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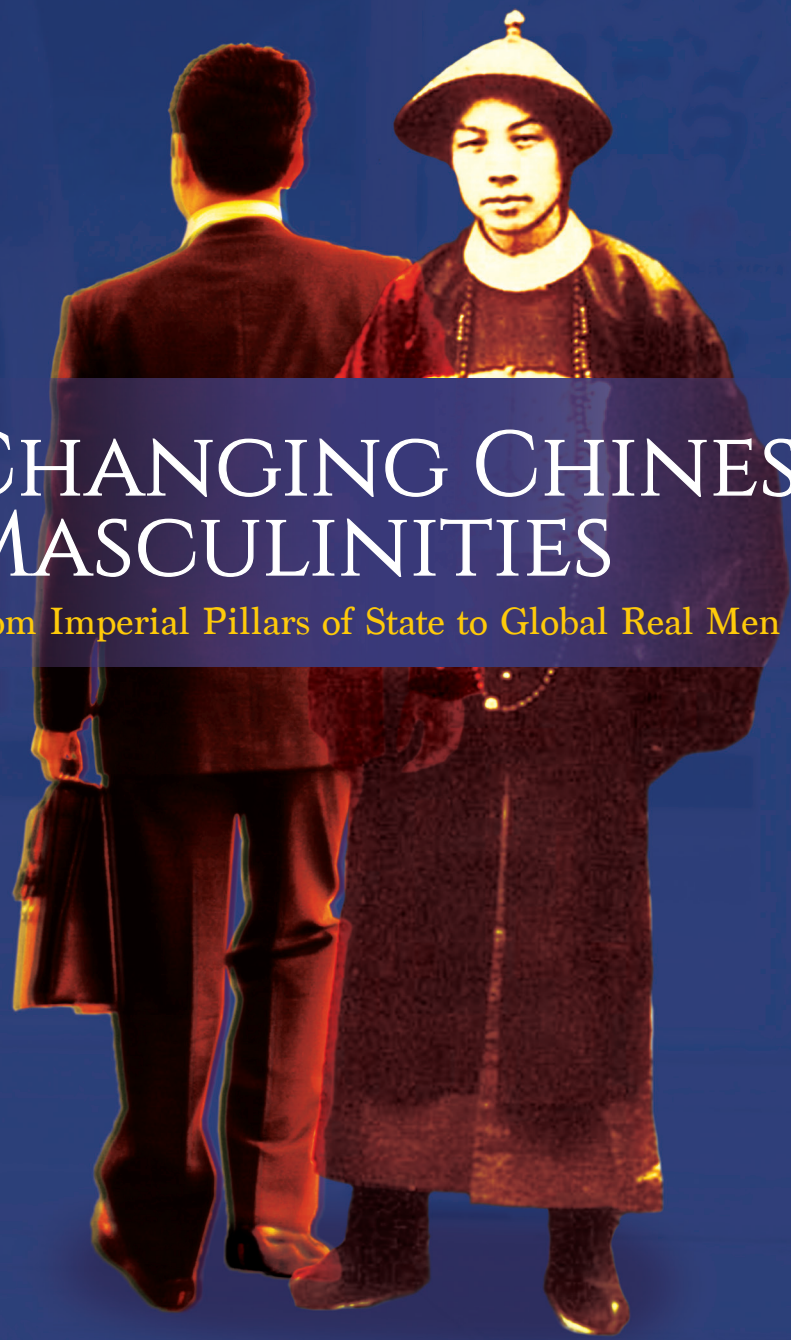

Changing Chinese Masculinities

From Imperial Pillars of State to Global Real Men

Edited by **Kam Louie**

Changing Chinese Masculinities

Transnational Asian Masculinities

Series Editors: Derek Hird (University of Westminster) and Geng Song (University of Hong Kong)

The first book series in the world on this topic, Transnational Asian Masculinities explores the representations and lived realities of Asian masculinities in their transnational dimensions. Books in this series use interdisciplinary perspectives and interrogate diverse textual, visual, and ethnographic materials. They illuminate the specificities of Asian masculinities in global contexts and question some of the assumptions of Euro-American theorizing on masculinities. By approaching Asianness through ethnicity, nationality, and location—encompassing men's, women's, queer, and trans masculinities—this series unpacks the tangled assemblages of local and transnational circulations of people, ideas, and objects that have shaped Asian masculinities in all eras.

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Contents

Contributors

Louise Edwards is Asian studies convener at UNSW and president of the Asian Studies Association of Australia. She has published extensively on *Honglou meng*, including *Men and Women in Qing China: Gender in the Red Chamber Dream* (Brill and Hawai'i University Press, 1994 and 2001) which has been extended and updated in Chinese as 清代中國的男性與女性：紅樓夢中的性別 (北京大學出版社, 2014). Other recent books include *Gender, Politics and Democracy: Women's Suffrage in China* (Stanford University Press, 2008) and *Women Warriors and Wartime Spies of China* (Cambridge University Press, 2016).

Derek Hird is a senior lecturer in Chinese studies at the University of Westminster. His research interests include Chinese migrant men's experiences in London and Chinese white-collar masculinities. Recent publications include "The Paradox of Pluralisation: Masculinities, Androgyny and Male Anxiety in Contemporary China," in *Understanding Global Sexualities: New Frontiers* (edited by P. Aggleton, P. Boyce, H. L. Moore, and R. Parker) (Routledge, 2012) and *Men and Masculinities in Contemporary China* (with Geng Song) (Brill, 2014).

Martin W. Huang is a professor of Chinese at the University of California, Irvine. He has published widely on topics related to desire, masculinity, male friendship, literati culture, and vernacular fiction. His publications include *Negotiating Masculinities in Late Imperial China* (Hawai'i University Press, 2006) and *Desire and Fictional Narrative in Late Imperial China* (Harvard University Press, 2001). His current project is on memory and mourning.

William Jankowiak is Barrick Distinguished Professor of Anthropology, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. He is the editor of *Romantic Passion* (Columbia University Press, 1995) and *Intimacies: Between Love and Sex* (Columbia University Press, 2008). His *Sex, Death, and Hierarchy in a Chinese City: An Anthropological Account* (Columbia University Press, 1993) is in its fifth printing. He is currently completing a book manuscript, *City Days/City Nights: Emergent Social Patterns in a Chinese City*.

Xuan Li is an assistant professor of psychology at New York University Shanghai. Her recent publications include "Fathering in Chinese Culture: Traditions and Transitions" (coauthored with Michael Lamb) in *Fathers across Cultures: The Importance, Roles, and Diverse Practices of Dads*, edited by Jaipul Roopnarine (Praeger, 2015), and *Chinese Fathers: Ideals, Involvement, Interactions, and Influences* (Routledge, forthcoming).

Kam Louie is an honorary professor at the University of Hong Kong and UNSW. He has eighteen books under his name. Recent publications include *Chinese Masculinities in a Globalizing World* (Routledge, 2015), *Eileen Chang: Romancing Languages, Cultures and Genres* (ed.) (Hong Kong University Press, 2012), and 男性特質論：中國的社會與性別 (江蘇人民出版社, 2012) (Chinese translation of *Theorising Chinese Masculinity*, Cambridge University Press, 2002).

Sheldon Lu is a professor of comparative literature at the University of California, Davis. His recent publications include: "Re-visioning Global Modernity through the Prism of China," *European Review* 23:2 (May 2015): 210–26; "Artistic Interventions in Contemporary China," *China Information*: *A Journal on Contemporary China Studies* 29:2 (July 2015): 282–97; and a Chinese novel, 愛情三部曲 (華僑出版社, 2015).

John Osburg is an assistant professor in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Rochester, USA. He is the author of *Anxious Wealth: Money and Morality Among China's New Rich* (Stanford University Press, 2013). His research interests include capitalist and consumer culture, morality, political corruption, gender, and sexuality in contemporary China. His current research examines forms of spiritual and moral self-fashioning in urban China.

Geng Song is an associate professor in the School of Chinese, the University of Hong Kong. Among his publications are *The Fragile Scholar* (Hong Kong University Press, 2004) and *Men and Masculinities in Contemporary China* (coauthored with Derek Hird) (Brill, 2014). He is currently working on a monograph on nationalism and transnationalism in Chinese television.

Mark Stevenson is a senior lecturer in Asian studies at Victoria University, Melbourne. He is the author of *Many Paths: Searching for Old Tibet in New China* (Lothian, 2004), and the editor and translator (with Wu Cuncun) of *Homoeroticism in Imperial China: A Sourcebook* (Routledge, 2013), as well as a forthcoming edited volume on wanton women in late imperial Chinese literature (Brill).

Heung-wah Wong is director of the global creative industries program at the University of Hong Kong. His research interests include the anthropology of business, the globalization of Japanese popular culture, the study of pornography, gender, and sexuality, and the comparative study of Japan and China. He has recently published *Japanese Adult Videos in Taiwan* (with Hoi-yan Yau) (Routledge, 2014).

Cuncun Wu is head of the School of Chinese, the University of Hong Kong. Her recent books include *Homoerotic Sensibility in Late Imperial China* (RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), *Homoeroticism in Imperial China: A Sourcebook* (with Mark Stevenson) (Routledge, 2013), and 戲外之戲：清中晚期京城的戲園文化與梨園私寓制 (forthcoming).

Binbin Yang is an assistant professor in the School of Chinese, the University of Hong Kong. Her research interests include women and gender in late imperial China. She has published in journals such as *Modern China*, *Nan Nü*, and *Journal of Women's History*. Her most recent work is *Heroines of the Qing: Exemplary Women Tell Their Stories* (University of Washington Press, forthcoming).

Hoi-yan Yau is a senior lecturer in the Department of Cultural Studies, Lingnan University. Her research interests are in the areas of gender, sexuality, globalization of Japanese popular culture, censorship, and colonialism. Her most recent publication is *Japanese Adult Videos in Taiwan* (with H. W. Wong) (Routledge, 2014).

Harriet Zurndorfer (Leiden Institute for Area Studies, Leiden University, the Netherlands) is the founder and managing editor of the journal *Nan Nü: Men, Women and Gender in China*, published since 1999. Her most recent publication is "Men, Women, Money, and Morality: The Development of China's Sexual Economy," *Feminist Economics* 22 (doi:10.1080/13545701.2015.1026834).

Introduction

Kam Louie

The many political and social upheavals of the second half of the twentieth century, such as the civil rights movement and protests against the war in Vietnam, resulted in a growing interest not only in class and race, but also in gender. In the Western world, this social phenomenon gave rise to gender studies as an academic discipline. However, initially, gender studies was, to all intents and purposes, effectively women's studies. Men as a gendered category escaped close scrutiny until the turn of the millennium, when masculinity studies began to emerge as an academic discipline. While the number of men's studies courses at tertiary institutions remains small, discussions about men in gender and women's studies classes are growing and there is keen interest in the field. This interest is likely to grow at a rapid rate, as there is increasing awareness that much more research on men and related topics such as sexual exploitation and father-child relationships is necessary if we hope to create a happier and saner society. There are now several scholarly journals such as *The Journal of Men's Studies*, *Men and Masculinities,* and *Norma: International Journal for Masculinity Studies* that are devoted to the study of men, and hundreds of academic as well as popular books and articles about men have also been published.

However, in the case of Chinese masculinity studies, this felicitous situation has one major lacuna that needs to be filled. Research and publications on men have indeed been growing exponentially in the last two or three decades, but the focus has been overwhelmingly directed at and situated in Western white societies, so that when nonwhite ethnic groups are considered it is mostly under the rubric of "minorities." This is not a bad thing. Indeed, partly thanks to the work of very good scholars in this area, Orientalist images typified by Fu Manchu and Charlie Chan are only mentioned in serious academic discussions as just that: Orientalist stereotypes. But there is no getting away from the fact that these characters are meant to be Chinese men. The unstated assumption is that they are somehow representative of Chinese men in general, and not just some imagined (usually by white people) exotic beings that are not based on

reality. Furthermore, these men operate in Europe or America, not in China itself. That is, if they are Chinese at all, they are out of context. It is no wonder that they often come across not as real men, but simply as caricatures.

While it is understandable that Euro-American scholars would focus on their own societies, with the result that scholarship on gender studies has hitherto concentrated on the Western world, there is an urgent need to examine men within their "natural" environment so that the diversity of peoples and cultures can be better appreciated. Is there an indigenous Chinese masculinity? Apart from my *Theorising Chinese Masculinity* (Cambridge University Press, 2003) in which I proposed the *wen-wu* (cultural attainment–martial prowess) dyad as a Chinese masculinity ideal and a research tool for analyzing men, there have been few sustained efforts to answer this question. But with the economic and political centers shifting toward East Asia in the new millennium, there is increasing interest in this region, especially China, as well as a growing recognition that Chinese masculinity is intrinsically fascinating and worthy of study, regardless of its relevance to the Western world. But, of course, China's connections to the rest of the world are now so intricate that failure to understand what it means to be a man in China in effect means failure to understand the West as well. Indeed, ever since China began to open its doors and foster trade with the rest of the world at the end of the Cultural Revolution (1966–76), Chinese goods and people have been found in all parts of the globe. At the same time, more and more outsiders are now visiting, studying, or working in China. The number of tourists going to China, for example, had increased from around a million at the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976 to nearly 100 million by the end of the millennium. In many big cities around the world, Chinese immigrants and students constitute a substantial proportion of the resident population. Their cultural baggage with respect to gender needs to be understood, for their sake if not for that of the rest of the population. To unpack that baggage, of course, we need to look at their home country.

Visitors to present-day China, including Sinologists who know its history and culture well, are inevitably astonished by the seismic transformations that have taken place there. They cannot help but be struck by the changes in the physical landscape, from the skyscrapers that have sprung up in erstwhile villages to the super high-speed trains that fly above former bicycle tracks. Changes in human relationships have been equally dramatic. The Communist revolution that resulted in the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949 had already institutionalized major national undertakings such as the new marriage laws that ended polygamy. The family structure that had been in place for centuries has now been totally disrupted. With monogamy as the legal basis for marriages and couples able to choose their partners instead of leaving this decision to their parents through arranged marriages as in the past, family relationships are conducted on a new basis, leading to major transformations in many other basic gender roles and social networks. The Cultural Revolution,

with its intensified promotion of the slogan "women hold up half the sky," further shook ideologies and practices in human relationships, but the greatest change probably came after the Cultural Revolution, as the one-child family and migration of young people to the towns and cities radically altered the shape of Chinese society. These changes had repercussions for fundamental human experiences, such as parent-child relationships, with the role of the father becoming in many instances a lot less aloof and severe than in the past.

The fact that more and more women have gone to school and tertiary institutions and are excelling in what they do has also revolutionized gender relations. In the popular domain, for example, shelves in bookshops are lined with self-help books on how to manage men or women; men are often seen as disadvantaged in the new social structures and as so underachieving that there is much talk of a masculinity crisis and manuals have appeared on how to "save the boys." All of these "how to" books and treatises are meant to help boys and men perform better at important junctures in life such as examinations and job progression. But often such fears of a crisis are simply sensationalized claims. Most of these social changes do not indicate a complete break with past beliefs or practices in gender relations. Rather, the vehemence with which authors and readers react to what they see as a world turned upside down only shows the strength of their convictions about what they regard as "normal." To understand the degree to which traditional hegemonic masculinity maintains its grip on today's China—and indeed whether and to what extent past and present masculinities are hegemonic in the sense that higher-class men oppress lower-class men and men in general oppress women—we need to look at specific features of masculinity in traditional times.

In recent years, there have been many excellent academic studies about how changing social and gender relations affect women. However, as indicated above, while there are many journals and monographs on various aspects of Chinese culture, we are only just beginning to see Chinese masculinity studies take off. Nonetheless, this beginning is rapidly gaining momentum. A glance at the recent books and articles on Chinese masculinity in the references section of this volume shows that while Chinese men have come under the microscope as gendered beings only in the twenty-first century, scholarly work on this topic mushroomed once the field began to be opened up. Yet despite some excellent work on different historical and contemporary periods in China, there are few book-length studies on significant topics related to masculinity that provide original research material that highlights similarities and contrasts between the traditional and modern eras. Given these pressing problems, a couple of years ago I invited some of the best scholars working on Chinese masculinity to write original research papers relating to this topic.

Interestingly, although my request to the invitees was fairly general, along the lines of "Chinese Masculinities on the Move," the papers that came in fell neatly into two time periods: late imperial China and present-day China. Clearly,

most scholars consider these periods to be the most fascinating and informative in revealing how Chinese masculinity has moved from traditional times to now. This is not to say that the long twentieth century was insignificant or uninteresting. Indeed, much scholarly work has been devoted to this period, and the chapter by Harriet Zurndorfer in this book gives a full and insightful account of polygamous behavior from the late imperial era until the present day. But on the whole the book provides a neat divide and comparison between the traditional past and the modern present, thereby allowing the similarities and contrasts to be more starkly revealed. The issues that are discussed cover key aspects of male identity such as family relations (including being a son, husband, and father), sexual activities (including attitudes and practices relating to sexual partners such as concubines, mistresses, or prostitutes), sexual orientations (homosexual and homosocial etc.), the relationship between masculinity and nationalism, and so on. These issues are significant in China now, and yet the chapters on present-day Chinese masculinities often echo concerns raised by the chapters on the late imperial era, and show the extent to which traditional thinking and practices were "modern" as well as shedding considerable light on the current situation.

Notions of manhood in China have manifestly shifted, and many of the seismic movements occurred in the twentieth century, but inside the new clothing that is worn by the Chinese man today, we can still find the historical Chinese man. As we read each other's papers, we were again and again struck by the fact that pressing concerns in the contemporary world needed to be framed in historical context, and a context that is Chinese. Thus, while we do not want in any way to downplay the value of China-West style analysis or using "Western" methods and assumptions to analyze Chinese masculinities, we believe that a book that depicts these linkages will help to advance a more holistic picture of Chinese masculinity. Chinese masculinity is so diverse and complex that no single book could hope to capture all of its nuances. But, by displaying significant and similar characteristics that link "tradition" and "modernity," that diversity and complexity can be better appreciated. Based on the above rationale, I have divided the book into two parts, with Part 1 dealing with the late imperial period and Part 2 with the current era.

This contrast needs to be emphasized because China studies is such a huge field that, even in a subfield such as gender studies, we often found that those who worked on traditional times knew very little of current trends and manifestations in male behavior, especially the "global" attitudes of the young. Similarly, those who worked on the contemporary scene often had little knowledge of the past. Time and resource constraints meant that to do original and thorough research, most scholars needed to specialize so that the scope of their research was not too wide. Yet, if the lens was to capture a longer time period, the continuities and discontinuities between the past and present would become startling yet clear. For example, many observers find the sudden rise and acceptance of the practice of "second wives" and prostitution in China quite shocking

when compared with the situation in the country only a few decades ago. Yet, as Harriet Zurndorfer's far-ranging chapter on the relationship between polygamy and masculinity shows, these practices were widespread in the Ming dynasty (1368–1644). Indeed, like the "second wives" that are now in vogue, concubines were seen as prestige objects, and both indicate a man's worth. In this way, they serve as a status marker, a visible sign that demonstrates superiority to other men. Marriages tended to serve the purpose of fulfilling familial and social obligations, and love was rarely valued as a basis for marriage. Of course, there were exceptions. Zurndorfer mentions the celebrated example of Shen Fu's (1763–1810) memoirs, in which he portrays his love for his wife, as an indication of the first stirrings of companionate marriage.

Shen Fu lived in the mid-Qing dynasty (1644–1911); this was when China was on the verge of the "modern" era, so marital relations were already undergoing a transformation. Indeed, many historians have worked on the understanding that "modern China" began in the early nineteenth century when European powers drove straight into the heart of the Chinese Empire after the Opium Wars. This is the "big picture." For a more refined and targeted examination of how the social changes taking place in China at that time affected an individual man's sense of gendered identity and his attempts to come to terms with a role he did not relish, Martin Huang's chapter on Shen Fu is innovative and enlightening. Huang's analysis of Shen Fu is especially valuable in showing that this "poor scholar," despite his obligatory protestations about filial piety, had to struggle to find an acceptable role for his wife in the face of his father's (often oppressive) demands. The father-son relationship and its effects on the development of a Chinese man's gendered identity are fascinating topics that are attracting more attention, as shown by Xuan Li and William Jankowiak's chapter, which looks at contemporary father-child relationships in a couple of Chinese cities.

The difference between Shen Fu and the educated urbanites of today is that Shen was considered poor and "struggling" because he did not hold an official position as all literati in those days strove to do. Today, many men who have modest salaries and do not have access to power and privilege may also see themselves as struggling, but they are still mostly upwardly mobile, and most would not see anything amiss in making money via business and trade. As much of the first half of this book shows, Ming-Qing China was considered "traditional," but it was a society in transition, on the verge of change brought about by domestic forces, and a society in which the rise of the merchant class in particular was changing the way the gentry (*shi* 士) behaved in relation to other classes. This had a direct impact on how they performed masculinity. It also influenced the way in which other men, and women, saw that performance. The shifting fortunes of the gentry as a class in Ming-Qing times provide the background for much of the discussion in the first half of the book. The uncertain fortunes of the "struggling" literati find their counterpart in the newly rich's pursuit of money in contemporary China. This quest for wealth and its implications for

their perceived status as men are matters that are alluded to in most chapters in the second half of the book.

The emergence of the mercantile class in the Ming dynasty in competition with the gentry for higher social status is deftly revealed by Mark Stevenson in his essay on the role of the *huapu* 花譜, the commentaries on the actors (most of whom were or would become catamites) in the Beijing theater scene at the end of the Qing. Stevenson shows how this genre was used by the literati in an effort to maintain their claim to cultural superiority over the merchants, a claim that was being eroded as money was increasingly being seen as a signifier of status and successful manhood. But the new rich also wanted social prestige, so they aimed for symbols that marked them as having *wen* refinements. Like concubines, second wives, and mistresses, keeping a catamite meant obtaining a trophy in the competition for superiority against other men. And the ability to comment on and judge the qualities of the ideal catamite was valued highly as an indication of the refinement and taste of a connoisseur. These developments were only able to take place when China had reached a high degree of urbanization.

Cuncun Wu's study on male prostitution and urbanization in the late Ming also uses the topic of actors and catamites to demonstrate the social transformations that were taking place at the time. Adding to Stevenson's argument that urbanization had changed the nature of the male prostitution market in late imperial China, she shows the effects of urbanization and commercialization on the actual players: the buyers and sellers of sex. Social and spatial mobility had by late Ming transformed strict feudal structures to the extent that, rather than having to serve their lords as bonded playthings, catamites could become free agents who would sometimes amass considerable wealth and redefine their own masculinity and gender roles. This was possible because of the commanding function of the marketplace. Unsurprisingly, this social mobility was more attainable for those engaged in male same-sex prostitution than for female prostitutes. So even here, masculinity continued its hegemonic grip when it came to the position of women.

Indeed, Louise Edwards argues in her chapter that, contrary to modern conventions whereby elaborate beautification rituals or bodily displays of decoration are normally seen as feminine characteristics, male bodies were the preferred aesthetic form in Ming-Qing China. Edwards illustrates her point by zooming in on the classic Chinese novel of that era, *Honglou meng* 紅樓夢 (Red Chamber Dream), and its descriptions of clothing, dress, accessories, and fabric. Focusing the spotlight on men's appearance in the Qing dynasty in this way shows that elite men were definitely not so self-effacing that they hesitated to display their "beautiful" attributes. On the contrary, they were as eager as the actors and catamites to show off their bodily refinements, and such ostentations were considered normal. In fact, as Binbin Yang's essay on the Manchu official Wanyan Linqing (1791–1846) highlights, the literati in autobiographies would

use both written text and pictorial representations to portray their lives of "unparalleled glory."

Yang's object of study, Wanyan Linqing, lived on the threshold of what many historians delineate as the "modern" period. The Opium War of 1842 marked a watershed in Chinese history, and it was after the repeated defeats of the Chinese military by European powers following this war that China was dubbed "the sick man of East Asia." Throughout the so-called "modern" period, Chinese men's self-identity had to somehow come to terms with this epithet. It was only with "China's rise" at the turn of this millennium that a more confident and assertive configuration of Chinese masculinity emerged. Yet, even with the impending crisis of his time, Wanyan Linqing's self-portrayals as demonstrated in his autobiography reveal a man whose image of himself was anything but self-effacing or feeble. They show a man in charge of his circumstances and a masculinity that was self-assured and robust. Of course, that might have had something to do with his class, and he certainly came from a privileged background.

Class as an omnipresent marker of masculinity is most manifest in the Chinese contemporary scene. Indeed, the first two chapters in the second part of this book, by Derek Hird and John Osburg, reveal the multiple ways in which the new rich in China benefit from the norms and values that have emerged in recent years in terms of acceptable ideals of masculinity. Hird examines "white-collar men" as emblematic of the global success of China's economic reforms. He shows how these men distinguish themselves from those in a similar social stratum but who are seen as corrupt (the "black-collar men") or those who have reached top managerial levels and are therefore almost off the comparison table (the "gold-collar men"), and so on. While the new middle classes want desperately to be seen as having achieved good social positions by having secure jobs and families, they also want the respectability that comes from having civilized values and high moral standards. However, Hird's ethnographic approach exposes the discrepancy between ideology and practice. For example, he wryly remarks of one interviewee that the man in question espoused equality in housework and childrearing activities, but that what he observed during the time he spent with them was that the wife still did almost all of these chores. Nonetheless, at least this man saw such household chores as acceptable masculine activities, and that can be said to be more enlightened than the views of most men in the past.

Osburg also draws on ethnographic material in his discussion of changing norms and values associated with Chinese masculinity in the world of the new rich—more specifically, government officials and state enterprise managers. Members of this new group have often been exposed as corrupt and as manipulating the legal system to their own advantage. Osburg shows that many of the values they hold—ideals of hierarchy, loyalty, and mutual solidarity; notions of sexual privilege and consumer pleasure; and modes of status and power—are

intertwined with the unfolding configurations of elite masculinity that straddle both government and business worlds in contemporary China. Their penchant for making the right connections (not just officials, but gangsters and assorted minor criminals) often mimics the traditional ideologies and practices of the sworn brotherhoods. The corruption that results thus follows patterns established in some of the most enduring masculinity ideals that are exemplified in classic brotherhoods such as those found in *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* and *Water Margin*. Far from having *wen* refinements as indicated by the *wen-wu* 文武 ideal, the new rich often display lower-class *wu* preferences and behaviors.

So, are both the moneyed and the working classes reviving the rough and tough aspects of *wu* in the *wen-wu* dyad that I have characterized as emblematic of ideal Chinese masculinity? Did the Republican and Communist revolutions have no impact on current constructions of Chinese masculinity? Until now, the symbols and models that were characteristic of the Chinese working-class hero were quite different from traditional ones. During the Cultural Revolution in particular, the world of gender relations was turned upside down, at least in rhetoric. Women were said to hold up half the sky, and Jiang Qing in particular made sure that the ideological apparatus showed women as having stood up. It was really during the post-Mao reform era, when "normality" was restored, that the use and abuse of power that sometimes rivaled the worst of the old days became favorite topics for discussion and exposure. Indeed, one can say that many of the new norms attempted to copy pre-Communist Revolution ones, and this can be clearly seen when the film industry is examined, as Sheldon Lu does in his chapter on Jia Zhangke's films.

In Jia's films, the working-class heroes of the Mao period such as the "iron man from Daqing" Wang Jinxi, "the model peasant of Dazhai" Chen Yonggui, and "the good soldier" Lei Feng do not appear. So where do working-class men look for models? Sheldon Lu's examination of some of the most influential films by director Jia Zhangke shows how Hong Kong gangster movies provide inspiration for the creation of working-class heroes. But the protagonists in Jia's films generally lead tragic lives and suffer the trauma of losing their loved ones (girlfriend, wife, or lover) or have difficulty entering into satisfying relationships with women due to the fundamental social and economic transformations of the Reform period. *Wu* masculinity is unambiguously in evidence. Indeed, one of the films Lu looks at is titled *Xiao Wu* 小武 (Little Wu), and its protagonist's fate is to end up as a pickpocket whose arrest provides the film's ending. While more "human" in having to deal with modern frustrations than the improbable model worker-peasant-soldier figures from the Mao period, these working-class heroes (or more precisely, male antiheroes) demonstrate the difficulties facing Chinese men in their search for some form of successful manhood ideal in the present day.

In retrospect, it is easy to see that the Cultural Revolution propaganda was more wishful thinking than reality-based. Model men from that era are now seen

as illusions or fakes, and a wholesale restoration of older exemplars seems to be consciously taking place. Yet the Mao years did leave an indelible impact and any backward step cannot be complete. In fact, Chinese men now do take more of a role in family matters, and at least claim to engage in housework and childcare. It is accepted as normal that women, especially educated ones, pick men as much as men pick women, as can be seen in the format of the popular television dating game show *If You Are the One*. And the possibility of tenderness between couples is now taken as something that is at least achievable and desirable, and practiced fairly widely in some cities and districts. Indeed, the measure of the modern man in terms of his relationship to family members is not just begetting children and being filial to his parents. There is much more concern now with being a kind and loving father than with being a strict one. Xuan Li and William Jankowiak's chapter shows how old chauvinistic models are declining and more sensitive behavior is on the increase.

Based on their observations and in-depth interviews of dozens of men in Hohhot and Nanjing, Li and Jankowiak argue that the new economy has produced male ideals organized around a good balance of traditional *wen* and *wu* attributes. Echoing Derek Hird's findings, the men they interviewed claim to want closer emotional relationships with their offspring rather than the disciplinarian, aloof, or detached role they used to have. They tend to want to develop more caring and supportive spousal relationships too. Part of the reason for these changes stems from changed social and familial structures. As indicated above, when most families in cities have only one child, it is hardly surprising that both parents invest considerable time and energy in this single offspring—even if it is a girl. Thus father-child interactions are necessarily different from those that existed before, even though, as Li and Jankowiak point out, traces of tradition still remain.

How men perceive themselves and others perceive them as "manly" is not confined to their roles within the family; it is of utmost importance in national terms. Chinese governments throughout the ages have invested significant resources and effort in making sure that being a real man includes being good for the country. There are countless tales and legends of patriotic men who should be emulated. Many such tales were generated through folklore, so they include sacrifices made for national ends. Family members (mostly men) who go to war and never come back are often portrayed as martyrs and their sacrifice as glorious. Being a soldier who fights bravely and effectively on the battlefield has always been one marker of masculinity. The current government and image-makers in China have spared no effort in manipulating this desire to be a "real man" for nationalist ends. By analyzing the 2013 popular 70-episode television drama series *The Dog-Beating Staff*, Geng Song explores this phenomenon, showing how the use of the Japanese as the "other" has the effect of defining "Chineseness." And much of that Chineseness is intricately bound up with how Chinese masculinity is imagined and perceived. Thus, traditional sentiments such as *qingyi*

情義 (emotions of loyalty) could be seen as faithfulness and loyalty to one's wife, sibling, or family, but increasingly in the popular media, they are constructed as loyalty to the country—China.

Song's analysis is insightful. Its corollary is that, to the filmmakers, one of the defining features of having a masculinity within the "Chineseness" rubric is that it implies a state of being subject to the People's Republic. But as I have outlined in *Chinese Masculinities in a Globalizing World* (Routledge, 2014), to Chinese men living outside mainland China, such an implication is extremely problematic. When they live abroad, how can these men strive to assume a masculinity that belongs to another land, even if this land is called China and they are called Chinese? The final chapter of this book neatly illustrates the dilemma. Unlike the other contributors to the book, Heung-wah Wong and Hoi-yan Yau take Chinese masculinity away from the Mainland and show how the particularities of Hong Kong and Taiwan affect the ways in which social frameworks such as political organizations and family relationships are constructed. These frameworks in turn determine how masculinity is constituted. While these constructions are no doubt "Chinese," they have a different set of "Chinese characteristics" from those promoted by the Chinese government or practiced in China.

It goes without saying that it is impossible to give a description of "Chinese masculinity" that is entirely comprehensive, and the last word on the subject will never actually be the last. There are so many ways to view Chinese men that even though we have used a variety of approaches from the humanities and social sciences to discuss the topic, we know that we have only opened paths for further exploration. We have used different methods and materials from the humanities and social sciences in our quest, and even though some subject matters seem quite specific, we use each case study to reach general conclusions about Chinese masculinity. We hope this book will serve as another platform for researchers and lay people alike to ponder the important subject of how Chinese men are managing to perpetuate or transform traditional gender roles in this rapidly changing world.

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Part 1

Late Imperial Chinese Masculinity

1
Polygamy and Masculinity in China

Past and Present

Harriet Zurndorfer

Introduction

In the late nineteenth century, polygamy—along with opium smoking and foot binding—came to represent China's backwardness in the face of imperial encroachment and cultural denigration by foreign powers. China's 1895 defeat in the Sino-Japanese War cast the image of the country as the "sick man of East Asia" (*dongya bingfu* 東亞病夫), and prompted nationalist reformers to include the transformation of gender relations as part of the modernization project. Polygamy, or to be more exact polygyny, whereby a man has a legal wife and multiple women with whom he consorts, seemed to epitomize the enervating sexual decadence that had brought about China's decline (Dikötter 1995). And yet, as reformist discourses evolved into a reordering of social norms, including the propagation and legal institutionalization of the conjugal nuclear family with its ideal of one husband, one wife (*yifu, yiqi zhi* 一夫一妻制) in the early twentieth century, polygamy seemed to have escaped the officially authorized imperatives. The 1930 Marriage Law did not outlaw concubinage, and efforts to realize sexual equality for married men and women through litigation in the Republican-era courts did not erase the actuality of polygamy (Bernhardt 1994; Kuo 2012). The institution survived as legal authorities found that concubinage did not intrude upon the *yifu, yiqi zhi* commitment (Tran 2011, 108). Moreover, prostitution in the Republican era continued to flourish as before (Hershatter 1997; Henriot 2001), and even became a substantial source of tax revenue for local governments that helped to subsidize roads, education, and crime prevention (!) (Remick 2014).

It was only after 1949 under the directive of the Chinese Communist Party that any real attempt to eliminate polygamy and other forms of extramarital behavior saw results. The Marriage Law of 1950 promoted marriage as essentially a relationship of equals with shared responsibility for family and children (Evans 1995). The Maoist regime from 1949 to 1976 also pursued strict sexual

norms: premarital and extramarital sex were "taboo," with institutional controls such as the *danwei* 單位 (work unit) logistically eliminating the possibility of sexual liaisons because of the close supervision of employment and adjoining housing. In essence, in pre-reform-era China non-marital sex was highly monitored and repressed, with those people caught engaging in extramarital affairs punished severely (Zhang 2005). Moreover, in the 1960s and 1970s, the government held men responsible for upholding sexual morality, a task once ascribed to women in imperial China (Fang 2012).

Since the reform era began, polygamy in various forms has become common, with rich, and even not so rich, men (Xiao 2011) enjoying the company of women who are not their wives on a regular basis. While the prevalence of extramarital behavior in China may be due in part to the decline of formal control over sexual conduct, it is also important to understand other factors relevant to this trend. One recent study has demonstrated that the rise in urban job mobility in the private sector has directly influenced extramarital sexual behavior among men, who are now able to pursue affairs autonomously (Tian, Merli, and Qian 2013). But it is not just opportunity that is pertinent here. One may well ask what motivates large numbers of Chinese men to engage in extramarital sex, and for a certain percentage of these men, to maintain a "second wife" (*ernai* 二奶), installing her in an apartment and paying her a monthly stipend. Recent ethnographic research on Chinese men indicates that taking a mistress (or many) may be considered in relation to Judith Butler's idea of performing manliness—that is, identity is constructed through performative reiteration (Osburg 2013; Hird and Song 2014; Butler 1990). In present-day China, men's performance is regulated by the accumulation of wealth and the status that affluence generates (Zurndorfer 2016).

Performing manliness has several dimensions: first, a man's adherence to the normative roles defined by the structures of marriage, fatherhood, and filial piety, and second, a man's pursuit of homosocial relations that take place outside the home. Nowadays, men hope through homosocial networks to advance their financial and professional interests, and to foster long-term binding connections that will support material enrichment. The sites of these networking encounters include restaurants, karaoke lounges, saunas, and brothels. In these settings the purchase of women's sexual services is standard, and is considered integral to building trust in business relationships between men, cementing their ties to one another (*guanxi* 關係) (Zhang 2001; Zheng 2006). Businessmen aiming to procure a license, or tax break, or legal compensation, from local officials will arrange for *xiaojie* 小姐 (sex workers) to be made available to them as part of an evening's entertainment. Such largesse on the part of the entrepreneur is also a statement of his elite status—his ability to obtain women for others reflects a certain lifestyle that includes the possession of real estate, luxury clothing, and cars, as well as membership of exclusive clubs (Osburg 2013, 33). For many men, acquiring a mistress (or even more than one) is also part of performing manliness.

Zhang Xingkui's 2011 study of this phenomenon underlines the element of prestige that men covet by having a beautiful elegant young woman—or even better, several—at their disposal. Such men, he argues, do not wish to abandon their wives and their families, and usually do their best to keep their affairs secret; he summarizes this situation with the expression *jiazhong hongqi budao, waimian caiqi piaopiao* 家中紅旗不倒，外面彩旗飄飄 (the red flag flies at home, while colorful flags abound outside). He concludes that men having *ernai*(s) is a new form of polygamy (Zhang 2011, 147).

The re-emergence of polygamy/polygyny in recent times leads one to want to know more about how masculinity in the present compares, or contrasts, with masculinity and male sexual culture in the Chinese past. It would seem that today's male elite who enjoy banqueting, drinking, and sexual entertainment in the interests of boosting their wealth, prestige, and power may not be so different from their ancestors who also relied on "wine, women, and song," practices that may be described by the collective term *yingchou* 應酬 (Uretsky 2008, 807). The deep-seated tradition of relationship-building (*guanxi*) in pleasure sites is central to both cohorts of men. As Osburg (2013) shows in his recent ethnographic study of businessmen in Chengdu, the "informal, fragmented" bureaucracy that oversees economic development demands a certain amount of exchange between the entrepreneurs who provide capital for projects and the officials who control the regulatory institutions to validate them. The banquet, the karaoke bar, the sauna, and the brothel are where these men engage in *gemenr guanxi* 哥們兒關係 (best mates' networks) masculinity; these networks exclude women and less powerful men (Hird and Song 2014, 144–45). This is a world of patron and clients scripted in past traditions. Thus, rather than viewing today's Chinese sexual mores as a result of a post-Deng reformist "sexual revolution," this essay explores those factors that tie present-day masculinity and male sex culture to the past.

Chinese masculinity may be examined historically according to four influential factors: kinship bonds—both real, as in filial practices, and fictive, as between gang members; elite men's intimate relationship with the state whereby the government endowed high officials with masculine status in return for loyalty; shifts in economic relations, particularly the impact of commerce; and foreign masculinities—nomadic or Western (Hinsch 2013, 7–9). In this chapter we consider how these four elements are relevant to Chinese men engaging in polygamy/polygyny since the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) and what their performance says about their masculinity, past and present.

Wives, Ladies for Pleasure, and Masculinity in the Ming-Qing Era

Male bonding through comradeship and entertainment, desexualized heroism, and success in the examination system dominated the presentation of manliness

in Ming (1368–1644) and Qing (1644–1911) China. Prior to the Ming period, hundreds of years of contact with highly militarized steppe societies had generated two important consequences. First, the encounter with these groups had left Chinese men convinced of their superiority to the invaders, encouraging the performance of their manhood in terms of *wen* (cultured man) as opposed to *wu* (martial activeness) (Louie 2002, 66). By the time of the Mongol Yuan dynasty (1279–1368), the ideal man had become the "fragile scholar" (*caizi* 才子), whose "rosy lips, sparkling white teeth, and jasper-like face" (Song 2004, 126) were the antithesis of the aggressive fighting hero. In contrast to the military antics of their subjugators, Chinese men demonstrated their prowess in the examination hall. The fact that the Mongols had suspended the imperial examination system for eighty years had fed not only Chinese men's disgust with the conqueror but also their anxiety over the loss of their identity based on power and political achievement (Song 2004, 65–67). The second consequence of this interaction with "barbarians" relates to the social fluidity of Chinese society and the precarious nature of property that the disruptions of the Yuan conquest and occupation had spawned (Bossler 2013, 360–61). To ensure family stability, Confucian adherents advocated that the sons of wives and concubines had equal status, which in the long term meant that brothers and half-brothers all had the same obligations in terms of filial piety (Bossler 2013, Chapter 8). In that way the "domesticated" concubine and her offspring reaffirmed the values and social efficacy of Confucian ethical culture during a time of uncertainty and stress (Bossler 2013, 253; 360).

Many scholars consider the end of the Yuan period to be a turning point in Chinese gender relations, as the Ming dynasty ushered in a greater appreciation of patriarchal authority and female fidelity (Mann 1999, 27–30). Wives were expected to demonstrate faithful widowhood and loyalty to their husband's family. Gender segregation (*nannü youbie* 男女有别), which originally meant separation of men and women and came to indicate the constraints on female behavior (Hinsch 2003, 596), underlined the distinct roles expected of women *inside* the household and men *outside* the home.[1] It was a man's obligation to seclude the women in his family to maintain its moral integrity (Furth 1990, 196; Bray 2005, 271), but it was also expected that men should guard against undue influence by their wives, and that they should resist the lure of the pleasure quarters (Furth 1990, 196–97; 204–6). Male sexual fidelity to a wife was prized, but not obligatory (Hinsch 2007). The transmission of social ethics in the Ming-Qing era was reiterated through the performance of family rituals recorded in household instruction guides and in lineage genealogies that endorsed the centrality of vertical patriarchal authority within the circle of kin. Concubines were integral to this patrilineal kinship system as the sons they bore by their masters

1. Ko (1994) argues that "cloistering" women sometimes had a positive effect on women's culture. Mann (1997) also argues the paradox of the patriarchal and patrilineal Chinese family system providing spaces of safety, enjoyment, and even empowerment for women physically and socially segregated from men.

had legal mourning obligations to their father and his ancestry, and thus helped perpetuate the patriline (Bray 1997, 352–55).[2]

But concubines, along with courtesans, were also "prestige objects" among the Ming male elite, and there to enhance a man's status. While his wealth might be judged by how many concubines he could maintain in his household, his intellectual repute was evaluated by his arbitrage of taste and his ability to participate in literary and artistic exchange with courtesans. Courtesans were frequented (or acquired) to entertain (especially to make witty conversation), to provide companionship, to fulfill emotional needs, but most importantly, to display the individual male's status as a member of the established literati (Ko 1994, 251ff). These encounters with courtesans were also occasions when men could gain admiration from other men. Men's pleasure with these women formed part of their own homosocial networking which ultimately passed judgment on their maleness (Huang 2006, 2). The relations between a courtesan and her literati clients operated according to a "gift economy": male clients offered courtesans a poem, a painting, lyrics to an aria, and the courtesan would reciprocate in kind, by matching the poem, painting, and so on (Zeitlin 2006, 77). Performing maleness in this situation thus required a certain cleverness that could be demonstrated to both the women and fellow literati patrons. Men also "masculinized" courtesans in informal contests played out in the pleasure quarters, such as the flower register game in which they cross-dressed the women and then rated them as examination candidates (Berg 2013, 90; Ko 1997, 82–86). These talented women and the entertainment quarters represented the competition for success and the "rat-race" nature of the scholarly world—where men were under constant pressure to show off their mental ability and survive the insecurities and vulnerabilities of the examination system and the competition for office.

Elite literati masculinity was not the only form of hegemonic manhood in the Ming dynasty. Popular fiction of the period alerts us to the attraction of the physically tough *haohan* 好漢 (good man) and the equally powerful *yingxiong* 英雄 (hero). These men exhibit what in the West are viewed as the desirable characteristics of masculinity—they are physically strong and powerful, and in possession of the qualities of courage, fortitude, endurance, and stoicism (Song 2004, 163). They were also appreciated for their generosity: The characters in the Ming novel *Shuihu zhuan* (*Water Margin*) demonstrate their kindness (and virtue) by helping others with money and material goods (Huang 2006, 104). But these *haohan* figures have no room in their lives for women—these men fight for righteousness (*yi* 義) and profess great loyalty to the men with whom they fight. The novel depicts the men as heavy drinkers who have absolutely no interest in women, or worse, who view them negatively as adulteresses and troublemakers

2. Bray (1997, 357) notes that wives who were unable to bear children would prefer their husbands to acquire a concubine rather than divorce them. Also, any child born of a union between her husband and the concubine would formally be considered the wife's child.

(Huang 2006, 107–8; Song 2004, 158; 170). In *Shuihu zhuan*, six bandits have troubling relationships with women who are unfaithful, which the author contrasts with the loyalty the men have toward each other. One interpretation of this anti-female stance argues that the women's infidelity denotes the political decadence driving the heroes to rebellion (Hinsch 2013, 126; Fitzgerald 1986, 377–78). The women are unworthy, and the men can find their honor and dignity only in the homosocial world of male companionship.

The opposite of this male rejection of heterosexual relations was heterosexual overindulgence, a way of life that was much mocked in late Ming literature. One thinks of the late Ming novel *Jinpingmei* 金瓶梅 (*Plum in the Golden Vase*) with its intemperate polygamist, the rich, pretentious, and ill-educated wastrel Ximen Qing who acquires woman after woman to create a small empire over which he can reign (McMahon 1995, 49). The novel illustrates the insatiability of sexual desire, which in the end leaves Ximen Qing dying of priapism: *Jinpingmei* "could serve as a textbook about what can go wrong with polygamy" (McMahon 1995, 51). But it is arguable whether the author intended to oppose polygamy. More explicit in its ethical message is Li Yu's (1610–80) *Rou putuan* 肉蒲團 (*The Carnal Prayer Mat*) in which an erudite scholar familiar with the subtleties of Confucian morality is a lustful villain. He takes woman after woman in a series of illicit conquests that end in his utter repudiation of sexual desire: hero Weiyang Sheng realizes the fatality of sex and cuts off his penis. These novels illustrate what happens when men do *not* adhere to the tenets of Confucian sexuality, which may be considered in terms of containment. As both McMahon (1988) and Louie (2003, 7–8) have suggested, the ideal *wenren* 文人 was trained in control through extensive calligraphy exercises and rote learning, and admonished to practice restraint; thus, masculine sexuality in the Chinese tradition prized the ability of a man to suppress his sexual urges.

The late Ming (1570–1644), when these novels first appeared, was a "confusing" time (Brook 1998). One and a half centuries of relative peace and prosperity had brought wealth and intense commercialization that helped to blur the social boundaries between classes. Cities flourished as never before: urban prosperity stimulated the promotion of cosmopolitanism, anonymity, and relative freedom in the attendant pleasure districts, which attracted a wide-ranging clientele, from literati and students seeking relief from the pressures of studying for (and failing) the civil service examinations, to sojourning merchants requiring lavish, conspicuous entertainment for doing business and for their own gratification (Zurndorfer 2011, 199). Prostitution was widespread and indicative of the vibrant and highly profitable trade in human beings (Hsieh 2008). Brothel-visiting tested an ordinary man's competence. Given the wide proliferation of late Ming *riyong leishu* 日用類書 (daily life encyclopedias) churned out by the booming printing industry and the attention these works paid to clients' interaction with prostitutes, it seems that commercial sex had now become a matter of public attention. The 1599 encyclopedia *Xinke tianxia simin bianlan santai wanyong zhengzong*

新刻天下四民便覽三台萬用正宗 (Santai's orthodox instructions for myriad uses for the convenient perusal of all the people in the world, newly engraved) gave guidance to traveling merchants on how to deal with prostitutes and courtesans, from etiquette to warnings about the dangers of financial exploitation (Zurndorfer 2013, 520–21). Similarly, the *fengyue* 風月 (erotica/romance) section of the 1612 edition of the *Wanbao quanshu* 萬寶全書 (Encyclopedia of myriad treasures) offered instructions for increasing sexual pleasure in brothels (as well as in the home) (Wang 1996, 199–203). This particular "daily use encyclopedia" also provided advice to male patrons on how to communicate their wishes and desires to prostitutes and courtesans as well as to realize the limitations of these liaisons. Specific guidelines included: "One needs to flirt before intercourse, one does not wait until afterwards to give gifts"; or "Lust lasts for three generations, beauty lasts for only a decade" (Sakai, Sakade, and Ogawa 2003, Vol. 3, 305–34). The content of these encyclopedic guidebooks implies that nonelite men were known to experience anxiety in sexual encounters, and that they worried about their competence in performing manliness in this increasingly competitive commercialized environment where almost any man had the opportunity to engage in polygyny.

The late Ming also saw the credibility of the government and ruling officials reach a low ebb, allowing palace eunuchs to encroach on society while leaving learned men to contemplate how to pursue life's course—whether to turn their backs on the sordid competitive world of the examinations and office-holding and thereby withdraw from societal conventions (Peterson 1979, 3; 130),[3] or to take public responsibility and bring order to the state. The latter option meant literati "struggling to (re)assert their elite status by reinventing themselves as the custodians of the genuine *ru* 儒 or Confucian cultural heritage" (Huang 1998, 153). To accomplish this goal some men turned their backs on office-holding in the imperial bureaucracy, and instead gave their political commitment to their local districts to enhance local authority (Bol 2003). Many others, however, rejected any political activity, and flocked to urban conclaves in Jiangnan, where they sought fame for their aesthetic talents in poetry writing, calligraphy, painting, and music, and enjoyed the "good life" (Luo 2006). They also questioned neo-Confucian orthodoxy and espoused the teachings of Wang Yangming (1472–1529) with their message that the individual's own moral sense was the basis of ethics and social life, ideas that eventually in the late Ming became linked to the cult of *qing* 情 and its association with concepts of emotion and feeling.

Integral to this "alternative" lifestyle were courtesans skilled in the same artistic fields dominated by men. The late Ming was the high tide of courtesan

3. Alternatively, the elite turned to Buddhist institutions and patronized monasteries as a way of publicizing their common identity as the privileged members of the gentry (Brook 1993).

writing and publication (Idema and Grant 2004, 355; Zurndorfer 2014, 27)—these women were prized not only for their literary talents, but also for their glamour, refined taste, and sense of romance. Cultivated courtesans were "lotus flowers"—beautiful creatures with noble characters in difficult circumstances (Xu 2007, 9). In the late Ming courtesans engaged those men who sought self-realization outside the conventional prestige of the examination system and office-holding. While in homosocial gatherings such as poetry societies, men celebrated friendship (Guo 1983, 498–512) and communicated their unorthodox ideas in *jiangxue* 講學 (philosophical debates) (Huang 2007), they also spent their time openly expressing their (hetero)sexuality by singing highly erotic songs with courtesans in the pleasure quarters (Lam 2011, 116–17), unleashing a certain libertine sensibility that writers such as Feng Menglong (1574–1646) documented. In his anthology of classical love stories *Qingshi leilüe* 情史類略 (Classified outline of the history of love), Feng treated courtesans as the ultimate challenge to orthodox norms of modesty and reserve. The artistic encounters between elite men and courtesans, in which pleasure, indulgence, and sentiment were central, reveal the extent to which courtesans represented freedom from the Confucian rigidity segregating men and women in late Ming "polite" society.

But, interestingly, it was also at around this time that gentry wives and daughters began to be appreciated for their literary talents. Women from elite families in the late Ming were also publishing their poetry, their letters, and sometimes their song lyrics in anthologies edited by men, usually a male relative who saw the value of their writing as a direct expression of emotion, free from convention and artifice, and thus indicative of the new kind of thinking inspired by Wang Yangming. What evolves in this era of general cultural anxiety is a growing "romantic equalitarianism" that crept into the discourse of orthodoxy and even allowed the romanticization of marriage (Ko 1994, 86–89). By watching plays such as those by Tang Xianzu (1550–1616)—whose 1598 drama *Peony Pavilion* told the story of a girl who falls in love with a young man in a dream and subsequently dies of longing; she returns from the dead after she appears in his dream and he opens her grave, and they are reunited (Idema and Grant 2004, 500–504)—women from all status groups fell under the spell of *qing* and were captivated by eroticism and passion. And what seems most remarkable about this time of "confusion" by the early seventeenth century was the admittance of courtesans into the homes of the literati, where they entertained in the presence of the wives of these men (Ko 1994, 256). Within domestic spaces, courtesans and upper-class wives mingled in ways that were unprecedented: gentry wives befriended courtesans by exchanging poems and paintings, and invited "singing girls" to parties in private villas (Ko 1994, 259). And both categories of women had their poetry published in the same anthologies (Chang 1997, 147–70).

It would seem that in the last decades of the Ming, polygyny had become almost respectable among the most sophisticated and stylish of the literati elite. Masculinity at this point in Chinese history was not so much a function

of political status as it was a demonstration of a man's power to negotiate the permeability of domestic and familial boundaries in a society in flux.

The success of the Manchu conquest of China ended the muddles and plasticity of late Ming social developments, and humiliated Chinese men, who were forced to shave their foreheads and grow a long braid (queue), Manchu style, as a public sign of their submission (Mann 2011, 106). Moreover, the Manchus "blamed the fall of the Ming emperors on sexual indulgence and moral transgression" (Mann 2011, 19). The Qing government also aimed to restore order in the domestic arena by revitalizing the classical ideals of Song dynasty neo-Confucian orthodoxy through adherence to ritual prescriptions honoring filial sons, loyal officials, and devoted mothers. The revival of classicism in the Qing era hardened the line between orthodoxy and heterodoxy, making it more difficult for scholars to romanticize their relationships with courtesans (Zurndorfer 2011, 214). The Qing state banned female entertainers from official functions, which in the long run deprived courtesans of the security of their status (Mann 1997, 127–28). Writing women from the gentry class now distinguished their own literary talents from those of courtesans, whom they belittled—they also established an orthodox canon of writing exclusively for women of their own rank and thereby gained status in terms of their moral authority (Li 2009). On the other hand, the courtesans' quarters continued to flourish, and for families who could afford it the practice of keeping concubines in the home for men's sexual pleasure or procreation endured (Mann 2011, 70). Wives, however, whatever their social class, were under ever more scrutiny during the Qing regime—female fidelity was the objective of a state cult promoting women's virtue, especially chaste widows. Long lists of "virtuous women" were featured in local gazetteer histories, while shrines and memorial arches honoring these women speckled China's landscape.

In his study of sexuality in eighteenth-century China, Matthew Sommer argues that pressure on women to behave as chaste wives and good mothers was coupled with stress on men to perform as husbands and fathers. What this meant in the long run was that the legal system aimed "to extend a uniform standard of sexual morality and criminal liability to all . . . Previously tolerated spaces for extramarital sexual intercourse were eliminated from the law, and the imperial center mandated that local officials intensify their surveillance of sexual behavior and gender roles" (Sommer 2000, 10–11). In reality, the state's control of sexuality was logistically limited—a local magistrate with responsibility for 250,000 people living under his jurisdiction had many more important demands on his time. But local lineages and extended families did strive to regulate the behavior of male members. Some lineage rules, reportedly, stipulated penalties for men visiting prostitutes, for "being licentious," and for committing adultery; punishments could even include exclusion from the kinship group (Mann 2011, 37).

Nevertheless, whatever the attempts on the part of officialdom to keep sexual activity confined to marriage, there is sufficient evidence from court cases and other documentation to demonstrate that these efforts did not change men's behavior with regard to polygyny. Janet Theiss's 2004 study of sexual mores and the role of women based on her investigation of 860 criminal cases (*xinke tiben* 刑科題本) in the First Historical Archives in Beijing reveals the widely varying local circumstances existing in eighteenth-century China that hindered the official endeavor to standardize the application of laws, including those against adultery (Theiss 2004, 48–49). Elsewhere, Theiss has analyzed the problematic nature of romantic conjugal love in this period, which put emotions in conflict with ritual propriety, the marital relationship in conflict with the interests of the patriline, and subjective desires in conflict with social duties (Theiss 2009). Conjugal love may have also gained growing significance at around this time. It may be argued that mid-Qing China saw among the elite the passions associated with the cult of *qing* "domesticated, ritualized, and transformed into conjugal love . . . and integrated into 'familistic moralism'" (Xu 2013, 226). The writer Shen Fu's (1763–1825) memoir *Fusheng liuji* 浮生六記 (*Six Records of a Life Adrift*) authenticates the tensions between conjugal love and filial duty (Sanders 2011). Shen, a Suzhou-born obscure poverty-stricken private secretary and exam failure, writes of his deep love for his wife Chen Yun and the joy of his marriage. Modern scholars viewing the Shen-Chen union have offered varying interpretations of Chen's involvement in the procurement of a concubine named Hanyuan for her husband. Given that the couple already had a son, and was not economically secure, understanding this transaction is problematic. While Paul Ropp explains Chen's enthusiasm for Hanyuan as proof of her intense feelings for her husband and her fidelity to him (Ropp 1985, 113; 116–18), Helen Dunstan sees Chen's support for Hanyuan becoming Shen's concubine as a tactic to keep her husband's sexuality at home (Dunstan 2007, 113–14). In any event, one may consider the first stirrings in mid-Qing China among the social elite enjoying companionate marriage to challenge the male prerogative for polygyny, although it would be more than a century before any kind of epistemic break would occur to make monogamy a matter for legislation (Tran 2009a) and romantic love a subject of public and literary discourse (Lee 2007).

Sexuality in the Qing embraced certain assumptions: containment for men, and concealment for women (Mann 2011, 91–92). Wives had only one sexual partner but husbands could have many. Upper-class men took concubines, as well as maids and other household servants to bed—the male progeny of these unions became the ritual sons of a man's wife. The practice of female infanticide had left a relative scarcity of women, and for those men without financial means this meant no spouse, while 99 percent of all women became wives or "married" concubines (Mann 2000, 1063). For those men with wealth, courtesans provided respite from a homosocial life. In the new treaty-port conclaves, and in particular in Shanghai ("the brothel of Asia"—Henriot 2001, 6), courtesan houses took on

new significance, because these locations became surrogate domestic space for sojourning merchants and literati, with all the comforts, pleasures, and solace of a home away from home (Liang 2010, 66–67). In these establishments the focus was on entertainment, especially music, as well as parlor games and sophisticated chitchat (Yeh 2006), while sexual intimacy may have been limited (Henriot 2001, 52–55; Hershatter 1997, 109–16). Upper-class customers were expected to demonstrate their gentility by spending time establishing a relationship with a particular courtesan house and a particular courtesan, and to understand that there were long-term financial obligations in this kind of affiliation (Hershatter 1997, 93). A man was supposed to devote himself to only one courtesan for at least a four-month season (Hershatter 1997, 135). Masculinity here was tied to observing the rituals of these houses—a man's urbanity, knowledge, and wealth were under scrutiny as he engaged in the intricacies of the etiquette of frequenting courtesans (Hershatter 1997, 69).

Courtesans and courtesan culture survived the onslaught of the political and military crises that devastated the Qing polity in the second half of the nineteenth century, but the humiliations of military defeats by Western armies, and that by Japan in 1895, helped to usher in the modernization of Chinese masculinity (Hinsch 2013, 132). Gender norms would now be completely reassessed.

Denouement: From "Sick Man" to Metro Man—Unravelling Polygyny and Masculinity in a Century of Change

Yan Fu's (1854–1921) epithet for China—"sick man of Asia"—first uttered in 1905 at a time when Chinese confidence in their own culture was at a low ebb, contributed to the general global image of China's weakness as a political entity (Xu 2008, 15). In response, Chinese men began to rebel against the fragility of the ideal scholar's body and to value Western ideals of robust manhood, which in the long run helped to encourage a new appreciation of maleness rooted in physical pursuits such as sports and military training (Brownell 1995). Yan's denunciation was also one more indication of the growing awareness within China in the early twentieth century that, in order to survive, the entire country needed to change. The anxieties of the time that focused on discourses of nationalism, education and science, and economic change kindled the flurry of reforms that ensued in the following decades, including those in the domestic sphere. Family reform had many dimensions, not least of these the release of women from traditional household confinement that enabled them to go out to work, but it was men who were to determine the directions the movement would take. Men's views, expressed in the popular media and in formal journals such as *Jiating yanjiu* 家庭研究 (Family research), guided the discussion concerning familial change; this was an opportunity for men "to refashion their economic, social, and political identities" (Glosser 2002, 139). In search of a new sense of self in an industrializing economy and modernizing state, men attacked the extended family ideal

and the sanctity of filial piety, and began to promote the *xiao jiating* 小家庭 (small family). In the early years of the Republic (1912–49) young men sought to free themselves of the yoke of patriarchal authority and to choose their professions or jobs, wives, and homes without the interference of parents and other relatives (Hinsch 2013, 144).

Under the influence of nationalism and Western notions of sexuality, early twentieth-century male reformers publicized the need to change kinship priorities with the ultimate aim of helping to further Chinese modernity. Central to their discussions was the importance of conjugal love and companionate marriage, and by implication male fidelity. In the writings of Cai Yuanpei (1868–1940) promoting the sexual loyalty of a man to his wife, of Zuo Shunsheng (1893–1969) and Wang Tongzhao (1897–1957) focusing on the pleasures of a companionate wife, and of Liang Qichao (1873–1929) celebrating his formation of the Monogamy Association (*Yifu yiqi hui* 一夫一妻會), one may see the impact that new ideas about the sanctity of the relationship between husbands and wives had achieved (Zhou 2012, 222–28). Writing to his mother in 1915 when he became officially engaged to his wife prior to his departure for study in the United States, Hu Shi (1891–1962) exclaimed: "Your son always supports monogamy, because this is the system prevailing in all the civilized societies. I hate polygamy (such as concubinage or setting up two primary wives). How could I break my own aspiration by courting women other than my fiancée?" (translated and cited by Zhou 2012, 229; see also Chiang 2004, 323–24).[4] In 1912, the year he became president of Beijing University, Cai Yuanpei also founded the Jindehui 進德會, a society for the propagation of male virtue—the Society's list of unacceptable behavior included visits to brothels and keeping concubines (Zhou 2012, 230). With Jindehui's membership reaching nearly 20,000 by 1918, Zhou concludes that its popularity was indicative of elite Chinese men's abandonment of the ideals of filial piety and their growing aspirations for a different kind of sexual identity marked by strict monogamy (Zhou 2012, 233).

The male-generated discourse advocating the small family as the ideal social unit proved to be the first step in the transfer of power away from the individual, through the family, to the state (Glosser 2003). The Nationalist or Guomindang government (1928–1949) seized the opportunity to promote the idea that the small family was the building block for a strong nation and that family reform needed to be mediated by an expansive state. This Nationalist vision was supplemented, as Glosser shows (2003, Chapter 3), by entrepreneurs who also endorsed small conjugal families answering to individual choices and thereby supporting the rise of a new consumerism that, in turn, was thought to be the key to a modern economy. Social science surveys of the 1920s show that eliminating

4. But as Chiang (2004) notes, as a married man Hu Shi had an affair with a young Chinese female, Cao Chengying, and later with an American woman, Edith Clifford Williams.

concubinage was important to young male students professing the new family ideals (Glosser 2003, 57), but legislation outlawing the practice entirely did not materialize. Moreover, as the surveys also demonstrate, young educated men sought educated women as wives not because they valued gender equality but because an educated woman was an asset to them—no one wanted to be tied to an illiterate partner with bound feet. In magazines published for the middle classes, the ideal household is depicted as being sustained by the wife, who has responsibility for its maintenance and beautification as well as for the children, while the husband provides the income that the wife uses to create a warm and nurturing home. An urban man's worth now came to mean his financial assets and his ability to maintain status for his wife and heirs (Hinsch 2013, 137).

With the promotion of the New Life Movement in 1934, sexual propriety once again became an issue, and some men may have felt the need "to police women," especially those who flaunted themselves with Hollywood-style brashness (Edwards 2000). But one may question whether this new-style puritanism extended to male extramarital behavior. The answer to this is double-edged. On the one hand, legal debates never settled the issue of whether concubinage was a violation of monogamy and therefore, in fact, constituted bigamy—Republican-era jurists made possible the legal tolerance of concubinage by creating the categories of "minor wife" and "household member" for these women (Tran 2009b).[5] On the other hand, the civil code of 1931 was relatively more "gender-equal" than earlier legislation, with the definition of adultery expanded to encompass a much wider range of behavior by a husband as grounds for a judicial divorce (Kuo 2012, 17; Bernhardt 1994, 208–9). According to Kuo, Nationalist family law gave wives confronting their husbands' infidelities a greater range of choices in the matter of divorce, and even offered grounds that might lead to criminal prosecution (Kuo 2012, 155).

Masculinity took another turn in the wake of the Sino-Japanese War and the subsequent civil war. Years of fighting and displacement had challenged the "softness" of intellectuals and thinkers and rendered militarized masculine identity no longer exceptional or unattractive. With the Communists in power from 1949, the idealization of the physically strong soldier took on greater significance, and both men and women were expected to perform their sexuality in new ways. Women began to dress like men, whose standard worker-peasant-soldier image dominated visual representations of the new social order (Finnane 2008, 203). The new regime also made monogamy the socialist principle of marriage, and thus completed the earlier state-building agenda of the Nationalist/Guomindang government (Glosser 2003). In the post-1949 official discourse of sexuality, women's behavior was the principal standard of sexual and marital

5. Mann (2011, 74–75) argues that the laxity in relation to concubine legislation may be due to the dearth of concubines at this point. Unfortunately, there are no country-wide statistics that could reveal how many women were in fact part of this category.

behavior. But in contrast to the prevalence of those female exemplars who demonstrated fidelity, self-sacrifice, and self-denial in the media, reference to male conduct was notably absent (Evans 1992, 148). This "masculinization" of women during this period also coincided with the emasculation of men. Living in a power structure dominated by a close group of older males, men in the first decades of the PRC were politically, economically, and sexually vulnerable to these political leaders. The authorities saw procreation as the only reason for sexual intercourse, and considered sexual excess detrimental to men (Evans 1995, 366–67; Zhang 2007, 502). In the Maoist "new society," men in socialist work units earned the same meager wages as women, had little political say, and reportedly felt "castrated" by regimentation and regulation. The depiction of Maoist-era sexuality in the 1985 novel *Nanren de yiban shi nüren* 男人的一半是女人 (*Half of Man Is Woman*) by Zhang Xianliang addresses the issues of male sexual repression, impotence, and manhood through the suffering of the main male character (Zhong 2000; Louie 2002, 71–77). Zhang made the theme of dysfunctional masculine sexuality a metaphor for the fate of the nation as a whole. Other commentators saw Maoist-era masculinity as the "victim" of gender-equality (*nan nü pingdeng* 男女平等) policies that reduced men to obedient instruments of the authoritarian party-state (Wang 2003, 148).

Beginning in the 1980s with the reform era, masculinity was in flux—from "seeking roots" in the idealization of physically raw "manly" macho men heroes who dominate women through sadism and violence, as depicted in Mo Yan's *Hong gaoliang* 紅高粱 (*Red Sorghum*); to male engagement with the "other," that is, Han men visiting minority women in Yunnan and other southern regions in pursuit of sexual tourism, a phenomenon anthropologist Louisa Schein terms "internal Orientalism" (Schein 1997). As market reforms became even more pervasive and intense in the 1990s, ideals of masculinity shifted again. China's rapid economic success from the 1990s brought wealth to millions of men who believed that a high income "represents the essence of masculinity: the higher the income, the more superior his manliness" (Hinsch 2013, 163). In the workplace a man proves his male prowess with his business acumen, material gain, and self-advancement. Conspicuous consumption in leisure activities, such as membership of expensive sports clubs, as well as in the domestic arena (where the successful man can demonstrate how he can provide for his family) has become central to his manhood. Urban-based men with white-collar jobs, financial assets, and an appreciation of prestigious foreign clothing brands are the post-reform-era quintessence of the new "metrosexual" (Hird and Song 2014, 67) and a tribute to China's new triumphant identity in our globalized world.

By the last decade of the twentieth century men under the age of forty were known to view sex in a manner independent of romantic attachment. According to an extensive survey conducted by Chinese sexologist Pan Siuming and other scholars during that decade, increasing numbers of men began to engage in

extramarital sex and make use of the services of female sex workers (Pan et al. 2004, 422–23). It was then, too, that the practice of "keeping a mistress" became increasingly common. Around that time came the first mentions of the *xiaomi* 小秘 (keeping a female secretary-cum-lover) phenomenon in conversation, fiction, and humor. The frequent use of this expression in the media was a definite indication of women's sexual commodification in the market economy as well as the extent to which "the uncontrolled sexual appetite of the private entrepreneur," who was given the disparaging label *dakuan* 大款 (big money, or "big bill"), had become a feature of everyday life (Farrer 2009, 675–76). The popular media also flirted with the moral implications of the extramarital affair. Chi Li's 1998 novel *Lailaiwangwang* 來來往往 (Coming and going), which was dramatized in a television series in summer 2000, portrays a strong female character who helps to shape the life of her husband as he evolves from factory worker under socialism to top businessman in the textile industry by the 1990s. Once successful, the husband seeks the attention of a young urban woman and eventually makes her his mistress, but when his wife becomes aware of the affair she refuses to divorce him. It is possible to regard this story as vindication of how romance and emotions now have an entirely different ethical connotation: in an increasingly competitive and money-oriented society, genuine "feelings" have acquired a very positive moral overtone (Sun and Farrer 2003, 14; Osburg 2013, 44).

The frequency of extramarital relationships in Chinese society is exacerbated by the way business transactions are handled. It is well known that in China business is conducted as much outside as inside the office, with the result that ritualized leisure that aims to build *guanxi* networks—involving banquets, heavy intoxication, and not least, women serving as hostesses and escorts—is integral to Chinese commercial practices (Zheng 2006; Zurndorfer 2016). As Zheng Tiantian's ethnographic research in a Dalian karaoke bar demonstrates, the consumption of sex by entrepreneur patrons is a necessary feature of doing business: because of the social trust needed between business people and officials, male entrepreneurs strive to demonstrate a rational, "cool" masculinity by conquering the emotions of female sex servers, thereby proving their own emotional self-control and ability to manipulate the emotions of others. "Success or failure at projecting a masculine image crucially determines participation and relative position within the elite, male-dominated circles of Chinese business and government" (Zheng 2006, 162). Zheng recently argued that the karaoke bar (and sex) have now even eroded the importance of the early evening banquet (Zheng 2012, 662). Similarly, medical anthropologist Elanah Uretsky revealed in her research on the relations between the Chinese business elite and government officials in Yunnan between 2003 and 2006 that the consumption of female-centered entertainment at saunas, massage parlors, and karaoke clubs by both groups of men is a crucial part of the process for both parties of gaining trust and building personal loyalty to one another, as well as a means of demonstrating Party

fidelity in a situation characterized by the inherent conflicts between the needs of a market-orientated economic system and a socialist political system (Uretsky 2008, 810–11).[6]

Despite a plethora of images in the popular media that cast modern Chinese men as the "enlightened, tolerant, and confident boyfriend/husband/father," Hird and Song found that men are more likely to retain a certain unease in relationships with girlfriends and wives in fear of their eventual loss of dominance (Hird and Song 2014, 26–27; 214). They also perceived among their informants that the role of family breadwinner was a key element in their masculinity. They heard from these individuals that while they believed they should cater to the sexual needs of their wives, they also felt more comfortable in a dominating role in bed (Hird and Song 2014, 240). Sociologist James Farrer found in his Shanghai research that male executives sometimes struggled to conform to the ideals of marital love and treated these relationships in "a businesslike fashion" (Farrer 2002, 220). Osburg's study has underlined that the intimate relationships married men conduct with women other than their wives are integral to their claims to status and social esteem. Thus, it would seem that notwithstanding the rhetoric of the "new man," modern-day Chinese males—just like their ancestors—continue to view marriage as the realm of responsibility and respectability, and extramarital relationships with lovers and mistresses as the true domain of romance and passion (Osburg 2013, 172).

Concluding Remarks

This broad-brush narrative on polygyny and masculinity in late imperial and post-imperial China has underlined those features of the behavior of Chinese men in the past that may be comparable to those in the present. It has demonstrated that in late imperial China masculinity was located in the realms of scholarly attainment and moral uprightness, qualities that the doctrine of Confucianism made central. Even the traditional ruffian character (*haohan*) had the ability to reveal his capacity for morality: he was known to fight for righteousness and to profess another Confucian value, that of loyalty. Masculinity in premodern China, as Martin Huang, Bret Hinsch, and Song Geng have argued, was not defined by a man's sexual relationship with his wife but by his performance within political mechanisms and by proving himself to other men. As such, homosocial relations have been at the core of Chinese masculinity, both historically and in the present. In imperial China, men married to fulfill their obligation of filiality, but it was in the company of other men that they enjoyed

6. Given these circumstances, it should not be surprising that, according to the World Health Organization, China has the largest commercial sex work force in the world, comprising an estimated 10 million men and women—more than 300,000 in the city of Beijing alone (Jensen 2009, 533).

the social pleasures of literary or popular culture, and indulged their emotional attachment to courtesans. Although male fidelity to wives was not unheard of, there was no parallel to the official treatises advocating chaste widows and self-sacrificing wives that celebrated the faithful husband. So deeply ingrained in Chinese culture was the institution of concubinage that even modernizing legal discourses could not eliminate the practice.

In the business world of today, men also participate in leisure activities away from their wives—in restaurants, karaoke bars, and brothels—in order to build networks that will boost their wealth and political connections. The deep-seated tradition of *guanxi* permeates the communication between government officials and ambitious businessmen. In search of more wealth and greater power (or at least political support), rich men indulge their political contacts with the pleasures of entertainment and sex. And these wealthy men consider their own extramarital relationships to be a mark of status. As husbands, these men are meant to fulfill their filial obligations to their wives and parents, but as successful entrepreneurs they may demonstrate their financial achievement to other men by acquiring "second wives" whom they provide with apartments and other forms of remuneration. Extramarital affairs do not preclude a man's worth as a loyal subject of the Chinese nation-state, and are therefore outside the moral framework of political propriety. Polygyny and masculinity both in the past and in the present can thus be seen to be grounded in China's specific social and political culture.

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2
The Manhood of a *Pinshi* (Poor Scholar)

The Gendered Spaces in the Six Records of a Floating Life

Martin W. Huang

In Shen Fu's 沈復 (b. 1763) much admired autobiography, *Six Records of a Floating Life* or *Fusheng liuji* 浮生六記 (hereafter shortened to *Six Records*), there is a curious passage about an incident in his childhood years in which the narrator recalls his obsession with various small insects and plants:

> Whenever I heard the sound of mosquitoes swarming I would pretend they were a flock of cranes dancing across the open sky . . . to me the grass became a forest and the insects became animals. Imagining that small mounds of earth were hills and that shallow hales were valleys, I let my spirit wander there in happiness and contentment . . . One day while I was absorbed in my imaginary world, my egg was bitten by an earthworm (in Suzhou we call the male organs eggs), so that it swelled up and I could not urinate. The servants caught a duck, and were forcing it to open its mouth over the wound, when suddenly one of them let go of the bird. The duck stretched out its neck as if to bite me there, and I screamed with fright. This became a family joke. (Shen 1983, 55–56; Shen 1991, 86)[1]

As I argue in detail later in this chapter, this passage provides important clues to our understanding of the author's gender self-identity as a male adult. Shen Fu is apparently still tormented by the memory that he remained a "family joke" even long after he had entered into adulthood. It is this memory of his obsession with small objects as a child and his resultant "symbolic castration" that seems to have shaped many aspects of his self-representation in this complex autobiography.

Six Records has long been celebrated for its detailed depictions of the conjugal attachment between the author and his late wife, which exhibited a candidness that had rarely been seen in traditional Chinese literary history. However, few

1. All English translations of Shen Fu's *Fusheng liuji* quoted will be based on that by Leonard Pratt and Chiang Su-hui, but using pinyin instead of Wide-Giles romanization and with minor modifications (as indicated) where I consider them necessary.

critics have examined this autobiographer's anxieties as a marginalized "poor scholar" (*pinshi* 貧士) from the perspective of gender analysis, and how such anxieties have impacted the way he presents his relationship with his wife. I try to read this autobiography as Shen Fu's desperate attempt to come to terms with his own gender identity as a Confucian literatus, hoping to shed light on the identity crisis many literati were experiencing at the turn of the nineteenth century when career opportunities for educated males were rapidly dwindling.

Following his father's example, throughout his life Shen Fu worked as a private secretary (*muyou* 幕友) on the staff of several local officials. The flourishing of the *muyou* profession during the Qing dynasty (1644–1911) can be attributed to many factors, such as the increasingly competitive nature of the civil examinations as a result of an ever larger pool of candidates and the simultaneous decline in traditional career opportunities, the commercialization of society, the changing bureaucratic structure of the Qing empire, the increasing need for specialized knowledge of local administration, and so on (Guo 1996, 16–72). While *muyou* was an increasingly important career alternative for those educated males who failed in the civil examinations sponsored by the imperial government, and thus had no possibility of a career as a governmental official themselves, it was often a profession many of them entered with great reluctance (Guo 1996, 327–69).

Being a *muyou* often meant being constantly reminded of one's own examination failures by working for someone who had become an official by virtue of their success in these same examinations that the *muyou* himself had failed. He was so close to power, which he could occasionally exercise in the name of his patron/employer, and yet, at the same time, he remained distant from it because he could never claim any real credit for what he achieved because everything was done in the name of the official who had hired him. For many, it was a rather feminizing experience:

> A common metaphor used to characterize their frustrations was that of a girl who was too poor to marry but who had to make a living by making beautiful wedding dresses for rich girls, an image made famous by the late Tang poet Qin Taoyu (fl. late ninth century) in his poem "Pinnü" 貧女 (A Poor Girl). The concluding couplet of this famous poem reads: "How sad every year I have to do needlework/And yet all the gowns I make are for the weddings of other girls." This poem has become a classic because of its subtly-evoked image of a *pinshi* (a poor scholar), and the interchangeability between *pinshi* and *pinnü* (a poor girl) has been an important theme in literati poetic tradition. (Huang 2006, 58–59)

Of course, the *pinshi* or *hanshi* 寒士 (obscure scholar) is a self-image Shen Fu repeatedly invokes in his autobiography, as I discuss later.

Shen Fu's contemporary, Xu Jiacun 許葭村 (fl. mid-nineteenth century), who served on the staff of many officials during his lifetime, captures the feminizing experience of being a *muyou* best with this metaphor of the *pinnü*:

> This spring I again worked as a clerk for an official in Pingshu county. All these years, I have been making wedding dresses [for others]. So far I am still a servant. All this is because I am someone who looks like a country girl, whose beauty no one appreciates. (Xu 1986, 4)

Xu's friend, Gong Weizhai 龔未齋, also a lifelong *muyou*, writes thus to his nephew:

> A true man should be able to stand on his own feet (*zhangfu dang zili* 丈夫當自立) and he should not rely on the pity of others . . . A failure throughout my life, I really feel ashamed of myself for not being able to stand on my own feet. (Xu 1986, 303)

For many in the profession of *muyou*, one of the most emasculating aspects of their experience was their inability to stand on their own feet (*zili*). As a private secretary on the personal staff of an official, a *muyou* was totally dependent on the whims of his employer, partly because their relationship was not institutionally guaranteed by the imperial bureaucratic system: working for an official, he was paid by that official rather than by the imperial government, and their relationship was completely private. In the words of Gong Weizhai, "though often presented as a guest or a friend, he is actually treated no differently from a retainer" (Xu 1986, 305). It was the ambiguities associated with the identity of the *muyou* which, as the term itself suggests, underscored his dual status as an advisor/secretary (*mu* 幕) as well as a guest/friend (*you* 友); the fact that he could also be reduced to being a retainer or, worse, a servant, also made the actual experience even more humiliating and emasculating. Being treated as a retainer was all the more humiliating precisely because of the expectation to be treated as a friend. Indeed, *zili* is the very notion Shen Fu clung to when he tried to vindicate his manhood by insisting that he did not care to fight with his brother over their inheritance after their father died. Using very similar wording, he declared: "A true man cherishes his ability to be able to stand on his own feet (*da zhangfu gui fu zili* 大丈夫貴乎自立) (Shen 1983, 93; Shen 1991, 110). Being unable to "stand on his own feet" was certainly the predicament Shen Fu often found himself in as a *muyou*.

The Oppressive Presence of His Father

Shen Fu's father played an important part in the formation of his self-perception as a man who could not stand on his own feet. This is the way Shen Fu describes how he began his training to become a *muyou*:

> During the summer of 1781, in the eighth month, my father fell sick with malaria and returned home. When he was cold he wanted a fire, and when he was hot he wanted ice. I advised him against this but he did not listen, and so his illness eventually turned into typhoid fever and grew worse daily. I waited on him with soup and medicine, never closing my eyes day or night

> for almost a month. My wife Yun also became very ill, and was confined to her bed. I was quite depressed and there is no way to describe it.
>
> One day my father called me to him and said, "I am afraid I will not recover. You have studied a few books, but ultimately this will not help you to make a living. I am going to entrust you to my sworn younger brother Jiang Siqi, so that you can continue in my profession" . . . It was from this time that I began studying to work in government offices. Why record these unhappy events here? I reply, I record them because it was from this time that I abandoned my study and began my wandering. (*paoshu langyou zhishi* 拋書浪遊之始). (Shen 1983, 105; Shen 1991, 115–16)

Obviously, to become a *muyou* was not a career choice Shen Fu would have made for himself; rather, it was made for him by his father, whose illness, we are told by the son, became much worse because the latter refused to listen to his advice. His father therefore brought sheer misery to both his son and his daughter-in-law. His father's order for him to study to become a *muyou* and his stubborn refusal to listen to his son's sound advice, two seemingly unrelated issues, are somehow symbolically linked here. Note the sentence "it was from this time that I abandoned my study and began my wandering": here, "study" most likely refers to his study in preparation for the civil service examinations, the respected traditional path for career advancement for almost every educated male at the time. Shen Fu was never given a chance because his father never listened to him and did not think he could succeed in the civil examinations.[2] Basically, Shen Fu implicitly blames his father for sending him down this miserable career path that would condemn him to lifelong poverty. Furthermore, Shen Fu also seems to suggest that his father contributed to his poverty in other ways:

> My father, the honorable Jiafu, was the most generous gentleman, anxious to help those in trouble, to assist anyone in need, to marry off other people's daughters and to bring up their sons. There are countless examples. He spent money like dirt, most of it for other people. (Shen 1983, 73; Shen 1991, 96)

Knowing the kind of poverty Shen Fu suffered throughout his life as he has carefully detailed in this autobiography, the reader can detect signs of deep bitterness toward his father even though in this passage he is supposed to be praising his father's generosity, which, according to Shen Fu, was only reserved for others.

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2. Elsewhere in the autobiography (Shen 1983, 65; Shen 1991, 93), Shen Fu shows his apparent dislike for the civil examinations when he tells us that when he and his friends got together one of the topics they considered too vulgar to discuss was the eight-legged examination essays; ironically, though, the rules of the drinking game they played were all worded in the vocabulary of the civil examinations. Apart from the inescapability of the examination culture that is implied here, the reader wonders whether any mention of the civil examinations had been a painful reminder to Shen Fu that he had been denied a chance to even attempt them as a result of the career decision his father had made for him.

The constant tension with his father proved to be one of the direct causes of his misery. His wife, Yun, was literate, so his father asked her to write to him on behalf of her mother-in-law when he was working away from home. She had to stop, however, when Shen Fu's mother began to suspect she had written something improper in the letters because there was gossip at home. This upset Shen Fu's father, who complained to him that "your wife will not condescend to write letters for your mother." Later, Yun really infuriated her father-in-law when the latter happened to open and read one of her letters to Shen Fu, who was working with him at that time, which arrived after her husband had already left:

> Yun wrote of my younger brother's borrowing from the neighbor, and also said, "Your mother thinks the old man's illness is all because of the Yao girl. When he is a bit better, you should secretly order Yao to write to her parents saying she is homesick. I will tell her parents to go to Yangchou to fetch her home. This way, both sides can disclaim responsibility for her departure." (Shen 1983, 75; Shen 1991, 97)

The "Yao girl" was the concubine Shen Fu's father had taken with Yun's assistance. Working away from home, his father insisted on finding a girl from his hometown to be his concubine and "take care of" him. After a friend had conveyed his father's wishes to him, Shen Fu wrote to Yun, asking her to find his father such a girl. Yun lied to her mother-in-law about the girl to cover up the matter, but when the truth was revealed she incurred the latter's resentment. After learning of the father's recent illness, Shen Fu's mother began to blame the concubine for having depleted his health. Yun therefore tried to have the girl sent home in order to appease her unhappy mother-in-law. All of this made his father furious, especially on top of another incident in which Shen Fu's younger brother claimed he knew nothing about a loan, which he had actually received from a neighbor with Yun as guarantor. His father began to accuse Yun of borrowing money behind Shen Fu's back and demonstrating disrespect for her elders by calling her mother-in-law "your mother" and her father-in-law "the old man" (here, in fact, Yun was just quoting her mother-in-law, as the latter had used the expression "the old man"). The father even sent a messenger home to try to have Yun expelled. Shen Fu could only apologize to his father; he then rushed home, for fear that Yun might commit suicide. Eventually Shen Fu and his wife were forced to move out of the family home.

Although his father later invited them back after learning what had really transpired, he soon had them expelled again due to his displeasure when he learned that Yun had sworn sisterhood with a sing-song girl:

> Your wife does not behave as a woman should, swearing sisterhood with a sing-song girl. Nor do you think to learn how to improve yourself [by associating with good people]. Instead, you befriended petty people. I cannot bear to put you to death. Make plans to leave home, and make them quickly.

> If you take too long, I will have you taken to the court, accusing you of being unfilial. (Shen 1983, 78; Shen 1991, 99)[3]

The reader can well imagine the wrath of Shen Fu's father and its consequences at a time when a father enjoyed absolute authority over his son and when being perceived to be unfilial was probably the most serious sin/crime a man could commit.

Their relationship remained strained until the father's death. Shen Fu was so worried about incurring his father's anger again that he did not dare return home without the latter's permission even after he learned that he was very sick. He rushed home only after receiving the news that his father had passed away, thus feeling he had to carry the burden of the infamy of an unfilial son for his failure to be at his dying father's bedside.

Throughout the autobiography, Shen Fu never directly criticizes his father, but there are many implicit references to the unfair treatment he and his wife received from him. After reading the autobiography, the reader comes away with the distinct impression that Shen Fu's father was an important contributing factor to his miserable life as a *pinshi*, whose male ego had been severely bruised by the fact that he was unable to protect and provide for his wife:

> Alas! Yun came to this world a woman, but she had the feelings and ability of a man. After she entered the gate of my home in marriage, I had to rush about daily to earn our clothing and food, there was never enough, but she never once complained . . . What a pity that she should have died in poverty and after long illness. And whose fault was it that she died? It was my fault, what else can I say? (Shen 1983, 89; Shen 1991, 107)

While Yun, born a woman, had the ability and talent of a man, Shen Fu, born a man, failed to properly fulfill his manly duty to provide for his wife and children. His failure in this regard was not unrelated to his father, as Shen Fu repeatedly suggests in his autobiography. In a word, his father contributed significantly to his sense of being an emasculated man. Given the sacredness of the Confucian notion of filiality in traditional Chinese culture, our autobiographer is quite remarkable in registering his unhappiness with his father in such a thinly veiled manner and, indeed, very few Confucian literati before Shen Fu had presented their fathers in such an unflattering light, pointing to the depth of his resentment.

Trapped in the Feminine Spaces

It is in the first section of Chapter 2, "The Pleasures of Leisure," that Shen Fu mentions his childhood obsession with various "small things." Significantly, the bulk of Chapter 2 focuses on how the now adult Shen Fu managed to find

3. I have modified the English translation here based on my interpretation of the original Chinese text.

various ingenious ways to enjoy a few leisurely pleasures with his wife in the confined spaces of their small residence because they could not afford the "big spaces" of a large house.[4] Shen Fu's childhood obsession with small things and his ability to imagine these small things into big things, which were related to his "symbolic castration," are now presented as a "virtue" at a time when as an adult he was compelled by his poverty to come to terms with the confinement of small spaces. In other words, for the adult Shen Fu, making do with small spaces was first of all a harsh economic necessity faced by a poor man rather than an aesthetic choice or the happy continuation of a childhood hobby. One point the adult Shen Fu repeatedly emphasizes is that living in small spaces was primarily necessitated by the fact that he was a *pinshi* of very limited means:

> Poor scholars (*pinshi*) who live in small crowded houses should rearrange their rooms in imitation of the sterns of the Taiping boats of my home county, the steps of which can be made into three beds by extending them at front and back. Each bed is then separated from its neighbor by a board covered with paper. Looking at them when they are laid out is like walking a long road—you do not have a confined feeling at all. When Yun and I were living in Yangchou we arranged our house in this fashion . . . Yun had laughed about our handiwork, saying "The layout is fine, but it still does not quite have the feel of a rich home." I had had to admit she was right! (Shen 1983, 61; Shen 1991, 90)

Despite his bragging about his unique ability to find pleasure in confined spaces and to create the illusion of spaciousness out of such a small space, there was always an unmistakable sense of something lacking, reminding both himself and the reader of the actual big spaces he as a *pinshi* could not afford. Elsewhere in this chapter Shen Fu is more direct about this point when he explains that the reason he raised flowers in vases rather than in pots was not that "I did not enjoy looking at them in pots, but because our house had no garden I could not grow them in pots myself" (Shen 1983, 57; Shen 1991, 87).

Just as his childhood love for small objects and insects was associated with his "symbolic castration," his special ability as an adult to create the illusion of "big spaces" out of small spaces was related to his status as a *pinshi* and his desperate need to grapple with the reality of the confined and small spaces he found himself in, a reality caused in part by his inability as a man to make a proper living.

Even when he and his wife seemed to be enjoying the pleasures of their miniature world in their confined spaces, something unexpected would always happen to expose the ephemeral nature of their carefully constructed illusion: Shen Fu raised a pot of orchids, his favorite flower, but one day it suddenly dried up and died: "Only later did I learn that someone [who] had asked for a cutting and been refused had poured boiling water over it and killed it" (Shen 1983, 56;

4. Steven Owen has a different reading of the "small spaces" in the *Six Records* (Owen 1986, 99–113).

Shen 1991, 87). Similar unexpected "destruction" occurred again, after Shen Fu and his wife had built a landscape in a pot, with miniature hills, a pavilion, and a river: "We were as excited about it as if we were actually going to move to those imaginary hills and vales. But one night some miserable cats fighting over something to eat fell over the eaves, smashing the pot in an instant" (Shen 1983, 62; Shen 1991, 91). The imaginary world of big spaces Shen Fu and his wife managed to construct in their crowded residence proved to be fragile and vulnerable just as his childhood imaginary world of small insects was easily destroyed by a giant—a not-so-big toad—an episode Shen Fu recalls at the beginning of this chapter, in which his childhood memory seems to have been dominated by the traumatic incident of his penis being bitten by an earthworm, and later almost bitten by a duck. Small spaces and this obsession with trying to imagine various small things into big things seem to be intimately associated with his damaged manhood—his injured penis as a child and his bruised male ego as an adult *pinshi*. Because of their poverty, Shen Fu and his wife had to do their utmost to find "pleasures of leisure" in their crowded residence by constructing a world of miniature hills and bonsai (*penzai* 盆栽) that was intended to help them sustain the illusion that their crowded living space was not so small. The feminine nature of these small domestic projects (the special ways of arranging flowers or furniture, etc.) is emphasized when Shen Fu tells us how his wife was often better at these undertakings than he was.

The emasculating nature of these confined domestic spaces that dominate Chapter 2 becomes all the more pronounced when they are contrasted with the "real" big spaces that characterize Chapter 4, "The Delights of Roaming Afar," which relates our autobiographer's manly activities: his visits to many famous places around the country. Before launching into a detailed discussion of Chapter 4, a brief look at the overall structure of the autobiography is in order.

As its title suggests, *Six Records of a Floating Life* originally contained six chapters. However, as we have it now, it contains only four chapters, as the last two chapters are missing. Among the extant four chapters, Chapter 1, "The Joys of the Boudoir," parallels Chapter 3, "The Sorrows of the Misfortunes," in terms of the contrast between "joys" and "sorrows"; if "joys" are mainly confined within the feminine space of the boudoir, then sorrows are to be found whenever the outside world begins to intrude on the boudoir. In turn, Chapter 2, "The Pleasures of Leisure," is contrasted with Chapter 4, "The Delights of Roaming Afar," as the former focuses on the confined feminine domestic spaces while the latter details the expansive spaces beyond the domestic, the masculine domain where a man was supposed to find fulfillment of his manhood. Consequently, the reader can fully appreciate the gender implications of the confined domestic spaces of Chapter 2 only in relation to the masculine spaces that dominate Chapter 4.

In Chapter 1, which is meant to be about the "joys" of the boudoir, the reader is first reminded of the respective gender implications of different spaces: the

confined nature of the domestic feminine space and the wider masculine world beyond the family compound. After hearing Shen Fu raving about a local festival, Yun expressed a desire to go, but was worried that this might be improper as she was a woman. With the encouragement of Shen Fu, she decided to cross-dress as a man so that she could join him for the outing. Here, the fact that Yun had to masquerade as a man in order to travel beyond the feminine space of the boudoir is certainly a poignant reminder of the symbolic boundary between the domestic space of the feminine and the masculine space of the outside world, as the different gender implications of these two realms are reinforced in Chapters 2 and 4 respectively. Travel, especially to far-off places, was an important gender privilege that was only supposed to be enjoyed by the men of the day. It was a badge of a man's masculinity, as Shen Fu once explained to his wife:

> It's a pity that you are a woman and have to remain hidden away at home. If only you could become a man we could visit famous mountains and search our magnificent ruins. We could travel the whole world together. Wouldn't that be wonderful? (Shen 1983, 40; Shen 1991, 77)

If Chapter 2 is about how Shen Fu had to come to grips with his own emasculation as a frustrated and poor scholar within confined domestic spaces, Chapter 4 is about his desperate attempts to regain his manhood by presenting himself as a man who had traveled widely or someone who was able to roam those big "manly" spaces around the country, conforming to the Confucian image of a manly gentleman as celebrated in the common saying: "A true man has lofty ambitions that reach the four corners of the earth" (*zhangfu zhi zai sifang* 丈夫志在四方).[5] In Chapter 4, he does not have to pretend that the small spaces he found himself trapped in were not really confining as he tried so hard to do in Chapter 2, because here he is supposed to be enjoying the delights of traveling afar as only a man could.

Roaming in Masculine Spaces

Chapter 4, "The Delights of Roaming Afar," in fact, begins on a not-so-delightful note:

> I have traveled about working in government offices for thirty years now, and the only places in the world I have never been to are Sichuan, Guizhou and Yunnan. The pity is that wheel and hoof have followed one another in such quick succession. Everywhere I have gone I have been accompanying others, so that while beautiful mountains and rivers have passed before my eyes like drifting clouds and I have been able to form some rough idea of what they are like, I have never been able to search out and explore secluded places on my own. (Shen 1983, 101; Shen 1991, 113)

5. I briefly discuss the association of travel with manliness in Ming culture in Huang (2006, 149–50).

Here, the feeling is at least mixed: Shen Fu is boasting of having traveled to many places around the country yet because most of these trips were undertaken while he was serving as a *muyou* or having to accompany his employers, he did not have the opportunity to explore secluded places on his own, suggesting that his dependency on others might have undermined his experience as a manly traveler. All of these frustrations are related to his aspirations to be able to stand on his own feet or *zili*. It is also interesting to note that although *muyou* was the profession Shen Fu worked in for most of his life, in his autobiography Shen Fu seldom talks directly about his *muyou* experience other than when he mentions it as a factor that enabled him to travel to a particular place.

Immediately after this paragraph on his unhappy dependency on others, Shen Fu tries to reassert his intellectual independence or *zili*:

> I like to have my own opinion about things and not pay attention to other people's approval or disapproval. In talking about poetry or painting, I am always ready to ignore what others value and to take some interest in what others ignore. And so it was with the beauty of famous scenery, which lies in any case entirely in what one feels about it oneself. Thus there are famous scenic spots which I do not feel are anything extraordinary, and there are unknown places that I think are quite wonderful. (Shen 1983, 101; Shen 1991, 113)

Of course, the harsh reality is that his intellectual independence is often undercut by his economic dependency, as he repeatedly mentions in the chapter. Throughout this chapter, which is supposedly about how widely he has traveled, there is a subtle tension between his total dependency on others as a *muyou*, who was able to travel around the country only because he had to accompany his employers to the latter's different official posts, and his aspiration to feel like a man of independence (*zili*) when he was traveling.

In sharp contrast to the images of dwarfed trees and miniature mountains in Chapter 2, here the dominant images are those of a grand landscape: "From there West Lake looked like a mirror, while the city of Hangchou was as small as a ball and Qiantang River looked like a belt. We could see for hundreds of *li*, quite the most wonderful vista I have ever seen" (Shen 1983, 104; Shen 1991, 115); or "The view from the pavilion was boundless, but all that could be seen were angry waves reaching to the horizon" (Shen 1983, 113; Shen 1991, 121). These are "real" grand vistas rather than the artificial bonsai and miniature mountains he and his wife constructed in the confined spaces of their home. They are meant to be truly masculine spaces beyond women's reach—a woman with her bound feet, such as his wife, could only dream of visiting these places, even if she cross-dressed as a man as Yun is said to have done in Chapter 1.

On the other hand, to show that he is a man of independent views, Shen Fu often chooses to differentiate himself from others by offering his own opinions of popular tourist spots:

> The most famous place in Suzhou itself, Lion Forest, was supposedly created in the style of paintings by Yunlin with splendid rocks and many old trees, but to me it looks like a pile of coal dust covered with moss and ant hills, without the least suggestion of the atmosphere of mountains and forests. In my humble opinion, there is nothing particularly wonderful about it. (Shen 1983, 136; Shen 1991, 136)

It is interesting to note here that Shen Fu is faulting Lion Forest for its artificiality and lack of naturalness, even though artificiality is a quality that characterizes all of the miniature mountains or bonsai trees he cherished so much in Chapter 2. In fact, miniature mountains and bonsai trees are all about "taming" nature within the confines of the domestic space. The reader is reminded here how desperately Shen Fu tried to escape from the confined domestic space to assert his position as a manly traveler who embraced and enjoyed "real" nature.

Unfortunately, as Shen Fu tells us, he was often unable to visit a scenic place he really wanted to see because the official for whom he was working at the time had to move or was appointed to another post:

> In the second month of winter that year we reached Qingzhou. There Zhuotang received the letter promoting him to the Inspectorate of the Dongguan Circuit, and left me behind at Qingzhou. I was disappointed at being denied this opportunity to see the mountains and rivers of Sichuan. (Shen 1983, 139; Shen 1991, 138)

And, in the autumn of 1807, "Zhuotang was dismissed from office and appointed to the Hanlin academy, and I accompanied him to the capital. I never got to see the so-called mirage of Dengzhou after all" (Shen 1983, 144; Shen 1991, 141). As it begins, Chapter 4, which is supposed to be about the "delights" of "roaming afar," ends on a rather unhappy note, reminding the reader that Shen Fu's effort to exert his manliness via emphasizing his intellectual independence was often undermined by his status as a *muyou* and the painful fact that his ability to travel as a man was totally dependent upon the emasculating profession that he disliked so much. Here, Zhuotang 琢堂 was the sobriquet of Shi Yunyu 石韞玉 (1756–1837), his childhood friend, who later became a famous and prolific writer as well as a high government official. Zhuotang hired Shen Fu to work for him as a *muyou*. Working for someone who was his childhood friend and who, in contrast to himself, was a great achiever in life, must have been difficult for Shen Fu, since his employer was another poignant reminder of his own failure in life. Although he does mention how Zhuotang helped him (he even gave him a girl as his concubine after the death of his wife), in his autobiography Shen Fu never expresses the kind of strong feelings about this friend that he reserves for several other friends. The fact that Shen Fu insists on referring to him simply by his sobriquet Zhuotang rather than using his official title indicates that he considers himself his equal rather than his employee, underscoring the ambiguities inherent in the relationship between a *muyou* and his employer.

This leads us to the meaning of the term *langyou* 浪遊 in the title of Chapter 4 (it is translated by Pratt and Chiang as "roaming afar"). Shen Fu uses the very same word to refer to the "wandering" life of a *muyou* when he mentions that ever since his father had ordered him to take up the profession of *muyou* he had to give up "study" and begin his "wandering": "Why record these unhappy events here? I reply, I record them because it was from this time that I abandoned my study and began my wandering [*langyou*]" (Shen 1983, 105; Shen 1991, 116). Here, *langyou* refers to the frustrating life of wandering he had to endure in order to make a living as a *muyou*, serving on the staff of various officials and following his employers as they were stationed in various areas. Thus, *langyou* could be a happy act of roaming freely, something enjoyed by a true man, but it could also be just the opposite: unhappy "wandering," which was often emasculating and confining, even in big spaces, as he sometimes experienced while traveling, as described in Chapter 4.[6] Indeed, Chapters 2 and 4, despite the apparent contrasts between them in terms of the different gender ramifications of spaces, are actually about two different facets of the same issue—Shen Fu's attempts to come to terms with his own gender anxiety as a *muyou* whose actual life experiences were anything but those that could enable him to claim that he had been a man of *zili*, someone who could stand on his own feet.

The Manhood of an Affectionate Husband

Among the long trips described in Chapter 4 is a trip to Guangdong. This was not a trip Shen Fu took as a member of his employer's personal staff. It was, rather, a "business trip" he undertook with the husband of his younger cousin to do business in the south. His account of this trip does not focus on sightseeing or their business activities but on his adventures in the pleasure quarters. Patronizing prostitutes was certainly a male privilege and thus might have been presented here to help enhance his self-image as a true man, part of the main agenda of the chapter. We are told that he chose a sing-song girl named Xi'er as his companion, largely because she looked like his wife, Yun, and that he even wished that his wife could be there too. Shen Fu seems to be insisting that even while he was having a sexual relationship with another woman he remained loyal to his wife, since he chose to sleep with Xi'er only because she resembled his wife in appearance; furthermore, he was convinced that his wife would have been perfectly happy to join them, as he had told us earlier that Yun was anxious to have another sing-song girl become his concubine. Shen Fu even demonstrated loyalty to the prostitute Xi'er, because throughout his sojourn in Guangdong, he tells the reader, he was "monogamous": he never slept with

6. *Langyou* is also the word Shen Fu's more famous contemporary, the poet Huang Jingren 黃景仁 (1749–1783), employed to describe his experience of traveling around the country to visit various famous places, as well as his *muyou* activities (Huang 1983, 1).

other prostitutes as most other patrons did. While trying to prove his manhood by asserting his privilege as a patron of the pleasure quarters, Shen Fu insists that he was different from other men, especially when it came to relationships with women: he was more sensitive to women and more loyal to those he had relationships with, even though he did not disavow any of the male privileges afforded by patriarchal society.

Much has been said about Shen Fu as a loving husband. Indeed, it was not common for a man at that time to openly side with his wife in her disputes with his own parents, as he does in showing how she was wronged by his family and especially his father. This attitude is quite remarkable given the traditional Confucian emphasis on a son's obligations to his parents and the strong suspicion toward a wife as a family outsider.[7] It is even more remarkable that in his autobiography he describes in such detail the unfair treatment of his wife at the hands of his parents and his resultant frustration. Such remarkable sensitivity on Shen Fu's part, I would like to contend, might be related to his own marginalized position as a *pinshi*. We have seen how Shen Fu must have felt his manliness was undermined thanks to the oppressive presence of his father, who once even threatened to put him to death. It was precisely his marginality and his feeling of emasculation that placed him in the position where he could better empathize with his wife, who had suffered so much unfair treatment due in large part to her even more marginalized position as a woman and a daughter-in-law. For example, it was his frustration over his own inability to be an independent traveler that made him more understanding of his wife's desire to venture beyond the confines of the boudoir to see more of the outside world. He even urged her to cross-dress as a man in order to break free from the gender restrictions imposed on her as a woman by the largely segregated society.

A common wish often expressed by a loving couple at that time was that they could continue to be husband and wife in the next life because they loved each other so much in this life. However, here we find an interesting twist: Shen Fu proposed that in the next life, Yun would be reborn a man and a husband, while he himself would be a woman and a wife (Shen 1983, 40; Shen 1991, 78). In other words, he wished they could switch genders and reverse their roles as husband and wife in the next life. This is quite interesting since a popular belief influenced by the Buddhist idea of karma at that time was that when a man committed a sin he would be reborn as a woman in the next life as a punishment, while a woman would be reborn as an animal in the next life as a punishment for her sin, suggesting a clear hierarchical gender order. But it seems Shen Fu did not mind being reborn as a woman in the next life. Thanks to his own marginality, it was much easier for him to identify with Yun in her more marginal position as

7. I discuss this suspicion of the wife as a family "outsider" as articulated in the many collections of "household instructions" popular during the late imperial period in Huang (2006, 187–89).

a woman. The specific context in which Shen Fu made this proposal of a gender switch between himself and his wife in the next life reinforces this impression of Shen Fu as a man who could easily identify with a woman: they were talking about Yun's wish to travel around the country together when they became old because it was more difficult for a young woman to venture far beyond the confines of her home. When Shen Fu worried that they might be too old to travel by then, Yun said: "Then if we can't do it in this life, I hope we can do it in the next" (Shen 1983, 40; Shen 1991, 78). Yun's remark led Shen Fu to propose that they switched genders in the next life. Precisely because he himself had experienced the confining feeling of the crowded spaces of the domestic realm, as he recalls in Chapter 2, and because of his dependency on others as a *muyou*, which enabled him to travel extensively but which at the same time severely undercut his freedom and independence as a traveler, Shen Fu was able to better appreciate his wife's aspiration to travel around the country.

Citing, not without sarcasm, the old saying that "lack of talent in a woman is a virtue," Shen Fu attributes the suffering and tragedy of his wife to the fact that she was too talented, because it was her literacy—her ability to write—that got her into trouble in the first place when his father asked her to write letters for his mother, causing innumerable problems. However, there is a deeper implication: Shen Fu is identifying with Yun in their shared fate as talented people being mistreated by others or neglected by their times (*sheng bu fengshi* 生不逢時), a perennial theme in male literati literature. Despite their seemingly similar positionality in the symbolic gender order, Shen Fu cherished his wife more, precisely because, as a woman, she was relegated to an even more marginalized position and was therefore at times able to make her husband feel more manly about himself—for example, when she tried so hard to get him a concubine, reminding him of his privileges as a man. Shen Fu's special appreciation of Yun in this regard can be seen in the way he details her persistent endeavors to find him a concubine. This was an indication of her virtue as an unjealous wife and a reaffirmation of Shen Fu's status as a man and a husband. This polygamous privilege he was supposed to enjoy as a husband and her acceptance of it were meant to enhance Shen Fu's manly image. Shen Fu's sense of his own manliness was apparently not compromised by the potentially "lesbian" implications in Yun's professed love for Hanyuan, who was the same girl she wanted Shen Fu to take as a concubine. Shen Fu and Yun even jokingly referred to the play *Lianxiang ban* (The fragrant companion) by the seventeenth-century playwright, Li Yu, in which a woman, after falling in love with another girl, arranges for the latter to become her husband's concubine so that the two can live together forever (Shen 1983, 51; Shen 1991, 85).[8] In fact, Yun was heartbroken after learning that Hanyuan had

8. The same type of deep attachment among the wives in a polygamous family is the theme of the novel *Lin Lan Xiang* (Three women named Lin, Lan, and Xiang), a work from the Kangxi period (1662–1722). Despite various explicit, and often erotic, descriptions of their love, nothing physical is mentioned to have happened among

become a rich man's concubine. Here, strangely enough, a potentially lesbian attachment between the spouses of a polygamous man was supposed to enhance rather than undermine his manliness; or at least this is what Shen Fu is suggesting. Unfortunately for Shen Fu, he was eventually denied this opportunity to enjoy polygamous bliss, partly because he was merely a poor literatus (*pinshi*), when Hanyuan was taken as a concubine by a rich and powerful man.

It seems that there was something about Yun that made Shen Fu feel better about himself as a man. She had a knack for nursing his bruised male ego.[9] For example, Shen Fu has a lot to say about his wife's literary talent but he makes sure that the reader is always aware that she was not well enough educated to challenge his status as a man with a Confucian education. She had just the right level of education for him to feel that he was still intellectually far superior. This is the way Shen Fu describes how he tried to cultivate his wife: "When we were first married Yun was very quiet, and enjoyed listening to my discussing things. But I drew her out, as a man will use a blade of grass to encourage a cricket to chirp, and she gradually became able to express herself" (Shen 1983, 38; Shen 1991, 76). Despite all his love and his professed respect for her intellect, enjoying a special sense of superiority, Shen Fu could also be quite condescending to her.

More importantly, Yun never complained about Shen Fu's career failures or his incompetence as the root cause of their poverty. Instead, she consoled him:

> "One day we should build a cottage here and buy ten *mou* of land to make a garden around it," said Yun happily. "We could have servants plant melons and vegetables that would be enough to live on. What with your painting and my embroidery, it would give us enough to drink wine and compose poetry [with our friends]. We could live quite happily wearing cotton clothes and eating nothing but rice. [You] don't have to worry about the need to travel far away [to find a job]." (Shen 1983, 43; Shen 1991, 79)

What Yun suggests here is, on the surface, a utopian vision of the life of a hermit, who is somehow shielded from all worldly worries. Of course, this was in sharp contrast to the reality they faced. First, largely due to her husband's career setbacks, they would never have the money to build a cottage, let alone buy ten *mou* of land. Consequently, they would have no land for a servant to farm and from which they could produce enough to live on. In fact, Yun's suggestion that what they could earn from Shen Fu's paintings and her embroidery would be just enough to cover the cost of their entertaining friends highlighted the meager and inadequate nature of their actual income.

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these wives. I examine the lesbian theme of this novel and its similarities to Li Yu's play in Huang (2001, 184–205).

9. This might be one of the reasons why its earlier English translator, Lin Yutang (1895–1976), claims in the introduction to his translation (Shen 1999) that Yun is "one of the most beloved women in Chinese literature." She was appreciated as an ideal wife by many Chinese male literati, especially those who were not terribly successful in their own lives.

Elsewhere, Shen Fu describes how Yun helped him entertain his friends with the conventional phrase "selling a hairpin to buy wine" (*bachai gujiu* 拔釵沽酒; Shen 1983, 64; Shen 1991, 93), an allusion to the famous line from the *daowang* 悼亡 (mourning) poem by the Tang poet Yuan Zhen 元稹 (779–831), in which the latter praises his late wife for helping to defray the cost of entertaining his friends with the money she received from selling her hairpin (Yuan 1982, 98).[10] However, what is deeply ironic here is that Yun was now suggesting that they needed to combine their earnings (from the sale of his paintings and her embroidery) just to cover the costs of entertaining their friends (in the poem, selling the hairpin was a one-off act, which could not ensure a sustainable income in the long run). In other words, all Shen Fu earned from selling his paintings would not be enough even to cover the cost of entertaining their friends, whereas he had originally planned to sell his paintings as a way of supporting the family (at one time, Shen Fu opened a shop to sell his paintings, but he soon had to give it up because of poor business).

The unintended irony in Yun's expressed wishes notwithstanding, she does show that she is not a wife who would complain about her husband's incompetence. Here we are reminded of the famous Ming writer Gui Youguang's 歸有光 (1507–1571) deep appreciation of his late wife for the same reason: she consoled Gui that they could lead the life of a reclusive couple now he had returned home after again failing to pass the provincial examination, as he recalled in a much-anthologized lyrical essay years after she had passed away (Gui 1981, 423–24). As a Confucian literatus who had suffered repeated career setbacks, his wife's show of support was something he greatly appreciated. Shen Fu's deep attachment to Yun must have been related to her unique capacity to caress his injured male ego. This is why he insists that the *guifang* or boudoir (the intimate space the two shared), though very small, was the place where he could find "joys" and "pleasures," despite its ultimate fragile and illusory nature; it was the "space" where he could at least pretend that he was a man of *zili*.

Yun played a dual role in Shen Fu's struggles to grapple with his gender identity as a man who was marginalized and who felt emasculated: she was an integral part of the small and confined feminine world where Shen Fu could feel shielded from the harsh realities of the masculine outside world; at the same time, as an understanding and subservient wife, she also helped to nurse his bruised male ego when it was traumatized by the outside masculine world.

As a remarkably candid and detailed autobiography, *Six Records* provides us with a very rare intimate glimpse into the gender psyche of an early nineteenth-century Chinese literatus, who suffered many frustrations and career setbacks during his lifetime, a fate not uncommon among educated males at a time when the traditional paths to career success were becoming increasingly difficult and

10. The term *daowang* broadly means "mourning the dead." However, more narrowly defined, it could refer to "mourning the death of one's spouse."

their gender identities were becoming increasingly complex. Shen Fu's reflections on his own gender identity are intimately related to his memories of his wife, underscoring the fact that the constructions of gender identities seldom take place in isolation: Shen Fu's self-perception as a man and as a husband was closely related to his perception of Yun as a woman and a wife. This is probably one of the reasons *Six Records* has been read by many as a *daowang* or elegiac memoir and by many others as an autobiography. This chapter is a deliberate attempt to read it as both, simultaneously: it is a memoir of Yun as his beloved wife, but more importantly, also a self-reflection on Shen Fu's own manhood.

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3
Theater and the Text-Spatial Reproduction of Literati and Mercantile Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Beijing

Mark Stevenson

> In the traditional Confucian masculinity framework, merchants were the least desirable in terms of *wen-wu*. (Louie 2002, 129)
>
> . . . conceptions of gender that emphasize performance risk truncating the whole field. (Connell 1998, 476)[1]

Backlit, two opera actors in full costume, one large and slightly ungainly, the other petite and holding a sword by his waist, walk forlornly through a hangar-sized doorway into an empty, dimly lit, and dusty rehearsal hall that doubles as a basketball court. Beijing, 1977, the screen tells us. An old janitor, offscreen, questions them, then recognizes the pair and turns a light on. A spotlight, it narrows into a thin cone, reducing the figures to two silhouettes and their long shadows; they stand together alone, surrounded by the inky darkness of the hall. The screen fades to black then cuts to a painted scroll against which the introductory credits are projected. On the scroll the same two figures are depicted in a traditional opera scene, frozen at the climactic moment when Consort Yu draws her lord's sword across her throat.

The last line of the opening credits names the director, Chen Kaige, after which the screen again blackens and then opens to a sepia-toned scene of a busy Warlord-era temple fair. The camera picks out a woman leading a ten-year-old child through the crowd. She fends off a customer who recognizes her, and we follow the pair as they stop to watch a group of boy-actors tumble on the street. It might be the Tianqiao *zabadi* slum-town (天橋雜巴地), just south of the capital's entertainment quarters. The woman appears to force herself to share in the fun, hoping to cheer up her son, whom she has lifted up affectionately so that

1. Connell associates "performance" with the "symbolic dimension," and goes on to say that "[g]ender is not only a system of signs and meanings; it involves the material labor of housework and machine minding, the accumulation of wealth, the materialities of violence and power, pregnancy and child rearing, and so on. Our models should not privilege the symbolic dimension of social practice over all others" (1998, 476). Note: Research for this paper was supported by the Australian Research Council.

he can watch with her, her cheek against his. A few moments later the troupe of boy-actors is in trouble, manhandled by ruffians, the crisis resolved when one of the boys performs a feat of strength (and courage), and the crowd disperses.

The camera then cuts to a courtyard where the troupe's master disciplines his rebellious charges, and natural color gradually replaces sepia. The mother and her child appear in the courtyard from where they proceed inside so that the boy, who could still be misread as a girl, can be sized up. The examination stops when the master spots the boy's extra finger. The camera cuts to the snowy, ramshackle alleyway outside, from where we hear the approach of an itinerant knife sharpener.

For someone seeking to interpret social and spatial rhetorics operating through the confluences of theater milieux and male same-sex prostitution in nineteenth-century Beijing (taken here to begin with the 1770s), this opening sequence of the film, and indeed much else in *Farewell My Concubine*, captures something of the magnitude of the questions that existed then and those that exist now. A woman (mother and sex worker) in a busy street; we see and imagine her subjective and subjected placement in relation to a range of men, the camera relegating all other women to the status of background population. There is the street as commercial space, as performance space, as the space of hegemonic masculinity, and, possibly, the public sphere; a space of broad shoulders and fists, of ritualized negotiations. A feat of young bravery, a decaying entertainment quarter. The troupe's courtyard, an enclosed space with its own law, custom and discipline; its hall where contracts are made and loyalties are sworn. And the surrounding space of the Warlord era, a conveniently anarchic epoch, owned by neither China's past nor its future.

There are of course other ways in which each of these spaces is used, and also other spaces I am still to come to. They contribute to the film's emotional or sentimental impact within the diverse cultural centers of Greater China, an impact that has been ongoing and significant (Hsu 2012). It is not my task in this chapter to offer an assessment of how these questions are explored in the film, nor, for that matter, to assess the way the film has led to some interesting anachronistic additions to queer theory (Chi 2007). *Farewell My Concubine*'s unfolding evocations of spaces, bodies, and destinies does, however, exert an irresistible pull on the discussion that follows, not least in dramatizing the question of China's relationship to modernity, and, again, in being the first introduction of any significance most of us probably had to the connections between Beijing theatrical traditions and male same-sex prostitution—despite having known all along that there were all-male troupes with beautiful stars. Where did the pair of dusty actors come from when they walked into the deserted rehearsal hall in 1977? From 1922, we are told in the sepia shots that follow the credits; from way back then and even further back.

Masculinity and modernity are terms that are ill-defined and broadly contested. In English both terms have been around longer even than most of us are

probably prepared to acknowledge modernity itself has. We cannot assume that, even in the period since the words were first used, they have pointed very precisely to what we understand through them today. To investigate either topic before around 1600 is to enter a time when masculinity and modernity were not identified as such, but we are still able to recognize them and point to them fairly convincingly; or at least this is the case for masculinity, modernity having a built-in "best-after" date. Moving outside English history and into Chinese history demands hermeneutic identification of parallel or analogous terms or practices of categorization, even as we enter a very different discursive realm. Put this way, commencing an analysis of the gender rhetoric of the nineteenth-century Beijing theater world with the help of the lens and perspectives of a 1993 Chinese film is not as incongruous as it might at first seem.

While it is difficult to pinpoint when they first did so, a further difficulty is that both modernity and masculinity assume (or enforce) uniformity; which is to say masculinity emerges as a word that connotes an overall maleness, and modernity likewise an overall advancement of civilization. Acknowledging that while history is nothing at all if not a recognition that the meaning of things changes, that is how the two terms come to us now, with a ready, built-in, general assumption of uniformity. Sociologists and gender theorists may have distinguished hegemonic, subordinate, and alternative masculinities, but even so the substantive resists and defeats all the adjectival attempts at modification or hewing off. That impression, too, may yet be one further imprint of our own time: "The illusion that there exists a single masculinity is just that, an illusion, created by our classification system" (Brod 2011, 26). That "classification system" was and to a large degree still is the implicit "sex roles" framework ("core set of values") that allocates singular male and female roles throughout a culture, predicated most fundamentally in modern times on the division of the public and domestic spheres.[2] With this contrast in place—each role established and fortified by contrast to what is other to it—the dual impulses of structuralism *and* functionalism in the second half of the twentieth century seemed at first to be satisfied.

At this point we can appreciate the innovative force of Kam Louie and Louise Edwards' proposal of a *wen-wu* dyad (文武) for Chinese masculinity that was both analytical and continuous, a single model that allowed internal diversity while acknowledging the historical distribution of the male and female spheres between outer (public) and inner (domestic) spaces (Louie and Edwards 1994). As has become evident in their subsequent work, that historical division of the spheres enables a bracketing of women outside the *wen-wu* equation—at least in contrast to the Western model of a masculine-feminine binary—thus

2. These should not be mistaken as being straightforward equivalents of the inner (female) and outer (male) spheres in traditional China that are introduced in the next paragraph.

allowing men to fight it out within a binary of their own. The question of women then reenters the *wen-wu*/civil-martial dyad as the new question of how *wen* and *wu* men model their relationships with the excluded other—i.e., with women—which in turn shapes how *wen* and *wu* men relate structurally to each other (hermetically never admitting women). Another implication, yet to be sufficiently explored, was a shift from a logic of gender *identity* to one that was closer to questions of achieved and ascribed *status*. In terms of historical and cross-cultural work, the *wen-wu* dyad has allowed those who employ it to short-circuit or bypass a modernist model that was also being challenged in Euro-American research (Schneider 2011, 148). The intervention of Louie and Edwards therefore allowed us to leave our universalist instincts behind to an extent that would not have otherwise been possible.[3]

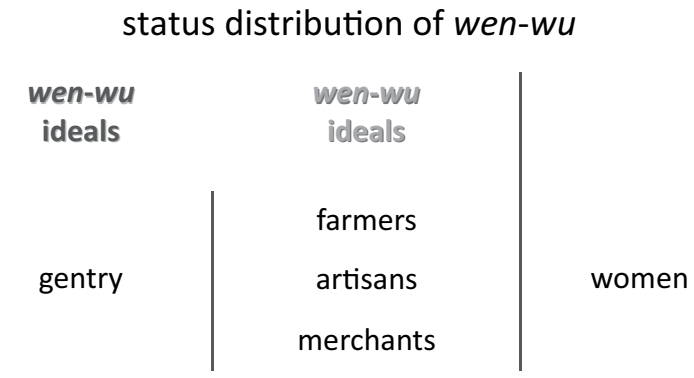

Figure 3.1 Status distribution of *wen-wu*

Women's *wen-wu* achievements, as Louie later explained in *Theorising Chinese Masculinity*, "are acknowledged only if they *publicly* demonstrate they are men . . . As cultural constructs, *wen* and *wu* realms are the public preserve of men, and women who dare to venture in must do so in a manner which will further prove the exclusivity of male rights implicit in this construct" (Louie 2002, 12, my emphasis). But women were not the only people left out. Valorization of *wen* and *wu* is very old, and already within the ancient ranking of occupations into gentry, farmers, artisans, and merchants the civil *and* martial ideals both belong exclusively to the first category—the gentry (*shi* 士, retainer, knight, scholar-official). The *wen* and *wu* ideals interest the subsequent categories only insofar as they seek to emulate the first (Figure 3.1). We are then left with a reformulation of

3. Their intervention was timely, echoing anthropologist Gilbert Herdt's call for the "complementary perspectives of anthropology and social history" to come together in a "new cross-disciplinary dialogue to deconstruct sex and gender dimorphism and reconstruct divergent codes and roles for representing sexual and gendered natures, ontologies and epistemologies in human relations across time and space" (1994, 18).

Louie's formula, which can be made clear with a simple substitution of terms as follows: "Non-*shi* persons' *wen-wu* achievements are acknowledged only if they publicly demonstrate they are *shi* . . . As cultural constructs, *wen* and *wu* realms are the public preserve of *shi*, and non-*shi* persons who dare to venture in must do so in a manner which will further prove the exclusivity of *shi* rights implicit in this construct." In the same way as the cultural constructs exclude women, exclusion of non-gentry men is achieved with a watertight cultural logic, rendering them "*wen-wu* ambiguous" (see Figure 3.2, punning of course on "gender ambiguity"). There would thus appear to be close parallels between the separation of male and female realms (*nan nü zhi bie* 男女之别) and the separation of *shi* and non-*shi* realms. It should be added that as a consequence of *wen* gaining an early upper hand in status terms over *wu*, even when non-*shi* men were able to pursue entry into the *shi* realms, they were compelled to set their sights on the symbols of *wen*.

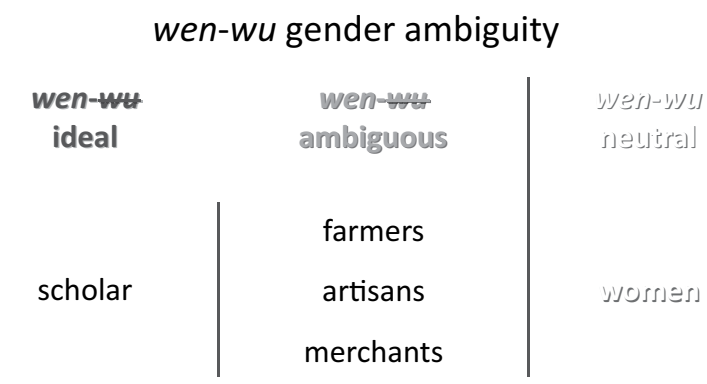

Figure 3.2 *Wen-wu* gender ambiguity, with *wu* devalued in relation to *wen*

Distinction and Space

In the argument that follows, I assume that same-sex prostitution in nineteenth-century Beijing was a continuation of the literati's need to distinguish itself and its status from other groups or categories of men. There is nothing new in this, as it is both predictable and a large part of Louie and Edwards' purpose in proposing the *wen-wu* model in the first place.[4] Examining how this worked for nineteenth-century Beijing, however, should shine some light on the question of masculinity in segments of society other than the literati, and it will also be shown that beyond the textual tradition these questions were often problems of social organization and social space, textual and spatial strategies never being separate (hence the "text-spatial" identified in this chapter's heading). I will also

4. It was also an important part of Wu Cuncun's argument in *Homoerotic Sensibilities in Late Imperial China* (2004), and before that in *Ming-Qing shehui xing'ai fengqi* (2000).

argue that the "flower-guide literature" celebrating the attractions of boy-actors created a "literary space" out of the reach of other classes of men and consciously antagonistic to them. Both of these ideological themes—literati exceptionalism and the use of literature as power—have been constant in Chinese history, suggesting that this question of social and spatial division was one that was structural as well as being of abiding cultural interest.

Down the centuries the key ideological constant in the cultural arguments dividing the ancient gentry (as well as later scholar-officials) from other men was the age-old categorization of the populace already referred to, the *simin* (四民), "the four classes of persons (or subjects)": *shi* (士, gentry, scholars), *nong* (農, farmers), *gong* (工, artisans), *shang* (商, merchants). One's position in the hierarchy was decided on the balance of service or contribution to the state versus service to oneself or family alone (see Huang 1995, 26), a distinction that contributes to later portrayals of merchants as shallow and self-serving.[5] As can be seen in the selected historical uses of this ideal set out below, the hierarchy of virtuous service implied not only occupational specialization *but also physical separation*. One of the clearest early formulations is found in *Guanzi*, where mention is also made of the need to keep each occupation well-defined and in separate parts of the city-state:

> 士農工商四民者，國之石民也。不可使雜處，雜處則其言咙。其事亂，是故聖王之處士，必於閒燕。處農必就田墅。處工必就官府。處商必就市井。
>
> The gentry, peasants, artisans, and merchants, these four types of people, are the bedrock of the state. They should not be allowed to dwell together. If they do, their speech will become distorted and their work disorganized. For this reason the sage kings, when posting the gentry, were certain to send them to places of leisure. In situating the farmers they were certain to send them to the fields. In situating the artisans they were certain to send them to the bureaus responsible for them. In situating the merchants they were certain to send them to the marketplaces. (Rickett 1985, 325)[6]

5. While statements recorded in *Mengzi* referring to the contrast between those who labor with their minds and those who do so with their strength (the one governing and supported by the other) are taken up in later works such as *Zhonglun* to support the superiority of the *shi* class (士者勞心，工農商者勞力), that distinction does not account for differentiation between the three other groups. In short, the assumptions expressed in *Mengzi* reflect the position of the bureaucrat and not the position of the court or the logic of power. It is also important to note that various schools of thought made slightly different use of the model (see Nylan [2001] for a relatively egalitarian interpretation in *Xunzi*).
6. The same passage appears in the "Discourses of Qi" in *Guoyu*, but with the farmers listed last. In a similar passage in the "Discourses of Zhou" that cites ancient precedent, the farmers are listed as "common people" (or plebs, *shuren* 庶人); whereas the gentry displayed appropriate reverence in their offices, "the common people, the artisans and the merchants all attended to their [own areas of] work in order to contribute [surplus] to their superiors" (庶人、工、商各守其業以共其上) (Powers 1995, 217, my interpellations).

Turning to late imperial China, beyond the tried and true path of supporting their sons in the quest for examination success, the rise in the economic power of merchants together with a diversification of social life following expanded urbanization in the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) resulted in at least two strategies for competing with or sharing cultural power with the literati elite. One could distinguish oneself as a gentleman by lavishing money on the pleasures and tastes that had previously been the preserve of the elite (Brook 1998), or one could forswear pleasure and cultivate more sedate and industrious values with an eye to rising above "the rabble" (Lufrano 1997). In either case, not a few learned gentlemen found both trends to be disconcerting. Even as radical an iconoclast as Li Zhi expressed disquiet:

> 吾獨怪夫今之學者以聖人而居市井之貨也！陽為聖人，則炎漢宗室既以為篡位而誅之；陰為市井，則屠狗少年又以為穿窬而執之。非但滅族於聖門，又且囚首於井里，比之市交者又萬萬不能及矣。吾不知其於世當名何等也！
>
> What I find most peculiar are those scholars today who pursue sagehood whilst being focused on the business of the marketplace. Acting on the surface as sages they will be executed for imposture by those maintaining the memory of our most ancient ancestors; or acting unseen as merchants they will be targets of burglary by young ruffians. Not only will their clans be annihilated by the Confucians, they will be left destitute by the marketplace, which when compared to merchants falls short by a mile. I can think of no appropriate category that would fit them.[7]

Li Zhi's tendency to hyperbole aside, he plainly viewed merchants as pretty low; scholars who dabbled in the marketplace or failed to divest themselves of their associations with it were of a considerably lower order and clearly undeserving of goodwill.

Kwan Man Bun has detailed how challenges facing the hard-pressed Qing administration through the nineteenth century further opened up opportunities for merchants, in more official ways, to court closer relationships with the state, or at least its agencies. These included involvement in relief efforts as well as "expansion into hitherto inaccessible territories such as local militia and education . . . the merchants eclipsing the literati-official gentry as leading citizens of the day" (2001, 10).[8] Such efforts may have proved in the main to be localized and temporary, yet they at least reveal the status ambitions of merchants at the time as well as their understanding of how to go about realizing them:

7. Li Zhi (1997 [1590], 401), "Jiaoyou" (交友, making friends). By the mid-Qing this had become "As I see it, scholars should stick to scholarship without trying to become officials, and officials should stick to officialdom without trying to be scholars too. A man who wants to be both will succeed in neither!" (*The Scholars*, Chapter 49; see Wu 1957, 644). The irony here is that support for learning traditionally assumed service to the state as an official.
8. Ho Ping-ti's reading of the situation for the Yangzhou salt merchants suggests that the non-Han background of the Qing court meant it did not share the same qualms about mercantile wealth and influence as previous dynasties (cited in Huang 1995, 31).

> A reconstruction of the family history of two leading eighteenth-century Changlu merchant households reveals a networking culture that gave them access to high places and influenced state decisions. The salt merchants' expensive garden parties, poetry clubs, and opera performances, in addition to their art, antiques, book collections, and other scholarly affectations, easily condemned as pretentious and wasteful, could also be sound investments. (Kwan 2001, 9; see also Huang 1995, 31–33)

When we turn below to examine how merchants such as those Kwan describes in Tianjin are represented in relation to "opera performances" in Beijing, we find that the south tends to be associated more closely with a mercantile ethos than northern localities such as Tianjin. While this can in part be put down to an age-old trope associating brash merchants with southerners (Louie 2002, 129)—and not forgetting the southern origin of many of those settled in Tianjin—it may in part also reflect the fact that in Tianjin men had access to their own replica of Peking opera and the associated "flower appreciation."

Scholars and Other Men in and around Theaters

As Martin Huang notes in *Literati and Self-Re/Presentation*, the social confusion of the eighteenth century is reflected in many of the most important works of fiction from the period. In the novel *Rulin waishi* (*The Scholars*), in particular, the general motif of social imposture or presumptuousness (*maomei* 冒昧) is often combined with the use of theatrical events and imagery to convey the nature of literati insecurity. In achieving this effect Wu Jingzi uses (perhaps borrows) scenes from the late Ming to comment upon the situation in the mid-Qing,[9] revealing in the process a level of interest in, and suspicion of, public life (Huang 1995, 68–70). In Chapters 49 and 50, for example, we are given a story of an unsuccessful scholar who tries to ingratiate himself with a group of far more eminent men. This is brought to a halt, or at least takes a different turn, when he is arrested as they watch a theatrical performance at the home of an important Nanjing official, and he eventually confesses that only by exaggerating his standing could he receive acknowledgment from merchants, local gentry, and men of property (那些商家同鄉紳財主們纔肯有些照應). As was seen with the salt merchants in eighteenth-century Tianjin, opera performances were not an inconsequential venue for making the kinds of contacts and impressions that helped a man to make his way in the city. In *Rulin waishi*, the author accurately historicizes this portrayal by placing the Ming performance in a private garden estate.

9. According to Shang Wei, *Rulin waishi* was circulating in a handwritten edition as early as 1749 (2003, 310). The novel contains evidence that the compilation of flower-guide style lists was already a popular pastime before Wu Changyuan's formal identification of the genre in *A Small Book on the Orchids of Yan* (1770s, see below), although in *Rulin waishi* the model would appear to be late Ming practices centering on gardens and excursions.

In Chapter 30, Wu Jingzi describes a very different kind of grand gathering where the delicate young scholar-gentleman Du Shengqing and his friends organize a competition to elect the best local *dan* actor (旦, player of female roles), which is held at a pavilion on Carefree Lake. It is a resounding success, and the chapter describes an outdoor pageant as grand as those described by Yuan Hongdao at Tiger Hill or Zhang Dai at West Lake—either or both of these late Ming authors could easily have served as Wu's model:

> When night fell hundreds of lamps were lit, high and low, making everything as bright as day. And the melodious singing lingered in the air. Rich *yamen* officials, merchants and shop-keepers in the city (城裏那些做衙門的、開行的、開字號店的有錢的人), hearing of the contest, hired fishing boats, fixed up awnings and hung up lanterns, then had themselves rowed to the middle of the lake to watch. When they were pleased, they applauded and cheered. This went on till dawn, by which time the city gates were open and they went home. (Wu 1957, 415–16)

In fact, Wu Jingzi was writing at a time when both of the theatrical scenarios described above were transitioning and no longer as current as they were in the Ming, a period when something quite different was taking shape in Beijing that would supplant older forms of theater entertainment in terms of the amusements available to literati men. Before the fall of the Ming the theatergoing of elite men was largely limited either to viewing plays or musical performances on stages located within private garden settings, attended by family members and/or guests (and these could be very large gatherings on special occasions), or to attending entertainment sponsored by the imperial court (which could also be understood as a special type of private occasion). Public folk performances and holiday entertainment were not out of bounds, but they were treated by elite men as curiosities rather than a form of entertainment that satisfied their own cultural needs (indeed, men of true cultivation at the time *read and composed* drama in preference to watching it).

Principles of social division in the Ming should have meant that elite and popular audiences tended in the main to share quite different theatrical experiences, but the impression Wu Jingzi creates, reflecting additional transformations experienced in his own time, is of a society in which the upper echelons included not just local gentry and rich *yamen* officials, but also merchants, local gentry, and men of property (see also Ding 2002, 87–88). What they were all doing when they attended amusements together is summed up by Martin Huang's comment on the actor beauty pageant referred to above, which functioned as "not only a contest staged to grade the looks and talents of the actors but, more important, a carefully choreographed exhibition of the fine taste of its sponsors" (1995, 70). In the context of *Rulin waishi*, Wu Jingzi is both reflecting the impact of changes in social organization on literati claims to refined pursuits, and at the same time casting a provocative and critical eye over what he sees as their petty obsessions.

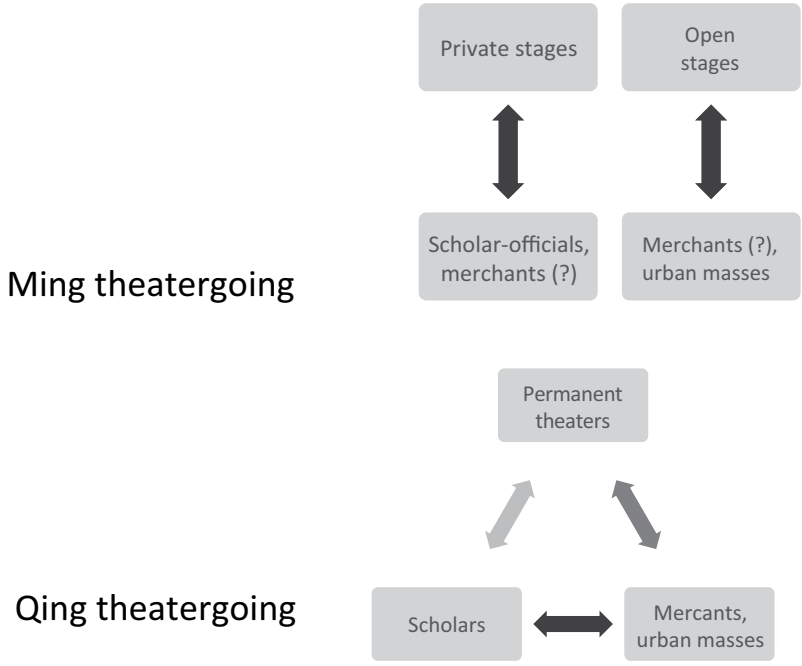

Figure 3.3 Ming and Qing theatergoing

Those petty obsessions—expensive garden parties, poetry clubs, opera performances, art, antiques, book collections (Kwan 2001, 9)—played no small part in the shaping of opera traditions in Beijing and the creation of an emergent form of public space in the eighteenth century in which official and mercantile elites not only shared events together but came to share the same performance events as the general (male) public. Garden coterie gave way to teahouse and teagarden, and the latter were quickly transformed into urban commercial playhouses. The new theatrical spaces that sprouted in Beijing consequently offered a very different kind of viewing experience from that previously enjoyed by elite men (Figure 3.3). First of all, as the theaters claimed a stable space for themselves within the urban landscape, performances could be enjoyed all year round, and the program was constantly being renewed. Where once theater viewers were guests called to enjoy a predetermined program—held at the home of a friend or associate—they were now consumers of mass culture who had a range of theater and programs to choose from. Second, men could choose from a range of daily sessions, and this allowed them to fit theater attendance into their work schedules. Not inconsequentially, this also allowed a certain level of addiction to the theater. Third, the theaters became new spaces in which friends could meet regularly outside official or family contexts. While many men report visiting theaters alone, there are many more descriptions of them attending with friends, and eventually of friendships being to some extent defined by a shared experience

of the theater. Fourth, and closely related to this last observation, theaters had their origins in tea-halls, and it was not long before they spawned sidelines such as restaurants, inns, and even institutions resembling nightclubs where men could get together as well as pursue trysts with their favorite actors (the *siyu*, or "private-apartments" 私寓). Finally, as already hinted at above, there was a new sense of a public space that included all walks of life, a sense of sharing a public culture that included many more types of person than an individual's own set. All of these new features of urban leisure appear to have evolved out of a single mid-eighteenth-century innovation of Beijing tea-hall proprietors—the offering of theatrical performances in competition for an increasingly cashed-up clientele.

Nineteenth-century *huapu* (花譜 "flower-guides," "flower-registers," small-circulation booklets celebrating the attractions of boy-actors) added one more important dimension to aficionado enjoyment of the theater. In a slightly different sense from Ming drama, through the institution of *huapu*, men were again "reading" theater as much as they were viewing it (women did not have access to public theaters in Beijing until the early twentieth century), and many *huapu* record that when aficionados did get to the theaters their interest focused more on the boy-actors' appearance than on the literary or musical experience. Indeed, for elite men, the "literary" experience of the theater (and here we are speaking of the drama around drama, not the theatrical event) was postponed and transposed into the composition and enjoyment of *huapu*—the commentaries on the boy-actors composed by either individual theatergoers or informal "societies"—often the result of competitions or other forms of ranking.

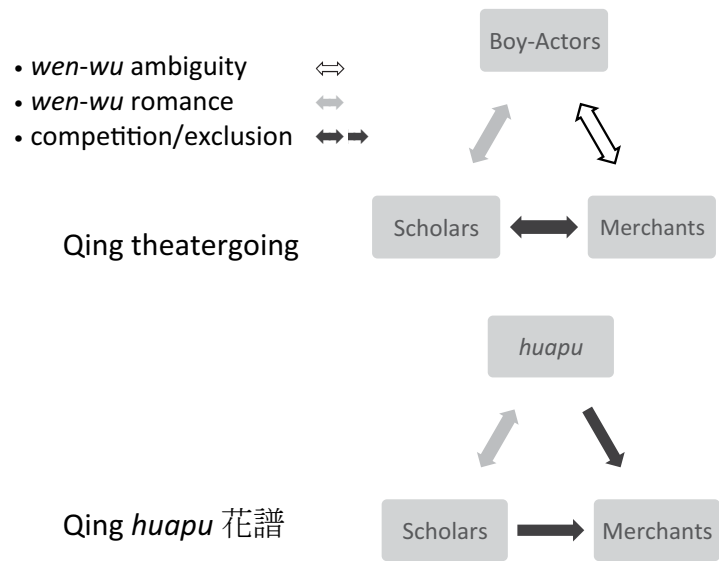

Figure 3.4 Position of merchants in Qing theatergoing and in *huapu*

This "separate" dimension of flower-guide composition is very clearly, if not consciously, a claim to a field (in Bourdieu's sense) that the literati could share at some distance from the social mix attending permanent theaters, and, more particularly, some distance away from their nearest competitors for the actors' attentions—wealthy merchants and their sons (Figure 3.4). As Andrea Goldman has also noted, "flower-register [*huapu*] writers were highly conscious of the presence of wealthy merchants among crowds of playhouse attendees, and they took pains to distinguish their own taste in performance from that of the mercantile profession" (2011, 78, my interpolation).[10] Indeed, the literary virtuosity required to produce even the plainest style of flower-register, a simple list accompanied by verse, was beyond the reach of any who lacked "fluency in the literary tradition (to appreciate the allusions and import of the poetry and prefatory prose passages) and familiarity with the theatrical practices in the capital city (to decipher the jargon and shorthand for plays, actors, and performance techniques)" (Goldman 2011, 39).[11] Beyond money, such distinction required education, time, and a degree of sympathy for decadent sensibilities. It is hard to tell—pseudonyms make absolute determination impossible—but it appears that merchants and scholars rarely contributed to the same *huapu*, and it remains to be seen whether merchants ventured into *huapu* composition or contributions at all, despite the supposed status confusion beleaguering the nineteenth century.

Huapu Views on Merchants and Money

The first *huapu* for which a clear date is available is *Yanlan xiaopu* (燕蘭小譜 A small book on the orchids of Yan), composed by Wu Changyuan 吳長元 between 1774 and 1785, the year of its printing. A scholar based in Hangzhou, Wu spent more than ten years in Beijing as a writer, supporting himself by collating or proofreading books for scholar-officials. Remarkably, in composing *Yanlan xiaopu* he was explicitly aware of establishing *huapu* as a new *biji* (筆記 miscellaneous notes) subgenre and even as a literary fashion celebrating the attractions of young male performers. This first and founding example of the male homoerotic *huapu* runs to over 23,000 characters, the bulk consisting of contributions by theatergoers from his own circle. Arranged in five *juan*, it commences with an author's preface, a friend's encomium and a "guide to use of the book" (*liyan*

10. Goldman treats crass merchants under the heading *laodou* (老鬥, translating the term as "old roué"), a term that included wealthy frequenters of the theater from any background who tended to lavish excessive amounts of money on their favorite boys (2011, 53–58). The term appears only eleven times in Zhang Cixi's collection, where most mentions of the term are after around 1845, and almost always in ditties in the street-song style (*zhuzhici* 竹枝詞), a form that tended by and large to be satirical.
11. While "jargon and shorthand for plays, actors, and performance techniques" can be found in *huapu*, it is the *erotic* jargon and shorthand for actors that is the focus and point of the *huapu* literary performance.

例言) by the author. The main part of the work lists sixty-four actors commemorated in 138 poems as well as verse notes and anecdotes (Wu and Stevenson 2010, 105). The fifth *juan* includes a number of admonitory anecdotes and verses in the form of "miscellaneous impressions" (*zagan* 雜感) with "hidden moral messages" (*guifeng* 規諷); it is in this section that anecdotes with messages concerning merchants are recorded, and their moral import is hardly subtle:

> 友人言：昔蘇伶唐玉林、方蘭如，長洲人，在慶成部一時之彼美也。秀州某賈與之契好。所有貿易之資，盡耗于（於）淺斟低唱中。既而賈以逋負被縶，二人告其友曰：「賈之事，公所知也。倘藉公之力，爲渠解紛，則二千金之助。吾兩人在，何至廢業失所？」友感其言，爲之平章息訟。未幾，賈復與他伶狎。二人愴然曰：「溺不可拯也，我不負賈而賈實負我矣！」其金遂絶。噫！誰謂此輩中無真情俠骨者耶？爲述其事書之。
>
> Something I heard from a friend: Some time ago there were two Suzhou actors, Tang Yulin and Fang Lanru, both natives of the Changzhou district, who for a time were the outstanding beauties of the Qingcheng troupe. A certain merchant from Xiuzhou [in Zhejiang] became very attached to them and soon all his trading funds were squandered on entertainment. Before long he was locked up for dodging debt, so the two actors contacted a friend of his. "You will be aware of the trouble the merchant is in," they said. "If you can look into it and intervene on his behalf, we will help out with two thousand silver taels. With the two of us standing by him, can there be any danger of him losing his livelihood and becoming homeless?" The friend was touched by their words and set about halting the litigation. In no time at all, the merchant was again dating other actors. "He's in too deep to save," the two actors concluded despondently. "It is not we who are letting down the merchant, it is the merchant who has let us down." And with that they stopped supporting him. Fie! Who could say that among their lot there are none who are chivalrous and honorable? Precisely why I write of it here. (Wu 1988, 42–43)

The mistake here, it should be noted, is not simply that the merchant loses his head and squanders his immense wealth. The *shi* men are those who treat *xianggong* (相公 actors available for dating) as other men, while *shang* men consider them to be women/girls/prostitutes (this is a hierarchical difference that forms a major subtheme within the mid-nineteenth-century novel *Pinhua baojian* [品花寶鑒 Precious mirror for ranking flowers] set within the same milieu; see McMahon 2002).[12] The distinction of the *shi* in the context of nineteenth-century theatergoing is that they recognize these "other" men as men, if not men within their own class. While we can probably take the closing flourish from Wu with a grain of salt, the very fact that he thinks the way he does distinguishes him in at least two ways from the merchant: first, he is not objectifying the *xianggong* as a mere figure of the demimonde and recognizes a subject capable of noble

12. This difference is one reason, among others, that we should avoid glossing *xianggong* and *dan* with phrases such as "boy-actress," "cross-dressing actor," or "transvestite."

sentiment; and second, he understands the pursuit of beauty to be something greater than mere pleasure.

The commercial aspect of dating actors was not something the literati patrons managed to be completely blind to, for being blind to it could spell social disaster for literati men and merchants alike. Stories of this kind are not uncommon, although they are rarely quite as sad as in the next example:

> 金陵富商某者，于（於）癸巳年在京捐納別駕。初時愛玩玉器，無他好焉。不數月，于（於）戲園相識二人，俗名「拉縴者」，招伶來寓，日引日多，家人以二鬼目之。于（於）是富商豪情頓起，酒肴車馬，率以爲常，晝則歌樓酒館，夜則豪飲呼盧，每晚必留一旦在寓同宿。繼爲娶親買屋，衣服器具皆備，一人不下千餘金。凡五閱月，已爲三人娶矣。都中之資既竭，復往家取。其子來京，勸以南返，不聽，而阿堵物不能裕如也。後一伶索三百金，期彼數日，不能如約，其人在寓門詬詈，卽前所與娶婦者。商聞之怨悔羞忿，至夜而縊。約計不及一年，所費萬金以外。其子欲訟之官，鄉人勸以勿彰父過，爲之吞聲隱泣。嗟乎！誰實致之？皆二鬼焉！居長安道者可不慎所交哉！余聞之富商之鄰，爲所目擊，因諱其姓氏，書之以爲殷鑒。
>
> There was a wealthy Nanjing merchant who in 1773 came to the capital to purchase a position by contribution. To start with he took an interest in collecting *objets de jade* and cared for nothing else. A month or so later at the theater he became acquainted with two men commonly known as "The Go-Betweens" [through whom he] sent for actors to visit him at his lodgings. The visits became so frequent that his servants regarded those men a pair of demons. From then on the wealthy merchant's bigheadedness soared and his life became filled with feasting and carriages. Days he spent at theaters and restaurants, evenings drinking his fill and gambling, and every night without fail a *dan* would stay to share his bed. He even helped some of them marry and set up house, making outlays on clothes and fixtures exceeding more than a thousand for each one. In a period of no more than five months he must have helped obtain wives for three of them. When his funds in the capital started to dry up he sent home for more. His son came to the capital to plead with him to head home to the south, but he wouldn't listen and was soon broke. As a result, when one of the actors asked to borrow three hundred he had to ask him to wait a few days. When the time came and he still didn't have enough the fellow hung around the gate cursing and berating him—one of the very ones he had assisted to marry! Hearing it the merchant was so overcome with regret and embarrassment he hung himself in the middle of the night. It couldn't have been more than a year, and he had spent over ten thousand. His son had wanted to take it to court, but people back home counselled him not to draw attention to his father's failings, and so [his family] kept their grief to themselves. How heart-breaking! Who was behind what took place? Without doubt that pair of demons. Whoever comes to live in the capital cannot afford to be careless about whom they get involved with. These events reached my ears from the mouth of one of the wealthy merchant's neighbors, who witnessed it personally. I have taken the trouble to suppress his identity, but set it down so that it may serve as a warning to others. (Wu 1988, 48–49)

In the next anecdote, Wu does acknowledge the venality of actors, something that finds its way into *huapu* discourse from time to time as a concern to keep a lid on *shili* (勢利 wealth-based snobbishness or favoritism). There are also a number of messages about imposture and status confusion. Ostensibly the important patron is a senior scholar-official, but he is behaving like a crass merchant, and like Li Zhi before him and Li Ciming after, Wu holds these types as much responsible for social confusion as the merchants "passing" in the other direction. As it turns out, the imposture was of another kind altogether.

> 聞昔年，某伶于（於）戲園遇一貴客，邀往酒樓，贊其色藝之妙，命僕携兩元寶贈之。叩其寓，不告，云是粵省太守來京補觀察者，不日卽出京，毋庸往還也。次日，伶在別園，其客亦至焉。復招飲，贈銀如前。將別，伶固請某日過寓午飯，其人沈吟再四，囑以不須多費，只一二肴叙談可也。是日，其人盛從而來，持贈千金，抵暮欲去，固留宿，乃遣僕返。曰：「明日不須早來」！伶延入卧室，與談甚洽，凡箱櫃所有悉告之。更餘，舉家皆寢，二人尚喋喋不休。次早家人起，見門牖箱櫃俱開，惟伶獨卧榻上，喚之迷悶不醒，亟以水解之，乃覺，方知爲盜席捲踰垣而去。余曰：「斯伶亦盜也，以盜捐盜，詎知彼盜之巧哉！」
>
> I heard some years ago that an actor met an important patron at the theater. The big shot invited him to a restaurant and in awe of his impeccable beauty and art he had one of his servants present him with a gift of two silver ingots. The actor asked where the fellow lived; he declined to tell him, explaining that he was a prefect from Guangdong who had come to the capital on appointment to the general administration circuit. He was only in the capital for a few days more so there was no need to pay him the courtesy of a visit. The next day the actor was performing at another theater and the patron was there as well. Again he took him drinking, and gave him a present as he had the first time. When they were about to part the actor insisted on inviting the fellow to come to his residence on a certain day for lunch. The man demurred emphatically, but finally he agreed, at the same time imploring him not to go to too much expense, suggesting that a couple of main dishes would do to accompany their conversation. When the day came the man arrived with a long train of retainers, bringing a gift of a thousand taels. As evening fell he prepared to leave but the actor insisted he stay the night. Eventually he relented and sent his retainers home, adding, "Don't bother coming too early tomorrow morning." The actor led him into the bedroom and as they chatted he found they had much to talk about and he showed off all his chests and cabinets. As night fell the rest of the house retired while the two of them stayed up talking. The following morning the servants rose and found the gates, doors, chests, and cabinets all wide open. The actor was found sleeping alone on the bed. When they tried to rouse him he was groggy and unable to wake, so they splashed him with water. As soon as he came to he realized that the thief had cleared him out and then climbed over the wall. My thoughts: "In truth the actor was also a thief, so all that was stolen were stolen goods; he had not reckoned that a thief might be outwitted by another thief!" (Wu 1988, 48)

One of the things to note in these short narratives is the distance they place between Wu Changyuan and the characters whose stories give him and his friends so much amusement. They are things that happened some years ago, or that he heard from a friend, or from an unfortunate wealthy merchant's neighbors who witnessed them. These ways of relaying the information to the reader are not inconsequential. They establish that these embarrassing men and their misfortunes or misdemeanors are not part of Wu's own milieu, which is simply a way of reinforcing that it is one thing for them to go to the theater, but they really have no place venturing into flower appreciation and its venues. A further corollary of these assumptions is that longer narratives, such as the autobiographical *Notes on Flower Appreciation in the Phoenix City* (鳳城品花記, included in Zhang Cixi's collection of *huapu*), can subscribe to the same logic while barely even acknowledging the presence of merchants at all. The novel *Precious Mirror for Ranking Flowers* adopts a different strategy again, building the entire sixty-chapter story around the contrast between sublime passion and venal lust, the latter finding its fullest embodiment in Xi Shiyi, a "crass opium merchant from Canton" (McMahon 2002, 90). In other words, the flower-guides and other belle-lettristic writing that developed around theaters are involved in a repetition of the triangular love contest played out in Yuan drama, as Zheng Zhenduo noted in 1934, between young scholars, merchants, and prostitutes (Zheng 1988, 486–506), wherein the merchant is portrayed as the unworthy owner of a courtesan's or prostitute's affections (Figure 3.5).

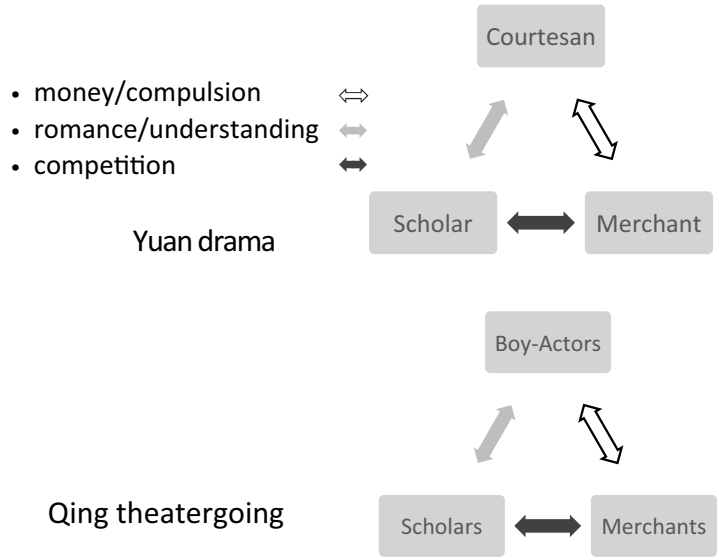

Figure 3.5 "Love triangles" in Yuan drama and Qing theatergoing

Conclusion

In the minds of literati "flower appreciators" the purpose of the theater, or perhaps *liyuan* (梨園, pear gardens—i.e., circles of opera performance and patronage) would be a better description, was as a stage for their own social performance (Goldman 2011, 39–40): a performance played out on two fronts, literary and public. As Wu Cuncun and I have suggested, in terms of the staging of public culture, this double performance occupied a space between a traditional field of connoisseurship and a second field, one that was yet to arrive—modern sport (Wu and Stevenson 2010). This sounds absurd, and even insulting, to a devotee of Chinese theater. The composition of *huapu* is not sport, but in its provision of an arena where elite men could compete indirectly with other elite men, it does precisely one of the things Roland Barthes has suggested sport is designed to do, which is to provide a competition where "man does not confront man directly. There enters between them an intermediary, a stake, a machine, a puck, or a ball" (Barthes 2007, 59). An actor available for dating was just such an intermediary.

Barthes is referring to men competing on the field, but in the *huapu* we might see two competitions (in a single game?): the competition played out exclusively between literati men (in taste and romantic adventure, in *yunshi* 韻事), and the competition played out directly between actor and actor (in popularity and fame). Within the "literati competition" it is possible to see how the actors become the "intermediary" through which elite men deflect their social and cultural competition. Direct competition is deflected still further by the highly refined language of their *huapu* compositions, as well as through the refined arts of modesty and self-deprecation (Figure 3.6).

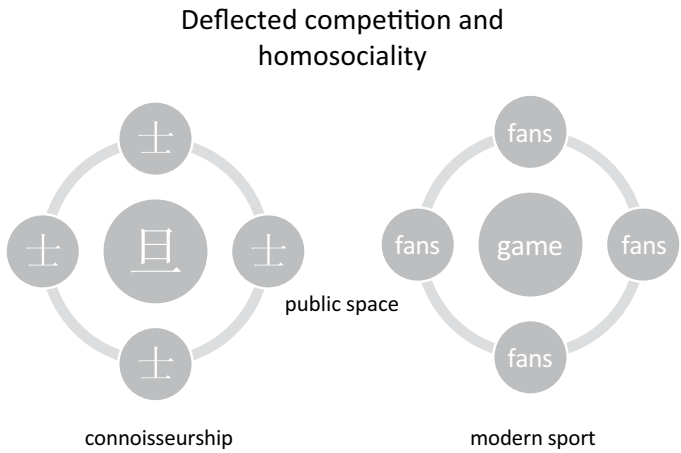

Figure 3.6 Deflected competition and homosociality (士 *shi*, elite men, 旦 *dan*, actors)

Despite their ostensible triviality, for the writers and readers of *huapu* there was something of deep personal significance in the events that took shape around actors. A great deal of themselves was invested in those events: *possession* of an actor's affections (the public performance) and *mastery* of "flower-appreciation" (the literary performance) were opportunities to demonstrate worth and standing among other men. No doubt sport's attributes of "strong, adroit, courageous" (Barthes 2007, 59) apply more, in Louie's analysis, to the martial *wu* ideal of the *wen-wu* (civil/martial) dyad that operates in constructions of Chinese masculinity (Louie 2002)—these were not the values Beijing theater aficionados of the nineteenth century most ardently strove to attain, but they could easily be replaced by others: considerate (*wenrou* 溫柔), erudite (*boxue* 博學), debonair (*fengliu* 風流), and other qualities pertaining to the cultivated *wen* ideal (see also McMahon 2002). It was never mere coincidence that *huapu* constituted a system of knowledge production, combining the two literati distinctions of literary and cultural expertise.

In a recent essay reviewing their earlier delineation of "hegemonic masculinities," R. W. Connell and James Messerschmidt write:

> To understand embodiment and hegemony, we need to understand that bodies are both objects of social practice and agents in social practice. There are circuits of social practice linking bodily processes and social structures—many such circuits, which add up to the historical process in which society is embodied. These circuits of social embodiment may be very direct and simple, or they may be long and complex, passing through institutions, economic relations, cultural symbols, and so forth—without ceasing to involve material bodies . . . *Among dominant groups of men, the circuits of social embodiment constantly involve the institutions on which their privileges rest . . . for instance, how their characteristic sports, leisure, and eating practices deploy their wealth and establish relations of distance and dominance over other men's bodies.* (2005, 852; emphasis added)

We might summarize this formulation further and define masculinity as "men being men in the knowledge that they are doing well or better at what other men aspire to do." One of the key tricks of symbolic dominance is that the dominant ensure that others aspire to what the dominant are best placed to do best. These assumptions and more are all implied in the *wen-wu* model of achieved status, but the cultural historical work that waits to be done is to describe the "circuits of social practice" (as Connell and Messerschmidt describe them) that have operated in China, and thereby open up dialogue with gender studies and theory. While I may not have succeeded in quite expanding that model to include achievements in the commercial realm, I hope I have been able to further demonstrate the model's potential for situating men in their circuits of "social embodiment." Within the field of *wen-wu*, as in the field of nineteenth-century Beijing theatergoing, men had no need to refer to women, but were able to distinguish or define themselves against lower-status men. From beginning to end this was accompanied by a manipulation of the canons of *ya* and *su* (雅俗, refined

and coarse). The valorization of *wen* and *wu* was based on an early model of social stratification that saw the two as requisite attributes of the highest social category below the ruling nobility—that is, the *shi*, or gentry. The subsequent balance of *wen-wu* in Chinese history was predicated on their being embodied in the scholar-officials, the most active servants of the ruling nobility in the public domain. While merchants eventually managed to move up from their position of lowest prestige and attract broad admiration or envy, their position in relation to *wen-wu* prestige had to remain—or was only allowed to remain—ambiguous.

This question of the ambiguity of the merchant can be made clearer by reference to the separate issue of the gender of the boy-actors. The gender of the *xianggong* is not a matter of the gender of the *xianggong* and his elite sponsors alone, but always already includes the third figure of the merchant. I also want to suggest that, if we take the *wen-wu* model seriously, we need to think of gender ambiguity as lying not with the actors (who were not always players of female roles, and who did not cross-dress offstage), but with the figure of the merchant, who occupies the (emasculated) ambiguous *wen-wu* position (Figure 3.7). The *wen-wu* version of gender ambiguity cannot be our (modern Euro-American) version of gender ambiguity, for the "unsettling" of gender is not found in the transvestism routinely noted in present-day academic studies but rather in the figure and placement of the merchant (the feminized actor having been a "settled" position for centuries as emblematic of *ya* and thus admitted into the sphere of *wen*).

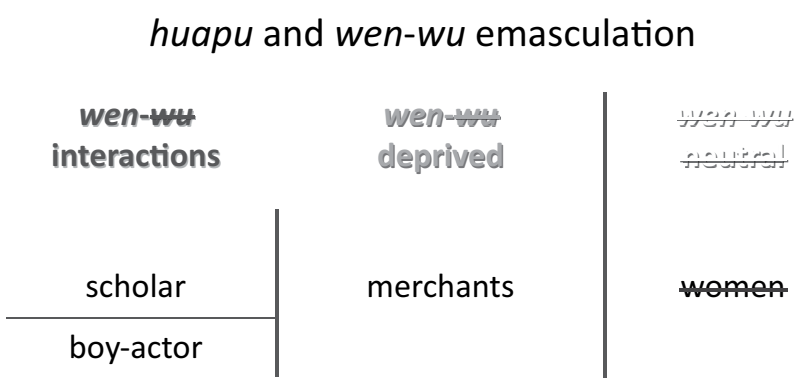

Figure 3.7 *Huapu* and *wen-wu* emasculation

The *wen-wu* model held sway until its boundaries were broken by Western and Japanese men, men whose "circuits of social practice" were (and are) something else again. To return to my comments on sport, when Cheng Dieyi and Duan Xiaolou first appear in *Farewell My Concubine* they walk into a rehearsal hall that doubles as a basketball court, where we find them again at film's end. As romantic as I might be about the vision of great film directors, I cannot bring myself to believe that this was a conscious alignment of art with sport and

public culture on the part of the director, but I also find it hard to accept that it was mere accident—that the cold, unadorned grey of the auditorium was not the space of a yet to be defined modernity, or even a heterotopic crypt set aside within it. And I should also note again that this takes place without an audience, without the circuit of *wen-wu* social embodiment, the film having "dramat[ized] the overpowering and traumatic historical process through which premodern subjectivities (like the feminized *dan* actor embodied by Cheng Dieyi) are being transformed, often at great human costs" (Leung 2010, 47). While these things "happened" in Beijing in 1922, 1977, and 1993, I am sure there had been similar scenes elsewhere before and that there have been others since.

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4
The Plebification of Male-Love in Late Ming Fiction

The Forgotten Tales of Longyang

Cuncun Wu

While there is a large and growing academic literature on the history of Chinese same-sex desire, both in Chinese and in Western languages,[1] most of the discussion has centered on issues that either relate to what might be called the "legal" question of the status of homoerotic desire in Chinese history—a question in large part driven by modern and postmodern interests in identity and regulation—or that relate to what might be called the "generic" question of literary representation and cultural history that in large part derives from the limited range of surviving sources. There can be no question that there remains much to discover in both approaches, but there are also interesting problems to raise outside them, particularly around what both legal and literary sources have to say about social history and historical practice. One such area that is still relatively neglected, given its apparent prevalence, is male same-sex prostitution, and it is my aim here to take further steps to explore what literary sources reveal about practices and cultural assumptions in the late Ming. I will focus in particular on how the passive role in same-sex prostitution was represented and what that might tell us about Ming society. The close interrelation of diaristic and creative forms of writing during the period is crucial in this process.

While there are numerous references to male same-sex desire in the Chinese archive, until the late Ming period references to male same-sex prostitution were relatively rare, even in literary works.[2] Prior to the late Ming, descriptions of

1. Since the beginning of the 1990s, numerous monographs, papers, and postgraduate theses have been produced in both Chinese and English or other Western languages on the history of Chinese homosexuality, such as Xiaomingxiong (1987); Hinsch (1990); Vitiello (1992; 1996; 2011); Sommer (1997); Darrobers (1998); Wu (2000; 2004); Zhang (2001); McMahon (2002); Volpp (2001); and Stevenson and Wu (2013).
2. There is a brief account by the thirteenth-century writer Zhou Mi (1232–1298) on male same-sex prostitution in Hangzhou in the late Southern Song period: "In the region of Wu [Hangzhou] it is particularly prevalent and their lairs are outside New Gate. They

male same-sex relations fell into three categories: (1) relationships between masters (broadly, household heads or other owners/employers) and their boy servants, (2) situational homoerotic arrangements, such as in temples, barracks, or among beggars; and (3) bonding between aristocratic men and their male favorites. We then see by clear contrast, following the economic prosperity and urbanization of Jiangnan (i.e., the Lower Yangtze) in the late Ming and the influence of the elite libertine subculture that it spawned, an abundance of references to fashionable men consorting with male prostitutes.

While it might initially seem strange to associate prostitution with social or cultural progress, I would nevertheless argue that this development in the structure of homoerotic fashion reflects changes that can be described as early modernity in China—at the very least it reflects a new level of relatively egalitarian opportunity for male sexual indulgence beyond a limited number of men with power, wealth, or physical strength. The fantasy of indulging in erotic pleasures with an alluring young man was no longer the sole privilege of men at the head of wealthy and influential households, and any man who visited the larger cities of the Lower Yangtze could find men who would entertain his erotic desires or fantasies for a price. As for the men selling sex, they were no longer subject to the unique sexual privileges of a master or owner, but were able to move from one customer to another depending on how much each was willing to exchange. Consequently, male same-sex prostitution appeared as a new "service for fee" operating in terms of the marketplace, and market logic tended to displace other organizing discourses such as hierarchy or feeling, although the latter were at least preserved ritually as part of the romance. The shift can be understood as part of a more general reorientation toward the market and parallels other trends emerging out of the large-scale urbanization of the late Ming period (Li 2000; Fei 2009).

As New Historicist scholarship has pointed out, the emergence of social changes of this kind is often recorded or evident less in formal historical documents than in contemporary literary works, where the imagination is able to entertain and extend new or unelucidated forms of social possibility (Gallagher and Greenblatt 2000, 20–48). Just as changes experienced during the eighteenth century Enlightenment in Europe saw anticlerical and anti-establishment sentiments expressed in the explicit eroticism of the libertine novel and other forms of pornographic representation (Hunt 1993, 23; 30; 33–37), the anti-establishment strain within late Ming thought can be understood to express a nascent Chinese modernity that produced an interest in iconoclastic representations of sexuality, albeit approximately a hundred years earlier in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

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all apply rouge and powder and dress up gorgeously, are skilled at needlework, and go by female names, thus eking out a living" (Stevenson and Wu 2013, 240–41).

Turning to examine the extensive late Ming *yinci xiaoshuo* (淫詞小說, obscene fiction), one feature that should strike us immediately is the sudden proliferation of depictions of contemporary city life and the sexual life of urban commoners.[3] In a similar manner to erotic literature in Europe, and in a sign of its alignment with other modern developments, we see erotic representation move quickly from depicting amusement for elite men to being more closely associated with ordinary people. Historical or fairyland themes and backdrops give way to contemporary city life. Showing no interest in being aligned with the values of the higher levels of the imperial hierarchy, the stories from the late Ming narrate tales of wealthy merchants as well as petty traders, pettifoggers, petty criminals, clerks, soldiers, tradesmen, and, of course, prostitutes and catamites. Examples of works representative of this trend in the first half of the seventeenth century include the short story collections *The Forgotten Tales of Longyang* (*Longyang yishi* 龍陽逸史, 1632)[4] and *Enemies Enamored* (*Huanxi yuanjia* 歡喜冤家, 1640; see Xihu 1994), as well as a less well-known short play collection, Huang Fangyin's *Short Plays from the Studio of Wayside Flowers* (陌花軒雜劇, ca. 1610; see Huang 1994), in which all of the episodes are located among urban commoners in the crowded cities of the prosperous Lower Yangtze delta. This chapter will focus on the stories collected in *Forgotten Tales* in order to consider what the collection's depictions of male same-sex prostitution can tell us about the increased social and spatial mobility of *xiaoguan* (小官, catamites), and in particular the shifts in their social profile.

The Forgotten Tales of Longyang

Noted briefly in several catalogues of prohibited books and in Qing literati *biji* 筆記, *Forgotten Tales* disappeared from the public view early in the Qing dynasty.[5] It was only made accessible to scholarship in the late 1980s when the

3. Giovani Vitiello has also recently pointed out the unique value of pornography for shedding light on topics not otherwise given much attention in other genres of writing (Vitiello 2011, 9).
4. Zuizhu Jushi, *Longyang yishi* (The forgotten tales of Longyang), first edition, published in the fifth year of the Chongzhen reign (1632), collection of the Saeki Bunko, Japan (see Zuizhu 1994).
5. To my knowledge, the only surviving reference to *Forgotten Tales* throughout the late Ming and Qing is by the early Qing scholar Liu Tingji (fl. 1677–1715). In his *Zaiyuan zazhi* (在園雜志 Jottings from Zaiyuan), Liu condemns the book as being among "the lowest of the low," together with other homoerotic collections from the same period, advocating that "all copies should be confiscated and burnt completely" (Liu 2005, 85). Following Liu's brief reference there are only isolated notes in official catalogues of prohibited books that list it among "obscene fiction" (淫詞小說 *yinci xiaoshuo*, see Wang 1981). There is no evidence that *Forgotten Tales* was ever reprinted during the Qing dynasty. The most authoritative cataloguer of Chinese fiction, Sun Kaidi, lists it as "missing/unseen" (*weijian* 未見) (Sun 1982, 180).

Chinese scholar Huang Lin discovered it in the Saeki Bunko Collection (佐伯文庫) in Japan. While not necessarily a masterpiece of literary or erotic fiction according to the usual standards of the art, its unique significance for cultural history has attracted the attention of many cultural historians since its rediscovery. It may even be a contender for the title of first homoerotic short-story collection in world literature—and is certainly the first known homoerotic collection in Chinese history. The extant edition is the first edition, published in 1632 in Hangzhou. The author (if there was only the one) is known by the *nom de plume* Jinjiang's Besotted with Bamboo Recluse (Jinjiang zuizhu jushi), which reveals that he was originally from Jinjiang (now Zhenjiang, in Jiangsu). The illustrations were provided by Hong Guoliang, a well-known engraver. Hong's concurrent involvement in the engraving of illustrations for the erotic novel *Jinpingmei* may reflect the publisher's expectations (or ambitions) for the homoerotic collection's reception.

Unlike previous representations of homoeroticism in Chinese fiction, where same-sex episodes are supplementary to narratives of heterosexual romance, this collection consists of twenty unique short stories that focus specifically on male same-sex relationships, all featuring what are represented as the travails of consorting with catamites. While they are thus clearly written from the viewpoint of the literati, the stories as they are told reveal an interest in the question of the vicissitudes confronted by catamites competing in the prostitution marketplace. While the usual questions of literary license and motivation must apply, simply by including the lower classes in greater narrative detail than any other source type, the collection must be understood as providing information on the lives of late Ming Jiangnan catamites that is unavailable in any other form. As might be expected, the corpus repeats stock themes dramatizing how catamites took every opportunity to fleece "big shots" (大老官, *dalaoguan*), yet the urban detail that is assembled in these stories can provide important insight into social relations and conditions at the time, particularly in terms of the catamites' struggle to make a living in the face of considerable social discrimination. There may be stories of catamites occasionally striking it lucky with a big shot who takes a fancy to them and offers them a less tenuous existence, but it is more often the case that the customers themselves are depicted as being struggling city commoners. And we are also introduced to the go-betweens, usually stereotyped as lazy and penniless. While all of these accounts are structured to support particular moral positions, or the moral positions of particular groups, the details provide insight into the circumstances of city commoners who had neither an established occupation nor a regular income, making do by engaging in prostitution. In many cases we can identify catamites as belonging to destitute groups passed over in the process of urban restructuring; even more significantly for our understanding of gender in Chinese history, their stories reveal the renegotiation of masculine identity in homosocial and homoerotic relationships.

Prostitution as an Occupation

While female courtesanship and prostitution are almost constant themes in Chinese popular and poetic literature,[6] male same-sex prostitution (as opposed to conditions of bonded service) finds its way into literary representation only in the late Ming. Once catamites do enter the frame, reflecting their different social positioning, Chinese literary works can be seen to take very different positions toward female and male prostitution, at least initially. Female prostitutes/courtesans had most commonly been portrayed in literature as beautiful, kind, brave, and, not uncommonly, faithful or even chaste. Moving tales of love between literati men and prostitutes were legion in Chinese fiction and drama from at least the Tang dynasty. Their male counterparts (and perhaps they are thus not counterparts) are hardly ever afforded such poetic treatment by the literary imagination.[7] In *Forgotten Tales*, for example, prostitution positions catamites and go-betweens as socially stigmatized and low status. There are few tender love stories, and more commonly the narrative descends into the realm of obscenity, deception, greed, blackmail, and betrayal as everyone manipulates everyone else in pursuit of their own interests or just simple survival.

While we may have doubts relating to the constructed nature of the short stories and their positioning in relation to their authors' prejudices, there is agreement enough between the various kinds of fictional sources to conclude that they do in the main accurately record the organization of several forms of male same-sex prostitution of the time—and these were far more stable and regular than we might generally imagine. The three most common forms of male same-sex prostitution in *Forgotten Tales* are: (1) private agreement between the catamite and his customer, (2) dealings via go-betweens, and (3) public male brothels. As already noted above, these three market-based arrangements were new in the late Ming.

6. China has a long history of courtesan culture, with abundant references in literature, theater, music, fine art, and sculpture, as well as evidence from historical works. Modern scholarship has been prolific over the past thirty years in both Chinese and English, ranging from Tao Muning's study (Tao 1993), to works on visual culture such as that by Ferry M. Bertholet (Bertholet 2011), with most of the discussion focusing on the late imperial period.
7. In *Bian er chai* (弁而釵) and *Yichun xiangzhi* (宜春香質) there are several touching love stories between catamites and literati men, although in these stories the catamites are usually described as devoted, faithful, or even chaste lovers, and tellingly these love stories almost always reposition the catamites into female roles outside the commercial sale of sex (wives, concubines, widows), sometimes passing as female over a number of decades (McMahon 1987; Vitiello 1994; 1996). The tendency to describe male love as sublime love was greatly developed in the Qing dynasty, aligned with a growth in theater-based male prostitution and associations with the courtesan ideal (Starr 1999; McMahon 2002; and Wu and Stevenson 2010).

Private Agreement between the Catamite and His Customer

The first thing to note about a private agreement between a catamite and his customer is that it is no longer the age-old relationship between a boy servant (which could include entertainers) and his master; rather, it is a fixed-period contract negotiated between a catamite and his customer. This was usually a written legal agreement, with the signatures of the customer, the catamite, and a witness (often a position occupied by a go-between). These documents are sometimes "reproduced" in the stories. In the second *hui* of *Forgotten Tales*, for example, we are provided with the following details:

> This agreement is made before the three parties. Each year Shao will provide Li living expenses of 30 silver taels, plus outfits for both the spring and summer seasons. Any pocket money or tips will not be calculated as part of this lump sum. This agreement is entered into voluntarily by both parties and they shall abstain from any further requests. In the event of any unexpected developments in the future, the witness will decide by fair judgment. This agreement document is set down for future reference, and each party will keep one copy of it. (Zuizhu 1994, 116)

> 三面看定，每歲邵奉李家用三十金，身衣春夏套，外有零星用度，不入原議之中。此系兩家情願，各無異說。如有翻覆等情，原議人自持公論。恐後無憑，立此議單。各執一紙存證。

In the nineteenth *hui* a more imaginative agreement is signed, along the lines of a real estate transaction, taking a more humorous form in line with the story's plot:

> With this agreement of sale the owner Hua Zi, due to his lack of funds, is willing to sell to Fan Chu a pair of fertile fields left to him by his father and located below Spine Ridge and to the rear of Belly Manor. With a witness the agreement is ratified by the three parties for a specified price. Once the agreement is in force the said fields may be tilled however and whenever the buyer likes. This consists of the vendor's livelihood and has not been previously offered for sale. Should any rumors or strife result the vendor will take full responsibility and Fan Chu will not be incriminated. This agreement of sale is drafted for future reference. (Zuizhu 1994, 391)

> 立賣契人花姿，今日欠用，情願將父親置服田兩股，坐落脊樑山下，肚皮莊後，憑中賣與範處為業。三面議定，價銀若干。過契之後，早晚任憑開懇，此系賣主血產，更無重疊交關。如有人言事端，賣主自行理直，不涉範處之事。恐後無憑，立契存照。

With this example of lively late Ming imagination we leave historical agreements behind, but we are able to see in the preceding examples an acknowledgment of the commercial nature of the catamite's trade, including if not a prenuptial agreement then at least the outlines of a negotiated agreement along the lines of those existing in the marketplace, as well as the possibility for catamites to agree to cohabitation agreements. While these "agreements" are composed in a literary and ironic imitation of everyday commercial agreements, it is clear that in the

author's mind prostitution has become a matter of contract and rights between negotiating citizens, reflecting the urbanization and modernization of social relations in late Ming society. These developments had significant consequences for the organization of male same-sex desire.

Deals via Go-Betweens

One of the more remarkable features of *Forgotten Tales* is the large number of references to go-betweens making or supplementing a living out of male same-sex prostitution. Go-betweens appear in all twenty stories, and in the great majority of cases they play a negative role; they are the marginal and unwelcome characters—sneaky, devious, greedy yet lazy, all matched by their deceitful appearance and shabby dress. Despite the miserableness of their external appearance and their lack of any redeeming features, their importance in the organization of prostitution is acknowledged on all sides as indispensable. As skilled panderers to both popular catamites and wealthy customers, both sides seek out their assistance. If we can take the author at his word, go-betweens in the seventeenth century were astute and well-organized professionals. In the third *hui*, "Daytime Ghost," one go-between is described in the following terms:

> From day to day he cannot be found engaged in any useful employ. Instead, he is found wandering through the streets and lanes. As soon as he catches sight of a handsome youth he has ready a number of means to obtain his name and address, the details of which he firmly commits to memory. Who would know it, after passing two to three years in the catamite business things begin to look up and he gets close to a few "big shots." Eventually his trade gets busier and busier, and before long those who want to sell are looking out for him, not to mention those who want to buy. (Zuizhu 1994, 118)
>
> 平日間並不作些經營，只是東奔西撞。見了個標致小官，畢竟要訪了他的姓名住處，就牢牢放在肚裏。不料他在這小官行中，混了兩三年，倒行起一步好時運來，就結交了幾個大老官。後來一日興了一日，要買貨的也來尋他。要賣的也來尋他。

In the ninth *hui* we are able to eavesdrop on the dialogue between a merchant, Chu Yuzhang of Songjiang, and a Suzhou inn proprietor, Ye Jingtang:

> "Sir, might there be any handsome catamites in your city?" Ye Jingtang laughed as he replied, "So my honored guest is another fancier of the male-mode! There are indeed many catamites here, but it is not something I have a hand in myself, you'll have to seek out one of the local idlers." "So, do you know any local idlers?" Chu Yuzhang asked. Ye Jingtang had his reply ready, "Certainly. Outside Chang Gate there's one Liu Ruiyuan, an acquaintance of mine. He's one of the best catamite pimps. No matter what kind of look you are after in your catamite, he'll find one whenever you happen to feel the need; keeps them all memorized." (Zuizhu 1994, 220–21)

> 「主人家，你這裏可有標致小官麼？」葉敬塘笑道：「客官又是個好男風的了，有一說，我這裡小官盡多，只是我在下不甚在行，還要尋著那老白相，才得妥當。」儲玉章道：「主人家，老白相你可有熟的麼？」葉敬塘滿口應承道：「有有，閶門外有個劉瑞園，是我極相熟的，他卻做得好小官牽頭，憑你要怎樣標致的，俱在他肚裏。這時要這時就有。」

The allusion to pimps or go-betweens committing details of local catamites to memory (literally "in their bellies") would appear to be a realistic detail of doing business on the street, and while these pimps were most likely largely illiterate, like others involved in informal forms of business they found ways of keeping track of the market. We also find them alert to any opportunity to lure new talent into the trade, manage negotiations, and fend off local hoodlums.

As with any market, the pimps are described as keeping an eye out for price fluctuations and competition. They needed to ensure that their catamites did not cheat them or get involved with poor scholars when there might be other better paying customers in the offing. They also had to be careful not to be cast to one side when a couple decided they could do without them. In the second *hui* when the catamite Li Xiaocui and the big shot Shao Nang discover that the go-between Luo "The Whale" has been fleecing both of them they decide to free themselves of him. Luo is cleverer than either anticipates, introducing an even bigger big shot to Li Xiaocui, leading him to leave Shao and thus successfully exacting his revenge (Zuizhu 1994, 112–13).

Public Male Brothels

Male same-sex brothels were an entirely new phenomenon on the late Ming urban landscape, and *Forgotten Tales* contains several descriptions of public male same-sex brothels, brothels accessible to the general male populace. However, this was not the only literary work interested in the topic in the late Ming. At around the beginning of the seventeenth century, the novelist Deng Zhimo wrote *The Battle of Catamites and Prostitutes* (*Tongwan zhengqi* 童婉爭奇, also known in English as *The Marvelous Competition between Boys and Girls*), a novella that depicts a struggle for ascendency between catamites and prostitutes from male and female brothels located in the same entertainment district (Deng 1985). The primary premise for this tale is an observation that the male brothel attracted more clients than the whorehouse, igniting the prostitutes' jealousy. Their battle escalates until they are assisted by a scholar-official who mediates between the parties by explaining that each has its own pleasures to offer. The publication of *Forgotten Tales* was quickly followed by two more Chongzhen period (1628–1644) collections, each containing four longer tales (novellas) that depicted events in and around male brothels, *Bian er chai* (弁而釵, Caps with Hairpins) and *Yichun xiangzhi* (宜春香質, Fragrant Beauty Inspiring Ardor).

All of these works are consistent in describing the existence of a large number of male brothels in Lower Yangtze cities.

In *Forgotten Tales*, the fifth, eighth, and fourteenth *hui* are all stories centered on male brothels that cater to the general populace. In these businesses one could find several dozen catamites separated into categories based on differences in their ages:

> [The owner Bian Ruoyuan] focused on collecting catamites from various localities and opened a shop front specializing in "male merchandise," and there were thirty to forty of them, good ones and duds both. He divided the range into four brands: Heaven Brand for the top, Earth Brand for the upper-middle, Human Brand for the lower-middle, and Harmony Brand for the bottom. The criterion for classing the four brands was quite intriguing. Those who had just begun to let their hair grow long were classed as Heaven Brand; those whose hair had reached their shoulders were classed as Earth Brand; those who had started to tie their hair up were classed as Human Brand; and those who were old enough to wear a cap but still unwilling to wear it were classed as Harmony Brand. This simplified matters for visitors to his shop, for they were able to make the right selection according to the brand of their choice. It turned out to be a stroke of luck for Bian Ruoyuan, for in less than ten years he had earned around two to three hundred thousand silver taels. (Zuizhu 1994, 301)
>
> 〔卞若源〕專一收了些各處小官，開了個發兌男貨的鋪子。好的歹的，共有三四十個，把來派了四個字號：天字上上號，地字上中號。人字中下號。和字下下號。這四個字號倒也派得有些意思。他把初蓄發的派了天字，發披肩的派了地字，初擄頭的派了人字，老扒頭派了和字。凡是要來下顧的，只須對號看貨。這卞若源也只當行了這一步運，不上開得十年鋪子，倒賺了二三十萬。

In the fourth *hui*, the reader is introduced to a very elegant male brothel located down a quiet city lane:

> The two of them entered and saw there was a large inner courtyard which was laid out magnificently:
>
> Between the two large gold fish crocks
> a few tastefully placed Taihu rocks.
> Five or six box trees of various size,
> sweet flag in about twenty or thirty tubs,
> peach blossom paired with China redbud,
> and banana trees interspersed with palms.
> Strains of chamber music filled the air,
> red pansy trailing up the stone stair. (Zuizhu 1994, 147)
>
> 兩個踱到裡面。只見老大一個天井，兩邊好不輯理得齊整：擺兩座金魚缸，搭幾塊太湖石。黃楊樹高低五六株，菖蒲盆大小二三十。碧桃花相對紫荊花，棕皮樹間著芭蕉樹。半空中幾點管弦聲，滿階前一帶胭脂赤。

The author has clearly set out to match and surpass the elegant and stylish interiors of the fanciest female brothels described in late Ming literati writing.

In conveying the impression that male brothels were a widely accepted part of the urban landscape the author of *Forgotten Tales* also borrows other marketing strategies from the world of late Ming commerce. In the eighth *hui*, Lu Chun, the new proprietor of a male brothel, hits upon the idea of distributing leaflets around the neighborhood:

> In Liusong Lane, Nanlin, with a change of owner from such-and-such a month and such-and-such a day, the Catamite Apartments have re-opened for business. Please circulate this information to all patrons and we guarantee we won't disappoint you. (Zuizhu 1994, 205)
>
> 南林劉松巷，於某月某日換主，新開小官榻房，知會四方下顧者，招接不誤。

As we have seen with *The Battle of Catamites and Prostitutes*, stories set in male brothels would often take advantage of scenarios in which male and female brothels are compared or enter into open competition. Most commonly these followed plots whereby catamites are outdoing prostitutes in the market, a development that often provokes the prostitutes to devise all kinds of underhand means to undermine the catamites' success. In the eighth *hui* of *Forgotten Tales*, a huge male bordello with more than fifty private rooms is developed from the remains of a struggling female brothel. All of the catamites there enjoy extremely prosperous trade under the star of a stunning male beauty Fan Liulang. When the prostitutes and their madams can no longer contain their jealousy, they attempt to ruin the male brothel by pasting posters everywhere declaring how dirty and obscene catamites are. Left with no other means of protecting their reputation, the catamites take the prostitutes' offenses to the magistrate. Brought before the magistrate the prostitutes turn on the waterworks and also offer to supply sex to prisoners two days per month, a ploy that too easily persuades the judge to take the prostitutes' side and condemn the catamites for destroying their livelihood; he consequently announces that henceforth no homosexual behavior is permitted within the bounds of his county (Zuizhu 1994, 203–16).

Male and female prostitutes are of course competing in the same market for the same customers, men with money. Yet Ming fiction never allows this to be portrayed as what in today's terms would be called a level playing field. Catamites are given free rein to pursue romance, passion, and money, while prostitutes can only achieve success through a more sedate social script that involves tears and sexual bribes; or at least that is what the homoerotic stories would have us accept. In the eleventh *hui*, we are told the story of a talented and elegant prostitute and a handsome catamite who are sister and brother. They relocate to Hangzhou in hope of finding better prospects, and before long the young man has attracted a wealthy and devoted customer, while his sister attracts only occasional visitors and must survive on her brother's income. Finally, when the catamite's lover

proposes he leave prostitution and they cohabitate the catamite's response is that he cannot do so unless the lover marries his sister. The marriage takes place and the three live happily together. Beyond the message that prostitutes were unable to survive while catamites thrived, we might conclude that there is also a message for women to marry and live respectably and leave the selling of love to the experts, the men who really touch men's hearts (Zuizhu 1994, 253–70). Although catamites now play a role that "traditionally" women were required to fill, they are nevertheless the superior object of desire.[8] It became more or less a universally applied formula in homoerotic writings for the superior position of men over women to be upheld, and these stories expressed misogynistic views far more forcefully than did narratives of heterosexual love.

Increased Social and Spatial Mobility and the Change in Male-Male Sexual Relationships

As mentioned above, male prostitution, and particularly the emergence of male brothels, changed the dynamics of male-male sexual relationships, which had until the late Ming been limited to master and servants, courtiers/aristocracy and male favorites, and situational relationships such as in temples or barracks. Except in the case of situational relationships, which were shaped in the absence of women, the arrangements were strictly hierarchical and dominated by the exclusive power of men of means and the aristocracy to pursue pleasure at will as long as it did not impact on people of good family or government functions; subordinates, the passives or inserted parties in the relationship, had very little agency. With the advent of widespread male same-sex prostitution, however, two important changes ensued: (1) catamites gained a certain amount of freedom to choose customers, even though the choice was usually undertaken under pressure of the need for money, and (2) any man attracted to the pleasures of same-sex relationships could pursue them via the market, as long as he could pay. This resulted in a change in public, and especially elite, perceptions of same-sex desire and same-sex prostitution, particularly as time went by and more commoners publicly consorted with male prostitutes.

This last observation helps to explain the fact that while *Forgotten Tales* reflected this social change in the most vivid terms, the author also shows a clear tendency to portray this change as a sign of moral decline and an opportunity to denigrate same-sex prostitution, as well as catamites and their customers. In the

8. Keith McMahon has noted more or less the same thing in relation to *Bian er chai*, in which "there is also the vision of the all-containment of the self, which can be both masculine and feminine. 'It is [the same as] I' means 'I contain all,' a corollary of which is 'men contain all'" (McMahon 1987, 234). Something similar is also evident in the way the *wen-wu* (civil-martial) dyad as developed by Louie encompasses all male concerns while excluding women from them (Louie 2002).

eighth *hui*, when the catamites are defeated in court by the prostitutes, all of the catamites become homeless apart from the catamite star Fan Liulang, who is adopted as the stepson of the boss of the male brothel, Lu Chun. The author, however, declines to leave it at that:

> This Fan Liulang was born a catamite, so how could it fall to him that he could enjoy Lu Chun's property and wealth? In less than half a year he deliberately caused a commotion and then was off somewhere else to continue in his catamite ways. (Zuizhu 1994, 216)
>
> 這范六郎，生成是個做小官的命，那裡有福安享魯春的家當，不上替他做得半年兒子，尋了一場吵鬧，依舊告辭到別處去做了小官。

The increased mobility that catamites now enjoyed caused some consternation among the literati of the time, who had until then been able to regard their privileged access to male-love as a mark of their distinction. A clear sense of loss can be read in their pornographic writing, most clearly in their concern over what they perceived to be a decline in morality, loyalty, and true love. The blame is laid clearly at the feet of the catamites, but the anxieties belong to this class:

> Forever pursuing the greener grass on the other side. Today falling for this one, tomorrow falling for that one. (Zuizhu 1994, 319)
>
> 到了這山，又望那山，今日尋一個，明日換一個。
>
> Don't you know nowadays catamites just flock like pigeons to the prosperous spots? But what is even more detestable is the way they love to make friends with you as long as you are willing to spend wildly, even should you be only a beggar or a pickpocket. However, if you are the least bit frugal, they will never look your way, even should you be prince or gentry. I mean in no way to malign them, I am simply speaking from my accumulated personal experience. (Zuizhu 1994, 381)
>
> 殊不知近來小官都像了白鴿，只揀旺處就飛。還有一件最惱人的，比像這時你若肯撒漫些兒，就是乞丐偷兒，也與他做了朋友。你若這時愛惜錢鈔，就是公子王孫，只落得不放在心坎上。這不是把他說得難為，委是屢試屢驗的話。

Passages such as these are interspersed throughout this genre of novels and short stories and testify to literati unease over increased social and spatial mobility and the consequent shift in the organization of male-male sexual relationships. As in any other market, once it is commoditized, monetary exchange becomes the preeminent principle shaping the relationship. Contrary to literati protests and rationalizations, anyone becoming a player in this market will come up against the centrality of commoditization. The go-betweens, understandably in their position, are very clear-eyed on this point, seeing both customers and catamites as replaceable in the ongoing quest for turnover. Each is simply a unit in an exchange value system (Zuizhu 1994, 112–13; 119; 127).

Masculinity, Gender Roles, and Catamites' Social Identity

As with most depictions in early modern homoerotic fiction, catamites in *Forgotten Tales* are often depicted as feminine and shallow, but across the twenty stories there are only two that explicitly associate catamites with women. The first *hui* includes a good-looking boy of fifteen who loves needlecraft and whose work "excels that of even the most skilled girls." In the ninth *hui* a merchant fond of cavorting with catamites is forced to face up to the upset this causes his wife, upon which he simply cross-dresses a catamite and introduces him to his wife as a new concubine he has brought in to solve the problems they have producing an heir. Apart from these two examples, the catamites in *Forgotten Tales* are all handsome and fashionable young men.

As fashionable and good-looking as they may be, the dominant stereotype of catamites in the stories is of lazy boys with an attractive appearance who are addicted to exquisite outfits; the majority have no interest at all in academic learning or family reputation. What they do have is a strong devotion to what would today be called consumerism, but this is hardly a plus since they all come from poor families and have neither the inclination nor the ability to earn a living in productive labor. When their charms disappear with the passing of time they return to being ordinary men except that their creators condemn them to suffer poverty and discrimination, the impulse or motivation behind this probably being a form of punishment for withdrawing the pleasure they once provided from their elite patrons. When they are fortunate enough to join the laboring classes they use what remains of their beauty to flirt with women and boys at the first opportunity. In this respect *Forgotten Tales* is almost unique in reflecting on men's post-catamite lives.

As Keith McMahon has noted in one of his earliest articles, in Ming erotic fiction literati men who had sex with low-status youths did no harm to their status or to public recognition of their masculinity; on the contrary, it bolstered their sense of supremacy, and their sense that there were no limits to their conquests or their share of pleasure (McMahon 1987, 235–37). That elevation of male experience was very much the point of libertinism in the late Ming, and we also find similar themes present in early modern European pornography (Trumbach 1993, 253–82). When low-status passive partners in male same-sex relationships are represented as astonishingly faithful, chaste, and tender, they share the same marks of subordination as chaste women in the fiction and drama of the period. In the most extreme examples of self-sacrifice, to honor their gentlemen lovers they elect to spend the rest of their lives cross-dressed and passing as women, sometimes subjecting themselves to castration. This logic was very widespread in the popular literature of the late Ming period, and the same sensibility would later have a profound influence on homoerotic fiction in the Qing.

Forgotten Tales is notable in not rehearsing this kind of gothic fantasy, limiting its focus to the sublunary details of day-to-day urban life. This does not mean,

however, that the author of the collection was operating at all outside the rules of male libertinism. Noting the context of increased social and spatial mobility in the late Ming period, the kind of literary punishment or revenge just outlined is not surprising. The overall portrayal of catamites in *Forgotten Tales* is also negative, but the structure in which judgment is brought down and retribution meted out is completely different in emphasis. As we saw above, there are no faithful or chaste catamites in any of the stories in the collection; instead, all male same-sex relationships end unhappily, whether or not this is preceded by falling in love at first sight, a trial separation, or joint triumphs over vicissitudes. While this might be interpreted as merely a form of cynical realism that reflects the usual fate of human romances, or even the mark of "true romance," it is intriguing that it is always the catamites who are blamed for the relationship coming to an end. I would like to suggest that this is a reflection of the context of prostitution from which the stories are derived. The author reiterates time and again that catamites never show any understanding of true love or moral virtue, and that they will desert their lover at the drop of a hat should another man offer more lucrative prospects, or even simply flash some cash. The new context of prostitution had allowed catamites new possibilities for mobility and agency, and this change was felt by literati men as a challenge to or reduction in their masculinity. One source of *Forgotten Tales* is thus a collective mourning for lost prerogatives.

And how should we socially position the catamites in the stories? There has been much discussion of their feminization, from which it is concluded that they are therefore equivalent or analogous to women/prostitutes (a substitute, replacement, or improvement). On the surface there would seem to be good evidence for this line of thinking: the stories themselves contain passages in which the two positions are equated, or at least compared—with catamites in at least one instance even being teased as "your ladyship" (*jiazhupo* 家主婆, see Zuizhu 1994, 315)—and several stories in the collection describe how often wives, concubines, and prostitutes are jealous of catamites. There are, however, other things to be considered apart from their position as the choice of sexual object, and in the stories in *Forgotten Tales* there are also signs that socially identifying catamites as women is possibly not what is occurring. Even setting aside the obvious question of their inability to give birth to a lover's heir, they have no possibility of gaining a place in their lover's family clan book, and in terms of social hierarchy it is questionable whether they ever experience the social marginalization and subjection that common women do. There are also indications throughout the collection that the author was not inclined to "lower" the catamites as far as women or prostitutes. This can be shown in part by reference to an illustration from the first *hui* (see Figure 4.1). In it we see three people: the literatus Han Tao, the catamite Pei Youniang, and the prostitute Wei Xiangqing, who all share a bed in the prostitute's room. Our initial response might be that this is one of the few possibilities for them to all copulate at the same time, especially given the literatus' obsession with his new catamite; the literatus (the

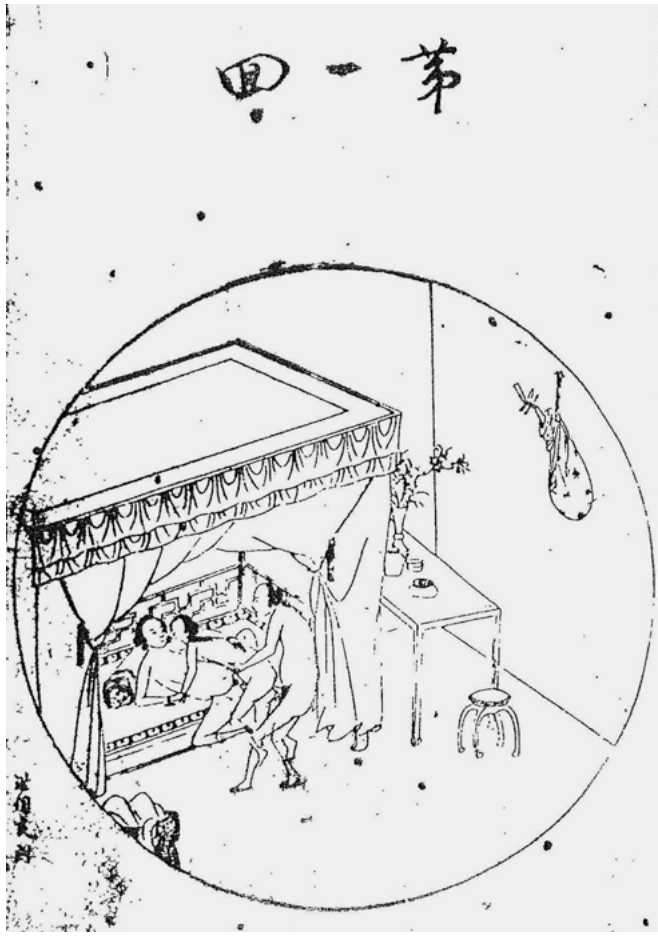

Figure 4.1 Illustration from *Longyang yishi* (The forgotten tales of Longyang), first edition, published in the fifth year of the Chongzhen reign (1632), collection of the Saeki Bunko, Japan. The plate is from the first *hui* (chapter) and colophon records by Hong Guoliang, a famous woodblock engraver active in late Ming Hangzhou.

ideal of manhood) is of course on top penetrating the catamite, the catamite is in the middle penetrating the prostitute, and the prostitute occupies the lowest position. Despite the obvious problem of how three bodies might be fitted together, it is important to remember that the event has been constructed by the author, and he has chosen to position the woman below the men. The illustration makes this clearer than the text, with the weight of the two men clearly bearing down on her. One further element to consider is that on that night, although Han Tao had plotted the scenario at the bordello, it was the catamite who had initiated sex with the prostitute and it was only after they had commenced that Han Tao joined them. When push comes to shove, we might say, the woman always ends up in the most subordinate role. Once we see through the humor

and play that is required in pornography's bawdy treatment of gender ambiguity, jokes aside, the catamite is no woman.

Published in 1632, *The Forgotten Tales of Longyang* provides a wealth of insights into male same-sex prostitution of the late Ming period. Among the twenty tales, the stories narrate various forms of male prostitution from private agreements, to deals via go-betweens, to commercial male brothels available to all comers. This diversity of venues and arrangements appears to reflect the instability in which male love (*nanfeng* 男風) was caught up as a result of late Ming urbanization as well as the growth of urbanization in separate regional centers. It also represents a diversification of the market following the penetration of market forces into ever more corners of life.

In the preceding discussion I have set out to assess what the collection reveals about changes in late Ming male same-sex prostitution, particularly in regard to the increased social and spatial mobility of *xiaoguan* (catamites) and the range of factors determining their social positioning. Changes in the organization of urban life appear to have led to the emergence of *xiaoguan* from feudal arrangements of bonded service into the vicissitudes of the marketplace. These effects of urbanization and social change were not unrelated to wider redefinitions of masculinity and gender roles in late Ming society. The impact on their customers had repercussions for their understanding of their own social position, and the kind of homoerotic writing found in *Longyang yishi* was in part an attempt to come to terms with these changes. In many instances literati writers appear to have felt threatened by the plebification of male same-sex prostitution, and this helps to explain why so much of the homoerotic writing of the period, while fascinated with the romance of male love and male beauty (*nanse* 男色), employs the imaginative devices of fiction to subject catamites to all manner of humiliation and misfortune. It is, however, a very complex shift, and the plebification of catamites and commercialization of the flesh trade also had an effect on men's perceptions of women who sold their bodies, resulting in a downward shift in the status of courtesans and prostitutes. After the seventeenth century courtesanship would never be what it had once been, whereas male same-sex prostitution, undergoing still further commercial transformation, would see an eventual increase in glamor before the imperial system collapsed altogether.

It is possible, from *Caps with Hairpins* in the early seventeenth century to the mid-nineteenth-century homoerotic novel *Precious Mirror for Ranking Flowers* (*Pinhua baojian*), to identify a trajectory whereby Chinese homoerotic fiction, reflecting concomitant social developments, breaks away from romantic master-servant themes to pursue a more free-floating understanding of "sublime love" between literati men and boy-actors. The stories from *Forgotten Tales* analyzed here played a significant role, broadly speaking, in the shift from elite male or master-dominated narratives of male-male bonds to a focus on a new order of market-dominated same-sex prostitution. That shift may have allowed the emergence of a scene that can still appear familiar to those of us in more "modern"

times. Certainly, many of the passages I have reviewed here have a modern ring to them, such as those in which we find the shallow materialism, the rationality of commercial transactions, and the recognition of wealth as fate and money as freedom and mobility, altogether perhaps signaling the abandonment or critique of virtue-based ethics. The stories also serve as a reminder that there are vestiges of the past still in existence in our time that can also materialize around male same-sex prostitution, such as an insensitivity or antagonism toward women that extends to the derision of men who "lower" or "degrade" themselves by playing "female," "passive" roles. If we were able to transport a late Ming catamite to contemporary Shanghai or Beijing, how familiar would he find the local male prostitution scene? It may be dangerous, however, to assume that these similarities signal much in the way of real continuity across the last centuries of Qing rule, as urban society continued to transform, and probably even less so now, after more than a century of contact with Western homophobia.

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5
Aestheticizing Masculinity in *Honglou meng*

Clothing, Dress, and Decoration

Louise Edwards

Men are not generally associated with "beauty" today; neither is masculinity commonly regarded as being manifest through elaborate beautification rituals or bodily displays of decoration. Such tasks are performed by women and are interpreted as expressions of their femininity. In China today, as elsewhere, if men are described as "beautiful," the inference is generally that they are feminine, effete, or homosexual.[1] But this phenomenon is culturally and historically contingent. Just as ideals of beauty have changed dramatically over time and between cultures, so too have the expectations of which sex is displayed as an aesthetic object and praised for its achievement of the prevailing standard of beauty.[2]

This chapter argues that in the eighteenth century, during the height of the Qing dynasty, male bodies were a legitimate human form upon which to display beautiful clothing and accessories. Moreover, an elaborately decorated male body connoted power, high status, and strength—superior masculinity was a decorative performance. I build this argument through an analysis of the premier classic Chinese novel of that era, *Honglou meng* (紅樓夢 *Story of the Stone, Red Chamber Dream*, circa 1760s), and its descriptions of clothing, dress, accessories, and fabric. Through Cao Xueqin's 曹雪芹 novel we see that masculine bodies were the preferred aesthetic form. His detailed descriptions of clothing, dress, and accessories are not focused on the many young women who populate the novel—rather, the reader's aesthetic eye is invited to roam primarily over the male protagonist, Jia Baoyu, and two masculine female figures, Wang Xifeng and Shi Xiangyun. All three of these characters are known for their rejection of strict gender-sex norms and for the fluidity of their expressions of *yin* 陰 (female

1. Acceptance of men's conscious beautification is reemerging in recent years through the "metrosexual man" (Song and Hird 2013).
2. Lois Banner noted in her article on late medieval and early modern Europe that "young male bodies, not just female ones, were eroticized. In art and literature, in costume and behavior, young men's bodies were alluring" (Banner 1992, 37).

essence, subordinate, passive, shaded) and *yang* 陽 (male essence, dominant, active, bright). It is my contention that Cao's particular attention to the beauty of their dress serves to amplify their masculinity in this interplay of *yin* and *yang*. Although the novel focuses primarily on the lives of women, the descriptions of clothing are dedicated primarily to characters who manifest *yang* attributes.

Cao Xueqin's discussion of a character's clothing is an integral part of his description of their *masculinity*, and his adornment of their bodies is a feature of their active *yang* energy rather than their femininity or effeminateness. This reading of the novel suggests that during the mid-Qing the aestheticization of the human form was a feature of the *yang* or masculine aspects of humanity—regardless of physical sex. Any femininity we detect in Jia Baoyu, Wang Xifeng, or Shi Xiangyun is not a result of their explicitly decorated bodies—in fact, quite the opposite. Cao Xueqin's descriptions of the clothing and elaborate adornment of these particular characters assert their *yang* energy and strength.

In contemporary discussions about clothing in *Honglou meng* we frequently see the now-naturalized association of femininity with "beautification through clothing." A 2011 article published in a magazine targeting a popular audience used the novel to reaffirm the connections between women, femininity, clothing, and beautification practices. Its author Sun Ningning declares:

> Women's beauty always needs clothing and adornments as a foil, regardless of whether they are magnificent or quietly dignified. Therefore, women who love beauty have specific requirements, and most of them have uncountable items of clothing—and this is particularly so among beautiful women who also love beauty. (Sun 2011, 70)

Despite the novel's clear and extensive descriptions of Jia Baoyu's clothing and its repeated references to him "changing his clothes," Sun makes no analysis of Baoyu. Her analysis reflects the general shift in the social meanings circulating about the aesthetic human form in China and elsewhere in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries where beauty and self-adornment are deemed to be female and feminizing preoccupations and attributes.

The weakness of this analysis is apparent if we examine the novel's clothing in terms of *yin* and *yang*. In 1994, Kam Louie and I argued that *yin* and *yang* were inadequate tools for discussing the male sex's performance of masculinity and the concomitant differential in social power between males and females. Our point drew on the notion that *yin* and *yang* essences are deemed to be present within *all* sexes and can move fluidly within any individual of any sex at any time (Louie and Edwards 1994, 139). Power differentials between individuals impact their status as *yin* or *yang* such that a man can be simultaneously *yang* and *yin* in any given social situation—*yin* to his father but *yang* to his son. Similarly, a woman can be *yang* relative to her servants while simultaneously being *yin* to her husband. For this reason, when we explore the performance or expression of gender across all human bodies—be they male, female, or intersex—*yin yang* cosmology is a central and highly productive theoretical frame.

When men's enculturation is analyzed separately from women's, the *wen-wu* 文武 paradigm provides a more powerful analytic tool. But when we are exploring gendered traits that can exist in any sex, *yin yang* becomes an important concept to consider. By exploring *yang* as it is expressed in the novel's male and female characters we see the complexity of masculinity's link to power and its dominance over femininity even within a social system with a cosmology that promotes the complementarity of *yin* and *yang* forces. Complementarity does not preclude hierarchy. Ultimately, only men can truly achieve a stable intermingling and balancing of *yin* and *yang* to secure a form of enlightenment and distance from worldly cares. Women's display of *yang* or performance of masculine behaviors signals social instability, or at best are temporary diversions since their core *yin* status can never truly harness *yang*. Men's bodies can achieve this balance and master the supreme generative interaction of the two essences. For those men who fail to nurture their *yang* or allow *yin* to dominate them, social instability is the result.

Yin and *yang* cosmology underpins *Honglou meng*'s philosophical rationale and informs many aspects of the novel's complex binary pairings—including clothing and body decoration. Steeped in *yin yang* theory, the novel explicitly challenges rigid sex-gender mapping of men as "masculine" and women as "feminine." In Chapter 31 readers are reminded of the mutability and mutuality of *yin* and *yang* essences and their generative power as well as their hierarchical nature—*yin* is not *yang*'s equal. Shi Xiangyun explains its operations to the young maid, Kingfisher.

> In any case, strictly speaking Yin and Yang are not two things but one and the same thing. By the time Yang has become exhausted, it *is* Yin; and by the time Yin has become exhausted, it *is* Yang. It isn't a case of one of them coming to the end and then the other one growing out of nothing . . . Yin-yang is a sort of *force* . . . It's the force in things that gives them their distinctive forms. For example, the sky is Yang and the earth is Yin; water is Yin and fire is Yang; the sun is Yang and the moon is Yin . . . In the case of birds and beasts the males are Yang and the females are Yin. (*Story of the Stone* 2.31.122; *HLM* 1.31.315)[3]

Kingfisher elaborates on the lesson in metaphysics, saying to her mistress: "You're Yang and I'm Yin."

Through this chapter I demonstrate that the performance of aesthetic work during the Qing was a *yang* characteristic directly linking positive energy, vigor, and brightness to higher social status and prestige. Decoration in the mid-Qing was not, as people would commonly assume today, a feminine or *yin* quality. Cao Xueqin uses descriptions of clothing to highlight particular characters' *yang*

3. The English translations are drawn from the three-volume Penguin Classics editions of the novel completed by David Hawkes. The notation format above proceeds as follows: 2.31.122 refers to volume 2, chapter 31, page 122. The Chinese language text comes from the three-volume edition published by Xingzhou shijie shuju (Cao, n.d.) unless otherwise stated.

expressions—hence the predominance of descriptions of the clothing worn by Baoyu, Xifeng, and Xiangyun. These three characters are depicted as having the most explicit *yin yang* fluidity. In contrast, the absence of descriptions of clothing of any of the senior men in the Jia clan amplifies the exhaustion of their *yang* and the imminent decline of their clan. Cao alerts us to their decrepitude by *not* describing the clothing of the senior men despite their public high social status.[4] Similarly, the Imperial Concubine, Jia Baoyu's sister, makes a visit to the household early in the novel and this episode is marked by extensive discussion of servants carrying her wardrobe and her frequent "changes of clothes." These references serve to amplify her *yang* status.

Dressing up in Chambers Red

The novel is known for its extensive, accurate descriptions of fabric and clothing. Cao Xueqin's family included multiple generations of Imperial Textile Commissioners charged with managing the production of silk and other precious cloth and its distribution to the imperial family. Cao Xueqin's great grandfather, grandfather, and uncle held positions as Imperial Textile Commissioners in Nanjing and Suzhou. According to David Hawkes, their tasks were "to manage the government-owned silk factories, each with their hundreds of skilled employees, to purchase the raw silk materials which supplied them, and to supervise the transport of finished products to the Imperial Court at Peking" (Hawkes 1973, 26). Cao Xueqin lived with connoisseurs of fabric so it is no surprise that the novel is replete with details of characters' dress.

Knowledge of fabric quality is a matter of considerable pride within the household and is a form of connoisseurship that the Jia clan cultivated over multiple generations. Characters compete to demonstrate superior knowledge and appreciation of fabric and textile composition. In Chapter 40, Grandmother Jia demonstrates her superiority over Wang Xifeng's already considerable expertise during a discussion about the correct name for a bolt of gauze—Xifeng mistakes it for "cicada wing" (*chanyisha* 蟬翼紗) whereas it is in fact "haze diaphene" (*ruanyanluo* 軟煙羅) (*Story of the Stone* 2.40.283; *HLM* 1.40.404). The discussion of clothing and dress in the novel is not simply incidental decorative detail.[5]

4. I am grateful to the reader for Hong Kong University Press for inviting me to consider the position of the senior men of the novel in relation to clothing and *yin yang* cosmology.
5. L. Sychov and V. Sychov compare the references to clothing in the novel's first 80 chapters written by Cao Xueqin with the last 40 completed by Gao E, and demonstrate that Cao's attention to clothing detail surpasses Gao E's. I have not considered the last 40 chapters here. The Sychovs also show that clothing performs a significant symbolic role in the triangular relationships between Jia Baoyu and his two love interests, Lin Daiyu and Xue Baochai in the matching of their names through precious jade, hairpins, and jade belts. Baochai's hairpin marks her as *yin* while Daoyu's belt marks

Scholars of *Honglou meng* commonly declare that the sumptuous descriptions of clothing and connoisseurship around textiles serve to amplify the extreme wealth of the Jia clan—emphasizing the heights from which the family will inevitably fall. In this reading, detailed descriptions of rare furs (fox, snow weasel, and marten) are symbols of the Jia clan's excessive and unsustainable lifestyle. Clothing is reduced to yet another detail of household life to show that "at its apex, wealth and excess produce their own demise." Other studies of the clothing in the novel dedicate themselves to determining whether Cao's descriptions are an accurate representation of real clothing worn in the mid-Qing, and yet others explore differences between Han and Manchu clothing (Shen 1981; Qin 2006; Ji 2012).[6]

While the revelation of the Jia clan's excessive lifestyle is clearly one of the functions of Cao's elaborate descriptions of furs, jewels, coronets, and silk, this reading does not explain why the particular bodies of Xifeng, Xiangyun, and Baoyu were designated as those upon which readers should come to appreciate the detail of this excess. There is a deeper significance to clothing than a mere display of wealth and excess. My gender analysis shows how these excessive displays of wealth through clothing and Cao's attention to realism in dress are loaded with symbolism that tells us much about the nature of masculinity and *yang* power as they operated in the mid-Qing. In examining the depictions of clothing in the novel within a gendered frame our knowledge of the historicity of the normative "aestheticized body" is enhanced.

Luxurious Display: Clothing in *Yang* for the Three Masculine Characters

In contrast to Jia Baoyu, Wang Xifeng, and Shi Xiangyun, the young women of the novel, known collectively as the "Twelve Golden Hairpins" or the "Twelve Beauties" (*Shier chai* 十二釵), are appraised for their translucent skin, bright or brimming eyes, and delicate eyebrows. Readers only occasionally glimpse their clothing or the decorations they adopt—whereas our three *yang* accented characters are described in intricate and extended detail. The Twelve Beauties, apart from Wang Xifeng and Shi Xiangyun, have a disembodied beauty that focuses readers' attention primarily on their faces and skin unless they are in the *yang* position in relation to their servants—only then does Cao Xueqin dedicate word space to detailing their clothing. There are only rare exceptions to this pattern.[7]

her as *yang* since the belt was a symbol of the costume of male officials (Sychov and Sychov 1981, 292).

6. See also the detailed work conducted on comparisons of the translations of clothing terms in the novel by Shen Weiyan (2011).

7. One notable exception is in Chapter 8, where Baochai's dress is described during one of Baoyu's visits. While the descriptions are vivid, they are followed by statements about the simplicity of her clothing, rather than its elaborate decoration.

Clothing detail is primarily provided at times when the author seeks to draw our attention to a character's *yang* accents. The extensive descriptions of Jia Baoyu's clothing and repeated discussions of his wardrobe changes (*huan yifu* 換衣服) invite readers into the world where desirable men cultivated their style, glamor, and fashion sense. Similarly, Wang Xifeng's wardrobe is described through the eyes of newcomers to the household in the most sumptuous of terms as one of Cao's many reminders that she has masculine tendencies (Edwards 1993) and has authority within the household as its supreme manager. Shi Xiangyun's clothing is described specifically to emphasize her *yang* tendencies as she frequently dons men's attire and all her cousins know of her boyish traits.

The two excerpts below come from the novel's first few chapters and set the tone for the remainder of the novel in terms of the "aesthetic work" that *yang* performs. In Chapter 3, when Lin Daiyu, one of the female love-interests for Jia Baoyu, arrives in the Jia family mansion, we are treated to the first of Cao's elaborate descriptions of Wang Xifeng's clothing. Readers had been told that she was "worth more than 10,000 men" at the close of the preceding chapter. As Daiyu sees it:

> A beautiful young woman entered from the room behind the one they were sitting in, surrounded by a bevy of serving women and maids. She was dressed quite differently from the others present, gleaming like some fairy princess with sparkling jewels and gay embroideries. Her chignon was enclosed in a circlet of gold filigree and clustered pearls. It was fastened with a pin embellished with flying phoenixes, from whose beaks pearls were suspended on tiny chains. Her necklet was of red gold in the form of a coiling dragon. Her dress had a fitted bodice and was made of dark red silk damask with a pattern of flowers and butterflies in raised gold thread. Her jacket was lined with ermine. It was of a slate-blue stuff with woven insets in colored silks. Her under-skirt was of a turquoise-colored imported silk crepe embroidered with flowers. (*Story of the Stone* 1.3.91; *HLM* 1.3.23)

Following this, the first of Cao Xueqin's detailed descriptions of clothing, Xifeng's face, eyebrows, lips, eyes, and slender form are written into a poem.

The same chapter includes a second elaborate description of clothing—this time that of Jia Baoyu—also through Lin Daiyu's eyes.

> The young gentleman who entered in answer to her unspoken question had a small jewel-encrusted gold coronet on the top of his head and a golden headband low down over his brow in the form of two dragons playing with a large pearl. He was wearing a narrow-sleeved, full-skirted robe of dark red material with a pattern of flowers and butterflies in two shades of gold. It was confined at the waist with a court girdle of colored silks braided at regular intervals into elaborate clusters of knotwork and terminating in long tassels. Over the upper part of his robe he wore a jacket of slate-blue Japanese silk damask with a raised pattern of eight large medallions on the front and with tasseled borders. On his feet he had half-length dress boots of black satin with thick white soles. (*Story of the Stone* 1.3.100; *HLM* 1.3.27–28)

A poetic description of his nose, eyes, eyebrows, complexion, and hair completes the vision. The description of his clothing continues: "Around his neck he wore a golden torque in the likeness of a dragon and a woven cord of colored silks to which the famous jade was attached" (*Story of the Stone* 1.3.101; *HLM* 1.3.28). If this extensive description of his clothing at first meeting was not enough to alert us to Jia Baoyu's performance of aesthetic work in the novel, only a few pages later we are treated to another luscious list.

> Quite soon he was back once more, this time dressed in a completely different outfit. The crown and circlet had gone. She could now see that his side hair was dressed in a number of small braids plaited with red silk, which were drawn round to join the long hair at the back in a single large queue of glistening jet black, fastened at intervals from the nape downwards with four enormous pearls and ending in a jeweled gold clasp. He had changed his robe and jacket for a rather more worn-looking rose-colored gown, sprigged with flowers. He wore the gold torque and his jade as before, and she observed that the collection of objects around his neck had been further augmented by a padlock-shaped amulet and a lucky charm. A pair of ivy-colored embroidered silk trousers were partially visible beneath his gown, thrust into black and white socks trimmed with brocade. In place of the formal boots he was wearing thick-soled crimson slippers. (*Story of the Stone* 1.3.101; *HLM* 1.3.28)

Daiyu provides us with another description of Baoyu's complexion and rosy cheeks that "might have been brushed with powder and the lips touched with rouge so bright was their natural color" (*Story of the Stone* 1.3.101; *HLM* 1.3.28).

Daiyu's rival for Baoyu's hand, Xue Baochai, provides readers with another detailed account of the desirably attired Jia Baoyu.

> He had a little jewel-encrusted coronet of gold filigree on the top of his head and a circlet in the form of two dragons supporting a pearl round his brow. He was dressed in a narrow-sleeved, full-skirted robe of russet-green material covered with a pattern of writhing dragons and lined and trimmed with white fox-fur. A butterfly-embroidered sash with fringed ends was fastened round his waist, and from his neck hung a padlock-shaped amulet, a lucky charm, and the famous jade said to have been inside his mouth when he was born. (*Story of the Stone* 1.8.188; *HLM* 1.8.77)

The third major *yang* accented character, Shi Xiangyun, is described in similarly detailed fashion by Cao Xueqin when she arrives at the poetry party in Chapter 49.

> She was wearing an enormous fur coat that Grandmother Jia had given her. The outside was made up of sables' heads and the inside lined with long-haired black squirrel. On her head was a dark-red camlet "Princess" hood lined with yellow figured velvet, whose cut-out cloud shapes were bordered with gold, and round her neck, muffling her up to the nose, was a large sable tippet. (*Story of the Stone* 2.49.479; *HLM* 2.49.507)

The others tease her for looking like a Tartar groom (*xiao saodazi* 小騷達子) and she parries: "You haven't seen what I am wearing underneath yet!"

> She had on a short, narrow-sleeved, ermine-lined tunic jacket of russet green, edge-fastened down the center front, purfled at neck and cuffs with a triple band of braiding in contrasting colors, and patterned all over with dragon-roundels embroidered in gold thread and colored silks. Under this she was wearing a short riding-skirt of pale-red satin damask lined with white fox belly-fur. A court girdle of different-colored silks braided into butterfly knots and ending in long silken tassels was tied tightly round her waist. Her boots were of deerskin. The whole ensemble greatly enhanced the somewhat masculine appearance of her figure with its graceful, athletic bearing. (*Story of the Stone* 2.49.479; *HLM* 2.49.505)

In contrast to these extensive descriptions of Shi Xiangyun, Wang Xifeng, and Jia Baoyu, the other main characters, despite repeatedly being described as beauties and regardless of their social position as senior men in the household, are only described in a perfunctory way. In the case of Lin Daiyu, Baoyu describes her as he first sees her, in terms of her passionate, tear-filled eyes, mist-wreathed brows, and melancholy face (*Story of the Stone* 1.3.102; *HLM* 1.3.28). At other times they are metaphorically referred to through clothing references such as flashing sleeves, jangling bracelets, shaking earrings, and hair ornaments. No particular detail is usually provided (*Story of the Stone* 3.62.202; *HLM* 2.62.654).

Jia Baoyu: The Apex of *Yang*

It is commonplace to talk about Jia Baoyu as effeminate (Louie 2012, 935), but this attribution partly results from our current association of the aestheticized human form with women and girls. This anachronistic analysis misreads the context of Jia Baoyu's highly aestheticized and decorated body. It projects current perceptions of femininity and masculinity onto the mid-Qing—a time when beauty and aesthetic appeal were not purely "women's work." Nor was a woman's excessive fashion sense a marker of family prestige. Other practices such as foot binding, seclusion from public view, sex segregation, and concubinage performed these status display roles. Rather, the appreciation of elaborate dress was part of the general cultivation of elite civility and demonstration of *yang* power for both public and private display, and could be mobilized by any sex.

Displays of beauty, in the mid-Qing, were appropriate for men because they manifested attributes associated with *yang*—brightness, power, activity, and strength. The role of highly decorated clothing in signifying *yang* energy would disappear as China adopted European and American ideas of gender performance that confined decoration to the female sex and femininity and trivialized beauty and beautification in the late nineteenth century. Chromophobia came to dominate in China under the influence of Western ideas of beauty wherein colorful decoration "is made out to be the property of some 'foreign body'—usually the feminine, the oriental, the primitive, the vulgar, the queer or the pathological [or] relegated to the realm of the superficial, the supplementary,

the inessential or the cosmetic" (Batchelor 2000, 22–23).[8] By the early twentieth century the reinvigoration of China prioritized pragmatism, practicality, and utility (Zhou 2012). Refined, colorful, decorated beauty, and the civility it represented, became trivial extras in the "hands on" world of military, industrial, and commercial competition. Baoyu *becomes* more effeminate from the twentieth century in part because men generally are removed from the aestheticized realm, leaving that social space to women. The many rich manifestations of *yang* that operated prior to the twentieth century are cast aside—male essence is reduced to utilitarianism and removed from the decorative realm. Yet, to mid-Qing readers Baoyu was very *yang*. His predilection and preference for young women, manifest in his many comments about the purest essences of humanity being concentrated in the female (see Edwards 1988–89), further amplify his extreme *yang* qualities because of his power to rule over the young pure girls in his kingdom.

Previously, I argued that Jia Baoyu's character is metaphorically bisexual because he incorporates both masculine and feminine traits (Edwards 1990). Readers are alerted to this bisexuality through other characters' descriptions of Baoyu's girl-like behavior. His embracing of the feminine marks his superiority and uniqueness because he can balance the *yin* and *yang*. He does not relinquish his *yang* or succumb to excessive *yin*; rather, he balances the two—hence the metaphoric bisexuality. Cao Xueqin's use of clothing descriptions shows readers that Baoyu's sympathy for girls *does not* produce a diminution in his *yang*. Clothing displays, supremely *yang*, serve to balance any *yin* behaviors or tendencies he may otherwise manifest—and the very act of achieving this balance is supremely manly.

Baoyu's affinity with the feminine is revealed, for example, in Chapter 66 when You Sanjie describes him as "being somewhat girlish (*youxie nüer qi* 有些女兒氣) in his mannerisms," but she also explains that this is because he spends so much time among girls in Prospect Garden and that he can certainly not be considered stupid. Sanjie's comment comes after her sister, You Erjie, and a male servant, Joker, describe Baoyu as weird, dull, and unmanly. Joker goes so far as to say "He doesn't practice *wen* and doesn't practice *wu*" and just likes to hang about with the maids.[9] Joker's comment, as Kam Louie has explained (2002), is tantamount to saying that Baoyu is "not a real man." Erjie continues this misunderstanding, saying, "I always thought Baoyu looked so nice. How disappointing to learn that there is really nothing in him after all!" (*Story of*

8. One of the early French references to the novel describes it in terms that show the trivial and feminine nature of its descriptions of clothing: "it is about two characters whose costume cannot fail to amuse the elegant and the young mistresses of Great Britain." I am grateful to Martin Woesler for directing me to this reference (Davis and Bruguière 1819, 150).
9. Hawkes translates this as "He doesn't study, he doesn't care for physical training" (*Story of the Stone* 3.66.293).

the Stone 3.66.294; *HLM* 2.66.703). It is against this misunderstanding of his character that You Sanjie makes her comment about his being "somewhat girlish" but not stupid. By Chapter 66 readers already know that his *wen* accomplishments are formidable—in terms of poetry composition and cultivated lifestyle connoisseurship—rendering Joker's description of him unreliable. Jia Baoyu is actively resisting being a man trapped by conventional markers of Confucian success. Lesser characters read this choice as "stupidity," "dissoluteness" or "effeminacy," and general "weakness." But, ultimately, as readers of the novel know, Jia Baoyu is operating at another superior, albeit unconventional, level from these unreliable witnesses.

Jia Baoyu's *yang* nature is also manifest through the mirroring of Baoyu's clothing by other superior male figures. The key relevant relationship is Baoyu's friendship with the Prince of Beijing. The Prince is the highest-ranked person to have direct contact with the Jia clan in the novel and in this respect his *yang* social status relative to every other character is undisputed—but his deeper, generative, and essential *yang* power is presented through descriptions of clothing. His personality is one that confirms Baoyu's unconventional ideas about the qualities of superior people.

> Baoyu had often heard about the Prince of Beijing. He had heard that he was very clever. He had also heard that he was as handsome as he was clever and that he was a quite jolly, unconventional sort of person who refused to let either his royal birth or the conventions of official life constrain him. (*Story of the Stone* 1.14.287; *HLM* 1.14.134)

The meeting of the two like-minded men happens during Qin Shi's funeral and proceeds as follows, with the viewing eye switching from the Prince to Baoyu in turn.

> Looking up, Baoyu saw that Shui Rong's (the Prince) princely headgear was embellished by way of mourning with white bands, a white hatpin, and filigree silver "wings." As a further token of mourning his robe, though heavily bordered with a "tooth and wave" design of rainbow-colored stripes and gold-emblazoned with the royal five-clawed dragon, was of a white material. It was confined at the waist by a red leather belt, studded with green jade. The splendid costume, the luminous eyes, the finely chiseled features really did make him an arrestingly handsome young man. (*Story of the Stone* 1.15.288; *HLM* 1.15.135)

Cao Xueqin mirrors his description of the Prince's clothing with an equivalent for Baoyu:

> Baoyu was wearing a little silver coronet on the top of his head and a silver headband round his brow in the form of two dragons emerging from the sea. He had on a narrow-sleeved, full-skirted robe of white material and a silver belt inlaid with pearls. After studying and admiring the flowerlike face and coal-black eyes, the prince's face broke into a smile. (*Story of the Stone* 1.15.288; *HLM* 1.14.135)

Their friendship is consolidated when the Prince gives Baoyu a rosary bracelet "made of the aromatic seeds of some Indian plant" (*Story of the Stone* 1.15.289; *HLM* 1.15.135). No other characters present in the extensive narration of the funeral have their dress described in such detail by Cao Xueqin.

The decorations on Baoyu's clothing and headgear include the key symbol of *yang* interaction with *yin*—dragons playing with pearls. His coronets and headbands routinely have dragons on display. The first description of Baoyu, as seen through Daiyu's eyes, has him wearing a golden headband with two dragons playing with a large pearl. His neck is adorned with a gold hornless dragon (*chi* 螭) necklace. The twin dragon and pearl symbols are also evident in his headgear when Baochai and Baoyu meet a few chapters later. The dragon and pearl symbolize masculine fertility as the pearl marks the egg that promises new life through the integration of the two essences. The Prince of Beijing wears an imperial dragon embroidered on his robe as a mark of his superior status. Butterflies, another classic *yang* symbol, feature frequently on Baoyu's clothing, consolidating his strength, brightness, vigor, and masculinity.

Clothing is a manifestation of *yang* but it also has the effect of buttressing Baoyu's *yang* against the harmful effects of flooding *yin*. One of the most dramatic episodes relating to clothing that integrates *yin yang* cosmology comes in Chapter 52, when Baoyu wears the treasured peacock-feather cloak. Grandmother Jia provides the cloak to Baoyu directly after seeing him prepared for snow.

> "Is it snowing?" she asked him.
>
> "Not yet," said Baoyu, "but it looks as if it will." (*Story of the Stone* 2.52.544; *HLM* 2.52.539)[10]

Hawkes' translation hides the gendered significance of this seemingly simple exchange about the weather. Baoyu's literal reply is "The sky is *yin*, it still hasn't snowed" ("Tian yin zhe, hai meiyou xia ne" 天陰著，還沒有下呢). Cao Xueqin then balances Baoyu's exposure to this *yin* weather by providing him with a dramatic *yang*-coded cloak. Mid-Qing readers would instantly recognize the Peacock as the earthly reincarnation of the Phoenix—and the Phoenix symbolizes *yang* energy. Much is made of the magnificence of the cloak and it has an instant and overwhelming effect on the *yin* characters that come into contact with it.

The cloak projects so much *yang* power that many seeing it are cowed in its presence. As Baoyu exits the mansions, the yard cleaners immediately drop to their knees *en masse* to salute him Manchu-style. Despite numerous comings and goings in the novel, this episode is the key one in which we see the awe that

10. Prior to his departure to see his grandmother, Baoyu is told by his maid, Musk, "It's very overcast again. It looks as if it will snow. You'd better put on your felt" (*Story of the Stone*, 3.52.544). Musk's words are literally, "The weather is *yin yin* again" (*Tian you yin yin de*) (*HLM* 2.52.539).

Baoyu alone inspires in the male servants beneath him. Equally, Grandmother Jia's principal maidservant, Faithful, runs from the room when Baoyu seeks her out to display himself in the cloak. "Faithful, see this! How do you think I look in it?" Her reaction is to hastily retreat into Grandmother Jia's room (*Story of the Stone* 2.52.545; *HLM* 2.52.539–40). Faithful steadfastly repels this super concentration of *yang* because she has sworn to remain chaste and loyal to Grandmother Jia. Earlier, she had rejected Jia She's demand that she become his concubine, and her refusal was couched in a strong declaration of her resistance to men and sexuality. Jia Baoyu, adorned in the most alluring of *yang* attire, the embodiment of the Phoenix on earth, threatens her with its "super sex appeal."

During his outing, Baoyu damages the cloak by burning a hole in the lapel. Panicked about the punishment that this is likely to incur, he arranges for one of his maids, Skybright, to repair the hole. She stays up all night darning despite her precarious health—she has been bedridden with a cold and fever for several days, and the all-night darning proves too much. She alone has the skill to repair the damaged *yang* cloak. Baoyu's principal maid, Aroma, teases Skybright about her indispensability, saying, "If he burns another hole in his peacock gold snow-cape, who's going to mend it for him if *you* aren't there?" (*Story of the Stone* 3.62.210; *HLM* 2.62.658). Later in the novel, Skybright's clothing protects Baoyu's *yang* even when she is on her deathbed. Despite barely being able to lift her body, she pulls off the chemise she is wearing to swap it for his shirt. The chemise has immediate effect, as he is able to repel the advances of Skybright's lustful, excessively *yin* sister-in-law. He departs hastily back to the safety of Prospect Garden wearing Skybright's *yang*-buttressing chemise (*Story of the Stone* 3.77.546; *HLM* 2.77.838).

On two other occasions clothing protects Baoyu from excessive *yin* produced by inclement weather, and the extended descriptions of his "dressing" invite the reader to gaze upon his body and its *yang* decorations. Baoyu's *yang* clothing explicitly repels the drenching *yin* of the rainwater or snowfall. His rain-capes are renowned among readers of the novel and are described in great detail. In Chapter 8 we read:

> A maid came forward with Baoyu's rain-hat and he lowered his head slightly for her to put it on. Holding the brim of the great saucer-shaped red felt top, she jerked it up and prepared to bring it down, aiming the inside part at his crown.
>
> "Stop!" he cried impatiently. "You have got to go easy with a great clumsy thing like that! Haven't you ever seen anyone putting one of these things on before? You had better let me do it myself."
>
> "Come here!" said Daiyu standing on the edge of the kang. "I'll put it on for you!"
>
> Baoyu went and stood in front of her. Putting her two hands round the inner cap, Daiyu eased it gently down until its rim fitted over his golden headband, so that the walnut-sized red woolen pompom of the headband was left quivering outside the cap on its flexible golden stem.

> "There!" she said, after a few further adjustments. "Now you can put on your cape."
>
> Baoyu took the cape from his maid and fastened it himself. (*Story of the Stone* 1.8.195–96; *HLM* 1.8.82)

In Chapter 45, readers are invited to examine the detail of another of Baoyu's rain-capes through Daiyu's curious eyes. This cape has particular *yang*-boosting qualities since it was gifted to Baoyu by the Prince of Beijing, whose friendship with Baoyu revolves around mutual exchange of clothing and trinkets. By removing the bowl of the rain hat, it is transformed from *yang* into *yin*. In the following exchange, readers view Baoyu's clothing in detail but only see Daiyu's face.

> Almost simultaneously with this announcement, Baoyu himself burst in wearing a rain-cape and an enormous rain-hat of woven bamboo. Daiyu laughed at the spectacle he presented.
>
> "The Old Fisherman! Where have *you* just sprung from?"
>
> "How are you today?" Baoyu asked her anxiously. "Have you had your medicine? How much have you managed to eat today?"
>
> He was divesting himself of the rain-clothes while he asked these questions. When he had disposed of them, he picked up the lamp from the table and, shielding it with one hand to throw the light on her, scrutinized her face. He appeared to be satisfied with what he saw.
>
> "You've got a better color today."
>
> Now that he had taken off the rain-clothes, Daiyu could see what he was wearing underneath. He had on a somewhat worn-looking tunic of red silk damask tied with a green sash at the waist, and trousers of sprigged green silk. The ends of his trousers were stuffed into socks extravagantly patterned with a design of flowers picked out in gold, and there were flowers and butterflies embroidered on his satin slippers.
>
> "The top part of you seems to have been pretty well protected against the rain," said Daiyu, "but what about the bottom part? Still, you appear to have kept your feet dry."
>
> "This is a complete outfit I've been wearing," said Baoyu. "There is a pair of pear-wood pattens that go with it as well, but I left them outside on your verandah."
>
> Daiyu looked again at the cape and rain-hat. Both were exquisitely made—quite unlike those that are sold in the market.
>
> "What sort of straw is this cape made of?" she asked him. "It's so fine. I can see now why you didn't look like a hedge-hog in it as people usually do in these things."
>
> "The whole outfit was given to me by the Prince of Beijing," said Baoyu. "It's exactly like the one he wears himself at home when it rains. If you like it, I'll get you one the same. There's nothing so very special about it really. The hat's rather fun. The center part is detachable. If you want to wear it in winter when it's snowing, you undo this little bamboo fastener and the whole top comes out, leaving you with just the brim. So when it snows, it can be worn by a woman just as well as by a man. I'll get you a hat like this to wear in winter when it snows."

> "I don't want one, thank you," said Daiyu laughing. "If I were to wear one of those, I should look like one of those old fisherwomen you see in plays and paintings." (*Story of the Stone* 2.45.401–2; *HLM* 2.45.465–66)

The fisherman is a common symbol of the male individual who rejects the trammels of a petty political or bureaucratic life and isolates himself in the natural world—an archetypal Daoist figure and one less repugnant than the wandering monks that dot the novel. It is the unconventional man that Baoyu will become by the end of the novel. The fisherwoman does not have the same deep connotations.

Clothing the Masculine Women: Wang Xifeng and Shi Xiangyun

The idea that decoration was a *yang* manifestation during the mid-Qing is confirmed through an examination of the descriptions of the novel's key masculine women—Xifeng and Xiangyun. In this reversal of the flow of *yin* and *yang*—i.e., the women are seeking to increase their *yang* essence—we see the limits of the ideal of "balance" and "interactive flows of essences" within *yin yang* philosophy, embedded as it is within a Confucian patriarchal frame. Cao Xueqin dedicates lengthy descriptions to both women's clothing (an amplification of their *yang* potential) and describes their aspirations to be men or to be better than men. But, just as women cannot enter the *wen-wu* ideology permanently, the temporary nature of women's access to *yang* is evident in Cao's descriptions of masculine women in *Honglou meng*.

The dominant perspective on Wang Xifeng is that she is a termagant, power-hungry, greedy, and lascivious woman whose lack of restraint propels the Jia family further and more rapidly into decline. Cao Xueqin uses this disruption of gender norms to amplify her destructive role in speeding the clan along the path to its demise (Edwards 1993). She is frequently described as acting like a man, wanting to be a man, and equally as often as achieving results better than any man. Cao Xueqin explains that she was "brought up from earliest childhood just like a boy, and had acquired in the school-room the somewhat boyish-sounding name of Wang Xifeng" (*Story of the Stone* 1.3.91–92; *HLM* 1.3.23). Xifeng's name literally means phoenix, and the phoenix is a powerful symbol of *yang* energy unless it is paired with a dragon, in which case it can become *yin* essence. This mutability precisely expresses Xifeng's role in the novel. She is an unrestrained female phoenix—who should have a dragon to tame her excessive *yang*, but whose husband is a dissolute fellow incapable of controlling her. Descriptions of Xifeng's clothing are central to her identification as a *yang* character.[11] The initial

11. Transgression of gender norms is embedded in the characterization of both Wang Xifeng and Jia Baoyu, with Angelina Yee arguing that Xifeng's masculinity was an artistic device to counterpoise her masculine characteristics with Baoyu's feminine traits (Yee 1990, 636–49).

description of her in Chapter 3, as outlined earlier, includes references to phoenix and dragon motifs on her clothing and jewelry as well as to the *yang* butterfly. The particular phoenixes on her pin are *chaoyang* 朝陽—literally, "facing the *yang*"[12]—phoenixes.

The young cousin, Shi Xiangyun, visits the Jia mansions at numerous points in the novel and is generally appraised positively by critics and readers for her fun-loving nature and generosity of spirit. Xiangyun's *yang* nature is also made manifest through descriptions of her clothing and her predilection for dressing as a man.[13] Other characters expound at length on her enthusiasm for dressing as a man.

> She's really happiest dressed in boy's [lit. other people's][14] clothes. That time she was here in the third or fourth month last year, I remember one day she dressed up in one of Baoyu's gowns and put a pair of his boots on and one of his belts round her waist. At first glance she looked exactly like Cousin Bao. It was only the ear-rings that gave her away. (*Story of the Stone* 2.31.118; *HLM* 1.31.312)

Grandmother Jia tells her "that she [makes] a very good-looking boy" (*Story of the Stone* 2.31.118; *HLM* 1.31.313).[15] Similarly, in Chapter 49 her cousins remind readers that "She loves dressing up as a boy. Actually she looks even more fetching in boy's clothes than she does as a girl" (*Story of the Stone* 2.49.480; *HLM* 2.49.507).

Later in the novel we see that her preferred male clothing is not just any style of menswear. Rather, she prefers military outfits or horseman's outfits. In Chapter 63 we read that she "had long since shown a passion for dressing up in military uniform and was frequently to be seen wearing a cavalryman's

12. Hawkes does not mention the rose pendant, another *yang* symbol, hanging from her waist.
13. Ji Xueyuan argues that her "changing dress" without "changing her sex" represents the novel's resistance to a traditional culture that denigrated women—Xiangyun's clothing choices, in this reading, stand as evidence of Cao Xueqin's veneration of women (Ji 2004, 24). Ji presents Xiangyun's female-to-male cross-dressing in a history of cross-dressing after the rise of Song neo-Confucianism that separated men's and women's dress styles. My 1994 book argues strongly against reading the novel as a text that protests against the treatment of women in Qing China.
14. Hawkes translates *bie ren* 別人 (lit. "other people's") clothes as "boy's clothes." He was probably aiming to capture the spirit of her personality rather than to provide a literal translation. He also translates *taoqi* 淘氣 (naughty) as "tomboyish" on several occasions.
15. The Hawkes translation specifically codes her behavior as tomboyish. For example, in Chapter 21 Hawkes writes that Baoyu observes Xiangyun sleeping and declares: "a tomboy, even in her sleep!" (*Story of the Stone* 1.21.415). Alternative translations for the Chinese term *bu laoshi* 不老實 that Hawkes translates as "tomboyish" are "not nice" and "unrestrained."

belt and tight-sleeved riding habit" (*Story of the Stone* 3.63.237; Cao 1791).[16] In Chapter 49, when she is described as looking like a Tartar Groom in her deerskin boots and fox-fur riding clothes, the martial effect is clear for astute readers to see. Xiangyun's *yang* style represents the *wu* masculinity manifest in the horse riding so honored by the Manchu rulers of China during the Qing. Cao Xueqin provides other clues to her *yang* disposition as well. The famous scene in Chapter 62 when she is found in a drunken slumber covered in red peonies—the archetypal *yang* flower—is yet another occasion when Cao Xueqin directs readers to her *yang* nature. However, detailed descriptions of her clothing and clothing changes remain the key forms of amplifying her *yang* aspirations.

Cao accentuates the temporary nature of Xiangyun's *yang* position by confining her decorative clothing to her visits to the Jia household. As she arrives at the Jia mansions and as she leaves, Cao Xueqin draws readers' attention to her changed clothing. Her return to the Jias' in Chapter 31 is replete with commentary about her clothing. Grandmother Jia invites her to take off her outer layers. The sheer quantity of clothing she has on causes Lady Wang to declare "Gracious, child! What a lot you have on! I don't think I've ever seen anyone wearing so much" (*Story of the Stone* 2.31.118; *HLM* 1.31.312). She explains: "'It's my Aunt Shi who makes me wear it all,' said Xiangyun. 'You wouldn't catch me wearing this stuff if I didn't have to.'" Daiyu reminds the others of the time that Xiangyun grabbed Grandmother Jia's new red snow-cape and hitched it up to rush outside to play in the snow—getting it covered in mud and slush. On departing the Jia household, her temporary frolicking in *yang* clothing must cease, and she returns to the real world of girls who are to be betrothed and married off. In Chapter 36 Cao describes her tearful departure and return home. "While the three of them were talking, Xiangyun came in wearing her going-out clothes and looking very dressed-up. Her uncle the Marquis's people had arrived to fetch her, and she had come to say good-bye" (*Story of the Stone* 2.36.211; *HLM* 1.36.367). Her mischievous, boyish clothes are a temporary feature of her visits to the Jia household, and do not allow any permanent or sustained transcendence to a balanced and stable state of *yin* and *yang*.[17]

Ultimately, neither woman can transcend the mundane or achieve the harmony in *yin* and *yang* that Baoyu does as he sheds his worldly desires and progresses to enlightenment. Some other male characters such as Liu Xianglian also achieve enlightenment during the novel but no women do. Instead, the women who aspire to increase their *yang* are doomed to failure in an aggressive or

16. The section in Chapter 63 that relates to cross-dressing is sometimes excluded from editions of the novel. To view a version of the novel with this excerpt included, see Cao (1791).

17. Ji Xueyuan argues that Cao Xueqin used Shi Xiangyun's cross dressing as a way of promoting a new notion of aesthetics in which there is a merger of *yang* and *yin* forms of beauty into a more complete form (Ji 2004, 24).

amusing effort to rise above themselves and their female bodies. Wang Xifeng's *yang* nature is not sustainable—it ultimately marks the decline of the family and the decline of her personal health. She tries too hard to be *yang*—refusing to take medication, denying her illness and weakness, and ultimately becoming out of balance. Her miscarriage and failure to produce a son make a mockery of her "dragon playing with a pearl" decorations. Shi Xiangyun's fate, while not as disastrous as that of many of her cousins, is pathetic and tragic nonetheless. The two masculine women's *yang* displays are temporary distractions from their inescapable femaleness that binds them to an ordinary life dominated by *yin*.

Secondary *Yang* Characters: Playing at Being Men

The maleness of *yang* behaviors is evident not only in the repeated invocations of the masculine manners and aspirations of Xifeng and Xiangyun but also in two other characters—Parfumée, the actor-turned-maidservant, and You Sanjie, the ill-fated beauty who commits suicide when her betrothed breaks his promise to wed her. Both women's clothing is, at different points in the novel, described in intricate detail, and both are immediately described as transforming into men—albeit temporarily. The descriptions of their clothing amplify their *yang* moment.

In Chapter 63, Baoyu hosts a birthday party in his quarters and all of his maids and cousins are invited. The preparations for the party include a scene in which readers are invited to look upon Baoyu's dress in detail, but we are also provided with an equally intricate description of Parfumée's attire. She is one of two servants described in such detail.

> Baoyu himself was wearing a dark-red cotton tunic tied at the waist with a sash, and trousers in a black-and-green-patterned lined silk gauze, unconfined at the ankles. The girls found him already ensconced on the kang. He was leaning back, one elbow resting on a newly-made turquoise-colored pouffe stuffed with rose and peony petals, playing guess-fingers with Parfumée. Parfumée was shouting excitedly as she played. She was wearing a very short, close-fitting tunic with a harlequin pattern of turquoise, deep purple and reddish-brown lozenges, a willow-green sash, and flower-sprigged pale red trousers, which, like Baoyu's, were unconfined at the ankles. Her hair was done up in a number of little plaits which had been drawn back to join one great plait, as thick as a goose's egg at the nape of her neck. She had a tiny jade stud, no bigger than a grain of rice, in her right ear; from her left ear hung a pendant made of ruby-glass and gold, the size of a ginkgo-fruit. Never had the moonlike pallor of her face, the limpid brightness of her eyes, shown to greater advantage.
>
> "Look at that now!" said the maids admiringly. "Wouldn't you take the two of them for a pair of twins?" (*Story of the Stone* 3.63.221–22; *HLM* 2.63.664)

In the Chinese text, the maleness of the twins is evident in Cao's use of the phrase "younger and older brother twins" (*shuangsheng de dixiong liangge* 雙生的弟兄兩個). The other servants are described simply as "wearing only tunics

and trousers, with their unadorned hair loosely knotted or coiled" (*Story of the Stone* 3.63.221; *HLM* 3.63.664).

At first, this description appears to contradict the pattern that I propose Cao Xueqin was developing (i.e., that only *yang* characters deserve decoration and readers' appraising eyes). A servant is surely a *yin* character. But, as we read further, we see that this description is in keeping with the overall pattern. Later in the chapter, Baoyu interrupts Parfumée while she is tying her hair and insists that she cut it short on the sides and shave across the top in the style of a boy. He further establishes her temporary *yang* status by venturing to describe the masculine clothing she should wear to complement this male hairstyle.

> "We'll get you a big fur cap with ear-flaps to wear in the winter," he said, "and big tiger-boots for your feet, or white socks and thick-soled, stitch-patterned padded shoes, to go with loose-bottomed trousers." (*Story of the Stone* 3.63.236; Cao 1791)

Baoyu then declares that she should also change her name to that of a man—Xiongnu 雄奴. This new name both confirms her temporary *yang* identity through the use of the character *xiong* 雄 and retains her servant status through the inclusion of the character for slave, *nu* 奴. The character *xiong* comes from the *ci-xiong* (female-male 雌雄) pairing that Shi Xiangyun taught her maidservant when she explained the operation of *yin* and *yang*. Parfumée's male name, Xiongnu 雄奴, literally means "Manly and Heroic Slave." Baoyu declares that most people who hear it will think it is the word for the northern nomads, the Hun, whose ethnic category is also pronounced Xiongnu 匈奴 but which uses a different character (and tone) for Xiong. Through this play on homophones, the two mischievously plot for Parfumée to be able to pass as a foreign Hun pageboy if she accompanies Baoyu out in public.

This episode gives rise to an extended commentary about the female-to-male cross-dressing fad among the Jia clan dwellers of Prospect Garden.

> Parfumée's transvestism was by no means a novelty in the household.[18] The tomboyish Shi Xiangyun had long since shown a passion for dressing up in military uniform and was frequently to be seen wearing a cavalryman's belt and tight-sleeved riding habit. When Baoyu put Parfumée into boy's clothing, she was quick to follow suit by dressing her own Althée in a page's costume. As a "painted face" Althée was already in the habit of shaving off the short hair above her forehead and round her ears to facilitate making-up and had acquired a certain masculinity of movement and gesture from the role she played, so the transformation was in her case a less drastic one. (*Story of the Stone* 3.63.237; Cao 1791)

Xiangyun changed Althée's name to "Valiant"—literally "Big Hero" (*Daying* 大英). Because her surname was Wei, the combination, Wei Daying 韋大英,

18. This sentence is an addition to the original text inserted by Hawkes to amplify the cross-dressing.

produced a homophone for the start of the phrase "Only a hero manifests his inherent talents" (*Wei da yingxiong neng bense* 惟大英雄能本色) and consolidated the manly tone.[19] Cao Xueqin follows this interlude with a brief description of Li Wan and Tanchun's transformation of Baoqin's maid into a pageboy. But these servants are but transitory simulacrums of men, females dabbling in *yang* through clothing for the amusement of their superiors.

You Sanjie's *yang* nature is evident in Chapter 65 when she upbraids Jia Zhen and Jia Lian for playing cheap with her and her sister's honor. Cao Xueqin provides us with the detail of her clothing:

> Out of deliberate disregard for appearances she had taken off her hair-ornaments and outer clothes, and from time to time as she spoke, the animated gestures with which her words were accompanied caused the imperfectly-fastened crimson shift she was wearing to gape open, revealing glimpses of leek green breast-binder and snow-white flesh beneath; the red shoes that peeped out below her green drawers were all the time tap-tapping or coming together in a manner that was anything but ladylike, and her earrings bobbed to and fro like little swings. To her brow's dusky crown and lips incarnadine the lamplight lent an added softness and brightness; and the wine she had drunk gave her eyes, which were at all times sparkling and vivacious, an even more irresistible allure. (*Story of the Stone* 3.65.282–83; *HLM* 2.65.697)

Then Cao reveals that she has become more like a "real man" in relation to the two men stunned into silence and obedience before her.

> Sometimes she abused them, called them names, said the most outrageous things to them. It was as though the roles had been reversed—as though she was the man and they were a pair of poor, simpering playthings whose services she had paid for. (*Story of the Stone* 3.65.283; *HLM* 2.65.697)

Cao Xueqin amplifies the *yang* role played by both women by aestheticizing their forms through detailed descriptions of their clothing—power and dominance required beautification to be truly convincing in the elite mid-Qing context.

Clothing as a Manifestation of *Yang* Status through the Dress of Minor Characters

On the rare occasions when Cao Xueqin describes in detail the clothing of the other characters in the novel it too is framed as a display of *yang* positioning. This sometimes occurs in instances where the mistresses' *yang* position over their servants is asserted. In the discussion about *yin* and *yang* between Kingfisher and Shi Xiangyun this relationship is made explicit. Kingfisher explains her relationship to Shi Xiangyun—"You're Yang and I'm Yin"—on the basis that "the master is Yang and the servant is Yin" (*Story of the Stone* 2.31.123; *HLM* 1.31.316).

19. This section is omitted from the Hawkes translation.

When the Twelve Beauties (other than Xiangyun and Xifeng) are performing their *yang* role relative to their servants we see a rare detailed description of their clothing. In the cases outlined below, none of the females performing *yang* roles is described as actually becoming like a man or dressing like a man—their *yang* status emerges only in power relations between other women or lower social classes.

Clothing becomes a boundary marker between servants and mistresses during the raid on Prospect Garden prompted by the discovery of a cheap purse embroidered with pornographic figures. As each compound in the garden is searched for other objects belonging to men, Wang Shanbao's wife dares to touch Jia Tanchun on the pretense of searching her person.

> Going up to Tanchun, she took hold of a corner of her jacket and turned it back, grinning all over her face.
>
> "There!" she said. "Now I've even searched Miss Tan, and there's nothing on her either!"
>
> Xifeng was shocked.
>
> "Good gracious, woman! Are you—?"
>
> But before she could finish there was a resounding *smack*! and a large red mark appeared on the old woman's face where Tanchun had hit her.
>
> Tanchun was in a towering rage.
>
> "Who do you think you are? How *dare* you touch me . . . Here!"—with one hand she began feverishly undoing her buttons, while with the other she pulled Xifeng's hand towards her and placed it beneath her jacket—"Search me! I would rather be searched by you than submit to being pawed over by a slave!" (*Story of the Stone* 3.74.472–73; *HLM* 2.74.798–99)

Ultimately, the raid reveals two caches of men's clothing—one held by a young maid on behalf of her brother and the other by the recipient of the purse, none other than Wang Shanbao's granddaughter, Chess. These objects signal the loss of the purity of the garden and the impending disbanding of its residents (Edwards 2013). Clothing marks the division between the *yang* mistresses and their *yin* servants but also signals the inevitable penetration of the garden by uncontrolled *yang* aspects.

Another instance occurs when Aroma, Baoyu's principal maid and chamber wife, is described in great detail as she is about to leave the mansion to return to visit her mother on her deathbed. Wang Xifeng is determined that Aroma be decked out in the best possible clothing for her return home. A great show is made of ensuring that Aroma is dressed properly and Cao Xueqin dedicates considerable detail to her outfits. In this instance, the use of *yang* as a public and active display of status is being asserted—by no means is Aroma being decorated to be trivialized as an object of desire. Rather, she is being decorated so that when she returns home she is able to manifest her power and status over her parents, her brother and his wife. Not only should she "dress herself up in the very best things she's got"; but "tell her to take a good big bundle of extra clothes with her as well. The cloth it's wrapped in is to be of the highest quality. Her hand-warmer is to be a good one too" (*Story of the Stone* 2.51.516; *HLM* 2.51.525).

Once Aroma is dressed in her "best" she reports to Xifeng for inspection. Xifeng describes what she sees:

> Aroma's hair, liberally studded with pearled and golden jewelry, was satisfactory; her clothing, it seemed, less so. She had on an ermine-lined silk tapestry dress of peach-pink satin, sprigged with a pattern of different sorts of flowers, a leek-green padded skirt embroidered in couched gold thread and colored silks, and a black satin jacket lined with squirrel. (*Story of the Stone* 2.51.516; *HLM* 2.51.524)

Xifeng finds this inadequate—the jacket is "too plain" and "not warm enough." Xifeng then lends her one of her own heavier fur coats: "It was a very grand one, in slate-blue satin, with eight large, embroidery-like silk tapestry roundels woven into it, and with a lining of arctic fox." Not yet satisfied with Aroma's already impressive array of clothes, Xifeng "told Patience to fetch a better carrying-cloth—one made of good quality foreign broadcloth and lined with turquoise-colored silk—and a snow-cape to add to the contents of her bundle" (*Story of the Stone* 2.51.517; *HLM* 2.51.525). Xifeng's dominance in the decorative "status display" is clear from this episode. Aroma is not a *yang* character herself (no mention is made of her transforming herself into a man, for example) so she must be *dressed* by the supreme *yang* female, Xifeng. Not only does Xifeng have the pecuniary power to provide her clan's Chamber Wife with superior outfits to mark the clan's status; she also has the authority to bequeath these items and instruct her underlings to wear them. Decorative and elaborate clothing is a manifestation of *yang* power that marks a hierarchy between sexes and between social classes.

Conclusion

Honglou meng, written as it was by an impoverished scholar from a fallen bureaucrat family, promotes the Daoist philosophy of *yin* and *yang* and actively rejects the Confucian ideals of masculinity for the real world marked by *wen* and *wu*. The characters at the apex of his ideal world are those who reject or see the futility of the worldly norms of bureaucratic success (e.g., Jia Baoyu and the Prince of Beijing). However, the beneficial effect of balancing the two essences in order to appreciate the full folly of the world is a man's privilege. The inherent manliness of this ideal of mutual interchange of *yang* and *yin* essences is evident in the depiction of the female characters who seek to build up their *yang* qualities. Their inability to ever transcend biology is evident in their tragic fates—no different from those women who accept their *yin* status relative to men. So, while Kam Louie and I argued that *yin* and *yang* was not very useful for exploring masculinity because it was open to both men and women, there are limits to the female's access to the supreme powers of its generative mutability and mutuality—at least within Cao Xueqin's depiction.

Nonetheless, as I have aimed to show in this chapter, if we remain alert to the power of *yang* as a display of masculinity and the ultimate superiority of those men who seek to "get in touch with their *yin* side," we can avoid mistakenly reading Jia Baoyu as effeminate and therefore ineffectual in his own time. Cao Xueqin was amplifying Jia Baoyu's masculine power through vigorous and repeated displays of his *yang* in detailed clothing descriptions. Wearing and displaying beautiful clothing was integral to the mid-Qing elite masculine performance.

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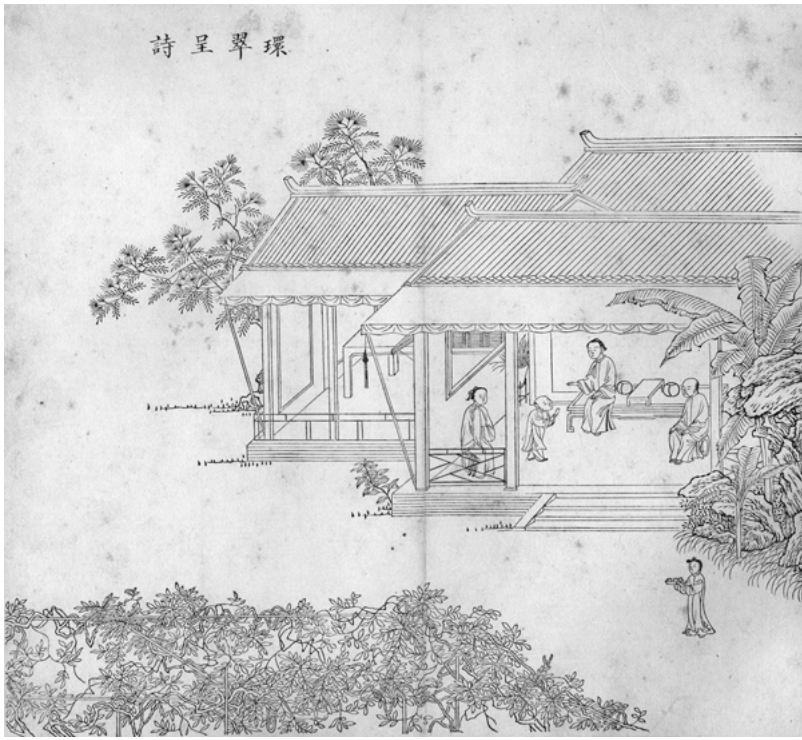
6
Drawings of a Life of "Unparalleled Glory"

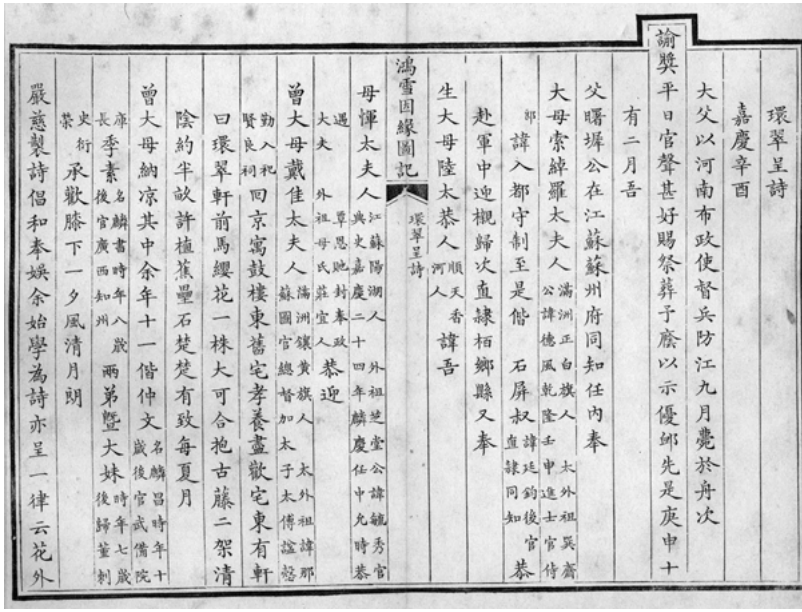
Ideal Manhood and the Rise of Pictorial Autobiographies in China

Binbin Yang

Hongxue yinyuan tuji 鴻雪因緣圖記 (Drawings of fleeting memories and karma, 1847), a *nianpu* 年譜 (chronological auto/biography) by the Manchu official Wanyan Linqing 完顏麟慶 (1791–1846), continues to stand out in the Chinese autobiographical tradition due to its novel form and visual impact (Feng 2005, 119–58; Moloughney 1992, 11).[1] In 1827, Linqing began to commission paintings to retrace his life experiences, and seventy-eight paintings were completed over three years. At the suggestion of the painter Wang Chunquan 汪春泉, Linqing commissioned a further two works designed to give a coherent form to his corpus of paintings: the first, a portrait, which he used to head the paintings; and, the second, a painting portraying him having his portrait painted, which he used to conclude the collection. Thus, by the autumn of 1829, Linqing had produced the first collection of his autobiography in purely visual form. He also came up with the idea of composing a written account to accompany each of the paintings, but it was not until 1836 (when he served as the director-general of river works in the Jiangnan area, a post he was remembered for) that he had the chance to start writing these accounts. In the early winter of 1838, Linqing completed eighty accounts and produced four consecutive albums 圖冊, in which each account followed a painting on linked leaves. The effect was a life unfolding in extensive "chain pictures"—to borrow the term used by the modern scholar Ah Ying 阿英 (1980)—with Linqing's voice regularly coming in and engaging the viewer by explaining the anecdotes or events involved in the visual images (Wanyan 2011). (See Figure 6.1 for a sample painting and its corresponding account portraying the early years of Linqing's life.)[2]

1. See these references for *nianpu* as a form of auto/biography. Scholars have also long recognized the value of the work as a historical source and have tapped it for information about river works, historical and cultural sites, popular customs, political events, and the social and religious life of the Manchu aristocrats (Dodgen 1991, 36–63; Dodgen 2001, 56–68; Liu 2004, 161–218; Teng 1993, 64–71).
2. Figures in this chapter are reprinted, with permission, from the National Library of China.





Figures 6.1a and **6.1b** Linqing learning poetry composition and dedicating a poem to his great grandmother (*Hongxue yinyuan tuji*, Album 1, Painting No. 2, followed by an account). Reprinted with permission of the National Library of China.

As Linqing's creative energy continued to find expression in this autobiographical form, his "chain" of images juxtaposed with textual accounts reached extraordinary proportions. In 1840, he completed his second collection, and in 1845, the third. Both collections were modeled on the first and incorporated exactly the same number of paintings and accounts. These three collections were produced in woodblock and lithographic prints at different times. An exquisite version from 1847 keeps the original form of the collections by reproducing the images in albums.[3] When unfolded, the 240 paintings/portraits and their corresponding accounts generate a vivid story that spans more than half a century.

Linqing's work marks the apex of what I would term "pictorial autobiographies," which emerged during this time as the result of the renewed significance of portraiture as a means of producing normative gender roles for men (and women) to emulate. Central to these cultural and artistic trends was a heightened interest among the elite in "performing" their identities in the visual spaces of their portraits by appropriating widely circulating gender ideals. As this chapter will show, Linqing's pictorial autobiography was an elaborate performance of masculine ideals—as the epitome of the moral order and cultural influence of his dynasty during, ironically, a time of impending crisis.

Linqing and Gender Ideals in Portraiture

A brief recapitulation of the portraiture tradition in China will help shed much light on my discussion of Linqing's efforts at self-glorification. Portraiture developed significant commemorative and didactic functions during the Han dynasty (202–220 BC) through creating two prominent gender ideals—namely, the founding generals of the dynasty and the female moral exemplars (Seckel 1993, 7–26; Vinograd 1992; Wu 1996, 84–86). Both continued to exert crucial influences on state-promoted gender orthodoxies, but it was the glorious images of the generals that helped the newly founded dynasties to demonstrate their legitimacy and demand loyalty from their subjects. Images of generals found new patronage during the Qing dynasty. In 1755 and 1776, respectively, the Qianlong emperor commissioned one hundred portraits for his generals who had successfully put down rebellions in the western frontiers and Sichuan, and ordered that all of the portraits be hung on the walls of the Ziguang Pavilion 紫光閣 (Nie 1990, 65–69).

These grand commemorative projects were firmly grounded in the Qianlong emperor's larger "civilizing mission" of state-building, frontiers-expansion, and social and moral reforms. Janet Theiss' discussion of the cult of female chastity during this time provides a useful context. The "gender logic" governing the chastity cult by no means focused on female virtue or proper gender distinction

3. A copy is currently held by the National Library of China. Reprints used in this chapter come from this copy.

alone. Rather, it had much broader implications for a new ruler-subject dynamic, in which the ruler acted as a "civilizer" chastising and transforming the moral behavior of his subjects, and in which the subject, male or female, demonstrated absolute loyalty to the "civilizing benevolence" of the ruler—and, by extension, to the new social and political order established by the ruler. This civilizing mission not only penetrated every level of the local societies but also expanded to the new frontiers, and to the tribal groups on the borders of China proper (Theiss 2004, 25–54).

The reemergence of the age-old masculine ideal in political art vividly illustrates the correlation between the construction of gender ideals and the building of the Qing state. Portraits of the glorious generals in the Ziguang Pavilion now became visual statements of the pacifying and civilizing power of the Qing state. To use Louie's *wen-wu* paradigm, these portraits illustrated the ultimate form of *wu* masculinity claimed by the Manchu rulers. The Kangxi and Qianlong emperors legitimated their rule over a primarily Han state through the display of an ideal balance between their *wen* (e.g., moral and cultural attainment) and *wu* (e.g., pacifying missions and frontiers expansion) powers (Louie 2002, 9–17).

As many as Linqing's idealized selves were, as we shall find below, his life story unfolded along the path of his brilliant career and was a clear emulation of the ideal of the founding general. To begin with, the execution of Linqing's first eighty portraits "coincided" in time with a grand commemorative event. In 1828, the Daoguang emperor started to commission portraits for the generals who had just put down the Muslim rebellion on the western frontiers (*Qing shilu* 1985–87, vol. 35, 83–89). In 1830, the court painter He Huanwen 賀煥文 completed fifty-two portraits, which were immediately hung in the Ziguang Pavilion. Soon afterwards, the emperor commissioned He Huanwen to produce a further ten paintings describing the battle scenes, ordered that these paintings be inscribed onto bronze plates, and handed out the plates as gifts to his officials, including Linqing. This immediately established He Huanwen's reputation as a distinguished portrait painter across the Capital, and the officials all "took it as their great fortune to have him paint their portraits" (Wanyan 2011, vol. 1, 334; vol. 3, 1000). In this context, Linqing clearly intended to emulate his colleagues, whose portraits had just entered the memorial hall.

More importantly, the above story appears in the last account of Linqing's extensive autobiography, where he looked back at his life and tried to wrap up his life story. In this account, Linqing recalled one of his portraits that was painted in 1843, by none other than He Huanwen. He Huanwen offered to paint the portrait at a farewell gathering for him when he was about to leave for another official post, and said:

> When I was in the Huai 淮 area, I learned of your achievements in preventing the floods. I also learned of the fact that you frequently took out the sword that once belonged to King Kaiping 開平王 of the Ming dynasty and that is now in your collection of antiques: you would touch the sword and reflect

> on your own life. Now that you are about to complete the third collection of *Hongxue yinyuan tuji*, please allow me to paint a portrait for you, with you wearing your hat with beaver tail ornaments and holding that sword.[4] My intentions are on the one hand to portray your loyalty and dedication (to the state), and, on the other hand, to express my sincere feelings while seeing you off. (Wanyan 2011, vol. 3, 1000–1001)

Linqing used this portrait to head his third collection. He then commissioned He Huanwen to paint another portrait of him, and used this latter work to end his third collection. In this painstakingly self-conscious fashion, he wrapped up his entire life story. (See Figure 6.2 for the portrait of Linqing painted by He Huanwen.) Linqing's messages are explicit—he was comparing himself to Chang Yuchun 常遇春 (1330–69), whose portrait was in the Ming memorial hall for founding generals. The fact that the painter not only knew of Linqing's intentions but used precisely this knowledge to construct his image as a loyal and dedicated official testifies to what I have proposed above as Linqing's indebtedness to the portraiture tradition. That this painter had completed the commemorative project for the Daoguang emperor—and was now offering to paint a portrait for Linqing, while his autobiographical project was drawing to its end—further highlights this indebtedness.

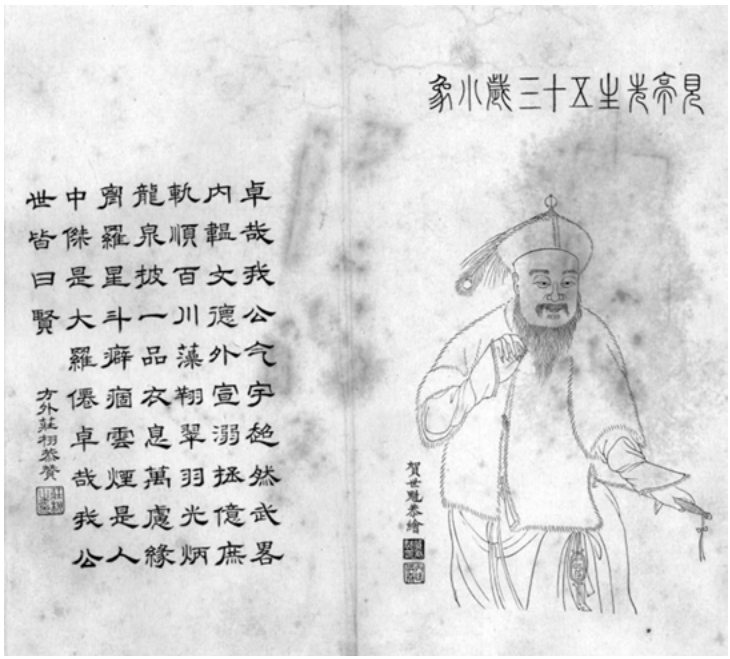


Figure 6.2 Portrait of Linqing at the age of fifty-three (*Hongxue yinyuan tuji*, Album 3, front page). Reprinted with permission of the National Library of China.

4. Beaver tail ornaments signified high social status and official rank.

Linqing succeeded in conveying to his audiences his image as an official who deserved the honor of the glorious generals. Indeed, several authors of the prefaces and epilogues included in *Hongxue yinyuan tuji* explicitly compared him to these generals. In light of this perceived unparalleled glory as delineated by *Hongxue yinyuan tuji*, the authors predicted that his portraits would indeed one day enter the memorial halls of the Qing dynasty (Wanyan 2011, vol. 1, 9; vol. 2, 343). An interesting question arises here. How did portraiture as a means of producing "ideals" transform into such an overtly self-glorifying mechanism—i.e., a means for Linqing to suggest that he was himself an "ideal"? To answer this question more fully, we need to place Linqing's life story further within the prevailing autobiographical sensibilities that made portraiture an innovative form of self-representation.

From Portraiture to Pictorial Autobiography: The Creation of an "Ideal Man"

Portraiture developed distinct autobiographical tendencies during the late imperial period. The three centuries starting from the late Ming period became the golden age for self-portraits of artists and portraits commissioned by scholar-officials. The subjects of the portraits assumed a wide array of cultural roles and ideals as a means of asserting their social or cultural ambitions (Vinograd 1992, 11–14). From these artistic trends emerged an elaborate subgenre of portraiture—namely, *huanji tu* 宦跡圖, a sequence of portraits or paintings that traced the "footsteps" of an official as he moved along his career path. They highlighted the virtues of the subject (e.g., benevolence and loyalty) and his contributions to the state, in this sense mirroring the glories of the founding generals. The earliest precedent for Linqing's autobiography that I have located is a sequence of self-portraits by Zhang Han 張瀚 (1511–93), the minister of rites at the beginning of the Wanli 萬曆 reign (1573–1620). Himself a painter, Zhang Han portrayed his career in three long handscrolls. In each handscroll, Zhang featured himself in sixteen consecutive sections/self-portraits that corresponded to the different stages of his career (Yang 2008, 24–31).[5] Closest to the visual form of Linqing's autobiography was an album commissioned by Xu Xianqing 徐顯卿 (1537–1602), the Ming Hanlin Academy scholar and vice minister of rites. Xu's album incorporates twenty-six portraits and paintings, each of which is followed by an autobiographical account on a separate leaf (Yang 2008, 33–46).[6]

We must also bear in mind, moreover, that the autobiographical tendencies of portraiture emerged in an age of printed images. The printing boom, driven by a highly commercialized printing industry and influencing an audience across

5. Only one of the handscrolls has survived, and this is currently held by the Palace Museum of Beijing.
6. The album is currently held by the Palace Museum of Beijing.

the expanses of the Qing state, led to the reproduction of images on woodblocks in unprecedented quantities and varieties (Brokaw and Chow 2005; Chow 2004; Clunas 1997; Hegel 1998). Of particular note here was the production of portraits and paintings such as Zhang Han's and Xu Xianqing's in extraordinary numbers in woodblock prints. The painter Zhang Bao 張寶 (1763–ca. 1833), for example, executed a hundred self-portraits/paintings to record his lifetime travels and printed them as a series of collections, titled *Fancha tu* 泛槎圖 (Drawings of myself floating in a raft, 1831). Zhang Bao's extensive autobiography was the greatest inspiration for Linqing (Wanyan 2011, vol. 2, 530–31).

Figure 6.3 Self-portrait of Zhang Bao (*Fancha tu*, author portrait). Reprinted with permission of the National Library of China.

As both the modern scholars Zheng Zhenduo 鄭振鐸 and Ah Ying note in their ground-breaking studies on woodblock prints, there were a significant number of printed sequences of portraits during this time. Both also refer to a whole range of related pictures in print, such as those portraying the lives or excursions of the sages, beauties, heroes, poets, moral paragons, and emperors (Ah 1980, 3–5; Zheng 2006, 165–210). We may safely assume, then, that it was the massive reproductions and wide circulation of these printed sequences of pictures that further cemented the bonding between portraiture and autobiography. Quite contrary to being what Pei-yi Wu perceives as the "sunset" of autobiographical writing in China (Wu 1990, ix), the Qing period saw autobiography

reach unprecedented proportions and sophistication with the new possibilities afforded by visual images.

Significantly, the various masculine ideals circulating in print facilitated the leap from portraiture for "emulation" to portraiture as a means of "self-glorification." Portraiture's earlier function of producing gender ideals now joined forces with the prevailing autobiographical sensibilities and the technology for massive reproduction and, as a result, portraiture became a readily available mechanism for self-representation. *Hongxue yinyuan tuji* figured as the culmination of these trends. It combined a range of cultural ideals that circulated widely in visual forms, with the effect of creating an "ideal man" in almost every sense of the phrase during this time. An author of one of the epilogues astutely captured Linqing's messages and summarized his ideal selves as follows:

> Now that I have read *Hongxue yinyuan tuji* by my mentor,[7] I start to realize that he was born with innate talent, that he attained his high rank through his pursuit of studies, that he inherited his family heritage of illustrious learning and virtue, and that he glorified the state because he obtained the favor of the emperor. While he made his way into the Phoenix Pavilion, he also had the chance to step onto the land of the immortals.[8] Moreover, he was given seals to lead the armies, served as a diplomat to demonstrate the prestige of the state, and lived up to people's expectations of him in preventing the floods. His most admirable accomplishments are that he has always adhered to the (Confucian) virtue of being benevolent, and, at the same time, that he has the leisure to seek the company of mountains and rivers; that he is at once a powerful minister and a poet, and that he has traveled all over the blessed lands of the immortals. He can truly be said to be a distinguished minister who also engages in the most refined cultural activities. (Wanyan 2011, vol. 1, 336–37)

This life story of unparalleled glory mirrored in significant ways the civilizing power of the Qing state and the "ultimate" *wen-wu* masculinities of the Qing emperors. In addition to his emulation of the glorious generals (*wu*), Linqing's cultural heritage illustrated an ideal combination of the Manchu aristocratic origins with the Han traditions of learning (*wen*). Linqing precluded any ethnic tensions at the very beginning of his story by retracing three major sources of his learning—namely, his grandfather, Wanyan Dai 完顏岱, who taught him the *Guoyu* 國語 (Discourses on the states); his parents, Wanyan Tinglu 完顏廷鏕 and Yun Zhu 惲珠 (1771–1833), who taught him poetry composition; and his uncle, Yun Bingyi 惲秉怡, who gave him a systematic training in the Confucian classics (Wanyan 2011, vol. 1, 20–31). The Wanyan lineage was distinguished both by its early generations, who were among the founding generals of the Qing state, and by its erudite descendants in later times. This lineage also played a pivotal role in imperial projects of translating classical Han historical and literary works

7. The author, Wang Guozuo, was one of Linqing's disciples.
8. Here, the "land of the immortals" refers to the splendid scenery that Linqing had the chance to see.

into the Manchu language, thus contributing to the state-promoted cultural fusion between the Manchu and the Han (Teng 1993, 65–66). The Yun lineage from Changzhou 常州, on the other hand, had long enjoyed cultural prestige and produced numerous *jinshi* degree holders, poets, essayists, scholars, and painters.[9] The Yun lineage was also famed for its female talents, of whom Linqing's mother, Yun Zhu, was exemplary. Susan Mann, in her ground-breaking study on women in eighteenth-century China, has conducted a detailed study of the anthology of women's poetry compiled by Yun Zhu, i.e., *Guochao guixiu zhengshi ji* 國朝閨秀正始集 (Correct beginnings: Poetry by gentry women of our august dynasty, 1831) (Mann 1997, 94–117). This voluminous anthology incorporated the works of 933 women poets and marked the pinnacle of women's poetic achievement during the Qing dynasty. Moreover, Yun Zhu used her anthology as a civilizing project for her dynasty, in the sense that the anthology illustrated how women's learning figured as "both hallmark and product of the High Qing era," particularly the way in which the moral influence of the Qing state reached its farthest frontiers and foreign countries through women's learning (Mann 1997, 98).

Mann uses a picture from *Hongxue yinyuan tuji* as an illustration of Yun Zhu at work, as well as for Linqing's active role in this project (Mann 1997, 96). A closer look at the picture reveals much about how the project, as a family endeavor, fit into Linqing's agenda of using the idealized images of himself and his family as the epitome of the moral order and cultural influence of his dynasty. In the center of the picture, and on the left side of the pavilion in the picture, is Yun Zhu, who sits behind a desk and by the side of a huge bookshelf loaded with books. The maid and young servant at her sides signify her status as the family "matriarch" after Linqing's father passed away. On the right side of the pavilion are Linqing's wife, Cheng Mengmei 程孟梅, and their daughter, Wanyan Miaolianbao 完顏妙蓮保. They sit at the two sides of another desk, on which are piles of books—presumably, the anthology that the family was in the process of compiling. The picture depicts Cheng Mengmei giving instructions to Miaolianbao, who is copying out a few lines on a sheet of paper. Between the two desks stands Linqing, who serves as a "messenger" transferring a completed sheet of paper from Miaolianbao to Yun Zhu for the latter to review. Another young servant is rushing out of the pavilion and calling out to a maid, who has just entered the courtyard by a side door, with a cup of tea in her hands. Clearly, he is telling her that the tea is needed urgently. This vivid detail adds to the sense of the intensity of the compilation work that those inside the pavilion are carrying out (Wanyan 2011, vol. 2, 392–93).

9. To name but a few, Yun Shouping 惲壽平 (1633–90; style name Nantian 南田), the pioneering painter of the Changzhou School; Yun Jing 惲敬 (1757–1817), the pioneering essayist of the Yanghu 陽湖 School; and Yun Bing 惲冰 (ca. 18–19th centuries), a leading woman painter.

The picture yields a variety of messages about family and gender relations at this time, none of which gives the slightest hint of the "messiness" that Theiss discusses. Theiss uses legal cases to illuminate the failed efforts of the Qing government to regulate gender relations and family order, especially among the lower social strata (Theiss 2004, 10–11). At the other extreme, however, was the apotheosis of these relations in line with state-promoted family values, as represented in Linqing's family portrait. Yun Zhu, a chaste widow who raised and personally educated her son, now enjoyed the prestige accorded by the success of her son's career and by her "matriarchal" status in the family. She also embodied the ideal womanhood of the time—namely, what Mann proposes as the combination of and reconciliation between the two archetypes of the moral instructress and the talented poetess (Mann 1997, 116–20). Linqing, on the other hand, figured as an exemplar of filial piety who carried on the family's cultural heritage. According to the corresponding account, it was he who first printed his mother's collection of poetic works, *Hongxiangguan shicao* 紅香館詩草 (Poetry drafts from the Household of Red Fragrance, 1814); he who used his growing connections to collect over 3,000 poetic works by women, over the course of fifteen years; and he who personally hand-copied these pieces for his mother to edit and who eventually published the anthology (Wanyan 2011, vol. 2, 394–95). The image of Linqing standing in the center of the group of people in the picture also gives a sense of his central role in coordinating this family project. The participation of Linqing's wife and daughter in this project further signified the continuation of the family's cultural heritage through the younger generations of female talent. It was Miaolianbao who completed a sequel to the anthology after Yun Zhu passed away (Wanyan 2011, vol. 2, 611). Most importantly, the idealized family order structured around filial piety and cultural prestige was securely situated within an "august dynasty," whose influence steadily reached out to its farthest frontiers through a grand literary and civilizing project.

By this point, we may summarize the "ideal man" Linqing created as one who was at the apex of both his political and cultural powers and who, by maintaining perfect order in his family and mirroring the ultimate *wen-wu* masculinities of his emperors, epitomized his dynasty at the apex of its civilizing power. However, the Qing dynasty began to experience multiple challenges from the 1830s onwards—ironically, around the time that Linqing printed Yun Zhu's anthology and its sequel.

Tensions, Ironies, and Writing Strategies

A closer look at *Hongxue yinyuan tuji* reveals the tensions underlying Linqing's enactment of various political and cultural ideals. The greatest tension lies in the fact that Linqing's life of unparalleled glory was increasingly situated in a time of unparalleled trouble. Below is a brief list of the events that started to shake Linqing's world, as he recorded them:

Table 6.1 The chaos of the mid-nineteenth century as recorded by Linqing

Items	Volume and page numbers	Keywords
Nianfei (捻匪) (bandits from the Nian Cult)	2.374	Over 544 bandits caught.
Yaofei (徭匪) (bandits from the Yao ethnic group)	2.406; 2.438	Hunan, Guangdong, and Guangxi Provinces; *duoshi zhiqiu* (多事之秋) (a chaotic time); *weijing* (未靖) (not yet put down).
Bandits from Jiayi (嘉義) County, Taiwan, plundering areas in Fujian	2.462	Holding a military exercise in Guizhou; selecting a troop from Guizhou and sending it to Fujian.
Opium production and trade	2.466	Guizhou; *minpin zhongli* (民貧重利) (poverty of the local people as the reason for opium as a profitable trade); 89 persons caught.
Other bandits (匪類)	2.662	Huangtiandang (黃天蕩) (close to Nanjing); pillaging salt merchants.
The British invaders (英吉利夷匪／英逆／英夷)	2.658; 2.666; 3.688; 3.700; 3.708; 3.748; 3.752; 3.756	Guarding the coastline (沿海防範); checking cannons (驗炮); ill omens for wars (兵象); the British invasion of inner lands (英夷內犯); the fallen cities: Dinghai (定海), Zhenhai (鎮海), Ningbo (寧波), Zhapu (乍浦), Shanghai, Baoshan (寶山), Zhenjiang (鎮江); cities under attack: Guazhou (瓜洲), Yizheng (儀徵); supervising the army in the north of the Yangtze River (江北督師); blocking the British warships in the Yangtze River (防堵在江英夷).
Chaos caused by the British invasion	3.752	Refugees; bandits; merchants hoarding supplies; soaring rice prices.
Big floods	2.542; 2.606; 3.756; 3.900	The Yellow River; the Great Canal; rivers in Fengyang (鳳陽), Siyang (泗陽), Huai'an (淮安), and Yangzhou (揚州); incessant dangers (奇險疊生); incessant news of floods (水災疊報); unusual situations of overflowing rivers (異漲).

What Linqing bore personal testimony to was a typical picture of the mid-nineteenth century, composed of bandits, opium, floods, and, most of all, the First Opium War. This picture fits most uncomfortably with the apparently seamless flow of Linqing's portraits and paintings depicting his refined cultural activities. For example, if we allow ourselves to be guided by the eighty titles in the second

collection and the paintings under these titles, we find an extensive sequence of travels that resembles those in the first collection—e.g., Linqing's visits to historical and scenic sites, and his gatherings with the elite. This sequence of travels is only sparsely illustrated by paintings that directly refer to Linqing's performance of his duties. However, as soon as we begin to read the accounts that follow the paintings, tensions arise.

Almost immediately following the portrait of Linqing's family discussed earlier is a landscape painting titled, "Shenjian wangyun" 椹澗望雲 (Watching clouds at the Stream of Mulberry Trees) (Wanyan 2011, vol. 2, 404–5). Reading the account that follows the painting, we soon realize that "watching clouds" is far more than an act of enjoying the natural scenery. Rather, it echoes "watching clouds and thinking of one's parents" 望雲思親, an allusion to filial piety. Here, for the first time, Linqing discloses that the chaos caused by the Yao bandits prevented him from fulfilling his filial duties to his mother. Assigned to the post of Governor of Guizhou in 1832, he had to leave his mother at his earlier official abode in Henan for fear that they might run into the bandits on their travels. On his way to Guizhou, he stopped by the Stream of Mulberry Trees, thought of his mother, and composed a poem that included the following lines:

> It was only because I received the sovereign's order
> That I dared not express my filial feelings.

Having left the stream and traveled another thirty miles, Linqing stopped again and composed another poem, which included the following lines:

> I have a mother whom I cannot serve;
> The emperor's matters forced me onto this trip. (Wanyan 2011, vol. 2, 406–7)

This sense of resentment in Linqing's poetic compositions brings out the tension between, on the one hand, the conflicting duties placed on him, and, on the other hand, the smooth flow of his paintings, which consistently feature him seeking the company of nature and enjoying refined cultural activities. This tension further gives rise to a great irony in his story about his filial feelings: no title or painting in the second collection refers to Yun Zhu's death in 1833; nor does any account refer to Linqing's mourning her death. Only after we go through a series of "uneventful" travel accounts between 1832 and 1833 do we finally realize—upon seeing a painting on Linqing's assumption of another post, dated the first lunar month of 1834—that Yun Zhu had passed away eight months before.

The painting, titled "Qingyan shoufu" 清晏受福 (Receiving blessings at the Garden of Purity and Peace), depicts the exquisite Garden of Purity and Peace that had once served as one of the temporary palaces of the Qianlong emperor on his excursions to the south (Wanyan 2011, vol. 2, 512–13). By this time, the garden had become the office for the director-general of river works in Jiangnan, the post that Linqing had just assumed. It was here that he received the Daoguang emperor's New Year gifts: a work of calligraphy featuring a

large character *fu* 福 (good fortune), executed by the emperor himself, as well as several portions of venison. Having explained the situation in the corresponding account, Linqing turns quite unexpectedly to recount his earlier assumption of his post in Guizhou. Later in 1832, Yun Zhu fell dangerously ill in Henan and urgently wanted to see Linqing. Linqing applied for leave, but the approval did not come until it was too late. Yun Zhu passed away in the fourth lunar month of 1833 without seeing Linqing for a last time. The rest of the account only briefly recaptures Linqing's "heartbrokenness," his fulfillment of the one-hundred-day mourning period, and the emperor's words of condolence: "Your mother had a profound understanding of the proper rites, and you should replace your filial feelings with loyalty to the state 移孝作忠" (Wanyan 2011, vol. 2, 515).

The account is too brief to provide any clues as to what lay behind the emperor's blessings. It does, nonetheless, draw attention to Linqing's favored writing strategy of embedding "events" within a sequence of "uneventful" travels or cultural activities. This writing strategy becomes especially manifest toward the end of the second collection. Two consecutive accounts, "Hongze guifan" 洪澤歸帆 (Taking a boat back home from Hongze Lake) and "Heting naliang" 荷亭納涼 (Enjoying the cool air in a pavilion by the lotuses), are typical. Again, we might expect the first account to be a description of a literati painting featuring the subject in natural settings—in this case, Linqing sailing through great expanses of water. While this is no doubt the case, Linqing's main message concerns not leisure or casual enjoyment of the scenery, but rather the incessant floods that had caused great damage to the Jiangnan area during the past few years. Through the eulogizing words of a friend, he conveys the message that it was due to the measures he took as director-general of river works in the region that the floods were finally controlled (Wanyan 2011, vol. 2, 606–7). The second account further subverts the illusion of leisure by referring to an overwhelming number of accumulated cases/documents 積案 that Linqing attended to in his pavilion by the lotuses. We also become aware that he was impeached in 1836 because of problems relating to the construction of river works, confused accounts of government funds, and subordinates who embezzled funds for their private ends. Only through much investigation did he finally clear his name in 1838 (Wanyan 2011, vol. 2, 610–11). When he again sat in this pavilion in the summer of 1838, it was clearly not simply to enjoy the cool air. Instead, he was enjoying a moment of great relief following a precarious stage in his career.

Dodgen's study of the crisis in Qing Yellow River control may throw more light on this part of Linqing's life story. The growing inadequacies of the hydraulic system in the late eighteenth century led to an "irregular bureaucracy" characterized by a substantial body of supernumeraries hired from outside the river administration system to ease labor shortages and meet the growing need for repair work (Dodgen 1991, 48). Although meant to be an adjunct, this irregular bureaucracy generated rampant corruption, as well as problems of waste, incompetence, and depravity. Combined with the emerging fiscal problems of

the Daoguang reign, the hydraulic crisis eventually outgrew the limits of available resources and, like population growth and economic change during this time, had far-reaching implications for the governing power of the Qing state (Dodgen 1991, 48–59). The charges Linqing faced in 1836 reflected in broader terms these technical, fiscal, and bureaucratic problems confronting the river administration and contributing to the decline of the Qing state (Dodgen 1991, 49–53; Dodgen, 2001, 61–68). Therefore, the relief he expressed in the summer of 1838, after the charges against him had been dropped, was only a prelude to even greater trouble in a few years. As shown in Table 6.1, Linqing was deeply caught up in the First Opium War in 1840–42. (See Figure 6.4 for the beginning of Linqing's involvement in precautionary measures against invasion.)

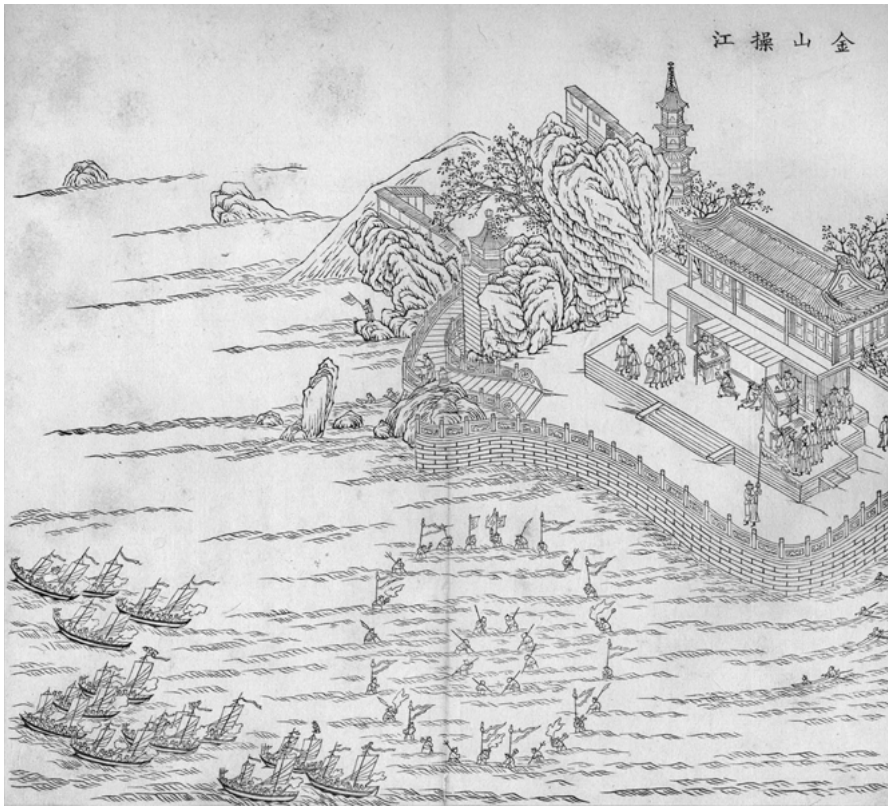


Figure 6.4 Linqing holding a military exercise (*Hongxue yinyuan tuji*, Album 2, Painting No. 75). Reprinted with permission of the National Library of China.

The seventh lunar month of 1842 saw a critical juncture in Linqing's career. By this time, he had come through most of his battles with the British fleet. In the previous month, he had seen Shanghai, Baoshan, and Zhenjiang fall to the British. Together with Dan Minglun 但明倫 (1782–1853), another Qing

general resisting the British invasion, Linqing was now organizing the defense of Yangzhou (Wanyan 2011, vol. 3, 748–49). He also introduced strong measures to protect the refugees and reduce panic, caught and executed bandits, and organized donations to purchase supplies and beat down the price of rice (Wanyan 2011, vol. 3, 752–53). He was soon distracted by the floods: on the seventeenth day of the seventh lunar month, the Yellow River overflowed at Cuizhen 崔鎮 in Henan:

> Hearing the news I rushed to the affected area . . . The broken embankments already widened to over a hundred and ninety *zhang* 丈 and could not be repaired immediately.[10] After appointing an official . . . to be in charge of the situation, I rushed back (to Yangzhou) to block the British warships in the Yangtze River, and (at the same time) urgently sought river works that could combat the floods. Since the Middle River (a canal north to the Yellow River) was blocked by mud, I had to take boats and sedan chairs by turns in traveling both ways. I would all of a sudden get stuck in the mud and . . . change to a sedan chair, with the servants holding the chair with their hands. As we moved slowly to the midstream, the water suddenly rose to the servants' chests, and I had to send soldiers to dive into the water and find a path to move forward. (Wanyan 2011, vol. 3, 756)

Linqing's account gives dramatic detail of the mid-seventh lunar month of 1842, when he was forced to deal with several crises simultaneously. What is crucial is not simply how he was torn between his duties, or how he got stuck in the mud when trying to rush to his various duties. Rather, it soon becomes clear that Linqing's frenzied efforts came to a standstill all of a sudden. He wrapped up his accounts in haste, without mentioning how he got out of the "mire" of the mid-seventh month of 1842. In relation to the defense of Yangzhou, he only mentions that the British fleet "retreated" in the ninth month. Regarding the floods, on the other hand, he states that he obtained the emperor's agreement that he could have another year to solve the problems. Following these accounts is again an extensive sequence of scenery paintings and travel accounts—which appear, at first glance at least, deeply ironic.

Part of what Linqing omitted from his accounts is now a well-known story. Only a few days after the Yellow River overflowed, the Qing government signed the Nanjing Treaty with Britain, thus beginning its period of "great humiliation." Concurrent with this turning point in his dynasty was Linqing's own downfall. A closer look at the account that follows immediately reveals the fact that, in the eleventh month of this year, he was stripped of all his official titles due to his failure to prevent the floods in the seventh month. He would have been subject to even more severe punishment had it not been for the efficacy of some measures he had taken to attempt to control the floods (Wanyan 2011, vol. 3, 760).

10. One *zhang* equals around 3.33 meters.

The painting bears another delusive title: "Zhufang xiying" 竹舫息影 (Living the life of a recluse in a bamboo boat). Only, here, "life of a recluse" is nothing more than a euphemism for the ruin of Linqing's career. The following thirty-four scenery paintings depicting Linqing at leisure hence stand in stark contrast to most of the preceding paintings, which focus on Linqing's proclaimed reconciliation of the conflicting ideals of the minister and the hermit. As a result, his image became increasingly that of a tragic hero rather than a hermit or a minister with refined tastes. I now return to what I proposed at the beginning of this chapter as Linqing's painstakingly self-conscious effort to stage himself, in his third collection, as a dedicated official who deserved the honor of being equated with the Ming founding general Chang Yuchun.

The Transformation of the Ideal Man

In the double seventh month of 1843, there appeared to be a chance for Linqing to resurrect his career. The emperor thought of him when the Yellow River overflowed in Henan, and assigned him to "assist"—without any official title—the new director-general of river works (Wanyan 2011, vol. 3, 900). This fact "coincided" with the execution of Linqing's portrait by He Huanwen. It was just as Linqing was about to leave for Henan, at a farewell gathering organized by his friends, that He Huanwen offered to paint his portrait. Therefore, what the painter referred to as Linqing's assumption of a new post was not just *any* post among the numerous posts that Linqing had assumed in his brilliant career. Instead, it signified a critical chance for him to recapture his former glory.

In eulogizing Linqing, the painter referred, first of all, to Linqing's widely known achievements in managing the floods; and then to the sword that had once belonged to Chang Yuchun, and that now constantly reminded Linqing of his own life. In particular, the painter explicitly stated his intention to incorporate Chang Yuchun's sword into the construction of Linqing's image—as a means of portraying the latter's "loyalty and dedication (to the state)." By quoting these words at this particular moment, Linqing was no doubt trying to enhance his chances of regaining his career. He was, indeed, claiming for himself the recognition he deserved—yet did not receive—by staging himself as Chang Yuchun. After all, Chang was not only a famed founding general of the Ming dynasty but also a tragic hero, who died an abrupt death before fully realizing his ambitions, and who achieved recognition only posthumously (Zhang et al. 2002, 56–59). In short, underlying Linqing's overt self-glorification were political motivations in addition to his indebtedness to an age-old ideal.

This portrait of Linqing by He Huanwen diverges significantly from the two other portraits that head his first and second collections, respectively. A look at the three portraits in sequence marks out the clear course of Linqing's transformation, particularly his shift of emphasis to the ideal qualities of manhood in the face of the humiliations confronted by both himself and his dynasty.

Portrait 1 (see Figure 6.5), executed when Linqing was thirty-nine (1829), is typical of what we might expect of a portrait of a scholar-literatus. It features Linqing in a rather plain and casual long gown, with no adornments to indicate his rank or title. The only accessory is a duster in his left hand. Commonly used in literati portraits of this time, the duster signified the status of the cultural elites, especially that associated with the Wei-Jin luminaries who liked to engage in "pure talks" 清談. Both Tu Long 屠隆 (1543–1605) and Wen Zhenheng 文震亨 (1581–1645), authors of two famous guidebooks on connoisseurship, defined the duster in its relation to "pure talks" and to the refined 雅 literati culture, as opposed to the vulgar and the common (Tu 2011, 295; Wen 2011, 109).

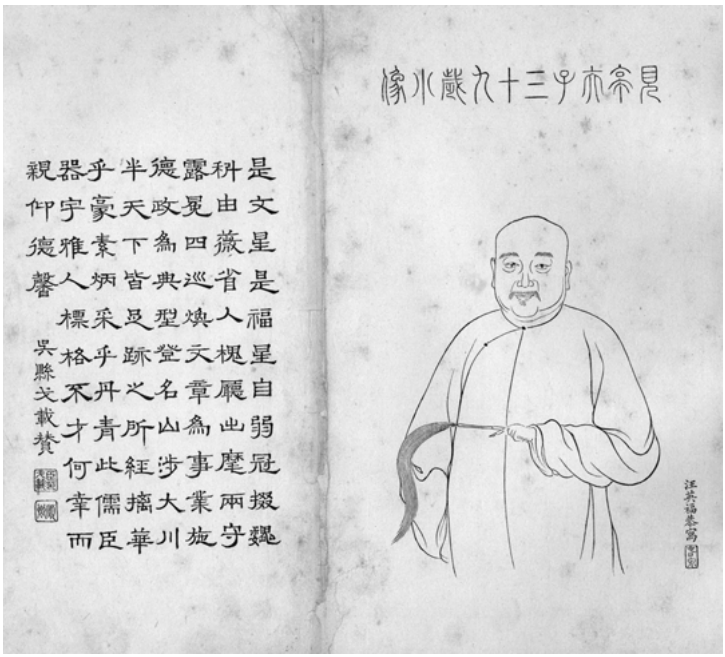


Figure 6.5 Portrait of Linqing at the age of thirty-nine (*Hongxue yinyuan tuji*, Album 1, front page). Reprinted with permission of the National Library of China.

The eulogy that corresponds to this portrait echoes this association of the duster with cultural refinement, emphasizing Linqing's "demeanor of a Confucian official" and his "style of a refined person" (Wanyan 2011, vol. 1, 18). Linqing's own inscription focuses on his cultural refinement as reflected in his karmic bonds with mountains and rivers, and in turn attributes this refinement to his commitment to Confucian values (Wanyan 2011, vol. 1, 19).

Portrait 2 (see Figure 6.6), executed when Linqing was fifty (1840), again portrays him in a long gown. Although at first similar to the casual and plain style of the first portrait, the gown that Linqing wears in the second portrait boasts two additional features: first, the "archer's sleeves," which were typical of

the outfit of a military general; and, second, a finely made belt with a jade buckle, which indicated status and wealth. Most prominent is the replacement of the duster in Linqing's left hand by a *ruyi* 如意. Another commonly depicted accessory in portraits of the literati, the *ruyi* nonetheless had connotations beyond cultural refinement. According to Tu Long and Wen Zhenheng, the "ancients" often used the *ruyi* to command armies or defend themselves in battle. Preferably, a *ruyi* would be made from steel, in the way weapons were made. Wen especially ridiculed recent Ming replicas made of wood or bamboo as nothing more than "trash" (Tu 2011, 295–96; Wen 2011, 109). Linqing's change of accessories therefore contained a subtle message about his changed self-image. As I have shown earlier, Linqing highlighted these changes by creating an ironic distance between his travel paintings and their corresponding accounts in his second collection. He also succinctly recaptured these changes in his eulogy for the portrait, which emphasized not only his "wisdom" and "benevolence" in performing his duties but also his ability to command [armies] with, precisely, his *ruyi* (Wanyan 2011, vol. 2, 354).

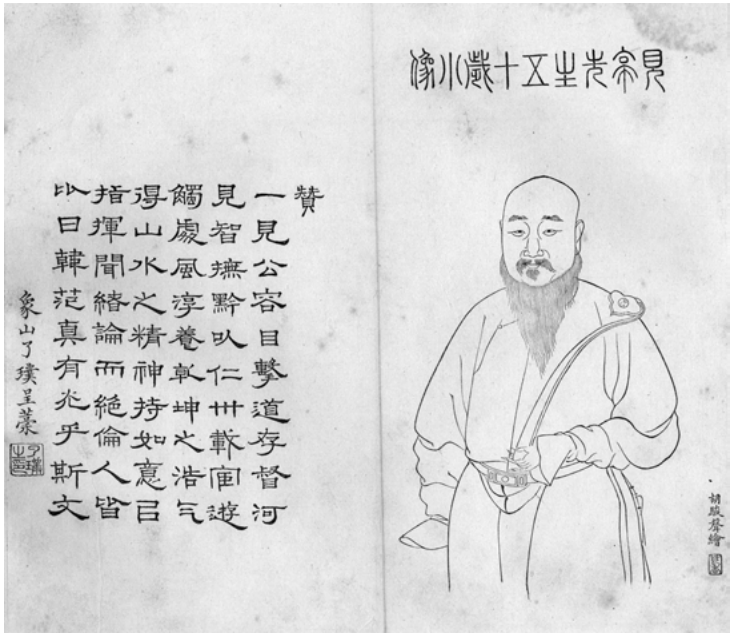


Figure 6.6 Portrait of Linqing at the age of fifty (*Hongxue yinyuan tuji*, Album 2, front page). Reprinted with permission of the National Library of China.

Portrait 3 (see Figure 6.2)—produced only three years later, when Linqing was fifty-three (1843)—greatly magnifies the subtle message of the second portrait by further replacing Linqing's *ruyi* with the sword once used by Chang Yuchun. Aside from its political undertones referencing Liqing's personal vicissitudes,

the sword—by the standards of Tu Long and Wen Zhenheng—became an adornment or an object of connoisseurship only at the cost of the meanings originally attached to it. Namely, it symbolized the martial spirit of the swordsman, which was unfortunately long gone. Had that spirit survived, Tu asserted, the sword would have exerted a transformative effect on its owner, making him fearless and enabling him to fight against the atrocities committed by violent enemies (Tu 2011, 269–70; Wen 2011, 120). Linqing's portrait revived precisely this heroism: the painter He Huanwen adopted the style with which he had painted the portraits of the glorious generals in the Ziguang Pavilion to craft Linqing's image, thus making Linqing closely resemble a number of these generals in attire, posture, and vigor (Nie 1996, 3–6).[11] In short, by the end of this sequence of portraits, Linqing's image was transformed from that of primarily a "refined person" to that of a heroic military general.

Linqing's shift in emphasis in terms of the ideal qualities of his manhood can be characterized as the ascending visibility of the *wu* power over the *wen*. It is useful to recall that, in Louie's *wen-wu* paradigm, it was the balancing of these two forces that guaranteed successful leadership and self-governance (Louie 2002, 15). To the author of the eulogy for Linqing's portrait, the transformation inscribed on the portrait indicated precisely the achievement of such an ideal balance in Linqing—what he termed "*wu* strategies harbored within, and *wen* virtues demonstrated without 武略內蘊，文德外宣" (Wanyan 2011, vol. 3, 684).

To Linqing himself, however, the growing visibility of his *wu* power was tinged with a sense of failure, which he glossed over with the following inscription:

> I touched this sword of three feet to express my [unfulfilled] intent;
> Wearing the robe of the first-rank official, I [nevertheless] took the burden from my shoulders. (Wanyan 2011, vol. 3, 685)

With his brilliant career cut short and his powers (the "burden," or responsibilities) taken away, the sword he held in his hand came to remind Linqing of his unfulfilled ambitions as much as it reminded him of those of its former owner Chang Yuchun. A visual statement of *wu* power, the sword ironically bespoke what had weakened the ideal man Linqing had perceived himself to be, hence the loss—rather than completion—of the ideal balance he sought.

Concluding Remarks

Linqing managed to regain his official titles in 1845 (Wanyan 2011, vol. 3, 930–37). There was little time for him to regain his former glory, though, as he

11. Most of He Huanwen's works were lost. However, a number of generals' portraits commissioned by the Qianlong emperor may provide a sense of the indebtedness of Linqing's portrait to this painting tradition. For example, see the reprints in Nie's essay, and in particular p. 3 for the portrait of the general Namuzhar.

was soon incapacitated by a leg problem and died less than a year later (Wanyan 2011, vol. 3, 937; 944; 960; 984; 992). His story of unparalleled glory ended, sadly enough, in the loss of that glory. Yet his extraordinary life story tells us about much more than failed ambitions.

What I have attempted to do in this chapter is to make sense of the powerful visual impact of *Hongxue yinyuan tuji*, as well as Linqing's overtly self-glorifying tendencies. I have reviewed the portraiture tradition as a means of producing gender ideals and Linqing's indebtedness to this tradition. I then retraced the sweeping artistic and cultural trends of the late imperial period that made portraiture an innovative means of self-representation. It was the proliferation of visual culture that made available (and "visible") a variety of masculine ideals and that facilitated the leap from portraiture for emulation to portraiture as a means of self-glorification. The phenomenal rise of pictorial autobiographies during this time directly subverts what previous scholarship believed to be the "sunset" of Chinese autobiographical writing. While these trends merit further investigation, in this chapter I have mainly read Linqing's pictorial autobiography as their culmination in both proportion and sophistication. The effect was the creation of an "ideal man" in almost every sense of the term during this time.

Linqing's idealized self mirrored the ultimate *wen-wu* masculinities of his emperors, which hinged on legitimate rule over a previously Han state through cultural attainment, moral influence, and pacifying and civilizing powers. With such ultimate masculinities undermined and the Qing state power shaken by multiple challenges, Linqing lost his once secure sense of self—hence, the ironic distance that grew increasingly visible between the images and texts of his autobiography. The growing visibility of his *wu* power, in particular, bore testimony to the irony of his life story. Rather than indicating his rising masculine power, as an author of his eulogy suggested, Linqing's transformed image as a military general and a tragic hero was tinged with a sense of failure, reminding us of the frenzied efforts he had made—in vain—to address the problems besetting him and his dynasty.

In short, this life story of both unparalleled glory and great vicissitudes throws light on how the construction of manhood both responded to and articulated the great changes of the time. In a different manner from the "poor scholar," whose identity crisis arose largely from his dwindling career opportunities (Chapter 2), Linqing was forced to come to terms with an identity that he laboriously idealized in the face of epochal changes.

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Part 2

Chinese Masculinity Today

7
Making Class and Gender

White-Collar Men in Postsocialist China

Derek Hird

Post-Mao marketization policies have produced complex transformations in men's subjectivities, which, in turn, have contributed to configuring China's postsocialist modernity in particular gendered, sexualized, and classed ways (Lu 2007). The model of urbane masculinity that has become most readily associated with visions of China's modernization and progress is the white-collar man (*bailing nanren* 白领男人). More than any other classed and gendered category, white-collar men fit the reform-era project of producing prosperous, well-educated, "civilized" (*wenming* 文明), "high-quality" (*suzhi gao* 素質高) individuals replete with material and career aspirations and the skills to compete in the transnational economy (Rosen 2004). If the rise of the white-collar man in early twentieth-century America marked a major social and gendered transformation (Mills 1956), then the emergence of his counterpart in early twenty-first-century China deserves close attention. Concentrating on the formation of white-collar men's subjectivities, I aim to shed light on how white-collar men make sense of themselves in gendered and classed ways, and their role in the gendering and classing of contemporary Chinese society.

Since the early 1990s, relentless commodification and the pervasive reach of market ethics have characterized postsocialist China's modernization quest to "join tracks with the world" (Karl 2005). The mass media has fomented expansive metropolitan "transnational subjectivities" through depictions of transregional and transglobal flows of people, technologies, music, ideas, and products (Yang 1997). The now dominant logic of the "neoliberal" capitalist market promotes the formation of the self-interested, self-reliant "desiring subject" in an increasingly privatized, consumerized, and hierarchized socioeconomic landscape (Davis and Wang 2009; Rofel 2007; Zhang and Ong 2008). At the same time, the collectively oriented socialist ideologies, policies, structures, practices, and cityscapes of the Mao era have been largely disassembled and disparaged, although they continue to haunt, inform, and serve as other to the present in various ways (Lu 2007; Rofel 2007; Visser 2010; Zhang 2008).

Entanglements of gender and class in the formation of the subjectivities of Chinese middle-class men are little studied. Class is often downplayed in scholarly works on gender; and gender is usually a minor concern of works on class.[1] Putting gendered and classed subjectivities at the center of investigation opens up new perspectives on class and gender formation and challenges mainstream media depictions of masculinities. Subjectivities—the "inner lives of subjects" (Biehl, Good, and Kleinman 2007, 5)—are "not . . . original forms but [are] dynamically formed and transformed entities" (ibid., 10). A focus on processes of subjectivity formation helps illuminate changing values, desires, and ways of thinking (ibid., 12). It shows how models of masculinities find multiple re-expressions in everyday lives and reveals the dissonances between highly visible depictions of masculinity and the muddied complexities of men's lived experiences. It draws attention to how men's varying desires, capacities, and habitats combine to transform discursive masculine ideals in practice. And it helps locate emergent patterns of white-collar masculinities in the discursive practices that enable and constrain possibilities of gender and class in contemporary China.

Raewyn Connell has proposed that the increasingly global reach of economic relations has produced a globally dominant masculinity performed by globally mobile managers, a kind of me-first, materialistic, sexually permissive masculinity of limited loyalties (1998, 15–16). This "transnational business masculinity" commodifies men's relations with women, while simultaneously proclaiming equal opportunities for women through a "gender-neutral language of 'markets,' 'individuals,' and 'choice'" (ibid.).[2] Mark Liechty points to how the emerging global middle classes "increasingly embrace moral and political rhetorics of freedom, equality, and (in the neoliberal era) 'free trade'" while using their wealth to buy imagined security in gated communities (2012, 296). These insights suggest that middle-class men construct a rhetoric of equality, freedom, and choice that belies the ways in which their behavior "on the ground" creates new hierarchies of gender and class. The middle classes in China are no exception to this general trend, although their development in China, as elsewhere, is interwoven with local specificities. Based on the ethnographic material I present below, I argue that Chinese white-collar men often seek to define themselves through rhetorics of freedom and equality, and move toward these ideals in some of their activities, but simultaneously act to shore up the parameters of their own gendered and classed privileges as much as they can. In this way,

1. Exceptions include Hanser (2008), Lee (1998), Lin (2013), Liu (2013), Moskowitz (2013), Osburg (2013), Otis (2012), Pun (2005), Yan (2008), and Yang (2010). Lin, Moskowitz, Osburg, and Yang examine migrant, *weiqi* 圍棋 (Go)-playing, *baofahu* 暴發戶 ("new rich"), and urban working-class masculinities respectively.
2. The commodification of men's relations with women in China is discussed in Song and Hird (2013, 169–210).

middle-class men's conflicted subjectivities reveal them as both "conservatives and progressives" (ibid., 280).

Making Class and Gender

In *Making Gender: The Politics and Erotics of Culture*, Sherry Ortner draws attention to the dual aspects of subjectivity formation: the construction of subjectivities through discourses on the one hand, and individuals' enactment, negotiation, and resistance of these discourses on the other. Responses to discourses may reproduce but may also transform the worlds in which people live (Ortner 1996, 1–2). Ortner emphasizes the need to engage with "texts" of varying forms and the ways people negotiate them, as "human action is constrained by the given social and cultural order" but also "makes and potentially unmakes it" (ibid., 2). "'Agency,'" Ortner claims, can be "defined minimally as a sense that the self is an authorized social being," and is "part of simply being human, and thus . . . its absence or denial is as much of a problem as its construction" (ibid., 10). Ortner wants to get away from debates that pose only two types of subject: the totally discursively determined subject and the "free agent of Western fantasy" (ibid., 11). Judith Butler's influential theory of gender performativity is one of the most persuasive explanations for subjects' "agency" (Butler 1990). Butler describes an unstable subject that requires repeated construction through reiterative and citational discursive practices, a process that endows the subject with transformative potential: "the fact that [norms producing gender] must be repeated . . . creates the space for them to be repeated differently and thus is also the condition of possibility for action" (Lloyd 2007, 65).

As with gender, as with class. E. P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class* "is a study in an active process, which owes as much to agency as to conditioning" (1963, 9). Neither structure nor category, "class" is fashioned through relationships, in which "some men, as a result of common experiences (inherited or shared), feel and articulate the identity of their interests as between themselves, and as against other men whose interests are different from (and usually opposed to) theirs" (ibid.). Löic Wacquant similarly argues that "[c]lass lies neither in structures nor in agency alone but in their relationship as it is historically produced, reproduced, and transformed" (1991, 51). Moreover, "[g]roups and boundaries are made and unmade in history, not theory," he emphasizes, critiquing views of class as "static and ahistorical" (ibid.). Following Thompson, Wacquant states that "[c]lass identities, practices, and 'lived experiences' are not 'afterthoughts' tacked on preexisting classes; they enter into the very making of these classes" (ibid.). Utilizing Bourdieu's notion of the "structured formation or self-production of class collectivities through struggles that simultaneously involve relationships between and within classes and determine the actual demarcation of their frontiers," Wacquant argues that middle-class characteristics cannot be "read off" theoretical criteria, but instead

"must be discovered through analysis of the whole set of creative strategies of distinction, reproduction, and subversion pursued by all the agents—not just middle-class ones—situated at the various theoretically pertinent locations in social space" (ibid., 52).

Wacquant outlines how middle-class identities that coalesced in different ways in the specific historical conditions of France and Germany nevertheless shared "several striking parallels." In both countries middle-class identity was a response to the growing assertiveness of organized labor, a dis-identification from socialism, and crystallized through state recognition: "in both instances, their emergence was facilitated by, and for the most part served the interests of the dominant class" (ibid., 56). The making of the middle class in these instances involved both the "distribution of objective resources" (structure) and "strategies, identities, and specific organizations actually developed as vehicles for group formation by middle-class actors" (agency) (ibid., 57). Although the middle class remains "an ill-defined entity," Wacquant counsels that academic studies should seek not to eliminate its ambiguity but to capture the "indeterminacy, wooliness, and contention that exist and partly define it" (ibid.).

The White-Collar Male Subject in China

"Othering" is an integral part of identity construction (Mouffe 2005, 2; Rose 1998, 192). In mainstream discourses in post-Mao China, gender identity is premised on "natural," sexed, biomedical differences that position men as more capable of decisive and bold action; women, by contrast, are depicted as more adept at caring for others and dealing with the minutiae of domestic life (Honig and Hershatter 1988; McMillan 2006; Song and Hird 2013). Gendered discourses mix with "Confucian" norms of filiality requiring marriage and procreation to produce the normative white-collar man as a married heterosexual: a subject position that even many gay men and women feel obliged to live up to (Engebretsen 2013). Middle-class othering includes a moral dimension: "Middle classes first attempt to naturalize and protect their class privileges through discourses of moral distancing from their class Others" (Liechty 2012, 296). The constitution of the white-collar subject requires disassociation from practices associated with coarseness, dishonesty, laziness, poverty, backwardness, and the rural. The Chinese white-collar man's "discursive others" include the low-quality migrant peasant (see Lu, this volume), the out-of-fashion working-class-hero-turned-loser (see Lu, this volume; Yang 2010), the unsophisticated "newly rich" man (*baofahu* 暴發戶) who lacks "taste" (*pinwei* 品味) and "personal quality" (*suzhi* 素質) (Osburg 2013, 13, and this volume), the morally reprehensible, corrupt, "black-collar" (*heiling* 黑領) top government officials, the envied "red-collar" (*hongling* 紅領) public service employees who enjoy job stability, good welfare benefits, and opportunities for promotion, and the "gold-collar" (*jinling* 金領) high-earning managers who have risen above a white-collar category increasingly tainted by

an association with white-collar "losers" (*diaosi* 屌絲) who do not earn enough to buy an impressive house and car (*Diaosi zhuan* 屌絲傳).

Much scholarly attention has been paid to the middle class (e.g., Goodman and Chen 2013; Li 2010a; Li 2012; Ren 2013; Zhou 2005a), but relatively little academic work has focused on white collars per se, despite their prominence in popular and media discourses over the last decade.[3] In one of the few academic studies that focuses specifically on white collars, Laura Duthie suggests that while class is ultimately a discursive construct, it is also useful to consider the Weberian "definition of social class as a structural position in relation to both property and commercial situation" (2005, 2).[4] Duthie defines white-collar professionals in China as "middle class in their property ownership—they do not make a living off their property. Though many own one or more residences, their primary income is derived from salaried work in corporations" (ibid.). In terms of their commercial position, she argues that "[a]lthough they hold credentials and skills highly valued in the market, they do not wield significant economic or political power as would a major industrialist or financier. Thus, they fall into Weber's middle classes." In his research on the middle class and *xiaokang* 小康 ("moderately well-off") society, Lu Hanlong similarly places "white-collar workers in corporations" alongside government and office clerks and other professionals in a midlevel class of "knowledge service groups," as part of a "well-off" group situated between rich and poor (2010, 116). "In multinational corporations and direct investment corporations, China's local white-collar workers usually occupy the middle and lower levels. Senior management positions are hard to attain" (ibid., 123). But Lu states that "[j]ob stability and stress are enduring problems for white-collar workers," who are "'slaves' to consumer goods . . . travel and entertainment," and "there is always a distance between their material desires and what they can get from society" (ibid., 124).

Academic and media depictions converge in portraying the white-collar man as well-groomed, well-educated, worldly, and in the vanguard of consumerism (Zhou 2005b, 18; Hird 2009); honest, hardworking, socially responsible, and not reliant on corrupt or nepotistic practices in his accumulation of economic, social, and cultural capital (Pang 2010, 31; Zhou 2005a, 17–20); and democratic- and egalitarian-minded (Li 2010b, 74–76; Li Chunling 2010, 145). Duthie found that most white-collar workers "explained the key to their success as merit-based: you work hard, perform well, and you are almost certain to move up the ranks"

3. Hai Ren argues that the term "white collar" is less politically charged than the term "middle class" as it is not suggestive of social or political class antagonism (2013, 4). This suits the Chinese government's "postsocialist vision of a civilizational and developmental progress toward a refined, normative and orderly society" (Yan 2008, 195, discussed in Ren 2013, 10).
4. C. Wright Mills principally employed Weber's concepts of "class, occupation, status, power, authority, manipulation, bureaucracy, [and] profession" in his study of American white collars (1956, 357).

(2005, 7).[5] Zhou Xiaohong claims that if everyone were to aspire to this hard-working, honest, middle-class model, society would become more "healthy" (*jiankang* 健康) and "harmonious" (*hexie* 和諧) (2005b, 17–18). The middle class, according to Zhou, encourage more civilized behavior among lower-income classes in their "enthusiasm for work" (*jingye jingshen* 敬業精神), "occupational morals" (*zhiye daode* 職業道德), "commercial honesty and good faith" (*shangye chengxin* 商業誠信), "motivation for success" (*chengjiu dongji* 成就動機), "family ethics" (*jiating lunli* 家庭論理), "raising quality" (*suzhi tisheng* 素質提升), "cultural taste" (*wenhua pinwei* 文化品味), and "children's education" (*zinü jiaoyu* 子女教育) (ibid., 20).

Modernization theories present white-collar workers as inevitable products of market economies; however, "[t]he development of a high-consuming urban society [in China] has been as much the outcome of the social engineering project of the contemporary reformist state and its agencies as it has been a consequence of the opening up of the economy and society" (Tomba 2009, 1).[6] Wacquant notes that state actions were "decisive" in the formation of French and German middle-class symbolism, and that the middle class, once formed, went on to serve the ruling class (1991, 56). The interests of China's middle class correspond with many of the key aims of Deng Xiaoping's policy of allowing a segment of society to get rich first (Zhou 2005b, 20). Jiang Zemin extended official recognition and approval of the middle class when he invited the "new social strata" to join the Communist Party in 2001 (Holbig 2002, 30). The state's preferred model of white-collar masculinity is a highly educated, market-oriented, urban, depoliticized, "civilized" subject who helps propel China's economic development and national honor on the world stage, and who remains compliant with Communist Party rule because it brings him economic and status benefits, or, put another way, class and gender privileges.

Methodology and Methods

Ethnographic methodology underlies my research methods. Ethnographers, like all researchers, "make choices about what to research, interpret what they see and hear, decide what to write and how, and do all this in the context of their

5. Liechty writes: "[A]round the world, middle classes couch their consumer privilege in ideological rhetorics of democratic, individual 'achievement'—as the result of either personal 'entrepreneurial success' or (via 'meritocratic' education) academically credentialed, salaried, 'professional' employment," showing that "[m]iddle-class consumption and labor are (clinically) codependent" (2012, 279).
6. Luigi Tomba cites the average 133 percent increase in public sector salaries in Beijing between 1995 and 2000 and the expansion of leisure time through the introduction in 1995 of a five-day week (and subsequent extension of public holiday periods) as government strategies specifically geared toward creating a high consuming middle class (2009, 4).

own personal biographies and often ensconced in scientific and disciplinary environments" (O'Reilly 2012, 213). As a "polemical researcher" of gender and class, who analyzes social life "for the political purpose of overcoming social oppression" (Madison 2011, 7, following Habermas 1971), I nonetheless strive to be aware of my preconceptions and prejudices. I draw from a "grounded theory" approach (Charmaz 2000 and 2006; Glaser and Strauss 1967) that involves "an iterative process in which ideas are used to make sense of data, and data are used to change our ideas" (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007, 159). Following Kathy Charmaz's "constructivist" approach, I analyze and code my informants' expressed beliefs and accounts of their experiences without necessarily taking them at face value (Mills, Bonner, and Francis 2006, 31). My approach "tells a story about people, social processes and situations that has been composed by the researcher—it does not simply unfold before the eyes of an objective viewer"; and because of this, my theorizing "does not approach some level of generalisable truth, but constitutes a set of concepts and hypotheses that other researchers can transport to similar research problems and to other substantive fields" (Pace 2012, 8, drawing from Charmaz 2000). It follows, then, that my accounts of informants' ideas, attitudes, and practices are not intended to be "representative."

This chapter draws principally on recorded "ethnographic interviews" with Chinese men carried out in Beijing in June 2013, but also utilizes data I have gathered in fieldwork in Beijing on men and masculinities since 2004.[7] During two year-long periods in Beijing in 2004–5 and 2006–7 I carried out ethnographic fieldwork for my doctoral thesis on white-collar men and masculinities. Between 2009 and 2013, I visited Beijing once or twice every year but one, spending several weeks on each occasion conducting participant observation and interviews, and in 2011 I expanded my focus to include blue-collar workers. Altogether I have interviewed and conversed with more than seventy informants in the course of my research, two-thirds of them men. Whatever the format of the interaction, my intention was to discover how my informants made sense of themselves subjectively in a variety of settings and practices.

I met my 2013 informants through existing networks of contacts built up since 2004. Their ages, as with most of my previous interviewees, ranged between the early twenties and early forties, and they all identified as Han. And as with previous informants, not all could be described as white-collar workers, but the majority were well-educated, relatively affluent urbanites. The interviews lasted between one and two hours, and took place in cafes, teahouses, restaurants, and

7. The ethnographic interview, always embedded in longer-term fieldwork, is "more like a conversation than an interview," in which "the interviewee is given the opportunity to respond in a leisurely way, to disagree, to change the topic, to add new ideas and so on," and aims "to encourage reflexivity, to give people time to delve into their thoughts, to express their contradictory opinions, their doubts, their fears, their hopes and so on" (O'Reilly 2012, 120; 127–28).

informants' homes and workplaces. They were "semi-structured" in that I initially and from time to time asked questions about issues of gender and class that I had previously formulated, while for the most part I let my informants take the conversation where their interests lay. I had informal, unscripted, and often spontaneous conversations with many of them about my research during our shared time hanging out in cafés, eating in restaurants, visiting local attractions, and passing the time in their homes. The locations and forms of these interviews and participant observation experiences were in much the same vein as those of the interviews I have conducted since the earliest days of my fieldwork (Hird 2009).

Making Class in China

In an arty café on Beijing's eastside in June 2013, I met Ruan Ling, on the cusp of thirty and unmarried. Originally from Zhejiang, Ruan had come to Beijing to study at a top university, and upon graduating had gained a job in a leading state-owned newspaper writing reports on online comments. But he was unhappy there because, in his words, "there was no way for me to incorporate my stance in my reports because they had to be approved by the leaders, they made the strategic decisions." He resigned and joined friends at a social enterprise (but still a "company" under Chinese law) that sought to inculcate leadership skills, civic values, and a loving disposition into high-school students by arranging voluntary work for them with poor rural communities in a "third-world country."

Since Ruan's company sought to transform the students into better citizens, I wondered how Ruan understood the notion of "quality," so often associated with building a "civilized" urban middle class. Ruan responded that most of his friends were white collars, and that they were "more civilized" (*bijiao wenming* 比較文明) and "higher quality" (*suzhi bijiao gao* 素質比較高) than other men. He added that white-collar men, especially those from south China (like him), respected women more than other men did. In doing so, he echoed state discourses constituting "civilized" and "high-quality" urban, middle-class subjects, and long-established popular discourses locating cultured men in the more economically developed south. Ruan placed strong emphasis on the public behavior required of a high-quality, civilized individual:

> In judging this a central element is public morality—in public places do you just think of yourself or do you consider the question of public morality [*gongde* 公德]. I think this is a very important point. Civilized [*wenming* 文明] behavior manifests in politeness [*limao* 禮貌]; for example, when people offend you the kind of attitude you respond with. Or when you want to trouble someone with something how you interact with them.

Ruan's definition of civility as a public display of etiquette assumes the gentle, restrained model of masculinity available to affluent men from highly educated backgrounds, and implicitly denigrates more physical and direct models of

masculinity. Mark Moskowitz noticed these classed embodiments of masculinities in the contrasting styles of *weiqi* players in Beijing. Drawing on the *wen-wu* 文武 (cultural attainment–martial valor) dyad theorized in Louie (2002), he writes that the sedate, restrained style of young university players created a very different masculinity from the boisterous and gruff manner of working-class park players (Moskowitz 2013, 140).

Higher levels of politeness were similarly associated with civility and affluence by Luo Bin, a Henan-born investment consultant in his mid-twenties, who had spent six months as an exchange student in Taiwan. During an interview in April 2011 in his downtown office, he said:

> You might think this [politeness] is very soft [*yinrou* 陰柔]. In fact I think this is not for sure. It's to do with the rising levels of civilized [*wenming* 文明] behavior. People are becoming more polite. I'll give an example: a 1.85 metre tall, big Taiwanese guy. Why do people think Taiwanese men are very sissy-like [*niang* 娘]? It's because they are very polite, they won't curse people. Mainlanders then think that Taiwanese are very sissy-like, but in fact this is not the case, it's just that they are being very polite.

Ruan's and Luo's elaborations of quality, politeness, and civility presuppose high levels of economic and educational capital, and thereby reinscribe postsocialist discourses that privilege the urban middle classes and condemn rural migrants as ignorant, impolite, and unsophisticated (Anagnost 2004, 190).

Building Trust and Love

Beyond the need to display civility, Ruan had very deep concerns about the need to build trusting and loving relations. Joining an enterprise that enabled him to feel he was helping China's youth build loving relationships resolved the ethical dilemma he felt while working with the state newspaper. Although he still felt pressured in his new job, Ruan drew strength from the "positive energy" (*zheng nengliang* 正能量) of the company's ethos.[8] His company sought to infuse deeper civic values through "civil society education" (a phrase Ruan said in English; henceforth marked [Eng]), but this concept could not be openly promoted because of government restrictions, so they called their "product" "volunteer education" [Eng]. Ruan stated:

8. The term "positive energy" has become ubiquitous in self-help books in China since 2012 and was widespread in local authority public information messages when I visited Beijing in June 2013, for example in messages on public transport systems encouraging commuters to face their work and home stresses with a smile. Barbara Ehrenreich (2009) argues that "positive thinking" discourses promulgate neoliberal strategies that instruct people not to feel down or complain if they are sacked, feel overworked etc., at a time when neoliberal business practices are increasingly rendering people unemployed or saddled with heavier workloads.

> We take Chinese students and send them to a third world country. Currently we send them to a country in Southeast Asia. It's a very good country, a Buddhist country, very warm-hearted: the entire people all "trust" [Eng] each other. China has none of these things right now, or very little.

The volunteer work abroad aimed to inculcate the "ability to love" [Eng] in the students, which as singletons they lacked: "Because they are always being loved, but they never love the others [*sic*] [Eng]." Feelings of trust and love were similarly key for the company's founder (a young man in his twenties). According to his statement on the company website, when he did voluntary work in the same Southeast Asian country before establishing the company, he felt "trusted and needed, despite the limited communication and language barrier. This is the kind of feeling that our generation longs for."[9]

The young founder and Ruan were both dissatisfied with the state of interpersonal relations in China, and their characterization of a Southeast Asian Buddhist country as a place where they feel valued and trusted, and where they can trust people, evokes China as a place of deep mistrust where young people have a low sense of self-worth. The company's program responds to anxieties among China's young people about individualized, high-intensity, dog-eat-dog, material competitiveness that they feel has severely damaged interpersonal trust and collective endeavors, and prevents them from feeling truly fulfilled and happy.

The idea that urban youth should go to the countryside to help with manual work in villages harks back to the "educated youth" (*zhishi qingnian* 知識青年) policy that was first instituted in the 1950s and accelerated during the Cultural Revolution. Urban, high-school-educated students were sent "up to the mountains and down to the countryside" (*shangshan xiaxiang* 上山下鄉) to learn from the peasants how to be better socialist citizens. Ruan made no mention of this when explaining the moral ethos at the heart of the company, but his company's message can be interpreted as a postsocialist reworking of a Maoist vision, involving the transformation of wayward city youth into committed builders of a better society through exposure to the harsh realities of peasant life. The sent-down youth policy became widely discredited and condemned as a mechanism for removing unemployed youth from the cities, but the idea that the core values of human life are to be found among the poorest of peasants persists to this day. The root-seeking movement of the 1980s acclaimed peasant life as the source of real Chinese cultural values, and lauded peasant masculinity as a model for urban Chinese men feeling emasculated by women's "liberation" (Baranovitch 2003; Zhong 2000). Contemporary tourists flock to village and rural settings seeking to recover an experience of "authentic" or "original" culture (*yuanshengtai* 原生態) untainted by urban and commercial development (Zhu 2012). Ruan's company has packaged together notions of peasant wisdom, rural authenticity,

9. To protect Ruan's anonymity, I am not providing the URL for the company's website.

modernization and development theories, and neoliberal self-development ideologies to create a "product" that seeks to inculcate a mix of these perspectives in young, middle-class subjects.

Nevertheless, as a commercial entity competing in China's highly competitive marketplace, the company had to convince its customers—the parents of high-school students—that parting with their money would bring a more material benefit to their offspring than encouraging "love," "trust," and feelings of self-worth from helping a "third-world" country. The company's promotional material, endorsed by US advisors on its board, emphasized that going on the program would greatly increase a student's chance of getting accepted into an elite US university, since the admission evaluation procedures accord high weighting to a student's international voluntary service. Ruan explained that the company needed to use this kind of marketing language to persuade parents to buy the "product." I suggested that he seemed comfortable with the very commercial way the company operated. "We don't reject commercialization," he said, "in fact, we hope we can have good commercialization." He explained that social enterprises are treated in the same way as any other business according to Chinese law; there are no preferential tax breaks. Selling a "product" rather than relying on donations gave them a better chance of survival: "We feel if you can commercialize your charitable activities, your enterprise's ability to exist will be stronger." What made them a social enterprise in spirit if not by law, Ruan said, was that 30 percent of their income went directly to helping the poor in Southeast Asia.

Still, I was puzzled that they thought that their "customers" were all aiming to get into prestigious US universities, as I had imagined that the students on the program came from a cross-section of society. Ruan laughed when I raised this and said that all the students came from richer families, since the cost is 20,000 yuan per person (£2,000) for a ten-day program. He believed this sum was affordable for most white-collar families, and said that the company was exclusively targeting the sons and daughters of well-off white-collar families who had aspirations for their offspring to attend Ivy League universities. They did not offer scholarships to children from lower-income backgrounds and had no plans to do so.

Ruan's company's values and practices respond to the concerns of the Chinese middle class about rampant materialism and its effect on the moral wholesomeness of individuals and society; but at the same time they point to the limits to what can be done when operating within these very conditions. On the one hand, Ruan's company was undoubtedly helping some of Beijing's middle-class singleton children experience the joy of doing something for others less well off than themselves. The feelings of trust and love that the company seeks to inculcate may well have helped them develop notions of self-worth not based on material success. On the other hand, this was done through the promise of giving these children an extra boost to win out over their middle-class peers in

the race for an elite global education and the stellar career trajectory that often comes with it. The high price and lack of bursary scheme excluded children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. The company therefore acted in ways that enhanced middle-class privilege, denied upward mobility to poorer families, and reinforced "love" and "trust" as middle-class attributes. Moreover, the company's quasi-"orientalist" ethos encouraged othering of a poorer neighboring country. When I asked Ruan whether the company intended to run the scheme in China, he claimed it was impossible because of state control of land, which prevented them from carrying out building projects. The emphasis in the company's promotional literature on the need for international experience to get into a top university, however, suggests another important reason for the decision to send volunteers abroad.

A moral tension lies at the heart of the middle-class civilizing project. Liechty writes that "becoming middle-class means coming to terms with conflicted moral and material logics" (2012, 280). For James Farrer, the white collars of 1990s Shanghai were "morally compromised" and "little concerned with larger social ideals" (2002, 138). Ruan acknowledged and sought to escape from the stark moral and material logics that characterized his high-flying yet ideologically restricted job with the newspaper, and he claimed to have done so through the "positive energy" of transforming selfish school children into loving subjects. But from a "class-making" perspective Ruan and his company were still deeply complicit in the state project to build a "civilized," "high-quality," market compliant, depoliticized, middle-class workforce premised on social division and individual material goals. If Liechty is right in saying that "becoming middle-class means coming to terms with conflicted moral and material logics," then, in terms of class privilege, Ruan's move to the social enterprise enabled him to do just that.

Gendering the Home

Lu Dexiang is an IT director for a well-known, state-owned magazine in Beijing. Originally from northeast China, when I met Lu in June 2013 he was in his mid-thirties, married, and had a baby son. On the topic of gender relations, Lu told me that men and women are equal in China now, and that male chauvinism is a thing of the past. But then he added that China had in fact entered an era of women's domination, which he called "female chauvinism" (*da nüzi zhuyi* 大女子主義). His sentiments echoed those expressed by many of my male informants, white-collar or otherwise. For example, Zhou Rong, a Hebei-born computer sales executive in his late thirties, married with a young daughter, told me that nowadays "men are belittled and women are treasured" (*nan jian nü gui* 男賤女貴). Such comments and other phrases such as "women's rise and men's decline" (*yin sheng yang shuai* 陰盛陽衰) reflect a concern expressed by men from different socioeconomic backgrounds that in recent decades women's status has

risen while men's status has fallen. These notions map the ebb and flow of *yin* and *yang* forces onto a modern binary of sexed bodies, and express a sense that expansion of women's rights comes at the expense of men's power.[10]

Lu felt that Chinese men were disempowered and bossed around at home. When a man gets home from work these days, Lu lamented, his wife tells him to clean this and tidy that. I heard similar views from Yuan Long, a Jiangsu-born married man in his early thirties who worked in the IT department of a Beijing SOE, when I interviewed him in June 2013. Yuan identified as belonging to the "post-80s" (*baling hou* 八零後) generation, the first post-Mao generation. He believed that male chauvinism was "rarer and rarer" among the post-80s generation, and that "women's status in the home was now higher than men's." For his part, Lu seemed philosophical about such changes: it was no problem, he laughed, adding that he even changed his baby's nappies sometimes. But his engagement with his child was not much in evidence when I visited. For the two hours we were chatting in his lounge, his wife—a full-time civil servant—was with their baby in a bedroom. She came out only once, carrying the child, said hello, then returned to the bedroom. Lu told me that she was on maternity leave, and would soon be flying with the child to her parents' home to spend the summer months there. Lu would stay in Beijing. Despite his professed willingness to change nappies, Lu's behavior over the afternoon and his plan for his wife to take his child away for several months gave me the impression that his wife was the primary caregiver for their child. Similarly, despite his insistence that women's status was higher in the home for his generation, Yuan Long's views on the benefits of car ownership suggested similar assumptions about women's primary caregiving responsibilities. "I want to buy a car for convenience," Yuan said. "They are useful, such as for one's wife picking up one's child from school." Yuan's main motivation for buying a car may well have been for the convenience, safety, and welfare of his family. Nonetheless, his expectation that his wife would be responsible for picking up their child from school suggests an assumption that his wife would be the primary carer for their child, and that she would have to make space in her daily schedule to do so (see Li and Jankowiak, this volume, on the emergence of the "nurturing father ideal" and its relative lack of adoption in daily conduct).

Qin Wei, a Jiangxi-born, married investment banker in his late twenties, whom I interviewed in April 2011, insisted that he engaged in joint decision-making with his wife at home, maintaining that he had "no additional decision-making power." Qin and his wife divided household tasks equitably, but he hinted that he still harbored some "male chauvinist" views:

> I'm not an especially big male chauvinist, I also respect very much my other half's opinions, including how to do housework. After we finish work and

10. C. J. Pascoe notes that for some American writers gender is also "a zero sum game in which gains for girls must equal losses for boys" (2012, 17).

> head home, my jobs are to buy vegetables, prepare them, and wash the dishes. She just cooks the food; the rest is all my work. There's no specially specified division of labor; it's just the way we've established in practice. We've slowly become used to it, the two of us living together. As for washing clothes, whoever has time just fits it in.

Qin's rhetoric here suggests an egalitarian approach to marriage. But Qin admitted subsequently that he had a "relatively close to traditional" (*he chuantong de bijiao jiejin* 和傳統的比較接近) attitude to certain family responsibilities. In his view, the man paid for the house, and the woman looked after the children. He ascribed his stance—a seemingly contradictory mix of new ideas of gender parity in "decision-making" and much older notions of gendered responsibilities—to the diverse influences on the post-80s generation, who had grown up in a post-Mao era characterized by a mix of "traditional" and "modern" ideas and practices.

I asked Zhou Rong if his relationship with his wife, a manager in an electronics firm, was conducted on an equal basis. "It's equal," Zhou responded. "I always discuss things with her." Then, without drawing breath, he continued: "But if we don't agree, then we go with my decision." It seems that Zhou's notion of marriage equality consisted of both parties' involvement in the discussion of issues, but that his decision was final. I asked him directly who had the most decision-making power in his relationship. He replied:

> Of course it's me. She looks after the small things, I look after the big things. She buys things for daily use, for example, makeup and so on. Men don't bother with these. But big things like buying a house, car, or investing—of course it's men who make the big decisions. Of my friends, eight out of ten are the same as me; the others are the other way round—the wife looks after the big things [laughs].

Zhou echoed Qin's stance in reserving the "big" decisions for men. In Zhou's opinion, this male decision-making power is deeply rooted in historical practices in village society, in which rural women held the least power of all: "In the past there was much less discussion. In the cities maybe there would still be discussion. But in the countryside it was whatever the husband said had to be done. Men went out, women stayed at home."

Gendering the Workplace

Embedded ideas about gendered attributes similarly contribute to the privileging of white-collar men in the workplace (see, for example, Liu 2008). Qin was very aware of this:

> Men's career prospects are very clearly much better than women's. Not only our company, but the companies around here that I have observed are also the same. My wife also works in an investment company, and she feels very sure about this, that for the same position, a man's salary will possibly be

> higher, he will possibly be put in a more important position; a woman will be treated a bit worse. We've already talked this over in private; this is the current reality.

Hebei-born Shi, forty, a married computer sales executive with two children, who had just founded his own electronics company when I met him in June 2013, was explicit in outlining a gendered division of labor:

> For example, women make good nurses because they are good at attentively (*xixin* 細心) caring for patients. Ninety percent of men don't have this ability. With regard to IT, there's a lot of pressure, sometimes you need to work from nine in the morning till twelve at night. And there's another problem: women also have to look after the kids and the home.

Shi's comments resonate with pervasive biomedical discourses that consider caring abilities as innate to women, and strength and decisiveness as men's characteristics. Shi's matter-of-fact assertion that women have a responsibility to look after children and the household aligns with historical associations of women with domestic space that Zhou had also mentioned (Mann 2000).

I asked Qin and Shi to explain the root of gendered differences in the workplace. Qin pointed to the persistence of deeply embedded "traditional" beliefs and views about appropriate behavior for women:

> Traditional thinking has it that men are of indomitable spirit [*dingtian lidi* 頂天立地], more reliable [*geng kaodezhu* 更靠得住] in certain ways. Another aspect is maybe to do with gender difference. Sometimes one needs to do business socializing [*yingchou* 應酬], and I feel that doesn't really suit women, such as drinking alcohol, exchanging many toasts. None of that suits women; perhaps it's something to do with gender. But I think the biggest influence is perhaps something to do with a person's innate thoughts [*guyou de siwei* 固有的思維]—the belief that men are possibly a bit stronger [*geng qiang yidian* 更強一點].

Shi, too, had no doubt that longstanding cultural beliefs about gender roles lay at the heart of gender discrimination. He insinuated that mothers who work are neglecting and harming their children:

> It's traditional Chinese culture that puts the onus on the man to provide for his family; nothing can be done about it [*mei banfa* 沒辦法]. After marriage, men must bear the burden of providing for children [*nanren chengdan yang haizi* 男人承擔養孩子]. If your wife also goes out to work, then your kids are not being looked after, and this will lead to problems. Men must go out to work to earn money to look after their family.

Shi also drew on a Confucian notion linking the prosperity of the family and nation to justify a gendered division of familial roles: "If the family lives in harmony all affairs will prosper" (*jia he wanshi xing* 家和萬事興). Shi's views suggest that cultural justification for gender inequality works in the same way as biomedical justification: in discourses that promulgate gender traits as deeply culturally embedded, gender inequality becomes "naturalized" as an inevitable

and necessary part of unchanging sociocultural relations. As Shi says, "nothing can be done about it."

Shi's profoundly conservative and unequal view of husband/wife roles, responsibilities, and aptitudes was so much at odds with the progressive depictions of white-collar men in the media that I was not surprised when Shi resisted being described as white collar or middle class, claiming (unconvincingly) that he did not earn enough. According to Liechty, middle-class material and moral conflict is "particularly acute for women attempting to negotiate between expanding economic opportunities and persisting ideas regarding a woman's proper role in the home" (2012, 297n6). In this light, Shi's resistance to being called white collar or middle class can be partly understood through his opposition to married women working.

Ruan Ling, however, was clearly conflicted in his thoughts on this issue:

> Women's biggest obstacle, and I know this from looking for women to work at my company, is that if in the future they get married and have kids this is very troublesome. It's a big problem. But I'm absolutely not saying that I'm against this, I'm just considering this from the company's perspective. This is a big headache for sure.

Despite his own support for women working, Ruan's acceptance of his company's profit-driven commercial principles in a social context in which women are assumed to be primary child carers led him to consider women employees as "troublesome" and a "headache." This is far from a gender-neutral perspective, as Ruan admits, and points to a major form of white-collar managerial prejudice against professional women.

In sum, despite prominent discursive associations of white-collar men with gender equality, and evidence of more involved fathering and support for women working, white-collar men's assumptions about the gendered division of labor and decision-making in everyday practices at home and work show that they continue to "make gender" in ways that privilege men over women.

Conclusion

My informants found different ways of negotiating the material and moral conflicts that Liechty identified at the core of middle-class subjectivity. Ruan moved to a social enterprise to escape a political climate in which he felt uncomfortable. Ruan and Luo justified the privileges of the middle class because of its more developed civility. Lu and Yuan proclaimed the dominance of women in the home while still avoiding equal caregiving duties. Zhou and Qin professed the equality of their marital relationships yet reserved key decisions for themselves. Shi chose to reject identifying as white collar or middle class, and felt no need to adopt a narrative of gender parity.

My informants mobilized a variety of discourses to legitimize their class and gender privileges. Ruan and Luo drew on discourses of white-collar "quality,"

civility, politeness, honesty, hard work, and material affluence to "other" differently classed masculinities, and their practices worked to reproduce their own class advantages. The story of Ruan's social enterprise shows how proto-white-collar subjectivities can be formed bricolage-like from "traditional," collectivist, developmental, and entrepreneurial discourses. Zhou, Qin, Shi, and Ruan drew on discourses of Confucian tradition, biological sexual difference, and market forces to explain away discrimination against women—and their participation in it—either at home or in the workplace.

Postsocialist white-collar masculinity is a key new gendered identity in China that has emerged through the Chinese state's reform-era strategy of creating a wealthy urban class with global reach. White-collar Chinese men are constituted as civilized, progressive subjects in the vanguard of China's socioeconomic development and, as with middle classes around the world, are rhetorically aligned with freedom, choice, and equality. Paradoxically, my informants' white-collar male identity was simultaneously predicated on class and gender privileges that they felt unable or unwilling to yield. Their negotiation of this tension defined them.

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8
Corruption, Masculinity, and *Jianghu* Ideology in the PRC

John Osburg

Recently, an entrepreneur I had met at a local gym invited me to visit a hot spring in a small city outside Chengdu. He was closely connected to some officials from the city where the hot spring was located, and they had offered to pay for our hotel, meals, and hot spring entrance fees. When these officials later went to Chengdu, the entrepreneur, Mr. Zhao, would in turn cover all of their expenses. While he ultimately "paid" for this trip by treating his government friends when they visited Chengdu, this reciprocal arrangement allowed him to demonstrate his degree of connectedness to powerful people and the strength of his *guanxi* (關係), about which he boasted frequently.

Although at dinner the previous evening Mr. Zhao's car had displayed the license plates of an ordinary citizen, when we set off on our trip, his Audi A4 sported government license plates that exempted him from paying highway tolls and allowed him to disregard whatever traffic regulations he deemed inconvenient, which, from my experience in the backseat, felt like all of them. In addition to his government plates, he displayed a permit in his car window that allowed him to use a police horn and loudspeaker, which he used repeatedly when driving through streets crowded with bicyclists, pedicabs, and peddlers, barking at them to clear the way.

Mr. Zhao, however, had no official connection to the government or Communist Party. He was an entrepreneur who frequently undertook government construction projects and who was rumored by many to be connected with one or more local criminal organizations (*heishehui* 黑社會). State agents had bestowed these privileges on Mr. Zhao as a sign of their close ties with him. Like many entrepreneurs, he had earned his perks through countless evenings lavishly entertaining state officials in upscale restaurants, karaoke clubs, and foot massage parlors and on trips to Macao.

Among other new rich I encountered in my research, these elite privileges also included the granting of other police and even military perks.[1] One entrepreneur I knew who was well connected to a high official in the city's Public Security Bureau had an official police identification and a licensed gun, even though he distributed Chinese wines for a living and had never spent a day in the police academy or a police station. Beyond being indicative of the privatization of state power, this entrepreneurial appropriation of state privileges suggests a convergence in the lifestyles and increasing integration of China's economic and political elites.

Jianghu (江湖) Ideology and Brotherhoods in China

The patron-client relationship between state officials and entrepreneurs in China and the importance of social capital that includes ties to the government has been well documented by scholars (Smart 1993; Pieke 1995; Buckley 1999; Wank 1996; 1999). China's economic reforms notwithstanding, state agents still control access to capital, business licenses, and land. Furthermore, in many industries strong ties to the state offer one a competitive advantage. Well-connected entrepreneurs are more likely to win government contracts and obtain tax breaks and regulatory flexibility, and they are the first to learn about shifts in policy. As David Wank (1999) has argued, they also rely on the state both for protection from other predatory state agents and for leverage should any business disputes arise. Wank characterizes the relationship between state officials and businessmen as "symbiotic clientelism": entrepreneurs obtain protection and many benefits that enhance their business success, while state agents both generate revenue for local government agencies and obtain illicit income through bribes or kickbacks that often dwarfs their official salaries (Wank 1999, 11). By distributing favors, privileges, contracts, and protection, officials are able to build their own networks of entrepreneurs to accomplish various goals, from personal enrichment to state-driven aims of economic development.

In this chapter, I argue that viewing these networks not simply as transactional patron-client networks, but as gendered social formations, brings several other key features into view. First, entrepreneurs, state enterprise managers, and government officials alike increasingly aspire to a similar masculine "boss" ideal: they aim to become dispensers of favors and opportunities, people who can command the assistance of other powerful individuals with just a phone call. Participation in these networks as both patron and client is fundamental to post-Mao ideologies of masculinity. Secondly, as I will examine in detail below, these networks draw upon the rhetoric, structure, and ideologies of China's

1. This chapter is based on ethnographic research conducted with a group of wealthy entrepreneurs in the city of Chengdu, China from 2002 to 2006 and supplemented by follow-up visits in 2008, 2010, and 2013.

tradition of sworn brotherhoods. Built on ideologies of male solidarity, these gendered networks not only constitute a key component of business but also comprise the "elementary structures" of corruption and organized crime in China. Although some of these networks are based on ties of kinship and native-place, the bulk of the relationships that compose these networks are forged and maintained through ritualized leisure—experiences of shared pleasure in venues that cater to the desires and enjoyment of elite men. Primarily, these venues include karaoke clubs, saunas, nightclubs, foot massage parlors, and high-end restaurants and teahouses.

Susan Mann has pointed out that male, sex-segregated, homosocial networks have been at the heart of many late imperial and modern Chinese institutions, from scholarly academies and the civil service exam to secret societies and bandit groups (Mann 2000, 1602). In the reform era, as Maoist political cosmology and collectivist ethics have lost their salience in people's interpersonal relationships, gendered notions of interpersonal morality and authority, rooted in the discourses of kinship and *renqing* (人情, human feelings and relationships), have increasingly served to legitimate everyday forms of power and ethics in China. Among the entrepreneurs with whom I worked in China, business relationships were often couched in a rhetoric of male solidarity, brotherhood, paternalism, mutual aid, and *yiqi* (義氣, honor or a sense of obligation in personal relationships). One template for these relationships is the hierarchical and gendered idiom of brotherhood. Patrons and well-connected bosses are often referred to as "big brothers" (大哥), and their status depends on fulfilling paternalist obligations and providing for the well-being of the other members of their networks. Associates and underlings are usually referred to as "iron brothers" (鐵哥們兒) or simply "brothers" (兄弟). They are expected to put their fictive brotherly relationships above all other commitments, sharing their success and using positions of power to the advantage of other members of their network. While these relationships generally lack the strong bond and weighty obligations that characterized actual sworn brotherhoods (Jordan 1985), they serve a similar purpose in providing a certain degree of security and stability in an environment of considerable competiveness and distrust. By invoking the framework of brotherhood, businessmen are able to draw upon an ideology that minimizes conflict and competition, provides a ready-made set of moral obligations, and offers a framework for dispute resolution (ibid).

Given the strong rhetoric of brotherhood and loyalty among these groups of men, another template for these relationships is *jianghu* (江湖) culture, of which sworn brotherhoods were an integral part. *Jianghu* is a term that is difficult to capture in English. In its most limited sense it refers to the knight-errant culture depicted in the classic fourteenth-century Chinese novels *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (三國演義) and *The Water Margin* (水滸傳). The peach orchard scene at the beginning of *Three Kingdoms* in which the three main characters pledge their loyalty to one another was widely imitated by underground brotherhoods (幫會

banghui) in Qing China. To this day, many criminal sworn brotherhoods in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the PRC base their initiations on the "peach garden pledge" (桃園結義) from this novel. Guan Yu (關羽), the deified main character from *Three Kingdoms*, is also worshipped by many of these groups as the embodiment of the code of brotherhood and "honor and righteousness in personal relationships" (義氣). But more broadly, *jianghu* connotes a social and moral space different from the normative world of family, law, and the state in which a concern with honor (義氣) outweighs all other concerns and trumps state law.[2]

For those marginalized by mainstream social norms and values, which (ideally) placed law-abiding scholar-officials at the top, *jianghu* mythology and ideology offered an alternative framework for generating self-worth and formulating durable, binding relationships outside the traditional kinship system. Relationships in the *jianghu* world often took the form of voluntary (or what is sometimes called "fictive") kinship, with the sworn brotherhood being the most prevalent form.[3] Sociologically, the *jianghu* world was (and still is in many Chinese communities around the world) composed of the diverse groups of people who "live by their wits, skill, and, sometimes, brutality," including gangsters, hucksters, prostitutes, and other assorted minor criminals (Boretz 2011, 33). Sworn brotherhoods offered men who were at the fringes of Chinese society, and often far from kin, a modicum of protection and mutual support. Thus, brotherhoods, such as the Tiandihui (天地會), which first appeared in the mid-Qing, tended to mostly attract men from marginal social positions (Ownby 1996). Many were so-called "bare sticks" (光棍, *guanggun*) who lacked families of their own (Billingsley 1988). Yet, in the contemporary PRC, we find a proliferation of *jianghu* forms and ideology among virtually all social classes. As I will argue below, this can be attributed to the inherent insecurity of the official and business worlds, despite the high status of both of these professional domains.

While some of the networks I encountered in my research were organized, underground (criminal) brotherhoods with a well-defined hierarchy and a clearly delineated membership, commonly known as 黑社會 *heishehui* (literally, "black society"), many others more loosely mimicked the forms, terms of address, and ideology of China's tradition of sworn brotherhoods. In Republican China (1912–49) sworn brotherhoods were frequently intertwined with the state to help with the policing and governance of particular unruly populations,

2. For an extended discussion of the meanings and significance of *jianghu* in China and Taiwan, see Boretz (2011, 29–40).

3. Following the work of many anthropologists, I avoid labeling these relationships "fictive," which implicitly contrasts them with "real" blood-based kinship. As countless ethnographies have demonstrated, the obligations and emotions attached to kinship relationships have little to do with a narrow Western conception of biological relatedness. Thus I use the term "voluntary" to emphasize that these relationships were entered into by choice, but by no means should this imply that the emotional weight and obligation attached to them was any less "real."

a relationship that, as I discuss elsewhere (Osburg 2013, Chapter 3) is not altogether different from their role today. This was particularly the case in Sichuan, where members of *Paoge* (袍哥) permeated state and civil institutions in the late Qing and Republican periods (McIsaac 2000; Zhou and Shao 1993, 563–72). Even during the Maoist years, Elizabeth Perry and Nara Dillon document how worker rebels in Shanghai during the Cultural Revolution employed "masculine metaphors of brotherhood to construct their new rebel community" (2002, 270). Drawing as much on this brotherhood tradition as on Hong Kong gangster movies in developing their ethos, formal underground brotherhoods (黑社會) exert an increasing influence over local state organs in China, play a key role in real estate development, and control much of China's vast "underground" economy.

The early days of China's market reforms created a morally grey and socially marginalized space that resonated with the *jianghu* world. Avron Boretz (2011) suggests an affinity between the *jianghu* values and the emerging world of business:

> [M]any narratives of and about China's 1980s craze of leaping into the sea (下海 *xiahai*) make use of similar tropes and allusions. Around this time, *xiahai* became a popular term among Chinese intellectuals and party officials who were "taking the plunge" into the newly opened world of private business. Those who cast off into the stormy seas of capitalism were giving up the security and prestige of an official career . . . But the decision to engage in entrepreneurial activity was regarded by many, especially intellectuals, who traditionally defined their calling as pure and above the desire for profit, as inherently self-debasing . . . For them, "leaping into the sea" would have implied many of the same moral and personal dilemmas that "embarking on the dark path" has long had for working-class men and women in Taiwan. (Boretz 2011, 57)

Not surprisingly, then, given this climate of risk, uncertainty, and moral greyness, many businessmen and government officials draw on *jianghu* notions of obligation and brotherhood to establish relationships of trust with one another and to justify their participation in what are often illegal activities. While the stigma surrounding profit-making of the 1980s has withered away and the legal status of capitalist activities in the PRC is safely enshrined in law, business, especially more lucrative fields, remains a high-risk, high-reward field in which participation in many morally grey activities (such as bribery) is still essential. Entrepreneurs and businesspeople are still heavily reliant on official connections for access to resources, opportunities, and protection. Their official patrons too depend on informal alliances with those outside officialdom for the bulk of their "grey" income. The brotherhood tradition provided a ready-made template for these alliances, despite its lofty ideals not always finding realization in the cutthroat world of Chinese capitalism.

In his influential examination of Chinese masculinity, Kam Louie (2002) argues that the *wen* 文 (scholarly)/*wu* 武 (martial) dichotomy has undergirded

Chinese masculinity throughout its various historical permutations. While Confucians traditionally disparaged commerce and profit-seeking, Louie argues that increasingly Confucius is being reinterpreted as a philosopher of business management (2002, 55). *Wen* masculinity, Louie argues, is also being reconfigured and reimagined to incorporate the successful businessman. Yet, despite the ever-increasing hegemony of commerce in the PRC, given the rough and tumble reputation of the business world, a certain "rough and ready" *wu* masculinity still persists in many industries. In particular, it can be found outside the office environment in the raucous evenings of banqueting, drinking, singing, and (sometimes) sex consumption that still accompany many business deals.[4] Nor are these two configurations of masculinity mutually exclusive: the sophisticated, white-collar business manager by day may very well be a hard-drinking, loyal-to-the-end *gemenr* (哥們兒) by night.

Entertaining (應酬) and Cultivating Business Networks

One of the primary sites for studying the formation of business networks is entertaining and leisure interactions that take place at banquets, in KTVs, *xijaofang* (洗腳房, foot massage parlors), saunas, and teahouses. My research subjects spent most nights and many afternoons in these venues cultivating business ties or maintaining existing ones. Rather than viewing these interactions as part of a "supposedly universal psychology of male bonding" (Kipnis 2001, 92n16), as they are often understood in the West, a starting point of my analysis is that masculinity is not a universal essence or biological impulse, but a culturally and historically variable construction that requires constant maintenance through performance. In making this claim, I am not simply arguing for either the reemergence or the stubborn persistence of a cultural pattern that mechanistically reproduces itself. In the reform era, gendered *guanxi* networks have proliferated in particular political domains and industries, while they have declined in others. Moreover, they are not simply constituted out of the fabric of "traditional" social relations—such as kinship and native-place ties—but are increasingly forged between business associates in the new spaces of leisure in China's urban centers. In these contexts, actors performatively invoke cultural notions of brotherhood or *yiqi*—sometimes sincerely, and at other times in highly calculated, instrumental ways. Sometimes these practices generate their intended performative effects; at other times they fail.

4. Historically, *wu* masculinity was associated with sexual abstinence or control of sexual desire, whereas *wen* masculinity was often confirmed and validated through sexual relations with women. In the popular imagination in the PRC today, the new rich businessman and the corrupt government official are both associated with sexual overindulgence. While, on the one hand, their abundant sexual relationships serve to confirm their high status, on the other, they are also cited as evidence of their moral degeneration.

The nightly carousing in nightclubs with business partners, mistresses, and paid hostesses that dominates the afterwork lives of most businessmen in China is not simply the result of a suppressed masculinity finally finding release after the prohibitions of socialism; nor is it simply what men, by nature, are programmed to do. Rather, by drinking, singing, and being flattered by female companions in nightclubs, men are both creating and enacting a particular version of masculinity that is associated with being a man of status and wealth in post-Mao China. They are at the same time seeking to forge homosocial ties crucial to their career success and financial futures. Business entertaining is understood by its participants as a (not always successful) attempt to inject forms of value that are resistant to commodification into business relationships, to transform relationships of cold calculation into kin-like relationships embedded in moral economies of sentiment and obligation. This transformation is realized through the incommensurable, shared experiences of intimacy, vulnerability, and transgression that this entertaining enables (but does not always achieve). The entrepreneurs I worked with hoped that if they paid for an evening on the town their client or official patron would walk away not simply feeling "indebted" to the host for his lavish expenditure but also with an embodied memory of shared pleasure and a latent sense of fondness, or *ganqing* (感情), for their host. In his description of how banquets transform relationships in China, Andrew Kipnis (2001, 88) states, "Psychologically, *ganqing* [sentiment] may be described as a sentimental memory of indebtedness and shared experience. The more exceptional the memory created the better." In other words, anyone can offer a bribe or a kickback, so only those who can generate more durable ties rooted in *ganqing* rather than just financial interest have an advantage. *Yingchou* (應酬, business entertaining) should thus be understood as an attempt to embed market relationships into gendered social relationships.[5]

As James Farrer and Sun Zhongxing (2003, 14) note in their analysis of discourses surrounding extramarital sexuality in reform-era Shanghai, feelings and sentiment (*ganqing*) have increasingly served as a counter-discourse to money in post-Mao China and have taken on a very positive moral connotation. In this context, my informant friends frequently framed their business transactions and patron-client relationships as "helping friends" (幫助朋友) or as rooted in "feelings" (感情) for others. To appear to be overly calculating and greedy and focused on a short-term transaction rather than the relationship itself was to risk being accused of having a "poor peasant nature" (小貧農的劣質性). Such behavior was viewed as a sign of both desperation and untrustworthiness and likely to raise the suspicions of business partners and official patrons. By framing their behavior as motivated by feelings rather than money, I believe my informants were also claiming a particular kind of elite moral subjectivity: one that was

5. In the Sichuan dialect, which was spoken by most of my informants, this form of instrumental entertaining was referred to as *goudui* (勾兌).

secure enough financially to be free from being governed by crude material interest alone. My informants often bragged about the *xiongdi* to whose success they had contributed, and in narrating their own rise in business, they were quick to credit the one or more *dage* (大哥) who had provided them with opportunities, capital, or important connections. Generosity was at the core of the boss-patron ideal that many of my informants emulated, and several of my interviewees told stories of friends and acquaintances who had borrowed money and gone into considerable debt to maintain the generous displays associated with this version of masculinity. One individual, whom I will discuss further at the end of this chapter, estimated that he spent RMB 2 to 3 million a year in one particular nightclub, and given that his bill often exceeded RMB 10,000 in a single evening, I believe his estimate.

Similarly, many elite men with whom I worked also framed payments to mistresses or hostesses as gifts—as tokens of concern for their well-being and happiness rather than as payments for time and services rendered. Just as in their relationships with other men, wealthy men and government officials strive to cultivate relationships of patronage with their mistresses and lovers. For example, I encountered several female university students in Chengdu who had their tuition and living expenses paid by wealthy, older male patrons. According to my male interviewees, the desirability of the woman "provided for" directly reflected her patron's wealth, reputation, and status. Mistresses or lovers (and specifically not wives) were thus viewed as reliable indicators of the qualities (charm, sophistication, wealth, and appearance) of their male patrons. Providing for multiple dependents, be they mistresses or fellow businessmen, was thus central to the "boss-patron" imaginary that informed the practices of many of the elite men with whom I worked.

This is not to argue that these networks were islands of brotherly love and feelings in a commodified world. Although the businessmen mostly enjoyed banqueting, drinking, and cavorting with hostesses on their own, they sometimes resented being obliged to entertain clients, partners, and officials they did not like on a personal level, as well as the considerable amount of time, money, and energy consumed by this entertaining. They also complained about obligations to help out a business associate or to promote his product or service. One memorable example involved an entrepreneur, Mr. Cai, who owned the distribution rights to a brand of mooncakes considered by many to be inferior in taste and quality. Around the Mid-Autumn Festival, when mooncakes are traditionally given as gifts, they nonetheless dutifully purchased the dry, crumbly mooncakes from Mr. Cai to distribute to other members of their social networks.

Some also saw the constant drinking in KTVs and the hiring of sex workers to entertain others as the mark of an unsophisticated nouveau riche (暴發戶 *baofahu* or 土豪 *tuhao*), and they sometimes looked down on clients and officials who demanded this form of courtship. Some of the men with whom I worked contrasted China's business world with an idealized West in which (they imagined)

their talents and abilities alone would be sufficient to win contracts and attract partners. Many of my interviewees complained that their endless obligations to business associates, government officials, and other members of their social networks prevented them from pursuing their own business and leisure interests. Several of them explained that successful, wealthy individuals in particular are forced to "live for others" (為別人生活) rather than for themselves. Many wished they could just give a bribe or a kickback and be done with it. But the inflationary pressures of entertaining, along with the persistent uncertainty of China's business world, have rendered the production of relationships rooted in irrational, incommensurable sentiment all the more crucial to business success. Increasing market competition has made the cultivation of *guanxi* more rather than less important.

Despite their wealth and high status, many of my informants viewed their social and financial positions as precarious. They often contrasted the informal, voluntary kin networks on which they relied with the networks of those who possessed *beijing* (背景, literally, "background"). By *beijing* they were referring to those connected to powerful individuals through kinship ties, in particular the sons and daughters of powerful officials. My informants claimed that they needed to cultivate *guanxi* precisely because they lacked *beijing*, which others they were competing against possessed. They would often complain that, despite their efforts to cultivate powerful ties, their growth was ultimately limited by those with *beijing*. Frequently they found that the alliances formed at the banquet table and in the nightclub were vulnerable to periodic anticorruption purges. Once their official patron(s) lost power and influence, their fortunes were likely to suffer as well. Lacking the durable (nonvoluntary) kin-based connections of the true elite, my informants needed to constantly maintain their networks, and sometimes they had to be rebuilt from the ground up.

Corruption, Patronage, and Masculinity

Many of the practices I observed and analyzed in my research form the basis of the broad social field described by scholarly and nonscholarly observers alike as corruption (腐敗) in China. Corruption, however, is a polysemic term that carries with it a great deal of moral baggage and thus often lacks analytical precision. The literature on corruption both within China and elsewhere is too vast to be dealt with in detail in this chapter. Instead I aim to suggest some limitations to what is arguably the most widespread characterization of corruption (and not insignificantly how it is framed by the Chinese state)—the failure of public institutions to curb the private desires of individuals. Writing about corruption in Ghana, Jennifer Hasty summarizes the limitation of this individualist approach to corruption as follows:

> This normative scholarship on corruption tends to view the practices of corruption as alienated, self-interested acts by greedy public servants poaching

> on national resources and as selfish crimes of calculated desire in the absence of public discipline. It is therefore assumed that a more pervasive public exercise of social discipline through state institutions will work to prevent corruption by stifling the selfish greed of individuals. What this corruption scholarship fails to recognize, however, is that forms of desire that fuel corruption are not merely selfish and private but profoundly social, shaped by larger sociocultural notions of power, privilege, and responsibility. (Hasty 2005, 271)

Evolving configurations of masculinity are key to understanding the "notions of power, privilege, and responsibility" that underpin many corrupt activities in China in two ways. First, as members of these networks, businessmen, state enterprise managers, government officials, and members of the underworld aspire to emulate (and are judged in terms of) a similar paternalistic "boss-patron" ideal—as both a generous dispenser of assistance and opportunities for whom all are eager to do favors, and someone who commands a large and powerful *guanxiwang* (關係網). The power and status of an elite man are measured, I would argue, above all other factors by his ability to accomplish goals, for both himself and others, through his social network. Secondly, male government officials, as high-status men, are not exempt from being measured according to the symbolic codes of elite masculinity—mistresses, imported cars, and luxury brand clothing and accessories. Thus many forms of extralegal and grey income generation should be understood as their attempts to support a lifestyle that maintains their gendered status and recognition within their broader social networks.

Furthermore, as much anthropological work done on corruption in Africa has noted, forms of official malfeasance are often grounded in local norms, ethics, and expectations from kin and other members of an official's social network (Olivier de Sardan 1999). In his essay on the moral economy of corruption in Africa, Jean-Pierre Olivier de Sardan argues that corruption is anchored in "ordinary everyday practice" and enabled by the "value systems and cultural codes, which permit a justification of corruption by those who practice it" (ibid., 25–26). Rather than viewing corruption as evidence of moral decay or a lack of ethics, he argues that the practices of corruption are "standard practices deeply rooted in more general social relationships" (ibid., 50). In other words, one person's concern for his nephew's business success might be another person's insider dealing. Or, the relationships that many of my informant-friends frame as "helping friends" or fulfilling obligations to their "brothers" would no doubt be perceived by most Chinese citizens as the highly immoral basis of corruption. This grounding of corruption in everyday ethics helps to explain why, to quote Daniel Jordan Smith's observation about corruption in Nigeria, ordinary Chinese are "paradoxically active participants in the social reproduction of corruption even as they are also its primary victims and principal critics" (2007, 5).

In his account of the history and origins of corruption in the Chinese Communist Party, Lü Xiaobo (2000) argues that the CCP failed both to establish a "modern" bureaucracy committed to formal rules and procedures and

to maintain an inspired, loyal cadre core dedicated to the goals of "continuous revolution." He shows how many CCP policies, which promoted the goals of revolution over bureaucratization, undermined the establishment of an elite culture committed to formal bureaucratic rules and norms. Instead, the insecurity and uncertainty generated by constant political campaigns led officials to seek protection in interpersonal networks, thereby undermining the bureaucratic power of the state and strengthening informal networks, a process he calls "organizational involution."

Building on Lü's (2000) historical argument, I understand corruption in the PRC today as primarily a product of these evolving informal, yet deeply powerful, networks. While there are no doubt many acts of simple theft and deception committed by self-interested individuals, corruption as a larger social phenomenon relies on the coordination and cooperation of others. In contemporary China, it is built on particularistic, gendered networks bound together by overlapping ties of affect, interest, loyalty, and mutual obligation that permeate different levels of state and society. Thus I view corruption as a product of elite networks and their moral economies—as the dominance of an informal mode of power and distribution over the legally enshrined one.

In order to better illustrate some of the points I have been arguing here, let me show how the themes of this chapter play out in the life of one individual, whom I call Mr. Wei.

Mr. Wei: A Man Straddling Many Worlds

Mr. Wei claimed to be a self-made man who had prospered through hard work and a good reputation, but he also had an excellent family background (背景). Originally from Jiangsu, his father fought in the Red Army and was later assigned to a government job in Sichuan. Mr. Wei himself became an official at a young age, working for the city construction and planning bureaus. He explained to me that during his time in the construction bureau, in order to accomplish his official tasks he had to interact and do business "with all kinds of people" including, in his words, "社會上的人," referring to people with expansive social networks that included members of the *jianghu* world. He said that he did many favors for people at the time but refused to take any money from them. In this way, he claimed, he was able to earn people's respect and gain a reputation.

Early in his career his superiors were investigated for corruption. During the investigation Mr. Wei was questioned by anticorruption investigators but refused to provide any information about his superiors. He was held in detention for several weeks. During that time he felt that his family and friends turned their backs on him, and his wife nearly divorced him. Finally, he was released from custody but stripped of his official position. Temporarily estranged from his family and former friends, he borrowed some startup capital from an underworld friend and went into business. Naturally, he chose a career closely related

to the work of the construction bureau—the demolition and relocation (拆遷) business. His act of sacrifice and loyalty to high-ranking construction bureau officials all but ensured Mr. Wei's business success.

Because of this demonstration of loyalty, Mr. Wei won the respect and trust of many powerful officials in the construction and land bureaus; these were the very people who decided which neighborhoods would be torn down to make way for new developments. He explained that this act of sacrifice demonstrated that he was a man who could be trusted, who "understood the value of *yiqi*" and the importance of relationships. In addition to hiring Mr. Wei's company to demolish old neighborhoods, local government agencies subcontracted the negotiation of compensation for displaced residents to his company, and he commanded a gang of young thugs to scare away residents who were reluctant to leave their homes. He also acted as a broker with government bureaus involved in real estate, helping his friends, both new and old, to acquire land marked for development and approval for their projects. Countless entrepreneurs courted him for his access to inside information about land auctions, zoning, and development plans.

His business grew very quickly, and he not only commanded an important position in the legitimate world of real estate, but became an underworld boss (a self-described 老大) to several younger followers, his "little brothers," who helped carry out some of the less savory aspects of his business. Mr. Wei thus had many faces. When dining with other entrepreneurs outside his circle of friends, he presented himself as a modern businessman, launching into monologues about the latest business strategies and management techniques. When alone with me or with his circle of friends he focused on his roles as the "boss" (老大) of the demolition world and paternal "big brother" (大哥) to his "little brothers" (兄弟).[6] When describing himself, he emphasized his role as a provider to many: his family, the employees of his legitimate company, and the *xiongdi* who had pledged an oath of loyalty to him. Mr. Wei characterized his relationship with his *xiongdi* as follows:

> My *xiongdi* look to me as a god. They don't have much education or good family backgrounds, so I provide for them and teach them how to achieve success in today's society. They come to me with business ideas, and I help them get started with advice and money. Sometimes they try to cheat me, but I can always see through them. They also come to me with personal problems. Sometimes they even cry in front of me. Without me they would be lost.

Shortly after I left Chengdu and returned to the US, Mr. Wei called me one morning and declared that he was already the boss (老大) of the demolition business and soon he would be the boss of the city. He had sold his year-old Toyota Crown and bought a brand new Mercedes and hired a full-time driver.

6. Some of his friends saw his underworld aspirations as somewhat juvenile. They would say that he watched too many Hong Kong gangster movies.

His real estate business was booming, and his fame and reputation had spread from Chengdu to neighboring counties. After we had updated each other on our lives, he mentioned that he was calling from the hospital. Previously, during my fieldwork, he had been hospitalized for a few weeks because of stomach problems caused by excessive drinking. He informed me that it was stomach problems again that had sent him back to the hospital. When I asked why he had endangered his health again, he explained that the several weeks of nightly entertaining (應酬) necessary to court a new group of officials in Chengdu had led to his hospitalization. I told him he needed to take better care of himself and that his health was more important than anything. It was the foundation of any other success. He replied, "I can't stop or slow down. I have many people whose livelihoods depend on me [literally "depend on me to eat," 靠我吃飯]. I've got about fifty employees and even more *xiongdi*. Their livelihoods depend on my success. I have to keep going."

On my latest trip to Chengdu in 2013, I asked him whether, now that he was becoming well-known, and given his previous experiences with anticorruption officials, he was worried about falling out of the state's favor and having his business activities investigated. Given the recent anticorruption campaign and the detention of the former mayor of Chengdu, Li Chuncheng (李春城), and several other Sichuanese officials, I asked Mr. Wei if he worried about an investigation into his business. He told me that even though he gets detained once every few months he is not at all worried. Previously he had explained to me, "The government needs people like me. I can accomplish things that the police and the government cannot do or that are not convenient for them to do." The activities to which Mr. Wei refers are the more violent aspects of China's privatization of formerly collective or state-owned land. It is the younger brothers at the bottom of the underworld organizations who are sent to scare away or inflict violence on residents who refuse to leave housing pegged for redevelopment or who protest their often paltry or skimmed compensation funds. The implied or actual threat of violence is also used to persuade residents to accept below-market prices for their housing and land rights.

The career of Mr. Wei thus illustrates two different trajectories of elite power in contemporary China: on the one hand, it illustrates the privatization of the state—the appropriation of state resources and power by non-state elites—and on the other, it demonstrates the official penetration and cooptation of informal modes of power (such as the masculine solidarity of underworld gangs). These two trajectories (both away from the almost complete state monopoly on power in the Maoist years) have not led to an increasing separation between "state" and "society" but rather have generated networks, the nodes of which extend through multiple modes of power and forms of authority. Despite the ways in which some of the practices can be interpreted as evidence of the weakness of state control, I argue that they are not inherently resistant to state power. While illegal, corrupt practices might undermine the formal laws and institutions of

the state, they do not necessarily undermine the reach and effectiveness of state governance. By cutting deals with *heishehui* bosses over seafood banquets, local governments are able to exploit the masculine solidarity of junior members of these groups to manage the underground economy and to undertake tasks that would incite public outrage if carried out explicitly by organs of the state, such as forcing evictions and quashing protests. These elite networks provide protection and opportunities for the accumulation of wealth and status for both state and non-state elites, and they are also the networks through which the state-driven goals of economic growth are achieved. While entrepreneurs and underworld leaders cultivate relationships with members of the state to obtain protection, insider access, and government privileges, state officials rely on entrepreneurs to achieve development goals that advance their careers, and they depend on unofficial incomes and deeds to support the extrabureaucratic "face" and status appropriate for a powerful official in the reform period. Elite networks are thus the social formations that organize corruption and govern its transactions through its "unwritten rules" (潛規則). In short, these networks, governed by their ideologies of mutual aid, brotherhood, and accumulation, are becoming significant institutions in their own right. They support forms of distribution that undermine official state hierarchies and organize the market economy to their advantage.

Conclusion

The tumult of twentieth-century China, from the reformist movements of the early twentieth century to the Cultural Revolution–era attacks on traditional culture, significantly weakened the ideological foundation that helped to legitimate the position of the scholar-official (才子) as the most exulted form of masculinity. In addition to hostility toward intellectuals during the peak of the Maoist period, the CCP promoted a more physically-oriented masculinity associated with the peasant and working classes. At the beginning of the reform period in the early 1980s, we see the continued celebration of a rugged, *wu* masculinity in film and literature, as many Chinese men sought to overcome perceived emasculation by both the patriarchal state and the economically dominant West (Zhong 2000). During this same period, the emerging field of business was a domain at the margins of respectability that required daring, brashness, and wits to survive. *Jianghu* ideology offered a compelling, deep-rooted cultural framework to justify their chosen path and to orient their actions and relationships. As a nonelite cultural form, *jianghu* ideology was able to persist through the cultural tumult of the Mao period in literature (both in *Sanguo Yanyi* and *Shuihu Zhuan* and later in extremely popular martial arts novels), art, and everyday practice. And the form of the voluntary brotherhood provided the ideal template for the informal networks that structured many business ventures and official-entrepreneur alliances in the PRC.

China's ever-increasing integration with the global capitalist system has only further disturbed the dominant position of the *caizi* at the pinnacle of Chinese masculinity, as the status of merchants in the guise of the global businessman and entrepreneur constantly grows. While one occasionally hears references to the ideal of the "Confucian businessman" (儒商), and Confucius (along with Mao) is being reinterpreted as a business strategist (Louie 2002, 55), this chapter argues that the decline of the *wen* scholarly mode of masculinity during the Mao and early reform periods created a space for *jianghu* ideals, once confined to the margins, to move into the mainstream as they became a key cultural resource for the business world. However, as business practice becomes increasingly normalized, the metaphors of the early reform era, when entrepreneurial activities were morally and politically suspect, have lost much of their salience. (No one "plunges into the sea" of business anymore.) The ongoing corruption crackdown initiated by Xi Jinping suggests that the informal networks of businessmen and officials forged through lavish banquets and expensive gifts may be declining in significance. Thus, the affinities between the business world and the *jianghu* world may be diminishing along with them. We are already seeing the revitalization of *wen* conceptions of masculinity that accommodate the hegemony of global capitalism through the rise of white-collar masculinity in China (see Hird, this volume). Furthermore, in the past few decades, the discourse of *suzhi* (素質, personal quality) has increasingly become the hegemonic measure of social status in the PRC. Because it is more aligned with *wen* conceptions of masculinity, those with *suzhi* are understood to possess high levels of education, manners, and taste. Rough and ready businessmen such as Mr. Wei are usually disadvantaged by this discourse and labeled *baofahu* (nouveau riche) or *tuhao* (vulgar rich). In such a context, *jianghu* ideals may lose their salience in the business world and return to their traditional place at the margins of Chinese society.

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9
The Postsocialist Working Class

Male Heroes in Jia Zhangke's Films

Sheldon Lu

Jia Zhangke's (賈樟柯) films are renowned for their portrayal of ordinary Chinese people caught up in the historic yet troubled transition of China from a socialist planned economy to a capitalist market economy. Male heroes (or antiheroes) are central characters in Jia's films. The filmic depiction of Chinese masculinity in crisis partakes of a more general description of the losses and grievances of a whole generation of people in socialist China.[1] I focus on male protagonists in Jia's films such as *Xiao Wu* (小武, a.k.a. *The Pickpocket*, 1997), *Platform* (站台, 2000), *The World* (世界, 2004), *Still Life* (三峽好人, 2006), *24 City* (二十四城記, 2008), and *A Touch of Sin* (天註定, 2013). The characters suffer the trauma of losing their loved ones (girlfriend, wife, or lover), and have difficulty entering into satisfying relationships with women due to the fundamental social and economic transformations in the period of Reform and Opening.

Jia Zhangke (b. 1970) has emerged as one of the most well-known independent art-house film directors from the People's Republic of China. His films have consistently focused on the history as well as contemporary reality of socialist China. Many of his films depict the drama and trauma of ordinary Chinese citizens in the throes of economic reforms. Jia's film aesthetics is also striking and intriguing. Sound, music, image, cinematography, editing, pacing, and storytelling are rather idiosyncratic under his direction. The interplay between fact and fiction, between documentary realism and fictional narration, is noteworthy.

In the classical socialist era (1949–76), the available role models for men were the exemplary workers, peasants, and soldiers (*gong, nong, bing* 工農兵), as well as occasionally cadres (*ganbu* 幹部), officials, and administrators. In the post-Mao era, especially since the onset of Reform and Opening, Chinese society has unleashed a multitude of heretofore unseen role models, possible careers,

1. The question of masculinity in crisis has been an important topic in the study of Chinese literature, film, and culture in the post-Mao era (Zhong 2000; Cui 2012). However, these studies do not specifically address questions of masculinity in the films of Jia Zhangke.

and subject-positions. The Chinese economy has moved away from a predominantly planned economy with national ownership to a mixture of a planned economy and a market economy with a variety of forms of ownership: national, collective, and private. Individual entrepreneurs (*getihu* 個體戶) and businessmen have appeared as new social classes. These men function, compete, and operate in a society in which the line between a legitimate business and an illegitimate transaction is often blurred. Jia Zhangke's films testify to the processes of the formation and deformation of masculinity in a new kind of socialist state—"postsocialism."[2] He is "the cinematic poet of post-socialist China" (Berry 2008, 250).

Men from the working class populate Jia's films. As mentioned above, the old socialist trio of workers, peasants, and soldiers has become less appealing in Chinese society, and there is a dearth of positive role models. Men must search for suitable new subjectivities. In Jia's films, men often borrow role models from elsewhere. They look for inspiration from the film, TV, and popular culture of Hong Kong, East Asia, and the West. For instance, the gangster type in Hong Kong cinema, as exemplified by the charismatic performance of Chow Yun-fat, has been a recurrent image in Jia's films. The diverse influences from outside the People's Republic of China have contributed to the establishment of mixed masculine models.

Xiao Wu: The Gangster Model

Xiao Wu 小武, the title character of the film *The Pickpocket*, is a pickpocket in Fenyang (汾陽), Jia Zhangke's hometown, in Shanxi (山西) Province. One of his former friends, Jin Xiaoyong (靳小勇), becomes rich through the illegal selling of cigarettes, and is coopted by the local government as a model entrepreneur. He makes a donation of RMB 30,000 to the town, and is interviewed and praised by the local television station. He is busy preparing for his wedding, and neglects to invite his ex-buddy Xiao Wu to the event. He wants to be clean and not be tainted by association with a questionable character from the past. Xiao Wu is very upset at not being invited to the event by his "friend." Lonely and sad, he wanders the streets of the city and ends up in a karaoke bar. He develops a caring relationship with a hostess at the bar, Meimei (梅梅), and helps her out when she becomes sick. Even though he usually cannot sing, in a fascinating episode set in a public bathhouse, a naked Xiao Wu unexpectedly and spontaneously begins to sing a song. He falls in love with Meimei, but toward the end of the film, Meimei is transferred to another city by her boss, and Xiao Wu is unable to find her. Xiao Wu feels the pain of losing his lover. As he is in the act of stealing someone's wallet, his cell phone rings, and it is a call from Meimei.

2. I attempt to clarify the notion of "postsocialism" (Lu, 2007), especially in the Postscript, "Answering the Question: What Is Chinese Postsocialism?" (204–10).

The ringing of the phone attracts people's attention, and Xiao Wu is arrested on the spot for pickpocketing.

The actor who plays Xiao Wu is Wang Hongwei (王宏偉), who has appeared in many of Jia's films. In this film, Wang Hongwei portrays a character who has a small physique and long hair, and wears huge glasses. Now and then, the soundtrack of the film broadcasts a famous Hong Kong action film: *The Killer* (*Diexue shuangxiong* 喋血雙雄). Xiao Wu is a pale comparison to the figure of the iconic, heroic, romantic gangster performed by Chow Yun-fat (周潤發). Chow Yun-fat's stellar performances in John Woo's (吳宇森) gangster films have been the benchmarks of masculinity in Hong Kong, pan-Chinese, and Asian popular culture. The jarring juxtaposition between sound and image, between the romantic soundtrack of *The Killer* and the lackluster appearance of the diminutive Xiao Wu in a dusty town in northern China, creates a poignant caricature of the image of the Chinese male in the Era of Reform and Opening. At the same time, the morally ambiguous male person is becoming the order of the day in a fast-changing nation where a large grey area exists between right and wrong, between legitimate work and illegitimate transaction, between law and social transgression.

Martin Scorsese was among the big-name international fans of this low-budget Chinese film. The American director is also well-known for the portrayal of gangsters and morally ambiguous characters. He claimed that *Xiao Wu* could have been one of the ten best films of the year if he had been able to help with the promotion of the film. His observations are worth quoting at length:

> Then came the Sixth Generation. I was in Rome shooting *Gangs of New York* when I received a tape of a film called *Xiao Wu* by a young director named Jia Zhangke; it was his first feature. I put it in the player one night, and from the first shot to the last, I was mesmerized. It's a simple story of a few days in the life of a pickpocket in a small northern town, around the time that his friend is getting married. The remarkable eye and ear for detail grabbed me immediately: every scene was so rich, so perfectly balanced between storytelling and documentary observation. And as a character study, and a film about a community, *Xiao Wu* is extraordinary. There is nothing sentimental about Wang Hongwei's performance or about Jia's approach to him, and somehow that makes the end of the film, where the protagonist is arrested, chained, and exposed to public ridicule, all the more devastating. This was true guerrilla filmmaking, in 16mm format, and it reminded me of the spirit in which my friends and I had begun, back in the 1960s. The fact that the picture was made underground, without a hope of actually being seen on Chinese screens, was heartbreaking. If I'd seen it in time, it certainly would have turned up on the ten-best list too. (Scorsese 2005, viii)

The big-time gangster who turned into a legitimate businessman has become a new role model for men in the post-Mao era. Failing to achieve the desired prowess and respectability, the Chinese male then struggles to survive as a petty thief and may eventually be punished by the law. The film *Xiao Wu* vividly describes this particular male trajectory in contemporary Chinese society.

Still Life: The Migrant Worker and Embodied Masculinity

Still Life (*Sanxia haoren* 三峽好人) also narrates the tale of the trauma of Chinese socialism in transition. The male protagonist Han Sanming (韓三明), a coal-miner from Shanxi Province, goes to Fengjie in the Three Gorges area to search for his lost wife, who had run away from him many years ago. He had spent RMB 3,000 and "bought" a wife for himself in Shanxi. In Fengjie, he meets an intriguing young man, a small-time gangster, who is known as "Mark." There is one striking scene consisting of a single long take and medium shot that depicts a conversation between Han Sanming and Mark.[3]

Mark's silhouette resembles that of Chow Yun-fat. When Han Sanming asks him his name, he replies, "Mark." This is a reference to "Brother Mark" ("Fa Ge" 發哥, Brother Fat). He recounts lines from Chow Yun-fat's role of Jeff in *The Killer*, directed by John Woo. "We are not suited for this modern world. We old-timers are too nostalgic." Again, there is an incongruous juxtaposition between the icon of Chinese masculinity embodied by Chow Yun-fat's film roles and a thug in present-day Fengjie. Throughout the film, the soundtrack plays a number of romantic Cantopop songs. Eventually, "Mark" is killed, and his body is found by Han Sanming under the debris of a demolished building. The influence of Hong Kong's cinema and pop culture is strongly evident in this film. There is a rich and yet ironic layering of meanings, as well as a disconnection between sound and image. Music and sound from different time-periods are mixed to produce a particular effect and feeling.

In *Still Life*, Han Sanming goes to Fengjie to look for his long-lost wife. Even when he finds her and the two meet, it is uncertain whether she will go back and live with him in the future. He is forced to return to Shanxi to earn more money in an attempt to win her back.

The issue of marriage also looms large at the end of an earlier film by Jia, *Platform* (站台, 2000), which chronicles the adventures and transformation of a performance troupe over some twenty-odd years from the beginning of the Reform Era to the end of the twentieth century. It is largely a story of thwarted ambitions and failed ventures, a "journey across the ruins of Post-Mao China" (Lin 2005). However, at the end of the film, the two protagonists—Cui Mingliang (崔明亮) (Wang Hongwei) and Yin Ruijuan (尹瑞娟) (Zhao Tao 趙濤)—marry and even have a child. After years of wandering and searching in vain, they return to their hometown in Shanxi with a sense of resignation. The ending does not convey an image of marital bliss; rather, the final impression is of the tired body and dispirited face of the male protagonist, Cui Mingliang.

The companion film to *Still Life* is Jia Zhangke's documentary *Dong* (東). "Dong" is a reference to the name of the painter, Liu Xiaodong (劉小東). The

3. For a detailed discussion of this scene, the film aesthetics of Jia Zhangke, and his generation of filmmakers more broadly, see Lu (2009; 2010).

two films were shot at the same time in Fengjie. Liu Xiaodong is a leading contemporary Chinese painter who specializes in oil paintings of human figures. He is the friend of many filmmakers of the so-called Sixth Generation, and has appeared in a number of their films. The first half of the documentary revolves around Liu Xiaodong's painting of migrant demolition workers in Three Gorges. A group of half-naked, ordinary male workers serve as the models for Liu's painting. Indeed, some of the same workers/models, including the actor playing Han Sanming, appear in both the painting and the documentary. The lean, muscular, masculine bodies of local and migrant workers are also frequently featured in *Still Life*. They are not professional actors but real workers. This realist aesthetics (with the use of mostly nonprofessional actors) adds to the realism of Jia's films. It should be emphasized that masculinity itself, in the unadorned, original bodily form of half-naked male workers, constitutes the main subject of representation in both the documentary *Dong* and the feature film *Still Life*. Shuqin Cui pinpoints this connection in Jia's films with considerable insight. She writes:

> Figures central to the painting and the film are ordinary migrant workers. Their graphic and visual configuration focuses on the physical body, specially the laboring body. These body images are the primary artistic and discursive modes for the construction of the migrant social identity. Half-naked, dark-skinned, and sweat-soaked, dirty male bodies have been a central mise-en-scene in urban China. The bodies are everywhere, but identities remain invisible. The primary workforce for China's economic development, inferior in socio-political status, this collective entity remains subject to economic exploitation and socio-cultural neglect. (Cui 2010, 189–90)

Migrant workers have been the primary laborers building China's shining façades of modernization and globalization in the decades of Reform and Opening. Yet, their voice is barely audible in Chinese society and politics. They are a disenfranchised and exploited class. Jia's films attempt to visibly represent them on the screen and lend them a voice in soundscapes. He usually avoids depicting the upper echelon of Chinese society, focusing instead on the average person. As one critic rightfully states: "the main characters of Jia's films are individuals whose walks of life are closer approximations of the Chinese 'average': all live in or are from towns of lower rank than provincial capital, none have college educations or the hope of attaining one, and none occupy the extraordinary social position of the professional artist" (Jaffee 2006, 79).

24 City: The Fate of the Socialist Worker

24 City is a film specifically about the socialist legacy. It details the history of a once proud state-owned enterprise in Chengdu and its near bankruptcy in the present day. (The title of the film possibly originates from a line of classical poetry: 二十四城芙蓉花，錦官自昔稱繁華). The Cheng Fa Group (成發集團) and

its subsidiary 420 are a military airplane factory. The group has sold its land to real estate developer China Resources Land (華潤置地 Huarun zhidi), and is relocating the factory to a suburb of Chengdu.[4] The film begins in December 2007 when the company is finalizing the land sale, and consists of a mixture of fictional narrative and documentary.

Demolition of the physical structure of old buildings and the symbolic tearing-apart of old personal stories are at the center of the film. It is in part a nostalgic look at a time when honest manual labor (*laodong* 勞動) was appreciated. In one scene, a slightly modified line from a poem by Ouyang Jianghe (歐陽江河) is directly projected onto the screen: 整個造飛機的工廠是一個巨大的眼球，勞動是其中最深的部分 (The whole airplane factory is a huge eyeball; labor is its deepest part). In contemporary China, the big shots are those individuals such as real estate developers who take over the old factory site, as if capitalism were taking over socialism. The camera focuses on the lives of model workers in the heyday of socialism and the sorry state of laid-off workers in the present. The film captures the disappearance of the socialist past along with its attendant pains and traumas. These aspects of the film are reminiscent of Wang Bing's (王兵) nine-hour-long documentary *West of the Tracks* (*Tie xi qu* 鐵西區, 1999–2001), set in Shenyang in northeast China.

This film about the everyday lives of ordinary people deploys Jia's signature long-take aesthetics. The viewer sees shots of an old factory, empty rooms, dilapidated buildings, and a scarred landscape. Such static shots often contain a pastiche of different space-times: awards and banners from the olden days of socialism hung on the walls of the factory rooms; buildings in ruins and under demolition. The multiple layering of space and time is striking in Jia Zhangke's oeuvre. It is a mixing of past, present, memory, desire, and affect. The soundtrack, songs, music, and ambient sounds include bits of different historical moments, slices of past, shattered dreams, and the forgotten past. The stylistic collage creates both fragmentation and linkage, as well as continuity and discontinuity. There is often a disconnection between sound and image.

The film incorporates static, frontal shots of ordinary workers in the factory. These shots linger on the plainness of the faces and bodies of the male workers, who at times look shy and hesitant while directly facing the camera. Such unglamorous images in fact lionize these men and transform them into "ordinary heroes." One intriguing scene relates to a worker who looks like a security officer in the factory. He rides a bike at night and examines his surroundings with a flashlight. There is a shot of the worker's flashlight as if the cinematographic image were lending an existential weight to an otherwise insignificant object. As this worker rides his bike at night, the soundtrack is the sentimental, romantic melody of the song "淺醉一生" (literally, "A Life of

4. See Hai Ren (Ren 2012) for an account of this land sale between China Resources Land and Factory 420 as well as an analysis of Jia Zhangke's film *24 City*.

Mild Intoxication") by Sally Yeh (葉倩文), which is used at the beginning of the film *The Killer* (*Diexue shuangxiong* 喋血雙雄) as Jeff (Chow Yun-fat) is about to shoot at a group of gangsters in a nightclub where Jenny (Sally Yeh) is singing this song.

> I wander around every day;
> My heart drifts each morning and each night,
> Hoping to find a companion
> So that my heart no longer drifts.
>
> ……在每一天我在流連
> 這心漂泊每朝每夜
> 多麼想找到願意相隨同伴
> 使這心莫再漂泊
>
> [My translation]

This ordinary security officer in Chengdu is juxtaposed through the film's soundtrack with the exemplum of masculinity in Hong Kong popular culture. In fact, Jia Zhangke uses the soundtrack of the same episode in *The Killer* in his earlier film *Xiao Wu* when the character Xiao Wu is plying his trade on the streets of Fenyang.

24 City consists of a series of interviews with workers at the factory. Some interviewees are real workers in the factory, while others are fictive characters portrayed by film stars such as Lü Liping (呂麗萍) and Chen Chong (also known as Joan Chen, 陳沖; star of the film *Xiao Hua* 小花, 1978). The film is a blend of fiction and documentary.

The film begins with an interview with a real worker from the plant. He Xikun (何錫昆), now a middle-aged man, was a young machinist (鉗工) at the plant some twenty years ago. He reminisces about his teacher (*shifu*) Wang Zhiren (王芝仁) at the time when he was an apprentice. The teacher taught him to be frugal, and not wasteful, when using precious factory materials. He was a model worker. During the Cultural Revolution when dangerous fighting between different factions was rampant, most workers stopped working, but he still came to the factory to work. At the end of this episode, He Xikun pays a visit to his former teacher, who has long been retired and has partially lost his memory. It is an emotional reunion between the teacher and the disciple.

Another of the interviewees is Song Weidong (宋衛東), a manager at the factory, who recounts his memories of the factory's past as well as the personal story of his first love affair. In his account, the factory was the typical product of a socialist planned economy. It was like a self-sustaining island in Chengdu. The children of the factory had little interaction with other children in Chengdu except when it came to fighting. The children from the factory attended the kindergarten, elementary school, and middle school run by the factory itself. In the summer, the factory even produced its own cold drink (*qishui* 汽水) for

its employees and their families. Because it was a state-owned enterprise (SOE), employees and their families enjoyed privileges that were not given to the locals of Sichuan Province. Being a worker in an SOE was an enviable job. Those were the good old days of socialism. Song Weidong reminisces about this part of the history of the factory with pride and nostalgia. But he recalls that things started to change after the reforms of the Deng Xiaoping era. The factory began to lose money, especially in times of peace. China was transitioning to a market economy, and the factory needed to be financially accountable. Job security and financial well-being were no longer guaranteed.

The worst blow of all came when universities and colleges were reopened and national examinations for entry into universities were reinstated in the late 1970s. Song Weidong's girlfriend gained admission to a university, whereas he stayed in the factory. Because of the social disparity between a university student and a factory employee in the new Reform Era, Song's girlfriend decided to end their relationship. This highlights the difference in social status between a mental laborer (an intellectual) and a manual laborer (a factory worker) in China's putatively egalitarian socialist state.

This was also a time when there was an influx of foreign culture and soap operas into socialist mainland China. In 1984, China Central Television imported a Japanese TV drama for the first time—*Akai Giwaku* (赤い疑惑), which was given the Chinese title *Xue Yi* (血疑). This soap opera was a huge hit in China at the time. Yamaguchi Momoe (山口百恵), who played the lead role in the TV series, became a pop icon among the Chinese audience, and the series' theme song, *Thank You Very Much* (多謝你), was a national hit in China. Chinese girls mimicked the demeanor and hairstyle of the film's teenage protagonist, Oshima Yukiko (大島幸子). Song Weidong recalls that on the day of their separation, his girlfriend wore a red scarf in the style of Yukiko. Ironically, toward the end of the interview, Song Weidong says that his wife, the current personnel files manager at the factory, is a fan of the Japanese soap opera and still watches replays of the series!

At the end of the interview with Song, the film cuts to a scene of Song playing basketball alone on a basketball court in the factory's residential area. The emotional theme song of the Japanese soap opera can be heard in the background. In this film, Song Weidong loses his girlfriend due to the social changes taking place in China at the time. A socialist SOE was no longer a safe haven for a man. He could lose his loved one, as happened to Song, at a time when China was gradually transforming into a capitalist-style market economy.

The importance of the multiple international influences on gender formation in Chinese popular culture in the late 1970s and early 1980s should not be underestimated, but it will suffice to mention one other example here. It is noteworthy that in the early years of Reform and Opening, another extremely influential masculine idol in China was also a figure from Japanese popular culture. In 1978, the Japanese film *Manhunt* (1976; original Japanese title: 君よ憤

怒の河を渉れ; Chinese translation: *Zhuibu* 追捕) was shown in China. The star of the film was Takakura Ken (高倉健), who immediately became the epitome of the tough guy (*yinghan* 硬漢) in Chinese popular culture. Chinese viewers of that generation still remember him. About thirty years later, this iconic masculine figure, although much older, starred in Zhang Yimou's film *Riding Alone for Thousands of Miles* (千里走單騎, 2005), and his die-hard Chinese fans had another chance to see their former icon.

It might be said that in Jia Zhangke's films the paradigmatic masculine figure is the factory manual laborer in the socialist Mao era. In the post-Mao, post-socialist era, this erstwhile masculine ideal has disappeared, and male characters must search for new social roles, often without success. With the disintegration of socialist models of masculinity, men take on a variety of at times dubious roles: gangsters in the style of Hong Kong action cinema, seedy entrepreneurs, petty thieves, rebellious youth, migrant workers, and so on. There is a thin line between a hero and an antihero, a legitimate male occupation and an illegitimate occupation. There is a lack of clear role models in a confusing and rapidly changing era.

I Wish I Knew: A Glimpse of a Strong Woman

Jia Zhangke's film *I Wish I Knew* (海上傳奇, 2010) is a documentary about Shanghai that was made to coincide with the World Expo in Shanghai in 2010. The hosting of the World Expo was a major event on the agenda of the Chinese government. The World Expo was like retro chic—a chance for a country that had belatedly achieved modernity to catch up with the rest of the world. The World Expo is a simulacrum of the world, in the form of miniature models of various countries around the world.

This documentary film consists of a series of interviews with real people. It offers a multiperspectival representation of Shanghai and endeavors to capture lost moments. These are memories of the socialist legacy as well as other periods of Chinese history. The socialist period was but one important moment in Shanghai's history.

Again, Jia's typical style is at work in the film: the mixing of images, ideas, and sounds from various people and different historical periods. Together these elements create a jarring impression of the disparate dreams, ambitions, emotions, and sentiments surrounding the past and present of the city. The lyricism of the film evokes a tinge of nostalgia for the lost old days of Shanghai. A horizontal panning of the landscape reveals extensive ruins, which are self-evidently environmental and physical, but could also be psychological and emotional. Jia's film as a whole testifies to the changing modes of production over a long stretch of time, the transition from industrial production in a planned economy under the socialist model to transnational production, flexible accumulation and production in the post-Fordist, postindustrial mode.

One character in particular, a female character, is noteworthy in the analysis of Chinese masculinity in the socialist era. This woman constitutes a backdrop to the portrayal of males. Huang Baomei (黃寶妹) was a confident model worker in the 1950s, and had the honor of being received by Chairman Mao. She was a worker at Shanghai No. 17 Textile Plant (上海國棉 17 廠). (Interestingly enough, a member of the Gang of Four, Wang Hongwen [王洪文], was also originally from this model factory.) Huang Baomei's personal story is one of national pride. It is the story of the socialist confiscation and transformation of old capitalist and foreign plants in the 1950s. In fact, Shanghai-based director Xie Jin (謝晉) made a film about Huang (*Huang Baomei*, 1958). In the interview in *I Wish I Knew*, she proudly recalls her trip to Europe to attend an international gathering of youth representatives from various countries. She remembers that the foreigners were impressed by how good-looking the young people from New China were, making her proud to be a Chinese woman on the world stage. Her assertiveness and confidence are a sharp contrast to the hesitancy and indecisiveness of many Chinese male characters in Jia's films.

The camera then cuts to an empty factory. The jarring discrepancy between an idealist past and an empty present is felt here and there throughout the documentary. The Huang Baomei episode transitions to an episode about workers from Changxing Shipyard Building Factory (長興造船廠). Viewers see images of modern male industrial workers. Against the images of male workers can be heard the soundtrack of a famous song from the 1970s: "We Workers Are Powerful" (咱們工人有力量). This part of the film offers a glimpse of the heyday of socialist industrialization in Shanghai, a time when men were empowered by Red ideology.

Suffice to say that Jia's film *The World* (世界 2004) richly depicts the predicament of Chinese masculinity in the era of globalization. The setting is a simulacrum of sorts: the World Park on the outskirts of Beijing. The film creates an ironic juxtaposition of a futuristic globalized world and the harsh reality of the socialist legacy. Young males with a Shanxi accent travel to Beijing in search of jobs and a better life. These migrant workers join the vast floating population in China's capital. While Beijing stands as a symbol of globalization and mobility, these earthbound male characters are trapped in the World Park and are unable to move upward on the social ladder. The "World" becomes a spatial confinement for those who lack career prospects. Their lives may even come to a tragic end, as is the case for Taisheng and his girlfriend Tao. Jia's style of cinematic realism, which employs restraint and understatement rather than high melodrama, helps to drive home his vision of the harsh reality in present-day China.[5]

5. On this point as well as the tension between global fantasy and unfulfilled hope in the film *The World*, see Jerome Silbergeld (2009).

The Pain of the Working Class in *A Touch of Sin*

In Jia Zhangke's film A *Touch of Sin* (*Tian zhuding* 天註定, 2013), male characters again occupy central positions in the narrative. The film consists of four separate tales set in different parts of China. Coal-miner Dahai (大海) takes matters into his own hands to fight corruption and redress social injustice in his village in Shanxi Province. San Er (三兒) is a filial son and loving father in his home village in Chongqing, but also lives a life of robbery and murder. Xiaohui (小輝) is a migrant worker from Hunan Province who works in a factory in Dongguan, Guangdong Province, and ultimately jumps off a building and commits suicide out of desperation. Xiao Yu (小玉), a young woman from Hubei Province, fights back against a rapist and kills him. All four stories of violence and death are based on real people and events in contemporary China. In a departure from the usual style of restraint and understatement found in Jia's previous works, this crime film describes raw emotions and stages physical violence. Desperate characters ultimately resort to extraordinary measures to fight against a dehumanizing world. This film is a reflection of the escalating tensions and social problems in contemporary China. The major characters in the film are people from the working class, or the underprivileged class. They speak a medley of Chinese dialects: Shanxi, Chongqing, Hunan, Hubei, and Cantonese dialects. In this way, this particular *huayu* (Chinese-language) film speaks to the plight and living conditions of all working-class Chinese people regardless of where they are.

The English title of this film is *A Touch of Sin*, which evokes King Hu's film, *A Touch of Zen* (*Xia nü* 俠女, 1971). Here, Jia Zhangke pays homage to the martial arts films of Hong Kong directors King Hu and Chang Che. When times are so bad and the authorities are undependable, people must take matters into their own hands. There seems to be a call for the return of the spirit of chivalry in *jianghu*, which is an arena outside law and civil society. Male and female characters in the film are like modern knights-errant who right wrongs and combat evils. In such instances, these Chinese male heroes possess the spirit of courageous, strong-willed warriors (*wu*),[6] and yet they cannot properly vent their outrage and indignation through legitimate social channels. They must act like ancient martial arts heroes who operate outside the law and the government, as reenacted again and again in Hong Kong martial arts films. These "criminal" male characters meet a tragic fate as they are driven into a dead end by a ruthless

6. The dichotomy between *wu* (warrior) and *wen* (scholar) as the twin embodiments of Chinese masculinity is discussed in Kam Louie's groundbreaking work *Theorising Chinese Masculinity: Society and Gender in China* (2002). Louie updates his theory of Chinese masculinities in a broader context in his new book *Chinese Masculinities in a Globalizing World* (2015). The *wu* paradigm seems to be the more relevant to the working-class male characters in *A Touch of Sin* as well as other films by Jia Zhangke.

world. The staging of Chinese masculinity in *A Touch of Sin* vividly represents the crisis of Chinese society as a whole in the early twenty-first century.

The richness and complexity of Jia's portrayal of men in contemporary society is facilitated by unique film aesthetics, a hybrid form of sound and image aesthetics. Shuqin Cui perceptively points out this aspect of Jia's films:

> Trends from Mao's mass culture to contemporary pop genres provide temporal illustrations of the shifting social scene. Pop forms such as music, songs, KTV, media, fashion, and hairstyle all function as indices of sociocultural change. A single performance brings the audience back to Mao's era, and a multi-sound installation suggests the confluence and divergence of the local and the global. As the long take rejects the audience's engagement, the soundtrack becomes the primary mode for comprehension. It is through this pop and multi-installed soundtrack that the audience experiences deeply the feeling of anxiety and uncertainty about a society running headlong towards an ambiguous destination. (Cui 2010, 176–77)

As such, the male character is an overdetermined being that embodies the contradictions, hopes, frustrations, and anxiety of people in the historical transformation of Chinese socialism. He is befuddled by an array of models and ideals of masculinity: the old-style socialist worker, the gangster in Hong Kong popular culture, and the capitalist ideology of individual entrepreneurship. He may fail to live up to any of these new models and end up being a petty thief or an unlucky migrant worker. It might not be feasible to judge whether a male character is a macho hero or a pathetic weakling in Jia's films. Each male character is an ordinary hero of some sort because he carries the burden of gender formation and enacts the multifaceted nature of life in postsocialist China.

Chinese masculinity has undergone tremendous changes in modern times. Jia's films are an exploration of such profound transformations. The time-honored, traditional masculine dichotomy of *wen-wu* (intellectual-warrior) is inevitably evolving in postsocialist China. The old masculine images and ideals from the Chinese tradition are no longer the sole cultural and spiritual resources men use to deal with reality. Myriad influences from the pan-Chinese world, East Asia, and other places have all played a role in shaping masculinity in contemporary China.

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10
The Chinese Father

Masculinity, Conjugal Love, and Parental Involvement

Xuan Li and William Jankowiak

China's "traditional" family dynamics have faced a series of major challenges since the beginning of the twentieth century.[1] The relentless progression of social and political movements, from the New Culture Movement (*Xin Wenhua Yundong* 新文化運動) in the mid-1910s to the implementation of the Reform and Open policy (*Gaige Kaifang* 改革開放) since the late 1970s, had a profound and long-lasting impact on individual consciousness as well as social relationships. Chinese who were born and raised in the twentieth century, having grown up with colonization, communist campaigns and continuous social reorganization, learned to doubt their cultural traditions and to welcome new thoughts and esoteric behaviors. In recent decades, China's intensely competitive economy has provided increasing opportunities for profitable employment, adventure, and self-development for middle-aged and younger generations. In the process, many long-standing social norms—both traditional values and those that had emerged with the socialist system—are being questioned, challenged, and tacitly revised at an accelerating rate.

China's drastic social transformation has contributed to, among other changes in the private sphere, the reconceptualization of gender expectations and preferred practices in family life. The shift in gender roles and contextual expectations can readily be found in domains such as dating, marriage, and parenting. China's ongoing cultural transformation is especially salient to the way in which urban men are reimagining and redefining the meaning of masculinity and its relation to individual behavior and family roles. Specifically, both China's neoliberal policies and its market-driven reforms have provided the affective foundation that has come to validate many changes in Chinese family relationships.

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In this chapter, we will focus on the way in which contemporary Chinese men (re)negotiate the meanings and emergent norms that apply to being a good parent. On the basis of a brief review of the *wen-wu* (文／武) conceptualization of Chinese masculinity and of the recent history of Chinese fatherhood, we will first argue that China's newly competitive economy accounts, at least in part, for the emergence of a new image of masculinity that is organized around the hybridity of the traditional *wen* (文) and *wu* (武) dimensions, with increased emphasis on the self-confidence, politeness, and cool demeanor of males. We will then explore how the value placed on self-expression and parent-child intimacy has modified men's behavior from aloof and detached toward a new willingness to form emotional bonds with their only child. We will further propose that Chinese fathers' desire to be more closely involved with and form a loving relationship with their singleton children can be attributed to a combination of direct influences from ongoing socioeconomic changes and the greater spousal expectations in terms of marital life and family care work. It is the combined force of these intrafamilial and societal influences that has made fatherhood in contemporary China an integral part of the new Chinese masculinity.

Chinese Masculinity as Manifested in the *Wen-Wu* Model

Kam Louie and Louise Edwards (1994), in exploring classical Chinese literature, found a core recurrent theme: men were conceptualized as being either oriented toward a reflective and scholarly (*wen* 文) life posture or a more physical, assertive and thus action-oriented (*wu* 武) stance (Louie and Edwards 1994; Louie 2000; 2002). These two images are, at least superficially, polar opposites: the *wen* image idealizes the literary scholar and values studious endeavor, mastery of classical knowledge, and attributes of gentility that include kindness and moral guidance, whereas the *wu* image highlights an action-oriented man who has physical strength, engages in bold action, and is forceful when necessary. This typology, however, should not be viewed simplistically as an "either/or" relationship between two absolute opposites. Rather, both versions of Chinese maleness share some common features, at the core of which lie a reserved attitude toward the expression of emotions and an emphasis on self-control.

In every historical era, both the *wen* and *wu* personas can be found, although different historical eras tend to value and highlight one over the other. It is noteworthy, however, that the *wen* type is more often endorsed as the ultimate ideal, whereas the *wu* image has served as a default category for men who are unable to achieve the scholarly ideal, and is thus often embraced by working-class men, long-time bachelors, and bandits (Hinsch 2013; Watson 1988). For instance, historians (Song 2004; Louie 1991; van Gulik 1974) have suggested that the Han elite of the late Ming dynasty adopted a frail, scholarly (*wen*) male identity (Louie 2002, 19) so as to tacitly reject the embrace of martial (*wu*) masculinity by the Manchu rulers. The Han elite cultivated the genteel, unthreatening masculine image to

continue to secure critical administrative positions in the Manchu imperial court (Louie 2002, 19). Despite the continued coexistence of both personas, this preference has crystalized, and was shaken neither by the collapse of Imperial China in 1911 (which deprived the literati class of its social privilege) nor by the official hostility toward the educated classes under Mao's government (Kipnis 2013).

The advent of modernity, through its political, economic, and moral manifestations, considerably enriched the two-dimensional masculinity norms. After China was forced into the global market in the late nineteenth century, new variations of masculine personas emerged, such as the model workers in the early socialist years, the networking businessmen who appeared with the economic reforms, and the stay-at-home Internet geeks and karaoke-singing club goers among the post-80s and post-90s generations (Song and Hird 2014). Wherever the traditional *wen* and *wu* typology still holds, these behavioral models are increasingly hybridized, with adroit shifts between the two depending on the context: while male traits that are traditionally deemed as *wu* such as boldness and bravery are gaining recognition in the public arena such as in business competition, traditional *wen* traits such as softness and emotional sensitivity, together with the imported ideal of self-expression, are highly sought after in the private sphere during men's interaction with their spouses and children, especially among the professional class. Consequently, Chinese masculinities are now constructed with an increasing appreciation of a new synthesis that embraces a blend of *wen* and *wu*, with the context-appropriate display of confidence, assertiveness, coolness, gentility, and warmth (Jankowiak and Li 2014).

Chinese Parenthood in Transition

Among the various aspects of personal life (such as family, friendship, intrapersonal cultivation, and so on), we find that the transformation of the urban image of masculinity can be best understood in the context of the family. In the new cultural milieu of reformed China, the family is gradually being reorganized away from a totalizing instrumental institution centering on ancestral lineage into a conjugal-based collective in which constant effort is needed to cultivate and reaffirm interpersonal bonds. Jankowiak and Li (2014; forthcoming) have discussed the increased affective expression demanded in marriages and romantic relationships in contemporary China, for instance. Consistently, everyday parent-child encounters are now inclined toward an emotionally charged interactive style, rather than the acting out of rigid formalities defined by preassigned hierarchical roles.

The increased value placed on the cultivation of emotional development also arises, at least in part, from the pragmatic realization that it is more beneficial, in reform-era China, to raise an emotionally secure and autonomous child than an unreflective or suppressed conformist. Parents, through various media outlets, have been found to believe that a professionally competitive, high-quality (*gao*

suzhi 高素質) child can only emerge when fathers and mothers are skilled in parental love and generous in granting warmth and autonomy. Consequently, contemporary Chinese parents have been widely observed to consciously take the opportunity for day-to-day parent-child interactions to promote their children's self-esteem and independence. Urban parents, in particular, fervently seek to raise children who are—as well as being obedient and respectful—happy, healthy, independent, and self-confident, and thus have the potential to become high-achieving (*youxiu* 優秀), emotionally well-adjusted, and considerate individuals (Lu and Chang 2013; Naftali 2009; Way et al. 2013; Xu 2014). Despite the lingering contradictions in parenting values and a lack of cultural consensus on concrete childrearing strategies (Fong 2007; Jankowiak 2011), it is generally agreed that nurturing parents—regardless of their gender—are essential for the development of a psychologically healthy child. In today's China, as in many parts of the developed world where a "psychologized" discourse of child development prevails, it is no longer sufficient for parents to be just financial providers and disciplinarians: fathers and mothers are now required to take on a wide range of other roles including the child's teacher, playmate, counselor, and friend (Li and Lamb 2013; Naftali 2014; Short et al. 2001).

The Chinese Father: Integration of Involved Fatherhood and the Masculine Ideal

The shift in parenthood ideals toward close involvement and a warm, emotionally explicit parenting style converges with the hybrid, context-dependent manifestation of Chinese masculinities. These two changes both require contemporary Chinese men to act as loving, nurturing parents toward their children, and stand in stark contrast to the fathering ideals of previous generations. For much of Chinese history, Han Chinese men accepted fatherhood as an indispensable part of the default life path of a male (Greenhalgh 2015). Childbearing, which extends the family lineage and (potentially) family glory, was at the heart of one's filial duties, as preached in Confucian classics and folk proverbs, including the widely misinterpreted quote from Mencius (*bu xiao you san, wu hou wei da* 不孝有三無後為大, often literally yet incorrectly understood as "There are three things which are unfilial, and to have no posterity is the greatest of them"). These doctrines and folk beliefs, however, taught Chinese men about fathering more as an abstract collection of duties, especially in terms of their role as provider (Levy 1968, 169), than by offering them practical parenting advice.

The traditional Chinese male attitude toward children was supported by the concept of filial piety, which encouraged overall benevolence (*ci* 慈) from the father to the child, and, with a stronger emphasis, demanded obedience, respect, and loyalty from the child toward the father (*xiao* 孝) (de Groot 1882–1910; Freeman 1965). As a counterpoint to the role of mothers, the goal of fathering was not to develop a warm, emotionally charged parent-child relationship, but

to discipline, instruct, and provide a role model for children in order to raise them to be responsible and ethical people (Fei 1935; Fung 1999; Ho 1987; Solomon 1971; Wolf 1972). In practice, active engagement in actual childcare or having warm, nurturing interaction with their children was not considered part of manhood; rather, traditional Chinese fathers believed that they should *not* encourage or tolerate emotional indulgence. In effect, they strove to be a father (*fuqin* 父親) rather than a daddy (*baba* 爸爸).

The expectation for fathers to be the stern disciplinarian did not mean that traditional Chinese fathers were without compassion or love for their children. Most Chinese fathers, in fact, felt a warm, deep sentiment toward their children (Solomon 1971; Li 1969; Hsiung 2005). The articulation of that sentiment, however, was constrained by the conventional "strict father" persona, which placed restrictions on men expressing their parental love—for the greater good of the child, for the maintenance of appropriate social order, and to uphold a proper male posture (Levy 1968; Solomon 1971; Wolf, 1970). When examined through the lens of the *wen-wu* model, one can say that the father was expected to adopt a genteel or *wen* persona that maintained a deep concern for his offspring but conveyed both a detachment from everyday childcare and emotional reservation.

The caring yet reserved image of a traditional Chinese father was masterfully captured by writer Zhu Ziqing (朱自清) in his famous prose *The Sight of Father's Back* (背影), in which he depicted a scene where his father saw him off at the railway station as they parted after a brief meeting:

> Getting on the train with me, he picked me a seat close to the carriage door. I put down the brownish fur-lined overcoat he had tailor-made for me. He told me to be watchful on the way and be careful not to catch cold at night. He also asked the train attendants to take good care of me.
>
> . . . I said. "Dad, you might leave now." But he looked out of the window and said, "I'm going to buy you some tangerines. You just stay here. Don't move around." I caught sight of several vendors waiting for customers outside the railings beyond a platform. But to reach that platform would require crossing the railway track and doing some climbing up and down. That would be a strenuous job for father, who was fat. I wanted to do all that myself, but he stopped me, so I could do nothing but let him go. I watched him hobble toward the railway track in his black skullcap, black cloth mandarin jacket and dark blue cotton-padded cloth-lined gown. He had little trouble climbing down the railway track, but it was a lot more difficult for him to climb up that platform after crossing the track. His hands held onto the upper part of the platform, his legs huddled up and his corpulent body tipped slightly toward the left, obviously making an enormous effort . . . The next moment when I looked out of the window again, father was already on the way back, holding bright red tangerines in both hands . . . After boarding the train with me, he put all the tangerines on my overcoat, and patting the dirt off his clothes, he looked somewhat relieved and said after a while, "I must go now. Don't forget to write me from Beijing!" I gazed after his back retreating out of the carriage. After a few steps, he looked back at me and said, "Go back to your seat. Don't leave your things alone." Watching

him blending in the crowd and disappearing, my eyes were again filled with tears. (Zhu 1925[2007], 50–54)

他給我揀定了靠車門的一張椅子；我將他給我做的紫毛大衣鋪好坐位。他囑我路上小心，夜裡要警醒些，不要受涼。又囑托茶房好好照應我。……我說道：「爸爸，你走吧。」他往車外看了看，說，「我買幾個橘子去。你就在此地，不要動。」我看那邊月臺的柵欄外有幾個賣東西的等著顧客。走到那邊月臺，須穿過鐵道，須跳下去又爬上去。父親是一個胖子，走過去自然要費事些。我本來要去的，他不肯，只好讓他去。我看見他戴著黑布小帽，穿著黑布大馬褂，深青布棉袍，蹣跚地走到鐵道邊，慢慢探身下去，尚不大難。可是他穿過鐵道，要爬上那邊月臺，就不容易了。他用兩手攀著上面，兩腳再向上縮；他肥胖的身子向左微傾，顯出努力的樣子。……我再向外看時，他已抱了朱紅的橘子往回走了。……他和我走到車上，將橘子一股腦兒放在我的皮大衣上。於是撲撲衣上的泥土，心裡很輕鬆似的，過一會說：「我走了，到那邊來信！」我望著他走出去。他走了幾步，回過頭看見我，說：「進去吧，裏邊沒人。」等他的背影混入來來往往的人裡，再找不著了，我便進來坐下，我的眼淚又來了。

Zhu's narration accurately captures the nuanced tension between the apparent devotion and concern of a father toward his (albeit adult) child, as seen in the father's meticulous caregiving acts, and his awkwardness and ineptness in verbally expressing his paternal affection, as seen in the absence of any explicit display of love apart from a few instrumental verbal exchanges. This prose, through a realistic portrayal of Zhu's own father, was thought to have captured the essence of a typical traditional Chinese father whose warmth and nurturance are hidden behind a quiet, restrained masculine face.

It is worth noting that there is a gender bias in the way traditional Chinese fathers treat their sons and daughters. Different interaction styles with boys and girls in Chinese families have been well documented, and are often ascribed to the agrarian origin of Chinese civilization, which favors male heirs because of their greater potential to provide labor for the family and be economic assets (Li and Lamb 2013; Lu and Chang 2013; Strom, Strom, and Xie 1995). While enjoying privilege, however, sons in Chinese families—in which paternal concern and strictness are often synonyms—are subject to greater control, harsher treatment, and less overt affection as a reflection of the higher standards their fathers aspire for them to reach, and the socially desirable gender role they are expected to follow. In contrast to the aloof attitude toward sons, fathers, especially those in well-educated social classes with enough resources for both sons and daughters, preferred to adopt a more emotionally involved relationship with their daughters, and therefore treated them with more lenience, indulgence, and tenderness (Lu 2010; Zhang 2007).

Apart from being gender-sensitive, Chinese fathers adjusted their parenting style according to their child's age. Many scholars have noted the stark contrast in the affective climate of parent-child interactions in Chinese families before

and after the child reaches "the age of reason" (*dongshi* 懂事) (Chuang and Su 2009; Jankowiak 1992; Putnick et al. 2012; Wolf 1970). Although there is no exact cut-off point, it is generally believed that the transition takes place at around the time the child starts school (approximately six years of age) (Fung 1999; Ho 1989). At the preschool stage, fathers have less contact with their children, and are likely to be fairly tolerant when they do engage with them. As children grow older, however, fathers begin to assume the role of strict teacher and disciplinarian and are expected to demonstrate a marked shift from their early leniency to greater harshness (Chuang and Su 2009; Wang and Chang 2009).

The collapse of the Qing dynasty saw China's larger cities engaged in social and cultural transformation, at least among the elites. By the 1920s urban intellectuals challenged conventional beliefs about the motives for marriage and childbearing, as well as the behavioral norms of coupledom and parenthood. The orthodox ideal of proper masculinity organized around a posture of aloof lover and parent was deemed to be a relic of the feudal age and openly criticized by writers and social activists. Lu Xun (魯迅), who had vehemently advocated for a revolution in the parent-child relationship in his early essay, "How We Should Father Now" (*Women xianzai zenyang zuo fuqin* 我們現在怎樣做父親), responded to a friend's concern about his "doting" nonauthoritarian parenting style with a poem:

> Does a true hero have to be heartless? 無情未必真豪傑
> Surely a real man may love his young son. 憐子如何不丈夫
> Even the roaring, wind-raising tiger, 知否興風狂嘯者
> Turns back to look at his own tiny cubs. 回眸時看小於菟
>
> ("A Riposte to a Friend" 答客誚, *Lu Xun: Selected Poems*, 1932, translated by W. F. F. Jenner)

Feng Zikai (豐子愷, 1898–1975), the pioneer painter and artist, also pictured his own children in a loving fashion in numerous works, and openly wrote about their engaging everyday behavior. Olga Lang's (1946) research found that most professional Shanghai families had already embraced a more affectionate ethos, whereby males were more "daddies" than stern fathers. The gender transformation away from the more formal spousal and parenting posture to a new style of family life organized around duty and affection can thus find its origins prior to 1949, and was in a way continued (albeit in a politically charged manner) and expanded by later revolutions.

China's fast-advancing market economy and ongoing rapid cultural change is an intensification of twentieth-century social patterns that complement the culturally prescribed paternal roles characterized by closer involvement in child-rearing and more overt expression of parental warmth. While the start of men's gradual emotional reorientation predated the 1980s (Jankowiak 1993), the state-sanctioned urging for men to become more involved parents, especially to their

young children, voiced through various media outlets during the mid-1990s, dramatically accelerated the process (Naftali 2009).

Equally influential as and perhaps more immediately effective than state-sponsored publicity campaigns, however, has been the wife's influence over her husband's behavior. It has been extensively documented in fatherhood research worldwide that men's involvement in childcare is sensitive to their female partners' gender attitudes and feedback (Cowan and Cowan 1987; Hawkins et al. 2008). The vast majority of the new generation's Chinese women, often raised as singletons themselves, expect their husbands to assist them with childcare, voice such wishes during the dating/courtship period, and advocate for this once the child arrives. During our interviews with dating or recently married couples, urban Chinese women overwhelmingly acknowledged that they expected their (future) husbands to help with early childrearing. Remarkably, the men themselves also expect to become involved, possibly because of an inclination to respect their wives' expectations and value their feedback, as well as a readiness to make an effort to please them in order to maintain an emotionally intimate marital relationship. We suspect that Chinese men's eagerness to be involved in childcare tasks, especially when their children are in early infancy and toddlerhood—phases when childcare is the most tedious and seemingly unrewarding—is driven at least in part by the desire to support and please their wives, who are in turn likely to reward them with verbal approval or physical affection in recognition and acknowledgment of their continued efforts in marital courtship. In time, however, men may develop a deeper attachment to their only child and become involved for no other reason than that they find it fulfilling.

Chinese men's earlier childcare involvement, intertwined with changes in their perception and performance in relation to other family bonds (such as the marital relationship), may have a tacit impact on their overall sense of what it means to be a man. First of all, the performance of familial tasks that were previously deemed feminine and thus "unmanly" is now highly valued. Chinese masculinity, reevaluated and redefined, is now compatible with, in addition to the traditional *wen* traits, involvement in childcare and parent-child intimacy. The fear of being stigmatized as "feminine" persists, as for 1980s Japanese men (Ishii-Kuntz 2012), and there is at times still an element of ridicule, as experienced by Shanghai men who shoulder an above average share of housework (Xu and O'Brien 2014). With time, though, this concern is fading, and is likely to be overtaken eventually by larger social forces that are reshaping family relationships and with them the standards of appropriate and inappropriate behavior for males and females. Secondly, paternal involvement, while itself a by-product of men's efforts to be more intimate and affectionate spouses, feeds back into such endeavors by adding greater calmness, patience, expressiveness, and gentility (*wen* traits) to the ideal masculine repertoire. Anthropological studies of African populations found that if boys were assigned childcare duties they were

perceived to be less aggressive and more nurturing than their counterparts who were not involved in childcare (Ember 1970). We suspect that active engagement in childcare might have a similar impact on Chinese men's behavior.

Empirical Evidence: From Aloof Disciplinarian to Nurturing Co-parent

The shift in fathering culture from the responsible yet aloof father (*fuqin*) to the highly involved, affectionate daddy (*baba*) can be supported by an abundance of interview and observational data with Hohhotian and Nanjing families. First of all, remarks from fathers, mothers, and children indicated that Chinese fathers are now departing from the traditional posture of someone who fulfills paternal responsibilities in the background and becoming more present in the forefront of daily childcare, often contributing to the child's educational development. For instance, one Nanjing father with a daughter in the fifth grade revealed: "When I am away for even one day I worry about my daughter doing her homework." In fact, most of the fathers we interviewed insisted that they participated, albeit sometimes indirectly, in their child's educational development by taking them to the museum or to a special exhibition, or, if in no other way, by simply accompanying them to and from school or sitting with them as they did their homework. The new ideal also includes arranging and leading the child's leisure activities, such as taking the child on walks in the park or accompanying them outside for evening chats with neighbors in the apartment courtyard. Fathers readily join their spouses as co-parents to raise their only children. One mother living in rural Nanjing told the researchers that she and her husband "spend almost all the time together after our child comes home. It is always like this. We basically center our lives around the child—of course we cannot leave her alone in the home while we have fun. That would never happen." While acknowledging that she had to leave her husband alone with the child sometimes for practical reasons ("When her father is off work he takes her to school, then back home. Because he is a teacher, she follows her dad to school and back."), she added: "When it comes to leisure activities we both take her out." Some even became worried that such involvement might be excessive. One 24-year-old woman expressed her concern, for instance, that "Chinese fathers always worry about their kids too much, they are afraid the kids will get hurt. So it leads to Chinese kids not being able to develop a sense of independence so easily."

Remarkably, Chinese fathers are becoming less selective about their involvement in the care of younger children. The preference for interaction with older children clearly persists, but to a lesser extent: while Jankowiak's 1980s observation in Hohhot suggested that Chinese fathers of previous generations hardly started to perform childcare tasks before their child reached three years of age, in his more recent trips, he found that Inner Mongolian urban fathers interacted with equal frequency with both younger and older children. During his

observations of Hohhotian parents and children in public parks, for example, 306 of the 608 (50 percent) fathers he witnessed interacted with their children who were under three years of age, whereas 301 fathers did so with their children who were between three and six years of age. In 2014, Jankowiak witnessed a large number of—mostly middle-class—Beijing professional fathers holding infants (2–6 months old), a rather uncommon sight in the 1980s. These findings corroborate Li's interview results with Nanjing parents as well as those of a recent Beijing study, which used time diaries to document interactions mothers and fathers had with their toddlers. It was found that Beijing fathers were available for their toddlers on average 3 hours and 31 minutes a day and spent 1 hour and 56 minutes a day in direct interaction with their babies (i.e., playing with and caring for the child) (Chuang and Su 2009, 18). Furthermore, Jianfeng Zhu's (2008) unpublished study of Beijing families found that Beijing fathers' participation in their future child's development started with fetal education (*taijiao* 胎教) (i.e., interaction with the fetus such as talking and playing music). This new behavioral pattern suggests that Chinese fathers are more involved, and at an earlier stage, than their predecessors.

In addition to increased assistance with childcare and companionship, Chinese fathers are transforming their parenting persona from the stern authority figure who is ever ready to discipline and criticize toward a behavioral style anchored in warmth and expressed affection. This change has been elaborated in Qiong Xu and Margaret O'Brien's (2014) study on Shanghai father-daughter dyads, and is clearly visible in both Li's and Jankowiak's samples. One mother recalled that whenever her "daughter makes a mistake on the exam because of sloppiness her father would not become emotional but calmly instruct her"; another mother responded, in agreement, that "when it comes to learning time he would help her (the daughter). He would never shout at her." Many other mothers concurred that their husbands now willingly and deliberately played the "nicer," more lenient parent, contradicting the "strict father, warm mother" (*yanfu cimu* 嚴父慈母) model. Many fathers not only restrain themselves from harshness but also actively display their fatherly love, especially through physical intimacy, to form a closer and more affectionate emotional connection with their children. One primary-school girl disclosed to the researcher that "[n]o matter what happens I can go to him and he can tutor me on schoolwork. He would allow me to sit close to him, let me sit on his lap, make something. He is not happy with one kiss. He wants three (laughs)." Several fathers cheerfully reported that they often tickle, hug or kiss their children—both sons and daughters—"sometimes in such a way that others would find ridiculous," according to a 48-year-old urban father. One mother from urban Nanjing acknowledged that her husband and child often played games together and "[my daughter] would often sleep while standing on his shoulders, with her eyes closed." Another recalled that her husband greatly enjoyed rough-and-tumble play with their daughter: "He would kiss her bottom, or hug her. He would shove her with his arms then carry her

to play and then go crazy." Jankowiak, too, found that physical contact (in the form of hand-holding or shoulder-patting, for instance) existed in 98 of 149 cases (66 percent) where fathers and children walked together in the park, in stark contrast to the overall impression that China is a noncontact culture. Fathers seem to be more demonstrative toward their daughters than their sons: observations found Hohhotian fathers had physical contact with their sons in 14 of 30 observed instances (47 percent), whereas they had physical contact with their daughters in 22 of 30 observed instances (73 percent).

Although many parents, fathers and mothers alike, admitted that great displays of father-child intimacy were something of a luxury in the busy course of family life, the vast majority of Chinese fathers, at least in theory, had a strong desire to "try to be [their] kids' friends," in the words of one 24-year-old interviewee. Many fathers found it a rewarding goal to become their children's best friend, and several reported that they had taken the initiative to communicate and bond with their children, partly out of a fear that they would forever lose the chance to do so once the child entered adolescence and started to rebel. This improved father-child closeness is reflected in the description of a 10-year-old Nanjing girl, who said that her father was her "safe haven." One Nanjing father proudly noted: "My child trusts me a lot . . . she trusts me and behaves just like a friend." Reports from the mothers resonated with their husbands' self-reports. Several mothers recalled that their children keep asking "when will daddy come home?" when their husbands stay at work late to put in extra hours or are away on business trips, and some found it amusing when their children told them that they would like to "sleep with daddy tonight."

Chinese women readily recognized and appreciated their husbands' monetary and managerial contributions to childrearing. While it is true that some Chinese mothers perform as many childcare chores as possible to alleviate the burden on their husbands, others demand a more egalitarian division of labor; some prefer that their husbands play the "bad cop," at least from time to time, while others hope that their husbands will be less harsh toward their children. However, Chinese mothers almost unanimously prefer the new fatherhood ideal, which combines the traditional *wen* traits with affective expressiveness, to the traditional aloof male parenting stance. For example, one 37-year-old Chinese woman was upset by the fact that her husband "never helps around the house and is completely indifferent to his only child." A Nanjing mother admitted, not without anger and dismay, that her husband "never asks the child what he did at school," while another mother was saddened by the fact that "when it comes to play time [my husband] pays little attention to the child," and had come to the disappointing conclusion that "[i]t seems to me that he seldom cares about the child." These remarks indicate that while the nurturing father ideal is yet to be widely adopted in terms of actual conduct, Chinese parents, and mothers in particular, feel comfortable about integrating the "daddy" role into their perception of manhood.

The preference for a closer, more emotionally intimate father-child relationship as the new parenting ideal, however, is yet to be fully embraced by all Chinese men. Interviews and observations of numerous Chinese parents suggested that the fundamental aspects of being a mature Chinese male—competent and in control of the self, effective family provider, and source of the family's moral authority—have not entirely disappeared from the fatherhood ideal. While Chinese fathers are actively devoted to the development of their children, the degree of acceptance of the new "warm father" model varies greatly, resulting in differing emphases on financial investment and emotional involvement. The aloof parenting style is more likely to linger among rural migrants and wealthy non-college-educated urbanities. The latter, in particular, often choose to prioritize their career and fulfill their parental responsibilities through financial provision for their family through their business success (Osburg 2013). On the other hand, some working-class men with low incomes compensate for their lower financial contribution with high emotional involvement. At the same time, numerous professional middle-class men strive to blend work and family together, contributing to their children's lives through both high financial investment and high emotional involvement. Further evidence of a shift in childrearing trends is evident in a sociological survey of Shanghai residents, which found a strong relationship between the degree of education and greater father-child interaction that overrides the effect of time availability. Shanghai fathers with college diplomas or higher degrees, while working longer hours than their counterparts with less education, still spend significantly more time interacting with their children (Xu and Zhang 2007). These emergent urban behavioral patterns, and their covariation with family socioeconomic background, were also found in Li's survey of Nanjing parents and children, who consistently indicated that the father's level of educational attainment was a strong predictor of the level of his involvement.

Not only the quantity of the father's involvement in contemporary Chinese families, but also the quality of father-child interaction, is stratified, in part, according to the father's educational background. Li's interviews revealed that the father's educational background is positively correlated with their verbal display of paternal love and overall expression of affection toward their children. While middle-class Nanjing fathers and mothers invariably insisted that the father should be approachable (if not supportive, encouraging, and affectionate) to the child, fathers with less than senior secondary education (beyond the nine-year compulsory primary school and junior high school courses) often complained, for instance, that they were not sufficiently equipped with the vocabulary to communicate with their children and thereby assumed a kind, intimate parenting persona. "My husband does not have high *suzhi* and does not know how to reason with the child when he makes a mistake," according to one Nanjing mother of a 10-year-old son. A 45-year-old, highly involved father with an 11-year-old daughter told Li, with regret, that he can sometimes be quick

tempered and use "uncivil" words with his daughter because he "has not done a lot of school and spend[s] all the time at work with construction workers." These fathers have to resort to means other than verbal display to convey their parental love, often in a similar manner to Zhu Ziqing's father. One mother of a 9-year-old son told Li about her "doting" husband, who "would not say a word and just run to the store" whenever their son asked for something, be it a snack, a book, or stationery. Some rural fathers with less than nine years of education simply rejected the tender, expressive father image. "What's there to say?" commented a bricklayer with an 8-year-old daughter. "As for the kids, it's enough to make sure they have enough to eat and wear."

Although Chinese children are frequently taught about the unspoken sacrifices their fathers make for them on a daily basis, and many are indeed aware of the loving acts their fathers perform in seemingly trivial day-to-day interactions, Chinese children show a clear preference for the warm, affectionate fathering style. One 11-year-old Nanjing girl, after commenting on how she had benefited from her father's strict discipline, said: "Yes, I heard the teacher saying that 'Strictness is love and sloppiness is harm'(*yan shi ai, song shi hai*, 嚴是愛, 鬆是害). But I think it should be the other way around!" Among Jankowiak's informants, too, there appears to be a positive correlation between the father's warmth and expressed affection and the degree of intimacy a child felt toward their father. Adult daughters who had close father-child relationships readily recounted the pleasant conversations they had had with their father. One 27-year-old female, who fondly recalled her father talking to her about life and her future plans, remembered that: "He was always so encouraging and supportive of my plans." Another, a 16-year-old university student who had good memories of her relationship with her father, admitted that one of the reasons she wanted to pursue her studies in Europe was to achieve her father's life goal, which had been disrupted by the Cultural Revolution. A 28-year-old female fondly remembered how she would run to her father for emotional support every time her mother criticized her: "My father gave me a hug and I smiled and ran back to my mother." She added that she had appreciated her father's kind words of support and had often had enjoyable talks with him.

On the other hand, if the father was not actively involved, failed to be verbally engaging, or frequently quarreled with the mother, the father-daughter relationship was recalled as less warm and often outright hostile. One 26-year-old woman, who described her father as "rude, crude, and impolite," acknowledged that the folk expression that "daughters are closer to fathers and sons closer to mothers" did not apply to her, and did not attempt to hide her dislike for her father. Her negative reaction was echoed in the words of a 23-year-old woman who blurted out that she "disliked my father who drank too much and quarreled all the time." These singleton Chinese children are comfortable with the compatibility of emotional positivity and the father figure.

Conclusion

The reevaluation of customary kinship obligations, conjugal expectations and duties, and parent-child interactions is closely intertwined with China's large-scale political and socioeconomic changes. However, these cultural shifts cannot be attributed in their entirety to the socialist transformation of China's urban infrastructure: Lang's (1946) Shanghai study and Whyte and Parish's (1984) urban survey found that many of these domestic changes were already under way prior to the 1949 Communist Revolution. At the same time, the changes in the organization of the contemporary urban Chinese family, instead of bearing the signature of traditional Chinese culture or socialist societies, seem to be consistent with a worldwide pattern that is inclined toward the formation of a nuclear or conjugal family, in which interpersonal interactions (specifically, spousal interactions) are less characterized by detachment and more colored by emotional expression. This is consistent with William Goode's (1963) family transformation thesis, which holds that the twin forces of urbanization and industrialization fundamentally changed the way in which the emotional life of families is organized. These transformational forces, when linked with socialist-inspired egalitarian values and the reemergence of a competitive market economy, altered the way Chinese masculinity was envisaged and performed.

The shift in emotional orientation is not only reshaping husband/wife interactions, but also recasting men's attitude toward childrearing. A growing body of social science research has documented a profound shift away from fatherly indifference toward the assumption of a more nurturing persona. Our research findings are consistent with this literature. We found strong evidence for positive, albeit emergent, parent-child interactions primarily among (but not restricted to) the college-educated stratum in second-tier Chinese cities such as Hohhot and Nanjing. To make a bold and speculative generalization, fathers in today's mainland China are increasingly departing from the aloof, stern, figure of moral authority toward a proper yet more closely involved and more emotionally engaged parental guardian. Patriarchal sentiment, which might be found in other contexts and could be manifested in the stern father role upheld by some (especially less well-educated) fathers, is no longer as apparent in most parent-child interactions as it was just a few decades ago. Through friendly, gentle guidance of their only children, contemporary Chinese fathers embody a refined, hybrid synthesis of traditional masculine (particularly *wen*) traits and newly emerging behavioral patterns such as assertiveness, confidence, passion, and emotional demonstrativeness.

Our findings reveal, at least within the parenting domain, a strong cross-regional homogeneity. While being conscious of the regional differences in the way masculinities are expressed, both in the conventional folk ideal (e.g., assertive, dominant and tough [or *wu*] northerners versus more polite, soft spoken,

and genteel [or *wen*] southerners) and in fieldwork observations, we found educated parents in Hohhot (north) and Nanjing (south) are going through remarkably similar changes in their interaction styles with their children. We therefore suspect an interaction effect between regional and socioeconomic class: in other words, the longstanding stereotypes in regional gendered behavior might be more prevalent among social classes with limited education, whereas Chinese males in higher social strata, who have been influenced by a shared educational background, are moving toward the same new fathering ideal regardless of their hometown.

We are also aware that such homogeneity might not extend to Hong Kong or Taiwan, which will be discussed in greater detail in other chapters in this volume. These regions have completely different modern histories that have involved more intense forms of colonization, earlier openness to global markets, and greater in and out migration than the Mainland (Hsiao 2013). Without the disruption of the Cultural Revolution, Taiwan and Hong Kong are also considered to have stronger identification with traditional Chinese culture, including its gender norms; such continuity might have been further consolidated in recent decades as a reaction to the rise of the socialist Mainland. The different histories and current social realities of these regions yielded different cultural experiences for members of these societies, and hence shaped their gender and family ideals in different ways. Given the dearth of comparative studies that encompass different societies of the Chinese culture, it would be an interesting enterprise to further explore how the respective masculinity ideals and behavioral styles of Chinese men in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the Mainland have developed in similar or divergent ways.

Finally, we were fascinated by the fact that the interaction between men's changing behavior as spouses and as fathers was not only subject to the larger social context, but they also exerted mutual influence over each other, a process that Goode's convergence thesis does not address. Our observations further suggest that Chinese men carefully negotiate different facets of their masculinities as part of the everyday juggling act between various interpersonal bonds in the public and private spheres. While these facets can, at times, contradict each other, our research found that there seems to be a synergy at least in the marital and parental domains. In this way, the often-competing notions of proper masculinities provide an unexpected vibrancy to the contemporary image of Chinese manhood which, for too long, has been imagined as being a constructed persona situated along the *wen-wu* continuum.

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11
All Dogs Deserve to Be Beaten

Negotiating Manhood and Nationhood in Chinese TV Dramas

Geng Song

The interconnection between nationalism and masculinity in Chinese popular culture has attracted scholarly attention in recent years (Song 2010; Song and Hird 2014). Nationalist sentiments and images of national heroes in the Chinese media have increasingly become distinctly Chinese characteristics of masculinity in the global age. Perhaps the most conspicuous examples can be found in TV dramas (*dianshi lianxuju* 電視連續劇), an overwhelmingly popular and influential form of entertainment in contemporary China. This chapter discusses the centrality of nationalism in the televisual construction of masculinity in postsocialist China, with a particular focus on a 70-episode drama series entitled *The Dog-Beating Staff* (*dagou gun* 打狗棍), a nationwide smash hit in 2013, and explores how television represents a "happy marriage" between the state's agenda and popular social desire through representations of nationalism and masculinity (Sun 2002, 126).

National Identity and Television

As the centerpiece of the country's rapidly growing commercial communications and cultural industry, television is playing an increasingly important role in Chinese people's everyday lives and providing fuel for the discursive construction of cultural identities in the popular imagination. Chinese television studies has emerged as an academic field in recent years, with a small but growing number of scholars in English-language academia exploring various aspects of Chinese television. What is largely missing, however, is studies on television as a technology of the self, or, in the words of Sun and Zhao (2009, 97), "an analysis of how television as a visual technology of storytelling and subject making articulates with the broad political economy of China's ongoing social transformation during the era of a worldwide 'neoliberal revolution'."

An important aspect of postsocialist subject-making in China is the construction of identities in terms of the Self/Other dichotomy. In the age of globalization,

television has become a particularly important resource for projects geared toward constructing a sense of national, ethnic, gendered, generational identity (Barker 1999; Ma 1999). For instance, foreigners who speak impeccable Mandarin are an increasingly common sight on Chinese TV screens, appearing in a variety of TV shows, including Chinese language contests (e.g., *Hanyu qiao* 漢語橋), dating shows (e.g., *Feicheng wurao* 非誠勿擾), and singing contests (e.g., *Zhongguo hao shengyin* 中國好聲音). Foreigners have, to a certain extent, become an indispensable element of the televisual display of national pride, evidenced, for instance, by their on-screen performances of patriotic Chinese songs (*hongge* 紅歌) and their admiration for Chinese food. The homogenized "foreigner" (which has become something of a proxy for "American") on Chinese TV plays an important role in forming a cosmopolitan and modern image of China and reflects a deeply rooted practice of alluding to the Occident as a contrasting Other to various conceptions of what is distinctively Chinese (Chen 1995). This discursive construction of national identity is dynamically intertwined with the construction of other identities, such as gender identity. A salient example is the exoticized and eroticized bodies of white women seen in a number of Chinese TV dramas, a phenomenon that has been critically linked to the "libidinal economy" of Chinese men by Sheldon Lu (Lu 2000; see also Erwin 1999; Johansson 1999; DeWoskin 2005; Song, 2015).

Of course, the most obvious example of televised nationalist fervor is the remarkable proliferation in recent years of TV dramas set during the Anti-Japanese War (1937–45), with images of evil Japanese soldiers, who are popularly known as "Japanese devils" (*Riben guizi* 日本鬼子), an increasingly familiar sight on most Chinese TV channels. Of the twenty-two drama series aired during prime time by Jiangsu Satellite TV in 2012, for instance, nine (41%) were set during the Anti-Japanese War (Zhan 2013). Wu (2013) reported that, in Hengdian (橫店) studios alone, a famous TV drama shooting site in Zhejiang Province, 700 million "Japanese devils" were "killed" in a single year. The place is thus jokingly called "China's primary anti-Japanese base" by the country's netizens. With its demonization of the Japanese "Other" and legitimization of Communist rule as its central ideology, anti-Japanese TV drama has become an important media narrative of history, carrying on and reinforcing the collective memory of the country's great national disaster and the humiliations of the past (Wu 2013). Because of the popularity of anti-Japanese dramas, playing Japanese soldiers and officers has become a steady career for a group of Japanese actors known as "professional devils" (*guizi zhuanyehu* 鬼子專業戶). Unknown amateur actors from Japan often become household names after coming to China to portray one of these "devils" (Song 2015).

Although commercialization has put an end to the government monopoly over TV production, all TV stations and channels in China remain state-owned, and the Communist Party of China (CCP) still regards television as an important propaganda tool. The censorship of TV programs by the CCP's Propaganda

Department guarantees that television as a mass medium is "ethically inspiring and uplifting" and helps to maintain an image of social stability and national harmony (Song 2010, 411), a situation that has contributed significantly to the proliferation and popularity of anti-Japanese dramas. According to a scriptwriter in CCTV's TV Series Production Center, the mushrooming of anti-Japanese dramas on the Mainland is a direct result of the censorship and subsidy systems in force (personal communication, May 2013). The government subsidizes the production of approved TV drama series, which it sees as a national project, thereby allowing producers to make ends meet even if no TV station ultimately chooses to purchase or air the series. However, scripts must pass a stringent censorship process to gain such government funding. Evidence suggests that dramas on the Anti-Japanese War, the government's favorite theme, are much more likely to obtain government funding than dramas depicting contemporary society, such as those with an anticorruption theme.[1] One web essay identifies the Anti-Japanese War as the safest and most profitable theme for TV productions and sarcastically notes that "killing Japs has also turned into a business" ("Da guizi zenme biancheng shengyi le?" 打鬼子怎麼變成生意了). Evidenced by the aforementioned phenomenon of "professional devils," televisual narratives of the Anti-Japanese War have become both a politically safe form of entertainment and a profit-making industry, in which various popular tastes and desires are cloaked in the overcoat of "nationalism." This government-sponsored and market-oriented "consumerist nationalism" (*shangye minzuzhuyi* 商業民族主義), which forms an important part of "a symbolic economy that generates identity" (Callahan 2006, 179), goes a long way toward explaining the country's perplexing obsession with a war that ended seventy years ago.

Through such consumerist nationalism, Chineseness is defined, imagined and constructed. However, one important yet largely understudied topic is the performance of masculinity in the context of Chinese nationalism (see Butler [1990] for a performative theory of masculinity). The longstanding discursive link between manhood and nationhood can be traced back to at least the late Qing dynasty, and has been reinvigorated by the conspicuous rise of nationalism in popular culture witnessed since the early 1990s.[2] On the one hand, China's gradual integration into the globalized capitalist system has inevitably resulted in cultural pluralism, which questions and erodes modernist notions

1. This focus on the Anti-Japanese War obviously also allows the government to avoid more recent, and more politically sensitive, national disasters/tragedies such as the Great Leap Forward and resulting famine and the Cultural Revolution.
2. Since the dying days of the Qing empire, Chinese men have engaged in a struggle to cast off China's label as the "sick man of Asia": the early and mid-twentieth century saw the denigration of the Confucian aesthete and the adoption of national self-strengthening philosophies embodied in nationalist, revolutionary renderings of manhood, and in the last two decades the white-collar man has emerged as the workhorse of the new China dream of individual material success and national resurgence (Song and Hird 2014, 256).

of Chineseness, including conceptions of Chinese masculinity. On the other, China's opening up has, paradoxically, given rise to a nationalist obsession with the quality of Chinese men and anxiety over the virility of both Chinese men and the Chinese nation, an obsession that is particularly conspicuous in the mass media (Song and Hird 2014, 1–2; 9–10). The perceived "crisis of masculinity" in postsocialist China must therefore be studied in the context of both globalization and Chinese nationalism. Rather than a monolithic Chinese nationalism, however, scholars have identified a variety of multifaceted nationalist discourses in the Chinese media, distinguishing official, liberal, nativist and cultural nationalisms (Zhao 2005; Shen 2007). In Guo's (2004) view, cultural nationalism encompasses not only a desire for the restoration of China's past pride and prestige, a struggle for the position rightfully due the country by dint of its population and size, but also a search for national identity in the era of globalization.

In the context of today's China, the cultural politics of identity is a particularly important area inviting fruitful analysis, not only because of the country's large population, size, and ethnic diversity, but also because "transnational flows of capital, images, and people between China and the world have opened up new avenues for inventing nationhood and creating self-understanding" (Lu 2000, 29). Yet, as Carlson (2009, 29) has pointed out, the cauldron of identity-shaping influences, which determines how the Chinese define their relationship to one another, the state, and the outside world, remains "all well outside the scope of conventional surveys of Chinese nationalism." According to Callahan (2006, 179), a nation is not simply a matter of people or territory, but also of time. The Anti-Japanese War has become just such a temporal event constructing contemporary Chinese identity. Examination of the televisual constructions of manhood and nationhood therefore highlights the intersection between national and gender identities, and thus affords new insights into both Chinese nationalism and Chinese masculinities.

All Dogs Deserve to Be Beaten

The Dog-Beating Staff tells the life story of Dai Tianli 戴天理 (*tianli* 天理 literally means "heavenly principles"), a fictional national hero in Rehe (熱河) Province (which is also known as Jehol, a now defunct province that existed during the Republican period), during the half century from the Boxer Rebellion in 1900 to the Communists' victory in 1949, with a special focus on the Japanese Occupation (1932–45). Like many other TV dramas with a similar theme, the series reiterates the clichéd discourse of a century of national humiliation and drives home the didactic message that no one but the Communist Party could have saved China. At the center of this 70-episode series lies the enmity between the Dai (戴) and Na (那) families, neighbors in the Rehe capital of Chengde. The Dai family are good characters embodying the spirit of patriotism, with Tianli's father and daughter both dying a heroic death fighting the Japanese, whereas

their rivals, the Nas, who are of Manchu ancestry, make a fortune trafficking opium. Na Tulu (那圖魯), the drama's No. 1 villain, ends up in disgrace, labeled a *hanjian* (漢奸, traitor to the Chinese nation). In line with nativist nationalist performance (see Zhao 2005), the dog-beating staff, a weapon used to beat "mad, vicious dogs, traitor dogs and invader dogs," is a symbol of patriotism and the supposed Chinese spirit throughout the series.

Unlike in Western culture, where dogs are looked upon as faithful companions, friends, and even family members, in Chinese culture these animals generally conjure up derogatory images and associations, as evidenced by the many dog-related idioms and proverbs in Chinese, most of which are highly insulting and carry the connotation of shameless servility. In Chinese cyberspace, "dog" is a very common label used by the ultranationalist *fenqing* (憤青, angry youth) to attack their opponents (Song and Hird 2014, 115).[3] In the context of gender performance, the image of the dog denotes spineless and unprincipled men, and thus connotes a lack of masculinity, a point we will revisit later in the chapter. The dog-beating staff in this series is a symbol of power for the chieftain of a beggar sect known as the *ganzi bang* (桿子幫). As guard dogs and stray dogs constitute the No. 1 nuisance for beggars, the staff, which is also a martial arts weapon, is meant to protect and unite the beggars.[4] When Dai Tianli is bequeathed the dog-beating staff by his predecessor, who dies fighting the Eight-Power Alliance invaders, and becomes chief of the beggar sect, he discovers an inscription carrying the motto "Protect the family, guard the nation and enrich the country" (*Baojia, weiguo, xingbang* 保家、衛國、興邦), which attaches a nationalist meaning to the weapon. In addition to "mad and vicious dogs," Dai later adds "invader dogs and traitor dogs" to the targets of punishment to be meted out by the dog-beating staff. With this mighty weapon, he valiantly kills numerous Japanese officers and soldiers, as well as Chinese villains and betrayers. It thus symbolizes the patriotic and chivalrous model of masculinity that the drama extols.

Masculinity is primarily defined in the drama by three Chinese keywords that defy easy translation, *xuexing* (血性), *xinyi* (信義) and *qingyi* (情義), which are linked by the central theme of nationalist loyalty. They are thus in line with the trend in public discourse toward restoring "traditional" types of masculinity in

3. A pronounced example is the infamous tirade launched by Peking University Professor Kong Qingdong 孔慶東 against the people of Hong Kong. He accused them of being "dogs of the British imperialists . . . not humans" during a webcast interview in January 2012, provoking bitter controversy. See http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/jan/24/chinese-professor-hong-kong-dogs. Accessed on November 21, 2013.

4. Both the beggar sect and the dog-beating staff are imaginaries borrowed from Jin Yong 金庸 (Louis Cha)'s martial arts novel *The Legend of the Condor Heroes* (*Shediao yingxiong zhuan* 射鵰英雄傳) and its sequel *The Return of the Condor Heroes* (*Shendiao xialü* 神鵰俠侶).

pursuit of a Chinese national identity. In *The Dog-Beating Staff*, the three keywords repeatedly appear as touchstones of genuine masculinity. Those embodying true manhood are at the same time contrasted with a group of unworthy men who lack these characteristics. From the outset, this dichotomy is represented by the patriarchs of the two households, the upright Dai Hanting (戴翰霆), a loyal guard at the former Qing court, and the unprincipled Na Pingshan (那平山, known as "Pockmarked Na"), owner of a drug store and underground opium den. Their sons, Dai Tianli and Na Tulu, were childhood friends who learned martial arts together from a mysterious Kung Fu master. However, it becomes clear that they are morally poles apart when they are faced with national crisis. Dai Tianli and his gang, including his sworn brother "God of Fortune," his rival in love and later ally "Old Second Aunt," and his son Ma Jiujin (馬九斤), all embody real Chinese manhood by standing up to the Japanese at risk of their lives. They are contrasted with less worthy men such as Na Tulu, who are physically manly but cowards inside. Like Na, the hypocrite Fang Mengqiao (方夢橋) and Dai's son-in-law Bai Jingui (白金櫃) both descend to *hanjian* status owing to their moral weakness, and are eventually punished as "dogs." It is noteworthy that masculinity thus defined is not the exclusive preserve of men in this drama. Various admirable masculine traits are also found in several female characters, such as Dai Tianli's adopted daughter Dai Ruobing (戴若冰), his childhood love Na Suzhi (那素芝), and Na's niece, a mute girl named Gege (格格, "Princess"). The female masculinity they display is in line with Mencius' definition of masculinity as political adherence and moral power (Sha 2007).

Xuexing, which literally means "the spirit of blood," is often used to refer to a man's courage, uprightness, and determination, the virtues that blood symbolizes in Chinese culture. A man with *xuexing* is not only a man with guts, but also one of morality, with a strong sense of justice. One of the drama's central themes is resistance to the opium trade. In the official discourse of victimhood that prevails in China, opium was a central part of the foreign powers' scheme to ravage the Chinese people and enslave the country. During the Boxer Rebellion, Dai Tianli kills two foreigners who had traded opium into China, and then goes on the run for thirteen years. He returns to his hometown when the Manchu Qing government is overturned by the Republicans, only to discover the secret opium trafficking of his neighbors, the Nas. An honest and upright man, he then uncovers collusion between the Nas and Rehe Governor Fang Mengqiao, who also happens to be the biological father of Dai's adopted daughter, and successfully destroys all of their opium in public. Na Tulu thus holds a grudge against him. As a foil to true masculinity, the malevolent Na Tulu is a macho man in appearance, with a strong build and good martial arts skills, but he is weak inside. He becomes addicted to opium, which leads to the suicide of his first wife. When the Japanese invaders arrive, he initially fights bravely as a Kuomintang officer, but eventually submits to the Japanese when they threaten the lives of his wife and son and take advantage of his eagerness to pursue

revenge against Dai. He then becomes the police commissioner of Rehe under Japanese Occupation and reopens his opium den by order of the Japanese. As previously noted, *xuexing* is not represented as exclusive to the male body, thus rendering masculinity a constructed space out of the biological binary of the two sexes. It is lacking in Na Tulu, but incarnated in the heroic deeds of some of the women in the series. For example, Dai Tianli's adopted daughter Dai Ruobing is a Communist and, although weak in appearance, is imbued with a kind of toughness and resistance to yielding to the enemy. She refuses to surrender when caught by the Japanese and is executed together with her husband, a Communist leader, after a sentimental wedding on the execution grounds. Another example is Na Tulu's daughter, the mute Gege, who stitches up the heads of three heroes beheaded by the Japanese and then buries them using only her hands. Through these women, the drama reiterates the hackneyed discourse that men such as Na Tulu who lack *xuexing* should feel ashamed when facing women who display masculine courage and morality.

Xinyi refers to the virtue of keeping faith. In this regard, the two male protagonists are again sharp contrasts to each other. Na Tulu's sister Na Suzhi is Dai Tianli's childhood sweetheart. They become engaged before Dai flees town. When he returns thirteen years later, however, he brings with him a little girl who calls him Daddy. This causes a misunderstanding between the two families and eventually spoils Dai and Na Suzhi's marriage contract. The truth is that Dai has remained faithful to his fiancée throughout his long exile. The girl has been entrusted to his care by his friend Fang Mengqiao, a fanatical revolutionary who has set out to assassinate a Manchu high official. Dai hides himself in deep forest for thirteen years and endures many hardships bringing up the girl alone because of his promise to his friend. Because he has promised Fang to keep his secret, he makes no attempt to explain the situation to his fiancée when she misunderstands the situation. The girl's real father, in contrast, is a hypocrite and coward who dare not recognize his own daughter when he returns to Rehe as a Republican official, having been tamed by the arbitrariness of his wife, the daughter of a powerful official. Keeping one's promise even at the cost of one's life is part and parcel of the integrated personality of a *junzi* (君子), as prescribed in Confucianism. Exemplary masculinity is also demonstrated through various attitudes toward the code of brotherhood in the series. As "brothers" who learned martial arts from the same teacher (a teacher who has no other disciples than these two), Dai and Na were taught a special whistle to use as a signal for help. Whenever one party was in danger, he was to whistle loudly for the other's help. This whistle is called the "brother whistle" (*xiongdi shao* 兄弟哨). When Na Tulu is surrounded by Japanese troops and, on the verge of death, desperately sounds the "brother whistle," Dai, who is now the head of the anti-Japanese guerrillas, happens to be nearby and rushes to rescue his erstwhile brother, regardless of the danger. However, it is not long before the ungrateful Na Tulu betrays Dai under

the threats of and temptations offered by the Japanese. When Dai is trapped in an old temple owing to a plot hatched by Na and the Japanese, unaware of his brother's betrayal, he whistles for help. In stark contrast to Dai's former courage and loyalty, Na Tulu pretends not to have heard the whistle and turns his back on the brotherhood call. As noted above, through this good/evil dichotomy the drama resorts to imagined "traditional" values and rhetoric, which lie at the core of the nationalist discourse, to construct the idealized Chinese man.

The third keyword, *qingyi*, emphasizes men's loyalty, but *qing* (feelings, emotions) also connotes compassion and sentimental attachment. When Dai Tianli leaves his fiancée, he promises that he will come back to marry her and says, "One cannot fail in *qingyi*, even at the cost of one's life. Whoever has *qingyi* is complete in humanity; one lacking in it is just a beast" (*you qing you yi de shi ren, wu qing wu yi de shi chusheng* 有情有義的是人，無情無義的是畜牲). This saying becomes one of the recurring themes of the drama and is closely linked to masculinity. *Qingyi* morality is best illustrated by the love between Dai Tianli and Na Suzhi. They grow up together and become engaged at a young age. However, Na's father, a greedy and fiendish man, breaks his promise to Dai and marries his daughter to the adopted son of a eunuch for 200 taels of gold, with which he then opens an opium den. When Dai Tianli exposes him, the government cracks down on the opium business run by the Nas, and Na Suzhi's father is executed. The couple thus become implacable foes. Later in the series, however, Dai Tianli's newborn son is stolen by a thief at the instigation of Na Tulu, who is eager to revenge himself against Dai. The thief, who is reluctant to kill a baby, sends him to Na Suzhi and her husband, who became a bandit chieftain on Cockscomb Mountain after his family's property was confiscated. Na Suzhi adopts the boy and brings him up as her own son, teaching him the principle of *qingyi* using the aforementioned saying uttered earlier in the series by Dai. At series end, Ma Jiujin, as Dai's son becomes known, is told the truth about his father, and the three are reunited as a family following the death of Na's husband on the battlefield. *Qingyi* can be characterized by loyalty to women, brothers, and family, but the paramount form of *qingyi* is loyalty to one's homeland, as discussed in detail in the next section.

"You Are a Real Chinese Man Now": The Primacy of National Interests

The three generations of men in the Dai family (protagonist Dai Tianli, Dai's father, who is killed by the Japanese after he chops off the head of the very first Japanese soldier to enter Chengde, and Dai's son, Ma Jiujin, who eventually becomes a Communist fighter) epitomize the moral accomplishments of *wu* (武) masculinity. *Wu* refers not only to physical strength and military prowess, but also to the wisdom and morality of knowing when to and when not to resort to

violence (Louie 2002, 14).[5] Patriotism is constructed as the primary criterion for *wu* masculinity in *The Dog-Beating Staff*. As Dai Tianli says at one point, "in the face of the formidable enemy, kill the devils and defend our country; that's what a disciple of *wu* (*xi wu zhi ren*, 習武之人) should do." This principle determines his actions and distinguishes humans from "dogs." For instance, when Na Tulu is encircled by the Japanese and seeks his help, Dai rescues him regardless of the opposition between these sworn brothers. For him, personal enmity must be forgotten at a time of national crisis. When he meets Na Tulu on the battlefield, he shouts, "You are a real Chinese man now!" (*ni shi yige zhenzheng de Zhongguo yemenr le* 你是一個真正的中國爺們兒了). Patriotic politics have been a major avenue for establishing one's masculinity, and they have been internalized as the unyielding obligation of a real man. As Dai's given name indicates, a man who betrays his nation is "*tianli nanrong* 天理難容" (will not be forgiven by Providence).[6]

As mentioned above, the love-hate relationship between Dai Tianli and Na Suzhi constitutes a central theme of the drama. When investigating the Na family's secret opium trade, Dai makes use of Na Suzhi's confidence in him to obtain evidence of her father's crimes. He promises to intercede with the authorities to save her father's life, but the governor, Dai's former friend Fang Mengqiao, who is also involved in opium trafficking, decides to make Na Pingshan a scapegoat and has him executed in front of his family. Na Suzhi, feeling guilty about her betrayal of her father, thus regards Dai Tianli as her principal foe and vows to obtain revenge. Although Dai does his best to keep his promise to Na, when faced with conflict between personal love and national interest, he unhesitatingly chooses to sacrifice the woman he loves for the sake of the nation's welfare (*minzu dayi* 民族大義). He says, "As a Chinese, I cannot sit by while foreigners dump opium in China and harm my countrymen." In the end, Na Suzhi understands his patriotic deeds, forgives him for killing her father, and reunites with him.

In contrast to the Dai family's patriotic heroism are those shameful "dogs" who deserve to be beaten. The non-masculine Other is embodied in unworthy Chinese men who betray their nation in the face of threats and/or temptation. While the forceful yet feeble Na Tulu serves as a foil to our primary hero, Dai Tianli, Dai's son-in-law Bai Jingui, who embodies the "small man" image in Confucian discourse, can be regarded as the opposite of the young hero Ma Jiujin. Bai was originally an apprentice in Dai's grain shop. An orphan adopted by Dai at an early age, he is treated as a family member by the Dais and is particularly

5. Kam Louie lists the seven virtues that define *wu* masculinity. They are "suppressed violence, gathered in arms, protected what was great, established merit, gave peace to the people, harmonized the masses and propagated wealth" (Louie 2002, 14).
6. The nationalist discourse on masculinity has arguably become one of the hegemonic masculinities in today's China in the sense that it is assumptive, widely held, and has the quality of appearing to be "natural" (Morgan 1992; Donaldson 1993).

well liked by the grandmother, i.e., Dai Tianli's mother-in-law. He grows up with Dai's second daughter Ruonan 若男, and later passionately pursues her. When Ruonan is carried off by a local tyrant who wants her beauty for himself, Ma Jiujin, who also desires Ruonan without realizing that she is his own sister, ventures into the tyrant's house alone and rescues her. He leaves the unconscious girl with Bai Jingui after Bai promises that he will make her happy for the rest of her life. When the girl comes to, Bai falsely claims credit for saving her life and thus becomes her husband by lying his way into the Dai family's confidence. As a husband and father of three, he prioritizes the interests of his small family over the interests of the nation and becomes a *hanjian* when the Japanese arrive. He leads the Japanese troops into Rehe City and then cooperates with the invaders.[7] Although he behaved like a humble servant to the Dais before his marriage, he reveals his cloven hooves as soon as his status changes. He betrays his father-in-law to the Japanese and kills the grandmother who once loved him with his own hands, before ultimately suffering a shameful death himself. An online commentary on the series construes Bai as a "family man" who has no thoughts of patriotism and thus degenerates into a betrayer of the nation:

> Of humble origins, Bai Jingui sells himself at an early age in order to bury his father. His lower status means that he learns how to hold himself in different situations, and the wealth of the Dai family is what he pines for. Given a choice, he will never choose to return to poverty. So he works for the Japanese in order to protect his family and preserve his current life . . . But he sincerely loves Ruonan. In order to save her, he leads the Japanese in and betrays his own people . . . Bai Jingui represents a lot of us, who would rather betray the nation for the sake of the small family. He is a good family man but a harmful element for the nation.[8]

This criticism of the Family Man is reminiscent of the condemnation of selfish and family-centered men found in traditional Chinese literature.[9] It is considered shameful to be concerned about one's own small family when the nation is facing a crisis. In sharp contrast to Bai's selfishness in the drama are the sacrifices made by the aforementioned Communist couple, i.e., Dai Tianli's adopted daughter Ruobing and her husband Gao Jinghu (高鏡湖), who presents a weak scholarly image on the surface. Gao inducts Ruobing into the Communist Party, and both become fearless anti-Japanese fighters. When they are eventually captured by

7. This plot shows the obvious influence of the online condemnation of *dailu dang* 帶路黨, a term that can be roughly translated as the Quislings Party, by ultranationalist netizens. It is widely used to refer to those labeled as "traitors" of the Chinese nation, who, as a figure of speech, lead the way for enemies invading their homeland.
8. See http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_63dce2be0101h5rt.html. Accessed on June 12, 2014. My translation.
9. Excessive emotional links with the small family have long been constructed as something that hampers true masculinity/heroism, as can be seen in Xin Qiji's 辛棄疾 *ci* poem "Water Dragon's Chant": "I'd be ashamed to see the patriot. Should I retire to seek for land and cot" (translation by Xu Yuan-zhong in Xu 1996, 416).

the Japanese, they choose to die for the nation. Dai Tianli initially looks down upon his frail-looking son-in-law, but is later deeply moved by his patriotic spirit and praises his manhood. Once again, the national interest serves as the touchstone of true masculinity.

The dog-beating staff is a nationalist totem and the embodiment of the "Chinese spirit," and it is thus sought after by many in the drama, including the Japanese. As in many other recent TV dramas with a similar theme, the Japanese officers and soldiers are all cunning and evil enemies who covet and hunt Chinese treasures.[10] To discover the whereabouts of the staff, the Japanese commander asks his own son, Ochiai Jiro (落合次郎), who is also an officer of the invading troops, to disguise himself as a mute (so that his true identity will not be revealed by speaking) and mingle with the Chinese. He insinuates himself into Dai Tianli's confidence and becomes one of his martial arts disciples. As the most dangerous enemy in Dai's midst, Ochiai not only steals his martial arts techniques, but also spies on him and gains information on the guerrillas, thereby directly causing the deaths of "Old Second Aunt" and others in the anti-Japanese camp. Ochiai is the embodiment of the stereotypical Japanese in the popular imagination. The Japanese are believed to have learned everything they know from Chinese culture, but to have then bitten the hand that fed them. When his cover is blown, Ochiai insists on a one-to-one duel with Dai Tianli, prohibiting the Japanese soldiers present from opening fire on Dai, and loses one of his arms in the process. The representation of this odious Japanese man to some extent turns the war into a rivalry of masculinity between the two nations.

"Old Second Aunt": A Cross-Dressing Real Man

Another male character in the drama who merits particular attention is Na Suzhi's husband, the bandit chieftain nicknamed "Old Second Aunt" (*Lao er shen* 老二嬸). This type of man (and masculinity) is very uncommon in anti-Japanese TV dramas. As the adopted son of a eunuch who wins Na Suzhi with his father's wealth, this man has a negative image when he first appears in the drama. Compared with Dai Tianli, he is effeminate and talks and moves about in a womanish manner, a typical *weiniang* 偽娘 image.[11] Online commentary compares him to a fox, thus evoking the transgender "Fox Man" image popular in cyberspace (see Song and Hird 2014, 100–101):

10. A recent hit TV series called *Sons and Daughters of the River* (*Dahe ernü* 大河兒女), for instance, depicts how during wartime the Japanese went out of their way to steal the secret recipes for the *Junci* (鈞瓷) porcelain in Henan Province.
11. *Weiniang* (fake women), a term originating with the Japanese, is used to refer to men with a woman's appearance. It has become a vogue word in online discussions and even singing contests in recent years, reflecting a trend for transgender cosplay among urban youth in China. For more details, see http://socialmediauppsala.wordpress.com/2013/10/31/a-puzzle-of-gender-a-unique-culture-generated-by-a-weiniang-forum/. Accessed on June 21, 2014.

> The four main characters in the drama represent four types of man, which resemble a donkey (Dai Tianli), wolf (Na Tulu), leopard (Ma Jiujin) and fox (Ma Yi, a.k.a. "Second Daughter" or "Old Second Aunt"), respectively.[12] . . . The audience is so amazed when the "Second Daughter" played by Yu Yi first appears in the drama. His skin is as white as a woman's, he speaks in a girlie manner and walks with a sway of his hips. His powdered face, the green earring on one ear and the gesture of "orchid fingers" when he is talking . . . all leave the audience dumbfounded—"What a womanish man!"[13]

Some readily associate this image with homosexuality.[14] However, "Old Second Aunt" is obviously heterosexual, and even becomes a model husband. Na Suzhi does not like him at all at first and guards herself with scissors on their wedding night. However, this effeminate man turns out to be a subservient husband and treats Na very well after their marriage. To please his wife, who is a fan of Peking Opera, he arranges for an opera troupe to visit Cockscomb Mountain and even becomes a cross-dresser when he plays the concubine in the play *Farewell My Concubine* (*Bawang bieji* 霸王別姬).

Figure 11.1 "Old Second Aunt" cross-dressed as the concubine in *Farewell My Concubine*. Source: http://images.baidu.com.

12. When he is young, he is nicknamed "Second Daughter"(*er yatou* 二丫頭), which implies he has a transgender identity. When he is older and becomes the head of the bandit gang at Cockscomb Mountain, his men call him "Old Second Aunt" (*lao ershen*), a common name for a middle-aged woman in rural China.
13. See http://tieba.baidu.com/p/2665320727. Accessed on June 22, 2014. My own translation.
14. See http://ent.163.com/13/1025/11/9C1DESDH00031GVS.html. Accessed on June 22, 2014.

"Old Second Aunt" becomes incredibly determined and valiant when facing the Japanese, and dies a heroic death on the battlefield. He turns his bandit gang into an anti-Japanese guerrilla force and proclaims himself their commander-in-chief. The men fight side by side with "Old Second Aunt's" rival in love, Dai Tianli, to strike against the Japanese troops. Owing to the existence of a Japanese agent in their camp, however, they are soon defeated and surrounded by the Japanese. "Old Second Aunt" fights until his last breath, pulling out a grenade to die alongside his enemies. His last words are: "I have been playing the concubine all my life, and in the end I played the king (Xiang Yu 項羽) once."

As his wife says, "Old Second Aunt" is a "real man with a woman's look." From the perspective of masculinity studies, this gender reversal and the displacement between real life and fantasy and between appearance and the heart are highly fascinating. Masculinity is fundamentally defined in the drama as inner moral power rather than physical appearance or strength. Men such as Na Tulu who appear strong and macho on the surface ultimately turn out to be cowards and therefore non-masculine, whereas "Old Second Aunt" represents the true spirit of Chinese masculinity, that is, the valor to fight and die for the nation. In other words, his masculinity is validated by the heroic deeds he performs, which are prescribed by nationalist politics, thereby demonstrating a thought-provoking split between mind and body. As studies on masculinities in traditional China (Song 2004) reveal, true masculinity can be accommodated in feminine or even female bodies. Interestingly, the depiction of "Old Second Aunt" in the drama intertextually refers to the story of Xiang Yu, the hero par excellence, and his concubine, who is normally played by a male *dan* (旦) actor in traditional operas.[15] The play is now known for its cross-dressing and homoerotic overtones, thanks to Chen Kaige's prize-winning film *Farewell My Concubine*. In terms of the *yin/yang* (陰／陽) matrix, however, it goes without saying that Xiang Yu represents the *yang* and the concubine the *yin* identity in both heterosexual and homosexual contexts. Yet in *The Dog-Beating Staff*, this dichotomy is significantly subverted by "Old Second Aunt," who looks *yin* on the outside but bears a *yang* spirit on the inside. Nationalism is the power that engenders the ultimate *yang* identity.

Conclusion

Although nationalist sentiments have become a hallmark of the construction of heroic masculinity in the Chinese media, it is by no means exclusively Chinese

15. *Farewell My Concubine*, a canonical play in the Peking Opera tradition, is based on the historical story of the last battle between Xiang Yu (232–202 BC), the self-styled "Hegemon-King of Western Chu," and his rival Liu Bang (256–195 BC), the founder of the Han dynasty. In the play, Xiang Yu is surrounded by Liu Bang's forces and commits suicide on the banks of the Wu River after his loyal concubine Consort Yu kills herself with Xiang Yu's sword in front of him.

practice to link masculinity with nationalism. In fact, masculinity and nationalism are articulated together in many cultures (Nagel 1998, 249). As Todd Reeser points out, the analogies and connections made between masculinity and nation demonstrate an underlying anxiety about both:

> Masculinity might be linked to the nation precisely because the nation needs to be buttressed by another incarnation of power or because masculinity needs to be helped by the representational power of the nation. A nation that has suffered, or fears suffering, military defeat may use images of masculinity to revitalize or revirilize itself . . . A man who fears castration or emasculation may turn to patriotism or to more extreme nationalisms . . . to assuage his own anxiety about being a man. (Reeser 2010, 189)

However, existing studies on the interplay between masculinity and nationalism generally focus on how standards of masculinity have rendered nationalism a masculine identity or on metaphorical analogies between powerful masculinity and the nation from the political studies perspective (Enloe 1990; Nagel 1998). This chapter, which adopts a cultural studies perspective, opens up a new avenue of study on the negotiations between manhood and nationhood by examining how nationalist ideology and education have significantly influenced the discourse on masculinity in the popular imagination. In *The Dog-Beating Staff*, the male characters' self-sacrifice and devotion to their motherland render them paramount examples of the masculine *yang* identity. It is against this patriotic backdrop that other masculine qualities such as courage, wisdom, brotherhood, and faithfulness to love are represented and praised. In other words, nationalism has become the primary criterion for judging masculinity. In this sense, it can be argued that nationalism now constitutes the characteristically Chinese masculinity found in TV entertainment.

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12
The Anthropology of Chinese Masculinity in Taiwan and Hong Kong

Heung-wah Wong and Hoi-yan Yau[1]

Introduction

Janet was in her early twenties when we first met her in 2003. At our first interview, she suggested that she had stopped dating her boyfriend *just* because her *waishengren* (外省人 mainland Chinese) father rejected him as coming from a "farming family in the south whose parents are poorly educated," studying at a "university with a poor reputation," working in a "small local company," and thus "not a good man."[2]

Patty was a young working mother with two daughters when we met in late 2002. She lived in a traditional cottage house with her parents-in-law. As a working mother, she struggled to balance her family and career. She woke up early each morning, prepared breakfast for her children, sent her elder daughter to kindergarten, and then rushed to work. Despite suffering from a lack of sleep, she had to wake up early at the weekend to help her mother-in-law with household chores.

John was in his mid-twenties when we first spoke to him in 2003. He came from an educated middle-class family, had graduated from a local elite university, and had a job with good prospects in Taipei. However, he faced a dilemma when he was sent to work in his company's headquarters in the UK. As he had grown up close to his mother, he felt obliged to remain in Taiwan to take care of her in her old age. In the end, he decided to take his mother to the UK with him.

1. The authors have contributed equally to the chapter and their names are shown in alphabetical order.
2. *Waishengren* refers to the mainland Chinese who followed Chiang Kai-shek and fled to Taiwan in 1949. Those Chinese who settled in Taiwan in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries alongside their offspring are commonly known as *benshengren* (本省人 local Taiwanese). While the differences between *waishengren* and *benshengren* are artificially constructed, they have become the source of the major ethnic conflict in modern Taiwan.

All of these ethnographic cases concerning the ordinary lives of men and women in Taiwan might appear unremarkable or even be taken for granted among local Taiwanese, but they were extraordinary, even exotic, stories to authors from Hong Kong, which although in many ways culturally similar to Taiwan, is at the same time very different. As we have seen, family still holds sway in the social lives of the local Taiwanese. More importantly, the duties and expectations placed upon Taiwanese men and women are considerable, if not overwhelming. Yet these duties and expectations are not totally incomprehensible to Hong Kong Chinese because they after all derive from and are variants of traditional Chinese kinship ideologies, which have simply developed in ways that seem bizarre in the eyes of outsiders. The aim of this chapter is to spell out the differences in the characteristics of manhood in the Chinese societies of Taiwan and Hong Kong.

In the last few years alone there has been a flood of critical reflection questioning prevailing notions of masculinity in general and Chinese manhood in particular (Braudy 2003; Anderson 2009; Marcell et al. 2011; Schrock and Schwalbe 2009; Barker 2010; Boretz 2011; Liong and Chan 2012; Pascoe 2012; Zhu 2013). Rather than engaging in a comprehensive review of this literature, we wish to focus on several major points in the study of Chinese manhood, mostly in support of our central argument that Chinese manhood has to be studied in its wider context. Our basic premise is that there is no essentialized, universal, and abstract idea of manhood even within the Chinese societies of Hong Kong and Taiwan. The nature and character of manhood in these two Chinese societies hinges upon three contexts: geopolitics, the family system, and the relationship between womanhood and manhood. It follows that Chinese manhood cannot be studied in isolation but must be considered in its relation with womanhood.

Family Ethics and Gender in Taiwan

We have outlined the geopolitics of postwar Taiwan elsewhere so we will be brief here (Wong and Yau 2010; 2013). Taiwan was a Japanese colony for fifty years. When Japan was defeated in the Second World War, Taiwan was returned to the Republic of China (ROC) under the Nationalist Kuomintang (KMT) government headed by Chiang Kai-shek. In 1949, Chiang was defeated by the Communists. As a result, Chiang transplanted the ROC along with the KMT party to Taiwan, where he built an authoritarian one-party state. Japanese elements that had been incorporated into the life patterns of the locals were, of course, disturbing to the KMT regime, as the regime saw the local people as "slaves" of Japanese imperialism and "contaminated" by Japanese culture (Winckler 1994, 30; Gold 1994, 60). In addition, the loss of the Mainland to the Communists made it important to the KMT to establish its legitimacy as the sole government of China. To this end, Taiwan had to be (re)made to look more like "China," or more precisely, the representative of *all* China (Yang 1992, 26).

Against this background, the KMT regime took a heavy-handed approach to local culture, which manifested itself in a two-step process. The first step was a series of de-Japanization policies including the abolition of the Japanese administrative division of Taiwan (Huang 1993, 324), the renaming of streets with Chinese geographical names or names relating to Han and Great China (Luo 1996, 24), and the banning of Japanese language, Japanese media imports, and Japanese publications (Luo 1996, 23). Yet the increasing impossibility of Chiang's imperative to retake the Mainland and the gradual loss of American political and military support from the late 1960s forced the KMT to move to the second step, which mainly entailed Sinicization policies, in an effort to justify its legitimacy as representative of all of China. The Chinese Cultural Renaissance Movement (CCRM) was one such campaign.

The CCRM (1966–early 1990s)

The CCRM was a four-step process: the revival of Chinese classics, the active demonstration of ethics, the moral improvement of students and citizens, and the promotion of women as mothers. Efforts were first put into promoting literary development and republishing Chinese classics (Lin 2001, 82). Large-scale exhibitions centering on Chinese paintings, operas, calligraphy, national music, and costumes were organized (Lin 2001, 58). In schools, ethics courses such as "life and ethics" and "citizenship and morality," which revolved around *siwei bade* (四維八德 Four Anchors and Eight Virtues), were taught in primary and junior high schools from the early 1970s (Yang 1992, 45).[3] *Siwei bade* is a set of moral standards that puts great emphasis on social harmony achieved via self-cultivation and on patrilineal values such as filiality and patriotism that subordinate sons (citizens) to the head of family (head of state). Outside the classroom, the state issued the "National Citizens' Living Guidelines," instructing its citizens to sacrifice the *xiaowo* (小我 the smaller self) for the success of the *dawo* (大我 the greater self). In concrete terms, it instructed citizens to defer to their parents and seniors and to be thoughtful to friends and others through self-restraint or self-sacrifice (CCRMA 1977, 3–18). More crucially, the state "interpellated" women with a model of *xianqi liangmu* (賢妻良母 virtuous wives and good mothers), which required them to stay at home to teach their children *zhong* (忠 loyalty) and to show *xiao* (孝 filiality) to their parents-in-law (Lin 2001, 53). The crucial message here is that marriage, to Taiwanese women, is not about conjugal love, but about taking care of their children and parents-in-law, which is their *real* duty. Model mother contests were held to celebrate those who sacrificed themselves for the success and well-being of their family. The postwar state's discourse thus

3. The Four Anchors refers to etiquette, righteousness, self-integrity, and dignity, while the Eight Virtues refers to patriotism and filiality, kindness and love, truthfulness and uprightness, harmony and peace.

sanctified marriage and identified *xianqi liangmu* as the *only* role for Taiwanese women (Lin 2001, 53).

We do not pursue the content of the CCRM any further here. But perhaps enough has been said to explain why Chiang relied on Confucian ideology, human ethics, and gender stratification to seek tighter control over Taiwan. Through rehearsing traditional Chinese family values and human ethics, he not only brought order to Taiwan by subsuming individuals under family heads and requiring them to be supportive of each other, but also claimed people's allegiance as the father of the country. By confining women to domestic life, he regulated women through men and other institutions. In the service of national unity, these narratives of "Chineseness" invoked by the KMT regime amount to a process of "cultural hegemony" (Chun 1994, 56).

A major consequence of these policies is that they rendered traditional Chinese moral values such as *xiaoshun* (孝順 being filial), *guangzong yaozu* (光宗耀祖 to "brighten and shine" the ancestors), *churen toudi* (出人頭地 to stand out among one's peers), *nanzun nübei* (男尊女卑 male domination and female subordination), *xianqi liangmu*, *dandang* (擔當 a male sense of responsibility), and *renqing* (人情 human obligations), to name just a few, extremely important in the Taiwanese moral life. As we will see below, these ideologies constitute an important moral background against which modern Taiwanese manhood and womanhood can be better understood. However, it is of interest to point out that the traditional Chinese moral values invoked in these policies originated from the *fang/jiazu* (房／家族) system in Taiwan.[4]

We should add here that *fang/jiazu* principles are a set of kinship ideologies rooted in mainland China, yet, as we shall see, when they were transplanted in Taiwan and Hong Kong, they would take a different form and character as a result of the unique geopolitics.

Fang/Jiazu Principles

Relying heavily on Chen Chi-nan's (1986) seminal research on the Chinese family system in Taiwan, we now outline the basic characteristics of the Chinese family with reference to two native concepts, *fang* and *jiazu*.

Literally, *fang* refers to the bedroom of "a married son and his wife"; bedrooms taken by unmarried sons are but *jian* (間, literally "space") (Chen 1986, 55–56). One can see that *fang* places a central emphasis on the son's conjugal status, designating the son or the son and his wife as a unit or all his male descendants and their wives as a kin set (Chen 1986, 55–56). Metaphorically, *fang* thus takes on the meaning of the genealogical status of a son as a conjugal unit in relation to his

4. The traditional Chinese family system in Taiwanese society is very complex, and a detailed discussion of it is beyond the scope of this chapter. For a comprehensive review of the Chinese kinship system, see Gonçalo Duro dos Santos (2006).

father. *Jiazu* is a blend of *jia* and *zu*. *Jia* refers to a coresident, commensal group, whereas *zu* is a genealogical notion that refers to the sets of agnates and their wives regardless of their functional aspects (Chen 1986, 64). Taken together *jiazu* refers to the genealogical status of father in relation to son.

The Chinese family system in Taiwan is formed through the relationship between *fang* and *jiazu*. Within this relationship, *fang* is a smaller unit subsumed under *jiazu* and *jiazu* is the encompassing sum of *fang*. In short, *fang* is integral to *jiazu* and *jiazu* is the aggregate of *fang*. However, while *fang* and *jiazu* constitute the core of the Chinese family in Taiwan, they in fact represent two different forces, moving in completely opposite directions. *Fang* places a singular focus on the married sons and their *fang* members, stressing the differentiation of *fang* within the *jiazu*. By contrast, *jiazu* suppresses the differentiation of *fang*, working to integrate them and subsume them as one unit under *jiazu*.

The continuity of the *fang/jiazu* line, as Chen (1986, 80) notes, is the single most important imperative of the Chinese family in Taiwan. This line flows from the father to his son who, once he becomes a father, passes it on to his son, and so on. More crucially, this line evinces no fixed genealogical limits. It thus flows from the focal ancestors through living agnates to future male descendants. It is through this successive father-son filiation that the Chinese family attains its eternity. A son, as the *fang* of the father's *jiazu*, can not only carry on the *jiazu*'s line, but can also be entitled to the *jiazu*'s property and be worshipped in his father's *jiazu* after death.

A daughter cannot create a *fang* in her father's *jiazu*. Before marriage, she is a dependent of her father's *jiazu*. After marriage, she is instead a member of her husband's *fang/jiazu*. Even if she marries uxorilocally, she cannot carry on her father's *jiazu* line; nor is she entitled to *jiazu* property (Chen 1986, 68). No matter whether she is married out or uxorilocally, she cannot worship her father, or be worshipped in her father's *jiazu* after death.

The above characteristics of *fang/jiazu* further serve to underline the formation of *jia* at the domestic level. The *jia* can be seen as a coresidential group. The membership of a *jia* is basically underpinned by *fang/jiazu* membership—that is, the male founder, all of his male descendants, and their spouses. However, *jia* as a coresidential group, unlike *fang/jiazu* as a genealogical concept, can also include unmarried female descendants (including daughters and sisters) or even their uxorilocal husbands who are related to the *fang/jiazu* through their wives. That is to say, while a daughter is not a *fang* member she is nonetheless a *jia* (family) member. Yet it must be remembered that the daughter's membership of the *jia* is after all temporary. At best, she is a "passer-by" in the natal *jia*, because she will become a full member of her husband's *jia* after marriage according to the *fang/jiazu* principle.

The concepts of *fang/jiazu* also have a profound impact on the financial management of *jia*. The finances of the *jia*, according to Shuzo Shiga (1978, 113), can be likened to a "joint account" in which members share a common budget and

all members, sons and daughters alike, are required to contribute financially to their *jia*. The matron who is in charge of the *jia*'s financial affairs allocates money to members for their daily use. In many cases, family members are discouraged, if not disallowed, from keeping private money, because this would be contrary to the core familial ethic: just as family members are required to support one another unconditionally, it is said that members have to share with others all they have, because the family as a whole will offer financial help to any member when required. It could therefore be said that the financial management of the Chinese *jia* is underpinned by an ideal of unselfish mutual sharing.

However, while members of the *jia* can draw money from the account for daily expenses, not all members have a right to the surpluses left over from the account, which will be accumulated as household property, to be apportioned equally among the "brothers" (Shiga 1978, 113). This is because once the surpluses become *fang/jiazu* property, their sharing and ownership is defined not by *jia* but by *fang/jiazu* membership which only includes sons (Chen 1986, 130). As we shall see below, the very operation of the *jia* at the domestic level is likewise fashioned by *fang/jiazu* principles, which impose a set of duties and expectations on Taiwanese "sons" and "daughters."

Taiwanese Sons

First, the paramount importance assigned to family continuity introduces an intense expectation of every Taiwanese man to bear a son, since only a son can carry on the family line by creating a *fang*. Therefore, for a man to be without issue is regarded as the most miserable fate in Taiwanese society, because his *fang* line is threatened with extinction (Chen 1986, 102). No matter whether as sons or persons, Taiwanese men take great pains to bear their own sons to continue their *fang* lines.

Second, Taiwanese sons are customarily expected to *guangzong yaozu* (i.e., "brighten and shine the ancestors"), because, as noted above, they are seen as the continuation of their father's line and in turn that of all of the ancestors. The honor derived from their personal success can therefore be transferred back to their fathers and the lineal ancestors before them. That is why the personal success of a son in Taiwanese society can *guangzong yaozu*. A daughter's personal success, however, cannot *guangzong yaozu* because such success cannot be transferred back to her ancestors. Only sons can *guangzong yaozu*. To *guangzong yaozu*, Taiwanese sons need to *churen toudi*, a common phrase in modern Taiwan that refers to standing out among one's peers in terms of upward mobility. There are traditionally two major ways to stand out among one's peers: via academic pursuits (讀書取士 *dushu qushi*) or through doing business (從商 *congshang*). Doing business of course affords upward mobility, but is ultimately regarded as secondary to academic achievement, which is prioritized as the highest form of *churen toudi* under the Confucian ethics of Taiwan.

Third, Taiwanese sons are expected to support and live with their aging parents until the latter die. Sons are also expected to worship their dead parents regularly, lest they be hungry in the underworld (Stafford 1992, 371). In short, sons are important sources of financial and emotional well-being for Chinese parents.

These three expectations help to define what a "good" son should do in Taiwanese society: (1) get married at a certain age in order to provide a male heir for his parents; (2) achieve high educational qualifications and thereby have a good career and a stable income so as to *churen toudi* and *guangzong yaozu*; and (3) have a strong sense of responsibility so that he will be willing to take on the demanding filial duties of serving his parents.

Taiwanese Daughters

By contrast, since a daughter is not counted as a *fang* in the genealogical sense, she can neither carry on the *fang/jiazu* line nor *guangzong yaozu*. That is to say, whether she can have a son or *churen toudi* is not an issue that will bother her parents. What Taiwanese parents are most concerned about is whether their daughters can marry out and, perhaps more crucially, "marry well," in the sense that they marry upward. This is because they know that without a husband or a son, their unmarried daughter will have no one to rely on once her father dies. Neither does she have, it might be recalled, a *fang* status or a male descendant to make sacrifices to her after death (Chen 1986, 70). A woman who dies unmarried is even more miserable than a man who dies without issue. She can only achieve *fang* membership through ghost marriage (Chen 1986, 71). To a woman, even a dead woman, marriage is everything. In contemporary Taiwan, where marriage has been sanctified by the 40-year-long CCRM, we should not be surprised that it still appears to be the major life goal of most women.

Marriages in Taiwanese Society

Our research in Taipei shows that a large number of informants, though opposed to arranged marriage, continue to take into account their parents' likes and dislikes when selecting a dating or marital partner. But what is meant by a "good" son-in-law or daughter-in-law in the eyes of Taiwanese parents?

A Good Son-in-Law

From the perspective of the woman's parents, a "good" son-in-law appears to be one who is responsible to his family, and willing to bear the demanding duties expected of him. But being responsible is not enough—he also needs to be a "competent" man. As we saw in the ethnographic case of Janet at the beginning

of this chapter, a man's background constitutes a combination of factors that determine whether he will be a "strong" son-in-law. The implication here is that good family and educational backgrounds will make him a "refined" man, competent to look after his family and make informed decisions as the head of the family.

Competency also refers to a man's ability to support his family financially—that is to say, he needs to *churen toudi*, to have success in either career development or academic pursuits. In short, Taiwanese parents try to make sure that their daughters marry men with "higher" socioeconomic status.

A Good Daughter-in-Law

Once a woman marries, she becomes a dependent of her husband (and later of her son). As a dependent, she does not need to have a high level of education or a good career. All she needs is to subordinate herself to the interests of her husband's *fang/jiazu*. Her value to her husband's *fang/jiazu* thus lies in her ability to assist her husband to fulfill his filial duties to the *jiazu* (Hsiung 2004, 29).

The traditional onerous demands on daughters-in-law might have been relaxed somewhat in modern Taiwan, but the ideas of being prolific and being filial to one's parents-in-law, as reinforced by the abovementioned CCRM, remain very important. Ethnographic data show that many women subject themselves to numerous pregnancies just because they have not yet produced a son. Some women are even forced to walk out on their marriages as a result of their failure to bear a son. For the parents of the man, whether the woman can bear him a male heir for the patrilineal line is clearly the key concern.

Being prolific is important, but what is more important is to make sure that this son belongs to the patrilineal line of her husband. For that reason, her virginity is significant, as it guarantees reproductive ownership by her husband and thus his patrilineal line. Even if a woman is not a virgin, she must not be sullied by a bad reputation. Clearly, a woman needs to be chaste to make a good marriage.

The woman is also expected to be filial to her parents-in-law in two major ways. First, she is expected to submit to their authority, notably that of her mother-in-law. Secondly, she is expected to serve her parents-in-law uncomplainingly. Her persona is also important, because lifelong cohabitation with her in-laws requires a docile rather than outspoken or boisterous nature. The logic is that a woman is required to take up the filial duties to her parents-in-law in order to free her husband from domestic chores so that he can concentrate on building his career and thereby *churen toudi*.

We can see that the above brief ethnographic examples of mate selection have identified qualities that constitute a "good" son-in-law or daughter-in-law in Taiwan. A "good" son-in-law is one who possesses a strong sense of responsibility to his family and manages to *churen toudi*, while a "good" daughter-in-law

is one who can assist her husband to fulfill his filial duties, and takes on his responsibilities as her own. Those who deviate from these gender characteristics might find themselves disadvantaged in the "marriage market."

Taiwanese Manhood

In the previous section, we saw that a "good" son-in-law is one who has a mature personality, has a strong sense of responsibility, and manages to *churen toudi*. In order to be favorably placed in the "marriage market," men must therefore try hard to fulfill the criteria for a "good" son-in-law, which further define a general set of gender norms for so-called Taiwanese manhood.

As noted earlier, in order to *churen toudi* a man is required, first and foremost, to have a good education. However, having good academic credentials is a means but not an end. After graduating from school, a man is expected to find a good job, build a bright career, and earn a good income. All of this signifies his "competence" as a man.

Dandang

A man also needs to have a strong sense of responsibility to his *jiazu*. In Taiwan, this sense of male responsibility is known as *dandang*. *Dandang* literally refers to shouldering responsibility, but in the context of Taiwanese manhood it refers to a specific set of male duties to his *jiazu*. *Dandang* is closely associated with compulsory military service in Taiwan. Most Taiwanese mothers/women agree that their sons/men only begin to have *dandang* after serving in the army (Chin 1997, 11). Even our male informants reported that they had become more "mature" after their service. Military training thus amounts to a rite of passage that transforms boys into men, because it allows them to develop a new sense of self-understanding, thereby demonstrating responsibility not only for themselves, but also for their partners, parents, and other *jiazu* members. In short, ensuring the well-being of their *jiazu* is their "intrinsic" duty as a man. While it is common to say male *dandang*, we have never heard of female *dandang* in Taiwan. That is to say, Taiwanese women simply do not need to have *dandang*. But what do they need?

Taiwanese Womanhood

We saw above that a "good" daughter-in-law has to bear a male heir for her husband, to assist him to *churen toudi/guangzong yaozu*, and to take care of his parents for him; as a mother, she must nurture her son so that he can *churen toudi* in the future. All of this implies that a "good" woman needs to take the interests of her man and of his *jiazu* as her "life goals." She is therefore required

to be submissive, sacrificing herself, her interests, her life, and her career for men and their *jiazu*. But a man and his *jiazu* can define not just what the personal interests of a woman are, but also what a "good" woman should be, because if she fails to meet these expectations she will be considered to have failed in her role as a woman. Taiwanese womanhood is thus defined by men and their *jiazu*: a good woman has to be fertile, docile, and self-sacrificing, if not selfless, with the ultimate aim of assisting her husband's *jiazu*.

Marriage, *Fang*/*Jiazu*, Manhood, and Womanhood in Taiwan

Looking more closely at these gender expectations of Taiwanese men and women, we can see that they derive from the criteria through which the respective parents judge their children's mates, which are in turn tailored according to the expectations they first put on their sons and daughters. In order for their son to fulfill his duties to bear a son, *churen toudi/guangzong yaozu*, and serve them in old age, his parents desire a "daughter-in-law" who is fertile, chaste, docile, supportive, and self-sacrificing, traits that can ultimately help him to achieve his duties to his *jiazu*. Conversely, in order for their daughter to "marry well," her parents desire a "son-in-law" who is educated, responsible, capable, and well established both financially and in his career. We can see that the institution of marriage has played an important role in transforming the patrilineal values of *fang/jiazu* through a set of criteria for a "good" son-in-law and daughter-in-law into the gender expectations on men and women in the wider social context.

It is also apparent that Taiwanese manhood and womanhood emphasize the interests of parents in *jiazu*, while downplaying the importance of *fang* by minimizing the interests of sons. As mentioned above, *jiazu*/*fang* represents the conflict between the integrative tendency of *jiazu* and the differentiating inclination of *fang*. This conflict itself, according to Chen,

> is summed up in the loyalty of the male head of a *fang* as the husband and father in his own *fang* on the one hand, and as the son or brother of his father in his father's *chia-tsu* [*jiazu*] on the other. As a husband or father in his own *fang*, a man is inclined to protect his *fang*'s interest against threats from other *fang* in the same *chia-tsu*. But as a son or brother in the superordinate *chia-tsu* as a whole, he is supposed to sacrifice his *fang*'s interest for the *chia-tsu*'s solidarity. A man is always pulled between loyalty to his fellow *fang* which form a *chia-tsu* under their common father or ancestor, and loyalty to his own *fang* unit which he represents as the *fang* head. (1986, 87–88)

While the balance between the integrative tendency of *jiazu* and the differentiating inclination of *fang* is dependent on the authority of the father because an authoritative father, as Chen (1986, 89) correctly points out, "may exercise his authority to enforce the loyalty of his sons to his *chia-tsu* [*jiazu*] and suppress the internal conflicts between various *fangs* of the different sons," the submission of different sons to their father's authority can also be intensified by

reinforcing sons' loyalty to their father. This was how the KMT regime had hoped to shape the people of Taiwan through the CCRM, which aimed to promote the integrative *jiazu* ideology by minimizing the importance of differentiating *fang* orientation. By promoting *jiazu* ideology that inherently subsumed sons to the father, Chiang likewise claimed absolute allegiance from all Taiwanese citizens as the father of Taiwan. When we consider this in the context of our earlier discussion of *fang*/*jiazu*, we can see that the family system in Taiwan emphasizes the integration of *jiazu* at the expense of the interests of *fang*, with the ultimate aim of consolidating the authority of the parent-state over its children-subjects. Under such a *jiazu* ideology, we can see that the concept of masculinity in Taiwan places a central focus on the interests of *jiazu* to the extent that the interests of *fang* can always be sacrificed. In other words, men in Taiwan in general position themselves as a subordinate member of a *jiazu*, rather than as the leader of their own *fang*. This is why sons in modern Taiwan are still expected to pay obeisance to their fathers, to live with their aging parents, to have *dandang* to take good care of their parents financially and physically, and to bear a son for their *jiazu*, because manhood in modern Taiwan is generally expressed in the integration of *jiazu* at the expense of the interests of the *fang*.

However, as we shall see, due to differences in geopolitics, the form of masculinity manifested in the Chinese society of Hong Kong is quite different from that in Taiwan.

The Geopolitics of Postwar Hong Kong Society

Immediate postwar Hong Kong was a state characterized by chaos and poverty. This situation was exacerbated when the Communist Party of China (CPC) took over China and officially founded the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949. The founding of the PRC can be seen as the single most important event in the period between 1949 and 1967, as laid out by Chun (1996, 58), because it had a profound impact on Hong Kong socially, economically, and politically.

Socially, the success of the CPC in the Chinese Civil War and the subsequent founding of the PRC had important political implications for people in China. This was because, among other things, capitalism and anything related to it in mainland China was seen as in need of "liberation" by the Communists. Frightened at the idea of being "liberated," a large number of Chinese capitalists and ordinary farmers fled to Hong Kong, even in the midst of the Civil War (Wong 1988, 20). The massive influx of Chinese refugees into Hong Kong continued well into 1949, which not only led to a massive increase in the population of Hong Kong but also dramatically changed the demographics of the local society. Notwithstanding the fact that they were all Chinese from mainland China, these refugees were by no means a homogenous group. They spoke a variety of Chinese dialects, followed different customs and rituals, worshipped

different kinds of god, and to a certain extent considered themselves different from other groups (Baker 1983, 470). In the 1950s and 1960s, there was no Hong Kong identity as such, and most residents of Hong Kong simply identified themselves according to their respective hometowns in China (Baker 1983, 471).

The massive influx of Chinese came to an end when the colonial government passed the Immigrants Control Ordinance 1949 and introduced the Hong Kong Identity Card to regulate the inflow and outflow of Chinese migrants into Hong Kong and their activities there (Law and Lee 2006, 219). This all meant that the door to Hong Kong had been closed. With the establishment of the Lo Wu Control Point between Hong Kong and Shenzhen, Hong Kong was completely shut off from mainland China. The separation of Hong Kong from mainland China, although artificial in nature, was to have profound long-term social significance. Hong Kong suddenly became a haven for Chinese who wanted freedom (Tsang 2004, 80).

Politically, the founding of the PRC also changed the politics of Hong Kong. As Chun argued, 1949 "was a major turning point which transformed Hong Kong into a battlefield for contesting 'national' identities" (1996, 58). Many of those Chinese who migrated to Hong Kong during the late 1940s and 1950s were members or supporters of the right-wing KMT (Tse and Siu 2010, 77). The pro–KMT China faction soon clashed with the pro–Communist China faction in Hong Kong, an issue that the colonial government was very vigilant about. The fact that there was no Hong Kong identity as such meant that Hong Kong became a battlefield for contesting these "different" Chinese identities. The intense conflicts between the rightists and the leftists, between the pro–KMT China faction and the pro–Communist China faction, erupted in the infamous 1967 riots (Chun 1996, 58). These riots were sparked by pro–Communist leftists in Hong Kong, who, inspired by the Cultural Revolution in the PRC, turned a labor dispute into large-scale demonstrations against British colonial rule (Leung 1996, 145; Cheung 2000, 39). As Chun perceptively points out, the 1967 riots could arguably be considered to be the catalyst that strengthened the government's determination to develop a consumption-based market society via economic development as a way to divert local people from the two Chinese nationalisms (1996, 58). In other words, the political policy invoked by the colonial government in postwar Hong Kong was precisely a form of depoliticization, a means of pretending that politics was not relevant to the social life of Hong Kong. This was a pretense because the portrait of an apolitical Hong Kong itself is very political.

Economically, the founding of the PRC put Hong Kong, which was closely tied to China economically, in a very difficult position. From the start of the Korean War, and during the subsequent United Nations embargo on trade with China in the early 1950s, Hong Kong's entrepôt trade, at that time the territory's major economic activity, suffered tremendously because China had been Hong Kong's largest trading partner. In addition, the newly established Communist Chinese regime imposed rigid control over its foreign trade, which led

Hong Kong's entrepôt trade to decline further (Chiu, Ho, and Lui 1997, 30–31). In the face of this economic setback caused by Cold War tensions, the colonial government began to focus on export-oriented industrialization by transforming Hong Kong into a free market port that would provide a more favorable environment for foreign investment. As Chun pointed out, this decision was "not just for the sake of [economic growth or] modernization itself but more importantly as a means of steering Hong Kong away from on-going national conflicts" (1996, 58). This is just another way of saying that the colonial government aimed to neutralize national conflicts and divert people's attention from political issues by immersing them in economic development and consumerism. Further facilitated by the positive nonintervention policy implemented in 1971 (Fung 1982, 26), export-oriented industrialization proved to be very successful in the following decade. Manufacturing's share of the GDP increased from 24.7 percent in 1961 to 28.2 percent in 1971, and the sector's share of total employment grew from 43 percent to 47 percent (Chiu, Ho, and Lui 1997, 52). The rapid growth of the manufacturing sector substantially increased the incomes of most Hong Kong workers, which in turn allowed them to spend and consume.

The colonial government also endeavored to promote consumption, as part of its strategy to steer the local people away from the two Chinese nationalisms. This governmental imperative manifested itself clearly in the administration's open attitude toward media imports in postwar Hong Kong, which was also in line with its noninterventionist policies. Since the early twentieth century, Hong Kong had attracted many transnational corporations, especially media-related business ventures. A notable example of this is television. Rediffusion, originally a radio provider, was granted a cable broadcasting license by the Hong Kong government and began to provide a monochrome cable television service, known as Rediffusion (Hong Kong) Limited. Rediffusion Cable was a black-and-white broadcast service with only one channel and an initial four hours of airtime daily.[5] Almost all of its programs, including dramas, documentaries, and news, were imported directly from Britain and were therefore broadcast in English (Cheuk 2008, 31). In addition, cable viewers were required to pay expensive subscription and rental fees, which explains why Rediffusion viewers were limited to an elite cohort who were both economically affluent and culturally literate.

The situation began to change in 1967 when TVB, the first free-to-air broadcaster, which was again jointly owned by overseas and Chinese-Shanghainese TV stations, was launched (Wu 2003, 5). The major difference between TVB and RTV was that TVB, from its inception, provided "wireless" and "free" TV broadcasts to people in Hong Kong. To distinguish it from the cable TV broadcaster RTV, TVB advertised itself as *the* "wireless TV" broadcaster, although there is

5. See http://www.rthk.org.hk/broadcast75/topic03a.htm. Accessed on July 8, 2015.

now more than one wireless free-to-air television station. The advantage of viewing TV broadcast by TVB was that viewers did not need to pay subscription or license fees. All they needed to do was to purchase a TV set and an antenna. The relatively low cost of TV consumption associated with TVB was especially significant for people in Hong Kong during the 1960s and early 1970s. For most people in Hong Kong, buying a TV set and watching free broadcasts was more economical than subscribing to RTV. This made TVB an overnight success in Hong Kong during the 1970s and 1980s (Wong and Yau, forthcoming).

The passion of the Hong Kong people for TV increased in 1971 when TVB began to produce and transmit television dramas in color (Wong and Yau, forthcoming). In the early years, most of TVB's airtime was filled with imported content such as English-language programs (Cheuk 2008, 33). TVB only began to produce its own television dramas in the late 1960s.

Locally produced television dramas started to gain momentum in Hong Kong in the 1970s under the leadership of Chung King-fai and Leung Tin. The dramas they produced, however, were rather outdated, and did not resonate with Hong Kong audiences (Wong and Yau, forthcoming). This situation changed radically when a large pool of young, highly educated local talent entered the local broadcasting scene during the 1970s. Of these figures, Selina Chow Liang Shuk-yee, who has worked for all three TV stations in Hong Kong at different times, was arguably the most influential drama producer at TVB at the time (Wong and Yau, forthcoming).

The intention of Chow Liang to situate her television dramas firmly within Hong Kong society can be seen in *Hotel* (狂潮), the first long-running serial drama (totaling 129 episodes) directed by Chow Liang, Wong Tin-lam, and Shek Siu-ming, and screened on Jade Theatre (翡翠劇場). Premièring in November 1976, *Hotel* revolves around people and events at a fictional hotel called the "Rich Jade Hotel," which is owned by a Hong Kong millionaire. Set in the transitional period during the rapid economic expansion of Hong Kong society in the 1970s, the show portrays the emergence and growth of the new middle class and the tensions, conflicts, clashes, and deceptions among different characters. TV audiences in Hong Kong, for the first time, could identify with the different characters and therefore "see" themselves in the drama. In a sense, this drama is a landmark in Hong Kong television history, not only because it attracted a viewership of 1.9 million but also because it created a standardized, mass consumer society, wherein people had extremely similar tastes (Cheuk 2008, 38). On the evening of the final episode of *Hotel*, people hurried home to see the drama at 7 p.m.; students, white-collar workers, factory workers, and professionals had all been discussing the finale since the afternoon (Chow 1990, 30). Inspired by Anderson's thesis on nationalism, we argue elsewhere that the broad popularity of TVB dramas in particular and mass consumer culture in general helped to build a national identity in Hong Kong (Wong and Yau, forthcoming).

Hong Kong Society as a Market Society

The concerted efforts of the colonial government to promote production and consumption were instrumental in transforming Hong Kong into a market society in the 1980s. The underlying assumption behind the governmental rhetoric of economic development and consumption expansion was that Hong Kong society was completely free of governmental intervention and everything was determined by market demand and supply. By artificially portraying Hong Kong as a free market, the government aimed to lure the local people into an endless circle of moneymaking and consumption, thereby steering them away from the different forms of Chinese nationalism that had plagued Hong Kong in the 1960s. Of course, the extent to which Hong Kong society was free from government intervention is open to debate; what is important here is that these government policies helped to transform Hong Kong into a market society. The idea of a market society in which everything can be reduced to, and measured by, a common denominator—monetary value—is one that underpins the self-definition of Western society (Sahlins 1976; 1999; 2000). This free market tends to inscribe an ideology onto a market society whereby every action and its alternative, as Sahlins explains,

> must first be translated into their apparent common denominator of "pleasures" or "satisfactions," among which we prudently allocated our limited pecuniary means. In the translation, then, their distinctive social content is lost, with the result that from the natives' point of view all of culture seems constituted by (and as) the businesslike economising of autonomous individuals. (2000, 278)

Under the sway of market economism, the social life of Hong Kong Chinese is characterized by a utilitarian ideology that preaches that the social actions of autonomous individuals are largely translated into monetary values and decision-making is determined by utility. This concept of utilitarianism is so omnipresent and hegemonic that it has found its full manifestation in the local familial relationship, one of the most important forms of human relationship in the Chinese society of Hong Kong. When we say that the notion of utilitarianism has permeated familial life, it means that the relationships between family members and nonfamily members as well as the relationships among members within the family are largely expressed in terms of functional values, and are based on utility. This utilitarian understanding of the Hong Kong family has been famously and substantially captured by Lau Siu-kai (1978). In contrasting it with the familism characteristic of traditional China (Lau refers to this as "traditional familism"), Lau coined the term "utilitarianistic familism" to describe the kind of familism prevalent in modern Hong Kong (1978, 8–9). According to Lau, utilitarianistic familism refers to:

> a normative and behavioural tendency of an individual to place his familial interests above the interests of society as well as its constituent individuals and groups, and to structure his relationships with other individuals and groups in such a fashion that the furtherance of his familial interests is the primary consideration. Moreover, among the familial interests, materialistic interests take priority over all other non-materialistic interests. (1978, 9)

More importantly, Lau (1978) attributed this utilitarianistic familism to the changes wrought by the urbanization, industrialization, and colonization of Hong Kong society. In other words, the form of familism characteristic of modern Hong Kong resulted largely from the abovementioned geopolitics, especially the transformation of Hong Kong society into a market society. It is of crucial significance here to point out that this kind of familism has a profound bearing on the role of Hong Kong Chinese daughters. As we have seen, daughters as non-*fang* members played a relatively minor role in economic development under traditional familism. However, with the rapid expansion of the textile and electronics manufacturing industries in Hong Kong during the 1960s and 1970s, these young, submissive daughters suddenly acquired a new functional value to their parents: they could now be employed in the labor market, and the money they earned could be used to finance the family.

Hong Kong Chinese daughters were able to be manipulated because there is, as already noted, a gap between the status of daughters as members of the *jia* and as nonmembers of the *fang/jiazu* system. This gap allowed Hong Kong parents to use their daughters as an important instrument to maximize the financial well-being of the *jia*. Ethnographic studies have shown that Chinese parents tend to develop strategies to optimize the financial contribution of their daughters before they marry, because it is the norm for Chinese daughters to cease to be members of the *jia* upon marriage and thereafter to have no formal financial duty to the natal *jia* (Salaff 1981). One of the strategies employed by parents is to "make" their daughters' schooling as short as possible in order to increase their working life before marriage as much as possible. As Salaff (1981) discovered, many Hong Kong daughters were forced to leave school when they finished primary school so that they could earn money to pay for their male siblings' university education. This appears to have been especially true in the 1960s, when the manufacturing sector was expanding and thus provided plenty of employment opportunities for young women in the territory. The income these Hong Kong daughters earned for their families could be channeled to other purposes by their natal families, such as purchasing a flat for their male siblings; the daughters, however, were not entitled to a flat acquired by virtue of their financial contribution because they were not *fang/jiazu* members. The financial manipulation of Hong Kong Chinese daughters thus points directly to the discriminatory nature of Chinese *fang/jiazu* against female descendants.

From Working Daughters to "Strong Women"

As mentioned above, Hong Kong's manufacturing sector expanded substantially in the 1960s. However, production costs in the manufacturing sector have risen rapidly since the early 1980s because of the soaring property market, labor shortages, and rising wage rates. In response, manufacturers relocated their production bases to the Mainland to take advantage of the abundant supply of low-wage labor there. According to Chiu, Ho, and Lui (1997), this relocation strategy had twofold implications for Hong Kong's employment structure. First, the absolute number of persons employed in the manufacturing sector fell. Secondly, within the manufacturing sector the proportion of production and related workers fell by a fifth, from 82.3 percent in 1981 to 68.2 percent in 1991, while that of professional, technical, administrative, and managerial workers tripled, from 3.8 percent in 1981 to 11.4 percent in 1991. Chiu, Ho, and Lui (1997) argued that these statistics pointed to a double-restructuring process. In the overall economic structure, there had been a sectoral shift from manufacturing to finance, trading, and services from the 1970s onward. At the same time, manufacturing itself had moved from a production to a commercial orientation (Chiu, Ho, and Lui 1997, 71–77).

The resultant occupational shift from production to commerce provided abundant employment opportunities in service sector for educated young people. Most of these educated young people were born in the late 1950s and early 1960s, and grew up in the 1970s. The 1970s was a very important period in modern Hong Kong history. During this decade, Hong Kong society changed rapidly and radically. Incomes and living standards improved markedly, with the result that many young people—even those from working-class families—no longer needed to leave school early and work to support their families.

The colonial government also worked hard to provide educational opportunities for many working-class children. In 1971, the British colonial government for the first time introduced six-year free compulsory education in Hong Kong (Morris, McClelland, and Wong 1997, 30). In conjunction with this, the government enacted the Attendance Order which imposed a penalty (a level 3 fine or three months' imprisonment) on any parent who failed to send his/her child(ren) to school without a reasonable excuse (Hong Kong Education Bureau 1974, 1). In 1973, Crawford Murray MacLehose, who had become governor of Hong Kong in 1972, appointed a new Board of Education and commissioned it to formulate a practical policy for the expansion of secondary education, which resulted in the 1974 "White Paper on Secondary Education in Hong Kong over the Next Decade" (Hong Kong Education Bureau 1974, 1). The main target of the White Paper was to make nine years of subsidized education (i.e., six years of primary school followed by three years at secondary school) available to every child by 1979 (Hong Kong Education Bureau 1974, 3; Morris, McClelland, and Wong 1997, 30). In addition, the White Paper recommended the abolition of the

secondary school entrance examination, which was the method used to select students for secondary education before 1974, and the rotation of classrooms so that more classes could be held when the number of classrooms was inadequate (Hong Kong Education Bureau 1974, 4; 12). However, the plan was subsequently brought forward by a year and it was announced that from 1978 all primary school leavers who chose to attend secondary school would be provided with three years of free junior secondary education (Hong Kong Education Bureau 1978, 1). Under these educational policies, most young people born in the 1960s would have at least a high-school level of education, enabling them to move from the manufacturing sector into the tertiary sector.

Many utilitarianistic Hong Kong parents of course did not miss this chance to promote the welfare of their families by sending their children, including their daughters, to high school and even university. Many of these children would be the first in their family to attend university. Meanwhile, the sectoral shift from manufacturing to finance, trading, and services created opportunities for these well-educated young people to leave the working class and join the service class.

Obviously, these educated young women were not the working daughters of the 1960s. Instead, they were career-minded women who were portrayed in the media as "strong women." The term "strong women" originates from the TVB drama *A House Is Not a Home* (家變), which achieved a new record in audience numbers, topping the TV ratings with an audience of 2.4 million (Cheuk 2008, 38). Premièring in August 1977, this TV drama features the conflict and tensions between the separate households of a wealthy man, Lok Fei: the household of Lok's wife and the household of his concubine. Among the cast, the strong female image of Lok Lam, portrayed by Liza Wang Ming-chuen, found great favor with Hong Kong audiences, especially young women. At the time, many young women in Hong Kong attempted to emulate the so-called "Lok Lam hairstyle."[6] Throughout the late 1970s and early 1980s, Lok Lam was the talk of the town, and her image in the drama as a strong, career-minded woman became the model for many career women at the time.

The media producer who coined the term "strong women" was Chow Liang Shuk-yee, who is herself a good example of a "strong woman." Chow Liang was born into an educated middle-class family. Her parents were well versed in Beijing operas, Cantonese opera music, and Shaoxing operas. Under the influence of her father, who was a filmmaker and cinema entrepreneur, from a young age Chow Liang became involved in the entertainment world. These early experiences exerted a tremendous influence on her, culminating in her decision to pursue a postgraduate degree in drama at the Rose Bruford College of Theatre and Performance.[7] Upon her return to Hong Kong, she joined TVB,

6. The Lok Lam haircut is a straight shoulder-length cut with a wavy fringe.
7. See http://www.chamber.org.hk/wsc/speakers/SelinaCHOW.pdf. Accessed on July 8, 2015.

which, as mentioned above, was the first Hong Kong-based TV station. Her first position there was as episodic drama director. According to our interview with Kitty Yip Git-hing, a prominent TV producer in the 1970s, Chow Liang, herself a graduate in English from the University of Hong Kong, when appointed assistant general manager for drama production, looked to recruit fresh graduates from local universities to form the backbone of her production team. This clearly reveals her intention to bring in new blood and to base her dramas firmly on Hong Kong society. Most of these fresh graduates were born in Hong Kong and socialized during the rapidly changing 1970s and absorbed many aspects of the new ethos along with their colonial education. They therefore were not only highly educated, but also developed a strong sense of community attachment to Hong Kong society (Chow 1990, 8). It was this group of educated young people, along with Chow Liang, who not only produced programs with highly diversified themes and complex plots but also made TV dramas the dominant mode of entertainment among Hong Kong people (Chow 1990, 9–10).

Womanhood and Manhood in Hong Kong

It should be emphasized that although the daughters of Chinese families in Hong Kong were encouraged to serve as "working daughters" in factories from the 1960s and as "career women" from the 1970s, the instrumental nature of Hong Kong Chinese daughters never changed. The major reason that these women were encouraged to work by their families was not to empower the women themselves but to optimize the economic opportunities generated by the geopolitics of Hong Kong to further exploit the money-earning power of women. This was because, based on the concept of *jia*, in which members share a common budget and sons and daughters alike are required to contribute financially to their *jia*, the income generated by women could be channeled to other family purposes, although the women themselves had no right to the surpluses they generated.

However, their economic contribution to the family, as Salaff (1981) discovered, did allow working daughters in the 1960s to levy influence on some major decisions made within the family. More importantly, those career women with economic power in the 1980s were able to affect the relationship between their husbands and fathers-in-law. As noted earlier, Taiwanese men are generally subordinate members of *jiazu*, and are supposed to sacrifice their interests for their father's *jiazu*. Ethnographic research also reveals that Chinese women represent their husbands' *fang* interests within *jiazu* and their active involvement in and protection of their husbands' *fang* interests is the core factor that leads to the disintegration of *jiazu* (Chen 1986, 89). In other words, whether a father can suppress *fang* rebellion and impose family peace is dependent on the balance of political and economic power between fathers and their daughters-in-law. It follows that economically powerful career women in Hong Kong can always undermine the

authority of their fathers-in-law and put the interests of their husband's *fang* over those of their father-in-law's *jiazu*. We thus argue that compared with the *jiazu* orientation in Taiwan, the families of Hong Kong Chinese tend to be *fang* oriented, which in turn has profound implications for the content of womanhood and manhood in Hong Kong.

Womanhood in Hong Kong

In postwar Hong Kong, where utilitarianism dominated the cultural sphere and materialistic interests took precedence over all other nonmaterialistic interests, the working woman/mother rather than the professional housewife became the norm. In fact, the professional housewife now enjoys much lower status than the working woman/mother. This is clearly reflected in the local term *shinai* (師奶), meaning housewives, which carries a negative connotation. All of this indicates that women are still expected to take care of children and the household, but their failure to do so no longer carries moral connotations, as we can see that more and more Hong Kong families hire domestic helpers from the Philippines, Indonesia, and Thailand to take care of their children and families.

In the familial context of Hong Kong, where the *fang*'s interests take priority over those of the *jiazu*, daughters-in-law who are willing to take care of their parents-in-law are admirable but not essential. For the same reason, daughters-in-law are not expected to live under the same roof as their parents-in-law. Living separately is the norm in modern Hong Kong.

Attitudes toward chastity have also changed, as virginity is no longer expected and divorced women with children also find it easy to remarry. In fact, marrying may be easier for them than it is for single women over thirty. Motherhood remains desirable but is not essential. In fact, how many children a couple should have and their gender preferences are negotiable. More importantly, women often have more say in the *fang*'s finances.

Manhood

Men in Hong Kong are still expected to be successful at school and in their later career development, but the major purpose of their success is to economically and spiritually benefit their *fang* and residential *jia* rather than their father's *jiazu*. Similarly, men in Hong Kong are still expected to take care of their parents financially, physically, and emotionally, but their *fang*'s interests take priority over those of their father's *jiazu*. The change in priority from *jiazu* to *fang* means that more and more parents need to live in aged care homes instead of being taken care of by their sons. One consequence of this is the widening social distance between male siblings.

The increased importance placed on *fang* also implies significant changes to parenthood. Men are expected to negotiate with their wives about motherhood,

the number of children they should have, and their gender preferences; these matters can no longer be decided by the men alone.

Conclusion

The message of this chapter is very simple: different contexts produce different Chinese masculinities. The first important context identified in this chapter is the geopolitics of the society in question, as we have seen in the cases of Taiwan and Hong Kong. The influence of geopolitics is first mediated by the kinship system, which in turn shapes and informs the nature and character of manhood and womanhood.

The second important context is the kinship system, because manhood and womanhood at least in the Chinese societies of Hong Kong and Taiwan derive their meaning first and foremost from kinship ideologies. The third important context is womanhood because, as we have shown, the nature and character of manhood is to a great extent related to, if not negatively defined by, womanhood. In addition, media developments in postwar Hong Kong and foreign influences provide some important contexts in which masculinity is formulated.

We conclude that there is certainly no single essentialized Chinese masculinity; rather, there are different masculinities that result from complex articulations between Chinese kinship systems, geopolitics, and other factors. As we have seen here, the form of Chinese masculinity that is characteristic of Taiwan pays more attention to the *jiazu*'s interests whereas that in Hong Kong focuses instead on the *fang*'s interests. Masculinity or manhood needs to be understood in terms of its full range of contexts rather than as an independent entity.

Two questions arise from the findings of this chapter. The first is: is it still accurate to say that the types of manhood manifested in the Chinese societies of Hong Kong and Taiwan are the same? If not, can we still refer to these two different forms of manhood as Chinese manhood? Or we could ask the more direct question: can we say that there is a form of manhood that is applicable to *all* Chinese societies?

Our second question is methodological. If the nature and character of masculinity in the Chinese societies of Hong Kong and Taiwan is defined by the full range of contexts of these two societies, including their geopolitics, family systems, and their interrelations, should we still focus our research on manhood in these two societies? Or, to put this in another way: if masculinity is just a dependent variable in the chain of social explanation, should the focus of research be relocated to the geopolitics, the family system, and their interrelations?

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Index