Chen Di's *Investigations of the Ancient Pronunciations of the Mao Odes* (*Mao Shi guyin kao*) and Textual Research in the Late Ming

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Chen Di's 陳第 (1541–1617) masterwork of historical phonology, *Investigations of the Ancient Pronunciations of the Mao Odes* (*Mao Shi guyin kao* 毛詩古音考, 1606, hereafter *Investigations*), has long been recognized as a late Ming progenitor of the "evidential learning" (*kaozheng* 考證) that would come to dominate Qing scholarship in the eighteenth century. Chen's work reconstructs the ancient pronunciation of characters through a systematic comparison of rhymed words in the *Classic of Odes* (*Shijing* 詩經, hereafter "the *Odes*"), cross-referenced with other ancient, contemporaneous texts. Its evidence banked on the premise that the jarring near-rhymes ending many stanzas of the *Odes* were not intended by the ancients, but rather reflected a difference between past and present pronunciation that had emerged gradually over time. The *Investigations* has been heralded by a long string of historians, from Gu Yanwu 顧炎武 (1613–1682) in the seventeenth century to Hu Shih 胡適 (1891–1962) in the twentieth, as marking a watershed in the transition from speculative moral Neo-Confucian philosophy toward evidence-based historical scholarship.[1]

In this essay, however, I argue that the evidence Chen produces for the rhyming patterns of the ancient *Odes* draws on a vision of moral possibility broadly characteristic of the late Ming intellectual context, particularly the stream typically seen as most at odds with later Qing approaches: the radical Taizhou 泰州 school of *xinxue* 心學 (learning of the heart-mind). Counted among the members of this putative school was Jiao Hong 焦竑 (1540–1620), the Nanjing-based literatus with whom Chen lived and closely collaborated while writing the *Investigations*. For these *xinxue* radicals, moral practice consisted not in conformity to established norms, but in the authentic (and some-

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[1] Hu Shih, "The Scientific Spirit and Method in Chinese Philosophy," in *The Chinese Mind: Essentials of Chinese Philosophy and Culture*, ed. Charles Alexander Moore (Honolulu: East-West Center, 1967), 124–25.

times even pleasurable) expression of the self in response to specific aesthetic, historical, and social contexts.[2] Such an approach was dismissed by later Qing scholars as empty learning that denigrated sagely records of the past in favor of subjective interpretations of morality. Many modern scholars have followed these Qing commentators in viewing *xinxue* as inimical to practices of philology and historical textual analysis that marked later engagements with the classics.[3] But the "subjectivism" of *xinxue* did not, for Chen Di or Jiao Hong, desacralize canonical texts, so much as encourage them to view these texts in a new way: as records of embodied, emotive, and contextualized practices that bore the marks of their time and place. I show that for Chen, the very resonance of the *Odes* with readers in the present—marked by pleasurable, physical responses such as clapping and dancing, as well as emotive pathos—made possible the transmission of its key moral lessons. The pathos would be heightened, and its lessons enhanced, when the poems were pronounced in ways specific to their era, facilitating smooth recitation without recourse to awkward "harmonizations" (*xieyun* 叶韻) for its unrhymed words. This approach to historical context was precipitated by ideas associated with *xinxue*, not obstructed by them.

This essay thus joins a growing scholarship that interrogates the long-held division between the speculative, subjective philosophy of the Ming dynasty and the evidence-based antiquarianism of the Qing. It has long been recognized that text-critical scholarship was ongoing in the Ming, albeit usually characterized as a rejection of *xinxue* rather than an extension of it.[4] More

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2   Wm. Theodore de Bary has argued that for these Ming Confucians, "the test of truth is personal experience and practical accomplishment, and the basic value of Confucianism is 'humanity' as exemplified in personal character, conduct, and cultural refinement"; see de Bary, *The Unfolding of Neo-Confucianism* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1975), 25. The extent to which this position emerged directly out of the *xinxue* philosophy of Wang Yangming 王陽明 (1472–1529) or whether it was precipitated by extra-philosophical transformations of late Ming lifeworlds is considered in Tina Lu, "If Not Philosophy, What Is Xinxue?" *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 80 (2020): 123–63.

3   Benjamin A. Elman, *From Philosophy to Philology: Intellectual and Social Aspects of Change in Late Imperial China*, 2nd rev. ed. (1984; rpt. Los Angeles: UCLA Asian Pacific Monograph Series, 2001), 4; Ori Sela, *China's Philological Turn: Scholars, Textualism, and the Dao in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 2018), 93–97; for a similar argument in relation to *xinxue* approaches to the *Odes* specifically, see Liu Yuqing 劉毓慶, *Cong jingxue dao wenxue: Mingdai "Shijing" xueshi lun* 從經學到文學: 明代 "詩經" 學史論 (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 2001), 175–87.

4   Youngmin Kim, "Luo Qinshun (1465–1547) and His Intellectual Context," *T'oung Pao* 89 (2003): 367–441. Yu Ying-shih 余英時 sees Jiao's interest in classicism as arising out of the "intellectualist" commitments of *lixue* 理學 as opposed to *xinxue*: "Cong Song Ming ruxue de fazhan lun

recent scholarship has begun to reveal how values and practices associated with *xinxue* encouraged philological and phonological enquiry, often centered on recovering the timeless intent of the ancient sages for contemporary readers.[5] The role played by Jiao and Chen in this complex historical narrative is almost always mentioned, but rarely theorized explicitly.[6] There remain many unanswered questions about how precisely *xinxue* commitments motivate investigation of historical and phonological contexts, or shape a pattern of research that focuses on the particularity of past utterances contained in presumably timeless ancient texts. I show that for Chen and Jiao, it is the difference of the past with the present that enables past texts to serve as foundations of moral possibility: the particularity of these texts offers not an insurmountable barrier to understanding, but an invitation to comprehend the passionate, and sometimes wildly discrepant, embodiments of virtue across time and space. The moral substance of a text, for them, lies not in the intention of its sagely authors, but rather in the authentic emotional experiences prompted by its historically specific phonological and narrative features. In investigating these features for the purposes of moral reflection and insight, Chen and Jiao unsettle the necessity of dividing moral concerns from the production of textual and historical knowledge, opening new space for considering *xinxue's* relationship to textual research.

Qingdai sixiang shi" 從宋明儒學的發展論清代思想史, in Yu, *Zhongguo sixiang chuantong jiqi xiandai bianqian* 中國思想傳統及其現代變遷 (Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue chubanshe, 2004), 172–75. Yu was among the earliest to link Ming metaphysical speculation to Qing philology, arguing that the latter arose out of the former's need to eventually re-examine the original texts upon which their metaphysical controversies rested; see his "Qing Confucianism," in Yu, *Chinese History and Culture: Seventeenth Century Through Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 2016), 115. However, Yu tends to overstate the degree to which the moral and intellectual questions of late Ming scholarship were divided into separate, if complementary, projects. Part of my argument here is to examine how these moral and intellectual projects were in fact mutually fructifying when applied to textual scholarship.

5   E.g., Bruce Rusk, "Old Scripts, New Actors: European Encounters with Chinese Writing, 1500–1700," *East Asian Science, Technology, and Medicine* 26 (2007): 68–116; Nathan Vedal, *The Culture of Language in Ming China: Sound, Script, and the Redefinition of Boundaries of Knowledge* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 2021).

6   As early as 1871, the Guangdong-based classicist Chen Li 陳澧 (1810–1882) noted the value of Chen's work for his own project of synthesis between Song and Han learning: *Dongshu dushuji* 東塾讀書記 (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1997), 98. Rong Zhaozu 容肇祖, *Mingdai sixiang shi* 明代思想史 (Taipei: Kaiming shudian, 1969), presents evidence of Jiao's and Chen's interest in textual scholarship but offers no analysis of its connection to *xinxue*. Lin Qingzhang 林慶彰 suggests that *xinxue* encouraged Chen's interest in substantive learning and independent thinking, but does not offer more specific analysis; see Lin, *Mingdai kaojuxue yanjiu* 明代考據學研究 (Taipei: Xuesheng shuju, 1983), 391–94.

The *Odes* and its Significance

The *Odes* is an anthology of more than three hundred poems, court hymns, and folk songs, the earliest of which may date to the Western Zhou dynasty (1046–771 BCE). Although pivotal in the development of Chinese poetry, historically the text of the *Odes* was treated as richly multivalent and multifunctional. The most famous explanation of uses of the *Odes* is found in *Analects* 17/9, where Confucius explicitly links its value to empirical enquiry, self-cultivation, and the study of the natural and human worlds. As he explains to his students,

> The *Odes* can be a source of inspiration and a basis for evaluation; they can help you to come together with others, as well as to properly express complaints. In the home, they teach you about how to serve your father, and in public life they teach you about how to serve your lord. They also broadly acquaint you with the names of birds, beasts, plants and trees.
>
> 詩可以興，可以觀，可以群，可以怨。邇之事父，遠之事君。多識於鳥獸草木之名。[7]

In his commentary on this passage, the Neo-Confucian thinker Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200) noted that all human relationships are contained in the *Odes*, with the remainder "able to serve as a broad resource for a knowledge of things in the world."[8]

By Zhu Xi's time it had long been known that the poems of the *Odes* were once accompanied by music; their structure and repetition support a careful rhyme scheme that made them easy to sing and chant.[9] Yet there existed many places where rhymes did not quite work where they might be expected to on the basis of the repetition and structure of the poem. Recourse was thus made to "harmonizing rhymes" (*xieyun* 叶韻) which involved adapting the pronunciation of certain characters at the ends of lines to force a rhyme with the corresponding word in the stanza. It was assumed that such harmonizations

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7   Edward Slingerland, trans., *Analects: With Selections from Traditional Commentaries* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 2010), 204.

8   Cited and translated in Slingerland, ibid., 204.

9   C.H. Wang, *The Bell and the Drum: Shih Ching as Formulaic Poetry in an Oral Tradition* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1974), 1–3; the *Odes* is also the earliest received text to contain material of musicological value in its descriptions of musical instruments and their sounds, such as in Mao #208, "Gu zhong" 鼓鐘; see Kenneth J. DeWoskin, *A Song for One or Two: Music and the Concept of Art in Early China* (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, Univ. of Michigan, 1982), 21.

accurately reflected the pronunciation and intentions of the ancient com-
posers of the odes.

One of the most well-known guides to such "harmonization" in the *Odes* was
Zhu Xi's *Shi jizhuan* 詩集傳 (*Collected Commentaries on the* Odes) which some-
times gave different pronunciations for the same word in different poems.[10] Yet
the awkwardness of harmonizing rhymes did not go unnoticed, even in Zhu's
time. Attempts were made by scholars such as Wu Yu 吳棫 (ca. 1100–1154) to
investigate the rhymes more systematically, but his categorizations of words
into rhyme tables were not always consistent or self-evident.[11] Most scholars
date the breakthrough in phonological research to Chen Di in the late Ming,
but Jiao Hong claims to have preceded Chen in his rejection of the "harmoniza-
tion" theory. In a short essay published in his compendium *Jiaoshi bicheng* 焦
氏筆乘 (Mr. Jiao's Notebooks), parts of which were first published in 1580, Jiao
asserts that ancient rhymes have not been transmitted for reading the *Odes*,
and argues against the harmonization theory on the basis of its arbitrariness:
"Going along with this [theory] means that 'east' can be pronounced 'west,'
'south' can be pronounced 'north,' 'up' can be pronounced 'down,' and 'before'
can be pronounced 'after.' Characters have no correct form, the *Odes* have no
correct characters—what logic is this?" 如此則東亦可音西，南亦可音北，
上亦可音下，前亦可音後，凡字皆無正呼，凡詩皆無正字矣，豈理也
哉?[12] Jiao states that Chen Di, visiting him in 1604, proclaimed his theory to be
a "once-in-a-millennium" revelation so radical that many scholars would find
it difficult to accept.[13]

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10   Discussed in William H. Baxter, *A Handbook of Old Chinese Phonology* (Berlin: Walter de
      Gruyter, 1992), 152–53, which also offers modern phonetic reconstructions of Zhu's har-
      monized rhymes.

11   Baxter, *Handbook*, 154; Jiao discusses Wu's contributions in his preface to Chen's *Mao Shi
      guyin kao*: Jiao Hong, "Mao Shi guyin kao xu" 毛詩古音考序, in Chen Di, *Mao Shi guyin
      kao*, *Yizhai ji* 毛詩古音考, 一齋集, ed. Jiao Hong, vols. 4–6 (Fujian: n.p., 1848 reprint),
      1.1a. A full-text scan of the *Yizhai ji* is available at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/
      Category:一齋集.

12   Jiao Hong, "Gu shi wu xieyin 古詩無叶音," in *Jiaoshi bicheng* 焦氏筆乘 (Shanghai:
      Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1986), vol. 3, 83. Edward Ch'ien, *Chiao Hung and the Restruc-
      turing of Neo-Confucianism in the Late Ming* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1986), 280,
      gives the initial publication date of the *bicheng* as 1560, but in his own preface Jiao claims
      publication in the *gengchen* 庚辰 year of the Wanli 萬曆 era (1580). Jiao further explains
      that the pressures of officialdom, compounded by his rushed demotion from chief exam-
      iner for Shuntian 順天 prefecture to a post in Fujian on trumped-up charges of sedition,
      delayed publication of works he had been keeping since long before the original publica-
      tion of the partial set in 1580; see "Jiao Hong zixu" 焦竑自序, in *Jiaoshi bicheng*, vol. 1,
      1.

13   Jiao, "Mao Shi guyin kao xu," 1b.

Jiao unknowingly joined earlier scholars, such as Xiang Anshi 項安世 (1153–1208) of the Song, who had already argued against the idea that ancient pronunciations were necessarily the same as contemporary ones.[14] Jiao's elder contemporary Yang Shen 楊慎 (1488–1559), for whom he edited the *Sheng'an waiji* 升庵外集, thematized a disciplinary purpose for this scholarship by coining the term "phonology" (*yinxue* 音學) and compiling his own extensive lists of ancient words, later utilized by Chen Di.[15] But not until Chen's *Investigations* did there appear comprehensive and systematically organized evidence of pronunciation differences between past and present—an accomplishment Jiao argues "exceeds the Way itself."[16]

Chen's *Investigations* examines the earliest extant redaction of the received text version of the *Odes*, named after two early Han dynasty scholars both surnamed Mao. The version of the text included in Chen Di's collected works, *Yizhai ji* 一齋集, edited by Jiao Hong, is comprised of several parts, originally in four *juan*: prefaces by Jiao and Chen and a colophon by Chen which explain their motivations and intellectual justifications for the project; a comprehensive index which serves as a quick reference for the reconstructed pronunciation of each character; a lengthy supplementary essay written by Chen, titled "Inexpert Words on Reading the *Odes*" ("Du *Shi* zhuoyan" 讀詩拙言) which explains his arguments from the preface in greater depth; and finally, extensive lists of extracted texts, organized by character, which are divided into two categories: "direct evidence" (*benzheng* 本證) for ancient pronunciation, drawn from the text of the *Odes* itself, and "corroborating evidence" (*pangzheng* 旁證), drawn from other early texts, most prominently the "Images" of the *Yijing* 易經 and elegies and poems from the *Zuo zhuan* 左傳.

Chen's analysis traces change in pronunciation using a genealogical method, or what he calls "tracing back the source and following the flow" (*suyuan yanliu* 遡源沿流).[17] In doing so, Chen was among the very earliest in the history

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14   Chen Xinxiong 陳新雄, *Guyin yanjiu* 古音研究 (Taipei: Wunan tushu chuban gongsi, 1999), 15–16. In his preface to *Yinxue wushu* 音學五書 (*Five Books on Phonology*), Gu Yanwu 顧炎武 also surveys the contributions to phonology made since Han times; see his *Yinxue wu shu* ([n.p.]: Sixian jiangshe 思賢講舍, 1890), vol. 1, 1a–2b.

15   Yang Chonghuan 楊崇煥, "Chen Di guyinxue chu zi Yang Sheng'an bian 陳第古音學出自楊升庵辨," in *Yang Sheng yanjiu ziliao huibian* 楊慎研究資料彙編, ed. Lin Qingzhang 林慶彰 and Jia Shunxian 賈順先 (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiu yuan Zhongguo wenzhe yanjiusuo, 1992), 541; c.f. Liu, *Cong jingxue dao wenxue*, 128–30, 162, who argues Yang Shen's research provided only educated guesses about alternative pronunciations, lacking the systematic evidence-gathering of Chen's work.

16   Jiao, "Mao Shi guyin kao xu," 2b.

17   Chen Di, "Du *Shi* zhuoyan," in *Mao Shi guyin kao*, 1.1a.

of Chinese phonology to articulate both "the processes of diachronic change, and of dialectical differences and their influence on sound change."[18] Chen's most extensive explanation of this method comes in the first paragraphs of his "Inexpert Words":

> It has been said that sound change perhaps began when the five barbarians brought chaos to the Hua [Chinese] and forced the people of the Central Plains into the area of the Jiang and Zuo [rivers], mixing barbarian languages into the area north and south of the Yellow and Huai rivers. But within a single prefecture, pronunciations are different, related to location. Within a hundred years, language undergoes successive changes, related to the passing of time. Besides, once there are characters there is a pronunciation to read them. From large seal script [of the Zhou dynasty] and small seal script [of the Qin dynasty] to eight-point clerical script [of the Han dynasty], from eight-point clerical script to *li* clerical script, these [styles of writing characters] have all changed—how can pronunciation alone not change![19] What is valued in chanting the *Odes* and reading the *Documents* is to go further to discuss the pronunciations of their time. The three hundred poems are the ancestors of poetry, and they are also the ancestors of rhyme. Those who write rhyme-books ought to focus energetically on this point, tracing back to their source and following their flow, considering each character one-by-one, saying "the ancient pronunciation is this, the contemporary pronunciation is that." Then, contemporary pronunciation will circulate but ancient pronunciation will not quite be extinct. From the Zhou [dynasty] to the later Han [dynasty], sounds had already changed; but actually most had not yet changed. When I investigated the *Shuowen jiezi*, [I found that these examples] generally were pronunciations from the Mao edition of the *Odes*. When, however, Xu Xuan revised the *Shuowen* dictionary, he generally relied on Sun Mian's *Qieyun* [*Divided Rhymes*, eighth century CE]. This was using the Tang dynasty pronunciations and violating those of antiquity. Citations from the *Odes* in all the rhyme-books since this date are as rare as morning stars, but there are countless quotations from celebrated authors of the Tang and Song peri-

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18   Göran Malmqvist, "Chinese Linguistics," in *History of Linguistics Volume I: The Eastern Traditions of Linguistics*, ed. Giulio C. Lepschy (London: Routledge, 2014), 17.

19   For a discussion of these script forms and their evolution, see Qiu Xigui, *Chinese Writing*, trans. Gilbert L. Mattos and Jerry Norman (Berkeley: Society for the Study of Early China, 2000), 118–26.

ods. Is this not making a genealogical record of the sons and grandsons while forgetting the ancestors of the lineage?

說者謂自胡亂華，驅中原之人入於江左，而河淮南北間雜夷言，聲音之變或自此始。然一郡之內，聲有不同，繫乎地者也。百年之中，語有處轉，繫乎時者也。況有文字而後有音讀，由大小篆而八分，由八分而隸，凡幾變矣音能不變乎？所貴誦詩讀書，尚論其當世之音而已矣。三百篇，詩之祖，亦韻之祖也。作韻書者宜權輿於此，遡原沿流，部提其字曰：古音某今音某。則今音行，而古音庶幾不泯矣。自周至後漢，音已轉移，其未變者實多。愚考說文…凡此皆毛詩音也。徐鉉脩說文，槩依孫愐之切韻，是以唐音而反律古矣。厥後諸韻書引古詩如晨星，而於唐宋名家之辭，每數數焉。無亦譜子孫而忘宗祖乎。[20]

In this passage Chen refutes the common arguments that linguistic transformations occur because of contamination from barbarian languages, or that they can be sufficiently reconstructed on the basis of Tang dynasty rhymes. In doing so, he presents sound change not as a degradation or a loss of some past ideal, but as a series of inevitable transformations that occur across space as well as time. As he argues in his preface to the *Investigations*, "time has past and present; space has south and north; written characters have transformations and reversals; sounds have changes and shifts—this is inevitably how things go" 蓋時有古今，地有南北；字有更革，音有轉移，亦勢所必至.[21] Chen's innovation lies in recognizing these "changes and shifts" of sounds through time as empirically verifiable and systematic: following Chen's suggested periodization, pronunciations from the Zhou to the Han are distinguishable from those of Tang and later, delimiting the temporal scope of potential corroborating evidence for phonological reconstruction of rhymes in the *Odes*.

On this basis, Chen conducts what he calls an "evidential investigation" (*kaoju* 考據) that works inductively to group all known instances of a given rhyming character from the *Odes* and other early texts to demonstrate the actual historical reading of the character.[22] Part of this investigation involves figuring out the pattern of rhyming lines in each stanza, which, as Chen points out, were also different from those used in contemporary poetry and "cannot

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20   Chen, "Du *Shi* zhuoyan," 1a–b.

21   Chen Di, "Mao Shi guyin kao zixu" 毛詩古音考自序, *Mao Shi guyin kao*, 1.1b.

22   Chen, "Mao Shi guyin kao zixu," 4a.

be summed up in one rule" 不可一律齊也.[23] The "Inexpert Words" essay gives a wide range of examples of rhyme schemes within individual stanzas of the *Odes*; these schemes show that the ancients appeared to have "used level tones to pair rhythmically with level tones, and deflected tones to pair rhythmically with deflected tones" 舊音必以平叶平, 仄叶仄也 rather than alternating them as was done in much contemporary poetry.[24] For these reasons, Chen concludes "the rhymes of the *Mao Odes* moved in a natural path … [so] it is difficult to treat them the same way as [rhymes of] later ages" 毛詩之韻，動於天機 … 難與後世同日論矣.[25] As a consequence, the pronunciation of rhymes in the *Odes*—which he calls "direct evidence"—are best compared to contemporaneous texts ("supplementary evidence") which feature the same character in a rhyming line. On this basis, Chen can work out a pronunciation for the character to make the rhyme work in every case it appeared in both the *Odes* as well as other contemporaneous texts from the pre-Qin and Han periods.

His inductive method presumes systematic sound change across time, even if it does not focus on directly demonstrating it. As he states repeatedly throughout the "Inexpert Words" essay, his reconstructed pronunciations are validated by the idea that pronunciations across (roughly) contemporaneous texts will be consistent with each other, while also differing systematically from those of later eras.[26] To do otherwise, he notes, would be to assume that the harmonization of rhymes must "take [the pronunciations of] one land to apply everywhere, or one time period to apply for a thousand years past" 以一地概

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23   Chen, "Du *Shi* zhuoyan," 3a. His observation echoes his contemporary Yuan Ren 袁仁 (1479–1546) who notes the difficulty of applying to the *Odes* prosodic techniques that worked for contemporary as well as Han and Tang poetry; see Yuan's preface to his *Mao Shi huowen* 毛詩或問 (*Congshu jicheng chubian*, vol. 1732), 1.1; for discussion, see Rusk, *Critics and Commentators*, 180. Yuan's *Mao Shi huowen* was one of the few Ming-era texts on the *Odes* in Chen's personal library; see Chen, *Shishantang cangshu mulu* 世善堂藏書目錄, ed. Mao Yi 毛扆 (*Congshu jicheng chubian*, vol. 34), 1.4.

24   Chen, "Du *Shi* zhuoyan," 4b.

25   Ibid., 4b.

26   E.g., ibid., 2b–3a, 7b, 8a, 11a, 12a. Many of the interlinear notes in the evidence sections of the *Investigations* also state his awareness of such changes. For example, his discussion of the character 行 argues for a pronunciation of 杭 xaŋˊ but notes that "the *Shiming* 釋名 dictionary [dating to the Han dynasty] says 行 xiŋˊ is 伉 kʰaŋˋ. The kʰaŋˋ [reading] works for earlier pronunciations; in ancient times it was pronounced with a flat tone. Today we distinguish the pronunciations of 杭 [xaŋˊ] and 形 [xiŋˊ], but in ancient times there was no xiŋˊ pronunciation" (Chen, *Mao Shi guyin kao*, 1.5a). Here and throughout, I transcribe Chen's Ming dynasty pronunciations using Edwin G. Pulleyblank's Early Mandarin reconstructions in *Lexicon of Reconstructed Pronunciation in Early Middle Chinese, Late Middle Chinese, and Early Mandarin* (Vancouver: Univ. of British Columbia Press, 1991).

四方，以一時概千古, such as when Tang commentators used their own pronunciations to harmonize ancient rhymes. If every era and every place did the same, Chen argues, this "would split and fragment the written composition of every document" 將使文字聲律渙判支離而靡有畫一.[27] Chen also tests the historical aspect of these claims deductively, conducting experiments in which he proposes reconstructions for characters based on rhymes from one text and then applies the reconstructions to the same characters in another, contemporaneous text. When reconstructed rhymes from the *Laozi* were applied to the *Mao Odes*, for example, they "all fit the ancient pronunciation of the *Mao Odes* like a tally" 此與毛詩古音若合符節 with no need for arbitrary harmonization.[28] In a colophon to the *Investigations*, Chen claims that his reconstructions, solidified after discussions with Jiao, were finally comprehensive enough to stand as the basis for "deductive extension to further cases" 觸類引伸 by future scholars.[29]

Chen's approach was praised by Qing commentators, including the compilers of the *Siku quanshu zongmu* 四庫叢書總目, who argued that the *Investigations* took phonology beyond the mistakes of Wu Yu.[30] They noted the use of Chen's work by Gu Yanwu in his *Five Books on Phonology* (*Yinxue wushu* 音學五書), which built its analysis upon Chen's earlier foundation.[31] In the twentieth century, Hu Shi proclaimed Jiao's and Chen's collection of "statistical material" on Chinese rhymes as a demonstration of an indigenous "inductive method" that heralded China's "scientific spirit."[32] These commentators affirm the con-

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27   Chen, "Du *Shi* zhuoyan," 11a. Notably, Chen's evidence in the *Investigations* is entirely focused on historical reconstruction and showing the differences between ancient and present-day pronunciation. Although he often remarks on regional differences in pronunciation—for example, he notes that the character 尾 is "pronounced 倚 [jǐ] ... but southerners all pronounce it as 委 [uǰ]" (*Mao Shi guyin kao*, 1.11b)—these seem to play little role in his phonological reconstructions.

28   Chen, "Du *Shi* zhuoyan," 7b–8a. Chen would go on to cross-reference, in the same deductive manner, the reconstructions of pronunciations for eighty distinct characters from the *Chuci* 楚辭 to the *Mao Odes* in his *Qu Song guyin kao* 屈宋古音考 (*Yizhai ji*, vol. 7), 1.2a. In employing a mix of inductive and deductive methods, Chen matches the pattern of other Ming *kaoju* practitioners; see Lin Qingzhang 林慶彰, *Mingdai kaojuxue yanjiu* 明代考據學研究 (Taipei: Xuesheng shuju, 1983), 2–3.

29   "Mao Shi guyin kao ba" 毛詩古音考跋 (Colophon to the *Investigations of Ancient Pronunciations in Mao Odes*), *Mao Shi guyin kao*, 4.2a.

30   Yu Zhaojun 余肇鈞, "Yizhai xiansheng 'Guyin kao' yi zhong qiyan jin'an" 一齋先生古音考一種弁言謹案, in *Mao Shi guyin kao* (*Mingbian zhai congshu* 明辨齋叢書, vol. 20, Changsha: Yu shi 余氏, 1867); Yong Rong 永瑢 et al., *Siku quanshu zongmu* 四庫全書總目 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1965), 42.365.

31   *Siku quanshu zongmu*, 42.367.

32   Hu, "The Scientific Spirit and Method in Chinese Philosophy," 125–27.

tributions made by the *Investigations* to historical phonology, which directly enabled the later advancements of Qing-era philology.[33] In fact, Gu Yanwu cites Chen's "Inexpert Words" essay so extensively in his own work that modern scholars have mistakenly attributed some of Chen's arguments about historical sound change—particularly, its variance across locales as well as historical eras—to Gu.[34]

Despite the close relationship of Chen's work with the later outputs of Qing scholars, however, his and Jiao's intellectual motivations were not necessarily aligned entirely with the goals or even methodologies that came to characterize *kaozheng* scholarship in the eighteenth century. In what follows I offer a sketch of these two scholars and their relationship, linking their stated anxieties about the rhymes in the *Odes* to broader intellectual concerns characteristic of late Ming *xinxue*. These concerns led them to associate phonological research on the *Odes* not with historical knowledge for its own sake, but with a distinctive kind of aesthetic appreciation that makes moral transformation possible.

Jiao Hong and Chen Di on the *Odes*

Chen Di is the acknowledged author of the *Investigations*, but as noted above the research appears to have been at least minimally collaborative. Chen claims that only after consulting with Jiao in the spring of 1604 could he bring his draft research on ancient pronunciations, first begun in 1601, to completion.[35] During his decade-long residence at Jiao's home in Nanjing, Chen's work was facilitated by access to Jiao's famously vast personal library—whose contents Chen claims to have consumed voraciously, alongside his own extensive personal book collection.[36] Jiao's library almost certainly contained at least a few of the era's bestselling poetry anthologies, whose lists of rhyming words from a variety of non-poetic and non-canonical sources parallel the kind of evidence

33   Elman, *From Philosophy to Philology*, 254–55.

34   E.g., Mark Elvin incorrectly attributes the insight about the inherent process of sound change, made by Chen in "Du *Shi* zhuoyan" (1a), to Gu; see his "Some Reflections on the Use of 'Styles of Scientific Thinking' to Disaggregate and Sharpen Comparisons between China and Europe from Song to Mid-Qing Times (960–1850 CE)," in *History of Technology, Volume 25*, ed. Ian Inkster (London: Thoemmes Continuum, 2004), 85; Similarly, Heming Yong and Jing Peng mistake Chen's method of "tracing [sounds] upward to the sources" as Gu's innovation; see their *Chinese Lexicography: A History from 1046 BC to AD 1911* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2008), 349.

35   Chen, "Mao Shi guyin kao ba," 1a.

36   Chen Di, *Shishantang cangshu mulu*, 1.1; Lin, *Mingdai kaojuxue yanjiu*, 386.

on view in the *Investigations*.[37] Jiao authored a preface to the *Investigations* and edited a "corrected" version of its evidence lists, in which Chen notes Jiao's alternative reconstructions for certain characters.[38]

Jiao himself was one of the most revered classicists of his time. He earned first place in the palace examinations of 1589 and began gathering sources for a history of the Ming dynasty in his role as Hanlin academician.[39] He later served as chief examiner of Shuntian, until a political scandal resulted in his demotion to assistant magistrate in Fujian. In 1598, he resigned his post and retired to his hometown of Nanjing to write. It was there in 1604 that Jiao first met Chen Di, when both men were in their sixties. Their friendship appears to have been deeply intimate and coincided with the most intellectually productive period of Chen's life.

Chen was born in Lianjiang 連江, Fujian, to an academic family of low status.[40] He unsuccessfully competed four times in the provincial examinations, eventually pursuing a career as a military commander and strategist starting in the 1570s. By the turn of the century, Chen had already published several volumes of poetry as well as documents related to his military service along the northern part of the Great Wall at Jimen 薊門. His record of a trip to Taiwan in 1603, as a military adjunct to General Shen Yourong 沈有容 (1557–1627) on his mission to eliminate the pirates ravaging the south China coast, is the earliest firsthand written account of the island's indigenous people.[41] But it was not

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37 Bruce Rusk has shown how the commercial publishing environment of the late Ming facilitated the growth of massive anthologies of verse, which often included rhymes and poem-like sayings beyond the conventional definition of *shi* 詩 poetry; see his *Critics and Commentators: The Book of Poems as Classic and Literature* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard Univ. Asia Center, 2012), 84–86. As Rusk points out, Yang Shen was a key figure in this process. Jiao was compiling Yang Shen's *Sheng'an waiji* around this time, and it is likely he had access to rhyme lists such as Yang's *Guyin lüeli* 古音略例 (*Congshu jicheng chubian*, vol. 1242) which organizes rhyme evidence in ways similar to the *Investigations*.

38 E.g., *Mao Shi guyin kao*, 1.21a.

39 Unless indicated otherwise, biographical information for Jiao is taken from Lien-che Tu, "Chiao Hung," in *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period*, ed. Arthur Hummel (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1943); Huang Zongxi 黃宗羲 (1610–1695), *Ming ru xue'an* 明儒學案 (SKQS), 35.8b–9b; Jiao, "Jiao Hong zixu."

40 An extensive biography of Chen can be found in Zhaoying Fang, "Ch'en Ti [Chen Di]," in *Dictionary of Ming Biography, 1368–1644*, ed. L. Carrington Goodrich and Zhaoying Fang, (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1976), vol. 1, 180–84; see also Jin Yunming 金雲銘, *Chen Di nianpu* 陳第年譜 (*Chronological Biography of Chen Di*) (Taipei: Taiwan yinhang, 1972); Mao I-Po 毛一波, "Chen Di jiqi zhuzuo 陳第及其著作," *Xiandai xueyuan* 10, no. 7 (July 1973). Chen's *zi* was Jili 季立, his *hao* Yizhai 一齋.

41 Chen Di, "Dongfan ji 東番記," in *Minhai zengyan* 閩海贈言 (*Words of Praise From the Fujian Sea*), ed. Shen Yourong 沈有容, *Taiwan wenxian congkan* 臺灣文獻叢刊 56

until he began his stay with Jiao in Nanjing that Chen turned to the research that would earn his reputation as one of the most innovative phonologists in Chinese history.

Over the next ten years, interrupted by several pilgrimages to Daoist temples and mountains, Chen remained with Jiao to complete the research and writing for the *Investigations* as well as its companion volume on rhymes in the *Chuci* 楚辭, the *Investigations of Ancient Rhymes in Qu [Yuan] and Song [Yu]* (*Qu Song guyin kao* 屈宋古音考). He also completed the *Encomium for the Diagrams of Fuxi* (*Fuxi tuzan* 伏羲圖贊), a work on the hexagrams and diagrams of the *Yijing* that Chen identifies as "continuing the work of the *Investigations*, and completing it" 續毛詩古音考而成之.[42] In the colophon to the *Encomium*, Chen describes Jiao's influence and approach to the Classics:

> On snowy nights in front of a brazier, I discussed the *Yijing* with the brilliant Mr. Ruohou [Jiao Hong]. With masterly, sublime words, every enquiry produced ever more novel [insights] about how the images of the *Yijing* speak to meanings and principles despite coming from the opposite direction. This was a process of diligent effort to explicate profound subtleties.
>
> 寒爐夜雪明德弱侯先生譚易。超超玄悟愈叩愈新益於理義象數反說而歸之同，研精而闡其奧者也。[43]

Here Chen alludes to the three-teachings syncretism characteristic of Jiao's work, which sought to demonstrate the prevalence of Neo-Confucian "meanings and principles" (*liyi* 理義) across a wide range of texts from Sanskrit and Chinese sources.[44] In fact, Jiao authored a number of apologetics for Buddhism in response to criticisms from the *lixue* 理學 Confucian Cheng Hao 程顥 (1032–

(Taipei: Taiwan yinhang, 1959), 24–27; for an exhaustive philological account of this text, see Fang Hao 方豪, "Chen Di Dongfan ji kaozheng 陳第東番記考證," *Wenshizhe xuebao* 7 (1965): 41–76. For analysis of how Chen's trip to Formosa may be connected to his phonological research, see Leigh K. Jenco, "Chen Di's *Record of Formosa* (1603) and an Alternative Chinese Imaginary of Otherness," *The Historical Journal* 64.1 (2021): 17–42.

42   Chen Di, "Fuxi tuzan ba" 伏羲圖贊跋, in *Fuxi tuzan* 伏羲圖贊 (*Yizhai ji*, vol. 1), 1.1a.

43   Ibid., 1a–2b.

44   Jiao's most definitive statement in defense of syncretism is arguably his essay "Zhi tan" 支談, in *Jiaoshi bicheng xuji* 焦氏筆乘續集 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chiubanshe, 1986), 227–52. For discussion, see Ch'ien, *Chiao Hung*; Leigh K. Jenco, "Moral Knowledge and Empirical Investigation in Late Ming China," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 121 (2021): 69–92.

1085).[45] Jiao's devotion to his teachers Geng Dingxiang 耿定向 (1524–1596) and Luo Rufang 羅汝芳 (1515–1588), as well as to his iconoclastic friend Li Zhi 李贄 (1527–1602), led Huang Zongxi to classify Jiao as a member of the Taizhou school, which "pressed Yangming into the ranks of Chan Buddhism" 躋陽明而為禪矣.[46]

Like many in the late Ming, however, both Jiao and Chen embraced commitments beyond Chan Buddhism to include Daoist and *xuanxue* 玄學 ideas.[47] They believed these diverse perspectives enhanced rather than detracted from the serious study of the *Five Classics*, although Chen acknowledges that Jiao's approach did lead to some highly unconventional readings of these early sources.[48] The editors of the *Siku quanshu zongmu*, in fact, seem puzzled by the apparent contradiction between Chen and Jiao's systematic text-criticism and their decidedly more speculative work.[49] What arguably unites these two approaches is that both thinkers conformed to the belief, widely held since Song times, that direct access to classic texts is precisely what unlocks their potential for moral instruction. Chen argues that his own childhood experience of learning the classics in his family bypassed commentaries, favoring instead recitation that enabled an emotional connection to the text.[50] In the colophon, he identifies his method of engaging the classics as a "cleansing of the heart-mind" (*xi xin* 洗心). In a clear parallel to Wang Yangming's 王陽明 (1472–1529) own moral struggles, Chen claims that his awakening to this potential came only very late in life, after a long illness arising from his earlier, futile efforts at "focusing attention" (*ni shen* 凝神) on texts and objects.[51]

This intellectual background suggests that Chen's and Jiao's interest in the *Odes* likely derives from a specific kind of moral interest. As might be expected,

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45   Rong Zhaozu 容肇祖, "Jiao Hong jiqi sixiang," 焦竑及其思想 *Yanjing xuebao* 23 (1938): 38–40.

46   Julia Ching and Zhaoying Fang, *The Records of Ming Scholars* (Honolulu: Univ. of Hawai'i Press, 1987), 165; see also Huang, *Ming ru xue'an*, 32.1a.

47   The *Dictionary of Ming Biography* cites evidence suggesting that Chen at one point became an acolyte of his fellow Fujianese syncretist Lin Zhao'en 林兆恩; see Fang, "Ch'en Ti," 180.

48   Chen implies that Jiao's interpretations are so bold they are used to label him "deviant" (*pi* 僻) or "insane" (*kuang* 狂); see Chen, "Fuxi tuzan," 1.2b.

49   For the dismissal of Chen's "largely fabricated theories lacking sufficient evidence" 大抵皆臆造之說，不足為據 presented in the *Fuxi tuzan ba*, see *Siku quanshu zongmu*, 8.64. For criticism of Jiao Hong's tendency to "frequently refer to Buddhist texts, collapsing into disorderly writing" 動輒牽綴佛書，傷於蕪雜, see *Siku quanshu zongmu*, 119.1028.

50   Chen, "Fuxi tuzan zixu," in *Fuxi tuzan* 伏羲圖贊, 1.1a. This experience is noted in *Siku quanshu zongmu*, 12.100.

51   Chen, "Fuxi tuzan ba," 1a–b.

in his preface to Chen's *Investigations* Jiao Hong does justify phonological research in terms of its moral impact. He argues that if the ancient rhymes utilized by the Odes are not clear, then it makes the *Odes* unreadable. "If the *Odes* are unreadable, then the teachings which balance gains and losses, which move heaven and earth, which resonate with ghosts and spirits—all of these are just about lost" 詩不可讀，而正得失、動天地、感鬼神之教或幾于廢.[52] Jiao here identifies the *Odes* as a linchpin of classical learning. Without them, the texts and teachings of the ancient world cannot be reliably glimpsed, and opportunities for moral cultivation would be lost forever.

Chen offers a more distinctive, and extensive, explanation for his phonological research. He begins his preface by explaining why the *Odes* are important:

> The *Odes* use sound to teach, taking something that can be sung, recited, or chanted and sighed out, to the point where hands and feet start to dance without one being aware, arousing emotions of 'stimulation, evaluation, sociality, and expressing complaints,' as well as 'serving the father and serving the ruler.' In addition [the *Odes*] goes on to expound the names and meanings of 'birds, beasts, plants and trees' [*Analects* 17/9]. This is what makes them poems.

> 夫詩，以聲教也，取其可歌、可咏、可長言嗟嘆，至手足舞蹈而不自知，以感竦其興、觀、群、怨。事父事君之心，且將從容以紬繹，夫鳥獸草木之名義，斯其所以為詩也。[53]

Although Chen repeats commonly held views about the value of the *Odes* drawn from the *Analects*, as well as the Han-era "Great Preface" to the *Odes*, he establishes the phonological elements of the text as rooted in pleasurable, spontaneous practices of dance and song that are more consonant with the Mao commentary—which saw the *Odes* not merely as a textual artifact but an indicator of songs actually performed in the "politico-religious ceremonies of Zhou ancestral sacrifices."[54] In combining attention to both historical context and emotional plausibility, Chen's reading reflects broader trends in Ming scholarship. His contemporaries increasingly embraced the *Mao Odes* and Han-era commentaries as correctives to what were seen as insufficiently historicized Song-era interpolations (most prominently Zhu Xi's), even as they

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52   Jiao, "Mao Shi guyin kao xu," 2b.

53   Chen, "Mao Shi guyin kao zixu," 1a.

54   Martin Kern, "*Shi Jing* Songs as Performance Texts: A Case Study of 'Chu Ci' (Thorny Caltrop)," *Early China* 25 (2000): 50.

celebrated the capacity of these ancient and paradigmatic poems to prompt emotional responses in readers of the present.[55] But Chen goes further to link these effects directly to the phonological research he undertook. He expresses anxiety about what might be lost when oral engagement with the lyrics is marred by "harmonizing" rhymes that do not match their historical equivalents:

> When I was young I was taught the *Odes* in my family, and always kept an interest in it. Later in life, I lived alone on the sea, after all of the marriages and funerals [of my life] were over. I was not adept at regulated verse, quatrains, or recent-style poems, and I looked upon the ancient style from the Six Dynasties as even more distant. I would pick up only [these] three hundred poems and read them night and day. Although I was unable to move my hands and tap my feet in the manner of the ancients, I had only to start reading, and all at once deep feelings of happiness, joy, sorrow and grief oozed out of me. I feared only that when my sons and nephews studied the *Odes*, they did not know ancient pronunciation. So, for that reason, I gradually placed [the rhymes] into two columns, direct evidence and collateral evidence. The direct evidence is taken directly from matching evidence in the *Odes*. Collateral evidence is taken from other texts. When I did not have either kind of evidence, I played about exploring the sounds, trying to find ways to work the rhymes, wanting only to make them easy to sing and chant, so they can be recited and sighed out.

> 愚少受詩家庭，竊嘗留心于此。晚季獨居海上，慶弔盡廢。律絕近體，既所不嫻，六朝古風，企之益還。惟取三百篇，日夕讀之，雖不能手舞足蹈，契古人之意，狀可欣、可喜、可戚、可悲之懷，一於讀詩洩之。又懼子姪之學詩而不知古音也，於是稍為改據，列本證、旁證二條：本證者，詩自相證也。旁證者，采之他書也。二者俱無，則宛轉以審其音，參錯以諧其韻，無非欲便于歌咏，可長言嗟嘆而已矣。[56]

The implication of this passage is that, without access to the rhymes that make the *Odes* "easy to sing and chant," the reader would be deprived of the pos-

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55   E.g., Yuan Ren, "Mao Shi huowen xu," 1.1, whose work on the *Odes* was critical of Zhu Xi; as noted, Chen lists Yuan's work in his inventory of books from his personal library; see Chen, *Shishantang cangshu mulu*, 1.4. For a discussion of these trends in relation to *Odes* scholarship, see Liu Yuqing, *Cong jingxue dao wenxue*, 67–68.

56   Chen, "Mao Shi guyin kao zixu," 3b–4a.

sibility of experiencing the odes in their aesthetic and embodied aspect, as vehicles of passion: feelings of "happiness, joy, sorrow and grief" would be unable to "ooze out" and provoke the reader into a deeper appreciation of the text.

The spontaneity of these authentic moral responses links Chen's hermeneutic of the *Odes* and other classics, on the one hand, to his methods of phonological reconstruction, on the other. Chen claims that the *Odes* give voice to people whose chanting, singing, cursing, sighing out, and clapping hands are done within specific contexts that give meaning to their utterances, and fulfill certain kinds of emotive functions. In doing so, they also happen to offer clues to how they pronounced and rhymed words:

> Pronouncing 皮 as 婆 [pʰɔ′] was chanted by laborers of Song.[57] Reading 丘 as 欺 [kʰi] was spoken by the children of Qi. Reading 戶 as 甫 [fuˇ] was sung among the ordinary people of Chu. Reading 裘 as 基 [ki] was in a taunt about midgets in Lu. Reading 作 as 詛 [tsuˋ] was in a curse used by the commoners of Shu. Reading 口 as 苦 [kʰuˇ] was in a song of praise for the Bai Canal in Han. And 家 being read as 姑 [ku]—this was in a prognostication about a wife of Qin. 懷 being read as 回 [xuj′] appeared in the dream of [Zishu] Shengbo of Lu. Reading 旃 as 芹 [kʰin′] was in a divination portending the destruction of Guo by the state of Jin. The shout of [Hun] Liangfu, in a dream of a Prince of Wei, reads 瓜 as 孤 [ku]. In moments of talking in the streets, calling out praise and blame, or when blurting out prognostications from dreams—is there ever time to diligently emulate the false rhymes of those who read the *Odes* in later ages?

> 且讀皮鳥婆，宋役人謳也。讀丘為欺，齊嬰兒語也。讀戶為甫，楚民間謠也；讀裘為基，魯朱儒譃也；讀作為詛，蜀百姓辭也。讀口為苦，漢白渠誦也。又家，姑讀也，秦夫人之占；懷，回讀也，魯聲伯之夢。旃，斤讀也，晉滅虢之徵。瓜，孤讀也，衛良夫之譟。彼其閭巷贊毀之間，夢寐卜筮之頃，何暇屑屑模擬若後世吟詩者之限韻邪。[58]

This rich passage works on multiple levels to link phonological reconstruction to the moral purpose of the *Odes*. Chen's persuasively detailed list offers numer-

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57 For a full list of citations to these sources, many of which are taken from the *Hou Hanshu* and the *Zuo zhuan*, see Chen, *Guyin yanjiu*, 19–20.

58 Chen, "Mao Shi guyin kao zixu," 3a–b.

ous examples from ancient sources, most prominently the *Zuo zhuan* and *Hou Hanshu* 後漢書, to give indications of how corresponding characters in the *Odes* should be read. But these examples also draw attention to a wide range of phenomenological situations that would prompt a performance of spontaneous rhyme—dreaming, praising, calling out in the streets, taunting—in a variety of regions from Chu to Wei. Chen shows that these texts, prominently but not exclusively the *Odes*, record utterances whose spontaneity makes them more likely to be rhymed, and rhymed using the pronunciations specific to their own time and place.

This passage sees Chen carrying forward an insight, first developed in the *Hanshu* but raised again by Zhu Xi in the Song, that the *Odes* were not exclusively an elite construction. As Zhu explains it in his *Shi jizhuan*, "I have heard that most of the so-called 'Airs' among the *Odes* are formed from the songs and ditties of the streets and alleys. They are what men and women sang to each other, each speaking their feelings" 吾聞之，凡詩之所謂風者、多出於里巷歌謠之作、所謂男女相與詠歌、各言其情者也。[59] Zhu uses this historical belief to argue that some of the poems in the collection express "debauched" or morally suspect attitudes, meant to provide negative examples to the discerning reader.[60] These intentions lie behind Zhu Xi's own explanation for how (or alternatively, for what purpose) the *Odes* were made:

> 'Humans were created and were quiescent; this is the nature of Heaven. They are moved by feeling for objects, and these are the desires of the nature' [*Liji* 禮記, "Yueji" 樂記]. Once there are these desires, it is not possible to be without thoughts. Once there are thoughts, it is not possible to be without speech. Once there is speech, there must be a natural inflection and rhythm for what is beyond speech and expressed in sighs, without being cut short. This is the purpose for which the *Odes* was made.

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59   Zhu Xi, "Shi jizhuan xu" 詩集傳序, in *Shi jizhuan* 詩集傳 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1980), 2.

60   Steven Van Zoeren, *Poetry and Personality: Reading, Exegesis, and Hermeneutics in Traditional China* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1991), 229. Concerns about such "depravity" or "lasciviousness" (*yin* 淫) led a later follower of Zhu Xi, Wang Bo 王柏 (1197–1274), to argue for the permanent excision of these poems from the *Odes*; see Siu-Kit Wong and Kar-Shui Lee, "Poems of Depravity: A Twelfth Century Dispute on the Moral Character of the Book of Songs," *T'oung Pao* 75 (1989): 224–25. Achim Mittag offers an extensive bibliography of Zhu Xi's theory of the depraved odes in "Change in Shijing Exegesis: Some Notes on the Rediscovery of the Musical Aspect of the 'Odes' in the Song Period," *T'oung Pao* 79 (1993): 198, n. 3.

人生而静，天之性也；感于物而动，性之欲也。夫既有欲矣，則不能
無思。既有思矣，則不能無言。既有言矣，則言之所不能盡，而發於
咨嗟詠歎之餘者，必有自然之音響節族而不能已焉。此詩之所以作
也。[61]

For Zhu, in other words, the *Odes* reflects a natural order that provides a series
of strict moral lessons; reading the text was particularly useful in regulating the
right kind of "thoughts" to have in response to "desires." Some of these lessons
offered in this diverse and ancient set of poems, Zhu held, were intended by
the sages as negative examples. Poems celebrating female sexual desire or what
in Zhu's time would have been considered illicit sexual liaisons were meant to
show the reader how *not* to respond in a way that would violate Neo-Confucian
norms.

In contrast to Zhu's (hugely influential) moralizing commentary, for Chen
the *Odes* records neither the intentions of the sages nor warnings against inap-
propriate behavior. Rather, they offer a repository of emotive responses that
"contain all of heaven and earth" ranging across class, gender, time, and space
to "summate the principle and the nature, and illuminate the authenticity of
the Way" 總統理性，闡揚道真. For Chen, notably, these responses encompass
even those poems that in the eyes of Zhu Xi were "debauched" and therefore
unavailable for positive moral instruction:

> The *Book of Odes*, although only three hundred poems, nevertheless con-
> tains all of heaven and earth; embraces past and present; traces back the
> origin of things and situations; satirizes political institutions; summates
> the principle (*li*) and the nature (*xing*); and illuminates the authenticity
> of the Way. Its breadth is so vast, nothing is not contained within it; its
> beauty is so sublime, nothing is not encompassed by it. While seeming
> near, it is actually far; while seeming shallow, it is actually deep. Its words
> are sufficiently complete, yet its meanings are inexhaustible.
>
>   Thus, "for whom shall I adorn myself?" [Mao #62, "Bo xi" 伯兮, one
> of the "debauched" Odes] is the unswerving loyalty of a yearning young
> bride. "I will take the field with you" [Mao #133, "Wu yi" 無衣] is the great
> ambition of battle songs … "Cutting down the bottle-gourds, knocking
> down the jujubes" [Mao #154, "Qi yue" 七月] is the pure joy of the farmer.
> "Roast turtle and fresh fish, bamboo shoots and reed shoots" [Mao #261,

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61   Zhu, "Shi jizhuan xu," *Shi jizhuan* 詩集傳, 1; c.f. the translation in Michael Fuller, "Aesthet-
      ics and Meaning in Experience: A Theoretical Perspective on Zhu Xi's Revision of Song
      Dynasty Views of Poetry," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 65 (2005): 347.

"Han yi" 韓奕] is the elegant delight of a feted farewell … Can the words of fashionable, elegant scholars of later ages ever approach these classic standards?

詩雖三百篇，然牢籠天地，囊括古今，原本物情，諷切治體，總統理性，闡揚道真，廓乎廣大，靡不備矣。美乎精微，靡不貫矣。近也實遠，淡也實深，辭有盡而意無窮。故「誰適馬容」聞怨之貞志也。「與子借作」塞曲之雄心也…「斷壺剥棗」田家之真樂也。「魚鼈筍蒲」餞送之清致也…後世風流文雅之士，言之能若此之典乎。⁶²

Chen's reading of these odes generally eschews the fraught allegorical readings of Han (and later Qing) scholars to identify their emotional impact as arising directly from the activities they literally describe: in Mao #154, pruning and harvesting produce delights specific to farming; the "roast turtle and fresh fish" of Mao #261 describe the aesthetic satisfaction of a well-conducted farewell party. He cites historical examples that likewise motivate emotional responses through the "traces" of their "currents" apparent in the *Odes*:⁶³

"He holds only to his own thoughts" [Mao #257, "Sang rou" 桑柔] describes the breaking-up of factions. "Our people are exhausted" [Mao #253, "Min lao" 民勞] is the hardship of the common people. [These episodes] indicate the demise of the Zhou, and are the reason the Han, Tang, and Song dynasties fell. Can the words of literati who seek to plan for the care of the people in later ages ever approach this [level of] detail?

自有肺腸」朋黨分矣。「民亦勞止」百姓困矣。此周之衰也，亦漢唐宋之所以亡也。後世經綸康濟之士，言之能若此之詳乎？⁶⁴

Chen's selections, particularly when taken together with his attention to spontaneous action across various locales, suggest an ethnographic view that values the *Odes* in part for its record of ordinary practice—the particularities of everyday experiences that Chen calls "detail" (*xiang* 詳). These hermeneutical possibilities would not be seen again until the early twentieth century,

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62   Chen, "Du *Shi* zhuoyan," 5a–b. Translations from the *Odes* are modified from Legge, with additions from Arthur Waley, in *The Book of Songs*, ed. Joseph R. Allen (New York: Grove Press, 1996).

63   Chen, "Du *Shi* zhuoyan," 5b.

64   Ibid., 5b–6a.

when anthropological studies undertaken by Wen Yiduo 聞一多 (1899–1946), Gu Jiegang 顧頡剛 (1893–1980), and Marcel Granet linked the *Odes* to origins in ancient folksong and rural performance.[65]

For Chen, seeing the *Odes* as records of spontaneous, ordinary action is part of how they provoke the cultivation of extraordinary moral and aesthetic sublimity. Comprehending the moral potential of the *Odes* lies in grasping the emotional gravitas these scenes evoke, resulting in an authentic (because spontaneous) emotional response; but this would be impossible without the rhymes that make the poems "easy to sing and chant, so they can be recited and sighed out."[66] Believing, to the contrary, that the ancients intended "harmonized" near-rhymes in the diverse situations like those described in the *Odes* would be to view classic texts as products of deliberate and reflective effort (what Chen dismissively refers to in the passage above as "diligent emulation of false rhymes" 屑屑模擬若後世吟詩者之限韻邪)[67] flowing from a unified ancient source, "taking the [pronunciations] from one location to apply everywhere or [those of] one time period to apply for a thousand years past" 以一地概四方，以一時概千古.[68] To Chen, this would be to fundamentally misunderstand what it was that the texts recorded: namely, a huge range of practices and situations connected in specific ways to their own time and place. The very contexts that prompted the spontaneous responses recorded in each ode, and which thereby shaped their aesthetic value, belie attempts to force their meanings or their pronunciations into continuity with the present.

The Influence of the Late Ming Intellectual World

Chen is of course not unique in reading the *Odes* as a source of moral insight, or as a notable record of spontaneous emotional expression. The general conversation about poetics in the Ming was notably focused on issues of authentic emotional expression and their relation to moral cultivation, in which the *Odes* often featured as a paradigmatic example for a diverse range of perspectives.[69]

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65   Wen Yiduo 聞一多, *Gudian xinyi* 古典新義 (Beijing: Guji chubanshe, 1956); Laurence A. Schneider, *Ku Chieh-Kang and China's New History* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1971), 174–81.

66   Chen, "Mao Shi guyin kao zixu," 4a.

67   Ibid., 3b. The passage, quoted in full above, reads "is there ever time to diligently emulate the false rhymes of those who read the *Odes* in later ages?" 何暇屑屑模擬若後世吟詩者之限韻邪.

68   Chen, "Du *Shi* zhuoyan," 11a.

69   Adam Schorr, "The Trap of Words: Political Power, Cultural Authority, and Language

These conversations increasingly encouraged a reading of the *Odes* as an object of literary criticism, and thus as subject to corruption and interpolation as any other text.[70] Chen and Jiao likely drew on some of this work in historicizing the prosody and phonology of the *Odes*, but importantly for both, it was the sublimity of the text itself that motivated its evidential scrutiny. The distinctive connection drawn in the *Investigations* between the particularities of everyday experience and the possibilities of higher moral purpose are perhaps best explained in relation to *xinxue* commitments—in particular, those associated with Wang Yangming's doctrine of the unity of knowledge and action (*zhi xing heyi* 知行合一). Although often interpreted as privileging the lived experience of virtue over (mere) engagement with the Classics, Wang's doctrine also made possible new ways of reading texts as repositories of embodied moral practice. Understanding these possibilities will illuminate Chen's and Jiao's particular approach to the *Odes* and connect *xinxue* commitments to specific methodologies of textual study that are irreducible either to later Qing *kaozheng* or earlier *lixue* approaches.

In his conversations with students, Wang Yangming utilized a number of analogies to explain how the unity of knowledge and action works: "Only after one has experienced pain can one know pain. The same is true of cold or hunger. How can knowledge and action be separated?" 又如知痛，必已自痛了，方知痛。知寒，必已自寒了。知饑，必已自磯了。知行如何分得開.[71] His doctrine implies that "real" moral knowledge is always experiential knowledge, which puts into practice the true insights of our "innate good-knowing" (*liangzhi* 良知) found in our heart-mind (*xin* 心).[72] Yet Wang's frequent analogies to bad odors and pain do not directly demonstrate the validity of this doctrine; they seem to point instead to a more fundamental, perhaps logically prior feature of moral knowledge or virtue in general: its embodiment. We might say that to be embodied means that knowledge about morality is dependent on, and perhaps for Wang even constituted by, features of the physical self beyond

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Debates in Ming Dynasty China" (Ph.D. diss., Univ. of California, Los Angeles, 1994); Chang Woei Ong, *Li Mengyang, the North-South Divide, and Literati Learning in Ming China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Asia Center, 2016).

70   Rusk, *Critics and Commentators*, chapter 5.

71   Wing-tsit Chan, *Instructions for Practical Living and Other Neo-Confucian Writings by Wang Yangming* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1963), #5. See also Wing-Tsit Chan 陳榮捷, ed., *Wang Yangming Chuanxi lu xiangzhu jiping* 王陽明傳習錄詳註集平 (Taipei: Xuesheng shuju, 1983). The citations here to Wang's *Instructions* are by section number, which is the same in both the Chinese edition and Chan's English translation.

72   Philip J. Ivanhoe, *Ethics in the Confucian Tradition: The Thought of Mengzi and Wang Yangming* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2002), 78.

the heart-mind, as that self interacts with its material and intellectual environments.[73] The experience of a bad odor yields knowledge of that odor in itself, and it does this automatically. Analogously, reaction to the environment by someone suitably cultivated (that is, possessing a heart-mind that has not been obscured by desires or selfishness), constitutes knowledge about the true and proper reaction to that environment.[74] But how was one to know if one's reactions were those of a suitably cultivated or "enlightened" self, and thus sincere and authentic demonstrations of the unity of knowledge and action?

Responding to these questions led late Ming thinkers, including some of Wang's most putatively "radical" followers, toward investigation of the more practical kinds of lived experiences that constituted virtue, or at least could promise conditions for unobfuscated moral insight. The most well-known of these was Li Zhi's plea to cultivate one's "childlike heart-mind" (*tongxin* 童心), which in Li's words "is the original heart-mind at the very beginning of first thought" 最初一念之本心, "free from all falsehood and entirely genuine" 絕假純真.[75] Jiao, who managed to sustain a friendship with the fractious Li Zhi longer than anyone else, associated these conditions for moral insight with the everyday and the common. Jiao labelled this "the everyday practices of the common people" 百姓日用—an allusion to the *xici* 繫辭 commentary of the *Yijing*. In the commentary, the phrase is used to contrast common ignorance to sagely wisdom. But Jiao adopts a more egalitarian reading of this phrase from Wang Gen 王艮 (1483–1541), the son of a salt-merchant whose rejection of commentarial convention marked the beginning of a distinct Taizhou school of moral enquiry.[76] According to Jiao, Wang Gen sought a kind of "broadly shared virtue" (*tong de* 同德) which he identified with "what the common people, in their daily use, consider to be broadly shared virtue" 同乎百姓日用這為同德.[77] Like the "child-like heart-mind," "the everyday practices of the common

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73   I am drawing on a heavily modified definition of embodiment provided in Robert A. Wilson and Lucia Foglia, "Embodied Cognition" (https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/embodied-cognition/), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2017 edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta, last accessed 26 August 2023.

74   These requirements for cultivation are discussed in Wang, *Instructions*, "Inquiry on the Great Learning," 271–80; see *Wang Wencheng gong quanshu* 王文成公全書 (Shanghai: Zhonghua tushuguan yingyin, 1913), vol. 26, 1b–5a.

75   Li Zhi, "Explanation of the Childlike Heart-Mind," in *A Book to Burn and a Book to Keep (Hidden): Selected Writings*, ed. Rebecca Handler-Spitz et al. (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 2016), 107.

76   Ching and Fang, *The Records of Ming Scholars*, 165, 173; Wang's biography can be found in *Ming ru xue'an*, 32.6a–7b.

77   Jiao, "Zhi tan," 228.

people" turned on the idea that moral knowledge could be found in a stripped-down, unreflective, more basic state beyond elite convention. For Jiao Hong as for Wang Gen, what ordinary people did in their everyday lives reflected the same moral care shown by the sages; observation of one could lead to the moral heights of the other.[78]

Wang Gen was known for his elevation of non-elite culture as a source of moral health, and in the records left of his recorded conversations (*yulu* 語錄) "the everyday practices of the common people" is frequently identified with sageliness.[79] In Jiao's case, his citation of Wang Gen alludes to his recognition, present in essays such as "On Branches" ("Zhi tan" 支談) and throughout his work, that the unified insight of the heart-mind could be found everywhere, including in putatively foreign traditions such as Buddhism.[80] Neither Wang Gen nor Jiao Hong felt compelled to engage in the kind of ethnographic documentation of non-elite daily life that we might see as following from their claims to value such experience. Yet their elevation of "the everyday practices of the common people" to a position of moral worth opened space for talking about everyday experience as a site of meaningful moral action and a source of ethical insight and inspiration.

Their view here is related to a broader shift taking place in literary production, which saw elite writing conventions as stifling the innate creativity suitable for the present age. Many of Wang's followers turned away from the study of the Classics toward other sites of moral understanding, including *xiaoshuo* 小說 novels and drama, which were seen to provide more space for the authentic expression of their subjective "spirit" (*yiqi* 意氣) and "emotions" (*qing* 情).[81] David Nivison links this literary movement to Wang Yangming's view of action and its distrust of the capacity of words to sufficiently convey the truth of the Way. As Nivison argues, "epistemology and ethics after Wang Yang-ming [become] aesthetic: knowledge is personal experience; 'virtue' is closely associated with states of feeling."[82]

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78   Ibid., 232; for discussion of the phrase "the everyday practices of the common people" in this context, see Justin Tiwald, "Song-Ming Neo-Confucianism" (https://plato.stanford .edu/entries/song-ming-confucianism/), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2020 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta, last accessed 26 August 2023.

79   For example, *juan* 卷 3 of his *yulu*; see Yuan Chengye 袁承業, *Wang Xinzhai xiansheng yiji* 王心齋先生遺集 (Shanghai: Guocui xuebao guan, 1912).

80   "Zhi tan," in *Jiaoshi bicheng xuji* 焦氏筆乘續集 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1986), 227–52.

81   Maram Epstein, *Competing Discourses: Orthodoxy, Authenticity, and Engendered Meanings in Late Imperial Chinese Fiction* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Asia Center, 2001), 74.

82   David S. Nivison, "The Problem of 'Knowledge' and 'Action' in Chinese Thought Since

Nivison's conclusion about the aesthetic turn in late imperial China seems to give further evidence for the view that Wang's philosophy left little room for the pursuit of "the investigation of things" (whether texts, people, or the natural world) in any literally empirical sense. If the written word was distrusted as a site of reliable truth, there seems little reason to pursue detailed investigation of such words, least of all in the refined scholarly practices of philology or phonology.[83] But this is not the only possible outcome arising out of Wang's "unity of knowledge and action." The other, relatively neglected, implication of such a view is that, in denying the value of abstract generalizations to the understanding of virtue, Wang effectively encouraged his followers to examine—and indeed to experience for themselves—the concrete and particular situations in which virtue might take shape. These concrete and particular situations might be those most likely to prompt wildly spontaneous (and therefore genuinely "authentic") behavior,[84] or they might be those emulated by contemporary eccentricity—such as Wang Gen's well-known insistence on dressing and travelling in the style of the ancients.[85] But they also included study of such situations in textual records such as the Classics.[86] Wang himself argued, in striking agreement with the *kaozheng* scholar Zhang Xuecheng 章學誠 (1738–1801) nearly two centuries later, that "events are really principles and principles are really events ... The Five Classics are also history" 事即道，道即事 … 五經亦史.[87]

The relationship between knowledge and action, in other words, leaves open the possibility that the features of this revised view of action (in which virtue was embodied in and responsive to particular contexts, manifest in concrete practice, and implicated in affective responses that can promote moral insight) had already left their marks on the textual tradition. Accordingly, for adherents of *xinxue*, including Jiao Hong, attention to textual analysis was driven not

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Wang Yang-Ming," in *Studies in Chinese Thought*, ed. Arthur F. Wright (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1953), 112–45, 120.

83   Such a conclusion has led many to identify Li Zhi and other Taizhou school members with a "subjective and nontextual standard for moral knowledge"; see Epstein, *Competing Discourses*, 73.

84   Wai-yee Li, "The Rhetoric of Spontaneity in Late-Ming Literature," *Ming Studies* 35 (1995): 32–52.

85   Ching and Fang, *The Records of Ming Scholars*, 174–75.

86   One example might be the recognition that ancient sound and rhyme could only be mimicked through a specific physical reconfiguration of breath as it moved through the body, as recently documented in Nathan Vedal, *The Culture of Language*, 155, 193.

87   Wang, *Instructions*, #14. For further analysis of Wang's aesthetic sense and its relationship to poetry more broadly, see Zuo Dongling 左東嶺, *Mingdai xinxue yu shixue* 明代心學與詩學 (Beijing: Xueyuan chubanshe, 2002): 43–54.

only by the desire to uncover timeless truths, but also to reveal the contextual specificity of moral practice. Jiao indicated this connection when responding to student queries about why the "meanings and principles" (*yili* 義理) of texts could not be clear simply from reading them in preparation for the civil exams. He argues that the importance of "understanding characters" (*shi zi* 識字)—that is, understanding their etymological aspects—requires "experience" beyond knowing how to read and pronounce them.[88] Texts, in other words, conveyed "experience" beyond the words on the page, which required particular kinds of text-critical techniques before true understanding could be reached.[89] The discoveries that emerge from textual analysis under these conditions are not *a*historical so much as *trans*historical—they promise moral insight not through the expression of some transcendental, universal truth, so much as they provoke, and themselves bear witness to, the kinds of aesthetic and emotional experiences that generate moral capacity in their readers.

It is this possibility that is here pursued by Chen Di, and to a lesser extent Jiao Hong, in their investigation of ancient pronunciation in the *Mao Odes*. What I above called Chen's "ethnographic sensibility" for viewing the exemplary yet quotidian episodes found in the *Odes* can be linked to these conversations about moral potential found in the emotional experience of authentic, everyday interaction. Their literalness anchors their capacity for moral cultivation, by showcasing the "details" of their sublime emotional responses to diverse situations. This literal realism also, of course, makes possible Chen's use of them as phonological evidence. The individual odes and their situations both model, and in their particularity help to evoke, the kinds of emotional responses that certain late Ming thinkers associated with authentic, spontaneous, and therefore morally praiseworthy action. At the same time, attention to the particularity and spontaneity of these situations also enables their transformation into empirical evidence about speech and language, which, when organized into categories of "primary evidence" and "corollary evidence," yields phonological knowledge.

A useful contrast might be drawn between Chen's approach and that of other late Ming thinkers who, as Nathan Vedal has recently shown, were also making significant albeit overlooked advances in phonology. Vedal argues that scholars such as Ge Zhongxuan 葛中選 (1577–1636), Wu Jishi 吳繼仕 (fl. 1579–1611), Chen Jinmo 陳藎謨 (ca. 1600–1692), and Fang Yizhi 方以智 (1611–1671) began

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88   "Du shu bu shi zi" 讀書不識字, in *Jiaoshi bicheng*, 113.

89   Tina Lu links these connections between text and experience to shifts in late Ming literary practices that extend beyond the scope of Yangming philosophy in "If Not Philosophy, What Is *Xinxue*?"

exploring representations of sound divorced from Chinese characters, largely on the basis of cosmological principles pioneered by Shao Yong 邵勇 (1012–1077), a germinal figure of Song Neo-Confucianism.[90] Although Shao's own ideas sought to advance the cosmological basis for a Neo-Confucian world-view that also included moral norms, Vedal shows that for these late Ming phonologists the aims were often analytic rather than prescriptive: cosmological principles enabled them to claim comprehensive, impartial, and ultimately universal standards for language independent of any particular script, topolect, or historical period. In a notable contrast with Chen Di, Wu Jishi declares, "The study of sounds shares an origin that traverses the ages. Although past and present differ, sounds have not changed. The *qi* of each region from all directions does not fundamentally differ" 夫音聲之學，萬世同原，古今雖殊，音聲不異，四方各域，氣元不殊.[91] Similar theories underlie the poetics of the archaist school (*fugu pai* 復古派), whose key figures including Li Mengyang 李夢陽 (1473–1529) embraced poetry as a vehicle of authentic self-expression but insisted that ultimately "the correct poetic forms were nothing but the products of nature."[92] These forms reflected consistent rules that united both the odes of the ancients as well as the poetry of latter-day commoners.[93]

By drawing evidence from empirical discrepancies of pronunciation across time and space, and emphasizing the moral possibilities that awaited readers who likewise engaged the *Odes* in relation to their own situation, Chen rejects the abstract idealism of scholars such as Wu Jishi or Ge Zhongxuan—both of whom criticized Chen Di for his "subjectivism" (*ziwo zuo* 自我作).[94] Insofar as Chen's methodology draws inferences about pronunciation on the basis of existing textual evidence, rather than seeking confirmation in cosmological principles assumed to furnish a continuous truth that spans time, space, and fields of knowledge, his work bears some similarity to that of later *kaozheng* scholars.[95] Like those scholars, Chen sees time and location as the independent variables that could sufficiently and systematically explain when pronunciations would be identical, or not, for the same character in different texts. Ultimately, however, Chen's methods were grounded in different premises than this later *kaozheng* scholarship and produced different results.

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90   Nathan Vedal, "New Scripts for All Sounds: Cosmology and Universal Phonetic Notation Systems in Late Imperial China," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 78 (2018): 1–46.

91   Ibid., 26.

92   Ong, *Li Mengyang*, 320; further discussion on 250–51.

93   See Adam Schorr, "Trap of Words," 199.

94   Vedal, "New Scripts for All Sounds," 23.

95   See the discussion of these approaches in Vedal, *The Culture of Language*, 170–73.

The late-Ming emphasis on authentic and spontaneous engagement, trumpeted by Jiao's friend Li Zhi and arguably a key marker of the Taizhou school, helps Chen to view the *Odes* and other early texts as repositories of potential evidence of ancient sound. He refuses the idea that engagement with classic texts must adhere to their historical accuracy or risk anachronism in interpreting their moral relevance for the present; likewise he rejects the possibility that this moral relevance turns on some universal cosmology that investigation of the Classics can more fully reveal. In the next section, I explain how Chen's commitment to embodied experience as necessary for moral understanding produces an alternative view of how the past and present might relate to each other.

The Moral Value of Historical Difference

Chen's approach to the *Odes* turns on a middle ground of hermeneutical possibility, little recognized within studies of the Chinese textual tradition, which embraces historical particularity as a mark of the moral potential of classic texts. It offers an important counter-point to arguments that reduce Song and Ming hermeneutical approaches to viewing "the classical tradition as subservient to their own claims."[96] One result of this subservience, according to Ori Sela, was the collapse of the present into the past: "antiquity and the present became one in the minds of *daoxue* and *xinxue* scholars."[97] In contrast, Chen's position suggests how *xinxue* offers a range of more complex possibilities. Notably, Chen's engagement with the text remains always one of seeking moral cultivation or instruction; in contrast to *kaozheng* scholars of the eighteenth century, such as Duan Yucai 段玉裁 (1735–1815), he does not pursue phonological analysis for its own sake.[98] At the same time, however, the moral motivation behind Chen's research does not turn on an identity between ancient and contemporary value, assumed by a wide range of thinkers for a variety of distinct reasons—from Zhu Xi in the Song to Wu Jishi and other cosmological idealists in the Ming, to Chen's successor Gu Yanwu in the Qing. Chen maintains estrangement from the past without for that reason denying its validity in the present. Drawing out these relationships in more detail can explain how Chen's view of the *Odes* is not fully reducible either to earlier Song or to later Qing

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96   Ori Sela, *China's Philological Turn*, 95.

97   Ibid.

98   For Duan as a figure in the "rigorous discipline" that phonology had become by the mid-eighteenth century, see Elman, *From Philosophy to Philology*, 258.

approaches—adding to our understanding of how *xinxue* contributed to the emergence of forms of textual analysis typically seen at odds with it.

Consider Zhu Xi's famous interpretation of the *Odes*, which shares with Chen an emphasis on the direct accessibility of the text for the purposes of cultivating an appropriate emotional response that can aid moral development. As part of cultivating this appropriate emotional response, Zhu like Chen emphasizes the broader performative contexts in which historically the *Odes* took shape. Zhu decries the use of music that in his time accompanied *Odes* lyrics as merely "contemporary" (*jin* 今), whose entanglements with "barbarian music" (*huyue* 胡樂) made ancient accompaniments to the *Odes* impossible to recover.[99] As he argues in the *Zhuzi yulei* 朱子語類, "when you hear them, [such accompaniments] are not different from popular music (*suyue* 俗樂) and one does not know how the ancient music (*guyue* 古樂) sounded" 然聽之與俗樂無異，不知古樂如何.[100]

Zhu's conflation here of "barbarian," "popular" (or more precisely, "folk") and "contemporary" music establishes a clear hierarchy of value: between the past as ancient, elite, and culturally Chinese, on the one hand; and the present constituted by elements that were seen as foreign—in terms of both culture and class—to the literati of the Song dynasty, on the other. By implication, the unfolding of history to this point in time represents for Zhu Xi a process of contamination, in which the purity of the ancient becomes ever more debauched by the vulgarity of the present. For Zhu Xi, of course, there is something universal and timeless about the ancient, which is the whole point of accurately capturing the musical accompaniments to the *Odes* to begin with. To include in that universalism any mark of barbarism—of cultural otherness—would be to inhibit its ability to speak across time.

Here, Chen offers a strong contrast to Zhu. For Chen, past and present are different in a qualitative way. That is, their differences are not due to a degeneration from past to present, or an inability to reproduce the ideals of the classical past in the present, but rather due to their irreducible difference created by inevitable (and often systematic) changes over time and space. In the case of the *Odes*, Chen effectively argues that contemporary readers using harmonizing rhymes, or posing a continuity of principles between past and present, were not conforming to the ideals of antiquity but rather the opposite. They were committing an anachronism with serious consequences for how the *Odes* could enable our moral cultivation in the present:

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99   Mittag, "Change in Shijing Exegesis," 209.
100   *Zhuzi yulei* 朱子語類, 92.2347; cited and translated in ibid.

In writing contemporary poetry, it is perfectly fine to not know ancient rhyme. But when reading ancient poetry, can ancient rhymes really not be examined? Alas! [It is sometimes said,] "Past and present have the same ideas, past and present have the same sounds. We can use our meaning (*yi* 意) to trace back the meaning of the ancients: their principle (*li* 理) is not that far apart [from our own]. We can use our sounds to formulate the sounds of the ancients: their rhyme is not that far apart [from our own]." The danger here lies in privileging the present and negating the past, grasping the characters but muddling the pronunciations.

蓋爲今之詩，古韻可不用也。讀古之詩，古韻可不察乎。嗟夫。古今一意，古今一聲，以吾之意而逆古人之意，其理不遠也；以吾之聲而調古人之聲，其韻不遠也。患在是今非古，執字泥音。[101]

Insofar as past and present were different, there is not a continuity of value or any principles linking them. This does not mean that Chen thinks we cannot understand the ancients; to the contrary, we must understand them on their own terms before we can experience the *Odes* in their aesthetic and embodied aspect. Only utilizing the proper rhymes used by the ancients would move our emotions (*qing*) in the right way, producing an authentic experience of connection with them.[102]

Chen's approach reflects a Taizhou belief that authenticity turned on recognizing the difference between ourselves in the present and the ancients of the past. As the poet Yuan Hongdao 袁宏道 (1568–1610) noted, "In general, things are prized when they are authentic. If I am to be authentic, then my face cannot be the same as your face, and how much less the face of some man of antiquity!" 大抵物真則貴，真則我面不能同君面，而況古人之面貌乎.[103] Although this could lead scholars to go to absurd lengths to demonstrate the authentic spontaneity of their actions, it did encourage awareness of change

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101   Chen, "Mao Shi guyin kao zixu," 4a–b.

102   For more on the "cult of *qing*" in the Ming period, see Martin W. Huang, "Sentiments of Desire: Thoughts on the Cult of Qing in Ming-Qing Literature," *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews (CLEAR)* 20 (1998): 153–84.

103   Yuan Hongdao, "Qiu Zhangru" 丘張孺, in *Yuan Zhonglang chidu quangao* 袁中郎尺牘全稿 (Shanghai: Zhongyang shudian, 1935), 32, trans. in Jonathan Chaves, *Pilgrim of the Clouds: Poems and Essays by Yüan Hung-Tao and His Brothers* (Buffalo: White Pine Press, 2005), 18; see further Zuo Dongling, *Li Zhi yu wan Ming wenxue sixiang* 李贄與晚明文學思想 (Tianjin: Tianjin renmin chubanshe, 1997), 248. Their relationship was more "intersectional," in Zuo Dongling's words, than one of simple influence; Zuo argues (262) it was a key factor in the rapid spread of Li's ideas in the broader literary world.

over time.[104] As Li Zhi explains when extolling the merits of the eight-legged essay, every era was seen to have a form of writing appropriate to it; the values or tastes of one era could not be held to be normative for any other.[105] For writers and artists in the late Ming, including Yuan and his Gong'an 公安 literary school, this approach liberated them from the formal strictures of past genres and styles, connecting them more closely to the emotion (*qing*) that ensured authentic personal expression. But for Chen, Li, and others, it also entailed a critique of presentism: we cannot use the values or sounds of the present to read the past without risking loss of the very emotional connection we seek. One consequence of Chen's position here is that the differences of the present with the past are no longer seen merely as peripheral to an unchanging Way. Instead, these differences invite the exercise of what Wang Yangming called *gewu* 格物—meaning not "the investigation of things" as defined by Zhu Xi, but rather the concrete actions of doing good in the world.[106] Part of this doing good involves responding appropriately to unprecedented situations, giving rise to "details" or "particularities" (*xiang* 詳) which embody the inexhaustible moral lessons of the Way itself.[107]

For Chen there are direct and non-arbitrary links between the particularities of sound in the past, and the working of sagely virtue across time:

> *Qian* and *kun* wane but do not change—this is the [nature of the] Way. But time and space change and transform—this is [the nature of] sound. So if you are born in Qi, you speak the language of Qi. If you are born in Chu, you speak Chu. Supposing a sage arose in later ages, would they not be reading 服 as 復, 華 as 花, and *qing* 慶 with a falling tone?

> 夫乾坤毀而不易者，道也。時地易而轉移者，聲也。故生齊則登言矣，生楚則楚言矣。使聖人而生于後世，有不讀服爲復，讀華爲花，讀慶當以去聲乎。[108]

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104   Li Wai-yee has called this the "shock effect" taking precedence in such demonstrations; see Li, "The Rhetoric of Spontaneity," 36.

105   Li Zhi, "Shiwen houxu" 時文後序 in Zhang Jianye 張建業, *Li Zhi quanji zhu* 李贄全集注 (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2009) vol. 1, 324–25.

106   Wang, *Instructions,* #318–19.

107   de Bary called this the tendency to "discover the divine in the commonplace," a trait he associates in particular with Wang Gen; see *Self and Society in Ming Thought,* ed. Wm. Theodore de Bary and the Conference on Ming Thought (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1970), 176.

108   Chen, "Du *Shi* zhuoyan," 12a.

Chen argues, in effect, that the tension in the difference between the past and present must be maintained if we are to embody the Way. That is, only an accurate reconstruction of the past, in its particularity, will sufficiently realize sagely lessons for us in the present: we must see the persistent movements of *qian* and *kun*, identified in the *Yijing* as the foundational elements of the universe, within the distinctive and inevitable transformations of time and space. He calls this an example of a lesson from the *Liji* 禮記, which involves "going back to the root and maintaining the old arrangements, without forgetting what they were at first" 此所謂反本脩古，不忘其初者也.[109]

Kaozheng approaches, in contrast, gathered the particularities of the past not to witness the diverse workings of virtue, but often to recover a singular sagely intent behind the words of the text that could cut across the dross of forgeries and distortions in intervening centuries. In the case of the *Odes*, one way that singular intent could be grasped was through allegorical readings that interpreted each of its poems not in their literal senses, but in terms of praise or blame for the actions of rulers or their consorts.[110] These allegorical readings originated in the Han, a development that C.H. Wang links to the historical demise of their musical accompaniment. Stripping down the poems to the principles of propriety that Confucius intended them to embody, attention was directed away from the formality and sensibility of their historical musical performance.[111] The poems became interpreted after that point in terms of "their fixity and in the details and form of their language" rather than in terms of their broader performative contexts.[112] Qing scholars took on this approach with their adoption of Han dynasty materials and scholarship. Not only were Han commentaries seen to be closer to the historical sources of canonical texts, and therefore more valuable,[113] but they also dovetailed with a historical perspective that read the text of the *Odes* as retaining intact the personality and intent of its sagely author(s).[114]

The *kaozheng* emphasis on textuality explains why the key anxiety driving reconstruction of ancient pronunciations is the loss of textual meaning, specif-

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109 Ibid., 12a–b.

110 Bernhard Karlgren, *Glosses on the Book of Odes* (Stockholm: Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, 1964), 71–72.

111 Wang, *The Bell and the Drum*, 6.

112 Van Zoeren, *Poetry and Personality*, 139. Van Zoeren sees the culmination of this hermeneutic in Kong Yingda's 孔穎達 (574–648) work on the *Correct Significance of the Confucian Classics* (*Wujing zhengyi* 五經正義), begun in 638.

113 Joseph R. Allen, "Postface: A Literary History of the *Shi Jing*," in *The Book of Songs*, trans. Arthur Waley (New York: Grove Press, 1996), 357.

114 Karlgren, *Glosses*, 74; Van Zoeren, *Poetry and Personality*, 108.

ically related to the construction of characters. Elman notes that by the seventeenth century it was generally recognized that the meaning of a character was decisively related to its phonetic components, and it was along this line that later Qing analysis of the rhymes of the *Odes*, by Jiang Yong 江永 (1681–1762) and others, developed.[115] Many Qing scholars (indeed, most Chinese commentators on the classics in general) valued the classics for their moral instruction, but already by the sixteenth century trends of scholarship toward knowledge for its own sake became prevalent.[116] By the eighteenth century, when Jiang Yong advanced a historicist view of ancient language in his own study of the rhymes of the *Odes*, the goals of scholarly effort were no longer sagehood and speculative philosophy but the rigorous accumulation and examination of evidence.[117] This does not imply that for *kaozheng* scholars there was ever an absolute severing of the connection between history and value, or that the connection was not articulated in diverse ways.[118] One of the most prominent Qing studies of the phonology of the *Odes* is Gu Yanwu's *Five Books on Phonology* published in 1667, which explicitly aligns itself as a successor to Chen Di's *Investigations*. Writing more than a century before Jiang, Gu grounds his purely phonological concerns in the moral possibilities of the classics.[119] But his way of linking phonology to a moral hermeneutical reading of the *Odes* turns on an identity between past and present values not found in Chen's work. Gu characterizes the formation of sound, and its subsequent formation into rhymed poetry, as the work of Heaven rather than the creation of humans—echoing the cosmological principles that late Ming phonologists like Wu Jishi and Ge Zhongxuan believed could produce a universalist theory of sound without reference to empirical observation of human usage. He goes on to attribute the differences between ancient and contemporary pronunciation not (as Chen

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115　Elman, *From Philosophy to Philology*, 256–57.

116　As argued in Peter K. Bol, "Looking to Wang Shizhen: Hu Yinglin (1551–1602) and Late-Ming Alternatives to Neo-Confucian Learning," *Ming Studies* (2006): 99–137; and Nathan Vedal, "From Tradition to Community: The Rise of Contemporary Knowledge in Late Imperial China," *Journal of Asian Studies* 79 (2020): 77–101.

117　Elman, *From Philosophy to Philology*, 258.

118　As Michael Quirin puts it, "instead of undermining the Confucian creed, historical studies [such as *kaozheng*] tended to stabilize and confirm it by constantly re-working the tradition and freeing it from internal inconsistencies and interpolations from the outside"; see his "Scholarship, Value, Method, and Hermeneutics in *Kaozheng*: Some Reflections on Cui Shu (1740–1816) and the Confucian Classics," *History and Theory* 35.4 (1996): 47.

119　Notably, he was criticized for putting normative statecraft concerns ahead of his philological scholarship by the editors of the *Siku quanshu zongmu*; see Thomas Bartlett, "Phonology as Statecraft in Gu Yanwu's Thought," in *The Scholar's Mind: Essays in Honor of Frederick W. Mote*, ed. E. Perry Link (Hong Kong: The Chinese Univ. Press, 2014), 185.

does) to an inevitable consequence of human activity, but to a corruption in the transmission of ancient models and writing. At the end of his preface, he expresses hope that a sage will arise who can "cause today's pronunciations to be restored to the pure ancient ones" 今日之音而還之淳古者.[120] In fact, in a move again at odds with Chen Di's argument, Gu held that ancient pronunciations since before the Western Zhou were uniform, justifying his interest in the *Odes* as a definitive guide for ancient sound: "The pronunciation of the 305 poems of the *Odes* … despite their wide provenance from fifteen [different] states and their longevity of more than several thousand years, have never once differed [from each other]" 詩三百五篇 … 以十五國之遠，千數百年之久，而其音未嘗有異.[121]

Despite his explicit dismissal of Song-Ming learning as too steeped in Buddhist thought and speculation about "the mind" (*xin* 心) and "the nature" (*xing* 性), then, Gu nevertheless echoes Zhu Xi in his relationship to the past. His argument about phonology, as Bartlett has pointed out, is tied intimately to his statecraft project: Gu yearns for the uniform, elite speech of the ancients, over the local dialects, vernacular speech, and barbarian languages of his present day which he saw as preventing the emergence of a truly universal worldview in the public interest.[122] His phonological investigations of the *Odes* and other texts turn, then, on seeing in them a universal truth realizable in the present, rather than a repository of particular experience distinct to each time period.

Conclusion

The production of phonological knowledge in late imperial China was motivated by a diverse range of views about the value and meaning found in the past. Rarely conceived by its practitioners as divorced from normative values, phonology took shape amid these contestations about the value of the past and its relationship to the present. The *Investigations of the Ancient Pronunciations of the Mao Odes* occupies a distinctive and influential place in these

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120   Gu, "Xu" 序, in *Yinxue wushu*, 1.2b (http://hdl.handle.net/1885/206043), last accessed 5 September 2023; for discussion of the phonological elements of Gu's reading and its subsequent influence, see David Prager Branner, "On Early Chinese Morphology and Its Intellectual History," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain & Ireland* 13 (2003): 55–56.

121   Gu, "Xu," 1.1a.

122   Bartlett, "Phonology as Statecraft," 200.

conversations. Chen Di's empirical investigation of ancient sound presaged the evidential learning of the Qing in its content, but the project itself drew on currents of *xinxue* thought that many Qing scholars (and latter-day historians) would come to see as unhelpful for, even inimical to, such philological research. For Chen Di, historical recovery of ancient sound mainly focused on the moral and emotive responses the *Odes* make available rather than on uncovering the "real" historical intent of the authors or personalities behind them. Focusing on the potential of classic texts for evoking direct, authentic, and spontaneous emotional responses, Chen also interpreted the textual record as attesting to similar responses in phonologically distinct contexts, giving evidence of the discrepant workings of virtue. The estrangement from the past that enabled the contextualization of sounds and texts for *kaozheng* scholars would entail estrangement from the very emotional impact and moral insight for which Chen and Jiao valued them.

Xinxue commitments, in other words, helped Chen and Jiao to view the textual tradition as a source of a new kind of knowledge. Later readers—both Qing commentators and modern-day historians—focus on Chen's and Jiao's deft use of textual evidence, even as they lament their inability to use such evidence in the service of a broader project of textual criticism.[123] But such readings place anachronistic demands on Chen and Jiao, to answer questions which appeared significant only later. More dangerously, they remain blind to how emotive and moral connections to the *Odes* could motivate and structure pioneering insights into its phonology. Chen and Jiao do not demonstrate any of the tendencies shown by both Zhu Xi and Wang Yangming to uphold present values in the face of historical difference; but nor does their enterprise of historical reconstruction collapse into mere antiquarianism or the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake. Rather, their study of the classics maintained a productive tension between past and present. Such methods could involve not only recovery of timeless sagely intent or universal possibilities expressed in classic texts, but also appreciation of the context and specificity that generated their moral substance. These possibilities limn an overlooked perspective on how and why

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123　E.g., Yu, "Mao Shi guyin kao xu," 4; Wolfgang Behr, "Language Change in Premodern China: Notes on Its Perception and Impact on the Idea of a 'Constant Way,'" in *Historical Truth, Historical Criticism, and Ideology: Chinese Historiography and Historical Culture from a New Comparative Perspective*, ed. Helwig Schmidt-Glintzer et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 38–39; Benjamin Elman, "Review of *Truth, Historical Criticism, and Ideology: Chinese Historiography and Historical Culture from a New Comparative Perspective*," *T'oung Pao* 96 (2010): 233. For a reading of Ming phonology that rejects such anachronistic interpretations, see Vedal, *The Culture of Language*, especially chapter 6.

late imperial Chinese scholars might investigate the textual record and empha-size historical contextualization, in ways related to but distinct from *kaozheng* approaches that would dominate scholarship in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Acknowledgments

Abstract

Chen Di's 1606 masterwork of historical phonology, *Investigations of the Ancient Pro-nunciations of the Mao Odes*, has been identified as foundational for Qing dynasty text-critical scholarship, providing systematic evidence for historical sound change via comparative analysis of the *Odes*' rhyme schemes. I argue, however, that this research was motivated and shaped by Neo-Confucian *xinxue* commitments to embodied moral knowledge, typically seen at odds with later Qing approaches. Both Chen and his Taizhou school collaborator Jiao Hong located the moral substance of a text not in the intention of its sagely authors, but rather in the authentic emotional experiences prompted by its historically specific phonological and narrative features. Although recent scholarship has begun to reveal how *xinxue* fostered philological enquiry to reveal universal sagely truths, less well recognized is how *xinxue* could also motivate investigation of historical contexts—unsettling the division of moral concerns from the production of textual and historical knowledge.

Résumé

L'œuvre maîtresse de Chen Di 陳第 sur la phonologie historique, *Etudes sur les pro-nonciations anciennes des Odes dans la version de Mao* (*Mao Shi guyin kao* 毛詩古音考, 1606), a été identifiée comme fondamentale pour la recherche philologique critique de

la dynastie Qing, fournissant des preuves systématiques de l'évolution historique des sons par le biais d'une analyse comparative des schémas de rimes des Odes. Je soutiens cependant que cette recherche a été motivée et façonnée par les engagements néo-confucéens, *xinxue* 心學, en faveur d'une connaissance morale mise physiquement en pratique, un engagement typiquement perçu comme étant en contradiction avec les approches ultérieures des lettrés des Qing. Chen et son collaborateur de l'école de Tai-zhou, Jiao Hong 焦竑, situent la substance morale d'un texte non pas dans l'intention de ses sages auteurs, mais plutôt dans les expériences émotionnelles authentiques susci-tées par ses caractéristiques phonologiques et narratives historiquement situées. Bien que des études récentes aient commencé à révéler comment le *xinxue* encourageait l'enquête philologique pour révéler des vérités universelles, on sait moins que le *xin-xue* pouvait également motiver des travaux sur les contextes historiques—ce qui remet en question notre dichotomie entre préoccupations morales et production de connais-sances textuelles et historiques.

提要

陳第於1606年完成的歷史音韻學巨著《毛詩古音考》被認為是清代考證學的奠基之作。該書通過對《毛詩》韻律結構的比較分析，為我們提供了關於歷史語音變化的系統性證據。本文認為這項研究的動機和形成實則源自新儒家心學對具象化的道德知識的認同，而我們通常認為這種認同有悖於後來的清代研究方法。陳第和他泰州學派的合作者焦竑都將文本的道德內涵定位於由歷史特定性的音韻及敘事特徵所觸發的真實情感體驗，而非其聖賢作者的意圖。雖然進來的研究已開始逐步揭示心學如何通過促進語文學的研究來揭示普遍性的聖賢真理，目前尚未受到同等重視的是心學如何也能激發歷史背景相關方面的調查，從而打破將道德關切從文本和歷史知識的生產中剝離出來的做法。