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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Reading between the Lines of a Classical Chinese Prose Anthology: *Guwen guanzhi* as a Subtle Challenge to State Orthodoxy

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Guwen guanzhi, first published in 1695, is the most renowned anthology of classical Chinese prose, and is still widely read in schools within Greater China. This article challenges the conventional assumptions that such anthologies in general echoed the imperial orthodoxy, and could not favour heterodox views, and that *Guwen guanzhi* in particular was just an ordinary anthology based on an imperially approved model, *Guwen yuanjian*, without any other independent merits than its concise size. The analysis in this article suggests that *Guwen guanzhi* promoted diversity of thought and autonomous virtue both in terms of its approach to education and its critique towards authoritarianism. While it is impossible to say how intentional this was on the part of the anthology's compilers, *Guwen guanzhi* is nevertheless an example of how unorthodox ideas could have been promoted in a subdued manner.

1695 年首次發行的《古文觀止》是中國最知名的一部文言散文選集，至今仍在大中華地區學校中被學生廣泛閱讀。長期以來，學界認為該選集代表了對帝國正統觀念的認同，不讚同任何異端觀點。而《古文觀止》本身只是以官方認可的《古文淵鑒》作為模本，除了簡明扼要這一特點之外別無長處的一本普通選集。本文試圖對這些看法提出挑戰。作者認為就提供了教育的途徑及對權威主義的批評而言，《古文觀止》促進了思想的多樣性和獨立自主的品德養成。如今學者已經無法得知選集編纂者的具體用心，儘管如此，《古文觀止》仍然是一個表明非正統觀點曾經是通過柔和的方式推廣的良好範例。

Keywords: Literary Chinese, anthologies, orthodoxy, censorship, Guwen guanzhi

關鍵詞：中國文學，選集，正統觀念，審查制度，《古文觀止》

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Introduction

Guwen guanzhi 古文觀止, '*For classical prose, look no further*', is the most renowned classical Chinese reader still in circulation. It is an anthology of literary Chinese prose originally published in the 34th year of the Kangxi 康熙 emperor's reign (1695). The anthology soon became widely circulated, and has remained the most popular classical Chinese reader ever since.

Guwen guanzhi (hereafter GWGZ) was not the only classical Chinese reader in the early Qing, and it is not even the only one that has survived to the present day, but its overwhelming popularity is a remarkable phenomenon. Today it can be said that every Chinese with an intermediate-level education is familiar with it. The GWGZ matches in fame the anthology *Tangshi sanbai shou* 唐詩三百首, '*300 Tang poems*', of 1763 (Li 2017, 340).

There are two common presuppositions about GWGZ. The first presupposition regards the origin of GWGZ, and labels the anthology as merely an abridged copy of some authoritative anthology serving the needs of students aiming to take the civil service examinations. The second, related presupposition regards the nature of the anthology, and summarily categorises GWGZ as one of the many anthologies with nothing more than literary ideals and pedagogical means behind its selection of texts, void of any political content. This article questions these presuppositions, and challenges the view that GWGZ was "nothing too extraordinary" (Clifford 2017, 226–227, xxxvii), and that it – or similar anthologies – could not "favor heterodox views" (see Laughlin 2004).

This article introduces first GWGZ and its compilers, and then discusses the place of GWGZ among other similar anthologies in its time, and the originality of the anthology. Then it lays out the societal background for its publication, leading into an analysis about the nature of the anthology, and its special characteristics. This article is based on a comparative study with a dozen classical Chinese readers in use during the early Qing dynasty, the time when GWGZ was first published. That study was approved as a Licentiate Thesis in East Asian Studies (Sinology) by the Faculty of Humanities,

University of Helsinki (Kallio 2011). The thesis was preceded by translating 105 texts from the GWGZ into Finnish, published in the form of a trilogy by Gaudeamus Helsinki University Press (Kallio 2005, 2007 and 2008).

Guwen guanzhi and its compilers

The original GWGZ is divided into 12 fascicles (*juan* 卷, 'scrolls'), and altogether contains 222 texts.[1] The total length of the texts (notes and commentaries [*pingzhu* 評註] not included) is approximately 110,000 characters. The texts are arranged by period, ranging from pre-Qin dynasty until the Ming dynasty. There are 56 texts from the Zhou era (1045–221 BC), including 34 texts from *Zuozhuan* 左傳; 17 texts from the Qin dynasty (221–206 BC), including 14 texts from *Zhanguoce* 戰國策; 31 texts from the Han dynasty (206 BC–220); six texts from the Six Dynasties (222–589); 43 texts from the Tang dynasty (618–907), including 24 texts by Han Yu 韓愈; 51 texts (by 12 writers, all from Northern Song) from the Song dynasty (960–1279); and 18 texts (by 12 writers) from the Ming dynasty (1368–1644).

Most of the texts are prose written in the 'ancient style' that *guwen* 古文 refers to. The consensus from the Tang dynasty onwards was that *guwen* meant 'unrestrained prose' (*sanwen* 散文), essays that were not written in parallel prose (*pianwen* 騈文). However, the borderlines between *sanwen* and *pianwen* have always been flexible.[2] GWGZ also includes three (or four) pieces written in parallel prose, as well as three *ci* 詞 and four *fu* 賦 prose poems.

Guwen also had the implication of the 'ancient style', the "unadorned and versatile style of historians and [Tang and Song] writers" whose main proponents during the Tang dynasty, Han Yu and Liu Zongyuan 柳宗元, had started a Campaign for the

[1] Perhaps the most reliable edition available today, which also contains the original notes and commentaries, is by Zhonghua Shuju (*Guwen guanzhi* 1987); its 'critical notes' (*jiaokanji* 校勘記) are copied (without mentioning the source) from Wang Wenru (early Republican era, see Guwen guanzhi 1998).

[2] Han-style *fu*-poems (*Han fu* 漢賦) have "always" been considered to be *sanwen*, whereas *ci*-poems began to be categorised as *sanwen* after the Song era (Xiong 2000, 27).

Ancient Style (Chow 1996a, 186). They regarded language as a vehicle for promoting the Way (*wen yi zai dao* 文以載道). This made *guwen* "more than a style of writing. It is a prose ideologically grounded in the Confucian Classics and the [Neo-Confucian rationalist doctrine of Cheng Yi 程頤 and Zhu Xi 朱熹] and methodologically steeped in" the ancient style (ibid.). Thus the term *guwen* is not void of political connotations.

GWGZ was compiled and edited by two village school teachers, Wu Chucai 吳楚才 and Wu Diaohou 吳調侯. Very little is known of the former, Wu Chengquan 吳乘權 (sobriquet Chucai 楚才, 'Talent from the Jiangnan region', 1655–1719). The latter, his younger nephew Wu Dazhi 吳大職 (styled Diaohou, 調侯), remains virtually unknown. Wu Chucai was from present-day Shaoxing. We know that he never became part of the established literati (*Shaoxing xian zhi* 1999, 2079; *Shaoxing shi zhi* 1996, 3098).

Wu Chucai's uncle, Wu Xingzuo 吳興祚 (sobriquet Liucun 留村, 'Lingers in the countryside', 1632–97), was a high imperial official, a patron of the arts, and a poet himself. A native of Shanyin county in Shaoxing prefecture, Wu Xingzuo passed the county level examination in 1650. He was appointed surveillance commissioner (*anchashi* 按察使) for Fujian in early 1675, and there he captured the rebellious forces of a Ming-loyalist commander. As a consequence, Wu Xingzuo was promoted to the post of governor (*xunfu* 巡撫) in 1678, and he started mobilising troops for the takeover of Taiwan. He captured Xiamen in 1680. Wu Chucai, then 24 years old, joined his uncle in Fujian in 1678 and worked as his private secretary (*mubin* 幕賓) and as a tutor for his sons. That is when Wu Chucai started working on an anthology of classical Chinese prose (*Shaoxing xian zhi* 1999, 2079; *Shaoxing shi zhi* 1996, 3092–3).

Wu Chucai continued this work when he followed his uncle, who had become the Governor-General of Guangdong and Guangxi in 1682, to the south. It was there, if not earlier, that he was joined by his nephew Wu Diaohou (*Shaoxing xian zhi* 1999, 2081). It is not known when Wu Chucai and Wu Diaohou returned to Shaoxing. In any case, the preface of the 1697 edition of GWGZ is dated in Shanyin county of Shaoxing prefecture.

Guwen guanzhi among classical prose anthologies

With regard to the first presupposition, it has been commonly assumed that GWGZ is based on the imperially approved selection of texts in the anthology *Guwen yuanjian* 古文淵鑑, published in 1685. After all, the commentaries of the latter became the standard for the civil service examinations. For example, Gao Yang 高陽 states that *Guwen yuanjian* must have served as a model for *Guwen Guanzhi*, which according to him is demonstrated by the fact that both begin with a selection from *Zuozhuan* (Gao 1987, 2). There have been two master's theses (Wang 2005; Zhang 2007) written in either the People's Republic of China or the Republic of China on Taiwan about GWGZ,[3] and both assume that the majority of texts would have been selected from *Guwen yuanjian*. Understandably, they also assume that GWGZ was purely a study-aid for the imperial examinations.

Guwen yuanjian (or *Yuxuan guwen yuanjian* 御選古文淵鑑, '*Imperially Commissioned Profound Mirror of Ancient Essays*') was one of the major literary undertakings during the beginning of the Qing dynasty. The Kangxi emperor was personally involved in the selection (Creel 1949, 250). The anthology consists of approximately 1,000 texts in 64 fascicles, covering the period from pre-Qin until the Song dynasty. No poetry is included, and the term *guwen* in the title seems to refer to 'ancient style'. The texts are arranged by era, beginning with texts from *Zuozhuan*.

The following statistics illustrate the similarities and differences between *Guwen yuanjian* (1873) and GWGZ:

(1) In *Guwen yuanjian*, texts from *Zuozhuan* total 59. Out of the 34 *Zuozhuan* texts in GWGZ, 19 are the same as in *Guwen yuanjian*.

(2) In *Guwen yuanjian*, texts from *Zhanguoce* total 19. Out of the 14 *Zhanguoce* texts in GWGZ, six are the same as in *Guwen yuanjian*.

[3] Based on an internet search and searches conducted in the National Libraries both in Beijing (December 2007) and in Taipei (April 2006) of their databases of the Master's theses and PhD dissertations written in the People's Republic and the Republic of China, respectively. An updated search in December 2019 on Wanfang Data revealed no further theses in the PRC which study GWGZ per se.

(3) *Guwen yuanjian* includes 12 texts from *Gongyangzhuan* 公羊傳 (GWGZ includes three, one of which is the same as in *Guwen yuanjian*), and nine texts from *Guliangzhuan* 穀梁傳 (GWGZ includes two, one of which is the same as in *Guwen yuanjian*).

(4) *Guwen yuanjian* includes ten texts by Cheng Yi and 36 by Zhu Xi. GWGZ has no texts from either.

(5) In *Guwen yuanjian*, both Southern (Chinese) and Northern (non-Chinese) Dynasties are equally represented by one fascicle each; GWGZ uses the period title 'Six Dynasties', which excludes the Northern Dynasties.

These statistics show that the selections in the two anthologies are significantly different. Only one third (74 in total) of the 222 texts in GWGZ are also in *Guwen yuanjian*, and the proportions of selections from different sources do not match in the two anthologies. A closer look further reveals that even the texts which both the anthologies share appear under different titles, and have been selected in differing lengths. Furthermore, neither the notes nor the comments appear to have any similarities. Therefore, I conclude that it is most improbable that Wu Chucai and Wu Diaohou based any part of their work on *Guwen yuanjian*. In fact, they may never have seen it. At the time when Wu Chucai and Wu Diaohou were compiling their anthology, the availability of *Guwen yuanjian* was possibly not very widespread; it was also probably expensive due to its massive size of 64 fascicles.

However, those who have questioned the originality of GWGZ are right. There was indeed a "blueprint" for GWGZ, namely *Guwen xiyi* 古文析義, '*Elucidation of ancient-style prose*',[4] published in 1682. None of the GWGZ editions I have consulted for this study mention the role of *Guwen xiyi*, and neither do Wu Chucai and Wu Diaohou in their preface. Instead, they explain themselves in a rather roundabout way as follows: "Should one make selections of *guwen*? The answer: It is useless." Good and bad texts are accumulating all the time, so how could one make a selection? "Therefore the two of us do not dare to speak of selecting, but of compiling. How do we compile? In order to compile writings by ancient men, we compile from what ancient and modern men have selected", complementing, systematising and correcting

[4] Translation of the title by Cynthia J. Brokaw (2007).

along the way, exercising extreme caution and relying on many years' experience.[5] The similarities between *Guwen xiyi* and GWGZ have been noted in only a few other sources. *Fuzhou shi zhi* (2000, 548), notes that "*Guwen xiyi* preceded GWGZ and had a strong influence on it". In addition, in a book review in *Zhonghua dushu bao*, Feng Xu 馮虛 calls *Guwen xiyi* a "blueprint" for GWGZ (Feng 2003).

Guwen xiyi consists of two volumes, the 'original' *zhengbian* 正編 and the 'sequel' *xubian* 續編 or *erbian* 二編. It is unclear whether both were published at the same time. The 'original' volume has 231 texts from 76 writers or sources in six fascicles, ranging from pre-Qin until the Ming dynasty, and organised in periods. The 'sequel' has 360 texts from 102 writers or sources in eight fascicles. My comparison shows that 86% of the texts in *Guwen guanzhi*, i.e. 190 texts, seem to originate from *Guwen xiyi*, mostly from its first volume.[6] Even the relative proportions of the different writers or sources are rather similar. The following statistics illustrate the similarities and differences between *Guwen xiyi* (2011) and *Guwen guanzhi*:

(1) *Guwen xiyi* has 84 texts from *Zuozhuan*, equalling 14% of all the texts. GWGZ has 34, equalling 15% of all the texts. Of these 34 texts, 32 are the same as in *Guwen xiyi*.

(2) *Guwen xiyi* has 38 texts from *Guoyu* 國語, equalling 6% of all the texts. GWGZ has 11 texts, equalling 5% of all the texts. All these 11 texts are the same as in *Guwen xiyi*.

(3) *Guwen xiyi* has 51 texts from *Zhanguoce*, equalling 9% of all the texts. GWGZ has 14 texts, equalling 6% of all the texts. Out of these 14 texts, 12 are the same as in *Guwen xiyi*.

(4) Of the 100 texts from the Six Dynasties, Tang, and Song periods in GWGZ, 91 are the same as in *Guwen xiyi*.

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[5] 古文宜選乎。曰、無庸也。 … 且余兩人非敢言選也、集焉云耳。集之奈何。集古人之文、集古今人之選 … 云耳。

[6] According to Feng (2003), 88% of the texts in GWGZ have been selected from *Guwen xiyi*. Feng does not provide a list of texts which he sees as originating from *Guwen xiyi*, so I am unable to explain the two percentage-point discrepancy.

(5) *Guwen xiyi* has 42 texts from the Ming period, equalling 7% of all the texts. GWGZ has 18 texts, equalling 8%. Of these 18 texts, seven are the same as in *Guwen xiyi*. *Guwen xiyi* includes texts from 42 Ming era writers, GWGZ 12. Out of these 12 writers, 11 are the same as in *Guwen xiyi*. Of the so-called Seven Masters of Ming (*Ming qianhou qi zi* 明前後七子), GWGZ selected only texts from Wang Shizhen 王世貞 and Zong Chen 宗臣, exactly like *Guwen xiyi*.

If these statistics are not sufficient proof that GWGZ has its origins in *Guwen xiyi*, a further analysis leaves no room for doubt. First, a selection from *Liji* 禮記 does not appear in any other collection before GWGZ than *Guwen xiyi*, and the selected six texts are exactly the same. Second, some texts have sections that have been rewritten or abbreviated in exactly the same manner (e.g. the beginning of text #27 *Yanzi bu si jun nan* 晏子不死君難 has been similarly rewritten, and text #61 *Yan Chu shui Qi wang* 顏斶說齊王 has been abbreviated similarly by deleting a section from the middle). Third, mistakes or alterations in characters are repeated in both books (e.g. in text #115 *Chunye yan taohuayuan xu* 春夜宴桃花園序 by Li Bo 李白, 'peach blossoms' (*taohua* 桃花) are changed into 'peaches and plums' (*tao li* 桃李); and in text #127 *Hui bian* 諱辯 by Han Yu, the character *ji* 機 is used instead of its homophone 飢; see An 1987, 319, note 2).

It is, nevertheless, noteworthy that the commentaries and notes in GWGZ are not copied from *Guwen xiyi*. In fact, the comments do not appear similar to any other commentaries I have seen. Therefore, one has to assume that they have been independently produced by Wu Chucai and Wu Diaohou.

Guwen xiyi was compiled and edited by Lin Yunming 林雲銘 (1628–97). He was a mid-ranking official (*tongpan* 通判) who had passed the metropolitan examination in 1658. Despite several attempts, he never succeeded in getting a post in the capital, and after having lost an official position, he retired to literary work in his native place, Fujian. Later he moved to Hangzhou, where he earned a living as a writer and as a travelling village teacher. His literary undertakings include a collection of *ci*-poems and a study of the structure of *Zhuangzi* 莊子 (*Fuzhou shi zhi* 2000, 548; *Zhongguo lidai*

renming dacidian 1999, entry 'Lin Yunming'). Unlike GWGZ, *Guwen xiyi* was destined to become one of the many anthologies of the late imperial era to fall into oblivion.

Interestingly, the paths of Lin Yunming and the Wus may have crossed. Lin had been imprisoned by a Ming-loyalist general in early 1674, and he remained in captivity for eighteen months until the rebel forces surrendered (*Fuzhou shi zhi* 2000, 548).[7] A scholar-official of some distinction, Lin Yunming may well have met Wu Xingzuo after his release. At that time, at least the first volume of *Guwen xiyi*, which was published in 1682, must have been close to completion. We know that an early version of the manuscript "is said to have been lost in the course of the 'Fujian troubles' ..." (Brokaw 2007, 359). It seems a remarkable coincidence that both Lin Yunming and Wu Chucai were in the same place at the same time, and that some aspects of GWGZ can be regarded as plagiarising *Guwen xiyi*.

Later, several competing anthologies, some of which can be seen as plagiarising GWGZ, entered the market. In particular, two anthologies resemble GWGZ in size, and seem to copy both GWGZ and *Guwen xiyi* in the selection of the texts. One of them, *Guwen shiyi* 古文釋義, '*Explaining the meaning of guwen*', was compiled and edited by Yu Cheng 余城 (Qing dynasty, the year of publication is unclear). *Guwen shiyi* has 147 texts in eight fascicles, and a great majority of all the texts—71%—seem to have been selected from *Guwen guanzhi*. Moreover, of the remaining 43 texts, 21 can be traced to *Guwen xiyi*. The other, *Guwen pingzhu quanji* 古文評註全集, '*A complete compilation of ancient prose with notes and commentaries*', was compiled and edited by Guo Gong 過珙 (Guo Shanghou 過商侯) in 1703 in present-day Wuxi. The anthology has 233 texts in twelve fascicles. Of these texts, 164 seem to be selected from GWGZ.

[7] Why Lin Yunming had been captured by the Ming loyalists is unclear. Lin was no longer in office when he was living in Fujian.

Decentralisation, independent self-cultivation, and money-making

The time when GWGZ was compiled, the early Qing, was a very conservative era. Confucian social order was reduced to Sixteen Maxims (*Shang yu shiliu tiao* 上諭十六條) promulgated by the Kangxi emperor. They were devised to form the orthodoxy (de Bary 2000, 71–72). The Manchus' aim of gaining absolute control was also reflected in the field of education and literature. The Kangxi emperor was personally involved in the compilation of *Guwen yuanjian*, which was to become the standard material for preparing for the essays in the civil service examination. In 1699, the Kangxi emperor appointed a special board to create a new edition of the commentaries to the *Spring and Autumn Annals.* The major objective of this work was to condemn all those passages which asserted that an unworthy or tyrannical ruler had no claim to loyalty (Creel 1949, 250), resembling the censoring of *Mencius* by the first emperor of the Ming three centuries earlier (Fuehrer 2018, 238–241).

This conservatism was met with resistance on at least two different levels. First, the ideological orthodoxy based on the correct doctrine – exemplified not only by the maxims but also by the state-sponsored dominance of the School of Principle among philosophical Neo-Confucianism – gave rise to ideological opposition. As Prasenjit Duara has remarked, "It is widely accepted that there was a Confucian tradition of literati autonomy and dissent which developed most particularly in the Ming-Qing transition during the seventeenth century", aiming to free Confucian ideals from the exclusive service of imperial government (Duara 1996, 153). The members of the opposition, like Gu Yanwu 顧炎武, aimed to reconstruct the social order of high antiquity and bring Confucianism back to its roots (Chow 1996a, 204; Chow 1996b, 54–55). Many scholars, such as Gu Yanwu, also turned against excessive unification policies, and spoke for the benefits of decentralised rule (Chow 1996b, 80–84), which they referred to as *fengjian* 封建, 'divided enfeoffment' in J. Spence's (2001, 166) translation. (In other contexts, *fengjian* is most often translated as 'feudal system' because the term referred to a system of semi-autonomous duchies under the overlordship of the Son of Heaven, forming a nominally unified empire.)

A second form of resistance came from developments at the grass roots level, corroding orthodoxy and unity from below. Many scholars have argued that many characteristics of a civil society emerged at that time, interlinked with the rise of the printing press (Duara 1996, 150). Since the late Ming, commerce had been booming both within China and with foreign nations. As a result, cities were growing and new market towns were springing up. As a consequence, a middle class was beginning to take form, comprising merchants, artisans, and scholars without an official position. The members of this group possessed wealth, power, and literacy, and an ambition to provide their offspring with tools for social climbing (Lufrano 1997, 5). Commerce was no longer looked down upon, but started to be a regarded as a respectable career for someone who had not been successful in climbing the imperial examination ladder. From the merchants' perspective, there was a recognition that Confucian teachings could actually help them earn money in a similar manner to how those teachings helped the scholar-officials to rule the country (Yu 1987, 544–545).

There was a strong "self-cultivation approach to commerce" (Lufrano 1997, 23). The teachings of Wang Yangming 王陽明 (1472–1529) were crucial for this social change. "Its proponents ... seeking to make their teachings relevant to the daily needs of the subordinate classes, declared that any member of society regardless of class could achieve sagehood. Their teachings thus propagated the radical notion of the intrinsic equality of all" (Lufrano 1997, 43). The Taizhou branch of the Yangming School reached out to non-elite people by establishing private academies and sponsoring large public lectures. Merchants, especially, actively sought contact with the school. It is noteworthy that the scholars representing Neo-Confucian orthodoxy, who were responsible for setting the standard for the civil service examinations – to be known as the Tongcheng School (桐城派) in the 1700s – showed little interest in commerce while their opponents often enjoyed the support of wealthy merchants (Chow 1996a, 186–187, 199–200).

The growth of the middle class benefited the traditional scholars. There was money to be made through the production of materials to fulfil the learning needs of this group. Many commercial printing houses started publishing popular encyclopaedias, primers, morality books, travel guides, self-help books, and even fiction, and those

books needed writers (Lufrano 1997, 17, 33).[8] In the beginning of the Qing dynasty, the demand grew for textbooks that helped the integration of the Manchu aristocratic youth, and similar materials were also in demand among the middle class. There was even a proliferation of classical literature compilations.[9] After all, mastery of Literary Chinese was the sign of a gentleman.

It is very likely that this proliferation is the reason for GWGZ's existence. While Wu Chucai and Wu Diaohou could hardly have hoped for their work to compete against *Guwen yuanjian* or other prose compilations produced by well-known scholars for a prominent position among the materials used for coaching students for the civil examinations, the two village teachers could nevertheless have had a market among the rising middle class. A rare glimpse of the situation regarding readers in Literary Chinese during early Qing is provided by Cynthia J. Brokaw in her work, *Commerce in Culture—The Sibao Book Trade in the Qing and Republican Periods*. The list of books available in a rural shop in Fujian includes some twenty different *guwen* anthology titles, among others *Guwen xiyi*, *Guwen shiyi*, and GWGZ (Brokaw 2007, 516, Appendix G, 11–12).

Against the demand for orthodoxy by the Imperial Government, many literati in the early Qing era, especially those living in the Jiangnan region, were calling for more freedom and space in ideology as well as government. A time-honoured fashion for expressing criticism in China has been to resort to the quoting of ancient texts, superficially unrelated to the contemporary society. Instead of voicing a direct critique, you could discuss a historical event or account in an allegorical manner. For example, if you wanted to say that the Emperor should trust his subjects, then you could write about mythical rulers who did so, and the benefits that followed.[10] You could also subtly guide your readers to think in a certain way by promoting texts that supported the desired viewpoint. Therefore, even an innocent anthology of Literary Chinese was

[8] Lufrano writes of merchant manuals, but the situation was likely to also have been the same for other types of textbooks.

[9] Hong et al. 2001 includes a non-conclusive but nevertheless impressive list of classical literature compilations from the different dynasties. These numbers based on that list are probably at least indicative: the number of compilations published during the Song dynasty was 62, with the Yuan, Ming and Qing having 5, 24 and 80 respectively.

[10] One example is Ouyang Xiu's 歐陽修 essay *Pengdanglun* 朋黨論, #162 in GWGZ.

potentially a tool for political propaganda, depending on the selection and presentation of the texts.

What is unique about *Guwen Guanzhi*: comments, selection and content analysis

With regard to the second presupposition, mentioned in the Introduction, GWGZ is commonly regarded as "nothing too extraordinary" or even "unbearably boring" (Clifford 2017, 226–227, xxxvii). Along similar lines, Charles Laughlin categorised GWGZ as one of the standard premodern anthologies which "generally favor formal essays of serious import that cleave to Confucian values" in contrast to "more modern collections" which "increasingly favor heterodox views, and include more 'individualistic' essays on small, private matters" (Laughlin 2004).

Taking into account the societal background of GWGZ, illustrated above, the question arises: Are there signs in the GWGZ indicating that its compilers may have been hiding passive resistance against and criticism towards the political system and realities of its time? In order to shed light on this question, this article makes an effort to measure the relative extent to which the texts manifest centralism and unity, which would have been the preferred orientation of the Imperial Government, and their opposing forces, localism and pluralism.

First it is necessary to take a deeper look at the special characteristics of GWGZ. While the GWGZ is greatly indebted to *Guwen xiyi*, there are characteristics that set them apart. We may find those by looking at the comments which are unique to the GWGZ, as well as those texts which are not included in *Guwen xiyi*.

Studying the comments in GWGZ, the most noteworthy and special characteristic of GWGZ is the educational ideology it manifests. Unlike Lin Yunming, the editor of *Guwen xiyi*, Wu Chucai and Wu Diaohou included Han Yu's *Shi shuo* 師說, 'On Teachers' (text #124), in their anthology. During the Song dynasty, Yu Wenbao 俞文豹 accused Han Yu of not understanding that teaching is a life-long vocation, although

"he presumably seeks employment as a teacher himself"[11] (Zhu 1997, 168–169). Lin Yunming echoes the assumption that Han Yu wrote the piece for his own livelihood's sake, and goes on to state that it does not follow any traceable logic and is exhausting to read (Hong 2001, vol. 2, 447). Wu Chucai and Wu Diaohou disagree in their commentary to the text:

> He says all people everywhere can be teachers, no matter whether they are old or young, rich or poor; as long as there are people, one can choose a teacher for oneself. ... This piece is all about his wish that young master Li [to whom this piece is dedicated] can get an [proper] education. Hence it is not correct to say that Han Yu wrote this in desperation, in order to seek employment as a teacher, and in order to draw followers to him (*yi chang houxue* 以倡後學).

The preface to the 1695 edition of GWGZ (*Guwen guanzhi* 1899), written by Wu Xingzuo, contains what has generally been regarded as the motto for *Guwen guanzhi*: *Yici zheng mengyang er bi houxue, que gong qi qianxian zai* 以此正蒙養而裨後學，厥功豈淺鮮哉, usually explained to mean: "When they thus set right the educational practices at traditional private schools and aid the younger student generations, how could their achievement be regarded as trivial!" Indeed, Wu Chucai and Wu Diaohou avoided the overly difficult texts that many teachers tended to use in order to flaunt their own expertise, and made their explanations as clear and concise as possible. They wanted to offer help to those in need, as in *bi houxue* 裨後學, 'assisting the less advantaged students',[12] thus following the very ideals of Han Yu.

Furthermore, Wu Chucai and Wu Diaohou held in very high regard the essay by Wang Yangming, *Zunjingge ji* 尊經閣記, 'Pavilion for Revering the Classics' (text #212), which they also selected in *Guwen guanzhi*, although it was not included in *Guwen xiyi*. In their commentary to the text, Wu Chucai and Wu Diaohou state:

> The Six Classics are not outside my heart; my heart itself contains the Six Classics (*wu xin zi you liu jing* 吾心自有六經). Why do the students of the Way

[11] 蓋以師道自任

[12] *Houxue* stands for *houjin xuezhe* (後進學者), 'those studying who come after us', and as such can refer to either students of a younger generation or to less advanced, or even less privileged students.

> seek (the truth) from afar? Return to your heart, and you may grasp the essence of the Six Classics to guide you forward. Master Yangming has guided people all his life always to use their innate knowledge and instinct to probe into the roots of man's true nature (*yi yi liangzhi liangneng genjiu xin-xing* 一以良知良能、根究心性). For that aim he wrote this reminder.

Yu Yingshi sees a connection between Chan-Buddhist "illumination" and Han Yu's "dispelling of fallacies" (Yu 1996, 479), thereby making Han Yu a forerunner of Wang Yangming in this respect. The idea that people should shun blind belief in generally accepted truths and that anyone can intuitively understand the Classics was unorthodox (see e.g. Lodén 2006, 123). It is therefore remarkable to find such an essay in a textbook such as GWGZ. All in all, Wu Chucai's and Wu Diaohou's pluralistic and individualist views regarding education fall in line with the grassroots cultural climate of the time and place where they were living.

Furthermore, some of texts selected for GWGZ by Wu Chucai and Wu Diaohou can be deemed controversial. The inclusion of such a Gong'an School (*Gong'an pai* 公安派) leader as Yuan Hongdao 袁宏道 has been called a proof of exceptional insight on the part of Wu Chucai and Wu Diaohou (Chen 200x, 2–3). The text #221 *Saotan zhumengzhe* 騷壇主盟者 accuses the Later Seven Masters of blindly copying the form of old writings without understanding the real essence of the *guwen*. However, the selection may also have been motivated by the fact that the text is a short biography of a Shaoxing-born celebrity, Xu Wei 徐渭 (Xu Wenchang 徐文長), and it is possible that Wu Chucai and Wu Diaohou selected the text simply out of civic pride. More noteworthy is the fact that neither Zong Chen's famous political parody, text #216 *Bao Liu Yizhang shu* 報劉一丈書, nor the sarcastic allegory of mandarin oranges, text #208 *Maiganzhe yan* 賣柑者言, by Liu Ji 劉基, is found in any preceding anthology. The most striking "rebellious" act is ending the anthology with the "pro-anarchic" essay by Zhang Pu 張溥, text #222 *Wu ren mubei ji* 五人墓碑記, which relates to the events leading to the rise of the Restoration Society (*Fu she* 復社), a conservative-Confucianist literary school that transformed into a social movement fighting

corruption.[13] Zhang's essay (see also discussion on content analysis, below) shares the tendency of the famous lamentation by his contemporary, Gu Yanwu: "That humanity and righteousness are lost to the extent that beasts are led to devour people and that people are on the point of eating each other, is called losing [the right to rule over] All-Under-Heaven."[14] All these controversial texts, tinged with compassion for the plight of the common people, manifest a strong emphasis on innate virtue at the expense of state-defined morals.

A similar emphasis is also revealed through a content analysis. I used as a sample the 105 texts which I have previously translated. Those texts I have studied in the detail necessary for the requirements of a content analysis. They compose a sample that has the same relative amount of texts from all the eras, by which the texts are organised in the GWGZ, as the entire anthology. The translated texts consist of an equal proportion (ca. 47%) from all eras.[15] Therefore, they can be considered to form a representative and random sample. The texts have then been analysed with a method corresponding to a conventional content analysis, meaning a qualitative analysis of the manifest content of text data (Holsti 1969, 2–5), made quantifiable through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes as well as their underlying categories (Holsti 1969, 94, 116–117; Neuendorf 2017, 50). Content analysis follows the standards of scientific method, including objectivity and replicability (Holsti 1969, 3–14; Neuendorf 2017, 10–14).

Guided by the research question, I have identified three themes (or dimensions; x, y, z). The first theme (x) is the relationship between the state (the ruler) and the people. There the content categories to be identified in each sample text include loyalty, pacifying the commoners, good of the state vs. humane authority, rights of the people. The second theme (y) is the relationship between state-defined morals and innate virtue (dogmatism, emphasis on authority vs. emphasis on virtue and autonomous ethics).

[13] The same text is in *Guwen xiyi* (the 'sequel') as well, but in a less prominent location.

[14] 仁義充塞而至於率獸食人人將相食謂之亡天下 (Gu 1782, 013-7a). Through paraphrasing two philanthropic verses in Mencius, I.A.4 and VII.B.13, Gu was expressing his anti-Manchu feelings (Chow 1996b, 45).

[15] Furthermore, the sample includes an almost equal proportion of texts originating from *Guwen xiyi* (88/190) and those not included in *Guwen xiyi* (17/32), the difference from entirely equal proportions amounting to 2 texts (90/190 and 15/32 both equal 47%). For a more detailed discussion on the randomness, see Kallio 2011, p. 102–103.

The third theme (z) is the relationship between territorial unity and the *fengjian* ideal (unity, heavenly order vs. regional rule, opposing hegemony).

Each theme of a text was coded with a numerical value (-1 for relative monism/orthodoxy/centralism, 0 for no correlation/not relevant, 1 for relative pluralism/heterodoxy/localism). For the sake of simplicity, no decimal values (such as "-0.7") have been used, and the analysis has consciously erred on the conservative side, i.e. assigning "0" value when the case is not clear. Three examples of the coding practice are given below:

(1) In text #7, *Ji Liang jian zhui Chu shi* 季梁諫追楚師, Ji Liang's answers to the Marquis of Sui form the message of the text. Ji Liang suggests that the ruler should focus on the wellbeing of his subjects.[16] This manifests a desire for humane authority, and therefore I coded x=1. Ji Liang also laments that the Marquis's subjects fail to realise that sacrifices to the gods are needed for the public good, and just follow their own will.[17] This manifests a utilitarian approach, dismissing the desirability of being virtuous for virtue's sake, and therefore I coded y=-1. With regard to the third theme, Ji Liang advises against attacking the neighboring state.[18] This manifests a preference for regional rule and opposition to hegemony, and therefore I coded z=1.

(2) Text #60, *Fan Ju shui Qin wang* 范雎說秦王, contains the words of a peripatetic advisor. The emphasis is on the orderly rule of the state and the success of its ruler, with no agency given to the people,[19] so I coded x=-1. The theme of the story is the integrity of the advisor overriding his sense of loyalty and obedience, though he knows that this could cost him his life.[20] Therefore, I coded y=1. Finally, the advisor's point of departure is the desirability of unity under heaven.[21] This is the reason for coding z=-1.

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[16] 今民餒而君逞欲、祝史矯舉以祭、臣不知其可也。 … 是以聖王先成民而後致力於神。

[17] 故務其三時、脩其五教、親其九族、以致其禋祀、於是乎民和而神降之福。故動則有成。今民各有心、而鬼神乏主。

[18] 臣聞小之能敵大也、小道大淫。 …君姑脩政而親兄弟之國、庶免於難。

[19] 臣死而秦治、賢于生也。

[20] 知今日言之於前、而明日伏諸於後、然臣弗敢畏也。… 可以少有補於秦、此臣之所大願也、臣何患乎。… 臣之所恐者、獨恐臣死之後、天下見臣盡忠而身蹙也。

[21] 故文王果收功于呂尚、卒擅天下、而身立為帝王。

(3) Zhang Pu's essay, text #222, mentioned above, states plainly that the people are more important than the state,[22] so I coded x=1. It also extols the independent uprightness of five commoners who rose up against injustice,[23] and therefore I coded y=1. Zhang considers political opposition against despotism justified and suggests that the ultimate reason for the local uprising was the very nature of centralised rule which allowed eunuch Wei Zhongxian (魏忠賢) to usurp power.[24] This is why I coded z=1.

The results of the coding are as follows. With regard to the first theme, 29 texts were coded (x=-1), 51 (x=0) and 25 (x=1). With regard to the second theme, 34 texts were coded (y=-1), 12 (y=0) and 59 (y=1). And with regard to the third theme, 25 texts were coded (z=-1), 60 (z=0) and 20 (z=1). The results of both the first (x) and third (z) theme follow a bell curve.

YJ	XY1	XY2	GWGZ (# and title of the text)		x,y,z
周文					
X	X		001	左傳·鄭伯克段于鄢	0,-1,-1
X	X		007	左傳·季梁諫追楚師	1,-1,1
X	X		008	左傳·曹劌論戰	0,-1,-1
X'		X	010	左傳·宮之奇諫假道	-1,1,1
	X		013	左傳·子魚論戰	0,-1,-1
	X		015	左傳·介之推不言祿	-1,1,-1
X	X		016	左傳·展喜犒師	0,1,1
X	X		017	左傳·燭之武退秦師	0,-1,0
X'	X		018	左傳·蹇叔哭師	1,0,0
X	X		020	左傳·王孫滿對楚子	0,1,1
X'	X		026	左傳·子產告范宣子輕幣	-1,1,1
	X		027	左傳·晏子不死君難	1,1,0
X	X		030	左傳·子產論尹何為邑	-1,-1,0
	X		033	左傳·子產論政寬猛	-1,-1,0
		X'	034	左傳·吳許越成	0,-1,-1

[22] 亦以明死生之大、匹夫之有重於社稷也。

[23] 而五人生於編伍之間、素不聞詩書之訓、激昂大義、蹈死不顧、亦曷故哉。

[24] 且矯詔紛出、鉤黨之捕、遍於天下、卒以吾郡之發憤一擊 … 不可謂非五人之力也。

X	X		036	國語·召公諫厲王止謗	1,-1,1
X		X	040	國語·里革斷罟匡君	0,1,0
X	X		042	國語·叔向賀貧	0,1,1
X	X		045	國語·申胥諫許越成	-1,-1,-1
		X	049	穀梁傳·鄭伯克段于鄢	0,-1,0
	X		051	檀弓·晉獻公殺世子申生	-1,1,-1
	X		053	檀弓·有子之言似夫子	0,-1,0
	X		054	檀弓·公子重耳對秦客	0,1,-1
	X		056	檀弓·晉獻文子成室	0,1,0
秦文					
	X		057	國策·蘇秦以連橫說秦	0,-1,1
X	X		058	國策·司馬錯論伐蜀	-1,-1,-1
	X		059	國策·范雎說秦王	-1,1,0
X	X		060	國策·鄒忌諷齊王納諫	-1,1,-1
	X		061	國策·顏斶說齊王	1,1,0
X		X	062	國策·馮煖客孟嘗君	1,-1,0
X			065	國策·觸讋說趙太后	-1,-1,0
X	X		066	國策·魯仲連義不帝秦	0,1,1
			068	國策·唐雎說信陵君	0,1,0
	X		069	國策·唐雎不辱使命	0,1,1
X	X		071	李斯·李斯諫逐客書	1,1,1
漢文					
	X		075	史記·項羽本紀贊	0,1,1
X	X		078	史記·孔子世家贊	0,1,0
X	X		080	史記·伯夷列傳	0,1,1
	X		083	史記·酷吏列傳序	-1,1,0
			086	史記·貨殖列傳序	1,1,0
		X	088	司馬遷·報任少卿書	0,1,0
X			090	文帝·文帝議佐百姓詔	1,1,0
X	X		093	賈誼·賈誼過秦論上	-1,1,1
X			095	鼂錯·鼂錯論貴粟疏	1,-1,0
	X		098	李陵·李陵答蘇武書	1,1,0
X	X		099	路溫舒·路溫舒尚德緩刑書	1,1,-1
			102	馬援·馬援誡兄子嚴敦書	0,-1,0

X	X		103	諸葛亮·諸葛亮前出師表	-1,1,-1
六朝文					
	X		106	王羲之·蘭亭集序	0,0,0
		X	108	陶淵明·桃花源記	1,0,1
		X	109	陶淵明·五柳先生傳	1,1,0
唐文					
	X		112	駱賓王·為徐敬業討武曌檄	-1,-1,-1
	X		115	李白·春夜宴桃花園序	0,0,0
	X		116	李華·弔古戰場文	1,0,1
	X		117	劉禹錫·陋室銘	0,-1,0
X	X		119	韓愈·原道	-1,-1,0
	X		121	韓愈·獲麟解	0,1,-1
			122	韓愈·雜說一	-1,1,0
			123	韓愈·雜說四	-1,1,0
X			124	韓愈·師說	0,1,0
	X		128	韓愈·爭臣論	-1,1,0
		X	129	韓愈·後十九日復上宰相書	0,-1,0
	X		135	韓愈·送李愿歸盤谷序	0,1,0
	X		136	韓愈·送董邵南序	0,-1,-1
		X	139	韓愈·送溫處士赴河陽軍序	0,-1,-1
X	X		141	韓愈·祭鱷魚文	-1,-1,-1
X		X	143	柳宗元·駁復讎議	0,-1,0
	X		146	柳宗元·捕蛇者說	1,0,0
		X	147	柳宗元·種樹郭橐駝傳	1,0,1
		X	148	柳宗元·梓人傳	-1,1,0
	X		152	柳宗元·小石城山記	0,1,0
宋文					
		X	154	王禹偁·待漏院記	-1,1,0
	X		156	李格非·書洛陽名園記後	0,1,-1
	X		158	范仲淹·岳陽樓記	-1,1,0
	X		159	司馬光·諫院題名記	-1,1,0
			160	錢公輔·義田記	1,1,0
		X	161	李覯·袁州州學記	-1,-1,0
X		X	162	歐陽修·朋黨論	-1,1,-1

X	X		163	歐陽修·縱囚論	0,-1,0
X	X		168	歐陽修·五代史宦者傳論	-1,0,-1
X	X		170	歐陽修·豐樂亭記	1,-1,0
	X		171	歐陽修·醉翁亭記	0,0,0
	X		172	歐陽修·秋聲賦	0,0,0
			177	蘇洵·心術	0,-1,-1
			179	蘇軾·刑賞忠厚之至論	1,-1,0
	X		185	蘇軾·喜雨亭記	1,-1,0
		X	186	蘇軾·淩虛臺記	0,1,0
	X		188	蘇軾·放鶴亭記	0,1,0
X	X		190	蘇軾·潮州韓文公廟碑	-1,1,0
	X		192	蘇軾·前赤壁賦	0,0,1
	X		193	蘇軾·後赤壁賦	0,0,0
		X	195	蘇軾·方山子傳	0,1,0
X		X	196	蘇轍·六國論	0,1,1
	X		200	曾鞏·贈黎安二生序	0,1,0
	X		201	王安石·讀孟嘗君傳	0,1,-1
			202	王安石·同學一首別子固	0,1,0
明文					
			206	宋濂·閱江樓記	-1,-1,-1
			208	劉基·賣柑者言	1,1,0
			209	方孝孺·深慮論	0,1,-1
			211	王鏊·親政篇	0,1,-1
			212	王守仁·尊經閣記	0,1,0
	X		216	宗臣·報劉一丈書	1,1,0
			217	歸有光·吳山圖記	1,-1,0
	X		221	袁宏道·徐文長傳	0,1,0
		X	222	張溥·五人墓碑記	1,1,1

YJ = *Guwen yuanjian*, XY1 = *Guwen xiyi* (zhengbian), XY2 = *Guwen xiyi* (xubian)

X = contains the text, X' = contains the text but with marked differences (including notably different titles)

Table 1: The sample texts, their occurrence in *Guwen yuanjian* (YJ) and *Guwen xiyi* (original, XY1, and sequel, XY2), and their coded values (x, y, z)

The second (y) theme forms an anomaly. The majority of the sample texts were coded (y=1) instead of (y=0). This shows that the sample texts are biased toward virtue and autonomous ethics instead of dogmatism and authority. Interestingly, among the 59 sample texts in the (y=1) category, 30 belong into the group of 55 texts not included in *Guwen yuanjian*. This indicates a clear difference in the selection of texts in GWGZ in comparison to *Guwen yuanjian* with regard to emphasis on innate ethics. Furthermore, a great majority of the texts coded (y=1) are also coded (z=0), and among them, there are ten texts coded (-1, 1, 0) which is a major factor in the imbalance between (y=1) and (y=-1).[25] These ten texts lament the need to sacrifice one's individual virtue for the good of the state (but with no preference to a unitary or non-unitary form of state). For example, text #123 *Zashuo si* 雜說四 by Han Yu, speaks of good horses and bad horsemen. Horses cannot survive without the horsemen, but because they maltreat the horses, everyone thinks that there are no good horses, and the horses' whinnying has no effect.[26] It is a metaphor for the scholar-officials whose ability to manifest their virtue relied on the whims of the Emperor. Remarkably, only one of these ten texts is also included in *Guwen yuanjian.*

Statistics also show that this anomaly is predominantly "inherited" from *Guwen xiyi*. Omitting those 19 sample texts which are unique to GWGZ (i.e. are not included in *Guwen xiyi*) does not change the relative distribution. However, since a great majority (12) of those 19 sample texts fall in the (y=1) category, it can be surmised that Wu Diaohou and Wu Chucai were probably inclined to prefer similarly biased texts when making their selection from the *Guwen xiyi*.

To make the analysis one step more quantifiable, the sum values (x+y+z) of each sample text can be placed on a diagram. The statistical spread of the values -3...3 forms a normal distribution-like bell curve,[27] and drawing the diagram shows that the sample texts (see bar graph in Fig. 1) would also follow the same bell curve (confirming that

[25] A smaller imbalance between the texts coded (y=1, x≥0, z≥0) and the texts coded (y=-1, x≤0, z≤0) would still remain even without these ten texts.

[26] 策之不以其道、食之不能盡其材、鳴之而不能通其意、執策而臨之曰、天下無馬。嗚呼、其真無馬邪、其真不知馬也。

[27] We can imagine a Rubik's cube made of 27 (3x3x3) smaller cubes, each small cube representing the value of the sum (x+y+z). There are seven small cubes with the value 0, one with the value -3 (and one with the value 3), etc. Turned into a graph, these values (1/27, 3/27, 6/27, 7/27, 6/27, 3/27, 1/27) form a bell curve.

the sample can indeed be considered random), were it not for the skew towards the positive values caused by the anomaly in the y-dimension. As to the skew, while not overwhelming, it is nonetheless statistically significant.[28] On the whole, it can be said that the sample texts manifest *some* bias towards heterodoxy.

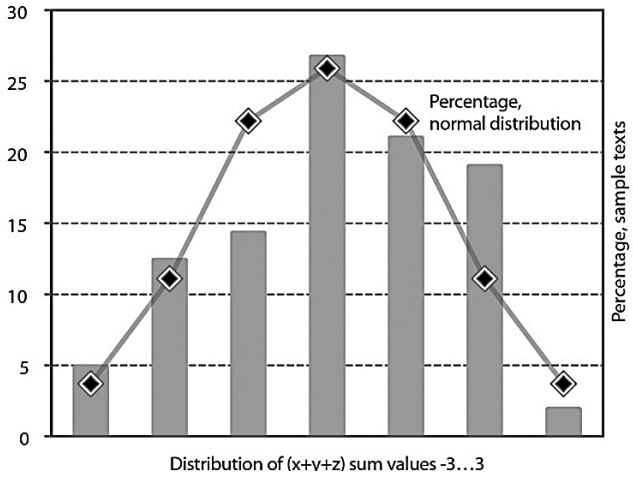

Fig. 1: Distribution of the sum values (x+y+z) of the 105 sample texts in a bar graph (Source: Kallio 2011, 109.)

Conclusions

My comparison of GWGZ with other anthologies (Kallio 2011) shows that the main assets of GWGZ were its size, the relative comprehensiveness of its selection, and good notes and comments. It avoided the overly difficult texts that many scholars tended to use in order to flaunt their own expertise, as well as an overly moralistic or tendentious approach, and the explanations are as clear and concise as possible. This made GWGZ especially suitable as a practical study aid, even for self-study. This is also the probable reason for the continued popularity of the anthology.

[28] The statistical significance, also taking into account the margin of error, is discussed in detail in Kallio 2011, 100, fn. 208.

So GWGZ was first and foremost produced as a practical study aid, but there is more to it. According to the conventional presuppositions, the content of GWGZ must have been based on the imperially approved *Guwen yuanjian*, and in consequence, it should be regarded as nothing more than an "ordinary", non-heterodox anthology. In contrast, this article shows that neither presupposition is correct, and furthermore suggests that GWGZ promoted diversity of thought and autonomous virtue in terms of both its approach to education and its critique towards authoritarianism. It can therefore be argued that the anthology may have had a role in cracking wider the inevitable fault-lines in China's state-enforced orthodoxy.

The unorthodox ideas which GWGZ promotes – diversity and autonomy – were sure to find a receptive audience among the less advantaged "subordinate classes" who had the desire to cultivate themselves but who were looked down upon by the traditional scholar-gentry. Studying the Confucian classics would have enabled the merchants to tap into the power of language that was previously the monopoly of the scholarly elite. GWGZ perfectly filled the need for a general reader, and was therefore well received especially by those students who were not solely intent on success by climbing the imperial examination ladder, such as members of the merchant class.

It is not possible to know how intentionally Wu Chucai and Wu Diaohou made their anthology different from the imperially approved *Guwen yuanjian*. Nevertheless, the differences between the selections suggest that the approach of Wu Chucai and Wu Diaohou was not altogether orthodox. It also remains unknown if GWGZ was ever subject to any censorship or approval procedure. If that had been the case, the recommendation by Wu Xingzuo would probably have weighed strongly in favour of the publication. It is also possible that as a "mere" reader produced by unknown village teachers, the book escaped the eyes of the censors. This seems to have been the case also during the modern era, and the GWGZ's value in literary education has apparently diverted attention away from its "between the lines" content.

Intentionally or not, GWGZ nevertheless contains a bias that is certainly unorthodox. Its message, hidden in the commentaries and reflected in the selection of the texts, echoes with other voices from the era of its publication, promoting educational egalitarianism and calling for individualist ethics. The rising middle class, composed mostly

of merchants, studied literary Chinese and Confucian ethics not because they wished to become scholars, but because they wanted to be considered equally sophisticated and enjoy a similar societal status to the scholarly elite. The ethos of GWGZ was well suited for that purpose. Therefore, I find it apt to paraphrase the "motto" of GWGZ, mentioned above, as follows: "When they thus rectified methods for the enlightenment of the youth and assisted even the less-advantaged on the Way of learning, how could their achievement be regarded as trivial!"

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