

intellectual messages of the classics; these moral applications were teased out via overarching hermeneutical paradigms based on key philosophico-psychological terms such as the mind, reason, *qi*, human nature, desire, and the Way. The success gained by these schools in their respective approaches brought them great renown, and are fair characterizations of their *raison d'être* and daily scholarly occupations.

The original organizing principle of my treatment of Qing classical scholarship was to devote vol. 4 of my series to Han Learning, and dedicate vol. 5 to Song learning. But by the time I finished chapter six of the present study, I came to realize that these two fundamental elements in their approaches to classical scholarship actually bound these separate schools together. I found that Song learning classicists who concentrated on interpretation often engaged in preliminary philological handling of texts before producing their interpretive studies. Another level on which these two elements are bound together I define as a discourse devoted to “meanings and principles” (*yili* 義理). This element was actually a strong presence in Qing period Han learning, as evinced by the hermeneutical approaches of such hardcore philologists as Dai Zhen 戴震 (1727–1787), Jiao Xun 焦循 (1763–1820), Lving Tingkan 凌廷堪 (1757–1809), and Ruan Yuan 阮元 (1764–1849) as they produced important interpretive studies of various classics.² Jiao Xun actually opposed the use of the technical term “evidential research” to characterize Han learning during his lifetime because it obscured the importance of interpretive studies that were equally revealing of the scope of the school and its impact on multiple levels.³

Nevertheless, it is as convenient as it is customary to view Han learning as mainly philological, and Song learning as mainly interpretive. To some eyes, Han learning also gained the negative connotation of petty, fussy textuality. A private sociality of dedicated philologists studied, it seemed, for the sake of study, a duty they felt they owed to classical scholarship. Such unswerving and obsessive attention to the trees of textual facts often led to a dry technicality that inspired both a negative reaction and sometimes well-deserved derision, for it often missed the forest of the teachings to be derived from these texts. And since interpreters found much of their purpose to ameliorate modern ills by re-interpreting the messages of the classics, the technicalities of texts did not occupy them. Similar to Modern Text (*jinwen* 今文) partisans of the Western Han dynasty (206–24 BC), they were more concerned with the “subtle words and grand meaning” (*weiyanyu* 微言大義) of the classics. When they focused on a particular word, it was not to verify its orthography, reconstruct its ancient phonology, or apply any other philological test; rather, they endeavored to extract meaning and praxis that was often only discernable within an overarching hermeneutic framework. It was the Old Text (*guwen* 古文) school of classicists of the Eastern Han (AD 25–220) which engaged in hard-scrabble grappling

² Tian Fumei 田富美, *Qian-Jia jingxue shilun: yi Han-Song zhi zheng wei hexin zhi yanjiu* 乾嘉經學史論：以漢宋之爭為核心之研究 (Taipei: Wen Shi Zhe Chubanshe, 2013), 7. For a wide range of studies, see Lin Qingzhang 林慶彰 and Zhang Shou'an 張壽安, eds. *Qian-Jia xuezhe de yilixue* 乾嘉學者的義理學, 2 vols. (Taipei: Zhongyang Yanjiuyuan Wen-Zhe Suo, 2003) and Wang Xuequn 汪學群, *Qingdai juan* 清代卷, in Tang Yijie 湯一介 and Li Zhonghua 李中華, eds. *Zhongguo Ruxueshi* 中國儒學史 (Beijing: Beijing Daxue Chubanshe, 2011), 326–431.

³ Tian, *Qian-Jia jingxue shilun*, 63.

with texts. This was natural, given that the sources of these texts were transmitted manuscripts written in ancient scripts discovered hidden up in walls or buried in tombs, while New Texts were new productions resulting from the transcription of these ancient texts that were written in mostly forgotten scripts, into modern contemporary orthography. And sometimes transcriptions were based on an oral recitation dictated from memory.⁴

Without descending into any depth to identify other defining characteristics of New Text/Old Text orientations, the terms Han learning and Old Text learning in this study are synonymous with the philological approach and a certain set of classics, and the terms Song learning and New Text learning are synonymous with the interpretive approach and an alternate prioritization of classics.⁵ One theory holds that the terms Han and Song learning were first formulated in the early Qing by Mao Qiling 毛奇齡 (1623–1716) and soon became widely embraced.⁶ Qi Yongxiang, the annotator of a modern edition of the important work by Jiang Fan 江藩 (1761–1831), *Record of the Masters' Transmission of Han Learning*, rather traces the origin of the term Han learning to Jiang Fan's masterful survey.⁷ The term Song learning is used to cover such disparate schools during the Qing dynasty as early Qing holdouts of the Neo-Confucian orthodoxy, which stream of thought was actually the official ideology during the entire Qing period, the mid-Qing New Text school that sought political guidance and solutions from the texts of the three canonized commentaries on the *Spring and Autumn Annals* 春秋, Zuo's Commentary 左傳, Gongyang's Commentary 公羊傳, and Guliang's Commentary 穀梁傳, the Changzhou 常州 school of that emphasized embodying the Way in elegant prose, the late Qing effort to shift the emphasis of speculative hermeneutics away from the *li* 理 of rational principle to the *li* 禮 of rituality, and other late movements to re-task education, reform the government, and to save the Chinese world. The late Qing father and son duo of classicists,

⁴ The best introduction in English to the intellectual background of the late-Ming early Qing classical scholarship is Elman, *From Philosophy to Philosophy*. For Chinese, consult Chen Zuwu 陳祖武, *Qingchu xueshu sibianlu* 清初學術思辨錄 (Np: Zhongguo Shehui Kexue Chubanshe, 1992); Chen Zuwu 陳祖武, *Qingdai xueshu yuannliu* 清代學術源流 (Beijing: Beijing Shifan Daxue Chubanshe, 2012), 1–154; Jiang Guanghui 姜廣輝 ed. *Qingdai jingxue sixiangshi* 清代經學思想史, 4 vols. (Beijing: Zhongguo Shehui Kexue Chubanshe, 2003), vol. 4; Wang Xuequn 汪學群, “Qingdai juan” 清代卷, in *Zhongguo Ruxueshi*, 8:28–325; Yang Jing 楊菁, *Qingchu lixue sixiang yanjiu* 清初理學思想研究 (Taipei: Liren Shuju, 2008); Xie Guozhen 謝國楨, *Mingmo Qingchu de xuefeng* 明末清初的學風 (Shanghai: Shanghai Shudian, 2004), 1–48.

⁵ On the nature of these two camps, see the useful and insightful introduction by Tang Zhijun 湯志鈞, *Jindai jingxue yu zhengzhi* 近代經學與政治 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 2000), 37–85.

⁶ Zhang Lizhu 張麗珠, “‘Han–Song zhi zheng’, nanyi tiaohu de genben qijian” 漢宋之爭難以調和的根本歧見, in *Qian–Jia xuezhe de yilixue*, 乾嘉學者的義理學, 2 vols. Lin Qingzhang 林慶彰 and Zhang Shou'an 張壽安, eds. (Taipei: Zhongyang Yanjiuyuan Zhongguo Wen–Zhe Yanjiusuo, 2003), 235. An introduction to the various close synonyms of Han Learning, including *puxue*, *kaozheng*, and one not noted above, “the learning during the Qian–Jia period” (乾嘉之學), see Sun Jianqiu 孫劍秋, “Qingdai Hanxue xingcheng yuanyin zonglun” 清代漢學形成原因總論, *Qingdai xueshu luncong* 清代學術論叢 1 (2001): 13–16. Sun opts for the term of Han learning, one preferred by Qing classicists themselves, to encompass the textual approach of Qing classicists; he further adds that it nicely contrasts with the term “Song learning.”

⁷ Under title of *Hanxue shicheng ji jianshi* 漢學師承記箋釋, 2 vols. Annotated by Qi Yongxiang 漆永祥 (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 2006), 1:35, n. 6.

Huang Shisan 黃式三 (1789–1862) and Huang Yizhou 黃以周 (1828–1899), who impelled the reorientation of research from *li* as reason to *li* as ritual, were both regarded as “amalgamated” classicists who “based themselves on Han masters but venerated Song learning” (*zong Han zun Song* 宗漢尊宋).

This late concern for combining both Han and Song learning occasionally had emerged early on in the Qing dynasty. It is true that Han learning denoted an exclusive attention to textual matters as the end all and be all of research, as if solving such complexities would lead to some self-evident higher truth without any further effort at explication. Most of such hide-bound textualists did not take the additional step away from the text towards interpretation until the Qianjia period as exemplified by Sun Xidan 孫希旦 (1736–1784), the most authoritative Qing commentator on the *Records of Ritualists* 禮記. Sun revealed the ultimate pragmatic purpose of his scholarship in the following phraseology: “Read this ritual classic just like viewing these rites with one’s own eyes, then enact them with one’s own person” 讀禮經當如目親見之而身親行之.⁸ In other words, the purpose of philological scholarship was to establish a correct text, access its message, and to apply it. Such an emotional, internalized commitment to a text and what it teaches as exemplified by Sun Xidan was not the overriding concern of many rationally detached Han learning partisans. Yet Sun’s commitment to philological rigor cannot be questioned. Similarly, Wang Maohong 王懋竑 (1668–1741) was an earlier philologist who was steeped in the original Han learning of Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127–200) and Fu Qian 服虔 (late 2nd century AD), yet his choice of texts to specialize in were the works of Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200), and also the imperially sponsored compilation *Summa Theologica of Rational Learning* 理學大全.⁹ Wang’s rigorous approach to philology that was devoted to the aim of classical hermeneutics is reminiscent of Wang Fuzhi’s 王夫之 (1619–1692) more notable example of this brand of scholarship a generation earlier.

Three rather obscure scholars are worth a brief look to provide concrete examples of “amalgamated” classicists such as the Huangs, father and son, mentioned above only in spare abstract. The Huangs will be treated at length in vol. 5, so need not detain us here.

Wang Fu 汪紱 (1692–1759) from Wuyuan 婺源, anciently part of southern Anhui, was a contemporary of Hui Dong 惠棟 (1697–1758), the *primus inter pares* of transitional classicists

⁸ Sun Xidan, “Xingzhuang” 行狀, in *Liji jijie* 禮記集解, 3 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua Shujue, 1989), 1: 6.

⁹ So sound was the philological basis of Wang’s classical studies that Zhang Shunhui views him as a forerunner of the Yangzhou school of evidential research since his natal place was near Yangzhou. See Zhang’s treatment of Wang that commences Zhang’s analysis of the Yangzhou school in Zhang, *Qingdai Yangzhou xueji*, 19–36. More details on Wang’s studies on Zhu Xi are revealed by Lin Hongzhang. He categorizes Wang’s contributions of scholarship concerning Zhu Xi into four grand areas: 1, Zhu’s studies on the *Yijing*; 2, the *Jiali* 家禮 had not been composed by Zhu; 3, he compiled a chronological biography and critical study of it; and 4, he compiled the work *Zhu zi lunxue qieyaoyu* 朱子論學切要語. See Lin Qingzhang 林慶彰, “Wang Maohong de Zhuzi xue” 王懋竑的朱子學, *Qingdai xueshu luncong* 1 (2001): 417–26. Wang’s biography in the *Qingshi liezhuan* records his major works as including an annotated version of Zhu Xi’s literary selections and an annotated version of Zhu Xi’s *yulu* 語錄. *Qingshi liezhuan* 清史列傳, 20 vols. (1987; 2nd printing Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 2005), 17:5368.

between early Qing and the Qian-Jia era. Wang's case of ecumenical classicism is rather unique in that nowhere is Han learning contrasted with Song learning in his biography, as is the case of the next two scholars to be introduced. Yet he was a prolific author of classical studies that embraced both philological glossing and interpretive musings.¹⁰ Of his 13 works in some 104 scrolls, two "sections and lines" philological commentaries, one on the *Classic of Filial Piety* and one on the *Records of Ritualists*, together with a study of the rhymes of the *Poems*, reflect his interest and ability in textual criticism. His remaining ten studies along hermeneutic lines bear out the conclusion of his biography that, "And in all his works he uniformly adhered to the learning of the Five Song Masters" 而一以宋五子之學為歸;¹¹ this quintet included Zhou Dunyi 周敦頤 (1017–1073), Shao Yong 邵雍 (1011–1077), Zhang Zai 張載 (1020–1077), Cheng Hao 程顥 (1032–1085), and Cheng Yi 程頤 (1033–1107). As the five founding figures of Song metaphysically based morality, their learning obviously guided Wang Fu's research in the hermeneutics of the classics. His "amalgamated" learning clearly skewed away from philology towards interpretation. The most unique aspect of his classical profile occurred after 10 years of intense research and writing, for at that point he suddenly burned all his works and decided to only write after abandoning research and reason, instead opting "to write directly after concentrating his mind" 凝神直書.¹² Such an approach clearly only worked in interpretive, not philological, works. The imbalance between philology and interpretation is reminiscent of the work of Wang Fuzhi, who was a capable philologist but worked preponderately in the field of hermeneutics. Both scholars confirm my working hypothesis that Han and Song learning stances were intellectual choices, made out of concern for the scholarly task at hand.

The last two classicists to review in brief lived during the late Qing period, and better match the definition of "amalgamated" classicists, for their biographies openly portray them as non-partisan scholars, partaking of the best of both Han and Song learning. The first one was Cheng Ru 成孺 (1816–1883) from Baoying 寶應, central Jiangsu near Yangzhou.¹³ He was enormously erudite in numerous fields, including such endeavors based on philologically-acquired data as the geography of the "Tribute of Yu" 禹貢 chapter of the *Esteemed Documents*, four studies of ancient calendars, a study of the medieval phonology of the *Isolated Rhymes* 切韻 in five scrolls, and astronomy; yet he also produced 13 reflective studies of the interpretation of the thought of Zhu Xi. His biography describes his intellectual orientation as follows:

With regard to the two lineages of Han and Song learning, Cheng Ru established the facts and sought the truth, and did not adopt partisan views. He once stated, with profound confusion, "When studying for oneself, employ Song learning to be an authentic Confucian; employing Han learning will also make one an authentic Confucian. But

¹⁰ Wu Fu's biography is at *Qingshigao* 480.13152–153.

¹¹ *Qingshigao* 480.13152.

¹² *Qingshigao* 480.13153. The term "concentrating his mind" derives from *Zhuangzi*, and refers to the technique of meditation to focus the mind on an object to close down the physical mind and allow the spiritual mind to emerge.

¹³ Cheng Ru's biographies are at *Qingshi liezhuan* 67.5430–31, *Qingshigao* 480.13161–162.

when studying for others, employing Han learning will make one a pseudo Confucian; employing Song learning will also make one a pseudo Confucian.”

孺於漢、宋兩家，實事求是。不為門戶之見。嘗曰：為己，則治宋學真儒也，治漢學亦真儒。為人，則治漢學偽儒也，治宋學亦偽儒。¹⁴

The thrust of this seemingly contradictory passage seems to be that study of the classics must consistently be dedicated to one's own moral cultivation, notwithstanding the particular approach employed or subject at hand. This is confirmed by an additional quotation preserved in his biography:

Interpretation is what the *Analects* regards as learning major truths; philology learns minor truths. Neither of them but embody the way of the Sages within them. Serving one's father and lord are matters of great truth. Learning much about the names of birds and beasts, plants and trees are matters of minor truth: all of them are endorsed by the teachings of the *Poems*, yet differentiate between both fundamentals and non-essentials, what is important and what is negligible.

義理，論語所為識大是也；考證，識小是也。莫不有聖人之道焉。事父事君，識大也。多識鳥獸草木之名，識小也：皆詩教所不廢，然不可無本末輕重之差。¹⁵

The last so-called “amalgamated” classist was Liu Xizai 劉熙載 (1813–1881), who was just ten years older than the above-mentioned Huang Yizhou. Born in Xinghua 興化, northern Jiangsu, Liu earned his “presented scholar” degree in 1844 and was a classicist *cum* educationalist, who once tutored in the Upper Studio 上書房, the private school for princes of the blood in the Forbidden City during the Qing, supervised a term of regional examinations in Guangzhou, and once taught in the national academy.¹⁶

As for Liu's classical scholarship, it is characterized as follows in his biography:

In Xizai's treatment of the classics, he held off from any partisan Han or Song views. When discussing “probing the principle of things”, he concurrently adopted the views Zheng Xuan.¹⁷ When discussing the Mao version of the *Poems*, he did not abandon Wu Yu's harmonization of rhymes.¹⁸ When reading the chapter on “Explaining Glosses” of

¹⁴ *Qingshigao* 480.13161.

¹⁵ *Qingshigao* 480.13161.

¹⁶ See Liu Xizai's biography at *Qingshi gao* 480.13158–159.

¹⁷ This catch phrase of Song philosophers “probing the principle of things”, was approached by Song Neo-Confucians through a hermeneutic framework, not philologically such as had been done by the Eastern Han textual critic Zheng Xuan (127–200).

¹⁸ Wu Yu 吳棫 (ca. 1100–1154) was a Song scholar who helped pioneer the study of ancient phonology. In his treatment of the rhymes of the *Shijing*, he would “harmonize the rhymes” (*xieyun* 叶音) to make sure the rhymes fit by adjusting them on the fly in an ad hoc manner; his approach was unsystematic and should not have been taken

the *Close to Elegance Onomasticon*, he determined that the four words *an*, *wu*, *tai*, and *yu* subsumed all sounds....¹⁹ During his life he became well versed in the *Six Classics*, the *Masters*, the *Histories*, as well as the words of the Daoists and Buddhists.

熙載治經，無漢、宋門戶之見。其論格物，兼取鄭義，論毛詩古韻，不廢吳棫叶音。讀爾雅釋詁至印、吾、台、予，以為四字能攝一切之音.....生平於六經子史及仙釋家言靡不通曉。

To sum up the discussion thus far, two major points of similarities were shared by both Han and Song learning classical schools; the first was the employment of the research methodology of philology. In the case of Song classicists it was often merely propaedeutic to some degree. The second point was interpretive hermeneutics along the line of Song, Yuan, Ming speculative “meanings and principles” philosophizing, again only to some degree in the case of Han learning classicists of the Qian-Jia era. Given this reality, I decided that my design for volumes four and five of the Qing portion of *A History of Chinese Classical Scholarship* was unnecessarily overlapping and repetitive. Instead of devoting one volume to Han learning and one to Song learning, I changed formats to a chronological presentation that focuses on each major classicist and emphasizes his utilization, refinement, or development of the discipline of philology. After all, volumes two and three of this series followed this same organizational track and emphasis. But this perspective is adopted in this series as an organizing narrative principle, not as a portrayal of how traditional Qing classicists viewed their own intellectual history.

It may be useful at this point to insert a comparative perspective from the tradition of medieval Biblical exegesis of Rabbinic Judaism. Among the various strategies employed were the antipodes of *peshat* (*pshat*), or the plain, literal meaning of the text, and *derash* (*drash*), the interpreted or homiletically applied meaning of the text in Rabbinic Judaism. In the case of Abraham ibn Ezra (1089-1164), the great grammarian and commentator, he based his explication of the Hebrew Bible on his command of grammar and lexicography.²⁰ Irene Lancaster presents his fundamental approach to Biblical commentary as follows:

The fifth path [of Jewish approaches to the knowledge of God through the Bible] is ibn Ezra's own, the direct path to God. This path demands a knowledge of grammar, science

seriously by late Qing phonologists; but the citation of Wu Yu is meant to demonstrate Liu's lack of partisanship towards Han learning, even at the expense of cutting-edge research in historical linguistics.

¹⁹ The elided passages discuss his views on other linguistic matters, such as the use of glides, alliteration, assonance, and rhymes and the Six Scripts, or principles of character formation. The four characters isolated by Liu are the four initial characters in a series of nine characters of nine that all mean “I”: 印 *ang*, 吾 *wu*, 台 *tai*, 予 *yu*, 朕 *zhen*, 身 *shen*, 甫 *fu*, 余 *yu*, 言 *yan*, 我 *wo* 也. Hao Yixing 郝懿行, *Erya yishu* “Shigu” 爾雅義釋詁, *Han xiaoxue sizhong* 漢小學四種 ed., 2 vols. (Chengdu: Ba-Shu Shushe, 2001) 2:913 (1a.49). The first word *ang* is reconstructed in Middle Chinese as *ɲaŋ* rising tone; *wu* is reconstructed as *ɲuə* rising tone; *tai* is reconstructed as *ji* level tone; *yu* is reconstructed as *ya*, also level tone. There is no apparent reason that these four words may “subsum” (*she* 攝) all sounds (yin 音); even if we translate “sounds” as “tones”, we are no closer to apprehending Liu's intention.

²⁰ Alan J. Hauser and Duane F. Watson, ed., *A History of Biblical Interpretation*. Vol. 2: *The Medieval through the Reformation Periods* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 17–18, 151–54.

and all contemporary secular subjects, as well as insight into Written and Oral Torah. For ibn Ezra, such comprehensive knowledge is essential if a seeker wishes to fathom the depths of the hidden meanings embedded in the biblical texts....According to David Weiss Halivni, for the Jews...the main hermeneutic problem was the dichotomy between *pshat* and *drash*, with allegory playing a relatively minor role....For the Christian commentators, allegory was of primary importance, literal and rhetorical interpretations taking second place.²¹

The final step in the maturation of the textually focused approach was taken by the only medieval Jewish commentator more renowned than ibn Ezra, the nonpareil commentator Rabbi Solomon ben Issac, known popularly by his acronym Rashi (1040-1105); it turns out that the latter figure was most likely influenced by his younger contemporary ibn Ezra's philological prowess and concern for contexts—historical, cultural, and linguistic. Rashi largely removed from serious exegetical consideration the traditional commentaries, both oral and written, known as *midrash*. According to an authoritative scholarly source, "Whereas *midrash* allows for a fanciful reading, encouraging embellishment of details and often stressing a moral or legal teaching, *peshat* came to connote a reading that fit the actual 'meaning' of a text, as understood by a particular commentator."²² It is not hard to discern echoes of Song learning speculative hermeneutics in the freewheeling readings of the *midrash*. Of course, the parallels between Han learning versus Song learning and *peshat* versus *derash* outlook are not exact, but it is curious that many partisan *derash* practitioners claimed that their applied readings and conjectural inferences were ensconced within concrete *peshat* textual literalism.²³

It is appropriate to review in the next section the traditional viewpoint that colored Qing and most modern discussions of classical scholarship during this dynasty. This is important since I am confident that most Qing classicists of either persuasion, Song or Han learning, would not subscribe to my view of the inherent similarity between these schools given their adoption of both methodological stances of philology and philosophy, depending on the scholarly task at hand. They would most likely subscribe to the inherent division between their two camps as perceived by hardcore intellectual partisans who believed in the rightness of their preferred methodological approaches, the superiority of their choices of classics and commentators to prioritize, and the importance to the state of the results of their scholarship. And frequently, these beliefs were defended by vociferous, sometimes vesuvian, arguments. Even more frequently was the unacknowledged impact of entrenched world views that kept these camps divided as a natural condition of scholarly reality, which required that scholars self-identify as either Han school textual critics or Song school textual interpreters.²⁴ The detached vision sketched above of

²¹ Irene Lancaster, *Deconstructing the Bible: Abraham ibn Ezra's Introduction to the Torah* (London: Rutland, 2003), 7–8, 55.

²² Hauser and Watsons, eds., *A History of Biblical Interpretation*, 2:144.

²³ David Weiss Halivni, *Peshat and Derash: Plain and Applied Meaning in Rabbinic Exegesis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).

²⁴ For the case of the two Cantonese classicists Chen Li 陳澧 (1810–1882) and Zhu Ciqi 朱次琦 (1807–1882), both universally regarded as "amalgamated" Confucians who embraced both Han and Song learning values yet who

choosing the appropriate methodology for the textual task at hand seemingly was scarcely acknowledged by Qing classicists of any persuasion.

1.2

Intellectual Background: The Traditional Understanding of the Han/Song Competition During the Qing

During the early Qing, the separate concentration on the substance of classical texts on the one hand, and on the essence and pragmatic application of their lessons on the other, is the direct result of widespread reaction against the prevailing intellectual climate of the previous three major dynasties, the Song (960–1279), Yuan (1279–1368), and Ming (1368–1644). This attack lightly and easily skipped over the fact that philologists often indulged themselves in their own philosophical musings. Nevertheless, this intellectual outlook from these earlier dynasties eschewed substantial learning grounded on reading, research, and annotation in favor of reflective hermeneutics presented usually in the form of oral discourse, and based on thinking, theorizing, and psychologizing. None of these three later approaches seemed of practical value to Qing thinkers when addressing pressing contemporary problems. Qing classicists were especially vituperative in their critique of this approach on the part of Ming scholars, which was castigated as “empty and far-removed” (*kongshu* 空疏), the same aspersion cast against earlier Song dynasty philosophizing classicists. Of course, the rise of any intellectual movement cannot be simply ascribed to a direct reaction against the prevailing ideology, as important a factor as this may have been. Of course, other factors either impelled or facilitated such a rise, but will not concern us here.²⁵

The main target of early Qing reactionary classicists was the Learning of the Mind advocated by Wang Yangming 王陽明 (1472–1529), whose approach to classical scholarship was to turn inwards, even further way from texts.²⁶ One of the three early Qing masters Wang Fuzhi, for instance, granted the great Northern Song dynasty classical master Zhu Xi a measure of respect for his editorial intervention in the “Great Learning” 大學 chapter of the *Records of Ritualists* in the attempt to make some sense of a very garbled text; Zhu Xi attributed the textual

sometimes unconsciously defaulted to their fallback partisan stances, witness Cao Meixiu 曹美秀, “Wan-Qing Han Song shiye Zhong de Zhuzi—yi Chen Li yu Zhu Ciqi wei li” 晚清漢、宋學視野中的朱子—以陳澧與朱次琦為例, *Cheng Da zhongwen xuebao* 31 (2010): 159–88.

²⁵ But Sun Jianqiu does conveniently note some factors that contributed to the rise and facilitated the flourishing of Han learning: 1, The methodological models and research agendas set by scattered philologists during the preceding Ming dynasty and early Qing masters. 2, The “returning to antiquity” (*fugu* 復古) movement. 3, The trend towards the belief in “mastering the classics to apply their practical uses” (*tongjing zhiyong* 通經致用). 4, An inevitable necessity in the development of Confucianism. 5, A counter-reaction to the school of Wang Yangming. 6, Pressure from literary inquisitions to avoid sensitive topics. 7, The promotion of scholarship by the ruling class. 8, Political stability and unity. 9, Economic development and prosperity. 10, Great strides made in the printing and collecting of books. 11, The compilations of large collections of books. And 12, the introduction of Western science, in particular astronomy and mathematics. Sun Jianqiu, “Qingdai Hanxue xingcheng yuanyin zonglun”, 16–24.

²⁶ For aspersions against Wang Yangming by early Qing classicists, consult Cheng Fuwang 成復旺, “Fanhui jingdian, zouxiang shixue—luelun Ming-Qing zhi ji xueshu sixiang de zhuanbian” 返回經典, 走向實學—略論明清之際學術思想的轉變, *Qingdai xueshu luncong* 1 (2001): 6–8.

corruption to some misplaced strips of bamboo, and accordingly felt free to rearrange the order of individual passages.²⁷ But as for the approach of Wang Yangming and his followers, Wang Fuzhi's negative assessment was that they "abandoned practical learning, exalted emptiness and the far-removed, disdained customs and conventions, and indulged in intellectual dissipation" 廢實學崇空疏，蔑規矩，恣狂蕩。²⁸ In retrospect, Wang Yangming's classicism seemed much too disengaged from reality, especially from such terrestrial challenges as critical reading of the classics, operating a far-flung bureaucracy—educating, recruiting through examinations, training, and supervising officials—and defending a weakened central authority. This widespread anti-scholarly emphasis on speculative thought and far-ranging reflection rather than substantial learning and practical action (in the moral but not scholarly field), was blamed for the fall of the Ming to the Manchu invaders who founded the Qing dynasty. This tragic and contemporary condition was rightfully compared by Gu Yanwu to the same intellectual rot that had taken hold on the eve of the fall of the north to northern nomadic invaders in the early fourth century AD. The ill-fated ideology that undermined the urgent imperatives of practical statecraft was known as "Pure Conversations" (*qingtan* 清談), which referred to deep discussions on profoundly trivial subjects, usually targeting the Daoist sages Laozi and Zhuangzi. Gu compares this fourth century fixation on Daoist speculation with contemporary preoccupation with Chan Buddhism.²⁹

What is broadly termed as Neo-Confucian orthodoxy strictly refers to the imperially sanctioned Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucian school of classical scholarship; it was afforded this privileged monopoly as the foundation of the entire examination system from 1313 until 1905. On the level of doctrinal discourse, however, Neo-Confucianism loosely included such schools of separate emphases as that which investigated the Dao or Learning of the Way (*daoxue* 道學), one which mused over the nature of an immanent principle, or Rational Learning (*lixue* 理學), and one which probed the font of sainthood in the mind or Learning of the Mind (*xinxue* 心學).

Jiang Fan, author of the imposing tome on the lineage of Qing Han learning cited above, was an intellectual historian who also produced a slim survey of Song Learning. The complete titles of these two works pointed up the two fundamental research approaches that prevailed during these two dynasties, Han and Song: *Record of the Masters' Transmission of Han Learning* for the former, and *A Record of the Sources of Song Learning* 宋學淵源記 for the latter:

With the rise of the Han, Confucian masters gathered up all the books from the remains of the ashes of Qin and transmitted these remains to a future that would have lost all

²⁷ Wang Fuzhi, *Liji zhangju* 禮記章句, in *Chuanshan quanji* 船山全集, 16 vols. (Changsha: Yue-Lu Shushe, 2011), juan 42, 4: 1468. For similar sentiments by Gu Yanwu 顧炎武 (1613–1682), see Gu Yanwu, "Da Li Zide shu" 答李子德書, in Gu Yanwu, *Gu Yanwu quanji* 顧炎武全集, 22 vol. (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 2011), 21:122–27; p. 127.

²⁸ Wang Fuzhi, *Chuanshan quanji*, 4:1468. For similar sentiments by Gu Yanwu that endorsed Zhu Xi's editorial decisions, see Gu, "Da Li Zide shu" 答李子德書, in Gu, *Gu Yanwu quanji*, 21:122–27; p. 127.

²⁹ Gu, "Fuzi zhi yan xing yu tiandao" 夫子之言性與天道, in Gu, *Rizhi lu quanji jiaoben* 日知錄全集校本, 3 vols. (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 2009), 1:402.

hope. Lord Zheng [Xuan] of Gaomi [eastern Shandong], working in Luoyang, gathered up all great accomplishments. He studied ancient glosses and investigated the rites and music and was thereby able to master the words of the sages; the learning of correcting the mind and making one's intent sincere was naturally clarified. The foundation of the education for moral transformation derived from the rites and music and the ways of self-cultivation and maintaining peace were naturally formulated. Commencing with the Song dynasty founded by the Zhao lineage, the books read by Zhou Dunyi (1017–1073), Cheng Yi (1033–1107), Cheng Hao (1032–1085), Zhang Zai (1020–1077) and Zhu Xi were all interpretive commentaries by early Confucians; only through reading these interpretive commentaries could they begin to be capable of explicating on a lofty level the principles underlying nature and fate. If it were not for the transmission of the classics by Han Confucians, then the sacred classics and worthy traditional commentaries would have long since fallen by the wayside. How would Song Confucians then be able to discuss nature and fate in such a lofty manner?

漢興儒生攬摭群籍於火燼之餘，傳遺經於既絕之後。厥功偉哉！東京高密鄭君集其大成，肄故訓，究禮樂，以故訓通聖人之言而正心誠意之學自明矣。以禮樂為教化之本而修齊治平之道自成矣。爰及趙宋周程張朱所讀之書先儒之義疏也。讀義之書始能闡性命之理。苟非漢儒傳經則聖經賢傳久墜於地。宋儒何能高談性命耶？³⁰

I skip Jiang's treatment of the internal conflicts among these various schools associated with these Neo-Confucian masters and how only Zhu Xi among them valued Zheng Xuan's scholarship.

In the above passage, Jiang Fan justifies the use of ancient Han Learning, as ultimately codified by Zheng Xuan, as the foundation of classical scholarship, to first reconstitute the classics, to explicate them through word glosses, to isolate the lessons of moral development and the political way, and to transmit these texts and lessons to later ages. Early Qing Confucians often expressed their disgust at the theoretical bent of Neo-Confucian thinkers as they remained too far separated from the textual sources of the Confucian canon. In this formulation, distance assuredly did provide perspective, but unfortunately also a paucity of evidence to ground and guide interpretations, for scholarship can never be replaced by philosophy or theology in interpreting the classics, according to the mindset of Qing Han Learning partisans.

As mentioned above, during the early Qing, the prevailing intellectual orthodoxy was that of Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi's amalgamated reading of the classics, which was vigorously promoted by the Kangxi Emperor 康熙 (r. 1661–1722). This school of thought not only provided the factual basis for exam preparation and the standardized interpretations that informed the basis of successful advancement throughout the succession of local, regional, and national exams, it was in the intellectual ether as the unacknowledged ontological world view. It furthermore formed an almost theologized program for moral self-cultivation that was the inspiration for dedicated

³⁰ Jiang Fan, *Songxue yuanyuanji-fu fuji* 宋學淵源記-附附記 (CSJI chubian ed.), 1.1.

scholarship on the part of the majority of classicists.³¹ A late Ming movement towards a closer connection between Neo-Confucian theory and praxis, termed “practical learning” (*shixue* 實學), traced its antecedents in the thought of Zhu Xi and eased the way towards early Qing interest in substantial scholarship. Even though some scholars who promoted this approach often reacted harshly against perceived defects or serious flaws in the Cheng-Zhu approach to classical scholarship, still they remained constrained in their world view by their indoctrination in the tenants of the Cheng-Zhu school.³² Even the most ardent devotee of Eastern Han dynasty classical commentaries, Hui Dong, accepted Cheng-Zhu thought as the foundation of his moral world view, for on a pair of couplets pasted on matching pillars in his studio was the following sentiment composed by his father Hui Shiqi 惠士奇 (1671–1741): “For the Five Classics venerate Fu and Zheng; For the hundred types of conduct emulate Cheng and Zhu” 五經尊服鄭，百行法程朱.³³ Huang Zongxi 黃宗羲 (1610–1695), despite his fame as one of the founders of Qing dynasty practical learning approach to the classics, nevertheless maintained his commitment to some of the goals of Neo-Confucian orthodoxy, and wrote extensively on intellectual history and philosophical concerns at the center of Neo-Confucianism.³⁴ The following extract from his biographical tomb epitaph composed by Quan Zuwang 全祖望 (1705–1755) betrays both Huang’s dissatisfaction with the general trend and practice of Ming scholarship and some residual sympathy for the Ming approach to learning through internal introspection:

My lord once himself stated that when he was studying with Liu Zongzhou [1578–1645], he rather enjoyed the intellectual current of vigorous moral courage but could not avoid being entangled in preparing for the civil service exams; but what he gained was superficial. After the disaster of the fall, he started to study with more penetration. Thereafter he completely released what was obstructing him in his breast and felt great regret for his past focus on out-of-date learning....My lord said that when Ming scholars held classes they followed the failings of the genre of recorded lectures, and did not take the Six Classics as their foundation. They hid up their books and engaged in wandering around presenting lectures. Hence, those who studied under them should have first exhausted their knowledge of the classics, for classical learning is the key to managing the world; only in this way could they avoid the learning of impractical Confucians. Therefore, he also made them read histories. He further stated that if one read little, then

³¹ Yang Jing, *Qingchu lixue sixiang yanjiu*, 1–47.

³² An admirable introduction to this late strain of Neo-Confucianism and its historical development is William Theodore de Bary and Irene Bloom, eds. *Principle and Practicality: Essays in Neo-Confucianism and Practical Learning* (NY: Columbia University Press, 1979).

³³ Jiang, *Songxue yuanyuanji*, 1.2. Fu and Zheng refer to Fu Qian 服虔 (d. ca. 195) and Zheng Xuan. After hearing that Fu’s views on the *Chunqiu Zuozhuan* were similar to his own, Zheng imparted the incomplete draft of his commentary on the *Zuozhuan* to Fu.

³⁴ On this issue, see Yang Zuhan 楊祖漢 and Yang Ziping 楊自平, eds. *Huang Zongxi yu Mingmo Qingchu xueshu* 黃宗羲與明末清初學術 (New Taipei City: Guoli Zhongyang Daxue Chubun Zhongxin and Airiti Press, 2011).

he lacked the means of verifying the transformations of principle; if one read much yet did not seek these transformations in his mind, then this resulted in vulgar learning. Therefore, all who studied with my Lord did not fall into the failings of the lecture format.

公嘗自謂受業戴山時頗喜為氣節斬斬一流又不免牽纏科舉之習所得尚淺患難之餘始多深造於是胸中窒礙為之盡釋而追恨為過時之學.....公謂明人講學襲語錄之糟粕不以六經為根柢束書而從事於游談故受業者必先窮經經術所以經世方不為迂儒之學故兼令讀史又謂讀書不多無以証斯理之變化多而不求於心則為俗學故凡受公之教者不墮講學之流弊。³⁵

Another leading figure of the early Qing who combined practical philology and close reading to reach the interpretive goals of the Neo-Confucian intellectual program is the above mentioned Wang Fuzhi. Wang's study of Zuo's *Commentary* 左傳 on the early classic *Spring and Autumn Annals* 春秋, called *Continuation of Wide-Ranging Discourses on Mr. Zuo's Commentary on the Spring and Autumn Annals* 續春秋左氏傳博議, was a continuation of Lu Zujian's 呂祖謙 (1137-1181) earlier work entitled *Songlai's Wide-Ranging Discourses on Mr. Zuo*. Wang eschews explaining the text; instead, he elects to evaluate certain historical events recorded by Zuo's canonized commentary to extract the principles of exerting government order and differentiating the relationships between the gentleman and the petty man.³⁶ This effort is part of an overall approach designed to isolate and extract ancient lessons for contemporary applications, an orientation that will persist throughout the dynasty, although it is true that this emphasis died down among Han Learning adherents during the Qianlong reign as they tended to lie low to avoid political entanglements. But it did return to prominence with particular urgency late in the dynasty under the aegis of the New Text school. This practical approach to classical scholarship is termed "mastering the classics to apply their practical uses", as already mentioned above.

In this sphere of political pragmatics, Wang again supplies an instructive example in the case of the *Book of Changes* 易經 with his *Esoteric Commentary on the Zhou Changes with Patterns Exposed* 周易內傳發例. This work seeks to discover the essence of the Way as revealed by this classic through a close reading, including philological treatment; in this manner he "masters the classic." His application of this essence lies in how he discovers the location of this Way in disparate human spheres and links them up in a holistic unity to better govern society: he connects learning with life, and the individual with the state and the world. To Deng Liguang, this commentary is a shining example of Wang's exemplification of the practical

³⁵ Quan Zuwang, *Quan Zuwang Jieqitingji jiaozhu* 全祖望鮚埼亭集校注, 4 vols. Ed. Zhan Haiyun 詹海雲 (Taipei: Guojia Bianyinguan, 2003), 2:267-68.

³⁶ See the analysis of Cai Miaozhen 蔡妙真, "Wang Fuzhi Xu Chunqiu Zuoshihuan boyi tanxi" 續春秋左氏傳博議探析, *Jingxue yanjiu lunwencong* 8 (2000): 249-61.

approach encapsulated by the instructive slogan cited above.³⁷ A single quote from another exegetical work on the *Changes* by Wang illustrates how the practical is embedded in his ontological outlook; this quote is the *incipit* of scroll one of the companion piece called *Exoteric Commentary on the Zhou Changes* 周易外傳: “The Way is that which is embodied in things in order to produce the useful in the world” 道，體乎物之中以生天下之用者也。³⁸

The case of Gu Yanwu is also instructive in his catholicity of approach. It is true that in his study of the *Changes*, Gu used no works of any Ming scholar; but it is also true that he prized the readings of Song philosopher Master Cheng above all—“not going through Master Cheng [Cheng Yi], how can the grand meaning be clarified?” 不由程子，大義何由而明乎—a striking imprimatur of the importance he placed on the cosmologico-moral message of this classic apart from the technical integrity of its text.³⁹ The traditional view is that it took until a new generation of classicists emerged to find hard-nosed philologists free from their youthful exposure to Cheng-Zhu philosophy, and that they existed side by side with true believers who remained faithful to the tradition of their fathers. Benjamin Elman’s seminal study of the Qing evidential movement, *From Philosophy to Philology: Intellectual and Social Change in Late Imperial China*, points up this long period of parallel interests since the period of philosophical supremacy was not only as long as the period dominated by the evidential research movement, which was coterminous with the Qian-Jia era, it ran throughout the entire course of the dynasty. But a more nuanced understanding of the issue is that the ontological outlook as centered on the thought of Zhu Xi was deeply ingrained in the consciousness of classicists of all bents, and formed an unconscious framework for understanding matters of morality, psychology, and epistemology.

The case, I suggest, is surely analogous to that of Petrarch (1304–1374), the founding humanist of the Italian Renaissance, who is traditionally viewed as stripping off his Christian world-view when assuming the guise of a rationally, linguistically and belles-lettres oriented poet and prose writer. Recent work has revealed that when he claimed St. Augustine (354–430) as one of his favorite authors, Petrarch was not merely confirming a pro-forma allegiance to his Christian upbringing. Rather, Augustinian thought permeated Petrarch’s worldview and moral compass. According to Alexander Lee:

Petrarch’s interest in the classics was, however, by no means reflective of a narrow focus....Nor, indeed, is it meaningful to suggest either that Petrarch’s writings were anything other than Christian in character, or that his reading of the classics can be understood without an appreciation of his debt to the patristic and medieval traditions....But of all Christian writers, St. Augustine commanded Petrarch’s most profound respect and was the object of his most lasting devotion. Petrarch included Augustine’s works alongside those of Cicero, Virgil, Seneca, and Horace on his list of his

³⁷ Deng Liguang 邓立光, “‘Tongjing zhiyong’—yi Wang Fuzhi de Yixue weili” 通经致用—以王夫之为例, in *Qingdai jingxue yu wenhua* 清代经学与文化, ed. Peng Lin 彭林 (Beijing: Peking University Press, 2005), pp. 1–8.

³⁸ *Zhouyi waizhuan* 周易外傳, in Wang Fuzhi, *Chuanshan quanji*, 1:821. A similar formulation is found on p. 823: “The Dao is the application of the essence of heaven and earth” 道者，天地精粹之用也。

³⁹ Gu, *Rizhlu*, 1:10.