

Finally, Saxena promises to study a couple of films that reveal the ‘ubiquitous’ and often non-meaningful ways to perceive English in India. She takes up Danny Boyle’s *Slumdog Millionaire* and Zoya Akhtar’s *Gully Boy*, both situated in Mumbai’s Dharavi, to study how English became a commonplace site for inspiration and even liberation against the popular belief of elitism. Saxena’s attempt is to argue that Indianness as a qualifier remains much more ‘messianic’ at times when a language like English becomes a language of ambition and social upward mobility.

If read from the perspective of translation politics, Saxena succeeds to offer a relatively deeper and fresher view on the construction of the Anglophone that has lately become a homogenous term for global politics. To her, Anglophone may not relatively be a stable concept of a singular, rather exclusive signifier but might very well be read through ‘provincialising’ English as a language that translates invisible boundaries into moments of survival and liberation. Specifically, talking about the post-colonial Indian scene, as Saxena proposes, the ‘meaninglessness’ of a ‘hegemonic’ language or the sensory perception of a ‘defamiliarized’ English might be a method in studying the language with a greater engagement of social reality and all that is ‘real’ in politics.

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LORE AND VERSE: POEMS ON HISTORY IN EARLY MEDIEVAL CHINA. By Yue Zhang. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2022. xv+223 pp.

Yue Zhang’s book is the first English monograph which investigates the *yongshi shi*, the poems on history, which is one of the important subgenres in the history of Chinese literature.

Intense Problem Awareness: The author has a distinct consciousness of questions. From the very beginning, he said in the book: “What were *yongshi shi* in early medieval China? What is the relationship between *yongshi shi* and *huaigu shi* in this period?” (6) Because *yongshi shi* is the key index word in the monograph, its definitions and scope are a must to be investigated and analyzed.

In the following chapters, it is the questions that lead and make a further study of the poems on history. In chapter 2, those questions are how Zuo Si’s poems related and contributed to the *yongshi* subgenre, as well as how they reflected the broader context of Western Jin Dynasty (265–316), etc. The question in Chapter 3 is whether Zuo’s efforts were effective in shaping the prospective memory of his poems. Chapter 4 “focuses on how Tao Yuanming’s reflections in his *yongshi shi* carried on cultural memory in a way that also conveyed his personal perspective on life, moving the *yongshi* subgenre from the political realm into the individual realm” (73). Chapter 5 discusses how the cultural memory of Zhang Liang in Xie Zhan’s *yongshi shi* is presented through Xie’s poems inspired by visiting historical places or relics. Chapter 6 concerns the historical accounts poets chose to be memorized by the world, how poets deal with complex historical records on particular historical figures, and the approaches adopted in appropriating lore from various accounts by the poets who composed the *yongshi shi* in *Wen xuan*, and so forth.

Academic research is designed to find, analyze and solve a question. Yue Zhang has made a thorough and systemic exploration of *yongshi shi* guided by those questions in the case studies of the Poems by Zuo Si, Tao Yuanming, Xie Zhan, and the like.

Where does a question come from? It’s from the contemporary. “All the true history is the contemporary one.” (Croce 2) The truth of history lies in the accordance with the tradition that was invented by contemporary era. The questions of *yongshi shi* resulted from the concerns of the contemporary. It is true with Zuo Si, the poets before him like Ban Gu, and the ones after him such as Jiang Yan and Tao Yuanming.

Explicit Theoretical Framework: The author has a very clear consciousness of theory application. In this book, he applies some theories such as cultural memory, reception aesthetics and intertextuality theory, which have shed light on the interpretation of *yongshi shi*.

Just as the author said, “Cultural memory and reception studies form the macro perspective that guides my research, while intertextuality provides the micro perspective necessary to establish textual connections and cultural continuities between historical sources and individual poems.” (*Lore and Verse* 4) Therefore, those theories mentioned above construct the theoretical frame of this book.

According to Assmann, the cultural memory of a deceased person can be divided into retrospective memory and prospective memory (45). Chapter 2 explores the relationship between retrospective memory and *yongshi shi*. This chapter argues that Zuo Si used historical figures like Zhufu Yan, Zhu Maichen, Chen Ping and Sima Xiangru not only to express his emotions but also to skillfully place himself into the larger context and lineages of exemplary historical figures, which is a new insight into the study of Zuo Si. There were historical figures with high morals, outstanding ability but unknown achievements. Zuo Si expressed his sympathy in his poems and a tradition of *Shibuyu* (a lack of appreciation for scholars) was stressed. “It is usually in society that people acquire their memories.” (Halbwachs 68) Though memory is kind of fiction, it makes the identification possible.

The third chapter traces the prospective memory and reception of Zuo Si’s *yongshi shi* in early medieval China. The identification and utilization result in the canonization of literary works. The imitation of Zuo’s poems by Jiang Yan, the criticism by Liu Xie and Zhong Rong, the reception and reuse of Zuo by Xue Cheng construct a kind of prospective memory of Zuo’s *yongshi shi*. The poets in that era articulated their emotions and thoughts through historical allusions in the poems, criticized contemporary affairs, formed their personality under the influence of Zuo Si.

The *yongshi shi* is not a representation of history, it is the effective-history of the historical figures or their events: the unity of the understanding reality and the event reality. The cultural memory theory in the use of this book shares the same idea as that of philosophical hermeneutics.

With the turn of narrative in the field of history, history is no longer considered to be objective. The post structuralist mentality is embodied in *Lore and Verse*: “The assumption is that the historical elements in *yongshi shi* are an amalgam of historical, unofficial, and anecdotal texts combined in a way that creates a new meaning in poetry.” (11)

Sensible Analytical Tool: *Lore and Verse* has a strong methodological awareness. It adopts several methods such as close reading, intertextuality, textual transmission, and cultural memory, which makes an effective and detailed analysis of *yongshi shi* in early medieval China.

1. Close Reading: In a sense, chapters from the second to the sixth in this book are all case studies based on a close reading of the *yongshi shi* itself. Close reading is one of the main characteristics of this monograph, which includes the translations of *yongshi shi*, some historical backgrounds of them, the intertextual explanations between literature and history. Yue Zhang once in an article said, “The method of close reading of texts helps to appreciate and interpret poetry, and is an important method for Western sinologists to study Chinese poetry.” (On Stephen 53)

The analysis of *yongshi shi* by close reading has some advantages: its conclusion is persuasive, because it was drawn from the case study and text anatomy; the understandings are new, because they are the results of dialogues with former and contemporary scholars; the argument is sound, because it has a solid foundation of texts.

2. Intertextuality: Almost all works are characterized by intertextuality. “A Work exists between and among other texts, through its relations to them.” (Culler 33) Through an intertextual method, poems are linked to one another, forming an echoing and complex network of poetry. The characteristics of intertextuality are more prominent for *yongshi shi*, for it is imbued with historical allusions.

In nearly all the case studies in this monograph, intertextuality could be seen in the analysis of *yongshi shi*. For example, in Chapter 5, the historical context of Xie Zhan was first presented. In the following sections, the close reading of *yongshi shi* is unfolded in the historical lore of Zhang Liang, Liu Bang, Liu Muzhi, Liu Yu, the Xie clan, and so on.

Concluding Remarks: The style of sinologist's study consists of an introduction to the topic, the description of the research object, the translation of an original text, an analysis of it and some theories generalized from it. And this book has the style of sinologist's study.

Lyric is the mainstream of ancient Chinese poetry, and its influence is far-reaching. "The poem articulates what is intently on the mind." (Sun 69) How about the *yongshi shi* in early medieval China? I believe that it's the same, because poems on history are not a reconstruction of history, but a statement of intention, emotion and/or thought. Memory is not historical event, it is essentially a narrative filled with morality and ethics. Such is one of the inspirations from *Lore and Verse*.

Lore and Verse has typological value and significance. As a research paradigm, its theory and methodology could be applied to *yongshi shi* after 589, even other subgenres of poetry.

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ADORNING BODIES: MEANING, EVOLUTION, AND BEAUTY IN HUMANS AND ANIMALS. By Marilynn Johnson. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022. 224 pp.

When discussing fashion, clothing, or adornment more broadly, conversations in philosophy shift almost inevitably to aesthetics. The obvious aspect about someone's adornment is how it appears to others, but something beyond appearance is also integral. In *Adorning Bodies: Meaning, Evolution, and Beauty in Humans and Animals*, Marilynn Johnson launches her analysis from the philosophy of language in order to delve into the meaning of human adornment. She weaves the discussion around ideas from three key thinkers: Roland Barthes, H. P. Grice, and Charles Darwin. Because appearance remains an important aspect of adornment, Richard Prum and his notion of "biotic aesthetics" serves to connect the discussions about meaning with aesthetics.

To clarify the subject of this book, Johnson explains that it is not limited to fashion or clothing. This book is about "bodily adornment," which includes fashion as well as hats, jewelry, piercings, hairstyles, tattoos, and other accessories. She emphasizes that, for it to be meaningful, adornment needs to be understood as adornment of a body. Adornment carries meaning for a particular body, which can differ on another body. Part of her reason for approaching the topic from philosophy of language can be summarized by her own words. Johnson writes, "I am not making the claim that communication is the *only* thing we do with clothing, but one of the important things, and one that has been neglected." (16) As a legal example further motivating the connection with language, Johnson cites *Tinker v. Des Moines School District* from 1969. In this case, the Supreme Court ruled that three students wearing black arm bands to protest the Vietnam War "were protected by the Free Speech Clause of the First Amendment." (21) If it had been a mere accessory, then no one would have