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Narrative of Chinese and Western Popular Fiction

Comparison and Interpretation

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About This Book

This book authored by Yonglin Huang originally published in Chinese by Central China Normal University Press presents a comprehensive and systematic study of the narrative history, narrative methods and narrative contents of Chinese and Western popular fiction from the perspectives of narratology, comparative literature, and art and literature studies by adopting the methodology of parallel comparison. The book is a pioneering work that systematically investigates the similarities and differences between Chinese and Western popular fiction, and traces the root causes leading to the differences. By means of narrative comparison, it explores the conceptual and spiritual correlations and differences between Chinese and Western popular fiction and, by relating them to the root causes of cultural spirit, allows us to gain an insight into the cultural heritage of different nations. The book is structured in line with a cause-and-effect logical sequence and moves from the macroscopic to the microscopic, from history to reality, and from theory to practice. The integration of macro-level theoretical studies and micro-level case studies is both novel and effective. This book was awarded Second Prize at the Sixth Outstanding Achievement Awards in Scientific Research for Chinese Institutions of Higher Learning (Humanities & Social Sciences 2013).

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Introduction

1.1 A Conceptual Comparison of Chinese and Western "Popular Fiction"

1.1.1 A Comparison of the Concept of Chinese and Western "Fiction"

According to Western contemporary narratology, the literary form of Western fiction took shape in the 18th century, which is marked by the emergence of "novels"; while in terms of stylistics, "fiction" in the Middle Ages was actually a type of prose fictional stories which originally meant "a thing that is invented or imagined." In other words, prose fictional stories were the forerunner of novels in the West in the Middle Ages. Examples of these novels include various stories in the folk literature popular in the countryside, stories of chevalier romance, stories of tramps, etc., among which G. Boccaccio's *The Decameron* and M. de Cervantes's *Don Quixote* were the representatives. It can be said that prose fictional stories ushered in the beginning of Western fiction. The word "novel" originated from the Italian word "novella," which is defined in *Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language* as "a short prose narrative, ususally with a moral and often satiric, as any of the tales is, Boccaccio's *Decameron*" (David 1972: 974). The word "novella" derived from "novena," which exactly means "new stories." "Novel" was a concept developed after the Renaissance. It originally referred to romantic love stories and adventurous legendary stories. Later, it gradually expanded into a literary concept which included lengthy fictional literary forms of different types. During its development, the concept was gradually restricted to a type of fictional literary form which described the life of ordinary people in their familiar, daily and current environment in the real world. In many European languages, the word "romance" (i.e. adventurous stories and romantic legends) is still used to refer to "novel." Forster (1879–1970), the British

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novelist and theorist, holds that it suffices to define "novel" as "a fiction in prose of a certain length" (Forster 1974: 25).

The Chinese equivalent word for "fiction" is "xiaoshuo," which can be traced back to *Zhuangzi • External Things*,[1] in which there is the statement "It falls far short of supremacy to decorate xiaoshuo in order to seek fine fame and good reputation," in which "xiaoshuo" actually (also literally) refers to "casual talks and petty remarks," and is very different from "xiaoshuo" (fiction) used in later times as a literary form. The person who firstly used the word "xiaoshuo" as a literary form is Huan Tan (23 BC–46 AD), a philosopher in the Eastern Han Dynasty (25–220 AD), who stated in his book "*New Comments*" (*Xin Lun*) that "fictionists collect causal talks and petty remarks and make analogy to compose short writings in an effort to cultivate themselves and manage family affairs. Therefore they are worth reading." Huan Tan affirmed the status of "xiaoshuo" as a literary form and "xiaoshuo jia" (fictionist) as a person who composed literary works. In his view, "xiaoshuo" is intended to make use of the things and phenomena around us to analogically expound certain principles of cultivating one's characters and managing family affairs. It is a form of "short writings" consisting of various "light remarks and petty notes." Ban Gu[2] (32–92 AD), a Chinese historian and writer in the Eastern Han Dynasty, listed 15 types of xiaoshuo in his *Book of Han•On Art and Literature*, arguing that "folk xiaoshuo were mostly written by some minor officials based on the talk of the town or hearsay," hence the term "xiaoshuo" (fiction) as a literary form in the history of Chinese literature, which was regarded by Ban Gu as a recount of the talk of the town and hearsay. In his "Preface" to *Records of Demigods* (*Sou Shen Ji*), Gan Bao (283–351 AD), a writer and historian in the Eastern Jin Dynasty (317–420 AD), pointed out that there might be errors in his *Records of Demigods*, and "if the errors are from the records collected by me about recent times, then I would be willing to take the blame and make a distinction between the scholars of the past and me. So far as the present *Records of Demigods* is concerned, it can be seen that Heaven is by no means unfair" (Quoted in Huang and Han 1982: 20). This shows that the fictionists at the time mainly attempted to fulfill their duty to record the historical facts faithfully. Classical Chinese fiction has two branches: fiction of classical Chinese,[3] and fiction of vernacular Chinese. Fiction of classical Chinese was formed in the Tang Dynasty (618–907 AD). Shen Jiji (750–797 AD), a writer of Tang romance, noted in his

[1] Zhuangzi (369–286 BC) is the pivotal figure in classical philosophical Taoism in ancient China, and *Zhuangzi* is a compilation of his and others' writings at the pinnacle of the philosophically subtle classical period in China. The period was marked by humanist and naturalist reflections on normativity shaped by the metaphor of a Tao—a social or a natural Way. Traditional orthodoxy understood Zhuangzi as an anti-rational, credulous follower of a mystical Laozi. This traditional view dominated mainstream readings of the text.—Translator's note.

[2] Ban Gu (32–92 AD) was a Chinese historian, politician, and poet best known for his part in compiling the *Book of Han* (*Han Shu*), the second of China's 24 dynastic histories (the first is the *Historical Records* [*Shi Ji*] by Sima Qian [145 BC–??]). He also wrote a number of fu, a major literary form with part prose and part poetry, which is particularly associated with the Han era.—Translator's note.

[3] "Classical Chinese" refers to the written Chinese based on the ancient classical Chinese language popular in China before the May 4th Movement in 1919.—Translator's note.

"Postscript" to *The Tale of the Fairy Ren* (*Renshi Zhuan*) that his aim of writing was "integrating the law of change, exploring the fortune of unusual people, displaying the beauty of writing and conveying the essence of ingenuity" (Quoted in Zeng et al. 1982: 12). From this it can be seen that Shen Jiji treated fiction-writing as a kind of artistic creation. Through elaborate arrangement of the structure of his writing, he attempted to transmit to people and the world delicate and profound affections. As Hu Yinglin (1551–1602), a man of letters in the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644) pointed out, "writers in the Tang Dynasty wrote in an original and creative way on purpose in an effort to express their aspiration by means of fiction." Based on the above remarks of Huan Tan, Ban Gu and Hu Yinglin, we can summarize the general characteristics of early fiction as: short in length ("short writings"), morally teaching ("to cultivate themselves and manage family affairs. Therefore they are worth reading"), recording the phenomena and concrete things around people ("collect causal talks and petty remarks and make analogy," "talk of the town and hearsay," "the records collected by me about recent times"), and fictional ("wrote in an original and creative way on purpose"), which are to a certain extent in line with the characteristics of the early Western fiction.

From the above discussion about the evolution the concept of "fiction" in China and the West, it can be seen that Chinese and Western concepts of fiction share the common feature of "fictional composition based on real life." Chinese concept of fiction evolved along the way of "from sticking to the historical facts to shaking off the yoke of them, from faithful recording of facts to fictional composition"; while Western concept of fiction originally meant "fictional composition," and it is during its process of evolution that it gradually began to lay stress on the realistic elements in its artistic creation so as to shorten the distance between the artistic world and the secular world. Therefore, Chinese and Western concepts of "fiction" actually point to the same destination by different routes (Hu 2004: 191).

1.1.2 A Conceptual Comparison of Chinese and Western "Popular Fiction"

What is "popular fiction"? According to Betty Rosenberg and Diana Tixier Herald, "popular fiction" is modelled fiction, as each type of it is supposed to follow certain rules in plot construction and characterization and to avoid violating some taboos. These rules and taboos are acknowledged by the authors and are required to be observed by the publishers (Quoted in Huang 1997). John G. Gawelti classifies the mode of "popular fiction" into two types: cultural mode and plot mode. "Cultural mode" refers to the cultural formats which are often found in popular fiction to reflect the features of certain time and place, such as cowboys, fugitives, American Indians, and borderland towns in American western fiction; and castles, monasteries, innocent girls, and evil forces in Gothic fiction. "Plot mode" refers to the relatively stereotypic storylines in popular fiction, such as the adventures in Americans western fiction,

the horrifying experience of a young girl escaping from evil hands in Gothic novels (Quoted in Huang 1997). Gawelti holds that it is through an organic integration of a series of certain cultural formats and relatively stereotypic storylines that a certain type of popular fiction is made (Ibid.). All types of fiction follow certain mode, and serious fiction and popular fiction are no exceptions, the difference lies in that serious fiction follows more general mode while the mode of popular fiction is more special, as it is often about a certain type of heroes and heroines as well as villains, the stories often take place in some special places, and it often involves some special plots. Gawelti makes a discussion about it as follows:

> All cultural products are a mixture of two elements: traditional techniques and creation. "Traditional techniques" are the elements known by the creator and readers beforehand, which include favorite plots, stereotyped characters, generally accepted views, generally understandable metaphors, and other language techniques. On the other hand, "creation" brings about elements which are uniquely conceived of by the creator, such as the new type of characters, new views or new language forms.
>
> (Gawelti 1971: 37)

Therefore *Finnegans Wake* by James Joyce should be at the pole of creation while stereotyped works at the other, although stereotyped works may also involve a lot of creation, and vice versa.

In the following table by American scholar Berger (1996), some commonly-seen types (or modes) of popular fiction are listed, such as American western fiction, detective fiction, spy fiction, and science fiction, as well as their stereotyped patterns. Of course, each type may differ a lot in their plots, types of villains, and themes. The table may let us know something about what is meant by Gawelti about "traditional techniques" (see Table 1.1).

Table 1.1 Traditional techniques in popular fiction

Factors	Western fiction	Detective fiction	Spy fiction	Science fiction
Time	19th century	Present	Present	Future
Place	American west	City	The world	Space
Hero	Cowboy	Detective	Secret agent	Spaceman
Heroine	Country teacher	Maiden	Spy	Spacegirl
Villain	Fugitive	Killer	Hidden spy	E.T.
Storyline	Restoring law and order	Searching for the killer	Searching for the hidden spy	Driving away E.T.
Theme	Justice	Catching the killer	Saving freedom	Saving the world
Costume	Cowboy hat	Raincoat	Western suit	Hi-tech costume
Means of movement	Horse	Old car	Open car with two seats	Spaceship
Weapon	Six-shooter	Pistol and fist	Pistol with a silencer	Laser gun

A special type or mode of fiction reflects the interest of the reader, author and publisher in it. "Mode" constitutes the base on which a fiction can be appreciated. While reading fiction, people will feel delighted and satisfied because the content of the fiction arouses their interest. Once they have a certain experience about a certain mode of fiction, they will have the desire to re-read it (Huang 1997). In terms of subject matter, popular fiction can be classified into such types as martial arts fiction, detective fiction, romantic fiction, science fiction, historical fiction, each type of which has its unique mode of writing. Although popular fiction came into being a long time ago, it is not until modern times that it came out in large numbers, and now it has become a part of our modern life.

As a branch of Chinese literature, popular fiction (tongsu xiaoshuo) in China originally had three elements in ancient times which evolved into four types of fiction in modern times. The "three elements" refers to "heroes," "sons and daughters," and "gods and demons." Later, fiction about gods and demons became a collateral branch of martial arts fiction, while science fiction with an air of gods and demons made their appearance in China as a new type of fiction. In the new era, through re-structuring and addition of new type, modern popular fiction in China has evolved into four major types: social popular fiction, romantic popular fiction, martial arts fiction and detective popular fiction. As for the definition of Chinese "popular fiction," a lot of scholars have made in-depth discussions about it, which is presented as follows.

As early as 1918, the Chinese scholar Liu Bannong (1891–1934) gave a definition of "tongsu" (popular) in terms the meaning of the English word "popular." He holds that "tongsu" means "be suitable and understandable to and liked and received by general people," arguing that popular fiction "is the fiction belonging to upper, middle and lower classes rather than for philosophers and scientists to exchange views and ideas, let alone for men of letters to complain and to show off their skills" (Liu 1986: 74). This defines the essence of "popular fiction" from the perspective of the readers.

Chen (1942) argues that "we should advocate popular literature movement in China, for popular literature has the merits of both the old and new literature; at the same time it has the feature of understandability and smoothness. It is not only accessible to every one of us, but also bridges the gap between the new and the old literature." He further points out that "the so-called popular literature not only requires the author to write in a popular way, but also requires him to live with the reading public, to learn from them, to learn their language, to be receptive to their spirit legacy, to express their feelings and interests, and to represent them in their works." "While creating their works, the author should try to give up his own interests and try to be close to the interests of the general readers—to be able to make flexible use of their interests is the key to popular literature." "While selecting topics, the author of popular literature must seek for the stories about the life of general people. As for his writing techniques, he might as well make use of old or existent techniques. If he chooses to make use of new techniques, they must be simple and understandable …" (Ibid.).

Zhang Gansheng, after making a research into the etymological meaning of "tongsu" in Chinese, comes to the conclusion that the conception of "tongsu" derived from the conception of "su" (vulgar). The term "tongsu" originally had two meanings: one is "thoroughly understand customs and conventions," the other is "be connected with

secular world." Given that, Zhang Gansheng argues that "fiction in China has been tightly connected with 'tongsu' from the time when the definition of 'fiction' was formulated." "The expression 'tongsu' of Chinese fiction originally referred to 'the thorough understanding of customs and conventions,' and this notion remained for some time until the Tang Dynasty… Therefore, it went through some time for popular fiction to change from the sense of 'the thorough understanding of customs and conventions' to 'be connected with secular world'" (Zhang 1991: 4–6). It can be seen that Zhang Gansheng makes a discussion about "popular literature" from the perspective of literary creation.

The Chinese translator and writer Dong Leshan (1924–1999) defines "popular literature" as follows:

> Roughly speaking, popular literature has the following characteristics: (1) popular literature is normally shallow in its ideological contents and depth of thought, and the author's literary creation is based on the popular common social values. Therefore, such literature is unable to offer rich "food" for readers' spiritual world — it at most serves as a harmless entertainment. (2) The writing techniques of popular literature follow certain set patterns, and have become so much fixed that the storylines, settings and characters are highly similar with each other (though there are some minor differences), and is totally devoid of innovation. (3) Except for a few writers, the language of popular literature of most writers is devoid of its own style and characteristics, and it only functions to make clear a stereotyped story.
>
> (Dong 1995: 258)

So Dong Leshan makes a summary of the features of popular literature in light of the writing purpose and techniques.

Chen Pingyuan points out that "an important feature of popular literature is its good readability. By readability we do not mean complicated narrative, exciting plots and entertaining flavor; instead we mean the text provides a set of codes familiar to the readers and is easily identified by the readers automatically, hence its readability". This readability can be attributed to the following two factors: (1) The use of stereotypic techniques and standardized language to create a literary world which seems to be intricate and complicated on the surface but actually familiar, clear and pure—this is different from pure literature which is full of unfamiliarity, distortion and blank, calling for the participation and creation on the part of the reader. (2) It has a clear value judgment, embracing a simplified thinking of binary opposition between the good and the evil, the right and the wrong, and representing the existent social codes and cultural conceptions embraced by the general public—this is different from pure literature which is full of skepticism and rational criticism (Chen 1992: 197–198). Besides, Chen Pingyuan also holds that, for popular literature, "apart from its representation of prevalent aesthetic tastes, what is more important is its embodiment of popular cultural spirit… For popular literature, what is most valuable is not what has been said about the author's political views or religious ideas, but the revealed sentiments, mentalities, and feels which have not been fully realized by the author, or have only been faintly realized by him but cannot be accurately expressed" (Chen 1992: 199–200). Chen Pingyuan, by grasping the key point of "readability", makes a penetrating analysis of the "popularness" of popular literature. By revealing the

textual features in terms of the reading psychology and receptivity of the reading public, he reveals the key reasons why general readers are fond of reading popular literature.

Fan (1999: 18) points out that "(Chinese) popular fiction in modern times belongs to city popular fiction with traditional Chinese style, and so it is different from that in ancient times. We may as well define modern Chinese popular literature as follows: modern Chinese popular literature refers to the created or re-created literature by men of letters which grew and developed on the basis of industrial and commercial economy in the metropolises in the late Qing Dynasty[4] (1840–1911) and early period of Republic of China (1912–1949). Its content is based on traditional Chinese psychological mechanism, and its form inherited the mode of Chinese classical fiction. Functionally, it is intended to be interesting, entertaining, instructive and readable; meanwhile, it also gives consideration to such educational functions as punishing the evil and encouraging virtue. Owing to its advantage of suiting the appreciative taste of Chinese people, it has a wide readership with city people as the mainstay. It is a commercial literature which is regarded by city people as a spiritual consumer product, and which in return is sure to reflect their social values".

To sum up, popular fiction can be defined as "a form of fiction with vivid storyline, common language and high readability which reflects the cultural spirit of the reading public, expresses their values in a stereotyped way, and attaches importance to their aesthetic tastes".

1.2 Comparability and Heterogeneity of Chinese and Western Popular Fiction

1.2.1 Comparability of Chinese and Western Popular Fiction

A lot of literary researchers have been working hard in the fascinating filed of fiction theory and comparative literature and have attained fruitful achievements. However, in spite of the fact that many questions have been answered, there are still plenty of literary phenomena which are yet to be understood, and to make a comparison of Chinese and Western popular fiction is one of those research topics which awaits further exploration. The author of the present book holds that, popular fiction has long occupied a marginal position in the literary history of different countries and nations, and has long been neglected and under-explored. However, such a genre of literature has been enormously influential and has been the most popular among the reading public, exerting a huge impact on literary creation of later ages which

[4] "The late Qing Dynasty" (1840–1911) is a period from the outbreak of the First Opium War (1840) to the collapse of the Qing Dynasty (1911) and the founding of the Republic of China (1912).—Translator's note.

should never be underestimated. Therefore, it is of great necessity and significance to examine the same or similar regularities between Chinese and Western popular fiction and to analyze their common characteristics and the reasons behind them. The present book attempts to bring Chinese and Western popular fiction in for comparison, taking them for cross-reference and mutual verification in an effort to reveal their common aesthetic characteristics and respective peculiarities and values, so that we can go deeper from the superficial comparison of similarities and differences to the in-depth cross-cultural exploration. The methodology of the present book for the comparison of Chinese and Western popular fiction mainly involves the method of parallel comparison, focusing on the analysis and examination of similarities and affinities between them with regard to their contents, forms, themes, plots, images, tones, narrative art, etc. (i.e. comparability). Therefore, stressing comparability constitutes both the logical starting point of the present book and one of the important issues to be tackled in it.

As far as comparative literature is concerned, although some researchers are skeptical about the comparability of literature which has different cultural origin, most scholars still believe that literary systems of different cultures, no matter what differences there are between them or what historical stages they are in, must have some shared aesthetic mode of thinking and similar or same elements of artistic expression. Humans are the same in essence and this lays the mental and theoretical foundation for comparability. Different nations, due to their different living environment, way of living, historical tradition, national belief, aesthetic thinking, etc., have evolved different cultures with distinctive national characteristics. Such differences of different cultures are self-evident, while the common characteristics of different cultures in their ideologies, feelings and behaviors determine that there is commensurability between them. As Morgan points out, all human beings are of the same origin, and so they share the same intelligence mechanism and material form. Therefore, human experiences during the same cultural stage are basically the same in every age and every region. The intelligence mechanism of human beings, although differs slightly due to their different capability, is always in accord with each other in their pursuit for ideal standard. Therefore, its activity is homogenous in every stage of human development (Morgan 1997: 556). The British cultural anthropologist Tylor holds that in a broad sense, human characters and habits share a lot of similarities and sameness, as human beings are the same in essence, although they may be in different cultural stages (Tylor 1992: 6–7). The French cultural anthropologist Levy Bruhl points out that the same system, witchcraft, religious ritual, and beliefs and conventions about birth and death can be found in different nations, and it is owing to this sameness that the method of comparison emerged and came into operation (Levy-Bruhl 1981: 8–9). The German philosopher Hegel also maintains that as far as artistic category is concerned, the mode of artistic conception and means of artistic expression of different nations are often mixed-up, which makes us believe that the basic category specifically belonging to certain national world-view can also be found in earlier or later nations (Hegel 1979: 29).

So is the culture of different nations, naturally popular fiction which makes up an important part of a nation's culture is no exception. The popular fiction of many

nations has been translated into different languages and has been widely read the world over, and has turned out to be the classics of world's literature widely acknowledged by different nations—this proves that different nations share the same conceptions in literary creation and aesthetic appreciation. Goethe, after reading a Chinese romance,[5] comes to the conclusion that "Chinese people are almost the same as us in thinking, behaviors and feelings, which makes us feel that they and we are of the same kind of people. The only difference lies in that there in China everything seems to be brighter and clearer, more innocent, and more ethical. There in China everything is understandable, approachable, without strong lust and fiery poetical passion, which accord a lot with what is described in my *Hermann and Dorothea* and in the novels of the 18th century British writer Richardson (Quoted in Eckermann 1982: 112). What is noteworthy is that, here Goethe is not making a general discussion about the similarities of thinking, behaviors and feelings shared by Chinese and German people, but comes to be aware of the sameness in different nations through his reading of Chinese fiction. By making a comparison between Chinese romance and his own poem *Hermann and Dorothea* and Richardson's works, he draws the conclusion that "there are so many similarities between them" that he "becomes more and more fully convinced that poetry is the common property of human beings" (Ibid.: 113).

While talking about comparative literature, Qian Zhongshu (1910–1998), a famous Chinese writer, holds that "parallel study between Chinese and Western literature… is not only possible, but also highly significant" (Quoted in Zhang 1981). "Such a comparison can bring about conclusions of universal significance because it is made against the background of different cultural systems" (Ibid.). Le Daiyun also points out that, literature in all cultural systems is commensurable, as human beings share the same form of life and of experience (e.g. joy and sorrow, hope and despair, separation and reunion, and love and hate). Besides, the essence of literature lies in endowing the chaotic existence with a certain form, meaning and value. As a result, it is possible to study the common characteristics and laws of literature from the global perspective by breaking through the barrier of language and unitary cultural tradition (Le 1989: 1–2). Therefore, based on this idea and the three prerequisites of comparative literature, i.e. literariness, transcendence and compatibility (Cao et al. 2002: 58), the author of the present book believes that the comparability of Chinese and Western fiction is beyond doubt, because both two, though falling into different cultural systems, are the literary works which have a lot in common in ideology, literary mode, literary types and style.

[5] According to the noted Chinese esthetician Zhu Guangqian, here "a Chinese romance" possibly refers to "*The Fortunate Union*" (*Haoqiu Zhuan*).—Author's note.

1.2.2 Heterogeneity of Chinese and Western Popular Fiction

"Comparison" in comparative literature is different from "analogy." "Analogy" is a logical methodology through which general analogical reasoning is applied in the study of the history of human cultural development. Given the fact that two things may have a lot in common in a series of attributes and one of the two things also bears some other attributes, we can deduce that the other thing is sure to bear the same other attributes (Zheng 1994: 8). But in comparative literature, "comparison" compares not only the homogeneity of the things that are compared, but also their heterogeneity. This is especially so in cross-culture comparative study of Chinese and Western literature in which heterogeneity becomes the focus of comparison.

A number of researchers have made insightful comments about the heterogeneity of Chinese and Western literature. For example, Yuan (1998: 78) points out that "literature, no matter Oriental or Occidental, shares some common properties, which constitutes the starting point for the research of Chinese and Western comparative literature. But this starting point is not absolute, it is merely a beginning, leading us into a wider sphere of research… Therefore our comparison of Chinese and Western literature should not merely stop at the research on homogeneity, we must also explore the different literary ideological representation which is due to such different factors as environment, time, national conventions, and ethnic culture." Gu (1979) also argues that in specific area of Chinese and Western fiction, it is necessary to shift the focus of research to "differences" rather than "generalization," as it is extremely difficult to make generalization about the differences of Chinese and Western literary and cultural traditions… Given the longtime disconnection between China and the West as well as the huge differences between Chinese and Western cultures, in the study of Chinese and Western comparative literature the research on "differences" should be given more emphasis. Cao (1998) makes a more detailed exposition about heterogeneity, arguing that the main task of Chinese comparative literature should be engaged neither in French-style cultural "foreign trade", nor in haggling over "export" or "import" of literary works, nor in American-style cultural "great unity"… Instead, it should attempt to understand the national characteristics of Chinese literature and literary theory in its interpretation of cross-heterogeneous culture and to seek dialogue and communication between China and the West. "In the final analysis, comparative literature has two functions: one is communication, i.e. to seek the common grounds between different literature, disciplines and cultural circles of different nations and make an organic integration of them. The other is mutual complementation, i.e. to explore the differences between different literature, disciplines and cultural circles of different nations in an effort to highlight the respective national characteristics, literary individualities and unique values of different nations' literature so as to achieve mutual complementation and mutual glorification" (Cao 1998: 208). Since comparative literature pays special attention to and lays special emphasis on heterogeneity, it is required that such a comparison must be an equal dialogue. "The nature of 'dialogue' determines the principle of mutual

subjectivity and equality, which will guarantee that the comparison between heterogeneous cultures is two-way and equal, and therefore will guarantee the objectivity and academic nature called for by comparative literature" (Cao et al. 2001: 301).

Therefore, in light of the principle of equal dialogue, communication and mutual complementation in cross-heterogeneous culture, the author of the present book applies the methodology of parallel study in comparative literature aided with such theories as hermeneutics, receptive aesthetics, and narratology to make a comparison of Chinese and Western popular fiction by highlighting their respective literary features and revealing and expounding their respective literary traditions and existent values, in an effort to explore their shared aesthetic nature and fundamental laws. In the present study, the structural elements of fiction such as plot, theme, characters, and narrative make up the basic structure of the book, and question-consciousness is stressed so that the comparative study is question-driven. The present study holds that the comparison of homogeneity and heterogeneity is not the ultimate goal. Homogeneity is stressed in order to lay the foundation for comparison, and heterogeneity is emphasized in order to acknowledge and reveal respective literary characteristics, traditions and values. However, acknowledging heterogeneity does not mean indulging in self-closure and self-admiration—instead, it is intended to demonstrate the necessity and importance of dialogue, to better carry on the strengths of one's tradition, and to conscientiously draw on the quintessence of others so as to attain the goal of communication, understanding, mutual complementation and common development. In this way, an ideal literary world which is equal, colorful and mutually beneficial may be jointly built.

1.3 A Survey of the Similarities and Differences of Narrative of Chinese and Western Popular Fiction

Chinese and Western popular fiction grew out of different "soil," therefore their contents and artistic forms are inevitably constrained by such factors as society, history, philosophy and literature as well as the writer's personal ideology and literary accomplishment. As a result, Chinese and Western popular fiction differs considerably in narrative themes, narrative characters, narrative structures and narrative settings.

1.3.1 Narrative Theme of Chinese and Western Popular Fiction

As far as the theme of righteousness and morality is concerned, both Chinese and Western popular fiction exhibits a strong sense of righteousness and morality, such as the exposure of unjust society and dark politics, the praise of such ideological sentiments as sympathy for the weak, fighting against the evil and upholding justice,

and the full affirmation of such moral values as being ready to help others for a just cause, sacrificing one's own interests for the sake of others, being creditable, and keeping promises. While upholding righteousness and promoting morality, Chinese and Western popular fiction also makes critical narrative about those morally evil people and phenomena, and many of them exhibit such themes as fighting against atrocity, pursuing freedom, and yearning for peace. The difference between Chinese and Western popular fiction lies in that, influenced by Confucianism, Chinese popular fiction carries with it strong ethical significance, which is embodied in the advocacy of such feudal ethical principles as loyalty, filial piety, chastity and righteousness. By contrast, influenced by empiricism, Western popular fiction displays the ethics of individualism, emphasizing the expression of idiosyncratic ideology and individualistic code of conduct.

With regard to the theme of retributive justice, both Chinese and Western popular fiction exhibits distinct moral/ethical values and evaluation about good and evil, and right and wrong through retributive justice, and fully displays the spirit of punishing the evil and praising the good. However, the in-depth implications of such a theme in Chinese and Western popular fiction are very different. The theme of retributive justice in Chinese popular fiction is closely related to Confucianist tradition and Buddhist conception; while in Western popular fiction such a theme is tightly connected with Christian culture and tradition. Besides, Chinese popular fiction centers around the ethical code of inter-personal relations and therefore is simple and plain, and is provincial in contents, thus lacking in depth of thought and appeal that are otherwise inspiring and thought-provoking. By contrast, Western popular fiction, while expressing such a theme, is much more transcendental—apart from focusing on and exploring the relation of man with God and the relation between human beings thereof, it also incorporates the relation of man with nature and with objective (cosmic) laws into its literary creation, so that the rational spirit and philosophic quality are strengthened.

As regards the expression of the theme of love and marriage, although both Chinese and Western popular fiction justifies the rational pursuit for sensual desire and anti-tradition rebellious spirit, the theme of love in Chinese popular fiction is mostly related to fighting against feudal hierarchy, feudal ethical code and arranged marriage; while such a theme in Western popular fiction is closely connected with the criticism of Christianity for its distortion and mutilation of human nature, and bears with it a strong anti-religion sentiment. Besides, comparatively speaking, since Chinese popular fiction aims at appealing for an ideal life, it is no wonder that the theme of love which makes up an important part of ideal life is fully expressed in it. Western popular fiction, by comparison, attempts to reveal the dark side of the world, so it is no surprising that the depiction of love which is found in almost every work does not make up the most foregrounded part except in a few works.

As for the expression of the theme of revenge and gratitude, revenge in Western popular fiction often carries with it a strong sense of individualism on the part of the heroes, which is manifested in their inquiry for self-identity and quest for knowledge. The avengers mostly carry out their revenge in order to defend their reputation, dignity and rights. This fully shows the value orientation of Western culture which

emphasizes the fulfillment of individual happiness, dignity and rights. While in Chinese popular fiction, since the revenge of the heroes is mainly based on "filial piety" and "righteousness," the way their revenge is taken is relatively mild, sometimes it is even carried out in an idealistic way, e.g. the revenge is solved through the power of Buddha and love. This has something to do with the interpretation of traditional Chinese ethical culture about "righteousness" and "propriety," as well as with the spirit of eclecticism in Chinese culture. For example, the revenge and return of gratitude by Edmond Dantès in *The Count of Monte Cristo* by the French writer Alexandre Dumas are obviously different from those in *The Legend of Condor Hero* (*Shen Diao Xia Lü*) by Jin Yong[6]: The revenge of Dantès is taken in defence of his reputation and dignity, while the revenge of Yang Guo involves both his personal and nation's debt of gratitude and retaliation, and he puts his nation's debt of gratitude and retaliation above those of his person's, exhibiting a spirit that "for a hero, what is most important is his country and his people." What's more, by displaying revenge against a broader setting, Western popular fiction reveals richer and more complicated implications than Chinese one, and this is especially so in its exploration of human nature which shows great depth and profundity. By comparison, the expression of revenge in Chinese popular fiction often centers around merely one aspect, and therefore can hardly make multi-level manifestation in its contents and implications.

1.3.2 Narrative Characters in Chinese and Western Popular Fiction

A common characteristic of earlier Chinese and Western popular fiction is that the narrative is mainly based on plot, which often involves fascinating stories. What appeals to the reader is moving and intriguing storylines, and characters are merely a component of fiction which makes up the plot. For example, in *The Decameron* by Italian writer G. Boccaccio, there are 100 short stories in which narrative of stories is made to express the writer's opposition to Christian asceticism of the Middle Ages and feudal conception of hierarchy, and to uphold such humanistic ideas as personality emancipation, freedom and equality, while characterization is hardly stressed. Similarly, in the early stage of Chinese fiction, the weird fiction in the Six Dynasties (222–589 AD) and the romance in the Tang Dynasty (618–907 AD) also excelled in telling stories, and the depictions of characters' language, image and movement were largely slack and simple, still less subtle psychological portrayal. This is because stories, no matter in China or in the West, constitute exactly the direct matrix of fiction, and naturally, fiction in the early period bore such story-based birthmark.

With the development of society and the gradual manifestation of infinite richness of human's thoughts, feelings, and consciousness, people's personalities got more

[6]Jin Yong: Jin Yong (1924–) is the better-known pen name of Louis Cha Leung-yung, a noted Chinese martial arts novelist and essayist.—Translator's note.

and more distinctly displayed, and accordingly characterization in fiction received more and more attention, which exerted a great influence on fiction writing. As a result, Chinese and Western popular fiction gradually evolved from story-based narration to characterization by various means, and some characters with distinctive personalities portrayed by some writers were well-received by the reading public. Writers of different nations, based on their own national characteristics and literary traditions, formed their different styles of characterization in popular fiction.

For Chinese popular fiction, the main artistic technique to do characterization is to describe character's appearance and action, with character's mental activity hardly depicted. Consequently, characters in Chinese popular fiction are mostly stereotyped. In Chinese popular fiction, character's personalities are represented through the depiction of their appearance, speech and action, and are especially action-based (i.e. to depict the character through his or her actions). The causes for the formation of such an artistic feature in characterization (i.e. stressing the depiction of speech and action of the characters while neglecting the analysis of their inner world) are as follows: Firstly, it has something to do with the development of Chinese popular fiction which evolved directly from the oral literary form of "oral talk" (shuohua)—such a literary form attracted the audience by means of speaking and singing, and was supposed to be able to arrest the audience's attention and to hold fast them chapter after chapter without letting them go. As a result, the storyteller, apart from narrating and describing in vivid language, needed to use his posture and movement to portray the characters, while the isolated, static and tedious psychological description would get the atmosphere of the place in which the story was told boring enough, which was least desired by the storyteller. Therefore, the storyteller tended to avoid psychological description. Secondly, it is closely related to Chinese social philosophy and ethical ideas. In Chinese feudal society, the value and significance of an individual person were so much determined by the feudal ethical and moral orders that his mentality, aspiration and moral characters were brought into a certain framework, and were fixed at a certain position and they had their codes of ethics to abide by, e.g. the father was supposed to be strict, the son was supposed to fulfill his filial duty, the daughter was supposed to obey her father before marriage, and obey her husband after marriage, the officials were supposed to be loyal to his emperor. As a result, it was hard for Chinese people to form a unique, individualistic and rich psychological world. Since the writer made no effort to explore or depict the unique mental activity of the individuals, the characters in Chinese popular fiction mostly represent certain stereotypes. Thirdly, it has something to do with the Confucianist aesthetic ideas that always stressed that art and literature were subordinate to politics and morality, as Confucianists placed great emphasis on the integration of poetry and music into propriety as well as the representation of ethical and moral codes through character images. Consequently, character images inevitably got stereotyped, which turned out to be the embodiment of certain moral ideas. In the same way, the stereotyped characters in ancient Chinese popular fiction exhibited the requirement of ancient aesthetic ideas for orderliness, sublimity and harmony. Therefore they met the requirements of ancient readers for the unified beauty of ideals and standardized beauty of form.

By comparison, Western popular fiction excels in subtle psychological description. Researchers in the study of European fiction hold that, the higher level of the writer, the more depiction of inner world of the characters, and the less depiction of external events, and hence they would make evaluation of a work of fiction in terms of its depth of psychological exploration. Some researchers even argue that fiction is a type of literature which specializes in personality depiction. Human personalities are complex, so it does not suffice to characterize people through the depiction of external events and activities. Instead, a writer should delve into the soul of people to analyze and explore their mental world through meticulous psychological depiction so as to reveal the typical personalities of people in typical settings, and to reveal the change of people's personalities along with the change of their settings.

The development of Western fiction can be said to be the process of exploring human inner world, which has something to do with the individual-based, self-centered ideas characteristic of the Western culture. Since humanism of modern West grew out of theological soil, the idea of original sin was deeply rooted in the Western world. As a result, Westerners' morality is that a person should be responsible to himself, and should atone for his sins through self-struggle, as Christianity has an important doctrine that "everyone is equal before God." After God was rejected, social atomic theory came into being, which holds that every individual person is like an atom that exists without depending on anyone else. Individuals' rights are inviolable, and individual-based, self-centered ideas were embraced. Naturally, human's personality turned out to be the focus of depiction in Western fiction. Then after 20th century, with the widespread acceptance of Freud's psychological analysis theory, modern writers no longer take the depiction of characters' inner world as a means to exhibit characters' personalities, as the traditional realistic writers did; instead, they take it as an end of literature, focusing on characters' subjective mental state independent of the objective existence. Some of them have gone so far as to advocate revealing isolatedly the subconscious or irrational mentality of characters, thus denying the necessity of depicting characters' personality and objective historical-social conditions for the portrayal of characters.

In brief, with regard to characterization, although characters in both Chinese and Western popular fiction display a polarization of good and evil, Chinese popular fiction lacks characters with a mixture of both good and evil personalities, and mostly centers around their ethical and moral attributes without paying enough attention to the exploration and representation of the rich, subtle and varied human nature. This makes the characters in Chinese popular fiction tinged with a strong ethical color, which turns out to be an embodiment of ethical morality. By contrast, in Western popular fiction, there are not only characters with single personalities, but also characters with a mixture of both good and evil personalities. Besides, as regards the techniques of characterization, Western popular fiction is also obviously different from that of Chinese: the former often depicts characters' mental experience in great detail, and especially stresses characters' psychological depiction; while the latter tends to depict characters' mentality in a terse way, which is often represented through his actions and talks. The conflicts in Chinese popular fiction are often represented through the external conflicts between characters, with the inner-world conflicts of

the characters seldom touched upon. By contrast, Wester popular fiction not only exhibits the external conflicts between characters, but also pays great attention to the inner-world conflicts of the characters, making the characters play their roles under the dual internal and external pressure in an effort to display their thrilling lot of either survival or destruction.

1.3.3 Narrative Structure of Chinese and Western Popular Fiction

Two features contribute to the appeal of Chines and Western popular fiction: one is the novel selection of materials, as everyone has a natural curiosity; the other is the vivid storyline, as storyline with twists and turns is sure to be fascinating. As a matter of fact, most writers lay greater emphasis on the latter. Then the ingenious invention of storyline and arrangement of plot naturally involve the question of structural layout of the fiction (i.e. its narrative structure). Since different nations have different literary traditions, Chinese and Western popular fiction shows considerable differences in their structural layout.

Chinese popular fiction has three major characteristics: complete structure of narrative, clear arrangement of ideas, and tight connection of storylines. Firstly, by "complete structure" we mean the story is told from the very beginning to the very end, the ins and outs of the characters are clearly explained, and conflict is eventually sure to be solved, i.e. it has a beginning, development, climax and ending. Also for the characters, the fiction often begins with the depiction of their birth of place, family background, age and appearance. After the characters are introduced, the story can be unfolded chronologically from the beginning to the end. The ending of the fiction not only means the story is concluded, but also the ending of the protagonists—even the ending of their children and grandchildren—must be made clear. The narrative technique of popular Chinese fiction is mainly chronological narrative, while flashback and flashforward techniques are rarely used. This has something to do with the fact that Chinese fiction was influenced by the narrative of historical literature. Historical literature is factual literature, it not only makes a detailed account of a person's achievements, but also records other related materials for reference so as to be accurate and authentic. Such a narrative of historical literature has exerted huge influence on the narrative structure of Chinese popular fiction. Secondly, by "clear arrangement of ideas" we mean the fiction has a clear clue which is well arranged. The layout of Chinese popular fiction aims at making clear and understandable the plot of complicated realistic life through its structure, i.e. sorting out the clue of complicated realistic life so as to make the story vivid and interesting on the basis of clear sequence of events. This structural feature is related to the fact that Chinese popular fiction mostly derived from the art of folk "oral talk", and it still retains the feature of "history-telling" in oral literature. As it is impossible for the listeners of oral literature to go back to the previous "pages" for

the content of the story as the readers of novels do, and have to understand and memorize the story by memory, the storyteller must make the story simple and clear so that the listeners are able to understand it the time they hear it and bear it in mind instantly. Thirdly, by "tight connection of storylines" we mean popular novels often consist of independent short stories which are closely linked with each other, and they as a whole make up the long stories with complete structure and well-arranged opening and ending. There are two reasons for such a "bead-stringed" structure: firstly, since traditional popular novels derived from "oral talk," it needs to narrate the main characters and events collectively so as to satisfy the listeners' expectation for listening to a certain part of story every time. Secondly, since popular fiction derived from the art of oral talk, long storytelling could not be finished in a short period of time, hence the division of paragraphs, from which derived the zhanghui structure.[7] Normally, zhanghui is divided at the place where there is a shift of plot and suspension. One or several zhanghui make up a unit of plot, which connects with what comes before and what goes after, and which is relatively independent, thus making the rhythm of plot development more impressive and striking. The advantage of such a structural form is that it has a clear thread of development and complete beginning and ending, and it can reflect the rich and varied social life, which suits the appreciative habits of Chinese readers. The narrative structure of Chinese popular fiction is made as such that the form of the fiction is complete and balanced so as to represent its theme as a whole in an explicit way.

Similarly, Western popular fictionists also attach great importance to the narrative structure of fiction; however, their arrangement of the structure has their own characteristics. Unlike Chinese popular fiction in which plot is arranged chronologically so that it develops along a single line, in Western popular fiction plot may develop along a single line, or double line, or multi-line which are intricately woven together in terms of the need of theme-representation and characterization. As for the sequence of narrative, flashforward, flashback and interposed narrative are often used to disarrange and reorganize purposely the sequence of events in life so as to reconstruct an organic whole of the storylines with the aim of enhancing the appeal of plots. Western fictionists refuse to structure the story in a dull, flat way. Instead, in their pursuit for originality and novelty, they adopt different techniques to form various structural layouts. Therefore, they do not necessarily arrange plot chronologically. In order to make the fiction capture the attention of the readers at the outset so that they can take a lot of interest in the story instantly, Western popular fictionists often invert the sequence of beginning, development and ending, putting the most important and appealing plot at the beginning. The narrative structure of Western popular fiction is characterized by its creation of twists and turns, and complication and intricacy. Owing to the ever-changing structural forms, many stereotyped, flat plots may turn out to be stories of infinite variety and fascination. These structural techniques do not aim at making conflicts explicit, but making them implicit so that the readers can

[7]Zhanghui structure: structure of a type of traditional Chinese novel which is divided into several chapters with each chapter headed by a couplet giving the gist of its contents.—Translator's note.

uncover gradually and understand in depth the nature of conflicts and the theme of the fiction.

In summary, structural layout of Western fiction aims at strengthening the appeal of plots, satisfying the curiosity of the readers and attracting them to think about the themes of the stories.

1.3.4 Narrative Setting of Chinese and Western Popular Fiction

"Setting" in literary works includes social setting and natural setting, and the depiction of settings which the characters are in can better reveal the personalities of the characters. As Mao Dun (1896–1981), the renowned Chinese writer and literary critic, points out, "characters in literary works have to be involved in actions in certain settings. Therefore, settings must be depicted in literary works, and they are by no means dispensable decorations, no matter they are social settings or natural settings; instead, they are closely related to the thoughts and actions of the characters" (Mao 1978: 66–67). As a very important artistic technique in fiction writing, setting-depiction includes the depiction of such natural and social elements as natural scenery, characteristics of the times, conventions of the localities, atmosphere, etc. As a matter of fact, the depiction of settings plays an important role in the development of Chinese and Western fiction, either from storytellings to novels, or from realistic accounts of stories to fictitious fabrications.

In China, fiction historians consider the emergence of romance of the Tang Dynasty (618–907 AD) as a symbol of maturity of Chinese classical fiction. This view is based on such an important argument that it was in the romance of the Tang Dynasty that fictionists began to pay attention to the roles of setting-depiction. As Lu Xun (1881–1936), a famous Chinese writer and literary critic, points out, "like poetry, fiction underwent a big change in the Tang Dynasty. Although it still dealt with anecdotes and strange tales, its narrative became tactful and its style became flowery. Compared with the fiction in the Six Dynasties which was crude and clumsy, fiction in the Tang Dynasty improved greatly. And what is especially noteworthy is that, it was during that time that writers began to write fiction on their own initiative" (Lu 1981: 70). The romance of the Tang Dynasty abounded in setting-depictions; at the same time it absorbed the characteristics of other literary genres, such as the elaborate exposition in cifu,[8] the simple, straightforward style in historical record, the expressing of sentiments through object depiction in the prose of the Six Dynasties (222–589 AD), and the creation of artistic conception in the poetry of the Tang

[8]Cifu: a literary form which emerged in the Warring States Period (475–221 BC) and was popular in the Han Dynasty (202 BC–220 AD). It is sentimental or descriptive, and is often rhymed.—Translator's note.

Dynasty. Compared with the romance of the Tang Dynasty, huaben[9] fiction in the Song Dynasty (960–1279 AD) had their own characteristics in setting-depiction, the biggest of which is its good understandability, and what is depicted in them are exactly the customs and conventions of the then people and society. In setting-depiction of the romance of the Tang Dynasty, the traditional technique of "integrating feelings into the scene and expressing the sentiments by means of objects" was often adopted so as to express characters' feelings and emotions. While in huaben of the Song Dynasty, setting-depiction mostly centered around detailed and exact description of various social life so as to exhibit colorful city life. Although setting-depiction in Chinese fiction began at an early time, its functions were largely limited, which only served as a background and a foil to set off characters and their actions. As a result, Chinese popular fiction is devoid of lengthy setting-depictions. This is also because early popular fiction derived from huaben or imitative huaben, which was told orally to the audience, and isolated setting-depictions not only sounded dull, but were also hard to tell. Therefore, when the storyteller had to describe the settings, he would resort to singing a few rhymed lines, or simply making some embellishments at certain crucial points so as to set off by contrast the characters, lighten the atmosphere, and eventually bring the gist of the story home.

Setting-depiction in Western fiction came to maturity much later than that in Chinese fiction. *The Decameron* was written in a plain and simple way, and what it cares about is merely the process and result of plot development. Under the dominance of classicism, setting-depiction remained underdeveloped even after Renaissance. However, once the European fictionists learned the importance and functions of settings to fiction, they lost no time in developing their various functions, placing independent aesthetic values on setting-depiction itself. Lengthy depictions of natural settings can often be found in Western popular fiction, some of them are done for making the story more authentic, some for revealing the relations between characters, some for setting off the mood of the characters, and some for displaying the personality of the characters. Admittedly the depiction of natural scene is important, but the depiction of social settings is even more stressed by Western classical writers who often made it an important component of characters' personality, and some of the depiction was even made to be the main driving-force for the formation of characters' personality, which demonstrates that it is only in typical settings that typical personality can be portrayed. Wellek and Warren, after analyzing fiction in Europe, argue that "Romantic description aims at establishing and maintaining a mood: plot and characterization are to be dominated by tone, effect… Naturalistic description is a seeming documentation, offered in the interest of illusion" (Wellek and Warren 1982: 221). Writers attach importance to the role of settings in portraying characters in order to re-represent life and, more importantly, to do characterization, i.e. to build concrete and real-life background for the characters so as to make them lifelike and typical. Fictionists represent characters through settings, and the change of settings brings about the change of characters' personality; at the same time typical charac-

[9]Huaben: storyteller's script in folk literature during the Song (960–1279 AD) and Yuan (1271–1368 AD) Dynasties.—Translator's note.

ters can make the settings typical—in this way, characters and settings complement each other and form a dialectical unity. Here settings not only serve as a foil to set off characters' actions, but also play an active role—they are the motive for the characters' actions and the dominating power for the formation of characters' personality. Besides, they govern the whole story, and serve as an important means to reveal the theme.

In summary, although Chinese classical fictionists came to be aware of the roles of setting-depiction earlier than their Western counterparts, they failed to go any further to develop it; while for Western fictionists, once they learned the functions of setting-depiction, they at once made full use and innovation of them. As a result, in Chinese popular fiction, plots and character images make up the mainstay while setting-depiction merely serves as a foil. By contrast, in Western popular fiction the roles of setting-depiction were highly valued in characterization and lightening up the atmosphere. At the end of the 19th century, some Western writers already began to take settings as the main components of their novels, while in some modern or contemporary Western novels, settings even play a more important role than characters and plots.

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Chapter 2
Popular Literature, Elite Literature and Folk Literature

Literature used to be classified into "refined literature" and "popular literature." Today this earlier classification of literature has evolved into that of "elite literature", "popular literature" and "folk literature." The prosperity of popular literature is one of the important cultural phenomena during China's social transformation in the 20th century. Following the laws of cultural market and adapting to the mechanism of market operation, popular literature in China has now seized a large share of cultural market and has attracted a great number of readers, thus forming one of the most influential and dynamic cultural phenomena. In this chapter, we will make a discussion about the differences, connections and interactions between popular fiction, elite fiction and folktales.

2.1 The Distinction Between Elite Fiction, Popular Fiction and Folktales

In *The Sociology of Art* (1974), the Hungarian cultural sociologist and art historian Arnold Hauser divides modern art into "elite art", "popular art" and "folk art" in terms of the relationship between art production, art consumption and cultural stratum (Hauser 1987). Though some of his discussions are quite disputable, he offers really insightful viewpoints on the classification of art, which not only reveals the historical process of the development of art, but also points out different levels and tastes of different types of art and specific circles of production and consumption they have as well. Accordingly, if prose narrative literature with strong storylines is to be divided from the angle of level and taste, it can also be classified into three categories: "elite fiction", "popular fiction" and "folktales." In this section, we will elaborate on the distinctions between elite fiction, popular fiction and folktales from the perspective of sociology of art and literature, mass communication, function of literature, and history of literature.

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2.1.1 The Subject of Production

The producers of elite fiction are mainly intellectuals at higher cultural level, while the producers of popular fiction and folktales are mostly intellectuals at lower cultural level and working people at the bottom of society respectively.

Elite fiction and popular fiction are primarily writers' personal literary creation, which reflects the subjective initiative of "this specific writer" towards the objective world. Writers objectify their thoughts and feelings in their work, and then consumers will be affected through their reading and understanding of it. Each writer has his different social experience, cultural literacy and personal temperament, and differs considerably in their understanding of the world, therefore, popular fiction and elite fiction are the personalized and onymous products of literature which belong to the writer himself. Meanwhile, due to fictionists' different aim of literary creation and artistic accomplishments, a distinction can be drawn between elite fiction and popular fiction. Those intellectuals with higher artistic accomplishments take it as their own duty to represent the society and educate the readers through fiction, accordingly, their work becomes the embodiment of social phenomena, the revelation of the true meaning of life, and the outpouring of deep emotions, which inspire readers to reflect on themselves in their reading so as to purify and transcend themselves. The main value of this type of elite fiction is largely cognitive and aesthetic, and major motive of elite fictionists for literary creation is to arouse emotional resonance among readers. For elite fictionists, the ultimate goal of literary creation is to attain higher social benefits. By contrast, producers of popular fiction, however, are mainly intellectuals at lower cultural level, whose creative motive is largely to pursue commercial value of art. Hence popular fiction is entertaining and commercial by nature, and is often characterized by satisfying the curiosity of lower cultural stratum (mainly citizen stratum) and the pursuit of sensory stimulation, in the hope of obtaining higher economic benefits.

As for folktales, its productive process is a kind of self-disciplined activity on the principle of collectivism, which involves thinking, feeling and creating based on collective spirit. Therefore, folktales can be regarded as the crystallization of collective wisdom. On the other hand, folktales are not purely collective, as almost every aspect of their production is distilled from each individual person's feelings and intelligence. However, since the producers of folktales are a collection of countless individuals, they are almost unaffected by each individual producer, whose unique personal style will naturally disappear in commonalities. Personal thoughts and emotions can only exist in the folktales after they gain recognition from this collective spirit, such as the mutual recognition between the general public and folktale narrators. Therefore, folktales are characterized by strong national spirits and local colors, as they express the thoughts, emotions and aesthetic taste of general public, and hence they are a kind of anonymous and non-personalized product of literature.

2.1.2 The Subject of Consumption

In "Introduction" to *Critique of Political Economy*, Marx points out that "production is consumption, consumption is production. Consumptive production. Productive consumption … [In the sense] that one appears as a means for the other, and is mediated by the other, which is embodied by their mutual dependence. It is a movement which relates them to one another, makes them appear indispensable to one another, but still leaves them external to each other. Production creates the material, as external object, for consumption; consumption creates the need, as internal object, as aim, for production. Without production there will be no consumption; without consumption there will be no production" (Marx 1972: 95). The theory about the relationship between economic production and consumption Marx discusses here also applies to the production and consumption of literature. Literature is produced in order to meet the needs of consumers/readers. Different literary genres cater to different classes of literary consumption (of literary consumers), which are determined by their different cultural structure and social status. Therefore, for each literary genre, there is a corresponding group of consumers for its reception. In this sense, literary creation is intended neither for one person in particular nor for "humanity" in general, but for part of human beings, that is, for some specific groups and classes. Elite fiction, popular fiction and folktales have their own stratum of artistic consumption respectively. Elite fiction is intended for higher intellectual stratum with higher artistic accomplishments, so people of intellectual stratum are its subject of consumption; popular fiction is intended for lower intellectual stratum, with people of citizen stratum as its subject of consumption; while folktales are intended for illiterate and semi-illiterate stratum, with people of farmer stratum as their subject of consumption.

Consumption process of literature is certainly a process of re-creation, because the same literary product may create different artistic effects on different consumers (i.e. readers). In addition to objectively existent literary works which constitute an objective factor, subjective factors also play an important role in people's appreciation of literature. Due to different consumers' subjective emotions, social experiences, literary attainments, psychological qualities, etc., the re-creation of the same literary work may turn out to be extraordinarily rich and varied.

On the other hand, consumers of elite fiction, popular fiction and folktales react to literary products in different ways. Production and consumption of elite fiction and popular fiction are two interrelated processes, but they are somehow independent of each other. Consumers are not directly involved in the productive process, so they have little influence upon the works produced. Subject consciousness of producers always dominates the process of production, while in the process of consumption, consumers can go beyond the subject consciousness of producers, and interpret literary products based on their own understanding so as to create "new works" in the process of self-creation. Millions of people have millions of understanding about the same product, thus forming millions of "new works," but these "new works" only exist in the minds of millions of people, and are incapable of and have no right to change the works that have already been materialized. Re-creation of all kinds of

consumption processes only lies intangibly in each individual, and will never form new products to re-enter the consumption process to affect consumers. However, the consumers and producers of folktales are somewhat identical, namely, in the process of listening, the audiences of folktales are likely to become narrators at any time, and in the consumption process of literature, consumers may turn into producers, and from the very beginning, people undertake the task of production, consumption and reproduction simultaneously. Therefore, folktale consumers with their subjective aesthetic feelings can act directly on the products to produce a lot of variants of stories. Folk literature is "the art of producers," for such literature is produced for the sake of its self-consumption, and its production and consumption are always carried out in the same stratum. Therefore, no matter what variants are produced and what products with new characteristics appear afterwards, those products embody the ideology and artistic taste of that stratum and group throughout.

Through the analyses above, we might as well describe the relationship between production and consumption of elite fiction, popular fiction and folktales as follows: For elite fiction and popular fiction, producers and consumers are separated from one another, and the process of production and consumption is chronological. The products of elite fiction and popular fiction are in written form, with relative stability, and their consumption process is a process of one entity (literary work) producing countless aesthetic effects on individuality, which may exert influence upon the creation of another new work, but cannot directly act on the existent aesthetic object (a work of fiction). For folktales on the other hand, the producers and consumers are identical, and the process of production and consumption is synchronic. The products of folktales are amorphous "fluids" represented by word of mouth (in oral form), which are the products of commonality of numerous individuals.

Mechanism of literary production is mainly adjusted and regulated by the supply and demand of consumer market of literature. Literary works link one subject to another under the regulation of market mechanism to achieve a balance between supply and demand. But it should be pointed out that sales of literary product are not necessarily proportional to its quality and value. Supply and demand of literary market can only reflect the common taste during a certain period of time and the structural conditions of a certain cultural stratum. Production quantity of popular fiction, therefore, can only be a measure of its economic benefits and its commercial success or failure, rather than a measure of the quality of the product itself and the size of its social benefits. At present, popular fiction has unprecedented wide readership, high circulation and huge financial reward. However, compared with elite fiction which has comparatively small circulation and limited readership, the quality and social value of popular fiction still remain low. It should be noted that it will take a long time for elite fiction which has great artistic and social value to expand its readership, because a full understanding of the profound meanings contained in elite literary works requires adequate literacy and literary accomplishment. In summary, the diversity of consumers' educational level and aesthetic taste lays down various requirements for the market of literature, and this helps to form the richness and complexity of the production of literature.

2.1.3 The Media of Transmission

According to the basic principles of literary and artistic sociology, the production and consumption process of literature involves three main factors: producers, consumers and literary products, among which literary products function as a bridge to connect producers and consumers. Based on the SMCR Model of Communication (Berlo 1960), the communicative process of literature may consist of four elements: communicator, information, media, and audience. Based on the above-mentioned factors and elements, we can establish two corresponding models as represented by the following Diagram 2.1.

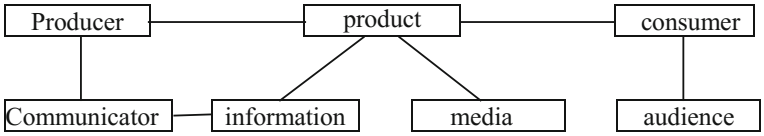

Diagram 2.1 Two corresponding models (production-consumption model & SMCR model)

A comparison of the above two models shows that mass communication attaches more importance to the media than literary and artistic sociology. The Canadian scholar Marshall McLuhan even believes that "the media are the messages" (McLuhan 1978). In terms of the transmission of literature, different media (i.e. the carrier of information) may produce different artistic effects upon the audience. From the perspective of epistemology, people's experience is made up of numerous perceptual materials merging with one another, through which people can receive the stimulation of sight, smell, hearing, touch and taste. It is the diversity and synchronicity of such stimulation that constitute a very complicated living picture about the real world, and enable people to grasp fully the appearance and nature of things. During artistic appreciation, however, restricted by the media, people can only bring into play one or several aspects of sense organs instead of all of them. Oral language is the main medium for folktales, while written words are the medium for elite fiction and popular fiction. Both oral literature and written literature belong to the art of language, and they seem to be the same at first glance, but we can find after careful studies that they actually differ greatly.

With sound language as the carrier of literature, oral literature resorts to sense of hearing and employs oral language to embody and convey people's feelings, thoughts and experiences without the aid of other medium; while written literature appeals to sense of sight and it carries much less emotional loads than oral literature. McLuhan (1978) holds that spoken audible language describes human's experience much more fully than written or printed language, which distorts and impoverishes the auditory properties and natural form of transmission, and confines the spontaneity of living language to a narrow range, turning the colorful kaleidoscopic empirical world into a drab, inflexible and lifeless logic. Human's eyes receive these monotonous, uniform

and strictly ordered symbols mechanically, which results in the formation of people's logical thinking and the abstraction of the concrete images.

Oral literature which is based on spontaneous oral activities has no materially fixed work in form; therefore impromptu factors play an important part in its creation and modification. However, the written form of elite fiction and popular fiction materializes the flow of spoken language into a stable form, thus the receptors can detach themselves from the communicator, and browse titles and contents optionally, pause at any place for careful or even repeated reading in terms of their own needs. They can also analyze the contents of the story transmitted and search for more background materials and details. In this way, the defect of instantaneity of oral literature is overcome so that it is more convenient for written literature to have long-time preservation and repeated appreciation, and therefore it becomes "permanent".

While oral literature is more emotionally apprehended, written literature is more rationally comprehended. In written literature, words are linked up to one another in every line, and people read, perceive and think line by line, and convert symbols into aesthetic images, which on the one hand leaves much wider space for readers' imagination, but on the other hand may make sensory organs of the readers lose their balance, as they rely too much on their visual sense to receive written messages. After elite fiction and popular fiction are printed and produced in large quantities by mass production, they bear certain features of commodity, and can bring economic benefits; but on the other hand, they are far less convenient, flexible and timely than oral literature, as their writing, editing and printing processes take a lot of time.

Folktales spread through vivid and expressive spoken language. What happens between the communicator and the audience is the face-to-face direct communication, with timely and flexible feedback. Communicators can make corresponding adjustments with regard to the content and form of the story told in terms of the reaction of the audience, and even the relationship between the communicator and the listeners may change continuously so as to achieve the maximum harmony between them. In such a communicative process, in addition to audible sound language, what is involved also includes inaudible silent language such as movements, facial expressions and gestures. In addition to the information the communicator sends, there is also a specific communicative atmosphere formed based on the information feedback. Such characteristics of audio-visual unity and fusion of feelings and setting enable people to acquire richer and more colorful artistic images.

The present author has studied the information flow of narrative of folktales and its particularity from the angle of information theory, and proposed that besides the shared characteristics of general communication and information system, information system of folktales narrative has the following more characteristics: firstly, the information is communicated in a direct way, namely, the narrator and the audience of the folktales communicate with each other face-to-face on the same occasion, which is characterized by timely exchange of information and high accuracy. Secondly, the content of communication is rich, which includes thoughts, emotions, attitudes, viewpoints, etc. Thirdly, the carrier of communicative information is diversified, that is, in addition to verbal language, it is also supplemented by body language, such as movements, facial expressions and gestures. Fourthly, the choice of the contents of

communication is subjective and random, that is, the narrator can determine what to tell or what not to tell, and modify existing story subjectively. Fifthly, the effects of the same information for different receptors differ greatly. The understanding of the same story is often a matter of "the benevolent see benevolence and the wise see wisdom," because "images are larger than thoughts" (Huang 1991). Since folktales make use of oral language as their means of communication, they are based on a kind of collective spontaneous interpersonal relationships, which binds people together through disseminating collective consciousness. Due to limited space, time and the audience of oral language, its influence is also limited.

In *Morphology of the Arts*, the former Soviet Union aesthetician M. Kagan proposes that, for oral literature and written literature, the difference between them lies in their different roles in social communication. Oral literature is a more effective means to unite people through their homogeneous emotion, mental state, feelings and thoughts, and to overcome the isolation of spiritual world of each individual. However, the strength of the communicative ability of oral literature and its weakness in another aspect—the effect scope of its communicative energy—are mixed up dialectically, because obviously sound language can only work on a limited audience who can only gather together at a given time and location. Written literature is unable to separate people's generality from their individuality, nor is it able to unite people in such a powerful way with such spiritual commonality, just as what oral literature does. However, it can "compensate" for this defect not only through activating people's personalities, but primarily through going beyond the limited scope within which sound language can work, and moving towards the wider boundless world (Kagan 1986: 349). The author agrees with what is said above by Kagan about the difference between the traditional oral literature and written literature. However, with the development of modern science and technology, especially with the wide spread of various types of electronic media, the folktales can also spread all over the world timely and widely via these modern audio-visual electronic means. Therefore, the spread of oral literature is no longer limited in time and space.

In short, either in the process of literary creation and artistic structure, or in image perception and information feedback, there are considerable differences between the narrative of folktales as oral literature on the one side and elite fiction and popular fiction as written literature on the other.

2.1.4 Main Functions

As the British cultural anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski points out, all the cultural elements, if we are right, must be active, operative and effective. This dynamic property of cultural elements indicates that the key work of anthropology lies in the research on the functions of culture. Cultural process always follows a certain law, which is embedded in the functions of cultural elements (Malinowski 1987: 14). As an important component of cultural phenomena, literature is the reflection of certain social life visualized in people's mind; at the same time, it reacts to life actively and

bears certain social functions. Generally speaking, literature has three main functions: cognitive function, educational function and aesthetic function. Specifically speaking, the social effects produced by different genres of literature are different; besides, the social functions of different literary works of the same literary form may also differ from one another in their focus. As narrative art forms, elite fiction, popular fiction and folktales have cognitive, educational, aesthetic, recreational and practical functions. However, since they belong to different categories of literature, their functions may differ in their focus. Elite fiction mainly emphasizes cognitive and educational functions, popular fiction focuses more on recreational function, while traditional folktales attach greater importance to practical function.

While writing fiction, elite novelists often give priority to cognitive and educational functions of their works. Speaking of such British realistic writers as Dickens, Miss Charlotte Brontë and Mrs. Gaskell, Marx observes that for these outstanding fiction-writers in England, their vivid and eloquent pages have issued to the world more political and social truths than have been uttered by all the professional politicians, publicists and moralists put together (Marx 1960: 402). Marx sings praise of Balzac, saying that Balzac, who is remarkable for his profound grasp of reality, aptly describes in his last novel *Les Paysans* how a petty peasant performs many small tasks gratuitously for his usurer, whose goodwill he is eager to retain, and how he fancies that he does not give the latter something for nothing because his own labour does not cost him any cash outlay. As for the usurer, he thus kills two birds with one stone. He saves the cash outlay for wages and entraps the peasant, who is gradually ruined by being deprived his own field of labour, deeper and deeper in the web of usury (Marx 1960: 396). Actually Marx puts what he found in Balzac's novel *Les Paysans* into his representative work "*Das Kapital.*" Elite fiction makes full use of vivid artistic images to reproduce truthfully various scenes of social life and the world, reflect economy, politics and culture in a certain historical period and social trend and customs, and describe the mental outlook and the inner world of different classes, different strata and different characters, and their relations in reality. In this way, elite fiction helps the readers to have a better understanding about history and social reality.

Besides depicting social life, elite fiction also embodies the author's thoughts, feelings and aesthetic ideas. The protagonists in elite fiction in particular often embody the author's evaluation of right and wrong and his attitude about love and hate, thus the reader can be inspired and educated while reading the work of elite fiction. Elite fiction probes into personal and social problems against a broad backdrop, which enables the reader to better understand themselves and others, and motivate people to strive hard to create a better life. It is believed that the purpose of literature is to help people to understand themselves, boost their confidence, inspire them to pursue truth and fight against vulgarity of people, find the good things among people, arouse in people's heart a sense of shame and courage, and try their best to make them noble and powerful so as to enable them to inspire their own lives with the spirit of divine beauty. Liang Qichao (1873–1929), a famous political activist of bourgeois reformism and enlightenment thinker in Chinese modern history, proposed "revolution in the realm of fiction", arguing that "How did the Chinese people develop

the idea of holding the success in imperial examinations and official career in such high esteem? It stems from fiction. What is the origin of the Chinese people's obsession with the idea that a perfect marriage consists in a beautiful lady and a talented scholar? It lies in fiction. Where does the Chinese people's sympathy for robbers and brigands hidden away in the river and lake areas spring from? It springs from fiction. Where does the Chinese people's interest in witches and fox spirits come from? It comes from fiction." And he holds that "If one intends to reform the people of a nation, he must first reform its fiction. Therefore, to reform morality, one must first reform fiction; to reform religion, one must first reform fiction; to reform politics, one must first reform fiction; to reform social customs, one must first reform fiction; to reform learning and arts, one must first reform fiction; and to reform even human mind and remold its character, one must first reform fiction. Why is this so? This is because fiction has a profound power over the way of man" (Liang 1960: 14–17). Liang Qichao lays great emphasis on the position and role of fiction in social life, which has positive significance for its opposition against the traditional bias against fiction in Chinese feudal society. However, he excessively exaggerates the role of fiction, and concludes that human thought decides everything, culture decides everything, and fiction decides everything, which falls into the trap of historical idealism. Therefore, the cognitive and educational functions of fiction should be affirmed realistically, that is, fiction does matter a lot in social life, but it is also constrained by social economic conditions after all.

The human spirit is diversified and multilayered. As a kind of spiritual sustenance, literature also has two kinds of social functions: one is to provide entertainment, relief and leisure for people; the other is to enlighten thoughts and sublimate emotion. Elite fiction focuses more on the latter, while popular fiction emphasizes the former. Therefore, popular fiction is a kind of literature characterized by entertainment. From the physiological and psychological point of view, entertainment is an indispensable part of people's life, and is necessary for people to stay energetic and can stimulate and strengthen their vitality. While pursuing material enjoyment, people also pursue spiritual satisfaction at the same time. Without entertainment, people will become empty and bored, and will suffer from a severe "spiritual hunger." In order to achieve mental balance and seek spiritual compensation, people have to vent their emotions in various forms of behavior. If a certain form of behavior has sociopathic tendency, it will turn into a kind of severe instable factor of the society. Therefore, people call for a kind of spiritual needs so as to vent their emotions in proper forms. The recreational feature of popular literature, to a certain extent, can meet such spiritual needs of people.

It must be noted that truly great artistic works are not purely entertaining, and its importance lies in the exploration of social significance and meaning of life, putting forward the standards of truth, goodness, beauty, and falsehood, evil and ugliness. In this way, we can discuss personal and social problems against a broad social background, which can help us to look at the others, look into ourselves, and inspire us to change our lives for the better. What we can get from this type of literary works is not pleasure in its general sense, but a kind of aesthetic perception. Luan Meijian analyzes this question from the perspectives of readers' reception as follows:

"In terms of social reality in general, people often turn to literature for relaxation, for entertainment, for venting their emotions, and even for reproducing the illusory dreams. That is why in China there are more fans of Jin Yong and Qiong Yao,[1] while Shakespeare and Tolstoy are ignored and forgotten" (Luan 1990). "People are both rational and irrational, and they have endless irrational desire, which cannot be satisfied under the yoke of social rationality. As a kind of compensation, popular literature can satisfy such desire in an illusory way … Fighting scenes, detective plots and erotic descriptions grab people's sensory nerves in a direct and effective way … easily enter readers' psychological and physiological sphere for sensory pleasure … Readers' preference for and fascination with martial arts fiction are not only due to their choice of aesthetic psychology … but more importantly, their attempt to display their vitality" (Ibid.). He further argues that "As a creative activity of social elites, refined literature is a form of elite culture; while popular literature tends to represent the content of sub-culture because it attempts to meet readers' needs to the fullest extent. Elite culture on the one hand is self-conscious, on the other hand it is more social- and historical-bound… while sub-culture is more likely to break away from the barriers of elite culture, offering us a lot which are thought-provoking" (Ibid.).

Speaking of the entertainment function of Chinese popular fiction, the contemporary Chinese writer Zhu Ziqing (1898–1948) makes the following remarks:

> In the tradition of Chinese literature, fiction, ci[2] and qu[3] (including Chinese opera) are regarded as the sidetrack of a track, because they are for entertainment and fun, and are not something serious. Since fiction is not regarded as serious, it is often referred to as "light readings" … In Chinese fiction "weird stories" (zhiguai xiaoshuo) and "romances" (chuanqi xiaoshuo) have long been the mainstay, however, both of them are not regarded as something serious. There is a representative anthology of fiction compiled by writers of the Ming Dynasty entitled "*San Yan*" *and* "*Er Pai.*" "*Er Pai*" includes *Amazing Tales: First Series* and *Amazing Tales: Second Series*, which obviously focus on something "weird," while "*San Yan*" refers to *Stories to Enlighten the World*, *Stories to Caution the World*, and *Stories to Awaken the World*, which aim at "educating people," but which also have to be "weird" enough so as to be able to "surprise people" in the first place in order to be educative. So later a number of stories from "*San Yan*" *and* "*Er Pai*" were selected and compiled into another collection entitled *Wonders of the Present and the Past* (*Jingu Qiguan*), which also emphasizes "weirdness." And it is such "weirdness" of stories that functions as pastime for people at their leisure.
>
> (Zhu 1996: 139)

Zhu Ziqing in this passage not only explains the "inheritance feature" of modern popular fiction, but also emphasizes a very important point for the popularization of popular fiction, namely the "recreational feature" of popular fiction. Of course, we should see that some works of popular fiction go too far in that they are always in hot pursuit of sheer recreation and amusement, seeking for superficial sensory stimulation, representing cheap sentimentality, and venting turbulent emotional insecurity.

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[1] Qiong Yao is a popular contemporary Chinese woman writer of romantic love stories.—Translator's note.

[2] Ci: a type of classical Chinese poetry, originating in the Tang Dynasty (618–907 AD) and fully developed in the Song Dynasty (960–1279 AD).—Translator's note.

[3] Qu: a type of verse popular in the Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368).—Translator's note.

Admittedly, recreational feature of popular fiction is closely linked to its commercial nature, which aims at obtaining higher economic benefits in the shortest possible time. However, if we lay excessive stress on entertainment, it will lead to a fall in its artistic value, and will weaken the cognitive and educational functions of literary works. Of course, we can't absolutize all things, and it should be admitted that some works of popular fiction integrate recreational, educational, and aesthetic functions as a whole well enough. These successful works are worth our careful study so that we can promote the creation and development of popular fiction.

As "the art of producers," folktales came into being along with productive labor, and constituted an integral part of people's struggle for production and daily life. Folktales have strong practical value, which is mainly manifested in two aspects: imparting knowledge, and social interaction. Some fables and stories about daily life are mostly artistic summary of the working people's knowledge and experience in their struggle for production and survival, which can play the role of imparting productive knowledge and summarizing labor experiences. As Zhu Di points out, "The earliest oral literature took the form of storytelling prevailing in primitive tribes. Its contents were very limited, which were mainly concerned with people's hunting adventure and victory … At the same time it is also a kind of experience imparted to their audience" (Zhu 1982: 268). Such Chinese fables as "Pulling the Seedlings Upward to Hasten Their growth," "Standing by a Tree Stump Waiting for a Hare," "Nicking the Boat to Seek the Missing Sword" and the like originated from people's labor experience, and were later gradually raised to the height of philosophical instruction. It is said that the purpose of compiling *Panchatantra*, a famous collection of Indian fables and ancient fairy tales, is to impart the arts of ruling the people to the crown princes through stories so that they could carry on their imperial power and rule the people in a better way. Therefore, *Panchatantra* is often regarded as a kind of theory of ruling, but in fact it is a collection of folk literature. The folk stories in it later spread into China and were turned into Chinese folktales, such as "The Rabbit Kills the Lion," "The Fox King," "The Chukar," etc., which borrow the plot and structure of foreign stories to summarize the common experience of life and struggle shared by Chinese and foreign people. Folktales generalize class struggle and productive experience by means of artistic images, so they are both an art and a "science." Just as Malinowski (1987: 88) puts it, "mottos, riddles, stories and historical narrative, no matter in the original culture or developed culture, tend to be a mixture of art and knowledge".

Folktale narrating is a direct face-to-face communication in spoken form on collective occasions, and a kind of mass cultural entertainment activities, therefore, stories become the means of interpersonal communication within certain areas. Whether it is in families or on public occasions, narrators of folk stories always face the audience they are familiar with, tell impromptu stories, communicate with them friendly and even exchange roles with the audience. Under such circumstance of chatting and laughing, folktales not only enliven the atmosphere of daily life, but also enhance the communication of thoughts and feelings between people, build closer interpersonal relationships, and unite people under a certain cultural environment, thus playing an important part in organizing social life.

From the perspective of the trend of folk literature, with the constant advance of society and human intelligence, the practical value of folk literature has been continuously weakening, while its recreational function has been increasingly strengthened. In primitive society with extremely low productivity, survival was the most important for human beings, and all activities were nothing but the means to earn a living. At that time, human beings only had low intelligence and undeveloped aesthetic faculties, so most of the primitive art was of practical nature. Only when the development of productive forces freed people from rushing about all day long for survival and thereafter they had some leisure time that their need for spiritual life led to the constant development of people's aesthetic faculties, and then art began to throw off the shackles of practical function to develop its aesthetic and recreational functions. But different literary types may differ in their speed and degree of functional transformation. Until now, even though some of the literary types of folk literature still have very important practical value, on the whole the vast majority of folk literature has lost its practical function and has mainly served recreational function. Folk literature is not only a literary phenomenon, but also a cultural phenomenon, because it is all-embracing, and its content is all-encompassing, involving extensively people's thoughts, ideas, ethics, customs, science, religion, belief, etc. Paul Lafargue once mentioned that folk literature is people's memorandum of science, religion and astronomical knowledge, and is the "encyclopedia" of the working people (Lafargue 1979: 8). As it can offer some valuable materials for the study of social science and natural science, folk literature bears some scientific value which is not found in other types of literature, and such value is becoming more and more important nowadays.

2.1.5 History of Development

Folktales, elite fiction and popular fiction came into being at different times in a historical sequence, and they have a relationship of inheritance in artistic traditions between them. As an age-old literature, folktales appeared along with the emergence of human language and primitive thinking; elite fiction came into being only when the written language was fully developed and artistic thinking was rather mature, while popular fiction emerged only when commodity economy appeared and citizen stratum sprung up.

While studying the history of folktales, we find that among the materials available now, source materials about tales told by word of mouth in remote antiquity are almost a blank; even those few data recorded later in ancient books are not necessarily accurate descriptions of the original tales, which brings great difficulties for the study of the origin of folktales. Still, we can make inferences and roughly draw the outline of the evolution of the folktales based on the general laws of social development, evolution of thinking and language formation. In all of the narrative literature, primitive myth is of the earliest origin, because before the invention of writing, human beings had experienced a long period of oral literature, for example, myth had gone through a long period of oral transmission and artistic processing

before it was written down. The German philosopher Ernst Cassirer argues that "language and myth are near kin. In the early stages of human culture their relation was so close and their cooperation so obvious that it is almost impossible to separate the one from the other. They are two different shoots from one and the same root. Whenever we find man we find him in possession of the faculty of speech and under the influence of the myth-creating function. Hence, for a philosophical anthropology it is tempting to put these two attributes particular to man under a common origin." He also believes that the reason why "for the primitive mind myth and language are, as it were, twin brothers" lies in that "both of them are based on a very general and very early experience of mankind, an experience of a social rather than of a physical nature" (Cassirer 1986: 142–143). Marx also points out that "in the period of lower ability of savage stage … an unwritten literature of myths, legends and sagas was already created, which exerted powerful impact upon human race" (Marx 1960: 5). Due to the extremely low productivity in the primitive society, primitive men were unable to understand and explain nature's infinite changes and power, so they turned to naive imagination for help, and had the illusion that the whole universe was under the command and control of God, thus creating a lot of myths. At the same time, based on their own experience in their struggle for production, they created many deified heroes, on whom they placed their ideal of conquering nature; therefore, myths are full of the spirit of positive romanticism. Just as Marx puts it, "all mythology overcomes, dominates and shapes the forces of nature via imagination and by means of imagination" (Marx 1972: 113). Besides the myths and legends originating in the primitive society, ancient animal tales and fairy tales also appeared in the late primitive society. These ancient myths, legends and tales possess the following characteristics: firstly, they are the products of labour because they are closely connected with productive labour of primitive men. Secondly, their artistic imagination and processing are based on naive primitive thinking. Thirdly, they are the earliest form of narrative literature. Myths and legends are the original sources of fiction. First of all, they made initial preparation for the "conception" and creation of fiction. Artistic fabrication, simple plots and characters of myths and legends provided artistic basis for the emergence of fiction. Secondly, the creative method of positive romanticism of myths and legends exerted great influence on fiction that appeared later. In addition, some of the subject matters and stories of myths and legends were often assimilated by fiction that appeared later. Therefore, Marx speaks highly of ancient myths, holding that "Greek mythology is not only the arsenal of Greek art but also its soil" and that "they still afford us artistic enjoyment and that in a certain respect they count as a norm and as an unattainable model" (Marx 1972: 112; 114).

In China, popular fiction originated from the folk art of storytelling. In the history of Chinese literature, the art of storytelling already emerged in the Tang Dynasty (618–907 AD). Apart from storytelling in the street, in order to expound the Buddhist texts, monks in the Tang Dynasty turned elegant Buddhist scriptures into "su-jiang" (folk talk). In order to strengthen the publicity effect, they also incorporated some plain and comprehensible folktales and folklores into their talk. Since it was not improvisational oral creation, and required interpretation that was faithful to

Buddhist scriptures, the monks were more likely to and were supposed to write the manuscript of the folk talk carefully, which is called "bianwen"[4] (transformed texts). The so-called "bianwen" refers to the transformed popular texts from esoteric scriptures. Based on the analysis of "huaben" (storytelling scripts) in the Tang Dynasty found in the Dunhuang grottoes, the plots of "transformed texts" were relatively simple, and its language was not popular enough, but as a kind of popular literary works with plots, they were the earliest prototype of popular fiction in China. In the Song Dynasty (960–1279 AD), commercial economy developed rapidly, which contributed to the prosperity of cities, and public places for entertainment appeared in Bianjing, the capital of the Northern Song Dynasty (960–1127 AD). At that time, there were many commercial performances by professional artists, usually in the form of "shuohua" (storytelling) in simple vernacular language. In "storytelling" in the Song Dynasty, "xiaoshuo" (storytelling plus singing) and "jiangshi" (historytelling) were the most popular forms of storytelling. The former ("xiaoshuo") is also called "yinzier" (literally, "silver words"), which is a combination of storytelling and singing to the accompaniment of "yinzi sheng" (a reed pipe wind instrument carved with silver words), specially for performing and narrating short stories; while the latter ("jiangshi") is to perform and narrate long historical stories in the form of storytelling without singing. Historytelling scripts in the Song and Yuan Dynasties were generally referred to as "pinghua" (simple stories), such as *A Simple Story of the Three Kingdoms* (*Sanguo Pinghua*); while short storytelling scripts were often known as "xiaoshuo" (short stories), such as *New Short Stories of Sharp-tongued Li Cuilian*. These storytellers' texts, namely scripts for storytelling (or storytelling scripts), not only laid the foundation for the creation of Chinese vernacular short stories, but also played an important part in the formation of fiction. Lu Xun holds that "this kind of literary works not only differ in genre, but also reform its form by using the vernacular, which constitutes indeed a major change in the history of fiction" (Lu 1981: 319). Storytelling scripts were written to resort to the audience's hearing, with rather brief accounts and mere records of lyrics and main plots, therefore they could only be counted as a primitive form of popular fiction. On the one hand, the development of commercial economy led to the rise of citizen stratum and its rapid expansion, which brought about significant change in the composition of literary audience whose new aesthetic taste could not be satisfied by elite literature and folk literature. On the other hand, the emergence of professional artists and popular literature's dependence on art market facilitated the appearance of popular literature, which met the needs of people from all walks of life. In the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), citizens not only paid for listening to "storytelling", but also bought "storytelling scripts" to read, through which booksellers found it profitable, so they published a large number of storytelling scripts. At the same time, the literati began to edit and refine storytelling scripts, and even imitate the writing of storytelling scripts, thus consciously created "nihuaben" (novels written in the style of

[4]Bianwen: a popular form of narrative literature flourishing in the Tang Dynasty (618–907 AD), with alternate prose and rhymed parts for recitation and singing (often on Buddhistic themes).—Translator's note.

storytelling scripts) for people to read. Whether in terms of its commerciality, or writer's self-consciousness in his creation, or its extensive readership, or its popular nature, "nihuaben" can be regarded as a mature form of popular fiction.

As for the time of origin of popular fiction, in *The History of Popular Fiction* Chen Dakang points out:

> Between the late Yuan Dynasty and the early Ming Dynasty, two great works *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* and *Outlaws of the Marsh* came out, which has a double significance. From the perspective of the works themselves, these two novels are outstanding masterpieces that our nation takes pride in, and they hardly had any rivals in the 14th century in the world. While from the perspective of the history of Chinese literature, the emergence of the two works marked the birth of a new literary genre, namely popular fiction. Although at present such questions as their writing process, date of completion, changes of different versions and the like are still controversial in academia, there is one point that people generally agree on: they are the earliest works of popular fiction in China.
>
> (Chen 1993: 1)

Thus if popular fiction came into being between the late Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368) and the early Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), they have only a history of more than five hundred years so far. Compared with the history of ancient mythology, legends and folktales in ancient times, popular fiction in China is a rather young literary form.

As for the history of elite fiction in China, Lu (1981: 70) holds that "like poetry, fiction underwent a big change in the Tang Dynasty. Although it still dealt with anecdotes and strange tales, its narrative became tactful and its style became flowery. Compared with the fiction in the Six Dynasties which was crude and clumsy, fiction in the Tang Dynasty improved greatly. And what is especially noteworthy is that, it was during that time that writers began to write fiction on their own initiative." The emergence of legendary stories in the Tang Dynasty is a giant leap in the history of Chinese fiction, which marks the beginning of the maturity of Chinese fiction. How can we draw such a conclusion? Here it is necessary for us to briefly review the history of Chinese fiction.

Chinese fiction originated from myths and legends in remote antiquity. Mythology is "the nature and society itself reworked in an unconscious artistic way by the popular imagination" (Marx 1972: 113). It is the art during the childhood of humanity. In the process of "unconscious artistic reworking," such artistic means as imagination, exaggeration and fabrication were employed, together with simple plots and character images, which made initial preparations for the emergence of fiction. During the Spring and Autumn and the Warring States Periods (770–221 BC), fables and stories developed greatly. As one of the earliest forms of narrative literature, fables aim at teaching moral lessons through satirical short stories. Historical works in the Pre-Qin period (2100–221 BC) and Western and Eastern Han Dynasties (202 BC–220 AD) such as *The Spring and Autumn Annals* (*Chun Qiu*), *Strategies of the Warring States* (*Zhan Guo Ce*), *Historical Records* (*Shi Ji*), etc., give detailed descriptions of important historical figures and events, and embody a strong literary color. *Historical Records*, in particular, makes outstanding achievements in characterization, which offers artistic reference for the emergence of fiction. The artistic experiences in

characterization and narrative in the Pre-Qin period and Western and Eastern Han Dynasties made a positive impact on the creation of fiction in later times.

The Han, Wei and Six Dynasties were afflicted by frequent wars, social unrest, corruption of the ruling class, unprecedentedly various sharp conflicts, rampant superstition, the wide spread of Buddhism, and prevailing empty and idle talk. Hence came the booming period of "anecdotal stories" (zhiren xiaoshuo) and "weird stories" (zhiguai xiaoshuo), among which the representative works include Gan Bao's *Records of Demigods* (*Sou Shen Ji*), Wang Jia's *Records of Gleanings* (*Shi Yi Ji*) and Liu Yiqing's *New Anecdotes of Social Talk* (*Shi Shuo Xin Yu*), which are characterized by explicit theme, distinctive characters, delicate depiction and complete structure, thus helping later writers to accumulate rich experience for fiction writing and enable the Chinese fiction to begin to take shape. However, the writers at that time did not create fiction consciously, so they could not give full play to their artistic imagination and creativity, and failed to do characterization successfully, therefore, their works could not be counted as "fiction" in its real sense.

Romance in the Tang Dynasty (618–907 AD) developed on the basis of weird stories popular in the Six Dynasties (222–589 AD), but it underwent a fundamental change, which is shown in the following aspects: Firstly, in terms of the cognition of the author of the fiction, romance authors turned from unconscious writing to conscious creation. As Shen Jiji (750–797 AD), a romance fictionist of the Tang Dynasty, points out in his "Postscript" to *The Tale of the Fairy Ren* (*Renshi Zhuan*), the purpose of his writing is "to elaborate the principle of change, observe the relationship between divinities and men, and manifest the beauty of essays as well as conveying subtle feelings." He regards fiction writing as artistic creation, in which he could convey subtle feelings to readers through elaborate structure of the essay. From this we can easily find that writers of romance in the Tang Dynasty realized that they were doing artistic creation, so they consciously employed fictional artistic techniques. Secondly, in terms of subject matters, they made shift in subject matters from the absurd karma weird stories popular in the Han, Wei and Six Dynasties to the reflection of a variety of human and social relationships in real life in the Tang Dynasty, and subtly combined the highly fantastic plots with the realistic human world. Thirdly, in terms of artistic creation, the rough and clumsy outlines characteristic of weird stories gave way to vivid depiction of storylines and characters, together with longer length, more detailed descriptions, more complete plots and more distinctive characters, which indicates that Chinese fiction entered the mature stage in the Tang Dynasty.

The above brief review of the history of folktales, popular fiction and elite fiction show that folktales originated from oral literature in the ancient times; popular fiction derived from the art of "storytelling" starting from the Song Dynasty (960–1279 AD) and became mature between the late Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368) and the early Ming Dynasty (1368–1644); while elite fiction came to its maturity with the emergence of romance in the Tang Dynasty (618–907 AD). The earliest form of folktales, namely myth, was a product of the combination of oral language and primitive thinking; elite fiction was the result of the combination of written language and artistic thinking; while popular fiction resulted from popularization of written language and secularization of artistic creation.

2.2 The Interaction Between Elite Fiction, Popular Fiction and Folktales

Elite fiction, popular fiction and folktales coexist in the unity of national culture, and these three forms of prose narrative literature are inextricably linked with one another. They are independent of and different from one another, at the same time they are also interrelated and interpenetrated with one another. Under certain conditions, folktales can be converted into popular fiction and elite fiction, and vice versa. Moreover, there exists a "grey area" between elite fiction and popular fiction. Which category they belong to largely depends on the essential features exhibited by them.

2.2.1 Transformation of Folktales into Elite Fiction and Popular Fiction

Would folktales created and spread orally by the working people, once written down by writers, be necessarily transformed into "elite fiction" or "popular fiction"? This depends on concrete circumstances.

First of all, written works which faithfully record and properly rework oral folk stories still fall into the category of folk literature.

To record and rework folktales and even all of the works of folk literature is a scientific work which is supposed to be loyal to the original tale when it was orally transmitted, and to preserve its special literary, aesthetic and scientific value so as to achieve the unity of literariness and scientificity. Although those oral works are transformed into written literature, their prototype, ideological content, orality and characteristics of artistic expression remain unchanged, and their authors and their ownership still reflect the nature of collectivity. When these works are published, the authors still remain anonymous, only the names of narrators and people who record and rework them can be signed. Here we should strictly distinguish between the author, the narrator, and people who record and rework the work, because they play different roles in the creation of folk literature. The narrator of folk literature mainly plays the role of inheriting the cultural tradition, and during the process of narrating, reworking is somewhat hard to avoid, but the whole work is not supposed to be created by the narrator. As to the people who record and rework the oral literature, what they do is merely to complete the transformation from oral text into written text, though rewriting may occur, its change to the original is supposed to be slight. Therefore, this kind of literature which is "faithfully recorded and carefully reworked," in fact still retains the "collective" nature and "oral" style characteristic of folk literature, and therefore undoubtedly belongs to folk literature.

Secondly, prose narrative works "adapted" (adaptation) and "recreated" (recreation) by using the materials of folktales can be classified into elite fiction or popular fiction according to different circumstances.

"Adaptation" refers to writers' processing of the materials of folktales into works of other genres with the original theme and plot almost unchanged based on their own creative intentions and artistic style. By contrast, "recreation" means writers' complete changing of the original theme or plot, as well as their re-construction of new works based on their own understanding, while the materials of folktales are only regarded as a shadow, or a source of inspiration. Both adaptation and recreation help to change the form, structure and content of folktales, in which writers' subjectivity plays an important role. As a result, this kind of work cannot be counted as folk literature, but rather elite literature or popular literature.

There are plenty of examples of adapting and recreating the materials of folktales into popular fiction and elite fiction in all countries and at all times, as exemplified by Boccaccio's *The Decameron*, Rabelais' *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*, Luo Guanzhong's *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (*Sanguo Yanyi*), Shi Nai'an's *Outlaws of the Marsh* (or *Water Margin*, *Shui Hu Zhuan*), Wu Cheng'en's *Journey to the West* (*Xi You Ji*), etc. These works draw on materials from folklores, stories and anecdotes, and are the writers' recreation through their refining and processing. For another example, Pu Songling's *Strange Tales from a Scholar's Studio* (*Liao Zhai Zhi Yi*), the so-called the greatest collection of short stories in classical Chinese, contains many texts directly employing folk stories of ghosts and weird stories. According to the relevant research, this book includes more than 160 stories directly or indirectly taken from folktales, and is greatly influenced by folk literature in terms of artistic form and style (Wang 1985). Folktales and its subject matters have been employed by literary writers in all countries and at all times since ancient times, undoubtedly the influence of oral literature upon written literature should never been underestimated.

Folktales and their materials have a lot of impact on writers' fiction creation, but this impact remains somewhat at a superficial level. Owing to the increasingly in-depth and encompassing research on fiction creation, now we have got a better understanding about the profound impact of folktales on the creation of new fiction in terms of "archetype" and "writing techniques." Ancient "archetype" in folktales often appeared consciously or unconsciously under the fictionist's pen, such as the old archetype of "a distressed young scholar's chance encounter with a fair maiden" in Chinese folk literature, which is found in the novels of current times such as *Manager Qiao Assumes Office*, *Romance of Tianyun Mountain* and so on. Many fictionists have employed grotesque and distorted techniques borrowed from myths, legends and fantasies in their fiction writing. For example, Colombian writer Garcia Marquez won Nobel Prize for literature in 1982, which is attributed to his novels of "magical realism." When his good friend, Mendoza, asked him about the most influential person in his long writing career, he replied: "First of all, it is my grandmother. She told me gruesome stories in a calm and collected manner, as if she had just witnessed them. I found that she told stories calmly and vividly, which makes them sound real and believable. It is through the use of my grandmother's method that I created *One Hundred Years of Solitude*" (Marquez and Mendoza 1987: 70). Now, there are more and more fictionists who try to absorb rich nutrition from folktales to improve their own literary creation.

2.2.2 Transformation of Elite Fiction and Popular Fiction into Folktales

In the above we have discussed the transformation of folktales into elite fiction and popular fiction, which is essentially a process of folk oral literature being written down. In the following part, we will talk about the transformation of elite fiction and popular fiction to folktales, which is essentially a process of elite fiction and popular fiction being oralized. Writers borrow the storytelling form from folk literature to create works of fiction based on people's appreciative habits and aesthetic requirements and their own understanding of life. Such works are originally published in written form, and then turn into stories through oral transmission. Can these works be counted as folktales? This is a little complicated, because to examine whether a work belongs to folktales or not, we need to find out whether it has oral characteristics and have an overall grasp of both its content and form. We should also examine whether the work spreads about among the working people in their favorite form of storytelling, and whether it agrees with the working people in terms of ideological content and aesthetic taste. If such kind of works does represent people's thoughts, life and wishes, and express their aesthetic ideas and artistic taste, and spread far and wide among people in the oral form, then it can be counted as works of folk literature. When this kind of works is still in written form, it belongs to writers' literature, but after it spreads far and wide in oral form, it turns into folk literature. It should be noted that whether an oralized work belongs to folk literature or not depends not only on its form of transmission, but also on its ideological content and artistic characteristics (i.e. whether they are consistent with the characteristics of folk literature or not). We should examine it as a whole instead of focusing only on one specific aspect one-sidedly.

2.2.3 The Cycle from Folktales to Fiction and then to New Folktales

In the history of Chinese and foreign literature, there are many examples of writers who, based on the materials of folktales, adapt and create works of fiction which then spread orally and thereof produce new folktales. For example, a lot of works in Grimm's fairy tales and Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tales are created based on the subject matters and images of folk literature which are now totally beyond people. What we read now are fairy tales recreated by Grimm and Andersen, which then spread in oral form instead of written form, thus greatly enriching folk fairy tales. For example, *The Decameron*, the masterpiece of the pioneer humanist of Renaissance Boccaccio, set an important precedent for modern European short stories, which was deeply influenced by *The Thousand and One Nights*, a collection of Arabian folk tales, but some stories in *The Decameron* deviated from their written form and were turned into oral folk tales. Therefore, some literary historians believe that from the

European Middle Ages to the Renaissance, folk literature became more and more important in the writers' works, so that sometimes it was hard to draw a clear line between them.

When the works of fiction that have been reworked and transformed make their way back to the folks, the working people often recreate them based on their own understanding instead of retelling the stories unchanged. This kind of recreation has two forms: one is to enrich the original story, that is, to enrich the characters in the original, to supplement the plot, and to modify the language. For example, in *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (*Sanguo Yanyi*), Guan Yu, a famous general in the late Eastern Han Dynasty (25–220 AD), once told the envoy of Eastern Wu "how can a man of nobody match a lady of somebody?", and it is based on this mere quotation that people create another story about the tortuous and unusual life experience of Guan Sanjie, the third daughter of Guan Yu. Some scholars widely collected folktales related to *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* and published the collection of folk stories *Anecdotes of the Three Kingdoms* (*Sanguo Waizhuan*), in which most of the stories are inspired by *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (Jiang and Han 1987). The second form of recreation is to tell the opposite of the story, that is, people sometimes are dissatisfied with the ending of the original story and characters, and so they create new stories in the opposite way. For example, many stories in the collection of folk stories *Cao Cao Calls on Zhuge Liang Three Times* compiled by Zheng and Han (1987) are just the opposite to those in the novel *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. For example, in the original novel Liu Bei calls on Zhuge Liang three times, while in this collection the story becomes Cao Cao calling on Zhuge Liang three times. In the novel, Zhuge Liang enrages Zhou Yu three times, while in the collection the story turns out to be just the opposite. In the novel, Zhuge Liang captures Meng Huo seven times, while in the collection Meng Huo captures Zhuge Liang five times. It can be seen that this collection goes in the opposite direction of the original work and creates stories in a different and fresh way. As Liu Shouhua points out in his "Preface" to this collection of folk stories, "Folk oral literature is closely related to writers' written literature in China, because writers often adopt the materials of folk literature to enrich their own works, as exemplified by *Romance of The Three Kingdoms*, *Journey to the West* (*Xi You Ji*), *Outlaws of the Marsh* (*Shui Hu Zhuan*), *Strange Tales from a Scholar's Studio* (*Liao Zhai Zhi Yi*) and so on. After these works spread about and become popular among the folks, people make full use of their artistic wisdom to weave and create new stories on the basis of them. In this way, they influence each other, and promote each other, thus giving impetus to the development of Chinese literature and the prosperity of national culture" (Liu 1987: 3). These remarks clearly show the relationship between folk literature and writers' literature which is mutually influential and mutually promotive, and illustrate such a circular process, that is, from the folks to writers, and then back to the folks, in which each stage is the improvement and development of the previous stage rather than a simple repetition, therefore it promotes the prosperity and development of literature in a spiral form.

It can be seen from the above analysis that folktales, popular fiction and elite fiction are closely related to one another, and they are in a dynamic state of interaction.

In order to reach out to a wider readership, and to expand their own art market, elite fiction sometimes has to borrow the materials and techniques in folktales and popular fiction. In order to improve its social taste and artistic expression, folktales also have to resort to the power of elite fiction to expand its influence, and appeal to refined taste. While in order to get higher economic benefits and stronger vitality and social benefits as well, popular fiction must cater to readers from different cultural stratum. On the one hand, they have to learn from folktales' comprehensible, fresh and vigorous language and techniques of weaving stories; on the other hand, they have to borrow from elite fiction ways of characterization and fresh techniques of expression. Only in this way can these three literary forms improve together in a way of mutual promotion. As for the quality gap between these three types of literature, the gap between popular literature and elite literature is larger than that between folk literature and elite literature. In terms of the consumers of literature, popular literature has the advantage over elite literature and folk literature. Under the current social conditions, it is impossible to narrow the gap between these three types of literature—as a matter of fact, from the perspective of literary enrichment, it is unnecessary to narrow such a gap, because the gaps of cultural attainment and aesthetic taste of the reading public are always present. In the long run, it is impossible and also unnecessary to eliminate the gap in literature.

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Chapter 3
Folktales and the Evolution of Fiction

In prose narrative literature, story is the most ancient form of art. All nations and all cultures possess their own stories or tales that have been passed down from generation to generation. Anyone, from the childhood through to the old age in his life, should have at least listened to some stories, although he possibly has never made up stories or told stories. Stories, to a certain extent, can be regarded as an enlightening instructor and a textbook about life.

There has been a close connection between stories and fiction ever since the first appearance of fictional works. As a powerful means of transmitting and preserving a nation's culture, folk stories or to be more exact, folktales boast a long history and strong vitality and have exerted a profound impact on the birth and evolution of fiction. Written fiction originated from oral storytelling. By means of written language, written fiction narrates stories and portrays characters. Through centuries, fiction has gradually evolved into an independent literary form with its artistic value greater than that of folktales. Since there exists a close connection between fictional narrative and storytelling, the study of this connection forms a crucial part for the study of fiction, especially popular fiction. In this chapter, we will explore the origin and evolution of folktales and fiction as well as the relationship between storytelling and fictional narrative within the framework of story in its broad sense.

3.1 The Origin of Folktales and Fiction

3.1.1 The Origin of Folktales

Myth, which first emerged as storytelling of primitive men, is a symbolic narrative and elaborate account with gods as its main characters, and is the outcome of the objectification of human powers. All mythology subdues, controls and visualizes the forces of nature by means of imagination. This subduing of the forces of nature

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was firstly embodied in the account of how nature and human society came into being. As Lu (1981a: 17) puts it, "When primitive men observed natural phenomena and changes which could not be accomplished by any human power, they made up stories to explain them, and these explanations became myths." The elemental phenomena of nature were hostile to primitive men, and the law of the nature and the cosmos was beyond their primitive understanding. Therefore, primitive men created imaginative and elaborate myths to explain the phenomena of nature. Enslaved to low labor productivity and limited cognitive capacity, primitive men attributed all the happenings in nature to the will and power of gods. Their worship of gods is both the product of their fear of nature and the signal of their awakening self-awareness. Acknowledging the power of gods is in a sense to display the primitive men's desire to subdue and control the forces of nature. In Greek mythology, for example, the union of Gaia the earth goddess and Uranus the sky god gave birth to gods that represent various personified aspects of nature (e.g. the sun, the moon, the sea, the lightening, the four seasons, etc.) as well as of Olympic gods and goddesses (e.g. wisdom, war, art and literature, etc.). Chinese mythology is likewise characterized by the primitive men's indirect display of power, such as seen in the tales of Pan Gu who separated the sky from the earth, Nü Wa who patched up the sky, Jing Wei who attempted to fill up the sea, Kua Fu who determined to chase the sun, Chang'er who flied to the moon, Hou Ji who taught farmers to plant crops, and Gong Gong who knocked down Buzhou Mountain. To quote from Gorky (1980: 136), "In the imagination of primitive men, a god was not an abstract concept or a fantastic being, but a perfectly real figure equipped with some implement of labour, skilled in one trade or another, an instructor and fellow-worker of men." Gorky also states that "ancient folktales and myths are not reflections of primitive men's fear of nature. Instead, they are accounts of human's conquer of nature and human's struggle against ordeals of nature through the miraculous power of language" (Quoted in Liu 1986: 332). In Chinese mythology, You Chao who made houses with tree branches and Sui Ren who developed the method of making fire by drilling wood were the inventors of houses and fire respectively in the Paleolithic Age; Fu Xi who invented fishing net and Shen Nong who instructed people to plant crops were the inventors of agriculture in the Mesolithic Age; Huang Di, Yao, Shun and Yü were esteemed chieftains in the Neolithic Age. All these mythical figures were heroes who attempted to subdue and transform nature in the prehistoric age.

Owing to the longtime production and labour, human mind gradually developed and improved, and began to have a better understanding of the intrinsic nature of things. With their abstract thinking better developed, they were more confident about their value and power, and turned from worshiping deities to worshipping demigod heroes, until they began to sing praises of the heroes in their man's world, which eventually gave birth to the emergence of legends. This leap from myths to legends is gigantic, for since then stories began to deal with actual admirable people rather than intimidating supernatural beings. The focal point of stories was shifted from divinity to humanity, and from worshiping god to praising man. A legend was told as if it were a historical event which happened during a specific historical time period, rather than a product of mere fantasy and imagination. Early legends were not clearly

distinguished from myths, and were indiscriminately referred to as "mythological legends." Then it developed independently into a new literary form. For instance, mythological legends as a general literary genre were included in many Chinese classical works, such as *The Book of Songs* (*Shi Jing*), *The Poetry of Chu* (*Chu Ci*), *Spring and Autumn Annals* (*Chun Qiu*), *Historical Records* (*Shi Ji*), *Liezi, Travels of King Mu* (*Mutianzi Zhuan*), *Spring and Autumn Annals of Wu and Yue* (*Wu Yue Chun Qiu*), *Book of the Master of Huainan* (*Huainanzi*), etc. Legends have many different types, for example, legends about historical figures, such as national heroes, emperors and high-positioned officials, master artisans, literati, resourceful people, etc.; legends about historical events, such as the Yellow Turbans Uprising, Fang La Uprising, the Uprising of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, etc.; tales about local scenery, customs, specialties, folk art, etc. While myths have no longer been massively created as time goes by, legends have still been vigorously transmitted from generation to generation.

After legends, fables which were another form of storytelling appeared. Embracing rationalistic ideas, fables tell succinct fictional stories that are intended to teach some instructive, thought-provoking lessons, and are so labeled as the "veiled truth." The earliest Chinese fables are often found in the prose works of the Pre-Qin period (2100–221 BC). These Pre-Qin fables are short didactic stories that often narrate anecdotes of the past to allude to the present through analogy or metaphor. There are many household Chinese fables telling metaphorical truth, such as "Lord Ye's False Love of Dragons," "Pulling the Seedlings Upward to Hasten Their growth," "Pao Ding Carving up an Ox Carcass," "Waiting by a Tree Stump Waiting for a Hare," "The Fox Borrowing the Awe of the Tiger," "Nicking the Boat to Seek the Missing Sword," "His Spear Goes against his Shield," "Buying Shoes," etc. Gong Mu holds that "most of the Pre-Qin fables were created by the working people and were the crystallization of their wisdom, and only a small part of them were created by literati of that time" (Gong 1983: 9). When the creators of fables intentionally or unintentionally used real or fictional stories to express their ideas or views of the world, they rid themselves of intuitive and primitive way of thinking, and leapt from non-conscious primitive literary creation to conscious literary creation.

With myths as the source of various types of stories, legends, fables, fairy tales and animal tales gradually came into being. All these various forms of stories bear the feature of fantasy and imagination characteristic of myths, and some of them directly derived from myths. *The Story of the Cowherd and the Weaving Girl*, for instance, was originally recorded in *The Book of Songs* (*Shi Jing*) as a mythological tale about stars:

> Far away in the Milky Way in the sky, the twinkling stars splendidly shone, and the Weaving Girl stars in triangle way kept on shifting seven times a day. Although coming over and passing by seven times a day, they couldn't weave beautiful clothes; although the Altair stars brightly shone, they were not able to pull the carts.

The Far-away Altair in *The Nineteen Ancient Poems* called the Cowherd and the Weaving Girl as "a (married) couple" at the beginning. Later, the story was further evolved, according to volume XXVI of *The Standard Phrase Dictionary (Peiwen Yunfu)*:

> The Weaving Girl, daughter of the Lord of Heaven, lived in the east of the Galaxy. She worked year after year and finally she was able to weave splendid clothes. Out of mercy on her loneliness, the Lord of Heaven permitted her to marry the Cowherd. After getting married, the Weaving Girl abandoned the weaving task. Angry about it, the Lord forced the Weaving Girl to go back to the east of the Galaxy, only allowing the couple to meet once a year.

This contains much more than what is recorded in *The Book of Songs*. During the subsequent oral circulation among the folks, some contents related to historical elements and daily life were added. Therefore the story was transformed from a myth to a legend. The Cowherd and the Weaving Girl, originally two constellations in the Galaxy, were personalized and bonded as a couple, which was evolved into a story. At the same time, the plots of the tale were also enriched.

Some stories, just like myths, are full of fantasy, although the direct connection between these stories and myths can hardly be found, such as the story of "Whitewater Fairy," which is recorded as follows in *A Sequel to Records of Demigods (Sou Shen Hou Ji)*:

> There was a farmer named Xie Duan who lost his parents when he was young and was brought up by his neighbour. He was very obedient and honest, but he did not find a wife when he was already 18. He went to sleep at night and got up early in the morning and did farming industriously day after day. One day he accidently found a large river snail. Thinking it was something special, he took it home, kept it in a tank, and took care of it every day. Since then, every time when he was back from the field, he would find on his table a lot of delicious foods, as if somebody had done the cooking for him. He asked his neighbour about this, but no one knew who did it. One day, when the rooster was crowing, he pretended to go to the field, and then came back in the mid-day. He hid himself outside the fences watching what happened inside the house. Totally shocked, he saw a beautiful girl standing up from the spiral shell and going to the kitchen to do cooking. He hastened to open the door and asked who she was, and was told that she was Whitewater Motome, who said: "As the Lord of Heaven has mercy on your loneliness, he sent me to keep the house and cook for you. In ten years, when you become wealthy and find a wife, I shall go back. But now, as you have peeped at me and made me exposed, no longer should I stay." The man tried to persuade her to stay, but failed. While she went off, she left the shell with foods stored in it for him. And the man stayed wealthy all his life ever since.

Besides, such Chinese folk tales like *Mantis Turning into Human*, *Wolf Grandma*, *Ten Brothers*, etc., are also imbued with fantasy. Outside China there are also a lot of world-renowned children's fairy tales which are full of fantasy, such as *The Little Red Riding Hood* from *Child and Family Fairy Tales* by German writers The Brothers Grimm, *Stories of Three Bears*, *Stories of Three Pigs* and *Jonny and Small Cake* by the British writer Joseph Jacobs, and *Norwegian Folk Fairy Tales* and *Tales from the Fjeld* by Norwegian writers Peter Christian Asbjørnson and Joergen Mauer.

The evolution of "story" went through the stages of primitive society, slave society and feudal society. With the improvement of the productivity, the progress of the society and the deepening of the cognition of human beings, the fantasy color in story faded while the realistic composition was increasingly strengthened. With the emergence of the stories of manners, story creation went through a turn from romanticism to realism, such as the stories of farm hands and landlord, of artful women, of families, and of production experiences, which are mostly realistic. Folk

stories reflect people's daily life, even if there are elements of fantasy in them, they are only partially fantastic and are mainly realistic.

After the founding of the People's Republic of China (1949), people continuously promoted the growth of the traditional arts of folktales, and created new stories on the basis of the traditional folktales to reflect their new life and new thoughts with realistic features. As a dynamic system of historical development, stories of different times are closely connected with each other. New stories were created in the new historical era, inheriting and maintaining the tradition of folk stories. As an offshoot of time-honored oral stories, new stories satisfy people's aesthetic taste and recreational need with fascinating plots, which account for the coexistence of ancient and modern literature. Of course, the current new stories are largely different from traditional folk stories in that most of them are written works, and are strongly constrained by the consumer market, and so could hardly avoid the vulgar tendency in them.

3.1.2 The Rise of Folktales and Fiction

Folktales are those tales told by word of mouth among the folks. According to the study of Malinowski, folktales, together with myths and legends, are the three basic forms of human culture in the early age of human beings. The earliest form of fiction is fictional story, and this has been proved by the history of fiction at home and abroad. Time-honored tales were created by laboring people orally, and fiction originated from oral folktales. In the *Aspects of the Novel*, which is honored as "a classic analysis of the art of fiction in the 20th century," Forster (1974: 40) believes that the fundamental aspect of the novel is its storytelling aspect. He traces the origin of storytelling activities, holding that:

> It (storytelling) is immensely old — goes back to neolithic times, perhaps to palaeolithic. Neanderthal man listened to stories, if one may judge by the shape of his skull. The primitive audience was an audience of shock-heads, gaping round the camp-fire, fatigued with contending against the mammoth or the woolly rhinoceros, and only kept awake by suspense: what would happen next? The novelist droned on, and as soon as the audience guessed what happened next, they either fell asleep or killed him.
>
> (Forster 1974: 41)

Lu Xun points out more clearly that:

> As for fiction, I think it originated from what people did while taking rests. People took singing as a way of entertainment in their labor time to forget about the tedious work. When it came to rests, it is also necessary for them to have something entertaining. And telling stories to one another is exactly the way they adopted to gain this leisure, which is the very origin of fiction.
>
> (Lu 1981b: 302–303)

The above paragraph briefly states the relationship between fiction's origin and story. Fiction in the early age took storytelling as its starting point, that is to say, story is the initial form of fiction. It is exactly in terms of this form that the origin of fiction

could date back to storytelling in ancient times, and we can draw the conclusion that the earliest fictionists should be those storytellers.

It is the nature of human beings to tell and listen to stories, and we can say that deep in the psychological consciousness of human beings there exists the motive for narrating. Long before the real novel came into being, telling and listening to stories was a spiritual need for human beings. Storytelling plays an important role in the production, accumulation and evolution of a nation's traditional culture and spirit. In ancient times, the primitive hominid used to sit around the bonfire and tell some strange and fantastic stories. There is a detail in Homer's Epic *Odyssey*: King Aginor ordered his musician Dimodork to sing the love story of the goddess of crown Aphroditethe to Odysseus, which made him and all the Phoenicians very delighted. Just as Zhu (1982: 268) points out, "storytelling which prevailed in the primitive tribes was the earliest oral literature. However, the topics it covered were very limited, which mainly involved how they won victories or overcame the difficulties during their hunting in the form of narrating or singing. This kind of narrating or singing recalled their excitement in their hunting; meanwhile it imparted their experience to their listeners." Later, with the advance of times, storytelling began to cover the sphere of social history and become all-encompassing. Even now, in the primeval jungle in Africa, when the night falls, people would gather around the bonfire and enjoy their storytelling time. For example, there is a description of the scene of storytelling in Africa as follows:

> In Africa, people still keep the habit of storytelling in their spare time. When the sun sinks in the west and the evening bonfire blazes out, when the cattle take their rest and the fishing net gets washed and hung up outside, you can find people telling stories no matter on the top of far-away Ethiopian mountains or beside a cup of palm wine on the ivory seashore washed by the sea waves, even in the slums of Bo-Kaap and Thatched Village in Cape Town. The stories are passed down to granddaughter from her grandmother, from father to his son and grandson.
>
> On the tranquil coast of República de Moçambique, through the village, over the valley and then up the hilltop village of Suasiri, you can hear people's laughter, their singing and storytelling voice until late into the night. Walking closer, you will find people sitting around the bonfire in the dusk listening to their ancestors telling stories, and the eyes of children shine with bonfire light.
>
> (Luo 1962: 112)

It is reported that there is still this old story in Solomon Islands (the South Pacific Ocean islands): Whenever the sun sets in the western Atlantic, the local residents will gather around the garden or flock to the beaches, chewing areca and chatting. Then after a while, a voice will rise up: "once upon a time …" At this, people will, all of a sudden, stop their heated discussion and settle their eyes on the storyteller, everything around becoming so quiet. The crowds will focus all their attention on him until he is too tired to tell any more stories. From these storytellers and story-listeners, we can clearly see the embryo of "fictionists" and "readers." Hence, we can say that fiction is nurtured by the milk of story, and story leaves a distinctive mark on fiction.

There is indeed a close relationship between fiction and story from the perspective of fiction embryology. The traditional folktales were created orally and passed down by word of mouth, and it had been a long time before they finally came into being. Our ancestors made various kinds of simple sounds in order to coordinate and cooperate with each other in their collective life and collective labor. However, as time passed, these monotonous sounds were unable to get their thoughts well across. Just as Engels says, "they had come to such a point that something must be told to each other" (Engels 1972: 511). So language came into being. At first, their language was very simple, later it became more complicated. After their language narrative ability reached a certain level, the earliest oral story was then created by them. Then the primitive people created the "symbolic language," e.g. recording the event by knotting the strings, drawing in the cave, etc. Quite a long time later, they created written characters, so that the story could be written down on such materials as bricks, bamboos, metals, fabrics, paper, etc. Next, we will further discuss the relationship between storytelling and fiction based on the related studies in the West.

In the West, fiction, and novel in particular, has a surprising affinity with folktales in its origin. In terms of etymology, before the Renaissance the word "romance" used by the French, the Germans and the Italians derived from "romanice" which was an adverb meaning "folk language" in the Middle Ages. According to Harry Lefroy's research, the word for "novel" in French, i.e. "romam," means medieval romance; the word for "novel" in Italian, i.e. "novella," is cognate with the English word "novel," both meaning "news" (i.e. events that happened recently). So while "novel" was derived from the ancient "heroic legends" on the one hand, it is linked up to the modern "news" on the other hand. Even if we quote from Wellek and Warren's book and define "novel" as "the modern descendant of the epic—with drama, one of the two great forms" (Wellek and Warren 1982: 212), it obviously has a clear nature of "tale" or "story," which is reflected in two ways: Firstly, "epic" literally means "story" in Greek language; and secondly, some basic narrative techniques used in Homeric epics can also be found in early novels, such as using closed framework and structure (*Iliad*), placing twists and turns in the plot to depict characters' fates (the adventures of Odysseus), employing both flashback and interposed narrative (*Odyssey*), creating dramatic conflicts (Achilles and Agamemnon fall out and become enemies). European novels originated from the storytelling by the illiterates in the period of Roman Empire. At that time, they worked during the day, and at night they would get together, chattering, teasing, flirting and quipping, which, as time went on, led to the formation of some stories with fixed plots. Then these stories were passed down by word of mouth among people. In the Middle Ages, there appeared some semi-professional storytellers—minstrels. They wandered through the streets or alleys and sang their revised version of some popular stories which were a magnet for working people who sat around them to enjoy the stories to their heart's content after a busy day. By the 11th or 12th century, the number of minstrels had steadily increased and their stories had become an indispensable part of people's everyday life. At the same time, some popular oral literature found its way into the royal palace and some famous minstrels became distinguished guests of the aristocracy. As their social status improved, those minstrels received some education, and learned how to

write and were able to put their oral stories into written form. As a result, the written form of fiction came into being.

Myths, legends and folktales gave direct birth to novels. *The Golden Ass* written by Roman writer Apleius in the 2nd century AD is known as the precursor of Western novels. It depicts the fantastic adventures of Lucius, a noble young man who misuses a magic drug and accidentally transforms himself into an ass. This novel draws its materials heavily from myths and folklores. Then in the Middle Ages novels were further nourished by medieval folktales. For example, Boccaccio's *The Decameron* inherited and carried forward the medieval folktales. Rabelais's *The Life of Gargantua and of Pantagruel* is also based on folktales. Many novels in later times often drew its materials from folktales. Some critics believe that the birth of the genre of novel is an inevitable outcome of past narrative literature. Before the emergence of novels, development trends in such literary forms as legends, epics and dramas are from unconscious narrative (as in legendary narrative) to conscious narrative, from oral narrative to written narrative with more aesthetic value, from collective creation to individual creation, from for mass listeners to for individual reader (receptors of the narrative), and from poetic narrative to prose narrative. This development is evident, though it did not evolve in a linear way, neither did the latter necessarily and completely replace the former (for example, prose narrative did not take the place of poetic narrative completely). That's probably why Forster (1974: 40) says that "… the novel tells a story. That is the fundamental aspect without which it could not exist." Although he didn't forget to add that "That is the highest factor common to all novels, and I wish that it was not so, that it could be something different …" (Ibid.). The subtext here is: novels are based on stories, but do need to transcend stories; novels can not be separated from stories, but are not equal to stories, still less to oral storytelling. To stories which spread by word of mouth, the stable and basic components are plot frameworks and main characters, while other factors vary with each storytelling, and it is very difficult to find the author's personal style and the narrative nuance in oral storytelling which are, however, quite common in written narrative. Therefore, as a written work, the novel must transcend oral stories and adapt to written form of expression. The novels in later ages, just as what Forster hopes to see, transcend stories. But in terms of the early form of the novels, it is story that should be regarded as the genuine precursor of the novels.

3.2 Chinese Folktales and Fictional Style

The narrative of folktales has a long history in China, and numerous volumes of folktales have been produced, which not only provides treasure for Chinese and world literature, but also lays solid foundation for the preparation, formation and evolution of Chinese fictional style. Lu (1981b: 303) once said, "Telling stories is exactly where fiction emerged." Due to the differences of social patterns and cultural traditions between ancient China and the West, Chinese fiction differs greatly from that of the West in terms of their historical origin and stylistic form. Firstly, the

biggest difference lies in the style of language. Chinese ancient fiction presents two types of language style: classical Chinese and vernacular Chinese, thus forming two different types of fiction: fiction of classical Chinese, and fiction of vernacular Chinese. Chinese fiction went through different historical stages in the process of its formation and evolution: myths and legends, fables and stories, historical biographies and unofficial histories, anecdotal stories and weird stories, romances in the Tang Dynasty, storytelling scripts in the Song and Yuan Dynasties, novels in the Ming and Qing Dynasties, and modern novels. Despite different connotation and extension of the concept "fiction" in different historical periods, folk narrative has exerted huge impact on fiction-writing throughout all these historical periods. It can be said if there were no folk narrative, there would be no fiction, let alone its development. In the following section, we will briefly explore the relationship between folktales/story narrative and classical Chinese fiction and vernacular Chinese fiction with regard to their formation and evolution from the perspective of story narrative.

3.2.1 Folktales and Classical Chinese Fiction

From ancient China to Pre-Qin period (2100–221 BC), a lot of myths emerged and spread far and wide, which gave birth to the basic elements for fiction creation, and laid initial foundation for the birth of fiction. As mentioned earlier, myth is the oral creation of the working people in ancient times. Due to the extremely low productivity, nature often threatened the existence of human beings and no scientific explanations could be given for it. Bases on their primitive thinking in "childhood" stage, people attempted to conquer, dominate, and visualize the forces of nature with the aid of their imagination. Therefore myths are natural and social forms themselves which have been processed in an unconscious artistic form through people's fantasy. "Processed in an unconscious artistic form" reveals the essential characteristics of myths, and through the unconscious employment of imagination, exaggeration and invention, myth as an artistic means itself, together with simple plots and characters it created, made initial preparations for the emergence of fiction. Myths then became the raw materials for the creation of fiction in the later ages.

The Han, Wei and Six Dynasties were afflicted by frequent wars, social unrest, political evils, unprecedentedly sharp conflicts, prevailing religious superstition and empty talk. Hence came the booming period of anecdotal stories and weird stories, among which the representative works such as Gan Bao's *Records of Demigods* (*Sou Shen Ji*), Liu Yiqing's *Records of the Nether World* (*You Ming Lu*), Wang Jia's *Records of Gleanings* (*Shi Yi Ji*) describe demons and spirits, supernatural world and weird events with complex contents. However, what really possessed strong realistic significance and fictional flavors, and reflected social life and people's thoughts and feelings were those tales and stories coming from the folks. For example, stories such as *Li Ji, the Serpent Slayer*, *Gan Jiang and Mo Ye*, *Han Ping and His Wife* from Gan Bao's *Records of Demigods*, and *Liu Chen and Ruan Zhao* from Liu Yiqing's *Records of the Nether World* either sing the praises of the heroine's noble qualities

of ridding the evil people and sacrificing herself, or extol the hero's courageous deeds of defying brutal suppression and helping the victim, or show enduring love between husband and wife, or present people's longing for and pursuit of happy life. In terms of artistic techniques, these works have delicate depiction, distinct images, complete plots and beautiful language. While describing the supernatural world and promoting spirits, weird novels tried to give color to the scene and atmosphere, and presented vivid dialogues among characters for the sake of authenticity of the story. Therefore, by making good use of materials from folk literature and storytelling techniques from folktales, writers of these works accumulated rich experience in plot arrangement, character portrayal and language organization in novel creation, which helped Chinese fiction to take initial shape.

Ban Gu listed fifteen volumes of "novels" ("xiaoshuo") in *Chronicles of Literature of the Han Dynasty*, and noted that "novelists used to be government officials at low position, who collected stories from gossips and hearsays on streets and lanes." This indicates the origin of "fiction" as a genre in the history of Chinese literature. Different from the written works created by later writers (i.e. prose narrative "fiction"), early "fiction" was only a recounting of "gossips and hearsays on streets and lanes," which shows that at that time the "fiction" derived from the folktales, and naturally those novelists didn't regard their own writing as novel creation, but rather merely the collecting and recording of anecdotes and weird stories. In his "Preface" to *Records of Demigods*, Gan Bao remarks that "If I make occasional mistakes when collecting and recording stories, I am willing to shoulder the responsibilities together with ancient scholars. As for those records, they are rich enough to prove the existence of spirits and supernatural world" (Gan 1982: 20). Although these "novelists" boasted about their factual recording of history, their stories actually were based on the Buddhist scriptures, Taoism, ancient books and folktales, "which were merely fragmentary and were obtained from the old" (Ibid.), searching for the strange and wield stories, and the similarities and differences were all collected, and the falsehood and truth were all included, which indicates that at that time novelists mainly endeavored to fulfill their duties as historians by faithfully examining and recording historical facts, thus they were incapable of artistic imagination and creation. In this way, their works could only outline the story roughly instead of effective characterization by means of typification. Even in those anecdotal stories focusing on the character portrayal, it is impossible for the novelists to create typical images, and what they did is somewhat similar to writing literary sketch.

Owing to the development of productivity, commercial economy, emerging burgher class, influx of foreign culture, and particularly the wide spread of the Indian Buddhism, the culture in the Tang Dynasty (618–907 AD) witnessed unprecedented advance, which contributed to favorable socio-cultural atmosphere for fiction writing. The simultaneously flourishing creation and spread of Chinese folktales provided fiction writing with not only beautiful and rich prototypes and materials, but also various mature means of artistic expression. For example, Bai Xingjian's *Biography of Li Wa* is an adaptation of the folk story *A Flower*; Chen Hong's *Biography of Dongcheng Elder* and *Romance of Everlasting Regret* draw heavily from folktales; Li Chaowei's *Biography of Liu Yi* shares the similar storyline with the Indian story

Dragon Lady, and so on and so forth. These novels are successful not only for their employment of folktale subject matter, but more importantly for the application of the unique aesthetic ideas and skillful artistic expression found in folktales in order to deepen the themes, unfold the plots and portray the characters. Therefore, these works boast profound ideas and contents, complex touching plots as well as vivid, typical characters, thus meeting the requirements for the style of fiction. No wonder it is said that "compared with the purely scholastic literary creation, the romances in the Tang Dynasty have a lot of folk literary elements in it; while compared with folk literature, they have the elements of scholastic literary creation. Standing between folk literature and scholastic literature, they represent a new type of story featuring scholastic style of folk literature and folk style of scholastic literature (Chen 1982).

With regard to the understanding of novel creation, romance writers in the Tang Dynasty made great progress in this regard than before. According to Shen Jiji in his *The Tale of the Fairy Ren* (*Renshi Zhuan*), the purpose of his writing is "to elaborate the principle of change, observe the relationship between divinities and men, and manifest the beauty of essays as well as conveying subtle feelings" (Quoted in Zeng et al. 1982: 12). Thus we can see that writers then regarded novel writing as artistic creation, in which they could convey subtle feelings to the readers through the elaborate structuring of their work. Combining this view with the views set forth in forewords/postscripts of Bai Xingjian's *Biography of Li Wa* (*Li Wa Zhuan*), Yuan Zhen's *Biography of Yingying* (*Yingying Zhuan*), Huang Fumei's *A Story of Wang Zhigu* (*Wang Zhigu*) and anonymous work *Biography of Imperial Concubine Mei* (*Mei Fei Zhuan*), we can easily find that romance writers no longer did artistic processing of social life "in an unconscious artistic way"; instead they realized that they were doing artistic creation, therefore they consciously used fictional artistic techniques to combine the highly fantastic plots with the realistic human world, making shift in fiction theme from the absurd karma legends popular in the Wei and Jin Dynasties (220–420 AD) to the reflection of a variety of human and social relationships in real life, as well as the shift in artistic ways from giving rough outlines to focusing on vivid depiction of the story and characters. Compared with novels in the Six Dynasties period (222–589 AD), romances in the Tang Dynasty had more in-depth thoughts, richer feelings and stronger artistic appeal. The emergence of romances in the Tang Dynasty marked the formation of classical Chinese fiction as well as the formation of the genre of fiction as one type of literary genres.

In the Song Dynasty (960–1279 AD), a fundamental change took place—the birth of huaben, or storytelling scripts. Since then, the mainstream of classical Chinese short stories before the Song Dynasty gradually turned into that of vernacular ones. As they were separated from the general public in the whole process from writing to reading, classical Chinese short stories finally declined although it still went on along its own path. Short stories in the Song Dynasty generally fell into three categories. The first category is romance with the common themes about history, whose achievement remained low. Influential works among them include such anonymous works about history as *Records of Riverway Excavation* (*Kai He Ji*), *Records of Emperor Yang Di* (*Hai Shan Ji*), *Biography of Imperial Concubine Mei* (*Mei Fei Zhuan*), and *Anecdotes of Li Shishi* (*Li Shishi Waizhuan*), as well as Qin Chun's *Biography of Tan Yige* (*Tan*

Yige Zhuan) about real life. Lu Xun makes an analysis of the causes for their low achievement as follows:

> Romances had died out by the time the Tang Dynasty perished. Though there were also romances in the Song Dynasty, things were quite different: in the Tang Dynasty current affairs were frequently depicted while in the Song Dynasty ancient events were preferred. One can see few admonitions in the Tang works but a lot more in the Song works. Perhaps in the Tang Dynasty writers had more freedom of speech and discussing current affairs would not bring them disasters, while in the Song Dynasty there were so many restrictions that writers always tried to evade them and would choose to tell stories about ancient times. Moreover, the prevailing Neo-Confucianism in the Song Dynasty resulted in Neo-Confucianalized fiction for which admonitions became a must, or they would be regarded as futile.
>
> (Lu 1981b: 319)

The second category of short stories in the Song Dynasty is literary sketchbook. Sketchbooks at early stage of the Northern Song Dynasty (960–1127 AD) were mostly about the events and affairs in the Tang Dynasty (618–907 AD) and the Five Dynasties (907–960 AD), like Sun Guangxian's *Random Thoughts and Remarks* (*Beimeng Suoyan*); while since the middle of the Northern Song Dynasty, they mostly centered around matters of the dynasty itself, such as Sima Guang's *Accounts of Sushui* (*Sushui Jiwen*). Writers in the Southern Song Dynasty (1127–1279) preferred to record old anecdotes in the Northern Song Dynasty, such as Zhou Hui's *Qingbo Anecdotes* (*Qingbo Zazhi*).

The third category of short stories in the Song Dynasty is weird fiction, which was even less successful than literary sketchbooks which recorded bits and pieces of history. Influential works of this category include Hong Mai's *Records of Yi Jian* (*Yi Jian Zhi*) and Wu Shu's *Records of Strange Men in the Yangtze and Huai River Valley* (*Jiang Huai Yi Ren Lu*). The greatest contribution of the Song Dynasty (960–1279 AD) to classical Chinese fiction should be the voluminous *Extensive Records of the Taiping Era* (*Taiping Guang Ji*) in which nearly 500 unofficial historical stories, biographies and novels were collected. It has 500 volumes and 92 categories. Thanks to such a work, many classical Chinese short stories before the early stage of the Northern Song Dynasty (960–1127 AD) were preserved.

The classical Chinese short stories in the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644) could not rival the vernacular novels and short stories at the same era. The main collections of these short stories include Zhai You's *New Remarks by Oil Lamp* (*Jian Deng Xin Hua*), Li Zhen's *Extra Remarks by Oil Lamp* (*Jian Deng Yu Hua*), Shao Jingzhan's *Remarks by a Rekindled Oil Lamp* (*Mi Deng Yin Hua*), *New Remarks by Yu Chu* (*Yu Chu Xin Zhi*) edited by Zhang Chao, *He Liangjun's Remarks* (*He Shi Yu Lin*), etc. In a word, from the early Song Dynasty to the late Ming Dynasty, most of the classical Chinese short stories followed the writing style of the Jin and Tang Dynasties, imitating the archaistic writing style in their creation. For lack of originality, none of them could surpass those in the Tang Dynasty. Due to this reason, the classical Chinese short stories during this period remained underdeveloped.

It was not until the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911) that the great Chinese writer Pu Songling (1640–1715) infused the new blood of "folk literature" into the old forms of the classical Chinese short stories, thus creating the popular collection of short

stories *Strange Tales from a Scholar's Studio* (*Liao Zhai Zhi Yi*), which pushed the creation of the classical Chinese short stories to a new height. Next, we will discuss how Pu Songling creatively learned and used folk literature to revive the declining classical Chinese fiction.

First of all, in terms of the subject matters for fiction creation, Pu Songling expounded it clearly in his "Preface" to *Strange Tales from a Scholar's Studio* that "For my talent cannot rival that of Gan Bao, elegant explorer of the records of ghosts and gods; I am rather animated by the spirit of Su Dongpo,[1] who loved to hear men speak of the supernatural beings. I get people put what they tell me to writing and subsequently I dress it up in the form of a story and thus in the lapse of time my friends from all quarters have supplied me with a great lot of materials, which, from my habit of collecting, have grown into a vast pile" (Quoted in Zeng et al. 1982: 161). This indicates that most of the materials in *Strange Tales from a Scholar's Studio* came from the folk people. Wang Fenling examined and verified the sources of its materials in greater detail. According to her study, there are about more than 140 stories coming from the folk (Wang 1985). In addition, there still remained a lot of unverified stories, the number of which was really considerable in view of the number of verified ones. Secondly, in terms of the employment of its creative methods and artistic techniques, Pu Songling creatively used imagination, exaggeration and some other romanticistic elements, forming a unique romanticist creative approach: On the one hand, it brought the unreal things to reality, such as the flower eidolon and the fox devil and the nether world. While personalizing these unreal things and actualizing the nether world, it deeply reflects the conflicts in reality through the picture in which human and ghost, and the nether world and the human world are mixed together. On the other hand, by making full use of the surrealistic power provided by these unreal things, it presented the ideal characters and the vision of life in the eyes of the author. Thirdly, by inheriting storytelling techniques from the folktales whose plots were made intricate and vivid, Pu Songling made his short stories popular throughout the ages for its colorful and vivid plots. At the same time, by breaking away from the tradition of focusing on stories, Pu Songling took characterization as his central task. By representing life through characters' image to express the author's aesthetic ideas, Pu Songling opened up a new field for the creation of short stories, and indicated their trend of development.

Feng Yuancun, a man of letter in the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911), spoke highly of Pu Songling's novel, claiming it as "the first book of scheming." He commented that "with regard to how *Strange Tales from a Scholar's Studio* described the ghosts and eidolons, it followed the sequence of the plots, giving these ghosts and eidolons emotions and personalities. Though the description is amazingly subtle, it never goes beyond what people expect; though the stories are amazingly coincident, it is exactly within people's expectation" (Feng 1982: 166). These remarks are rather appropriate. Pu Songling's excellent artistic techniques resulted from his creative learning of the good tradition of how people told stories in their daily life, which is the very reason

[1]Su Dongpo (1037–1101 AD) is a great poet in the Tang Dynasty (618–907 AD).—Translator's note.

why the *Strange Tales from a Scholar's Studio* helped the classical Chinese fiction to thrive for the second time and reach its peak.

From what has been discussed above, we can see that classical Chinese fiction grew under the nurture of the art of folktales. It showed strong vitality when absorbing abundant nourishment from folktales; if detached from folktales, it was sure to wither.

3.2.2 Storytelling and Vernacular Chinese Fiction

"Hua" in archaic Chinese had the meaning of "story," although in modern Chinese it refers to "oral or written words that are uttered." In the Song and Yuan Dynasties, when the classical Chinese short stories were at a low ebb, the art of "shuohua" (telling stories, or storytelling) which emerged among folk people was unprecedentedly prosperous. Actually the so-called "shuohua" just means "storytelling." Since most of its listeners were the lower-class people, the storyteller would use vernacular Chinese which was understandable, clear, vivid and straightforward. After that, fiction writers started to learn the art of "storytelling" from the folks. By using vernacular language, they broke through the limit of the classical Chinese short stories, which enabled them to represent their lives and to express their feelings more naturally and vividly in an attempt to find a new path for the development of Chinese short stories.

According to the records of Nai Deweng, a hermit in the Southern Song Dynasty (1127–1279), "storytelling" fell into four categories, among which the most popular ones are "short stories" (xiaoshuo) and "history-telling" (jiangshi). The speaker was so skilled in telling stories that the listeners felt as if experiencing the situation personally. They were often too absorbed in the story to forget tiredness, worrying about missing what the speaker said. The master copy the storyteller used was called "huaben" (scripts for storytelling, or storytelling scripts). And the so-called "huaben" was the literary master copy of the art of "storytelling." Hu (1980) explains the reasons for the appearance of "storytelling scripts" as follows:

> Many historical stories, folktales as well as current news stories were told and spread by word of mouth among people. These stories, at the beginning, were plain, simple, with indistinct characters and vague personality and were close to the real things and real people in our daily life. Once it was heard by the storytellers, on the one hand as their political orientation and emotions were basically similar to those of the folk people, the storytellers would adapt the story in terms of the people's different feelings, such as love, hate, praise and criticism; on the other hand, because of their competitive profession and knowledge gained from their masters and family members, they tried to fathom people's thoughts by means of their experiences and intelligence. With their own deliberate thoughts impromptu coming into their mind, they reconstructed the story, adding some exciting plots, describing more about the character's personality. The same story often displayed some differences when the artists each played their own talents by word of mouth. The stories were perdurable and widespread and they learned from each other's strengths to offset respective weaknesses. There were more and more polishings and supplements with richer contents and improved forms, thus some people processed and portrayed the contents of the stories and the situation in which the stories were told in varying degrees and put them into written words. Sometimes

> they wrote down the contents by themselves for teaching and acquiring knowledge between master and apprentices. In this way, huaben, or storytelling scripts, came into being.
>
> (Hu 1980: 130)

The appearance of storytelling scripts in the Song Dynasty (960–1279 AD) is revolutionary in the history of fiction. Development from classical Chinese fiction to vernacular Chinese fiction not only enhanced its expressive power but also broadened the readership and improved its social function. The objects depicted in the fictional works underwent a change from literati in feudal society to common people, especially the city residents, and therefore, the ideological contents and aesthetic interest of the works changed as well. Storytelling scripts in the Song Dynasty laid the foundation for the vernacular short stories and novels. Therefore Lu (1981b: 319) observes that the emergence of storytelling scripts in the Song Dynasty "was really a giant leap in the historical development of fiction".

Then in the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), fiction of storytelling scripts exerted a broad impact on society for its unique artistic form, which attracted widespread attention of men of letters. On the one hand, they processed and sorted out the storytelling scripts; on the other hand, by imitating its form they wrote the vernacular short stories for reading, which are called "ni huaben," i.e. the imitation of huaben, or imitative huaben. This made the vernacular short stories become mature and reached its unprecedented peak. This achievement was represented by Feng Menglong's "*San Yan*"[2] and Ling Mengchu's "*Er Pai*,"[3] which were regarded as the literary treasures of vernacular short stories in ancient China. In terms of subject matters, "storytelling scripts" concerning Song and Yuan folk literature accounted for about one-third of "*San Yan*" which had the greatest achievement. They took city residents as protagonists to reflect the then social life and folk customs and conventions. Many of them were folklores and folktales with strong folk style, intense emotions and acrid flavor. While among "imitative storytelling scripts" which accounted for two-thirds of "*San Yan*," most of the stories were taken from folktales and folklore. With regard to the structure of the fiction, the works in *San Yan* in the Ming Dynasty inherited the artistic tradition of the storytelling scripts in Song and Yuan folk literature. Not

[2] *San Yan* is an abbreviated title for the three collections of short stories compiled by Feng Menglong (1574–1646), a writer of the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644). The three collections of shorts stories are *Stories to Enlighten the World* (also translated into *Stories Old and New*, *Yu Shi Ming Yan*), *Stories to Caution the World* (*Jing Shi Tong Yan*), and *Stories to Awaken the World* (*Xing Shi Heng Yan*).—Translator's note.

[3] *Er Pai* is an abbreviated title for the two series of short stories compiled by Ling Mengchu (1580–1644), a writer of the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644). The two series of short stories are *Amazing Tales: First Series* (*Chuke Pai'an Jingqi*) and *Amazing Tales: Second Series* (*Erke Pai'an Jingqi*).—Translator's note.

only the poems, ci,[4] ruhuo[5] and touhui[6] previously used as the performing means of storytellers became the means for fiction creation, but also the plot could be made to develop in the process of conflicts with the cause and result clearly represented. If nothing happened, the story was short; if something happened, the story was long. And clear threads of thought ran through the work. The conflicts would be resolved on the spot. There were beginning and ending, and even the secondary characters would have a clear ending. People in the Ming Dynasty inherited the national forms of the storytelling scripts in Song and Yuan folk literature. Although the vernacular short stories in Ming folk literature moved from storytellers' "tongue" to readers' "desk," they kept the inherent performing features of these storytellers, which made the readers feel as if they were personally on storytelling stage listening to the storytellers telling stories vividly, which was an advantage of imitative storytelling scripts. As for the use of language, the works in the Ming Dynasty were also deeply affected by the storytelling scripts in Song and Yuan folk literature and retained the advantage of colloquial style. In some of the excellent works, their language integrated the northern dialect in the Ming Dynasty, colloquial language of the south of the Yangtze River, some colloquial language of the Song and Yuan Dynasties, and some plain classical Chinese. The completely colloquial expressions in the language were very close to the modern spoken language. For example, not only the subject matter of *Maiden Bai Guards Leifeng Pogoda Forever, Du Shiniang Sinks the Jewel Box in a Rage*, etc., came from the folks, but also they kept the basic artistic features of storytelling. They were structually complete stories with beginning and ending, and bizarre plot with easily understandable language. But different from storytelling scripts, they became longer, the theme and idea became more focused, and the depiction of characters' inner world became more subtle. Therefore, they have won high praise, and have been passed down and become enduringly popular.

The ancient Chinese "novels in zhanghui style[7]" (or zhanghui-style novels) originated from history-telling, which is also a form of storytelling. Both "history-telling" and "short stories" were very popular with people in the Song Dynasty (960–1279 AD), with the former telling lengthy historical stories while the latter current stories and affairs. The evolution from history-telling to zhanghui-style novels resulted from the development, communication, and inheritance of storytelling arts themselves (such as the art of history-telling) and it went through several stages as follows.

The first stage was represented by the history-telling scripts in the Song Dynasty (960–1279 AD). Instead of serving as written literature, they were brief master copies

[4]Ci: poetry written to certain tunes with strict tonal patterns and rhyme schemes and in fixed numbers of lines and words, originated in the Tang Dynasty (618–907 AD) and fully developed in the Song Dynasty (960–1279 AD).—Translator's note.

[5]Ruhuo: (of storytelling scripts or professional storytellers in the Song and Yuan Dynasties) introductory story or verse before the main tale.—Translator's note.

[6]Touhui: (of storytelling scripts or professional storytellers in the Song and Yuan Dynasties) introductory remarks before the main tale.—Translator's note.

[7]Zhanghui style: A type of traditional Chinese novel divided into some chapters with each chapter headed by a couplet giving the gist of its contents. "Zhang" or "hui" in Chinese means "chapter".—Translator's note.

of oral literature. Though divided into several parts with headings, their structure was not clear enough. The text was written in an outline form which was characterized by its spoken parts. The scope of the subject matters was confined to "wars recorded in historical books and biographies before the Song Dynasty," centering on vicissitudes of dynasties as well as the rise and fall of emperors and generals. The second stage was represented by pinhua, a style of storytelling popular in the Song Dynasty. Inheriting from history-telling scripts in the Song Dynasty, pinghua in the Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368) was further improved in its form for it already had clearer paragraphs, headings as well as serial illustrations which could be offered for reading and appreciation. Moreover, its subject matters expanded to heroic romances (for instance, *Xue Rengui Conquered the Troops of Liao [Xue Rengui Zheng Liao]*), which was the content of chivalric romance, bringing some contents of short stories (mainly about podao and ganbang[8]) into pinghua. These subject matters were different, although they were also related to one another. The history-telling stories mainly narrated events and depicted characters based on history while chivalric romance, podao and ganbao, which were character-centered, described the events caused by the conflicts between characters. The typical history-telling novel was the *Three Kingdoms* (*Sanguo*), and the typical cavalry novel was *The Legend of Warriors of Yang Family* (*Yang Jia Jiang*); while *Outlaws of the Marsh* (*Shui Hu Zhuan*) was a fusion of chivalric romance and podao and ganbang, written in the form of history-telling scripts and described the scenes of that kind. Every kind of full-length pinghua had at least the above three components at the same time and each with different focuses. There was something in common in some components of "history-telling," "chivalric romance" and "short stories" in pinghua of the Yuan Dynasty and some short stories (with a theme similar to *Outlaws of the Marsh*) tended to expand their length. The third stage was represented by zhanghui-style novels. Between the late Yuan Dynasty and the early Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), headings for chapters in zhanghui-style novels began to take shape and their length was greatly increased, which indicates that zhanghui-style novels formally came into being. Owing to long-term artistic accumulation, stories in *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (*Sanguo Yanyi*) and *Outlaws of the Marsh* (*Shui Hu Zhuan*) became extremely rich and abundant. On the basis of folk creation (of pinghua), through Luo Guanzhong's *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, the art of history-telling gained a great advance. The stories in *Outlaws of the Marsh* were mostly short stories originally published as offprints in the Song and Yuan Dynasties. These stories were sorted out by predecessors, and especially through Shi Nai'an's compiling, a large number of short stories in *Outlaws of the Marsh* with the historical background of peasant uprisings during the end of the Northern Song Dynasty (960–1127 AD) were integrated, as well as focused, generalized, enriched and developed, thus forming zhanghui-style novels characteristic of the features of short stories and the length of history-telling. This is the first achievement in the

[8]Podao and ganbang: "podao" is a sword with a long blade and a short hilt wielded with both hands; "ganbang" refers to "rods and bars." This phrase refers to one type of storytelling scripts in the Song Dynasty (960–1279 AD), which mainly tells about wars involving the use of such weapons as swords, rods and bars in the form of short stories.—Translator's note.

development from oral talks to historical novels; it is also the first fruit in the integration of "short stories", "chivalric romance" and "history-telling." They were all mature works, laying the foundation for the later zhanghui-style novels, and also offering two role models of historical "romance" and heroic "legend" for them.

In the middle of the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), along with the ever increasing complexity of social life, literary creation became more and more prosperous and varied. Not only history-telling novels and chivalric romances evolved into rich literary readings, but also various elements and forms in different literary works began to be absorbed by zhanghui-style novels. Therefore, apart from historical romances and heroic romances, there were also fantasy novels, detective novels, and novels of manners. The emergence of *Chin P'ing Mei* (or *Jin Ping Mei*) paved the path for zhanghui-style novels which basically fell into the sphere of "literary creation" in its real sense, and which broke away from the art of storytelling and balladsinging, thus on the whole gaining its independent status. Zhanghui-style novels in the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911) had a wider range of subject matters. The appearance of *The Scholars* (*Ru Lin Wai Shi*) and *A Dream of Red Mansions* (*Hong Lou Meng*) indicates that zhanghui-style novels already reached the stage of fully independent literary creation. Although in its form it still adopted the traditional system of history-telling fiction in the Song and Yuan Dynasties, the novel itself had completely become an independent literary genre divorced from storytelling and balladsinging.

What is noteworthy is that, for the earliest zhanghui-style novels such as *Outlaws of the Marsh*, *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, *Romance of Demons* (*Ping Yao Zhuan*), etc., their subject matters came from the folktales and historical legends rather than from authorized history, therefore they represent the kind of history processed by the common people.

To sum up, the influences of "history-telling" upon the formation of (book-length) zhanghui-style novels are as follows:

Firstly, storytellers in the Song Dynasty "told history" in vernacular Chinese, which represents an emancipation of literature. It was able to, in a more natural way, represent life, portray characters, depict scenes, and express feelings. While folk storytellers "told history", it was impossible for them to complete a long historical story from the very beginning to the very end at a time—they had to tell it for a number of times. This duration in time led to the birth of zhanghui-style novels. Every time the storyteller told a story, it is equal to a hui (i.e. a chapter) in the later novels. Every time before the storytelling began, a topic title would be shown to the audiences revealing the main content of the story, and this is the origin of the title of each chapter in the later zhanghui-style novels.

Secondly, in order to attract the audiences and strike a chord in their heart, the storyteller before his storytelling must process the folktales and legends, explore in-depth the feelings, emotions and personalities of the heroes or heroines, carefully study the conflicts, auras and various details so that he could organize and create rich, intricate, thrilling (but realistic) and logical storyline. This artistic conception offers an artistic reference for the birth of zhanghui-style novels.

Thirdly, although folk artists were unable to complete a literary work of voluminous length at a time, they, in their storytelling and balladsinging, were able to tell independent and exciting stories one after another centering on a general topic or a general historical event. As long as these stories could be sorted out and linked in a certain logical sequences, the basic framework of a literary work of voluminous length could be initially established.

As Zhao (1982) points out, "if it were not for folk literary creations, such novels as *Outlaws of the Marsh, Romance of the Three Kingdoms* would not have been so smoothly and rapidly came out under the pen of men of letters, and if it were not for the techniques and creative experience employed for reference, such novels as *The Scholars* and *A Dream of Red Mansions* created independently by men of letters would not have come out so early and so maturely as what we see now".

From what has been discussed above, we can come to the conclusion that Chinese fiction has grown and developed on the basis of fairy tales, legends, and folktales. They carried forward the tradition of folktales, which set the right course for the advance of Chinese fiction, i.e. Chinese fiction is intended for the nation, for the popular taste, and for the general public.

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Chapter 4
Narrative Modes of Popular Fiction

What is narrative? A narrative is a narrator's account of a sequence of events, presented in a certain language, following a certain narrative structure. "Modes," according to John G. Cawelti, "are ways in which specific cultural themes and stereotypes become embodied in more universal story archetypes" (Cawelti 1976: 6). To put it briefly, modes are patterns of conventions that are specific to a particular culture or context. And a literary mode is a combination or synthesis of a number of specific cultural conventions with a more universal story form or archetype. With the above definition of "mode" as a starting point, we can define "narrative mode of fiction" as "the functional framework through which the fictionists recount stories in a given language in the course of their narrative production." So far a lot of research on fiction narratology has already been done by scholars in China and in the West. In this chapter we will apply some of their findings to the narrative production process of Chinese and Western popular fiction in an effort to explore the similarities and differences of narrative modes between Chinese and Western popular fiction from the angles of narrative time and narrative perspectives.

4.1 Narrative Time

According to Elizabeth Bowen, time is an essential element of narrative that is as important as the characters in a story. A novelist who has truly mastered the skills of storytelling should almost always use time dramatically. George Bluestone makes a study on the distinction between the novel and the film, and discovers that the formative principle in the novel is time, for "… the novel takes its space for granted and forms its narrative in a complex of time values" (Bluestone 1957: 61). In his 1952 classic *Time and the Novel*, A. A. Mendilow provides his in-depth observations on the issue of time in novels. He describes systematically the physical time frame of novels by discussing a disjunction between chronological time and psychological time. Through his contrastive analysis of the time locus of the reader and the time

Y. Huang, *Narrative of Chinese and Western Popular Fiction*,
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locus of the writer, he further distinguishes between three kinds of time in a novel: (a) the time during which we read the novel, (b) the time when the novel is written, (c) the past and the dramatic present in the novel. The carefully created illusion of the fictive present of the story consists of temporal elements such as temporal perspectives, temporal spread, and temporal transfer. Chronological time in the fictive present of the story can be identified, for it is also a fictive element used by the novelist alongside events, actions, conflicts and twists. Psychological time in the fiction, however, can be perceived quite differently by different characters. The sense of immediacy and presentness can be destroyed by the implied reference to or deliberate departure from the chronological time. The mutual relations between fictional time and chronological time contribute to the dramatic development of the story (Mendilow 1952).

Narrative time, also known as textual time, is the length of time in the story which communicates the sequence of events as rendered by the author and presented in the novel. There is often a difference between "narrative time" and "story time," with the latter being the base of the former. "Narrative time" is the time taken to narrate the events, and "story time" refers to the "real time" of the events. While story time is multi-dimensional, narrative time is often uni-dimensional and linear. Just as Todorov (1981) observes, to a certain extent, narrative time is linear while story time is dimensional. In a story, several events may happen at the same time, but in the narrating of the story those events have to be narrated one by one, thus a complicated image is projected onto a straight line. Genette argues that "narrative is a double temporal sequence: there is the time of the signified and the time of the signifier. This duality renders possible all the temporal distortions that are commonplace in narratives" (Genette 1980: 33). In this sense, narrative time is neither a simple copy or imitation of the story time nor a total transcendency of it. Instead narrative time serves as an aesthetic medium for the realization of the plot. It enables novelists to manage and schedule the story time (i.e. to re-segment and re-structure the story time) so as to organize and present multiple sequences of events in a linear narrative.

Here is a passage from *The Pearl Shirt Returned to Jiang Xingge*, one of the stories in *Stories to Enlighten the World* (or *Stories Old and New*, *Yu Shi Ming Yan*)[1] by Feng Menglong (1574–1646), a writer in the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644).

> (A) Time sped by like an arrow. Before they realized it, the anniversary was upon them. After offering oblations to his father's spirit tablet and taking off his garments of mourning made of coarse hemp, Xingge again asked the matchmaker to speak to the Wang family. This time, the proposal was accepted. (B) Within several days, the six preliminaries were completed, and the bride was brought over the threshold, (C) as is attested by the following lyric poem to the tune of "*The Moon over the West River*":
>
> Red curtains replaced the white of mourning;
>
> Hemp gave way to colorful clothing.

[1] *Yu Shi Ming Yan* is a collection of short stories written by Feng Menglong in the Ming Dynasty. Its initial title was *Gu Jin Xiaoshuo* (*Stories Old and New*), but later this title was changed into *Yu Shi Ming Yan* (*Stories to Enlighten the World*). So the title of this collection of short stories has different translations, which include "*Stories to Enlighten the World*," and "*Stories Old and New*."—Translator's note.

The festooned halls aglow with candles;
The nuptial wine and wedding feast all set out.
Why envy the splendor of a dowry?
Harder to come by is beauty.
Tonight, the pleasure of clouds and rain;
Tomorrow, visitors with whishes of joy.

(D) The bride was Mr. Wang's youngest daughter, nicknamed Number Three. Because she was born on the seventh day of the seventh month, she was also known as Sanqiao (literally, No. Three Coincidence). (E) The two older married daughters of the family were also of remarkable beauty. (F) Within the country of Zaoyang there circulated a four-line song that voiced the admiration for the Wang girls held by all and sundry:

Women in the world are many;
Those with the Wangs' beauty are few.
He who takes a Wang girl as wife
Is better off than the emperor's son-in-law.

(G) As the proverb says, "Failure to make a business deal is a matter of the moment; failure to marry the right wife is a woe of a lifetime." In selecting daughters-in-law, some families of distinction seek only a matching family background or rich dowry and arrange the betrothal with never a thought about other considerations. Later, when the grotesquely ugly bride is brought into the family and called upon to greet the members of the clan, imagine what poor figures the parents-in-law cut! Moreover, the discontented husband can hardly resist the temptation of illicit affairs. Yet, it so happens that ugly wives are best at bossing their husbands. If the husband reacts in the same way, he invites marital strife, but if he yields to her a couple of times out of face-saving considerations, she starts to put on airs. (H) It was to avoid such unpleasant situations that Jiang Shize, upon learning that Mr. Wang was prone to producing beautiful daughters, had sent over betrothal gifts early on to commit Mr. Wang's youngest girl to his son, both of whom were then at a tender age. (I) Now that Sanqiao had crossed the threshold of the Jiang house, she was perceived to be as full of grace and charm as expected. In fact, she was twice as beautiful as her two older sisters.

(Feng 2000)

The above sections in the story are numbered according to the temporal analysis approach proposed by Genette. The order of the constituent elements of the narrative is marked by A, B, C, D, etc., according to the order of their appearance in the narrative, while the chronological order of the story will be marked by numbers such as 1, 2, 3, 4, etc. We have thus segmented nine sections in this brief account of Xingge getting married to Sanqiao, distributed among four temporal positions. These positions are as follows in chronological order: (1) the birth and naming of Number Three (aka. Sanqiao); (2) Xingge's father sent over betrothal gifts to commit Sanqiao to his son when they were only kids; (3) Mr. Wang's two older daughters got married; (4) Xingge and Sanqiao were wedded. It should be noted that Section C and Section G are the narrator's comment or viewpoint that holds no temporal positions in the story time. Therefore, these two sections are marked as "0." We then number the narrative sections according to their change of position in story time. Both Section A and B go in position 4, C in position 0, D in position 1, E and F in

position 3, G in position 0, H in position 2, I in position 4. The formula of temporal sequence is as follows:

$$A4—B4—C0—D1—E3—F3—G0—H2—I4$$

Apparently, these nine sections hold quite different temporal positions. The narrative starting point (A and B) echoes with the end (I), both narrating current events. Following the beginning of the narrative is a repetitive account in the form of a poem (C0), while some comments from the narrator are inserted right before the end of the narrative, which blocks the smooth flow of the story, thus it functions to delay the story time. Section D1, E3 and F3 can obviously be defined as retrospective. The retrospection is then disrupted by Section G0 but continues in Section H2. If not so, the temporal structure of this narrative passage would form a perfect "saddle." Therefore although the narrative of ancient Chinese fiction usually conform to chronological order and follow linear progression, anachronies and delay of story time can also be found, as indicated by the excerpt above.

To study the temporal order of a narrative is to compare the order in which events or temporal sections are arranged in the narrative discourse with the order of succession these same events or temporal segments have in the story. In terms of the relationship between story time and narrative time, we can classify four basic time schemes in written literary narrative, namely, chronological order, analepsis, prolepsis, and anachrony. Accordingly, in popular fiction we can also classify four types of narrative mode, namely, chronological narrative (chronology), analeptic narrative (analepsis), proleptic narrative (prolepsis), and interlaced narrative (mixed anachrony). A comparison of Chinese and Western popular fiction shows that these four narrative modes are applied differently in Chinese and Western fiction.

4.1.1 Chronological Narrative

By "chronological narrative" we mean the order of narrative of events is in conformity with the actual sequence of events in natural time, i.e. the "narrative time" almost agrees with the "action time" of the events. A correspondence between narrative time and natural story time can be observed in most stories or fictional works in ancient times. The narrator's account of the story is linear in its progression and conforms to chronological order of the story from the beginning to the end. As observed by René Wellek and Austin Warren, "the old narrative, or story (epic or novel) happened in time—the traditional time-span for the epic was a year. In many great novels, men are born, grow up, and die; characters develop, change; even a whole society may be seen to change (e.g. *The Forsyte Saga*, *War and Peace*) or a family's cyclic progress and decline exhibited (e.g. *Buddenbrooks*). The novel, traditionally, has to take the time dimension seriously" (Wellek and Warren 1982: 215). Old narratives are often linear and chronological because narrators in ancient times were intimately influenced by the irreversible natural and chronological time scheme of human experience (e.g.

birth, growing-up, aging, and death). They would rather pursue a perfect temporal correspondence between narrative and story instead of manipulating the narrative with temporal distortions.

The temporal order of Chinese popular fiction in ancient times is mostly chronological. The narrator centered around a certain plot and unfolded the story along the time scheme of "past—present—future," displaying a complete and closed framework with opening, development, climax, and ending of the story. As the Chinese novelist and translator Zhou Guisheng (1873–1936) observes, traditional Chinese fiction almost always begins with an introduction to the characters before recounting the story. Some traditional Chinese novelists use preface, foreword, poem, or narrator's comments to commence the narrative. These various means of openings are regarded as proper lead-in, an indispensable part in traditional Chinese fiction, without which it seems hard to set about writing onward. This old-fashioned narrative mode prevailed among Chinese novelists in ancient times and is familiar to readers (Zhou 1903).

Major Chinese classical novels, such as *Outlaws of the Marsh* (*Shui Hu Zhuan*), *Journey to the West* (*Xi You Ji*), *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (*Sanguo Yanyi*), also follow the archetypal pattern of chronological order in which the events of the story unfold. In fact, as discussed earlier, temporal correspondence between narrative time and story time can be found in most traditional Chinese popular fiction, and there are two reasons for such a narrative mode as follows.

Firstly, from its birth through its further development into an independent genre, Chinese fiction was enormously influenced by Chinese historical narrative, and fictionists in ancient China drew considerable inspiration from the narrative structure of written history. In fact, Chinese ancient fiction had long been "honorably" referred to as "unofficial historical narrative," which shows the huge impact of the mode and form of historical narrative on Chinese fiction.

Chinese historical records can be classified into three types in terms of their thematic structure. The first type is "annals" (biannianti), a historical account of facts or events arranged and compiled in chronological order. *The Spring and Autumn Annals* (*Chun Qiu*) by Confucius (551–479 BC) and *Zuo's Commentary on Spring and Autumn Annals* (*Zuoshi Chunqiu*) by Zuo Qiuming (556–451 BC) are typical examples of this category. The events involving different people in different regions are also always recorded in annals in order of natural time sequence. The second type is "state/regional historical record" (guobieti), such as *Discourses of the States* (*Guo Yu*) and *Strategies of the Warring States* (*Zhan Guo Ce*). The events important to the people of a nation, state, or city are recorded in the order in which they occurred. The third type is "biographical historical record" (jizhuanti). *Historical Records* (*Shi Ji*) and *Book of Han* (*Han Shu*) fall into this category. *Historical Records*, for instance, is not a sequential narrative following exact the chronological order, but rather a monumental historical narrative consisting of small, overlapping units dealing with famous historical figures or major historical events. It must be noted that although the second and the third types of historical narratives do not follow the chronological order from beginning to the end, facts or events in a specific region or about a specific person are still arranged according to the natural time order. For example, the battle

between the states of Wu and Jin is recorded in the order of natural time in *Discourses of the States*. Different phases of the war, from the King of Wu's invoking of martial law, to the deployment of troops and the King's order to charge accompanied by a drumroll, are recorded with distinct time markers such as "dusk," "midnight," "dawn," or "sunrise," and unfold themselves in a natural flow of time. Biographical historical record is composed of sections such as annals, biographies, tables, and treatises, each of which has its unique feature and functions quite differently. However, within any of these compositive sections, the narrative of historical events is still arranged in terms of the order of natural time. In brief, all the three types of ancient Chinese historical narrative commonly rely on chronological order. Since historical records can be regarded as the "ancestor" of fiction, their impact on Chinese fictionists' literary creation—especially on chronological narrative—is undoubtedly profound.

The second reason why ancient Chinese popular fiction commonly relies on chronological order lies in the oral tradition of Chinese literature. Chinese popular fiction, especially storytelling scripts and zhanghui-style novels, originated from the ancient art of storytelling (shuoshu), then developed into storytelling scripts (huaben) and imitative storytelling scripts (nihuaben), and eventually evolved into novels. Since storytelling is an art form that transmits messages by word of mouth, storytellers were supposed to employ chronological narrative to make their account of stories easy to understand and memorize, with the completeness and clarity of the plot being the top priority. Although popular fiction no longer transmitted messages by word of mouth, it still preserved the traditional chronological order of oral literature to a great extent. As a result, storytelling scripts mostly employed the pattern of chronological narrative, where characters are portrayed within the dimension of natural time. The following is the opening passage of the story entitled *Yang Balao's Extraordinary Family Reunion in the Land of Yue*, an excerpt from *Stories to Enlighten the World* (or *Stories Old and New, Yu Shi Ming Yan*) by Feng Menglong. This excerpt can be regarded as a typical example of the linear development of characterization in chronological order.

> Our story takes place in the Zhida reign period (1308–1311 AD) during the Yuan Dynasty. There lived in Zhouzhi County in Xi'an Prefecture a man named Yang Fu with the pet name of Balao (the Eighth) because he was born on the day of the Mid-Autumn Festival in the eighth month. His wife, Li-shi, bore a son named Shidao, who was now an extraordinary intelligent seven-year-old.
>
> (Feng 2000)

Readers are then informed that Yang Balao's family circumstances gradually deteriorated. He raised some money to buy merchandise that he later would sell in Fujian and Guangdong Provinces. When he traveled to Zhangpu County in Zhangzhou Prefecture, he married into the Nie family, and had a son named Shide. Three years went by since Yang Balao left his hometown. Missing greatly his wife and child back in Xi'an, he planned to return home for a visit. Setting out on his journey back to his hometown, Yang Balao and some other civilians fell unfortunately into the Japanese pirates' hands. They had no choice but submitted to the will of their captors and worked as their slaves. Yang suffered great hardship for nineteen years in Japan

until those Japanese pirates gathered together for another invasion into China, and Yang was brought along. He managed to escape from the pirates, and encountered by chance his two sons who are both high-ranking officials. It was indeed a scene of family reunion filled with boundless joy. The story ends with the following passage:

> Prefect Nie and Assistant Prefect Yang jointly wrote a memorial addressed to Grand Marshal Puhua, in which they gave a full account of the events that had led to their reunion with their father. The grand marshal in turn reported the matter to the imperial court, which duly bestowed royal titles and gifts on the entire family. Nie Shide changed his surname to Yang, becoming Yang Shide. Yang Balao enjoyed prosperity until he died at a ripe old age.
>
> (Feng 2000)

Yang Balao's Extraordinary Family Reunion in the Land of Yue begins with Yang Balao's birth and ends with his death, but both the beginning and the ending are irrelevant to the story itself, for the main plotline is Yang's adventure, captivity, escape and family reunion, while such trivial information as Yang's birth and death is quite insignificant. Both the beginning and the ending of the story could have been omitted, just as Yang's nineteen years of captivity in Japan could have been crossed out. However, under the influence of oral literature, in which a story is considered incomplete without introducing how the leading character's life begins and ends, the narrator has to present the story in such a regular manner, with superfluous sections at the beginning and the end.

Another example of this common practice is how Wang Shaotang (1889–1968), a storytelling artist in China, expanded the story of Wu Song in *Outlaws of the Marsh* (*Shui Hu Zhuan*) from about 80,000 characters in the novel to 1,100,000 characters in his verbal account that runs for as long as 75 days. Although a lot of details and additional plotlines are inserted into the original story, the storytelling artist still employs chronological narrative throughout his entire account without changing the natural order of actions or events.

Different from storytelling scripts or imitative storytelling scripts, which were both derived from and considerably influenced by the verbal tradition of oral literature, classical Chinese fiction as a form of "writer's literature" is the written form of literature that embraces non-linear or disjointed narrative techniques such as retrospective digression or reverse chronology. For instance, in *The Story of Xue Wei* by Li Fuyan in the Tang Dynasty (618–907 AD), the Magistrate Xue's full recovery from ailment is put before his recounting of how he was healed magically through his dream in which he was transformed into a fish. In another story in the Tang Dynasty entitled *The Knight-Errant*, reverse chronological narrative is also adopted: Upon the official's discovery and scolding of the burglar, the knight-errant hidden under the bed came forth with a retrospective account of his deal with the burglar to murder the official. *The Story of the Pearl Shirt* in the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644) narrates the death of one of the characters and the fate of his wife not along the linear chronological progression of events, but at the end of the main storyline. However, when these aforementioned works were adapted to fiction in the form of storytelling scripts, the temporal pattern was restored to the traditional chronological narrative, a choice made intentionally by the adapters so as to conform to the oral tradition

of storytelling scripts. This shows the different impact exerted by different narrative traditions upon classical popular fictionists and vernacular popular fictionists. With imaginary audience being their primary receptors, fictionists regard coherence and intelligibility of storytelling as the top priority. The prevailing narrative strategy of popular fiction, as a result, is still chronological.

Before the 19th century, full-length novels in zhanghui style were the dominant form of Chinese fiction, and the majority of novelists observed the tradition of chronological narrative. A few innovative novelists, however, experimented with untraditional temporal patterns and creative narrative strategies within the generally traditional framework. Two well acknowledged practices of such are the use of disrupted narrative in *Outlaws of the Marsh* and *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. Jin Shengtan (1608–1661), a literary critic in the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911), compares the disrupted narrative in *Outlaws of the Marsh* to a range of mountains partly obscured by drifting clouds. When the main storyline runs linearly for too long, readers may get bored by the vast time span and multitudinous events. Then the novelist can deliberately chop the plot up and recount a parallel story before going back to the linear development of the main plot (Quoted in Ye 1982: 146). Mao Chonggang (1632–1709), another critic in the Qing Dynasty, makes similar comments on the disrupted narrative in *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, arguing that in the novel different narrative techniques are used most appropriately. He holds that for some texts chronological narrative should be used, while for some other texts narrative of disrupted time order should be employed. If a text is quite short, then the chronological order can help the text to achieve coherence and unity; if a text is rather long, a skillful novelist should better enrich the linear plotline of the text with interposed narrative (Quoted in Ye 1982: 146).

Both Jin and Mao's comments on disrupted narrative accentuate the novelist's awareness of adjusting the narrative structure to evoke readers' aesthetic response. A story that is too long may run the risk of being tedious and exhaust its readers. Therefore, punctuated by interposed narrative, the story may acquire the necessary alternation and variation in its pattern and rhythm. It must be noted that, the disruption of the linear temporal structure, however, only temporarily breaks off the dominant chronological order. Once the interposed narrative is completed, the narrative will resume its natural chronology. Take the application of disrupted narrative technique in *Outlaws of the Marsh* for example. The novel depicts three successive attacks on the Zhu Family Manor. After recounting the second attack and before presenting the third, the novelist introduces two new characters, the Xie brothers, and depicts their imprisonment as well as their escape from prison with vivid details. Despite the interposed storyline of Xie brothers, the three attacks on the Zhu Family Manor are still rendered by the novelist and presented in the novel following a chronological order. In this sense, the disrupted narrative applied in *Outlaws of the Marsh* and *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* is fundamentally different from analepses and anachronies that are common in Western popular novels.

To sum up, chronological narrative is the leading temporal narrative mode in Chinese popular fiction, though it does not exclude the employment of analeptic, proleptic and anachronic narrative techniques in them. It should be noted that

fictionists in ancient China applied these "non-leading" narrative techniques with much caution: they would narrate the story along the natural time sequence of major events of the story with explicit time expressions marked out so as to avoid disjointedness or anachrony on the part of the receptors. In this sense, ancient Chinese fictionists and contemporary fictionists view narrative temporality quite differently and apply temporal narrative techniques to serve different purposes.

4.1.2 Analeptic Narrative

Different from Chinese traditional popular fiction which habitually conforms, at least in its major articulations, to chronological order, Western popular fiction, by contrast, is characterized by anachrony through fictionists' deliberate dissection, fusion and stretching of the actual time sequence of the story. A linear narrative with strict succession of events following chronological order is a stagnant tale where lively characters are reduced to lifeless objects. What readers could see is nothing but the external world of the characters while characters themselves are reduced to silence (Liu 1986: 140). In Western popular fiction, one of the most widely used narrative techniques to achieve anachrony is analepsis (also known as "flashback"), which refers to "any evocation after the fact of an event that took place earlier than the point in the story where we are at any given moment" (Genette 1980: 40). This technique takes the narrative back in time from the point the story has reached, to recount events that happened before and give the "back-story," thus allowing the narrator to re-order the story by "flashing back" to an earlier point in the story. Such a technique can be traced all the way back to Homeric epics in ancient Greece and historical narratives in ancient China. To illustrate Homer's employment of analepsis, Genette refers to the sidewise movement at the start of the *Iliad* in the translation of Andrew Lang, Walter Leaf, and Ernest Myers:

> Sing, goddess, the wrath of Achilles Peleus'son, the ruinous wrath that brought on the Achaians woes innumerable, and hurled down into Hades many strong souls of heroes, and gave their bodies to be a prey to dogs and all winged fowls; and so the counsel of Zeus wrought out its accomplishment from the day when first strife parted Atreides king of men and noble Achilles.
>
> Who then among the gods set the twain at strife and variance? Even the son of Leto and of Zeus; for he in anger at the king sent a sore plague upon the host, that the folk began to perish, because Atreides had done dishonour to Chryses the priest.
>
> (Genette 1980)

In this excerpt, the natural chronological order of events is: (1) Agamemnon (the son of Atreides) had dishonoured Chryses the priest; (2) Achilles sent a pestilence upon the host to plague the people; (3) Achilles and Agamemnon fell out with one another; (4) the wrath of Achilles; (5) the innumerable woes of the Achaians. However, Homer's narrative sequence is (4), (5), (3), (2), (1). As analyzed by Genette, "the first narrative subject Homer refers to is the '*wrath of Achilles*'; the second is the '*miseries of the Greeks*,' which are in fact its consequence; but the third is the

'*quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon*,' which is its immediate cause and thus precedes it; then, continuing to go back explicitly from cause to cause: the '*plague*,' cause of the quarrel, and finally the '*affront to Chryses*,' cause of the plague. The five constituent elements of this opening, which I will name A, B, C, D, and E according to the order of their appearance in the narrative, occupy in the story respectively the chronological positions 4, 5, 3, 2, and 1: hence this formula that will synthesize the sequential relationships more or less well: A4—B5—C3—D2—E1. We are fairly close to an evenly retrograde movement" (Genette 1980: 37).

Analepsis was also used very early in Chinese historical narrative. In *Zuo's Commentary on Spring and Autumn Annals* (*Zuoshi Chunqiu*) by Zuo Qiuming (556–451 BC) for instance, the character "初" ("chu", meaning "earlier") is often used to indicate retrospection or flashback, as can be seen in the following excerpt:

> In winter, duke Mu of Zheng died. **Earlier** (初), his father, duke Wen, had a concubine of mean position, who was called Yan Ji, who dreamt that Heaven sent and gave her a lan flower (i.e. orchid flower), saying, "I am Bochou (the founder of that House); I am your ancestor. This shall be the emblem of your child. As lan flower is the most fragrant flower of a State, so shall men acknowledge and love him." After this, when duke Wen saw her, he gave her a lan flower, and lay with her. She wished to decline his approaches, saying, "I am but a poor concubine, and should I be fortunate enough to have a son, I shall not be believed. I will venture to prove it by this lan flower." The duke agreed, and she bore a son, who became duke Mu, and named him "Lan."

In this story, the natural chronological order of the events is: (1) Yan Ji dreamed of a lan flower; (2) Duke Wen gave Yan Ji a lan flower and lay with her; (3) the birth of duke Mu of Zheng; (4) the naming of duke Mu of Zheng; (5) the death of duke Mu of Zheng. However, in the passage the death of duke Mu of Zheng, an event that occurred at the end of the time chain, is placed at the very beginning. The narrative then goes back in time with a case of analepsis, and the rest of the passage still assumes a chronological order. If we adopt Genette's approach of temporal analysis, the formula of temporal order of the above story, then, is as follows:

A5—B1—C2—D3—E4

Obviously, the temporal distortion caused by the use of analepsis in this passage is only minimal. By comparison, Homer experimented with analepsis more boldly, producing in his epic poem an intense effect of anachrony.

Though an age-old means to distort natural temporal order, analepsis has now developed into an essential narrative technique in modern fiction. For example, in a work of fiction with a revenge theme, the narrative of vengeance is often succeeded by a retrospection of vendetta. In a crime story, the happening of a criminal case is almost always narrated before the modus operandi is explained. Analepsis is also a common narrative technique in coming-of-age novels, where the recollection of the character's growing experience often follows the introduction to the character's current status.

As Genette points out, "every anachrony constitutes, with respect to the narrative into which it is inserted—onto which it is grafted—a narrative that is temporally

second, subordinate to the first in a sort of narrative syntax …" (Genette 1980: 48). The primary narrative can be regarded as the first narrative, while the narrative embedded within the primary narrative becomes the second narrative. Genette then draws a distinction between external analepsis, internal analepsis, and mixed analepsis in terms of whether the point to which they reach is located outside or inside the temporal field of the first narrative (ibid.: 61).

(1) "External analepsis" refers to the analepsis whose entire extent remains external to the extent of the first narrative. There are two representative ways of applying external analepsis in literary narrative. The first type is to introduce the main character's background information before the starting point of the first narrative; the second type is to insert in the first narrative an episode that is obviously separate from the first narrative. The components of these two subcategories of external analepses are different, and the ways they are inserted into the narrative also differ from one another. As a result, these two external analepses function quite differently. The first external analepsis serves to acquaint the reader with certain supplementary information, while the second external analepsis embodies the narrator's intention to manipulate the ambience and tension of the first narrative.
(2) "Internal analepsis" refers to the analepsis where the second narrative is obviously later than the starting point of the first narrative. There are also two common ways to apply internal analepsis. The first is to allow a character to introduce the background information of himself/herself, or in some cases, of another character's. This internal analepsis should be differentiated from the first type of external analepsis, in which the character's background information is introduced by the narrator, therefore should be considered as narrative time instead of story time. The first type of internal analepsis, however, assumes the external form of story time through the recount of a character in the narrative. This pseudo-storytime still entails narrative interference, especially when it reaches a rather wide time span. In this way, the reader's attention will be temporarily diverted from the progression of the first narrative to the retrospection of a certain character in the narrative.

The second type of internal analepsis adds supplementary narrative to a certain scenario in the first narrative. Strictly speaking, though this kind of analepsis involves two plotlines of the story, it does not belong to the realm of time, for it doesn't cause temporal ellipsis. When it is employed to narrate what happens to another character at the time of narrating, it can be considered as supplementary narrative. Unlike the conventional "double journey narrative" that goes through one protagonist's plotline from start to finish before recounting another protagonist's story, this second type of internal analepsis marks a deliberate switch from one storyline to another, even before the former storyline is fully narrated. The reader, however, is not aware of the incompleteness of the first storyline, until he/she witnesses characters and events peculiar to the first storyline resurface during the progression of the second storyline. The use of internal analepsis causes temporal distortion, a pleasant surprise on the

reader's part, and so makes the work aesthetically appealing to him. It also enables the narrator to add complexity and conflicts to characters and plot.

(3) "Mixed analepsis" as the third type of analepsis is only used occasionally. It is defined by Genette as external analepsis "whose reach goes back to a point earlier and whose extent arrives at a point later than the start of the first narrative" (Genette 1980: 49).

The leaps forward or backward along the straight line of a chronological succession of events, noted by Lev Vygotsky, serve important psychological and aesthetic function in literature. In his practical analysis of Ivan Bunin's 1916 short story "Gentle Breathing," Vygotsky observes that the events in the disposition list follow the order of the alphabet, the chronological order, while in the composition list the chronological sequence is completely disrupted. The letters are rearranged in a series without any apparent order (Vygotsky 1971). Vygotsky then elaborates on the function and significance of disrupted narrative with an example of a detective story. If the reader is informed at the early stage of reading that the protagonist's life is in danger, the reader will be really curious about the fate of the protagonist. This sense of suspense will be heightened and intensified if the novelist does not make it clear whether or not the protagonist will have a narrow escape from the danger. Later on, when the reader finally reads about the danger, the murder, and the death, instead of painful tension and suspense, he/she experiences an almost pathological lightness. To conclude, "disposition and arrangement of events in a story, and the combination of phrases and sentences, of concepts, ideas, images, and actions are governed by the same rules of artistic association as are the juxtapositions of sounds in melody, or those of words in a poem." This arrangement, he maintains, relies on poetic technique that "is purposeful; it is introduced with some goal of other, and it governs some specific function of the story" (Vygotsky 1971: 148–49).

Temporal shifts achieved through analepsis are most widely found in Western detective novels. To build suspense and thrill, most detective novelists choose to abandon the conventional chronological order, frame the narrative structure in curves rather than a straight line, and recount the protagonist's life not from birth to death, but the other way around. A typical detective story begins with the discovery of a dead body, and then the murdering process is introduced with analepsis. The process of the inspection and case analysis will be recounted with elaborate details before the murderer's motive and modus operandi are explained upon the detective's solving of the case. *The Greek Coffin Mystery*, for instance, begins with the death of a famous art dealer and collector. His attorney then discovers that his will is missing and notifies the district attorney. An inspector and his detective son are called in, and they narrow down the possible location of the will to a single location: the dead man's coffin. When the coffin is pried open, however, it contains no will but a strangled corpse. The rest of the novel unfolds around the pursuit of the missing will as well as the murderer.

There had been almost no detective novels in the modern sense in ancient China until a large number of them were introduced during the translation boom in the late Qing Dynasty (1840–1911). Statistics show that 82% of all 51 published novels

employing the technique of analepsis during the late Qing Dynasty are detective stories, or stories with the elements of suspense or thrill (Chen 1988: 49). It is quite obvious that the analeptic arrangement of plots is in accordance with the suspenseful nature of detective stories. By presenting the criminal case at an earlier stage with analepsis, a conventional chronological narrative can be transformed into a vivid and lively whodunit. All through the reading experience, the reader will be inevitably driven by a strong sense of suspense and curiosity, until the story culminates with the solving of the case and the revealing of the modus operandi. In this way, the novel is sure to be made greatly appealing to the reader.

Some China's early translators and critics of detective stories have observed a distinct difference between Chinese and Western novels. For example, the Chinese translator Xu Nianci (1875–1908) studies the structures of Chinese and Western novels, and concludes that most Chinese novels have a plain opening and a happy ending, while most Western novels have an unexpected opening with an unrestrained ending. While translating Conan Doyle's *A Study in Scarlet*, Lin Shu (1852–1924), the renowned Chinese writer and translator, also makes a careful analysis of the story's narrative structure. He points out that Sherlock Holmes's identifying the murderer at the end of Part One takes the reader by surprise. Instead of explaining the details of Holmes's investigation of the murder immediately, Part Two opens with a backstory, a deliberate delay to create suspense, and also an important clue for the reader to figure out the entanglement between the victim and the suspect. In the end, the unraveling narrative thrills the reader with much delight and glorifies the narrative structure of the story.

Analepsis is not only favored by detective novelists, but is also widely employed by romance novelists. For example, *La Dame aux Camelias* by Alexandre Dumas, fils, employs the technique of analepsis. The story begins with a sale of all the assets of Marguerite after her death, and proceeds with the life story of Marguerite recounted by her lover Armand. The ingenuity of the narrative structure makes the story so absorbing and compelling.

Although not a frequently used technique, analepsis can also be found in ancient Chinese novels. In Jin Shengtan's comments on *Outlaws of the Marsh* (*Shui Hu Zhuan*), he expresses his appreciation of the novelist's employment of the supplementary narrative device to disrupt narrative order in Chap. 8, *Arms Instructor Lin Is Tattooed and Exiled to Cangzhou; Sagacious Lu Makes a Shambles of Wild Boar Forest*:

> "Brother," he said, "Ever since that day we parted when you bought the sword, (*the first retrospective narrative about Lin Chong, also an inserted narrative providing supplementary details of the story*) I've been worried about you. (*The first supplementary narrative about himself*) After you were convicted, (*the second retrospective narrative about Lin Chong*) I had no way to rescue you. (*The second supplementary narrative about himself*) I heard that you were being exiled to Cangzhou, (*the third retrospective narrative about Lin Chong*) and I sought you outside Kaifeng Prefecture, but in vain. (*The third supplementary narrative about himself*) … You set out before dawn at the fifth watch. (*The eighth retrospective narrative about Lin Chong*) I hurried ahead to the forest and waited to kill the two wretches here. (*The eighth supplementary narrative about himself*) They intended to harm you, (*the narrative about Lin Chong is back to the time of narrating*) so I ought to destroy them." (*The narrative*

about himself is back to the time of narrating) (*These two narrative threads are like two flying dragons closely intertwined, with vigorous twists and unexpected fusion to enchant its reader to the full*.)

(Jin 1985: 155–156)

Commenting on Chap. 16 of *Outlaws of the Marsh*, Jin (1985) analyzes again the novelist's artistic use of supplementary narrative. He notices that the fresh and vivid portrayal of many characters in that chapter is not presented through direct depiction by the novelist, but is narrated from the perspective of Lu Da, the pivotal character of that chapter. Jin argues that this is not a cursory arrangement simply to complete the narrative, but an ingenious move to subtly tie the destiny of a stalwart band of heroes together. Lu Da and Yang Zhi were perfect strangers when they encountered on Two-Dragon Mountain, but the very mentioning of their mutual friend Lin Chong by Cao Zheng, one of Lin Chong's apprentices, entwined these outlaws' fate. Not only did Lu Da, Yang Zhi, and Cao Zheng become good friends, but it was no other than Cao Zheng who persuaded Yang Zhi to take refuge on Liangshan with him. Although Lin Chong didn't appear in this very chapter, his words and deeds were introduced by the main characters in the chapter, a vivid and innovative way to establish the profile of Lin Chong. What's more, this indirect and brief depiction also saves the story from becoming a scattered and lengthy tale. In addition, Lu Da's retrospective narrative, or supplementary narrative, of how he came across Zhang Qing and his wife at a tavern in Crossroads Rise foreshadows later developments of the story and paves the way for the introduction of Wu Song, another pivotal character in the novel. Moreover, in later development of the story, it was Zhang Qing who advised Wu Song to escape to Two-Dragon Mountain after Wu killed those who were responsible for his brother's tragic death. Disguised as a monk, Wu Song came into contact with Lu Da, the real monk, and both of them sought refuge in the mountain fastness of Liangshan in later chapters. Jin Shengtan highly praises the novelist's skillful and creative structuring of the narrative to bind the separate stories of all these heroes together. The success of *Outlaws of the Marsh* as a novel lies in the fact that it describes the tortuous courses of the adventures of the Liangshan outlaws in a uniquely true-to-life way. The choice of subject matter and the thrust of the novel have a somewhat subversive tinge to them. Indeed, the narrative devices and artistic skills employed by the author of *Outlaws of the Marsh* in delineating those vivid characters and recounting the intricate multi-line story help this classic work to attain remarkable artistry never seen before.

Under the influence of Western fiction, analepsis as a narrative device became more and more frequently used in modern Chinese fiction. *Grievances over Nine Lives* (*Jiu Ming Qi Yuan*) by Wu Woyao (1866–1910), for instance, opens with a dialogue about a fire accident full of dramatic tension:

Hey guys! Here we are! But how are we supposed to enter this locked door?

You fool! There's no way this wooden door will stop us! Gimme my hammer!

Bam! — That's really loud!

Okey-dokey, the door is open! Oh, gosh! There's an iron gate behind the door! What are we gonna do?

> Wham!
>
> Great! That must be Brother Lin. Hey, man! We failed to open these iron gates. What shall we do?

This intense dialogue is followed by a depiction of the fire, a poem lamenting over the sufferings of the victims, and more dialogues. The opening section ends with a statement promising a suspenseful ride—"The clutter and clamor faded away into stillness, but somewhere in this stillness lurks a mysterious tragedy that will cost nine lives." Unlike most of the novels in late Qing Dynasty (1840–1911) that began with a conventional preface, this novel arouses the reader's curiosity from the very beginning with an opening full of suspense, while the motive for the crime is not revealed until Chap. 16. It is highly likely that Wu got his inspiration from Western novels translated into Chinese at that time, in which analepsis was a very popular narrative device. Before Wu composed this novel, his close friend Zhou Guisheng translated and published a novel entitled *Dushe Quan* from *In the Serpents' Coils* by the French writer Fortune Du Boisgobey, which begins with a dialogue between the father and his daughter involving the use of analepsis:

> Your cravat is all awry, father.
>
> It is quite your own fault, my dear child. You know very well that I have never been able to dress myself without help.
>
> But you declined my assistance this evening, on the plea that you were in a hurry, and that I should only hinder you.

Zhou Guisheng comments on this opening in his "Translator's Comments" on his Chinese translation *Dushe Quan* as follows:

> Written by a prominent French novelist, this novel begins with a father-daughter dialogue that seems rather abrupt and disorderly at first glance, but a closer examination of it reveals that it is creatively coherent and skillfully arranged. This method of introducing the characters and plot of the story is a fascinating display of Fortune Du Boisgobey's pencraft, and a practice favored by many Western novelists as well.
>
> (Zhou 1903)

The obvious resemblance between the opening passages of *In the Serpents' Coils* and *Grievances over Nine Lives* exhibits the undeniable influence of the former on the latter. While commenting on and applauding Wu's employment of analepsis, Hu Shi (1891–1962), a distinguished Chinese writer, thinker and philosopher, attributes Wu's innovative use of this narrative device to the influence of narrative structure of Western crime fiction (Hu 1921: 144–166).

With more and more novelists of detective stories adopting analepsis in their works, this narrative device also became favored by authors of romantic and political novels. For example, Xu Zhenya (1889–1937) was supposedly inspired by Alexandre Dumas, fils, and modeled on the narrative time of *La Dame aux Camelias* in his popular novel *Jade Pear Spirit* (*Yu Li Hun*). Lu Xun also employed the technique of analepsis in his short story *Benediction* (*Zhufu*). For a time, analepsis was so popular that it was widely used by Chinese fictionists, helping them to create suspense and tension in their fictional works.

4.1.3 Proleptic Narrative

As suggested by Todorov, "the easiest relation to observe is that of *order*: the order of narrating time (the order of discourse) can never be perfectly parallel to the order of time narrated (of fiction); there are necessarily interversions in the 'before' and the 'after.' These interversions are due to the difference in nature between the two temporalities: that of discourse is one-dimensional, that of fiction, plural. The impossibility of parallelism therefore leads to *anachronias*, of which we may note two evident aspects: *retrospections*, or backward looks, and *prospections*, or anticipations" (Todorov 1981: 30). Rimmon-Kenan also states that "the main types of discrepancy between story-order and text-order ('anachronies' in Genette's terms) are traditionally known as 'flashback' or 'retrospection' on the one hand and 'foreshadowing' or 'anticipation' on the other. However, in order to avoid the psychological as well as the cinematic-visual connotations of these terms, I shall follow Genette in rebaptizing them 'analepsis' and 'prolepsis' respectively" (Rimmon-Kenan 2005: 48). To conclude, story time and narrative time are two different types of temporal relations. Instead of being an exact copy of story time, narrative time often involves shifts and changes such as prolepsis (or foreshadowing) and analepsis (or flashback), the reconstruction and redesigning of story time. All these are maneuvers that manifest the novelist's narrative techniques and skills.

Prolepsis and analepsis constitute two opposing poles of temporality. Prolepsis, or proleptic narrative, is to narrate in advance a story-event which happens some time later. This narrative device has been widely adopted by Chinese novelists, even from ancient times. Some scholars even argue that although the use of prolepsis is a relatively less popular practice among Western novelists, it is a remarkable feature of Chinese narrative tradition. The divination inscribed on turtle plastrons discovered in the ruins of Yin is a rudimentary form of prophetic prolepsis. Several instances of prolepsis in *Zuo's Commentary on Spring and Autumn Annals* (*Zuoshi Chunqiu*) are also presented in the form of divination and prophesy. With the growing influence of Buddhism spreading farther and wider, the Buddhist perspective on time and space for all living beings within the six realms of existence and the Buddhist theory of retributive justice were introduced into China. Under such influence, Chinese prophetic narrative often carried with it religious color, displaying a broader philosophical realm (Yang 1997: 152–53). Yang's phylogenetic study of proleptic narrative in Chinese narrative tradition reveals its cause and origin. Prolepsis in traditional Chinese narrative is not just a way of constructing narrative structure, but also a way of thinking that is much affected by the deep-rooted ideology and cultural psychology. The present author and Pan Wanmu have conducted a collaborative research on the prophetic narrative mode of *Zuo's Commentary on Spring and Autumn Annals*. Our study shows that prophetic narrative in this book has exerted profound influence on later literary narrative. In later centuries, historical narrative retained the defining features of the book; fictional narrative displayed the impact of the book on its plot and structure, while short stories inherited the ethical and moral values of the book, especially romances in the Tang Dynasty (618–907 AD) and imitative storytelling

scripts in the Ming and Qing Dynasties (Pan and Huang 2004). As for the reason why temporal prolepsis is less frequently used in the Western narrative tradition, Genette believes that it is because "the concern with narrative suspense that is characteristic of the 'classical' conception of the novel ('classical' in the broad sense, and whose center of gravity is, rather, in the nineteenth century) does not easily come to terms with such a practice" (Genette 1980: 67). Generally speaking, prolepsis as a kind of predictive narrative gives the reader an anticipatory hint or even a summary of future events or development, the result of which is the pleasure and satisfaction the reader may gain as he reads on and makes anticipation and verification about what may happen next or eventually.

4.1.3.1 Major Forms of Proleptic Narrative

Prolepsis narrative takes various forms in popular fiction, the most common of which are the following four:

(1) Proleptic narrative in the form of fortune-telling or divination

Fortune-telling refers to the mystical or supernatural practice of predicting what will happen in a person's future life. Though highly superstitious, the practice of fortune-telling or divination can indeed be prophetic. As a result, they often appear at the beginning of Chinese ancient popular fiction to act as a prolepsis. A classic example of this is the beginning of *Judge Bao Solves a Case through a Ghost That Appeared Thrice* in *Stories to Caution the World* (*Jing Shi Heng Yan*) by Feng Menglong. In the opening section of this story, Sun Wen, a chief clerk at the yamen of Fengfu County, had his fortune told. After Sun Wen gave the fortune-teller the date and the hour of his birth, he received a prophetic quatrain from the fortune-teller that said:

> This is the day the white tiger arrives,
> Bringing with it sorrow and misery.
> Before one o'clock tomorrow morning,
> All the kith and kin will be in mourning.
>
> (Feng 2005)

Since the quatrain was extremely inauspicious, Sun Wen pressed the fortune-teller for elaboration. "I won't keep anything from you, sir, but you are going to die … this very year, this very month, this very day, around midnight tonight, at the third quarter of the third watch," the fortune-teller explained. What happened later was exactly as predicted. At the third quarter of the third watch that very night, Sun Wen was murdered by his wife and her adulterer:

> Little did the Big Chief Clerk Sun expect that his wife would carry on an affair with the Young Chief Clerk Sun. On the day that the older Sun came home after having his fortune told, the younger Sun happened to have sneaked into his house. Hearing that the older Sun was to die at around midnight, the younger man took the opportunity to get him drunk and then strangled him and threw him into the well. The younger Sun then walked towards the

> river, covering his face with his hand, and threw a rock into the water, making a loud splash, to make people believe that the older Sun had thrown himself into the river. The kitchen stove was then moved to cover the well. Later, the couple got married through the services of the matchmakers.
>
> (Feng 2005)

In this story, the prophetic quatrain written by the fortune-teller bears a dual function. On the one hand, it serves as a prophetic prolepsis that creates a terrifying atmosphere. On the other hand, it plays a catalytic role to help the story to move forward, for it was this prophecy that gave the wife the idea of murdering her husband on exactly that time so as to put the blame on her husband's unfortunate and inevitable destiny. Superstitious as it is, this prophetic story is also a typical example of predestination and fatalism.

Apart from fortune telling and divination, other forms of occult or superstitious practice such as materialization and prophecy are also used in literary narrative as prophetic prolepsis. For instance, in *Qian Poliu Begins His Career in Lin'an* from *Stories to Enlighten the World* (or *Stories Old and New*, *Yu Shi Ming Yan*) by Feng Menglong, a mystic image materialized in a stone mirror, a prolepsis of the protagonist's futuristic rise to power and position is employed:

> There was in Lin'an a hill called Stone Mirror Hill with a rock, all around and shiny, that reflected images like a mirror. In his daily frolics on the hill with his playmates, Qian Poliu was seen, as reflected in the stone mirror, wearing an emperor's robe with a jade belt, and a crown on his head. The awestruck boys said with one voice that this must have been the work of some divine being. With total composure, Poliu announced to the boys, "The divine being in the mirror is me! All of you, get down on your knees and bow to me," and so they did. Poliu accepted the bows in all complacency, and the practice continued.
>
> (Feng 2000)

The prophetic image materialized in the stone mirror is a prolepsis forefelling how Qian Poliu realized his ambition and became the ruler of the states of Wu and Yue. This kind of prophecy about a person's extraordinary talents or promising future can often be found in ancient Chinese narrative, especially historical biography. In the Chinese narrative tradition, the employment of various forms of superstitious practice to foretell future events is not only a practice to manipulate temporality of the story, but also an attempt to foster an ancient and metaphysical culture. The folkloric nature of these prophetic stories enables them to preserve the occult cultural heritage, and the mystic trait of prophetic prolepsis endows these stories with a strong sense of dramatic tension and rich cultural aura.

(2) Proleptic narrative in the form of dreams

There is an old Chinese saying that "One dreams at night what one thinks about during the day." Indeed, expressing and reflecting in a distorted way both a person's conscious and unconscious mind, dreams have drawn the attention of numerous scholars in modern times. For example, Sigmund Freud's theory of psychoanalysis is founded upon the analysis of dreams. According to Freud, "One of the most common types of dream formulation may be described as follows: a train of thoughts

has been aroused by the working of the mind in the daytime, and retained some of its activity, escaping from the general inhibition of interests which introduces sleep and constitutes the psychical preparation for sleeping. During the night this train of thoughts succeeds in finding connections with one of the unconscious tendencies present ever since his childhood in the mind of the dreamer, but ordinarily repressed and excluded from his conscious life. By the borrowed force of this unconscious help, the thoughts, the residue of the day's work, now become active again, and emerge into consciousness in the shape of the dream" (Freud 1957: 52).

The fact that the scientific finding of psychoanalysis proves the old Chinese saying to be true is no coincidence, as one's thoughts are indeed reflected by one's dreams, though with certain disguise or distortion. Dreams can affect the dreamer's emotions and subconscious mind, and some part of that unconsciousness will emerge into consciousness, which means that one's future behavior can be affected to a certain extent by one's dreams. This finding of psychoanalysis provides scientific justification for using dreams as prophetic prolepsis in works of literature. In ancient storytelling scripts, description of dreams is often used both as a depictive device of the spiritual world and inner conflicts of the characters and as a means of proleptic narrative. However, unlike dreams depicted in modern fiction, those in ancient storytelling scripts are often tinged with uncanniness. A good example of mystic prophetic dream can be found in the story of *Li Gongzuo Decodes the Dream Message with Ingenuity; Xie Xiao'e Captures the Pirates with Wisdom* from *Amazing Tales: First Series* (*Chuke Pai'an Jingqi*) by Ling Mengchu (1580–1644), a writer in the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644). The dream in this story is not simply a prolepsis that serves merely the purpose of prediction or warning, without affecting the storyline itself, for a prolepsis is basically just an advance notice or anticipatory recall of events that are bound to happen in later development of the story. However, dreams narrated in this story mark the critical turning points of the plot, connecting preceding events and future incidents. Xie Xiao'e, the heroine of the story, had a narrow escape from a band of robbers, but both her father and husband were killed by them. Later, Xiao'e dreamt that her father told her: "I was killed by 'a monkey in a carriage' (車中猴, che zhong hou) and by 'grass east of the door' (門东草, men dong cao)." She also dreamt that her husband told her: "I was killed by 'walking through grain' (禾中走, he zhong zou) and by 'a husband for a day' (一日夫, yi ri fu)."

She asked all her relatives and friends about what she was told in her dream meant, but no one was able to make sense of it. Eventually, Li Gongzuo, a retired magistrate in Hongzhou, helped Xiao'e to decode the hidden message of the dream: "a 'monkey' in the 'carriage' (車中猴) is the graph 申 [*shen*, a heavenly stem, correlated with the monkey]. The graphs for 'door' [門] and 'east' [東] along with the element for 'grass' [艹] form the graph 蘭 [*lan*]. 'Walking through grain' (禾中走) is to penetrate a 'field' [田], which also forms the graph 申 [*shen*]. 'A husband for a day' (一日夫) forms the graph春 [*chun*]. Therefore, the one who killed your father is 申蘭 (Shen Lan), and the one who killed your husband is 申春 (Shen Chun). There's no doubt about that as it is clear enough." Now that Xiao'e had found out the names of the murderers, she disguised herself as a man and investigated the whereabouts of Shen Lan and Shen Chun. Finally she took revenge, killing the pirate who murdered her

father and bringing about the arrest and execution of her husband's murderer. Without the dreams acting as indispensable clues, the following part of the story about the avenging daughter and wife could not unfold itself. It can be said that in this story, the catalytic function of the dream for plot development outweighs its proleptic narrative function.

Prolepsis as a prophetic device is also used for a number of times in *A Dream of Red Mansions* (*Hong Lou Meng*), the most typical example being Ja Baoyu's touring around the Illusory Land of Great Void. From the paintings and poems in the *First Register of Twelve Beauties of Jinling*, to the twelve fairy songs about the twelve beauties, all that Baoyu read and heard in the Illusory Land of Great Void were but proleptic narrative of the predestined fate of the female characters in the novel. The following are the lyrics of "The Birds Scatter to the Wood," the very last piece of the twelve fairy songs:

> An official household declines,
> Rich nobles' wealth is spent.
> She who did god escapes the jaws of death,
> The heartless meet with certain retribution.
> Those who took a life have paid with their own lives,
> The tears one owed have all been requited in kind.
> Not light the retribution for sins against others;
> All are predestined, partings and reunions.
> Seek the cause of untimely death in a part existence,
> Lucky she who enjoys rank and riches in old age;
> Those who see through the world escape from the world,
> While foolish lovers forfeit their lives for nothing.
> When the food is gone the birds return to the wood;
> All that's left is emptiness and a great void.
>
> (Cao 1999)

As demonstrated by this example, poems or dreams often serve as prophetic prediction or summary of later events in Chinese classical novels, a poetic and artistic way for the reader to take an anticipatory glimpse of future development of the storyline.

(3) Proleptic narrative in the form of poems or commentaries

Inserting poems or commentaries at the beginning or in the development of the story is a distinct trait of ancient storytelling scripts and zhanghui-style novels. However, not all poems or commentaries included in a novel serve proleptic function. When they do act as prolepsis, not all poems or commentaries cover the same range in the narrative. Generally speaking, poems or argumentative commentaries placed at the beginning of the story are often holistic prolepsis for the entire narrative, while those appearing within the story are mostly partial prolepsis that only governs posterior events. A typical example of holistic prolepsis presented in the form of a poem and the narrator's commentary is the opening section of *Zhuang Zhou Drums on a Bowl*

and Attains the Great Dao from *Stories to Caution the World* (*Jing Shi Tong Yan*) by Feng Menglong:

> Wealth and rank are but short-lived dreams;
>
> Fame and glory are but floating clouds.
>
> Your kith and kin may not be forever,
>
> For tender love may change to burning hate.
>
> Do not put the golden cangue on your neck,
>
> Nor bind yourself with a jade padlock.
>
> Free yourself from the desires of the mundane world;
>
> Enjoy your days, and abide by your lot.
>
> The above lyric poem to the tune of "The Moon over the West River" exhorts people to sever ties of misplaced love and set themselves free, although ties between father and son and those between brothers cannot be severed because they are branches on the same tree. Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism may have their differences, but none denies the virtues of filial piety and fraternal love. As for the children and grandchildren, well, you can't very well make sure that everything works out exactly as you wish for the generations that come after you. There is a saying that puts it well:
>
> Your children will have their own share of fortune;
>
> Don't serve them meekly like beasts of burden.
>
> As for husband and wife, even though they are tied by a red thread around their waists and a red string around their ankles, they are, after all, separable, just as skin is from flesh. As another saying puts it so well:
>
> Husband and wife are birds in the same woods;
>
> When day breaks at last, they fly their separate ways.
>
> In our contemporary world, human relationships are at sixes and sevens. Although there isn't much aberration in the observance of relationships between father and son and between brothers, people do dote overly on their children, and yet, the love for children is far exceeded by that between husband and wife. Goodness knows how many husbands, wallowing in the pleasures of the boudoir and listening to nothing but their wives' pillow talk, have been bewitched by women and done things in violation of filial piety and fraternal love. Such men are by no means men of wisdom.
>
> I now propose to tell a story about Zhuang Zhou drumming on a bowl. I do so not with the intention of provoking marital strife but simply to exhort people to know what is good from what is stupid and what is true from what is false and to tone down the passion that consumes them most. Gradually, much to their own advantage, their six senses will be purified, and Daoist thoughts will arise in their minds.
>
> (Feng 2005)

The above poems and narrator's commentary constitute the foreword of the story. Though highly religious and preachy, they are closely associated with the storyline of the narrative and strengthen the theme of how one should stop indulging oneself in marital flirtation for "tender love may change to burning hate." In the following part of the narrative, the novelist narrates a fictitious weird tale of Zhuang Zhou and his wife, with the poems and commentary in the foreword being the prolepsis of the couple's surreal experience.

Apart from poems and narrator's commentaries placed at the beginning of the story, sometimes a brief summary of the plot may also be inserted at the beginning

to reveal the later development of the storyline. Here is an example from *The Young Lady Gives the Young Man a Gift of Money* from *Stories to Caution the World* (*Jing Shi Tong Yan*). This story begins with two poems, both exclaiming how time flies. The story then goes on with the narrator's commentaries that "All beings in this world progress from youth to the prime of life to old age. No one is exempt from this eternal law of nature." This is followed by a recapitulation of the story, in which the narrator briefly summarizes the storyline. "Now I propose to tell of a rich man more than sixty years of age who lived in Kaifeng Prefecture in Bianzhou (or Bianjing), the Eastern Capital. His hair was all snowy white, but instead of reconciling himself to his age, he indulged in the pleasures of the flesh until he dissipated all his family fortune and almost ended up a ghost in an alien land." The poems, the narrator's commentaries and the plot summary provide insightful remarks about the story, which proves to be philosophically intriguing and captivating to the reader from the very beginning.

In addition to poems and commentaries put at the beginning, there are also poems and commentaries inserted within the story itself, and they are often placed at crucial turning points of the storyline (e.g. the protagonist of the novel is face with a life-changing event), acting as signposts foreboding later turn of events.

(4) Proleptic narrative in the form of a plot summary

The proleptic summary of the plot often appears in the foreword of the storytelling scripts, or right between the end of the prologue and the beginning of the main story. It can be regarded as a holistic prolepsis to the main story. In most cases, prolepsis in vernacular novels is a brief advance notice of the storyline to be echoed by more specific and detailed recount. This narrative mode manages to provide the reader with a quick preview of the plot while minimizing the disruption to the linearity of the narrative. Appearing frequently in early vernacular novels, prophetic preface is a quite unique form of prolepsis, for it does not lead to temporal distortion, a natural result of prolepsis in traditional vernacular novels. In fact, in the preface of almost all the traditional full-length novels and novellas, the ending of the story has already been announced in advance. When this occurs, the suspense derived from the question "what will happen next?" is replaced by the suspense revolving around the question "How is it going to happen?"

In the beginning chapter of *Outlaws of the Marsh* (*Shui Hu Zhuan*), the narrator states straightforwardly how Marshal Hong releases one hundred and eight demons by mistake:

> What would we have to tell in this book? Reader, don't be alarmed, for in what follows thirty-six stars of Heavenly Spirits come to earth and seventy-two stars of Earthly Fiends appear among men. Valiants hide in strongholds, heroes gather in the marshes.
>
> (Shi and Luo 1999)

Then in the later narrative, whenever a hero becoming an outlaw taking refuge in Liangshan is mentioned, and especially if his motive is not clear enough, the author would say, "he is also one of the seventy-two stars of Earthly Fiends, and so he appears among men," which echoes with the proleptic summary in the beginning chapter and justifies the hero's motive adequately.

Another example of prolepsis in the form of a plot summary can be found in the third chapter of *The History of Sui Dynasty* (*Sui Shi Yi Wen*):

> The fall of the Sui Dynasty (581–618 AD) and the rise of the Tang Dynasty (618–907 AD) is the working of divine providence. That is why Emperor Yang of Sui were slain by a heaven-sent gang of killers, and that is how Li Yuan ascended to the throne with the help of a heaven-sent general who fought bravely in the battlefield and even saved Li Yuan's life by chance. This hero is a man by the name of Qin Qiong, and his styled name is Shubao.

It is pretty clear that the crucial role Qin Qiong is going to play in the founding of the Tang Dynasty as well as Qin Qiong's encounter with Li Yuan by chance are already foretold in the above excerpt.

The prefaces of many traditional novels serve the proleptic function. Examples include: the story about the reincarnation of three generals in the Han Dynasty (202 BC–220 AD) in the "Preface" to *Records of the Three Kingdoms in Plain Language* (*Sanguo Zhi Pinghua*); the story about the adventures of Sirius and the Moon Goddess at the beginning of *Romance of the Witch Tang Sai-erh* (*Nü Xian Wai Shi*); the story of a roc descending into the world from the opening chapter of *The Biography of Yue Fei* (*Shuo Yue Quan Zhuan*); the "Preface" to *Outlaws of the Marsh* (*Shui Hu Zhuan*) about Marshal Hong releasing demons by mistake; the story of the Stone's past history and adventures in the first chapter of *A Dream of Red Mansions* (*Hong Lou Meng*), etc. These prefaces do not involve temporal distortion, for events recounted in these prefaces occur before the unfolding of the main storyline itself. However, in a semantic sense, this kind of prophetic prefaces serves as prolepsis. It prepares the reader for the story by stating its origin and foretelling its development and ending, hence establishing a surreal framework for the unfolding of the storyline.

Some vernacular novels aim at teaching certain moral lessons. The poems at the beginning of these novels and the foreword section often involve some precepts and the narrator's prediction of a certain character's fate. The following are two examples of this kind of precautionary prolepsis taken from *Stories to Awaken the World* (*Xing Shi Heng Yan*) by Feng (2009):

> This story is about a man whose jesting remarks after a bout of drinking led to his own death, the destruction of his family, and the loss of several other lives.
>
> *—Over Fifteen Strings of Cash, a Jest Leads to Dire Disasters*

> I plan to move on to a story about a young man who also hit nonhuman beings with slingshot pellets. But, unlike the one who repented after having hurt the bird, this young man ruined his family's considerable fortune as a consequence of his action and became an object of ridicule.
>
> *—Divine Foxes Lose a Book at Small Water Bay*

Another typical example of precautionary prolepsis can be found in *An Evil Ferryboat Owner Takes Money for an Unidentified Corpse; A Base Servant Files an Accusation about an Alleged Murder* from *Amazing Tales: First Series* (*Chuke Pai'an Jingqi*) by Ling Mengchu. In this story, the narrator inserted a prolepsis right between the prologue and the main story: "I have just told you a story of how reality may become pretense. Now I'm going to tell another tale about how pretense may become reality, and how trivial matters may lead to imminent catastrophe that almost cost innocent

lives if not for divine intervention." In this prolepsis, the narrator reminds the reader clearly and directly that the prologue and the main story are two opposing tales. In the prologue, a rich businessman named Wang Jia held a personal vendetta against his fellow townsfolk Li Yi. After Wang Jia was arrested for murdering Li Yi, he paid an imprisoned bandit a huge sum of money, so that the bandit would take the fall for murdering Li Yi. He then had his legal counsel bribe the local authorities to have him released. This is what the prolepsis refers to as "a story of how reality may become pretense." Since the prolepsis foretells that the main story is "about how pretense may become reality," we can anticipate a story in which an innocent person is arrested for a murder that he/she did not commit. The main story is about a man named Wang Sheng who had a dispute while drunk with a ginger vendor and knocked him down. Suffering from asthmatic coughing, the ginger vendor choked into coma. Regaining consciousness, the angry ginger vendor was consoled and soothed by Wang Sheng with a roll of silk as indemnity. That night, a ferryboat owner named Zhou Si paid Wang Sheng a visit. Presenting a bamboo basket belonging to the ginger vendor and the roll of silk as evidence, Zhou Si informed Wang Sheng that the ginger vendor died of injury from his beating a while ago in the ferryboat, and claimed that he would report the unnatural death of the ginger vendor to the local officials the next day. To escape from punishment, Wang Sheng bribed Zhou Si with sixty taels of silver, and buried the alleged corpse of the ginger vendor in the ancestral grave. A year later, Wang Sheng punished a servant named Hu Ahu severely for negligence. Holding a grudge against Wang Sheng, Hu Ahu reported the buried corpse to the government and had Wang Sheng arrested. Grieved and depressed all day for several months, Wang Sheng was but a moribund prisoner awaiting his doom. One day, the ginger vendor suddenly appeared and paid Wang's wife a visit. Upon the resurfacing of the ginger vendor, the truth about his alleged death was finally out. It turned out that the ginger vendor's alleged death was Zhou Si's scheme to extort money from Wang Sheng. In the end, Wang Sheng was released from prison, Hu Ahu suffered severe punishment of flogging and Zhou Si was beaten to death.

This main story teaches many moral lessons. From Wang Sheng's dispute with the ginger vendor, one learns the lesson that he/she should treat others nicely and kindly; Hu Ahu's betrayal of his master and his miserable death exemplify the prevalent saying, "Providence will not forgive a person who betrays his master"; from Wang Sheng's undeserved imprisonment, one realizes that it is of paramount importance that government officials hear cases with caution and prudence. The author also made comments from the perspective of the storyteller: "If the ginger vendor had never resurfaced, neither Wang Sheng nor his family would have learnt the truth, and Wang Sheng would have never been able to redress his injustice and convince the officials that he was not guilty. Kind officials of noble character, you should take this case as a warning and learn your lesson." It is exactly this sincere advice for "kind officials of noble character" that connects the main story with the prologue. In this sense, even with completely different plot, the prologue and the main story can echo with each other to strengthen the same theme. Telling a complete story in itself, this kind of prolepsis is quite different from previously discussed prolepses in the form of poems or commentaries.

4.1.3.2 Major Functions of Proleptic Narrative

Widely used in popular fiction, especially vernacular novels, prolepsis or proleptic narrative often serves the following functions:

(1) Creating suspense by producing delay

A primary function of prolepsis is to produce a temporal gap so as to cause delay and create suspense. As the creator of the story, the narrator knows very well how the story ends, but generally he will not disclose the ending to the reader until the due time so as to keep them in suspense for as long as possible. However, a prolepsis informs the reader with the ending of the story in advance, so it seems that the story no longer intrigues its reader with the suspenseful factors. However, instead of reducing the intensity of suspense, prolepsis in popular fiction in the form of fortune-telling, divination and dream enhances and intensifies the suspense of the story, even creates future-oriented suspense. This new suspense occurs when the prolepsis is placed far ahead of the normal sequencing of events, so that the narrative after the prolepsis basically aims at demonstrating how the story gradually develops into the ending, which has already been foretold by the narrator in the prolepsis. In this sense, the prolepsis gives birth to prophecy and future-oriented suspense at the same time. Although the ending of the story is already revealed in advance, it is now the progression and development of the story that capture the reader's attention and arouse their curiosity.

A major gap or pause in the narrative, prolepsis causes delay that creates future-oriented suspense. "This (suspense) need not involve any temporal displacement; events may be narrated in the order in which they are supposed to have occurred. But they must be events of the kind which will arouse a strong expectation for the continuation of the sequence, coupled with a strong uncertainty as to *how* it should continue" (Rimmon-Kenan 2005: 129–130). "Suspense is evidently but a privileged, or, if one prefers, an exasperating form of distortion: on the one hand, by keeping a sequence open (through emphatic devices such as delays and reactivations), it secures the contact with the reader, thus managing an obviously communicative function; on the other hand, it holds over him the threat of an uncompleted sequence, of an open paradigm (if, as we believe, all sequences have two poles), that is to say, a logical disorder. It is this disorder which is consumed with that particular anguish tinged with delight (the more to be savored, since it is always straightened out in the end). Suspense is, therefore, a way of gambling with structure, with the ultimate goal being, as it were, to risk and to glorify the structure" (Barthes and Duisit 1975: 267–268). As long as the threat of the "uncompleted sequence" and "open paradigm" exists, the suspense will become more intensified.

(2) Helping the story to move forward and strengthening the theme

Like the iterative chanting in *The Book of Songs* (*Shi Jing*) or the recurring theme of a symphony, prophesies in Chinese popular fiction often appear in succession, resulting in a cumulative progression of plotline that is highly intriguing and truly impressive.

In *Misidentifying the Corpse* from *Storytelling Scripts of Qingpingshan Hall* (*Qingpingshan Tang Hua*) by Hong Pian, a writer in the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), for example, the storyteller captivates the reader with as many as seven prophecies, the first one being a poem at the beginning of the story as follows:

> Affairs of the world are too numerous to tell;
> Wise men keep themselves out of harm's way;
> Those who ruin the state and the family
> Are men with a weakness for the other sex.
>
> (Feng 2005)

In this story, it was the protagonist Qiao Yanjie's lechery that caused death and destruction to his entire family, so in every prolepsis the narrator directly linked Qiao's current action to its future consequence. Though over-simplifying the causal chain, these prophesies are extremely intriguing and repeatedly alert the reader to the danger of the protagonist's behavior. With the use of prolepsis, every important plot-point is mentioned early in the story with a signpost pointing directly to the ending of the story:

> The woman became Qiao Jun's concubine. As a consequence,
> Everyone in the family perished;
> All the family wealth was wipe out.
> …
> As a result of Gao-shi's demands, Qiao Jun ended up as a man without a home or country.
> …
> She locked the gate with a padlock and set out for the mistress's house with Xiao'er. Truly,
> A moth darting into a flame courts death;
> A bat hurtling against a pole will not live.
>
> (Feng 2005)

In novels where dreams are used as prolepsis, the depiction of the dreams is often combined with the depiction of characters' response to the dreams in reality, which helps to create a dreams-coming-true atmosphere, and is also an effective method to move the story forward and to pave the way for the plot development. For instance, dreams in the story *Li Gongzuo Decodes the Dream Message with Ingenuity; Xie Xiao'e Captures the Pirates with Wisdom* from *Amazing Stories: First Series* (*Chuke Pai'an Jingqi*) by Ling Mengchu not only act as prolepsis, but also form crucial links between the preceding and the following events. It is arguable that the plot development will stagnate if not for these prophetic dreams. In this sense, dreams in this story serve catalytic function as well as proleptic function. Another function of these repeating prolepses is to help the narrator to set the pace for the narrative so that the complex relationships between characters and the complicated story can be skillfully organized into a well-developed storyline where time sequence often parallels with causal logic.

Prolepsis in popular fiction also teaches ethical and moral lessons. In a typical Western narrative mode, the moral of the story is to be concluded towards the end. By

contrast, in the narrative mode of Chinese vernacular fiction, a cautionary tale with a painful lesson almost always begins with a prolepsis of the grave consequences and the tragic denouement, and a warning to the reader that karma comes after everyone eventually. In Chinese culture, moral judgment is not based on specified context but pre-established and predetermined. The following foreword of *The Tangerines and the Tortoise Shell* from *Amazing Stories: First Series* (*Chuke Pai'an Jingqi*) by Ling Mengchu is an example of moral judgment antecedent to the story:

> Just think how many heroes recorded in those seventeen authentic historical books[2] failed to win the wealth and rank they deserved … Truly, all depends upon destiny. Only when a family is fated to go down in the world does a loafer appear in it; only when a house is destined to fall does it produce a wastrel. This is the general rule.
>
> (Feng and Ling 2001)

The moral teaching in this foreword is then proved by the prologue with a story of how a thrifty merchant who had scrimped all his life saving money for his sons was finally prevented from giving it to them. The money was not in their destiny, so it had simply marched off from under the old man's bed the night before it was to be handed over. All through the story there are commentaries from the narrator to further strengthen the theme of this prologue, such as "And this was the beginning of the change in his luck" and "Wen's success was a pure chance." The main story is about the adventure of an unsuccessful merchant, nicknamed Unlucky Wen, who happened to find a tortoise shell with 24 pearls lying hidden, hitting the jackpot and winning a great fortune beyond his dreams. Echoing with the theme of the entire story, this plotline teaches the same moral lesson as presented in the proleptic foreword.

Another example is the moral lesson about handling worldly affairs without prejudices and preconceptions in the foreword of *Out of Anger Over Trifles a Renowned Scholar Metes out Reckless Punishment; Ready to Accept a Heavy Penalty a Chivalrous Singsong Girl Leaves a Good Name* from *Amazing Stories: Second Series* (*Erke Pai'an Jingqi*) by Ling Mengchu:

> Why am I preaching that people should not have prejudices? The answer lies in that human mind is the most quick-witted and most flexible, and therefore justice can only be found in an empty mind. Even the slightest prejudice in a person might cause him to fail to distinguish the good from evil. Even sages and men of virtue may not be able to see the facts in their true colors if they're stubborn and opinionated.
>
> (Ling 2008)

The main story strengthens the moral teaching presented in the foreword by telling a tale of how Zhu Xi (1130–1200 AD), the founder of the Confucian school of philosophy in the Song Dynasty (960–1279 AD), misjudged some cases because of his preconceptions and prejudices. In fact, as exemplified by the above stories, predestination, causality, and karma are three prevailing themes in the stories collected in

[2]It is generally acknowledged that up to the Song Dynasty (960–1279 AD), there were seventeen "authentic" historical books or records compliled by historians, including *Historical Records* (*Shi Ji*) by Sima Qian (145–?? BC), *Book of Han* (*Han Shu*) by Ban Gu (32–92 AD), *History of the Three Kingdoms* (*Sanguo Zhi*) by Chen Shou (233–297 AD), *History of the Northern Dynasties* (*Bei Shi*) by Li Dashi (570–628 AD) and Li Yanshou (??–??), etc.—Translator's note.

the first and the second series of the *Amazing Tales* (*Pai'an Jingqi*). There is yet another example from *Jiang Shuzhen Dies in Fulfillment of a Love Bird Prophecy* in *Storytelling Scripts of Qingpingshan Hall* (*Qingpingshan Tang Hua*) by Hong Pian. While teaching the moral lesson of how unbridled lust can lead to grave consequences, the narrator also states clearly and directly in the foreword as well as the prologue that several innocent lives will be gone in this cautionary tale. This prolepsis is then followed by an introduction to the heroine and her backstory. The story unfolds chronologically without any temporal distortion to create tension and suspense. However, as the protagonist's lust caused the death of one lecher after another, the tragic plot and the horrifying ending are gradually verified. Before the heroine's marriage with her last husband, the storyteller exclaims a clichéd commentary which functions as a prophetic warning:

> It would have been all right if the woman had not gone to Mr. Zhang, but as she did, she was:
> Like pigs and sheep on their way to the slaughterhouse,
> With each step she drew nearer to her death.
>
> (Feng 2005)

Upon the tragic denouement, the storyteller supplements a retrospective narrative about the "love bird prophecy" from the ghost to the heroine together with the following commentary: "How fearsome that spiritual beings never fail to foretell the coming of calamity or fortune!" Although this warning from the ghost is not included in the narrative plot, it is crucial evidence of karma and predestination. Preaching karmic causation, ethics and morality, prolepsis in Chinese popular fiction is not only a narrative device, but also has a rich sense of religion and philosophy.

4.1.4 Interlaced Narrative

In Paul Ricoeur's view, what is meaningful in the three registers of order, duration, and frequency are the discordances between the temporal features of the events in the diegesis and the corresponding features in the narrative. "With respect to order, these discordances may be placed under the general heading of anachrony" (Ricoeur 1985: 83). "Anachrony" or "discordance" occurs when discourse time deviates from story time. When this discrepancy occurs, two main types of anachrony, analepsis and prolepsis, can be generated with the "present moment" taken as a frame of reference. According to Rimmon-Kenan, "An analepsis is a narration of a story-event at a point in the text after later events have been told. The narration returns, as it were, to a past point in the story … Conversely, a prolepsis is a narration of a story-event at a point before earlier events have been mentioned. The narration, as it were, takes an excursion into the future of the story" (Rimmon-Kenan 2005: 48). "Interlaced narrative" discussed in this section shares some similarities with Ricoeur's definition of "discordance" in that they both refer to discrepancy between story-order and text-order. However, interlaced narrative and "anachrony" or "discordance" are not entirely

the same, for the former integrates chronological narrative, proleptic narrative and analeptic narrative into a hybrid in which past, present, and future of the discourse time are often closely interwoven. In other words, interlaced narrative deconstructs and reorganizes the sequence of the narrative with the integrated application of all the aforementioned narrative devices. Both the content and the form of interlaced narrative reflect the impact of national culture, aesthetic conventions, mindset, and shared values.

Interlaced narrative can be found (though sporadically) in traditional Chinese novels, especially in vernacular novels when linear narrative is challenged by several intertwining plotlines. For example, in Chapter forty-nine of *Outlaws of the Marsh* (*Shui Hu Zhuan*), the narrator's recount of Song Jiang's three successive attacks on the Zhu Family Manor is interrupted by an analepsis of the false accusation of the Xie brothers that drove a gang of outlaws to seek refuge in Liangshan. Another example of interlaced narrative in *Outlaws of the Marsh* can be found in chapter one hundred and one, where Wang Qing's life is introduced in flashback. In chapter four of *A Dream of Red Mansions* (*Hong Lou Meng*), the backstories of several major characters are inserted to form an interlaced narrative. Preserving the linearity of narrative to the greatest extent, these inserted narrative devices manage to shape the clear-cut narrative structure without causing temporal displacement. To avoid displacement and confusion in temporality, analepsis in traditional vernacular novels is often presented in direct speech. The following is an example of such from chapter twenty-one of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (*Sanguo Yanyi*, also translated into *Three Kingdoms*):

> I was admiring the plums on the branch," Cao remarked. "The new green ones called to mind last year's campaign against Zhang Xiu, when we ran short of water on the march. How parched the men were! Then something occurred to me. "There's a plum grove ahead," I cried and pretended to locate it with my whip. When the troops heard me, their mouths watered and their thirst was gone. Seeing these plums now, I can't help enjoying the sight; and having some wine just heated, I decided to invite Your Lordship for a drink at this little pavilion.
>
> (Luo 2003)

In this passage, Cao Cao recounted his own stratagem of quenching soldiers' thirst by encouraging them to think of plums. Acting as an indirect analepsis, this direct recollection of Cao Cao also helps to present a vivid portrayal of a machiavellian strategist with bold vision and unflinching resolve.

In chapter eighteen of *Flower in the Sea of Retribution* (*Nie Hai Hua*) co-authored by the two Qing Dynasty writers Jin Songcen and Zeng Pu, there is a unique case of narrative intervention that paves the way for a stylized analepsis:

> I understand that at this moment my dear readers are really curious about three matters, namely … Well, I have to ask for your forgiveness, for I will temporarily set these three matters aside, and entertain you with a tale that happened long ago and far away in a village on an island by the sea.

In the above example, distortion and confusion caused by the disrupted temporal order is reduced to the minimum, for the retrospection is still narrated within the

fundamentally chronological framework. Narrative devices such as analepsis, prolepsis, anachrony and supplementary narrative are carefully and skillfully integrated into a coherent and well-structured interlaced narrative, a typical manner of manipulating time in traditional Chinese novels.

With the development of narrative techniques, modern novelists are no longer content with "unexpected opening" created by analepsis and "future-oriented suspense" produced by prolepsis, and they begin to experiment with novel narrative methods to create dramatic tension and aesthetic effect. This results in an intricate temporal pattern in which time is no longer a clear and traceable track, but a confusing and ambiguous conundrum. Commenting on Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*, Sartre made the observation that "The first thing that strikes one in reading *The Sound and the Fury* is its technical oddity. What has Faulkner broken up the time of his story and scrambled the pieces?"…"Now, it is immediately obvious that Faulkner's metaphysics is a metaphysics of time" (Sartre 1963: 225–26). Faulkner himself also contends that "the fact that I have moved my characters around in time successfully, at least in my own estimation, proves to me my own theory that time is a fluid condition which has no existence except in the momentary avatars of individual people. There is no such thing as *was*—only *is*" (Faulkner 1956). The following is an excerpt from the second section of *The Sound and the Fury*:

> "I adore Canada," Miss Daingerfield said. "I think it's marvelous."
>
> "Did you ever drink perfume?" Spoade said. *with one hand he could lift her to his shoulder and run with her running Running*
>
> "No," Shreve said. *running the beast with two backs and she blurred in the winking oars running the swine of Euboeleus running coupled within how man Caddy*
>
> "Neither did I," Spoade said. *I don't know too many there was something terrible in me terrible in me Father I have committed Have you ever done that We didn't we didn't do that did we do that*
>
> (Faulkner 1995: 146–147)

In this example of interlaced narrative, Quentin's mind was floating between the present talk and the past memory of his father's reprimanding Caddy for fornication. The perplexing mind of Quentin resulted in the disordered dialogue and revealed his fury and absentmindedness while talking.

A Rose for Emily, another story by Faulkner, also displaces and disrupts the natural chronological order in an attempt to create suspense and surprise. The temporal displacement in the story lends plausibility to the withholding of information and creates much shock effect when the discovery of Homer's corpse is narrated at the end of the story.

Inspired by Western novels, Chinese contemporary novelists also experiment with the interlaced narrative technique. One example of such bold practice is *A Wrongly Edited Story* by Ru Zhijuan, in which past and present events overlap profusely to form a montage, as suggested by the title of the novel.

Structuring story time along the stream of psychological time is another temporal pattern observed by modern fictionists. One of the earliest exploration of time can be traced back to *The Confessions of Saint Augustine*, in which Saint Augustine argues

that time is based on our psychology or mind. There are three categories of time which exist in our mind, namely, the past, the present and the future, and they are closely related to our memory, attention and expectation, as he notes:

> But how is that future diminished or consumed, which as yet is not? Or how that past increased, which is now no longer, save that in the mind which enacteth this, there be three things done? For it expects, it considers, it remembers; that so that which it expecteth, through that which it considereth, passeth into that which it remembereth. Who therefore denieth, that things to come are not as yet? And yet, there is in the mind an expectation of things to come. And who denies past things to be now no longer? And yet is there still in the mind a memory of things past. And who denieth the present time hath no space, because it passeth away in a moment? And yet our consideration continueth, through which that which shall be present proceedeth to become absent …
>
> (Augustine 2002: 123)

In an earlier passage, Saint Augustine equates time with impression:

> It is in thee, my mind, that I measure times … the impression, which things as they pass by cause in thee, remains even when they are gone; this it is which still present, I measure, not the things which pass by to make this impression. This I measure, when I measure times. Either then this is time, or I do not measure times.
>
> (Augustine 2002: 122)

The French philosopher H. Bergson's *Time and Free Will* which came out in 1913 marks his revolutionary analysis of time that provides the philosophical basis to stream-of-consciousness writing in which time is not only a recurrent theme but also a constituent factor of both story and text. Bergson considers time as a kind of conscious state or duration. In Bergson's opinion, "when we speak of time, we generally think of a homogeneous medium in which our conscious states are ranged alongside one another as in space, so as to form a discrete multiplicity … It is to be presumed that time, understood in the sense of a medium in which we make distinctions and count, is nothing but space … But states of consciousness, even when successive, permeate one another, and in the simplest of them the whole soul can be reflected. We may therefore surmise that time, conceived under the form of a homogeneous medium, is spree spurious concept, due to the trespassing of the idea of space upon the field of pure consciousness" (Bergson 1913: 42, 46). According to Bergson, there are two forms of time, pure time (or psychological time) and spatial time (or physical time). The core of Bergson's time theory is his distinction between the time that occurs in the theories of natural science and the time that we directly experience. He argues that scientific time is a mathematical conception measured by clocks and chronometers. Since these measuring instruments are spatial bodies, scientific time is represented as a homogeneous medium and is described with measuring units such as minutes, hours, and years. However, when it comes to our direct psychological experience, what we find is not a mathematical conception, but a succession of states that melt into each other to form a concrete, indivisible process. He stresses that the deeper we go into the depth of consciousness, the more inapplicable of the concept of spatial time, but the more applicable of psychological time. Time is what makes us really free—and only the diversified, unique and unrepeatable duration of time will make us really free.

Sigmund Freud developed and made popular the idea of the conscious- versus unconscious- mind. Events and desires that are too frightening or painful are locked away in the unconscious mind through the process of repression. The influences of the unconscious almost inevitably reveal themselves symbolically and indirectly through vehicles such as dreams or slips of the tongue. A primary assumption of Freudian theory is that the unconscious mind, though exists well under the surface of conscious awareness, governs and controls human behavior to a great degree. Freud later developed a more structural model of the mind comprising three entities of id, ego and superego. These tripartite of human psyche constantly work against each other and interact to form a whole. Pushing ideas into our dreams as well as our conscious mind, they contribute a lot to an individual's behavior. Entirely unconscious, the id is the most primitive part of the human mind that responds directly and immediately to the instincts. According to Freud, the id is the source of our bodily needs, wants, and desires. It also has a mystical decisive influence upon our aesthetic appreciation.

Saint Augustine's views on time, Bergson's time theory and Freud's psychoanalytic theory were embraced by stream-of-consciousness writers and Nouveau Roman fictionists. In their literary creation, linearity of time is replaced by the reversing, interlacing and overlapping of the past, the present, and the future, resulting in an interlaced narrative through the use of narrative devices such as interior monologue, stream of consciousness, free association, etc. "Most of the great contemporary authors, Proust, Joyce, Dos Passos, Faulkner, Gide, and Virginia Woolf, have tried, each in his own way, to distort time. Some of them have deprived it of its past and future in order to reduce it to the pure intuition of the instant; others, like Dos Passos, have made of it a dead and closed memory. Proust and Faulkner have simply decapitated it. They have deprived it of its future, that is, its dimension of deeds and freedom" (Sartre 1963: 230).

Stream-of-consciousness writing can be traced back to Marcel Proust's thirteen-volume *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu* (*Remembrance of Things Past*, 1925). In this extensive and complex work, Proust deals with time from new and extreme points of view, turning it into a bold experiment "… of time ruled, captured, bewitched, surreptitiously subverted, or better: perverted" (Genette 1980: 160). In the novel, past events and experience are not recounted in exact conformity with the order of time or the shift of space, but are arranged with a great many anachronies and digressions of all kinds. Contrary to conventional narrative with classical narrative temporality, Proustian narrative is controlled almost entirely by the hero's recollections presented in his mind through internal monologue, until the day on which the hero decided to leave the world and withdraw into his work. Unlike conventional monologue that is conscious, logical, well-organized, and reader-oriented, internal monologues in *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu* are often future-oriented, "a recall that is anticipated, a detour no longer by the past but by the future—occurs each time the narrator explains in advance how he will later, after the event, be informed of a present incident (or of its significance)" (Genette 1980: 81). The following is an excerpt of such an inverse movement from the first volume "Swann's Way" of the novel:

> Many years later we discovered that, if we had been fed on asparagus day after day throughout that whole season, it was because the smell of the plants gave the poor kitchen-maid, who had to prepare them, such violent attacks of asthma that she was finally obliged to leave my aunt's service …

The incident narrated in the above passage happened in the past, but the hero had not learnt the truth about this incident until many years later he was informed that the asthma attack is induced by the housekeeper's trickery so as to drive other servants away. This zigzag round trip links the past with the future in a typically Proustian manner.

Virginia Woolf also experiments with stream of consciousness in her novels, with *To the Lighthouse* being a key example of her stream-of-consciousness writing. This Woolf's masterpiece is written mostly as the heroine's thoughts and observations of the present moment, which can also be viewed as an extended meditation and a placid recollection of her past experience. In *The Mark on the Wall*, Woolf explores the thought process through the internal monologue of the protagonist. The narrative begins with a statement about the mark on the wall, which immediately develops into a long stream of thoughts and visions that flow in the mind of the protagonist throughout the narrative, where traditional temporality is replaced by nonlinear stream of consciousness. Here is an excerpt from *The Mark on the Wall*:

> I must jump up and see for myself what that mark on the wall really is — a nail, a rose-leaf, a crack in the wood?
>
> Here is nature once more at her old game of self-preservation. This train of thought, she perceives, is threatening mere waste of energy, even some collision with reality, for who will ever be able to lift a finger against Whitaker's Table of Precedency? The Archbishop of Canterbury is followed by the Lord High Chancellor; the Lord High Chancellor is followed by the Archbishop of York. Everybody follows somebody, such is the philosophy of Whitaker; and the great thing is to know who follows whom. Whitaker knows, and let that, so Nature counsels, comfort you, instead of enraging you; and if you can't be comforted, if you must shatter this hour of peace, think of the mark on the wall.

The first paragraph of this excerpt consists of a first-person narrator's observation of a mark on the wall, followed by a series of fleeting reflections and wandering thoughts in the second paragraph. The unfolding revelation of the narrator's freely associated mind rapidly flows over a wide range of ideas and topics in a world that is surreal yet lively. These ideas and topics in the narrator's train of thought are so sporadic, changeable, loose, disorderly, and therefore barely predictable, only idiosyncratic to the thought process of the narrator rather than the external actions or events. The self-referential narrative reflects upon the narrator's swarming thoughts that are scattered and illogical, even wandering to the fantastical, just like the unconscious mind described by Freud.

With regard to the nonlinearity and variability of the stream of consciousness as well as the diversity of association, German psychologist Hermann Ebbinghaus (1850–1909) has made the following observation: "At a given moment A may be about to disappear from consciousness. While B is, so to speak, at its zenith; C is rising into clear consciousness, while D is only vaguely present. A moment later A has disappeared, B is declining, C is at its zenith, and D is rising. Any two items present in

consciousness tend to form linkages. Hence there may not only be connections such as A–C and A–D but backward associations such as D–C, and even C–A" (Quoted in Murphy 1999: 196). Since the stream-of-consciousness writing allows the subjective mental processes of characters to determine the objective content of the narrative, the time-space continuum is almost always replaced by an interlaced narrative in stream-of-consciousness novels.

Interlaced narrative also involves the novelist's deliberate use of time difference to cause temporal dislocation. A classic example of this is *Portrait of Jennie* by the American novelist and poet Robert Nathan. The story started out with a struggling young painter named Eben Andrews who lived penny-to-penny in New York. One day he strolled through Central Park and encountered a playful young girl named Jennie. Enchanted by the outgoing child, Eben painted a sketch for her. When Eben came across Jennie again two weeks later, she was already several years older and began to learn French. Jennie explained that she had fallen in love with the painter, so she decided to hurry up and grow so fast that they could get married and be together, and that's exactly what happened. Each time when Eben met Jennie again, she seemed to be several years older, and was apparently slipping through time. Half a year later, Jennie returned again as a young lady, and the two lovers became romantically involved. In this time-traveling romance, the limits of time and space are bent so as to create a mystical instance of anachrony, which in itself seems absurd and surreal, but it is exactly owing to such a dislocation of time that the protagonist's unremitting pursuit of pure love is effectively represented.

It must be noted that, when novelists shift the focus of their narrative from physical time to psychological time, it does not necessarily exclude the presence of the former, for "the accent is now on the simultaneity of the contents of consciousness, the immanence of the past in the present, the constant flowing together of the different periods of time, the amorphous fluidity of inner experience, the boundlessness of the stream of time by which the soul is borne along …" (Hauser 1958: 239). When physical time is projected in the conscious mind, the linear progression from the past to the present to the future is disrupted; even the mathematical measuring unit of time can be distorted. As a result, time in modern literature becomes an independent, indifferent, and homogeneous medium, a mere accident of matter. The experimentation with the narrative temporality allows novelists to order and narrate events with new approaches. Overall, the selection of narrative time sequence should ultimately be determined by the artistic conception of the novel so as to achieve optimal artistic effect.

4.2 Narrative Point of View

Modern narratology draws a clear distinction between the narrator of a story (through whom the story is told) and the narrative point of view of a story (through what perspective a narrative is presented). A long time ago, thinkers already concerned themselves with the study of point of view. Plato, for example, uttered his view on this

matter through Socrates' words: "If you look at a couch from the side or the front or from anywhere else, does it differ in any way from itself? Or, while not differing at all, does it appear different?" (Plato 2004: 301) Then in 1905, Norman Friedman made the statement that "The unity of a passage or a plot depends largely on the clearness and stability of (the narrator's) position" (Friedman 1968: 114). Percy Lubbock further pointed out that "The whole intricate question of method, in the craft of fiction, I take to be governed by the question of the point of view—the question of the relation in which the narrator stands to the story" (Lubbock 1996: 251). Narrative point of view, also known as narrative perspective, narrative focus, narrative focalization, or narrative angle, refers to the point of observation and manner of representation of a narrative. It is the perspective through which a narrative is presented and from which events of a story are witnessed. In a nutshell, narrative point of view is a narrative state that produces different narrative constructions based on the specific perspectives from which a story is presented. It reflects a special angle or vision from which the world is "seen" by a narrative work or text.

Western literary theorists attach great importance to the application of point of view in narrative. Just as Percy Lubbock observes, among the techniques of fiction, the technique of point of view which indicates the relation between the narrator and the story is the most complicated. As a way of representation, narrative point of view affects the artistic effect and value of fiction to a great extent. As for the classification of narrative point of view, different scholars have proposed different classifications, such as Cleanth Brooks, Robert Penn Warren or Bertil Romberg's quadripartition, F. K. Stanzel's tripartition, N. Friedman's octopartition, etc. In the present author's opinion, the most convenient and efficient classification is a tripartition typology symbolized by the formulae put forward by Todorov: Narrator > Character (the narrator says more than any of the characters knows), Narrator = Character (the narrator says only what a given character knows), and Narrator < Character (the narrator says less than what the character knows). These three formulae correspond with three types of focalization to be discussed in the following section, namely, zero focalization, internal focalization and external focalization. Zero focalization is the narrative pattern in which the narrator has an omniscient point of view, moving freely in time and space, inside and outside the characters' minds. Both internal focalization and external focalization assume limited point of view, where stories are generally narrated through the eyes of a single character. Although stories can also be told through the eyes of an omniscient narrator in internal focalization or external focalization, the focus is often limited to a single character, revealing only the inner thoughts or feelings of that specific character. In the following section, we are going to explore the application of these three types of focalization in Chinese and Western popular fiction.

4.2.1 Zero Focalization

Zero focalization is used prevailingly in ancient fiction. The story is told as if by a transcendental God-like narrator who knows everything—what happened in the past, what is happening at present, and what will happen in the future; the past, present and future of characters; their thoughts, actions, and appearance—there is nothing that he doesn't know. As Barthes and Duisit point out, "The narrator stands at the same time inside his characters (since he knows all that happens in them) and outside them (since he never identifies with one more than the other)" (Barthes and Duisit 1975: 261). In other words, the narrator tells the story from an all-encompassing, God-like point of view. This point of view is defined by Lubbock as "omniscient narrative," symbolized by Todorov's formula as Narrator > Character, and is referred to as "zero focalization" by Genette. This omniscient point of view often takes the form of third-person narrative, a long-standing, time-tested narrative pattern that has been widely adopted by novelists, including masters of narrative art such as Balzac, Stendhal, Dickens, Turgenev, Hugo, George Sand, Prosper Merimee.

Before Western novels flooded into China at the beginning of the twentieth century, Chinese novels, especially popular fiction, adopted the pattern of omniscient narrative with almost no exception. It can be said that Chinese popular fiction adopted such a narrative perspective more extensively than their Western counterpart. In China the storytelling tradition provides solid foundation for the omniscient narrative, for the storyteller is not only the narrator but also the creator of the story. As a result, the narrator naturally knows all the facts, thoughts, feelings or motives of all the characters and has a global understanding of the whole situation. Apart from being an all-knowing narrator telling the story from outside of it, the narrator can sometimes assume the role of an active participant in the story, or a mere observer or witness. The narrator can also switch perspective from one character to another before returning to the omniscient, transcendental position. This omniscient narrative, or zero focalization, opens up wonderful opportunities for creativity and gives the narrator much freedom and supremacy. It is therefore applied in many early vernacular novels, including storytelling scripts and novels based on storytelling scripts, such as *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (*Sanguo Yanyi*), *Outlaws of the Marsh* (*Shui Hu Zhuan*), and *Journey to the West* (*Xi You Ji*).

4.2.1.1 Three Types of Zero Focalization

Zero focalization can be further divided into three variations: objective narrative mode, subjective commenting mode, and hybrid mode.

(1) **Objective narrative mode**

In the objective narrative mode, the narrator is all-knowing and God-like. However, instead of being an active participant in the story, the narrator is transparent, even invisible. He does not state directly his own attitude towards and judgment about the

story or the character, but merely tells the story from outside of it. As the French writer Maupassant notes, the narrator of objectivity should aim at "… giving us an exact presentment of all that happens in life, carefully avoid all complicated explanations, all disquisitions on motive, and confine themselves to let persons and events pass before our eyes" (Maupassant 1967: 399). However, it should be noted that adopting an objective attitude doesn't mean the narrator is devoid of his attitude and inclination. Instead, his attitude and inclination are revealed through other means such as plot, characterization, and certain stylistic devices such as allegory, symbolism, irony, etc., rather than stated directly in his narrative.

The following two examples excerpted from *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (*Sanguo Yanyi*, also translated into *Three Kingdoms*) and *Stories to Enlighten the World* (*Yu Shi Ming Yan*, also translated into *Stories Old and New*) illustrate the application of objective narrative mode in classical Chinese novels:

> The call was posted in Zhuo County, where it drew the attention of a man of heroic mettle. This man enjoys sensual pleasure more than reading and learning … He was a descendant of Liu Sheng, Prince Jing of Zhongshan, a great-great-grandson of the fourth Han emperor, Jing. His name was Liu Bei; his style, Xuande.
>
> (Luo 2003)

> Here begins our story. King Qian, named Liu, with the courtesy name Jumei and the nickname Poliu, was a native of the county of Lin'an in Hangzhou Prefecture. During his mother's pregnancy, fire often broke out around the house, only to vanish when people came to put it out. The entire family was much bewildered.
>
> One day, towards dusk, Mr. Qian was approaching the house from outside when he caught sight of a giant lizard about ten feet long climbing down from the roof, its eyes bright and sparkling, its head almost reaching the ground. Mr. Qian stood aghast. He was about to scream for help when the lizard disappeared. A glow of fire suddenly illuminated the sky from both the front and back of the house. Alarmed at what he thought was a fire, Mr. Qian cried to neighbors for help. All the neighbors, including those who had already gone to sleep, rushed to the scene with long hooks and water buckets, but there was no fire to be seen. Instead, they heard a newborn baby's cries coming out of Mr. Qian's room — it turned out Mrs. Qian had just given birth to a baby. Shamefaced, Mr. Qian apologized to the neighbors for having disturbed them with a false alarm. The sight of the giant lizard and the strange happenings prompted Mr. Qian to decide to drown the newborn baby because he thought it must be some kind of demon that would only bring calamity if left to live. (But the baby was not destined to die yet …)
>
> (Feng 2000)

In the above second example, the narrator gives an objective and all-encompassing introduction to Qian Liu's life and family. When Qian Liu's mother was pregnant with him, the family experienced several weird things, such as the "fire often broke out around the house, only to vanish when people came to put it out," and "a giant lizard about ten feet long climbing down from the roof, its eyes bright and sparkling." The sight of the giant lizard and "a glow of fire suddenly illuminated the sky from both the front and back of the house" seem to be recounted from the perspective of Qian Liu's father, an approach to make these things more convincing. As a matter of fact, these are only legends and folklore rather than historical facts, and the point of view chosen by the narrator helps to make the tale more credible in order to deify the protagonist.

Now let's take a look at an example from *Stories of the Tang Dynasty* (S*huo Tang*). In chapter twenty-one of this novel, Cheng Yaojin argued and fought with an old couple at a tavern, and this excerpt narrates what happened after the old couple called for help:

> While Cheng Yaojin and the old couple were fighting with each other, a hero came from afar. Almost seven feet tall, this man has starry eyes and a round face, which was adorned with a thin mustache and goatee. Wearing a knitted kerchief and glossy dark green silk military gown, he rode a high horse, accompanied by more than a dozen servants. Seeing a crowd gathering in the street, the hero drew in the rein and stopped at the door of the tavern, where he heard Cheng Yaojin yelling from inside: "Don't hide from me! If you don't show yourself, I'll tear this tavern down!" He then saw Cheng Yaojin kicked ferociously on the support pillar of the building, which began to rock and creak, and almost collapsed. Dismounting from his horse, the hero hurried into the tavern to calm Yaojin down, "Calm yourself, good valiant. Let's settle this through discussion instead of fighting." Cheng Yaojin turned around and shouted to him with anger, "Are you paying for my damaged garment on his behalf?" "That's not a big deal. What I really want is to invite you, my dear friend, to my house, so that we can discuss over some other matters." Yaojin glanced up and down to check the man out, and found that he seemed to be a decent and honest guy. "Alright," Yaojin replied, "I'll stop now. If not for your sake, I'm gonna beat this motherfucker to death!"

In this typical example of objective zero focalization, the point of view alternates for three times, which exactly shows a complete omniscient narrative on the part of the narrator who at the same time keeps his narrative objective. Such objective zero focalization is traditionally a basic pattern of Chinese fiction, as noted by an anonymous critic in the late Qing Dynasty (1840–1911):

> Portraying characters in fiction should be like reflecting directly and faithfully one's countenance in the mirror, so that the viewer will make their own judgment about characters. Novelists should refrain from inserting into novels their own judgment of characters, which is in fact not a rare practice among playwrights. In traditional Chinese opera, a character's first appearance on the stage is often accompanied by a soliloquy with a proleptic summary of the character's personality and conduct. After watching the play, the audience sometimes may feel that the judgment in the soliloquy does not do justice to the character. Even if the proleptic soliloquy is later proved to be convincing, it deprives the audience of the delight and satisfaction of making their own discovery and judgment. Although popular fiction is not serious literature, it is still not acceptable for the author to include his/her own opinions and judgment about characters in the fiction. From the valorous heroes in *Outlaws of the Marsh*, to the lascivious lovers in *Chin P'ing Mei* (*The Plum in the Golden Vase*), to the amorous aristocrats in *A Dream of Red Mansions*, to the wide assortment of characters in *The Scholars*, all of these characters are vividly yet objectively portrayed. Although the authors of the aforementioned novels did not make their own judgment about characters, their depiction and narration of characters and events are like a bright mirror from which the reader can see clearly the identity, traits, strengths, and weaknesses of every character. Indeed, a great character portrayal should be like a "mirror-view," and a mirror does not reflect its own image.
>
> (Anonymous 1907)

(2) **Subjective commenting mode**

Just as in objective narrative moe, the narrator in subjective commenting mode is not an active participant in the story either. However, unlike the narrator of the objective

narrative mode in which the narrator's recount is purely objective, the narrator of the subjective commenting mode often appears directly in the story and intervenes in the narrative progression with subjective comments and narrator's opinions. This mode can be viewed as a combination of the representational function and the evaluative function of the narrator.

The subjective commenting mode was employed in the early Chinese short vernacular stories, such as *San Yan*, and early full-length novels based on storytelling scripts, such as *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (*Sanguo Yanyi*) and *Outlaws of the Marsh* (*Shui Hu Zhuan*). Later on, commentators and editors in the early Qing Dynasty deleted the poems of moral judgment from these novels, turning their narrative pattern from subjective into objective. Generally speaking, novels based on storytelling scripts with zero focalization take the perspective of first-person narrative. But unlike the first-person narrative adopted by modern and contemporary novels, first person markers such as "I" are not directly employed in the novels based on storytelling scripts, instead the narrator would overtly indicate his presence as the first-person narrator to the reader. An example of this can be found in *A Foolish Prefect Wins the Emperor's Favor at Royal Court* from *Two Collections of the West Lake* (*Xihu Er Ji*), a collection of short stories by Zhou Qingyuan in the Ming Dynasty. After telling two stories about how someone gains fame and fortune out of sheer luck, the narrator makes the following comment:

> Readers, you may say that both centipedes and scorpions sting, but the sting from a centipede brought this man fortune, while the sting from a scorpion brought the other man misfortune. Indeed, both of them were stung by noxious insects, but after the sting one gained fame and fortune, while the other became poor and destitute, their opposite tracks of life can only be explained by predestination … Now this humble man in front of you is going to tell you these two men's stories before proceeding to the main story.

In this passage, the narrator creates a fictitious scene in which the narrator and his audience interact directly with each other. The narrator utters his comments in the form of a direct dialogue between the narrator and the "readers," and "this humble man in front of you" indicates the presence of the narrator of the story.

The narrative mode of vernacular novels in the early Ming Dynasty was very close to the storytelling mode of oral literature. Inserted into the novels are a wide assortment of popular sayings, narrator's commentaries and judgment, and explanation of characters' thoughts, feelings, and motives. *Er Pai*, a collection of two series of short stories compiled by Ling Mengchu (1580–1644) of the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), is a perfect showcase for this trend, with further development in its narrative artistic style. The image of a storyteller as a narrator is highlighted in *Er Pai*, and the extensive use of the narrator's comments, judgment, and explanations makes the narrative explicitly subjective. Let's take *Lord Man Forsakes His Benefactor Spouse; Jiao Wenji Takes Revenge after Death* as an example. This is a story from *Er Pai* about a kind-hearted and hospitable man named Jiao Dalang who assisted Deputy Minister Man in his time of difficulty. During his stay at Dalang's place, Man and Dalang's daughter fell in love with each other, and their secret infatuation burgeoned into a marriage. However, after Man took office as one of the top winners in the imperial court examination, he cheated on his wife and had a bigamous marriage with the

daughter of a high official. At this point of the story, the novelist made his comments through the mouth of the narrator:

> This was partly Dalang's fault. It was generous of him to help Master Man in his time of need, but Dalang should have given the young man some money for traveling expenses and sent him on his journey. Because Dalang was a widower, living with his unmarried daughter, why should he go out of his way to accommodate Man at his home? It was true that Dalang loved drinking with friends and, greatly attracted by Man's personality, was glad to treat him well. But it never struck Dalang that his guest might not be honest. Man took advantage of his host's hospitality and respect for learning, and gradually put on an air of arrogance. He also had the thought in mind that, because the old man had a beautiful daughter, he might be fortunate enough to marry the woman. As Master Man found it hard to get this idea across, he had to wait as the days went by …
>
> (Ling 2008)

In the above commentary which makes a judgement about the two characters, the narrator switched between the perspective of an outside observer and the characters themselves, stating directly and clearly who should take responsibilities for what is going to happen, revealing the inner thoughts and hidden motives of the characters, and making subjective moral judgment. Exploiting to the greatest extent the privilege of an omniscient narrator, the novelist acts more or less as a participant in the story. More examples of the subjective commenting mode are as follows:

> Isn't it a wonder that there are such fools in this world? A peddler who had started his business with only three taels of silver wanted to spend ten taels for a night with a celebrated courtesan. Isn't this an impossible dream? Well, as the ancients said, "Where there is a will, there is a way." He racked his brains and came up with a plan …
>
> Holding an oilcloth umbrella, he went to the silversmith's shop across the street to use their scales. This silversmith was a snob. He thought, "How much silver can an oil-peddler have to need my scales? Let me give him a small five-tael weight. He may not even need the largest cord." Qin Zhong untied the knot of his parcel to reveal all his loose pieces of silver. Generally speaking, a pile of loose pieces of silver may appear to be worth more than one ingot of equal weight. The silversmith being a petty man without having seen much of the world, his facial expression changed as he saw so much silver. Thinking to himself, "As they say, you can't judge a man by his looks, nor measure the sea with a pitcher," he hastened to set up the scales and took out many weights of varying sizes.
>
> —*The Oil Peddler wins the Queen of Flowers*
>
> (Feng 2009)
>
> "No, readers, let me explain. Only when a family is fated to go down in the world does a loafer appear in it; only when a house is destined to fall does it produce a wastrel. This is the general rule." … So it seems that each bite or sup we take is preordained. Jin, who was not destined to possess money, could not keep even three taels, let alone eight hundred. But Wang, who was destined to possess it, could not get rid of three taels. Thus, regardless of either man's intentions, a have became a have-not and a have-not became a have.
>
> —*The Tangerines and the Tortoise Shell*
>
> (Feng and Ling 2001)

Subjective commenting mode is quite popular among novelists of the late Qing Dynasty (1840–1911). The following are two examples from *Nine-tailed Turtles* (*Jiu Wei Gui*):

> Readers, do you know who this guy is? This sucker from Changzhou is named Jin Hanliang, a notorious son of a pimp.
>
> …
>
> The miserable look of Jin Yuelan will give you an idea of how heartless and utterly devoid of conscience prostitutes can be! That is why one should never marry a girl working in a brothel. I'm not talking through my hat, but speaking from experience.

With critical commentaries like these, *Nine-tailed Turtles* exposes and castigates the despicable conduct of avaricious prostitutes, degenerate whoremasters, and corrupted dignitaries.

There are also instances of subjective commentaries in *Exposure of the Official World* (*Guanchang Xianxing Ji*) by Li Baojia (1867–1906), a novelist in the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911):

> In the recent couple of years, many countries wanted to forcibly occupy the territory of our country. From time to time they sent battleships cruising along our shore, and sometimes they even sent a varying number of people ashore with various excuses, from topographic survey to military drill. Even the commanders of border-provinces could do nothing about it, let alone local officials.

In this passage, the narrator openly denounced certain countries' aggressive act and moral degeneration of some officials.

In the subjective commenting mode, the narrator plays an active part by directly passing comments and opinions on characters and events, and therefore the first person "I" who is the narrator or author himself may occasionally appear in the narrative. However, this "I" still narrates the story from the outside of it as an omniscient, God-like narrator as he does not assume any role in the story. In this sense, even with the use of the first-person "I," the true nature of the novel is still a third-person narrative.

(3) **The hybrid mode**

Hybrid mode of zero focalization has its great strength in providing a panoramic bird's eye view for a grand narrative with a diverse range of characters and events. Therefore for example, *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, which is a classic masterpiece presenting grand scenes and imposing style, demands a hybrid mode of zero focalization and a panoramic perspective. Take the following opening passage of the novel as an example:

> Here begins our tale. The empire, long divided, must unite; long united, must divide. Thus it has ever been. In the closing years of the Zhou Dynasty (1046–256 BC), seven kingdoms warred among themselves until the kingdom of Qin prevailed and absorbed the other six. But Qin soon fell, and on its ruins two opposing kingdoms, Chu and Han, fought for mastery until the kingdom of Han prevailed and absorbed its rival, as Qin had done before. The Han court's rise to power began when the Supreme Ancestor slew a white serpent, inspiring an uprising that ended with Han's ruling a unified empire.
>
> (Luo 2003)

With insightful vision and imposing style, this succinct opening passage epitomizes the vicissitudes of several centuries with vivid (brief) details, exhibiting the narrator's supreme narrative skills as well as his talent as an eminent historian.

Integrating objective narrative mode and subjective commenting mode, the hybrid mode of zero focalization allows the novelist to make panoramic and omniscient depiction of numerous characters and complex events on the one hand, and step from behind the scene onto the stage to make subjective comments and evaluations on the other hand. For example, the narrator can comment directly on the traits and behaviors of the characters, or sometimes can even present his/her evaluation of the characters about his past and present in a short passage. Let's take a look at an example from *The Oil Peddler Wins the Queen of Flowers* in *Stories to Awaken the World* (*Xing Shi Heng Yan*) by Feng Menglong:

> In their forties now, they had only one child, a daughter named Yaoqin (which means "zither inlaid with jade") who was as pretty as she was talented from childhood on. At age seven, she was sent to the village school, where she learned to read a thousand sentences per day. At age ten, she was able to write poems … Twelve years of age at this point in our narration, Yaoqin excelled in music, chess, calligraphy, and painting, and her dexterity in needlework exceeded everyone's expectations. All these accomplishments came not from practice but from her innate talents.
>
> (Feng 2009)

Both objective depiction and subjective commentaries are employed in this passage to introduce the life experience of Queen of Flowers, a typical instance of the hybrid mode. Such a narration serves both as a backstory and a brief profiling of the character before he/she makes his/her debut, thus helping the reader have a better understanding of the characters with regard to the latter development of the plot.

Let's look at another classic example of the skillful use of hybrid zero focalization in *A Dream of Red Mansions* (*Hong Lou Meng*). The following excerpt is a hybrid narration of Baoyu and Daiyu's romantic feelings towards each other:

> Now Baoyu had always been deplorably eccentric. Since childhood, moreover, he had been intimate with Daiyu, finding her a kindred spirit. Thus now that he knew a little more and had read some improper books, he felt none of the fine girls he had see in the families of relatives and friends fit to hold a candle to her. He had long since set his heart on having her, but could not admit as much. So whether happy or angry, he used every means to test her secretly.
>
> And Daiyu, being rather eccentric too, would disguise her feelings to test him in return.
>
> Thus each concealed his or her real sentiments to sound the other out. The proverb says, "When false meets false, the truth will out." So inevitably, in the process, they kept quarrelling over trifles.
>
> So now Baoyu was reflecting. "I can forgive others not understanding me, but you ought to know you're the only one I care for. Yet instead of comforting me you only taunt me. It's obviously no use my thinking of you every minute of the day — you've no place for me in your heart." To tell her this, however, was beyond him.
>
> As for Daiyu, she was reflecting, "I know I've a place in your heart. Naturally you don't take that vicious talk about gold matching jade seriously, but think of me seriously instead. Even if I raise the subject, you should take it perfectly calmly to show that it means nothing to you, that the one you really care for is me. Why get so worked up at the mention of gold and jade? This shows you're thinking about them all the time. You're afraid I suspect this when I mention them, so you put on a show of being worked up — just to fool me."
>
> In fact, to start with their two hearts were one, but each of them was so hyper-sensitive that their longing to be close ended in estrangement.
>
> (Cao 1999)

In the omniscient narrative of novels based on storytelling scripts, objective narrative mode and subjective commenting mode are often integrated by the narrator. Let's take a look at the following passage about Shen Xiu being murdered by Zhang Gong in *One Songbird Causes Seven Deaths* from Feng Menglong's *Stories to Enlighten the World* (*Yu Shi Ming Yan*, also translated into *Stories Old and New*):

> As coincidence would have it, the bucket-cooper Mr. Zhang was walking through the willow grove, a load on his shoulders, on his way to the Chu residence for a job. From afar, he saw a man lying under a tree. Taking what would be the space of three ordinary steps in two, he rushed forward and put down his load. What he saw was a young man in a coma, his face drained of all color. There was nothing of any value about him other than the birdcage, in which the cursed bird was, at that very moment, singing more beautifully than ever. Indeed, as the saying goes, the sight of money stirs up one's greed, and the direst poverty leads to action. Zhang thought to himself, "How can I ever get to have some fun with the pittance I make?" … "This thrush alone," said Zhang to himself, "would be worth two or three taels if silver at least, not to mention anything else." So saying, he picked up the cage, but before he got away, Shen Xiu came to. When he saw Zhang carrying the birdcage, he tried in vain to get up. "Old jerk!" he cried out, "Where do you think you're taking my bird?"
>
> "So this little bastard has a sharp tongue!" Zhang thought to himself. "If I walk away with the thing, he'll get up and catch up with me, and I'll end up the loser. If I am to get a bad name anyway, I might as well finish him." From his bucket he drew out a paring knife, held Shen Xiu to the ground, and struck with one blow of the knife. It being a sharp, curved knife struck down with mighty force, the young man's head rolled to one side.
>
> (Feng 2000)

This passage begins with "As coincidence would have it," a summarizing comment to remind the reader of what is to be expected, and it also reflects the superior, all-knowing identity of the narrator who knows every single detail of the story like the back of his hand. This comment is followed by Zhang Gong's noticing Shen Xiu from afar to near. "From afar, he saw a man lying under a tree." "Rushed forward," he saw the fainted man's "face drained of all color," then cast his eyes on the birdcage nearby. Here the description is conducted from the eyes of Zhang Gong. However, it must be noted that this narrative does not involve any shift of perspective, for Zhang Gong is in fact the target of the narrator's focalization and observation. It is indeed Zhang Gong who "saw a man lying under a tree", but "taking what would be the space of three ordinary steps in two, he rushed forward and put down his load" is obviously narrated from the perspective of the narrator. Furthermore, "the sight of money stirs up one's greed, and the direst poverty leads to action" is apparently a critical comment made from the narrator's point of view instead of Zhang Sheng's. To conclude, the entire passage is narrated from the perspective of the omniscient narrator.

4.2.1.2 Functions and Limitations of Zero Focalization

As stated earlier, a narrative with zero focalization mode is narrated by an omniscient narrator who, although outside of the story, takes a bird's-eye view or camera perspective so as to yield a panoramic observation of all the things happening to

various characters in different times based on what the narrator "sees," "hears," or "records." He not only knows all the external events in the outer world, but also explores the inner world, hidden agenda, and secret motives of every character.

Booth (1983) summarizes the functions of the zero focalization mode as follows: proving the facts, picture, or summary; molding beliefs; relating particulars to the established norms; heightening the significance of events; generalizing the significance of the whole work; manipulating mood; commenting directly on the work itself. According to Booth, the first function of zero focalization is to tell the reader about many different kind of facts, such as "stage setting, explanation of the meaning of an action, summary of thought processes or of events too insignificant to merit being dramatized, description of physical events and details whenever such description cannot spring naturally from a character" (Booth 1983: 169), through narrative summary. As for the second function of manipulating the mood of the reader, "… authors are in effect exercising careful control over the reader's degree of involvement in or distance from the events of the story, by insuring that the reader views the materials with the degree of detachment or sympathy felt by the implied author" (ibid.: 181–182). "Intrusions about values and beliefs offer a special temptation to the novelist, and we can all name works in which the philosopher-manqué indulges in irrelevant pontification. But as we have seen, the quality of such passages depends far more on the quality of the author's mind than upon whether he chooses to push his profundities back into the mind of a dramatized character" (ibid.: 200). Popular fictionists can effectively manipulate the expectations of the reader by means of zero focalization. Any literary creation is inevitably under the influence of the values and beliefs of its author. Whether a piece of modern fiction is successful or not largely depends on whether it can, by revealing in a dramatic way the characters' thoughts and feelings as well as conflicts among characters, make the reader feel and experience its beliefs and values. The third function of zero focalization is to advocate the narrator's own moral standard and value judgment. Being the unequivocal spokesman of the author, the narrator often makes condescending commentaries directed at reinforcing moral teachings, or overtly elaborating the significance of events or the motive of characters. With the thematic inclination in mind, the privileged narrator constantly feed the reader with authorial commentaries and judgment so that the reader is left with no other choice but accept them on his own accord.

The Fan Tower Restaurant as Witness to the Love of Zhou Shengxian from Feng Menglong's *Stories to Awaken the World* (*Xing Shi Heng Yan*) is a good example of the omniscient narrator's capability of going freely in and out of the story to exert impact on the represented world as well as the reader's perception of the story. The story took place during the reign of Emperor Huizong in the Song Dynasty (960–1279 AD). During a sightseeing tour of the Golden Bright Pond, Fan Erlang, whose family owned a wine shop in Fan Tower, locked eyes in mutual attraction with Zhou Shengxian, daughter of a seagoing merchant. Since they could not speak openly to each other, they indirectly exchanged personal information while addressing their remarks to a vendor of soft drinks. After returning home, Shengxian suffered from lovesickness and declined all offers of food. Worried over the girl's health and encouraged by a matchmaker, Shengxian's mother consented to the engagement between Shengxian

and Erlang. However, when the girl's father was back from his voyage and was informed of the match, he was offended by the thought of Fan's social position, and repudiated the engagement in a rage. Learning about her father's disapproval of the engagement, the girl fell down in a faint and died. After the burial of the girl, a grave robber sneaked into the tomb. Overcome with lust, he tried to violate the dead corpse of Shengxian, only to be shocked by the girl who suddenly came back to life. Promising to restore her to Fan, the grave robber took the girl home as his mistress. At New Year's, Shengxian managed to escape from the grave robber's residence and made her way to Fan's wine shop. Taking her to be a ghost, Fan killed her by accident. He was then arrested and put in jail, where the ghost of Shengxian visited him in his dreams, and foretold Fan's release in one month's time. Exactly thirty days later, the grave robber was arrested, and Fan was released from jail. He later got married, but still treasued deeply the fond memory of Shengxian's love.

Though narrating a tale of weird plotline, the storyteller did not seem to attempt to go deeper to represent the true feelings and emotions of characters. Neither did he strive to narrate patiently to the reader the ins and outs of the story. Instead, after some authorial commentaries and a functional introduction to characters' background in the first scene, the storyteller deliberately used humorous and exaggerating depiction to intensify the theatrical effect, thus intriguing the reader in an instant. In this comic scene, an unmarried young man and a fair maiden only eighteen years of age were engaged in an indirect dialogue through which they disclosed their affections for each other. The girl's intentional fight with the soft drink vendor was full of carefully inserted information about herself. Fan picked up the vibe and followed suit. Throughout the scene the narrator did not make any authorial commentaries, yet his presence can be felt through the carefully selected narrative information and the skillfully designed dialogue. Entertained by this lively scene, the reader also develops the crucial awareness that Shengxian is more quick-witted and daring than Erlang, and she also takes the initiative in their romantic relationship. Aside from this, the reader is not informed of any specific details or unnecessary background information to back up the scene. Then in the next scene, Fan Erlang realized that Shengxian's coded message was an invitation for him to follow her to her residence. The narrator then prophesied that:

> And this adventure was to lead to a baffling court case. Truly,
>
> Do not say one word more than needed;
>
> Do not venture out if the trip can be spared.
>
> (Feng 2009)

Targeting at Fan Erlang, this warning is on the one hand a reflection of the narrator's somehow conventional and prejudiced view of women as the root of men's problems, and on the other hand a narrative device to command attention and create suspense through exaggerated information. Indeed, the plot development proves this warning to be an overstatement, for what happened to Erlang in the next section was simply a false alarm, while Shengxian braved all kinds of perils, even rising from the dead. This naturally justifies the narrator's focusing primarily on the experience of Shengxian

for the most part in that section, until Erlang was thrown into prison for accidentally killing Shengxian. The primary plotline about Shengxian's experience, behavior, thoughts and feelings were interrupted by two incidents, namely, the matchmaker's diagnosis of Shengxian's ailment, and the grave robber's sneaking into the tomb. With vivid details and intriguing plot, these two incidents can be quite entertaining to the audience of the storytelling performance. Inserted into the narrative, however, they may affect the coherence of the story and distract the reader from the main plotline. All through the story, Shengxian and Erlang's external behavior and inward thoughts are depicted rather distantly instead of intimately. Here is one example of such distant depiction of character's inner world: "Having heard the commotion, the girl said to herself, "What better time than this to get away?" Another example is the description of Fan Erlang's thoughts in the lockup: "How very strange! If she was a human, she had already died once before. The undertaker who was present at the burial can testify to that, and the grave is also there. But if she was a ghost, she did bleed when hit, and the corpse is still there." Managing both the content and the structure of the narrative, the narrator's intrusion in the plot or the mind of the character serves merely the function of moving the story forward or justifying the character's behavior without relating to the subtle emotions and sentiments of the character. The narrator enables the reader to see clearly what happens to the characters and how they act or feel, but their very heart and soul remain undisclosed.

An obvious strength of zero focalization lies in the fact that the unlimited bird's-eye view enables an omniscient narrator to see all and know all. The narrator can access both the external actions and the internal workings of all the characters in the story. This kind of omniscient point of view has a long-standing aesthetic tradition in China. Historically, Chinese novels originated from hearsay and evolved through storytelling. The Narrator > Character formula put forward by Todorov can best summarize the "been there, done that" mentality of the usually well-informed storyteller/novelist, who naturally favors the third-person omniscient perspective. To quote from Rimmon-Kenan, "The extradiegetic narrators … are both extradiegetic and heterodiegetic. It is precisely their being absent from the story and their higher narratorial authority in relation to it that confers on such narrators the quality which has often been called 'omniscience.' 'Omniscience' is perhaps an exaggerated term, especially for modern extradiegetic narrators. Nevertheless, the characteristics connoted by it are still relevant, namely: familiarity, in principle, with the characters' innermost thoughts and feelings; knowledge of past, present and future; presence in locations where characters are supposed to be unaccompanied (e.g. on a lonely stroll or during a love-scene in a locked room); and knowledge of what happens in several places at the same time" (Rimmon-Kenan 2005: 98). As a matter of fact, the presence of the author in the story is almost inevitable, since it is the author who creates the story-world in the first place. It is impossible for the characters to act freely without the manipulation of the author, for the world represented in the fiction, even in those highly realistic ones, is never an exact replica of the real world, but an artistic projection of reality. This fictional world revolves around certain convention or protocol, so the experienced reader of literature can identify the association between the fictional world and the real world. For full-length novels with numerous characters, complex

plot, and frequent switch from scene to scene, an omniscient perspective allows the narrative to cover a wider range with an all-encompassing view. Moving freely in time and space, the omniscient narrator can incorporate various literary elements into a coherent and balanced unity, making his narrative more varied and colorful.

Of course, zero focalization also has its limitations. In his 1939 article *Francois Mauriac and Freedom*, Sartre singled out omniscient perspective for sharp criticism:

> "Do you want your characters to live? See to it that they are free."
>
> "He once wrote that the novelist is to his own creatures what God is to His. And that explains all the oddities of his technique. He takes God's standpoint on his characters. God sees the inside and outside, the depths of body and soul, the whole universe at once. In like manner, M. Mauriac is omniscient about everything relating to his little world. What he says about his characters is Gospel. He explains them, categorizes them and condemns them without appeal. If anyone were to ask him how he knows that Therese is a cautious and desperate woman he would probably reply, with great surprise, "Didn't I create her?"

Sartre contends that "*La Fin de la Nuit* is not a novel." And the reason why Mauriac as the writer failed to achieve this purpose is because "of the sin of pride. Like most of our writers, he has tried to ignore the fact that the theory of relativity applies in full to the universe of fiction, that there is no more place for a privileged observer in a real novel than in the world of Einstein …" "God is not an artist. Neither is M. Mauriac." Jonathan Raban, a principal advocate of omniscient perspective, also points out that "A truly omniscient narrator would be a tiresome guide through a novel. He would forever be suppressing his intrusively obvious knowledge of the outcome of the plot and would reveal so much of the characters that they would be so transparent as to be uninteresting. The majority of so-called 'omniscient narrators' are merely efficient spies" (Raban 1969: 33). These remarks poignantly reflect the limitations of omniscient perspective. Apart from this, in traditional Chinese popular fiction (especially fiction based on storytelling scripts), the author who is an omniscient narrator invariably harbors the intention of "dispelling the folly and awakening the world," therefore their narrative is notably filled with garrulous moral teaching, sometimes to such an extent that they even bore their reader to death.

4.2.2 Internal Focalization

In the mode of internal focalization, the narrator knows as much as the characters do, and the narrative is made through the consciousness of one or more characters in the story. The narrator delivers facts and opinions entirely through the perceptions of the one or several characters, and narrative information is restricted to what is available to their perception, cognition, and thought. As for other characters that are not chosen by the narrator as his mouthpiece, the narrator only provides speculation or assumption about their feelings and emotions from the perspective of an onlooker. The narrator can be the protagonist (as in novels in diary form or epistolary novels), or the observer of events (Watson in Arthur Conan Doyle's *Sherlock Holmes*, for

instance). He can also choose to hide deep inside a certain character, peeping into his/her heart and soul.

Internal focalization started to be employed early in the history of Western novels. Picaresque novel, for instance, is narrated by a character in the story. This narrative mode is also used in autobiographical novels and epistolary novels that were quite popular in the eighteenth century. Some autobiographical novels or memoirs, such as the ones written by Daniel Defoe, are purely fictional; while others, such as *The Confessions* by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, reflect the author's personal experience. Taking the mode of internal focalization, epistolary novels are either first-person narrative in the form of letters, correspondence between characters, or letters that are not expected to be responded, such as *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers*, which is in fact the dialogue between the author and the (implied) reader. The entire content of such novels is narrated from the perspective of a certain character in the story, and the narrator's recounting of the story is guided and constrained by the consciousness of that character. The mode of internal focalization has its obvious strength in that it can thoroughly disclose the inner world of the characters and fully represent their intense inner conflict and aimless thought through the eyes and the mind of that viewpoint character who would only narrate what he/she is familiar with. If he/she has no knowledge of a certain person, event, or thing, he/she could refrain from narrating it. As a result, while reading such works, the reader will develop a sense of intimacy with the characters as the distance between him and the characters are shortened.

In most cases, the mode of internal focalization employs first-person narrative, although sometimes it also uses the third-person narrative. According to Todorov's formula, internal focalization means "Narrator = Character" (i.e. the narrator says only what a given character knows). It can be further divided into three variations: fixed, variable, and multiple (Genette 1980: 189–90).

(1) **Fixed internal focalization**

In narrative with fixed internal focalization, events are recounted through the consciousness of a single character, which means the narrative point of view always comes from that character. In many detective stories "I" is the narrator of the story, and this first-person "I" is but a minor character who often plays the role of the assistant to the detective, the main character of the story, and reports the detective's investigation of the crime as an observer. Two canonical examples of this are Watson's narrating of Sherlock Holmes (in Arthur Conan Doyle's detective novels) and Hastings' narrating of Hercule Poirot (in Agatha Christie's detective novels), in which the first-person perspective of "I" goes throughout, making the story very lively and palpable. Now let's take some excerpts from Agatha Christie's *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* to demonstrate the use of fixed internal focalization.

> I followed him. Still frowning, he went across to the desk and took out a small pack of patience cards. Then he drew up a chair to the table, and, to my utter amazement, began solemnly to build card houses!
>
> My jaw dropped involuntarily, and he said at once:

> "No, mon ami, I am not in my second childhood! I steady my nerves, that is all. This employment requires precision of the fingers. With precision of the fingers goes precision of the brain. And never have I needed that more than now!"
>
> "What is the trouble?" I asked.
>
> With a great thump on the table, Poirot demolished his carefully built up edifice.
>
> "It is this, mon ami! That I can build card houses seven stories high, but I cannot" — thump—"find" — thump — "that last link of which I spoke to you."
>
> I could not quite tell what to say, so I held my peace, and he began slowly building up the cards again, speaking in jerks as he did so.
>
> "It is done — so! By placing — one card — on another — with mathematical—precision!"
>
> I watched the card house rising under his hands, story by story. He never hesitated or faltered. It was really almost like a conjuring trick.
>
> "What a steady hand you've got," I remarked. "I believe I've only seen your hand shake once."
>
> "On an occasion when I was enraged, without doubt," observed Poirot, with great placidity.
>
> "Yes indeed! You were in a towering rage. Do you remember? It was when you discovered that the lock of the dispatch-case in Mrs. Inglethorp's bedroom had been forced. You stood by the mantel-piece, twiddling the things on it in your usual fashion, and your hand shook like a leaf! I must say —"
>
> But I stopped suddenly. For Poirot, uttering a hoarse and inarticulate cry, again annihilated his masterpiece of cards, and putting his hands over his eyes swayed backwards and forwards, apparently suffering the keenest agony.
>
> "Good heavens, Poirot!" I cried. "What is the matter? Are you taken ill?"
>
> "No, no," he gasped. "It is — it is — that I have an idea!"
>
> "Oh!" I exclaimed, much relieved. "One of your 'little ideas'?"
>
> "Ah, ma foi, no!" replied Poirot frankly. "This time it is an idea gigantic! Stupendous! And you — you, my friend, have given it to me!"
>
> Suddenly clasping me in his arms, he kissed me warmly on both cheeks, and before I had recovered from my surprise ran headlong from the room.

In this excerpt, recounted by Hastings ("I") through his own eyes, the process of how Poirot got his "gigantic", "stupendous" idea was lively and vividly depicted, showing Poirot's intelligence and quick wit. As a set-off to the protagonist, the first-person narrator "I" can extol the protagonist in a more convincing manner.

Fixed internal focalization is also used in the novels in which the narrative is made from the third-person point of view. With this narrative mode, the narrator tells the story from the third-person fixed perspective of a certain character in the story. For example, in Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, the narrative focuses on the consciousness of Mr. Dalloway, the protagonist of the story:

> What a lark! What a plunge! For so it had always seemed to her, when, with a little squeak of the hinges, which she could hear now, she had burst open the French windows and plunged at Bourton into the open air. How fresh, how calm, stiller than this of course, the air was in the early morning …

Although the above passage involves depiction of the character's action, the focus of the narrative is placed, for the most part, on the thoughts and feelings of Mrs.

Dalloway. Although the third-person narrative bears certain similarities with first-person narrative, it enjoys more liberty in its narrative range than the first-person perspective.

Some scholars noticed that before the swarming of Western novels into China at the beginning of the twentieth century, Chinese fictionists and fiction theorists did not develop awareness for omniscient narrative, and therefore novels in diary form or epistolary novels were very rare. As Chen (1988: 77) observes:

> It should be noted that in the early novels with the first-person perspective, the first-person narrator is in most cases not the main character of the novel, rather he merely plays a supporting role. That is to say, the first-person narrator tells the reader either anecdotes that he/she has witnessed, or the story of his/her friend, not his/her actual personal experience. Among all the thirty-six Western novels translated into Chinese and published in the four leading fiction magazines in the late Qing Dynasty (1840–1911), thirty-five are narrated by a peripheral narrator who plays only a supporting role in the story, with the only exception being *Le dernier jour d'un condamné* by Victor Hugo, while the other novels, such as *Gulliver's Travels* by Jonathan Swift, *The Californian's Tale* by Mark Twain, *Looking Backward* by Edward Bellamy, and science fiction novels by Camille Flammarion and Jules Verne translated by Liang Qichao and Zhou Guisheng, are all recounted by a first-person narrator who shares with the reader what he/she has seen or felt in a strange world. Most of those thirty-six novels fall into the category of detective stories, and are narrated by a first-person "I" about what happened to "my friend." This kind of narrative perspective is not uncommon in ancient Chinese novels. What Chinese ancient novels lack, however, is the narrative pattern in which a first-person narrator ("I") tells his/her own story ("my" story), which is the most representative and appealing form of first-person narrative. When this type of first-person narrative was introduced into China, the so-called "New Novelists" in late Qing period failed to recognize the real strength of their narrative perspective, but viewed them simply as books of travels or literary travelogue, which is a quite unfortunate indigenization, even misinterpretation, of the first-person narrative structure employed by Western novelists.
>
> (Chen 1988: 77)

Take a scene from Chapter Nine of *Outlaws of the Marsh* (*Shui Hu Zhuan*) for example:

> One day, while Xiao-er was cooking in the entry, a man slipped in and sat down inside at one of the tables. Then another fellow furtively entered. The first man was an army officer, by the looks of him. The second seemed more like an attendant. He also hurried in and sat down.
>
> (Luo 2003)

This passage is narrated not from the perspective of the narrator, but from that of Xiao-er, a character participating in that scene. Since Xiao-er knew nothing about the two customers, when he described their visiting the tavern, he could only address them as "the first man" and "the second." This narrative is acknowledged by Jin Shengtan (1608–1661), a literary critic in the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911), as a good example of the novelist's shift of perspective from the narrator to a character. Although employing the internal focalization mode, this passage is not narrated by "I," the first-person narrator.

As for the fictional works written by the so-called Chinese "New Novelists" of the late Qing Dynasty (1840–1911), although many of them did employ the first-person

narrative, their contents are mostly about what the first-person narrator sees, hears, and feels. A canonical example is Wo Woyao's *Vignettes from the Late Chi'ing: Bizarre Happenings Eyewitnessed Over Two Decades* in which what the protagonist sees, hears, and feels is unfolded through a man named "Narrow-escaper." Here is a passage from the novel explaining why the protagonist was named "Narrow-escaper":

> During my twenty years of career life, I have encountered but three types of stuff: the first are bugs and creeping things; the second are beasts of prey; the third are monsters and devils. Fortunately, over the past twenty years, I was not bitten by the first type, not eaten by the second, and not seized by the third. What a narrow escape! And that's why I got the name "Narrow-escaper."

As the name of the novel suggests, events recollected by the Narrow-escaper happened during the last two decades of the nineteenth century. In the first half of the novel, personal experience recounted by the narrator is mingled with his comments on what he has witnessed or heard from others. For instance, after hearing his friend Chi-chih's recount of a bizarre experience in Nanjing, the first-person narrator contemplates the following:

> The words of Chi-chih set me thinking. The acts of the expectant taotai and magistrate conclusively proved the moral turpitude of officialdom. But I did not dare ask why Chi-chih himself was willing to remain in official circles in spite of this.

Here is another passage about the daily experience of the narrator:

> Now there are only two newspapers published in Shanghai: *Shanghai News*, and *North China Daily News*. If you subscribe them from Nanjing, each issue will arrive with a delay of several days. Since France has recently been at war with Annam, as soon as I got the newspaper from the past few days, I sorted them out according to date, and started reading the military report section first. However, I didn't find any authentic information concerning the war, just dubious news with expressions such as "It is said that," "allegedly," or "rumor has it," which are no better than gossip heard on the grapevine.

The first-person narrative adopted in this novel requires the narrator to recount entirely from "my" perspective and about what "I" observed, experienced, or heard. For example, the above explanation of the protagonist's name and contemplation of the words of Chi-chih are both narrated from "my" point of view, which makes the events narrated in the novel highly convincing. However, as pointed out by Prusek (1980), the first-person narrative in this novel is a "non-functional framework." This novel "achieves its coherence through the use of a first-person protagonist as a formal unifying principle, but there is not a trace of the 'typical Western search for self,' and the personal feelings and emotions of the narrator are almost absent." This non-functional framework of first-person narrative is just "a pose and that the author had no other aim in mind than to put together a collection of stories and anecdotes to captivate and entertain his readers" (Prusek 1980: 115–116). As impressive as it is, this novel by Wu Woyao is in fact a hybrid of two narratives, with the narrator of one being an active participant of events and that of the other a passive observer. If we extract all the events that "I" actually participated in from this novel, we will have a vivid and coherent first-person narrative in its real sense.

(2) **Variable internal focalization**

In narrative with variable internal focalization, events are narrated through the perspectives of several characters. Different from zero focalization mode, this mode of narrative is limited to one character at a time. *La Dame aux Camelias* by the French novelist Alexandre Dumas, fils, which recounts the story and portrays the lead heroine from the perspective of a first-person narrator, is one of the earliest novels using this narrative mode. Although the first-person narrator shifts from person to person, this "I" always remains to be a certain character in the story, instead of the God-like, all knowing "I" in narrative with zero focalization. For most part of the story, it is either Armand Duval, Marguerite's lover, or an unnamed frame narrator who recounts the tragic experience of Marguerite. Then the first-person narrator shifts to Marguerite herself, who allows the reader to peep into her inner world and sense her thoughts and feelings through her diary. Finally, Marguerite's friend Julie becomes the first-person narrator who supplies some details to complete the story. Narrated as the experience and observation of a first-person narrator from the beginning to the end, this novel appeals to its reader as highly convincing, palpable, and touching. It works to the narrator's advantage when the first-person storyteller, an active character in the story, is in fact the mouthpiece of the author.

Another example of narrative with variable internal focalization is *The Sound and The Fury*. This literary masterpiece that we have quoted from in earlier discussion consists of four sections, with the first three narrated from the perspective of the three Compson brothers respectively. Benji, the narrator of the first section, suffered from mental disability and had no concept of time. He therefore mixed events he recalled from the past and events that actually took place on the day of April 7th, 1928 into a disjointed and choppy tale. The second section details Quentin's tormented and jumbled inner thoughts on June 2nd, 1910, the day when he committed suicide. Sliding between modern-day events and memories, Quentin was trapped in time and obsessed with his memories and his struggle with Caddy's promiscuity. Jason's section reads more like a monologue, in which Jason recounted the story of the events of April 6th, 1928, and revealed his obsession about money as well as his anger towards his sister Caddy and her daughter. Narrated by Faulkner himself from a third-person perspective, the fourth section of the novel puts an end to the Compson's story by telling the tale of Disley, the Compson's black servant. Adopting the variable internal focalization mode, each of the first three sections has its own fixed focal point and unique narrative style, adding much color, diversity and appeal to the literary style of *The Sound and the Fury*.

(3) **Multiple internal focalization**

Multiple internal focalization refers to the narrative mode where the same event is recounted by several characters, each from his/her own perspective. Since different people can view the same event quite differently, the author invites the reader to hear them all out and then compare and contrast these divergent points of view. The major difference between multiple internal focalization and variable internal focalization lies in the fact that in the former mode it is the same event that various characters

narrate, while in the latter different events are recounted by different characters. As mentioned in our earlier discussion of anachrony, involving multiple narrators to recount the same event is like asking various witnesses to provide evidence, which is why the multiple internal focalization mode is frequently used by detective stories or mystery novels to carry out the investigation of a certain case. One example of this is *An Investigation of a Missing Person* by the Chinese novelist Li Gongda, which relates the mysterious disappearance of a geological prospecting team member as perceived successively by his college sweetheart, the leader of the geological prospecting team, his colleagues, friends, wife, etc. Another example of multiple internal focalization is *In a Grove* by the Japanese novelist Ryuunosuke Akutaga. This short story is a juxtaposition of contradictory testimonies in the context of a criminal investigation provided successively by a woodcutter, a traveling Buddhist priest, a bountiful hunter, an infamous criminal, the wife of the victim, and the ghost of the victim as delivered through a spirit medium. These multiple narrators' interpretations of events in the grove differ in ways that are impossible to reconcile, making it impossible to know what actually happened and what the truth is, leaving the reader much to ponder. In *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* by the French novelist Pierre Choderlos de Laclos, yet another example of multiple internal focalization, the same event is recounted again and again, each time from the perspective of a different character. The multiple discourses from "multiple-dimensional" narrators create an incredibly realistic "multiple-dimensional" narrative style of this novel.

According to Genette (1980: 190), in epistolary novels the same event may be narrated by different correspondents form their own different perspectives, which also falls into the category of multiple internal focalization. In a sense, narrative with multiple internal focalization is like cubism paintings that depict the subject from a multitude of viewpoints so as to represent the subject in a greater context. Just like how Picasso creates a multi-dimensional space on a flat canvas which appeals more to our eyes than a uni-dimensional plane, novelists employs multiple internal focalization to make the reader know better about the multi-faceted aspects and complexity of the stories.

4.2.3 External Focalization

In this mode of external focalization, the narrator is restricted to be an "outside viewer" who only recounts what the characters see or hear as well as the characters' appearance, actions, and objective settings of the story without depicting their motives, intentions, thinking and feelings, nor will the narrator make any subjective comments. The narrator, like an "outsider", says less about what is going on in the story-world than the characters know. This type of purely objective narrating is what Lubbock refers to as the "dramatic mode," and what Todorov observes as "Narrator < Character." It is the result of modern readers' preference for objective narrating that leaves them enough room for personal reflections and independent thinking rather than omniscient narrating with too much authorial intrusion. Exter-

nal focalization has the following three different modes: the reporting mode, the dramatic mode, and the recording mode.

(1) **The reporting mode**

Used mostly in short stories, the reporting mode of external focalization simply reports to the reader what is going on in the story-world without making any authorial comment or giving any specific background introduction. A classic example is Hemingway's "The Killers," a story that begins with two men walking into a diner and discussing what they want to eat:

> "I'll tell you," Max said. "We're going to kill a Swede. Do you know a big Swede named Ole Anderson?"
>
> …
>
> "What are you going to kill Ole Anderson for? What did he ever do to you?"
>
> "He never had a chance to do anything to us. He never even seen us."
>
> "And he's only going to see us once," Al said from the kitchen …

In this purely objective scene, we learn from the conversation between characters that these two men were going to kill a Swede named Ole Anderson, but the reason why Ole was to be murdered remains unknown to the reader. When the two hit men left the diner, the owner of the diner sent an employee named Nick to go alerting Ole that two hit men were looking for him. When Ole was informed of this, although he knew pretty well the reason he was being hunted down, he did not explain a thing to Nick, but "looked at the wall and did not say anything." Restricting all observation to external manifestations, this short story simply let the characters perform right in front of us without ever telling us why someone would want Ole dead, or how Ole felt when he learned that he was going to be killed.

Authors of detective novels sometimes also employ partly the reporting mode in their stories to create a sense of mystery. This is exactly what Conan Doyle did in "The Adventure of the Stockbroker's Clerk." Shortly before a stockbroker's clerk named Hall Pycroft was due to start working for a prestigious firm in London, a man named Arthur Pinner offered him a better-paid job in his brother Henry's company, on condition that Pycroft did not send a letter of resignation to his would-be employers. Pycroft agreed to the deal and accepted the job offer, but soon he was concerned about the suspicious fact that the two Pinners might be the same man, so he sought help from the brilliant consulting detective Sherlock Holmes, who found out that the story of the brothers was a fabrication and that there was only one Pinner, who wanted to obtain an example of Pycroft's handwriting so that the fake Pycroft could steal a vast stock of valuable securities out of Mawsons, the company that hired Pycroft in the first place. In this intriguing tale with partial external focalization, suspense and curiosity arise from the fact that the narrator does not inform immediately the reader of all the information there is to know, thus successfully impressing the reader with a surprising yet satisfactory and memorable ending.

In Chinese gong'an fiction (i.e. "court case fiction"), a subgenre of Chinese crime fiction which began in the Song Dynasty (960–1279 AD), external focalization is

also employed to create a sense of mystery and suspense. For example, in *Judge Bao Solves a Case through a Ghost That Appeared Thrice* from Feng Menglong's *Stories to Caution the World* (*Jing Shi Tong Yan*), the author restricts the perspective of the narrator and deliberately hides some information from the reader so as to supply the story with the undertow of suspense and fear. The night when Big Chief Clerk Sun was murdered is reported with much misleading information supplied by the actual murderer. In this recount from the murderer's perspective, Big Chief Clerk Sun's wife was just an innocent witness of the crime, while the maid named Ying'er was fast asleep the entire night. However, when we take a closer look at this recount, we can find many planted clues pointing to Chief Clerk Sun's wife as the murderer. For example, she made sure that Ying'er had learned about Chief Clerk Sun's doomed death by asking her, "Did you hear Father say that a fortune-teller told him today that he was going to die at midnight tonight?" Both Chief Clerk Sun and Ying'er failed to stay awake that night, but Sun's wife had a sleepless night, maybe worrying about her husband's life, or perhaps busy plotting her husband's murder. When she heard that Chief Clerk Sun went out, she woke Ying'er up so that she could have a witness to chase after her husband with her. In order to make this murder scheme more deceptive, the storyteller switches between two restricted perspectives: either narrating events through the eyes of those who had been tricked by the murderer, or recounting with distorted information from the murderer's point of view, which is in fact an objective narrative made by the storyteller from outside of the story. In this external focalization mode, the story is narrated by someone who knows less about what actually happened than the murderer herself, even less than the maid. This restricted perspective achieves the intended effect of blinding and baffling the reader. For example, it was not until two matchmakers came with marriage proposals that the reader knew about the existence of Young Chief Clerk Sun, a pivotal character that Big Chief Clerk Sun's wife and the maid Ying'er should have known, yet was never ever mentioned. Although the external focalization mode turns this story into an enigmatic guessing game that is extremely intriguing, it does not give the reader an access to the murderer's heart to learn about her emotions, feelings, and hidden motive. The storyteller's portrayal of the poor victim and the simple-hearted maid is also quite vague and oversimplified. Although the storyteller has skillfully manipulated the narrative progression with a delay, he/she does not participate actively in the story, nor is he/she able to intervene in the story or the characterization.

(2) **The dramatic mode**

The basic narrative technique for dramatic mode of external focalization is dialogue. Like a play script, the dialogue enables the reader to sense the exchange of thoughts and feelings between characters, but does not provide additional explanation or authorial comment. Here is a dialogue between Granny Liu and the Lady Dowager from Chapter thirty-nine of *A Dream of Red Mansions* (*Hong Lou Meng*):

> "How old are you, venerable kinswoman?" asked the Lady Dowager.
>
> Granny Liu rose to answer, "Seventy-five."

> "So old, yet so hale and hearty! Why, you're older than I am by several years. If I live to your age, I doubt whether I shall be so spry."
>
> "We're born to put up with hardships, madam, and you to enjoy good fortune," replied Granny Liu with a smile. "If we were all like you, who'd do the farming?"
>
> "And your eyes and teeth, are they still good?"
>
> "I can't complain. But this year one of my back teeth on the left side has come loose."
>
> "I'm old and useless now," rejoined the Lady Dowager. "My sight's failing, I'm hard of hearing, and my memory's going. I can't even remember all our old relatives. When they call I don't see them for fear they'll laugh at me, I've become so helpless. All I can do is eat pap, sleep, or amuse myself for a while with these grandchildren when I'm bored."
>
> Granny Liu smiled.
>
> "That's your good fortune, madam. We couldn't manage it even if we wanted to."
>
> "Good fortune? I'm nothing but a useless old thing."
>
> Everyone laughed at that.
>
> "Just now Xifeng told me you've brought us a lot of pumpkins and vegetables," the lady Dowager went on. "I've asked to have them cooked at once. I've been longing for some freshly picked things of this kind. Those we buy outside aren't as good as yours, straight from the fields."
>
> "This is rough country fare but at least it's fresh," Granny Liu answered. "We'd rather eat meat and fish ourselves, only we can't afford it."
>
> (Cao 1999)

At first glance, this dialogue seems to be a purely objective record of the conversation between the two characters. When studied closely, however, this plain and undemonstrative dialogue is full of pointed remarks from both parties. The lady Dowager's self-deprecation is actually full of pride and self-importance, while Granny Liu's flattering remarks are in fact subtle sarcasm. In this manner, the author manages to pass judgment on these two characters without making any authorial comment.

(3) **The camera mode**

In the camera mode of external focalization, the narrator is like a camera or video recorder that simply films every scenario without elaborating or commenting on it. The difference between the camera mode and the reporting or dramatic mode is that there is hardly any trace of the narrator in the camera mode, which excludes any authorial manipulation of the narrative scenario. As stated by Christopher Isherwood in *Goodbye to Berlin*, "I am a camera with its shutter open, quite passive, recording, not thinking" (Isherwood 2012: 1). This "camera eye" writing style is frequently found in Nouveau Roman, but rarely applied in popular fiction.

Since the external focalization mode aims at highly objective and realistic representation of the story, the narrator of this mode is restricted to the external world of the characters such as their appearance, costume, facial expression, movement, and their talk, but is excluded from their inner world, even oblivious of the true identity of each and every character. Although this narrative mode enjoys the advantage of being more objective and realistic, the drastic reduction of narrative information can turn the narrative into a baffling puzzle. Excluding any authorial intrusion into the

narrative scenario or the mind of characters, the external focalization mode may create an unwelcome distance between the story and its reader, thus resulting in its rare application in popular fiction.

4.2.4 Shifting Focalization

In the previous sections, the narrative of Chinese and Western popular fiction is classified into zero focalization, internal focalization and external focalization. It must be noted that, in most works of Chinese or Western popular fiction, usually there is more than one focalization employed. In other words, there is often the shifting between various types of focalization which helps to move the story forward and reinforce the theme, especially in those novels that involve a multitude of events and characters. Yang Yi argues that Chinese literary narrative features an incorporate pattern that moves from a limited point of view to a panoramic, omniscient perspective, the process of which is implemented through the shifting of focalization (Yang 1997: 221). Although this viewpoint of Yang's is based on his observation of full-length zhanghui-style novels, it is also pertinent to the narrative structure of Chinese popular fiction in a general sense.

For instance, in Chapter three of *A Dream of Red Mansions* (*Hong Lou Meng*), Daiyu arrived at the Rong Mansion and was introduced to several dozens of characters. To spare the reader of a boring and tedious description of all those characters from the fixed perspective of Daiyu, the novelist constantly shifts the narrative perspective between Daiyu and the third-person narrator. Firstly the novelist depicts how Daiyu walked into the Rong Mansion and how she was greeted by a swarm of maids from the perspective of the narrator himself, followed by the description of how Daiyu entered her grandmother's chamber and both of them burst out sobbing. Then the narrative perspective is shifted to that of Daiyu's:

> And presently the three young ladies appeared, escorted by three nurses and five or six maids.
>
> The first was somewhat plump and of medium height. Her cheeks were the texture of newly ripened lichees, her nose as sleek as goose fat. Gentle and demure, she looked very approachable.
>
> The second had sloping shoulders and a slender waist. She was tall and slim, with an oval face, well-defined eyebrows and lovely dancing eyes. She seemed elegant and quick-witted with an air of distinction. To look at her was to forget everything vulgar.
>
> The third was not yet fully grown and still had the face of a child.
>
> All three were dressed in similar tunics and skirts with the same bracelets and head ornaments.
>
> (Cao 1999)

Zhi Yanzhai, a critic of *A Dream of Red Mansions* in the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911), makes a comment on the "three young ladies appeared" section that goes, "these three are viewed from Daiyu's eyes," which indicates the critic's acknowledgment of the shifting perspective. The narrative then shifts back to the third-person narrator's perspective:

> Daiyu hastily rose to greet these cousins … All present had been struck by Daiyu's good breeding. For in spite of her tender years and evident delicate health, she had an air of natural distinction. Observing how frail she looked they asked what medicine or treatment she had been having.
>
> (Cao 1999)

Following this passage is a conversation concerning Daiyu's health, which is also narrated from the third-person narrator's perspective. Then the novelist uses Daiyu's perspective to describe the grand entrance of Wang Xifeng. Daiyu noticed that while a roomful of people remained so respectful and solemn in the Lady Dowager's presence, Xifeng's laughter rang out even before her arrival. She also saw how richly and resplendently Xifeng was dressed, suggesting this lady's exalted position in the family. Then the narrative resumes to the third-person narrator's perspective:

> Xifeng took her hand and carefully inspected her from head to foot, then led her back to her seat by the lady Dowager.
>
> "Well," she cried with a laugh, "this is the first time I've set eyes on such a ravishing beauty. Her whole air is so distinguished! She doesn't take after her father, son-in-law of our Old Ancestress, but looks more like a Jia. No wonder our Old Ancestress couldn't put you out of her mind and was forever talking or thinking about you."
>
> (Cao 1999)

Henceforward third-person the narrator's perspective is used to recount the conversations between Daiyu and the others. When Daiyu went to see her two uncles with the company of Lady Xing and Lady Wang, the narrative again shifts between Daiyu's perspective and the narrator's perspective, presenting a most detailed description of what Daiyu observed carefully along her way. When Daiyu finally arrived at Lady Wang's chamber, she and Baoyu had their first encounter. A description of Baoyu from Daiyu's perspective is then followed by a description of Daiyu from Baoyu's perspective:

> Of course, Baoyu had seen this new cousin earlier on and guessed that she was the daughter of his Aunt Lin … Her dusky arched eyebrows were knitted and yet not frowning, her speaking eyes held both merriment and sorrow; her very frailty had charm. Her eyes sparkled with tears, her breath was soft and faint. In repose she was like a lovely flower mirrored in the water; in motion, a pliant willow swaying in the wind. She looked more sensitive than Bi Gan, more delicate than Xi Shi.
>
> "I've met this cousin before," he declared at the end of his scrutiny.
>
> (Cao 1999)

This profiling of Baoyu involves both a shift of perspective and a change of focalization. Observed from Baoyu's eyes, this depiction of Daiyu also reveals Baoyu's feelings and attitude towards Daiyu. Constantly shifting between various points of view, the narration of Baoyu and Daiyu's first encounter is skillfully structured and vividly delivered, with a clever hint of their affinity with each other in their previous life, which is the reason why they both felt that they had met each other before. In this chapter about Daiyu's meeting with numerous kith and kin at the Rong Mansion, Cao Xueqin employs a constantly shifting perspective to render a panoramic and dynamic narrative, thus bringing about vibrant and vivid characterization.

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Chapter 5
Court Case Fiction and Detective Fiction

One of the fundamental themes of the world's literature is crime and punishment. The Chinese traditional "court case fiction" (gong'an fiction) and detective fiction originating from the West largely bear such a theme, often with such a basic structure of "committing crime, investigating and analyzing the case, trial, and conviction." Chinese court case fiction and Western detective fiction have much in common in many aspects, but due to different geographical, social and cultural backgrounds, they also differ greatly in many ways. Thus a comparative study of them may contribute to our better understanding of the typical features of the Chinese and Western crime fiction.

5.1 Similarities and Differences Between Chinese and Western Crime Fiction

Along with the emergence of private ownership and the concept about it, there inevitably appeared various criminal behaviors such as theft, robbery, rape, murder, etc. State apparatus thereupon came into being to impose control over the society, and some judicial countermeasures appeared accordingly such as detection, trial, penalty and so on. Both Chinese "court case fiction" and Western "detective fiction" focus on the same topic of revealing the process of committing a crime and settling a lawsuit, but they actually belong to two different types of fiction due to their different social and cultural backgrounds in which they originated. In the following part, we will make a comparative study of the similarities and differences between these two types of fiction.

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5.1.1 Law-Executor: Official Judge Versus Private Detective

At all times and in all the countries, where there are criminal acts, there must be law-executors who settle lawsuits. Although both Chinese "court case fiction" and Western "detective fiction" aim at describing the process of settling a lawsuit and reaching conviction, the law-executors they depict are two subjects with totally different identities. Chinese "court case fiction" is characterized by "feudal officials settling a lawsuit," that is, it is feudal officials in the government bureaucracy who assume the role of law-executors. Take Judge Bao (999–1062 AD, named Bao Zheng or Bao Longtu[1]), the most famous figure in Chinese "court case fiction" as an example. During the reign of Emperor Ren (Zhao Zhen [1010–1063 AD]) in the Northern Song Dynasty (960–1127 AD), he got the emperor's trust and appreciation, and had the privilege of executing a criminal on the spot without prior approval from the emperor, as he had the "swords of authority" bestowed by the emperor. He is knowns as an impartial, incorruptible and clean "iron-faced" judge who always endeavored to weed out the wicked and pacify the good, and rectify the unjust charges. As a law-executor in the government bureaucracy, he actually represented the interests of the feudal state. Although he was often in defiance of the imperial family, in essence he served the feudal dynasty for the sake of maintaining the imperial rule and order—actually, the "swords of authority" bestowed by the emperor is a symbol of the power of feudal state. Fiction of this type essentially sings the praises of the impartial and incorruptible judges for their unflinching loyalty to the emperor and great efforts to help to consolidate the rule of feudal state. Such a theme of eulogizing the impartial and incorruptible judges reflects a salient thematic characteristic of Chinese "court case fiction", i.e. "feudal officials settling a lawsuit."

In contrast to Chinese "court case fiction," what Western "detective fiction" centers around and extols is not "the impartial and incorruptible judge" on behalf of the interests of government bureaucracy of the ruling class, but the private detective coming from the folks, while those official police officers often become an easy target for satire instead. Private detectives are not judicial personnel governed by national legal institutions, so they could independently undertake and solve a case for anyone who turns to them for help. Therefore their services are of commercial nature. For example, fictional detective Sherlock Holmes in *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* acts independently and succeeds in solving various cases. He always appears at the request of the police due to their official incompetence in solving a case. In almost every case, Sherlock Holmes will give the police a lesson on detective techniques at the scene of the crime, and quite often he treats the official police with sarcasm and ridicule, questioning them and gloatingly pointing out their errors and loopholes in their investigation process. In short, in Western detective fiction the official police are an easy target for satire, because they are too arrogant and rude on the one hand, and on the other hand they are powerless and helpless at solving the complicated

[1]Bao Zheng is also named "Bao Longtu" as he was once a grand academician of the Longtu Court.—Translator's note.

cases; while private detectives are to be eulogized because they are intelligent and knowledgeable, and no matter how complicated the cases they are handling are, they can always reveal the whole truth and clear the whole case in the end. In brief, the contrast between characters representing "government bureaucracy" and "non-governmental folks," between "official" and "private" purposes of settling a lawsuit, and between different keynote of "praising the official judge" and "satirizing official poice"—all these constitute the primary differences between Chinese "court case fiction" and Western "detective fiction."

5.1.2 Detective Method: Joint Judgment by Man and Deities Versus Settling Lawsuits by Human Intelligence

Chinese feudal officials mostly followed such procedures when settling a lawsuit: presenting the indictment plaint, arresting the accused, proclaiming the defendant to appear in court, followed by the magistrate banging his gavel and snapping "tell the truth quickly." If the defendant confesses and signs, the trial is over; if not, the defendant will be put to torture, and he will confess and sign, and then the case is over. The trial in ancient China was once mocked as "plank plus stick"—extracting confessions by torture. Though in some cases investigation was indeed made to aid the solution of a case, such as officials making an investigative trip in disguise and so on, yet it merely involves some perceptual knowledge obtained from eyes, ears, nose, etc., and is lacking in in-depth rational analysis, thus the process of settling a lawsuit is highly subjective, which may easily result in misjudged cases. What's more, the aid of deities and spirits in settling a lawsuit (e.g. inviting a celestial being to descend on the earth to give some advice, asking the ghost to lead the way for solving a case) endows the case-solving process with feudal superstitious coloring. Hence in Chinese court case fiction, lawsuits are settled based on the low-level joint judgment made by man and deities. Judge Bao, the most renowned image in Chinese court case fiction, is a good case in point. As a grand academician of the Longtu Court, he is said to be capable of "settling a lawsuit in this world during the day as well as a lawsuit in the underworld at night," thus he presents a unique artistic image, a mixture of man and deity. For example, in *An Anthology of Detective Stories* (*Baijia Gong'an*) which recounts Judge Bao's stories of settling various lawsuits, there are 27 non-physical bizarre stories, and 27 realistic case stories with deities' supernatural powers involved, a total of 54, which account for 54% of the all the stories of the book. In *The Court Case Stories of Bao Longtu* (*Longtu Gong'an*), 34 stories are about solving cases with the aid of superstitious techniques by deities and ghosts, among which either the deity manifests itself by giving some guides, or the ghost appears in the dream to drop some hints, or the spirit helps to lead the way for the solving of a case. Of course, the book also contains the stories of settling lawsuits by means of human intelligence, among which Judge Bao either disguises himself to

investigate the case, or feigns illness to arrest criminals, or makes use of wise fraud, etc. But even these stories still pale in comparison with the rational and scientific solving of cases in Western detective fiction.

Compared with Chinese court case fiction, the case-solving process in Western detective fiction is more complicated because it highlights the means of "investigating" and "detecting." Even without the help of supernatural powers of deities and ghosts, there is no lack of a sense of mystery in Western detective fiction. With unexpected but often reasonable plot, the stories appear to be mysterious rather than grotesque and absurd. Settling lawsuits in Western detective fiction is based on people's wisdom and scientific method, and detectives tend to have amazing insight, the ability to conduct accurate analysis and judgment of the things observed, and a relatively wide range of scientific knowledge as well. Sherlock Holmes in Conan Doyle's novella *A Study in Scarlet* is a good case in point. His succinct narrative in his essay "The Book of Life" constitutes the core of these methods of detection and case-solving. As Watson writes, "The writer claimed by a momentary expression, a twitch of a muscle or a glance of an eye, to fathom a man's inmost thoughts." Then he quotes from Holmes as follows, "From a drop of water, a logician could infer the possibility of an Atlantic or a Niagara without having seen or heard of one or the other. So all life is a great chain, the nature of which is known whenever we are shown a single link of it … Before turning to those moral and mental aspects of the matter which present the greatest difficulties, let the enquirer begin by mastering more elementary problems. Let him, on meeting a fellow-mortal … By a man's finger nails, by his coat-sleeve, by his boot, by his trouser knees, by the callosities of his forefinger and thumb, by his expression, by his shirt cuffs—by each of these things a man's calling is plainly revealed."

In order to answer Watson's sarcastic dissenting comments, the detective demonstrated immediately on the spot by guessing that he came from Afghanistan, which leaves Watson dumbstruck with surprise. Holmes says: "The train of reasoning ran, 'Here is a gentleman of a medical type, but with the air of a military man. Clearly an army doctor, then. He has just come from the tropics, for his face is dark, and that is not the natural tint of his skin, for his wrists are fair. He has undergone hardship and sickness, as his haggard face says clearly. His left arm has been injured. He holds it in a stiff and unnatural manner. Where in the tropics could an English army doctor have seen much hardship and got his arm wounded? Clearly in Afghanistan.'"

Holmes' close observation of people, exact deductive reasoning and accurate conclusion is indeed admirable. It is actually true of all the detectives in Western detective fiction, for example, detective Dupin under the pen of Edgar Allan Poe, and Father Brown under the pen of Gilbert Keith Chesterton—they all radiate human wisdom. Therefore, "Detectives in detective fiction naturally all have precise powers of observation, so when we read more and become immersed in it, we'll be naturally influenced and our powers of observation may improve" (Cheng 1933).

5.1.3 Plot: Ingenuity Versus Thrill

Chinese court case fiction is profoundly related to legend. For example, in the story "A Monk's Trick with a Letter" from *Storytelling Scripts of Qingpingshan Hall* (*Qingpingshan Tang Hua*) by Hong Pian, a writer in the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), the author indicates clearly after the title the nature of the storytelling script that it is a "court case legend." Hence Chinese "court case story" usually has "legendary" nature and therefore is also called "court case legend." The legendary nature of court case fiction lies not only in the novelty of content and characters, but more importantly the plot. Court case fiction usually attempts to captivate the readers with the ingenious arrangement of the plot so as to satisfy their curiosity and aesthetic needs. As Hu Ke says, "The audience and readers often enter the realm of art with a curious mood in the hope of seeing legendary characters, unusual events and wondrous atmosphere" (Hu 1979: 167). Therefore, in order to meet readers' demand, the plot of court case fiction is often made ingenious and dramatic, and full of twists and turns. For example, in "*A Monk's Trick with a Letter*," the story starts with the appearance of a mysterious character with "thick eyebrows, big eyes, an upturned nose and a slightly wide mouth" in a small teahouse at the Zaoshuo Lane. This mysterious character asked the man who sold snacks to send a letter and two gifts to Huangfu Song's wife, which aroused his suspicion about their relation. In a fit of anger, Huangfu Song sent his wife to the local authorities, but his wife had nothing to confess, so he had to divorce his wife. Feeling wronged, his wife was about to drown herself, just at that time, she met an old woman who claimed to be her aunt. The old woman then took her home and coaxed her into marrying that mysterious man with "thick eyebrows, big eyes, an upturned nose and a slightly wide mouth." On the second day of the first Chinese lunar month of that year, the new couple went to the Daxiangguo Temple to burn incense, and came across her ex-husband. The mysterious man, finding the woman still loved her ex-husband, told the whole story to her about how he designed a plot to marry her and the fact that he used to be a monk, in order to express his love for her. Feeling cheated and so fiercely indignant, the woman quarreled violently with him, vowing she would take him to court. At this, the monk became so furious that he strangled her in an attempt to kill her. While the woman was struggling, her ex-husband came to her help. He burst the door open, caught the monk and sent him to the local authorities. Finally, the monk was executed and the couple were reunited. The story is both queer and coincidental, but at the same time reasonable and convincing. For another example, in the story "Wrongful Execution of Cui Ning" from *Stories to Awaken the World* (*Xing Shi Heng Yan*) by Feng Menglong, Liu Gui got drunk and told his wife that the money he took back from his father-in-law was what he earned from selling her to another man, which is actually a mere joke, but his wife simply took his words and ran away that very night, which is a sheer misunderstanding. By coincidence, Liu Gui was murdered that night and the money was stolen. On her way back to her parental home, Liu Gui's wife happened to meet Cui Ning, and the money Cui Ning got from selling the silk was precisely the same as what Liu Gui brought home, which is another sheer coincidence. As a result, Cui

Ning was accused of abducting other's wife and murdering Liu Gui for his money, and Chen Gui's wife was accused of colluding with Cui Ning and murdering her husband, so both were wrongfully executed. The story is endowed with a legendary and tragic color owing to the author's employment of incidental misunderstanding and coincidence. In brief, in these court case stories, the twists and turns of plot and legendary characters enhance the appeal of the works and maximally satisfy readers' curiosity.

With regard to Western detective fiction, as Sun Jiafu notes, "This kind of fiction is mostly about the deceitful, adventurous, investigative and case-solving activities of professional police officers and private detectives … It is full of scenes of murder, theft and chase, with thrilling and weird storylines …" (Sun 1983: 39). *Chinese Encyclopedic Dictionary* (*Cihai*) also defines detective fiction as fiction which "depicts their (detectives') scheme and adventure, with bizarre and intricate plots." It is true that detective fiction is characterized by adventurous contents and thrilling plotlines, as exemplified by Conan Doyle's detective novels, which are full of thrill and terror, and fatal danger that threatens the protagonist's life at any moment. For example, in "The Adventure of the Speckled Band," Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson waited for the appearance of a venomous snake in Miss Stoner's room, and lashed the snake violently with a stick in darkness. In "The Final Problem," Holmes' open and risky struggle with Professor James Moriarty is vividly depicted, during which he was almost killed by the Professor, a "criminal mastermind." All these extremely dangerous and thrilling stories greatly enhance the appeal of Conan Doyle's novels, and readers watch with great interest the unlocking of mysterious and nightmarish crime mystery, in the feeling of terror and tension longing for Sherlock Holmes' triumph over criminals and fair punishment for them.

It is generally agreed that detective novels should create an atmosphere of tension and suspense from the outset. For example, a story entitled "The Yellow House" depicts at the beginning a yellow house which people went in one by one but no one was out. Another story entitled "The Mysterious Card" describes at the beginning a woman who showed a business card written in foreign language she got to a hotel owner, but the hotel owner backed away in fear. Then the woman asked another diner to translate it, and he was also scared away immediately. Later she took the business card to another hotel, and the hotel owner also refused her request to check in. Such beginnings create a thrilling tension from the outset, and therefore have strong appeal for the readers.

The primary reason why detective fiction appeals to readers lies in the "secret" of the plot that runs throughout the whole story. People are born with strong curiosity, and so they have an overwhelming desire to uncover the secret in agitation, and long to see through everything incomprehensible and mysterious they encounter. The greater or more dangerous or more important the secret is, the stronger the desire to uncover it will be. What can be found in detective fiction is usually the secret of murder, because life is of the uttermost importance to people. Therefore, what appeals to readers most is the mysterious and thrilling plot conflicts and tense atmosphere resulting from the descriptions of the murder and the process of tracking the life-threatening murderer.

5.1.4 Narrative Point of View: Omniscient Point of View Versus Single Point of View

Point of view of fiction refers to the angle of vision of the narrative and description in the fiction, namely, from which the story is narrated and told. Point of view of fiction falls into three types: single point of view (first-person point of view), omniscient point of view (third-person point of view), and directional point of view (second-person point of view). In omniscient point of view, the author, who assumes the role of an "authority," plays the "omniscient or all-knowing" role, who appears in the work in the third-person "he/she." The author makes the narrator know everything about what has happened, what is happening and what will happen, and the past, present and future of the characters, their appearances, actions and mental activities, the beginning, development and ending of the events in the work. In fact, the author and the narrator in the work become one. While in single point of view, the story is unfolded from a single angle, and the author claims to be "I" or lets one character in the work do so. In either case, this "I" is a character in the work, who is both an observer of the life events and the narrator of the novel. The entire content of the work is seen, heard and narrated from the perspective of this "I." Directional point of view (second-person point of view) is actually the writer's narrative of the story directed at characters, which is rarely used in fiction. Based on the theory of narrative perspective mentioned above, we can see the difference between Chinese court case fiction and Western detective fiction, i.e. Chinese court case fiction mainly adopts omniscient point of view, while Western detective fiction usually employs single point of view.

Chinese court case fiction is closely related to the art of "storytelling" (shuohua) among the folks—to be more exact, it used to be one kind of "storytelling" among the common people. According to the records of Nai Deweng, a hermit in the Southern Song Dynasty (1127–1279), storytelling falls into four categories, among which fiction, also called yinzi'er, mostly centers around heroes taking up the cudgels against an injustice or people rising to power and wealth. It involves such thematic types as love stories, ghost stories, legends, court case stories, etc. "Storytelling" was often done in the third-person point of view, i.e. omniscient point of view. By adopting such a point of view, the author does not intervene in novels by showing up directly, but stays behind the scenes to show that he is "everywhere." This is so whether in court case fiction of storytelling scripts in early Song and Yuan Dynasties, or court case fiction of imitative storytelling scripts in the middle of the Ming Dynasty, such as Feng Menglong's "*San Yan*" and Ling Mengchu's "*Er Pai*," or full-length court case novels such as *The Court Case Stories of Bao Longtu* (*Longtu Gong'an*), or chivalric court case novels such as *The Court Case Stories of Judge Shi* (*Shi Gong'an*) and *The Court Case Stories of Judge Peng* (*Peng Gong'an*) in the Qing Dynasty. The author who adopts the third person point of view knows everything about the causes and results of an event, its development, the characters and their relationships, psychology and privacy, as well as all the secrets in the whole story that cannot be uncovered at a certain moment. For example, at the beginning of the

vernacular court case fiction, there is often a section called "ruhua" (introductory story or verse before the main story), in the form of verse, or of a passage combining verse and prose, or even of a complete story. The major purpose of this section is to comment on the main story in advance, or foretell the end of the story, or point out the moral of the story. In the process of the narrative, the narrator sometimes inserts comments in the form of poetry, prose, explanation, or moral evaluation, which may arouse questions in readers' mind and strengthen the suspense. Then at the end of the storytelling there will be an ending, usually in the form of a poem, which acts as the narrator's final comments. In this way, the author, in terms of the needs of the overall artistic conception, sometimes allows the narrator to step forward from behind the scenes, but this does not change the nature of the third-person point of view of the work. As the third-person "he," the objective existence of "he" in real life is reflected in the author's mind, and melts into his thoughts and feelings and subjective consciousness. Such a "he" fused with the author's attitudes and opinions, evaluation and judgment is indeed an artistic "he." Omniscient point of view has the advantage that the author can give full play to his imagination, and fully demonstrate broad picture of life, which can cover past, present and future. It can also cover the artistic or thematic realm that characters of any other work cannot touch upon.

By contrast, Western detective fiction usually employs both omniscient point of view and single point of view, with the latter point of view mostly adopted, because detective fiction has something to do with biographies and memoirs (e.g. Conan Doyle once compiled his Sherlock Holmes stories into books, and one of them is entitled *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*.), and so will attempt to achieve the effect of "truth." Single point of view usually shows everything that is described in the novel from the angle of the first-person "I," who emerges in two ways: (1) the author directly intervenes and appears in the work to express the author's "self"; (2) the author stays behind the scenes, and chooses to lead the reader and move the story along from one character's point of view, vision and angle. For example, the anonymous assistant in *The Adventures of Dubin* and Watson in *The Adventures of Sherlock Holm*es are characters the writers choose to serve as point of view, vision and angle, and they are the "I" in the works. The advantage of first-person point of view lies in that the first-person "I" is the observer and participant of life events, who observes with his vision, narrates in his tone, and recount the story based on his personal experience so as to provide a lively and vivid description. In this way, readers may feel they are present on the scene, experiencing the whole incident and seeing the characters themselves, which is impressive, real and familiar.

5.2 A Comparison Between *Huo Sang's Detective Stories* and *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*

Huo Sang's Detective Stories (*Huo Sang Tan'an*) is the representative work of Cheng Xiaoqing (1893–1976), a pioneer of Chinese detective fiction, and it is also one of the

most influential series of detective stories in China. Cheng Xiaoqing's first detective story *Figure under the Light* (*Dengguang Renying*) with Huo Sang as the protagonist was published in 1914. Owing to its novelty, it became very popular and was well received by readers. After this big hit, Cheng Xiaoqing went on to write more than 60 detective stories with Huo Sang investigating cases as the subject matter, which were compiled into *Huo Sang's Detective Stories* and published by the World Publishing House in 1941, and has been very popular among readers.

The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes is the work of the British writer Conan Doyle (1859–1930). A masterpiece of Western detective novel, it is a bestseller all over the world and is still well received and much enjoyed by people the world over until now.

Huo Sang's Detective Stories is the forerunner of Chinese detective fiction, while *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* is a masterpiece of Western detective fiction, so how are the two works related to each other? A good understanding of this question will help us to know better how Chinese detective fiction emerged and developed by drawing on Western detective fiction.

5.2.1 *Huo Sang's Detective Stories:* Drawing on *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*

As a pioneer in spreading Western detective stories, Cheng Xiaoqing devoted himself to the translation of Western detective novels at a very early time. Fan Yanqiao once commented on Cheng Xiaoqing's detective novels, saying that Cheng Xiaoqing "imitates Conan Doyle and characterizes 'the Chinese Sherlock Holmes'—Huo Sang … who is a purely 'domestic' detective" (Fan 1984: 332, 334). If we make a careful comparison between Cheng Xiaoqing's *Huo Sang's Detective Stories* and Conan Doyle's *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, we can see that Cheng Xiaoqing draws on Conan Doyle's *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* in many aspects, which will be discussed as follows.

5.2.1.1 Similarity in Main Characters

Similarity in the Composition of Characters

In *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, Holmes and Watson are the two main characters throughout the book, who become partners in the process of solving cases, and Watson appears in the novel as the capable assistant of Holmes, and participates in and assists him in case-solving work. In *Huo Sang's Detective Stories*, Huo Sang and Bao Lang are actually the Chinese version of Holmes and Watson, because they are similar both in partnership and in their life experiences. For example, Holmes remains single all his life, and Watson gets married later; Huo Sang also remains

single, and Bao Lang gets married later. Holmes sometimes uses morphine, which often makes Watson feel deeply regretful; Huo Sang is a heavy smoker, and Bao Lang often see his face in silent meditation in the smoke. Holmes plays the violin in his spare time, and so does Huo Sang when he is happy or depressed. The tacit cooperation between Huo Sang and Bao Lang is indeed borrowed from the cooperative pattern of Holmes and Watson.

Similarity in Characters' Personalities

Holmes is an unusually prominent figure: a brave, smart, composed and helpful man who is full of sense of justice and compassion. A man of great insight, he can analyze things profoundly and unlock a variety of incredible "mysteries," and thus he is able to solve all kinds of complex cases. Huo Sang is similar to Holmes in that he is always ready to stand out for justice, sympathizes with the weak, and assists people in distress. Besides, he is smart and alert, good at memorizing and thinking, and is knowledgeable and talented. In particular, he has keen observation and accurate judgment. As written in the book, Huo Sang is "extremely vigilant, good at memorizing and pondering … fond of learning … specializing in science, including mathematics, physics, biology, chemistry, etc., and is also interested in philosophy, law, economy, and experimental psychology, abnormal psychology in particular; as well as in fine arts, medicine, and Chinese traditional martial art, etc." All in all, Huo Sang, just as Holmes, is a very outstanding figure.

Besides detective work, the two characters also make some studies on mathematics, physics, chemistry, criminal psychology of social science, philosophy, economy and law. In "A Study in Scarlet," Conan Doyle says through Watson's mouth: "He is … an enthusiast in some branches of science …. He appears to have a passion for definite and exact knowledge." In the story "Huo Sang's Childhood," Cheng Xiaoqing tells us that since childhood, Huo Sang has learned "knowledge, old and new … and he concentrates on the study of philosophy, psychology, chemistry, physics, and the like. He perseveres with his study until he can thoroughly understand what he is learning." At the same time, he believes that a person's knowledge, experience and sense of responsibility are three essential elements to success, among which he puts scientific knowledge first. In the story "The Crimson Palm," he illustrates the identification method of fluid stain on a knife: we can drop a kind of special fluid on the stain. If the stain is juice, it will turn green after five minutes; if the stain is blood, it will not change color, which reflects his rich scientific knowledge.

Holmes' assistant Watson is a simple-minded man, and so is Huo Sang's assistant Bao Lang, who usually has unrealistic views, and often leads the case astray. During Huo Sang's investigation, Bao Lang's limited wisdom seldom has its place. Although Bao Lang occasionally participates in the discussions of case-solvings, on most occasions Huo Sang's opinions prevail, as Bao Lang's judgment is often inaccurate. Therefore, Bao Lang actually appears as a supporting role whose position is almost the same as that of the simple-minded police officers such as Wang Yinlin in the story "The Innocent Murderer" or Ni Jinshou in the story "After the Dance." It's often the

case that, when Bao Lang is still kept in the dark, Huo Sang has already found the key to solving cases. Therefore, just as Watson in *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, Bao Lang acts only as a supporting role before readers. In addition, local detectives in *Huo Sang's Detective Stories* are almost as arrogant, incompetent, superficial, self-righteous, subjective and arbitrary as those police officers in *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*.

Similarity in Characterization through the Technique of Contrast

In *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, in order to highlight Sherlock Holmes' extraordinary and outstanding talents, the author deliberately arranges a simple-minded Watson as a foil. During the process of solving cases, Watson often makes unrealistic analyses and wrong judgment, while Holmes tends to refute his judgment timely, and draws a conclusion which eventually proves to be correct, so Watson constantly feels surprised and gasps with admiration while working with such a genius. The use of the technique of contrast achieves the artistic effect of providing a foil to set off the main character. In *Huo Sang's Detective Stories*, Bao Lang also serves as a supporting character. In addition, both police officers and official detectives in *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* and *Huo Sang's Detective Stories* are usually self-righteous, and always jump at conclusion, thus leading the judgment of cases astray, and finally only Holmes and Huo Sang can successfully solve cases, which also highlights their remarkable abilities.

In *Huo Sang's Detective Stories*, Bao Lang, the assistant, is not a man who enjoys ease and leisure, but a man who loves detective work and devotes himself to it. He is enterprising, hates injustice like poison, and always takes the initiative in spite of his position as an assistant. He racks his brains for a variety of mysterious cases, and even risks his life, and uses his limited reasoning ability in an effort to solve all the problems for Huo Sang. He is hearty and enthusiastic, frank and outspoken, but is often kept in the dark. Every time when Huo Sang has been quite sure about case-solving, and the deployment plan has been in place, Bao Lang still has no idea about what is happening, so he keeps complaining about Huo Sang's "keeping him in suspense." During his spare time, he is engaged in recording all sorts of weird things and writing them into novels. In short, Bao Lang can be regarded as a lovely, honest and courageous intellectual, a good detective who impresses the reader deeply. For the author Cheng Xiaoqing, Bao Lang is an indispensable character. If Huo Sang is the leading character, then this assistant becomes a character who functions as a tool in the work. When the author arranges a trap to lead the reader into a "maze," in most cases, Bao Lang acts as a "guide" who leads the reader into that "maze," while it is the leading character Huo Sang who makes the reader suddenly see the light. In addition, this assistant also plays another role in the work, i.e. being the one whom Huo Sang "keeps in suspense." Actually the author attempts to create suspense through the doubts Bao Lang raises, while Huo Sang would refuse to give a straight answer. Once Huo Sang leads the reader out of the "maze," he needs Bao Lang to give "annotations" for the reader. Therefore, Bao Lang is not only a tool of

Huo Sang, but also a tool of Cheng Xiaoqing, who even requires him to be a tool of the reader. All this shows that Bao Lang is of great importance in the work.

5.2.1.2 Similarity in Narrative Perspective

In the essay "Different Aspects of Detective Novels," Cheng Xiaoqing makes a discussion on the "use of self-narrative" in detective novels. He observes that "narrative pattern of detective novels can be classified into two types: biographic and autobiographic. In biographic novels the author narrates the facts from the third-person point of view using purely objective method; while the author in autobiographic novels becomes a member of the characters in the novel, and the recorder also experiences personally and participates in the investigation and puts forward views about the case, so the facts he describes are more realistic, familiar and interesting … Most of the Western detective novels adopt self-narrative pattern, such as Watson in *The Adventures of Sherlock Holm*es and the anonymous assistant in *The Adventures of Dubin*. The same is also true of the detective novels in China. That is why my work *Huo Sang's Detective Stories* also makes use of the character Bao Lang (to make narrative from his first person perspective)" (Cheng 1984).

Therefore, in *Huo Sang's Detective Stories*, Cheng Xiaoqing adopts first-person point of view, that is, narrates the story from Bao Lang, the first-person narrator "I," which actually borrows from Sherlock Holmes' narrative perspective by telling the story from Watson, the first-person narrator "I." Let's look at the beginning of the story "The Degenerate Woman" in *Huo Sang's Detective Stories*:

> This is a bizarre and tragic case, for which I cannot help sighing deeply. This case took place many years ago, still at the beginning of Huo Sang's detective career. It was a cold winter — as what I kept in my diary, the date is December 9, a Saturday morning.

By using the first-peron narrative perspective, the above beginning passage creates a more real and familiar atmosphere.

5.2.1.3 Similarity in Detailed Descriptions

There are often such descriptions in *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*: when someone comes to visit Holmes, Holmes can immediately deduce where he comes from, which train he takes, what his job is, whether it is rainy or sunny outside, whether he slept or not last night and so on from his time of arrival, clothes, shoes, language and manners, movements and gestures, such as Holmes's deduction about Watson when they first met.

In *Huo Sang's Detective Stories*, we can also find similar descriptions, such as Huo Sang's deduction about the visitor in "The Degenerate Woman · Hell on Earth." Huo Sang, first of all, deduced from the woman's voice, appearance, figure and state of walking that she came from the north; then he deduced from her career that the ship she took is Tycoon No. 1 from Yingkou; and he deduced from her appearance and

figure that she had an unusual life experience. Secondly, when the person involved in a case describes what happened, Holmes sometimes lets Watson sit beside to listen, sometimes lets him eavesdrop in the next door. This is also true of Huo Sang's "arrangement" for Bao Lang. Moreover, Holmes likes playing the violin in his spare time, while Huo Sang likes art as well; Holmes has the habit of taking cocaine and smoking cigarettes, while Huo Sang also smokes. From these similar details, we can clearly see Cheng Xiaoqing's imitation of *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* in his *Huo Sang's Detective Stories*. In *Huo Sang's Detective Stories*, it is often the victim who comes to report the case, which is also true in *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, and the stereotyped descriptions are: Holmes deduces from the visitor's clothes, shoes, facial expressions, talks and actions where his native place is, where he comes from, and his career and experience, etc. We can also find similar descriptions in *Huo Sang's Detective Stories*, which highlight Huo Sang's amazing predictive ability and remarkable judgment. For example, in "After the Dance," Huo Sang told from a cigarette holder found at the crime scene that its master used it very carefully, because it was brightly polished, so he deduced that "this man is very cautious, and leads an economical life. Look, the residual tail of the cigarette has already burned into the rims." In "The Fire of Youth," Huo Sang deduced from the sound of the visitor's high-heeled shoes that the guest was a fashionable young lady; and based on the detail that when the young lady came to report the case early in the morning, she asked Mrs. Su whether the master was at home instead of whether he had got up, Huo Sang deduced that the visitor thought nothing about "sleeping" on her mind, as she assumed it was already broad day, thus based on her question, Huo Sang deduced that this young woman stayed up all night.

It is exactly because there are so many similarities in the main characters, narrative perspective and detailed descriptions and so on between *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* and *Huo Sang's Detective Stories* that Cheng Xiaoqing is called "Conan Doyle in China," and his work *Huo Sang's Detective Stories* is known as "*The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* of the Orient."

Conan Doyle is one of the forefathers of detective novels in the world, and his *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* is a masterpiece of the kind, whose leading character Sherlock Holmes is a world-renowned protagonist. Cheng Xiaoqing and his work *Huo Sang's Detective Stories*, by contrast, seems to be less influential and has its deficiencies in some aspects, such as the lack of the mysterious color and atmosphere of terror characteristic of detective novels as exemplified by *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, the lack of Conan Doyle's mastery of the arrangement and handling of multiple clues, the lack of ability to handle a few false clues. Besides, it is not as profound as *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* in terms of the logical reasoning of the cases, and some details are not handled with careful consideration. Although it is stylistically smooth and clear, it lacks some depth and lingering aftertaste. All these result in the limited influence of Cheng Xiaoqing's detective novels in the world.

5.2.2 Cheng Xiaoqing's Innovation in *Huo Sang's Detective Stories*

While drawing on experience of Western detective novels such as *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* and others, Cheng Xiaoqing integrates Chinese social and cultural background, and makes new practical and theoretical explorations in the creation of detective novels, thus forming his own writing style and theoretical views about detective fiction.

5.2.2.1 Recognition of the Value of Scientific Education of Detective Novels

Cheng Xiaoqing holds that "If we acknowledge the utilitarian aspect of art, then it will add one more important value to detective novels, because other types of novels usually involve the essential element of 'emotion,' while besides that, detective novels bear the essential element of 'intelligence.' In other words, detective novels lay stress on scientific education, which are intended to broaden people's mind, cultivate people's observation and enrich people's social experience, so it seems to be justifiable to associate detective novels with the word 'utility' … The plot of detective novels is always concerned with a detective trying to solve a mystery through observation, collection of evidence and reasoning. If people read more detective novels, they will be 'unconsciously' influenced in their observation and reasoning, and will improve their abilities in them" (Cheng 1920). He also thinks that "detective fiction is a kind of textbooks of popular science in disguise" (Cheng 1984: 70). Because of this, Cheng Xiaoqing takes the writing of detective novels rather seriously, and deals with materials and plot arrangement with scientific attitude. Especially, in his novel creation he has a balanced handling of the core element "intelligence"—when he describes how Huo Sang solves cases, he depicts him as a character of great wisdom, but not as a supernatural deified figure.

5.2.2.2 Emphasis on Artistic Techniques of Detective Novels

Cheng (1984) holds that "In addition to creative imagination, it is not subject matter, but structure and depictive method that determine whether detective novels are well-written or not. Even for the same case of a theft or a murder, it may differ in its process, procedures of investigation and techniques of solving the case, and there are also conscious or unconscious suspense, subtle changes, compact and insinuating conversation, and thrilling and hazy situation, all of which constitute important artistic elements of detective novels." Cheng Xiaoqing makes an analysis of the tips of writing detective novels as follows: "For example, writing an intricate case story requires the arrangement of four clues, among which only one can lead to the revealing of the truth, and the remaining three are false clues which may lead

readers astray, and this is actually where Bao Lang plays his role, because the art of organizing detective novels is just like setting a maze. The author must lure readers to the center of the maze with attractive force, where readers are lost in roundabout twists and turns and can not find the way out, and it is not until the last moment that the author allows the sudden uncovering of the secret and the enlightenment of readers" (Ibid). Here Cheng Xiaoqing captures the essential differences in writing techniques between detective novels and other types of novels. Through setting the stage for later story, using suspense, and arranging multiple clues, the author is able to create intricate and bizarre plot, put the readers in a state of tension, wonder and mystery all the time, and then make readers feel surprised and suddenly enlightened after experiencing nervous expectation, which is the very artistic realm and effect that detective novels pursue.

5.2.2.3 Descriptions and Reflection Within the Framework of Western Detective Novels

We can see more or less the shadow of Sherlock Holmes in Huo Sang, only with some reworking and modification while depicting such a character. The addition of a lot of "seasonings" of Shanghai flavor to the novel, especially those about city people's thoughts and life of the time, leaves a lot of Chinese marks on characters, scenes and events in the novel, and "fills in" it all sorts of weird things—"a combination of Chinese and Western elements" in the decadent city of old Shanghai. Devils who created chaos, people's mentality, changing family, distorted interpersonal relationship—all this lends the novel with rich national flavor. This, together with the author's unadorned and straightforward depiction and standardized language, makes Cheng Xiaoqing's works more popular than foreign novels introduced into China, and this is what makes Cheng Xiaoqing successful.

When reading *Huo Sang's Detective Stories*, we can feel that the typical environment reproduced in the novel is that of Chinese society during the period of the Republic of China (1912–1949). The author describes with a critical attitude the life scenes of concessions in Old Shanghai, the style and features of people from all walks of life in Old Shanghai society, and a variety of life events such as fighting over the inheritance, murder and arson, drug trafficking, women trafficking, and even killing for revenge (or for love), suicide, murder and so on. His novels are based on local events, and describe local scenery, people and things who are present and familiar, which helps to increase readers' interest and understanding of Chinese society during the period of the Republic of China.

Although Sherlock Holmes and Huo Sang are quite similar with each other in their determined character and careful and thorough exploration of things, we can see more of Chinese traditional moral values in Huo Sang. For example, in the story "The Innocent Murderer," when Wang Yinlin spoke highly of Huo Sang's intelligence and achievements, Huo Sang felt flattered, saying modestly that "I dare not say a person can be always successful in every endeavor only with his talent; on the other hand, if a person's intelligence is rather limited, but is overconfident sometimes,

then he tends to go the wrong way." Moreover, the author further illustrates the differences between Sherlock Holmes and Huo Sang through Bao Lang's words, "this calls Sherlock Holmes to my mind. Admittedly, he is a man of great talents, but he has a too high opinion of himself and always appears to be on his high horse. If we compare Sherlock Holmes with Huo Sang, we can see the obvious differences between easterners and westerners in their cultivations and habits."

Cheng Xiaoqing's detective novels reflect mainly Chinese traditional ideology and moral and ethical concepts, such as sense of justice, despising high officials and lords, sympathizing with the weak, robbing the rich to help the poor, etc., which reflects both the golden mean of Confucianism and the universal love of Mohism. As a feudal intellectual writer, Cheng Xiaoqing has deep-rooted Chinese traditional concepts in his ideology, therefore, he always maintains a gentleman's demeanor of keeping his moral integrity, never colluding with social evils and is always sympathetic towards the poor, and this is why Cheng Xiaoqing's detective novels are filled with noble ethical ideas. On the other hand, influenced by ancient Chinese court case novels, Cheng Xiaoqing's detective novels fail to touch on the nature of the feudal social system in old China, let alone arouse readers' aspiration to overthrow the feudal system, but only make citizen stratum get some illusory satisfaction and emotional outlet through certain detective plotlines which strike a chord in city people's heart.

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Chapter 6
Martial Arts Fiction and Chivalric Literature

Martial arts spirit is a common presence in both the Eastern and Western cultures. But the Chinese expression 武侠小说 (wuxia xiaoshuo, i.e. martial arts fiction) is probably unique to Chinese literature, because one can hardly find a ready equivalent word in English for the character 侠 (xia) which has the meaning of ① "a person adept in martial arts and given to chivalrous conduct" (i.e. a chivalrous person or swordsman) or ② "chivalrous conduct," nor such a concept in English culture. The word in close meaning (but not a ready equivalent) to "xia" may be "knight." Based on the criterion that "a xia uses force to violate the prohibition," a statement made by the ancient Chinese Legalist philosophers Han Feizi (280–233 BC), such Western novels depicting knights, righteous robbers and fighting scenes seem to fall into the category of martial arts fiction. In this chapter, we will make a comparison of Chinese martial arts fiction and Western chivalric literature in an effort to probe into the similarities and differences of xia culture between China and the West.

6.1 A Comparison Between Western Knight and Chinese Chivalrous Swordsman

As a symbol of worshiping martial spirit, Chinese chivalrous swordsman and Western knight share certain cultural similarities such as upholding justice, helping the weak and poor, being eager to offer help, keeping promise, acting in good faith and being loyal and upright. As the Chinese-American scholar Liu Ruoyu points out, "the shared beliefs and ideas of xia in China and Europe represent the common wishes of mankind which transcend time, space and the differences between them, and facilitate their communication of ideas" (Liu 1991: 195). But due to different times and nations in which they grew, they exhibit different cultural spirit and characteristic qualities.

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6.1.1 Cultural Spirit: Upper-Class Culture Versus Lower-Class Culture

In respect of cultural spirit, Western knights and Chinese chivalrous swordsmen came into being in different culture systems. The concept of "knight" belongs to Occidental culture, which imposes moral self-discipline based on transcendental religious belief and rational spirit, and values purely individual sense of honor. The concept of "chivalrous swordsman" belongs to Oriental culture, which emphasizes social-ethical restriction upon people, and values individual's reputation among the group.

A knight is basically a member of the Western feudal ruling class. As the backbone of feudal upper class, knights participate in upper-class political affairs, royally serve the king and feudal lords. They have a strong sense of hierarchy, thus knights embody the cultural spirit of upper-class society in Western Europe. This can be seen by reviewing the historical development and cultural forms of chivalry. Chivalry grew out of the upper-class society in the medieval Europe. At that time, the warriors in military service gathered around feudal rulers, formed knight regiments and waged plundering wars in the service of feudal rulers. In the West, knight is both a profession and an identity; meanwhile it is also a noble title, a sign showing the warrior has entered the upper-class society. To attain such a title is never easy, for it has rigorous rules and regulations and a complete set of feudal ethics and rituals. If the son in aristocratic family intends to become a knight, then he must first serve a lord and his wife who are in a higher hierarchy than him as an attendant at the age of seven or eight, and receive enlightenment education. At the age of fourteen, he would become a squire, i.e. a probational knight, whose main task is to learn to become gallant warrior. He would receive specialized military skill training, including riding a fast-running horse, controlling the speed of a war-horse, using shield and sword coordinately, pitching a spear on a horse, learning sword-fighting skills, etc. At the age of twenty-one, after strict test and solemn ceremony, such as granting armor, swearing an oath of allegiance and going through other religious rituals, he then officially attains the knight title. The knighting ceremony was relatively simple in early times. But after the 11th century, due to the expanding social influence of knights and the penetration of church into social culture, knighting ceremony became more complex with strong religious color and extravagant forms. At the night before knighting ceremony, the priest would hold a sacred ritual bath for the knight-to-be at the church, symbolizing the cleansing and purifying of his body and soul by the God's mercy. On the next morning, he has to rise up early to attend mass. At the knighting ceremony, the knight-to-be must wear special dresses of which he can choose the color: white represents purity for all his life, and red the willingness to shed blood and sacrifice life for just cause. He then wears a white leather belt and resolves to defend church with chastity. In the church, the priest ordains the knight-to-be with a sword, and the knight-to-be hands the sword to the priest and says: "Our Lord, please listen to our prayer. Bless the sword with your hand of justice. Its owner is eager to bear the sword to protect church and defend the weak, the poor and the lonely and all your

servants from heretics' ravaging. Use the sword to attack and defend." And then there is the consecration ceremony for the armor, shield, spike, etc. After such a set of rituals, the knight-to-be is led to the feudal lord by the priest. The feudal lord holds *The Knights Code of Chivalry* in his hand and reads it out. Then the knight-to-be is asked: "will you adhere to the creeds?" The knight-to-be must make a solemn vow, promising that he will "keep faith, uphold justice, value the truth, protect the weak and defenceless, respect the honour of women, fear God and maintain His Church, never turn the back upon a foe, never refuse the challenge from an equal, give succor to widows and orphans and serve the liege lord in valor and faith." With that, a senior knight helps him to wear a new armor, iron shoes, leg guards, cuirass, helmet, etc. He then walks to the feudal lord and is equipped with a sword and spurs by the lord himself. At last, the knight kneels down on one knee while the feudal lord pats on him with the back-edge of a sword, declaring aloud that he has become a knight, which signifies the end of knighting ceremony. Growing out of such a chivalrous system, the spirit of knight culture is definitely a kind of aristocratic culture. A knight must keep his chevalier manner, i.e. he must be mild, elegant, courteous, decent, cultured, faithful and law-abiding. It is in fact a closed, upper-class aristocratic culture, and a cultural spirit that sets up the social order.

By contrast, the concept of "chivalrous swordsman" belongs to Oriental cultural system which emphasizes the constraint of social ethics and morality, and values individual reputation among the group. The Chinese traditional culture is ethic-oriented. Against such a cultural background, the swordsman is constrained by ethical politics and moral values. Chivalrous swordsmen come from all walks of life. They may be active in streets and lanes, and may also be hidden in the wilderness. Courage, uprightness and brotherhood are the guideline in their life. They never stick to trifles, and are so bold and unstrained that they sometimes even fall into certain bad habits. Thus it plays the role of activating the society on the one hand, and yet contains spontaneous folk culture spirit on the other hand. As Chen Shan points out, "'xia' (chivalrous swordsman) and 'ru' (Confucianist) are both long-standing social stratum in Chinese history, both of which arose in the pre-Qin period (2100–221 BC) and existed till modern times. The cultural spirit of xia and Confucianist carries 'a sense of transcendence' which has broad and sustained psychological impact and is deeply rooted in Chinese culture. If we say that the shadow of Confucianist looms in the souls of Chinese intellectuals, then we can also say that the light of chivalrous swordsman flickers deep in the hearts of Chinese common people" (Chen 1992: 2). Through centuries, such ideal thought and traditional mentality as "putting justice above material gains" and "sacrificing one's life for righteousness" have been deposited in the ethics consciousness of Chinese people, and have formed an unique collective unconsciousness—worship of personality. After the Song Dynasty (960–1279 AD), ethics of martial arts began to gradually take in Confucianist ethical ideas, and eventually produced Confucianized chivalrous ethics, i.e. above (individual) life what should be valued most are nation, friends, duty, promise, debt of gratitude and of revenge, reputation, morality and justice," and "neither riches nor honors can corrupt a man; neither poverty nor humbleness can make him swerve from principle; and neither threats nor forces can subdue him." These have become the moral ideals as well as

the symbols of the ideal personality of Chinese nation. For example, in the new-style martial arts novels, a series of typical chivalrous swordsmen embracing an ideal unity of Confucianism and chivalrous conduct are portrayed, such as Guo Jing, Yang Guo, Xiao Feng, Zhang Danfeng, etc.[1] Till this day, when handling and regulating interpersonal relationship, Chinese people still mainly abide by the principles of martial arts ethics, for such ethics have long taken deep root in the Chinese people's ideology and are considered as the traditional virtues shared by them.

6.1.2 Religious Belief: Christianity Versus Folk Hero

In respect of religious belief, there are considerable differences between Western knights and Chinese chivalrous swordsmen. As devoted Christians, Western knights are constrained by Christianity, yet Chinese chivalrous swordsmen, having no unified religious belief, mostly worship folk heroes. This difference is largely due to their different political status and cultural background.

Chivalry originated in the feudal society of medieval Europe. After the fall of the Roman Empire, the religion of slaveholders turned into that of feudal lords, and Christianity was kept to serve the feudal lords. In the early times of Western European feudal society, due to the weak royal power and severe feudal separation, Catholicism took the opportunity to expand its power. Until the 8th century, owing to the increasingly powerful magisterium, the church gained relatively influential political power, and the Pope had supreme power in the secular regime. In politics, the church enjoyed monopoly; in economy, the church owned a lot of land and was considered the landlord in Western European feudal society. No matter in which European country, they would hold over one-third of the total land, exploiting the peasants and taxing all civilians by tithes. At that time, politics, law, philosophy, literature were all the servants of theology. Any ideas or theories that did not conform to theology were banned and prohibited from publicity. In the feudal countries of medieval Europe, Christianity church held a vitally important position, for feudal rulers took advantage of Christianity, an influential mind-controlling tool, to assert its authority and maintain its power. Given the chivalry in such social context, knights naturally became members of the feudal ruling class, who were in fact professional soldiers in Christianity organization. Belief in Christianity is the utmost code of conduct for a knight, as "If one is not Christian and is not baptized, then he shall not become a knight," and one who has no belief will not fulfill the duty of a knight. Hence belief education is the preliminary and also primary education for Western knights. In the Christian world, a newly born baby is brought into Christianity through baptism. While for the son of a knight, baptism has more special significance: when held up

[1] Guo Jing and Yang Guo are the two heroes in *The Legend of the Condor Heroes* (*Shediao Yingxiong Zhuan*), Xiao Feng is the hero in *The Demi-Gods and Semi-Devils* (*Tian Long Ba Bu*). Both two works are by Jin Yong. Zhang Danfeng is the hero in *Romance of the Wondering Swordsman* (*Pingzong Xiaying Lu*) by Liang Yusheng. Both Jin Yong and Liang Yusheng are the renowned martial arts fictionists in China.—Translator's note.

from the holy plate, he not only becomes a Christian, but also a quasi-Christian knight deep inside his heart. Born in an aristocratic family, at his seven or eight years old, the boy would be taken by his father to a feudal lord or other noble family to commence the education of a knight. At the preliminary stage, the wife of feudal lord would often take the boys to attend Mass, teach them the psalm, and tell them religious stories, for the church sets the rule that one with no Christianity belief cannot fulfill the duty of a knight. From the hostess's words and deeds, the little "knights" learnt to submit to the church and to fear God. To cultivate the boys' unswerving loyalty to Christianity and to prevent the invasion of pagan ideas is the top priority of the hostess's religious education. In daily life, a knight must go to Mass every day to confirm him in belief of God; he must often go to church to confess and pray to God for forgiveness; if one commits a sin, he must do penance to atone for it; he must also participate in important religious activities such as fasting and protect the interests of the church despite all risks. As the Crusade enhanced the concept of "just war" among the churches, it became the duty and spiritual symbol of a knight to heed the call of the church and join Crusades. When calling on Western knights to join Crusades, the Pope Urban II pointed out that those who kill and pillage are not qualified as knights, and they not only commit crimes but also shall not enter the Kingdom of Heaven; but those knights believing in God have the obligation to protect the Holy Land Jerusalem and liberate the Christians persecuted by pagans. The church's systematic description of chivalry can be found in John Sulzberger's *On Politicians*, which points out that chivalry was created by God and its purpose is to protect the church and the nation. The knights must swear allegiance and pledge eternal loyalty to the church and feudal lord, respect the clergy, care for the people, safeguard social stability, fight against heresies and pagans, and perform his duty at all risks. The knights should obey and serve the church in the first place; when a conflict occurs between the church and the king, the knights should side with God (the church) rather than follow corruption or the monarch that goes against the church. Thus it can be seen that Western knights take a completely Christianized organizational form, with the belief in Christianity as their common spiritual prop.

Chinese chivalrous swordsmen mostly came from common folk world, and belonged to the civilian class. This can be seen from relevant documents and literature, as depicted in official historical records and famous literary works that many chivalrous swordsmen came from common civilians, such as Zou Feng, Du Hu and other fifteen chivalrous swordsmen who sacrificed themselves in support of Wen Tianxiang's resistance against Kublai Khan's invasion of the Song Empire. Meanwhile, the famous bandit in the Northern China Zhang Hui (nicknamed "Sai Zhang-Fei", meaning Zhang Hui can rival Zhang Fei, a valiant military general during the Three Kingdoms period [220–280 AD]) is also a chivalrous swordsman coming from the common folks. Fang Zishan, as depicted in Su Shi's[2] prose *Biography of Fang Zishan* (*Fang Zishan Zhuan*), is a chivalrous swordsman who had a passion for wine

[2]Su Shi (1037–1101 AD), also known as Su Dongpo, was a renowned Chinese writer, poet, painter, calligrapher, pharmacologist, and a statesman of the Song Dynasty (960–1279 AD).—Translator's note.

and sword, yet he concealed his name and lived as a hermit in the wilderness. Thus those chivalrous swordsmen, living separately as individuals, could not possibly share the same religious belief. Even those swordsman organizations formed after the Song Dynasty (960–1279 AD), such as martial arts circles, forest outlaws and secret social organizations, are non-religious unions and thus did not have a common religious belief. Each school of martial arts has its own grand master and successors. In the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), there developed two major schools of Chinese boxing which are Shaolin School and Wudang School, thus creating the division between "internal boxing" and "external boxing." To advocate the virtue of martial arts and the integrity of swordsman is the common code of conduct in Chinese martial arts circles. As Chen Shan points out, "Monotheism does not exist in Chinese civil society, but various secularized religious consciousness does exist. And the integrity of swordsman is the quasi-religious consciousness in Chinese martial arts society" (Chen 1992). Unlike the martial arts circle, forest outlaws, living a turbulent and adventurous life, had a strong sense of brotherhood. Because of the unstable way of life and the hostile social environment, they became sworn brothers through certain solemn rites, and henceforth offered aid to each other in case of adversity. The "god" that they worship is the concretized notion of chivalrous spirit with "loyalty and righteousness" as its core, with such heroes as Liu Bei, Guan Yu and Zhang Fei who were the sworn brothers in Peach Garden as their idols,[3] without Western knights' transcendental cognition of life (soul), the universe, and anthropomorphized existence of God. The Chinese forest outlaws did not pray for the miraculous advent of God, as their Western counterparts did, rather they fought the evil and aided the poor by their own martial arts virtue and skills. In addition, in secret social organizations (e.g. secret folk associations and parties), there was no lack of chivalrous swordsmen. Some secret social organizations themselves were martial arts groups.

Besides the shared spiritual pursuit of "equality," the other reason why scattered folk warriors could be assembled and organized is the mysterious rite. For instance, in the Society of Heaven and Earth (Tiandi Hui),[4] there is the rite of drinking chicken blood wine and passing the sword circle and sword bridge for the enrollment. Other rites include walking through the fire pit in the swearing ceremony, placing tea cups in array and speaking in argot when contacting, and various incantations, drawing magic figures and worship rites. Unlike the defamiliarized means in Western religion rites (such as the unique architecture of church, the solemn Mass and worship rituals, separated confession, etc.) that arouse the follower's transcendental realization and belief in the meaning of life and the universe itself, the mysterious rites in Chinese secret social organization apply the commonly known secular methods to create an

[3] Liu Bei, Guan Yu and Zhang Fei are the three heroes in *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (*Sanguo Yanyi*) by Luo Guanzhong (1330–1400). Legend has it that the three heroes took an oath and became sworn brothers in Peach Garden.—Translator's note.

[4] "The Society of Heaven and Earth" (Tiandi Hui) is a Chinese fraternal organization and secretive folk religious sect founded in 1762, with the aim of fighting the Qing Dynasty and rebuilding the Ming Dynasty, enforcing justice on behalf of Heaven, and robing the rich and aiding the poor.—Translator's note.

intense sense of mystery and feeling of reverence among its members. It thus builds up a self-disciplined mental mechanism among its followers through such punitive agreements as oaths and rules.

6.1.3 Personality Values: Obligation Versus Brotherhood

In respect of personality values, Western knights and Chinese chivalrous swordsmen differ in that the values of the former are more rational and tend to "put obligation in the first place" (Leggett 1990: 50), while those of the latter are plainer and more unsophisticated and tend to set "righteousness" as the core.

As members of the social stratum, knights are protected and regulated by chivalry, which defines their social status, duties and obligations. Ramon Llull, the author of *The Book of the Ordre of Chyvalry or Knyghthode*, believes that the life of a knight shall be pure, noble and devoted to religious belief, thus he himself showed great enthusiasm for the group life of knights. In his view, the lifestyle of knights is an evident reflection of Christ's will. Besides safeguarding the communal property, the first article of knights' code of conduct is to be valiant and loyal, to uphold justice, to be allegiant to the royal family, and to protect the church. The relationship between a knight and his feudal lord is defined and legitimated by such documents as *Pledge of Fief*, *Property Inventory*, etc. If a conflict arises between knights, it should be judged by the court of feudal lords, as is stated in the following edict decreed by Emperor Conrad II in 1037:

> On the legal code of our predecessors, it specified that no knight who was the tenant of a bishop, abbot, marquis, count or any other might be deprived of his fief unless he were convicted of a legal offense by the judgment of his peers.

This edict is known as *Constitution on Fiefs* (also known as the *Edict on the Benefices of the Italian Kingdom*). It also stipulates that the right of a knight to appeal to the emperor or an imperial representative when treated unfairly is granted; the fiefs that descend to the children should also descend to the grandchildren; and that he whose brother died without legitimate heirs might succeed to the fief which had belonged to their common father. In this way the edict consolidates hereditary possession of their fiefs.

In the medieval Europe, with relative lack of production means, the land and the peasants attached to it were the only valuable subjects of labor and production tools, thus they became the resources that everyone competed for. As the possessor of such important resources, the knights must pay due price—their force and loyalty to the upper class feudal lord. A strong alliance between feudal lord and his vassals was built up through "allegiance ritual." The pledge of allegiance states clearly the rights and obligations of the two sides, thus enabling them to jointly safeguard the feudal rule in Europe and reign over other social classes.

The duties and obligations of knights are compulsory, which results in the notion "obligation outweighs all" and so puts them in a passive position. However, as

the feudal lords gave the notion an air of religious mystery, the master-servant relationship was played down, making the inequality between them fair and reasonable. The obligations imposed on knights by feudal lords became the will of Christian God. The knights as devout believers in Christianity regarded all those imposed on them as sacred duties and applied them in his code of conduct. The model knight Edward the Black Prince has "God, I serve the people all my life" as his motto (Jin 1984: 188). To some extent, the personality values of medieval knights that "obligation outweighs all" reflect a sense of responsibility based on the abstract and transcendental religious spirit, belief and code of conduct.

Chinese chivalrous swordsmen belong to the civilian class, and their ethics is basically the moral standards regulating interpersonal relationship in the civil society—the "brotherhood" ethics. Therefore, unlike the rational values of Western knights, the personality values of Chinese chivalrous swordsmen were fostered in simple and coincidental emotional context. "Xia" (侠) means "chivalrous conduct," i.e. "defending the weak against injustice"; "Yi" (义) means "righteousness", i.e. "being upright, sincere and undaunted." Then the combination of the two characters "xia-yi" (侠义) means "being heroic and gallant, acting bravely for a just cause, helping the distressed and oppressed, curbing the violent and assisting the weak, and being willing to defy all difficulties and dangers for the sake of the nation, the people, the cause of justice, or even a patron or superior who once helped." Zhuang (1960) elaborates on the tradition of "xia-yi" at both superficial and deep levels: "Daring to risk life, drawing a sword to fight when dispute erupts, and taking his own life willingly when defeated in fighting are the superficial forms of xia; protecting his companions from injury and defending the nation from provocation, putting the national interests above personal gains are the core spirit of xia." He also compares the chivalrous tradition in civilian society with pan-Confucianism culture in upper class society: "A Confucianist is the opposite of a chivalrous swordsman in that the former is lifeless and spiritless while the latter is energetic and spirited; the former tends to have empty talk while the latter values practice; the former is concerned about weal and woe while the latter cares nothing about gains and losses; the former is stereotypical and monotonous while the latter is innovative and diverse" (Zhuang 1960: 572–574). Chivalrous swordsmen follow the simple moral code of "personal loyalty" (i.e. code of brotherhood) to regulate himself and to judge people and things. Hence they value friendship highly, and are willing to defy all difficulties and dangers for those friends having similar ideals and beliefs. They have a strong sense of justice, ready to assist the weak and curb the violent, and defend others against injustice. Especially when being personally on the scene of the "unfair" and "unjust" that is not related to his own interests, they would stand out boldly out of the simple wish for social fairness and justice. Before their uprising, Liangshan heroes in the Song Dynasty (960–1279 AD) had the desire to defend the weak against injustice and abhor evil as a deadly foe. After becoming sworn brothers in the uprising, they even waved the flag imprinted with "enforce justice on behalf of Heaven," and waged war on feudal officials. In this way the chivalrous swordsman's spirit—"having a strong sense of justice and ready to help the weak" and "defend the weak against the unfair"—is raised to a higher level of "redress the injustice and remove the evil for the

people" and "for the benefit of the people." Their personality values are not based on rationality or personal interests; rather they are grounded on "righteousness." Setting the principle of "personal loyalty" as the code of conduct and moral rules shows the positive spirit of mutual help and unity among common people on the one hand; on the other hand it entails putting personal emotions and gratitude above everything which will result in negative outcomes such as cliquishness, unprincipled conduct and gang habits.

6.1.4 Personality Spirit: Honor Versus Righteousness

In respect of personality spirit, Western knights and Chinese chivalrous swordsmen differ considerably. The personality sprit of knights is based on a sense of honor, reflecting the characteristics of "guilt culture" which is typical of the West, while the personality spirit of Chinese chivalrous swordsmen is based on righteousness, reflecting the characteristics of "shame culture" which is typical of the East.

The spirit and morals of knights are based on a sense of superiority which arises from their social status and thus they are regarded as being superior to those common people. They respect individual personality, value individual honor and pay great attention to their personal image, and thus they attach great importance to knightly manners. They are particular about their personal appearance, behavior, manners, and demeanor, and design their own image following the standard of the nobility. They keep their words, fulfill their duty faithfully, stress loyalty and are willingly helpful. They have their ambition instilled since the age of seven or eight, which is to become an outstanding warrior and a powerful hero. Knights are ready to fight since they were born. Those who fight without fear shall be rewarded with utmost honor. Knights cherish their reputation, and if it gets tainted or doubted, they will fight it back by defeating the opponent in a duel. In the eyes of knights, women are the embodiment of love and beauty in the secular world, and are the goddesses of light that represent harmony, peace and solace, thus they idealize and idolize women, often choosing a certain lady as their idol, and regarding it their utmost honor to swear allegiance to and serve her. An ideal knight is an ideal lover, and the Platonic love between a knight and a lady is known as "knightly love." Take Ulrich von Liechtenstein, a knight who adored love, as an example. He embarked on his journey wearing a helmet with the mini-sculpture of Venus, and fought all the way from Venice to Vienna by challenging other knights, so that he could present all his daring exploits to Venus, the goddess of love. At the age of twelve, Ulrich chose a noble lady to whom he would devote all his love. Infatuated by the love for the beautiful lady, he touched everything that she had touched, and even drank the water in which she had washed her feet. Yet the lady scolded him for his uncouth behaviors in return. To win her love, Ulrich cut off one of his fingers and sent it to the lady in a velvet casket. Though unmoved, she promised to open the casket once in a while to have a look at the finger of the poor knight. To win her heart, he kept on fighting and won a lot of battles, and did all that is required of a man in any routine relationship of love. However, the lady merely rewarded him by

allowing him to meet her in rags among a group of beggars like a leper. Her cruelty did not intimidate him nor extinguish his love and courage. On the contrary, the agony caused by inaccessible love made the knight feel like having regained a new life in the Nirvana, after which he experienced indescribable vainglorious happiness and pride. It is obvious that this sort of personality spirit is typical of the Western guilt culture, which takes honor as the only and absolute criterion and individual conscience is enlightened by this criterion. Moral constraints on individuals arise from transcendental religious belief and rationalistic spirit, and absolute individual honor is stressed. Influenced by medieval chivalric spirit, the national character of West Europe is the combination of elegant manners which derives from nobility, and chivalrous spirit which emphasizes individual reputation, honor and the willingness to help others, as well as such negative aspects as arrogance and the tendency to go to extremes.

Chinese chivalrous swordsmen, on the other hand, possess a kind of "chivalrous righteousness" personality summarized by Sima Qian,[5] who observes in his *Historical Records • Biographies* of *Wandering Knights* that Chinese chivalrous swordsmen who are the best embodiment of "chivalrous righteousness" have five characteristics in common: (1) They cultivate their moral conduct and establish a good reputation which is so widespread that all the people who know them praise them for their virtue. (2) Though sometimes they break the law and order, they are still worthy of people's compliment. They live up to their reputation and the trust of those talents who join them. (3) They keep their word and will never stop their pursuit until success is achieved. Once they have promised something, they will faithfully fulfill it without caring about their own well-being. (4) They despise the bullies who terrorize the weak and indulge themselves in pleasure-seeking, and give priority to others' needs over their private concerns. (5) They never brag about their ability, nor do they show off the favor they have done to others. They even avoid meeting the ones whom they have done favor. In short, chivalrous righteousness refers to the quality of possessing high morality, attaching importance to commitment, thinking little of money, despising bullying the weak, and most importantly, prioritizing others' need without caring about their own gains. Chinese chivalrous swordsmen have a strong sense of justice and are ready to help the weak; they think little of their own individual life and death but value brotherhood, and will undertake any obligation for their bosom friends (This is what the Chinese idiom "One is willing to risk his life for his friend" describes.) They are indignant at injustice, so they would stand up against the bullies and defend the oppressed. They sympathize with the weak and are willing to offer them a helping hand. As real swordsmen who live up to their name, they keep radiating the brilliance of chivalry in their daily conduct, and such trait remains unchanged at perilous moments. Chivalrous swordsmen possess not only outstanding martial arts skills, but also the lofty virtue of chivalrous

[5] Sima Qian (145–?? BC) was a Chinese historian of the Han Dynasty (202 BC–220 AD). He is considered the father of Chinese historiography for his *Historical Records* (*Shi Ji*), a Jizhuan-style (history presented in a series of biographies) general history of China, covering more than two thousand years from the Yellow Emperor to his time.—Translator's note.

spirit and martial ethics. That the chivalry ethics outweighs martial skills is a basic concept and code of conduct for chivalrous swordsmen. It is what a real chivalrous swordsman pursues for his lifetime to excel at martial arts morality and martial arts skills. And only a chivalrous swordsman who processes both can truly be respected. The image of chivalrous swordsmen stands for the ideal personality spirit the Chinese people have been pursuing for, and their spirit is the natural flow of the lofty ethics and willpower of life held by the Chinese people. Reflected from the deeds of chivalrous swordsmen are the inextinguishable ideal for social equity and justice, the courage to challenge unfair reality, the great sympathy for humanity, the efforts at self-cultivation, character-building as well as integrity-nurturing. All these have helped to form the national character of the Chinese nation.

To sum up, on the whole the militant tradition in Western knight spirit has been completely civilized and transformed into a part of noble disposition typical of the upper class. By contrast, the chivalrous righteousness of the Chinese nation has been well kept in the folk culture popular among the lower class, and has developed into highly complete and powerful militant spirit. This element of national character has become a potential force that drives the nation forward, though the character itself might be aimless and spontaneous to some degree.

6.2 A Comparison Between Martial Arts Fiction and Chivalric Literature

In the previous section, we studied the different socio-cultural background of Western knights and Chinese chivalrous swordsmen, and their different national-cultural spirits and qualities. In this section we will examine the similarities and differences between Western chivalric literature and Chinese martial arts fiction.

6.2.1 History of Development

Western Chivalric literature resulted from the combination of a system (chivalry) and a culture (Christian culture). The ups and downs of chivalric literature were directly determined by the rise and fall of chivalry (i.e. chivalrous system). In other words, the emergence, development and decline of chivalric literature reflect those of chivalrous system. By contrast, Chinese martial arts fiction went through three different stages: emergence, development and metamorphosis. Therefore, chivalric literature is the literature in historical pattern, which already fell into decline before its metamorphosis, while martial arts fiction experienced glorious metamorphosis after the stage of development.

The origin of chivalric literature dates back to the emergence of chivalry. With the demise of the Western Roman Empire, medieval Europe (500–1500 AD) was actually in a state of splitting and scuffling. In that era with collapsed social system and morality, the society was actually governed and controlled by feudal lords. The 11th century was a significant period in the military history of Western Europe, for spur, pike and heavy armor began to play a dominant role in armored cavalry tactics. Invented in China and spread to Western Europe in the 8th century, spur performed the military function of enabling the knight to sit more steadily on the horse. In the 11th century, pike was improved in that it became longer and heavier, and barb was added to the blade so that it would not be difficult to pull out if pierced deep into the enemy's body. A short backrest was added to saddle in case of the knight's leaning-backward when sprinting. The complicated armored cavalry tactics required specialized training and expensive equipment. The aristocrats that those knights served must provide them with economic support, normally a piece of real estate, in exchange for the military service offered by the knights. Supported by feudal lords, knights were used as military force in defense and plundering wars. Knights were in a period of great prosperity in the 12th and 13th century, and together with churches, they became the cultural tradition and spiritual pillar in the medieval European society. Armored cavalry tactics, monarch-subject relationship, and a set of moral norms (the spirit of knights) constitute chivalrous system. A knight in medieval Europe can be regarded as an equivalent of "shi" (a scholar, the lowest level in Chinese aristocracy) in the Warring States Period (475–221 BC) in China. "Shi" appeared around 300 BC, thus at least eight centuries earlier than Western knights. The emergence, development and decline of chivalric literature reflect those of chivalrous system whose existing form was always based on relevant social stratum. By contrast, martial arts fiction went through three different stages: emergence, development and metamorphosis. Growing out of "shi" in the Warring States Period, it went through metamorphosis after the stage of development, and was transformed into a pure literary form.

European chivalric literature which thrived in France in the 12th and 13th century has three major forms: chivalric verse, chivalric romance and chivalric novels. "Dawn song" is a typical representative of chivalric verse. Chivalric romance and chivalric novels are composed by literati and court poets completely out of romantic literary imagination, and are large in number and complicated in system, and became the main form of chivalric literature. By contrast, Chinese martial arts literature went through a rather long initial period, spanning almost the first half of centralized monarchy in Chinese history, and has such main forms as court case novels, legends and romances, and ballads. It was not until the turning of the Yuan and Ming Dynasties that *Outlaws of the Marsh* (*Shui Hu Zhuan*), the first martial arts novel in China, made its appearance. During the Ming and Qing Dynasties, a large number of chivalrous novels appeared, and martial arts literature developed rapidly. During the Republic of China (1912–1949), martial arts literature achieved unprecedented prosperity, and a great many martial arts litterateurs arose, such as Gu Mingdao, Zhao Huanting, Bai Yu, Zhu Zhenmu, to name just a few. Then the metamorphosis of martial arts literature started along with the emergence of "new martial arts literature" in Hong Kong and Taiwan, with three great master writers as its representatives, who are Jin

Yong (Louis Cha Leung-yung), Gu Long and Liang Yusheng. As the leading figure of "new martial arts literature," Jin Yong not only promoted the metamorphosis from "old martial arts literature" to "new martial arts literature," but also lifted martial arts literature to its highest level.

6.2.2 Content and Ideology

Both martial arts literature and chivalric literature originated from their own historical and cultural context. In that European era with collapsed social system and morality, to establish a unified and stable national state and devout and loyal Christian faith was the cultural context and national mentality for Europe at the time. The combination of chivalry and Christian culture gave rise to chivalric literature. Thus, besides encouraging military spirit, chivalric literature is characterized by strong Christian spirit and obvious Christian color. By contrast, growing out of Chinese civilian society, chivalrous swordsman's actions often went beyond the political system and legal system in feudal society, as the ancient Chinese Legalist philosophers Han Feizi (280–233 BC) put it, a xia (i.e. a chivalrous swordsman) uses force to violate the prohibition. Martial arts fiction advocates the spirit of "justice" mixed with strong social impulse and simple ethics. It is a rebellion against the powerful centralized monarchy, a literary effusion of folk sentiment, and it has a strong flavor of folk culture.

The knight spirit is first of all related to the moral norms of feudal warriors, among which valiancy, loyalty, generosity and comity are placed above all. Cowardice naturally could not be tolerated by warriors; the monarch-subject relationship had high demands for personal loyalty—the monarch was generous to his subjects as he needed to cultivate his subjects' loyalty; and the mutual comity between knights gave them a sense of identity and security, which is a unique phenomenon in the world military history. The knight spirit was also armed with Christianity. The knights' loyalty to monarch, defense of church, and acts of chivalry were all based on political and religious interests. In fact, knights not only made up the military force supported by feudal lords, but were also members of feudal rulers. Their loyalty to monarch, defense of church and acts of chivalry were based on a whole set of feudal moral principles and Christian spirit, and their ultimate aim was to defend the feudal moral principles and Christian spirit. Chivalric literature depicts the life of knights and eulogizes their spirit. Yet as mentioned earlier, even for a young boy whose social status is not low, it is not easy to obtain the title of "knight"—he must have a lot of adventurous chivalrous experiences which were measured by the standards of feudal class in the Middle Ages: he must have killed many pagans. As members of feudal privileged class, knights in chivalric literature have deep-rooted feudal ideas and religious beliefs. The fundamental basis of feudal ideas is "loyalty to monarchy." A large amount of the early chivalric literature described that, for the interests of feudal lords the knights would take risks, go on an expedition, and plunder the lands and treasure of other nations. In the Middle Ages, feudal vassals doubled the

exploitation of peasants in the name of the crusade and looted other's property in the name of exterminating pagans and protecting the Orthodox Church. The knights' belief in "protecting the Orthodox Church" is built upon pillaging pagans, which is also to serve feudal lords. Thus "loyalty to monarchy" and "protecting the Orthodox Church" are in fact unified, reflecting the unification of the state and the church.

Both Western chivalric literature and Chinese martial arts fiction manifest the conflict between justice and evil and the victory of justice over evil. But as for the criteria of "justice" and "evil," there exist certain differences between them: in Western chivalric literature, the criteria are based on the political and religious interests. Knights must be loyal to and defend feudal lords and Christianity which are considered the embodiment of justice, and eradicate such evil conducts as betrayal of monarch and practice of paganism. Although the action of knights conforms to the "justice" in specific social politics and historical context, knights actually served as the church's tool to massacre pagans, the feudal lords' dominant force to slaughter and plunder, the Crusades to invade and aggress, and the feudal rulers' force to suppress and exploit the underclass.

Chinese martial arts fiction sets traditional culture consciousness and ethical ideas as the criteria of "justice" and "evil." Chinese chivalrous swordsmen regarded the actions of bully, oppression and violence as "injustice" and "evil," thus they attempted to suppress the evil and pacify the good, defend the weak against an injustice, and uphold justice for all. The swordsmen's chivalrous action is a symbol of "justice" integrating strong social impulse and simple ethical spirit. Sima Qian's *Assassin Biography* (*Cike Lie Zhuan*) in his *Historical Records* (*Shi Ji*) depicts "shi" (scholar, the lowest level in Chinese aristocracy) in the Warring States Period (475–221 BC) in the form of historical records. The biography possesses certain elements of martial arts literature and can be regarded as the pioneering work of such literature. In Sima Qian's view, "in today's world, though chivalrous swordsmen's action does not conform to justice, they will honor their words, make resolute decision, keep their promise, and sacrifice their life to help those in danger and distress." It is very important to have a correct interpretation of this statement. First of all, in "though chivalrous swordsmen's action does not conform to justice," what is meant by "justice" here? Chivalrous swordsmen are daring, revengeful, and would draw a sword for his private ends without hesitation, thus they are regarded as the embodiment of violence. Yet from "they will honor their words, make resolute decision, keep their promise, and sacrifice their life to help those in danger and distress," it can be seen that "justice" here does not mean "good and fair behaviour or treatment in secular world" as we might think, but the ethics and morals in specific social politics and historical context, namely the ruling order and moral principles in the centralized monarchy. On the other hand, for "xia" (i.e. chivalrous swordsmen), "yi" is their spiritual pillar. Then what is "yi"? *The Doctrine of the Mean* (*Zhongyong*) quoted Confucius's words as saying that "Yi, appropriateness." *Mencius • Li Lou* held that "Yi, the right way in life." Combining the two explanations, we hold that "yi" means "righteousness" and "justifiability." It must be noted that, as a criterion for morality and conduct, although "yi" is understood differently by people, it has no such a connotation as "loyalty to monarch" in a real sense. The idea of "loyalty to monarch" in martial

arts fiction was not formally formed until *Outlaws of the Marsh* came into being. Before that, martial arts fiction had a strong sense of anti-feudal government, as in the eyes of chivalrous swordsmen, oppression and exploitation are the biggest injustice in the world, so they must fight back against the "unreasonable" and the "unjust." Hence in martial arts fiction, chivalrous conduct is often aimed at oppressors and the exploiting class. In the *Complete Biography of Jigong* (*Jigong Quan Zhuan*), the protagonist Jigong was a typical figure of those who are devoted to fighting against the injustice of the society. Anytime he saw the weak being bullied or the bad doing evil, he would defend the weak against an injustice, eliminate the evil, and wipe out the violence. Chinese chivalrous swordsmen belong to the lumpenproletariat—they had no land or property or permanent job, and so they led a wandering life. They helped the distressed, succored the poor and fought against the unjust with superb martial arts and righteous ardor. It can be said that their conduct transcended political and legal system in feudal society.

"Why does the society value chivalrous swordsmen? Because the world knows no justice. People cannot appeal to justice, so they turn to chivalrous swordsmen. Curbing the powerful and helping the weak, chivalrous swordsmen soon swept over the country. To reward or to punish them, the power should lie in the emperor. Can we say that chivalrous swordsmen's conduct infringed the emperor's power? Or is it because the emperor did not exercise the power himself, so chivalrous swordsmen did it for him?" (Jiang 1989: 185). These words reveal the fact that chivalrous swordsmen's rebellion against centralized monarchy tended to impel them to replace the political system of autocratic monarchy and become legislators and law-executors to some extent. Thus in the eyes of centralized monarchy ruler, martial arts fiction which sang praises of chivalrous swordsmen and chivalrous spirit was regarded as "reactionary literature." By contrast, chivalric literature shared the same essence as church literature and other literature which aimed at propagating feudal Christian spirit: the anti-humanity medieval Christian dogma and religious ideology. This is the essential difference between martial arts fiction and chivalric literature.

6.2.3 Behavioral Motive

In respect of character's behavioral qualities, both Western knights and Chinese swordsmen are adventurous, valiant and tenacious, yet they differ greatly in behavioral motive and purpose. The knights' conduct stemmed from class status, their duties, religious sentiment, and their affection for some noblewoman. With strong conviction about making glorious achievements and getting promoted or knighted, the knights were highly utilitarian. By contrast, Chinese chivalrous swordsmen were filled with chivalrous spirit, individual uprightness, good sense, and indignation against social injustice. But they did not show any individual utilitarianism to a great extent.

As previously mentioned, knight was a noble title in medieval Europe. Obtaining the title means entering upper class and gaining certain feudal aristocratic privilege.

To obtain such a title, one must go through strict test and solemn ceremony. One of those important procedures is making pledges and accepting precepts, of which the main content is that the knight must "be loyal to monarch" and "protect the Orthodox Church." The pledge is in fact the highest form of promise that the knight makes about his duty and obligation, and the code regulating the knight's moral and conduct. As in *Le Petit Jehan de Saintre*, the knight Jehan made adventurous travel to the four great powers of Europe to fulfill his duty and obligation. Deeply influenced by medieval knight spirit, Don Quixote in Cervantes' work decided to take up knight-errant's way of life, and to perform his duty to maintain justice, suppress the violent and assist the weak, and eliminate social injustice, regardless of his own life. Yet as the knight spirit then was out of accord with the times, his good intentions only led to the opposite results, and he always got a bloody nose. The Russian writer Ivan Turgenev commented on Don Quixote that "he displayed the faith in eternal and unshakable things" and "the belief in truth that beyond common people," and paid his "devout reliance and sacrifice" (Turgenev 1958: 108). In a sense, being granted the title of "knight" is a hero's highest honor, and knight is a symbol of courage and loyalty. The knight's honor is granted by feudal lords, in other words, the hero's highest value or ultimate aim is to trade all his courage and loyalty for the recognition and commendation from the ruling class. The knight (hero) has already been shaped by national ideology, thus national ideology is also the dominant aesthetic feature in chivalric literature.

The core of Chinese martial arts fiction is chivalrous spirit, which is mainly embodied in "having a strong sense of justice and being ready to help the weak." The contemporary martial arts fictionist Liang Yusheng elaborates it clearly that:

> In martial arts fiction (wuxia novels), I believe "xia" (chivalrous conduct) is more important than "wu" (kung fu). "Wu" is the body, and "xia" is the soul; "wu" is the means, and "xia" is the end. It is better to have "xia" without "wu" than to have "wu" without "xia."

"Wu" and "xia" are connected, and "xia" and "yi" (righteousness) are inseparable. "Yi" cannot stand without "xia," and "xia" cannot be achieved without "yi." In the novel *Three Heroes and Five Gallants* (*San Xia Wu Yi*) by Shi Yukun, a writer in the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911), there is such a paragraph: "a true chivalrous swordsman is able to adapt himself to different circumstances. At the sight of injustice, he would fight against it right away with all his force and ability … Only then he is worthy of being called a "xia" (a chivalrous person or swordsman)." As observed in the first chapter of *Seven Swordsmen and Thirteen Chivalrous Heroes* (*Qi Jian Shisan Xia*) by Tang Yunzhou, a writer in the Qing Dynasty:

> These swordsmen and chivalrous persons appear and disappear without regularity. They are self-reliant and would do things for others, such as robbing the rich and relieving the poor, suppressing the evil and pacifying the good, and eliminating the violent. They come uninvited. Yet when being invited, they are nowhere to be found.

In Jin Yong's novel *The Legend of Condor Hero* (*Shen Diao Xia Lü*), the male protagonist Guo Jing also said, "Why do we practice martial arts? It is true that having a strong sense of justice and ready to help the weak are our primary duty…

but you must always bear it in mind that 'those who do good for the country and the people are the greatest chivalrous swordsmen,' and in the future they will be well-known and widely respected." The tradition of chivalry in Chinese martial arts is best highlighted in the novel *Outlaws of the Marsh* (*Shui Hu Zhuan*). At Liangshan marsh, an apricot-colored flag was hung out, and on it were the words "enforce justice on behalf of Heaven." These words reflect the norm and code of conduct of the heroes at Liangshan marsh. To "enforce justice on behalf of Heaven" is to praise virtue and punish vice, to rob the rich and relieve the poor, and to suppress the evil and pacify the good, which are in fact the embodiment of sympathy and sense of justice in chivalrous spirit. It must be noted that the conduct of Chinese swordsmen is often detached from the pursuit of fame and fortune. For example, in the novel *Three Heroes and Five Gallants*, the Northern Swordsman Ouyang Chun explains the feature of "chivalrous spirit," observing that "in the course of performing chivalrous conduct, one is supposed to keep it confidential and not make it public. If the distressed can be helped and the poor can be succored, then there is no need to put in an appearance" (Shi 1980: 416).

Due to the essential differences mentioned above, martial arts literature and chivalric literature acquired different social status from the very beginning. Chivalric literature is regarded as the literature and culture embodying mainstream ideology in the Christian monarchial society in Europe, thus it was always advocated by upper class rulers. Based on national ideology and Christianity, chivalric literature belongs to aristocratic literature of ruling class. By contrast, Chinese chivalrous swordsmen's rebellion against unified authority and centralized monarchy determines the "folk nature" of martial arts literature. Chivalrous swordsmen symbolize the vigor of individual life and personalized sense of autonomy, widely divergent from "collectivism," "nationalism," and national ideology. Thus, with its innate spiritual connotation, martial arts literature exerted a direct impact on centralized monarchy, and was always considered as "fierce floods and savage beasts" (i.e. great scourges) by the feudal authority. As a form of folk culture, martial arts literature is the product of folk psychology projected onto the realm of literature, and it flourished with the development of commodity economy in the later stage of centralized monarchy. Thus, there occurred a unique phenomenon: on the one hand, martial arts literature is deeply rooted in folk culture and enjoyed a high status in the folk society; on the other hand, standing on the opposite side of national ideology, it looks pale without mainstream discourse power, and is unable to enter mainstream culture. This is the destiny of martial arts literature, which is decided from the very beginning by its rebellious nature.

6.2.4 The Circumstances of Performing Chivalrous Acts

As for adventurous chivalrous acts, both Western knights and Chinese chivalrous swordsmen had to endure a hard life in the open, set out on arduous journey, and overcome dangers and difficulties. Yet they differ greatly in terms of the circum-

stances in which their chivalrous acts were performed—knights' adventure is often set in mysterious environment, while that of the chivalrous swordsmen is often put in realistic environment.

Many of the early knights' adventures depicted in chivalric literature occur in mysterious settings: the ancient dark forest, mazy fortress, and cave haunted by demons, and their rivals were by no means common people, but tigers, lions, serpents, monsters, Black Knights, and super-power opponents. In the face of horrific circumstances and ferocious rivals, the knights fought against them fearlessly and eventually won the victory with the help of magical helmets, rings, swords, etc. After the Crusades, the background of European chivalric romance underwent some changes: the stories which used to be shrouded by the darkness of forests and oddity of north myths were turned into something as charming as fairy tales, with glittering treasures, magical talisman, magic, holy water, coquettish beauty, magnificent palace, glamorous garden, all loaded with mythological conceptions and religious fanaticism from the East and the West.

By contrast, the chivalrous acts of Chinese swordsmen were carried out not in dark and scary circumstances, nor in mysterious and romantic settings, but in the real social life. Adopting an almost realistic writing technique, it displays the diverse secular life, and the characters are similar to those in real life. For example, in the *Outlaws of the Marsh* (*Shui Hu Zhuan*), the individual chivalrous acts include: Wu Song fought and killed Hsi-men Ch'ing, beat Jiang Zhong when drunk, wreaked havoc at Feiyunpu, blood-stained Mandarin Duck House; Lu Zhishen caused a turmoil in the wild boar forest, stirred up trouble at peach blossom village, and burned crock temple; Li Kui wreaked havoc in Jiangzhou, hijacked execution ground, killed Li Gui, and beat Yin Tianxi to death, etc. The collective chivalrous acts include: took the ill-gotten birthday treasures by strategy, heroes from the three mountains united to strike Qingzhou, three sieges of Zhu Village, and the heroes hijacked execution ground, etc. In swordsmen's world, a man's value is judged by his martial arts skills: those with superb skills can have a place in the world; and those with poor or no skills are slaughtered like ants, having no value of existence. In the *Outlaws of the Marsh*, few words are used to describe the social environment at the time, but the social life in the Northern Song Dynasty (960–1127 AD) is vividly portrayed through the depiction of the people from all walks of life and their relations. For another example, in the book *Complete Biography of Jigong* (*Jigong Quan Zhuan*), the character's wandering life in towns and villages in regions south of the Yangtze River is depicted. The book presents us a picture of the urban and rural life in the regions south of the Yangtze River in the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911): urban prosperity, serried shops, and numerous taverns and brothels. The depictions not only have social significance but also make the legendary world of swordsmen more realistic and lifelike.

What martial arts fiction constructs is a world of brotherhood. In real feudal world the imperial law reigned supreme. Yet in martial arts fiction, Chinese chivalrous swordsmen would adhere to the code of brotherhood in complete contempt of the imperial law. Unbound by law, the brotherhood world in fact reflects the reconstruction of the ancient Chinese dream of Peach-Blossom Garden (i.e. a utopian land of peace and happiness away from the turmoil of the mundane world), which abhors

the unfair and the unjust guarded by the imperial law. Thus aloof from royal court indoctrination, the brotherhood world is placed with the hope for fairness and justice. The world of brotherhood has its rules: uphold justice, praise virtues and punish vice. In this world, the chivalrous swordsmen dare to vent anger and curse, to fight and kill, and to lead a wandering life. They are in charge of justice, hold their own destiny, and seek spiritual liberation and transcendence. The brotherhood world becomes the spiritual home to heroes, which undoubtedly reveals people's hope for freedom.

Hegel said, "A man shall not have objective reality without surrounding world, just like a god statue shall not settle down without a temple" (Hegel 1979: 12). The above discussion shows that both Chinese and Western writers created a specific environment for their characters: influenced by myth and religion, Western chivalric literature portrays the environment of knights with the tone of mystery and romanticism; rooted in China, the living environment in martial arts fiction is real and close to life to the readers, thus it displays a strong sense of realism.

6.2.5 Views on Women

Both chivalric literature and martial arts fiction depicts women, yet they take opposite attitudes towards women in their depiction. In Western chivalric literature, the love between a knight and a lady (usually a noblewoman) is a significant and even indispensable part of the work. Knight is bound up with love, thus in chivalric literature women are depicted as elegant and decent, to some extent they are even deified. But in Chinese martial arts fiction, the image of women is often undesirable, and chivalrous swordsmen are described as apathetic about women. They treat sexual desire as something evil and advocate that "a hero would restrain himself from the lust for woman." It was not until the emergence of "young hero and heroine novel" in the late Qing Dynasty (1840–1911) that this mold was broken up.

Hero and beauty are the customary theme in chivalric literature. In chivalric works women are not only beautiful but also good-natured and considerate, and can be regarded as the ideal role model of romanticists' imagination. Another feature of chivalric literature is the knight's admiration for and pursuit of noblewoman: a valiant knight falls in love with a noblewoman and secretly dates her, creating a lamenting love story. The knight is refined and courteous, and acts in gentlemanly manners in every way. In Western chivalric literature, the heroines are generally mild and delicate, as pure as angels, and they would never brandish a sword. The reason for this phenomenon traces back to the Western cultural traditions. Before converting to Christianity, women were regarded as the symbol of fertility and reproduction. Barehanded women could go to the battlefield and make peace between the warring sides. The power of woman is being woman. French artist Jacques Louis David's painting *The Intervention of the Sabine Women* depicts the image of Sabine women curbing the war with Romans. After converting to Christianity, the image of Virgin Mary was held in high esteem, thus the positive image of woman in literary works tends to be idealized by the model of Virgin Mary. Braving wind and waves, practicing loyalty

and bravery, and together with the love for and conquest of a noblewoman, all these bring out the best of a knight's charm. In the author's view, the knight's pursuit of love is similar to his pursuit of the title "knight," both carry vanity in psychological sense and conquest in spiritual sense, as Xuan Zhu (also known as Mao Dun) remarks in his book *Introducing Chivalric Literature*:

> In romance (chivalric literature), the heroines are either proud and intelligent, or termagant and ignorant. If it is to depict a good woman, she could be depicted as perfectly good as a fairy; if it is to depict a bad woman, she could be described as incomparably bad. But in either case, they just propel knights to take risks, fight with each other or do foolish things (the so called "make a name for himself"), all for a mere smile from the woman. Even a beauty's smile can give strength to the knight and help him snatch a victory out of defeat. If the knight is injured and dying, a beauty's tears can guide his soul into heaven … But from another perspective, those fairy-like beauties do not have their independent personalities, thus they are merely playthings for the knights. They are protected like precious flowers and rare birds, but eventually they are only "objects," not "humans." This is the medieval views on women revealed in chivalric literature.
>
> (Xuan 1990: 21–22)

The above paragraph basically summarizes the views on women in Western chivalric literature. *Dawn Song*, regarded by Friedrich Engels as the quintessence of Provence chivalric lyrics, depicts a knight's affection for a noblewoman and their parting scene at dawn. The chivalric romance *Lancelot, the Knight of the Cart* tells the love story between the knight Lancelot and the Queen Guinevere. Lancelot gave up the glory and took risks for the sake of Guinevere, and he would obey every word she said. The chivalric novel *Le Petit Jehan de Saintré* narrates the love story between the French knight Jehan and a beautiful princess. Thus it is obvious that women hold a significant position in chivalric literature. Women are often pictured as idols that the knight would feel great honor to serve. Vanity and sense of conquest are the major impetus for a knight's act of love. It can be said that without the part of "women's love," there would be no chivalric literature.

Influenced by feudal moral principles such as the Confucian ethical code "segregation between male and female," ancient Chinese martial arts fiction generally rejects woman and "romantic love." In traditional chivalrous concept, they believe "a chivalrous swordsman would restrain himself from the lust for woman." They despise playboys and the like and would severely punish those shameless "deflowering thieves." In Fei Xiaotong's *From the Soil—The Foundations of Chinese Society*, he deems that in China's rural society the affectional orientation of chivalrous swordsmen tends towards the same sex. In the brotherhood pledge "we ask not the same day of birth but we seek to die together," the close bond in some degree reveals deep and strong same-sex relationships between the swordsmen. Besides, some hold that martial arts fiction is supposed to portray the hero's masculine beauty, thus there exists no space for woman. In all Chinese martial arts fictional works, the one that most discriminates women may probably be *Outlaws of the Marsh* (*Shui Hu Zhuan*). Women cause troubles—this is widely acknowledged by almost all heroes of Mount Liang. The forbidden zone of "sex" in Chinese martial arts fiction was breached in *The Tale of Heroic Sons and Daughters* (*Ernü Yingxiong Zhuan*) by Wen Kang, a

writer in the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911). The novel not only manifests heroism, but also depicts the lasting romance between a hero and a heroine for the first time in the history of Chinese martial arts fiction, portraying vividly the image a heroic yet affectionate chivalrous swordswoman name He Yufeng. In spite of this, the novel does not exceed the basic sphere of feudal ethical code—it is still confined to the depiction of feudal moral code of words and deeds of the characters as well as virtue and integrity in an effort to safeguard the feudal moral values and obligations. In modern and contemporary martial arts novels, women are depicted as true to life, and they dare to love and hate, hence their image becomes more vivid and impressing. In contrast to Western chivalric literature, modern Chinese martial arts literature often highlights a certain beauty's admiration for and pursuit of a chivalrous swordsman, and the role of the beauty is more like a bosom friend of the swordsman rather than his plaything, as is the case in Western chivalric literature.

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Chapter 7
Science Fiction and Fantasy Stories

Science fiction (*or* Sci-fi) as a genre of literature gives depictions of vistas of sci-tech progress and human's understanding and speculation about the mystery of nature by means of vivid storylines and fascinating techniques. Based on the current sci-tech development and conditions, it employs scientific logical deduction to depict virtually the yet-to-be-realized scientific inventions and innovations so as to convey the authors' criticism about real life and reflections about futuristic scientific development. Therefore, the history of science fiction is actually a history during which human beings have been making continuous exploration of and gain understanding about the universe, time and space as well as human beings themselves.

7.1 A History of Chinese and Western Science Fiction

7.1.1 A History of Western Science Fiction

It is generally believed that the founder of Western science fiction is Francis Bacon (1561–1626), the British philosopher and scientist. Bacon is the author of *New Atlantis*, a utopian travel story completed in 1604 and published in 1627, in which the author depicts a small submerged island in Pacific Ocean named "Atlantis," its scientific institution and various scientific wonders that once existed there. From 17th century to 18th century, there even appeared space travel novels (e.g. those by Cyrano de Bergerac) and short stories dealing with futuristic world (e.g. Louis-Sébastian Mercier's *The Year 2440* published in 1770). Most literary historians agree that the very first literary work with complete sci-fi characteristics is *Frankenstein* (1818) by the English writer Mary Shelley, who was the second wife of the famous English poet Percy Bysshe Shelley. Influenced by her mother, husband and other members of the family, she abandoned very early the belief that man was created by God and embraced Darwin's theory of evolution. Meanwhile she was well versed

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in the writing techniques of gothic novels. At the age of 18, she found inspiration in her dreams and began her writing of *Frankenstein*. The protagonist of this novel is Frankenstein, a young doctor who finds out the secret of life and creates a living creature—but due to experiment error, the creature looks very hideous—so hideous that no one dares to get close to him. As a result, he vents his anger on the young doctor who has created him and then disappears in the wildness. As far as writing technique is concerned, this novel inherits the artistic style of gothic novels to create a gloomy and horrific atmosphere. But different from the traditional gothic novels, the protagonist of this novel is no longer the chivalrous hero in traditional gothic novels, and the calamity facing the protagonist is no longer the one in the usual sense, but the catastrophe created by human beings themselves. The reason why this novel has been considered as the first sci-fi novel is that it is based on scientific knowledge so that the fantasy of human beings is scientifically grounded, through which the behavior of human beings can be observed. The novel depicts love and hate, and killing and revenge between the scientist Frankenstein and the monster created by himself, thus starting one of the major themes of "man creating man" in science fiction. *The Last Man* (1826), another novel by Mary Shelley, initiated the theme of "the end of the world" in science fiction. Mary Shelley can well be regarded as "the mother of science fiction."

Jules Verne (1826–1905), the 19th century French writer, has been universally acknowledged as "the father of science fiction" owing to his high productivity of sci-fi novels and unique contribution to literature in the innovation of artistic techniques. During his lifetime he wrote nearly 100 sci-fi stories, among which 64 are sci-fi novels and two are collective volumes of novellas and short stories. While deeply influenced by Robinson Crusoe, Verne enlarges the sphere of "special" travel by describing various types of unusual travels such as travel around the world, or inside the earth, or in the sea, or in the air, or around the moon. No wonder many of his novels are inter-connected by the general title "*Bizarre Travels.*" His representative works include *The Daughter of Captain Grant*, *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea* and *The Mysterious Island*, which make up his *Trilogy* of science novels. *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea* is Verne's major work as well as the representative of science fiction during his time. It tells the story of Professor Pierre Aronnax, a biologist of Paris Museum and his two friends who roam under the sea by Captain Nemo's submarine "the Nautilus." The novel gives a vivid portrayal of Captain Nemo, a legendary figure, and makes two bold predictions: the use of submarine, and the wide-spread use of electric power. The author revels in the description of scientific adventure, and for the first time he puts the protagonists armed with cutting-edge sci-tech ideas at the center of his sci-fi novels, and predicts a number of futuristic findings and inventions. In this way, Verne pushes forward science fiction to a new stage of development. Verne's works possess a kind of elegance characteristic of French style; meanwhile they also attempt to seek scientific accuracy and advancement ahead of his time, therefore he is regarded by later researchers as a member of "school of science" or, to be more exact, "school of hard science."

Until the end of the 19th century, although there appeared some influential science fictionists such as Verne, their literary exploration was nevertheless confined within

a certain aspect, and sci-fi fiction as an independent literary genre was yet to take shape. Then Herbert George Wells (1866–1946), an English novelist, summarized the characteristics of those science fictionists before him, and innovatively carried on and developed science fiction, making it an independent literary genre in literary world. Wells wrote 9 famous sci-fi novels in his lifetime, and these novels were mainly written from 1895 to 1908. *The Time Machine*, the first of these 9 novels, which is also his representative work, proposes for the first time that the world can move faster into the future through the advancement of machines. The novel tells the story of a time traveller who rides in his self-made time machine to travel through time and space to the futuristic world hundreds of thousands of years from now. To his surprise, he finds that futuristic mankind not only makes no progress, but dreadfully falls back. By employing a nearly horrifying writing technique and intricate plots, Wells displays a gruesome and fearful scene in which mankind falls into degeneration. Wells's works have vivid plots, salient conflicts and intriguing stories. He intermingles the fantastic and the possible, the strange and the familiar, and the new and the old into a whole, and lays great stress on literariness. With social science as the main contents of his works, he portrays the characters and their thoughts, and symbolizes the contradictions and development of human society. By integrating fantastic scientific imagination and in-depth social criticism as a whole, he reveals the influence of science and technology on the society. It is of great ideological depth and social significance to pay close attention to the influence of sci-tech development on human life, which sets the basic format of modern science fiction. Wells is regarded by later researchers as a member of the "school of literature" or, to be more exact, "school of soft science," and he is acclaimed by those Western researchers who are in favor of this school as the "father of science fiction."

From 1920s to 1930s, science fiction got further developed and branched off into two schools. In Europe, Wells's writing techniques were carried on and there appeared a large number of excellent sci-fi novelists and sic-fi novels which were both emotional and rational. However, in America things were obviously different where novelists laid stress on bizarreness and horror and were keen on new inventions and new physical concepts, thus ignoring their social duties and responsibilities to some extent. In Europe, as a result of the change of political situation and the rise of German and Italian Fascism, there appeared a new form of science fiction, i.e. dystopian or non-idealistic fiction. Such fiction, though related to politics, generally represents its theme by means of sci-tech metaphors or sci-tech depictions. They give true-to-life portrayal of utopian dreams and make them vividly visible so as to force people to consider the futuristic "utopian society" more concretely and deeply. The representative works of dystopianism are *We* by Yevgeny Zamyatin (1884–1937) of former Soviet Union, and *War with the Newts* by Karel Capek (1890–1838) of Czech. *We*, published in Britain in 1924, is a role model to represent philosophic ideology in the form of science novel, while *War with the Newts* is a political satirical sci-fi novel which is generally considered as the prophet of anti-Nazism. Its special technique of combining scientific fantasy with political satire enlarges the sphere of science fiction.

The most well-known science fictionist during the First and Second World Wars is William Olaf Stapledon (1886–1950). As both a writer and philosopher, Stapledon cares a lot about the fate of human beings, and his works mostly deal with the philosophic and moral issues of the society. His main representative works include *Last and First Men: A Story of the Near and Far Future* (1930), *Last Men in London* (1932), *Odd John: A Story between Jest and Earnest* (1935), *Star Maker* (1937), *Darkness and the Light* (1942), *Sirius: A Fantasy of Love and Discord* (1944), etc. By employing the techniques of science fiction, these works made up the social "documents" between the two World Wars and possess ever-lasting literary value.

The former Soviet Union was a socialist country, and so science fiction of the country developed along the road of socialist realism, in which there appeared a lot of excellent sci-fi works, e.g. Vladimir A. Obruchev's *Plutonia* (1924) and *Sannikov Land* (1926), Alexei N. Tolstoy's *Aelita* (1922–1923) and *The Hyperboloid of Engineer Garin* (1925–1926), and Alexander Belyaev's *The Amphibian Man* (1928), to name just a few. These works reflect the thirst of people of former Soviet Union for science and world knowledge.

In America, the beginning of 20th century witnessed a rapid development of public education, a great increase of readership, and people's hunger for books and scientific knowledge. In order to meet this need, publishing industry in America developed by leaps and bounds. Some science periodicals carried sci-tech stories in series along with sci-tech essays in an effort to propagate scientific knowledge. Among these periodicals the most famous one is *Modern Electrics* edited by Hugo Gernsback (1884–1967), in which a series of sci-fi novels were carried. At first, the stories carried in the magazine were simple and coarse. Then in 1923 Gernsback used one entire printed page of an issue of the magazine *Science and Invention* to carry science stories, naming it "Special Edition of Science Stories," and thus extended greatly the influence of such a literary genre. Then there emerged magazines especially dedicated to "science stories." In 1926, *Amazing Stories* began its publication. At first, these magazines relied heavily on the novels of Verne, Wells and other novelists, defining "science stories" as "the stories in Verne's or/and Wells's style" in which amazing romantic stories were combined with scientific facts and predictions. Before long, Gernsback founded two magazines: *Air Wonder Stories* and *Science Wonder Stories*. Then in 1930, the magazine *Thrilling Wonder Stories* came out. The competition between these magazines and the publication of sci-tech stories in other magazines greatly promoted the development of science fiction. Gernsback attached great importance to the scientific quality of science fiction, and proposed the slogan that "science fiction aims at turning science into mythology." His efforts played a decisive role in ushering in the "Golden Age" of science fiction. The Hugo Awards which was named after him is one of the top sci-fi awards in the world.

As a promoter of science fiction, Hugo Gernsback made his indelible contributions. But the maturity of American science fiction should be attributed to Dr. Edward E. Smith (1890–1965). Smith is a master in novels of space adventure. His first novel, *The Skylark of Space*, stirred a sensation after its publication in Gernsback's *Amazing Stories* in 1928. Smith's science fiction has two series: *The Skylark* series and *The Lensman* series. Space novels can be traced back to the end of the 19th century and the

beginning of the 20th century, but it was not until the publication of Edward Smith's two series that the writing mode of space novels was established. This mode has the following features: the two sides in conflict involve two or over two societies with highly developed science and technology; the protagonists in one side are human beings, and in the opposite side are either human beings or other higher animals; the actions of protagonists are set in space, who use such high-tech transportation means as spaceships or spaceship formation. Owing to Edward Smith's outstanding attainment in space novels, he was chosen to be the Guest of Honor at the second World Science Fiction Convention in 1940, and was conferred the Top Honorary Award for Science Fiction Lover in 1964.

Another influential sci-fi writer during this period is John W. Campbell Jr. (1910–1971), who is also an outstanding sci-fi activist. Influenced by Gernsback School in his early years, he later published a number of novels about space adventure in Smithian style. Being so serious about his writing, Campbell produced sci-fi novels which are of greater depth in their ideological contents and come closer to scientific reality. His *Troops* series, *CT* series and *Anthropoid* series which focus on the exploration of human nature are magically fascinating. As a highly experienced writer, he knew well the taste of his readers and so his writing orientation. He attached great importance to the literariness of science fiction and often held theoretical discussions on sci-fi writing. He proposed that writers should throw off the yoke of the conventional subject matters such as space adventure and robot, and shift their attention to the negative impact science might bring to the society. Meanwhile, they should change their bad habit of stressing plots but ignoring characters, and keep improving their writing style and techniques. As an editor of *The Astounding Science Fiction Anthology* for dozens of years, he dug out and trained a large number of sci-fi writers who made bold explorations in psychology, philosophy and politics and published a lot of fine sci-fi novels, which helped to start a new wave of literary creation. Campbellian School is the successor to Gernsbackian School. Compared with Gernsbackian School, Campbelian School deals with broader subject matters and more profound themes, and gives more weight to writing techniques and literariness. With the evolution of science fiction, some magazines opened columns specially dedicated to the discussion of science fiction, and sci-fi lovers nationwide organized various clubs, published periodicals and imitative sci-fi novels, and made comments and criticism, all of which greatly promoted the development of sci-fi creation. The World Science Fiction Society specially established the annual John W. Campbell Award for the best new writers.

From 1930s to 1950s, a stable literary school of science fiction took shape in America, which ushered in a so-called "Golden Age" of science fiction. This period saw the emergence of a large number of sci-fi novelists, e.g. Clifford D. Simak (1904–1988), Alfred E. van Vogt (1912–2000), Theodore Sturgeon (1918–1985), Robert Heinlein (1907–1988) and Isaac Asimov (1920–1993). Clifford D. Simak is known for his prolificacy of works, some of which present a unique idyllic flavor and utopian sentiment. Alfred E. van Vogt's sci-fi works not only diversify in their subject matters and themes, but also are full of complex and bizarre plots, among which stories about supermen, robots and extraterrestrial beings are especially successful.

Theodore Sturgeon is known for the high quality of his works. During his lifetime, Sturgeon wrote a number of sci-fi novels, novellas and short stories with original themes, powerful style and distinctive characterization, some of which have become the classics of sci-fi novels. Robert Heinlein is known for his "Future History series" which reject some writers' bad habit of "writing thrill for thrill's sake" or "writing magic for magic's sake," and exhibit high artistic connotation and ideological value. Besides, Heinlein published a number of science novels which are well received by young readers. Isaac Asimov is an amazingly prolific writer whose achievements mainly lie in his two series: "Robot series" and "Foundation series." The former makes bold innovation in traditional subject matters, creating many intelligent and affectionate robot images; while the latter portrays a soul-stirring picture of the rise and fall of Galactic Empire in imitation of the historical facts of ancient Rome from a psycho-historical perspective.

Science fiction needs to present the value of science itself, which inevitably leads to a conflict between science and traditional religious belief. Such a conflict results in the emergence of anti-science fiction which intermingles religious belief with sci-fi techniques, and thus it plays a certain role in improving the techniques of sci-fi writing. The leading representatives of anti-science fiction novelists are Clive Staples Lewis (1898–1963) and Walter Miller Jr. (1923–1996).

Influenced by the Cold War, people in the West in the 1960s experienced a dramatic change in their world view. The classic sci-fi novels which used to be popular during the Golden Age gradually broke away from people's realistic thinking, resulting in a New Wave in sci-fi writing which first started in Britain.

Michael Moorcock (1939–), who became the editor of the British sci-fi magazine *New Worlds* in 1965, published a batch of sci-fi novels in which the focus of attention was shifted from the traditional natural science to humanities. The major writers of the New Wave, apart from Moorcock, include J. G. Ballard (1930–2009) and Brian Aldiss (1925–), who made great efforts to depict the misfortune, isolation, disappointment, tolerance and friendship of human beings and, being strongly critical and pessimistic, they came closer to mainstream literature and expanded their subject matters to include religion and sex in their writing. This is called "the New Wave" in science fiction creation. In America, the representatives of this New Wave movement include Philip J. Farmer (1918–2009), Joseph Henry Delaney (1932–2000), Bob Shaw (1931–1996) and Gordon R. Dickson (1923–2001). They realized that such problems in real life as race, environmental protection and education were found wanting in traditional sci-fi novels which tended to rely on sci-tech achievements. The sci-tech subject matters which had been so much favored in "Golden Age" lost its novelty as a result of continuous replication and restructuring. Along with this emerging New Wave, some sci-fi writers who were eager to cast off the bondage of traditional sci-fi novels and to raise its status in literature no longer treated such orthodox disciplines as physics as its main focus. Instead, they laid greater stress on psychology, sociology, politics, and even theology, and their writing techniques came very much close to those of orthodox mainstream literature. Trying their best to learn and draw on the techniques of mainstream literature and purposely avoiding the scientific description found in traditional science fiction, writers during this period

devoted themselves to the pursuit of literary techniques of sci-fi creation and realistic thinking.

However, in the late 1970s, the New Wave declined and became something of a spent force, losing its vanguard and power. Its excessive negligence of scientific connotation threatened to deprive science fiction of its own characteristics. Consequently, a reform which attempted to return to the traditional science fiction came up, which is called "Cyber-punk Movement." "Cyber" is the prefix of the word "cybernetics" while "punk" means "anti-culture people," and "Cyber-punk" refers to "a programmer who breaks into computer systems in order to steal or change or destroy information," or "fast-paced science fiction involving futuristic computer-based societies."

Cyber-punk Movement emerged as a result of writers' dissatisfaction with the New Wave, which came too close to mainstream literature, thus inviting severe criticism from some other sci-fi writers, who argued that the New Wave attempted to make science fiction abandon its value and tradition and to be replaced by mainstream literature. On the one hand, sci-fi writers learned from the lessons of the New Wave and gained a better understanding about the scientific quality of science fiction so that they actively explored modern new sci-tech subject matters, leading sci-fi writing back to sci-tech narrative; on the other hand, realizing the deficiency of traditional sci-fi novels with regard to their literariness and contemporaneity, they paid more attention to their literary value and ideological contents. The two major representatives of "Cyber-punk Movement" are William F. Gibson (1948–) and Bruce Sterling (1954–). Gibson's *Neuromancer* which came out in 1984 carried off all the major awards of the year for science fiction while Sterling's *Involution Ocean* (1977) and other works were also well received. These works make ridicule and satire on the cultural value of human life against the scientific backdrop of information explosion. Before long, Cyber-punk Movement spread to the other countries and went beyond the sphere of science fiction, turning out to be a sub-culture phenomenon. What Cyber-punk expresses is actually the world view of a totally new generation. With the advance of time/space virtual technology and the approach of globalization, science fiction in the West is ushering in an era of prosperity and diversity.

In the 1950s, science fiction began to be adapted for the screen and in this way they got more popular. Such sci-fi movies as *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951) and *The War of the Worlds* (1953) became smash hits at one time. Then the 1970s saw the arrival of a new stage for science fiction adapted for the screen, during which not only more movie-goers were attracted to go to the cinema, but also artistic techniques of movies got developed. Owing to the success of science fiction in movie industry, plays with sci-fi contents were put on the stage in theaters, and feature programmes about science fiction were presented on the radios and televisions. Nowadays science fiction has become one of the most popular literary genres the world over.

A survey of the development of Western science fiction shows that, since the seminal introduction of the two types of science fiction by Verne and Wells, science fiction has gradually reached maturity, evolving from the period of Golden Age when the emphasis was laid on the presentation of sci-tech scenes to the period of the New Wave when attention was paid one-sidedly to literary techniques. Western science fiction has evolved in such a way that it keeps steering between the two extremes

of "hard science fiction" and "soft science fiction", attempting to seek a balance between them.

Along with the evolution and prosperity of science fiction, there appeared three awards encouraging science fictionists: International Fantasy Award (IFA, 1951–1955–1957) nominated and presented by British Science Fiction Association, Hugo Award (1953, 1955–1956, 1958–) nominated and presented by the World Science Fiction Society, and Nebula Award (1966–), nominated and presented by Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America (SFWA) and voted on by the community of authors.

The following is a list of sci-fi novels which won the above awards from 1951 to 1976 (Scholes and Rabkin 1977) (Table 7.1).

Table 7.1 Sci-fi novels which won the awards from 1951 to 1976 (Scholes and Rabkin 1977)

Year	Novel title	Author(s)	Award(s)
1951	Earth Abides	George R. Stewart	IFA
1952	Fancies and Goodnights	John Collier	IFA
1953	City	Clifford D. Simak	IFA
	The Demolished Man	Alfred Bester	Hugo
1954	More than Human	Theodore Sturgeon	IFA
1955	A Mirror for Observers	Edgar Pangborn	IFA
	They'd Rather Be Right	Mark Clifton and Frank Riley	Hugo
1956	Double Star	Robert A. Heinlein	Hugo
1957	The Lord of the Rings Trilogy	J. R. R. Tolkien	IFA
1958	The Big Time	Fritz Leiber	Hugo
1959	A Case of Conscience	James Blish	Hugo
1960	Starship Troopers	Robert A. Heinlein	Hugo
1961	A Canticle for Leibowitz	Walter M. Miller, Jr.	Hugo
1962	A Stranger in a Strange Land	Robert A. Heinlein	Hugo
1963	The Man in the High Castle	Philip K. Diek	Hugo
1964	Way Station	Clifford D. Simak	Hugo
1965	The Wanderer	Fritz Leiber	Hugo
1966	Dune	Frank Herbert	Nebula
	This Immortal	Roger Zelazny	Hugo
	The Foundation Trilogy	Isaac Asimov	Hugo
1967	The Moon is a Harsh Mistress	Robert A. Heinlein	Hugo
	Babel-17	Samuel R. Delnay	Nebula
	Flowers for Algernon	Daniel Keyes	Nebula

(continued)

Table 7.1 (continued)

Year	Novel title	Author(s)	Award(s)
1968	Lord of Light	Roger Zelazny	Hugo
	The Einstein Intersection	Samuel R. Delnay	Nebula
1969	Stand on Zanzibar	John Brunner	Hugo
	Rite of Passage	Alexei Panshin	Nebula
1970	The Left Hand of Darkness	Ursula K. Le Guin	Hugo and Nebula
1971	Ringworld	Larry Niven	Hugo and Nebula
1972	To Your Scattered Bodies Go	Phillip Jose Farmer	Hugo
	A Time of Changes	Robert Silverberg	Nebula
1973	The Gods Themselves	Isaac Asimov	Hugo and Nebula
1974	Rendezvous with Rama	Arthur C. Clarke	Hugo and Nebula
1975	The Dispossessed	Ursula K. Le Guin	Hugo and Nebula
1976	The Forever War	Joe Haldeman	Hugo and Nebula

7.1.2 Development of Modern Chinese Science Fiction

The origin and development of science fiction are closely related to the advance of science and technology, as the latter have greatly promoted the growth of the former. Joseph Needham (1900–1995), the renowned British scientist and historian, spoke highly of the scientific and technological achievements of ancient China, maintaining that China was far ahead of the West in science and technology between the 3rd century AD and the 13th century AD. Besides, China was also far ahead of European countries in scientific inventions and discoveries, and this was especially so before the 15th century (Needham 1975: 3). However, in modern times China lagged behind Western world in science and technology. After the Opium War of 1840, China was reduced to a semi-colonial and semi-feudal country. As the Western forces encroached on China, Western science and technology began to pour in. According to the data collected and analyzed about the translated Western sci-tech works in China during a period of 60 years (from 1853 to 1911), it is found that there were 468 Western sci-tech books translated into Chinese which deal with astronomy, meteorology, mathematics, physics, chemistry, and geography, etc. (Zhou 1982).

At the same time, modern Western science fiction began to be translated and introduced into China continually. From 1900, scholars such as Yi Ru, Xiu Yu, Liang Qichao, Bao Tianxiao, Wu Jianren (Wo Yao) translated Verne's sci-fi novels successively. For example, in 1900 Yi Ru and Xiu Yu translated Verne's *Around the World in Eighty Days*, and their version is regarded as the first Chinese translation of Western science fiction. In 1903, Liang Qichao translated Verne's *The Fifteen Young Heroes*, and at the same time Bao Tianxiao, Zhou Guisheng and some other

translators translated Verne's other works into Chinese. In 1903, Lu Xun's translation of Verne's *From the Earth to the Moon* was published. This translation was done from Japanese to archaic Chinese. In order to promote sci-fi literature and spread scientific knowledge among the people, Lu Xun wrote an explanatory preface to his translation, arguing that human beings always hope for moving forward. Some ambitious people, despite their achievements, are unsatisfied with what they've attained and embrace more lofty ideals and dreams in the hope that one day they can overcome the gravity of the earth and fly through the atmosphere for the universe, soaring in the space freely. He compares such science fiction to the "seeds of discovery and invention"—only if you sow the seeds can you reap harvest. This fully affirms the predictive and enlightening role science and technology play in scientific invention, discovery and innovation.

In response to the proposal of some influential writers such as Lu Xun, and also under the influence of foreign sci-fi novels, writers in China started to imitate foreign sci-fi works in their literary creation. The four major magazines in the late Qing Dynasty (1840–1911), i.e. *New Novels* (*Xin Xiaoshuo*), *Novels with Illustrations* (*Xiuxiang Xiaoshuo*), *Novels Monthly* (*Yue Yue Xiaoshuo*) and *Novels* (*Xiaoshuo Lin*) all took great pride in including sci-fi stories in them. Up to now, the earliest work created by Chinese authors that can be regarded as a sci-fi novel in its strict sense is Xu Nianci's *Stories of Mr. New Conch* published by Shanghai Fiction Press in 1905. This novel was included in a collection of sci-fi novels entitled *New Conch*, in which other two translated works "*Stories of Mr. Conch*" and "*Stories of Mr. Conch: A Sequel*" were included along with *Stories of Mr. New Conch*. *Stories of Mr. New Conch* was actually an exercise work after Xu Nianci had read the first two translated works. As the author noted, "After reading them, I am great amazed by their weirdness," "I took such a great interest in them that I could hardly tear myself away from them," however, "my work is nothing but an imitative work of them."

In *Stories of Mr. New Conch*, the first-person narrative is adopted by the author, who, based on his separation of the "soul" and "body," depicts various fantastic scenes seen by the "soul" after it goes up into the outer space and by the "body" after it goes down the earth. The soul flies to the Mercury, where it sees how an aged man is miraculously turned into a young sturdy boy through brain transplant. On the Mercury, it sees various spectacular plants and animals in ancient times. Then the body goes down to the earth's core, where it sees an elderly man of over 9000 years old, as well as a kind of "exterior mirror" similar to modern television. After this fantastic experience, he returns to Shanghai and devotes himself whole-heartedly to the teaching of "brain electricity," which turns out to be a great success. This novel on the one hand draws on the experience of foreign sci-fi creation and makes a bold conception of the story based on the related modern scientific knowledge; on the other hand it makes use of the belief among Chinese folks that a human has the "soul" apart from his "body" for the conceiving and structuring of the story, making the novel an ideal integration of East (i.e. China) and West with an unique flavor. In the novel, such scientific fantasies are set forth as "brain transplant," "longevity of humans," "exterior mirror" and "brain electricity," some of which have now become realities. For example, "organ transplant" has now achieved a great success, "exterior

mirror" has been proved by the invention of television, and some of the functions of "brave electricity" have been fulfilled by cyber-communication, while "longevity of humans" has become an important research topic worldwide with some initial achievements already being accomplished.

After Xu Nianci's *Stories of Mr. New Conch*, there then appeared "*Travels in Utopia*" by Xiaoran Yusheng, *Electrical World* by Gaoyang Bucaizi (Xu Zhiyan), *The Flying Monster* by Gan Ruo, *A New Story of an Old Rustic's Idle Talk* by Lu Shi'e and *Machine Wife* (anonymous). These works exhibit two striking features characteristic of the late Qing Dynasty (1840–1911): one is the curiosity about and reverence for science, the other is the strong desire to make the country rich and boost its military power, both of which "bear a strong color of enlightenment for reform and mass administration" (Wang 1999). For example, "*Travels in Utopia*" is a reformist novel advocating constitutionalism, *The Flying Monster* lashes out at traitorous foreign policy of the imperial government of the late Qing Dynasty, while *Electrical World* envisages that science and technology may be utilized to defeat the Western powers and revive China.

The period of the Republic of China (1912–1949) witnessed a slow development of sci-fi creation. Major works during this period include *China Ten Years from Now* by Jin Feng, *The Dream of Peace*, *Under the North Pole*, *Strange Illness in London*, and *Sex Transformation* by Gu Junzheng. Some leading writers of the time also dabbled in the field of science fiction, e.g. *A Tale of Cat City* by Lao She and *The Gills of an Iron Fish* by Xu Dishan. Sci-fi novels during this period still bored the characteristic of paying close attention to the fate of the nation, but were rather wanting in their sci-tech fantasies. *A Tale of Cat City* by Lao She has long been considered as merely a political satire or humorous novel, but actually it is the first sci-fi novel dealing with the subject matter of Mars exploration. The novel reached the highest level in the then China either in terms of its boldness of fantasy or its depth of criticism about the national characters of Chinese people, which has something to do with Lao She's experience of studying in Britain.

China Ten Years from Now by Jin Feng was collected in the first volume of *The World of Novels* publish by Commercial Press in 1923. This is an important work with national characteristics which merits our study. The novel is presented in the first-person narrative, telling how the protagonist spares no efforts to research on a kind of WWW ray and finally achieves success. The story goes that ten years ago, Chine was bullied by foreign countries. Being frustrated and disappointed, the protagonist indulged himself in reading magazines to pass the time. Inspired by what he learned that "a certain foreign so-and-so invented a double X ray," he resolved to develop a tenfold X ray. He immersed himself in this hard work for 5 years and finally he invented W ray which was 3–4 times more powerful than X ray. In spite of this, he was dissatisfied with it and continued with his research. After another three years of hard work, he eventually developed a kind of extremely thin ray called "WWW ray" which is 12 times as powerful as X ray. However, the ray emitter proved to be too cumbersome. In order to make it small enough so that it could be shipped easily, he submitted a request to the government asking for financial aid (with the money he also planned to build ten biggest airships in the world), but the request was met with a

refusal. Later with the support of the Chinese people who donated a hundred million yuan in all, he succeeded in building airships and above all, a very light WWW ray emitter—so light that it could be lifted by a single person. In 1931 the enemy invaded China. With the support of the Chinese people, he launched a counterattack on the enemy with WWW ray emitter. The emitter proved to be so powerful that it completely destroyed the enemy's airships and warships in an instant. The enemy forces were wiped out at one go and national prestige was greatly boosted.

What is special about this sci-fi novel is that, firstly, the scientific fantasy of the novel is set against the backdrop of Chinese nation in grave peril, manifesting a strong patriotic spirit. It is pointed out in the novel that only by relying on the people can a nation become prosperous and powerful, which makes the novel bear some educational value. Secondly, the WWW ray emitter conceived by the author is very much similar to the modern laser weapon, while modern laser technology did not appear until 1960s, and small-sized laser weapon is still under research and improvement until now. Obviously, the novel is highly scientifically speculative. Therefore, this novel can be said to be an ideal integration of scientific speculation, political appeal and educational value, embodying a big step forward compared with those sci-fi novels before it which merely focused on the conceiving of scientific fantasy but ignored the literariness and educational value of the works.

Gu Junzheng is a renowned Chinese writer of popular science. He began his writing as early as 1930s, and continued writing for nearly 50 years, leaving behind him a large number of popular science works for Chinese readers. While writing works of popular science, he also engaged himself in the writing of sci-fi works. He can well be called the pioneer of modern Chinese science fiction. As a passionate lover of foreign science fiction, he translated R. L. Stevenson's *Treasure Island* into Chinese. In 1939 he completed his first sci-fi novel *The Dream of Peace.* In the next year he wrote *Under the North Pole*, *Strange Illness in London*, and *Sex Transformation*, etc. The first three were included in a collection of sci-fi novels entitled *The Dream of Peace* published by Shanghai Cultural Life Press in 1940, while the last one was carried in the 1st, 2nd, 4th, 5th, and 6th issues of the 2nd volume of the magazine *Interesting Science* in 1940. Since Gu Junzheng's sci-fi writing was based on foreign science fiction which he learned from and used for reference, his works bear an obvious trace of imitation. For example, both the characters and settings of the above first three novels are quite foreign, and only the last one is of Chinese flavor in characters and settings, although its flashback narrative and some descriptions are still tinged with a trace of imitation. In spite of this, Gu's works are rather innovative, which in summary has the following features: firstly, his works are an ingenious integration of literary and scientific conceptions, which makes them very appealing, e.g. the conception about hypnosis and insinuation in *The Dream of Peace*, or the fantasy about magnetic theory and the production of high-strength magnetic alloy through high-temperature cooling in *Under the North Pole*, which has currently become an important research topic. The method proposed in *Strange Illness in London* is helpful for producing fertilizer by using artificial catalysts, and the fanciful idea set forth in *Sex Transformation* to change the sex of humans by means of medicine is enlightening for the research of sex transformation in animals

(e.g. the change of sex in poultry)—actually this field of study has been drawing more and more attention. Secondly, Gu makes use of the techniques and storylines found in detective novels in his works, which strengthen their artistic appeal and readability.

It was only after the founding of People's Republic of China (1949) that science fiction gained a tremendous development. The government called for the whole nation, especially young people, to love science, learn science and apply science. In response to this, beginning from 1950s the sci-fi works by Verne, Wells and Belyaev, etc. were successively translated into Chinese. Besides, there emerged a large number of sci-fi writers such as Zhang Ran, Zheng Wenguang and Yu Zhi. The first sci-fi work after the founding of the People's Republic of China is Zhang Ran's *Sleepwalking in the Solar System*, which was published in 1950 by Tianjin Knowledge Publishing House. The book consists of two parts with a total of 35,000 words. The first part is made up of the first nine chapters which tell about Jing'er's sleepwalking in the solar system; the second part is composed of the rest three chapters which deal with Mr. Chen's introduction to solar system in his science class after the story of Jing'er's sleepwalking in solar system got around among her classmates. The novel spreads knowledge about astronomy through Jing'er's various adventurous experiences in her sleepwalking to the moon, the sun, the Mars and the Uranus.

After that, there appeared some representative sci-fi works which include: *The Second Moon* (1954) by Zheng Wenguang carried in *China Youth Daily*, which is about a visit to the man-made moon, *Black Gems* (1956) also by Zheng Wenguang. *The Lost Brother* by Yu Zhi (which is the pen name of Ye Zhishan) was firstly published in series in the magazine *Middle School Students* in 1956, and its offprint was published in 1958. It is a sci-fi comedy which tells the story of an elder brother who gets into a refrigeration house by mistake and is frozen to death. Some years later he is brought around and it turns out that he is younger than his younger brother. *Travels to the Prehistoric World* (1958) by Xu Qingshan published by Jiangsu People's Publishing House depicts the experience of the protagonist who returns to the prehistoric era fifty thousand years ago. *Travels to the World of Science* (1958) by Guo Yishi published by China Children's Press describes various wonders in the future world. *Mystic Fog in the Ancient Gorge* (1960) by archeologist Tong Enzheng published by China Children's Press deals with the discovery of the historical remains of Ba Nationality.[1] *The Living Monkey King* (1962) by Zhao Shizhou published by China Children's Press includes four sci-fi short stories: *The Living Monkey King*, *The Talking Letter*, *I Saw it with My Own Eyes*, and *An Exhibition That Is Not Open*, among which *The Living Monkey King* was carried in *China Children's Daily* on March 21, 1957 which is about multi-layer movable printing. *The Adventure of Bookie* (1962) by Xiao Jianheng published by China Children's Press tells the story of a puppy named "Bookie" which is run over and killed by a car. After its head is transplanted onto the body of a dog, some miracles happen … The novel was well received by children readers after its publication and was included in *Chinese New Literature Florilegium*

[1] "Ba nationality" is a group of ancient ethnic minority people who inhabited in the Three Gorges region in the heart of China.—Translator's note.

and middle school textbook of Chinese language, which makes it the first sci-fi work included in textbooks in China. Chi Shuchang is skilled in writing sci-fi novels with "new-invention" subject matters. He combines science and technology with daily life, which makes his works highly favored by the common readers. His *A Pasture of Whales* (1961) published in *China Children's Daily* is about the miraculous story of herding whales by means of imitating the "language" of the leading whale. In summary, the above mentioned sci-fi works touch upon almost every sphere of modern science, and have played an important role in spreading scientific knowledge among the Chinese youngsters.

During the turmoil period of the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), sci-fi creation in China went into a slump. Then after 1976 China's sci-fi creation witnessed a gradual but active recuperation and development, and newspapers and magazines even vied with each other for carrying sci-fi stories. In *A Complete Volume of Chinese Sci-fi Novels* compiled by Rao Zhonghua, over 390 sci-fi works published from 1976 to 1980 were collected, which is 4 times the total of those published between 1949 and 1976. For example, *Little Smart's Travels to the Future* (Part 2) by Ye Yonglie was published by China Children's Press in 1978. Then the year of 1979 saw the prodigious emergence of sci-fi works, some of which are listed below in terms of different publishing houses:

People's Literature Publishing House: *A Flight to the Sagittarius* (Part 2) by Zheng Wenguang, *Magic Flute in Snowy Mountains* (A collection of 2 short stories) by Tong Enzheng; *The Miracle on the Top Mountain of the World* (A collection of scientific works which include five short stories, three science fairy tales and three science sketches) by Ye Yonglie.
Juvenile & Children's Publishing House: *Trails of the Tiger in the Forest* (A collection of five short stories) by Xiao Jianheng, *After the Nose Was Lost* (A collection of 6 short stories) by Ye Yonglie, and *The Eye of the Sea* (A novella) by Liu Xingshi.
China Children's Press: *Shark Scout* (A collection of three short stories) by Zheng Wenguang, *The Little Ping-pong Has Changed* (A novella) by Guo Zhi, and *Mysterious Signals* by You Yi.
Science Popularization Press: *Sea Girls* (A collection of three short stories) by Zheng Wenguang, *The Guests from Outer Space* by Lu Ke.
Jiangsu People's Publishing House: *Dreams* (A novella) by Xiao Jianheng, *Dinosaurs Under the Sea* (A collection of nine short stories) by Ji Hong and Miu Shi, and *The Strange "Divers"* by Miu Shi.
Fujian People's Publishing House: *Golden Dreams* by Qiu Guohua, *The Incident of "Taurus"* by Chen Zhongyi, and *A Queer Case in the Air* by Yang Shouxin et al., *Adventure in Interstellar Space* by Qiu Guohua and Cai Haibin, *Tracking in the Forest* by Ji Hong et al.
Guangdong People's Publishing House: *People Flying to the Pluto* (A collection of 7 short stories) by Ye Yonglie.
China Workers' Press: *Crisis in an Airship* by Wei Yahua et al.
Shanxi People's Publishing House: *Adventure in a UFO* by Qiang Qingchang.
Hubei People's Press: *Travels to the Heavenly Palace* by Lan Fan.

Hunan People's Publishing House: *The Lost Man* by Shi Hepi and Zhu Yuqi, *The Miracle of Life* by Yu Jigen and Deng Tinglu, *Spies in A Green Island* by Ye Yonglie.
Henan People's Publishing House: *Dead or Alive?* by Ye Yonglie.
Sichuan People's Publishing House: *The Flying City*, and *Columbus from America* by Liu Xingshi.
Shandong People's Publishing House: *Travels to the City in the Air* by Lin Zhi.
New Buds Publishing House: *Mysterious Clothing* by Ye Yonglie.
China Youth Publishing House: *Selected Novels of Science Fiction and Fantasy* by Zheng Wenguang.
Fujian Education Press: *Travels to the Past History and the Future* by Yan Jiaqi, *A Queer Case in Bermuda Triangle* by Zhu Yuqi et al.
Heilongjiang Science and Technology Press: *Spies in the Magic Sea* by Bei Xing et al.

Apart from the above publications, some publishing houses also reprinted collections of sci-fi novels published before 1966.

Among those authors who were engaged in sci-fi writing after 1976, Ye Yonglie is the one who was most influential. He graduated from the Department of Chemistry at Beijing University in 1963. While still at the University, he already published a collection of science sketches entitled *The family of Carbon*, and was the author who contributed the most entries to the large-sized popular science series *A Hundred Thousand Whys*. In 1978, Ye Yonglie published his representative sci-fi novel *Little Smart's Travels to the Future*. The novel was written in 1961, and its first printing numbered 1,500,000, while the total printing exceeded 3,000,000. It was so popular at the time that it exerted huge influence on a whole generation of young people. In his sci-fi creation, Ye Yonglie lays equal stress on both literariness and scientific quality. As a prolific and influential writer, his works are characterized by wide ranges of subject matters, novel conceptions, diverse styles, and an integration of emotion and reasoning. He has over 60 collections of science sketches and 20-odd collections of sci-fi novels, which makes him the most accomplished sci-fi writer in China until now. In 1980 Ye Yonglie was elected the (only) director of the World Science Fiction Society (WSFS), Asia region, making the Chinese science fiction go globally for the first time. Unfortunately, Ye Yonglie's sci-fi novels met with unfair criticism in the middle of 1980s, which forced him to give up sic-fi writing and turn to documentary literature. He was also so successful in this field that he became a world-renowned writer of documentary literature.

Among the sci-fi novellas that came out after 1976, the most noteworthy one is *A Flight to the Sagittarius* (1978) by Zheng Wenguang. It tells the story of a Chinese spaceship named "Orient" which, due to the damage by the enemy, makes an unexpected takeoff. Although it is supposed to be bound for the Mars, it somehow flies to the distant Sagittarius owing to fuel exhaustion. Three young people in the spaceship meet with various obstacles, but, by making use of cosmos power, they manage to make the spaceship dock with another spaceship "Advance" dispatched from their motherland, and return to the earth safe and sound. In this novella, three young people named Yue Lan, Ji Lai and Ruo Hong are successfully characterized. The storyline is

intricate and moving, and knowledge about spaceflight and astronomy is organically fused into the story. From a historical perspective, Zheng Wenguang succeeds in making his sci-fi works relate the past with the present and the future, and writes in a bold but rigorous style, attaining notable achievement in terms of either "hard science fiction" or "soft science fiction." He was acclaimed by an American magazine *ASIA 2000* as "one of the few Asian scientists who devoted himself entirely to both science and literature."

As for sci-fi short stories published after 1976, the best one should be *Death Ray on a Coral Island* by Tong Enzheng. The first draft of this work was completed in 1963 and it should have been published in the magazine *Art and Literature for the Youngsters*. But somehow it failed to get published after the press proof came out. Then in 1978 Tong Enzheng made a revision of it and got the revised version published in the magazine *People's Literature*. It tells the story of how a young Chinese scientist, through his own efforts and with the help of his friends, wrenches himself free from the enemy's clutches and takes along with him high-efficiency atomic batteries to return to his motherland. What is especially successful about this short story is its vivid characterization of Hu Mingli the scientist (Dr. Matthew), Chen Tianhong, and villainous characters Brian and Rom Josef, among which Hu Tianming is especially vividly portrayed: He is both kindhearted and upright. When he learns that he is deceived, he rises up bravely against the enemy. Although he is easily taken in, he refuses to drift with the tide after he becomes aware of the cheating. The story which sings praises of the patriotic spirit of Hu Mingli and Chen Tianhong is so thrilling, mystical and fascinating that it exercised considerable social influence after its publication. It was adapted as a motion picture for the screen by Shanghai Film Studio, as a drama for the stage by Chengde Drama Troupe, and as a radio drama for radio by China National Radio. It was honored as the "Best Short Story" in 1987.

In the middle of 1980 when science fiction in China was enjoying a boom, there suddenly appeared a fierce criticism against it, and a number of sci-fi novels were accused of propagating pseudoscience, laying bare the dark side of the society and being in poor taste. Under the tremendous pressure, a large number of young and able sci-fi writers changed their profession of writing one after another, which resulted in a sudden decline of Chinese sci-fi literature. Just like the "Cinderella" exiting from a dancing party, sci-fi literature in China fell and was at a low ebb for as long as ten years.

The 1990s saw a rapid "updating" of the team of sci-fi writers. Unlike the previous sci-fi writers who were mostly sci-tech researchers in research institutes, from colleges and universities there emerged a batch of active writers. On the other hand, influenced by the foreign sci-fi works, Chinese readers felt an intense longing for the new boom of sci-fi literature. In 1991, the first "China Constellation Awards of Science Fiction" were jointed presented by Ministry of Culture, Writers Association of Popular Science, and over 20 publishing houses. In the same year, World Science Fiction Society convened the annual meeting in Chendu, the capital of Sichuan Province. In 1997, China International Science Fiction Conference was held in Beijing. At the end of the 20th century, Chinese government laid greater stress on propagating the

idea of "invigorating the nation through science and technology." These favorable conditions offered new hopes for Chinese sci-fi writers at the turn of the century. A number of publishing houses published a series of sci-fi works. At the same time, sci-fi writers broke away from the old conventional mode of thinking and published a number of excellent works with strong innovative ideas and the spirit of the time.

The major sic-fi writers during that period of time include Wu Yan, Xing He, Han Song, Wang Jinkang, Lü Yang, etc.

Wu Yan, a writer of Manchu nationality, began sci-fi writing as early as the end of 1970s when he was still a middle school student in Beijing. His *The Sixth Day of Life and Death* written in 1990s involves the cutting-edge scientific topics; meanwhile it is literarily delicate and touching. As a professor at Beijing Normal University, Wu Yan offered for the first time sci-fi course in the Chinese university, which helped to cultivate a number of sci-fi writers of the new era. Starting from the year 2000, Beijing Normal University offered MA Program in sci-fi literature, which is the first of its kind in the history of higher education in China.

Xing He, a native of Beijing, is a representative of the new era. His major works include "*Pilgrimage*," "*Farewell before Left Fist Stretched*," "*Residual Magnetic Trace*," etc., which won him "Bing Xin Award" and "Galaxy Award." Mostly narrated in the first person, his works are full of romantic heroism and are well received by young readers.

Han Song started writing sci-fi novels in the 1980s, and his representative works include *Red Oceans*, *Gravestone in the Universe* and *Twisty Youth*. *Red Oceans* is a sci-fi novel of over 400,000 characters. It tells the story that a future nuclear war destroys all the eco-systems of the land of the earth. The remnant humans could do nothing but transform themselves into aquatic beings like fish through genetic engineering technology and, at the same time turn the blue oceans into red ones so that humans can adapt to them. With rich imagination the author conjures up a panoramic view of futuristic human society which is complex, wield and heart-rendering. The novel has deep thought, grand scenes, exciting storylines and desolate atmosphere, and is both tragic and philosophically enlightening. It won the First Prize of "World Chinese Science Fiction Art Award" and won "Chinese Science Fiction Galaxy Award" for several times, and has been translated into a number of different languages and published the worldwide.

Wang Jinkang, a native of Henan Province, is a senior engineer. He began writing science fiction after he was middle-aged. As a writer of profound thought and fully developed style, he created such representative works as *Heavenly Fires* and *The Song of Life*, etc.

Lü Yang started writing science fiction in the 1980s, and his representative works are "*Lu Wenji Series*." His *The Kiss of Black Hole* and *The Disappearing Galaxy* are known for their rich sci-tech contents.

Sci-fi creation in the new era is still under way. In 1999, the title of the composition for national college/university entrance examination was "If Memory Could Be Transplanted," an innovative sci-fi title which triggered an unprecedented fervor in sci-fi book market. Now people place their hope of sci-fi creation on the younger "Internet generation." With the continuous advances of Chinese literature and sci-

ence and technology, sci-fi literature in China is expected to usher in an era of greater prosperity.

7.2 A Comparison of Mythology, Fantasy Stories and Science Fiction

7.2.1 Connections and Differences Between Mythology and Science Fiction

7.2.1.1 Influence of Mythology on Science Fiction

"Mythology" refers to the (oral) retelling of myths—stories that a particular culture believes to be true and that use the supernatural to interpret natural events and to explain the nature of the universe and humanity. Mythology is largely based on real life rather than on sheerly groundless imagination. It is a fantasy about nature and real life, an unconscious artistic processing which reflects human's desire to conquer and control natural forces. What's more, mythology may shed fresh insight into scientific development. On the surface, mythology and science seem to be incompatible, as mythology results from subjective imagination while science is based on objective reality which calls for rigidity. But actually, mythology or "mythological fantasy" is to some extent based on science, and so can be regarded as plain and bold "scientific fantasy." Mythological fantasies precede—and therefore prelude scientific invention and innovation. Those which are envisaged in mythology are very often been created or realized through scientific inventions and innovations. Therefore, we may as well say that in mythology lies the earliest scientific fantasy, or in other words, mythology is the "science of fantasy."

Like mythology in the other parts of the world, mythology in China is also full of "scientific fantasy" which offers enlightenment for the relevant scientific inventions and innovations. For example, in *Classic of Mountains and Rivers* (*Shan Hai Jing*) there is a myth of "*Kua Fu Chasing after the Sun*," which goes as follows:

> Kua Fu had been chasing after the sun until he got to the place where the sun sets.
>
> …
>
> Kua Fu failed to take a proper measure of his strength and chased after the sun until he got to Yugu.

Primitive people had the spirit and desire to challenge and conquer nature, and the story of "Kua Fu Chasing after the Sun" fully shows the indomitable willpower of human beings to struggle with nature. Although Kua Fu died of thirst on his way, he praiseworthily caught up with the sun and got into the halo of sunlight, which indicates that in the view of primitive people, the sun was something highly approachable. In this myth, the vigorous valiant spirit of primitive people to struggle with nature, as

well as their cognitive assumption and imaginary understanding about nature are well represented, which unintentionally "sowed the seeds" of scientific exploration.

Even in ancient times, people dreamed of flying into the space and travelling on the moon. "Chang'e Flying to the Moon" is just such a representative story, which goes as follows:

> Heng'e was the wife of Hou Yi, a highly skillful archer who obtained elixir from the Queen Mother of Heaven. But before he took the elixir, Heng'e stole it and then took it, and became an immortal. She flied to the moon and became a moon fairy.
>
> —*Huainanzi* • *Annotated by Gao You*

Therefore it can be seen that in the imagination of ancient people, the moon is an inhabitable place. Then in stories of the Tang Dynasty (618–907 AD), the moon became a fully inhabitable heavenly body, as is noted in *Youyang Miscellany* (*Youyang Za Zu*) by Duan Chengshi (803–863 AD), a writer of weird stories of the Tang Dynasty:

> Legend has it that there were a cinnamon tree and a toad on the moon. According to some books about strange tales and anecdotes, the cinnamon tree was about five thousand feet tall under which a man had been chopping it with an axe. However, the cut in the tree closed up immediately after the cut was made. This man was named Wu Gang who was ordered to chop the tree due to his error in his study of witchcraft.

In the myths of "Kua Fu Chasing after the Sun" and "Chang'e Flying to the Moon," the desire of primitive people to have access to the sun and the moon is consigned to imaginary fantasy in order to realize it, thus bridging the gap between human beings and the sun and the moon, and expanding the scope of human knowledge. Although these myths are merely the imaginations of primitive people, they embody their understanding of and fascination for the sun, the moon and other celestial bodies, thus heralding the later astronomical exploration. It can be said that the fantasy about the sun and the moon in ancient times turned out to be the subject matters concerning "universe exploration" for the literature of later ages. The contemporary Chinese writer and literary critic Mao Dun (1896–1981) speaks highly of the myth of "Chang'e Flying to the Moon," observing that "to treat the moon as an inhabitable heavenly body—this is unique among the mythology of the world's nations" (Quoted in Rao 1982: 7). The development of modern science has turned the age-old myth into reality: in January 1959, the spacecraft Luna 1 of former USSR flew by the moon; on June 20, 1969, the lunar module "Apollo" of America made the historical landing on the moon for the first time. It is reported that Japan is planning to build a station on the moon which can accommodate 6 astronauts, and it is expected to be completed in 2024.

The next example is the myth of "Nü Wa[2] Mending the Sky," which goes as follows:

> In remote antiquity, there were four huge pillars to support the earth, but somehow they collapsed, and the land of the earth cracked. The sky was unable to cover up all the things

[2]"Nü Wa" is a goddess in Chinese mythology who, according to the legend, created humans and everything on the earth.—Translator's note.

> on the earth, nor was the land able to take hold of them. There were such blazing fires everywhere that they could not be put out, and there were such torrential floods all around that they could not be stopped. As a result, kind-hearted people fell prey to the ferocious beasts, and the aged and the young fell victim to the savage fowls. Then, Nü Wa smelted colored ores to patch up the sky, chopped off the legs of a giant turtle and used them to support the four corners of the fallen sky, killed a black dragon to save the Chinese people, and checked the flood with reed ashes. It turned out that sky was mended, the four huge pillars were erected, the floods subsided, and the ferocious beasts and fowls met their death, and the people survived and lived on.

The above myth of Nü Wa shows that in the face of such natural calamities as falling sky, sunken earth, fire and flood wreaking havoc, and beasts preying on men, humans struggled with natural calamities in extremely harsh environment, which reflects people's strong wish to conquer nature. What is noteworthy is that Nü Wa's "mending the sky to stop falling water" reveals the then production technique. As is mentioned above, Nü Wa "smelts colored stones to patch up the sky," from this it can be deduced that it must be because the melting technology was then developed and adopted by people that the imaginary idea of "smelting colored ores" which was based on the then production technology was set forth, while the description that Nü Wa "checked the flood with reed ashes" indicates that, faced with flood disaster, people no longer evaded it passively; instead, they made efforts to ward off flood, hence the idea of "banking up to keep the flood out when it approached," while the reeds which grow in river margin and which hamper the flow of water are naturally associated with the material for building dike—this reflects the preliminary technology in water control engineering. Mythology reflects the history of primitive people struggling with nature, at the same time it also records and shows the improvement of their production technology.

Next let's look at the following story recorded in *Classic of Mountains and Rivers* (*Shan Hai Jing*).

> Long long ago, a tribal chieftain named Chi You waged a war against Yellow Emperor.[3] Yellow Emperor dispatched Ying Long, a dragon with wings, to fight against Chi You in the wildness. Ying Long stored a large amount of water in order to attack Chi You, while Chi You called Feng Bo, the god of wind and Yu Shi, the god of rain for help. Feng Bo and Yu Shi poured heavy rain and blew fierce wind. Then Yellow Emperor sent Nü Ba, the goddess of draught who was always dressed in black, for help. Then the rain stopped, and Chi You was killed. Using up all her power, Nü Ba was unable to go up to heaven, and the place where she lived became completely dried-up. A man named Shu Jun told this to Yellow Emperor who then arranged Nü Ba to settle to the north of Chishui River, and made Shu Jun the god of agriculture. Sometimes Nü Ba got away from where she lived, and wherever she went, it would become very dry. If people wanted her to leave, they would pray to her: "Goddess, please go for the north!" and would dredge ditches and gullies.
>
> After killing Chi You, and then fettering Kua Fu, Ying Long chose to live in the south, and this is why it is so rainy in the south.

Obviously, the above story reveals the regular meteorological pattern in China where it is arid in the north and flooded in the south. In their explanation for the cause of

[3] "Yellow Emperor" ("Huang Di" in Chinese pinyin) (2717–2599 BC) is a legendary Chinese sovereign and cultural hero who is said to be the ancestor of all Chinese.—Translator's note.

such a regular meteorological phenomenon, they adopted the technique of fantasy and explain it based on the familiar social phenomenon, and personify flood and drought, thus creating two gods: Ying Long and Nü Ba. In such a fantastic story a scientific fact is unveiled: in China it is arid in the north and flooded in the south.

Talking about the relationship between realism and romanticism, Gorky (1959) observes that "mythology is a kind of fiction, and fiction means to extract essential ideas from the established realistic totality and represent it with mythology—hence we have realism. And then, if we add what we desire and what is possible based on the imaginary logical reasoning to the ideas extracted from established reality so as to make up for the image, then we have romanticism which forms the basis of mythology and which is extremely beneficial, for it inspires an attitude to reform the reality, i.e. the attitude to change the world" (Gorky 1959: 337).

These remarks tell us that although mythology is fictional and imaginary, it is by no means pure fantasy, for it is based on "the soil of real life." By means of "the wings of imagination," the force of nature is deified so that people's strong will to struggle with nature and their yearning for conquering nature are expressed, hence it is positive romanticism.

To sum up, mythology is the precursor of modern science fiction. The influence of mythology on science fiction lies in the following two aspects: firstly, the imaginary techniques of science fiction are the succession and development of those of mythology. As the oldest artistic form, ancient mythology is mainly characterized by fantasy. Although it is merely a result of "unconscious artistic processing," the artistic techniques created in it were used for reference by literary creation in later ages. The fantasy in science fiction grew out of the fantasy in mythology. Similar to mythology, science fiction resorts to fantasy to create an imaginary setting and reality so as to achieve the intended effect. If it were not for the techniques of fantasy, it would be impossible for science fiction to depict the immense universe, remote future and fantastic inventions and discoveries. Secondly, science fiction often makes use of images and materials in mythology. Mythology covers extremely all-inclusive subject matters; besides, it has quite a large readership and is very popular among people. As a result, science fictionists often make use of the images and materials in mythology for their literary creation so as to produce better effect. For example, in the Western sci-fi novels, the myths in the Bible are often used to create a special symbolic setting, as in M. Miller Jr.'s *A Canticle for Leibowitz* in which *Genesis* and *Revelation* in the Bible are used, while in Chinese sci-fi stories or novels there is no lack of examples in which mythological images and materials are employed.

The reason why mythology could exert such a huge influence on science fiction is that there is a natural connection between mythology and science fiction. Strictly speaking, mythology is neither an art nor a science in the modern sense. However, as a comprehensive representation of primitive culture, mythology possesses both primitive elements of science and primitive elements of art, while what connects science and art is fantasy. In science fiction, scientific fantasy is depicted through the narrative techniques of fiction. Obviously, science fiction possesses both the content of art and content of science, along with them the technique of fantasy is used. This forms the fundamental reason why science fiction and mythology run so close with

each other. A good understanding of this may help to explain why modern science fiction has been more heavily influenced by mythology than other types of fiction.

7.2.1.2 Differences Between Mythology and Science Fiction

Although science fiction and mythology are closely related, they still differ considerably as they fall into two different types of literature.

Firstly, from the angle of the time of creation, mythology is the product of laboring people in ancient times, while modern science fiction is the product of writers in modern times.

Ancient mythology originated in the Neolithic Age. Available data shows human beings entered the Neolithic Age about 13,000 years ago. As different nations differ in their cultural enlightenment, economic development and social organization, they entered the Neolithic Age at hugely different times. For example, Egypt entered the Neolithic Age as early as 15,000 years ago, while Tasmanian people[4] still stayed at the Paleolithic Age in the 18th century. As for China, Neolithic culture already appeared 8000 years ago. Why did mythology appear during the Neolithic Age? This is because, firstly, during this period human beings had already formed a set of modes of thinking and possessed the ability of narrative; secondly, it is during this period that organized social life came into being. As is noted by Xie Xuanjun, "the organized social life and the development of human language formed the cornerstone of the cultural development of human beings, which ensures the continuity of knowledge accumulation. The organized social life made it possible for knowledge to be passed on generation after generation and spread widely" (Xie 1986: 4).

As mentioned earlier, modern science fiction which dates back to *Frankenstein* (1818) by the English author M. W. Shelley which is the first sci-fi novel with complete sci-fi characteristics has only a history of over 170 years. The emergence and rise of modern science fiction presupposes the emergence of modern science and the formation of scientific ideas.

Secondly, from the angle of the motive of creation, mythology is the product of unconscious artistic processing, while modern science fiction aims at representing human knowledge purposely in the form of fiction so as to attain the goals of spreading scientific knowledge and promoting scientific development.

For primitive people, the process of creating mythology is totally the process of unconscious artistic processing. Speaking of the origin of mythology, Lu Xun notes that "primitive people who inhabited in caves saw various changes in nature, such as wind, rain or earthquake which are beyond their understanding and control. Surprised by that, they assumed that there must have been an almighty ruler there, and named it 'shen' (i.e. god), and imagined his life, his movement … hence 'shen-hua' (i.e. god-tale, or the tale of gods, or mythology)" (Lu 1981: 302). Thus it can be seen

[4] "Tasmanian people" are the aboriginal people inhabiting in the island state of Australia which is located 150 miles to the south of the Australian mainland, separated by the Bass Strait.—Translator's note.

that, due to their low productivity and cognitive power, primitive people were unable to understand the natural phenomena and social life, and so they unconsciously processed artistically these phenomena and things in a subjective, one-sided and imaginative way, making them appear to be fantastic and wield.

By contrast, modern science fiction is an integration of science and fiction, and science fictionists attempt to spread consciously scientific knowledge through certain artistic techniques. As science calls for logical thinking, while literature requires figurative thinking, science fiction aims at manifesting and popularizing science through figurative techniques. As Lu Xun remarks in his explanatory preface to his translation of Verne's *From the Earth to the Moon*, "If science is merely thus presented, it will bore the ordinary people who are so tired of it that they can hardly complete reading it. This is inevitable as people are forced to do something against their will. Only by means of the power of fiction and acting on the stage will people take some interest in science." This means we can introduce scientific knowledge by means of fiction, and especially we can make science fiction interesting and lively so that the readers take delight in reading them and acquire scientific knowledge from them.

Thirdly, from the angle of creative thinking, mythology is based on primitive thinking and is created on the basis of animism, while modern fiction is created under the guidance of science.

The emergence of mythology can be attributed to its special way of thinking, i.e. primitive thinking. Such thinking is highly subjective for the reason that primitive people had rather limited knowledge which, if any, was mostly superficial and intuitive. Therefore, everything in mythology is concrete, and images in mythology are materialized. Meanwhile, the emergence of mythology has something to do with the belief of "animism" which holds that, just like primitive men, everything in the universe has life, and has even "soul" and emotion. Therefore, by using the image of man for their imitation and creation, they created different "gods" representing various natural phenomena and endowed them with language, behavior and emotion.

Science fiction is not merely a simple compilation of scientific materials, but a representation of science through the author's artistic thinking and characterization in the form of fiction. The content of science fiction is based on science and scientific laws rather than on groundless wild fantasy. Instead of depicting science in reality, it represents yet-to-be-realized facts in the past or in the future as a reality. Since it is based on science, it must possess such three elements as "science," "fantasy" and "fiction" in order to be "science fiction." For example, such classical Chinese novels as "*The Investiture of the Gods*" (*Fengshen Yanyi*) and "*Journey to the West*" (*Xi You Ji*) can only be regarded as fantasy fiction rather than science fiction as they are scientifically unfounded.

Fourthly, from the angle of protagonists, in mythology the protagonists are gods or demigods while in modern science fiction the protagonists are scientifically-minded living people.

In mythology, the protagonists are gods or demigods. The gods in the mythology of early period are mostly created in imitation of horses, oxen, snakes, tigers and various plants, or even inorganic things such as stone or the sun. The images of these

gods came from the pure imitation of the appearance of animals or directly imagined things, and the worship of them came from the primitive totemism, i.e. fetishism. For example, the worship of dragon of Chinese people is actually the worship of dragon totem. Then as people's views changed, "human elements" (e.g. human appearance and body) in animal gods gradually built up, while "animal elements" gradually fell off, until eventually animal images gave way to the images of human animals. For the gods of human animals, the appearances of humans, animals and monsters were intermingled to form such gods with the head of a man and the body of an animal which are mostly found in many ancient Chinese mythology (e.g. Nü Wa, Fu Xi[5]), or the body of a man and the head of an animal which are often found in ancient Egyptian mythology. Such worship of gods of human animals appeared in the middle period of primitive thinking, when mysticism and animism were still prevalent, but the "element of human" began to permeate, and humans became part of "gods," which indicates the awakening of men's self-awareness.

Fiction calls for characterization of typical protagonists. Protagonists in science fiction are often scientists, or people with certain scientific knowledge. For example, in *A Flight to the Sagittarius* by Zheng Wenguang, such three young scientists as Yue Lan, Ji Lai and Ruo Hong are successfully characterized. Similarly, in *Death Ray on a Coral Island* by Tong Enzheng, such patriotic scientists as Hu Mingli (Dr. Matthew) and Chen Tianhong are vividly portrayed, which constitutes the biggest success of the novel.

In brief, mythology must revolve around gods to construct plots and develop storylines. Inventions and innovations in mythology are nothing but a kind of utopian fantasy and beautiful dreams. By contrast, modern science fiction centers around humans to construct plots and reflects futuristic inventions and innovations of human beings—here the fantasy about futuristic scientific achievements is largely scientifically grounded.

7.2.2 Connections and Differences Between Science Fantasy and Science Fiction

7.2.2.1 Connections Between Science Fantasy and Science Fiction

Although modern science fiction can eventually be traced back to mythology, its direct source, however, is ancient fantasy. With the advance of times and the development of production forces and human cognitive power, fantasy eventually grew out of ancient mythology. In this process the color of apotheosis gradually faded and subject matters concerning humans were brought into the focus. Besides, fictitious invention of the story evolved from unconscious artistic processing into conscious artistic creation. Rooted in a certain social reality, fantasies mainly reflect people's

[5] "Fu Xi" is a legendary Chinese ruler of great antiquity, credited with the introduction of farming, fishing, hunting and animal husbandry.—Translator's note.

imaginations and ideals. The authors of fairy tales and fantasies consciously use and modify imaginary materials in ancient mythology so as to come up with new stories reflecting people's daily life, their dreams and ideals; meanwhile, they boldly exercise their imagination based on the advance of production techniques in order to create science fiction with brand-new contents and forms. It has fantasy in it, but the fantasy is not represented through fairies and immortals, or rare animals and strange birds, or treasure and magic. Instead, the author plays up the techniques of skillful craftsman and proposes bold hypothesis on the basis of the then production techniques. Science fantasy is such a narrative genre of literature which, by means of the technique of fantasy and the deified humans (usually the grandmasters and skillful craftsmen in various trades and professions), makes speculations about the futuristic science and technology. The speculations proposed in science fantasy are by no means sheer fantasy, rather they are both bold and possible, and are in line with the development of science and technology.

By utilizing the primitive imagination in mythology, science fantasy draws materials from real life and incorporates the then science and technology into its realm of imagination. It once offered enlightenment for scientific inventions and innovations. Let's look at the following examples.

Lu Ban (507–444 BC), the ancient Chinese master carpenter, invented the first flying machine—a wooden hawk made of wood and bamboo, which could stay flying in the air for three days without falling. In "Lu Ban Constructing a Wooden Hawk" collected in Duan Chengshi's *Youyang Miscellany* (*Youyang Za Zu*), there is a story which goes as follows:

> Lu Ban was a native of Dunhuang of Suzhou Prefecture, and his dates of birth and death are unknown. As a highly skillful craftsman, he once built a temple in Liangzhou. Besides, he also constructed a wooden hawk. Every time he knocked at the wedge of the wooden hawk for three times, it would take wing and then he would ride it home. Shortly afterwards, his wife was pregnant. His parents asked his wife how was that, and the wife told them how her husband often came home by the wooden hawk. Then Lu Ban's father managed to obtain the wooden hawk. He knocked at it for dozens of times, and was flown to a city in the State of Wu, where local people regarded him as a demon and killed him. Lu Ban then constructed another wooden hawk and rode it to the state of Wu where he found his father's body. He was so deeply resentful of Wu people's killing of his father that he made a wooden immortal and put it up in the south of Suzhou. The wooden immortal pointed his hand towards the southeast where the state of Wu lies, and it turned out that the state of Wu had severe droughts for three years. A fortune-teller declared that the drought was caused by Lu Ban, and so Wu people offered Lu Ban thousands of tributes as an apology. Upon that Lu Ban chopped off an arm of the immortal, and on that very day it rained heavily in the state of Wu. Even in the early period of the Tang Dynasty (618–907 AD), local people still prayed to the wooden immortal. During the Six States Period (907–1279 AD) when the state of Chu was about to attack the state of Song, Lu Ban also made a wooden hawk to spy on the cities of the state of Song.

The above story demonstrates that as early as at least 2300 years ago, Chinese people, by exercising their imagination, already made scientific prediction about human flight, which drew the attention of scientific researchers. Therefore, people could look into the possibility of wooden-bird flight from the angle of production techniques, and lead their thinking all the way to the exploration for scientific invention, thus

making fantasy story scientifically and practically founded. In the story, weird tricks and magical arts are abandoned, which not only demonstrates the awakening of human beings' self-awareness, but also shows their full confidence in their creativity. Wang Chong (27–97 AD), a philosopher in the Eastern Han Dynasty (25–220 AD), made the first rational speculative discussion about the wooden hawk in his work *Discourses Weighed in the Balance* (*Lun Heng*), noting that "it is possible to make a flying hawk with wood," which acknowledges the possibility of wooden hawk flying in the air. He then goes on to argue that "how can a hawk made of wood flying in the air without falling, only because it resembles the image of a hawk?" "If it does have a certain apparatus, it should be able to keep on flying continuously without falling." This shows that at that time, people already realized that the wooden hawk was able to fly not because it resembled a hawk in appearance, but because it was operated by a certain apparatus. The theoretical discussion about machine-aided flight led to some practical experiments. Legend has it that the highly skillful scientist Zhang Heng (78–139 AD) attempted to make a wooden bird which was expected to be able to fly for several miles. He fitted it with feathers and installed a gadget in its body. By means of bionics and the power of machine, Zhang Heng successfully made the wooden bird fly once again after Lu Ban's first successful attempt, which marks an important milestone in the man-made machine flight. Zhang Hong, after doing some textual research about human flight, argues that although science and technology over 2000 years ago were unable to bring about a manned aircraft, it is possible that a bird-like aircraft made of wood or bamboo appeared during that time. "No matter the wooden bird was made by Mozi[6] or Lu Ban, no matter the wooden bird flew for one day or half a day, it all indicates one fact: the first aircraft appeared in China as early as over 2300 years ago. This is remarkable in the history of technological development in China" (Zhang 1965: 10). Liu (1981) even holds that "the story about the wooden bird possesses the basic characteristics of modern science fiction."

In *Liezi • Questions by Yin Tang*, a fantasy about a skillful craftsman named Yan Shi creating a "robot" is recorded as follows:

> King Mu of Zhou (1054–949 BC) made an inspection tour to the west, crossing Kunlun Mountain and climbing up Yan Mountain. On his way back to the border, he came across a craftsman named Yan Shi who volunteered to perform a feat for him. The King asked, "What feat do you have?" Yan Shi replied, "I'll try whatever you order me to do. But I've created a thing which I hope you can have a look at." The King said, "Bring it to me tomorrow. We'll watch it together." The next day Yan Shi presented himself before the King. The King asked: "Who is that man with you?" Yan Shi answered, "He is a performer I made." The King looked at the performer, who moved agilely and smoothly, just like a real man. That's awesome! He would sing when he bent his head, and his voice went well with the melody. He would dance when he lifted his hands, and his dance followed closely the beat. His movement was ever-changing, which was fully at his own will. Assuming that the performer was a real man, the King called his favorite concubines to watch his performance. When the performance was drawing to the end, the performer blinked his eyes to flirt with the concubines around the King. The King was so furious that he threatened to kill Yan Shi at

[6]"Mozi" is a reverent name for Mo Di (468–376 BC), who is a renowned thinker in the pre-Qin period (2100–221 BC) and the founder of Mohism. He is also said to be the inventor of a flying wooden bird, apart from Lu Ban.—Translator's note.

> once. Frightened to death, Yan Shi immediately took apart the performer which was showed to the King. It turned out that the performer was pieced up with leather, wood, resin, paint, chalk, black charcoal, cinnabar, and black mud, etc. The King examined it carefully and found that, inside the body of the performer there were liver and gall, heart and lung, spleen and kidneys, and intestines and stomach; outside his body there were muscles and bones, limbs, skins, teeth and hair. Although they were all fake, there was nothing left out for a human body. Yan Shi pieced up all the above things and then the performer returned to his normal state. The King tried taking off his heart, and the performer was unable to speak; the King tried taking off his liver, and he was unable to see; the King tried taking off his kidneys, and he was unable to walk. At this, the King sighed delightedly: "Human's feat can really have the same functions as nature!" He then ordered his attendants to take the performer in their carriage back to his state.

Obviously, this science fantasy was created through speculation based on the theory of traditional Chinese medicine. The "robot" was made in accordance with the structure of a real man and was based on the inner connection between heart and mouth, and liver and eyes, etc. The robot created by Yan Shi not only was able to dance and sing, but also express his feelings and emotions with his eyes—he even flirted with the King's concubines so that the King suspected that he was disguised by a real man and nearly killed Yan Shi, his producer. From this it can be seen that Yan Shi was so skillful at making "robot" that it was real enough to pass for a real man.

Bian Que Transplanting the Heart (*Bian Que Huan Xin*) is also an amazing science fantasy based on the then surgical treatment. Let's look at the following story about heart transplant between Gong Hu and Qi Ying by Bian Que (407–310 BC), a famous doctor in the Spring and Autumn and Warring States Periods (770–221 BC), which was recorded in *Liezi • Questions by Yin Tang*:

> Then Bian Que let Gong Hu and Qi Ying drink poisoned wine, and the two stayed in a coma for three days. Bian Que then cut open their chests, took out their hearts and switched and transplanted them. Then the two were fed with a kind of wonder drug and became conscious and were as healthy as before. They bid farewell to Bian Que and went "home" — Gong Hu went to the home of Qi Ying and met "his" wife and children, but they simply did not know him; while Qi Ying went to the home of Gong Hu and met "his" wife and children, but they did not know him either. The two families went to the court for it, asking Bian Que to reason it out. It was only after Bian Que explained what had happen that the lawsuit was settled.

The above story as a science fantasy which was far beyond the then medical capacity tells about heart transplant which was impossible to carry out at that time. However, such a fantasy is by no means sheer nonsense; instead, it is based on medical science to a certain extent. In *History of the Late Han Dynasty* (*Hou Han Shu*) by Fan Ye (398–445 AD), a historian and writer in the Southern and Northern Dynasties (420–589 AD), the story of how Hua Tuo (145–208 AD), a famous doctor in the later Han Dynasty (202 BC–220 AD), gave his patient anaesthetic with Mafeisan (a kind of powdered medicine for anesthesia made by Hua Tuo) and then performed surgery was recorded as follows:

> If the disease afflicts somebody from within, which is unable to be cured by medicine or acupuncture, the doctor can firstly administer Mafeisan mixed with wine to him so as to make him unconscious. Then the doctor cuts open his abdomen and back, and cuts off the tumor. As for the diseased intestines or stomach, the doctor can cut it off, wash off the rotten

part, and then suture the wound, and apply miraculous ointment. After four or five days, the wound will heal, and in a month the man will fully recover.

A comparison between the above two stories of Bian Que and Hua Tuo indicates that "Gong Hu and Qi Ying drink poisoned wine and then stayed in a coma for three days" in the first story is based on "the doctor can firstly administer Mafeisan mixed with wine to him so as to make him unconscious" in the second story; while "transplanting heart" is a pure inference based on the "fact" that, since intestines or stomach can be cut off and sutured, so can heart. What's more, Bian Que's "wonder drug" can also rival Hua Tuo's "miraculous ointment." Based on the then medical science, the author of *Bian Que Transplanting the Heart* conceives fresh fictitious stories and adds fresh subject matter and writing technique through logical reasoning. However, it is obviously wrong for the author to regard heart as an organ for thinking, an idea prevalent in ancient medicine that considers heart to be the organ of spirit (Peng 1983). The transplant of a person's heart will result in the change of his thinking and characters—this is exactly the wrong prediction resulting from the unscientific ideas in traditional medicine. Therefore, although the fantasy based on the traditional unscientific medicine accords with the inference principle for the creation of science fiction, it can only be called "traditional science fiction" due to its poor scientific foundation.

From what has been discussed above, it can be seen that science fantasy and science fiction are so much similar with each other in that they are both prose narrative literature which is based on realistic scientific knowledge and which makes depictions about futuristic scientific inventions and discoveries by means of characterization and plots—the two are so much similar that some people even equate science fantasy with science fiction, thus blurring the line between them.

7.2.2.2 Differences Between Science Fiction and Science Fantasy

A close examination of the two types of prose narrative literature under discussion which both possess scientific contents and fantasy quality reveals that they still differ fundamentally in the following three aspects.

Firstly, they differ in their artistic pursuit. Science fantasy attaches great importance to the constructing of storylines which are supposed to be novel and bizarre so as to attract listeners and readers, and it makes no deliberate efforts at characterization. For example, in the stories "Lu Ban making a wooden hawk and a wooden immortal" and "Bian Que transplanting the heart," the authors did not narrate in a plain direct way the inventions and the feats of the craftsmen; instead, they attempted to construct vivid storylines which are mysterious and difficult to verify, and which involve some misunderstandings on the part of the characters to achieve certain intended effects. The story of Lu Ban who came home at night by the wooden hawk which resulted in his wife's pregnancy and his parents' misunderstanding is very original, while the story of the wooden singer and dancer making sheep's eyes at the King's concubines which made the King furious is interesting and amusing. This type of narrative not

only attempts to seek for vivid artistic effect, but also to exhibit interpersonal relationships in a given social setting, integrating reflection of scientific prediction with revelation of social conflicts. The storyline that the fatuous King was infuriated by the wooden "robot" and threatened to kill Yan Shi to vent his anger is superficially an amusing comedy resulting from his misunderstanding, but actually it involves an indignant accusation against the cruelty of the feudal kings and monarchs.

By comparison, science fiction which centers around character image to construct storylines gives top priority to characterization. Ye Yonglie, a renowned contemporary Chinese science fictionist, holds that "science fiction and science fantasy differ in that the former possesses the characteristics of fiction while the latter is merely a story. Their biggest difference is that the former attempts to portray typical character image while the latter merely represents scientific dreams through stories" (Ye 1980: 93). He stresses that in the creation of science fiction, "the author needs to design typical characters and typical settings in his scientific as well as artistic conception. For fictional works, the portrayal of typical character images and the depiction of typical settings in which the characters live are closely connected" (ibid: 96). Although ancient science fantasy also made portrayal of certain characters, they were by no means typical; while the typical settings in which the characters live were even less adequately described. By comparison, modern and contemporary sic-fi works lay great stress on the portrayal of typical characters and the depiction of typical settings. For example, *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea* by J. Verne portrays vividly the image of Captain Nemo who is a wise, cynical and compassionate man of great learning. *A Flight to the Sagittarius* by Zheng Wenguang tells the story of three young people who are forced to travel in the outer space due to an accident who overcome enormous difficulties to return to the earth safe and sound. The novel exhibits the staunch and self-sacrificing spirit of Chinese young people against the backdrop of the vast universe, showing their noble and loyal friendship, family affection and love. *Death Ray on a Coral Island* by Tong Enzheng successfully portrays the images of such outstanding patriotic scientists as Professor Zhao, Dr. Matthew and Chen Tianhong who are willing to devote themselves to their motherland and sacrifice their lives to protect scientific achievements. All these character images leave deep impressions on the readers.

Secondly, they differ in their protagonists. Protagonists in science fantasy are usually demigods, or deified founders or skillful craftsmen in various trades and professions. For example, Lu Ban who made the wooden hawk is a deified founder and master of carpentry, Yan Shi who made the fake man is a deified skillful craftsman, Bian Que who transplanted the heart is a deified sage of medicine. They were able to make miraculous creations and inventions not because of their profound scientific knowledge, but because of their superb craftsmanship as well as the instructions they received from some supernatural beings. Since their creations and inventions are poorly scientifically and logically founded, readers can gain little after their reading in terms of their knowledge acquisition. For example, the construction of wooden hawk by Lu Ban fails to point to the practical aviation inventions humans could make. In the imaginary realm of fantasy, wooden hawk is nothing but a work of art with a certain form and structure which could fly in the air only by magic.

What is noteworthy is that such stories unveil a special theme: the skillful craftsmen who made the wooden hawk and the wooden man which benefits human beings often fall victim to their craftsmanship: Yan Shi who made the "robot" was nearly killed by the King as he suspected that Yan Shi let a real man disguise as the "robot." Lu Ban who made the wooden hawk was not killed, but his father who rode the wooden hawk to the state of Wu was killed by the fatuous King. These plots are by no means sheer fabrication; rather they reveal a tragic fact: novel inventions by people often amaze and astound the world; however, they themselves often fall the victims to the reactionary forces.

By contrast, the protagonists in science fiction are mostly people equipped with modern scientific knowledge whose creations and inventions are scientifically based. For instance, in *The Dream of Peace* by Gu Junzheng, the protagonist Marlin is an expert in radio technology; while in *Death Ray on a Coral Island* by Tong Enzheng, the protagonists Hu Mingli (Dr. Matthew) is an expert in laser research and Chen Tianhong is an expert in high-efficiency atomic battery. Therefore, these imagined people do not appear to be "unreal"; instead they are rather "real," because if the protagonists in science fiction are not equipped with considerable scientific expertise, it would be impossible for the author to come up with a sci-fi work which is able to predict futuristic scientific development.

Thirdly, they differ in their scientific foundation. The ancient science fantasy is merely based on primitive and simple scientific ideas and, between "science" and "fantasy," emphasis is laid on the latter, while the former is merely revealed in the outcome of fantasy. Therefore, science fantasy based on subjective speculation could hardly be placed on a par with science fiction based on logical reasoning. For example, in the story of Lu Ban making a wooden hawk, there is no mention of the scientific basis for the making of the wooden hawk, although this amazing feat of Lu Ban forecasts the futuristic aviation development. In the story of Yan Shi making a dummy in terms of the human structure, the dummy is able to move like a real man, and "he" even has "his" free will! Rao (1982) holds that "this is a science fantasy based on traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) and inference." Based on the relevant theory of TCM about internal organs and senses, the author of the story reckons that as long as Yan Shi imitates actual human structure, he could well pass the fake for the real, hence the story. However, a story conceived in this way cannot be equated with science fiction, not only because "their imitation techniques differ," but also because their scientific foundations vary. Obviously, what the story of Yan Shi is based on can hardly be called a "science" as it fails to possess the elements which make up a scientific theory. Therefore, the foundation of the story of Yan Shi making the man is naturally unscientific, and hence the story can hardly be regarded as a work of science fiction.

In modern science fiction, between "science" and "fantasy" the emphasis is laid on "science"—it is science that pushes forward fantasy so that it reaches a new realm. "Science fiction" is a new literary genre which made its emergence by adapting itself to the age of science—here the so-called "science" is the "science" after the era of science came along, and therefore in a scientific sense it is "modern science" rather than the ancient experiential techniques. Modern science fiction vastly involves various

aspects of modern science, such as physics, astronomy, biology, chemistry, psychology. Therefore, its narrative must be in conformity with modern and contemporary science on the basis of which the futuristic scientific development can be envisioned. Since modern science fiction and modern scientific knowledge and development are closely related, the author must be equipped with adequate scientific knowledge in order to be able to undertake the creation of such a genre of literature.

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Chapter 8
Romantic Fiction and Erotic Fiction

The question of man and woman has long remained the most sensitive and most fascinating topic for human beings since ancient times. Either in the West or in the East, romance about man and woman remains the common subject matter for almost all forms of literature. Man and woman get to know each other, fall in love with each other, and then part each other forever—the stories always go like this, only they are set in different settings. In popular fiction, romantic love and sexual love constitute an important subject matter. However, due to the different ethics, morality and social-cultural backgrounds, Chinese and Western popular fiction of romantic/sexual love differs considerably.

8.1 A Comparison of Erotic Stories in *San Yan* and *The Decameron*

"*San Yan*" is an abbreviated title for the three collections of short stories compiled by Feng Menglong (1574–1646), a writer of the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644). The three collections of shorts stories are *Stories to Enlighten the World* (or *Stories Old and New*, *Yu Shi Ming Yan*),[1] *Stories to Caution the World* (*Jing Shi Tong Yan*), and *Stories to Awaken the World* (*Xing Shi Heng Yan*). This trilogy of short stories by Feng Menglong is based on his extensive collection of the storytelling scripts and imitative storytelling scripts from the Song Dynasty (960–1279 AD) to the Ming Dynasty. *The Decameron* is a collection of short stories by Italian writer Giovanni Boccaccio (1313–1375). Although the two collections of short stories were produced in two nations which are far apart, they are the same in that they both have rich and intricate stories which reflect broad aspects of social life. Especially the stories about

[1] The initial title of *Yu Shi Ming Yan* (*Stories to Enlighten the World*) was *Gu Jin Xiaoshuo* (*Stories Old and New*), so the title of this collection of short stories has different translations (e.g. *Stories to Enlighten the World*, and *Stories Old and New*).—Translator's Note.

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love and marriage make up important parts of the two works. A comparative study of the stories about love and marriage in the two works will be of great significance for our understanding of the similarities and differences in the themes of love and marriage between Chinese and Western popular fiction.

8.1.1 Opposing Asceticism and Advocating Humanism

Medieval Christian church believed that love between man and woman is a sinful sensual desire. God endowed humans with sexual instinct so that they could carry their generations on. Humans, however, found the "sensual pleasure" in this instinct, thus leading to their decadence and degeneration. The church held that the union of man and woman was not supposed to be for the sake of love, but for the sake of reproducing good and devout disciples of the sacred church who worship God so as to palliate their sin of sensual desire. They denied human nature in the name of divinity, and replaced love between men and women with God's love, sparing no efforts to preach sexual asceticism. While in Chinese feudal society, the Confucianists also brought sex into the norm of propriety which reflects a web of human and social relations, emphasizing that the individuals were supposed to repress or even sacrifice their own sexual rights and sexual ability so that they could meet the requirements of the society. In this way, a set of sexual ethics centering around asceticism was established. This is especially so in the Song Dynasty (960–1279 AD), when the neo-Confucianist doctrine deemed "heavenly principles" of feudal ethics and human desire as two opposing poles, proposing that all humans are the same in that if they uphold heavenly principles, then their human desire would get annihilated; if their human desire prevails, then the heavenly principles would collapse. No one can come to terms with both heavenly principles and human desire. From this it can be seen that Chinese feudal ethics, just like Christian doctrines, also advocated asceticism. It is against such similar background of asceticism that both Feng Menglong and Boccaccio boldly expressed their opposition to asceticism and upheld humanism in their works.

Boccaccio holds that love between man and woman is human nature. Where there is man, there is human nature which is inextinguishable and inevasible. In *The Decameron*, Boccaccio inserts a brief episode about "green geese" at the beginning of the story which is told on the fourth day: a desperately devoted Roman Catholic went to the town with his grown-up son who had been kept away from the outside world since he was young. For the first time in his life, the son saw women and got very excited. The father, in an attempt to frighten him so that he would not indulge in wild fantasy, told him that those women were "green geese" which were sources of troubles and misfortune. However, the son requested, "Dear dad, let me take a goose home." After this episode, Boccaccio remarked:

> Whoever attempts to block human nature has to give it his best shot. However, if he really sets himself against it, he will not only waste his efforts, but also end up suffering serious losses.

These words fully show that human nature is irrepressible and it has to be freed from the yoke of asceticism.

Coincidentally, a story almost identical to "green geese" can be found in *What the Master Would Not Discuss* (*Zi Bu Yu*) by Yuan Mei (1716–1797), a scholar and writer in the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911). The story which is entitled "*A Young Monk Missing the Tiger*" goes like this:

> In Wutai Mountain, a Buddhist sacred land, there was an old monk who took a three-year-old young monk as his disciple. As Wutai Mountain is so tall, the monk and his disciple stayed all year around in the monastery reciting scriptures for Buddhist cultivation without going down the mountain.
>
> Then ten years went by in a flash. One day, the monk and his disciple went down the mountain. On their way downhill they saw oxen, horses, chickens, and dogs, but the young monk knew none of them, let alone called out their names. So the old monk pointed each of them to his disciple, telling him that "this is an ox, which can till the land, and that is a horse which we can ride on; this is a rooster which can herald the break of the day with its crow, and that is a dog which can watch the door."
>
> The disciple nodded, saying "I see. I see."
>
> After a while, a beautiful young girl went past them. The disciple opened his eyes wide, and asked the old monk in surprise: "Master, what's this?"
>
> For fear that his disciple would be tempted and would go off into wild fantasy about the girl so that his cultivation would be affected, the monk straightened his face and told his disciple very seriously, "her name is 'tiger,' which is barely accessible. If you get close to her, you are sure to be devoured with hardly any trace of you left by her."
>
> The young monk nodded, replying repeatedly "I've kept it in my mind."
>
> Towards the evening the old monk and his disciple went up the mountain and were then back in the monastery. The old monk asked, "Is there anything you saw on our way downhill which makes you miss a lot?"
>
> "Nothing," replied the disciple seriously, "except the devouring tiger. Somehow I miss her a lot …"

It can be seen that the two stories express the same theme: human nature is so inextinguishable that any religious ethics which attempts to annihilate human desire is foolish and absurd.

Christians spare no effort preaching asceticism, but behind their preached doctrine we can find nothing but their excessive indulgence in sensual pleasure—human desire is irrepressible even to those devout Christians, and this can be proved by the tenth tale told on the third day in *The Decameron* which is about the "demon" and the "hell": In the desolate and uninhabited desert there was a young monk named Rustico who had been assiduously cultivating himself according to Christian doctrines. One day he saw the body of Alibech, a beautiful innocent young girl who came over to cultivate herself, and his long-repressed sexual desire was aroused. Then he seduced the girl and was satisfied by "shutting" his "demon" (penis) inside her "hell" (vagina) time and again, while the innocent girl also gained such great pleasure from the repeated sex that she later could hardly control her sexual passion. This story shows that the normal human desire and the awakening of youth and love are irresistible by any religious doctrines, and that the Christian asceticism is against human nature. Thus it

can be seen that Boccaccio's exposure of sensual greed and lust of Catholic Church turns out to be an effective tool to fight against asceticism of the Church.

In *San Yan*, Feng Menglong's criticism on "annihilation of human desire" of feudal ethics is mainly reflected in his sympathy towards the secret love between young man and woman. For example, in the tale *Prefect Qiao Rearranges Matches in an Arbitrary Decision*, it is owing to Prefect Qiao's mishandling of a marriage that the young men and young women (mainly Sun Run and Hui Liang) are happily reunited and married. The ending of the story shows that the author is sarcastic about feudal marriage system and is sympathetic towards love between man and woman. Another tale *Ruan San Redeems His Debt in Leisurely Clouds Nunnery* is about the love story between Chen Yulan, a young lady from a rich family and Ruan Hua, the son of a merchant. Chen Yulan's father set such demanding requirements for the marriage of his daughter and his future son-in-law that his daughter's marriage was held up. In spite of her father's objection, Chen Yulan fell in deep love with Ruan San. Unfortunately, Ruan San died accidently in their secret meeting and so their tryst turned out to be a tragedy. At the beginning of the tale, the author quotes a Chinese saying as follows:

> A man should get married on coming of age, and so should a woman. Otherwise, something is sure to go wrong.

Obviously, this shows that it's so natural for a man or a woman to get married on coming of age, and so we should follow the way of nature. If anyone attempts to block such a natural course by interfering in their children's marriage, they are sure to end up hurting themselves with their foolish act. The above saying is very similar to the remark made by Boccaccio about the tale of "green geese" mentioned above.

Just like *The Decameron* which exposes the greed and lust of monks and priests of the Christian Church in an effort to lay bare the hypocrisy of their preached asceticism, *San Yan* also gives ample depictions of the evils and lecherousness of Buddhist monks and priests, thus forcefully expressing the theme of anti-asceticism. Take the tale *Monk Moon Bright Redeems Willow Green* and *Abbot Mingwu Redeems Five Commandments* in *San Yan* as an example. In the first tale, a well-cultivated monk who is said to "have been cultivating himself for 52 years in the bamboo forest" saw the beautiful body of a courtesan named Wu Honglian, and "was immediately surging with lustful desire in spite of his effort to control himself." In the second tale, the monk who is known for his "obedience of five commandments[2]" saw Wu Honglian, and was at once so utterly captivated by the girl that his lewd passion was strongly aroused, and immediately bought over the foster father of the girl with ten tael of silver, asking him to send his daughter to his "bedchamber" in the evening. In these two stories, the author uncovers the affectation of virtue of those monks and lays bare their greedy lecherousness as well as the hypocrisy of asceticism they preach.

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[2]"Five commandments" or "Five Precepts" are a set of basic code of ethics undertaken by the followers of Buddhism. The five commandments or precepts are commitments to abstain from harming living beings, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying and intoxication.—Translator's note.

8.1.2 Singing Praises of Love and Women

Catholic Church deems sexual love as a sensual evil, while Boccaccio's tales show that pure love is a fruit of human's real nature and genuine affection—it is a positive element and the source of happiness in a man's life. It can enlighten the foolish and help to give full play to one's talents. For example, in the first tale told on the fifth day in *The Decameron*, Cimon, a foolish son from a rich family, "was not so much a human as a beast." His master's untiring teachings and his father's patient persuasion (even the flogging of him) all failed to put him right. However, ever after he fell in love with Iphigenia at first sight, "his stony heart was shot by the arrow of love" and "he grew to be smart and intelligent out of a foolish man," and later turned out to be a renowned philosopher with high prestige.

Catholic Church claims that woman is the source of evils and is inferior to man. While Boccaccio believes that woman is a beautiful creation for whom he shows his heartfelt sympathy and respect. In the "Preface" to *The Decameron*, Boccaccio claims that his work is composed for women, and is dedicated to those women who "stay in their small world of boudoir all day long." In *The Decameron*, many tales sing praises of women's kind heart, deep affection, and witty mind. For instance, in *The Tale of Filomena*, the ninth tale told on the second day, the wife of a merchant who was unrighteously wronged was threatened to be put to death. She made a narrow escape, and was forced to have her hair cut and disguised herself as a man. She went through untold hardships and adventures and finally, she avenged herself by virtue of her remarkable wisdom and ability, proved her innocence, and resumed her role as a woman and was therefore respected by people. In *The Tale of Fiammetta*, the fifth tale told on the first day, the Marchioness of Montferrat by a banquet of hens seasoned with wit checked the mad passion of the King of France. In *The Tale of Emilia*, the fourth tale told on the eighth day, the chaste and resourceful widow lady played some smart tricks on the lewd rector of Fiesole and made a fool of him before the public who finally received his just punishment.

Feudal system and feudal ethics are largely incompatible with love between man and woman which is characterized by democratic spirit, and therefore they always make every attempt to deprive man and woman of their right to voice their love to each other and destroy the union of them, resulting in numerous love tragedies. Just like Boccaccio, Feng Menglong as a writer equipped with preliminary democratic thought expressed his full approval for the love between man and woman. In *San Yan*, he gives a lot of descriptions about love which exhibit the desire of women in pursuit of their happy life, sing praises of pure love and lash out at the oppression of feudal system against women. For example, in the tale *Du Shiniang Sinks her Jewel Box in Anger*, the heroine Du Shiniang, like those women in *The Decameron*, yearned for happy love and marriage. Of course, her pursuit of love and marriage is not based on sexual desire—after all, she was then a renowned courtesan and had been in the line for 7 years, but this never satisfied her sexually, or rather she was badly hurt and felt deeply humiliated, which made her determined to reform herself—she fell in love with Li Jia, a man whom she felt "honest and sincere." However, it never occurred

to her that her beloved man went so far as to sell her to another man. The ruthless reality ruined her dream about love. Thinking she would rather die in honor than live in disgrace, she sank her jewel box in great anger and then killed herself by jumping into the river. The author highly praises such a rebellious spirit of Du Shiniang who would rather die when life is a disgrace.

The tale *Artisan Ts'ui and His Ghost Wife* tells a love story about Cui Ning, an artisan and Yu Xiuxiu, a maid doing embroidery in Wang Residence. Although Yu Xiuxiu was killed by her master in Wang Residence, her pursuit of love was not extinguished, and her ghost continued to love Cui Ning. At the end of the tale, the author, in the form of fantasy, made them married in the nether world. The tale *The Young Madam offers Money to Clerk Zhang* tells the story of a young madam in her twenties in Zhaoxuan Residence who fell out of favor with her master and was forced to marry Mr. Zhang, a rich merchant who was over sixty. She was in such a great distress that she soon fell in love with Clerk Zhang in Mr. Zhang's shop. Later she was forced to hang herself, but her ghost continued to be in pursuit of her beloved. There are many such stories in *San Yan* in which the hero or heroine died for love. Feng Menglong commented in a poem in the story *Mr. Le Junior Searches for His Wife at the Risk of His Life* that "If one falls in deep love with his beloved, it doesn't matter even if he has to die." In the story *Wu Qing Meets Ai'ai by Golden Bright Pond*, we can also find such poetical lines as "If the couple is separated as far apart as life and death, they'll never be willing to take it, as the most important thing in life is nothing but deep love." Here the author sings high praises of the steadfast and persistent love and individual right of marriage, which is in line with the spirit represented in *The Decameron*. Engles made the following remarks about such a deep love: "erotic love is often so strong and lasting that, if the couple cannot get united and have to part, it is a big—if not the biggest—misfortune to both two sides. They'd be willing to take great risks, even at the cost of their lives, in order to be able to get united" (Marx and Engels 1972: 73).

Traditional Chinese feudal ethics held that "it is only women and mean persons that are most difficult to get along with." For a long time, woman has been regarded as a source of misfortune that may topple a state, or a creature that is hard to get along with, or a tool exploited by man to give vent to his sexual desire. Influenced by feudal morality, women in the fiction before the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644) were mostly devalued. However, in Feng Menglong's *San Yan*, women not only turn out to be the major subjects of the stories, but also they are mostly extolled and praised. For example, the courtesan Du Shiniang who would rather die in honor than live in disgrace, or the hardworking and intelligent maid Yu Xiuxiu who knows clearly what to love and what to hate, or the concubine Bai Yuniang who endures painful humiliation for her husband and bears untold hardships without complaint, or the courtesan Yu Tangchun who is wise, sincere and strong-minded, or the rebellious fairy maiden Lady White who keeps doing good deeds, to name just a few. The depictions of these women reveal preliminary progressive democratic view of Feng Menglong about women.

8.1.3 Opposing Hierarchy and Advocating Equality

In the rigidly stratified feudal society—no matter in the East or West—the idea that married couple should come from families of equal status has long dominated people's view about marriage. According to this idea, it is the status and wealth of the family rather than the love between the couple that form the foundation of their marriage. In such a status/wealth-centered marriage, getting married is regarded as "a political act, an opportunity to expand one's power and influence by means of a new union in which what decisively matters is the interest of the family rather than the personal will" (Marx and Engels 1972: 74). Both Boccaccio's *The Decameron* and Feng Menglong's *San Yan* boldly lash out at this feudal hierarchical principle of marriage and advocate the idea that marriage should be based on equality and mutual love.

The first tale told on the fourth day in *The Decameron* portrays the image of Ghismonda, and makes an attack on feudal mercenary marriage and hierarchical ideas. The infanta Ghismonda lived alone at home, and she fell in love with Guiscardo, the attendant of her King father Tancredi. Tancredi discovered their love and so he jailed Guiscardo. Later he slayed Guiscardo, had his heart dug out and sent the heart in a golden cup to the daughter in an effort to kill her passionate love by means of punishing her beloved. The King scolded her, claiming that she should not have had an affair with a low and humble attendant—even if she wanted to have an affair with someone, she should have chosen a man who could match her in their status. To this Ghismonda retorted:

> Now it appears that I have not offended but by love; in imitation of vulgar opinion, rather than truth: you seek to reprove me bitterly, alleging no other main argument for your anger, but only my not choosing a Gentleman, or one more worthy. Wherein it is most evident, that you do not so much check my fault, as the ordination of fortune, who many times advances men of meanest esteem, and abases them of greater merit. But leaving this discourse, let us look into the original of things, wherein we are first to observe, that from one mass or lump of flesh, both we, and all other received our flesh, and one Creator has created all things; yes, all creatures, equally in their forces and faculties, and equally likewise in their virtue: which virtue was the first that made distinction of birth and equality, in regard, that such as have the most liberal portion thereof, and performed actions thereto answerable, were thereby teamed noble; all the rest remaining unnoble: now although contrary use did afterward hide and conceal this Law, yet was it not therefore banished from nature or good manners …
>
> Cast a heedful eye then (good Father) upon all your Gentlemen, and advisedly examine their virtues, conditions, and manner of behaviour. On the other side, observe those parts remaining in Guiscardo: and then if you will judge truly, and without affection, you will confess him to be most noble, and that all your Gentlemen (in respect of him) are but base grooms and villains.
>
> … Perhaps you will allege that he is but mean and poor; I confess it … Nevertheless poverty impairs not any part of noble nature, but wealth hurries into horrible confusions.

In the feudal marriage system in which hierarchy, financial wealth and political power assume dominance, Ghismonda was courageous enough to shatter the view of feudal family hierarchy and made her judgement of a man in terms of his wisdom and moral character. Her above righteous remarks and brave act to pursue love at the cost of her

life reflect clearly the spirit of democracy and humanism. Although her love ended in tragedy, she triumphed over her father spiritually, which can be proved by the fact in the tale that her father made the couple buried together. This demonstrates that the sincere and devoted love between Ghismonda and Guiscardo prevails against feudal hierarchical ideas represented by the King, thus exhibiting a victory of humanistic love over feudal hierarchical marriage system.

In *San Yan*, there are also similar stories like the above tale of Ghismonda and Guiscardo in which unequal social or family status leads to love tragedies. For example, in *The Fan Tower Restaurant as Witness to the Love of Zhou Shengxian*, Zhou Shengxian is just such a woman as Ghismonda. Although she was the daughter of a rich merchant Zhou Dalang, she fell in love with Fan Erlang, a wine dealer in Fan Tower Restaurant. But her father thought the man was from a too humble family and rejected their proposed marriage as he considered their love "humiliating" to his family. In spite of this, the girl refused to yield to her father. She attempted to kill herself two times for the sake of Fan Erlang, and she even promised to be with him after her death as a ghost. Such a rebellious spirit of her that she would never yield to the feudal hierarchical ideas and feudal patriarchal system reflects women's demand for equality and democracy. Besides, it also shows that people's noble pursuit of equality and democracy is sure to be in violent conflict with feudal hierarchical ideas. Therefore, in order to win freedom of love and marriage, people inevitably will have to carry on desperate struggles against feudal ideology and ethics.

In *San Yan*, there are tales which tell about the ups and downs of some individuals and families which lead to the widening of the gap between those used-to-be-equally-matched families, thus resulting in the tragedies of love and marriage. For example, in the tale *The Beggar Chief's Daughter*, Mo Ji, a poor scholar, married Jin Yunu, the daughter of a beggar chief. Mo Ji was very gratified about the marriage because "he got a beautiful wife for nothing and they lived in abundance." However, after he passed an imperial examination and then secured an official position, he began to feel contempt for his marriage with Jin family, thinking it "a lifetime stain for him." In order to get re-married into a family of high status, he laid murderous hands on his wife who had made every effort to help him succeed, killing her by pushing her into the river. The tale shows that people's ideas about family status, wealth and power can ruin marriage and smear human soul. On the other hand, in *San Yan* there are also tales which tell the story of young man and woman who abandoned the ideas about family status in pursuit of love and ultimately found their happiness. For instance, the tale *The Oil Vendor and the Courtesan*, through its vivid storyline, shows that in the matter of love and marriage, what is most precious is mutual respect and mutual love rather than family status, hierarchy and wealth. The marriage between Shen Yaoqin, a courtesan and Qin Zhong, a lower class oil vendor and their happy life represent a full approval for equal love between ordinary people and a violent attack on feudal ethics.

8.1.4 Depicting Secret Love with Different Judgement

In Boccaccio's *The Decameron*, there are a lot of tales about (especially women's) extramarital love. This represents a special means and an important part of *The Decameron* in opposition to asceticism and in favor of emancipation of human nature.

For instance, in the eighth tale told by Neifile on the seventh day, a husband grew jealous of his wife, and discovered that she had warning of her lover's approach by a piece of pack-thread, which she tied to her great toe at nights. While he was pursuing her lover, she put another woman in bed in her place. The husband, finding her there, beat her, and cut off her hair. He then went and called his wife's brothers, who, holding his accusation to be false, subjected him to a torrent of abuse. In the ninth tale told by Panfilo on the seventh day, Lydia, wife of Nicostratus, loved Pyrrhus, who to assure himself thereof, asked three things of her, all of which she did, and therewithal enjoyed him in presence of Nicostratus, and made Nicostratus believe that what he saw was not real. In the tenth tale told by Panfilo on the fourth day, the wife of a brilliant surgeon led a well-to-do life, but she was not satisfied with what she had. She fell in love with a libertine who took an opiate by mistake and was deemed to be dead. So she and her maid put him in a chest and carried it off to the house of two usurers. Then he came to himself, and was taken for a thief and was almost killed. He was saved only after the maid, under the persuasion of the wife, claimed him to be her lover.

Why Boccaccio took great delight in narrating such illegitimate affairs between man and woman? This is because the upper-class marriage during that time was not based on love, but on the mercenary marriage between families of equal social rank. When marriage becomes a means to promote and strengthen the interest of the family, it is sure to be opposed. In *The Decameron*, there is a tale in which the heroine, when in her prime, was married to a haggard judge. Later she was got away by a pirate. Her husband attempted to ransom her, but was met with her blank refusal. She claimed that she'd rather live with the pirate than go with her husband merely for the sake of his social fame. In *The Decameron*, such rebellious acts of women in the form of clandestine love affair were mostly due to their dissatisfaction with their husbands or their unhappy marriage. Therefore, these "affairs" turn out to be bitter sarcasm about the feudal mercenary marriage and feudal patriarchy.

In Feng Menglong's *San Yan*, there are also depictions of unfaithful love, especially there are a lot of stories about wife's love affairs behind their husband's back. But this Feng Menglong did not approve of; instead he basically took a negative attitude about it. For instance, in the story *Ren the Filial Son with a Fiery Disposition Becomes a God*, Sheng Jin, the wife of a shopkeeper named Ren Gui, had an adulterous affair with Zhou De, a playboy. Such adultery was more than Feng Menglong could tolerate, so he meted out the most severe punishment to them in the story: Ren Gui, in a fit of fury, killed Sheng Jin's father, mother, maid and the adulterous couple. To such a retaliatory act Feng Menglong, rather than denounced it, showed his praise and appreciation. After Ren Gui was executed for murder, he was made

by the author a god worshipped by people. At the end of the story, Feng Menglong sang praises of Ren Gui as follows:

> The iron may melt, the rock may decay,
> But the spirit will never wither away;
> Ren Gui killed the adulterous couple at the cost of his life,
> His staunch and loyal spirit will forever stay alive.

Therefore, it can be seen that Feng Menglong is very different from Boccaccio who advocates hedonism. Feng Menglong opposes indulgence in sensual pleasure, holding that "lust is the root leading to the ruin of one's health, therefore a man should not indulge in illicit relationships." In the first volume of *Stories to Enlighten the World* (or *Stories Old and New*), he states clearly the purpose and theme of *San Yan* from the very beginning as follows:

> … I advise that a man should behave properly, exercise self-control and be content with his natural fate, and should never dampen his spirit and spoil his morals for the sake of these four things: "wine," "sex," "fortune" and "anger." He should know that, while he seeks pleasure and makes merry, he is not really pleased and merry; while he makes petty gains, he is actually losing it. Speaking of the above four things, no one can fully express how evil and harmful "sex" is. Eyes are the window for one's affections, and heart is the seed for one's desire. If one occasionally goes about seeking carnal pleasure, it doesn't matter much. But if he conspires to seek his momentary pleasure without thinking about other's gratitude, and thereof corrupt public morals — if your wife is assailed with obscenities by someone else, how will you feel about it?

On the one hand, under the influence of the then democratic ideology, Feng Menglong was against the feudal ethics which strangled the love between man and woman, and maintained that love and marriage should take its natural course, and beloved couple should finally get married. However, under the influence of traditional feudal ideology, he held that a man should abide by moral conventions and behave oneself and should not indulge in sensual pleasure, as "sex" is the root of misfortune of human beings. Therefore, he was basically negative about extramarital affairs. By contrast, Boccaccio who was in favor of freedom of personality and was against asceticism agitated for "primeval passion of life (sexual impulse)" and appreciated the illicit affair which was to some extent regarded by him as a kind of "true love." Unable to find a way out for women's emancipation, he believed unrealistically that, as long as there is love, people would be able to shatter the yoke of religion and feudal ideology to find their happiness—and this is where the major defect of *The Decameron* lies.

Boccaccio lived in Italy where the germ of bourgeois ideology firstly emerged. It was a transitional period from the feudal Middle Ages to the modern capitalist period when capitalism just began to shine through. Boccaccio's *The Decameron*, from the standpoint of emerging bourgeois classes, made attacks on feudal forces and Catholic Church. He exploited his worship of women to express his determination to fight against feudalism, declaring that "I was born an affectionate man and an escort of women. Ever since I became sensible as a child, I vowed to devote all my heart to you [women]." Feng Menglong, on the other hand, was brought up in the

southeast part of China in the late Ming Dynasty (1368–1644) where industry and commerce were relatively well developed. Although the basic social economy during that period still took the form of feudal economy, commodity economy which grew out of interior feudal society had relatively fully developed, and day by day it made impact on feudal natural economy and weakened the age-old patriarchal system. In the realm of ideology, democracy began to germinate, but it was unable to free itself from the fetters of feudal ideology to form systematic bourgeois democratic system, and feudal ideology still took a dominant position. Like Bocaccio, Feng Menglong at the time posed a lot of challenges to the feudal ethics by means of love between man and woman in an effort to uphold bourgeois democratic ideology. This aim was made very clear in his "Preface" to *Folk Songs* compiled by him: "there are fake verses, but there are no fake folk songs … In these folk songs, true love between man and woman can prove the hypocrisy of orthodox (feudal) ethics." Therefore, both *The Decameron* and *San Yan* make violent attacks on religion, monks and clergy, lay bare fully the hypocrisy of the religious asceticism, and sing high praises of humanity and its emancipation and free and happy love and marriage, thus exhibiting in them in-depth humanistic thought.

8.2 A Comparison of Erotic Depictions in *Chin P'ing Mei* and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*

Sex is an age-old and mysterious topic. From time immemorial to the present, no matter in the East or West, sex as an human act to reproduce one's offspring and satisfy one's sexual desire has long remained a sacred and eternal theme. However, it takes a very long time for human beings to move from instinctive primordial desire to the conscious pursuit of sexual satisfaction, and from sexual abstinence to sexual emancipation. Literature is a mirror of social life, and sex as an important part of social life is sure to make up an important part of literature. Among erotic novels in the East and West, the Chinese novel *Chin P'ing Mei*[3] (*The Plum in the Golden Vase*) by Lanling Xiaoxiao Sheng (literally, The Scoffing Scholar of Lanling), and the English novel *Lady Chatterley's Lover* by the British writer D. H. Lawrence, are two representative works of its kind which are most influential and controversial. As the two works came out in different times and from different countries, and the

[3] *Chin P'ing Mei* (or *Jin Ping Mei* in modern Chinese Pinying system), translated into English as *The Plum in the Golden Vase*, is a Chinese novel of manners composed in vernacular Chinese during the late Ming Dynasty (1368–1644). The author took the pseudonym "Lanling Xiaoxiao Sheng" (literally, "The Scoffing Scholar of Lanling"), and his identity remains unknown. The story centers around Hsi-men Ch'ing (or "Xi Menqing" in modern Chinese Pinying system), a corrupt social climber and lustful merchant who is wealthy enough to marry six wives and concubines. After P'an Chin-lien (or "Pan Jinlian" in modern Chinese Pinying system) secretly murders her husband, Hsi-men Ch'ing takes her as one of his wives. The story follows the domestic sexual struggles of the women within his household as they clamor for prestige and influence amidst the gradual decline of the Hsi-men clan.—Translator's note.

two writers differ in their subjective ideology and artistic cultivation, they present totally different features in their depiction of sexuality. In this section, a comparison of erotic depictions in the two novels is to be made in an effort to explore the different narrative characteristics of Chinese and Western erotic fiction.

8.2.1 Sexual Indulgence and Release of Instinctive Sexual Desire in *Chin P'ing Mei* Versus Sexual Beauty and Marriage of Body and Soul in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*

As the contemporary Chinese writer Mao Dun remarks, "This book (i.e. *Chin P'ing Mei*) gives an in-depth depiction of social manners. Especially there are a lot of explicit depictions of sexuality … which are very undisguised and blatant. The novel has 100 chapters, among which 60–70 chapters involve the depictions of sexuality, which are not only many but also diversified. The book can well be said to be a comprehensive integration of erotic depictions" (Mao 1927). Erotic depictions in *Chin P'ing Mei* are of four categories in terms of its narrative content: (1) General narrative of sexual relation; (2) depictions of direct sexual activity (e.g. sexual intercourse); (3) exaggerated depictions of sexual desire and sexual activity; (4) the prompting and emphasizing of sex, sexual mentality, and sexual awareness. While in terms of the length of narrative of sexuality, it is roughly of two categories: (1) sketchy depictions (about 100 places); (2) detailed depictions (about 50 places). In the novel, there are over 100 places involving obscene depictions which present, without exception, extremely explicit sexual activity and sensual stimulation.

In *Chin P'ing Mei*, the heroes and heroines seek sensual pleasure without discrimination (i.e. without considering where they are or whom they will have sex with). The male protagonist Hsi-men Ch'ing always seems to be stimulated for the pursuit of women. For example, in Chapter 2 a description is made of Hsi-men Ch'ing who met P'an Chin-lien for the first time as follows.

> This man, on whose head the forked stick had fallen, stopped in his tracks and was about to make trouble; but when he looked around to see who was responsible he found, to his surprise, that it was a beautiful and seductive woman. Behold, she was:
>
> Gloosy, black, raven's feather tresses;
>
> Dark, curved, new moon eyebrows;
>
> Clear, cold, almond eyes;
>
> Redolently fragrant cherry lips;
>
> A straight, full, alabaster nose;
>
> Thickly powdered red cheeks;
>
> A handsome, silver salver face;
>
> A light, lissome, flowerlike figure;
>
> Slender, jade-white, scallion-shoot fingers;
>
> A cuddlesome, willow waist;

A tender, pouting, dough-white tummy;
Tiny, turned-up, pointed feet;
Buxom breasts; and
Fresh, white legs.

(Lanling 1993)

Hsi-men Ch'ing sized up P'an Chin-lien with lustful eyes through which P'an Chin-lien's hair, eyebrows, eyes, mouth, nose, cheeks, face, body, hand, and waist are all depicted in detail. He saw not only her parts which are visible, but also her invisible parts "through" her clothes.

Hsi-men Ch'ing went so far as to be almost crazy in his pursuit of women. In Chapter 57, he said to Wu Yüeh-niang as follows:

> You're expressing your jealousy again. As the saying goes: Even Heaven and Earth are characterized as yin and yang, it is only natural that male and female should mate. Those who engage in secret trysts and illicit affairs in this life are all persons whose fates were ordained in a previous life. Their names were entered in the register of amorous affinities, and they are merely fulfilling their fates in this life. You don't mean to say that they are merely acting on impetuous and reckless impulse, do you? I've heard it said of the Jetavana Park, in the western realm of the Buddhist patriarch himself, that it was only acquired after the grounds were paved with gold; and that even in the Ten Courts of the Underworld, something in the way of paper money is required if one is to survive. As long as I expend this property of mine in the doing of extensive good works, even if I were to rape Chang'o the moon goddess, fornicate with the Weaving Maid, kidnap Hsü Fei-ch'iung,[4] or abduct the daughter of the Queen Mother of the West, it would do nothing to diminish the Heaven-splashing wealth and distinction that I now possess.
>
> (Lanling 2006)

These words reveal the erotomania mentality of Hsi-men Ch'ing who is an upstart businessman. Women "conquered" by him include daughters of officials, courtesans of brothels, wives of small businessmen, wives of his sworn brothers, widows of great fortune, and maids of his former wife—all of whom turn out to be the subjects with whom he seeks his sensual pleasure and on whom he vents his lustful desire. Hsi-men Ch'ing has sex indiscriminately without considering time and place, which is depicted in the novel in many places, presenting extremely vulgar and obscene language, acts, and scenes.

In *Chin P'ing Mei*, one of the heroines is P'an Chin-lien who can well be called "an extremely lustful wanton." A lot of depiction is given to her about her language, acts, and mental activities, as is illustrated by the follow excerpt:

> But as for P'an Chin-lien, she was still in the springtime of her youth, not thirty years old. So the flames of her desire could not be banked, but flared up ten feet high. Every day, without fail, she would make her way to the front gate, looking as though she was modeled in plaster and carved of jade, and displaying white teeth and red lips. Leaning against the door jamb as she gazed out into the street, she often remained there until dusk. In the evening when Chin-lien returned to her room, she found that on her glossy pillow, amid deserted bed curtains, there was no companion on the Phoenix Terrace. Unable to sleep, she would wander into the garden where she gently paced the flower-stream moss, and watched the

[4]Hsü Fei-ch'iung is a mythological female musician in the entourage of the Queen Mother of the West.—Translator's (D. T. Roy's) note.

> moon bobbing beneath the water, fearful lest Hsi-men Ch'ing's heart should prove as difficult to capture. Occasionally she caught sight of lovemaking of the tortoiseshell cats, and this would engender tumult in her heart all the more.
>
> (Lanling 1993)

In the novel there are such stories as "P'an Chin-lien engages in a drunken orgy under the grape arbor" and "P'an Chin-lien enjoys a midday battle in the bathtub," as well as such depictions of her when she has sex with Hsi-men Ch'ing, producing "a trembling voice and melting tones," and "sighing and moaning, panting and groaning." P'an Chin-lien has sex in a lascivious and varied way, the depiction of which reveals her strong instinctive sexual desire on the one hand, and her wild beastliness on the other. She displays her instinctive desire frantically and nakedly without being constrained by the traditional morality. Chastity and ethical principles are totally cast aside by her, making her struggle against feudal morality and pursuit of sexual happiness tinged with some lewd and abnormal characteristics.

In *Chin P'ing Mei*, there are a lot of rhymed poems employed to depict sexual acts and sexual mentality. Owing to their appropriate places in the novel, vivid figure of speech, and language used, these rhymed poems make up for the deficiency of prose narrative of vernacular Chinese. For example, in Chapter 6 there is a scene depicted in which Hsi-men Ch'ing and P'an Chin-lien have sex as follows:

> The woman's mastery of the arts of the bedchamber was equal to that of any prostitute, and she pulled out all the stops in her endeavors to please her partner. Hsi-men Ch'ing, too, was on his mettle and eager to display his spearsmanship to best advantage. A woman of beauty and a man of talent, both of them were in the prime of life.
>
> There is a poem that describes the picture they presented:
>
> In the seclusion of the nuptial chamber the pillow and mat are cool;
>
> The man of talent and woman of beauty approach the climax of their game.
>
> No sooner have they embarked on "dipping the red candle upside down";[5]
>
> Than they suddenly switch to "punting the boat by night."[6]
>
> Rifling its fragrance, "the butterfly nibbles at the calyx of the flower";[7]
>
> Sporting with the water, "the dragonfly darts, now high, now low."
>
> When pleasure reaches its height passions are intense, and feelings know no bounds;
>
> As the mouth of the "divine turtle" disgorges its "silvery stream."[8]
>
> (Lanling 1993)

[5] "Dipping the red candle upside down" is a metaphoric expression for vaginal intercourse with the woman on top of the man.—Translator's (D. T. Roy's) note.

[6] "Punting the boat by night" is the name of lyric tune as well as a metaphorical expression for intercourse with the man on top of the woman, with his weight on his knees and wrists, while the woman's legs are raised and knees flexed so that her lover's abdomen rests on the backs of her thighs.—Translator's (D. T. Roy's) note.

[7] "The butterfly nibbles at the calyx of the flower" is probably a metaphorical reference to cunnilingus.—Translator's (D. T. Roy's) note.

[8] The term "divine turtle" is a standard euphemism for the penis. The expression "silvery stream," the literal meaning of which is "clear stream," in the context of this poem refers unmistakably to semen, but it also puns with another compound that means "copper cash."—Translator's (D. T. Roy's) note.

For another example, in Chapter 13 there is a scene in which Hsi-men Ch'ing and Li P'ing-erh have sex, which is at first described in vernacular Chinese, and then in rhymed verse:

> (… When Hsi-men Ch'ing heard this, he was completely delighted. The two of them sat down together:) Shoulder to shoulder and thigh over thigh, exchanging cups as they drank, while Ying-ch'un stood at their side to pour the wine and Hsiu-ch'un went back and forth to serve the food. When they began to feel the effects of the wine, within the brocade bed curtains, the maids perfumed with incense the mandarin duck quilt, and put in its place the coral pillow. The servants then removed the table at which they had been drinking and put the latch on the door, after which the two of them got into bed and engaged each other in amorous sport.
>
> … (Truly, what were the two of them doing with each other? Behold:)
>
> By the gleam of lamplight,
>
> Amid mermaid silk curtains;
>
> One comes, the other goes,
>
> One butts, the other lunges.
>
> One of them stirs his jade arms into motion,
>
> The other raises her golden lotuses on high.
>
> This one gives vent to the warbling of an oriole,
>
> That one gives voice to the twittering of a swallow.
>
> It is just like Chang Chun-jui's rendezvous with Ts'ui Ying-ying;[9]
>
> It much resembles Sun Yu's secret tryst with the Goddess of Witches' Mountain. 11
>
> Promises to be as faithful as the hills and seas,
>
> Still resonate within their ears;
>
> The butterfly is enamored, the bee distraught,
>
> They are not yet willing to call a halt.
>
> (Lanling 1993)

It should be noted that, although the depiction by verse in *Chin P'ing Mei* is more implicit and euphemistic than that by vernacular Chinese, and therefore it can afford a lot of room for thought, on the whole it is still rather straightforward and is lacking in poetical flavor.

It may be assumed that the author of *Chin P'ing Mei*, by depicting sex explicitly, attempts to explore and exhibit the basic instinctive desire of human beings so as to cater for the readers. However, in terms of actual effect, these sex depictions turn out to be sheerly a venting of carnal desire and a display of basic instinct of humans.

Then what is "sex in real sense"? D. H. Lawrence, the author of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, has a totally different understanding about this question from the author of *Chin P'ing Mei*. According to Lawrence, "sex and beauty are one thing, like flame and fire. If you hate sex, you hate beauty; if you love living beauty, you have a reverence

[9] "Chang Hun-jui" and "Ts'ui Ying-ying" are the hero and heroine of the *Romance of the Western Chamber*, a famous drama written by Wang Shifu (1260–1336), a playwrite of the Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368). In this drama the hero and heroine have a love affair and, after a lot of twists and turns, end in happy marriage.—Translator's note.

for sex. Of course you can love old dead beauty and hate sex. But to love living beauty you must have a reverence for sex" (Lawrence 1998: 2–3). In Lawrence's eyes, "There must be two in one, always two in one—the sweet love of communion and the fierce, proud love of sensual fulfilment, both together in one love. And then we are like a rose. We surpass even love, love is encompassed and surpassed. We are two who have a pure connection. We are two, isolated like gems in our unthinkable otherness. But the rose contains and transcends us, we are one rose, beyond" (ibid.: 21).

Therefore, in his *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, sexual love turns out to be something very important and indispensable. In this novel, Lawrence gives a subtle and amazing depiction of the beauty of sexual love. The sexual love between Connie and Mellors depicted by the author, which is an integration of mind and body, is narrated in such beautiful words that it proves to be so touching, lovely and poetical. While reading these depictions of sexuality, the readers will be greatly entertained straight from the depth of heart without sensing anything lewd or lustful.

For example, in the novel Connie, who was sexually frustrated, got into Wragby in order to get over her depression and temporarily rid herself of her husband by whom she felt constrained and oppressed. By doing this she entered a world in which there was a man who shared with her the same loneliness and depression, and in which Connie experienced the joy of life, considering Mellors to be "an amiable, healthy, and passionate man." Both of them experienced spiritual pleasure and satisfaction in their sensual sexual love. For instance, in Chapter 10 there is a passage as follows:

> "Eh! What it is to touch thee!" he said, as his finger caressed the delicate, warm, secret skin of her waist and hips. He put his face down and rubbed his cheek against her belly and against her thighs again and again. And again she wondered a little over the sort of rapture it was to him. She did not understand the beauty he found in her, through touch upon her living secret body, almost the ecstasy of beauty. For passion alone is awake to it. And when passion is dead, or absent, then the magnificent throb of beauty is incomprehensible and even a little despicable; warm, live beauty of contact, so much deeper than the beauty of vision. She felt the glide of his cheek on her thighs and belly and buttocks, and the close brushing of his moustache and his soft thick hair, and her knees began to quiver. Far down in her she felt a new stirring, a new nakedness emerging. And she was half afraid. Half she wished he would not caress her so. He was encompassing her somehow. Yet she was waiting, waiting.
>
> (Lawrence 2002)

Lawrence depicts sexual love in such a beautiful, passionate and poetical prose poem. Another passage is quoted as follows:

> He too had bared the front part of his body and she felt his naked flesh against her as he came into her. For a moment he was still inside her, turgid there and quivering. Then as he began to move, in the sudden helpless orgasm, there awoke in her new strange thrills rippling inside her. Rippling, rippling, rippling, like a flapping overlapping of soft flames, soft as feathers, running to points of brilliance, exquisite, exquisite and melting her all molten inside. It was like bells rippling up and up to a culmination … She clung to him unconscious in passion, and he never quite slipped from her, and she felt the soft bud of him within her stirring, and strange rhythms flushing up into her with a strange rhythmic growing motion, swelling and swelling till it filled all her cleaving consciousness, and then began again the unspeakable motion that was not really motion, but pure deepening whirlpools of sensation swirling deeper and deeper through all her tissue and consciousness, till she was one perfect concentric fluid of feeling, and she lay there crying in unconscious inarticulate cries. The

> voice out of the uttermost night, the life! The man heard it beneath him with a kind of awe, as his life sprang out into her. And as it subsided, he subsided too and lay utterly still, unknowing, while her grip on him slowly relaxed, and she lay inert. And they lay and knew nothing, not even of each other, both lost.
>
> (Lawrence 2002)

As Lawrence regards love as a form of energy, and sex as part of life—the part which is the most natural, the most sacred, and the most neglected by modern people, the natural and beautiful sex in his *Lady Chatterley's Lover* turns out to be something which could be—and should be—worshipped. Lawrence not only depicts in a poetical and beautiful tone people's sensual pleasure and intoxication while they are having sex, but also describes how the two protagonists (i.e. Connie and Mellors) decorate their naked body with flowers, symbolizing that a marriage of sex and mind is the most ideal for human beings.

Yu Dafu (1896–1945) points out in his essay "Reading Lawrence's Novel—*Lady Chatterley's Lover*" (1934) that "If we compare *Chin P'ing Mei* with *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, we'll see at once the different ages in which the two authors lived and the different writing techniques the two authors employed. In *Chin P'ing Mei*, certain scenes and their descriptions are rather repetitive and far-fetched, and can well be dispensed with; while in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, every line and every sentence seems to be indispensable. Every act of sex seems to be so natural" (Yu 1997: 6). Lin Yutang (1895–1976), a renowned Chinese writer, translator and linguist, also observes in his essay "On Lawrence" (1935) that "the depiction in *Chin P'ing Mei* is objective, while in Lawrence's novels it is subjective … In *Chin P'ing Mei* sex is depicted for sex's sake, while in Lawrence's novels sex is depicted for something deeper, as the author attempts to explore the mind of people—what is important is the union of mind and body … To Lawrence, having sex is something healthy and intoxicating rather than something sinful and shameful …" (Lin 1997: 7) All these remarks are rather insightful and penetrating.

8.2.2 Abnormal Sex, Indulgence of Sensual Pleasure and Euphoria of Body in *Chin P'ing Mei* Versus Natural Sex, Passion and Vitality of Life in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*

In *Chin P'ing Mei*, morality is overpowered by lechery. The author makes a depiction of abnormality of sex, in which men and women enjoy sensual pleasure in their animal-like sex, amour and incest.

In the novel, a lot of descriptions are given to sex toys, philtre and erotic pictures. Hsi-men Ch'ing who claims that "in my younger days I frequented the streets and alleys of the licensed quarter and reared a 'turtle' of prodigious size" (Chapter 3) always takes with him "the bag of sexual implements" which helps to enhance sexual

pleasure. For example, in the following passage there is a depiction of the use of "a titillating bell" by Hsi-men Ch'ing in his sexual intercourse.

> Their colloquy at an end, the woman was helping Hsi-men Ch'ing off with his white satin jacket when an object fell out of his sleeve with a tinkling sound. Taking it in her hand, she found it had a heavy feel to it and was about the size of a fowling pellet. She scrutinized it for some time but couldn't tell what it was. Behold:
>
> To the tune "Immortal at the River"
>
> First introduced as a product of the Barbarian armies;
>
> It has found its way by recommendation to the capital itself.
>
> Its body is miniature, its interior hollow.
>
> Once set in motion by the merest touch;
>
> It will roll around spontaneously, stridulant as a cicada.
>
> Adept at arousing consternation in the beauty's heart;
>
> A veteran contributor to the vigor of the loins;
>
> Its sobriquet is "Brazenfaced Valiant Vanguard."
>
> On the victory honors list forever number one;
>
> It has won renown as "The Titillating Bell."
>
> The woman examined it for some time before asking, "What on earth is it? And why does it give me a numb feeling halfway up my arm?"
>
> "This is something you wouldn't be familiar with," Hsi-men Ch'ing laughed. "It's called a 'titillating bell' and comes from the southern country of Burma. Good ones cost four or five taels of silver."
>
> "What do you do with it?" the woman asked.
>
> "If you put it in your 'crucible' before doing the deed," said Hsi-men Ch'ing, "It's too wonderful for words."
>
> "You've been experimenting with Li P'ing-erh, haven't you?" the woman said.
>
> Thereupon, Hsi-men Ch'ing gave a full account of the events of the preceding night, with the result that Chin-lien's:
>
> Lecherous desires were suddenly aroused.
>
> Though it was broad daylight, the two of them:
>
> Took off their clothes and went to bed.
>
> (Lanling 1993)

"Titillating bell" is a small hollow bell made of thin silver plate. It is used in pair, with a drop of mercury in one bell and a tongue-shaped metal in another. When shaken, it can produce trills. It is put in the vagina of a woman and is stopped with a thin spitball. As the woman moves her thigh or rocks her body, the bell will shake all along and emit a trilling sound which could produce a pleasant sensation. Apart from using sex toys, Hsi-men Ch'ing also beseeched the Indian Monk for "the medication to enhance his performance of the arts of the bedchamber." For example, in Chapter 51, there is a description of Hsi-men Ch'ing who, after taking medication, indulged in wild pleasure with P'an Chin-lien. At the end of Chapter 13, there is a description of an erotic album of painting of Hsi-men Ch'ing as follows:

Mounted on patterned damask in the imperial palace,
Fastened with ivory pins on brocade ribbons;
Vividly traced in outlines of gold, enhanced by blue and green colors;
The square painting on each folio leaf is neatly framed.
The women vie with the Goddess of Witches' Mountain,
The men resemble that handsome paragon, Sung Yu.
Pair by Pair, within the bed curtains, they show themselves to be practiced combatants.
The names of the positions are twenty-four in number;
Each one designed to arouse the lust of the beholder.

(Lanling 2006)

In *Chin P'ing Mei* there are a lot of depictions about perverse sexual behaviors. For example, there is a description of P'an Chin-lien and Li P'ing-erh who were stripped off and were whipped by Hsi-men Ch'ing. In the novel Li P'ing-erh is depicted "to be fond of doing it doggie fashion. Getting down on all fours, she made Hsi-men Ch'ing sit on the pillow and insert himself into her inverted flower while she moved back and forth as she wished." Apart from that, in the novel there are also a lot of descriptions about voyeurism and eavesdropping, as well as descriptions about incest. For example, there are descriptions of adultery between brothers and their sisters-in-law, between sons-in-law and mothers-in-law, between masters and servants, and between mistresses and page boys. For instance, in Chapter 12, the author of the novel makes a comment on the adultery of P'an Chin-lien with her fifteen-year-old page boy Ch'in-t'ung as follows:

One of them shows total disregard for ethical norms or distinctions of status;
The other does not discriminate between above and below or high and low.
One of them, inspired by perverse lustful daring,
Cares nothing for the severity of her husband;
The other, carried away by lecherous desires,
Ignores a clear-cut violation of the law.
The garden with its hundred flowers,
Has been transformed into a pleasure ground;
The bedroom of his lawful mistress,
Has turned into a Kingdom of Cockaigne.
Almost before they know it, a glob of donkey's spunk,
Has been deposited in Chin-lien's jadelike body.

(Lanling 1993)

In *Chin P'ing Mei*, there are a lot of depictions about sadism & masochism, perverse sex, incest and sex indulgence, but hardly any descriptions about the sublimation of sexual love, which exhibits a sheer pursuit of carnal desire and sensual pleasure that is divorced from the spiritual and affectional communication between man and woman. Such a pursuit of sexual love is nothing but a down-to-earth sensual carnalism.

As Kang (1998: 227–228) observes, "A survey of the depictions in *Chin P'ing Mei* clearly shows that the affectional and aesthetic elements often found in traditional

Chinese literature are totally excluded in the novel. Sexual activities turn out to be constantly occurring daily activities—it occurs along with the excitement after drinking, with the indolence after a nap, with the boredom after watering the garden, and with the momentary leisure after attending official business or entertaining guests … For Hsi-men Ch'ing, sexual act turns out to be the sole and the most important way to seek pleasure—such pleasure has nothing to do with the happiness in one's inner heart, as what it seeks is sexual stimulation and satisfaction, which in essence is an activity treating its subject as consumer goods. Therefore to Hsi-men Ch'ing, all those women who have sex with him—no matter she is a wife, a concubine, or a mistress—hardly differ from prostitutes … Women on the one hand offer themselves as a 'thing' to men for their enjoyment, on the other hand they ask for some 'thing' to satisfy themselves. In the form of 'I am in possession of a some thing', they fall into the trap of 'I am nothing but that some thing'." As Maslow (1954) points out, if desire is never suppressed, and if everyone can have sex with others at will, then there will be no such a thing as tender love. If asceticism is an alienation of human nature, then over-indulgence which emphasizes one's basic instinct is sure to be another form of alienation of human nature. In *Chin P'ing Mei*, depictions about perverse sex represent people's wild indulgence in sex as well as an alienation of human nature.

Lawrence explains in his essay "Morality of the Novel" the connotation of "life" as follows: "By life, we mean something that gleams, that has the fourth-dimensional quality. If the bank clerk feels really piquant about his hat, if he establishes a lively relation with it, and goes out of the shop with the new straw on his head, a changed man, be-aureoled, then that is life. The same with the prostitute. If a man establishes a living relation to her, if only for one moment, then it is life. But if it doesn't: if it is just money and function, then it is not life, but sordidness, and a betrayal of living" (Lawrence 1998). Therefore, what Lawrence as a novelist attempts to do in his writing is to understand the inner feeling and love of people and to reveal the feeling and love embodied in sex.

In *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, Lawrence makes a depiction of the physiological reaction of Connie and Mellors during their first sexual love and their mental state after it as follows.

> With a queer obedience, she lay down on the blanket. Then she felt the soft, groping, helplessly desirous hand touching her body, feeling for her face. The hand stroked her face softly, softly, with infinite soothing and assurance, and at last there was the soft touch of a kiss on her cheek.
>
> She lay quite still, in a sort of sleep, in a sort of dream. Then she quivered as she felt his hand groping softly, yet with queer thwarted clumsiness, among her clothing. Yet the hand knew, too, how to unclothe her where it wanted. He drew down the thin silk sheath, slowly, carefully, right down and over her feet. Then with a quiver of exquisite pleasure he touched the warm soft body, and touched her navel for a moment in a kiss. And he had to come in to her at once, to enter the peace on earth of her soft, quiescent body. It was the moment of pure peace for him, the entry into the body of the woman.
>
> She lay still, in a kind of sleep, always in a kind of sleep. The activity, the orgasm was his, all his; she could strive for herself no more. Even the tightness of his arms round her, even the intense movement of his body, and the springing of his seed in her, was a kind of sleep,

> from which she did not begin to rouse till he had finished and lay softly panting against her breast.
>
> Then she wondered, just dimly wondered, why? Why was this necessary? Why had it lifted a great cloud from her and given her peace? Was it real? Was it real?
>
> … The man lay in a mysterious stillness. What was he feeling? What was he thinking? She did not know. He was a strange man to her, she did not know him. She must only wait, for she did not dare to break his mysterious stillness. He lay there with his arms round her, his body on hers, his wet body touching hers, so close. And completely unknown. Yet not unpeaceful. His very stillness was peaceful.
>
> She knew that, when at last he roused and drew away from her. It was like an abandonment.
>
> (Lawrence 2002)

Since Connie was once left with a feeling of deep hurt, her first body contact with Mellors was intuitive and lacking in passion, or was even full of qualm and fear. Then after the first barrier was overcome, when Connie instinctively "received" Mellors, "The activity, the orgasm was his, all his," while she lay quite still, in a sort of sleep, in a sort of dream. Then she wondered dimly "why this is necessary"? For their second sexual love, she was even more afflicted with mental conflict. She felt she could hardly be aroused, thinking of the time when she was with Michaelis, feeling that they seemed to have something in common. In the whole process she felt that the thrust of man's buttocks was ridiculous, surely ridiculous. She kept on thinking that the man who was having sex with her was a stranger, a complete stranger (i.e. a person from a different social class). Although she said before she left that she would be back, she regretted it when she was home and took a bath at once, hoping to wash off everything and every remanent odour. She decided to end their affair, and stop to spread her legs for the man. All this indicates that in Lawrence's view, sex without affectional interaction is a horrible and dirty thing.

As far as the relationship of body and mind is concerned, Lawrence holds that the supreme state of sex is to realize the fusion and communication of two minds through the close fusion of the two bodies. As he points out:

> To the individual, the act of coition is a great psychic experience, a vital experience of tremendous importance … In the act of coition, the two seas of blood in the two individuals, rocking and surging towards contact, as near as possible, clash into an oneness. A great flash of interchange occurs, like an electric spark when two currents meet or like lightning out of the densely surcharged clouds. There is a lightning flash which passes through the blood of both individuals, there is a thunder of sensation which rolls in diminishing crashes down the nerves of each — and then the tension passes … The two individuals are separate again. But are they as they were before? Is the air the same after a thunder-storm as before? No. The air is as it were new, fresh, tingling with newness. So is the blood of man and woman after successful coition.
>
> (Lawrence 1998: 57)

In the novel, there is a depiction of Connie and Mellors who reached orgasm "together," and then Connie "realized the depth of the other thing in her. Another self was alive in her, burning molten and soft in her womb and bowels." That evening Connie would not take her bath, as the sense of Mellors's flesh touching her, his very stickiness upon her, was dear to her, and in a sense holy. After ridding herself of the

fear and shame about sex, Connie was able to take sex as "part of life," embracing herself sexually, just like she was able to embrace herself rationally and spiritually. "My sex is myself, just like my mind is myself—no one can make me ashamed of this," as is described in the novel:

> And he realized as he went into her that this was the thing he had to do, to come into tender touch, without losing his pride or his dignity or his integrity as a man … And as his seed sprang in her, his soul sprang towards her too, in the creative act that is far more than procreative.
>
> She was quite determined now that there should be no parting between him and her.
>
> (Lawrence 2002)

8.2.3 Male's Domination Over the Female in *Chin P'ing Mei* Versus Equality Between the Male and the Female in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*

In the patriarchal feudal Chinese society in which men took the center stage, women always took a subordinate position. On the one hand, they were besieged by the powerful patriarchal culture, and so the value of their life could only be manifested in the men they were attached to without their own subjective consciousness; on the other hand, such ethics as "the three obediences and four virtues"[10] proposed by the Confucianists to control women's behavior has long restrained their thought and personal freedom. As time went by, such ethics grew into a kind of collective unconsciousness which dictated their behavior, and they gradually got used to submitting to men so as to be recognized by the society. As the British philosopher, logician and essayist Bertrand A.W. Russell (1872–1970) observes:

> Due to such submissive position of women, in most civilized societies the married couples are deprived of the true conjugal affection, and the relationship between wife and husband is one of subordination on the one hand, and of responsibility on the other hand.
>
> (Russell 1988: 17)

As far as inter-sexual relationship is concerned, *Chin P'ing Mei* is characterized by the depiction of male-centered carnalism. Hsi-men Ch'ing is the leading protagonist in the novel, and in all the sexual depictions about him, no matter his acts, his language, or his doom, he takes a dominant position in sexual experience. While the women he faces, due to their different status, appearance, identity and personality, either fall prey to him, or turn into something like his sex partner, or his objects to appeal to his vanity or to prove his sexual ability. The author writes a lot about Hsi-men Ch'ing's sexual freedom, sexual pleasure and sexual ability, and especially

[10]The three obediences and four virtues: in ancient China, a woman was required to obey her father before marriage, her husband during married life, and her sons in widowhood (i.e. three obediences), and was required to possess such four virtues as fidelity, physical charm, propriety in speech, and efficiency in needle work (i.e. four virtues).—Translator's note.

elaborates on how he "conquers" so many women, how he has sex with two women at night, and how powerful his sexual ability and skills are. In the novel Hsi-men Ch'ing takes up most of the sexual depictions (nearly 100 times), and women who are "conquered" by him number as many as 18. As the appendage of men, women such as P'an Chin-lien, Wang Liu-erh and Li P'ing-erh mainly attempt to please and cater for Hsi-men Ch'ing, while sex itself hardly brings them any pleasure—instead it sometimes gives them pain and torture.

The sexual pleasure of Hsi-men Ch'ing is heavily based on the physiological and spiritual torture on the part of women, as he derives his sexual pleasure from the pain of women. For example, in Chapter 27 there is a depiction of Hsi-men Ch'ing and P'an Chin-lien who play the game of "shooting the silver goose with a golden pellet" as follows:

> … The woman's two feet were suspended from the arbor … he reached into the bowl of ice water for a jade-yellow "imperial damson" plum and pitched it at the orifice of the woman's vagina. He pitched three of these in a row and each of them struck the clitoris … Then after several hundred thrusts and retractions … the sulfur-imbrued ring boke inside her. As for the woman:
>
> Her eyes dimmed, her respiration slowed,
>
> The sound of her breathing was barely audible,
>
> The tip of her tongue became ice-cold, and
>
> Her four limbs lay inert upon the mat.
>
> (Lanling 2001)

Then after she came back to her senses, she turned to Hsi-men Ch'ing and complained with coquettish tears that "How could you be so cruel to me? You almost cost me my life." In his sex with women, Hsi-men Ch'ing torments women in order to enhance sexual stimulation so that he could be aroused. As a form of maltreatment of patriarchal society over women, such wicked acts of Hsi-men Ch'ing undoubtedly exhibit men's most ruthless and contemptible oppression of women.

Totally different from *Chin P'ing Mei* in the depiction of sexuality, *Lady Chatterley's Lover* centers around the female protagonist Connie, who is entirely different from P'an Chin-lien, "the wanton" in *Chin P'ing Mei*. In her struggle for and pursuit of happiness, she keeps on improving and fulfilling herself, showing elegant temperament and taste.

Influenced by the then social environment, family status, educational background, her father's profession of art, and her mother's free and radical thought, Connie possessed the "upper-class" moral principles and social conventions on the one hand, and on the other hand she was even more equipped with the dream and pursuit characteristic of modern women. At the age of 15, she went to Germany to study music, and was often involved in hot discussion with men about philosophical, sociological and artistic matters, and she was just as good as the men themselves, or even better. Therefore, the impassioned interchange of talk, happy singing, and camping in the forest were what she often did with her classmates. Before she married Clifford, she had already dated her college classmates, and "had given herself as a gift to the youth with whom she had the most subtle and intimate arguments."

> And if after the roused intimacy of these vivid and soul-enlightened discussions the sex thing became more or less inevitable, then let it. It marked the end of a chapter. It had a thrill of its own too: a queer vibrating thrill inside the body, a final spasm of self-assertion, like the last word, exciting, and very like the row of asterisks that can be put to show the end of a paragraph, and a break in the theme.
>
> (Lawrence 2002)

As her husband was paralyzed from the waist down due to a Great War injury, in great dismay and frustration Connie developed an affair with Michaelis, her husband's friend. However, it turns out that Michaelis was a selfish and uncouth guy, who did nothing but gave vent to his sexual desire without considering Connie's need, which led to a mental conflict between them. Therefore, when Michaelis enticed her with fortune and honeyed words, she rejected him without hesitation. After falling in love with Mellors, she showed such qualities as tolerance, understanding and demure characteristic of women. What she could not bear is that her husband permitted her to have a baby with someone else, which in her eyes was a humiliation of dignity. What she sought for is the beauty of human nature and spontaneous development of love instead of the venting of animal-like sexual desire. In Chapter 7 the author writes:

> Connie heard it all with deepening dismay and repulsion. It was one of the ghastly half-truths that poison human existence. What man in his senses would say such things to a woman! But men aren't in their senses. What man with a spark of honour would put this ghastly burden of life responsibility upon a woman, and leave her there, in the void? …
>
> Connie really sometimes felt she would die at this time. She felt she was being crushed to death by weird lies, and by the amazing cruelty of idiocy. Clifford's strange business efficiency in a way over-awed her, and his declaration of private worship put her into a panic. There was nothing between them … he tortured her with his declaration of idolatry. It was the cruelty of utter impotence. And she felt her reason would give way, or she would die.
>
> (Lawrence 2002)

Lawrence tries to refrain from preaching to or criticizing young people, instead he encourages them to experience life personally and naturally so that they could make themselves "complete living beings," as Pan (2002: 65) notes:

> Everything needs to have a point, but what is the point of life? Women know that life is a stream, a slow-flowing winding stream, which converges, then diverges, and then converges — In its long and subtle flowing there are definitely neither periods nor points, although there are places where it flows unsmoothly. Women tend to regard themselves as a slow-flowing stream which is full of appeal, desire and beauty — a stream of power and quietness; while men tend to regard women as tools — tools of love, of labor, of politics, and of pleasure. As tools women turn out to be something pointed (i.e. they've got a point), and so they ask for everything … However, life is far from a matter of point, rather it is a matter of flowing — the key is flowing.
>
> Live and let live. Love and let love. Flowers blossom and wither — let it be, there is no such a thing as point.
>
> (Pan 2002: 65)

8.2.4 Evil of Sex, Abstention from Sex and Encouragement of Virtue in *Chin P'ing Mei* Versus Purity of Sex and the Rightful Claim of Sex in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*

Sex between men and women is amply depicted in *Chin P'ing Mei* in an effort to preach the subject matter that good virtue brings about blessing while lechery leads to misfortune, as well as the motif of retributive justice. Indecency of sex and retribution of justice are branded with the mark of "encouraging virtue" in an effort to defend feudal ethics. The author of *Chin P'ing Mei* tries to admonish people that sex should be restrained and must be constrained by moral ethics, as over-indulgence in sex is doomed to death. In Chapter 100 there is a poem as follows which has long been considered as the motif of the novel revealed purposefully by the author:

> An idle glance at this transmitted text leaves
> one with confused feelings;
> Who fully understands the extent to which
> the way of Heaven is cyclical?
> Hsi-men Ch'ing's wealth and corruption made it
> hard to continue his line;
> Ch'en Ching-chi's licentious cavorting ensured
> his eventual annihilation.
> The goodness of Meng Yü-lou and Wu Yüeh-niang
> vouchsafed them long lives;
> The wantonness of Li P'ing-erh and Ch'un-mei
> led to their early deaths.
> It is not strange that P'an Chin-lien should
> meet with an awful fate;
> And her ill repute lasts for a thousand years,
> perpetuated in fiction.
>
> (Lanling 2013)

From what is quoted above, it can be seen that the author wrote the novel in order to caution all the people under heaven against sex so as to punish the evil, praise the good and abstain from sex.

The author of *Chin P'ing Mei* shows his ingenuity in that, on the one hand he gives ample depictions of sexual indulgence of individuals; on the other hand he relates sex with self-destruction and eventually brings the story to an admonishing end, showing that "those individuals themselves are to blame for their misfortune" so as to call for people to be self-disciplined. In the novel men conquer and torment women, while women in return also dally with and trample on men—both men and women play the game of sex at the cost of their lives: Hsi-men Ch'ing died of sexual indulgence at the age of 33, and he died an extremely painful death for taking excessive aphrodisiac. Apart from him, his wife and concubines as well as the women who had sex with

him mostly came to a tragic end. For example, such women as P'an Chin-lien, P'ang Ch'un-mei, Li P'ing-erh and Sung Hui-lien all died of promiscuous sex.

In *Chin P'ing Mei*, sex is highlighted in order to admonish people against sex, and those tragedies of the protagonists in the novel are attributed to their sexual indulgence. As a result, the social factors involved contributing to the protagonists' tragedies are evaded. As Mao (1927) observes insightfully, "In *Chin P'ing Mei*, obscenity is depicted in the name of a high-sounding motive: virtue encouragement and retributive justice. It is the creed of all erotic fiction that those who indulge in sex are doomed to sudden death or misfortune, no matter whether the author truly thinks so or not. Of course, it is significant to write erotic fiction in order to make people know that 'those who indulge in sex are doomed to sudden death or misfortune.' However, if those who indulge in sex are punished merely by retributive justice rather than by society and law, it is far from appropriate, as retributive justice is rooted in superstition; once superstition is rejected by people, retributive justice loses its power. In such a case, the book that aims at encouraging virtue will turn out to something sexually enticing."

It seems contradictory in *Chin P'ing Mei* that, on the one hand there are ample depictions of people enjoying sex tremendously; on the other hand there are also a lot of descriptions of these people dying of their sexual indulgence (in order to encourage virtue). However, if we take into account the historical background and social-ideological trend in the late Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), it's not hard for us to understand the reasons behind such a contradiction involved in the author's writing conceptions, writing motive, and writing composition. The middle and late Ming Dynasty witnessed a transitional time when asceticism gave way to carnalism. The traditional mode of production that "the men plough and the women weave" was shattered, the feudal moral ethics started to collapse, and there was a turn from sexual abstinence to sexual indulgence. As a result, the whole society was in great turmoil and chaos. It is against this backdrop of the time that *Chin P'ing Mei* came into being, which shows the dissipation and decadency of the then Chinese feudal society on the one hand, and on the other hand people's sexual repression, sexual hunger and sexual perversion under the constraints of feudal ethics of asceticism, and their struggle for their sexual pleasure and sexual rights. In this sense, the novel has its progressive significance in that it exhibits the ideas of sexual liberation and humanism. On the other hand, since the author was long influenced by traditional feudal ethics, and was equipped with the sense of mission of "rectifying the time and improving the mind of people" characteristic of traditional Chinese intellectuals, he had to incorporate obsolete feudal ethics and moral principles into his novel in an effort to make the novel morally instructive. In this sense, the novel also has its limitation and negative significance.

Lawrence (1998: 228) holds that the life of human body is the life of feeling and emotion. What the body feels is the real hunger, real thirst, and the real joy in snow and sunshine. When it smells the fragrance of roses or sees violets, it feels real happiness. Its sorrow, its love, its tenderness, its affection, passion, hatred and sadness—all these are real. All human feelings reside in body, while mind could do nothing but perceive these feelings. He maintains that a real man should try to be a

man of vitality and perfection, while sex is one of the means to vitalize and better one's life, as well as the most effective means to endow those people trapped in modern culture with a new life. In his Preface to *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, Lawrence points out that the real significance of this novel lies in that the men and women in this world may be expected to think about sex fully, completely, purely and innocently. Even if they could not perform sexual acts at will, they could, at least, have complete and innocent thinking about sex.

Based on the overelaborate depictions of sex, *Lady Chatterley's Lover* lashes out against the indifferent and inhuman industrialized society in an effort to kindle people's pursuit of perfect humanity. Lawrence maintains that promiscuity can never bring about real satisfaction to people, and truly beautiful sexual relationship occurs only between two people who love each other. Therefore, only when men and women build up a noble and healthy relationship can they attain a perfect and superb fusion.

In his depiction of sexuality, as Lawrence would never stray away from his starting point, he depicts the sensual pleasure of Connie and Mellors entirely out of his conception that sex is pure and innocent, and also out of his subjective feelings. While depicting Connie's feeling about sexual love, Lawrence writes:

> She was gone in her own soft rapture, like a forest soughing with the dim, glad moan of spring, moving into bud. She could feel in the same world with her the man, the nameless man, moving on beautiful feet, beautiful in the phallic mystery. And in herself in all her veins, she felt him and his child. His child was in all her veins, like a twilight.
>
> (Lawrence 2002)

Using pure language, Lawrence portrays Connie as a revitalized image, a woman with happy humanity, which is so beautifully and profoundly represented.

Britain in 1920s–1930s witnessed a time when industry developed rapidly. As a result, machines devoured human nature and the rich and the poor were in sharp opposition to each other. As Mellors says, "men turned into nothing but labour-insects, and all their manhood taken away, and all their real life. I'd wipe the machines off the face of the earth again, and end the industrial epoch absolutely, like a black mistake." Humans seemed to have increasingly been enslaved by industrial civilization, and human nature was distorted to varying degrees. Lawrence writes the novel not to cater to his time, but to set himself against the upper-class rules, conventions and the so-called moral ethics so as to reveal critically the perplexity of people in an industrialized era. As Lawrence puts it in his novel:

> It was not woman's fault, nor even love's fault, nor the fault of sex. The fault lay there, out there, in those evil electric lights and diabolical rattlings of engines. There, in the world of the mechanical greedy, greedy mechanism and mechanized greed, sparkling with lights and gushing hot metal and roaring with traffic, there lay the vast evil thing, ready to destroy whatever did not conform.
>
> … He (Mellors) thought with infinite tenderness of the woman. Poor forlorn thing, she was nicer than she knew, and oh! So much too nice for the tough lot she was in contact with. Poor thing, she too had some of the vulnerability of the wild hyacinths, she wasn't all tough rubber-goods and platinum, like the modern girl. And they would do her in! As sure as life, they would do her in, as they do in all naturally tender life. Tender! Somewhere she was tender, tender with a tenderness of the growing hyacinths, something that has gone out of

> the celluloid women of today. But he would protect her with his heart for a little while. For a little while, before the insentient iron world and the Mammon of mechanized greed did them both in, her as well as him.
>
> (Lawrence 2002)

Therefore, Lawrence on the one hand acknowledges sex as a human nature and describes lady Chatterley's experience in an understanding and compassionate tone, on the other hand he lays bare how industrialized society destroys human nature as well as how hypocritical and selfish the conventional moral ethics are. However, it must be noted that the acknowledgement of sex is not the sole or the ultimate aim of Lawrence, as he holds that "the love between a man and a woman, when it is whole, is dual. It is the melting into pure spiritual communion, and it is the friction of sheer sensuality, both" (Lawrence 1998: 19). Sex is beautiful only when mind and love are united; otherwise, "love without control will only result in trouble, while mind without love will be nothing but a dry stuff, which will only make you boring." Such is the important view of Lawrence about sex that mind and love, or consciousness and instinct, should be united as one.

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