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# A Discussion on Internal Repetition among Liu Yong's *Ci* Poems and Its Effects on Their Transmission

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## Abstract

Internal repetition in literary works is a common occurrence; however, there are differences in the degree in which it appears. There is a high amount of repetition in the wording, themes, and compositional structure of Liu Yong's 柳永 *ci* poetry. When considering the creative process, the reasons for repetitive and similar texts stem from influences pertaining to the predetermined audience, the length of time used in creating a work, and revisions. Nonetheless, the repetition in Liu's *ci* poems did not have a negative impact on their circulation as would be expected, perhaps because they were consumed as individual pieces circulated as songs, making it so audiences had no means of comparison. In addition, their existence as "auditory texts" diminished the focus on their wording. Furthermore, the innovation of *manci* poetry and its transmission among different audiences made it so that people of the Song paid little attention to the textual repetition in Liu's *ci* poetry. During the early years in which *manci* gained prominence, the repetition occurring within Liu's *ci* poems may have had a positive influence.

## Keywords

Liu Yong 柳永 – *Yuezhangji* 樂章集 – repetition – textual production – transmission and reception

People of the Song dynasty (960–1279) recognized Liu Yong's 柳永 (984–ca. 1056) *ci* poetry as having harmonious and beautiful tonality. Later commentators acknowledged that his creative, tonal, and narrative techniques “influenced the compositional techniques of Qingzhen 清真 (Zhou Bangyan 周邦彥) and Mengchuang 夢窗 (Wu Wenying 吳文英).”<sup>1</sup> Critical opinions often focused on the vulgar side of his works’ themes and literary style. Ming dynasty (1368–1644) commentators began noticing creative issues concerning Liu Yong’s word choice and thematic content and offered their own criticisms and opinions. The commentators of the Qing dynasty (1644–1911) further criticized the (lack of) creative dimensions of Liu Yong’s *ci* poetry, the most severe among them coming from Qian Feizhong 錢斐仲 (1809–1862), who believed that “for every ten of Liu Yong’s works, nine of them write about pleasant scenery and pleasant times or romantic love between men and women.”<sup>2</sup> He further noted that “in addition, a single theme appears two or three times, or even four or five, which is most unlikable. All he writes about is feelings of enchantment or sorrow while at song and dance houses. His works don’t even have the smallest amount of refined character.”<sup>3</sup>

Some of these criticisms of the repetition found among Liu’s *ci* poetry are directed toward his imitation of works of past writers, while others are directed toward their internal repetitions. It should be noted that these two criticisms are aimed at two completely different dimensions of his creative work. Imitation is the process of inheritance and reception in literary creation. Most of the works being imitated have already been canonized, and through imitation, authors adhere to and model themselves after the written tradition. However, the internal repetition in the works of authors is the practice of forming their own authorial style and establishing a new written tradition. In Liu Yong’s case, the author and his texts have not completed the process of being canonized. The imitation of previous generations of writers and internal repetition each has different underlying mechanisms and effects. Imitation relates more to the history of reception and literary canonization, while internal repetition relates more to writing techniques and the creative process. Because of this, the current article will only discuss the problem of internal repetition in the author’s texts.

1 Cai Songyun 蔡嵩雲, *Keting cilun* 柯亭詞論, in vol. 5 of *Cihua congbian* 詞話叢編, ed. Tang Guizhang 唐圭璋 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986), 491.

2 Qian Feizhong 錢斐仲, *Yuhua'an cihua* 雨華齋詞話, in vol. 4 of *Cihua congbian* 詞話叢編, ed. Tang Guizhang 唐圭璋 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986), 3013. There is a typographical error in the *Cihua congbian* where Qian Feizhong’s name appears as Qian Peizhong 錢裴仲.

3 *Ibid.*, 3012.

## 1 A Similar Face: the Phenomenon of Internal Repetition within the *Ci* of Liu Yong

Qian Feizhong's above comments touch upon two dimensions: the first is word choice and word repetition; the second is repetition in topic matter and themes. Other commentators have noticed similarities in the structure of Liu's *ci* poetry. Xu Angxiao 許昂霄 (ca. 1680–1751) once commented on the piece “Yu hudie” 玉蝴蝶 (Wangchu yushou yunduan 望處雨收雲斷), “The path of the piece is similar to that of works like ‘Xuemei xiang’ 雪梅香 and ‘Basheng Ganzhou’ 八聲甘州.”<sup>4</sup> The term “path” refers to the way of organizing the written content of a piece and is concerned with its structural composition. When reading Liu's *ci* poetry, the reader is quickly drawn to its external form: its wording, themes, and structural composition.<sup>5</sup>

Let us first look at the similarities in wording. Excluding the names of the modes (*gongdiao* 宮調) and the titles of the tunes (*cipai* 詞牌), Liu's *ci* poems use a total of 1,994 characters.<sup>6</sup> Among them, 132 characters are used over thirty times with a frequency of usage over 14%. Among these, the characters *feng* 風 (wind) and *ren* 人 (person) are used 134 times, attaining a frequency of 63%. In terms of frequency, this is not the most repetitive among Song *ci* poets. The Song poet Wu Wenying's (ca. 1200–ca. 1260) five most commonly used characters *hua* 花 (flower), *chun* 春 (spring), *xiang* 香 (fragrant), *yun* 雲 (cloud), and *qiu* 秋 (autumn) appear with a frequency of usage of over 65%. The character *hua* 花 in particular appears at a frequency of 89%. But people's impressions of Wu Wenying's *ci* poetry are not that “for every ten works, nine are the same.” Why, then, is there this impression of Liu's works? The high-frequency characters that appear in Wu Wenying's *ci* poetry “have no essential difference from the traditional ‘graceful and reserved’ *ci* poets (*wanyue ciren* 婉約詞人), but his works also have no shortage of alterations.”<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, “in the *Quan Song ci* 全宋詞, many [of the variations] are first seen in [the works of] Wu Wenying.”<sup>8</sup>

4 Xu Angxiao 許昂霄, *Cizong ouping* 詞綜偶評, in vol. 2 of *Cihua congbian* 詞話叢編, ed. Tang Guizhang 唐圭璋 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986), 1552.

5 Du Ruohong 杜若鴻, *Liu Yong jiqi ci zhi lunheng* 柳永及其詞之論衡 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang daxue chubanshe, 2004) also discusses the repetition in wording and thematic content in Liu's *ci*.

6 Statistical analysis is derived from Tao Ran 陶然 and Yao Yichao 姚逸超, coll. and annot., *Yuezhangji jiaojian* 樂章集校箋 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2016). All quotations of Liu's *ci* will use this text. No further citations will be made.

7 Tian Yuqi 田玉琪, *Paihuai yu qibao loutai: wu wenying ci yanjiu* 徘徊於七寶樓臺—吳文英詞研究 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2004), 53.

8 *Ibid.*, 59.

This is not the case for Liu Yong. He repeatedly combines the same characters, creating redundancies in wording, for example, *hong-cui* 紅翠 (red and emerald green) and *hong-lü* 紅綠 (red and green). The character *hong* 紅 (red) appears 62 times in Liu's *ci* poetry, while the characters *cui* 翠 (emerald green) and *lü* 綠 (green) appear 51 times and 18 times, respectively. "Red" and "emerald green" appear in around one-fourth of Liu's *ci* poems. Among them, "red" and "emerald green" or "green" appear as a pair twenty times, occurring almost once in every ten of his *ci* poems. Outside of being combined as a single word, "red and emerald green" also often appears in coordinate phrases formed from two disyllabic words that also have internal parallelism (*duizhang* 對仗). For example, in the *ci* poem "Qingbei yue" 傾杯樂, we read "emerald green [leaves] fall; bright red [flowers] wilt" 翠消紅減. Another example is in "Changshou yue" 長壽樂: "lush flowers and delicate leaves" 繁紅嫩綠 [literally lush 'red' and delicate 'green']. In "Xiping yue" 西平樂 we see a similar variation: "many lush flowers and delicate leaves" 幾許繁紅嫩綠; in "Busuanzi" 卜算子, "wilting flowers and withering leaves fill the eyes" 滿目敗紅衰翠; and "This is the time of wilting flowers and withering leaves" 是處紅衰翠減 in "Basheng Ganzhou." It is little wonder why it was believed that "when narrating or creating parallel structures, a large number of the words are similar. ... If the statistical scope is expanded to include all of Liu's *ci*, the similarities will be even more pronounced."<sup>9</sup>

We can now turn to thematic content. Liu's *ci* poems include three basic themes: romantic love (*yanqing* 艷情), travel (*jili* 羈旅), and panegyric works (*songsheng* 頌聖). One hundred three pieces – nearly half – are on romantic love. Fifty-nine pieces – almost one-fourth – are works on travel. Thirty-eight pieces – nearly 20% – are panegyric.<sup>10</sup> When expressing these themes, the convergence of thematic content perhaps led to the texts' simplified and formulaic word choice, chosen imagery, and setting. When writing about travel, the imagery of Liu's *ci* poetry brings forth feelings of desolation and grief. Even here, there are habitual expressions such as "the skies of Chu stretch on as far as the eye can see; the waves splash in the sunset; the surface of the thousand-league river is wide" in "Xuemei xiang"; "I think of how I have gone on trip after trip. Deep mists cover the water for a thousand leagues. Heavy

9 Xie Yan 謝琰, "Zhizao Bianjing: Liu Yong ci yu ducheng huayu de xin zhankai" 製造汴京：柳永詞與都城話語的新展開, *Wenxue pinglun* 文學評論, no. 4 (2020): 139–40.

10 Du Ruohong 杜若鴻 made partial changes to the themes analyzed by the Japanese scholar Uno Naoto 宇野直人 before collecting statistical data. See Yuye Zhiren 宇野直人 [Uno Naoto], *Liu Yong lungao – ci de yuanliu yu chuanguxin* 柳永論稿—詞的源流與創新, trans. Zhang Hai'ou 張海鷗 and Yang Zhaohong 羊昭紅 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1998) and Du Ruohong, *Liu yong jiqi ci zhi lunheng*, 34.

with mist, the skies of Chu stretch as far as the eye can see” in “Yu lin ling” 雨霖鈴; “I walk and walk and come to another desolate village. The skies of Chu stretch as far as the eye can see, and before me, there is still no color of dawn” in “Luntai zi” 輪台子. The setting in all three examples is a journey to “the skies of Chu” (*chutian* 楚天). The time of the first two examples is set at dusk, and they describe the visual sensation of gazing without being able to see far into the distance. This brings out the sorrow of a wanderer remembering the home that they have left. Poets often use elements such as the patterns of bedding or interior decorations to express the fact that they sleep alone. This is commonly seen in palace poetry (*gongti shi* 宮體詩) and the anthology *Huajian ji* 花間集. Liu Yong merely switches the written subject from palace women to a wandering traveler.

Next is similarity in composition. Scholar have previously summarized the regular patterns found in the composition of Liu’s *ci* poetry.<sup>11</sup> The structural pattern named by Shi Yidui 施議對, “imagining the future from the present to discuss the present,” in reality contains a subtype: “remembering the past from the present to talk about the present.” Liu’s *ci* poems also have a purely chronological structural pattern. According to the author’s statistical investigation of Liu’s *ci* poems, forty-one pieces “imagine the future from the present to discuss the present,” and twenty-four pieces “remember the past from the present to talk about the present.” The two types make up 30% of Liu’s *ci*. The structure of roughly thirty pieces – or 14% – is purely chronological. Forty-seven pieces – or 22% – “imagine another’s longing for oneself.” There are also some pieces that have obvious traces of formulaic structure, but the number is small. For example, among pieces written about the city during peaceful times and panegyric works, at least fifteen of them have the following structure: first, they

11 Shi Yidui 施議對 summarized the structural patterns of space and time in Liu’s *ci*. See Shi Yidui 施議對, “lun ‘tuntianjiafa’ 論 ‘屯田家法’”, in *Diyijie cixue guoji yantaohui lunwenji* 第一屆詞學國際研討會論文集 (Taipei: “Zhongyang yanjiuyuan” Zhongguo wenzhe yanjiusuo choubei chu, 1994). Li Jing summed up the characteristics and concrete patterns of the composition of Liu’s *ci*. See Li Jing 李靜, “‘tuntian xijing’: Liu Yong ci de zhangfa shulun” “屯田蹊徑”: 柳永詞的章法述論, *Liaoning shifan daxue xuebao (shehui kexue ban)* 遼寧師範大學學報 (社會科學版), no. 6 (2006): 94–96. Miao Jing 苗菁 believes that “the formulaic characteristics [of Liu’s *ci*] are expressed most prominently in the establishment of settings, the expansion of structures, and emotional orientation.” Miao Jing 苗菁, “Lun Liu Yong ‘jilü xingyi’ ci de moshihua tezheng” 論柳永 “羈旅行役” 詞的模式化特徵, *Qilu xuekan* 齊魯學刊, no. 6 (2014): 124–29. Zhao Huijun 趙惠俊 begins with the structural origins and development of Liu’s *ci* to discuss their structural types. Zhao Huijun 趙惠俊, *Chaoye yu yasu: Song Zhenzong zhi Gaozong chao citan shengtai yu citi yahua yanjiu* 朝野與雅俗: 宋真宗至高宗朝詞壇生態與詞體雅化研究 (Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 2019), 160–66.

give an overall impression of the location or the weather; second, they discuss the scenery; and last, there are prayers and benevolent words. These all have recognizable patterns, and their structures show an overall tendency toward the formulaic.

Xu Angxiao's discussions on "Yu hudie" begin with an individual case to explore the tendency towards similarity in the composition of Liu's *ci* poetry. In the statement "the path of the piece is similar to that of works like 'Xuemei xiang' and 'Basheng Ganzhou,'" all three of the discussed *ci* are about travel. The setting for each of the three pieces is looking out from a tall building in autumn, and two of the works are set at dusk after the rain. The first section of these three works describes looking out from a high place. The latter part describes longing for someone. All three pieces end the first part with an endless waterscape. "Yu hudie" and "Xuemei xiang" each conclude by using wild swans that have lost their flocks to express a feeling of resentment. Even their use of classical literary quotations is somewhat similar. One piece writes, "The scenery of the night is desolate, and it is enough to make Song Yu express forlorn feelings of autumn" 晚景蕭疏，堪動宋玉悲涼。The other writes, "The scenery is desolate ... It is enough to produce feelings of mourning that come with autumn. All those years ago, Song Yu must have felt as I do now" 景蕭索……動悲秋情緒，當時宋玉應同。"Yu Hudie" and "Basheng Ganzhou" write respectively that "I pointed at the night sky, wrongly believing that a boat was returning" 指暮天，空識歸航, and "How many times have I wrongly believed a boat to be returning on the horizon" 誤幾回，天際識歸舟。They are very similar. This is not something rarely seen in Liu's *ci*. Thus, Zhou Cengjin 周曾錦 (1883–1921) once stated that "the first parts mostly describe scenery or travel, while the latter parts reminisce on old pleasures or the sorrow of leaving home. Almost all of his pieces are this way."<sup>12</sup>

Creative works emphasize innovation, and writers will receive ridicule for an overly high rate of internal repetition in their works.<sup>13</sup> Ge Lifang 葛立方 (d. 1164) once said, "Xu Hun's 許渾 'Cheng pei mingfu shi' 呈裴明府詩 states: 'One night in a village by a river, the water rose to the heavens. Autumn winds blew across a place covered in water.' His poem 'Hanshui shangjia' 漢水傷稼 has two sentences that are exactly the same." He believed that the author's lack

12 Zhou Cengjin 周曾錦, *Wolu cihua* 臥廬詞話, in vol. 5 of *Cihua congbian* 詞話叢編, ed. Tang Guizhang 唐圭璋 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986), 4648.

13 Commentators of narrative texts also have different attitudes. Mao Zonggang 毛宗崗 and his son commented on *Sanguo yanyi* 三國演義 and placed special emphasis on its repetitiveness. See Li Guikui 李桂奎, "Maoshi fuzi dui *Sanguozhi yanyi* de 'bilei er guan' jiqi 'chongfu' lilun de xiandai yiyi" 毛氏父子對《三國志演義》的“比類而觀”及其“重複”理論的現代意義, *Shehui kexue* 社會科學, no. 2 (2017): 173–81.

of study caused repetitions in their works: “If one wants to write, one should begin with reading.”<sup>14</sup> Though Liu Yong’s *ci* poems show repetition in their wording, the re-usage of five to seven-character sentences in his *ci* poetry is relatively rare. However, *ci* poems contain many shorter sentences, and this makes it objectively easier for them to have a feeling of repetition when compared to more traditional poetry.

When an author writes about the same theme, they cannot always create new content, owing to the fact that their emotional experiences and cognitive levels are continuous. Li Bai’s 李白 (701–762) six poems about Mount Tai 泰山 are “repetitive in thematic content.”<sup>15</sup> Liu Zhangqing 劉長卿 (ca. 726–789) was renowned as the “Great Wall of Five-Character Poems” (*wuyan changcheng* 五言長城), but Tang (618–907) commentators often criticized him saying, “though the style and form of his poems lack novelty, he is especially skilled at refining content and excels in his rhetoric. In over nine of his poems, the theme is fairly similar, and the final sentences of the poems are even more so. He is keen of mind but lacking in talent.”<sup>16</sup> Cen Shen 岑參 (715–770) and Li Yi 李益 (746–829) wrote frontier poetry and each created their own style, but Wang Shizhen 王世貞 (1526–1590) criticized them, saying that their works “have few poetic sentences and almost half of their works have similar structures and content.”<sup>17</sup>

Even Du Fu 杜甫 (712–770) was unable to avoid structural repetition. Pu Qilong 浦起龍 (1679–1762) believed that “Xubu’ 徐步 is similar in construction to the poem ‘Duzhuo’ 獨酌.”<sup>18</sup> Qiu Zhao’ao 仇兆鼈 (1638–1717) once stated that “Without exception, when Du Fu’s poems are made up of multiple sections, they will surely have similar compositional structures.”<sup>19</sup> However, there are many variations in Du Fu’s poems, making it harder for the average reader to notice the repetitions.

To summarize, Liu’s *ci* poems contain internal repetition, but this is a universal phenomenon in the works of writers and not something particular to Liu Yong. We might do well to take Liu’s *ci* as an example to discuss the reasons behind this phenomenon.

14 Ge Lifang 葛立方, *Yunyuyangqiu* 韻語陽秋, in *Lidai shihua* 歷代詩話, ed. He Wenhuan 何文煥 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981), 2: 487.

15 Qiu Zhao’ao 仇兆鼈, annot., *Dushi xiangzhu* 杜詩詳注 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1979), 1.5.

16 Gao Zhongwu 高仲武, *Zhongxing jianqi ji* 中興間氣集, in *Tangren xuan Tangshi xinbian* 唐人選唐詩新編, ed. Fu Xuancong 傅璇琮 et al. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2014), 504.

17 Wang Shizhen 王世貞, *Yiyuan zhiyan jiaozhu* 藝苑卮言校注, coll. and annot. Luo Zhongding 羅仲鼎 (Jinan: Qilu shushe, 1992), 4: 200.

18 Pu Qilong 浦起龍, *Du Du xinjie* 讀杜心解 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1961), 3: 416.

19 Qiu Zhao’ao, *Dushi xiangzhu*, 3.1246.

## 2 Limited Performance: a Brief Explanation on the Textual Repetition of an Author's Works

Personal factors such as an author's education, accumulation, and life experience can influence their creative work, but the motivation behind literary creation and the processes of preparing, writing, and revising can all influence the face of a text. When considering textual repetition in an author's works, perhaps we can look at factors related to the creative process. Writing lyrics and writing poetry are not entirely the same. Their audiences are often distinct. In addition, a writer's identity may also influence textual production.

### 2.1 *Influences from a Predetermined Audience*

When writing *ci* poetry, Liu Yong differentiated between predetermined consumers. At times, works were written for "the masses" (*puluo dazhong* 普羅大眾). At other times, they were written for specific individuals. For example, the predetermined consumer of "Zui Penglai" 醉蓬萊 was Emperor Renzong of Song 宋仁宗 (r. 1022–1063). The predetermined reader of "Wang haichao" 望海潮 was the governor of Hangzhou, Sun Mian 孫沔 (1008–1079). When writing for different audiences, an author will adopt different strategies.

In the Northern Song dynasty (960–1127), one of the main functions of *ci* poetry was entertainment, and *quzi ci* 曲子詞 (*ci* of tunes) were consumer goods. Liu's *ci* poems, such as "Dou baihua" 鬥百花 (Mannuo gongyao xianxi 滿搦宮腰纖細), "Liang tongxin" 兩同心 (Nenlian xiue 嫩臉修蛾), and other such vulgar *ci* poems, were made for urban consumers. Liu Yong, in part, persisted in combining the writing characteristics of the *shi* 士 class with content enjoyed by urban populations. Because of this, "though his *ci* are very refined, they are mixed with vulgar language. Thus, men of culture do not usually like speaking of his *ci* poetry."<sup>20</sup> Yet, the themes and language enjoyed by people of popular culture often limit the expressive space of the author and forcing them to perform on a narrow stage will unavoidably create repetition.

However, Liu's *ci* poems were circulated and sung among the upper class, and his creative methods were well-known among educated people. Content such as travel and service, the bustling city, the presentation of gifts, and panegyric pieces were all habitually consumed by the educated class. Emperor Renzong loved Liu's *ci* poems to the point that "each time he drank wine, he

20 Xu Du 徐度, *Quesao bian* 却掃編, ed. Zhu Kai 朱凱 and Jiang Hanchun 姜漢椿, in vol. 3 of *Quansong biji* 全宋筆記, 3rd edition, ed. Zhu Yian 朱易安 and Fu Xuancong 傅璇琮 (Zhengzhou: Daxiang chubanshe, 2008), 10: 164.



would have his attendants sing them repeatedly.” It was only later that Liu Yong insulted the emperor when presenting *ci* poetry at his behest.<sup>21</sup>

On several occasions, Liu Yong presented panegyric pieces. For example, he presented “Yulou chun” 玉樓春, “Wushan yiduan yun” 巫山一段雲, and “Yujie xing” 禦街行 during the reign of Emperor Zhenzong 真宗 (r. 997–1022) around the time of the “Heavenly Book” (*tianshu* 天書) and the “Arrival of the Sacred Ancestor” (*shengzu linjiang* 聖祖臨降) incidents. In the third year of the Zhihe 至和 era (1054–1056) of the Emperor Renzong, Liu Yong was already 73 years old, yet he still presented “Zui Penglai.”<sup>22</sup> A piece where the emperor was a potential consumer would most likely have done away with unsuitable themes such as the romantic longings of the urban class, the scholar-officials’ interactions with courtesans, or the resentment of travel. All that was left was praising and eulogizing; therefore, it was not easy to avoid the wording and structure stemming from force of habit.

## 2.2 Time Constraints When Writing

It was not easy for members of the scholar class to be proficient in both words and music. Ministers of Rhetoric (*cichen* 詞臣) in the imperial court were not necessarily good at writing musical lyrics. Zeng Bu 曾布 (1036–1107) once complained that “the wedding banquet held several days ago was a time for celebration in the court, but none of the song lyrics were very good. ...”<sup>23</sup> However, Liu Yong was proficient in music: “Whenever a court musician of the Imperial Academy of Music (*jiaofang* 教坊) composed a new song, they would, without fail, ask Liu Yong to write lyrics for the piece before circulating it. Thus, Liu Yong became well-known.”<sup>24</sup> The work *Beisong cipu* 北宋詞譜 traces the first lyricist for each tune, and Liu Yong is the first lyricist for one hundred twenty-five of those tunes.<sup>25</sup> Among them, some may have been “new songs” composed by court musicians. Since they were “new songs,” their musical elements would naturally be different from more well-known tunes, and one would need to master

21 Chen Shidao 陳師道, *Houshan shihua* 後山詩話, in vol. 1 of *Lidai shihua* 歷代詩話, ed. He Wenhuan 何文煥 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981), 311.

22 See appendix six in the second volume of Tao Ran and Yao Yichao, *Yuezhangji jiaojian*, 923.

23 Li Tao 李燾, *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* 續資治通鑑長編, coll. and punct. Shanghai shifan daxue guji zhengli yanjiusuo 上海師範大學古籍整理研究所 and Huadong shifan daxue guji zhengli yanjiusuo 華東師範大學古籍整理研究所 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1992), 20: 514.12229.

24 Ye Mengde 葉夢得, *Bishu luhua* 避暑錄話, coll. and punct. Tian Songqing 田松青 and Xu Shiyi 徐時儀 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2012), 3.137.

25 Tian Yuqi 田玉琪, *Beisong cipu* 北宋詞譜 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2018).

the emotional sound of the pieces when writing lyrics for them. However, if court musicians “would, without fail, ask Liu Yong to write lyrics,” the creative process could not have taken too long. A relatively short turnover time for creating a piece more easily leads to textual repetition or similarity.

In the first year of the Jingyou 景祐 era (1034–1038), Liu Yong presented two pieces, “Song zhengyi” 送征衣 (Guo shaoyang 過韶陽) and “Yongyu yue” 永遇樂 (Xunfeng jieyun 薰風解愠), to wish Emperor Renzong longevity for his birthday (*qianyuan jie* 乾元節). Tao Ran 陶然 believes that the content of the two pieces was very similar.<sup>26</sup> In the third month of the same year, “on the wuyin 戊寅 day, the emperor arrived at the Chongzheng Hall (*chongzheng dian* 崇政殿) to personally test the graduates whose names had been presented to him by the Ministry of Ritual. On the Jimao 己卯 day, they tested the students. On the Xinsi 辛巳 day, they tested those granted special permission.”<sup>27</sup> Liu Yong passed the examination as an advanced scholar. “On the Guimao 癸卯 day of the fourth month, the emperor’s birthday, the ministers wished him longevity at Zichen Hall (*zichen dian* 紫宸殿).”<sup>28</sup>

From this, it can be seen that Liu Yong’s participation in the imperial exam ended on the twenty-first day of the third month. The emperor’s birthday was held on the thirteenth day of the fourth month. However, taking into account the many activities after passing the imperial exams and other practical factors such as the time needed to present the works, Liu Yong might not have had much time to write them. His two panegyric pieces chose weather and auspicious signs to write about the protection of heaven and the longevity of the kingdom. Among them, “lightning surrounds the stars of the Big Dipper and rainbows hang over Huazhu” 璿樞繞電·華渚流虹 are original sentences repeated in both pieces. Other sentences include “may your fortunes be fulfilled for a thousand years” 千載應期 and “may the fortunes of the kingdom be prosperous” 運應千載會昌. In addition, “ten thousand spirits will offer protection” 萬靈敷祐 and “the spirits of the three realms will offer blessings and protection” 三靈眷祐. And again “grand festivities are pure and peaceful” 嘉節清和 and “the daytime scenery is pure and peaceful” 晝景清和. Each of these is a repetition of the same meanings using similar characters.

The two works contain thirty-eight identical characters, not counting synonyms and not discussing their places within the pieces. Identical characters make up 36.5% of the 104 characters in “Yongyu yue” and 32% of the 119 characters in “Song zhengyi.” If we include synonyms, the rate of repetition is even

26 Tao Ran and Yao Yichao, *Yuezhangji jiaojian*, 53–54.

27 Li Tao, *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian*, 5: 114.2671.

28 *Ibid.*, 5: 114.2674.

higher. Among these thirty-eight characters, thirteen are low-frequency characters that appear less than five times in Liu's *ci* poetry. The seven characters, *dian* 電, *shu* 殊, *ting* 挺, *xiang* 祥, *xuan* 璇, *you* 祐, and *zuan* 纘, only appear twice, once in each of these works. This, in particular, can explain the extent of repetitions in Liu Yong's works when rushed. As far as writing experience is concerned, it is difficult to avoid repetition when writing pieces that are thematically similar in a short period of time. By using a fixed structure, formulaic themes, and conventionalized language, it is easier to finish a piece in a short time. However, it can easily lead to textual repetition.

### 2.3 *The Results of Revision*

Author's revisions are an important part of the creative process. Liu Yong has not left behind any details concerning the revision of his works, but he has two pieces titled "Yeban yue" 夜半樂 both of the same rhyme. Chen Rui 陳銳 (fl. 1893) has pointed out that "though the seasonal setting is different, the conception and arrangement are the same. Most likely one is a rough draft, and the other is a revised draft adapted to fit changes in time. The two were both collected in his anthology."<sup>29</sup> The author agrees with this statement. A rough look at the two works shows that the sequence, characters, and events are not identical, but they use the same rhyme. If one looks more carefully, it is not difficult to discover that their sentence structure and composition are alike. The beginnings of the pieces are seemingly different, but the subject of their description, weather (*tianqi* 天氣), is the same.

They follow by writing about concrete matters: the first is about traveling on a river, the second about standing and staring at the countryside. One is about movement; one is about stillness. One is about a man; the other, a woman. They seem to be different, but in reality, their narrative vein is the same. The second rhyme in the two pieces describes scenery; the third rhyme is about human matters. The first work writes about the difficulties of traveling merchants on the road, while the latter narrates an exhausted dancing courtesan observing the landscape. "Rising sails" are seen because of the traveling merchants and "countless red flowers" are seen because of the tired dancer. These images are used to end the first parts of the pieces. The ends of the sections each shift the subject, using scenery to transition to the second part. It must be stated that the narrative logic, the compositional structure, and even the transitional techniques are identical. Though they may differ in appearance, they are the same in spirit. The similar places in the latter two sections of these pieces are of the same type.

29 Chen Rui 陳銳, *Baobizhai cihua* 裒碧齋詞話, in vol. 5 of *Cihua congbian* 詞話叢編, ed. Tang Guizhang 唐圭璋 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1986), 4202.

In truth, literary creation is a complex process. Reasons for internal repetition in the works of an author can be divided into many different aspects. The subjective effects of the author need no discussion. Restrictions of literary form and the rules of traditional writing are perhaps reasons leading to the appearance of this phenomenon. However, the three previously discussed factors of the creative process are easily overlooked, and we have specifically highlighted them.

### 3 A Style of His Own: Why Textual Repetition Only Had a Limited Impact on the Circulation of Liu's *Ci* Poetry

It is difficult for authors to avoid internal repetition in their texts, though this kind of phenomenon may make readers “like one's vigor and grace at first, but having read more, one unavoidably grows bored of the similarity.”<sup>30</sup> Commentators also criticize writers and advise them to avoid internal repetition while creating. Looking back at Liu's *ci* poetry, the people of the Song seemed not to care about the repetition found in his works. The reasons may be the effectiveness of the music, his innovation concerning *manci* 慢詞 (a long form of *ci* poetry), and his combination of the vulgar and the refined.

We may begin with the effectiveness of the music. We often emphasize the melodic harmony of Liu's *ci* poetry, but little attention is given to how this characteristic produced effective transmission of his work. There is a difference between the circulation of *ci* poetry that are sung accompanied by music and pieces of pure poetry. The effect of music and rhyme on *ci* poetry is more profound, and the ways in which the people of the Song consumed *ci* poetry actively aided the circulation of Liu's works.

First, the consumption of individual works and pieces weakened the impression of repetition in Liu's *ci* poetry.

When we speak of the “repetition,” “sameness,” or the “formulaic” nature of works, there is always an object of comparison. But the initial circulation of Liu's *ci* poetry would have been in the form of individual pieces performed orally. The previously cited comment, “whenever a court musician of the Imperial Academy of Music composed a new song, they would, without fail, ask Liu Yong to write lyrics for the piece before circulating it,” shows that Liu's *ci* poems written for new songs were not released at the same time. This form of transmission, as single pieces, made it so audiences had no means of comparison. Before Liu's *ci* poems had been collected into an anthology, listeners

<sup>30</sup> Zhu Yizun 朱彝尊, ed. *Mingshi zong* 明詩綜 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2007), 5: 2290.

did not pay attention to the problems of repetitive wording or their formulaic structure. They placed more attention on the novelty of the new tunes. We know of one hundred twenty-five new tunes used by Liu Yong, and the *Yijian zhi* 夷堅志 states that “the courtesan of Tang Prefecture, Ma Wanger 馬望兒, was famous in the business for her expertise in singing the *ci* poems of Liu Qiqing.”<sup>31</sup> She would at the very least have had excellent performances in both quantity and quality. Non-professionals would have difficulty doing this, not to mention that in places where people went to hear *ci* poems, they would not often listen continuously to a large number of songs. In the years of Jingkang 靖康 (1126–1127), people in the capital listened to courtesans sing *ci* poems of Jiangnan, “and they called her back to sing them again. After she finished, the courtesan received money and left.”<sup>32</sup>

Even if they continually listened to many *ci*, most would not listen to the *ci* poems of a single writer. For example, the “Yue zhi” 樂志 chapter in *Gaoli shi* 高麗史 writes that Northern Song *ci* songs had seven longer compositions (*daqu* 大曲) of music and dance. Outside of these, there were also forty-four miscellaneous songs (*zaju* 雜曲), including eight by Liu Yong. But these eight *ci* poems were not placed together; instead, other *ci* poems were placed between them.<sup>33</sup> Even if the songs were not performed in order, there was a very low probability of singing eight songs by Liu Yong in succession at the same banquet. People who listened to another of Liu’s *ci* poems after hearing several pieces by other writers would most likely not notice the repetition in his works. This kind of consumption made it so that when people sang or listened to *ci*, it was difficult for them to come into contact with many of Liu’s works, resulting in a lowering of their sensitivity to textual repetition.

Second, their existence as auditory texts obscured the audience’s focus on their words.

Huang Shang 黃裳 (1044–1130) once said, “make someone sing the *ci* poems of Liu Yong: listen to their melodies and hear their lyrics, and it’s just like the age in which Liu Yong lived. It makes people sigh with emotion.”<sup>34</sup> “Listen to

31 Hong Mai 洪邁, *Yijian zhi* 夷堅志, coll. and punct. He Zhuo 何卓 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2006), 1: 19, 350.

32 *Ibid.*, 1: 7, 57.

33 Wu Xionghe 吳熊和, “Gaoli Tangyue yu Beisong ciqiu (fulu: ‘Gaolishi: Yuezhi’ suozai Beisong ciqiu)” 高麗唐樂與北宋詞曲 (附錄: 《高麗史·樂志》所載北宋詞曲), in *Wu Xionghe cixue lunji* 吳熊和詞學論集 (Hangzhou: Hangzhou daxue chubanshe, 1991), 34–76.

34 Huang Shang 黃裳, “Shu Yuezhangji hou” 書樂章集後, in *Quan Song wen* 全宋文, ed. Zeng Zaozhuang 曾棗莊 and Liu Lin 劉琳 (Shanghai: Shanghai cishu chubanshe; Hefei: Anhui jiaoyu chubanshe, 2006), 103: 106.

their melodies” is placed before “hear their lyrics,” showing that people of the time placed more emphasis on *ci* poems that were accompanied by music, and not on *ci* poems that were purely poetic. In the time of Jingkang, He Li 何栗(1088–1127) “drank alcohol every day in the secretariat’s office (*dutang* 都堂), talking and laughing in a composed manner. He would often sing the *ci* poetry of Liu Yong.”<sup>35</sup> Being under the influence of alcohol would make it so that his attitude would not be nearly as diligent as the Qing commentators who would be punctuating the *Yuezhangji* 樂章集. In addition, physiologically, the information received by sight and sound is different, and they would thus focus on different problems.

Concerning the identity of the audience, members of the urban class might have placed more importance on the music and not the words of the text. For example, during the Jin (1115–1234) and Yuan (1206–1368) dynasties, ceramic pillows from the Cizhou Kiln were often decorated with the words of Su Shi’s 蘇軾 (1037–1101) “Manting fang” 滿庭芳, but many of these characters were written incorrectly. Zhang Ming 張鳴 believes that “the words of ‘Manting fang’ come from an ‘auditory’ text.”<sup>36</sup> The average person did not pay attention to miswritten characters on everyday objects, and perhaps they also did not notice the repetition in Liu’s *ci*.

In reality, Qing commentators’ discussions on repetition in Liu’s *ci* poems were based on texts that had already become “*ci* poems spoken without musical accompaniment” (*tuci* 徒詞). If *ci* poems had still been sung during the Qing dynasty, the commentators may have paid less attention to the repetition in Liu’s works.

Third, Liu’s *ci* poems contain musical and rhythmic variation. They differ when sung and accompanied by music.

The tonal patterns of words and sentences are one aspect of *ci* poetry when accompanied by music. Liu’s *ci* poems demonstrate changes in sound concerning both tonal patterns and syllables. We can look at word combinations from the example discussed in the first part of this article, “red” and “emerald green” (Table 1).

35 Xu Mengxin 徐夢莘, *Sanchao beimeng huibian* 三朝北盟會編 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987), 68.516.

36 Zhang Ming 張鳴, “Songci wenben chuanbo zhong de gushihua yanyi xianxiang: yi Su Shi ‘manting fang’ (xiang’ai diaopan) wei li” 宋詞文本傳播中的故事化演繹現象：以蘇軾“滿庭芳”（香鬢雕盤）為例, in *Zhongguo Tangsong wenxue guoji xueshu yantaohui lunwenji* 中國唐宋文學國際學術研討會論文集 (Beijing: *Wenxue yichan* bianjibu and Beijing shifan daxue wenxueyuan, 2019), 2: 341.

TABLE 1 Tonal patterns in words and sentences of *ci* poetry

Sentences from <i>Yuezhangji</i>	Tone pattern	Tone names
The flowers are like a carpet and the green grass is like a blanket 紅茵翠被	Level, level, oblique, oblique	Light level / dark level / departing / departing
After the start of spring, the flowers and grass seem to be miserable and resentful. 自春來、慘綠愁紅	Oblique, level, level; oblique, oblique, level, level	Departing / dark level / light level, ascending / entering / light level / light level
Do not let the leaves be dam- aged or let the flowers wilt. 免教斂翠啼紅	Oblique, level, oblique, oblique, level, level	Ascending / dark level / ascending / departing / light level / light level
Wilting flowers and withering leaves fill the eyes 滿目敗紅衰翠	Oblique, oblique, oblique, level, level, oblique	Ascending / entering / departing / light level / dark level / departing
In this place, the flowers wither and the leaves wilt. 是處紅衰翠減	Oblique, oblique, level, level, oblique, oblique	Departing / departing / light level / dark level / departing / ascending
Leaves wilt and flowers wilt. 翠消紅減，雙帶長拋擲	Oblique, level, level, oblique; level, oblique, level, level, oblique	Departing / dark level / light level / ascending; dark level / departing/ light level / dark level / entering
Leaves wither and flowers wilt. The orioles are also languid. 翠減紅稀鶯似懶	Oblique, oblique, level, level, level, oblique, oblique	Departing / ascending / light level / dark level / departing / ascending

These seven examples in Table 1 each form sentences with alternating even and oblique tones. Even just those phrases made up of the words “red,” “green,” and “emerald green” have three kinds of tonal variations. If one takes into account the four tones, then the tonal combinations of the phrases are completely different.

In the same vein, they are influenced by the tune of the *ci*, and the same phrases might be separated, creating different sentences. For example:

“The imperial capital’s scenery is flourishing, but I love the end of spring the most” 帝裏風光爛漫，偏愛春杪 in “Manchao huan” 滿朝歡。

“The imperial capital’s scenery is grand. At that time, I was still young, and I took part in banquets both day and night” 帝裏風光好，當年少日，暮宴朝歡 in “Qishi” 戚氏。

“The imperial capital. The scenery is best during this season” 帝裏。風光當此際 in “Neijia jiao” 內家嬌。

The wording “the imperial capital’s scenery” is the same. But in the three sentences, it is followed by a disyllabic word, a monosyllabic word, or a verb-complement phrase. Because of this, each sentence has clear syllabic variation. When accompanied by music, the emphases of the musical phrases’ meters differ. The rhythm and length of pauses will also vary. In “Neijia jiao,” the characters for “imperial capital” and “scenery” belong to different sentences. When performed, they are parts of different musical phrases.

These characters are influenced by the tune of the *ci* poems and their musical phrases: they have changes in both pauses and rhythm; they are influenced by the sound, emotion, and melody of the *ci*’s tune; and character sounds will have variations in emphasis and length. When reading *ci*, there is no change in the characters, but when listening to a *ci* piece, sound is added to the text and the piece is influenced by the tune, musical phrasing, and melody. There will be greater intricacies in its meter and pauses, not to mention that the sound will change with the performance of a singer.

Next are the new tunes of *manci*. During the period when *manci* first began to take shape, audiences paid more attention to their new style and form and ignored their imperfections. Before Liu Yong, although there were already Long Tune *ci* (*changdiao ci* 長調詞), the most common kind of musical *ci* was Short *ci* (*lingci* 令詞) best represented by drinking-game songs (*jiuling gequ* 酒令歌曲). “The qualities of Song *ci* are their short length and soft and drawn-out sounds.”<sup>37</sup> The slow tunes of Liu’s *ci* poetry conformed with the developmental trends of *ci* styles, making a breakthrough concerning the qualities of Short *ci*. The lexical structure of Liu Yong’s *manci* were emulated by Su Shi, Zhou

37 Wang Kunwu 王昆吾, *Tangdai jiuling yishu* 唐代酒令藝術 (Beijing: Zhishi chubanshe, 1995), 229–30. The book argues that “the circulation of slow tunes and long tunes was caused by historical trends and should not be seen as having been created by any single person (for example, Liu Yong).” However, it cannot be doubted that Liu Yong excelled at slow tunes.



Bangyan 周邦彥 (1056–1211), Wu Wenying, and other famous writers. Yang Denghua 楊等華 has provided examples showing that Su Shi's *ci* poetry and Liu Yong's *ci* poetry have similarities in wording, syntax, imagery, and structure. They believe that Su Shi both followed and emulated Liu's *ci* poetry. They also analyzed how the *ci* poems of Huang Tingjian 黃庭堅 (1045–1105), Qin Guan 秦觀 (1049–1100), and Chao Duanli 晁端禮 (1046–1113) emulate Liu's *ci* poems.<sup>38</sup> When discussing how Liu's *ci* poetry influenced Zhou Bangyan, Cai Songyun 蔡嵩雲 (1891–1944) once stated that “the origin of Zhou Bangyan's *ci* poetry comes completely from Liu Yong. When writing on romantic love, he uses the narrative style of a *fu* 賦. This is a direct usage of Liu Yong's distinct style.”<sup>39</sup> Zhou Ji 周濟 (1781–1839) also believed that “Zhou Bangyan's *ci* poems mostly emulate Liu Yong, but his train of thought and literary competence often surpass Liu when he is writing at his deepest and most sincere.”<sup>40</sup> We thus get a rough idea of the contributions of Liu Yong's *manqi*. From this we can deduce that when Liu's *ci* poems were first being transmitted, their originality may have attracted greater attention.

Next is the combining of the vulgar and the refined. Liu's strategy of aiming pieces at different groups was suitable for audiences from different social classes. In regard to the circulation of works, a larger audience base means that it is easier to be noticed. Thus, the strategy of differentiation found in Liu's *ci* poetry was successful. It was during the transition from the Northern Song to the Southern Song that Liu's *ci* poems were collected into the *Yuezhangji*. The texts became relatively fixed, giving birth to a method for their written transmission. Yet at this time, *ci* music had not disappeared, which meant that Liu's *ci* poems had diverse routes of transmission where the best among them could be selected. From the choices made by successive generations of anthologies, it can be seen that elite readers paid more attention to refined *ci*. One hundred seven major *ci* anthologies dating from the Song to the present have chosen to include Liu's *ci* poems 1,502 times. However, only twenty pieces have been included in anthologies on over twenty occasions, and the seven pieces that have been included on the most occasions are all *ci* poems about travel.<sup>41</sup> This shows that elite literati's acceptance of Liu's *ci* poetry was based on their own

38 Yang Denghua 楊等華, “Liu Yong ci Beisong jieshou shi yanjiu” 柳永詞北宋接受史研究 (Master's Thesis, Shanghai University, 2016).

39 Cai Songyun, *Keting cilun*, 4912.

40 Zhou Ji 周濟, *Song sijia cixuan* 宋四家詞選 (Taipei: Guangwen shuju, 1999), 9.

41 This data comes from the database used in Yu Yuying 郁玉英, *Songci jingdian de shengcheng ji shanbian* 宋詞經典的生成及嬗變 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2016) and was provided by Yu Yuying. I would like to express my special gratitude.

tastes. Yet Liu's strategy of differentiating between audiences provided the possibility for his *ci* poetry to be chosen by them. Tao Ran 陶然 and Zhou Mi 周密 once analyzed the "narrowing of themes" and "aesthetic inclination to select what is refined and discard what is vulgar" present in 20th-century anthologies of *ci* poems when choosing among Liu's works.<sup>42</sup>

In reality, the strategy of differentiation's effect on transmission was bidirectional. A minister of the *siku* 四庫 once stated that Li Shangyin's 李商隱 (ca. 813–ca. 858) poems have expressive imagery, but "the pieces most often recited by people of popular culture are his flamboyant pieces."<sup>43</sup> Li Shangyin's poetry contains both flamboyant language that conformed to popular culture but also has expressive pieces that were enjoyed by the learned elite. This is similar to the combination of refined and vulgar pieces in Liu's *ci*, and in the process of circulation, his pieces also underwent selection. Of course, the minister's criticism was directed at the anthologies of later generations that would choose vulgar pieces while discarding the refined, yet it shows that the strategy of differentiating between audiences expanded the reception of his works.

Internal repetition in texts is a universal phenomenon in literary history, but people of different eras had different views concerning the repetition found in these texts. In some ways, the repetition in Liu's *ci* poems can be considered a creative practice emerging after the appearance of *manci* poetry. A major reason for the repetition in their wording and thematic content was the inheritance of standardized styles and themes of "*ci* poetry from the School Among the Flowers" (*huajian ci* 花間詞). Yet the formulaic nature of his compositional arrangements aided writers of *ci* poetry in exploring the layout of *manci*. It was on a foundation of inheriting the Short *ci* of the School Among the Flowers that Liu's *ci* poems explored writing techniques for *manci*, and this was the reason for the formation of internal repetitions in his texts. At the same time, this kind of repetition promoted the formation of Liu's style and writing model, indirectly contributing to the flourishing of Song *ci* poetry.

*Translated by Jordan Palmer Davis*

42 Tao Ran 陶然 and Zhou Mi 周密, "Lüelun Liu Yong ci zai xiandai jingdian cixuan zhong de xingsu" 略論柳永詞在現代經典詞選中的形塑, *Jinan xuebao* (*zhexue shehui kexue ban*) 暨南學報 (哲學社會科學版), no. 6 (2018): 113–21.

43 Yong Rong 永瑢 et al., *Siku quanshu zongmu* 四庫全書總目 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1965), 2: 151.1297.

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