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Changing Old Tune to New Tune: Liu Yong's Urban Narrative and the Urban Cultural Construction in the Mid-Song Dynasty

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Abstract In the 1920s, the Japanese scholar Naito Konan put forward the famous theories of “the Song dynasty is the beginning of modern China” and “the cultural transformation was completed during the Tang and Song dynasties,” which exerted far-reaching influence in the academic circle. However, although full of the “numerous academic growth points and exuberant academic vitality, the theories have not been well explored and illustrated yet.”¹ This paper, taking Liu Yong as a case study, is intended to provide concrete examples to Naito's theories. The urban narrative in Liu Yong's lyrics—the multi-role discourse practice of a prodigal poet, a talented lyricist, and a traveling official—inherited the discourse splitting trend of the late-Tang and Five dynasties and finished the transformation from the elite to the mass discourse. Accordingly, it set the narrative mode of amorous themes and discourse mode of “talented lyricist plus amorous affairs,” which exerted far-reaching influence on the construction of the new urban culture in the Song dynasty.

Keywords urban narrative, cultural construction, talented lyricist, traveling official

Introduction

Despite the numerous research perspectives and achievements, it is still hard to

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¹ Wang Yongzhao, 2006, p. 10.

explain Liu Yong's complicated identities coexisting in his works: a prodigal poet, a talented lyricist and a traveling official. This is not only the difficult point of such researches but also the inexorable trend in the cultural transformation between the Tang and Song dynasties. Based on the study of the changes of Liu Yong's urban narrative modes and discourse roles, the paper is aimed to investigate the culture transformation and reconstruction in the Tang and Song dynasties.

The mid-Song dynasty saw the great changes of urban system and the rise of new marketplaces and market culture.² Through a study of the changes of Liu Yong's multiple cultural identities and multi-role discourse practice in his lyrics, the paper is intended to explore the following issues: how was the narrative mode of urban culture of the Song dynasty constructed by means of the reconstruction of the mainstream and marginalized discourse, the elegant and the "vulgar" discourse? How did the narrative mode and motifs, which were continuously selected, accepted, or dispelled by various groups, become a part of the urban culture of the Song dynasty?

The reason why the paper takes urban narrative as the starting point is that: the background description, that is, the description of the changes of economic development, system transformation, living style and value orientation, is merely the one-dimension time and cause-effect flow, so it is difficult to reveal the diachronic status jointly formed by various complicated elements. However, the changes of urban narrative, which are triggered by the changes of city spatial structure, can reveal the all-round, direct material and discourse reality of the function changes of social differentiation and social structure. Accordingly, it has a more solid base to study the cultural identity and role discourse in a given urban narrative than in a simple economic and political background.

Certainly, the urban narrative was not constructed naturally. The people living in the new marketplaces were not born with the innate advantages of urban narrative, and they did not necessarily approve of the new urban system and structure immediately. Only through the process of unique experience and emotional memory—multi-role literary expression—urban narrative of the context, could the new urban space successively become the vocabulary of the individual—the group—the mass.

Born in about the 4th year of the Yongxi 雍熙 (987) reign period of Emperor Taizong of the Song dynasty 宋太宗 (939–997), Liu Yong lived and created his

² According to the imperial order of the third year of Jingyou under the reign of Emperor Renzong 宋仁宗, "The houses of the lower strata cannot use *sipu* 四铺 (the four-side decoration art in traditional Chinese architecture) and *douba* 斗八 (the decoration art of ceiling in traditional Chinese architecture). Li Tao, 1979, volume 119.

ci lyrics under the reign of Emperor Zhenzong 宋真宗 (968–1022) and Emperor Renzong 宋仁宗 (1010–1063).³ As a prodigal poet, a talented lyricist and an official, Liu Yong, through his urban narrative and multi-role discourse practice in his lyrics, expressed his involvement and unique experience of the new urban space, which accurately embodied the new market system, the differentiation of urban hierarchy, and the transformation and reconstruction of urban culture in the periods of Emperor Zhenzong and Emperor Renzong. As the Northern Song scholar Fan Zhen 范镇 put it, “We have enjoyed forty years’ peace under the reign of Emperor Renzong. However, although I have stayed in the Imperial Academy for more than ten years, I failed to write a canticle for that. Now I find that in Liu Yong’s *ci* lyrics.”⁴

From a Prodigal Poet to a Brothel Visitor: From *Lifang* to Marketplaces

Song Minqiu 宋敏求 said, “Since the reign periods of Qingli (1041–1048) and Huangyou (1049–1054), the curfew in the imperial capital has been cancelled and the street drum has not been heard.”⁵ In his “Yulouchun” 玉楼春 (Spring in Jade Pavilion), Liu Yong also wrote about the lift of curfew in imperial capital in the Mid-Song dynasty: “The curfew cancelled, the people traveled freely in the imperial capital/they amused themselves by frequenting brothels.” Thus he bluntly expressed people’s new experience in the new urban life brought about by the changes of urban system.

“What an enjoyable night in the imperial capital!” “The music was borne in the spring wind/the candles and lamps illuminated the dawn.” From the above lines in “Yulouchun,” we can see that the all-night revelries present a sharp contrast with the scenes of Chang’an 长安 and Luoyang 洛阳 during the curfew in the Tang dynasty: “When night fell the drumbeats told that the curfew began.”⁶ “When the drumbeats faded away/the dust of the capital was settled.”⁷

After the lift of the curfew in the Mid-Song dynasty, when Liu Yong “returned drunk in the midnight,” he “fell into a gloomy mood.” However, the Tang poet Wen Tingyun 温庭筠 was once beaten his teeth off by the street agents due to

³ Tang Guizhang, 1957, p. 3.

⁴ Zhu Mu, 2003, volume 10.

⁵ Katō Shigeshi, 1959, p. 258, p. 284.

⁶ Zhang Ji, 1993, “Luoyang xing” 洛阳行 (Traveling in Luoyang).

⁷ Yao He, 1997, volume 8.

his violation of the curfew.⁸ Such common descriptions of curfew in the *Tang chuanqi* 唐传奇 (Tang legends) as “he returned to the dwelling place, only to find that the gate was closed, so he had to sit outside all night waiting for the gate to be opened”⁹ are quite different from the descriptions of the night life in the Tang and Song literature.

Of course, what made people “indulged in frequenting brothels” was not only the free time spared by the lift of the curfew, but also the expanded public leisure places from *lifang* 里坊 (dwelling block in cities) to marketplaces, as was described in the following lines:

The whole society preferred the life of joviality,
And the prosperous city presented its beauty.
The music flew out of every household,
And the mansions expanded to the riotous streets.

According to the imperial order of the 3rd year of Jingyou reign period (1008): “The houses of the lower strata cannot use *sipu* 四铺 (the four-side decoration art in traditional Chinese architecture) or *douba* 斗八 (the decoration art of ceiling in traditional Chinese architecture) unless they are the hotels and mansions facing the streets, cannot build *menwu* 门屋 (the building of the entrance of government offices and temples) unless they are the officials’ houses, cannot paint the houses, timbers, windows and plinths unless they are the royal houses or temples.” It indicates that during the reign of Emperor Renzong, not only the curfew was lifted, the hotels and mansions facing the streets were also approved. The marketplaces were formed in the period of Jingyou. In addition, the hotels and mansions (restaurants, teahouse, inns and stores) and their architectural decoration, which went beyond the *sipu* and *douba*, had been approved by the government. These changes endowed the streets in Dongjing 东京 in the Northern Song dynasty with the functions of not only commerce and entertainment, but also the new public leisure places where “both the elegance and the ‘vulgarity’ bloomed and everything showed their beauty” and “people of all levels enjoyed pleasure-seeking,” which conceived the new features of the Song culture.

The changes of urban system and city spaces in the Mid-Song dynasty resulted

⁸ The item “Wen Tingyun” in *Taiping guangji* 太平广记 (Records of the Taiping era): “During the reign period of Xiantong (CE 860–874), Wen Tingyun, in his frustration, returned to the South. When passing Guangling 广陵, he got drunk and violated the curfew. As a result, he was beaten off his teeth by the inspectors.”

⁹ “Ren Shi zhuan” 任氏传 (Biography of Mrs. Ren) and “Li Wa zhuan” 李娃传 (Biography of Li Wa).

from the rise of the new social strata and commercialization as well as urbanization. The appearance of the “ten social stratum of city dwellers”¹⁰ in the household registration system indicates that social differentiation and division of labor have reached the unprecedented level. The city dwellers were officially listed in the feudal household registration system, indicating that their social strata and factions had been recognized by the government: “Although the city dwellers are accused of annexation, they are the mainstay amid adversities. In the years of famine, they could be persuaded to share their wealth with the victims; in the years of bandits, they could be exploited to resist the enemy. Therefore, the wealth in the city dwellers plays a similar role to the wealth in the government.”¹¹ During the reign of Emperor Zhen, “The millionaires were numerous and the people whose family property exceeded 100,000 were everywhere in the capital city.”¹² During the reign of Emperor Renzong, when Song was at war with Western Xia dynasty (1038–1227), the emperor borrowed two hundred thousand strings of cash from the wealthy Li Clan, and repaid them in the name of several officials in the capital.”¹³ The city dwellers with great wealth “lived a life of luxury and extravagance: large surplus of choice food, solid carriages and fat horses, beautiful clothes and ornaments. Their houses were even more luxurious than those of princes and marquises.”¹⁴ As a result, “extravagance became common among the people. They competed in showing off their luxuries such as their ornaments, brocade, exquisite vessels of gold jade and pearls. The rich were so proud of their wealth and the poor felt ashamed of their poverty.”¹⁵ They played a decisive role not only in economic life, but also in life style and value orientation. They did not form a real political power, but they influenced the whole society’s material production and the cultural consumption, and even the life style.¹⁶ Therefore, the construction of the new

¹⁰ According to Ouyang Xiu, during the reign of Emperor Renzong, “In the past, because of the requisition of some ministers, all the people were categorized into ten classes.” (“Qi mian fuke ji xiadeng renhu chake zhazi” 乞免浮客及下等人户差科札子. See *Ouyang Wenzhong gong quanji* 欧阳文忠公全集 (A complete anthology of Ouyang Xiu), volume 116. According to their property, the people were classified into three groups: the high class, the middle class, and the low class. The high class included landlords, householders, merchants, debtors, master craftsmen and tax-dealers; the low class included vendors, craftsmen, employees, poor scholars etc. See Wang Zengyu, 1985, pp. 73–77.

¹¹ Su Zhe, 2004, “Zhizhi sansi tiaolisi lunshizhuang” 制置三司条例司论事状 (Memorial to the throne on the institutions).

¹² Li Tao, 1979, volume 85.

¹³ Ibid., volume 388.

¹⁴ *Lequanji* 乐全集 (Lequan collection), volume 14).

¹⁵ *Songhuiyao* 宋会要 (Compendium of government and social institutions of Song dynasty).

¹⁶ The so-called discourse refers to the speaking vocabulary and manner dominated by certain value orientation system. Due to the influence of different value orientation and discourse resources, different cultural identities show great difference in their speaking vocabulary and manners.

urban discourse became an inexorable trend. The discourse of a prodigal poet in Liu Yong's lyrics not only represents the pursuits of the newly rising city dwellers, but also helps to construct the new urban culture with its secularized and popularized narrative mode and aesthetic value.

The life of frequenting brothels best illustrates the role experimentation, emotional memory and discourse practice of Liu Yong, who lived in the new city space as a prodigal poet. Liu Yong began the differentiation and transformation of his lyrics from elite discourse of intellectuals to folk discourse of city dwellers as a prodigal poet: "I did not get any official position or pay/so I indulged myself in the mansions facing prosperous streets day by day."¹⁷ and "A day after a day/I was addicted to wine and be sensuality." The "prodigal" means the wandering man who ignores the so-called one's proper duties or business corresponding to the orthodox ideas of feudal society. The people of the two Song dynasties unanimously regarded Liu Yong as a prodigal: "While a candidate for the imperial examination, Liu Yong frequented the pleasure quarters and brothels. He was skilled at writing song lyrics."¹⁸ The description of his riotous excursions can be found everywhere in his lyrics: "Surrounded by gorgeously appareled ladies/I abandoned myself to pleasure-seeking in brothels."¹⁹ Actually, Liu Yong was not the first famous prodigal poet. Wen Tingyun, the late Tang poet, had the similar experience to Liu Yong. He composed some romantic lyrics about his brothel life and thus was regarded as a prodigal poet.²⁰ However, the elegance of his narrative still represents the aesthetic standard of the intellectuals. Therefore, the late generations still thought that Wen Tingyun's lyrics were "profound, beautiful, grand and concise."²¹

Liu Yong has always been criticized as a prodigal poet due to his narrative of amorous themes. For one thing, since the imperial examination system started in the Tang and Song dynasties, especially after the Song dynasty when the notion that "the government should protect the interests of the scholar-officials rather than of the populace" was advocated,²² it has been believed that the intellectuals should "stress the courteous manners and stick to what is radical." More importantly, Liu Yong's secularized and popularized narrative of amorous themes went against and deconstructed the orthodox aesthetic values of the aristocratic.

Although they are both the narrative of amorous themes, the love between

¹⁷ "Qishi" 戚氏 (Mrs. Qi).

¹⁸ Ye Mengde, *Bishu luhua* 避暑录话 (Tales Recorded in Summer Holidays), volume 3.

¹⁹ "Jixianbin" 集贤宾 (Gathering of wise guests).

²⁰ "Wen Tingyun zhuan" 温庭筠传 (An Biography of Wen Tingyun) in *Jiu tangshu* 旧唐书 (Old chronicle of Tang), volume 140.

²¹ Zhang Huiyan, *Cixuan* 词选 (An anthology of ci).

²² Li Tao, 1979, volume 221.

man and woman in Liu Yong's lyrics, such as that in

For the present, stay away from the riotous feasts.
Believe my vows and stay away the worries.
We will have a happy ending when we afford a house.
("Jixianbin")

and in "At that time, please give your congratulations to me/And I will bequeath you good gratuity." ("Changshoule" 长寿乐 "Joy of Longevity") forms a sharp contrast with that in Wen Tingyun's lyrics, such as that in

The crystal curtain swayed, and the glass pillow gleamed.
The soft fragrance caused me to dream, in the brocade quilt.
The willows along the river looked hazy,
The swans were flying under the waned moon.
("Pusaman" 菩萨蛮 [Buddhist Dancers])

and

Many sails pass me by, but not the one for which wait I.
The slanting sun sheds a sympathetic ray.
The carefree river carries it away.
My heart breaks at the sight of the islet with duckweed white.
("Meng Jiangnan" 梦江南 [Dreaming of the South])

They are two completely different narrative modes. Despite Liu and Wen's similar experiences, the different urban systems brought about the different urban narratives. Liu Yong's narrative of amorous themes features obvious popularity, secularization and colloquialization of the market culture. Accordingly, it deconstructed the aesthetic values of the late Tang, the Five dynasties and the early Song periods, as can be seen in the following lines:

The mountains and rivers at sight triggered my homesickness again;
The faded flowers in rain and wind made me more pitiful for the spring.
It would be better to cherish the girl around me than to care the sad.
(Yan Shu 晏殊, "Huanxisha" 浣溪沙 [Sand of Silk-washing Stream])

Liu Yong's narrative challenged the traditional mainstream discourse, and consequently caused the severe criticism from the scholar-officials of the Song dynasty.²³

²³ Xu Du, "Queshaobian" 却扫编 (Quesao writing), volume 5: "It was full of vulgar words, thus was beloved by some secular people," in Huang Sheng, 1958, volume 5.

It was right through Liu Yong's role discourse practice that the restaurants, inns, markets and secular human nature, which represented the new signs of city and urban strata—"the households of the city"—"the fops of the capital,"²⁴ entered his urban narrative, disuniting and replacing the previous discourse and aesthetic orientation which focused on the royal and noble life.

The secularization and commercialization in Liu Yong's urban narrative of amorous themes still can be seen in his repetitive descriptions and emphasis on the commercialization of entertainment: "For one smile from you, I would rather pay ten thousand bushels of pearls, let alone a thousand ounces of gold."²⁵ and "A natural beauty with a pure heart and spirit, is worth more than a thousand ounces of gold."²⁶ The allusion "a smile is worth a thousand ounces of gold" or "paying one thousand ounces of gold for a smile"²⁷ originally means it is hard to make an imperial or aristocratic concubine smile, which has nothing to do with commodity exchange. While in Liu Yong's lyrics, it involves the commodity exchange in pleasure quarters, which truthfully reflects the new city space and the commercialization of love affairs.

The emphasis of "A natural beauty with a pure heart and spirit is worth more than a thousand ounces of gold" resulted from the fact that money had already been generally acknowledged as a medium of exchange in commerce, entertainment and daily life.²⁸ The urban narrative of amorous themes from the late Tang to early Song usually deliberately avoided the market exchange of love affairs (for the lovers then were mostly non-commercialized: girls were supported and fed by either a family or an official, while Liu Yong and other city dwellers mainly dealt with commercialized courtesans performing for anyone at a brothel). This narrative was often full of aristocratic images, such as tender love, poetic romance between mortals and immortals, rendezvous and heavenly abodes, etc. Liu Yong's urban narrative of amorous themes was quite different. It frankly told how people used their money to exchange the sex and entertainment resources, which had been monopolized by the royals and dignitaries. Through money business, the resources became the commodities which could be afforded

²⁴ Wang Zhuo, *Biji manzhi* 碧鸡漫志 (Ode for the black rooster), volume 2.

²⁵ "Hehuandai" 合欢带 (Belt of hehuan).

²⁶ "Libienan" 离别难 (Hardships of departing).

²⁷ The allusion originated from Cui Yin "Qiyi" 七依: "Her looking back is worth one million cashes and her simile is worth a thousand gold" and Wang Sengru 王僧孺 "Yong chongji" 咏宠姬 (Ode to Favorite Concubine): "I would use several cities to trade her looking back/and a thousand gold to make her simile."

²⁸ "Extravagance became common among the people. They competed in showing off their luxuries such as their ornaments, brocade, exquisite vessels of gold jade and pearls. The rich were so proud of their wealth and the poor felt ashamed of their poverty."

by the public, and satisfied the innate pleasure-seeking desires of everyone. This shows the transformation from aristocratic and elite culture to secular and commercial culture. Besides, this narrative mode tore away from the love affairs' sentimental veil, and reduced them to a mere money relation; therefore, it countered the myth constructed by the scholar-officials: their talent and discourse power could go beyond money. As a result, Liu Yong's narrative was denounced by the mainstream scholar-officials: "Due to this, his lyrics constituted a different style featuring plainness and vulgarity, which was most loved by the illiterate."²⁹

It was right because Liu Yong's lyrics represented the "plain and vulgar" discourse of "the illiterate" that his narrative of amorous themes from a prodigal poet to a brothel visitor finished the construction of the discourse from the individual to the desire group expression.

The most striking feature of prodigals and brothel visitors, the represents of male desire, is that they frequented brothels and indulged themselves in women and music bought by money, which highlights the cultural identity and discourse of the desire subject. Liu Yong's discourse of a brothel visitor features the bold narrative of male desire, the brute body and lust care, the numerous women and songs and the exciting sensuality, and the boast of richness, as can be seen in "as long as I can obtain a smile from you/I am disinclined to see the ten thousand ounces of gold." It expresses the long-depressed desire of the marginalized people, i.e. the common city dwellers, and the aesthetic orientation of secularization and popularization. Liu Yong believed it was the natural right to satisfy one's lust, especially when the man and woman were in love with each other. He thought it was the natural right of prodigals and talents to have love affairs everywhere:

The scenes are so beautiful,
And we are so young.
Why not have some love affairs for fun?
After all, we have the clear-cut image as well as the elegant taste.
("Dongxiange" 洞仙歌 [Song Of a Fairy in the Cave])

My heart has been attracted by the beautiful views for long.
In addition, I am still so young.
And for love affairs I eagerly long."
("Dongxiange")

The brothel visitors regarded the female bodies as the consumption objects, so

²⁹ Wang Zhuo, *Biji manzhi*, volume 2.

they willfully embellished the sensory stimulus from the beautiful women and songs and countenance:

Visiting the brothels,
I made acquaintance with beautiful girls.
Some of them are sensual and pretty,
While others are of natural beauty.
("Manjianghong" 满江红 [The River All Red])

I find a sixteen-year old girl who I loved in my heart.
She was born so beautiful and so smart.
The most charming part is her smiles,
Which never occur without her two dimples.
She is so coquettish and lovely;
I'd like to lean close to her again and again,
To feel her fine and lubricious skin.
("Xiaozhenxi" 小镇西 [West of Small Town])

This highlights the increasing desire of consumption fashion in the secular culture and the transformation of narrative mode of the new city space. Liu Yong's lyrics about his brothel life, his endless pursuit of the sensuality, and his boast of numerous amorous stories, all highlight the male vanity and desire as well as the vulgar and secular narrative of consuming the female bodies. They reveal that the commercialization of the entertainment in the new city space provide the male city dwellers with unprecedented chances and discourse power for their increasing pursuit of sensuality.

The discourse of brothel visitors features the "prodigal plus amorous themes." Similar to the palace-style poetry in the Six dynasties, the discourse, which was established through the individual experience, is also the expression of self-desire, and a transmigration of narrative of individual desire. The only difference is the desire subjects have become the common intellectuals and city dwellers, instead of the royal and dignitaries who once monopolized the sex and entertainment resources. This discourse, due to its expression of the long-depressed desire of the citizens, "began to spread widely and became popular in the world." As a result, it became popular in secular literature—the *biji xiaoshuo* 笔记小说 (sketchbooks) and *huaben* 话本 (script for storytelling). The discourse mode established by Liu Yong gradually became the classics of urban culture after continuously selected and narrated in the history. From numerous *cihua* 词话 (storytelling interspersed with songs and ballads), *biji xiaoshuo* and *huaben* in two Song dynasties, such as *Zuiweng tanlu* 醉翁谈录 (Drunk old man's talks), *Lüchuang xinhua* 绿窗新话 (New talks under green

window), and *Liu Qiqing shijiu wan jianglou ji* 柳耆卿诗酒玩江楼记 (Liu Yong who drank and wrote poems on the river tower), and drama and *nihuaben* 拟话本 (short colloquialism novels) in the Yuan and Ming dynasties, such as *Zhong mingji chunfen diao Liu Qi* 众名妓春风吊柳七 (The famous courtesans lament on the death of Liu Qi), which were very popular in the folk, it can be seen the process of construction and changes of the discourse.

The prodigal-brothel visitor discourse, which represents the pursuit of the new urban culture, became “widely spread” in the world. Finally, it gradually entered the center from the margin, and formed the important secular trend of urban culture of the Mid-Song dynasty.

From a Talented Lyricist to Discourse of Talented Lyricists: Urban Narrative Mode Stressing Hedonism Rather Than Official Ranks

Besides the expansion of entertainment spaces and groups, another striking feature caused by the changes of cities in Mid-Song dynasty was the hedonism, popularization and commercialization of people’s revelry in their daily life, especially during festivals, which hastened the birth of the new urban life that people “drank to their heart content to enjoy the peaceful and prosperous time” and the urban narrative that evaluated pleasure-seeking as the highest good.

The detailed description of revelry on the festivals, such as Lantern Festival, Pure Brightness Festival and Mid-Autumn Festival etc., is classic in Liu Yong’s urban narrative, such as the prosperous and boisterous streets seen as follows:

Decorated lanterns displayed in every house were brightly shining;
The beautiful girls went everywhere for sightseeing.
The trees along the streets were all decorated with lanterns and festoons,
The squares were decorated with towering brightly lighted lantern mountains.
The place reechoed with the sound of lutes and drums.

Besides, the collective revelry in “all people left the downtown to visit places of interest” and “the wind was so gentle and not cold/carrying the new music from every household” is also a case to the point. The youths all experienced such feeling on festivals:

The strong merriment was priceless.
Do not spare the wine, even if it cost the earth.
When my money was used up,

I would trade wine with my expensive apparel.
 Let's have the sky as our tent and the earth as our mat,
 And drink to our hearts' content to enjoy the peaceful and prosperous time.
 ("Paoqiule" 抛毬乐 [Joy of Playing with a Ball])

These descriptions vividly and incisively reveal the collective revelry on festivals. Both the form (*manci changdiao* 慢词长调 [long and slow melody]) and the content (visiting the places of interest and revelry) can best embody the transformation of the urban culture in Northern Song dynasty.

To be sure, the collective revelry on festivals was not original in the Northern Song dynasty.³⁰ However, the changes of cities and commerce, together with the emperors' stress of coming of millennium and sharing happiness with people, rendered the collective revelry of festivals more popularized, secularized, commercialized and hedonistic.³¹ Liu Yong is concerned more about the commoners than the royals and dignitaries.³² As a result, different from that of the time of *lifang*, the revelry of festivals in Liu Yong's urban narrative is infused with strong commercial atmosphere. In the Northern Song dynasty, "Jinming Lake 金明池 and Qionglin Yuan 琼林苑 were open on March, 1st of lunar calendar" for the annual ceremony of ablution. In his lyrics Liu Yong described the troupes:

Traveling along the dyke golden and fair,
 Variety shows were performed everywhere.
 The well-dressed girls were strolling,
 And the music was resounding.
 ("Pozhenle" 破阵乐 [Joy of the cavalry])

Liu Yong also described the rented stalls, which were mentioned by Meng

³⁰ As early as in the Tang dynasty, Qujiang 曲江 was the place of interest during festivals. "The only place of interest in imperial capital is Qujiang." ("Ting zhushi yingzao qujiangting she" 听诸司营造曲江亭敕 in *Quantangwen* 全唐文 (The complete anthology of Tang prose), volume 74.

³¹ Zhu Bian: "When appreciating the lantern show on Lantern Festival on the Imperial Palace, Emperor Zhenzong saw the crowds and made a toast to a minister: 'My forefathers experienced a lot of hardships to start the dynasty; now I was lucky to meet the peaceful time. Let's celebrate it together.' The minister congratulated to him."

³² For example, in Du Fu's "Liren xing" 丽人行 (Satire on fair ladies): "The weather's fine in the third mood on the third day/By riverside so many beauties in array." "Among them there're the emperor's favorite kin/Ennobled Duchess of Guo comes with Duchess of Qin." "When eunuchs' horses come running, no dust is raised/They bring still more rare dishes delicious to the taste." "ON the main road an official retinue comes/A rider ambles on saddled horse, the last of all."

Yuanlao 孟元老³³, and the dragon boat race:

The emperor came to visit the place in his vehicle,
He enjoyed the drinking with his beautiful wine vessel.
Beside the green lakes he feasted the people,
The dragon boat race was in full swing,
Every contestant tried his best to win.
("Pozhenle")

The daily life and collective revelry in the new city were always full of commercial elements. Due to the commercial interest brought about by the policy of "the imperial court supporting the marketplaces" and the political purpose of stressing the coming of the millennium, the variety shows, ditties and acrobatics became booming, which constructed the new connotation and functions of urban culture.

The entertainment in the marketplaces, which could only be performed occasionally during the time of *lifang*, became the regular show business in daily life in the Northern Song dynasty. The public leisure places, which spread all over the city, offered various kinds of entertainment catering to popular taste. Consequently, they deconstructed the traditional creation, consumption and dissemination.³⁴ They not only satisfied the cultural demands of the new city dwellers, but also reconstructed the tastes and value indentation of urban culture with their new discourse and secular themes.

Du Fu 杜甫 once uttered his deep sigh and criticism in the lines "The prime minister is powerful without a peer/When he is angry, be careful not to come near!" In his narrative of the revelry of festivals he denounced the pried, luxury, and debauchery of royal relatives. Liu Yong, however, praised the heaven on

³³ Jinming Lake was open to all the tourists. The cloisters extended to everywhere, and along them there were leisure places where people were gambling, selling food and drink or performing their variety shows." "The tourists thronged to go around. In the south to the bridge there was a gate named Lingxing Gate, where two high-rise buildings ornamented with colored lanterns and bright banners stood there. On the building there were people who strived for the tournament, who courtesans stood there to add to the fun." "In the east of the street, there were restaurants and hotels, casinos and other leisure places. There would be sold when Jinming Lake was closed." Meng Yuanlao, 1956, pp. 181–182.

³⁴ Yao He: "When the drumbeats faded away the dust of the capital was settled/Then the feasts began and people laughed around the tables." The lines describe the typical entertainment life of Tang people in *lifang*. Most of the Tang scholars' elegant entertainment, such as feasts, gatherings, songs and dances, night banquets, "chatting for a whole night around the oven," "telling grotesque tales" and spreading Tang *chuanqi* etc, which are familiar to us, took place under the curfew time in *lifang*, which was seclude from marketplaces. They were still the activities of the nobilities' salon, for both the creators and the receivers were merely scholars.

earth in his lyrics, which can be seen in the lines:

The emperor came to visit the place in his vehicle,
He enjoyed the drinking with his beautiful wine vessel.
Beside the green lakes he feasted the people,

and “Looking at the fantastic scenes/you cannot help thinking of the fairyland of Penglai.” He also expressed his inebriation in secular hedonism:

At the peaceful time,
The people of all walks enjoy their rich life.
Facing the beautiful scenes in the peaceful times,
How can I leave alone without drinking to my heart’s content?
 (“Paoqiule”)

Revealing the new trend of social differentiation and spiritual life. (i.e. from the emphasis on virtues and social responsibilities to emphasis on hedonism). The people gradually approved of and even followed the trend of secularization, popularization and hedonism. The new value orientation, which abandoned the profundity and turned to sensuality, represented the transformation of cultural identities of intellectuals in the new urban spaces of the Northern Song dynasty. The so-called talented lyricists refer to the people who, despite their outstanding literary talent, failed the imperial examination since the Tang and Song dynasties, and thus were dispelled out of the mainstream society. The essential distinction between scholar-officials and talented lyricists lies in the fact that: the former won the recognition and occupied high ranks, while the latter failed to win the recognition of their talents so they felt they were born at the wrong time.

As far as Liu Yong is concerned, among his multiple roles, being a talented lyricist is his most authentic and gratifying role. His famous “He chongtian” 鹤冲天 (Crane shooting into the sky) best illustrates his role discourse, cultural identity and value orientation:

On the golden list of candidates,
I lost the chance to come first.
And I am briefly a deserted sage during this enlightened time,
What should I turn to?
Failing to achieve my ambition,
Why not indulge in passions and run wild?
No need to worry about gains and losses.
As a talented lyricist and writer of lyrics,
I am like an untitled minister.

In the singsong houses and brothels,
 I keep a rendezvous behind painted screens;
 My old acquaintances are to my liking.
 They are worthy of my visits.
 Better to take comfort in the arms of the girls in red and green
 And enjoy the distractions and hours of dalliance,
 Thus compensating for my disappointment.
 The prime of one's life is too short.
 Better to barter empty fame
 For the pleasures of good wine and sweet song.

The most striking feature of Liu Yong's role of a talented lyricist does not lie in his great versatility, but in his choice between social ranks and hedonism ("Better to barter empty fame/for the pleasures of good wine and sweet song") and his startling marginal value orientation (As a talented lyricist and writer of lyrics/I am like an untitled minister). Without doubt it is his public challenge of the mainstream value orientation.

Based on the national policy of "ruling the nation with the scholar officials," the Song rulers tended to value humanities and belittle military affairs.³⁵ The emperors often held palace examinations in person³⁶ and those who passed the examinations would win the honor of being "disciples of emperor." Therefore, striving to pass the imperial examination for an official career was an inevitable choice and mainstream value orientation of Song intellectuals. Due to the preferential treatment³⁷, the scholar officials were accustomed to the hedonistic life of feasting and drinking. With the development of politics, economy, commerce, and entertainment, they gradually formed their multiple roles in many aspects of their life: public affairs and private affairs, governing and entertainment,³⁸ which can be seen in various genres, such as poems, essays, lyrics, notes and fiction.

However, the hedonistic life of the scholar officials was quite different from

³⁵ As Cai Xiang 蔡襄 put it: "Nowadays, we choose officials mainly from scholars by judging their literary talents. The senior ministers are scholars; the court attendants, scholars; the secretaries of fiancés and supplies, scholars; the generals in charge of national defense, scholars; the commissioners, scholars; the department magistrates, scholars." See "Guolun yaomu" 国论要目 (Principal points on the state), in *Duanmingji* 端明集 (An anthology of Duanming), volume 22.

³⁶ Liu Yong, "Changshoule".

³⁷ Li Tao, 1979, volume 221.

³⁸ "The Palace attendant Huang was in charge of feasting the guests. During the breakfasts he sternly talked about the justice and state affairs, while during the suppers he ordered the courtesans to toast him until he was heavily drunk." See Zhou Hui, *Qingbo zazhi* 清波杂志 (The sketchbook of Qingbo), volume 10.

the life style of “Better to barter empty fame/for the pleasures of good wine and sweet song.” For the ruling class, the former was quite acceptable, while the latter was completely not, for it would deconstruct the mainstream value orientation and subvert the scholar officials’ traditional cultural identities. Because of this, Liu Yong naturally offended the ruling class and called forth unanimous criticism from the contemporary and later scholar officials.³⁹ In his lyrics, the narrative of valuing hedonism more than high official positions is almost everywhere:

Ephemeral name and profit I will strive to renounce.
 Don’t take rights and wrongs to heart.
 Riches and honors do not come for trying,
 But at the right time my ambition shall be requited.
 Don’t be sad and idle,
 Stay close to green wine and pink cheeks.
 Inside the embroidered curtain,
 Get drunk, lie close to the fragrant beauty.
 With these, what more could you want?
 (“Ru yu shui” 如鱼水 [Like a fish to water])

As a candidate for the imperial examination, Liu Yong should have studied hard to attain an official position. However, although he was clear that “the days become bright and sunny/it is the good time to study,” he turned to hedonism again:

The landscape gardens gradually become charming,
 I plan to pleasure-seeking.
 I will buy numerous flowers,
 I will ride a carriage loaded with wine.
 I will spend thousands of money to call a courtesan.
 I would rather intoxicate myself,
 And sleep with her till the sun is high.
 (“Tiyindeng” 剔银灯 [Trimming the silver lamp])

³⁹ “Emperor Ren stressed elegance and dignity and he preached the root of Tao and dispelled amatory and flatulent literature. Liu Sanbian 柳三变 (Liu Yong), a candidate of the imperial examination, loved to compose erotic lyrics which spread everywhere, including the Hechongtian: “Better to barter empty fame/For the pleasures of good wine and sweet song.” When the result of examination was out, Emperor Ren cancelled Liu’s qualification. He said, ‘Let him seek the pleasure of good wine and sweet song. Why does he seek the empty fame now?’ Liu Yong did not pass the examination until the 1st year of Jingyou (1034). Later he renamed himself Liu Yong, and thus got the chance to be an official.” See Wu Hui, 1979, volume 1; Tang Guizhang, 1988, volume 1, p. 135.

After the repeated failures in imperial examinations, the talented lyricist expressed his indignation in his lyrics:

The prime of one's life is too short.
Better to barter empty fame,
For the pleasures of good wine and sweet song.

Even as to such a grand and honorable event as his passing the palace examination, he would mix it up with a romantic affair:

In late Spring I will go to the palace,
Where incense will be burning.
Standing in the pavilion,
Facing the emperor in person,
I'm sure I can pass the imperial examination.
At that time, please give your congratulations to me,
And I will bequeath you good gratuity.
("Changshoule")

Besides, his biggest wish after passing the imperial examination was still hedonistic: "Let's make a appointment to go brothels/we will ride our steeds to see the beautiful girls" ("Liuchuxin" 柳初新 [The new willow]) When he served as an official away from home after passing the imperial examination, he still thought as usual:

The official career is difficult,
Yet it is worth naught.
When drinking with you along,
I heard a cuckoo's sad song.
After listening to it again and again,
I fully understood it and suggested you resign.
("Siguile" 思归乐 [Missing the joy of returning])

The previous inspiring standard of scholar officials, i.e. the Qu Yuan 屈原 spirit: "when the entire world in mud has sunk, alone I'm clean/when all the people are drunk, sober I'm seen," was degraded into "Facing the beautiful scenes in the peaceful times/How can I leave alone without drinking to my heart's content." Du Fu's sense of historical mission, as is expressed in "I would help the crown in my strife/to purify the ways of life," was replaced with the ideas of "How much time will be left in my late years/the tricky official career is worth naught" and "The ephemeral life can not last for 100 years. What could the official ranks,

houses and wealth be good for me? (“Weifan” 尾犯 [Accessory offender])

It is only through narratives that cultural identity can be expressed. It comes from the author’s discourse practice, and is limited by various social powers. The role discourse and urban narrative of a talented lyricist, which were triggered by his failure in an imperial examination and his unrecognized talents, broke through the mainstream ideology with its emphasis on “Better to barter empty fame/for the pleasures of good wine and sweet song.” Accordingly, it presented a different cultural identity and value orientation. In fact, it indicated the discourse power and construction of a new group of talented lyricists which ranked between the mainstream elites and the common citizens.⁴⁰

The cultural identity and discourse power, as were expressed in “as a talented lyricist and writer of lyrics/I am like an untitled minister,” endowed justifiability to the group of talented lyricists, making the new rising group contest with the mainstream elites.

The new life attitude and value orientation featured dodge of loftiness, deconstruction of profundity, elimination of scholar officials’ traditional life meaning and sense of mission, disengagement of mainstream ideology, pursuit of instant sensuality and abandonment of spiritual dimension. They showed profound significance in constructing the marginalized culture or subculture. It is just because of this that Liu Yong’s role discourses and urban narrative realized the transformation from individual’s literary expression to group discourse.

The talented lyricists experienced the role transition from an entertainment consumer to a producer—from a talented lyricist and entertainment consumer in

I heard of the versatile Song Yu 宋玉 from Orchid Pavilion
 He was so skilled at composing poems.
 Now I want to ask such a question:
 Where are the changeable clouds from?
 (“Jiwutong” 击梧桐 [Striking the phoenix tree])

to a lyricist in “When Qiqing (Liu Yong) resided in the capital, he visited all the brothels in his leisure time. Wherever he went, the courtesans admired his fame as a lyricist. Liu was good at changing the mode of tunes. Once he mentioned [a courtesan in a lyric], her fame would increase ten-fold.”⁴¹ The role transition is the expression of Liu Yong’s individual literary expression of his cultural identity as a talented lyricist—a main creator of new urban culture—and the value

⁴⁰ During the Song and Yuan dynasties, the writers and narrators of *zaju* were called *cairen* 才人. See Zhou Mi, 2007. “Lan Caihe” 蓝采和 in *Gujin zaju* 古今杂剧 (Variety shows of all times) by an anonymous author in the Yuan dynasty.: “How dare I, a balladeer, be so arbitrary? Actually this is what newly created by the *cairen*.”

⁴¹ Luo Ye, 1998, volume 2.

fulfillment and existing characteristics of talented lyricists.

Different from the mainstream elites who depended on the imperial court to realize their value, the talented lyricists depended on a new group—the courtesans and various brothel visitors. The courtesans were the most important bridge between the talented lyricists and their audience, so the mutual admiration between the talented lyricists and courtesans was the high point of the new role, group and profession:

Since time immemorial,
There've been rare gifted scholars and beauties,
Who could live the life which was ideal.
Better to love and embrace each other,
For unnecessarily the other can understand my versatility.
("Yunü yao xianpei" 玉女摇仙佩 [Young girl waving fairy wearing])

We have not made love to each other clearly,
But we have loved each other silently.

...

The meeting of a gifted scholar and a fair girl,
Maybe has been predestined long before.
("Yuhudie" 玉蝴蝶 [Jade Butterfly])

These courtesans were not only the bosom friends of their talent, but also their confidants when their mainstream life and value orientation were baffled.

In the singsong houses and brothels,
I keep a rendezvous behind painted screens;
My old acquaintances are to my liking.
They are worthy of my visits.

The favor and the admiration from the courtesans not only greatly promoted the circulation of the talented lyricists' lyrics, but also helped them realize their manly charms, social functions, life value and emotion consigns:

At the sumptuous feasts,
You got the writing brush and paper ready.
Smiling, you asked me for new lyrics.
When you sang the new song for me,
Your sweet voice got more and more steady.
When you thought of the previous affection between us,
Your face became more and more lovely.
("Yuhudie")

Therefore, the narrative mode and value orientation which contradicted official ranks to hedonism resulted not only from the satisfaction of individual desire, but also from the social differentiation and career orientation of different roles and strata.

Consequently, the talented lyricists inevitably stood closer to marketplaces and the secular society. They provided the public with cultural entertainment by means of commercialization of their lyrics:

My whole life fails to realize my distinguished talents
 I can only speak of the stories of common people.
 I sing the new lyrics and change the difficult tune,
 For I know the rhythm and meter well.
 Skilled at dressing up in playas and singing songs,
 I am beautiful both inside and outside.
 Whenever I enjoy songs at banquets,
 People praise my skills.
 How is it a pity that I am getting old.
 (“Chuan huazhi” 传花枝 [Passing the flower twig])

The profligacy, which was hated deeply by the mainstream society, was the most beloved part among the citizens. The narrative mode of “talented lyricist plus amorous themes,” especially such stories as “three courtesans controlled Liu Young to compose lyrics,” has become the widespread motif of later novels and dramas.

“Liu Qiqing, alias Yong ... had the demeanor of a transcendent being. He was talented, gallant, and arrogant to the royals and dignitaries. He was often engaged in amorous dalliances. He often composed new *ci* lyrics at will, and gradually built up his great everlasting reputation in the world ... Nowadays, he has already become a legend among the courtesans.”⁴² Liu Yong, as a fashion idol among the citizens and a hotspot of mainstream society’s criticism, has been enjoying his reputation for hundreds of years. This is the greatest success of a talented lyricist’s marginalized life, social function and value realization.

The identification of the idol was the inevitable result of discourse construction, identification of cultural identities and popularization of value orientation. The citizens needed an idol to be their spokesman of their culture and value orientation, and the idol would express the response of the public to the narrative mode, value orientation and value goal in a fashionable way. An idol, especially in the subculture group, often had unexpected powerful appeal. Liu Yong constructed the myth of “despising the nobility and living an uninhibited

⁴² Luo Ye, 1998, volume 2.

life,” as is expressed in “As a talented lyricist and writer of lyrics/I am like an untitled minister” and “Better to barter empty fame/for the pleasures of good wine and sweet song.” The myth spread and was re-narrated at a miraculous speed, making the new rising talented lyricists and common citizens verify their life meaning and affirm their positions in the cultural map. After the repeated narrative in different groups, genres and texts, the prodigal poet and talented lyricist Liu Yong, together with his lyrics, became the idol and classic of talented lyricists.⁴³

It was just the talented lyricists’ discourse practice that enabled the discourses of talented lyricists and common citizens to develop from oral narrative into texts. As a result, it crossed the border between the marginal and central traditions, overlapped in many cultural circles, and broke the integration of elites and culture. In this way, it carved out a niche for the discourse of talented lyricists and common citizens. As the Song scholar Xu Du 徐度 said in volume 5 of his *Quesaojian* 却扫编: “Liu Yong built up his reputation during the reign of Emperor Ren ... His lyrics, despite its exquisiteness, are often full of vulgar expressions, so they are especially loved by the vulgar people. Later, as Ouyang Xiu 欧阳修 and Su Shi 苏轼 appeared, the lyrics became refined and elegant. As a result, Liu’s lyrics were ignored by the refined scholars. However, they were still loved by the vulgar people as before.”

The role discourse of a talented lyricist in Liu Yong’s lyrics pushed the role specialization, which started from such talented lyricists as Du Mu 杜牧, Wen Tingyun, Wei Zhuang 韦庄, into role discourse practice of talented lyricists. Thus, it sketched the new cultural identity and orientation for the later intellectuals who made an obscure living by selling their works to common citizens in public leisure places.⁴⁴ From Liu Yong to Guan Hanqing 关汉卿, a typical talented lyricist in guild of authors, we can clearly see how the talented lyricists were derived from the same origin.

Liu Yong’s narrative of a talented lyricist led the Mid-Song transformation

⁴³ See *Gujin cihua* 古今词话 (Ancient and modern *cihua*), Wang Zhuo’s *Biji manzhi*, Wu Zeng’s *Nenggaizhai manlu* 能改斋漫录, Zhuang Shunmin’s 张舜民 *Huamanlu* 画墁录, Chen Shidao’s 陈师道 *Houshan shihua* 后山诗话, Ye Mengde’s *Bishu luhua*, Xu Du’s *Quesaoji*, Luo Ye’s *Zuiweng tanlu*, *Lüchuang xinhua* etc. Later it became the archetypes of *huaben* in the Song dynasty, dramas in the Yuan dynasty, and *nihuaben* in the Ming dynasty, such as “Liu Qiqing shijiu wan jianglou ji” in *Qingping shantang huaben* 清平山堂话本 (Qingping shantang scripts), Yuan *zaju* “Qian Dayin 钱大尹 wisely favors Xie Tianxiang 谢添香 by Guan Hanqing and “Zhongmingji chunfeng diao Liu Qi” in *Gujin xiaoshuo* 古今小说 (Ancient and modern novels) by Feng Menglong 冯梦龙.

⁴⁴ Zhang Shanren 张山人, Kong Sanzhuang 孔三传, Wang Yanling 王彦龄, Cao Zu 曹组 and Zhang Gunchen 张袞臣 recorded in *Biji manzhi*, volume 2 and the narrators recorded in *Dongjing menghua lu* 东京梦华录 (The dream in eastern capital) and *Mengliang lu* 梦梁录 (A dream of sorghum).

from elite discourse to talented lyricists' discourse. It indicated the contradictory intersection of Liu Yong's social and cultural identities. For example, as for his cultural identity, he showed his self-esteem and disdain of official positions in "As a talented lyricist and writer of lyrics/I am like an untitled minister." However, as for his social identity, he had to keep trying to pass the imperial examination till he did it after he renamed himself. For the other example, as for his cultural identity, he believed that "How much time will be left in my late years/the tricky official career is worth naught." ("Siguile") However, in his actual life, he had to keep paying homage to some dignitaries and ingratiated the emperor by singing the praises of his birthday, which revealed another side of him as a traditional scholar official. For another example, as a talented lyricist, he believed "Better to barter empty fame/for the pleasures of good wine and sweet song." However, as an official, he had to rein himself:

How do you know?
The official career reined me more and more,
I can't be as carefree and romantic as before.
("Chang xiangsi" 长相思 [Everlasting Longing])

He had to make himself conform to the mainstream ethics of scholar officials. The contradictory intersection of multiple roles and cultural identities endowed Liu Yong's lyrics with complicated forms and tension, so it is hard to be judged with the unified value standard. It embodied that during the transformation, the overlapping of the center and the margin resulted in the pluralism of role differentiation, value orientation and cultural identities. The pluralism enabled Liu Yong's lyrics to break down the barriers between different culture circles of different strata. They were disseminated among scholar officials as well as among common citizens, representing the newly-emerged differentiation and integration trend of the Song culture.

From a Traveling Official to Discourse of Official Travel: Traveling Official and Amorous Themes

The establishment of one's discourse means the recognition of one's self-identity; the differentiation of social strata led to the changes of role discourse. This is a two-way process. Liu Yong's lyrics, not only show his marginalization from the mainstream discourse, as is shown in his role discourse of a prodigal poet and talented lyricist, but also his mainstream from the margin, as is shown in his narrative of his ingratiation and official travel.

The official travel was the most common discourse of ancient Chinese scholar

officials. The imperial examination system provided common intellectuals with the possibilities of spatial mobility and life choices—traveling for study, career and official positions. The narrative of the traveling officials' life included self-cultivation, ingratiation, and official travel. However, these themes had been expressed mainly in poetry, so when they entered the lyrics which were aimed to entertain the common citizens, they had to be reconstructed and integrated in discourse and narrative mode.

Liu Yong's lyrics about official travel brought forth two innovations. First, he applied the narrative of seeking favor from nobilities and official travel in poetry to lyrics, which expanded the lyrics' expression and discourse. As a result, lyrics entered the centre from the margin. Second, he used the amorous themes and entertainment function of lyrics to innovate the grand narrative of official travel, making it more secular and poetic. For example, judged from the extant documents, it was Liu Yong who was the first to sing praise of the emperor's birthday and imperial ceremonies in lyrics.⁴⁵

His "Yulou chun" 玉楼春 (Spring in jade pavilion: the phoenix mansion is full of fragrance) praises the full panoply of Emperor Zhen's sacrifice ceremony; his "Yujiexing" 御街行 (Travel on the imperial street: the burning firewood was almost over, and the dawn came.) praises the great occasion of Emperor Zhen's general amnesty in the 2nd year of Tianxi (1018) due to the star metamorphose; his "Song zhengyi" 送征衣 (Delivering traveling garment) and "Yongyule" 永遇乐 (Joy of eternal union) both celebrate the birthday of Emperor Ren and coming of the millennium by elaborating the various auspicious signs and people's jubilation on the birthday. He wrote *ci* in the form of rhapsodies and elaborated the great occasions, i.e., he inherited the traditional discourse and narrative mode of *hanfu* 汉赋 (rhapsody of the Han dynasty), which stressed "praising the virtues of the monarch and being attentive to loyalty and filial piety," and highly praised the "jubilation and richness of the people." His "Qingbeile" 倾杯乐 (Joy of drinking a toast), which celebrated the Lantern Festival in imperial parks, spread into the imperial harem and "won many praises," which broke the tradition that the "lyrics composed in the folk were forbidden in imperial musicians."⁴⁶ Liu Yong also developed the popular ditties into the grand *manzi changdiao*, making it suitable to "elaborate the peaceful and

⁴⁵ The late period of Emperor Zhen and the period of Emperor Ren, in which Liu Yong lived, were the golden time of the Northern Song dynasty. On every occasion of auspicious events or the grand ceremony of amnesty, or the emperor's birthday, "the scholar officials thronged to make songs to the rulers. See *Songshi jishi benmo* 宋史纪事本末 (Reporting origin and result of historic events in Song dynasty), volume 22. Liu Yong's court congratulatory lyrics are the embodiment of the scholar officials' adulation.

⁴⁶ "Yuezhi" 乐志 (Chronicle of music) [with reference to] *Songshi* 宋史 (Chronicle of Song dynasty), volume 126, Zhonghua shuju, 1979.

prosperous times.”⁴⁷ Thus, the lyrics entered the center from the margin, and gave a new look to Song *ci*.

In addition, Liu Yong was not constrained by the imperial perspectives and the conventional narrative mode. He narrated the urban life in the form of lyrics and thus reconstructed the elegance and the “vulgarity.” Different from the conventional adulation of the imperial court, his poems for seeking favor from nobilities had a stronger sense of new urban life. For example, in the poems written to the prefects of Suzhou 苏州, Hangzhou 杭州 and Chengdu 成都, the first sections highlighted the flourishing and bustling urban life, while the second sections sang highly praise of their political probity and social justice. Liu Yong were more interested in the secular hedonism in the marketplaces, such as

The wealth of the marketplaces in Suzhou
Exceeds that of other thirteen prefectures.
Everywhere you can see the fair ladies
In gaily-painted pleasure-boats, or in gorgeous buildings.
 (“Rui zhengu” 瑞鹧鸪 [Auspicious partridge])

The Jinli 锦里 Street is so charming,
The Silkworm Fair is so flourishing.
The entertainment places are everywhere.
Both the elegant and the “vulgar” like seeking pleasure.
Wearing fine clothes,
The ladies here look so fair.
 (“Yicunjin” 一寸金 [An ounce of gold])

As a result, he imparted the poems about seeking favor, which tended to be conventionalized, with much earthliness. His urban narrative, which “elaborated the peaceful and prosperous times,” became everlasting noted poems capturing the local conditions.

The integration of the elegance and the “vulgarity”⁴⁸ not only more channels

⁴⁷ Song Xiangfeng 宋祥凤, “Yuefu yulun” 乐府余论: “*Manci* started from Emperor Ren’s reign period. After the war was over, the capital became so prosperous. The public leisure places all preferred the new tunes. Qiqing, due to his frustration, lingered among the public leisure places. He infused the vulgar language into his lyrics in order to let the courtesans to spread them. As a result, they spread so quickly because of their harmonious tune... *Manci* thus became more and more popular.”

⁴⁸ The secularization, popularization and commercialization of entertainment resulting from the unification of streets and marketplaces and the expansion of time and places for urban entertainment enabled the courtesans of officials, families and marketplaces to break the limits of their classes and cultural circles, rendering the lyrics on feasts and amours affairs possibilities of circulation between the provinces and marketplace.

for the narrative of official travel, but also a new place for the narrative of the new urban life. Liu Yong's poems about seeking favor from nobilities spread from the officialdom to the marketplaces, even the border areas and foreign countries. "Wherever there was a well where they could drink water, [people] would sing Liu's songs." Compared with the common poems about seeking favor, Liu Yong's lyrics spread more widely and were accepted by more people.

And for that reason, Liu Yong's lyrics, which were written in the form of *hanfu*, had the multi-perspectives of marketplaces, imperial court and provinces, and accordingly started the new narrative of official travel and urban life: "It was Liu Qiqing who began the tradition of elaborating the peaceful and prosperous times. He dwelled on the times so meticulously that even a thousand years later, one can still see the scenes at that time from his lyrics."⁴⁹ It reveals the differentiation and integration of traditional discourse during the construction of new urban culture. His narrative of official travel, which best illustrated the process, finished the transformation from official travel to amorous narrative. He totally deconstructed the Tang narrative mode of official travel stressing "a man should be ready to realize his aspiration anywhere all over the country," which is best represented in the poem of the Tang poet Wang Bo 王勃:

I feel on parting sad and drear
 For both of us are strangers here.
 If you have friends who know your heart,
 Distance cannot keep your apart.
 At crossroads where we bid adieu,
 Do not shed tears as women do!

Liu Yong, however, established a new narrative of official travel stressing amorous affairs in his lyrics:

Hand in hand, we gaze at each other's tearful eyes
 And burst into sobs with words congealed on our lips
 ...
 Where shall I be found at day's early break
 From wine awake?
 Moored by a riverbank planted with willow trees
 Beneath the waning moon and in the morning breeze.

Liu Yong's narrative of official travel can be categorized into two groups. In the first group, he contrasted official career with amorous affairs. He complained of

⁴⁹ Li Zhiyi, "Ba Wu Sidao xiaoci" 跋吴思道小词 (Afterword to *Wu Sidao's ci*).

his sufferings of the official travel because he often could not enjoy his amorous affairs due to the official career. This was a challenge to the mainstream discourse, for it broke the unification of the discourse and value orientation and expressed the individual's pursuit of amorous affairs. In the second group, he infused amorous themes into the grand narrative of official travel, and replaced the grand "political ambitions" with secular "amorous affairs." In the first group, the elegance does not dispel the "vulgarity"; and in the second group, the "vulgarity" does not undermine the elegance. Because of the superb art of composition, he won the reputation of "being skilled at elaborating official travel." His "Qishi" is praised as "For a thousand years *Lisao* 离骚 (The lament) alone held the palm/ until "Qishi" appeared to be the swan song of sorrow."⁵⁰

The first group include Liu Yong's "Yuhudie" (Jade butterfly: the rain stopped and the clouds disappeared), "Yebanle" 夜半乐 (Jubilation of midnight: the clouds were cold/and the day was gloomy), "Manjianghong" (The river all red: the heavy rain just stopped), "Dongxiange" (Son of a fairy in a cave: with great enthusiasm), "Luntaizi" 轮台子 (Son of wheel pavilion: the clean river was vested by fog) etc. Among them, "Qishi" is the best. As the Qing scholar Cai Songyun 蔡嵩云 commented: "'Qishi' was composed by Tuntian 屯田 [Style name of Liu Yong]. The theme is nothing more than the grief over the scenes of the autumn. However, it shows superb writing techniques in arrangement of ideas. The first section dwells on the sight of the yard which makes the poet think of his future journey; the second section elaborates the night scenes which remind the poet of his past; the third section continuously depicts the poet's memories of his past journeys and the reality that the poet was still a lonely and sleepless wanderer. The different parts run together as a coherent whole, showing Liu Yong's superb art of composition."⁵¹ What brings charm to the lyrics is the narrative mode highlighting the emotional comparison between the lovesickness of a traveling official and the enjoyment of amours affairs, as well as the milieu that juxtaposes the previous jubilation and present sorrow. The contrast of the previous jubilation and present sorrow are depended layer upon layer, vividly expressing the sufferings of official travel, as is seen in "accompanied by my shadow alone/I can not get to sleep." Due to the excellent art of composition, Liu Yong's lyrics are over-praised as the match of *Lisao*.

The best of the second group include his "Yulinling" 雨霖铃 (Bells ringing in the rain: cicadas chill, and drearily shrill), "Quyuguan" 曲玉管 (Curved jade pipe: the clouds were floating over Mont. Long) and "Basheng ganzhou" 八声甘州 (Eight beats of a Ganzhou song: shower by shower), etc.

The broad mind and audacious color in Wang Bo's narrative of official travel,

⁵⁰ Wang Zhuo, *Biji manzhi*, volume 2.

⁵¹ *Keting cilun* 柯亭词论 (Ci theory of Ke pavilion).

as is represented by his famous lines “Ambitious men are ready to realize their aspiration anywhere/their hearts are linked together even if they are not there,” represent the Tang scholar officials’ self-expectations and spiritual world, and the discourse ethics and value orientation which put dedication to one’s motherland on top of private love affairs.

Liu Yong’s “Yulinling” is entirely different. It not only infuses the secular amorous affairs into the grand narrative of official travel, but also meticulously elaborates the natural feeling of “Hand in hand, we gaze at each other’s tearful eyes/and burst into sobs with congealed on our lips,” which was experienced a thousand times by the traveling officials but always ignored, veiled and repressed by the mainstream discourse. What’s more, through the narrative of the descriptive departing circumstances, the moving detail of shaking hands to say goodbye, and the imaginary scenes after departure, the lyrics tactfully and vividly depict the deep love between the two lovers. It reveals Liu Yong stressed love affairs more than official career, and he made an effort to use the marginal discourse to deconstruct and dilute the mainstream ethics and values. The pursuit of individual desire inevitably brought about some negative influences—escape from social responsibilities and abandonment of spiritual pursuit. As Chen Zhensun 陈振孙 and Chen Tingzhao 陈廷焯 put it: “It is true that Liu Yong’s lyrics are not lofty and dignified. However, his lyrics stand out due to their harmonic and mild tones and apt language.” “Qiqing’s lyrics are well elaborated and narrated. Those about detainment in strange lands and journeys on official services are especially skillful. Yet his poetic ideas are not lofty, and his course of thought is slightly unorthodox. The innovation of *ci* lyrics started from Liu Yong.”⁵² His words point out the role Liu Yong plays in the transformation of discourse and reconstruction of the elegance and the “vulgarity.”

The two kinds of narrative of official travel, despite their own particular emphases, both embodied a common pursuit: using the marginalized discourse and value orientation to change the mainstream discourse, to express the scholar officials’ normal desires of amorous affairs, which had been repressed by their official careers for too long. They claimed the justifiability of the scholar officials and common citizen’s desires. Therefore, after the integration and reconstruction of the elegance and the “vulgarity,” they enriched the discourse of official travel and the multiple perspectives of traveling officials. As a result, Liu Yong constituted a new narrative mode of using amorous affairs to depict official travel. His “Moored by a riverbank planted with willow trees/Beneath the waning moon and in the morning breeze” became everlasting famous lines and the classic of narrative of official travel in the Song dynasty.

⁵² Chen Zhensun, 1989, volume 21, Chen Tingzhao, 2006.

Liu Yong's narrative of official travel, after the reconstruction of the elegance and the "vulgarity," deconstructed the narrative of official travel in Tang poems, which featured self-cultivation, unrecognized talents, fickleness of human friendships and laments on agedness and poverty, etc. His narrative of official travel was about an amorous talented lyricist who traveled from a place to another and experienced numerous amorous affairs. The journeys on the official travel, which were within sight but not within reach for the common citizens, were described into the experiences of "vulgar" amorous affairs, thus breaking the barrier between the life of traveling officials and the life of common citizens. The narrative of official travel, because it reflected the common pursuit of people's desire and pleasure-seeking, gained wide acceptance from common citizens. The narrative transformation from official travel to amorous affairs sublimated the sensual pleasure and embodied the common feelings of traveling officials and common citizens.

The transformation from the marginal to the mainstream and the reconstruction of the elegance and the "vulgarity" broke the unification of scholar officials and elite discourse, or the unification of common citizens and marginal culture. Accordingly, it catered to both elegant and popular tastes, and "spread to everywhere people lived." Liu Yong's narrative of amorous affairs during official travel and the classic scene of

Where shall I be found at day's early break,
From wine awake?
Moored by a riverbank planted with willow trees,
Beneath the waning moon and in the morning breeze.

have become the motif of later novels and dramas, and showed their vigorous vitality in different texts of different eras.

In summary, Liu Yong's multi-role discourse of a prodigal poet, talented lyricist, and traveling official in the new city established the discourse of prodigal poets, talented lyricists and traveling officials. In this way, his lyrics constructed a set of narrative mode of urban culture in the Song dynasty, featuring amorous affairs, and the basic discourse mode of amorous affairs-talented lyricist-official travel. They also established the motif (The later urban secular culture, no matter *huaben*, novels or drama, all basically followed the discourse mode). Thus, Liu Yong's lyrics inherited the discourse splitting trend starting from the late Tang and Five dynasties, finished the transformation from mainstream elite discourse to secular marginal discourse. Consequently, they exerted far-reaching influence on the transformation of urban culture and construction of new urban culture of Song dynasty.

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