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Envisioning the Chinese Detective:
Dimensions of an Imported Genre, 1890s-1940s

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements
for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in

Literature

by

Jin Liu

Committee in charge:

Professor Yingjin Zhang, Chair
Professor Jin-kyung Lee
Professor Kuiyi Shen
Professor Wai-lim Yip
Professor Oumelbanine Zhiri

2016

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Chair

University of California, San Diego

2016

DEDICATION

TO MY PARENTS

WITH LOVE AND GRATITUDE

獻給我的父母

感謝你們始終如一的關愛與支持

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Signature Page iii

Dedication iv

Table of Contents v

Acknowledgements viii

Vita x

Abstract of the Dissertation xi

Introduction 1

I. Literature Review 5

II. Theoretical Approach 11

III. Outline of Chapters 14

Chapter One

When Sherlock Holmes Met the Chinese: The Politics of Translation (1896-1916) 18

I. Contextualizing Translations 22

The Initial Introduction of Detective Fiction (1896-1897) 22

The Vogue of Translating Detective Fiction (1900-1911) 29

1910-1920: A Transitional Period 38

II. Translation as Cultural Negotiation 44

Naming the Detective 45

Sherlock Holmes Goes Chinese 46

Sherlock Holmes and the Law 53

Women in Focus 60

III. Conclusion 71

Chapter Two

The Fiction of Modern Life: Accommodating the Experience of the Modern 73

I. The Poetry of Modern Life 76

Urbanization and the Rise of Detective Fiction 77

The Urban Landscape in Modern China: Shanghai in Focus 81

Print Culture and the Commercialization of Literary Production and Consumption 90

II. Negotiating the Modern and the Traditional in Texts 93

"The Modern Urbanites Live in Space but Think in Time" 95

The City as a Labyrinth 99

Dance Halls as Demon Lairs 107

The Institution of Marriage 112

Dance Hostesses as Victims and Seductresses 119

Intellectuals 125

Detectives as New Heroes 129

III. Conclusion 133

Chapter Three

Chaos under Control? The Changing Conceptions of Law and Justice 136

I. Metamorphosis of China's Law and Legal System 142

Traditional Legal System: Law in Accordance with Rites 142

Late-Qing New Policies Reform: Legal Modernization in Blueprint 146

The Republican Period: Continuation of the Legal Reform 149

II. A Chinese Tradition of Law and Literature 150

Court-case Fiction: The Worship of Upright Officials 150

Knight-errant Fiction: Taking Justice into Our Own Hands 157

III. Chinese Detective Fiction: Law and Order Redefined 158

Justice Comes First: Huo Sang the Upholder of Justice 159

Beyond the Boundary of Law: Lu Ping the Impromptu Detective 171

IV. Conclusion 180

Chapter Four

Science Textbook in Disguise: Science and Chinese Detective Fiction 182

I. The Rise of Modern Science in China 185

II. Detective Fiction as Science Textbook 193

III. Science in Detective Fiction: Knowledge, Method, and Reasoning 198

IV. "The Death Hastening Spells:" Science Prevails over Superstition 203

V. Exorcizing the Supernatural 208

VI. The Morality of Science 218

VII. Conclusion 228

Epilogue 231

Glossary 236

Bibliography 241

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VITA

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Envisioning the Chinese Detective:
Dimensions of an Imported Genre, 1890s-1940s

by

Jin Liu

Doctor of Philosophy

University of California, San Diego, 2016

Professor Yingjin Zhang, Chair

Since its introduction in the late nineteenth century, detective fiction has experienced ups and downs in the turbulent history of modern China. If its importation was initially prompted and sustained by the agenda of "fiction for mass education" by late-Qing reformers, its blossoming and proliferation owed much to the rise of urban modernity in China. Drastic changes at all levels called for new ways to comprehend,

interpret, articulate, and tackle the modern urban experiences. Drawing on translation and cultural studies, this dissertation takes as its central issue the cultural negotiation and appropriation in the transplantation of this genre, and argues that detective fiction, as a case of cultural translation, presents the detective as a new hero of the modern age, and proffers an alternative vision of the Chinese modern. As such, this study intends to contribute to the ongoing discussion of alternative modernities, and broaden the scope of modern Chinese literature and culture studies.

Chapter One examines translated detective fiction in 1896-1916 and highlights the agency of translators in appropriating the genre to the Chinese context. Chapter Two surveys the modern urban milieu conducive to the boom of detective fiction in the Republican period, as well as the literary representation and envisioning of urban modernity. Chapter Three addresses the theme of justice and law in Chinese detective fiction from a comparative perspective. Chapter Four interrogates the theme of science, with a focus on detective writers' concern over the morality of science.

Introduction

Detective fiction, one of the newcomers to the world of literature, is also among the fastest-growing in terms of production and consumption. For well over a hundred years, detective fiction thrills, unsettles, exhilarates and gratifies the reader by following a recurring pattern of suspense and revelation. Its best-known specimen, the Sherlock Holmes stories created by Arthur Conan Doyle (1859-1930), not only enjoys a huge following over generations, but is constantly revived through adaptations for the stage, film and television, a recent example of which is the BBC's contemporary remake *Sherlock* broadcast since 2010. Immensely popular as it has always been in the West, detective story experienced rises and falls in China. The last century witnessed its flourish in late-Qing and Republican Shanghai, the Communist regime's banishment of this genre for nearly three decades since 1949, and a gradual revival following a thaw in state control in the 1980s.

Generally considered to be non-native to China, detective fiction was first imported in the late nineteenth century, and within a few years achieved phenomenal success by being the most translated genre of the time. If we admit that translation took center stage in the late-Qing literary scene, detective fiction was undoubtedly the fastest-rising superstar of the 1910s.[1] Cross-cultural transplantation of the genre was not limited to translations, but soon extended to imitations and creations. In the ensuing decades,

[1] According to literary historian A Ying, about two thirds of late-Qing fiction were translated works, among which detective stories and novels took up more than half (274, 283).

many writers tried their hands at creating Chinese detectives. Cheng Xiaoqing 程小青 (1893-1976) and Sun Liaohong 孫了紅 (1897-1958) emerged as the most prominent detective writers of the time. However, under the impact of a more radical ideology endorsed by the New Culture Movement (*xinwenhua yundong* 新文化運動, also known as the May Fourth Movement, 1915-1923),[2] detective fiction was relegated to the peripheral and dismissed as leisure reading, though it continued to enjoy considerable popularity among general readers. The remarkable thriving of the genre and its subsequent marginalization are worthy of scholarly attention because they mark this genre out as a complex arena where a full array of political, ideological, social and cultural forces and discourses confront, contend, collide, and converge. In particular, the intense interest in and the avid appropriation of this genre in the late Qing and Republican era promise a fertile ground for literary and cultural studies. These considerations gave rise to this project, a study of how varied forces and discourses interacted in envisioning a new type of hero in modern China — the Chinese detective, and the new ways of coping with modern challenges proffered by this imported genre.

In my exploration of detective fiction and its development in China, many questions naturally arise: Under what circumstances was it introduced to China? Why was there an unrivalled enthusiasm for translating detective stories into Chinese? How was it perceived, employed, and received in the sociopolitical contexts of China? How did it comply with and contribute to Chinese modernity? To what extent did the

[2] The New Culture Movement was a social and cultural revolution growing out of the disillusion with Chinese tradition. Under the banners of science and democracy, the movement denounced Confucianism and other traditional ideas and practices, and exalted Western ideas. It also promoted a New Literature in modern vernacular Chinese. The New Culture or May Fourth paradigm dominated Chinese culture and thought well into the Communist era.

translation and creation of detective fiction incorporate the urban and modern experience of the Chinese people? … Although this genre has received considerable academic attention in recent years, and attempts have been made to answer these questions, there are definitely ample room for improvement, and many gaps to fill. By situating this genre in relation to social changes, political upheavals, ideological trends, and literary reforms, this project aims to delineate the reception, reproduction and consumption of detective fiction between the 1890s and 1940s as a typical case of cross-cultural negotiation in unequal international power relations. It adopts a cultural studies approach by contextualizing the genre in the dynamics of modernization and urbanization processes, changing agenda and popular imagination. By placing this genre in the limelight, I intend to illustrate how the Chinese detective — a new hero of the modern age — was collectively envisioned by incorporating favored attributes of foreign detectives with native resources, how a cultural product can be enlisted to serve different purposes under changing circumstances, and how popular literature, often excluded from scholarly contemplation for its dubious literary value, can provide a clear if not better glimpse into the expectations and anxieties of the people at a given time.

Since the primary concern of this project is to explore the dynamics surrounding the importation of detective fiction and the Chinese reconfiguration of the genre, I choose to focus on the first half of the twentieth century, a period when detective fiction, free from the state censorship, was actively produced and consumed. The fate of detective fiction and its various forms of transformation in post-1949 China, Taiwan or Hong Kong are not included in this study because the ideological and cultural issues involved are markedly different and deserve a dedicated study. Besides, Chinese crime literature since

1949 has been the focus of *Chinese Justice, the Fiction: Law and Literature in Modern China* by Jeffrey C. Kinkley, a landmark study of legal culture and crime literature in modern and contemporary China.

My study seeks to illustrate how this genre with its many historical, cultural and ideological associations was negotiated and appropriated upon its encounter with the Chinese tradition. In particular, I will first examine the translations of detective fiction, especially those done before the advent of the New Culture Movement, to understand how ideological agenda and local cultural tradition greatly affected the way detective fiction was received and reproduced. The bulk of this dissertation, though, is about detective fiction by Chinese writers. Through these stories, now unknown to most Chinese because of reasons more of a political nature,[3] we not only come in touch with their writers, but also with their targeted audience — a mingled group of intellectuals and petty urbanites mostly from the metropolis Shanghai.[4] As the only imported genre of popular literature that truly gained popularity among general readers, detective fiction acutely captured the targeted audience's experience of the modern and responded to their desires and anxieties at a specific juncture of Chinese history. As such, these stories open up a window to the exploration of the Chinese experience of urbanization and modernity in the first half of the twentieth century, as well as the examination of the complex relationships between literature, ideology and society. Cheng Xiaoqing and Sun Liaohong's works will be closely read next to foreign and Chinese antecedents, and will

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[3] Detective fiction was banned in mainland China since the 1950s and the ban was not lifted until the 1980s. See Jeffrey C. Kinkley, *Chinese Justice, the Fiction: Law and Literature in Modern China* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2000) 1-2.

[4] Shanghai, as the major locale of the production and consumption of detective fiction in the Republican Era, will be discussed in details in Chapter Two.

be discussed in relation to the social, cultural and political milieus of Republican China (1912-1949). In particular, I am interested in how the foreign genre was grafted to local materials, and what ideological functions it implicitly or explicitly served at the time.

I. Literature Review

In the field of modern Chinese literature studies, attention has long been devoted to literary texts canonized by the New Culture / May Fourth discourse. Until quite recently, popular literature has been excluded from serious studies for being frivolous and of little literary value. Recent scholarship, however, has come to challenge the monopoly of May Fourth modernity, which, characterized by a high-minded elitism, viewed history as a linear progress towards a purposeful future, proposed a rupture from the past, and celebrated westernization. Rather than seeing the Chinese experience of the modern as a case of "belated modernity" fraught with anxieties to catch up with the Western original, scholars now emphasize Chinese agencies in appropriating or reinventing foreign and local resources in the imagination and representation of the Chinese modern, and the multiplicity of Chinese modernity. David Der-wei Wang uncovers "repressed modernities" in late-Qing fiction in *Fin-de-Siecle Splendor: Repressed Modernities of Late Qing Fiction, 1849-1911*. Lydia H. Liu examines "translated modernity" from the perspective of "translingual practice," focusing on the "rhetorical strategies, translations, discursive formations, naming practices, legitimizing processes, tropes, and narrative modes that bear upon the historical conditions of the Chinese experience of the modern since the

latter half of the nineteenth century" in *Translingual Practice: Literature, National Culture, and Translated Modernity — China, 1900-1937*.[5]

Alternative modernities projected in popular literature and modernist literature of the Republican period also attracted considerable attention. Perry Link takes a sociological approach to the study of modern Chinese popular fiction in *Mandarin Ducks and Butterflies: Popular Fiction in Early Twentieth-Century Chinese Cities*, and sees "butterfly fiction" as a site of negotiation between elements of Western culture, urban culture and classical culture. Leo Ou-fan Lee explores "urban modernity" from the angle of cultural history in *Shanghai Modern: The Flowering of a New Urban Culture in China, 1930-1945.* Focusing on the city as the "cultural matrix of Chinese modernity,"[6] Lee reconstructs the cultural geography of Shanghai in the 1930s, discusses the local appropriation of the foreign, and celebrates its cosmopolitanism and hybridity. Similarly focusing on modernist fiction, Shu-mei Shih's work *The Lure of the Modern: Writing Modernism in Semicolonial China: 1917-1937* highlights the ambivalence of Chinese urban modernity under a semicolonial situation. Like Shih, Yingjin Zhang also finds it important to include Beijing writers in the discussion of urban modernity in *The City in Modern Chinese Literature and Film: Configurations of Space, Time, and Gender*.

Thanks to these efforts to recognize the plurality of Chinese modernity, more attention has been paid to middlebrow or popular literature long excluded from literary canon, including late-Qing fiction, butterfly fiction, modernist fiction, and other popular

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[5] Lydia H. Liu, *Translation, Popular Imagination and the Novelistic Reconfiguration of Literary Discourse, China: 1890s-1920s* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1995) xviii.
[6] Leo Ou-fan Lee, *Shanghai Modern: The Flowering of a New Urban Culture in China, 1930–1945*, (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1999) xi.

genres. Detective fiction, dismissed as genre in the Mandarin Ducks and Butterfly school (*yuanyang hudie xiaoshuo* 鴛鴦蝴蝶小說),[7] also emerged as a topic of increasing interest. As an intriguing cultural phenomenon, the rise of detective fiction in China has been the topic of an expanding body of researches. Jeffrey Kinkley, for instance, argues in *Chinese Justice, the Fiction* that the passion for detective fiction rose out of a misconception of detective fiction as the popular vehicle for science and legal consciousness, and therefore local writers of detective fiction shared the same set of assumptions with the New Literature emerging in the New Culture Movement. Li Li Peters regards detective fiction as a specimen of urban culture that derives most of its generic characteristics from the urban modern experience that induced its inception in her dissertation *Translation, Popular Imagination and the Novelistic Reconfiguration of Literary Discourse, China: 1890s-1920s*.

Scholars also approach detective fiction from the angle of translation studies. Eva Hung, for example, attributes the boom of translated detective fiction in the late Qing period to the utilitarian view of foreign fiction as a convenient means to promote mass education. Her articles "Sherlock Holmes in Early Twentieth Century China (1896-1916) — Popular Fiction as Educational Tool" and "Giving Texts a Context: Chinese

[7] The term "Mandarin Ducks and Butterflies School" originated as a disparaging reference to classical-style love stories popular in the 1910s such as *Yuli hun* 玉梨魂 [Jade pear spirit, 1912] by Xu Zhenya 徐枕亞's (1889-1937). It later came to encompass all forms of popular old-style fiction including knight-errant fiction, detective novels and many others, in contrast to New Literature advocated by the New Culture Movement in the mid-1910s and 1920s. Recent scholarship has come to debunk these stereotypes. For efforts to rediscover Republican popular fiction, see E. Perry Link, *Mandarin Ducks and Butterflies: Popular Fiction in Early Twentieth-Century Chinese Cities* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1981); Tang Zhesheng, *Zhongguo xiandai tongsu xiaoshuo liubian shi* 中國現代通俗小說流變史 [The History of modern Chinese popular fiction] (Chongqin: Chongqin chubanshe, 1999); Fan Boqun 范伯群, ed. *Zhongguo jinxiandai tongsu wenxueshi* 中國近現代通俗文學史 [The History of modern Chinese popular literature from early modern to modern times] (Nanjing: Jiangsu jiaoyu chubenshe, 2000).

Translations of Classical English Detective Stories 1896–1916" examine the social-cultural factors that govern the introduction of foreign detective fiction into the receiving culture, and call for a reassessment of their social and cultural significance. If Hung's study paved the way for a cultural turn in the study of translated detective fiction, Leo Ou-Fan Lee carried on this line of inquiry and expanded the scope to include imitations of Sherlock Holmes. Lee views the importation of Sherlock Holmes as a significant case of cultural negotiation in his article "Sherlock Holmes in China," and his reading of Huo Sang 霍桑, the Chinese detective created by Cheng Xiaoqing, as a postcolonial mimicry opens up new possibilities of interpretation.

There are recent works aspiring to delineate the history and significance of detective fiction in the Chinese literary and cultural tradition. *Zhongguo jinxiandai tongsu wenxueshi* 中國近現代通俗文學史 (The history of modern Chinese popular literature from early modern to modern times) by Fan Boqun stood out for the scope and depth of its exploration of this subject. The chapter on detective fiction written by Tang Zhesheng not only attempts to explain detective fiction's appeal to Chinese readers by examining the psychological, aesthetic, social and cultural relevance of this genre, but also traces its origins, development and indigenization in China. Tang points out that Chinese detective fiction differs from its Western counterpart in its prioritization of traditional values, its focus on family relations, and the authors' identification with the common people. He also provides a remarkably thorough survey of the top writers of this genre in China.[8]

[8] For similar attempts at writing a history of Chinese detective fiction, see Ren Xiang 任翔, *Wenxue de lingyidao fengjingxian: Zhentan xiaoshuo shilun* 文學的另一道風景線：偵探小說史論 [Another landscape of literature: A history of detective fiction] (Beijing: Zhongguo qingnian chubanshe, 2001).

These works have provided different perspectives and given insights to the study of detective fiction in China, yet I still find their explanations oversimplifying at times and lacking a more nuanced look into the dynamics between the Western detective "canons" and the Chinese translations, between detective fiction and its indigenous Chinese relatives — court-case fiction (*gong'an xiaoshuo* 公案小說) and knight-errant fiction (*wuxia xiaoshuo* 武俠小說), between detective fiction and other popular genres that rose alike amid the boom of printing industry and urban culture, and between detective fiction and other writings that share the same printing space. In a word, detective fiction poses several questions not yet satisfactorily answered or fully addressed by previous studies.

Other than scholarship on Chinese detective fiction, there is also a need to examine scholarly works on detective fiction published over the past sixty years in English. Detective fiction, still one of the most popular genres on the market, has long been the object of academic study since the 1940s. Earlier criticism of this genre was centered on detective fiction's literary status until in the 1940s, attention was brought to the narrative techniques and historical aspects of the genre by Howard Haycraft's pioneering study *Murder for Pleasure: The Life and Times of the Detective Story* (1946). In the 1960s and 1970s, with the rise of Russian formalism and structuralism, detective fiction was analyzed as a specimen of narrative machine. It was well-established as a legitimate academic subject in the 1980s, and a full array of perspectives were introduced to the study of this genre, ranging from psychoanalysis, reader-response theory, to deconstruction. Heta Pyrhönen distinguishes three basic types of academic inquiries in this field: formal studies, thematic studies, and cultural studies. Those concentrating on

the formal aspect of the genre pay close attention to plot and narration, intertextuality, and to the cultural demarcation of genres. Thematic studies either focus on the moral dimension of law, justice and moral choice, or on the epistemological concern of knowledge and interpretation. Cultural studies approach examines the social-cultural context of literary production, and its ideological implications.[9] These approaches have lent light to the unraveling of the myth of detective fiction and its popularity since the late nineteenth century. Especially instrumental to my study is the cultural studies approach, the representatives of which include studies conducted by John G. Cawalti and Dennis Porter. Cawalti demonstrates in *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance: Formula Stories as Art and Popular Culture* (1976) how popular literature invites readers into a constructed mythic world by reduplicating and implementing formulaic narrative structures, stereotypical figures, and familiar themes. As a form of wish-fulfillment, detective stories necessarily evolve into disparate varieties in response to changing culture and society. Hence formulaic literature, including detective fiction, is a particular mode of perception or reflection of reality, and the study of it will enhance our understanding of the values and interests of a particular culture. Porter borrows from Deconstructionist theory and argues in *The Pursuit of Crime: Art and Ideology in Detective Fiction* (1981) that ideology is built into the very constituents of detective fiction with what he calls the "deep ideological constants" and "surface ideological variables."[10] Despite their somewhat reductive view of detective fiction as the site of ideological manipulation of

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[9] See Heta Pyrhönen, *Murder from an Academic Angle: An Introduction to the Study of the Detective Narrative* (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1994) 1-11.

[10] According to Porter, "deep ideological constants" are "universal genre characteristics", while "surface ideological variables," being the "attributes of the dramatis personae, the character and milieu of crime, police methods, etc.," "vary greatly from one cultural tradition to another and even from one author to another" (125).

the reader, I find these two works useful in terms of the close attention paid to both the text and the cultural context of detective fiction, and will draw on their studies in this project.

Apart from the studies of Anglo-American detective fiction, two recent books on Japanese detective fiction also give insights to my project. Both published in 2008, Mark Silver's *Purloined Letter: Cultural Borrowing and Japanese Crime Literature, 1868-1937* aims to provide a "description and assessment of Japanese writers' responses to the problem of writing in the borrowed genre of detective fiction,"[11] while Sari Kawana's *Murder Most Modern: Detective Fiction and Japanese Culture* adopts a cultural anthropological approach to the relationship between detective fiction and Japanese modernity. Both demonstrate how fruitful cross-cultural study of detective fiction can be, besides pointing out practical directions for the layout of this study.

II. Theoretical Approach

This dissertation regards the translation and creation of detective fiction in China as a continuous endeavor of cultural translation. By cultural translation, I mean an awareness of translation not just as the practice of transferring texts from one language into another, but as an extensive process of cultural confrontation and hybridization that produce new meanings and identities in the receiving culture. As detective fiction is a genre imported from the West, its translation and production in the first half of the

[11] Mark Silver, *Purloined Letters: Cultural Borrowing and Japanese Crime Literature, 1868-1937* (Honolulu: U of Hawai'i P, 2008) 16.

twentieth century have been largely bound by conventions of the genre set by Western writers. Even the best samples of Chinese detectives are highly reminiscent of their foreign counterparts. In this sense, I will treat the translations, imitations and creations of detective fiction in modern China as a case of cultural translation.

Taking this perspective, my study draws heavily on target-oriented translation studies. The cultural turn of translation studies and translation turn of cultural studies are equally stimulating to the theoretical configuration of this project. I am indebted to the polysystem theory of Itamar Even-Zohar, Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere's insights into literary translation, culturally oriented approaches and historical studies exploring identity forming power of translation. In particular, Even-Zohar's polysystem theory provides a theoretical foundation, and Wai-lim Yip's article "Debunking Claims of Xin, Da and Ya: The Afterlife of Translation" encourages the study of the cultural implications of translation.

Even-Zohar's groundbreaking article "The Position of Translated Literature within the Literary Polysysm" considers literature a system existing with co-systems in a culture, and translated literature is a subsystem within the home literature. He sees translation (of literature) not as an "a-historical out-of-context" phenomenon, but "an activity dependent on the relations within a certain cultural system."[12] Translated literature may assume a "central" or "peripheral" position, and may perform "innovatory" or "conservatory" function within the target literature depending on the demands and ideological and cultural norms of the target culture at the specific time. Similarly, the socio-literary conditions of the receptor culture are the deciding factors in the choice of

[12] Itamar Even-Zohar, "The Position of Translated Literature within the Literary Polysystem," *The Translation Studies Reader*, 3rd ed., ed. Lawrence Venuti (New York: Routledge, 2012) 167.

texts to be translated. As such, translation is recognized as a political-cultural practice within the literary and cultural polysystems, and can possibly bring about social changes. It is relevant to the study of translated fiction in late Qing and early Republican era because the unusual phenomenon of translated fiction taking a central position in Chinese literature can only be explained with reference to the reformists' need to fill in the perceived "literary vacuums" when China was at a turning point, and their utilitarian purpose of importing fiction for mass education.

Wai-lim Yip, when debunking the myths of "reconstruction of the author's horizon," "objective interpretation," "reproducibility of meaning" and "ideal readers,"[13] emphasizes the "confrontation, negotiation and modification of cultural codes and systems" in translation.[14] He proposes to see translation activities as opportunities of expanding the "receptive repertoire," and "turning alien elements into new potentials for expression."[15]

Informed by these articles, I see Chinese detective fiction as a field of cultural confrontation, transfer, negotiation, and compromise. The translation and writing of detective fiction is a dynamic process showing that the Chinese experience and imagination of the modern were never along a single linear line, but were multifarious, and full of conflicts and ambivalence. From translation to creation, Chinese detective writers perhaps most deeply sensed the "the angst (or anxiety) created by the confrontation of two cultural systems in the act of translation … and tr[ied] to turn

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[13] Wai-lim Yip, "Debunking Cliams of Xin, Da and Ya: The Afterlife of Translation," *Twentieth-century Chinese Translation Theory: Modes, Issues and Debates*, Ed. Tak-hung Leo Chan (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2004) 83.
[14] Ibid. 79.
[15] Ibid. 87.

confrontations into opportunities of widening our intellectual horizon and our receptive parameters, allowing us to reflect on indigenous strengths and weaknesses."[16] Their efforts to incorporate the Western strengths with the Chinese values distinguished them from the iconoclastic position of the New Culture Movement. Looking back from the twenty-first century when the monopoly of the New Culture revolutionary discourse has been challenged, we should recognize the value of multiplicity and diversity of other voices and visions concerning Chinese modernity that have been eclipsed for too long.

III. Outline of Chapters

Chapter One, "When Sherlock Holmes Met the Chinese: The Politics of Translation (1896-1916)," deals with the politics of translation. Translation is seen as a process of cultural negotiation that appropriates foreign texts for the needs of the target culture. Intentional deviations made to the translated texts were commonly seen in late-Qing translations. Although it is sometimes difficult to tell whether a deviation resulted from ignorance or cultural interference, I venture to argue that translators of that time did more or less contemplate cultural differences and conveyed their changing preferences and priorities through the changes they "freely" made to the texts. In the case of translating detective stories, such "transgressions" reveal how the Chinese people came to know the foreign detectives and the imported genre, and what attributes they saw as commendable or unacceptable. To illustrate the point, I will focus on the translation of Sherlock Holmes stories as they are the most translated detective stories in China. Early

[16] Ibid.

translations in classical Chinese between 1896 and 1916 will be closely studied to show the working of ideological and cultural considerations.

If detective fiction emerged and developed in America, Britain, and France as a result of evolving modernity, and reforms of legal system and police institution, did its importation and reproduction in China testify to the presence of modernization and urbanization processes that were at once similar to and different from those experienced by the Western countries? In Chapter Two, "The Fiction of Modern Life: Accommodating the Experience of the Modern," I attempt to restore the production of detective fiction to the historical, social and cultural contexts of the late Qing and Republican period, and examine the key factors that played an indispensable part in the development and popularization of this genre in China. To be specific, it provides necessary historical backgrounds, delineates a brief history of detective fiction, and sketches the urbanization and modernization processes, the boom of printing industry, and the commercialization of literary production and consumption. Contextualizing the rise of the genre will help us understand how people's anxieties and desires at certain junctures of time were projected onto the structure, language, and characterization of detective fiction and how the modern subjectivity was collectively imagined by writers and readers to counter the threats of the modern age.

Chapter Three, "Chaos under Control?: The Changing Conceptions of Law and Justice," will address a central concept of detective fiction, that of law and justice. While Chinese readers of the early twentieth century grew up with the stories of Judge Bao whose unwavering integrity and unfailing wisdom had long been mystified through various literary and theatrical reincarnations, it did not take long for them to embrace

Sherlock Holmes or his Chinese sibling Huo Sang — a new type of hero — to restore order amidst a new form of chaos. This order is defined to a great extent by law, revolutionized as thoroughly in the Republican period as the political system, though law and justice may not always converge. This chapter will study detective fiction alongside traditional court-case fiction in terms of the changes in political and legal systems. In contrast with Holmes and Huo Sang, there was still another type of "hero" like Arsène Lupin and Lu Ping 魯平, who stands on the side of justice but not the law. It is not difficult to detect its close affinity with the righteous bandits often applauded in traditional popular culture, who rose in troubled times and took justice into their own hands. This chapter will also examine the relationship between detective fiction and knight-errant novels in terms of their respective treatment of the theme of law and justice.

The last chapter, "Science Textbook in Disguise: Science and Chinese Detective Fiction," discusses a major attraction of this genre in the eyes of late-Qing elites: its relevance to science. Indeed, the modern detective is well equipped. Sherlock Holmes is a typical example with his magnifier, test-tubes, microscope, and specialized knowledge of forensic science. Cheng Xiaoqing, to promote detective fiction in China, calls it "a popular science textbook in disguise" 化裝的通俗科學教科書.[17] While this view remains controversial, it partially accounts for the Chinese enthusiasm for the genre in the early twentieth century. This chapter's focus is to trace the idea of science in modern Chinese detective fiction to see how this idea gained precedence or even dominance

[17] Cheng Xiaoqing, "Lun zhentan xiaoshuo" 論偵探小說 [On detective fiction], *Xin zhentan* 新偵探 [New detective] 1 (1946), 5.

while traditional means of crime-investigation, as those prevalent in court-case fiction, were relegated to the peripheral.

In short, my dissertation draws on translation studies and cultural studies to examine the politics of the translation and creation of detective fiction in modern China. It presents Chinese detective fiction as a locus of cultural confrontation, negotiation, and appropriation, and challenges the May Fourth canonization of modern Chinese literature. It stresses the agency of Chinese translators and writers in appropriating detective fiction to local circumstances, and underscores the ambivalence and complexity of the Chinese experience and imagination of the modern. As such, it intends to contribute to the ongoing discussion of alternative modernities, and aims to broaden the scope of modern Chinese literature and culture studies by presenting detective fiction as a significant participant in the envisioning and representation of the Chinese modern. Recognizing the translation and writing of detective fiction in China as a "translingual practice" in dynamic sociopolitical contexts, this study will also enhance our understanding of translation as a heavily mediated cultural and social practice.

Chapter One

When Sherlock Holmes Met the Chinese:

The Politics of Translation (1896-1916)

> Recently, I am greatly delighted to read detective fiction translated by the Shanghai gentlemen. I applaud their great benevolence in doing so. If detective fiction becomes popular, the legal authority of our country would update their methods, employ lawyers and detectives, and widely set up schools to train professionals. Consequently, people would rush to get enrolled. With the promise of reputation and wealth, who would rather lead a worthless life? The common people would no longer suffer the bullies of litigation masters and yamen runners. They may even witness the prevailing of justice in the world. What a great credit to fiction then!
>
> — Lin Shu 林紓 (1852-1924),
> "Shen shu gui cang lu xu"《神樞鬼藏錄》序
> (Preface to *Martin Hewitt*)[1]

Sherlock Holmes, the Great Detective, arrived in China in 1896 by *Shiwu bao* 時務報 (Chinese progress, 1896-1898), a premier political forum for the late-Qing reformers. The earliest translation of his cases, "The Adventure of the Naval Treaty," was sandwiched between articles on Western views of China, technical and military news like "How to Save on Coal" and "Military Dogs of Germany," and news briefs on world

[1] Lin Shu 林紓, "Shen shu gui cang lu xu"《神樞鬼藏錄》序 [Preface to *Martin Hewitt*], *Wan Qing wenxue congchao xiaoshuo xiqu yanjiu juan* 晚清文學叢鈔・小說戲曲研究卷 [Anthology of late Qing literature: Research materials on fiction and drama], ed. A Ying 阿英 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1960) 237-238.

situation such as the impending contention between British and French navies in the Mediterranean. The juxtaposition of detective stories with articles or news on current affairs, odd as it seems, presented this brand new genre as a cultural product relevant to the brewing political storm in China. Just as the periodical's name suggests, detective fiction was supposed to take part in the "Chinese progress," a long journey leading to the building of an independent nation-state.

We will begin our boundary-crossing journey with Sherlock Holmes in *Shiwu bao*, and trace the genre's decade-long entanglement with the reformist agenda. In the next twenty years, translated detective fiction heralded the trend of importing fiction for mass education, and reached the zenith of its fame as the most translated and most popular genre in China. Only with the onslaught of the New Culture Movement (1915-1923) did it lose its ideological high ground, and suffer a decline of prestige on the literary scene. Overshadowed by the iconoclastic New Culture agenda, the once acclaimed genre was for a long time marginalized, dismissed, and forgotten. In view of the leading role translated detective fiction once played in the Chinese political, cultural, and literary domains, however, it warrants a detailed discussion.

This chapter, therefore, takes translated detective fiction as its subject. Focusing on the cultural interventions and negotiations in translation, I intend to demonstrate the interplay of translated detective fiction and ideology, popular imagination and expectation, traditional values, and literary conventions. Specifically, we will focus on early translations of the Sherlock Holmes stories between 1896 and 1916. I argue that detective fiction engaged in the Chinese reformist discourse by conjuring up a vision of a society dominated by rationality and law for China to model on. To achieve this goal,

early translators experimented with various strategies to "bring the world home." [2] In other words, translators appropriated the foreign according to the specific ideological setting and cultural norms of the target culture, so that the foreign can be more accessible and acceptable to the Chinese.

This chapter draws on the methodology of target-oriented translation studies, most notably the polysystem theory, as is explained in the Introduction. Eva Hung's article "Giving Text a Context: Chinese Translations of Classical English Detective Stories 1896-1916" demonstrates a successful application of the target-oriented theory on Chinese texts, and shows that late Qing fiction translation is a fertile ground for investigation. Hung insists on giving the texts a context, and proposes that the late-Qing translators and their works should be reassessed for their "contribution towards cultural transfer within a specific period in history,"[3] rather than being dismissed for their lack of literary values.[4] Since foreign fiction was translated for utilitarian purpose in order to educate the masses, broaden their horizon, and introduce knowledge current in the West, they were primarily chosen for their popular appeals in the source culture and their contemporariness. Translated fiction achieved sensational success in China, yet they soon came under attack "on two fronts — literary and moralistic," because the education advocates were disappointed to find that the "tastes of the non-elite readership" came to dominate literary production and eclipsed the educational purpose,[5] and the new

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[2] I borrow the term from Theodore Huters' book title *Bringing the World Home: Appropriating the West in Late Qing and Early Republican China* (Honolulu: U of Hawaii P, 2005).
[3] Eva Hung, "Giving Text a Context: Chinese Translations of Classical English Detective Stories 1896-1916," *Translation and Creation: Readings of Western Literature in Early Modern China, 1840–1918*, ed. David E. Pollard (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1998) 169.
[4] Ibid. 153.
[5] Ibid.

ideological and cultural norms defined by the New Culture Movement deprive these early translations "of their social and literary context."[6]

Recent scholarship in translation studies tends to view translation as a de facto battleground of clashing worldviews, ideologies, and ultimately power relations. In the context of late-Qing and Republican China, translation was a primary agency for changes, and extensive translational activities accompanied almost all major political upheavals. The reason behind this phenomenon lies in the urgency of a defeated and downtrodden China to establish an independent modern nation-state on the model of its conquerors. There was, undeniably, the danger of self-imposed cultural colonialism by importing translated fiction in huge quantities. The focus of this discussion, however, is on the scrupulous considerations and creative strategies in translational practices that suggest possible resistance and subversion. The translations to be analyzed were apparently initiated by and oriented toward the receptor culture. In this regard, they will be taken as cultural transfers intended to enrich China and bolster it up for the challenges of the modern age.

Rather than attempting an exhaustive survey of translations produced during the late-Qing and early-Republican era, I will focus on early translations of the Sherlock Holmes stories in 1896-1916 to interrogate the relationship between translation, politics, and culture. The Sherlock Holmes series were not only the most popular in the English-speaking world at the time of its introduction, but also the earliest introduced and most applauded in the Chinese setting. Not to mention that they were also the most translated

[6] Ibid. 168.

and bestselling in early twentieth-century China.[7] Translations of Sherlock Holmes will reveal what characteristics of the genre most appealed to the reader, and how popular perceptions, expectations, and cultural norms of the target culture conditioned the strategies translators employed in their endeavors.

I. Contextualizing Translations

The Initial Introduction of Detective Fiction (1896-1897)

It is hard to ascertain whether there were detective stories translated into Chinese prior to 1896, but it is commonly agreed that the four short stories by Arthur Conan Doyle (1859-1930) in *Shiwu bao* ushered in a vogue for detective fiction that soon reached its zenith in the next decade. It is noteworthy that *Shiwu bao*, which occupied a premier position in Chinese politics and journalism, published the first Sherlock Holmes story "The Naval Treaty" from Vol. 6 to Vol. 9 in 1896, the first year of its publication.[8] Indeed, this is not even the first detective story this journal published. Earlier that year, in the initial issue of this journal, there was already a translated story named "Yingguo baotan fang Kadie yisheng an" 英國包探訪喀迭醫生案 (British detective in search of Dr. Kadie).[9] The fact that the first batch of detective stories appeared in a leading journal of

[7] Works by Arthur Conan Doyle stand out most prominently among all translations not only of detective fiction, but also of all other literary works as one of the most translated. See Chen Pingyuan 陳平原, *Ershi shiji Zhongguo xiaoshuo shi* 二十世紀中國小說史 [A history of twentieth century Chinese fiction] (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1989) 43.

[8] Translated as "Ying baotan kan dao miyue an" 英包探勘盜密約案.

[9] Its source and author were not mentioned, and are still unidentified. It was not rare to see translations without author information in the late Qing when the concept of intellectual property was not yet introduced.

political reform is significant enough. It set the tone for the introduction of detective fiction as a vehicle for the enlightenment project undertaken by the late-Qing reformers, and anticipated the ascendance of fiction six years later in China, whose ardent promoter being none other than Liang Qichao 梁啟超 (1873-1929), a reformist thinker, propagandist, and the chief-editor of *Shiwu bao*.[10] In a sense, the endorsement of *Shiwu bao* greatly shaped Chinese perception of detective fiction at least in the first two decades of its spread in China. But why would detective fiction catch the attention of the Chinese reformists? What does this popular genre of crime and detection have to do with political reforms and nation building? To answer these questions and to make sense of the early translation activities, it is imperative to see this literary phenomenon in its historical context.

Chinese history took sharp turns since the mid-nineteenth century when China was forced open by Western battleships and canons. Ever since then, national salvation became the dominant theme of Chinese political, social and cultural arenas for over a century. Initially, the Chinese elites ascribed China's defeat in face of Western military attacks to deficiencies in Chinese science and technology. Thinking optimistically that all problems would be solved by adopting western science and technology, and furnishing Chinese military forces with advanced weapons and equipments, the political elites

[10] Liang Qichao was one of the leaders of the Hundred Days' Reform in 1898, aiming to reform Chinese political and educational institutions. Liang inspired the Chinese with his writings. A leading figure in Chinese journalism, Liang edited and founded several newspapers and journals to communicate his political, social and literary ideas, including but not limited to *Shiwu bao*, *Qing yi bao* 清議報 (China discussion,1898-1901), *Xinmin congbao* 新民叢報 (New citizen journal, 1902-1907. Starting from 1899, he also called for revolutions in poetry, prose and fiction in support of national reform. The revolution in fiction was particularly influential in ushering in a trend of translating foreign fiction, and creating "new fiction." In Joseph Levenson's words, Liang was the "most influential turn-of-the-century scholar-journalist."

launched the Self-Strengthening Movement (*ziqiang yundong* 自強運動, 1861-1894). Thirty years of technological and military reforms, however, did not stop China from falling further into the abyss of shame. It came as a most devastating shock when, after so many years of self-strengthening, China was easily defeated by Japan in the First Sino-Japanese War (*jiawu zhanzheng* 甲午戰爭, 1894-1895). The defeat was especially humiliating because the victor was not the powerful West, but Japan, a neighboring small country who used to submit whole-heartedly to the supremacy of Chinese culture since ancient times until quite recently, when likewise threatened by the West, it avidly began an overhaul in the model of the West.[11] The traumatic experience made the Chinese elites realize that adopting Western science and technology in itself was far from enough to brace China for the threats posed by foreign powers. Given the adverse circumstances, new solutions had to be sought or else imminent dangers of invasion and enslavement would surely fall on the nation and the people.

Some elites learned from Japan's success and called for a reform in the Chinese political system. Reform-minded elites prompted Emperor Guangxu 光緒 (1875-1908) to orchestrate the Hundred Days' Reform (*wuxu bianfa* 戊戌變法) in 1898,[12] hoping to carry out a series of institutional and social reforms, yet this movement came to an abrupt

[11] The Meiji Restoration (1868-1912) was a turning point in Japanese history. This reform restored imperial rule in a form of constitutional monarchy, and enacted a full-scale modernization modeling on the West. As a result, Japan sped along the fast track to becoming a modern industrialized country.

[12] The Hundred Days' Reform was a failed reform led by Emperor Guangxu, Kang Youwei 康有為 and Liang Qichao to modernize Chinese state and social system in 1898. It went on for 103 days, and ended with a coup d'état led by Empress Dowager Cixi, representative of the conservative forces. The emperor was put in house arrest, six reformers were executed and most reforms were rescinded. Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao went in exile, and formed the "Baohuang hui" 保皇會(Protect the emperor society), trying in vain to promote a constitutional monarchy in China.

end when the emperor was put under house arrest by Empress Dowager Cixi 慈禧 (1835-1908) and six chief advocates of the reform were executed.

It was no accident that the initial importation of detective fiction fell into the period between the defeat of the Sino-Japanese War and the Hundred Days' Reform when the empire was in a state of political ferment. *Shiwu bao*, being the mouthpiece of this reform, might consider detective fiction instrumental to their project, when it singled it out as the only fictional works to publish. Since its establishment in Shanghai in 1896, *Shiwu bao* was published every 10 days, consisting mostly of news of China and other countries, the latter translated from various foreign news media, and commentaries on contemporary issues. It was short-lived with a total of 69 issues before its closure in 1898, yet it enjoyed skyrocketing popularity with a rapidly increasing circulation from 3,000 at the beginning to 17,000 at the highest. Liang Qichao, the chief-editor, declared the main purposes of this publication in "Lun baoguan youyiyu guoshi" 論報館有益於國事 (The beneficial effects of newspapers on national affairs) in the first issue: this newspaper aspires to "widely translate news of the world," to "record new policies of the provinces in detail," to "extensively collect major international law cases," and to "include books on politics, knowledge and skills as a sideline."[13] In short, it aims to disseminate new knowledge to the public in the hope of molding them into well-informed citizens that may contribute to the reform of the nation. Detective stories seem to fit into the category of "books on politics, knowledge and skills" and were published in the column of

[13] Liang Qichao 梁啟超, "Lun baoguan youyiyu guoshi" 論報館有益於國事［The beneficial effects of newspapers on national affairs], *Shiwu bao* 時務報 1 (1898), 1.

"Translations of Foreign Articles" (Yuwai wenyi 域外文譯) or "Translations of English newspapers" (Yingwen baoyi 英文報譯).

A closer look at the translations of four Sherlock Holmes stories in *Shiwu bao* will lead to the following observations. First, they were done by the same translator Zhang Kunde 張坤德, who is obscure by now but judging from the quality of his translations, he must have been proficient in English. The alternations Zhang made to the text resulted from conscious interventions rather than misunderstanding. Eva Hung commends the translator's serious approach to translation, noting the speedy progress from consciously restructuring the narrative and altering the narrative angle of "The Navel Treaty" to adhering to the original narrative method, including the first-person perspective, in the last of the four — "The Final Problem." The translator obviously had the reader response in mind, and tailored the source text to better conform to traditional narrative norms.[14]

Second, the translator must have *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes* (1894) with him instead of the *Strand Magazine* where the stories were serialized, as is manifest in the note under the title "Translated from *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*" 譯歇洛克呵爾唔斯筆記. It shows that the translator might very well know that stories in this collection are fictional, yet he intentionally downplayed this aspect by eliminating many details, altering narrative structure, and changing the first person perspective to the third person.[15]

[14] Hung, "Giving Texts a Context" 160-163.
[15] For a detailed discussion of the narrative alterations of the translated Sherlock Holmes stories on *Shiwu bao*, see Hung, "Giving Texts a Context."

Third, the translator might have the Chinese *biji* 筆記 genre in mind when he translated these stories from *The Memoirs*, because he seemed to find the traditional *biji* fiction, a classical fiction genre recounting anecdotes in a believe-it-or-not tone, analogous to Sherlock Holmes stories that always try to convey a sense of reality. Indeed, "The Navel Treaty" begins with an introduction of Percy Phelps, the person from whose hand the naval treaty is stolen, in a sentence that conforms to the convention of Chinese historical and biographic literature: "There is a person with first name Percy and last name Phelps, who is the nephew of Lord Holdhurst, a Conservative Minister."[16] While Chinese historical and biographical literature is a genre that contains both reality and fiction,[17] to translate the story in this tradition reveals the translator's intention of making the story sound like a record of real happening. In a sense, the translator discarded all the juicy details that appealed more to the literary taste, and reshaped the story into a factual report that was in line with the concern of the journal.

If the four Sherlock Holmes stories in *Shiwu bao* were not the first detective stories ever translated into Chinese, they were, without question, the first that caught public attention on a large scale. They achieved such popularity that they were soon reissued in the form of a book in 1899.[18] While the translations of literary works were still sporadic by the turn of the century, it was already a trend in development. Kang

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[16] Doyle, "Ying baotan kan dao miyue an" 16.

[17] The origin of Chinese fiction can be traced to three sources: mythology, collections of gossip and street talk, and historiography. For an insightful discussion of the rise of fiction in China, see Ming Dong Gu, *Chinese Theory of Fiction: A None-Western Narrative System* (Albany: State U of New York P, 2006) 52-61.

[18] It was published under the title *Xinyi baotan an* 新譯包探案 [New translations of detective cases], and includes "Yingguo baotan fang Kadie yisheng an" and the four Sherlock Holmes stories originally published in *Shiwu bao*.

Youwei 康有為 (1858-1927), a leading figure of the Hundred Days' Reform, already recognized the potential of fiction to enlighten the people to the urgency of reforms. In his preface to *Riben shumu zhi* 日本書目志 (Bibliography of Japanese books, 1897), he observes that among the small number of Chinese people who were literate, most did not read the classics, but all read fiction. Hence he thinks it advantageous to translate fiction as a viable means of disseminating popular knowledge, for "fiction is particularly popular in the West."[19] An important essay that made an early call for fiction is "Benguan fuyin shuobu yuanqi" 本館附印說部緣起 (Announcement of our intention to publish a supplementary fiction section, 1897) by Yan Fu 嚴復 (1854-1921) and Xia Zengyou 夏曾佑 (1863-1924). This long essay explains why *Guowen bao* 國聞報 (National news daily), the Tianjin-based reformist newspaper, published a supplement reserved for fiction. Yan and Xia so justify their decision,

> With the rise of fiction, its impact and wide acceptance have surpassed Confucian classics and history. Inevitably, the Chinese people's character and customs come under its influence … We also learned that the development of European countries, the U.S., and Japan all initiated with the aid of fiction…The ultimate goal is to enlighten the people.[20]

This statement makes clear that fiction was promoted for its universal appeal and its successful "participation" in the building of modern nations. As a result, the reformist

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[19] Quoted in Guo Yanli 郭延禮, "Zhongguo jindai fanyi wenxueshi de fenqi yiqi zhuyao tedian" 中國近代翻譯文學史的分期及其主要特點 [The phases and main features of the history of modern Chinese translated literature], *Qingmo xiaoshuo* 清末小說 [Late Qing fiction] 18 (1995).

[20] Jidao 幾道 (Yan Fu), and Bieshi 別士 (Xia Zengyou), "Benguan fuyin shuobu yuanqi" 本館附印說部緣起 [Announcement of our intention to publish a supplementary fiction section], *Ershi shiji Zhongguo xiaoshuo lilun ziliao* 二十世紀中國小說理論資料 [Compiled theories of Chinese fiction in the twentieth century], ed. Chen Pingyuan 陳平原 and Xia Xiaohong 夏曉虹, Vol. 1 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1989) 27. My ellipses.

elites considered it convenient to elevate the traditionally lower-ranking genre to a new height, leading to the revolution of fiction (*xiaoshuojie geming* 小說界革命) proposed by Liang Qichao in 1902.

The Vogue of Translating Detective Fiction (1900-1911)

The failure of the Hundred Days' Reform left some elites disillusioned with the Qing government. They came to realize that rather than expecting the established institutions to reform themselves, it would be more promising to rely on the people to bring positive changes to the nation. For example, Liang Qichao in exile theorized the need to recast the Chinese people into new citizens (*xinmin* 新民) for the purpose of nation-building in *Xinmin shuo* 新民說 (Discourse on the new citizen),[21] a collection of essays published between 1902 and 1906. The new citizen, a key concept in the early-twentieth-century Chinese politics, was to arise from the masses, as opposed to the gentry whom the reformists sought to mobilize and involve previously. For centuries, the majority of the Chinese populace had been excluded from participating in state affairs or large-scale social affairs. They had little or no formal education, were semi-literate or illiterate, and had no sophisticated opinions about the state, not to mention any knowledge of the international situation. The failed reform drove the reformists to seek alternative approaches, and the possibility of a popular movement fired their imagination.

[21] Liang Qichao defines his ideal Chinese citizenship in categories such as social and personal morality, state consciousness, spirit of adventure and progress, freedom, autonomy, self-esteem, and cooperation (Guo 9). For a thorough discussion, see Zhonghua Guo, "The Emergence of the Citizen Concept in Modern China: 1899-1919," *Theorizing Chinese Citizenship*, ed. Zhonghua Guo and Sujian Guo (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2015).

The masses now took on a political significance as the key to national salvation. If they could be enlightened by new ideas, and transformed into new citizens through education, the nation would accordingly be revitalized and strengthened against foreign encroachments. The discovery of the potential of the masses exhilarated the elites and rekindled their passion for reform, only this time they visualized a social reform starting from the grassroots and moving upward toward the pinnacle of the entire system.

It was at this juncture that Chinese journalism took off quickly,[22] for the press would "facilitate the development of popular knowledge" and promote social engagement.[23] Recognizing the "necessity of refashioning the Chinese soul by means of literature," Liang Qichao came up with the catchy slogans of poetry revolution, prose revolution and fiction revolution, the last of which advocated "new fiction" (*xin xiaoshuo* 新小說).[24] In the influential essay "Lun xiaoshuo yu qunzhi zhi guanxi" 論小說與群治之關係 (On the relationship between fiction and the government of the people, 1902), Liang argues with rhetorical power,

> If one intends to renovate the people of a nation, one must first renovate its fiction. Therefore, to renovate morality, one must renovate fiction; to renovate religion, one must renovate fiction; to renovate politics, one must renovate fiction; to renovate social customs, one must renovate fiction; to renovate learning and arts, one must renovate fiction; and to renovate even the human mind and remold its character, one must renovate fiction. Why is this so?

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[22] For a discussion of the rise of Chinese political press in late-Qing, see Joan Judge, *Print and Politics: "Shibao" and the Culture of Reform in Late Qing China* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1996), especially Chapter 1. For an extensive survey of the late-Qing press, see Roswell S. Britton, *The Chinese Periodical Press, 1800-1912* (New York: Paragon Book Gallery, 1966).

[23] Judge 22.

[24] David Der-wei Wang, "Chinese Literature from 1841 to 1937," *The Cambridge History of Chinese Literature*, ed. Kang-I Sun Chang and Stephen Owen, Vol. 2 (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 2013) 441. Liang Qichao founded a literary journal *Xin xiaoshuo* 新小說 (New fiction, 1902-1906) to propagate his idea of "new fiction," and advance the revolution of fiction.

> This is because fiction has a profound power over the way of man.[25]

Liang's glorification of fiction led to a widespread utilitarian appropriation of the genre for the enlightenment of the populace (*kai minzhi* 開民智). As fiction was prescribed as a sugarcoated panacea for the masses, and championed as the vehicle to enlighten the populace and increase popular knowledge, soon there was a proliferation of fiction. In particular, foreign fiction came in handy in providing new information, transmitting new knowledge, instilling new ways of thinking, and promulgating a new lifestyle to the Chinese people. Liang Qichao, for one, credited the ready progress of the Western countries and Japan to political novels,[26] and set out to translate political novels himself.[27] Liang's enthusiasm inspired many to participate in translating or adapting foreign fiction. Detective fiction, together with all varieties of fiction, flooded the market. According to Tarumoto Teruo, 2,504 works of translated fiction were published by 1920. The flourish of translated fiction came to such a height that from 1902 to 1907, translated fiction outnumbered original fiction.[28] Among these translated works, detective fiction achieved enormous popularity. In literary historian A Ying's words, "Almost all

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[25] Liang Qichao, "On the Relationship Between Fiction and the Government of the People," trans. Gek Nai Cheng, *Modern Chinese Literary Thought: Writings on Literature, 1893-1945*, ed. Kirk A. Denton (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1996) 74.

[26] Liang, "Foreword to the Publication of Political Novels in Translation," trans. Gek Nai Cheng, *Modern Chinese Literary Thought* 71-73.

[27] Liang Qichao was an avid advocate of political fiction. He personally translated political novels from Japanese such as *Kajin no kigu* (*Jiaren qiyu* 佳人奇遇, Unexpected encounters with beautiful ladies) by Shiba Shiro (1852-1922), and *Keikoku bidan* (*Jingguo meitan* 經國美談, Praiseworthy anecdotes of statesmanship) by Yano Ryukei (1851-1931) as examples of politically engaged new fiction. For a relevant discussion, see Lawrence Wang-chi Wong, "'The Sole Purpose Is to Express My Political Views': Liang Qichao and the Translation and Writing of Political Novels in the Late Qing," *Translation and Creation*.

[28] A Ying 阿英 estimates in *Wanqing xiaoshuo shi* 晚清小說史(A history of late-Qing fiction) that late-Qing translated fiction took up two thirds of all published fiction (234). However, Tarumoto Teruo in "A Statistical Survey of Translated Fiction 1840-1920" shows that the number of translated titles only exceeded original titles between 1902 and 1907 (39). For 1840-1911, there were 1,288 original titles, and 1,016 translations (39).

translators of the time had translated some detective stories. If there were 1,000 translations of fiction, detective fiction would take up more than half."[29] The surge of translating detective fiction arrived in 1907, according to Guo Yanli, with large numbers of detective stories translated into Chinese, sometimes immediately following the publication of the original.[30] Eva Hung is of a similar opinion when she says "a significant proportion of the work was done between the years 1906 and 1909, which coincided with the peak period of late Qing fiction translation as a whole."[31] It was also a time when the circulation of literary magazines reached a new height.

Indeed, literary magazines became the top platform for the publication of "new fiction" and translations. Most fiction appeared first in these periodicals before printing in book form. Following Liang Qichao's pioneering magazine *Xin xiaoshuo* 新小說 (New fiction, 1902-1906), more than twenty literary periodicals that published translated and original fiction quickly sprouted in the first decade of the twentieth century, including *Xiuxiang xiaoshuo* 繡像小說 (Illustrated fiction, 1903-1906), *Yueyue xiaoshuo* 月月小說 (All-story monthly, 1906-1909), and *Xiaoshuo lin* 小說林 (Forest of fiction, 1907-1908).[32] In addition to these fiction magazines, newspaper supplements, tabloids, and

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[29] A Ying, *Wanqing xiaoshuo shi* 242.

[30] Guo Yanli, *Zhongguo jindai fanyi wenxue gailun* 中國近代翻譯文學概論 [The modern translated literature of China: An introduction] (Wuhan: Hubei jiaoyu chubanshe, 1997) 159. He estimates around 400 translations of detective fiction for 1907-1919 (159). Guo also identifies the period 1907-1919 as a peak of literary translation (43).

[31] Hung, "Giving Texts a Context" 158.

[32] Liang Qichao's *Xin xiaoshuo* created a sensation in the literary circle. Fiction magazines mushroomed in its wake. According to Cheng Pingyuan, there were 27 magazines and newspapers with "fiction" in the title in 1902-1917. See Cheng Pingyuan, *Zhongguo xiaoshuo xushi moshi de zhuanbian* 中國小說敘事模式的轉變 [The transformation of narrative styles in Chinese fiction] (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1988) 272.

even some political or comprehensive periodicals published fiction, which greatly contributed to the boom of new fiction.

Detective fiction had been a main attraction, and account for one fourth of all translated titles published in the four major fiction magazines. Liang's *Xin xiaoshuo* published detective fiction from the first issue to the last, acknowledging detective fiction as "new fiction." *Xiuxiang xiaoshuo* took up where *Shiwu bao* left and published six more translations of the Sherlock Holmes stories.[33] They seemed to be a great hit because they soon appeared in book form in 1903.[34] *Yueyue xiaoshuo* and *Xiaoshuo lin*'s establishment in 1906 and 1907 boosted the translation of fiction, leading to what Guo Yanli calls the "prime of literary translation" in 1907-1919.[35] Almost all literary periodicals reserved a section for detective fiction, and popular detective fiction reappeared in the form of books shortly after their first appearance in the periodicals. In a time when books were much more expensive than periodicals and beyond the reach of the general public, this fact alone attests to its striking success among readers.

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[33] The six stories are "The Adventure of the 'Gloria Scott'" 哥利亚斯考得船案 (Issues 4-5), "The Adventure of the Silver Blaze" 銀光馬被盜案 (Issue 6), "The Adventure of the Yellow Face" 孀婦匿女案 (Issue 7), "The Adventure of the Musgrave Ritual" 墨斯格力夫禮典案 (Issue 8), "The Adventure of the Stockbroker's Clerk" 書記被騙案 (Issue 9), and "The Adventure of the Resident Patient" 旅居病夫案 (Issue 10) published from July to October, 1903.

[34] The Commercial Press reissued them in book form, named *Buyi Huasheng baotan an* 補譯華生包探案 (Additional translations of Watson's detective cases). It was reprinted and renamed *Huasheng baotan an* 華生包探案 (Watson's detective cases) in 1906.

[35] Tarumoto Teruo 樽本照雄 identifies two peaks of fiction publication in 1907 and 1915 ("Qingmo" 162), relevant to the peaks of periodicals in 1907-8, and in 1913 ("Qingmo" 152). See "Qingmo Minchu de fanyi xiaoshuo: Jing Riben chuandao Zhongguo de fanyi xiaoshuo" 清末民初的翻譯小說：經日本傳到中國的翻譯小說 [Late-Qing and early Republican translated fiction: Translated fiction that went to China via Japan], *Fanyi yu chuangzuo: Zhongguo jindai fanyi xiaoshuo lun* 翻譯與創作：中國近代翻譯小說論 [Translation and creation: On early modern Chinese translation of foreign fiction], ed. Wang-chi Wong 王宏志 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2000).

Unlike translated love stories such as *La Dame aux Camélias* and *Joan Haste* translated by Lin Shu (1852-1924) that were tremendously popular,[36] detective fiction, rather than improvising on the universal themes like unrequited or tormented love, was outstanding in terms of its formal innovations, unfamiliar characters, and new way of thinking that greatly distinguish it from traditional Chinese crime stories.[37] Together with political fiction and science fiction, detective fiction is generally considered to be non-native to China. While the other two genres remained relatively insignificant, detective fiction stands out for enjoying a prominence never accorded to translate literature before. Observations by the contemporaries can give us some clues about the appeal of this genre. Some recognized the superiority of Western legal system and reflected on the deficiency of Chinese justice. Zhou Guisheng 周桂笙 (1873-1936), translator of *Xieluoke fusheng zhentan an* 歇洛克復生偵探案 (The Return of Sherlock Holmes, 1904) comments,

> The legal system and litigation of our country differ drastically from Western countries. The detective profession is beyond imagination. After China engaged in international trade, the foreigners enjoyed extraterritorial rights in concessions, established police forces, and created the position of detective. Yet these "detectives" have no special training. They are none other than bullies. Cases brought to the Mixed Court were casually handled because of the fear of offending the foreigners,[38] and time constraints. As for adjudicating cases in the inland, the officials

[36] *La Dame aux Camélias* by Alexandre Dumas, fils (1824-1895) was translated as *Bali chahuanü yishi* 巴黎茶花女遺事 (The deeds of the late lady of the camellias of Paris) in1897, and *Joan Haste* by H. Rider Haggard (1856-1925) was translated as *Jiayin xiaozhuan* 迦因小傳 (A biographical sketch of Joan Haste) in 1905.

[37] Despite all the non-native elements, the thematic concerns of detective fiction have much in common with traditional Chinese fiction such as court-case fiction and knight-errant fiction. This is another important factor contributing to its appeal to the Chinese reader. This aspect will be addressed in Chapter Three.

[38] Mixed Courts (*huishen gongxie* 会审公廨) existed in the Shanghai International Settlement and the French Concession between 1869 and 1926. They were used to adjudicate cases inside the concessions that involved Chinese citizens or citizens of non-treaty countries according to Chinese law. If the case also involved foreigners, a foreign assessor would sit with the Chinese magistrate as judges.

> easily resort to torture. The absence of justice is beyond words. In this situation, what can we make of the efforts of detectives! As for the Western countries, they have the highest respect for human rights. It is customary to have lawyers defend the accused. No one can be convicted unless the evidence is conclusive. That's why the science of detection can be widely applied.[39]

The contrast of the legal systems highlights China's deficiency that need be addressed. The importation of detective fiction seemed to serve the purpose of awakening readers to the need of changes by providing the reference point of an imagined society under the rule of law, as Yang Xurong puts it.[40] Similarly, detective fiction could help the Chinese distinguish the true and false in Western civilization, according to the preface to the 1906 reprint of *Buyi Huasheng baotan an* 補譯華生包探案 (Additional translations of Watson's detective cases). With an anticipated increase in international exchanges and communications, such knowledge would prepare people to be more cautious and wise in their dealing with the Westerner, the owner of the Commercial Press so advertises.[41]

In the same vein, detective fiction could evoke nationalist sentiments concerning the crisis China suffered. Chen Xiji 陳熙績 in his preface to *Xieluoke qi'an kaichang* 歇洛克奇案開場 (A Study in Scarlet, 1908) expounds the translator Lin Shu's deep meaning in translating the detective novel, because as he sees it, Lin Shu "never wasted

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[39] Zhou Guisheng 周桂笙, "Xieluoke fusheng zhentan an bianyan" 《歇洛克復生偵探案》弁言 [Foreword to *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*], *Ershi shiji Zhongguo xiaoshuo lilun ziliao* 119.

[40] Yang Xurong sees the subgenres of late-Qing fiction, such as political fiction, fantasy, historical fiction, in parallel with the imagination of different aspects of the modern society. Detective fiction corresponds to the imagination of a society under the rule of law. See Yang Xurong 楊緒容, "Wanqing zhentan xiaoshuo yu xiandai fazhi xiangxiang" 晚清偵探小說與現代法治想像 [Late-Qing detective fiction and the imagination of the modern rule of law), *Zhongguo wenxue yanjiu* 中國文學研究 [Studies in Chinese literature], Vol. 13 (Beijing: Zhongguo wenlian chubanshe, 2009).

[41] Shangwu yinshuguan zhuren 商務印書館主人 [Owner of the Commercial Press], "*Buyi Huasheng baotan an* xu"《補譯華生包探案》序 [Preface to *Additional translations of Watson's detective cases*], *Ershi shiji Zhongguo xiaoshuo lilun ziliao* 201.

his words" unless to "reform society" and to "invigorate the people."[42] Instead of commenting on the crime or the detective, Chen Xiji expresses deep sympathy to Jefferson Hope, the avenger of the story, and likens him to King Goujian of Yue 勾踐 (reigned 496–465 BCE) and Wu Zixu 伍子胥 (559-484 BCE), two famous avengers in ancient Chinese history who endured extreme hardships to plan retaliation. "If all men of our country can be as steadfast and persevering, what can't be accomplished? What to worry about the humiliations?" Chen remarks, and goes on encouraging readers to read it along with the biographies of Goujian and Wu Zixu in *Shiji* 史記 (The records of the grand historian).[43]

It is clear from the above comments that foreign fiction imported in the service of political agenda had been commonly accepted and reiterated by authors and readers alike. If detective fiction lends itself easily to over-interpretation and ideological manipulation in the Chinese context, its rapid rise to fame also owed to its compatibility with the aesthetic taste of Chinese readers, whose interest in the new, eccentric and extraordinary had been fostered by Chinese fiction. Readers noticed detective fiction's novelty of narrative structure early on. In 1905, Xu Nianci 徐念慈 (1875-1908) observes that detective fiction excels in its "intricacy of plots and bizarreness of detection," and concludes that "it is at its best in overall structure, not sentences; in the form, not the spirit."[44] It echoes Zhou Guisheng's admiration of the unconventional story opening with a conversation in his translator's note to *Dushe quan* 毒蛇圈 (In the serpents' coils,

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[42] Chen Xiji 陳熙績, "*Xieluoke qi'an kaichang* xu"《歇洛克奇案開場》敘 [Preface to *The first of Sherlock's strange cases*], *Ershi shiji Zhongguo xiaoshuo lilun ziliao* 327.
[43] Ibid. 328.
[44] Juewo 覺我 (Xu Nianci), "*Di yibaishisan ji* zhuiyu" 《第一百十三集》贅語 [Idle chatter on *The 113th episode*], *Ershi shiji Zhongguo xiaoshuo lilun ziliao* 237.

1903).[45] Zhou describes this innovative arrangement as "ink drops from the air," and "grotesque peaks thrusting towards the sky." Yu Mingzhen 俞明震 (1860-1918) was similarly impressed with the first person witness perspective of the Sherlock Holmes stories, saying that "the stories' advantage lies exactly in the narration of Watson."[46]

These enthusiastic responses made detective fiction the top-selling genre in the 1900s. Xu Nianchi's statistics indicates that among those published by Xiaoshuolin Publishing House, translations of detective fiction sold the best, taking up seventy to eighty percent of the sales volume.[47] Although detective novels and stories by many authors were introduced, Sherlock Holmes remained the best known. Aside from the six stories collected in *Buyi Huasheng baotan an* in 1903, more collections came to be published in this decade, including *Taixi shuobu congshu zhiyi* 泰西說部叢書之一 (Western fiction series I, 1901),[48] *Xu baotan an* 續包探案 (Continued translation of detective cases, 1903),[49] and *Fuermosi zaisheng an* 福爾摩斯再生案 (The Return of

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[45] Zhixin shi zhuren 知新室主人, "*Fushe quan* yizhe shiyu" 《毒蛇圈》譯者識語 [Translator's note on *Margot la Balafrée*], *Ershi shiji Zhongguo xiaoshuo lilun ziliao* 94. *Dushe quan* 毒蛇圈 was Zhou Guisheng's translation of *Margot la Balafrée* (1884) by French novelist Fortuné du Boisgobey (1821-1891).

[46] Gu'an 觚庵 (Yu Mingzhen), "Gu'an manbi" 觚庵漫笔 [Gu'an's scripts], *Ershi shiji Zhongguo xiaoshuo lilun ziliao* 249.

[47] Juewo (Xu Nianci), "Yu zhi xiaoshuo guan" 余之小說觀 [My view on fiction], *Xiaoshuo lin* 小說林 [Forest of fiction] 9 (1908) 7-8.

[48] Translated by Huang Ding 黃鼎 and Zhang Zaixin 張再新, this collection includes six Sherlock Holmes stories, namely "The Adventure of the Speckled Band" 毒蛇案, "The Red-headed League" 紅髮案, "The Adventure of the Beryl Coronet" 寶石冠, "The Adventure of the Greek Interpreter" 希臘舌人, "The Boscombe Valley Mystery" 拔斯夸姆命案, and "The Adventure of the Noble Bachelor" 紳士克你海姆. It was published by Lanling Publishing House 兰陵社. See Guo Y., *Zhongguo jindai fanyi wenxue gailun* 147; Hung, "Giving Texts a Context" 174-176.

[49] Translated by "Jincha xuesheng" 警察學生(Police student) and published by Wenming Books, it includes seven stories: "The Five Orange Pips" 三 K 字五橘核案, "A Scandal in Bohemia" 跋海渺王照像片, "The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle" 鵝腹藍寶石案, "The Man with the Twisted Lip" 偽乞丐案, "The Adventure of the Copper Beeches" 親父囚女案, "The Adventure of the Engineer's Thumb" 修機斷指案, and "The Adventure of the Nobel Bachelor" 貴胄失妻案. See Guo Yanli, *Zhongguo jindai fanyi wenxue gailun* 147-8; Hung, "Giving Texts a Context," 174-176.

Sherlock Holmes, 1904-1906).[50] Detective novels featuring Sherlock Holmes were also translated, and *A Study in Scarlet* alone had five Chinese renditions from 1904 to 1908.[51] For the purpose of comparing and contrasting, I will use *Buyi Huasheng baotan an* (1903) in my analysis of the translation strategies.

1910-1920: A Transitional Period

After the Revolution of 1911 (*xinhai geming* 辛亥革命) overthrew the Qing dynasty and established the Republic of China in 1912, the political situation of China was further complicated by the outbreak of World War I, more demands from foreign powers, Yuan Shikai's 袁世凱 (1859-1916) seizure of power, the ensuing warlord competition that lasted till 1928, and the occurrence of the New Culture Movement and its political outcome the May Fourth Movement in 1919. The political agitation of this decade exerted great influence on the cultural production of the time. For one thing, the publication of fiction experienced a setback around 1911, and reached a higher peak in 1915, with original titles exceeded translations by far.[52] It was during these years that the Mandarin Ducks and Butterflies school of love fiction rose to fame, and came to dominate the literary scene. Heirs to the New Fiction tradition, these stories evolve on the

[50] It was translated by Zhou Guisheng and Xi Ruo 奚若 and includes 13 cases from *The Return of Sherlock Holmes.* See Guo Yanli, *Zhongguo jindai fanyi wenxue gailun* 148.
[51] They are *Da Fuzhou* 大復仇 (The grand revenge, 1904) by Huangren 黃人 and Xi Ruo, *Enchou Xue* 恩仇血 (Gratitude and revenge in blood) by Chen Yan 陳彥, *Xueshu* 血書 (In blood, 1905) by Zhou Shoujuan 周瘦鵑, *Fuermosi zhentanan diyi an* 福爾摩斯偵探案第一案 (The first detective case of Holmes, 1906), and *Xieluoke qian kaichang* (1908) by Lin Shu. For more information about the translations of the Sherlock Holmes stories, see Guo Yanli, *Zhongguo jindai fanyi wenxue gailun* 149-154.
[52] Tarumoto, "Qingmo Minchu de fanyi xiaoshuo" 162.

themes of arranged marriage, unrequited love, and self-sacrifice. With tragic endings, they broke thousands of readers' hearts.

The intellectual milieu since the mid-1910s brought drastic changes to the literary scene. The advocates of the New Culture Movement were for the most part western or Japanese-educated intellectuals growing up under the influence of new fiction. Compared with those actively involved in late-Qing cultural and literary production, these elites were of a younger generation. Disillusioned with traditional culture following the failure of the Republic to address China's existing and occurring problems, they regarded it paramount to revolt against traditional Chinese culture and establish a new one on the twin pillars of science and democracy. Even though they shared with the previous generation the same concerns for the salvation of the nation, they blamed China's repeated failure on the very cornerstone of Chinese existence: traditional Chinese culture and values, which, in contrast, were still cherished by the previous generation of Chinese elites as the backbone of Chinese identity even when they turned the most reform-minded about Chinese political and social institutions.

With a self-proclaimed role as the enlightener of the Chinese people, the New Culturalists called for a new literature in vernacular language. Their original intention was to create a new form of national literature devoid of remnants of traditional culture on the one hand, and accessible to the undereducated common people on the other. In practice, however, they produced a new form of elite literature distinct from the works of the previous generation. They also actively engaged in the translation of foreign literary works, but they were more selective in terms of literary values, and criticized the previous generation for their vulgar taste in choosing inferior and insignificant works to

translate. Even though they used vernacular Chinese in their translation or creation, they transformed the language with transliterations, coinages, and even altered the sentence structure to the degree that common readers would have problem comprehending.[53] With this movement, the "enlighteners" of China aggressively pushed to the center of the literary scene and relegated all "older" forms of literature to the peripheral, including late-Qing new fiction, and early Republican butterfly fiction. Overshadowed by this new generation, the older generation or people not as willing to break up with traditional culture had to give up their trendsetting position and content with their works being none other than "popular" literature.[54] Challenged by new literature, "popular" literature, including detective fiction, underwent a downslide in the late teens,[55] although it was soon revived in 1923 when readers found popular fiction more closely delineating the changes of Chinese society they bore witness to.[56]

The appearance of the first "complete" translations of Sherlock Holmes stories in 1916 attests to the persistent popularity of detective fiction among a readership that was

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[53] The modern vernacular (*baihua* 白話) proposed by the New Culturalists is "an extraordinary hybrid form deriving from at least four main sources: (1) *wen-yen* (Classical Chinese); (2) premodern written vernacular Chinese (based on the northern dialects of the past); (3) contemporary colloquial speech (Mandarin or northern dialects); and (4) European and Japanese loanwords, neologisms, and syntactical structure" (L. Liu 1056). For more discussions on the new vernacular, see Lydia H. Liu, "The Translator's Turn: The Birth of Modern Chinese Language and Fiction," *The Columbia History of Chinese Literature*, ed. Victor H. Mair (New York: Columbia UP, 2001); Qian Suoqiao, "Literariness (Wen) and Character (Zhi): From Baihua to Yuluti and Dazhongyu," *A Companion to Modern Chinese Literature*, ed. Yingjin Zhang (Malden, MA: John Wiley & Son., 2016).

[54] Fiction and other vernacular literature were innately "popular" in traditional Chinese literature, when prose and poetry in classical Chinese were considered high literature. Such a line was blurred, however, when the status of fiction was elevated in the late Qing for utilitarian purposes. There was no clear distinction between popular and serious fiction in the 1910s and 1920s, and we see the rare phenomena of writing novels in parallel prose or semi-classical Chinese. For example, Lin Shu translated foreign novels in classical Chinese to appeal to the elite, and his success added to the prestige of fiction. Early translations of detective fiction were also done in simple classical Chinese.

[55] For New Culturalists and Leftist Writer's attacks on popular literature and the setback, see Tang, *Zhongguo xiandai tongsu xiaoshuo liubian shi* 20-31.

[56] Tang, *Zhongguo xiandai tongsu xiaoshuo* 16.

not necessarily affected by the New Culture prejudice.[57] *Fuermosi zhentan an quanji* 福爾摩斯偵探案全集 (Complete stories of Sherlock Holmes) was an ambitious project in twelve volumes, involving ten translators including renowned figures such as Yan Duhe 嚴獨鶴 (1889-1968) and Zhou Shoujuan 周瘦鵑 (1895-1968),[58] and the young Cheng Xiaoqing who would later become the master of Chinese detective fiction. It includes forty-four Sherlock Holmes stories, the most comprehensive in China at the time. In all seriousness, it includes three prefaces and an afterword, notes on the use of the book, a detailed biography of the author, and all stories have the English title under the Chinese one. Eva Hung holds that this collection, representative of "a serious translation and editorial approach towards fiction translation," not only "testifies to Arthur Conan Doyle's status among turn-of-the-century translators and readers," but also "set a standard" in the development of literary translation.[59] This collection, done in classical Chinese, was so well received that it had been reprinted twenty times by 1936.[60]

In terms of ideological orientation, this collection harks back to the agenda of "new fiction for popular knowledge" of the last decade. The prefaces and afterword expound the painstaking efforts of "teaching through fiction." Bao Tianxiao's 包天笑 (1876-1973) preface claims that the detective "must value moral principles and have knowledge so as to uphold the law and safeguard human rights for the benefits of the

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[57] The first Chinese "complete" edition of Sherlock Holmes is actually not complete. Out of the 56 short stories and 4 novels on Sherlock Holmes, forty-four were included in this collection. See Guo Y. *Zhongguo jindai fanyi wenxue gailun* 150-153.

[58] These translators were considered "Mandarin Ducks and Butterflies" writers by critics acknowledging only the New Literature legacy.

[59] Hung, "Giving Texts a Context" 167.

[60] Ren Xiang 任翔, "Zhongguo zhentan xiaoshuo de fasheng jiqi yiyi" 中國偵探小說的發生及其意義 [The emergence of Chinese detective fiction and its significance], *Zhongguo shehui kexue* 中國社會科學 [Social science in China] 4 (2011) 208.

nation and the people," whereas Chen Lengxue's 陳冷血 (1878-1965) preface points out the corruption of the so-called "police detectives" in China, the likes of whom would be the target Holmes sets out to combat. The last preface by Yan Duhe not only denounces police detectives, but also likens private detectives to ancient knights-errant and calls for the establishment of a discipline of crime detection, for which the Sherlock Holmes stories would serve as a perfect textbook.[61] With a biography of the author and a postscript, Liu Bannong 劉半農 (1891-1934) gives his full endorsement to detective fiction.[62] Liu makes explicit what he considers Doyle's purpose for writing the series:

> Conan Doyle had the high aspirations to enlighten the people, and make criminal detection highly esteemed. The reason he did not write textbooks on detection, but detective stories is because criminal detection differs from other disciplines, which can be summarized by a comprehensive textbook no matter how profound its principles are. Criminal detection is as disciplined as the immovable mountain, as flexible as the unpredictable climate, as immense as the boundless universe, and as detailed as though it can see through fine hair. Elusive as it is, if one must make it a textbook with definition of detection and principles of detection, it would be unsatisfactory. Yet such books are indispensible to society and the world, and cannot be left undone. What is feasible is to change the method and be creative. Doyle conveyed the most profound and abstruse principles by means of fiction. Now all issues were solved, and his lofty aspirations of enlightenment were realized. Such is Conan Doyle's primary goal, and we have to make it explicit to the reader.[63]

Liu Bannong sees Doyle as a conscious promoter of science, and his stories a textbook of criminal detection in disguise. Rather than speaking what Doyle had in mind, Liu actually

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[61] Quoted in Leo Ou-Fan Lee, "Fuermosi zai Zhongguo" 福爾摩斯在中國 [Holmes in China], *Dangdai zuojia pinglun* 當代作家評論 [Contemporary writers review] 2 (2004), 9.
[62] Liu later turned to the New Culture camp and became an active advocate of the movement.
[63] Bannong 半侬, "Fuermosi zhentan an quanji ba" 《福爾摩斯偵探案全集》[Postscript to *Complete stories of Sherlock Holmes*], *Ershi shiji Zhongguo xiaoshuo lilun ziliao* 519-520.

expresses "the Chinese writers' general opinion about detective fiction at the time," [64] and with a strict adherence to the utilitarian view of fiction, sums up the vogue of detective fiction translation of the last decade.

The 1916 collection signaled the end of the most influential period of translated detective fiction. Even though many new translations of Sherlock Holmes stories continued to land the market throughout the next three decades, including a collection of Sherlock Holmes series in vernacular Chinese translated by Cheng Xiaoqing in 1927 and *Yasen Luoping an quanji* 亞森羅平案全集 (Complete stories of Arsène Lupin) in 1925,[65] its heyday was gone when part of its appeal, namely the enlightenment mission advertised by its late-Qing promoters, was taken over by the more socially engaged and self-conscious "new literature." Detective fiction was read more for entertainment or relaxation. In the 1920s through 1940s, original detective fiction picked up and works by Cheng Xiaoqing and Sun Liaohong caused sensations for their localizing efforts and their capacity to reflect the changing concerns of the Chinese people in a timely manner.

In view of its iconic status in the translation of detective fiction, the 1916 collection of Sherlock Holmes will be the last translation to study in this chapter. All three samples — the four stories in *Shiwu bao* 1896-1897, *Buyi Huasheng baotan an* of 1903, and the 1916 collection — are taken as representatives of the "fiction for mass education" agenda. Their distinctive utilitarian approach to detective fiction conditioned

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[64] Tang Zhesheng, "Zhentan tuili bian" 偵探推理編 [Detective fiction], *Zhongguo jinxiandai tongsu wenxueshi*, Vol. 1, *762*.

[65] The collection translated by Cheng Xiaoqing is *Fuermosi tanan da quanji* 福爾摩斯探案大全集 [Complete cases of Sherlock Holmes] published by Shijie Publishing House 世界書局. *Yasen Luoping an quanji* has 4 volumes and was translated by Zhou Shoujuan, Sun Liaohong, et al. in vernacular Chinese. It was published by Dadong Publishing House. See Tang, "Zhentan tuili bian" 763-764.

their choice of translation strategies. The following will focus on instances of cultural appropriations and negotiations reflected in the three samples of translation.

II. Translation as Cultural Negotiation

Viewing the importation and development of detective fiction in the context of drastic political transitions and ideological reorientations in China enables us to better evaluate the choices of translation strategies by early translators to make it more accessible to Chinese readers. Granted that detective fiction embodies science, rationality, and rule of law, and its combination of adventures and intellectual excitements appealed greatly to Chinese readers' interest in the eccentric and extraordinary, it still needed to establish more emotional and cultural relevance with the target culture for translations to achieve success. Translators' laborious efforts facilitated its reception in the target culture.

Though it is assumed that readers of translated fiction and new fiction in the late Qing consisted mainly of people with a lower level of education, the reality could be more complex. Yuan Jin in his discussion of late-Qing readers says that the growing demand for late-Qing fiction partially came from traditional literati's increasing interest in reading fiction.[66] Xu Nianchi's 1907 survey statistics indicates that about ninety percent of fiction buyers were traditionally educated scholars who were open to new

[66] Yuan Jin 袁進, "Shilun Wanqing xiaoshuo duzhe de bianhua" 試論晚清小說讀者的變化 [Discussion on the changes of the late-Qing readership], *Mingqing xiaoshuo yanjiu* 明清小說研究 [Journal of Ming-Qing fiction studies] 1 (2001), 20.

knowledge.[67] Yuan Jin concludes that as more traditional literati participated in the reading and even writing of fiction, they would necessarily influence "new fiction" with their aesthetic preference, interest, values, and language usage.[68] We will see below the efforts of tailoring the foreign elements in detective fiction for better reader response.

Naming the Detective

To begin with, Chinese translators had to find a way to properly address the "detective." Private detective, the hero of most imported detective stories, did not exist in late-Qing or Republican China.[69] Translators tried many names including *baotan* 包探 and *yitan* 議探 before settling on *zhentan* 偵探. The transition from *baotan* to *zhentan* indicates an improved understanding of the social position private detectives hold, and a changing attitude toward the new hero.

Baotan, also called *baodating* 包打聽, refers to police detectives in the police station of the foreign concessions in China. According to Zhou Guisheng, they were usually promoted policemen originally from lower classes. The police detectives had no expertise in or knowledge of crime detection, but relied on a group of informers to provide information on a regular basis at a certain teahouse or opium den the detective frequented. The detective even held a temporary office there, and had no scruples about applying torture to suspects. In Zhou's description, *baotan* and his gang were none other

[67] Xu Nianchi 徐念慈 published "Dingwei nian xiaoshuojie faxing shumu biaochabiao" 丁未年小說界發行數目調查表 [Survey on the number of fiction books published in 1907] in *Xiaoshuo lin* (Issue 9). Quoted in Yuan Jin, "Shilun" 20.
[68] A typical example is Mandarin Ducks and Butterflies love stories written in parallel prose. See Yuan Jin, "Shilun" 23-25.
[69] Sun Liaohong refers to Huo Sang as the only private detective in China in his Lu Ping stories.

than "Shanghai bullies" who profited by intimidation.[70] Hence the word *baotan* or *baodating* with its association with the ignorant but overbearing police detectives and their informers would most likely evoke repugnance rather than admiration.

Translators soon recognized the misnomer, and explored new terms to name the heroes of detective fiction. In 1902, Huang Ding 黃鼎 and Zhang Zaixin 張在新 published *Yitan an* 議探案 (Detective cases), including six Sherlock Holmes stories.[71] Referring to detective fiction with the term *zhentan* 偵探 is said to begin with Zhou Guisheng,[72] and we see a more frequent appearance of the word in fiction magazines to denote detective fiction since 1902. Again, Zhou was quite articulate about the difference between Chinese *baotan* and private detectives in foreign fiction. In his understanding, Western private detectives have expert knowledge, rigorous moral codes and a high sense of social responsibility. As products of modern civilization, they obey the law and respect human rights.[73] Perhaps it is with these considerations in mind that Zhou decided to adopt the new term *zhentan* to foreground the desired new qualities of modern detectives.

Sherlock Holmes Goes Chinese

Those who have read cases of Sherlock Holmes will remember him as a genius in deduction, and an eccentric gentleman in almost all other aspects. He is quite content

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[70] Zhou Guisheng (Ji 吉), "Shanghai zhentan an" 上海偵探案 [Shanghai detective cases], *Yueyue xiaoshuo* 月月小說 [*All-story monthly*] 7 (1907).
[71] Published by Yuxue Study 餘學齋, it is possibly a reissue of *Taixi shuobu congshu*, Vol. 1 (1901).
[72] Yang Shiji 楊世驥, *Wenyuan tanwang* 文苑談往 [Past events of the literary world] (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1945) 11-14. *Zhentan* is likely a loanword from Japanese 探偵小說.
[73] Zhou Guisheng, "Shanghai zhentan an."

with a bachelor's life and has no longing for company. He is often described as "machine-like," prefers city life to nature and rustic country life, and is quite a hermit when not involved in exciting cases. Together with his talent for resolving difficult cases, he represents a new type of hero unknown to the Chinese. While the early translations more or less retain the eccentricity of Holmes, he was cast as a more accessible and amiable gentleman in translation. The revamped image of Sherlock Holmes carried with it a larger-than-life touch because he was intended to be a role model of a western gentleman with modern education of science and law.

The early translations of "A Scandal in Bohemia" serve as good examples here. In the story, Holmes is entrusted with the task of recovering a photograph of the King of Bohemia and Irene Adler because the latter threatens to break the King's impending engagement to a princess. Holmes is resourceful enough to discover the hiding place of the photograph yet his intention is spotted by Adler, and the woman outwits Holmes by fleeing the country with her new husband, taking away the photograph for her own protection. The story begins with a preamble in which Watson tries to make sense of Holmes' aversion of women:

> All emotions, and that one particularly, were abhorrent to his cold, precise but admirably balanced mind. He was, I take it, the most perfect reasoning and observing machine that the world has seen, but as a lover he would have placed himself in a false position. He never spoke of the softer passions, save with a gibe and a sneer. They were admirable things for the observer — excellent for drawing the veil from men's motives and actions. But for the trained reasoner to admit such intrusions into his own delicate and finely adjusted temperament was to introduce a distracting factor which might throw a doubt upon all his mental results. Grit in a sensitive instrument, or a crack in one of his own high-power

> lenses, would not be more disturbing than a strong emotion in a nature such as his.[74]

Translators of the 1916 version understood it this way:

> 夫以吾友福爾摩斯之為人，讀者固知之有素。其人實無愛情可言，面峭而心冷，視世間一切事莫不透徹表裡，不能言情又遑論乎愛？渠嘗語人謂：偵探家之心，其用實類明鏡，燭奸照孽莫不賴是，設一旦而鐫情愛二字於其中，則蒙翳銹蝕即由是而起，將何以照魑魅？此語實名言也。[75]
>
> Readers should have long been familiar with the personality of my friend Holmes. He was a stranger to romantic love, with a stern look and a cold heart. He saw through everything in the world. If his feelings rarely stirred, how could he fall in love? He used to say that the heart of a detective was just like a clear mirror, which reflected the real face of the evil. If the heart was touched by love and the mirror was thus tarnished, how could it expose the evil then? It was indeed very well said.

The original compares Holmes to a sensitive instrument, with which strong emotions like romantic love is a great disturbance. It seems Holmes stands for science itself, the accuracy of which should be guarded against uncertainties posed by human emotions. The translation, however, lays emphasis on the incorruptness of Holmes. If "instrument" is the metaphor used on Holmes in the original, "mirror" is the key word here, suggesting a righteous personality that is intolerant of the evil. The translators tried to tone down the eccentricity of Holmes by rendering him morally superior. His aversion to women therefore can be justified by his perspicacity, his aloofness, and most importantly, his responsibility as a principled justice-upholder. The translators obviously did not like the

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[74] Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Complete Sherlock Holmes* (New York: Race Point Publishing, 2013) 163.
[75] Doyle, "Qing ying" 情影 [Photograph of lovers], *Fuermosi zhentanan quanji* 福爾摩斯偵探案全集 [Complete stories of Sherlock Holmes], trans. Xiaoqing 小青, et al, Vol. 3 (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1926) 1. All translations in this dissertation are mine unless otherwise noted.

idea of Holmes as a machine incapable of strong feelings. For Chinese readers of that time, such an association could only incur abhorrence and misunderstanding. Such a presentation would not make Holmes an authoritative figure the reader could look up to, as the Chinese translators tried to present. In a sense, the translators turned Holmes into a more accessible hero whose superiority and transcendence make him not susceptible to strong emotions, and therefore always reliable in his judgment. This transformation draws Holmes, the science-minded detective, toward numerous incorruptible upholders of law in the Chinese literary tradition.

The efforts to recast Holmes into a positive hero not too incomprehensible to the Chinese did not stop here. Despite making him morally impeccable and incorruptible like Chinese judges, early translators also tended to cast him in a more amiable mood, especially in his relation with Watson. In the original, Holmes and Watson keep a friendly yet unequal relationship. While Holmes commands authority for his expertise in problem solving, Watson plays the role of a subordinate. Though they are close friends and partners in adventures, Holmes sometimes can be condescending and arrogant in his attitude towards Watson. Many stories open with an incident of Holmes making remarks, and then condescending to enlighten Watson with his reasoning, which is invariably greeted with exclamations. Holmes is often demanding in his request for help from Watson, who, despite his own business and marriage, often complies unconditionally. Of course this arrangement is often attributed to the sidekick role of Watson crucial to these stories. Watson is supposed to be a foil for Holmes and serves a narrative function in these stories: as an observer and participant of Holmes' adventures, he is close enough to what happens, yet distant enough to keep Holmes' revelation to the last minute.

This friendship underwent some changes in the early Chinese translations. Most obviously, Holmes and Watson are getting closer and more on equal terms. In fact, Holmes is quite amiable in his relationship with Watson to the extent that rather than an eccentric genius of detection, he is more akin to a traditional Chinese gentleman. Translators seemed to find the original Holmes' often arrogant attitude rude, and tried to give him a friendlier look that might find resonance in the ideal friendship of traditional scholar-gentlemen.

Early translations often omit the preambles to the Sherlock Holmes stories, possibly because the lengthy conversations between Holmes and Watson are minimally relevant to the main plots. Translators, however, would rather give some emphasis to the friendship of the pair. The 1903 and 1916 renditions of "A Scandal in Bohemia" show such a tendency. When the newly wedded Watson went past the Baker Street, he decided to visit his old friend. When he showed up,

> His [Holmes'] manner was not effusive. It seldom was; but he was glad, I think, to see me. With hardly a word spoken, but with a kindly eye, he waved me to an armchair, threw across his case of cigars, and indicated a spirit case and a gasogene in the corner. Then he stood before the fire and looked me over in his singular introspective fashion.
>
> "Wedlock suits you," he remarked. "I think, Watson, that you have put on seven and a half pounds since I saw you."
>
> "Seven!" I answered.
>
> "Indeed, I should have thought a little more. Just a trifle more, I fancy, Watson. And in practice again, I observe. You did not tell me that you intended to go into harness."[76]

Holmes' reserved and casual manner towards a newlywed friend obviously was a bit too aloof. Although the 1903 translation rushes to the main plot with only a brief mention of

[76] Doyle, *Complete* 164.

Holmes' welcome of Watson — "福則遽然迎我，延之上坐" (Unexpectedly, Holmes came up to welcome me, and led me to the best seat),[77] it shows Holmes as more "effusive" and courteous than Doyle intended. In comparison, the 1916 rendition done by Changjue 常覺 and Xiaodie 小蝶 took more liberty to redefine their friendship:[78]

> 則吾友已歡迎而出曰："聞鈴聲，即知為君。君來大佳。"則即引椅令坐。且以雪茄之盒授予，並指桌上啤酒及汽水屬予飲。福之待人，恆落寞。獨於予，則頗異眾，故予恆樂就之。時福已顧予笑曰："華生醫士，久不見君矣。吾聞閨房之中，實有鎖鍵。人而得妻，即如猿猱之被桎梏。君其一也。"言次，復以銳利之目光視予曰："數日不見，何便癡肥乃爾，殆又加重七磅半矣。"予笑應曰："增七磅耳，半則未也。"福因笑曰："徐當以權度之，茲姑勿論。吾但問汝近來又殺幾人乎？"予詫曰："老友，此說作何解？"福初不答，但搓手而笑。頃之始曰："汝今又行醫業，安能免於殺人。"予聞語，則亦笑曰："汝又雅謔矣。……"[79]

> My friend had come to welcome me, saying, "I heard the doorbell and knew it was you. How wonderful that you came!" He took me to a seat, offered me his case of cigars, and indicated beer and mineral water on the table. Holmes was usually emotionally distant to people, but he treated me quite differently. Hence I always enjoyed his company.
>
> Holmes looked at me in smile, "Dr. Watson, I haven't seen you for a while. I heard that the lady's boudoir actually has locks. A married man is like an ape in shackles. You are no exception." Then he looked me over with his piercing eyes, "I haven't seen you for only a few days, but how come you have grown so fat? You must have put on seven and a half pounds."
>
> "Only seven pounds, no extra," I answered with a grin.
>
> Holmes smiles, "I should have you weighed when we have time. Anyway, let me ask you, how many have you killed recently?" In surprise I asked, "What do you mean, my old friend?" At first

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[77] Doyle, *Xu baotan an* 續包探案 [Continued translation of detective cases), trans. Jingcha xuesheng 警察學生 [Police student] (Shanghai: Wenming shuju, 1903) 19.

[78] Changjue and Xiaodie are both pen names. Xiaodie's real name is Chen Dingshan 陳定山 (1897-1987), a renowned writer and painter.

[79] Doyle, "Qing ying," *Fuermosi zhentanan quanji*, Vol. 3, 3. My ellipsis.

> he only smiled and rubbed his hands, but did not reply. After a moment, he explained, “Now you are in practice again, how can you avoid killing people?” I heard his words and laughed, “You are joking again!...”

Here Holmes’ attentive and warm treatment of Watson is in line with the 1903 version. The translators had Holmes express a warm welcome to Watson even through the author says he hardly speaks a word. The original presents Holmes in typical emotional detachment so as to highlight his incisive reasoning that will be shown in the following explanation of how he found out about Watson’s recent moves. The translation, with all the smiles and jokes that were clearly the translators’ improvisations, heightens the male bonding between Holmes and Watson. In fact, China has a long tradition of eulogizing the brotherhood (*yiqi* 義氣) between traditional heroes such as those in *Sanguo yanyi* 三國演義 (Romance of the three kingdoms), *Shui hu zhuan* 水滸傳 (Water margin) or knight-errant fiction. In the literary circle, the friendship between gentlemen is equally greatly appreciated. A more equal relationship and a more polite and amicable detective would greatly endear him to the Chinese reader. Obviously the translators were not fully convinced that emotions would necessarily affect Holmes’ rationality and impartiality. They seemed to appreciate the balance of the two and thought that the detective should have more appeal if he is not only morally impeccable, but also friendly and considerate to his loyal friend.

Such a close and casual companionship can be spotted frequently in early translations done by different translators, indicating a general effort to bring Holmes closer to Chinese readers. Generally speaking, the 1916 collection goes further in softening the image of the detective. In the 1916 translation of “The Crooked Man,”

Holmes is considerate when he requests Watson to accompany him out of the city. He politely asks, "君行所業不虞曠廢乎" (Won't it interrupt your practice),[80] while the original is simply "If you could accompany me in that last step you might be of considerable service to me."[81] His concerns for Watson also show when he stopped in the middle of briefing the case and says, "今君狀似憊，且留其餘詞，俟明晨火車中告汝"（You seem to be tired, I will save the rest to tomorrow when we board the train), [82] which is absent in the original. Upon Watson's insistence, Holmes goes on with the narration, and then takes leave after saying, "吾絮絮語此，沮君好夢，負罪君夫人矣" (I said so much, and kept you up so late, that I must have been a nuisance to your wife).[83] Interestingly, in the original, Holmes stops by and requests to stay at Watson's for the night at the very beginning of the story, before he tells Watson about the case. A deviation like this surely serves a purpose. Holmes' self-centeredness and arrogance may be justifiable, but not commendable in a culture that values modesty and propriety. Hence the translators embroidered the stories with details of Holmes' concerns for his peers and subordinates, to make him more understanding, considerate, and approachable.

Sherlock Holmes and the Law

The early translators, out of a wish to make Holmes a well-balanced modern hero for the Chinese to admire, took liberty to reshape him as less emotionally detached and

[80] Doyle, "Loubei xuanren" 僂背眩人 [Crooked juggler], *Fuermosi zhentanan quanji*, Vol. 6, 85.
[81] Doyle, *Complete* 424.
[82] Doyle, "Loubei xuanren," *Fuermosi zhentanan quanji*, Vol. 6, 91.
[83] Ibid. 95.

machine-like. Similarly, they also made efforts to reduce the tensions and improve the relations between the counseling detective and the police detectives. While his non-official position enables Holmes to criticize the existing legal system and provides an alternative route to justice, if only in imagination, early Chinese translators obviously thought it more relevant to present the Western legal system, which was considered more advanced and worthy to be modeled on, in a more positive light.

Holmes and the police's tension is manifest in *The Sign of Four*. In Chapter Six when Holmes meets police inspector Athelney Jones, the latter takes on a superior air.

> "Here's a business!" he cried in a muffled, husky voice. "Here's a pretty business! But who are all these? Why, the house seems to be as full as a rabbit-warren!"
>
> "I think you must recollect me, Mr. Athelney Jones," said Holmes quietly.
>
> "Why, of course I do!" he wheezed. "It's Mr. Sherlock Holmes, the theorist. Remember you! I'll never forget how you lectured us all on causes and inferences and effects in the Bishopgate jewel case. It's true you set us on the right track; but you'll own now that it was more by good luck than good guidance."
>
> "It was a piece of very simple reasoning."
>
> "Oh, come, now, come! Never be ashamed to own up. But what is all this? Bad business! Bad business! Stern facts here – no room for theories. How lucky that I happened to be out at Norwood over another case! I was at the station when the message arrived. What d'you think the man died of?"
>
> "Oh, this is hardly a case for me to theorize over," said Holmes dryly.
>
> "No, no. Still, we can't deny that you hit the nail on the head sometimes…"[84]

Liu Bannong's translation included in the 1916 collection apparently downplays the tension and rivalry between Holmes and the police. In this version, when Holmes hears the footsteps, he says, "警吏來矣，吾等當退避，勿與爭緝探之功" (The policemen

[84] Doyle, *Complete* 113.

have arrived. We should withdraw, and not compete with them for the credit of detection."[85] When Jones enters the room, the scene is presented this way:

> 包探入室，即發其巨聲狂呼曰："此間肇事矣！此間肇事矣！若輩何人，胡得闌入？此非兔窟，胡得擾擾如畜家兔？
>
> 福爾摩斯悄然應之曰："包探愛生爾內（名）瓊司（姓）先生，胡竟不識下走邪？"
>
> 瓊司一聞其聲，即改容曰："客乃大理想家福爾摩斯先生耶？卑人詎敢弗憶。前於皮旭柏苟寶石一案，深得君助。"
>
> 福曰："前案易如反掌，胡足置念？"
>
> 瓊司曰："此案既得君來，幸亦賜以臂助。頃余別有所事，至上腦胡警署，旋聞屍弟以案情來報，即隨之共來。不意君已先知其事。君既先知，亦能斷定死者何由暴斃邪？"
>
> 福乾笑曰："此事大難，殆不能加以理想。"
>
> 瓊司曰："君弗故作難，君之探案，警闢老辣，乃如以鐵釘釘入人腦，腦雖堅，必力破。……"[86]

> The inspector entered, and immediately yelled at the top of his voice, "Here is a trouble! Here is a trouble! Who are all these? How can you intrude? It is not a rabbit warren. How come it is as if full of rabbits?
>
> "Don't you remember me? Inspector Athelney Jones," responded Holmes softly.
>
> Upon hearing his words, Jones changed his attitude right away, "You are the great theorist Mr. Sherlock Holmes? Why, how can I forget you! We got great help from you in the Bishopgate jewel case."
>
> "It was a very easy case. Not worth mentioning," said Holmes.
>
> Jones said, "Since are you here already, please extend your help to us in this case. Just now I happened to be out at Norwood over another case. I was at the station when the brother of the dead arrived, so I came here with him. I did not expect you had learned of it already. Since you know about it, can you tell what the man died of?"
>
> "Oh, this is very hard. I have not get formed a theory yet," said Holmes with a dry laugh.
>
> Jones insisted, "Please don't pretend that it is difficult. You are an expert detective, and you are so experienced that you can

[85] Doyle, "Fuguo bao" 佛國寶 [Treasure of the Buddhist country], *Fuermosi zhentanan quanji*, Vol. 2, 51.
[86] Ibid. 51.

> solve a tough case as if driving a nail into the human skull. Hard as it is, the nail would nevertheless penetrate it."

Despite obvious errors caused by misunderstanding, this translation almost completely alters the relation between Holmes and Jones. When Jones first appears, the translator makes him put on bureaucratic airs like a domineering Chinese yamen runner. Holmes appears humble before Jones, trying to avoid conflict. Holmes surely commands respect from Jones, who is not only grateful for the service Holmes once offered, but also beseeches his further assistance. The back-and-forth taunting between the two in the original were replaced with mutual compliments.

When Holmes sometimes disregards the law and acts according to his own conscience, early translators would try to rationalize Holmes' choice by resorting to familiar Chinese concepts. A well-known example appears in the 1916 translation of "The Adventure of the Abbey Grange." In the original story, Holmes feels sympathy towards Captain Crocker who fell in love with Lady Brackenstall and killed her abusive husband in self-defense. When he finds out Captain Crocker is the one who killed Sir Brackenstall, instead of reporting him to police, he meets with Crocker in private:

> "Now, look here, Captain Crocker, this is a very serious matter, though I am willing to admit that you acted under the most extreme provocation to which any man could be subjected. I am not sure that in defense of your own life your action will not be pronounced legitimate. However, that is for a British jury to decide. Meanwhile I have so much sympathy for you that, if you choose to disappear in the next twenty-four hours, I will promise you that no one will hinder you."
>
> "And then it will all come out?"
>
> "Certainly it will come out."
>
> The sailor flushed with anger.
>
> "What sort of proposal is that to make a man? I know enough of law to understand that Mary would be held as accomplice. Do

> you think I would leave her alone to face the music while I slunk away? No, sir, let them do their worst upon me, but for heaven's sake, Mr. Holmes, find some way of keeping my poor Mary out of the courts."
>
> Holmes for a second time held out his hand to the sailor.
>
> "I was only testing you, and you ring true every time. Well, it is a great responsibility that I take upon myself, but I have given Hopkins an excellent hint and if he can't avail himself of it I can do no more. See here, Captain Crocker, we'll do this in due form of law. You are the prisoner. Watson, you are a British jury, and I never met a man who was more eminently fitted to represent one. I am the judge. Now, gentleman of the jury, you have heard the evidence. Do you find the prisoner guilty or not guilty?"
>
> "Not guilty, my lord," said I.
>
> "*Vox populi, vox Dei*. You are acquitted, Captain Crocker. So long as the law does not find some other victim you are safe from me. Come back to this lady in a year, and may her future and yours justify us in the judgment which we have pronounced this night!"[87]

The 1916 translation makes significant changes here to the extent that it would be more appropriately called rewriting.

> 福曰："君此舉誠快人意，然而大禍及身亦復可慮。故吾意不如暫避海外，俟稍寢而後歸。特不知君意將以為如何？"
>
> 白路格毅然作色曰："汝欲我儘卸罪於夫人耶？汝意殆以為設捕我，則君此舉為不公。然於君之職務，又不得不盡。故將釋我而捕夫人為一舉兩得之事？可恥哉！此如何事，乃欺侮一婦人。吾寧死不為！"
>
> 福爾摩斯乃第二次握其手曰："密司脫白路格，君誠男子，令我欽佩無已。君為此事，吾必深隱，不為宣暴。非謂行兇之事，可以風世，實以彼勳爵自有取死之道，但英國法律嚴，君此舉雖義，終不能自免於罪。君正年青，奚能以寶貴之光陰，消磨於鐵窗之下？故寧秘之。且吾於哈伯根之前，已嘗指示圭角。彼自不能覺悟，于吾無與。此後但需我一日口不啓者，則彼輩警察，即一日不能加縲紲於君身。華生，取酒來，浮一大白，為我賀此情天之大俠。"
>
> ……

[87] Doyle, *Complete* 776-777.

> 白路格不禁傾倒曰：“君誠匪奚所思矣! 我當轉敬君一大白。”[88]

> Holmes said, “Your action is to my great joy, yet the disaster it would bring to you is to be concerned. In my opinion, you’d better escape overseas for the moment, and return after the trouble has blown over. What do you think?”
>
> “You want me to leave the lady as a scapegoat? You probably think that it is unfair to arrest me. Yet you have to fulfill your responsibility. So you will release me and arrest the lady. Kill two birds with one stone? What a shame! What is it? You are bullying a woman. I would rather die than escape,” says Crocker sternly.
>
> Holmes held his hand the second time and said, “Mr. Crocker, you are truly a man, and I respect you sincerely for that. I will keep your doing a secret and never expose it. It doesn’t mean that murder can be condoned, but Sir Brackenstall deserved death. Even though you acted heroically, you cannot be acquitted under the strict British law. How can a young man like you waste your precious time in jail? So I would rather keep it a secret. After all I have given Hopkins a hint. If he still cannot figure out the truth, then there is nothing I can do. From now on, as long as I do not expose it, the police would never arrest you. Watson, bring the wine. We should drink a toast to the gallant knight of love!”
>
> …
>
> Crocker could not help but admire, “You are indeed incredible! I should toast to you!”

The translators made Holmes much more expressive of his sympathy towards Captain Crocker. Holmes not only justifies the killing of Sir Brackenstall with the Chinese concept of *yi* 義 (righteousness, justice), but also admires him as a *xia* 俠 (knight-errant) — the two traditional concepts in combination would easily evoke the image of a chivalrous outlaw who is always ready to draw his sword to defend the victim at the sight of injustice, regardless of law. In the original, Holmes sets up a private court and asks

[88] Doyle, “Qingtian juesi” 情天决死 [Life and death for love], *Fuermosi zhentanan quanji*, Vol. 9, 122-123. My ellipsis.

Watson to be the jury to exonerate Crocker, reflecting a strong awareness of law even though the legal system in itself is deemed too strict and impersonal. However, this part is completely removed and replaced with the familiar scene of mutual admiration between like-minded knights-errant. In a traditional way, they drink and toast to each other in recognition of a shared code of honor.

If we view the translators' "deviations" in the context of the political agenda of using fiction to enlighten the people, we would better make sense of them. When the elite reformists worked to revamp institutions, they saw detective fiction as a reflection of Western society under the rule of law, and a projection of an ideal China was to emulate. In this regard, the police — a government agency for law enforcement, should reconcile with the sleuth — the projection of justice in popular imagination, in order to work out a promising future for the legal reform of China. Hence we see in translations of the Sherlock Holmes stories, the police can be dumb or arrogant, but they are not corrupt beyond redemption. Some of them, like Inspector Jones in *The Sign of Four*, are even willing to recognize the superiority of Holmes' method and cooperate with him in solving cases. Likewise, Holmes also curbs his suspicion over the institutions of the law and becomes more cooperative and patient towards the police. The moderation of the tension between the institution and the outsider reveals a wish that the legal reform could be carried on through the joint efforts of an authority willing to take advice, and the people willing to cooperate and contribute their wisdom. In recognition of the fact that the rigid law may fail to take into account individual circumstances, as in "The Adventure of the Abbey Grange," translators did not hesitate to justify the private detective's freedom of

choice by borrowing traditional moral concepts, and invoking the tradition of knights-errant.

Through all these cultural negotiations, Holmes becomes more Chinese in early translations. Conditioned by the agenda of fiction for mass education, translators intended the Sherlock Holmes stories to be viewed as a window to showcase the legal practices and democratic awareness of the West. To make the new hero more accessible to Chinese readers, however, translators also took pains to tailor him to better comply with the Chinese cultural and social norms by making him less eccentric and aloof, more understanding and considerate of others, and a morally impeccable justice holder inheriting part of the legacies from the wise judges and chivalrous knights-errant of the old times.

Women in Focus

While it is difficult to remodel the detective into a Chinese hero, it is relatively easy and interesting to reshape the few women figures in the Sherlock Holmes stories. To be sure, women do not take a central position in these stories. With the exception of Irene Adler in "A Scandal in Bohemia," most women make appearances as people in need of help or salvation. Sherlock Holmes is also depicted as a misogynist. Even so, he holds respect for those women with strong characters, even when they are in a position in need of help. Women of strong characters, however, are not common in Chinese literature. When these stories were rendered into Chinese, it seems the early translators found it a rather difficult issue to tackle. More often than not, they let their preconceptions of

women take the upper hand rather than following the original texts closely in their depiction of women. This aspect stands out as one of the most conspicuous changes made by early translators. Before arriving at any generalization, let us first look at a few examples.

In "The Musgrave Ritual," Brunton, a butler of an aristocratic mansion is reported missing. Shortly afterwards, a maid who was once engaged to the butler but was later jilted, also disappears. Sherlock Holmes finds the body of the butler in an abandoned cellar, and envisions the crime scene. In the original, Holmes reconstructs the course of events in his mind, and conjectures that the missing maid, Rachel, is the one who brought death to the man. Here is how he imagines the critical moment when the maid was asked to guard the entrance of the cellar — a heavy slab, while the man went down to explore the "treasury:"

> What smoldering fire of vengeance had suddenly sprung into flame in this passionate Celtic woman's soul when she saw the man who had wronged her — wronged her, perhaps, far more than we suspected — in her power? Was it a chance that the wood had slipped, and that the stone had shut Brunton into what had become his sepulcher? Had she only been guilty of silence as to his fate? Or had some sudden blow from her hand dashed the support away and sent the slab crashing down into its place? Be that as it might, I seemed to see that woman's figure still clutching at her treasure trove and flying wildly up the winding stair, with her ears ringing perhaps with the muffled screams from behind her and with the drumming of frenzied hands against the slab of stone which was choking her faithless lover's life out.[89]

What is noteworthy is, first, Holmes puts surmises in question form quite often. It seems natural as it is a guess made on uncertain grounds. However, when we take into account

[89] Doyle, *Complete* 408.

Holmes' usually self-assured and confident deductions in most stories, these questions caught my attention as nothing but peculiar. The four questions Holmes asks himself show that he does not know for sure what a role Rachel played in the death of Brunton. He is reluctant to proclaim Rachel guilty because it could as well be an accident that the wood slipped and the slab sealed the opening. In a sense, Holmes' resort to the rhetorical device of posing questions instead of deducing a story about what may have happened as he used to do is evident of his unwillingness to blame Rachel for the death of Brunton.

Secondly, the tone of Holmes in this passage is also infused with emotions, which is rare. It is clear Holmes' sympathy is with Rachel — the suspect. If Rachel indeed took revenge on Brunton, Holmes ascribes her murderous act to a fit of anger that "suddenly" seized the "passionate Celtic woman," implying that the murder was not plotted, but a crime of passion. When Holmes says the butler "had wronged her — wronged her, perhaps, far more than we suspected," he tries to excuse Rachel further by pointing out how Brunton must have hurt her. Even though Rachel might be guilty of committing a murder, Brunton was to blame morally for taking advantage of her and deserting her. Holmes even goes so far as to suggest that Rachel might not be responsible for withdrawing the supporting log. Simply put, Holmes tries to excuse Rachel, or at least to justify her act by stressing the wrongdoings Brunton committed in the first place.

Now if we turn to two Chinese translations, we will come to some interesting discoveries. The first translation is included in *Buyi Huasheng baotan an* (1903):

> 婢見(1)泊露吞身處窖內，四圍皆鐵壁，無異鳥之入籠，魚之投網。頓生一念(2)，憶及(3)泊露吞前之相棄，怨恨交集。且疑(4)其近日情好，必系為偽，報復之心，躍躍欲動。轉思(5)抽去諸木，則泊身葬窖中，萬難逃遁。且(6)隱窖藏尸，亦無

> 發覺之虞。于是(7)膽粗氣厲，殺機遽萌。悉力將木抽去，使石復合。藉洩宿憤，懷寶而逃(8)。[90]
>
> The maid saw (1) Brunton in the cellar just like a bird in a cage, or a fish in a net. A thought suddenly occurred to her (2). She recalled (3) how Brunton abandoned her and was full of resentment. She began to doubt (4) if Brunton's change of attitude toward her was a pretense, and was driven by a desire for revenge. She contemplated (5) that if she removed the log, Brunton would be locked in the cellar without a chance of escape. Moreover (6), there would be no risk of exposure for a body hidden in the discarded cellar. With these considerations (7), she was filled with audacity and decided to kill him. She pulled all her strength together to remove the log, and the stone sealed the entrance. She vented her grudges with this act, and ran away with treasure (8).

It is noteworthy that the tone is completely changed in this version. A crime scene is reconstructed, with an emphasis on the mind activity of the suspect. The underlined parts show the reasoning and calculation that must have occupied Rachel's mind before she took action against Brunton. What in the original appears to be a surmise with the sympathy towards the suspect is turned into a judgmental accusation, most conclusively drawn in the last sentence. What is considered an impulsive act of a stereotypical hot-tempered Celtic woman is now recast as a shrewd woman full of murderous schemes. It is also interesting to notice that while the original does not spare thoughts on the possible reactions of Brunton, the translator, however, thinks it necessary to describe Brunton's miserable situation as well. In a word, the translator seemed not in favor of Holmes' sympathy towards the suspect. He chose to present a Holmes more judgmental towards Rachel, and put Rachel unmistakably in the wrong. In line with this strategy, the

[90] Doyle, *Huasheng baotan an* 73. My underlines.

translator touched only lightly on the wrongs Brunton did to Rachel, while detailing Rachel's scheming mindset to make Rachel, not Brunton, the evil one.

The 1916 translation casts Rachel in a similar light:

> 其死也，實蘭卻爾有以致之也。蓋蘭卻爾之於勃勒吞，徒以利和始言歸於好，而秋風團扇之捐固已久懷怨毒，報復之念蘊諸於心正如弩箭在弦，隨機即發。今也勃勒吞身處穴中如墮陷阱，其生命且懸於蘭卻爾之手。蘭卻爾於是時迴憶往事，頓觸舊恨，以為此天假我以大好之時會也，不死此傖無以洩吾憤，因不暇膽顧，急奮力拔木。木去而石合，勃勒吞乃葬身穴中，無復生望矣。蘭卻爾既闔石，疾攜頃間所得珍寶，倉皇遁走。[91]
>
> His death was caused by Rachel. Brunton made peace with her by nothing else but promise of profits, yet Rachel harbored grudge for a long time because of his desertion. Vengeance lurked in her heart just like a bolt on the string, ready to shoot off at the right moment. Now that Brunton was stuck in the cellar as if in a trap, and his life in her hands, Rachel recalled what happened in the past and was overtaken by hatred. She took it as a prefect chance sent by heaven, and she would not be able to vent her anger but to kill him. So she jumped at the chance and hastily withdrew the log. The stone sealed the opening without the support of the log, and Brunton was buried in the cellar with no hope of escape. All this done, Rachel hurriedly grabbed the newly found treasure, and fled in panic.

The translator likewise condemns Rachel in this passage, rather than following the original's sympathetic questionings. Similar to the last translation, it spares no lines on what must have appeared in Rachel's mind, as far as the translator can imagine, before she stroke the blow. The moral ground cannot be mistaken — Rachel is wrong because she committed murder. The translator makes it clear at the very beginning that there is no question about who should be responsible for Brunton's death. Holmes is most certain about it in this version.

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[91] Doyle, "Kuzhong mibao" 窟中秘寶 [Secret treasure in the cellar], *Fuermosi zhentanan quanji*, Vol. 6，49-50.

Now we may wonder why the two Chinese translators went so far as to overhaul this passage and change Holmes' perception of Rachel completely. In my understanding, this may be attributed to the moral stricture of the time — the translators appropriated the text to approximate the stereotypes of women in Chinese literary tradition. Chinese literary reservoir, unfortunately, does not supply many varieties of female characters, due to the limited roles women were allowed to play in traditional Chinese society. They are either models of chastity and female virtues who eventually get rewarded for being virtuous and self-sacrificing, or femmes fatales who are morally corrupt and dangerous, or tragic women who are jilted by men despite their virtues. In general, the female stereotypes in traditional Chinese literature are either the epitome of female virtues, or the opposite, a tempting yet corrupting force that men should be alerted about.

To be sure, deserted women like Rachel are not rare to find in Chinese literature, yet they are often helpless against their fate and rarely resort to violent retaliation as Rachel does in this case. In addition, women who commit violence for being deserted are almost unanimously dismissed in a negative light, however they justify their actions. Against this cultural background, it is understandable that Chinese translators of "The Musgrave Ritual" in the 1900s and 1910s find Rachel, especially Holmes' forgiving attitude toward Rachel, a bit at odds with their moral upbringing.

Taking into consideration the mission of bringing enlightenment to the Chinese people that translated fiction was supposed to fulfill, it is perhaps easier to justify the translators' intentional change of Holmes' attitude towards Rachel. If such a vengeful woman like Rachel could not only walk away unpunished, but also gain Holmes' — the hero of the new age — sympathy, it would possibly send out a wrong message to the

reader, that the one who committed a capital crime like murder can be let loose and that crimes are pardonable if there are ample reasons behind them. Perhaps it is with this gatekeeping mentality that the translators took on the role of censor, and took liberty to revise the text as they saw fit.

Examples showing clashes of cultural ideals concerning women in early translations of Sherlock Holmes are by no means limited to the above-discussed passage. "A Scandal in Bohemia" gives a peculiar example of the extent women, as well as Holmes' opinion of them, can change across cultures. This story is often taken as an important piece to the understanding of Holmes' view on Women. It begins with Watson's statement that Holmes has an aversion to women, which makes his high esteem of Irene Adler quite peculiar. As the only woman ever outplaying Holmes, Adler is a woman of strong character. She is intelligent, resolute, and "has a soul of steel… and the mind of the most resolute of men," according to her former lover, the King of Bohemia.[92] Indeed, what marks Irene Adler out as "the woman" in Holmes' opinion is her intellect and resolution, which make her more like a man than a woman. There are many instances where Adler exemplifies these characters in the story. For example, she stays calm and acts promptly when she finds out she is set up by Holmes to reveal the hiding place of the photograph. She exits the room, asks the groom to watch Holmes closely, goes upstairs to get cross-dressed as a young man, follows Holmes to his apartment at Baker St. and even calls Holmes to confirm his identity. Her resolution to let go of the past and embrace a new life also places her in a position in control, compared to the miserable life of many women so deserted. Therefore it is not unusual for this conversation to take place toward

[92] Doyle, *Complete* 168.

the end of the story when Holmes, Watson and the King arrive at Adler's house only to find her gone:

> "What a woman — oh, what a woman!" cried the king of Bohemia, when we had all three read this epistle. "Did I not tell you how quick and resolute she was? Would she not have made an admirable queen? Is it not a pity that she was not on my level?"
>
> "From what I have seen of the lady she seems indeed to be on a very different level to your Majesty," said Holmes coldly. [93]

Now when we shift attention to the first two translations of this story in Chinese, we would see how the unruly woman was harnessed, and Holmes' regard for this woman of character subdued. The above conversation was completely erased from the first Chinese translation entitled "Bahaimiao wang zhaoxiangpian" 跋海渺王照像片 (Photograph of the king of Bohemia, 1903), which indeed deletes most details about Adler and shapes her more like a gentle lady rather than a "dangerous" woman. When the King tells Holmes about how Adler blackmails him with the photograph in the original story, in this translation the king sounds nostalgic about the days they spent together and never speaks of her strong character. While Holmes dresses up as a clergyman, stages a scuffle and pretends to be injured right in front of Adler's house, Adler is morally obliged to let him into her house to be treated. This translation, however, makes her a caring lady who inquires about the "injured" clergyman and offers to take him in of her own accord.[94] Most notable is the fact that this version never mentions Holmes' high opinion of Adler

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[93] Doyle, *Complete* 177.

[94] The translation is "美婦急趨入，呼曰：'此人之傷重乎，毋任其睡地上，可輿入客堂置榻上'" （The beautiful lady hurried into the room and cried, "He is so badly injured! Don't let him lie on the ground. Lift him to the sitting room and place him on the couch.") (Doyle, *Xu baotan an* 25). The corresponding part in "A Scandal in Bohemia" reads, "'He can't lie in the street. May we bring him in, marm?' 'Surely. Bring him into the sitting-room. There is a comfortable sofa. This way, please!" (Doyle, *Complete* 174).

and it ends with a dismissive exclamation, “不想數年老保探竟失刃於婦人焉！” (Quite unexpectedly, a woman gets the upper hand of an experienced detective).[95] Indeed this version depicts Irene Adler more as a gentle, harmless woman who, out of despair, tries to use the photograph to prevent her lover’s engagement to another woman. Her hasty marriage and departure seem an escape from the old shadows, and her triumph over Holmes is purely incidental.

If this translation gives us a domesticated, tamed Irene Adler, another translation produced 13 years later presents a “femme fatale” whom the King of Bohemia is wise to leave behind. The story now has a new title “Qing ying” 情影 (Photograph of lovers), and the translators were Changjue 常覺 and Xiaodie 小蝶, both writers of the Mandarin Ducks and Butterflies school. The translation of the conversation between the King and Holmes follows like this:

> 福讀已，王即呼曰：“如何，吾固謂薏倫之為人實巾幗中之鬚眉也。其行事往往不可測。向使彼人之身生於貴族，為予王后者，豈獨不能為萬幾之助。惜其出身微賤，而尤病在所愛不專。”福曰：“陛下毋贊其能。今彼已攜陛下小影去，將奈何？”[96]
>
> After Holmes read the epistle, the King of Bohemia cried, “Wow, I told you Irene as a woman was no less than men! Her actions were always unpredictable. If she were aristocratic and became my queen, would she not have been a great help to me? What a pity that she was of humble birth, and too bad she is not a faithful woman.” Holmes said, “Don’t admire her abilities, your Majesty. Now that she has left with your photograph, what can we do about it?”

The underlined parts, inserted by the translator, show the wide divergence of opinion concerning Irene Adler. The moral stricture on Adler, absent from the original story

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[95] Doyle, *Xu baotan an* 27.
[96] Doyle, *Fuermosi zhentanan quanji*, Vol. 3, 23. My underlines.

despite her blackmailing act, was considered necessary by the translators, and they were harsh in their criticism of her morality. By labeling Adler unfaithful, the translators absolved the King from the blame of deserting Adler, which is indicated in the original. And indeed, they might share the King's disdain for Adler's origin and profession when they repeated her humble birth and made her a stereotypical sing-song girl who is beautiful, intelligent, yet morally loose. Entertainers, female or male, had an extremely low social status in China until the mid-twentieth century. The translators carried this culturally-specific prejudice against sing-song girls when they brought Irene Adler across culture. While this version stays much closer to the original compared with the last translation, it likewise alters the image of Irene Adler and consequently Holmes' opinion of her.

The translators of both versions tried to discredit Adler's capabilities and thus reduced her impact on Holmes. In the original Holmes shows more respect to Adler than to the King when he comments they are not of the same level. Holmes' disregard of the authority is dismissed in both translations. The detective who values the ability and character of people was changed into one submissive to higher social rank. The first version goes further than the second in this respect because it glosses over all negative presentations of the King and Holmes' contempt for authority. Translators of the second version, though retaining some details about Holmes' disrespect of the King, obviously did not approve of Holmes' elevation of Adler above the King when they made Holmes cut short the King's admiration and regret for Adler and divert his attention to the aborted task of recovering the photograph.

A conclusion can be derived from the above observation that Chinese translators actively engaged in interpretation, adaptation or even rewriting of the story in their translation practices. The intentional transformation of Irene Adler reveals personal and cultural preferences and prejudices regarding the role of women. Be it Rachel, the deserted and wronged woman who takes revenge into her own hand, or Irene Adler who is strong and intelligent enough to outwit all the men in the story, they were measured against the social conventions of the day for women in China and their departure from the norm must be removed or reduced in order to be more admissible to readers.

In fact, not only "unconventional" behavior or personalities of women were largely pruned, but their looks often need to be changed. Eva Hung observes that appearances of women in these stories are often changed to appeal to the Chinese tastes in early translations.[97] While appearances of women are culturally coded in the English context and are directly related to their characters, such descriptions if brought faithfully into the Chinese context would lose its connection with characters. Many Chinese translators, for this reason or not, opted to change their appearances to Chinese stereotypical descriptions, yet oftentimes, the appearances favored by the Chinese suggest a feminine beauty that is frail and meek, a far cry from the strong-willed ladies favored by Doyle. In general, the strong-willed ladies were not the norm in China. Even though elites felt keenly the need of bringing into shape the new Chinese citizen, for the women they emphasized more the need for education, not their independent will.

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[97] Eva Hung, "Wanqing fanyi xiaoshuo zhong de funü xingiang" 晚清翻譯小說中的婦女形象 [Women in late-Qing translated fiction], *Zhongwai bijiao wenxue* 中外比較文學 [Comparative literature in China] 2 (1998), 71-87.

III. Conclusion

This chapter shows how translated fiction, particularly detective fiction, was envisioned and promoted as a vehicle of new knowledge for the education of the populace, and participated in the late-Qing and early-Republican reformist discourse. As Eva Hung emphasizes in her article "Giving Texts a Context," it is necessary to restore these early translations to their context to make sense of the translators' manipulations of the texts, many of which would be deemed unacceptable according to today's standard. Although it remains debatable whether fiction was a fit choice for the dissemination of popular knowledge and how well it fulfilled the mission, the facts that translating fiction for educational purpose was a well-accepted slogan and that the ensuing boom of translated detective fiction exerted considerable influence on Chinese fiction make it a phenomenon worth studying.

Rather than arguing for the aesthetic value of detective fiction, which has been the topic of several scholarly works, this chapter emphasizes the agency of early translators to appropriate the foreign genre and the foreign hero to the Chinese context. The many efforts to embellish the Western legal system, the democratic spirit, the scientific knowledge and methods went hand in hand with the recognition that the modern hero and the modern vision detective fiction presents can only be truly appreciated by contemporary readers with a touch of the familiar. In other words, the early translators sought to combine the best of the two worlds in their translation projects. They enriched the modern detective with Chinese sensibilities, and moral characters reminiscent of the incorruptible wise judges or gallant knights-errant of Chinese tradition. They also tailored

other characters, most noticeably female characters, to conform to the Chinese cultural norms. When the call for detective fiction more pertinent to Chinese reality was on the rise, we would see the first attempt at creating native detective fiction in the late 1900s, and its full blossoming in the 1920s.

Chapter Two

The Fiction of Modern Life:

Accommodating the Experience of the Modern

> The first essential value of the detective story lies in this, that it is the earliest and only form of popular literature in which is expressed some sense of the poetry of modern life.
>
> — G. K. Chesterton
> "A Defense of Detective Stories"[1]

G. K. Chesterton (1874-1936), the English writer who created the priest-detective Father Brown, was one of the first to recognize and extoll the close affiliation of detective fiction and the modern urban experience. Detectives in his opinion are modern equivalent of epic heroes who travel across the wild and ominous modern cities in search of the truth. Sherlock Holmes, for example, exemplifies the valued qualities of an urban explorer, a puzzle solver, a restorer of social order, and an embodiment of scientific rationalism. Indeed, it was not an accident that detective fiction first came into being in the post-industrial America, Britain and France where modernization and urbanization were in full swing in the nineteenth centuries.

From its inception, detective fiction has been a product of modernity, urbanity, and rationality. One may ask, did its importation and reproduction in China testify to the presence of modernization and urbanization processes that were at once similar to and different from the Western experience? How did it reflect the concerns, anxieties and

[1] G. K. Chesterton, "A Defense of Detective Stories," *The Art of the Mystery Story*, ed. Howard Haycraft (New York: Universal Library, 1946) 4.

expectations of the people in a modernizing China? These are some of the central questions to address here. The previous chapter offers a glimpse into how the Chinese translators, while eagerly introducing detective fiction as a vehicle for national renovation, either deliberately or inadvertently tailored it according to their own values. This chapter will take a step further to probe how the urban milieu not only prepared and conditioned the germination of detective fiction in Chinese soil, but also made a strong presence in the stories, reflecting the promises and woes associated with modernization.

The earliest Chinese detective fiction emerged shortly in the wake of the debut of translated detective stories, and established itself solidly as a genre in the early Chinese literary magazines published in the 1900s. Many literary magazines, including the pioneering *Xin xiaoshuo* (New fiction) and *Yueyue xiaoshuo* (All-story monthly), featured a dedicated column of detective stories. While translations still accounted for roughly half of the detective stories in these magazines, native works began to populate them, making the first decade a transitional time for Chinese detective fiction.

If in the first stage of its introduction, detective fiction was a novelty saddled with a political agenda, its transplantation in China obviously called for more supports than the endorsements of the reform-minded elites. Admittedly, the fascinating theme of crime and detection, and its innovative narrative style held a sway and endeared itself to the contemporary Chinese reader.[2] This chapter, however, will focus on the social and historical conditions that facilitated its establishment in China. In David Wang's words, "[T]he emergence of cities and urban culture, the burgeoning of a printing industry, the

[2] Scholars such as Chen Pingyuan have discussed thoroughly the aesthetic and narrative appeals of this genre to the Chinese reader, and its influence on the transformation of modern Chinese fiction in their books. See Chen Pingyuan, *Zhongguo xiaoshuo xushi moshi.*

mushrooming of public media such as newspapers and magazines, and the increasing demand for a literature for public entertainment, all contributed to a new popular reading culture."[3] With first a survey of the material factors that conditioned the cultural and social environment of detective fiction, followed by an examination of the textual representation of modern urban experiences, I argue that detective fiction, as a specimen of popular literature and a fiction of modern life, reflects and projects the experiences, anxieties, expectations and imaginations of the modern by the urbanites. Targeted to and welcomed by the so-called "petty urbanites," detective fiction departs from the New Culture iconoclastic modernity by its gentle, gradual, eclectic and sometimes ambivalent attitude towards modernization.

On the one hand, due to its Western origin, its role in the late-Qing reformist agenda, and the influence of the New Culture Movement, detective fiction seems to be a candid celebration of the modern advances. Its promotion of Western learning and ideas such as science and the rule of law is unswerving. On the other hand, such promotions are not unconditional. Concerned with the overwhelming impact of modern material culture, writers shared with many urbanites their worries about the overall dismissal of tradition, and the resulting moral decay. Through story setting, plotline, asides, and characterization, detective writers conveyed the idea that tradition should be selectively preserved along with the adoption of western learning in their envisioning of modern China.

Specifically, this chapter starts with a comparison of the modern conditions that gave rise to detective fiction in the West and in China, in order to show the intimacy of

[3] Wang, "Chinese Literature" 441.

this genre and modernization. Next it will address the question how Chinese detective fiction responds to the anxieties associated with modernization by constructing a world in which the familiar reconciles with the foreign. Chinese detective fiction in general affirms the significance of adopting western learning to navigate the modern challenges, redefines the city dwellers' position in the modern world, and promises the attainment of security and order in the rapidly changing modern world as a wish fulfillment. It does not glorify science and other branches of western learning as a panacea to all problems, though. Rather, it seeks to preserve some of the Chinese tradition as an antidote to the overly materialist tendency often attributed to the Western influence.

I. The Poetry of Modern Life

As Chesterton so enthusiastically hails in "A Defense of Detective Stories," this genre as "the poetry of modern life" is a product of the modern age. It may be confusing as to what he means by this phrase, but further reading through the essay indicates that Chesterton considers detective fiction a "rude, popular literature of the romantic possibilities of the modern city," which, different from nature — the age-old topic of literature, is a "chaos of conscious ones [forces]."[4] In other words, Chesterton recognizes the new genre's ability to capture contemporary changes readers experienced in a rapidly urbanizing world. Hence it is necessary to restore detective fiction to its historical and social contexts and examine to what extent detective fiction is a product, as well as a reflection, of the modern age. The following survey will cover the factors crucial to the

[4] Chesterton 4.

rise of detective fiction in the West and in China: urbanization and growth of urban population, proliferation of print culture, and commercialization of literary production and consumption.

Urbanization and the Rise of Detective Fiction

Let us take a detour to the first of its type, Edgar Allan Poe's "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" (1841), at the outset of exploring the bygone age. Poe's trendsetting detective stories have Paris as the locale,[5] which is, in Poe's description, dark and enigmatic. Here C. Auguste Dupin, a gentleman of leisure, solves mysteries by keenly observing the urban environment and its dwellers, and exercising ratiocination. In "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," the anonymous narrator recounts his acquaintance with Dupin and how he displays a talent for mystery solving in the murder case of Madame L'Espanaye and her daughter. The metropolis, as the setting of the crime, is significant. Similar to a "flâneur" in Walter Benjamin's word, Dupin is fascinated with Paris, especially Paris at late night:

> Then we sallied forth into the streets, arm and arm, continuing the topics of the day, or roaming far and wide until a late hour, seeking, amid the wild lights and shadows of the populous city, that infinity of mental excitement which quiet conversation can afford.[6]

[5] Allan Poe published "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" in 1841, "The Mystery of Marie Rogêt" in 1843 and "The Purloined Letter" in 1844. These early pieces are now recognized as the founding blocks of this genre.
[6] Edgar Allan Poe, *The Murders in the Rue Morgue and Other Stories* (New York: Worthington, 1887) 5.

Though leading a secluded life, Dupin and the narrator nonetheless enjoy exploring the myriad secrets of the city under the cover of darkness. The "populous city," Paris, at night, is never at peace, of course. Soon a murder case is revealed, which can be summarized in a few words: Around three o'clock in the morning, terrible shrieks arouse neighbors of a house in the Rue Morgue and upon their hurried arrival, the two occupants of the house, a mother and her daughter, are found brutally murdered and their bodies mutilated. Several individuals are examined, and they disclose some clues pertinent to the murder, among which some details are of particular interest to the revelation of the "metropolitan" nature of the murder case.

First, it is reported by those in contact with the old lady and her daughter that they led a very retired life, and little is known about them except that they were well-off. Even neighbors who grew up in the neighborhood cannot provide more information about them. Obviously, city dwellers live in close proximity, but the community now consisted so predominantly of strangers that the tightly-knit communal life typical of villages and towns is lost. People with different backgrounds may live in the same neighborhood, yet they are barely known to each other.

Second, according to some "witnesses," strange voices were heard when they broke into the house, and different people, some of foreign nationalities, identified the language as French, Italian, Spanish, German, English, or Russian:

> But in regard to the shrill voice, the peculiarity is not that they disagreed — but that, while an Italian, an Englishman, a Spaniard, a Hollander, and a Frenchman attempted to describe it, each one spoke of it as that of a foreigner. Each is sure that it was not the voice of one of his own countrymen. Each likens it — not to the voice of an individual of any nation with whose language he is

> conversant — but the converse. The Frenchman supposes it the voice of a Spaniard, and "might have distinguished some words had he been acquainted with the Spanish." The Dutchman maintains it to have been that of a Frenchman; but we find it stated that "not understanding French this witness was examined through an interpreter." The Englishman thinks it the voice of a German, and "does not understand German." … Now, how strangely unusual must that voice have really been, about which such testimony as this could have been elicited! — in whose tones, even, denizens of the five great divisions of Europe could recognize nothing familiar! You will say that it might have been the voice of an Asiatic — of an African.[7]

It is interesting to notice witnesses often confess that they have never heard of, or have little exposure of a certain language, and yet they claim the voice they heard spoke that language. It is a significant detail because it is only in a metropolitan and cosmopolitan urban space that people from different origins live closely in the same neighborhood, yet know little of each other's background. Physical proximity does not guarantee a sense of security. On the contrary, people feel unsafe in the urban space, surrounded by all the "others" — foreigners, people of unknown background, etc., and they tend to assign the cause of disorder to the unknown others. This offers a glimpse of how Poe's innovative detective story captures the "terrors of the urban abyss."

Poe's representation of the growing city as an "urban abyss" is a typical conception of the city in the nineteenth century. The mushrooming and expanding cities emerged as an aftermath of the Industrial Revolution. With large factories set up in the cities and rising demand for workers, there was a steady population shift from rural to urban areas. By 1850 in Britain, the urban population outnumbered the rural for the first time in history, and London grew from a population of two million in 1840 to five

[7] Poe 19. My ellipsis.

million forty years later.[8] City dwellers were confronted with a new pattern of settlement, wherein they shared the urban space with people coming from diverse areas, and speaking different dialects or languages. Daily encounter with strangers became a norm, while the intimate and familiar communal life they used to lead in villages or countryside became a past. The estrangement and suspicion characteristic of urban interpersonal relationship is evident in Poe's caricature of the "witnesses" above.

Along with rapid urbanization and population growth came social changes, among which was a rapid increase in crime resulting from poverty, unemployment and overcrowding.[9] The rising middle class, benefitted from the new wealth, desired to protect their growing commercial and industrial interest amidst rising crime and disorder. They pushed forward political reforms, including the establishment of centralized police forces. In England, the Metropolitan Police was implemented in 1829, and the U.S. followed suit to establish new policing systems in the 1830s and 1840s, signaling a new level of state surveillance and social control.

The impact of industrialization and urbanization reached the cultural domain as well. Revolutionized print production and improved distribution made the massive expansion of the publications possible. Newspapers, periodicals and books were printed and sold cheaply for public consumption, fostering a sense of community among readers. Wider schooling and increased literacy rate made everyone a potential reader of print by

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[8] E. J. Hobsbawm, *Industry and Empire: The Making of Modern English Society, 1750 to the Present Day* (New York: Penguin, 1983) 159.
[9] Richard D. Fitzgerald, "The Social Impact of the Industrial Revolution," *Science and Its Times: Understanding the Social Significance of Scientific Discovery*, ed. Josh Lauer and Neil Schlager, Vol. 4 (Detroit: Gale, 2000) 376-381.

the end of the nineteenth century.[10] All this paved the way for the boom of popular literature. The advent and prominence of detective fiction was a special response to the demand for a literary genre that can give expression and relief to the anxieties of the urban experience.

Together with the spur of modern life, the fascination with crime — an age-old theme for literature — certainly contributes to the popularity of detective fiction. However, with a high incidence of crime in the overcrowding urban space, and the middle-class attention to the security of private property, it is no wonder that the hero of this new genre is now the detective, instead of the criminal, and the focus is now on the detection of crime, rather than on crime and punishment.[11] Most classic detective fiction before 1930s deals with clients with upper or middle class background about cases of murder or theft, two most upsetting transgressions against them. In a sense, the success of the early detective stories can be attributed to a desire for social and epistemological order, a desire to find a sense of security and order in this "urban abyss" or urban jungle, through the reassuring hero — the detective.

The Urban Landscape in Modern China: Shanghai in Focus

The relationship between the rise of popular literature and the spread of the industrial revolution in an international context has long been observed by scholars. For example, Perry Link points out "modern-style entertainment fiction…has…consistently

[10] See Kate Flint, "The Victorian Novel and Its Readers," *The Cambridge Companion to the Victorian Novel*, ed. Deirdre David (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2012) 13-35.
[11] See Christopher Pittard, "Victorian Detective Fiction: An Introduction," *Crimeculture.com*.

appeared in tandem with industrialism around the world," citing the boom of translated and imitated popular fiction in Japan of the 1870s and 1880s and Shanghai of the early twentieth century as examples.[12]

The Chinese quest for modernity began as a response to foreign incursions, and changes such as urbanization, expansion of urban population, growing printing industry, and the commodification of popular culture were all associated with the Chinese pursuit of wealth and power in an unfavorable international power relation. These changes, however, were conducive to the development of Chinese detective fiction. In turn, detective fiction gained prominence because of its ability to capture and represent the modern urban experience in China.

The rise of detective fiction, or popular literature in general, cannot be viewed in isolation from the urbanization process China underwent since the second half of the nineteenth century. It is the expansion of modern cities and the many changes associated with this process that made the boom of Chinese detective fiction possible, and naturally modern cities and their dwellers also made their ubiquitous presence in the stories.

The emergence of modern cities in China was, in the first place, due to the insistent attempts of the foreign countries to open China up for commerce and trade. There were quite a few cities before the foreign intervention, for sure, but most were either seats of national or regional governments, like Beijing, or centers of traditional industry like Suzhou, or transportation hubs like Guangzhou. None of them were like the modern cities developed in the industrial West as a result of the growth of modern industry. Since the mid-nineteenth century with the opening up of the port cities under

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[12] Link, *Mandarin Ducks* 8-9.

the unequal treaties, however, modern cities gradually came into being. The best example is Shanghai, the locale accounting for most of the production and consumption of popular literature in the first half of the twentieth century.

The growth of Shanghai was in many ways representative of the "modernization" of China. Originally a county town with a population of 270,000, [13] Shanghai's economic and trade potential was recognized by the West and its doors were flung open through unequal treaties in the mid-nineteenth century. The establishment of foreign concessions played an indispensable role in speeding up the urbanization and modernization of Shanghai.[14] While the extraterritoriality of the Shanghai International Concession and French Concession violated the autonomy of Chinese sovereign, the foreign powers stimulated the growth of commerce in Shanghai. In less than two decades, Shanghai replaced Suzhou as the largest trade center for the country,[15] and soon became the major industrial, financial, and transportation center as well.[16]

With the earliest-established and largest foreign settlements, Shanghai, the principal gateway to China, experienced a full-scale confrontation with the West at the local level. Besides foreign business and industry that led to a changeover in the nature

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[13] Different sources have varying estimates of Shanghai's population around 1843, the year it was opened up as one of the five earliest treaty ports in China. Robert Fortune estimates a population of 270,000 in 1843 (104), whereas Zou Yiren estimates over 540,000 people living in Shanghai county and the outskirts in 1852 (91).

[14] The British settlement was the first settle in Shanghai for foreigners, established in 1843 under the Treaty of Nanking. The American settlement and French Concession were defined in 1848 and 1849 respectively. The British and American settlements merged to form the International Settlement in 1863. Foreign concessions were abolished in 1943.

[15] Suzhou was the largest commercial and industrial city in the Jiangnan area before Shanghai's growth. See Li Bozhong 李伯重, *Jiangnan de zaoqi gongyehua (1550-1850)* 江南的早期工業化（1550-1850） [Jiangnan's early industrialization: 1550-1850], Rev. ed (Beijing: Zhongguo renmin daxue chubanshe, 2010).

[16] Li Honghua 李洪華, *Shanghai wenhua yu xiandaipai wenxue* 上海文化與現代派文學 [Shanghai culture and modernist literature] (Taipei: Xiuwei chubanshe, 2008) 21-22.

and function of the city, the foreign concessions also became a window to showcase the material achievements of the post-industrial West, with its "well-paved streets, skyscrapers, luxurious hotels and clubs, trains, buses and motors, and much electricity."[17] The expansion and population growth of the foreign concessions expedited the clash and fusion of cultures, and the Chinese in or out of the concessions readily adopted many of the western imports. Similarly, modern lifestyle brought about by foreigners spread well beyond the concessions. Leo Lee in his pioneering study *Shanghai Modern: The Flowering of a New Urban Culture in China, 1930–1945* identified western places like hotels, department stores, coffeehouses, cinemas, dance halls, public parks and the race clubs in his discussion of Shanghai's urban culture. Chinese scholars such as Xiong Yuezhi also mentioned the adoption of modern conveniences and policies across the boundaries of the foreign concessions by the Chinese, including electric lights, telephone, running water, and the democratic system of majority rule. He concludes, "With the establishment of the foreign concessions, the Westerners not only brought from their home countries household implements, but also their social systems, lifestyles and ethics. Consequently, Chinese and Western cultures coexisted, communicated, and blended peacefully through practice."[18]

A mercantile society quickly emerged in Shanghai with an abundance of foreign and domestic industry and commerce. Shanghai's domestic industry held forty percent of the industrial capital of the country in 1933, and its factories and workers accounted for

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[17] *All about Shanghai* 1.

[18] Xiong Yuezhi 熊月之, "Shanghai zujie yu wenhua ronghe" 上海租界與文化融合 [Foreign concessions and cultural fusion in Shanghai], *Xueshu yuekan* 學術月刊 [Academic monthly] 5 (2002), 58.

half of the national totals in 1948.[19] The boom of industry and commerce caused a huge influx of population from nearby areas and hinterland. Its population skyrocketed from 540,000 in 1852 to 1.3 million in 1910, and over 3 million in the 1930s, making it the fifth largest city in the world.[20] By 1949, about eighty-five percent of Shanghai population were immigrants from other regions. They came to Shanghai either as refugees of wars or disasters, or for employment and livelihood. Most of the immigrants came from Jiangnan area, including Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces, the most productive and prosperous areas of China since the Song dynasty. They belonged to different social strata, and brought with them capital, talent, labor, and willingness to adapt to the new setting.

Growing presence of the West, fast industrialization, and the surge of immigrants in a relatively brief time definitely created many social issues, such as high unemployment rate and rising crime rate. Frederic Wakeman, author of *Policing Shanghai 1927-1937*, notices the "statistically confirmed disorder and criminality" in the 1920s, citing the almost tenfold increase of armed robberies from 1922 to 1926 in the International Settlement, and an eightfold increase of crimes recorded in greater Shanghai from 1927 to 1930.[21] The upsurge of disorder and criminality was caused by warlordism across China, radical strike mobilization against foreign privileges, or "a general lack of social order associated with urban commerce and industry, or with Shanghai's position as

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[19] Xiong Yuezhi , "*Shanghai tongshi* zongxu" 《上海通史》總序 [Preface to *General History of Shanghai*], *Xueshu yuekan* 學術月刊 [Academic monthly] 5 (1999), 80.
[20] See Yang Jianlong 楊劍龍, "Lun Shanghai wenhua yu ershi shiji Zhongguo wenxue" 論上海文化與二十世紀中國文學 [On Shanghai culture and twentieth-century Chinese literature], *Wenxue pinglun* 文學評論 [Literary review] 6 (2006), 169; Zou 114.
[21] Frederic Wakeman, Jr. *Policing Shanghai, 1927-1937* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1995) 6-7.

a semi-colonial treaty port."[22] Shanghai not only attracted people for the opportunities it offered, but also posed a series of threats closely linked to urbanization and modernization.

Among all the residents and immigrants of Shanghai, the potential readers of popular literature were the so-called "petty urbanites" (*xiao shimin* 小市民). Perry Link, author of the groundbreaking work on modern popular fiction *Mandarin Ducks and Butterflies* points out that petty urbanites, a term "taken to include small merchants, various kinds of clerks and secretaries, high school students, housewives, and other modestly educated, marginally well off urbanites," were the main readers of the so-called butterfly literature in the twenties and thirties.[23] Hanchao Lu in *Beyond the Neon Lights: Everyday Shanghai in the Early Twentieth Century* proposes an explication of this term not so much as occupationally defined, but as community based. He points out the connection between the petty urbanites with *shikumen* houses.

> [T]he image of "petty urbanite" carries implications for social rank based on community, and it is the residential community that is being emphasized. When people used the term, the first thing that came to mind was usually a type of person whose outlook was limited by the community in which he or she lived. In modern Shanghai, the *xiaoshimin* were identified with a type of residence known as the *shikumen* house.[24]

Shikumen 石庫門, meaning "stone-framed door" literally, is a style of housing unique to Shanghai that blends Western townhouse with the traditional residence of the South. It emerged in the foreign concessions to accommodate growing population of Chinese

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[22] Ibid. 8.
[23] Link, *Mandarin Ducks* 5-7.
[24] Hanchao Lu, *Beyond the Neon Lights: Everyday Shanghai in the Early Twentieth Century* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1999) 63.

refugees from the Taiping Rebellion (*taiping tianguo* 太平天國, 1850-1864) in the late nineteenth century. It was at first for the well-to-do families, but was later downsized and became the primary residence of middle and lower-middle-class people. According to Lu, about forty percent of the Shanghai population in the 1930s are clerks (*zhiyuan* 職員), a major constituent of the petty urbanites including office workers, clerks, shop assistants, and other service personnel.[25]

With a relatively high literacy rate of over eighty percent among men and over sixty percent among women in the early twentieth century, and the already common Sunday breaks among wage-earners by then,[26] there was a need for pastime, or entertainment. Fan Boqun summarizes the reason the petty urbanites became the major audience of popular fiction. In his opinion, popular fiction was foremost an affordable, low-cost entertainment. People found reading popular fiction relaxing enough, a good practice to while away their leisure time. They could also find their likes and the life they were familiar with in these stories. As a source of information, they guided newcomers on how to settle down and how to avoid being bullied or duped in Shanghai. In Fan's apt words, popular fiction "is a practical textbook to help the immigrants transition from being villagers to urbanites. Besides cautioning them from being fooled, it plays a more crucial role of informing them of the differences between the life in modern cities and the life in rural villages."[27]

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[25] Ibid.

[26] Min Jie 閔傑, "Xingqiri gongxiu zhidu de shixing" 星期日公休制度的實行 [The implementation of the Sunday break system], *Qingshi jingjian* 清史鏡鑑 [The mirror of Qing history], Vol. 2.

[27] Fan Boqun, "Cong 'tingzijian zuojia' yu 'fengjian xiaoshimin' de guanxi tanqi" 從"亭子間作家"與"封建小市民"的關係談起 [On the relationship between "pavilion-room writers" and "feudalistic petty urbanites"], *Jiangsu daxue xuebao* 江蘇大學學報 [Journal of Jiangsu University] 1 (2009).

Regarding the affinity between Shanghai, its dwellers, and the rise of popular fiction, Tang Zhesheng makes the following observation:

> Popular fiction represents what people saw, heard, and felt in their Shanghai experiences of gold-digging, leisure, and recreation. It not only shows a discontent towards the foreign dominance of Chinese economy, but also elaborates with pride on Shanghai's social customs, behavior and spending patterns. When authors incessantly lamented Shanghai as a "big dye vat," they also admired their spirit of innovation and pursuit of personal interests. In a sense, Chinese popular fiction contains a truthful record of Shanghai's transformation. It keeps an account of the major changes and historical events in Shanghai's history, archives the changes of its social customs, and reflects the mentalities of the Shanghai people. The Shanghai urbanites showed enormous enthusiasm towards these popular stories, because the plots mimicked their life closely, in which they saw their reflections one way or another. Moreover, these stories cater to the urbanites' reading taste. With their attention to entertainment, leisure or novelty, they provided a relief to readers stressed out under social competition. They also worked as recreation guidebooks. Of course, their satire and criticism also reminded readers of the rules for ethical conduct deep in their hearts.[28]

Tang explains the reason Shanghai became the center of production and consumption for popular fiction by referring to its unique social and cultural environments.

Compared with the urbanization process in the West, Shanghai distinguishes itself by being a peculiar amalgam of foreign dominance and prevalent Chinese presence. The Qing-controlled district coexisted with the International Concession and the French Concession, with three sets of administrations, three judicial systems, and three policing systems.[29] The Chinese immigrants pledged dual loyalty to their hometown and Shanghai:

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[28] Tang, *Zhongguo xiandai* 15.

[29] During the late-Qing and Republican era, the International Settlement was governed by the Municipal Council, the French Concession was ruled by the Municipal Administrative Council, and other areas were ruled by Shanghai County Government. Consular courts coexisted with Chinese courts. In addition, mixed courts functioned in the concessions for Chinese and foreigners without extraterritorial rights. Concessions

various native-place organizations were primary media to facilitate the immigrants' adaptation to the life in Shanghai. In a country with about ninety percent of population in rural areas,[30] Shanghai truly provided an arena where the traditional and the local clashed and blended with the newest and the cosmopolitan. Rhoads Murphey notes in *Shanghai: Key to Modern China* that

> Shanghai and the pattern of its development during the past century have been modern Chine in microcosm. In the city China for the first time learned and absorbed the lessons of extraterritoriality, gun-boat diplomacy, foreign "concessions," and the aggressive spirit of nineteenth century Europe. There more than anywhere else the two civilizations came together: the rational, legal-minded, scientific, industrialized, efficient, expansionist West, and traditional, intuitive, humanist, agrarian, inefficient, seclusionist China.[31]

If plurality and hybridity characterize urban culture everywhere, Shanghai perhaps displays it more prominently than the Western cities because the confrontations of the local and the West, the rural and the urban, the traditional and the modern happened over a short span of time in response to foreign aggression.[32]

Shanghai, with its multiple aliases such as "Paris of the East," the "city that never sleeps," or the "modern metropolis" of China, provided a unique setting for the rise of Chinese detective fiction. Its speeding urbanization, modernization, and population growth soon turned it into a replica of the "urban abyss" that was at once exciting and corrupting. Hence it prepared the ground for the boom of Chinese detective fiction, when

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and Shanghai County had separate police powers as well. See *All about Shanghai*, Chapter 2, Appendix 1; Wakeman, *Policing Shanghai*.

[30] Xiong Yuezhi, *Yizhi wenhua jiaozhi xia de Shanghai dushi shenghuo* 異質文化交織下的上海都市生活 [Shanghai urban life under cross-cultural influences] (Shanghai: Shanghai cishu chubanshe, 2008) 463.

[31] Rhoads Murphey, *Shanghai: Key to Modern China* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1953) 3.

[32] Xiong, *Yizhi* 465.

Chinese readers expected to see Chinese detectives explore the urban labyrinth, restore order and uphold justice in a local setting.

Print Culture and the Commercialization of Literary Production and Consumption

Shanghai figured prominently in the modern history of China not only for the roles it played in Chinese economy and politics, but also for its cultural significance. Of particular interest is its role in the formation and development of modern popular culture. Prosperous printing industry contributed tremendously to the flourish of Shanghai's popular culture. Newspapers and periodicals were foreign imports in the nineteenth century, and Shanghai for its ready access to western technology and human resources, soon became the center of Chinese publishing industry. Coupled with its laxity of ideological control in the foreign concessions, Shanghai saw the launching of the reformist newspaper *Shiwu bao* in 1896 and the iconoclastic *Xin qingnian* 新青年 (New youth) in 1915, signaling its centrality in the Chinese quest for modernity. Aside from its political significance, the boom of printing industry also played an indispensible role in the commercialization of literary production and consumption. Literary periodicals developed following the proliferation of literary supplements of newspapers. Both the literary supplements and literary magazines feature short fiction and serialized novels to meet the growing demand of the city dwellers for leisure reading. Statistics show that the number of literary periodicals rose from 57 (1902-1916) to 143 (1917-1927).[33] The

[33] Chen Pingyuan, *Zhongguo xiaoshuo* 272. Among the over 57 literary periodicals established between 1902 and 1917, 27 include "fiction" in the title.

number of literary periodicals and supplements reached over 600 in the 1930s.[34] Fiction features prominently in these periodicals and supplements, and the close connection between the popularity of serialized novels and the circulation of the newspapers and periodicals is testified by the skyrocketing circulation of *Xinwen bao* 新聞報 (Daily news, 1893-1949), a leading Shanghai daily newspaper, when Zhang Henshui's 張恨水 (1895-1967) tremendously popular novel *Ti xiao yinyuan* 啼笑因緣 (A tale of laughter and tears, 1930) was serialized in its literary supplement *Kuaihuo lin* 快活林 (Forest of delight).[35]

The relationship between newspapers, periodicals and readers is highly commercialized. While readers depended increasingly on newspaper and periodicals for news, trends, and other information about the changing society, readers' tastes and demands also influenced their coverage and orientation. Conversely, these print publications also helped shape the values, aesthetic taste, lifestyle, and social customs of modern Shanghai. To achieve popularity, literary works had to cater to the taste of the reader. Thus Republican popular literature, including a full range of subgenres such as knight-errant fiction and love fiction, follows the tradition of the late-Qing fiction and the butterfly literature, and takes a ground-level view to present to readers a world not too remote from theirs. With their detailed descriptions and representations of society, popular fiction attracted a wide following.

With the flourishing print culture and the expanding readership, Shanghai saw more and more literary men turn to writing as a career. Previously China had no professional writers — that is, no one lived on writing as a profession. With the abolition

[34] Li Honghua 49.
[35] The circulation increased to 200,000, see Li Honghua 49.

of the imperial examination in 1905, many aspiring scholars found their path to officialdom shut down. Shanghai, with its massive demand for writing professionals, offered an alternative to these dejected men of letters. Writing would generate considerable income, thanks to the adoption of the author's remuneration by more publishers since 1901.[36] By the 1930s and 1940s, writing had become the foremost career for men of letters, second only to teaching. Now that the authors' livelihood and the profitability of the publications depended primarily on the reception of their writings, authors were particularly sensitive to readers' changing expectations at an eventful time.

Although fiction writers wrote with readers' increasing demand for recreation in mind, they did not give up more serious pursuits. Many scholars have noticed the intention of "containing education in amusement" in popular fiction of the time. King-fai Tam, for one, points out "the tendency of the Huo Sang stories to address directly (and awkwardly in some cases) the interconnection between crime and society," and sees Huo Sang and Bao Lang as "worthy descendants of the moral and social-minded judge."[37]

From the survey of the material factors conducive to the popularity of Chinese detective fiction, we see the formation and expansion of a public sphere where more information was circulated, and the urban dwellers' aesthetic tastes assimilated gradually. The commercial atmosphere permeated the literary circle, where writers and publishers were sensitive to readers' need and taste in order to achieve success, and readers also

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[36] The first record of copyright royalty in China in 1901 appears on *Tongwen hu bao* 同文滬報. It says authors would be rewarded with twenty percent of the royalty on books. The earliest record of paying the author on the basis of word count appears in *Xinmin congbao* 新民叢報 (Newspaper for new citizens) and *Xin xiaoshuo*, both established by Liang Qichao in 1902. He stipulates that commentaries and critical essays are paid three *yuan* per thousand words, treatises are paid 3 or 4 *yuan*, depending on the quality, and records of event are paid 2 *yuan*. See Li Honghua 54-55.

[37] King-fai Tam, "The Traditional Hero as Modern Detective: Huo Sang in Early Twentieth-century Shanghai," *The Post-colonial Detective*, ed. Ed Christian (New York: Palgrave, 2000) 152-3.

relied on popular literature for relaxation and information. In this sense, the opinions expressed and sentiments revealed through popular fiction may well reflect what the general public thought about the modern and the urban experiences. The following will explore such reflections in Chinese detective fiction in order to restore some aspects of the urban experiences of the general Shanghai urbanites.

II. Negotiating the Modern and the Traditional in Texts

Shanghai, the setting of most Chinese detective fiction, not only serves as the background of the stories, but also plays a crucial role in the conception and development of the stories. Being China's most modern city with the largest population and the most drastic clashes of cultures and ideas, Shanghai is undeniably a fertile ground for crimes of old and new, and the fittest place to exercise detective talents. Thus Cheng Xiaoqing had Huo Sang leave Suzhou for Shanghai to solve a case and later stay there to open his business. In Bao Lang's words, "it will benefit the people of Shanghai. Moreover, Shanghai is more conducive to the pursuit of a detective career than Suzhou."[38] As we know, Shanghai spun out stories after stories of detection to be read across the city and the country, with its never-ending supply of professional writers, readers, and publishing houses. In the following we will examine the expression of modern urban experiences in detective fiction through the configurations of time, space, institutions and characters.

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[38] Cheng Xiaoqing, *Zhan nihua* 沾泥花 [A mud-stained flower] (Shanghai: Shijie shuju, 1945) 2.

This discussion cannot go without the insights of previous scholarship. Shanghai's cultural history and literature, including the Mandarin Ducks and Butterflies school, Saturday school, and the Neo-Sensationalists, have been topics of revived interest since the late twentieth century, and have become a fecund field of study. Scholarly works such as Leo Lee's *Shanghai Modern* and Yingjing Zhang's *The City in Modern Chinese Literature and Film* have informed this chapter by shedding light on the relationship between the cityscape, the people, and the literary representations. The many modern hallmarks mentioned by Leo Lee provide points of reference in the following survey of space in detective fiction, and his reading of the Neo-Sensationalists definitely exemplifies how to deftly read between literature and city. Yingjin Zhang's study focuses on the ambivalent attitudes towards the city in modern Chinese literary and cinematic texts, distinguishing different sets of imagery and values associated with towns, Beijing, and Shanghai. Particularly inspiring is his attempt at explaining the differences in terms of the configurations of space, time, and gender. Specifically, Zhang reads Beijing as a traditional capital characterized with complex interpersonal networks, stable symmetry of city planning, leisurely manner, and rituals of daily routine. In literary representations of Beijing, configurations of time give way to space, symbolizing the dominance of tradition. At the other end of the spectrum, Shanghai evokes images that are fragmentary and transitory. Daily encounter with strangers in a rapidly changing environment causes a great deal of stress and anxieties. Different authors have their own ways of writing the urban experiences, but despite obvious ideological differences, they often share deep-rooted cultural mentality towards the same city.[39]

[39] See Yingjin Zhang, *The City in Modern Chinese Literature & Film: Configurations of Space, Time, and*

The following investigation of the experiences and imaginations of the modern city in Chinese detective fiction will draw on existing researches, including the categories of space, time and gender, to reach meaningful interpretations. We will proceed from the images of time, because as Yingjin Zhang notes, the temporal dimension overshadows the spatial in the Shanghai experience.[40]

"The Modern Urbanites Live in Space but Think in Time"[41]

Time perhaps is the most significant element in detective narrative. To solve a case, one of the first that needs to ascertain is the time of the happening, or time of death if it involves a murder. It is often done by resorting to the detective's medical knowledge, or the expert opinion of a forensic investigator. As far as we understand the centrality of time in detective cases, we are still impressed by the meticulous markings of time throughout Cheng Xiaoqing's works.

"Huqiu nü" 狐裘女 (Woman in fox-fur scarf) narrates a story of betrayal and deceit. When a young man Qian Zhishan is found dead in his own room the very night he denigrated a renowned writer at the latter's birthday celebration, the suspects include a mysterious woman in a black fox-fur scarf spotted by a police constable on duty on a nearby street around midnight, the writer whose reputation is at stake, and the daughter of the writer whom Qian pursued. Based on a muddy footprint beside the bed, Huo Sang infers that a woman must have visited Qian's room between 11:30 pm and 12 am,

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Gender (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1996), Part II and Part III for discussions of Beijing and Shanghai in literary and cinematic texts.

[40] Zhang 118.

[41] Ibid. 178.

because there was a drizzle lasting around 20 minutes after 11 pm, enough to saturate the dust on the street to be muddy. The servant also reports hearing two barks of dog, one around 11 pm when Qian returned, and the other some time later. In his efforts to unveil the truth, Huo Sang constantly throws inquiries concerning time and presence to people involved, and details as above serve as clues, indispensable in these stories, leading to the final revelation.

Time is not only significant to the solution of criminal cases, but also inscribed in the detecting process. While Benjamin Franklin's famous maxim "Time is money" does not pertain to Chinese detective fiction, "time is life" surely does. Huo Sang's prompt adoption of modern conveniences such as telephones and taxies definitely speeds up the acquisition and processing of information. We often see distance calculated in terms of travel time in Huo Sang stories. For example, in "Wuhou de guisu" 舞后的歸宿 (The end of the dance queen), Huo Sang and Bao Lang take a taxi to the site of crime: "It is right at 7:30 in the morning of April 19th, Monday. It only takes 7 minutes to travel from Huo Sang's apartment to Road Qingpu by car."[42] Accurate time recordings abound in the story, underscoring the author's attention to detail, speed, precision, and efficiency. Time also gives structure to human activities. As a reference point, it brings to the fore the activeness and efficiency of the detective and his assistant in their pursuit of the truth, an echo to Huo Sang's constant advocacy of an active life.

The importance of time is not exclusive to Chinese detective stories, but its centrality in these stories highlights the level modern life has been structured and

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[42] Cheng Xiaoqing, *Huo Sang tan'an ji* 霍桑探案集 [Detective cases of Huo Sang], Vol. 3 (Beijing: Qunzhong chubanshe, 1986) 9.

configured with time. In comparison, native crime stories before the advent of detective fiction seem untouched with the precision and urgency associated with time. Traditional novels are often characterized with a multi-tiered temporal structure where the author would switch between different scenes supposedly happening simultaneously. This narrative structure foregrounds the space and downplays the sequence of events, presumably signaling a relatively stable social form and convention. Wilt L. Idema comments on this phenomenon, "[I]n the Chinese tradition from its earliest beginnings, space and its division according to the directions have taken precedence over time and development."[43] The relatively stable temporal structure yielded to narratives prioritizing the temporal sequence, in line with China's transition into a modern age. Detective fiction serves as a typical example in this respect.

The attention to time is not a trademark of Cheng Xiaoqing. It is present in other writers' stories. Sun Liaohong's burglar-detective Lu Ping is equally alert to time. In "Sai Jinhua de biao" 賽金花的表 (Sai jinhua's watch), Lu Ping's curiosity is aroused by a shriek of "stop thief" at 12 o'clock three nights in a row. Assuming the role of a psychiatrist, Lu Ping gets a chance to approach the old man who called out for help. The old man Yan Qizhai has been mad for seven years, after he was awakened by a call of "stop thief," fell downstairs in darkness, and lost a precious watch in his possession since then. The watch is precious primarily for its commemorative value: it was allegedly a gift to the Qing ambassador by German Emperor Wilhelm II, and was later passed on to the ambassador's concubine, the famed courtesan Sai Jinhua (a real late-Qing figure). Sai

[43] Wilt L. Idema, "Time and Space in Traditional Chinese Historical Fiction," *Time and Space in Chinese Culture*, ed. Chun-chieh Huang and Erik Zürcher (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995) 362.

gave it to Yan Qizhai's father as a token of love, but Yan's father drowned on the way back to Shanghai to marry Sai. The watch was possessed by Yan Qizhai's younger brother, but was lost in gamble and redeemed by Yan Qizhai. Yan adopted his nephew, but refused to return the watch. Obviously, the old man was so emotionally attached to the rare watch, that the loss of it gave him a heavy blow, depriving him of his sanity. Regardless of its rather complex storyline, the association of the watch with a mad old man in his gloomy bedroom on the top floor of his son's house is significant. A sharp contrast with the first floor where Lu Ping was received and entertained with the gaudiest imported goods such as a cigarette box containing a figurine cabaret dancer, and a canon shaped cigarette lighter, Yan's quarter on the third floor is dark and dusty, filled with Buddhist statues and ancient books. It seems the watch, though a symbol of time, is aestheticized with the memories attached to it. Just like the old man, it can no longer catch up with time — hence it went missing for seven years. Lu Ping, however, is perceptive enough to find the culprit — Yan's nephew, manages to retrieve the watch, and donates it to a fundraising event. Lu Ping's attention to time — he notices the shrieks came right at 12 am for three nights, and his detachment from the beautiful watch, enable him to act rationally and achieve his goal. While the mysterious watch never ticks, there are two clocks mentioned in the story that do. One is the small clock on Lu Ping's nightstand: "it ticks and tocks to push the giant wheel of time," showing time to Lu Ping awaiting the recurring shriek at night. The other is a grandfather clock in a corner of the Yan family's living room. Different from the highly decorative, jeweled, value-laden watch that seems to cause disasters to its owners, these two clocks dutifully perform their

time-keeping duty. Perhaps the wheel of time has cast the old man into the past. Only those who read time as it is can catch up with the time.

The ubiquity of temporal markers is not limited to detective fiction, but is a common feature of late-Qing and Republican fiction set in Shanghai. Alexander Des Forges in his study of Shanghai installment fiction notices that "[i]n Shanghai novels…the narrative frequently covers a shorter period of time, and references to dates and times are always precise and completely consistent, with no discrepancies."[44] He accounts for the obsession with temporal consistency with the "widespread installment of mechanical clocks in Shanghai residences and places of business, the tolling of the Customs House clock that could be heard through the city streets, as well as other peculiarities such as the British cannon shot at noon each day."[45] In short, a different set of temporal indicators set Shanghai apart from the more traditional parts of the country. Shanghai dwellers lived in an urban space marked by Western time with its focus on speed, efficiency and accuracy. Detective fiction, among other genres, captures the temporal impact on the urbanites. Detective writers like Cheng Xiaoqing and Sun Liaohong made their detectives agile in action, and quick in mind, with a strong sense of time. If a changing temporal consciousness is evident in detective fiction, it also indicates, with the example of detectives, the significance of a strong sense of time in catching up to modern times.

The City as a Labyrinth

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[44] Alexander Des Forges, *Mediasphere Shanghai: The Aesthetics of Cultural* Production (Honolulu: U of Hawai'i P, 2007) 61.
[45] Ibid. 62.

Space occupies another important position in detective fiction, but what the detective explores is often fragments of space. Yingjing Zhang differentiates two types of views of the city. One is the "aerial view" that "captures the city as an imposing — and sometimes nearly impossible — spectacle, a map of interconnected spaces, or a sheer monstrosity marked by its uncanny scale."[46] The other is the ground-level view, through which "the city is experienced as a labyrinth inviting exploration, an enigma awaiting decipherment, a series of disconnected spaces that need to be reorganized, and an endless parade of fragmented impressions that need to be fixed in their proper places."[47] In Zhang's interpretation, the aerial view is linked to a more traditional narration and marks an effort to "provide the reader with a readable text of the otherwise illegible city."[48] Hence it conveys "a sense of order in the city, a sense that ensures, and is ensured by, the continuity of tradition."[49] The ground-level view, however, is more closely related to the bewildering experience of the modern, "sustained by individual characters in their everyday activity in the city."[50]

Chinese detective fiction almost always takes a ground-level perspective, allowing the reader to follow the narrator and the detective in their exploration of the city labyrinth, and piece together the "fragmented impressions" into a coherent narrative of cause and effect. While the Neo-Sensationalist writers of the 1930s, such as Shi Zhecun 施蟄存 (1905-2003), Liu Na'ou 劉吶鷗 (1905-1940), and Mu Shiying 穆時英 (1912-1940), enthralled by the modern aspects of Shanghai, attempted to convey the fragmented,

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[46] Y. Zhang 128.
[47] Ibid. 130.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Ibid. 125.

frenzied urban sensations and modern experiences, along with their desires and fears, in their modernist works, their contemporary detective writers obviously had a different outlook on the "modern" and different urban experiences to convey. They tried to capture the daily urban experience of the petty urbanites from a ground level. When the outbreak of crimes unsettles the urban community, it is the task of the detective to guide the reader through the city labyrinth towards the truth, put together seemingly random fragments and information to decipher the myth, uncover the truth, bring the perpetrator to justice, and restore the social order. In other words, detective writers used their stories of crime and detection to express the unsettling and alienating urban experiences that might find resonance in many readers, and installed the detective as a force of redemption.

Interestingly, rather than casting the detective stories in the most modern quarters of Shanghai, like the places listed in *Shanghai Modern* where foreigners and the most westernized people frequented, most detective stories unfold in the more traditional quarters, the everyday world Hanchao Lu describes in *Beyond the Neon Lights*, particularly in the *lilong* 里弄 (alleyway houses, including *shikumen* and new-style alleyway houses) communities populated by the middle to lower-middle classes. Called by many as the "villages" within Shanghai, these communities of alleyway houses constitute the main locale where family or love tragedies happen. By focusing on the "village" side of Shanghai — the familiar world where most detective writers resided and moved about, writers were better able to render legibility and coherence to their narratives. This narrative choice also foregrounds whatever "new" or "modern" elements that infiltrated and to some extent contaminated the lives of the *lilong* residents. Examinations of the space in Huo Sang stories will illustrate this point.

A typical site of crime is in an alleyway house, most commonly a *shikumen* house. Such houses were originally designed to host only one family, but because of the shortage of housing in Shanghai, they commonly housed more than one family. According to Shanghai Municipal Council's 1937 report, about seventy-four percent of families living in the International Settlement (where most alleyway houses were located) shared with no less than three other families in an alleyway house.[51] Such a subdivided *shikumen* house appears in "Guai fangke" 怪房客 (The odd tenant) by Cheng Xiaoqing.

One day Huo Sang receives Mrs. Ma, obviously a lower class woman living in a leased alleyway house in Zhabei district, a factory district populated predominantly by the urban poor. Mrs. Ma leases a single-bay alleyway house, and sublets it to three other families. The Ma family occupies the back living room, and a man by the surname Ye recently moves into the second-floor loft. The man claims to be a teacher, but he leaves home at noon and returns after midnight, quite a suspicious schedule for a teacher. His eccentricities can hardly escape the attention of his inquisitive housemates. They heard him counting coins for an hour, and saw him cover up cracks and holes on the walls with black cloth. Their nerves were so overstrung that a missing kitchen knife speeds Mrs. Ma to Huo Sang on the ground of a suspected foul play. When Bao Lang, acting on Huo Sang's behalf, visits the neighborhood of Mrs. Ma's residence, he sees "a narrow little pathway with lower-middle-class dwellings on either side. Filthy water covered the ground, so that it seems all but impossible to walk down the alley without dirtying one's feet. All over the walls of the buildings hung wet clothes drying the sunlight, and the

[51] Lu 158.

people living there kept up a constant din."[52] With a typical ground-level view, the reader follows Bao Lang in his adventure into the overcrowded alleyway community, a world Bao Lang obviously does not belong to, but nonetheless is a commonplace in Shanghai.

Neighbor's prying eyes, pricking ears, and gossips have singled Mr. Ye out as a troublemaker that will unsettle the community. Huo Sang and Bao Lang track Ye from his residence, over the railway, passing a store selling lottery, to an illegal opium den in another *shikumen* house. Huo Sang uncovers that Ye is actually a fortune-teller, and a frequenter of the opium den. All his odd behaviors become legible once Huo Sang and the police reveal his superstition about the effects of some magic spells to bring on wealth.

Such a community embodies some characteristics of the "villages" within Shanghai. Overcrowding aggravates the suspicions among housemates or neighbors of diverse backgrounds. The example of the odd tenant bears some resemblance to the scene from "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" quoted earlier. In Poe's story, witnesses all identify the voice they heard as uttered by a person of another country, revealing their sense of insecurity among strangers in the metropolis. Similarly, Ye the fortune-teller in "Guai fangke" is identified as the other, for he speaks in northern dialect, follows a different schedule, and is secretive in attitude and actions. However, the story ends up being a false alarm, suggesting that Ye is actually not so different from his neighbors. On the contrary, he is one of them. Sharing the urban space with strangers is now the norm, rather than an exception.

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[52] Cheng Xiaoqing, *Sherlock in Shanghai: Stories of Crime and Detection by Cheng Xiaoqing*, trans. Timothy C. Wong (Honolulu: U of Hawai'i P, 2006) 100.

Though Huo Sang has more prominent customers, most range from lower-middle class to well-to-do gentlemen or businessmen living in *shikumen* houses or new-style alleyway houses. For many of his contemporary readers, the alleyway compounds were associated with their daily life and experience, and they were familiar with the issues most common to residents of the alleyway houses. They lived in close proximity to one another, yet their diverse social backgrounds and places of origin stood in the way of forming a tight community. A "motley crowd," as Hanchao Lu calls them, "did not develop a sense of identity based on the alleyway compound or, in a broader sense, based on the neighborhood… Here, the bond of neighbors was situational: they were people jammed together because they lived in an extremely crowded city."[53] Suspicion and misunderstanding among neighbors as depicted in "Guai fangke" were not rare. Moreover, family feuds over property and love-related crimes were still the most sensational topics of gossips in the neighborhood. Not surprisingly, they are the topics of most Huo Sang cases. By presenting the most familiar community to his readers and the types of crimes most likely to happen in such a community, writers like Cheng Xiaoqing foregrounded the ability of their detectives to turn the most insignificant traces into meaningful clues in problem solving. In another word, they showed their readers ways to make sense of their Shanghai experience, putting much emphasis on deciphering the physical environment and strangers one encounters daily in the city.

Apart from alleyway houses, Huo Sang moves in other quarters of Shanghai and exercises his detective skills on other aspects of the Shanghai experience. Huo Sang himself lives in an apartment on No. 77 Aiwen Road (today's West Beijing Road), in the

[53] Lu 224.

so-called upper corner of Shanghai — the more fashionable and prosperous area in the International Settlement. His role as a private detective sanctions him to move freely across the boundary of the richer and the poorer areas, travelling most often by taxi that drastically shortens distance and expedites his detection. Readers often travel with Huo Sang and Bao Lang to the sites of crimes, police stations, or other places of relevance. In "Moli" 魔力 (Magic spell), Bao Lang gets a call from a young lady asking Huo Sang for help. Deciding to attend the appointment on behalf of his friend, Bao Lang sets out in a taxi. His route is described in realistic details, "The car pulls out of Aiwen Road, drives south on Guangde Road, then turns onto Bubbling Well Road and heads east… The car turns onto Republic Road, heading south…and comes to a stop when it approaches Shangwen Road."[54] Bao Lang travels across the heartland of the "modern" Shanghai in the concessions, via roads paved by the Shanghai Municipal Council, who expanded the International Settlement by constructing extra-settlement roads across the original boundaries.

Lai Yi-lun notes the significance of the straight and broad modern roads and the square layout of the city defined by these roads. She comments, "Roads as they appear in Huo Sang cases embody rationality and order. Admittedly it reflects a disenchanting of the space in early Republican Shanghai, when the curves were erased and straight lines were drawn, the darkness were dispersed by light, and chaos were reduced and order imposed."[55] She interprets the representation of roads as a symbol of speed and efficiency,

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[54] Cheng Xiaoqing, *Wu fu dang* 五福黨 [Five blesses gang] (Shanghai: Shijie shuju, 1945).
[55] Lai Yi-lun 賴亦倫, "Cheng Xiaoqing zhentan xiaoshuo zhong de Shanghai wenhua tujing" 程小青偵探小說中的上海文化圖景" [Cultural Scenery of Shanghai in Cheng Xiaoqing's Detective Fiction], M.A. thesis (National Chengchi U, 2006) 27.

and a constant drive for progress. Even though modern roads and transportations provide convenience, they also expedite crimes such as road robberies mentioned in some Huo Sang cases. Hence the construction of modern roads and adoption of modern conveniences are not enough to moderate human desires and reduce crimes because it does not enforce a moral constraint. Moreover, the construction of extra-settlement roads is an act of imperial encroachment, however civilized the roads might look.[56] Lai's interpretation of the urban space in Cheng Xiaoqing's detective fiction introduces the perspective of imperialism. The urban planning with public roads and streetlights is often taken as a gift of Western civilization, but it actually covers up the imperial expansion.

Today's researchers see the point clearly, but most detective writers of the time did not. Cheng Xiaoqing and Sun Liaohong let their detectives enjoy modern conveniences in their exploration of urban space, but they, consciously or not, barely touched upon the foreign presence in their stories. Except for the modern public places mentioned above, there are no foreign characters, nor direct mentions of the imperial presence in their works, although most of their works were written in the 1920s through 1940s when imperial existence still loomed large in Shanghai.[57] Perhaps it is because the writers did not come into direct contact with foreigners, or they tried to create a fictional world without foreigners, that they might go into details in depicting aspects of Western material culture but not the stark presence of foreigners. This literary phenomenon is in line with readers' experience because most urbanites, although living in Shanghai, did not move in the same circles as foreigners.

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[56] Ibid. 15, 27-29.

[57] The foreign concessions of Shanghai ended in 1943 when the state of affairs following the attack on Peal harbor (1941) prompted Britain and the US to see China as an alliance in the war against Japan.

To sum up, Chinese detective fiction leads readers to hunt down the perpetrators by following the steps of the sagacious detectives. The detectives become authoritative guides of the city because of their ability to navigate the city at ease, and give coherence and meaning to diverse urban spaces in their investigation. In a sense, the detectives piece together the diverse and fragmentary urban images for readers, and assure them that the modern city is still legible, as long as one masters the new methods.

Dance Halls as Demon Lairs

Besides alleyway houses and public roads, fictional detectives also access modern hallmarks like the dance halls. A rather detailed description of the Moon Dance Hall through the eyes of Bao Lang appears in Cheng Xiaoqing's "Huo shi" 活屍 (The living corpse):

> Ballroom dancing is a foreign import. Originally it was a noble entertainment: after eating and drinking, men and women as hosts and guests engaged in dancing to enhance mutual understanding and friendship.
>
> But the dance halls in Shanghai serve completely different uses. They have become brothels. Dance hall bosses are mostly so-called "famous figures," who are no more than rogues. They cajole beautify girls of poor backgrounds with money and coax them into dance hostesses, to sate the lust of exploiting tycoons, and their sons and nephews. Dance hall bosses earn a fortune from these disguised prostitutes. Despite a handful of customers who come with their partners, the majority comes unaccompanied to dally with dance hostesses. Our country still suffers from incessant foreign invasions, internal strives, famines, disasters and poverty. Yet our dance hall customers cannot care less. They indulge themselves in debauchery, and lead a befuddled life! It's why I always loathe dance halls!
>
> The dance hall is luxuriously decorated. The center is a large dance floor. The waxed narrow-strip wood floor is gleaning in the

> lights. In the surrounding are small round tables made with grapefruit wood and marble tabletops. By the tables are two or four refined soft chairs made of white canvas. The walls are painted light red, with many gilded wall lamps inlaid with engraved glasses. There are numerous ceiling lights with pale purple or blue silk lampshades. How colorful and dazzling! There is a large wall cupboard, filled with a variety of brand-name foreign wines such as champagne and whisky, each costing several hundred dollars. A means of flirtation is to open several bottles of champagne in a row for a dance hostess. In short, it is a place to squander money, a bewitching trap, and a bottomless abyss where youths plummet!
>
> ...
>
> The dance hall is air-conditioned. I do not sweat, but my vision and hearing suffer the plight of passively taking in the intoxicating jazz music, the bewitching dim light, the glaring decorations, and the coquettish manner dance hostesses put on for a living.[58]

Huo Sang and Bao Lang usually do not set foot in a dance hall unless their detective job calls for. The dance halls situate at one end of the spectrum for Huo Sang's range of explorations, with the other end being the nearby cities or outskirts of Shanghai. From the above description, it is obvious that the dance halls, with its display of wealth and exhibition of desires, are deemed with suspicion and repugnance as a symbol of the corrupting influence of Western material culture. Most seriously, it fritters away the aspirations of the youths with a fantasy of peace and prosperity, leaving them indifferent to social problems and national plights.

Since the first dance hall opened to the Chinese in 1927, dancing quickly became a popular entertainment in Shanghai. An article in *Xiao ribao* 小日報 (Small daily) in 1928 says, "The dancing fad of Shanghai people has reached a peak. The dance halls mushroomed, youths and young ladies race to learn dance, as if one cannot be recognized

[58] Cheng, *Huo Sang tan'an ji*, Vol. 8. My ellipsis.

as Shanghainese if he / she does not dance."[59] Huo Sang and Bao Lang's disapproval of dance halls are not unique because by the 1930s, the dance halls in Shanghai were more often than not vice establishments operating under the cover of modern entertainment. The decadent influence became so detrimental that in 1934 the presidents of Shanghai's colleges collectively agreed to forbid students to attend cabarets.[60] But different from the abhorrence towards the dance halls shown in Cheng Xiaoqing's most stories, the dance halls are a mesmerizing topic for the Neo-Sensationalist writers. Mu Shiying, the modernist writer most fascinated with the dance halls, presents a dance hall scene in his famous short story "Shanghai de hubuwu" 上海的狐步舞 (The Shanghai foxtrot),

> The azure dusk blankets the whole scene. A **saxophone** stretches out its neck, opens its great mouth, and blares at them, "woo woo." Inside on the smooth floor, floating skirts, floating robes, exquisite heels, heels, heels, heels, heels. Free flowing hair and men's faces. Men's white-collared shirts and women's smiling faces. Arms outstretched, kingfisher-green earrings dragging on shoulders. A group of tightly arranged round tables, but with scattered chairs. Waiters in white stand in dark corners. Scent of alcohol, perfume, smoke…someone sits alone in the corner holding a coffee to stimulate his energy.
>
> Dancing: the waltz melody enwraps their legs, their legs stand on the waltz melody floating, floating.[61]

Compared to Cheng Xiaoqing's sober and disapproving narration, the above description captures the frenzied and fragmented images in the dance hall, as if taken with a camera span. From the words emerge a writer who obviously fell under the spell of this flamboyant world.

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[59] Xiong Yuezhi, *Shanghai tongshi* 上海通史 [General History of Shanghai], Vol. 9 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1999) 177. Also see Leo Ou-fan Lee, *Shanghai Modern* 23-29.

[60] See Li Honghua, 33-34; Andrew D. Field, "Selling Souls in Sin City," *Cinema and Urban Culture in Shanghai, 1922-1943*, ed. Yingjin Zhang (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1999) 125.

[61] Translation by Andrew D. Field. The word in bold appears in English in the original text.

In contrast to Cheng Xiaoqing's detective, Sun Liaohong's gentleman-rogue Lu Ping generally roams in a more westernized setting. To play the role of a thief, Lu Ping has to access the world of the riches, so he gets more exposure to modern markers like dance halls, coffeehouses, department stores and western hotels. A description of a dance hall by Sun Liaohong in the beginning of "Qie chi ji" 竊齒記 (The stolen denture) goes like this:

> In the spacious dance hall, the music band produces enchanting rhythms, the lights radiate sleepy beams, and many pairs of lovebirds are floating on the center of the dance floor, pushing forward the man-made waves. Their vibrant "plumages" form many intricate flowing lines on the gleaming waxed floor. Every bottle of drink on every table around the dance floor mirrors different excited faces.
>
> During this brief time in this small space, there is no concern of the rise and fall of a nation, no distinction of seasons, no yesterday or tomorrow. Neither do feelings like hunger, cold, illness, and suffering exist in this space. The hungry can feast on women's beauty; the cold can keep the body temperature up with the fire in the heart; the ill can find cure in the ultimate panacea of charming dimples; the troubled will possibly find your worries gone in the smiles of young ladies.
>
> All in all, here you can find only pleasure, not suffering; only happiness, not sadness. In the least, it is a temporary heaven in the human world.[62]

Despite the more lively language and a jesting tone, the implied message in this description is similar to Cheng Xiaoqing's, that the dance hall is an enchanting trap that ensnares people into a life of dissipation. Similar view is also expressed on other modern places Lu Ping visits. For example, when Lu Ping tracks down a social butterfly Miss Li, he visits a Tulip Coffeehouse where Miss Li frequents:

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[62] Xiao Jinlin 萧金林, *Zhongguo xiandai tongsu xiaoshuo xuanping, zhentan juan* 中國現代通俗小說選評 偵探卷 [Selection and review on modern Chinese popular fiction: Detective fiction] (Shanghai: Shanghai wenyi chubanshe, 1992) 242.

> Tulip, this is a fairly luxurious coffeehouse. At a little over nine, the air had become heated. Under the dim light, the leader of the music band on stage waves his arms up and down, like a bird flapping his wings quickly to take off. In the hall, everyone's cup is brimmed with delicious drink, everyone's pocket is full of paper bills, and everyone's lungs are imbued with hazy leisure. Here, perfumed clothes, gorgeous hair, lights, and music weave into a colorful dream. At this moment, the entire universe is blank or void, except this space of fantasy. [63]

This description presents the coffeehouse in its glittering fragments of lights, drinks and music, suggesting a life of luxury and dissipation. This dreamy experience of the coffeehouse, similar to the above dance hall scene, reminds one of the Neo-Sensationalist fantasies, but the tone is sarcastic, showing distain for the coffeehouse customers, although not as serious and didactic as in Cheng Xiaoqing's stories. Lu Ping's experience of modern Shanghai obviously differs from Huo Sang's, because of their different identities and spheres of activity, and because Lu Ping is supposedly most actively in the 1940s when Shanghai was most affected by wars, and a sense of uncertainty and decadence permeated the atmosphere.

Seeing Shanghai as a "cesspool of vice" (*zui'e de yuansou* 罪惡的淵藪) dated back to the nineteenth century. Interestingly, at the same time Chinese detective fiction glories reason, logic, science, law and order associated with the Western civilization, it also blames the West for the increasing moral degeneration and decadence of the metropolis. While detective writers unreservedly promoted the scientific methods and the awareness of law in their stories, they nonetheless revealed their concerns over the social

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[63] Sun Liaohong, *Xiadao wenguai Sun Liaohong daibiaozuo* 俠盜文怪孫了紅 [Masterpieces of Sun Liaohong], ed. Fan Boqun 范伯群 (Taipei: Yeqiang chubanshe, 1993) 73.

problems emerging under the influence of the West. Jeffrey Kinkley notices Cheng Xiaoqing's clear position against "modern Western ways of conspicuous consumption," claiming that Cheng has taken "these dance halls into symbols of China's decadence" because "[t]hey waste youthful energy that ought be used to fend off foreign bullies; the young are ensnared in the pursuit of leisure."[64]

The fad of social dancing and the mushrooming of the dance halls were a social focus that every reader could relate to at the time. The writers' censure of the dance halls in a large degree echoed the general public's reservations over the extravagant and licentious lifestyle suggested by the dance halls. After all, most Shanghai urbanites were immigrants who left their hometowns for the promise of getting rich, with traditional ethical and moral principles still keeping a firm hold over their outlooks.

The Institution of Marriage

Arranged marriage came under attack in the late Qing, and found its literary expression in early-Republican butterfly fiction. Soon, freedom of love against arranged marriage became a staple topic of new literature in the 1920s and 1930s. It also finds resonance in Chinese detective fiction. In fact, Cheng Xiaoqing caught up with the trend so well that he wrote several stories on this topic.

"Wuning si" 毋宁死 (I'd rather die), for one, highlights Huo Sang's opposition to arranged marriage. He Daiying, daughter of a government official in Suzhou, is found missing a day before her wedding, apparently to escape the arranged marriage to a good-

[64] Kinkley 200.

for-nothing playboy — the son of her father's superior. It is an impossible escape, because she seems to have vanished from her bedroom on the second floor of a big house, when her cousin keeping watch on her left for just a blink of eyes. Her disappearance upsets her father extremely, and a crushing guilt brings down her cousin, who would not stand Huo Sang's inquiry for long. The detective is confident to restore Daiying, but only after the originally set wedding time. When the marriage is cancelled, Huo Sang duly restores the missing girl, who actually has never left home, but set up a scam with the help of her sympathetic cousin and aunt.

Although Huo Sang has seen through the scam, he chooses to help Daiying evade the upcoming wedding by keeping her secret longer. The title of the story "I'd Rather Die" comes from the note Daiying left to her father. It is the second part of the famous saying, "Give me liberty, or give me death!" which was quite popular at the time.[65] During investigation, Huo Sang and Bao Lang has a discussion on the topic of arranged marriage,

> [Bao:] "Do you think the girl went missing because she is fighting for freedom from arranged marriage?"
>
> [Huo:] "Sure, it is so obvious. The three words she left prove it."
>
> I [Bao Lang] come to a sudden realization, "You are absolutely right. The time is moving forward, and the old institution of marriage should also be revolutionized. I hope you will be a guardian of freedom, rather than helping the tyrant."
>
> Huo Sang responds in a deep voice, "Of course. But freedom should also have its limits. If in pursuit of a freedom unrestrained,

[65] "Give me liberty, or give me death!" is a quotation attributed to Patrick Henry from a speech he made to the Virginia Convention in 1775. This phrase was widely popular among youths in their fight against arranged marriages in the 1920s. See Yang Lianfen 楊聯芬, "Lian'ai zhi fasheng yu xiandai wenxue guannian bianqian" 戀愛之發生與現代文學觀念變遷 [The occurrence of love and conceptual change in modern literature], *Zhongguo shehui kexue* 中國社會科學 [Social sciences in China] 1 (2014), 178.

> young people elope on impulse, regardless of human dignity, it is not what I consider right."[66]

This conversation shows clearly that Huo Sang and Bao Lang are against arranged marriage, but they will not let the call for "freedom of marriage" blow their minds. They support it on condition that it does not go against basic moral principles.

Rather than stressing his support for the freedom of love, Cheng Xiaoqing more often expresses his concern over the abuse of this freedom in his other stories. "Di'er zhang zhao" 第二張照 (The other photograph) is an example. The story opens with a personal advertisement for potential marriage partner in the newspaper. Bao Lang mentions the new phenomena of publishing ads or notices in the newspapers on seeking husbands, cohabitation agreement or its dissolution.[67] Bao Lang ostensibly does not view them in a positive light. Sarcastically calling them the products of "our twentieth-century civilization,"[68] Bao Lang laments the abuse of the freedom of love:

> [M]arriage had really become a most difficult problem in these "modern" times. The feudalistic practices of marriage by barter or compulsion or parental arrangement — sometimes even before birth — were of course completely unacceptable. But now, self-appointed modernizers had turned conjugal bonds into a farce, where couples could get together on a whim one day and split apart on a whim the next. Such people turn falling in love into a game, and lack any fundamental respect for marriage as an institution. As marriage breaks down, can the family endure? If we abandon the family as well, what sort of society will we have? Is this where human evolution is taking us? Or are we actually regressing?[69]

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[66] Cheng Xiaoqing, *Hei dilao* 黑地牢 [The black dungeon] (Shanghai: Shijie shuju, 1945) 176.
[67] Non-marriage cohabitation came into fashion since the 1910s.
[68] Cheng, *Sherlock in Shanghai* 45.
[69] Ibid. 45-46.

Bao Lang's train of thoughts is broken by Huo Sang, who opts to see things in perspective by remarking that "once a massive dike that has held for thousands of years is broken down by overwhelming waves of modern thought, it inevitably releases a powerful burst of wild crosscurrent."[70] Although Huo Sang says it lightly, the following case testifies to the harm of such crosscurrents.

Gu Yingfang consults Huo Sang on how to deter a blackmailing rascal Wang Zhisheng who threatens to break her engagement with a family secret. Four years ago Wang seduced Gu's sister to elope with him. This affair brought disasters to the family: her heart-broken mother died soon afterwards, her family relocated to Shanghai to escape the scandal, and eventually the sister committed suicide, which Gu learns only from the newspaper. Now that Gu is soon to be engaged and the announcement appears in newspapers, Wang tries to blackmail her with her sister's scandal. Furthermore, he even sets her up with a man hooked by a "husband seeking" ad Wang put up, and takes a photo of their "meeting" for blackmail. Gu's problem is eventually resolved, but the story seems to suggest that the freedom of love and marriage can be abused by people of loose morals, and women suffer the most. The tragedy of Gu's sister and many others show the dear price unrestrained freedom of love and marriage would cost women. Hence the advocacy of the "freedom of love or marriage" should be taken with caution, and relationships should be established in a proper way in compliance with human decency and moral principles.

In a sense, Huo Sang and Bao Lang's stand on this issue can be succinctly summarized with the ancient maxim "Begin with affections, end in propriety and

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[70] Ibid. 46.

righteousness" 發乎情，止乎禮義, a stance similar to the view of love expressed in the butterfly fiction, and much more realistic than the radical advocacy of "free love" frequently seen in New Literature. Considering the social reality of the 1920s and 1930s when the call for freedom of love and marriage was broadcast at a high pitch as part of the iconoclastic discourse of the New Culture Movement, and extramarital and premarital cohabitation became a vogue among youths eager to catch up with the new trend, Cheng Xiaoqing clearly showed concern over the tendency of allowing one's desires to run wild without consideration of its harm to family and society, and vouched for a more reserved and rational attitude on the issue of love and marriage.

The 1920s witnessed the rise of the fever of "love" among youths. An author observes in 1923 that "the young men and women in today's China are all busy with dating. 'Sacred love,' 'supreme love' and the like have been daily utterances among them."[71] Another author remarks,

> Falling in love has become a common phenomenon among young men and women. A pair walking hand in hand, side by side in public parks is common. Most interestingly, everyone chants the eulogy of love in writing, except those who cannot write. As for their philosophy of love, they claim that love alone makes life vigorous…[72]

The adulation of the freedom of love, or free love was rampant among youths, yet the tragedies and disputes related to the freedom of love were also on the rise. According to an article published in 1932, "disputes of love and marriages accounted for half of all

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[71] Yanshi 宴始, "Zhongguoshi de lian'ai fangshi" 中國式的戀愛方式 [Chinese-style dating], quoted in Yang Lianfen 176.
[72] Chen Dongyuan 陳東原, "Lian'ai zhi tu" 戀愛之途 [The path of love], quoted in Yang Lianfen 176.

social disputes" in the newspapers.[73] The widespread obsession with love is echoed in Bao Lang's comment, "Shanghai society is full of erotic traps that lure youths. The evil trend has become epidemic. So many youths have seen courting women as their top priority."[74] This issue is constantly addressed in Cheng Xiaoqing's stories. "Shuang xun" 雙殉 (Death times two), for example, narrates a quadrangular love affair.

Zhang Meixia breaks the promise of marriage in her wedding to Wu Zichu to everyone's surprise, because the marriage is blessed with love and family consent. Her bridesmaid Xu Yuying suspects Zhang has fallen in love with her admirer Yu Xinsun, the object of Xu's unrequited love. Consumed with jealousy, Xu tries to kill Zhang. When all misunderstandings have finally cleared up, and Zhang survives the small doze of poison, news arrives that the heartbroken Yu has killed himself in Suzhou. Following in his footsteps, Xu throws herself into the Huangpu River the next day. Huo Sang comments on the death of Yu, "All four characters in this drama are a hundred percent sincere on the issue of love. They can be called the disciples of love. What a pity that Yu Xinsun had a weak character and limited vision. He saw love as the only important thing in his life, thus gave away his life to no purpose!"[75]

Love can hardly resist the corrosion of money, especially in the material environment of Shanghai. Some cases of Huo Sang decry the corruption of love by

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[73] Meng Ru 孟如, "Muqian Zhongguo zhi hunyin jiufen" 目前中國之婚姻糾紛 [Marital disputes in present-day China], quoted in Yu Hualin 余华林, "Ershi shiji ersanshi niandai zhishi nuxing lianai beiju yuanyin tanxi" 20 世紀二三十年代知識女性戀愛悲劇原因探析 [Analysis of the causes for the love tragedies of intellectual women of the 1920s and 1930s], *Jindai Zhongguo shehui yu minjian wenhua* 近代中國社會與民間文化 [Modern Chinese society and folk culture], ed. Li Changli 李長莉 and Zuo Yuhe 左玉河 (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2007) 331.
[74] Cheng, *Huo Sang tan'an ji*, Vol. 8.
[75] Cheng, *Wu fu dang*.

money. In these cases, tragedies happen when the material girls desert their lover or husband for a wealthy catch. “Zi xinijan” 紫信箋 (The purple letter) is such a tragedy.

Xu Zhigong, an architect, was jilted by his cousin Wang Yufu because a rich playboy Fu Xianglin is after her. Their engagement makes Xu so bitter that he kills Fu, and sets things up to exonerate himself. Bao Lang says,

> The dead seems to be a good-for-nothing dandy, while Xu Zhigong is a self-reliant professional. A comfortable life of high position and great wealth is admired by women lacking in proper education. In this society that values material possessions, vanity is on the rise. So if the demon of vanity intrudes into the garden of love, the god of love would lose the battle and be dispelled.[76]

Women, affected by vanity in the material culture, could cease to be faithful. Cheng Xiaoqing obviously saw women as being weak-willed, inconstant, and more susceptible to the corruption of material culture because of a lack of proper education. Bao Lang says elsewhere that “young women should be extremely cautious towards beginning relationships, because their intelligence is not developed enough, education is not universal, and new morals have not been established yet at this time.”[77]

Women, when lost in crass materialism, would be the destruction of men. Bao Lang comments at the end of “Zi xinijan,” “Women could be the inspiration of men on a bright future, but they could also be their destruction. Two men were destroyed by a material girl, but it is sad that they regarded love as the sole purpose of life.”[78] Such

[76] Cheng, *Huo Sang tan’an ji*, Vol. 6, 151.
[77] Ibid. 136.
[78] Ibid. 228.

material girls also make appearance in “Moli” 魔力 (Magic spell) and “Huiyi ren” 灰衣人 (The man in gray).

The issue of love and marriage was one of the major social concerns of Cheng Xiaoqing’s time, and it is no wonder that Cheng made it one of his main themes. Although love and marriage in detective fiction serve mainly as the causes of crimes and disputes, they nevertheless reflect many other related social issues such as the problems of education, ethics, and law. Cheng’s realistic attitude is in line with his views on many other issues revealed through his stories: on the issue of love and marriage, one should not follow the western model blindly, but have to resort to one’s reason and moral values to achieve a balance in this transitional time.

Dance Hostesses as Victims and Seductresses

Women in Chinese detective fiction are predominantly victims of crimes. They are generally more vulnerable and susceptible to harm, similar to those in Western detective fiction, but the images of women in Chinese detective fiction have unique features. Most significantly, women become an area of contention between Western and traditional influences. Besides women rebelling against arranged marriages or victims to the freedom of love mentioned above, another group of women often appears in Chinese detective fiction — the dance hostess (*wunü* 舞女).

Two novellas by Cheng Xiaoqing feature dance hostesses as the main characters, “Wugong moying” 舞宮魔影 (The phantom of the dance palace), and “Wuhou de guisu” (The end of the dance queen). Both center on the demise of dancing stars. In “Wugong

moying," Ke Qiuxin, the dancing star of the Moon Palace Dance Hall, was shot dead in her own house at late night. Before her death, she performed at the dance hall, and mingled with her suitors and admirers, including a young writer Yang Yiming who is on his honeymoon trip, and a manager of a textile factory Jia Sanzhi. Yang showed concern over Ke's deteriorating health, and invited Ke to join his wife and himself to Mount Putuo to recuperate, but Ke gave no answer. When Yang, eager to get a reply, visited Ke's house the same night, he was shocked to find her dead. When the case was reported to the police, Huo Sang's help was sought. They set off to locate the suspects by tracing down the miscellaneous objects left in her room, a handkerchief, a trodden jewel case, a cigarette butt, and a pistol — the murder weapon. They also follow clues provided by witnesses. Surprisingly, the list of suspects gets longer, suggesting the late dance star was an object of desire, contention and jealousy in complex social networks. Jia, the wealthy suitor, seduced her in vain with a diamond bracelet. Wang Baixi, Ke's cousin, urged her to accept Jia's solicitation. Two bandits planned to rob her diamond necklace throughout the night. Yang's wife and another dance star visited her out of jealousy. Finally a bandit points out Wang Baixi, Ke's cousin, as the murderer. A letter written by the suicidal Ke to Yang reveals the wrongs Wang did to her. Calling herself a slave and her cousin a devil, Ke exclaims,

> I was too young. Lack of education, and a blind faith in freedom made me turn a deaf ear to the advice of my parents. I made a mistake. Tempted by this devil, I lost virginity, abandoned my family, came to this evil city, and led a miserable life disgracing humanity! For three years, I have thrown my life in to earn a lot of money for him, but he still would not let me go. With my decadent life and ailing body, I can no longer live with it. Fortunately my

> soul is still pure. Now I have made up my mind to leave this filthy world![79]

The letter expresses her regret for blindly pursuing the freedom of love, and the consequences she bears. Whether a naïve girl who eloped with a philanderer, or a glamorous dance star admired by thousands, Ke Qiuxin is depicted as a victim susceptible to physical and moral harms in a city full of danger and deprivation. To highlight her image as a victim who cannot control her own destiny, Cheng Xiaoqing did not cast her as a frivolous woman, despite her role as a dance star. Rather, she is portrayed as an emaciated woman with "limpid eyes depleted of liveliness and radiance due to silent weeping and sad looks, and red cherry lips, which, without makeup, would expose a loss of natural beauty."[80] Even her name Qiuxin, meaning autumn heart, evokes the image of abandoned women pining away in autumn frequently found in Chinese literary tradition.

If Ke Qiuxin, for her "pure soul" uncontaminated by the evils of the city, was painted with sympathetic strokes, another dance queen was judged more harshly. In the opening of "Wuhou de guisu," a dance hostess Jiang Anna asks Huo Sang to investigate the murder of Wang Lilan, a "retired" dance queen. When Jiang comes to Huo Sang's, her overly polished look, dyed hair, arrogant manner and foreign name give away her identity. Huo Sang and Bao Lang despise and pity her at the samefor her efforts of becoming more western. But her complaints of the tragic life of dance hostesses, however, win Bao Lang's sympathy. With their investigation, the private life of the late dance

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[79] Tang Zhesheng, ed. *Xue zhiren* 血紙人 [The bloody paper man] (Beijing: Wenhua yishu chubanshe, 2004) 73-74.
[80] Ibid. 5.

queen surfaced to light. Wang Lilan lived in "extreme luxury and extravagance," as Bao Lang concludes after seeing her houseful of foreign goods. Yet all this came at a price. She lived on men, a lifestyle not unexpected of a former dance queen. According to her uncle Li Zhifan, Wang was his ward after her parents died. She knew her place as a small town girl, but after hearing a fellow girl boasting about the easy money she earned in a Shanghai factory, Wang insisted on going to Shanghai. She never returned since then. Only after Li came for a visit did he know that Wang had become a dance hostess. On his second visit, he found Wang lived in a larger house, provided by a wealthy Mr. Lu, but at the same time flirted with other "modern youths." Huo Sang and Bao Lang trace down these male "friends" of Wang, and after a lengthy process of adventure and detection, find out that it is a double murder. Wang was slayed by her uncle Li in the first place, and then shot by one of her "boyfriends" Zhao Boxiong, a secret agent, whose mission was to execute Wang for her involvement in a certain political scheme.

Unlike Ke Qiuxin, Wang Lilan, as her westernized stage name "Lilan" (similar to Lillian) suggests, is a lost soul. Huo Sang comments on her downfall,

> She was of feeble will. It is a pity that she left the simple and unsophisticated rural village, fell into the furnace of the material society, and degenerated. Immersed in the tide of indulgence and abandonment, she would do everything for money, selling her body, her soul, betraying the people, and what not![81]

She deserted all moral values and embraced unethical relations in order to pursue material benefits. She was killed twice for her irrevocable degradation in the rampant materialism of modern society. Her uncle Li Zhifan obviously is a prig who appears to be

[81]Cheng, *Huo Sang tan'an ji*, Vol. 3, 187.

a Confucian moralist disapproving of Wang's lifestyle, yet his will is not strong enough to resist the temptation of money. Surrounded by extravagance, his greedy nature prevailed and led him to kill for Wang's jewels, and for her break of engagement to his son. In this case, we see that women and men alike are morally contaminated by the "foul city," and lose their soul among material temptations of the city. Wang is seen in such a negative light that Cheng Xiaoqing assigned a double identity to her as an enemy of the state, and had her executed by the secret agent, although it is hardly creditable for such a small town girl to quickly change into an unusually deceitful and slippery "head of a conspiracy" under the cover of a social butterfly. Nonetheless, Cheng Xiaoqing clearly indicates that materialism of the city under Western influence is detrimental not only to the physical and moral wellbeing of individuals, but also to the state. It is yet another expression of Cheng's strong sense of social responsibility.

Wang Lilan's image is closer to a femme fatale but as Leo Lee comments, these female seductresses are not spirited and sexy in Cheng Xiaoqing's clumsy writing,[82] possibly due to his heavy-handed didacticism. Dance hostesses also make frequent appearances in Sun Liaohong's stories. While some conform to the image of coquettes, some are wretched creatures awaiting Lu Ping's rescue. "Qie chi ji" (A stolen denture) contains both representations.

The story is entirely set in the Lidu Dance Hall, where Lu Ping blackmails an illicit couple with their shady secret. After a panorama of the dance hall quoted earlier in this chapter, the author zooms in to a young girl of about seventeen, whose natural beauty

[82] Leo Lee, "Fu'ermosi zai Zhongguo" 14.

is overtaken by heavy makeup, like "a solitary flower imposed with artificial paint."[83] Apparently she had not got used to the dance hall. This is "an innocent jade lately thrown into the gilded pit of hell by the muddy current of life."[84] Lu Ping asks the wallflower to dance, seizes this chance to inquire into her background, and tests her with frivolous words. As a novice dance hostess not yet corrupted by her environment, Zhang Qi proves herself worthy of rescue. Next Lu Ping takes seat beside his partner, back to back with a fashionable couple — a young man "beautiful from the tip of his hair to his toes" and a woman with voluptuous beauty.[85] The woman obviously thrives in admiring gaze, in sharp contrast to the young girl mentioned above. Lu Ping gossips with his partner about the recent death of a rich merchant in a voice loud enough for the couple to overhear. In Lu Ping's analysis, Huang Chuanzong, a profiteer hoarding rice in a difficult time, was poisoned by his sixth concubine, Li Fengyun, a former dance star of this dance hall, in conspiracy with her secret lover Zhou Bikang, Huang's nephew and dentist. Zhou poisoned Huang by inserting a deadly chemical cyanate in his denture, which took effect six days later. Lu Ping claims to have stolen the denture as the evidence of the murder, which brings great fear to the overhearing couple, who are none other than the murderous Li and Zhou. Lu Ping discloses his intention to blackmail them, offering to return the denture (which Lu actually bought from a random dental clinic), and leave the case untouched in exchange because the couple has "got rid of a rice worm for society."[86] With Li's three diamond rings, Lu Ping would now save the dance girl Zhang Qi, who happens to be Huang's illicit daughter, from the abyss.

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[83] Xiao 243.
[84] Ibid.
[85] Ibid. 246.
[86] Ibid. 260.

In this story, Li Fengyun is pictured as the opposite of the young dance hostess. Li's merciless murder and debauchery make her a stereotypical femme fatale. What would Zhang Qi be if she were left to the corruption of this alienating and degenerating environment? Would she turn into another Li Fengyun in time? Like Wang Lilan, Li Fengyun is lost completely in the decadent world represented by the dance hall. Thus it is significant for Lu Ping to extend salvation to the still redeemable girl before it is too late.

The above gives a general picture of the typical representations of dance hostesses in Chinese detective fiction. In contrast to the lively and sensual depictions of the bewitching seductresses by the Neo-Sensationalists, Chinese detective writers in general see women in this trade primarily as victims who first lose their innocence, and later lose their soul and moral sense in sensual pleasure and wealth. Dance hostesses lost in decadence are often painted as dangerous enchantresses who pose a threat to those ensnared by carnal desires. Their transformation from naïve village girls, to novice dance hostesses often falling prey to male desire, and then to the seductresses is symbolic of the spiritual downfall of some city dwellers under the impact of "western" material culture. The village or small town girls still under the influence of traditional ethics are innocent, but because their lack of proper education, when they arrive in the big city and enter the decadent world represented by the dance halls, they would soon lose their way, and degenerate under the temptation of money and material comfort. The modern urban world is undoubtedly overcast with danger, immorality and corruption in the eyes of Chinese detective writers.

Intellectuals

The intellectuals in Chinese detective fiction are as much censured as praised. As these people (mostly young men and women) receive college education or even higher education from overseas, detective writers expect them to be pillars of society in its modern transition. On different occasions, Cheng Xiaoqing had Huo Sang or Bao Lang express his high hopes for the intellectuals, but often these utterances come as admonitions to intellectuals who did not pursue the right way in the stories.

It is commonly seen in the Huo Sang stories that the intellectuals betray their education and upbringing, and let their desires and the penchant for leisure and material comfort prevail. Their education and social status become an adornment in their game of love, and an entrance ticket into the extravagant world of lust and luxury. Often can we find "modern youths" haunt the dance halls and woo the dance hostesses. This phenomenon distresses Bao Lang and Huo Sang to no small degree, and they often take chance to exhort them to lead a more useful life. In "Wuhou de guisu," Bao Lang urges a young man infatuated with the dance queen to mend his ways, saying, "Our country is at a critical moment. Inevitable disasters could befall at any time. Youths are vital to the country, and are the mainstay of our nation. You are a promising intellectual, then how can you abandon yourself to the alluring den of sirens? It is suicidal!"[87] In "Huo shi," Huo and Bao met an old acquaintance, a returned student majoring in chemistry, in a dance hall. Bao Lang thinks to himself that whatever the man has learned in the United States, he surely is now a salesman of foreign goods, referring to his adoption of imported goods. Huo Sang warns him rather seriously,

[87] Cheng, *Huo Sang tan'an ji,* Vol. 3, 212.

> You know that it is a critical period of internal and external troubles, not a time for fun or enjoyment. Intellectuals like us have great responsibilities. Our country has been invaded non-stop by the Japanese. Most people are now struggling in mires, and filling their stomachs with bark. Yet the hedonists in the city still waste their energy in the alluring dens of sirens! Think about it. If we still have a spark of humanity, how can we indulge in enjoyments? I dare say that Shanghai dance halls nowadays are indeed dens of sirens that devour our young men and women. You should come less. With your knowledge and talent, you should play a leading role in a laboratory, rather than being a frequent visitor of the dance halls.[88]

Cheng Xiaoqing's disapproval of the intellectuals' lack of social responsibilities is evident. Possibly written in the 1930s when Northeastern China was occupied and Shanghai had been attacked by Japan, Cheng Xiaoqing wished to expose the problems with his writings, and stimulate the social responsibilities of intellectuals and students, the backbone and future of the country as he saw.

In some extreme cases, the intellectuals can go further astray and turn into criminals. In "Baiyi guai" 白衣怪 (The ghost in white), Huo Sang reads the news that a college graduate shot a dance hostess out of jealousy. He exclaims, "How ridiculous that a college graduate who is an intellectual in the leading position would know social dancing, fall in love with a dance hostess, and shoot his lover dead! Isn't it worth noting that such phenomena occur in our age?" In response, Bao Lang indicates the widespread atmosphere of pleasure-seeking, romance, and decadence in the circles of education, laments the bankruptcy of education, and worries about the disastrous effects on the country.[89]

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[88] Cheng, *Huo Shi* 235-235.
[89] Cheng, *Zhentan taidou Cheng Xiaoqing* 132.

Intellectuals-turned criminals can be extremely dangerous. In a story "Di'er zhang zhaopian" already discussed above, Wang Zhisheng, a college graduate of law goes to the extreme of seducing an innocent girl into destruction, and following it up with schemes of blackmailing her sister. In Bao Lang's words,

> [T]he man had been a law student, hence a recipient of higher education and a member of the intellectual elite. Lacassagne, the French criminologist, has said that "those who possess knowledge, yet lack morality, are truly frightening when they commit a crime." The Belgian Quetelet has also said that training and education are two different matters. Simply being literate or trained is an insufficient gauge of whether a person is more or less likely to become a criminal: It is only a measure of a person's ability to become a higher- or lower-level wrongdoer. In other words, someone who has been through higher education is in no way less prone to break the law than someone who has not. Moreover, when an intellectual commits a crime, his modus operandi is far more formidable. Mr. Hu Zhantang has therefore made the painful admission that "It is fortunate for us that our educational system is not universal!" [90]

The cause of the intellectuals' deviant tendencies is attributed to the defect of education. Through Huo Sang, Cheng Xiaoqing not only criticized the wholesale westernization promoted in education, but also the erroneous focus on the superficial that takes the dregs and discards the essence:

> What is the use of our current education, except for being an adornment? We have numerous masters and PhDs, but what good have they brought to our national welfare and the people's livelihood? Those in position care only about the titles and degrees, and people treat education as a gilding process and a footstep to wealth and rank. What is the difference from imperial examinations? How many of them devote themselves to the intensive research of a certain subject? How many assiduously study in laboratories? How many take heed of the current

[90] Cheng, *Sherlock in Shanghai* 69-70.

> situations and future needs of our country? How many have in mind our nation's survival? What is the purpose of such education?[91]

The acute criticism was flung to the reader, challenging them to face the corruption and failure of education.

In general, Cheng's detective fiction has become a sounding-board for his social concerns. Speaking through Huo Sang and Bao Lang, he expressed concerns over the intellectuals' unwholesome lifestyles and their lack of responsibilities. His attitude towards these intellectuals can be summarized as "lament for their misfortune, anger for their lack of resolution" 哀其不幸，怒其不爭, in Lu Xun's terms. In his opinion, new educational system in the western model fails to foster pillars of the nation, with its superficiality and materialistic tendency. Moral education and discipline should be an indispensible part of education.

Detectives as New Heroes

If the intellectual's image in the Huo Sang stories is not upright enough, Cheng Xiaoqing nevertheless placed the hope on his detective and the assistant, as exemplary intellectuals who demonstrate the qualities expected. In other words, onto the detective projected the author's imagination of Chinese modernity by negotiating the old and the new, the East and the West. Huo Sang and Bao Lang, as the best-known pair of Chinese detective and his assistant, deserve a closer look here.

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[91] Cheng Xiaoqing, *Huqiu nü* 狐裘女 [Woman in fox-fur scalf] (Shanghai: Shijie shuju, 1945) 1.

The character of Huo Sang contains a complete set of qualities lost in most intellectuals in Cheng's stories. His serious approach to detective work, for example, marks him superior to all the PhDs who would rather squander time on social dancing or love games, than doing their job in the laboratory. Huo Sang takes every chance to promote his scientific methods and attitudes, making him a representative of the "scientific mind" in King-fai Tam's words.[92] We will leave Huo Sang's dedication to science to Chapter Four, but it is important to point out that Huo Sang's scientific mind and methods make him an ideal intellectual of the modern time, one who can creatively apply western methods to the resolving of Chinese problems.

Apart from the advocacy of science that aligns the detective with the New Culture agenda, Huo Sang surely embodies other ideals that are significant enough to be incorporated into Cheng's vision of modern China. For one thing, his sense of righteousness partly derived from his Moist belief makes him particularly social-minded. In "Jiangnan yan" 江南燕 (The south-China swallow), Bao Lang brings up Huo Sang's preference of the Confucian notion "To study the phenomena of nature in order to acquire knowledge" (*gewu zhishi* 格物致知) because of its resemblance to modern scientific methods, and the idea of "universal love" (*jian'ai* 兼爱) proposed by the Moist school. In Bao Lang's words, "heavily influenced by the chivalric spirit of Mozi, he [Huo Sang] develops a hatred for crimes and evildoings, and a readiness to stand up against injustice, help the needy and fight against might."[93] In an article "Huo Sang de tongnian" 霍桑的童年 (Huo Sang's childhood), Bao Lang the biographer mentions the legacy of his father

[92] Tam, "The Detective Fiction" 128.
[93] Cheng Xiaoqing, *Jiangnan yan* 江南燕 [The south-China swallow] (Shanghai: Shijie shuju, 1945) 1.

that also contributes to Huo Sang's uprightness. Huo Youzhi, the father, is educated in the traditional way to be a candidate for officialdom, but his candor and obstinacy make him an ill fit for the career. He turns to business and finally to farming. Huo Sang takes after his father's rebellious mind, strong will and righteousness. Although in this biography, Bao Lang highlights the rebellious heart of Huo Sang, it does not negate the fact that Huo Sang inherits a great deal from the Chinese tradition, represented by his serious but caring father. Furthermore, Huo Sang also chooses out of his own will to carry forward some of the tradition that he sees as relevant to the changing China. In other words, Huo Sang's attitude towards tradition, unlike the New Culturalists, is not to reject tradition altogether. Just as he does not approve of wholesale westernization for China, he does not endorse the overthrow of tradition either. In "Jiangnan yan," Huo Sang is said to have "extensive knowledge of both old and new learning," and he "incorporates" diverse knowledge. His take on the old learning is to "absorb the essence and discard the dross," following the judgment of his scientific mind.[94] For all his tolerance and open-mindedness towards diverse learning, Huo Sang still leans towards "modern science," which he relies on as the criterion of acceptation or rejection of the tradition. In Fan Boqun's words, Huo Sang is a perfect union of "wisdom" (*zhi* 智) and "high aspiration" (*zhi* 志), with his scientific mind the expression of the former and his social responsibility the manifestation of the latter. [95]

The mysterious presence of the "South-China swallow," a gallant burglar, makes more evident the inheritance of the tradition in Cheng Xiaoqing's stories. If Huo Sang

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[94] Ibid.

[95] Fan Boqun, *Zhongguo zhentan xiaoshuo zongjiang: Cheng Xiaoqing* 中國偵探小說宗匠: 程小青 [Great master of Chinese detective fiction: Cheng Xiaoqing] (Nanjing: Nanjing chubanshe, 1994) 16-17.

embodies the incorporation of the new and the old dictated by modern science, the South-China swallow is more a traditional-style knight-errant who robs the rich and relieves the poor by means of superb martial arts. The South-China swallow shows up in several Huo Sang stories, not as Huo Sang's nemesis, but as his comrade in spirit. Despite their often opposite positions as the thief and the detective, they share in common a sense of justice beyond the definition of the law. In a sense, Huo Sang is a more law-abiding knight-errant furnished with modern science, whereas the South-China swallow is the gallant outlaw who seems more "superhuman" for his esoteric abilities that evade imitation. The inclusion of the South-China swallow, and Huo Sang's sympathy with him, enhance these stories' tie with the Chinese tradition.

Sun Liaohong's Lu Ping is comparable to the South-China swallow in that both are gallant burglars who have no trust in the law but opt to take justice into their own hands. It is interesting to see that despite their different preferences in the negotiation of the old and the new, many Chinese detective writers explicitly expressed their emotional and moral connection to the Chinese tradition.[96]

Bao Lang, the assistant and chronicler of Huo Sang, deserves a special mention in his own right. As Huo Sang's steadfast alliance, Bao Lang shares Huo Sang's campaign against crimes, and his social concerns. Aside from the narrative function he undertakes in detective stories, he is a journalist and writer by trade. King-fai Tam discusses the cultural significance of the pairing of Huo Sang and Bao Lang in "The Detective Fiction of Ch'eng Hsiao-ch'ing," saying that they represent Cheng's "consistent effort to

[96] Chapter Three will pursue this line of inquiry by showing how Chinese justice and law are imagined in Chinese detective fiction.

incorporate two contradictory visions of life."[97] Specifically, Huo Sang and Bao Lang represent "two competing visions of how China is to invigorate itself:" Huo Sang being the representative of the "scientific mind," and Bao Lang the "literary mind."[98] When Huo Sang disseminates scientific knowledge and method, Bao Lang raises issue with the "morality of science," which is generally the domain of the literary mind.[99] As the literary mind, Cheng Xiaoqing expresses many concerns over the misuse of science through Bao Lang.[100]

In summary, we see the efforts of the detective writers to negotiate, appropriate and incorporate the old and the new, the West and the East through the characterization of the detectives. Even though King-fai Tam correctly sees Cheng Xiaoqing's cultural negotiation in the characterization of Huo Sang and his assistant, I do not agree with his statement that "Ch'eng presented these two visions in all their strength and weakness with such impartiality that ultimately the reader is left to decide between them for himself."[101] Cheng surely revealed a high degree of ambivalence towards the two visions, but rather than taking it as an impartial ideological stance consciously posited, I would rather see it as a reflection of the conflicting visions not yet integrated into a single one, a correspondence to the confusions and contradictions out there in the transitional world. To put it differently, the ambivalence is typical of the search for modernity in progress, a sign of the plurality and possibilities of modernity.

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[97] Tam, "The Detective Fiction" 119.
[98] Ibid. 128.
[99] Ibid. 130-131.
[100] This will be addressed in Chapter Four.
[101] Tam, "The Detective Fiction" 119-120.

III. Conclusion

Daniel Bell says, "A city is not only a place but a state of mind, a symbol of a distinctive style of life whose major attributes are variety and excitement; a city also presents a sense of scale that dwarfs any single effort to encompass its meaning."[102] It is true that the rise of Shanghai as a modern metropolis not only provided the material factors conducive to the rise of Chinese detective fiction, but also presented a new state of mind and a distinctive style of life that can be exciting, confusing, or intimidating to different individuals. As a specimen of popular fiction, detective fiction captures the urban experiences familiar to readers.

Leading detective writers like Cheng Xiaoqing and Sun Liaohong were sensitive to the reader's psychological and emotional needs, and created Huo Sang and Lu Ping in response to the demand for adventure, relaxation, information, guidance, and justice. Most writers were generally positive about the improvement science and reason could bring to readers, so they took it upon their shoulders the tasks of imparting new knowledge and chiming in with the New Culture enlightenment project. They did not fully agree with the New Culture advocates' wholesale westernization and complete rejection of tradition, though. The association of the modern lifestyle in the metropolis with moral decline and their explicit moral concerns made them conservative in comparison to their contemporaries more susceptible the foreign influence such as the Neo-sensationalists, or those more critical of the tradition, like the leftists. Old and new,

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[102] Danielle Bell, *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism: 20th Anniversary* Edition (New York: Basic Books, 1996) 106.

East and West, traditional and modern all find their places in these works, suggesting an ongoing process of cultural negotiation and appropriation, and an eclectic, ambivalent attitude towards the modernization of China. There were disagreements among detective writers, to be sure, but overall as a popular genre, Chinese detective fiction of the Republican period shows an effort to combine the scientific methods and mindset with Chinese ethics and moral principles, and envisions a modernity that accepts the Western influence with caution and embraces part of the Chinese tradition in good faith.

Chapter Three

Chaos under Control?

The Changing Conceptions of Law and Justice

> Sherlock Holmes: "I am not the law, but I represent justice so far as my feeble powers go."
>
> — Arthur Conan Doyle
> "The Adventure of the Three Gables"[1]

> Bao Lang: "In the scope of justice, we are not bound by rigid law."
>
> — Cheng Xiaoqing
> "Bai shajin" 白紗巾 (The white scarf)[2]

A rich man comfortably sits in the couch of his study. Suddenly he smells something like burnt cloth, and behold! There is a paper man caught in the window seam! Its leg is stuck between the windows as if it is forcing its way into the room. It is a small paper man of about four inches long. There are three fine lines between his eyebrows, and a mole in his left ear. Blood stains its heart, and its right hand holds a knife. The man is struck by horror. He hastily throws it into the fireplace. The paper man falls on a hot coal, and abruptly rises up, as if it is ready to attack. The stink of burnt cloth again sneaks in, making the man eager to flee the room. But when he opens the door, he thinks he hears a breath, yet nobody is outside.

[1] Doyle, *Complete* 1076.
[2] Cheng Xiaoqing, *Yeban hushing* 夜半呼聲 [Midnight screams] (Shanghai: Shijie shuju, 1945).

This is a scene from "Xue zhiren" 血紙人 (The bloody paper man), a novella written by Sun Liaohong. The rich man is Wang Junxi, an upstart in Shanghai who seemingly owns everything: wealth, fame, and a beautiful and docile wife. Yet his wonderful life is shattered by the paper man whose facial features remind him of a man he deeply wronged twelve years ago. Wang then worked in a small hostel in a faraway town of Zhejiang province. One stormy night, a shabbily dressed man arrived and asked for lodging. Wang Junxi, named Aling at that time, immediately smelled money when the man took out five silver dollars as prepayment, and refused his help to lift the package. Peeping into the window, he saw the man counting stacks of money and jewels. Greed fueled a venomous scheme: Wang reported the man to a powerful squire whose only son recently died of heart attack overnight. It happened that several children disappeared from the area, and rumor spread that all these, including the death of the squire's son, were the doings of the White Lotus Society,[3] whose remnants abducted or killed the children as human sacrifices for magic weapons. Wang claimed he saw the man cutting paper men that could walk! Of course the man must be a sorcerer of White Lotus. The local people were so shocked and agitated that they broke into the man's room, and found three paper men in his package, together with a record of the missing children' birthdays. The man did not have a trial. He was ordered to death by the squire's words, and underwent a most cruel execution of tearing open his heart. The man, sure enough, had a mole in his left ear, and three wrinkles between his eyebrows. Wang took the man's belonging, and fled to Shanghai, before the identity of the dead man came to light. He

[3] The White Lotus Society was a secret religious society existing in China since the 14th century. They led several rebellions in Chinese history.

was a wealthy landlord from another town, who, threatened by bandits, decided to leave his hometown. According to his plan, he sneaked away earlier to escape the attention of the bandits, and would reunite with his family in this hostel.

Ghost of the past returns. Wang sees the paper man again in his security box, when he discovers the loss of large sums of cash and bonds. Worse still, he sees the very incarnation of the dead man, twice in his own house. His nerves are so frayed that once when he meets a young friend with the surname Qiu in a tearoom, he suspects he smells the burnt cloth, and cries, “There it is again! That devil! With a mole in his ear!” It catches the attention of Lu Ping, the gentleman burglar, who sits next table. He is quite alarmed, thinking his identity is exposed because he is often called “the devil” and he has a red mole in his ear. Lu Ping’s interest is aroused, and he decides to find out the truth. Under the alias of Doctor Yu, he blatantly walks into Wang’s house with his family doctor, pretending to be the assistant. He wins the trust of everyone, and visits Wang alone the next day. With his witty conversation, easy manners, and mastery of the human heart, he is able to extract Wang’s partial confession of the past, and uncovers the scheme of Wang’s wife and his friend Qiu.

It turns out that Wang’s wife is the daughter of the dead man. Her family was devastated after her father’s death: her mother died shortly afterwards; her brother took up bad habits, squandered away all money, and sold her to a brothel. She met Wang and married him, without knowing that Wang was the murderer of her father. Only when Wang has a slip of tongue under the influence of alcohol does she come to the horrid discovery and plot the scheme with Qiu, her former suitor. They ask her brother to play the role of their father’s ghost, and take the same amount of cash that belongs to her

father, together with twelve years' interest, from the security box. When the infuriated Wang threatens to attack his wife and Qiu, Lu Ping points out that Wang has been poisoned by Qiu, and this is the final blow for Wang. Lu Ping tells Wang's wife that he makes up the poisoning story to scare Wang to death. Yet in reality, he finds that Wang does die of poison, obviously Qiu's doing, but Lu Ping chooses to keep the secret.

Thus ends the story, a story not so much on Lu Ping's clever detection of the truth as on his sense of justice. Ironic as it seems, Lu Ping the burglar represents justice that is difficult to achieve at that time, especially when it involves a powerful and wealthy man. A typical revenge story, it seems to echo and even reinforce an ancient belief in the Chinese culture, i.e., what goes around comes around. The theme of karmic retribution runs through the story. It begins with a Buddhist preaching Wang attends. "Those who kills will be killed in return!" These words of the Buddhist monk unsettle Wang and seem to start the process of vengeance. What happens next include more elements traditionally common to a revenge story, such as the apparition of the dead man, the mysterious paper man, and the lost money. With the revelation of Wang's doing early in the story, and the building up of suspense and intensification of horror, the story makes the reader witness to the punishment of the evil man. When Lu Ping makes appearance, he not only solves the puzzle of the paper man, but also plays a crucial role in speeding up the punishment and protecting the culprits of Wang's death. Here, Lu Ping is like an instrument of providence. Respect to the ethics is given full credits, while law, when coming into conflict with ethics, can be disregarded.

This sounds familiar to the Chinese reader of the early twentieth century, who grew up reading court-case stories. Yet for the new genre of detective fiction so recently

imported for the purpose of showcasing the rule of law and updating the legal concepts of the Chinese, this story is a far cry. Sun Liaohong's Lu Ping is not typically recognized as a detective. After all, Lu Ping is an outlaw. But is this attitude towards law and justice unusual among Chinese detective stories of the time?

A similar case of revenge by Cheng Xiaoqing, "Baiyi guai" (The ghost in white) may give a clue. In this story, a well-off man seeks Huo Sang's help because he sees a ghost in white twice. The man dies the same night, seemingly of violence. Huo Sang and Bao Lang investigate into the case and discover that it is the doing of the nephew Qiu Haifeng, a graduate of a school of fine arts in Beijing. His father died last year when the gold stocks he invested in plummeted. Since then he lives at the mercy of his uncle who profits from rising gold stocks. Qiu comes to suspect foul play in his father's death when an old servant tells him that his uncle often awakes from nightmares screaming his father's name, and that he even hires Taoist priests to exorcise unquiet spirits. To find out the truth, Qiu asks this loyal servant to dress up as a ghost in white bed sheet, and his uncle's reactions prove his guilty conscience. The night his uncle dies, Qiu dresses up as the ghost and shows up before him. His uncle immediately takes him as his brother's ghost and seems very scared. He throws a chair at the "ghost." Before Qiu can say anything, the man collapses dead. Qiu is able to extract confession from his uncle's accomplice, which confirms his suspicion. His uncle took advantage of his father's illness and made false news of gold price to exacerbate his health condition. Ultimately Qiu is the one who should be responsible for the death of his uncle, Huo Sang and Bao Lang, however, sympathize with him and trust his words that he has no intention of murder.

Because of Huo Sang's testimony, Qiu is not detained. Soon he goes abroad for further study.

These two stories are similar in many ways. The victims in both stories used to commit murder out of greed. They are troubled by guilty conscience, and this mentality is manipulated by the son or daughter who seeks revenge. Superstition plays a crucial role in the development of plots, and the detectives' wisdom sees through the fog and brings everything to light. Both detectives have sympathy for the avengers, and both stories acknowledge the saying "the wages of sin is death." The avengers in both stories go unpunished with the aid of the "detectives," who value moral integrity more than the law.

Such attitudes are not rare in Chinese detective fiction of the 1930s and 1940s, and this raises some questions: Why does such moral dilemma often feature in these detective stories and what does it tell about the time and the society? This chapter will explore the issue of law and justice in Chinese detective fiction by reading them, especially works of Cheng Xiaoqing and Sun Liaohong, against their Chinese and foreign predecessors in the history of crime fiction. Special attention will be paid to identifying the continuities and ruptures these new perceptions, representations and imaginations of law and justice have from their predecessors, and the socio-historical factors that conditioned their emergence. I intend to elucidate the impacts of sociopolitical changes on the fictional representations of law and justice, and illustrate how Chinese detectives were projected as new embodiments of justice by the collective imagination of the time.

Since law and justice are the focus of this chapter, a brief survey of the Chinese legal system would provide a useful context for the discussion. Literary representations of law and justice will follow, and main attentions will be given to Chinese detective

fiction of the Republican period by leading writers. By situating detective fiction in the tradition of Chinese crime fiction and exploring the myriad ways literature reflecting the reality of legal practices and the public's changing conceptions of the legal system, we will see that detective fiction, in the same vein as traditional crime fiction, was also loaded with concerns and expectations of the public. These concerns and expectations persist in Chinese culture for ages, and take on diverse manifestations in literature at different times.

I. Metamorphosis of China's Law and Legal System

Traditional Legal System: Law in Accordance with Rites

Traditional Chinese law, under the strong influence of Confucianism, was to a great extent based on *li* 禮 (rites).[4] *Li* is an important concept of Confucianism, meaning the propriety of interpersonal interaction. People have different social roles and accordingly are expected to follow and internalize different norms of proper behavior that regulate and maintain social order. For example, the ruler of a state should respect the subjects, and the subjects should be loyal to the ruler. Within a family, the junior should show filial piety to parents and elders. In terms of governance, *li* also plays a central role, as Confucian thinkers believe that a proper government should be guided by *li*, and the law is supplemental and hence secondary. A saying by Confucius well summarizes the prevalent view on the relationship of law and *li*:

[4] *li* 禮 (rites), an important concept in Confucian thinking, refers to the rules of propriety. It is associated with ethics and social order.

> Guide them by edicts, keep them in line with punishments, and the common people will stay out of trouble but will have no sense of shame. Guide them by virtue, keep them in line with the rites, and they will, besides having a sense of shame, reform themselves.[5]

The idea is that social control should primarily be enacted through the rule of virtue, and sustained through moral education and persuasion. Applying law and administering punishment were regarded as the last resort in governance. Ideally, law and *li* should complement each other, with rites taking the lead and law playing a subsidiary role. *Tang lü* 唐律 (The Tang code), established during the Tang dynasty and signaling the maturity of traditional legal system, was lauded as a perfect example of the integration of law and *li*.[6] In fact, this integration remained a defining feature of the Chinese legal system until the twentieth century. More than playing a key role in law making, *li* also exerted authority in judicial practices.

The case of Wei Wuji 衛無忌 in *Jiu Tang shu* 舊唐書 (The old history of Tang) provides a good example. Wei's father was killed when she was young, and her mother remarried, leaving her alone with no siblings. She was preoccupied with the thought of vengeance as she grew up. The occasion arrived when she saw the killer of her father at a banquet and killed him with a brick. She surrendered herself to the local official, declaring her willingness to take punishment now that her father's death had been avenged. The case finally reached Emperor Taizong, who, in favor of her filial piety and unyielding will, pardoned her. Moreover, he ordered the local officials to settle her down

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[5] Confucius, *The Analects* 論語, trans. D. C. Lau (London: Penguin Books, 1979) 63. The original is "道之以政，齊之以刑，民免而無恥；道之以德，齊之以禮，有恥且格."

[6] Zhang Jinfan 張晉藩, *Zhongguo falü de chuantong yu jindai zhuanxing* 中國法律的傳統與近代轉型 [The tradition and modern transition of Chinese law] (Beijing: Falü chubanshe, 1997) 30.

with fields and house in another state and find her a match.[7] This case reveals the extent *li* dominates law in administering justice.

Also noteworthy about traditional legal system is the integration of the judiciary and administration. Judicial power was entrusted to administrative officials at local levels. The central government did establish judicial institutions such as the Ministry of Justice (*xingbu* 刑部), and the Court of Judicial Review (*dalisi* 大理寺),[8] but ultimately the emperor could overrule decisions made by these institutions, as the case of Wei Wuji shows. In a sense, whether justice could be carried out depended largely on moral integrity and competence of officials and their advisors. Corruption and abuse of power could be a serious issue at times, and it is because of this situation that incorruptible officials who took to their heart the administering of justice were prevalently idolized in popular culture.

It is also important to note that in traditional China, there was no distinction between civil and criminal laws. In a sense, the traditional law is criminal law and whoever involved in lawsuits was presumed to be guilty until proven innocent. Therefore, officials and the public alike viewed litigation in a predominantly negative light. On the part of ordinary people, high cost often deterred them from resorting to litigation in civil matters. For officials, people's litigiousness would suggest a failure of the virtuous rule. Such a negative view on litigation might have brought about the general lack of legal knowledge among ordinary people.[9]

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[7] See Section "Lie nü" 列女 (Outstanding Women) in *Jiu Tang shu* 舊唐書 (The old history of Tang).
[8] Names and powers of judicial institutions at the central level changed over time. For details, see Zhang Jinfan 147-149.
[9] Zhang Jinfan 281-283.

Because of the presumption of guilt, torture in trial (*xingxun* 刑訊) was permitted and became a widespread practice. The convicts also faced severe penalty in traditional legal system. Since confession was considered the last and most crucial verbal evidence to convict a suspect, torture in trial was frequently used to extort confession, the abuse of which unfortunately often led to miscarriages of justice.[10] The case of Yang Naiwu 楊乃武 and Little Cabbage (*Xiao baicai* 小白菜) in the late Qing dynasty is just a best-known example revealing how corrupt officials abused tortures in trial and afflicted extreme punishments in legal practices.[11]

In short, traditional Chinese law was moralized with the principles of *li*. While there were humane sides such as the consideration of ethics and morals in settling lawsuits and the cautious attitudes towards adjudicating any lawsuit, there were also problems. Highly concentrated power of the government ran the danger of despotism, if the ruler was not upright, capable, or open-minded enough. Corrupt officials, abuse of torture, and privileged classes often prevented the course of justice, so much so that the underprivileged common people had the need for a wish fulfillment in popular culture.

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[10] For a detailed discussion on Chinese criminal investigation system, see Ni Tie 倪鐵, "Zhongguo chuantong zhencha zhidu de xiandai zhuanxing: 1906-1937 nian zhencha zhidu xiandaihua de chuqi jinzhan" 中國傳統偵查制度的現代轉型: 1906-1937 年偵查制度現代化的初期進展 [Modernization of China's traditional criminal investigation system between 1906 and 1937], Diss. (East China U of Political Science and Law, 2008).

[11] The case was among the four unusual cases of the late Qing dynasty. Yang Naiwu of Hangzhou was a candidate for the imperial examinations 舉人. In 1873 he was accused of committing adultery with his neighbor nicknamed Little Cabbage and murdering her husband with poison. The county and district magistrates imposed extreme tortures on him many times and forced him to admit to the crime. Yang and Little Cabbage were sentenced to death. Yang's relatives appealed to the imperial court, yet the original sentence was twice upheld because high officials were bribed. A retrial in Beijing four years later at Dowager Empress Cixi's order finally proved them innocent. Consequently, more than thirty officials were removed from office.

The emergence of court-case fiction and the worship of upright officials are typical examples here.

Late-Qing New Policies Reform: Legal Modernization in Blueprint

Traditional legal system remained relatively stable for almost a thousand years with minor revisions through the dynasties. The biggest challenge did not come until the mid-nineteenth century when Chinese sovereignty was gravely threatened by Western powers. As far as the judiciary is concerned, unilateral extraterritorial rights and consular jurisdiction were imposed on China by Western powers and Japan in unequal treaties, on the ground that "'uncivilized' states were incapable of establishing justice."[12] With extraterritoriality, nationals of these countries were given a legal privilege and exempt from the laws of China. The foreign consul was responsible for handling all civil and criminal cases involving his countrymen if they were accused or charged. They even extended their power to the Chinese living or working in the foreign concessions.[13]

When reform-minded officials and intellectuals awoke to the realization that Chinese judicial sovereignty was severely violated, they called for a legal reform to abolish extraterritoriality. Translations of western philosophical and legal works accelerated in the second half of the century, and Western ideas like separation of powers

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[12] "Extraterritoriality," *The Columbia Encyclopedia*, 6th ed. (New York: Columbia UP, 2000). According to "extraterritoriality" in Wang, Ke-wen, ed., *Modern China: An Encyclopedia of History, Culture, and Nationalism*, "One of the main goals of the legal reform during the last years of the Qing dynasty was to attack the rationale of extraterritoriality, namely, the 'backwardness and barbarity' of China's legal codes" (110-111). More discussion of extraterritoriality in China can also be found in Jules Davids, and Jonathan M. Nielson, "Extraterritoriality," *Encyclopedia of American Foreign Policy* (Farmington Hills: Gale Group, 2002), *Encyclopedia.com*.

[13] Such cases were brought to the Mixed Court.

and judicial independence appealed to elites who were concerned about the future of China.

Finally, the legal reform associated with the New Policies Reform (*gengzi xinzheng* 庚子新政, 1901-1911) was formally initiated, as a necessary step in building a constitutional monarchy, with an imperial edict issued in March, 1902. This edict brought up the need to adapt the Qing legal code to a changing time and situation, and requested scholars well-informed of both Chinese and Western legal codes to be sent to Beijing to draft new codes that would be "practical, fair, and well received by China and the West alike" 切實平允, 中外通行.[14] Two months later, another edict appointed Shen Jiaben 沈家本 (1840-1913) and Wu Tingfang 伍廷芳 (1842-1922) to take charge of revising the laws according to "the present situation of foreign relations and the legal codes of other countries."[15]

The New Policies' attempt to establish a modern judiciary was externally compelled in the hope of abrogating extraterritoriality. To invalidate justifications for extraterritoriality, the new judiciary must be tailored after Western models. The main concern, however, was on the issue of "what combination of the Western and the Chinese would be best for China."[16] The drafted and revised laws produced in the New Policies reform demonstrated a tension and compromise between traditional laws informed by rites and the imported concept of legal equality for all. For example, while *Daqing xin*

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[14] Quoted in Li Guilian 李貴連, *Shen Jiaben yu Zhongguo falü xiandaihua* 沈家本與中國法律現代化 [Shen Jiaben and the Modernization of Chinese Law] (Beijing: Guangming ribao chubanshe, 1989) 85.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Qiaoxun Xu, *Trial of Modernity: Judicial Reform in Early Twentieth-Century China, 1901-1937* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2008) 39.

xinglü cao'an 大清新刑律草案 (Draft of new criminal code) was presented to the court in 1907, its radicalness stirred such a fierce controversy that it had to undergo lengthy revisions before it was formally promulgated in 1910 with "provisional regulations" which revived most of what were removed from the old law. This criminal code, however, never had the chance to be implemented during the Qing dynasty, which came to a sudden end in 1912.

The guiding principles of the legal reform can be succinctly summarized as "the rule of law, judicial independence, and due process."[17] Overall, the reform made the following efforts to fashion a modern judiciary. First, the judiciary and administration were to be separated to achieve judicial independence. The establishment of a system of four-level courts and three-level trials were underway when the Qing dynasty ended in 1912. Secondly, the reform aimed to abolish torture in trial, and moderate criminal punishments. Some of the cruelest punishments were abolished, and incarceration and fines were proposed as major forms of punishments. Thirdly, a civil code was drafted for the first time in Chinese history, aiming to separate criminal and civil justice in light of foreign models. And fourthly, codes of civil and criminal procedures were drafted in order to ensure the rights of the accused and the impartial resolution of civil and criminal cases. Although this reform did not realize its goal of establishing a modern judiciary to regain judicial sovereignty, it provided a blueprint to carry on legal modernization in the Republican period.

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[17] Ibid. 3.

The Republican Period: Continuation of the Legal Reform

After the Qing dynasty was toppled by the 1911 Revolution, warlord regimes collectively called the Beiyang Government ruled China from 1912 to1928. The legal reform partially accomplished under the Qing regime became a framework in which the Beiyang government worked out details to formalize judicial institutions and practices. For example, the Beiyang government inherited the draft code and other laws in effect, removing only the parts incompatible with the new form of government. Despite continued endeavors in drafting new laws and promoting the legal reform, the actual accomplishment fell far behind expectations. Many county magistrates were still given the judicial power for want of resources, and this situation persisted well into the 1940s.

The Beiyang Government's efforts of modern nation-state building were continued by the Nationalist regime (1928-1949). The unfinished legal reform project was carried on in order to elevate China's international standing and put an end to extraterritoriality. The establishment of six-code legal system signaled another progress in the legal reform.[18] Also the laws promulgated by the Nationalist Government took a step further to separate law from the influence of rites. For all the changes, the reform, just like in the Beiyang era, was hampered by lack of resources and unfavorable circumstances like wars, and the spirit of the new laws never penetrated to all levels of the society.

The brief survey of the changes in Chinese legal system aims to provide a socio-historical context for the ensuing discussion of Chinese crime fiction. The following

[18] The body of law consists of six codes: the Constitution, the Civil Code, the Code of Civil Procedures, the Criminal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedures and the Administrative Laws. See Zhang Jinfan, ed., *Zhongguo falüshi* 中國法律史 [A history of Chinese law] (Beijing: Falü chubanshe, 1995) 554-560.

discussion will hinge on the correlation between literary phenomena, the social conditions, and the authors' views on law and justice.

II. A Chinese Tradition of Law and Literature

Upholding justice is a recurrent theme of literature. In pre-modern China, the genre most closely tied to this theme is court-case fiction, where an upright and incorruptible official resolves a myriad of strange and difficult cases. The emergence and popularity of this genre corresponded to the distinguishing features and specific challenges of the traditional legal system mentioned above. There is, however, another genre marginally linked to the theme of justice, i.e., knight-errant fiction. More of a psychological compensation, the imaginary knights-errant come to the rescue where the law fails to do justice, or when the law is out of reach.

Court-case Fiction: The Worship of Upright Officials

The literary genre most relevant to Chinese law in the imperial period is court-case fiction. As a form of popular entertainment, court-case fiction rose to prominence in the Song dynasty and retained its popularity till the Qing dynasty.[19] The majority of these stories were written in vernacular Chinese, and almost always feature district magistrates

[19] Scholars diverge on the definition of court-case fiction and when this genre first emerged. For details see Lü Xiaopeng 呂小蓬, *Gudai xiaoshuo gong'an wenhua yanjiu* 古代小說公案文化研究 [Cultural studies of traditional court-case fiction] (Beijing: Zhongyan bianyi chubanshe, 2003) 10-21; Chen Li-Chun 陳麗君, "Cong kualinyu de shijiao tan gong'an wenxue yanjiu de jige wenti" 從跨領域的視角談公案文學研究的幾個問題 [Discussion of several issues in the studies of court-case fiction from an interdisciplinary perspective], *Tunghai University Library Newsletter* 10 (2009).

making investigations and settling lawsuits. They usually include a description of the crime, the exposure of the deed and the punishment of the guilty.

Such a genre could only come into being with the establishment of a legal system. Chinese legal system reached maturity in the Tang dynasty with the creation of *Tanglü* (Tang code). In the Song dynasty, the boom of commerce and urban society brought about an increasing legal awareness among the populace. With social interactions and civil disputes on the rise, the court had to "add many statutes on marriage, household registration, land and property" in order to "regulate the increasingly complex social relations."[20] Accordingly, the populace's awareness of the law increased: professional litigation masters (*songshi* 訟師) emerged, and collections of legal cases and judgments went into press.[21] In addition, the compilation of *Xi yuan ji lu* 洗冤集錄 (Collected cases of injustice rectified), a groundbreaking book on forensic science by Song Ci 宋慈 (1186-1249), signaled the development of criminal investigation system, and facilitated the blossoming of court-case fiction.

The heyday of court-case fiction arrived in the Ming dynasty when collections of court-case fiction abound in the market and more literati were involved in the writing.[22] The famous Judge Bao came into focus as the hero of numerous court-case stories.

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[20] Miao Huaimin 苗懷民, *Zhongguo gudai gong'an xiaoshuo shilun* 中國古代公案小說史論 [History of traditional Chinese court-case fiction] (Nanjing: Nanjing daxue chubanshe, 2005) 33.

[21] Ibid. The most famous collections of legal cases include *Yi yu ji* 疑獄集 (Collection of doubtful cases), *Zhe yu gui jian* 折獄龜鑑 (The grand mirror for judging criminal cases), and *Tang yin bi shi* 棠陰比事 (Parallel cases from under the pear tree). They supposedly served as manuals of jurisprudence and judgment, but were often read as court-case stories by the public. Collections of judgments include *Minggong shupan qingming ji* 名公書判清明集 (Luminous collection of judgments by illustrious figures). See Miao 34-38.

[22] It was different from the Song dynasty when most court-case stories were crafted by story-tellers and performed in the public.

Collections of Judge Bao's trials were greatly relished, such as *Baijia gong'an* 百家公案 (A hundred court cases) and *Longtu gong'an* 龍圖公案 (Court cases of Bao Longtu).

When it came to the mid-Qing dynasty, court-case fiction took on a more diversified look. On the one hand, the once predominantly short genre took the form of chapter novel (*zhanghui xiaoshuo* 章回小說);[23] on the other, a new subgenre came into fashion when court-case fiction merged with knight-errant fiction and created a hybrid court-case and knight-errant fiction, the representatives being *Shigong an* 施公案 (Cases of Lord Shi), *San xia wu yi* 三俠五義 (Three Heroes and Five Gallants), and *Penggong an* 彭公案 (Cases of Lord Peng).

Chinese court-case fiction, in general, displays the following characteristics. First, it almost always involves a local magistrate or judge of the higher court, and the official, if wise and fair in administering judgments, is often idealized and idolized as a larger-than-life figure, leading to the worship of just officials in popular culture. The elevation of the incorruptible officials is telling of the status quo of traditional legal system. As is mentioned above, traditionally jurisdiction was not separate from administration. Consequently, the local official played a crucial role in upholding justice in the area. Therefore such just officials like Bao Zheng 包拯 (999-1062, commonly known as Judge Bao) and Hai Rui 海瑞 (1514-1587) were glorified in popular culture,[24] whereas in

[23] Traditional Chinese vernacular novels were mostly written in the format of *zhanghui xiaoshuo* 章回小說, or chapter-divided novel. Centering on plot, each chapter ends with a suspense inviting the reader to return to the next chapter for the outcome. Chapter novels can be very long, including over a hundred chapters such as *Xi you ji* 西遊記 (Journal to the west) and *Honglou meng* 紅樓夢 (Dream of the red chamber). Chapter novels came into popularity in the Ming and Qing dynasties.

[24] Bao Zheng served as governor of Kaifeng during the reign of Emperor Renzong 仁宗 (r. 1022-1063) in the Northern Song dynasty. Many fictionalized court cases in literature and drama were assigned to him,

reality, corrupt officials were commonly found. It is only when the official had the supreme authority over the people, and upright officials stood out among the corrupt or inept ones that people made them a symbol of justice. On the other hand, such officials also exemplified the Confucian idealization of the officials taking care of the people like father figures in a household. They were called parent-like officials (*fumu guan* 父母官), or in a figure of speech, the "blue sky" (*qingtian* 青天), indicating their paternal authority and responsibility over the people.

Also characteristic of court-case fiction, it is not rare that legal code gave way to ethics. This is in line with Confucian thought that holds morality and ethics as the first and foremost measure of social control. Many of these stories feature a filial son or virtuous woman exacting revenge. A story from *Chuke pai'an jingqi* 初刻拍案驚奇 (Striking the table in amazement: First series) of the Ming dynasty has a plot quite similar to the anecdote of Wei Wuji quoted earlier. Entitled "Li Gongzuo qiaojie mengzhong yan, Xie Xiao'e zhiqin chuangshang dao" 李公佐巧解夢中言 謝小娥智擒船上盜 (Li Gongzuo wittily solved riddles sent in dreams; Xie Xiao'e cleverly caught robbers of the ship),[25] the story begins with the murder of her father and husband and robbery of their ship when Xie Xiao'e is fourteen. She makes a narrow escape and stays in a nunnery, though she is reluctant to become a nun because she has not avenged the dead. She dreams of her father and husband, each telling her the name of his murderer in a riddle.

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which made him the most idolized upright officials in Chinese history. His other names include Baogong 包公 (Lord Bao)，Bao Qingtian 包青天 (Bao the blue sky), Bao Longtu 包龍圖 (Bao of the dragon image), and Bao Daizhi 包待制 (Edict attendant Bao). Hai Rui was an official of the Ming dynasty. He was revered as a model of unwavering integrity in office.

[25] This story is based on a short story in Classical Chinese from the Tang dynasty, "Xie Xiao'e zhuan 謝小娥傳" (Biography of Xie Xiao'e) by Li Gongzuo 李公佐 (c. 770-850).

She cannot solve the riddles, and asks for help from a monk in a nearby temple who is well-connected with officials and literati. The riddles remains unsolved for several years until an official named Li Gongzuo successfully deciphers the two names. Xie Xiao'e cross-dresses as a man and looks for the two robbers. By coincidence, she reads a position vacant notice posted by a man with the same name of the man who killed her father, and applies for the job. She is accepted and soon becomes a trusted employee of the robber. She finds her family's belongings in the robber's place and is sure she has found the murderer of her father. She stays in the service of the robber for two years, waiting to confirm whether his cousin is the other robber. She finally gets the chance when the two show up together in a banquet. Xiao'e kills one robber, asks the neighbors' help to bind the other and send him to the local magistrate. The evil is exposed and punished, and Xiao'e is willing to accept due punishment with no regrets. The local magistrate has sympathy for her and reports her deed to the Court. The emperor not only excuses her but also asks the local magistrate to commend her moral integrity and virtues. Xiao'e, however, renounces promises of a good life, chooses to become a nun and leaves her hometown. She runs into Li Gongzuo once more and tells him her story of revenge. Li is so deeply moved that he puts it down in writing.

This story shares the same framework as the case of Wei Wuji. Both suffered loss of family at a young age, and both nurtured a strong will to take revenge. Both eventually took justice into their own hands and did not shy away from their own doings. Both cases reached the supreme ruler and both went free for demonstrating filial piety and virtues. Xie Xiao'e's story has more details and the plot is more complex, yet the main idea is the same, i.e., as long as their actions can be justified by ethics, they could gain sympathy of

the society and be exempt from the punishment of the law. Xie Xiao'e, in particular, is commendable for many reasons: filial piety towards her father, loyalty towards her husband, chastity throughout all these years when she had to dress as a man in the service of the robber, and disregard of fame and profits.

Although in reality it is not always the case that law submits to ethics, in court-case fiction, however, when the two come into conflict, ethics almost always gets the upper hand. It is revealing of the public expectation that the legal system could be in sync with ethics, and that the local magistrate could be as lenient and understanding as being just and upright.

The third characteristic of court-case fiction is its detailed description of the measures taken to extort verbal evidence, and the emphasis on heavy punishment on the guilty. At a time when forensic science was not as developed as today and material evidence was not easy to collect, officials had to rely heavily on observation and verbal evidence in investigation and judgment. The use of torture to extort verbal evidence or confession is condemned if the magistrate is corrupt and incompetent. However, when an upright magistrate adopts the same method on the guilty, it seems not an issue with court-case fiction. Therefore it is not the cruelty of the method that is in question, but whether it is used by the right official on the right person. Moreover, court-case fiction relishes the punishment of the guilty out of the traditional belief that the evil should be punished and the good should be promoted 懲惡揚善. The description of punishment of the guilty also serves the social function of warning people against committing wrong deeds.

It is necessary to point out that the legal system under the Confucian influence did not necessarily approve of heavy punishments. It was often proposed that torture should

be used with caution (*shenxing* 慎刑). Regardless of whether abuse of torture was a social reality or whether torture was used with caution, court-case fiction almost invariably prescribes heavy punishment for the evil to meet the public demand for justice and a clear delineation of reward and punishment.

Although not quite common in court-case fiction, the differentiation of punishment based on the criminal's social status can be found in some stories. It mirrors the reality of the traditional legal system, although it might be a target of complaints among the underprivileged. In fact, placing righteousness before considerations of social status or family connections is lauded in these stories. For instance, the story "Zha Mei an" 鍘美案（Judge Bao executed Chen Shimei) is perhaps the most popular one about the impartiality of just officials. In a nutshell, it tells how Chen Shimei, a poor scholar rises to fame in the imperial examinations and marries the Emperor's sister by hiding his marital status. When his wife Qin Xianglian comes to the capital with her children to look for Chen, the latter is afraid that his secret would be exposed and his career would be compromised. So he decides to have his wife killed. When Qin realizes that her husband has changed into a heartless man, she reports the case to Judge Bao. Despite pressure from the Emperor's sister and mother, the impartial Judge Bao has Chen Shimei tried and executed. This story developed into this form in the Qing dynasty and was widely adapted for stage performance. While the plot is for the most part fictional, its popularity reveals a call for impartial treatment regardless of social status, which is extremely

exceptional in the traditional legal system because it sees differentiation as the norm. This situation did not change until the late-Qing legal reform.[26]

In short, court-case fiction sets the sagacious just official as the focus of wish fulfillment. The just official, being part of the imperial institution, represents the best of the system with his responsibility, capability, understanding, and wisdom. Moreover, he surpasses the real officials by being impartial and incorruptible. In imperial China when law and justice were dependent on the moral uprightness of the government officials, the emergence, transformation, and popularity of court-case fiction testify to the pervasiveness of injustice, and the popular demand for upholders of justice.

Knight-errant Fiction: Taking Justice into Our Own Hands

If the popular imagination of justice is projected onto the righteous officials in court-case fiction, it also finds another expression in the more illusionary world of the knights-errant. Chinese scholar Chen Pingyuan defines knight-errant fiction as a genre with a focus on chivalrous deeds done by force.[27] The heroic knights-errant come to the rescue of the helpless where law fails to bring about justice. Scholars often trace its origin to "Biographies of Knights-errant" in *Shiji* (Records of the grand historian) by Sima Qian, but the genre did not come into shape until the Tang dynasty when knights-errant became one of the favorite subjects of the *chuanqi* 傳奇 or "tales of marvels." Knight-errant

[26] Court-case fiction also contains a plethora of supernatural elements, in accordance with the deification of the just officials. It seems these just officials are so god-like that they can relate to the supernatural and got divine revelations. This aspect of court-case fiction became the most controversial when science called into question the existence of supernatural beings. It will be fully addressed in Chapter Four.

[27] See Chen Pingyuan, *Qiangu wenren xiake meng: Wuxia xiaoshuo leixing yanjiu* 千古文人俠客夢：武俠小說類型研究 [The scholar's ancient knight-errant dream] (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1992) 1.

fiction gained popularity in the Qing dynasty, reached a new height in the Republican era, and is still a favorite genre of popular fiction today.

Also a psychological compensation for the slack of social order and moral values, knights-errant emerge as superheroes who, by means of their superb martial arts skills and strong sense of justice, help the weak and punish the evil. Most knight-errant novels tend to be less concerned with the reality, but the spirit of knights-errant echoes the strong demand for justice among the unrepresented and underprivileged.

III. Chinese Detective Fiction: Law and Order Redefined

Chinese detective fiction of the Republican period displays a high degree of social concern in general. Writers like Cheng Xiaoqing and Sun Liaohong did not hesitate to voice their own observations and social critiques through the mouth of their characters. In addition to explicit remarks, their stories also comment on the law and legal system of the time by means of plot structure and characterization. Then what do these stories reveal about their writers' attitudes toward the law and legal system? Did the writers share the same view? To what extent did their view(s) represent the prevailing conception of the legal system? How do their heroes meet the popular demand for justice and order? To answer these questions, we will closely examine the works by Cheng Xiaoqing and Sun Liaohong. The second task to accomplish in this section is to identify the uniqueness and continuation of the representation of justice in Chinese detective fiction by placing it in the context of traditional crime fiction.

Justice Comes First: Huo Sang the Upholder of Justice

Law and justice occupy a prominent position in the copious body of Cheng Xiaoqing's detective works,[28] not only because of the inherent affiliation of detective fiction and this particular theme, but also out of Cheng's concern over the problems afflicting the society. In almost all his works, Cheng expresses deep anxieties through the words of Huo Sang and Bao Lang. Apart from the "consensus against sybaritism, consumerism and decadence" already discussed in Chapter Two,[29] they also lament the general deterioration of morals, the corruption of education, the officials' neglect of duty, and most importantly, the lack of justice. For example, Huo Sang criticizes the inefficiency of the traditional judicial system in "Duan zhi tuan" 斷指團 (The league of cut-off thumbs),

> With the exception of a number of metropolises, most of the hinterland has no independent jurisdiction. The administrators have judicial authority, and most stick to the secret tip of simplifying matters. For instance, if a murder happens in his area, how he treats the case depends on the wealth and social status of the victim. If the victim is a poor commoner, they take as their motto "The less trouble the better," and dismiss the case carelessly. If the victim has a strong background and the administrators face pressure from higher levels, they will play the trick of "stealthily substitute one person for another." That is, they will randomly get a scapegoat, extort confessions by force, and settle the case.[30]

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[28] Cheng Xiaoqing published more than seventy works of detective fiction between 1910s and 1940s. They often appeared first in newspapers or magazines, and were later collected into books. Seventy-three stories were included in *Huo Sang tan'an xiuzhen congkan* 霍桑探案袖珍叢刊 (Pocket series of Huo Sang's detective cases) published by Shijie shuju from 1942 to 1945.

[29] Kinkley 100.

[30] Cheng Xiaoqing, *Duan zhi tuan* 断指团 [The league of cut-off thumbs] (Shanghai: Shijie shuju, 1945) 4-5.

When Cheng Xiaoqing wrote in the 1920s to 1940s, the legal reform that was initiated in the early 1900s was still under way but never fully carried out. Just as Huo Sang observes, jurisdiction was not separated from administration in most parts of China. Considering the fact that the late-Qing saw novels of exposure (*qianze xiaoshuo* 譴責小說) produced in large quantities, which expose the fraud, hypocrisy, and sycophancy among officials, what the Republican era inherited was a negative perception of officialdom (*guanchang* 官場) as inherently corrupt.[31] Many problems of the traditional judicial system remained and sometimes became aggravated with the involvement of new interest groups. Even in metropolises like Shanghai where the judicial institutions had been reformed, the procedures were still overshadowed by hypocrisy and corruption, residues of the old system.

Out of the suffocating darkness emerge the caring and responsible Huo Sang, and his assistant Bao Lang. They share the same concerns, and harbor the same aspiration, i.e., however small their efforts might be, they would strive to advance the course of justice and contribute to this grand mission. Unlike his predecessor Sherlock Holmes, who seems aloof and not at all interested in social problems, Huo Sang pays close attention to them and is characterized by an acute awareness of his mission and responsibility to society. If we call Holmes a restorer of middle-class social order, Huo Sang, in contrast, can be rightly called an upholder of justice: the type of justice used to be represented by upright officials like Bao Gong in traditional literature.

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[31] See Ruoyun Bai, *Staging Corruption: Chinese Television and Politics* (Vancouver: UBC, 2014) 162 for a discussion of *guanchang* and novels of exposure.

Huo Sang repeats his mission several times. In "Duan zhi tuan," Huo Sang explains why he takes the case while still on vocation, "I have always wanted to eradicate the evil, assist the good, and serve the people. Now the area is troubled by such a cruel secret society, whose members kill and cut off thumbs as if it were a game. They are the enemy of society. How can we stand aloof?"[32] In another story "Taofan" 逃犯 (The fugitive), Huo Sang states,

> The reason I work tirelessly is because I care for those who live in the shadow of treacherous officials, unruly gentry, and local despots. They suffer from all kinds of oppressions. Some were wrongfully thrown in jail and have no way to voice their grievance. I cannot stand it. How can I not attend to my calling? The reward of my job is in the job itself. I don't care for other rewards.[33]

Huo Sang takes it as his calling to stand up for those wronged and bring justice to them. He regards himself as a spark in the darkness, eagerly trying to remedy the defects of traditional judicial system with his feeble efforts.[34]

His loyal partner and bosom friend Bao Lang speaks highly of Huo Sang's contributions, saying,

> Since I published Huo Sang's detective cases, they have more or less spurred the gradual reform of the judiciary, whose dark sides have traditionally been a taboo. For example, they have come to value proofs and discard torture in investigation, and employ forensic experts in autopsy. All in all, our judiciary has come to be rescued from evils such as superstition and disregard for human life, and has embarked on the bright path of "relying on reason," "making use of science," "supporting human rights" and "pursuing the rule of law."[35]

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[32] Cheng, *Duan zhi tuan* 39.
[33] Cheng, *Huo Sang tan'an ji*, Vol. 11, 60.
[34] Cheng, *Duan zhi tuan* 5.
[35] Cheng, "Xue bishou" 血匕首 [The bloody dagger], *Huo Sang tan'an ji*, Vol. 6, 67.

It is farfetched to say these changes occurred as a result of the fictional detective's hard work and his partner's popular stories, yet we can see not only Huo Sang and Bao Lang's sense of mission and high expectations, but also the author's. Cheng Xiaoqing took the writing of detective stories seriously. With his writings, he intended not just to entertain, but more importantly to guide, to educate, and to influence readers and society, so that one day the rule of law can be realized.

If the calling of Huo Sang is to uphold justice, as Cheng intended, is he also the guardian of law and order? The answer that can be found within the texts is vague. First, Huo Sang is independent of the judiciary. Being a private detective, he is not a government employee, unlike the police detectives who always call for his help, and surely different from Judge Bao who represents the authority. That Huo Sang does not belong to the institution is an important fact. Because of that, he does not have to compromise his integrity when his conscience comes into conflict with corruption, common practice, or even the law. He can be true to his own judgment of right and wrong whichever situation he runs into. Second, he is aware of the imperfection of the legal system. He knows that the law sometimes represents only a fraction of people's interests, and that it can often be manipulated. Huo Sang once says, "In this time, the law is like a weapon exclusively for the protection of the wealthy. In other words, the power of money can surely change the law!"[36]

In light of this, the role of lawyers in Cheng's stories is of particular interest. Lawyers often turn out to be villains in his stories. In "Huiyi ren" (The man in gray), a doctor is shot at the same night a newlywed couple are killed. It turns out that the

[36] Cheng, "Huiyi ren," *Huo Sang tan'an ji*, Vol. 6, 59.

murderer is the bride's ex-husband, who was forced into divorce by a lawyer hired by the second husband, who of course is much richer. The ex-husband seeks revenge but mistakenly kills the next-door neighbor of the lawyer. In his confession to Huo Sang, the murderer expresses his contempt for the treacherous lawyer Dong Beijin:

> I plan to set him up as an example to warn those lawyers who manipulate the law. Lawyers enjoy a high social status, and their job is to protect human rights, especially the rights of the underprivileged people. Yet lawyers like Dong Beijin are only after money. They don't care for the law, not to mention the protection of human rights. This kind of people should not be allowed to live in the world and commit more heinous crimes.[37]

Thinking that the lawyer has been killed in a second try, the murderer commits suicide to preserve his dignity, as he "has a clear conscience, and does not want to die on a legal charge."[38] What he does not know is that the lawyer escapes death again, protected by Huo Sang in ignorance of the cause of the murder. After learning the whole story, Huo Sang and Bao Lang are sympathetic towards the murderer, and lament that the net of the law cannot catch the lawyer. The story ends with a twist when the lawyer dies in a train accident. Poetic justice finally intervenes.

Lawyers like Dong Beijin show up in several stories. Almost unexceptionally they appear as treacherous. Bao Lang calls them "law mongers" (*lüguan* 律棍),[39] meaning they will turn things upside down for the sake of money. This disdain for lawyers might be a continuation of the distain for litigators in imperial China who were infamous for confusing black and write in their composition of the plaints.

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[37] Ibid. 60.
[38] Ibid. 61.
[39] Cheng, "Huo shi," *Huo shi* 35.

Because of the imperfection of the law and the unethical conducts of many legal practitioners, Cheng Xiaoqing found it more important to make Huo Sang stand up for justice, rather than the law. Huo Sang, with the understanding that "[t]he righteous can be illegal, while the actions that do not transgress the law can be morally wrong,"[40] does not hesitate to break the law in the name of justice. The story quoted in the beginning of the chapter "Baiyi guai" shows this tendency, but "Duan zhi tuan" is a more relevant example here.

In this particular story, Huo Sang once accompanies Bao Lang to Nanjing to recuperate from neurasthenia. Not long do they enjoy leisure before it is spoiled by the arrival of a package, which to their astonishment contains a cutoff thumb immersed in alcohol. Curiosity and conscience spur them to pursue the culprits, the "League of Cut-off Thumbs." After several failed attempts, Huo Sang encounters Fan Baiping, the head of the league, who surrenders himself and elucidates the nature of the league: they are a group of well-educated young men who warn and punish the corrupt rich by violent means in order to intimidate the rich hypocrites and to curb the spread of corruption in society. Rather sympathetic with Fan, Huo Sang and Bao Lang only regret their involvement puts Fan and his comrades in disadvantage. "My attitude and purpose were misunderstood. Otherwise I would not have worked in the interest of the evil gentry, and Fan Baiping would not have been the victim caught in the snare of law," Huo Sang sighs. The news of Fan's escape from the jail brings a welcome relief to the story.

Fan Baiping is one of the most unlikely criminals in Huo Sang stories written by Cheng Xiaoqing. He is a graduate of Peking University, a schoolteacher, and a well-off

[40] Cheng, "Xue bishou," *Huo Sang tan'an ji*, Vol. 6, 74.

"upper-class young man" equipped with new knowledge. His involvement in the mutilation and murder of several wealthy people seems rather incompatible with his image, yet it happens that in a corrupt society without a soundly established legal system, conscientious young men like Fan resort to violence as a means of punishing the evil and upholding social justice. Although Huo Sang and Bao Lang disapprove of violence, they share with these young men a deep concern for the welfare of the people, and a sense of responsibility for social improvement. Their sympathy towards Fan indicates a moral dilemma Huo Sang often confronts. To adhere to the law and turn in the criminal, he will suffer from the pangs of conscience. Yet to secretly release the criminal, he runs the risk of violating the law he still sets hope on.

The moral dilemma of Huo Sang reminds one of Sherlock Holmes, the prototype on which Huo Sang is modeled. Holmes also has his difficult moments in choosing the right thing to do. The following utterance of Holmes might very well summarize Huo Sang's attitude towards Fan: "Once or twice in my career I have done more real harm by my discovery of the criminal than ever he had done by his crime. I have learned caution now, and I had rather play tricks with the law of England than with my own conscience."[41]

It is estimated that in about one fourth of Sherlock Holmes stories, the Great Detective takes justice into his own hands either to save a culprit or remove someone from risking a trial.[42] The detective appoints himself the judge and jury, using his own judgment to protect the weak, when he finds the punishment disproportionately severe for

[41] Doyle, *Complete* 773.
[42] According to Robert Keith Leavitt, "In the 60 cases of record in the Writings, there are 37 definite felonies where the criminal was known to Mr. Sherlock Holmes. In no less than 14 of these cases did the celebrated detective take the law into his own hands and free the guilty person" (Doyle, *Annotated* 467).

the crime. A good example is “The Adventure of Charles Augustus Milverton.” A young lady seeks Holmes’ help when Milverton the notorious master blackmailer threatens to ruin her engagement by exposing her private letters if she does not pay a high price. Holmes meets with Milverton and finds the man extremely repulsive with no moral sense. The negotiation fails, and Holmes decides to burgle Milverton’s house for the letters. Watson and Holmes, hiding in the room, happens to witness a meeting between Milverton and a maidservant coming to sell her mistress’s secret. Things take a dramatic turn when the maidservant reveals herself as a former victim of Milverton, saying her husband died of heartbreak when she would not pay Milverton and he revealed her secret. This lady shoots Milverton to death, and runs away. Holmes stops Watson when he intends to step in before the shooting. Holmes dumps all the secret letters to fire before leaving the scene of the crime. When the police ask for help in investigation, Holmes refuses them, claiming his sympathy is with the criminal. Later, they discover the identity of the culprit and her late husband, but decide to keep their silence.

This case shows clearly how far Holmes can go in pursuing a justice different from, and in a sense, above the law. He breaks into Milverton’s house for burglary, stands witness to the execution of Milverton, shelters the criminal, and destroys the blackmail papers. Holmes can justify his action because the man is beyond the boundary of morality and can hardly be brought to justice before the law without causing scandals to his victims. Out of chivalry and confidence in his own judgment and sense of morality, Holmes does not mind flouting the law for noble purposes.

Holmes’ disregard for the law stems from his confidence in his superior judgment and sense of morality. What underlies this confidence, in turn, is a legal system that

traditionally prioritizes the judgment of individuals.[43] In the post-industrial, late Victorian England with an established legal system and new police forces, Sherlock Holmes' willingness to occasionally break the law for noble purposes was not necessarily considered vices, because English law, the precedent of common law, is one that highly values individualism. Holmes' transgressions represent a trust in the power of the individual, sometimes over the institution. And this confidence originates in humaneness and rationality, a combination that makes Holmes a lasting appeal even to this day. He functions at the turn of the century as a symbol of the high spirit of the age, a champion of rationality, an assuring force that would always uphold justice, whether guaranteed by the law or not, and a restorer of social order.

Huo Sang, as the "Eastern Holmes," takes on many traits of his British predecessor, among which, the readiness to break the law for the ultimate good is one. Different from Holmes, however, his transgression is rooted in his awareness that the current law and legal system are flawed, and that however feeble his power is, as a conscientious citizen, he should contribute to the course of justice and the improvement of the legal system by following the prevalent moral standards in dealing with cases. In fact, Huo Sang often regards the law as being too "rigid and inflexible," and proposes to remedy it with conscience and compassion.[44] Underlying his "transgression" are his social responsibility and his concern for the legal reform, rather than the confidence in his individual code of honor or morality, or the restoration of a relatively stable social order.

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[43] According to *The Spirit of the Common Law* by Roscoe Pound, the legal tradition of the common law has two characteristics, one of which being "an extreme individualism," i.e.,the "unlimited valuation of individual liberty and respect for individual property" (13). Pound further explains that "[i]t relies on individual initiative to enforce the law and vindicate the right" (13-4). See Roscoe Pound, *The Spirit of the Common Law* (Boston: Marshall Jones, 1921).

[44] Quoted in Fan, *Zhongguo zhentanxiaoshuo zongjiang* 19.

This may give insights to the ambivalent relationships of Huo Sang with the police detectives, and the "South-China swallow," nickname for a gallant bandit in Huo Sang series.

The police officers in Huo Sang series are not quite different from police inspectors from Scotland Yard in Sherlock Holmes stories. Some are arrogant and complacent; some are ignorant and often rush to conclusion regardless of evidence pointing elsewhere; some, who are more humble and ready to learn, benefit from Holmes' methods. In comparison, Huo Sang's attitude toward the police is friendlier. Although Huo Sang is also confident of his method, he does not regard himself as the source of wisdom, but considers himself a pioneer in the domain of crime detection, and is willing to share his method if the police are open to learn. In these stories, the police stand for the imperfect law enforcement system, and inherit problems of the old bureaucracy, such as being domineering to the ordinary people and sometimes still using torture during investigation. However, some officers from this system are not irremediable. For example, Wang Yinlin, the Inspector General of the Shanghai Police, is described this way:

> His mind is not as quick as Huo Sang's, and knowledge of crime investigation such as observation, deduction and applied science is less than enough, yet he values his reputation. The perseverance and courage he demonstrates, just like his short and stout figure, top his peers.[45]

Humility and open mind obviously make him a beneficiary of Huo Sang's method and attitude: "He not only gets rid of many bad habits and practices, but also makes great

[45] Cheng, "Guai dianhua" 怪電話 [Strange phone calls], *Huo Sang tan'an ji*, Vol. 2.

progress in observation and deduction."[46] In a symbolic sense, Huo Sang, the independent detective dedicated to correct the wrongs and carry out justice amidst pervading injustice enlightens the system with his scientific method and humanitarian stance. His cooperation with the police shows his hopes and expectations for the improvement of the system.

Despite his friendliness with the police, Huo Sang also reserves some respect for the mysterious South-China swallow, the bandit first introduced in "Jiangnan yan" (The south-China swallow). This story was written in classical Chinese and serialized in 1919. It is supposedly the first time Huo Sang tries his hand in crime detection and Bao Lang in chronicling Huo Sang's cases. In the story, Huo Sang and Bao Lang are asked to aid in the detection of a larceny. Supposedly it is done by the South-China swallow, the bandit who has recently committed two grand larcenies in Suzhou. Wherever the South-China swallow burgles, he leaves his name on the wall, and this case is no exception. However, Huo Sang finds the handwriting of the South-China swallow impressively handsome but different from the awkward handwriting in this particular case. Based on this and other observations, Huo Sang discovers the real thieve. At the end of the story, the South-China swallow writes a letter to Huo Sang saying, "Although I don't care much for my reputation, I am open and candid, and absolutely not a flinching coward. Thanks to your successful investigation, the blot on my name is removed. I write this brief note to

[46] Cheng, "Baiyi guai," *Zhentan taidou Cheng Xiaoqing daibiaozuo* 偵探泰斗程小青代表作 [Masterpieces of Cheng Xiaoqing, the master of detective fiction], ed. Fan Boqun 范伯群 and Fan Zijiang 范紫江 (Nanjing: Jiangsu wenyi chubanshe,1996) 159.

express my regard and thanks."[47] While the police detective asks for this note as a clue to solve the other cases involving the South-China swallow, Huo Sang remains silent. The South-China swallow makes several other appearances in Huo Sang series, but always remains mysteriously in the dark. He warns Huo Sang of imminent danger, and frees Huo Sang and Bao Lang from the detainment of the League of Cut-off Thumbs. Huo Sang, though disapproving of the South-China swallow's transgression of the law, appreciates his chivalry because he, similar to the traditional knight-errant, is only robbing the rich and never harms the poor.

The inclusion and celebration of the South-China swallow and the likes in Cheng Xiaoqing's stories point out the existence of a gray area beyond and above the law.[48] Cheng Xiaoqing shows his worries and doubts about the legal system. He, and many other of the time, knew that the law cannot fully administer justice, and Cheng, by letting loose the South-China swallow, and members of the League of Cut-off Thumbs, responds to the public demand for justice in an uncertain time. But different from Sun Liaohong, whose work will be discussed next, Cheng Xiaoqing hoped for the improvement of the legal system, and was positive about the eventual realization of the rule of law, as seen in the improvement Huo Sang brings to the police. Sun Liaohong's Lu Ping, similar to the South-China swallow, is more of a social bandit as defined by Eric Hobsbawm than a bona fide aid to the changing legal system.[49]

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[47] Cheng, *Jiangnan yan* 69.

[48] Similar figures include Qu Gongxia in "Langman yuyun" 浪漫余韵 (Lingering romance), who out of honor avenged a dying deserted woman he happens to meet in Tianjing.

[49] Eric Hobsbawm defines "social bandits" as "peasant outlaws whom the lord and state regard as criminals, but who remain within peasant society, and are considered by the people as heroes, as champions, avengers, fighters for justice, perhaps even leaders of liberation, and in any case as men to be admires, helped and supported" (25). See E. J. Hobsbawm, *Bandits* (Harmondsworth Penguin, 1985).

Beyond the Boundary of Law: Lu Ping the Impromptu Detective

Lu Ping is a gentleman thief who appears in a series of detective-adventure stories written by Sun Liaohong between the 1920s and the 1940s. As a contemporary of Huo Sang, Lu Ping shares the same interest in detection, though his motivation is by no means as dignified and morally impeccable. How does he combine the seemingly incompatible roles of thief and detective together? Where are the boundaries of right and wrong? We will survey remarks and comments in the text, plot structure and characterization to arrive at conclusions.

It is of great importance, first of all, that Lu Ping is active in troubled times. Shanghai between the 1920s and 1940s witnessed frequent transitions of political power: from the warlord regime to the Nationalist regime, from Japanese occupation to the Nationalist recapture. The situation was further complicated by the existence of foreign concessions, which were not abolished until 1943. Sun Liaohong did not go into details about the political situation though. After all, his stories were not meant to be political critiques. In the few glimpses of the luxurious life led by the wealthy, however, Sun achieved the goal of providing an exotic and interesting setting for his stories, and reminding readers that such lifestyle was beyond their reach, however hard they worked. Dances, parties, western-style mansions, jewels, among many others, abound in the life of the wealthy in Lu Ping stories.

An example from “33 hao wu” 三十三號屋 (House No. 33) shows how Sun voiced his criticism through descriptions of luxury. Lu Ping sees a fish bowl displayed in the balcony of the house across the street. The fish bowl not only contains tropical fish,

but also a pair of "colorful fairy fish" that was "once exhibited in the largest department store of Shanghai at the price of one thousand per pair," and with that much money, "it is enough to buy a small house or get a wife."[50] The writer, who claimed to be Lu Ping's friend, further comments that such a high price evoked silent laments from the common people, and that "the small palace across the street must be really rich to be able to own such small animals higher priced than human beings."[51] It turns out that this pair of fish is just one of many costly props used in the courting game of a teenager, whose father, ridiculed by Lu Ping as a "rice worm," is a profiteer who prospered from hoarding large amount of rice.

Profiteers, traitors, racketeers, exploiters, blackmailers and such are targets of Lu Ping's mischief. These people benefited the most from the turbulent time and gained by victimizing the needy and the poor. It is by playing tricks on this particular group in an overwhelmingly corrupt world that Lu Ping is able to justify his chosen profession as a thief. Not only is he in line with gentlemen thieves in the Western tradition including Robin Hood and Arsene Lupin, but he also fits well into the Chinese tradition of knights-errant who right wrongs and defend innocence.

As we see in the example above, the writer freely comments on the nouveaux riches' lifestyle. In fact, Sun Liaohong often inserted comments of the "writer" or remarks and thoughts of Lu Ping in these stories as a more direct form of social commentary. Generally, these remarks are rather cynical. Some of them ridicule political corruption and exploiting officials. In "Lanse xiangweishe" 藍色響尾蛇 (The blue

[50] Sun Liaohong, "33 hao wu," *Xue zhiren*, ed. Tang Zhesheng, 188.
[51] Ibid. 188.

rattlesnake), a story set in the mid-1940s when the Nationalist Government recaptured Shanghai after the surrender of Japan, Lu Ping reflects on government officials and thieves and says to himself,

> Why do many people want to be an official, but not a thief? Generally speaking, in either role, one extends his hands by stealth in the dark. Their ends and means are not different. What sets them apart is that thieves only bring loss to one person or a family, while officials harm the interests of a region, a province, or even a nation. In the eyes of the common people therefore, the less harmful, the more favorable. Then why don't those who want to be an official take a more favorable profession of thieving?[52]

It is not the only place where Lu Ping compares officials to thieves. In particular, he ridicules the insatiable appetite of the "takeover high officials," and their disregard for the welfare of the people.[53] Such negative opinions of government officials and upstarts could easily find echoes among readers, and Lu Ping's tricks, besides being entertaining, also provided a form of catharsis for the reader to see the corrupt punished and justice done, if only for a moment in imagination. In this sense, Lu Ping serves the same function as Huo Sang in that both, wittingly or unwittingly, become a champion of justice to the reader.

For all the justifications, however, Lu Ping is still a thief. What is his opinion of the law, then? He does not comment on the law as frequently as on officials and profiteers. A passage from "Lanse xiangweishe" clearly shows his disdain of the law:

> Then is he, a thief, willing to catch the murderer on behalf of the sacred law? Well, he is quite willing to chase down the murderer,

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[52] Sun, "Lanse xiangweishe" 藍色響尾蛇 [The blue rattlesnake], *Xiadao wenguai Sun Liaohong*, 21-22.
[53] Ibid. 160, 29. Takeover refers to the handover of Shanghai to the Nationalist government when Japan surrendered in 1945.

> but not for the purpose of upholding the law. He always regards the law as something similar to Taoist magic figures, being produced by certain smart guys in some embarrassing situations. These magic figures may intimidate silly ghosts, but are absolutely useless on the malicious and cunning ones. What's more, many malicious ghosts deliberately hide behind the magic figures and play their dirty tricks. Therefore the so-called law functions almost the same way as magic figures. [54]

The law, in Lu Ping's opinion, cannot stop those in power from committing wrongdoings. It even facilitates their exploitation of the powerless. This pessimistic view of the law bears a remarkable resemblance to a comment made in the 1930s by Xuan Yongguang, a Beijing-based writer. He says, "The law is like a spider web. It is only capable of catching feeble flies and mosquitos. Stronger wasps and rampaging bees may run into the web, but instead of being caught, they break a few holes in it. It is always the powerful to blame when the law is broken, not the common people."[55] Both use metaphors to point out the ineffectiveness of the law in the time.

Lu Ping's cynicism is not restricted to the topic of the law. He seems to question the deterioration of social values in general. For example, in "Yelie ji" 夜獵記 (The night hunt), Lu Ping steals a specimen from a museum, claiming "There is no honest person in the world."[56] He has a similar comment in another story "Mu'ou de xiju" 木偶的戲劇 (The drama of a puppet), saying that "people in the world are all thieves."[57]

Descriptions of luxuries and direct comments are but two ways out of many for the author to lament social injustice and inefficiency of the law. They address the reader

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[54] Ibid. 46.
[55] Xuan Yongguang 宣永光, *Wangtan fenghun* 妄談瘋話 [Absurd words and lunatic ravings] (Beijing: Dazhong wenyi chubanshe, 2003) 204.
[56] Sun, *Xiaodao Lu Ping qi an* 201.
[57] Ibid. 267.

directly, aiming to evoke similar feelings and thus shorten the distance between the reader and the fictional world. Sun Liaohong not only expressed his views directly, he also integrated them into the plot structure. The case of "Xue zhiren" with which this chapter opens is a great example of Lu Ping's autonomy in carrying out justice. Equally frequent is Lu Ping playing tricks on the rich people and the police. "Tun yuganyou zhe" 囤鱼肝油者 (The man who stocks up cod-liver oil) is such a story.

Rather than playing the role of a detective, Lu Ping in this story is a villain who claims to "rob the rich and relieve the poor," which in his interpretation is simply to "relieve his own poverty."[58] Hardly a detective story in the strict sense without a "detective," this story nevertheless reveals Lu Ping's contempt for the authority. Lu Ping and his gang bait Yu Weitang, a profiteer who makes his fortune by hoarding rice, fabrics, medicines, etc, with a bogus message of "a large batch of cod-liver oil on sale." Yu is given knockout drops and a drug that causes temporary memory loss. When he slips into unconsciousness, he is dressed up as "Lu Ping" in Western suits, a red tie, and fashionable shoes. He is then transported to a busy street and reminded constantly of his "dangerous situation" by a mysterious man, who is none other than Lu Ping himself. The muddle-headed Yu is so lost in this mysterious experience that he suspects he is targeted for kidnap. He retrieves the pistol already in his pocket to fight against the men following him, but is arrested by them, who are actually policemen. The next morning Lu Ping visits Yu's grand house, claims to be the head of the kidnappers, and asks for a large ransom. The Yu family only learns that they have been tricked after the ransom is paid, and Yu is bailed out by friends. Switching from Yu Weitang's perspective to an

[58] Ibid. 405.

omniscient perspective, the narration leads the reader into a maze that still awaits a revelation of what indeed happens. Yu Weitang attracted Lu Ping's attention because he is a top hoarder of necessities, the narrator explains. Yu is dressed up as a knockoff Lu Ping to attract the attention of the police, who of course gets a message ahead of time. After all, where else to keep this "hostage" better and free of charge than the police station?[59] Hence Lu Ping not only plays trick on Yu, but also on the police. The author surely made no secret of his distrust of the law enforcement agency.

The author's cynicism and disappointment at the social reality are most directly expressed through the characterization of his protagonist. Lu Ping is a cloud of mystery: his background, life experience, family, age and even appearance remain a mystery for all the stories he is involved in. He keeps on changing names, roles, and looks to achieve his end — to "take over the ill-gotten gains" from the hoarding and profiteering merchants and upstarts who profited from the people. Unlike his Chinese predecessors the knights-errant, Lu Ping is quite westernized in his appearance, habits, and even lifestyle. He almost always appears in tailored suits and his trademark a red tie, smokes Turkish tobacco, drives a car, and finds himself at home in upscale modern places such as department stores and coffeehouses. Huo Sang, the "only Chinese detective" whose identity Lu Ping sometimes playfully assumes, also wears western suits and smoke cigarettes, but Cheng Xiaoqing always made sure that the suits were cut from domestic fabrics, that he only smokes cigarettes of the domestic brand "White Gold Dragon," and that he rarely sets foot on modern places of amusement unless his duty calls for. Distinct from the self-imposed censoring attitude of Huo Sang towards imported goods, Lu Ping

[59] Ibid.

takes a much more relaxed posture in the tide of western material culture. It doesn't mean that Sun Liaohong acknowledged an overall submission to the western influence. Sun Liaohong had more than often directed his sarcasm to the corrupting modern world. After all, no one expects a thief to be a role model. Lu Ping's dandyish appearance and behavior form a sharp contrast with his gallant and adventurous heart that drives him to combat the corrupt and relieve the weak and poor. By allocating all the seemingly incongruous elements to a single character, Sun Liaohong made a statement that in this all too deceptive world, "polar opposites such as detectives and thieves, robbers and celebrities, gentlemen and villains are Indistinguishable considering their personalities and behavior."[60]

Lu Ping's frequent changes of identities make the stories all the more exciting to read. Readers know Lu Ping by his red mole and red tie, but they don't know anything else that is certain. An early work "Yanjing hui" 眼鏡會 (The association of glasses) highlights Lu Ping's changeful identities. When some jewelers get together, they propose to test each other's ability to tell real from fake jewels, on the condition that all should wear green glasses. In their next meeting, a police officer arrives with the information that Lu Ping is among the attendants, but the jewelers, all found with red moles on their ears, cannot tell who is Lu Ping among them. Out of fear, they hand in their jewels to the host for safekeeping, but they soon find the host has been knocked out and bound in a side room, and their jewels gone. They realize that the host they just interacted with is Lu Ping in disguise, but a jeweler points out that the host's role was assumed by Lu Ping's

[60] Sun, "Muou de xiju," *Xiaodao Lu Ping qi an* 269.

accomplice, and Lu Ping was the police officer. This story is set up like a game, without the social concern characteristic of Sun's later works. Lu Ping's changeability is a key element in the evolvement of the story, and a top feature of Lu Ping. As such, it shows Lu Ping as a slippery figure that escapes identification, definition and classification. Perhaps it is yet another expression of Sun Liaohong's perception of the world as a hopelessly chaotic one where human dignity is denied and identities are confused. Sun Liaohong did not set his hope on the improvement of the world, nor did he expect Lu Ping to play any active role in the reconstruction of a social conscience.

Tang Zhesheng in his analysis of Sun Liaohong's works identifies two elements that greatly contributed to the sophistication and success of Sun Liaohong's works in the 1940s. One is Sun's application of the traditional notion "robbing the rich and assisting the poor," and the other is the adoption of the concept of "karmic retribution" in his later works.[61] Both are traditional concepts that have been expressed, circulated and enhanced through traditional vernacular literature such as fiction and drama. Compared with Cheng Xiaoqing's ambivalent acquiescence of such concepts, Sun Liaohong did not shy away from expressing them outright in his stories. The case introduced earlier, "Xue zhiren," is a candid expression of these two concepts. It opens with the Buddhist peaching of "those who kills will be killed in return," resonates here and there with similar articulations of retributive justice, and ends with the punishment of the villain by the avengers. Lu Ping covers up for the avengers out of an "absolutely incorrect thought" that any crime committed for love should be excused. The narrator comments, "he committed the offence of shielding the criminals, legally speaking. From a Buddhist perspective, he

[61] Fan, *Zhongguo jinxiandai tongsu wenxueshi*, Vol. 1, 854.

committed a crime in compliance, which is almost as serious as committing the crime himself."[62] A final question is thrown to the reader, "In readers' judgment, do you think my mysterious friend should repent for his deviant thought?"[63] It is put so confidently that the narrator is sure that Lu Ping would find support among reader who shared the same understanding of the traditional concepts conveyed here.

In short, the embrace of the concepts such as the two mentioned above further justifies the controversial character of Lu Ping. Situated in the intersection of the Chinese knight-errant tradition and the Western tradition of legendary outlaws, Lu Ping was a welcome addition to the lineup of fictional detectives. The gallant outlaw offers an alternative to the law-abiding detectives, in an increasing chaotic Shanghai of the 1940s. As Tang Zhesheng observes,

> Although it already entered the Republican era, the people's legal awareness is still feeble. They worshipped two types of hero: the upright officials who can decide a case with excellent judgment, and the brave man who kills the rich and assists the poor. In a time when there was no upright officials to rely on, the brave man became particularly popular. Chinese society in troubled times expected the brave men the most, surely Sun Liaohong's fiction would receive great response.[64]

Stories featuring gallant outlaws like Lu Ping are a modern form of wish fulfillment in the vein of knight-errant fiction. Their popularity reflected the general distrust of the authority and a general disillusionment with the promises of nation building or social progress in the time. The rising popularity of knight-errant fiction in the Republican era might relate to the same mentality.

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[62] Tang, *Xue zhiren* 170.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Fan, *Zhongguo jinxiandai tongsu wenxueshi*, Vol. 1, 850.

IV. Conclusion

From court-case and knight-errant fiction to detective fiction, the heroes of popular imagination have undergone drastic changes. These changes reflect the transformation in the Chinese legal and political systems and the social conventions. In Imperial China when the rule of man was practiced, the people looked up to the government officials to administer justice. For the lower-class people, who had no privilege and were at the mercy of the official when their reputation, property or even life was threatened, the magistrate's judgment became particularly crucial to whether justice can be done. Hence the popularity of court-case fiction among the common people is telling of the general dissatisfaction of the legal reality, and the public anticipations for the righteous officials who can represent their interest and carry out justice impartially. In some cases, a general disillusionment with the corrupt politics would overspill and embody in the fictional knights-errant, who function beyond the law and take justice into their own hands.

The arrival of fictional detectives, in contrast, corresponds to the modern turn of China. Huo Sang and the like take over from the just officials the responsibility of the justice upholder. In a transitional period when the traditional legal system fell apart, and the new legal system was yet to be instituted, the just officials could no longer fit squarely in this new system. Popular imagination called for a new type of hero to look up to, and the modern detective filled the void. On the one hand, these fictional detectives have sound judgment and impeccable sense of justice, which empower them to be the successor of justice upholder. On the other hand, their social status is different and

knowledge background up to date with the modern era, which qualify them to be the new expert of crime. Functioning as private detectives, they stand outside the legal system as supplement to the not yet perfect system. They also achieve an autonomy that enables them to criticize the system at a safe distance, to cooperate with the system as they see fit, and to act according to their own sense of justice if necessary. Detective writers may be more positive or negative about the future improvement of the legal system, and their attitudes, representative of different public opinions, were projected onto the "heroes" they created. Ambiguous figures such as the South-China swallow and Lu Ping reveal their authors' reservation or distrust in this regard. In this sense, the free spirit of the gallant outlaws found their modern incarnation in these mavericks.

Chapter Four

Science Textbook in Disguise:

Science and Chinese Detective Fiction

> I admit that detective fiction is a popular science textbook in disguise. Besides encouraging the appreciation of literary arts, it also works to awake curiosity and inspire rationality. In a society as deeply superstitious and decadent as ours, detective fiction is indeed the right medicine to wipe out the problems.
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> — Cheng Xiaoqing
> "Lun zhentan xiaoshuo" 論偵探小說
> (On detective fiction)[1]

When Huo Sang was young and had not taken up private detection as a profession, he used to live with Bao Lang in Suzhou. They exchanged ideas and opinions, and communicated their understanding of criminal investigation. Once, Bao Lang went rowing with a friend. When he returned and got changed, he came upon the idea of testing Huo Sang's detective skill, as the latter did not know his outing. Huo Sang sized him up, and concluded, "Didn't you go rowing?" Later he explained,

> After studying you for a moment, I found that though your clothes are tidy, you look fatigued, and your collars are wet with sweat. It is clear that you must have intensely exercised. But was it race walk, football, or jumping? You are not good at them, so it was none of them. I know you like martial arts. Then did you practice boxing? Yet when you practiced it before, you usually went topless. The sweat stain on your collars told me it was not that. When I looked down and noticed the water stain on your socks, I suddenly recalled that two weeks ago you turned down an invitation to

[1] Cheng, "Lun zhentan xiaoshuo" 5.

> rowing with Mr. Xu because you were otherwise engaged. You felt regret for it. Based on the above information, I concluded that you must have responded to the invitation finally and went rowing today.[2]

This train of reasoning went on, and Huo Sang correctly guessed the location of rowing as well. This episode seems insignificant compared to the over seventy cases Huo Sang solves in the following years, yet it points out the most salient features of his method. First, he relies on observation of details, or sometimes trifles, as the first step of his investigation. Second, observations have to be connected with knowledge of the person involved, in this case Bao Lang, to establish meaningful interpretations. Third, a hypothesis will be formulated, which in turn will be tested and verified with more evidence. Huo Sang likens his method to scientific research on another occasion:

> I have often told you that when a scientist conducts his research, he should never hold onto any preconceived ideas. He has to make use of an unclouded mind to observe closely, look for evidence rigorously, and collect faithfully all relevant information, before coming to a conclusion.[3]

Huo Sang summarizes here the gist of the scientific method that has been popularized since the nineteenth century as the backbone of modern society. This method, practiced by famous detectives including C. Auguste Dupin, Sherlock Holmes, Hercule Poirot, and Huo Sang, is a defining feature of detective fiction. The power of science is invoked every time a problem occurs. It is bolstered and celebrated every time the great detective defeats uncertainties, and work out the solution by virtue of this method.

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[2] Cheng, "Jiangnan yan," *Jiangnan yan* 4.
[3] Cheng Xiaoqing, "Wuhou de guisu," *Huo Sang tan'an ji*, Vol. 3, 86. Translation by King-fai Tam, see "The Detective Fiction" 128-129.

Central to this literary phenomenon is the great confidence in science, an optimistic conviction that science can be applied to all areas of investigation, and that scientific methods can reach the final truth. It can be found in classic Western detective fiction, when Sherlock Holmes extols what he calls the "Science of Deduction and Analysis" thus: "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."[4]

Does Chinese detective fiction celebrate science with equal confidence? If yes, what might have contributed to the worship of science? If no, what might have led to a different perspective to science? These questions will be addressed in this chapter by interrogating the convergence of science and ideology in Chinese detective fiction. We will examine the fascination of science in Chinese detective fiction, and explore how science became a major appeal and selling point of this genre in China, and what public opinions on science underlay these stories. I would like to suggest that Chinese detective fiction promotes science as an empowering tool to explore the world, and an enlightening tool in modern nation building. It participates in the New Culture discourse in dispelling superstition, publicly exorcises the unknown and promotes science as a way of thinking. At the same time, out of concerns over the tendency of indiscriminately worshipping the West, writers maintained that science need the moderation of morality.

Specifically, this chapter begins by situating detective fiction in the rise of modern science and scientism in China, with a focus on the influence of ideology on literary production. Secondly, the affinity of science and Chinese detective fiction will be

[4] Doyle, "The Sign of Four," *The Complete Sherlock Holmes*, 13.

examined in relation to historical, political, social and cultural changes. In particular, detective fiction will be read vis-à-vis court-case fiction in their respective treatment of "supernatural powers." Finally, drawing a comparison between Chinese and Western detective fiction, I will discuss in detail Chinese detective fiction's concern over the morality of science. Primary texts for this study are the Huo Sang stories by Cheng Xiaoqing, and the Sherlock Holmes stories by Arthur Conan Doyle. The former is chosen not only for their prestigious status among Chinese detective fiction, but also for the author's many writings on science and detective fiction, and his professed belief in the educational function of the genre.

I. The Rise of Modern Science in China

Cheng Xiaoqing defines detective fiction as a genre which

> takes as its central issue a mysterious case, and its protagonist the detective who, by means of intellectual activities and scientific skills, follows the track of ethics, makes use of deductive and inductive methods, and finally arrives at a solution to the mystery with comprehensive and rational analyses.[5]

The key terms here, "scientific," "deductive and inductive methods" and "rational," denote the distinguishing features of detective fiction that set it apart from other genres. Science becomes a yardstick to measure whether a crime story can be categorized as a detective fiction when Cheng decries the supernatural elements in court-case fiction. As Cheng perceives, detective fiction works to "enlighten" (*qizhi* 启智), different from many other genres that appeal more to the sentiments. No wonder Cheng took it as his mission

[5] Cheng, "Lun zhentan xiaoshuo" 3.

to promulgate science in the form of detective writing, evident in the beginning quote of this chapter. Cheng's statement, explicit as it is, was by no means original. We have shown in Chapter One that many early promoters and writers of detective fiction in China shared the view. Indeed, it was typical in the cultural milieu where modern science was embraced and hailed as a top priority of nation building.

Modern science followed the footsteps of Western imperial powers into China. Though scientific discoveries and technological inventions were not rare in ancient China, the late imperial period was characterized by a stagnation of science and technology, in sharp contrast with the industrialized West. Scholars have identified many factors, ranging from cultural, social, political, to economic, to explain the long hiatus of Chinese science, but many agreed that Chinese culture, under the influence of Confucianism, did not encourage the development of natural science due to the prioritization of agriculture over commerce and trade, and the emphasis on the sustainability and stability of the society rather than affluence and progress. In addition, the traditional culture made light of *qi* 器 (instrument) while emphasizing *dao* 道 (the way). *Dao* here means the essential principle, while *qi* means tools, which compared with *dao* is certainly of less significance. Science and technology were in the category of mere instruments, which can be useful but will distract one from the pursuit of the way. Granted that the Jesuits were the pioneers in importing Western science as early as the seventeenth century, the importance of modern science did not hit the Chinese until the mid-eighteenth century, when the two Opium Wars (1839-1842, 1856-1860) flung open the doors of China with advanced firearms and battleships — products of modern developments in science and technology.

Only then did some Chinese officials come to the awareness that advancements in science and technology played a major role in the rise of the West and the defeat of China.

Efforts were made to introduce Western science into China, and the "Self-Strengthening Movement" (1861-1895) was soon initiated as the Qing government's response to the aggressions. Defense industries were the first to modernize, with the establishment of arsenals and shipyards, and the creation of the Beiyang Fleet. Military, navy and foreign language schools were set up to train scientific and technological personnel. Its guiding principle is succinctly summarized in a phrase "*zhong ti xi yong*" 中體西用, meaning "Chinese learning as the essence, and Western leaning as utility."[6] Clearly a utilitarian attitude was adopted towards Western learning, which to the officials meant nothing more than advanced science and technology. This movement, however, was considered a failure when Japan destroyed the Beiyang Fleet and defeated China in 1895. Western encroachments intensified in its wake. It seems the *zhong ti xi yong* dichotomy did not salvage China.

As time went by, progressive literati came to understand Western learning in a broader sense. Yan Fu, for one, recognized the limits of focusing on science and technology alone. As a renowned translator of influential Western thought, he was the foremost to introduce Social Darwinism to China by translating Huxley's *Evolution and Ethics* in 1898.[7] This work exerted tremendous influence on Chinese intellectuals because

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[6] This phrase was supposedly raised by Zhang Zhidong 張之洞 (1837-1909), a leading official of the Self-strengthening Movement. Chinese learning refers to the traditional Confucian learning, and Western learning refer to science, technology, new education, foreign commerce and trade, social sciences, etc. The purpose was to help the Qing overcome the crisis and consolidate the imperial rule with adoption of Western learning.

[7] Translated as *Tian yan lun* 天演論, the Chinese version is not a complete translation, but one infused with Yan Fu's own interpretations. For example, Yan Fu did not agree with Huxley's view that human values

it provided a new perspective on the predicament of China. Yan interpreted China's plight in terms of the Darwinian theory of evolution, and emphasized China's need to change institutionally for the purpose of survival. This was a reorientation of Chinese thought, for it was the first time Western theories were used to explain China's problems. Theoretically, it provided justification for the Hundred Days' Reform (1898), and paved the way for the New Policies of the late Qing Government (1901-1911). More significantly, its impact on a younger generation of Chinese intellectuals made it possible for more radical movements to brew in the name of national survival.

As we mentioned in Chapter One, detective fiction was introduced to China at this stage, together with political and science fiction. With the earliest translations of the Sherlock Holmes stories serialized on *Shiwu bao* (Chinese Progress) before the turn of the century, and the climax of detective fiction translation in the following decade, it is not difficult to see the relevance of detective fiction to the project of importing not only Western science and technology, but also their supporting social, political and cultural recourses. Detective fiction stood out as the best match for this agenda, which explains its overwhelming success at the stage.

With the abolition of the Imperial Examination as part of the New Policies in 1905, and more students studying overseas, a younger generation of Chinese intellectuals grew up under the influence of Social Darwinism and other Western thoughts. The end of the imperial rule in 1911, and the beginning of the Republic era saw the culmination of vehement attacks on Chinese culture and ideology during the New Culture Movement (1915-1923). The new intelligentsia had internalized the Western gaze of seeing China at

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and ethics were not inherited, but determined by culture, and advocated instead Spencer's argument for Social Darwinism.

an inferior stage of evolution, and decided to eradicate the Chinese tradition that were taken as the main impediment to Chinese progress. Two slogans of the New Culture Movement, lovingly dubbed Mr. Science (*De xiansheng* 德先生) and Mr. Democracy （*Sai xiansheng* 賽先生) by Chen Duxiu 陳獨秀 (1879-1942) in his iconoclastic magazine *Xin qingnian* (New youth), summarize the emphases of this movement. Apart from the characteristic iconoclasm of the movement — the rejection of Confucianism and traditional values, the New Culturalists recognized the potential of science, together with democracy, to stand in not only as the key to national salvation, but also as a spiritual surrogate. Chen confidently remarked, "We now recognize that only these two gentlemen [Mr. Science and Mr. Democracy] can save China from the political, moral, academic, and intellectual darkness in which it finds itself."[8] Societies dedicated to the promotion of science were established in the 1910s and 1920s, the most famous being the Science Society of China (*kexue she* 科學社, 1915-1960), which was initiated by Chinese students at Cornell University. Science journals such as the monthly *Kexue* 科學 (Science) were published in the hope of disseminating and popularizing scientific knowledge.

After nearly two decades of efforts to present science as the key to China's survival in the world of natural selection, the idea of science had been essentialized from being specialized fields of knowledge to a singular science that has not only a claim to truth, but also authority over the interpretation of many domains traditionally not its own.[9] In short, science was applied to all aspects of life, as is seen in the article titles in

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[8] Chen Duxiu, "Benzhi zui'an zhi dabian shu" 新青年罪案之答辯書 [A self-defense of our journal's criminal case], *Xin qingnian* 新青年 [New youth] 6.1 (1919),10-11.
[9] Grace Yen Shen, "Scientism in the Twentieth Century," *Modern Chinese Religion II; 1850-2015*, ed. Jan Kiely, Vincent Goossaert and John Lagerwey, Vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 2015) 109.

Kexue, including "Scientific Spirit," "Scientific Method," "Science and Education," "Science and Morality," and "The Scientific Philosophy of Life."[10] Science thus constructed became the "epistemic and moral reference point for all other human activity,"[11] and began to dominate Chinese modern life ever since. The exaltation of science to an overarching authority in human life is exactly the character of scientism. China scholar D. W. Y. Kwok first applied this term to the study of the Chinese obsession with science in his pioneering book *Scientism in Chinese Thought 1900-1950*, defining it as "the tendency to use the respectability of science in areas having little bearing on science itself…that view which places all reality within a natural order and deems all aspects of this order, be they biological, social, physical, or psychological, to be knowable only through the methods of science."[12] In a word, scientism is an ideology that claims science as the only or primary source of meaning and values. A typical scientistic statement claims, "It is science, and only science, that will revive the forest of learning in China and provide the salvation of the masses!"[13] The universal, all-encompassing claim of science to national salvation is typical of Chinese scienticism in the first half of the twentieth century. The concept of scientism enables us to see that the obsession with science in China was not initiated or sustained by virtue of science per se, but because of the projection of expectations and imaginations, and the ascription of the values to it.

With the rise of scientism during the New Culture Movement, and its denigration of Chinese culture, it is not surprising to see Chinese detective fiction sing to the tune of

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[10] D. W. Y. Kwok, *Scientism in Chinese Thought, 1900-1950* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1965) 14-15.
[11] Shen 96-97.
[12] Kwok 2, 12.
[13] "Fakan ci" 發刊詞 [Foreword], *Kexue* 科學 [Science]1.1 (1915) 7, qtd. in Shen 111.

glorifying science.[14] These stories, written at a time when Mr. Science and Mr. Democracy were broadcast, came under the pressure of echoing the attitude of the majority of educated elite. We will see in the next section that as long as Cheng Xiaoqing is concerned, his detective stories surpass the Western counterparts in their endorsement and promulgation of science as an attitude and a methodology.

The prevalence of scientism did not go unchallenged, to be sure. Doubts and concerns questioning the omnipotence of science surfaced frequently, and the credence in science was shaken following the devastating World War I, which for some Chinese intellectuals "had proved the bankruptcy of Western material civilization, and by association, of science."[15] Most notably, a sprawling debate of "science and the philosophy of life" (*kexue yu renshengguan* 科學與人生觀) between the exponents and opponents of scientism took place in 1923-1924. Over twenty renowned intellectuals joined this debate, including Liang Qichao, and Hu Shi 胡適 — leader of the New Culture Movement. As its name suggests, this debate focused on the ability of science to determine a philosophy of life. As Min-Chih Chou suggests, "the central issue to this debate was the direction and substance of China's modernization, not modernization itself."[16] In other words, what the opponents argued against was the "self-debasement and the unreserved worship of the West,"[17] and the universal application and cultural

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[14] Ren Xiang identified three stages of development: translation, imitation, and creation. Creation, defined by the emergence of a group of detective writers, occurred in the 1920s through 1940s. See Ren Xiang, "Zhongguo zhentan xiaoshuo."
[15] Shen 117.
[16] Min-Chih Chou, "The Debate on Science and the Philosophy of Life in 1923," *Zhongyan yuanjiuyuan jindaishi yanjiusuo jikan* 中央研究院近代史研究所集刊 [Bulletin of the Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica] 7 (1978), 559.
[17] Ibid. 562.

authority of science. The debate, nonetheless, ended with the loss of the opponents,[18] when most intellectuals taking part in the debate were on the side of science, or scientism.[19] Indeed, when "both sides fundamentally accepted the discourse of science as the language of contention," and "[n]o one denied the necessity of science on human knowledge, and every spoke in terms of observation, hypothesis, verification, and measurement," the victory of the pro-science camp, or scientism, was not hard to claim.[20]

The omnipotence of science was taken so for granted that Hu Shi proudly asserts, "During the last thirty years there is one term which has acquired a supreme position of respect in the country. Whether people understand it or not, whether they are conservative or progressive, they all dare not reveal an attitude of contempt toward it. That term is science."[21] Even efforts to reassess and restore the Chinese tradition justified themselves in the language of science. When Chiang Kai-shek 蔣介石, the leader of the Nationalist Government, launched the New Life Movement (*xinshenghuo yundong* 新生活運動, 1934-1949), he recast Chinese heritage as scientific and hence useful for nation building. The goal of this movement, summarized by Jennifer Oldstone-Moore, "was to use Confucian principles updated for a modern context to … save the nation, by creating,

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[18] The "anti-science" camp, otherwise called neo-Confucians, or humanists, consisted of Zhang Junmai 張君勱 (1887-1969), Liang Qichao, and others. According to Grace Shen, "it leaned toward a dualism of spirit and matter that challenged the idea of the 'omnipotence of science,' or science's claim to (potentially) know the goven all realms of human experience" (118). The "pro-science" camp included Ding Wenjiang 丁文江 (1887-1936), Hu Shi 胡適 (1891-1962), and others.

[19] Hu Shi's retrospective account of the debate was quoted in Chou, "The Debate on Science" 580.

[20] Shen 118.

[21] Hu Shi, "Kexue yu renshengguan" 科学与人生观 [Science and the philosophy of life], in Jerome B. Grieder, *Hu Shih and the Chinese Renaissance: Liberalism in the Chinese Revolution*, 1917-1937 (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1970) 159.

through scientific means, citizens who would identify with modern China and develop national pride through applying principles of Chinese civilization."[22]

In short, the rise of modern science was contingent on specific political, social and cultural contexts of modern China. When the New Culture Movement launched an all-out war against Chinese tradition and advocated for a wholesale acceptance of the West, scientism emerged and spread in full swing. While it was beyond doubt that modern science and technology should be avidly pursued, the elevation of science as the universal value system raised suspicions. Nevertheless, scientism as a dominant intellectual trend necessarily exerted influence on the domain of literary production, particularly on detective fiction, whose affiliation with modern science seems innate. Chinese detective fiction's participation in the promotion of science does not mean that it vouches for the omnipotence of science. Similar to the New Life Movement's justification of traditional values in the language of modern science, Chinese detective fiction also contains reservations and concerns resonant with the skepticism of the opponents in the 1923 debate,[23] but before probing into this aspect, we will first approach the more outspoken endorsement of science.

II. Detective Fiction as Science Textbook

Speaking of "Chinese Enlightenment," most scholars would think of the New Culture Movement, which marked a total repudiation of the Chinese culture and a new

[22] Jennifer Oldstone-Moore, "Scientism and Modern Confucianism," *The Sage Returns: Confucian Revival in Contemporary China*, ed. Kenneth J. Hammond and Jeffrey L. Richey (Albany: State U of New York P, 2015) 46.
[23] This will be addressed in detail in a later section.

engagement with the West. Proposals for a reform of Chinese literature appeared in *Xin qingnian*, calling for a new vernacular literature based on "universal" standards in promotion of science and democracy. Chen Duxiu asserts in his strong-worded article "Wenxue geming lun" 文學革命論 (On literary revolution, 1917), "Down with ornate, sycophantic literature of the aristocracy; up with the plain, expressive literature of the people! Down with stale, pompous classical literature; up with fresh, sincere realist literature! Down with obscure, abstruse eremitic literature; up with comprehensible, popularized social literature!"[24] In response, a new literature written by more radical writers emerged, and gradually began to dominate the literary scene in the 1920s. The proponents of New Literature launched several blanket attacks on popular literature for its outdated values and lack of social engagement. Detective fiction, unlike other forms of popular literature such as love stories, "was fortunate enough to encounter benevolent neglect or even acquiescence from critics," as King-fai Tam notes.[25] Hu Shi, for instance, recommends it because it "provides the best training of the application of scientific methods."[26] Tam explains the New Culture camp's tolerance of detective fiction with the genre's "constituent borrowing of strength from the West,"[27] among which the promotion of science surely stands out.

The display of scientific knowledge and methods constitutes a major attraction of detective fiction since its introduction, and this legacy passed on from translated works to

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[24] Chen Duxiu, "On Literary Revolution," *Modern Chinese Literary Thought*, ed. Kirk A. Denton (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1996) 141.
[25] Tam, "The Traditional Hero" 141. Tam gives the examples of Hu Shi, who "is reported to have spoken favorably of detective fiction," Liu Bannong and Zhang Tianyi, who used to be translator or writer of detective fiction, before converted to New Literature (142).
[26] Hu Shi 胡適 and Cao Boyan 曹伯言, *Hushi riji quanbian* 胡適日記全編 [The complete collection of Hu Shi's diary], Vol. 8 (Hefei: Anhui jiaoyu chubanshe, 2001) 638.
[27] Ibid.141.

original works. It was welcome as a great reading "conducive to the development of both a scientific mind and a lawful society,"[28] and this argument was widely accepted. Lin Shu, a prominent late-Qing translator of foreign literature, comments, "The imaginary stories of detective fiction would surely awaken the rational mind."[29] Liu Bannong introduced Doyle as a conscious promoter of science, and his stories textbook of criminal detection in disguise in his famous postscript to *Fuermosi zhentan an quanji* (Complete stories of Sherlock Holmes) in 1916.[30] Liu certainly read too much into Doyle's detective stories, but his opinion was typical in his time, and was echoed across the next three decades by Chinese detective writers.

In self-defense against the harsh criticism from New Literatrue supporters, writers stressed detective fiction's alignment with the New Culture's promotion of science and democrasy. They alluded to detective fiction's participation in the discourse of social reform, and continued to advertise the genre's practical benefits of enlightening the Chinese mind. Cheng Xiaoqing stood out most prominently among Chinese detective writers not only for his prolific writing career, but also for his defense of the genre in a series of articles. In "Tan zhentan xiaoshuo" 談偵探小說 (On detective fiction, 1929), he comments on how detective fiction can enhance the power of reasoning,

> Detective fiction contains the element of "reason," apart from the element of "sentiment" that most other types of fiction possess. Put differently, the constituents of detective fiction are more scientific.

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[28] Ibid. 142.
[29] Lin Shu, "*Xieluoke qi'an kaichang* xu"《歇洛克奇案開場》序 [Preface to *The opening case of Sherlock*], *Ershi shiji Zhongguo xiaoshuo lilun ziliao*, ed. Chen and Xia, Vol. 1, 328.
[30] Quoted in Chapter One.

> It can expand the rational faculty, improve the power of observation, and enrich people's experience of society. [31]

Cheng reiterates the same argument seventeen years later in another article on detective fiction, showing his conviction of the genre's benefit for enlightening of the Chinese mind.[32] He also speaks highly of the influence reading detective fiction can exert on the powers of observation and reasoning. In an article published in 1933 "Cong shierbujian dao zhentan xiaoshuo" 從"視而不見"到偵探小說 (From "turning a blind eye" to detective fiction), Cheng asserts,

> Detective fiction is a science textbook in disguise. It embodies everything one expects to find in scientific methods such as observation, collecting evidence, deduction, induction, and making judgment. Although it does not contribute to material science such as astronomy, physics and biology, it imperceptibly suggests a scientific method. I think in this era, the scientific method is a tool for us ordinary people to cope with any situation. It is not exclusive to scientists. Detectives in detective fiction naturally all have acute powers of observation. If we read more of it, and have constant exposure, our power of observation will naturally improve.[33]

Throughout thirty years of his career as a detective writer, he always defended detective fiction on the ground of its relevance to science and national salvation. Other writers also shared similar views on science and detective fiction. Lu Dan'an 陸澹安 (1894-1980), whose amateur detective also ranked among famous Chinese fictional detectives in the

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[31] Cheng Xiaoqing, "Tan zhentan xiaoshuo" 談偵探小說 [On detective fiction], *Ershi shiji Zhongguo xiaoshuo lilun ziliao*, ed. Wu Fuhui 吳福輝, Vol. 3 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1997) 82.

[32] Cheng Xiaoqing says, "Detective fiction places an extra emphasis on science. It expands the rational faculty, develops the mind for argumentation, strengthens the power to observe, imagine, analyze, and think, and enrich the reader's experience of society so as to allow him to distinguish truth from falsehood." See Cheng Xiaoqing, "Cong shierbujian dao zhentan xiaoshuo" 從"視而不見"說到偵探小說 [From 'turning a blind eye' to detective fiction], *Shanhu* 珊瑚 [Coral] 13 (1933).

[33] Ibid.

1920s, describes his detective Li Fei, as "a graduate of Yadong Public School and the University of the East," and a man "full of wisdom endowed by science."[34] One would not miss the similarity here when Cheng Xiaoqing presented the young Huo Sang as a nonconformist who "only studied practical disciplines that met the demand of the time, whether they are old or new. Philosophy, psychology, chemistry and physics are all his favorites. He studied diligently until he fully understood."[35] It is with detective fiction's pronounced faith in science in mind that Jeffrey Kinkley in *Chinese Justice, the Fiction* views Chinese detective fiction "as a popular affiliate of May Fourth literature (as Western scholars call the modern, socially engaged, serious literature of the time) rather than just a continuation of 'indigenous' popular fiction."[36] He sees Cheng Xiaoqing as a May Fourth writer, claiming "Cheng Xiaoqing's stories resemble contemporary serious works in form and language…, ideology, milieu…, and the author's view of creativity."[37]

As a literary expression of "science for national salvation," Chinese modern detective fiction necessarily contains many statements that are highly scientistic. For example, to Cheng Xiaoqing, curiosity and practical necessity were two driving forces of human civilization. He speaks through Bao Lang in "Huiyi ren" (The man in gray),

> I believe that all human beings are instinctively curious…Every one of us is a born detective. However, the degree of curiosity varies from high to low, and its development could be on the right track or take a side road. These differences determine the relative superiority or inferiority of nations' creativity, and consequently

[34] Lu Dan'an, "Mian li zhen" 棉裡針 [A needle in the cotton], *Zhongguo zhentan xiaoshuo zongjiang Cheng Xiaoqing*, ed. Fan Boqun 285.
[35] Cheng, "Huo Sang de tongnian" 霍桑的童年 [The childhood of Huo Sang], *Jiannanyan 165.*
[36] Kinkley 178.
[37] Ibid.

> their status in the world. The Italian Calileo's curiosity was aroused when he saw a hanging light swinging, and made a discovery about the pendulum. Since then, human beings have accurate clocks. The Englishman Watt's curiosity was aroused when he saw steam lifting the lid of a teapot, he decided to make use of steam and his invention prompted the great Industrial Revolution, which changed the entire world. Our historical tradition seems to have disregarded this instinct. Children's curiosity, while still sprouting, would often be repressed and destroyed by ignorant parents, let alone being encouraged. It may be one of the main reasons why our material achievements fell behind."[38]

In another article where he mentions detective fiction's encouragement of curiosity, he again laments that most Chinese people had little curiosity as a result of traditional education, superstition, and social constraints, and indicates it was a dangerous situation for China.[39]

Despite the simplistic correlation of curiosity, progress and national survival, and heavy didacticism of these comments, Cheng Xiaoqing's detective and assistant are marked by a sense of urgency regarding the role of science in national salvation. No wonder some New Culturalists would neglect or even tolerate detective fiction. The inflated faith in science exhibits not only in Cheng Xiaoqing's articles, but more prevalently in detective fiction. We will explore the application of scientific knowledge, display of modern conveniences and innovations, demonstration of scientific methods, and the endorsement of scientific rationalism in Cheng Xiaoqing's works next.

III. Science in Detective Fiction: Knowledge, Method, and Reasoning

[38] Cheng, *Huo Sang tan'an ji*, Vol. 6, 46.
[39] See Cheng, "Tan zhentan xiaoshuo," *Ershi shiji Zhongguo xiaoshuo lilun ziliao*, ed. Wu Fuhui, Vol. 3, 83; Fan, *Zhongguo jinxiandai tongsu wenxueshi*, Vol. 1, 833.

The nineteenth and twentieth centuries saw a proliferation of scientific innovations and their imports into China, and it manifested in detective stories. The modern environ with all the scientific innovations became a necessary backdrop against which the detective moves around. There were railways, telephones, telegraphs, newspapers, and all other conveniences introduced from the West. To fulfill the enlightenment mission, detective writers feature science prominently in their works.

Most conspicuous is the highlight of scientific knowledge. Like their Western predecessors or contemporaries, Chinese fictional detectives are often conceived as experts of forensic science, psychology, chemistry, and other related subjects. Huo Sang, perhaps the most knowledgeable Chinese detective, reads a variety of books on criminal investigation or abnormal psychology by foreign experts.[40] Interestingly, some of these books were just translated into Chinese in the 1920s to 1930s, when modern criminology was introduced as a new learning.[41] The author obviously has ascribed his own reading experiences to his detective. Researches on Cheng Xiaoqing have shown that Cheng was an avid reader and studious learner. A self-taught man, he never felt contented in his achievements. In 1924, he started correspondence courses in criminal psychology and criminal investigation from an American university. He also published articles in the *Xuesheng* 學生 (Student) magazine, entitled "How to Test the Pressure of Air" (1921)

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[40] Huo Sang reads Hans Gross's book (in "Cuiming fu" 催命符), Katsumizu Atsuyuki's 勝水淳行 *Criminal Sociology* (in "Di'er dan" 第二彈), and quotes Alexandre Lacassagne, a French criminologist and Adolphe Quetelet, a Belgium sociologist (in "Di'er zhang zhaopian" 第二張照片).

[41] See Zhang Zhihui 張智輝, *Bijiao fanzuixue* 比較犯罪學 [Comparative criminology] (Taipai: Wu'nan tushu chuban gongsi, 1997) 56. Katsumizu Atsuyuki's 勝水淳行 *Criminal Sociology* , for one, was a newly translated scholarship on criminology.

and "New Discovery in Anthropology" (1922).[42] Apparently he had a wide range of interests, and was keen on acquiring "learning required of a detective," as Dingyi 定一, an early reader of detective fiction puts it. [43]

It is true that writers often have the detective show or apply his knowledge to impress the reader, but there are times when scientific knowledge is indispensible. In numerous cases, Huo Sang's knowledge of shoeprint, cigarette, bullet, or other traces of crime helps him decipher the mystery. An episode included in "Xue shouyin" 血手印 (The blood handprint) demonstrates the importance of scientific knowledge in crime investigation. In a murder case, Huo Sang applies chemical knowledge and successfully exonerates the suspect. While the police are convinced that a knife belonging to the suspect was the weapon, Huo Sang insists that the stains on the knife should be tested to see if they are the victim's bloodstains. He drops ammonia on them and proves they are bloodstains. Then he consults a chemist whose lab test shows it is not human blood. Surely Bao Lang would not miss the chance to deplore the reality of Chinese justice in contrast to Huo Sang's scientific spirit.

Second, scientific method is a key element in these stories. Speaking of Huo Sang's method, Bao Lang says,

> The one and only way for my friend is field investigation. He always proceeds from reality, and makes speculations or estimations of what happened on the basis of reliable facts and

[42] Cheng also translated several science articles for the magazine. See Liu Weimin 劉為民, *Kexue yu xiandai Zhongguo wenxue* 科學與現代中國文學 [Science and modern Chinese literature] (Hefei: Anhui jiaoyu chubanshe, 2000), Chapter 7.

[43] Dingyi 定一 in "Xiaoshuo conghua" 小說叢話 [Talks on fiction, 1905] says, "It is hard to meet the qualifications of being detectives. A detective should have special knowledge, temperament, and ability. The three qualifications are all indispensible." See Dingyi, *Ershi shiji Zhongguo xiaoshuo lilun zilian*, ed. Chan and Xia, Vol. 1, 81.

> material evidences. Several decades have passed, and he has undertaken numerous mysterious and dangerous cases. It is this practical and realistic scientific method that has always enabled him to steer clear of danger to safety.[44]

Huo Sang's numerous cases have repeatedly demonstrated the effectiveness of scientific methods. Through these examples, the author sought to inculcate science methods in readers.

Compared to the empirically provable processes of Huo Sang, Bao Lang's method of crime detection, put forward in a discussion with Huo Sang at the beginning of his detective career, consists of two parts. First, "[L]istening to the sound, and looking into the reason. Scrutinizing the appearance, and examining the countenance" 聆音察理，鑑貌辨色.[45] Second, fingerprints and footprints should be collected as primary evidence. Curiously, Bao Lang's rudimentary method bears a close resemblance to the technique of *wuting* 五聽 (five hearings) traditionally adopted by magistrates to ascertain the truth of the case. Recorded in *Zhou li* 周禮 (The rites of Zhou) and widely employed, it instructs the magistrate to mobilize all senses in inquisition and acutely observe the person's speech, countenance, breathing, reaction to the words of the judge, and eyes 辭聽，色聽，氣聽，耳聽，目聽.[46] The rationale is that if people are not telling the truth, they may be evasive or unduly elaborative, change facial color, or breathe heavily. They may also be confused, unresponsive, or look daze. It is an intuitive way of lie detection based on the

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[44] Cheng, "Huo shi," *Huo Sang tan'an ji*, Vol. 8.
[45] Cheng Xiaoqing, "Jiangnan yan," *Jiangnan yan* 2. Bao Lang actually quoted "Qian zi wen 千字文" (The thousand character classic), a classic primer for teaching children characters popular since the sixth century, to describe his rudimentary method of detection.
[46] Wallace Johnson and Denis Twitchett, "Criminal Procedure in T'ang China," *Asia Major* 6.2 (1993), 125-126. See also Weifang He, *In the Name of Justice: Striving for the Rule of Law in China* (Washington, D. C.: Brookings Institution P, 2012), Note 86, 238.

magistrate's understanding of human psychology. Huo Sang does not refute the validity of ancient wisdom Bao Lang draws on. After all, acute observation underlies all activities of crime detection, and Huo Sang is an expert in this respect. The contrast of the instinct or intuition-based *wuting* technique with the empirical nature of modern crime detection that Huo Sang practices is nonetheless striking, and the author obviously preferred the latter for its objective, verifiable and measurable nature, and its association with the rule of law.

Last but not least, it is scientific reasoning that detective fiction ultimately demonstrates to its readers. In *The Adventure of the Copper Beeches*, Holmes lectures to Watson, "Crime is common. Logic is rare. Therefore it is upon the logic rather than upon the crime that you should dwell. You have degraded what should have been a course of lectures into a series of tales."[47] He points out the centrality of logic in his method. Besides being logical in his analysis, Holmes is a positivist who relies on field investigation and observation for the collection of evidence. The same goes for Huo Sang, the most scientific Chinese detective. In fact, whether the story's emphasis is on a scientific solution of the case has become a yardstick to distinguish detective fiction from its indigenous predecessor, court-case fiction. While scientific rationality was upheld in detective fiction, the traditional worldview of the court-case fiction gradually fell apart. The reverence of the unknown, a constituent of the traditional worldview often exemplified in the court-case fiction, is among the topmost to attack by detective fiction.

[47] Doyle, *Complete* 326.

IV. "The Death Hastening Spells:" Science Prevails over Superstition

"Cuiming Fu" 催命符 (The death hastening spells), a novella by Cheng Xiaoqing, is an interesting case showing the complicated coexistence and contention of "new knowledge" and "old notions." While the title suggests the working of supernatural power, the unraveling of the story proves otherwise. It begins with Bao Lang coming to Huo Sang's office upon a phone call. He finds Huo Sang in the armchair reading an English translation of *Criminal Investigation* by Hans Gross. Huo Sang shows Bao Lang a strange spell with the words "Huge gambling losses" written in red ink on exotic paper. This spell brought fear to Gan Tingsun, the recipient, who is said to be "superstitious," and the curse came true. Huo Sang and Bao Lang exercise their deductive method and conclude that it was just a malicious trick devised by a vindictive yet timid person, possibly a professional with modern education, and knowledge of abnormal psychology to panic the victim with a spell. Soon after, a second spell "Running into accidents while going out" arrives and comes true, then a third and a fourth. Each time the spell turns more vicious, with the third a life-threatening "Die in seven days," though Huo Sang never thought these spells would indeed end with a death. The victim seemingly hung himself in his bedroom in the morning, with the last spell cursing his death in three days under his pillow. While the police consider it a suicide, Huo Sang is convinced that it is a murder. With his knowledge of Western medicine and forensic science, Huo Sang detects the smell of ether and symptoms of inhaling ether, an anesthetic widely used in surgery, and concludes that the man was first anesthetized with ether, then hung by the murderer, who set it up as if the man committed suicide after washing his face, around 8 to 9 am.

With acute observation and reasoning, Huo Sang discovers a loophole in the testimony of a housemaid who claims to be the last to see the victim alive. The maid says she took water upstairs to the victim when he was combing his hair, but most people comb hair after washing face. It turns out that the maid did not see the victim that morning at all. The murderer, Gan Dongping, adoptive father of the victim, killed him early in the morning, asked the maid to pretend delivering water upstairs after 8 am, and left home as usual for breakfast at 7 am. The spells are actually false clues, sent by a medical doctor Hua Jimin, the lover of the victim's adoptive sister, because the victim disapproved of the relationship, treated him rudely, and exposed it to the fiancé of his sister, causing her engagement to fall apart disgracefully. In retaliation, the doctor devised the spells, intending to make use of Tingsun's superstitious mind to scare him away from the Gan family. The adoptive father, exasperated by the breakoff of engagement and the large sum of money Gan Tingsun asked for, decided to get rid of him once and for all. When Huo Sang identifies him as the murderer, Gan Dongping confesses his crime. It turns out he learned the effect of ether from his daughter, after she underwent a surgery months earlier. He accidentally saw the death-hastening spell and decided to exploit the chance to cover up his scheme.

Particularly pertinent to the topic of science is the use of ether in this murder. Upon the death scene, police detectives do not find anything wrong while Huo Sang, well versed in forensic and medical science, notices the smell of ether, and the symptoms of taking ether on the victim. The presence of ether is a key element in the solution of this case. There are the police detectives who have no related knowledge and no idea whatsoever of the role ether plays in the murder. In contrast, Huo Sang's advanvced

knowledge of medical and forensic science prepares him adequately for the quick detection of the drug used. The message here is to remind readers of the difference new knowledge can make for crime detection, and the power it entails.

Noticeably, the groundbreaking book *Criminal Investigation* by Hans Gross, the father of criminal investigation, made four appearances in the novella. Huo Sang is reading this book at the beginning of the story, and comments that

> This book is invaluable, but unfortunately there is no Chinese translation yet. In the past, ignorant fogeys carried out post-mortem examinations. Until now, they still take charge of these matters of life and death, except in a handful of metropolises where legal medical experts are employed. In a scientific era, how can they still rely on outdated and superstitious experience to solve cases done by criminals with the latest knowledge?[48]

The following case seems to validate Huo Sang's words and acknowledge the authority of the book through Huo Sang's successful application of the knowledge gained from the book, such as the knowledge that one may mumble in delirium under the effect of anesthetic. Although Cheng Xiaoqing describes the policemen as hardworking and reasonable in this story, they are obviously not knowledgeable enough to combat criminals in a scientific era.

Perhaps to call attention to the importance of catching up with new development in criminal investigation, this story casts the criminals in an interesting light — as criminals equipped with new knowledge, in contrast to the ignorant policemen. Gan Dongping and Hua Jimin both take advantage of new knowledge in their wrongdoings. Gan Dongping is depicted as a man of the past age, being a man of leisure retired to the

[48] Cheng, *Huo Sang tan'an ji*, Vol. 4.

comfort of metropolitan Shanghai. He wears traditional attires, looks as imposing as a bureaucrat, lives in a large old-styled house with tasteful furniture and decors, and has the habit of rising early and going out for breakfast every morning. He engages his daughter to her cousin early on, as is a normal traditional practice, and hates to see the engagement break off disgracefully due to Tingsun's interference. One would hardly expect such a figure to be the murderer, not to mention the adoption of ether, a novelty out of reach for most people. It is ironic that ether, a symbol of advanced science, would catch the attention of a man with "old" mentality, and become a tool of evil. In contrast, Hua Jimin, the medical doctor with new education, would resort to spells as a means of revenge is equally ironic. With abnormal psychology as part of his medical training, he does not put it to good use, but to vent his spite upon the victim. As for the victim, who received modern education and obviously enjoyed a modern lifestyle, it is only lamentable in the eyes of Huo Sang that he retained a superstitious mind and was prejudiced against the freedom of love, causing his early demise.

All of these underscore the message that in a changing time, if scientific knowledge cannot be applied to good causes, it would bring about grave damages, especially if those in law enforcement cannot keep abreast with new development. In addition, Cheng Xiaoqing criticizes the superficial changes people often associate with being "modern." For example, when Bao Lang and his wife have a short conversation on the subject of being "modern," his wife says, "Many people have only a modern look or modern enjoyment, but not a modern mind." Bao Lang responds, "Yes, what we are

lacking for now is the modern mind. It is attributed to the failure of education!"[49] So it is clear that the key to being truly "modern," for both individuals and the nation, is not merely "modern" on the surface, like acquiring new knowledge, or adopting modern devices and inventions, but to revolutionize the mindset to be more open-minded, to be rid of traditional "prejudices," and to do away with blind faith and superstition. While people who make a convenience of new knowledge to do wrong things are condemned, like Gan Dongping, anyone with modern knowledge but lacking in a righteous and modern mind, such as Hua Jimin, is not the one to be entrusted to usher China into modernity, nor is he the type of person Cheng wants his readers to emulate. Huo Sang really stands in sharp contrast to the ignorant or malicious characters as the perfect modern man: a righteous man who not only takes in new knowledge diligently, but also puts them to good uses.

Besides the contrast of the old and the new and the concern over what is "modern," another major target of this story is superstition. According to the storyline, superstition makes the victim susceptible to threats, and provides the murderer a chance to carry out his scheme. From the beginning, Huo Sang has been reassuring the victim that "the spells would have absolutely no magic power if he does not believe in superstitions." Huo Sang adds, "Even genuine Taoist spells have no magic. If it had, we only need to ask the immortal Zhang in Mount Longhu for some Taoist spells and would avenge the unbearable humiliations our country suffered."[50] It is characteristic of Cheng's detective fiction to deny the presence of any supernatural elements. All things that appear to

[49] Ibid.
[50] Ibid.

involve the supernatural, such as the spells in this case, would be exposed as the work of human beings.

V. Exorcizing the Supernatural

Early Chinese readers of detective fiction must have been amazed by the multitude of scientific instruments, methods, and knowledge that the detective commands at will to solve the mysteries. Turning to court-case fiction, we will find that it differs from detective fiction not only in having government officials as the representatives of justice, but also in their means of revealing the truth and carrying out justice. In fact, one aspect of court-case fiction, the recurring supernatural interference, was a target of attack in detective fiction.

Chinese detective fiction in general is quite belligerent against the so-called "superstition." Take Cheng Xiaoqing's "Baiyi guai" (Ghost in white) for example. The story evolves on the theme of "a suspicious heart will see imaginary ghosts." When Qiu Risheng, on account of being haunted by the ghost of his brother that cannot be exorcised by Taoist masters, seeks Huo Sang's professional help, he reluctantly puts the question, "Is it the doing of a man or a ghost?" At this point, Bao Lang reflects, "In the current era of scientific advancements, if one believes in demons beyond the physical phenomenon, wouldn't it be a laughingstock?"[51] As if to speak aloud Bao Lang's mind, Huo Sang reassures Qiu that "you got to be sure there is absolutely no ghost, or monster

[51] Cheng, *Zhentan taidou Cheng Xiaoqing daibiaozuo* 150

whatsoever."[52] They confidently set out to dispel the ghostly apparition by chasing down clues to identify the "ghost," who is none other than Qiu's nephew Haifeng, the son of Qiu's late brother. Suspicious of the role Qiu plays in the sudden death of his father, Haifeng, aided by his loyal servant who serves the Qiu household, appeared on different occasions before Qiu in the shape of ghost to confirm his suspicion. In fact, Qiu did hasten his brother's death by altering news about his investment. With a guilty conscience, he was so scared the last time he saw the "ghost" that he fell on the ground, bumped his head, and died. Out of his adherence to a higher code of justice, Huo Sang surely sympathizes with Haifeng, and testifies to his innocence in Qiu's death.

This novella is typical of Huo Sang's ghost hunting. It repeats a formula many Chinese detective writers follow in their storytelling: the haunting ghosts are invariably found to be humans, and the unknown can always be explained with modern science. In this case, it is the resolute rejection of the supernatural beings and the decided exorcising of the mysterious and unknown that characterize the scientific attitude of modern Chinese detective. This attitude is typical of Huo Sang in many cases that seem to involve the supernatural but thanks to Huo's efforts, turn out to be mere human contrivances. Not only Huo Sang, but other writers such as Sun Liaohong, adhere to this formula, as can be found in works including "Xue zhiren" discussed in Chapter Three.

Upon a closer look, it is clear that such stance is a legacy of the "enlightenment" of the late-Qing reforms and the New Culture Movement. It reflects a positive, inflated faith in the power of science in revealing the truth in this mundane world. This stance is in line with the hegemony of science established since the turn of the century. Not

[52] Ibid.

surprisingly, it is a continuation of the utilitarian view of translated detective fiction. Whether science can solve all issues of human life is not our concern here. What merits discussion is writers' conscious efforts to exorcise the ghosts and any supernatural elements from the imaginary world. In the above case, Huo Sang shows contempt when Qiu speaks of asking for a Taoist master's help to exorcise the "ghost," and he says frankly, "I don't believe in the existence of ghost in the world. Ghost resides in your heart."[53]

In sharp contrast, supernatural elements abound in court-case fiction, and play an indispensible role in the revelation of crimes therein. In two popular Judge Bao casebooks of the Ming Dynasty, *Baijia Gong'an* and *Longtu Gong'an*, about half of the cases include supernatural elements. Often it is the victim's ghost that returns and expects justice from the wise judge, sometimes it is a divine inspiration that enlightens the judge to the truth, and sometimes the malefactor is a malicious spirit that is eventually exorcized by the judge. While the judge can adjudicate cases in the human world, he is also endowed with supernatural power to rectify the unjust concerning the underworld. He is morally impeccable so that he can get help from other worlds. The supernatural elements make the storyline complex and riveting, and the judge somehow deified in this fictional world, seems at ease in the coexistence of human and supernatural beings.

One of the earliest Judge Bao cases, "San xianshen Bao Longtu duanan" 三現身包龍圖斷冤 (Judge Bao solves a case through a ghost that appeared thrice), is a sharp contrast to modern detective cases. Originally *huaben* 話本 (a storyteller's script) in the

[53] Ibid. 155.

Song dynasty,[54] it was later revised and included in *Jinshi Tongyan* 警世通言 (Stories to caution the world, 1624), one of the widely celebrated trilogy of vernacular story collections compiled by Feng Menglong 馮夢龍 (1574–1645) in the Ming dynasty. Supposedly this is a case Judge Bao solves early in his career as an official. The story follows the formula of *huaben* stories by including an opening poem exclaiming the predestined fate, and a *ruhua* 入話 (prologue) speaking of a blind man who can foretell the future according to the sounds he hears. The prologue transitions to the main story by introducing a fortune-teller who claims to be remarkably accurate. One day, First Master Clerk (*yasi* 押司) in the local county office, Sun Wen, stops by the fortune-teller's booth, and gets the prophecy that he will die by 1 am the very night. In disbelief and dismay, Sun tells his wife the incident, gets drunk, and is helped to the bed by his wife and the maid Ying'er. Soon afterwards, the man suddenly jumps off bed, rushes out the door, covers the face with one hand, and throws into the river. It is just past midnight, and as the river flows straightly into the Yellow River, the body is unlikely to be found. Five months later, the wife remarries another county clerk with the same last name Sun.

The tragedy of the late husband would have been gradually forgotten, were it not for his strange apparitions before Ying'er, the maid. Ying'er sees the ghost the first time in the kitchen in a ghastly shape, with disheveled hair, protruding tongue, and bleeding eyes. He implores Ying'er to stand up for him. After this scaring incident, her mistress decides to marry her off. Ying'er's husband Wang Xing happens to be a drunkard and

[54] See Lin Song 林嵩, "San xianshen gushi zhi liubian qiji yingxiang" 三現身故事之流變及其影響 [The transformation and influence of the story of "Three appearances"], *Mingqing xiaoshuo yanjiu* 明清小說研究 [Journal of Ming-Qing fiction studies] 1 (2011), 200.

gambler. Squandering away all his money, he pushes Ying'er to ask for money from her mistress, who apparently will not help more than once. The second time Ying'er is forced to go to her mistress, she sees the ghost in his normal appearance as if still alive, who generously gives her some money. Ying'er sees the ghost two days later in a Taoist temple in the form of an underworld judge. He hands her a piece of paper, and exhorts her to plead on his behalf to redress his grievance. There is a riddle on the paper, "Big woman, small woman, the last one tills the land and the latecomer eats the food. To learn the thing happening at midnight, remove fire and expose the water. The second or third month of the next year, this can be solved by *jusi*."[55] Quite baffled, Ying'er and her husband decide to leave it till next year to see what will happen.

The second month sees the debut of Judge Bao, then a magistrate newly appointed to this county. Three days after assuming office, he dreams of sitting in court to hold pleas, where he reads a couplet: "To learn the thing happening at midnight, remove fire and expose the water." Judge Bao makes the couplet public, offering a reward of ten taels of silver for anyone who can solve the riddle. Wang Xing sees the chance, but when he retrieves the paper given by the ghost, he finds it void of writing. Nevertheless, he still goes before Judge Bao and tells him the whole story. Judge Bao immediately grasps the truth, and orders the arrest of the Sun couple, because he has correctly deciphered the riddle: "Big woman, small woman" refers to older and younger Sun, as the two characters making up the word "woman" in Chinese — "女子"— can also mean the daughter's son — "*sun* 孙"— exactly the last name of the two husbands. The second sentence of the

[55] The original is "大女子，小女子，前人耕來後人餌。要知三更事，掇開火下水。來年二三月，句已當解此" (Feng 170).

riddle points out whatever older Sun acquired, wife or possession, was taken over by younger Sun. The third sentence reveals the location of his body: in order to solve the mystery of the midnight death, you need to remove the stove, and the body is in the well beneath the stove. The man was strangled to death, according to Ying'er's description of the ghost's first appearance. The last sentence says Judge Bao — *jusi* 句巳 making up the character "包" (Bao) — will solve the case in this month of the year.

Judge Bao's inference is verified by the discovery of the body in the well. Older Sun was indeed murdered by his wife and younger Sun, then her lover. When the wife heard of the fortune-teller's word, she plotted with younger Sun, and decided to jump at this opportunity to murder him. The wife got him drunk, then they strangled him and disposed of his body in the well when Ying'er dozed off. Afterwards, younger Sun dressed up as older Sun, rushed out, and jumped into the river, making it look like an inexplicable suicide. They later built the stove upon the well to cover things up. As expected, the murderers are punished, and Wang Xing gets the promised reward.

As an early example of court-case fiction, this story displays some defining features of this genre, such as the wise magistrate, but the most notable feature about it is the presence of supernatural elements and the role they play in the fiction. The beginning poem and prologue set the tone of predestination for the story, and when older Sun learns his fortune, readers anticipate its realization. The first part of the story is thus shrouded in this atmosphere of pending death. After older Sun's "suicide," the event takes on a more supernatural turn with the three appearances of his ghost. It may seem fantastic, but in the tradition of Chinese fiction, the presence of ghosts is not unusual. Here we see the formula of ghost pleading to redress their grievances. Although he can show up before

the living, he has to wait for the arrival of the wise magistrate to expose the truth of his death. In line with the theme of the opening episode, everything is predetermined, including the appointment of Judge Bao to the county, his dream revelation, and his solution of the case by figuring out the riddle. Since then Judge Bao wins the reputation of being a sagacious judge that can adjudicate human cases in the daytime, and cases in the underworld at night. The ending poem reiterates the message that heavenly rules apply to all beings, and no one can escape karmic retributions.

The story represents the traditional worldview characterized with "a perceived continuity between the world of the living and that of the dead and other supernatural beings."[56] Chinese thought since antiquity has been dominated by the doctrine of the unity of Man and Heaven (*tian ren heyi* 天人合一). Injustices in the temporal world would upset the natural order, and lead to supernatural interferences.[57] In terms of Chinese justice system, "[t]his-worldly magistrates lived in a traditional world where the gods and ancestors were real and could make their will known through portents, dreams, and oracular pronouncements."[58] It is a place governed by the rule of karmic retribution, that good has its reward and evil has its recompense, all overseen by beings above human beings. In this sense, the story fits perfectly fine within the Chinese fictional tradition.

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[56] Terry Kleeman, "Traditional Chinese Jurisprudence and the Supernatural: Can Ghosts Give Evidence," International Conference on the Development of the Worldviews in early Modern East Asia (Taipei, Taiwan, August 6, 2005), 2.

[57] Natural disasters such as famine and flood were taken to indicate the emperor's deteriorating moral character and improper management of the country. A famous example of the correspondence of heaven and man can be found in the Yuan drama *Dou E Yuan* 竇娥冤 [The injustice to Dou E] written by Guan Hanqing 關漢卿 (c. 1241–1320). Dou E is executed for a crime she did not commit. Before her death, she swears that her innocence will be proved if a heavy snow will fall in mid-summer, and the province will experience a three-year drought. These events indeed happen, and her case is eventually redressed.

[58] Kleeman 2.

Interestingly, this story shares some similarities with "The Death-Hastening Spells." Both have a death foretold, and both end with a death, in the pretense of suicide. Thanks to the wise Judge Bao or detective Huo Sang, both cases are revealed to be murder done under the cover of the prophecy or spell. As a result, the murderers are duly punished. But despite these superficial similarities, the differences are far more fundamental and revealing of the contrasting worldviews conveyed in these two works. This story conforms to and reiterates the traditional moral messages such as karmic retribution and predestination. Even though older Sun is murdered, his death at the predicted time still validates the prophecy, beckoning the certainty of predestination. The riddle given to the maid and the revelatory dream of Judge Bao again reinforce the theme of predestination and the belief that the good will eventually overcome the evil. Yet for the detective story, we see how Huo Sang dismisses the unknown as superstitious and decidedly rejects the presence of the unknown in his world. The spells are revealed to be mischief plotted by an enemy, while the murder is committed out of family grudge. There is no place for superstition here, except in the heart of the victim that renders him vulnerable to harm. Cheng Xiaoqing is trying to present a world ruled by scientific rationality, in which people, no longer bound by "blind faith," can exercise their reason freely, as demonstrated by their model detective Huo Sang. In a sense, detective fiction of this type works to dispel the remnants of the worldview fortified by court-case fiction, and exorcise the supernatural elements in order to make way for science and reason.

Scholars have pointed out that the use of science in detective fiction is more often than not decorative, [59] and the efficacy of science is exaggerated in detective fiction.[60] Possibly in self-defense against the New Culturalists' charges, and out of the writers' serious intent to inform and teach, Chinese detective fiction in general is quite serious about disseminating scientific knowledge and dispelling superstition. After all, superstition, a blanket term in the May Fourth discourse for all customs or traditions considered backward and at odds with science, was identified as a major obstacle to China's progress.

The attack on superstition can be traced to the late-Qing reformist agenda.[61] For example, Liang Qichao blames Chinese superstitions on the adverse influence of traditional vernacular fiction.[62] A novel *Sao Mi Zhou* 掃迷帚 (The broom that weeps away superstition, 1903), attempting to turn people against traditional Chinese religious ideas, claims in the opening, "What stops China from making progress is none other than superstition," and "to save China, we must begin by reforming its customs and

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[59] Tam, "The Traditional Hero" 146; Stephen Knight, *Form and Ideology in Crime Fiction* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1980) 86.

[60] King-fai Tam notes that "detective fiction tends to exaggerate the wonders of criminological and forensic science" ("The Detective Fiction" 128).

[61] The term *mixin* 迷信 (superstition) was adopted by Liang Qichao from Japanese (Luo 62).

[62] Liang Qichao says in "On the Relationship Between Fiction and the Government of the People," "Where does the Chinese interest in witches and fox spirits come from? It comes from fiction…Nowadays our people are deluded by such superstitious practices as geomancy, physiognomy, divination, and praying to spirits to bring good fortune and to exorcise calamities. The superstitious belief in geomancy has driven people to oppose the construction of railroads and the opening of mines. Disputes over the site for a grave can embroil en entire clan in armed fighting and merciless killing. Processions and festivals intended to welcome the spirits or offer thanksgiving to the gods annually cause people to squander millions of dollars, waste their time, stir up trouble, and drain the national economy. This is all because of fiction" (79, my ellipsis).

traditions."[63] The New Culture Movement went further in its criticism of the superstition of traditional culture. Its supporters mobilized science as a crucial instrument to banish ignorance and superstition. Perry Link observes that "enough elite attention" was given to this idea that "many of China's traditional beliefs were superstitious and that superstitions were bad," so much so that butterfly literature was pressured to "consider it stylish at a superficial level," yet reject it at a deeper level.[64] From the above discussion we can conclude that Chinese detective fiction's particular attention to science does bring it closer to the "elite" position of the New Culture Movement. As for whether the adherence was a superficial or fundamental one, and whether detective writers rejected the wholesale dismissal of tradition at a deeper level, before we move on to find answers in the discussion of the morality of science, we need to examine another Huo Sang case.

Cheng Xiaoqing unusually expressed a doubt of the "omnipotence" of science in a short story "Heilian gui" 黑脸鬼 (The black-faced ghost). Huo Sang and Bao Lang receive a young client who claims to have seen a black-faced ghost. While Huo Sang assures the child that there is no ghost in the world, Bao Lang thinks to himself,

> Do ghosts exist in the world after all? This is still a mystery. Ususally scientists would surely deny the existence of ghosts, but Dr. Wu Tingfang of our country, Sir Oliver Lodge of Britain, as well as Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the author of the Sherlock Holmes cases, were all firm believers of spiritualism. Now after hearing Pei Zhiying's account, I am confused. With his scientific mind, Huo Sang certainly does not believe in ghosts. Will he take this ghost story?

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[63] Its author went by the pseudonym Zhuangzhe 壮者 (Strong man). Quoted in Miao Huaimin, "Cong gong'an dao zhentan" 從公案到偵探 [From court-case to detective fiction], *Mingqing xiaoshuo yanjiu* 明清小說研究 [Journal of Ming-Qing fiction studies] 2 (2001), 50.

[64] Perry Link, "Traditonal-Style Popular Urban Fiction in the Teens and Twenties," *Modern Chinese Literature in the May Fourth Era*, ed. Merie Goldman (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1977) 343.

> ……
>
> Ordinary people believe that human life consists not only of the material, but also the spiritual. However advanced science is at present, it still cannot reach the spiritual. Hence even though I believe in science, yet so far I still cannot admit that science can account for every aspect of human life or solve all mysteries in the universe.[65]

Unsurprisingly, the ghost turns out to be the child's younger cousin, who has no evil intention other than playing a small trick, for they heard many ghost stories from servants recently. The story relays the message that family education is crucial to the abolition of superstition. Despite the ending that reassures the reader that ghosts only exists in the heart and mind, Bao Lang's secret doubts bespeak the author's reservations regarding the authority and universal applicability of science. This position reminds one of the opponents' questioning of science in the 1923 debate of Science and the Philosophy of Life. Although the exaltation of science dominates the Huo Sang cases, the author still felt the niggling doubt: Is there supernatural power in the world? After all, even the creator of Sherlock Holmes believed in spiritualism.

VI. The Morality of Science

Although Chinese detective writers seemed eager to validate the efficacy of science, they also expressed mounting concerns over the morality of science. "The Death-Hastening Spell" has voiced the concern that scientific knowledge enabled criminals to improve on their illegal activities. Cheng Xiaoqing's works disclose a distrust of knowledge without morality, and a vague belief in justice being overseen by a higher

[65] Cheng, *Hei dilao* 93.

force. In the following, I will expound the relation of science and morality in Chinese detective fiction, in particular Cheng Xiaoqing's works, with reference to the Western counterpart, the Sherlock Holmes stories.

Written between 1886 and 1927, the Sherlock Holmes oeuvre was created spanning the late Victorian, Edwardian and Georgian eras. With most stories set in or before 1903, however, Conan Doyle intended to present Sherlock Holmes as a superhero of the Victorian age, embodying the spirit of the age such as optimism, progress, faith in science and reason; and upholding Victorian values such as courage, moral responsibility and social proprieties. As critic Rosemary Jann notes, "Through the character of Holmes, Doyle brilliantly popularized the century's confidence in the uniform operation of scientific laws that allowed the trained observer to deduce causes from effects."[66] Indeed, when Doyle talked of how he conceived of the Sherlock Holmes stories, he expressed the disappointment he had while reading previous detective stories, and spoke of his decision to make his detective build up conclusions on evidence.[67] In other words, Holmes distinguishes himself from earlier detectives by being a man of science who relies on his cerebral power and deductive methods to decipher mysteries, and restore social orders. The hopes and anxieties of his time were projected onto the detective, when the British Empire witnessed the height of its imperial power, unprecedented prosperity, and great scientific inventions.

Despite the fact that during the Victorian Age, there were writers who challenged the benefits of industrial growth with the social problems in view, and the fact that Doyle himself became a dedicated proponent of Spiritualism later in his life, he still celebrated

[66] "The Era of Sherlock Homes," PBS.
[67] See his 1927 interview "Arthur Conan Doyle," *Internet Archive*.

the age of promise and progress in his best-selling detective stories. There is no mystery that cannot be solved by the combination of scientific reasoning, acute observations, and bravery. Despite works such as *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886) by Robert Louis Stevenson or the earlier *Frankenstein* (1818) by Mary Shelley that bring up the theme of dangerous knowledge, Sherlock Holmes and Watson almost never question the power of knowledge. They do encounter highly intelligent villains such as Holmes' nemesis Moriarty, for sure. The emphasis of the stories, however, is not on how knowledge enables Moriarty to be a criminal mastermind, but on the rivalry with and pursuit of the criminal by the great detective.

In "The Adventure of the Final Problem" (1893), Sherlock Homes confronts his archenemy, Professor Moriarty. Being a criminal mastermind, Moriarty is the closest to a man equipped with "dangerous knowledge." In Holmes' words,

> He is a man of good birth and excellent education, endowed by nature with a phenomenal mathematical faculty. At the age of twenty-one he wrote a treatise upon the binomial theorem which has had a European vogue. On the strength of it, he won the mathematical chair at one of our smaller universities, and had, to all appearances, a most brilliant career before him. But the man had hereditary tendencies of the most diabolical kind. A criminal strain ran in his blood, which, instead of being modified, was increased and rendered infinitely more dangerous by his extraordinary mental powers. Dark rumors gathered round him in the University town, and eventually he was compelled to resign his chair and come down to London. He is the Napoleon of crime, Watson. He is the organizer of half that is evil and of nearly all that is undetected in this great city.[68]

From this description, it is obvious that Moriarty impresses people as being extremely intelligent. He owes his early academic success to natural gift, family background and

[68] Doyle, *Complete* 483.

education, yet the hereditary criminal strain dooms his criminal turn. The emphasis here on "natural" or "hereditary" makes it almost a predetermination, revamped in the discourse of criminology or biology, for Moriarty to go awry. Obviously the theory behind this utterance is positivist criminology popular since the mid-nineteenth century, which believes that it is the nature, not nurture, of the person that causes criminal propensities.[69] According to this theory, Moriarty is a born criminal, whose menace is exacerbated by the knowledge he commands. In other words, the danger of knowledge is not called into question in this case, or in any other Sherlock Holmes stories, when the criminal is considered inborn, or beng spurred by individual circumstances. It may be safe to conclude that knowledge and science are never seriously questioned in the Sherlock Holmes stories, nor is "knowledge" seen as a threat to the society.

Things are different for Chinese detective writers of the twentieth century. True that Cheng Xiaoqing welcomed new knowledge, especially science, with optimism. Yet it was not without reservations and concerns. Prominently in Cheng's stories, a group of people labeled with the word "modern" (*modeng* 摩登) are portrayed in a negative light, often as examples of the failure of modern education. "Modern" in the Chinese context means "up to date" or "fashionable."[70] It can be used in a positive or pejorative sense, depending on the context. As a key word in Cheng's stories, however, it means getting new education, adopting Western lifestyle, dressing fashionably, etc. It is applied to

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[69] In criminology, the Positivist School has attempted to find scientific objectivity for the measurement and quantification of criminal behavior. As the scientific method became the major paradigm in the search for knowledge, the Classical School's social philosophy was replaced by the quest for scientific laws that would be discovered by experts. It is divided into Biological, Psychological and Social.

[70] For more discussion, see Chapter One, and Zhang Yong 張勇, "Modeng kaobian: 1930 niandai Shanghai wenhua guanjianci zhiyi" "摩登"考辨——1930 年代上海文化關鍵詞之一 [Modern: a key term of Shanghai culture in the 1930s], *Zhongguo xiandai wenxue yanjiu congkan* 中國現代文學研究叢刊 [Modern Chinese literature studies] 6 (2007).

young professionals, students, young women, but never to Huo Sang or Bao Lang. Obviously, it is a term Cheng used with irony. The target here is their superficial adoption of Western material culture. Instead of acquiring the kernel of western culture — scientific attitude towards life, scientific worldview, or social responsibility — they adopt western lifestyle and latest fashions, while retaining their superstitious and shallow mind. In extreme cases, some "modern" men would go to the extreme of becoming dangerous villains. Therefore, the newly acquired knowledge became a knife in the butcher's hand. "Huo shi" (The living corpse) by Cheng Xiaoqing portrays such a "modern" villain.

The story is set in the 1930s when under the Japanese encroachment, some youths formed a "League of Eliminating Collaborators," targeting profiteers who sold Japanese goods. After a bomb threat to such a trading house, merchants selling foreign goods are scared and consult Huo Sang for ideas to get rid of the league. Huo Sang, a dedicated consumer of domestic products, rejects such a request in a morning, when a young woman in her twenties, dressed in pretty silk gown and wearing high heels, stumbles into Huo Sang's office. The woman is beautiful, but as pale as paper and unable to speak. She is in severe pain, so Huo Sang immediately takes her to the hospital. The mysterious woman dies of Lysol poisoning nonetheless, and Huo Sang's reputation is blemished because of his connection with the case. Huo Sang therefore needs to clear his name in two days. He posts a notice on newspapers asking for clues to the woman's identity. Responding to the notice, an anonymous call exposes the woman's connection to a Mr. Xu, a handsome young man residing in his relative's Western-style house, as Huo Sang and Bao Lang soon find out. Mr. Xu, or Xu Zhiyu, is a professor at Dongwu University,

returning two months ago with a doctorate in sociology from New York University. He is engaged to the only daughter of a rich banker.

Huo Sang also locates the hotel the dead woman stayed, and reveals her identity as Qin Shoulan, who recently returned from the U. S. According to the disclosure of a steward working at the hotel, who happens to be the anonymous caller, Xu visited Qin several times, and had a quarrel with her before she poisoned herself with Lysol. Obviously Xu and Qin used to be lovers, and Xu abandoned Qin for a girl of wealthier background, leading to Qin's suicide. During the investigation, a murder happens unexpectedly. A man is shot dead before Xu's residence at midnight, and Xu is injured by another bullet shot through the window. During interrogation, Huo Sang finds Xu conniving, deceitful, and evasive. Out of suspicions, Huo Sang searches Xu's residence for proofs of his involvement in the murder while Xu is away, and finds the shirt Xu wore at the time of his "injury." When Xu suddenly turns up and realizes his secrets are exposed, he fires at them and flees. Before he can sneak away, however, a sudden explosion next-door severely injures him. It was a bomb thrown at a trading house by the "League of Eliminating Collaborators." Xu is eventually arrested and convicted for the murder of a League member, and he dies from injury soon after.

The truth is, Xu and Qin fell in love when both were studying in the U. S., and they returned to China together. While Xu secured a position in Shanghai, Qin went back to her hometown for a visit, only to find her family bankrupt. She returned to Shanghai, and discovered that Xu had quickly ditched her for a wealthy girl. After a fierce quarrel, Qin took Lysol and went to Huo Sang as if going to a final court of appeal. Although Xu cannot be legally changed for Qin's death, both Huo Sang and Bao Lang condemn his

desertion of Qin and think him morally responsible for her death. Out of a guilty consciousness, Xu mistook a man standing before his house at midnight, actually a member of the "League of Eliminating Collaborators" keeping watch on Xu's neighboring trading house, for a possible avenger for Qin. He shot the man dead, and to cover up the murder, Xu set up the scene as if he was also a victim. Huo Sang found the key evidence of his pretense — a bloodstained shirt cut by knife, not pierced by a bullet — in Xu's bedroom. Poetic justice is done when Xu is not only found guilty of the murder, but also injured by the bomb and died in disgrace.

Cheng Xiaoqing ambitiously incorporated the elements of adventure, suspense, politics, and love into this intricate plot. Readers would not ignore the high frequency of the word "modern" in this story. Qin Shoulan is described as "modern." Impressed by her fashionable appearance that makes her look like a socialite, dance hostess or movie star, Bao Lang calls her a "so-called modern figure baptized in the new age."[71] Later when Bao Lang asks Huo Sang how to find her identity, Huo Sang says, "Women of this type, even a recent returnee from abroad, must be very sociable. She might have frequented dance halls, restaurants, cinemas and theaters."[72] Huo Sang also thinks of her as "a fashionable woman expert at enjoying foreign goods."[73] Bao Lang and Huo Sang are highly unanimous in their opinion of Qin. Not without prejudice, they deem her "modern," with all typical associations such as fashionable clothes, luxurious expenditure, extravagant lifestyle, and lots of social intercourses attached to her. "Modern" is also used on Xu. In spite of his fashionable clothes and handsome appearance, the man is a sly

[71] Cheng, *Huo shi* 15.
[72] Ibid. 27.
[73] Ibid. 40.

pretender who has no moral sense whatsoever. Hence the word "modern" indicates a superficial westernization the author disapproved of. Being "modern" in this story means paying excessive attention to the material comforts at the expense of moral discipline.

In contrast, the good-willed hotel steward who discloses information about Qin out of gratitude towards Huo Sang for a past favor, seems to have retained traditional virtues better than the "modern" people. Bao Lang exclaims,

> He knows one should repay kindness for kindness, which is rare. Unfortunately, such national essence exists only among non-intellectuals. The old saying goes, 'When rites become defunct, they can be recovered from people living in the outskirt." Yet it has a time limit, too. In a few years, it is possible that such people will become extinct.[74]

In response, Huo Sang asks Bao Lang how he would respond if other people ridicule him as falling behind the time. Bao Lang sighs,

> I am confident that unlike the old fossils, I have no wish to turn the clock back. However, in today's society, friendship, marriage, teacher-student relation, and labor relation have all been commercialized — obviously a consequence of being contaminated by the by-products of material culture, and the disregard of our innate spirit! In my opinion, the continuation of a nation depends on its unique spirit, which should not be dismissed blindly under new influence. I'd rather be called 'behind the time' on this point![75]

Bao Lang pits himself against the "modern" people who are irrevocably corrupted by Western material culture, and have lost their cultural upbringing. In this changing time, he insists on upholding the national spirit, defined by the preservation of certain traditional values. Huo Sang, of course, shares his opinion.

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[74] Ibid. 87-88.
[75] Ibid. 88.

Intellectuals without the guidance of moral values would be dangerous. Huo Sang considers Xu such a dangerous rival, "Crimes done by intellectuals are far more difficult to solve."[76] Bao Lang also laments, "What a waste that he got so much knowledge through higher education yet used it to deceive a woman!"[77] Yet Huo Sang cannot agree with the overly pessimistic tone, saying, "In this rapidly changing time, there is a gap between generations in terms of ideas or morality, as expected. We can only act practically. When politics is put on the right track, and educational policies are implemented, it is possible to turn round the tide."[78] Apparently, both Huo Sang and Bao Lang are concerned with the fact that under new education system, young men may acquire knowledge, but with little moral discipline, they would succumb to the temptation of material comforts, and lose their way. This theme turns more explicit with the progression of the story, and Huo Sang warns, "Knowledge is like a wild horse. It can be extremely dangerous if unbridled by morality."[79]

This particular concern over the morality of knowledge or science has to be explained in terms of China's unique situation at the time. Stuck in incessant wars internationally or domestically between 1920s and 1940s, national issue became a topic hard to avoid for writers with social conscience. Aiming to call attention to some of the social problems in metropolitan Shanghai or China at large, Cheng Xiaoqing not only brought up the "League of Eliminating Collaborators," which emerged after the conflict of China and Japan in 1932 known as the Shanghai Incident, to remind readers of the humiliation China suffered, but also voiced his disapproval of some intellectuals' self-

[76] Ibid. 89.
[77] Ibid. 90.
[78] Ibid.
[79] Ibid. 119.

indulgence and lack of social engagement. In this story, Xu is a sharp contrast to the league member he kills. The handsome and highly-educated Xu enjoys respectable social status, yet he only cares for his personal interest, and applies his knowledge to doing harm. Such men are "living corpses," in Huo Sang's words. In comparison, the League member who sacrifices for his cause wins the respect of Huo Sang, Bao Lang, and the society, although he obviously has no money, good education or social status. Bao Lang mourns for the loss of the League member, "I feel such a profiteer who knows only self but not national interest, and the hypocrite who ravaged women, deserve death. It is a pity, however, for the patriotic youth to sacrifice this way."[80]

As for Xu, Bao Lang not only thinks "the treacherous one has reaped the consequences," but also considers it a "manifestation of providence."[81] Interestingly, poetic justice would be phrased as providence. Even though Cheng Xiaoqing for the most part denied the existence of supernatural elements in this story, he is also against materialism that explains everything in terms of material existence. He spoke through Bao Lang, "In modern society, those young men and women who compete for material benefits at the expense of the nation, moral character, or their life, are also poisoned by a blind faith in materialism."[82] It seems Cheng would rather believe in the existence of providence as a counterforce for the rampant deterioration of morality in society. Even Huo Sang acknowledges that "our traditional idea of cause and effect cannot be easily categorized as superstition. 'As a man sows, so he shall reap.' This is in accordance with

[80] Cheng, *Huo shi* 218.
[81] Ibid. 219.
[82] Ibid.

the scientific law of causality."[83] Huo Sang also uses traditional concept of retribution to account for the bad ends of evildoers, " 'He who is unjust is doomed to destruction.' This is not just an old religious saying, but also tallies with science or psychology."[84]

Although many traditional beliefs were dismissed as superstition during and after the New Culture Movement, Cheng Xiaoqing did not approve of the radicalism in denouncing everything traditional in favor of the West. In a society where the law was still deficient, it is perhaps a consolation if people still believe in a providence that can do justice to all people. Although providence can no longer manifest in the form of gods, ghosts or spirits, it can still manifest in the punishment of the evil and the reward of the good, only in a more incidental way.

VII. Conclusion

Detective fiction as a popular genre is heavily influenced by the cultural and ideological contexts of its production. Even though science is equally celebrated in both the Sherlock Holmes stories and Cheng Xiaoqing's stories, different historical and social circumstances would leave indelible imprints in the works, which in turn would convey these ideas and affect the reader's view on related issues. On the theme of justice or science, our exploration has shown that Chinese writers, with a different set of concerns, negotiate the elements of modern and traditional, foreign and indigenous, in their writings. The substantial impact of the New Culture Movement and its zealous worship of science

[83] Cheng, *Huo Sang tan'an ji*, Vol. 13.
[84] Cheng, *Zhentan taidou* 313.

is pervasive in Chinese detective fiction, to the extent that its upholding of science as a methodology and a way of thinking reverberates with the New Culture discourse on science. As much as they agreed with the slogan of science for national salvation, they were not convinced of the omnipotence of science, or the view that "science is the only legitimate outlook on human life and society."[85] They reserved a reverence to Chinese tradition as an antidote to the material culture of the West, which made them sympathetic with the stand of science opponents in the 1923 debate. In Min-chi Chou's words, "[w]hile critical of many aspects of Chinese culture, they were not prepared to abandon their own past in its entirety."[86] Chinese detective writers more than likely would agree that the "preservation of China's cultural quintessence would serve as a vital link of balance between the old and the new…and that China's past indeed had something intrinsic to offer to the future culture of China."[87]

Cheng Xiaoqing speaks though the "scientific mind" Huo Sang to caution against wholesale westernization. Huo Sang points out that Bao Lang has been poisoned by Western fiction, and made the mistake of copying the Western methods indiscriminately. He lectures,

> The East and West have different cultures, and different learnings. Each has its own strengths and weaknesses. When we explore Western learning, we should learn its strengths, not the weaknesses, for our own use. We shall never follow the West blindly.[88]

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[85] Chou 573.
[86] Ibid. 579.
[87] Ibid.
[88] Cheng, "Jiangnan yan," *Jiangnan yan* 2.

To illustrate his point, Huo Sang pointed out that footprint and fingerprint evidence works less well in China than in the West because of the difference in living condition, footwear, and the absence of a fingerprint database. Bao Lang stresses instead the importance of acting according to changing circumstances.

While it is difficult to say whether Cheng Xiaoqing and his fellow detective writers "accept[ed] Western ways superficially yet reject[ed] them fundamentally,"[89] as Perry Link asserts, it is not overstretching to claim that Chinese detective fiction, after all, cannot be simply regarded as a "popular affiliate of May Fourth literature,"[90] for its reluctance to break abruptly from Chinese tradition, its suspicion about the materialistic tendency of the Western culture, and its deep concerns over the morality of science.

[89] Link, "Traditonal-Style Popular Urban Fiction" 343.
[90] Kinkley 178.

Epilogue

This study sets out to explore the translation and creation of detective fiction in late Qing and Republican China. Inquiries into the genre's entanglement with politics, ideology, and modernization in an intricate sociopolitical context prove fruitful, for it shows the transient nature of the distinction between high culture and popular culture, the socio-cultural significance of the so-called popular literature, the limitation of the New Culture Movement's polemical renouncement of Chinese tradition, the cross-fertilization of ideas and literary traditions across culture, and the multiplicity of Chinese modernity.

My project is based on the assumption that popular fiction "expressed genuinely felt concerns of its readership," as Perry Link puts forth,[1] and focuses on the modern articulations of the age-old call for justice and order. Taking a comparative and interdisciplinary approach, it shows that cultural negotiations and appropriations abound in Chinese detective fiction, and that these instances of negotiations point out the translators and writiers's painstainking search for a Chinese modernity of their own. The survey of major themes such as law and science demonstrates that translators and writers alike held a moderate, sensible and middle-of-the-road view on Chinese modernity. On the one hand, they participated in the discourse of "fiction for mass education," celebrating Western learning, scientific methods, and rule of law. On the other hand, they did not go to the extreme of forsaking Chinese tradition altogether. Rather, they sought a way to appropriate the two and find a middle ground between the new and the old. This

[1] Link, "Traditional-Style" 338.

attitude is evinced in the translation strategies adopted by early translators, the concerns over the morality of science, the criticism of materialistic tendency in modern life, and heavy moralist undertone of the stories.

Specifically, Chapter One shows early translators of Sherlock Holmes made considerable efforts to adapt Western learning and institutions to the aesthetic taste and moral strictures of Chinese readers. Chapter Two points out that cultural norms and material culture of Republican China exerted great influence on the production and consumption of detective fiction, and that detective writers with strong social concerns intended to not only inform and educate the reader about the necessity to catch up with the time, but also warn them the risks of denouncing national values. Chapters Three and Four discuss from different perspectives detective fiction's ambivalence towards the new and the old. Recognition of the importance to learn from the West was accompanied by the realization of the danger of wholesale westernization. Hence, the detective fiction proposes a compromise of the new and the old as a viable solution to the issues of cultural dislocation.

This study shows that although the New Culture's vehement attacks on popular literature were polemical and excessive, its accusation that popular literature endorsed a conservative ideology is not totally ungrounded, although it should be the reason for easy dismissal. Perry Link's study of Chinese popular fiction has a similar observation: "[P]opular authors were not mere observers of the question of the new versus old styles. Their stories often encourage the reader in one or the other direction; and it is probably true that more total encouraging is done in the old-style direction, whatever the actual

results may have been."[2] Detective translators and writers' nationalist concern for the preservation of national quintessence almost always accompanied their encouragement to learn from the West, showing their deep-rooted doubts about the radicalism prevalent at the time. The balancing of the old and the new, and of entertainment and instruction may contribute to its popular appeal in that "popular literature in early-twentieth-century China provided a special environment where readers were able to try out new ways of life at a safe distance. At the same time, … leisure reading performed the important social function of naturalizing foreign cultural elements new to China,"[3] as Perry Link and King-fai Tam both point out.

Chinese detective fiction certainly suggests alternative approaches to incorporating the West and dealing with the tradition. Jeffrey Kinkley's claim that detective fiction is a "popular affiliate of May Fourth literature" needs to be revisited. Kinkley glosses over the ideological departures and ambivalence in detective fiction, affirms the dichotomy of serious literature and popular literature, and fails to evaluate Chinese detective fiction on its own merits. I also beg to differ from King-fai Lam's assertion that Cheng Xiaoqing presents two ways of life with impartiality for the reader to sample and choose from. Cheng Xiaoqing might have his dilemmas and wavering moments, but his position was made clear that he opted for a selective acceptance of the West and the traditional. In this sense, Cheng Haiyan's view that Cheng's detective fiction stands between "transforming the West with Chinese tradition," and "transforming

[2] Link, *Mandarin Ducks* 208-209.
[3] Tam, "The Detective Fiction" 114.

the Chinese with Western learning" can better summarize the position of the early generations of Chinese translators and writers of detective fiction.[4]

The uncovering of repressed and alternative modernities has been a prosperous area of study for Chinese literature, since the publication of David Wang's monograph on late-Qing fiction *Fin-de-Siècle Splendor*. With this dissertation, I intend to give credit to a genre that once fueled the popular imagination, and to contribute to the search for the "lost" voices and alternative views that once expressed the angst and expectations of the non-elite. My study not only serves to validate the cultural and social implications of popular literature or popular culture by revealing the concerns of the populace or certain strata of the populace, but also joins in debunking the hegemony of the May Fourth discourse on progress, science, and universality. Informed by translation and cultural studies, it also hopes to contribute to Chinese translation studies by showing the potential of studying literary texts in political, social, and cultural contexts.

The dialogues between detective fiction, popular literature, material culture, modernity, and ideology are fascinating to explore. My study is but an initial stage of study, with new possibilities and potentials for further development. For example, inclusion of minor writers and detective stories in literary magazines would make this presentation of pre-1949 Chinese detective fiction more complete. The influence of American films, especially film noir, on detective fiction of the 1940s would add more depth to this study. A postcolonial perspective to detective fiction, as is suggested by Leo

[4] Cheng Haiyan 程海燕, "Lun Cheng Xiaoqing zhentan xiaoshuo de bentuhua" 論程小青偵探小說的本土化 [On the indigenization of Cheng Xiaoqing's detective fiction], *Anqing shifan xueyuan xuebao* 安慶師範學院學報 [Academic journal of Anqing Teachers Collegs] 5 (2014), 21.

Lee, would be revealing of the dynamics of politics, translation, and identity. This approach, though left out unattended due to the constraints of theoretical framework and scope, would be a promising area for future study. The discussion could also be extended to Chinese crime fiction in Hong Kong, Taiwan and Mainland China after 1949. Introducing new sets of variants under different sociopolitical contexts, it would be an interesting continuation of this study. The lackluster presence of Chinese detective fiction after 1949 forms a sharp contrast to the rapid development of detective fiction in Japan, and will be another direction worth pursuing for future study.

Glossary

“Bahaimiao wang zhaoxiangpian”	跋海渺王照像片
Baijia gong’an	百家公案
“Baiyi guai”	白衣怪
Bao Tianxiao	包天笑
Bao Zheng	包拯
baotan	包探
baodating	包打聽
“Benguan fuyin shuobu yuanqi”	本館附印說部緣起
biji	筆記
Buyi Huasheng baotan an	補譯華生包探案
Changjue	常覺
Chen Duxiu	陳獨秀
Chen Lengxue	陳冷血
Chen Xiji	陳熙績
Cheng Xiaoqing	程小青
Chiang Kai-shek	蔣介石
chuanqi	傳奇
Chuke pai’an jingqi	初刻拍案驚奇
Cixi	慈禧
“Cong shierbujian dao zhentan xiaoshuo”	從“視而不見”到偵探小說
“Cuiming Fu”	催命符
dalisi	大理寺
dao	道
Daqing xin xinglü cao’an	大清新刑律草案
De xiansheng	德先生
“Di’er zhang zhaopian”	第二張照片
Dingyi	定一
“Duan zhi tuan”	斷指團
Dushe quan	毒蛇圈
Feng Menglong	馮夢龍
Fuermosi zaisheng an	福爾摩斯再生案
Fuermosi zhentan an quanji	福爾摩斯偵探案全集
fumu guan	父母官
gengzi xinzheng	庚子新政
gewu zhishi	格物致知
gong’an xiaoshuo	公案小說

Goujian	勾踐
“Guai fangke”	怪房客
guanchang	官場
Guowen bao	國聞報
Hai Rui	海瑞
“Heilian gui”	黑脸鬼
Hu Shi	胡適
huaben	話本
Huang Ding	黃鼎
“Huiyi ren”	灰衣人
“Huo Sang de tongnian”	霍桑的童年
“Huo shi”	活屍
“Huqiu nü”	狐裘女
Huo Sang	霍桑
jian’ai	兼爱
“Jiangnan yan”	江南燕
jiawu zhanzheng	甲午戰爭
Jinshi Tongyan	警世通言
Jiu Tang shu	舊唐書
jusi	句巳
kai minzhi	開民智
Kang Youwei	康有為
Kexue	科學
kexue she	科學社
kexue yu renshengguan	科學與人生觀
Kuaihuo lin	快活林
“Lanse xiangweishe”	藍色響尾蛇
li	禮
“Li Gongzuo qiaojie mengzhong yan, Xie Xiao’e zhiqin chuangshang dao”	李公佐巧解夢中言, 謝小娥智擒船上盜
Liang Qichao	梁啟超
lilong	里弄
Lin Shu	林紓
Liu Bannong	劉半農
Liu Na’ou	劉吶鷗
Longtu gong’an	龍圖公案
Lu Dan’an	陸澹安
Lu Ping	魯平
lüguan	律棍

“Lun baoguan youyiyu guoshi”	論報館有益於國事
“Lun xiaoshuo yu qunzhi zhi guanxi”	論小說與群治之關係
modeng	摩登
“Moli”	魔力
Mu Shiying	穆時英
“Mu’ou de xiju”	木偶的戲劇
Penggong an	彭公案
qi	器
qianze xiaoshuo	譴責小說
“Qie chi ji”	竊齒記
“Qing ying”	情影
qingtian	青天
qizhi	启智
Riben shumu zhi	日本書目志
ruhua	入話
“Sai Jinhua de biao”	賽金花的表
Sai xiansheng	賽先生
San xia wu yi	三俠五義
“San xianshen Bao Longtu duanan”	三現身包龍圖斷冤
Sanguo yanyi	三國演義
Sao Mi Zhou	掃迷帚
“Shanghai de hubuwu”	上海的狐步舞
Shen Jiaben	沈家本
“Shen shu gui cang lu xu”	《神樞鬼藏錄》序
shenxin	慎刑
Shi Zhecun	施蟄存
Shigong an	施公案
Shiji	史記
shikumen	石庫門
Shiwu bao	時務報
“Shuang xun”	雙殉
Shui hu zhuan	水滸傳
Song Ci	宋慈
songshi	訟師
sun	孫
Sun Liaohong	孫了紅
taiping tianguo	太平天國
Taixi shuobu congshu zhiyi	泰西說部叢書之一
“Tan zhentan xiaoshuo”	談偵探小說
“Taofan”	逃犯

Ti xiao yinyuan	啼笑因緣
tian ren heyi	天人合一
“Tun yuganyou zhe”	囤魚肝油者
Wei Wuji	衛無忌
“Wenxue geming lun”	文學革命論
Wu Tingfang	伍廷芳
Wu Zixu	伍子胥
“Wugong moying”	舞宮魔影
“Wuhou de guisu”	舞后的歸宿
“Wuning si”	毋宁死
wunü	舞女
wuting	五聽
wuxia xiaoshuo	武俠小說
wuxu bianfa	戊戌變法
Xi yuan ji lu	洗冤集錄
xia	俠
Xia Zengyou	夏曾佑
Xiao baicai	小白菜
Xiao ribao	小日報
xiao shimin	小市民
Xiaodie	小蝶
Xiaoshuo lin	小說林
xiaoshuojie geming	小說界革命
Xieluoke fusheng zhentan an	歇洛克復生偵探案
Xieluoke qi’an kaichang	歇洛克奇案開場
Xin qingnian	新青年
Xin xiaoshuo	新小說
xingbu	刑部
xingxun	刑訊
xinhai geming	辛亥革命
xinmin	新民
xinshenghuo yundong	新生活運動
Xinwen bao	新聞報
xinwenhua yundong	新文化運動
Xiuxiang xiaoshuo	繡像小說
Xu baotan an	續包探案
Xu Nianci	徐念慈
“Xue shouyin”	血手印
“Xue zhiren”	血紙人
Xuesheng	學生

Yan Duhe	嚴獨鶴
Yan Fu	嚴復
Yang Naiwu	楊乃武
“Yanjing hui”	眼鏡會
Yasen Luoping an quanji	亞森羅平案全集
yasi	押司
“Yelie ji”	夜獵記
yi	義
“Yingguo baotan fang Kadie yisheng an”	英國包探訪喀迭醫生案
Yingwen baoyi	英文報譯
yiqi	義氣
yitan	議探
Yitan an	議探案
Yu Mingzhen	俞明震
Yuan Shikai	袁世凱
yuanyang hudie xiaoshuo	鴛鴦蝴蝶小說
Yueyue xiaoshuo	月月小說
Yuwai wenyi	域外文譯
“Zha Mei an”	鍘美案
Zhang Henshui	張恨水
Zhang Kunde	張坤德
Zhang Zaixin	張在新
zhanghui xiaoshuo	章回小說
zhentan	偵探
zhi	智 / 志
zhiyuan	職員
zhong ti xi yong	中體西用
Zhou Guisheng	周桂笙
Zhou li	周禮
Zhou Shoujuan	周瘦鵑
“Zi xinijan”	紫信箋
ziqiang yundong	自強運動
zui’e de yuansou	罪惡的淵藪
“33 hao wu”	三十三號屋

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