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Banner calligraphy Huai Su 懷素 (737–799), Tang calligrapher and Buddhist monk

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GUEST EDITOR'S PREFACE

Shih-Wen Sue Chen

The death of Mao Zedong in 1976 and the rise of Deng Xiaoping in 1978 with his policy of Reform and Opening Up led to a series of major changes in Chinese society in the decade that followed. The 1980s has been characterised as a decade of transition, of various 'fevers' (*re* 热 in Chinese), of discos, karaoke, pop music, fashion, Flying Pigeon bikes, radios, and wristwatches. This period has been frequently overlooked by researchers who focus either on the Cultural Revolution or the rise of commercialisation and commodity culture in the 1990s and beyond. The few English-language studies conducted on the 1980s have concentrated on topics such as intellectual culture, high politics, or reform economics, and have mostly viewed this period through the lens of the June Fourth Incident at Tiananmen Square. Publications focusing on the 1980s, such as *Returning to the 1980s* (Chongfan bashi niandai 重返八十年代), *1980s and I* (Wo he bashi niandai 我和八十年代), and *The Eighties: Interviews* (Bashi Niandai Fangtanlu 八十年代访谈录), reflect a sense of nostalgia for the decade which has been characterised as 'full of potential and freedom', 'an age of innocence, idealism, and enthusiasm', and an era where the cultural aspirations of the Chinese people were widened as a result of the 'open door' policy.[1]

Deng's new economic policies and guidelines provided people with more access to material goods and services, more opportunities to acquire knowledge of the outside world, and more leisure time. It is worth reconsidering this early reform period by focusing on the everyday and examining how the lives of ordinary people were transformed during this time. The many aspects of changes to everyday life and how they influenced the outlooks and experiences of people living in the 1980s have largely been ignored because daily life is often dismissed as mundane, trivial, repetitive, or depoliticised. However, as Henri Lefebvre and others have argued, the political cannot be divorced from the everyday and the political is often hidden in the everyday. Ben Highmore, interpreting Lefebvre, states, 'the singularity of the everyday event (a woman

1 Cheng Kuangwei 程光炜, ed., *Chongfan bashi niandai* 重返八十年代 (Beijing: Beijing da xue chu ban she, 2009); Ma Guochuan 馬國川, ed., *Wo he bashi niandai* 我和八十年代 (Hong Kong: Sanlian shudian, 2010). Zha Jianying, ed., *Bashi Niandai Fangtanlu* 八十年代访谈录 (Beijing: SDX Joint Publishing Company, 2006). S. Wang, 'The Politics of Private Time: Changing Leisure Patterns in Urban China,' in ed. D.S. Davis, R. Kraus, B. Naughton and E.J. Perry, *Urban Spaces in Contemporary China: The Potential for Autonomy and Community in Post-Mao China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp.149–72 (at p.166).

buying sugar, for example) reverberates with social and psychic desire as well as with the structures of national and global exchange'.[2]

2 Ben Highmore, *Everyday Life and Cultural Theory* (New York: Routledge, 2001), p.25.

The papers in this issue illuminate the plurality of relationships and networks of new voices that emerged in this decade. Focusing on a changing religious landscape, Scott Pacey discusses the re-emergence of Buddhism and its relationship with atheism in 1980s China, examining articles published in the Chinese Buddhist Association's journal *Voice of Dharma* (Fayin 法音), Li Ping's novel *When the Sunset Clouds Disappear* (Wanxia xiaoshi de shihou 晚霞消失的时候), and other examples from popular culture to delineate how they aspired to enlightenment. Utiraruto Otehode and Benjamin Penny examine the role of activist practitioners in the Qigong boom of the 1980s, focusing on the case of Soaring Crane Qigong (*Hexiangzhuang Qigong* 鹤翔庄气功) activists in Luoyang municipality. Turning to literature, Rui Kunze analyses pulp science fiction published in the early reform era, using sociocultural and psychoanalytical approaches to dissect the texts. She argues that these stories reflect concerns about the national project of modernisation, the control of the Chinese Communist Party, and the reading publics' anxieties and desires as they engage with a new economy.

The two invited papers present recollections of the authors' personal experiences of 1980s China. Liu Qing 刘擎, who was hailed as a model student by the Shanghai-based newspaper *Wenhui Daily* (Wenhui bao 文汇报) in 1983 while studying for a masters degree in chemical engineering, reflects on the new campus culture that emerged in this period. He characterises the various activities happening across campuses as an 'independent cultural movement' and places them in the historical context of 1980s China, pointing out how they challenged and questioned the dominant official ideology. Sang Ye 桑晔 writes on what was lost and gained in the 1980s, using diverse examples such as the 'Four Gentlemen' of the 1980s (Weng Yongxi 翁永曦, Huang Jiangnan 黄江南, Zhu Jiaming 朱嘉明, and Wang Qishan 王岐山), the changes to public toilets, and the 1984 survey of a county in Heilongjiang province to illustrate the changes that occurred in this decade.

The seemingly singular or fragmented nature of the 'snapshots' of everyday life described can be combined to provide a multifaceted portrait of how people lived and dealt with transitions in society as a result of Reform and Opening Up.

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‘ASPIRING TO ENLIGHTENMENT’: BUDDHISM AND ATHEISM IN 1980s CHINA

Scott Pacey

With its theoretical foundations in Marx, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has always been officially atheist, and members of the party are not supposed to be religious adherents. In practice, since coming to power in 1949, the CCP’s approach to managing religious activity has been much more complex. In the 1950s, the party expected religious beliefs to disappear as society progressed ideologically, but the 1954 constitution of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) granted freedom of religious belief nonetheless. This policy reflected Mao’s early, comparatively relaxed approach to dealing with religion. In his 1927 ‘Report of an Investigation into the Peasant Movement in Hunan’, Mao explained that ‘it is the peasants who made the idols, and when the time comes they will cast the idols aside with their own hands; there is no need for anyone else to do it for them prematurely’.[1]

According to the sociologist of religion in China, Fenggang Yang:

> In the ideological lexicon of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), atheism is a basic doctrine, which manifests in two major forms: scientific atheism and militant atheism. Scientific atheism, as the offspring of the European Enlightenment Movement, regards religion as illusory or false consciousness, non-scientific and backward; thus atheist propaganda is necessary to expunge religion. In contrast, militant atheism, as advocated by Lenin and the Russian Bolsheviks, treats religion as the dangerous opium and narcotic of the people, a wrong political ideology serving the interests of the anti-revolutionary forces; thus forces may be necessary to control or eliminate religion. Scientific atheism is the theoretical basis for tolerating religion while carrying out atheist propaganda, whereas militant atheism leads to antireligious measures.[2]

However, although atheism is a central tenet of the party’s ideological platform, its approach to dealing with religion has not been rooted only in these sources. It is also built on approaches developed during the modernisation

1 Christopher Marsh, *Religion and the State in Russia and China* (New York: Continuum, 2011), p.162. For Mao’s original comments, see Mao Tse-Tung, *Report on an Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1967), p.46. <http://marx2mao.com/Mao/HP27.html>.

2 Fenggang Yang, ‘Between Secularist Ideology and Desecularizing Reality: The Birth and Growth of Religious Research in Communist China,’ *Sociology of Religion* 65.2 (2004): 101–19, at p.103.

movement in the Republic. Then, two neologisms — 'religion' (Ch. *zongjiao* 宗教; Jp. *shūkyō*)[3] and 'superstition' (Ch. *mixin* 迷信; Jp. *meishin*)[4] — that were imported into Chinese from Japanese came to frame debates about religious belief. As Rebecca Nedostup notes regarding the Nationalists' (hereafter abbreviated according to the Wade-Giles romanisation of their Chinese name — KMT) policies during the Republican period, religion had to be 'religion in a rationalized form —not tales of magical crabs and mystical eggs. In other words, religion can be distinguished from superstition'.[5] Under the KMT, religious practice was, therefore, permitted, but religious representatives sought to carve out a space for their traditions within the realm of the rational and religious, rather than the irrational and superstitious.

Opposition to 'religion', however, increased with the rising tide of scientism and Marxism in the 1910s and 1920s. Modernist intellectuals, during the New Culture Movement and the May Fourth Movement in 1919, called for religion to be discarded in light of science and philosophy — a position that gained currency during the latter stages of the Republic. For example, Hu Shi 胡適 (1891–1962), a proponent of pragmatism and former student of John Dewey (1859–1952), advocated 'using science as the basis of our philosophy of life' and 'using a scientific attitude, spirit, and methodology as our attitude to life and way of living'.[6] In 1930, he put forward a set of scientific 'new ten commandments' that held human beings to be animals — whose values changed according to the time and environment — and a product of evolution, in contrast to divinely created beings.[7] A debate between advocates of science and metaphysics occurred in print in 1923, concerning which of these — science or metaphysics — was most suited to the formation of a viable 'philosophy of life'.[8] The period thus saw a group of Chinese intellectuals begin to articulate a worldview founded in atheism and science, while at the same time opposing religion, and not just superstition, as unmodern.

Certain Buddhists tried to establish a privileged space for Buddhism in the 1920s and 1930s. The most vocal proponent of this approach was the monastic Taixu 太虛 (1890–1947). Taixu pointed out that there was no creator deity or notion of the soul in Buddhism; therefore, it was atheistic and scientifically valid.[9] For example, in an essay penned in 1913, he wrote:

> Alas! lord of creation! You are no lord of creation! Are you not the supreme expression of ignorance? For the deceptive and non-existent to be regarded as true and existent is truly to be subject to the greatest of illusions. Because this illusion has not been destroyed, and because enlightenment has not been established, I shall never spare myself in controverting this notion.[10]

Taixu did, in fact, continue to argue for the atheistic nature of Buddhism and its compatibility with science throughout his career. As Erik J. Hammerstrom has shown, Buddhists associated with the Wuchang Buddhist Seminary (*Wuchang foxueyuan* 武昌佛學院), where Taixu was an important influence, thought about Buddhism and science too, and published articles on the subject in the pages of *Haichao yin* 海潮音 — a magazine Taixu co-founded in 1920.[11] These writers shared with Buddhists who were not interested in science the 'core' of Buddhist beliefs (reincarnation, karma, the superknowledges or *shentong* 神通, and other beliefs that can be considered 'supernatural'),[12] indicating that their definitions of what was scientific differed from those of their non-Buddhist opponents.

3 See Rebecca Nedostup, *Superstitious Regimes: Religion and the Politics of Chinese Modernity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2009), pp.7–8.

4 *Ibid.*, p.9.

5 *Ibid.*, p.3.

6 Hu Shi 胡適, 'Kexue de renshengguan' 科學的人生觀, in ed. Hu Shi, *Hu Shi wenxuan* 胡適文選 (Hong Kong: Xiandai shudian, 1956), p.74.

7 Hu Shi, 'A Scientific View of Human Life,' p.74.

8 D.W.Y Kwok, *Scientism in Chinese Thought 1900–1950* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965), p.135.

9 T'ai-hsü, 'On Atheism,' in ed. and trans. Douglas Lancashire, *Chinese Essays on Religion and Faith* (San Francisco: Chinese Materials Center, 1981), p.63. For the original text, see Taixu 太虛, 'Wushen lun' 無神論, in ed. Yinshun 印順, *Taixu dashi quanshu* 太虛大師全書 (CD-ROM), Vol.13 (Xinzhu: Caituan faren Yinshun wenjiao jijinhui, 2005), pp.284–95, at p.291.

10 T'ai-hsü, 'On Atheism,' p.71; Taixu, 'Wushen lun,' p.291.

11 See Erik J. Hammerstrom, 'Buddhists Discuss Science in Modern China (1895–1949)' (PhD diss., Indiana University, 2010).

12 See *ibid*., p.443.

Although the ideological environment shifted in 1949, and began moving towards militant, rather than scientific, atheism in the lead-up to the Cultural Revolution (1966–76), Buddhists continued to align their doctrines with the nation's overarching intellectual context. In the 1950s, the government established representative organisations for China's official religions. Writers affiliated with these often sought to show how their religious ambitions did not contradict party policy. For example, as Holmes Welch has shown in his classic study *Buddhism under Mao*, articles in the magazine *Xiandai foxue* 現代佛學 often reinterpreted Buddhist doctrine in terms of Communist ideas. 'Sentient beings' (*zhongsheng* 衆生), then, could refer to the 'masses' (*qunzhong* 群衆).[13] 'Thought reform' was interpreted as a process of mental purification.[14] In denying the existence of a soul and a creator deity, the Buddha had presaged Marxist scientific atheism.[15]

The magazine's editor, the monastic Juzan 巨贊 (1908–84), explained that 'the nature of Buddhism was different from that of other religions because it was "atheist" (*wu-shen* 無神)'.[16] He thus carved out a unique space for Buddhism by showing that it alone cohered with one of the most fundamental tenets of Marxism. In 1960, the monastic Jinhui 晉惠 also wrote in the magazine that Buddhism was atheistic. He supported this assertion with the work of writers including Rahul Sankrityayan (1893–1963), whose essay 'Buddhist Dialectics' was published in Chinese translation in 1957.[17] Sankrityayan referenced Buddhism's lack of belief in a creator deity. Jinhui also referred to the Russian Buddhologist Fedor Shcherbatskoi's *Buddhist Logic* (1930–32) (part of which appeared in translation in *Xiandai foxue*'s second issue in 1959), in which he cites the fact that Buddhism does not incorporate belief in a god or soul.[18]

Despite their efforts to show that Buddhism could coexist with Marxism — and even complement it — *Xiandai foxue* ceased publication shortly before the Cultural Revolution, in 1964. During the ensuing period of militant atheism, religious activity continued privately and in secret.[19] After this, the Eleventh Party Congress reaffirmed the freedom of religious belief that had been guaranteed in the 1954 constitution. The government re-established the Religious Affairs Bureau (*Zongjiao shiwuju* 宗教事務局) in 1979, and China's five national religious associations were revived in 1980. A new religious policy, Document 19, was released in 1982. This stated that while one of socialism's goals was to see the end of religion, this would happen naturally, with the progress of science and technology. Religious activity would be permitted so long as it did not contradict the aims of the CCP, was patriotic, and was pursued within the framework of China's official religious organisations.[20]

According to Shiping Hua, by this stage China's intellectual landscape was divided between the Marxist scientism of Hu Qiaomu 胡喬木 (1912–92) and the Marxist humanism of Wang Ruoshui 王若水 (1926–2002).[21] Hu's scientistic approach reflected the new emphasis on scientific development as promoted by Hua Guofeng 華國鋒 (1921–2008) after the Cultural Revolution, while Wang's reflected the dissatisfaction with scientistic Marxism felt by many students and intellectuals. At the same time, the relatively liberal religious environment created by the party's changed stance on religion enabled writers to focus on demonstrating compliance with Document 19, and to choose whether or not to think about religion in terms of Marxist theory.

13 See Holmes Welch, *Buddhism under Mao* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), p.86.

14 *Ibid*., p.270.

15 *Ibid*., p.271. Welch provides other examples as well. See his 'Interpreting Buddhist Doctrine,' in *ibid*., pp.267–97.

16 See Chü-tsan [Juzan], 'Appendix A: An Account of My Work over the Past Year,' in *ibid*., p.396.

17 In the magazine *Xuexi yicong* 學習譯叢. See issue 3, pp.11–15.

18 Jin Hui 晉惠, 'Fodian zhong "wushenlun" sixiang' 佛典中「無神論」思想, *Xiandai Foxue* 現代佛學 5 (1960): 25–27. For Fedor Shcherbatskoi, see *Buddhist Logic* (New York: Dover Publications, 1962).

19 See Vincent Goossaert and David A. Palmer, *The Religious Question in Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), p.165.

20 For a translation of Document 19, see Donald E. MacInnis, *Religion in China Today: Policy and Practice* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1989), pp.8–26.

21 Shiping Hua, *Scientism and Humanism: Two Cultures in Post-Mao China (1978–1989)* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), p.54.

This policy change was accompanied by new academic trends. From 1978, religious studies departments and institutes reopened around the PRC, including the Institute of World Religions at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, and the Institute for Religious Studies at Nanjing University. The Chinese Association of Religious Studies was founded that same year.[22] There were scholars, such as Lü Daji 吕大吉 (b. 1931), who argued that the notion of religion as opium was of fundamental importance when viewing religion from a Marxist perspective. Others, such as Zheng Jianye 鄭建業 (1919–91), Zhao Fusan 趙復三 (b. 1926), as well as Ding Guangxun 丁光訓 (1915–2012) (who in 1980 became chair of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement (*Sanzi aiguo yundong* 三自愛國運動) — China's official Protestant organisation), argued differently. For them, Marx's comparison of religion to opium either did not represent the entirety of his views, or had been misinterpreted as a tool of oppression in light of China's 'century of humiliation'.[23] Since this began with China's defeat in the First Opium War, opium had a special resonance in China that it lacked in other contexts.

The CCP itself, however, continued to promote atheism. This can be seen in the official media. For example, *Renmin ribao* 人民日报 reported that middle and high schools in the city of Xining held a movement to study Lei Feng 雷鋒 (1940–62) during the winter of 1980. They were encouraged to maintain a diet of scientific literature, as well as to 'advocate atheism, and refrain from engaging in feudal superstition'.[24] Another *Renmin ribao* article, from 1983, relates how work units in Jiangsu province participated in an education campaign against 'superstitions' such as fortune telling. Part of this involved the promotion of atheism. Its success was shown by the fact that in 1982, 'not one of the commune members who built a new house — over 430 — had invited a geomancer to determine its fengshui'.[25]

Nevertheless, religious adherence does appear to have grown, as suggested in the figures provided in Document 19. This reports that in 1949 there were 8 million Muslims, 2.7 million Catholics, and 700,000 Protestants. By 1982, these numbers had increased to approximately 10 million Muslims (although the report notes this was mainly due to population growth), more than 3 million Catholics, and 3 million Protestants. It does not give precise figures for Buddhists and Daoists, but notes that 'among the Han race, Buddhism and Daoism still exercise considerable influence at present'.[26] Vincent Goossaert and David Palmer report that

> even though the publication of religious literature was in theory strictly controlled in the PRC — Bibles and other scriptures could be sold only on the premises of officially designated places of worship — in practice, it was easier to find religious materials than the works of Marx and Mao. Bootlegged *fengshui* manuals, divinatory almanacs, and *qigong* handbooks were among the main offerings of street-side book vendors during the 1980s and 1990s.[27]

Throughout this period, vegetarian restaurants and lay-Buddhist associations grew in number; Goossaert and Palmer also estimate that 'from the late 1970s until the suppression of Falungong in 1999' perhaps 'about one fifth of urban residents had some form of direct contact with *qigong*'.[28]

Reanimating Buddhism

The continued re-emergence of religion in Chinese life shows how people had begun to question the CCP's ideological stance as a totalistic worldview.

22 He Guanghu, 'Thirty Years of Religious Studies in China,' in eds Fenggang Yang and Graeme Lang, *Social Scientific Studies of Religion in China: Methodology, Theories and Findings* (Leiden: Boston: Brill, 2011), p.30.

23 See He Guanghu, 'Thirty Years of Religious Studies in China'; Fenggang Yang, *Religion in China: Survival and Revival under Communist Rule* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp.49–54; Gong Xuezeng 龔學增, 'Makesizhuyi zongjiaoguan yanjiu 60 nian' 馬克思主義宗教觀研究60年, in ed. Zhuo Xinping 卓新平, *Dangdai Zhongguo zongjiaoxue yanjiu (1949–2009)* 當代中國宗教學研究 (1949–2009) (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2011), pp.9–11.

24 'Xining shi shiliusuo zhongxiaoxue xuesheng changyi guo yige xue Lei Feng shu xinfeng de hanjia' 西寧市十六所中小學學生倡議過一個學雷鋒樹新風的寒假, *Renmin ribao* 人民日报, 31 January 1980, p.6.

25 Zhao Enyun 趙恩雲 and Song Xianzhi 宋賢智, 'Xianggou gongshe yindao qunzhong pochu fengjian mixin,' 香溝公社引導群眾破除封建迷信 *Renmin ribao* 人民日報 7 January 1983, p.3.

26 MacInnis, *Religion in China Today*, p.11. Fenggang Yang reports that 85 per cent of respondents in the Chinese Spiritual Life Survey in 2007 held some form of religious belief. See Fenggang Yang's reference to his 2010 conference paper in 'A Research Agenda on Religious Freedom in China,' *The Review of Faith & International Affairs* 11.2 (2013): 6–17.

27 Goossaert and Palmer, *The Religious Question in Modern China*, p.276.

28 *Ibid*., p.287.

According to Zhao Dingxin, 'fevers' (or crazes; *re* 熱) for 'Sartre, Nietzsche and Freud', as well as for 'religion', were symptomatic of a public need for alternatives to Marx and Mao. While the 'culture' craze was driven by a belief that 'Chinese culture should be held responsible for the failed development and tragedies of Mao's era', there was a renewed interest in 'traditional' culture as well.[29] The 1980s thus saw intellectuals become interested in Chan 禪.[30] Others were led to Buddhism through their interest in *qigong*.[31]

One of the principal ways for people to encounter Buddhism after Document 19 was through popular media. Goossaert and Palmer report that around this time, 'novels, films, and TV shows were populated with Buddhist monks, Taoist magicians, and invincible heroes who could fly, disappear and reappear at will, read people's minds, and neutralize adversaries with their miraculous inner powers or secret magical potions'.[32] The comic strips of Cai Zhizhong 蔡志忠, including *Chanshuo* 禪說, were hugely popular in the late 1980s and early 1990s.[33] One producer of religious-inspired media was the Shanghai Animation Film Studio (*Shanghai meishu dianying zhipianchang* 上海美術電影製片廠). It released the classic feature *Danao tiangong* 大鬧天宮 in two parts, in 1961 and 1964. However, it disappeared along with much of the Chinese film industry during the Cultural Revolution. It revived in the reform era, producing a series of films drawn from China's pre-modern cultural milieu, including Buddhist and Daoist topics.[34]

In 1980, the studio released *San ge heshang* 三個和尚, a film about a trio of monastics who initially struggle to reside together, but who eventually find friendship in adversity. This won the inaugural Golden Rooster Award for best animated film. The studio also produced an animated film based on a tale of one of the Buddha's former lives — *Jiu se lu* 九色鹿. *Laoshan daoshi* 嶗山道士 was another short film about a man who trains under a Daoist master on Lao Mountain, and learns how to walk through walls.[35] And between 1982 and 1987, China Central Television produced a series based on the classic novel *Journey to the West* — a fantastic reconstruction of the Tang dynasty monk Xuanzang's 玄奘 (602–664) journey to collect Buddhist texts from India.[36]

The re-emergence of Buddhism into daily life — and the dissatisfaction with official ideology — is also evident in Li Ping's 禮平 (b. 1948) novel *Wanxia xiaoshi de shihou* 晚霞消失的时候.[37] The semi-autobiographical work first appeared in the magazine *Shiyue* 十月 in 1981, and describes the regret Li felt over his participation in the Cultural Revolution. In a 1988 interview, he recalled that while searching the YMCA in Beijing as a Red Guard, he found photographs of their activities. Li remarked that 'this was the first time I became aware that religious life was so colorful, friendly, and beautiful'.[38] Although he never became religious himself, he eventually came to believe that while 'religion is not true ... it has its beauty'.[39]

The novel was popular among university students, but his positive portrayal of religion as an alternative value system, and his criticisms of an overly scientific and dehumanised Marx, led to him being interrogated about his links to underground writers and barred from delivering lectures or joining the Chinese Writer's Association (*Zhongguo zuojia xiehui* 中國作家協會).[40] Although the novel generated, according to his own reckoning, over 100 critical essays,[41] it reflected the thoughts of a young generation of students who were disillusioned with Chinese Marxism after the 'ten years of turmoil' (*shinian dongluan* 十年動亂). Such youths were willing to see what religion could offer in the formation of post-Maoist worldviews.

29 Zhao Dingxin, 'Crazes,' in ed. Edward L. Davis, *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Chinese Culture* (London; New York: Routledge, 2005), pp.161–63.

30 Ji Zhe, 'Non-institutional Religious Recomposition Among the Chinese Youth,' *Social Compass* 53 (4): 535–49.

31 *Ibid*., p.541.

32 Goossaert and Palmer, *The Religious Question in Modern China*, p.277.

33 See Ji, 'Non-institutional Religious Recomposition,' p.538–39.

34 See Yan Hui 顏慧 and Suo Yabin 索亞斌, *Zhongguo donghua dianying shi* 中國動畫電影史 (Beijing: Zhongguo dianying chubanshe, 2005), pp.125–58.

35 See *ibid*., chapter 5.

36 The novel is attributed to Wu Cheng'en 吳承恩 (c.1500–c.1582), although it also appears to be an elaboration and development of earlier stories and texts concerning Xuanzang's journey. See Anthony C. Yu's 'Introduction', in, ed. and trans. Anthony C. Yu *The Journey to the West* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1977), Vol.1, pp.1–62.

37 Li Ping 禮平, *Wanxia xiaoshi de shihou* 晚霞消失的時候 (Beijing: Zhongguo qingnian chubanshe, 1981).

38 Li Ping, cited in ed. Laifong Leung, *Morning Sun: Interviews with Chinese Writers of the Lost Generation* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1994), p.103.

39 Leung, *Morning Sun*, p.101.

40 *Ibid*., p.100.

41 Li Ping, cited in Leung, *Morning Sun*, p.100.

Li's persona in the novel parallels the journey of many of these disaffected young people. When he discusses Shakespeare with a young girl, Nanshan, he learns that in Marxism there is a place for subjective values. The ever-idealistic Li nevertheless proceeds to become a Red Guard, and next meets Nanshan while searching the house of her grandfather — a former commander in the KMT army. Nanshan appears holding a large, unidentified book. Despite his admiration for her, Li found himself sharply criticising her bourgeois ways, and they were both ultimately disappointed in one another's ideological choices.

Two years later, full of regret over this incident, he found Nanshan and her grandparents on a train. Listening in to their conversation, he heard Nanshan express the humanistic sentiments of students in the post-Mao era. Although she had no clear ideology herself, she stated that 'the hope of this world lies more in the human spirit and actions, not in the minds of different theorists'.[42] But aside from humanity, she also believed in something higher, because she told her grandfather that

> I must thank an unknowable power. At a time when I might have become a completely different person, it made me who I am today, and I am extremely grateful. This power is great and mysterious. Some people say it's a sacred consciousness; some people say he's a just old man. I'm more willing to believe the latter. I believe he stands above the universe, that he knows everything that's going on in the human world, and that he knows everything that's going on with me. I do not doubt that he has benevolently influenced both my life and my destiny. Therefore, even though I can't see him, I do long for him. If he really does exist, then one day, when I finally face him, I will, on behalf of myself and the family he has bestowed me with, bow deeply to this old man, and pay a daughter's respect.[43]

Her grandfather, astounded by her monologue, asks: 'Are you praising Jehovah?' To which Nanshan replies: 'Yes, Jehovah. I love him deeply'.[44] Li was amazed too. How could Nanshan, with her superior understanding of Marx, revealing her to be both scientific and aesthetic, be a Christian? Yet, coming from her, he believed that she must somehow be right. He also realised that the book she had been holding on the day he searched her grandfather's house had been a Bible.

The final chapter is set after a gap of twelve years, during which time Li had grown disgusted with the servility the Cultural Revolution fostered. Walking on Taishan, he had his first encounter with an erudite Buddhist monk. During their discussion, the monk talked about the history of Western philosophy and science, as well as the weather formations that characterised the area. Impressed with his knowledge, Li finally could not help himself, and said:

> I cannot deny that Buddhism has a glorious history and traditions, but if someone understands astronomy and meteorology, he can't suppose that there are heavenly palaces for the gods constructed in the middle of the universe, and if he understands mechanics and physics, then he can't believe it possible for anyone to mount the clouds and ride the mist. But you are obviously someone with a thorough knowledge of science, and your learning convinces me that you must also be someone with a warm love of it, too. So I simply find it impossible to understand how you can go on believing in religion.[45]

42 Li Ping, *When the Sunset Clouds Disappear*, p.105.

43 *Ibid*., p.110.

44 *Ibid*., p.111.

45 Li Ping, trans. Daniel Bryant, 'Autumn,' in ed. Michael S. Duke, *Contemporary Chinese Literature: An Anthology of Post-Mao Fiction and Poetry* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1985), p.65.

Although at first the monk did not reply, he soon expressed his agreement with Li that 'there is something beyond truth, and this is beauty'. But he also explained that

> beyond beauty there is goodness. It is the search for truth, beauty, *and* goodness that constitutes the whole spiritual life of humanity... There are many religions in the world, from those of Jesus and Allah in the West to Buddhism and Daoism in the East, and their branches and sects are numberless... It should be apparent from this that the basis of religion is morality, and does not really conflict with science.[46]

Even though Nanshan had a superior understanding of Marxism, and the old monk on Taishan had firm knowledge of science, they both had their own form of religiosity. Li, who had existed entirely within the framework of atheism and Marxism, was able to admire both of them because he felt there was something missing in his own worldview. While the novel ends ambiguously concerning Nanshan's ultimate religious affiliation, it tantalised its readers with suggestions about the place of subjectivity and humanism in Chinese Marxism, and its compatibility with religious sentiment. Therefore, sociologist of religion Fenggang Yang notes that the significance of the novel is probably that it showed 'religious clergy, once ridiculed and driven out of public sight, might hold some enlightening truths about the questions with which many young people were struggling'.[47]

Buddhist Mediations on Atheism

In the intellectual arena, dissatisfaction with Maoism led Li's generation to consider that perhaps religion could coexist with Marxism. In the political sphere, the policy changes of 1979–1982 brought a new tolerance for religion founded in scientific or Enlightenment, rather than militant, atheism. This allowed Buddhists to reconsider their doctrine's relation to Marxism anew, as well as its relation to Taixu's earlier stance, and those of monastics such as Jinhui and Juzan in the early Communist period.

In 1981, *Fayin* 法音 was founded to serve as the Chinese Buddhist Association's (*Zhongguo fojiao xiehui* 中國佛教協會) journal of record. In some of the articles appearing in the magazine in the 1980s, a range of views concerning atheism were expressed that would not have appeared in the more ideologically rigid conditions of the 1950s and 1960s. More specifically, these articles embody a reassessment of the line that had been established since the days of *Xiandai foxue* before the Cultural Revolution — that Buddhism cohered with scientific atheism — and thus with the CCP's ideological platform.

In 1987, the deputy secretary general of the Sichuan Buddhist Association (*Sichuansheng fojiao xiehui* 四川省佛教協會), Gu Titao 賈題韜 (1909–95), gave a speech entitled 'Lun kaiwu' 論開悟. According to the report furnished in *Fayin*, Gu's talks were always well attended. Audience members included 'scientific workers and qigong professionals from outside the Institute, as well as students from Peking University'.[48] Gu characterised awakening in an interesting way — as something that is eminently attainable in this life — and as anything but mysterious or lofty. He explained that the Buddha became awakened after only six years of ascetic practice, and then 40 days of further practice beneath the bodhi tree. He then led numerous people towards their own awakening.

46 *Ibid*., pp.66–67.

47 Yang, *Religion in China*, p.142.

48 Deming 德明, 'Dakai rensheng aomi zhimen: Gu Titao lao jushi de yidu hua' 打開人生奧秘之門:賈題韜老居士的一席話, *Fayin* 法音 2 (1987): 37–38, at p.37.

This view concerning the ease with which awakening can be achieved differs with how it is usually described in the two main Chinese schools of Buddhism: Chan and Pure Land (*Jingtu* 淨土). The Indian Buddhist philosopher, Nāgārjuna (2nd – 3rd century CE), is purported to have outlined two paths to practice: the 'hard path', in which one relies on one's own efforts, and the 'easy path', in which one relies on the power of enlightened buddhas, and thus reaches the stage of nonretrogression (in a bodhisattva's practice) more easily.[49] Later, Chinese Pure Land exegetes and practitioners advocated the pursuit of practices that included recitation of the buddha Amitābha's name. This 'easy path' became a core mode of praxis in Chinese Buddhism.

However, awakening is not normally described as easily attainable — it is often, in fact, the end product of lengthy periods of positive karmic accrual. But for Gu, it was simply a case of having the correct 'belief', and 'courage'.[50] It was, rather, this characterisation of awakening, rather than the lengthier, more 'other worldly' type, that cohered well with the CCP's stance on atheism and historical materialism. Amitābha was an 'other worldly' personage, and his Pure Land was distant from the earth. This, clearly, was at odds with the Chinese Marxist emphasis on founding an earthly utopia. Gu's approach to awakening — as a state that could be achieved through human effort rather than through recourse to deific figures — made more sense in an age of atheism.

Gu, therefore, also explained in his speech that Buddhism was, in fact, a form of atheism. According to him, where Buddhism differs from other religions is in its lack of a creator deity and belief in divine ordination. Due to the unity of all phenomena, a notion expounded on in the Huayan school of Buddhism, sentient beings were also one with the Buddha and could become like him.[51] One can see how this equality between the Buddha and unenlightened beings might resonate with the official ideals both of a classless society and scientific atheism.

Gu's pragmatic approach reflected the line taken in a vast backlog of Republican and early communist-period material. But, in the open religious climate of the 1980s, the pressure to align religion with atheism was absent. You Youwei 游有維 (1917–90), writing in 1987, could thus find scope to consider Buddhism beyond materialism. In his article, You, who was a layman holding a variety of posts within the Shanghai Buddhist Association (*Shanghaishi fojiao xiehui* 上海市佛教協會), responded to a question from some readers on this subject. He answered that in the sense that Buddhism did not have a creator deity who ordered earthly affairs, the answer was yes — Buddhism was atheistic.[52] But, in other respects, the Buddhist position was less clear-cut. For example, in the cycle of transmigration through the paths of rebirth there was a cognitive essence (*jingshen zhuti* 精神主體) that survived physical death. You also referred to the view that the form taken by the external world depended on the purity of one's mind.[53] You was in fact describing what in the 1950s would have been denounced as idealism.

You's argument was made from the perspective of Yogācāra Buddhism, which posits that there are eight different types of consciousness. The first five of these are akin to the sensory faculties, while the sixth consciousness is responsible for conscious mental activity. The seventh consciousness has the unique role of using information gathered through the other types of consciousness to forge our discrete identity and notion of selfhood. In Buddhism, this is considered a false construct, and hinders awakening.[54]

49 Julian F. Pas, *Visions of Sukhāvatī: Shantao's Commentary on the Kuan Wu-Liang Shou-Fo Ching* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), pp.53–55.

50 Deming, 'Dakai rensheng aomi zhimen,' p.37.

51 *Ibid.*

52 You Youwei 游有維, 'Guanyu "Fojiao shi wushenlun" de jin yibu yanjiu' 關於「佛教是無神論」的進一步研究, *Fayin* 法音 5 (1987): 7–10, at p.7.

53 *Ibid.*, p.7.

54 Dan Lusthaus, 'What is and isn't Yogācāra'. <http://www.acmuller.net/yogacara/articles/intro-uni.htm>.

The eighth and final consciousness is the 'base consciousness'. It is here that 'seeds', which are the results of our volitional actions, are deposited. When these seeds mature, they generate the conditions of our experience, and also form the karmic repository that will lead to subsequent lives. While the eighth consciousness is not considered to have any kind of spiritual existence as a soul does, it does indicate that for Yogācāra all experience is cognitive. The eighth consciousness, however, is never considered to be in any way akin to a soul.

For You, in 1988, it was precisely this latter consciousness which enabled him to think about Buddhism as incorporating aspects that were not strictly materialistic — a deviation from Marxist doctrine but one that was made possible through the freedom that was now available to Buddhist thinkers. In particular, You cited the existence of a ninth or undefiled consciousness, which in Yogācāra Buddhism has been postulated as a way of explaining the minds of enlightened beings.[55] Awakened beings, like the Buddha, have purified the eighth consciousness, which allowed this pure, undefiled consciousness to emerge. Such a position clashes with earlier efforts to align Buddhism with science, since it cannot be scientifically verified. However, the newly open political context was allowing Buddhists not only to reconsider their relationship to scientific atheism and the stance taken in *Xiandai foxue*, but also to think about Buddhism and atheism in new ways altogether.[56]

Finally, a short piece by the prominent Taiwanese monastic, Shengyan 聖嚴 (1930–2009), was printed in the magazine in late 1989. In this, Shengyan asserted that there were two kinds of atheism: materialist atheism, and Buddhist atheism. The first

> denied the independent existence of all spirits, and does not accept the existence of spirit worlds (*guishen shijie* 鬼神世界). The atheism discussed in Buddhism states that all phenomena arise co-dependently, that the myriad things in the universe arise from the collective karma of sentient beings, and affirms that there are spirits (*jingshen* 精神) and ghosts (*guishen* 鬼神). But it does not assume that there is an omniscient, omnipotent ruler that created the universe — as is spoken of in monotheism — which is the first, last and only god.[57]

With these definitions, Shengyan highlighted similarities he considered Buddhism to share with scientific atheism, while carving out a privileged space for 'Buddhist atheism'. In making this argument, he returned to discussions he had engaged in during the 1950s and 1960s that were aimed at showing Buddhism to be a more scientific and modern religion than theistic Christianity. In 1956, he had claimed that besides its lack of a creator deity, beings commonly thought of in popular practice as celestial — buddhas and bodhisattvas — were merely spiritually advanced beings.[58]

We Fade to Grey

The above examples show that there were instances of mediation between state ideology and young intellectuals, religious studies scholars, and Buddhists. Even though these discussions had somewhat restricted audiences — university students, writers in China's metropolitan centres, and a limited number of monastics and Buddhist laypeople — they helped create the conditions for China's religious efflorescence in the 1980s. But they were not its end product. Li Ping's novel was certainly popular and reflected the views of a generation, but scholarly debates on opium were not the bread and butter

55 For different views on this, see Paul Williams, *Mahāyāna Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundations* (London: Routledge, 1989), pp.92–93.

56 Another contributor to the discussion, Yuanming 圓明, was a teacher at the Shanghai Buddhist Academy. He rejected the question of whether Buddhism was atheistic or not altogether, arguing that it was misguided. By leaving the question open, Yuanming's stance perhaps granted even more leeway concerning the degree to which Buddhism was atheistic or not. See Yuanming, 'Guanyu "Fojiao shi wushenlun yanjiu" xiaoyi' 關於「佛教是無神論研究」小議, *Fayin* 6 (1988): 43.

57 Shengyan 聖嚴, 'Fojiao chengwei wushenlun de yiyi shi shenme?' 佛教稱為無神論的意義是什麼, *Fayin* 10 (1989): 17–18, at p.17. Also see this brief text in Shengyan, *Xuefo qunyi* 學佛群疑 (Taipei: Dongchu chubanshe, 1989), pp.137–40.

58 Shengyan, 'Ping bo Fojiao yu Jidujiao de bijiao'評駁佛教與基督教的比較, in Shengyan, *Jidujiao zhi yanjiu* 基督教之研究 (Taipei: Dongchu chubanshe, 1993 [1956]), pp.293–94.

of Chinese religious life. And *Fayin* was not a magazine that aimed at mass circulation in the 1980s or even today.

For this, we must look to other forms of popular media, or simply to the *qigong* movement, or the interest in Buddhist culture, that characterised the 1980s religious landscape. These movements gave expression to religious sentiment and aspirations, and provided an alternative to the Marxism that many were criticising as devoid of subjectivity, or as incapable of solving the problem of alienation. The religious engagement with party policy in the 1980s can thus be described in terms of varying degrees of disengagement. Fenggang Yang has described this in a legal sense with his division of the PRC's religious landscape into red (legal), black (illegal) and grey (borderline) religion.[59] There was also an intellectual division into those who supported and spoke about party policy, and those who did not discuss Marxism, at least in any great depth, at all.

The Buddhist layman Huang Nianzu 黃念祖 (1913–92) is one example of a practitioner and teacher who spoke about traditional Chinese Buddhist aspirations. Huang was raised as a Buddhist and studied at the Beijing Engineering College (*Beijing gongxueyuan* 北京工學院). In the 1980s, he became a prominent preacher in Beijing, and his discussions of Pure Land soteriology are widely available on the internet today.[60] In a collection of talks entitled *Xinsheng lu* 心聲錄, for example, Huang teaches the importance of reciting a buddha's name (*nianfo* 念佛) as a way of supplementing one's own limited capacities.

Huang held that certain aspects of Buddhist practice (such as keeping the precepts) depended on one's own power. However, this was unreliable and needed to be augmented with 'other power' (*tali* 他力),[61] which stemmed from an advanced buddha or bodhisattva such as Amitābha. He explained that 'this epithet Amitābha is the accumulation of countless eons of merit. This epithet is therefore the actual fruit of merit, and thus in the epithet there is naturally unlimited merit.'[62] Huang's stance was clearly not atheistic; he advocated recitation of Amitābha's name as a purifying, efficacious practice that exemplified Mahāyāna teachings. The reality of Amitābha, and the power of his vows, was thus a key aspect of Huang's buddhist oeuvre.[63]

However, Huang also accepted that there were similarities between Buddhism and science. For example, in a 1986 speech on this subject in Beijing, he explained that Buddhist knowledge could aid in the understanding of physics:

> Relativistic physics adds time to the third dimensional coordinate of space, thus comprising a fourth dimension. The two complement one another, and constitute the unified field of space and time. When people think about the reality of four-dimensional space, they are unable to understand it before thoroughly ridding themselves of erroneous thoughts and vexations.[64]

Huang thus ascribed a scientific nature to Buddhism, something that Taixu and his associates at the Wuchang Buddhist Seminary did in Republican China, and which the *Xiandai foxue* writers did in the 1950s and 1960s.[65] However, once this had been established, Huang's Buddhist outlook remained otherwise traditional, something that was made possible by the comparatively open religious climate of the 1980s.

Conclusion

The articles in *Fayin*, Li Ping's novel, the re-emergence of Buddhism in the realm of popular culture, and the teachings of Huang Nianzu show that

59 Fenggang Yang, 'The Red, Black, and Gray Markets of Religion in China,' *Sociological Quarterly* 47 (2006): 97–122.

60 For a brief hagiography, see <www.buddhism.com.cn/jingtu/wnz/hnzszssj.htm>.

61 Huang Nianzu 黃念祖, *Xinsheng lu* 心聲錄 (Taipei: Huazang jingzong xuehui, 2004), p.26.

62 *Ibid*., p.54.

63 Huang wrote an essay on the Chinese Pure Land patriarch Shandao 善導 (613-81) for *Voice of the Dharma*: Huang Nianzu 黃念祖, 'Shandao dashi yu chiming nianfo' 善道大師與持名念佛, *Fayin* 11 (1990): 29–31.

64 Huang Nianzu, 'Foxue yu kexue' 佛學與科學, in ed. Beijing fojiao wenhua yanjiusuo 北京佛教文化研究所, *Foxue yu kexue: xin shidai de duihua* 佛學與科學：新時代的對話 (Beijing: Beijing fojiao wenhua yanjiusuo, 2002), p.21.

65 On Buddhists and science in Republican China, see Hammerstrom, 'Buddhists Discuss Science in Modern China (1895–1949)'.

Buddhists and their sympathisers were no longer confined to discussions of Buddhism in terms of party ideology. Even so, Buddhists and Marxists were, perhaps, actually asking the same questions, which centered on delusion. Marxists argued that religion was the product of a false conception of reality, and was determined by class and social structures. For Chinese Buddhists, the Buddha also taught that we are deluded, and outlined a path through our delusion towards awakening. While for CCP members, delusion could be overcome through the study of party ideology, for Buddhists, this could be done through their own canon of scriptures and commentaries.

Like Li Ping's monk on Taishan, Buddhists also continued to value science. However, so long as discussion was carried out within the parameters of legal acceptability, Buddhists and other religious adherents could experience new levels of intellectual freedom. This, in turn, opened up spaces for Buddhists to explore their own tradition, and at the same time, to experience Buddhism in a greater variety of lived, daily contexts.

They could thus once again prioritise *bodhicitta* (*puti xin* 菩提心) — the aspiration to realise bodhi-wisdom, that is, perfect enlightenment'.[66] Or, they could seek supernormal abilities, or rebirth in Sukhāvatī. Of course, Deng's economic reforms offered one sort of aspiration — to attain wealth. But for many Chinese, this was clearly insufficient. They wanted something more than what most of the 'crazes' for education, money and travel — which characterised the era — could offer. As something Chinese and ancient, forbidden and now accepted, this enthusiastic stampede back to pre-liberation religious life, or as close to it as possible, showed that the 'aspiration to enlightenment' was still remembered.

66 Charles A. Muller, 'Enlightened Mind' 菩提心, in ed. Charles A. Muller, *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*. <http://buddhism-dict.net/ddb>.

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ACTIVIST PRACTITIONERS IN THE QIGONG BOOM OF THE 1980s

Utiraruto Otehode and Benjamin Penny

Between the early 1980s and the end of the 1990s, there was a craze for *qigong* 气功 in China that saw its practise become a mass participation activity. *Qigong* was no longer the preserve of a small number of people. As with the group exercises performed to public address broadcasts at schools and work units, it had become a part of everyday life. During this period, many previously little-known schools of *qigong* achieved national popularity in the space of a few years, some gaining millions and even tens of millions of practitioners. One example was Soaring Crane Qigong (*hexiangzhuang qigong* 鹤翔庄气功), created by Zhao Jinxiang 赵金香 (b. 1934), who first began popularising its practise in 1980.[1] At first, just a few people trained alongside Zhao in public parks, but, within four years, according to their own documents, Soaring Crane Qigong had close to ten million practitioners.[2] This figure is probably exaggerated, but this form of *qigong*, and others, certainly achieved levels of participation unheard of until the 1980s.

Certain people, who came to be known as activist practitioners (*gugan* 骨干), played an important role in the popularisation of *qigong*, acting as intermediaries between the founders of schools and the broad mass of practitioners. A capable activist practitioner was able to popularise a practise in one village or one county and sometimes even across an entire municipality, turning hundreds and thousands of people into regular practitioners. Thus, early in the 1980s, fostering such activist practitioners and harnessing their energies was seen as essential to popularising *qigong* practise. For example, the then State Sport Commission (*Guojia tiyu yundong weiyuanhui* 国家体育运动委员会) supported Zhao Jinxiang to run numerous training courses for activist practitioners of Soaring Crane Qigong from across China, enabling its rapid spread.

While academic studies of *qigong* have tended to emphasise the personal charisma and capabilities of masters and a popular interest in health and spir-

1 For a medical-anthropological approach to Soaring Crane Qigong, see Thomas Ots, 'The Silenced Body: The Expressive *Leib*: On the Dialectic of Mind and Life in Chinese Cathartic Healing,' in Thomas J. Csordas, *Embodiment and Experience: The Existential Ground of Culture and Self* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp.116–36.

2 'Hexiangzhuang qigong quanguo shoujie xueshu jiaoliuhui ziliao huibian' 鹤翔庄气功全国首届学术交流会资料汇编, *Tiyu Bao* 体育报 13/8/83, p.1, gives the number of Soaring Crane practitioners nationally in August 1983 as 4,500,000.

ituality as reasons why certain styles spread rapidly, few have examined the existence and role of activist practitioners. This has meant that we have only seen the two extremities of the *qigong* boom — the masters and the masses, the apex and base of the pyramid — not the activists who played such a dynamic role in the zone linking the two.

This essay shows how activist practitioners were involved in the popularisation of Soaring Crane Qigong in Luoyang 洛阳 municipality, beginning with an introduction to this style of *qigong* and its popularisation across the country. Next, we show how the activities of individual activist practitioners were influential in the popularisation process. The third section describes Luoyang's activist *qigong* practitioners, and classifies them into three broad categories. Finally, we analyse the ties that bound the activists together. The material we use here was mostly provided by Luoyang activist practitioners themselves, with whom Utiraruto Otehode spent two years between 2005 and 2007 doing fieldwork. During this time, he came to know several dozen people who had been enthusiastic activist practitioners in the 1980s and 1990s from Soaring Crane Qigong, Wisdom Healing Qigong (*Zhineng qigong* 智能气功) and Yan Xin Qigong 严新气功. After the suppression of Falun Gong 法轮功 by the Chinese authorities in 1999, the government sought to 'rectify' other *qigong* schools.[3] As a result, by the time Utiraruto came to do his fieldwork, some people had given up the role of activist practitioner, only continuing their practise personally. Others had moved on to popularise the new government-backed *qigong* styles aimed primarily at promoting health.[4]

Soaring Crane Qigong

Soaring Crane Qigong was created by Zhao Jinxiang in Beijing in 1980. In Zhao's own account of the creation of Soaring Crane Qigong, he was born into a peasant family in Shandong in 1937, going to work in Beijing in the 1950s.[5] In the early 1960s while recuperating from illness, he began to practise Liu Guizhen's 刘贵珍 (1902–83) style of *qigong* therapy (*qigong liaofa* 气功疗法) and also began teaching himself traditional Chinese medicine.[6] During a visit home in 1971, Zhao achieved a high level of attainment in Qigong of the Primordial Chaos of the Former Heaven (*Xiantian hunyuan qigong* 先天混元气功) with the help of a relative. In 1980, he was employed by the Beijing Qigong Research Association (*Beijing qigong yanjiuhui* 北京气功研究会), where he directed the practise of other devotees. At this time, a number of people suggested he formulate his own set of *qigong* exercises and in due course, after various revisions, he arrived at the five-part moving *qigong* exercise that he called Soaring Crane. The crane is traditionally associated with auspiciousness and longevity in China.

Soon after its creation, Soaring Crane Qigong became organised. In 1980, with the formal approval of the Beijing Qigong Research Association, Zhao established a regular teaching venue at the Beijing Workers' Stadium (*Beijing gongren tiyuchang* 北京工人体育场). In 1985, he set up the Xiangshan Soaring Crane Research Centre (*Xiangshan hexiangzhuang qigong yanjiu zhongxin* 香山鹤翔庄气功研究中心) in the western suburbs of Beijing. When the Chinese Research Society into Qigong Science (*Zhongguo qigong kexue yanjiuhui* 中国气功科学研究会) was established in 1986, the Soaring Crane organisation was included as one of its members. In 1990, Soaring Crane was registered with the Ministry of Civil Affairs' (*Minzheng bu* 民政部) Social Organisations (*shetuan* 社团) division as a subcommittee of the China Association For the

3 See, Benjamin Penny, *The Religion of Falun Gong* (University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 2012).

4 Utiraruto Otehode, 'The Creation and Reemergence of Qigong in China,' in eds Yoshiko Ashiwa and David L. Wank, *Making Religion and Making the State: The Politics of Religion in Modern China* (California: Stanford University Press, 2009).

5 Zhao Jinxiang 赵金香, *Xiantian hunyuanxue* (先天混元学), (Beijing: Zhongguo gongren chubanshe, 1994), pp.134–40.

6 Utiraruto Otehode and Benjamin Penny, 'Qigong Therapy in 1950s China,' *East Asian History* 40 (2016): 69–83.

Promotion of Culture for the Elderly (*Zhonghua laoren wenhua jialiu cuijin hui* 中华老人文化交流促进会) — meaning that the Chinese Soaring Crane Qigong Research Committee (*Zhongguo hexiangzhuang qigong weiyuanhui* 中国鹤翔庄气功委员会) became an officially registered mass-participation social organisation. In 1991, representatives from Soaring Crane organisations in more than ten different countries and regions, including Australia, the USA, the UK, Korea, Japan, Mexico, and Israel, established the International Association for Scientific Research into Soaring Crane Qigong (*Guoji hexiangzhuang qigong kexue yanjiuhui* 国际鹤翔庄气功科学研究会); Zhao Jinxiang was appointed director-for-life. After the suppression of Falun Gong in 1999, in common with other *qigong* groups, all Soaring Crane Qigong organisations in mainland China were disbanded.

Luoyang is in western Henan Province, a four-hour fast train ride from Beijing. Between the early 1980s and late 1990s, dozens of different *qigong* schools spread throughout the Luoyang area. By 1998, twenty-four different schools were members of the Luoyang Research Society into Qigong Science (*Luoyangshi qigong kexue yanjiuhui* 洛阳市气功科学研究会) and there were 163 regular venues for teaching *qigong*, with an estimated 180,000 people practising daily across the municipality.[7] Soaring Crane reached the Luoyang area earlier than other styles of *qigong* and it had comparatively more practitioners. In 1998, twelve different *qigong* schools held a combined total of 52 short courses in the Luoyang area, with 9,172 people taking part. Nine of these courses were in Soaring Crane Qigong with 3,804 participants, meaning that it had the best-attended training courses in the city that year. By way of comparison, there was only a single class teaching the nationally famous New Qigong of Guo Lin (*Guo Lin xinqigong* 郭林新气功), and just eighteen people took part.[8] In 2000, after the suppression of Falun Gong, the Luoyang Research Society into Qigong Science revoked the registrations of the committees representing twenty-four schools of *qigong*, including Soaring Crane, in line with national policy.[9] Later, some of the former Soaring Crane venues and some of its former practitioners became part of the organisation for the promotion of health-and-fitness oriented *qigong* sponsored by the State General Administration of Sport (*Guojia yiyu zongju* 国家体育总局), in which capacity they have continued to the present day.

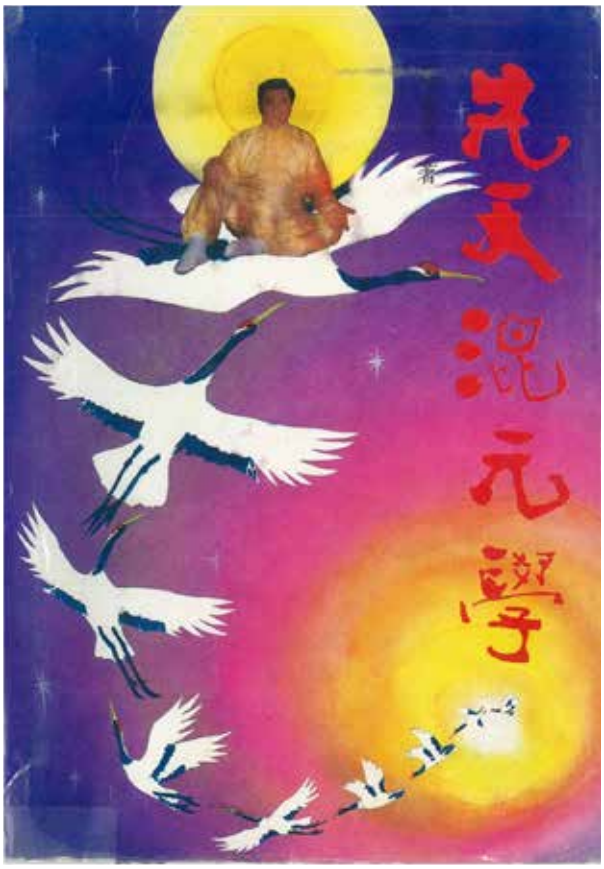

Figure 1

Zhao Jinxiang and his Soaring Crane Qigong. Zhao Jinxiang 赵金香, Xiantian hunyuanxue 先天混元学 (*Beijing: Zhongguo gongren chubanshe, 1994).*

Soaring Crane Qigong was very active in the Luoyang region throughout the 1980s and 1990s, and can be considered one of the more important centres for the school across the country. Zhao Jinxiang did not visit Luoyang personally to teach before 1989 but his practise had begun to spread there as early as 1981. By 1983, formal classes were being taught in Luoyang and a regular teaching venue had been established in 1985. In Luoyang itself, it was not just ordinary citizens practising Soaring Crane but also senior Communist Party members and government officials. In the early 1980s, a training course for the Standing Committee of the Luoyang Municipal Committee of the Chinese Communist Party (*Zhonggong Luoyang shiwei changwei hexiangzhuang qigong xuexiban* 中共洛阳市委常委鹤翔庄气功学习班) was held, and con-

7 These figures are taken from *Luoyang shi qigong kexue yanjiuhui jiuba nian gongzuo zongjie ji jiujiu nian gongzuo jihua* (洛阳市气功科学研究会九八年工作总结及九九年工作计划 *Luoyang Research Society into Qigong Science Work Report for 1998 and Plan for 1999*).

8 *Ibid.*

9 The revocation followed instructions given in the joint General Office of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party and General Office of the State Council (Zhonggong zhongyang bangongting, Guowuyuan bangongting 中共中央办公厅, 国务院办公厅), 6 (2000), 'Zhuxiao huo chexiao an qigong gongfa, leibie chengli de qigong shetuan ji fenzhi jigou' 注销或撤消按气功功法,类别成立的气功社团及分支机构.

sequently many senior figures in the government practised it themselves or supported its practise. By 1995, eleven Soaring Crane teaching venues had been established and there were more than 8,000 regular practitioners.[10] A number of national Soaring Crane events were held in Luoyang: Zhao visited the city four times between 1989 and 1996 to hold national teaching workshops. These workshops each lasted a full week, with some 700 people taking part.[11] Practitioners in the city were especially proud that Luoyang was the location of the Third National Symposium on the Academic Study of Soaring Crane Qigong (*Quanguo hexiangzhuang qigong disanjie xueshu jiaoliuhui* 全国鹤翔庄气功第三届学术交流会), held in 1990. The Luoyang *qigong* display team for the Golden Crane Cup (*Jinhe jiang* 金鹤奖) at this event came first in the competition of 22 regional representative teams.

Activist Practitioners

One practical question faced by many *qigong* masters and the organisations they led was finding ways to popularise their practise. In the early 1980s, Soaring Crane began to implement a strategy of 'fostering activist practitioners, and using individuals to achieve wider impact' (*peiyang gugan yidian daimian* 培养骨干以点带面) to address this. For example, in late 1982 and early 1983, Zhao held training sessions for activist practitioners in Beijing at the request of the State General Administration for Sport. Trainees came from across China; more than 130 people representing 26 different provincial-level divisions attended.[12] Attendees had been chosen and funded by local official sport administration committees with the intention of taking the practise of Soaring Crane back to their own provinces. Put another way, they were to become the main driver in the promotion of Soaring Crane Qigong, spreading it to their hometowns and regions.

Henan Province's Sport Administration (*Henansheng tiyu weiyuanhui* 河南省体育委员会) sent two people to take part in the Soaring Crane training held in Beijing, one of whom was Zhang Jian 张剑 from Luoyang. Earlier, in 1980, when Soaring Crane had only just begun to become popular, Zhang had trained in the style during a work trip to Beijing. After returning to Luoyang, he taught it in the city's parks and public squares. Thus, the municipal Sport Administration put his name forward and covered all his costs. Returning to Luoyang, Zhang held courses tailored to senior figures in the municipal Communist Party and government.[13] These classes were held in the main hall of the municipal Party Committee for four hours each weekday evening and all day Sunday. As Zhang recalls, the senior Party and government officials who took part were to play an active role in the promotion of Soaring Crane Qigong in the Luoyang region. The fact that the chair of the municipal Party Committee, the mayor, the chair of the National People's Congress of Luoyang, and the chair of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference of Luoyang all took part was itself a mark of support for Soaring Crane and excellent publicity. Clearly, the training of trainers in Beijing achieved its desired effect.

Soaring Crane activist practitioners such as Zhang demonstrated the success of the strategy of training individuals to influence the people of their particular locale. At an organisational level, at the headquarters in Beijing and in its local branches, Soaring Crane attached high importance to the fostering of activist practitioners. The chairperson of the Luoyang Soaring Crane Qigong municipal steering committee (*Luoyangshi hexiangzhuang*

10 *Hunyuan qigong bao* 混元气功报 October 1995, p.4.

11 According to notes supplied to Utiraruto Otehode by a Mr Lei 雷, head of the teaching centre in Wangcheng Park.

12 Zhao Jinxiang, *Xiantian hunyuanxue*, p.144.

13 Recalling events in 2006, Zhang Jian said the full title given to this training course was Soaring Crane Qigong Training Course of the Standing Committee of the Luoyang Municipal Committee of the Chinese Communist Party (Zhonggong Luoyang shiwei changwei hegong xuexiban 中共洛阳市委常委鹤功学习班).


洛陽气功

沉痛悼念中国鹤翔庄气功
高级气功师吴孝景同志

Figure 2

Wu Xiaojing 吴孝景 *(1936–93)*, Luoyang qigong 洛阳气功 *1 May 1994, p.1.*

qigong weiyuanhui 洛阳市鹤翔庄气功委员会) emphasised, in particular, the power of activist practitioners; over several years, the committee trained hundreds of people who contributed to the teaching and promotion of the style, embodying its principles in their practise. One activist the chairperson mentioned taught Soaring Crane whenever he visited family or friends; in his village alone there were hundreds of practitioners.[14]

Soaring Crane Activist Practitioners in Luoyang

Many activist practitioners of Soaring Crane Qigong emerged in Luoyang during the 1980s and 1990s. They formed the core of the organisation in the city and surrounds — some serving in key posts on Soaring Crane's municipal committees, and some taking charge of particular teaching venues. Most Soaring Crane activists played a role in its popularisation as teachers and instructors. The three cases discussed below represent three different kinds of activist practitioner. By considering their activities, we can observe what sort of people they were, how they came to be Soaring Crane activists, and what their main contributions to the growth of Soaring Crane practise in Luoyang were.

An Activist Practitioner at the Municipal Level

Activist practitioners at the municipal level played an important role in the growth of Soaring Crane practise in the Luoyang region as a whole; most served in key posts on Soaring Crane's municipal committee. There were only a few activists of this type in the early 1980s, but their numbers steadily increased until there were 40 or so by the early 1990s[15] Wu Xiaojing 吴孝景 (1936–93) was a typical municipal-level activist practitioner.

Wu was one of the first to become involved in the popularisation of Soaring Crane in Luoyang and was a key figure in the formation of its municipal

14 Wang Xingwen 王星汶, quoted in *Hunyuan qigong bao*, October 1995, p.4

15 In a 2006 interview that Utiraruto Otehode conducted with Zhang Jian 张剑 and Lei Zunting 雷尊廷, he was told that in the early 1980s activists in the popularisation of Soaring Crane included his two interlocutors, along with Tian Songlin 田松林 and Wu Xiaojing 吴孝景. The figure for 1993 is derived from a list of members of Luoyang Soaring Crane Municipal Steering Committee.

steering committee.[16] He believed his practise of Soaring Crane had saved his life.[17] Wu had been in the army, having once served as a political commissar to the People's Armed Forces Office (*Wuzhuang bu* 武装部) in Sanmenxia 三门峡. In 1993, he was diagnosed with a tumour on his spleen and underwent surgery in Zhengzhou. After returning to Luoyang, he began learning Soaring Crane in Wangcheng Park 王城公园. Later, while in Beijing for further medical treatment, Wu visited Zhao Jinxiang himself, and received personal coaching. The doctors in Beijing had initially informed Wu that his condition was very serious and that he might not live another six months. Yet, according to his testimony, his health began to steadily improve through practising Soaring Crane. He believed that it had given him a second lease on life and was enthusiastic for more people to study it so that they too could conquer sickness and ill health.[18]

Wu's contribution to the growth of Soaring Crane practise in the Luoyang region was threefold. Colleagues recall that he held numerous training courses in Luoyang city, in surrounding county towns in the municipality, and in various villages. Secondly, he established the Luoyang Municipality Soaring Crane Qigong Committee as a means of popularising it. Wu placed great emphasis on the role of activist practitioners in this work and held numerous training courses for them. He played a role in the emergence of more than 300 such activist practitioners in the municipality, providing the organisational and personnel resources necessary for its successful popularisation in Luoyang. Thirdly, Wu forged close links between Soaring Crane groups and practitioners in Luoyang and its organisations at the national level. Wu invited Zhao Jinxiang to Luoyang numerous times to hold national-level Soaring Crane events, including training courses for practitioners, academic symposiums, and competitive performances.[19] In March 1993, shortly after his death, Zhao Jinxiang wrote a personal letter to Zhang Jian, another activist in Luoyang. In that letter, Zhao Jinxiang referred to Wu as being 'reliable' and 'the person I was looking for to develop Soaring Crane Qigong'.[20]

An Activist at a Training Venue

The second type of activist worked to promote Soaring Crane Qigong at particular locations in Luoyang municipality. Most were leaders at the regular training venues (*Hexiangzhuang qigong fudaozhan* 鹤翔庄气功辅导站) in the various parks and public squares of Luoyang city proper that had come into being in the early 1980s. By the 1990s, the number of venues had grown to a dozen or more, with more than twenty activists involved.[21] Since these venues were closest to the everyday life of ordinary people in Luoyang, they played a very important role in the popularisation of Soaring Crane Qigong. Lei Zunting 雷尊廷 (b. 1936) was one such activist practitioner.

Lei was a leader at the Soaring Crane training venue in Wangcheng Park in Luoyang. Formerly a senior aviation engineer, he began practising *qigong* in 1983 in Wangcheng Park as he only lived ten minutes away. Initially studying Wild Goose Qigong (*Dayangong* 大雁功) and One Finger Zen Qigong (*Yizhi changong* 一指禅功), he later switched to the Soaring Crane style. In the early eighties, enthusiasts came together to train informally, but later a more established group of Soaring Crane practitioners formed, and in 1985 a regular training venue was established in Wangcheng Park. Lei took charge of almost all subsequent activities there.[22]

16 Duan Cunying 段存英, widow of Wu Xiaojing, assisted Utiraruto Otehode during fieldwork conducted in Luoyang between 2005 and 2007.

17 Wu Xiaojing, 'Wo — you yige juezheng fengshengzhe' 我—又一个绝症逢生者 ('Here am I, another person saved despite terminal illness'), private paper dated 1985.

18 Wang Xingwen, 'Yige hao bu liji zhuanmen li ren de ren' 一个毫不利己专门利人的, supplement to *Luoyang qigong* 洛阳气功, May 1994.

19 'Jinian hexiangzhuang qigong gaoji qigongshi Wu Xiaojing tongzhi zhuanji 纪念鹤翔庄气功高级气功师吴孝景同志专辑, *Luoyang qigong* 洛阳气功 May 1994.

20 Zhang Jian provided this letter to Utiraruto Otehode in 2006.

21 Materials held by the Luoyang Municipality Soaring Crane Qigong Committee noted training centres in nine locations in 1993, with between one and three leading activists at each for a total of sixteen such persons. By 1996, there were twelve centres, each with between one and four leading activists for a total of 26 such persons.

22 During fieldwork undertaken in Luoyang between 2005 and 2007, Utiraruto Otehode was a long-term participant in activities run by Lei Zunting at the Wangcheng Park Soaring Crane training centre, and acknowledges the care and assistance Lei provided.

Figure 3

Lei Zunting 雷尊廷 and other qigong practitioners at Wangcheng Park. Lei is wearing a white t-shirt printed with 中国鹤翔庄气功 ('Chinese Soaring Crane Qigong') and the efficacious numbers '70-70-70-7'. Photo: Utiraruto Otehode 2005.

The main activities in Wangcheng Park were regular group practise, promotion of the style, and taking part in municipal, provincial, and national Soaring Crane events. Regular group practice took an hour or more every morning at a particular place in the park. There were about 60 regular attendees and about 100 or more irregular attendees. Most lived close by, although a few came from further afield by public transport. The main promotion for Soaring Crane Qigong was through training courses. The Wangcheng Park group put on five such courses in 1990 with 86 people taking part. The regulars would occasionally take part in major competitions or celebrations. For example, Lei and the others from Wangcheng Park were enthusiastic participants in the 1990 Golden Crane Cup competition as well as the 1997 Luoyang display to celebrate the return of Hong Kong to Chinese sovereignty.

An Individual Activist

Individual activists were mostly practitioners of Soaring Crane who had passed Qigong Association tests and had been given permission to become teachers, assistant teachers, or instructors. They assisted leaders at the teaching venues and trained novice students of Soaring Crane. They would also sometimes undertake individual activities aimed at promoting Soaring Crane. In Luoyang, beginning around 1990, there was a fairly well established system for evaluating *qigong* activists — in 1990, the Luoyang Municipal Soaring Crane Qigong Committee accredited 65 of them,[23] but by 1998, 144 received this qualification.[24] Becoming recognised as an activist practitioner involved passing a number of tests. A certain level of medical knowledge was required as was a high standard of personal morality and behaviour. They were expected to have a thorough grasp of *qigong* theory, an understanding of its methods, and be skilled instructors.

Han Tianzhi 韩天智 (1924–2008) was a Soaring Crane activist practitioner in Song county 嵩县, part of the wider Luoyang municipality.[25] Han had been director of the county animal husbandry bureau and began practising Soaring Crane after his retirement in 1985. He considered that it improved health and longevity and encouraged moral self-cultivation, claiming that his practise had cured him of illnesses, improved his physical state, and made him a better person. Han said that Soaring Crane required its practitioners first to

23 According to the committee's 1990 work report, nine of these 65 were evaluated as Grade Two *qigong* teachers, 25 as assistant teachers, and 31 as coaches.

24 The committee's 1998 work report stated that 23 of these 144 were evaluated as *qigong* teachers, 46 as assistant teachers, and 75 as coaches.

25 Utiraruto Otehode visited Han Tianzhi at home several times in Song county in 2006, conducting long discussions with him. The account here is drawn from notes taken during those conversations.

Figure 4

Soaring Crane practitioners in rural Song county 嵩县. Photo: Utiraruto Otehode 2005.

work to achieve harmony with nature, so they would not harm the environment. Secondly, he said, practitioners should achieve harmony with society, so they were encouraged to make small social contributions as part of their day-to-day lives. Finally, to achieve harmony with their families, they should treat all members fairly and equitably, including treating their daughters-in-law as they did their own daughters.

Han introduced Soaring Crane Qigong to many people and took it to his home village, Checun 车村, which is in a remote mountainous area of Song county some distance from the county town. Before Han returned to teach Soaring Crane in 1993, no-one in the village practised *qigong*. At first suspicious and unwilling to learn, the villagers believed Han had ulterior motives, but, at its height, more than 40 villagers in Checun were practising Soaring Crane. Han began by working with his relatives, with his younger brother Han Tianlu 韩天禄 taking the lead.[26]

These accounts of practitioners at the municipal, training venue, and individual level show that activist practitioners of Soaring Crane Qigong had a variety of different professional backgrounds and careers: a soldier, an engineer, and a public servant. Other activist practitioners Utiraruto met were peasant farmers, shopkeepers, and housewives. They also had different reasons for becoming Soaring Crane activists. Some thought *qigong* practise had saved their lives, and wanted to spread it as a way of repaying the debt. Some enjoyed it as a hobby, taking pleasure in spending an hour each day practising with a group. Some were motivated more by ethical or possibly even religious feelings.

The Ties That Bound Activists Together

While relations between the creators of *qigong* schools and activist practitioners took place in and were mediated by state-registered social organisations such as *qigong* research associations and steering committees of various schools, activist practitioners and their leaders were also linked

26 This part of the account draws on a survey Utiraruto Otehode conducted in Checun 车村 in September 2006. During the same visit, he interviewed Han Tianlu and other Soaring Crane practitioners.

in ways outside the state system. Officially, activist practitioners served in mundane and visible roles as committee chairs, committee members, or instructors. Outside that system, the links between activists were cultural and spiritual, being built on foundations from Chinese tradition, religion, and folk belief.

The spiritual ties in Soaring Crane were embodied in the relationship between its creator and the local activists. In his letter to Zhang Jian referred to above, as well as praising Zhang Jian and the other core activists in Luoyang for their handling of Wu Xiaojing's funeral arrangements, Zhao Jinxiang also gave an account of the place now held by Wu in the spirit world:

> *... Wu Xiaojing has appeared before me many times. He wished to say farewell and also to tell me that he would believe in Soaring Crane and in his master Zhao Jinxiang for all eternity. He has already been granted his place, immutable and undying in the cosmos. He is a mighty general in the cosmic realm, the Red Lord [Hongbanzi 红斑子]. He has been given charge of the weather, whether it will be cloudy or fine, whether the wind will blow or the rain fall. He told me that, if need be, he can manifest his spirit powers to aid Soaring Crane.*[27]

Clearly, the relationship between Zhao and activists in Luoyang was spiritual in nature: the relationship between Zhao and Wu had not come to an end merely because the Wu Xiaojing who lived in our world had died. Indeed, they appear to have frequent spiritual interaction and their spiritual relationship is, if anything, closer than ever.

Soaring Crane activists also believed that Zhao Jinxiang had spiritual powers. To cite one example, the wife of one young Luoyang activist, Mr Hu, was several months pregnant. During a hospital check-up the doctor told her she was going to have a girl, but Mr Hu wanted a son. Not long afterwards, Zhao Jinxiang visited Luoyang, and Hu asked Zhao if there was any possibility that he might have a boy instead. Zhao simply said, 'You can have a son'. While subsequent check-ups consistently showed a girl, when the baby was born it was indeed a boy. Mr Hu said this was definitely the result of Zhao using his spiritual powers. Another activist, a Mr Liu, also had personal experience of Zhao's powers. Liu had taken part in a training course for Soaring Crane activists in the 1990s and Zhao had instructed that photographs were not to be taken without permission. Nonetheless, Liu wanted to take a photograph and when the master's attention was elsewhere, did so. When Liu had his film developed, the one of Zhao Jinxiang only showed a miasma of multicoloured light — all the other photographs on the roll developed as expected. Liu considered himself lucky to have been able to photograph Zhao's spirit aura.

These spiritual links between Soaring Crane practitioners and their master played a special role in its popularisation, as it enabled a direct relationship between Soaring Crane's creator and its grassroots activists. Relationships such as these were obviously unlike those established according to the state regulations governing social organisations — they were informal and invisible and not subject to oversight by administrative organs of the state. In addition, we should be aware that behind the dry, bureaucratic, and officially sanctioned instructional books and magazine articles emanating from *qigong* groups through the 1980s and 1990s often dwelt strong and privately held beliefs in the minds of practitioners in the spiritual powers and cosmic roles of their practices and masters.

27 See note 19.

Conclusion

While the personal capabilities or charisma of any *qigong* master in the 1980s and 1990s were important in the rapid spread of *qigong* in mainland China, we should also direct our attention to the great number of activist practitioners across the country who worked hard to popularise and promote the various styles. We should also note that at the beginning of the *qigong* boom in the early 1980s, government agencies at both central and local levels gave their support to, and even became directly involved in, activities aimed at fostering activist practitioners. We have seen how the hundred or so trainees at the first national course for *qigong* activists had been recommended by their local governments, who also covered the costs of attending the course. At a minimum, this indicates that in the early 1980s relations between the state and *qigong* masters were cordial and that they worked together to train activists and spread *qigong* among ordinary people nationwide.

The degree to which *qigong* actually spread and took root in a given place was, in large part, due to its local *qigong* activists. In addition, some styles of *qigong* were popular in some localities but not in others, and in some places more than one style was practiced while in others only one could be found. This depended to a large extent on whether or not a group of activist practitioners were there, and the degree to which a group was effective or not in organisation and action. In the case described here, Soaring Crane succeeded in becoming very popular in the Luoyang region because of the strong organisation and the capacity for action by a large group of activist practitioners.

The existence of relationships between the *qigong* masters and local activist practitioners outside the state system, such as the spiritual bonds described above, enabled *qigong* forms to survive and grow. These relationships were generally well hidden — unlike the links based on social organisations, these spiritual ties did not appear in any formal documents. They were grounded on private correspondence or word of mouth, but nonetheless coexisted harmoniously with the formal relationships, and sometimes even served to strengthen the working of the official organisations — such as the numerous occasions on which the Luoyang Soaring Crane Municipal Steering Committee assisted Zhao Jinxiang in holding training courses and research symposiums. Yet the existence of such relationships in itself constituted a potential threat to the state's means of control of social organisations because *qigong* masters could directly influence the activities of local activists through invisible and informal networks that escaped oversight and control by the state.

In the end, after the suppression of Falun Gong, the government disbanded all *qigong* organisations and began the nationwide promotion of a newly formulated health-and-fitness style of *qigong* (*jianshen qigong* 健身气功) instead. Not only was Luoyang chosen as a test location for the promotion of this new 'healthy' *qigong*, the campaign there met with great success. Ironically, perhaps, many formerly devoted practitioners of Soaring Crane Qigong became active in the new *qigong* association and became instructors at its training venues in the city's parks.

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DISPLACED FANTASY: PULP SCIENCE FICTION IN THE EARLY REFORM ERA OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Rui Kunze 王瑞

Science fiction (*kexue huanxiang xiaoshuo* 科学幻想小说) became tremendously popular in the early reform era (c.1978–83) of the People's Republic of China (PRC).[1] The (re)emergence of this genre, like that in the 1950s and the early 1960s, took place under the aegis of the official policy that promoted science and technology as a means of modernising China. In 1978, the Chinese government's central task of the New Era (*xin shiqi* 新时期) was to realise the Four Modernisations — modernisations in agriculture, industry, national defence, science and technology — by the end of the twentieth century.[2] This aspiration, predicated on China's century-long desire for national modernisation and an implicit sense of millennial destination, led to a surge of science fiction in literary production, which fervently imagined a future empowered by science and technology. Between 1978 and 1983, not only nationally acclaimed literary journals and presses but also regional popular science magazines (*kexue jishu puji chuangzuo zazhi* 科学技术普及创作杂志) published a large number of science fiction stories.

In his seminal study of science fiction in the PRC, Wagner suggests that the science fiction works produced in the early reform era — what he translates as 'science phantasy' — be considered as a 'lobby literature' for the scientific community, which presents the group aspirations of 'scientists' in the form of the 'phantasy future' and portrays 'how scientists would operate in the larger framework of society if their demands were met'. The target readership, therefore, consists of the scientific community and the authorities, 'to whom these texts would be presented publicly in printing, as the collective demand and offer of compromise from the science community'.[3] This thesis is certainly applicable to most works produced by scientist-authors such as Tong Enzheng 童恩正 (1935–97), Zheng Wenguang 郑文光 (1929–2003), and Ye Yonglie 叶永烈 (b.1940). Their stories featuring patriotic scientist-heroes promised that sci-

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1 Ye Yonglie's 叶永烈 (b.1940) story *Xiaolingtong manyou weilai* 小灵通漫游未来 (1978), for example, sold over a million and a half copies. Several anthologies of Chinese science fiction were compiled between 1979 and 1983. Important Western science fiction authors such as Isaac Asimov, Ray Bradbury, Robert Heinlein were translated, and the works of Soviet science fiction writers such as Alexander Belyayev and Vladimir Obruchev were reprinted. For more information on the translation of science fiction in China, see Qian Jiang, 'Translation and the Development of Science Fiction in Twentieth-Century China,' *Science Fiction Studies* 40 (2013): 116–32.

2 The goal of the Four Modernisations was first proposed by Zhou Enlai in 1963 at the Conference on Scientific and Technological Work in Shanghai. In the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Communist Party of China Central Committee in 1978, the government proposed this goal as its central task of the 'New Era'.

ence and technology would bring about a bright future for socialist China. Wagner's study, however, does not fully consider those science fiction stories written by minor authors that were published in regional magazines aiming to popularise science. Therefore, his thesis cannot convincingly account for the immense popularity of science fiction among general readers and the fierce attacks this genre suffered in the Campaign against Spiritual Pollution (*fandui jingshen wuran* 反对精神污染, 1983–84), when Communist conservatives tried to suppress theoretical debates on humanism, 'socialist alienation', and any ideas suspected of 'bourgeois liberalisation'.

Wagner's original study nevertheless provides many insights for further discussion. In analysing the debate in the late 1970s over the nature of science fiction — whether it should be literature or an artistic form of science popularisation — Wagner detects that the lack of a generic definition of science fiction offers writers 'a chance to explore the potential of science phantasy as part of a new popular literature'.[4] More importantly, he draws attention to the subversive potential of 'phantasy' once science fiction is defined as literature: this genre would then enter 'a field defined as "realist" ' while carrying its 'contraband of phantasy, which did not feel bound by the definition of "rational induction" from present-day scientific knowledge'.[5] Wagner refers to the *Oxford English Dictionary* to differentiate 'phantasy' from fantasy: the former means 'imagination, visionary intuition', while the latter denotes 'caprice, whim, fanciful invention'.[6] I shall use 'fantasy' in this paper to include both meanings, not only because it has become an acceptable variant of 'phantasy', but also because I believe that the demarcation between visionary intuition and whimsical thinking implies the presumption that reality is opposed to fantasy, history to fiction, a presumption that would forestall a productive probe into fantasy.

Zhan Ling's 詹玲 recent research into Chinese science fiction in the early 1980s acknowledges that popular (*tongsu* 通俗) science fiction stories constitute the major part of the genre at the time and that fantasy (*huanxiang* 幻想) is key to examining those stories. Yet her argument still hinges on the assumption that the genre should convey 'proper' scientific knowledge. In response to the question 'What sort of fantasy do we need to support science?' she dismisses fantasy in popular science fiction, asserting it has gone awry. These stories fantasise violence, eroticism, and 'non-scientific' supernatural power, Zhan concludes, therefore they 'deviate from the essence of science fiction'.[7]

Thus the threads left by Wagner on fantasy and popular literature have not been picked up. Furthermore, the bulk of science fiction stories produced in the early reform era, especially those published in regional popular science magazines, remain largely unexplored. These stories will be used in this essay as source material. I propose to rethink these science fiction stories as 'pulp fiction', whose complex mechanism of fantasy merits an examination combining close textual analysis with sociocultural and psychoanalytical approaches. Produced in early post-Mao China, these science fiction texts exemplify the enmeshment of and tensions between the national project of modernisation, the Communist Party's ideological control, the nascent consumer economy, and the populace's urgent need to relieve their repressed desires, discontents, and anxieties. An investigation into these ephemeral yet immensely popular texts will help us to achieve a better understanding of the early reform era of the PRC.

3 Rudolf G. Wagner, 'Lobby Literature: The Archeology and Present Functions of Science Fiction in China,' in *After Mao: Chinese Literature and Society: 1978–1981,* ed. Jeffrey C. Kinkley (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), p.44.

4 *Ibid*., p.41.

5 *Ibid*., p.41.

6 *Ibid*., p.27.

7 Zhan Ling 詹玲, '1980 niandai qianqi zhongguo kehuan xiaoshuo de zhuanxing,' 1980 年代前期中國科幻小說的轉型 *Ershiyi shiji* 二十一世紀 8 (2014): 62–76, at pp.70–71.

In the first section, I briefly delineate the generic history of Chinese science fiction up to the 1970s, in particular its notion of fantasy, which had been closely associated with the agendas of national modernisation and the popularisation of modern scientific knowledge. Against this historical background, I define my source material as 'pulp', which catered to a new consumer readership and are characterised by highly formulaic narratives and brief popularity at a certain historical moment. Introducing Suvin's theory of 'cognitive estrangement',[8] the Freudian concept of 'displacement',[9] and the psychoanalytical approach to 'the literary fantastic',[10] I propose to explore the mechanism of fantasy in these science fiction stories in relation to the social and cultural contexts of the early reform era. The analysis considers two interconnected aspects of fantasy: first, the contents of fantasy defamiliarise the implied reader's empirical world and thereby suggest what is lacking in real life; second, fantasy has to be articulated in 'proper', hence often displaced, ways, given the ideological and social controls in the early reform era. The second section offers a close reading of three most popular tropes in these stories — mind-reading gadgetry, sensual enjoyments, and alien encounters — as examples to demonstrate various forms of 'displaced fantasy' in the highly formulaic narrative of pulp science fiction. The analysis also shows that many texts contain discrepancies and ruptures on narrative and linguistic levels, which render their message equivocal and allow the implied reader to detect and decode subtexts and latent messages in the process of consuming them. The last section retraces the debates over fantasy in the genre of science fiction between 1979 and 1983, arguing that it is the potential power of fantasy to destabilise the didactic function and scientistic optimism of the genre that resulted in its expulsion by both ideologue-critics and scientist-authors in 1983.

Science Fiction as Pulp, Fantasy as Reality

Coining the term 'pulp science fiction' to describe my source material so as to discuss them as popular literature may sound redundant for an English-speaking reader. The generic term 'science fiction', such as American science fiction in the tradition of Hugo Gernsback (1884–1967), functions as 'a distinct marketing category' and is largely 'pulp' by definition.[11] Yet Chinese science fiction originated in the early twentieth century, mainly as a literary means to disseminate scientific knowledge and thinking for national enlightenment and modernisation. In the words of the nationalist reformer and journalist Liang Qichao 梁启超 (1873–1929), science fiction (*kexue xiaoshuo* 科学小说) should 'elaborate science by means of novels'.[12] This means that the genre has been entangled with the didactic function of popularising scientific knowledge from the very beginning and has more often than not upheld the optimistic view that scientific-technological progress necessarily brings about social improvement. After 1949, the generic term science fiction was replaced by 'science-fantasy fiction' (*kexue huanxiang xiaoshuo* 科学幻想小说), a literal translation of the Russian term *nauchnaya fantastika* (научная фантастика). In Russia, 'science-fantasy fiction' was a literary genre that emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century. During the Stalinist era, but particularly after the canonisation of Socialist Realism in 1934, it was subjected to a larger artistic category that aimed to popularise scientific knowledge — 'science *belles-lettres*', or *nauchno-khudozhestvennaya* (научно-художественная), translated into Chinese as *kexue wenyi* 科学文艺.[13] Soviet

8 Darko Suvin, *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction: On the Poetics and History of a Literary Genre* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979).

9 Sigmund Freud, *New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*, trans. W.J.H. Sprott (New York: W.W. Norton, 1933).

10 Rosemary Jackson, *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion* (London: Methuen, 1981).

11 Mark Bould and Sherry Vint, *The Routledge Concise History of Science Fiction* (London: Routledge, 2011), pp.2–3. In *Pulp: Reading Popular Fiction* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988) by Scott McCracken, the author examines detective fiction, popular romance, science fiction, and gothic horror.

12 See Xin xiaoshuo baoshe 新小說報社 [Liang Qichao 梁启超], "Zhongguo weiyi zhi wenxue bao *Xin xiaoshuo* 中國唯一之文學報《新小說》, *Xinmin congbao* 新民叢報 14 (1902). For discussions on the origin and early development of Chinese science fiction in English, especially on its relation to modernisation and nation building, see D.E. Pollard, 'Jules Verne, Science Fiction and Related Matters,' in ed. David E. Pollard *Translation and Creation: Readings of Western Literature in Early Modern China, 1840–1918* (Amsterdam: John Banjamins, 1998), pp.177–207; and several articles in *Science Fiction Studies* March 2013: Yan Wu, '"Great Wall Planet": Introducing Chinese Science Fiction,' 1–14; Nathaniel Isaacson, 'Science Fiction for the Nation: *Tales of the Moon Colony* and the Birth of Modern Chinese Fiction,' 33–54; and Shaoling Ma, '"A Tale of New Mr. Braggadocio": Narrative Subjectivity and Brain Electricity in Late Qing Science Fiction,' 55–72. Early Chinese science fiction demonstrates a historical moment of epistemological transformation — and hence confusion — rather than conveying correct knowledge of modern science and technology. For this epistemological transformation, see David Der-wei Wang, 'Confused Horizon: Science Fantasy,' in *Fin-de-Siècle Splendor: Repressed Modernities of Late Qing Fiction, 1848–1911* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997) and Chen Pingyuan, 'From Popular Science to Science Fiction: An Investigation of "Flying Machines",' in Pollard, *Translation and Creation*, pp.209–39.

13 Wagner, 'Lobby Literature,' pp.26–31; Matthias Schwartz, *Die Erfindung des Kosmos. Zur sowjetischen Science Fiction und populärwissenschaftlichen Publizistik vom Sputnikflug bis zum Ende der Tauwetterzeit* (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2003), p.13.

popular science writings and science fiction, two subcategories of science *belles-lettres*, were introduced into China as early as in the 1930s[14] and massively translated in the 1950s.[15]

It is against this historical and ideological background that I resort to the term 'pulp science fiction' to emphasise that the stories examined here, instead of being part of the didactic science *belles-lettres*, are products of an emergent consumer economy. Although they were probably not produced self-consciously to sell on the market, they were meant to be read for pleasure and thereby anticipated the commercialised popular literature of the late 1980s. The 'pulp' features of these science fiction stories include, among others, highly formulaic — and often sensationalistic — storylines and characters as well as visual illustrations.[16] One may argue that some science fiction stories by scientist-authors, such as the vastly popular 'Death Ray on a Coral Island' (Shanhudao shang de siguang 珊瑚岛上的死光, 1978) by Tong Enzheng, and the detective-sci-fi thriller series featuring the policeman-hero Jin Ming 金明 (1980–83) by Ye Yonglie, may be reconsidered as pulp.[17] They belong to the persistent pulp tradition that had never been uprooted in Maoist China despite waves of suppression. By reading Soviet adventure stories, spy thrillers, and science fiction as well as indigenous thriller stories dealing with the theme of 'suppressing counter-revolutionaries' (*sufan* 肃反, 1950–52), Chinese readers managed to gratify their taste for the thrilling and the lurid.[18] The circulation of underground hand-copied literature (*shouchaoben wenxue* 手抄本文学) during the Cultural Revolution, in the most coarse and unstable manner, continued the pulp tradition.[19] Produced mainly by hack writers for consumption, pulp science fiction in the early reform era was highly formulaic and not written skillfully. The narratives were often fractured by discrepancies in narrative perspectives and tones, dissonance between the text and its subtext, unnatural developments of story and characters, logical lapses, and so on. Now, most of them have been forgotten. They were, therefore, literally 'pulp' due to their disposability in cultural production and circulation.

Science fiction flaunts fictionality and fantasy. The connection between the fantastic and the empirical worlds in this genre is theorised by Darko Suvin as 'cognitive estrangement': 'SF [science fiction] is, then, a literary genre whose necessary and sufficient conditions are the presence and interaction of estrangement and cognition, and whose main formal device is an imaginative framework alternative to the author's empirical environment.'[20] The fictional world of fantasy makes sense to the reader only when its relation to the empirical world is recognisable — as its alternative. It defamiliarises the empirical world and thereby suggests different, albeit not necessarily progressive, possibilities: how the real world should be, could have been, or will be.

The addition of fantasy to the generic term in the 1950s did not just bring about a terminological change to Chinese science fiction, it also orientated its fantasy towards that of 'socialist science fiction'. Their fantasy had to be carefully prescribed so that it would not contradict the dominant literary creed of 'socialist realism'. When Alexander Bogdanov's (1873–1928) Bolshevik utopia *Red Star* (красная звезда) (1908) was serialised in the semi-monthly *Popular Culture* (Tongsu wenhua 通俗文化) during 1935 and 1936 as science fiction, its translator, Chong Ji 崇基, justified the scientific feature of the Martian society in the story — an imagined future society after the success of the Bolshevik

14 For example, the writings of M. Ilin (Ilya Marshak, 1895–1952), a well-known Soviet popular science author, were translated in the 1930s by the leftist popular science educator Dong Chuncai 董純才 (1905–90), who promoted Ilin's idea that the development of science and technology is the necessary condition to eliminate classes and to realise the full freedom of mankind. See Dong Chuncai, 'Fanyi yilin zuopin de jingguo he yinxiang' 翻譯伊林作品的經過和印象, in *Bu ye tian* 不夜天 (Shanghai: Kaiming shudian, 1937), pp.78–86. The earliest — and truncated — translation of Russian science fiction that I have found is *Huo Xing* 火星 (1908) by Alexander Bogdanov (1873–1928), translated by Chong Ji 崇基 and serialised in *Tongsu wenhua: zhengzhi, jingji, kexue, gongcheng banyuekan* 通俗文化: 政治,經濟, 科學, 工程半月刊 during 1935 and 1936. According to Wagner, dystopian trends in Soviet science fiction in the 1920s, such as works by Majakovski and Zamyatin, were not introduced into China. Soviet writers' relinking with this critical tradition in the late 1950s again failed to reach Chinese readers due to the Sino-Soviet rift. See Wagner, 'Lobby Literature', p.29.

15 For example, Shanghai-based *Chaofeng chubanshe* 潮鋒出版社 brought out a series of translated Soviet science fiction based on the selection of Soviet National Children's Books Press (Детгиз). Other science fiction titles were published by *Kexue puji chubanshe* 科學普及出版社 and *Zhongguo qingnian chubanshe* 中國青年出版社, the favourite author being Alexander Belyayev (1884–1942). Almost every issue of *Zhishi jiushi liliang* 知识就是力量, a popular science magazine launched in 1957 in imitation of its Soviet namesake Знание-сила, featured one or two Soviet science fiction stories.

16 For the concept of 'formula' in analysing popular literature and film, see John G. Cawelti, *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance: Formula Stories as Art and Popular Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976) and articles in his *Mystery, Violence, and Popular Culture* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004).

17 I thank one of the readers for this insightful comment. Jeffrey C. Kinkley notes in his study of Chinese crime fiction at the turn of the 1980s that the combination of science fiction and detective formulas were popular with Chinese readers, citing Ye Yonglie as one of the examples. See Kinkely, "Chinese Crime Fiction and Its Formulas at the Turn of the 1980s,' in *After Mao*, p.97 and n.29.

18 In 1955, for example, *Zhongguo qingnian chubanshe* published a series of Soviet spy thrillers (*jingxian xiaoshuo* 驚險小說), which were reprinted many times. For *Sufan* thrillers, see *Sufan xiaoshuo xuan 1949–1979*

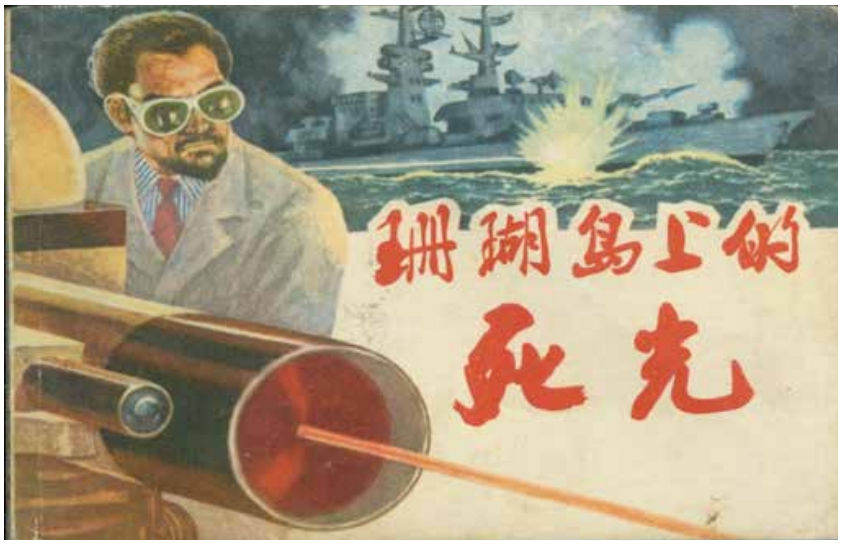

Figure 1

The cover of a picture-book version of Death Ray on a Coral Island. *700,000 copies of this version were printed.*

Revolution — by stressing that it was fantasy rooted in social sciences.[21] When Chinese science-fantasy fiction was promoted in the mid-1950s targeting mainly children and teenagers,[22] the scientist-author Zheng Wenguang took as his task to explain — and domesticate — the element of fantasy in science fiction. Attributing the statement that 'fantasy is the most precious quality' to Lenin, Zheng posits that fantasy in science fiction imagines the near future (metaphorically called 'tomorrow') based on achieved scientific results. Like Chong Ji, Zheng also legitimises fantasy in science fiction by emphasising its 'scientific', hence empirical, grounds. According to Zheng, fantasy in science fiction does not predict the future, but points out the possible directions for further scientific research. Fantasy in science fiction, he further elaborates, inspires young readers, cultivates their interest in science and technology, and encourages them to 'march forward to science and achieve the victory of building Socialism and Communism'.[23]

Rosemary Jackson, by contrast, sees fantasy as a compensation for the lack resulting from cultural constraints. The literary mode of the fantastic allows desires that threaten or disturb the cultural order to be 'expelled' through having been 'told of', and in doing so, makes them 'vicariously experienced by author and reader'. It thereby 'traces the unsaid and the unseen of culture', because it opens up, 'for a brief moment, on to disorder, on to illegality ... on to that which lies outside dominant value systems'.[24] To understand the culturally subversive mechanism of fantasy in pulp science fiction of the early reform era, one has to combine Jackson's psychoanalytical approach to fantasy with a Freudian concept of repression — 'displacement'. Also known as 'transference of accent', displacement refers to a repressive mechanism by which ideas, desires, and wishes deemed as unacceptable find their expression distorted and displaced in the dream. What appears to be the most important element in the dream can be secondary in the dream-thoughts while what is important among the dream-thoughts 'obtains only incidental and rather indistinct representation in the dream'.[25] Thus the mechanism of displacement enables 'devious' ideas and wishes to 'harmlessly' surface in distorted or disproportionate forms in non-realistic contexts such as dream — or in our case, the fantastic narrative.

As a product of a nascent market economy, pulp science fiction is consumer-oriented. Like other forms of popular culture, its formulas are created

肃反小说选 1949–1979 (Beijing: Qunzhong chubanshe, 1979). For the development of pulp culture in Hong Kong made possible by mainland émigrés after the communist takeover of mainland China, see Sai-Shing Yung and Christopher Rea, 'One Chicken, Three Dishes: The Cultural Enterprises of Law Bun,' in eds Christopher Rea and Nicolai Volland *The Business of Culture: Cultural Entrepreneurs in China and South Asia, 1900–65* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2015), pp.150–77.

19 For some of the most circulated texts, see *Anliu: 'Wenge' shouchaoben wencun* 暗流: "文革" 手抄本文存, ed. Bai Shihong 白士弘 (Beijing: Wenhua yishu chubanshe, 2001). The hand-copied literature was mostly written by amateurs. The texts often changed drastically in circulation due to copying mistakes and the copier's own creative addition or deletion. For studies of hand-copied literature, see Perry Link, 'Hand-copied Entertainment Fiction from the Cultural Revolution,' in eds Richard Madsen and Paul G. Pickowicz. *Unofficial China: Popular Culture and Thought in the People's Republic of China* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1989), pp.17–36; and Lena Henningsen, 'Crime, Love, and Science: Continuity and Change in Hand-copied Entertainment Fiction (*shouchaoben*) from the Cultural Revolution'. *Kodex* 6 (2016): 101–19.

20 Suvin, *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction*, pp.7–8.

21 Chong Ji 崇基, preface to *Huo Xing* 火星, *Tongsu wenhua* 通俗文化, 27 (1935): p.19.

22 This wave of science fiction took place when the state promoted science and technology in 1956 — a policy popularised through the slogan 'Marching forward to Science' (*Xiang kexue jinjun* 向科学进军). Science fiction stories of the period appeared mainly in newspapers, magazines, and books for children and teenagers, such as *Zhongguo shaonianbao* 中国少年报, *Zhongxuesheng* 中学生, *Ertong shidai* 儿童时代, *Shaonian wenyi* 少年文艺, etc. The major publishing houses involved in translating Soviet science fiction and the works of Jules Verne as well as publishing Chinese children's science fiction were *Zhongguo qingnian chubanshe* and *Shaonian ertong chubanshe* 少年儿童出版社.

23 Zheng Wenguang 郑文光, 'Tantan kexue huanxiang xiaoshuo' 谈谈科学幻想小说, *Dushu yuebao* 读书月报 3 (1956): 21–22. Cf. Wagner's quotation of S. Ivanov: 'Soviet science phantasy must reflect tomorrow, that is, that space of time separated from our days by one or two decades, or perhaps only years'. Wagner, 'Lobby Literature,' p.28.

24 Jackson, *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion*, pp.3–4.

25 Freud, *New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*, pp.33–34.

26 Cawelti, *Mystery, Violence, and Popular Culture*, pp.134–35.

27 This interest in supernormal abilities as well as their entanglement with the notion of science find their resonance at the beginning of the twentieth century, when, for example, Xu Nianci's 徐念慈 1905 science fiction story 'A Tale of New Mr Braggadocio' (Xin faluo xiansheng tan 新法螺先生谭) talked about 'brain electricity' (*naodian* 脑电) as a means of remote communication and a source of energy. According to Max K.W. Huang's study, Chinese Spiritualism during the May Fourth era studied 'heavenly eyes' (*tianyantong* 天眼通) and telepathy (*chuanxinshu* 傳心術). See Huang, 'Minguo chunian Shanghai de lingxue yanjiu: yi "Shanghai lingxuehui" weili' 民國初年上海的靈學研究: 以「上海靈學會」為例, *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan jindaishi yanjiusuo jikan* 中央研究院近代史研究所集刊 55 (March 2007): 99–136). For an analysis of somatic science in the 1980s, see David A. Palmer, *Qigong Fever: Body, Science and Utopia in China* (London: Hurst & Company, 2007).

28 Luo Dan 罗丹, 'Shenmi de dianbo' 神秘的电波, *Kexue Tiandi* 科学天地 1(1979): pp.55–61.

'within a cultural matrix that results from the interactions of writers, audiences, and publishers or producers' and function by 'reflecting values and assumptions shared by a community of reader'.[26] In the next section, I choose three formulaic elements in the fantastic narratives of pulp science fiction for a (sub)textual analysis in order to probe into the mechanism of displaced fantasy in this body of texts. By reading the fantastic narrative in relation to the social and cultural contexts of the early reform era, my analysis intends to trace the twice-concealed ideas and desires in the empirical world of the author and the reader.

Displaced Fantasy: A (Sub)textual Reading of Pulp Science Fiction

In 1979, the Association of China's Popular Science Writers (*Zhongguo kexue jishu puji chuangzuo xiehui* 中国科学技术普及创作协会) launched its magazine *Popular Science Creation* (*Kepu chuangzuo* 科普创作). It included in the category 'science *belles-lettres*' a broad spectrum of creative arts, ranging from text-based science fiction, 'science sketches' (*xiaopin* 小品), fairytales, poetry, and screenplays for radio broadcast to visual culture such as 'science education film' (*kejiao dianying* 科教电影), painting and calligraphy (*kepu meishu* 科普美术). Meanwhile, regional associations of popular science creation (*kepu chuangzuo xiehui* 科普创作协会) were established in many provinces, publishing their own monthly or bimonthly magazines.

Science *belles-lettres*, latest news of technological development from home and abroad, and biographical stories of scientists constituted the major parts of these popular science magazines. It is, however, notable that plenty of space was also given for discussion on how to improve the quality of everyday life 'scientifically' — for example, dietetics, horticulture, health tips, geographical knowledge about local scenic spots, and recipes featuring local delicacies or specialties. These topics anticipated subsequent consumer interests in tourism, gastronomy, and health regimens (*yangsheng* 养生). Science fiction stories published in these magazines suggest a similar desire for depoliticising everyday life, although the following analysis shows that their imagined modernised future is at once conformist and subversive.

1. Mind-reading Gadgetry

The early reform era witnessed a remarkable fascination with somatic science, when phenomena such as *qigong* 气功 and supernormal powers (*teyi gongneng* 特异功能) were frequently reported and debated in the media. One of the most discussed supernormal abilities was the ability to penetrate barriers to detect things invisible to the naked eye. In pulp science fiction, such an ability is achieved through various gadgets that help to find mineral reserves, to obtain military secrets, and, most important of all, to read minds by receiving, saving, interpreting, and even retrieving the 'brainwaves' (*naobo* 脑波) of the target person.[27]

In 'Mysterious Waves' (Shenmi de dianbo 神秘的电波) (1979), by Luo Dan 罗丹, a 'biological wave receiver' is installed on a high-tech machine that can synthesise protein and sugar with water, air, and solar energy.[28] This receiver guards the machine because it responds to the brainwaves of the person touching it. Together with a 'biological wave interpreter' that restores the received brainwaves to intelligible language and pictures, this gadget helps the police catch the foreign spy who steals the machine in order to obtain

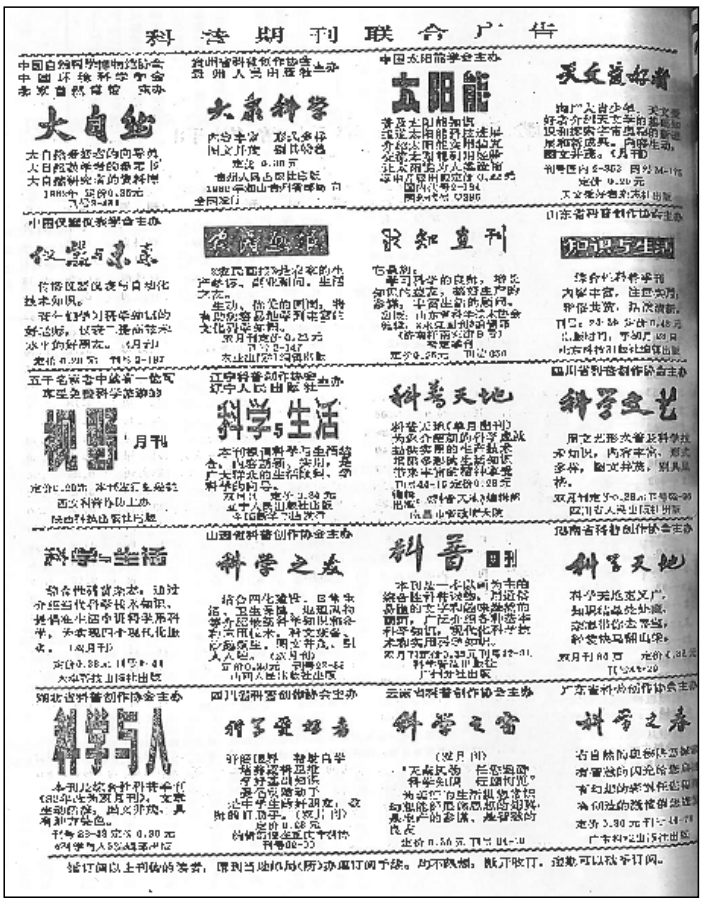

Figure 2

An advertisement for regional popular science magazines in Kexue Tiandi 科学天地 *(October 1980).*

its advanced technology. The 'thoughts detector' in 'After the Expert Was Assassinated' (Zhuanjia yuci yihou 专家遇刺以后) (1981), by Wang Qinlan 王琴兰 and Wang Yi 王沂, reads and interprets human minds.[29] The police use it to trace the suspect's thoughts and nail the spy assassin. These two stories are reminiscent of *Sufan* spy thrillers, whose paranoia about enemy infiltration is typical of the Cold War era and embodied in the frequent appearance of the spy in popular culture of both sides.[30] In pulp science fiction of the early reform era, the spy appears less as a political traitor than as the saboteur of the economic and technological development of socialist China.

Besides guarding against the enemy, the mind-reading gadget can be used in other ways. In 'Unprotected Drafts' (Wengao shimi 文稿失密) (1981), by Shan Ming 单明, the 'thought recorder' follows the thinking process of a scientist, converts his thoughts into language, and enables his ideas to be published simultaneously.[31] 'Same Dream in Different Beds' (Yichuang tongmeng 异床同梦) (1980), by Ying Qi 应其, tells a story in the style of 'scar literature' (*shanghen wenxue* 伤痕文学) about the spiritual reunion of two lovers through a 'thought detector'.[32] Due to a misunderstanding, Xiao Xiao broke up with her engineer boyfriend Luo Tian in the Cultural Revolution. A married woman in the late 1970s, Xiao Xiao meets Luo again, only to find out that her husband was the one who drove a wedge between them. Presenting Xiao Xiao with his invention, the 'thoughts detector', Luo Tian makes it possible for them to share their thoughts with each other every night, thus maintaining a platonic but loving relationship.

If the feverish interest in somatic science and supernormal power shows the complicated relations between science, the undercurrent of religious

29 Wang Qinlan 王琴兰, Wang Yi 王沂, 'Zhuanjia yuci yihou' 专家遇刺以后, *Kexue tiandi* 6 (1981): 40–45.

30 For spy stories in post-war American pulp fiction, see Cawelti, 'Take That, You Commie Rat!', in *Mystery, Violence, and Popular Culture*, pp.312–27.

31 Shan Ming 单明, 'Wengao shimi' 文稿失密, *Kexue yu shenghuo* 科学与生活 3 (1981): 41–42.

32 Ying Qi 应其, 'Yichuang tongmeng' 异床同梦, *Kexue yu shenghuo* 6 (1980): 55–59. 'Scar literature' refers to those literary works produced in late 1970s PRC which denounce, often sentimentally, the Gang of Four for imposing injustice and suffering on intellectuals and cadres in the Cultural Revolution. This literary trend began with Lu Xinhua's 卢新华 1978 short story 'Scar' (Shanghen 伤痕).

practices and beliefs, and the creation of a national identity in the early reform era, then the fantastic narrative about the power of mind-reading gadgetry in pulp science fiction appears to reflect an unshakeable faith in the machine. By imagining a machine that is able to convert invisible thoughts neatly into traceable, unambiguous articulation, the texts reflect a displaced desire for unhindered interpersonal communication. However, they also assume that language is transparent and the human mind is not stratified. Furthermore, surveillance and invasion of privacy are accepted without qualms in these stories. All these, I argue, should be seen as symptomatic of the trauma of political movements and mass surveillance in Maoist China.

Aided by the linguistic-social system of Mao-speak (*Mao huayu* 毛话语), mind-reforming political movements were repeatedly carried out, often in combination with mass surveillance, to instill the binary thinking of good versus bad (with many extensions such as revolutionary versus counter-revolutionary, progressive versus conservative), striving to wipe out intellectual complexity, psychological equivocality, and linguistic ambiguity in Chinese society. In these stories, surveillance of individuals is accepted as necessary. In order for the mind-reading gadgets to work, the characters must have 'unadulterated' minds — either as purely good or as single-mindedly evil. The cheerful celebration of transparent communication via mind-reading gadgetry demonstrates how the authors have internalised political control, mass surveillance, and naive optimism about technological advancement of Maoist China.

To articulate directly the distress of lacking human communication and trust, pulp science fiction had to resort to the strategy of displacement — that is, to move them out of socialist China to a spatial 'Other', as exemplified in the story 'The Patent of Sassoon' (Shaxun de zhuanli 沙逊的专利) (1980). Professor Sassoon from 'a certain developed country' invents a mind-reading computer to commemorate his daughter, who committed suicide after her fiancé cheated on her. Unfortunately, what this patented machine discloses to Sassoon is a (capitalist) world full of lies.[33]

Hedonism for the Nation

Displacement takes place at various levels when desires for material enjoyment and sensual pleasure (taboos in Maoist China) seek expression. In addition to using the spatial 'Other' (that is, the capitalist world), the most remarkable strategy in pulp science fiction — whether used consciously or not — is to legitimise private desires by means of the grand narrative of national modernisation. The clashes and negotiations in this process of legitimisation, as the following analysis shows, are manifested in the discrepancies and ruptures on narrative and linguistic levels in many pulp science fiction stories.

In the story 'The Wedding Continued' (Jiexu de hunli 接续的婚礼) (1980), by Xie Shu 谢树 and Wang Yishan 王义山, for example, highly incongruous narrative components coexist, reinforcing and undercutting each other's discursive power.[34] The story is told from the perspective of Zhihai, who has spent years researching at the South Pole and now flies back to continue his wedding, which was disrupted five years ago because his wife was suddenly sent on a secret mission. Zhihai is picked up by a chauffeur in a Red Flag (*Hongqi* 红旗) sedan, who brings him directly to their new apartment.[35] He is not bothered by the fact that his wife's whereabouts are unknown, and his attention is

33 Yang Yang 杨洋, 'Shaxun de zhuanli' 沙逊的专利, *Kepu chuangzuo* 科普创作 3 (1980): 55–59.

34 Xie Shu 谢树 and Wang Yishan 王义山, 'Jiexu de hunli' 接续的婚礼, *Kexue shidai* 科学时代 4 (1980): 39–42.

35 The Red Flag sedan had been used exclusively by high-ranking cadres in Maoist China. For the legacy of it as a symbol of privilege and the creation of its new image as a consumer good in the post-socialist era, see Geremie R. Barmé , 'CCP™ & Adcult PRC', in *In the Red: On Contemporary Chinese Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), pp.235–54.

immediately drawn to the apartment, which is described in meticulous detail. It features French windows, a self-illuminating ceiling with pink stars, and a stereo system. The walls are covered with floral wallpaper and decorated with paintings. On one wall hangs a gouache painting entitled, following the zeitgeist, *The Future Rises from Our Hands*; while on another is a reproduction of Rubens's (1577–1640) work *The Origin of the Milky Way*. Zhihai's wife comes back at the end of the story, bringing him the good news that the secret mission of developing a special sort of aluminum foil for spaceships, which took her away from the wedding, has just been successfully completed.

Both Zhihai and his wife appear to fit the profile of scientist figures in the 'lobby literature' analysed by Wagner, who are loyal to the party-state and live in the closed Science Republic. They do not question the invasion of the state into their private life; they doggedly follow the rules of keeping secrets about their scientific projects, and their emotions are conditioned by their work rather than their personal life. This image of the scientist devoting him/herself wholeheartedly to the national project of the Four Modernisations is, however, not completely congruous with the narrative voice, whose description of the apartment reflects the enthusiasm for a modern 'cultured' domestic space in the early reform era. Floral wallpaper, French windows, the self-illuminating ceiling with pink stars (somehow reminiscent of the ceiling of the Great Hall of the People), and the stereo system seem to be essential material elements that contribute to the formation of a comfortable home. The paintings on the wall should demonstrate the owner's cultural taste. The gouache painting suggests propagandistic messages about the future of modernisation, while the Rubens reproduction implies a certain familiarity with Western culture. The coexistence of the Rubens painting, the propaganda poster, and the daily amenities in the private apartment of two Chinese scientists, incompatible as they may appear, shows the authors' imagined future in terms of Western-style, consumption-based modernisation — in contrast to Soviet-style state-conditioning. The fact that the text does not describe the Rubens painting in detail may suggest that the authors intend to address implicitly those who know Rubens's work — his fleshy female figures and Roman mythology. These gaps between the general storyline and the narrative voice, therefore, allow the repressed longings for domestic comforts and physical sensuality to be articulated — both wrapped in the discourse of national modernisation.

Ci Jiwei's thesis that the utopianism of the Chinese revolution is a sublimated form of hedonism may provide a philosophical explanation for the limitations of pulp science fiction's imagination of the future. At the core of this hedonism, Ci argues, is 'the view, based on a materialist ontology and an empiricist epistemology, that happiness consists in the satisfaction of the senses (as well as the intellectual faculties) and the pleasure consequent upon such satisfaction'. Serving as the ultimate end of the revolution, hedonism was denied here and now (hence the seemingly opposite asceticism in Maoist China) and forever postponed in the future.[36] It comes as no surprise that pulp science fiction tends to fantasise this postponed future, in which sensual pleasures, especially food and daily amenities, are satisfied. It consequently appealed to the reader in the early reform era who had been denied these pleasures for decades.

The sensual pleasure of sex, which may easily trigger more transgressive issues such as individuality, freedom, and human rights, is often shunned

36 Ci Jiwei, *Dialectic of the Chinese Revolution: from Utopianism to Hedonism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), p.135. Such hedonism found its way in science fiction stories produced in the 1950s. For instance, the children's science fiction story "Elephants sans proboscis" (Gediao bizi de daxiang 割掉鼻子的大象 (1956) fantasises about abundant food production, in which the pig, by means of pituitary gland stimulation, can be raised to the size of the elephant.

in pulp science fiction. In the story analysed above, we see that the issue of sexual pleasure, tantalisingly suggested in the plot of the wedding and the reunion of the couple, is displaced into the joy of a successful scientific project. The story 'Hope Island' (Xiwang dao 希望岛) (1982), by Wei Shilin 韦士林, which centres on a scientific project of eugenics, exemplifies, on the other hand, a text exhibiting patriotism yet haunted by sex.[37] The astronaut Zuo Liang, after his mission to Pluto, visits his fiancée Chen Na, a researcher at the eugenics research centre on Hope Island. This private visit, however, is immediately channeled into a scientific research project for the nation: Zuo is asked to participate as a sperm donor to make the fittest test tube babies. He is then put in the Dream Pool of the research centre. His dream is described thus:

> ... On the shimmering surface of the lake, a yacht came to him. Zuo Liang looked closely and saw that the driver was no other than Chen Na. Overjoyed, he sprang onto the yacht which was still two metres away from the shore. He caught Chen Na and held her tight in his arms.
>
> The yacht floated on the lake. Charming landscapes flashing through, fragrance lingering around, music faintly discernible, and the tender Chen Na nestling against him. All these pleased Zuo Liang, who felt a pleasure never experienced before. He closed his eyes and took his time to enjoy it ...[38]

These two passages show the irrepressible urge of the narrative voice to touch upon the topic of sex. Even though the story develops in the direction of a research project, the scientific practice of eugenics and the storyline of the exciting meeting of a young couple at a reproduction centre are clearly sexually charged. Resorting to dreams — a classic literary trope of fantastic narrative — the text describes Zuo Liang's masturbation and pleasure in highly suggestive language: the surroundings full of water, his fiancée as the object of his desire, and enjoyment of all senses. The subtext about sexual behaviour and pleasure, which can hardly be missed by adult readers, unsettles the overt message of carrying out a eugenic project for the nation.

The desire for hedonistic enjoyment finds its explicit articulation in stories set outside China. In these texts, the narrative voice takes great pleasure in depicting the imagined fancy lifestyle of rich capitalists, while simultaneously denouncing this way of life and its moral decadence. Such schizophrenic narrative allows the implied reader to project their 'deviant' desires and doubts about science safely on the fictional Other — the immoral capitalist. Mr Wood, from the capitalist country M. (referring to the United States, which is *Meiguo* 美国 in Chinese), in the story entitled 'A Girl Named Danqin' (Danqin guniang 丹青姑娘) (1980), by Xie Shijun 谢世俊, is a case in point.[39] His possessions and vices are enumerated by the narrator: he owns a villa on the beach, a private helicopter, and a butler; he not only indulges in whiskey, cigars, and other luxuries, but is also sexually obsessed with the national beauty queen Tess. In order to possess Tess as an eternally young beauty, Mr Wood employs Dr M. to produce a clone from a cell stolen from her. When the clone-daughter turns fourteen, Mrs Wood discovers her husband's secret and encourages Tess and her clone to sue Mr Wood, who loses the case and is thrown into prison.

This story is roughly structured and pitted with inconsistencies. Described as a decadent womaniser, Mr Wood is, however, rather persistent in pursu-

37 Wei Shilin 韦世林, 'Xiwang dao' 希望岛, *Kexue zhi chuang* 科学之窗 3 (1982): 53–57.

38 *Ibid*., 55.

39 Xie Shijun 谢世俊, 'Danqin guniang' 丹青姑娘, *Kexue yu shenghuo* 5 (1980): 26–31.

ing Tess and cares about the clone-daughter; the fact that the girl grows up and will grow old obviously does not fulfil Mr Wood's intention to possess an eternally young beauty. The story about the immoral capitalist Mr. Wood and the unscrupulous, money-driven scientist Dr. M, on the other hand, raises several issues not allowed to be discussed in Maoist China — for example, extramarital relations, sexual desires, and the ethics of scientific research. This storyline questions the use of science and implicitly interrogates the official discourse that promotes science as a positive force in shaping the future.

Encounters with Aliens

If the capitalist world and capitalists serve as negative Others in pulp science fiction, then aliens and their societies are, more often than not, presented as positive Others showcasing a desirable alternative world. As with science fiction in many other countries, Chinese pulp science fiction is interested in encounters with extraterrestrial beings. The possible existence of intelligent beings beyond Earth has long been a topic of popular science magazines before and after 1949. In early 1961, shortly before the Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin (1934–68) travelled into outer space, the illustrated periodical *Knowledge is Power* (Zhishi jiushi liliang 知识就是力量) published a couple of articles speculating on the existence of intelligent beings on other planets.[40] In 1978, a short essay in *China Youth* (Zhongguo qingnian 中国青年) asked whether there would be 'guests' from outer space coming to visit Earth, implying an optimistic attitude towards alien contacts.[41]

Despite bold speculations ventured by these major magazines and increasing global interest in UFOs in the 1980s, most scientist-authors chose not to write about alien encounters, because evidence of alien existence was elusive. Pulp science fiction, unperturbed by the problem of scientific evidence, pursued this topic with gusto. In these stories, the earthlings' encounters with extraterrestrial worlds are invariably positive; it is usually Chinese scientists who meet aliens; and the aliens and their societies are always more advanced in technology and more rational in social organisation. I argue that the writing of alien encounters can be read as the euphoric popular imagination of the PRC coming into contact with a modern, implicitly Western, Other. This imagination, in turn, bears visible traces of social norms and values from Maoist China.

Xiao Jianheng 萧建亨 (b.1961), one of the best-known authors of science fiction and popular science, wrote a story about a Chinese philologist enabling communication with aliens by translating a letter from alien astronauts (1980). It turns out that the letter expresses warm greetings from the aliens and their excitement about discovering civilisations on Earth.[42] Conversely, the aliens in 'After the Disappearance of the Demonic Shadow' (Moying xiaoshi yihou 魔影消失以后) (1980), by Zhou Kun 周昆, use an interpreting machine that learns the languages spoken on Earth in no time by automatically discerning linguistic rules.[43] In both stories, the problem of communication is solved by technology, which allows both sides to express their good intentions and friendliness. The portrayal of these positive encounters may refract the optimism about the (economic) open-door policy in the Chinese popular imagination, in which technological modernisation plays a central role.

40 La Li 拉里, 'Yuzhou zhong de zhihui shengwu' 宇宙中的智慧生物, *Zhishi jiushi liliang* 知识就是力量, 2 (1961): 1–5; Qi Gai'er 齐盖尔, 'Huoxing shang you ren ma?' 火星上有人吗？ *Zhishi jiushi liliang* 4 (1961), 22.

41 Wu Haoyuan 吴浩源 and Zhao Chengjing 赵成璟, 'Tianwai shifou you ke lai?' 天外是否有客来?, *Zhongguo qingnian* 中国青年 4 (1978): 46–47.

42 Xiao Jianheng 萧建亨, 'Jinxing ren zhi mi' 金星人之谜, *Kexue huanxiang xiaoshuo xuan* 科学幻想小说选 (Beijing: Zhongguo qingnian chubanshe, 1980), pp.154–84.

43 Zhou Kun 周昆, 'Moying xiaoshi yihou' 魔影消失以后, *Kexue shidai* 科学时代 6 (1980): 46–53.

For ordinary Chinese citizens in the early reform era, going abroad was, perhaps, psychologically no nearer than flying to other planets. The literary trope of alien encounter that is structured on the Self/Other binary foregrounds the increasing self-consciousness — and anxiety — of positioning the Chinese identity in a larger world. Pulp science fiction creates an external gaze of the aliens — the Other — to champion a proud Chinese identity by making Chinese scientists the key player in alien encounters and asserting China's long history with a brilliant (ancient) civilisation. In 'The Stranger from Outer Space' (Taikong qike 太空奇客) (1981), by Tao Wenqing 陶文庆, Chinese astronauts receive a package from intergalactic travellers from a planet named Duna, which includes a long letter with pictures and a 'dictionary', translating the signs on Earth into the Duna language. With the help of this dictionary, the astronauts are able to decode the letter expressing the aliens' pleasure at finding high civilisations on Earth and to understand the pictures that introduce the Duna.[44] In 'The Messenger' (Xinshi 信使) (1980), by Zhang Yonglin 张涌林, it is again Chinese astronauts who find a research report produced by aliens on Earth's civilisation. This report covers topics ranging from geometry and the theory of relativity to the discovery of Peking Man fossils.[45] As Sigrid Schmalzer shows us, the construction of Peking Man as a symbol of China's long history and one of the early civilisations took place mainly in Maoist China, when the archeological work on Peking Man was used as scientific evidence of evolution to cement nationalism and Marxist historical materialism.[46]

The deployment of Peking Man fossils is not the only indicator of the impact of Maoist China on the popular imagination. The fantastic narrative of the aliens' physical features and social organisation also reflects its influence. Aliens are often described, at least from the perspective of the (Chinese) earthling narrator, as a more evolved species. In the story of 'After the Disappearance of the Demonic Shadow' mentioned above, the Chinese astronaut Luo Qiong lands on Lotus Planet. Its inhabitants resemble earthlings, but they are extraordinarily healthy and beautiful, suggesting the positive result of eugenic technology. The aliens on the planet Sirius, as observed by the Chinese marine scientist Lu Ying in 'The Secrets of the Aliens' (Yüzhouren de mimi 宇宙人的秘密) (1980), by Jing Weiru 井维如, seem to be a post-human race: they obtain energy as plants do and reproduce by cloning. As a result, they have no physical need for food and sex, hence, in the words of the narrator, no moral confusion. In contrast to their reduced biological needs is their exceptional ability to think with multiple organs.[47] The rationalised body corresponds to a rationalised social organisation. On Lotus Planet, wars have been eliminated because its inhabitants found out that it hindered social development. Technology is so developed that they do not have natural disasters because the weather can be conditioned according to their needs. Factories and farms are moved to other planets and operated by robots. Unhealthy individual habits such as smoking and drinking have been completely stamped out. The inhabitants of Lotus Planet work two to three months a year and spend the rest of their time learning and enjoying their lives. Returning to Earth, Luo Qiong claims that this alien civilisation represents the future of human society. Similarly, the alien society on the planet Sirius in 'The Secrets of the Aliens' uses robots for daily chores so that its members can do scientific research during work hours and enjoy entertainment (*yüle* 娱乐) in their spare time.

44 Tao Wenqing 陶文庆, 'Taikong qike' 太空奇客, *Kexue tiandi* 2 (1981): 10–13.

45 Zhang Yonglin 张涌林, 'Xinshi' 信使, *Kexue tiandi* 3 (1980): 50–54.

46 Sigrid Schmalzer, *The People's Peking Man: Popular Science and Human Identity in Twentieth-Century China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

47 Jing Weiru 井维如, 'Yüzhouren de mimi' 宇宙人的秘密, *Kexue zhi you* 科学之友 1 (1980): 31–34.

Such imaginings of aliens and their societies exemplify the scientistic discourse of modernisation in China that has seen technological progress and the rationalisation of the man and society as the way to a modern future — a view held by both Nationalists and Communists.[48] Technology not only offers human beings material comforts, freedom from natural disasters and daily chores, but can also mold the human race as desired — as eugenic technology is described without qualms in many texts. The positive depiction of the post-human races that know no pleasure — and therefore no sin — of sexual and culinary enjoyments reflects the internalisation of the repressive moral codes and total social control in Maoist China. A society whose control of the individual goes as far as eliminating personal habits such as smoking and drinking brings to mind the Soviet writer Yevgeny Zamyatin's (1884–1937) dystopian novel *We* (Мы, 1921), in which the characters are dehumanised due to their loss of individuality and human frailty in a highly modernised future. Pulp science fiction writers, furthermore, seem uninterested in fantasising about the political system of the alien world, and their collective imagination seems to dry up when it comes to describing entertainment that supposedly occupies a large part of alien life.

The alien world as the positive Other, characterised by advanced technology, material abundance, and social order in these stories produces an estranging effect, denoting the lack of these things in real life and the desire to change the status quo. Yet, as the examples analysed above show, to a large extent, alien encounters in pulp science fiction demonstrate how social and cultural values of Maoist China have been internalised. Little consideration is given to individual freedom, human frailty, and other political alternatives. On the other hand, one may argue that the remote and fantastic contacts with the aliens can be seen as displaced expressions of China's popular imagination of its encounter with the rest of the world — especially the technologically more advanced West. The emphasis on the role of Chinese scientists and astronauts in making contact with aliens not only asserts Chinese identity in the wider world, but also shows China's return to professional science to realise its modernisation project.

Fantasy Disciplined: The Decline of Science Fiction in the Early Reform Era

As mentioned in the first section, Chinese science fiction had long been burdened by scientistic optimism and didacticism, which required that science fiction disseminate correct scientific knowledge. Pulp science fiction in the early reform era tended to undermine both, albeit often inadvertently, and thereby teetered on the verge of ideological transgression. The attempt to discipline fantasy in science fiction — particularly in pulp science fiction — and the resistance of science fiction authors, led to many controversies from 1979 through to the end of 1983. They developed in roughly two periods, involving major media outlets such as *Guangming Daily* (Guangming ribao 光明日报), *China Youth* (Zhongguo qingnian bao 中国青年报), *People's Daily* (Renmin ribao 人民日报), and *Wenhui Daily* (*Wenhui bao* 文汇报). The first period (c.1979–80) witnessed debate over the relation between literature and scientific knowledge in the genre. In the second period (c.1981–83), the controversy escalated and the focus shifted to the content of fantasy in science fiction, which suggests that critics realised fantasy's potential to destabilise the dominant ideology. Towards the end of 1983, controversy was replaced

48 For the Nationalists' attempt to make Chinese people, society, and administration scientific, see William C. Kirby, 'Engineering China: Birth of the Developmental State, 1928–1937,' in *Becoming Chinese: Passages to Modernity and Beyond*, ed. Wen-hsin Yeh, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), pp.137–60. For an intellectual history of scientism in China, see D.W.Y. Kwok, *Scientism in Chinese Thought, 1900–1950* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965).

by negative criticism. Science fiction in general, and pulp science fiction in particular, was under fierce attack by all major newspapers for spreading spiritual pollution.

It should be noted that the critics' remarks — instead of attacking a particular work or author — were directed against the genre as a whole, which put pressure on all science fiction writers. Scientist-authors who were better equipped in theory to defend the genre, were more vocal. Interestingly, their responses, while asking for more tolerance, supported the ideologue-critics and tried to expell pulp science fiction from the genre by confirming the didactic function of science fiction and its role in national modernisation.[49]

In the first stage of controversy, the central issue was whether science fiction should lean towards science or literature. In other words, to what extent can science fiction be freed from the task of disseminating scientific knowledge?[50] Tong Enzheng argued against science fiction's function of popularising scientific knowledge, reformulating its goal as spreading 'a scientific view of life'.[51] The critic Lu Bing 鲁兵 saw the refusal to disseminate scientific knowledge as taking the soul (*linghun chuqiao* 灵魂出窍) from science fiction.[52] In July 1979, *China Youth* published an article criticising Ye Yonglie's story 'The Miracle on the Highest Mountain of the World' (*Shijie zuigaofeng shang de qiji* 世界最高峰上的奇迹, 1977) for disseminating scientific falsehoods.[53] Ye argued that science fiction differed from popular science writing in that its speculation about the future did not have to fit precisely with present-day scientific knowledge.[54] Xiao Jianheng emphasised the literariness of science fiction by calling for the separation of science fiction from science *belles-lettres* and by including social sciences in the notion of science.[55]

Even though no-one touched upon socialist realism explicitly in the debate, Wagner observes that this controversy moved Chinese science fiction into 'a categorical no man's land'. The 'contraband of phantasy' in science fiction may put literary realism in question and the lack of categorical legitimacy may offer writers a chance to explore its potential 'as part of a new popular literature'.[56] Yet, in the early reform era, when the writing of fantasy in science fiction was constantly policed and disciplined, this exploration proved difficult. In 1980, a group of articles published in *Popular Science Creation* discussing Ye Yonglie's highly popular story 'Little Smart Tours the Future' (Xiaolingtong manyou weilai 小灵通漫游未来) (1978) anticipated the second stage of controversy. A story about a child-journalist called Little Smart touring the City of the Future, the book is generally considered a children's fantasy story dramatising the ideas of the Four Modernisations. One critic complained that the description of the life in the City of the Future focused mainly on daily amenities, while the modernisations of industry and national defence were barely touched upon. Instead of engaging in meaningful scientific explorations, another critic commented, the robot in the story only functioned as a domestic servant. Moreover, the way Little Smart entered the City of the Future (he loses his way) was considered by the critics as too effortless. It could not prepare the reader for the long, toiling process of realising the Four Modernisations.[57] Taking issue with 'triviality' in the story's imagining of the future, these critical remarks expressed an anxiety that fantasy in science fiction did not fit neatly into the grand narrative of the Four Modernisations and thereby might spill out of ideological control.

As I have argued earlier in this paper, the future characterised by material abundance and a comfortable lifestyle was one of the reasons that science fic-

49 For the defence of science fiction, see the articles by Xiao Jianheng 萧建亨, Ye Yonglie, Peng Zhongmin 彭钟岷 and Peng Xinmin 彭辛岷, Huang Yi 黄易, Tong Enzheng 童恩正, and Zheng Wenguang, in Huang Yi, *Lun kexue huanxiang xiaoshuo* 论科学幻想小说 (Beijing: Kexue puji chubanshe, 1981).

50 It is interesting to note that the same issue was also discussed, with less ideological load and risk, in Taiwan a bit later. See 'De xiansheng. Sai xiansheng. Huan Xiaojie' 德先生，赛先生，幻小姐, in ed. Zhang Xiguo 张系国, *Dangdai kehuan xiaoshuo xuan II* 当代科幻小说选II, (Taibei: Zhishi xitong chuban gongsi, 1985), pp.209–56.

51 Tong Enzheng, 'Tantan wo dui kexue wenyi de renshi' 谈谈我对科学文艺的认识, *Renmin wenxue* 人民文学, 6 (1979), 110.

52 Lu Bing 鲁兵, 'Linghun chuqiao de wenxue' 灵魂出窍的文学 , *Zhongguo qingnian bao* 中國青年報14/8/1979.

53 Zhen Shuonan 甄朔南, 'Kexuexing shi sixiangxing de benyuan' 科学性是思想性的本源, *Zhongguo qingnian bao* 19/7/1979.

54 Ye Yonglie, 'Kexue. Huanxiang. Heli – da Zhen Shuonan tongzhi' 科学. 幻想. 合理 — 答甄朔南同志, *Zhongguo qingnian bao* 2/8/1979.

55 Xiao Jianheng, 'Shitan woguo kexue huanxiang xiaoshuo de fazhan — jianlun woguo kexue huanxiang xiaoshuo de yixie zhenglun' 试谈我国科学幻想小说的发展 — 兼论我国科学幻想小说的一些争论, in ed. Huang Yi, *Lun kexue huanxiang xiaoshuo*, pp.8–47.

56 Wagner, 'Lobby Literature', 40–43.

57 Cai Zizheng 蔡字征 et al., 'Pinglun *Xiaolingtong manyou weilai*' 评论《小灵通漫游未来》, *Kepu chuangzuo* 科普创作 1(1980): 88–92.

tion was popular in the early reform era — it addressed the repressed desires and discontents of its readers. The surge of pulp science fiction around 1980–81 alarmed some critics, who interpreted its fantastic narrative as a form of tasteless escapism, which played no role in helping the reader to understand reality and develop science and technology. At this point, the literary creed of realism entered the debate. Two articles are representative: Xiao Lei's 肖雷 'The Other Side of the "Boom"' ('Fanrong' de lingyimian' '繁荣' 的另一面) and Zhao Shizhou's 赵世洲 'Questioning Science Thrillers' (Jingxian kehuan xiaoshuo zhiyi 惊险科幻小说质疑).[58] Whereas both articles conceded that science fiction was a tremendously popular genre at the time, Xiao dismissed most of the stories as 'fantasy plus love' or 'fantasy plus thriller', which, in his view, failed to reflect social reality and were, therefore, escapist in nature. Zhao, a popular science writer himself, characterised science fiction as unrealistic, unreasonable, and vulgar. Rhetorically asking what 'murder, eroticism, theft, and crazy men have to do with science and technology', Zhao politicised the debate by arguing that developing 'spiritual civilisation' (*jingshen wenming* 精神文明) side by side with science and technology was a feature of socialist culture. Very few science fiction authors came out to confront the charges. Ye Yonglie, many of whose stories verged on pulp science fiction, responded to the charges, ironically, with the rhetoric of orthodox literary criticism. He defended the genre for its power to predict scientific developments, its function of setting up a model for the socialist 'new man', its ability to forecast the future, and its contribution to the Four Modernisations.[59]

In October 1983, the Campaign against Spiritual Pollution started. The next month, science fiction was ferociously attacked in major newspapers and pulp science fiction stories were tagged as 'frauds' (*maopai huo* 冒牌货). *Guangming Daily* reported on the meeting of the Association of China's Popular Science Writers, which aimed to 'eliminate spiritual pollution in order to guarantee the healthy development of popular science creation'. According to the report, some science fiction works spread pseudo-science, 'feudal superstition', and the belief in God; some promoted bourgeois egoism and hedonism; some indulged in murder, detection, or eroticism; and some even displayed discontent over the socialist system and the party. Although these science fiction stories were just one part of the genre, the report warned, their harmful influence, especially on young people, should not be overlooked.[60] *People's Daily* reiterated the scientism and didacticism of science fiction by harking back to Lu Xun's 鲁迅 (1881–1936) 1903 essay on science fiction. It accused 'certain' science fiction stories of discussing social and political problems instead of conveying correct scientific knowledge, and expressed alarm at science and technology being abused by criminals and unscrupulous scientists. These stories, it concluded, were neither scientific nor realistic. Furthermore, they abandoned the communist ideal in favour of bourgeois liberalisation and commercialisation.[61] In the same vein, *Wenhui Daily* identified the 'deviant paths' (*qitu* 歧途) of science fiction creation as follows: escapism, political incorrectness (criticism of the socialist system), bourgeois decadence (fascination with horror and sex), and the obsession with profit.[62]

These intense attacks on science fiction brought into view the ideological recalcitrance of fantasy in science fiction. With scientist-authors silenced by the noxious political implications of these attacks and minor authors completely disappearing from the scene, science fiction as a genre withered at the end of 1983.

58 Xiao Lei 肖雷, '"Fanrong" de ling yimian' '繁荣' 的另一面, *Wenxue bao* 文学报 16/4/1981; Zhao Shizhou 赵世洲, 'Jingxian kehuan xiaoshuo zhiyi' 惊险科幻小说质疑, *Dushu* 读书 8 (1982): 60-65.

59 Ye Yonglie, 'Jingxian kehuan xiaoshuo dayi' 惊险科幻小说答疑, *Dushu* 读书 1 (1983): 63–69.

60 Liu Lusha 刘路沙, 'Zhongguo kepu chuangzuo xiehui zai jing zhaokai zuotanhui tichu qingchu jingshen wuran, baozheng kepu chuangzuo jiankang fazhan' 中国科普创作协会在京召开座谈会提出清除精神污染，保证科普创作健康发展, *Guangming ribao* 光明日报 1/11/1983.

61 Shi Tong 施同, 'Kehuan zuopin zhong de jingshen wuran ye ying qingli' 科幻作品中的精神污染也应清理, *Renmin ribao* 人民日報 5/11/1983. In 1903, Lu Xun published his rather free translation of Jules Verne's *De la terre à la lune* in Japan. His preface to the translation argued that the entertaining power of fiction should be used to disseminate modern scientific knowledge so as to achieve the goals of dispelling superstition, reforming the thought of the Chinese people, and propelling Chinese civilisation forward.

62 Feng Feng 冯凤, 'Kexue huanxiang xiaoshuo chuangzuo de qitu' 科学幻想小说创作的歧途, *Wenhui bao* 文汇报 23/11/1983.

Conclusion

The emergence and popularity of pulp science fiction in the early reform era were the result of various forces, including loosened ideological control, the reintroduction of a consumer-oriented market economy, the CCP's ambition of realising national modernisation, and, not least of all, the populace's need to channel its repressed desires and discontents. Like 'lobby literature', pulp science fiction responded to the official call for realising the Four Modernisations. While not attempting to challenge the dominant ideologies of communism, patriotism, and scientistic optimism, pulp science fiction, nevertheless, turned out to be ideologically transgressive when its fantastic unconscious spilled over by addressing — through displacement — the repressed desires, discontents, and doubts in Chinese society. As my analysis shows, displacement of fantasy mainly took place in three ways in these texts: first, the construction of negative capitalist Others and a capitalist world on which anxieties and discontents, the negative use of science, and the negative image of the scientist were projected; second, the legitimisation of private desires by displacing them onto the official discourse of national modernisation; and third, the portrayal of positive alien Others and their societies to showcase a desirable future by displacing the temporal distance between the present and the future into the spatial distance between planets.

The fantasy narrative in pulp science fiction has its limitations and fails to provide any alternative historical hypothesis. It does, however, offer social commentary through the defamiliarising effects it creates. Furthermore, pulp science fiction as 'light literature' offered its readers pleasure by inviting them to decode the displaced, latent messages in the texts. Although pulp science fiction was suppressed in the Campaign against Spiritual Pollution, its 'pulp' legacy would re-emerge in the 'new wave' of Chinese science fiction from the 1990s onwards. The desires and discontents it disclosed would become increasingly visible in Chinese society and culture, anticipating further changes.

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THE EMERGENCE OF INDEPENDENT MINDS IN THE 1980s

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At the beginning of the 1980s, the project of reform and openness enjoyed popularity among the general public and was especially welcomed among young people. The young generation was living in an atmosphere of freshness and richness unprecedented in the history of the People's Republic of China in terms both cultural and material, and they were considered as most fortunate. The party-state also placed great hope on young people, praising their patriotism, encouraging their initiative and having faith in their loyalty. They shared the goals of the Four Modernisations (*Si ge xiandaihua* 四個現代化) and wanted to work together toward 'the bright future'. This spirit was very well captured by the popular song *Young Friends Come Together* (Nianqing de pengyou yiqilai 年轻的朋友一起来). When it was first broadcast in 1980, I was among thousands of youths deeply moved by this song. It was very appealing to identify oneself with the 'new eighties generation' as the realisation of the Four Modernisations would be glorious for the nation as well as for every individual. But the loyalty of young people to the party did not last long. At the end of the 1980s, a substantial portion of this fortunate generation turned out to be 'unfilial children' who were intellectually critical, socially disobedient, and even politically rebellious. What happened to them?

A comprehensive analysis of Chinese aspirations in the 1980s is beyond my ability. In this essay, by combining personal experience with theoretical reflection, I attempt to explain how independent minds and spirits emerged from the discursive practices of the new campus culture, which led to the birth of the 'awakening generation' and contributed to a broader transformation of the social imaginary in the 1980s. The aspirations of young people were diverse but in many aspects beyond the grid of the official ideology. Their ideas of a good life gradually diverged from 'the bright path' set by the party-state for the new eighties generation. The heyday of the awakening generation ended

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in 1989, but its legacy remains and deserves a re-examination. I will start with personal stories, and then move to general observations on the campus cultural movement, and, finally, offer some theoretical analysis on the intellectual and political implications of the new youth culture.

My First Trip to Beijing

I spent my youth in the 1980s and made many unforgettable memories. In October 1983, something happened to me. I was called up in class and was assigned by the Shanghai Communist Youth League (CYL) (*Shanghai gongchanzhuyi qingniantuan* 上海 共產主義青年團) to a delegation called the 'Revitalising the Chinese nation speech group'. The delegation was to make a speaking tour of Beijing in a 'patriotic education program' organised by the Central Committee of the CYL. As a two-time prize winner of the Shanghai college student speech competition, I was included. During a week's stay in Beijing, the members of the delegation were received by CYL leaders including Wang Zhaoguo 王兆国 and Hu Jintao 胡锦涛. We delivered speeches at Tsinghua University (*Qinghua daxue* 清华大学), Renmin University (*Renmin daxue* 人民大学), *Red Flag* magazine (*Hongqi* 红旗), the Central Military Commission (CMC) (*Zhongyang junshi weiyuanhu* 中央軍事委員會), and, finally, at the Jingxi Hotel (*Jingxi binguan* 京西賓館), to those who were attending the second Plenary Session of the 12th Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Central Committee. We met Hu Qili 胡启立, who was a member of the Secretariat of the Central Committee and was about to become a member of the politburo. Hu Qili personally asked Hu Jintao to have the *Renmin ribao*人民日報 publish my speech.[1]

I was twenty years old at that time, in the second year of my masters program in Chemical Engineering. This was my first trip to Beijing; my first meal at the Jingxi Hotel; and also my first time on an airplane, which turned out to be 'flying high' — not only literally but also metaphorically. The whole experience was overwhelming. What happened on the second day after I returned to Shanghai shocked me even more: *Wenhui bao* 文汇报, a Shanghai-based major national newspaper, published a feature on me on its front-page, as well as an editorial entitled 'Learn from Liu Qing to Take the Road Both Red and Expert'.[2] I was portrayed as a model student for being 'both politically and professionally excellent'. In the following month, I received hundreds of letters from readers and dozens of invitations asking me to give speeches.

This dazzling experience made me more confused than excited, because there was something unrecorded in the newspaper report about my trip to Beijing. My original speech was about the humanist aspects of Marxism, which relied on Zhou Yang's 周扬 (1908–89) famous article commemorating the centenary of Marx's death.[3] I also gave a fresh interpretation of Zhang Haidi 张海迪 as China's Helen Keller, an exemplary youth pursuing humanism and self-realisation.[4] In the roundtable discussion held by *Hongqi*, my speech was seriously criticised for being 'politically problematic' and 'misunderstanding Marxism'. When I tried to respond to the criticism by referring to Zhou Yang's article, one senior editor replied: 'Zhou Yang's article is his personal view and does not represent the official line of the Central Committee and, to be frank, the *People's Daily* is not the official voice of the Central Committee. It is *Hongqi* that is designated as the official organ of the Central Committee.' I was warned that the Central Committee of the CCP would soon launch a project called the Anti-Spiritual Pollution Campaign (*Fanjingshen*

1 Liu Qing, 'University Students and China,' *Renmin ribao* 15 November 1983.

2 *Wenhui bao*, 29 October 1983.

3 Zhou Yang, 'Several Theoretical Issues of Marxism,' *People's Daily* 16 March 1983.

4 Zhang has been disabled since she was five because of illness, but she made advances in the fields of translation and literature. She was designated by the CYL a model youth in the 1980s.

wuran yundong 清除精神污染). The consequence was that I had to work all night to rewrite my speech, and, as advised, to downplay its individualism and humanism and shift the emphasis to young people's obligations to our motherland. It was not the original piece but the revised one that was delivered at the Jingxi Hotel and then published in the *People's Daily*.

For a while, I suffered from an inner struggle so intense that it burned me out inside. To be honest, there was temptation in being a model student. It not only satisfied the vanity that many at my age would have, but, may have also, as suggested, paved the way to a promising future. Especially in China at that time, the state system was almost the only conceivable space in which a young person could have an outstanding career, professional or political. In other words, it was a great opportunity to 'fly high'. On the other hand, I was not sure that this was the way I'd like to fly. First, the Anti-Spiritual Pollution Campaign was notorious and evil in the eyes of most young people. To serve this campaign in any way made me feel ashamed and manipulated. Second, the fame I received was based on a fabricated story. The image bearing my name in the newspaper report was not who I actually was. This might be a moral issue but it seemed to be more than a matter of honesty. Here, I found in myself an example of 'self-alienation'. To accept the image or to live with the story meant that I would be alienated from myself. Only after many years did I find a more appropriate term for this when reading Charles Taylor. It was a matter of authenticity. To be truthful to oneself is the ideal of authenticity, which is an intrinsic value of any meaningful life.[5] Eventually, I decided not to conform to the title of model student. In retrospect, it was a turning point of my life. I recalled a line from Robert Frost's poem *The Road Not Taken*: 'I took the one less travelled by, and that has made all the difference'.

One good thing happened during my trip to Beijing. I became friends with a member of the speech group, Tao Jun 陶骏, a talented playwright. The play *Rubik's Cube* (Mofang 魔方), which he wrote and directed, caused a sensation on the Shanghai stage in 1985.[6] It was regarded as one of the most important Chinese experimental plays of the 1980s. In 1985, Tao and I, along with other two university students, founded an experimental drama club named White Bat. This was the first independent theatre group in Shanghai.[7] The first work we did was an adaption of Shakespeare's 'Four Great Tragedies', titled *To Be or Not To Be*. We took original lines from Shakespeare and mixed them with Shakespearean-style lines that we made up. Audiences who were not familiar with the original could hardly tell the difference. This was a sort of postmodern collage in which Hamlet, King Lear, Macbeth, Othello, and a modern Chinese youth are seemingly having conversations with each other across the boundaries of time and space. The central theme is searching for the meaning of life and pondering moral problems against the uncertainty of social change. We presented this theme as both a timely and eternal issue. The play was presented at several universities in Shanghai and finally as part of the program of the First Shakespeare Drama Festival of China in 1986.[8]

The Rise of the Campus Cultural Movement

White Bat was but one example among many, some of which I was personally engaged in or witnessed. At that time, there were hundreds of campus-based and self-initiated cultural groups and many more loosely organised activities with multifarious interests and themes. Some favoured pop culture, entertainment, and hobbies such as dance parties, pop songs, photography,

5 Charles Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992).

6 Geremie R. Barmé and John Minford translated an excerpt of this work and included it in their edited volume *Seeds of Fire: Chinese Voices of Conscience* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1988).

7 For the story of White Bat, see Liu Yonglai and Zhang Ying, *Independent Theater: Shanghai 1985 to 2007* (Shanghai: Shanghai Science and Technology Press, 2008), Ch.1.

8 'To Be or Not To Be' was recently translated into English and included in Ryuta Minami, ed., Shakespearean Adaptations in East Asia: A Critical Anthology of Shakespearean Plays in China, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan (London: Routledge, forthcoming).

fishing, and stamp collecting. Many others were intellectually orientated, with book readings, speech contests, debating competitions, poetry and novel writing, experimental theatre, student publications, and 'cultural salons' holding invited lectures and discussions. With the large-scale introduction of Western thought (from Nietzsche, Freud, and Sartre to historians and theorists of social sciences), newly available intellectual resources inspired new thinking. While some concentrated on scholarly matters, many others were concerned with social, political, and moral issues relevant to China. Notable discussions included, among others, those on 'the Pan Xiao 潘晓 problem'[9] and 'obscure poems' (*menglong shi* 朦胧诗) in the early period, on the fifth-generation movies on 'feudal traditions' as a reason for China's backwardness, especially in the television documentary series *River Elegy* (*Heshang* 河殇) during the years of 'Cultural Fever' (*wenhuare*文化热), and on the student demonstration of 1986, the ten-year anniversary of the Cultural Revolution, and Wang Shuo's 王朔 novels in the late 1980s.[10]

What would be the proper term to characterise this variety of activities? And what are their implications? I want to argue that these practices could be seen as an *independent cultural movement*. It created discourses alternate to the orthodox ideology and significantly contributed to a broader social transformation. I am aware of plausible doubts with this argument, three of which need attention. First, these cultural practices were not truly independent, given the fact that in the 1980s all student groups and campus activities took place within the official organisational framework. Second, neither did they really qualify to use the term 'movement', as they seemed to be fragmentary actions lacking both coherent goals and clear leadership. And third, their claimed significance may also be rejected as exaggeration because those activities were apparently so ordinary and common to any Western campus that nothing in them appears extraordinary. These are legitimate questions. But I believe that we may have a different view if we put these campus activities in the historical context of 1980s China and if our analysis moves beyond the perspective of institutional structures.

First of all, it is correct to say that all public activities in the 1980s were dependent on the state in terms of formal institution. As the state overwhelmingly penetrated and occupied society, the private sector and non-governmental organisations were underdeveloped, if they existed at all. There was little institutional space and few resources outside the party-state system for cultural activities in the 1980s (especially in the early years of the decade). Both physical spaces and legally sanctioned sponsors remained in the hands of state-owned units (*danwei* 单位). Under these conditions, cultural activities of any kind (performances, publications, exhibitions, conferences, and so on) had to be held by or affiliated with a unit. To the extent that the university was also a unit, campus culture was institutionally not independent of the state. Institutional structures do matter, for in many ways they shape social practice, but nevertheless they do not determine it. The fact that all universities in 1980s China were state-owned did not mean that a certain degree of autonomy was impossible, nor did it mean teachers and students had no agency.

Secondly, the independent dimension of campus activities should be understood in terms of their discursive features and not their formal institutional setting. Campus culture in the 1980s developed discursive practices that produced discourses more or less independent of the state ideology

9 Pan Xiao was a 23-year-old factory worker. She wrote a letter in 1980 entitled 'Why is Life's Road Getting Narrower and Narrower?' to the magazine *China's Youth*, in which she confessed her loss of faith in the communist ideals that she had believed in her youth. Over the next few months, about forty thousand young people from all over China responded to that letter.

10 For debates around these topics and events, Barmé and his collaborators provide the most informative and useful materials in English in three edited volumes: Geremie R. Barmé and John Minford, eds, *Seeds of Fire: Chinese Voiced of Conscience* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1988); Geremie R. Barmé and Linda Jaivin, eds, *New Ghosts, Old Dreams* (New York: Times Books, 1992); and Geremie R. Barmé, *In the Red: Contemporary Chinese Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).

within institutions dependent on the state. I use a loose Foucauldian definition of discourse: a 'discursive formations' relates to distinct or invisible regularities that encompass values, norms, and attitudes in almost all aspects of life.[11] It is in the sense of changing discursive formation that a wide range of cultural practices in the campus could be called an independent movement. While these spontaneous activities were apparently not well integrated, as discursive practices, they converged in a nearly identical direction in terms of values, norms, and attitudes, orientated to questioning, criticising and rejecting the regularities of the orthodox ideology. It was an independent movement also in the sense that it refuted the validity of the centre–periphery relationship of the dominating and dominated discourses. The sublime seriousness of the ideological orthodoxy was derided and became the target of mocking, joking, and criticism. Abstract categories of the grand narrative, such as 'the people' (without individuals), 'socialism' (without society), 'the public' (without the private) and so on, were derided as false and their symbolic value depreciated. In this movement, mainstream discourse became marginal and its central position of domination was taken over by alternative ideas, values and attitudes.

Thirdly, the movement also cultivated a new kind of community. Young people who had felt frustrated and repressed by the official orthodoxy were able to 'find each other' in campus cultural activities. For example, students attending a speech given by a 'highly controversial figure' on one campus could quickly get to know each other in the ensuing discussion. Some of them would start to 'hang around', and this would likely lead into organising another event. Once the transcript of the speech and the discussion disseminated onto other campuses, it would connect a broader range of teachers and students, creating an informal network of readership. These people were able to associate with one another in different ways: direct and tangible, remote and imagined. Eventually, they came together to form what I call a 'discursive community of unofficial China'. They encouraged each other to express frustration, discontent, disappointment, and resistance, felt individually and privately in overt or subtle ways. For instance, a student who was reading Milan Kundera's *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* could make fun of the political study session (regularly scheduled on Wednesday afternoons) by calling it 'the unbearable boringness of Wednesday afternoons' and elicit tacit smiles from his roommates who shared the same language code. In this community, long-repressed knowledge, emotions, and aspirations were liberated and articulated in new vocabularies, invented or adopted.

By expressing their own ideas in their own languages, these young people were awakening and consciously diverging from the official discourse, not only from the conservative orthodoxy but also later from the reformist discourse, which I will discuss in the next section. Consequently, the movement exposed serious problems in the ideology — being intellectually dogmatic and contradictory, morally hypocritical, aesthetically dull, and spiritually barren. The official ideology was facing bankruptcy and could no longer provide what it claimed, including a framework for understanding the world, history and society, justification for political legitimacy, norms and rules for moral conduct, and a guide to the good and meaningful life. People connecting to and identifying with this community were no longer isolated in a fearful and vulnerable situation. They could feel 'I am not alone' and acquire a sense of belonging to their imagined community. As the community developed, it claimed the name of 'the awakening generation'.

11 See Michael Barrett, *The Politics of Truth: From Marx to Foucault* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), p.123.

The Legacy of the Awakening Generation

On the eve of my departure to study abroad, a friend of mine had a farewell dinner for me. He was a senior theorist of the party, reformist, and admirer of Hu Yaobang 胡耀邦 (1915–89). It was in the summer of 1991, the time that the nation was struggling to recover from the tragedy of June fourth and yet trying to find a way to move forward. On that evening, he revealed a deep sense of regret and sorrow as he felt that the ruling party was losing the support and trust of young people. 'Losing the young means losing the future', he said to me. He thought that even after the Anti-Spiritual Pollution Campaign, the party still had a chance to regain the support of young people by citing an example from the celebration of the National Day parade in 1984, when Peking University students surprised the audience with an unexpected banner reading 'Hello Xiaoping!' He believed that young students supported reform and opposed these 'stubborn conservatives'. He missed these early years of the 1980s, nostalgically wondering if things could have been otherwise. 'Where did things go wrong?' he asked, and followed this with: 'Haven't we been open enough? Do we give you too much freedom or not enough? You do not oppose the entire system, do you? If we started all over again, what would they expect us to do?'

I ponder these questions but was not able to answer them, instead replying with my own question: 'What would have been your expectations for our young people?' 'Patience,' he replied firmly. 'I hoped you could have been more patient and given the reformists some more time.' In his view, there could have been another way, which would have avoided the June fourth tragedy. Here was his version of *The Road Not Taken* and hence the sense of a missed opportunity.

Would the road he wished our young people to have taken be connected to the one I did not take? To put the question less metaphorically, what if young people simply joined the reformist camp, followed its leadership and fought against these 'stubborn conservatives'? Would that have been a way out? More than twenty years have passed, and today I can say with some confidence that there is a profound reason why the road we wished for was not taken.

During the early period of the reform era, there were some encouraging developments, including the rehabilitation of many university professors who had been repressed during the Cultural Revolution, the relaxation of ideological controls, and the import of foreign culture and ideas. Later on, reformist leaders in the party decided to yield its strict supervision of social relationships, consumption, and lifestyle to individual choice and market forces. Tsou Tang has labelled these changes a historic watershed, before which the state had steadily expanded its reach, and after which it began to retreat from an increasingly wide social sphere.[12] As a result, political criteria were not as strict as before. The resulting compromise can be described as a retreat from 'everything is forbidden except what is allowed' to 'everything is allowed except what is forbidden'. This gave many intellectuals and students the idea that the coalition favouring the official reform agenda could increase intellectual autonomy and pave the way for the freedom of public expression. It was against this background that the new campus culture emerged and boomed.

However, while reformist discourse was intended to adapt to the new situation of post-Mao China, it was theoretically less coherent than the conservative orthodoxy and unsustainable in the long run. Consequently, the

12 See Tang Tsou, 'Back from the Brink of Revolutionary-'Feudal' Totalitarianism', in eds Victor Nee and David Mozingo, *State and Society in Contemporary China* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), pp.53–88.

reform project of the 1980s had caught itself in a dilemma. It had to rely on principles of the orthodox ideology that in time it intended to abandon. This eventually resulted in a serious problem of political legitimacy. In Mao's era, official ideology had claims to be both science and religion. Political legitimacy on the one hand made truth-claims with a modern scientific guise, and on the other appealed to the sacredness of the revolution and the charisma of revolutionary leaders. It was, in a sense, a mix of political philosophy and political theology. These two elements reinforced each other and became as one, providing the party-state a political legitimacy that could not be challenged. Following the death of Mao, the rise of Deng Xiaoping 鄧小平 (1904–97) in 1978 drove the party in the direction of 'de-Maoisation', involving the repudiation of 'the personality cult' and the dogmatic excesses of the Cultural Revolution and the justification of pursuing economic production and material interests. In the struggle against party conservatives, who insisted on the 'Two Whatevers', reformists launched the 'thought liberation movement' (*sixiang jiefang yundong* 思想解放运动) in a coalition with intellectuals within the party system.[13] The movement started with a debate on the 'criteria for testing truth' — an ideological confrontation between those supporting the 'Two Whatevers' and those opposed to them. The debate ended with Deng Xiaoping's strong endorsement of the principle that 'practice is the sole criterion for verifying truth'. He sharply criticised dogmatism, calling on the party and the people to adhere to the practice of seeking truth from facts, smashing spiritual shackles, and emancipating their minds.

While 'thought liberation' was ideologically necessary to legitimise the reform agenda outlined by the reformist leadership, the movement virtually eliminated political theology from the official ideology, and also, at least in principle, made political philosophy open to rational criticism and empirical testing. As political theology was abandoned, the legitimacy of the ruling party had to be justified in a rational way, by being tested and subjected to 'the sole criterion of practice'. But there was an insoluble tension between a monopoly on ideological truth and scientific testability. As Leszek Kolakowski explained, ideologies 'want the facts to confirm them in the same way that scientific hypotheses are confirmed, being thereby compelled to distort and conceal unfavourable facts. They are supposed to possess absolute truth and to be testable at the same time.'[14] But once the space of rational debate and criticism is opened to the public, scientific testability allows counter-examples and counter-arguments to contradict the assumed truth of ideology. In this regard, the 'thought liberation movement' opened up a Pandora's box that released self-defeating intellectual forces. In other words, to claim absolute truth and, therefore, absolute political authority, would be extremely difficult if not impossible. 'Thought liberation' created a discursive space where radical challenges to the orthodox ideology were conceivable, which went beyond the political boundary that the party, both the reformist and the conservative wings, had to secure.

It is not surprising that these young faculty and students who seriously adopted thought liberation would eventually experience disillusionment with the official reform agenda. The Anti-Bourgeois Liberalisation Campaign in 1987 resumed the ideological and political repression that the Anti-Spiritual Pollution Campaign in 1983 had attempted to achieve. It made clear that thought liberation was not allowed to cross the line that the reformers and conservatives agreed on. There existed an intellectual and political 'forbidden zone', where rational debate and criticism were subject to indis-

13 Hua Guofeng, the then Chairman of the CCP, advocated that 'whatever policy decisions Chairman Mao made must be firmly upheld, and whatever instructions Chairman Mao gave must be unswervingly followed'.

14 Leszek Kolakowski, *Modernity on Endless Trial* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990), p.234.

putable and absolute authority. Young people soon realised that the limited freedom they could sometimes enjoy was not protected by formal and legal guarantees, but was merely something vouchsafed by the party. The criticism voiced by intellectuals and students was contained within the ideological scope and institutional framework designated by the party's leadership (albeit the reformist faction). Any radical moves beyond the party's needs and limitations would not be tolerated and, most likely, would be suppressed. But having felt disillusionment does not mean that young people were willing to accept and live with the status quo. Disillusionment created a condition for awakening. As the 1989 event indicated, many attempted to conceive their own visions of the future and formulate their own agendas, instead of taking whatever road the party (even its reformist leadership) directed.

What, then, does 'independence' mean in the context of the campus cultural movement of the 1980s. It is true that young people in general preferred the reformists to the conservative and that they would support the reformist if a political choice had to be made between the two camps. But it would be a mistake to assume that the way the awakening generation denied the validity of the existing situation could still be fully understood as a 'reformist–conservative struggle'. It is fair to say that the awakening generation was born in the reform era and owed its growth to the reformist camp of the party. In the view of many reformists, the relationship between the party reformist and young people was conceived as being that of a benevolent father and his loyal children. However, this view was still deeply embedded in the patriarchy that has such a long history in the Chinese tradition. The awakening generation began by challenging the orthodox ideology that the conservatives wanted to defend but, along with its growth, ended up rejecting the patriarchy (benevolent or not) itself. Throughout the 1980s, this generation came to realise that replacing old players with new ones might be good but was not enough; the point was to change the game itself.

The very meaning of 'awakening' is to refuse blindly to follow any authority (be it reformist or conservative) and to establish the principle that, in imitation of Socrates' famous sentence, 'an unexamined doctrine is not worth believing'. This was a paradigm shift in both a cognitive and a normative sense. It led to a new 'social imaginary' in which politics are conceived as dialogues among morally equal members of a political community, not the monologue of an elite group, and political legitimacy should be justified by critical and rational discussion not self-claimed truth. This is, in my view, the true and far-reaching legacy of the awakening generation.

I'd like to end the essay by citing Gu Cheng's 顾城 famous poem *Yidairen* (*A Generation* 一代人). Only two lines long, it accurately captures the spirit of the awakening generation:

黑夜给了我黑色的眼睛
我却用它寻找光明

The night has given me dark eyes,
but I use them to look for light.

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1984: WHAT'S BEEN LOST AND WHAT'S BEEN GAINED

Sang Ye 桑晔

For China the country and myself the individual, the 1980s was quite a special decade, and to list the multifarious aspirations and demands and all the shifting situations of that period, layer upon complicated layer, would present an insurmountable task. I will discuss three disparate topics: what's been lost, what's been gained, and lost and found.

This paper has been adapted from a speech presented at the workshop '"I Want to Fly High": Chinese Aspirations in the 1980s', 18–19 February 2013, held by the Australian Centre on China in the World at The Australian National University.

What's Been Lost

On 16 January 1980, the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) convened a meeting of leading party, state and army cadres, at which Deng Xiaoping 邓小平 (1904–97) delivered a 'Report on the Present Situation and the Tasks Before Us'. Such meetings differed from the usual party gatherings attended by Central Committee members in that the grassroots workers, peasants, and soldier representatives who made up the majority of the Central Committee — what are known as 'flower vases and hand-raising machines' — were completely shut out. They were told, 'You're all busy, so you don't need to attend'. Such a meeting was held at only one other time in the history of the party. It would be some nine years later, late at night on 19 May 1989, at a time when the Communists were faced with an intensifying protest movement in Tiananmen Square. On that occasion, the premier Li Peng (1928–) 李鹏 first called on his audience to 'mobilise in this emergency and to curb turmoil in a clear-cut manner', and then Yang Shangkun 杨尚昆 (1907–98) declared, 'We have no choice but to move a group of the PLA to the vicinity of Beijing'.

But, back to the meeting of 16 January 1980. In his report, Deng Xiaoping solemnly announced that in the decade of the 1980s, the CCP and the People's Government would carry out three major tasks: first, it would continue to oppose hegemony and safeguard world peace; second, it would bring back the

province of Taiwan into the embrace of the motherland and realise national unification; and third, it would strengthen economic construction and step up the pace of the Four Modernisations.

How time flies. Most of the participants in that meeting are now dead, and those three major tasks not only went uncompleted in the 1980s but also in the 1990s, and now, more than 30 years on, it's still hard to say what the state of play is.

Opposing hegemony was a little strange. It seemed that the more China opposed it, the more hegemony spread throughout the world. When the old man made his speech, he was facing 2.5 hegemons — the United States and the Soviet Union as major hegemons, and Vietnam as a minor hegemon — but at least the other countries in the vicinity did not dare to harbour ambitions, or did not do so openly. The rise of a great central power embarking on a road to revival — what a wonderful thing — but in the end they screwed it up somehow, and even what were thought to be just fawning, servile dogs and cats raised their heads and bared their teeth and claws. Look no further than the ten countries in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations: apart from Cambodia, which is just thinking of ways of getting more money, each of them is a party to 'hyping the South China Sea issue'. The Chinese authorities are helpless before their messing around and can only complain to all that 'small countries cannot bully great powers'. The domestic situation is even worse, with hegemony actually on the increase rather than lessening as hegemons 'manipulated by outside forces' run rampant. It is said that Tibetan separatists want to carve off a large chunk of land, and East Turkestan separatists also want to carve off a large chunk of land, hence resisting foreign aggression requires internal pacification, but internal pacification first requires resisting foreign aggression, which makes the complex task of opposing hegemony even more complicated. I suspect that when Deng Xiaoping drew up the agenda in the 1980s, he never would have imagined our world's swift, colourful transformation, much less that the cost of safeguarding national peace — not to mention world peace — would be so high. If it had occurred to him, Deng would certainly have set at least a century for the task, rather than a decade, with the notion that he could lead the industrious, intrepid, and wise Chinese people to victory before the sun had dawned on the 1990s.

The return of Taiwan to the motherland and the unification of the country is a pretty awkward formulation. If this province of the Republic of China or People's Republic of China were in the hands of the Americans or the Japanese or the Koreans, then its return to the motherland would be an issue. The problem is that the island was in the hands of President Chiang of the Republic of China, and today it remains under the management of President Tsai Ing-wen of the Republic of China, so what does it mean to talk of Taiwan's 'return' to the motherland? Fortunately, this awkward formulation did not seem all that awkward at the time. In those days, the Chinese people knew that the emergence of 'Taiwan's return to the motherland' was just a euphemism for 'the liberation of Taiwan', which had been shouted for three decades. And, in fact, it was Mao Zedong 毛澤東(1893–1976) in 1961 who first used 'Taiwan's return to the motherland', but he had something else entirely in mind. The man believed that there was no such thing as the Taiwan problem, and the supposed problem between the mainland and Taiwan was actually a problem between China and the United States. US imperialism was the actual sover-

eign of Taiwan, and American imperialists ought to give it back. In Mao's hands, that simple situation got worked up into something complicated, and then Deng worked it into something even more complicated. Well stocked in both conciliatory smiles and aggressive bluster, both of which had their uses, the end result was that at noon on 16 May 1989, when Deng Xiaoping entertained Gorbachev in the Great Hall of the People, he admitted, 'There is one thing I'm afraid I cannot accomplish, and that is the Taiwan Question'. Almost three decades have passed and the situation is still dragging on without end. A country has risen to the extent that it is poised to overtake the world's largest economy, but it is one country with two systems, and in addition to that it is a country split in two. This is unprecedented in history.

The task of economic construction seems to have gone the furthest toward completion, and has continued to the present day, so that Wen Jiabao 温家宝 could assure the heroic souls in North Korea, 'Now our country is strong, and our people's lives are happy'. After a series of doublings beginning in the 1980s, China's GDP reached 40 trillion *yuan* in 2010 — second in the world. The ordinary people of China ought to be happy, but they can't really laugh: medical treatment is hard, schooling is hard, housing is hard, food is unsafe, drink is unsafe, and even breathing is unsafe, so many people believe that life is not happy. At the same time, the enemy of the Chinese people, American imperialism and the outside world it represents, lives well, and their healthy and contented poor enjoy the hearty fruits of China's reform: a flood of cheap, low-quality consumer goods. So too do their jackal-thin rich enjoy the hearty fruits of China's reform: the dividends of free-flowing capital. It is also said that this happy outside world still hasn't given up its tendency toward reckless acts and subversion, and that the only reason they behave so wantonly is that they hold a trump card. This deadly slip of paper contains a list of names of the children and grandchildren of those party, government, and army cadres who listened to Deng Xiaoping's agenda in the 1980s, and who now hold overseas deposits. The paper may be more lethal than a missile or aircraft carrier. It's the ace and, once played, the war is over before it's begun: China goes the way of the Soviet Union. And China going the way of the Soviet Union would be a grim outcome, although it does have its plus side. The first two major tasks that have remained incomplete from the 1980s to today would be easily solved, finished without even acting on them.

There are many many other losses among the gains and losses, and those addressed here are but a small number of examples. China's missed opportunities in the 1980s are probably more regrettable.

What's Been Gained

Looking back today, the 1980s was an uncertain, transitional decade that saw the exit of some certain old things, while some anticipated new things did not actually arrive, and thus, in those days people, no matter who they were, often found themselves in awkward situations. Sensitive young people felt more stifled under rediscovered authoritarian control, and while the elderly ought to have felt better, that was not necessarily the case because they had no way to rid their minds of the shadow of class struggle and the campaigns they were frequently reminded of. And so it was that in this decade the expectations for flight became exaggerated and many people simply wanted to leave without any consideration for whether they'd be able

to return once they left. Still, there were those whose ambitions mirrored the ambitions of the three major issues on Deng Xiaoping's agenda, and they firmly believed that Chinese history would experience a fundamental turning point within the decade and, whether tomorrow or the following year, everything would be possible and one should not miss the opportunity to take part.

In Beijing in 1980, four young people — Weng Yongxi 翁永曦, Huang Jiangnan 黄江南, Zhu Jiaming 朱嘉明, and Wang Qishan 王岐山 — threw themselves into the formulation of the initial reform strategy. Based on their respective strengths, they were called 'the Four Gentlemen of systemic reform': Weng Yongxi the brains, Huang Jiangnan the mouth, Zhu Jiaming the letters, and Wang Qishan the legs. The first three — the brains, mouth, and letters — were truly exceptional, but Wang was the legs in name only. He ran fast because he owned a beaten-up motorcycle, and anyone who had a motorcycle in those days was practically a superman. By the last year of the decade, the Four Gentlemen had become senior cadres in the party. Most of them took the wrong side in the June fourth disturbance and were excluded from the centre of power by Jiang Zemin 江泽民 and Hu Jintao 胡锦涛 after him, and they either went abroad or turned to business. Wang Qishan was the exception. He is now on the Standing Committee as the final member China's seven-strong ruling group.

The greatest contribution made by the Four Gentlemen in the 1980s was the '24-character principle' of the early reform period: 'curb demand, stabilise prices; develop appropriately, seek stability; reform slowly, adjust repeatedly; concentrate the large, disperse the small'. Deng Xiaoping and Chen Yun 陈云 seized upon this mantra and proposed the formulation, 'Reform must be beneficial to adjustment, adjustment means retreat on certain fronts, and the retreat must be sufficient', to advance by retreating and thus implement economic reform. However, if we consider the matter from another perspective, the Four Gentlemen's velvet glove approach was actually harmful. When they came up with these 24 characters, election campaigns for urban grassroots People's Congress representatives were in full swing, and the candidates, in some university constituencies in particular, proposed ideas for comprehensive economic, political, social, and institutional reform in their speeches and on their posters that were more enlightened and more thorough than the new Xiaoping policy, and whose broad support pitted the two forces in a desperate struggle. Hence the Four Gentlemen's greatest contribution could be said to be providing the CPC Central Committee with an effective means of maintaining the old institution and fighting those outside it, thereby prolonging its life. Whether this is merit or transgression is hard to say even now.

Elections and campaigns for grassroots People's Congress representatives in major cities, particularly among university constituencies; the Five Stresses, Four Beauties, and Three Loves; special economic zones; the Strike Hard campaigns; eradicating Spiritual Pollution; the 'breakthrough gold medal' at the Los Angeles Olympic Games; One Country, Two Systems; No Turning Back in modern art; Chinese character input methods; a billion people, nine of ten in business, and the rest waiting to open accounts; the dual pricing system in industry; studying Old Deng Xiaoping during the day, listening to young Deng Lijun 邓丽君 (1953–95) at night; 'everyone's a cheat, and the Henanese are the masters'; the Tiananmen

Square protests and bloodshed … these are the big issues when talking about the 1980s.

Looking outward, Philips brought out the world's first compact disc; the rescue at the US embassy in Tehran failed, showing that superpowers aren't invincible; the two Germanies began to dismantle the Berlin Wall … these too were big issues that had a large influence on the Chinese people when talking about the 1980s.

Everyone who talks about the 1980s, be they someone who personally experienced them, someone who was an observer, or a researcher who came later, will bring up lots of issues, and perhaps some of the demands will be enlarged, some of the facts reduced, and some things might be quietly papered over — the history of the Chinese people has always been written thus, so it is not surprising.

If I must pick out something that China gained from among the gains and losses of the 1980s, I'd try as hard as possible to choose something uncontroversial: urban Chinese since that decade began to get public toilets in which they could shut the door so that no one else could see how they shitted and pissed. Before the 1980s, China did not have stalls with individual partitions in public toilets, much less doors on those stalls. Public toilets consisted of an open line of latrines, the larger toilets with two lines facing each other, the smaller ones with only one line, and a short one at that. The distinction among different classes of public toilets lay in the construction materials used for the pits and the floor. The public toilet in Tiananmen Square was the best in China, with inside walls of marble, terrazzo floors, and two lines of white ceramic squatters where you and your friends could choose neighbouring pits to help each other out, or facing pits to engage in friendly conversation. In addition to the lack of partitions and doors, one other distinguishing characteristic of the public toilets was that they were rivers of faeces and filthy beyond belief. So whenever someone returned from a trip to mainland China, whether a foreigner or a compatriot from Hong Kong or Macao, one of the most important pieces of information they'd return to was the toilet, and the toilet was one of their most significant experiences. According to CY Leung 梁振英, the current chief executive of Hong Kong, in the summer of 1980, when he was just 26 years old, he was heading steadily northward from Hong Kong providing professional land zoning consultation for China's special economic zone construction, and at the behest of Liang Xian 梁宪, a researcher with the Policy Research Office of the Merchants Bureau of the Ministry of Transport (*Jiaotongbu zhaoshang ju zhengce yanjiu shi* 交通部招商局政策研究室) (now the Research Division of China Merchants Group, *Zhongguo zhaoshang ju jituan yanjiu bu* 中国招商局集团研究部), he used Hong Kong's public toilets 'that you can shut yourself up inside' as a template for stamping out copies in mainland China.

Without question, doors for public toilets was a major event, creating room for debate on a wide range of matters including public health, personal privacy, urban construction, and the growth of the middle class.

Lost and Found

I have had great opportunities as a writer, for in the 1980s literature still mattered in China. Roland Barthes wrote, 'I don't know if it should be

called an intellectual or a thinker, but at any rate it's a new type of non-author figure', but this new figure had not really taken the stage in China, and although the tradition of the rule of literature was in decline, it was still far from dead. Literature still mattered, and literature could be used to say things, and this was extremely important for us at the time. Chinese history, particularly modern and contemporary history, was off limits at the time if you were a nobody, so the oral histories that Zhang Xinxin 张辛欣 and I collected in *Chinese Lives* were published in China under the category 'oral documentary literature'. 'Oral', and 'documentary', together with 'literature' gave us the pass we needed, and without 'literature' on there, it's hard to imagine what we would have done.

In brief, I wrote two books in the 1980s, one that was translated into more than ten different languages and sold quite well, and the other, despite being co-authored with the noted Australian writer Nicholas Jose, was a total loss because of me. I also took two long-distance bike trips, one in 1986 along the old course of the Yellow River, and the other in 1987 from Adelaide to Darwin.

In addition to this, in 1984 I helped out a friend conduct a survey of rural society for which I chose an incredibly tacky name, 'Memories Left for the Future' (*Liuge weilai de huiyi* 留给未来的回忆). In the three years following, I only spoke of the survey with a very limited circle of friends.

The choice of 1984 was, of course, due to the significance of the year: Big Brother is Watching You. But it's also because conspicuous changes took place in China that year; for example, some people no longer held out any hope or gratitude. On National Day, a Peking University student named Guo Jianwei 郭建崴 and his associates held up a home-made banner reading 'Hello, Xiaoping'. Besides this, there were the small calculations I will now discuss.

I conducted the survey in a county in Heilongjiang province that was home to a total of 684,000 people from fifteen ethnic groups. With ethnic Manchus numbering 130,000, or nearly twenty per cent of the total, it had the highest Manchu population out of any of the several dozen counties in the black soil of old Manchuria.

The entire Manchu population in this county had come from Beijing, the capital of the Qing dynasty, and its old capital Mukden (now Shenyang) and had emigrated beginning in the twentieth year of the Jiaqing Emperor (1815). The first year 1,000 people were sent over, and they erected eight banner (*qí* 旗) camps; five years later another 2,000 people were sent over, to form 120 banner villages. By 1984, the first eight banner camps had become townships, and the majority of the 120 banner villages were now villages.

These Manchu people sent to the wilderness from the capital were the idle scions of the eight banners. For the long-term stability of the Qing empire, the emperor sent them out of the city to open up the countryside. They were the rusticated youth of the imperial system, and ought to be considered the ancestors of the first red guards send down to the countryside for re-education by Mao Zedong.

The bannermen's children had enjoyed several lifetimes of ease in the capital and knew nothing of farming, nor were they willing to farm, so their source of food and clothing after emigration came from ethnic Han migrants from the provinces of Hebei and Shandong. A landlord–tenant relation-

ship gradually took shape between the two ethnic groups, with most of the Manchu people becoming landlords. To satisfy the needs of these landlords, the Xibe 錫伯 people, who were adept at cultivating the dry land; the Mongol people, who were adept at raising livestock; the Korean people, who were adept at working the rice paddies; and the Muslim people, who were principally engaged in food service, also willingly migrated by the hundreds to settle here.

Through interviews conducted during the survey, recollections supported by formal documentation prior to 1945 (when the Communist Party regime was established here) of the basic annual income for local farmers were as follows: for first-class long-term employment, the equivalent of 2,000 kg of corn, or slightly more; for second-class long-term employment, the equivalent of about 1,500 kg of corn; the lowest annual income, of 'half-person' minors was the equivalent of 500 kg of corn. After 1945, from the land reform to the people's communes, farmers' incomes decreased every year, until by 1962, they had an annual per capita average of 45 *yuan* (or the equivalent of just 70 kg of corn, not enough to survive on), the lowest level in history.

Following the interviews, a survey of income and expenditure and durable goods ownership of 120 rural households was conducted using systematic sampling methods. The 120 households surveyed comprised 580 family members with a total income of 327,000 *yuan*, or 408 *yuan* per capita, nine times that of 1962. Total expenditure was 260,000 *yuan* (a deficit). Living expenditure, mostly food, clothing, fuel, household goods, and medical fees, accounted for 135,000 *yuan*. Culture and entertainment expenditure was just 3,000 *yuan*, the apportioned cinema fee. Durable goods ownership was: bicycles 56, sewing machines 39, alarm clocks 34, black-and-white televisions 3, tape recorders 3, sofas 4, wardrobes 26, writing desks 27, beds 20. The owners of the 3 televisions also owned the 3 tape recorders, 7 of the bicycles, the 4 sofas, 3 wardrobes, 3 desks, and 4 beds. These 3 households had assets of 10,000 *yuan*, and had become rich first.

Some of you may be familiar with rural life in Heilongjiang and could point out that many local people are accustomed to sleeping on the heated sleeping platform (*kang* 炕) instead of in a bed, and therefore for me to say that the 120 households own just 20 beds is unfair and unkind and alarmist. But the fact is that I really am that bad: in light of the fact that most locals sleep on the *kang*, we counted anyone that had a *kang* covered by a mattress as a bed. The problem is that more than a hundred households didn't even have a mattress but slept directly on the earthen *kang* and a straw mat.

They were poor. But a friend of mine who read this survey surprisingly exclaimed, ah, the abundant northeast — it's not too poor. He said he'd conducted a similar survey in the Dingxi 定西 area of Gansu 甘肅 in 1983, in a rather more extreme village in which more than half of the households had total assets of less than ten *yuan*. A mud-and-straw shack not worth even a cent, two rice bowls, and less than a pair of trousers per person was all these families had, just like in the vicious attacks of the bandit Chiang Kai-shek 蔣介石 (1887–1975) in Taiwan.

Upon completion, the survey was not published. They were 'memories left for the future', so they were left for the future. Leaving them for the future: I really had energy back then, and I believed that the future would arrive. The future I imagined was 2014, when I'd be 59, or my last year before

retirement according to standard practice in those days. I planned to return before retirement to observe its transformations and metamorphosis, what had been lost and gained, and whether it retained its charm.

Then, using the material from 1984 and 2014, I would write my final book.

I've already said why it was 1984, but I never said why it was that place. I chose it because it is a countryside established when the old emperor, in order to oppose revisionism and to prevent a peaceful evolution, drove people from the cities to the countryside. The original new rural reform, under the reform and opening up of Deng Xiaoping and his successors, ought to be urbanisation, but at what time and in what form this urbanisation ought to happen is a very interesting question. In the 30 years after 1984, I would devote 30 years to waiting for urbanisation. Perhaps this was sufficient, perhaps not, but at any rate it would be a test of my patience. Apart from the above, I chose this land, uninhabited until the arrival of the bannermen and, therefore, a place absent of other traceable history, as a contrivance. Its earliest records are in 1815; it is clean, simple, and easily managed and manipulated.

For nearly 30 years, I had been past that place many times but never stopped, because of the anxiety of nearness, and because I had to leave it aside until later. But I kept ties with some of the people there, and through them, I know that there's an expressway, an airport, a high-speed railway station, joint ventures, and real estate developments — half of the eight banner encampments-turned-townships are now thickets of tall buildings. And I also know that in many of the villages the water is undrinkable; unless you want to get sick, you drink bottled water. Many of the villages have no young people; they've gone off to find work in Shenzhen or Beijing, and people hired from populous provinces like Sichuan and Henan work the fields.

Finally, I will answer a question that will inevitably come up: why did I choose to use systematic sampling from among the four commonly used sampling methods? I was well aware that this method is not simple to operate, and is particularly difficult for just one or two workers, but it can effectively improve the accuracy of the estimate. In simple random sampling, there is no association or exclusion between elements, and since I was aware that elements varied to a great degree, using this method would be deceptive. Stratified sampling can ensure that the sample structure is close to the population structure, but it requires selecting stratification variables and was highly inconvenient for me. Cluster sampling requires less work because it combines clusters, but accuracy suffers, and since I was young and fit, I was unwilling to do it that simply.

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INTELLECTUAL MEN AND WOMEN IN THE 1980s FICTION OF HUANG BEIJIA 黃蓓佳

Li Meng 李萌

In 1979, Shu Ting 舒婷 published the poem 'To the Oak' (Zhi xiangshu 致橡树), which would become widely popular among women in the 1980s as China was swept by a poetry-writing craze. The poem compares man to the oak and woman to the kapok: two trees strong enough to resist extreme weather, independent, yet potentially capable of supporting each other. This signified the ideal male–female relationship in the post-Mao period, when women desired not only loyalty but also independence and collaboration with men. In stark contrast, the works of Huang Beijia 黃蓓佳 (1955–) depict and consider far less ideal relationships between intellectual men and women.

Huang Beijia was born into a family of intellectuals. In the late 1970s, she began her writing career as a student of Chinese literature at Peking University. She became well known for her romances about intellectual men and women by the 1980s — the heyday of her writing for adult readers.[1] Her fiction was especially popular among college students. In most of her works, Huang, like many women writers in the 1980s, has 'women take the leading roles, [while] men play second fiddle', as Li Xiaojiang puts it.[2] Using gender theory and psychoanalysis, I offer a close reading of the unsympathetic representations of intellectual masculinities in Huang's fiction. In these texts, intellectual women embark on a journey to find a 'real' man and an ideal relationship, but ultimately fail. This overarching theme is what I call a 'utopia to dystopia' process; Huang's fiction depicts how male intellectuals transform from objects of desire in the eyes of intellectual women to undesirable figures because they fail to live up to female expectations. This process is sometimes mirrored in the self-identification of intellectual men in Huang's novels.

My study of the masculinity and femininity of Chinese intellectuals draws on the frequently cited methodologies of Susan Brownell and Jeffrey N. Was-

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1 Huang Beijia is a prolific writer for both adults and children. However, her achievements in children's literature have long eclipsed her reputation as a writer for adults.

2 Xiaojiang Li, 'Resisting While Holding the Tradition: Claims for Rights Raised in Literature by Chinese Women Writers in the New Period,' *Tamkang Review* 30.2 (1999): 99–109, at p.108.

serstrom. These approaches rely on a now well-known distinction in Anglophone feminist theory and women's studies criticism between feminism focused on equality and feminism focused on difference. Neither of these methodologies treats 'woman' as an epistemic fact isolated from men or patriarchy. The first, concerned with the problem of inequality, advances a criticism of patriarchy. This approach, referred to as 'inequality-patriarchy', takes for granted the immutable existence of two biologically differentiated sexes and examines how power is distributed between the two.[3] The second methodology focuses on the issue of difference while highlighting the construction of gender. Assuming that 'man' and 'woman' are socially and culturally constructed categories that heavily influence the process of gender formation, practitioners of this second approach welcome the possibility of other gender categories, including gender identities that 'stand apart from or combine the elements of the two'; they celebrate gender blending/blurring behaviours and identities.[4] The second methodology, which is extended to discussions of *yin-yang* (陰陽 dark-light), *wen-wu* (literary-martial or 文武 scholar-soldier), and the masculinity of post-Mao intellectual men, can be productively applied to elucidate gendered roles in the Chinese context.

I argue that not only are the intellectual women in Huang's fiction frustrated by patriarchal power, they depict the multiplicity of available forms of gender identity while engaging in the 1980s popular public discourse around 'seeking a *real* man' (*xunzhao nanzihan* 寻找男子汉).[5] Their inability to find a real man is a key source of their estrangement: they want to find a real man but cannot. A focus on difference juxtaposes the women's journeys with a variety of intellectual men, broadly demarcated into two types: the fragile 'Other' and the father figure. Both types come to the fore during unpleasant moments in their relationships with women, leaving the question 'Where is the *real* man?' unanswered for Chinese intellectual women.

The Masculinity of Intellectual Men

Kenneth C. Clatterbaugh states that the concept of masculinity consists of three elements: a field of gender roles constituted by 'a set of behaviours, attitudes, and conditions that are generally found in the men of an identifiable group';[6] a stereotype of masculinity, that is, 'a general idea of what most people consider to be the masculine gender role';[7] and a gender ideal, 'a widespread notion as to what the gender role for men should be'.[8] Along similar lines, Raewyn W. Connell distinguishes masculinities in a given society into the hegemonic, the subordinate, and the marginalised. She maintains that 'two types of relationship — hegemony, domination/subordination and complicity on the one hand, and marginalisation/authorisation on the other — provide a framework in which we can analyse specific masculinities'.[9] A number of scholars have drawn similar distinctions. Michael Kimmel, for instance, has mapped out the hegemonic definition of manhood, 'a man in power, a man with power, and a man of power'.[10]

Cultural difference is an important factor when considering the differences in ideas about gender, even dominant ideas about gender. In their study of the nuanced relationship between Chinese masculinity and its Western equivalent, Kam Louie and Louise Edwards put forward the following account of Chinese masculinity:

3 Susan Brownell and Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom, 'Introduction: Theorizing Femininities and Masculinities,' in eds Brownell and Wasserstrom, *Chinese Femininities/Chinese Masculinities: A Reader* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), p.6.

4 Brownell and Wasserstrom, 'Introduction', pp.5–6.

5 Zhong Xueping, *Masculinity Besieged?* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), p.208.

6 Kenneth C. Clatterbaugh, *Contemporary Perspectives on Masculinity: Men, Women, and Politics in Modern Society* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1997), p.3.

7 *Ibid*.

8 *Ibid.*

9 Raewyn W. Connell, *Masculinities* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), p.81.

10 Michael S. Kimmel, 'Masculinity as Homophobia,' in eds Michael S. Kimmel and Abby L. Ferbet, *Privilege: A Reader* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2003), p.164.

> Chinese masculinity, then, is not a poorer, effeminate version of 'normal' Western masculinity. Nor is its 'difference' from the 'norm' derived from the domination of a more submissive, childlike (more easily oppressed) Chinese femininity. Chinese masculinity has evolved in a historical and cultural context that required no inspiration and gained no benefit from comparisons with the West. Moreover, current notions of the 'impotence' of Chinese men have developed within the 'Neo-orientalism' of the late twentieth century where money represents power, and maleness without economic might signifies impotence.[11]

From this perspective, Louie and Edwards put forward a Chinese masculinity based on the internal *wen-wu* paradigm, which is both a category and a method.[12] *Wen* 文, or refined masculinity, Louie argues, is symbolised by Confucius and the gentleman scholar-official. *Wu* 武, or martial masculinity highlights physical strength and skill.[13] Louie and Edwards consider *wen-wu* a useful distinction since this dyad applies exclusively to men. However, there is a similar paradigm that works within Chinese femininity even though *wen* was denied to women.[14] Using this conceptual framework as a way of exploring the relationship between Chinese and Western masculinities, Louie asserts that *wen* and *wu* were forms of unique maleness that evolved before and outside the Westernised gender schema in which 'Oriental' is associated with 'inferior' or 'exotic' and the scholar is associated with a more feminised masculinity.[15] Associated with education, *wen* symbolises the 'right to power', and as both Louie and Song Geng 宋耕 observe, the Chinese cultural élites' sense of superiority is manifested not only in political power but also in its leadership role in moral dimensions. This conjuncture is exemplified in the Confucian ideal of *junzi*-hood (君子 virtuous gentleman).[16]

In pre-modern Chinese high culture, the privileging of *wen* over *wu* was paramount in the construct of an ideal masculinity. For Louie, the *wen-wu* dichotomy stresses a marked difference between ideal male sexuality in Chinese contexts and that in Occidental ones.[17] Louie notes that *wen* virtues associated with male scholars dominate in countless pre-modern works, especially romances about talented scholars and beautiful women (*caizi jiaren* 才子佳人); one can trace the dominance of the *wen* virtues associated with male scholars. In his discussion of representations of intellectual men in Chinese culture, Song defines their masculinity as 'fragile', which has 'notoriously been considered as a symbol of "lack of masculinity" in Chinese culture by Westerners'.[18] Song deploys terms such as 'effeminate' to accentuate the frailty of male intellectuals in classical Chinese theatre. He offers a genealogical analysis of the literary tradition through which this refined and docile image has become a hallmark representation of intellectual masculinity. Wang Yuejin 王跃进 similarly argues that Chinese intellectuals have long been characterised in mainstream culture as manifesting gentleness and a sober state of mind.[19] These dominant images of ideal masculinity are not only important factors shaping the Huang's narratives and her characterisation of intellectual men, they also reflect the historical negotiation and renegotiation of gender roles in Chinese culture.

The historical context of Huang's fiction was an important transitional period for popular figures of Chinese masculinity. In the next section, I consider how the ideal masculinity of the Chinese intellectual was challenged or imbued with new expectations in Chinese feminist discourse in the 1980s and beyond.

11 Quoted in Song Geng, *The Fragile Scholar: Power and Masculinity in Chinese Culture* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press. 2004), p.10.

12 Kam Louie, *Chinese Masculinities in a Globalizing World* (London: Routledge, 2016), p.13.

13 Chris Berry, 'Stellar Transit: Bruce Lee's Body or Chinese Masculinity in a Transnational Frame,' in eds Fran Martin and Larissa Heinrich, *Embodied Modernities* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006), p.244.

14 Kam Louie, *Theorising Chinese Masculinity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p.17.

15 Song, *The Fragile Scholar*, p.10.

16 Louie, *Theorising Chinese Masculinity*, pp.44–45, 95; Song, *The Fragile Scholar*, p.89.

17 Louie, 'Chinese Masculinity Studies in the Twenty-First Century: Westernizing, Easternizing and Globalizing Wen and Wu,' *International Journal for Masculinity Studies* 9.1 (2014): 18–29, at p.22.

18 Song, *The Fragile Scholar*, p.vii.

19 Wang Yuejin, 'Red Sorghum: Mixing Memory and Desire,' in ed. Chris Berry, *Perspectives on Chinese Cinema* (London: British Film Institute, 1991), pp.85–86.

Seeking the Real Man in 'New Era' literature

The fragile stereotype of *wen* masculinity that had formed around the Confucian scholar was questioned and challenged in the 1980s.[20] A marked intellectual anxiety over the crisis of masculinity in China manifested in expressions such as 'seeking the real man' and 'searching for the root' (*xungen* 寻根, or male self). Song Geng observes that Chinese men in New-Era fiction are 'disappointedly described as weak, immature, selfish and impotent'.[21] This description also applies to Huang's representations of intellectual men.

In her pioneering work *Masculinity Besieged,* Zhong Xueping 钟雪萍 divides the literature of the 1980s into two major periods based on the debates over Chinese masculinity. In the early 1980s, a number of women writers such as Zhang Jie 张洁and Zhang Xinxin 张辛欣 began drawing critical attention to men as gendered beings.[22] Their 'not-so-sympathetic representations' called the Chinese public's attention to a phenomenon known as *yinsheng yangshuai* 阴盛阳衰, meaning 'the prosperity of the feminine and the decline of the masculine'.[23] This development was evident in the obsession in literary circles with configuring male sexuality as suppressed, restricted, and disciplined.[24] The *yinsheng yangshuai* phenomenon led to the emergence of 'seeking-real-men literature',[25] which aimed to re-establish male sexual potency.[26] Representations of men in the works of writers such as Zhang Jie and Zhang Xinxin focus on their intellectual and psychological weaknesses rather than lack of physical masculinity. Huang Beijia's representations of intellectual men, however, represent the lack of masculinity in both regards.

Male writers also expressed concern over the masculinity of Chinese men. In 1985, Zhang Xianliang 张贤亮 published *Half of Man is Woman* (Nanren de yiban shi nüren 男人的一半是女人), which is considered a masterpiece of 1980s Chinese literature.[27] The Chinese intelligentsia thus embarked on debate and concern over sexuality, masculinity and femininity. In a different vein, some authors referred to more recent socialist masculinities that leaned more toward the *wu* side of male gender identity. For instance, Cao Wenxuan's 曹文轩 'real men' possess 'a cold exterior toughness, and a spirit that can be obliterated but not defeated'.[28] Male characters that model Cao's ideal are often found in early 1980s fiction by male writers such as Jiang Zilong 蒋子龙, Li Cunbao 李存葆, and Wang Meng 王蒙. In 1986, the 'search for the real man' sentiment was given full voice with the release of Sha Yexin's 沙叶新 drama entitled *Seeking the Real Man* (Xunzhao nanzihan 寻找男子汉), which reflected women's apprehensions about Chinese masculinity. The problem of masculinity thus contributed to the plight of Chinese intellectual women.

As both Wang Deling and Zhong Xueping observe, this nationwide sentiment had effects in other aspects of society in 1980s China. With the influx of Japanese and American films in the 1980s, many regarded the macho images of Sylvester Stallone in *Rocky*, Takakura Ken 高倉健 in *You Must Cross the River of Wrath* (Kimi yo fundo no kawa o watare 君よ憤怒の河を渉れ), and the tough Western Chinese frontiersmen represented in the 'root-seeking' fictions by Han Shaogong 韩少功 and Zheng Wanlong 郑万隆 as embodiments of 'real men'.[29] These images of masculinity all rely on physical virility, echoing the hegemonic definition of manhood in contemporary Western culture put forward by Robert Brannon and Deborah David.[30]

20 Louie, *Theorising Chinese Masculinity*, p.59.

21 Song, *The Fragile Scholar*, p.8.

22 Zhong, *Masculinity Besieged?*, pp.4–5.

23 *Ibid.*, p.40.

24 Zhu Aijun, *Feminism and Global Chineseness: The Cultural Production of Controversial Women Authors* (New York: Cambria Press, 2007), p.155.

25 Zhong, *Masculinity Besieged?*, p.5.

26 Zhu, *Feminism and Global Chineseness*, p.155.

27 Wang Deling 王德龄, *Chongdu bashiniandai* 重读八十年代 (Beijing: Xuyuan chubanshe. 2009), p.3.

28 Quoted in Louie, *Theorising Chinese Masculinity*, p.45.

29 Zhong, *Masculinity Besieged?*, p.5.

30 Quoted in Michael S. Kimmel, *The Gender of Desire: Essays on Male Sexuality* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2005), p.71.

According to Zhong Xueping, the mid-1980s witnessed an explosion of literary experimentation where many male writers began to represent 'themselves' in their writing.[31] Zhong maintains 'there is an ambivalence in the representation of men: they are considered "weak", but they want to be (and it is thought that they should be) strong'.[32] Huang Beijia follows the same literary fashion in her representations of intellectual men: her male characters yearn for masculinity and anxiously search for it, eager to avoid or escape the modern stereotype of the Other. Within this dimension, intellectual men are represented as disempowered or disabled, either physically or spiritually.

'What Should I Do?': Intellectual Men as the Fragile Other

The intellectual men in Huang's fiction, like their female counterparts, endeavour to assume a place in the phallocentric symbolic order; at the very least they strive to become someone desirable to educated women. The endings of these stories are invariably tragic or traumatic: the women either leave their husbands/partners/lovers or are killed by them. The fragility of these men is exemplified by the helplessness of the question 'What should I do?' expressed by the male protagonist Haiyang in 'Endless Mistakes' (Yi cuo zai cuo 一错再错).[33] Drawing upon Song Geng's view of pre-modern Chinese scholars as 'the fragile' and Wang Yiyan's characterisation of intellectuals' 'soft' masculinity, I will explore the image of intellectual men as the fragile Other in 'Lane in the Rain' (Yu xiang 雨巷), 'The Balcony' (Yangtai 阳台), 'A May of Sadness' (Youshang de wuyue 忧伤的五月), 'Perfect Family' (Meiman jiating 美满家庭), 'Endless Mistakes', and other stories.[34] During this transitional period in traditional China, *wen* masculinity had lost its popularity and the fragile scholar was no longer embodiment of the ideal masculinity.[35]

'Lane in the Rain' features characters whose livelihood is music — the father a famous composer and the son a student at a conservatory. The story foregrounds tensions between the father, the son (an unnamed protagonist), and the *femme fatale* (Xiaoshan). Zhong Mingcheng 钟名诚 portrays the character of Xiaoshan as a paragon of Huang's intellectual women,[36] the winsome and charismatic 'queen' of the department, a talented, promising, and productive young musician, but also a *femme fatale*. The body of the son is central to his encounter with her, which drives the father–son tension close to patricide. The son's biological mother, who died in his childhood, leaves a space taken up by Xiaoshan in ways that clearly echo Freud's account of the Oedipus complex. This story, and others by Huang published in the 1980s and early 1990s, suggests the usefulness of 'castration anxiety' as a conceptual tool for reading her stories and her concerns around intellectual men.[37]

The central narrative trajectory of 'Lane in the Rain' can be summarised as the male protagonist's anxious searching and waiting for Xiaoshan on the day of a Herbert von Karajan concert.[38] The story relies on two strategies to portray his intellectual masculinity. One reveals the son's fragility due to his attachment to Xiaoshan. He falls prey to her charms during his gloomy childhood in the years of the Cultural Revolution while separated from both his father, who was then being persecuted, and his deceased mother. As Xiaoshan assumes the place of the mother, she sheds light on his memories of childhood loneliness. Upon enrolling at the conservatory, he is overjoyed at encountering Xiaoshan once more. His subjectivity, his very sense of self, has become grounded in her acknowledgement of him, and he glorifies her as 'spring wind, summer rain, autumn dew and winter sunshine'.[39] Preparing to

31 Zhong, *Masculinity Besieged?*, p.5.

32 *Ibid*., p.5

33 Please refer to the appendix for abbreviations, dates of first publication and sources of the primary texts used.

34 Wang Yiyan, 'Mr Butterfly in *Defunct Capital*: 'Soft' Masculinity and (Mis)engendering China,' in eds Kam Louie and Morris Low, *Asian Masculinities: The Meaning and Practice of Manhood in China and Japan* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), p.41.

35 Louie, *Chinese Masculinities in a Globalizing World*, p.10

36 Zhong Mingcheng 钟名诚, 'Huang Beijia yanjiu shuping' 黄蓓佳研究述评, *Journal of Bijie University* 26. 5 (2008): 74–78, at p.78.

37 In my telephone conversation with Huang Beijia, 24 August 2011, she stated that her novellas published in the early 1990s could be deemed as typical of the 1980s.

38 The name of the male protagonist, the son, is not given. He is referred as 'He'.

tell her the news that a famous conductor spoke positively of his symphonic poem, he feels it is 'the first time in all these years that he is fully confident to face her'.[40] But Xiaoshan's unexpected indifference to his news leaves him embarrassed and self-critical once more.

Another strategy Huang uses to present this protagonist's masculinity is the other side of his Oedipal drama — jealousy towards his father and a fantasy of attempted patricide. The son's hostility towards his father increases when he learns of Xiaoshan's admiration for him. The relationship between Xiaoshan and the father taunts him: 'Father shelters me from the wind, the rain, and at the same time sunshine'.[41] The protagonist constantly compares himself to his father, and, unable to claim Xiaoshan, ultimately fails to take his father's place. This is a clear representation of the Freudian image of the father: 'In the son's eyes his father embodies every unwillingly tolerated social restraint; his father prevents the son from exercising his will, from early sexual pleasure, and, where there is common property in the family, from enjoying it'.[42] After Xiaoshan leaves their home, the father starts improvising on the piano. This scene, narrated by the son, suggests that in that moment the father is thinking of Xiaoshan:

> His father was right. Xiaoshan was like a piece of piano music. This metaphor was far more accurate than any the son had thought of ... it should have been him not his father who composed an impromptu on Xiaoshan. Why was his father able to so quickly capture her image while he could not? Xiaoshan had been on his mind for so many years.[43]

The son tries to escape the father's symbolic order by 'not being his accessory',[44] rather by making Xiaoshan his lover and taking her under his control. Both attempts, however, remain unsuccessful.

The father's performance of the impromptu piece occurs on the same day the protagonist is desperately searching for Xiaoshan. After the concert, the son spots Xiaoshan and his father together, confirming their relationship. At that moment, he realises his attempt to take his father's place has failed. Overtaken by an indescribable feeling of frustration and anxiety, he succumbs to the power of his father by resuming his subordination to him. His overwhelming sense of disempowerment can be interpreted as a form of castration. In the final scene, the bewildered son stares at his father's shadow and begins to make a comparison:

> Father walks across the street towards them in a hurry. The street lamps shed orange light on him. The son is totally covered in his father's shadow. All of a sudden, he cannot help imagining himself standing in the position of his Father. If he were there, would his shadow be big enough to cover Xiaoshan's shadow, too? [45]

Again, the passage depicts an expression of Oedipal tendencies. Overshadowed by the father's overwhelming power, the son makes a clear attempt to exert an equally powerful influence on the female protagonist, who is, to him, a mature lover and mother figure. The son is in fact destined to 'remain all his life bowed beneath his father's authority and he is unable to transfer his libido to an outside sexual object'.[46] Huang's larger strategy in 'Othering' intellectual men is to represent them as physically and spiritually disabled. This representation is congruent with Song's observation on the discourse of the fragile scholar in traditional Chinese high culture as 'weakness, fragility and vulnerability in both physical and emotional dimensions ... that

39 Huang Beijia 黄蓓佳, *Youshang de wuyue: Huang Beijia zhongduapian xiaoshuo zixuanji* 忧伤的五月：蓓佳中短篇小说自选集 (Beijing: Huaxia chubanshe, 1996), p.59.

40 *Ibid.*, p.66.

41 *Ibid.*, p.63.

42 Quoted in José Brunner, *Freud and the Politics of Psychoanalysis* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), p.152.

43 Huang, *Youshang de wuyue*, pp.64–65.

44 *Ibid.*, p.61.

45 *Ibid.*, p.73.

46 Brunner, *Freud and the Politics of Psychoanalysis*, p.153.

gives scholars a rather effeminate image of the dominant Western gender discourse'.[47]

Another literary work of this era, 'The Balcony', features a physically disabled intellectual man, Li Yu, who is subordinate to his father, a professor of vocal studies in the prime of his life. Li Yu is marginalised and ignored by his parents, and the story recounts his failed attempts to gain their attention. By treating him as both physically traumatised and powerless, the intellectual parents deny him the expression of his spiritual needs and dismiss his intellectual qualities. When the father hires his student Qingqing as a housemaid, the young woman seduces Li Yu, enabling him to find a new awareness of his own masculinity. Though still trapped by his sense of inferiority, his first (and only) sexual experience is used to compensate for his physical deficiency:

> Li Yu looked away from Qingqing. Staring at the floor, he muttered, 'We shouldn't bother fighting. You are prettier, healthier, smarter and happier. You are stronger. So you have to tolerate my bad temper.'[48]

Li Yu insists that he 'was born a loser. It's my fate' and that Qingqing has allowed him to experience 'what a man should be' and thank her for 'making me complete'.[49]At the same time, however, Qingqing, an accomplished singer, is also seducing Li Yu's powerful father, in the hope that he will help her establish a successful singing career. The jealous son secretly observes his father flirting with Qingqing during her vocal lessons, but he remains unable to subvert the power of the father.

It is worth noting that in both 'Lane in the Rain' and 'The Balcony' the fathers are intellectual men. The sons are subservient fragile Others and their fragility reflects castration anxiety, which helps establish the *yinsheng yangshuai* phenomenon in New-Era literature. In both novels, the sons seek to gain power through women but fail. According to Freud, the male child fears that he will never be powerful and experiences the dramatic crisis of realising that the mother, too, is 'castrated'.[50] She signals a kind of threat but has no real power because she lacks a phallus, which is the property of the father. In both stories, it is the ones with a 'phallus', the fathers, who possess the power to claim domination over women which the intellectual sons compete for but fail to win.

Employing psychoanalytic terms in the analysis of Huang's fiction is not, as is often the case with psychoanalytic literary criticism, a matter of reading between the lines. Huang is direct in her dramatic conjunction of events and images that have been central to psychoanalytic theories of subjectivity, gender, and power. The character Fang Fu in 'A May of Sadness' is a vivid example of the Other. Fang Fu appears at the story's outset as an ideal intellectual man, physically and intellectually refined. His childhood was marked by the trauma of sexual abuse by his widowed mother. The mother eases her sexual starvation by exhibiting her nude body to her young son. This oppressive female desire haunts him into his adulthood, even after his mother remarries. The trauma results in impotency, his distancing himself from women, and his hatred of the female body until his late twenties, when he meets Xiaocong who he subsequently marries.

The sexually experienced Xiaocong stares at Fang Fu with both sympathy and contempt when he kisses her hand passionately without realising he has a visible erection. She cannot help belittling him for being so ridiculous and inexperienced. She 'feels disgusted whenever thinking of Fang Fu's sexual

Figure 1
Huang Beija.
Photo: baike.com

47 Song, *The Fragile Scholar*, p.38.

48 Huang Beijia, 'Yangtai' 阳台, *Renmin wenxue* 人民文学 1 (1989): 143–68, at p.160.

49 *Ibid.*, pp.160–61.

50 See Susan Hayward, *Cinema Studies: The Key Concepts* (London: Routledge, 2000), p.197.

vacuity'.[51] The first days of their marriage reveal Fang Fu's 'shameful sexual failure'.[52] Confronted with Xiaocong's body, he cannot help being overtaken by traumatic memories of his mother's naked body. After their first successful sexual intercourse, the ecstatic Fang Fu submits himself to Xiaocong, 'taking her as his supreme goddess'.[53] Xiaocong takes on the symbolic position of the mother, claiming dominance over Fang Fu, who is sexually inexperienced.

A disastrous train accident extends Fang Fu's disablement into the physical realm as he becomes paralysed and diagnosed with severe cranial injuries. At this stage, Fang Fu's condition could exemplify what Lung-kee Sun calls 'wombnisation' (*mutaihua* 母胎化).[54] Sun regards Chinese men's tendency to be emasculated as ubiquitous, and, taking a Freudian psychoanalytical approach, he describes them as 'not yet weaned'.[55] While specific events have led to Fang Fu's condition, he is also represented as undeveloped in this sense: 'All in all he is a feeble and helpless child, a child with great lack of inner balance'.[56] Believing he is irredeemably defective, Fang Fu ends his life.

Another work that starkly contrasts intellectual men and women is 'Perfect Family', in which Zhiyan, a university lecturer, illustrates the link between scholarly fragility and wombnisation. Zhiyan discovers that he has a brain tumour, and his fiancée, Xiaoyu, returns from the US to take care of him. Zhiyan survives the surgery, but suspects his wife is having an affair with an American professor, 'losing himself in the miserable thought that he is a loser. Whenever he is about to lose his temper, he almost faints. So, does that mean he is forever disabled?'[57]

Xiaoyu's termination of an unexpected pregnancy compels Zhiyan to question her fidelity. He throws doubt on her nonchalance about the abortion, suspecting that she has already undergone several in the US. He acts like a spoiled child and tries to stop her from returning there. When this manipulation fails, he interprets her sarcastic smile as representing contempt.[58] His failed attempt to control Xiaoyu deeply frustrates Zhiyan. On the evening before her departure, he turns on the gas, believing that suicide is the only way he can keep Xiaoyu from leaving him for a place where he would be unable to survive due to his fragility.

Failures in constructing male subjectivity are expressed in the suicidal acts of both intellectual men. According to Ueno Chizuko 上野千鶴子, 'to be-come a man' signifies 'the ownership of a woman (the sexual object)'. In so doing, man becomes a sexual subject.[59] Tellingly, the two intellectual men deny their wives the status of sexual subjects. Rather, they themselves become the Other or the object in the end, greatly damaging their male pride. The wives, therefore, become sexual subjects, either by exhibiting sexual and physical dominance or rejecting their identification with the image of the child-bearing machine that the husbands hold up. Although no record exists that shows Huang has read the works of Ueno, the quote 'he who is unable to tame his wife should not be called a man', from Ueno's book the title of which translates as *Woman-Haters: Misogyny in Japan*, seems equally applicable in understanding the tragic endings in both 'A May of Sadness' and 'The Perfect Family'.[60]

Both stories resonate with the *yinsheng yangshuai* phenomenon that greatly damaged the self-esteem of Chinese men at the time.[61] This phenomenon emerged after the Cultural Revolution and, along with the 'seeking real men' phenomenon, was echoed in literature of the 1980s.[62] Grounded in traditional Chinese ideas of cosmic order, *yin* and *yang* are two quintes-

51 Huang, *Youshang de wuyue*, p.328.

52 *Ibid.*, p.325.

53 *Ibid.*, p.327.

54 Quoted in Zhong, *Masculinity Besieged?*, p.208.

55 Zhong, *Masculinity Besieged?*, p.30.

56 Huang, *Youshang de wuyue*, p.333.

57 *Ibid.*, p.497.

58 *Ibid.*

59 Ueno Chizuko, *Yan nü: riben de nü xing xianwu* 厌女：日本的女性嫌恶 translated by Steve Yang (Taipei: Unitas Publishing Co. Ltd, 2015), p.32. In the same paragraph, Ueno argues that this is also the way a son becomes a man like his father.

60 Ueno, *Yan nü*, p.34.

61 Ding Zijiang 丁子江, *Zhongmei hunlian de xingxue fenxi* 中美婚恋的性学分析 (Beijing: Zhongguo gongren chubanshe, 2006), p.109.

62 Zhong, *Masculinity Besieged?*, p.40.

sential concepts whose harmonious co-existence is thought to delineate all manner of oppositions and complementarities in the physical and spiritual worlds.[63] *Yin* and *yang* have endless sets of interpretations, described in language using terms such as 'heaven and earth'. The *yin-yang* binary is often equated to the dualistic paradigm of femininity and masculinity in Western thought. However, scholars such as Li-Hsiang Lisa Rosenlee and Kam Louie have questioned the conventional equation of *yin-yang* with femininity and masculinity, arguing that the former is actually 'correlative, co-determining and complementary through and through'. Zhong Xueping posits that regardless of the complementary and indivisible nature of *yin* and *yang*, the use of these terms in the 1980s was in ways directly correlated to sexual difference, linking woman (rather than the feminine) to *yin* and man (rather than the masculine) directly with *yang*.[64]

Even if the complementarity of *yin* and *yang* can be seen as analogous to gender complementarity, female writers and critics have pointed out the pervasive presence of gender inequality in Maoist and post-Mao China. Zhong argues that:

> [t]he issue is not whether or not men are 'weak' and suffer from being 'feminized'. Rather, it is that men are still more powerful than women, and that male chauvinism is still very much a part of Chinese male subjectivity and is still dominant in Chinese society at large.[65]

Huang's fiction, however, presents a different case. The interaction between these male intellectuals foregrounds male anxiety over the (perceived) ascendancy of women's power. Huang's works specifically illustrate this anxiety and potential for disempowerment when female counterparts appear to be physically, sexually, and intellectually powerful. In many of her stories, the man's weakness is subjected to female scrutiny.

In 'Tender is the Autumn' (Qiuse yiren 秋色宜人), the female protagonist An Qian is under pressure to finalise a daunting report on a young high-achieving male scholar at her university who survived a suicide attempt. Her audacity in revealing the dark side of the institutional system in which they both work, as well as her advocacy for social attention to the mental states of intellectuals earns her more scathing criticism than sympathy and support among her colleagues and peers. Her boyfriend, Lin Lin, believes the gossip about the impropriety of her work and ends their relationship. He suspects that she has feelings for the scholar she is meant to be reporting on and fears that gossip about An will have a detrimental impact on his own reputation. An's power jeopardises Lin's power as well as his dignity and symbolic authority in a patriarchal society.[66] His fury towards An points to his anxiety over this threat of disempowerment.

Paired with the much-discussed fragility of the scholarly man, this form of Chinese masculinity is also concerned with power and domination. The possibility, threat, and experience of disempowerment trouble many of the intellectual men in Huang's fiction. Their power is manifested in sexual control, financial security, and political influence and status brought by career achievement.

'Journey in Winter' (Dong zhi lü 冬之旅) relates the vicissitudes of disempowerment for artist Ying Tianming. Ying's status as an intellectual is acknowledged and thus authorised by people in power. A university council member who loves art admires Ying's talent and appoints him director of the

63 Potuan Chang, Yiming Liu and Thomas F. Cleary, *Understanding Reality: A Taoist Alchemical Classic* (Honululu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1987), p.3.

64 Li-Hsiang Lisa Rosenlee, C*onfucianism and Women: A Philosophical Interpretation* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), p.48. See also Kam Louie, T*heorising Chinese Masculinity*, p.239. Zhong, *Masculinity Besieged?*, p.40.

65 Zhong, *Masculinity Besieged?*, p.40.

66 Lim Chin Chown, 'Castration Parody and Male Castration: Eileen Chang's Female Writing and Her Anti-Patriarchal Strategy,' in eds Peng-Hsiang Chen and Whitney Crothers Dilley, *Critical Studies: Feminism and Femininity in Chinese Literature* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2002), p.137.

university art troupe. With his support, Ying, a dynamic graduate of theatre studies, writes an ambitious musical titled *Song of May Fourth* (Wusi zhi ge 五四之歌). The musical is a tremendous success and the troupe organises a triumphant nationwide tour during the winter holiday. However, Ying's success ends abruptly after the tour with the appointment of a new Youth League director, who manages to get Ying removed from his directorial position. Feeling disempowered after losing the opportunity for career development as well as his reputation as a rising playwright, Ying is assigned minor tasks and languishes in depression. His mistreatment by the new director leads to Ying resigning from his post. His damaged pride and fragile self-confidence are noted in his resignation letter, which states that 'due to the current university leaders' ignorance about artistic activities, I have lost my interest in this position'.[67]

Ying's wife's sexual transgression only exacerbates his sense of disempowerment. Upon her admission to having the extra-marital affair, Ying throws porcelain at her and accidently kills her. In a closing comment, the narrator expresses regret at this development, inquiring about the motivation for Ying's violence:

> Ying was never a heartless person. Why does he resort to violence in response to Hui's unfaithfulness? ... To me, if that successful nationwide tour never happened, he would not have turned violent later. Indeed, that tour left him with triumphant and remarkable memories. Ying is a perfectionist. Hence, he cannot tolerate being significant only once. Even when his popularity at the university began to fade, he always meant to stay clear of sorrow and frustration.[68]

It is worth noting that in the original text, *shizhonggan* 失重感, literally 'feeling weightless', is translated here as 'being a nobody'. It can also be understood as 'being insignificant'. I interpret this as a response to disempowerment, a sense of being insignificant under the symbolic weight of his reputation. John L. Osburg draws a close connection between reputation and power in Chinese élite masculinity. He argues that in the course of building a reputation, a form of power is cultivated that transcends the material and institutional foundation in wealth or bureaucratic positions.[69] This connection between reputation and power resonates with the disempowerment of Ying Tianming in 'Perfect Family'.

Intellectual men's struggle for power is also seen in 'Room of Roses' (Meigui fangjian 玫瑰房间). These power relations mirror what Zhong Xueping calls 'the strong desire for masculinity', manifested in competition for power.[70] According to Ueno, men enjoy affirmation, attention and praise from other men when vying for power in the male homosocial world.[71] Man's success in this male homosocial world is underpinned by power, wealth and honour, culminating in the ownership of women.[72] 'Room of Roses' features two friends, Dali and Li Xiaoming, both junior academic staff competing for an associate professorship. Dali sees the promotion as an opportunity to gain power over his intellectual wife, Xinyue, who is desperately applying to go abroad for further education and a better material life. For Dali, the promotion would make him 'an ideal husband (a real man)' who can better provide for his wife financially, bring material satisfaction, and bring the family out of hardship. Despite his great efforts he is ultimately unsuccessful at stopping Xinyue from leaving him to go to the US, failing to demonstrate power and assert control over his wife.

67 Huang, *Youshang de wuyue*, p.291.

68 *Ibid.*, p.293.

69 John L. Osburg, 'Engendering Wealth: China's New Rich and the Rise of an Elite Masculinity' (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2009), p.108.

70 Zhong, *Masculinity Besieged?*, p.214.

71 Ueno, *Yan nü*, p.29.

72 *Ibid.*, p.29

Still, the senior department staff regard Dali as the most promising candidate, holding more academic achievements than Li. Dali and Li promise to vote for each other in the competition for associate professorship, but on the day of the election, Li is overtaken by 'a sneaking evil thought'.[73] Driven by his lust for power, Li votes for himself instead and his vote wins him the promotion. Feeling guilty, he fears that 'he will never rest in peace' for his 'dishonourable act'.[74] According to the narrator,

> Now both the loser and winner suffer. The latter, however, suffers from a more immense trauma as his evil conscience will be forever disdained. The title of Associate Professor is to him a cangue. He will never live in peace.[75]

This scenario depicts intellectual men as constantly under threat. Dali is disempowered by his lack of promotion, whereas Li is disempowered by his devious ascent to power by which he becomes a traitor. His betrayal also makes him infamous in the department. The power struggle between Dali and Li bears similarities to Song Geng's discussion of fame and homosocial male bonds in the Confucian tradition. Song considers manhood homosocial because of the need for men, especially men groomed to serve the state, to prove themselves to each other. Achieving fame in those circles affirmed one's masculinity, and in the Confucian tradition, loyalty and righteousness are linked and celebrated.[76] Song's discussion here is a clear reminder of Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's description of a special relationship between male homosocial desire and the structures for maintaining and transmitting patriarchal power. Such a relationship is founded on an inherent and potentially active structural congruence.[77] In this sense, Li fails to meet the ideal standard of manhood, and his fall from grace is another form of disempowerment.

As illustrated in these stories, these unsympathetic representations of intellectual men are hardly attractive to intellectual women. Besides, the fragile Chinese intellectual men are frequently represented as undesirable in the context of male homosociality. The 'Othering' of Chinese intellectual men was prevalent in popular literature and films during the 1980s and 90s.[78] Confronted with gender norms from non-Chinese cultural contexts, Chinese intellectual men were distraught with the possibility of losing male pride brought by 'soft' masculinity.[79] However, Huang's intellectual women rarely respond sympathetically to men's distraught feelings. In these stories, fragility is the only feature that these men share with the utopian knowledge élites in the traditional theatrical classics. No longer upholding the utopian image, these men are represented as dystopian Others to the intellectual women. In the following section, an analysis of Huang's other trope, representing intellectual men as the father figure, is discussed.

'The One I Used to Admire': De-masking the Father Figure

Huang's representations of intellectual men who might be considered father figures are more senior, both in social status and age, and more powerful in intellect and performance than the intellectual women within the same stories. According to Joan Riviere, it is from the father figure(s) that the intellectual women seek attention and affirmation by means of flirting and developing sexual relationships.[80] The needs of intellectual women in their relationships with the father figures include 'first, direct reassurance of the nature of compliments about her performance; secondly, and more

73 *Ibid.*, p.92.

74 *Ibid.*, p.102.

75 *Ibid.*

76 Song, *The Fragile Scholar*, p.173.

77 Eve Kosofsky Sedgewick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), p.25.

78 See, for example, the protagonist Gao Wen in Huang Jianxin's 黄建新 film *Stand up Straight, Don't Bend Over!*' (Zhanzhiluo biepaxia 站直咯，别趴下).

79 Ibid., p.10.

80 Quoted in Joan Riviere, 'Womanliness as Masquerade,' in ed. Athol Hughes, *The Inner World and Joan Riviere: Collected Papers 1920–1958* (London: Karnac Books, 1991), p.92.

important, indirect reassurance of the nature of sexual attentions from these men'.[81] These yearnings are explicitly expressed on occasion by the women in Huang's stories.

The charismatic father figure informs the intellectual woman's fantasy of an ideal man. Huang's works feature many scenes in which intellectual women strive to create strong spiritual bonds in their relationships with father figures. Such bonds are the principle focus of their identity and orientation in love and marriage. The 'utopia to dystopia' process is featured in these texts in terms of intellectual woman's identification with the father figure. When the father figure's charismatic camouflage is gradually dismantled during this process, their dystopian natures emerge.

Sexual transgression is used by Huang to configure the relationship between intellectual men and women in a number of stories. The father figure initiates and encourages the sexual transgression of the woman, who is disconcerted by her situation. The father figure camouflages himself as a saviour, but fails to fulfill that role, while the expectations of the female counterpart draw her to him. These expectations also draw her into a kind of bewilderment as she must now negotiate her ambivalence about dominant social values.

The father figures make a grand entrance, radiating charisma that conceals some dark side in their masculinity that will lead to the women's disillusionment. This disillusionment usually culminates in trauma or death. Over the course of these narratives, the intellectual man is first presented as a '*real* man' who should uphold an ideal society but is later revealed to be a fraud. For example, in 'Midsummer Night' (Zhongxiaye 仲夏夜), a famous violinist's performance leaves a lasting impression on Mengling, a violin student. The narrator describes his performance thus:

> He leaned his head to the violin with such elegant but unthinking grace. Throughout the performance, he kept his eyes closed, just like a praying Christian. Only his trembling lips revealed his surging passion ... Everyone in the music hall remained stock still, as if being mesmerised by Satan.[82]

The Satan metaphor suggests just how charismatic and seductive the father figure is. Since Satan is the embodiment of evil, this foreshadows the trauma the female protagonist will face. Another charismatic intellectual is the poet in 'Journey in Winter', who is described as 'a brilliant star among Chinese poets'.[83]

In both these novellas, the father figure's charisma enables them to become mentors to intellectual women, but they cast a shadow, dominating the desire of the women who position themselves as their students and devotees. For example, in 'Midsummer Night',

> The violinist leans forward toward her, speaking to her in an amicable way as if she were a child. Under his gaze, she finds it hard to breathe and feels as vulnerable as a baby.[84]

On transitioning from a mentor to a lover, the father figure arouses the women's sexual desire. In doing so, the intellectual women further submit themselves to the *homme fatale*. In 'Midsummer Night', the violinist initiates Mengling's first sexual experience, saying that he 'just wants to make her happy':[85]

81 *Ibid.*
82 Huang, *Youshang de wuyue*, p.187.
83 *Ibid.*, pp.264–65.
84 *Ibid.*, p.204.
85 *Ibid.*, p.224.

> 'Don't be afraid, my dear little girl. Just lie there and don't move, hmm?' He whispers. He touches her forehead, then runs his fingers down over her eye, cheeks, lips and chin. 'You are so lovely, as pure as an infant. None of the many girls I know has such a wonderful face as yours. You touch people's hearts when you look at them. I can't describe the feeling, my girl ...' His fingers linger along her neck, shoulders, breast, abdomen, to her thighs. She begins to tremble like a piece of swaying silk, like the blue waves caressed by the ocean breeze.[86]

These father figures leave an indelible mark on the bodies of the women that haunts their intellectual trajectories and sexual lives. A similar scene in 'Journey in Winter' shows Hui beginning a sexual relationship with the poet who 'seduces, or arouses her sexual desire'.[87] He brings enlightenment to the intellectual female body and *jouissance* to her intellect or spirit. But this moment of enlightenment and corporeal and spiritual awakening does not last. The father figures have disappeared by the end of both stories, leaving the intellectual female protagonists to deal with the consequences of their sexual attention alone. Both Mengling and Hui experience pregnancy and must undergo an abortion. At her university, Hui becomes 'someone dishonoured because of her premarital sexual relationship and abortion'.[88] The father figure proves unreliable as a saviour, to the devastation of the female lives he touches. Ultimately, the father figures seduce the intellectual women into transgressing the symbolic order and abandon them to the abyss of punishment.

Written from the first person perspective of a high school girl, 'The Promenade Garden' (Jiexin huayuan 街心花园) highlights the Janus-faced masculinity of the father figure as a sign of the intellectual woman's estrangement from the dominant social order and of her self-doubt and self-criticism. The story intertwines encounters between the two protagonists: the high school girl (the narrator) and the handsome scholar known only as 'he'. She falls for his gentle manner and fine taste in art, finding herself in 'blissful harmony' whenever she is with him, but the father figure aura quickly fades when his wife appears.[89] The female protagonist comes to realise that the man takes other lovers to escape from his unhappy marriage. In the coda, the man kills his wife and forces the narrator to falsely testify that she witnessed the wife die of a heart attack. The death of the wife also marks the end of the narrator's relationship with him and crushes her idealised vision of intellectual men.

A similar strategy for de-masking the father figure is adopted in 'A May of Sadness' (Youshang de wuyue 忧伤的五月). The story overtly adopts the narrative arc of *Jane Eyre*. An enthusiastic *Jane Eyre* reader, the protagonist Xiaocong always imagined her ideal lover as Edward Rochester, a mature married man who knows women well. While maintaining a relationship with her long-term university boyfriend, Xiaocong falls secretly in love with the charismatic father figure, Weijun, a married man who is a Rochester figure. Weijun's seduction leads to her sexual transgression. However, Weijun's charisma disappears when Xiaocong finally recognises that his love for her is actually an excuse to escape his marriage to a wife with mental illness (an allusion to Bertha Mason). The utopian vision of love has become dystopian.

In these four cases, the powerful and charismatic father figure steps out of the intellectual woman's utopian vision of 'the real man' to reveal his dark side. To the dismay of the intellectual woman, the ideal or 'real' man does not exist.

86 *Ibid.*, p.223

87 *Ibid.*, p.226.

88 *Ibid.*, p.269.

89 Huang Beijia, 'Jiexin huayuan' 街心花园, *Zhongguozuojia* 中┌作家 4 (1987): 146–52, at p.151.

Conclusion

I would like to close with an example from 'Winter in the Outskirts' (Qunian dongtian zai jiaowai 去年冬天在郊外) — one of Huang's most celebrated romantic novellas. The story explores the relationships between Laiya, a student of Chinese literature and a promising writer, and two intellectual men: 'Dr X', a pedantic PhD student fully dedicated to his academic pursuits, and Fanyin, a brilliant music student with whom she develops a spiritual bond. In her relationship with 'Dr X', Laiya perceives no space to demonstrate her talent as a writer; whenever they are together, he talks about nothing but his own research. In contrast, Fanyin admires her literary talents and they inspire each other to write. Fanyin infuses his love for Laiya into mesmerising poetry and seems to be an ideal suitor. But Laiya remains dissatisfied with both Dr X and Fanyin. She breaks up with the indifferent Dr X but is not prepared to enter into a new romantic relationship with Fanyin. For Fanyin, Laiya is 'an unattainable phantom'.[90] She is unable to draw closer to him and can only 'be an outsider to him forever'.[91] Laiya's self-orientation as an outsider, an observer of her ideal lover, bespeaks her estrangement within relationships.

Distance and detachment haunts every unpleasant moment in these heterosexual relationships between intellectual men and women in Huang's works. Negotiating between Confucian, Maoist, and contemporary discourses on gender roles, Huang's intellectual women disengage wilfully from the models of women imposed in these discourses. In the meantime, their male counterparts exhibit their own estrangement through their failed attempts to become *real* men.

Referring back to Shu Ting's 'To the Oak', one could interpret her key image of the oak and the kapok standing together as signifying that their roots are entwined below ground. This represents what Shu Ting calls 'great love' (*weida de aiqing* 伟大的爱情). In Huang's representations of heterosexual relationships, however, the relationship between men and women usually results in mutual estrangement and disappointment. As a corollary, the women's journey in search of a *real* man, the men's becoming *real* men, and the establishment of the *ideal* heterosexual relationship all remain incomplete. The message in these texts seems evident: there is no such thing as an ideal relationship or a *real* man.

90 Huang Beijia, 'Qunian dongtian zai jiaowai' 去年冬天在郊外, *Shanghai wanxenxue* 上海文学 7 (1982): 12–23, at p.23.

91 *Ibid.*

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Appendix: Huang Beijia's Stories Discussed in this Article

Chinese Title	English Title	Date of First Publication	Source
雨巷	'Lane in the Rain'	1981	*Youshang de wuyue: Huang Beijia zhongduapian xiaoshuo zixuanji* 忧伤的五月: 黄蓓佳中短篇小说自选集 (Beijing: Huaxia chubanshe, 1996)
去年冬天在郊外	'Winter in the Outskirts'	July 1982	*Shanghai wanxenxue* 7 (1982): 12–23
玫瑰房间	'Room of Roses'	1984	*Meigui fangjian* (Shijiazhuang: Hebei jiaoyu chubanshe, 1995)
秋色宜人	'Tender is Autumn'	1986	*Youshang de wuyue*
仲夏夜	'Mid-summer Night'	May 1986	*Ibid.*
街心花园	'The Promenade Garden'	April 1987	*Zhongguozuojia* 4 (1987): 146-52
冬之旅	'Journey in Winter'	Nov. 1987	*Youshang de wuyue*
阳台	'The Balcony'	Jan. 1989	*Renmin wenxue* 1 (1989): 143-68
忧伤的五月	'May of Sadness'	1989	*Youshang de wuyue*
一错再错	'Endless Mistakes'	1990	*Ibid.*
美满家庭	'Perfect Family'	1990	*Ibid.*