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# The Sixteenth-Century Novel *Water Margin* and the Tradition of Fiction Commentary and Sequels in Late Imperial China

DISSERTATION

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by

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# ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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This dissertation considers the *Shuihu zhuan* (Water margin) interpretation complex to be a problematic site of interaction between parent work, commentaries, and sequels, where a commentator and a sequel writer both attempt to control "reader response" to the novel. I argue that sequels—having appeared during the rise of commentaries in the sixteenth to seventeenth centuries and later developed into a literary enterprise—are highly sophisticated constructs of textual design and rhetoric, often informed and shaped by the interpretive agendas of fiction commentaries. With this novel's mass appeal as a book of heroism and transgression, commentators and sequel writers aimed to defend *Shuihu zhuan* against misinterpretations of the "reader," by shaping it into a cautionary tale against rebellion. In my analysis, I find that the acts of commenting and sequeling are complicated by the overlap of "author" and "reader" in the works of Jin Shengtan, Chen Chen, and Yu Wanchun. A commentator often acts as an "author" and even invents a theory of two texts (original and sequel), while a sequel writer is always positioned as a "reader" of the original and the "author" of his sequel: a dual role that gave rise to correction and rewriting of the parent work. To reach a more nuanced understanding of the rise of fiction commentaries and sequels, I also explore how hermeneutic issues were shaped by historical and cultural factors, including book marketing strategies and publishing culture. My study will further our understanding of the relationship between fiction commentaries and sequels in the late imperial period. At the same time, it will also deepen our appreciation of some of the theories, rhetoric, and interpretations of fiction that are offered in commentaries and sequels.

# INTRODUCTION

## Novels, Commentaries, Sequels, and the Rise of Interpretation

### I. Branding the Fiction Novel in the Late Ming

The Wanli period (1563-1620) witnessed one of the most robust commercial publishing markets in Chinese history.[1] With the rise of interactions between merchant and gentry classes,[2] publishing centers in the Jiangnan region produced classics, histories, collections of writings, examination aids, how to manuals, almanacs, and much more,[3] to cater to the needs of increasingly diverse readers. This demand for books of all kinds—from expensive reprints of classical texts, to cheap editions of popular works of literature—generated greater competition that forced publishers to expand their range of published books.

One such category included *xiaoshuo* 小說 (fiction, or novels). With the goal of increasing book sales, publishers purchased woodblocks of *xiaoshuo* from private publishers or carved their own woodblocks for new editions that would become full-length novels. According to one study, by the end of the Wanli period (1620) printing houses had published more than fifty full-length novel titles in the commercial book market.[4] Despite success in the production and distribution of novels, publishers still faced the issue of how to market *xiaoshuo* for a

[1] Commercial publishing flourished because of technological improvements in the production of paper and woodblock printing. These improvements allowed for greater availability and lower cost of books, including novels, poetry, anthologies, histories, philosophy, classical texts, and much more. See Jonathan Porter, *Imperial China: 1350-1900* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), 213.

[2] As one historian notes, advances in commercialization allowed for the "subtle knitting together of these two societies." Refer to Timothy Brook, *The Confusions of Pleasure: Commerce and Culture in Ming China* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998), 253.

[3] On the categories of books produced in these publishing centers, see Kai-wing Chow, *Publishing, Culture, and Power in Early Modern China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 80-87.

[4] Tan Fan 譚帆, *Zhongguo xiaoshuo pingdian yanjiu* 中國小說評點研究 (Shanghai: East China Normal University Press, 2001), 11.

sophisticated literati audience, since many literati considered *xiaoshuo* to be unrefined and even dangerous for their depictions of sex, violence, and transgression.[5]

An important source that elaborates on the "dangers" of *xiaoshuo* are the writings of early Qing critic Liu Tingji 劉廷璣. In one account, he describes how novels had flooded the book market, to such a degree that the court became concerned these books were poisoning the minds of readers. The Qing court then issued a nation-wide ban of novels with the intention to restore moral order. Liu further elaborates that the dangers of *xiaoshuo* begins once the "author" finishes his book and publishes it in the book market. Liu feels whether the author's message of "caution" (*quanzheng* 勸懲) against immoral behavior is taken seriously will depend upon the interpretation of the "reader," who is responsible for shaping the presumed "danger" of *xiaoshuo*: the reader's own misinterpretations of a novel that can lead them to become "cruel" (*henli* 狠戾), "rebellious" (*beini* 悖逆), "cunning" (*quanmou* 權謀), or "deceitful" (*juzha* 狙詐).[6] As will be discussed in more detail, this tendency for the "novice reader" (*bu shan dushu zhe* 不善讀書者) to misinterpret *xiaoshuo* generates a need for the "masterful reader" (*shan dushu zhe* 善讀書者)[7] who can defend *xiaoshuo* against misinterpretations through revisions, deletions, and the addition of highly sophisticated "fiction commentaries" (*xiaoshuo pingdian* 小說評點).

Despite the presumed dangers of *xiaoshuo,* it gained mass popularity in the sixteenth to seventeenth centuries because many readers felt novels could teach them fundamentals of

[5] An important aspect of vernacular Chinese fiction is its association with oral storytelling: the culture of storyteller and audience that possesses an "unsqueamish delight in sex, filth and disease." Refer to C.T. Hsia, *The Classic Chinese Novel* (Ithaca: Cornell East Asia Series Reprint, 1996), 21.
[6] "Lichao xiaoshuo" 歷朝小說, in *Zaiyuan zazhi* 在園雜志 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2005), *juan* 2, 82-85.
[7] Liu Tingji, "Lichao xiaoshuo," in *Zaiyuan zazhi*, *juan* 2, 85.

reading.[8] With the proliferation of novels in the book market, readers gradually began to consume them for more than just enjoyment; in addition to reading "eight-legged essay" (*bagu wen* 八股文) anthologies,[9] they voraciously read novels with hopes of increasing chances of success on the civil service examinations.[10]

This rapid increase in the readership of *xiaoshuo* was the effect of a unique phenomenon in the book market of the late Ming: the heightened degree of literati involvement in the publishing process. To make *xiaoshuo* even more marketable, publishers had to collaborate with "scholar-commoners" (*shengyuan* 生員) who were instrumental in preparing books for publication.[11] Now novels were published with punctuation, annotations, and stylistic revisions, to enhance their overall quality and readability. Not only that, for the first time in the history of *xiaoshuo*, prefaces and commentaries attributed to anonymous "celebrity scholars" (*mingshi* 名士) appeared, to offer highly sophisticated and nuanced readings of novels.[12]

Despite the presence of a "commentator" in the text who provides pithy annotations, by the early seventeenth century, *xiaoshuo* still did not enjoy the status of more refined writings. The impactful "branding" of novels, as sophisticated texts that could enable readers to become

[8] Anne McLaren, "Constructing New Reading Publics in Late Ming China," in *Printing and Book Culture in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 154-155.
[9] Examination anthologies were among the most marketable books in the commercial publishing market. See Kai-Wing Chow, *Publishing, Culture, and Power in Early Modern China*, 78.
[10] In the late Ming there was most certainly a niche audience and market for students preparing for the civil service examination. In addition to standard classical works, they sought out other texts including *xiaoshuo*, that would increase their chances of passing the examinations. See Robert Hegel, "Niche Marketing for Imperial Fiction," in *Printing and Book Culture in Late Imperial China*, 235-266.
[11] For a discussion of the literati's important role in the publishing world of the late Ming, see Joseph P. McDermott, *A Social History of the Chinese Book* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2006), 108-110.
[12] One example is Yu Xiangdou 余象斗 (1560-1637), who had published basic commentary editions of *Shuihu zhuan* and *Sanguo yanyi*. He even boasted "this studio has invited famous gentlemen to comment and annotate [on the text]" 本堂以請名公批評圈點. Refer to Tan Fan, *Zhongguo xiaoshuo pingdian yanjiu*, 73-74.

"genius" writers, would begin with the commentaries of the literary giant Jin Shengtan 金聖嘆 (1608-1661): one of earliest figures to advocate for the interpretive seriousness of *xiaoshuo*.

**II. Jin Shengtan and the Rise of Interpretation**

As Robert Hegel argues, in the seventeenth century there was a turn towards the "seriousness" of the *xiaoshuo* tradition. The literati reading, writing, and commenting on *xiaoshuo* began to see it as a "respected vehicle for serious artistic experimentation and intellectual expression."[13] Andrew Plaks extends this argument in his breakthrough work on the *Four Masterworks of the Ming Novel*.[14] He argues that far from being ignored for its "vulgarity," *xiaoshuo* produced by literati were self-conscious, artistic constructs. Their efforts helped elevate the *xiaoshuo* tradition to a higher degree of complexity, by transforming its narrative materials into sophisticated "literati novels" (*wenren xiaoshuo* 文人小說).[15] What Hegel and Plaks have explored in their research are processes of evolution in the history of *xiaoshuo*. Literati efforts to elevate *xiaoshuo* set the stage for the next step of evolution: the intensified interest in the interpretation of novels, in the form of fiction commentaries.[16]

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[13] Robert E. Hegel, *The Novel in Seventeenth-century China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 3.

[14] *Si da qishu* 四大奇書, a term presumably coined by Feng Menglong 馮夢龍 (1574-1646). It includes *Sanguo yanyi* 三國演義 (Romance of three kingdoms), *Shuihu zhuan* 水滸傳 (Water margin), *Xiyou ji* 西遊記 (Journey to the west), and *Jin Ping Mei* 金瓶梅 (Plum in the golden vase). By at the seventeenth century, this term was used by Liu Tingji and the dramatist Li Yu 李漁 (1611-1680). Refer to Liu Tingji, "Lichao xiaoshuo," in *Zaiyuan zazhi, juan* 2, 82-85; Li Yu, "Sanguo zhi yanyi xu" 三國志演義序, in *Li Yu suibi quanji* 李漁隨筆全集 (Beijing: Jinghua chubanshe, 2000), 300; and Andrew Plaks, *The Four Masterworks of the Ming Novel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987) 5, footnote 5.

[15] Andrew Plaks, *The Four Masterworks of the Ming Novel*, 4, 121, 123.

[16] After Jin Shengtan, commentaries began to have greater presence in *xiaoshuo*, as seen in the commentaries in novels such as *Sanguo yanyi*, *Jin Ping Mei*, and *Xiyou ji*, respectively written by Mao Zonggang 毛宗崗 (1632-1709), Zhang Zhupo 張竹坡 (1670-1698), and Liu Yiming 劉一明 (1734-1820). See David Rolston, ed., *How to Read the Chinese Novel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990). Rolston's volume is an important source in English that provides insightful explanations, terminology, and bibliographies for the study of *xiaoshuo pingdian*. Scholars in this volume also include introductions and translations of "how to read" essays by *xiaoshuo* commentators, which are helpful for our interpretations of the traditional vernacular fiction novel in China.

In the studies of fiction commentators, much attention has been given to the commentator Jin Shengtan and his role in elevating the status of *xiaoshuo.*[17] Like many literati of his time, Jin had mastered the *Four Confucian Books* (*Sishu* 四書) at a young age and would later obtain his entry-level licentiate degree (*xiucai* 秀才). Jin was an avid reader of Buddhist texts, ancient poetry, historiographies, and fiction.[18] His passion for reading and uncanny ability to write commentaries did not go unnoticed. With Jin's vast knowledge of texts, ranging from Confucian classics and philosophies to book commentaries and popular novels, he became known in the Jiangnan region as the eccentric celebrity scholar[19] of Guanhua Studio 貫華堂, where he resided and worked on his literary projects.[20] In his lifetime, he produced three important works that include his commentaries: *Caizi bi du shu* 才子必讀書 (Must-read book for geniuses), an anthology of ancient prose; *Xiaoti caizi shu* 小題才子書 (A genius book of minor essay topics), a collection of model eight-legged essays on the *Four Confucian Books*; and his most famous work the *Liu caizi shu* 六才子書 (Six books of genius), a canon of fine writings.

These works are all informed by the concept of "literary genius" (*caizi* 才子), which was of Jin's invention and central to his thinking. Admittedly, "literary genius" refers to young readers of Jin's works who aspired to become writers. Likewise, it also describes the authors of

[17] In the United States, research on Jin Shengtan has focused on Jin's literary criticism and his contributions to *xiaoshuo pingdian*. At the same time, it has included some critical theories for comparison. See John C.Y. Wang, "Jianjie Meiguo de Jin Shengtan yanjiu" 簡介美國的金聖嘆研究, in *Zhongguo wenxue pingdian yanjiu lunji* 中國文學評點研究論集 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2002), 360.

[18] See Lu Lin 陸林, *Jin Shengtan nianpu jianbian* 金聖嘆年譜簡編, in *Jin Shengtan quanji* 金聖嘆全集 (Nanjing: Fenghuang chubanshe, 2008), vol. 6, 12-15.

[19] Jin had quite a reputation as a commentator. In one account, an officer of the Shunzhi Emperor reported Jin to be a "talented recluse" 才高而見僻. See *Jin Shengtan nianpu jianbian*, in *Jin Shengtan quanji*, vol. 6, 71.

[20] Refer to Liao Yan 廖燕, "Jin Shengtan xiansheng zhuan" 金聖嘆先生傳, in *Jin Shengtan quanji*, vol. 6, 158-159; John Wang, *Chin Sheng-t'an: His Life and Literary Criticism* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2004), 228. Jin also worked in another studio called Changjing 唱經, which was the name for one of his "aliases" (*biehao* 別號). See *Jin Shengtan nianpu jianbian*, in *Jin Shengtan quanji*, vol. 6, 9-10.

the *Six Books of Genius*.[21] But it is equally likely that "literary genius" refers to Jin's self-proclaimed interpretive abilities as a hermeneutic master of reading: the commentator whose presumed access to the "authorial intention" (*zhi* 志) of each author justifies the inclusion of his commentaries to the *Six Books of Genius*.

"Literary genius" is the unique image of author, reader, and commentator that informs the innovation of Jin's commentaries, which he argued to be a "necessary" component in enabling readers to become writers.[22] Jin's attention to essay composition and their corresponding "organizing principles of writing" (*wenfa* 文法) in his commentaries would presumably attract readers interested in writing like literary geniuses. As a father and an uncle, he held great aspirations for the young men of the Jin clan and took it upon himself to train them on the fine points of reading and writing. Between the years 1641-1644, he had been writing commentaries to the *Must-Read Book for Geniuses* and the *Six Books of Genius*, with hopes that readers of these texts, including his young sons and nephews, will themselves become "genius" writers.[23]

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[21] The literary geniuses include Qu Yuan 屈原 (343-278 BC), author of *Li Sao* 離騷 (Encountering sorrow); Zhuangzi 莊子 (370-287 BC), author of *Zhuangzi* 莊子 (Writings of Master Zhuang); Sima Qian 司馬遷 (145-86 BC), author of the *Shiji* 史記 (Records of the Grand Historian); Du Fu 杜甫 (712-770), author of *Dufu shi* 杜甫詩 (Poetry of Du Fu); Shi Nai'an 施耐庵 (1296-1372), author of *Shuihu zhuan* 水滸傳 (Water margin); and Wang Shifu 王實甫 (1260-1307) , author of *Xixiang ji* 西廂記 (Story of the Western Wing).

[22] The "necessity" of Jin's interpretations to the *Six Books of Genius* are often implied to suggest that his commentaries can teach readers to write well so they themselves will become literary geniuses. Refer to "Xu san" 序三, *Jin Shengtan quanji*, vol. 3, 19-20, 22; "Du diwu caizi shu fa" 讀第五才子書法, *Jin Shengtan quanji*, vol. 3, 28-37, entries 50 and 67.

[23] Jin writes, "In the past, since I wanted my sons and nephews to write well, I offhandedly wrote over one hundred essays on the *Zuo Commentaries*; *Strategies of the Warring States*; *Book of Zhuangzi*; *Encountering Sorrow*; *Gongyang Commentaries*; *The Guliang Commentaries*; *Records of the Grand Historian*; *Han History*; and the prose collections of Han Yu, Liu Zongyuan, Su Xun, Su Shi, and Su Che. The title of my work was based on the old title *Necessary Readings in Ancient Prose* by Zhang Tongchu [*jinshi*, 1604]. Then I added the word 'literary genius,' and titled my work *Must-Read Book for Geniuses*. I had serious hopes those who read it would themselves become literary geniuses" 僕昔因兒子及甥侄輩，要做得好文字，曾將《左傳》、《國策》、《莊》、《騷》、《公》、《穀》、《史》、《漢》、韓、柳、三蘇等書雜撰一百餘篇，依張侗初先生《必讀古文》舊名，只加「才子」二字，名曰《才子必讀書》蓋致望讀之者之必為才子也. In "Du diliu caizi shu fa" 讀第六才子書法, *Jin Shengtan quanji*, vol. 2, 856, item 14.

Jin Shengtan finished commentaries to three out of the *Six Books of Genius*.[24] He was very meticulous with the rhetoric and depth of what he deemed the *Fifth Book of Genius* (*Diwu caizi shu* 第五才子書): Jin's 70-chapter edition of the novel *Shuihu zhuan* 水滸傳 (Water margin)[25] which includes his "how to read" essay, prefaces, extensive chapter and interlineal commentaries, multiple changes to the text proper (100-chapter edition), and a new dream sequence ending that depicts the symbolic deaths of the 108 Liangshan bandit-heroes.[26] Jin felt all texts, especially novels given their "lower" form, needed commentaries to defend against possibilities for dangerous interpretations. Hence with his 70-chapter edition, Jin aimed to decrease the tension between *zhong* 忠 (loyalty to the emperor) and *yi* 義 (sworn fraternal honor) that had been sustained in previous editions of *Shuihu zhuan* and caused what Jin believed to be grave misinterpretations of this novel.[27]

The earliest known edition of *Shuihu zhuan* appeared in the sixteenth century.[28] Its narrative materials originated from historical accounts of the famous bandit group led by Song Jiang (1073-1124) and the relevant stories in *Xuanhe yishi* 宣和遺事 (Remnant affairs of the

[24] Jin finished commentaries to *Du Fu shi*, *Shuihu zhuan*, and *Xixiang ji*. He had begun writing commentaries to *Zhuangzi*, *Li sao*, and the *Shiji*, but never completed them. Refer to "Changjing Tang yishu mulu" 唱經堂遺書目錄, in *Jin Shengtan quanji*, vol. 6, 91-92.

[25] In this dissertation, I will use three editions of *Shuihu zhuan*, as follows: 1) Jin Shengtan's 70-chapter edition, *Diwu caizi shu Shi Nai'an Shuihu zhuan* 第五才子書施耐庵水滸傳, in *Jin Shengtan quanji*, vol. 3-4, cited as *JSTSHZ*; 2) the 100-chapter edition with commentaries attributed to Li Zhi 李贄 (1527-1602), *Li Zhuowu pi ping zhong yi Shuihu zhuan* 李卓吾批評忠義水滸傳 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1990), cited as *LZWSHZ*; and collated commentary edition *Shuihu zhuan huiping ben* 水滸傳會評本 (Beijing: Beijing University Press, 1987), cited as *SHZHPB*. Chapter and page numbers will be included in the main body, separated by a colon.

[26] One modern scholar, after comparing Jin's 70-chapter edition with the 100-chapter edition, found that there exist 5231 discrepancies. See Chen Jinzhao 陳錦釗, "Tan Guanhua tang Jin Shengtan piben Shuihu zhuan," 談貫華堂金聖嘆批本水滸傳, *Shumu jikan* 書目季刊, 7.4 (1972): 59-64.

[27] In Jin's account, even the *Shiji* could poison the minds of readers without "proper" interpretations provided by the commentator. Refer to "Xu yi" 序一 in *Jin Shengtan quanji*, vol. 3, 14.

[28] Specifically, the *Jing ben zhongyi zhuan* 京本忠義傳 that was printed during the Jiajing reign (1522-1566). Refer to Liu Dong 劉冬 and Ouyang Jian 歐陽健, "Guanyu Jingben zhongyi zhuan" 關於京本忠義傳, in *Wenxue yichan* 文學遺產, vol. 2 (1983): 85-87.

Xuanhe reign).[29] The main narrative of *Shuihu zhuan* gives focus to the assembly of the 108 bandit-heroes of the Liangshan Marsh, the location of a "fraternity" that only admits members based upon an "oath of sworn fraternal honor" (*jieyi* 結義, or *yiqi* 義氣). Having been wronged by corrupt officials and forced to become outlaws, these bandit-heroes are caught in a moral dilemma: to either remain loyal to the emperor (*zhong*) or uphold the sworn fraternal code of Liangshan (*yi*). Their heroic actions win them fame in the Shandong locale, yet with Liangshan's increasing influence among locals, the Song government begins to see them as a political threat and seek to punish them for transgressing against the emperor.

Certain literati found *Shuihu zhuan* to be dangerous for readers who might rebel against imperial authority after reading this novel, given its images of rebellion in the conflict between the Liangshan fraternity and government forces.[30] Aware of the possibility for dangerous "reader response," Jin's agenda was to enhance his 70-chapter edition as a "book of genius" with a highly sophisticated rhetoric of controlling interpretation. Jin's main claim was that he had access to the intention of the historical "author" Shi Nai'an 施耐庵 (1296-1372).[31] With this access, Jin attempted to "authorize" his "commentator"—constructed in the image of a "masterful reader"—who was now responsible for preventing "novice readers" from generating misinterpretations of *Shuihu zhuan*.[32]

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[29] For an investigation of the "textualization" process of *Shuihu zhuan* refer to Liangyan Ge, *Out of the Margins: The Rise of Chinese Vernacular Fiction* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001), 36-49.
[30] See Liu Tingji, "Lichao xiaoshuo," in *Zaiyuan zazhi, juan* 2, 82-85.
[31] Jin's efforts to sustain the presence of the "author" in *Shuihu zhuan* reflects a trend in the seventeenth century, wherein commentators manipulated the "author" figure to help elevate the status of *xiaoshuo*. On this point, refer to Martin W. Huang, "Boundaries and Interpretations," in *Snakes' Legs: Continuations, Rewritings and Chinese Fiction,* ed. Martin W. Huang (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004), 24.
[32] See Jin's comment in *JSTSHZ*, 35: 643. Also refer to Wayne Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 73. In Western studies of fiction, an "implied author" is a persona in the text, often created by the historical author. This is an important rhetorical device because once the reader has the image of this author in his mind, the historical author begins taking control of the reading process, to direct the reader in a certain

The main textual interventions in Jin's commentator role include "editing" (*bian* 編), "separating" (*fen* 分), and "interpreting" (*jie* 解) the novel.[33] One textual intervention worth critical scrutiny is Jin's "cutting at the waist" (*yaozhan* 腰斬):[34] the radical deletion of the last 30 chapters from *Zhongyi Shuihu zhuan* 忠義水滸傳 (Loyal and righteous heroes of the water margin, 100-chapter edition). This deletion greatly impacted the reading, writing, and interpretation of *Shuihu zhuan*, giving rise to the theory of two *Shuihu* texts—a venerated "original" (Jin's 70-chapter edition) and an inferior "sequel" (last 30 chapters of the 100-chapter edition). With this theory and his critical commentaries, Jin would radically shape the *Shuihu* "sequels" that followed in the "fiction sequel" (*xiaoshuo xushu* 小說續書) enterprise.

Jin's contention that sequeling is a poor attempt at imitating the "original"[35] was not an isolated view. Some literati felt *xiaoshuo xushu* were not worthy literary projects, given their tendency to imitate presumably more well-written original novels. *Xushu* certainly aroused the criticism of Jin's contemporary, the dramatist Li Yu 李漁 (1610-1680), who found that *xushu* failed to live up to their parent works and were merely awkward "outgrowths" of the originals.[36] Informing such views is the assumption that a sequel is unlikely to surpass the quality of a parent

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direction of discovery. In *xiaoshuo*, the commentator plays a similar role in policing reading, by constructing images of "author," "commentator*"* and "reader," despite referring to specific historical figures.

[33] Jin Shengtan, "Xu yi," in *Jin Shengtan quanji*, vol. 3, 5-6.

[34] In Lu Xun's view, Jin's version of the novel is like seeing "a dragonfly with a broken tail" 断尾巴蜻蜓. See his "Tan Jin Shengtan" 談金聖嘆, in *Lu Xun quanji* 魯迅全集 (Beijing: Remin wenxue chubanshe, 1957), vol. 4, 404.

[35] Refer to Jin's comment in *JSTSHZ*, 70: 1234.

[36] ". . . a revised *Xixiang ji* or a sequel to *Shuihu zhuan* cannot live up to the standards set up in the original works. Even if they are indeed several times better than the original works, the best praise they could hope for is 'a dog's tail used to substitute a sable's tail' or 'the legs added to a snake'" . . . 無論所改之《西廂》，所續之《水滸》，未必可繼後塵，即使高出前人數倍，吾知舉世之人不約而同，皆以『續貂蛇足』四字，為新作之定評矣. Translation slightly modified from Martin W. Huang, "Introduction," in *Snakes' Legs*, 2-3.

work.[37] However, these views are not entirely sufficient in explaining the phenomenon of a sequel writer's unique positionality. As will be explained in the next section, a sequel writer played the dual role as "reader" of original and "author" of his sequel, to offer his own sophisticated "interpretations" of the novel through the act of sequeling.

**III. Interpretation and Textual Design in *Shuihu* Sequels**

Jin Shengtan's branding of *Shuihu zhuan* represents one of the earliest moments of interaction between fiction commentaries and sequels. My principal argument is that fiction sequels are sophisticated constructs of textual design and rhetoric, often informed and shaped by the interpretive agendas of fiction commentaries. With *Shuihu zhuan* and its commentaries and sequels as problematic sites of interpretation, this dissertation seeks to explore the hermeneutic interactions between a commentator and a sequel writer, to understand how both attempt to control "reader response" to the novel in their writings.

This dissertation will focus on four texts. The first text is *Zhongyi Shuihu zhuan* (100 chapters, *Rongyu tang* 容與堂 edition, published in 1610), with preface and commentaries attributed to writer Li Zhi 李贄 (1527-1602).[38] The second text is *Di wu caizi shu Shuihu zhuan* (70 chapters, *Guanhua tang* 貫華堂 edition, published between 1641-1644), which includes Jin Shengtan's prefaces, commentaries, revisions, and emendations. The third text is *Shuihu houzhuan* 水滸後傳 (Water margin sequel, published in 1664) written by Chen Chen 陳忱 (1615-1670), a sequel to the 100-chapter edition with prefaces and commentaries written by

[37] Liu Tingji believed that fiction sequels were almost always derivatives of their parent works, never exceeding beyond the lowest level of quality. See his essay "Xushu" 續書, in *Zaiyuan za zhi, juan* 3, 124-125.

[38] According to one theory, it was the fiction commentator Ye Zhou 葉晝 (fl 17th c.) who had made such attributions, but who himself wrote these commentaries. Refer to Okī Yasushi 大木康, *Minmatsu Kōnan no shuppan bunka.* 明末江南の出版文化 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2014), 69.

Chen himself. The fourth text is *Dangkou zhi* 蕩寇志 (Quell the bandits, published in 1853) written by Yu Wanchun 俞萬春 (1794-1849), a sequel to the 70-chapter edition with several prefaces and extensive commentaries provided by Yu's close friends.

These four texts make up the three-part framework of *Shuihu zhuan* original (parent work), commentary, and sequel in my argumentation. I will term this framework the "*Shuihu* interpretation complex,"[39] based on the assertion that this tripartite structure allows for a more nuanced investigation of the hermeneutic interaction between each of the four texts.[40] With this framework, I aim to test the validity of Jin's theory of two *Shuihu* texts and better understand the relationship between fiction original, commentary, and sequel.

There have been studies on *xiaoshuo xushu* in English and in Chinese. Scholars in the *Snakes' Legs* volume (2004) have underscored the importance of *xushu* in critical *xiaoshuo* discourse. Likewise, journal articles and a few unpublished theses found in China and Taiwan have explored the literary value of *Shuihu* sequels. In his book, Hong Kong scholar Wong Hoi Sing provides a broad technical survey of all extant *Shuihu* sequels.[41] One issue that scholars have not explored is the connection between fiction commentary and sequels. To the best of my knowledge, there are no studies that investigate this connection. My dissertation is the first attempt to examine the interaction between fiction commentary and sequels in late imperial China.

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[39] I have extended the term found in Liangyan Ge's book, where "*Shuihu* complex" refers to the sedimentary accretion of materials that would become the novel *Shuihu zhuan*. See *Out of the Margins*, 7.

[40] Questions may be raised as to why *Jin Ping Mei* and *Hou Shuihu zhuan* 後水滸傳 (After the water margin) are not included as central texts of study in this dissertation. While *Jin Ping Mei* uses the Wu Song chapters as the story's point of departure, this novel's connection to *Shuihu zhuan* is not sustained enough to constitute a sequel, but rather a "spin-off." Likewise, the lack of running commentaries in *Hou Shuihu zhuan* makes this sequel less convincing as a work that contributes to the interpretive richness of *xiaoshuo*.

[41] Wong Hoi Sing 黃海星, *Gudian xiaoshuo yanjiu: yi Shuihu xushu wei zhongxin* 古典小說研究：以水滸續書為中心 (Hong Kong: University of Hong Kong Jao Tsung-I Petite Ecole, 2013).

As Martin Huang argues, the sequel writer takes on a unique dual role as "reader" and "author," in his reading of the parent work and its accompanying commentaries, the sequel he creates,[42] and his need to exert control over how the parent work is read.[43] From here we can raise another question: can a "sequel" (*xushu*) be read independent of its parent work? If we read a sequel as an "extension" of its parent work, what is the gain? Modern scholar Gao Yuhai suggests a *xushu* participates in the interpretation of a parent work by developing its plots and characters. What makes such a work a "sequels," Gao contends, is the sequel writer's interaction with the parent work that generates conditions for innovative moments in the sequel narrative.[44] Gao's explanation is based upon a narrow definition that limits *xushu* as extension of their parent works. His view does not consider what modern scholar Lin Chen calls the broad definition of *xushu*: sequels that expand, abridge, and/or rewrite parent works.[45]

This definition allows for a more nuanced study of *xushu*, as a phenomenon with further implications regarding the nature and function of "sequel" in literary theory. French theorist Gerard Genette makes a distinction between "continuations," which aim to bring an end to an unfinished parent work, and "sequels," which extends the narrative of the parent work.[46] However, *xushu* cannot easily be categorized into either "continuation" or "sequel." As will be explored in this dissertation, *xushu* can simultaneously offer extensions of the previous narrative and provide what a sequel writer considered to be the most "appropriate" ending to the parent work. As an interpretive practice, *xushu* aims to "complete" events and endings that the narrative

[42] Martin W. Huang, "Introduction," in *Snakes' Legs*, 3.
[43] Martin W. Huang, "Boundaries and Interpretations," in *Snakes' Legs*, 26.
[44] Gao Yuhai 高玉海, *Ming Qing xiaoshuo xushu yanjiu* 明清小說續書研究 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2004), 5, 53.
[45] For Lin Chen's two definitions of *xushu*, see Martin W. Huang, "Introduction," in *Snakes' Legs*, 3-4.
[46] As noted in Martin Huang, "Introduction," in *Snakes' Legs*, 4.

of the parent work left "incomplete," and often contains rhetoric like that of fiction commentary, intended to correct and control readings of the parent work.

My methodology is informed by Wolfgang Iser's concept of interpretive "gaps," to better understand the distinctions between parent work and sequel. According to Iser, readers engage with texts against the background of the genres in which they are working. A novel, for example, will test reader expectations of the "novel" genre, but certain aspects of a novel genre will also challenge such expectations. This tension between reader expectations of the novel genre and what is actually presented in a novel conditions the reading process, where the act of filling in interpretive gaps allows readers to produce meanings of the text.[47] With Iser's concept of "gaps" in mind, we are in a better position to understand the *xiaoshuo* commentator's role in filling gaps before the beginning of the novel (prefaces, "how to read" essays), between lines, and between chapters. Likewise, when considering the interpretive gaps opened by expectations of the *xiaoshuo* "genre," we can also consider the unique role of a sequel writer—both "reader" of the parent work and its accompanying commentaries, and "author" of his sequel—in the act of sequeling: filling in interpretive gaps between original and sequel, and addressing what he found to be narrative gaps in the parent work.

In the *Shuihu* interpretation complex, understanding "authorial intention" tends to be a contentious issue that is addressed by both a commentator and a sequel writer. In Jin Shengtan's opinion, readers tend to misunderstand the author's intention and thus fail to fully appreciate his caution against banditry.[48] Besides making claims of access to authorial intention and manipulating the "author" figure as Jin did, a *Shuihu* sequel writer had to think through questions

[47] See Wolfgang Iser, *The Implied Reader* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1974), 37; and his *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1978), 169.
[48] See his comments in "Xu er" 序二, *Jin Shengtan quanji*, vol. 3, 18.

of "textual design," given his dual role as reader of original and author of sequel. "Textual design" refers to the conception, planning, and distribution of the *Shuihu* sequel "product" in the commercial publishing market, and the position of the sequel in the *Shuihu* interpretation complex.[49] On the production end of textual design, a sequel writer had to consider the marketability of his sequel in relation to the prestige of the parent work and produce a sequel with comparable quality in form, content, and style. On the interpretive end of textual design, a sequel writer had to justify his sequeling efforts, by reading the parent work and its accompanying commentaries to discover narrative and interpretive gaps that he would then address in his sequel.

For a *Shuihu* sequel writer, one of the most challenging aspects of textual design was determining which ending of the novel (70-chapter edition vs. 100-chapter edition) to be the point of departure for a sequel. The choice between these two editions impacted the trajectory of the sequel narrative. With Jin's invention of the theory of *Shuihu* "original" and "sequel," he was able to shape the rhetoric and textual design of *Shuihu* sequels and establish certain boundaries of interpretation in commentaries that accompanied these sequels. This theory of two texts forced a sequel writer to imitate Jin's sophisticated rhetoric and to also include commentaries to a sequel, by either writing an auto-commentary or inviting commentators to write them. By adding commentaries to his sequel, the sequel writer could make similar claims of access to authorial intention and enhance his "reading" of the parent work in the act of sequeling.

In the *Shuihu* interpretation complex, two sequels are worthy of critical scrutiny to understand the rivalry between a commentator and a sequel writer, both whom are trying to

[49] Refer to Matthew James Vechinski, "The Design of Fiction and the Fiction of Design," *Textual Practice*, no. 27 (Dec. 2013): 269-293.

control readings of the novel. In *Shuihu houzhuan*, the sequel writer Chen Chen continues the narrative from the end of *Zhongyi Shuihu zhuan* (100-chapter edition). Since two-thirds of the bandit-heroes are either killed or assassinated by the end of chapter 100, Chen proposes to restore the honor of the Liangshan fraternity by narrating the reunion of the remaining 32 bandit-heroes and their search for a new "utopia." This sequel is considered by one scholar to be in a "position of seriousness" given its complex interaction with both the 70-chapter and 100-chapter editions of *Shuihu zhuan*. In disagreement with Jin Shengtan's hostile interpretation of the Liangshan, Chen intended to write a sequel that would demonstrate how the bandit-heroes maintained their honor and, despite disagreements with imperial leadership, never truly challenged imperial authority.[50]

If Chen Chen attempts to elevate the honor of the Liangshan bandit-heroes in *Shuihu houzhuan*, Yu Wanchun settles for the entirely opposite agenda in *Dangkou zhi* which begins where Jin's 70-chapter edition ends. Yu's agenda is to condemn Liangshan as "bandits" rather than champions of "loyalty and righteousness" (*zhongyi*), to justify their capture and physical termination. As David Wang notes, Yu reveals a clear political agenda to honor imperial sovereignty by presenting the Liangshan heroes as "bandits" who are unworthy of valorization. Despite Yu's attempts to ideologically twist the Liangshan fraternity as a dishonorable group of "rebels," they also possess an "unusual mutual commitment" which makes their bond of brotherhood appear "stronger than ever."[51] It is this effort to both terminate the Liangshan "rebels" and to honor them as gallant "heroes" that constitutes the main tension in *Dangkou zhi*.

[50] Ellen Widmer, *The Margins of Utopia: Shui-hu hou-chuan and the Literature of Ming Loyalism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987), 45, 109, 139.
[51] David Wang, *Fin-de-siecle Splendor: Repressed Modernities of Late Qing Fiction, 1849-1911* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 125-26, 133.

This dissertation will investigate these two sequels, which provide an opportunity to explore the hermeneutic interactions between Jin Shengtan, Chen Chen, and Yu Wanchun. I will begin with an analysis of Jin's concept of "literary genius" and his sophisticated rhetoric that both gave rise to the theory of *Shuihu* original and *Shuihu* sequel. I will then investigate the interaction between "commentator" and "sequel writer" in *Shuihu houzhuan* and *Dangkou zhi* and give focus Jin's role in shaping the textual design, rhetoric, and interpretive agendas of these two sequels. I argue each sequel offers its own "proper" ending and "corrective" interpretations of *Shuihu zhuan*, to have retroactive effects on the parent work (70-chapter edition or 100-chapter edition) and to challenge the authority of the "commentator" (Jin Shengtan). What emerges from this interaction is a hermeneutic competition of masterful "reading" between commentator and sequel writer in the *Shuihu* interpretation complex, to determine who wields greatest control over "reader response."

**IV. Competition of Interpretation: Loyalty and Righteousness in *Shuihu zhuan***

Beginning in the Han dynasty (206 BCE – 220 AD), *zhong* 忠 referred to a subject's moral responsibility (loyalty) to his lord, while *yi* 義 referred to moral reciprocity (righteousness) among family, friends, and community members. In later periods, the definition of *zhong* remained unchanged, while the definition of *yi* began to diverge. Although *yi* could refer to larger ethics among all human relationships, in certain localities *yi* referred to a code of honor in clan alliances, where members swore an oath to each other in times of need. In more extreme

examples, *yi* referred to the sense of fraternity in small militia establishments, where members swore an oath of loyalty required to be tangibly expressed by taking action.[52]

While *zhong* remained etymologically unchanging, *yi* had an etymological fluidity that generated what some thinkers considered to be dangerous interpretations capable of induce readers to commit unlawful acts or even transgress against imperial authority. This issue of how to interpret *zhong* and *yi* constitutes the main tension in *Shuihu zhuan*. The character Song Jiang the "Timely Rain" 及時雨 gains reputation among the Liangshan fraternity as a leader who is both loyal to the emperor (*zhong*) and righteous in his actions towards sworn brothers (*yi*). His aspirations to someday serve the emperor win him the title "Loyal and Righteous Song Gongming" 忠義宋公明 among the Shandong locale. Yet the sense one gets is that, Song Jiang's version of *yi* refers more to the code of ethics between lord, subject, and common people, rather than the loyalty among "brothers" who swear an oath of selfless reciprocity to one another (*yiqi*). In contrast with Song Jiang, the character Li Kui nicknamed "Black Whirlwind" 黑旋風—the outspoken and intensely authentic brigand hero—expresses his "sworn fraternal honor" in more extreme ways, often killing both perpetrators and innocents in the name of the Liangshan fraternity, to appear even more rebellious and cruel compared with the rest of the bandit-heroes. Both characters symbolize the tension sustained in the narrative of *Shuihu zhuan*, where the bandit-hero is faced with the dilemma of either honoring his duty to the emperor (*zhong*) or serving his sworn fraternity without hesitation (*yi*).

How to read *zhong* and *yi* presents certain contentions for readers of *Shuihu zhuan* who tend to read the Liangshan characters as either "heroes" or "bandits." On the one hand, why does

[52] See Huo Youming, 霍有明, "You yi ciyuan de yanhua lüe tan Shuihu de zhongyi" 由義詞源的演化略談水滸的忠義, in *Tangdu xuekan* 唐都學刊, No. 4 (2001), 70-74.

the historical author allow these honorable heroes to be killed by their enemies, or poisoned by corrupt officials? On the other hand, what informed the historical author's decision to glorify these vile bandits, who appropriate *zhongyi* in name but fail to abide by this code of behavior? In response to such issues, one commentator believed the "author" intended to underscore Song Jiang's authenticity as a hero, who is loyal to both his country, emperor, and fraternity. [53] By contrast, Jin Shengtan asserts that Song Jiang manipulates *zhongyi* for his own agendas; such appropriation of *zhongyi*, he contends, might mislead the "reader" into believing bandits are also capable of becoming champions of "loyalty and righteousness."[54]

Among commentators of *Shuihu zhuan*, Jin employs the most intricate rhetoric, shaped by his concerns with how to address this novel's reputation as a book of rebellion.[55] In 1642, *Shuihu zhuan* became so popular that the Ming government ordered all its woodblocks and printed copies to be burned immediately.[56] This literary sterilization effort occurred in response to the rise of banditry and rebellion in Shandong that had begun a few years prior to the fall of the Ming. In one case, a group of bandits even adopted names of famous *Shuihu* characters, such as Song Jiang, Yan Qing, and Lei Heng.[57] The theme of "rebellion" in *Shuihu zhuan* remained a concern even in the late Qing (1848-1911), when this novel was included in a government list of

[53] See Li Zhi, "Preface to the Loyal and Righteous Outlaws of the Marsh," in *A Book to Burn and a Book to Keep (Hidden)*, ed. Rivi Handler-Spitz et. al (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 126-127.
[54] Jin Shengtan, "Du diwu caizi shu fa," in *Jin Shengtan quanji*, vol. 3, 28.
[55] As part of his strategy to counter this argument, Jin deemed that the "sequel writer" Luo Guanzhong 羅貫中 (1320-1400), historical author of *Sanguo yanyi*, had appended a "bad" sequel to the 70-chapter original. He reasons that since the last 30 chapters describes Liangshan receiving amnesty, "Luo" largely misinterpreted the original author's intention to vilify Song Jiang and the rest of the Liangshan fraternity. Apparently, the addition of this "sequel" had the effect of allowing subversive readings that tended to validate transgressions against the emperor. In Jin's view, such readings could potentially induce readers to themselves become bandits. See *JSTSHZ*, 70: 1234-35; "Xu er," in *Jin Shengtan quanji*, vol. 3, 18; chapter one, section V of this dissertation, "Constructing *Shuihu* Original and Deleting *Shuihu* Sequel."
[56] Albert Chan, *The Glory and Fall of the Ming Dynasty* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1982), 399; *Ming Qing shiliao yi bian* 明清史料乙編, in *Shuihu zhuan ziliao huibian* 水滸傳資料彙編 (Tianjin: Nankai University Press, 2012), 448-449.
[57] See *Ming mo nongmin qiyi shiliao* 明末農民起義史料, in *Shuihu zhuan ziliao huibian*, 447-448.

"banned books," in response to constant threats from rebellion forces.[58] These cases of book burning and banning suggest that *Shuihu zhuan* prevails in the Chinese imaginary as a novel perceived to carry messages of transgression, with the potential to undermine imperial authority.

A key focus of this dissertation is to investigate commentator and sequel writer attitudes towards heroic/rebellious characters, events, and images in *Shuihu zhuan*. First, I will analyze Jin Shengtan's rhetoric which is informed by his agenda to decrease the tension of *zhongyi* and control how the Liangshan bandit-heroes are read in his 70-chapter edition. I will then explore the two distinct interpretations of the Liangshan bandit-heroes in *Shuihu houzhuan* and *Dangkou zhi* and demonstrate how such interpretations function as "reader responses" to parent works and their accompanying commentaries. On the one hand, Chen Chen tends to view the Liangshan fraternity as a group "bandit-heroes" whose gallant behavior are worth celebrating. On the other hand, Yu Wanchun reads them as a "bandit resistance movement" that actively consolidates power, resists political authority, and disrupts civil order.

Specifically, my goal is to investigate *Shuihu houzhuan* and *Dangkou zhi* as sophisticated constructs of textual design and rhetoric, informed by the agenda to police readings of the Liangshan bandit-heroes. In the case of *Shuihu houzhuan*, they are considered "heroes" rather than rebels: deserving of a "water margin" utopia, and their sworn fraternal honor worthy of celebration. If *Shuihu houzhuan* was an effort to celebrate the "honor" (*yiqi*) of the Liangshan bandit-heroes, then *Dangkou zhi* attempts to elevate imperial authority (*zhong*) above sworn loyalty (*yi*), by narrating the bandit-heroes' desperate fight towards their ends, to then have the effect of de-elevating their heroic status.

[58] This decree to ban *xiaoshuo* deemed harmful to society was largely supported by Ding Richang 丁日昌 (1823-1882), a proponent of the self-strengthening movement. See Deng Zhicheng 鄧之誠 (1887-1960), "Xiaoshuo jin li" 小說禁例, in *Gudong suo ji* 古董瑣記 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1991), *juan* 6, 201.

This is not to say that both sequels offer only readings of either glorifying or condemning the Liangshan bandit-heroes. As I will demonstrate, in the *Shuihu* interpretation complex, much interaction occurs between *Shuihu* original (70-chapter edition and 100-chapter edition), *Shuihu* sequel (*Shuihu houzhuan* and *Dangkou zhi*), and the accompanying commentaries to all four texts. Exploring this interaction provides an opportunity to understand why Jin Shengtan, Chen Chen, and Yu Wanchun were so adamant about the "appropriateness" of their interpretations, and how Chen and Yu each present dramatically different "readings" of *Shuihu zhuan* in their respective sequels, both informed by Jin Shengtan's rhetoric and theory of two texts.

This dissertation calls for a reconsideration of the contention that a sequel writer primarily imitates the parent work by offering an "extension" of the parent work's narrative in his sequel. With the *Shuihu* interpretation complex as the theoretical structure of my dissertation, I will argue that Chen and Yu began their literary projects based upon the contention that a parent work almost always requires further "interpretation." In their writings, they not only testify to the prestige of parent works; to legitimize their sequels, they also employ an intricate rhetoric of controlling interpretation and "rewrite" certain aspects of their chosen parent work.[59] For this reason, in *Shuihu houzhuan* Chen stresses that the 100-chapter edition (and Jin's 70-chapter edition) did not fully succeed in emphasizing the honor of the Liangshan bandit-heroes. Likewise, in *Dangkou zhi*, Yu attempts to finish what Jin could not in the 70-chapter edition, by making an effort to disassociate the Liangshan "bandit resistance movement" from the concept of *zhongyi* and rectify the intention of the *Shuihu* "author."

[59] By "rewrite," I am broadly referring to two concepts: *bu* 補, to make complete what is incomplete; and *zheng* 正, to rectify misinterpretations.

In this study, my aim is to carve out a space for *xushu* in critical *xiaoshuo* discourse by investigating how "reader response" to *Shuihu zhuan* was largely shaped by hermeneutic issues, which opened up a competition of reading between commentators and sequel writers. This study will focus on the intricate architecture of textual design, rhetoric, and interpretive agendas embedded in the *Shuihu* interpretation complex of fiction original, commentary, and sequel. In addition, each chapter will explore how hermeneutic issues in *Shuihu* commentaries and sequels were shaped by certain historical factors, such as book marketing strategies and publishing culture in late imperial China.

The remainder of this dissertation is divided into three chapters. Chapter one investigates the significance of Jin Shengtan's "literary genius" concept and the impact of his textual interventions in *Shuihu zhuan.* With "literary genius" as the innovation of his commentaries, Jin mainly argues that unless readers follow the interpretations of the genius commentator (himself), they are denied access to the literary genius of the *Shuihu* "author." This argument had the effect of making his commentaries a "necessary" component of the 70-chapter edition. While Jin's first agenda is to provide explications of authorial intention, textual design, and writing techniques in *Shuihu zhuan*, his second agenda is to police reader interpretations of *zhongyi*, to "authorize" the "commentator" figure in his edition *of Shuihu zhuan*. This chapter also investigates Jin's deletion of the last 30 chapters to *Zhongyi Shuihu zhuan*. Having established "authority" as the genius commentator, Jin was able to generate the textual conditions to invent a theory of two texts: a venerated *Shuihu* "original" (first 70 chapters) and an inferior *Shuihu* "sequel" (last 30 chapters). Despite constructing this theory to prevent further tampering to the stability of his 70-chapter edition, Jin's textual interventions would radically shape the textual design, rhetoric, and interpretive agendas of the two sequels *Shuihu houzhuan* and *Dangkou zhi*.

Chapter two explores the sophistication of Chen Chen's sequel, *Shuihu houzhuan*. First, I investigate Chen's marketing strategies that were aimed at enhancing the prestige of his sequel. By manipulating "author," "commentator," and "sequel writer" figures in his sequel, Chen challenges the prestige of Jin's 70-chapter edition and offers what he considers a proper "reading" of *Zhongyi Shuihu zhuan*. Second, I explain how Chen's sequel is predicated upon the issue of textual design: choosing the point of departure for the sequel narrative, finding gaps in the parent work, and then making "corrections" to the parent work. Chen's attention to textual design allow him to "rewrite" the Liangshan bandit-heroes by narrating their rise from "ruin" to a state of heightened "glory." Third, I argue that Chen Chen increases the tension between *zhong* and *yi* as a preamble to carrying out his actual agenda: to de-elevating *zhong* as a formality and to elevate *yi* as a renewed "sworn fraternal honor." Finally, I argue that in the edition titled *Chongding Shuihu houzhuan* 重訂水滸傳 (Water margin sequel revised), the commentator-editor Cai Ao 蔡奡 (fl 18th c.)—following the rhetoric set up by Jin Shengtan—tends to direct readers towards a less rebellious reading of *Shuihu houzhuan*. To further this agenda, Cai deletes Chen's auto-commentaries and adds his own commentaries, which he justifies by extending the intention of the "sequel writer" in his rhetoric: to moralize readers of *Shuihu houzhuan*.

Chapter three examines Yu Wanchun's efforts to terminate the Liangshan bandit-heroes in *Dangkou zhi*. This chapter argues that even though *Dangkou zhi* testifies to the prestige of the 70-chapter edition by accepting Jin's theory of two *Shuihu* texts and by following Jin's specific rhetoric, this sequel is informed by Yu's dissatisfaction with Jin's edits, revisions, and commentaries. Next, I analyze the rhetoric of the *Dangkou zhi*, to investigate the sense of urgency generated by the commentators; with their commentaries, they attempt to establish *Dangkou zhi* as the "proper" sequel and ending to *Shuihu zhuan* and also enforce Yu's view that

*Shuihu zhuan* must be read as a cautionary tale against rebellion. Last, this chapter investigates Yu's simultaneous efforts to "rewrite" Liangshan as both a group of "rebels" and a fraternity of "heroes." It is this conflict between how to "read" Liangshan that gives *Dangkou zhi* its main tension, where Liangshan appears even more desperate and vicious than in the parent work by fighting together towards honorable deaths as sworn brothers.

Each sequel has been deeply conditioned by their respective authors' contemporary realities. As we shall see, it is no coincidence that both Chen Chen and Yu Wanchun took loyalist positions in their sequels. What they have masked as "sequels" also double as "readings" of *Shuihu zhuan*, informed by the unique positionalities of the respective sequel writers, caught in their particular ages of dynastic transition and unrest.

# CHAPTER ONE

## Branding Literary Genius: Jin Shengtan's Hermeneutic Interventions[1]

The first task every critic faces in analyzing *Shuihu zhuan* is to tackle the problem posed by different editions of this novel. The intricate relationship between two important editions, Jin Shengtan's 70-chapter edition *Diwu caizi shu Shuihu zhuan* and the 100-chapter edition *Zhongyi Shuihu zhuan*, is very rarely mentioned in studies of this novel; most analyses give focus to Jin's revisions, edits, and truncations of the latter, without explicit consideration of the rhetoric of Jin's commentaries and the importance of his concept "literary genius" (*caizi* 才子) in shaping that rhetoric. The 100-chapter edition was originally published in 1610, with commentaries attributed to the sixteenth-century writer Li Zhi. Despite Jin's claim that he had found the 70-chapter "ancient edition" of *Shuihu zhuan* which he would revise, edit, and write accompanying commentaries on, between the years 1641-1644, Jin made significant alterations to many aspects of the 100-chapter edition, including the deletion of its last 30-chapters to construct his 70-chapter *Shuihu* "original." Because this edition was constructed based upon the assertion of a genius "commentator" figure who has access to the "authorial intention" (*zhi* 志), it gives unique insights into what Jin wanted *Shuihu zhuan* to be, and in many cases the revisions and commentaries are so essential that they present a dramatically different "reading" of *Shuihu zhuan*.

[1] This chapter began as a conference paper titled "Talent, Canon, and Commentary: Jin Shengtan and the Interpretation of Literary Genius (*caizi*)," which was presented at the American Oriental Society Western Branch Annual Meeting, Stanford University, Oct. 30 – Nov. 1, 2014. Special thanks for all the participants who provided insightful feedback during the conference. I am especially grateful to Dr. John Wang, whose scholarship on Jin Shengtan and encouragement during the conference inspired me to further develop this chapter.

In this chapter, I argue this construction of a novel "original"—Jin's 70-chapter edition of *Shuihu zhuan*—is informed by a highly sophisticated rhetoric of controlling interpretation. Jin's commentaries highlight what he felt was most important to retain in the text and shows what he felt must be deleted or explicated upon. A point of interest is his radical intervention in the 100-chapter edition, specifically the last 30 chapters which he deleted and deemed a bad "sequel." This deletion leaves the reader without recourse to the relationship between "original" and "sequel," a connection that shaped Jin's agenda to prevent further tampering of his 70-chapter edition.

My analysis shows that although Jin Shengtan's commentaries to *Shuihu zhuan* offer reading and writing strategies to readers, with the manipulation of "author," "commentator," and "reader" figures, his commentaries aim to police interpretation, by advocating for an appropriate reading of *zhongyi* 忠義 (loyalty and righteousness). With the construction of a venerated 70-chapter "original" and a bad 30-chapter "sequel," Jin intended to prevent further tampering to the stability of his edition, but whose interventions had the effect of inventing a theory of two *Shuihu* texts that radically shaped the textual design and rhetoric of what would become *Shuihu* sequels. Critical to understanding the significance of Jin's rhetoric is an investigation of his trademark concept "literary genius" and how it came to shape his commentaries.

**I. Elevating the Genius Commentator**

Jin Shengtan was once visited by his friend Shao Dian 邵點,[2] who had just returned from court. In Shao's account, the Shunzhi emperor was so impressed with the *Liu caizi shu* 六才子書

[2] According to historical accounts, Shao Dian was a member of the imperial academy and one of Jin's most intimate friends. He eventually fell into a period of disillusionment after the 1644 dynastic transition. See Lu Lin 陸林, "Qingchu Shao Dian qi ren ji yu Jin Shengtan jiaoyou kao—jian lun Jin shi chun gan ba shou de chuangzuo xintai"

(hereafter referred to as *Six Books of Genius*), he deemed Jin a "master of ancient prose essays" (*guwen gaoshou* 古文高手). This praise moved Jin to such a degree that he wrote eight poems dedicated to his majesty.[3] If this anecdote is true, Jin's fame as a commentator likely reached great heights in his old age. Yet his fame was coupled with anguish that arose from witnessing the end of the Ming and rise of the Qing. Jin had long abandoned all hope of holding government office[4] and found solace training the younger generation to become writers[5] with his "literary genius" canon, anthology, and essay collection.[6]

Jin aimed to convince readers they would not have access to the "organizing principles of writing" (*wenfa* 文法) without the guidance of the "commentator" who presumably has access to the literary genius of the "author." In addition to claiming that all *Six Books of Genius* are "excellent works" (*jingyan* 精嚴), Jin emphasized both *Shiji* (Third book of genius) and *Shuihu zhuan* (Fifth book of genius), despite their differences in terms of "genre," could teach young readers how to write well because of the accompanying commentaries he wrote to these two texts.[7] Some of Jin's contemporaries were quite convinced of the effectiveness of Jin's commentaries in teaching readers how to write. Jin's friend Xu Zeng 徐增 (1612-?) found that by following Jin's commentaries for each book, readers could gain access to the principles of

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清初邵點其人及與金聖嘆交遊考——兼論金詩春感八首的創作心態, in *Zhongguo dianji yu wenhua* 中國典籍與文化, No. 2 (2015): 41-47.

[3] Lu Lin ed., *Jin Shengtan nianpu jianbian*, in *Jin Shengtan quanji*, vol. 6, 72.

[4] In 1641, Jin had taken the triennial provincial examination but failed to pass it. See *Jin Shengtan nianpu jianbian*, in *Jin Shengtan quanji*, vol. 6, 39.

[5] As Jin notes in his list of thirty-three delights, "To hear our children recite the classics so fluently, like the sound of pouring water from a vase. Ah, is this not happiness?" 子弟背誦書爛熟，如瓶中瀉水。不亦快哉！This list is found in Jin's *Xixiang ji* commentaries in the "Kao yan" 拷艷 chapter. I have borrowed this translation from Lin Yutang's complete translation of the list, in his *The Importance of Living* (New York: J. Day, 1937), 131-136.

[6] Refer to Introduction, section II of this dissertation, "Jin Shengtan and the Rise of Interpretation."

[7] Jin Shengtan, "Xu san," in *Jin Shengtan quanji*, vol. 3, 22.

writing in the *Liu jing* 六經 (Six Confucian classics).[8] If such principles that made Confucian classics "canonical" were not clear before, Jin's commentaries to the *Six Books of Genius* could now illuminate these principles to readers.[9] Jin was quite concerned about the development of young readers who he felt lacked exposure to different categories of books, including *xiaoshuo*.[10] He believed that for young readers to read *Shuihu zhuan* properly, they need to rely on the interpretations of the genius "commentator," who can elucidate on the principles of writing based upon his access to the intention of the "author."[11]

According to Jin, the "author" produced literature indicative of his respective individual talents,[12] which manifest in the principles of writing embedded in the text. Jin finds that while readers admittedly know how to "think" (*gousi* 構思), "organize" (*liju* 立局), "polish sentences" (*zhuoju* 琢句), and "arrange characters" (*anzi* 安字), they simply "lack the methods" (*wu fa yu shou* 無法於手) and "do not know when one should feel ashamed [cannot distinguish between

[8] "Literature is a vessel to convey the Way. The Way of the sages are spread throughout ancient texts; if you want to know the Way of the sages, you must understand the literature of the sages . . . In Jin Shengtan's comments on the *Six Books of Genius*, the principles of writing in these books are actually the principles described in the *Six Confucian Classics*" 文者，載道之器也。聖人之道，散現於典籍，故欲知聖人之道，當先知聖人之文 . . . 聖嘆之評六《才子書》，以其書文法即六經之文法. The quote is from Xu Zeng, "Tianxia caizi bi du shu xu" 天下才子必讀書序, in *Jin Shengtan quanji*, vol. 6, 142-143.

[9] Xu's comment here seems to resonate with the Ming literati "iconoclastic notion" that moral wisdom in classical texts were overly archaic but could now be accessed in vernacular texts. See Anne E. McLaren, "Constructing New Reading Publics in Late Ming China," 153.

[10] Jin writes, "I very often see that fathers and elder brothers today do not allow young people to read all the books available . . . This is a grave mistake. When a boy is ten years old, his intelligence burgeons out; if he is not allowed to read all the books available, he may develop other hobbies" 吾每見今世之父兄，類不許其子弟讀一切書 . . . 此皆大錯。夫兒子十歲，神智生矣，不縱其讀一切書，且有他好. "Xu san," in *Jin Shengtan quanji*, vol. 3, 19. Translation from Laura Wu, "Jin Shengtan: Founder of a Chinese Theory of the Novel" (PhD Diss., University of Toronto, 1993), 250.

[11] The "genius" of Jin's commentaries was certainly a viewpoint which he did everything possible to advance. Refer to John Wang, *Chin Sheng-t'an: His Life and Literary Criticism*, 230.

[12] Jin writes, "Zhuang Zhou, Qu Ping, Ma Qian, and Du Fu all possess their own genius. More recently, Shi Nai'an and Dong Jieyuan had their respective talents as well" 莊周有莊周之才，屈平有屈平之才，馬遷有馬遷之才，杜甫有杜甫之才。降而至於施耐庵有施耐庵之才，董解元有董解元之才. In "Xu yi," *Jin Shengtan quanji*, vol. 3, 15.

good and bad writing]" (*wu chi yu xin* 無恥於心): both which could presumably enable them to produce a great work as the "author" did.[13]

Jin suggests that because of the author's masterful textual design, the author will undoubtedly have greater authority than the "reader" who is likely to only become a sub-par author without proper knowledge of principles of writing. By underscoring the discrepancy of the writing sensibilities between "author" and "reader," Jin sets up the conditions for his interventions as the genius "commentator," whose assumed access to "authorial intention" allows him to illuminate the "literary genius" of the "author." It was Jin's view that "literary genius" consisted of two types:

> According to my contemporaries, "talent" refers to the genius's ease of producing literature; [I would say] a writer who composes with difficulty is a genius. For the former, it is because he writes rapidly with triumphant vigor that he is a genius; but for the latter, he must exhaust his mind and vitality, his face then becomes grave and solemn . . . to complete a text 依世人之所謂才，則是文成於易者，才子也；依文成於難者，才子也。依文成於易之說，則是迅疾揮掃，神氣揚揚者，才子也；依文成於難之說，則必心絕氣盡，面猶死人 . . . 得成一書也.[14]

Jin believed that an author had to spend several years organizing his ideas, gathering materials, writing, and revising in order to complete his work.[15] As for authors such as the Tang poet Li Bai (701-762) who produced literature effortlessly, Jin found such ease to be illusory.[16] He encouraged readers to model themselves on the Han historian Sima Qian (145-86 BC),

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[13] According to Jin, these authors who embodied "literary genius" were like the finest tailors who "cut cloth" (*cai* 裁). These genius authors, like tailors, understood all the parts of a garment in his mind—the color, sleeves, lapels, cape, and cap—even if they only had the brocade in their hands. See "Xu yi," *Jin Shengtan quanji*, vol. 3, 15-16.
[14] Jin Shengtan, "Xu yi," in *Jin Shengtan quanji*, vol. 3, 16-17.
[15] A translation of this comment can be found in John Wang, *Chin Sheng-t'an: His Life and Literary Criticism*, 256.
[16] See Jin's comment in "Shengtan Chidu" 聖嘆尺牘, in Jin Shengtan, *Tang caizi shi* 唐才子詩 (Taipei: Dezhi chubanshe, 1963), 557. According to the preface, Jin Yong 金雍 (1631-?) had collected his father's correspondences addressed to other literati and compiled them into this collection.

considered by Jin to be the "ultimate" author figure,[17] who declared that an author needed to begin from a position of hardship, suffering, and pain, before producing a great work.[18]

By juxtaposing these two types of genius authors, Jin begins legitimating the "commentator" who presumably understands the process of authoring that informs his masterful reading of *Shuihu zhuan* and its organizing principles of writing. Although Jin claims these principles are indicative of the historical *Shuihu* author Shi Nai'an's "literary genius," Jin is making the assertion of an "author" figure whose literary prowess cannot be emulated by readers without the guidance of the "commentator." With this assumed access to "authorial intention," Jin attempts to persuade readers that they can produce fine writing like the "author" if they read his 70-chapter edition of *Shuihu zhuan*, the "paragon of writing" 文章之總持. Jin then assures readers that his *Shuihu* commentaries will enable them to "read and understand the principles of writing for all texts" 讀一切書之法, and even promises that his commentaries will "enable students to read all texts with great ease" 便以之遍讀天下之書，其易果如破竹.[19]

Many of these readers were Jin's students who underwent rigorous training in his Scholar's Hall 學士堂. Based on Jin's own accounts, he would proctor practice examination essays based on topics from the *Four Confucian Books*, evaluate the merits and mistakes of each student's essay, and then lecture on the fine points of reading and writing.[20] Jin hoped that with

[17] Martin W. Huang, "Boundaries and Interpretations," in *Snakes' Legs*, 27.
[18] See Arthur Waley, trans., "Letter to Jen An (Shao-ch'ing)," in *Anthology of Chinese Literature: From Early Times to the 14th Century*, ed. Cyril Birch (New York: Grove Press, 1965), 95-102.
[19] "Xu san," *Jin Shengtan quanji*, vol. 3, 22.
[20] Jin Shengtan, "Xiao ti caizi shu xu" 小題才子書序, *Jin Shengtan quanji*, vol. 6, 541.

his commentaries, students would become literary geniuses like the authors of these works.[21] In Jin's reading program, young readers began with a text such as *Shuihu zhuan*; a close reading of this novel and Jin's accompanying commentaries would presumably enable them to begin understanding how to read all texts and eventually write like the genius "author."[22] Yet to have access to such strategies, readers had to give up the control of interpretation to Jin Shengtan who, having convinced readers of his hermeneutic abilities, offers them masterful readings of *Shuihu zhuan.* With this control, Jin was able to generate the sense in young readers that, to become genius authors themselves, it is necessary to follow the interpretations of the genius "commentator:" the ultimate enabling figure for readers to become writers. Giving the commentator figure such prominence, now a work like *Shuihu zhuan*, branded as the *Fifth Book of Genius*, could become one of the required readings for readers who aspire to become genius writers.[23]

To enhance the authority of his commentaries, Jin constructed a vertical imaginary of interpretation consisting of "author," "reader," and "commentator." Jin manipulates the presence of "author" to justify the need for a commentator who offers "appropriate" interpretations of the

[21] Jin Shengtan, "Du diliu caizi shu fa," in *Jin Shengtan quanji*, vol. 2, 856, item 14. Xie Liangqi 謝良琦 (1624-1671) found Jin's commentaries worthy of serious attention and affirms Jin's intention to teach readers to become literary geniuses. See Xie Liangqi, "Caizi bi du shu xu" 才子必讀書序, in *Jin Shengtan quanji*, vol. 6, 147-148.

[22] One of Jin's aims was to have readers read his commentary edition and "transfer their knowledge and experience to the reading of various kinds of classics." See Shan Te-hsing, "The Aesthetic Response in *Chin-p'i shui-hu*: An Iserian Reading of Chin Sheng-t'an's Commentary Edition of the Shui-hu chuan," in *Chinese Literary Criticism of the Ch'ing Period (1644-1911)*, ed. John Wang (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1993), 184.

[23] The connection between the *Six Books of Genius* and the *Must-read Book for Geniuses* has been noted in Introduction, section II of this dissertation, "Jin Shengtan and the Rise of Interpretation." Jin began working on *Must-read Books for Geniuses* in 1642, at the same time he had been writing his commentaries to *Shuihu zhuan.* The first two characters *Tian xia* 天下 were added by Jin's close friend Xu Zeng. The extant edition was originally printed during the second year of the Kangxi reign (1663) by Zhou Lianggong 周亮工 (*jinshi* degree, 1640), only a few years after Jin's death. Refer to Jin Shengtan, *Tianxia caizi bi du shu* 天下才子必讀書, in *Jin Shengtan quanji*, vol. 5, 57-81; Lu Lin, ed., *Jin Shengtan nianpu jianbian*, in *Jin Shengtan quanji*, vol. 6, 40-41; Lu Lin, *Jin Shengtan shishi yanjiu* 金聖嘆史實研究 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 2015), 74.

novel based upon his presumed understanding of authorial intention and textual design. In this imaginary, Shi Nai'an is the "author" whose literary genius is presumably uncovered by the "commentator" Jin Shengtan and revealed to the novice "reader," who cannot not truly understand the writing of the literary genius without the commentator's assistance.

By giving the "commentator" such a crucial role in this vertical imaginary, Jin begins exerting greater control over reader interpretation in his 70-chapter edition of *Shuihu zhuan*. Why go to such length to exert so much control on the text? The sense one gets is that Jin was not satisfied with only claiming to know authorial intention. With the genius "commentator," Jin enabled himself to move fluidly between "author" and "reader" positions and have a direct impact on the reading process by adding "authorial" dimensions of textual design and principles of writing in his commentaries. These points suggest that in Jin's rhetoric, he constructs an image of the "author" Shi Nai'an who appears unaware of his own principles of writing; on the contrary, now these principles appear as discoveries of the "commentator."[24] Jin's "authority" is therefore built upon claims of "interpretation," that is, the genius commentator's role in presumably discovering principles of writing of which the "author" was not cognizant. [25]

Jin's concept of "literary genius" was informed by some of his personal aspirations. At a young age he hoped to become a writer: "I thought myself to have great genius. I felt very

[24] Jin's commentaries demonstrate an "appropriation" of authorial intention. For example, Jin once stressed how the reader is no longer reading *Xi xiang ji* written by Wang Shifu 王實甫 (1250-1307), but the reader is now examining a text written by Jin himself. Based upon such logic, whenever a reader peruses any of Jin's *Liu caizi shu*, including *Shuihu zhuan*, they are not reading a book by its author, but a book enhanced with the commentaries of Jin's genius commentator. See "Du di liu caizi shu fa" 讀第六才子書法, in *Jin Shengtan quanji*, vol. 2, 865.

[25] Refer to Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics and Criticisms and Other Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 33. A reader will often discover aspects of a text that are "unconscious" to the author to become points of departure for interpretation. In his commentaries Jin does not state that the "author" was consciously employing principles of writing in his book, which leads one to believe such principles were not something already "there" in the *Six Books of Genius*; rather, Jin explicates on such principles in a way that suggests these principles are his own discoveries.

disappointed, as if from ancient times to now, I alone had great genius, and I alone remained dismayed and frustrated" 自負大才，不勝侘傺，恰似自古迄今，止我一人是大才，止我一人獨沉屈者. [26] Such autobiographical details sometimes appear in Jin's commentaries and provides insight into the validity of certain points made by Jin's contemporaries. In this way, it seems Lu Wenheng 陸文衡 (*jinshi* degree, 1619) makes quite an accurate observation in his writings: "when Jin speaks of the brilliant literary genius, he is likely speaking of himself" 每言錦繡才子, 殆自道也.[27]

As will be discussed in the next section, in Jin's self-proclaimed role as a masterful "commentator," he was a polemic Confucianist who expended much efforts to "authorize" his commentaries. Jin's "literary genius" did not manifest in the "author" role per se, but the concept of "literary genius" certainly informed his "commentator" role of transmitting authorial intention and his claims to defend *Shuihu zhuan* against misinterpretations.

**II. Neo-Confucian Rhetoric and Jin Shengtan's "Commentator" History**

Critical to understanding Jin's rhetoric in his *Shuihu* commentaries is to understand how a Neo-Confucian justified the need for his commentaries.[28] Given the size of Confucian "canon" and tendencies for readers to misinterpret these numerous texts, the thinker Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200) had doubts about reader capabilities to understand meanings of Confucian classics. Zhu's "canonization" efforts in his *Four Confucian Books* were part of the larger agenda to police

[26] Translation from John Wang, *Chin Sheng-t'an: His Life and Literary Criticism*, 224.
[27] Lu Wenheng 陸文衡, *Qiang an sui bi* 牆庵隨筆, in *Jin Shengtan yanjiu ziliao huibian*, 13.
[28] Peter Bol argues that self-identified "Neo-Confucians" operated under a rhetoric of loss and recovery. Zhu Xi believed Zhou Dunyi and the Cheng brothers rediscovered the Way, after it had been lost from the Han to Tang periods. Likewise, Wang Yangming believed Zhu Xi was responsible for the loss of moral engagement, and that Wang himself had recovered it. See Peter Bol, *Neo-Confucianism in History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 100.

interpretations of these texts.[29] Zhu claimed his predecessors made grave misinterpretations that were in need of correction.[30] Although Zhu found that previous commentaries could partially be adopted into his own,[31] he was also quite confident about the appropriateness of his interpretations, especially when he found previous commentaries "contradict with [original meanings of] the classics" (*yu jing bu he* 與經不合).[32]

Zhu Xi believed contemporary "exegetes" (*tanjing zhe* 談經者) committed errors of interpretation—such as garbling meanings and elevating the status of "lowly" texts[33]—and are at fault for causing readers to misunderstand the "meaning of classical texts" (*jing yi* 經意).[34] In Zhu's rhetoric, the bad "commentator" will almost always make errors and cause the novice "reader" to misread the text. By juxtaposing a bad "commentator" and a novice "reader," Zhu attempted to legitimate his *Four Confucian Books* and accompanying commentaries that presumably restored the meanings of classical texts.[35]

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[29] Zhu Xi made the Confucian "canon" smaller. One example is Zhu's extraction of the "Da xue" 大學 (Great Learning) from the *Li ji* 禮記 (Book of Rites), which would become the first canon in *Sishu*.

[30] Zhu had quite the axe to grind with his predecessors who contradicted with his views on learning and knowledge. While Zhu Xi admired the thinker Han Yu 韓愈 (768-824) for his discourse on rectifying the mind (*zheng xin* 正心) and making one's attentions sincere (*cheng yi* 誠意), he was dissatisfied with Han for not explaining the importance of "investigation of things" (*gewu* 格物) and "attainment of knowledge" (*zhi zhi* 致知) in his writings. Zhu also voiced his dissatisfaction towards contemporary thinkers, believing they deviated from Cheng Hao and Cheng Yi's philosophy, thus failing to demonstrate true understanding of "inherent principle" (*li* 理) in mind, matter, and object. He also blamed thinkers like Hu Hong 胡宏 (1105-1161) for making the Neo-Confucian discourse of the Cheng brothers incomplete. See Li Jingde 黎靖德, ed., "Daxue wu" 大學五, in *Zhuzi yulei* 朱子語類 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1994), *juan* 18, 431.

[31] Zhu is specifically commenting on Han commentators Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127-200) and Wang Su 王肅 (195-256), and critiques them for providing some inaccurate annotations, despite their excellent emendations of certain texts. See *Zhuzi yulei* 朱子語類, *juan* 83.

[32] Zhu Xi, "Shu lin zhang suo kan sijing hou" 書臨漳所刊四經後, in Chen Junmin 陳俊民, ed., *Zhuzi wenji* 朱子文集 (Taipei: De fu guwen jiao jijinhui, 2000), *juan* 82.

[33] Zhu Xi, *On Reading, Part 2*, in Daniel K. Gardner, trans., *Learning to be a Sage: Selections from Conversations of Master Chu, Arranged Topically* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990), 5:61, 159.

[34] Daniel Gardner, *Learning to be a Sage*, 5:57, 158.

[35] See Zhu's comment in Daniel Gardner, *Learning to be a Sage*, 5:62, 159.

An important component of Zhu's rhetoric is to point out misinterpretations of previous commentators that could potentially mislead novice readers. In this light, Jin Shengtan shares certain commonalities with Zhu Xi.[36] Jin often emphasizes the "appropriateness" of his readings,[37] based on his assumption of the connection between the genius commentator and the first commentator—the revered sage Confucius—as described in Jin's account of a "commentator history."

Jin bases his argument on the logic of the Master, who once said he was merely "a transmitter and not a maker [transmitting the wisdom of the sages, rather than creating it]" (*shu er bu zuo* 述而不作).[38] As Jin states, "sages" (*shengren* 聖人) before Confucius authored books with the purpose of edifying readers: to unite the minds of people and administer a perfect moral order.[39] The moral authority of sages were then transmitted by Confucius, who had compiled the *Liu jing* in his role as a "commoner" (*shuren* 庶人).[40] Jin finds Confucius to be a model for commoners, because of his unique position as a man of sagely virtues, without the status of a sage. He reasons that "Confucius did not intend to author [the *Chunqiu* 春秋]" 未嘗作者，仲尼之志也, since he primarily transmitted the moral messages of sages into "classics" 因史成經,

[36] On the similarities between Zhu Xi and Jin Shengtan's programs of reading, see Laura Wu, "Jin Shengtan: Founder of a Chinese Theory of the Novel," 248-260.
[37] Martin W. Huang, "Author(ity) and Reader in Traditional Chinese *Xiaoshuo* Commentary," in *Chinese Literature* 16 (Dec. 1994), 53.
[38] James Legge, trans., *Confucian Analects*, in *The Chinese Classics* (Taipei: SMC Publishing inc, 1991), vol. 1-2, 195; Zhu Xi, *Sishu jizhu* 四書集注 (Taipei: Taida chuban zhongxin, 2016), *juan* 4, 125.
[39] Jin Shengtan, "Xu yi," in *Jin Shengtan quanji*, vol. 3, 11.
[40] In Jin's words, the *Six Confucian Classics* serve to promote a perfect moral order: "[these texts] possess the status of a sage, and therefore have authority. You can understand why, considering the moral power of the sages" 在聖人之位，則有其權。有聖人之德，則知其故. In "Xu yi," in *Jin Shengtan quanji*, 3: 11.

rather than establishing his own writing as a vehicle for moral order 不別立文.[41] In Jin's view, since Confucius claimed to transmit by illuminating meanings of a text, he holds the highest position among "commoners," as the earliest "commentator" on whom later commentators should model.[42]

Based on Jin's account, Confucius was able to compile and edit texts that would become the *Liu jing* without ever "authoring" (*zuo* 作), which was an "activity reserved for sages and the emperor" 聖人而天子之事. Having established Confucius as the model "commentator," Jin then critiques commentators who came after Confucius. Apparently, these commentators authored books without discrimination and even spread far-fetched doctrines. Lacking the moral virtue of Confucius, they authored books from the position of commoners without the "authority to author books" 作書之權. Jin then reasons, if commoners authored books without the moral power of a sage, then these books ought to be burned for their potential to disrupt moral order. He then cites the "misfortune of book burning" 燒書之禍 as evidence and argues that Qin Shi Huang 秦始皇 (259-210 BCE), lacking the perspicacity to distinguish between dangerous books and moral books, inadvertently destroyed the latter in his massive book-burning campaign. Based on the

[41] "Xu yi," in *Jin Shengtan quanji*, vol. 3, 12. The claim that Confucius was the earliest "commentator" is one that was made by historical figures who came before Jin Shengtan. Sima Qian believed Confucius "created *Chunqiu* by following historical records" 因史記，作春秋 (*Shiji*, 47: 1943). In other words, Jin considered himself the latest "commentator" among a long lineage of commentators who transmit but do not create. Regarding this point, Wai-yee Li suggests "authorship can be understood as a kind of editorial labor," and that "the unique vision of a transmitter or an editor may result in crucial textual changes, so much that he can be considered an author. The line between author and editor can thus be nebulous." See her "Concepts of Authorship," in *The Oxford Handbook of Classical Chinese Literature*, eds. Wiebke Denecke et. al (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 361. The point that those who authored also considered themselves "compilers" or "editors" (the act of transmission) is also made in Martin Huang, "Author(ity) and Reader in Traditional Chinese *Xiaoshuo* Commentary," 51.

[42] As noted by Sima Qian: "Hence those who know essential meanings of ritual and music can create; those who understand the manifestations of ritual and music can transmit their meanings. Those who create are called sages; those who transmit are called the ones who can illuminate meanings [that is, the commentator]" 禮樂之情者能作，識禮樂之文者能述。作者之謂聖，述者之謂明。明聖者，述作之謂也 (*Shiji* 史記, 24: 1189-1190). Translation from Wai-yee Li, "Concepts of Authorship," 361.

logic that Qin Shi Huang's campaign was justified based upon his authority as emperor, but unjustified in terms of moral governance, Jin implies that Qin Shi Huang is unworthy of the same reverence given to Confucius.[43]

Jin's rhetoric later takes a polemical turn. He feels if moral decline had been caused by the proliferation of dangerous books and the burning of moral books, ministers in court during the Han dynasty were equally at fault for the "misfortune of book acquisition" 求書之禍. Realizing what Qin Shi Huang had done, Han ministers ordered a large-scale recovery of extant books. Famous scholars provided many classical texts to the court, but they also included books written by commoner authors. Jin points out that such book recovery efforts increased the possibilities for dangerous interpretations. In his view, even though classical texts serve to edify readers, books authored by commoners can incite readers toward transgressive actions; apparently even a renowned historical work like the *Shiji* can be misread to then poison the minds of the readers by inciting theft, lust, corruption, and rebellion.[44]

With this "commentator history," Jin's rhetoric takes a moral and political twist, informed by the assumption that since the possibilities for misinterpretation are almost always present in the reading experience, a commentator like Confucius is necessary to guide readers towards "correct" interpretations. With two historical events as evidence—Qin Shi Huang's book burning campaign that damaged moral books and the Han court's recovery of moral books that inadvertently raised the status of "commoner" books—Jin underscores what he considers the essential problem of interpretation: moral books are often destroyed by government authorities,

[43] Jin Shengtan, "Xu yi," in *Jin Shengtan quanji*, vol. 3, 12.
[44] "Xu yi," in *Jin Shengtan quanji*, vol. 3, 14.

while “commoner” books are almost always consumed by readers who are likely to generate dangerous interpretations without guidance from commentators.

With this account of the commentary tradition that had begun with Confucius, Jin places even more responsibility on the “reader” to generate appropriate interpretations. In Jin’s rhetoric, since the “reader” is almost always a novice of interpretation, there is a need for the “masterful reader” (*shan dushu ren* 善讀書人) who can provide commentaries and defend the text against misinterpretations.[45] With this elevation of the “commentator,” Jin essentially de-elevates the “reader” to a lower position on his vertical imaginary of interpretation; now the “reader” must rely on commentaries to generate an appropriate reading of the text.

Early Qing critics shared similar views with Jin Shengtan. Liu Tingji, for one, found that once a text is authored, it is the responsibility of the “reader” to properly interpret and avoid damaging a text with misinterpretations. In Liu’s view, while a “masterful reader” can read *Shuihu zhuan* as a caution against “rebellion” (*bei ni* 悖逆), he is almost always outnumbered by the many “novice readers” who damage this novel by failing to understand the author’s intention of cautioning readers against immoral behavior. [46]

With Liu Tingji’s elucidation on what constitutes a “masterful reader,” we are in a better position to appreciate Jin’s emphasis on the need for the “commentator.” What likely informed Jin’s point on the dangers of poorly guided reading is the fact that by 1642, when Jin had been writing his *Shuihu* commentaries, this novel had become so popular that, fearing it might further embolden bandit and rebel groups in Shandong (some who even adopted names of famous

[45] In Jin’s view, the “reader” needed to have a correct understanding of “authorial intention” to be considered a “masterful reader.” See his comment in *JSTSHZ*, 35: 643.
[46] Liu Tingji, “lichao xiaoshuo,” in *Zaiyuan zazhi*, *juan* 2, 82-85.

characters from the novel),[47] the Ming government ordered all its woodblocks and printed copies to be burned immediately.[48] With its reputation as a book of rebellion, *Shuihu zhuan* now had an even greater need for a commentator who could police interpretations, to prevent readers from misinterpreting texts and emulating the rebellious behavior of many of the Liangshan bandit-heroes. Jin writes:

> As a commoner [like Confucius], I have no [authoritative] power to prohibit people under heaven from authoring books, but I occasionally take the books from the hands of these "gamblers" [readers who often misinterpret texts] to edit, separate, and interpret them. Then I am able to prevent people from authoring books that they want to author but have yet to author. It is my merit to "sweep away" [all bad books] under Heaven and surpass, in brilliance, the great burning [of books] of the Qin empire 身為庶人，無力以禁天下之人作書，而忽取牧豬奴手中之一編，條分而節解之，而反能令未作之書不敢復作，已作之書一旦盡廢，是則聖嘆廓清天下之功，為更奇于秦人之火.[49]

One detects a degree of exaggerated sensationalism in Jin's claim to surpass Qin Shi Huang's burning of books. Jin's focus is to emphasize his role in controlling readings of *Shuihu zhuan* by "editing" (*bian* 編), "separating" (*fen* 分), and "interpreting" (*jie* 解) the novel, similar with what Confucius had done previously with classical texts. Jin feels he can avoid Qin Shi Huang's mistake of inadvertently burning moral books in his campaign to destroy "bad" books. Instead, Jin claims to intervene in a way that minimizes the potential harms of *Shuihu zhuan*:[50] by "transmitting" (*shu* 述) authorial intention through his commentaries, like the first commentator Confucius had done.

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[47] See *Ming mo nongmin qiyi shiliao* 明末農民起義史料, in *Shuihu zhuan ziliao huibian*, 447-448.
[48] Albert Chan, *The Glory and Fall of the Ming Dynasty* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1982), 399; *Ming Qing shiliao yi bian* 明清史料乙編 in *Shuihu zhuan ziliao huibian*, 448-449.
[49] "Xu yi," in *Jin Shengtan quanji*, vol. 3, 5-6.
[50] Martin Huang, "Author(ity) and Reader," 44.

### III. "Reader Response" and the Appropriation of Author(ity)

Wielding the authority of the first commentator Confucius, Jin Shengtan could now begin carving out a space for the genius "commentator" in his 70-chapter edition of *Shuihu zhuan.* One scholar argues that Jin saw the "ancient writer," including Shi Nai'an, as "actually himself."[51] But this explanation is not entirely sufficient, in part because Jin needed to construct an appropriately shaped "author" figure [52] and transfer authority from this "author" to the "commentator."[53]

To begin establishing the connection between genius "commentator" and historical "author," Jin refutes the explication of authorial intention in the preface to *Zhongyi Shuihu zhuan* (100-chapter edition) that was ostensibly written by Li Zhi.[54] Jin disagrees with his argument that *Shuihu zhuan* arose from the author's indignation, in the same vein as Sima Qian's anger that informed the authoring of *Shiji*. On the contrary, Jin insists that Shi Nai'an was "well-fed, warm, and without anything else to do, carefree at heart, he spread out paper and picked up a brush, selected a topic, and then wrote out his fine thoughts and polished phrases."[55]

Jin's sense of urgency to distinguish himself as the most sophisticated reader in the history of *Shuihu* commentaries necessitated this disassociation with the famed Li Zhi.[56] Now with this refutation of Li's reading of "authorial intention," Jin could authorize the genius

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[51] Liangyan Ge, "Jin Shengtan as a Creative Critic," in *Chinese Literature* 25 (2003): 9.
[52] Jin created an "author" figure whose shape was similar to the "commentator" (himself). Refer to Ellen Widmer, *Margins of Utopia*, 101.
[53] Jin Shengtan, "Du di liu caizi shu fa," *Jin Shengtan quanji*, vol. 2, 865.
[54] In his preface, Li Zhi stresses Liangshan's capacity to embody *zhongyi* in their campaigns against the Liao forces and Fang La, which are carried out in the name of the emperor. See Li Zhi, "Zhongyi Shuihu zhuan xu" 忠義水滸傳序, in *Fen shu* 焚書 (Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 2011), *juan* 3, 188.
[55] Jin's comment in John Wang, trans., "How to Read the Fifth Book of Genius," 131-32.
[56] According to one account, when the Shunzhi Emperor asked about Jin Shengtan, one of his advisors described Jin as "talented but reclusive . . . from the same faction . . . as Li Zhi of the Ming dynasty" 才高而見僻 . . . 與明朝李贄 . . . 同一派. See Lu Lin, *Jin Shengtan Nianpu jianbian*, in *Jin Shengtan quanji*, vol. 5, 71.

"commentator" by constructing a specific image of the historical author Shi Nai'an (an "author" figure in the text) with a preface attributed to the latter but actually forged by Jin. His first strategy is to affirm the commentator's understanding of the authoring process, informed by the author's "carefree mind" (*xinxian* 心閒). In the voice of Shi Nai'an, Jin writes:

> First, authoring this book will not add to my reputation, nor will it hurt my reputation; second, I write from a leisurely mind and carefree state; third, this book is neither moralistic or foolish, and it is readable for even those who are not scholars; fourth, [blemishes in this book] are not of high concern as merits and faults might be in composition 此傳成之無名，不成無損，一；心閒試弄，舒卷自恣，二；無賢無愚，無不能讀，三；文章得失，小不足悔，四也.[57]

Here Jin creates an image of an "author" who writes out of leisure and shows minor concern for how his book might impact readers. The "author" even believes *Shuihu zhuan* to be readable by most people, and that in terms of style, its faults will have little no consequence on readers interested in learning how to write.

Jin's second strategy is to describe the author's concern for the "reader response" of *Shuihu zhuan*, despite presumably having authored it from a carefree state of mind. Since Jin Shengtan previously claimed that Shi Nai'an authored *Shuihu zhuan* out of idleness rather than frustration,[58] he needed to give shape to the psychology of the "author." In the voice of the "author," Jin lists all the reasons why Shi Nai'an was hesitant to write *Shuihu zhuan*:

> First, I have lost all hopes of gaining fame, and my aspirations to write have grown sluggish; second, speaking is a pleasure, but authoring a book is laborious; third, after my death, no one will be able to read my book; and fourthly, I will regret next year what I have written this year 名心既盡，其心多懶，一；微言求樂，著書心苦，二；身死之後，無能讀人，三；今年所作，明年必悔，四也. [59]

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[57] Shi Nai'an [Jin Shengtan], "Guan Hua Tang suo cang guben Shuihu zhuan qian zi you xu yi pian jin lu zhi" 貫華堂所藏古本水滸傳前自有序一篇今錄之, in *Jin Shengtan quanji*, vol. 3, 39.
[58] See Jin Shengtan, "Du diwu caizi shu fa," in *Jin Shengtan quanji*, vol. 3, 28.
[59] Shi Nai'an [Jin Shengtan], "Shuihu zhuan qian zi you xu," in *Jin Shengtan quanji*, vol. 3, 39.

In Jin's account, Shi is concerned about how readers will understand his book, and even expresses concern that his book will be utterly misread by others (even if it is readable, as the "author" claims in this preface).

With these two strategies—affirming the author's "carefree mind" in the authoring process and emphasizing the author's concern over "reader reception"—Jin Shengtan attempts to stabilize his 70-chapter edition by giving the "author" greater presence in this text. With these strategies, Jin appropriates the "author" figure as an invention in the text to authorize the "commentator" (Jin himself), whose presumed hermeneutic abilities allow him to address the author's "anxiety" of reader reception.[60]

With his forged preface, the concerns of the "author" are translated into a need for the "commentator," whose assumed intimate understanding of authorial intention and masterful reading abilities enable him to address the issue of the novel's "readability." By claiming access to the historical author's intention and textual design, Jin gain leverage as the "commentator" who purportedly reads the novel as the "author" demands. And having established this presumed connection between "commentator" and "author," he is able to justify the textual interventions of the "commentator:" to polish the text and rid its blemishes; to make the text more readable with commentaries; to point out principles of writing to which the "author" was not cognizant; and, as will be discussed in the next section, to defend the author's intention and protect the novel against misinterpretations of novice readers.

[60] As the "author" states: "my life is limited. Alas! How will I know how later generations will read it?" 吾生有涯，吾嗚呼知後人之讀吾書者謂何? In "Shuihu zhuan qian zi you xu," in *Jin Shengtan quanji*, vol. 3, 39.

## IV. Policing Interpretation: *Shuihu zhuan* as Cautionary Tale

In Jin's rhetoric, since previous interpretations of *Shuihu zhuan* are presumed to be wrong, there is now an urgency for correct interpretations provided by a genius commentator who is assumed to share the same moral authority as the first commentator Confucius, and who supposedly has access to the authorial intention of the historical "author" Shi Nai'an.

Jin believes the "author" of *Shuihu zhuan* produced "fine thoughts and polished phrases" (*jinxin xiukou* 錦心繡口)[61] and therefore possesses the greatest understanding of this novel. By contrast, novice readers—including "young readers" (*zidi* 子弟), "peddlers" (*fanfu* 販夫), and "yamen runners" (*zaoli* 皂隸)—are those with the lowest understanding of this novel given their tendency to misread it. With this juxtaposition of "author" and "reader," Jin generates a need for correct readings of *Shuihu zhuan* provided by the genius "commentator" (himself), who "with refined thoughts and feelings can appreciate it" [Shi's principles of writing and caution against banditry]" 必要真正有錦繡心腸者，方解說道好.[62] Here Jin claims to share the same elevated writing sensibilities with the "author," and suggests that readers cannot truly appreciate "literary genius" unless they follow the interpretations of the "commentator."[63] Jin writes:

> I hate those young people who, when they read, ignore [fail to comprehend] the art of writing itself. As long as they can remember a few incidents from the book, they consider themselves to have read it [in its entirety]. Since even the *Warring State Strategies* and the *Records of the Grand Historian* are passed over as nothing but collections of incidents, how much more so is this the fate of the *Water Margin*? 吾最恨人家子弟，凡

[61] John Wang, "How to Read the Fifth Book of Genius," in *How to Read the Chinese Novel*, 131.
[62] John Wang, "How to Read the Fifth Book of Genius," in *How to Read the Chinese Novel*, 145.
[63] By the late Ming, publishing houses greatly expanded their variety of publications to cater to the needs of increasingly diverse readers. In this historical moment, fiction also began to have greater presence in the commercial publishing market. See Kai-wing Chow, *Publishing, Culture, and Power in Early Modern China*, 80-87; Tan Fan, *Zhongguo xiaoshuo pingdian yanjiu*, 11-12.

> 遇讀書，都不理會文字，只記得若干事跡，便算讀過一部書了。雖《國策》、《史記》都作事跡搬過去，何況《水滸傳》.[64]

Perhaps for the first time in the practice of *xiaoshuo* commentary, a commentator places even greater responsibility on the "reader" to correctly interpret the text. In Jin's vertical imaginary of interpretation, the novice "reader" will almost always fail to learn principles of writing of the author, or read the novel as demanded by the author's intention. This tendency to read without writer sensibilities generates a need for the "commentator" like Jin Shengtan, who can elucidate on both principles of writing, explicate on authorial intention, and defend against misreadings.

One issue Jin brings up is the problem of "readability." He reasons that while "history" (*shi* 史) often "uses writing to convey actual events" (*yi wen yun shi* 以文運事), "fiction" (*xiaoshuo* 小說) tends to "produces events as an effect of writing" (*yin wen sheng shi* 因文生事).[65] This reasoning implies that the danger associated with fiction lies in its "fictionality" (the production of events through manifest "literary" patterns). Unlike history, fiction does not have to narrate actual "events," nor is fiction required to have a "moralizing" effect on its readers.[66] On the contrary, since narrative materials of *Shuihu zhuan* are only partially based upon historical accounts, readers have even greater potential to misread this novel and poison their own minds.[67] Jin found the "readability" of *Shuihu zhuan* to be problematic because readers might identify too closely with the bravado of bandit-heroes and adopt Liangshan's tangible expression of "sworn fraternal honor" (*yiqi*) as their own.

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[64] Slightly modified translation based upon John Wang's translation in "How to Read The Fifth Book of Genius," in *How to Read the Chinese Novel*, 139-40. Also see "Du diwu caizi shu fa," *Jin Shengtan quanji*, vol. 3, 34.
[65] John Wang, "How to Read the Fifth Book of Genius," in *How to Read the Chinese Novel*, 133.
[66] This distinction between "history" and "fiction" was one of Jin's more innovative points, which influenced Chen Chen's rhetoric in his auto-commentaries to *Shuihu houzhuan*. Refer to chapter two, section I of this dissertation, "Author, Commentator, and Sequel Writer in *Shuihu houzhuan.*"
[67] See "Xu yi," in *Jin Shengtan quanji*, vol. 3, 14.

With the possibility for "dangerous" readings generated by novice readers, Jin could legitimate the "commentator" who is now necessary to police interpretations of *Shuihu zhuan*. Having witnessed the decline and fall of the Ming dynasty, concerns for banditry and rebellion certainly informed Jin's attitudes towards the Liangshan bandit-heroes. Although Jin admired certain members of the Liangshan fraternity, he also cautioned readers against ignoring the distinctions between "brigand" (*qiangdao* 強盜) and "honorable hero" (*yishi* 義士). In Jin's view, if the reader is already a bandit, he may pride himself while reading *Shuihu zhuan* 已為盜者讀之而自豪, and for novice readers, they may even become inspired to engage in banditry after reading the novel 未為盜者讀之而為盜.[68] In his view the "danger" lies in the narrative's capacity to elicit "reader response" to such a degree, that readers may end up damaging the novel with their misinterpretations. According to Jin, misinterpretations can be prevented by stabilizing (or constructing) the 70-chapter "original" (Jin's 70-chapter edition):

> The reason for deleting "Loyalty and Righteousness" and keeping "Water Margin" in the title of the novel, is to preserve [Shi] Nai'an's book, which is a small matter, and to retain the authorial intention of [Shi] Nai'an, which is a great matter 削忠義而仍《水滸》者，所以存耐庵之書，其事小，所以存耐庵之志，其事大.[69]

Jin's "clean up" of the *Shuihu zhuan* title has certain implications regarding his genius "commentator" role. If previously readers tended to identify with the heroism of the bandit-heroes, now without "loyalty and righteousness" in the title, readers are presumably less inclined to read the novel with attention to Liangshan's dilemma of loyalty to the emperor (*zhong*) vs. loyalty to sworn brothers (*yi*) that presumably causes readers to misunderstand the author's intention to caution against banditry.

[68] "Xu er," *Jin Shengtan quanji*, vol. 3, 18.
[69] "Xu er," *Jin Shengtan quanji*, vol. 3, 18.

This deletion of *zhongyi* is an important example of Jin's larger efforts to undercut the tension between imperial authority and sworn fraternity in *Shuihu zhuan* and shape this novel into a cautionary tale against rebellion. Jin felt that such reshaping was necessary, based on the assumption that novice readers cannot match the hermeneutic abilities of the "masterful reader" (himself). In Jin's view, previous commentaries to *Shuihu zhuan* emphasized the Song Jiang's moral aspirations,[70] causing readers to misunderstand the author's intention. Instead of elevating Song Jiang as the paragon of loyalty and righteousness, with Jin's careful manipulation of the "author," authorial intention is now reconfigured to be the opposite: to vilify Song Jiang as a "bandit" rather than a "hero."[71] Even though Song Jiang gains fame among locals and the Liangshan fraternity as "Song Gongming the Loyal and Righteous" 忠義宋公明, in the 70-chapter edition, readers are led by Jin's commentaries to have a dramatically different "reading" of Song Jiang:

> In this book, [among the 108 heroes] the author writes of the 107 heroes with most ease and writes of Song Jiang with most difficulty. Thus, for readers of this book, they also read the 107 heroes' narratives with most ease but read Song Jiang's narratives with most difficulty. The author [Shi Nai'an] directly writes of the 107 heroes; the moral characters are truly moral, and the evil characters are truly evil. But this is not the case for Song Jiang. Hastily reading the first time, you might find Song Jiang to be completely moral. When you read again the second time, you find he is both moral and evil. Reading the third time, you find Song Jiang's morality does not outweigh his evil, and finally you read him again, to discover he is completely evil without an ounce of morality in him. For one who reads Song Jiang's narrative repeatedly up until the end: if he truly believes to know Song Jiang is completely evil without an ounce of goodness, can we not say that he is a masterful reader? 一部書中寫一百七人最易，寫宋江最難；故讀此一部書者，亦讀一百七人傳最易，讀宋江傳最難也。蓋此書寫一百七人處，皆直筆也，好即真好，劣即真劣。若寫宋江則不然，驟讀之而全好，再讀之而好劣相半，又讀之而好不勝劣，又卒讀之而全劣無好矣。夫讀宋江一傳，而至於再，而至於又再，而至於又卒，而誠以有知其全劣無好，可不謂之善讀書人哉！(*JSTSHZ*, 35: 643)

[70] Refer to Li Zhi, "Zhongyi Shuihu zhuan xu," in *Fenshu*, 188.
[71] Jin Shengtan, "Du diwu caizi shu fa," in *Jin Shengtan quanji*, vol. 3, 28.

What does Jin Shengtan mean here by "moral" and "evil"? In the reception history of *Shuihu zhuan*, Jin is referring to the contentious issue of how to read the Liangshan bandit-heroes, as either rebellious brigands or champions of loyalty and righteousness. The reader might find it difficult to hold Li Kui at fault for his behavior, since he is rebellious by nature, but fiercely loyal to Song Jiang. However, Song Jiang is entirely different among all the bandit-heroes, because the reader cannot truly "know" Song Jiang's intentions.[72] Jin argues that, if the reader comes to the conclusion that Song Jiang is evil—that his appeals to "loyalty and righteousness" are nothing but platitudes, and that although he claims to want amnesty, he actively transgresses against the emperor as leader of the Liangshan "bandit" group—then the "reader" can be considered a "masterful reader" like Jin himself: the genius "commentator" who reveals the "correct" reading of *Shuihu zhuan* based on a presumed access to authorial intention.[73] The effect of such "reading" is the stabilization of Jin's 70-chapter edition, where the "commentator" has arguably "restored" the author's intention to warn against rebellion and banditry.

## V. Constructing *Shuihu* Original and Deleting *Shuihu* Sequel

To control interpretation of *zhongyi* in *Shuihu zhuan*, Jin relies on a sophisticated rhetoric to "authorize" the "commentator," whose commentaries attempt to model those of the first commentator Confucius, and whose interpretations presumably align with the intention of the "author." With this rhetoric, Jin hopes to justify his claims of defending the novel against

[72] This issue that Song Jiang's intentions are never fully understood by average readers seems to be a point of contention among later readers of *Shuihu zhuan*. It is specifically addressed by the author Yu Wanchun and his commentators in *Dangkou zhi* (sequel to the 70-chapter edition). See chapter three, section II of this dissertation, "Rewriting 'Great Peace Under Heaven' and 'Loyalty and Righteousness.'"

[73] As one scholar has claimed, Jin opposed amnesty and expressed this view by undercutting Song Jiang's repeated claims of waiting to be forgiven by the emperor. However, Jin often contradicts himself when he praises the bandits as heroes on several occasions within the novel, particularly Lin Chong, Lu Zhishen, and Wu Song. See David Rolston, *Reading Between the Lines: Traditional Chinese Fiction and Fiction Commentary* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 35-36.

misinterpretations. Such claims have the effect of generating the textual conditions that allow him to construct a venerated *Shuihu* "original" (first 70 chapters) and an inferior *Shuihu* "sequel" (last 30 chapters). His agenda is to properly end the narrative with the complete assembly of the 108 bandit-heroes and Lu Junyi's dream of their termination, with the intended effect of de-authenticating the last 30 chapters of *Zhongyi Shuihu zhuan* and to deter future tampering (in the form of commentaries and/or sequels) to the stability of his 70-chapter edition.

Jin's edition of *Shuihu zhuan* quickly rose in popularity after its publication. Modern scholars agree that both aesthetics and thematic consistency informed Jin's editorial changes and his deletion of the last 30 chapters.[74] However, this explanation is not entirely sufficient, given Jin's tendency to play a much larger role in reinventing *Shuihu zhuan* as a "book of genius" through his textual interventions (editing, separating, and interpreting). On this point, Lu Xun suggests that many of the Jin's editorial changes, which Jin claims to be evidence of the author's "marvelous" (*miao* 妙) writings, are actually Jin's self-aggrandizing praises.[75] It should also be added that Jin emphasizes such "discoveries" to radically brand the 70-chapter edition as the innovations of the genius "commentator," whose connection with Confucius and the "author" presumably legitimates his deletion of the 30-chapter "sequel." Before explaining Jin's manipulation of the "sequel" concept, a brief look at the reception of Jin's edition is in order.

By the fourteenth year of the Shunzhi Reign (1657), Jin's edition of *Shuihu zhuan* had already been in circulation among literati. Some were quite impressed with Jin's work. Wang Shiyun 王仕雲 (*jinshi* degree, 1652) did not particularly like *Shuihu zhuan*, but he found that

[74] Tan Shengmao 覃聖茂, *Jin Shengtan pingzhuan* 金聖嘆評傳 (Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe, 1998), 203. There is certainly merit in suggesting that the art of writing informed Jin's editorial efforts to make the novel more consistent, compact, and vivid. See John Wang, *Chin Sheng-t'an*, 263-269.
[75] As noted by Lu Xun, *A Brief History of Chinese Fiction* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1964), 193.

Jin's commentaries made the novel more enjoyable. After reading Jin's 70-chapter edition, he was quite convinced that the 108 bandit-heroes are not men of "loyalty and righteousness" (*zhongyi*). Wang even notes that Jin's commentaries "rectify" (*zheng* 正) certain misinterpretations regarding the connection between *zhongyi* and the Liangshan "bandits," and that the addition of the ending dream sequence is of "great merit to the sages [contributes to promoting moral order]" 有功於聖人不小也.[76] In Wang's account, by deleting the "sequel" and including the ending of execution for all 108 bandit-heroes in a dream, Jin succeeded in defending the author's intention to caution readers against rebellion. However, many of Jin's contemporaries "saw through his ruse" of falsifying an ancient edition of *Shuihu zhuan* and the author's preface.[77] It is perhaps Zhou Lianggong 周亮工 (*jinshi* degree, 1640) who provides the most stringent critique of Jin's edition. Zhou found Jin's claim that Luo Guanzhong 羅貫中 (1320-1400) authored the last 30 chapters to be unpersuasive. He is shocked that Jin Shengtan would make such audacious claims and believes Jin intended to defame Luo.[78]

Wang Shiyun and Zhou Lianggong provide on-the-ground perspectives regarding the reception of Jin's 70-chapter edition. Yet Jin's contemporaries seem to have missed the highly sophisticated rhetoric that informed his radical deletion of the last 30 chapters and addition of a new ending. As I will now argue, Jin Shengtan's manipulation of the "sequel" concept and the

[76] See Wang Shiyun's comment in Lu Lin, ed., *Jin Shengtan nianpu jianbian*, in *Jin Shengtan quanji*, vol. 6, 67.
[77] David Rolston, ed., *How to Read the Chinese Novel*, 128.
[78] Zhou's view testifies to some of the different theories concerning the origin of *Shuihu zhuan*. Apparently, it was believed by some literati that *Shuihu zhuan* was written by either Shi Nai'an or Luo Guanzhong. Some sources even claimed that it was anonymously written by an author from the Song dynasty. Yet a problem with Zhou's comment here is that in his other writings, he gives high praise to Jin's commentaries. See Lu Lin, ed., *Jin Shengtan nianpu jianbian*, in *Jin Shengtan quanji*, vol. 6, 70-71.

"sequel writer" figure allows him to justify a new ending that would presumably prevent further tampering of Jin's 70-chapter edition.

The concept of "sequel" (*xushu* 續書) was certainly a helpful rhetorical device to enhance the authority of Jin's edition. In his view the "sequel writer" Luo Guanzhong clumsily mimicked the "author" Shi Nai'an and is to blame for cheapening the "original" 70-chapter *Shuihu zhuan*. Jin's main complaint is that Luo distorted the veracity of historical events upon which the plot of the "original" 70-chapter novel was based. Jin was aware that historical sources tended to be "rewritten" in *Shuihu zhuan*, with varying effects. In his comments on historical events of the Song dynasty,[79] Jin notes the veracity of the historical figure Zhang Shuye 張叔夜 (1065-1127) and his capture of Song Jiang and his band.[80] According to Jin, by authoring *Hou Shuihu zhuan* 後水滸傳 (Sequel to the water margin, referring to the last 30 chapters of the 100-chapter edition), the "sequel writer" Luo produced "repulsive jottings" (*ezha* 惡札) that distorted historical facts. Jin continues to emphasize that historically, the Song court did not grant Song Jiang amnesty or request his help to campaign against other bandits. Apparently with Luo's addition of the campaign against Fang La in the bad "sequel," he opened up possibilities for dangerous readings by depicting a "court that lost dignity" 失朝廷之尊, that also sustained "damage to the national rule of law" 壞國家之法.[81] Thus in Jin's opinion, by rewriting historical

[79] Following Jin's prefaces includes essays on the "heading" 綱 and "text" 目 of the official account of Song Jiang's surrender to government forces, and Jin's comments on this account. Apparently Jin's inclusion of the heading and text corresponds with entries in the *Yu pi zizhi tongjian gangmu* 御批資治通鑒綱目. Refer to David Rolston, ed., *How to Read the Chinese Novel*, 129, ft. 22.

[80] See *Jin Shengtan quanji*, vol. 3, 23-27. These sources seem to confirm what is narrated in the *Xuanhe yishi*, which states Zhang Shuye coaxed Song Jiang and his band back to the Song court, where they were ordered to campaign against Fang La and received merits after their success. See William O. Hennessey, trans., *Proclaiming Harmony* (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies at the University of Michigan, 1981), 58.

[81] Jin Shengtan, *Song shi mu*, in *Jin Shengtan quanji*, vol. 3, 27.

events with negative implications on moral rule and, conversely, glorifying the "bandits," in his 30-chapter sequel the "sequel writer" Luo made the grave mistake of allowing bandits to receive amnesty and regain their honor, despite committing unforgivable offenses against imperial authority. By drawing such connections between "sequel" and "history," Jin is now able to argue that Luo Guanzhong's sequel is based on his poor reading of the 70-chapter "original" and contradicts with the authorial intention of Shi Nai'an. Jin's critique of the "sequel writer" Luo is based on his previous justifications, that only the genius "commentator" who knows fine writing like the "author" can truly understand *Shuihu zhuan*. Jin argues that without his commentaries, edits, and deletions, the reader will almost always read *Shuihu zhuan* as a call to banditry.

One scholar asserts that Jin deleted the last 30 chapters because they departed from the main *Shuihu* narrative.[82] Yet such arguments do not fully consider Jin's concern with elevating his status as the genius "commentator." His efforts to shape *Shuihu zhuan* into a "book of genius" was a response to the many editions of the novel that previously appeared,[83] which provided different representations of *zhongyi*. This difficulty of interpreting *Shuihu zhuan* allowed Jin to justify the "invention" of the theory of two texts: a stable, "completed" narrative (70-chapter original), and an inferior "continuation" (30-chapter sequel), a theory which served to further justify his role as a genius commentator who provided commentaries presumed to be "corrective," and therefore necessary,[84] to defend *Shuihu zhuan* against misinterpretations.

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[82] Liu Liangming 劉良明, *Zhongguo xiaoshuo lilun piping shi* 中國小說理論批評史 (Taipei: Hongye wenhua, 1996), 248.

[83] Refer to Wilt Idema and Lloyd Haft, *A Guide to Chinese Literature* (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies at the University of Michigan, 1997), 204. There are two groups of early preserved editions of *Shuihu zhuan*. The first group of early editions were published in Fujian, which includes several incidents, narrated in summary style. The second group of early editions come from the Jiangnan region, which has fewer incidents and more detail. In this group, there are both 100 and 120-chapter editions, the latter which expands the plot by adding extra campaigns.

[84] Martin W. Huang, "Boundaries and Interpretations," in *Snakes' Legs*, 23, 30.

In comments on the last chapter of the 70-chapter edition, Jin attempts to justify his new ending that would presumably correct the error of "appending a dog's tail as a substitute for a sable's tail" 橫添狗尾 (*JSTSHZ*, 70: 1234). As Jin argues, the "sequel writer" Luo made the mistake of disrupting the textual integrity of the 70-chapter "original" (sable's tail) by writing the bad 30-chapter "sequel" (dog's tail).[85] With this construction of two *Shuihu* texts, Jin could now justify the need for the "commentator" to reverse the damage the "sequel writer" had done, by restoring both the historical author's preface and the "true" ending of the 70-chapter "original."

In addition to enhancing the presence of a historical "author" and forging a preface attributed to the latter, Jin also added (in his view, restored) what he claimed to be the "true" ending to *Shuihu zhuan.* With this intervention, Jin disregards the textual integrity of the 100-chapter edition and stabilize his 70-chapter edition. His main strategy is to "end" (*jie* 結) *Shuihu zhuan* with what he considered to be the "proper" ending, informed by his agenda to prevent future commentators and writers from tampering with the stability of his 70-chapter edition.

In this ending, after all 108 bandit-heroes are assembled in the Hall of Loyalty and Righteousness, Lu Junyi dreams of a battle with the immortal Ji Kang 嵇康 (223-263). Ji Kang captures all 108 bandit-heroes and orders their execution, later castigating Lu Junyi and the "bandits" for killing officials and disobeying the emperor. After Lu witnesses the rest of the band executed, he sees the words "Great Peace Under Heaven" (*tianxia taiping* 天下太平) and awakens from his dream (*JSTSHZ,* 70: 1234-1235). Jin's claim is that the "sequel writer" deleted this ending and added the narrative that describes how the bandit-heroes receive amnesty and lead military campaigns for the emperor and in the name of "loyalty and righteousness"

[85] See Jin's comment in "Xu san," in *Jin Shengtan quanji,* vol 3., 20.

(*zhongyi*). With the insertion of Lu Junyi's dream of total execution, Jin deflates the tension between serving the emperor (*zhongyi*) and serving one's sworn brothers (*yi*) that had been the main concern in the 100-chapter edition.[86]

The sense one gets is that Jin hoped to bring the narrative closer to what he thought to be the actual historical account of Zhang Shuye's capture of Song Jiang and his band.[87] With this restoration of the "proper" ending, Jin corrects what he considers to be the "mistake of amnesty in the [30-chapter] sequel" 續傳招安之謬 (*JSTSHZ,* 70: 1234-1235). Based on the argument that the 30-chapter "sequel" failed to realize "Great Peace Under Heaven," Jin then justifies his termination of the Liangshan "bandits" as depicted in the "proper" ending, to have the effect of rewriting (or, rectifying) *Shuihu zhuan* as a cautionary tale against rebellion.

Despite Jin's highly sophisticated rhetoric which includes the manipulation of the "sequel" concept and "sequel writer" figure, early Qing critics were not completely satisfied with Jin's textual interventions. Liu Tingji found Jin's revisions and deletions of the novel were "marvelous" (*jiancai zhi miao* 剪裁之妙) and even remarks that Jin possessed "great talents" (*cai da ru hai* 才大如海) as a commentator. Yet Liu also believed Jin had made the mistake of elevating Liangshan as heroes, despite their positions as "bandits" (*daozei* 盜賊), to open up dangerous readings of the novel.[88] Liu's critique is not entirely unjustified, and later readers of *Shuihu zhuan*—who would become sequel writers of this novel—would make similar critiques to justify the need for their sequels.

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[86] As symbolized in the last chapter of the 30-chapter "sequel," when Song Jiang dies an unjust death for the sake of the emperor, in contrast to Li Kui's ultimate expression of sworn loyalty, who is willing to die for Song Jiang and serve him in the afterlife.
[87] See *Jin Shengtan quanji*, vol. 3, 23-27.
[88] Liu Tingji, "Lichao xiaoshuo," in *Zaiyuan zazhi*, *juan* 2, 83.

With the construction of a revered 70-chapter "original," a bad 30-chapter "sequel," and the restoration of the "true" ending, Jin attempts to legitimate his 70-chapter edition and accompanying "literary genius" commentaries, with hopes of preventing the production of competing "interpretations," in the form of *Shuihu* commentaries and sequels. With Jin's efforts to restore *Shuihu* "original" and delete *Shuihu* "sequel" in his rhetoric, he raises hermeneutic questions for readers who would become sequel writers of the *Shuihu zhuan*. Sequel writers of this novel were now forced to carefully consider issues of textual design; to choose between two different endings, either the ending of *Zhongyi Shuihu zhuan* (100-chapters) or the end of Jin's *Diwu caizi shu Shuihu zhuan* (70-chapters); and needed to employ a sophisticated rhetoric informed by their unique interpretive agendas. Aware of both these editions, and aware of Jin's theory of two *Shuihu* texts, they faced the challenge of authenticating their sequels in the *Shuihu zhuan* interpretation complex, which required them to demonstrate their mastery of how to properly "read" the parent work in the context of sequeling.[89]

**Conclusion**

This chapter has argued that Jin's 70-chapter edition and his commentaries include two agendas. Jin's first agenda was to convince readers that given his access to authorial intention, he could illuminate the author's principles of writing. With this access, he could presumably enable readers to themselves become literary geniuses. Jin's second agenda was to police readings of *Shuihu zhuan*, based on the claim of defending this novel against misinterpretations and preventing "dangerous" readings of *zhongyi*. Both agendas informed Jin's efforts to "authorize" the genius "commentator" with his rhetoric of controlling interpretation.

[89] A discussion of the relationship between the rise of "author" in *xiaoshuo* critical discourse and the rise of *xushu* appears in Martin W. Huang, "Boundaries and Interpretations," in *Snakes' Legs*, 23-30.

The largest appeal in Jin's *Shuihu* commentaries is the concept of "literary genius," which informed his manipulation of "author," "reader," and "commentator" figures. To justify his commentaries, revisions, and deletions, Jin draws connections between the genius "commentator," the first "commentator" Confucius, and the historical "author" Shi Nai'an. Jin's efforts to elevate the genius "commentator" (himself) had the effect of decreasing the tension between *zhong* and *yi*. To enhance his authority as the uncontested hermeneutic master of the *Shuihu zhuan* even more, Jin attempts to control how the novel would be read by inventing a theory of two *Shuihu* texts: a venerated *Shuihu* "original" and an inferior *Shuihu* "sequel." He places the onus of interpretation on "sequel writer," who he characterizes as bad "reader" that misunderstood the intention of the "author" and allows misinterpretations to be generated by readers of his sequel.

These constructions subsequently allowed Jin to justify why the deletion of the bad 30-chapter "sequel" and restoration of the "true" ending were necessary: to protect the textual "integrity" of the 70-chapter "original," to defend the intention of the "author," and to prevent dangerous interpretations of *Shuihu zhuan.* These claims are all informed by his actual agenda to stabilize and prevent tampering of his 70-chapter edition. However, the rhetoric, revisions, deletions, and commentaries of this edition did not produce the intended effect that Jin had imagined. As shall be explained, Jin's textual interventions radically shaped the textual design and rhetoric of *Shuihu* sequels, where the issue of *zhong* and *yi* again became the central focus for sequel writers, who offered "interpretations" of their own in the act of sequeling.

# CHAPTER TWO

## A Competition of Reading: Chen Chen's Celebration of the Liangshan Bandit-heroes in *Shuihu houzhuan*

### Introduction

Written after the fall of the Ming dynasty, *Shuihu houzhuan* is conditioned by Chen Chen's unique positionality as a sequel writer caught in his particular period political unrest.[1] As a sequel to *Zhongyi Shuihu zhuan*, it is in a "position of seriousness" and in disagreement with Jin's hostile interpretation of the Liangshan bandit-heroes,[2] and offers a unique "reading" of the Liangshan bandit-hero narrative, aimed at correcting certain aspects of the parent work that Chen felt the "author" did not deliver as promised.

This chapter makes a few contentions. It argues Chen's rhetoric focuses on the simulated interaction between "author," "commentator," and "sequel writer" to enhance the authority of his sequel. With his "reading" of *Zhongyi Shuihu zhuan*, Chen was able to design a sequel that corrects the parent work with certain writing strategies, such as "rewriting" characters, imitating previous events, and comparing different "genres." Next, this chapter argues that one of Chen's interpretive agendas is to represent *zhong* as not just "loyalty to the emperor," but "loyalty to the nation." With this move Chen elevates *yi* and subsequently restores the "sworn fraternal honor" (*yiqi*) of Liangshan. This chapter concludes with a brief analysis of *Chongding Shuihu houzhuan* 重訂水滸傳 (Water margin sequel revised) compiled by the commentator and editor Cai Ao 蔡奡 (fl 18th c.), who attempts to "moralize" this sequel and prevent dangerous readings of *zhongyi*.

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[1] "[*Shuihu houzhuan*] painstakingly expresses the nostalgia over a fallen nation and sentiments of a people" 沉痛地寄託他亡國之思、種族之感的書. This quote is from Hu Shi 胡適, "Shuihu xuji liang zhong xu" 水滸續集兩種序, in *Shuihu xuji* 水滸續集 (Shanghai: Shanghai Dongya tushuguan, 1924), 8-9.

[2] Ellen Widmer, *Margins of Utopia*, 45, 109.

## I. Author, Commentator, and Sequel Writer in *Shuihu houzhuan*

The ease and speed of text production allowed authors like Chen Chen to sell his fiction sequel as a means for financial support.[3] Yet his strategy was much more complex than attributing *Shuihu houzhuan* and its commentaries to celebrity scholars.[4] To make *Shuihu houzhuan* viable as a book worth buying, Chen attempts to give his sequel a certain prestige with the presence of "author," "commentator," and "sequel writer" figures, to make the sophistication of his book comparable to that of the parent work (100-chapter edition).

As a reader of *Shuihu zhuan* with some sequeling abilities, but without reputation as a "literary genius," Chen Chen would have found it embarrassing and unmarketable to reveal himself as the author of *Shuihu houzhuan*.[5] He could not ignore the popularity of Jin's 70-chapter edition, which enjoyed a high degree of circulation in the commercial book market.[6] To shape *Shuihu houzhuan* as a sophisticated sequel to its parent work, Chen would need to employ rhetoric similar to that found in Jin's 70-chapter edition of *Shuihu zhuan.*[7]

One of Chen's "branding" strategies was to associate "fiction" (*xiaoshuo*) with "history" (*shi*) in the same manner as Jin Shengtan did. In Chen's rhetoric, *Shuihu zhuan* is like the *Shiji* given that both texts include "organizing principles of writing" (*wenfa* 文法) accessible to readers once illuminated by the "commentator." One point Chen adds is that "sequels" (*xushu*)

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[3] Ellen Widmer, *Margins of Utopia*, 46.

[4] After violent dynastic transition in 1644, publishers still found that attributing the names of anonymous "celebrity scholars" to their books helped increased sales. Refer to Tan Fan, *Zhongguo xiaoshuo pingdian*, 73-74; Oki Yasushi, *Minmatsu Kōnan no shuppan bunka*, 69.

[5] The low prestige of *xiaoshuo xushu* is noted in Liu Tingji, "Xushu," in *Zaiyuan zazhi*, *juan* 3, 124-125.

[6] See chapter one, section V of this dissertation, "Constructing *Shuihu* Original and Deleting *Shuihu* Sequel."

[7] Jin's death is associated with "The Case of Lament in the Temple" (*Ku miao an* 哭廟案). According to historical accounts, the magistrate Ren Weichu 任維初 was quite the tyrant during his appointment in Suzhou. Eventually a group of a hundred or more scholars began speaking against Ren's harsh legal measures; among this group was Jin Shengtan. During protest, Jin escaped arrest but was later tried for treason and sentenced to death. Refer to John Wang, *Chin Sheng-t'an*, 235-237; Chen Hong 陳洪, *Jin Shengtan zhuan* 金聖嘆傳 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 2012), 4-5. See also chapter one, section I of this dissertation, "Elevating the Genius Commentator."

are also comparable with historiographies; he finds *Shuihu houzhuan* comparable to *Wudai shi* 五代史 (History of the five dynasties) as a serious text with commentaries that can reveal to readers principles of writing.[8]

With this connection established between historiographies, fiction, and sequels, Chen generates the conditions to give shape to "author," "commentator," and "sequel writer" figures in his auto-commentaries. If previously the *Shuihu* "author" was assumed to be unknown, now Chen can further shape this "author" as Shi Nai'an (an "author" figure that Jin had constructed previously),[9] to justify the presence of a masterful "reader" who presumably reads the parent work as the "author" demands: the "sequel writer" named Gusong Yimin 古宋遺民 (Adherent of the ancient Song dynasty), a supposed contemporary of the "author" Shi Nai'an.[10] Placing the "sequel writer" in the same period as the "author" had the effect of elevating the status of the supposed "extant Yuan edition" (*yuanren yiben* 元人遺本) of *Shuihu houzhuan*, of which Chen argues his edition is based upon. With presence of the "sequel writer" figure who presumably lived and wrote during the same time as the historical "author" Shi Nai'an, Chen could sell his writing without admitting his authorship of this sequel.

There was certainly awareness towards the marketability of *Shuihu houzhuan* as a sequel to its famous parent work (100-chapter edition).[11] One of the most important "branding" strategies found in *Shuihu houzhuan* is the manipulation of this sequel's publishing date through

[8] One difference is that *Shuihu houzhuan* can have moralizing effects on readers that Jin's edition failed to do. See "Shuihu houzhuan shi yu" 水滸後傳識語, in *Gudai xiaoshuo xushu xuba shi lun* 古代小說續書序跋釋論, ed. Gao Yuhai 高玉海 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2007), 34.

[9] Chen needed to manipulate the anonymity of the "author" to make his sequel more appealing to readers. He was no stranger to the convention of "anonymity" which was widely practiced in *xiaoshuo*. On the relationship between authorlessness, anonymity, and pseudonimity in *xiaoshuo*, see Martin Huang, "Introduction," in *Snakes' Legs*, 24.

[10] See "Shuihu houzhuan shi yu," in *Gudai xiaoshuo xushu xuba shi lun*, 34.

[11] Fiction sequels had become a niche in the commercial publishing market. Based on Liu Tingji's account, it was common practice among literati to write sequels to famous novels. See "Xushu," in *Zaiyuan za zhi*, *juan* 3, 124-125.

"backdating." In prefatorial materials, Chen and his publishers claim the sequel was first published on the thirty-sixth year of the Wanli reign (1608),[12] despite its actual publication in the third year of the Kangxi reign (1664).[13] With this manipulation of publishing dates, Chen makes *Shuihu houzhuan* more appealing in the book market, as a sequel presumably published before Jin Shengtan's "discovery" of Shi's 70-chapter "original" and addition of his genius commentaries.[14]

With Jin's invention of two *Shuihu* texts—a stable 70-chapter "original" and a deleted 30-chapter "sequel"—there was arguably no need for a "sequeling" of *Shuihu zhuan*. However, this theory of two *Shuihu* texts impacted both the reading and sequeling of this novel. Could Chen Chen write another sequel to the "original" and avoid the same mistakes of the "sequel writer" Luo Guanzhong that led Jin to condemn and delete the last 30-chapters as a "bad" sequel? Or should Chen ignore the stability of Jin's 70-chapter edition and begin from the 100-chapter edition, which the "author" presumably wrote out of frustration rather than a leisurely mind?[15]

In Chen's opinion, Jin made the mistake of "deleting and editing" (*shan gai* 刪改) the 100-chapter edition (parent work of *Shuihu houzhuan*). He found that Jin failed to justify the addition of *caizi shu* 才子書 (Book of genius) to the title of the 70-chapter edition.[16] In the context of Chen's sequel, the 70-chapter edition is considered "incomplete" given Jin's

[12] This is the date used by Chen's "commentator" (himself). Refer to "Shuihu houzhuan xu" 水滸後傳序, in *Gudai xiaoshuo xushu xuba shi lun*, 31-32.
[13] See Gao's explanation of *Shuihu houzhuan* prefatory materials, in *Gudai xiaoshuo xushu xuba shi lun*, 30, 32-34.
[14] I am grateful to Dr. Ellen Widmer for pointing out in our correspondence that the backdating of *Shuihu houzhuan* may have been intended to disassociate this sequel from the Ming loyalist movement of the early Qing period.
[15] Based on its own accounts, *Shuihu houzhuan* seems to follow Li Zhi's "reading" of *Shuihu zhuan*, that it is a work that grew from the author's indignation, aimed at honoring the Liangshan bandit-heroes. Refer to Li Zhi, "Zhongyi Shuihu zhuan xu," in *Fen shu, juan* 3, 188.
[16] See "Shuihu houzhuan shi yu," in *Gudai xiaoshuo xushu xuba shi lun*, 34. For a discussion on the discrepancy between Jin Shengtan and Chen Chen's views, see Torii Hisayasu 鳥居久靖, "Suikokōden" 水滸後傳, in *Tōyōbunko* 東洋文庫 66 (Tokyo: Tokyo Heibonsha, 1966), 295-296.

presumed tampering of the parent work: the 100-chapter edition (*Zhongyi Shuihu zhuan*) which Chen thought to be the true *Shuihu* "original" and the appropriate starting point for his sequel.

As a reader of *Shuihu zhuan*, who is now writing its sequel (an act which had been condemned by the famous Jin Shengtan),[17] Chen had to give his "sequel writer" a certain prestige, to withstand the critical judgment of sophisticated readers. The presence of a historical "sequel writer" was likely not enough to convince readers that *Shuihu houzhuan* was comparable in quality to *Zhongyi Shuihu zhuan*. Readers expected a sequel to a famous novel to include commentaries written by a genius "commentator." Such expectations forced Chen to reveal his hermeneutic abilities through auto-commentaries attributed to the *Shuihu houzhuan* "commentator," Yandang Shanqiao 雁宕山樵 (Forester of Goose Quarry Mountain).

In the commentator's account, *Shuihu zhuan* was co-authored by Shi Nai'an and Luo Guanzhong, who were contemporaries during the Yuan dynasty when writing fiction was a popular past time. Chen's "commentator" explicitly states his role in discovering the manuscript of *Shuihu houzhuan* that had been hidden away for over 300 years. In this account, it is this "commentator" (Chen himself) who "collated" (*hui* 匯), "revised" (*ding* 訂), and "edited" (*bian* 編) *Shuihu houzhuan*, with the agenda to enhance its readability.[18] In a manner very similar to Jin's manipulation of the "commentator" figure in his 70-chapter edition, Chen limits his "commentator" in an editorial role to conceal the boundaries between Chen's dual roles as sequel writer and commentator of *Shuihu houzhuan*.

[17] Jin Shengtan, *Song shi mu*, in *Jin Shengtan quanji*, vol. 3, 27.
[18] Yandang Shanqiao [Chen Chen], "Shuihu houzhuan lun lüe" 水滸後傳論略, in *Gudai xiaoshuo xushu xuba shi lun*, 43.

Chen's "commentator" is presumed to have access to the mind the "author" and is thus charged with the responsibility of defending "authorial intention" (*zhi* 志). The main function of this "commentator" is to explicate on the role of the "sequel writer" in extending Shi Nai'an's authorial intention through the act of sequeling. Echoing the voice of the *Shuihu* commentator Li Zhi, [19] Chen's "commentator" declares *Zhongyi Shuihu zhuan* is the author's "book of indignation" (*fenshu* 憤書), aimed at elevating Song Jiang's honorable behavior and expressing the author's anger at corrupt officials. By attesting to the frustration of the historical "author," Chen enables the "commentator" to speak openly about the sequel writer's "reading" of *Zhongyi Shuihu zhuan*. In the voice of the "commentator," Chen states that *Shuihu houzhuan* is a book which gives vent to the frustration of the Yuan "sequel writer," who felt the death of the "honorable" Song Jiang was unjustified.[20] Apparently the very indignation that inspired the original "author" to write *Shuihu zhuan*, now informs the intention of the "sequel writer" who is authorized to write a sequel the 100-chapter edition, based on his presumed shared authorial intention with the "author."

**II. Chen Chen as Dissatisfied Reader Turned Sequel Writer**

Chen's use of principles of writing borrowed from Jin Shengtan's "Du diwu caizi shu fa" 讀第五才子書法 (How to read the fifth book of genius) is helpful for rethinking his role as a sensitive reader of *Shuihu zhuan*. As I will argue in this section, the inception of *Shuihu houzhuan* hinges upon Chen's reading of principles of writing for textual design.

[19] Chen's agreement with Li's interpretation of why *Shuihu zhuan* was written out of anger appears most clearly in the comments at the end of chapter 40, which directly quotes chapter 91 of *Zhongyi Shuihu zhuan*. Refer to Ellen Widmer, *Margins of Utopia*, 109.
[20] Yandang Shanqiao [Chen Chen], "Shuihu houzhuan lun lüe," in *Gudai xiaoshuo xushu xuba shi lun*, 35.

In Jin's "how to read" essay, he includes "advanced insertion" (*dacha fa* 倒插法) which describes the technique of placing events or characters in an earlier part of a narrative, to foreshadow the importance it will take on later.[21] "Advanced insertion" is an important principle of writing in *Shuihu zhuan*, since it relates to the entire "design of the text . . . [and] the author-reader relationship."[22] When reading for "advanced insertion," Chen Chen's expectation as a reader of *Shuihu zhuan* is that if the "author" introduces certain events and characters, then they should take importance later in the narrative.

The story of Li Jun is a case in point. In the campaign against Fang La, several of the Liangshan chieftains die in battle. When Fei Bao and his companions bid farewell, Song Jiang requests Li Jun to escort them to Willow Hamlet, where they all share wine before departing. The storyteller then interjects: "And as a result, Li Jun's fame spread across the seas, his name was known throughout the world. He became a king of a foreign land, but never encroached upon the borders of China" (*Outlaws*, 93: 1976-77). From Chen's perspective, here "advanced insertion" is deftly employed by the "author" to foreshadow the significance of Li Jun's departure and his rise to King of Siam.

However, the storyteller never draws connections between Li Jun's departure and his rise to power.[23] In the *Shuihu* interpretation complex, the 100-chapter edition leaves open an important narrative gap for Chen to address in *Shuihu houzhuan*. Chen found that while the "author" attempts to foreshadow Li Jun's rise to king of a foreign land, he failed to deliver as

[21] See John Wang, trans., "How to Read The Fifth Book of Genius," 140.
[22] Ellen Widmer, *Margins of Utopia*, 92, 113. Chen uses the "advanced insertion" technique in his sequel. In chapter 2, the character Yi Cheng mentions Siam, which becomes an important subject in chapter 11. This point is also confirmed by Cai Ao. Compare *SHHZ*, 2: 38, and *CASHHZ*, *juan* 1, 2: 23
[23] When asked why he does not find a new place to settle, Li Jun expresses his desire to honor the gallant fraternity by continuing to serve Song Jiang until the campaign against Fang La is over, before setting out for new horizons with Tong Meng and Tong Wei (*Outlaws*, 94: 1979). This event is also mentioned a third time (*Outlaws*, 99: 2107), without explaining what happens to Li Jun after Liangshan finishes their campaigns.

promised by chapter 100. For a sensitive reader like Chen, Li Jun is not given a proper ending: not to mention that over two thirds of the Liangshan bandit-heroes (76 in total)—including the "popular" heroes Song Jiang, Li Kui, Lin Chong, Lu Zhishen, and others—are either killed in battle or poisoned to death by the end of the novel.

The incompletion of Li Jun's ending now becomes the perfect "topic" (*timu* 題目) of *Shuihu houzhuan*,[24] specifically to explain how Li Jun becomes the leader of the new Liangshan establishment. Chen must still consider the finer details of the parent work, which presents certain interpretive questions: Although Li Jun becomes the King of Siam, what events lead him to have such a position? After the disbanding of Liangshan, what happens to each of the remaining bandit-heroes? And how will they rectify their honor in this sequel? Chen found that the individual narratives of the remaining 32 bandit-heroes were not complete and needed to be addressed by including "proper" endings that the 100-chapter original had failed to provide.

Such questions informed the textual design and rhetoric of *Shuihu houzhuan*. In the voice of the "commentator," Chen argues the textual design of a "sequel" demands an equal, or even greater effort from the "sequel writer" in his act of sequeling compared with the "author" in his act of authoring:

> *Water Margin Sequel* is more difficult to write than *Water Margin*. In *Water Margin,* the author can create out of thin air and add or cut the text as he pleases; in *Water Margin Sequel,* the sequel writer can only "write lyrics to a given pattern" [to extend the narrative, plot, and characters of the parent work] with no way to distinguish what is good or bad. In the original, the author can describe the finest of characters with great brilliance; the sequel writer is therefore left with mediocre characters [materials used for the sequel] that require meticulous effort and subtle expression《後傳》有難於《前傳》處。《前傳》鏤空畫影，增減自如；《後傳》按譜填詞，高下不得；《前傳》寫第一流人，分外出色；《後傳》為中材以下，苦心表微.[25]

[24] As Jin Shengtan states, any fine writing begins with a good "topic." See John Wang, trans., "How to Read the Fifth Book of Genius," 140.
[25] Chen Chen, "Shuihu houzhuan lun lüe," in *Shuihu zhuan ziliao huibian*, 495.

The challenges of writing *Shuihu houzhuan* are very particular to Chen's role as a sequel writer. As Andrew Plaks points out, *xiaoshuo* reveals to us the aesthetic and moral values of literati culture and can "exhibit many of the same pretentions to high wit and deep seriousness as those found in literati painting."[26] These sensibilities are characteristic of literati like Chen, whose references to painting and lyric take on significance in his discussion of *Shuihu* original and sequel.[27] In Chen's view, the "author" has more freedom to arrange the text and to create characters of heightened originality. On the one hand, the "author" is like a painter or poet, who produces works with aesthetic qualities and historical allusions based on his creative freedom. On the other hand, the "sequel writer," like a lyric poet who adds words to well-known tunes, can only produce a work based upon events, characters, and endings in a stabilized novel "original" (parent work). Given how *Zhongyi Shuihu zhuan* ends with only 32 surviving bandit-heroes, Chen feels he only has mediocre characters to construct the narrative of *Shuihu houzhuan*. If in Chen's mind, *Zhongyi Shuihu zhuan* is the "tune" by which a *Shuihu* sequel must follow, then he is not merely follow as a "reader," but to add new elements to the *Shuihu* original as a "sequel writer." If we extend the metaphor of lyric and tune to Chen's "reading" of *Zhongyi Shuihu zhuan*, one might even say in his attempt to properly end the narrative of the remaining 32 Liangshan bandit-heroes, Chen intends to bring the "tune" of *Shuihu zhuan* to the forefront, and also seeks to carve out a space for his own "lyrics," where the rhetoric of in his sequel will exert a degree of interpretive control over *Zhongyi Shuihu zhuan*.

[26] Andrew H. Plaks, *Four Masterworks of the Ming Novel*, 25.
[27] Here Chen is giving focus to the "visuality" of the text, similar to points made by Jin Shengtan in his *Shuihu* commentaries. Refer to Mei Chun, *The Novel and Theatrical Imagination in Early Modern China* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 198-199.

Chen found the endings in *Zhongyi Shuihu zhuan* left something to be desired. His approach differs from other *Shuihu* sequel writers.[28] Rather than a full-on departure, Chen Chen ultimately chooses to begin his sequel right where *Zhongyi Shuihu zhuan* ended. As the next section will argue, in Chen's "reader" role, he pays close attention to the issue of "loyalty and righteousness" (*zhongyi*) that constitutes the main tension of the 100-chapter edition. Chen's "reading" of this edition would shape his interpretive agenda in *Shuihu houzhuan*: to provide a proper ending for the 32 remaining bandit-heroes, by narrating the restoration of their honor (*yi*) which had been lost in their futile campaigns carried out in the name of the emperor (*zhong*).

**III. Liangshan in "Ruin" as Point of Departure in *Shuihu houzhuan***

Rather than ending the narrative of the Liangshan bandit-heroes at their height of glory as Jin Shengtan does in his 70-chapter edition, by chapter 100 of *Zhongyi Shuihu zhuan*, Liangshan is stripped of its reputation as an honorable fraternity. Two thirds of the bandit-heroes die in military campaigns as ultimate expression of loyalty to the emperor; corrupt officials successfully plot the deaths of the main chieftains Song Jiang, Wu Yong, and Lu Junyi; and the remaining bandit-heroes are either exiled to distant military posts or forced to return to their native homes. Chen found Liangshan's "state of ruin" (*canju* 殘局) to be a point of dissatisfaction which would impact his rhetoric in *Shuihu houzhuan*.[29] This section will argue that Chen's dissatisfaction with the ending of the 100-chapter edition informed his efforts to elevate the Liangshan fraternity from their state of ruin to an elevated, honorable state.

Chen finds the leadership of Liangshan to be an important aspect of the parent work's structure. According to Chen's reading, the Liangshan fraternity had fallen into chaos under

[28] For example, *Jin Ping Mei* which makes grand thematic departures from the novel, or *Hou Shuihu zhuan*, which employs reincarnations of the 108 heroes to "correct" the improper ending of the 100-chapter edition.
[29] Yandang Shanqiao [Chen Chen], "Shuihu houzhuan xu," in *Gudai xiaoshuo xushu xuba shi lun*, 31.

Wang Lun's leadership; it was not until Chao Gai and Song Jiang appeared that Liangshan began to gather strength and influence as an honorable establishment of bandit-heroes. Since the "author" does elaborate how Liangshan becomes a fiefdom-like establishment led by the Li Jun,[30] Chen finds this narrative gap to be an appropriate topic for his sequel.

Since Jin Shengtan had condemned Luo Guanzhong for distorting the veracity of historical events in the 30-chapter sequel,[31] Chen needed to ensure that *Shuihu houzhuan* did not cheapen its parent work by misrepresenting historical events. Chen's strategy is to ground the narrative in Li Jun's "history" (*houhua* 後話, literally the "later tale") that is only briefly mentioned in *Zhongyi Shuihu zhuan*.[32] In Chen's mind, this pithy ending merits further narration, given Li Jun's "history" does not include a satisfactory narrative of how he gains such status. The narrative of Li Jun's rise to become leader of Liangshan is the point of contact between parent work and sequel. At the same time, what Chen considered an unsatisfactory ending to Li Jun's story in the parent work now provides narrative momentum in *Shuihu houzhuan*: the reassembly of the 32 bandit-heroes and the founding of their new establishment.

As Ellen Widmer points out, the success of Li Jun's establishment in Siam represents Chen's effort to retroactively justify Heaven's commitment to Liangshan Marsh.[33] To take this point further, Chen also aims to "rewrite" *Zhongyi Shuihu zhuan*, by elevating the Liangshan fraternity to a higher state of honor. Chen could accomplish this agenda by crafting an

[30] Yandang Shanqiao [Chen Chen], "Shuihu houzhuan lun lüe," in *Shuihu zhuan ziliao huibian*, 489.
[31] Specifically, the historical account of Zhang Shuye and his capture of Song Jiang and his Liangshan band. Refer to Jin Shengtan, *Song shi mu* 宋史目, in *Jin Shengtan quanji*, vol. 3, 23-27.
[32] "Li Jun eventually became King of Siam. Tong Wei and Fei Bao also became officials in a foreign land, each occupying coastal territory and doing as he pleased. But that was all later in Li Jun's history." In *Outlaws*, 99: 2107.
[33] Ellen Widmer, *Margins of Utopia*, 166.

"appropriate" beginning that would address what he considered a poor ending to the parent work. In the first chapter, Chen writes:

> Although the 108 Liangshan heroes were outlaws, they were loyal and righteous in mind, and honorable without an ounce of selfishness. They were all forced by petty officials into dire straits, to live in hiding among the marsh. Indeed, they were carrying out the Way on Heaven's behalf and never harmed the common people. Later our heroes received amnesty from the emperor and were dispatched to campaign against the Great Liao Kingdom and to exterminate Fang La: repeatedly gaining merit but dying on the battlefield for their nation. Sadly, on the day they returned to the capital from South of the river, only three tenths of them survived. Even though our heroes were given official positions, they were never properly reward for their merits in battle. Those deceitful ministers, still having an axe to grind, requested Lu Junyi to the capital. During a banquet in his honor, they poisoned Lu, concealing this from the emperor. When Lu returned to Huizhou, the mercury began to take effect, then he fell into the river and died. They even gave wine to Song Jiang who knew it was laced with poison. Yet fearing Li Kui would start up trouble and forever destroy Liangshan's reputation of loyalty and righteousness, Song tricked Li into drinking the wine with him . . . Wu Yong and Hua Rong had the best relationship with Song Jiang. Once they heard the news [that Song Jiang and Li Kui had purposely consumed the wine and committed double suicide,] they hung themselves in front of Song Jiang's grave in his honor and were buried together in one location 梁山泊內一百八人，雖在綠林，都是心懷忠義、正直無私，皆為官私逼迫，勢不得已，潛居水泊，卻是替天行道，並不殃民。後來受了招安，遣他征伏大遼，剿除方臘，屢建功勛，亡身殉國。江南回京之日，可憐所存者不過十分之三，雖加封官職，已是功高不賞，那奸臣輩還饒他不過，把盧俊義宣召到京，賜宴之時，瞞著徽宗暗地裡下了慢藥，回至盧州，水銀毒發，墜水而亡。又將鴆酒賜與宋江，宋江明知有毒，恐怕留下李逵惹是招非，壞了一世忠義，騙他來與他同飲 . . . 吳用、花榮，與宋江平日最好，聞知此信，來到宋江墓上，對面縊死，也就殯在一處 (*SHHZ*, 1: 6-7).

In the first chapter of his sequel, Chen narrates the "end" 煞尾 (*SHHZ*, 1: 8) of *Zhongyi Shuihu zhuan* and underscores problems in the parent work that can only be addressed by sequeling. Precisely because the bandit-heroes sacrifice their lives in the ultimate expression of loyalty to the emperor (*zhong*), they also fail to prevent the deaths of Song Jiang, Li Kui, Lu Junyi, Wu Yong, and Hua Rong: unable to uphold the honor of the fraternity (*yi*).

In Chen's "reading," the parent work mistakenly elevates *zhong* and displaces *yi*. His strategy is to twist certain details of the parent work to advance his viewpoint on the honor of Liangshan. Rather than presenting Song Jiang, Li Kui, Lu Junyi, Wu Yong, Hua Rong, and the

other bandit-heroes as martyrs who died for the emperor (*zhong*), Chen laments at the unjust circumstances of their deaths, to simultaneously present an elegy to the dead bandit-heroes and critique the corrupt officials responsible for damaging Liangshan's honor (*yi*). According to his "reading," the conflict between *zhong* and *yi* was never resolved in *Zhongyi Shuihu zhuan*, as many of the Liangshan bandit-heroes were forced to die in disgrace, failing to honor their oath to live and die together as one.

In Chen's view, since nearly two-thirds of the "finest characters" (*diyi liu ren* 第一流人) die in the 100-chapter edition, he only has "mediocre characters" (*zhongcai yixia* 中材以下) to work with in his design of *Shuihu houzhuan*.[34] Therefore Chen's second strategy is to "rewrite" such mediocre characters with the qualities and personalities of certain fine characters who are no longer present in the narrative of his sequel.

One such example of rewriting mediocre characters is the sequel's depiction of Ruan Xiaoqi the "Living King Yama" 活閻王, who appears even more rebellious in *Shuihu houzhuan* than he did in the parent work. Ruan holds the largest grudge against imperial authority for damaging Liangshan's "sworn fraternal honor" (*yiqi*). His nostalgia for Liangshan's glory and his grief over its state of ruin are juxtaposed to emphasize his adherence to sworn fraternal honor even more. Following Ruan's story from the parent work, the storyteller explains that after General Wang Bing and General Zhao Tong observe Ruan, they report to the corrupt official Cai Jing, and based on tenuous evidence,[35] suggest that Ruan intends to raise a rebellion. With the

[34] Yandang Shanqiao [Chen Chen], "Shuihu houzhuan lun lüe," in *Shuihu zhuan ziliao huibian*, 495.
[35] Ruan loses his position because generals Wang Bing and Zhao Tang hold grudges against him, after Ruan insulted them in a previous scene. Wang and Zhao then report to Tong Guan, claiming they witnessed Ruan Xiaoqi put on Fang La's royal garments and jade girdle (in jest), using this as evidence to argue Ruan intends to raise a rebellion. Tong Guan then reports this matter to Cai Jing who convinces the emperor to remove Ruan's military status and demote him to ordinary civilian status (*Outlaws*, 100: 2117).

testimonies of Wang and Zhao, Cai then convinces the emperor to demote Ruan Xiaoqi (*SHHZ*, 1: 10-11).[36] Having been labeled as a possible "rebel" by the court, Ruan Xiaoqi returns to his ancestral home to live as a "commoner," without military government rank or the heroic status as a member of the Liangshan fraternity. Ruan later reminisces over the days when the Liangshan enjoyed honor among the Shandong locale. He believes the turning point was the day Song Jiang accepted amnesty, which led to many years of bloody battles and the deaths of Song Jiang, Lu Junyi, Wu Yong, and Hua Rong (*SHHZ*, 1: 13-14).

Ruan Xiaoqi plays a relatively minor role in *Zhongyi Shuihu zhuan*, but rewritten in Chen's sequel, Ruan becomes the voice of Liangshan's righteous indignation. He feels that despite providing years of service to the throne, Liangshan was merely "rewarded" with death, murder, exile, and dishonor:

> If it was up to me, Ruan Xiaoqi, to hell with amnesty! We brothers would unite in mind and might, sack the Eastern Capital, annihilate those vile, jealous conspirators and avenge all people under heaven who suffered injustice. What a joy that would be! But I've fallen into their wretched trap. Now my brothers are either dead or have departed, and I'm left in dire straits. What can I do? Tomorrow I'll prepare some wine and meat, return to our mountain lair, visit my [dead] brothers like the old days 若依我阮小七見識，不受招安，弟兄們同心合膽，打破東京，殺盡了那蔽賢嫉能這班奸賊，與天下百姓伸冤，豈不暢快！反被他算計得斷根絕命！如今兄弟們死的死了，散的散了，孤掌難鳴，還做得甚麼事？我明日備些酒肉，到山寨裡澆奠一番，也見平日的弟兄情分 (*SHHZ*, 1: 13-14).

When read in light of the 100-chapter edition, Ruan Xiaoqi's declaration echoes the attitudes of the brigand hero Li Kui the "Black Whirlwind," who is the voice of sworn loyalty in the parent work. At one point he even suggests that Song Jiang would make a fine emperor of the Song dynasty (*Outlaws*, 60: 1281). With Li Kui no longer present in *Shuihu houzhuan*, his antagonistic attitudes toward corrupt officials and the emperor are now voiced through Ruan Xiaoqi, whose

[36] Chen seems to have borrowed the plot directly from the original here. Refer to *Outlaws*, 100: 2117.

indignation sets up the narrative of the 32 bandit-heroes' assembly and the restoration of their sworn fraternal honor.

Ruan Xiaoqi decides to return to Liangshan with the intention of restoring the Liangshan fraternity to its rightful place. Yet what Ruan sees upon his return is not a bandit-hero establishment at its height of glory. He finds the Hall of Loyalty and Righteousness in a dilapidated state, and the stone tablet that had once showcased the names of all 108 Stars of Destiny is now eroded and covered in moss. Only by standing in the ruins of Liangshan does Ruan Xiaoqi recall what had once stood there. Filled with both indignation and grief, he fills ten bowls of wine for his dead brothers and renews his oath of fraternal loyalty:

> All Under Heaven have heard of our reputation and speak of how we are gallant men, who carry out the Way on Heaven's behalf and loyally serve the nation. On the day after I die, naturally my spirit will follow my dead brothers wherever they go 天下聞名，道是我等替天行道，忠心為國的好漢子。我阮小七他日死後，自然魂靈隨著哥哥同在一處 (*SHHZ*, 1: 16).

Here Chen rewrites a scene from *Zhongyi Shuihu zhuan*, where Li Kui consumes laced wine with Song Jiang in double suicide and promises to serve Song in the afterlife as a ghost-servant (*Outlaws*, 100: 2128). Echoing the final words of Li Kui, Ruan Xiaoqi now makes the same oath to follow his sworn brothers in the afterlife.

By embedding the rebellious personality of Li Kui into the character Ruan Xiaoqi, Chen crafts an "appropriate" beginning to exert greater interpretive control on *Zhongyi Shuihu zhuan*. With Ruan Xiaoqi at the center of this sequel's beginning, Chen has rewritten a narrative cycle that had previously appeared in the parent work: the "rebel" bandit-hero's feelings of indignation having witnessed the court challenge sworn fraternal honor; his veneration of sworn brothers through ritual; and his renewed dedication to serve the fraternity in life and in death. By "rewriting" the relationship between Liangshan and imperial authority through Ruan Xiaoqi's

narrative, *zhong* begins to take less priority compared with *yi*, the latter which is gradually elevated as a bond of selfless reciprocity to be maintained in both life and in death.

## IV. Honoring the Fallen Nation: *Zhong* as Loyalty and Consolation

Li Zhi's explication on the significance of *zhongyi* opened up hermeneutic issues for Chen Chen. Since many of the bandit-heroes who embody *zhongyi* are no longer present after chapter 100, what strategies would help Chen construct a proper narrative for the 32 remaining bandit-heroes? And how would he justify elevating the remaining bandit-heroes, especially since Li Zhi deemed Li Jun and others are unworthy to be champions of *zhongyi*?[37]

To demonstrate why Li Jun and the remaining bandit-heroes are loyal to the emperor (*zhong*) but even more loyal to one another as sworn brothers (*yi*), Chen manipulates the boundaries between "sequel" and "commentary." In the preface to *Shuihu houzhuan*, Chen's "commentator" asserts that the character Song Jiang is the reincarnation of Dao Zhi 盜跖, a rebel leader who lived during the Spring and Autumn period (771-476 BCE). Apparently, the adage "carrying the Way on behalf of Heaven" (*ti tian xingdao* 替天行道) often uttered by Song Jiang is a gloss to a phrase in Confucius' *Chunqiu*. This phrase describes Dao Zhi, who struck fear in the minds of corrupt officials and evil bandits. With this gloss from a classical text compiled by the first "commentator" Confucius, Chen can claim that his sequel supplements endings to

[37] According to Li Zhi, Song Jiang deserves to be venerated for upholding *zhongyi*; however, he also finds that certain Liangshan bandit-heroes cannot be described as loyal and righteous. Noting that Li Jun stays behind instead of serving the government with Song Jiang, Li Zhi condemns him as "nothing worthy of someone who is loyal to his leaders and faithful to his friends" 非忠於君義於友. Refer to Huiying Chen and Drew Dixon, trans., "Preface to the Loyal and Righteous Outlaws of the Marsh," in *A Book to Burn and a Book to Keep (Hidden)* ed. Rivi Handler-Spitz et. al (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 126-127.

unsettled "events" (*shi* 事) in the parent work, to function in the same manner as Confucius' commentaries to *Chunqiu*.[38]

Like Jin Shengtan, Chen's rhetoric focuses on Confucius' claim of "transmitting but not creating" (*shu er bu zuo* 述而不作). In Chen's comparisons of history, fiction, sequels, and their respective commentaries, he attempts to elevate *Shuihu houzhuan* beyond "a dog's tail as a substitute for a sable's tail" (a sequel that poorly imitates its parent work).[39] Readers presumably need to read the 100-chapter edition with the interpretations offered in the narrative of *Shuihu houzhuan* and its accompanying commentaries, based on the logic that if *Chunqiu* cannot be understood properly without commentaries, then *Zhongyi Shuihu zhuan* also requires commentaries—in the form of a sequel—to prevent readers from damaging the integrity of the parent work with their misinterpretations of *zhongyi*.

To carve up a space to elevate *yi*, Chen offers an interpretation of *zhong* as not merely "loyalty to the emperor," but "loyalty to the nation," to address the presumed failure of the "author" to depict the punishment of corrupt ministers and rectification of injustices suffered by the people.[40] Chen carries out this interpretive agenda by imitating previous events from the parent work and, at the same time, innovating with "mediocre characters" in his sequel.

In the 100-chapter edition, Yan Qing the "Wanderer" 浪子 is known for his abilities in martial arts and wrestling, his musical talents, and his handsome looks. This combination makes

[38] Specifically, *Zuozhuan* 左傳 (Zuo commentaries), *Gongyang zhuan* 公羊傳 (Gongyang commentaries), and *Guliang zhuan* 穀梁傳 (Guliang commentaries). See Chen Chen, "Shuihu houzhuan yuan xu" 水滸後傳原序, in *Shuihu ziliao huibian* 水滸資料彙編, ed. Ma Tiji 馬蹄疾 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2004), 61. Cf. Yi Yongjiao 易永姣, *Shuihu zhuan san zhong zhuyao xushu de sixiang wenhua yiyun* 水滸傳三種主要續書的思想文化意蘊 (M.A. Thesis: Hunan Normal University, 2007), 22.

[39] This was a complaint that Jin Shengtan had about Luo Guanzhong's 30-chapter "sequel" to the 70-chapter "original." See his comment in *JSTSHZ*, 70: 1234.

[40] Yandang Shanqiao [Chen Chen], "Shuihu houzhuan lun lüe," in *Shuihu ziliao huibian*, 489.

him the perfect candidate to arrange a secret meeting with the Huizong Emperor and secure amnesty for Liangshan (*Outlaws*, 81: 1715-1722). In *Shuihu houzhuan*, Chen "comments" on this event by rewriting it and offering an extended interpretation of *zhong*. Yan Qing decides to visit the Huizong Emperor who is detained in the Eastern Capital, now occupied by the Jurchen forces. In what was once the symbolic center of national power and moral order, Yan Qing loses the verve and flamboyance he once held; instead, he is filled with grief and risks his life to visit the emperor to deliver a gift of bitter plums and oranges:

> "Yan Qing, your humble servant of the wild grasses, begs for forgiveness. I committed crimes and fell into the rivers and lakes [local fraternity] . . . recently I heard the north was sacked and now risk my life to bear witness to your lord's countenance" 草野微臣燕青，向蒙萬歲赦免。罪犯流落江湖 . . . 今聞北狩，冒死一覲龍顏 (*SHHZ*, 24: 708).

Huizong then expresses his appreciation for the previous service rendered by Song Jiang and the Liangshan fraternity, but expresses his regret over being tricked by corrupt officials into poisoning Song Jiang and others. Overall, the meeting between Yan Qing and the Huizong emperor in *Shuihu houzhuan* structurally models the similar scene from the 100-chapter edition. Using his wits and charm, Yan Qing secures a meeting with the emperor who bestows a poem to Yan before his departure. However, unlike the 100-chapter edition, in *Shuihu houzhuan*, Yan Qing is not seeking amnesty, but hopes to pay a debt of kindness to Huizong with a gift: bitter plums symbolizing the hardship and pain of losing a nation, followed by sweet oranges as consolation.

The larger function of this scene is to comment on the Huizong Emperor—known historically as a calligrapher, poet, and patron of literary and artistic activities[41]—and the issue of dynastic transition. Yan Qing laments:

[41] Refer to Patricia Buckley Ebrey, *Emperor Huizong* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014), 219-239.

> "I've already finished what I came to do. In the beginning Song Gongming hoped to receive amnesty, so I went to Li Shishi's home. It so happened the emperor arrived on his carriage, then I took the opportunity to sing a few ditties and pled to receive his graces, truly experiencing his sagely virtue. Sadly, the emperor was misled by corrupt ministers, leading to the destruction of the nation and his imprisonment. In my heart I could not take it, so I risked death to see the emperor again, to provide him a little consolation"「我已完了這件心事了。當初宋公明望著招安，我到李師師家，卻好御駕到來，乘機唱曲，乞這道恩詔，實是感懷聖德。可憐被奸臣所誤，國破身羈，中心不忍，故冒死朝見，以盡一點微衷。」 (*SHHZ*, 24: 712-713).

In the voice of Yan Qing, Chen expresses his sympathy for Huizong who has become a prisoner in what was previously the center of his empire. Yan Qing continues:

> "[The emperor] still wants to revive the dynasty . . . I'm afraid this will never come to fruition . . . The emperors of fallen nations of the past were very intelligent, but because of their high position all they did was indulge in pleasure and failed to understand the sufferings of the people. Not only that, they were manipulated by evil ministers, who falsely claim all the four seas are at peace and the myriad of kingdoms are at peace. In reality there is drought and famine, and the emperor hears nothing of bandits and thieves. There are some loyal ministers who remonstrate, but then they are falsely accused of slander and destruction of the dynasty, likely to be killed or exiled. Once a dynasty changes for the worse, there are no longer any loyal and upright ministers who will fight for the emperor or share the same concerns as him; as a result, the nation collapses with no chance of recovery." Yang Lin said, "In our mountain lair we often cursed the Huizong Emperor for not following the Way, but seeing him today in this state, even I want to shed tears!" 燕青道他還想著回朝 . . . 恐永世不能再見 . . . 從來亡國之君多是極伶俐的，只為高居九重，朝歡暮樂，哪知民間疾苦！又被奸臣弄權，說道四海昇平、萬邦寧靜，一概的水旱饑荒、盜賊竊發皆不上聞。或有忠臣諫諍，反說他謗毀朝廷，誅流貶責。一朝變起，再無忠梗之臣與他分憂出力，所以土崩瓦解，不可挽回的。」楊林道：「我們平日在山寨常罵他無道，今日見這般景象，連我也要落下淚來！」 (*SHHZ*, 24: 712-713).

Through the words of Yan Qing, Chen suggests that emperors are often victims of corrupt ministers who are responsible for the fall of a nation. Contrarily, truly loyal ministers and subjects—including the bandit-heroes who were wronged by those same corrupt ministers—are exiled or put to death. What emerges in this passage is a dirge to a fallen nation that is assumed to never again achieve the glory it had enjoyed at its height of order and prosperity. If Yan Qing takes a sympathetic position towards Huizong, Yang Lin takes an "antagonistic" position, who

remembers how he cursed Huizong for failing to maintain order throughout the empire. With regards to the Liangshan fraternity, Yang also vents the same sentiments as Li Kui, Ruan Xiaoqi, and others, who feel their honor has been destroyed because of corrupt officials and Huizong's failure to see through their treachery. Yet Yang Lin is so touched by Yan Qing's loyalty to the emperor that even he cannot help but shed tears.

Through the voices of these two characters, Chen reveals his own perspectives on the connection between *zhong* and the fall of a nation. More specifically, while the "fallen nation" in *Shuihu houzhuan* refers to the Song dynasty, the tumultuous turn of events leading to the fall of the Ming likely informed such references in this sequel.[42] Through the narrative and voice of Yan Qing, Chen presents his own interpretation of *zhong*, informed by his positionality during a time of chaos and unrest. In *Shuihu houzhuan*, the concept *zhong* now refers to a sense of grievance over a fallen nation, and a strong sense of "loyalism" as expressed through Yan Qing's daring infiltration of the Jurchen compound, to console the Huizong emperor and deliver his final message of loyalty.

**V. Death, Ghosts, and Blood Debts: The Rectification of Sworn Loyalty**

In the 100-chapter edition, the first edict for amnesty mandates the bandit-heroes must give up their stronghold, weapons, and wealth. Upon learning this, Li Kui reacts the most violently by emphasizing that Song Jiang ought to be emperor, subsequently threatening to kill everyone one of the "amnesty-writing officials" (*Outlaws*, 75: 1598). The emperor later issues a second amnesty which orders Song Jiang to be killed, but to forgive the actions of the other Liangshan

[42] As one scholar notes, much of the suffering associated with disasters and the fall of the Ming led Chen Chen to imagine a "utopia" in *Shuihu houzhuan*. See "Du Shuihu houzhuan—Zhongguo de wutuobang" 讀水滸後傳——中國的烏托邦, in *Zhongguo gudian xiaoshuo lunji di yi ji* 中國古典小說論集第一輯, (Taipei: Zhonghua shuju, 1971), 245-254.

bandit-heroes. In response, Liangshan launches a fierce attack against Gao Qiu and his troops (*Outlaws,* 80: 1678). The third edict of amnesty remarks on Song Jiang and his group's loyal and righteous behavior, but remains unsatisfactory for the Liangshan fraternity, since it mandates that every Liangshan member must return to their official posts or ancestral home. This clause causes an uproar since each Liangshan member must serve the throne (*zhong*) but at the expense of disbanding of Liangshan and challenging the honor of their sworn fraternal honor (*yi*).

Based on Chen's "reading," this tension between *zhong* and *yi* is sustained in the 100-chaper edition, without any proposed solution at the end of the narrative. This section will argue that in *Shuihu houzhuan*, Chen's strategy is to make *yi* the most dominant concern for the bandit-heroes, who are even more steadfast in their resolve to restore their honor, which had been destroyed after the death of their leaders and sworn brothers in the parent work.

In *Shuihu zhuan*, Song Jiang gains reputation in the Liangshan fraternity as a champion of "loyalty and righteousness." He hopes to someday receive amnesty so as to serve the emperor in an official capacity. By comparison, Li Kui and many other bandit-heroes hold disregard for the imperial power that often challenges their "sworn fraternal honor" (*yiqi*). In the *Shuihu zhuan* interpretation complex, the reading of "sworn fraternal honor" is a significant hermeneutic issue and constitutes the underlying tension between the Liangshan bandit-heroes and imperial power. On the one hand, the Liangshan fraternity justifies their actions based on this code of honor. On the other hand, the court views such actions—founding an establishment, campaigns against other groups at the margins, and stealing from the corrupt and wealthy—as transgressions against imperial authority.

This is precisely the issue tackled in Jin Shengtan's commentaries. Tangled up in the contention of whether Liangshan consists of "heroes" (*yishi* 義士) or "brigands" (*qiangdao* 強

盜), Jin argues for the latter by undercutting Song Jiang's repeated claims of waiting to be forgiven by the emperor and by ending the Liangshan "rebellion" in Lu Junyi's dream, which foretells Zhang Shuye's execution of the entire band.[43] With the construction of the 70-chapter "original" and addition of his commentaries, Jin attempts to decrease the tension between *zhong* and *yi* sustained in the 100-chapter edition.

Jin's agenda to correct *Shuihu zhuan* by de-intensifying the *zhongyi* dilemma had such an impact on how to read this novel, that sequel writers like Chen Chen were now forced to mediate in this issue. In *Shuihu houzhuan*, Li Jun takes over as leader of the remaining Liangshan bandit-heroes. In his dreams, Li finds himself in the Hall of Loyalty and Righteousness, where Song Jiang officially deems him the leader of Liangshan. Yet Song Jiang feels tormented in the afterlife, especially having suffered an unjust death, and regrets failing to complete all that he wished for the fraternity. Song Jiang wishes for Li Jun to achieve what he himself could not: to reunite the Liangshan fraternity and help them obtain positions in government (*SHHZ*, 10: 313). In this dream, Chen has essentially extended the interpretation of the title "Loyal and Righteous Song Gongming" 忠義宋公明. In the last 30 chapters of *Zhongyi Shuihu zhuan*, Song Jiang feels deep remorse after the repeated deaths of his sworn brothers. Yet in this sequel Song Jiang is even more regretful that his enemies diminished the honor of the Liangshan fraternity and hopes Li Jun will restore Liangshan to its former glory.

Chen's rewrite of Song Jiang, whose fierce loyalty to the emperor was the main cause of his unjust death, also necessitates the inclusion of the ghost of Li Kui who puts "sworn loyalty" above everything else, to the point of even appearing in the dreams of those he believes to be

[43] However, Jin often contradicts himself when he praises the bandits as heroes on several occasions, particularly Lin Chong, Lu Zhishen, and Wu Song. See David Rolston, *Reading Between the Lines*, 35-36.

Liangshan's enemies and murdering them with his dual battle axes. The structure of this dream sequence—the appearance of Song Jiang who consoles the dreamer, and then the appearance of Li Kui who condemns and kills him—is deftly imitated in the dream sequences of *Shuihu houzhuan.* In Li Jun's dream, after Song Jiang gives Li Jun blessings to take over the leadership of Liangshan, Li Kui suddenly appears wielding his double axes and lunges at Li Jun: "Your bullying knows no end! How dare you visit brother Song and ignore me!" (*SHHZ*, 10: 313). Li Kui the singular rebellious brigand-hero of Liangshan, loyal to the end and ready to lay down his life to defend fraternal honor. Chen's "rewrite" of Li Kui makes him appear even more violent and cruel, as the voice of sworn fraternal honor who demands blood to appease the tortured spirits of his sworn brothers.

By adding Li Kui's vengeful ghost into dream sequences, Chen attempts to decentralize the importance of loyalty to the emperor (*zhong*), to then underscore the centrality of sworn loyalty (*yi*). In another scene, after Dai Zong agrees to deliver a letter for Cai Jing, Li Kui appears in Dai's dream to deliver Song Jiang's message. Dai Zong walks through a beautiful utopic kingdom and eventually reaches the palace entrance. When Li Kui pressures Dai Zong to enter, he refuses and causes Li Kui to rush at him with double axes: "You disloyal rascal! In the end you failed to follow our brother's [Song Jiang's] orders and instead deliver documents for that traitor Cai Jing" (*SHHZ*, 15: 458-459).[44] In Li Kui's view, Dai Zong betrays Song Jiang by

[44] Song Jiang appears in the Huizong Emperor's dream to affirm his loyalty (*zhong*), while Li Kui wields his axes and tries to murder to emperor, in attempt to avenge his sworn brothers (*yi*). Li Kui rushing at Dai Zong with his double axes in a dream is a "recurrent image" in *Shuihu houzhuan*, adopted from *Zhongyi Shuihu zhuan*. When Song Jiang poisons Li Kui to prevent him from rebelling against the Song court, Li Kui makes a solemn oath to serve Song Jiang in death as an "attendant-ghost." Later, when Song Jiang visits Huizong in a dream, Li Kui appears from behind and expresses his dissatisfaction at the emperor for being tricked by the four evil ministers into wrongfully killing Song Jiang and him. He then rushes the Huizong emperor with his axes in an act of vengeance (*Outlaws*, 100:2135-6). However, when Li Kui's axe-frenzied attack on the dreamer, such as Li Jun and Dai Zong, appears in *Shuihu houzhuan*, this "recurrent image" loses the subversive edge it previously had in *Zhongyi Shuihu zhuan*. Now

becoming a running dog for Cai Jing, one of the four ministers responsible for the death Song Jiang, Lu Junyi, Wu Yong, and Hua Rong. Dai Zong's failure to honor the Liangshan fraternity reveals to the reader the significance of "sworn fraternal honor" in this sequel. It is not Song Jiang who delivers a message about the importance of *yiqi*; now Li Kui, a "ghost-attendant" for Song Jiang, has the authority to deliver a message of sworn loyalty on Song Jiang's behalf.

The recurrent appearances of Li Kui swinging axes in dreams echoes the need for the remaining bandit-heroes to rectifying *yi*, which would presumably appease the spirits of Song Jiang and other Liangshan leaders. If Chen wrote *Shuihu houzhuan* because of his dissatisfaction towards the ending of the parent work, one proper complaint would be that Song Jiang, Lu Junyi and others were never vindicated for their unjust deaths with the proper blood debts paid by the evil ministers who plotted their demise.

While fleeing south to avoid Jurchen forces, the remaining bandit-heroes run into a neighbor of Lu Junyi who is escorting four of the corrupt Song ministers to their place of exile. He informs Yan Qing that Wang Bi, Yang Jian, and Liang Shicheng have already been executed, but that he has detained Cai Jing, Cai You (Cai Jing's son), Gao Qiu, and Tong Guan, who were all responsible for the death of Song Jiang, Li Kui, Lu Junyi, Wu Yong, and Hua Rong. Yan Qing then returns to tell the others that he has found "four honorable guests." While many of the bandit-heroes want to stab them to death, Yan Qing proposes another plan. He invites these "four guests" for a banquet in an empty government building and eventually reveal their identities to these evil ministers. After a "sword dance" in the spirit of the Xiang Yu 項羽 (232-202 BCE)

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in the sequel, as the "ghost-attendant" under Song Jiang's command, Li Kui appears with double-axes in hand not attacking the emperor, but ready to take down even those in the gallant fraternity whom infringe upon Song Jiang's honor.

biography in the *Shiji*, Li Ying the "Striking Hawk" 撲天雕 and the bandit-heroes prepare a ceremony for their dead brothers:

> Li Ying ordered the others to remove the banquet tables, clean up, set up the incense altar, and light the incense burner. He ordered everyone to bow south in the direction of the heavenly spirit of the first martial emperor, and to bow north in the direction of the second emperor. In the same manner of presenting a court memorial, together they said: "Minister Li Ying and others hereby eradicate the traitors on behalf of the nation. To Heaven we show our gratitude to the virtuous ancestral emperors, and on Earth we dispel the collected suffering of ministers and commoners!" They all bowed five times and kowtowed three times. After the ceremony, they brought out a table, and Li Ying ordered his men to respectfully bring out the spirit tablets and place them on the table. The spirits had the names Song Gongming, Lu Junyi, Li Kui, Lin Chong, Yang Zhi engraved on them. They lit the incense. All the gallant fellows bowed four times and said, "Brother Song and all the heroic spirits, tonight we have the four traitors Cai Jing, Gao Qiu, Tong Guan, and Cai You. In life they plotted your deaths. Today we sincerely seek to address this injustice, and earnestly request your presence" 李應叫把筵席撤開，打掃潔淨，擺設香案，焚起一爐香，率領眾人望南拜了太祖武皇帝在天之靈，望北拜了二帝，就像啟奏一般齊道：「臣李應等為國除奸，上報聖祖列宗，下消天下臣民積憤！」都行五拜三叩首禮。禮畢，抬過一張桌子，喚請出牌位來供在上面，卻是宋公明、盧俊義、李逵、林沖、楊志五人的名號。點了香燭，眾好漢一同拜了四拜，說道：「宋公明哥哥，眾位英魂在上，今夜拿得蔡京、高俅、童貫、蔡攸四個奸賊在此，生前受他謀害，今日特為伸冤，望乞照鑒 (*SHHZ*, 27: 814-815).

This ritual harkens to a common reading of *yi*, meaning to serve the common people. With Li Ying leading the Confucian rituals of the imperial court, first the bandit-heroes honor emperors of past and present, before declaring the reasons for eradicating the four traitorous ministers: to honor the nation and repay blood debt owed to those who have suffered at their hands.

In clear contrast to the rituals of the imperial court enacted by Li Ying and the bandit-heroes, the next ritual is informed by sworn fraternal honor[45] that demands a blood debt to be collected and appease the spirits of bandit-heroes who died unjust deaths. Having shown

[45] On the connection between ritual and sworn fraternal honor, see David K. Jordan, "Sworn Brothers: A Study in Chinese Ritual Kinship," in *The Chinese Family and Ritual Behavior*, ed. Hsieh Jih-chang and Chuang Ying-chang (Taipei: Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica, 1985), 248.

reverence to the emperor, nation, and people, Li Ying, speaking for the Liangshan fraternity, expresses why they still have an axe to grind with the "four guests:"

> "All 108 of us correspond with the Stars of Heaven. We are of one mind and in solidarity, and complete with wisdom and courage. We received amnesty and went north to campaign against the great Liao and campaigned south against Fang La, to serve the throne and establish merit. Half of my brothers died on the battlefield for the throne; the emperor then wanted to bestow esteemed positions upon us, but all you traitors repeatedly stopped him. Besides taking away our posts, you could not help but poison Song Jiang and Lu Junyi, forcing them to suffer unjust deaths . . . If Song Jiang and Lu Junyi were still here, now when Jurchen forces have crossed the frontiers, we would have been sent to push them back: would we still have lost the frontiers to the enemy, leave the nation a wasteland? Now all the loyal ministers and generals are dead; half the country is demoralized and at the brink of falling, and the masses are disheartened. Who is to blame? Now you ask for mercy, but when did you ever *show us* mercy? . . . Today I will strictly abide by the teachings of my ancestors and not use military blades for this ceremony; having you traitors taste the flavor of laced wine is enough!" . . . Li Ying waved his hand and heard the sound of three roaring canons. Four to five thousand people called out like thunder in the hilly mountains. Two people tended to each one, drowning each traitor's ears with laced wine. In a matter of minutes, Cai Jing and the three traitors bled from all six orifices and dropped dead to the ground. The gallant fellows clapped in congratulatory joy. Li Ying dragged the corpses out of the city to be a feast for birds and wolves 「我等一百八人，上應天星，同心協力，智勇俱備。受了招安，北伐大遼，南征方臘，為朝廷建立功業。一大半弟兄為著王事死於沙場，天子要加顯職，屢次被你們遏住。除了散職，又容不得，把藥酒鴆死宋江、盧俊義，使他們負屈含冤而死 . . . 若留得宋公明、盧俊義在此，目今金兵犯界，差我們去拒敵，豈至封疆失守，宗社丘墟？今日忠臣良將俱已銷亡，遂至半壁喪傾，萬民塗炭，是誰之咎？你今日討饒，當初你饒得我們過麼？ . . . 我今凜遵祖訓，也不加兵刀，只嚐嚐鴆酒滋味罷」 . . . 李應把手一麾，只聽天崩地裂發了三聲大炮，四五千人齊聲吶喊，如震山搖岳。兩個伏事一個，扯著耳朵把鴆酒灌下。不消半刻，那蔡京等四人七竅流血，死於地下。眾好漢拍手稱快，互相慶賀。李應叫把屍骸拖出城外，任從烏啄狼餐 (*SHHZ*, 27: 816-818).

One will remember from *Zhongyi Shuihu zhuan* that Song Jiang and Li Kui also shared poisoned wine in double suicide as the ultimate expression of "sworn fraternal honor." In this sequel, the Liangshan bandit-heroes view the deaths of their beloved leaders and friends as an attack on

"sworn fraternal honor" which necessitates ritualized violence.[46] Rather than killing these evil ministers with blades—weapons appropriate in the battlefield, but not in "court ritual"—Li Ying orders the soldiers to "serve" wine laced with poison to these four "guests." In this way the bandit-heroes exact vengeance on those who owe blood debts for the death of their beloved leaders to rectify the code of sworn loyalty for themselves and their dead leaders. Now *yi* now elevated to greater heights, while *zhong* is delegated as formality which has significance as loyalty to emperor and nation, but only in name rather than in principle.

**VI. Taming Rebellious Readings in *Chongding Shuihu houzhuan***

Previously it was mentioned that in *Shuihu houzhuan*, Ruan Xiaoqi tends to replace Li Kui as the symbol of rebellion and sworn loyalty. In Cai Ao's edition of this sequel, he tends to downplay Ruan's rebellious qualities by bringing the reader's attention to the ferocity of his "untamable heroic airs" (*haoqi buxun* 豪氣不馴) in his commentaries, with the intention to caution against such behavior.[47] When examined carefully, one finds that Cai Ao, following the example set up by Jin Shengtan, directs readers towards a less rebellious reading of the 32 bandit-heroes in his commentaries and revisions. In this sense Cai's effort to tame images of rebellion in his edition of this sequel tend to conflict with Chen's agenda to elevate Liangshan's sworn fraternal honor.

Cai Ao's first major emendation is the complete removal of Chen Chen's prefaces and commentaries that previously accompanied *Shuihu houzhuan*, to carve out a space for his own commentaries. In Cai's view, authors face the challenge of how to effectively moralize readers in their books. He notes that certain literati tend to write without attention to high moral

[46] This appears to be the case for many Liangshan bandit-heroes such as Wu Song, whose heroism is emphasized by the author. See Martin W. Huang, *Negotiating Masculinities in Late Imperial China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009), 109-12.
[47] See Cai Ao's pre-chapter commentary in *CASHHZ*, chapter 1.

sensibilities and thus fail to "convey the Way" (*zai dao* 載道) like Sima Qian had done in the *Shiji*. Cai also faults the "author" of *Shuihu zhuan* for the same problem. Apparently if the importance of "humanness" (*ren* 仁), "righteousness" (*yi* 義), "loyalty" (*zhong* 忠), and "sincerity" (*xin* 信) were not clear in *Shuihu zhuan*, then Chen's sequel is meant to illuminate these virtues to his readers. In a manner similar to Jin Shengtan, Cai is quick to note that unless readers are "masterful readers" (*shan du shu zhe* 善讀書者), they are likely to miss out on "the author's intention [to caution against immoral behavior]" 作者之用心.[48]

Cai Ao's indebtedness to Jin Shengtan has already been noted by Ellen Widmer.[49] To further this point, Jin's influence on Cai's commentaries extends beyond the content and organization of Cai's own "how to read" essay. Modeling Jin Shengtan's rhetoric, Cai makes comparisons between *Shiji* and *Shuihu zhuan*, and takes note of the possibilities for misinterpretations of the latter. Rather than compare the principles of writing between the *Shiji* and *Shuihu zhuan*, Cai takes a different approach: to point out the failures of *Shuihu zhuan* to moralize its readers and the failure of *Shuihu houzhuan* to rectify its parent work. With these points, Cai justifies the need for a masterful "commentator" like himself, who can revise and comment on *Shuihu houzhuan* to defend this sequel against misinterpretations.

Like Jin Shengtan, Cai Ao demonstrates a strong conviction about the appropriateness of his interpretation. He insists that *Shuihu houzhuan* surpasses its parent work because of its more obvious moral message. In Cai's view, *Zhongyi Shuihu zhuan* depicts two types of deaths. While certain characters die as a result of their crimes, others suffer an unjust death despite their innocence. As he points out, unlike its parent work, *Shuihu houzhuan* gives focus to depicting the

[48] Cai Ao, "Ping ke Shuihu houzhuan xu" 評刻水滸後傳敘, "in *Gudai xiaoshuo xushu xuba shi lun*, 47-49.
[49] See Ellen Widmer, *Margins of Utopia*, 185-187.

deaths of those who "harm the people" (*hai min* 害民) and "betray the nation" (*wu guo* 誤國). Furthermore, when the Liangshan bandit-heroes kill, they kill based upon "heavenly principle and human emotion" (*tianli renxing* 天理人情) and are completely justified "heroic actions" (*haojie judong* 豪傑舉動).[50]

In Cai Ao's rhetoric, this moral sensibility is what informs Chen's sequel. Admittedly, Chen himself was concerned about the possibilities of readers misinterpreting *Shuihu zhuan* as a call to banditry, which is why he aimed to resolve the tension between *zhong* and *yi*.[51] Yet with Chen's attention to scenes that express the seriousness of sworn fraternal honor, to the degree that "sworn loyalty" (*yi*) begins to replace "loyalty to the emperor" (*zhong*) as the most important code of behavior, Cai Ao felt the need to prevent such glorification of "sworn loyalty" and its tangible expressions of honor (*yiqi*) with commentaries that illuminate Chen's moral perspectives (Cai's own) even more.

This elevation of sworn fraternal honor appears most clearly in chapter 27, with the execution of the four corrupt ministers that was described in the previous section. Informed by the argument that Liangshan bandit-heroes only kill based upon a moral cause, Cai Ao provides a lengthy chapter comment that further justifies their actions:

> According to official history, Cai Jing died not long after he was exiled to Danzhou. Later, even Cai You and forty of Cai Jing's were captured and executed. Tong Guan was also executed after getting captured. In this work it is written that Li Ying and others meet with the traitors . . . the latter who are forced to drink poison and die. [This account] is not meant to conflict with official history. But since the Liangshan group has a long-standing feud with Cai, Tong, and Gao, only death can rectify this matter and put one's [the reader's] mind at ease . . . Indeed, with the brush the author [sequel writer] conveys the law of right and wrong, and to pour emotion [into his writing] and vigorously conform with Heaven's Will [that those who commit crimes and injustices will pay for

[50] Cai Ao, "Shuihu houzhuan du fa" 水滸後傳讀法, in *Gudai xiaoshuo xushu xuba shi lun*, 52.
[51] Yandang Shanqiao [Chen Chen], "Shuihu houzhuan lun lüe," in *Gudai xiaoshuo xushu xuba shi lun*, 42.

their actions] 按正史，蔡京流貶儋州，不久而死，後乃誅其家屬並蔡攸等四十餘人。童貫亦是先竄後誅。今寫作與李應等相遇 . . . 逼令飲鴆而亡，非故與正史相左。蓋蔡、童、高三人皆與山泊諸人各有深仇大怨，非手刃之不足以伸浩氣而快人心 . . . 作者之筆，可謂好惡準人，情予奮符天意 (*CASHHZ*, 27: 330-331).

Concerned with the depiction of the brutal execution of these corrupt officials, Cai's strategy is to control how this chapter will be read by including historical accounts of these officials, aimed to underscore differences between "fiction" and "history." In his view, history records actual events and aims to moralize readers, while fiction is based upon fictitious events and, when misread, can cause readers to poison their own minds and even commit immoral acts based upon a strong sense of righteousness.[52] At the same time, Cai Ao does not deny that Liangshan takes action against Cai, Tong, and Gao, based upon their aim to rectify the unjust deaths of their sworn brothers. With his commentaries, Cai attempts to bring attention to the idea that immoral people, including corrupt officials, will pay for their unjust actions based upon Heaven's Will. Despite glorifying Liangshan for their success in rectifying unjust deaths, the effect of such comments is to shift attention towards the "fictionality" of this scene, which contains behavior that are presumed to be dangerous for readers, and to emphasize historical accounts of the corrupt officials in an effort to edify readers of *Shuihu houzhuan*.

If one is to believe Cai's viewpoint that Chen Chen intended *Shuihu houzhuan* to be a vehicle for transmitting a moral order, then Cai Ao's commentaries do not seem to conflict with Chen's moral agenda. But the sense one gets is that, borrowing the language of morality from the Confucian exegetical tradition, Cai Ao furthers his own moral agenda in his commentaries, disguised as an extension of Chen's authorial intention. The actual effect of Cai's commentaries

[52] Here Cai seems to have borrowed the same rhetoric as Jin Shengtan who notes the different functions between history and fiction. See John Wang, trans., "How to Read the Fifth Book of Genius," in *How to Read the Chinese Novel*, 133.

is the policing of interpretation and the reduction of possibilities for dangerous readings of *Shuihu houzhuan*. With his commentaries, informed by the rhetoric that he is defending the text against misinterpretations, Cai elevates *Shuihu houzhuan* as a sequel that edifies readers and, in his view, surpasses the parent work in this aspect.

**Conclusion**

In the last chapter of *Shuihu houzhuan*, an actor from Chai Jin's acting troupe introduces the manuscript for *Shuihu ji* 水滸記 (Record of the water margin) to him and requests the troupe to perform it. The storyteller describes a few of the scenes performed, including Song Jiang killing Yan Poxi, Li Kui causing a ruckus in the Eastern Capital, and Song Jiang's return to his hometown. Chai Jin then remarks: "Luckily they performed every story! Thinking back now, it all truly seems like a dream. If there is someone who can continue the next volume, today we can happily enjoy the new year in happy reunion" 虧他情節件件做到！回想起來，真是一夢。再有誰人把後本接上，我們今日同賞元宵，大團圓了 (*SHHZ*, 40: 1194-95). In this moment of self-reflexivity,[53] Chen reveals his reverence for the parent work, given the verve in the stories of Song Jiang's glory and Li Kui's violence. At the same time, Chen also hopes his sequel, which presumably remains to be written, will have a place as the proper ending to *Shuihu ji*.

In Chen's rhetoric, the main objective of the "sequel writer" is not to merely copy the parent work, but to correct what it failed to complete. The presence of "author," "sequel writer," and "commentator" is manipulated by Chen to elevate the status of his sequel. Chen's strategy was to transform his "reading" of Li Jun's story, into what he thought would be the proper "ending" for *Zhongyi Shuihu zhuan*. In this process, he also addresses the issue of *zhongyi* that he

[53] "Reflexivity" in novels refer to moments in which the author calls attention to the act of writing. See J.A. Cuddon, *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* (London: Penguin Books, 1998), 735-736.

felt were unresolved in previous editions of *Shuihu zhuan.* For Chen, *zhong* and *yi* cannot be mediated and ultimately causes conflict among the Liangshan bandit-heroes. Li Jun and his band can only express *zhong* as a formality, given the tendency for emperors to be misled by corrupt ministers whose goal is to harm the Liangshan fraternity. On the other hand, in order to rectify *yi,* the Liangshan bandit-heroes need to exact vengeance on those who must pay a debt of blood to their dead leaders; only with such "sacrifice" can the remaining bandit-heroes fulfill the promise of selfless reciprocity among sworn brothers.

With Chen's emphasis on *yi,* the commentator Cai Ao was able to problematize the interpretation of *Shuihu houzhuan* and carve out a space for his commentaries informed by a Confucian moral rhetoric. In Cai's view, although Chen intended to warn readers against immoral behavior in his sequel, since not all readers are "masterful readers," they may read *Shuihu houzhuan* as a call to banditry. By bringing this issue to light, Cai attempts to justify the need for his revisions and commentaries, informed by his agenda to defend this sequel against misinterpretations, specifically readings of the Liangshan bandit-heroes that can potentially incite readers into emulating dangerous heroic behavior.

With both Chen and Cai's editions, *Shuihu houzhuan* offers a look into the hermeneutic interactions between "commentator" and "sequel writer" in the *Shuihu* interpretation complex. This interaction becomes more complicated in later *Shuihu* sequels. As we will see in the next chapter, the author of *Dangkou zhi,* Yu Wanchun, was not as empathetic to Liangshan. Instead of beginning his sequel from the point of Liangshan in "ruins," Yu starts his sequel from the end of Jin's 70-chapter edition, when all 108 bandit-heroes of Liangshan are assembled in the Hall of Loyalty and Righteousness at their height of glory. With *Dangkou zhi* and its accompanying

commentaries, he attempts to reverse the significance of "sworn fraternal honor" by narrating Liangshan's fall from this position of glory, to their gradual decline and dishonorable termination.

# CHAPTER THREE

## Rewriting *Shuihu zhuan*: Rhetoric and Authorial Control in Yu Wanchun's *Dangkou zhi*

### Introduction

In *Dangkou zhi*, Yu tends to provide his "reading" of Jin Shengtan's 70-chapter edition of *Shuihu zhuan*. One scholar has argued that Yu was "convinced that he shares exactly the same view with Jin on the Liangshan rebels."[1] However, this explanation is not entirely sufficient and does not consider the degree to which the textual design, rhetoric, and interpretive agendas of *Dangkou zhi* are shaped by Jin's invention of the theory of two *Shuihu* texts (70-chapter original and 30-chapter sequel) and the sophisticated rhetoric of his commentaries.

In my analysis, I demonstrate that if Jin attempted to decrease the tension between *zhong* and *yi* in the 70-chapter edition, Yu takes an even more radical approach to resolving this tension by "rewriting" rebellion in *Dangkou zhi*. Having constructed an intricate rhetoric of controlling interpretation, Yu Wanchun and the *Dangkou zhi* commentators aim to shape *Shuihu zhuan* into a cautionary tale against rebellion by properly terminating the Liangshan "bandit resistance movement," to have the effect of rectifying the meaning of *zhongyi*. Yu's efforts to exert authorial control by terminating Liangshan is also complicated by the popularity of certain bandit-heroes such as Lin Chong, Lu Zhishen, and Wu Song, forcing Yu to rewrite their respective endings with a desperate heroism not seen in previous editions or sequels. The effect of such rewriting is Yu's elevation of Liangshan's *yiqi* 義氣 (sworn fraternal honor), to end his sequel where it began by reopening up the issue of *zhongyi* that previous commentators and sequel writers had tried to resolve.

[1] Shuihui Yang, "Growing from the Waist: The Problem of Sequeling in Yu Wanchun's *Dangkou zhi*," in *Snakes' Legs*, 146.

## I. (Mis)reading and the Rhetoric of Controlling Interpretation

Yu Wanchun enjoyed a distinguished military career in his lifetime. Between 1831 and 1832, he accompanied his father to Hunan where they led an army to suppress the revolts of local tribes led by Zhao Jinlong 趙金龍 (1779-?).[2] When British forces began invading Guangdong in 1840, Yu advised government military on strategic formations and weaponry, winning the praise of Zhejiang governor Liu Yupo 劉玉坡 (fl 19th c.). Yu was also a writer and authored several works, including texts on horseback archery, incendiary-based weaponry, medicine, and Buddhism.[3] His military activities and interests in such subjects reveals the sensibilities of a serious intellectual caught in an age of political unrest and rapid modernization.[4]

Yu was one of the earliest figures in the late Qing to notice the power of *xiaoshuo* to influence readers.[5] He hoped that by terminating the Liangshan "bandit resistance movement" in *Dangkou zhi*, he could control interpretations of *Shuihu zhuan* and prevent readers from transgressing against imperial authority.[6] Yu's sequel was published posthumously in 1853,[7] and with its message condemning bandits and rebellion, the Qing government found this sequel to be useful as a work of political propaganda to combat growing anti-government sentiments spurred

[2] See Yu Quan, "Xu ke Dangkou zhi xu," in *Gudai xiaoshuo xushu xuba shi lun*, 86-90.
[3] Yu Longguang 俞龍光, "Dangkou zhi shi yu" 蕩寇志識語, in *Gudai xiaoshuo xushu xuba shi lun*, 75-76.
[4] During the final years of his life, Yu even commented to a relative that "disorder began and will end in Guangdong" 亂始於廣東，亂終於廣東. This statement testifies to the degree by which chaos, rebellion, and warfare conditioned Yu's world view. See Yu Quan 俞灥, "Xu ke Dangkou zhi xu" 續刻蕩寇志序, in *Gudai xiaoshuo xushu xuba shi lun*, 88.
[5] This insight was similar to that of "New Fiction" (*xin xiaoshuo* 新小說) advocates such as Liang Qichao (1873-1929), who aimed to realize fiction's power to move the masses. Refer to David Wang, in *Repressed Modernities*, 127; Theodore Huters, *Bringing the World Home: Appropriating the West in Late Qing and Early Republican China*. (Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 2005), 114.
[6] Hulai Daoren 忽來道人 [Yu Wanchun], "Dangkou zhi yinyan" 蕩寇志引言, in *Gudai xiaoshuo xushu xuba shi lun*, 71.
[7] The first woodblock edition was completed in Nanjing in 1853 by Yu's close friends and his son Yu Longguang 俞龍光. See Yu Longguang, "Dangkou zhi shi yu," in *Gudai xiaoshuo xushu xuba shi lun*, 76. Yu Longguang consulted with his father's close friends Fan Jinmen 范金門 and Shao Xunbo 邵循伯 for editorial advice. Fan and Shao would then together write interlineal and end-chapter commentaries for *Dangkou zhi*.

on by the Taiping Rebels. According to one historical account, when the "Red Turbans" (*Hongbing* 紅兵) led by Li Wenmao 李文茂 (d. 1858) began a revolt in the Guangdong and Guangxi regions, the gentry of Guangzhou distributed pocket editions of *Dangkou zhi* among the affected areas to help restore public order.[8] In time the Taiping Rebels became acutely aware of the political agenda embedded in *Dangkou zhi* and the potential for this book to negatively impact their campaign. After Taiping Leader Li Xiucheng 李秀成 (1823-1864) took Suzhou in 1857, he ordered all woodblocks and copies of *Dangkou zhi* to be destroyed.[9]

Yu's message of condemning rebellion had a tangible impact on his readers, which was largely the result of a tightly organized rhetoric of controlling interpretation. An important component of this rhetoric was to claim having access to "authorial intention" (*zhi* 志) of the historical author Shi Nai'an, as Jin had done before in his 70-chapter edition (the parent work of *Dangkou zhi*).[10] With this presumed access, Yu places the onus of interpretation on readers who presumably misunderstand the author's intention to condemn Song Jiang and the Liangshan bandit resistance movement:

> Murder and arson, fighting and pillaging, murdering officials and avoiding capture, sacking cities and capturing towns: [according to bandits] these actions can also be called loyal and righteous! Gentle reader, think about it . . . such claims are truly heretical and perverse which harm the mind and will, and bring infinite damage. Imagine what would happen if such a book [*Shuihu zhuan*] were left unchanged among our society![11]

In Yu's view the danger of *Shuihu zhuan* lies in reader tendencies to misread this novel as a call to banditry. He finds that novice readers will almost always identify too closely with the bravado

[8] Qian Xiang 錢湘, "Xu ke Dangkou zhi xu" 續刻蕩寇志序, in *Gudai xiaoshuo xushu xuba shi lun*, 84.
[9] For a brief textual history of *Dangkou zhi*, refer to Gao Yuhai, *Gudai xiaoshuo xushu xuba shi lun*, 69.
[10] Yu had selected Jin's 70-chapter edition as the sequel's parent work, referred to as *Qian Shuihu zhuan* 前水滸傳 (Original Water Margin). See Hulai Daoren [Yu Wanchun], "Dangkou zhi yinyan," in *Gudai xiaoshuo xushu xuba shi lun*, 71. Jin's "access" to the authorial intention of Shi Nai'an is described in his "Du diwu caizi shu fa" 讀第五才子書法, in *Jin Shengtan quanji*, vol. 3, 28-29.
[11] Hulai Daoren [Yu Wanchun], "Dangkou zhi yinyan," in *Gudai xiaoshuo xushu xuba shi lun*, 71.

of the bandit-heroes and subsequently commit violent, criminal actions. With this claim, Yu begins to generate a need for a masterful "reader" of *Shuihu zhuan*, who doubles as a "sequel writer" that can write a proper sequel and defend this novel against the misinterpretations.

Yu found that one "reader" responsible for opening even more possibilities for dangerous interpretations of *Shuihu zhuan* was a bad "sequel writer." Like Jin Shengtan,[12] Yu blames the "sequel writer" Luo Guanzhong for writing a sequel (last 30 chapters of the 100-chapter edition) based upon a misunderstanding of Shi Nai'an's authorial intention. Reiterating Jin's argument, Yu stresses how Luo damaged *Shuihu zhuan* by distorting the veracity of historical events:

> . . . Now that this book [*Shuihu zhuan*] has been printed and is in circulation, there is nothing I can do to stop it. But Song Jiang, as a historical figure, far from being granted amnesty and given the mandate to quell the Fang La Rebellion, was captured and executed by Zhang Shuye. Since Luo Guanzhong resorted to falsehood to wipe out historical facts, I might as well lay out the facts to debunk the myth, so that generations to come will be able to draw a clear distinction between bandits and men of loyalty and righteousness, a distinction that does not brook the slightest confusion.[13]

Yu seems to be arguing that the "sequel writer" made up the amnesty and bandit quelling campaign narratives. This change to the plot of *Shuihu zhuan* had the effect of blurring boundaries between "evil" bandits and champions of "loyalty and righteousness," to then contradict the presumed authorial intention of Shi Nai'an.

Here the 30-chapter "sequel" is deauthenticated and allows authentication of *Dangkou zhi* which, in Yu's own words, was meant to "end the *Original Water Margin* [first 70 chapters] by [Shi] Nai'an and has absolutely no correlation with the *Water Margin Sequel* [last 30 chapters] "

[12] As Jin notes in his commentaries, his radical deletion of the last 30 chapters served the purpose of "destroying the erroneous sequel [which describes the Liangshan band receiving amnesty]" 破續傳之謬誤 (*JSTSHZ*, 70: 1150).
[13] Hulai Daoren [Yu Wanchun], "Dangkou zhi yinyan" in *Gudai xiaoshuo xushu xuba shi lun*, 71. See Shuhui Yang's partial translation in "Growing from the Waist," 144-45.

結耐庵之《前水滸傳》，與《後水滸》絕無交涉也.[14] Yu's attention to "correlation" is striking because it attests to his dual role as a reader of the parent work (70-chapter edition) and the writer of his sequel (*Dangkou zhi*). Having selected Jin's 70-chapter edition as the "original" (parent work), Yu follows the rhetoric set up in Jin's commentaries that gives focus to claims of defending "authorial intention" and deleting (or dismissing) the "bad" 30-chapter sequel. With these strategies—selecting a parent work, making claims of "authorial intention," and dismissing previous *Shuihu* sequels—Yu carves out a space for *Dangkou zhi* as the "proper" sequel to *Shuihu zhuan*. Furthermore, to give Yu Wanchun more interpretive control, the *Dangkou zhi* commentators construct a dramatic image of Yu as the "sequel writer" within *Dangkou zhi*, by repeatedly praising him as a skillful "reader" of *Shuihu zhuan* (comparable to the literary giant Jin Shengtan) and condemning the bad "sequel writer" who presumably failed to understand authorial intention. Their main agenda is to promote Yu as a sophisticated writer whose sequel is informed by his access to authorial intention and skillful reading of the parent work.

To emphasize the sophistication of Yu's reading of *Shuihu zhuan*, the *Dangkou zhi* commentators shift reader attitudes towards Song's evil nature even more.[15] In their view, there is an urgency to underscore the connection between "reading" Song Jiang and the act of sequeling. Their reasoning is that the "inferior sequel writer [Luo Guanzhong]" (*xudiao zhe* 續貂者) misread Song Jiang as a proponent of "loyalty and righteousness" and wrote a sequel based upon this misinterpretation. Feeling that the "reader" is responsible for properly interpreting a

[14] Yu Wanchun, "Dangkou zhi yinyan," *in Gudai xiaoshuo xushu xuba shi lun*, 71.
[15] The *Dangkou zhi* commentators were convinced by Jin Shengtan's point that Song Jiang was not a champion of "loyalty and righteousness" but an evil bandit, and blame Song for seducing the Liangshan bandit-heroes with his platitudes of "loyalty and righteousness" (*DKZ*, 92: 447).

text,[16] the commentators argue that all readers may "read" (*du* 讀) *Shuihu zhuan*, but will not necessarily "understand" (*jie* 解) it properly and actually "misunderstand" (*bu jie* 誤解) it, as Luo Guanzhong had presumably done:

> Luo Guanzhong made grave misinterpretations: taking what is false as truth . . . Authoring a wretched sequel to a fine work, he misled later generations to believe what is false to be fact; he is truly guilty of having wronged Shi Nai'an [the author of the original 70-chapter *Shuihu zhuan*], and the traitor of Confucian teaching 不解夫羅貫中者，以偽為真 . . . 狗尾續貂，遂令天下後世，將信將疑，誤為事實，是誠施耐庵之罪人，名教中之敗類也.[17]

Echoing Yu's message of condemnation,[18] they believe Luo Guanzhong damaged the integrity of the 70-chapter "original" by distorting historical facts and poisoning the minds of readers with his 30-chapter "sequel." [19] With this critique, the commentators dismiss Luo's 30 chapters as an "improper" sequel, to legitimate *Dangkou zhi* as the "proper" sequel that conforms with the authorial intention of Shi Nai'an and appropriately "concludes the Water Margin" (as suggested by the alternate title of *Dangkou zhi—Jie Shuihu zhuan* 結水滸傳).[20]

Finding that the previous *Shuihu* sequel writers all made the same mistake of damaging the textual integrity of the 70-chapter "original" by including additional narratives, Yu

[16] Another commentator Xu Peike 徐佩珂, Yu's friend and financial backer for the publishing of *Dangkou zhi*, had much to say with regards to Yu's purpose for authoring *Dangkou zhi*, the shortcomings of the "sequel writer" Luo Guanzhong, and the latter's misinterpretations. Xu laments that many readers of this book end up generating "a plethora of misinterpretations" 誤解者甚夥. In Xu's opinion, Luo neglected the authorial intention of Shi Nai'an while writing his 30-chapter "sequel." His failure was in mistakenly valorizing the Liangshan bandit-heroes as loyal and righteous for the sake of making the sequel entertaining, even though these "bandits" are described as committing violent acts and ravishing the lands. See Xu Peike, "Dangkou zhi xu" 蕩寇志序, in *Gudai xiaoshuo xushu xuba shi lun*, 78.

[17] Guyue Laoren 古月老人, "Dangkou zhi xu" 蕩寇志序, in *Gudai xiaoshuo xushu xuba shi lun*, 74.

[18] Hulai Daoren [Yu Wanchun], "Dangkou zhi yinyan" in *Gudai xiaoshuo xushu xuba shi lun*, 71.

[19] See Hulai Daoren [Yu Wanchun], "Dangkou zhi yinyan" in *Gudai xiaoshuo xushu xuba shi lun*, 71.

[20] Guyue Laoren, "Dangkou zhi xu," in *Gudai xiaoshuo xushu xuba shi lun*, 74.

essentially writes a counter-sequel to prevent readers from associating the Liangshan "bandits" with "loyalty and righteousness."[21] He writes:

> [In the original] there is nothing mentioned about Song Jiang receiving amnesty, his efforts in fighting for the dynasty, and his campaign to capture Fang La; nor were there any tales about the bandit-heroes' loyal service to the throne in life and transformation into upstanding gods in death. There was nothing about Li Jun of the Rivers making his way to distant lands across the sea to become the King of Siam either 沒有什麼宋江受了招安，提朝廷出力，征討方臘；生為忠臣，死為正神的話；也並沒有什麼混江李俊投奔海外，做暹羅國王的話 (*DKZ*, epilogue: 1366).

Here, Yu emphasizes that the parent work (Jin's 70-chapter edition) does not mention Liangshan's service to the emperor; their reincarnations after death and their transformations into gods; or Li Jun's journey to become the King of Siam.[22] Yu condemns all previous sequels as "bad" sequels, for presumably having been written based on misunderstandings of authorial intention.[23] By dismissing these sequels as unnecessary "tales" (*hua* 話), Yu tries to legitimate his own sequel, presumably informed by his masterful "reading" of the parent work and presumably in alignment with the author's intention to punish the Liangshan bandit resistance movement.

Admittedly, the sophistication of *Dangkou zhi* is indebted to Jin's specific rhetoric and his invention of the theory of two *Shuihu* texts. However, Yu and the commentators did not always agree with Jin's interpretations. As will be discussed in the next section, as a sophisticated "sequel writer" in competition with the "genius commentator" Jin Shengtan, Yu

[21] According to the commentators, Yu Wanchun defends the 70-chapter "original" against misinterpretations and offers a correction to the 30-chapter sequel. Rather than opening up possibilities for dangerous readings, *Dangkou zhi* moralizes its readers by "venerating imperial power and exterminating the bandits, in order to make the next generation under heaven understand that banditry will only lead to failure since the principle of loyalty and righteousness cannot be appropriated erroneously" 蓋以尊王滅寇為主，而使天下後世，曉然於盜賊之終無不敗，忠義之不容假借混朦. In Xu Peike, "Dangkou zhi xu," in *Gudai xiaoshuo xushu xuba shi lun*, 78.

[22] Corresponding respectively to the 30-chapter "sequel" (of the 100-chapter edition) attributed to Luo Guanzhong; *Hou Shuihu zhuan* by Qinglian shi Zhuren 清廉室主人, and *Shuihu houzhuan* by Chen Chen.

[23] Hulai Daoren [Yu Wanchun], "Dangkou zhi yinyan" in *Gudai xiaoshuo xushu xuba shi lun*, 71.

Wanchun attempts to do what Jin could not: to physically terminate all the bandit-heroes and symbolically "end" the rebellious spirit of the Liangshan bandit resistance movement, thereby having the effect of rectifying the meaning of *zhongyi*.

**II. Rewriting "Great Peace Under Heaven" and "Loyalty and Righteousness"**

While Yu recognized the validity of Jin's textual interventions to construct a stable, "complete" 70-chapter original, he was dissatisfied with the conclusion of Jin's edition for failing to depict the quelling of the Liangshan bandit resistance movement. As I will now argue, to "rewrite" *Shuihu zhuan* into a cautionary tale against rebellion and to rectify the meaning of *zhongyi*, Yu has all 108 Liangshan bandit-heroes (bad rebels) physically terminated, to dismiss the rebellious "sworn brotherhood" (*yi*) they represent. This move has the effect of glorifying the 36 imperial heroes (good rebels) and elevating loyalty to the emperor (*zhong*) as the central concern in *Shuihu zhuan*.

The *Dangkou zhi* commentators found that Jin's interpretations did not always have the intended effect of defending *Shuihu zhuan* against dangerous readings. According to Jin's reading, "The *Water Margin* is a lavish tribute to the 108 bandit-heroes" 一部水滸傳，一百八人總贊 (*JSTSHZ*, prologue: 49). However, the commentators find this point to be a "grave misinterpretation" 大誤 (*DKZ*, epilogue: 1367). They point out that "even with [Jin] Shengtan's commentaries, unenlightened [novice] readers will not understand the actual meaning [of the text]" 縱有聖嘆之評騭，昧昧者不能會其本旨.[24] Yu and the commentators seem to argue that readers will almost always fail to understand the author's intention when they read *Shuihu zhuan*

[24] Xu Peike, "Dangkou zhi xu," in *Gudian xiaoshuo xushu xuba shi lun*, 78.

without commentaries. In their view, even with commentaries by a "genius" commentator like Jin Shengtan, readers are still unable to read the novel as a cautionary tale against rebellion.

One commonality in the writings of both Yu Wanchun and his commentators is a sense of dissatisfaction towards certain aspects of Jin's edits, deletions, and commentaries. As a "reader" of the 70-chapter edition, Yu was aware of Jin's addition of the purportedly "true" ending which depicts the execution of all the Liangshan bandit-heroes in Lu Junyi's dream (*JSTSHZ*, 70: 1234-1235). Yu found that since Jin ended *Shuihu zhuan* without terminating the bandit-heroes, he ignored the fact that the original author "never fails to describe the evil of Song Jiang" 無一字不描寫宋江的奸惡; not only that, apparently Jin failed to adequately emphasize that the Liangshan fraternity may "verbally speak of loyalty and righteousness but are actually bandits at heart" 口裡忠義，心裡強盜.[25]

Based on Yu's reading, Jin only symbolically terminated the Liangshan bandits, an issue that needed to be addressed by a proper sequel that narrates Liangshan's fall from glory, their decline, and their physical termination. Near the conclusion of *Dangkou zhi*, the imperial heroes are led by Zhang Shuye, Chen Xizhen, and Yun Tianbiao to storm the Liangshan establishment. The "bandits" are captured and are forced on their knees in front of the Hall of Loyalty and Righteousness. Among the capturees is Lu Junyi, who realizes that his dream of termination has become a reality (*DKZ*, 136: 1278-79). With the scene of Lu Junyi's dream as recurrent "event," Yu has deftly applied the writing principle of "advanced insertion" (*daocha fa* 倒插法) to recall the significance of this dream in the beginning and its realization in the conclusion.[26] Having

[25] Hulai Daoren [Yu Wanchun], "Dangkou zhi yin yan," in *Gudai xiaoshuo xushu xuba shi lun*, 71.
[26] In Jin's "how to read" essay, he includes "advanced insertion" (*daocha fa*) which describes the technique of placing events or characters in an earlier part of a narrative, to foreshadow the importance it will take on later. See John Wang, trans., "How to Read The Fifth Book of Genius," 140.

structured a "beginning" and "conclusion" narrative loop, Yu prepares to physically terminate the Liangshan bandit resistance movement and correct Jin's failure to punish Liangshan in the parent work. Now the lives of the "bandits" are at the mercy of the "heroes" who, in Yu's opinion, truly embody "loyalty and righteousness" in history and in fiction.[27]

Yu's deft recall of Lu Junyi's dream (which has become a reality near the end of *Dangkou zhi*) functions as a comment on the phrase "Great Peace Under Heaven" (*tianxia taiping* 天下太平) that Lu sees right before he wakes up at both the end of the parent work and the beginning of the sequel. He is convinced that if the Liangshan rebels continue to engage in banditry, "it will be hard to avoid the coming disaster! [execution of Liangshan fraternity members, referring to his dream]" 這般景象難保不來 (*DKZ*, 71: 4-5). Here one detects a piercing irony in the juxtaposition between Lu's dream of execution and his witnessing of execution. Despite Lu's hope that the Liangshan rebels can avoid termination, the "reader" already knows that Lu's dream, where all Liangshan "bandits" are executed to usher in "Great Peace Under Heaven," will become a reality. With the recurrence of Lu Junyi's dream in beginning and conclusion, Yu essentially justifies the need to realize *tianxia taiping* with a proper sequel depicting the physical termination of the Liangshan bandit resistance movement.

In Yu's view, *tianxia taiping* fails to be realized in the parent work even with the assistance of Jin's commentaries, because of the difficulty involved in reading the character Song Jiang, who represents the greatest degree of corruption and who has convinced the Liangshan

[27] Yu's sequel attempts to bring the *Shuihu* narrative back to historical fact, by having the "bad rebels" captured or slain by government troops led by Zhang Shuye, who has been historically attributed with the capture and execution of Song Jiang and his bandit group. Refer to Hulai Daoren [Yu Wanchun], "Dangkou zhi yin yan," in *Gudai xiaoshuo xushu xuba shi lun*, 71.

fraternity that he is the "Loyal and Righteous Song Gongming" 忠義宋公明.[28] Yu cautions readers against believing Song's claim to be a defender of "loyalty and righteousness" and attempts to shift reader attitudes by "commenting" on the falsehood of this title in the exchange of rhetoric between Song Jiang and leader of the "good" rebels Chen Xizhen. The irony lies in the discrepancy between Song's claim to uphold *zhongyi* and his tendency to commit evil actions. As the commentators note, Song Jiang and his band of "bad" rebels appropriate *zhongyi* as their code of honor and simultaneously commit crimes that negatively impact the Shandong locale. Compared with their "bad" counterparts, Chen Xizhen and his group of "good" rebels also speak of *zhongyi*, but whose words are backed by an honoring of this code since they never take action without moral justifications.[29]

In a letter to Chen, Song claims that *zhongyi* is the greatest virtue in his life and hopes Chen can join him as another "champion of loyalty and righteousness" 忠義之士 (*DKZ*, 92: 449). Having read Song's letter, Chen immediately sees through Song's scheme[30] and writes a scathing response. Much of Chen's rhetoric is based upon a moral code, which Chen believes Song Jiang abandoned by manipulating the "false reputation of loyalty and righteousness" 假忠義之名. While Song Jiang hides behind his empty rhetoric of *zhongyi*, Chen Xizhen strings together a combination of deftly placed remarks and sharp critiques to expose Song's deception: "How outstanding that you speak loftily of Loyalty and Righteousness, [Song] Gongming" 卓哉公明，談忠論義! In Chen's opinion, Song Jiang and his group are foolish to believe that "banditry is a

[28] Here, the commentators state that Yu Wanchun's sequel is meant to "reverse [revise] the title Song Gongming, the Loyal and Righteous" 換忠義宋公明 (*DKZ*, 137: 1289).
[29] See *DKZ*, 82: 242-243. The commentators highlight the discrepancy between Liangshan's commitment to carry out the way on behalf of heaven and their evil actions.
[30] Song Jiang's use of *zhongyi* does not have the rhetorical effect he anticipated. Here *zhongyi* becomes a device to force Chen to ascend Liangshan. Previously, Song Jiang blames the assassination of the imperial emissary, responsible for delivering the amnesty letter to Liangshan, on Chen's daughter, Chen Liqing (*DKZ*, 92: 454).

shortcut to officialdom" 綠林為終南捷徑. To expose the hypocrisy of Song's claim to "Carry out the Way on Behalf of Heaven" (*titian xingdao* 替天行道), Chen reverses this adage, exclaiming that Song Jiang and his group have actually "transgressed against Heaven and harmed the Way" (*nitian haidao* 逆天害道) by stealing, pillaging, and killing without proper justifications (*DKZ*, 94: 480-81).

Although Song Jiang believes his ambitions for power can be realized with a reputation of *zhongyi*, the discrepancy between Song's claims and actions lead to his demise. Realizing that his campaign is nearing its end, Song Jiang escapes and hides in a local village. Song Jiang inadvertently reveals his identity to locals while talking in his sleep. Feeling afraid that such a high-profile bandit is among them, the locals tie him up. Song then confesses to be the "real" Song Gongming and asks his two capturers their names, which he discovers to be Jia Zhong 賈忠 and Jia Yi 賈義. To Song Jiang's surprise, they turn him into the authorities. Song then laments that he will "die at the hands of false loyalty and righteousness" 死在假忠假義之手 (*DKZ*, 137: 1296-1299). Here Yu ends Song Jiang's story with a touch of sharp and comical irony. It is not Song Jiang's crimes or the crimes of the Liangshan bandit-heroes that cause his death; with Yu's reinterpretation of the title "Loyal and Righteous Song Gongming," the false claims of *zhongyi* become the cause of Song Jiang's capture and signals the proper "end" of the Liangshan bandit resistance movement.

Pitting Song Jiang's empty rhetoric against Chen Xizhen's moral rhetoric has the effect of underscoring what Andrew Plaks calls the distorting or cheapening of *zhongyi* in *Shuihu zhuan*, to the point "at which the compound [*zhangyi*, "take honorable action"] 仗義 comes to mean little more than loose purse strings, where [*jieyi*, "swear an oath of fraternal honor"] 結義

can be assumed by any confederation of thugs, where [*juyi*, "assemble for an honorable cause"] 聚義 takes on the menacing message 'join us or else.'"[31] In other words, in the hands of "bandits" *zhongyi* becomes a tool used to justify theft, murder, and a "gang morality."[32] Now in *Dangkou zhi*, Yu Wanchun furthers this critique of the Liangshan bandit resistance movement, with the message that a bandit like Song Jiang—charismatic, generous, but manipulative and deceptive in his claim to be a champion of *zhongyi*—represents the greatest degree of corruption.

In Yu's rhetoric, this corruption is gift-wrapped as a reciprocal bond between friends who swear an oath of immutable honor (*yiqi*). Yu's main concern is that if Song Jiang is read as a champion of *zhongyi*, readers may also be misled into believing any bandit can claim to embody *zhongyi*, despite the crimes they have committed. He aims to correct what he considered the mistake of Jin's 70-chapter edition: the failure to completely disassociate *zhongyi* from the Liangshan bandit-hero resistance movement. Such assumed "misinterpretations" on the part of Jin Shengtan enabled Yu to justify the need to rectify the meaning of *zhongyi* through the act of sequeling, in ways that previous *Shuihu* commentaries and sequels had failed to do.

Admittedly, all 108 heroes are either killed, captured, or executed by the end of *Dangkou zhi*. This is not to say that Yu Wanchun did not admire the Liangshan bandit-heroes. For some of the most popular characters such as Guan Sheng, Lin Chong, Lu Zhishen, and Wu Song, Yu makes efforts to give them "honorable" ends, in a way that could simultaneously condemn the Liangshan bandit-hero resistance movement but also elevate the status of those characters that he considered to be the finest heroes of *Shuihu zhuan*.

[31] Andrew H. Plaks, *Four Masterworks of the Ming Novel*, 352.
[32] C.T. Hsia, *The Classic Chinese Novel*, 87.

## III. Desperate Heroism and Character Doubles

An important problem of reading *Dangkou zhi* is understanding Yu Wanchun's simultaneous efforts to condemn the bandit-heroes for their transgressions against imperial authority and to valorize their heroic behavior on the battlefield. Yu finds that many of these bandit-heroes are only partially responsible for their actions and blames Song Jiang for persuading Liangshan members that they are fighting for an honorable cause. According to Yu, unlike the first Liangshan leader Chao Gai the "Pagoda-Holding King of Heaven" 托塔天王, Song Jiang has no qualms about accumulating wealth or material goods by unjust means. When Shi Qian the "Flea on a Drum" 鼓上蚤 steals a chicken from locals, Chao Gai considers executing him for damaging Liangshan's sworn fraternal honor with his act of theft (*Outlaws,* 47: 1000-1001). By contrast, in *Dangkou zhi*, Song Jiang is pleased with Shi Qian when he steals rice from the locals (*DKZ*, 98: 571). The larger implication of Song's attitude towards the act of theft is that the Liangshan fraternity appears more as a bandit resistance movement in Yu's sequel because they rob and kill without proper justifications, given the evil of their leader Song Jiang, who may speak of *zhongyi* but fails to lead based upon the moral behavior that *zhongyi* demands.

By emphasizing Song Jiang's wickedness as the cause of Liangshan's depravity, Yu can now depict many of the bandit-heroes as "honorable." After hearing from an immortal that they are destined to lose their lives in future military campaigns (*DKZ*, 98: 569), the bandit-heroes become even more steadfast in fighting towards glorified deaths. In this sequel they now embody a "desperate heroism" that attests to the authenticity of their "sworn fraternal honor" (*yiqi*). The prophecy given by the immortal corresponds to the narrative arc of *Dangkou zhi* where all "bad" rebels (Liangshan) must meet their end at the hands of "good" rebels (government forces).

I will now argue that Yu's efforts to condemn Liangshan and shape reader interpretations sometimes escapes "authorial" control. Given the popularity of these bandit-heroes and Yu's own admiration of them, Yu reinterprets "sworn fraternal honor" by making the bandit-heroes appear even more uninhibited, courageous, and daring as they fight endlessly towards each of their respective "terminations" (*jie* 結).

At the Liangshan establishment, Song Jiang and other chieftains receive news that Yun Tianbiao has amassed a large army to besiege Mt. Qingzhen. Song Jiang gathers over 36000 troops to prepare for Liangshan's first major military campaign against government forces. They travel day and night to Mt. Qingzhen, where they begin the first of many bloody battles with government troops (*DKZ*, 99: 573). Leading the troops are Yang Zhi, Mu Chun, and Xue Yong, who are all famous for their unmatched skills with various types of weaponry. They are later surrounded and appear to have no way of retreating. Collected and unperturbed, Yang Zhi declares "why not simply battle to the death" 何不索性拼個死戰? In the voice of the storyteller, Yu immediately describes these heroes fighting off government troops with an unprecedented fierceness despite being outnumbered. In this "fight of desperation" 死命相爭, Mu Chun and Xue Yong die in battle, while Yang Zhi suffers several wounds and escapes with his life (*DKZ*, 99: 584-585).

Compared with Liangshan's complete assembly in the Hall of Loyalty and Righteousness at the end of the 70-chapter edition, in *Dangkou zhi* the bandit-heroes stand out even more by constantly living in glorious moments of battle as a rugged, honorable fraternity, desperately

fighting against the prestigious and powerful government troops.[33] Even after gaining knowledge of their destined termination, each character fights honorably toward his death: "treated with a touch of tragic heroism" that underscores the tension between their fate and their will,[34] a tension that also informs the trials each hero must face to prove the authenticity of his sworn fraternal honor.

Yu's strategy is to juxtapose the courage and military prowess of "good" rebels with "bad" rebels, to simultaneously deliver an ideological message of condemnation and to elevate Liangshan as a group of sworn brothers united by their convictions to defend the fraternity in life and in death.[35] The juxtaposition of Guan Sheng the "Great Blade" 大刀 with his "double" Yun Tianbiao is a case in point. Yun is the epitome of a Confucian "scholar-general" (*rujiang* 儒將) well-versed in both classical learning and military strategy.[36] His military prowess gains the attention of Guan Sheng, who leaps at the opportunity to test himself against Yun. Their first battle lasts 100 rounds without determining victor and loser. What emerges in the interaction between Yun Tianbiao and Guan Sheng is a feeling of competitive rivalry that allows their heroic behavior to stand out in magnificence:

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[33] The commentators write, "This chapter [which describes] the attack on Zhengyi village, is the author writing about the prestige and power of the government troops? Is he writing about the sincerity of the local militia? No, it writes of the heroism and magnificence of the Liangshan heroes. The government troops with such intelligence and courage, properly advance and retreat, their martial abilities unmatched; the local militia with such honesty, willingly share their provisions and are indeed courageous and bold. But the Liangshan heroes are still able fight battle after battle and remain vigilant left and right, always unwilling to compromise their principles of martial action. What gives them such powerful momentum? It must be [written this way] as part of the great 'militaristic strategy' [writing strategy of the author] by which the bandits are eliminated or captured in the latter half of the sequel" 此回攻打正一村，寫官兵聲勢乎？寫鄉勇真誠乎？非也，仍寫梁山雄壯耳。官軍如此智勇，進退合度，武藝超群；鄉勇如此歸誠，衣食仰給，勇敢有為。而梁山尚能一戰再戰，左顧右盼，總不忍稍失機宜，其聲勢為何如哉？必如此而後半部殲除群盜，擒獲巨魁，方是絕大韜略 (*DKZ*, 99: 587).

[34] David Wang, *Repressed Modernities*, 133.

[35] See Shuhui Yang, "Growing From the Waist," in *Snakes' Legs*, 153. Yang argues that because of Yu's tendency to use the Liangshan bandit-heroes as "archetypes" for the imperial heroes, he is giving full testimony to the artistic superiority of the original. However, this explanation does not take into full consideration the other function of the imperial heroes in *Dangkou zhi*: to act as foils and thereby elevate the status of the Liangshan bandit-heroes.

[36] A term often used by the *Dangkou zhi* commentators to describe Yun Tianbiao.

> When Tianbiao was just about to enter battle, the gate watchman reported, "Guan Sheng spoke wild words and challenged Your Excellency to a battle to the death." Tianbiao became furious and immediately saddled upon his horse with spear in hand, leading five hundred of his best machete-wielding soldiers outside the camp to set up in battle formation and engage the enemy . . . With spear in hand and saddled on his steed, Guan Sheng spoke, "Tianbiao you tactless bastard! Today you will die by my hand!" Tianbiao charged in full force and cursed Guan Sheng, "Traitorous beast! Ten thousand deaths would still be considered light punishment, if it were not for my Green Dragon Spear to chop off that dog head of yours!" 天彪正要出戰，轅門上來報：「關勝單挑相公廝殺，口出狂言。」天彪大怒，霍的提刀上馬，帶那五百名砍刀手出營迎敵，就雪地上擺開. . . 關勝橫刀躍馬，高叫：「天彪匹夫，今日必死吾手！」天彪一馬飛出，大罵：「背君禽獸，萬死猶輕，可惜我這口青龍寶刀砍你這狗頭！」 (*DKZ*, 91: 423-424)

In this scene the tension between *zhong* and *yi* is increased with the juxtaposition between Yun Tianbiao and Guan Sheng: the former who fights for the honor of the emperor, and the latter who fights tirelessly to defend Liangshan's sworn fraternal honor. Yun responds appropriately for a hero of his stature—with a dignified rage at the fact that a lowly "bandit" (Guan Sheng) has challenged him on the battlefield. The only way they can put their rivalry at ease is by fighting to the death in the name of manly honor.

Having tested each other in martial prowess, these two characters share heroic status that crosses boundaries of "good" and "bad" rebels; as heroes they both bear a likeness in mentality and physicality to Guan Yu 關羽 (?-220), the deity of war and sworn brotherhood. Although Guan Sheng shows even more conviction in defending his manhood and the honor of the fraternity in battle, his attachment to "honor" causes him to act based upon a dignified "rage" (*nu* 怒) and to lose sight of the strategic maneuvers needed to ensure victory:

> [Yun Tianbiao] waved his blade and attacked Guan Sheng in full force. Guan became furious and flourished his blade to engage him. On their steeds both heroes clashed together. In the snow they fought one hundred and sixty rounds; all one could see was a stark, wintry aura emerge from the murderous atmosphere of battle. Soldiers on both sides watched with fear in their hearts . . . After battling for some time, Yun Tianbiao and Guan Sheng had finished over 200 rounds. Yun Tianbiao feared his horse was fatigued. With the deft counter of his blade, he feigned defeat and returned to military

> formation. Guan Sheng yelled, "You tactless yokel, you cannot deceive me with that dragging blade trick! I'm not afraid of you!" On horse he galloped forward in chase 揮刀直取關勝。一關勝大怒，舞刀相迎。兩馬相交，在雪地上鬥經一百五六十合，只見一片寒光托住兩條殺氣. 兩軍看得盡皆駭然. . . 天彪、關勝又戰夠多時，大約已是二百餘合。天彪生恐馬乏，只得虛掩一刀，詐敗回陣。關勝大叫：「匹夫休使拖刀計，我豈懼你！」驟馬追來 (*DKZ*, 91: 424).

Here, the reader views this magnificent duel from the perspectives of both government troops and rebel forces. We simultaneously cheer for Guan Sheng and Yun Tianbiao, yet Yun seems to have a strategic advantage over Guan. Having learned the "dragging blade tactic" (*tuo dao ji* 拖刀計) that made Guan Yu famous,[37] Yun deftly feigns defeat and leads Guan into an ambush:

> After Fu Yu waited a while near the flagged gates, he saw Guan Sheng give chase. Seeing Guan was close enough, Fu Yu ordered the Yuanbi troops to release the flying hammers . . . Guan Sheng only paid attention to Tianbiao's dragging blade tactic and could not prevent the enemy ambush . . . The flying hammers had already been released; Guan Sheng failed to dodge them in time and was struck right in the chest. Guan Sheng nearly fell to the ground but got back to his horse and fled. Yun Tianbiao turned his horse around to give chase, when He Siwen and Xuan Zan fought desperately to stave off enemy forces and save Guan Sheng. Fu Yu then ordered his troops to kill without discrimination; the five hundred government troops battled courageously while the bandit troops; their morale failing, they began to flee and were decimated by the government troops, turning the snow completely blood-red 傅玉在旗門邊等夠多時，見關勝追來，覷得親切，運動猿臂，一飛錘抨去 . . . 關勝只顧天彪的拖刀計，不防有人暗算 . . . 飛錘早到，急閃不迭，胸坎上打個正著。關勝幾乎墜地，回馬便走。天彪勒回馬追來，郝思文、宣贊殺出，死命敵住，救回關勝。傅玉驅兵掩殺，五百砍刀手奮勇殺上，賊兵無心廝殺，盡皆逃走，吃官兵殺死無數，滿地都是紅雪 (*DKZ*, 91: 424).

Guan Sheng believed he had won the battle of words at the beginning of their battle by calling Yun Tianbiao a "tactless yokel" (*pifu* 匹夫) for presumably having guts but no brains. The irony is that Guan Sheng now becomes the *pifu* who, with his reckless courage, has fallen for the dragging blade tactic that had made his distant ancestor Guan Yu famous.

[37] Guan Yu battles with Huang Zhong for one hundred rounds, discovering Huang is a worthy opponent. Guan decides to fight with intelligence rather than brute strength, and then employs the "dragging blade tactic" to defeat him. See *Sanguo yanyi* 三國演義 (Taipei: Sanmin shuju, 2006), 53: 452-453.

In other words, Yun uses Guan Sheng's own tactics against him on the battlefield,[38] and Guan is thus responsible for his own defeat. With this allusion to Guan Yu and his famous "dragging blade tactic," Yu Wanchun twists Guan Sheng's heroic image to make him appear more daring and heroic than in the parent work. However, ironically Guan's death is not caused by the blade of the enemy; he is responsible for his own death, caused by wounds accrued after falling for Yun's (symbolically, Guan Sheng's own) dragging blade tactic (*DKZ* 92: 441). Guan Sheng's hubris thus lies in the heightened confidence of his own martial prowess and his failure to evade the trap set up by his "double" Yun Tianbiao. Guan's stature could only be taken to greater heights if he bears responsibility for his own death: an "end" justified by his dedication to "sworn fraternal honor" and necessitated by Yu's agenda to disassociate *zhongyi* from the Liangshan bandit resistance movement.

**IV. Lin Chong and the Deflation of Vindictive Honor**

Yu Wanchun designates the 36 imperial heroes as the men of loyalty and righteousness (*zhongyi*), who often function as the voice of Confucian ethics that inform interactions between rulers and subjects. These heroes are foils to the 108 "bandits," who represent the voice of sworn fraternal honor (*yiqi*). With this point in mind, this section will now examine how two types of honor (*zhongyi* vs. *yiqi*) are complicated in the "rewrite" of the ex-military instructor Lin Chong the "Pantherhead" 豹子頭 and his journey towards vindication.[39]

[38] Guan Sheng is described using this strategy during his battle against Shan Tinggui. See *JSTSHZ*, 66: 1192.

[39] *Zhong* refers to loyalty to the emperor, while *yi* refers to selfless reciprocity among friends. *Yiqi* is an extended interpretation of *yi*, but with an added quality. Now selfless reciprocity among friends is informed by a solemn oath of life and death among sworn brothers, which necessitates that they defend their honor at all costs. In the context of *Dangkou zhi*, imperial heroes can embody *zhongyi* by remaining loyal the emperor and demonstrating selfless reciprocity to other heroes with the same political alignment. But such an embodiment differs tremendously compared with the *yiqi* of Liangshan bandit-heroes, which does not require *zhong* as precedent.

In *Shuihu zhuan*, Lin Chong is forced to join the Liangshan rebels after suffering injustice at the hands of Young Master Gao (the adopted son of Gao Qiu), known among locals as the "lecherous tyrant." When Gao repeatedly tries to harass his wife, Lin Chong wants to take action but is forced to keep his anger to himself because Gao's adoptive father is Lin's boss. Young Master Gao complains to Lu Qian who devises a plan to frame Lin Chong. Accused of attempting to assassinate Gao at his residence,[40] Lin Chong loses his military instructor position and is tattooed as a criminal. Surviving against all odds and trials that to his martial prowess, he escapes to Liangshan and becomes a head chieftain, but later discovers his wife committed suicide after Gao attempted to force her into marriage (*Outlaws*, 19: 368).

Central to Lin Chong's narrative is the issue of "revenge" which is often emphasized in *Shuihu* narrative cycles that include hero, victim and perpetrator. Perhaps the most famous episode depicting "retribution" is the plot involving Wu Song, Wu the Elder, and Pan Jinlian. Having successfully fending off the sexual advances of his sister-in-law Pan Jinlian, Wu Song leaves the household of his elder brother, but discovers upon returning that the latter has been poisoned to death. Wu Song eventually captures the perpetrators—Pan Jinlian, Ximen Qing, and Madam Wang—and then sacrifices them to the spirit of Wu the Elder. In this narrative cycle, the hero has captured the perpetrators who pay a blood debt to the victim's spirit.

One problem shared among *Shuihu* sequels previous to *Dangkou zhi* is that corrupt officials (perpetrators) responsible for the unjust deaths of sworn brothers or family members (victims) never face retribution that must be is carried out by a member of the Liangshan

[40] The storyteller implies that Lu Qian has a weapon seller appear in front of Lin Chong to arouse his interest in purchasing a precious sword. Later, Lu Qian lures Lin Chong to Marshall Gao's residence, under the pretense that Gao wishes to compare the quality of his sword with Lin's newly acquired one. Lin Chong walks into the inner sanctum to find Marshall Gao, who scolds Lin for entering an area that strictly prohibits weapons. Feigning fear of assassination, Gao orders his guards to apprehend Lin Chong (*Outlaws,* 7: 162-166).

fraternity (heroes).[41] Yu's strategy is to rewrite "revenge" by exaggerating the ritualistic, violent sacrifice of perpetrators often necessitated by unjust deaths of one's sworn brothers in *Shuihu zhuan* and its sequels. Violent sacrifice, in the form of paying a blood debt—dragging out the perpetrator's heart, liver, and entrails to be offered to the deceased at the spirit altar—[42] was presumably not enough to underscore what Yu thought to be the true message regarding revenge in *Shuihu zhuan.* With a re-presentation of the character Lin Chong, Yu could interpret "revenge" in the context of *zhongyi* and with a touch of parody that makes the Liangshan fraternity appear cultish and cannibalistic compared with the imperial heroes.

Having harbored resentment for so long after Young Master Gao challenged his honor, Lin Chong feels gratified to have the chance of vindicating himself by physical mutilating and murdering Gao. After Gao is tied up, Lin Chong requests the chef to "prepare" Gao the way mutton is prepared and plans to consume Gao's flesh and blood. Gao is then "dragged away" (*qianxia* 牽下), "washed up" (*xi* 洗), and "cut clean" (*gua* 刮) like the carcass of an animal. Lin Chong and the other Liangshan members set up banquet tables and spirit altars, to prepare for their ritual of sacrifice:

> Song Jiang then ordered, "First bring three cups of Gao's blood to present to Lin's wife." Everyone responded in unison and poked three holes into Marshall Gao. On both sides of his body they drained blood into ceremonial cups. Song Jiang had all the chieftains perform ceremonial rites . . . After three rounds of drinking, Lin Chong ordered the chef to cook Gao's eyes the same way goat eyes are cooked. One of the lackeys then scooped out Gao's eyes with a sharp knife, splattering blood all over Gao's face 宋江便吩咐:「先取三杯血酒來祭奠林娘子。」左右一聲答應，衙內身上早已三個窟窿。左右將血灑捧上，宋江率眾頭領依次祭奠 . . . 飲至三巡，林沖方命用羊眼熟炒之法，一個嘍啰便把尖刀向衙內眼眶一挖，鮮血滿面 (*DKZ*, 98: 558-560).

[41] They end up sacrificing Cai Jing, Gao Qiu, Tong Guan, and Cai You, to honor the spirits of their dead brothers. Yet this scene serves to emphasize the bonds of sworn loyalty, rather than to resolve Lin Chong's failure to vindicate himself. See my analysis of this scene in chapter two, section V of this dissertation, "Death, Ghosts, and Blood Debts: The Rectification of Sworn Loyalty."

[42] See the scene depicting Wu Song's disembodiment of Pan Jinlian, in *Outlaws*, 25: 498.

While this scene of ritualistic sacrifice appears to validate Lin Chong's honor, here Yu has rewritten "revenge" as a primal, almost cannibalistic tendency that can be mistaken as the tangible expression of "honor" in the Liangshan fraternity. With this move, Yu is better prepared to argue that the rhetoric of morality (*zhongyi*) almost always overcomes the rhetoric of honor (*yiqi*) in the interaction between Wang Jin and Lin Chong.

The disappearance of the character Wang Jin puzzled both *Shuihu* commentators and sequel writers.[43] Jin Shengtan proposed an allegorical reading of Wang Jin as the symbol of "moral governance" (*wang dao* 王道). According to Jin's interpretation, Wang's disappearance is a narrative device that signals the end of benevolent government and the beginning of rebellion in the novel.[44] Dissatisfied with Jin's interpretation that the "departure" (*qu* 去) of Wang Jin foreshadows the "arrival" (*lai* 來) of the bandit-heroes,[45] Yu reverses Jin Shengtan's interpretation to emphasize that "Wang Jin arrives and the 108 bandit-heroes depart " 王進來而一百八人去.[46] Yu's assumption is that Wang Jin is central to the textual design of the parent work: symbolizing the decline of "moral order" (Wang Jin) and the beginning of "rebellion" (108 bandit-heroes). Now with Yu's refutation of Jin's interpretation, in *Dangkou zhi* Wang's return to the narrative represents the restoration of "moral order" and the end of "rebellion."

[43] Both Jin Shengtan and Yu Wanchun were dissatisfied with the disappearance of Wang Jin in *Shuihu zhuan*. As a commentator likely working with previous editions of *Shuihu zhuan*, the limitations of these materials had great impact on Jin's inability to "rewrite" Wang Jin into his 70-chapter edition. It is also possible Jin did not find such a revision would be convincing to readers. But Jin's multiple roles as editor, commentator and revisionary author gave him a certain degree of flexibility to shift the readers' attention towards his interpretations of *Shuihu zhuan*. By contrast, Yu Wanchun enjoyed a different kind of positionality as a sequel writer. He could continue, supplement, or correct the narratives in ways that a commentator could not.

[44] Based on Jin Shengtan's reading of the name Wang Jin. Refer to *JSTSHZ*, 1: 58-59.

[45] Jin comments, "Wang Jin leaves and the 108 bandit-heroes arrive" 王進去而一百八人來 (*JSTSHZ*, 1: 58-59).

[46] See the commentaries in *DKZ*, 133: 1236.

After Wang Jin is framed by Gao Qiu and loses his position as head military instructor, he joins Military Governor Zhong along the northwestern borders to fight against armies of the Tangut Empire. When Governor Zhong hears of Zhang Shuye's campaign against the Liangshan bandit resistance movement, he sends Wang Jin to help lead imperial troops (*DKZ*, 133: 1220). Yu's narration of what happened to Wang Jin after his disappearance has the effect of presenting an alternative narrative for bandit-heroes who felt they were "forced to join the Liangshan rebels" (*bishang Liangshan* 逼上梁山), that is, forced to break the law while taking heroic action or having been wronged by corrupt people in power.

With the juxtaposition of Lin Chong and Wang Jin, Yu offers a "reading" of how to distinguish between Liangshan "bandit" and imperial "hero" in *Shuihu zhuan*. Lin and Wang battle over 200 hundred rounds without determining a victor. Although Lin Chong insists on continuing their duel, Wang Jin later forces him to engage in a competition of rhetoric:

> Wang Jin laughed and said, "Today victor and loser have been determined. Why must we decide once more?" Lin Chong glared at him: "What do you mean?" Wang Jin said, "What is there to say? In the beginning when I was at the Eastern Capital, I heard you had some abilities. Later when I was in Yan'an, I heard you became chief military instructor but then broke the imperial law, got tattooed as a criminal, and finally got exiled. Then I heard you joined the Liangshan bandits. I said to myself, you're just a lowly punk with mediocre understanding of spear fighting at best! Today witnessing your military prowess, indeed you are very powerful. Yet I resent your blindness. In the first half of your life you served Marshall Gao and got toyed with by those crooked soldiers. In the second half, you joined Song Jiang's ranks and fell for the infamy of banditry, polluting your abilities and sullying your honor. Now the Liangshan establishment is at the brink of destruction . . . I am a famed general of the court, but you're a washed-up prisoner. We came from the same place, but arrived at two different endings. What a shame!" 王進哈哈大笑道：「今日勝負已分，何須再分勝負。」林沖圓睜兩目道：「此話怎講？」王進道：「有甚怎講！當初我在東京，聞得你有些本事。後來我在延安，聞得你充當教頭，又說你犯了王法，刺配遠方，又說你投奔梁山，做了強盜。我只道你是個下流，不過略懂些槍棒，今日看你武藝，果然高強。只可恨你不生眼珠子，前半世服侍了高二，吃些軍犯魔頭；後半世歸依了宋江，落個強徒名望，埋沒了一生本事，受盡了多少腌臢。到如今，你山寨危亡就在目前 . . . 我王進作朝廷名將，你林沖為牢獄囚徒，同是一樣出身，變作兩般結局，可惜嚇可惜！」(*DKZ*, 133: 1225-1226).

For Wang Jin, a hero's military prowess is not enough to determine victor and loser, but a hero's abidance to a moral code can ensure success on the battlefield. He notes that Lin Chong has some above-average martial abilities, but faced with adversity, he chose to flee and become a Liangshan rebel. Wang Jin's tirade against Lin Chong suggests that a hero's honor must be strictly aligned with the moral code of "loyalty and righteousness." In the voice of Wang Jin, Yu suggests that the imperial hero's mind, with its proclivity towards morality, is a much sharper "weapon" than the blade of a hero-turned-bandit with mediocre knowledge of spear fighting. It is this moral code associated with imperial authority, rather than a code of honor based on military prowess, that determines the "ending" (*jieju* 結局) in a man's life.

In the battle of rhetoric, Lin Chong has been verbally stripped of his greatest strengths: the superiority of his military prowess and his knowledge of spear fighting. His only "weapon" now is the rhetoric of sworn fraternal honor: "Shut the hell up! The court employed corrupt officials and harmed good people, forcing them into a bitter life. They had nowhere to go, until they decided to make a path for themselves. You have never had such an experience and don't know what they hell you're talking about" (*DKZ*, 133: 1226). Wang Jin is not fazed at all by Lin Chong's appeal to the common struggle of all his sworn brothers who were wronged by corrupt officials. Wang immediately counters with his rhetoric of Confucian ethics:

> Wang Jin laughed and said, "Making a path for oneself? What you have gained previously is now long gone. Think about it! As for me lacking such experiences, you are sorely mistaken! Like you, I was a chief instructor in the general's hall. Like you, I was suppressed by Gao Qiu; he took the initiative to harm you, and did he not do the same to me? It is only that I had greater sensibilities than you . . . It is a shame that after your fall, you had no intention of improving. You cared not one bit for propriety, righteousness, and morality. To one's surprise, you fell into a life of banditry. Could it be that you wanted to walk such a path, but in the end could not find another way? . . . If you just think about it, those in the Liangshan establishment with the same ability as you have been beaten time and time by the soldiers of our Celestial Empire. How could we forgive someone like you? You want to escape from your crimes, but now you have heaped

> crimes upon crimes; you want to avoid punishment, but today you have amassed punishments upon punishments. Those who take the unenlightened, rebellious path—how can they live with themselves? Such consequences are the result of your own actions, and now you want to blame others, which is truly absurd. You are exhausted and have no need to continue battling. Go back and carefully think over what I have said" 王進哈哈大笑道：「好個自全，如今全得全不得，只教你自己思想！至於你說我不曾親嘗其境，足見你糊塗一世。你做的是殿帥府教頭，我做的也是殿帥府教頭；你受高俅的管束，我也受高俅的管束；高俅要生事害你，高俅何嘗不生事害我？我不過見識比你高些 . . . 可怪你一經翻跌之後，絕無顯揚之念，絕無上進之心，不顧禮義是非，居然陷入綠林。難道你舍了這路，竟沒有別條路好尋麼？ . . . 你但思想，你山寨中和你本領一樣的，吃我天朝擒斬無數，諒你一人豈能獨免？你想逃罪，今番罪上加罪；你想免刑，今番刑上加刑。不明順逆之途，豈有生全之路？種種皆你自取之咎，尚欲銜怨他人，真是荒謬萬分。今日你也乏了，不須再戰了，回去細思我言。」 (*DKZ*, 133: 1226-1227).

As a military man who was wronged by corrupt officials, Wang Jin can identify with Lin Chong's struggle. Yet Wang believes he had more "sensibilities" (*jianshi* 見識) than Lin, specifically a moral code that informed Wang's decision to honor Confucian ethics of "propriety" (*li* 禮), "righteousness" (*yi* 義), and the wisdom to tell "right from wrong" (*shi fei* 是非). By contrast, without a "mind for continual improvement" (*shangjin zhi xin* 上進之心), Lin Chong joined the "bandits" who are now at the brink of termination. Despite Lin's desire to reclaim his honor, he has already damaged his honor to such a degree that, in Wang's opinion, the emperor will never grant him amnesty. Wang Jin essentially defeats Lin Chong with an astute rhetoric of morality rather than martial abilities, rendering Lin Chong's military prowess useless. Having realized Wang Jin's moral superiority, and that he is responsible for damaging his own honor, Lin Chong cries out in agony and goes cross-eyed. He then drops his lance to the ground and falls from his saddle (*DKZ*, 133: 1227).

Lin Chong's physical and spiritual fall attests to Yu's message that a man of superior military prowess cannot best a man with firm Confucian ethics. After Lin Chong is escorted back to the Hall of Loyalty and Righteousness, he finds himself in bed, struck with an "illness of the

consciousness" (*shenzhi bing* 神志病). After ten days, Lin's condition worsens. Zhu Tong, Lei Heng and others return from a successful military campaign with Gao Qiu's head in hand. They give Gao's head to Lin Chong, with the hopes of cheering him up:

> When Lin Chong saw Gao Qiu's head, he got up with a grunt. He held Gao's head in his hands and looked at it a bit. Lin grinded his teeth in anger and said, "I lost all integrity and reputation because of this punk! Now my life is in danger, all because of you!" He then threw Gao's head through the window, smashing it into pieces. Lin Chong cried out violently, lied back down, and died on the spot 林沖一見，呼的坐起身來，接了高俅的頭，看了一看，咬著牙齒道：「我為你這廝身敗名喪，到今日性命不保，皆由於你！」言畢，將頭擲出窗戶之外，摜為齏粉。林沖狂叫一聲，倒身仰臥而絕 (*DKZ*, 133: 1230).

In the end, Lin Chong vindicates himself by mutilating the head of Gao Qiu and "consuming" his adopted son Young Master Gao, both of whom caused him to join the Liangshan bandit resistance movement. Both Gao Qiu and Young Master Gao paid with their lives, and in this sense, Lin Chong has vindicated his honor. Yet the power of Wang Jin's rhetoric of Confucian ethics raises the question of whether "vindication"—collecting blood debt from those responsible for the death of a fraternity member—helps to elevate the Liangshan rebels' "sworn fraternal honor." Holding Gao Qiu's head in his hands, Lin Chong now regrets the path he has taken. As a bandit-hero who aspires to simultaneously be an honorable member of the sworn brotherhood and a dignified subject of the emperor, Lin can only react the best way he knows: in righteous indignation justified by his experience of injustice and constant struggle, both tragically conditioned by his choice to abandon the moral code of *zhongyi*.

Rather than condemn his enemies, Lin Chong directs his anger at himself. A fierce rage informs his deep sense of regret, as he expresses during the capture of Young Master Gao: "If I had known today would come, I would not have been filled with such regret for my previous actions" 早知當日，悔不當初 (*DKZ*, 98: 558). The irony is that in Yu's "rewriting" of Lin Chong, such feelings of regret remain intensely present in Lin's actions and words. Although Lin

Chong desires to restore his manly honor by killing Gao Qiu and Young Master Gao, Wang Jin's argumentation essentially forces Lin Chong to reconsider the consequences of personal vindication. Now with Gao Qiu dead, vindication through violent action seems empty, forcing Lin to symbolically take his own life with the purpose of salvaging what ever honor is left in his final moments. On this note of tragic heroism and in honor of the fallen hero Lin Chong, Yu Wanchun reveals, in a circuitous but forceful manner, his hardline loyalist position on the tension between morality (*zhongyi*) and honor (*yiqi*).

**V. Lu Zhishen, Wu Song and the Limitations of Martial Prowess**

What Yu seems to have discovered in his reading of the parent work and writing of his sequel are the limitations of heroic action,[47] often informed by the bandit-hero's need to uphold "sworn fraternal honor." Despite Yu's agenda to the condemn Liangshan heroes as a bandit resistance movement, he attempts to elevate two characters he found to be the most dignified in *Shuihu zhuan*: Lu Zhishen the "Flowery Monk" 花和尚 and Wu Song the "Pilgrim" 行者. As I will now argue, Yu's elevation of these two heroes focus on the strategy of exaggerating heroic action in the "rewriting" of their key narratives from the parent work: "Major Lu's Great Ruckus on Mt. Wutai" 魯提轄大鬧五台山 and "Wu Song Fights the Tiger on Jingyang Ridge" 景陽岡武松打虎. What Yu presents by rewriting such narratives in *Dangkou zhi* is a dramatically different "reading" of Lu Zhishen and Wu Song informed by his interpretive agenda to simultaneously condemn and elevate the Liangshan bandit-heroes.

[47] On this issue of heroic action in *xiaoshuo*, refer to Andrew Plaks, *Four Masterworks of the Ming Novel*, 349.

Although the violent behavior of Lu Zhishen and Wu Song may seem too savage at times, violence is sometimes necessary as part of their heroic action.[48] In *Shuihu zhuan*, Lu's sense of "honor" (*yi*) is only visible if he takes action and punishes bullies like Butcher Zheng, who exploits innocent locals for his own benefit. The same logic also follows in Wu Song's narrative, who appears honorable to the Shandong locale after they hear of his magnificent wrestling and defeat of the tiger that had repeatedly mawed travelers to death on Jingyang Ridge.

However, based on Yu's "reading" of the parent work, Lu Zhishen's "honor" does not entail murder or drunkenness that disrupts the lives of monks in the Wutai Monastery, nor does "honor" justify Lu's realization of nirvana upon death in the 30-chapter sequel. To properly end Lu's story and elevate his heroism, Yu rewrites one of the most famous of the Lu Zhishen chapters as "Lu Zhishen Makes a Ruckus in the Hall of Loyalty and Righteousness" 魯智深大鬧忠義堂.[49] Contrary to reader expectations that Lu will attack local bullies, monks, or government troops, in this episode he fights against his "sworn brothers" in the Hall of Loyalty and Righteousness. Typical of how masculinity is represented in *Shuihu zhuan* where capacity for meat and wine is "assumed to be in proportion to one's physical prowess,"[50] in *Dangkou zhi* Lu Zhishen eats over 10 *jin* of meat and drinks several barrels of wine. He then showcases his martial prowess against several government generals who hold him in awe for his god-like strength in battle (*DKZ*, 135: 1260). Lu returns to the Hall of Loyalty of Righteousness, believing he is leading a battle to destroy the Imperial Palace and to terminate Gao Qiu:

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[48] Martin W. Huang, *Negotiating Masculinities in Late Imperial China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009), 109-12.

[49] Here, Yu is playing with the wording of the chapter title, "Lu Zhishen makes a ruckus on Mt. Wutai" 魯智深大鬧五台山. Now in *Dangkou zhi* Lu Zhishen causes trouble in the Hall of Loyalty and Righteousness, which aligns with Yu's interpretive agenda to de-intensify the tension between *zhong* and *yi*.

[50] Martin W. Huang, *Negotiating Masculinities in Late Imperial China*, 106.

> It just so happened that when Song Jiang and Wu Yong secured the rear gate and were in the Hall of Loyalty and Righteousness discussing official matters, they caught a glimpse of Lu Zhishen with staff in hand and his head covered in blood. In shock, they asked him what happened. Lu Zhishen yelled out, "I'm here to help Song Gongming destroy the Imperial Palace!" He thrashed all the tables and seats in the Hall of Loyalty and Righteousness, and then pointed at Wu Yong: "Are you Gao Qiu?! Today I will kill you and rescue people from harm! You spineless dogs! What a joy it will be to end your lives!" Lu proceeded to attack Wu Yong with his staff. Wu Yong fled in haste and called out, "Brother Lu has gone mad! Who will stand up to him?!" 恰好宋江、吳用安頓了後關，正在忠義堂議事，瞥見魯達提杖浴血而來，大吃一驚，忙問甚事。魯達大喝道：「灑家要幫宋公明拆毀金鑾殿。」便將忠義堂擺設的桌椅亂打亂摜，便指吳用道：「你是高俅麼？今日灑家打殺了你，為民除害。你們這班狗才，教你們死個爽快！」說罷，提杖直打吳用。吳用急躲，忙叫道：「魯兄弟瘋了，那個去按住他？」(*DKZ*, 135: 1262)

In this scene, Lu Zhishen returns to the Hall of Loyalty and Righteousness suffering from the combination of excess consumption meat and wine, several flesh wounds, and an extended battle high. In this state of madness, Lu believes he can finally restore the honor of the sworn fraternity by striking down Gao Qiu. The irony is that while Lu believes he is helping Song Jiang to destroy the Imperial Palace and kill Gao Qiu, he has actually destroyed the Hall of Loyalty and Righteousness and has attacked one of the masterminds behind the Liangshan bandit resistance movement: Wu Yong the "Knowledgeable Star" 智多星, who manipulates fraternity members to further the political agenda he shares with Song Jiang.[51]

The destruction of the Imperial Palace and assault on Gao Qiu all happens in Lu Zhishen's mind and functions as an alternate "ending" to the narrative of Liangshan. Rather than emphasizing the tension between *zhong* and *yi*, with the irony of the "ruckus" in the Hall of Loyalty and Righteousness, *Dangkou zhi* now brings Lu's sworn fraternal honor to new heights. He continues to destroy everything in the Hall of Loyalty and Righteousness when Lu Junyi, the

[51] According to the commentators, Yu's agenda was to underscore how Song Jiang and Wu Yong manipulate the 106 bandit-heroes to join and fight for their rebellious cause. See the chapter commentaries in *DKZ*, 135: 1271.

only “strongman” present, begins dueling Lu Zhishen. Lu Junyi is no longer battling his sworn brother; in Lu Zhishen’s antagonism towards his “enemies,” he has now reverted back to his original role, who the storyteller refers to as “Major Lu” 魯提轄 (*DKZ*, 135: 1262). This subtle shift in how Lu is referred to—not by his style name Zhishen but, instead, his earlier military title *tixia*— repositions Lu from the “rebellious monk” of Liangshan (Sagacious Lu) to the “loyal officer” of the emperor (Major Lu). Now Lu symbolically resumes his role as an imperial subject in opposition against the Liangshan “bandits,” fighting for Confucian *zhongyi* as a pseudo “knight errant” (*yixia* 義俠) under Heaven,[52] more desperate than ever before in his commitment to destroy Gao Qiu (Wu Yong) and the Imperial Palace (Hall of Loyalty and Righteousness). Despite bringing Lu’s heroism to such heights, Yu Wanchun needs to align Lu’s proper “end” with the agenda to condemn the Liangshan bandit resistance movement. When “Major Lu” begins fighting out of the Hall of Loyalty and Righteousness, he stumbles on a broken willow tree and falls to the ground, causing his wounds to burst. He cries out and then declares, “I have completed today’s greatest task,” before falling to the ground (*DKZ*, 135: 1262). The irony is that, while Lu Zhishen astonishes onlookers in his physical exhibition of uprooting of the willow tree in the parent work (*Outlaws*, 7: 147-148), in *Dangkou zhi* now members of the Liangshan fraternity bear witness to the fact that the Major Lu’s overuse of martial prowess and the remnants of a willow tree have caused his death.

By juxtaposing Lu’s two heroic images in parent work and in sequel, Yu ends Lu’s story on a dissonant note of parody and grief. Lu Zhishen’s superior martial prowess is now the main cause of destruction in the Liangshan establishment. Yu has rewritten Lu’s hilarious but

[52] For the relationship between the term *yixia* and Lu Zhishen, see Lao Tan 老譚, *Shuihu yizhi bei wudu* 水滸一直被誤讀 (Chongqing: Chongqing daxue chubanshe, 2010), 39-40.

admirable "ruckus" on Mt. Wutai into an ironic, fatal heroism that informs his commitment to the fraternity, expressed through his efforts to terminate Gao Qiu (Wu Yong) and destroy the Imperial Palace (Hall of Loyalty and Righteousness). With this twisting of the "ruckus" topic into a parody of the same chapter from the parent work, Yu sustains the tension between the dual roles of Lu Da in *Shuihu zhuan*: "Major Lu" and his aspirations to serve the emperor (*zhong*) and "Lu Zhishen" who commits himself fully to sworn fraternal honor (*yi*).

In his deft rewrite of Lu's "ruckus," Yu simultaneously authenticates Lu's honor and terminates his bonds of brotherhood with Liangshan. He employs a similar strategy in the rewrite of the famous tale of Wu Song wrestling a tiger with his bare hands. After government troops capture Hu Yanzhuo, they acquire Liangshan army uniforms to be used as disguises and successfully infiltrate Wu Song's camps. One of the troops yell out that a tiger has been spotted, causing Wu Song to search for the tiger but with no result. To his surprise each camp has gone up in flames. He returns to the central camp and witnesses Shi En get stabbed to death by one of the disguised government troops. From behind, Wu's double Tang Meng appears and confronts Wu Song, boasting that since he defeated a panther with his bare hands (and who also previously defeated several tigers), he must have much greater martial prowess (*DKZ*, 128: 1137).[53]

An important strategy of Yu's rewrite of Wu Song is to exaggerate his heroic action and justify the need for a proper "end" that can elevate him as the finest of heroes in *Shuihu zhuan*. In the 70-chapter edition, the foundation of Wu Song's "honor" is built upon his martial prowess and reputation for slaying a tiger with his bare hands at Jingyang Ridge. However, in *Dangkou*

[53] During his travels, Tang Meng learns from the locals that although many hunters have tried to capture the man-eating panther, no one has yet succeeded. Tang then decides that he will capture the panther. When Tang Meng does see the panther, he notes its great size and then prepares to ambush it. When the panther notices Tang, he abandons his weapon, and begins wrestling the panther with his "divine strength" (*shenli* 神力). After suffering several wounds in this valiant battle, he is eventually forced to wrestle the panther with his bare hands, and even bite out its throat (*DKZ*, 115: 872-873).

*zhi* now it is symbolically the tiger who has "ensnared" Wu Song. Having been outsmarted by the enemy and with a tactic that is ironic in its echoing (and teasing) of Wu Song's martial prowess on Jingyang Ridge, Wu Song feels a greater need to defend his manhood through heroic action.

Wu Song and Tang Meng battle over 500 hundred rounds without determining victor and loser. Both heroes retreat, and Wu Song battles three more military generals. He is forced to exhaust more strength than ever before. Round after round of fierce fighting eventually catches up with him:

> Wu Song only had a few fence poles in his hand and had a hard time keeping up with all the fighting. He looked up to Heaven and sighed, "I, Wu the Second, have been upright my whole life. I never thought I would die like this!" After this declaration, a wind came from the sky above and covered the heavens in dust; in this moment Wu Song took the opportunity to escape 武松手裡只有幾路架隔遮攔，端的支持不住，仰天歎道：「我武二一生正直，不料今日如此死法。」說罷，天上忽起了一陣怪風，塵上障天，武松方得乘機逃脫 (*DKZ*, 128: 1139).

Heaven hears Wu Song's call for help, deeming him worthy of rescue. Yet why is it that Song Jiang and all the other bandits either get captured, executed, or die on the battlefield, while Wu Song is rescued in a deus-ex-machina fashion during his final hour? In Yu's view, previous sequels did not deliver the proper "end" of Wu Song's story. Since in the 30-chapter sequel, Wu Song loses his arm in battle, and in *Shuihu houzhuan*, he spends the rest of his days tending to the graves of Lu Zhishen and Lin Chong, Yu felt that both endings failed to elevate Wu Song's status as the finest of heroes. Now in *Dangkou zhi,* Wu Song's honor and upright behavior are validated in a way that previous sequels failed to achieve.[54]

[54] Wu Song's claim to be upright in *Dangkou zhi* echoes points made in the parent work. Wu Song claims to be an upstanding man who "upholds [the authority of] Heaven and stands [honorably] on the Earth" 頂天立地. He later captures and sacrifices both Pan Jinlian and Ximen Qing, fulfilling his promise to appease the dead spirit of Wu the

In *Dangkou zhi*, Wu Song becomes a demi-god among humans who can communicate with Heaven,[55] and whose presence remains in the battlefield even after his death. Later Song Jiang and a few other Liangshan troops finds Wu Song, having passed away, on top of a boulder leaning against a fencepole in an awe-inspiring stance and his eyes filled with a heroic rage (*DKZ*, 128: 1141). Composed, serious, and dignified, Wu Song is symbolically a monument that attests to the spirit of "loyalty and righteousness" and "sworn loyalty" that all other Liangshan bandit-heroes ought to model.[56] Despite having disagreed with some of Jin's interpretations of *Shuihu zhuan*, one finds Yu's rewrite of Wu Song confirms his own reading of this character, to validate Jin's interpretation of Wu Song as a "heavenly god, standing high above others [the remaining 107 bandit-heroes]."[57]

**Conclusion**

In Yu's sequel, the prestige attributed to the parent work did not prevent him from rewriting parts of it he deemed unsatisfactory. Yu and his commentators were able to carefully employ a rhetoric of controlling interpretation to legitimate *Dangkou zhi* as the most appropriate "sequel" to the 70-chapter "original." Their rhetoric is indebted to that of Jin Shengtan, who had previously constructed a vertical imaginary of "author," "commentator," "reader," and "sequel writer," and invented the theory of two *Shuihu* texts (original and sequel). Like Jin, Yu and the commentators blame the "sequel writer" Luo Guanzhong for distorting historical facts. Yet they also placed the burden of "interpretation" on the "commentator" Jin Shengtan, to legitimize

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Elder. Wu Song's actions then win him praise by the local government as a "fierce, righteously loyal fellow" 義氣烈漢 (*JSTSHZ*, 23: 439, 26: 504).

[55] This comparison between Heaven and Wu Song here actually elevates the latter as a demi-god, in the same way tiger hunters venerated him as a supernatural being (*SHZ*, 22: 423). In *Jin Ping Mei*, rather than becoming struck with fear, the tiger hunters almost venerate Wu Song as a god of supreme power. See Mei Jie 梅節, ed., *Jin Ping Mei cihua* 金瓶梅詞話 (Taipei: Liren shuju, 2007), 7-8.

[56] Regarding this last point, see the chapter end commentary in *DKZ*, 128: 1143.

[57] Jin Shengtan's comment, in John Wang, trans., "How to Read The Fifth Book of Genius," 136, item 13.

*Dangkou zhi* as a sequel that can disassociate the concept of *zhongyi* from the Liangshan bandit resistance movement and properly punish its members, to have the effect of shaping *Shuihu zhuan* into a cautionary tale against rebellion.

One of Yu's strategies was to give appropriate endings to characters he found to be the finest heroes of Liangshan by juxtaposing them with their imperial hero "doubles." However, with this juxtaposition of "bad" rebels and "good" rebels, Yu is forced to portray the Liangshan bandit-heroes fighting better, harder, and more desperately than they did in the 70-chapter edition, to have the effect of renewing their "sworn fraternal honor." Now the ethos of the bandit-heroes is no longer associated with loyalty to the emperor and righteousness (*zhongyi*) but manifests in their "sworn fraternal honor" (*yiqi*) that is tangibly expressed by fighting together against their fates and towards a heroic death.

This elevation of "sworn fraternal honor" and displacement of "loyalty to the emperor and righteousness" inadvertently justifies Liangshan's cause of "Carrying Out the Way on Behalf of Heaven" in their fight against imperial authority. This seems contradictory since Yu himself was quite clear about his intention in *Dangkou zhi* to disassociate Liangshan with the concept of *zhongyi*,[58] to "tame" the rebellious and transgressive sentiments embedded in *Shuihu zhuan*, and to deliver a loyalist doctrine to readers.[59] When *Dangkou zhi* is read in light of its parent work, Jin's commentaries, and previous sequels, it is clear that with Yu's efforts to punish Liangshan, he also valorizes their heroism and sustains the tension between *zhong* and *yi* rather than resolve it. An important function of this tension is to construct a hermeneutic competition between

[58] Hulai Daoren [Yu Wanchun], "Dangkou zhi yinyan," in *Gudai xiaoshuo xushu xuba*, 71.
[59] David Wang, *Repressed Modernities*, 126-127.

"commentator" (Jin Shengtan) and "sequel writer" (Yu Wanchun) over who wields the greatest control over reader interpretation of the original *Shuihu zhuan.*

# EPILOGUE

## Commentaries, Sequels, and Their Significance in the Development of Chinese Fiction

*Xiaoshuo* publishers in the late Ming found that adding commentaries, either written by or attributed to famous scholars, helped promote book circulation and sales.[1] Yet it was not until the appearance of Jin Shengtan's 70-chapter edition of *Shuihu zhuan* that *xiaoshuo* began to enjoy elevated status in the commercial publishing market. By "branding" *Shuihu zhuan* as a sophisticated literary work, newly improved by the commentaries of the genius "commentator," Jin was able to enhance the authority of his 70-chapter edition and set the stage for the development of the rich interpretive practice of *xiaoshuo* commentaries.

One of Jin's greatest contributions to the development of *Shuihu zhuan* is his invention of the theory of two *Shuihu* texts: a venerated 70-chapter "original" and an inferior 30-chapter "sequel." With his theory and commentaries, Jin attempted to prevent tampering of his 70-chapter edition. The actual effect was the radical shaping of the textual design, rhetoric, and interpretive agendas of two important *Shuihu* sequels, *Shuihu houzhuan* and *Dangkou zhi*.

With Jin's textual interventions in *Shuihu zhuan,* it is no coincidence that at that moment during the rise of *xiaoshuo* commentaries, *xushu* also underwent its initial boom. As a new literary enterprise, certain literati considered *xushu* a futile endeavor, merely "extensions" of their parent works. Sequel writers hence needed to employ new strategies that would help market their books. Chen Chen, for example, branded *Shuihu houzhuan* in way that would justify the need for a sequel to *Zhongyi Shuihu zhuan* (100-chapter edition). Manipulating the figures of "author," "sequel writer," and "commentator," Chen attempted to convince readers of *Shuihu*

[1] Regarding publisher tendencies to market commentaries, with the goal to promote book sales and circulation, see Tan Fan, *Zhongguo xiaoshuo pingdian yanjiu*, 73.

*houzhuan*, purportedly published in 1608 (actual publication date, 1664), was based on an ancient edition from the Yuan period that appeared shortly after *Shuihu zhuan* had been written by Shi Nai'an and Luo Guanzhong. With this move, Chen created the illusion that his sequel was written earlier than Jin's 70-chapter edition.

Almost 200 years after the first publishing of *Shuihu houzhuan*, Yu Wanchun's *Dangkou zhi* appeared, to have an actual impact in the political climate of the late Qing period. The Qing government found *Dangkou zhi* useful for persuading readers to remain loyal to the emperor. On the other hand, realizing how this sequel might negatively impact their cause, after the Taiping stormed Suzhou in 1857, they immediately destroyed copies and woodblocks of *Dangkou zhi*. To argue for the seriousness of his sequel, Yu explicitly states his intention to shape *Shuihu zhuan* into a cautionary tale against rebellion. The commentators of *Dangkou zhi* further Yu's rhetoric of controlling interpretation by providing sophisticated accompanying commentary in the form of prefaces, interlineal comments, and chapter comments, in an effort to convince readers that the Liangshan "bandit-heroes" should be read as a "bandit resistance movement."

The *Shuihu* interpretation complex has been the central structure of this dissertation as a platform to investigate the hermeneutic interaction between author, commentator, and sequel writer. In the cases of Jin Shengtan's 70-chapter edition, Chen Chen's *Shuihu houzhuan*, and Yu Wanchun's *Dangkou zhi*, all three writers made efforts to elevate the authority of their texts, employing highly similar strategies to further their respective interpretive agendas. Jin's main strategy was to manipulate the "author" figure, to justify the need for the "commentator" who presumably allows access to "authorial intention" (*zhi* 志) and "organizing principles of writing" (*wenfa* 文法) to the "reader" with his "literary genius" (*caizi* 才子) commentaries. With the construction of his theory of 70-chapter "original" and 30-chapter "sequel," Jin established a

point of contact on the issue of "interpretation" for readers who would become sequel writers of *Shuihu zhuan.* The sequel writers Chen Chen and Yu Wanchun would then model Jin's theory of two texts and his specific rhetoric—largely based on the claim of knowing the intention of the "author"—to offer "correct" interpretations of *zhongyi* and "proper" endings in their respective sequels in an effort to shape reader reception of *Shuihu zhuan*.

According to one scholar, there have been over eighty *Shuihu* sequels written since the appearance of Jin's 70-chapter edition.[2] With regards to *xiaoshuo xushu* as a more widespread practice, it makes up approximately 13 percent of the corpus of traditional Chinese vernacular fiction.[3] Despite these numbers, much of *xushu* has not been investigated as a literary phenomenon. As I have argued in this dissertation, with *Shuihu zhuan* and its sequels as example, *xushu* is valuable for their attempts to prolong, continue, and correct (that is, broader attempts of "rewriting") *xiaoshuo* originals. When *xushu* is considered as an interpretive practice similar to *xiaoshuo* commentaries, we can better understand how *xushu* contributes to our understanding of the intricacies within *xiaoshuo* critical discourse in their attempts to control interpretations of *xiaoshuo*, especially well-known "masterpieces," and to offer their own interpretations in both sequel narrative and its accompanying commentaries.

One aspect of this study that will raise questions is the connection between fiction commentaries and sequels. Both *Shuihu houzhuan* and *Dangkou zhi* offer larger interpretations of *Shuihu zhuan*—in particular, their views on the issue of *zhongyi*. On the one hand, Chen Chen

[2] Wong Hoi Sing *Gudian xiaoshuo yanjiu: yi Shuihu xushu wei zhongxin*, 17-26. Wong adopts a broader definition of the term *xushu*, to include this large number of *Shuihu* sequels in his list. By using such a definition, *Shuihu* sequels rival in number compared with *Honglou meng* sequels, which is close to one hundred and growing. See Zhao Jianzhong 趙建忠, *Honglou meng xushu yanjiu* 紅樓夢續書研究 (Tianjin: Tianjin guju chubanshe, 1997), 3.
[3] Li Zhongchang 李忠昌, *Gudai xiaoshuo xushu man hua* 古代小說續書話 (Shenyang: Liaoning jiaoyu chuban she, 1992), 3. Li's count is based on the titles in *Zhongguo tongsu xiaoshuo zongmu tiyao* 中國通俗小說總目提要 (Beijing: Zhongguo wenlian, 1991).

attempts to elevate Liangshan's "sworn fraternal honor" (*yiqi*) to greater heights, while displacing "loyalty to the emperor" as a necessary formality. On the other hand, for Yu Wanchun, the opposite must be carried out in *Dangkou zhi*: to author a sequel that defends the 70-chapter "original" against dangerous readings and prevent the latter from poisoning the minds of readers.

An important issue that awaits further exploration is whether sequels can be read independently of their parent works. What appears to be an extension or continuation of the parent work in the form of a sequel, often doubles as a reading of a parent work that impacts the interpretation complex of a particular novel and its subsequent reincarnations as commentaries and sequels. In this dissertation, with *Shuihu zhuan*, its commentaries, and its sequels as points of inquiry, I have attempted to highlight the complex interaction between "commentator" and "sequel writer" and investigate the tensions between each specific rhetoric of controlling interpretation. For Ming-Qing literati, if "reading" was a competition between a genius author and a sophisticated reader, the commentator could justify the need for his commentaries, by claiming to have access to the authorial intention and textual design. Such justifications generated problems for aspiring sequel writers, who were always readers of the parent work but authors of their own sequels.

Yet with his unique positionality as reader and author, a sequel writer was well-equipped to model the rhetoric and theories available in *xiaoshuo* commentaries, which were essential in shaping the textual design, rhetoric, and agendas of a sequel. In the *Shuihu* interpretation complex, Chen Chen and Yu Wanchun could author their sequels based upon Jin's theory of *Shuihu* "original" and *Shuihu "*sequel." At the same time, they needed to construct the "author," "commentator" and, additionally, "sequel writer" figures, to "authorize" their sequels as worthy of serious reading and interpretation. With careful planning of textual design and use of

sophisticated rhetoric, Chen and Yu offered their own interpretations in the act of sequeling, to have retroactive effects on readings of *Shuihu zhuan*.

What emerges in this interaction between "author," commentator," and "sequel writer" is the hermeneutic competition over who wields the greatest control over "reading" of a parent work. The sequel writer had to employ a sophisticated rhetoric to justify the need for his sequel. One surefire strategy was to closely "read" the parent work and its accompanying commentaries, to discover narrative and interpretive gaps that could only be addressed by sequeling. With these problems uncovered, a sequel writer could then carve open a space for his sequel, that presumably "completes" the narrative of the parent work and defend it against misinterpretations through both the act of sequeling and providing accompanying commentaries to his sequel.

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