

“Creation Through Translation” in Early Twentieth-Century Women’s Fiction: On a Literary Trend in the Initial Stages of Cultural Exchange Between China and the West

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Translated by Caterina Weber

Abstract

In the 1910s, the trend of “creating through translation” emerged in fiction by female Chinese writers. This concept, similar to that of “covert translation,” introduced by the contemporary Western translation theorist Juliane House, sprang up from the early stages of new literary forms that developed in the context of changes in early modern Chinese literature. The works of female Chinese authors were influenced by the plot, characters, and narrative techniques in Western literary works from which they consciously or subconsciously took inspiration, passing from the imitation of foreign novels to “creation through translation.” The arrival of this phenomenon is closely connected to the increased dissemination of Western knowledge and to a wider circulation of foreign novels among female writers in China. When reading and translating foreign literature, female authors transposed, filtered, and rewrote it into new texts that featured local elements. Ideologically and artistically, the practice of “creating through translation” provided enlightening guidance for modern women’s fiction in that it broadened the means of learning from Western literature, proving beneficial to China’s literary and cultural development. The same trend appears in early vernacular poetry during the May Fourth era, from which it can be traced further back to scholarly texts of the early modern period, such as Wei Yuan’s *Illustrated Treatise on the Maritime Kingdoms* (Haiguo tuzhi 海國圖志) or Wang Tao’s *Report on the Franco-Prussian War* (*Pu-fa zhan ji* 普法戰紀). Also Liang Qichao’s writings on Western thought and culture, for example, his *Notes on Rousseau* (*Lusuo xue’an* 盧梭學案), are written in a similar form. The emergence of “creation through translation” therefore evidently represents

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both a conscious, active effort by a generation's intellectual elite to seek knowledge and truth from cultural exchange between China and the West, and a new exploration and practice under Western influence that had a positive impact on China's literary and academic history, in that it broadened cultural/academic perspectives and stimulated the development of Chinese literature and culture.

Keywords

Chinese vernacular poetry – covert translation – creation through translation – female novelists

In the early twentieth century (1900-1919), some sixty female novelists emerged on China's literary scene; this was a completely new phenomenon in the history of Chinese literature. Considering the many female authors of *shi* (詩) and *ci* (詞) poetry, Chinese women's literature can be said to be highly successful, and yet for a long period China's traditional society produced no female novelists.¹ The first novel by a woman for which textual evidence exists is *Shadows of "Dream of the Red Chamber"* (*Honglou meng ying* 紅樓夢影, 1877) by the Manchu poet Xi Linchun (西林春) (also known as Gu Taiqing [顧太清], 1799-1877); this work, however, only appeared in the second half of the nineteenth century. Therefore, both the first generation of female Chinese novelists in the early twentieth century and a number of literary phenomena that emerged from their creative practice are a key academic research area and have great significance for the history of literature.

I

The creative nucleus of early twentieth-century female Chinese novelists was China's first generation of female intellectuals. Most of them fall into one of two groups: those among the first Chinese women to be educated abroad, and those who graduated from missionary schools or modern girls' schools.

1 For a detailed study on the reasons for this, see Guo Yanli, "Ershi shiji chu Zhongguo nüxing wenxue sida zuojia qunti kaolun 20 世紀初中國女性文學四大作家群體考論 (On the Four Groups of Chinese Women Writers in the Early Twentieth Century)," 文史哲 *Journal of Literature, History and Philosophy*, no. 4 (2009): 5-16.

They had all received a “new” education and had gained a thorough knowledge of specialized subjects, such as natural sciences, social sciences, and foreign languages as well as music, sports, and arts. Their forward and innovative thinking, ideology, and behavior were also different from those of aristocratic female authors (*guixiu zuojia* 閨秀作家) in and before the nineteenth century. This first generation of female Chinese intellectuals lived in the early twentieth century, an era in which movements for women’s rights, capitalism, and democracy were thriving in China; moreover, they had received a new Western-style education. These and other additional factors, such as their self-defined position as forward thinkers, made this group of female novelists feel a strong impulse and conscious need to learn from the West; literary creation was no exception.

As most female authors of the early twentieth century had learned foreign languages, some of them were both writers and translators. Such authors accounted for about one-quarter of female novelists; among the well-known ones are Huang Cuining (黃翠凝) (b. 1875-?), Huang Jingying (黃靜英), Chen Xiaocui (陳小翠) (1902-1968), Tang Hongfu (湯紅紱), Liu Yunqin (劉韻琴) (1883-1945), Huang Bihun (黃璧魂) (1875-1923), Mao Xiuying (毛秀英), Lady Fengxian (鳳仙女史士), Zhu Wanjiu (朱畹九), Zha Mengci (查孟詞), Gao Jianhua (高劍華) (b. 1890), and Zheng Shenhua (鄭申華) (b. 1898).

These women were mostly outstanding students in missionary schools or had been educated in a foreign country (some of them had attended missionary schools before studying abroad). This learning experience and cultural background allowed for frequent contact with Western literature and culture and opened opportunities for reading some Western literary works in the original. Consciously or subconsciously, the writers then let elements such as the plot, characters, and narrative techniques of Western literature trickle into their own creative writing process, which led to the trend of imitating Western literature. Of course, such “imitation” happened at different levels. In some cases, it was merely a matter of copying and learning from specific artistic devices in Western literature (e.g., psychological description, setting description, flashback, and first-person narrative); this is an artistic trend common across changes in modern fiction and will not be discussed here. In other cases, despite clear signs of imitation, borrowing, and transposing of elements such as cultural background, plot, and characters’ appearance, the author and title of the original were not clearly indicated. This practice is called “creation through translation” and is similar to the idea of covert translation in Western translation studies.

The concept of covert translation was put forward by the translation theorist Juliane House, who defines it as “concealing the translation status of a

target text by producing a text functionally equivalent to the original”; in other words, it is a translation that to some extent retains the authenticity of the source text, but because the translator needs to adapt the work to the receiving culture and remold it according to the standards of local readers, the final target text bears little resemblance to the source text and is, instead, closer to original writings in the target language. Huang Cuining’s first work “The Monkey Assassin” (Hou cike 猴刺客), published in the anniversary issue of *The All-Story Monthly* (Yueyue xiaoshuo 月月小說), is one early example of this literary trend in women’s fiction.

“The Monkey Assassin” tells the tragic story of a love triangle involving two men and a woman. Ma Weisheng, one of the men (who is already engaged to Baoqin), is murdered; the detective Wang Mingqing investigates and finds out that the assassin is a well-trained monkey belonging to Ma’s rival, the artist Lin Guocai. This novel was clearly influenced by the forerunner of detective fiction, “The Murders in the Rue Morgue” by the American writer Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849): the murderer in this famous detective story is none other than a ferocious orangutan. It is worth noting that Huang Cuining’s story was published in the October 1908 issue of *All-Story Monthly*, and, according to my research, Poe’s “The Murders in the Rue Morgue” had not yet been translated into Chinese at that time, which proves that Huang was inspired by the original of Poe’s story.

If “The Monkey Assassin” was simply inspired by Poe and contained traces of imitation rather than of “creating through translation,” works by other female novelists from the same period—including Huang Jingying, Chen Xiaocui, Ying Chuan, as well as authors of *Eyebrow Talk* (Meiyu 眉語), most notably Gao Jianhua—were typical examples of this trend.

Huang Jingying was an important writer and translator of the 1910s. Proficient in French and English, she was the first female translator who, after Hu Shi 胡適, translated in full the French novelist Alphonse Daudet’s short story “La dernière classe” (The Last Class) (rendered by Huang as “Zuihou zhi shouke” [最後之授課] and now generally known in Chinese as “Zuihou yi ke” [最後一課]). Her translation was of relatively high quality and is very significant for modern Chinese literary translation history. Huang Jingying’s career path began with literary translation, a process from which she gained the necessary experience and inspiration to engage in literary creation later. At the beginning of 1915, she published her two first translated stories in *Saturday* (Libailiu 禮拜六), Daudet’s “La dernière classe” (in no. 42) and the detective story “Fifty Thousand Dollars” (Wuwan yuan 五萬元, no. 41). Shortly afterward, in the winter of 1915 and the following year, she consecutively published eight pieces of creative writing in *Saturday* and in *Short Story Monthly* (Xiaoshuo

yuebao 小說月報). Of these eight short stories, at least three are “created through translation”: “Fishing-Line Lovers” (Diaosi yinyuan 釣絲姻緣), “Spilled Milk” (Fu shui 覆水) and “The One-Armed Lieutenant” (Du bi shaowei 獨臂少尉). The cultural background, the characters’ appearance, and the setting and situations in these short stories are all Westernized, evidently telling a foreign story. The works, however, are not clearly labeled as translations, and today it is very difficult to locate their corresponding original texts. These three short stories can all be seen as belonging to the trend of “creation through translation,” which marked cultural exchange between China and the West in the early twentieth century.

“Fishing-Line Lovers” tells the story of a young man and a woman who communicate by passing each other love letters with a fishing rod, eventually becoming husband and wife. Not only does the marriage ceremony in the story have typically Western religious characteristics (a priest reads out the vows in church, and the couple answers); the names of both main characters (the young man is called Hua’ertuolili (華爾脫利立), the girl Asailaishi (阿塞來史), their looks (“a pair of sky-blue eyes,” “blond hair”) as well as the settings and the tableware (“spoon and knife”) are all Westernized. Though the author does not say it explicitly, the reader has the impression that the author is revealing a story from another country. The aforementioned “Spilled Milk” and “The One-Armed Lieutenant” as well as Chen Xiaocui’s “The Subdued Bride” ([Xinfu huawei quan 新婦化為犬], in *Saturday*, no. 78) are similar. This inclination in early twentieth-century women’s fiction to imitate shows that female novelists were very eager to absorb artistic inspiration from Western works in order to distance themselves from the set patterns of China’s traditional fiction, as well as broaden the creative outlets for Chinese fiction and spur its growth. These progressive writers with an innovative mind-set therefore turned to a new tool: creation through translation.

Creation through translation was particularly common among *Eyebrow Talk* authors. *Eyebrow Talk*, a literary magazine established in Shanghai in 1914 by a group of modern female intellectuals, mainly published fiction (particularly short stories) with the main purpose of leisure and recreation. The chief editor of *Eyebrow Talk* was Gao Jianhua; her ten-strong editorial team consisted entirely of women: Ma Simei (馬嗣梅), Gu Renchai (顧紉荳), Liang Guiqin (梁桂琴), Xu Yuhua (許毓華), Liang Guizhu (梁桂珠), Liu Peiyu (柳佩瑜), Xie Youyun (謝幼韞), Yao Shumeng (姚淑孟), and Sun Qingwei (孫青未). Most of these novelists came from Jiangsu and Zhejiang and had received a modern education. Gao Jianhua first attended the Hangzhou Normal School for Women (Hangzhou nüzi shifan xuexiao 杭州女子師範學校) and in 1910 enrolled in the Beijing Normal School for Women (Beijing nüzi shifan xuetao

北京女子師範學堂); her niece Xu Yuhua also graduated from a modern school and spoke English. The other women had a similar educational background; several had studied at missionary schools. Most of them had learned other languages, and some were able to read foreign literature in the original. They then sifted and remolded fragments of texts they remembered, shaping them into new creations: from the narrative structure and characters' appearance to the cultural setting, all parts of their work contained elements of Western culture, and their writing patterns also clearly resembled those in foreign fiction.

Of the *Eyebrow Talk* authors, only the ten editors whose existence is proven through photographs are mentioned here. Except for Gu Renchai, who did not publish any works, the other nine writers published a total of twenty-three stories in *Eyebrow Talk*, of which eight—one-third—were examples of creation through translation. These stories were mostly based on an original text and are possibly examples of covert translation. Because at the time of their publication, it was not clearly indicated who had translated or adapted the work, and the originals were not well known, it is now impossible to determine to which author and country these writings should be attributed; their titles do not provide any evidence either, having been adapted to suit local tastes.

II

The literary phenomenon of creating through translation has a specific social and cultural background. Particularly with the increased dissemination of Western knowledge at the turn of the twentieth century, the novelty, unfamiliarity, and romanticism of foreign literature were attracting widespread interest among Chinese intellectuals, as described here by Lu Xun (魯迅):

In Liang Qichao's journal *Current Affairs* (*Shiwu bao* 時務報), we followed with excitement the *Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*; then, in *New Fiction* (*Xin xiaoshuo* 新小說), we read works known as "science fiction," such as Jules Verne's *20,000 Leagues under the Sea*; and again, through the great translator Lin Qinnan's (林琴南) renditions of the English writer H. Rider Haggard's novels, we experienced the gentleness of London ladies and the quirkiness of African savages.²

Translated literature, however, was always limited by the translator's own views and could hardly satisfy the expectations of Western literature

2 Lu Xun 魯迅, "Zhu Zhong-E wenzi zhi jiao 祝中俄文字之交 (A Celebration of Sino-Russian Literary Ties)," in *Lu Xun quanji* 魯迅全集 (*The Complete Works of Lu Xun*) (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1981), 4: 459.

enthusiasts; female intellectuals would therefore strive to read foreign fiction in its original version.

As their reading progressed, the female writers' understanding of the ideology and the artistic elements in Western works became deeper and more rational. In order to broaden the scope of women's fiction and further spur its development, these authors transposed, filtered, and rewrote the foreign literature they read into new texts. In doing so, they did not indicate that these texts were translations of works by foreign authors, nor did they acknowledge their role as translator; rather, they posed as authors. These creations through translation are worth looking at for several reasons.

First, while it can generally be said that creations through translation by female novelists appeared in the first two decades of the twentieth century, a more detailed investigation shows that representative texts of this kind were mainly published in the 1910s. As mentioned earlier, the beginnings of this trend can be traced back to Huang Cuining's story "The Monkey Assassin," but her work cannot be classified as a creation through translation in the proper sense (its main tendency still being that of imitating a Western novel). Actual creations through translation begin with "Tiny Embroidered Shoes" ([Xiuxie'er gang banzhe 繡鞋兒剛半折], in the first issue of *Eyebrow Talk*, October 1914) by Ma Simei, and its most typical, foremost examples are the works of the aforementioned authors Huang Jingying and Chen Xiaocui, along with those by leading *Eyebrow Talk* authors such as Gao Jianhua, Yao Shumeng, and Liu Peiyu, on whom more is said below. All these women were both novelists and translators, and their works of creation through translation all appeared between 1915 and 1916.

That texts created through translation were mostly published in the 1910s is by no means unusual. Women who could read Western literature in the original were still uncommon in the 1900s, but the development of modern education for women and the rising numbers of female students schooled abroad caused a rapid increase in the number of those who could read originals of Western literary works and, consequently, a growing interest in foreign fiction. Many female writers were already striving to imitate the writing patterns of Western literature; they reinterpreted these works by transposing and rewriting them, merged them with their aesthetic ideals and pretended to be the author, thereby "creating through translation." In the foreword to her imitation of Western fiction, "How Should One Make Him Care" ([Zen dang ta doude shang xin lai 怎當他兜的上心來], in the first issue of *Eyebrow Talk*), the writer Wu Peihua 吳佩華 spoke out about this trend among female authors: "When I study works of Western literature, I notice that very common events are described wisely and beautifully; they just flow naturally. Great works of

Chinese literature like the *Dream of the Red Chamber* and *Story of the Western Wing* (also called *Romance of the Western Chamber*) read that way, too. This is rare and very valuable. My imitation cannot capture the essence of such works; it simply reflects my yearning to do so.” It is easy to detect the delight these writers took in imitating Western fiction. Zha Mengci’s detective story “The Precious Mandarin Ducks” ([Baoshi yuanyang 寶石鴛鴦], in *The Grand Magazine* [Xiaoshuo daguan 小說大觀, no. 1]) is also an example of creation through translation and is probably the most accomplished work in early twentieth-century women’s detective fiction.

Second, another noteworthy feature of creating through translation is indigenization; it was a widespread trend in modern translated literature, particularly so in free translations and translation editing of the early modern era.

One main feature of this is the indigenization of titles: looking at some works by female writers, it would be hard to guess from their title that the contents are, in fact, foreign. Take Gao Jianhua’s “Liulang Defeats Ruanlang” (Liulang sheng Ruanlang 劉郎勝阮郎): Liulang and Ruanlang are originally characters in ancient Chinese mythology who become romantically involved with a fairy. This story is completely unrelated to the contents of Gao Jianhua’s novel, which is about an English village girl called Gu Lunna. The good-hearted main character is lured by money and sinks low into avarice and desire for material wealth. Set in the simplicity of the countryside, the story outlines the evils caused by the disparity between rural and urban wealth in English society; the actual contents of the novel therefore have no relation to its title. Gao Jianhua openly called this work “creative writing,” acknowledging neither the original author nor the fact that the text was translated; looking at the contents, it is clearly a case of creation through translation.

Another element is the indigenization of characters’ appearance. Even though these texts essentially portray a foreign story, the description of characters can contain indigenized features. Ying Chuan’s story “The Bridegroom’s Face and the Concubine’s Arm” ([Lang yan qie bi 郎顏妾臂], in *Saturday*, no. 63) is one such example. The main male and female characters in the story have been given Chinese names, Zuo Feili 左飛理 and Xia Lian 霞蓮; descriptions of their looks, hairstyle, and clothing also feel Chinese. The author, however, tells the story of the love between a beautiful girl and a heroic young man set in France, recounting a young girl’s love for a hero defending his country. Although parts of this work are indigenized, if looked at in its entirety, it is still a creation through translation. Two other works by Ying Chuan, “Green and Blue” ([Lü lan ji 綠藍記], in *Saturday*, no. 65) and “Lovers in Peril” ([Huo li yuanyang 火裡鴛鴦], in *Saturday*, no. 66) are, like the previously discussed works by Huang Jingying and other authors, two texts about foreign

stories. Just as was common practice in early modern translations and translation editing, the names of characters, the setting and background descriptions, and the narration all feature distinct Western characteristics.

Third, female authors were far from avoiding or concealing the practice of creating through translation. For one thing, they openly signed such works as authors; also, they never entirely indigenized their writings, thereby revealing that the plot was foreign;³ and, finally, this kind of fiction maintained the overall sense of the original, that is, the plot and the characters' foreign names and physical features, as well as a Western atmosphere and setting. All this points to early twentieth-century female writers' frank and straightforward identification with this creative practice.

III

Creation through translation was a widespread literary trend in early twentieth century female fiction; how exactly though has it opened up new channels and influenced the development of women fiction in that period?

The practice of creation through translation is significant in that it provided enlightening ideological guidance for modern women's fiction. Creation through translation covers a relatively wide ideological ground, ranging from praise for young people's fervent patriotism (as in Ma Simei's "Tiny Embroidered Shoes" and Ying Chuan's "The Bridegroom's Face and the Concubine's Arm"), seeking an independent spirit and support for women's emancipation (as in Sun Qingwei's "My Heart" [Nong zhi xin 儂之心]), to the satirizing of snobbish materialism and money grubbing (as in Huang Jingying's "Spilled Milk"), or again praising the noble behavior of those who help anonymously without expecting reciprocation (as in Li Huizhu's "Kind and Merciful" [Pusa xinchang 菩薩心腸]). The analysis that follows is restricted to examples taken from texts about love and marriage.

3 In Yao Shumeng's "creation through translation," "Bridegroom or Bandit?" (郎歟盜歟 Lang yu dao yu), *Mei yu* 眉語 no. 3 [1914]), it is clear from the beginning that the story is foreign: "The wealthier a city is, the more thieves it has: this is a common evil everywhere in this world. There are many secret gangs in Europe, and nowhere more than in Paris and London... thieves there are just as powerful as the police. Their top leaders would confuse officials and outwit detectives; local authorities would be completely helpless against them. I've heard, for example, about the great London bandit Jing Gang: his adventures are so fascinating they are well worth retelling. Allow me to briefly do so."

Novels about love as the one condition for marriage were still not very common in early twentieth-century Chinese women's fiction; this was, of course, related to the conservative Confucian ethics and principles that restricted female authors. Creation through translation, however, already contains the new concept of love as the primary prerequisite of marriage between a man and a woman. In "Bridegroom or Bandit?" the author Yao Shumeng emphasizes the position and function of individual cognition, willpower, and emotion in a love relationship and the idea of being true to what one loves and disregarding the rest. The priority of love and the freedom of choosing one's life partner described in the book was not at all uncommon in Western society but was relatively rare in female Chinese novelists' fiction at that time. These views on love are also reflected in another work, the novel *Meizhu and Xueyu Vie for Love* (*Mei-Xue zheng chun ji* 梅雪爭春記). In this novel, the twin sisters Meizhu and Xueyu both fall in love with Qiong'en, the son of the love rival of their father, Aitang Nakesi, whom the latter intends to kill. Qiong'en, however, is only in love with Meizhu; Xueyu nonetheless continues to pursue her love, even if it involves holding on to her older sister's admirer, and goes so far as to using every possible means to make the sisters' rivalry public.

Female writers' awareness of sexual love and passion in creation through translation also deserves attention. In the early twentieth century, descriptions of sexual acts in women's fiction (as also in works by male authors) were rather conservative and contained hardly any concrete portrayal of sexual behavior. In an act of love, the one to take the lead would also mostly be the man; the woman would be the one "being loved." Although in some works of fiction, women would show a need and desire for sex, during the act itself they would lack power and courage. In creation through translation, however, women often show more sexual initiative: they are the first to disclose their love to their partner or make love to a man on their own initiative. The rise in these female characters' overall consciousness and sexual awareness made creation through translation more emotional, more human, and more secular.

An episode about the tragic marriage of a young English couple in Gao Jianhua's *Meizhu and Xueyu Vie for Love* contains even bolder descriptions of physical love. Lian Niang and Aitang Nakesi are lovers; however, unable to pay off his gambling debts, Lian Niang's father gives her as collateral to his creditor, the rich Du Lü'en. Lian Niang is forced to marry Du, gives birth to twins, and devotes all her time and efforts to raising them, forgetting about the past. One day years later, while out in the fields, Lian Niang runs into her former lover Nakesi, who by then is also married with children, and his family. Both feel very awkward, only casting a quick glance at each other in silence. From that moment, Nakesi feels driven to seek the earliest opportunity to see Lian Niang

again. One evening, while Du Lü'en is away on business, Nakesi finds the main door ajar and secretly enters the house. As he sees Lian Niang, he gives in at once to his desires and kisses her. Lian Niang falls into his embrace, and their long-suppressed emotions flame up anew: the irrepressible lust causes both to slip into an extramarital affair and to indulge in the pleasures of love to their heart's content. The author Gao Jianhua does not critique this act of transgression, instead deliberately using her views on human nature to stand by the former lovers. She writes:

In this moment of supreme silence, the scene appeared cold and still in the faint light of the moon. At this very time, a seed of illicit love was planted, gradually growing and eventually leading to disastrous consequences. One has no choice in these extreme moments, in spite of feeling uneasy about such dishonest and shameless acts. It is mostly the case that love, if denied, becomes all the more ardent; unfulfilled desire cannot but end in passionate secret meetings. Who would still care for talk of one's integrity and reputation being at stake? Such are the consequences of being unable to follow one's heart.

While it cannot be said that the author condemns this irrational marriage and its sinful outcome from a feminist standpoint, she does show fervent sympathy for a tragedy caused by the objectification of women in a patriarchal society (in which daughters pay fathers' debts) and regrets the fact that the lovers are unable to become a family. It is important to note here that, in writing about lustful fantasies, female authors dared to describe a woman's need for sexual passion and considered it a natural human trait and the consequence of a senseless marriage. This open, unrestrained, deeply human sexual awareness in female novels created through translation was still rather avant-garde and inevitably had an influence on early twentieth-century women's fiction.

Second, artistically speaking, creation through translation broadened the means of learning from Western literature. In the 1900s, only few works of women's fiction existed. Available materials show that these consisted of approximately ten types of text, half of which were novels; over 95 percent of modern women's fiction (particularly short stories) all emerged in the 1910s. In this period, and particularly in 1914, the appearance of works created through translation drove the overall development and success of women's fiction. The peak of creation through translation was between 1914 and 1916: in these three years, the number of works (especially short stories) made up approximately 80 percent of women's fiction published in the first two decades of the twentieth century. Not only were the works in this period plentiful but

their artistic form also underwent remarkable changes, with a new trend of learning from foreign literature mirrored in literary elements, such as composition, narrative structure, and artistic expression. This transformation mainly had two aspects: the first was a change in the text structure from the traditional longitudinal cut that delved into the origin and outcome of facts to a cross-cut that picked the “most exciting aspects of life” (also called a cross-section). Xiu Ying’s “The Bearded Old Man’s Inheritance” ([Ranwengzhi yichan 髯翁之遺產], in *Saturday*, no. 94), Zhi Yin’s “Flower Girl” (Mai hua nü 賣花女), in *Short Story Monthly*, no. 10), Huang Jingying’s aforementioned “Fishing-Line Lovers,” Lü Yuning’s 呂韻清 “Dream of a Rich Husband” ([Jin fu meng 金夫夢], in *Spring Voice* [Chunsheng 春聲], vol. 2) all select a specific cross-section: they depict the joys and sorrows of life, praise women’s pursuit of their ideals, criticize the traditional concept of seeing men as superior to women, caution against typical pitfalls in life, or explore questions of economic and social well-being. In Huanying 幻影’s “Peasant Women” ([Nongfu 農婦], in *Saturday*, no. 83), the author chose the difficulties of childbirth in rural areas as her theme and describes the death of a young peasant girl due to blood poisoning during labor caused by the midwife’s poor hygiene precautions: “It is impossible to estimate how many come to hospital with this ailment; many can be saved, but for over half these wretched people, it is too late.” This work revealed that the shortage of medical care and the lack of hygiene awareness in the countryside were the actual reasons that more than half of pregnant women died in childbirth. The story counts some eight hundred characters and stretches over twenty-four hours; it is narrated in the first person by a trainee doctor on duty. It tells of a young woman who, in the course of difficult labor, pities her mother-in-law and husband without taking into account her own touching circumstances. The author’s artistic intuition portrayed a typical real-life situation, picking its “most fascinating section” (the cross-section). Although the piece is relatively short, it has an exquisite storyline and smooth flow, completely unlike the rigid, perpetual quests for origins and consequences in the longitudinal construction pattern of classical short stories.

Another aspect of the transformation in women’s fiction was changes in the use of narrative technique and narrative voice. Classical short stories essentially employed third-person objective narration. In modern short stories by female writers, however, the use of first-person narration was widespread, particularly works created through translation. Before this literary practice emerged, first-person narrators in short stories mainly gave an account of the events; in creation through translation, however, the first person “I” (“*yu* 余” or “*wo* 我”) was no longer an onlooker but one of the story’s main characters. Liu Peiyu’s “Serene Love” (Lang qing ru shui 郎情如水) uses first-person narration

and opens as follows: "My name is Make Geni'er. . . . I am among the happiest and most fulfilled people in this world." The narrator then recounts his love story with Ma Lin. The first person narration in this work is reminiscent of autobiographical narration: not only is the plot told by "I," but "I" is also the main character in the story. Compared to the observing "I" in female fiction before the appearance of creation through translation, this is a considerable step forward that allowed first-person narration to fully develop its use of participation and personal experience in order to directly express the narrator's feelings, thereby enhancing his or her prominence. First-person narration also intensified the subjectivity of emotional expression in works of fiction, easily conveying characters' feelings and helping to develop their inner world through meticulous psychological descriptions. Moreover, first-person narration brought the narrator closer to readers, thereby reinforcing the work's sense of realism.

Interestingly, in the 1910s, those who used a limited first-person narrator most often were precisely female authors of creation through translation. They employed this device in works created through translation, but often also in their original writings. Huang Cuining's "Leaving the Nestlings" ([Li chu ji 離雛記], in *Illustrated Novel Magazine* (*Xiaoshuo huabao* 小說畫報), no. 7) as well as Gao Jianhua's "Visiting the Children in Spring" (Chun qu er jia 春去兒家), Liu Peiyu's "Lover" (Xiaolang 蕭郎), and Xu Yuhua's "Departure" ([Yi sheng qu ye 一聲去也], published in *Eye-brow Talk*, nos. 1-3), all make skillful use of first-person narration. This point illustrates the influence of creation through translation on narrative techniques in original works of women's fiction.

IV

From the point of view of comparative literature, creation through translation is a type of active influence resulting from an exchange between two cultures, which is beneficial for the development of local literature and culture. Looking beyond female authors' works, we find that the trend of creation through translation appears in vernacular poetry of the May Fourth era and that traces of it can be found even in early modern historical and geographical texts. Wei Yuan's *Illustrated Treatise on the Maritime Kingdoms*, Xu Jiyu's 徐繼畲 *A Brief Account of the Maritime Circuit* (*Yinghuan zhiliue* 瀛寰志略), Wang Tao's *Report on the Franco-Prussian War* and his *A Brief Introduction to France* (*Faguo zhiliue* 法國志略), and even Liang Qichao's introduction to Western theories such as *Notes on Hobbes* (*Huobusi xue'an* 霍布斯學案), *Notes on Spinoza* (*Sipiannuosh*

xue'an 斯片挪莎學案) and *Notes on Rousseau* all contain elements characteristic of or follow the writing patterns of creation through translation.

I first discuss creation through translation in May Fourth era poetry. The tendency to create through translation is clearly perceptible in the early stages of free verse in this period. It is widely known that, in his explorations of new poetic forms, Hu Shi put a lot of effort into translating poems and considered translation an ingenious means of exploring changes in language and form in vernacular poetry. He saw translation as a means of innovation: after successfully translating the foreign poems "Auld Robin Grey" (Lao Luobo 老洛伯), "Over the Roofs" (Guanbuzhu le 關不住了) and "Hope" (Xiwang 希望), he included them in his own poetry collection *A Book of Experiments* (*Changshi ji* 嘗試集), stating: "Over the Roofs' has marked the beginning of my achievements in writing free verse."⁴ Hu Shi openly considered some of the translated poems his creations, taking a very clear stance on this. Other famous poets of the May Fourth era, including Wen Yiduo (聞一多) (1899-1946), Xu Zhimo (徐志摩) (1896-1931), and Li Jinfa (李金發) (1901-1976), were all influenced by foreign poetry in the early stages of their writing career. Some have called this "imitation" or "transposition"; we now call it creation through translation. Wen Yiduo's famous poem "Forget Her" (Wangdiao ta 忘掉她, 1926), which he wrote while mourning his young daughter, Wen Liying (聞立瑛), was influenced by the work of American Imagist poet Sara Teasdale (1844-1933) "Let It Be Forgotten." Similarly, Xu Zhimo's poem "Venice" (威尼市, 1922) is also thought to have been inspired by the German poet F. W. Nietzsche's (1844-1900) well-known poem of the same title.⁵ Also Li Jinfa's "In the Corner" (Qiangjiao li 牆角裡) was possibly influenced by the poem of the French poet Verlaine (1844-1896) "Colloque sentimental" (Sentimental Conversation). This kind of "imitation" has also been called "plagiarism," which it is certainly not. In the early stages of the process of literary creation and particularly with the emergence of new literary styles (e.g., early twentieth-century women's fiction or vernacular poetry and modern drama in the May Fourth era), the occurrence of influence and imitation is unavoidable. Moreover, the poems Wen Yiduo, Xu Zhimo, Li Jinfa, and others imitated and rewrote had not been translated into

4 Hu Shi 胡适, "Changshi ji · zaiban zixu 嘗試集 · 再版自序 (Preface to the Second Edition of *A Book of Experiments*)," in *Hu Shi quanji* 胡适全集 (*The Complete Works of Hu Shi*) (Hefei: Anhui jiaoyu chubanshe, 2006), 10: 35.

5 Mao Xun 毛迅, "Weinishi: Xu Zhimo zaoqi shiyi zhongde yige yidian 威尼市: 徐志摩早期詩藝中的一個疑點 (Venice: An Ambiguity in Xu Zhimo's Early Works)," *Wenxue pinglun congkan* 文學評論叢刊 no. 2 (2000): 2.

Chinese before (when the aforementioned works by these three poets were published, no translation of the foreign poems that had inspired them existed in China). The poets remembered fragments from their wide reading of foreign poetry in the original and used this inspiration as a motivation for their creativity, employing modern techniques to shape new texts in Chinese. This creation through translation was typical as part of the tendency to learn from the West and take inspiration from Western works in literary creation and was a catalyst that accelerated the progress of a new literary style toward artistic maturity and perfection.

Creation through translation is not limited to the literary field: the practice can also be observed in a number of early modern historical and geographical texts. Wei Yuan's *Illustrated Treatise on the Maritime Kingdoms* is one such example. It is widely known that this work stems from Lin Zexu's (林則徐) (1785-1850) *Gazetteer of the Four Continents* (*Sizhou zhi* 四洲志), which again is based on collaborative translation efforts between foreigners and Chinese versed in foreign languages, a team of whom Lin Zexu had brought together in Guangzhou to work on H. Murray's *Encyclopaedia of Geography*. This publication introduced the geography, history, political affairs, and other aspects of over thirty countries across the five continents; the name *Gazetteer of the Four Continents* is sometimes attributed to the fact that the work merges the Americas into one continent or to its use of ancient terminology from Buddhist texts. This was therefore the main source of material for compiling the *Illustrated Treatise on the Maritime Kingdoms*. Moreover, Wei Yuan's supplement is mainly based on material written by foreign missionaries. According to statistics, this text cites more than ten such sources. The most frequently quoted works are *Geography of Foreign Nations* (*Waiguo dili beikao* 外國地理備考) by the Portuguese missionary José Martinho Marques, and the German missionary Karl Gützlaff's *Universal Geography* (*Wanguo dili quan tuji* 萬國地理全圖集, 1838), the former being cited 91 times (comprising 120,000 characters); Wei Yuan valued this book very highly and quoted from it most frequently. The latter work is cited 57 times. In addition, one of the main components of the *Illustrated Treatise* is a collection of 78 maps that includes the *Historical Chart of Maritime Countries* (*Haiguo yange tu* 海國沿革圖), the *Front and Rear View of the Earth* (*Diqiu zhengbeimian tu* 地球正背面圖) and *Individual Country Maps of All Continents* (*Ge dazhou fenguo ditu* 各大洲分國地圖); all were maps published by the Hong Kong British Company.

These facts show that the three main sources of material for the *Illustrated Treatise* were all translations of foreign studies, charts, and data. It can therefore rightly be described as a creation through translation. Precisely

because he has mainly used foreign sources, Wei Yuan says of the *Illustrated Treatise* that it “sees foreign places just as foreigners perceive them”⁶ and “discusses the West through Western works.”⁷ His comments reveal that his is indeed a work of creation through translation. Wang Tao’s *Report on the Franco-Prussian War* and his *A Brief Introduction to France* are also such examples.

In order to introduce Western thought to Chinese intellectual circles, the scholarly elite of the early twentieth century, represented by Liang Qichao, wrote a large number of studies. Let us take Liang Qichao as an example: although he published a lot of essays under his own name, many of them were based on Japanese works or on translations by the Japanese. Liang’s source material for the previously mentioned *Notes on Hobbes*, *Notes on Spinoza*, and *Notes on Rousseau* all came from a translation by the Japanese scholar Nakae Chōmin (1847-1901) of a Western philosophical work, Alfred Fouillée’s *Histoire de la philosophie* (1875). That Liang absorbed Western theory and ideology through a Japanese “intermediary” for his instruction and cultivation is common knowledge among Chinese and non-Chinese academics alike. Only his *Notes* are used here as an example, but there are many similar texts that can also be identified as creation through translation.

Why, then, did the phenomenon of creation through translation and its literary patterns appear in modern literature and academic writing? There are several major reasons.

First, this practice stems from the political idea of “learning foreigners’ skills in order to control foreigners” (*shi yi changji yi zhi yi* 師夷長技以制夷). Second, China has a long tradition of translating and disseminating Western knowledge. As modern translated literature was spreading, the passionate and romantic young Western women and ardent quests for love in foreign novels, the thrilling mysteries and thick suspense of detective stories, and the miraculous wonders and unpredictable changes in science fiction all aroused a keen interest among Chinese readers. Female readers, in particular, who were emotional by nature and longed for romantic stories, developed a fondness for foreign literature and consequently a strong desire to imitate it and to learn from it. What had started as a practice of borrowing and replicating some of the artistic techniques used in Western fiction (e.g., flashback and psychological description) later developed into a comprehensive study and expansion of knowledge, ranging from progressive Western thought and narrative patterns

6 Wei Yuan 魏源, *Haiguo tuzhi* 海國圖志 (*Illustrated Treatise on the Maritime Kingdoms*), in *Wei Yuan ji* 魏源集 (Wei Yuan’s Works) (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1976), vol. 4.

7 Wei Yuan 魏源, *海國圖志敘* (Preface to the *Illustrated Treatise on the Maritime Kingdoms*), 1: 207.

to expressive techniques and other skills. These are the roots of the appearance of creation through translation in women's fiction. Third, all throughout Chinese literary history, changes in and the appearance of new forms of literature were mostly influenced by two factors: one was folk literature, for example, the development in ancient poetry from four-character poems to five- and seven-character poems and the emergence of *ci* poetry and lyric verse; the other was foreign literature. Early twentieth-century women's fiction, May Fourth era vernacular poetry, and modern and contemporary drama were all influenced by foreign literature in their early as well as advanced stages, as Chinese literature was undergoing a shift from classical to modern. Creation through translation was a response among the intellectual elite to the strong influence of foreign works on China's own literature and culture in the context of cultural exchange between China and the West. The developmental patterns of literary history tell us that a major change is unlikely to occur without the influence of the outside world; the appearance of creation through translation is precisely the outcome of such an impact from abroad.

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Relations Between Actors and Scholars During the Ming-Qing Transition, as Seen in *Tao'an Mengyi*

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Abstract

During the final phase of a declining political order, during troubled times, or under other exceptional circumstances, concord between outsider scholars and political authority is easily ruptured. The psychology of scholars and certain actors who were subject to the same “authority” pressure thus came to rest on a common foundation. Zhang Dai’s *Recollections of Tao-an’s Past Dreams* (*Tao’an mengyi* 陶庵夢憶) can be seen as a manifestation of the relationship between scholars and actors in troubled times. Through a deep analysis of the text of “Dream Recollections of Tao An,” we can see scholars beginning to have an emotional appreciation for the independence and individuality of the actors. At the same time, a certain self-consciousness of the actors was awakened, whereby the actors provided spiritual and material support to the scholars during this difficult period. The performance of many scholars in amateur theatrical shows also meant that the status of low-ranking scholars and actors was not significantly different. This new scholar-actor relationship is inseparable from the thought, politics and economics of the late Ming and early Qing period, and should be understood in just such a context.

Keywords

Tao'an Mengyi – scholar – actor – relationship

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Academia has no lack of studies on scholars, and research on actors has yielded fruitful results, but it is rare to compare scholars and actors and put their relationship under the lens of sociology, culture, and psychology. Previous studies often put the emphasis on scholars without realizing it, focusing on the way in which their situations, intellectual background, and sensibilities influenced this relationship while ignoring the unique psychological and emotional dimensions of actors as social beings. We wish to correct this oversight. We put actors and scholars on an equal footing and pay full attention to their special ideological traditions and psychological underpinnings in order to draw some objective and comprehensive conclusions.

Scholars and actors did not have equal social status in Chinese cultural history. Originally, scholars ranked the lowest in the noble class. Even though they gradually separated themselves from that class over the course of history, scholars were nevertheless the gatekeepers of knowledge and participated in national politics. In ancient times, actors were jesters and musicians. After the Mongol conquest of the Song Dynasty (960-1279) and as traditional opera developed, being an actor became synonymous with being an opera singer. It was a given that the lowly actor could not be mentioned in the same breath as the honorable scholar. Whereas scholars could be composers, spectators, or even oppressors under normal circumstances, actors could only be performers, objects of public scrutiny and diversion. Even if a scholar admired an actor for her art, his enthusiasm would only lead to and remain in the realm of sexual dalliance, making honest and equal communication between them an impossibility. Moreover, scholars as a class formed in the Warring States Period (475-221 BCE), a time of social and political turmoil. Naturally, they longed for political power from the start and schemed and fought against the ruling class throughout history. In prosperous times, the emperor brought scholars into the government, offering them minimal stipends while taking maximum advantage of their erudition. Working for the government offered scholars the prospect of a future, and peaceful coexistence was possible between the two sides. But during social upheavals such as a dynastic change, when politics was thrown into chaos, the political pressure on the scholars became unrelenting, and the delicate entente between the government and the scholars broke down. This scenario provided a psychological basis for empathy between scholars and actors, who were oppressed by the same authority. Under these circumstances, how did this empathy manifest itself, and why? We want to limit this rather general question by restricting the scope of our inquiry to Zhang Dai's (張岱) (1597-1680) book *Recollections of Tao-an's Past Dreams* (*Tao'an mengyi* 陶庵夢憶), which offers a portrait of the relationship between scholars and

actors in a tumultuous era. This book, therefore, serves as the point of departure for our discussion.

The Traditional Relationship between Scholars and Actors

Even though their relationship with the emperor could be fraught with dangerous undercurrents, scholars occupied an enviable position in Chinese society, compared with that of the actors, who sold their labor for the public's entertainment. They might have had discord with the emperor, but scholars possessed serviceable expertise that the emperor had to respect: "Getting along with scholars makes one strong; otherwise, weak."¹ In contrast, actors, whose beauty and talents did not pose a threat to the emperor, were destined to be the playthings of the upper classes. This was true even with sagacious rulers. Emperors played tricks on and humiliated the actors and blamed them for the problems of the society. Indeed, for the wise counselor Guan Zhong (管仲) (723?-645 BCE), the first of three grave mistakes a ruler could commit was "being too close to actors and too far from scholars."² The traditional view held that when political setbacks occurred, actors were often the first group, or not far from the first group, to be blamed.

It is normally the case that the emperor courted scholars but also guarded against them. In contrast, he took advantage of and looked down on actors. When scholars parlayed their knowledge into employment with the government, they had to act in concert with the authority; so as far as the actors were concerned, they became the new oppressors. Therefore, to a large extent actors derived their value in society from entertaining scholars. If scholars ignored them deliberately, actors would have no support for their individual personalities, thoughts, and feelings. A scholar named Gao Cong (高聰) lived during the Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279). He was "well-versed in literature and the classical texts, and amused himself with songs and beautiful women."³ He kept more than ten songstresses and dancers. When he was old and sickly, he did not want these women to entertain others, so he made them "burn

1 An Jiming 安繼民, ed., *Xunzi* 荀子 (Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou Chinese Classics Publishing House, 2005), 230.

2 Gao Huaping 高華平, Wang Jizhou 王齊洲, and Zhang Sanxi 張三夕, ed., *Han Feizi* 韓非子 (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2010), 572.

3 Li Yanshou 李延壽. *Beishi* 北史 (*History of Northern Dynasties*) (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1974), 1479.

fingers, swallow charcoal, and become nuns.”⁴ This kind of cruel and inhumane treatment exposes the harsh relationship between scholars and actors in this period of Chinese history.

Even though some actors were able to escape their humble position by making use of their talents and beauty, they could not truly integrate into mainstream society. Their social status was always uncertain, and when their sponsors died or abandoned them, they would have no choice but to return to their original station. If true love had occurred between an actor and a scholar, society at large would hardly have countenanced it; reality would have intervened at some point, and each would have retreated to his or her own camp in the end.

As we can see, when there was interaction between actors and scholars, it could occur only within the confines of a commercial transaction whose sole purpose was the scholars' enjoyment. When it went beyond commerce and entered into the realm of culture or personal emotions, the imperial authority would not tolerate it, for it would signal that the scholar had violated the terms of his employment and the actor had overstepped her role as the emperor's plaything. It is true that both actors and scholars were under pressure from the same authority. However, during periods when scholars were in the employ of a particularly powerful emperor, they often became spokesmen for the government and toed the official line with regard to actors. Under these circumstances, it is hard to expect a breakthrough in the negative relationship between scholars and actors. As for actors, no matter how they struggled to shake off the abject status that the authority had assigned them, their lot more often than not was exploited by scholars.

Characteristics of the Relationship between Actors and Scholars in *Tao'an Mengyi*

As mentioned above, during the reigns of powerful emperors, relations between actors and scholars often remained at the level of physical desire and improper dalliance. But did this relationship manifest itself in other ways when the government was weak? Zhang Dai, a scholar during the Ming-Qing transition, provided some classic answers in *Tao'an mengyi*.

Analyzing the book at a deeper level, one finds that relations between actors and scholars no longer remained at the level of amusement and dalliance during this period; a new kind of interaction emerged between them centering on

4 Ibid.

art and culture and based on equality. Scholars of this period started to appreciate actors as sensitive individuals who had more than beauty and artistic talent to exploit superficially but possessed an inner dimension that merited attention. Take, for example, Zhang's description of the actor Zhu Chusheng (朱楚生). "She was not very pretty,"⁵ wrote the author, curbing his enthusiasm only to express it unreservedly later, "but there was aloofness in her brows and passion in her eyes."⁶ She was elegant and refined, eliciting endless sentimentality from others. Zhu's art and beauty were not the only qualities that Zhang admired; he cared about her inner thoughts and sensibilities. She "died for love"⁷ and the passage about her tragic ending brimmed with melancholy. Had the author regarded Zhu solely as a pitiful plaything, he would not have written such sad and deeply felt lines.

Based on appreciation of this kind, what can we say about relations between actors and scholars during this period? The chapter "Drifting Garden" (Bu xi yuan 不系園) contains descriptions of a lively outing attended by actors and scholars. In addition to Zhang Dai, they included Zeng Bochen (曾波臣) and Chen Zhanghou (陳章侯), well-known painters of the late Ming period; Peng Tianxi (彭天錫) and Yang Yumin (楊與民), protégés of powerful and influential people; Chen Suzhi (陳素芝) and the above-mentioned Zhu Chusheng, famous female actors. Even though they differed in profession and social status, these companions consisted basically of actors and scholars. They met at a place other than a theatrical venue, talked about art and writing, and showed appreciation for one another's work. The scholars did not appear supercilious, and the actors were poised and relaxed. Their interaction was not perturbed by sexual tension but, rather, replete with artistic and spiritual reflections. This transcendent gracefulness was reminiscent of the manners of the Wei-Jin period (222-420). Whether the scholars were aware of it or not, their view of actors had elevated from unadulterated objects of play to independent-minded peers; this is what made the excursion of equals possible, having shattered the old model of one-sided licentiousness.

In this period, actors had awoken to a sense of self-awareness, and many of them developed superior artistry, poise, and strength of character, capable of providing the scholars with material and moral support.

5 Zhang Dai 張岱, *Tao'an Mengyi Xihu mengxun* 陶庵夢憶·西湖夢尋 (*Tao'an Mengyi and Remembrance of West Lake*), eds. Xia Xianchun 夏咸淳 and Cheng Weirong 程維榮 (Shanghai: Shanghai Chinese Classics Publishing House, 2001), 90.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid., 91.

Actors of different stripes had their roles to play on the stormy stage of the Ming-Qing transition. Even though their status was humble, some actors gained self-respect and became proud of their singularity. In addition to Zhu Chusheng, Wang Yuesheng (王月生) of Zhushi (朱市) was another actor at the top of the heap. Zhang Dai wrote about her in *Tao'an mengyi*: She was self-possessed and dignified, talented though not frivolous. Uninterested in power, she only befriended like-minded people. She lived in a crude and unseemly world yet comported herself like “a solitary plum blossom under a cold moon.”⁸ She had unmatched charm and dignity; with no trace of the eager pliability of the common actor, her style was rather like that of scholars. Actors like her were unlike the actors of old, who were common by their own design. The former learned to appreciate their own beauty and talents, no longer willing to put themselves out for scholars or the noble class.

Scholars excelled at literature and history. They had no trouble providing for themselves in halcyon times of peace, but during the turbulent Ming-Qing transition, they inevitably risked losing their livelihood and ancestral property. Actors, with their exceptional skills and lower social status, were better at making a living. No longer the playthings of scholars, they were in a position to provide their former patrons with material support. When her patron Qi Zhixiang (祁止祥) “sold everything in trunks and leather bags,”⁹ A'bao (阿寶) performed her craft on the street in order to provide sustenance for Qi. Hers is a very good example of an actor using his skills to aid a scholar.

Finally, due to the large number of scholars becoming amateur actors and playing roles in opera, the association between actors and scholars became much closer than before, blurring the social line between them. Before this time, high-ranking officials used to take part in hackneyed dramas and were often ridiculed by historians. Li Cunxu (李存勖), founder of the Later Tang dynasty (923-937), who “often played in comic skits with actors in his court,”¹⁰ is one such example. However, during the Ming-Qing transition, opera was becoming popular, and public opinion no longer criticized officials for playing roles in opera; in fact, it was sometimes regarded as an act of stylish refinement. Many scholars became opera aficionados at this time. Zhang Dai once carried props with him and went to a Buddhist temple in the middle of the night and sang “Han Qiwan Fighting the Jin Army” and “Yangze River Battle”¹¹

8 Ibid., 128.

9 Ibid., 72-73.

10 Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修, *Xin wudai shi* 新五代史 (*New History of the Five Dynasties*) (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1974), 398.

11 Zhang, *Tao'an*, 11.

in the empty dharma hall, surprising all the monks who got up to look at the interloper in utter amazement. Such unruly behavior would hardly have been tolerated in a previous era, at least not before being condemned first. But here Zhang wrote of this incident in a self-congratulatory tone in his book, and we can deduce that the cultural background of the era was such that it was acceptable for a scholar to be an amateur opera singer. Many such incidents are described in *Tao'an mengyi*; chapters such as "Evening Opera at the Gold Mountain Temple," "Drifting Garden," and "Yan Zhu Temple" all recount occasions of opera singing, but the most representative chapter is "Amateur Actor Peng Tianxi." Peng had a "family fortune of a hundred thousand taels of gold"¹² at one time, and a "belly full of books, mountains and seas, contraptions, and frustrations."¹³ We surmise that he was not of humble birth, but his lot was to be a failed and frustrated low-ranking scholar. He attempted to act to vent his frustrations and squandered his family fortune in learning the craft. He then roamed the four corners of the country making a living by taking on bit parts in opera. The vicissitudes of his fortunes in life obfuscated the difference between scholar and actor, and his story became a testament to the intimate association between scholars and actors.

Behind the New Relationship between Actors and Scholars

The new relationship between actors and scholars in *Tao'an mengyi* can be understood in the ideological, political, and economic context of the era.

We will look at the ideological context first.

In every era, the ideology of the times exerts unmistakable influence over society. We therefore start with the popularity of the Yangming School of the Mind (Yangming xinxue 陽明心學). This school of thought had generated much controversy from its inception. Some scholars had subscribed to its ideas, but, because the government tried to suppress it, albeit inconsistently, it petered out during the reign of the Ming emperor Jiajing (嘉靖) (1522-1566). Following the accession of its founder, Wang Yangming (王陽明) (1472-1528), to the Confucian pantheon under the Ming emperor Wanli (萬曆) (1573-1620), it sprang back into vogue very quickly.

Some of its ideas contained the seeds of self-awareness of the common people. Even though Wang did not deny the difference between saints and commoners, he asserted that everyone was endowed with a conscience and an

¹² Ibid., 93.

¹³ Ibid.

innate sense of *dao*. “As long as the people of the four professions do their best, there is no difference between them, since they share the same *dao*.”¹⁴ This statement affirmed the social value of the laborers and the merchants and subverted the traditional view that assured the primacy of scholars and farmers. It filled the gap in social status between the various professions and had a great impact on society at the time. *Tao'an mengyi* reflects this reality:

Waxed bamboo products from Jiaxin, painted bamboo products from Wang Er, bamboo writing implements from Jiang Huayu of Suzhou, copper products from Zhang Tong, and porcelain from Wu Mingguan of Huizhou: these workers worked in humble professions, yet commanded the same respect as government officials. This shows that any occupation can elevate a man's position, and he becomes abject by his own doing.¹⁵

We can see from the above passage that, during Zhang Dai's time, various professionals could elevate their status to equal that of scholars. Not only was Zhang not contemptuous of manual workers, but he reaffirmed the value of their professions and put the blame for their negative reputation on the workers themselves. These views on the same sense of *dao* and equality of the professions did not change people's negative perception of actors, but the compassionate acceptance of the artisan and merchant classes acted as a release valve for actors' social pressures and made their lives easier.

These prevailing views of society made it possible for actors to reconsider their situation and self-worth and, to a certain extent, alleviated the feeling of inferiority in their interaction with scholars. Zhang Dai once went on a tour to look at the snowy scenery accompanied by his songstresses, two of whom, named Ma Xiaoqing (馬小卿) and Pan Xiaofei (潘小妃), “rolled down a flight of a hundred steps to the bottom of the hill, and stood up covered with snow.”¹⁶ This spontaneous and unrestrained gesture would not have been possible with a fawning and self-deprecating actor in the old days.

We now look at the political context of the era.

Political conditions in the Ming Dynasty were very bad for scholars, who had to fight constantly with the government. Under the reigns of the Jianwen (建文) (1399-1402), Hongxi (洪熙) (1424-1425), Jingtai (景泰) (1450-1457), and Hongzhi (弘治) (1487-1505) emperors, the situation was relatively benign,

14 Wang Shouren 王守仁, *Wang Wencheng gong quanshu* 王文成公全書 (*Complete Works of Wang Wencheng*) (Shanghai: The Commercial Press, 1934), 12.

15 Zhang, *Tao'an*, 77.

16 *Ibid.*, 116.

but the rest of the Ming Dynasty was highly stressful for scholars. They lived under the constant threat of surveillance, beating, and imprisonment; their stipends were so small that they could hardly support their families.¹⁷ The abuse they suffered was both physical and emotional. Unheard of in the Song Dynasty, which was ruled by mostly benevolent emperors, such mistreatment was rare even under the foreign rulers of the Jin Dynasty (1115-1234): Lu Duo (路鐸) (d. 1218), who stopped Emperor Zhangzong (金章宗) (1168-1208) from leaving the capital to escape calamities, and Zong Duanxiu (宗端修) (1149-1208), who shamed Zhangzong's relatives for throwing the emperor's reputation to the wind,¹⁸ were both exonerated unharmed; they did not have to submit to beatings or imprisonment. When, at the end of the Ming Dynasty, the scholars considered the precarious present in light of their glorious past, they must have been full of anger and frustration; they felt unable to stop the destruction of their country and fight the impending foreign rulers, and their impotence only added to their misery.

Faced with this dark and cruel political reality, if the scholars stubbornly stayed the course, to say that they were ineffective would be an understatement: they would risk humiliation and death. Under these circumstances, they had only two choices: either admonish the rulers with tactful words to change the world or to escape it completely. The former means to persuade the rulers with ironic allegories or cautionary tales in order to ameliorate the political climate. There is a history of actors who wove innuendoes into their lines to achieve this desired effect. The traditional comedic actors always had some impact on intellectuals;¹⁹ sometimes the actor and the drama were employed jointly to achieve a political effect, such as when Zhang Dai put on a revised "Icy Mountain Adventure" (Bingshan ji 冰山記) to criticize the state of affairs in the country.²⁰ There are many more instances of escaping the world. When scholars were frustrated with politics, they sometimes turned their attention to other occupations in order to save themselves or to find an outlet for their disappointment. They became enamored of nature and the arts and lavished their attention on such things as scenic attractions (mountains, rivers), gardens, beauty, music, poetry, and colorful anecdotes. *Tao'an mengyi* mirrors this reality, and we have reorganized the chapter names into the following

- 17 Zhao Yuan 趙園. *Ming Qing zhi ji shidafu yanjiu* 明清之際士大夫研究 (*Scholars During the Ming-Qing Transition*) (Beijing: Beijing University Press, 1999), 6-11.
- 18 Tuo Tuo 脫脫. *Jin shi* 金史 (*History of the Jin Dynasty*) (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1975), 2205, 2203.
- 19 Yu Yingshi 余英時. *Shi yu Zhongguo wenhua* 士與中國文化 (*Scholars and Chinese Culture*) (Shanghai: Shanghai People's Publishing House, 1987), 116.
- 20 Zhang, *Tao'an*, 123-124.

categories for the sake of illustration: scenic attractions,²¹ gardens,²² customs,²³ and anecdotes.²⁴ Virtually all the chapters fall into these categories. Scholars wandered in their gardens amid the rocks and the flowers, reciting lines of poetry, or took trips with actors and harmonized with them in duets. This is how they vented their political discontent and frustrations and searched for temporary freedom of the mind. These were not isolated events during the late Ming period.

In this tumultuous period, scholars penned dramas, played parts in operas, and took sightseeing tours with actors. But behind this ostensibly elegant and romantic lifestyle was a profound sense of existential angst. The choice they had to make between changing the world and escaping it, and the corresponding psychological adjustment that went with the choice, deepened their relationship with actors.

Lastly, we look at the economic context.

Cities grew quickly during the Ming Dynasty. There were thirty three large cities of commerce and crafts, such as Shuntian, Suzhou, Wuchang, and Guangzhou by mid-dynasty. Later, twenty four cities developed gradually, among them Jiujiang, Xian, and Datong.²⁵ Commerce developed quickly as

- 21 山水名勝：鐘山、報恩塔、日月湖、孔廟櫓、孔林、燕子磯、表勝庵、焦山、楔泉、白洋湖、陽和泉、龍噴池、秦淮河房、楊神廟台閣、嚴助廟、爐峰月、湘湖、琅嬛福地、棲霞、曹山、雷殿、品山堂魚宕、愚公谷、阿育王寺舍利。
- 22 亭園花石：天臺牡丹、筠芝亭、礪園、奔雲石、木猶龍、花石綱遺石、梅花書屋、不二齋、岫嶠山房、逍遙樓、天鏡園、不系園、於園、治沅堂、煙雨樓、一尺雪、菊海、懸杪亭、蠟花閣、瑞草溪亭、魯府松棚、山艇子松花石。
- 23 風俗方物：越俗掃墓、魯藩煙火、蘭雪茶、朱文懿家桂、兗州閱武、乳酪、方物、世美堂燈、泰安州客店、樊江陳氏桔、揚州清明、虎丘中秋夜、金山競渡、揚州瘦馬、紹興燈景、水滸牌、西湖香市、鹿苑寺方柿、西湖七月半、定海水操、龍山放燈、蟹會、露兄、閏元宵、合采牌、樓船、阮園海戲、閏中秋、甯了、甘文台爐、齊景公墓花樽、及時雨、蘇州白兔、草妖、雪精。
- 24 奇人韻事：金乳生草花、金山夜戲、天硯、吳中絕技、濮仲謙雕刻、朱雲崧女戲、紹興琴派、砂罐錫注、沈梅岡、三世藏書、絲社、南鎮祈夢、湖心亭看雪、陳章侯、鬥雞社、牛首山打獵、張氏聲伎、祁止祥癖、二十四橋風月、范長白、諸工、姚簡叔畫、柳敬亭說書、劉暉吉女戲、朱楚生、彭天錫串戲、天童寺僧、范與蘭、王月生、張東穀好酒、閏老子茶、包涵所、朱氏收藏、仲叔古董、麋公、目連戲、韻山、嚙社、龍山雪、龐公池、過劍門、冰山記、魯王、祁世培。
- 25 Qin Peiheng 秦佩珩. *Mingdai jingjishi shuluncong chugao* 明代經濟史述論叢初稿 (*First Draft of the Ming Dynasty's Economic History*) (Shanghai: Shanghai Chinese Classics Publishing House, 1959), 238.

the cities grew in size; crafts became increasingly intricate, and the price of products rose dramatically. One bamboo sculptor from Nanjing, Pu Zhongqian (濮仲謙), “had phenomenal name recognition; his products were considered status symbols and scores of merchants on Sanshan Street benefited from his craft.”²⁶ Well-made pottery and tin utensils were especially sought after. “A cooking pot and a tin funnel cost five or six taels of gold, comparable to the price of antique Shang and Zhou pottery.”²⁷ Commercial activities were well regulated, and the products eclectic and abundant. The Ming writer Liu Tong (劉侗) (1593-1636), who lived under the reigns of Wanli and Chongzhen (崇禎) (1627-1644), had this to say about the flourishing commerce at the time:

The market at City Temple takes place on the first, fifteenth, and twenty-fifth of every lunar month. It starts at Bijiao Alley to the east and winds its way west for about a mile to City Temple. All kinds of products line the street: books old and new, pottery from the Shang and Zhou Dynasties, mirrors from the Qin and Han Dynasties, calligraphy and paintings from the Tang and Song Dynasties; and then there are jewelry, elephant tusks, jade, delicacies, and silk from Yunnan, Guangdong, Fujian, Hunan, Hubei, Jiangsu, and Zhejiang provinces. You can find everything here.²⁸

For the scholars who aspired to a life of comfort and pleasure, prosperous cities and abundant merchandise in the Ming Dynasty provided material security and a chance to realize the life of their dreams. Tales of luxury and extravagance abound in *Tao'an mengyi*:

From January to October, my buddies and I would dine on crab regularly. We would gather around noon to boil the crab. . . . There would be fat and juicy preserved duck and cheeses of different kinds . . . we would stew cabbage with the duck juice, which made it look like plates of jade. We would pour cold libations from a jade pot and nibble on bamboo shoots; the rice was freshly harvested Yuhang white, and the tea, Snow Orchid.²⁹

Boats on West Lake had multiple decks; they were the brainchild of Bao Hansuo (包涵所), the deputy minister. They came in three sizes: the

26 Zhang, *Tao'an*, 20.

27 Ibid., 34.

28 Liu Tong 劉侗 and Yu Yizheng 于奕正. *Dijing jingwu lue* 帝京景物略 (*Scenes in the Capital*), ed. Sun Xiaoli 孫小力 (Shanghai: Shanghai Chinese Classics Publishing House, 2001), 238.

29 Zhang, *Tao'an*, 132.

large boats held banquets and staged performances with child singers; the medium-size boats displayed calligraphy and paintings, and the small boats carried beautiful women. Mr. Bao didn't think songstresses were servants, so he let them receive guests as Shi Chong (石崇) and Song Qi (宋祁) did. The women amused themselves by galloping through the willow trees on horseback, as their bright and colorful robes flowed gracefully with the wind. They sang faintly and slowly while playing various instruments under the clear windows of the boat, with voices as sweet as the oriole's. When guests came, skits with singing children would be arranged. All the dances and instruments were first rate. . . . With no luxury spared and no desire unsated, I spent twenty years of my life on the West Lake. Beautiful villas and precious jewels were all de rigueur, and this was what the people of Hangzhou meant when they exclaimed, "Anything goes!"³⁰

When economic conditions were relatively stable, Chinese scholars, especially those of higher rank, belonged in some respects to what Thorstein Veblen called the leisure class. They did not partake of economic production but worked in literature, the arts, and politics. They required products of the highest quality; their eating utensils were often exquisite and rare, because to have anything else would have betrayed a lack of social status or taste. To associate with actors could be taken as an indication that they were men of apparent leisure and satisfied Veblen's definition of "conspicuous consumption";³¹ it was a way for scholars to show their social status.

A society rich in material goods provided an advantageous environment for scholars and actors to hone their dramatic skills, deepening the bond between them and the raising artistic standards among actors. Some scholars treated actors better than their retainers or their children's tutors,³² prompting actors to have a sense of gratitude toward their benefactors and enabling them to give material and moral support to scholars during times of social upheaval.

In conclusion, the authors remind the reader that it is not our intention to erase the natural dividing line between scholars and actors or to exaggerate the

³⁰ Ibid., 53.

³¹ Thorstein Veblen, *You xian jieji lun: guanyu zhidu de jingji yanjiu* 有閒階級論—關於制度的經濟研究 (*The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study of Institutions*), trans. Cai Shoubai 蔡受百 (Beijing: The Commercial Press, 1964), 30-53.

³² Zhu Yizun 朱彝尊, *Pushuting quanji* 曝書亭全集 (*Collection from the Book-Airing Pavilion*), ed. Wang Limin 王利民 et al. (Changchun: Jilin Literature and History Press, 2009), 387.

bond between them. Our aim is to offer an investigation of a new kind of relationship between them that resulted from an unusual social situation, putting it in a context that is appropriate for that period, so as to grasp all the cultural phenomena and explain literature objectively and profoundly.

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Research on Reader's Guides to Ming and Qing Popular Novels

Cheng Guofu

Translated by Brook Hefright

Abstract

Reader's guides (*fanli* 凡例), which form a distinct genre attached to popular novels, have a great deal of research value. This article collects and counts reader's guides to Ming and Qing popular novels, analyzes the overall characteristics of the genre, and discusses four aspects of them: (1) the historical value of reader's guides to Ming and Qing popular novels; (2) reader's guides and the creative method in popular novels; (3) reader's guides and chapter headings in popular novels; and (4) reader's guides and readers of popular novels. This study approaches this distinct genre of novels from the perspective of both examination of documents and of theoretical research; it uses theory and method to explore the creative methods and systematic structure of Ming and Qing popular novels as well as to trace the true course of popular novels' appearance, development, and evolution.

Keywords

bookstores – chapter headings – creative methods – popular novels – readers – reader's guides

Reader's guides (*fanli* 凡例) are a distinct editorial genre that convey the content of the work and the main creative idea; other names for the genre include *fafan* 發凡, *xuli* 敘例, *xuliè* 敘略, *liyan* 例言, and *buli* 補例. Reader's guides appeared quite early. Based on Du Yu's (杜預) (222-285) Preface to *Mr. Zuo's Spring and Autumn Annals* (*Chunqiu Zuoshizhuan xu* 春秋左氏傳序), written

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during the Western Jin period (266-316), it is clear that authors had adopted the reader's guide as early as the compilation of the pre-Confucian historical annals, and Confucius used this form as well.¹

The earliest author to systematically discuss the origin of the reader's guide and evaluate good and bad examples of it in different periods was the Tang Dynasty (618-907) historian Liu Zhiji (劉知幾) (661-721). He attached great importance to the genre, comparing the reader's guide of a historical annal to "a country having laws."² Liu held that the use of reader's guides began with Confucius and had its origins in the compilation of classics and histories. Because it was a distinct genre, the process of development of reader's guides was full of ups and downs. The development was cut short after Mr. Zuo and up to Gan Bao's (干寶) compilation of (*Jinji* 晉紀), but was then revived by Deng Can (鄧粲) and Sun Sheng (孫盛). Early reader's guides mostly conformed to the preface (*xuwen* 序文) genre, for example, in Shen Yue's (沈約) *Song shu* (宋書) and Xiao Zixian's (蕭子顯) *Qi shu* (齊書). Although these were called prefaces, the preface and reader's guide genres were not distinct at this stage. Subsequently, reader's guides gradually became distinguished from prefaces and came to form an independent genre of their own.³

A Count of Reader's Guides to Ming and Qing Popular Novels and an Analysis of Their Characteristics

Reader's guides to popular novels are generally found at the beginning of a novel, between the preface, on the one hand, and the table of contents and illustrations, on the other. A reader's guide contains rich historical material on the novel and has great value and importance for researching the author's or compiler's creative inspiration, the publisher's role, the creative theory of the novel, and the connection between the creation of the novel, on the one hand, and the reader and the market, on the other. From the perspective of the current state of scholarly research, reader's guides to novels have not yet received the attention they deserve. Scholars' main focus has often been the reader's guide to the Jiaxu (甲戌) edition of *The Dream of the Red Chamber* (*Honglouloumeng*

1 Du Yu, "Chunqiu Zuoshizhuan xu 春秋左氏傳序 Preface to Mr. Zuo's *Spring and Autumn Annals*," in *Zuozhuanzhushu* 左傳注疏, the Wenjin Ge edition of *Sikuquanshu* (Beijing: Commercial Press, 2005), 49: 6.

2 See Liu Zhiji, "Xuli 序例," in *Shitongtongshi* 史通通釋 (Shanghai: Shanghai Classics Publishing House, 1978), 4: 88.

3 Ibid.

紅樓夢) (also known as *The Story of the Stone* [*Shitou ji* 石頭記]). There have been at least nine studies of this work,⁴ but only one has conducted specific and comprehensive research on reader's guides themselves—that is, Shen Meili's "Research on Reader's Guides in Ming-Qing Novels".⁵ This article provides some insight into reader's guides to Ming and Qing novels; however, its account of the documents is incomplete, and additional, deeper investigation is needed.

Based on the author's collection and count, reader's guides to Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) popular novels number forty-two in all. In general, they exhibit the following characteristics: first, there is an intimate relationship between the reader's guide as a genre and Ming- and Qing-era bookstores and bookstore owners. On the basis of the documents currently available, the earliest extant popular novel that includes a reader's guide appears to be (*Dasong zhongxing tongsu yanyi* 大宋中興通俗演義), written by Xiong Damu (熊大木) (1506-1578), a bookstore owner in Jianyang (建陽). It was published by Yang Yongquan (楊涌泉) of the Qingjiang Tang (清江堂) bookstore, also in Jianyang, in 1552, the thirty-first year of the reign of Emperor Jiajing in the Ming Dynasty. Its compilers and editors were all bookstore owners. In addition, Yuan Wuya (袁無涯) of Wu County, Xia Lüxian (夏履先) of Hangzhou, the owner of Sixue Caotang (四雪草堂), and other bookstore owners personally composed reader's guides to novels. This makes clear that the contributions of Ming and Qing bookstore owners to the evolution of the genre of reader's guides to popular novels should not be overlooked.

Second, reader's guides are appended, for the most part, to historical and romantic novels, including "worldly affairs" novels, "gifted scholar/beautiful lady" novels, and "son and daughter hero" novels. For example, *The Dream of the Red Chamber* and its five sequels all contain reader's guides.

4 The main works concerning the reader's guide to the Jiaxu edition of *Hongloumeng* 紅樓夢 (*The Dream of the Red Chamber*) are 馮其庸《論〈脂硯齋重評石頭記〉甲戌本“凡例”》，《紅樓夢學刊》1980年第4期；王本仁《〈紅樓夢〉脂殘本〈凡例〉試談》，《青海師範大學學報》1980年第3期；周策縱《〈紅樓夢〉“凡例”補佚與釋疑》，《紅樓夢學刊》1981年第1期；鄧遂夫《論甲戌本“凡例”與〈紅樓夢〉書名》，《紅樓夢學刊》1986年第3期；尚友萍《證甲戌本〈凡例〉的作者是脂硯齋》，《紅樓夢學刊》1992年第2期；魯歌《〈紅樓夢〉甲戌本〈凡例〉的作者是曹頌》，《許昌師專學報》1998年第4期；胡淑莉、張振昌《論〈紅樓夢〉甲戌本“凡例”》，《社會科學戰線》1999年第6期；張傑《淺談〈紅樓夢〉甲戌本的“凡例”》，《陝西廣播電視大學學報》1999年第1期；馬瑞芳《論甲戌本〈凡例〉為曹雪芹所作》，《紅樓夢學刊》2003年第4期。

5 Shen Meili 沈梅麗. "Research on Reader's Guides in Ming-Qing Novels 明清小說中的凡例研究." *Journal of Harbin University*, Vol. 3, 2007.

Third, although reader's guides are not as common as prefaces and postscripts, judging by the times at which novels containing reader's guides were created and published, they received wide distribution. Reader's guides appeared during the reign of Emperor Jiajing, when popular novels gradually came into vogue. In *Dasong zhongxing tongsuyanyi*, the front matter contains seven reader's guides. Subsequently, novels published during the reign of Emperors Wanli (萬曆), Taichang (泰昌), Tianqi (天啟), Chongzhen (崇禎), Shunzhi (順治), Kangxi (康熙), Qianlong (乾隆), Jiaqing (嘉慶), Daoguang (道光), Tongzhi (同治), and Guangxu (光緒) all have reader's guides. The late Qing Dynasty novels *Haishanghua liezhuan* 海上花列傳, *Wanguo yanyi* 萬國演義, *Hong Xiuquan yanyi* 洪秀全演義, and *Xin qixia wuyi* 新七俠五義 all have introductory remarks or reader's guides.

Fourth, the form and content of reader's guides in Ming and Qing popular novels are rich and varied. They are generally divided into notes (*ze* 則), but not all are divided in this way. For example, the reader's guides to *Li Zhuowu xiansheng piping Xiyouji* 李卓吾先生批評西遊記, published in the reign of Emperors Taichang (1620) and Tianqi (1620-1627), and the lithograph *Hong Xiuquan yanyi*, published in 1908, the thirty-fourth year of the reign of Emperor Guangxu, among others, are not divided into notes.

Lieguo zhizhuan 列國志傳, republished by Yu Xiangdou 余象斗 in Jianyang in 1606, the thirty-fourth year of the reign of Emperor Wanli, contains in its front matter "A Reader's Guide to *Annexation Among States*" in eleven notes, not divided into sections (*duan* 段). This reader's guide concisely relates the process by which the feudal princes of the Warring States Period annexed each other's territory until the Qin state annexed the six kingdoms. It describes how Chu destroyed Chen; Yue wiped out Wu; Tianhe took the place of Qi; Jin was divided into the three kingdoms of Han, Zhao, and Wei; and Qin destroyed Zhou, Han, Zhao, Yan, Wei, Chu, and Qi. The reader's guide provides background on the novel's creation and its main content. Compared to other reader's guides to popular novels of the Ming and Qing periods, this reader's guide is quite unusual.

Reader's guides to Ming and Qing popular novels not only have great value as historical material but also provide a particular angle from which to research the creation of these novels, the theory of the novel, the publishing market, the social class of readers, as well as other issues. In the past, scholars generally approached the creative and critical theory of Ming and Qing popular novels by lumping together prefaces, sketches, commentary, letters, and official and private tables of contents; they very infrequently touched upon reader's guides. Yet taking the perspective of reader's guides as a distinct genre can help us to deepen and complete our understanding of the theory of Ming and Qing

popular novels. In this light, this article discusses reader's guides to Ming and Qing popular novels from four perspectives, as follows.

The Value of Reader's Guides to Popular Novels as Historical Material

As part of the text of Ming and Qing popular novels, reader's guides have great value as historical material. Because they provide important documentary material on a novel's copyright and ownership, its author's life and achievements, the development of the novel's title, and the sociocultural environment of the novel's production, they deserve our careful attention.

Reader's guides to novels often reveal important information about the author, the archetypes of the novel's characters, and the novel's commentators. For example, the author of *Yue Wumu jinzhong baoguo zhuan* 岳武穆盡忠報國傳 is generally believed to be Yu Huayu (于華玉). The statement at the end of its reader's guide confirms this: "Yu Huayu, courtesy name Hui Shan, was a man of Jinsha (modern-day Jintan in Jiangsu Province), made these notes in the Wo Zhi studio in Xiaowu (modern-day Yiwu in Zhejiang Province)."⁶ At the same time, however, another statement at the end of the reader's guide says, "My student Yu Bangjin, courtesy name Gu Yun, a man of Xin'an (in modern-day Jiangsu Province), edited and sequenced the work,"⁷ shows that Yu's student, Yu Bangjin, also participated in compiling the book. In other words, they compiled the book jointly, and the records preserved in the reader's guide supplement the traditional account.

Similarly, the reader's guide to the Jiaxu edition of *The Dream of the Red Chamber* includes the seven-syllable poem (*qilü* 七律), (rendered here in prose): "It seems like each word and each phrase is a drop of my life's blood; these ten difficult years of writing have been extraordinary."⁸ Because this poem does not appear in any other version, it provides first-hand evidence for textual research on the author of this novel and the circumstances of its creation.

Note 5 in the introductory remarks of Qishengtang's revised and enlarged edition of *The Scholars* (*Rulin waishi* 儒林外史), published in 1874, the

6 Yu Huayu, "Reader's Guide," in *Yue Wumu jinzhong baoguo zhuan* 岳武穆盡忠報國傳 (Youyi Zhai 友益齋, the last years of Emperor Chongzhen).

7 Ibid.

8 The 1754 Jiaxu edition of *Dream of the Red Chamber*, titled *Zhiyanzhai chongping Shitou ji* 脂硯齋重評石頭記 (*The Story of the Stone: with New Commentaries from Zhiyanzhai*).

thirteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tongzhi, confirms that the author of this work was Wu Jingzi (吳敬梓). However, it also reveals the real-life models of characters in the novel—such as Du Shaoqing, Du Shenqing, Dr. Yu, Zhuang Shangzhi, Mr. Ma'er, Chi Hengshan—and so provides rare and important historical material for our study of *The Scholars*.⁹ Some reader's guides also provide information about the novel's commentators. For example, based on the reader's guide to Fang Ruhao's (*Chanzhen yishi* 禪真逸史), we know that the bookstore owner Xia Lùxian was one of this novel's commentators.

Reader's guides to the novel also preserve important information about the work itself. The reader's guide to the Jiaxu edition of *The Story of the Stone* provides the alternate title *The Dream of the Red Chamber* and describes its origin; it also mentions the *The Dream of the Red Chamber* has the additional titles (*Fengyue baojian* 風月寶鑒), *The Story of the Stone*, and (*Jinling shi'er chai* 金陵十二釵). Note 5 in the reader's guide to (*Guigu siyou zhi* 鬼谷四友志) states: "*Siyou zhi* provides an account of the deeds of Sun Bin (孫臏) (380 BCE–320 BCE), Pang Juan (龐涓, d. 342 BCE), Su Qin (蘇秦, d. 284 BCE), and Zhang Yi (張儀, d. 309 BCE)."¹⁰ In the reader's guide to *Humble Words of a Rustic Elder* (*Yesou puyan* 野叟曝言), note 1 states: "The title of this work is *Humble Words of a Rustic Elder*; it could also be called 'Common People of the Village and Countryside Had Nothing to Do, So They Basked in the Sun and Chatted Together.'"¹¹

Some reader's guides also reveal information about the work that researchers of the novel's history have overlooked or that had been lost. For example, (*Chongbian Sui-Tang yanyi fafan* 重編隋唐演義發凡) states: "This book is titled *Sui-Tang Yanyi* (*Romance of the Sui and Tang Dynasties*) . . . it starts with the Yangdi emperor of the Sui and ends with the Minghuang emperor of the Tang. After Emperor Suzong, the Tang Dynasty had an additional 14 emperors. New and wonderful events that might delight people which happened during this time were compiled and published in another book, *Wan Tang Zhizhuan* 晚唐志傳), which I will not discuss further here."¹² Because *Wan Tang Zhizhuan* was not recorded in any catalogue pertaining to Chinese novels, the reader's guide provides us with otherwise inaccessible information to this work.

Reader's guides can help us to understand, to different degrees, the atmosphere of the particular era in which Ming and Qing popular novels were

9 See also the article in this issue by Shang Wei, "Examining Narrative Form in *The Scholars*."

10 Yang Jing 楊景, "Reader's Guide," in *Guigu siyou zhi* 鬼谷四友志 (Boya Tang, 1803).

11 Xia Jingqu 夏敬渠, "Reader's Guide," in *Humble Words of a Rustic Elder* (Changzhou: Piling huizhen lou 毗陵匯珍樓, 1881).

12 Chu Renhuo 褚人獲, *Sui-Tang yanyi* 隋唐演義 (Sixue Caotang, the Qing Dynasty), front matter.

created and published. In the guide to *Yue wumu jingzhong baoguo zhuan*, published by Youyizhai in the late Ming Dynasty, note 6 states that the book was based on the story of how Yue Fei defied the Jin and should serve as "a mirror for events of the present day; those whose ambition is to resist invasion by foreign enemies and eliminate those causing internal strife should take note of this book."¹³ The publisher hoped that the book would inspire people at the time to resist invasion by foreign enemies and get rid of those causing internal strife.

The political situation in the late Ming was tumultuous, and the conflict between the Manchus and the Han was becoming more intense. Against this backdrop, the story of how Yue Fei defied the Jin received a wide reception. Other works, such as *Yue wumu jingzhong zhuan*, published by Baoxuzhai in 1627, the seventh year of the reign of Emperor Tianqi, Yu Huayu's *Yue wumu jingzhong baoguo zhuan*, published by Youyizhai at the end of the reign of Emperor Chongzhen (1627-1644), (*Xinbian quanxiang Wumu jingzhong zhuan* 新編全像武穆精忠傳), published by Weiwentang at the end of the Ming Dynasty, as well as other collections of novels about the Yue, provide clear evidence that the statement in *Yue wumu jin zhong bao guo zhuan* epitomizes to a certain extent the ethnic conflict and tumultuous circumstances of the time.

In the reader's guide to the Jiayu edition of *The Dream of the Red Chamber*, note 2 states: "This book is merely a collection of jottings on love between men and women; therefore, it recounts in detail matters of the boudoir. The fact that it recounts matters of the boudoir in detail, but matters outside the boudoir superficially, should not be considered lacking in balance."¹⁴ Note 3 states: "This book does not presume to discuss the court. In each case where mention of politics is unavoidable, I pass over it in a few words, because I really do not dare to use the pen that writes of love between men and women to offend and blaspheme the court. One must not consider the book lacking for this reason."¹⁵ These quotations make clear that *The Dream of the Red Chamber* contains many instances of taboo avoidance in writing.

The novel was subject to the influence of the oppressive policies of the time, and this influence is reflected in the novel's subject matter. *The Dream of the Red Chamber* records many matters of the boudoir and describes enduring love between men and women; however, it touches only infrequently on current events or affairs of state. This, in turn, influences the novel's narrative structure: it leads the author, often deliberately, to obscure the novel's setting in space and time and cite past events to allude to the present.

13 Yu, "Reader's Guide."

14 Cao Xueqin, "Reader's Guide," in *Zhiyan Zhai chongping Shitou ji*.

15 Ibid.

Similarly, in the guide to *Honglou fumeng* 紅樓複夢, note 2 states: "In this book there are no words or phrases that infringe on taboo subjects on characters."¹⁶ Note 3 states: "Although this book is a novel, it is based on loyalty (忠), filial piety (孝), chastity (節), and righteousness (義)."¹⁷ In the reader's guide to *Xu jin ping mei* 續金瓶梅, note 6 states: "Bookstores are forbidden to publish obscene books, but recently there have been a lot of filthy writings."¹⁸ From these reader's guides, it is not difficult to see that the Qing Dynasty's policy of the censorship and destruction of novels and opera had a large impact on the creation and dissemination of novels.

Reader's Guides and Methods of Creation of Popular Novels

By the Ming and Qing eras, novel publishing was well developed. As they entered the commercial era, popular novels developed new characteristics, different from the past. The creation of popular novels through accretion over generations gradually gave way to independent creation by the literati. This tendency is particularly apparent in the creative realm of current affairs novels in the late Ming and early Qing. Below, I analyze reader's guides from different times in the Ming and Qing eras and from different genres; on the basis of this analysis, I discuss, on three levels, the key elements in the method of creation of popular novels.

On the first level, creators of Ming and Qing popular novels often had previous works on which they could rely. We can easily observe this from the creative process of Xiong Damu's *Dasong Zhongxing Tongsu Yanyi*. In the reader's guide to this work, note 1 states: "This work dramatizes Wumu Wang's historical account, using a novel as a reference."¹⁹ The novel that Xiong refers to is Wu Muwang's *Jingzhong lu* 精忠錄. In *Xu Wumu Wang Yanyi* Xiong Damu states this very clearly:

Wu Muwang's *Jingzhong Lu*, which records the deeds of Yue Fei, is the original novel, and I have not managed to obtain the whole text. Up to this point, I have secured the version published in Zhejiang. It compiles

16 Chen Shaohai 陳少海, "Reader's Guide," in *Hongloufumeng* (Rongzhu Shanfang 蓉竹山房), (1799).

17 Ibid.

18 Ding Yaokang 丁耀亢, "Reader's Guide," in *Xu jin ping mei* 續金瓶梅, (1660).

19 Xiong Damu, "Reader's Guide," in *Dasongzhongxingtongsuyanyi* 大宋中興通俗演義 (Jianyang: Qingjiang Tang, 1552).

and recounts the deeds of Yue Fei in exhaustive detail. However, its importance is abstruse, and its portrayal of all the characters is based on the deeds in the historical account. Readers below the level of scholar-officials may suddenly find that they cannot make sense of it.²⁰

Through Xiong's reference to the older work *Jingzhong Lu*, we learn that the book's meaning is obscure, and its language is cryptic and hard to understand. Therefore, on the basis of the previous work, "by dramatizing the original biography of Wumu Wang,"²¹ Xiong creates a new work. Similarly, in Xu Shigeng's Qing Dynasty "*Sanguo zhi yanyi buli*" 三國志演義補例, note 2 states: "The present work has been completely corrected in accordance with the ancient book (*guben* 古本)." ²²

The creation of genres besides historical novels was also often based on older works. For example, in Yuan Wuya's novel of knight errantry "*Zhongyi shuihu quanshu fapan* 忠義水滸全書發凡," note 6 states: "The old book (*jiuben* 舊本) is the version published by Guo Wuding."²³ In the guide to *Chanzhen yishi*, note 2 states: "The meaning of the old book is obscure, and its usages are classical; it would be difficult for ordinary people to enjoy."²⁴ In the guide to the "gifted scholar/beautiful lady" novel *Baigui zhi* 白圭志, note 6 states: "This book features poems prominently; the original work (*yuanzhu* 原著) generally left them out."²⁵ In the guide to the "son and daughter hero" novel *Humble Words of a Rustic Elder*, note 6 states: "Omissions are still according to the original book (*yuanben* 原本)."²⁶ These quotations all mention ancient books, old books, original works, or original books. In the field of Ming and Qing popular novels, the concept of "old books" is closely related to the publishing culture, the route of distribution, and so forth. Its meaning encompasses, at a minimum, the following perspectives. From the perspective of the time of publication, "old books" described novels that had already been published and that subsequent writers changed, expanded, and reprinted. From the perspective of

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid.

22 Xu Shigeng 許時庚, "*Sanguo zhi yanyi buli* 三國志演義補例," in Luo Guanzhong 羅貫中, *Sanguo zhi yanyi* 三國志演義 (*Romance of the Three Kingdoms*) (Shide Tang, 1769).

23 Yuan Wuya 袁無涯, "*Zhongyi shuihu quanshu fapan* 忠義水滸全書發凡," in Shi Nai'an 施耐庵, *Li Zhuowu piping Zhongyi shuihu quanzhuan* 李卓吾批評忠義水滸全傳 (Shuzhongtang, 1614).

24 Fang Ruhao 方汝浩, "Reader's Guide," in *Chanzhen yishi* 禪真逸史 (Hangzhou: Xia Lixian, the end of the Ming era).

25 Cui Xiangchuan 崔象川, "Reader's Guide," in *Baigui zhi* (Yong'an tang, 1807).

26 Xia, "Reader's Guide," in *Humble Words of a Rustic Elder*.

the route of distribution, “old books” described folk forms, such as storytelling set to music (*shuoshu* 說書) and novels in verse (*cihua* 詞話), that were transformed by the literati into high literature. From the perspective of the manner of distribution, “old books” also described the hand-copied manuscripts that served as contributing sources to the publication of novels. As Ming and Qing popular novels entered the era of publishing, adaptation on the basis of previous works became a prominent practice; it stood in contrast to the traditional creation and distribution of novels before the Ming era. Reader’s guides provide us with a glimpse of this process.

On the second level, truth and fantasy were interdependent. The books that contain reader’s guides are mainly historical novels and romances (including “worldly affairs” novels (世情小說), “gifted scholar/beautiful lady” novels (才子佳人小說), and “son and daughter hero” novels (兒女英雄小說). These two types of popular novels both emphasize the link between fiction and non-fiction and the interdependence between truth and fantasy. However, there are also differences between the two types in the concrete meaning of “truth,” which I discuss below.

In the actual process of creation, authors of historical novels often mixed official history, unofficial history, and legend. The authors were aware of historiography, a principle of recording the facts that preserved the flavor of the school of “historical tales” in the Song (960-1279) and Yuan (1271-1368) eras. For example, in the reader’s guide to *Yu Shaobao cuizhong zhuan* 于少保萃忠傳, published by Dalai Tang in the reign of Emperor Tianqi, note 22 catalogs twenty-two major types of sources that were collected in preparation for the writing of this work, including histories, short sketches, and many other kinds of documentary material. Using the official history *Huang Ming shilu* 皇明實錄 as an outline for the whole book, it constitutes the main pillar of the novel. At the same time, *Lieqing zhuan* 列卿傳, which “records the story of Yu Qian (于謙 1398-1457?), it is plucked from old legends to appeal to the masses,” or *Mengzhan leikao* 夢占類考, which recounts how “Yu Qian’s soul is in heaven; if scholars pray to him their wishes will come true,” also became important sources of creative material for *Yu Shaobao cuizhong zhuan*.²⁷ It combined the official dynastic histories with legend, fiction alternating with fact. This reveals the creative method of *Yu Shaobao cuizhong zhuan*, and it is quite representative for the creative process of historical novels in the Ming and Qing periods.

27 For the passages cited above, see the reader’s guide to Sun Gaoliang 孫高亮, *Yu Shaobao cuizhong zhuan* 于少保萃忠傳 (Dalai tang, in the Tianqi reign, notes 1, 8, and 22, respectively).

In the reader's guide to *Bei shi yanyi* 北史演義, note 1 states:

The story that this novel narrates began in the Northern Wei (386-534?), and ended in the early years of the Sui Dynasty. It is all based on accounts in the official histories. They have been used completely, but some accounts from popular legends have been used as well in order to supplement what the official histories are lacking and to fill out content that the eyewitness accounts do not touch upon. Everything has a basis in fact, and cannot be compared to books that have been compiled according to whim.²⁸

Among the histories that serve as sources for historical novels, books like Sima Guang's (司馬光) (1019-1086) *A Mirror for the Wise Ruler* (also known as *A Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government*) (*Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑑) and Zhu Xi's (朱熹) (1130-1200) *Tongjian Gangmu* 通鑑綱目 and *Tongjian* 通鑑 doubtlessly received the most attention. The reader's guide to *Dasong zhongxing tongsu yanyi* clearly shows how the book was created on the basis of these works. Note 4 of the reader's guide states: "The major themes are all linked to *Tongjian Gangmu*. In certain places of that original work, the main idea and the message are abstruse and hard to understand; therefore I used popular legends to draw connections and fill in the gaps. I hope this will help common, ordinary people to understand."²⁹ The guide to *Nianyi shi tongsu yanyi* 廿一史通俗衍義 also points out that the author created the novel by drawing on *Tongjian Gangmu*. This not only refers to *Tongjian Gangmu* as the source for the novel's subject matter, ideological orientation, compositional structure, and narrative, but also highlights how the novel fills in the deficiencies in the account in *Tongjian Gangmu*.

In sum, the "truthful" content in Ming and Qing historical novels is reflected mainly in historical facts—indeed, whether they conform to historical facts became an important standard for evaluating the novels' quality. The reader's guide to *Sui Yangdi yanshi* 隋煬帝豔史 makes this clear in note 1:

Even though this book is called a novel, it references historical events and classical allusions. It is wholly based on official histories. It has not sown confusion among ordinary people by presenting things that are not true or by jumping to absurd conclusions. Therefore, the narrative has a beginning and an end, and it is based on reliable sources. It is not

28 Du Gang 杜綱, "Reader's Guide," in *Bei shi yanyi* (1793).

29 Xiong Damu, "Reader's Guide," in *Dasong zhongxing tongsu yanyi*.

only appealing to the masses at present, but it is sufficient to transmit true facts to the next generation.³⁰

This note emphasizes that *Yanshi* was written in accordance with official histories and that the content was true and reliable. At the same time, it also allows for a small number of reasonable inventions, on the basis of respect for historical facts, in order to make the novel more entertaining, as well as to achieve the purpose of “assisting the official histories” and remedying their deficiencies.³¹

By comparison, the “truth” of romantic novels is mainly focused on lived reality, with a focus on the ways of the world. The reader’s guide to *Kuaixin bian* 快心編 states: “This volume is written entirely based on the ways of the world, and every piece is true to life.”³² In the reader’s guide to *Xingshi yinyuan zhuan* 醒世姻緣傳, note 1 states: “The names used in this book—Chao Yuan, Di Zong, Tong Ji, and Xue Ao—are not people’s real names. I do not wish to reveal their true deeds to other people.”³³ Note 5 states: “All the events of this book have a basis in fact. The existence of its characters can be verified.”³⁴ This kind of creative method, which is rooted in lived reality, also appears in note 4 of the folktale-based novel (*huaben* 話本) *Pai’an jingqi* 拍案驚奇, published during the reign of Emperor Chongzhen (1610-1644) of the Ming Dynasty:

My use of historical precedents and classical allusions to make my points through analogy generally hews closely to human nature and everyday life, and makes little reference to supernatural or fantastic matters. . . . There are one or two points that touch by chance on supernatural beings and the netherworld, but for the most part it stays close to what is credible, in distinction to lies based on pure fabrication.³⁵

Writers of romantic novels, and even folktale-based novels, emphasize “writing entirely based on the ways of the world,” “hewing closely to human nature and everyday life,” and “staying close to what is credible.” This shows that the novels

30 Qidong Yeren 齊東野人, “Reader’s Guide,” in *Sui Yangdi yanshi* (Jinling: Renrui Tang, 1631).

31 See Yu Huayu, “Reader’s Guide,” in *Yue wumujinzhongbaoguoqizhuan*, notes 4 and 5.

32 Tianhua Caizi 天花才子, “Reader’s Guide,” in *Kuaixin bian* 快心編 (Kehua Shuwu, the early Qing Dynasty).

33 Xizhou Sheng 西周生, “Reader’s Guide,” in *Xingshi yinyuan zhuan* (Tongde Tang, the Qing Dynasty).

34 Ibid.

35 Ling Mengchu 凌濛初, “Reader’s Guide,” in *Pai’anjingqi* 拍案驚奇 (Jinchang: Shangyou Tang, 1628).

reflect the lived reality and daily life of ordinary city dwellers. Compared to the techniques of historical novels, which revere historical facts and insist on creating a record of the facts, romantic novels and folktale-based novels focus on lived reality. To a certain degree, these tendencies represent the legacy and development of Song and Yuan historical storytelling (*jiangshi pinghua* 講史平話), on the one hand, and the creative method of novelistic folktale-based forms, on the other.

Finally, on the third level is the practice of taking material from imperial bulletins. Current-affairs novels at the end of the Ming and the beginning of the Qing eras emerged from novels on historical themes (*lishi yanyi* 歷史演義). However, these two types of novels are clearly distinct with respect to the subject matter, method of composition, and creative form. Novels on historical themes made historical figures and events the focus of description. Building off these figures and events, they tapped into stories and experiences under the surface of historical tradition. They demonstrated appropriate creative judgment, characterized by using the past as a mirror for the present in order to set an example for later generations. By contrast, current-events novels focused on presenting important contemporary events. They were created on the basis of imperial bulletins (*dibao* 邸報, *tangbao* 塘報) and hew closely to contemporary reality.

In Chinese literary history, there is a long tradition of reflecting current events in literary works. For example, during the Tang Dynasty, Bai Juyi (白居易) (772-846) clearly stated in "A Letter to Yuan Zhen" his position that: "Essays should be written in response to current conditions; poetry should be written in response to particular events."³⁶ Although Bai discusses "current" and "events" separately, his emphasis on the depiction of contemporary reality has an intrinsic connection to later current events novels of the late Ming and early Qing eras. By developing the creative tradition of novels on historical themes, these novels directly continue the spirit of books such as *The Golden Lotus* (*Jin ping mei* 金瓶梅), which criticized contemporary reality. This, in turn, forms a point of convergence between historical novels and romantic novels.

The dividing line between current events novels and novels on historical themes, with respect to their method of creation, is that current events novels were often created by taking material from imperial bulletins, and on this basis they amalgamated official histories and short sketches. For example, in *Wei Zhongxian xiaoshuo chijian shu* 魏忠賢小說斥奸書, note 3 of the reader's guide states: "It took me 'from spring to autumn' to write this book: it took

36 Bai Juyi, "Yu Yuan Jiu shu 與元九書 (A Letter to Yuan Zhen)," in 白居易集 (*A Collection of Bai Juyi*), comp. Gu Xuejie (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1979), 3: 926.

three years to finish. I read the imperial bulletins from the forty-eighth year of the reign of Emperor Wanli (1620) to the first year of the reign of Emperor Chongzhen; if I stack them up, they stand over six feet tall.”³⁷ After consulting a large number of imperial bulletins, the author also consulted records such as official histories and short sketches. This particular creative method and manner of selecting material determined, to a certain degree, these novels’ stylistic characteristics, making them governmental, journalistic, and prescriptive. This makes them unusual in terms of the creative process of Ming and Qing popular novels.

Reader’s Guides and Chapter Headings in Popular Novels

Chapter headings are an important organizational component in novels, and reader’s guides can give us a glimpse of how they evolved in popular novels. In the reader’s guide to *Pai’an jingqi*, note 1 states:

Each chapter has a heading. Because the phrasing in the old novels was always exquisite, people in the Yuan Dynasty used it for the titles of plays. Of the plays mentioned in *Taihe zhengyin pu* 太和正音譜, about half are phrases from old novels. Recently, authors were taking incompatible content from two different chapters and making couplets out of them. Inevitably, this made it necessary to cut out the original chapter headings, turning a good piece of writing into a bad one. Now, for each chapter authors use two phrases that constitute a couplet, in imitation of *Water Margin*, *Journey to the West*, and other historical examples.³⁸

From the perspective of the novel’s chapter headings, this note deserves our careful attention. It clarifies the origin of chapter headings in novels, including the inspiration that the titles of Yuan-era musical comedies (*zaju* 雜劇) took from such elements of the novelistic tradition as Song- and Yuan-era historical storytelling (*jiangshipinghua*) and literary Chinese novels (*wenyan xiaoshuo* 文言小說). At the same time, together with the titles of Yuan musical comedies, it influenced later generations of chapter headings in vernacular novels (*baihua xiaoshuo* 白話小說).

37 Wuyue Caomang Chen 吳越草莽臣, “Reader’s Guide,” in *Wei Zhongxian xiaoshuo chijian shu* 魏忠賢小說斥奸書 (Qiantang: Zhengxiao Guan, 1628).

38 Ling, “Reader’s Guide,” in *Pai’an jingqi*.

By the same token, this note demonstrates that compilers and publishers of folktale-based novels at the end of the Ming era tended to phrase chapter titles in couplets. Consulting the chapter headings in volume 40 of *Pai'an jingqi*, one sees that the chapter headings are all in the form of two phrases. Of these, six consist of two phrases of six syllables each, eighteen consist of two phrases of seven syllables each, and twenty consist of two phrases of eight syllables each. They are quite consistent. In imitation of the older example of *Water Margin* (also known as *Outlaws of the Marsh*) and *Journey to the West* (also known as *Pilgrimage to the West*, or *Monkey*), "for each chapter, authors used two phrases that constitute a couplet"; in this way, the chapter headings in couplets in the main text and the statements in the reader's guide can be said to echo each other.

Throughout the process of creation and dissemination of novels in the Qing Dynasty, the tendency of chapter headings in popular novels to take the form of couplets continued to evolve, and this is reflected in reader's guides to novels. The reader's guide to *Chun liu ying* 春柳鶯 states: "Each chapter has a title made up of two phrases placed at the beginning."³⁹ It consists of ten chapters in total; except for chapters 4 and 7, which have headings in two phrases of eight syllables each, all the other chapters have headings in two phrases of seven syllables each. This continues the developmental tendency of chapter headings in popular novels to take the form of couplets.

In the reader's guide to *Baigui zhi*, published during the reign of Emperor Jiaqing (1796-1820), note 4 states: "At the beginning of every chapter in this book there are two phrases that form a couplet. This is the guiding principle for the book."⁴⁰ It consists of four volumes and sixteen chapters in total; of these, eight chapters have titles in two phrases of seven syllables each, and eight chapters have two phrases of eight syllables each. The author of the reader's guide calls the chapter headings the "guiding principle of the book," indicating how highly he regards them. In the reader's guide to *Wanguo yanyi* 萬國演義, published during the reign of Emperor Guangxu (1871-1908), note 4 states: "Every volume has a title in couplets; moreover, it classifies and lists the important records at the level of specific items, linked together under each heading. One can grasp the main points almost at a glance."⁴¹ From the evidence in reader's guides, composing chapter headings in couplets became a mainstream tendency in Ming and Qing-era popular novels.

39 Nanbei Heguan Shizhe 南北鵑冠史者, "(Self-Record of the Author)," in *Chun liu ying* 春柳鶯 (published in the Kangxi reign).

40 Cui, "Reader's Guide".

41 Shen Weixian 沈惟賢, "Reader's Guide," in *Wanguo yanyi* (Zuoxin She, 1903).

The reader's guide to *Chun Liu Ying* states that the use of chapter headings in couplets is the reason that the author was "limited by the bookstore's whim";⁴² the role that the bookstore and its owner played in arranging chapter titles into couplets should not be overlooked. In the process of compiling and publishing novels, Ming- and Qing-era bookstore owners and lower-level literati connected with bookstores revised the chapter headings of older works. At the end of the Ming era, the Hangzhou bookstore owner Xia Lǔxian published Fang Ruhao's 方汝浩 *Chanzhen yishi* in eight volumes and forty chapters. In note 2 of the reader's guide, Xia emphasizes the work that went into revising the chapter headings of older works:

The meaning of the old book is obscure, and its usages are classical; it would be difficult for ordinary people to enjoy. I have organized it into forty chapters, which are divided into eight volumes, and the volume numbers are marked using the eight divinatory trigrams (*bagua* 八卦). I have cut out the old annotations in order to showcase the new and unusual.⁴³

When chapter headings were revised, pains were taken to use easy-to-understand language, to emphasize novelty and creativity, and to excise clichéd material. This was one of the starting points for bookstores and bookstore owners to edit chapter headings in novels.

At the same time, the contributions of the middle and upper strata of the literati in revising and improving the chapter headings of Ming and Qing popular novels should not be overlooked. The author of the reader's guide to *Yue Wumu Jinzhong Baoguo Zhuan*, published during the reign of Emperor Chongzhen was Yu Huayu, who passed the highest imperial civil service exam in 1640, the thirteenth year of the reign of Emperor Chongzhen, and served as the head magistrate of Xin'an and Yiwu Counties. Yu's edition omitted *Dasong Zhongxing Tongsu Yanyi*, and also revised the chapter headings from the older work, which had been compiled by Xiong Damu.

As the reader's guide makes clear, Xiong's original work consisted of eight volumes in total, with ten headings in each volume. Yu dismisses Xiong's work as redundant and trivial. He criticizes in particular chapter headings such as *Yinsi zhong Yue Fei xianling* 陰司中岳飛顯靈, *Qin hui yu fengmo xingzhe* 秦檜遇風魔行者, *Mingsi zhong baoying Qin Hui* 冥司中報應秦檜, and so on as

42 Nanbei Heguan Shizhe, "Self-Record of the Author."

43 Fang, "Reader's Guide."

“shallow and boorish, preposterous and nonsensical,”⁴⁴ and deletes them to reorder the book into seven volumes, with four headings in each volume. When Youyi Zhai revised the chapter headings in the older work *Dasong Zhongxing Tongsu Yanyi*, it focused on deleting superfluous headings and making the chapter headings concise and elegant. At the same time, it did its utmost to make the chapter headings and the main text correspond with each other and to avoid having many different things linked together in the same chapter.

By comparison, Xiong Damu's *Dasong zhongxing tongsu yanyi*, a creation of the initial phase of the popular novel in the Ming Dynasty, was faithful to the historical work on which it was based. This is apparent from the chapter headings, in which “the major themes are all linked to *Tongjian Gangmu*.”⁴⁵ *Tongjian Gangmu*, in distinction to *Zizhi tongjian*, “has a table of contents, but is nevertheless still difficult to consult,”⁴⁶ and invoking “outline” (*gang*) together with “index” (*mu*)) had an influence on the development of chapter headings in Ming and Qing popular novels.

This influence is particularly obvious with respect to *Dasong Zhongxing Tongsu Yanyi* and other early popular novels.⁴⁷ However, Yu Huayu's *Yue Wumu Jingzhong Baoguo Zhuan*, published in the late Ming era, is oriented toward presenting refinement and novelty. It revises the chapter headings of the older work, displays a strong awareness of the novel as an independent genre, gradually breaks free of the restrictions of the official histories, and moves the popular novel a step closer to being a professional literary production.

Reader's Guides and Readers of Novels

Documentary materials concerning the social class of readers of Ming and Qing popular novels are not only rare but also quite scattered. Until now, scholarly research on the relationship between readers' social class, on the one hand, and the creation and distribution of Ming and Qing popular novels, on the other, has unfortunately been scarce. Reader's guides to novels provide an important perspective for us to study this question.

Popular novels were published in order to satisfy the needs of readers in different social classes. When readers in different social positions and at different

44 Yu Huayu, “Reader's Guide.”

45 Xiong Damu, “Reader's Guide,” note 4.

46 Zhu Xi 朱熹, *Zhuzi quanshu* 朱子全書 (Shanghai: Shanghai Classics Publishing House; Hefei: Anhui Education Publishing House, 2002), 21: 1002-1003.

47 See Yu Huayu, “Reader's Guide,” notes 4 and 5.

levels read novels, they had different experiences, and the novels produced different reading effects. Due to the development of the commodity economy around the mid- to late Ming Dynasty, the class of urban people was continually expanding. At the same time, following improvements in printing technology and the fall in the cost of printing books, the price of books dropped. Many lower-class readers joined the ranks of novel readers, and their reading needs and leisure habits became an important impulse for the development of the Ming and Qing popular novel.

In the reader's guide to *Dasong Zhongxing Tongsu Yanyi*, note 4 states: "I hope this will help the common people to understand."⁴⁸ Note 7 states: "The sentence structure is coarse, and the choice of words is vulgar, so the book is easy for dull-witted, common people to read. I do not dare to claim connections with noblemen of talent."⁴⁹ As we can see, *Dasong Zhongxing Tongsu Yanyi* considered lower-class readers "below scholar-officials"—that is, people who were "ordinary" and "ignorant"—the main audience for the novel. This is a concrete reflection, apparent from the novels, of the development of the commodity economy and the changes occurring in social classes. It explains that, in the Ming and Qing eras, urban people were gradually taking the place of gentry and merchants who had dominated the readership until the middle of the Ming era, and it explains that urban people became the main component of the novel-reading public.

Lower-class readers' literacy level was quite low; their reading level and reading habits hastened the novel's popularization. We can gain a glimpse of this from reader's guides to popular novels of the Ming and Qing period. Based on the records in reader's guides, the tendency toward popularization of the Ming and Qing popular novel is evident in the following several respects.

First, in order to satisfy the reading needs of lower-class readers, novels adopted the convention of author's notes (*zuozhu* 作注), which made the language of the novels easier to understand. In the reader's guide to *Xin lieguo zhi* 新列國志 published by Ye Jingchi (葉敬池), note 7 states: "Place names were different in the past than they are today. I have now consulted the book *Yitong zhi* 一統志, clarified everything, and annotated it for the reader's convenience."⁵⁰ In Ming and Qing popular novels, a large number of notes about people's names, place names, official titles, customs and allusions,

48 Xiong Damu, "Reader's Guide."

49 Ibid.

50 Feng Menglong 馮夢龍, "Reader's Guide," in *Xin lieguozhi* (published in the Chongzhen reign).

pronunciations, expressions, and so on, are inserted into the main body of the text in order to give the reader an “overview.”

Second, using easy-to-understand language, or adopting vernacular language and dialect, in order to accommodate or even cater to the reader was a common practice in many popular novels. In the reader's guide to *Kuaixin Bian*, published in the early Qing era, note 1 states: “The meaning of the words is common and obvious, so that scholars and ordinary people alike can enjoy them. I do not dare to use obscure language to ornament myself, for fear I might offend learned noblemen.”⁵¹ In the reader's guide to *Honglou Fu Meng*, note 6 states: “In the book I avoid using unfamiliar phrases, thus making it easier to read.”⁵² In the reader's guide to the typeset and printed edition of *Wanguo Yanyi*, published by Zuoxinshe in the twenty-ninth year of the reign of Emperor Guangxu, note 1 states:

This book relates in particular historical and present-day facts about the countries in Europe, the Americas, East Asia, South Asia, and Southeast Asia. So that it can be used in instruction, it is written using clear language that makes it easy to understand, and for this reason it is titled *The Romance of the Ten Thousand States*.⁵³

As all the reader's guides cited above make clear, using plain, everyday language—even dialects and local slang—had the goal of accommodating the reading habits and characteristics of lower-class readers.

The third aspect was adopting plain, everyday verses and inserting them into the main text. In the reader's guide to *Sanjiao kaimi guizheng yanyi* 三教開迷歸正演義, note 4 states: “The reason this book is recited in common verse is to help people understand clearly.”⁵⁴ In the reader's guide to *Chun liu ying*, note 6 states: “The verse at the beginning of every chapter is not composed using standard methods. It is merely to clarify the narration and is meant as a convenience to common people.”⁵⁵ In the reader's guide to *Honglou Fu Meng*, note 21 states: “The verse in the previous book was too obscure. It was not only oppressive and hard to understand for the reader, but tasteless as well.

51 Tianhua Caizi, “Reader's Guide.”

52 Chen Shaohai, “Reader's Guide.”

53 Shen Weixian, “Reader's Guide.”

54 Pan Jingruo 潘鏡若, “Reader's Guide,” in *Sanjiao kaimi guizheng yanyi* (Jinling: Wanjuan Lou, in the Wanli reign).

55 Nanbei Heguan Shizhe, “Self-Record of the Author.”

It did not describe people and events as enjoyably as this book does.”⁵⁶ The use of verse showed concern for readers of the novel, particularly for lower-class readers’ literacy level and experiences. “So that people might understand clearly” and “for the convenience of common people” became the main goals of inserting verses into popular novels.

The fourth aspect was the widespread adoption of commentary. Chen Bangjun, who lived around the middle of the reign of Emperor Wan Li (1573–1620), pointed out in the reader’s guide to *Guang Xie Shi*: “The reason commentary has become popular today is that it helps beginning students (*chuxue* 初學) to read. It is not for scholars (*dafang* 大方).”⁵⁷ What Chen calls “beginning students” refers mainly to lower-class readers who have some knowledge of literature but whose level is not high. The fact that Chen places “beginning students” in opposition to “scholars” in this quotation indicates his regret that commentary of all genres, including commentary of novels, had undergone a change. From initially fulfilling the reading needs of officials and scholars, it came to focus on the demands of lower-class readers.

Commentary was intended to serve readers. Yuan Wuya’s “Zhongyi Shuihu Quanshu Fafan” states: “The book values commentary because it can convey the author’s thoughts and inspire the reader’s mind.”⁵⁸ Commentary became a bridge for communication between writers and readers. In the reader’s guide to *Bailian Zhen* 百煉真, note 4 states: “It is necessary to add detailed marks to crucial points in the plot, and discuss them one by one.”⁵⁹ In the reader’s guide to *Baigui Zhi*, note 4 states:

At the beginning of each chapter in this book . . . there are several lines of commentary. These are the book’s main entries. Readers can first read the commentary and then read the main text, or else first read the main text and then read the commentary; after that, they can refine their own understanding. Such are my, He Qingchuan’s, words of wisdom.⁶⁰

Commentary hewed close to the novel’s content and plot, the novel’s main creative idea, and its compositional structure. It was through commentary that the reader could better understand and absorb the text.

56 Chen Shaohai, “Reader’s Guide.”

57 Chen Bangjun 陳邦俊, “Reader’s Guide,” in *Guangxie shi* 廣諧史 (Sheng Yingkui, 1615).

58 Yuan Wuya, “Zhongyishuihuquanshufafan.”

59 Molangxian Zhuren 墨浪仙主人, “Reader’s Guide,” in *Bailian zhen* (published in the Kangxi reign).

60 Cui Xiangchuan, “Reader’s guide.”

Fifth, the arrangement of illustrations often took into account the needs of lower-class readers. In the reader's guide to *Xiuping yuan* 繡屏緣, note 1 states: "Usually, at the beginning of every novel there were several pages with exquisitely drawn portraits to delight the reader's eye. Presumably because the events in the novel were not all wonderful, bookstore owners first used this method to entice readers."⁶¹ In the reader's guide to *Honglou Fu Meng*, note 4 states: "This book reproduces the illustrations from the original book for the reader's enjoyment."⁶²

Illustrations could fill in deficiencies in the novel's text, as the reader's guide to *Chanzhen yishi* states in note 5: "The human emotions in *Chanzhen Yishi* are both beautiful and ugly. It uses words to describe them, but for those things that words cannot express, it uses pictures to portray them."⁶³ The work used illustrations to fill in deficiencies in the textual account. Because of this, bookstores of the Ming and Qing era, and particularly those of the Ming era, attached quite great importance to the use of illustrations in novels, to the extent that they invited famous artists to draft illustrations. In the reader's guide to *Sui Yangdi Yanshi*, note 8 points out: "The portraits often seen in the market only hint at a person's form. They are merely playthings for children. For this book I have specially invited a famous and skillful artist to paint the portraits, and he did his utmost to reveal their charms."⁶⁴ Note 9 states:

For each portrait, I chose a wonderful line of poetry from one of the ancients that matched the events in the story. With these words as inspiration or assistance, I worked their wonderful qualities into the portrait. So besides the words themselves, there was something else to enjoy. This is truly unprecedented among all the books in the world.⁶⁵

Pairing illustrations with verse increased the picturesque charm of the illustrations and so increased the reader's enjoyment.

There was a close connection between the needs of the reader and the compositional structure of the novel. For example, in *Bei shi yanyi* 北史演義, the reader's guide conveys in detail that the book's method of composition is closely connected to the reader's reception. As note 4 states:

61 Su'an Zhuren 蘇庵主人, "Reader's Guide," in *Xiuping yuan* 繡屏緣 (the manuscript in 1670).

62 Chen Shaohai, "Reader's Guide."

63 Fang, "Reader's Guide."

64 Qidong Yeren, "Reader's Guide."

65 Ibid.

There are reasons a war is won or lost. For every war I write about in this book, I must first give the reasons for its success or failure. If a country's military is strong, I describe the formations by which defeat is already foretold. Or if a country's military is weak, I describe the tendencies by which victory is already assured. Each has a different structure, and I portray each one by one. They clarify at a glance the true situation on that day.⁶⁶

Note 8 states: "Although this book has a lot of different threads, one main thread holds it all together: every event is analyzed thoroughly, in order to help the reader see clearly."⁶⁷ Note 11 states: "The important characters in the book are all painted in thick ink and heavy color in order to help the reader observe them."⁶⁸ Describing war, the commentary conveys in advance "the reasons for victory and defeat"; this lays the groundwork for the conclusion of the war. It allows the reader to understand clearly and not perceive the conclusion to be abrupt. The structure of the novel's plot and the depiction of its characters also give consideration to the reader.

In conclusion, I have researched reader's guides to Ming- and Qing-era popular novels from several perspectives. Reader's guides to popular novels have a high value as historical materials and can provide useful clues for us to research the writers, commentators, novels, and the contemporary environment of the creation and dissemination of novels. At the same time, reader's guides provide a distinct perspective to research issues of the creative method of novels, the chapter headings of novels, novel's readers, and so on. This perspective can help us to explore the true course of the Ming and Qing popular novel's emergence and development, as well as the patterns in its evolution.

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66 Du Gang, "Reader's Guide."

67 Ibid.

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Scenic Depictions of Huizhou in Ming–Qing Literature

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Translated by Casey Lee

Abstract

In the Ming through the Qing Dynasties, literary works captured Huizhou through scenic depictions of its mountains and rivers, villages, wealth, literary families, and portrayals of the local people. In these works, Huizhou men are described as virtuous, literary, and gallant while Huizhou women are often seen as knowledgeable, worldly, and industrious characters upholding the values of feudal society. By exploring such depictions of Huizhou, this article considers the way in which literary depictions correspond to historical reality, how scenes depicted in literature accord with the specific and various characteristics of a region, and the inextricable ties between scenic depictions in literature (*wenxue tujing* 文學圖景) and regional literature (*diyu wenxue* 地域文學).

Keywords

Ming–Qing literature – regional literature depictions – historical reality

In 1121, Shezhou (歙州) was renamed Huizhou (徽州) and charged with administering the six counties of Shexian (歙縣), Xiuning (休寧), Yixian (黟縣), Jixi (績溪), Wuyuan (婺源), and Qimen (祁門) as a newly formed prefecture. This geopolitical formation, which at the time was referred to by locals as “one prefecture, six counties,” would last until the Republican era (1912–1949). Huizhou was more a land of scenic mountains than it was of fields, and the quality of its soil was ill-suited to agriculture. In the Ming (1368–1644)

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through Qing (1644-1911) Dynasties, the population of Huizhou grew at a rate that surpassed its land's capacity for food production, forcing the people there to turn to trade beyond their borders in order to subsist. Beginning in the mid-Ming Dynasty, Huizhou people began to exhibit promise in trading, developing a merchant group on par with the widely recognized Shanxi merchants (Jinshang 晉商). As book learning was traditionally emphasized and valued in Huizhou, it was said of Huizhou merchants that "while they were compelled by circumstances to take up trade, they all retain the air of scholars."¹ Huizhou merchants were educated from a young age and actively sought interactions with literati and scholar-officials while conducting business. They thus brought the charms of their hometown to the attention of literary men, who drew on scenes from Huizhou in their writings.

Like Huangshan (黃山 Yellow Mountains), located within its borders, Huizhou's unique topography and its long-lasting importance in traditional Chinese culture has attracted much academic attention in the past century, giving rise to a field known as Hui studies (*Hui xue* 徽學). Historical research has already made remarkable strides in the study of Huizhou; however, the same cannot be said of studies conducted from a literary perspective.² This article seeks to fill a gap in scholarship by exploring how scenic depictions of Huizhou in Ming–Qing literature comprise a literary enrichment of Hui studies but also offer a way of understanding regional culture through scenic literary depictions.

Scenes of Huizhou's Landscape

Huizhou is located in the southern part of present-day Anhui Province and thus was considered part of China's Jiangnan ("south of the Yangtze River" 江南) region. The mountainous prefecture is home to both Huangshan and Mount Qiyun (齊雲山), a mountain of Daoist importance. It also contains the source of the Xin'an River, which, flowing first through Qiandao Lake before joining the Fuchun River, served as an important waterway connecting Huizhou with the outside world. Huizhou was thus geographically remote without

1 Daizhen 戴震, "Dai jiefu jiazhuan 戴節婦家傳," in *Dai Zhen wenji* 戴震文集 (*The Collected Works of Dai Zhen*) (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1980), 205.

2 At present, the only published studies of Huizhou literature are Han Jiegen 韓結根, *Mingdai Huizhou wenxue yanjiu* 明代徽州文學研究 (Shanghai: Fudan University Press, 2006); and Zhu Wanshu 朱萬曙, *Huizhou xiqu* 徽州戲曲 (Hefei: Anhui People's Publishing House, 2005). There are also portions of some articles on the topic.

being isolated, so it had the serenity of a celestial garden with the elegance of Jiangnan. These characteristics inspired men of letters to stop, linger, and depict it in literary imagery.³ When the Southern Dynasty literary figure Ren Fang (任昉, 460–508) “became prefect of Xin’an (新安), he went on a spring inspection tour of the area and became captivated by the bountiful resources and beauty of its landscape. He decided to reside there. Later, his home was named Fangcunxi (昉村溪).”⁴ The Northern Song poet Su Shunqin (蘇舜欽, 1008–1048) composed the following poem: “The road along the Xin’an is full of scenic beauty/as the mountain dusks, clouds dim and evening rain slants/with such sights before me I am reluctant to dismount/my heart leaps forward first to follow the waters home.”⁵ This poem not only captures Huizhou’s beauty in words but also expresses that the poet regards Huizhou as his heart’s abode.

Huizhou’s beautiful landscape was relatively unknown prior to the Song Dynasty (960–1279), but its reputation spread in the Ming through Qing dynasties as Huizhou’s merchants traded and interacted with literati outside the prefecture, inspiring them to visit its scenic mountains and rivers. In an article titled “Wang Hezhou zhuren you She”, the late Qing Huizhou figure Xu Chengyao (許承堯) writes of how literary men and officials such as Shen Shixing (申時行), Xu Wei (徐渭), and Wang Shizhen (王世貞) had all once traveled to Huizhou. When Xu Wei visited, he “ascended Mount Qiyun and returned to Zhejiang without having written a single poem. He thus composed a verse to reproach himself: Tethering my horse to a plum tree, I seek drink/a shop banner wavering between mountain and stream/with such praiseworthy scenes in sight/how could I fail to commit words to poetry?”⁶ In *Xu Wenchang san ji* (徐文長三集), this poem appears under the title “Since setting out from Zhejiang to Xin’an, climbing Mount Qiyun, encountering such fantastic sites on the way, all without writing a single word; a poem composed at an

3 During the reign of Emperor Jiajing (1522–1566), Huizhou native and *jinshi* (presented scholar) Cheng Minzheng 程敏政 edited and compiled *Xin’an wenxian zhi* 新安文獻志, which included 1,087 articles and 1,034 poems mostly covering the themes of Huizhou’s landscape and scenery, including works by native Huizhou men of letters.

4 Dai Tingming 戴廷明 et al., eds., *Xin’an mingzu zhi* 新安名族志 (Hefei: Huangshan Publishing House, 2005), 1: 252.

5 The original reads: 新安道中物色佳，山昏雲淡晚雨斜。眼看好景懶下馬，心隨流水先還家。

6 Xu Chengyao 許承堯, *Sheshi xiantan* 歙事閑談 (Hefei: Huangshan Publishing House, 2001), 20: 413. The original reads: 系馬梅花索酒時，溪山遙映酒家旗。如何每到堪題處，不解吟成一字詩？

intersection to mock myself.”⁷ In 1641, Qian Qianyi (錢謙益, 1582-1664) traveled to Huizhou and composed thirty poems about it.⁸ Many more literary figures have set foot in Huizhou and made it the subject of their poetry, propagating the image of Huizhou as a sanctuary of mountains and rivers through literary depiction.

Perhaps no image is more exemplary of Huizhou’s landscape than the Huangshan mountain range. The Ming Dynasty traveler Xu Xiake (徐霞客, 1586-1641) has written a travelogue based on the two times he climbed Huangshan, in 1616 and 1618. In 1616, the Huizhou scholar Pan Zhiheng (潘之恒, 1566-1622) published *Yellow Sea* (*Huang hai* 黃海), a compilation including a historical narrative of Huangshan’s grandeur along with collected writings by contemporary literary figures commemorating their travels to Huangshan. The literary works are arranged such that prose is followed by poetry. In addition to local Huizhou writers, *Yellow Sea* also includes works by writers who have traveled to Huizhou, such as Xie Zhaozhe, Feng Mengzhen, and Huang Ruheng. Huang Ruheng’s *Record of Huangshan Travels* (*You Huangshan ji* 游黃山記), recently selected to be included in the *Dictionary for Appreciation of Chinese Travel Writing* (*Zhongguo youji jianshang cidian*),⁹ documents a journey from the base of the mountain to the Baiyun Hermitage (Baiyun’an 白雲庵) the Santian Gates (*Santianmen* 三天門), and Guangming Summit (*Guangmingding* 光明頂). Huang writes,

Setting foot on Guangming Summit, one can see the Sanhai Gate. The utter silence stretches tens and thousands of *ren* (仞), as peaks pierce through the sky from below. Tiandu Peak (天都峰) sits even with my shoulders, while Dantai Peak (丹台峰) comes only to my heels. Within the majestic and obscurity between thirty-six peaks are the Chu River (楚江) and Mount Lu (廬岳). For all this boundless wonder to exist within my sight—what a magnificent view! It truly gives a feeling of being a solitary figure in another realm.¹⁰

7 Xu Wenchang 徐文長, *Xu Wenchang san ji*, vol. 11, in *Xu Wei ji* 徐渭集 (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1983), 2: 351.

8 Qian Qianyi 錢謙益, *Chuxue ji* 初學集, vol. 19, in *Dongshan shiji* 東山詩集 (Shanghai: Shanghai Chinese Classics Publishing House, 1985), 2: 641.

9 Zang Weixi 臧維熙, ed., *Zhongguo youji jianshang cidian* 中國游記鑒賞辭典 (*Dictionary for Appreciation of Chinese Travel Writing*) (Qingdao: Qingdao Press, 1991), 404.

10 Pan Zhiheng 潘之恒, *Huang hai* 黃海, travelogue 4 of 18, in *Siku quanshu cunmu congshu, ji bu* 四庫全書存目叢書·集部 (Jinan: Qilu Publishing House, 1997). A poems that follow are from this source.

Guangming Peak remains a popular tourist destination for visitors to Huangshan. Due to its high altitude and openness, which allows climbers a downward-facing view of the surrounding mountains, Huang's description "a solitary figure in another realm" aptly describes the feeling of standing there even today.

During the Qing Dynasty, writers continued to travel to Huangshan, adding their various stylistic flair to literary depictions of its scenery. In 1641, Qian Qianyi traveled to Huangshan and wrote a travelogue in nine volumes.¹¹ In the "Qian muzhai Huangshan ji" section of his *Sheshi xiantan* (歙事閑談), Xu Chengyao cites a portion of Qian's text and offers the following commentary: "This feels very authentically written. One could say it is the highest praise of our home region. As someone who was born and raised here, I take so much for granted that I could not, in fact, speak of it as intimately."¹² In 1783, Yuan Mei (袁枚, 1716–1797) climbed both Huangshan and Qiyunshan during a visit to Huizhou and composed more than thirty poems, including one titled "On the way to the monastery, gazing upon the Tiandu and Lianhua (蓮花) Peaks, half-obstructed by clouds. Upon our arrival, the clouds lessened, so the peaks fully revealed themselves for the first time." The poem reads, "The mountains are like a bride too shy to meet my eye/so she veils half her face making use of cloud veils/Only after sitting a while does she remove this screen/the gods playing me in a round of hide-and-seek."¹³ Yuan's likening of this scene of a mist and fog-covered Huangshan to a blushing bride is quite charming.

The writers depicting Huizhou's landscape discussed above are all famous literary figures of the Ming–Qing period. Others have also contributed their unique style and perspectives to the regional depictions of Huizhou. For instance, Yuan Mei's travels to Huizhou seem related to his encounter with the poetry of the Yangzhou merchant Jiang Chun (江春). Jiang, a native of Shezhou County in Huizhou, wrote "Huang hai youlü (黃海遊錄)," a poem cycle of thirty poems about his hometown.¹⁴ Yuan Mei's offers rather high appraisal of this poem cycle in *Suiyuan shihua* 隨園詩話. He writes,

11 In the chapter "Qian Muzhai huangshan ji 錢牧齋黃山記" in *Sheshi xiantan*, Xu Chengyao writes that Qian traveled to Huangshan in the fifteenth year of reign of Emperor Chongzhen, or 1642. However, Qian's thirty poems in *Chuxue ji* (see note 8) are dated "from the third month of the *xin yi* year to the first month." Therefore, Qian's travels must have taken place in year before, 1641.

12 Xu, *Sheshi xiantan*, 435.

13 Yuan Mei 袁枚, *Xiaocang shanfang shiji*, vol. 29, in *Yuan Mei quanji* (Nanjing: Jiangsu Chinese Classics Publishing House, 1997), 1: 656. The original reads: 山如新婦羞相見, 故使雲為半面妝。坐待片時才卻扇, 天公教我捉迷藏。

14 Jiang Chun's 江春 extant works are collected with those of his brother, Jiang Fang 江昉, in *Xin'an er jiang xiansheng ji* 新安二江先生集, which is held by the National Library of China as well as Anhui Province Library.

When I traveled to Huangshan, I brought with me books of poetry by Cao Zhenhen and Jiang Heting for reference. At first, I set aside Jiang's poetry, the work of a great merchant, in favor of Cao's, the work of a scholar. But I was not satisfied reading Cao's poems, so I picked up Jiang's poems, instead, and was very impressed by them . . . the spirit and boldness of his writing are extraordinary.¹⁵

Here, Yuan praises Jiang Chun's poetic talents and gives us a glimpse of the diversity of those who visited Huangshan and immortalized its scenic mountains and rivers through writing. This culture of travel to Huizhou popularized literary depictions of its landscape scenery.

Scenes of Huizhou Villages

In addition to being a haven of beautiful mountains and rivers, Huizhou was also a land of villages nestled in valleys. For native Huizhou writers of the Ming–Qing period, the rhythm of life in Huizhou alternated between reading and tilling the soil. While sharing an appreciation of Huizhou's scenic beauty with literary men who visited from afar, they were also immersed in the rustic, tranquil charm of village life. Huizhou's literary men, both long-term residents and merchants who left to trade, express familiarity and intimacy with this aspect of Huizhou life in their writings. This section focuses on the works of native Huizhou writers in order to explore scenic depictions of Huizhou's villages.

Jiang Guan (江瓘, 1503–1565) was a mid-sixteenth-century Huizhou writer from Shexian County. He once “demonstrated an exceptional will towards literary writing; but, due to an illness, had to leave school.”¹⁶ He researched medicine in hopes of treating his illness, collecting exemplary medical texts and documents from across the ages in the twelve-volume work *Mingyi lei'an* (名醫類案). *The Complete Catalogue of the Four Branches of Books* (*Siku quanshu zongmu* 四庫全書總目) has deemed the “many corrections and clarifications” in this work “precise and fitting.” At the same time, Jiang never gave up his earlier dream of writing and continued to compose poems, which have been collected in the seven-volume anthology *Jiang shanren ji* (江山人集). Because Jiang spent most of his life in Huizhou, his poetry centers on local life

15 Yuan Mei, *Suiyuan shihua*, vol. 13, in *Yuan Mei quanji*, 3: 439.

16 Wang Daokun 汪道昆, “Lingshi shanren zhuan, 靈石山人傳” in Jiang Guan 江瓘, *Jiang shanren ji* 江山人集, in *Siku quanshu cunmu congshu, ji bu* 143: 390.

in Huizhou.¹⁷ His poem “Fu dong yuan (賦東園)” expresses Jiang’s close relationship with his hometown in scenes that highlight the unique qualities of Huizhou village life. The lines “open window overlooks faraway peaks/magnificent trees line clear ponds” (開窗瞰遠峰，佳樹臨清池) highlight the mountain scenery that dominates Huizhou’s natural landscape. Then “in time, a light rain falls/and with it comes the valley wind” (微雨因時來，谷風與之隨) emphasize the feeling of spatial openness in the rural area. “Taking up hoes, we till unused land/the fields yield a plentiful harvest” (提鋤理荒穢，畦蔬有余滋) captures the wonder and satisfaction of cultivating one’s own vegetables. The image of these vegetables laid out with warm food and delicious wine in the lines “the harvested taro fill our plates with delicacies/we imbibe warm wine and rejoice in our self-sustenance” (採菖充盤饌，酒熟歡自持) brings the authentic flavor of agricultural life to the readers.

In terms of depictions of Huizhou village life, the works of Wang Zihu (汪子祐), a Huizhou native who lived in the late Ming and early Qing period, are even more exemplary. Chen Xichang (陳希昌), Wang’s junior from his home county of Qimen, provides the following biographical summary of Wang’s life in “Shixi xiansheng zhuan (石西先生傳)”:

(Wang Zihu) Courtesy name Aifu. Alias: Shixi. He spent his life in Qiximen. His father, Deyu, worked in the granary and died young. His mother, whose maiden name was Fang, became a widow and vowed to raise him on her own. From a young age, Wang was quick-witted and a prodigious reader. He most loved to read poetry. Mr. Wang used to say: To master the *ya* (雅) and *song* (頌) poetry (from the *Book of Songs*) by fifteen, and, by twenty, surpass Sima Xiangru (司馬相如, 179? BCE–118 BCE) in composing *fu* (賦)—such would be a fulfilling life. He was generous and free-spirited. He hated learning for the purpose of exam preparations, a process he cared little to engage.¹⁸

This biography describes a talented person with character, unsuited to the path of civil service examinations. From a young age, he desired only to write and find joy in writing poetry.

17 The volumes of the extant version of *Jiang shanren ji* are divided thematically as follows: 卷一至卷三為《林棲集》(實即以徽州本土生活為內容)，卷四為《毗陵集》、《池陽集》、《吳越稿》、《楚中稿》，卷五為《白下稿》、《西游稿》、《郡齋雜詠》，卷六為書、序，卷七為記，其中《郡齋雜詠》亦以徽州生活為主要內容。

18 Chen Xichang 陳希昌, “Shixi xiansheng zhuan 石西先生傳,” in Wang Zihu 汪子祐, *Shixi ji* 石西集 (*A Collection of Mr. Shixi*), in *Siku quanshu cunmu congshu, ji bu*, 146: 542.

Fortunately, Wang Zihu's poetry anthology, *A Collection of Mr. Shixi* (*Shixi ji* 石西集), survives. This work gives us insight into Wang's character, way of thinking, and his talent for depicting rural Huizhou through intricate, expressive imagery. As someone who abandoned the path of the scholar-official, Wang spent most of his days in Huizhou. His familiarity with his home region enriches his descriptions of Huizhou villages with a vivid and animated quality.

His poem, "The First of Eight Poems on a Mountain Village in Autumn (Qiuri shancun bashou [zhi yi] 秋日山村八首 [之一])," depicts the remoteness of a village nestled between mountains. Uneven roads laid with mountain stone weave beneath a veil of fog and clouds. An elusive bird occasionally appears. The chain of mountain peaks is hard to distinguish from a painting. Fields on stone foundations rest along the slopes. Tombs settle beside thatched houses. In this scene of total tranquility, where no human voice can be heard, a lone chicken cage faces the breaking dawn.¹⁹

Literary history has tended to discuss "fields and gardens" poetry (*tianyuan shi* 田園詩) with regard to works up through the Song Dynasty; little attention is paid to how the tradition continues to persist in the Ming through Qing Dynasties. Wang Zihu's poetry, which depicts fields and gardens both as scenic imagery and a way of life, could certainly be considered "fields and gardens" poetry. His work is filled with images of panicles, chickens, and bird coops; there are fields and desolate graves, misty dawns and tillage. There is bamboo cut into pipes for irrigation and homes built before steep cliffs. There is also the rustic warmth of mountain folk who "are most delighted to have guests, for whom plates of food are endlessly refreshed" (最喜能留客, 盤餐復進鮮). Other lines from his poetry, such as "toiling to plow disused land/tilling for countless years" (力耕無棄土, 耕鑿不知年), indicate that life in these villages has its pressures and hardships. At the same time, it is not without its joys, as the line "warm bedding sufficient for deep slumber" (穩朴足高眠) implies. This joy is reflected in literary depictions of not only the breathtaking natural scenery but also the warmth of human interactions, which serve to counteract the weariness associated with the pursuit of wealth and status.

19 See Wang, *Shixi ji*, in *Siku quanshu cunmu congshu, ji bu*, vol. 146. The original reads: 山村絕隱僻, 曲蹬入層雲。怪鳥時常見, 幽嵐晝未分。石田盤古麓, 茆屋帶荒墳。竟日無人語, 雞埘對夕曛。

Scenes of Wealth in Huizhou

Huizhou became a rich and prosperous part of China during the Ming–Qing period due largely to its enterprising merchants, who have been well studied by historians.²⁰ A poem that is frequently cited by researchers of Huizhou to illustrate its prosperity is Tang Xianzu's (湯顯祖, 1550–1616) "Pitying My Lack of Material Wealth, Wu Xu (吳序) Urges Me to Go to the Land of Mt. Huang (黃山) and Mt. Bai (白岳); But I Did Not." It reads: "To experience a land so rich it reeks of precious metals/many set off toward Mt. Huang and Mt. Bai/All my life, I have been fond of interesting places/but have no dreams of visiting Huizhou."²¹ Contemporary enthusiasts of Huizhou habitually cite these verses to express their fondness for the region; however, the poem offers neither a particular endorsement nor a denouncement of Huizhou. It is simply a reflection of the poet's personal feelings. Shen Jifei (沈際飛), the editor of *Yuming Tang xuanji* (玉茗堂選集), has remarked about this poem, "Wu Xu is a clever person. He hears that there are many scheming to take part in the selection of officials in the 'gold county' of Xiuning, as well as those who go there hoping to get rich by associating with them. But this one poem of Linchuan's (Tang Xianzu) is a salve that cools his eagerness."²² Shen's comment can be taken as a reflection of how during this period Huizhou attracted many social climbers and officials who sought to benefit from its wealth. He implies that it was precisely because Tang had no desire to be such an opportunist that he responds to Wu Xu's pleas for him to visit Huizhou by saying he has "no dreams of visiting Huizhou."

The most direct depictions of Huizhou wealth can be found in stories modeled after the "three words, two slaps" (*San yan er pai* 三言二拍) vernacular fiction collection. The stories in this collection tend to focus on the events of ordinary townsfolk. By "consummately replicating the diversity of social attitudes and human emotions, and by fully describing the intricacies of comedy, tragedy, meetings, and partings,"²³ this body of work vividly conveys a sense of

20 See Fujī Hiroshi's essay series "Shinan shōnin no kenkyū," *Tōyō Gakuhō* 36 (1953–54); and Zhang Haipeng and Wang Tingyuan, eds., *Huishang yanjiu* (Hefei: Anhui People's Publishing House, 1995).

21 Tang Xianzu 湯顯祖, *Tang xianzu quanji* 湯顯祖全集 (*The Complete Works of Tang Xianzu*), vol. 18 (Beijing: Beijing Classics Publishing House, 1999), 2: 782. The original reads: 欲識金銀氣，多從黃白游。一生痴絕處，無夢到徽州。

22 Ibid.

23 Baoweng Laoren 抱瓮老人, "Preface" to *Jinggu qiguan* 今古奇觀 (Shanghai: Shanghai Classics Publishing House, 1992).

society in the mid- to late Ming period. Huizhou merchants are frequently featured in the stories that concern merchants. In a survey of about fifteen collections of short novels (*huaben* 話本) from the period, passages associated with Huizhou merchants and their activities appear in forty or so chapter titles.

The thirty-seventh story in the Ming Dynasty short fiction anthology *Slapping the Table in Amazement, Second Collection* (*Erke pai'an jingqi* 二刻拍案驚奇) recounts a mysterious incident concerning a Huizhou merchant named Cheng Zai, begins with a description of how Huizhou people respected those engaging in trade.

The custom in Huizhou is such that being a merchant is considered the best career option, whereas the path to officialdom is second. . . . Huizhou people especially value those who engage in trade. Whenever merchants return, whether one's clansmen and friends, or one's wives, children, and other family members—everyone judges how to treat you based on your earnings. Those who earn a lot are received with love, respect, and ingratiation. Those who earn little are taken lightly and ridiculed.²⁴

Such a scene detailing how merchants are seen is rather exceptional in literary depictions of Huizhou. As success of the Huizhou merchants brought prosperity to the region, representations of Huizhou's wealth began to appear more frequently in literary works.

Whereas the materiality of Huizhou's wealth is well documented in historical sources and studies, its presence in literary works is more subtly related to certain recurring themes and images, such as descriptions of landscape gardens. Building landscape gardens hardly seem necessary for a region as blessed with natural beauty as Huizhou was. It became a trend among wealthy Huizhou merchants and their heirs in the Ming through Qing Dynasties.

A figure whose life and work well illustrate the relationship between garden culture and literature in Huizhou is Wu Wenkui (吳文奎) of the Wanli era (1572-1620). Wu not only built his own gardens but also wrote about them in great detail. *Suntang ji* (蓀堂集), a ten-volume compilation of writings by Wu Wenkui, gives us some insight into the circumstances surrounding his life and literary output. A native of Shexian County, Wu was born into a wealthy merchant family. His family circumstances dictated that he study from a young age in order to pursue a position in government, but his efforts went unrewarded.

24 Ling Mengchu 凌濛初, *Erke pai'an jingqi* (*Slapping the Table in Amazement, Second Collection*), vol. 37, in *The Complete Works of Ling Mengchu*, ed. An Pingqiu and Wei Tongxian (Nanjing: Phoenix Publishing House, 2010), 3: 906.

Frustrated, Wu immersed himself in the craft of writing, even becoming the pupil of Wu Guolun (吳國倫), one of the Latter Seven Masters of Ming Dynasty literature. Two chapters in the *Suntang Ji* are of special interest because they are written accounts of landscape gardens Wu designed and built himself. “Shiyuan ji” was written in 1528, the year he failed the civil service examinations. In it, he recounts how he built the garden because after “giving up his pursuit of officialdom, (he) longed for a place to unburden himself, but did not have one.”²⁵ Though built on “a small, cracked surface,” Shiyuan had “fine and sturdy” construction. Wu writes: “The east is a study area for the children. Turn to south and take that path into a room. This room is the study where my heart finds company. A pot of tea on the stove gives off a fragrance. I recline, stretching, onto the bedding, with several books open before me.”²⁶ According to “Sunyuan ji,” his other garden, Sunyuan, was much larger in both scale and extravagance. Its attractions included a thatched cottage, a cooling area, a sunflower garden, a pavilion, and grotto. With two private gardens to wander through, Wu Wenkui enjoyed the idyllic life of a rural gentleman. Time spent in his gardens inspired various subjects in this poetry, as is apparent from the title of his two works, “Sitting in Shiyuan on a Moonlit Night” and “Summer Time in Sunyuan.” Writings such as Wu’s not only constitute rich historical materials for the study of Chinese gardens but also offer us an indirect view of how wealth undergirds certain scenic depictions of Huizhou in literature.

Huizhou’s Literary Culture

If the literature discussed in the previous section conveys a sense of Huizhou’s wealth, this section deals with the strong aura of literary culture that can be sensed in depictions of Huizhou. Local scholars and men of letters form the heart of Huizhou’s literary culture. The aristocratic clans that migrated to Huizhou from the central plains traditionally placed great value on ritual propriety and formal education. The economic prosperity that came with mid-Ming developments in trade created even better material conditions for learning.

From historical documents available on Huizhou, it is quite apparent how much the Huizhou clans emphasized education in their households. *Mingzhou Wushi jiadian* (茗州吳氏 [家典], ed. Wu Di), a book of family rules for the

25 Wu Wenkui, “Shiyuan ji,” in *Suntang ji*, in *Siku quanshu cunmu congshu, ji bu*, 189: 172.

26 Ibid., 173, 174.

Wu clan in Xiuning County, details “eighty household articles,” which include such statutes regarding education:

Those children of the clan who have fine deportment and exhibit natural intelligence, but who lack the resources to seek instruction, should be taken in and educated, given a home and a living stipend. Should this result in the cultivation of one or two gentleman who can serve as a model for other clansman, this would fulfill the wishes of the clan, and substantiate the blessings of our ancestors. Its influence should not be underestimated.²⁷

Such books also often stipulate a system of financial assistance and rewards toward study and success in examinations. For instance, the Wang family of Liyang, also in Xiuning County, has a rule that says: “Allot one tael (*liang* 兩) of silver per year for all children in the clan pursuing studies to pay for lamp oil; two taels as reward for those who make it to the county to study at the county level; and one tael to cover testing fees for those taking examinations.”²⁸ This commitment to education has led to the grooming of academic talent from Huizhou from the Song through the Yuan Dynasties. Huizhou clans tend to have an unbroken chain of successful civil service examination candidates, many of whom attain the status of *juren* (舉人 recommended man) or even *jinshi* (進士 presented scholar). This regional tradition of academic excellence helped lend Huizhou a scholarly aura, which likewise became a prominent part of Huizhou’s depictions in Ming–Qing literature.

During the reign of Emperor Qianlong (1736–1796), there was a man named Cheng Mengxing (程夢星) who achieved the rank of *jinshi*, only to relinquish his office and return to settle in Yangzhou. Cheng was originally a Huizhou native from Censhandu in Shexian County. During his youth, his father sent him to his hometown to study in his grandfather’s home, an experience Cheng writes about in the poem “Zhi bai sha cui zhu jiang cun du shu” from the anthology *Jinyoutang shiji* (今有堂詩集).²⁹ The poem recalls his grandfather’s house in Jiangcun, where he would immerse himself in reading. He

27 Wu Di, *Mingzhou wushi jidian* 茗州吳氏家典 (Hefei: Huangshan Publishing House, 2006), 1: 17.

28 “Jizhu tiaokuan 給助條款,” in *Wangshi yuanyuan lu/Wangshi liyang jiafan* 汪氏淵源錄 • 汪氏黎陽家范; see Zhao Huafu 趙華富, *Huizhou zongzu yanjiu* 徽州宗族研究 (Hefei: Anhui University Press, 2004), 446.

29 Cheng Mengxing 程夢星, *Jinyou Tang shiji: Jiangfeng ji* 今有堂詩集 • 江峰集, in *Siku quanshu cunmu congshu, bubian* 補編, 42: 4.

remembers watching his uncle and grandfather poring through books in the shade of autumn trees. The poem depicts the tranquility of the village, a moment when the forest and trees are so quiet that one can hear the sounds of the Xin'an River. There are also images of books arranged in orderly fashion and a lute carefully placed on its stone-made stand that imbue the poem with an atmosphere of learning and culture. In fact, this poetic depiction of Cheng's academic environment accords perfectly with the romance of his examination success.

The activities of Huizhou's rural literary societies are also an important part of Huizhou's literary culture. The Ming Dynasty publication *Lübin yinshe lu* (率濱吟社錄) compiled sixty poems written by twenty-six members of Lübin Poetry Society, a Huizhou literary circle consisting of members of the local Cheng clan of Lübin.³⁰ The members of the Cheng clan were common folk; their family registry included no name that was accorded official status or rank. Even so, they participated actively in the literary culture of Huizhou. The sixth volume of the revised Cheng family registry (Cheng Yonglai, *Lüdong chengshi chongxiu jiapu* [率東程氏重修家譜]) includes an account of how one member of the clan, Cheng Qishi 程圻實, could not take the civil service examinations due to poor eyesight. Instead, he immersed himself in the local literary community, often inviting other family members and nearby friends to join him in the composition of poetry.³¹ In addition to works collected in the *Lübin Yinshe Lu*, Cheng Qishi has an anthology of his own poetry, *Zixiao shanren shiji*.

The *Lübin Yinshe Lu* is not only a collection of poems but also records the specific literary activities of its members. The compilation begins with a list of society rules composed of eight articles.³² These articles stipulate that

30 A Ming block-print edition of *Lübin yinshe lu* is held by the National Library of China.

31 Copies of *Lüdong chengshi chongxiu jiapu*, with revisions and selections by Cheng Tonglai, are held by the National Library of China as well as the special collections of the Anhui Provincial Museum.

32 The eight articles are as follows: 一、社中諸人同出一祖，而利名不以行者，以年有長少、學有先後、入社有早暮爾。今得若干人，後來有志者尚未艾，議許續入，蓋與人為善、無己之心也。一、會期以四仲月朔日卯刻畢集，吟社同試一題，比較進修之功，以盡切磋之益，或命題，或限韻，或聯句，弗之拘。一、作詩每月一首，務宜會日定課，如懈怠者及失旨者，罰呈紙五十張、堅筆四管、京墨二笏入社，以助膳錄。一、至期或有遠游不及赴會者，即抄題附去，若次會未歸，須先期完課寄納，違者罰如前數。一、同社諸人須德業相勸，過失相規，匪徒虛聲文字矣。設有操行不謹，為名教玷者，黜之。一、社中之為前輩者，固當恆存引進之心，而繼來者尤當誠敬聽受。凡遇疑難，各宜虛心鉤索，不可自作聰明，偏執己見，致生猜疑。此求益之道，亦

members must compose at least one poem a month and meet for annual gatherings where they can offer each other critiques and hold poetry competitions, such as by each composing a poem on the same topic or theme. From the activities and publications of these hobbyists, one can see how deeply the Huizhou literary culture permeated the fabric and sensibility of everyday life. Cheng Zhan (程瞻) has a poem, “Bu ju (卜居),” in which the speaker of the poem is someone walking along a chisel-paved path toward the mountainside cottage where he resides. The speaker takes in the sound of birds emanating from rocky flowerbeds and enjoys the serene peace of cloud shadows cast on bamboo shutters. He slows his steps as he enters his home and is greeted with a view of books spread idly over his bed.³³ The poem’s dense imagery contrasts with the speaker’s unrushed pleasure and leisurely pace. It is both the activities of such poets as well as their depictions of a bookish life that best capture the landscape of literary culture in Huizhou.

Depictions of Huizhou People

The previous sections discuss the landscape, villages, wealth, and literary culture of Huizhou, but the heart and soul of Huizhou scenes are the people of Huizhou. Whether in fiction, drama, poetry, or prose, Ming–Qing literature is by no means sparse in its portrayal of Huizhou people. Furthermore, these works consistently represent Huizhou people and their cultural attitudes in accordance with specific local characteristics.

First, the commitment of Huizhou people to traditional Confucian virtues is well documented in the biographies of Huizhou merchants. As the Tongcheng School writer Dai Mingshi (戴名世) has pointed out, “Huizhou people are skilled at making a living; they are able to go from having nothing to becoming officials. Even so, they live amongst family and friends, are largely forgiving and compassionate, while possessing loyalty and virtuousness. Although many

敦睦之意也。一、每人敷紋銀若干，輪流領放生息，以供膳錄之費。務須冬存至公，以圖久遠。一、會日取次一人為首，首家預備小酌，貴在豐約適中，陶寫性情，不可過奢、沉酣喧哄，以致不臧之譖。

- 33 Cheng Zhan, “Bu ju, 卜居” in *Lübin yinshe lu*, a block-print edition from the reign of Emperor Jiajing (1522–1566) held by the National Library of China. The original reads: 鑿石斜通徑，依山小結廬。鳥聲花塢靜，雲影竹窗虛。逸步鬆間杖，閑情榻上書。人非避世者，俗是結繩余。

gave up the way of the gentleman-scholar in order to engage in trade, this is not something that can easily be accomplished even with such titles.”³⁴

The Ming–Qing biographies of Huizhou merchants rarely include descriptions of their commercial activities, but they consistently praise Huizhou merchants for their acts of public virtue and civic philanthropy. According to this praise, Huizhou merchants are known to assist the weak and vulnerable, provide relief in times of disaster and crisis, attend to the repairs of roads and bridges, build academies, and subsidize land for the poor. There is an account of a Huizhou merchant, She Yu (余育), who returned to his hometown of Qianqiu Shan (潜虬山) after completing some business, and spent a fortune “to build Qianqiu Academy in the valley, so that he could host scholars visiting from surrounding areas and the children of his clan would have a place to study. He also built many homes in order to house those clansmen who did not have places to live.”³⁵ When a younger member of his clan asked why he would spend his hard-earned fortune in this way, he replied, “If disbanding is the aesthetic of the sages and gathering the way of petty men, how can I assume that gold and fine silks will suffice to allow descendants to guard this clan?”³⁶

Short stories written in the Ming Dynasty present more even-handed portrayals of Huizhou merchants, but the majority of them still tend to include depictions of their good deeds. The poem “Han shilang bi zuo furen, gu tikong yuanju langshu (韓侍郎婢做夫人, 顧提控掾居郎署),” anthologized in the second collection of *Slapping the Table in Amazement*, tells the story of a Huizhou farmer who is arrested for owing an official two taels of silver. In order to pay his debt, his wife sells their only profitable pig, only to be swindled in the process. In a fit of despair, she resolves to drown with her son in her arms, when a Huizhou merchant saves her and pays her husband’s debt. Both fictional and biographical accounts of Huizhou merchants seem to deem virtue a cultural characteristic of Huizhou people.

Another characteristic commonly associated with Huizhou people in both fictional and biographical writings is the importance they place on book learning and being cultured. In “Chengweng Wu’ao’s Epitaph” (程翁吳媼墓志銘), Li Weizhen (李維楨) writes of a Huizhou merchant named Cheng Zibin (程子彬), who spent every spare moment immersed in reading and writing poetry. He was apparently always “murmuring a verse” with little regard for

34 “Yang Yunzheng zhuan 楊允正傳,” in *Dai Mingshi ji* (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1986), 7: 207.

35 Li Mengyang, “Qianqiu shanren ji 潜虬山人記,” in *Kongtong ji 空同集*, vol. 48, in the Wen Yuan Ge edition of the *Siku quanshu*.

36 Ibid.

the “snickering” of others.³⁷ It is said he even spent the days before his death composing poems.

Fictional depictions of Huizhou merchants during the Ming Dynasty likewise emphasize their fondness for book learning. In these stories, merchants are often portrayed as former students and scholars. The two main characters in the short story “Cao shishan caoshu jinzhang, li shiwan enshan yihai (曹十三草鼠金章, 李十萬恩山義海),” collected in *Shengxiao jian* (生銷剪) are avid students of the classics and history who become merchants due to their humble family backgrounds. Ming Dynasty fiction also often characterized Huizhou merchants as placing great emphasis on their children’s education. “Bing songyun lienü liufang, tu lizhi chi’er shouhuo (秉松筠烈女流芳, 圖麗質癡兒受禍), a story collected in Donglu Gu Kuangsheng’s *Zuixing shi* (醉醒石), features a merchant Cheng Weng who, “while himself possessing little understanding of literature, greatly admired and loved those who did.” In addition to “putting sons and daughters under private instruction from an early age,” he also “sought well-read women and learned young men as spouses for his children.”³⁸

A third characteristic of Huizhou people is their spirit of gallantry. In *Scholarly Developments during the Ming–Qing Enlightenment* (*Ming Qing qimeng xueshu liubian* 明清啓蒙學術流變), Xiao Shafu and Xu Sumin discuss how the idea of the “heroic spirit” (*haojie jingshen* 豪傑精神) corresponds to the late Ming economic boom and subsequent rise in discourses of individualism.³⁹ Associating gallantry with the people of Huizhou thus aligns them with this cultural trend in history. Qian Qianyi once wrote of the poet Zheng Zuo:

(Zheng) Zuo, courtesy name Yishu. Native of She. Studied north of Fangshan and so referred to himself as Fangshan zi (child of Fangshan). He ended his studies, leaving to take up trade. He moved between Liang (梁) and Song (宋), constantly living the life of a gallant youth. Taking up a light bow and fine horse, he would hunt in the marshes of Daliang (大梁). Having bagged a bird or rabbit, he would strike up a stone fire and

37 Li Weizhen, *Dabi Shanfang ji* 大泌山房集 vol. 97, in *Siku quanshu cunmu congshu, ji bu* 152: 743.

38 Donglu Gu Kuangsheng 東魯古狂生 et al., *Zuixing shi* 醉醒石 *Shi diantou* 石點頭 (Beijing: Huaxia Publishing House, 2013), 37.

39 Xiao Shafu 蕭蕭父 and Xu Sumin 許蘇民, *Ming–Qing qimeng xueshu liubian* 明清啓蒙學術流變 (Shenyang: Liaoning Education Press, 1995).

roast off the stink of animal fat. Then he would sing out his grief, drinking heavily, before taking off with his whip lolling at his side.⁴⁰

From this description, it is clear that Qian Qianyi saw Zheng Zuo as an accomplished poet. He later adds that Zheng, “was especially quick-witted when it came to poetic composition. He could compose ten poems in a single breath.”⁴¹ Yet Zheng is not one to apply his talents toward success in the civil service examinations or pursuing a higher social position as a government official. Nor is he the type to while away in the company of books. As he reads and composes poetry, he also engages in trade, never straying far from his true character and nature. In this way, Zheng embodies one sense of the spirit of gallantry.

In addition to the three characteristics discussed above, portrayals specific to Huizhou women also occupy a good portion of the literary depictions of Huizhou people.

Huizhou women are portrayed as well read and worldly. Pan Zhiheng (潘之恒), a drama theorist who has received much scholarly attention in the past twenty years, was a well-traveled and accomplished Huizhou native who was deeply influenced by his mother. In “Pan mu Wururen xingzhuang (潘母吳孺人行狀),” Fang Hongjing (方弘靜, 1536–1621) honors Pan’s mother for the kindness she showed her sons’ friends. He writes that she never expressed weariness or irritation at their presence and even welcomed them warmly to her dinner table. He also notes that she began teaching Pan to read from the *Book of Songs* when he was five or six. When he was old enough to take the civil service examinations, she awaited results with the anticipation of any proud parent, but also took the open-minded attitude that “talent will receive its just recognition, even if it takes time.”⁴² It is certainly possible to credit Pan’s mother with Pan’s own generosity toward his friends and his zest for life as a cultured man.

Huizhou women are also portrayed as industrious. Wang Daokun’s *Taihan ji* (太函集) records the life stories of several Huizhou women. In his accounts of women born into wealthy families, he emphasizes their virtuousness and frugality. His accounts of women born to poverty highlight their hard work and perseverance. One such account, “Zeng’anren jiangmu zhengshi xingzhuang,” (贈安人江母鄭氏行狀), features a Mrs. Zheng who married into a humble situation and had to take up knitting in order to supplement the

40 Qian Qianyi, *Liechao shiji xiaozhuan* 列朝詩集小傳 (Shanghai: Shanghai Chinese Classics Publishing House, 1983), 322.

41 Ibid.

42 Fang Hongjing 方弘靜, *Suyuan cunqao* 素園存稿, vol. 20, in *Siku quanshu cunmu congshu, ji bu*, 121: 206.

family income. Whenever her mother-in-law saw her knitting late at night, she would plead with her not to toil at the expense of her own health. It was said that, in those situations, Zheng would always help her mother-in-law back to bed before continuing to knit.⁴³

Finally, Huizhou women were known for their exemplary virtue according to the feudal mores. The saying “there is no other region with more virtuous women than Huizhou” persists in popular culture even to this day. This characterization of Huizhou women is unfortunately also associated with many tragic situations. An apt illustration of this can be found in the story and context for the poem “Ji sui zhu (紀歲珠),” written by Wang Hongdu (汪洪度), a *xiucai* (秀才 cultivated talent) from Shexian County.⁴⁴ The poet prefaces his poem with the following commentary:

A certain villager left home to trade within a month of marrying his wife. In his absence, his wife took up embroidery in order to feed herself. Each year, she would purchase a single pearl with the extra money earned from her embroidery and wrap it in silk. When the husband returned, it was already three years after his wife's passing. He finds the pearls in a small chest. There were twenty in all.⁴⁵

It was quite common in Huizhou for newlywed women to be abandoned by their husbands, who left to engage in trade. Not only were they unable to find happiness in marriage, but, more often than not, they sacrificed their youth and, in some cases, their lives, in order to adhere to the virtue of remaining loyal to their absent husbands. This occurred when women, instead of being widows, chose to follow their husbands into death. Such stories involving Huizhou women are surprisingly common.⁴⁶

At the same time, there were occasionally fictional imaginings of Huizhou women who pushed against the mores of feudal society. In the second story in the second volume of Ling Mengchu's *Slapping the Table in Amazement*,

43 Wang Daokun 汪道昆, *Taihan ji* 太函集 (Hefei: Huangshan Press, 2004), 41: 885.

44 Shen Tingqian, *Qingshi biecai ji* (Hangzhou: Zhejiang Chinese Classics Publishing House, 1998), 5: 481. The original reads: 鴛鴦鵲鵲雁鵲，柔荑慣繡雙雙逐。幾度拋針背人哭，一歲眼淚成一珠。莫愛珠多眼易枯，小時繡得合歡被。線斷重緣結未解，珠壘壘，天涯歸未歸。

45 Ibid.

46 There are many examples in Wang's *Taihan ji*, such as “Rao mu wanjie zhuan 饒母完節傳” (vol. 27), “Zheng qi qi luoshi zhenjie zhuan 鄭麒妻羅氏貞節傳” (vol. 29), “Sun Jiefu fanshi zhuan 孫節婦范氏傳” and “Jidi daishi lienü fangshi zhuan 季弟待室烈女方氏傳” (vol. 32), and “Wang Lienü zhuan 汪烈女傳” (vol. 33).

Yao Dizhu is a Huizhou woman who is abandoned by her merchant husband. Unable to bear the wrath of her in-laws, she leaves home and takes up residence with someone else. The story makes special note of Yao's background as a Huizhou woman and, according to textual evidence, is a retelling of an actual incident recorded in the "Yan bu, Liang Dizhu (艷部, 兩滴珠) chapter in the *wai ji* (外紀) section of Pan Zhiheng's *Eternal History* (*Gen shi* 亘史).⁴⁷ This stands as evidence that, whether in fiction or reality, even in Huizhou, where feudal virtues of womanhood were deeply internalized by society, there will always be some women who audaciously pursue their own happiness.

Conclusion: The Significance of Literary Depictions of Huizhou

Regional depictions in literature (*difang wenxue tujing* 地方文學圖景) differ conceptually from regional literature (*diyu wenxue* 地域文學) in that the former refers to how literature captures images of regional landscape, culture, and people through language whereas the latter refers to literature by writers of a certain region. By considering these five categories as ways to understand scenic depictions of Huizhou, I propose a rough outline of regional depictions in literature as a theoretical category of study. In doing so, I have in this essay drawn on only a small portion of the abundant examples of Huizhou scenes depicted in Ming–Qing literature.

While this article focuses on depictions of Huizhou as a case study, the intention is to consider larger methodological and thematic issues in the studies of regions and literature. Huizhou is but one of the many vast and varied regions of China, and its scenes are but a fraction of multitudinous ways in which Chinese literature depicts regional scenery. Based on this article's close examination of Huizhou's literary depictions, I offer the following three points for further consideration.

First, this study demonstrates the way in which literary depictions correspond to historical reality. Although it is not uncommon to hear that literature generally draws on lived reality and a writer's involvement in life, in the case of regional depictions in Ming–Qing literature this tendency is even more pronounced, because the landscape, villages, wealth, literary culture, and people being represented all have a concrete basis in concrete history. It is possible to find corroboration for all the scenes discussed here—from the beauty of a particular mountain or a person who once resided there to cultural attitudes and

47 See "Genshi yu 'Liang Pai': 'Liang Pai' Lanben Kao Zhiyi 《亘史》与“两拍”——“两拍”蓝本考之一” in the appendix of Han Jiegen, *Mingdai Huizhou wenxue yanjiu*.

impressions—in historical records. In fact, the literary works discussed here constitute important source materials in the study of Huizhou history and culture; unfortunately, they have received little attention from both historians and scholars in Hui studies. This speaks to the need for a more interdisciplinary approach to research in contemporary scholarship.

Second, the study of regional depictions in Ming–Qing literature requires special attentiveness toward the relationship between literary production and the specificity of a region. During the Ming–Qing period, visual technology was limited, and preservation of everyday life scenes relied heavily on the written word. Yet the quality of the resulting scenes depended not only on the writer's background, life experience, and artistic style but, more importantly, on the specific characteristics of the region being depicted. I have chosen to look at Huizhou through the scenic categories of landscape, villages, wealth, and literary culture because these are the most prominent scenes to emerge in a survey of Huizhou's literary depictions. These categories might shift and change depending on the region. Additionally, they overlap with larger trends in Chinese literary imagery of the period. Because scenic depictions express literary conventions as well as regional specificity, it is important to pay attention to the nuances and shifts that occur depending on the region or body of literature in question.

Finally, this study seeks to unpack the deeply intertwined relationship between literary representation and regional literature. It is perhaps inevitable that factors such as the background of writers or the life paths they take influence the style and feel of their works. In this study of regional literary depictions, I have considered, on the one hand, writers who traveled to the region for a temporary stay and, on the other, writers who were native to the region or resided there for most of their lives. Li Weizhen, Qian Qianyi, and Yuan Mei fall into the former category while Wang Daokun, Pan Zhiheng, Wu Wenkui, and Wang Zihu fall into the latter. In the case of the former, their literary representations are limited by the number of their observations and experiences. At the same time, the quality of their literature is high and so is the imagery they contribute by elevating the artistry of regional depictions. For the native writers, who have a deeper level of passion for their hometown, their literary representations are rich, precise, and detailed. Whether a blade of grass or a scrap of wood, a mound of dirt or a hidden gully, the most unassuming person or event—nothing escapes their eyes. The Huizhou that emerges from their pens is much more dynamic and full of vitality. Thus, their works contribute to the content and themes of regional literature.

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A Comparative Study of Two Major English Translations of *The Journey to the West: Monkey* and *The Monkey and the Monk*

Hao Ji

Abstract

As two major English translations of a famous sixteenth-century Chinese novel *The Journey to the West, Monkey* by Arthur Waley and *The Monkey and the Monk* by Anthony Yu differ in many respects due to the translators' different concerns and translation strategies. Whereas Waley's translation omits many episodes and significantly changes textual features of the original novel, Yu's translation is more literal and faithful to the original. Through a comparison of the different approaches in these two translations, this paper aims to delineate important differences in textual features and images of protagonists and demonstrate how such differences, especially the changing representation of Tripitaka, might affect English-language readers' understanding of religious references and themes in the story. It also seeks to help us reconsider the relationship between translations and the original text in the age of world literature through a case study of English translations of *The Journey to the West*.

Keywords

comparison – *Monkey* – *The Monkey and the Monk* – translation – *Xiyou ji*

An immensely popular novel in China and East Asia, *Xiyou ji* 西遊記 (*The Journey to the West*), often attributed to Wu Cheng'en 吳承恩 (ca. 1500-1582), is loosely based on the pilgrimage of the historical figure Xuanzang 玄奘

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(596?-664 CE), who traveled to India to obtain Buddhist scriptures.¹ Unlike the historical accounts, the novel incorporates many fantastic elements into its narrative and highlights how Tripitaka's (i.e., Xuanzang's) disciples use their magic powers to help him overcome numerous obstacles and accomplish his task. Several translations of *The Journey to the West* have been published since the novel was first introduced to the Anglophone world as early as the nineteenth century. Among these translations, *Monkey: Folk Novel of China* (hereafter, *Monkey*), by Arthur Waley (1889-1966), and *The Monkey and the Monk: An Abridgment of The Journey to the West* (hereafter, *The Monkey and the Monk*), by Anthony Yu (1938-2015), have become the two major translations used by general readers of English. Both of them are abridged forms of the original novel, whose immense length and copious religious jargon present a significant challenge for general readers in the English-speaking world. Due to the translators' different concerns and translation strategies, these two translations differ in many respects. Through a comparative study of them, this paper aims to delineate important differences in textual features and images of protagonists and demonstrate how such differences, especially the changing representation of Tripitaka, might affect English-language readers' understanding of religious connotations in the story. It also seeks to help us reconsider the relationship between translations and the original text in the age of world literature through a case study of English translations of *The Journey to the West*.

The Actions of Translators: Different Journeys in Translation

The juxtaposition of Waley's *Monkey* and Yu's *The Monkey and the Monk* immediately reveals many major textual differences that strongly resonate with the constant debates in the history of translation theory over domestication versus "foreignization". To a large extent, the different features in English translations are closely associated with strategies adopted by each translator.

In general, Waley's translation can be considered a kind of domestication and seeks to bring the original novel closer to the English-speaking audience. As a well-known translator in the twentieth century, Waley produced many English translations of Chinese literary works—including *The Journey to the West*, one of the Four Masterworks of the Ming novel. *Monkey* has three parts, which to some extent echo the main structure of the original novel. The first part tells the story of the Monkey, including his origin, his acquisition of

1 Wu Cheng'en, *Xiyou ji* 西遊記 (*Journey to the West*) (Shanghai: Shanghai Chinese Classics Publishing House, 2009).

magic powers, the battle between him and the forces of heaven, and his later imprisonment by the Buddha. The second part describes the birth and youth of Tripitaka, his vengeance on his father's murderers, and the origin of his mission to India. The third part describes how Tripitaka's disciples Monkey, Pigsy, and Sandy join the quest to fetch the scriptures, as well as numerous adventures the pilgrims have while on their journey, and ends with the completion of their quest. Waley only selected three adventures (or four, if the last calamity caused by the turtle is included), namely, the Kingdom of Crow-Cock, the Cart-Slow Kingdom, and the River That Leads to Heaven. Waley clearly articulated his translation strategy in his preface to *Monkey*:

The original book is indeed of immense length, and is usually read in abridged forms. The method adopted in these abridgements is to leave the original number of separate episodes, but drastically reduce them in length, particularly by cutting out dialogue. I have for the most part adopted the opposite principle, omitting many episodes, but translating those that are retained almost in full, leaving out, however, most of the incidental passages in verse, which go very badly into English.²

Through his selection of specific episodes from the original novel and especially his deletion of "most of the incidental passages in verse which go very badly into English," Waley reproduced an English version of *The Journey to the West* that moves smoothly for native English speakers.

Waley's selective translation foregrounds the Monkey as the central character in the story, which can be perceived from its title as well as the structure of *Monkey*.³ Unlike the third part, which significantly deviates from the original novel, the first two parts in Waley's translation largely follow the first twelve chapters in *The Journey to the West*. As Hu Shi indicates in his introduction to the American edition of *Monkey*: "Mr. Waley's version in thirty chapters has translated Part I and Part II almost entirely, his chapter divisions corresponding exactly to the first twelve chapters in the original."⁴ In the first two parts,

2 Arthur Waley, *Monkey: Folk Novel of China* (New York: Grove Press), 1984, 7.

3 Such a change can be seen as one aspect of Waley's effort to recreate the original Chinese novel through his translation. For a detailed discussion on Waley's re-creative translation of *The Journey to the West*, see Hao Ji, "Zaizao xiyou: yase weili dui xiyouji de zaichuangxing fanyi," *Ming Qing xiaoshuo yanjiu*, no. 4 (2014): 216-232.

4 Waley, *Monkey*, 4. Hu Shi divided the original novel into three parts: Part I (the story of the Monkey, chapters 1-7), Part II (the story of Xuanzang and the origin of the mission to India, chapters 8-12), and Part III (the pilgrimage to India, chapters 13-100).

seven chapters are devoted to the Monkey, including his origin, his acquisition of magic powers, his battles against the forces of heaven, and his imprisonment by the Buddha under the Mountain of Five Elements. The central position of the Monkey is further established by the highly selective nature (i.e., the third part) of Waley's translation. The episodes selected by Waley all highlight the Monkey as a hero who plays a vital role in using his own power or strategies to subdue demons and help the pilgrims successfully complete their mission. Waley's reduction of *The Journey to the West* from one hundred chapters to thirty chapters makes an important change to the original story: to a large extent, the journey becomes the Monkey's journey of self-development, whose growth and heroic behavior overshadow Tripitaka, the original protagonist.

Not only does this strategy help Waley conveniently organize the narrative structure of the story, but it also responds to Waley's contemporary situation. *Monkey* was completed during World War II, while Waley worked at the Ministry of Information in London. His wife, Alison Waley, recounted a story regarding Waley and his work *Monkey* in a vivid way:

Arthur Waley was a scholar-poet who translated Wu Cheng-en's story in London 400 years later when almost the entire world was at war. During this war, his task as a war-time civil servant was to decode messages from the Far East. But when the Air Raid warnings sounded, he alone remained in his room on the sixth floor of the Ministry of Information, snatched open his private drawer and got to work translating from the ancient Chinese of Wu Cheng-en.⁵

Monkey can be viewed as an intellectual escape from the wartime reality in which Waley was trapped. The fantastic world in *Monkey* forms a sharp contrast with his real world at that time. The poet Edith Sitwell wrote in one of her letters to Waley, "How strange it is to come back from *Monkey* and realize how hideous people are making the world."⁶ Waley's creative translation of the novel depicts the evolution of the Monkey and his final promotion to Buddha Victorious in Strife, which can be read as Waley's personal struggle against adversity in World War II and his wish for peace—a successful completion of the journey both for his country and for himself after numerous ordeals in the brutal real world.

5 Arthur Waley, trans., *Dear Monkey* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1973), 17.

6 Edith Sitwell, "Extract from *Some English Eccentrics*," in *Madly Singing in the Mountains: An Appreciation and Anthology of Arthur Waley*, ed. Ivan Morris (New York: Walker, 1970), 97.

Waley's domestication of *The Journey to the West* helped *Monkey* gain wide popularity among English-language readers for its readability, but this readability was questioned by Anthony Yu as a crucial criterion for gauging the success of a literary translation:

Until only recent years, many Western and Chinese translators seem to have been dominated by excessive concern, if not "contempt," for their contemporary audiences. They have been more than willing and forthright in deciding what would be appropriate or appealing for readerly consumption. This notion of a rather ill-defined and unexamined cultural essentialism could thus become a powerful criterion for determining what to translate and how to translate, always clouded by the rather myopic assumption that certain practices, concepts, or expressions of one culture can never be understood or appreciated by another.⁷

Yu was further shocked at *Monkey's* notable departure from the original novel:

Not only was Waley's version drastically abridged, but there were also radical revisions of language and vast omissions of terms, episodes, recurrent poetic passages—all features the removal of which could vitally affect both textual integrity and meaning.⁸

In contrast to Waley's domestication, Yu's *The Monkey and the Monk* adopts different translation strategies, which lean toward "foreignization." As a scholar of religion and literature, Yu was dedicated to a dynamic dialogue between these two disciplines, which was exemplified in his research on *The Journey to the West* and his translations of it. Yu clearly states that one of the major aims of his translation is "to rectify the acclaimed but distorted picture provided by Arthur Waley's justly popular abridgment."⁹ *The Monkey and the Monk* is an abridgment of Yu's complete translation of *The Journey to the West* and aims to provide "as fully as possible all the textual features of the selected episodes."¹⁰ Whereas Waley's domestication operates at the levels of the target culture and historical particularities (World War II), Yu's foreignization demonstrates

7 Anthony Yu, "Readability: Religion and the Reception of Translation," *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews (CLEAR)*, 20 (December 1998): 94.

8 Ibid.

9 Anthony Yu, *The Monkey and the Monk: A Revised Abridgment of The Journey to the West* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), xiii.

10 Ibid., xiv.

more scholarly concerns through its preservation of major textual features left out by Waley.

In his observation of *Monkey*'s notable departures from the original novel, Yu indicates three major textual features omitted in Waley's translation, namely, terms, episodes, and recurrent poetic passages. A comparison of the four pilgrims' adventure in Cart Slow Kingdom will quickly draw our attention to the differences between these two translations, one of which is in the translation of chapter titles. For example, the original title of the first chapter in this adventure is 法身元運逢車力, 心正妖邪度脊關, which is translated by Yu as "The Dharma-Body in Primary Cycle Meets the Force of the Cart / The Mind, Righting Monstrous Deviates, Crosses the Spine-Ridge Pass."¹¹ Waley does not translate the chapter title and only uses roman numerals to demarcate each chapter in *Monkey*. There might be a few reasons for such a strategy. First, the title of each chapter often consists of a parallel couplet, which, as Waley puts it, might go badly into English. Second, the titles contain religious terms that might remain obscure to readers of English. Third, translating the titles with religious jargon might clash with Waley's view of the novel as a folk novel (this point is further discussed in the next section). By contrast, Yu provides a faithful translation of the chapter title as well as all the poetic passages in that chapter, which gives the readers an opportunity to observe the major textual features of the original novel. Nevertheless, Yu's accurate and faithful translation goes beyond mere restoration of those textual features and strongly resonates with his concerns over previous scholarly studies on the novel.

Although one major textual feature of many traditional Chinese stories is the combination of prose and verse, verses—poetic passages—are often dismissed in early English-language translations and studies due to the lack of poetic significance or narrative significance. In the case of *The Journey to the West*, different attitudes toward poetry might lead to different understandings of the novel as a whole. For example, although Waley's removal of many poetic passages from the novel increased the fluency of the English translation, his doing so also shows his assumption that those verses are not essential to the narrative. In Waley's eyes, dialogue rather than verse plays a vital role in the development of the story. This can be further corroborated by Alison Waley's foreword to her abridgment of *Monkey*: "Arthur Waley considered dialogue—'things said'—to be of the utmost importance since it tells us better than any descriptions about people and their true thoughts."¹² Yu strongly objects to Waley's removal of verses, and he does not agree with Jaroslav Průšek's

11 Ibid., 305.

12 Waley, *Dear Monkey*, 18.

(1906-1980, a Czech sinologist and a student of Bernhard Karlgren) view of the poetic insertions as “interludes” or “interruptions.”¹³ Yu believes that the verses, which might be dismissed for lack of poetic value in the traditional sense, play an integral role in the narrative:

Indeed, if judged by some of the traditional norms of Chinese lyric poetry, most of the poems of *The Journey to the West* might be considered inferior products because of their graphic and, occasionally, unadorned diction. . . . What is scorned by tradition, however, may turn out to be a poetic trait of special merit in the *Hsi-yu chi* (*Xiyou ji*). For what the author has sought to express in these poems is hardly the kind of lyricism suffused with symbolic imageries so characteristic of the earlier poetry of reclusion, nor is he attempting to achieve the subtle fusion of human emotion and nature which has been the constant aim of many of the T'ang and Sung poets. Most of all, he is not trying to enlist the service of the lyrical tradition to realize the ancient ideal of “expressing serious intent” (*shih yen chih* 詩言志), and that is why none of these descriptive poems can be said to be the bearer of profound moral ideas or weighty philosophical substances. Rather, what the author of the *Hsi-yu chi* seeks to convey to us seems to be the overpowering immediacy of nature, with all its fullness and richly contrasting variety, as it is often experienced by the main characters in the narrative.¹⁴

According to Yu, the lack of poetic value in those poems does not undermine their significance. Paradoxically, their simplicity reinforces the role of the verses in the narrative since they “do not invite attention to themselves as poetic entities in their own right, but rather, are called upon constantly to strengthen the élan and verve of the story itself.”¹⁵

As Yu goes on to say in his study of the novel, the significance of verse goes beyond what has been mentioned above. In 1972, Yu indicated two main purposes of the poems in the original novel: “that of presenting dramatic dialogues and that of describing scenery, battles, and living beings both human and non-human.”¹⁶ Five years later, Yu added another important function of the poems—“that of providing commentary on the action and the

13 Anthony Yu, “Heroic Verse and Heroic Mission: Dimensions of the Epic in the *Hsi-yu chi*,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 31, no. 4 (August 1972): 887.

14 Anthony Yu, *The Journey to the West* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), 1: 25-26.

15 Yu, “Heroic Verse and Heroic Mission,” 888.

16 *Ibid.*, 884.

characters”—and highlights the connection between poems and religion due to the fact that those poems “make frequent use of religious themes and rhetoric as well as allegorical devices.”¹⁷ In fact, religious allegory in *The Journey to the West* constitutes one of the most significant parts of Yu’s translation, which again reflects his scholarly concern with how to understand the novel as a whole.

Folk Novel vs. Religious Allegory

A brief examination of different English-language translations of *The Journey to the West* in the twentieth century reveals a changing picture of the novel in its English reception.

Both Waley and Yu mentioned two earlier English “translations” of *The Journey to the West*. One was *A Mission to Heaven: A Great Chinese Epic and Allegory*, translated by the Baptist missionary Timothy Richard in 1913, and the other was *The Buddhist Pilgrim’s Progress*, translated by Helen M. Hayes in 1930. Richard considered Qiu Chuji 丘處機 (1148–1227) the author of the novel. In the introduction to his translation, Richard gave a short biography of Qiu Chuji and highlighted “three religions as one” in the case of Qiu:

The author, Chiu Chang Chun, was originally a Taoist, but he represents the God of the Confucianists, and the God of the Buddhists, as well as his own, as great rulers in Heaven, whether as sages (sheng), the equals of Heaven, as Confucianists call them, or genii (shen), the recipients and dispensers of the elixir of immortality, and magic power, as the Taoist call them, or Buddhas (fo), the perfected saints, as the Buddhists call them, while the wicked, whether Confucianist, Taoist or Buddhist, are all equally blamed, and sent to the lower regions if they do not conform to the righteous law of the Universe, which he regards as the foundation of all true religion.¹⁸

Under the influence of scholars such as Hu Shi, Hayes disagreed with Richard’s view that Qiu Chuji was the author and attributed it instead to Wu Cheng’en. However, like Richard, Hayes also pointed out the importance of religious allegory in the novel:

¹⁷ Yu, *The Journey to the West*, 1: 24.

¹⁸ Timothy Richard, *A Mission to Heaven: A Great Chinese Epic and Allegory* (Shanghai: Christian Literature Society’s Depot, 1913), viii–ix.

So far as I know, no book had ever been written before in China with the aim of drawing the “common people,” let us say even the rabble, into the range of religious interest and adventure. The author—a scholar and gentleman—had realized that the heights of Buddhist philosophy must be made available for the many, and that it could only be achieved by interesting and amusing them and in these ways stooping to their level.¹⁹

According to Hayes, the journey of the pilgrims in the novel symbolizes a religious journey from the Buddha-nature to Buddhahood:

Its first object was to demonstrate the Buddha-nature in every man, and the fact that, whether he will or not, his ultimate destiny is Buddhahood. In this way the author leads us through the various forms of Buddhism, through Hinayana, through the two great branches of the Mahayana school to the perfect enlightenment of his pilgrims in the cosmic Buddhahood of the Universe.²⁰

Although their discussions touch on the religious allegory in the novel, neither Richard nor Hayes was able to capture the subtleties of such an allegory in their translations. In fact, as Yu indicates, these two early translations are “no more than brief paraphrases and adaptations.”²¹

Waley’s *Monkey* can be viewed as a response to his predecessors’ works in two ways: first, it provides a literary translation (though highly selective) of the novel, rather than “paraphrases and adaptations”; second, it represents a shift in the understanding of the novel from religious allegory to folk novel. The preface of Waley’s translation begins with the introduction of Wu Cheng’en as the author of the novel:

This story was written by Wu Ch’eng-en, of Huai-an in Kiangsu. . . . He had some reputation as a poet, and a few of his rather commonplace verses survive in an anthology of Ming poetry and in a local gazetteer.²²

Waley’s assertion of Wu as the author is closely associated with Hu Shi’s studies on the novel. Through his evidential examination of *The Journey to the West*,

19 Helen M. Hayes, *The Buddhist Pilgrim’s Progress* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1930), 7.

20 Ibid., 17.

21 Anthony Yu, *The Journey to the West*, rev. ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), xiii.

22 Waley, *Monkey*, 7.

Hu established Wu as the author of the novel based on several local gazetteers. In those local gazetteers, Wu was described as a person who excelled at humorous and satirical writings. Such descriptions drew Hu's attention and were used by him to dismiss previous allegorical readings of the novel. His introduction to *Monkey* also echoes such a judgment:

Free from all kinds of allegorical interpretations by Buddhist, Taoist, and Confucianist commentators, *Monkey* is simply a book of good humor, profound nonsense, good-natured satire and delightful entertainment.²³

Waley largely accepted Hu Shi's judgment and argued that "*Monkey* is unique in its combination of beauty with absurdity, of profundity with nonsense."²⁴

Waley's understanding of the novel as a folk novel would explain his omission of the parts of the novel that demonstrate close affinities with religion. Waley's omission of many poems in his translation also hints at this bias. Before Waley, Richard had already noticed the connection between poems and religion in the novel:

The exposition of Buddhist philosophy in a way that would attract the simple minds and hearty appetites of the multitude was the direct purpose of this book. . . .

It is for this purpose that poems are frequently introduced as comments into the text, and in them the great Buddhist conceptions are enumerated side by side with their application in the more simple and amusing adventures of the pilgrims.²⁵

Richard correctly observed that, in many cases, the poems might serve as "comments into the text" that are intimately associated with religious connotations. Nevertheless, he failed to see the influence of Daoism in many of those poems due to his assumption of the novel as Buddhist allegory and his probable lack of sufficient knowledge concerning Daoism. As Yu indicates:

Although the story of *The Journey to the West* is based upon the historical pilgrimage of Hsuan-tsang (Xuanzang), it is quite remarkable how extensively the themes and rhetoric of Taoism appear in every part of the work. . . . Taoist elements serve, not merely as a means of providing choric commentary on incidents and characters in the narrative, but frequently

²³ Ibid., 5.

²⁴ Ibid., 7.

²⁵ Hayes, *The Buddhist Pilgrim's Progress*, 17.

as an aid to reveal to the reader the true nature of the fellow pilgrims, to help define their essential relationships, and to advance the action of the narrative itself.²⁶

Many poems in the novel contain Daoist terminologies and frequently refer to the alchemical process. One example should suffice to show the difference between Waley and Yu regarding how a poem might affect the reader's understanding of the novel. In the story of Pigsy's conversion to being a pilgrim, Pigsy surrendered himself to Monkey as soon as he knew that Monkey was a disciple of Tripitaka. In the original novel, a poem immediately follows Pigsy's surrender:

Strong is metal's nature to vanquish wood:	金性剛強能克木,
Mind Monkey has the Wood Dragon subdued.	心猿降得木龍歸.
With metal and wood both obedient as one,	金從木順皆為一,
All their love and virtue will grow and show.	木戀金仁總發揮.
One guest and one host there's nothing between;	一主一賓無間隔,
Three matings, three unions—there's great mystery!	三交三合有玄微.
Nature and feelings gladly fuses as Last and First.	性情並喜貞元聚,
Both will surely be enlightened in the West. ²⁷	同證西方話不違.

The significance of the poem lies in the very fact that it depicts the relationship between Monkey (metal) and Pigsy (wood) through the appropriation of the terms of the Five Elements and reference to Daoist alchemy, which offers a different lens on the pilgrims and their journey as a process of religious self-cultivation intimately associated with alchemical lore. Waley omitted the poem in his translation and seeks to undermine religious connotations by reinterpreting the allegory in the novel:

As regards the allegory, it is clear that Tripitaka stands for the ordinary man, blundering anxiously through the difficulties of life, while Monkey stands for the restless instability of genius. Pigsy, again, obviously symbolizes the physical appetites, brute strength, and a kind of cumbrous patience. The commentators say that he represents *ch'eng*, which is usually translated "sincerity," but means something more like "whole-heartedness."²⁸

26 Yu, *The Journey to the West*, 1: 31.

27 Yu, *The Monkey and the Monk*, 267.

28 Waley, *Monkey*, 8.

Due to Waley's removal of the poem (and other similar poems and passages throughout the novel), an English-language reader might agree with Waley's interpretation of the allegory regarding the pilgrims and follow his understanding of *The Journey to the West* as merely a folk novel. Interestingly, when it comes to Sandy, Waley deliberately selected certain commentators' explanations that fit with his interpretation of the allegory in the novel. Nevertheless, like Monkey and Pigsy, Sandy in the original novel is also associated with the earth in the Five Elements. The following poem regarding Tripitaka's pregnancy in the Woman Nation included in Yu's translation depicts the symbolic relationship among the pilgrims, which clearly points to internal alchemy and religious allegory:

You need true water to smelt true lead;	真鉛若煉需真水，
With dried mercury true water mixes well.	真水調和真汞干。
True mercury and lead have no maternal breath;	真汞真鉛無母氣，
Elixir is divine drug and cinnabar.	靈砂靈藥是仙丹。
In vain the child conceived attains a form	嬰兒枉結成胎象，
Earth Mother has achieved merit with ease.	土母施功不費難。
Heresy pushed down, right faith's affirmed;	推到旁門宗正教，
The lord of the mind, all smiles, now goes back. ²⁹	心君得意笑容還。

Throughout the novel, Monkey is associated with metal or gold as well as mind (here, "the lord of the mind"; more discussion on this metaphor is in the next section). The lead in the poem, which serves as an important ingredient in alchemy, refers to Monkey in the novel, since true lead is also called the Lord of Gold. Mercury refers to Pigsy, since Wood Mother (another reference to Pigsy) is used in alchemy terminology to designate mercury. Earth Mother stands for Sandy, and its symbolic achievement in alchemy translates into Sandy's success in carrying water back to "dissolve the perverse pregnancy" (based on Yu's translation of the chapter title) in the narrative.

In contrast to Waley, who omits the poem, Yu offers a more faithful translation and highlights its religious connotations through four footnotes that

29 Yu, *The Monkey and the Monk*, 368. The English translation is modified in Yu's revised edition. Although Yu doesn't directly explain religious connotations in this particular poem, he discusses how the three disciples of Tripitaka connect to Five Elements and internal alchemy in his introduction to the revised edition of his complete translation of *The Journey to the West*. See Yu, *The Journey to the West* (2012), 1: 82-83. My reading of the poem here is based on his discussion.

explain how the poem connects pilgrims such as Monkey and Pigsy to the Five Elements and alchemical theories. Yu argues:

Structures throughout the long tale, the ubiquitous but unobtrusive voice of the narrator in fact provide a running, reflexive commentary—usually through interpolated verse of many varieties and the brief prose introductions to new episodes—and gently reminds the reader of allegory’s possible presence even within the fun-filled and lively depictions of cosmic battles, fantastic beings, bizarre experiences, and extraordinary feats of mental and physical bravura.³⁰

The allegory Yu mentions here largely refers to religious allegory, which is intended to challenge the understanding of the work simply as a folk novel. This challenge also points to Hu Shi’s argument on the nature of the novel with which Waley’s translation strongly resonates. In fact, in addition to rectifying Waley’s misrepresentation of the original novel, another motivation of Yu’s translation is

to redress an imbalance of criticism championed by Dr. Hu Shi, the Chinese scholar-diplomat who supplied the British translator with an influential preface. . . . My own encounter with this marvelous work since childhood, . . . had long convinced me that this narrative was nothing if not one of the world’s most finely wrought allegories. . . . The distantly collaborative result of our studies has made it clear that religion is not only crucial to the novel’s conception and formation, but also that its nearly unique embodiment in this work need not clash with “good humor, profound nonsense, good-natured satire, and delightful entertainment.”³¹

According to Yu, Hu Shi’s argument is not necessarily wrong. The real problem Yu finds in Hu’s argument is that Hu ignored the strong presence of religious allegory in the novel and thus reduced the richness of the novel to a single dimension.

Yu’s restoration of religious allegory in his translation should be viewed in a broader academic context than a mere criticism of Hu Shi. It also responds to scholarly discussions of *The Journey to the West* since the early twentieth century, when strong resistance to religious allegory arose in the understanding of the novel. In Yu’s eyes, one cannot simply ignore the presence of religious

30 Yu, *The Monkey and the Monk*, xi-xii.

31 Ibid., xiii-xiv.

allegory throughout the novel and label the novel as a work either of playfulness or of political allegory. Unlike commentators in the Ming and Qing dynasties who read the novel as religious allegory, Yu draws on modern scholarship, especially on Daoist texts, to highlight the intertextual relationship between *The Journey to the West* and religious sources and demonstrates that “the vast complex of alchemical, *yin-yang*, *wu-hsing* [five elements], and Buddhist terminologies in this text bear some organic relation to the action and characters of the story.”³²

In a cross-cultural context, Yu’s discussion of the use of religious allegory in *The Journey to the West* also serves as a different voice against popular understandings of traditional Chinese literature in general. For example, David Hawkes once argued that one prominent difference between Chinese literature and its Western counterpart is “the absence of religious inspiration” in the former.³³ On the contrary, Yu points out the presence of religious inspiration in Chinese literary tradition, and *The Journey to the West* again lends strong support to his argument:

What I want to suggest, rather, is the intriguing paradox this narrative displays: namely, that its deviation from formal details of history acknowledged to be parts of a most celebrated chapter of Chinese religious history actually constitutes that very inventive design of the author in investigating his work with a more intricate network of religious significance.³⁴

The Monk in Motion

The representation of Tripitaka constitutes another important difference between Waley and Yu in their translations of *The Journey to the West*. Along with its removal of religious allegory, *Monkey* significantly reduces the role of Tripitaka in the journey and depicts him as a weak mortal who lacks wisdom and power. More importantly, if we contrast it with the original novel, Tripitaka in *Monkey* becomes a genderless character, since his sexuality is largely omitted

32 Yu, *The Journey to the West* (1977), 1: 36.

33 David Hawkes, “Chinese Literature: An Introductory Note,” in *Classical, Modern and Humane: Essays in Chinese Literature*, ed. John Minford and Sui-kit Wong (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1989), 74.

34 Anthony Yu, “Religion and Literature in China: The ‘Obscure Way’ of *The Journey to the West*,” in *Tradition and Creativity: Essays on East Asian Civilization* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1987), 196.

due to Waley's selection of episodes. Although this change helps foreground the role of the Monkey, it presents English-language readers with a distorted image of Tripitaka and obscures its religious significance.

The journey of the pilgrims can also be viewed as a journey of redemption and self-discipline. All the pilgrims in the original novel are punished for their inappropriate conduct before the journey: Tripitaka failed to pay attention to Buddha's teachings; the Monkey caused havoc in heaven; Piggy misbehaved with the Goddess of the Moon; Sandy broke a crystal dish; the Dragon Horse accidentally burned the Pearls of Wisdom. The theme of self-discipline in the case of Tripitaka is strongly associated with his ability to reject sexual temptation. Unlike Waley's translation, which involves no sexual temptation in the pilgrims' journey, Yu's translation deals with the sexuality of Tripitaka in three selected adventures: the test given by the Four Sages who transformed themselves into women (chapter 19), the Woman Nation (chapters 23 and 24), and the Scorpion at the Cave of the Lute (chapter 25). During his encounters with various women, Tripitaka demonstrates strong self-discipline and determination. He chooses to act on his religious beliefs and eventually reject all sexual temptations. For example, when the Scorpion transformed itself into a sensual woman and tried to seduce him, Tripitaka was depicted thusly:

His eyes saw no evil form
 His ears heard no lustful sound;
 He regarded as dirt and dung this coy, silken face,
 This pearl-like beauty as ashes and dust,
 His one love in life was to practice Chan,
 Unwilling to step once beyond Buddha-land.
 How could he show affection and pity
 When all he knew was religion and truth?³⁵

Feminine sexual allure plays an important role in *The Journey to the West* (and many traditional Chinese fantastic stories as well, e.g., *Liaozhai zhiyi* [*Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio*]) and often serves as a test due to its deceptive power to lead men astray (in both the moral and religious sense). Waley's translation completely omits those tests, which renders Tripitaka's presence in the journey unimportant, since he cannot cope with any challenges without aid of his disciples and made no significant contribution to the progress of the journey. Nevertheless, Tripitaka's strong rejection of such temptations is crucial to the completion of the journey, which can be perceived from one

35 Yu, *The Monkey and the Monk*, 392.

adventure in particular included in Yu's translation. After Tripitaka was captured by the Scorpion, his disciples soon found the Scorpion's cave, and the Scorpion stabbed the Monkey's head during the fight. After a night of rest, the Monkey recovered from his wound and led Pigsy to fight the Scorpion again. After they arrived at the Scorpion's cave, the Monkey told Pigsy about his fears of what might happen to Tripitaka during the night:

If Master truly lost his primary *yang* and his virtue because of her deception, then all of us could scatter. If he has not been confounded and if his Chan mind has remained unmoved, then we could in all diligence fight to the end, slaughter the monster-spirit, and rescue Master to go to the West.³⁶

The fact that Tripitaka could resist sexual temptation saves the pilgrims from falling apart as a team and contributes significantly to the journey, not only as physical travel but also as a spiritual/religious progression. Waley considers Tripitaka "the ordinary man, blundering anxiously through the difficulties of life."³⁷ Nevertheless, in contrast to his disciples and other powerful demons they encounter throughout the journey, Tripitaka's fragility as a mortal person further demonstrates his superior religious conviction and moral strength.

In addition to the sexuality of Tripitaka, the religious significance is also undermined by the misrepresented relationship between the Monkey and Tripitaka in Waley's *Monkey*. The role of Tripitaka is significantly downplayed in Waley's translation, and at the same time the relationship between the Monkey and Tripitaka is also reduced to one between protector and protectee. In the original novel, the concept of *xinyuan* 心猿 (the monkey of the mind) and its discipline is vividly represented in the anecdote where the Monkey was controlled by the Tight-Fillet spell. Unlike Waley, who omitted the chapter title, Yu includes it, translated as "Mind Monkey Returns to the Right / The Six Robbers Vanish from Sight" (心猿歸正, 六賊無蹤), which indicates the religious connotations of this anecdote as well as the complexities of the relationship between Tripitaka and the Monkey. As Yu mentions later,

Moreover, Monkey's own experience as the Tang Monk's disciple mirrors his master's experience, one constituted by a series of imprisonment and release, harmonious integration and disastrous dissolution, epitomized in the idiom, "to subdue or release the Monkey of the Mind"

³⁶ Ibid., 394.

³⁷ Waley, *Monkey*, 8.

[收放心猿],...Both the metaphoric name itself [i.e., *xinyuan*, the Monkey of the Mind] and the need to control the mind have filled the discourse of both Buddhism and Quanzhen Daoism.³⁸

The religious connotations of the Monkey of the Mind reveal the complex relationship between Tripitaka and the Monkey in the novel. On the one hand, Tripitaka needs protection from the Monkey, and he also frequently serves as his teacher for the cultivation of the mind. On the other hand, the Monkey needs to be controlled, and sometimes dismissed, by Tripitaka, which reminds readers of “the difficult paradox of consulting and disregarding the power of *xin*, the heart-and-mind generating the nearly irresistible drives of emotion and intellect.”³⁹ Yu’s translation stresses the significance of *xin* (heart/mind): not only does it mention the Monkey of the Mind in some chapter titles (e.g., chapters 7, 14, 22, and 24), but it also includes the episodes of Tripitaka’s learning of the Heart Sutra and the battle between the two minds (i.e., the Monkey King and his double, “the Sixth-Ear Macaque”), which helps English-language readers examine the complex relationship between the Monkey and the monk through the lens of *xin*.

Conclusion

A comparative study of two English translations of *The Journey to the West* reminds us that translation is a hermeneutic act that can be complicated by various factors. Waley’s translation highlights the Monkey’s heroism and creates a fluent narrative of a hero’s growth at the cost of the religious significance of the original novel. The literary quality, or “readability,” is only part of Waley’s concern in his translation, since his recreated story of the Monkey also resonates with the situation he was facing, in particular World War II. At the same time that the tale of the heroic Monkey is elevated as the main thread of the narrative, the role of Tripitaka and religious allegory are significantly downgraded, and *The Journey to the West* is translated/transformed by Waley into a folk novel, which echoes Hu Shi’s judgment of the novel as a work free of religious interpretations.

Anthony Yu’s translation can be seen as a new hermeneutic development that is inseparable from the progression of scholarship on *The Journey to the West*. Yu’s emphasis upon religious allegory in the translation is closely

38 Yu, *The Journey to the West* (2012), 1: 73.

39 Ibid., 74.

associated with his scholarly understanding of the intimate relationship between religion and literature, especially in the case of *The Journey to the West*. His *The Monkey and the Monk* goes beyond a simple restoration of the major textual features removed by Waley. Beyond his textual restoration (or correction of Waley's distortions at the textual level), Yu pays homage to the strong religious presence in the original novel through the elevation of Tripitaka and his complex relationship with the Monkey as well as the preservation of concepts and terminologies of religious significance in the verses and chapter titles. The significance of the monk to Yu is further revealed in the following comparison by Eric Ziolkowski:

For Yu, the *Journey* must have had the added attraction of mirroring his own two primary vocations in the person of the central human protagonist. Tripitaka, in journeying through exotic lands and strange societies, becomes ipso facto a *comparatist*, observing constantly the differing ways of life and practices of the peoples he and his companions encounter. . . . By the same token, as if his portaging the scrolls of sutras and sas-tras from India to China at the end of the novel did not suffice to affirm his role as a translator in the etymological sense of someone who "bears (something) across," Xuanzang spent the remaining nineteen years of his life translating those texts into Chinese.⁴⁰

The changes in translation largely reflect Yu's scholarly concerns as he consciously locates his study and translation within the relevant academic tradition (both in China and the West) in order to "appreciate the novel as a work of full-blown fiction."⁴¹

In addition, the study of these two different translations of *The Journey to the West* also creates an interesting dialogue between the original Chinese literary work and its translations in the age of world literature. As David Damrosch argues, "world literature is not an infinite, ungraspable canon of works but rather a mode of circulation and of reading, a mode that is as applicable to individual works as to bodies of material, available for reading established classics and new discoveries alike."⁴² Translation plays a pivotal role in this mode

40 Eric Ziolkowski, "The Contrapuntal Venture of Anthony C. Yu: The Comparative Study of Literature and Religion," in *Literature, Religion, and East/West Comparison*, ed. Eric Ziolkowski (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005), 6.

41 Yu, *The Journey to the West* (2012), 1: 53.

42 David Damrosch, *What Is World Literature?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 5.

of circulation and of reading in the global context. In the case of *The Journey to the West*, its translations (by Waley and Yu) go beyond a mere introduction of a masterpiece in the history of traditional Chinese literature to readers of English. They have launched a meaningful dialogue with the original novel through the act of translating (each with a strong interpretive dimension). In his examination of the poetry of the well-known modern Chinese poet Bei Dao, Damrosch indicates: “works of world literature take on a new life as they move into the world at large, and to understand this new life we need to look closely at the ways the work becomes reframed in its translations and in its new cultural contexts.”⁴³ However, not only does the journey of certain literary works from their indigenous cultural tradition into the world at large help them take on new life or enjoy a special kind of afterlife beyond the traditional domain, but such a migration also contributes to a better understanding of the original works through various translations.

As we have seen earlier, the process of translating *The Journey to the West* and the two translators’ interpretations of the original novel go hand in hand. If we follow the categories of translation outlined by Roman Jakobson in his influential essay “On Linguistic Aspects of Translation,” we can consider that the interlingual translation (e.g., Waley’s and Yu’s translation) also serves as a special means of actualizing the potential of a literary work such as *The Journey to the West*, and this actualization resembles intralingual translation, such as that of various commentaries on literary works in traditional China.⁴⁴ Umberto Eco once made a distinction between the Model Reader and the empirical reader: “a text can foresee a Model Reader entitled to try infinite conjectures” and “the empirical reader is only an actor who makes conjectures about the kind of Model Reader postulated by the text.”⁴⁵ In this sense, both Waley and Yu can be considered empirical readers who have made their own conjectures through translation about the original novel that theoretically possesses infinite possibilities. While participating in the conversation with each other as well as other English translations of *The Journey to the West*, Waley’s translations of the novel as a folk novel and Yu’s emphasis on religious connotations correspond to different facets of the original novel. This is not to deny the problems that Yu

43 Ibid., 24.

44 The three categories of translation are intra-lingual translation, inter-lingual translation and inter-semiotic translation. See Roman Jakobson, “On Linguistic Aspects of Translation,” in *The Translation Studies Reader*, ed. Lawrence Venuti (New York: Routledge, 2004), 139.

45 Umberto Eco, *The Limits of Interpretation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 59.

indicates in Waley's translation of the novel. However, it might be worthwhile for us to shift our perspective to one of positive dialogue with *The Journey to the West*, rather than to simply dismiss Waley's translation on the basis of whether it is "faithful" to the original novel. For example, Yu's translation draws readers' attention to the issue of gender and sexuality (e.g., the sexuality of Tripitaka) in the novel through his restoration of the religious allegory, which is absent in Waley's translation. Waley's translation, though operating under a different understanding of the novel, also alludes to this issue from a different perspective—that is, the issue of female chastity. Waley selects the episode of the Kingdom of Crow-Cock (excluded from Yu's translation), in which a demon transformed into the king and ruled the kingdom for three years after he murdered the real king. After the demon was subdued, its identity as a male lion was also revealed. Then the novel raises a problem regarding the chastity of the king's concubines in the inner palace, and the problem is immediately solved by Piggy's discovery that the lion was gelded. In Waley's translation, the issue of chastity is subtly addressed not only through the resonance between this episode and an earlier episode, in which Tripitaka's mother was also forced to live with a bandit who killed her husband, but also through a compact structure in the translation—the episode of the Kingdom of Crow-Cock is the first of four adventures, and, compared to the episode that tells the experience of Tripitaka's mother in the original novel, it is much closer to this episode in terms of structure. It is in this sense that translations by Waley and Yu, despite their differences or, in some cases, even conflicts in translation strategies and agenda, collaborate in illuminating the aspect of gender and sexuality in the original novel from different angles.

In conclusion, I would like to recall Damrosch's comments in his discussion of world literature: "All works cease to be the exclusive products of their original culture once they are translated; all become works that only 'began' in their original language."⁴⁶ Translation makes a significant contribution to the new life of literary works by taking them away from the original culture, and yet, at the same time, it also looks back to the original culture, in which the life of those works began and constantly seeks meaningful dialogue with them to provide new insights.

46 Damrosch, *What Is World Literature?* 22.

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Examining Narrative Form in *The Scholars*

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Abstract

In Wu Jingzi's (吳敬梓) *The Scholars* (*Rulin waishi* 儒林外史), the narrative is constructed through the characters' descriptions of themselves as well as "character zones" reconciled within the dialogue, resulting in a distinctive narrative form. This article rationalizes inconsistencies in narrative time not as the product of false authorship but, rather, as the product of Wu Jingzi's narrative style. Furthermore, because these inconsistencies are found primarily in dialogue, solving the mystery of narrative time gives us an unparalleled opportunity to examine the novel's narrative form. Wu's writing style is perhaps best described as *laissez-faire*: weaving personal experiences together with anecdotes and rumors drawn from his social circle, he fashions a character-driven narrative form that mixes different perspectives and voices. More importantly, his narration illuminates the world of the Qing-era literati, reflecting the oral and written narrative cultures of the Confucian elite.

Keywords

Chinese literature – narrative form – *The Scholars* – Wu Jingzi

Though set primarily in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), *The Scholars* (*Rulin waishi* 儒林外史) takes place during the period from the late Yuan (1271-1368) to the early Qing (1644-1911). Except for chapters 1 and 56, the core of the novel takes place over 110 years and the reigns of six successive Ming emperors: Chenghua (成化), Hongzhi (弘治), Zhengde (正德), Jiajing (嘉靖), Longqing (隆慶), and Wanli (萬曆). A close reading reveals that chapters 2 to 55 are

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largely a year-by-year recording of events, with temporal dislocations occurring in chapter 7 (eight years), chapter 25 (ten years), and chapters 54 and 55 (twenty years). In “Chronicling *The Scholars* (Rulin waishi jili 儒林外史 [紀歷]),” Tan Fengliang (談鳳梁) offers a detailed analysis of the novel’s narrative time. He notes its subtle, painstaking complexity but also reports a number of errors and omissions. Some dates appear to be incorrect or do not conform to other details in the novel, while in other cases the narrative time is unclear, “insufficiently precise” or “seemingly unreliable.”¹ He notes nineteen such instances throughout the novel, although the majority is in the second half. Upon close examination, it is possible to identify further errors of a similar nature. Even if we disregard confusion stemming from unclear narration or dialogue, which are not considered here, we are left with at least ten such inaccuracies. Why is this so and how does it inform our interpretation of the novel?

Chronological inaccuracies instinctively raise the suspicion of false authorship, and this is the answer that many scholars have offered, but it cannot be the only possible answer. Resorting to false authorship cannot clarify why the narrator so rarely errs in his chronology of the chapters, nor can it explain why chronological inaccuracies appear more frequently in the second half of the novel. It is tempting to place the blame on a clumsy narrator or to expediently eliminate these passages, but this will not do. The novel is like a seven-tiered pagoda: remove one layer, and the whole pagoda comes tumbling down. And so presuming to verify the identity of the narrator or the authenticity of the text on the basis of lapses in narrative time remains untenable, with no clear evidence.²

Wu Jingzi’s inconsistencies in chronological narration are often the result of experimentation. For example, over the course of his more than twenty years of writing and editing, he increasingly drew on his contemporaries to serve as models for his characters, often transplanting their real-life time and circumstances into the existing framework of his novels; this leads to a number of contradictions and confusions in his chronology. Seen in this way, these fissures offer valuable insight into Wu’s creative process, its conflicting influences, multiple time dimensions, and the external forces motivating his loose style. Embarking on such investigations, we set aside questions of authorship and authenticity in order to examine the narrative time syndrome and diagnose its historical origins.

1 Tan Fengliang 談鳳梁, “Rulin waishi jili 儒林外史 [紀歷] (Chronicling *The Scholars*),” *Nanjing shifan daxue xuebao* 南京師範大學學報 3 (1984): 44–56.

2 I speak solely with regard to the chronology of *The Scholars*, and not the controversy surrounding the 1803 “Lying Idle Cottage” section.

In “A New Exploration of the Chronology and Process of Writing *The Scholars* (Rulin waishi chuanguo shijian, guocheng xintan 儒林外史>創作時間、過程新探),” Tan Fengliang raises several important points.³ First, Wu began to write the novel around 1735, finishing a draft around 1748-1750, after which he began editing continuously. Second, the writing of the novel took place in two phases: chapters 1-25 were completed before February 1736, with chapters 21-25 being written in the two months after Wu returned to Nanjing from a trip to Yangzhou. Chapters 26-35 were written between 1736 and 1739. The final chapters of the novel were finished before Wu’s death.⁴ Third, these phases represent an important shift in the sourcing of material: though the entire book is a work of fiction, chapters 1-25 most frequently employ historical anecdotes and cultural narratives, while chapters 26-35 draw on material from the author’s own life and those of his acquaintances. From chapter 36 onward, Wu continues to draw on biographical material but also inserts historical tales and cultural narratives. Fourth, the mixing of fiction and reality becomes most pronounced in the final third of the book.

There is reason to question the second point, as discussed below, but the other points are generally accurate. The last point is perhaps the most prescient. In the final third of the book, Wu deliberately attaches real people to the false events of the first and second sections, creating linkages between these different sections. From there arises the necessity of dealing with characters that appeared in previous sections; Wu employs both direct narration and flashbacks, but he often makes mistakes. The time span of the novel is longer than the lifespan of any human character, resulting in inevitable mix-ups and absurd plotlines: Ma Chunshang is still studying for the imperial examinations at the age of nearly 100, and Tang Zhentai’s brother Tang Feng turns 100 retiring to the countryside.⁵

Here some explanation is required. Wu Jingzi does not narrate the biographies of his characters directly; rather, these ages were deduced from details in the book, which hints at the nature of the problem. The stories of Ma Chunshang and Tang Feng were modeled after Wu’s acquaintances Feng Cui

3 Li Hanqiu 李漢秋, ed., *Rulin waishi yanjiu lunwenji* 〈儒林外史〉研究論文集 (A Collection of Critical Writings on *The Scholars*) (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1987), 229-247.

4 There is some controversy regarding when Wu Jingzi wrote the various chapters of *The Scholars*. Hu Shi’s thesis that the novel was finished between 1748 and 1750 is widely accepted by scholars.

5 Tan Fengliang 談鳳梁, “Rulin waishi chuanguo shijian, guocheng xintan 〈儒林外史〉創作時間、過程新探 (A New Exploration of the Chronology and Process of Writing *The Scholars*),” in *Rulin waishi yanjiu lunwenji*, 243.

and Yang Kai.⁶ As the time that Wu wrote the novel, both Feng and Yang were still alive, so in his mind's eye Ma and Tang were the same age or close to the same age as they were in real life. Wu continued to follow the lives of these real-life acquaintances and added new events into the novel as they transpired. Thus, the biographies of his fictional characters directly followed and were even dependent upon the lives of their real-life models. As he set out a chronological framework for his novel, Wu calculated the dates year by year, but occasional lapses still occurred, resulting in a chronological framework independent of the narrative framework of the novel and even occasionally in conflict with the narrative framework.

The collective efforts of multiple generations of scholars have resulted in a rich corpus of literature with regard to the characters, but we too often disregard the influence of the characters' real-life models and their own stories on narrative time. Although these real-life characters are combined with elements of fantasy, the narration of *The Scholars* is inextricably tied to the chronologies of their real-life biographies.

Real-Life Models and the Problem of Narrative Time

In chapter 25, Xiang Ding calls on his old friend Bao Wenqing when passing through Nanjing. He tells him, "More than ten years have passed since we parted." Tan Fengliang places this event in the sixty-first year of the novel's chronology. Bao Wenqing and Xiang Ding's farewell in Andong County in chapter 24 would have occurred some ten years before that. This would mean that ten years had passed between chapters, a rarity in *The Scholars*. Tan Fengliang adds that the details of the narrative seem to suggest that only three or four years had passed since Bao and Xiang had met in Andong County and that the source of such inconsistencies is unclear. It is certainly difficult to reconcile: if only three or four years are accounted for in the narration, why would Xiang claim it had been over a decade since they last met?

According to He Zehan, Xiang Ding was inspired by Shang Pan (商盤) (1701-1767). Jiang Shiquan, Shang's biographer, writes that Shang was appointed county magistrate in 1730, became curator at the Eight Banners National Academy of History in 1736, counted Emperor Qianlong among his patrons,

6 For further details, see He Zehan 何澤翰, *Rulin waishi renwu benshi kaolüe* 儒林外史人物本事考略 (*A Textual Analysis of Character Source Material*) (Shanghai: Shanghai Chinese Classics Publishing House, 1985), 12-15, 78-85.

and was bestowed with several titles, including regional governor of Haizhou. Emperor Qianlong even named him Commandery Aide of Zhenjiang.⁷

As Wu Jingzi described Xiang Ding's life, he must have had Shang Pan in mind, but he did not blindly follow the chronology of Shang's career. Instead, between chapters 23 and 25, he describes in summary form the twists and turns of his career, which in real life ended in 1744. This results in an inconsistency between Shang's self-description and Bao Wenqing's narrative. Wu must have become distracted by the chronology of Shang's life and thus deviated from his novel's chronology. Strangely, the problem could have easily been avoided: there seems to be no literary need for Wu to describe Xiang's career in such detail.

It is likely that Wu Jingzi wrote chapter 25 shortly after Shang Pan's career ended in 1744, so he included in the story events that had recently transpired in Shang's life, resulting in an excess span of time that seems to belong nowhere.

Another inconsistency in narrative time occurs in chapter 41. In April, Du Shaoqing chances upon his father's cousin Zhuang Zhuojiang while boating on the Qinhuai River. Zhuang Shaoguang introduces Du to Zhuang Zhuojiang, saying, "He has lived in Nanjing for eighty-nine years." But by examining the narrative closely, we find that Du has lived in Nanjing for only fifteen years by this point. This is a surprising error, considering that Du is modeled after Wu Jingzi himself. Other than a false author, what other plausible explanation could there be?

Zhuang Zhuojiang's character is partially modeled after Cheng Mengxing (1678-1755). In 1712 Cheng obtained the highest rank in the imperial examinations, joining the ranks of China's illustrious civil servants, and was awarded a position in the Hanlin Academy. In 1716, he went home to Yangzhou to mourn his mother's death and did not return to public life. In the novel, Zhuang Zhuojiang is Du Shaoqing's father's cousin, and, similarly, Cheng Mengxing is Wu Jingzi's father's cousin in real life. Zhuang even says to Du, "Forty years ago I had my last meal with a person I highly respect," which is in accordance with the date of Cheng's death.⁸ It seems that Wu is exceptionally careful with regard to the chronology of his own family.

7 Jiang Shiquan 蔣士銓, "Baoyi xiansheng zhuan 寶意先生傳," in *Zhongyao tangji jiaojian* 忠雅堂集校箋, ed. Shao Haiqing 邵海清校 (Shanghai: Shanghai Chinese Classics Publishing House, 1993), 4: 2093-2094. However, the characters and punctuation used here are not necessarily consistent with this cited work.

8 With regard to Cheng Mengxing's biography, see He, *Rulin waishi renwu benshi kaolue*, 75-78. See also Wang Juanjuan 王娟娟, "Cheng Mengxing yanjiu 程夢星研究 (A Study of Cheng Mengxing)" (M.A. thesis, Anhui University, 2010), Appendix 1, "Cheng Mengxing

In April and May 1740, Wu traveled to Yangzhou and then stopped to visit his hometown, Quanjiao. While Wu was in Yangzhou, the Huainan-Huaibei salt controller Lu Jianzeng was falsely accused of bribery, removed from his post, and exiled to a garrison on the border of the Qing empire. Gao Fenghan, along with other friends, went to see him off and gave him a copy of a painting that he had painted. In the lower-right-hand part of the painting was inscribed a poem about a duke crossing the border, and inscribed on the silk borders of the painting were over twenty lines of poetry by Zheng Xie, Li Mian, Cheng Mengxing, and others.⁹ According to existing historical records, Wu's first meeting with Cheng occurred around this time. Zhuang Shaogang's comment that Du Shaoxing had lived in Nanjing for eighty-nine years could be a reflection of a comment made by one of Cheng's friends upon Wu's first meeting with Cheng, because by the spring of 1740 Wu had already lived in Nanjing for over seven years. Perhaps when Wu described Du meeting his father's cousin on the Huai River, Wu had in mind his own meeting with the real-life Zhuang Zhuojang, that is, Cheng, whom he met in Yangzhou. This is one possible explanation for the inconsistency.

Similar situations occur a number of times in the novel: in chapter 49, Wu Shu says, "Four or five years ago, Mr. Du Shaoqing compiled a commentary on the *Book of Songs* that drew quite a bit of attention in his social circles." This "four or five years" does not fit the narrative time of the novel. In chapter 34, Chi Hengshan comments on the verse to Du Shaoqing: "The other day you gave me a copy of your *Commentary on the Book of Songs*, which I admired immensely." Chapter 35 describes Zhuang Shaogang's life at Xuanwu Lake: "When at leisure, he would fill to the brim another jar of wine and call his wife to come sit by his side to read Du Shaoqing's *Commentaries on the Book of Songs*." From chapter 34 to chapter 49, at least nineteen years passed—significantly more than the "four or five years" recalled by Wu Shu.

Wu Jingzi himself also wrote a *Commentary on the Book of Songs*.¹⁰ But the question of when Wu wrote the book, and when he began to circulate it in

yu *Rulin waishi*—Cheng Mengxing wei zhuangzhuojang renwu yuanxing buzheng 程夢星與《儒林外史》—程夢星為莊濯江人物原型補正 (Cheng Mengxing and *The Scholars*—A Revision to the Theory of Cheng Mengxing's Real-Life Model as a Resident of Zhuangzhuojang), 47-52; Appendix 2, "Cheng Mengxing nianpu 程夢星年譜 (Chronology of Cheng Mengxing)."

9 For further details, see Chen Meilin 陳美林, "Wu Jingzi Shengping 吳敬梓生平 (Biography of Wu Jingzi)," in *Wu Jingzi pingzhuan* 吳敬梓評傳 (*A Critical Biography of Wu Jingzi*) (Nanjing: Nanjing University Press, 1990), 339-344.

10 See Zhou Xinglu 周興陸, "Wu Jingzi shichuan zhuzuo *Shishuo* zai Shanghai faxian 吳敬梓失傳著作《詩說》在上海發現 (Wu Jingzi's Lost *Commentary on Book of Songs*

literary circles, has not been definitely resolved.¹¹ However, *The Scholars* does give us a comparative timeframe: by the time Wu had written chapter 49, his *Commentary on the Book of Songs* had already been circulating for four to five years. Therefore, he consciously or unconsciously adopted his own life's chronology in the novel's narrative time, again creating a number of inconsistencies.¹²

Another equally improbable error in the novel occurs in chapter 46: Yu Yude says to Du Shaoxing, "I used to be a poor scholar, but during the six or seven years that I've been in Nanjing I've saved enough to buy a paddy field producing thirty bushels a year." But the events of the novel suggest that Yu had been in Nanjing for at least fifteen years. Yu's real-life counterpart is Wu Peiyuan, also a poor scholar. From 1738 to 1746 Wu worked as a tutor in Shangyuan County while preparing for the imperial examinations, and in the fall of 1746 he went to Nanjing. Wu Jingzi and other acquaintances gave him a farewell dinner.¹³

I propose that these types of errors emerged because Wu Jingzi was too faithful to Yu Yude's biography. No other narrator could have been so intimately acquainted with the lives of Wu's acquaintances upon whom his characters were modeled. Therefore, although such examples have been used to call

Discovered in Shanghai)," *Guangming Daily* (Beijing), June 24, 1999; Zhou Xinglu, "Wu Jingzi shishuo jiehou fucun 吳敬梓〈詩說〉劫後複存 (Reconstructing Wu Jingzi's *Commentary on the Book of Songs*)," *Fudan daxue xuebao* 復旦大學學報 5 (1999): 131-140.

11 For other views, see Zhou Xinglu 周興陸 and Jin Zaimin 金宰民, "Wenmu shanfang shishuo santi 文木山房詩說三題," *Mingqing xiaoshuo yanjiu* 明清小說研究 (*Research on Ming-Qing Era Novels*) 2 (2001). See also Li Zhongming 李忠明 and Wu Bo 吳波, "Wenmu shanfang shishuode faxian yu yanjiu 〈文木山房詩說〉的發現與研究 (Discovery and Critical Studies of the *Wenmu Mountain Commentary on Book of Songs*)," in *Rulin waishi yanjiushi* 儒林外史研究史 (*A History of Critical Studies of The Scholars*), ed. Chen Meilin 陳美林 (Fuzhou: Haixia wenyi chubanshe, 2006), 281-294.

12 We can also infer the following: In chapter 34 of *The Scholars* Wu Jingzi's book of verse was circulating among his friends, implying that the chapter was written not long after this event. Chapter 49 mentions that the book was published four or five years earlier, providing another reference point. These four or five years could well represent the time that passed between chapters 34 and 49. This shows that, as the author was creating his characters, he did not necessarily always rely on their life chronologies but, rather, in the process of writing, he tended to insert events that had recently happened in the story. In this way, a relationship developed between his private life and the narration of the novel. This phenomenon does not occur often in the novel, but it is especially important in researching character development.

13 He, *Rulin waishi renwu benshi kaolüe*, 42-51.

Wu's authorship into question, ironically these details prove that only he could have written these passages, because only he could make such mistakes.¹⁴

Real-Life Models, Narrative Time, and the Writing Process

In light of this conclusion, there is reason to pose the following question: Can we deduce when parts of the novel were written, based on the timing of real-life events that were included in the novel? As described above, the section of chapter 25 in which Wu Jingzi traces Xiang Ding's official career was inspired by the career of Shang Pan, which ended in 1744. We can deduce, then, that chapter 25 was written in 1744 or shortly afterward.

In order to make our argument more convincing, we turn to the second half of the novel. As the novel progresses, it relies more and more on real-life models for its characters, and so narrative time begins to approximate real-life time more and more closely. This section is based on the experiences of the author after he moved to Nanjing. From chapters 31 to 46, Nanjing becomes the geographic focus of the narration, and so a new group of characters tied together by Yu Yude comes to the forefront. Yu was the master of sacrifice for a ritual ceremony at the temple of the sage Taibo. The ritual is a central element in chapter 37, as it is attended by all the prominent scholars living nearby. Yu officially makes his debut in this chapter. In chapter 46 he leaves Nanjing, fading into the background of the story.

As discussed above, Yu Yude's real-life model, Wu Peiyuan, was a tutor and imperial examination candidate in Nanjing between 1738 and 1746 (the county government was located in Nanjing). In the late fall of 1746, he went to Beijing to sit for the imperial examinations; in 1747 he was sent to Yuyao County to serve as county magistrate, and the following year was transferred to Sui'an County. In 1752 he retired from public life and returned to his hometown, Wuxi. Therefore, chapter 36 could not have been written before 1738. Considering the relative completeness of the plot of chapters 31-36, which revolves around the Taibo ritual, an even more conservative estimate is that this section was written in 1746 or shortly afterward, because this would have given Wu the opportunity to formulate a complete plotline before sitting down to write.

14 See Shang Wei 商偉, *Li yu shiba shiji de wenhua zhuanzhe: Rulin waishi yanjiu* 禮與十八世紀的文化轉折：儒林外史研究 (*Li and Eighteenth-Century Cultural Transformations: Studies of The Scholars*), Appendix: "Rulin waishi de zuozhe, banben jiqi xiangguan wenti" 《儒林外史》的作者、版本及其相關問題 (Author, Editions and Other Issues of *The Scholars*) (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 2012), 419-420.

Additionally, in chapter 48, Yu writes, “Dr. Yu had been transferred to Zhejiang, Du Shaoping had gone to pay him a visit; Zhuang Zhengjun had gone home to repair his ancestral tombs, and Chi Hengshan and Wu Zhengzi had left for an official post in distant parts.” In chapter 49 Wu writes of Chi Hengshan, “He left in the middle of the night for Jurong to see to the repairs to the imperial academy.” To verify, Du Shaoping’s real-life model, Wu Jingzi himself, did in fact go to Sui’an between 1748 and 1749 to pay his respects to Wu Peiyuan, who had recently become county magistrate.

Chi Hengshan’s real-life model was Fan Mingzheng, who was originally from Jurong. According to later Jurong County records, Fan Mingzheng returned to his hometown in 1749 to compile the earlier county records. Similarly, in *The Scholars*, Chi Hengshan went home to “make repairs to the imperial academy” in 1749.¹⁵ Therefore, chapters 48 and 49 about Chi must have been written not long after 1749, less than five years before Wu Jingzi’s death.¹⁶

There are a few additional examples that can serve as ancillary evidence: chapters 40 and 41, which deal with the character Shen Qiongzhi, are based in part on a case adjudicated by Yuan Mei during his tenure as a government official in Jiangning.¹⁷ However, Yuan Mei was transferred to Jiangning in 1745 and retired in 1749, so this section could not have been written before that. Additionally, at Yu Yude’s farewell dinner in chapter 46, Tang Zhentai says to Du Shaoping: “Has your worthy cousin joined the ministry yet?” Du answered in the affirmative: “He has.” Here “worthy cousin” refers to Du, who in chapter 31 had already told Bao Tingxi that he was set to enter the civil service at the highest rank within the next year or two. The background has already been established, so Du’s joining the ministry comes as a matter of course. But let us not forget that this detail comes from the biography of Du’s real-life model, Wu Qing, who in 1745 scored highly on the imperial examinations and became Director of the Ministry of Punishments.¹⁸ Clearly, chapter 46 could only have been written after 1745.

15 “Characters,” in *Xuzuan jurong xianzhi* 續纂句容縣誌 (*Compilation of Jurong County Annals*) (1930), Guangxu jiachen chongkanben 光緒甲辰重刊本, 9: 3. For details on the biography of Fan Mingzheng, see He, *Rulin waishi renwu benshi kaolüe*, 38-40.

16 Tan, “Rulin waishi chuanguo shijian, guocheng xintan,” 241-242.

17 Yuan Mei 袁枚, *Sui-Yuan shihua* 隨園詩話 (Beijing: People’s Literature Publishing House, 1960), 4: 115.

18 Zhu Baojiong 朱保炯 and Xie Peilin 謝沛霖, ed., *Ming-Qing jinshi timing beilu suoyin* 明清進士題名碑錄索引 (*Index of Ming-Qing Era Palace Graduate Autograph Steles*) (Shanghai: Shanghai Chinese Classics Publishing House, 1980), 2715.

What, then, should be said of the earlier chapters of *The Scholars*? Here we consider a passage from chapter 28:

Ji Weixiao said: "As soon as I came to Yangzhou, Inspector Xun gave me 120 taels, and put me in charge of the customs duties. I shall probably be here for some years, so I've taken another wife."

In chapter 30, Bao Tingxi tells Du Shenqing that Xun gave Ji several hundred taels, and that Ji married into one of the prominent families of Yangzhou. According to He Zehan's research, Ji Weixiao is based on Li Mian (李勉) and the salt controller Xun Mei is based on the life of Lu Jianzeng (盧見曾), who became salt controller in 1736, according to records of the Huainan-Huaibei salt trade.¹⁹ It is known that Li Mian received financial help from Lu Jianzeng, but the time frame is not clear.²⁰ According to Lu Wenchao (盧文弨), Lu Jianzeng simultaneously served as both salt controller and Superintendent of Yangzhou Customs.²¹ Three years later, he was convicted of bribery and exiled to the Qing garrison lands, as mentioned above. Because of this, the interaction between Salt Controller Xun and Li Weixiao must have occurred between 1736 and 1739, so Wu Jingzi could not have written chapter 28 before this period. In fact, Xun was salt controller as early as chapter 22, so that chapter must have also been written after 1736. These details support my conclusion: chapter 25 could not have been written before February 1736, as Tan Fengliang argues. In addition, chapter 29, which details Xun's bribery charges, must have been written after 1739.

In conclusion, I believe chapter 31 was written slightly later than is generally believed by scholars, because chapter 22 was likely not written before 1736. I have placed the beginning of chapter 25 in 1744, but this claim requires further evidence. Additionally, chapter 49 could not have been written earlier than 1749. Therefore, the last part of the novel must have been written shortly after the events upon which it was based.

19 He, *Rulin waishi renwu benshi kaolüe*, 23-30.

20 Zhao Shenzen 趙慎畛, "Yuchao zazhi 榆巢雜識," in *Qingdai shiliao biji congkan* 清代史料筆記叢刊 (*Qing Dynasty Sketches of Historical Material*), ed. Xu Huaibao 徐懷寶點校 (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2001), 1: 30.

21 "Zhiguanmen minghuanzhuan 職官門 • 名宦傳," in *Lianghuai yan fazhi* 兩淮鹽法志 (Legal Records of the Huainan-Huaibei Salt Trade), ed. Wang Anding 王安定 (1905), 137: 30; Min Erchang 閔爾昌, ed., "Bei zhuan ji bu 碑傳集補," in *Qingdai zhuanji congkan* 清代傳記叢刊 (*A Collection of Qing Dynasty Biographies*), comp. Zhou Junfu 周駿富 (Taipei: Mingwen Bookstore, 1985), 121: 107-113.

Additions and Revisions: The Example of Ma Chunshang

The process of reconstructing the chronology of Wu Jingzi's writing process shows that he often includes updates or revisions to the biographies of his characters. Generally, this occurs in one of two ways. First, the author is so intimately acquainted with the details of the lives of the acquaintances upon which his characters are based that he takes the opportunity to periodically update the reader on their lives even after they have faded into the background of the novel. Chapter 46 and its treatment of Du Shenqing's government post is an example of this that is analyzed above. The second possibility is that Wu has added to or revised previously written portions, and it is this circumstance that we discuss in detail here. The distinction between these two situations is not always clear cut. If Wu Jingzi had already written chapter 46 by 1745, then Du's update must have been a later addition. Therefore, the distinction between additions and revisions necessarily depends upon our own chronological estimates.

At times, these updates and revisions simply add new information or provide updates on the lives of characters, reminding the reader that they continue to live out their lives in the background of the novel and have not disappeared simply because they are no longer the focus of the narrative. But there are a few instances in which these additions or revisions dramatically alter the fates of characters, emphasizing the latent potential for transformation in Wu Jingzi's loose creative process. These hidden storylines in the background of the second half of the novel are often quasi-flashbacks: they remind the reader of a past episode while providing a new outlook on the event. In this way, past events are brought back into focus and often tied to current controversies or subjected to lively debate. This refusal to place characters and events safely in the unchanging and suspenseless past is a unique characteristic of Wu's narrative style.

Ma Chunshang is an excellent example. He makes his debut in chapter 13. In chapter 17, Kuang Chaoren returns to Hangzhou from his hometown and asks for Ma, upon which he is told that Ma has already returned to Chuzhou. At this point, Ma fades into the background of the story. What is interesting is that Ma's role in the story in fact begins in earnest at this point. His name appears in the gossip of the literati, drawing him into a new wave of controversy only after he has left the spotlight. This is Ma's "after story," and it serves to make Ma more interesting in his absence than in his presence.

These comments are found in chapters 17, 18, 20, 49, and 52 of the novel. Due to space constraints, we analyze the following example from chapter 49:

"Sir, I have a friend in your honorable province, a Chuzhou native. I wonder if you know him." Chi Hengshan said to Wan Zhongshu.

Wan Zhongshu replied, "Ma Chunshang is the most well-known scholar in Chuzhou. I have a few other scholar friends there, but I don't know which one you mean."

"I was speaking of Mr. Ma," Chi said.

Wan Zhongshu said: "Ma Chunshang is my sworn brother: of course I know him. He has gone to Beijing now. He is sure to go far there."

"Why has he gone to Beijing?" asked Wu Shu quickly. "He has not yet passed the provincial examination."

Wan Zhongshu replied: "When the last provincial director of education completed his three years in office, he recommended Ma for his excellent conduct. He has gone to the capital now to take a shortcut to officialdom. That's why I say he will go far."

Shi Yushi interjected: "These unorthodox careers won't take one very far. Men of character stick to the official channels."

"During his visit last year," said Chi Hengshan, "I was struck by Ma's genuine knowledge of his subject. It is strange that after all these years he is still a licentiate. It looks as if the examination system is not infallible after all."

"You are wrong there, Mr. Chi," protested Gao Hanlin. "Our dynasty has relied on these examinations for the past two hundred years. True scholars will always succeed. Mr. Ma's writings on this subject are merely superficial; of the finer points he knows absolutely nothing. If he were a licentiate for three hundred years and came first in two hundred local tests, he would still fail every time in the prefectural examinations!"

"Do you mean to say," asked Wu, "that the examiners and the provincial director of education don't see eye to eye?"

"Certainly!" answered Gao. "All the students who rank high on the provincial list will fail in the real examinations. Possessing a wholehearted dedication and doing well in the provincial examinations aren't enough to guarantee success."

"That essay of yours, sir, which won the first place," said Wan, "has been carefully studied by everyone in our province."

"Careful study," responded Gao, "is the key to success. In my three essays for the district examination, not a single phrase was written at random; each was culled from the classics, and that is why I passed. Without careful study, even Confucius himself would not pass. Mr. Ma has been expounding essays all these years; but what he teaches simply cannot

pass muster. If he understood the meaning of careful study he would be a high official!"

"Your words are a guide to the young, sir," answered Wan. "But I still consider my friend Ma Chunshang a fine scholar. I saw his edition of *The Spring and Autumn Annals* in a friend's house in Yangzhou, and I thought he had done a very good job of it."

This scene is very well written: the opinions expressed by the interlocutors reveal a good deal about their own characters as well as other important details of the story. Through Wan Zhongshu, for example, we learn of Ma's ambitions in Beijing. This episode is based on the experience of Ma Suizhong, Ma Chunshang's real-life model, who went to Beijing in 1752 to pursue a career in officialdom. In terms of how this relates to the creation timeline of *The Scholars* itself, there are two possibilities. The first is that, as Wu Jingzi was writing chapter 49, he learned of the episode and included it in his novel. The second is that perhaps the novel was all but finished by 1752, and Wu Jingzi, upon hearing the news of Ma Suizhong, went back and added it to Ma Chunshang's story.²² This seems to be the more plausible explanation. More importantly, this news gives Wu an opportunity to showcase his narrative talent, using this brilliant dialogue to draw the reader into the controversy surrounding Ma while expanding on and widening the reader's perception of Ma's character.

At the same time, one should not exaggerate the proportion of the novel subject to additions or revisions. Given the writing tools at Ma's disposal, systemic revision would have been extremely difficult; major changes would have affected the entire novel and made it nearly impossible to sort out all the details. Furthermore, extant copies of drafts penned by Wu contain no evidence that Wu had ever carried out any sort of systemic revisions.

In chapter 46, Li Weixiao pays a visit to Yu Huaxuan and Li Gong in which he mentions Xun Mei. However, Wu offers no biographical updates, and no mention is made of Xun's predicament in chapter 29. The reason, as one might imagine, is related to Xun's real-life model, Lu Jianzeng. Lu allegedly engaged in bribery in 1739 and was exiled the following year; just two years later, he was called back to take up a post in Luanzhou. Perhaps it was because of Lu's rapid

22 However, Wu Jingzi's additions were carefully chosen. In the year that Ma Suizhong went to Beijing, he in fact died in the capital, inspiring many of Wu Jingzi's friends to wrote poetry eulogizing him, but this is not mentioned in the novel. See He, *Ruilin waishi renwu benshi kaolie*, 14-15.

rehabilitation that the episode did not weigh heavily on Wu, and he never returned to the story of Xun. Nonetheless, the biographies of the characters' real-life models exert a marked, if perhaps at times subconscious, influence throughout the novel.

Rumor Networks and Narrative Form in *The Scholars*

Above, we used narrative time in *The Scholars* as a starting point for our analysis, both verifying the authorship of Wu Jingzi and attempting to reconstruct his narrative process. We sought to understand the implications of his loose writing style and his tendency to draw on real-life acquaintances as a source of narrative material. It would not be an exaggeration to say that he wrote the first modern Chinese novel and, in doing so, was a pioneer in Chinese literary history.

Importantly, Wu Jingzi's writing style and process directly influenced the dialogue-centered narrative form of *The Scholars*. The majority of narrative inconsistencies occur in the dialogue, and, as discussed above, many of these dialogues were based on conversations that Wu observed or took part in. The narrative itself is relatively consistent, despite the fact that it is often contradicted by inconsistencies in the dialogue. Furthermore, once narrative time is introduced to the discussion of narrative form, these so-called chronological inconsistencies become relatively unimportant questions, since the characters are not narrators. It is important to avoid equating the dialogue with the narrative voice. This raises a crucial point: how should we understand the dialogue within the framework of Wu Jingzi's narration? How do we isolate its defining characteristics, its motivations, and its importance for the larger trajectory of the history of the Chinese novel?

We begin with a concrete example. Quan Wuyong is one of the novel's more memorable characters. He is enigmatic, difficult to categorize, and inspires perhaps more controversy than any other character. At the end of chapter 11 and the beginning of chapter 12, Yang Zhizhong speaks highly of Quan, calling him a "remarkable genius and a wonderful scholar" and "unrivaled among contemporaries." However, later narration is more temperate in its praise of Quan, with opinions varying widely. In chapter 13, Quan's image receives a surprising makeover: at a feast at the estate of Lou Feng, Quan is arrested by government officials from Wucheng County and Xiaoshan County. He is accused of kidnapping and seducing a nun, Xin Yuan, from the Lan Ruo Temple. Quan is not heard from again until chapter 54:

"I heard that Mr. Quan Wuyong got into trouble later," said Chen Heshang.
 "What happened in the end?"

"He was slandered by some licentiates at his college," said Chen Munan.
 "Later he was cleared of that charge."

This is presented as idle chit-chat, yet it seems to subvert previous narrative elements and shakes the reader's understanding of Quan Wuyong. Why would the Quan Wuyong case be nonchalantly unearthed forty years after the fact?

Quan Wuyong is modeled after Shi Jing (是鏡) (1693-1769), a native of Wujin in Jiangsu Province.²³ The author Ruan Kuisheng (阮葵生) (1727-1789) describes Shi Jing in "Tea Guests' Remarks (Chayu kehua 茶餘客話)": "Native of Jiangyang, surname Shi, given name Jing, an arrogant individual lacking in culture. Enjoys boasting and complimenting himself. Never questions whether he is deserving of his status in life. Some years later, some accusations were leveled against him by local villagers and he fled into exile, not knowing what would become of him."²⁴ (For more detail on the episode, see Dong Chao). According to postscripts written by the author's son, Ruan Zhongqi, the 30-volume "Tea Guests' Remarks" was written before 1771. Shi Jing's name, which means "mirror," is believed to symbolize the accusations by the local villagers (see Dong). In the second volume, Shi Jing changes his name and becomes a scholar, building a house on Shengke Mountain and gathering 100 disciples.²⁵

"East Marsh Prose (Dong gao za chao 東皋雜鈔)" is another source of information about Shi Jing. According to Dong Chao's 1753 preface, "East Marsh Prose" was compiled beginning "after the yellowing of the roses" and was finished in December, over three months later, so it contains contemporary stories about Shi Jing from that period.²⁶

"The Chronicle of Mr. Shi Jing from Shun Mountain (Shunshan Shi Zhongming xiansheng nianpu 舜山是仲明先生年譜)," by Zhang Jingli (張敬立), attempts to refute the accusations surrounding Shi Jing.²⁷ The

23 Jin He 金和, "Rulin waishi ba 儒林外史跋 (A Postscript to *The Scholars*)." For further details, see He, *Rulin waishi renwu benshi kaolüe*, 1-12.

24 Ruan Kuisheng 阮葵生, "Chayu kehua 茶餘客話 (Tea Guests' Remarks)," in *Yi hai zhu chen 藝海珠塵*, Tingyitang edition 聽彝堂藏板, comp. Wu Shenglan 吳省蘭, 12, 8: 5-6.

25 "Dong gao za chao 東皋雜鈔 (East Marsh Prose)," in *ibid.*, 2: 13.

26 *Ibid.*, 1: 1-2.

27 Zhang Jingli, "Shunshan Shi Zhongming xiansheng nianpu 舜山是仲明先生年譜 (Chronicle of Mr. Shi Zhongming from Shun Mountain)" (1888), Wooden Movable Type Edition, in *Qingren nianpu xilie 清人年譜系列 (Qing Dynasty Biographical Dictionary)*, 2 *Qianjia mingru nianpu 乾嘉名儒年譜*, comp. Chen Zuwu 陳祖武選 (Beijing: Beijing Library Press, 2006), 488.

chronicle, which includes Liu Yin's biography of Shi, includes the following events: After the death of his father, the scholar Mu Lu, Shi speaks at his gravesite. Chen Shiguan retires from his post and returns south to call on his friends. Brother Li does not listen to Shi Jing's advice and continues to stir up trouble. Under duress from the Manchu county magistrate Sheng Bao, he falsely accuses Shi. The "Chronicle" places this episode in the fifty-ninth year of the reign of Emperor Kangxi (1720).²⁸ Again referring to the "Chronicle," Chen Shiguan's visit to Shi would have taken place in 1749, and the episode of the county magistrates in 1754.²⁹

In "East Marsh Prose," Dong Chao writes that Shi Jing felt as though he had been betrayed by a close sworn brother. He added this comment not long after November 1753.

Later on, Shi Jing was the target of a lawsuit, but he managed to have the charges dropped. These events occurred between 1753 and 1754, most likely in 1754. Wu Jingzi died on October 28, 1754. At the time he was visiting old friends in Yangzhou, and on that day he had a pleasant discussion with Wang You. That night, he died suddenly.³⁰ Is there a connection, then, between Shi Jing and Quan Wuyong?

He Zehan supports Jin He's conclusion that the character Quan Wuyong is based on Shi Jing.³¹ Additionally, he believes that chapter 13 implies that Shi Jing was falsely accused by one of his sworn brothers. The Qing-era scholar Zhang Wenhui also supports this view.³² However, at the time that He Zehan developed this view, it was not yet clear that Shi Jing was accused of a crime that occurred in 1754, the year that Wu Jingzi died. This makes the connection seem implausible, as Wu could not have written chapter 13 in the last year of his life. Was Quan Wuyong's arrest a later revision?

Because of the episodic structure of the novel, if Wu Jingzi had made late additions to chapter 54, it would have had little effect on the rest of the story. However, it is difficult to reach any definite conclusion regarding the addition of Quan Wuyong's arrest in chapter 13. Certainly, the narrative required such

28 Ibid., 506.

29 Ibid., 610-611.

30 Wang Youzeng 王又曾, "Shu Wuzheng jun minxuan xiansheng (Wenmushanfang Shiji) Hou Youxu 书吴征君敏軒先生《文木山房詩集》後有序," in *Rulin waishi yanjiu ziliao* 儒林外史研究資料 (*Studies on The Scholars*), ed. Li Hanqiu 李漢秋 (Shanghai: Shanghai Chinese Classics Publishing House, 1984), 16-18.

31 He, *Rulin waishi renwu benshi kaolue*, 10.

32 Li Hanqiu 李漢秋, ed., *Rulin waishi huijiao huiping ben* 儒林外史匯校匯評本 (Shanghai: Shanghai Chinese Classics Publishing House, 1984), 185.

a scene in order to divulge the news of Quan's arrest, and what better scene than a feast, which, after having accomplished its purpose, can quietly disappear? Here I would like to encourage debate regarding He's conclusion and his implicit question: How did Wu manage to successfully weave a variety of descriptions and anecdotes regarding Quan into the novel? This is a seemingly more interesting question.

The "corrections" to chapter 54 were motivated by a controversy over a collection of poems. In chapter 54, Chen Suyuan pretends to become a monk in order to divorce his wife. He cuts his hair into the style of a monk and spends his days telling fortunes and reading poetry. One day he meets Ding Yanzhi, who has a collection of poems that he purchased a few days before. Ding insists that the poems were written at the Oriole-Throat Lake feast. Although the feast is described in chapter 12, none of the authors of the collection of poems—Lan Jiang, Zhao Xueqi, Kuang Chaoren, and so forth—made any appearance at the feast. Chen refuses to believe that the poems were written at the feast. Eventually, Chen Munan comes upon the two of them and settles their argument, confirming that neither Yang Zhizhong nor Quan Wuyong were famous for their poetry. It is this dialogue that leads to the question: "I heard that Mr. Quan Wuyong got into trouble later. What happened in the end?"

It is important to recognize that the controversy occurs in a passage of quoted dialogue rather than in the narration directly. In this way, it mirrors the information dissemination network of the literati. The network included word-of-mouth gossip as well as various forms of written communications, such as "East Marsh Prose" and "Tea Guests' Remarks," which describe the Shi Jing scandal: all of these originate from the same place and time. Shi was still alive at the time, which inevitably led to revisions and additions in various written accounts. *The Scholars* is no exception: using dialogue as a narrative form, Wu is inevitably drawn into the information networks of the literati. Neither Ding Yangzhi's comments nor Dong Chao's records necessarily represent the truth; in fact, they inevitably contain assertions and cases of mistaken identity. Both narrators and commentators will also inevitably have their own prejudices and judgments. Shi was a controversial character to begin with, and after he became involved in a lawsuit, the gossip and criticism naturally intensified.³³

33 Due to space constraints, this article cannot provide a comprehensive treatment of the rumors surrounding Shi Jing. Considering the time limitations, Wu Jingzi likely had not read all the written comments and stories. Still, Shi was intimately acquainted with the Confucian elite of the period. He had acquired a reputation and was not uncontroversial. Regarding the rumors, of course, only hints and traces survive to this day. For example,

The novel has its foundations in this very information dissemination network. Eventually, through flashbacks, this phenomenon itself becomes a narrative object, occasionally even interfering in or correcting the narrative process. This is part of Wu Jingzi's narration style. It is not difficult to imagine his emotions upon hearing that Shi Jing had been wrongly accused and subsequently acquitted and to imagine him choosing to add this information into the narrative. As an author, he felt a responsibility not only toward his characters but also toward their real-life models, especially those who, like Shi Jing, were well-known. Contemporary Nanjing literary circles may well have recognized Shi in the novel. But Wu does not impose his views; instead, he lets the characters speak for themselves. This is one of the advantages of character-focused narration. It does not imply that Quan Wuyong's "rehabilitation" is justified or that he was wrongly accused. He is neither a criminal nor a gentleman. Quan the character is forged from the opinions of others, and it is only on the basis of these opinions that we can attempt to evaluate him.

Conclusion

The character-driven narrative form of *The Scholars* brings to mind M.M. Bakhtin's theories of heteroglossia and the polyphonic novel. In "The Dialogic Imagination" and other writings, he emphasizes that one of the core features of the novel is the inclusion of dialogue in the narrative and the formation of "character zones" with this dialogue as a foundation.³⁴ On the one hand, this marginalizes the authority of the narrator but, on the other, it creates a new consciousness centered on characters and discourse and their complex interrelationships. This relationship between characters and discourse is reflected in many aspects of discourse consciousness—language, style, irony, parody, dialogue, misappropriated dialogue, and more. Thus, according to Bakhtin, discourse consciousness is a characteristic feature of long novels; indeed it is

Yuan Mei had heard that after Shi's father passed away, he spoke at his gravesite. Yuan Mei wrote a letter to Shi denouncing what he viewed as his affectation; he claimed that Shi was taking advantage of a death to create a reputation for himself. Dai Zhenzeng penned a response to this letter, "Yu Shi Jing lunxueshu," but later joined in satirizing Shi Jing's character and scholarly achievement. (For further details, see He, *Rulin waishi renwu benshi kaolüe*, 1-12.)

- 34 See M.M. Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel," in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M.M. Bakhtin* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1988), 259-422. See also *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989).

possible only in long novels. Bakhtin's theory of the novel is based on the philosophy of language, which is clearly outside the scope of this article, but the similarities between his understanding of the long novel and the structure of *The Scholars* are hardly coincidental.

As an episodic novel, *The Scholars* shakes off the typical clichés of the novel form and undermines the power of the omniscient and unseen narrator whose authority traditionally went unchallenged. It should be noted that the proportion of dialogue to narrative text in *The Scholars* was much higher than that of the European novels with which Bakhtin was familiar.³⁵ Because of this, *The Scholars* is more effective in its character description.

It is also important to note that Wu Jingzi's characters' dialogue does not merge into a monolithic narrative voice. Further, the dialogue is more than just an indirect means for the narrator to exert control over the novel. Rather, Wu employs dialogue to mix different voices into the narrative, creating a heterogeneous narrator. Inconsistencies in narrative time construct this diverse, heterogeneous, character-centric narrative form.

Wu also employs dialogue as a means of rejecting the authority of the narrator. Instead, these diverse voices are seamlessly integrated into a heterogeneous narrative framework. Despite using a chronology situated within the history of the Ming dynasty, Wu still employs narration to denote the passage of time and seasons (e.g., he announces in chapter 35 "the first day of the month of October in the thirty-fifth year of the reign of Emperor Jiajing" and then "in the blink of an eye a year passed, and it was the middle of February").

When inconsistencies in narrative time appear, they are often the result of a discrepancy between the accounts of two characters or even the failure of scholars to agree on the dates of events. The inconsistency with regard to the details of the above-mentioned interaction between Xiang Ding and Bao Tingxi was a result of discrepancies in the biographies of the two characters. I tend to place the blame on Xiang Ding, because his account results in an odd gap between chapters 24 and 25. With regard to the novel as a whole, these discrepancies are the result of Wu Jingzi's character-centric narrative form. The novel never creates a coherent "reality" independent of the inner lives of its characters. In searching for truth, the reader is left to draw his or her own conclusions based on the characters' own accounts and a series of endless retellings and ambiguities.

From the perspective of Chinese literary history, the narrative form embodied by *The Scholars* can be traced back to the early seventeenth-century vernacular novel *The Golden Lotus* (*Jin ping mei* 金瓶梅), in which dialogue plays

35 See Shang, *Li yu shiba shiji de wenhua zhuanzhe*, 234-265.

a decisive role. In *The Golden Lotus*, it would not be a stretch to say that characters live out their lives “in” character dialogue: their identities as characters are shaped by dialogue. In many ways, dialogue is the basic building block of narration. What is interesting is that many events, when retold from the perspective of one character or another, seem to change or become distorted, giving rise to a number of ambiguities. Information dissemination networks even spring up around several of the main characters. Other characters are keen to play the role of messenger, adding their perspectives to dialogues and especially quarrels that have already played out, in the process creating a heterogeneous discourse containing multiple voices. They are quick to conjecture, exaggerate, or indulge in gossip and do not hesitate to create a scandal out of thin air. It is nearly impossible to verify the truth of many of their statements, but this is practically irrelevant. This is one of the defining characteristics of the dialogue-centric narrative form.

A further defining characteristic is the repetition and variation of past events. In *The Golden Lotus*, this device serves as the building block of narration. In a character-centric novel narration often centers on topics of daily life, leading to a sense that the story lacks plot, and so adding controversy and ambiguity to past events helps move the story forward and create tensions that require resolution.

The writing of *The Golden Lotus* was a watershed event in Chinese literary history. Its dialogue-centric narrative form parted ways with the traditional novelistic conventions to which even early seventeenth-century European novels still adhered. European novels of the period have been viewed as representing the rise of European literature, yet in terms of dialogue *The Golden Lotus* remained unrivaled.

In the popular 1719 English novel *Robinson Crusoe*, for example, the main character is a taciturn hermit. He has few interlocutors on the island, and so his character description is based mainly upon the identity given to him by the narrator. Although Crusoe interacts with Friday during their English lessons, Friday is his slave and not in a position to deviate from the general bent of his narrative. Therefore, the novel displays a remarkable level of narrative consistency.

From the era of *The Golden Lotus* to the era of *The Scholars* and *Dream of the Red Chamber* (*Honglou meng* 紅樓夢), the Chinese novel underwent pronounced changes in its narrative form, style, and content. However, the dialogue-centric narrative form continued unabated, though it continued to develop. Contrasting sharply with *The Golden Lotus*, *The Scholars* avoided the artificiality of deliberate narration and relied less on the authority of established scholarly traditions, opening the door for more autonomy by the

characters themselves. Additionally, *The Scholars* increasingly relied on contemporary influences from a wider range of time periods, allowing for a heterogeneous character zone with a multiplicity of voices. Wu Jingzi not only writes real-life acquaintances into his work, but he also follows these characters through their lives, periodically adding additional updates into the novel in the form of dialogue. For Wu, his characters are works in process, shaped layer by layer by the passage of time. The last half of the novel in particular exhibits this layering process through flashbacks in dialogue. In the process, the reader gains a window onto the world of the Qing-era literati.

In short, Wu successfully employed the social networks of the literati as an internal driver of his narrative. In doing so, he influenced the development of the modern novel, demonstrating its possibilities as a literary form and its near-boundless capacity for transformation.

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The Drifting of the “South” to Beijing: The Southern Factor in Beijing Culture of the Early Qing

Chen Dandan

Abstract

How did southern China figure in Beijing, the Qing capital? Here “the South” (Jiangnan) must be understood as a cultural rather than geographical term. It does not, however, merely refer to the cultural space in which intellectuals gathered but, rather, to their lifestyle and spiritual existence typical of the elites who resided in regions south of the Yangzi River. This sense of the South involved the body, sense, memory, and everyday experience of Han culture in this period.

Using Foucault’s notion of the “body politic,” I consider the South in opposition to macro politics, the Qing regime, which carried out society’s disciplinary and punishment functions. The body politic is a kind of “micro power,” which can sometimes override or undermine macro politics. In the process of accepting discipline and punishment from the Qing court, the South, drifting northward as its most talented men arrived to serve the Qing, was able to penetrate and reshape national politics in Beijing. In this sense, it maintained a measure of influence even in the face of hostile macro politics. To unpack the interaction between macro politics and micro politics, this article explores how the southern literati migrated to Beijing and established cultural circles there; how southern literati rewrote the idea of the “South” in the North and turned its remembrance into textual, physical, and spiritual rituals; and finally, how the South and the inscribing of the South, either in text or in action, served as a mode of existence for Chinese elites. I consider how intellectuals maintained or created links to the old culture by extending the South into the real spaces of the North and, more importantly, into their psychology.

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Keywords

Beijing – body politic – early Qing – Jiangnan (southern China) – macro politics

Leading Up to the Qing

While Shanghai studies have become one of the most cutting-edge and popular subfields in Chinese studies, Beijing has been comparatively neglected. The same can be said for the interaction between the cultures of the South (Jiangnan 江南) and North China in key historical periods. For most of the Ming dynasty, Beijing was the political capital, but it was never the cultural heart of the empire. Only in the early Qing did the dominant culture of the South begin to drift northward, principally to Beijing. This drift of southern culture to Beijing was a significant element in the development of Beijing's culture.

Scholars have examined various aspects of urban life and institutions in early modern China. For example, William Skinner's *The City in Late Imperial China* examines the cosmology and urban and social structures of the Chinese city, as well as its local societies and religious practices, but it does not provide a detailed examination of Beijing. Another book, *Beijing: From Imperial Capital to Olympic City* includes three chapters on premodern Beijing's role as capital: “The Emergence of Beijing as an Imperial Capital,” “The Forbidden City and the Qing Emperors,” and “Daily Life in the Inner and Outer Cities.” But again, its approach is more historical and sociological, much like “Change of Mandate: The Manchu Conquest, 1644-1860,” in the book *Beijing: A Concise History* or focused on material culture, such as another study, *The Building Culture in Early Qing Yangzhou*, which discusses the southern elements in the imperial gardens. All these works neglect the lived world of the literati. In terms of the differences and interaction between the South and the North, Zhao Yuan's *Studies on the Gentry in the Ming-Qing Transitional Period* provides many insights, but it discusses the North as a broader notion and does not focus on Beijing.

In scholarship that has largely focused on the physical or material form of Beijing, its urban spaces, and its people's daily life at the material level, there has been no deep investigation of the spiritual aspects of life in Beijing, the cultural circles that developed there, and how the spirit of the South came to take root in the northern capital. This article combines urban studies, intellectual history, and the history of mentalities (*histoire des mentalités*) to examine the

following issues. First, I trace the migration of the southern literati and cultural circles to Beijing, through which we see the interplay between politics and culture and between the Manchu regime as the central power and the culture of the South as a force representing local interests. Second, I consider how the Han literati from the South reinterpreted the South in the northern capital. This rewriting transplanted the literati's life modes from the South, helped them remember various aspects of their own southern culture in text and in reality, and recreated the South as literary imagery with different layers and forms. All these developments constitute the drift of the South to Beijing, through which the practice of the southern culture continued both in text and in reality. The penetration of southern culture to every level of the literati's everyday life contributed to the development of Beijing's culture and turned Beijing into a cultural center in its own right.

How did the South figure in Beijing, this northern capital in the early Qing? Here, the word "South" (*jiangnan* 江南) should be understood as a cultural, rather than geographical, term. It does not, however, refer merely to the cultural space in which intellectuals gathered but also to the lifestyle and spiritual existence typical of literati and other elites who resided in regions south of the Yangzi River. This sense of the South involved the body, sense, memory, and everyday experience of Han culture in this period.

The significance of the South in the history of Chinese culture arose from political transformations that date back much earlier. In fact, the shift of China's cultural center from the north to the south can be traced back to the first year of Yong Jia (永嘉) (307 CE), when the fall of the Western Jin Dynasty (266-316) prompted many elites to migrate and settle in areas east and south. This was not simply a geographic migration but one that led to a profound cultural transformation: it fundamentally changed the notions of "North" and "South," such that the South gradually came to be associated with a taste for fine art, a graceful style of living, and an aesthetic that appreciates a gentle and subtle style. Another milestone in this cultural migration was the fall of the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127) and the move of the ethnic Han power base from Bianliang in the north to Hangzhou in the south in 1127 CE. As a result of these repeated invasions by the northern minority peoples and the flight of the ethnic Han, the South (also a region with its own minorities) gradually became the heart of mainstream Han culture.

Thus, if a dynasty established its court and capital in the north (often in Beijing), it had to deal with problems that arose from the separation of the cultural and the political centers. In *Notes in the Old Learning Chamber* (*Laoxue'an biji* 老學庵筆記), written by the poet Lu You (陸游) (1125-1210), northerners

(*beiren* 北人) are referred to as *cangfu* 儻父 (vulgar fellows).¹ This example points to the popular conception that the South represented elegance and the North crudeness. It was impossible for the short-lived Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368) to change this separation of politics and culture, and during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), the cultural center remained in the South, even though the capital was established in Beijing. Nanjing, called *peidu* 陪都 (second capital), remained important and was home to the same number of government authorities. This old city and the surrounding cities of Suzhou and Wuxi comprised the cultural center, where the most influential intellectual and literary activities took place. Lacking this cultural status, Beijing's role as capital was always in some question. In fact, many scholars have attributed the eventual collapse of the Ming to the shift of the capital to Beijing in the dynasty's early years.

The capital's distance from the cultural center of the country meant that the South, with its cultural and economic prosperity, had to supply Beijing with many basic physical and human resources. This could create problems, as we can see from an account in Shen Defu's *Wanliye huobian* (萬曆野獲編): “Fish used in ceremonial sacrifices at the court had to be transported from the South, but by the time the shipment reached Beijing, it had spoiled.”² In addition to the North's economic dependence on the South, the spirit of Han culture shifted south, too.

While it is true that the separation of the political center from the cultural center had a lot to do with the prosperity of the South and the relative poverty of the North, economic considerations were not the sole factor. Here I turn to Michel Foucault. Generally speaking, in China national power (macro politics) and the individual were thought to be homologous, all part and parcel of the same cosmic system. The former determines the latter, and the latter reflects the former. Foucault has argued that this is not the case and proposed the concept of the “body politic.” On the one hand, the body politic simply refers to people's bodies, sense, memory, and everyday experience. On the other hand, as it runs through these aspects of people, the body politic functions as a kind of “micro power,” which can override macro politics, which carries out society's disciplinary and punishment functions. As Foucault describes it,

1 Lu You 陸游, *Laoxue'an biji* 老學庵筆記 (*Notes in the Old Learning Chamber*) (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1979), vol. 9.

2 Shen Defu 沈德符, *Wanli yehuo bian* 萬曆野獲編 (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1980), vol. 17.

this power is not exercised simply as an obligation or a prohibition on those who “do not have it”; it invests them, is transmitted by them and through them; . . . they are not localized in the relations between the state and its citizens or on the frontier between classes and that they do not merely reproduce, at the level of individuals, bodies, gestures and behaviour, the general form of the law or government.³

Nevertheless, the relationship between body politic and macro politics remains complicated. The body politic is not absolutely free and can itself be affected by macro politics.

For my purposes here, the South can be considered the body politic. It initially took form during transitions in political power and so was always symbolic of politics. In addition, the South gained a certain spiritual image from literature. In other words, the notion of the South was also produced by literary imagination. Continually framed in terms of its poetic connotations, the South was gradually transformed from textual imagery to an entire spiritual existence, which began to produce a particular conception of self, both materially and intellectually. As a subject of cultural discourse, the South not only extended itself historically but also created the cultural elite of Chinese society.

While the “way of the South” as a body politic affected the macro politics in different eras, the early Qing period is particularly interesting for the following reasons. To begin, it was during the Ming Dynasty, and especially its later phases, that the influence of the South reached its greatest height. The collective activities of the literati—gathering, chanting, singing, and drinking—gave rise to what was later called *Jiangzuo fengliu* 江左風流 (romanticism of the South).⁴ As a body politic whose considerable power was rooted in its long cultural tradition, the South represented a way of life for China’s intellectuals. After the establishment of the Qing Dynasty, this way of life became a political symbol, not only in texts but also in everyday life. The Donglin faction (東林黨) in the late Ming and the literary society called the Fushe (復社) pushed the image of the South as a body politic to its climax in the political struggles at the Ming court in Beijing that would destroy the dynasty. With the establishment of the Qing Dynasty, a northern nomadic ethnic minority again seized political power. Resulting tensions between the macro-politics carried out by the national power and the effect of the South as body politic sharpened. Thus, the subtle dialogue between macro-politics and micro-politics in

3 See Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 27.

4 江左 *Jiangzuo*, which means “the south of the lower reaches of the Yangzi River,” is interchangeable with *Jiangnan* in many literati writings.

the early Qing provides an excellent opportunity to trace key cultural changes in Chinese political culture.

With this dialogue in mind, let us go back to the cultural dynamics of the early Qing. The Manchu rulers, as an ethnic minority, realized the importance of establishing the dynasty's legitimacy. They therefore enacted a series of policies aimed at concentrating political and cultural power within the imperial court and its allies. The primary goal was to dissolve the cultural power of the South. Thus, during the transition the old conflict between the South and the North was extended into a confrontation between the old dynasty's loyalists and the new conqueror. The South now represented the last holdouts of the Ming dynasty and of Han culture. Even after the Manchus had captured most of the country, the South retained its role as the center of the Han culture. Yu Huai (余懷) (1616-1696) wrote *Miscellaneous Record of Banqiao* (*Banqiao zaji* 板橋雜記) to commemorate the rosy past of the South, especially of the old capital, Nanjing. Many plans for the overthrow of the Qing and a restoration of the Ming were conceived in the South. Thus the Qing ruler had to suppress potential resistance there. After a series of severe blows across the region, the worst of which were the judicial cases of *kechang* (科場), *zouxiao* (奏銷), *kumiao* (哭廟) which caused many literati from the South to be imprisoned or even executed, the Qing ruler adopted seemingly gentler cultural policies, such as “summoning the Ming loyalists” (*zhaoqiyyi* 詔起遺逸) in the ninth year of the Shunzhi (順治) reign (1652), and the “Examination for selecting the scholars and poets” (*boxuehongcike* 博學鴻詞科) in the eighteenth year of the reign of Emperor Kangxi (康熙) (1679). The common purpose of these measures was to win the hearts of the Han literati.

Here we can see how the minority ruler implemented discipline and punishment after seizing national power. But how did the South respond to these as a body politic? What happened to the South in the process of cultural change? I consider the historical response of the South to Beijing as the encounter of a body politic and macro politics in early modern China.

The Southern Literati and Cultural Circles in Beijing

In the early years of the Qing, thanks to a series of political and cultural policies, a large number of southern intellectuals were encouraged to migrate to Beijing. Among those flowing into the new capital, the most important figures were the “Three Masters of the South” (*Jiangzuo san dajia* 江左三大家): Qian Qianyi (錢謙益), Gong Dingzi (龔鼎孳), and Wu Weiye (吳偉業). Their appearance in the capital was quite shocking, since most southern intellectuals at that time devoted themselves to desperate resistance against the Manchus.

The decision of these men to accept government appointments from the new ruler in Beijing was a bombshell in the political and cultural context of the early Qing. As leaders of not only the South but also the intellectual culture of the whole country, their move to Beijing received wide publicity. Just before Wu set out for the capital,⁵ his friend Hou Fangyu (侯方域) wrote to him, hoping to dissuade him from his plan. Hou argued: "This decision is not merely a matter concerning yourself, but will affect the choices of intellectuals all over the country."⁶ Although many contemporaries exiled themselves far from the cities, intending to bury the past world, these three men headed a cultural movement that flowed into the new capital. It is true that Qian left Beijing after only a short stay and Wu's residence in Beijing was not long, but, due to their prominence, the fact that they had traveled to the new capital and accepted the official titles the Qing government had awarded them was highly symbolic.

Another group from the South was pushed into Beijing by the civil service examinations. The southern literati were influential due not merely to their numbers but also their cultural clout. Many important figures went to the capital to sit for the examinations, including Ye Fang'ai (葉方藹) from Kunshan (崑山) and three nephews of Gu Yanwu (顧炎武), known as "the three Xus of Kunshan" (昆山三徐): Xu Qianxue (徐乾學), Xu Bingyi (徐秉義), and Xu Yuanwen (徐元文). All of them scored high in the examinations. Another prominent figure was Wang Shizhen (王士禎) (his pseudonym was Yuyang Shanren (漁洋山人), "Yuyang from the Mountain"), who would later become a leader in poetry. It is true that Wang was from Xincheng (新城) in the north-eastern province of Shandong (山東), but if we take into account the ten years he spent in Yangzhou (揚州), where he was involved in many cultural activities with the southern literati, it becomes clear that Wang had fully embraced the culture of the South. In fact, in one poem, he calls himself "Wang of Yangzhou" (王揚州). In addition, Jiang Chenying (姜宸英), one of the "three famous men of the South without official titles" (*Jiangnan san buyi* 江南三布衣), and Gu Zhen'guan (顧貞觀) also moved to the capital. Both Jiang and Gu were important members of a famous literary salon held by the Qing prince Nalan Rongruo (納蘭容若), the son of Prime Minister Mingzhu (明珠).

The aforementioned "Examination for Selecting Scholars and Poets" was another catalyst for movement to the North. Its purpose, as elaborated in the

5 Wu Weiye was called up by the "Summoning the Loyalist of Ming" in the ninth year of the reign of Emperor Shunzhi (1652).

6 Hou Fangyu 侯方域, "Yu Wu Jungongshu 與吳駿公書 (A Letter to Wu Weiye)," in *Hou Fangyu quanji jiaojianzhu* 侯方域全集校箋注 (*The Annotated Complete Works of Hou Fangyu*) (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 2013), vol. 3. Jungong was Wu Weiye's courtesy name.

imperial edict, was to promote the development of scholarship as well as literary production and provide the new dynasty with a fundamental theory for its reign. In other words, the Qing rulers wanted to transfer the cultural capital from another civilization into their own political capital.

According to Lu Yitian's (陸以湑) (1801-1865) *Memoirs in the Cold House* (*Lenglu zashi* 冷廬雜識),⁷ during the Qing Dynasty the government organized two sessions of the “Examination for Selecting Scholars and Poets.” The first was in the eighteenth year of the reign of Emperor Kangxi (1679). The second was in the first year of the reign of Emperor Qianlong (乾隆) (1735). In both sessions, men from the South greatly outshone the rest. Among the literati who passed these examinations, most came from Jiangnan⁸ and Zhejiang. In the first session, out of a total of fifty, thirty-nine southern men passed the examination. Among them were many famous cultural figures, such as You Tong (尤侗), who was admired by Emperor Shunzhi (順治) as an “Old Gentleman” (*lao mingshi* 老名士); Zhu Yizun (朱彝尊) and Yan Shengsun (嚴繩孫), the remaining two of the “three famous men of the South without official titles”; Peng Sunyu (彭孫通), Wang Wan (汪琬), Chen Weisong (陳維崧), Mao Qiling (毛奇齡), and Xu Gui (徐軌).

Benjamin Elman once quoted Lawrence Kessler, agreeing that the “Examination for Selecting Scholars and Poets” illustrated that by this point most literati of the South had abandoned their hostility to the Qing court.⁹ In fact, as a cultural policy with a distinct political purpose, the examinations should be understood as part of the national power. All the same, they show that through this kind of dialogue and the gradually resolving tensions between Qing macro politics and the body politic, the South was experiencing a transformation. While national power forced many southerners to take the exams, the southerners' attitude toward the new dynasty had become ambivalent. For example, although Huang Zongxi (黃宗羲) did not take the examination, he still sent his son to accept government employment. To escape a government appointment, Yan Shengsun deliberately failed to finish his test, but he was tapped for a position anyway. In addition, his association with Nanlan Rongruo indicated his weakening resistance to Qing national power.

7 Lu Yitian 陸以湑, *Lenglu zashi* 冷廬雜識 (*Memoirs in the Cold House*) (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1984).

8 Here “Jiangnan” was the name of a province, which included Jiangsu and Anhui, two present-day provinces.

9 Benjamin A. Elman, *From Philosophy to Philology* (Nanjing: Jiangsu People's Publishing House, 1997), 9 (in Chinese).

Fifty men of letters who passed this examination and were appointed cultural officers would later be organized by the government to compile the *History of the Ming*. Obviously, this kind of project played an important part in Chinese macro politics. In fact, writing history has always been a political act, especially in transitional periods. After a dynasty ended, its loyalists would write history not only as a means of self-examination but also a way to re-concentrate the dispersed cultural power. To a new ruler, controlling the writing of history was an indispensable part of controlling culture. If we take this into account, we can understand why the new government quickly organized the compilation of the *History of the Ming* while exerting its national authority to suppress historical works produced by folk writers without official status. The “Examination for Selecting Scholars and Poets” demonstrates how the new dynasty tried to gain control of the culture by assembling its key producers (the literati, their activities, and their literary production). It succeeded in creating a cultural movement in the new capital.

Because many southern literati gathered in Beijing through these methods, new cultural circles began to emerge. Two main circles were active at that time, both of which were dominated by southern literati and the southern lifestyle.

One circle included Gong Dingzi, Ye Fang'ai, Peng Sunyu, Wang Wan, Chen Weisong, and Wang Shizhen. The attitude of the central figures always influenced the atmosphere of the entire circle. The leaders of this circle were Gong Dingzi and, later, Wang Shizhen. Gong was a particularly well-known representative of the South. In an introduction that Wang wrote for Gong's works, he called him “the recorder of the South” (*Jiangzuo wenxian* 江左文獻) for his “scholarship and elegant manners.”¹⁰ Wang Shizhen, as I argued above, should be regarded as a man of the South, too. According to the “Chronological Autobiography of Yuyang Shanren,” in the sixth year of the reign of Emperor Kangxi (1667), Wang Shizhen, Wan Wan, Li Tianfu, and others had organized a literary society under the supervision of Gong Dingzi.¹¹ At that time, any poet hoping to find his place in the literary circles of Beijing had to visit first Gong Dingzi and then Wang Shizhen. As a leader in poetry, Wang thought it was his responsibility to introduce the most excellent intellectuals to the whole circle. So, with Wang's recommendation, literati from all over the country quickly won fame as poets and were seen as Wang's pupils.¹² Considering

10 See Wang Shizhen 王士禛, “Yuyang Shanren zizhuan nianpu 漁洋山人自撰年譜 (Chronological Autobiography of Yuyang Shanren),” in <PY, char> (*Chronological Biography of Wang Shizhen*) (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1992).

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid.

that most of Wang’s pupils came from the South—they included Hong Sheng (洪昇), Wang Shidan (王式丹), known as one of the “fifteen poets of the South” (*Jiangzuoshiwuzi* 江左十五子), and Wang Maolin (汪懋麟)—we can say that this circle was constantly enlarged by the southern literati going to Beijing.

Nanlan Rongruo and his teacher, Xu Qianxue, led another important cultural circle. This one included Gu Zhenguan (Rongruo’s best friend from Wuxi) as well as Chen Weisong and Wu Zhaojian (吳兆騫), two of the “three phoenixes of the South” (*Jiangzuo san fenghuang* 江左三鳳凰), and Zha Shenxing (查慎行), who came from the famous Zha family in Haining (海寧), an old town in Zhejiang Province. The “three famous Southern men without official titles”—Jiang Chenying, Zhu Yizun, and Yan Shengsun—were also important figures in this circle.

At that time, these two circles interacted frequently, and the activities of these southern intellectuals, such as chanting, talking, and compiling books, provided Beijing with a new intellectual culture, a literati culture. Their houses, such as Zhu Yizun’s “Old Vine Book House” (*Guteng shuwu* 古藤書屋), were fondly remembered and referred to often by later writers. In this sense, with part of the South (and its literary production and cultural activities) drifting to the North as southern literati regrouped in Beijing, the capital itself became renowned for its literati circles, which were crucial to the growth of Beijing’s culture. In retrospective accounts written by later generations, the activities of the southern circles in Beijing, whose figures frequented local landmarks like Liuli Chang (琉璃廠) and the Ciren Temple (慈仁寺), were considered an indispensable part of Beijing culture. In other words, through the reconstruction of a miniature South in the north, Beijing acquired its own cultural memory.

How did these southern cultural circles in Beijing help shape the early Qing? Rather than their political effect per se, or how they were tamed by the macro politics of national power, I consider how they reconstituted the culture of the South in the northern capital and how the South as a body politic affected macro politics. In the early Qing, conflict between macro politics and the body politic of the South had sharpened greatly. Under Emperor Shunzhi, the conflict was clearly between northerners and southerners, while under Emperor Kangxi, it took the form of confrontation within these groups and became entangled with clashes between Manchu political cliques, one led by Mingzhu and the other by Suo’e’tu (索額圖).¹³ In fact, nearly from the inception of Qing

13 Xie Guozhen 謝國楨, *Mingqing zhiji dangshe yundong kao* 明清之際黨社運動考 (*A Study of Parties and Societies in the Ming-Qing Era*) (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1982).

rule, southerners suffered a variety of political blows as they struggled to become part of the ruling clique. Under Emperor Shunzhi, a group of southerners represented by Chen Mingxia (陳名夏), who came from Jiangnan Province, were appointed to official posts. As a member of the Jishe (幾社) literary society, Chen was clearly representative of the South. Upon his recommendation, other literati who were also among the most important people in southern political-cultural circles, such as Chen Zhilin (陳之遴) from Haining and Wu Weiye, also became government officials. But under the vigilant eye of the ethnic minority rulers, these southern officials were unable to maintain stable positions and status. Although Emperor Shunzhi once claimed that the punishments inflicted on southerners were not intended,¹⁴ this very claim reveals that southerners suffered greatly in political conflicts. One northerner, Feng Quan (馮銓), a political enemy of Chen Mingxia, once remarked to Emperor Shunzhi, “The southern literati are good at literary production but their behavior is often bad. In contrast, northerners may not be so excellent at literature, but their behavior is always exemplary.”¹⁵ It is recorded that the emperor was satisfied with Feng’s words.¹⁶ Here we see the embodiment of macro politics. Feng’s criticism of southerners for “being good at literary production” and the emperor’s consent to this can be read as the projection of national politics onto the cultural power of the South.

Chen Mingxia would eventually be executed as a result of a political attack from a northerner, Ning Wanwo (寧完我). Similarly, Chen Zhilin, also attacked by the northerner Wei Yijie (魏裔介), was exiled to the border regions. The judicial case of *zouxiao* (奏銷案) brought still greater insult. Many officials from the South—Wu Weiye, Xu Qianxue, Xu Yuanwen, Weng Shuyuan (翁叔元), Wang Wan, Peng Sunyu, Song Deyi (宋德宜), and Chen Weisong—were punished. These examples make clear that the national power was capable of exercising discipline and punishment over officials representing the body politic. At that time, even successful political operators, such as Xu Qianxue, depended heavily on Manchu mandarins like Mingzhu.

The southerners’ participation in this system of rule represented a degree of compromise. This entailed accepting the discipline of macro politics as well as a process of self-discipline. But the South also affected macro politics as a body politic through these southern literati because they helped changed the way

14 See *Qing shi gao* 清史稿 • 本紀五 (*The History of the Qing: Basic Annals*), vol. 5.

15 See *Qingshi liezhuan er chen chuan juan qishijiu fengquanchuan* 清史列傳貳臣傳卷七十九馮銓傳 (*Collection of Biographies of the Qing Dynasty, Biography of Feng Quan*) (Taipei: Mingwen Bookstore, 1985), vol. 79.

16 Ibid.

of life of the Manchu rules. Thus, while accepting the realities of the macro politics, the South also responded through its strong cultural power.

As a whole, the southern literati comprised the main cultural strength of the Qing government. Their importance included not only symbolic roles like the "three Masters of the South" but also cultural prestige. As Xu Qianxue once pointed out, most members of Prince Nalan Rongruo's literary salon were the most illustrious men of the time, although they did not succeed in politics.¹⁷ All these men were from the South. The contrast between their failure in politics and their assimilation of the Manchus also illustrates the mutual interplay between the macro politics controlled by the Manchu rulers and the South as body politic.

In addition to these people, those who succeeded in government became the leaders of key cultural offices. Xu Yuanwen, Ye Fang'ai, and Xu Qianxue were appointed one after the other as the head of the project to compile the official history of the Ming. Wu Weiye, Wang Shizhen, and Xu Yuanwen all served as head of the highest education office, the Guozhi jian (國子監).

In the early Qing, the teachers of the Manchu noble class, from the emperor to the various princes, came mostly from the South. Famous literati, such as He Zhuo (何焯), Qian Mingshi (錢名世), Zha Shenxing, and Wang Hao (汪灝), were selected to explain the Chinese classics to the emperors. Nalan Rongruo acknowledged Xu Qianxue as his teacher. His brother Kuixu's first teacher was Wu Zhaqian, then Zha Shenxing. Another Manchu nobleman, Yueduan (岳端), was taught by Gu Zhuo (顧卓), who came from Wujiang (吳江), and Zhu Xiang (朱襄), who came from Wuxi (無錫). Yueduan's nephew Wenzhao (文昭) was a pupil of Wang Shizhen, another crucial man of letters in the circle of Southern literati.

Literary activities in Beijing engendered and fostered the southern cultural circles there. Their significance can still be seen during the long reign of Emperor Qianlong, who initiated another massive cultural project, the compilation of the encyclopedia *Siku quanshu* (四庫全書), which again drew many southern literati to the capital. As Benjamin Elman has indicated, through their participation in cultural projects organized by the nation, "the energy and style of the scholarship of the South were replanted in Beijing."¹⁸ In fact, as we shall see, what was replanted was not merely the energy and style of the scholarship but an entire lifestyle typical of the southern literati.

17 See Li Xu 李勣, *Yinshui ci jian* 飲水詞箋 (*Commentaries on Yinshui ci*) (Shanghai: Zhengzhong Book Company, 1937), 6.

18 Elman, *From Philosophy to Philology*, 9.

Rewriting the “South” in the North

In the early Qing, the cultural activities of the southern literati in Beijing included gathering to discuss poems and exchange works. Beautiful courtesans, of course, were an indispensable part of these activities. The old “romantics” of the South were thus transplanted to the North through various activities by the whole literati culture. In a poem written by Cai Xiang (蔡湘), called “Listen to Liu Jingting Talking about Anecdotes in Sui and Tang Dynasties at the Banquet of Minister of Rites Gong Zhilu, with Limited Rhymes (Gong Zhilu Zongbo xishang ting Liu Jingting tan Sui-Tang yishi xianyun 龔芝麓宗伯席上聽柳敬亭談隋唐遺事限韻),”¹⁹ one can see an elegant party much like those of the past. It was a banquet hosted by Gong Dingzi. Among the guests was Liu Jingting (柳敬亭), the most famous storyteller in the old capital before the fall of the Ming. At this new banquet in the new capital, the old artist still told anecdotes of the Sui and Tang dynasties, just as he had in the South. Another famous artist, Zhang Wu (張五), had also been cast adrift in Beijing after the collapse of the Ming.²⁰ Thus for Liu and Zhang, the present occasion constituted a kind of rewriting of the past. Whereas Stephen Owen once called the image of Li Guinian (李龜年) in Du Fu’s “Meeting Li Guinian in the Southland” a “reminder of the past,”²¹ in fact, old artists such as Liu Jingting and Zhang Wu continued to maintain the integrity of the past world. They pulled the past into the present or pushed the present moment back to the past. In their work, the boundary between the present and the past was deliberately blurred. The past life-world of the South, thus, could be revived in the new capital, Beijing.

Through the medium of these social circles, the southern lifestyle came to permeate the everyday life of the Manchus. When Emperor Kangxi traveled to the South, he complained about the “excessive” luxury there; however, the everyday life of the court was itself pervaded by the atmosphere of the South. At that time, a group of southern literati, who had succeeded in the “Examination for Selecting Scholars and Poets,” were often summoned to the court. The emperor would have a feast with these literati and took pleasure

- 19 See Deng Zhicheng 鄧之誠, *Qingshi jishi chubian* 清詩紀事初編 (*Chronicles on Qing Poems, First Series*) (Shanghai: Shanghai Chinese Classics Publishing House, 1965), 484. Cai Xiang 蔡湘 went to Beijing from Shanghai (at that time, Shanghai was a small town in Jiangnan province) at the age of twenty. Zhilu was Gong Dingzhi’s pseudonym.
- 20 Zhang Xingliang 章性良, “Song Zhang Wu gui Wumen 送張五歸吳門 (See Zhang Wu Return to Wumen),” in Deng, *Chronicles on Qing Poems*, 507. Zhang Xingliang was from Jiangdu (a southern town) and knew some of the old men of letters from the South.
- 21 Stephen Owen, *Remembrances* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), 5.

in watching and enjoying beautiful flowers, fishing, and chanting. Since they had been taught, by and associated with, the southern literati, the Manchus gradually assimilated to southern culture. Nalan Rongruo's famous garden, where the Lushui Pavilion (淶水亭) stood, was selected as the gathering place for Rongruo and his literary friends. As the son of Prime Minister Mingzhu, Rongruo was trained by Han scholars, among whom were the most famous of the day. Because of his status, Rongruo's garden was where famous southern scholars such as Xu Qianxue, Wu Zhaoqian, and Zha Shenxing tended to gather. Growing up in these circumstances, Rongruo became a person whose tastes, feelings, and lifestyle were more like that of a southerner than of a northerner. His poems and songs vividly display this. After he had grown up and was selected to be the attendant to Emperor Kangxi, Rongruo became an excellent poet in his own right and the star of his salon.

One of the most important literary activities in the early Qing, the gatherings at the Lushui Pavilion resembled the old gathering tradition of the South, a tradition that had been noted by literati as early as the Eastern Jin (317-420). These gatherings did not simply copy those of the South but created a symbolic space in the new capital, where the Han literati could remember their parents' lives and even the previous dynasty, while the Manchus got to pursue the lifestyle their ancestors had desired for a long time. In this sense, the South extended itself in both memory and reality. As a natural site, Nalan Rongruo's garden was built according to the aesthetic of the South: a lovely lake, covered with lotus and green leaves, typical southern landscapes, and wandering poets, most of whom came from the South. It demonstrates how the South and Han culture were now cultivated in the everyday life of Manchu elites and in turn how the Manchus' imagined South created a new type of self. The most important thing here is that Nalan Rongruo, a Manchu, was the heart of this salon.

In addition to the Lushui Pavilion gatherings, there was a similar salon in Bo'erdu's (博爾都) villa in a suburb of the capital called Donggao Caotang (東皋草堂). This salon also had both Manchus and southern literati members. Thus, in drifting to the North, the South was substantially rewritten not only by the southerners at large there but also by the Manchus. At the same time, the South also helped rewrite the Manchu life-world and cultural identity in the north.

Remembrance of the South in the New Capital

How did the South and the writing of the South, either in text or in reality, serve as a mode of existence for the self? That is, how did intellectuals maintain,

acquire, or create links to the old culture by extending the South into the real spaces of the North and, more importantly, into their psychology?

In the tenth year of the reign of Emperor Shunzhi (1653), Wu Weiye set out for Beijing. On the way, he visited the city of Jinling (Nanjing) and wrote a couple of poems, which were full of sentimental images of the South, a kind of retrospective on the old dynasty. His subsequent poems were full of images of the South, too. In fact, at that time, images of the South were among the most common in his work. In Wu Weiye and his contemporaries' poems, we can see the South extending itself in text. In their textual world, it is located in the contrasts with the North. Both the North and the South already had established image systems. The image system of the South included "lost country" (*guguo* 故國), "home" (*jia* 家), "dream" (*meng* 夢), and "spring swallow" (*chunhong* 春鴻). Of course, this was an image system with bright colors. But if one goes behind the colorful veil, one finds that it was also an ethereal world with a sense of transience. "Flowers" allude to their subsequent fading; "spring swallow" is easily associated with a young bird's disappearing into the wider world. It is a bright yet sad image-world in which the brightness comes from past glory while the sadness arises from glory gone with the wind. In the meantime, in the image-world of the North, an air of desolation reigns: "old horse" (*laoji* 老驥), "storm and snow" (*fengxue* 風雪), "homelessness" (*wujia* 無家), and "lame donkey" (*jianlu* 蹇驢). Compared with the vividness of the South, such images obviously lack life and delight. But "old horses," "lame donkey," and "storm and snow" are also more concrete than "dream" and "spring swallow." These two parallel image systems contrast the South and the North not merely in terms of geographical difference but as gaps between the past and the present, culture and politics.

If we want to examine the inner world of the literati at that time, we cannot ignore the fact that the establishment of the Qing Dynasty gradually changed the meaning of the South as a cultural concept. In the Chinese literary tradition, the image of the South was an emblem of the old dynasty. In addition to being a lament for one's lost country, it also served as a representation of Han culture and, sometimes, a political objection. Zhang Dai 張岱 wrote *Remembrances of Tao'an's Dreams* (*Tao'an mengyi* 陶庵夢憶)²² and *The Search of Dreams in the West Lake* (*Xihu mengxun* 西湖夢尋); Yu Huai wrote *Miscellaneous Record of Banqiao* (*Banqiao zaji* 板橋雜記). These works served as representations of personal remembrance as well as a collective discourse for Han elites. Through their writing of history as well as the self, the literati sustained the South, but they also rewrote the past in a changed world.

22 Tao'an 陶庵 was Zhang Dai's pseudonym.

Thus, the effect of the South as a body politic can be accessed not only in the literati's re-creation of everyday life of the past but also through their representation. This kind of representation became a form of politics; it may be fairly characterized as a "spiritualization of politics." In this sense, it was also a discourse through which the past was invoked in the present via cultural tradition. It awoke and helped shape the culture flowing in one's body, sense, memory, and everyday experience. To people who surrendered to the Qing, such as Wu Weiye, the writing of their lament for the lost South, lost country, lost self, and lost culture was dual behavior. It washed away the deep sense of shame as it summoned up more rosy sentiments, which in turn became a subtle form of redemption. For these people, the most embarrassing necessity was seeking a balance between the old dynasty and the new. The South in the text then became an important point of balance, through which they could express nostalgia for their lost culture and declare, by visiting the lost self in the past, that they were still part of that past culture. It was only in these written texts that they could find a space to fully exist.

When we explore the inner worlds of the two generations, the older represented by the "Three Masters of the South," and the younger by their descendants such as Wang Shizhen, we find that the younger felt less responsible for the fall of the Ming than did their parents. While the older generation chose to alienate itself from its previous lifestyle as a form of redemption, the younger returned to the past by re-creating the flowery life lived by their elders. For the younger men, the intense pain at the loss of their homeland that weighed on the older generation had been diluted by the passage of time and faded to a subtle nostalgia for an earlier culture. A famous couplet by Wang Shizhen, "My thinking of Wujiang is shaken off every year, I ask the misty river about Banqiao,"²³ was written when he was only a little boy. Wujiang was in Suzhou, and Banqiao was an important area in Nanjing, both symbolizing the South. After the collapse of the Ming, the image of the South, particularly the old capital of Nanjing, often rolled into the minds of the literati as the symbol of the past dynasty. Thus for the younger generation, rewriting the South in the North became a way to recognize themselves in the old cultural world, construct ties to the old dynasty and the old cultural tradition, and gain a kind of self-affirmation as the transmitters of this tradition.

To the Han literati, the remembrance of the South provided a spiritual return to the former culture, the former dynasty, and their former selves. For the Manchus, it was more like a long journey upstream into a culture that had been admired for generations. The lost landscape of the Han was turned into

23 年年搖落吳江思，忍向烟波問板橋。

a fairyland. The Manchu “remembrance” of the South was in fact a celebration of the Han culture.

The Drifting of the “South”

In the process of accepting the discipline and punishment from the new national power, the South, by drifting in the physical space (from South to North), was able to penetrate and reshape the site of national politics (Beijing). In this sense, the South maintained a measure of influence as the micro politics in the face of the macro politics.

From the beginning, the Qing rulers intended to build a new capital, where Manchus were privileged to live in the inner city while the Han had to reside in the outer city. They hoped to create a new “Beijing culture” that would dominate other local cultures. The Qing rulers wanted to make Beijing a true cultural center to weaken the cultural power of the South and to minimize the possibility of rebellion there. From the “Examination for Selecting Scholars and Poets” to the early phases of the compilation of the *Siku quanshu*, the Qing rulers constantly tried to pull the cultural center from the South to Beijing.

However, in the meantime, the Qing rulers themselves and even the city of Beijing both experienced a kind of silent assimilation by the South. The everyday life and cultural identification of Manchu elites changed greatly. When Nanlan Rongruo finally traveled to the South, he was overjoyed because it was where most of his teachers and friends came from. To Rongruo, the South was like a dream, and being there was his most intense desire. In this sense, the South became the spiritual homeland for this Manchu prince.

In the process by which the Manchus endeavored to dissolve the cultural power of the South, the South itself served as a body politic, entering the development of the new dynasty’s culture. To some extent, it redefined the life-worlds of the Manchus. With the southern literati recreating their old cultural circles in Beijing, the city of Beijing developed its own memory of culture. As the famous classical scholar Pi Xirui (皮錫瑞) (1850-1908) once indicated: It is almost a law of history that the North always unites the country through politics while the South does so through culture.²⁴ After the South had been conquered by the Qing, the cultural flow of an entire literary group to the North shows us that the South managed to survive in a new political-cultural context and Han culture in a new non-Han dynasty.

24 Pi Xirui 皮錫瑞, *Jingxue lishi* 經學歷史 (*The History of the Classics*) (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1959), 282.

Of course, one cannot ignore the fact that as a body politic, the South would inevitably be affected by macro politics. Such effects not only meant its political suppression or its assimilation into the domain of macro politics but also included the fact that after the fall of the Ming, the South itself, the lifestyle there and the style of literary and scholarly production, changed a great deal. Such changes came in part from the introspection of the southern literati regarding the culture in which they grew up. In fact, there was a long tradition of dialogue and tension between the South and the North, which only intensified during transitional periods. The drifting of the South in physical space not only resulted in certain effects in the North but also provided the North, its constant opposite, with a chance to blend culturally.

For example, Gu Yanwu, originally a southerner, chose to wander across the North after the fall of the Ming. As Qian Mu indicates in his *Zhongguo jinsanbainian xueshushi* 中國近三百年學術史 (*Intellectual History of China in the Last Three Hundred Years*), over the course of about twenty years of drifting in the North, an interest in “textual research” replaced Gu’s previously “gentle” and “elegant” literary taste; the style of Gu’s scholarly production also turned to what was generally considered “northern scholarship.”²⁵ Another example is Zeng Wan (曾畹). In the last days of the Ming, Zeng and his friend Wei Xi (魏禧), one of the “three most famous essayists” in the early Qing, together traveled in the cultural circles of the South, like many literati at that time. After the collapse of the Ming, Zeng also wandered in the frontiers from the East to the West. Twenty years passed, and in an introductory essay Wei wrote for Zeng,²⁶ he describes Zeng, previously a southern gentleman and an elegant dresser, as looking more like a northern frontiersman with a dark yellow face, bleak eyes, leather clothes, and a heavy knife fastened to his belt. Thus, in Wei Xi’s account, both the previous world and Zeng’s previous self seem like a distant dream. The drastic change in Zeng’s physical appearance can also be read as a metaphor that points to changes in the South.

Conclusion

In Where Is the South: The Establishment of the Concept of the Orthodoxy and the Metamorphosis of the Gentry’s Spiritual World (何處是江南：清朝正統觀

25 Qian Mu 錢穆, *Zhongguo jinsanbainian xueshushi* 中國近三百年學術史 (*Intellectual History of China in the Last Three Hundred Years*) (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1986), 152, 156.

26 See Zhao Yuan 趙園, *Mingqingzhiji shidafu yanjiu* 明清之際士大夫研究 (*Studies on the Gentry in the Ming-Qing Era*) (Beijing: Peking University Press, 1999), 97.

的確立與士林精神世界的變異), Yang Nianqun (楊念群) touches upon the interactions between the Han literati and the ruling Manchus. But Yang is more concerned with how the southern literati clashed with Qing rulers in their competition over who would represent orthodoxy and how the Manchus reconstructed and managed the South to claim the legitimacy of their rule.

In discussing the drift of the South northward instead of how the South was transformed or co-opted by the Manchus, I see the South not only as a place or a cultural concept but as a body politic that was able to move and provide a counterforce to central power. The interplay of southern micro politics and Manchu macro politics pulled the South into Beijing and allowed the transplantation of southern culture to the capital. The southern elements in Beijing's rise as a cultural capital in the early Qing point to a new chapter in the long history of cultural drift between North and the South in China.

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Book Reviews



Wang Dachang (汪大昌)

Beijing: fangyan yu wenhua 《北京：方言与文化》 (*Beijing: Language and Culture*). Beijing: China International Radio Press, 2015. 250pp.

In 1956 the government of the People's Republic of China announced the adoption of a new official language to be known as the "common language" (*putonghua* 普通话). The language would be based on the northern dialect of Chinese (*guanhua* or Mandarin Chinese) as spoken by the people of Beijing. Because China has many mutually unintelligible dialects, it was necessary to have one standard language so that the Chinese Communist Party could govern the country as a single nation.

The linguist Wang Dachang, who teaches at Capital Normal University, is a native speaker of Beijing dialect. To him, that dialect of Chinese sounds the most pleasant and the most correct. In his new book *Beijing: Language and Culture*, he describes many aspects of Beijing dialect and compares it to *putonghua*.

The language spoken by the people of Beijing, he tells us, is a language that evolved over the course of a thousand years, when the politics and economy of Beijing was most heavily influenced by northern peoples, such as the Khitan, Mongols, Jurchen, and Manchus. The population movement of the Han was away from the northern rulers toward the south, where they continued to speak a Chinese that was less influenced by northern non-Han peoples. Today those southerners are the people who speak Cantonese, Shanghaiese, and other regional southern dialects. One can say that the southern peoples speak an older and more original form of Chinese, while northern Beijing speech represents a simplification of the earlier Chinese language brought about by its use as spoken by the northern peoples, for whom Chinese was a second

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language. Today, whereas Beijing Chinese has four standard tones and thirty-eight vowel sounds, Cantonese has nine tones and sixty-eight vowel sounds, and the Chaozhou 潮州 dialect spoken by many Chinese in the Boston area, where I am writing this review, has eight tones and eighty-five vowel sounds.

For native and non-native speakers of Chinese alike, one of the most distinctive features of Beijing speech is the use of the *er* 兒 sound added to many words and phrases. For example, the large flea market in Beijing, called Panjiayuan in standard Chinese, is pronounced in Beijing dialect as Panjiayuar 潘家園兒. Peking natives happily add the *er* sound at many points in their speech, and Wang presents many pages of examples of words and phrases that include this distinctive sound. He explains some rules for when the sound is added and when it is not but, in the end, concedes that the rules for this usage are too complex to list comprehensively and often depend on the whim of the native speaker.

A central point Wang makes is that *Putonghua* and Beijing dialect are not the same. Speakers of Chinese outside Beijing do not seem able or willing to use their tongue to produce the ending *er* sound. For most speakers of southern dialects, he says, making the *er* sound is difficult and does not come naturally, so it does not appear in those versions of *putonghua*. Even beginning students of Chinese come to recognize this example. In contrast, northern-style pronunciation calls for the tongue to curl so that the tip of the tongue goes back in the mouth and touches the palate. In that case, the *er* ending is a natural way to finish a word, as in Panjiayuar.

I have reviewed several Chinese dictionaries to see which add the *er* sound to their entries and which do not. Wang has done a similar review in his book. My informal review showed that some go very far in treating Beijing dialect as standard Chinese by adding the *er* sound in many of the examples they provide, while an equal number of dictionaries recognize *Putonghua* as different from Beijing dialect and the examples they give do not so closely follow Beijing usage. Wang discusses this situation of trying to define *Putonghua* as the standard versus retaining Beijing speech as the purest form of the standard language, leading to a dilemma that has bedeviled all dictionary compilers in China in recent decades. It also appears from my experience that most Chinese consider the pronunciation close to the northern pronunciation as closer to standard *putonghua*. Wang comments on these issues without being dogmatic or prescriptive.

Wang says that Beijing natives have a habit of dropping the tones of some words, especially when the word seems so familiar that it would be easily understood by all other people in the city. As an example, he gives the place name Baoding 保定, a major city to southwest of Beijing. Natives would say *Bao* (third tone)-*ding* (with no tone). But people who are exposed to *Putonghua* as

spoken in the rest of the country retain the tones for both syllables, saying *Bao* (third tone)-*ding* (fourth tone). Most people in China do not have a special identification with Baoding as the people of Beijing once felt they had, so they use the dictionary pronunciation.

One of the effects of the standardization of Chinese is that even people who are Beijing natives no longer follow this practice of omitting tones from some syllables, and they speak more like speakers of *putonghua*. A similar transformation is taking place in the use of the *er* sound: Wang's survey showed that less than 70 percent of students born and raised in Beijing regularly use the *er* ending. Lest one conclude that the old Beijing dialect is fading away, Wang says this is not yet so. Current practice in the city reveals that even some phrases from the past few decades regularly use the *er* ending in common parlance. Among these, he gives the examples *ditie X harxian* (地鐵 X 號兒線 number X subway line) and the ubiquitous *shenfenzher* 身份證兒 (identification card).

Wang presents an overview history of the Beijing region to make the point that its geographic location has allowed it to be one of the pivotal population centers in China. For centuries, soldiers either were garrisoned in the area or were passing through en route to even more far-flung border posts. There were traders and merchants in the area, making it an active economic and commercial center.

Beijing dialect emerged from these long-term interactions and was the product of all the peoples who met there. Because the most recent northern people to rule Beijing were the Manchus (1644-1911), one could say that, for the past three hundred years, the Manchus have had the greatest impact on the development of Beijing dialect. Wang acknowledges the Manchu influence and gives examples of Manchu expressions that have entered Beijing slang, but says the spoken Beijing dialect we hear today has a much shorter history, having formed in the 1920s and 1930s. That is the speech he is most interested in explaining and analyzing in this book.

Wang goes into detail about many aspects of Beijing speech, from cultural influences to linguistic analysis. Some of the statistics in the book come from his own surveys of how Beijingers actually use the language. His endlessly interesting book is clearly written and well organized. He mentions the work of numerous Chinese linguists and their publications, he tells how literary works have preserved the color and style of Beijing speech, and he describes television personalities who have performed using Beijing dialect. The first edition includes a short CD with Professor Wang outlining some of his points, along with excerpts of notable native speakers of Beijing speech, including Pu Yi, the last Qing emperor.

Reviewed by Ronald Suleski

Zhang Dainian and Cheng Yishan (張岱年, 程宜山)

Zhongguo wenhua jingshen 《中國文化精神》 (*The Spirit of Chinese Culture*).

Beijing: Peking University Press, 2015. 319pp.

Mainland China has undergone dramatic cultural changes in recent years. From the title *The Spirit of Chinese Culture*, one might expect to find a timely reflection of recent changes in Chinese folk culture in this book. But in fact folk culture is mentioned only in passing the first time (104) and then criticized as “selfish” and “superstitious” the second time (235). The authors consider philosophical refinement as representative of Chinese culture and aim to settle a 400-year-long debate (up to 1980s) over the identity of Chinese culture in the face of Western culture.

In the Introduction, the authors state that a discussion of Chinese culture needs to employ a “correct methodology,” by which they mean a “self-conscious acceptance of the guidance from universal truths in Marxist dialectical and historical materialism” (12). This cannot fail to cast a cloud of suspicion on what is to come, a suspicion ultimately justified by the authors’ systematic references to Marx and Engels in the basis of argumentation. Still, a sensitive reader can perceive two levels in the book—the first ideological and the second analytical—that often shift within a single section. For example, after examining how the concept of private property can illuminate the way in which individualism emerges from the Western family system, the authors immediately charge Western family relationships with reducing natural emotions to “ice-cold cash transactions” (57). Perhaps the authors had assigned themselves different functions, and one of them is mainly responsible for issuing value judgments to make the critiques of Chinese culture as politically correct as possible.

Tracing the development of traditional Chinese philosophy, the authors identify Confucianism (儒家) as the dominant theme in Chinese culture. The spirit of this Confucianism is said to consist of “vigorous action” (剛健有為), “harmony and the mean” (和與中), “upholding virtues and utility” (崇德利用) and “harmony between Heaven and man” (天人協調). The fundamental guideline is said to be “vigorous action,” which further consists of “unremitting self-improvement” (自強不息) and “using virtue to navigate through myriad things” (厚德載物) (14-15). The authors compare Confucianism

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to Legalism (法家), observing that the dominance of Confucianism over Legalism in Chinese culture results from the former's capacity for having political power positively construct everyday life, whereas the latter's conception of power as an external discipline defies public acknowledgment by the feudal landlord ruling class (107-109, 124). The authors reject national chauvinism, wholesale Westernization, and reconciliatory eclecticism before proposing creative integration to form a new Chinese culture.

The outstanding strength of the book lies in its use of ancient texts to support critiques of sinocentrism (華夏中心主義) (65-66), the traditional examination system (科舉制) (206-209), and cultural despotism (文化專制主義) (222-227). This approach to original voices tremendously animates the philosophical debates as in their critique of the Westernists (洋務派) and Reformists (維新派). Also praise worthy is the use of historical evidence to support their arguments. For example, to oppose geographic determinism (21-23), the authors trace the different outcomes of "familism" (家族主義) in China and the West back to the modes in which the primitive patrilineal clans evolved into slave societies. Likewise, compared to France and the United States, the authors attribute British nobility to the Glorious Revolution.

The book nevertheless comes up short, as it relies upon literal readings of philosophical works for textual interpretation. For example, the authors charge Li Zehou with being contradictory about whether ideology should be considered an aspect of a society's nature (302). But, with more charity, the authors could have read Li as toning down the idea that an influential ideology can by itself constitute the basis of social existence.

This uncharitable interpretive strategy hinders the authors' appreciation of certain precious aspects of Chinese culture, as is also painfully obvious in their discussion of Daoism. Clearly, whatever Daoists mean by the chronically ill-defined "nothingness" it includes in a cultural context goes much beyond the tired "passivity," "quietness," "gentleness," "diminishment," "peacefulness," or the vaguer "weakness" that critics adduce. The authors employ perennial clichés and discard Daoism without attempting to defend its rationale. To take just one example, while commentators have widely regarded Zhuangzi (莊子) as having relativized knowledge claims, the authors interpret him as rejecting all analytic methods (173). More controversial is the authors' characterization of Zhuangzi as an intuitionist who proposes that we rid our hearts of knowledge and desires to intuitively perceive the Dao. Here the authors fail to consider the alternative, that Zhuangzi is engaged in a descriptive project that groups people into two realities with different codes of happiness. This descriptive project may not carry any normative force that obligates "human" beings to change their "small" nature for the sake of imitating the "big" ways of

“heaven.” Arguably, the end of Hundun (混沌 primordial chaos)—the allegory that concludes *Zhuangzi*’s Inner Chapters—aims to show that human efforts at crossing the boundary between “big” and “small” are fatally futile.

The authors ignore similarities between Chinese and Western culture. For example, in a discussion of the highest value in Confucianism, the authors quote Mencius (164) as claiming that human nobility follows from heavenly nobility. It is natural to associate this Confucian thought with Matthew 6:33 in the Bible, according to which seeking the kingdom of God brings fulfillment of worldly needs. Rather than taking such chances to compare Western and Chinese thinking—as, say, Choong Chee Pang has done in a comparative study of Qu Yuan’s pleading to heaven and Job’s pleading to God, the authors cherry-picked shallow interpretations of Western canons to create a contrast with what they see as a Chinese culture dominated by Confucianism. To advocate harmony between humans and nature in Confucianism, the authors claim that Christianity situates humans outside and above nature (43). To show that Confucianism encourages people to create a better life, the authors claim that Christianity instructs sinful believers to abandon worldly happiness for the sake of eternal life (86). The authors also regard St. Augustine as advocating strict separation between church and state (60) without considering contemporary scholars’ challenge to the old chestnut that he advises that one lead a Christian life apart from politics.

Overall, this outdated book offers a one-sided introduction to Confucianism dictated by Marxist value judgments. Without a charitable interpretative strategy, the authors mangle Daoist insights and fail to accurately present the positions they oppose. Without an adequate appreciation of Western culture, the authors’ positive proposal of creative integration rings hollow. This book fails to present the spirit of Chinese culture. Still, the authors cover the major cultural topics and figures, so reading the book can allow the reader to become familiar with the terms of Chinese cultural debates.

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