

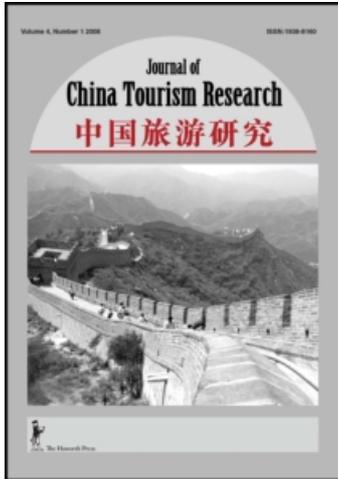
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“Galloping Our Minds Beyond the Boundaries”: Exploring Leisure in the Poetry of the Orchid Pavilion Gathering

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“Gallop Our Minds Beyond the Boundaries”: Exploring Leisure in the Poetry of the Orchid Pavilion Gathering

“精神超越界限”：关于《兰亭诗》休闲内涵的探讨

THOMAS M. LAVALLEE
LIBO YAN

This study investigates the leisure experiences represented in poetry written by early medieval Chinese literati at the Orchid Pavilion gathering in relation to six determinants of the subjective leisure experience (intrinsic satisfaction, perceived freedom, involvement, arousal, mastery, and spontaneity) set forth by Unger and Kernan (1983). Though there is not a direct correlation between the leisure experiences of the Orchid Pavilion poets and modern contexts in the areas of intrinsic satisfaction, perceived freedom, arousal, and spontaneity, the contrasting aspects help to distinguish important temporal and cultural conceptions in the early medieval Chinese setting. After factoring in an additional aspect of the leisure experience (spirituality) in relation to the “mastery” determinant, the authors have found that the leisure experiences of the participants who produced poetry at the Orchid Pavilion gathering may be best appreciated in relation to the involvement and mastery determinants.

KEYWORDS. Leisure, definition, Chinese poetry, early medieval China, Daoism, Orchid Pavilion

中国中古早期东晋名士于兰亭集会，成诗37首。本文旨在研究兰亭诗中所描绘的休闲体验，及其与Unger和Kernan（1983）提出的6项主观休闲体验决定因素（内在满足感、自由感、投入感、兴奋感、精进感及即兴感）的关系。虽然兰亭诗人的休闲体验与现代的内在满足感和自由感、兴奋感和即兴感没有直接相关，但当中的差异却有助于区分中国中古早期重要的世俗和文化概念。本文的研究发现，额外计入一项与“精进感”有关的决定因素（灵性）后，在投入感和精进感两项决定因素方面最能够体会到兰亭诗人的休闲体验。

关键词：休闲，定义，中国诗，中国中古早期，道教，兰亭

Introduction

On April 22nd in 353, forty-two gentlemen gathered to celebrate the *xi* 禊 (Purification) festival at the Orchid Pavilion on the outskirts of modern-day Shaoxing in Zhejiang province. This festival, which in earlier times featured washing and bathing, picking orchids, celebrating the fertility of the new season, and the singing of folksongs, by the

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time of the fourth century, though retaining some aspects of earlier observances, had gradually evolved into a ritualized outdoor literary gathering (Lavalley, 2004). The participants of the gathering sat on the grass along a diverted stream, drank wine from goblets that floated on the stream's current, and composed poetry inspired from classic writings and the sceneries around them. The calligrapher Wang Xizhi 王羲之 (321–379; alt. 303–361) immortalized this occasion in his preface to a collection of 41 poems originating from the Orchid Pavilion gathering that has secured the event's enduring fame throughout East Asia. Numerous articles have been devoted both to the text of the preface and its calligraphy, yet the poems as a subject of study have been largely ignored. The collection's difficult vocabulary of *xuanxue* 玄学 “abstruse studies,” which is a barrier to many readers, has had the effect of masking the potential usefulness of studying the poems as documents that yield other important cultural information. The poems in fact are an excellent source for understanding how fourth-century literati in China conceived of leisure pursuits at this occasion as well as the activity of landscape appreciation, which is central to their cultivation of attitudes toward leisure.

To understand the leisure attitudes of such a distant time requires building an interpretive bridge between the poems (and their original interpretive framework, *xuanxue*) and the contemporary vocabulary from the field of leisure studies. Fortunately, there is no shortage of approaches to the concept of “leisure” in recent decades to choose from in linking the past with the present (Jackson & Burton, 1999). For the purpose of this article, the authors have relied on contemporary leisure studies theory in general and more specifically descriptive vocabulary from studies that measure the subjective experience of leisure (Unger & Kernan, 1983) and the relationship between leisure and spirituality (Schmidt & Little, 2007). Six determinants employed by researchers aiming to measure leisure experiences in an American context, namely, intrinsic satisfaction, perceived freedom, involvement, arousal, mastery, and spontaneity, provide an uncanny correspondence to the vocabulary used by the Orchid Pavilion poets and will serve to structure our reading of the poems. By conducting close textual analysis of the poems composed at this occasion as well as other historical and literary sources, this study will illuminate the Orchid Pavilion poetry through current vocabulary in order to reanimate an ancient approach to leisure and add greater depth and texture to the field of leisure and tourism studies.

A Leisure Studies Approach to the Orchid Pavilion Poetry

In the past 50 years, there have been numerous articles in academic journals that attempt to define the term *leisure* (Gunter & Gunter, 1980; Iso-Hola, 1979; Schmidt & Little, 2007; Veal, 1992). Authors have considered leisure in light of varying frames of reference such as time, space, activity, “state of mind,” and expression of will, just to name a few. In addition to the range of different definitions of leisure, theoretical approaches to leisure have been multifaceted, including approaches that seek to quantify aspects of leisure as objective phenomena or as a subjective state. Moreover, the term leisure is often paired with other related terms such as *recreation* and *tourism*, which makes for an extremely broad spectrum of definitions and conceptions. From positivist research to interpretive research, from quantitative data to qualitative data, defining leisure and the leisure experience for different audiences will undoubtedly persist as an academic and industry interest for the foreseeable future. While reading through much of this literature keeping the Orchid Pavilion poetry in mind, several

important differences and correspondences between the modern context and fourth-century China emerge.

Intrinsic Satisfaction

In the *Journal of Consumer Research*, the authors of “On the Meaning of Leisure: An Investigation of Some Determinants of the Subjective Experience,” (Unger & Kerner, 1983, p. 382) investigated six determinants of the subjective experience and attempt to validate them within the framework of existing leisure theory. Tackling the problem of defining leisure, Unger and Kernan (1983) began with the broadest of terms, *intrinsic satisfaction*, that most resembles the “quintessence of leisure.” From the Greek word *scholé*, leisure is intrinsically motivated as an end in itself, rather than a means to an end. Leisure possesses qualities of personal satisfaction, gratification, and pleasure. Because those who attended the Orchid Pavilion gathering were required to possess specific skills (composition of poetry), adhere to rules (penalty of drinking alcohol if composition of poem was not accomplished), and, moreover, their participation marked an observation of a seasonal event, the phrase intrinsic satisfaction may not come closest to describing the nature of leisure in the context of this gathering. The poems composed by the poets at the Orchid Pavilion contain verbal expression of satisfaction, gratification, and pleasure, yet it would appear that the nature of their activity did have a purpose, to observe the beginning of the end of the spring season and to record a human response to this natural seasonal event with the written word. Also, there would appear to be a strong element of ritual at this occasion that balanced the pursuit of pleasure that slightly differs from intrinsic satisfaction and the Greek term *scholé*. In the Chinese context, *controlled leisure* or Huizinga’s *ritual contest* perhaps better describes the Orchid Pavilion context (Huizinga, 1950, p. 17).

Perceived Freedom and the Work/Free-Time Dichotomy

Unger and Kernan (1983) next sketched a dimension of leisure in relation to the term *perceived freedom*, which provides the opportunity to conceptualize leisure activities within a temporal framework. This is a dominant strain of interpretation for modern studies of leisure. From Webster’s Third New International Dictionary, leisure is defined as:

- Freedom or spare time provided by the cessation of activities;
- Free time as a result of temporary exemption from work or duties;
- A time at one’s own command that is free of engagements or responsibilities;
- A period of unemployed time;
- Opportunity provided by free time.

In the context of the Orchid Pavilion gathering in 353, the literati gathered there were observing a yearly seasonal festival that allowed for time away from usual duties, which, depending on the individual, mostly consisted of government bureaucratic responsibilities associated with a position or office held. However, the dichotomy between work and free time was not as pronounced for the literati class in the early medieval Chinese context as it has been for a generally defined “public” in modern times. Moreover, many of the participants of the Orchid Pavilion gathering did not define their identity based on “work” in the modern sense. With a well-developed manorial economy (slightly different in configuration compared to Western counterpart), the literati class gained a relative independence from public service because they

did not need governmental positions to sustain their household expenditures. The relative independence, added to their social status based on their intellectual achievements, is in part responsible for the disinterest of the literati class in politics. The disinterest in politics then won them more time in exploring and enjoying various aspects of an individual life.

The Orchid Pavilion participants did engage in an expression of their conception of freedom vis-à-vis time that, though not directly related to the free-time/work dichotomy, touches on a key component of their concept of leisure. Freedom from the point of view of the Orchid Pavilion poets was attained by becoming aware of an underlying principle in all of nature and reality. Once this realization was attained, an unfettered, leisurely approach to the immediate environment was unlocked and produced sensations of joy and pleasure. This aspect may be more closely aligned to the “mastery” determinant as we shall see later in this article. For the time being, it is worthwhile to note that the poets expressed their joy in relation to time via a *carpe diem* attitude.

#6 Wang Xizhi

Joining and scattering, always this is the norm,
 Long and short, always this has been the case.
 That which is created anew does not stop even for an instant,
 All of the past will not rise again.
 The present is divinely wondrous,
 Truly the past is the same as dust and dregs.
 Who is able to erase this strong feeling?
 Disperse it and deduce the principle,
 We write and our words become immortal.
 We should not wait for the Yellow River to run clear. (Lavallee, 2004, p. 251)

A modern definition that closely approaches the conception of leisure in the above poem maybe found in the following: “Leisure is activity—apart from the obligations of work, family, and society—to which the individual turns to at will, for either relaxation, diversion, or broadening his knowledge and his spontaneous social participation, the free exercise of his creative capacity” (Dumazedier, 1974, p. 133). After taking out the modern considerations of “work, family, and society” and the notion of the individual’s will for diversion, this description, particularly the aspect of creativity, corresponds well with Wang Xizhi’s exhortation to his fellow participants to seize the moment and make it immortal in words.

Involvement

The third determinant listed by Unger and Kernan (1983), *involvement* concerns the total absorption of participants experiencing leisure. Descriptors of this state include “entering a microcosm distinct from daily life,” “a fantastic escape from reality,” and “an interlude from the ordinary” (p. 383). The Orchid Pavilion gathering was an event to enjoy and to participate in these types of activities. The festival marked a time at which the literati in the setting of the suburban landscape could scatter their pent-up emotions accumulated from months spent indoors or other perhaps more political or personal frustrations. A useful way to measure how the Orchid Pavilion poets engaged in involvement (or perhaps another parallel conception—serious play) is to analyze the degree to which their writing actually engages the landscape that surrounded them. This

is an important feature of their writing because the overall aesthetic trend at the time was primarily devoted to nonlyrical philosophical speculation in verse form not nature description (Chang, 1986). Therefore, when the poets turn their imaginative gaze to their immediate environment it marks an important literary development as well as an exciting, new manner of involvement.

The literati until the mid-fourth century were inclined to be satisfied with an overall impression of the sceneries they gazed at a distance, without specific observations, in contrast with their successors in the fifth century. A nascent aesthetic appreciation of nature, however, can be applied to the Orchid Pavilion poets. In the preface of the poem collection, Wang Xizhi, therefore, described the site in such a manner:

Surrounding the pavilion were lofty hills and towering ranges, luxuriant forests and slender bamboos. There was, moreover, a swirling, splashing stream, wonderfully clear, which curved round it like a ribbon. . . . On this day the sky was bright and the air clear and mild; a breeze was gently blowing. (Strassberg, 1994, pp. 65–66)

In the postface, Sun Chuo attempted to depict the highness of mountains and the broadness of the lakes, but the numbers he employed in the following quotation mainly derived from the convenience, or style of writing, thus not serving as specific descriptions of the setting:

At the bank of southern brooks: high were the mountain ranges, ten thousand feet high; long were the lakes, millions of square miles. (Bischoff, 1985, pp. 205–206)

Moreover, the researchers find that the perception of sceneries in the occasion of Orchid Pavilion gathering was related to individuals' previous landscape experiences. The members of the Kuaiji group tended to have a more positive attitude toward the appreciation of nature than did peripheral the members as discussed below. They accordingly had more lines contributing to landscape description than did others. Some of them devoted a half or even a whole poem to the depiction of sceneries when metaphysics poetry predominated the poet society in the Eastern Jin Dynasty.

The "madman" Sun Tong spared no efforts in his narrative of sceneries, without a single line allocated to the philosophic thought that might occur to most of the poets at this occasion, which shows his confidence in the confirmation of the value of landscape depiction.

The landowners contemplate the mountains and streams;
Looking up searching for the tracks of the hermits.
The revolving pool swirls up a thoroughfare in the middle;
Sparse bamboo divides the tall paulownia.
Then flows the turning light goblets;
Clear sounding wind floats falling among the pines.
Birds of the season sing by long mountain streams;
The ten thousand sounds blow among the linked peaks. (Lavalley, 2004, p. 254)

The first couplet tells that on the one hand, in this festival gathering, his concentration was on the mountains and rivers rather than anything else, and, on the other, he

did not immerse in the pleasure that might be brought by drinking wine but looked up in order to gaze at the scenery. The middle two couplets shows that while looking at the floating goblets in the stream and the swirls, he would never forget to gaze at the natural objects around, including the harmonious coexistence of bamboos and paulownia and the shaking pine in the wind, maybe with its sounds like the tides. It is worthy of notice that Sun Tong was the only one who mentioned three specific plants among the Orchid Pavilion poets, who might make no allusions to any specific plant species. His plentiful experiences in the appreciation of nature might be responsible for his awareness of the existence of these landscape elements. The last couplet discloses that in the appreciation process, not only the visual aspects were engaged but also the aural senses were employed. Accordingly, the poet heard the singing of birds and a variety of pleasant natural sounds. Sun's case shows a typical appreciation at this stage, with no essential difference from that of Wang Xizhi as mentioned above. The preferred aesthetic images that he created might explain Wang Xizhi's admiration of him as the leading figure in terms composing poems at the occasion (Zhong, 1994). In this sense, he surpassed his younger brother Sun Chuo in the respect of landscape writing at this particular moment.

Sun Tong is not alone in composing landscape poems in the full sense. Xie An's younger brother, Xie Wan, a repeated visitor of the Orchid Pavilion, even offered two poems showing his strong landscape consciousness. In the Jin literati gathering, composing poetry was a popular literary game, and the game rule was that a poet should write at least one four-character poem and one five-character poem, which might suggest that it was a transition period in the respect of literature from the antiquity to the medieval age. The poetry genre is not the focus of this study, and the concerns herein are what Xie Wan had written in his following two poems. His four-character poem reads:

Intently looking into the lofty mountains,
Gazing at the tall woods.
Green creepers screen the mountain peak,
Slender bamboo cap the high pointed hill.
In the valley stream there is a pure echo;
The drumming of the branches makes a singing sound.
The black cliff spits moisture,
The spreading fog thus overshadowed the cliff. (Lavallee, 2004, p. 253)

In this poem Xie Wan told that he, like Sun Tong, also raised his head contemplating sceneries, but he had different observations. He noticed the decorations of the hills, that the liana looks like screens and the bamboo like grove bonnets. The natural sounds he heard were the murmuring of streams and the drumming of trunks and twigs. The poem concludes with an allusion to the moisture and fog throwing shadows on the peaks, which makes the aesthetic images more mysterious and satisfy the Daoist aesthetic taste. What the whole poem represents is pure nature, without human intrusion, which is another difference from Sun Tong's depiction. This characteristic also applies to his second poem.

Xie Wan's five-character poem was excellently translated by Lavallee as bellow:

The spirit of winter curls up its dark banner;
The deity of spring unrolls its bright flag.

Divine water covers the nine regions;
 A bright wind fans fresh luxuriance.
 The verdant forest is luminous with halcyon colored flowers;
 Red blooms push up out of new stalks.
 Soaring birds strum their feathers as they roam;
 Leaping fish jump with pure sounds. (Lavallee, 2004, p. 253)

In his reading of the above poem, Lavallee thought the poet might be too drunk to see the real sceneries around him. He doubted that the representation is the scene before the poet's eyes (Lavallee, 2004). Similarly, Zhong noted that landscape writing in the poem has half authenticity and half imagination (Zhong, 1994). Their readings were doubtlessly reasonable, but it should be noted that the poem, nevertheless, shows an observation of the rhythm of nature, the change of season, together with corresponding variations, thus differentiating it from other poems in the collection. The poet took a macroscopic perspective on the spring scenery, before him or not, thus making the depiction appropriate for whatever sites in the Yangtze delta, not bound to the Orchid Pavilion. The ending couplet, as Lavallee pointed out, is borrowed from lines of the Western Garden poets, which suggests a continuity of employing similar aesthetic images.

The same order as used in the above discussion of Xie Wan's writing will be employed to the examination of Sun Chuo, whose two poems, unlike the previous three, were landscape poems in an half sense. His four-character poem reads:

In spring we sing and climb the terrace,
 Together we look down upon the flowing water.
 The ode "Chopping Wood" comes to mind.
 Dignified is this elegant party.
 Slender bamboo shades the pool;
 Swirling rapids coil around the hill.
 Water threads through the pond rousing up torrents,
 And comes to overflow the boat-like goblets. (Lavallee, 2004, p. 251)

The above poem, by contrast with previously discussed writings, appears to offer nothing fresh in terms of landscape experience. Sun Chuo is probably eager to show off his artifice of chanting poems, thus continuously making allusions to the classic literature works in the first half of the poem. He employs these allusions to suggest the prosperity they enjoyed as well as his friendship with Wang Xizhi and Xie An (Zhong, 1994). The second half of the poem manages to draw a picture of the setting and their game of floating goblets but lacks individual observations. The poem indeed shows Sun Chuo's literary artifice, skillfully integrating the allusions into the representation of scene (Lavallee, 2004).

Facing the scene, Sun Chuo appeared to have been somewhat absentminded. In the above poem his priority is the friendship with Wang and Xie; in the following one, he reminded the readers his identity as a master of metaphysics poetry, referred to the delicious dishes they enjoyed, and praised the pieces of others in the later part of the five-character poem:

Grasping the brush I let fall clouds of elegant diction,
 With subtle words exploring the metaphysic truths.
 The season's treasures how could we not enjoy them?

Hearing your poetic chanting I forget the flavor of food. (Lavalley, 2004, p. 252; Zhong, 1994, p. 269)

In this poem he employed a different style, opening the poem with excellent depiction of the dynamic sceneries:

The flowing wind brushes the crooked islands;
Lingering clouds shade the nine marshes.
Voices of warblers sing in slender bamboo;
Roving fish sport in the swelling waves. (Lavalley, 2004, p. 252; Zhong, 1994, p. 269)

Linked by the four carefully chosen words, *brushes* 拂, *shade* 荫, *sing* 吟 and *sport* 戏, the four lines effectively reenact the scene before the poet's eyes.

At the end of the discussion of the nuclear members of the Kuaiji group is a brief examination of Xie An. His four-character poem wrote that the festival excursion is a continuity of the convention of Lustration Festival originated from the antiquity and the lingering in natural environment makes them feel proud and look down upon the mundane society:

The ancient and those who came before us
Took to heart their spring time roaming.
We are in harmony here, our words maintaining (their tradition).
We commit our contempt of the world to the trees and hills. (Lavalley, 2004, p. 252)

The taste in landscape might be in part responsible for their contempt of worldly affairs, and Xie An, like his friends and brother, would not fail to exhibit the aesthetic images reflected in his mind. He thus went on with:

Lush and luxuriant are joined ranges;
Vast and boundless are the plains and fields.
Revolving skies hang with mist;
The icy spring cracks open and flows. (Lavalley, 2004, p. 252)

It could be discerned that in the above lines Xie An might attempt to show his aesthetic taste in a different way than the others, showing a sort of sublime scene by the wording of numerous joined ranges and boundless plains and fields. However, the researchers doubt that the images belong to the scene presented to him since Wang Xizhi and Sun Chuo had, respectively, in the preface and the postface, already described the topography or landform of the gathering site: there are not such boundless plains and fields in their descriptions. Therefore, he might have used the same artifice as was in Xie Wang's five-character poem: half reality, half imagination.

Above discussed were the cases from the nuclear members of the Kuaiji group, which accounts for a low ratio of the participants of the Orchid Pavilion gathering. These nuclear members could not claim a monopoly of landscape appreciation, and the peripheral ones, despite that their aesthetic cultivation might not parallel those of their nuclear counterpart, also exhibited their interest in sceneries in varying degrees, which can be glimpsed in Table 1.

Table 1. Landscape Description in *Orchid Pavilion* Poems by Peripheral Members.

Poets	Landscape Lines
Xi Tan	A warm wind rises in the eastern valley; Harmonious pneuma shakes the tender shoots.
Sun Si	Gazing at cliffs I recollect the reclusion of Xu You; Looking down on the flowing wave I think of Zhuangzi.
Hua Mao	The tress are glorious surely luxuriant, The waves stir up as they bend in the river.
Yuan Qiaozhi	Turning my head to gaze at the resplendent forest blooms; Looking down, looking up, under the bright sky, the broad stream. Strong currents flow carrying fragrant wine . . .
Wang Xuanzhi	Pine and bamboo stand upright by the steep cliffs; A secluded mountain stream rouses a clear current.
Wang Ningzhi	Wisps of smoke fanned by the wind; With brilliant joy the harmonious penuma is pure.
Wang Suzhi	Chanting verse as the winding water rushes by; Clear waves twist and turn revealing white fish.
Wang Huizhi	Scattering thoughts in the landscape; Desolate, forgetting our confines. Gracefully floating bright and intelligent; Sparse pine trees shroud the peaks.
Wang Binzhi	The cinnabar cliffs tower over the land; Blossoms elegant reflect in the woods. Clear water stirs up waves; Now floating, now sinking. Fresh blossoms reflected in the trees so elegantly; Drifting fish sport in the clear dikes.
Wang Fengzhi	Without restraint gazing at the rocky mountain peaks; Looking down on the stream that washes away all traces. Feeling the flourish of the fishes and birds; A peaceful abode secluded in the mountains.
Wei Pang	On the third day of the third month of spring there is delight in the harmonious pneuma; The myriad things all are one in happiness.
Xu Fengzhi	Looking down brushing the pure white waves; Looking up plucking the fragrant orchids.

Unlike the nuclear poets who composed 8 lines, even 12, most of the peripheral members wrote merely 4 lines, which means that their landscape lines in Table 1 respectively account for approximately 50% of responding poems. From this analysis, we can see that the poets demonstrate an appreciable level of involvement in observing and then capturing their surroundings.

To a large extent, the party was an ideal opportunity for the common literati to learn from their precursors, so did the young from the old. Among the participants there were brothers, as well as fathers and sons (Li, 2006). It is not difficult to find in their lines some traces of imitation. In a manner similar to that of the nuclear poets, the

peripheral ones described those natural objects: the warm wind, the cinnabar cliffs, the decorated peaks, the hovering birds, the luxuriant woods, the forest blooms, the sparse pines, the slender bamboos, the crooked stream, the sporting fish in the clear water, and the torrents floating their goblets. Besides these aesthetic images, the imitations were also reflected in the similar allusions to the festival tradition, the ancient recluses, the pleasure of excursion to a suburb river mentioned by Confucian and his disciples, the joy of fish stated by the Daoism master Zhuangzi, etc.

In summary, the competition of chanting poems required no themes except for styles, but most of the poets represented the sceneries around the Orchid Pavilion in varying degrees (Li, 2006), which suggests that a strong landscape consciousness had found its place in the minds of the Kuaiji literati.

Arousal and Spontaneity

The fourth determinant, *arousal*, which maybe defined as the engagement with novel, complex, or dissonant stimuli during the experience of leisure and the sixth determinant, *spontaneity*, referring to activities that are not routine, planned, or anticipated, we will consider together because, though the words themselves point to ideas prevalent in Daoist and literary writings with which the participants were familiar, in the context of the Orchid Pavilion gathering there is little direct correlation to these conceptions as they are defined in the American or “Western” context. The absence of these determinants or their contrasting configuration in the Chinese context, however, is revealing. In their characterization of the arousal determinant, Unger and Kernan (1983) noted that “Berlyne (1969) discussed a rise of tension in play, which stems from ‘discrepancies’: novelty, and change, surprise content, complexity, and uncertainty or conflict” (p. 383). There certainly is complexity in the Orchid Pavilion participants’ ranges of leisure experiences as evident in their need to negotiate the production of literary texts. Yet the other descriptors of *change*, *surprise content*, *uncertainty*, and *conflict* are not fully present, at least not in the poetry they produced. Another aspect of the arousal determinant is a heightened sense of risk for participants of varying activities. The Orchid Pavilion poets do not seem to broach risk on a physical level (if we discount the risks involved with alcohol consumption). The term arousal on the surface would seem to correspond to the Chinese poetic notion of 兴 *xing* often translated as “affective image” that usually originates in nature and creates a stirring of emotion in the mind of the viewer/poet thereby causing the production of song or poetry. Numerous examples of this type of arousal are evident in the way the poets described their environment as witnessed in the prior discussion on *involvement*. Arousal also may indicate a state of mind on the part of the participants that reflects a change of consciousness. However, this aspect will be taken up more fully in discussion of the mastery determinant. As Unger and Kernan pointed out, sometimes there are instances of overlap among the determinants.

The spontaneity determinant also is conspicuously absent from the representations the collection provides us. The poets instead appear to derive pleasure from activities that are predictable, such as reenacting events or practices of the past that place the Orchid Pavilion in a dimension of historical connectedness. Though the poets do not always directly state that this activity produces pleasurable emotions, it is implied that the Orchid Pavilion celebrants shared the ancients’ enthusiasm for observing spring time customs. I believe that it is the sense of continuity in reenacting for Wang Xizhi and his group that produced delight perhaps even more than the activity itself.

#1 Wang Xizhi

Let us sing our rain-making dances,
So that the different ages flow in unison. (Lavalley, 2004, p. 249)

#23 Yuan Qiaozhi

The ancients sang their rain-making dances;
Here and now, we too also sign in wonder. (Lavalley, 2004, p. 256)

#9 Xie An

The ancients and those who came before us took to heart their springtime
roaming.
We are in harmony here; our words maintain (their tradition). (Lavalley,
2004, p. 252)

Reenacting the past is most often facilitated by reading, quoting, or making specific allusions to texts. The act of reading and discussing texts stands out as an enjoyable activity for the Orchid Pavilion participants. It may be the case that the act of reading or reciting passages from memory and matching them to the participants' immediate surroundings and state of mind could be construed as a kind of arousal. Not surprisingly, the *Zhuangzi* appears to be the preferred text to quote. *A New Account of Tales of the World* (Liu, 1976, pp. 403–444) documents many discussions and expositions of the *Zhuangzi* by literati of this period, including the Orchid Pavilion participants Xie An, Sun Chuo, and Wang Xizhi. The Orchid Pavilion poets do not hesitate to document their representation of discursive reasoning in their poetry. The pleasure of alluding to texts for poets such as Wang Linzhi and Cao Hua is not simply making mention of ideas but reenacting famous scenes. The more successful type of allusions would appear to be those such as the following that portray the author enjoying themselves in their present environment, just as Zhuangzi did in his. The combination of quotation and reenactment is what seems to make the experience pleasurable.

#33 Wang Linzhi

Obtaining meaning, happiness is with the fish. (Lavalley, 2004, p. 259)

#41 Cao Hua

Turning my head to gaze at the accomplished ones roaming;
Loosening the knot rambling for pleasure by Hao bridge. (Lavalley, 2004,
p. 261)

Given how the Orchid Pavilion participants did not experience the pressures of the modern work/free-time dichotomy, it is not surprising that their leisure preference would be centered on less spontaneous activities than in the Western context. Also, many aspects of the fourth-century literati's lives were less stable and predictable when viewed in light of the political climate of that time. Flight from the north to the Kuaiji area after the collapse of the Western Jin (265–316) after all was within Wang Xizhi's lifetime and certainly played a part in his contemporaries and younger contemporaries' perceptions of social stability.

Mastery and Spirituality

The fifth determinant of subjective leisure, *mastery* relates to individuals conquering an environment or testing themselves in an intellectual realm (Unger & Kernan, 1983). It is

clear that the Orchid Pavilion poets demonstrate aspects of mastery when they successfully produce poetry within the literary game being played at the occasion. In the preface and postface, Wang Xizhi and Sun Chuo each respectively mentioned how the gentlemen in attendance wrote poems as a part of this gaming activity, yet not all were able to do so. Each participant was challenged to write one four-character poem and one five-character poem. Many failed to write four-character poems, a poetic form that may have been less compelling to write for various reasons. Berlyne (1969) indicated that the rewards in play come from mastering conditions of high arousal. Other than Wang Xizhi in his preface and poem #6, Sun Chuo and Wei Pang are the only others who actually represent their own act of writing in the collection.

#8 Sun Chuo

Grasping the brush I left fall clouds of elegant diction;
Subtle words are dissected by brush-tip hairs. (Lavallee, 2004, p. 252)

#36 Wei Pang

Our brilliant host is joyous at the seasonal sacrifice;
Driving words by brightly pure pools.
Diligently we obtain sound without restraint;
With the whistling of strong winds we abandon the world's troubles.
Gazing at the peaks ashamed to take off our sandals;
Looking down at the stream I sigh and pick up my brush. (Lavallee, 2004, p. 259)

Johan Huizinga (1950), in his seminal work *Homo Ludens*, in reading Marcel Granet's descriptions of festival behavior in ancient China, posited that "the spirit of competition" at these seasonal celebrations demonstrates how central the "agonistic principle" is in the Chinese context (p. 55). This observation is particularly useful when interpreting the competitive nature of the literary game being played at the Orchid Pavilion gathering. The Orchid Pavilion poets, though on the surface appear to be enjoying themselves in a leisurely manner, are actually quite absorbed in a match of literary talent.

Another area of mastery may be found in the participants' successful engagement of a spiritual practice referred to by Wang Xizhi as "attaining unity," which we have referred to earlier in this article as "becoming aware of the underlying principle of all things." The Orchid Pavilion participants express different levels of mastery of this practice in their poems by using varying vocabulary and descriptions of their imaginative states. It is worth noting that within academic scholarship on leisure there is a distinct preference for analyzing states of leisure in a secular setting. However, in a recent study "Qualitative Insights into Leisure as a Spiritual Experience," Schmidt and Little (2007), using a phenomenology approach, considered the possibility of spiritual dimensions at work within the leisure experience. Schmidt and Little defined spirituality "as being a broad concept that refers to the ways in which people seek, make, celebrate, and apply meaning in their lives. This usually takes the form of a frame of reference wider than the immediate, the material, and the everyday and leads the believer to seek or experience a personal meaning in their own life. In connecting leisure with spirituality, researchers have described the capacity of leisure to refresh and renew the soul, providing space for freedom, self-revelation and connection" (Schmidt & Little, p. 244). The words of the participants in Schmidt and Little's study offer similar

expressions to the Orchid Pavilion poets when asked to respond to their experiences in nature. "Removed from the distractions and pace of modern life, nature offered the chance to live more simply, to reconnect with 'the wholeness of the natural world' (Phillip), to gain a 'sense of universality' (Penny) and 'to feel more peaceful and connected' (Pam)" (Schmidt & Little, p. 236). With these expressions in mind, we will now turn to the Orchid Pavilion gathering to more fully understand how the participants conceived of a spiritual aspect to their leisure activities, or might it be better to refer to their behavior as a leisurely aspect to their spiritual practices?

The relative mastery of the poets that through verse express sentiments of achieving a sense of unity and spiritual awareness at the Orchid Pavilion gathering may be understood by appreciating a new conception of pleasure that emerged in the literary tradition during this period. To describe this new conception, we will view examples of the set arranged in an ordering of layers of pleasure. The structure of layers has been in part formulated by a reaction to a study by Tu Wei-ming entitled "Profound Learning, Personal Knowledge, and Poetic Vision" (Tu, 1986). In his study, Tu Wei-ming stated the following:

If a salient feature of the Han metaphysicians was system building, the Wei-Chin metaphysicians replaced the spirit of construction with the spirit of "digging." For the Wei-Chin thinkers, no blueprint for the construction of a philosophical edifice was available nor even thought necessary or desirable. It seems that the prevailing ethos was to probe the underlying structure and principle of things instead of casting one's gaze outward in search of the grandiose design of the universe. (p. 7)

The conception of *li* (principle) as expressed by Wang Xizhi (especially in poems #1–#6 of the collection) corresponds generally with Professor Tu's evaluation of Wei-Chin thinkers. Yet Wang Xizhi and his associates *were* active in the process of construction, but their construction in all likelihood was one of cultural and religious practice, not of philosophical systems. Tu's metaphor of "digging" is particularly useful for uncovering how the Orchid Pavilion poets express emotions related to pleasure. In order to account for a commonly accepted experience or conception of pleasure by the literati of the era, or because that pleasure yields such a varying range of expression, we will organize chosen examples from the set into the following schematic that demonstrates derivation of pleasure from (a) experience of natural environment, (b) experience of reenacting the past, (c) roaming and wandering, (d) attaining unity, and (e) meditation or meditative practice. Of these five interpretative layers, the first two directly relate to the performance of shared cultural practices based on a tradition of behavior and shared understanding of texts. These types of pleasure are echoed throughout the Orchid Pavilion set and are derivative of past experiences. They have been considered earlier in the Intrinsic Satisfaction, Perceived Freedom, and Involvement sections. The last three layers, though also in many regards derivative of texts and past experiences, seem to introduce a new articulation of pleasure based on the experience of the participants engaged in what could be loosely defined as religious practice. It would appear that though the Orchid Pavilion poetry does not fully express an innovative philosophical system, there is some sort of collective religious behavior enacted. The manner by which the poets pursue pleasure at the Orchid Pavilion suggests an integration of Daoist philosophical concepts and specific activities that would yield anticipated outcomes that are expressed in terms of pleasure. Roaming, meditating, and attaining unity all elicit blissful or happy emotions just short of an ecstatic state of mind.

At the outset of this article, we have characterized Eastern Jin poetry as being intimately connected to the tradition of “abstruse studies” (*xuanxue*), a practice of literati conversation and textual reading that started during the end of the Han dynasty. This portrayal emphasizes the philosophical side to abstruse studies and pure talks. One of the inherent difficulties of studying the Daoist tradition from this and earlier periods is the interrelationship between Daoist philosophy based on the reading and conversation about Daoist texts and the practice of religious Daoism also derived from the reading and discussion of texts yet also connected to specific religious behavior such as the practice of spirit writing, meditation, physical exercises, and the use of substances to enhance longevity. A brief review of the history of Wang Xizhi’s family background in regard to this issue reveals important information that can contextualize the poetry of the Orchid Pavilion participants within the context of religious activities. Lothar Ledderose (1984), in his article “Some Taoist Elements in the Calligraphy of the Six Dynasties,” provided useful research in this regard.

The noble expatriate from the north were adherents of the “Way of the Celestial Master” (*T’ien-shih tao* 天师道) commonly known as the “Taoism of the Five Pecks of Rice” (*Wu-tou-mi tao* 五斗米道). The movement which is one of the earliest and most important forms of organized religious Taoism had begun in the second half of the 2nd century, and had its roots in the coastal area around Lang-yeh [home town of Wang Xizhi’s family in Shandong]. The affiliations of the Wang family with this creed are particularly strong and can be traced back to Han times. Wang Hsi-chih’s biography in the *Chin-shu* 晋书 (*Standard History of the Chin dynasty*) explicitly states that his family had practiced the Taoism of the Five Pecks of Rice for generations. In the fourth century the Wangs were still followers of this school. One indication of their continuing affiliation is that many members of the family carried personal names ending with the character *chih* 之, especially in the branch to which Wang Xizhi and Wang Xianzhi themselves belonged. This type of name occurs very often in this period. Like names containing the character *tao* 道 it was frequently used by believers of the Way of the Celestial Master. (p. 248)

Professor Ledderose also provided evidence from Wang Xizhi’s biography and writings that show a significant reliance on Daoist religious practices during his life. This information serves as material to support the view that religious practices influenced the unique development of calligraphy by Wang Xizhi and his son Wang Xianzhi. My purposes are not to analyze the calligraphy but to gain a new perspective on the poetry composed by the Wang clan and their associates. I believe that when read through the perspective of religious behavior, the concept of pleasure in the poems can be more readily appreciated. Moreover, the representation of pleasure moves beyond philosophical conceptions explored earlier in the writings of pre-Han Confucian and Daoist texts into a realm of ecstatic bliss more akin to mystical transcendence. As started by traditional and modern critics, most of the allusions and quotations in the poetry of the Orchid Pavilion are from the *Daode jing* and *Zhuangzi*. The behavior of participants at the gathering may be more religious in nature than scholars have previously described.

Within the third investigative layer, there are at least three types of roaming or wandering in the set: simple roaming, roaming in imitation of prior roamings, and

meditative roaming, that may indicate a religious practice. Roaming for pleasure in the following poems does not seem to signify anything other than moving about in the poet's environment.

#2 Wang Xizhi

Freely wandering at this fine early morning gathering. (Lavalley, 2004, p. 250)

#22 Yuan Qiaozhi

Beautiful guests have already arrived,

Together they roam strolling about for pleasure. (Lavalley, 2004, p. 256)

The second type, roaming in imitation of prior roamings, reenacts the practice of moving or journeying about the landscape as the ancients did. Just how the participants conceived of these past roamings is difficult to ascertain. The term *roaming* or *you* 游 has a long history worth investigation in another scholarly setting. Roaming for the ancients in the minds of the Orchid Pavilion poets had multiple layers of meaning including the possibility of roaming in exile, roaming in ecstatic or shamanistic quests as evident in the *Chuci* anthology and Han *fu*, or simply walking about for pleasure.

#9 Xie An

The ancients and those who came before us took to heart their springtime roaming. (Lavalley, 2004, p. 252)

#10 Xie An

Strong wine makes glad the sincere heart.

Just like roaming with Fu Xi and Tang Yao. (Lavalley, 2004, p. 252)

The third type, meditative roaming, which may indicate a religious practice, suggests a departure from the Jian'an model described in literary works. Though this type of roaming may suggest a hint of shamanistic spirit excursions, the Orchid Pavilion writers do not go so far as to describe in detail their observations while in this altered state.

#16 Xi Tan

Sitting straight up rouses distant thoughts;

With light chatter we roam the suburbs. (Lavalley, 2004, p. 254)

#41 Cao Hua

Turning my head to gaze at the accomplished ones roaming. (Lavalley, 2004, p. 261)

Nevertheless, it would appear from the lines above that the act of roaming or wandering possesses far more import than simply taking a walk. Whereas the strolling about the pleasure gardens of Ye during the Jian'an era seem to be leisurely exercise, here roaming *xiaoyao* 逍遥 or *you* 游 is more akin to the activity described in texts like the *Zhuangzi*: it is an act of meditation and exercise, a kind of strolling *qigong* or *zazen*. That Wang Xizhi mentions this as an activity of the ancients suggests that the Orchid Pavilion group is continuing a long tradition (that perhaps fell out of practice). It is interesting to note that not all of the participants are able (or willing?) to partake in this activity. Cao Hua in #41 and Yuan Qiaozhi in #22 are observers. This could simply be the case of each participant doing whatever they desire and that some did not wish to roam or that there are varying levels of roaming. Accomplished roaming could be more meditative.

The fourth layer of pleasure, *attaining unity*, also points to the possible religious dimension to the participants' experiences. In recent scholarship there has been a trend toward the attempt at integrating the religious and philosophical aspects of Daoism, particularly within the fourth-century movement known as Celestial Masters Daoism or *Tianshi daojiao* 天师道教 (Singleton, 1997). In keeping with this approach, it is worthwhile to consider a specific passage from the *Daodejing* that remarks on the nature of attaining unity and compare possible reading with the expressions of unity in the Orchid Pavilion set. The most relevant passage from the *Daodejing* that considers attaining unity may be found in chapter 10.

While you cultivate the soul and embrace unity can you keep them from separating? (Mair, 1990, p. 69)

This passage likely refers to a meditative practice known as “embracing the one” or “embracing unity.” Wang Xizhi and the Orchid Pavilion poets express their experience or attempt at experiencing this meditative state by using similar language. However, instead of employing the phrase *baoyi* (抱一), this states of attaining or embracing unity or oneness is framed in the context of recognizing the underlying principle *li* in all things. Once this realization is attained, the myriad manifestations of Dao become one and as a consequence there is a feeling of pleasure.

#3 Wang Xizhi

In whatever strikes my eyes, the principle is evident. (Chang, 1986, p. 6)

#17 Yu You

With feeling of principle I attain unity. (Lavalley, 2004, p. 255)

#22 Yuan Qiaozhi

People after all have a saying;

Once the goal is obtained then there is delight. (Lavalley, 2004, p. 256)

However, even though attaining unity appears to be the goal of many of the Orchid Pavilion poets, not all demonstrate mastery.

The act of roaming in the set would seem to precipitate the attainment of unity. Wang Xizhi introduced this line of thinking in the first poem of the set. “Let us sing our rain-making dances, so that the different ages flow in unison. Now hand in hand let us gather as one and release our bosom thoughts on the lone hill.” The later statements in the set concerning the subject of unity can be viewed as elaborations on this central activity. Sun Chong articulates his formulation of unity using the words *qi* 齐 and *tong* 同.

#13 Sun Chong

Vast and boundless is Great Creation;

10,000 transformations are all in alignment (*qi*).

Profound enlightenment is mysteriously equal (*tong*);

Competing anomalies abandon will.

Chen Ping and Zhou Bo forwarded their schemes;

Xia Huang and Ji Liji reclined on armrests.

In all cases I look up to rare things;

Now at the mountains, now at the river. (Lavalley, 2004, p. 253)

Despite the journey back in time to the age of the Han and Qin dynasties, the immediacy of his last two lines show clearly that the poet is rooted in the present environment. If Sun were to wander off into past references, the ritual moment would be lost.

The fifth and last layer of pleasure, *meditation* or *meditative practice*, is closely associated with the third and fourth. Not all of the participants seem to be as serious about their efforts to attain unity or deduce the principle as others. This could be due to levels of ability or personal preference and character. The following poems all make an effort at describing mental states that may be associated with meditative activity.

#16 Xi Tan

Sitting straight up rouses distant thoughts;
With light chatter we roam the suburbs. (Lavalley, 2004, p. 254)

#17 Yu You

Galloping our minds beyond the boundaries;
Desolate and empty on a far-reaching journey. (Lavalley, 2004, pp. 254–255)

#23 Yuan Qiaozhi

With wild fanciful thoughts I escape the common track;
Abandoning words I am able to play to the utmost. (Lavalley, 2004, p. 256)

Wang Xizhi would seem to be the most accomplished as he lectures on how to meditate and clearly derives pleasure from his efforts.

#5 Wang Xizhi

The mirror's brilliance rids one of dust and fish,
If you stop (polishing the mirror) then vileness and close-fistedness will
come into being.
Seize the pleasure of this one morning,
And make it your delight for a thousand years. (Lavalley, 2004, pp. 250–251)

Conclusion

From this study of the Orchid Pavilion gathering, it is possible to gain a new appreciation of the way in which early medieval literati in China engaged in leisure activities when read in light of the six determinants of the leisure experience set forth by Unger and Kernan (1983). It is important to note that the reading of the Orchid Pavilion poetry through the lens of the six determinants of the leisure experience only engages the vocabulary used by Unger and Kernan and does not relate to the conclusions found in their study. Nonetheless, though there are distinct differences between the modern conceptions of leisure within the intrinsic satisfaction, perceived freedom, arousal, and spontaneity determinants, the areas of involvement and mastery provide fruitful correspondences. Moreover, when the conception of spirituality as defined within Schmidt and Little's study (2007) is factored into the definition of the mastery determinant, a significant resonance emerges between modern leisure experiences and the early medieval Chinese participants at the Orchid Pavilion gathering. Though the language of the poetry composed at this occasion has often been construed as nonlyrical, difficult, or opaque, careful analysis yields valuable information about how the literati

explored the underlying patterns of nature to realize their own position in the landscape and how they affirmed their connection to seasonal change while engaging in leisure pursuits.

Leisure, it must be clearly understood, is a mental and spiritual attitude—it is not simply the result of external factors, it is not the inevitable result of spare time, a holiday, a weekend or a vacation. It is, in the first place, an attitude of mind, a condition of the soul, and is utterly contrary to the ideal of “worker” in each and every one of the three aspects . . . work as activity, as toil, as a social function Compared with the exclusive ideal of work as activity, leisure implies (in the first place) an attitude of non-activity, of inward calm, of silence; it means not being “busy”, but letting things happen Leisure is a form of silence, of that silence which is the prerequisite of the apprehension of reality: only the silent hear and those who do not remain silent do not hear. Silence, as it is used in this context, recreation: does not mean “dumbness” or “noiselessness”; it means more nearly that the soul’s power to “answer” to the reality of the world is left undisturbed. For leisure is a receptive attitude of mind, a contemplative attitude, and it is not only the occasion, but also the capacity for steeping oneself in the whole of creation. (Pieper, 1965, p. 43)

With the exception of the modern attitude toward work and free time, the sentiments expressed in this statement are very much in line with many aspects of the Orchid Pavilion poets’ attitudes toward leisure. Hopefully this article will affirm the possibilities of seeing the parallels between the distant past and our own present conceptions of leisure pursuits and open up new directions for exploring conceptions of leisure in other less commonly considered contexts.

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