



Undergraduate Dissertation coversheet & feedback form

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<i>For completion by student:</i>		
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Module code: SICH6019	Student ID number: 2016002	Educational support needs: Yes/No
Dissertation title: The Use of <i>yi</i> 以 in the <i>Spring and Autumn Annals</i> and A Rhetorical–Hermeneutic Reading		
Supervisor: <i>Chang kao ping</i>		Word count: 984
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English Review of Dissertation

1. The Early Preparation and Choice of Topic

Last year, I took Professor Zhang Gaoping's course, 'The Writing Style of the *Spring and Autumn Annals* and Classical Interpretation.' In class, Professor Zhang mentioned that the use of the character *yi* 以 in the *Spring and Autumn Annals* was a topic worth studying, and he also referred to his own research on the character *sui* 遂. His explanation made me realise that even a single word in the *Spring and Autumn Annals* could carry rich layers of meaning. This greatly interested me, and I therefore chose 'The Use of *yi* 以 in the *Spring and Autumn Annals* and A Rhetorical–Hermeneutic Reading' as the topic of my dissertation.

In the early stage of collecting materials, I found forty examples of *yi* 以 in the *Spring and Autumn Annals*. I then asked Professor Zhang which commentaries I should consult. He explained that traditional scholarship, as classified in the Complete Books of the Four Storehouses, may broadly be divided into Han learning and Song learning: Han learning and Song learning: the former focuses on textual explanation and philology, while the latter emphasises meaning and principle. Since my dissertation concerns both the use of *yi* 以 and its rhetorical interpretation, Professor Zhang advised me to focus especially on commentaries in the Song learning tradition. He also gave me a list of works by thirty-one scholars of the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, ranging from the Song to the Qing dynasty.

At first, I thought this topic would be easy, since it focused on only one word. However, after Professor Zhang's explanation, I soon realised its difficulty. There were two main challenges:

1. Most of the works listed by Professor Zhang have not been published in modern editions, so I had to consult them in the *Complete Books of the Four Storehouses*, punctuate the texts myself, and organise the materials. This made the initial stage rather difficult.
2. The *Spring and Autumn Annals* contains forty examples of *yi* 以, and I needed to compare the views of thirty-one commentators. In theory, this meant reading about 1,240 passages, which felt overwhelming at first.

Fortunately, I started early. During the summer holiday of my second undergraduate year, I had already begun collecting materials for my dissertation. Since some work had already been done, I felt it would be irresponsible to give up halfway. Therefore, I decided to

continue with the topic.

Later, while collecting materials, I happened to reread my diary from 2016 and 2017. At that time, I was studying at an old-style private school and had a strong interest in classical texts. I had heard Master Jingkong 淨空 say that he wished to establish a Sinology institute to train twenty or thirty people capable of reading the *Complete Books of the Four Storehouses*. I then hoped to become one of them. When I saw this record again, I felt greatly encouraged. I realised that writing this dissertation was also an opportunity to read the *Complete Books of the Four Storehouses* and to test my own ability. With this thought, I felt more settled and continued collecting materials.

2. The Process of Writing the Dissertation

After collecting the materials, I found that scholars held very different views on the writing style of *yi*. I therefore began to ask how one might recover and interpret Confucius's intended meaning in the *Spring and Autumn Annals*. At this point, I recalled Fu Weixun's method of the 'five meanings', which Professor Zhang had mentioned in class. I found that the two levels of 'intended meaning' and 'implicit meaning' could help me classify interpretations of *yi* from the *Three Commentaries* down to the Ming and Qing periods, and thereby trace a clearer line of interpretive development.

At first, I searched for philological materials on the original meaning of *yi*. I found that the *Zuo Tradition* interprets the word mainly according to its basic meaning. This belongs to the level of intended meaning. The *Gongyang* and *Guliang* traditions also build on this foundation, but they gradually move towards the deeper meaning of praise and blame. This belongs to the level of implicit meaning. From the Song dynasty onwards, scholars further developed these interpretations, adding ideas such as right and wrong, and the distinction between *Hua* 華 and *Yi* 夷. These readings were also shaped by their historical contexts. When I organised the materials in this way, I felt a real sense of achievement. I was glad that I could trace the interpretation of a single word in the *Spring and Autumn Annals* from the pre-Qin period down to the Ming and Qing periods.

3. Summary and Reflection

Overall, compared with the earlier stage of collecting materials, the writing process was quite smooth. Of course, I still faced some minor difficulties. For example, I sometimes felt restless and unable to continue writing. When this happened, I would go out for a walk. After

a while, I usually felt better and could return to my work. In general, however, the writing process went smoothly.

Second, writing this dissertation also gave me a basic understanding of how to write a longer academic paper. It helped me understand how long the whole process may take, from preparation to completion. This experience will also help me when I write another paper of a similar length in the future.

Finally, there is reflection and outlook. Writing this dissertation helped me understand how a small research topic can gradually unfold. However, as Professor Zhang once said, some studies only see the tree, and some studies, especially those about methods, only see the forest. A good study should see both the tree and the forest. My dissertation may be regarded as a study that focuses on one tree. In the future, I hope that my research topics and perspectives can move towards studies that see both the forest and the tree.