ABSTRACT

Wang Wei (王维, 701-761 A.D.) is one of the best known poets of Tang China. This study attempts a comparative analysis of the different remarks on Wang Wei's poetry as depicted in ancient shi hua (古诗话) and modern literary criticism. As the name implies, shi hua refers to poetic remarks given by critics in ancient China. On the other hand, the scope of Modern Criticism includes opinions of contemporary scholars extending from the May-fourth Movement period to the present.

This dissertation was prompted by the need to look at Wang Wei's works from a comparative point of view, a common perspective adopted by many contemporary scholars on the study of other poets, but not on Wang Wei as yet. Several variables influencing the status of Wang Wei throughout the past were examined. Of utmost importance was the factor of time. Indeed, in the passage of time, various components such as the arts, religion, and even politics were incorporated into literary trends of different eras. These accounted for the contradicting criticisms on Wang Wei's poems across different periods. Hence, such a comparative study of ancient and contemporary poetic criticisms deserves more attention.

Despite the great emphasis on the factor of time, the study recognized, as well, the variable of space in determining the reputation of Wang Wei's poetry. This acknowledgment called for the need of future researchers to look at criticisms on Wang Wei's poems across different countries.