

The Expressions of Self in Wang Tao's 王韜 *Manyou Suilu* 漫遊隨錄

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Introduction

The expression of self, closely related to the trend of subjectivism and individualism,¹ is an essential element of research into late Qing (1840–1911) literature as it is always regarded as a distinct feature of pre-modern and modern Chinese writings.² Traditionally in China, it was the “common features and not the uniqueness of an individual” that drew attention,³ until the notion of self expression first assumed great significance among the May Fourth writers.⁴ The idea, however, had begun to develop quite a long time before

¹ Leo Ou-fan Lee, “The Solitary Traveler: Images of the Self in Modern Chinese Literature,” in *Expressions of Self in Chinese Literature*, ed. Robert E. Hegel and Richard C. Hessney (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), p. 283.

² For example, Kirk A Denton, *The Problematic of Self in Modern Chinese Literature* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), chap. 1; Robert E. Hegel, “Introduction: An Exploration of the Chinese Literary Self,” in *Expressions of Self in Chinese Literature*, pp. 3–30.

³ Robert E. Hegel, “Introduction,” p. 6.

⁴ The most typical example is Yu Dafu 郁達夫 (1896–1945) who suggested in a book introducing modern Chinese prose that its most prominent feature is a strong expression of one’s personality, and the effect is that “when reading the works of modern writers, the writer’s affiliation, character, likes and dislikes, thoughts, beliefs and habits are vividly exhibited in front of the readers.” See Yu Dafu, “Introduction,” in *Zhongguo xinwenxue daxi: Sanwen erji* 中國新文學大系：散文二集 (A Collection of Chinese New Literature: Prose, vol. 2) (Shanghai: Shanghai liangyou tushu yinshua gongsi, 1935), p. 5. The original reads, “現代的散文之最大特徵，是每一個作家的每一篇散文裏所表現的個性，比從前的任何散文都來得強。……我們只消把現代作家的散文集一翻，則這作家的世系、性格、嗜好、思想、信仰，以及生活習慣等等，無不活潑地顯現在我們的眼前。” When Yu expresses these opinions, he is contrasting traditional and modern prose, which is why he emphasizes the expression of the self as the most

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the May Fourth period, with Jaroslav Průšek, for example, seeing its emergence in the late Ming.⁵ Starting from the late Qing, drastic changes took place in literature and literary ideas, and this trend became more prevalent.⁶

Concerning traditional Chinese travel writings, Leo Lee considers them lack of a prominent self image of the traveller, stating that “the proper place to begin our examination of the images of the self” should be Liu E’s 劉鷗 (1857–1909) *Lao Can youji* 老殘遊記 (The Travels of Lao Can), which was written between 1904 and 1907.⁷

In fact, travel literature is perhaps the best textual material for researching self expressions, as it is by nature self-reflective. When travelling in an unfamiliar environment, the traveller encounters the material things and cultures of others. Being a traveller is equivalent to being a stranger whose identity is transient and cannot be fully and clearly defined.⁸ This feeling of being a stranger inevitably urges the traveller to compare and contrast his own culture with the other. In the course of this contact, the traveller’s own culture is often used as guidelines to explain his new experiences.⁹ In this way, the traveller will question and reflect continuously on his self identity during

(Note 4—Continued)

important characteristic (ibid., pp. 1–20). Another example can be found in Wendy Larson’s *Women and Writing in Modern China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998) in which she refers to Lu Yin 廬隱 (1899–1934): “In her article ‘Chuangzao de wojian’ [創造的我見] (My views on literary creation), Lu Yin claimed that the essence of art is subjectivity and insisted on the validity of representing individual experience” (p. 124).

⁵ More information can be found in Jaroslav Průšek, *The Lyrical and the Epic: Studies of Modern Chinese Literature*, ed. Leo Ou-fan Lee (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1980), pp. 1–28. There is no definite period referred to as the late Ming, the most common calculation being from 1550 to 1644.

⁶ More details can be found in Guo Yanli 郭延禮, *Zhongguo jindai wenxue fazhan shi* 中國近代文學發展史 (A History of the Development of Modern Chinese Literature) (Jinan: Shandong jiaoyu chubanshe, 1990), pp. 1–58. Regarding the development of prose, see Ren Fangqiu 任訪秋, “Zhongguo jindai sanwen gezhong liupai zuojia zuopin de butong fengmao” 中國近代散文各種流派作家作品的不同風貌 (The Different Styles of Different Prose Writers in Modern China), in *Zhongguo jindai wenxue zhengming* 中國近代文學爭鳴 (The Flourishing Literature in Modern China) (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1989), pp. 68–82.

⁷ Leo Ou-fan Lee, “The Solitary Traveler,” p. 284.

⁸ Eric J. Leed, *The Mind of the Traveler: From Gilgamesh to Global Tourism* (New York: Basic Books, 1991), p. 15.

⁹ Harvey Levenstein, *Seductive Journey: American Tourists in France from Jefferson to the Jazz Age* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

the journey.¹⁰ The greater the distinction between home and the place of travel, the greater the motivation for reflection. In the pre-modern period, the Chinese were rarely interested in travelling overseas;¹¹ as a result, most travel writings deal with travels within China. During the late Qing, however, drastic changes within the country gave rise to an enormous amount of Chinese foreign travel writing.¹² In order to learn from the West and Japan, Chinese intellectuals, envoys, merchants, and students went travelling or studying abroad. Their travel accounts contain not only information about the countries they visited, but also their individual responses to those with distinct customs and traditions from China. Using the culture of the other as a mirror, travellers were able to reflect on their own cultural traditions and self identity both as an individual and as a Chinese.

In this paper, I propose to examine the question of self expression within travel writings in Wang Tao's *Manyou suilu* (Jottings of My Roamings),¹³ published in 1898. One of the earliest intellectual foreign travel accounts about the West, it appears to be a typical example of the prominence of self image in travel writings. The expression of self in Wang's work is so strong that the book even has the flavour of an autobiography.

¹⁰ Kwok Siu Tong (Guo Shaotang) 郭少棠 has analysed how travelling can arouse reflections on self identity. For more information see Kwok, *Lixing: Kua wenhua xiangxiang* 旅行：跨文化想像 (Travels: A Cross-Cultural Imagination) (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2005), pp. 74–76.

¹¹ Emma Jinhua Teng suggests a reason why Chinese travellers displayed so little interest in foreign lands. The travellers mentioned in her book were only interested in travelling to those areas that were under Chinese control. See Teng, *Taiwan's Imagined Geography: Chinese Colonial Travel Writing and Pictures, 1683–1895* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2004).

¹² Most of these accounts are recorded in Wang Xiqi's 王錫祺 (1855–1913) *Xiaofanghu zhai yudi congchao* 小方壺齋輿地叢鈔, vol. 11. During the 1980s, Zhong Shuhe 鍾叔河 edited and compiled 47 of these accounts into the *Zouxiang shijie congshu* 走向世界叢書, published by Hunan renmin chubanshe (Changsha, Hunan).

¹³ Ian Chapman translated the title of the book as *Jottings of Carefree Travels*. See Ian Chapman, "Jottings of Carefree Travels," *Renditions* 53 and 54 (Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2000), pp. 164–73. However, "carefree" suggests the meaning of pleasure and being free from worries, which may not match with what can be deduced from the book. Although Wang was proud of and felt happy about his travels, in between the lines, his grief permeated the book (as will be discussed in this paper). Therefore I do not use Chapman's translation. *Man* 漫 has the meaning of being carefree, but when associated with *you* 遊, it can also mean a boundless roaming as the expression 汗漫之遊 suggested. In the Preface of the book, Wang emphasized the long distances he travelled in the West and Japan, which were in line with the title of the book. Thus, I translate the title as *Jottings of My Roamings*.

I will first introduce relevant background information on the author Wang Tao and the *Jottings of My Roamings* to provide the context for an understanding of the book. Thereafter, textual analysis will show how the traveller himself plays the most important role in the book.

The Author Wang Tao and the *Manyou Suilu*

Wang Tao (1828–1897), initially given the name Libin 利賓, was one of the most outstanding intellectuals of the late Qing, who showed great interest in modern Western learning. After travelling to Europe, spending the longest duration in Britain, he left a travel account: *Jottings of My Roamings*.

Wang was born on 10 November 1828 in Fuli 甬里, a small village in Jiangsu province. At that time, the Qing dynasty had already passed its pinnacle. During Emperor Jiaqing's 嘉慶 reign (1796–1820), the country suffered serious political, military and social problems.¹⁴ These became more apparent as time went by, although there was little change in the way of life in Jiangsu.¹⁵ Wang was raised in a gentry family and his ancestors belonged to the élite class. Like all other young men from such a family background, Wang's ultimate ambition was to be successful in the civil service examinations. However, Wang only passed the first stage of the exam and as a result of his failures during the later stages, was unable to pursue a political career by that means. This had a life-long impact on Wang Tao and can be seen in his writings, most obviously in the travel account which will be discussed.

In 1847, when Wang went to Shanghai to visit his father, he was greatly impressed by the Western influences in the city. Two years later, because of a serious flood, Wang experienced difficulty earning a living in his hometown, and after being invited by Henry Walter Medhurst (1796–1857), decided to work for the London Missionary Society press.¹⁶ Wang felt very depressed when working in Shanghai because at the time people despised those who worked for foreigners.¹⁷

¹⁴ See Immanuel C. Y. Hsu, *The Rise of Modern China* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1983), pp. 123–30.

¹⁵ Henry McAleavy, *Wang T'ao (1828-?1890): The Life and Writings of a Displaced Person* (London: China Society, 1953), p. 1.

¹⁶ Henry Walter Medhurst, a native of London, was sent by the London Missionary Society to Malacca in 1816. In 1843 he went to Shanghai, where he became the city's first missionary. He established the Mohai shuguan 墨海書館 (London Missionary Society press) in Shanghai, translating the Bible for preaching purposes.

¹⁷ Henry McAleavy, p. 8.

The year 1862 was the turning point in Wang's life. In his preface to the *Jottings of My Roamings*, Wang wrote, "all of a sudden, there were rumours about me" regarding an event that could have resulted in his execution.¹⁸ At that time, the Taiping Rebellion that had started in the 1850s was about to end. Although the strength of the Taiping forces was waning, the court army was still struggling to defeat them. On account of the rebellion, large parts of Jiangsu were in ruins and the only safe place was Shanghai, a treaty port controlled by foreigners. Wang was so concerned with the rebellion that he wrote several memoranda to Qing officials suggesting plans for fighting back against the rebels.

However, in 1862, a memorandum signed by Huang Wan 黃畹 regarding military strategies to capture Shanghai against the Qing army was discovered after a battle in Wangjia si 王家寺 in Qibao 七寶 prefecture. When the document fell into the hands of Qing officials it was immediately judged to be Wang's work since its style looked very similar to that of his previous memoranda. Furthermore, the character *Wan* as well as the first character of Wang's courtesy name Lanqing 蘭卿 both appeared in *Chuci* 楚辭 (The Songs of Chu), as metaphors for virtuous people.¹⁹ Thus, the court ordered the arrest of Wang. When Wang heard the news he went to the British Consul for help. The Consul, Walter Medhurst, who happened to be Henry Medhurst's son, hid Wang in the consulate and in 1863 arranged for him to flee to Hong Kong.²⁰ Whether Wang was really the author is still uncertain. Although most scholars believe that Wang could have written it, they have found it hard to explain his intentions.²¹ Nevertheless, the significance of this event in the context of this paper is that Wang went into exile from then on, which gave him more opportunities to explore the Western world.

¹⁸ Wang Tao, *Jottings of My Roamings*, ed. Zhong Shuhe (Changsha: Hunan renmin chubanshe, 1982), p. 30. The original reads, "中間以蜚語之猝來。"

¹⁹ More details concerning the discussion of the authorship of the memorandum can be found in Lee Chi-fang, "Wang T'ao (1828-1897): His Life, Thought, Scholarship, and Literary Achievement" (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin, 1973), pp. 73-90; Zhang Zhichun 張志春, *Wang Tao nianpu* 王韜年譜 (Chronicle of Wang Tao) (Shijiazhuang: Hebei jiaoyu chubanshe, 1994), pp. 55-62.

²⁰ Natasha Vittinghoff suggested that the Qing court's harsh policy towards Wang Tao was due to the fact that he sought help from the British Embassy, rather than his memorandum to the Taipings. See Vittinghoff, "Why did Wang Tao go to Hong Kong? Some Preliminary Observations from the Unpublished Documents in the Public Records Office, London," *Contemporary Historical Review* 1, no. 3 (November 1998), pp. 60-62.

²¹ Lee Chi-fang, p. 92; Paul A. Cohen, *Between Tradition and Modernity: Wang T'ao and Reform in Late Ch'ing China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974), pp. 50-53; Henry McAleavy, pp. 14-16.

After he arrived in Hong Kong, Wang changed his given name to Tao 韜 and adopted the courtesy name Ziqian 子潛, as well as various sobriquets, such as Zhongtao 仲弢 and Tiannan Dunsou 天南邈叟 (The Old Recluse of the South), all of which contain a meaning of hiding. During his stay in Hong Kong, Wang worked for James Legge (1815–1897).²²

In 1867, when Legge went back to Scotland, he invited Wang to join him. Wang eventually headed off that winter. According to the *Jottings of My Roamings*, after embarking from Hong Kong, he passed through Southeast Asia, India, and Africa before arriving in Italy. He then went by train and travelled around Italy and France before crossing the English Channel to Britain. After staying in England for a few days, he went to Scotland, accompanied by Legge. From 1868 to 1870, he stayed in Dollar and travelled around the cities and villages of Scotland. He returned to Hong Kong in 1870.

The itinerary mentioned above is mostly covered by the *Jottings of My Roamings*, especially Wang's stay in Europe and Scotland, and is also similarly described in Wang's autobiography, "Taoyuan Laomin zizhuan" 弢園老民自傳 (The Autobiography of the Old Man of Taoyuan).²³

The exact dates that Wang Tao started and finished writing the book are unknown. However, the earliest draft of the *Manyou suilu* was not completed until 1870, just before he left Scotland, and the final version was finished some time between 1887 and 1889.²⁴

²² James Legge, a native of Huntly, became headmaster of the Anglo-Chinese College of Hong Kong in 1843. He started translating the Chinese Classics from 1841 and finished by 1870 with the help of Wang Tao. From 1876 to 1897, Legge was appointed professor of Sinology at Oxford University and his *Sacred Books of China* was published from 1879 to 1891. Besides translation works, Legge also wrote about Confucius, Mencius and Chinese religions. For a biographical study, see Wong Man Kong (Huang Wenjiang) 黃文江, *James Legge: A Pioneer at Crossroads of East and West* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Educational Publishing Co., 1996).

²³ Wang Tao, "The Autobiography of the Old Man of Taoyuan," in Wang, *Taoyuan wen xinbian* 弢園文新編 (Newly Edited Essays of Wang Tao) (Beijing: Xinhua shudian, 1998), pp. 367–72.

²⁴ In 1870, back in Hong Kong, Wang Tao wrote a letter to Ding Richang 丁日昌 (1823–1882), governor of Jiangsu, on behalf of Huang Sheng 黃勝, i.e. Wong Shing (1825–1902), concerning the submission of *Huoqi lueshuo* 火器略說, a manual on firearms which he helped translate from Western sources, and other matters. See Wang Tao, "Dai shang Ding zhongcheng shu" 代上丁中丞書 (A Letter to Ding Richang), in *Taoyuan chidu* 弢園尺牘 (Letters of Wang Tao) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959), pp. 100–104. Cf. Cohen, *Between Tradition and Modernity*, pp. 289–90, nn. 23 and 24. (Wong Shing, a native of Xiangshan 香山, Guangdong, was one of three students from the Hong Kong Morrison Memorial School brought to study at Monson Academy in Massachusetts, U.S.A. by the school's headmaster the Rev. Samuel R. Brown in 1847. The other two were Yung Wing 容闈 [Rong Hong, 1828–1912] and Wong Foon 黃寬 [Huang Kuan, (Continued on next page)

There are three editions of the *Jottings of My Roamings*: the original manuscript, the Dianshi zhai 點石齋 edition (1890) and the Xiaofanghu zhai yudi congcha 小方壺齋輿地叢鈔 edition (1891). The extracts used in this paper are not restricted to any edition; instead I collate the three, and the modern version edited by Zhong Shuhe 鍾叔河 is also used as a reference. Concerning the division of essays, I follow that of the original manuscript as it appears more logical.²⁵

(Note 24—Continued)

1828–1879]. Wong Shing returned to Hong Kong two years later because of illness, whereas Yung Wing graduated B.A. from Yale College in 1854 and Wong Foon completed his M.D. at Edinburgh in 1857, being the first batch of Chinese students to achieve such distinction. On Wong Shing's subsequent career in promoting Western learning and his public service in China and Hong Kong, see Cohen, *ibid.*, and G. H. Choa [Cai Yongye 蔡永業], *The Life and Times of Sir Kai Ho Kai*, 2d ed. [Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2000], pp. 24–26.) In this letter, Wang Tao mentions his travels to the West and lists his literary works finished in Britain, one of which is *Chengfu manji* 乘桴漫記 (*Jottings of Riding on a Raft*). It is believed that *Jottings of Riding on a Raft* later on became *Manyou suilu*, mainly because of the similarity in the meaning of the two titles. Wang says, "Just after finishing the draft, all of a sudden, he declared a wish to return to China. As the schedule was very tight, he did not have time to copy the drafts." Therefore it can be seen that when the draft of *Jottings of Riding on a Raft* was finished, Wang Tao had not yet left Britain. The final form was probably completed between 1887 and 1890, for which there are three main clues. First, the author's preface was written in 1887. Second, Wang listed *Manyou suibi tushuo* 漫遊隨筆圖說 in his annotated bibliography written in 1889. (Wang Tao, "Annotated Bibliography of Wang Tao," in *Taoyuan wen xinbian*, p. 382.) Third, in the last essay "Going to Several Banquets" there is a note under the title stating that it was published in 1889. Despite the absence of further information on the publisher, this helps to determine that Wang Tao had completed the last essay of the book by at least 1889. As the book was published by Dianshi zhai in 1890, the latest date of completion should not exceed 1890.

²⁵ The manuscript is divided into three *juan* with a total of 51 essays and the author's preface at the beginning. The first *juan* contains 18 essays recording Wang Tao's early life in Fuli until his arrival at Cairo. The second *juan* contains 17 essays recording Wang's trips in France and England and ends with Wang arriving at Dollar. The remaining 16 essays, which form the third *juan*, are accounts of the towns and cities of Scotland. From essay 47 to the end, Wang records that he went back to England and prepared for his departure. However, the Dianshi zhai version has a different arrangement of essays: the first *juan* contains 20 essays, from Wang's account of his life in Fuli to Essay 20 "A Brief Description of the Scenic Spots of Paris." The second *juan* also has 20 essays from Essay 21 "Vestiges of Paris" to Essay 40 "A Record of a Trip to the Shore." The third *juan* only has 10 essays, omitting the last essay recording the last part of Wang's stay in London. This edition contains some mistakes. For instance, the essay about Ceylon is placed before that of Penang, which does not accord with Wang's itinerary.

The Autobiographical Characteristics of the *Jottings of My Roamings*

Prologue

As they are often written in first person, it has been asserted that most Chinese travel writings are autobiographical in nature.²⁶ However, the image of the traveller does not feature prominently in most pre-modern Chinese travel writing. It should be pointed out that a lack of prominent self image does not mean that the traveller has not expressed his feelings in the writing. The main focus is the *expression* of the traveller's self image in the travelogue. Leo Lee commented,

In general, it may be said that in either extreme [poetic descriptions of natural beauty and encyclopedic accounts of environmental and geographical data] the role of the traveler, which is the author's undisguised or vaguely disguised self, does not assume any kind of romantic prominence.²⁷

He points out the two traditional subject matters in Chinese travel writings: natural beauty and geographical data. Foreign travel accounts written by late Qing intellectuals, however, made a breakthrough in that their main source materials were not based on the study of nature, but involved the discussion of city lives, advanced Western machines and systems.²⁸ This is more anthropocentric than traditional works. Secondly, while most traditional Chinese travellers journeyed “for a chance to retreat into Nature,”²⁹ the late Qing travel writers, including independent travellers, sought both personal enlightenment and remedies to save China. However, this teleological purpose sometimes makes the writings look more utilitarian than aesthetic. Laughlin even regards some of those writings as early examples of reportage.³⁰ Wang Tao's *Jottings of My Roamings* can be distinguished from both traditional travel writings and those of his contemporaries. On

²⁶ James M. Hargett, *On the Road in Twelfth Century China: The Travel Diaries of Fan Chengda (1126–1193)* (Stuttgart, Germany: Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden, 1989), p. 107.

²⁷ Leo Ou-fan Lee, “The Solitary Traveler,” p. 282.

²⁸ Regarding travel literature, I limit its meaning to travelogues written by intellectuals, excluding historical accounts or geographical gazetteers that merely gave data without personal responses.

²⁹ Julian Ward, *Xu Xiake (1587–1641): The Art of Travel Writing* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 2001), p. 2.

³⁰ Charles A. Laughlin, *Chinese Reportage: The Aesthetics of Historical Experience* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), pp. 37–44.

the one hand, it describes natural scenery, both within and outside China; on the other, it reveals the author's interests in modern Western cities, cultures and systems without neglecting the aesthetic demands of literature. Most importantly, it has the element of modern literature—the expression of self. In other words, the traveller, Wang Tao himself, played the most active role in the journey instead of the scenery or itinerary.³¹ Indeed, the *Jottings of My Roamings* is, in many ways, a portrait of Wang Tao. However, it should also be noted that the self expressed in literature is not necessarily the self in reality. The paper aims to analyse the self Wang expressed in the travelogue.

Regarding the literary element of an essay dealing largely with the facts of one's life, Louis A. Renza points out that “in selecting, ordering, and integrating the writer's lived experiences according to its own teleological demands, the autobiographical narrative is beholden to certain imperatives of imaginative discourse.”³² In other words, the selection of events is the major concern in discussion. As a travel writer, one might think that Wang would only write about his journeys. Indeed, most travel writings start with the traveller leaving home and going on the road, and “there is no necessity for travellers to provide a retrospective overview of their life in the manner of the biographer.”³³ However, the *Jottings of My Roamings* does start with such an overview.

In the Preface, Wang comments, “Even in the prime of my life, I was not famous, let alone now that I am old” (余也壯而無聞，老之已至)，³⁴ a view echoed at both the beginning and the end of the book. In the first three essays, Wang writes about his early days in his hometown, Fuli. The book starts with the sentence “I was born in Fuli” and is followed by his memories of the duck pond, lotus and plum blossoms, drinking parties, sounds of the pine trees, monasteries and small shops. Although the writer remembers his hometown with affection, there are also hints of his bitterness for “not being famous” and

³¹ Feng Guanglian 馮光廉, Liu Zengren 劉增人, and Xu Pengxu 徐鵬緒, *Zhongguo jin bainian wenxue tishi liubian shi* 中國近百年文學體式流變史 (A History of Modern Chinese Literary Genres) (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1999), p. 282; Zhuang Yanyu 莊燕玉, “Kang Nanhai *Lieguo youji yanjiu*” 康南海《列國遊記》研究 (A Study of Kang Nanhai's *Travel Diaries of Various Western Countries*) (Master's thesis, National Chung Cheng University 國立中正大學, Taiwan, 1999), p. 46.

³² Louis A. Renza, “The Veto of Imagination: A Theory of Autobiography,” in *Autobiography, Essays Theoretical and Critical*, ed. James Olney (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), p. 269.

³³ Paul Fussell, *Abroad: British Literary Traveling Between the Wars* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 203.

³⁴ Wang Tao, “Preface,” in *Jottings of My Roamings*, p. 29.

“not being understood by others.”³⁵ In Essay 1, when writing of joining drinking parties, he says, “I was always the last to be invited but the first to arrive.”³⁶ In Essay 2, he mentions that after his friend Zhang Ziyuan 張子嚴 died, he could not find a bosom companion (同志者) with whom he could share his love for plum blossoms.³⁷ In Essay 3, he records that when he heard the sound of pine trees, he “was so bewildered and filled with unbearable sadness,” that he felt his body had “nothing to rely on and nowhere to go.”³⁸ These accorded with his frustration at being unsuccessful and lonely expressed in the Preface. Then, in Essay 4, he writes about how he went to Lu prefecture 鹿城 for the civil service examination when he was sixteen, representing the start of his life journey.³⁹ The book ends as Wang was about to return from Britain to Hong Kong. He records his friend Zhan Na 詹那 giving a talk to British students about Chinese scholarship and the interaction of different cultures. Finally, Wang adds his comment: “This is wonderful. I am just afraid that time will not wait for me.”⁴⁰ This last sentence exudes a sense of grievance of his old age, echoing the discontented feelings about his life expressed in the Preface.

Furthermore, when comparing the aforementioned content with his “Autobiography of the Old Man of Taoyuan,” one can find many similarities in terms of the discussion of his early life, his trips to the West and Japan and how he cared for the outlook of the state but was not appreciated by others, although the Preface of the *Manyou suilu* does not talk about his family.⁴¹

A closer look at the preface provides further elucidation. Wang talks about his two motivations for writing the book: first, to record his travels during his life; second, expressed through his conversation with a friend, to broaden his readers’ horizons. Concerning the first point, Wang mentions three books from which he derived inspiration, namely *Hong Xue yinyuan* 鴻雪姻緣 (The Predestined Relationship between Swan and Snow) by Lin Qing 麟慶, *Huajia xiantan* 花甲閑談 (Idle Talks of the Elderly) by Zhang Weiping 張維屏 (1780–1859) and *Gaiyu conglu* 咳餘叢錄 (Anecdotes Written in a Filial Son’s Spare Time) by Hu Sichuan 胡斯鏞. These books, written in the Qing dynasty, recorded not only the

³⁵ Ibid., pp. 29–30.

³⁶ Ibid., “Gazing at the Lotus of the Pond of Ducks,” p. 34.

³⁷ Ibid., “Visiting the Plum Blossoms in an Ancient Villa,” p. 37.

³⁸ Ibid., “Listening to the Pine Trees at Baosheng [保聖],” p. 39.

³⁹ Ibid., “Climbing up the Mountains and Gazing into the Distance,” p. 40.

⁴⁰ Ibid., “Attending Various Banquets,” p. 170. The original reads, “美哉！恐時不我待也！”

⁴¹ Wang Tao, “The Autobiography of the Old Man of Taoyuan,” pp. 367–72.

authors' journeys, but also their daily lives in prose, poetry and pictures. Wang's selection of these works as models gives readers a hint that he is not only concerned with his travels, but also with his life. However, instead of giving a list of the events in his life, Wang is highly selective in the recording of his travels and the presentation of his self image.

Two-thirds of the book deal with his journey to Europe, which only counted for two years of his life. The emphasis on his Western trip is highlighted and explained in the preface. Wang regards his trips to the West and Japan as the most important events of his life through which he was able to feel most proud of himself. When he mentions his life in China, the tone is dismal: he describes his life as "difficult to survive for one day" (難供朝夕), himself as "one of the ever hungry people from the countryside" (莫飽侏儻), "suffering from hunger" (饑驅徒切); he claims that "no one really understands me [him]" (莫有知余者) and mentions how he was criticized by others.⁴² In short, it can be concluded with his phrase "余窮於世" (I was not successful in the world). However, when he was in Europe and Japan, he felt he was treated with great respect. Besides describing what he saw, he picks several dramatic scenes and elaborates on them in the preface. On one occasion, he gave a speech at Oxford University, talking about the interaction of Chinese and Western culture and the Way of Great Unity (see below on pp. 259–60). He notes: "the students appreciated my speech greatly as they had never heard of this notion."⁴³

Another example is when Wang walked on the roads in Britain the police drove away the children who were laughing at him. Moreover, whenever he asked the way, people would accompany him and not leave him alone until he reached his destination. The most dramatic scene is when an elderly person in a village in Britain took off his hat, greeted him and told him that he wished to follow Confucius.⁴⁴ Wang records it in the form of dialogue, hoping to give the impression that the words came from the person's mouth. Wang also declares in a straightforward way that he found his trip to the West "enjoyable" and something to be "proud of." He even says, "What made me feel delighted was that I was the first to travel to the West," and "I was the first Chinese to have these experiences, which were unusual for the literati at home."⁴⁵ Therefore, from the preface alone, it

⁴² Wang Tao, "Preface," pp. 29–32. The original criticism reads, "即文章小技，不滿於鄉里悠悠之口，何況其他？"

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

can be inferred that Wang's reason for writing about his travels was mainly because those journeys gave him a sense of self-importance he had never obtained from the civil service examination system because of his repeated failures. This explains why Wang tends to make his self image so conspicuous in the book.

The Traveller as Portrayed in the *Jottings of My Roamings*

Before going into details of how Wang, as traveller, plays the most important role in the *Jottings of My Roamings* by expressing himself, we should first understand that the text should be viewed against the background of a frustrated life, one full of setbacks and adversities. As mentioned above, like many other young Chinese males, Wang's ultimate ambition was to pass the civil service examination and obtain an official post; literary or other accomplishments were considered secondary. Unfortunately, after passing the preliminary stage, he failed the exam many times. Out of pride or self confidence, he criticized the system and said that he would never again take the examination.⁴⁶ However, the fact is that he still tried many times even after getting a job in the London Mission Press.⁴⁷

In the depth of Wang's heart, his greatest misfortune was his repeated failures at the examinations and his regret was barely softened by time. This is the reason why a sense of bitterness spills over into the Preface and essays of the *Jottings of My Roamings*. Feeling self-pity on the one hand, having high opinions of himself on the other, it becomes understandable for Wang to write his life story with memorable, and sometimes dramatic, scenes and tableaux with himself holding centre stage. He was desperate to present to his contemporaries and subsequent generations an image of someone important but had not been recognised by "the world." Although Wang used the word *shi* 世 which literally means the world, he did stress that he was esteemed in the West and Japan; therefore, *shi* will be understood to refer to China or, to be specific, the Qing court.

Wang portrays multiple self images in the *Jottings of My Roamings*. Stephen Owen has pointed out that vision of the self can be divided into two aspects: "roles" and "a much more contradictory and unsteady being."⁴⁸ Whereas "roles" refers

⁴⁶ Wang Tao, "A Letter to Brother-in-Law Yang Xingfu," in *Taoyuan chidu*, pp. 2-3.

⁴⁷ *Wang Tao nianpu*, pp. 19-68.

⁴⁸ Stephen Owen, "The Self's Perfect Mirror: Poetry as Autobiography," in *The Vitality of the Lyric Voice: Shih Poetry from the Late Han to the T'ang*, ed. Shuen-fu Lin and Stephen Owen (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), p. 86.

to fulfilling one's social role, the other aspect goes beyond social restrictions. Owen's observation, although written as part of a discussion of poetry, can also be used here to explain the multiple nature of the expressions of self. As for Wang Tao, it is obvious that while on the one hand he wanted to fulfil his duty as an intellectual by consistently giving suggestions on how to strengthen China, on the other hand a life full of failures and setbacks made him turn to thoughts of becoming a recluse. This "contradictory and unsteady" nature of the self expressed in the *Jottings of Roamings* will be demonstrated below.

The first facet of Wang is not too different from traditional literati who failed to obtain an official position. Following the traditional Confucian teachings, intellectuals were expected not to become rebellious even though they could complain (怨而不亂).⁴⁹ The teaching of Dao provides them with the alternative choice of being aloof from the world. Even Confucius once said that he wished to go away and sail the seas because there was no one carrying out his teaching.⁵⁰ The most famous recluse in Chinese history is Tao Qian 陶潛 (c. 372–427), who, despising the corrupted society in which he lived, returned to the countryside and lived as a recluse till the end of his life. Wang, having failed the exams, can reasonably be thought of as acting in the same way. Going one step further, he presented himself as a recluse before talking about the civil service examination, pretending that he was not interested in official positions at all.

Besides proclaiming that he prefers the life of a recluse, for instance stating in his poems that he wanted to play with seagulls and buy fields,⁵¹ Wang skilfully uses allusions and various symbols to imply his will. This is most apparent in the first three essays of his collection.

In Essay 1, after stating that he was born in Fuli, Wang immediately turned to history, introducing a famous man of letters, Lu Guimeng 陸龜蒙, a Tang poet from the ninth century who was a native of Fuli. Lu was talented but looked down upon worldly success. According to the Song dynasty work, *Tangshi jishi* 唐詩紀事 (Anecdotes in Tang Poetry), he was a genius man of letters who despised the world and did not try to get an official position. Instead, he went travelling with his friends and hated to talk to mundane

⁴⁹ Sima Qian 司馬遷, *Shiji* 史記 (Historical Records) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1982), *juan* 31, p. 1452.

⁵⁰ The original reads, “道不行，乘桴浮於海。” See Yang Bojun 楊伯峻, *Lunyu yizhu* 論語譯注 (The *Analects* with Translation and Notes) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1965), p. 45.

⁵¹ Wang Tao, *Jottings of My Roamings*, pp. 42, 126, 157.

people.⁵² Wang refers to several events of Lu's life in the essay. First, he describes Lu as 亮節高風 (having great moral courage and virtue) and being respected by the natives of Fuli.⁵³ He also mentions one story which shows Lu's Bohemian personality: a rider from the official post station who was passing by Lu's house killed one of Lu's ducks with a slingshot. Lu told him his ducks were precious because they could talk, so killing them could result in persecution. The rider was scared and offered to compensate. After Lu got the money, he laughed at the rider and told him that the only word his ducks could say was their name. The rider was furious and Lu eventually gave him back the money.⁵⁴ Although Wang did not give the story in full, it was expected that readers at that time would be familiar with the allusions. Despite Lu's talent and virtue, his literary works survived only because they were found by accident in the stomach of his statue. Wang sighed—"I believe that whether people are famous or unknown is pre-destined."⁵⁵ Although one can argue that Wang mentions Lu only because his hometown is named after Lu's sobriquet, Master Fuli, the fact that Wang chose to introduce Lu and the way he selected Lu's life events can, at the very least, show that Wang had a special feeling for his fellow townsman. Wang, like Lu, had the same unconventional personality and did not have an official position (though for different reasons). Instead of playing tricks on officials, Wang showed his Bohemian character by frequently mentioning his interest in both courtesans and ladies from decent families. He is so candid about his interest that one even suspects that he deliberately mentions it in order to show how unconventional he is. In fact, Wang's comment about destiny was not only meant for Lu, but also for himself.

Whether by coincidence or not, the first three essays contain conspicuous symbols of

⁵² Ji Yougong 計有功 (*fl.* 1121–1161), *Tangshi jishi* 唐詩紀事 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987), pp. 962–63. The original reads, “龜蒙，三吳人也。幼而聰悟，文學之外，尤善談笑，嘗體江、謝賦事，名振江左，居於姑蘇，藏書萬餘卷，詩篇清麗。……中和初，遭疾而終。……龜蒙少高放，從張搏遊，歷湖蘇二州辟以自佐。嘗至饒州，三日無所詣。刺史蔡京率官屬就見之，龜蒙不樂，拂衣去。不喜交流俗，不乘馬升舟，設蓬席、茶竈、筆牀、釣具往來。”

⁵³ Wang Tao, “Preface,” p. 33.

⁵⁴ *Tangshi jishi*, p. 963. The original reads, “龜蒙居震澤之南，巨積莊產，有鬥鴨一欄，頗極馴養。一旦，有驛使過，挾彈斃其尤者。龜蒙詣而駭之曰：「此鴨能人語。」少頃，手一本手本云：「待附蘇州上進，使者斃之，奈何！」使人恐，酬以橐中金。龜蒙始焚其章，接以酒食。使者俟其稍悅，方請人語之由。曰：「能自呼其名。」使人憤且笑，拂袖上馬。復召之，還其金，曰：「吾戲耳。」”

⁵⁵ Wang Tao, *Jottings of My Roamings*, p. 33.

the traditional Chinese *junzi* 君子 (gentleman)—lotus blossoms, plum blossoms, and pine trees. In Essay 1, Wang says he thinks that lotus blossoms are *junzi* among all the flowers as they have a clear fragrance, lasting charm, faultless virtue and pure colour, all of which resemble the appearance of reclusive and virtuous men.⁵⁶ Wang likes lotus blossoms so much that an allusion to them in an unsuitable simile is offensive to him.⁵⁷ Throughout the essay, he emphasizes his love for lotus blossoms, inventing special ways to eat and use them and still thinking about them forty years after leaving Fuli.

The meaning of plum blossoms is two-fold in that it symbolises a man who stands against difficult conditions of the world while at the same time remaining aloof from worldly matters. The earliest examples of praise for plum blossoms can be found in the Six Dynasties, when poets were amazed by how different plum blossoms are from other flowers, since they bloom in snow.⁵⁸ Because they are so enduring, plum blossoms

⁵⁶ Ibid., “Gazing Lotuses at the Pond of Ducks,” p. 35. The symbol of lotus blossom as a virtuous man originates in Zhou Dunyi’s 周敦頤 (1017–1073) “Ai lian shuo” 愛蓮說 (On the Love of the Lotus), which compares lotus blossoms with the *junzi*, praising the flower’s independence and purity. See Zhou Dunyi, *Zhou Lianxi ji* 周濂溪集 (Works of Zhou Lianxi) (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1937), p. 139.

⁵⁷ Wang Tao, *Jottings of My Roamings*, p. 35. Wang refers to a story about Zhang Changzong 張宗昌 (Liulang), who was the favourite of Empress Wu Zetian 武則天 (r. 690–704). An official of Wu, Yang Zaisi 楊再思 compared Zhang’s face with a lotus blossom. The original reads, “易之兄司禮少卿同休，請公卿宴其寺，酒酣，戲曰：「公面似高麗。」再思欣然，翦縠綴巾上，反披紫袍，為高麗舞，舉動合節，滿坐鄙笑。昌宗以姿貌倖，再思每曰：「人言六郎似蓮華，非也；正謂蓮華似六郎耳。」其巧諛無恥類如此。” See Song Qi 宋祁 and Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修, *Xin Tangshu* 新唐書 (New History of the Tang) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), *juan* 109, p. 4099.

⁵⁸ Typical examples are He Xun’s 何遜 (d. c. 527) “Yong mei” 詠梅 (In Praise of Plum Blossoms) and Yin Keng’s 陰鏗 (fl. mid-sixth century) “Xue li meihua” 雪裏梅花 (Plum Blossoms in the Snow). He Xun describes the plum blossoms as not being afraid of the snow. The original reads, “銜霜當路發，映雪擬寒開。” Yin also has a similar view as the line reads, “春近寒雖轉，梅舒雪尚飄。” Later, in the Tang dynasty, Zhang Jiuling 張九齡 (678–740) also wrote a poem about plum blossoms, praising their resistance in difficult circumstances. More information can be found in Deng Guoguang 鄧國光 and Qu Fengxian 曲奉先, eds., *Zhongguo huahui shici quanji* 中國花卉詩詞全集 (Zhengzhou: Henan renmin chubanshe, 1997), vol. 1, pp. 3, 4, 8. Later, in the Southern Song dynasty, Lu You 陸游 (1125–1210) wrote the lines, “unintentionally competing with other flowers in Spring, the plum blossoms let others envy them. Even when they fall and are grounded into dust, they are still fragrant.” (無意苦爭春，一任群芳妒。零落成泥碾作塵，只有香如故). See Lu You, “Busuanzi” 卜算子 (To “The Diviner”), in *Lu You ji* 陸游集 (Works of Lu You) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1976), p. 2471.

are sometimes compared with martyrs who die for their country. The second symbolic meaning of the plum blossoms comes from Lin Fu 林逋 (967–1028), a recluse who was famous for living surrounded by cranes and plum blossoms.⁵⁹ His poetic description of plum blossoms, “the sparse shadows are cast horizontally across the clear water, and dim fragrance floats towards the dusky moon” (疏影橫斜水清淺，暗香浮動月黃昏) became a standard phrase when mentioning plum blossoms and the image of a recluse.⁶⁰

In Essay 2, Wang talks about how he and his friends feasted and appreciated plum blossoms. Through the conversation between Wang and his friend Zhang Ziyan, readers are given the impression that they are so unconstrained that they are aloof from worldly worries and as pure as plum blossoms. The place where they feasted, “Chu Zhai” 樗齋 (Ailanthus Studio), placed near Qiushui ting 秋水亭 (Autumn Floods Pavilion) is also worth noticing. The two names make readers think of the “Autumn Floods” chapter in *Zhuangzi* 莊子 and the allusion of the Ailanthus Studio.⁶¹ Clearly, the owner of the villa chose the names deliberately. The ailanthus is mentioned in the “Xiaoyao you” 逍遙遊 (Free and Easy Wandering) chapter in which Zhuangzi compares the plant with a useless person, as it is not straight enough to make furniture. Zhuangzi says that although in the eyes of ordinary people ailanthuses are useless, it is for this reason that they are able to grow without any hindrance or harm. The author here advocates the idea of “wuyong zhi yong” 無用之用 (the use of being useless).⁶² Thus, gazing at plum blossoms in the Ailanthus Studio becomes a strong symbol of a recluse who is not appreciated by the world.

The symbol of the pine tree first appears in *Lunyu* 論語 (The Analects), in which Confucius says, “Not until the coldest time do I realise that pine trees and cypress trees are the last to wither” (歲寒，然後知松柏之後凋彫也).⁶³ Pine trees, famous for enduring coldness, are then compared with a virtuous man standing strong against difficulties, just

⁵⁹ Lin Fu, “Shanyuan xiaomei” 山園小梅 (Small Plum Blossoms of the Mountainous Garden), in *Lin Hejing ji* 林和靖集 (Works of Lin Hejing) (Taipei: Xuehai chubanshe, 1974), p. 18.

⁶⁰ Lin Fu’s contemporary Wang Qi 王棋 wrote a poem about plum blossoms which indicates the widespread influence of Lin’s verse of it. The last two lines of the poem read, “只因識得林和靖，惹得詩人說到今。” (*Zhongguo huahui shici quanji*, vol. 1, p. 32)

⁶¹ Wang Xianqian 王先謙, *Zhuangzi jijie* 莊子集解 (Collected Explanations of the *Zhuangzi*) (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1992), pp. 5, 99–108.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁶³ *Lunyu yizhu*, p. 102.

like plum blossoms.⁶⁴

In Essay 3, Wang records that when he was young he followed his father to live in the studio of Mr Shi 施氏, where he was overwhelmed by the sound of pine trees. He also mentions one of his acquaintances, Jiang Busong 江補松, who told him that the sound of pine trees was inspirational. Near the end of the essay, he shows his regret that all the trees later died or were cut down for firewood.⁶⁵

Wang Tao chooses to mention the lotus blossom, plum blossom, and pine tree at the beginning of his travel writings; although on the surface they have no strong relationship with the rest of the book, these three symbols are so well-known to Chinese literati that it is impossible for either the author or the readers to be unaware of them as a self-allegory or self-comparison to the author.⁶⁶ To place these allegories at the beginning of the book, Wang evidently regards that presenting himself is more important than just recounting his travels, and also demonstrates his will to portray himself as a recluse.

Being a recluse means being liberated from worldly matters, especially the appraisal by other people. Wang, though expressing his strong will to be a recluse, was not a real

⁶⁴ The earliest example can be found in Liu Zhen's 劉楨 (d. 217) poem written during the Three Kingdom period. Part of the poem "Zeng Zongdi" 贈從弟 (For My Cousin) praising the endurance of the pine tree reads, "亭亭山上松，瑟瑟谷中風。風聲一何盛，松枝一何勁。冰霜正慘悽，終歲常端正。豈不罹凝寒，松柏有本性。" See Ding Fubao 丁福保, ed., *Quan Han Sanguo Jin Nanbeichao shi* 全漢三國晉南北朝詩 (Complete Poetry of the Han, Three Kingdoms, Jin, and Northern and Southern Dynasties) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959), p. 263.

⁶⁵ Wang Tao, "Listening to the Pine Trees at Baosheng," in *Jottings of My Roamings*, pp. 39–40.

⁶⁶ The use of precious objects for self-allegorization or self-comparison can be traced to the traditional interpretation of Qu Yuan's 屈原 works, especially the *Lisao* 離騷 (Encountering Sorrow). Wang Yi 王逸 in his *Chuci zhangju* 楚辭章句 (Section and Sentence Commentaries on *The Songs of the Chu*) comments, "The writing of 'Encountering Sorrow' takes the method of *xing* from the *Poetry* (*The Book of Songs*), and draws out categorical correspondences as comparisons. Therefore, beneficial birds and fragrant plants are used to correspond to loyalty and integrity; noxious birds and foul-smelling objects are used as comparisons to slander and deceit. The Divine Beauty and Fairest One equal the lord; intimate consorts and beautiful maidens are used as analogues to virtuous officials. In dragons and phoenixes is invested the ruler; whirlwinds, clouds and rainbows are used for petty men." Translation taken from Pauline Yu, *The Reading of Imagery in the Chinese Poetic Tradition* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987), p. 105. (《離騷》之文，依《詩》取興，引類譬喻。故善鳥香草以配忠貞，惡禽臭物以比讒佞。靈修美人以媲於君，宓妃佚女以譬賢臣。虬龍鸞鳳以托君子，飄風雲霓以為小人。) See Hong Xingzu 洪興祖, *Chuci buzhu* 楚辭補註 (Supplementary Notes to *The Songs of Chu*) (Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 1973), p. 12.

recluse. On the contrary, despite his failure to gain an official position, he does not or cannot completely ignore the world, and still cares about the state and how other people think of him. This forms another two facets of Wang's self-image in the *Jottings of My Roamings*.

As an intellectual during the late Qing period who witnessed the waning of the state, Wang felt the same sense of crisis as those who wanted to save China. Though not appreciated by the Qing court, Wang did not lose his desire to contribute to the state. His concern for the state permeates his travel writings, especially when recording his experiences outside China. For instance, when he writes about Hong Kong, he talks of how Westerners transformed Hong Kong from a barren land to a city, how they set up colleges to educate and recruit an élite class, and finally how he felt pity that this city did not belong to China.⁶⁷ When he travelled around Southeast Asia, he sighed at the fall of those that had once been China's buffer states but were now annexed by the West.⁶⁸ In essays about France, he discusses the museums and cultural activities that China lacked.⁶⁹ In essays about Britain, he describes in great detail the tax systems, the clean avenues, the planning of the cities, the armaments, education for both men and women, the railways, the copyright law and the incentive policy for inventions.⁷⁰ He was greatly concerned with these things, which he felt would indicate whether a country was strong or not.⁷¹ At that time the élite class in China had already realized that the West was far more advanced in technology, especially concerning armaments. During the Self-Strengthening Movement (1860–1894) one of the most important objectives was to strengthen the army. Wang fully acknowledged that, but also realized that

⁶⁷ Wang Tao, "My Sojourn in Hong Kong" and "Roamings Around the Island," in *Jottings of My Roamings*, pp. 59–65.

⁶⁸ Ibid., "Mooring in Singapore," p. 67; "I Try to Bathe in Penang," p. 70; "A Banquet in Aden," p. 73; "Stopover at Cairo," p. 75.

⁶⁹ Ibid., "An Overview of the Scenic Spots of Paris," "Vestiges of Paris," "Watching Drama in Paris," "A Spectacular View of the Louvre Museum," "Visiting the New Museum," "A Carnival of Swings," pp. 82–98.

⁷⁰ Ibid., "The British Museum," pp. 103–5; "A Record of the British Customs," pp. 109–12; "A Brief Description of the British Systems," "Miscellaneous Records of Travels in Britain," "A Short Record of My Travels," and "Sophisticated and Remarkable Implements," pp. 111–23.

⁷¹ Lü Wencui 呂文翠 gave a specific example of Wang's discussion of railways. She advocated the idea that Wang emphasized the military importance of railways in mopping up an uprising because he had thought of the upheavals in China, especially the Taiping Rebellion. See Lü, "Wan Qing Shanghai de kuawenhua xinglü: Lun Wang Tao yu Yuan Zuzhi de Taixi youji" 晚清上海的跨文化行旅：論王韜與袁祖志的泰西遊記 (Trans-Cultural Travel in Late Qing Shanghai: On Two Travelogues of Wang Tao and Yuan Zhuzhi), *Zhongwai wenxue* 中外文學 34, no. 9 (2006), p. 35.

social systems such as education are also essential to a strong country. Thus, compared to accounts by his contemporary travellers, Wang also emphasised cultural and social aspects of a country. He observed: “The British are by habit honest and produce a wealth of goods. The rich people lead luxurious lives whereas the poor work hard. People compete with one another to develop new skills; therefore, there are few lazy people. What I envy most is that people there are modest and sincere. People, whether nobles or commoners, seldom quarrel with one another. Immigrants from other countries living there are never cheated. Because they have a harmonious relationship with the natives, they seldom feel anxious.”⁷²

“People are so elegant and kind that they compete with one another to receive travellers from afar. There are no problems with checking in at the customs or resulting from the questioning by the officials. People are never suspected to be villains simply because of their exotic clothes and languages. Inside the city, goods are not labelled at two different prices, while on the street, people do not pick up things that belong to others. These are enough to show Edinburgh’s tolerant government policy and lofty prosperity.”⁷³

“This is a country which values principles of conduct, not just powerful armies; a country built on compassion and sincerity, not treachery and brute strength, and a country which places kindness and ethics before wealth and might. This is why Europe’s nations endure while others fall into decay. Though Britain is on the northern corner of Europe, it has been free of enemy invasion for over a thousand years; and this is but one benefit of many. I say this not to flatter Westerners, but because it is true.”⁷⁴ (Translated by Ian Chapman)

He was also particularly inspired by the fact that Western women could receive an education. In the *Jottings of My Roamings*, several British ladies are mentioned. Not only are they beautiful, but they are also described as “clever” and “talented,” knowing culture and the arts in depth. What impressed Wang Tao most was that they even knew how to

⁷² Wang Tao, “A Record of the British Customs,” in *Jottings of My Roamings*, pp. 111–12. The original reads, “英國風俗醇厚，物產蕃庶。豪富之家，費廣用奢，而貧寒之戶，勤工力作。日競新奇巧異之藝，地少慵怠游惰之民。尤可羨者，人知遜讓，心多慤誠。國中士庶往來，常少鬥爭欺侮之事。異域客民旅居其他者，從無受欺被詐，恒見親愛，絕少猜嫌。”

⁷³ Ibid., “The Old Palace of Edinburgh,” p. 132. The original reads, “遠人之至其地者，無不競相延接，雅意殷勤。關無譏察之煩，吏無詰訶之擾，從無以異服異言而疑其為宄為慝者。入其境，市不二價，路不拾遺，是足以見其寬大之政、昇平之治矣。”

⁷⁴ Ibid., “Miscellaneous Records of Edinburgh,” p. 135. The original reads, “其國以禮義為教，而不專恃甲兵；以仁信為基，而不先尚詐力；以教化德澤為本，而不徒講富強。歐洲諸邦皆能如是，固足以持久而不蔽也。即如英土，雖偏在北隅，而無敵國外患者已千餘年矣，謂非其著效之一端哉？余亦就實事言之，勿徒作頌美西人觀可也。”

appreciate Chinese culture. Unlike Chinese women, Western women did not seem to shy away from male guests. Wang was astonished by that and he explained his appreciation: “They [the women] sat with us at the same table, travelled with us by coach, joined in the drinking and merriment and otherwise mixed freely, totally uninhibited by distinctions between men and women. The beauty of their countenance was matched by their purity of heart, their virtue and chastity by their book learning and proper conduct. Their dignity and correct behaviour ensured that no one dared affront them.”⁷⁵ (Translated by Ian Chapman)

Such human qualities are indispensable for the construction of a strong country and Wang’s wish to introduce them to Chinese readers as “broadening one’s horizons” constitutes another aim of the book.⁷⁶

Besides hoping that China could be as strong as the Western countries, Wang also revealed his inspiration regarding the interactions between the two cultures. Wang always looked forward to the sharing of cultures between the Chinese and the Westerners. This is what he called the “Great Unity” (大同).⁷⁷ He emphasizes the idea three times in the book, placing it at the beginning, in Essay 26 in the middle of the book, and at the end. In the Preface, Wang highlights an incident during his trip to Britain, writing: “What made me feel delighted was that I was the first to travel to the West. Neither officials nor famous literati had ever had this opportunity.” It is obvious that he was proud of what he achieved. He goes on to give an example. Wang gave a lecture at Oxford University where he was courteously treated. He says, “I presented them [the students] with a discussion of similarities and differences in the two cultures and suggested that the highest Dao would be the Great Unity. Students appreciated my speech greatly as they had never heard of this notion.”⁷⁸ Not bothered by repetition, Wang mentioned the event again in Essay 26, directly quoting his speech (or a part of it) and advocating similar thoughts.⁷⁹ At the end of the book, the idea comes up again through Wang’s mentioning of his friend Zhan Na. Zhan gave a talk to a group of students, again looking forward

⁷⁵ Ibid. The original reads, “食則並席，出則同車，觥籌相酬，履舄交錯，不以為嫌也。然皆花妍其貌而玉潔其心。秉德懷貞，知書守禮，其謹嚴自好，固又毫不可犯干也。”

⁷⁶ Ibid., “Preface,” p. 33.

⁷⁷ The “Great Unity” advocated by Wang Tao is different from the traditional idea, which is a description of a peaceful society. Wang’s idea is closer to that of cosmopolitanism, which looks for similarities between different cultures. Further information about this idea can be found in Wang Tao’s essay “Yuan Dao” 原道 (The Origins of the Dao), in *Taoyuan wen xinbian*, pp. 1–2.

⁷⁸ Wang Tao, “Preface,” p. 32.

⁷⁹ Ibid., “A Short Rest in London,” p. 99.

to a harmonious relationship between China and the West, vigorous interaction between cultures and technologies and an effective system of communication between people in the world. Wang was very appreciative of the sentiment.⁸⁰ Apart from being proclaimed directly at the beginning, the middle and the end of the book, the idea of a “Great Unity” also permeates elsewhere in the book when he records how Westerners appreciated his chanting of poetry and his scholarly works.⁸¹ Wang believed he was playing a significant role in promoting the idea of the sharing of cultures. This is shown by the way Wang presented the related events.

The most common way in which Wang shows how Westerners appreciated him is by describing an occasion when a large audience saw him perform as an important cultural ambassador, introducing the intriguing Chinese culture and literature. Apart from the speech given at Oxford University where students are described as “greatly impressed as they had never heard of this” (擊節歎賞，以為聞所未聞) and where “none of them did not clap their hand, or stamp their feet, they applauded me together till even the walls were shaken” (無不鼓掌蹈足，同聲稱讚，牆壁為震), in Essay 17 Wang records how he impressed others during a banquet on a ship. An extraordinarily beautiful young lady was interested in Wang, gazing and smiling at him. After quoting other people's words describing him as a talented intellectual, he says, “the girl was even happier and so excited that she asked them [other people] to request me to sing a song.” Finally, he agreed to chant a poem “to purify the mundane tune” of the instruments that had just been played. He was so good at chanting poems that “the pitch of my voice was high and sonorous, spreading out deeply like the sound of metals.” He received applause from all the audience and the lady was so enchanted by him that she pressed him to drink, asked for his calligraphy and did not want to put it down until Wang gave it to her as a gift.⁸²

Another typical example comes in Essay 47 when Wang gave a talk in Edinburgh about the teachings of Confucius. Instead of recording what he had said about Confucius, Wang mentions the last part of his talk when he intoned Chinese poems and prose, following a request from a female member of the audience. He describes his own voice as “melodious, sonorous and passionate,” resembling “the sound of gold and stone or a sudden change of weather.” The audience was greatly impressed; as a result “everybody

⁸⁰ Ibid., “Attending Various Banquets,” p. 170.

⁸¹ Ibid., “Miscellaneous Records of Edinburgh,” p. 135; “Travelling in Aberdeen,” pp. 141–42; “Travelling Twice in Dundee,” p. 148; “Sailing Back from Britain,” p. 159.

⁸² Ibid., “A Banquet in Aden,” pp. 73–75.

in Edinburgh knew the teachings of Confucius” and a fellow Chinese regarded him as the one who brought “the way of the Confucius to the West.” Wang’s concluding remarks on the event are illuminating: “Although I did not really deserve these words, they were close to what I had done” (雖不敢當，抑庶幾焉)。Other examples all indicating his popularity fill the book, such as people begging for specimen of Wang’s calligraphy and poetry, inviting him to banquets and asking him to take photos.⁸³

Not only does Wang think of himself as playing a leading role in spreading Chinese culture in Britain, he also considers himself to be trying hard to build the relationship between the two nations. When Wang was in Edinburgh, a letter claimed to have been written by Zeng Guofan 曾國藩 (1811–1872) was published in a British newspaper. The letter displayed a hostile attitude towards Westerners, even threatening war. Then, Wang says, “Commoners and officials, who felt suspicious that there might be war, came to ask me about the issue, and I explained to them.” After listening to Wang’s explanation that the letter was a forgery, “the rumour stopped.”⁸⁴ Showing such a heightened regard for himself, it is not unreasonable to conclude that Wang was showing off.

As Wang is interested in women, he cares how they look at him. While most were enchanted by his literary talents, Wang would go into detail about those who were educated and appreciated him as a scholar. For instance, in Essay 43, he introduces Miss Aili 愛梨.⁸⁵ This young lady was not only good looking, but most importantly she was artistic and clever enough to appreciate intellectuals. Wang says, “Although she was young, she showed respect to intellectuals. When she heard her father and Legge discussing people, she singled me out and regarded me as a genius whom she greatly admired.”⁸⁶

He chanted a poem for her and by the next day she had composed a melody for it. She also taught him the correct fingering for the piano and corrected his pronunciation of the Western alphabet. When Wang was unable to express himself, Aili could speak for him as she “was so sensitive that she could use her eyes to listen and her eyebrows to speak, instead of just using her mouth” (別有會心，能以目聽，以眉語，而不徒在口舌間也)。This is the only lady Wang regarded as being able to “fully understand my thoughts” (無不適如余意之所欲出).⁸⁷

⁸³ Ibid., “Sailing Back from Britain,” pp. 157–60.

⁸⁴ Ibid., “Miscellaneous Records of Edinburgh,” pp. 137–38.

⁸⁵ Ibid., “Travelling Twice in Dundee,” p. 147.

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 148. The original reads, “年雖幼，雅重文人，聞其父及理君品評人物，而獨道余為曠世逸才，益深欽佩。”

⁸⁷ Ibid.

As a bridge between the Chinese and Westerners, Wang was keen to display his Western contacts to his readers. This is indirectly presented in the essays about his life in China and becomes obvious in the parts about his trips to the West as mentioned above.

In essays written before Wang's arrival in the West (i.e. before 1868), some trivia give readers hints of the ideas outlined above. First, it should be pointed out that at that time, establishing contact with Westerners was not considered something to be proud of among Chinese intellectuals. On the contrary, people looked down upon those who worked with Westerners. Henry Macleavy noted how Wang was unhappy to be working in Shanghai for the London Mission Press as he was regarded as a "lackey of the foreigners."⁸⁸ However, it is obvious that by the time Wang wrote the book, his attitude had changed dramatically. When he describes Shanghai in Essay 8, he says that he was refreshed and impressed by the city's Western buildings and atmosphere. He also realized how ingenious Westerners could be when he visited the Mission Press.⁸⁹ The same impressions are described when he writes about Hong Kong.⁹⁰ In Essay 9, he records that he travelled to Dongting River with Henry Medhurst and William Muirhead, addressing them as the "two gentlemen."⁹¹ When he met his fellow Chinese, talking about their trips, he added: "I had brought some Western wine and drank with them. All of them regarded it as a good wine and showed their appreciation" (余携有洋酒，出以飲之，稱為佳釀，讚歎莫名).⁹² This sentence is of no significance in Wang's trip, but Wang added it in order to show that he could impress other Chinese because of his special knowledge of, and relationships with foreigners. Therefore, when he is talking about Western technology in later essays, he is not only describing what he had seen; rather, his tone is one of introduction and explanation, as he regards himself as someone who knows more about the West than others, and as being in a position to "broaden the reader's horizons."⁹³

In the essays about his Western trip, apart from impressing Western commoners as discussed in the above passages, Wang also emphasizes that he was appreciated by scholars. Apart from students of Oxford University, Wang mentions intellectuals, most of whom are friends of James Legge, and intelligent and beautiful women. For example, when Wang travelled to Aberdeen he went to visit the Protestant Christian missionary John Chalmers

⁸⁸ Henry Macaleavy, p. 8.

⁸⁹ Wang Tao, *Jottings of My Roamings*, p. 51.

⁹⁰ Ibid., "My Sojourn in Hong Kong," p. 59; "Roamings Around the Island," pp. 63–64.

⁹¹ Ibid., "Embracing the Remarkable Scenery of Moli," p. 53.

⁹² Ibid., p. 54.

⁹³ Ibid., "Preface," p. 33.

(1825–1899), whom he described as “knowing a lot about Chinese language and etymology” and “good at the studies of the ancient calendar.”⁹⁴ Thereafter, he records Zhan’s comments on Wang’s books about the *Spring and Autumn Annals* (*Chunqiu* 春秋), such as *Chunqiu shuorun zhiri kao* 春秋朔閏至日考 (A Survey of the Calendars of the *Spring and Autumn Annals*) and *Chunqiu rishi bianzheng* 春秋季食辨正 (A Discussion of Solar Eclipses in the *Spring and Autumn Annals*), “he [Chalmers] thought they were great works that could serve as guides for studying ancient calendars and solving previous problems. These books enabled readers to find out clearly the dates within the 242 years of the Spring and Autumn period” and “Chalmers said, ‘This book should be better than the one written by Chen Siyuan.’”⁹⁵ Although Wang appeared to be modest, the fact that he records Chalmers’s comments shows that in the depth of his heart, he feels that he deserved the praise.⁹⁶

Wang was so proud of his relationship with Westerners that sometimes he even changed the chronology of an event. The account of meeting the French Sinologist Stanislas Julien (1797–1873) in the *Jottings of My Roamings* is recorded during Wang’s visit to Paris.⁹⁷ However, according to Wang’s letter to Julien, he had not met him on his way to Britain and had wanted to arrange a meeting after leaving Britain on his journey back to Hong Kong.⁹⁸ In fact, as Wang’s narration finishes at the beginning of his return trip to Hong Kong, he should not have included his meeting with Julien, which happened after he had left Britain. However, Wang chose to change the order, placing the meeting before his trip to Britain when he was in France. I suspect that the reason for this manipulation is because he was so keen to include this incident in his account, in order to underline how famous he was.

Although being a recluse and an aspiring passionate intellectual may seem to be contradictory, they are, on the contrary, two complementary sides of Wang. On the one hand, the traveller is full of a great desire to contribute to the state or even the world, while on the other hand, his failure in the examinations remained a major source of embarrassment throughout his life. It was only through his trip to the West and his

⁹⁴ Ibid., “Travelling in Aberdeen,” p. 141.

⁹⁵ Chen Siyuan 陳泗源, a scholar of the ancient calendar, lived during the reign of Emperor Kangxi 康熙 (1662–1722) of the Qing dynasty.

⁹⁶ Wang Tao, “Travelling in Aberdeen,” pp. 141–42.

⁹⁷ Ibid., “Vestiges in Paris,” pp. 86–87.

⁹⁸ Wang Tao, “Yu Yingguo Yalige xueshi” 與英國雅理各學士 (A Letter to James Legge), in *Taoyuan chidu*, pp. 94–96. The original reads, “今者應理君聘，航海西邁，道出貴國京師巴黎。斯未悉所居，未由奉謁，紆軫之情，難以言狀。……返棹時，當經貴國，藉挹芳徽，一吐悃欵，願作平原十日之留。”

contact with Westerners that Wang was able to build up his confidence again. By chanting Chinese poems, giving talks on Chinese culture to Westerners and introducing Western technology and culture to the Chinese, Wang was able to demonstrate his significance to his contemporaries and posterity. This is in line with his claim in the Preface of *Jottings of My Roamings* to record his experiences so that they would not “pass with the wind and dust, and eventually become mere dreams and bubbles.”⁹⁹

Conclusion

Ian Chapman states that the *Jottings of My Roamings* is “rare among early accounts in being dominated by human beings rather than machines and institutions.”¹⁰⁰ However, from the above analysis, we can go one step further by stating that in this travel account it is not the trip of Wang Tao or the people he met during the journey that dominate, but the traveller himself. In fact, the traveller’s preoccupation with the self goes beyond the enumeration of events and situations: the book paints a self portrait rather than just an account of an exotic journey. Instead of recounting factually what happens to him, Wang likes to present events in a dramatic way in order to make himself stand out. Thus, the book is written in a dramaturgic rather than factual style, adding a flavour of fiction to the semi-documentary prose.

The domination of the traveller’s expression of self is in line with his objective to record his life events. From the preface, it is clear that Wang regarded his overseas journeys as the most important achievements of his life. Before his trip to the West, he was very much the same as any traditional Chinese literati who failed in civil service examinations and wanted to be a recluse. However, because of his disputes with the Taipings and more importantly, because he was living in the dynamic Late Qing period, Wang had new opportunities that his predecessors had not enjoyed. During his journeys, through continuous interaction with other cultures and reflections on his self identity, Wang Tao found his role, first as an intellectual concerned with state affairs and ways to strengthen his homeland, and eventually as a cosmopolitan intellectual who wanted to bring about understanding among different cultures, contributing not only to China, but also to the world.

⁹⁹ Wang Tao, “Preface,” p. 29.

¹⁰⁰ Ian Chapman, p. 165.

論王韜《漫遊隨錄》塑造的自我形象

(中文摘要)

徐 瑋

王韜(1828–1897)，江蘇長洲甫里人，因「黃畹」上書太平天國一案逃亡香港，後得英人理雅各(James Legge, 1815–1897)邀請協助翻譯經書，於1869年冬踏上歐遊之路，道經法國，旅居英國近兩年。1879年，王氏應日人寺田望南之請至日本。這兩次旅行的經歷分別記於《漫遊隨錄》和《扶桑遊記》。王氏西遊歐洲，東至扶桑，這樣的經歷在其同代的知識份子中是罕見的，因而造就了王氏與別不同的世界觀。

王韜向來為學術界熱門的研究對象。其政治思想、辦報理念，以至於其文學，如散文、小說等都不乏研究文章，然而鮮有以其遊記作為研究的主體。事實上，作為晚清首位西遊的文人，王韜的《漫遊隨錄》不但在中西交流文化史上有重要的意義，也是研究域外旅遊文學不可忽視的作品。

傳統中國遊記以自然景色或地理資料作為主要素材，旅行的主導——旅行者的形象卻並不突出。晚清以降，有識之士紛紛主張向西方學習，甚至親身到西方尋找富國強兵之道。他們留下的文字紀錄了中國人旅行的全新體驗，致使晚清旅行文學發展出新的特質。置身於文化反差極大的西方，中國的旅行者無可避免地反省自我的文化身份、形象、甚至自己作為中國知識份子的使命。而王韜則把這些反省的結果寫入遊記之中。通過跨文化經驗，書中的王韜漸漸擺脫了科舉失敗的傷痛，尋找到屬於自己的人生路向——文化中介者。這雖然不能說就是王韜的真實形象，卻是他所期許的自我形象。因此《漫遊隨錄》不但是王氏西遊的紀錄，更可作為自傳觀之。本文先簡述王韜生平，再以文本細讀的方法，分析王氏如何藉著遊記的模式來書寫生平，並以之塑造的自我形象。

關鍵詞：王韜 《漫遊隨錄》 自我形象 晚清域外旅遊

Keywords: Wang Tao, *Manyou suilu*, self image, late Qing foreign travels