeyman's time guided him through various princely courts.

Having established a certain reputation as a literary writer, Zhong Hong dedicated the last decade of his life to the intensive study of critical poetology. He wrote--as one source says--in contradiction to the fashion of his time and well-known contemporary scholar-poets. The summa of his literary criticism seems to be collected within this booklet, which was published a few years before his death under the title *Shipin*.¹⁵

With sceptically raised up eyebrows, Scaliger listens absent-mindedly to his friend. He discovers various considerable congruencies between the biography of Zhong Hong and his own life, except for one obvious divergence: Zhong Hong was a run-down patrician who experienced social mobility as a quite unpleasant phenomenon, whereas Scaliger himself pretended to be a descendent of the nobility of Verona. However, this was not of primary relevance for Scaliger, who still hoped that his *Poetics* would be published during his lifetime.

As the author of the *Shipin* restricted himself to the discussion of pentasyllabic lyric, Scaliger, conceiving the term in the traditional European understanding, could not accept the booklet in hand as a "*Poetics*."

But, Zhong Hong not only restricted himself to the study of pentasyllabic lyric, he furthermore introduced an additional aspect restricting his topic by using an objective criterion for the selection of poets discussed: besides the criterion of quality was that of the physical death of the poet.¹⁶ Whilst Scaliger's selection of poets was guided by the criterion of the size of his private library, he yet informs us that he criticized all poets he knew and/or could get the texts of. In fact, however, his range was far from complete.¹⁷

Reading further in the *Shipin*, Scaliger found a remarkable parallelism which aroused his interest: the tripartite division of poets. After turning over the leaves, it became clear: the three categories of Zhong Hong were based upon his aesthetic value-judgement. It was a schematized order of grades resulting from a judgement which makes quality the

basis of evaluation. Concerning this matter, Scaliger had a basically different conception: "We may make a threefold classification of poets, according to poetical inspiration (*spiritus*), age (*aetas*), and subject (*subjectum*)."

In the second *modus*, for example, he divides the poets "into three classes, according to the age in which they wrote. First, there is the pristine, crude, and uncultivated age, of which only a vague impression remains . . . Then there is the second and venerable period, when religion and the mysteries are first sung . . . Of the third period Homer is the founder and parent, and it includes Hesiod and other such writers."

In the third *modus*, he differentiates according to subject-matter so that "the poets may be classed under three principal heads. . . . The first is that of the religious poets. . . . The second is that of the philosophical poets, and these again are two sorts": natural and moral (including political). The third is that of poets writing on other topics.¹⁸

Conclusively, Scaliger's tripartite division into a psychological, temporal, and topical categorization stands versus Zhong Hong's evaluative tripartite classification.

In conformity with the hierarchical thinking of his times, Scaliger presents the eight best neo-Latin poets (*poetae recentiores*) in the form of a climax. Girolamo Fracastoro (1483-1553) represents the acme of this consequently arranged hierarchy, his *Didactic Poem on Syphilis* is praised as a divine poem (*divinum poema*). In his eulogy, he proclaimed Fracastoro the most outstanding poet since Virgil (*praestantissimus post Vergilium poetarum*), who was glorified to be the best poet of all times and his language was judged to be worthy of a god. In Scaliger's apotheosis, Virgil is hailed as the "God of Poets."¹⁹

Scaliger, who himself also ranked poets, set out for what he termed "deus poetarum" in the *Shipin*. Zhong Hong's order of individual poets within the three ranking grades is arranged

chronologically. Supposedly, the most outstanding poet is to be found among the twelve poets of the supreme-grade (*shangpin* 上品). However, since the order of poets itself doesn't lead to Zhong Hong's "*deus poetarum*", the reader is referred to the text of the theoretical treatise (*xu*). It guides Scaliger to Zhong Hong's outline of the historical development of pentasyllabic *shi*-poetry, where the period called *Jian'an* 建安 (196-220) is characterized as "The harmonic equilibrium [of ornament/form (*wen* 文) and substance/content (*zhi* 質)] was accomplished during this age" (彬彬之盛大備於時矣) and "Cao Zhi was the most outstanding poet of the *Jian'an*-period" (陳思爲建安之傑).²⁰

From these references, the "*praestantissimus poetarum*" of Zhong Hong's *Shipin* was identified as the "most outstanding poet" (*jie* 傑) of the most outstanding period: Cao Zhi's 曹植 (192-232) pentasyllabic oeuvre stands as the embodiment of perfect poetry. Like Zhong Hong, who sang the highest praises of his "*poeta laureatus*," Scaliger also composed 27 poems in posthumous praise of his *deus poetarum* of neo-Latin poets. Zhong Hong's critique, as found in his statements on individual supreme-grade poets in the *Shipin*, where we do not find any *adversaria* to Cao Zhi's pentasyllabic *shi*-poetry, reads:

骨氣奇高，詞彩華茂；情兼雅怨，體被文質，粲溢今古，卓爾不群。嗟乎！陳思之於文章也，譬人倫之有周孔，鱗羽之有龍鳳，音樂之有琴笙，女工之有黼黻。

俾爾懷鉛吮墨者，抱篇章而景慕，映餘暉以自燭。

The bone/structure (*gu*) and breath/spirit (*qi*) are of peerless sublimity. The diction is of flowery luxuriance. The feeling (*qing*) possesses both elegance (*ya*) and grief (*yuan*). The style (*ti*) has ornament/form (*wen*) and substance/content (*zhi*). He brilliantly surpasses past and present and stands out eminently above all others.

Verily, Cao Zhi is to literature what Zhou Gong and Confucius are to human ethics, what dragon and phoenix are to scaled and feathered beasts, what lute and mouth-organ are to music, what the embroidered sacrificial garment is to female handiwork.

Hence you scribblers/*poetae minores*, embrace, cherish and love his works, hoping that their splendour lighten your own efforts. . . .²¹

The structure of Scaliger's critical glosses on individual poets differs vastly from what he read in the *Shipin*. His methodic conception rests upon the two aspects which, presumably, poetry consists of: content and form. Surely, based on this dictum, *res* (facts/content) and *verba* (words/form) seem to mean vaguely the same thing as *wen* (ornament/form) and *zhi* (substance/content). Nonetheless, the terms need to be put in their true light:

By "content" (*res*), Scaliger means the objective understanding of facts (*res*) and, ensuing from the poets' understanding, the claim for accuracy and correctness of facts. "Style" (*verba*), including the claim for polished elegant expression, terminologically focuses on "words" (*verba*), whereas what we understand as "style" in the text of Zhong Hong literally means "body" (*ti* 體) and includes the aspects of both *wen* 文 and *zhi* 質.²²

Scaliger's discussion of Fracastoro's medical-pharmacological *Didactic Poem on Syphilis* is patterned by his concept of *res* and *verba*. In spite of his eulogic poems on Fracastoro, he shows a quite critical attitude. Some of Fracastoro's medical descriptions or pharmacological advice regarding syphilis, which was not understood as a specific venereal disease but in analogy to the Black Death, provoked Scaliger's contradiction. Fracastoro limited syphilis to human beings. Scaliger criticized him by elaborating on an infected dog. Fracastoro also described the first evident pathological

symptoms of syphilis, which rise after quite a long period of incubation:

Nam simulac purae fugiens lux alma diei
 Cesserat at noctis tristes adduxerat umbras
 Innatusque calor noctu petere intima suetus
 Liquerat extremum corpus nec membra fovebat
 . . .
 Bracchiaque scapulaeque gravi suraeque dolore.

As soon as the lovely light of the clear day gave way and gave rise to the sad shadows of the night, and the natural warmth, which during nighttime normally moves to the innermost part, left the surface of the body and didn't keep the limbs warm any longer, . . . , then the limbs, and arms, and shoulders, and calves are in heavy rheumatic pains.²³

In accordance with Scaliger's claim for factual accuracy, including the use of metaphorical expressions, nature has to be mirrored in total accordance with the facts. His rigor did not sanction the poetic image of "the light giving way and giving rise to the night."

Unfortunately, Scaliger's critiques are partly based on misinterpretations and/or misunderstandings of facts (*res*). His occasionally embarrassingly wrong "corrections" are documented throughout his *Poetices libri septem*. And his critique of *verba*, i.e. the stylistic critique, shows his exaggerated self-assessment as a poet. In his corrections of words and metaphorical expressions, Scaliger the critic and theoretician was never free from Scaliger the poet.

This kind of critique, whether justified or not, was essentially alien to Zhong Hong. His quoting some lines or verses from poems was just to support his critical judgement and to exemplify his dicta and critical statements, which

themselves are metaphors. His terminology consists for a great part of terms originally describing things of the every-day life. Metaphorically related, *feng* 風 (wind), *gu* 骨 (bone) etc. were used as "quasi-technical terms in Chinese aesthetic terminology" and became aesthetic criteria. In Zhong Hong's expertise, the concrete meaning of parameters like structure (*gu* 骨), spirit (*qi* 氣) etc. was cursorily outlined by evaluating adjectives only: frequently, his "words come to an end but the meaning still lingers on" (文已盡而意有餘). These metaphorical characterizations of poetry are to be understood as counterpoint to the particular details Scaliger focused on.²⁴

Zhong Hong's view of poetry as a phenomenon integrated in to the cosmic whole and cosmic changes is traced to its ultimate *raison d'être*:

"It's the *qi* which moves the *wu*; it's the *wu* which affects men" (氣之動物，物之感人)。 *Qi* 氣 (pneuma, life-force, life-breath) is the cosmic energy causing the perpetual change of *Yin* 陰 and *Yang* 陽. The interplay between the moving part and the moved part--through all its steps--stirs human sensibilities (*qing* 情 and *xing* 性) which manifest themselves in dance and song.²⁵

This concept of the "Birth of Poetry" (*Geburt der Dichtung*) leads to an understanding of poetry, where scribal corrections of singular words or verses are not a practicable way to improve the quality of the whole poem. Besides, Zhong Hong never had any intention to improve the aesthetic quality of any poem criticized in his *Shipin* and never thought himself an extraordinary poet entitled to correct poems, whereas it was an integral part of Scaliger's self-understanding.

The model for Scaliger's pedantic method seems to be Aristotle. "Our Emperor and perpetual dictator of all fine arts" (*imperator noster, omnium bonarum artium dictator perpetuus*), as the highly esteemed Greek is entitled by Scaliger, tried himself on some expressions and verses. Scaliger understood himself as in the line of Aristotle, Horace and Vida. But in

contrast to his progenitors, Scaliger intended to offer practicable instructions for the art of poetical composition. His aim was to write a fundamental systematical Poetic oriented toward the practice of writing.²⁶

It was a common paradox of Renaissance *artes poeticae*--by the way, the same was true for the *artes pictoriae* of that period--that, after devoting their first chapters to the doctrine of natural genius and the imagery of imagination, all writers devoted their remaining pages to instructions in the techniques to be mastered by the beginner.²⁷

In accordance with the insights of European antique Poetics, poetry, as understood by Scaliger as well as by his humanistic contemporaries, was not seen as an expression of personally experienced feelings or emotions. The divine force (*divina vis*) or talent of a poet was to be verified by his artistic alteration of the appropriate selection from the given subject matter (*vorgefundenen Stoff*). That's one of the reasons why Scaliger calls fine tactfulness or delicacy (*electio*) the highest virtue of a poet (*summa virtus in poeta*).

Xing 興 (metaphor/stimulus), *bi* 比 (simile), *fu* 賦 (description), the three modes of expression or principles of composition are to be used carefully; extension will increase their effect. In the theoretical part (*xu*) of the *Shipin*, Zhong Hong advises the poet to "embody the three principles by the force of inspiration (*fengli*) and moisten them by colourful embellishment (*dancai*), so that those who savour the poem find inexhaustible pleasure and those who hear it are moved at heart. This is the utmost in poetry" (幹之以風力，潤之以丹彩，使味之者無極，聞之者動心，是詩之至也).²⁸

In the process of poetical production, the poet should control his product within the *dicta* of poetical principles to reach the utmost in poetry. This sounded familiar to Scaliger; somehow, he was strongly reminded of Horatian tradition.

"Fascinating the reader" was emphasized by Scaliger as one of the most important virtues of the poet. The delightful

pleasure (*delectatio*), i.e. guiding the reader in a pleasant way to supreme happiness, is—following rhetoric and Horatian tradition—defined as one of the purposes of poetry. Its second purpose is teaching (*docere*): the poet has to teach the reader in all fields of knowledge and enable him to be wise, i.e. to act and live in a correct manner, based on scholarship. In accordance with this pedagogical theory, which includes its moral usefulness, the image of the learned poet (*poeta eruditus*) was postulated. Only the erudite poet is capable of performing his didactic task. In other words, poetry was elevated into the position of universal science.²⁹

Fengli 風力, the force of wind or force of inspiration, and *dancai* 丹彩, the colour of cinnabar or literary embellishment, lead in Zhong Hong's view on to infinite palatability, inexhaustible pleasure-or, if we change terminology, to *delectatio*.

The poetic language must differ from the vernacular (*sermo communis*) and use the high style embellished with each kind of ornament (*multo cum ornatu*). Scaliger demands beauty of poetic language which must also fit the content: words have to be well selected, sonorous, and must picture reality.³⁰

In Confucian tradition, the perfect harmonization (*binbin* 彬彬) of *wen* 文 (ornament/form) and *zhi* 質 (substance/content) is the acme of poetry, and one of the utmost cultural values.³¹

Zhong Hong's essentially expressive approach excludes the function of poetry, which is called *docere* by Scaliger, who emphasizes the polish and therapeutic function: the poet should blend together the delightful and the useful by teaching with amenity (*docere cum iucunditate*).³²

Zhong Hong paid little or no heed to this function of poetry. He refrains from elaborating on the regulation of mores or the harmonization of the cosmos (with all its various aspects) by music or poetry which was postulated in the *Great Preface of the Book of Odes* and instrumentalized by Confucian tradition. Zhong Hong's concept is focused on a communica-

tive and socializing function of poetry: it can change the situation of individual misfortune, like a palliate dispells suffering or loneliness. It fulfills this function efficaciously by virtue of its *fenggu* 風骨, the sublime manifestation of *qi* 氣, the ultimate source of poetic creativity and *raison d'être* of cosmic changes, which is not only the first Chinese character of the *Shipin*, but also a *Leitmotiv* throughout the whole book.³³

Scaliger, who also tried to explain the motivation that drives a poet to his creative activity, approaches a further question of great importance to him as a theoretician: In other terms, what's the reason for somebody to write a poem like Qu Yuan's *Lisao* 屈原離騷?

Poetry is, in Zhong Hong's view, the expression of personally experienced feelings (*qing* 情) and innate human nature (*xing* 性). The deep grief (*yuan* 怨) that strikes the formerly celebrated minister after his undeserved degradation to a *persona non grata*, and phenomena like "[white] bones strewn criss-cross on the northern wildness, and the souls chasing and flying across the tumbleweeds" (或忠諫瑄, 或魂逐飛蓬) are listed as examples of affective stimuli that move the heart and stir the soul. "How could one express such feelings," Zhong Hong asked rhetorically, "without recourse to the medium of poetry?"³⁴

After all we have seen in the house of Julius Caesar Scaliger at Agen in the south of France, let me draw a preliminary conclusion. The adherence to the refined expression of genuine feelings has been seen by Zhong Hong as jeopardized by the euphonic rules which came *en vogue* at his time. The *Shipin* has been handed down for nearly one and a half millenia as Zhong Hong's *plaidoyer* for his poetical ideal.

Any philosophical interest in the phenomenon of poetical writing was, for Scaliger secondary to the attempt to establishing norms for the contemporary, i.e. neo-Latin, poets. He pleaded for the adherence to the Latin, which he believed to be the better instrument for literature and also for education of a

cosmopolitan in the humanistic world. His reverential *admiranda* for Virgil is recorded throughout his *Poetices libri septem*. His embittered fight against the national languages, which to him seemed as vulgar as if his "*deus poetarum* of all times" would have written in the speech of the lower classes of Rome, is documented by his numerous feuds with exponents of not only linguistic nationalism.

Through the normative aspects of their concepts, both poetologists aimed to find the "truth of poetry", both arbiters claimed universally binding validity for their aesthetico-literary judgements.

The careful selection of the unequalled teacher guiding the young poet, who imitates the peerless model, to the highest sphere of art, is strongly emphasized as an antiposition to those who reject the lofty and enlightened model. They have nothing to do with the true literary tradition or mainstream of literature.³⁵

Aristotle, using a bare and reserved diction, usually presents his insights and instructions in an extremely sketchy way, frequently lecturing only on the most necessary. Parts of the text possess such an oracular darkness, that even the most pertinacious technique of interpretation can't acquire a satisfactory sense of it. In a not dissimilar way, the plethora of encyclopedic details, as presented by Scaliger, frequently lacks an illuminating instance of how to achieve the ideal. As he proceeds by illustration rather than by analysis, his discussion is often frustratingly vague: one does not see the wood for the trees. Whereas Scaliger exemplifies the faultiness through correction, Zhong Hong focuses on the accentuation of the positive example. But throughout his cursory elaborations, he sometimes, leaves his reader alone in quasi-Aristotelian oracular darkness. His view of the cosmic entirety, beyond conceivable exemplification, lacks the systematically presented illuminating example.³⁶

As we have to thank Plato, the "enemy of poetry", for

inspiring its most brilliant defense written by Aristotle, Scaliger's antagonists can be seen as an eminent source of inspiration for his *Poetices libri septem*. As for Shen Yue being a personal antagonist of Zhong Hong, we have only one not very reliable source. However, the *Shipin* doesn't seem to be written for the purpose of posthumously denouncing Shen Yue.³⁷

Like most scholarly didactic works, the *Poetices libri septem* and the *Shipin* arose out of a concrete context: advocacy of "adherence" and refusal of "innovation." But it lays neither in the power of Zhong Hong nor in that of Scaliger to change the historical flux by their endeavour to fight windmills. In China, the tonal theory Zhong Hong argued against gained general acceptance. The entire subsequent Chinese *shi*-poetry, especially the poems of the *Tang*-Dynasty, is essentially built on it. In Europe, Latin was still used for quite a long time as the *lingua franca* of scholars, but it quit the literary scene and left the stage to the national languages.

In China the name Shen Yue and in Europe the names Erasmus of Rotterdam and Francois Rabelais are familiar to educated people. But only a few have ever heard of Zhong Hong on the one side or Julius Caesar Scaliger on the other side.

Notes

¹ An abridged version of this paper titled *In Search of a tertium comparationis of the Poetological Approach of Zhong Hong (467?-518) and Julius Caesar Scaliger (1484-1558)* was presented at the International Sinological Symposium "Chinese Literature and European Context," organized by the Slovak Academy of Sciences, at Smolenice Castle near Bratislava, Slovakia, June 22-25, 1993.

² References to Zhong Hong's *Shipin* are based on He Wenhuan's *Lidai Shihua* 何文煥歷代詩話, edited by Helmut Martin, *Index to the Ho Collection of Twenty-Eight Shih-hua with a Punctuated Edition of the*

Ho Collection of Twenty-Eight Shih-hua (Taipei, 1973), 2 Vols., Vol.1, 7-17. Perhaps the most penetrating modern Chinese commentaries on Zhong Hong's *Shipin* are Lü Deshen, *Zhong Hong Shipin Jiaoshi* 呂德申鍾嶸詩品校釋 (Beijing, 1986) and Professor Wang Shumin, *Zhong Hong Shipin Jianzheng Gao* 王叔岷, 鍾嶸詩品箋證稿 (Taipei, 1992). The most important Western studies are: Hellmut Wilhelm, "A Note on Chung Hung and His *Shih-p'in*," in: Chow Tse-tzung 周策縱, ed., *Wen-lin. Studies in the Chinese Humanities* (Madison, 1968) 111-120; Bruce E. Brooks, "A Geometry of the *Shr pin*," in: Chow Tse-tzung, op. cit., 121-150; Cha Chuwhan 車柱環, "On Enquiries for Ideal Poetry: An Instance of Chung Hung," *Tamkang Review* 6:2, 7:1 (1975/76), 43-54; Yeh Chia-ying 葉嘉瑩 & Jan W. Walls, "Theory, Standards, and Practice of Criticizing Poetry in Chung Hung's *Shih P'in*," in: Ronald C. Miao, ed., *Studies in Chinese Poetry and Poetics*, (San Francisco, 1978), Vol.1, 43-80; John Timothy Wixted, *The Literary Criticism of Yüan Hao-wen* (Oxford, Ph.D.Diss., 1976), 462-491; J.T. Wixted, "The Nature and Evaluation in the *Shih-p'in* (Grading of Poets) by Chung Hung," in: Susan Bush & Christian Murck, eds., *Theories of the Arts in China* (Princeton, 1983) 225-264; Wong Siu-kit 黃兆傑, *Early Chinese Literary Criticism* (Hongkong, 1983) 89-114. My English translations and paraphrases of the *Shipin* used in this paper profited essentially from the above mentioned studies and partial translations. It seems that the only complete Western translation of the *Shipin* up to now was presented by Professor Ferenc Tökei whose efforts, unfortunately, didn't find any echo in the sinological world. This Hungarian translation of the *Shipin* has been published in his *Műfajelmélet Kinában a III-IV. Században. Liu Hie Elmélete a Költői Műfajokról* (Budapest, 1967) 177-208, 310-325, but has not been included in this book's English version. *Genre Theory in China in the 3rd-6th Centuries. Liu Hsieh's Theory on Poetic Genres* (Budapest, 1971).

³ Zhong Hong's statements are extensively cited throughout the various histories of Chinese literature, where describing poets and their oeuvre by discussing Zhong Hong's critiques is a frequently used method. See Prof. Ye Qingbing, *Zhongguo Wenxue Shi* 葉慶炳, 中

國文學史 (Taipei, 1984), 2 vols., who closely follows Zhong Hong's expertise and Zheng Zhenduo, *Chatuben Zhongguo Wenxue Shi* 鄭振鐸, 插圖本中國文學史 (Beijing, 1957), 4 vols., who shows a more critical attitude towards his glosses.

⁴ A diametrically opposed understanding of the *Shipin* was formulated by C.H. Wang, "Naming the Reality of Chinese Criticism," in: *Journal of Asian Studies* 28:3 (1979), 529-534, who concludes Zhong Hong's critiques are "his private revelation of his ideas. Chung Hung was . . . not offering any critical or theoretical defenseWhat Chung Hung formulated was a private philosophy of literature" For Zhong Hong's polemics against princes, gentlemen of the nobility, etc. and the lack of a common critical standard in the salon culture, see *Shipin*, 01002:18-21. Concerning his judgement on earlier literary critics, like Lu Ji 陸機 261-303), Li Chong 李充 (fl. 323), Zhi Yu 摯虞 (d. 301) etc. see *Shipin*, 01003:06-10.

⁵ I referred to the facsimile reprint of the edition published in 1561 in Lyon as edited by August Buck, *Julius Caesar Scaligers Poetices libri septem* (Stuttgart, 1964). On the *Poetices libri septem*, I found considerable help in Ilse Reinecke, *Julius Caesar Scaligers Kritik der neulateinischen Dichter* (München, 1988); Oskar Walzel, "Aristotelisches und Plotinisches bei J.C. Scaliger und Giordano Bruno," *Zeitschrift für Aesthetik und Allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft* 12:1 (1916), 439-459; Robert J. Clements, "Literary Theory and Criticism in Scaliger's Poemata," *Studies in Philology* 51 (1954) 561-584; Walther Ludwig, "Julius Caesar Scaligers Kanon neulateinischer Dichter," *Antike und Abendland* 25:1 (1979) 20-40. Other major books on Scaliger and his Poemata to be mentioned are: Eduard Lintihac, *De Julii Caesaris Scaligeri Poetice* (Paris, 1887); F.M. Padelford, *Selected Translations from Scaliger's Poetics* (New York, 1905); Eduard Brinkschulte, *Julius Caesar Scaligers kunsttheoretische Anschauungen* (Bonn, 1914). A German publishing house announces the forthcoming of a complete German translation of the *Poetices libri septem* for 1993.

⁶ Clements, 561.

⁷ Concerning the text of the *Shipin*, we find ourselves on the horn of a dilemma between the traditional editorial arrangement and, with regard to the content, the logical arrangement. Controversial points of view are unfolded by Cha Chuwhan, *Zhong Hong Shipin Jiaozheng* (Bu) 車柱環, 鍾嶸詩品校證(補). *Journal of Asian Studies* 亞細亞研究 (Seoul), 3:2 (1960), 117-158, 4:1 (1961), 203-237, 6:1 (1963), 299-330 [Separatum, Seoul, 1967] and Chan Hing-ho, *Zhong Hong Shipin Jijiao* 陳慶浩, 鍾嶸詩品集校 (Paris, 1978).

⁸ As an example not without relevance to the topics discussed here, we may point out the fact that in the seventh book he postulates that the principle of imitation--whatever he may mean by this term in that context--has no validity for lyric. This statement is contradictory to the dictum established throughout the other books, where he wrote that poetry "*tota in imitatione sita*." See Brinkschulte, 49f.

⁹ This classification of Scaliger's literary observations "worthy of recording" follows Clements, 563.

¹⁰ For a pioneering study on artes poeticae sericae and Renaissance Poetics see Douwe W. Fokkema, "Chinese and Renaissance Artes Poeticae," *Comparative Literature Studies* 15:2 (1978), 159-165.

¹¹ The family della Scala is well-known to the literary historian for Can Grande della Scalla, to whom Dante Alighieri (1265-1321) addressed his famous letter apologizing for using vernacular language in his *Divina Commedia*.

¹² Biographical data on Scaliger are based on Vernon Hall, Jr., "Life of Julius Caesar Scaliger," *Transactions of the American Philological Society* 40:2 (1950) 35-170, considering Reinecke's remarks on the actuality of Hall's study. See Reinecke, 10-13, esp.10, who follows M. Billanovich, "Benedetto Bordon e Giulio Cesare Scaligero," *Italia medioevale e umanistica*, 11 (1968) 187-256.

¹³ Horace's *Letter to the Brothers Piso* (*Epistula ad Pisones*) is commonly known as *De Arte Poetica*. I used the bilingual editions of Aristotle's *Poetik* (Greek/German), translated and edited by Manfred Fuhrmann (Stuttgart, 1982) and Quintus Horatius Flaccus' *Ars Poetica*. *Die Dichtkunst* (Latin/German) translated by Eckart

Schaefer (Stuttgart, revised second edition 1984). Concerning the Aristotelian *Poetic*, I also referred to Ingram Bywater's translation as printed in Richard McKeon, *The Basic Works of Aristotle* (Reprint Taipei, 1970) and Yao Yiwei's 姚一葦 Chinese version *Shixue Jianzhu* 詩學箋註 (Taipei, 1966). On the relation between Aristotle and Scaliger see also Bernard Weinberg, "Scaliger versus Aristotle in poetics," *Modern Philology* 39 (1942) 337-360.

¹⁴ Before proceeding, perhaps I should emphasise that "unfortunately" the name of the friend--as well as the whole "story"--is not historically documented.

¹⁵ For biographical data of Zhong Hong see *Nan Shi* 南史 (Beijing, 1975) 72:1778f and *Liang Shu* 梁書 (Beijing, 1973) 49:694-697; see also the partial translation in Wilhelm, 111-113, and the annotated complete translation of both biographies as recorded in the Official Chinese Dynastic Histories in Fuehrer, "Zur Biographie des Zhong Hong," *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 1992/1993 [in print].

¹⁶ See *Shipin*, 01002:31.

¹⁷ Scaliger informs us that he took all contemporary poets he knew off into account of his critics: "*Tum autem qui non omnium aut indolem aut facta cognosceremus . . .*," "*. . . ab iis, quorum opera sunt nota nobis . . .*"; see Reinecke, 99f. In fact, most of the poets criticized by Scaliger were already dead by 1550, when he began working on his *Poemata*. Cf. Clements, 561, who points to the fact, that Scaliger was "venturing sober criticisms of safely established authors of the past 'provided that they are dead and published'".

¹⁸ The above translations of Scaliger's text are taken from Padelford, reprinted in Hazard Adams, ed., *Critical Theory since Plato* (New York, 1971) 140.

¹⁹ For further references on Girolamo Fracastoro, latinized: Hieronymus Fracastorius, a noted medical doctor and poet, and his *Didactic Poem on Syphilis* see Reinecke, 552f, and Ludwig, 35-37. On Scaliger's apotheosis of Virgil see S. Shepard, "Scaliger on Homer and Vergil. A Study in Literary Prejudice," *Emerita* 19 (1961), 314-340; see also Clements, 574.

²⁰ *Shipin*, 01001:16f and 01001:26.

²¹ *Shipin*, 01004:17-22. In addition to the stylistic derivation of Cao Zhi's 曹植 poems from the section *Guofeng* 國風 of the *Book of Odes* 詩經, the sentence "The feeling (*qing* 情) possesses both elegance (*ya* 雅) and grief (*yuan* 怨)" may be read alternatively in the sense that the feelings expressed stand in the tradition of grief (*yuan* 怨) as expressed in the section "Xiaoya" 小雅 of the *Book of Odes* 詩經.

²² For discussion of the terms *wen* and *zhi* see James J.Y. Liu 劉若愚, *Chinese Theories of Literature* (Chicago, 1975) and Francois Jullien's splendid study, *La Valeur Allusive* (Paris, 1985).

²³ My translation from the Latin is indebted to Ilse Reinecke, 502f.

²⁴ See also Wong Wai-leung 黃維樑, "Selection of Lines in Chinese Poetry-talk Criticism," William Tay 鄭樹森 et al., eds., *China and the West: Comparative Literature Studies* (Hongkong, 1980) 33-44, who assumes that Zhong Hong was "probably the first or among the first who cited lines to support a critical opinion" (cit. 37) in Chinese literary criticism. Concerning the "quasi-technical terms in Chinese aesthetic terminology" see Donald S. Gibbs, "Notes on the Wind: The Term 'Feng' in Chinese Literary Criticism," David C. Buxbaum & Frederick W. Mote, eds., *Transition and Permanence: Chinese History and Culture. A Festschrift in Honor of Dr. Hsiao Kung-ch'uan* (Hongkong, 1972) 285-293. For an essential study on the term *qi* 氣 see David Pollard, "Ch'i in Chinese Literary Theory," Adele Austin Rickett, ed., *Chinese Approaches to Literature from Confucius to Liang Ch'i-ch'ao* (Princeton, 1978) 43-66. To describe Zhong Hong's allegorical way of expression, I am borrowing his own description of the mode of expression *xing* 興; see *Shipin*, 01033-34; Pauline Yu, *The Reading of Imagery in the Chinese Poetic Tradition* (Princeton, 1987) 164.

²⁵ See *Shipin*, 01001:04.

²⁶ See Walzel, 442 and Reinecke, 16. Cf. Aristotle *Poetics*, chapters 20-22.

²⁷ See Clements, 564.

²⁸ *Shipin*, 01001:35-01002:01.

²⁹ It should be noted in this context that imitation, from being the

aim of poetry became, in Scaliger's view, the function of poetry. Concerning the concept of the erudite poet, see Reinecke, 27-34 and August Buck, "Der Begriff des "poeta eruditus" in der Dichtungstheorie der italienischen Renaissance," A. Buck, *Die humanistische Tradition in der Romania* (Bad Homburg, 1968) 227-242.

³⁰ See Brinkschulte, 38.

³¹ For the *locus classicus* of this concept see the Confucian *Analects*, James Legge, *The Chinese Classics* (Reprint Taipei, 1983), vol.1, 190; Arthur Waley, *The Analects of Confucius* (London, 1938; undated reprint Taipei), 119.

³² Scaliger shows his acceptance of a Horatian compromise: epic should polish and reform *mores* and poetry should "*docere cum iucunditate*". See Clements, 565.

³³ See *Shipin*, 01001:04 and *passim*, 01002:10f; Wong Siu-kit, 94. "The Great Preface" of the *Book of Odes* is available in various translations. See e.g. James Legge, *The Chinese Classics* (Reprint Taipei, 1983), Vol. 4, Prolegomena, 34-36; Ferenc Tökei, *Naissance de l'Élégie Chinoise* (Paris, 1967) 85-87. Concerning the socializing function of poetry see the Confucian *Analects*, James Legge, 323; Arthur Waley, 212.

³⁴ See *Shipin*, 01002:04-09 for description of further stimuli.

³⁵ See *Shipin*, 01002:11-18.

³⁶ Concerning Aristotle's diction see Manfred Fuhrmann, *Dichtungstheorie der Antike* (Darmstadt, 1992) 3. On Scaliger see C.M. Dunn, "Scaliger and Metrical Theory," *Acta Conventus Neo-Latini Amstelodamensis* (München, 1979) 352-357, esp. 357, cit. in Reinecke, 43, note 82.

³⁷ See Vernon Hall, Jr., *A Short History of Literary Criticism* (New York, 1963) 10. Li Yanshou's remark on Zhong Hong denouncing Shen Yue is recorded in *Nan Shi*, 72:1779. For a discussion of Li Yanshou's statement, see chapter 5.4.4. of my *Zur Biographie des Zhong Hong*.

