ALLEGORY AND CHINESE LITERATURE

by

XUAN WANG

(Under the Direction of Thomas Cerbu)

ABSTRACT

This study is an effort to join the dialogue concerning the topic of Chinese allegory, a topic that was first discussed in the 1970s by Andrew Plaks, when Chinese literature began to be examined comparatively in American academia, and has since been developed by comparatists such as Stephen Owen, Pauline Yu, Longxi Zhang, and Haun Saussy. While Plaks, Owen, and Yu propose a theory in which the Chinese sense of allegory stands in opposition to its Western counterpart, I argue in the first chapter that such a "Chinese alternative" constitutes only a line of thought in Chinese poetics. Indebted to the Daoist monistic vision, this line of Chinese poetics, furthermore, bears interesting resemblance to the Western symbolist aesthetics, whose postulated superiority was deconstructed by Paul de Man in the late 1960s. With the consideration of the theory of Chinese allegory, the remainder of the chapters focuses on allegoresis and poetics of the 1592 vernacular prose-fiction the *Journey to the West* 西游记. While the dissertation's second chapter, "How Fiction Became a Sacred Scripture," chronicles the first three hundred years of evolution of allegoresis advanced in the *Journey*'s series of commentary editions, its third chapter, "Reading the Oppositional in Narrative," examines the two conflicting tendencies in reading the *Journey* during the course of the 20th century. Studying Hu Shih's 1921 prefatory dismissal of the theological interpretation, and the theological approach that has been revived by Anthony C. Yu and Andrew Plaks since the late 1970s, the third chapter also connects these two opposing modes in reading the *Journey* with the conflicting ways in reading European early modern texts such as the *Divine Comedy*, the *Faerie Queene*, and the *Pilgrim's Progress* appearing in postwar American academia. As the second

and third chapter, while tracing the four-hundred-year history of the *Journey* interpretations, are interested in tracking the motivations, both internal and external to the text of the *Journey*, for the theological allegoresis, the dissertation's last chapter, "Poetics and Interpretation of the *Journey to the West*," explores the *Journey*'s recurring themes and use of rhetorical devices.

INDEX WORDS: Allegory, *Journey to the West*, Romance, Interpretation, and Chinese-Western Comparative Literature

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PREFACE

In *The Art of English Poesy* (1589), George Puttenham regards allegory as the captain of all rhetorical figures, while in postmodern theory, allegory seems to have become the paragon of language, where what is said is recognized as being always already deferred and different from what is meant. "Allegory is a protean device, omnipresent in Western literature from the earliest times to the modern era," writes Angus Fletcher in the opening sentence of his 1964 monograph, *Allegory: The Theory of a Symbolic Mode*. But if Fletcher in this book treats allegory largely as a doctrine-oriented mode whose formularized features are congruent with the allegorist's hidden intention, the postmodern definition of allegory is known for exposing the disjunction between its two levels, the polysemy of its signs on the surface, and the uncertainty of its hidden signification. Beginning with semantical certainty and structural unity, allegory has a postmodern turn that challenges such certainty and unity. And of course, the kind of allegory discussed above is allegory in writing, whose origin should not be separated from the age-old practice in allegorical reading, the practice that is, to an extent, applicable to all forms of interpretation and criticism.

My dissertation begins with the observation first advanced in the mid-1970s that rejects the applicability of the "Western sense" of allegory to the Chinese literary imagination. Chinese allegory and metaphor, as it argues, do not share the supposed disjunction and artificiality with its Western counterparts. While tracing the changing arguments in major comparative works on Chinese allegory/metaphor since Qian Zhongshu, my first chapter situates such a view of Chinese rhetoric in the postmodern critique of the symbolist aesthetics that denigrates allegory. As the second and third chapter, which chronicle the four-hundred-year theological/philosophical allegoresis of the 1592 fiction the *Journey to the West*, constitute a case study of allegorical writing and reading in the Chinese tradition, these two chapters also use the *Journey to the West,* arguably the greatest quest-romance in Chinese literature, to examine motivations for, as

well as against the doctrinal allegoresis. Often compared to the early modern masterpieces such as the *Divine Comedy*, the *Faerie Queene*, and the *Pilgrim's Progress*, the *Journey to the West*, when introduced to its Western reader, (as the latter half of the third chapter strives to show,) seems to have undergone a similar interpretive modal as its Western counterparts. The dissertation's last chapter, while trying to complement the theories of romance advanced by Frye and Jameson, discusses the *Journey*'s peculiar features and its use of rhetoric against the backdrop of the 20th century *Journey* criticism.

This dissertation is indebted to the books and articles that I have cited; they are the sources of idea in this dissertation. And it is written for you, my thoughtful readers, who make me feel, desire, hope, and believe that I could make a difference.

I

FlOWER IN THE MIRROR AND MOON IN THE WATER

The problem of Chinese allegory revisited.[1]

If the second half of the 20th century is known for its overt concern with the problem of structure and hierarchy, its reevaluation of the relationship between the margin and the center in various social constructs, Jacques Derrida's challenge to the philosophical tradition, in which he calls into question the privilege of logos over rhetoric in its various configurations, has no doubt inspired academic efforts in addressing this concern. Just as Derrida dismantles the logos-centered concept-speech metaphysics that is founded on a willed and systematic forgetting of its own rhetorical origins,[2] Paul de Man similarly undoes the presumed superiority of symbol over allegory in poetics. Since the Romantic period, and over the course of the 19th century, symbol had been privileged for its closeness to the truth of the world and the poet's intuition. "The advantage of symbolic writing over allegory is," to borrow Coleridge's words, "that it presumes no disjunction of faculties, but simple dominance."[3] This presumed "simple dominance," when interrogated by de Man, has likewise turned to be an illusion. The promised organic totality in symbolism—the aesthetics of the binding between the inner self and the outward nature without disjunction—can hardly be fulfilled, and is inherently self-contradictory. To use de Man's vocabulary and conclusion, symbolism resembles a form

[1] A shortened version of this chapter is in print in *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature/Revue canadienne de littérature comparée* 45 (2018): 465-480. The first three paragraphs of this chapter is not included.

[2] See for example, Jacques Derrida, "White Mythology," *Margins of Philosophy*, translated by Alan Bass (Chicago: The U of Chicago P, 1972).

[3] Angus Fletcher, *Allegory: The Theory of a Symbolic Mode*, revised edition (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2012), 17. The book was originally published in 1964 by Cornell UP.

of self-mystification that wishes to overcome temporality through the self-deceiving identification with the outside Truth of the world.[4]

The construction and deconstruction of these hierarchies in mythos-logos/metaphor-concept/ allegory-symbol, in essence, reaffirm the disjunction between reality and its wishful ideal—the gap between what is and what is supposed to be. While concept and symbol are wished and then believed to be atemporal, transparent, and in line with the external world, metaphor and allegory are discredited for their disjunctions—the irredeemable lapse between thoughts and words. Disillusioned as we are now, and as language, as we keep reminding ourselves, is always already marked by the différance, we have to accept that every sign, every passage, and all the texts are *allegorical* in the strictest sense. Language as such always already says otherwise, and there is always already a disjuncture between what is meant and what is said.

We could well imagine the excitement and anxiety brought by this deconstructive reexamination to the American academy since the late 60s, whose impact is still felt to this day. It starts from a concern in philosophy, spreading quickly into English and Comparative Literature, and virtually any fields that are committed to the study of writing and reading could now no longer easily bypass this problem intrinsic in language. It may not be a mere coincidence that from the mid 1970s to the late 1980s, a series of articles and books in sinology (Chinese-Western comparative literature) demonstrated a preoccupation with rhetoric, giving special attention to the Chinese concept of metaphor and allegory.[5] The Western sense of allegory/metaphor,[6] as these articles and books

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[4] "The Rhetoric of Temporality," in *Interpretation: Theory and Practice*, edited by Charles S. Singleton (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins P, 1969). I here cite from his 1983 collection of essays, *Blindness and Insight*, where this piece is also included: Paul de Man, *Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism*, 2nd edition (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1983).

[5] Although Stephen Owen denies the influence of Western theories, which he calls as "the whitecaps of the latest critical wave" in the first page of his book, while insisting on his sole interest in Chinese poetry, his vocabulary, topics, and methods suggest otherwise. James Liu also mentions this interesting denial, as well as the presence of Deconstruction in Owen's *Traditional Chinese Poetry and Poetics: Omen of the World* (Madison, Wisconsin: U of Wisconsin P, 1985)*;* see the book review by James J. Y. Liu in *The Journal of Asian Studies* 45 (1986): 580.

[6] They tend to conflate allegory with metaphor, following Quintilian's definition of allegory: a continued metaphor: see Plaks, 92, and Yu, 19. Fletcher, however, is not in favor of this conflation, see Fletcher, 74-82.

The series of books and articles is: Andrew H. Plaks, *Archetype and Allegory in the Dream of the Red Chamber* (Princeton UP, 1976); Stephen Owen, *Traditional Chinese Poetry and Poetics: Omen of the World*; Pauline Yu, *The Reading of Imagery in the Chinese Poetic Tradition*, (Princeton UP, 1987); Pauline Yu, "Metaphor and Chinese Poetry," *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews* (*CLEAR*) 3 (1981):

invariably suggest,[7] is absent in Chinese poetics as well as in its literature.[8] To borrow Andrew Plaks's description of this difference between East and West, "representatives of the Chinese and European traditions are accorded a particular privilege of neat, even antipodal, contrast."[9] While the Western sense of allegory/metaphor implies disjunction,[10] as they explain, its Chinese counterpart embodies a totalizing,[11] coherent whole.[12] Pre-established,[13] historical,[14] and organic,[15] the Chinese allegory/metaphor is a synecdoche,[16] not the substitution.[17] Given the milieu of Deconstruction's remarks on language—the demystification of symbol/concept on the one hand and the corresponding rehabilitation of metaphor/allegory on the other—this series of books and articles, now in hindsight over 30 years later, seems an interesting phenomenon that deserves further examination.[18] To take stock of this "neat contrast" between China and the West, let us first of all return to this body of published scholarship.

205-24; Michelle Yeh, "Metaphor and Bi: Western and Chinese Poetics," *Comparative Literature* 39 (1987): 237-54.

[7] Haun Saussy, *The Problem of a Chinese Aesthetic* (Stanford, California: Stanford UP, 1993), 24. See also David McCraw's review of Yu's book in *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews (CLEAR)* 9 (1987): 130.

[8] A sample of these observations: "This may be explained partly by the absence of an articulated concept of allegory as distinguishable mode in Chinese literary theory, […]" (Plaks 84); "Let us call these readings 'transparencies' to distinguish them from the disjunctive metaphorical operations of Western poetics. In the nonfictional Chinese lyric, the text is a limited window on a full world, 'obscure' from a distance but growing luminous and 'manifest' as we approach it (to paraphrase Liu Xie on reading)" (Owen 63); "It is precisely this 'motive for metaphor' which the Western reader will not find in Chinese literature, whether in poetry or the poetics" (Yu, "Metaphor and Chinese Poetry," 213).

[9] Plaks, vii.

[10] Plaks, 7; Owen, 63; Yu, *Reading*, 17; Yeh, 250.

[11] Plaks, 7, 109.

[12] Owen, 23.

[13] Yu, *Reading*, 33.

[14] Owen, 15, 57.

[15] Owen, 42, 45, 59; Yeh, 252.

[16] Plaks, 110; Owen, 60; Yeh, 238.

[17] Owen, 60; Yeh, 239.

[18] As far as I am concerned, the influence of this series of books and articles is far reaching. As it witnesses the institutionalization of Chinese literature in American academia that began after the Second World War, and as it addresses questions in rhetoric, which are fundamental in literary studies, it, in a sense, has set the tone for the method, narrative, assumption, and vocabulary in approaching Chinese literature. Such an influence has also reached outside the American academy. The argument in this series has been recapitulated, for example, by Zheng Yuyu of Taiwan and Francois Jullien of France. See Zheng Yuyu 郑毓瑜, *Examples and Categories: Key Words in Literary Studies* 引譬联类：文学中的关键词 (Taiwan: Linking Press 联经出版社, 2012). See also Chapter 8 in Francois Jullien, *Detour and Access*, translated by Sophie Hawkes (New York: Zone Books, 2000). See also Eric Hayot's recapitulation of this phenomenon: "Vanishing Horizons: Problems in the Comparison of China and the West" in *A Companion to Comparative Literature*, ed. Ali Behdad and Dominic Thomas (Chichester, West Sussex; Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 88-107.

Andrew Plaks is probably the first sinologist to embarks on the topic of allegory and Chinese literature at great length. In his 1976 book, *Archetype and Allegory in the Dream of the Red Chamber*, he attributes the lack of the Western sense of allegory in Chinese literature to the absence of the Western "ontological disjunction" in the Chinese worldview. Plaks has brought up such an argument as early as in the introduction when he discusses the meaning of the *Dream of the Red Chamber*:

> Turning to a detailed inquiry into the nature of allegorical writing in the European tradition, with specific critical attention focused on the works of Dante, Chaucer, and Spenser, we find that the two-level ontological disjunction on which this mode is based in the West does not apply in the monistic universe of Chinese literature.[19]

Plaks's thesis entails two premises: that China is known for its ontological monism as opposed to ontological dualism of the West, and that the allegories in Dante, Chaucer, and Spenser are founded on the "two-level ontological disjunction." If we could set aside the age-old debate on whether the Chinese worldview is indeed monistic and involves no transcendence,[20] the second premise, that the ontological dualism serves as the

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[19] Plaks, 7.

[20] This absence of transcendence in Chinese worldview picked up by Plaks (as well as Owen and Yu), as Haun Saussy points out, resonates with some of the Jesuits' opinion of China in the 17th century: Nicolò Longobardi (1559-1654), the successor of Matteo Ricci as the Superior General of the Jesuit China mission, for example, claimed "that the Chinese, on the principles of their philosophy, have never known of any spiritual substance distinct, as we conceive of it, from matter; and that consequently they have known neither God nor angels nor the rational soul"(39). In his book, *The Problem of a Chinese Aesthetic*, admired as "having more or less settled the decades-long debate over the 'problem' of metaphor in Chinese literature," (see Hayot, in the book review of Zhang Longxi's *Allegoresis: Reading Canonical Literature East and West*, in *Comparative Literature Studies* 45 (2008): 123.) Saussy argues, to put it simply, that not only China has allegory in the Western sense, but also this East-West contrast is a willful construct. For one thing, the so-called metaphysical level in the Western allegory can also be physical, as a ship will be compared to the State in the classic example given by Quintilian. Besides, if fragrance is considered only as a synecdoche of virtue in *Li Sao*, as the two belong to the same category, then this category itself—the Form of the Good—ironically becomes the category of the abstract (31). Toward the end of his argument, Saussy is provocative: as Leibniz, in defense of Spinoza, was criticized as a materialistic Chinese pagan, doesn't the West, in its constructing of an opposite China, betray its own disagreements and opposing ideas within itself (45)? Aren't the defining qualities of the East also distinct features of the West? While Saussy in this book concerns the interpretative side (allegory in reading) of allegory, I look in this chapter from the side of poetics (allegory in writing).
Although it has long been acknowledged that the Dao is immanent within the physical world (hence monism), as Zhuangzi says in this much-cited passage: "the Dao is everywhere, in this ant, in this grass, in this earthenware tile, and in piss and shit," yet at the same time, paradoxically, the Dao in Laozi's depiction seems transcendental and immaterial: "it cannot be seen, nor heard, nor touched…视之不见名曰夷，听之

foundation for the two-level structure of allegory still begs reexamination. According to Plaks, the dichotomy between narrative and meaning in allegory is a "mimesis"[21] of the (Platonic) dichotomy between the physical and metaphysical. The allegorical fiction, in other words, is founded on the concrete, finite, visible, sublunary world, while the allegorical significance points to the truth of a transcendental nature.[22] But as long as the Platonic dichotomy implies the concrete and the abstract, which could be found in the structure of allegory, this philosophical structure also entails the dichotomy between the perfect and the imperfect, the good and the bad, the original and the copy, which are not reflected in the structure of allegory. Rather than further explaining this premise of the structural similarity between the literary device and the philosophical vision, Plaks then goes into detail about the dichotomy within the narrative, the dichotomy between light and darkness, true and false, for example, in order to show the allegorists' mimesis of the ontological duality.[23] The two levels in allegory, unlike the two levels in the Platonic imagination, are nonetheless bounded because of their similarity.[24] Because of the Chinese monism, as Plaks concludes, which can be taken as a "spatial vision of totality," the Chinese literary universe correspondingly resembles "a single, total frame of reference," contrasting the Western "two planes in allegory" and the "two-level cosmology."[25] Now, the question really boils down to this: What is the relationship between a dualistic/monistic worldview and a rhetorical device?—Is language based on the worldview, or the other way around?

Starting from the inquiry into the presence and absence of a literary device, the book seems to end up discussing the ontological, or rather, theological differences between China and Europe, and the seeming absence of transcendence in the Chinese

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不闻名曰希，搏之不得名曰微。此三者不可致诘，故混而为一" (*Tao Te Ching* 道德经, Chapter 14). See also Qian Zhongshu 钱钟书, *Tan Yi Lu* 谈艺录 [*On Art*], 2nd ed. (Beijing: Sanlian Bookstore, 2007), 676; see also Chen Guying's 陈鼓应 comments in*Laozi Zhuyi Ji Pingjie* 老子注译及评介 [*Laozi Annotation and Commentary*] (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1984), 15.

[21] Plaks, *Archetype*, 87, 93, 94.

[22] Ibid., 84-94.

[23] Ibid., 95-108.

[24] Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1405a: "Metaphor, like epithets, must be fitting, which means that they must fairly correspond to the thing signified: failing this, their inappropriateness will be conspicuous: the want of harmony between two things is emphasized by their being placed side by side." See Aristotle, *Rhetoric and Poetics* (New York: The Modern Library, 1954), 168-9. The section of *Rhetoric* is translated by W. Rhys Roberts.

[25] Plaks, 109.

mindset is made as responsible for its absence of disjunction in its use of "allegory." This set of arguments, along with its vocabulary, narrative, and method, as we will see, has set the stage for the discussions on allegory and Chinese literature.

About a decade later, Stephen Owen also engaged with this topic in his 1985 book, *Traditional Chinese Poetry and Poetics: Omen of the World*. Unlike Plaks, Owen focuses on poetry and poetics rather than philosophy or theology. But despite their divergence in methods and materials, Owen's observation of the Chinese sense of allegory/metaphor comes close to Plaks's thesis:

> The differences between Chinese and Western modes of literary reading are centered in the related questions of metaphor and the presumed fictionality or nonfictionality of poems. Presumptions of a fictional text and of a metaphorical Truth run throughout Western modes of literary reading. In the Chinese tradition of reading, the meaning of a poem as a whole is usually not taken as metaphorical (except in a limited number of subgenres).[26]

According to Owen, Chinese poetry is essentially historical. If the persona sees himself as a gull between heaven and earth, to use Du Fu's image from Owen's example, he is literally experiencing this connection rather than exploiting the rhetorical device of a metaphor. The Chinese poetic tradition, as Owen clarifies,[27] has nothing to do with invention or creation; rather, the Chinese poetry is preoccupied with manifesting the world's inherent order—the Dao—"the world's coming-to-be."[28] Imageries such as the gull, therefore, constitute the spontaneous process of uncovering this inherent order, which must be distinguished from the jarring, Western metaphor that is based on fiction. This vision of literature, as Owen further shows, can be traced to Liu Xie's 刘勰 (465-522) *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons* 文心雕龙. Recognized as the most comprehensive work on poetics in Chinese,[29] this book, particularly its first chapter, "(Literature's) Source in the Dao 原道," constitutes the bedrock for Owen's thesis:

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[26] Owen, 56-7.
[27] Ibid., 40-4.
[28] Ibid., 20; 25.
[29] James J. Y. Liu, *Chinese Theories of Literature* (Chicago: The U of Chicago P, 1975), 21.

> Great is the fulfilled power of the aesthetic pattern, for it appeared along with the generation of Heaven and Earth. All color derives from a blending of the Dark of Heaven and Earth's Yellow; by the circularity of Heaven and Earth's squareness all shapes are differentiated. The successive disks of sun and moon are suspended configurations that make the heaven lovely, while the luminous intricacy of hills and streams unfold forms that order the earth. We might say that this is the aesthetic pattern of Natural Process (Tao). Above we may contemplate radiant brilliance; below we examine the latent sectioning; and in these we find the fixed positions of high and low. Thus the two basic Principles appear. Man, endowed with the spark of spiritual nature, is added to these to form the Great Triad. Man is the flower of the Elements and the mind of Heaven and Earth. With mind, language appears, and in language, aesthetic pattern becomes manifest. This is an inherent character of the Natural Process.[30] 文之为德也大矣，与天地并生者何哉！夫玄黄色杂，方圆体分，日月叠璧，以垂丽天之象；山川焕绮，以铺理地之形：此盖道之文也。仰观吐曜，俯察含章，高卑定位，故两仪既生矣。惟人参之，性灵所锺，是谓三才。为五行之秀，实天地之心，心生而言立，言立而文明，自然之道也。

In the literary as well as the philosophical tradition, the Wen 文, originally meaning the "aesthetic pattern" and later expanding to connote concepts such as "culture," "civilization," and "writing," is usually regarded, especially in Zhuangzi and Laozi, as the antithesis of Nature. Here, by Liu Xie's sleight of hand, this "aesthetic pattern" is made to align with the natural order of the Dao. Just as the sun, the moon, the mountains and the rivers are the "aesthetic patterns" of the Dao, writing, the "aesthetic pattern" of humanity, as Liu Xie contends, likewise originates from the Dao of Nature. To use Owen's words, writing from such a perspective "manifests and uncovers the Natural Process." But grand and lofty this vision of writing may appear, the writing to which Liu Xie in this chapter refers is perhaps not the writing in general that Owen suggests. As he traces the history of writing in the remainder of the chapter, Liu Xie further defines his vision and confines it to the period from Fu Xi to Confucius. "From the time of Master Feng to the time of

[30] I follow Owen's translation, 18-9.

Confucius," as Liu Xie writes toward the end of this chapter, "both Feng, the first sage, who invented writing, and the 'King Without Crown,' who transmitted the teachings, drew their literary embellishments from the mind of *Tao* […] 爰自风姓，暨于孔氏，玄圣创典，素王述训，莫不原道心以敷章……."[31] According to Liu, it is solely in the writings of the sages (Fuxi, Shun, and Confucius, for example) of the distant Xia, Shang, and Zhou dynasty that the divine Dao can be found. Not all the writings, in other words, are about to uncover the divine principle of Nature.

In the "Preface 序志" of the *Literary Mind*, Liu Xie has made a clear distinction between the writings that are aligned with the Dao, and the writings of which he disapproves—writings that stand far from the Dao. Expressing his admiration for the Confucian classics, which are in his mind the sources to which all masterpieces can be traced, Liu Xie contrasts them with the writings of his time:

> Our time is far removed from that of the Sage, and orthodox literary style has declined: Tz'u writers love the exotic, and prize in their writing that which is superficial and eccentric. They try to "decorate the feather" just to be painting and will attempt to embroider even the leather handkerchief bag. All these writers deviate greatly from their true source in pursuit of the pretentious and the excessive. But in the *Book of History* in the discussion of tz'u, or language, it is said, "In writing one should emphasize the essentials." And when Confucius presented his teachings, he showed a dislike for the unorthodoxy. Therefore, I picked up my brush, mixed the ink, and began to write this essay. 而去圣久远，文体解散，辞人爱奇，言贵浮诡，饰羽尚画，文绣鞶帨，离本弥甚，将遂讹滥。盖周书论辞，贵乎体要，尼父陈训，恶乎异端，辞训之奥，宜体于要。于是搦笔和墨，乃始论文。[32]

In contrast to the classics that only address the essentials, contemporary literature is superficial, pretentious, and excessive. In Liu Xie's literary vision and ambition, there is clearly a distinction between the works of the Sages—the Classics, and the works of the ordinary men—always derivative of the Classics; a distinction between writing from the

[31] I here follow Vincent Yu-chung Shih's translation. *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons* (Hong Kong: The Chinese UP, 1983), 18-9.
[32] *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*, translated by Shih, 4-7.

past and writing of the present; a distinction between writing on the "essentials" and writing that are "superficial and excessive;" and a distinction between works that manifest the Dao and works that have deviated from the Dao. Contrary to what Owen may have learned from the passage that he uses above, Liu Xie's poetics does not show what literature is, but rather what literature *is supposed to be* and what literature *had been*. The writings that manifest the divine Dao, neither the condition of Chinese literature nor how a Chinese mind regards a Chinese poem, are admittedly either the ideal works to which every writer should aspire, or the Classics that have been established by the Sages from the distant past. The very reason that Liu Xie "picks up the brush to write" lies in the fact in his disappointment in the writings of his time, his disappointment that in his days, literature, blemished with inessential ornaments, has failed to align with the essential Dao.

As a comprehensive study of poetics, Liu Xie's fifty-chapter book also includes a large section on how to write, featuring chapters on "Rhythm 声律," "Parallel 俪辞," "Metaphor 比兴," "Hyperbole 夸饰," "Example 事类," "Word Choice 练字," and "Reservation 隐秀," that discuss rhetorical devices with which we are familiar. In these chapters, Liu Xie frequently outlines his visions of what could be the best writings, while offering practical strategies. In the chapter "Metaphor," for example, he contends that the excellence of a metaphor lies in the "aptness of representation 切至为贵", and that the ancient poems (the best, of course) could link things far apart as in the north and south, and match them as if they were liver and gall 物虽胡越合则肝胆. The best metaphor, both in the aesthetics of China and the West, as we shall see more clearly, will always be one in which the represented and its representation bind together as if they were "liver and gall."

Pauline Yu's *The Reading of Imagery in the Chinese Poetic Tradition* appeared two years after the publication of Owen's *Traditional Chinese Poetry and Poetics*. To borrow Saussy's comments, this 1987 study of the Chinese literary imagination is "the most systematic exploration and uncompromising analysis of the field of comparative

poetics so far."[33] After discussing Plato's mimesis theory, Christian dualism, Renaissance poetics of "making," and the Western transcendence—all of which she finds responsible for the "fundamental disjunction in a metaphor,"[34]Yu, following in Plaks's footsteps, addresses the Chinese monistic worldview. "Indigenous Chinese philosophical tradition agrees on a fundamentally monistic view of the universe,"[35] she writes. After explaining the features of this Chinese monistic worldview that is envisioned by the Daoist philosophers such as Zhuangzi, Yu gives an overall account of the poetic assumptions in a Chinese mind:

> Thus the Preface (the Preface of the *Classic of Poetry*) here can assume that what is internal (emotion) will naturally find some externally correlative form or action, and that poetry can spontaneously reflect, affect, and effect political and cosmic order. In other words, the seamless connection between the individual and the world enables the poem simultaneously to reveal feelings, provide an index of governmental stability, and serve as a didactic tool. Furthermore, the connections between subject and object or among objects, which the West has by and large credited to the creative ingenuity of the poet, are viewed in the Chinese tradition as already pre-established; the poet's primary achievement often lies in his ability to transcend, rather than to assert, his individuality and distinctiveness from the elements of the world.[36]

Similarly to Plaks's approach to literature, Yu regards worldview as the direct influence on poetic practice. Because the Daoist monistic worldview allows a "seamless connection between the individual and the world, between subject and object," the connection between poetry and the poet's intention is nothing but natural, spontaneous, and perhaps even pre-established. Following in Owen's footsteps, Yu then offers a range of passages selected from Chinese poetics to illustrate her observation. Again, Liu Xie's *Literary Mind* comes to the fore:

> In literary thinking, one's spirit is far-reaching. Thus when one concentrates and ponders in silence, one's thoughts can touch a thousand years. With a quiet move

[33] Saussy, 16-7.
[34] Yu, 17.
[35] Ibid., 32.
[36] Ibid., 32-3.

> of the face, one's gaze can penetrate ten thousand miles. … Before one's eyebrows and lashes, scenes of windblown clouds furl and unfurl. These are what the order of thought attains. Therefore, when the order of thought is subtle, the spirit and objects wander together.[37] 文之思也，其神远矣。故寂然凝虑，思接千载；悄焉动容，视通万里；…… 眉睫之前，卷舒风云之色；其思理之致乎！故思理为妙，神与物游。

To be sure, this famous passage from Liu Xie's chapter, "Spiritual Thought (Imagination) 神思," seems to present a poetic version of the Daoist monistic vision of the "unity" between the mind and the world. As the poet's mind joins with the far expanse of time and space, and as "his spirt and objects wander together," he has acquired the most resourceful mind and the most discerning eyes. Nonetheless, this poetic unity on which Liu Xie elaborates must have been different from, and even opposed to, the Daoist union between man and the universe. In the Daoist unity, one is supposed to completely forget oneself in order to join the external world. As intelligence, culture, and linguistic ability have all become worldly cares and impediments in the way of one's transcendence in the union with the Dao, one must brush these earthly burdens aside. In other words, whereas the Daoist unity is predicated on the absence of the self, the poet, described by Liu Xie as full of the presence of himself, is incorporating history, landscape, space, and time—the entirety of the external world—all into his mind. The poetic unity in Liu Xie is in essence the totality and expansion of the self rather than the merging of the self into nature. It is the totality of the subject rather than the unity between the subject and object as Yu presents— "Thus the priority has passed from the outside world entirely within the subject, and we end up with something that resembles a radical idealism."[38]

In addition, what this passage depicts is, admittedly, an ideal situation. Toward the end of this chapter, Liu Xie discusses the difficulties in finding the right ideas and the right, corresponding language. "The language may be so closely related to the ideas as if they were one, yet, they may differ as if they were a thousand miles apart 言授于意，密则无际，疏则千里,"[39] Liu Xie admits. If there were no disjunction between poetry and

[37] I am using Yu's citation here, 36.
[38] Paul de Man, "The Rhetoric of Temporality," *Blindness*, 196.
[39] *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*, translated by Shih, 301.

the poet's mind in the Chinese imagination, as Yu proposes, she is certainly invoking the most ideal situation rather than any kind of common reality with which a poet has to come to terms.

The last piece in this series that I intend to look at is Michelle Yeh's article published also in 1987, which is entitled, "Metaphor and Bi: Western and Chinese Poetics." Thanks to her adoption of the technical terms and her definitiveness, Yeh seems to have spelled out what Plaks, Owen, and Yu constantly suggest and insinuate, but do not claim overtly, on the issues of the Chinese sense of metaphor/allegory:

> As a combination of two categories that share some similarities, *bi* echoes the Western definition of metaphor. However, as we have discussed earlier, in Aristotle and many later theories, the difference between the tenor and the vehicle is equally essential and necessary. The tension that is generated from differences makes the juxtaposition both notable and valuable. The emphasis on tension also suggests that, although one can be used to describe the other, the two categories are two independent, mutually exclusive, self-contained entities. The relationship between them is essentially one of contrastive juxtaposition. This is exactly what we do not find in the Chinese *Bi*. […] Instead of the tension and disjunction that we have observed in the Western concept of metaphor, *bi* presumes affinity and complementarity.[40]

To summarize, while the Western metaphor is known for its "difference, tension, disjunction, and even contrast" between its tenor and vehicle, the Chinese "bi 比," commonly translated into English as to compare/comparison/metaphor/simile, has little or none of the difference between the tenor and vehicle in the Chinese imagination. Yeh, following in the footsteps of her predecessors, falls back in her arguments on the Daoist ideas of immanence and monism, as if philosophical vision had determined daily use of language, and as if the Chinese nation had already achieved Zhuangzi's vision—the ultimate primitivism of "seeing all the things as equal 齐物论." If there are a tenor and a vehicle in the process of comparison in the first place, their very existence is predicated

[40] Michelle Yeh, "Metaphor and Bi: Western and Chinese Poetics," *Comparative Literature* 39 (1987): 247; 250.

on the fact that they are already "two independent, mutually exclusive, self-contained entities."

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This set of theories of the Chinese sense of allegory/metaphor might not be foreign to its Western readers. What Plaks, Owen, Yu, and Yeh have built, that is, these Chinese "antipodes" in literary theory, call to mind the vocabulary and ideas belonging to the 18th-19th century Western Symbolist aesthetics[41] —the symbolic aesthetics and ideology that Paul de Man recently challenged. In his review of different European countries in which this phenomenon of the valorization of symbol takes place, de Man recapitulates the English branch of symbolism that is featured in Coleridge's poetics:

> We find in Coleridge what appears to be, at first sight, an unqualified assertion of the superiority of the symbol over allegory. The symbol is the product of the organic growth of form; in the world of the symbol, life and form are identical: "such as the life is, such is the form." Its structure is that of the synecdoche, for the symbol is always a part of the totality that it represents. Consequently, in the symbolic imagination, no disjunction of the constitutive faculties takes place, since the material perception and the symbolical imagination are continuous, as the part is continuous with the whole.[42]

Although it seems hard to pin down what Coleridge means by "life" and "form," the set of terms he uses to describe symbol looks familiar. Symbol is superior in its "organic growth of form," its "identification between life (the external world?) and form (the poet's intention?), its structure of "synecdoche," and its "totality." There is "no disjunction" of the "constitutive faculties" in the symbolic imagination, we are told, since nature (material perception) and mind (symbolic imagination) are "continuous, as the part is continuous with the whole." Pauline Yu could have well used this passage to describe

[41] To my knowledge, both Plaks and Yu have mentioned symbol in their books, but both deem it unimportant to their arguments. For Plaks, see 90-1, where he regards symbol as similar to allegory. Yu, who actually brings up the hierarchy of allegory and symbol, as well as de Man's critique, dismisses this issue as being "the subject of much discussion that need not concern us here." See 27-30.
[42] Paul de Man, "The Rhetoric of Temporality," *Blindness*, 191.

the Chinese aesthetics of the "seamless connection between subject and object." Before Paul de Man, Gadamer also questioned the validity of the symbolic aesthetics in his 1960 book *Truth and Method*, an aesthetics that in his observation "refuses to distinguish between experience and the representation of this experience."[43] To use Michelle Yeh's terms instead, the aesthetics of symbolism lies in its refusal to distinguish between the tenor and the vehicle. In the poetics of Novalis, the German forerunner of the symbolist movement, poetry is not artifice, and it has nothing to do with the making of language or any virtuosity of rhetoric.[44] Historical, non-fictional, and pre-established, the symbolist poetics is, by definition, the Chinese aesthetics and the Chinese sense of allegory/metaphor that our American sinologists/comparatists discusses here present.

It has in fact been recognized that certain parallels do exist between the symbolic poetics and ideas in Chinese poetry. In his 1948 book *On Art* 谈艺录, Qian Zhongshu 钱钟书 (1910-1998), the forerunner of Chinese-Western comparative poetics, includes the chapter, "Brémond on Poetry and Yan Yu's Poetics 白瑞蒙论诗与严沧浪诗话," on the "hidden consensus between symbolism and Yan Yu's remarks on poetry 象征派冥契沧浪之说诗."[45] Henri Brémond's *La poésie pure* (1925), as Qian introduces on the first page of that chapter, can be taken as a summary of what the French symbolist poets, such as Verlaine, Mallarmé, and Valéry, had been proposing over the past fifty years. As with Novalis' ideas on poetry, their contentions that poetry does not rely on knowledge or logic, and that poetry should be in the closest area to the soul and the divine, as Qian notes, are in the same vein as the 13th century critic Yan Yu's remarks on poetry of the High Tang period:

> Poetry involves a distinct material that has nothing to do with books. Poetry involves a distinct interest that has nothing to do with natural principle. Still, if you don't read extensively and learn all there is to know about natural principle, you can't reach the highest level. But the very best involves what is known as

[43] Ibid., 188.
[44] "Qian Zhongshu, *Tan Yi Lu*, 674-5.
[45] Ibid., 666-708. Qian's *Tan Yi Lu* was first published in June 1948 by Shanghai Kaiming Bookstore 上海开明书店. Its revised edition was published in 1984 by Zhonghua Shuju 中华书局. I cite from Sanlian Bookstore's second edition of this book.

> "not getting onto the road of principles" and "not falling into the trap of words." Poetry is "to sing what is in the heart." In the stirring and excitement of their poetry, the High Tang writers were those antelopes that hang by their horns, leaving no tracks to be followed. Where they are subtle, there is a limpid and sparkling quality that can never be quite forced and made—like tones in the empty air, or color in a face, or moonlight in the water, or an image in a mirror—the words are exhausted, but the meaning is never exhausted. 夫诗有别材，非关书也；诗有别趣，非关理也。然非多读书、多穷理，则不能极其至，所谓不涉理路、不落言筌者，上也。诗者，吟咏情性也。盛唐诸人惟在兴趣，羚羊挂角，无迹可求。故其妙处，透彻玲珑，不可凑泊，如空中之音，相中之色，水中之月，镜中之象，言有尽而意无穷。[46]

Describing the qualities of the most supreme poems, Yan Yu here contrasted writing poetry with learning from books or searching for principles. As with symbolist aesthetics, the critic obviously values natural talent over nurtured effort. "Poetry can never be quite forced and made," to borrow Yan Yu's words. Having little to do with knowledge, technique, or even work in the making, poetry resembles "tones in the empty air, or color in a face, or moon in the water, or reflection in a mirror"—enchanting images occurring in the natural world that Buddhist teachings use as expressions for enlightenment.[47] Known as the first critic who has associated poetry with the metaphysical,[48] Yan Yu sees their shared, common core in "enlightenment." "Both the Dao of Buddhism and the Dao of Poetry depend on the wonderful enlightenment 大抵禅道惟在妙悟, 诗道亦在妙悟,"[49] as he famously claimes. In Yan Yu's poetics, poetry resembles the Daoist cultivation, which involves meditation, self-improvement, and epiphany. Such an affinity made between metaphysics and poetry has also featured in the symbolic imagination.

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[46] *Yan Yu's Poetics* 沧浪诗话. I am generally following Owen's translation in *Readings in Chinese Literary Thought* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1992), 406. The only revision I made in Owen's translation is the phrase: "不可凑泊," which is translated by him as "that can never be quite fixed and determined." I think the sentence concerns the subtlety of poetry cannot be forced rather than its meaning cannot be determined.
[47] See Qian's Chapter 28 in *On Art*: "Wonderful Enlightenment and Buddhism 妙悟与参禅," 243.
[48] According to Qian Zhongshu, this is a false belief, since the connection between Poetry and Buddhism is a popular topic throughout the Song dynasty, see chapter 84 in *On Art*: "Comparing Poetry to Buddhism 以禅论诗," 636-648.
[49] *Yan Yu's Poetics;* see also Qian, 677.

Brémond's another book, published in 1926, is actually titled "Prière et poésie." In Novalis' judgment, to use another example, true poets ought to have the soul of a priest.[50]

This "wonderful enlightenment," this divine epiphany described in poetics, as Qian Zhongshu further suggests, should be traced to Zhuangzi and Plotinus, both of whom have written about the mystic vision of merging with the Dao/God.[51] The poet-priest, touched by Nature's grandeur and peace—as if he had been overwhelmed and had forgotten himself—joins in with the creating force of the universe. But as discussed earlier in Pauline Yu's poetics of the unity between subject and object, mysticism and religion must have been fundamentally at odds with poetry.[52] Neither religion nor mysticism privileges language, for example. As long as meaning is captured and transcendence reached, language is to be dismissed as a tool. Besides, if one had truly forgotten oneself, whose condition might be compared to what happens in sleep or even in death, how could he compose a poem in the first place? There seems to be a real impasse for poets under the influence of such an aesthetics. Wang Shizhen 王士禎 (1634-1711), for example, who regards himself as a student of Yan Yu, while choosing mysticism over language, paradoxically claims that the best poetry is about forgetting language.[53] Mallarmé's aesthetics of the blank, perhaps, also suggests some shared impatience with language. For the loquacious human beings in the noisy human realm, silence, emptiness, and absence are perhaps the best conduit to imagine somewhere closer to the divine: "That which is not ineffable has no importance," as they would say. "The moonlight in the water," however enchanting and luminous, is a reflection after all, always already absent from reality.

Despite these similarities in ideas between symbolism and Chinese poetry,[54] we should be clear that, unlike the 18th-19th century symbolist movement, which was more or

[50] "Der echte Dichter ist aber immer Priester, so wie der echte Priester immer Dichter geblieben." I cite from Qian, 674.
[51] See Qian, 677, 683-707.
[52] See also Qian's Chapter 28, "Wonderful Enlightenment and Buddhism 妙悟与参禅," 235-249.
[53] "The Pentasyllabic Quatrains of the Tang poets often enter the realm of Buddhism and have the miraculousness of 'getting the meaning and forgetting the words' 唐人五言绝句往往入禅，有得意忘言之妙," he says. I here follow James J. Y. Liu's translation in *Chinese Theories of Literature*, 44.
[54] One may wonder whether there was any substantial contact between China and Europe in literary history before the 19th century. Chinese aesthetic of the garden, the aesthetics of irregularity, asymmetry, surprise, and variety, did exert a great influence on European gardens since the 17th century. See Arthur O. Lovejoy,

less a consistent trend, its Chinese "counterpart" has never been coherent. Wang Shizhen and Yan Yu are from two different eras with a time lapse of over four centuries. Yan Yu's remarks on the "divine poetry" cited above, as we will see, are but a few of his many insights on how to write, including the technical aspects of writing poetry. Needless to say, this association with the metaphysical in poetics, scattered throughout the history of Chinese poetics at least from the Tang to its last dynasty of the Qing, can never be considered as representing Chinese poetics as a whole, just as Symbolism is not representative (rather, one may argue, it is an exception) of Western poetics. As the examples from passages of the *Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons* in our discussion of Stephen Owen and Pauline Yu have shown, Chinese critics/theorists rarely advocate one line of argument. Books on poetics in Chinese literature, usually more concerned with how to write than how to read, tend to offer a comprehensive, encyclopedic range of ideas on composition, instead of explaining or advancing a single thesis. This is probably why, for Qian Zhongshu snd many other traditional critics, Wang Shizhen's sole commitment to the metaphysical only reveals his misunderstanding of Yan Yu—it is nothing but an attempt to hide his own mediocrity in poetry with the abyss of mysticism, they would say.[55] In Yan Yu's judgement, furthermore, the poems that can be measured by the Buddhist terms of enlightenment are rare: only the poems of the 8th century poets Li Bo and Du Fu of come close to the divine. Prior to the passage cited above, Yan Yu even declares that no one other than Li Bo and Du Fu, has the talent for such kind of poem. While talented poets such as Li Bo do not need books or instructions for writing, some prescriptive guidelines are still necessary for the majority of the lesser minds. Yan Yu writes:

> Poetry has five rules: 1) construction of form; 2) force of structure; 3) atmosphere; 4) stirring and excitement; 5) tone and rhythm. Poetry has nine categories: 1) lofty; 2) ancient; 3) deep; 4) far; 5) long; 6) potent, undifferentiated; 7) drifting aloof; 8) notable grief; 9) gentle melancholy. These are three areas that demand care: 1) the opening and closing; 2) the rules for constructing lines; 3) the

"The Chinese Origin of Romanticism," *Essays in the History of Ideas* (Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 1948), 99-135.

[55] Qian, 233 in Chapter 27: "Poems of Wang Shizhen 王渔洋诗."

> eye of the line. These are two overall situations: 1) straightforward and carefree; 2) firm, self-possessed, and at ease. There is only one supreme accomplishment: (entering the) divinity. Where poetry has "divinity" it is perfect and has reached its limit; there is nothing to add to it. Only Li Bo and Tu Fu attained this; the others achieve it only imperfectly. 诗之法有五：曰体制，曰格力，曰气象，曰兴趣，曰音节。诗之品有九：曰高，曰古，曰深，曰远，曰长，曰雄浑，曰飘逸，曰悲壮，曰凄婉。其用工有三：曰起结，曰句法，曰字眼。其大概有二：曰优游不迫，曰沈著痛快。诗之极致有一，曰入神。诗而入神，至矣，尽矣，蔑以加矣。惟李、杜得之。他人得之盖寡也。[56]

Here, no longer measured by the Buddhist terms of enlightenment, poetry is categorized by its structure, forcefulness, rhythm, theme, mood, and the other technical aspects. The poet needs to hone his skills particularly in three areas:
sentence structure, the beginning and ending, as well as the eye of a poem. In the end, Yan Yu tells us that a poem which has "entered the divinity" is an extraordinary achievement, and only Li Bo and Du Fu had reached this limit. Such an aesthetics that is comparable to the symbolist aesthetics, in other words, unlike the symbolist aesthetics, recognizes itself in the first place as an idealistic vision rather than an approachable condition. Whether or not this is Yan Yu's strategy in canonizing Li Bo and Du Fu, such an aesthetics certainly cannot represent the overall Chinese aesthetics in poetry as a whole.

In this regard, then, James J. Y. Liu's handy introduction to Chinese poetics, *Chinese Theories of Literature*, published in 1975, can be misleading. By dis-assembling the various strands of ideas in one work, such as the various ideas of Yan Yu and Liu Xie, and re-assembling them into his structured account, Liu has developed "six kinds of theories of literature" out of Chinese poetics.[57] To reiterate Liu's guiding principle, as he is not interested in individual critics but in general theories, he "cannot make an omelette

[56] I follow Owen's translation in *Readings in Chinese Literary Thought*, 399-400. See also Qian's comments on this passage in chapter 6, "The Divine Spirit 神韵," 109.
[57] James J. Y. Liu 刘若愚, *Chinese Theories of Literature* (Chicago: The U of Chicago P, 1975), 14.

without breaking eggs."[58] Yet "an omelette" of Chinese theories of literature, with butter, pepper, and salt scrambled together, may be a far cry from the raw "eggs of remarks on poetry." To alert his reader of the potential misinterpretations, Liu makes the following disclaimer in the introduction:

> For the present, I wish to point out that these theories are not necessarily incompatible with each other but often interrelated, since different theories can be derived from common sources, and one theory can give rise to or be merged with another, as a shift of focus or a change of point of view occurs. On the other hand, they can naturally cause contradictions. […] I further wish to make clear that in distinguishing six kinds of theories, I do not imply the existence of six distinct schools of critics. In fact, Chinese critics are generally eclectic or syncretic, and it is common to find a critic who combines, say, an expressive theory with a pragmatic one.[59]

The first theory that Liu introduces among his six, and probably his favorite theory, is based on the remarks that are associated with the Dao—the bits and pieces from Zhuangzi, Liu Xie, Yan Yu, and Wang Shizhen that we have looked at. Regarding this theory as a "distinctively Chinese contribution,"[60] Liu aptly calls it the "Metaphysical Theory." This Chinese "Metaphysical Theory," as he introduces to his Western reader, following the observation of Qian Zhongshu, shares certain aesthetic values with the Symbolist poets, Baudelaire, Rimbaud, and Mallarmé in particular.[61]

In a somewhat predictable and perhaps inevitable fashion, this system of "Chinese theories," with its own qualifications, when passed down to Liu's students and readers, has nonetheless undergone a drastic transformation. To borrow Liu's metaphor again, now the eggs seem to have fully been replaced by the omelette. Pauline Yu's first published article with a comparative range (her first article discusses Georges Poulet and the symbolist tradition), interestingly, concerns the East-West parallel in poetics rather than the East-West divide for which she is known. Taking her cue from James Liu, she revisits the resemblance between Chinese "Metaphysical Theory" and Western

[58] Ibid., 14-15.
[59] Ibid., 14.
[60] Ibid., 2; 16.
[61] Ibid., 53-7; 154: Liu cites Qian Zhongshu, see his footnote 183.

symbolism, and fleshes out the observations of Qian Zhongshu and James Liu. To reiterate, despite similarities in certain ideas, the Chinese "metaphysical" poetics is not a school but a self-acknowledged ideal within Chinese poetics. When elaborating on the Chinese absence of allegory/metaphor a few years later, one may wonder how Yu has managed to overcome the dismissal of allegory/metaphor on the Western side of symbolism that she had examined carefully. Here, it seems still worthwhile to quote Pauline Yu's thesis on the China-West resemblance in full:

> They are equally likely to be unaware that many of these same nineteenth- and twentieth-century notions also appeared in a radically different historical and cultural context—advocated by a tradition of Chinese literary critics which James J. Y. Liu has termed "metaphysical." … In this essay, however, I shall be focusing not on Chinese critical theories as a whole, but solely on those which bear the most striking resemblances to our own modern Western poetic tradition—those of the "metaphysical" school—in the hope that the comparison will not only prove mutually illuminating, but will also suggest the possibility of a comparative poetics.
>
> […]
>
> Both Chinese and Symbolist critics, then, advocate four notions: a method of indirection and suggestion; a preference for intuition over logic; a kind of impersonality; and a thoroughgoing unity of self and world, one which enables the fusion of emotion and scene and also obliterates such distinctions as that between subject and object.[62]

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By sleight of hand and the genius of the sinologists-comparatists discussed here, ideals of the long history of Chinese poetics are made into a school of thoughts that sometimes stand close to Western symbolism, while these ideals, when taken as representing Chinese poetics as a whole, become the very antithesis of the West. The accounts of Chinese poetics offered by Owen, Yu, and Yeh, relying on the so-called

[62] Pauline Yu, "Chinese and Symbolist Poetic Theories," *Comparative Literature* 30 (1978): 291, 309.

"Metaphysical Theory," now make it impossible for us to tell whether we are reading tradition from the East, or tradition from the West—whether we are confronting an alien, opposing Other that is our alternative, or whether we are, once again, running into a Self that has to be defined and displayed by a self-created Other.[63]

Is it because in these Chinese ideals, they have found the lost luster of the symbolic theories that de Man has relentlessly taken apart? Is it because they need a playground for their literary fantasies so that a mystery will continue? Or is it because they are indeed blinded by the artificial naturalness of Chinese poetry, and mesmerized by its monosyllabic imageries and hieroglyphs?[64]

Much can be said about the problems of comparative literature (approaching China) now, whose sheer expansion urges the ambitious mind to capture the shimmering light of connection and contrast—to give meaning, to grasp insight, and whose blindness is not exempted from other disciplines and methods if they too, are founded on reading and interpretation. Standing in this ever-changing world, after all, we have to hold on to a sense of presence and certainty, no matter how blind and illusory it could be. This is always already programmed in language, whose extremity can be seen in the valorization of concept and symbol. Much too still remains to be said about language and rhetoric on the Chinese side: Confucius's insistence on the Wen—the demand for refining one's thoughts in words, seems now, in a comparative framework, to be a demand in effect for allegory.[65]

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[63] The alien, opposing Other now turns out to be literally residing within the Self. —I am thinking about Saussy's observation I discuss in my footnote 20, as well as Rimbaud's 'Je est un autre.' ("I is another.")

[64] While preparing for the allegoresis of the *Journey to the West* in following chapters, I encountered Ling Hon Lam's observation on the problem of the Chinese sense of allegory in his footnote, which explicitly points to what I am more or less suggesting here (except that I want to confine my speculation to poetics-aesthetics rather than extending it to the problem of modernity): "De Man rediscovers 'an allegorical tradition' in pre-Romantic and Romantic periods that works against the hegemony of symbol. … Plaks and Pauline Yu idealize the Chinese figure under the ideological sway of the Romantic symbol in order to deal with our own crisis of modernity. The organicistic imagination of symbol is a reaction to the modern split between subject and object." I've found pleasures of recognition. See Ling Hon Lam in "Cannibalizing the Heart: The Politics of Allegory and *The Journey to the West*," in *Literature, Religion, and East/West Comparison: Essays in Honor of Anthony C. Yu*, ed. Eric Ziokowski (Newark: U of Delaware P, 2005), 174.

[65] I am thinking about the analogy between the Wen and the animal fur made in the *Analects of Confucius*, where it defends the refinement of the Wen by invoking the likeness of the tiger and the dog if they are stripped of their fur. For a brief account of how Confucius as well as the Confucian scholars have understood the refinement of the rhetoric, see Appendix I.

The most extraordinary poem, as imagined for us by Yan Yu, resembles a flower in the mirror and the moon in the water, whose meaning will never be exhausted while words have long ended. Shimmering on the limpid water, the moon, reflected, draws the eyes of the earthly beholder, though illusory, yet enchantingly beautiful.

II

READING THE JOURNEY TO THE WEST

How Fiction became a Sacred Scripture.

In the preface, signed in the early summer of 1592, to the full-length edition, and arguably the earliest extant edition, of the *Journey to the West*, a concern over the nature of this extended fiction written mostly in the vernacular runs deep, and the preface seems to culminate in an apology for the book's forthcoming publication.

Signed with the name Chen Yuanzhi of Moling (Nanjing) 秣陵陈元之, a name that is otherwise unknown, the preface begins with two short citations: one from the Grand Historian Sima Qian, and the other, from Zhuangzi, the philosopher—

> The Grand Historian said: "The heavenly Dao is vast and all-encompassing, isn't it! Subtle, trivial speech which is aligned with the Dao also can resolve disputes." Zhuangzi said: "The Dao is in shit and in piss." 太史公曰：“天道恢恢岂不大哉，谭言微中亦可以解纷。” 庄子曰：“道在屎溺。”[1]

[1] For all the primary texts in the commentary editions of the *Journey*, I refer to the digital library of Chinese Text Project on the *Journey to the West*: http://ctext.org/library.pl?if=gbandremap=gbandtitle=%E8%A5%BF%E6%B8%B8.
There are three anthologies of source texts on the *Journey*: *Xiyouji Ziliao Huibian* 西游记资料汇编 [Anthology of Source Materials of the Journey to the West], edited by Zhu Yixuan and Liu Yuchen, (Henan: Zhongzhou Shuhuashe, 1983); *Xiyouji Yanjiu Ziliao* 西游记研究资料 [Research Materials of the Journey to the West], edited by Liu Yinbo, (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 1990), and *Xiyouji Ziliao Huibian* 西遊記資料彙編 [Anthology of Source Materials of the Journey to the West], edited by Cai Tieying, (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 2010). All the prefatory materials I cite in this chapter can be found in these three source books, most of the pre-chapter, post-chapter, and double-column interlinear commentaries I cite, however, are not included in these three anthologies.
For a descriptive bibliography of the *Journey* commentary editions, see *How to Read the Chinese Novel*, edited by David L. Rolston, (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1990), 451-6, where information regarding the commentator, formal aspects of the edition, general allegoresis, and places to locate the original copy is provided; see also Glen Dudbridge, *Books, Tales and Vernacular Culture: Selected Papers on China*, (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 16-33. The first descriptive bibliography of the *Journey* was prepared by Sun Kaidi 孫楷第 in *Bibliography of Chinese Vernacular Novels* 中國通俗小說書目 (1933).

It is certainly not at random that Chen Yuanzhi uses the words of Sima Qian and Zhuangzi to begin the preface. These two prominent authorities in Chinese writing, as Chen seems to be reminding his reader, are predecessors who have defended the writing style that has also been employed in the *Journey to the West*. Echoing Laozi's description of the omnipresence of the Dao—"the heavenly Dao is vast and all-encompassing"—Sima Qian in turn defines and defends the "subtle, trivial speech 微言," the writing style that he has highlighted in the "Biographical Accounts of the Witty Courtiers 滑稽列传." Irrelevant and insignificant though it may seem, the "subtle, trivial speech," which permeates the omnipresent Dao, has resolved political disputes and dissuaded kings from their willful misconduct. While the second citation of Zhuangzi reaffirms the Dao's omnipresence—the justification for Sima Qian's "subtle speech," it reminds the reader that the book *Zhuangzi* is, in effect, written in the "subtle speech," or to use a more common designation of the book, the "lodged speech 寓言," the writing form that is not unlike "subtle speech" where important messages are lodged and held within.

"If one imposes the rule of the solemn and elegant speech, the book of the *Journey* will be lost 若必以庄雅之言求之，则几乎遗西游一书." —Four times has Chen Yuanzhi appealed to the *Journey*'s endangered situation in this short preface.[2] While the book is obviously not the "solemn, elegant speech" that is employed in the writings of history and philosophy, the invocation of Zhuangzi and Sima Qian has become Chen Yuanzhi's way to resist the old supremacy of history and philosophy, the distaste for fiction, the reality of the *Journey*'s anonymity, and the possibility that it will soon be banished to oblivion. It is the "subtle speech which is aligned with the Dao 微言以中道" that the book uses, as Chen reaffirms the style that is employed by the *Journey*. Toward the end of this preface, an imagined debate over the publication of the *Journey* is staged,[3] and it escalates into a series of questions pointing to the status of history and

[2] The other three places are: "The Journey should not be lost 夫不可没已;" "I do not want to see the abandonment of what has been kept 所存不欲尽废;" and "I do not want to see the loss of (the author's) intention 不欲其志之尽湮."

[3] This debate starts with the argument advanced by an imagined, opposite side, which reads: "Someone once said: 'These are words in the wilderness, not the writings of a gentleman. The book cannot be taken as

philosophy: Are all the histories true? Is philosophy always in line with the order of the Dao? —Is your standard the standard of the Dao and can you really determine the hierarchy in writing? Chen Yuanzhi's preface, to be sure, concludes with his confirmation that the *Journey* has to be preserved and published.

Besides the explanation of the *Journey*'s writing style, which can be taken as the theoretical groundwork laid out by Chen Yuanzhi in his defense of the *Journey*, the preface writer also discusses the book's allegorical message, which stands as the centerpiece in this prefatory apology. After all, it is the meaning lodged within—the principle of the Dao that will in the end justify Sima Qian's "subtle speech" and Zhuangzi's "lodged speech." Regarding the allegorical message of the *Journey*, Chen Yuanzhi invokes another predecessor—the preface of an earlier edition that he claims to have read before. Chen Yuanzhi writes:

> The (old) preface interprets the monkey as the spirit of the Mind; the horse as the coursing of the Will; the pig (Zhu Bajie, the eight precepts) as the Wood of the Liver's vapor; the sand monk as the Water of the Spleen's vapor; Tripitaka (the Three Stores of spirit, sound and vapor) as the Master of the Mind; and the demons as the obstructions of the fears, distortions and fantasies produced by one's mouth, ears, nose, tongue, body, and will. Hence, the demons are born of the Mind, and they are also subdued by the Mind. Hence, to subdue the Mind is to subdue the demons, and to subdue the demons is to return to the Principle. To return to the Principle is to return to the Primal Beginning, which is the Mind without anything more to subdue. The preface reads the book as how the Dao is achieved; it takes the book as a plain allegory (lodged speech)! The preface reads the book as ways to cultivate the Great Elixir, which is generated in the East and achieved in the West. Hence, it is the account of the West.[4] 其叙以为：孙，狲也

history since it is not true; it cannot be taken as philosophy since it does not follow order; and it cannot be taken as talking about the Dao since it is almost false. I am ashamed of you.'" 或曰："此东野野语，非君子所志。以为史则非信，以为子则非伦，以言道则近诬，吾为吾子之辱。"

[4] I have consulted the translations of Dudbridge and Yu, both of whom have translated part of this preface. See Glen Dudbridge, *The Hsi-yu Chi: A Study of Antecedents to the Sixteenth-century Chinese Novel* (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge UP, 1970), 174; Anthony C. Yu, "Introduction," *The Journey to the West*

，以为心之神；马，马也，以为意之驰；八戒，其所戒八也，以为肝气之木；沙，流沙，以为肾气之水；三藏，藏神、藏声、藏气之三藏，以为郛郭之主；魔，魔，以为口耳鼻舌身意、恐怖颠倒幻想之障。故魔以心生，亦心以摄。是故摄心以摄魔，摄魔以还理。还理以归之太初，即心无可摄。此其以为道之成耳，此其书直寓言者哉！彼以为大丹之数也，东生西成，故西以为纪。

Whether this set of interpretations is indeed inherited from the reader of the past or simply comes from the preface writer's own apologetic ingenuity, it has shaped the understanding and reception of the *Journey to the West*. The *Journey* interpretations that are to be examined below, as we shall see, can all, in a sense, be traced to this earliest interpretation that is here recorded by Chen Yuanzhi. Reaffirming that the book is not some uncouth word game, the preface contends that the *Journey* has in reality contained the most serious messages concerning the Dao, the Great Elixir, the Primal Beginning, and the Mind that is free of demonic illusion. While the four fantastic disciples, the monkey, the pig, the sand monk, and the horse, are read as the personifications of the four human organs (perhaps also the five agents 五行), the demons are taken to be the mind's own illusions and deficiencies. In the giddy rhetoric of the description of the causal relations between the Mind, the Demon, and the Primal Beginning, we are told that the ultimate meaning of the *Journey* lies in the teaching of "subduing the Mind 摄心."

Such interpretative investments focused on controlling the mind and the workings of the five agents, to be sure, are grounded in the text of the *Journey*. Associated with both the "Mind" and the "Metal," the monkey, for example, appears often in the chapter headings as the "Mind Monkey 心猿"[5] and the "Metal Lord 金公."[6] Since the pig is sometimes called the "Wood Mother 木母," and the sand monk, the "Earth Mother 土母

(Chicago and London: U of Chicago P, 2012), 26-7. Dudbridge translated part of the allegoresis above discussing the association between the monkey and the Mind, see also my footnote 4 below.
Although this 1592 preface (written in the classical language), as far as I am concerned, is enormously important not only to the *Journey* studies but also in the history of fiction, it has not been translated in full into English to my knowledge. For the complete translation of this preface, see Appendix II.

[5] For discussion of the names of the pilgrims and their associations with the Daoist agents, see Dudbridge, 167-76; Yu, "Introduction," 65-73; and Andrew Plaks, *The Four Masterworks of the Ming Novel: Ssu Ta Ch'i-Shu* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1987), 189-93.

[6] Yu, 82-4; Plaks, 230-2.

," it is not beyond the reader's grasp that the *Journey* is interpreted as the workings of the five agents/organs inside a human body. But how exactly are the workings of these agents reflected in the narrative? If the ultimate teaching of the *Journey* takes the Mind as the generator and terminator of the demons, what is the function of the other body organs such as the ones represented by the pig and the sand monk? What is the correlation between the controlling of the Mind and the coordination of the five organs/agents, as the two theories seem to have implied two separate agendas in achieving the truth of the Dao? This brief account of the *Journey*'s meaning seems to have suggested two paths in reading the *Journey*, whose possibilities are yet to be explored.

Despite this underdeveloped prefatory interpretation, the double-column interlineal commentaries provided in the body of this edition have lent support to its own reading.[7] Among the rather sparse interlineal commentaries offered in this edition, its first three glosses have echoed and reaffirmed the two sets of allegoresis that are suggested in the preface. The "spiritual mountain of one square cun 灵台方寸山" and the "cave of the crescent moon with three stars 斜月三星洞," the two names appearing in the first chapter which are referred to as the residence of the monkey's teacher Subodhi, for example, are glossed by the commentary as the "Mind:"

> Spiritual mountain of one square cun: this is the Mind. 灵台方寸山心也。[…] Crescent moon is like the stroke of the slanted hook, the three stars are like three dots, and this is also the 'Mind 心.' It is saying that one does not need to go far to seek immortality, as immortality lies in the Mind. 斜月像一勾，三星像三点，也是心。言求仙不必在远，只在此心。[8]

Before his journey to the West, the monkey acquires the magic of longevity, the seventy-two transformations, and the ability to soar on the cloud in Subodhi's residence. As the gloss here internalizes the geographical location, the narrative could be read as the "Mind Monkey" seeking immortality in the "Mind"—even though this focus on the Mind seems

[7] The body of this 1592 edition has eight commentary pieces in total, among which two pieces are on pronunciation (Chapter 41 and 64), two on time setting in the plot (Chapter 47 and 48), and another one on the historical context (Chapter 100). See the chart of these eight pieces provided by Zhu: 竺洪波 Zhu Hongbo, *Sibainian Xiyouji Xueshushi* 四百年《西游记》学术史 [*The 400-Year Scholarship of the Journey*] (Shanghai: 复旦大学出版社 Fudan UP, 2006), 47.

[8] Chapter 1.

to have become an exegetical black hole that is consuming all the signifiers. In addition to this further substantiation of the significance of the Mind, the alternative interpretation is immediately suggested in the next chapter. As Subodhi, the monkey's teacher comments on the viability of the various ways in achieving immortality, he dismisses the practice of inactivity as "tiles and bricks on the kiln unrefined by water and fire."[9] This simple comparison, however, is glossed in the interlineal commentary with a specific doctrine from the Daoist alchemy. "The Daoist succeeds only when 'Water is above Fire' 道家只在水火既济才能得手," the commentary reads. This esoteric phrase, "Water above Fire 水火既济," originally an *Yijing* 易经 hexagram (䷾),[10] which is used in the Daoist alchemical practice to indicate success in attaining the Elixir, is not the first occasion where a Daoist technical term is presented in this edition. The last line in the preface concerning the *Journey*'s meaning cited above, where it mentions the Elixir's journey to the West, seems to be an echo of the couplet from *Awakening to Reality* (1075) 悟真篇, a work in the Daoist canon, which reads, "the Metal Lord is originally the son of the family to the East, living instead at the neighbor's body of the West 金公本是东家子，送向西邻寄体生."[11] In the correlative network of the alchemical vocabularies, the "Metal Lord" stands for the true Yang within Yin, or the trigram Kan 坎 ☵.[12] As the alchemists believe that the way to obtain the Elixir lies in reversing the natural degeneration and retrieving the true Yang, the couplet uses the Metal Lord's "living in the West" to symbolize natural degeneration, and it is the next couplet, where the Metal Lord "is called back home to grow up 认得唤来归舍养," that the attainment of the Elixir—the reversal of degeneration and the retrieval of the true Yang—is signified. But

[9] Chapter 2.

[10] The trigram Kan 坎 ☵ (the "Yang⚊" within the "Yin ⚋:" it has a variety of synonyms, among which is Water, or Metal within Water) locates above the trigram Li 离 ☲ (the Yin within the Yang, one of its synonyms is Fire): for the alchemists, this "Water above Fire" hexagram symbolizes the reversal of the natural process of aging, the path to immortality, and hence the success in attaining the Golden Elixir. It is believed that in the natural process, Fire is above the Water. See my discussion of the general theories of internal alchemy below when I discuss Chen Shibin's 1696 commentary edition.

[11] *Understanding Reality: A Taoist Alchemical Classic*, translated by Thomas Cleary (Honolulu: U of Hawaii P, 1987), 82. I came to notice this resemblance when reading Chen Shibin's 1696 commentaries in Chapter 14.

[12] Fabrizio Pregadio, *The Way of the Golden Elixir: An Introduction to Taoist Alchemy* (Mountain View, CA: Golden Elixir P, 2014), 46.

doesn't the "Metal" monkey's westward pilgrimage in the *Journey* narrative run counter to the eastward itinerary of the "Metal Lord" that is prescribed in the alchemical theory?

Despite these confusions and uncertainties, the two sets of readings, namely, the interpretation that is focused on the mind and the interpretation that alludes to the Daoist alchemical concepts, have been brought to the fore in the preface and in the interlineal commentaries of this earliest 1592 edition of the *Journey*, whose impact on the *Journey* readers, as we shall see, can be still felt to this day. Urged by the crisis that the *Journey* is to be lost—a difficult dilemma where this anonymous book may be despised as a nonentity, the preface writer, Chen Yuanzhi, in all his ingenuity and resourcefulness, seems to have turned this crisis into a celebration. Whether or not the *Journey* is indeed an allegory in which the teachings on achieving the Dao are lodged, Chen Yuanzhi's preface, though brief, is probably the most far-reaching criticism in *Journey* studies in hindsight.

Whether it is because Chen Yuanzhi's prefatory apology has succeeded in stimulating the interpretive curiosity or because the *Journey* narrative, with its plot in trials and in triumphs, attracts the reading crowd on its own, the many reprints and abridged editions produced over the next thirty years after the its 1592 debut showed its popularity.[13] While Chen Yuanzhi's concern over the book's bleak reception may prove unwarranted, the inquiry into the meaning of the *Journey*, as we shall see, became its reader's haunted habit. In the 1620s, a brand-new commentary edition was published, entitled "*Lizhi's Criticism of the Journey to the West* 李卓吾先生批评西游记."

As Chen Yuanzhi's prefatory apology seems to have originated from an earnest intention to save a neglected masterpiece, it is also plausible that this apology may have come from the publisher's desire to boost sales and profit from a larger audience (especially those who disapprove vernacular fiction). Rather than invoking the writing style that is championed by Sima Qian and Zhuangzi, this 1620s edition, quite different

[13] See a descriptive bibliography of the abridged editions of the *Journey* produced before the 1620s edition in Glen Dudbridge, *Books, Tales and Vernacular Culture: Selected Papers on China*, 16-33; or 曹炳建 Cao Bingjian,《西游记》现存版本系统叙录 "A Study on the Editions of the *Journey to the West*," in 淮海工学院学报 *Journal of Huaihai Institute of Technology* 8 (2010): 17-9. These abridged editions were mostly produced in the publishing houses based in the Fujian province.

from Chen Yuanzhi's strategy, provided another way to reach commercial success, as the publisher turned to the contemporary celebrity Li Zhi (1527-1602) and made him this edition's commentator. To be sure, although it was pointed out afterwards that most commentary editions attributed to Li Zhi are in reality penned by Ye Zhou 叶昼, a native of Wuxi (in Jiangsu province),[14] what easier way to prove a book's value than the suggestion that an esteemed scholar had invested his valuable time in commenting on it?

Despite the fabricated commentator, this 1620s commentary edition—the only commentary edition of the *Journey* produced after 1592 in the Ming dynasty, is probably also the only edition that did not make editorial changes to the earliest, 1592 text of the *Journey* in the next three-hundred years.[15] As the body of its text is flanked by the commentaries printed in the top margin, between the lines, and after the endings of most chapters, its first chapter is followed by Ye Zhou's "Overall Comment 总批" of the *Journey*, which begins with the commentator's concern and promise:

> Those who read the *Journey*, not knowing the author's purpose, regard it as a childish game. I have to pick out the important points one after another, in the hope that the author's intention will not be buried or swamped. 读西游记者，不知作者宗旨，定作戏论，余为一一拈出，庶几不埋没了作者之意。

Similar to what Chen Yuanzhi has intended to accomplish in his preface, Ye Zhou here is also committed to uncovering the meaning of the *Journey*. In the post-chapter commentary in the second chapter, he again cautions the reader "not to let go of the many lodged speeches appearing in the *Journey* 西游记极多寓言，读者切勿草草放过." But different from Chen Yuanzhi's allegoresis as well as the other *Journey* interpretations produced later in the Qing dynasty, the many "lodged speeches" that Ye Zhou selected from the *Journey* have little to do with the Confucian or the Daoist teachings and precepts. Rather than reading the book as an extended allegory in cultivating the mind or

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[14] The authenticity of Li Zhi is discussed by a handful of people, among whom are Chen Jiru 陈继儒 (1558-1639) and Sheng Yusi 盛于斯 (1598-1640). See Lu Decai's 鲁德才 introduction to *Lizhi's Criticism of the Journey to the West* 李卓吾先生批评西游记 (Hunan: 岳麓书社 Yuelu Shushe, 2006); see also David Rolston, *Traditional Chinese Fiction and Fiction Commentary* (Wisconsin: U of Wisconsin P, 1985), 356.

[15] A few textual differences seem to come from mistakes made by woodblock engravers rather than any deliberate editorial decisions. For the mistakes, see 吴圣昔 Wu Shengxi, "Two Observations on Li's Commentary Edition 李评本二探" in 明清小说研究 *Ming-Qing Fiction Studies* 10 (1995), 118.

coordinating the five body agents, Ye Zhou is interested in picking out what might be called snippets of life wisdom that are located in each chapter. The monkey can be read as the symbol of the Mind in certain chapters, for example, but this reading is not taken as the guiding principle that dominates the entire narrative. As he pays close attention to the characterization of the monkey, Ye sees the monkey first of all as a character in the narrative.

As for the other set of interpretations—the Daoist alchemical reading that is suggested in the 1592 edition, Ye Zhou's interest is at best lukewarm. His dismissal of the Daoist interpretation in the post-chapter commentary in Chapter 46, where the monkey outwits the three Daoist courtiers in the "Cart Slow Kingdom 车迟国," is in this regard in line with the preface that is attached to this edition. Signed with the name "Passer-by under the Pavilion with Curtains 幔亭过客," or Yuan Yuling 袁于令 (1599-1644), a scholar who was educated near the end of the Ming dynasty and served in the Qing court, this preface, while dismissing the overarching Daoist reading of the *Journey*, proposes a much bolder exegetical vision for the *Journey*:

> Interpreters read it as an allegory about the interaction among the five agents and the principles in Daoist cultivation, but I will say that the three schools have already been contained in this one book. If those who can read this book are also able to learn from it and extend its teachings, what other situations will they not comprehend, and what other principles of the Dao will they not be aligned with? Do we have to explore the Daoist and Buddhist canons to gain the hidden secrets?
> 说者以为寓五行生克之理，玄门修炼之道。 余谓三教已括于一部，能读是书者，于其变化横生之处引而伸之，何境不通？何道不洽？而必问玄机于玉匮，探禅蕴于龙藏，乃始有得于心也哉？

Obviously, both Yuan Yuling and Ye Zhou have reservations about the Daoist reading of the *Journey*, but what distinguishes the two readers is Yuan's suggestion of the affinity between the *Journey* and the three philosophical schools. As it is a suggestion that is unprecedented, it is also a suggestion that Ye Zhou might not be interested in and a suggestion which Chen Yuanzhi might be nudging the reader toward but has never really offered. In Yuan's understanding, the *Journey* is no different from the religious canons, and a competent reader will know how to obtain its precious teachings. Although Yuan

does not go on to unravel his vision of the book's allegorical message in the three philosophical schools, interpreters in the ensuing years did not shy away from this task, and a handful came up with their own new commentaries. The Manchus had now replaced the Ming reign, but the exegetical legacy left by Chen Yuanzhi, Ye Zhou, as well as Yuan Yuling, has lived on.

Around 1663, with the help of Huang Zhouxing 黄周星, a Ming loyalist who earned a living by tutoring and editing, Wang Xiangxu 汪象旭, a rather successful publisher based in Hangzhou 杭州, managed to issue an abridged commentary edition called "*Illustrated, Ancient Edition of Proving the Dao through the Journey to the West* 镌像古本西游证道书." As reflected by the title, this edition presents itself as being based on a recently-discovered ancient copy of the *Journey*, whose preface was signed in 1392 under the name Yu Ji 虞集, a Yuan dynasty scholar. While this sudden discovery of a 14th century copy is surprising, Yu Ji's preface opens with a more surprising story concerning the discovery of the *Journey*'s author. "A Daoist monk visited me," the preface writer records, "but before leaving, he presented me with this copy, saying, 'Here is the *Journey to the West* written by Qiu Chuji in the early years of the Yuan. I wish you would write a preface so that we can pass it on to our future generations.'"

This was certainly not the first time a publisher-editor associated his book with an important historical figure. The 1620s edition of the *Journey*, as we have seen, had invoked the celebrity Li Zhi in the book's title as its commentator. As such a marketing strategy may wipe out suspicion about the book's value, legitimize the editorial choices, and bring in authoritative backing to the commentary, the fact that this 1663 edition was reissued almost a hundred years later in the 1750s probably testifies its marketing success.[16] Although it has been pointed out that Qiu Chuji 丘处机 (1184-1227), one of the early founders of the Daoist internal alchemy of the Yuan dynasty, cannot possibly have used the terms specific to the future Ming society that appear in the *Journey*,[17] all

[16] It is reissued by Cai Yuanfang 蔡元放, see *How to Read the Chinese Novel*, edited by David Rolston (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1990), 453.
[17] To my knowledge, this is first brought up by Ji Yun 纪昀 in the 9th volume of *Jottings from the Grass Hut for Examining Minutiae* 阅微草堂笔记 which was published in 1791. See *Anthology of Sources of the*

the commentary editions produced after this edition have continued to count on this attribution. Nevertheless, despite its popularity, curious inconsistencies are rampant in this "ancient edition." If it is Yu Ji who wrote the preface to the book, for example, he would not have signed his name with an incorrect official title.[18] If this 1663 edition was indeed based on a 14th-century copy, it would not have the same editorial errors as the 1620s edition.[19] Although it is Huang Zhouxing who served as the chief commentator and editor,[20] the pre-chapter commentary always starts with the attribution to the publisher Wang Xiangxu. The interpretations provided in this edition, as we will see below, seem to be likewise inconsistent, if not entirely confusing.

After telling the story of how he acquired the ancient edition of the *Journey* and discovered the book's author, the preface writer "Yu Ji," similar to what Chen Yuanzhi does in the 1592 preface, offers his interpretation of the book:

> When I look into the intent of the true sage, I see that his intention does not lie in Tripitaka, though he talks about Tripitaka; his intention does not lie in fetching the scriptures, though he writes about fetching the scriptures. Monkey, Horse, Metal and Wood—these are the Yin and Yang inherent in our bodies; ghost, demon, monster and the evil spirit—these are the necessary obstacles in human life. Although the book is unusual and long, with several hundred-thousand words, its overarching meaning can actually be summed up in one phrase, which is, "retrieving the lost mind." It all depends on the mind whether one becomes a monster or a Buddha.
>
> If the mind is lost, it becomes a delusional mind. As soon as a delusional mind appears, it will do demonic things, which is changing and spreading all over the place. This can be found in the examples of the mind monkey, who claims to be a

Journey to the West 西游记资料汇编, Henan: 中州书画社 Zhongzhou Shuhuashe, 1983, 174. See also Lu Xun 鲁迅, Chapter 17 in *A Brief History of Chinese Fiction* 中国小说史略 (1924).

[18] Xu Shuofang 徐朔方, "On *Quanzhen religious school and the Novel of the Journey* 评《全真教和小说西游记》," in *Studies of Novel* 小说考信编 (Shanghai: 上海古籍出版社 Shanghai Ancient Books P, 1997), 342-8. This article first appeared in 1993 in the journal *Wenxue Yichan* 文学遗产 [*Literature Heritage*].

[19] Wu, Shengxi, 119-22.

[20] Ellen Widmer, "His-yu Cheng-tao Shu in the Context of Wang Chi's Publishing Enterprise" in 汉学研究 *Chinese Studies* 6 (1988): 37-64. This article examines the interaction between Huang and Wang with their letter exchanges.

king and a saint, and wreaks havoc in heaven. If the mind is retrieved, it becomes a true mind. As soon as a true mind appears, it can annihilate demons, and it is also changing and spreading all over the place. This can be found in the examples of the mind monkey, who subdues demons and proves the Buddha's reward. These two are but the same mind: if it is lost, it harms; if it is retrieved, it leads to rewards like these. A retrieved mind is no more magical than a lost mind, but there is a difference between being a demon and a Buddha. Therefore, a scholar fears the hardship in retrieving a lost mind while having no fear of the difficulty in reaching the good reward. This is the teaching of the true sage, who tries to awaken the world in all earnestness. His great intention will not lie outside this!
而余窃窥真君之旨，所言者在玄奘而意实不玄奘，所纪者在取经而志实不在取经。特假此以喻大道耳。猿马金木，乃吾身自具之阴阳；鬼魑妖邪，亦人世应有之魔障。虽其书离奇浩汗，亡虑数十万言，而大要可以一言蔽之曰收放心而已。盖吾人作魔成佛，皆由此心。此心放则为妄心，妄心一起则能作魔，其纵横变化无所不至，如心猿之称王称圣而闹天宫是也。此心收则为真心，真心一见则能灭魔，其纵横变化亦无所不至，如心猿之降妖缚怪而证佛果是也。然则同一心也，放之则其害如彼，收之则其功如此，其神妙非有加于前，而魔与佛则异矣。故学者但患放心之难收，不患正果之难就，真君之谆谆觉世，其大旨宁外此哉！

Noticeably, what preoccupies Yu Ji's interpretive attention is the "Mind." The overarching message of the *Journey*, as he demonstrates at length, is "retrieving the lost mind." When one's mind is lost, he becomes demonic; when the lost mind is retrieved, he turns into the daunting fighter against the demons. Yu Ji's interpretation obviously recalls one of the two exegetical paths that are prepared by Chen Yuanzhi. Yet while Chen embraces the general tenet of "subduing the mind," Yu Ji has developed it into a doctrine that is slightly different— it is the "lost mind" that needs to be "retrieved" rather than the "mind" that needs to be "subdued." Under this guidance of "retrieving the lost mind," therefore, when the mind monkey cancels his lifespan in the underworld, dismisses the position of horse-sitter assigned by the heavenly court, wreaks havoc during the peach festival, and wars against the troops from heaven, his behavior resembles the condition in

which the mind is lost. Obviously, Yu Ji has no sympathy for the monkey's reckless past when he challenges the heavenly authorities. The monkey's challenge, if anything, serves in Yu's reading as a counter example for the *Journey*'s allegorical message, and it illustrates the danger in letting go of the mind. But since it is the losing of the mind that causes the demons, why do demons still emerge when the lost mind is retrieved, which is symbolized by the Monkey's submission to Tripitaka? While Chen Yuanzhi conveniently associates the demonic origin with the human mind, Yu Ji's allegoresis seems unable to explain the ultimate cause of the demons in the *Journey* narrative.

Yu Ji's allegoresis, nevertheless, has an explicit bearing on Confucian teaching. The phrase "retrieving the lost mind 收放心" is a philosophical doctrine that is proposed in the *Mencius*. Believing that the human mind is inherently benevolent, Mencius attributes evil doings to the loss of such mind. "The Dao of learning," the *Mencius* states, "is nothing but to seek one's lost mind 学问之道无他，求其放心而已矣" (6A: 11). In Yu Ji's reading in this preface, it seems the *Journey* is an exact demonstration of the two opposite consequences of this Mencian theory: "when the mind is preserved, the demons die and the Dao is born 一存则魔死道生; when the mind is lost, the Dao dies and the demons are born 一放则魔生道死."[21] Xie Zhaozhe 谢肇淛, as a matter of fact, mentioned this Mencian doctrine in his brief discussion of the *Journey* about 50 years ago. [22]

This Mencian allegoresis is then further substantiated by the pre-chapter commentaries and the double-column interlineal gloss included in this 1663 edition. This Mencian message of "retrieving the lost mind 收放心," as the commentaries in the third chapter explain, can first be traced to the place where the monkey, after he acquires the magic from Subodhi and the powerful weapon, the Golden-Hooped Rod, returns to his birthplace and is hailed as the commander-in-chief. The text of the *Journey* narrative reads:

[21] Pre-chapter commentaries in Chapter 3. Commentaries in Chapter 27-31 (the mind monkey is banished because Tripitaka mistakes the demon killed by the monkey as a human being) have further explanations for this.

[22] It is in *Five Miscellaneous Morsels* 五杂俎 (1616), see *Anthology of Sources of the Journey*, 213.

> At this time, the banners were unfurled […] they engaged in military exercises as before. […] The four mighty commanders were entrusted with all matters concerning fortification, pitching camps, reward, and punishment. *The monkey put down his mind*. Every day he soared on the clouds and rode with the mist, touring the four seas and enjoying a thousand mountains. (Italics mine.) 此时大开旗鼓…… 依前教演…… 将那安营下寨，赏罚诸事，都付与四键将维持。他放下心，日逐腾云驾雾，遨游四海，行乐千山。[23]

According to the pre-chapter commentary, the phrase "to put down the mind 放下心" signals the very moment when the monkey loses his sober mind: it is because of this loss that he then befriends the monsters and wreaks havoc in heaven. However, while "to put down the mind" may suggest the Mencian doctrine in "putting aside the mind of Benevolence," it may also indicate an almost opposite meaning— "to put aside the anxious mind." When used in the vernacular,[24] the phrase "fang xin 放心 (to put down the mind)" probably refers to the latter rather than the former, since the former is a term only confined to the vocabulary of the Confucian classics. Obviously, the commentator-editor was not unaware of these two conflicting interpretations of "fang xin." Along with the many poems, dialogues, and bawdy jokes that are removed from this edition, "fang xin," the phrase used by the disciples to pacify the anxious Tripitaka, is often removed.[25] When the revered Chan Master, after imparting the *Heart Sutra* 心经, encourages Tripitaka with the saying, "put down the mind and fear not 放心休恐怖," he is understandably telling the nervous monk to set aside the anxious mind, not his benevolent heart. In this edition, nonetheless, the phrase "fang xin" is here replaced by the phrase "an xin 安心 (to pacify the mind)."[26] The editor, it seems, is more committed to his own interpretation of the *Journey* than the text of the *Journey* that he is interpreting. Now the Mencian reading illustrated in the Yu Ji preface seems more or less in line with commentaries provided in the body of this edition; still, one may wonder why the

[23] Chapter 3.
[24] Yu's translation: "Having settled all this […]," 43; Arthur Waley has not included this part in his translation, see *Monkey*, Grove, 1958.
[25] See Chapter 15, 56, and 80, for example.
[26] Chapter 19; the replacement of "fang xin" with "an xin" also occurs in Chapter 27.

Journey, whose author is said to be a Daoist patriarch, ends up talking about Mencian philosophy.

In addition to its overarching Confucian allegoresis, this 1663 edition does not entirely abandon the possibility of a Daoist reading. A concocted preface and the editorial abridgments may be the new ventures of this edition, but in terms of the interpretation of the *Journey*, its commentator, Huang Zhouxing, seems to have stuck to the two exegetical paths inherited from Chen Yuanzhi. As Chen's emphasis on the mind is channeled into the Mencian moral of retrieving one's benevolent mind, Chen's Daoist alchemical reading is likewise explored and expanded in this edition, albeit in a somewhat messy manner.

After the table of contents, as if to compensate for the lack of the Daoist element in the initial Yu Ji preface, the editor has before the body of the text included sixteen poems from the Daoist classic *Awakening to Reality*, a treatise which Chen Yuanzhi probably also referred to in his 1592 preface. "If one obtains the meaning of the poetry, / he will promptly see the three Daoist Gods 若人得了诗中意，立见三清太上翁." — With such an uplifting note in promise and hope as the concluding couplet, these sixteen poems are followed by the first set of pre-chapter commentaries, which broods upon the *Journey*'s Daoist bearing. According to the commentator, the five pilgrims can be identified with the five agents at work in the human body, and the "essence of achieving the Golden Elixir 金丹大旨" lies in knowing the collaboration of these five agents.[27] (The order of each pilgrim's appearance, as the pre-chapter commentary in Chapter 22 further explains, is an illustration of how the five agents interact among themselves.) But despite the occasional glee at its own decoding of the *Journey*'s Daoist signification,[28] this set of commentaries seems unable to entirely conceal its uneasiness at the mismatch between its interpretation of the text and the details of the text. Toward the end of the pre-chapter commentary for Chapter One, it already questions its own interpretation of the monkey:

[27] Pre-chapter commentary in Chapter 1.

[28] See the pre-chapter commentary in Chapter 22: "If it is not Huang and I who see through these with our calm eyes, aren't we being deceived by people like Li Zhi and Ye Zhou completely 若非半非居士与余两人今日冷眼觑破，岂不被李卓吾、叶仲子辈瞒杀乎？"

> The mind monkey is supposed to be Fire, yet the book takes it as Metal. (For example, Chapter 38 is entitled "Metal and Wood Visiting the Mysterious;" Chapter 47, "Metal and Wood with Compassion;" and Chapter 86, "Metal Lord Using magic.") […] This seems self-contradictory. But the five agents are originally the unifying One that cannot be divided. Besides, within one agent there is contained the five agents. As the Earth begets the Metal, for example, doesn't the Earth also contain the Wood, the Water, and the Fire? Following this argument, all the agents are like this. From this point, why can't the monkey be identified with the Metal, and why can't the sand monk be identified with the Earth? The book is, after all, a borrowed metaphor in order to prove the Dao. Its characters and the names of those characters have never existed. Who has seen with his own eyes the scripture-fetching Tang monk? Are there really a pig carrying the load and a sand monk leading the horse? 若夫心猿应为火，而传中或又指为金。（如三十八回"金木参玄"，四十七回"金木垂慈"，八十六回"金公施法"，是也。）…… 似属矛盾。然五行原大段，剖析不得，分之则五，合之则一。且一行中亦自具五行，如土本生金，而土中何尝无木，何尝无水无火？推此而论，莫不皆然。由此言之，行者何必不配金，沙僧何必不配土？况此书乃证道借喻，数人姓名原属乌有子虚，是何人真见唐僧取经，实实有八戒挑担，沙僧牵马乎？[29]

Instead of addressing the incongruity between the text and the interpretation, the commentary here dismisses the necessity of such a question by dwelling on the philosophy of the five agents and the fictive nature of the *Journey*. It does not matter whether the monkey should be identified with the Fire or the Metal, as the commentary explains to its reader, because the five agents are ultimately interchangeable and belong to a unifying One. It does not matter how the characters are named, as the commentary shows its exegetical premise, because the characters are, after all, "borrowed metaphors" that "have never existed." With such an exegetical logic, characters and plots are admittedly secondary to the allegorical message. This is indeed not the first time when this edition prioritizes its own agenda at the expense of the narrative details.

[29] Pre-chapter commentary in Chapter 1.

Despite such an almost militant effort in reinforcing the exegesis, the commentator must have found it hard not to be distracted by the narrative details of the *Journey*. Although this 1663 edition omits the most outrageous scenes where the monkey claims, "Many are the turns of kingship, / and next year the turn will be mine 皇帝轮流做，明年到我家" (Chapter 7); where Laozi reveals the Bodhisattva Guanyin's order to send the demons (Chapter 35); and where the pig throws the statues of the Daoist Gods into a stinking privy (Chapter 44), this edition can in the end barely repress its bewilderment at the *Journey*'s unconventional portraiture of Laozi, the foremost Daoist deity.[30] In the "Great King Rhinoceros 独角兕大王" episode (Chapter 50-52) , where the demon Rhinoceros, who has defeated almost everyone by sucking away their weapons with the "magic diamond snare 金刚琢," is revealed to be Laozi's missing green bull, the commentator seems to have become impatient at this Daoist deity's negligence. "In the past," the pre-chapter commentary recalls the previous episodes:

> the monkey stole the golden elixirs from his gourd, and the two boys in the Lotus Cave stole his five treasures. Today, the green bull steals his diamond snare. Why is it so easy to break into Laozi's residence? Although Laozi should not be blamed for poor discipline, he is still too careless about those thieves. Each word in the five-thousand-word *Tao Te Ching* has shown his scrupulous sophistication and experience, but why doesn't his behavior match up with his words? 昔年葫芦中之金丹行者偷之；莲花洞之五宝金银二童偷之；此日之金刚琢又青牛偷之。何兜率宫中之屡屡被窃也？虽非钤束不严之过，亦未免慢藏海盗矣。观道德五千言，字字精密老到，何所行与所言不侔乎？[31]

At this point, the commentator's insistence on finding the *Journey*'s Daoist meaning seems to have given way to his increasing interest in the narrative, and the admiration of Laozi included in the earlier pages now sounds a bit jarring. Besides the negligent Laozi, the last pages in this edition also responds to the *Journey*'s motif of the evil Daoist monk. Recalling the many Daoist practitioners who lurk on the westward road in order to kidnap

[30] For the deletion made in this edition, see Zhu, Hongbo, 78. See also 黄永年 Huang Yongnian's introduction: 黄周星定本西游证道书 [*Huang Zhouxing's Edition of Proving the Dao through the Journey to the West*] (Beijing: 中华书局 Zhonghua Shuju, 1993), 37.
[31] Pre-chapter commentary in Chapter 52.

Tripitaka, the commentator has in the end questioned the intention of the supposed author, Qiu Chuji.[32] As the commentator is gradually distracted by the *Journey*'s narrative details, the curious portrayals of the Daoist gods and monks are probably the very reason that the Daoist interpretation is left out of the preface of Yu Ji at the beginning of this edition. Perhaps for the commentator, the Mencian message is always more conceivable, since after his extensive analysis of the correlation between the five agents and the five protagonists, he concludes with a remark that undermines the entire Daoist interpretation. "Although there is the collaboration of the five agents," the commentator states, "it cannot win over the lost mind-monkey. Won't the scholars be awakened 盖虽有攒簇之五行，不敌心猿之一放也。学者可不猛省乎？"[33]

To sum up, the commentary in this 1663 edition is teeming with unexpected turns, obvious inconsistencies, and flickers of literary criticism that drop out of sight all too soon. As it has tried to flesh out Chen Yuanzhi's two ways in reading the *Journey*, it also shows that these two interpretative paths are fundamentally at odds with each other. This is probably one of the lessons that the ensuing commentary editions have learned, as not a single edition has ever since endorsed the Confucian and the Daoist allegoresis both at once. Following the model of the Mencian reading advanced in this edition, future interpretations will likewise delve into the specific theories in the classics and try to connect them with the *Journey* narrative. Nevertheless, the most enduring legacy from this 1663 edition should be its fabrication of the authorship of the *Journey*—all the following commentary editions, including the Confucian edition, have recognized Qiu Chuji as the author of the *Journey*. With the name of a founder of the Daoist internal alchemy, the value of the *Journey* skyrockets. Now the exegetical assumption of the *Journey* has inherently been altered: the necessity to defend a fiction is replaced by an

[32] Pre-chapter commentary in Chapter 78: "The *Journey* is a book believing that Daoism and Buddhism are of the same origin. Although demons exist in both religions, the book only criticizes the Daoist ones. Demons in the Black Rooster Kingdom, Cart Slow Kingdom, Child Destruction Cave, Yellow Flower Temple, and Pure Splendor Cave, here, are all evil Daoist monks. I am considering the intention of the Master Qiu Chuji—does he really regard our party to be unworthy? 西游为仙佛同源之书。仙佛二教，皆有邪魔，而书中不斥妖僧，而独斥妖道，如乌鸡国、车迟国，破儿洞，黄花观，与此处之清华洞，皆妖道也。窥丘祖之意，岂真以不肖待吾党哉？"

[33] Pre-chapter commentary in Chapter 22.

earnest wish to uncover the intention left by the revered sage. A fiction that was once on the verge of being lost is now on its way of becoming the sacred scripture.

With a preface that was signed in 1696, the next new edition, *The Illustrated, True Interpretation of the Journey to the West* 绣像西游真诠, is also the commentary edition that is believed to have been reprinted the most.[34] Little is known about this edition's commentator-editor, Chen Shibin 陈士斌, except that he signed his name with the region Shanyin 山阴 (in Zhejiang province), and he always began the post-chapter commentary with his Daoist title, Wuyi Zi 悟一子 (the Master who is Awakened to the One). But as this edition chooses the post-chapter commentary rather than the pre-chapter and double-column interlineal gloss, a systematic Daoist alchemical interpretation rather than the Confucian exegesis, it is obvious that Chen Shibin was rebelling against his immediate 1663 predecessor. In the opening lines of his post-chapter commentary, his discontent with the Confucian interpretation that centers on the Mind is already on full display:

> Wuyi Zi says: this is to show that the root and origin of the Great Dao is the Primal Breath of Yin and Yang, that is, the inchoate Origin, the Great Ultimate prior to Heaven, and the True One Being which is born within the Non-Being. If one tries his utmost to cultivate this, he will have an indestructible golden body, whose age will be equal to Heaven and Earth.
> Vulgar Confucians and crass scholars, who don't know the wordless Scripture of *He* and *Luo,* nor understand the principles in the *Yijing* and *Cantong,* stick to the Confucian books and barely comprehend even a small section in the *Journey*. Rejecting the Daoist canon, they are searching for nothing but the useless dregs. As the saying goes: "A fly in vinegar only knows the size of the vinegar container, and one cannot discuss ice with a summer insect." I pity those who aspire to the Dao yet have not obtained the true interpretation, those who are blind to the origin of life, and those who do not know the essential doctrines in

[34] Dudbridge, *Books, Tales and Vernacular Culture*, 26; see also 吴圣燮 Wu Shengxie, 清刻《西游真诠》版本研考 "Studies of the *True Interpretation of the Journey to the West Printed in the Qing Dynasty*," in *Ming-Qing Fiction Studies* 明清小说研究 22 (2007): 121.

cultivation. I will uncover the *Journey*, which has been treated with disrespect for hundreds of years, while showing what our friends wish to know in all ages. It is a pity that the predecessors interpreted it in a mistaken way, and that the readers have been deaf and confused. I have to analyze and correct the mistakes from one segment to another so as to point out those confusing places. Of the two lines in the title of this chapter, (that is, "The divine root being conceived, the origin appears; /The mind cultivated, the Great Dao is born,") for example, the most important meaning lies in the first line, which is the guiding principle of the author. Interpreters who only mentioned the primacy of the Mind, which is deluded speculation and confusing gloss, are blind, and they are going against the root and origin of the Great Dao—this is knowing neither the Dao nor the mind. They have completely discarded the Truth that the immortal sage has left to save the world. What a pity! What a shame! The first phrase, the "divine root," is the Primal Breath. 悟一子曰：此明大道之根源，乃阴阳之祖气，即混元太极之先天，无中生有之真乙。能尽心知性而修持之，便成金身不坏，与天地齐寿也。俗儒下士，识浅学陋，不晓河洛无字之真经，未明《周易》，《参同》之妙理；胶执儒书，解悟未及一隅；摈斥道藏，搜览亦皆糟粕。所谓"醯鸡止知瓮大，夏虫难与语冰者"也。予特悯夫有志斯道而未得真诠，既昧性命之源流，罔达修持之归要；揭数百年亵视之西游，示千万世知音之向往。但惜前人索解纰谬，聋聩已久，不得不逐节剖正，以指迷津。如此回提纲二语，最着意者，在上一句，为作者全部之统要。解者止提心字为主，妄揣混注。反昧却大道之根源，是不知道也，并不知心。竟将仙师度世真谛全然遗弃，可惜可叹！首言"灵根"也者，先天真乙之气也。[35]

In this impassioned speech, where criticism of the Confucian scholars and the Confucian interpretation has taken up most space, Chen Shibin, while accepting the 1663 edition's authorial attribution to Qiu Chuji, repudiates the exegetical primacy of the Mind, which is the dominant interpretation advanced in the 1663 edition. As he deplores the ignorance about the immortal sage's true intention of writing the *Journey*, Chen pledges to take

[35] Post-chapter commentary in Chapter 1.

over the task of restoring the true meaning of the book and reads the *Journey* as an allegory that centers on the "Primal Breath 先天真乙之气."

Under the guidance of the "Primal Breath" in Chen Shibin's reading, the "cave of the crescent moon with three stars," which is interpreted as the human mind in the earliest 1592 edition, is taken as representing the "Mind of the Heaven and Earth," since the monkey has travelled a long way to this cave in the narrative;[36] the monkey's "putting down the mind," which is interpreted as the loss of the mind in the 1663 edition, should instead be read as "putting down the anxious mind," since the monkey has already achieved his enlightenment at this point in the narrative.[37] While the 1663 edition associates the monkey with the Mind, Chen Shibin sees it as the embodiment of the "Metal in Water 水中金,"[38] the most important ingredient in achieving the Golden Elixir of the Primal Breath.[39] Chen Shibin's post-chapter commentary in the first chapter continues:

> This is the Metal in Water—the true, primal Metal prior to the birth of its parents. Hence, the monkey does not have parents, as his parents are the heaven and earth; and he is born out of a stone, "whose eyes are projecting two metal beams." Because the monkey has consumed the water posterior to heaven, "the metal light grows dim" and he is losing his original, natural gift. Because he is the Metal in Water, he lives in the "Water-Curtain Cave." Inside, there is the "bridge made of sheet iron"—this is clearly the belongings endowed by the heaven and the earth, which is beyond human capacity. 此水中之金，即父母未生前先天真乙之真金，故无父母而父天母地，产于石卵，目运"两道金光"也。因服食后天之水，而"金光潜息"，将渐失其初禀之性矣。以其为水中之金，故居于"水帘洞"，内有"铁板桥"，分明是天造地设的家当，非人力所能为。

[36] Post-chapter commentary in Chapter 1.
[37] Post-chapter commentary in Chapter 3. Chen also restored the editing of "fang xin" made by the 1663 edition, see Chapter 15 and Chapter 19, for example. The other edition Chen that seemed to be using was the 1620s Ye Zhou edition, see Wu Shengxie, 107-11.
[38] Post-chapter commentary in Chapter 1, 2, and 14.
[39] Yu, 83; Isabelle Robinet, *The World Upside Down: Essays on Taoist Internal Alchemy*, edited and translated by Fabrizio Pregadio, Golden Elixir P, 2011, 4.

As the Daoist alchemists see that it is the Primal Breath—the Breath of Yang—that constitutes the Golden Elixir of immortality, they believe that the only way to obtain this Primal Breath is to invert the natural process, to trace the process of Creation backward, and to go against the natural tide of degeneration and multiplication. To use the vocabulary of Yin and Yang, as it is Yang that generates Yin, and multiplication is realized by the two's conjoining forces in the natural process, the Elixir will be achieved by retrieving Yang from its mixture with Yin. To use the trigrams from the *Yijing*, as Yang (Qian 乾 ☰) and Yin (Kun 坤 ☷), prior to the formation of the other trigrams, mix together and first generate the trigrams of Kan 坎 ☵ and Li 离 ☲, one of the final steps in achieving the Elixir can be represented by extracting the inner Yang line from the Kan. The "metal in the water," a term inherited from the outdated external alchemy, is used by the internal alchemical school as an equivalent of the trigram Kan, the Yang within Yin, that is, the degenerated form of Yang.[40] Because the monkey is born from a stone on the sea shore, Chen Shibin identifies him as the "true, primal Metal prior to the birth of its parents"—the "metal in the water." In Chen's subsequent reading, as the "metal in the water" had lost its "original, natural gift" because of the consumption of the "water posterior to heaven," its education in Subodhi's cave has regained for itself the Primal Breath, and its rebellion against heaven is a sign of its success.

"This is to illustrate that if one obtains the Great Dao of the Golden Liquor and the Reversal Elixir, he will have the same age as Heaven, transcend the nine skies, and come in and out of Heaven at liberty—even the heavenly emperor can do nothing to restrain him. 此发明能了金液还丹大道，寿与天齐，冲举九天之上，由其出入，天帝亦不得而拘束之也," as Chen begins his post-chapter commentary in Chapter 4, where the monkey challenges Heaven by leaving the horse-sitter position that had been assigned by the Jade Emperor. While the 1663 Confucian interpretation takes the monkey's rebellion as a manifestation of the loss of the mind, Chen Shibin, as mentioned above, reads this episode as manifesting the success in retrieving the Primal Breath, a success

[40] For Creation theory and the alchemical practice of reversal, see Pregadio, 19-24; Robinet, 1-15. For the network of synonyms in the internal alchemy, see Pregadio, 46-7.

that even the Jade Emperor fails to comprehend.[41] In the subsequent episodes, when the monkey stands up to suppression and wars against the troops sent from heaven, he represents the decline of the Yang Breath, which showcases the workings of "the natural Way—when reaching the extreme, it can only move in the opposite direction 天道物极必反."[42] While Chen identifies the monkey's enemy, Erlang 二郎神, nephew of the Jade Emperor, as the troublesome "petty man 小人" (originally used in the *Analects* as opposed to the "gentleman 君子"), he sees the deified Laozi, apparently an ally of Erlang in the narrative, as helping the monkey in "stopping Yin and saving Yang 止阴救阳."[43] With the joint effort of Erlang, Laozi, and the Bodhisattva Guanyin, the monkey is then captured and thrown into an alchemical furnace for a forty-nine-day burn. When the monkey afterwards breaks out and shoves his enemy Laozi to the ground, Chen Shibin states: "This is when the Golden Elixir comes out of the furnace in reverse 此是金丹之逆出炉而脱胎也."[44] In Chen's reading, the Jade Emperor may fail to comprehend the monkey's success in obtaining the Primal Breath, Erlang may be an evil obstruction to the monkey's cultivation, but the Daoist deity Laozi, who attacks the monkey with his diamond snare, is the helper, not a confused, petty enemy like the Jade Emperor or Erlang. Apparently, Chen's commentary has parted company with the *Journey* narrative, and his reading of Laozi showcases the interpreter's power of maneuvering the text.

While Chen Shibin reads the first seven chapters as "illuminating that the Great Dao of the Golden Elixir lies in cultivating the Primal Breath—its method, origin, timing, and secret code 前七篇，明金丹大道是修炼先天真一之气而成，其丹法根源，火候始终，下手秘诀,"[45] he takes the westward journey led by the Tang monk in the next ninety-three chapters as showing the possibility of realizing the Elixir in an ordinary

[41] Post-chapter commentary in Chapter 4: "The Jade Emperor is in reality unaware of the wonder of the Primal Breath in his cultivation, and this is why he cannot subdue the monkey in the following texts. The monkey bows to the Emperor, accepting rather than rejecting the title given by the court. Doesn't this suggest that the monkey's cultivation surpasses the Jade Emperor's? 若天帝之包含矣，实未察其为先天真乙之妙也，正是下文不能收伏之根。悟空却朝上唱个大喏，亦直受而不辞。非悟空之包含天帝哉?"
[42] Post-chapter commentary in Chapter 5.
[43] Post-chapter commentary in Chapter 6.
[44] Post-chapter commentary in Chapter 7.
[45] Post-chapter commentary in Chapter 8.

human being.[46] The monkey, again, represents the "Metal in Water," or Kan (☵), the pig "Wood in Fire," or Li (☲), and the sand monk "Earth," which is to coordinate the five agents.[47] Perhaps it is not the right place here to question what is and where exactly to find in reality the so-called Kan, the "Metal in Water," or the Primal Breath, since however doctrine-oriented Chen Shibin's commentary may appear to be, it is, after all, a set of interpretations, not the Daoist theory per se. Nonetheless, Chen finds many a place in the *Journey* that displays how the Elixir is obtained: places where the monkey flees from Laozi's furnace mentioned above; where the monkey, trapped in Tathagata's giant hand, is pressed under the "Five-Agents Mountain 五行山;"[48] and where, quite unexpectedly, the monkey fights with enemies such as the monster who threatens to take over the flower-fruit mountain, the monkey's birthplace.[49] In Chen's reading, the demon dwelling in the "Heaven-Reaching River 通天河," who demands child sacrifice every year, resembles the "Metal in Water." When the Bodhisattva Guanyin, reciting her secret mantra, captures the demon and converts him back into his original form (he is the goldfish raised in her pond), she is gaining the Golden Elixir.[50] When the monkey fights to take the "spring water of abortion 落胎泉" from a conniving Daoist monk, he is retrieving the water of the Primal Yang in the reverse order.[51] The "bottomless cave 无底洞," into which the abducted Tripitaka is carried, symbolizes the trigram Kan (☵), since its lowest Yin line is broken and without a bottom. When the cave-dweller, the temptress, unable to get the better of the monkey, carries Tripitaka out of her cave, she is showing "the emblem of the Golden Elixir coming out of the furnace 正状金丹出炉之法象." As the frightened Tripitaka calls his disciples when he is taken out, what he signals is the "timing" of the Elixir.[52]

In Chen Shibin's habit of reading, everything it seems, has a chance of being regarded as the "Primal Breath—Kan—☵—Yang—Metal in Water." Any signifiers in

[46] Post-chapter commentary in Chapter 8.
[47] Post-chapter commentary in Chapter 19, 22, and 28.
[48] Post-chapter commentary in Chapter 7.
[49] Post-chapter commentary in Chapter 2.
[50] Post-chapter commentary in Chapter 49.
[51] Post-chapter commentary in Chapter 53.
[52] Post-chapter commentary in Chapter 82.

the *Journey* can be led into, and assimilated by this allegorical center, which seems to have already borne an endless chain of synonyms in the Daoist teaching. "The *Journey* talks about the Great Way of the Golden Elixir, […] which is in essence the Primal Breath. […] The book repeats and changes, but it has never departed from this Origin 西游一书，讲金丹大道，……实止是先天真乙之气。……反反覆覆，千变万化，不离其元,"[53] as Chen Shibin reflects and plainly recognizes such a logic in his reading of the *Journey*. Doubtless, the commentator's commitment to the Daoist interpretation is determined, uncompromising, and earnest; yet at the same time, the gravity of this exegetical center is blinding, and it invites myopia and bigotry. Perhaps the belief that it is Qiu Chuji who authored the *Journey* has sunk so deep in Chen Shibin's mind that he had never doubted this exegetical premise. Behind every word, every sentence, and every episode, there could be traces of the secret wisdom that are shrewdly arranged by this revered Daoist master. For Chen Shibin, reading the *Journey* resembles a paranoid hunting game—except that the prey hides in words, and is also made of words.

While Chen Yuanzhi's rather economical allegoresis in his 1592 preface may be driven by book promotion both for profit and for reputation, Chen Shibin's lengthy commentary seems both sincere and striking. Devoted to the Daoist interpretation that is suggested in passing by Chen Yuanzhi, Chen Shibin is obviously trying to outwit the Confucian allegoresis dominant in the previous 1663 edition. Nonetheless, his Daoist interpretation stands closer to the explication and justification of the Daoist theories than literary analysis; his tirade against the Confucian interpretation resembles more of a Daoist tirade against the Confucian philosophy. Is Chen Shibin attempting to use the *Journey to the West* to promote and reinforce the Daoist internal alchemy, just as Chen Yuanzhi once used the Confucian and Daoist philosophies to promote the *Journey to the West*? History has never been lacking in repetitions and turnarounds.

As mentioned above, Chen Shibin's 1696 edition had become the most commonly reprinted edition since its publication. The four commentary editions produced in the 19th century—all of which had invested in the alchemical exegesis—invariably used Chen Shibin's interpretation as their exegetical foundation.[54] On the other hand, the single new

[53] Post-chapter commentary in Chapter 50.
[54] Wu Shengxie, 121.

commentary edition produced in the 18th century, the *New Remarks on the Journey to the West* 新说西游记 issued in 1749, expounds on the Confucian allegoresis with a vengeance. As Chen Shibin challenges the 1663 edition with specified doctrines, structured arguments, and his tireless insistence, this new Confucian edition, while drawing on the tactics employed by its predecessors, tries to outdo its Daoist competitor both in length and in magnitude.

Zhang Shushen 张书绅, the editor-commentator of this new edition, who signed his name with the region Xihe 西河 (in Shanxi province) in the "Preface 自序" and the "General Remarks of the *Journey to the West* 西游记总论," had worked on the *Journey* commentaries while he was serving as a minor official in Yangcheng 羊城 (in Guangdong province). It took him a couple of weeks to finish the first draft in the hot summer of 1748, and after another six days, he finalized the manuscript.[55] In this very short time span, nonetheless, Zhang managed to pull together a preface; the General Remarks; a much longer "General Comments 总批" that reviews his exegetical agenda; the "Catalogue of Topics from the Classics 经书题目录"—an index where the Confucian tenets on which each episode of the *Journey* is believed to be based are assembled; the "Table of Contents Rhyme Prose 目录赋;" as well as the extensive pre-chapter, post-chapter, double-column interlineal commentaries. Instead of using the abridged text from the 1663 edition or Chen Shibin's 1696 version, Zhang followed the unabridged 1620s edition, making his edition the only full-length version produced during the Qing dynasty.

Obviously trying to outdo Chen Shibin's 1696 edition in length, Zhang Shushen, not dissimilar to how Chen Shibin begins his commentary, declares the overarching thesis of his interpretation by criticizing the previous interpretations. "The book of the *Journey to the West*, as the ancient called it the book proving the Dao, is originally proving the Dao of the Confucian sages; claiming that it is proving the Dao of the Daoist immortals or the Buddhas, however, is false 西游一书，古人命为证道书，原是证圣贤

[55] The situation is described in the "General Comments."

儒者之道，至谓证仙佛之道，则误矣," Zhang responds to his Daoist predecessor in the opening sentence of the "General Comments." Instead of lapsing into a lengthy belittling of enemies as Chen Shibin does in the 1696 edition, Zhang Shushen then appeals to the mismatch between the narrative and the Daoist/Buddhist principle to make a point. Tathagata's concern for the morality of the lecherous, malicious Southerners 南赡部洲者, which constitutes the cause of the scripture-fetching journey, as Zhang argues, is by nature Confucian and does not resonate with the spirits of "cultivating the self 独善一身" and "cutting off from the human realm 远避人世" that are championed in Daoism and Buddhism. The supposed Daoist sage Qiu Chuji, as Zhang in the end supplements his rejection of the Daoist interpretation, is in reality "a great Confucian gentleman who had to disguise himself as a Daoist monk 一时大儒贤者，乃不过托足于方外耳."

In Zhang Shushen's reading, the Mencian moral of "retrieving the lost mind" advanced in the 1663 edition, though highlighting a Confucian doctrine, does not exhaust the meaning of the *Journey*. The true message that the *Journey to the West* illuminates, as Zhang subsequently instructs the reader, is the general thesis of the *Great Learning* 大学, the book that had been acknowledged as the central text within the Confucian canon since the early 14th century.[56] As the *Journey* is taken as revolving around the central sentence of the central text in the Confucian canon, the commentator further divides its hundred-chapter narrative into fifty-two segments, with each segment illustrating a sentence in the Confucian canon:

> The *Journey to the West*, with a hundred chapters in total, is in reality divided into three parts. These three parts can be further divided into fifty-two segments. Within each segment, there is a topic, which is elaborated by an article. These articles may differ in length, but their messages do not go beyond "letting one's luminous virtue shine forth, renewing the people, and coming to rest in perfect goodness."

[56] Daniel K. Gardner, *The Four Books: The Basic Teachings of the Later Confucian Tradition* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2007), xxi. For translations of the *Great Learning* below, I have referred to both Gardner and Johnston: Ian Johnston and Ping Wang, *Daxue and Zhongyong* (Hong Kong: Chinese U of Hong Kong, 2012).

> What are these three parts? From Chapter 1 to 26, there are twenty-two topics all cited from the Sacred Scripture of the *Great Learning*, which are illuminating the importance in "making the intentions true and setting the minds right." This is the first part. From Chapter 27 to 97, there are twenty-seven topics cited from the Confucian classics, which have exposed the "restraint of disposition, the shadow of the human desire, and the occasional obscurity." This is the second part. From Chapter 98 to 100, these three chapters conclude the book in the general message of "letting one's inborn luminous virtue shine forth, renewing the people, and coming to rest in perfect goodness." This is the last part. 一部西游记，共计一百回，实分三大段。再细分之，三段之内，又分五十二节。每节一个题目，每题一篇文字。其文虽有大小长短之不齐，其旨总不外于"明新止至善"。何为三大段？盖自第一回起，至第二十六回止，其中二十二个题目，单引圣经一章，发明大学"诚意正心"之要，是一段。又自二十七回起，至九十七回止，其间七十一回，共二十七个题目，杂引经书，以见"气禀所拘，人欲所蔽，则有时而昏也"，是一段。末自九十八回起，至一百回止，共是三回，总结"明新止至善"，收挽全书之格局，该括一部之大旨，又是一段。[57]

Originally a chapter from the *Book of Rites* 礼记, the *Great Learning*, edited and commented on by Zhu Xi 朱熹, is also recommended by this authoritative reformer as the first Book to study in the Confucian curriculum.[58] The Book's opening sentence, "the way of great learning lies in letting one's luminous virtue shine forth, in renewing the people, and in coming to rest in perfect goodness 大学之道，在明明德，在亲民，在止至善," which is glossed by Zhu Xi as the "guideline 纲领" of the *Great Learning*, finds its way, not entirely surprisingly, as the *Journey*'s overarching thesis in Zhang Shushen's reading. As the first twenty-six chapters, which constitute the *Journey*'s first part, are the twenty-two "segments" explaining the twenty-two "topics" cited from the *Great Learning*, the next seventy-one chapters, which constitute the twenty-seven "segments" explaining the twenty-seven "topics" from the other Confucian classics,[59] are taken by

[57] "General Comments."
[58] Gardner, xxv.
[59] For the more or less complete list of quotations annotated with their origins, see Zhu Hongbo, 96-8.

Zhang as ultimately demonstrating Zhu Xi's commentary on the guideline of the *Great Learning*. According to Zhu Xi, the "restraint of disposition, the shadow of the human desire, and the occasional obscurity" are reasons that the "luminous virtue" fails to shine forth. The "second part" of the *Journey*, where most ordeals and encounters with the demons take place, is therefore elaborating on the obstacles of being virtuous. "Zhu's gloss illuminates the Sacred Scripture of the *Great Learning*, and the *Journey* is in reality glossing Zhu's gloss 是朱注发明圣经，西游实又注解朱注," Zhang comments on the layers of commentaries that he discovered.[60] The different parts, segments, and topics of the *Journey*, along with Zhu Xi's commentary and the Confucian classics, like Chinese boxes, will all in the end boil down to the guideline of the *Great Learning*.

According to Zhang Shushen, the first chapter, in which the monkey, dismayed by his limited lifespan, travels in search of the magic of longevity, brings out the opening phrase of the *Great Learning*, "the Way of Great Learning 大学之道," since "the Way of Great Learning, untarnished by eons, is longevity 大学之道，原千古不磨，故曰长生."[61] As the monkey, after acquiring the magic from Subodhi, returns to his birthplace and drives away the monster who threatens to take over his territory in the second chapter, he demonstrates the three steps of "letting one's luminous virtue shine forth, renewing the people, and coming to rest in perfect goodness 明德新民止至善," and as the monkey obtains his Golden-Hooped Rod from the Dragon Palace and cancels his lifespan in the underworld in the third chapter, he is "manifesting the great virtue 克明峻德." While the Daoist interpretation advanced by Chen Shibin reads the monkey's rebellion in the following chapters as an affirmation of the monkey's Daoist enlightenment, Zhang Shushen sees the rebellion as the manifestation of the monkey's immorality. "Not willing to attend the horse means not willing to make his intentions true 不肯弼马，便是不肯诚其意,"[62] he comments on the monkey's dismissal of the horse-sitter position assigned by the Jade Emperor. In this Confucian commentator's understanding, the monkey's defiance of authority reveals his dishonesty, and this chapter is an illustration of the sentence, "the so-called making the intentions true is to avoid self-deception: it is like

[60] "General Comments."
[61] Double-column interlineal gloss in Chapter 1.
[62] Double-column interlineal commentary in Chapter 4.

hating a bad smell or loving a beautiful color. This is called being content in yourself 所谓诚其意者毋自欺也。如恶恶臭，如好好色，此之谓自谦."[63] While Chen Shibin identifies Erlang, the celestial warrior who helps to capture the monkey, as the "petty man," Zhang Shushen associates the monkey with the "petty man." When the monkey, in the next chapter, binges on the divine treasures while wandering alone in the Garden of Immortal Peaches, Jasper Pool, and Laozi's palace, he resembles "the petty man, who does nothing good when alone; there are no place where he will not go 小人闲居为不善，无所不至."[64] When the monkey transforms himself into various shapes to avoid being captured, he embodies the *Great Learning*'s other line in describing the petty man: "When the petty man sees a gentleman, he conceals his badness and shows his goodness. But when others look at him, it is as though they see his lungs and liver. What's the point of this? 见君于而后厌然，掩其不善，而著其善。人之视已，如见其肺肝然，则何益矣?"[65]

As with the previous 1663 Mencian interpretation, the rebellion of the monkey in Zhang Shushen's reading is not applauded as a valiant confrontation with the authority, but is disapproved as an immoral, contemptable transgression. Yet whereas this transgression is attributed to the loss of the mind by the 1663 commentator, Zhang in his edition does not offer any theoretical explanation for the monkey's abrupt shift from virtuous "gentleman" in the first three chapters to "petty man" in the next four chapters. Unlike the earlier commentators, Zhang Shushen no longer regards the monkey as the exegetical center that is connected to the overarching allegoresis of the *Journey*, and his exegetical preoccupation seems more in line with maintaining the order of the exegetical structure that he has set up beforehand. As to whether or not this structure—the twenty-two quotations/topics of the *Great Learning* laid out in the first twenty-six chapters—corresponds to the *Journey* narrative, the silence about the inconsistency of the role of the monkey speaks volumes.

In Zhang Shushen's exegetical structure, as mentioned above, the *Journey*'s next seventy-one chapters, which constitute the twenty-seven articles (allegories) explicating

[63] Pre-chapter commentary in Chapter 4.
[64] Pre-chapter commentary in Chapter 5.
[65] Pre-chapter commentary in Chapter 6.

the twenty-seven quotations from the other Confucian classics, are all in the end demonstrating virtue's opposing force—the "restraint of disposition, the shadow of human desire, and the occasional obscurity." As these seventy-one chapters narrate the westward journey, during which the various demons are defeated, Zhang sees these demons as embodiments of the various forms of "human disposition and desire"—the moral vices that have darkened the illuminous virtue. The three Daoist courtiers in the "Cart Slow Kingdom" who had persecuted the Buddhist monks but failed to outwit the monkey, for example, represent one of the vices that is identified in the *Analects*: "the wildness in the interest in wit but not in the learning 好知不好学其蔽也荡" (17. 8).[66] The demon in the "Heaven-Reaching River," who demands the annual child sacrifice, results from Tripitaka's lack of "loyalty 忠."[67] The "bottomless cave" into which abducted Tripitaka is carried, reflects the monk's lack of motivation— his "giving up halfway 半途而废, "[68] a phrase cited from *Maintaining Perfect Balance* 中庸. More often than not, demons are taken by Zhang as generated from the pilgrim's own psychology, and they reflect the pilgrim's inner moral deficiencies. Yet while the all-too-human monk Tripitaka is, indeed, in the narrative marked by his lack of courage, inability to discern between Good and Evil, and entrapment in the human senses, can he be therefore characterized as deficient in the Confucian virtues, whose moral failures, according to Zhang, will give rise to the flesh-eating demons lurking on the road? As Tripitaka is blamed for his disloyalty in the "Heaven-Reaching River" episode (Chapter 47-49), his lack of "ritual propriety 礼" which is identified by Zhang in the next episode (Chapter 50-52), in which the pilgrims encounter the "Great King Rhinoceros," may give us a clue to the commentator's habit of reading.

Haunted by hunger, Tripitaka urges the monkey to gather food from the nearby village. As the perceptive monkey has already detected the vicious aura, he draws a magic circle on the ground and asks his companions to stay within it while he is away. In Zhang Shushen's reading, this circle drawn by the monkey embodies the "ritual propriety." When Tripitaka steps out of this protective circle afterwards, he foregoes the

[66] Post-chapter commentary in Chapter 44.
[67] Pre-chapter commentary in Chapter 48.
[68] Pre-chapter commentary in Chapter 80.

"ritual propriety," and the demon Rhinoceros King appears as an external manifestation of the pilgrim's transgression. In the pre-chapter commentary in this episode, Zhang Shushen summarizes his allegorization:

> The Way to the West is nothing but the Way of Filiality; the circle is nothing but the "ritual propriety of serving, burying, and sacrificing." Man should cautiously observe these three rituals and should not for a moment go out of the boundary—this is the right Way. The pilgrims go out of this circle, and they are going against life and death—this is why the ferocious demon comes. 盖以西天之道非别，即吾性中之孝道；圈子非别，即"生事葬祭之礼"也。人必于此三者谨守勿忝，一刻不可出了范围，方是正道。乃行者等不务出此，以致生死尽违，此凶怪之所由来也。[69]

According to Zhang Shushen, the "ritual propriety of serving, burying, and sacrificing," a phrase that is originally from the *Analects*,[70] is the "topic" of this three-chapter episode of the Rhinoceros King, which constitutes one of the twenty-seven "segments" of the second part of the *Journey*. After the pilgrims walk out of the circle of the "ritual propriety" and enter the demon's palace, the white human skeletons they see illustrate their negligence in observing the proper ritual.[71] Similar to the circle that is drawn by the monkey at the beginning of this episode, the demon's weapon, "the diamond snare," that appears later is likewise glossed by Zhang as the "ritual propriety." As this snare of the "ritual propriety" has sucked away the weapons of the monkey and the celestial troops, it demonstrates that all the celestial generals have to be subject to the "ritual propriety."[72] And as this snare is in the end retrieved by its owner, Laozi, it demonstrates that Laozi knows to observe the "ritual propriety."[73]

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[69] Chapter 50.

[70] *The Analects* 2. 5: "When parents are alive, comply with the ritual propriety in serving them; when they die, comply with the ritual propriety in burying them; comply with the ritual propriety in sacrificing to them. 生事之以礼，死葬之以礼，祭之以礼。"

[71] The double-column interlineal gloss in Chapter 50: "White bones are laid bare—it can be inferred that there is no burial. Mentioning burial and sacrifice while talking about serving—it shows the priority. 白骨暴露，不葬可知，却于生事内串入祭葬，轻重更为得法。"

[72] Post-chapter commentary Chapter 51: "All the celestial generals cannot go out of this snare and have to be subject to it. 天王神将，非惟不能出诸此圈之外，且并屈于此圈之中。"

[73] Pre-chapter commentary in Chapter 52: "The diamond snare is the treasure from Laozi's residence—this is marvelous. It is not to say that Laozi is good at retrieving this snare, but that he is constantly observing ritual propriety. It is not to say that Laozi is the master of the Rhinoceros demon, but that serving, burying,

If the Daoist interpreters, believing that they will one day through Daoist practice become immortal, dare to question even authorities from the heavenly court, Zhang Shushen, the Confucian commentator, seems interested in searching for fault and weakness in the pilgrims. In Zhang's way of thinking, the confinement of the circle probably entails control, order, and Confucian virtue. As if chanting a magic mantra, Zhang demonstrates his virtuosity in perpetuating the central theme that he designates in the narrative. In this regard, Zhang Shushen and his predecessor Chen Shibin, despite their obvious disagreement over the meaning of the *Journey*, share the same dexterity in propagating the meaning—the one allegorical center that encompasses all the details in the narrative. To be sure, Zhang's allegorization is more structured, as it mirrors his reading of the *Great Learning* that is glossed by Zhu Xi. The "Rhinoceros King" episode, which serves as one of the twenty-seven episodes on the darkness of the "human disposition and desire," will ultimately be taken as an illustration of the opening sentence of the *Great Learning*— "to let one's luminous virtue shine forth"—the ultimate allegorical center of both the *Journey* and the *Great Learning*.[74]

"The road to the West is the Way of the Great Learning, and the Way of the Great Learning is the Way of scholarship 西天之路即是大学之道，大学之道即学问之道," Zhang Shushen writes in the double-column interlineal gloss in Chapter 62. "The *Journey* talks about the Great Way of the Golden Elixir, […] which is in essence the Primal Breath 西游一书，讲金丹大道，……实止是先天真乙之气," Chen Shibin concludes in the post-chapter commentary in Chapter 50. As each interpreter sees the *Journey to the West* as an allegory written by his own school in uncovering how to obtain the ultimate Good, one may wonder whether in this prolonged search for meaning we see more of ourselves, or whether we have come to know the other. Perhaps for these dedicated, energetic interpreters, the split between the narrative and their interpretations has never caught their eyes. What they have seen is the glaring resemblance, the exciting

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and sacrificing are centers in the ritual proprieties. 金刚套却是兜率之宝，奇妙之极。不是说道祖善收此圈，正是说太上常守此礼。不是说太上是兕怪的主人，正是说生事葬祭惟以礼为主也。"

[74] One may wonder how the commentators' training in reading the classics (skills in picking out homophony, character combination, and association, for example) had informed their *Journey* interpretations. See Saussy's overview of the practice of classical exegesis: "Classical Exegesis," *The Columbia History of Chinese Literature* (New York: Columbia UP, 2001), pp. 709-14.

coincidence in the *Journey* with the theoretical agenda to which they have been dedicated. Perhaps the exegetical framework had well been decided before they go into the details of the *Journey*. As they believe in the righteousness of their commitment, they are reading for confirmation. In the midst of the bubbling pleasures of recognition, they see what they want to see, and nothing else.[75]

As Chen Shibin has expanded Chen Yuanzhi's passing observation on the *Journey*'s possible connection to the Daoist internal alchemy and transformed it into a set of chapter-by-chapter commentaries, Zhang Shushen is doubtless also indebted to the 1592 preface. Despite the mannerist structures and the extensive citations from the Confucian canon, Zhang's reading of the demons—the personifications of the various vices originated from the self—perhaps comes closer to Chen Yuanzhi's remark of "subduing the mind" than the 1663 interpretation of "retrieving the lost mind." Always interested in the problem of morality and believing in the possibility of enhancing morality, these Confucian readers have internalized the *Journey* as a battle within the self, the psychomachia perhaps, to use a Christian term. Nevertheless, to future commentators, such a Confucian reading might not seem as appealing as the Daoist promise of the life-extending elixirs. As the next four commentary editions produced in the entire 19th century were all dedicated to the Daoist exegesis, Zhang Shushen's endeavor marks an end product in the line of the Confucian allegoresis of the *Journey* in the traditional literary world.[76]

The Daoist branch of allegoresis, on the other hand, as if to retaliate against Zhang's thorough rejection of Chen Shibin's Daoist approach, had all positioned themselves as continuations of the 1696 interpretation. If it is Chen Yuanzhi, trying to salvage and promote the fiction *Journey to the West*, who proposes that the *Journey* could be an allegory of creeds and teachings; if it is Yuan Yuling, who advances an awe-inspiring claim that the *Journey* has incorporated the three schools of philosophy; if it is Huang Zhouxing, who fabricates the *Journey*'s authorship and provides interpretations

[75] I am also thinking about Elizabeth Kolbert's "That's What You Think: Why Reason and Evidence Won't Change Our Minds," in *The New Yorker*, Feb. 27, 2017, 66-71. See its electronic version: https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/02/27/why-facts-dont-change-our-minds

[76] I see the New Culture Movement 新文化运动, or the Chinese language reform, initiated in the late 1910s to be the break from the traditional literary world of China.

that only undermine his fabrication in the end; if it is Chen Shibin, for the first time, who ventures into a focused, if not cumbersome search for the Daoist messages; and if it is Zhang Shushen, who draws specific connections between the *Journey* and his Sacred Scripture, the *Great Learning*; it is the 19th century Daoist commentators who finally consolidate faith in the *Journey*'s status as sacred scripture. Composed by the renowned Daoist sage Qiu Chuji, one of the founding figures of the Quanzhen 全真 (complete reality) school of Daoism,[77] the *Journey to the West* is a "Heavenly Book 天书."[78] To be sure, the *Journey*'s soaring status also hinges on Qiu Chuji's posthumous fortune and popularity, as Qiu was placed at the origins of the Longmen 龙门 (Dragon Gate) lineage, which had become "during the Qing dynasty, the orthodox Quanzhen lineage and the officially sanctioned form of Daoism."[79]

Quite predictably, the four Daoist commentators of the *Journey* in the 19th century are all associated with the school of internal alchemy, among whom Liu Yiming 刘一明, also known as Wuyuan Zi 悟元子 (the Master who is Awakened to the Origin), is the 11th-generation master of the Longmen lineage.[80] Based in the mountainous areas of Gansu province, Liu Yiming, according to one of his many prefaces, did not publish the manuscript entitled "*The Compass: The Original Intent of the Journey to the West* 指南针：西游原旨" until around 1810, thirty years after he finished its first draft, when he was already a well-known commentator of major alchemical texts such as *Awakening to Reality*.[81] For Liu Yiming as well as the later *Journey* interpreters, that the Daoist teacher Qiu Chuji is the author was a fact, the unquestionable premise for their exegetical investment. As these Daoist practitioners believed in the authorship of Qiu, they also believed that this revered Daoist sage had left invaluable messages in the *Journey* that he

[77] Pregadio, 34 and 42.
[78] Preface in the 1861 *Notes of the Journey*.
[79] Pregadio, 37.
[80] The other three editions are: *The True Tenor of the Journey Explained by Yijing* 通易西游正旨 published in 1839 in Meishan 眉山 (in Sichuan province) by Zhang Hanzhang 张含章, or Wuming Zi 无名子 (the Master with No Name), about ten years after his death; *Notes of the Journey* 西游记记, the manuscript edition published in 1861 in Zhejiang province; and *The Journey with Commentary and Annotations* 评注西游记 in 1892 by Hanjing Zi 含晶子 (the Master Containing Crystal).
[81] *How to Read the Chinese Novel*, 295.

authored. Prior to Liu's post-chapter commentaries, which are often longer than the abridged text in each chapter, the first bullet point in one of this edition's many prefaces, which is entitled, "How to Read the Original Intent of the *Journey to the West* 西游原旨读法," more or less reflects how the *Journey* is regarded and revered in all the 19th century editions:

> The book, *The Journey to the West*, is the great way transmitted from mouth to mouth and from mind to mind by the saints, generation by generation. What the ancients dared not speak of was spoken of by Patriarch Qiu; what the ancients dared not relate was related by Patriarch Qiu. When the heavenly secrets are revealed so abundantly, this is a matter of the utmost consequence. Wherever this book resides, there are heavenly deities standing guard over it. The reader should purify his hands and burn incense before reading it, and it should be read with the utmost reverence. If he becomes bored or tired, the reader should close the book and return it to its place on high so that it will not meet with disrespect. Only he who knows this can read *The Journey to the West*.[82] 西游之书，乃历圣口口相传、心心相印之大道。古人不敢言者，丘祖言之；古人不敢道者，丘祖道之。大露天机，所关最重。是书在处，有天神护守。读者须当净手焚香，诚敬开读；如觉闷倦，即合卷高供，不得亵慢。知此者，方可读西游。

With the apotheosis of Qiu Chuji, the *Journey to the West*, once a work that was said to be on the brink of loss and disappearance, in quite a dramatic way, became the sacred scripture that should be honored with cleaned hands, burning incense, a sober mind, and a shrine that stands high. The book has said what the ancients dared not say and it has revealed the heavenly secret that matters the most. "A Book sent down from Heaven 天书," as the only manuscript edition released in 1861, *Notes of the Journey* 西游记记, reaffirms. In the description of Zhang Hanzhang, the commentator of the 1839 edition, the *Journey*, which stands on an equal footing with the ancient classics such as the *Odes*

[82] Ibid., 299. I am generally following Anthony Yu's translation. This "Guideline" is translated by Yu in full, see *How to Read the Chinese Novel*, 299-315.

诗, *History* 书, and *Yijing* 易, originates from the mind of the awakened predecessors who intended to save the world 先觉救世之心.[83]

To be sure, the "heavenly secret" concealed within this "Heavenly Book" would be exposed and explained, thanks to the effort and knowledge of these Daoist commentators-practitioners. Chen Shibin's 1696 commentary, published more than a century ago is indeed unprecedented, as it uncovers what had been "buried and swamped for hundreds of years";[84] yet still, interpreters of the 19th century, driven by the desire for a complete revelation, were bent on complementing and improving Chen's imperfect project. As the Daoist gist of obtaining the life-extending Elixir of the Primal Breath that was first spelled out by Chen remained unchanged, these four sets of commentaries invariably laid out more detailed exegetical structures for the *Journey.* And to be sure, each commentary had a dividing agenda on its own, as each had its own theological emphasis in presenting the procedure of cultivating the Elixir, and each tried to outdo its predecessor.[85]

The last commentary edition of the *Journey* produced in the traditional literary world of China, the *Journey with Commentary and Annotations* 评注西游记, coincidentally enough, was published exactly three-hundred years after the book's 1592 debut. Reading the *Journey* as filled with the sage's advice on cultivation and with promises for success, as well as admonition to persevere, this 1892 commentary edition participated the overall spirit of progress and self-cultivation that had been prevalent in both the Confucian and the Daoist readings. "The *Journey,* profound and well-explained with the hard work of Qiu Chuji, has informed the learner of everything, from the door to enter the Daoist realm, to the sequence in cultivating the Dao, and to the work in achieving the Dao. […] If one works on this every day, although it is a journey of eighteen thousand li, who will not achieve the Dao, if he does not for a moment give up?

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[83] Preface in 1839 edition, *The True Tenor of the Journey Explained by Yijing* 通易西游正旨.

[84] Liu Yiming, "Preface to the Original Intent of the *Journey to the West* 西游原旨序*."*

[85] For the structure of the 1810 Liu Yiming edition, see "How to Read the Original Intent of the *Journey to the West;"* for the 1839 edition, see "Afterword of the True Tenor of the Xiyouji 西游正旨后跋;" for the 1861 edition, see the article, "A Unique Commentary: Discussions on the Manuscript Edition of the *Journey* 另类的评点: 抄本《西游记记》批语试论," 胡胜 Hu Sheng and 赵毓龙 Zhao Yulong,明清小说研究 *Ming-Qing Fiction Studies* (23) 2008: 115-125.

This is what the whole book is about. 入道之门，修道之序，成道之功，深切著明，无一毫不告学者，其用心亦良苦矣。…… 逐日行之，虽十万八千里之程，须臾勿懈，学道而有不成者乎？此全书之大概也,"[86] the preface of this 1892 edition promises and admonishes its reader, joining in the exegetical spirit that more or less defined the first three-hundred-year *Journey* criticism.

In a time when fiction was considered to be on the lowest rungs of the ladder of writing, meaningless chatter only for leisure hours, maybe the only way, perhaps also the most efficient way, to preserve fiction, was not to defend fiction, the fictitious work infused with reality-inspired imagination that failed to impress a prejudiced mind, but to convert and package it into something else, something more aligned with the socially acclaimed values, grand philosophies, and shared human fantasies; and perhaps one day in the future, with the passing of time, it would indeed be transformed into something else, something mysterious, unfathomable, sacred, yet enormously intriguing. In its three-hundred years of circulation, the *Journey to the West* had experienced a change of fate, some astonishing reversals of fortune perhaps: from the lowest to the highest, as if the hierarchy resembled the shape of a circle, it did not take too long for it to reach the most sacred shrine. But of course, it took the hard work of generations of interpreters to build up the ladder. Believing that one day they could succeed in their cultivation, they built the ladder not only for the *Journey*, but perhaps deeper inside, for themselves: for the confirmation of faith, for their own ladders to the ultimate Good—for the possibility that there was a ladder to the ultimate Good. Now the *Journey to the West*, or rather, the sacred scripture glowing with sacred wisdom and heavenly secrets, detached from its own self and floating above the earthly ground, had yet to wait another thirty years to be removed, at least for a moment, from this worn-out spell cast by its devoted readers and students. But of course, the spell may return and leap back at us again one day, renewed and energized.

[86] Preface in the *Journey with Commentary and Annotations* 评注西游记.

III

JOURNEY TO THE WEST IN THE 20th CENTURY

Reading the oppositional narrative.

In January 1917, five years after the fall of the Qing dynasty, a point in time when foreign aggression would only escalate, an article appeared in *La Jeunesse* 新青年, the progressive magazine that would in the next few years grow into a stronghold for communist theories, and it was soon acknowledged as the harbinger of the "New Culture Movement 新文化运动," or to use the article writer Hu Shih's own words, the "first shot in the Chinese literary revolution."[1] Still a graduate student studying philosophy at Columbia University, Hu Shih 胡适, in this seminal article entitled "A Preliminary Discussion of Literary Reform 文学改良刍议," proposes that the "everyday speech 白话文," the spoken Chinese which had for centuries been regarded as inferior to the default written form of the "classical 文言文," should instead be employed in all forms of writing. "I hold that we should use popular expressions and words in prose and poetry 吾主张今日作文作诗，宜采用俗语俗字," as Hu Shih concludes toward the end of this epoch-making article:

> Rather than using the dead expressions of three thousand years ago, it is better to employ living expressions of the twentieth century, and rather than using the language of the Qin, Han, and the Six Dynasties, which cannot reach many people and cannot be universally understood, it is better to use the language of the *Water Margin* (*Shuihu zhuan*) and *Journey to the West* (*Xiyouji*), which is understood in every household. 与其用三千年前之死字，

[1] Hu Shih, "A Literary Revolution in China," originally published in *The Peking Leader* 北京导报 on Feb. 12, 1919; see *English Writings of Hu Shih*, Vol. 1, edited by Chih-P'ing Chou, 4.

不如用二十世纪之活字。与其作不能行远不能普及之秦汉六朝文字，不如作家喻户晓之《水浒》、《西游》文字也。[2]

While invoking the rise of the vernacular in the Renaissance, which is admired as a hallmark in Western history,[3] Hu Shih also invokes the repository of Chinese vernacular literature. To lend support to this Chinese literary reform, in other words, while the European history of national language underpins the righteousness of its belated, Chinese counterpart, writings in the vernacular—drama, prose, and novel, whose proliferation in the past four centuries has, according to Hu, "succeeded in standardizing the national language and been its greatest teachers and propagandists"[4] —now would serve as the model, foundation, and historical justification for China's new literature and new national language.

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[2] Translation is from *Sources of Chinese Tradition: From 1600 Through the Twentieth Century*, Vol. 2, 360.

[3] With overt awareness of historical evolution and history making, Hu Shih uses the rise of the vernacular tongues in Europe to justify the inevitability of this Chinese literary reform. See for example, "The Literary Revolution in China," originally published in *China Today through Chinese Eyes* in 1922; see *English Writings of Hu Shih*, Vol.1, 8.
In "A Preliminary Discussion of Literary Reform," Hu also offers a brief account of the rise of the vernacular in Europe in parenthesis, where he compares Latin to the classical Chinese, which has to be replaced by the vernacular: "In medieval Europe, while each country had its own vernacular tongue, it recognized Latin as the classical language, which was the ubiquitous written form, just as in our country we use the classical language as the written form. But then there were in Italy the literary masters such as Dante, who initiated vernacular writing in Italy. As writing in the vernacular became popular in other countries, the vernacular took over as the national tongues. In establishing the Protestant church, Luther used German to translate the Bible, and he initiated the tradition of German literature. The same had happened in Britain, France, and many other countries. The commonly-used English Bible was translated in 1611, only three-hundred years ago from now. Hence, today's European literature would all have to be considered as the vernacular tongues at that time. Thanks to the literary masters, "living literature" began to replace the dead literature in Latin. Living literature then gave rise to the national languages, where writing and colloquial speech are close to each other. 欧洲中古时，各国皆有俚语，而以拉丁文为文言，凡著作书籍皆用之，如吾国之以文言著书也。其后意大利有但丁诸文豪，始以其国俚语著作。诸国踵兴，国语亦代起。路得创新教始以德文译旧约新约，遂开德文学之先。英法诸国亦复如是。今世通用之英文新旧约乃一六一一年译本，距今才三百年耳。故今日欧洲诸国之文学，在当日皆为俚语。造诸文豪兴，始以"活文学"代拉丁之死文学。有活文学而后有言文合一之国语也。" (This segment is not included in the translation in *Sources*, hence the rendering is mine.)

[4] Hu Shih, "The Literary Revolution in China," originally published in *China Today through Chinese Eyes* in 1922; see *English Writings of Hu Shih*, Vol. 1, 10. In other words, just as Luther's translation of the Bible has shaped the German national language, or as Dante's *Commedia* has defined the Italian national language, vernacular literature such as the *Journey to the West*, as is envisioned by Hu Shih, would define and shape the modern mandarin Chinese. Hu Shih's vision, as mentioned below, was soon realized.

Within five years, Hu Shih's suggestion was implemented in schools, and it became a sweeping success.[5] And if this "first shot in the revolution," or to use another term coined by Hu, the "Chinese Renaissance,"[6] having shaken off the deep-seated supremacy of classicism, comprises the first step in China's coming to terms with its literary tradition in the 20th century, the next stage of this program of "re-organizing the national past 整理国故," understandably enough, involves the careful, unprecedented study of the vernacular novels. Rarely treated as seriously as the classics by literati of the past, these vernacular novels, now the foundation stones of the new national language, are the new canon that demands systematic research and scholarly investigation. Needless to say, the new generations of students and readers, in this new era of Chinese literature, had attested to their due excitement at this new scholarly field and discipline. By the year 1923 when the final version of Hu Shih's study of the *Journey to the West* came out, Hu had already published two drafts of this study since 1921.

Entitled "The Evidential Study of the *Journey to the West* 西游记考证," this revised article, serving as the preface to the 1923 reprint edition of the *Journey*, is a further development of the preliminary preface that Hu Shih wrote for the Shanghai Oriental Press's 上海亚东图书馆 first edition of the *Journey*, which was released in December 1921. Similar to how they had put together the new edition of the *Water Margin* in 1920 and how they had handled the many other vernacular fictions over the next three decades, this new edition of the *Journey to the West*,[7] with the commentaries of the older editions removed, is edited by Wang Yuanfang 汪原放, the editor who for the first time in history integrated modern punctuation and

[5] Ibid., 11-2.

[6] See Zhou Gang, "The Chinese Renaissance: A Transcultural Reading." *PMLA* 120 (2005): 783-95. See also I. A. Richards's recapitulation of the "Chinese Renaissance" of this literary movement: "The Chinese Renaissance," *Scrutiny*, September issue, 1932, 102-13. This article was later developed in Richards's 1968 essay collection: see "Sources of Conflict" in *So Much Nearer: Essays Toward a World English*, 218-37.

[7] This new edition is based on Zhang Shushen's commentary edition published in 1749, and Zhang's edition is based on the 1620s edition commented by Ye Zhou. See the very careful notes written by Wang Yuanfang before the full text of the *Journey* in "Notes after Editing 校读后记." In addition to Hu Shih's preface, this edition also includes an one-page preface by Chen Duxiu 陈独秀, as well as Zhang Shushen's "General Remarks 总论," which is supplemented with Hu Shih's remarks on Zhang's reading.

paragraphing into early modern texts such as the *Journey*. Admittedly, Wang's editing and the reissuing of vernacular fictions by the Oriental Press were in close collaboration with Hu Shih's project of China's literary reform. As the reproduction of the vernacular novels would have consolidated the new status of spoken Chinese, the added punctuations and the paragraphed text exemplified the rules of writing in the new national tongue.[8] Now the *Journey to the West* takes up a new form, and as all the previous commentaries have been deleted, Hu Shih's prefatory "evidential study," an unprecedented study of the author and the literary antecedents of the *Journey*, serves also in part as an extended response to the interpretations proposed in the previous commentaries. To use Hu Shih's own words, this preface, which was "not supposed to be written originally 本来也不必作,"[9] came into being only because of "the cloaks of the three schools—Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism—covered to the *Journey* 罩上了儒释道三教的袍子."[10] Using historical evidence and reasoned argument—the "clumsy perspective 笨的眼光"—Hu Shih in the preface rebels against the "readers who have been all-too-smart in the past hundreds of years 这几百年来读西游记的人都太聪明了,"[11] both in content and in method. Hu Shih's preface, in a sense, serves to justify the editor Wang Yuanfang's unprecedented removal of all the past doctrinal interpretations of the *Journey to the West*.

After a brief account of its two previous versions and their related contexts, the 1923 preface begins with a clarification of the long-standing rumor about the *Journey*'s author. Since 1663, when the first Qing dynasty commentary edition appeared, all the ensuing editions, including the one invested in the Confucian interpretation, have acknowledged Qiu Chuji, an early founder of the Daoist internal alchemy, as the author of the *Journey*. Since this attribution became the common shortcut to support the Daoist as well as the Confucian allegoresis in the past three-

[8] See how Hu Shih prefaces Wang's edition of the *Water Margin* in "Evidential Study of the *Water Margin* 水浒传序," where he regards Wang's edition as the textbook for the use of the modern punctuation.
[9] Hu, 51. I refer to Hu's preface in the 1923 edition of the *Journey* here and in the following discussion.
[10] Ibid., 51.
[11] Ibid., 51.

hundred years, Hu Shih's clarification at the beginning of his preface, if not entirely fatal to the previous commentators, at least undercuts their credentials.[12] What the Daoist sage Qiu Chuji of the Yuan dynasty wrote, as Hu explains, a book on geography that happens to be called "Journey to the West," has nothing to do with the novel *Journey to the West*. In the following five sections (of the eight sections in this 1923 preface), Hu Shih examines the five major antecedents of the *Journey*: 1) the hagiography of the great Buddhist monk-translator-theologian Tripitaka 慈恩三藏法师传, which was written around 688; 2) classical-language tales that have mythologized Tripitaka's scripture-fetching story from the *Extensive Records of the Taiping Era* 太平广记, which was compiled around 978; 3) the newly-discovered chapbook of the Southern Song dynasty with the prototypes of the monkey, the sand monk, and the structure of the trial series 大唐三藏取经诗话; 4) the origin of the monkey both in Chinese and Indian traditions; 5) the *Journey* in the Yuan drama in the vernacular. Always with a keen awareness of historical development and interested in finding patterns in the h`istorical process, Hu Shih must have found the transformation and transmission of this series of scripture-fetching stories exciting. As these many stages of the *Journey* witness the changing of genres, the growing of a narrative, and the formation of the vernacular fiction, Hu Shih has in these sections detailed the differences between these antecedents. In tracing how they differ from their predecessors and from the final product of the 1592 novel, Hu Shih studies the motifs that are omitted, revised, added, and retained in this 900-year evolution of the scripture-fetching story.

The preface's next section (its sixth section), returns to the topic of authorship. Either because of a deliberate concealment, or a true lack of sources, Chen Yuanzhi, the preface writer of the 1592 edition, the earliest edition of the *Journey*, underlines the anonymity of the book. As Hu Shih has at the preface's beginning pointed out the willful mistakes in the *Journey*'s later editions with regard

[12] To my knowledge, the first scholar who differentiates Qiu's *Journey to the West* and the fiction *Journey to the West* is Qian Daxin 钱大昕 (1728-1804). See 西游记资料汇编 *Anthology of Source Materials of the Journey to the West*, 173.

to the authorial attribution, he in this section elaborates on another speculation that had only been taken seriously two years ago. According to Jiang Ruizao's 蒋瑞藻 *Evidential Study of the Novel* 小说考证 (1910), the *Journey* was written by Wu Cheng'en 吴承恩 of Huai'an 淮安, a candidate for the Imperial Exam during the reign of Emperor Jiajing (1522-1566) 嘉靖中岁贡生. Based on Jiang's reference and with the help of Lu Xun 鲁迅, Hu Shih has found the similar contention in the writings of Ding Yan 丁晏 (1794-1875), Ruan Kuisheng 阮葵生 (1727-1789), and Wu Yujin 吴玉搢 (1698-1773). The earliest record, arguably also the most important evidence for this speculated authorship, is a handful of entries on Wu Cheng'en in the local history of Huai'an. Dated in 1626, more than thirty years after the *Journey*'s debut, one of these entries reads:

> Wu Cheng'en was bright as well as wise. Having read a wide range of books, he wrote effortlessly. His language was fresh and elegant, and was in the spirit of Qin Guan. Wu was also good at writing witty plays, and his miscellaneous pieces had been phenomenal. He did not have good luck. As a candidate for the Imperial Exam, he had served as the country magistrate for two years. Before long, he was ashamed of kowtowing, and returned home with a flick of his sleeve. He enjoyed drinking and poetry. Then he died. 吴承恩性敏而多慧，博极群书，为诗文下笔立成，清雅流丽，有秦少游之风。复善谐剧，所著杂记几种名震一时。数奇，竟以明经授县贰，未久，耻折腰，遂拂袖而归。放浪诗酒，卒。[13]

This portrait of Wu Cheng'en embodies the quintessential Chinese scholar-writer: talented, unconventional, and impatient with bureaucracy, he withdraws from society and finds pleasure in drinking and in writing. Because this local history has catalogued the *Journey to the West* as one of the several writings of Wu; the *Journey* does contain many idioms known as belonging to the Huai'an dialect; and the

[13] Hu, 32.

portrayal of Wu and the handful of his existing poems seem to live up to the greatness of the novel *Journey*, Hu Shih endorses the authorship of Wu Cheng'en.[14]

After a consideration of *Journey*'s antecedents and author, Hu Shih returns to the text of the *Journey to the West* in the last two sections of the 1923 preface. The author of the *Journey* might have been inspired by all the antecedents and sources enumerated above, as Hu notes, but ultimately, it is the author's incomparable creativity and imagination that make the entirety of the novel possible. Before Hu delves into the *Journey*'s specific episodes, he first divides this hundred-chapter novel into three parts; the structure of this book, as he notes, "must have been the most delicate among China's old novels 这部书的结构在中国旧小说之中，要算是最精密的了:"

> First part: biography of the monkey—the Great Sage who equals Heaven (Chapter 1-7)
>
> Second part: motivation for scripture-fetching and the scripture fetchers (Chapter 8-12)
>
> Third part: the eighty-one trials (Chapter 13-100)
>
> 第一部分：齐天大圣的传。（第一回至第七回）
>
> 第二部分：取经的因缘与取经的人。（第八回至第十二回）
>
> 第三部分：八十一难的经历。（第十三回至第一百回）[15]

Of this most carefully-structured novel, its first part, the "biography of the monkey," Hu continues, "is the most valuable myth-literature in the world 第一部分乃是世间最有价值的一篇神话文学."[16] If the raid of the monkey in heaven is read as the

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[14] In the introduction to the 1943 English edition of the *Journey*, Hu Shih seems more convinced of the authorship of Wu Cheng'en: "But to the people of Huai-an, the birthplace of Wu Ch'eng-en, the authorship of the story was apparently well-known in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The local history (gazetteer) of Huai-an, compiled in 1625, definitely recorded that the novel *Hsi Yu Ki* was written by him. This is the first Chinese novel of which the authorship is now authentically established." This conviction is probably due to the *Collected Writings of Wu Cheng'en* 射阳先生存稿 that was recently discovered in the Imperial Palace in 1930. Wu Cheng'en mentions in these writings his delight in reading and recording the strange tales. See "Introduction to the American Edition," in *Monkey*, translated by Arthur Waley (New York: Grove P, 1958), 3. The first edition of Waley's translation was published in 1943.

[15] Hu, 39.

[16] Ibid., 39.

manifestation of the "lost mind" in the 1663 preface of Yu Ji, and if in Chen Shibin's 1696 Daoist interpretation (as well as in the Daoist commentary editions produced in the 19th century), the raid resembles a proof of the monkey's attainment of the "Golden Elixir," Hu Shih sees it as a political revolt. The injustice and incompetence in the celestial palace—the low position of horse-sitter assigned in Heaven, biased custom that excludes the monkey from the celestial celebration, the military inefficiency, and the Jade Emperor's belittlement of the talented and his lack of sound judgment—are in Hu Shih's reading "the various motivations for the revolt, which is provoked by the government 都是政府激成革命的种种原因." For Hu Shih, the monkey's revolt is justified, and it is not a result of individual hubris as suggested in the previous Confucian commentaries, but a courageous reaction against social injustice—against the arrogant authority that refuses to improve. The havoc that the monkey makes in Heaven, innocent or not, should therefore be commended as an admirable endeavor to establish a new, better order. Hu Shih then quotes two speeches said by the monkey from chapter 7, where the monkey is defending his upheaval in front of all the dignities gathered in the celestial palace:

> An old monkey hailing from the Flower-Fruit Mount. / […] Too narrow the space I found on that mortal earth:/ I set my mind to live in the Green-jade Sky. / In Divine Mists Hall none should long reside, / For king may follow king in the reign of man. / If might is honor, let them yield me. / He only is hero who dares to fight and win! 花果山中一老猿，…… 因在凡间嫌地窄，立心端要住瑶天。灵霄宝殿非他有，历代人王有分传。强者为尊该让我，英雄只此敢争先！
>
> Even if the Jade Emperor has practiced religion from childhood, he should not be allowed to remain here forever. The proverb says, "Many are the turns of the top seat: /By next year the turn will be mine!" [17] Tell him to

[17] Hu, 40. In the original 1592 edition, this proverb is more daring, which reads: "Many are the turns of kingship, /and next year the turn will be my place 皇帝轮流做，明年到我家." As the 1620s edition keeps this proverb, it is slightly changed in the first edition appeared Qing dynasty (1663), which reads: "Many are the turns of the top seat: /By next year the turn will be mine 交椅轮流坐，明年是我尊!" While the 1696 Chen Shibin edition deletes this proverb, Zhang Shushen's 1748 Confucian edition changes it into: "Many are the turns for the Jade Emperor, /and next year the turn will be my

> move out at once and hand over the Celestial Palace to me. That'll be the end of the matter. If not, I shall continue to cause disturbances and there'll never be peace!" 他（玉帝）虽年劫修长，也不应久住在此。常言道，"交椅轮流坐，明年是我尊。"只教他搬出去，将天宫让与我，便罢了。若还不让，定要搅乱，不得清平！

"Before this, the author has laid out the motivations for the revolt, which is provoked by the government"; as Hu Shih explains the development of the plot of the novel's first part, "and here, these two passages are almost a revolution declaration! The Monkey King who revolts in heaven, though fails in the end, is after all a hero who 'fails with honor' 前面写的都是政府激成的种种原因；这两段简直是革命的檄文了！美猴王的天宫革命，虽然失败，究竟还是一个'虽败犹荣'的英雄！"[18] With excitement and admiration, Hu Shih is clearly in full sympathy with the monkey, "the heroic revolutionary" who is articulate, individualistic, and composed. The palace in heaven, the Jade Emperor, and to use Hu's term, the "government," on the other hand, are then targets that the *Journey* "rebels against." Instead of plainly spelling out his interpretation of this episode in the *Journey*, Hu Shih raises a rhetorical question:

> I want to ask the reader: if the author is not full of complaints, why does he portray the Jade Emperor as a good-for-nothing? Why does he portray the Heaven as dark, corrupt, and lacking in talent? And why does he let a monkey raid the celestial palace? 我要请问一切读者：如果著者没有一肚子牢骚，他为什么把玉帝写成那样一个大饭桶？为什么把天上写成那样黑暗，腐败，无人？为什么教一个猴子去把天宫闹的那样稀糟？[19]

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place 玉帝轮流做，明年到我家." The 1810 Liu Yiming edition, on the other hand, uses the version in the 1663 edition. Hu Shih here cites the one that is revised by the 1663 edition. This 1921 edition, which is based on the 1748 edition, follows Zhang Shushen's version of the proverb. I think the copy of the *Journey* that Hu Shih refers to in this preface is based on the 1663 edition.
All translations of the *Journey to the West* in this dissertation are indebted to Anthony C. Yu 's 2012 edition of translation, if I do not indicate otherwise. Yu, Vol. 1, 193-4.

[18] Hu, 41.

[19] Ibid., 41.

The author of the *Journey*, as Hu seems to imply, full of complaints, uses his writings to take his own dissatisfaction and frustration off his chest. His complaints about the Heaven and the Jade Emperor are the complaints about the earthly emperor with his earthly governance: its "good-for-nothing, darkness, corruption, and lack of talent." Understandably, Hu Shih is interested in politics—hierarchy, bureaucracy, and suppression depicted in the *Journey*. Yet if the book resembles some kind of social critique, as Hu Shih notes immediately in the next paragraph, it is at the same time the social critique that is of fun and wit:

> But the advantage of these seven chapters all lies in its humor. The author must have been a man full of complaints, but he is also a man of playfulness who disdains the world. Hence although criticizing, these seven chapters are not criticizing with a stiff face. The book criticizes you, yet you still feel that it is an extraordinarily fun, extraordinarily interesting myth-novel—whoever reads it cannot help but laugh out loud. 但是这七回的好处全在他的滑稽。著者一定是一个满肚牢骚的人，但他又是一个玩世不恭的人，故这七回虽是骂人，却不是板着面孔骂人。他骂了你，你还觉得这是一篇极滑稽，极有趣，无论谁看了都要大笑的神话小说。[20]

In Hu Shih's reading, the strength of the first part of the novel, which is understood as criticism of the government, lies in its humor. While the author, full of complaints, criticizes the world, he is also "playing with the world with disdain 玩世不恭." But what are the passages and examples that invite laughter? What are the readers laughing at and why is it laughable? How does humor relate to the author's "playfulness?" And above all, what does the phrase "playing with the world" suggest and imply? Hu Shih then moves to the novel's second part (chapter 8-12) on the story of Tripitaka, and it is in the discussion of the novel's third part that he returns to this topic.[21]

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[20] Ibid., 41.

[21] In this preface's original 1921 version, Hu Shih does not have separate sections on 1) chapbook of the Southern Song dynasty; 2) origin of the monkey in Chinese and Indian traditions; 3) speculation of *Journey*'s author, Wu Cheng'en; instead, after examining the antecedents in the hagiography of Tripitaka, mythologized tales, and Yuan vernacular plays, he launches into the discussion on the structure and meaning of the book (which becomes section 7 and 8 in the revised 1923 version).

After the brief account of the four sources of the third part of the *Journey* (chapter 13-100), namely, 1) the hagiography of Tripitaka, 2) chapbook and plays on the scripture-fetching story, 3) the *Book of Entry into Dharma Realm*, and 4) the author's imagination and creativity, Hu Shih picks up the topic of the *Journey*'s humor. "Making the series of monsters and trials is not entirely difficult," he writes:

> but the *Journey* has a special strength, which is its humor. It is the saints and Buddha who talk in the formal fashion with an elongated face, which is not human behavior. The reason that the *Journey* can be the foremost myth-novel in the world is because its myth is peppered with humor, which invites laughter. As the laughter humanizes the myth, we can say that the *Journey* is a myth with human touch. 想出这许多妖怪灾难，想出这一大堆神话，本来不算什么难事。但《西游记》有一点特别长处，就是他的滑稽意味。拉长了面孔，整日说正经话，那是圣人菩萨的行为，不是人的行为。《西游记》所以能成世界的一部绝大神话小说，正因为《西游记》里种种神话都带着一点诙谐意味，能使人开口一笑，这一笑就把那神话"人化"过了。我们可以说，《西游记》的神话是有"人的意味"的神话。[22]

Similar to his commentary of the first part of the novel, Hu Shih here reiterates the importance of humor in the *Journey* and regards it as the book's "special strength." Neither criticizing with a stiff face nor preaching like a saint, he states, the *Journey*, because of its humor, is a myth with human touch. But is it because of the humane side of the *Journey* that makes the book humorous? Is the reader laughing at the laughable aspects in the common humanity which the *Journey* touches on? Hu Shih offers the following three examples:

The 32nd chapter where the pig is sent by the monkey to patrol the mountain, as Hu continues, is a case in point. Instead of patrolling the mountain, the pig finds a clump of grass, crawls inside, and falls asleep. Not knowing that the monkey, who has transformed into a bug, is secretly watching him, the pig bows to a stone after his long nap—taking the stone as Tripitaka, he is rehearsing his fake

[22] Hu, 47.

patrol report to his fellow travelers. "The most humorous passage," Hu Shih shifts to the second example, "is where they cure the emperor's disease in the Scarlet-Purple Kingdom" (Chapter 68-71). In the thank-you banquet, hearing from the pig that the medicine is related to something of a "horse," the emperor requests the full name of this ingredient. Because the medicine is in reality made by half flask of the horse urine, the monkey replies with a made-up term, the "Horse-Saddle-Bell." Puzzled, the emperor turns to his imperial physician by the side, who provides an explanation in no time: "My lord, this Horse-Saddle-Bell tastes bitter, being cold, nonpoisonous;/cutting phlegm and wheezing makes its merit chief. / It loosens breath and rids one of poisoned blood;/ Quiets cough, fights exhaustion, and brings relief."[23] The emperor smiles and agrees.

In these two examples cited above, thanks to the monkey's omnipotent eye, the pig's incurable laziness, the physician's unashamed hypocrisy, his chilling eloquence, and the emperor's blind stupidity are all in full display. Everyone here seems to be accustomed to lie, good at lying, or easily swayed by it. It is humorous because either by preparing a fake report or by coming up with nonsense offhand, these characters go, or perhaps even flourish, by the trick of conjuring up an "alternate reality." As the world depicted here is manipulated by performance where deception prevails over honesty, the humor that Hu Shih underscores could also be a very dark and disturbing humor: a dark humor that sneers at human nature and the nature of the society. Hu Shih then offers his last example, and for this time, the critic adds his commentary between the quoted texts:

> We have mentioned that the raid of heaven resembles a kind of revolt. In Chapter 50 when the monkey's golden-hooped cudgel is sucked away by the Great King Rhinoceros, he goes up to Heaven, and asks for help from the Jade Emperor. Bowing deeply to the throne, the monkey says:
>
> > "His Venerable Majesty, here is my report. Since old Monkey began to accompany the Tang Monk to acquire scriptures in the Western Heaven, … and we have encountered a ferocious monster

[23] Chapter 69. Yu, Vol. 3, 280.

who wants to eat the Tang Monk captured in his cave. I found the way to his door and fought with the him. His magic powers are great indeed; he even managed to rob my golden-hooped rod. [...] I have a suspicion that this monster is an evil star from Heaven. For this reason, old Monkey came in person to memorialize to you. I beg the celestial worthy in his compassion to grant me my request. Please issue a decree to find out the identity of the evil star and to send troops to arrest this demon. Old Monkey makes this request with the utmost fear and trembling!"

This set of clichés that is used by the slave, becomes humorous in the mouth of the revolutionary party. Hence Immortal Ge on the side of the palace makes fun of him, saying:

"Monkey, why do you bow and become so humble?"

The monkey answers: "I'm not becoming humble. Right now I'm a monkey who has no cudgel to play with."

我们在上文曾说大闹天宫是一种革命。后来第五十回里，孙行者被独角兕大王把金箍捧收去了，跑到天上，见玉帝。行者朝上唱个大喏道:

"启上天尊。我老孙保护唐僧往西天取经，……遇一凶怪，把唐僧拿在洞里要吃。我寻上他门，与他交战。那怪神通广大，把我金箍捧抢去。……我疑是天上凶星下界，为此特来启奏，伏乞天尊垂慈洞鉴，降旨查勘凶星，发兵收剿妖魔，老孙不胜战栗屏营之至！"

这种奴隶的口头套语，到了革命党的口里，便很滑稽了。所以殿门傍有葛仙翁打趣他道：

"猴子，是何前倨后恭？"

行者道："不是前倨后恭，老孙于今是没棒弄了。"[24]

If we laugh at the pig's clumsy preparation for his fake report, the imperial physician's unctuous hypocrisy, here we may also laugh at the monkey's

[24] Hu, 49-50. Hu Shih here again cites the 1663 version of the text, which can be told from the omissions and modification made in this edition. Yu, Vol. 3, 2-3.

performance in front of the Jade Emperor. Previously an open enemy against the celestial court, now he kowtows to the throne and pleas like a seasoned servant, fully equipped with the bureaucratic language. "This set of clichés that is used by the slave," to quote Hu Shih again, "becomes humorous in the mouth of the revolutionary party." Indeed, whether a bold rebel or a staunch conservative, the monkey's identity seems to be a matter of role-playing, contingent at the moment. As the Immortal Ge teases the nature of his submission, the monkey's response, presumably in front of the Jade Emperor, is perhaps a dissenter's most cynical, self-serving justification for his surrender. Admittedly, the submission is hardly sincere—it is only because of the loss of his weapon that he here assumes and performs the role of a servant. The monkey obviously retains his contempt for the court, and as he is honest about his dishonesty, his perfunctory role-playing seems to be a parody of the kowtowing courtiers. As a conclusion for the three examples that are illustrated above, Hu Shih notes:

> There is some sharp ideology of playing with the world in this kind of humor. The literary value of the *Journey to the West* lies here. It is the case in the first part; it is also the case in the third part. 这种诙谐的里面含有一种尖刻的玩世主义。《西游记》的文学价值正在这里。第一部分如此，第三部分也如此。[25]

In his comment on the first part of the *Journey* where the monkey wreaks havoc in the celestial court, Hu Shih sees the author as a man of "playfulness who disdains the world 玩世不恭." Here, this resurfaced "playfulness," (literally, "playing the world 玩世,") becomes an ideology. Glossed as "disdaining the world 轻蔑世事,"[26] the phrase "playing with the world" perhaps not only implies the dissatisfaction with society, but more important, an utter disillusionment in authority, custom, convention, and rules in society, the heightened sensitivity in the absurdities and irrevocability of the various social constructs, and the consequential lack of interest in any forms of rectification. Such a disdain, as is exemplified in the monkey's self-

[25] Hu, 51.
[26] *Ciyuan* 辞源 (Beijing: The Commercial Press 商务印书馆出版, 1988), 2051.

conscious role-playing in the court—the fake conformity that amuses the reader—suggests a refusal to take society seriously, and a distrust in its improvement or progress. Different from the stance of an idealist, who aspires to change the world in the most earnest way, the ideology of "playing with the world" probably implies a profound recognition that it is better off laughing at and playing with the world, than sincerely participating in the world, which is an unsalvageable place. The *Journey* has no doubt taken great interest in exposing embarrassing moments in the human realm, yet as Hu Shih has mentioned several times, it invites laughter, not anger or even disappointment. To be sure, this laughter is implicit in the ideology of "playing with the world."

The last section of this preface, which only consists of one long paragraph, is perhaps the most influential, commonly-cited passage in Hu Shih's *Journey* study. A summary of the previous sections that we just went over, it is also a head-on response to the *Journey*'s religious interpretations, which have been accumulated in the last three-hundred years. In Hu Shih's argument, as we will see, the study of the *Journey*'s antecedents, author, structure, meaning, and literary value discussed in the previous sections, serves in effect as an extended argument against the Daoist and the Confucian interpretations, which have all been taken out in this new 1921 edition of the *Journey* The opening lines of this section reads:

> The *Journey to the West* has been ruined by numerous Daoist priests, Buddhist monks, and Confucian scholars in the past three-hundred years. The Daoists say that this book is a set of doctrines for cultivating the Golden Elixir. The Buddhists say that this book is about the law of Buddhism. The Confucians say that this book talks about the principles of "making the intentions true and setting the minds right." These interpretations are the great enemies against the *Journey to the West*. Now having deleted all the "True Interpretation" and "Original Intent" discovered by that so-called "Master who is Awakened to the Origin" and the "Master who is Awakened to the One," we restore its earliest appearance. 《西游记》被这三四百年来的无数道士和尚秀才弄坏了。道士说，这部书是一部金丹妙诀。和尚说，这部书

是禅门心法。秀才说，这部书是一部正心诚意的理学书。这些解说都是《西游记》的大仇敌。现在我们把那些什么悟一子和什么悟元子等等的“真诠”、“原旨”一概删去了，还他一个本来面目。[27]

Hu Shih's stance toward the theology-driven interpretations of the *Journey* cannot be clearer. The Daoist, Buddhist, and Confucian allegoresis are taken by him as "enemies" that have "ruined the text." They are the "cloaks" that had been imposed on the *Journey*, the "profound meaning 大义" that had been searched in vain "beneath the paper 透过纸背," and they are too smart to appreciate the "extremely accessible, extremely lucid dose of humor and spirit of playing with the world 极浅极明白的滑稽意味和玩世精神." Being ironical and perhaps deliberately provocative, Hu Shih is obviously trying to present an alternative approach and interpretation that are opposed to the three-hundred-year religious allegoresis. "These allegorical readers are too smart," as Hu Shih sums up the approach and interpretation that he holds,

> Hence, I have to use my clumsy perspective, to point out the evolution history of the *Journey* in these several hundreds of years; to point out that this book originates from folk legend and myth, and it does not have any "subtle, significant meanings"; to point out that the author of the novel is a literary master who "enjoys himself in poetry and liquor, and is good at wit and humor:" his poetry may imply the interest in "executing the ghosts," yet it does not have the Daoist mind of cultivating the "Golden Elixir"; to point out that *Journey* is at best a very interesting, humorous novel, a myth-novel. The book does not have any subtle meanings, what it has is at best the ideology of playing with the world, which is fond of critiquing. This ideology of playing with the world is also lucid: it does not hide, and we do not need to seek deep. 因此，我不能不用我的笨眼光，指出《西游记》有了几百年逐渐演化的历史；指出这部书起于民间的传说和神话，并无“微言大义”可说；指出现在的《西游记》小说的作者是一位“放浪诗酒，复善谐谑”的大文豪

[27] Hu, 50-1.

做的，我们看他的诗，晓得他确有“斩鬼”的清兴，而决无“金丹”的道心；指出这部《西游记》至多不过是一部很有趣味的滑稽小说，神话小说；他并没有什么微妙的意思，他至多不过有一点爱骂人的玩世主义。这点玩世主义也是很明白的；他并不隐藏，我们也不用深求。[28]

With the “clumsy perspective,” the *Journey* in its “original appearance,” and its “extremely accessible and lucid” ideology in playing with the world, Hu Shih is clearly presenting his approach to the *Journey* as everything that the old ones are not. By pointing out the *Journey*’s hundreds of years’ evolution history, its origin in folk legend and myth, its author’s ingenuity in wit and humor, and its significance in the spirit of playing with the world, Hu Shih seems to be able to prove that the *Journey* cannot be a Daoist or a Confucian allegory.[29] The underlying assumption here, it seems, is that religious allegory and novel-myth-literature belong to two mutually exclusive categories. But is it possible that a theology-oriented allegory could be compatible with a narrative-driven novel? Is Hu Shih also implying that the “lucid spirit of playing with the world” is fundamentally at odds with the pedantic search for the theological doctrines that “hide deep beneath the paper”—that the author’s unconventional wit and creativity are at odds with the inherited wisdom of the religious teachings?[30] A lot has been discussed about what the *Journey* is and had been in this unparalleled study/preface, and Hu Shih’s unflinching opposition to the

[28] Hu, 51.

[29] Hu Shih’s stance toward the Daoist/Confucian interpretations of the *Journey* is consistent throughout his life. Toward the end of his introduction to Waley’s translation, he also brings up the religious interpretations of the *Journey*: “Freed from all kinds of allegorical interpretations by Buddhist, Taoist, and Confucianist commentators, *Monkey* is simply a book of good humor, profound nonsense, good-natured satire and delightful entertainment. It has delighted millions of Chinese children and adults for over 300 years, and, thanks to Mr. Waley, it will now delight thousands upon thousands of children and adults in the English-speaking world for many years to come.” See “Introduction to the American Edition,” in *Monkey*, 5.

[30] As noted earlier in the footnote, this 1921/1923 edition also includes Zhang Shushen’s very short “General Remarks” in his 1749 commentary edition. It is glossed by Hu Shih as follows: “This ‘general remarks’ has not much value, but it after all represents a kind of reading of the *Journey*—the Confucian view of the *Journey*. All the commentaries of this book are based on this point of view. While those commentaries have all been deleted, I still think this ‘general remarks’ can be preserved. Hence, I have dissuaded Yuanfang from deleting it. 这篇总论虽无甚价值，却也代表西游记的一种说法——儒家的西游观。此书全部的批评，都根本于这一个观念。现在那些批评都删去了，我觉得这篇总论可以保存，故劝原放不要把他删去。”

theology-oriented interpretations has no doubt inspired and enlightened generations of *Journey* scholars in the next century.[31] Yet in the meantime, reaction against Hu Shih nevertheless arises. Especially since the 70s, to quote Anthony C. Yu, the English translator of the full text of the *Journey*, "Chinese, Japanese, European, and American academicians have exerted a noteworthy, even if not concerted, effort to reverse the critical tendencies dominant in the early republican period."[32] In the United States at least, the two dominant ways in interpreting the *Journey* prior to the "early republican period," that is, prior to Hu Shih's 1921 preface of the *Journey*, have been revived with a vengeance. If Anthony Yu's introductions, both in the initial 1977 edition of the full translation of the *Journey* and the 2012 revised edition, nudge toward a reading that takes the *Journey* as illuminating practices in the Daoist internal alchemy, Andrew Plaks' article in his 1987 monograph, *The Four Masterworks of the Ming Novel*, sees the novel as a Neo-Confucian allegory elucidating ways to cultivate the mind. The three-hundred-year habit of reading the *Journey* as a manual for Daoist or Confucian self-cultivation, which had been curbed and almost uprooted by Hu Shih since the 1920s, interestingly enough, find their way half a century later across the ocean on a completely different soil. So how do Yu and Plaks understand and react against Hu Shih's opposition to the tradition of *Journey* allegoresis? How do they in return advance their own readings? How do they relate to the old commentaries and how do they respond to each other? And above all, why would the *Journey to the West* be prone to be read as a doctrine-oriented allegory, and what are the special features that the *Journey* has, or to be precise, the special features which capture its reader's eyes and propel the momentum for such theological readings? The effort in reversing Hu Shih's reading on the part of Yu and Plaks, along with Hu's oppositional stance, seems to be an interesting case study to explore the nature of conflicting readings— in narratives

[31] See Anthony Yu's depiction of Hu Shih's influence, for example, in the introduction to his full translation of the *Journey*: "Introduction," *The Journey to the West*, translated by Anthony C. Yu (Chicago: The U of Chicago P, 2012), 52-3.
[32] Ibid., 53.

whose motifs concern a quest or a journey in particular. Let us first look at Anthony Yu's way of reading.

The final 2012 version of Yu's introduction to his English translation of the *Journey*, while based on the introduction of the 1977 version of his translation, incorporates passages from the talk he gave at the National University of Singapore in 2005, the revised version of which, under the title "The Formation of Fiction in *The Journey to the West,*" appeared later in 2008 in *Asia Major*.[33] Similar to how Hu Shih structures his 1921 preface, Yu, before plunging into the meaning of the *Journey* in the last section on "The Monk, the Monkey, and the Fiction of Allegory," reviews the *Journey*'s antecedents in the hagiography of Tripitaka, the monkey traditions, the chapbook and dramas on the scripture-fetching story, the controversy of its author, and the poetic sources that can be identified in the Daoist canon. After a synopsis of the Daoist alchemical allegoresis in Chen Shibin's 1696 edition and Zhang Shushen's 1749 Confucian commentaries, Yu gives a general evaluation of Hu Shih's reading:

> To oppose this tendency to treat the narrative as a manual for Buddhist, Daoist, or Confucian self-cultivation, Hu Shi emphatically declared in his essay of 1923 that the author intended neither subtle language nor profound meaning. Wu Cheng'en's overriding purpose in writing the narrative, according to Hu, was simply to air his satiric view of life and the world. For this modern Chinese philosopher and historian, *The Journey to the West* is above all a marvelous comic work, as Hu says in the foreword to Arthur Waley's abridged translation, "a book of … profound nonsense." Hu's evaluation of the work of *Xiyouji*'s premodern compilers and commentators

[33] The Chinese translation of the talk, titled "*The Journey to the West*: The Formation of Fiction and Its Reception 《西游记》：虚构的形成和接受的过程" can be found in Yu's 2006 essay collection in Chinese, which is edited and translated by Sher-shiueh Li 李奭学. This article, as an exception, is translated by Ling Hon Lam 林凌瀚.

was severe: "*Xiyouji* for these several centuries has been ruined by countless Daoist, monks, and Confucians. …[34]

While Hu Shih opposes the treatment of the *Journey* as religious manuals, Yu, on the other hand, has no doubt sympathized with the other side. "Not all modern students of this work," he summarizes his response to Hu's argument, "subscribe to such an astonishing view of its nature."[35] Although not explicitly contending (or perhaps cautiously refraining from concluding here in the introduction,) that the *Journey* has to be an allegory oriented toward religious cultivation and theological doctrines,[36] Yu shows great interest in tracing the Daoist, Buddhist, and Confucian terminologies and themes appearing in the narrative. What is far more interesting and important, as he clarifies his approach on several occasions, is "how religious idioms feed and facilitate fictive representation,"[37] —how "textual sources fund and fertilize the composition of the hundred-chapter narrative."[38]

Among the Daoist, Buddhist, and Confucian idioms and sources appearing in the *Journey*, Yu draws special attention to the Daoist alchemical sources. While his introduction underscores the Daoist sources almost on every page, his 1983 article, "Two Literary Examples of Religious Pilgrimage: The *Commedia* and *The Journey to the West,*" reads the *Journey* unequivocally as a Daoist allegory illuminating the

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[34] Yu, ''Introduction,'' 52; it can also be found in the 1977 edition of the *Journey*, 35. *The Journey to the West*, translated by Anthony C. Yu (Chicago: The U of Chicago P), 1977.
[35] Yu, ''Introduction,'' 53; it can also be found in the 1977 edition, 36.
[36] Yu's opposition to Hu is more explicit in his other articles. See for example in this passage from the 2008 article: "It should be pointed out at once that Hu's old study at the time of its publication was more than groundbreaking, and it contributed greatly to our modern understanding of other important topics such as the novel's textual history and possible authorship. But his critique of the interpretive agents allegedly ruining the novel also begets eventually its own irony, because one can argue today that a great deal of scholarship spanning Japan, the US., Europe, and finally again in East Asia in both China and diaspora communities, may be summarized as a serial refutation of Hu's – and Lu Xun's as well – observations. If there is problem in the novel's understanding, so the scholarly consensus seems to indicate, the 'adversaries' do not lie in the 'interpretations' but, in fact, in the novelistic text itself. The primary discourse of fiction, in other words, has already been unalterably infected with the languages of monks, Daoists, and Confucian academics, and it is a wonder that so astute a person as Hu Shi or Lu Xun failed to recognize them." See Anthony C. Yu, "The Formation of Fiction in *The Journey to the West*," *Asia Major*, 21 (2008): 34. For other examples, see the Chinese version in *Hong Loumeng, Xiyouji yu Qita* 红楼梦，西游记与其他：余国藩论学文选, 314; "Two Literary Examples of Religious Pilgrimage: The *Commedia* and *The Journey to the West,*" *History of Religions* 22 (1983): 225-6.
[37] Yu, ''Introduction,'' 74.
[38] Ibid., 53.

process of internal alchemy.[39] If the reader follows in the footsteps of Zhang Shushen and interprets the *Journey* as "a late Ming allegory on idealism with preponderant Neo-Confucian overtones," as Yu notes, s/he "is to miss a good deal of the other elements woven into the polysemous fabric of the work." The "other elements," that is, elements other than the Confucian elements, as Yu agilely shifts his reader's attention to the Daoist sources, are the "groups of images reflecting the cultivation of the body or the Tao (*hsiu-shen, hsiu-tao, hsiu-lien*)," which "bring into focus the specific art of physiological alchemy."[40] The underlying premise of Yu's approach, it seems, is that the employment of a specific set of religious language will lead to the making of a doctrine-oriented, theological allegory.

In addition to the *Journey*'s poetic sources from the Daoist treatises such as *The Crying Crane's Lingering Sound* 鸣鹤余音 and *Awakening to Reality* 悟真篇,[41] motifs such as "Mount Spirit dwells only inside your mind 灵山只在汝心头,"[42] "retrieving the lost mind 收放心,"[43] and "the horse of the Mind 意马"[44] are according to Yu also motifs that can be traced in the Quanzhen 全真 (complete reality) school of Daoism, which advocates the practice of internal alchemy. While the monkey, the pig, and the sand monk are all presented in the *Journey* as Daoist adepts thriving on the practice of internal alchemy,[45] their associations with the five agents, though it is "impossible to correlate them in a satisfying way," have "signified many things in the discourse of internal alchemy."[46]

In his attempt to prove that the *Journey* teaches the Daoist alchemical doctrines, the strongest example is probably the beginning of Chapter 44, in which

[39] See Yu, "Two Literary Examples of Religious Pilgrimage: The *Commedia* and *The Journey to the West,*" 227: "It may be asked at this point why the author of the 100-chapter narrative has chosen the processes of internal alchemy to form part of his allegory."
[40] Yu, "Two Literary Examples," 223.
[41] Yu, "Introduction," 43-51.
[42] Ibid., 68.
[43] Ibid., 73.
[44] Ibid., 74.
[45] Ibid., 79.
[46] Ibid., 82-3.

the travelers arrive at the "Cart Slow Kingdom."[47] Prior to meeting the kingdom's three Daoist national preceptors—the "Tiger-Strength Immortal 虎力大仙," the "Deer-Strength Immortal 鹿力大仙," and the "Goat-Strength Immortal 羊力大仙"—who have persecuted the Buddhist monks but will be defeated by the monkey in the end of this episode, the traveling group is drawn to a strange spectacle where hundreds of Buddhist monks, all in shabby clothes, are together pulling a cart of building materials up to a high mountain top. The *Journey* reads:

> The cart was loaded with bricks, tiles, timber, earth clods, and the like. The ridge was exceedingly tall, and leading up to it was a small spine-like path flanked by two perpendicular passes, with walls like two giant cliffs. How could the cart possibly be dragged up there? Though it was such a fine warm day that one would expect people to dress lightly, what the monks had on were virtually rags. They looked destitute indeed![48] 那车子装的都是砖瓦木植土坯之类；滩头上坡坂最高，又有一道夹脊小路，两座大关；关下之路都是直立壁陡之崖，那车儿怎么拽得上去？虽是天色和暖，那些人却也衣衫蓝缕，看此象十分窘迫。

"To the reader unfamiliar with alchemy, this prose passage may appear no more than a rather mild attempt at naturalistic description,"[49] Yu comments on this passage; but to readers steeped in the teachings of internal alchemy, the "cart-pulling 运车," the "spine ridge 夹脊," and the "perpendicular passes 大关" "may have directly come from writings on internal alchemy found in the Daoist canon."[50] In other words, as Yu seems to suggest, because the Daoist practitioners use the term "Cart-pulling" to describe the moving of the bodily fluid to important locations (anastomotic loci) such as the "Spine Ridge" and the "Perpendicular Passes," this episode on the "Cart Slow Kingdom" signifies one of the stages in the alchemical cultivation. "It is impossible to overlook the allegory when we consider both the

[47] This example has been used in several of his articles: see Yu, "Introduction," 88-91; "The Formation of Fiction in *The Journey to the West*,"37-40; and "Two Literary Examples," 225-6.
[48] Yu, Vol. 2, 269.
[49] Yu, "Two Literary Examples," 225.
[50] Yu, "Introduction," 89.

novelistic narrative and the technical Daoist terms and figures of speech so pervasively employed,"[51] Yu concludes. The "five pilgrims," as he elsewhere further suggests, can be "some aspects of the human self interacting and traveling within a physical body."[52]

Such a "bizarre image," to borrow Yu's term,[53] that is, the image of the five travelers as elements working in the body of a Daoist practitioner, is probably first mentioned in the pre-chapter commentary in the first chapter in the 1663 edition of the *Journey*. Responding to the "spine-like path flanked by the two passes" in this "Cart Slow Kingdom" episode of the *Journey*, the commentary in this edition reads:

> The "spine-like path flanked by the two passes" in the "Cart Slow Kingdom" means the "Spine-like Path flanked by the two Passes" in our bodies. Who doesn't know this meaning? But why is it set between the "Black River" and the "Heaven-Reaching River?" It is because the two Rivers are flanking the Path. With the "River" of the two rivers and the "Cart" of the Cart Slow Kingdom, we have the "River Cart." As the "River Cart" always moves in reverse without following the natural tide, how can it not reach the "Spine-like Path" and go through the two "Passes?" 车迟国之夹脊双关，即吾身之夹脊双关也。此义谁不知之？顾何以介于黑水、通天两河之中？盖双关之夹，两水夹之也。以两河之河，合之车迟国之车，夫是之谓河车。河车有逆转而无顺流，又安得不上夹脊，过双关乎？[54]

To be sure, this 1663 observation comes quite close to Yu's allegoresis, as they both read this passage as illustrating the alchemical process of moving the bodily fluid of the River Cart to locations such as the Spine-like Path and the two Passes of the human body. But while Yu's reading seems in line with this 1663 pre-chapter commentary, Chen Shibin's 1696 allegoresis—the first set of commentary that is dedicated to the Daoist alchemical reading in its entirety— offers an almost opposite interpretation of this episode. "These three chapters are written to criticize

[51] Ibid., 91.
[52] Yu, "Introduction," 93; "Two Literary Examples," 226.
[53] Ibid., 93.
[54] Pre-chapter commentary in Chapter 44.

the heretical schools 此三篇专为辟旁门外道而发," as Chen writes in the opening sentences in the post-chapter commentary in Chapter 44:

> The Cart Slow Kingdom's national boundary is between the Black River and the Heaven-Reaching River, which means the tardiness of the "River Cart." The noise that the pilgrims have heard and speculated on as "earth splitting apart, thunder cracking, men shouting, and horses neighing," is describing the abnormality that should be feared. While the monkey sees the crowd of monks pulling the cart and shouting in unison, what he sees is not the natural Dao where the Five Agents collaborate and the Four Images coordinate. The bricks, tiles, timber, and earth clods contained in the Cart are dregs and unclean things for the practitioners. As the Ridge, the Spine-like Path, and the Great Pass are all perpendicular cliffs, how can the Cart be pulled up? These all signify the illusions in cultivation without knowing the wonder of moving the River Cart. 车迟国界在黑河通天河之间，即河车迟滞之义。师徒闻声，猜以地裂山崩，雷声霹震，人喊马嘶，俱形容造作反常，可惊可骇之意。行者见攒簇许多和尚扯车，著力打号，见非攒簇五行，和合四象，氤氲自然之道也。车子装的都是砖瓦木植之类，见采取者，系滓渣重浊之物。历叙高坡，夹脊，小路，大关都是直立壁陡之崖，那车儿咋们拽得上去？皆指其用力之妄而不识转运河车之神妙也。

Unlike the interpretation of Yu and the 1663 edition, Chen sees abnormality and delusion, which run counter to the true alchemical process of moving the River Cart. In other words, while both Yu and the 1663 edition read this episode as illustrating a stage in alchemical cultivation, Chen Shibin sees it as showing the wrong practices, practices that fail to grasp the wonder of the internal alchemy. As the Confucian 1749 commentary edition, on the other hand, simply takes this episode as exemplifying a sentence from the *Analects,* "the human deficiency in interest in wit but not in the learning 好知不好学其蔽也荡,"[55], the 1620s edition, glossed by Ye Zhou, actually advises its reader not to misread this episode as a Daoist allegory:

[55] Post-chapter commentary in Chapter 44.

> The "Black Wind Cave," the "Yellow Robe Son," the "Blue Lion," the "Red Child," and the like in the past chapters are all the substitutive terms for the Five Agents of the Metal, Wood, Water, Fire, and Earth. The reason that the author makes them as monsters is because he wants the learners to get beyond the Five Agents. Here the three Daoist monks—the Tiger, the Deer, and the Goat—are also the hidden names of the "Tiger Cart," the "Deer Cart," and the "Goat Cart." The intention of the author is to ask people not to take the three "Carts" as the meaning in the narrative. *Journey to the West* readers, do you understand it or not? 前面黑风洞、黄袍郎、青狮子、红孩儿等项，都是金木水火土的别号。作者以之为魔，欲学者跳出五行也。此处虎力、鹿力、羊力三道士，亦是虎车、鹿车、羊车的隐名。作者之意，亦欲人不以三车为了义也。读《西游记》者，亦知之乎否也？[56]

To readers who are familiar with the Five Agents propagated in the Daoist internal alchemy, each Agent has a corresponding color: Water corresponds to the color Black, Earth to Yellow, Wood to Blue, and Fire to Red. The term *Red Child*,[57] according to Daoist theory, is the practitioner's innermost deity, the residue of the original Yang that could be cultivated into the Golden Elixir.[58] The three Daoist monks, Tiger, Deer, and Goat, which are also brought up by Yu,[59] recall the River Carts of the Tiger, Deer, and Goat from the alchemical terminology. Nevertheless, beyond the Daoist terms and in the text of the *Journey* narrative, as Ye Zhou points out in this quotation above, these names are all made by the author into something monstrous: the "Black Wind Cave" is the residence of the Black Bear, who steals Tripitaka's cassock; the "Yellow Robe Son" is the Rat who can summon wind that impairs the monkey's eyesight; the "Blue Lion," who transforms himself as a

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[56] Post-chapter commentary in Chapter 46.

[57] I am puzzled by Ye Zhou's comments after Chapter 40 on the "Red Child, which read:" "Since the ancient time, no one is not harmed by this child. Try to think: what kind of thing is the child? Those who know the answer will be allowed to read the *Journey to the West*. 自古及今，无一人不受此孩儿之害。人试思之，此孩儿毕竟是何物？理会得着，方许他读西游记也。"

[58] Fabrizio Pregadio, *The Way of the Golden Elixir: An Introduction to Taoist Alchemy* (Mountain View, CA: Golden Elixir P, 2014), 13-5.

[59] Yu, "Introduction," 89.

Quanzhen monk and later as the king, has drowned the real king in a well; the "Red Child," the 300-year-old child, nearly defeats the monkey with his ferocious fire and threatens to eat Tripitaka; and the Tiger, Deer, and Goat, who can summon rain for the emperor with their Daoist magic, have enslaved all the Buddhist monks and demolished all the Buddhist temples. While commentaries in both Yu and the 1663 edition, perhaps along with the ones in Chen's 1696 edition, ask the reader to follow the original meaning of the Daoist terms when reading this *Journey* episode, Ye Zhou here advises the reader to go beyond, to pay attention to the change in meaning, and not to mistake the original, Daoist denotation as the signification of the *Journey* narrative.

The *Journey*'s employment of the Daoist source, certainly some "massive appropriation from Chinese religious traditions,"[60] not only gives the Daoist terms a new layer of meaning but also turns the Daoist vocabulary on its head. In other words, as the original Daoist terms, while signifying various ingredients in the alchemical process, are made as demons and impediments in the pilgrimage, the author has actually inversed the meaning and implication of these Daoist sources. This appropriation of the Daoist terms resembles, to some extent, playing with or perhaps even making fun of the Daoist language. Following Ye Zhou's reading guide, the reader learns to go beyond the original meaning of the Five Agents. But is he simply suggesting going beyond the trap of language, a common motif in the Daoist teaching, or is he suggesting that the narrative urges the reader to go beyond the Daoist doctrine and practice? The latter reading, as it is critical of the Daoist practice, certainly lends support to Hu Shih's conclusion in his study of the *Journey*.

In an interesting way, the oppositional interpretations of Hu Shih and Anthony Yu of the 20th century find their parallel in the interactions between Ye Zhou and Huang Zhouxing of the 17th century. While Ye Zhou cautions the reader not to take the Daoist vocabulary at face value, Huang Zhouxing highlights the Daoist presence in the *Journey*. Trying to read the *Journey* as a celebration of the alchemical doctrines, the 1663 edition glossed by Huang serves also as a repudiation

[60] Yu, "Introduction" in the 1977 edition, 36.

of its immediate predecessor. "If it is not Huang and I who see through this (as a Daoist allegory) with our calm eyes," the pre-chapter commentary in Chapter 22 of this 1663 edition reads, "aren't we being deceived by people like Li Zhi and Ye Zhou completely 若非半非居士与余两人今日冷眼觑破，岂不被李卓吾、叶仲子辈瞒杀乎?" Nonetheless, it is after all the 1663 edition that has edited out passages in the *Journey* that would have posed challenge to its own interpretation. In this "Cart Slow Kingdom" episode, for example, in which the pig, following the monkey's advice, throws the statues of the three Daoist deities into a stinking privy, the "stinking privy" in this 1663 edition is omitted and replaced with the word "water pool" (Chapter 44).

"Finally," writes Yu toward the end of his introduction, "we are prepared to see how religion and literature converge in the making of the journey's fiction, all without a trace of didacticism or proselytism."[61] For Yu, the *Journey* is both a fiction and a religious allegory: the "fiction of religious allegory,"[62] to use the term he adopts in his description of the *Journey*. But will a religious allegory, whose primary purpose is to illustrate the process of the cultivating the Daoist Elixir, be "without a trace of didacticism or proselytism?" Are the literary and the religious, in their strict senses, compatible? In a similar vein, Dante's *Commedia* in Yu's understanding, when he discusses the shared features between these two journeys, is both an allegory of theologians and allegory of poets.[63] But will the two supposedly oppositional modes, that is, historical truth on the one hand and fiction-making on the other, be able to coexist?[64] Yu seems to have thrown his reader into a logical impasse.

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[61] Yu, "Introduction," 93. See also 74: "A Chan or Quanzhen-inspired novel like XYJ was not written necessarily as a work of religious proselytism [...]"
[62] Yu, "Introduction," 76.
[63] Yu, "Two Literary Examples," 215.
[64] I follow Singleton's distinctions between the "allegory of theologians" and the "allegory of poets." While the literal level of the "allegory of poets" is "devised, fashioned in order to conceal, and in concealing to convey, a truth" (Singleton 14), the literal level of the "allegory of theologians" is historical: following the model of Scripture, it "goes beyond metaphor and comes forth with the immediacy of reality itself" (Mazzotta 236). In Dante studies, whether the *Divine Comedy* is an "allegory of theologians" or an "allegory of poets" is at the heart of the debate. See Mazzotta 227-30; see also Ascoli 128. Dante first mentions poetic/theological allegory in *Convivio* (II, i) (written around 1303-06, in the period just preceding the *Commedia*), but I think he discusses the two modes in terms of reading rather than writing.

Andrew Plaks's article on the *Journey*, titled "*Hsi-yu chi*, Transcendence of Emptiness," serves as a chapter on the second novel which he covers in his 1987 monograph, *The Four Masterworks of the Ming Novel: Ssu ta ch'i-shu*. As with Yu's reading of the *Journey*, Plaks does not agree with Hu Shih's categorical rejection of the theological readings. The *Journey* is indeed a book of great humor according to Hu Shih, but it is at the same time a "serious" book that raises intellectual questions. In his response to Hu Shih, Plaks states:

> Hu Shih was not the first critic to dismiss the forced interpretations of the Ch'ing commentators and praise instead the sheer good fun of the book; but his has been the most influential argument. It finds its way into the writings of many twentieth century critics of Chinese fiction, and also dominates the reputation of the book in the West, thanks to Waley's brilliant *Monkey*. Although I personally feel that the serious side of the novel is far more interesting, given the intellectual context of Hu Shih's evaluation in the midst of the literary revolution in the early part of this century, his reading is fully understandable as a reflection of the spirit of the times. And, for that matter, nothing is wrong with it as far as it goes. *Hsi-yu chi* is after all a very funny book. But it is also quite a serious book, not dead serious perhaps, but it does raise serious intellectual issues. Having made this apology, I can move on to my own attempt to make something of the serious side of the text.[65]

The "serious side" of the *Journey*, as Plaks highlights in this passage, seems to be his way of coming to terms with Hu Shih's division between doctrinal allegory and novel. Emphasizing that the *Journey* is a novel dominated by the spirit of playfulness,

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See Charles Singleton, *Dante's Commedia: Elements of Structure* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1977), 14; and its Appendix, 84-94. The book was originally published in 1954 by Harvard UP with the title "Dante Studies I: Elements of Structure." See also Giuseppe Mazzotta's chapter, "Allegory: Poetics of the Desert" in *Dante, Poet of the Desert: History and Allegory in the Divine Comedy* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1979), pp. 227-37. Albert R. Ascoli, "Dante and Allegory" in *The Cambridge Companion to Allegory*, pp. 128-135.

Plaks also mentions this pair in his article on *Journey*, where he conflates the "allegory of theologians" with allegorical reading, and the "allegory of poets" with allegorical writing. See his footnote 118, Andrew Plaks, *The Four Masterworks of the Ming Novel: Ssu ta ch'i-shu* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1987), 224.

[65] Andrew Plaks, *The Four Masterworks of the Ming Novel*, 223-4.

wit, and humor, Hu Shih, as we have seen, dismisses the Daoist, Confucian, and Buddhist interpretations in full. For Plaks, on the other hand, the *Journey* straddles the two sides of Hu's division. As much as he still relies on this division, Plaks nonetheless rephrases these two categories as the "serious side" and the "humorous side."[66] The "serious side," the side that interests Plaks more, is the intellectual side, the side of the *Journey* as an "allegory in composition."[67] The "humorous side," the other side in this division, is the *Journey*'s undeniable sheer fun, its "amusing surface narrative,"[68] the humor that Hu Shih refers to, and its "ironic undercutting."[69] In Hu Shih's interpretation, the *Journey* is no doubt a novel of great amusement, which constantly invites laughter. But the humor and the laughter, as Hu also has brought up, are implicit in the "sharp ideology of playing with the world." The underlying assumption in Plaks's revised division here, is that the humorous side is never serious, but light-hearted, simple, and perhaps even superficial. But can we say that the laughing Democritus is no less "serious" than the weeping Heraclitus?

Nonetheless, although the humorous side of the *Journey* is effectively demoted in his response to Hu Shih, Plaks has never quite forgotten this side in his discussion of the *Journey*'s allegorical significance. This humorous side, as if a haunting shadow that looms large, has become the foremost problem that Plaks seeks to overcome with his allegoresis. "The chief problem with any simplistic

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[66] Ibid., 223.
[67] Ibid., 224.
[68] Ibid., 223, 224.
[69] Ibid., 223. The implications of Plaks's division between the "serious" side and the "humorous" side, for example, can be found in this passage in which he discusses the serious, allegorical dimension of the *Journey*: "To pursue the argument that there is more to the *Hsi-yu chi* than its amusing surface narrative, we must move from the notion of irony into the adjacent territory of allegory. Irony and allegory are, after all, sister tropes: they both describe ways in which texts can say one thing and mean another. But where the emphasis in irony is on the undermining of the authority of what is 'said,' in allegorical composition we get a more fully articulated projection of what is ultimately 'meant.'" See 224.
In her overview of the *Journey* that is included in *The Columbia History of Chinese Literature* (2001), Wai-yee Li still uses this framework of the "allegorical meaning" and the "comic surface" to discuss the book. "The question remains as to how allegorical meanings are connected to comic surface," she notes (636). If "allegorical reading" is inherently at odds with the narrative details, shall we begin to question the plausibility of this "allegorical reading?" Li seems in her conclusion to vouch for the importance of the "comic surface" of the *Journey*: "the comedy is too robust, and *Journey* unfolds gaily on the precarious balance between allegorical meanings and the comedy and energy of the esthetic surface" (637).

reading of the text," he notes, "is the fact that the ever-present sting of irony sooner or later undercuts even the didactic pronouncements that the author himself provides."[70] As he carefully goes over themes and instances of this "ironic undercutting," which ranges from the "consistent debunking of representatives of all three of the teachings,"[71] to the "author's considerable efforts to undermine the notion of a simple pattern of quest and attainment,"[72] and to the "weak underside of the heroes and their lack of steady spiritual progress,"[73] he shows the challenge posed by the narrative to the "simplistic reading of the text." To read the *Journey* simply as explaining the doctrines of the Daoist, the Confucian, or the Buddhist schools is to turn a blind eye to the narrative's "ever-present sting of irony," because the narrative clearly invites the reader to laugh at the absurdity of these three philosophical schools—to question the effectiveness of the westward pilgrimage. Before advancing his solution to the problem with his interpretation, Plaks cites the Daoist commentator-practitioner Chen Shibin's complaints about the difficulty in making sense of the text of the *Journey*—a motif which has since been revisited in the ensuing commentary editions:

> I have read this chapter over and over a number of times from start to finish, then closed the book and pondered deeply; but in the end I am unable to grasp its meaning. 此篇从头至尾，翻覆数过，掩卷沉思，而终莫得其解。[74]

Despite such a modest claim, Chen Shibin, as discussed in the last chapter, nonetheless offered a complete set of commentaries that is centered on the principles of the internal alchemy. In the next paragraph, following in the footsteps of his predecessor, Plaks introduces his thesis:

> But since I cannot claim to have reached the level of Ch'en Shih-pin's insight, I also need not give up without a struggle. As is undoubtedly clear by

[70] Plaks., 238.
[71] Ibid., 239-40.
[72] Ibid., 243.
[73] Ibid., 223; 253-4.
[74] Ibid., 240. This motif of talking about the difficulty in interpretation has since Chen been revisited by several *Journey* commentators: see Chen Shibin's edition in chapter 93; Zhang Shushen's in the "General Comments 总批;" Liu Yiming's in the "How to Read the Original Intent of the *Journey* 西游原旨读法;" and Zhang Hanzhang's 张含章 "Self-Preface 自序" in his 1839 edition.

> now, my own understanding of the allegorical meaning of the novel rests on locating the allegory within sixteenth-century Chinese thought, especially its central focus on what is commonly called the "philosophy of mind" (*hsin-hsueh*). I will for convenience refer below to this body of intellectual groundwork as primarily Neo-Confucian, …[75]

The difficulty that propels Plaks to invoke Chen Shibin before his present epiphany in reading the *Journey*—the difficulty that Plaks seems still to be "struggling" with—is the narrative's undermining of the three schools that Plaks had examined in the previous two pages. To make sense of the avaricious Buddhist deities, the cannibal Daoist monks, and the incompetent Confucian courts in the *Journey* narrative, Plaks proposes a new school of teaching, the renewed branch within the Confucian school that emphasizes the role of the human mind and has incorporated the Buddhist and the Daoist vocabularies into its own thinking. To read the *Journey* as an allegory about the "pilgrimage of mind," which takes place only within the mind, as Plaks further suggests, will explain away the bewildering lack of progress in the *Journey* and its anticlimactic ending—the "final undermining of the fulfillment of the mission."[76]

Similar to the 1749 Confucian commentary edition's interpretation of the monsters, Plaks sees them, who lurk in this westward journey for the arrival of Tripitaka, as "manifestations of the unenlightened state of the mind in its process of cultivation."[77] It is the pilgrims' carelessness and lack of vigilance, for example, that give rise to the serious setbacks such as the "Black Bear," the cassock stealer, and the "Great King Rhinoceros," who sucks away the monkey's golden-hooped cudgel;[78] it is Tripitaka's "unbridled fury" that brings out the "Red Child," who can be read as

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[75] Ibid., 240-1.
[76] Ibid., 243. As much as Plaks wants to make sense of the *Journey*'s allegorical meaning, he also seeks to overcome in his interpretation the ironies that are prevalent in the *Journey* narrative. See for example here, after reviewing the *Journey*'s problematic presentations of the progress and ending, Plaks writes, "the solution to this problem lies in reading the quest narrative not as a kind of literal 'Pilgrim's Progress,' as has been suggested by certain recent critics, but rather as an internal pilgrimage of the mind" (243).
[77] Ibid., 245.
[78] Ibid., 245.

the personification of "Fury."[79] For Plaks, demons are the external reflections of the various deficiencies inherent in the mind; the battle between the monkey and the demons resembles the battle within the self, the mind, and the self-consciousness—"essentially a *psychomachia* of the process of the cultivation of the mind as construed by sixteenth-century thinkers."[80] While Anthony Yu sees the five travelers as elements working in the body of a Daoist practitioner, Plaks also takes these travelers as belonging to one entity, an entity that nonetheless will generate and overcome its own "aspects of the unenlightened consciousness."[81] From this perspective of reading, Plaks writes, "all the obstacles outlined above—the tendency to disunity, various forms of the disorienting push of desire, the blockages of vision, and especially the problem of self-replication—can be taken as aspects of the loss and recovery of the integrality of the self."[82] The *Journey to the West*, in other words, is a story and allegory about the growing of the self—the coming to terms with the mind within the self.

Similar to how the previous Confucian readers reacted to the initial chapters of the monkey's challenge to heaven, Plaks also does not appreciate the monkey's audacious rebellion. As the 1663 edition associates the monkey's misbehavior with the Mencian warning of the "loss of the mind," and as Zhang Shushen's 1749 commentary sees the monkey as a "petty man, when dwelling alone, does nothing good and goes everywhere,"[83] Plaks reads these initial chapters as a "hubristic challenge to the authority of heaven."[84] In Plaks's eyes, the monkey, discontent and with an "overblown" mind, fails to understand his own limit, which foreshadows the many other "allegorical perils" that he and his fellow travelers are to encounter. To use the term that Plaks borrows from the Neo-Confucian canon, it is the "beclouding focus on individual desires (ssu 私)"[85] that the monkey has fallen victim to.

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[79] Ibid., 260.
[80] Ibid., 258.
[81] Ibid., 251.
[82] Ibid., 267.
[83] It is a sentence from the *Great Learning*: "小人闲居为不善，无所不至."
[84] Plaks, 271.
[85] Ibid., 272.

Giving special attention to the characters' flaws and mistakes, Plaks's reading of the *Journey* is more or less on the same exegetical trajectory as the Confucian approach to the book. "Chang's stubborn insistence on reading the entire novel as a sort of gloss on the basic teachings of the Four Books must strike most modern readers as idiosyncratic,"[86] Plaks comments on his predecessor, Zhang Shushen, whose allegoresis, similar to Plaks's, is exclusively dedicated to the Confucian learning. Yet while they may disagree on the meaning of specific episodes, such as the episode of the "Great King Rhinoceros," where Zhang Shushen reads the monster of the Rhinoceros as the embodiment of Tripitaka's failure in observing the Confucian virtue of "Filiality,"[87] Plaks nonetheless finds Zhang's interpretive instincts not to "as far out of line as it first appears when he goes on to insist on the reflection of other Confucian virtues in the novel."[88] A "less dogmatic application of Zhang's interpretive instincts,"[89] perhaps, Plaks's interpretation focuses on the concept of the "mind" in the *Journey* narrative, as the "mind" underpins the 16th century intellectual sphere where the *Journey* was produced. But will the *Journey*'s seemingly eclectic philosophies on the mind, extending from the one that proposes an annihilation of the mind,[90] to the one that champions the mind's absolute power in differentiating between good and evil,[91] be compatible with the arduous process in the cultivation of the mind that Plaks has highlighted in his exegesis? While emphasizing the importance of the mind, the *mind* that Wang Yangming's "philosophy of the Mind" refers to, perhaps less resembles a mind that needs to be improved, than a "benevolent mind," the human conscience that is inherently good. It is the other branch in Neo-Confucianism, the teaching of Zhu Xi's "philosophy of

[86] Ibid., 238.
[87] See my discussion of the commentaries of this episode in Chapter II.
[88] See Plaks's comment on Zhang later on page 265: "Chang Shu-shen may be exaggerating a bit when he puts the concept of *hsiao* (孝) at the core of his interpretation, but his argument may not be as far out of line as it first appears when he goes on to insist on the reflection of other Confucian virtues in the novel."
[89] Plaks, 239.
[90] See Chapter 13: "With the emergence of consciousness, all types of demons come forth; with the extinction of consciousness, all the demons are extinguished. 心生，种种魔生；心灭，种种魔灭." See also Plaks's discussion on this sentence, 245.
[91] See Chapter 17: "The bodhisattvas and the demons are all manifestations of a single thought. 菩萨妖精总是一念." See also Plaks, 245.

the Principle" which Zhang Shushen follows in his 1749 allegoresis, that demands the rectification of the mind, since the mind, taken as often clouded by desire and moral deficiency, needs to be enlightened by the truth of the "Principle 理." Here, we might have to wonder, which of the *minds*—which of the Neo-Confucian schools is Plaks's allegoresis in the end adhering to?

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On the one hand, the accumulation of the Daoist and Confucian interpretations of the *Journey* over the last 400 years, premodern and modern, in Chinese and in English, has confirmed and consolidated this orientation in reading the *Journey*. Flanked in between, Hu Shih's categorical dismissal of such a hermeneutic agenda opens the door to an almost new, and certainly less explored, interpretive territory on the other hand. In a world where how much is written counts for more than what is written, a doctrine-oriented allegorization of the *Journey* would have easily gotten the upper hand in this exegetical rivalry. Hu Shih's "critique of the interpretive agents allegedly ruining the novel," as Yu records the success of the theological reading of the *Journey*, "also begets eventually its own irony, because one can argue today that a great deal of scholarship spanning Japan, the U.S., Europe, and finally again in East Asia in both China and diaspora communities may be summarized as a serial refutation of Hu's—and Lu Xun's as well—observations."[92] Whether or not Hu's criticism "ends up in its own irony," the proliferation of the doctrine-oriented allegoresis of the *Journey*, with the layered commentary tradition and today's renewed scholarly investment, is undeniably a cultural phenomenon that deserves attention. So why would the *Journey to the West* be susceptible to be read as an allegory about how to become a Daoist immortal or a Confucian sage? What are the special features inherent in the *Journey* that stimulate scholarly effort to allegorize? The refutation of Hu Shih's interpretation advanced by

[92] Yu, "The Formation of Fiction in *The Journey to the West*," 34.

Yu and Plaks, whose arguments have been examined above, may allow us to theorize the shared rationale in reading the *Journey* as a theological allegory.

In the initial 1977 introduction to his English translation of the *Journey to the West*, before Yu sets out to discuss the Daoist themes and symbols in the narrative, he draws attention to the two possible results of his ensuing investment:

> I would also like to determine whether the vast complex of alchemical, yin-yang, wu-hsing, and Buddhist terminologies in this text bear some organic relation to the action and characters of the story, or whether they merely present a veneer of certain common figures of speech overlaid upon "ready-made fictional characters" and incidents, as Glen Dudbridge has described the Monkey of the Mind and Horse of the Will metaphor in the novel.[93]

Here, Yu indicates his concern over the yet-to-be-determined nature of the religious borrowings that appear in the *Journey* narrative. In his 2012 revised introduction, this concern is replaced by an assertive emphasis on the religious sources. "I want to discuss other textual examples of how religious idioms feed and facilitate fictive representation," as Yu instructs his reader in his way of reading the book, "a topic that, for me, is far more interesting and important."[94] Certainly not some insignificant "veneer" overlaid on the narrative, as Yu's statement of interest this time declares, the religious source will instead play an active role in "feeding and facilitating" the text of the *Journey*. Rather than fleshing out how the *Journey* has appropriated and taken advantage of the religious sources, Yu's description of his approach reveals his prioritization of the role of the religious borrowings, the implied, subsequent down-playing of fiction-making, and probably the inherent assumption that this "fictive representation," that is, the *Journey to the West,* "funded and fertilized" by the religious sources, constitutes a kind of religious writing. The primary rationale for Yu's Daoist reading of the *Journey*, it seems, lies in this "vast complex" of the religious borrowings appearing in the novel. Indeed, with the vocabularies, idioms, and poetic couplets borrowed from the Daoist canon—the

[93] Yu, 36, in the 1977 edition.
[94] Yu, 74, in the 2012 edition.

"massive appropriation from Chinese religious traditions apparent on almost every page of *The Journey to the West*,"[95] to borrow Yu's phrase again, it is plausible that the *Journey,* informed by the sources it has used, could serve in return as an allegory in explicating the ideas of these religious sources.

Nonetheless, Yu's initial concern over the nature of the religious borrowings, or to be precise, his concern over the relationship between the religious borrowings and the narrative, has never been entirely settled. Plaks, for example, likewise brings up this concern in his study. After enumerating the *Journey*'s indebtedness to the Buddhist, Daoist, and Confucian lexicon, he cautions the reader:

> Although the text is studded with allegorical labels of the type I have discussed above, the simple identification of textual figures with suggestive philosophical designations does not in itself constitute true allegory, especially since many of these tags appear in the prior sources. This is only the raw material of allegorical composition, which must be drawn into a fabric of dynamic interaction for the allegory to really function.[96]

As Yu asks whether the religious borrowings have borne "some organic relation" to the narrative, Plaks here provides a prescriptive guideline for the use of the religious sources: to make a true allegory, the sources must be drawn into the "fabric of dynamic interaction." To be sure, the borrowed religious dictions will not guarantee a true religious allegory, but while both Yu and Plaks ask whether the borrowings are fully integrated into the narrative, what they do not ask is whether these borrowings, being assimilated and appropriated by the narrative, might have undergone some substantial change, distortion, or even transformation in meaning. Here, the invocation of Derrida's "différance" seems like overkill,[97] but with the

[95] Yu, 36, in the 1977 edition.
[96] Plaks, 233-4.
[97] I am also thinking about René Wellek's comment on the relationship between works of art and their sources in his 1959 article, "The Crisis of Comparative Literature," where he says, for example: "Works of art, however, are not simply sums of sources and influences: they are wholes in which raw materials derived from elsewhere cease to be inert matter and are assimilated into a new structure" (164).

change of the context of each borrowed term and idiom, can their initial meanings be retained?[98]

In the end, Plaks does not certify whether the "religious borrowings" in the *Journey* have lived up to his expectations for the religious borrowings in "a true allegory that are really functioning." To prove that the *Journey* is a Confucian allegory of cultivating the mind—to prove that the Confucian terms have been "drawn into the fabric" of the *Journey* narrative, he seems to have nonetheless fallen back on the "sheer amount" of the Confucian borrowings in the narrative. It might be worthwhile here to cite Plaks's reasoning in full:

> The solution to this problem lies in reading the quest narrative not as a kind of literal "Pilgrim's Progress," as has been suggested by certain recent critics, but rather as an internal pilgrimage of the mind. This is already strongly suggested by the inclusion of so much *hsin-hsueh* terminology, and it is stated almost outright at a number of points in the text. […] A careful reading of the novel establishes that there is much more to it than a set of Taoist terms imposed on a Buddhist fable; that it is heavily charged with the language of syncretic *hsin-hsueh*, which substantially conditions the meaning of its allegorical figures. This philosophical language both redefines the problems raised in the allegorical journey and suggests possible solutions in terms of various conceptualizations of the cultivation of the mind.[99]

Not dissimilar to Yu's approach to the text of the *Journey*, Plaks prioritizes the borrowed terms and idioms: their vast amount, their immediate presence, and their pervasiveness. If it could be indeed determined that the borrowings, when they resurface in the text of the *Journey*, are Daoist or Confucian in nature, then to argue that the *Journey* is an allegory of the Daoist or Confucian teachings is all but expected. Yet while the "Confucian lexicon" makes the *Journey* a Confucian allegory and the "Daoist vocabulary" suggests a Daoist allegory, sources from the

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[98] For a discussion about the appropriation and adaptation of the Daoist poems in the *Journey* narrative, see Xu Shuofang,"On Quanzhen religious school and the Novel of the Journey 评全真教和小说西游记," in *Studies of Novel*.

[99] Plaks, 243-4; 258.

hagiography of Tripitaka, interestingly enough, have rarely led the *Journey* to be read as a Buddhist allegory on how to achieve the Buddhist enlightenment.[100]

In his brief introduction to Arthur Waley's 1943 English translation of the *Journey*, Hu Shih, while spending most of the time on the recently-discovered author Wu Cheng'en, notes in passing that what is in part responsible for the previous incorrect authorial attribution, the attribution to the Daoist monk Qiu Chuji, is the "seemingly allegorical character of the novel".[101] Less interested in the *Journey*'s previous allegoresis than the newly verified authorship, Hu does not go into detail about the "novel's seemingly allegorical character." Presumably, it is the deceptive "allegorical character" inherent in the *Journey* that has enticed and misled its old readers into believing that the *Journey* concerns religious cultivation, and hence, the authorship of a Daoist master must have been plausible. If the religious borrowings discussed above can be counted as one aspect of the *Journey*'s "seemingly allegorical character," the overarching motif of a journey, with its implied, customary themes in fighting the evil, in progress, and in the ultimate success in reaching the goal, likewise invites allegorical readings. Indeed, the basic plot of the scripture-fetching journey to the West, that is, the westward expedition to the Buddha's temple where the sacred scriptures are held, in no time incurs the association of an ascending path to transcendence. Despite his puzzlement at the curious presentation of the Buddha, the scriptures, and the pilgrims—those "ironic undercutting" in the narrative—Plaks, for example, still in the end regards this overarching motif as an important reason for his allegorical reading:

> If the author denies us an easy interpretation of his text in terms of the didactic values of Buddhism, Taoism, or Confucianism, what are we to make of the allegorical journey with its apparent message of attainment through perseverance, or transcendence of worldly temptation, in the

[100] Plaks also mentions this interesting phenomenon in his discussion of the traditional commentaries of the *Journey*: "significantly, however, not a single one of them accepts at face value the Mahayana pieties with which the journey begins and ends as exhausting the intended meaning of the work. Instead, they all seem to recognize that the overlay of Taoist terms and other symbols must radically modify the meaning of the Buddhist story." See Plaks, 236-7.

[101] "Introduction to the American Edition," in *Monkey*, 3. According to Hu, the *Journey* is the "first Chinese novel of which the authorship is authentically established."

> pursuit of a higher aim? What, then, is the purpose of all the excess baggage of philosophical terminology added here to the traditional narrative? The majority of twentieth-century critics would simply reply that these have no particular significance at all, that this is just literary embellishment, at most a kind of literati joke designed to mock the naïve reader. To my mind, however, the sheer amount of allegorical terms, as well as the manner in which they are integrated into the narrative structure, rule out such a blanket dismissal.[102]

With full awareness of the "ever-present sting of irony" in the *Journey*, Plaks's apology here for his Confucian interpretation has more or less summarized the several motivations behind the habit of reading the *Journey* as a doctrine-oriented allegory. Internal to the text of the *Journey*, the religious language—the "excess baggage of philosophical terminology," as well as the motif of a journey-quest, with "its apparent message of attainment through perseverance," are probably the two main aspects of the "seemingly allegorical character of the novel," to use Hu Shih's term again. External to the text of the *Journey*, Plaks's concern over the "significance" of the book— his uneasiness at the "lack of particular significance proposed by the 20th century critics," recalls the challenge which the *Journey*'s first 1592 preface tries to come to terms with. Neither philosophy, nor history nor poetry, the *Journey*, with its prevailing humor and use of the vernacular language, has never been explicit in its literary significance. As this anonymous, unidentifiable work may be lost due to its questionable nature, its 1592 preface writer Chen Yuanzhi appeals to the supposedly hidden, allegorical significance of the Daoist and Confucian teachings. The allegoresis of the *Journey*, in other words, is supposed to promote the book's value, clarify its literary status, and prevent it from being consigned to oblivion in the future. Yet if Chen Yuanzhi's concern over the lack of significance in the *Journey* comes from the outside pressure exerted by cultural hierarchy and prejudice, Plaks's demand for its allegorical significance seems to stem from his own understanding of Hu Shih's denial of the *Journey*'s religious

[102] Plaks, 240.

significance. To Hu Shih as well as to the "majority of twentieth-century critics," nonetheless, literary significance perhaps does not always coincide with the religious/philosophical significance of a work; humor, irony, and satire are not necessarily superficial and lacking in their own depth and seriousness.[103]

Since the publication of the 1921 edition of the *Journey to the West*, with the newly-added punctuation, all the previous commentaries removed, and Hu Shih's prefatory dismissal of the religious interpretation, the three-hundred-year tradition of reading the book as a Daoist/Confucian allegory has never been restored in the *Journey* criticism in mainland China. The revived interest in the *Journey*'s religious signification in American academia since the late 70s, on the other hand, cannot help but remind one of the postwar American academic investment in the theological approach to the early modern literature, especially in studies of Dante, Spenser, and Milton. A generation ago when C. T. Hsia, in his 1968 monograph *The Classic Chinese Novel*, introduced the *Journey* to American academics, he followed Hu Shih's observation and categorized the novel as "a work of comic fantasy"[104]— a major milestone in the history of fiction that he compared to *Don Quixote*,[105] *Everyman*,[106] *The Pilgrim's Progress*,[107] *Paradise Lost*,[108] the *Divine Comedy*,[109] and *The Faerie Queene*.[110] Using then current academic vocabulary and scholarly approach, Hsia also expressed his interest in the book's "archetypes."[111] The *Journey*'s overarching plot in quest, along with the motifs of battle between the good and the bad, duplication of the monsters, seduction of temptress, and the ultimate triumph, could

[103] I am thinking about Rorty's valorization of irony as opposed to metaphysics. See Richard Rorty, *Contingency*, *Irony*, *and Solidarity* (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge UP, 1989), 76.
[104] Hsia, C. T. 夏志清, "The Journey to the West," in *The Classic Chinese Novel* (New York: Columbia UP, 1968), 115.
[105] Ibid., 116.
[106] Ibid., 126.
[107] Ibid., 126.
[108] Ibid., 134.
[109] Ibid., 148.
[110] Ibid., 164.
[111] Ibid., 139-49. This approach to the *Journey* is further pursued by Karl Kao's 高辛勇 "An Archetypal Approach to *Hsi-yu chi*." *Tamkang Review* 5 (1974): 63-98. See also James Fu, who explores the themes that constitute the structure of a quest: James S. Fu, *Mythic and Comic Aspects of the Quest: Hsi Yu Chi as Seen Through Don Quixote and Huckleberry Finn* (Singapore: Singapore UP, 1977).

easily qualify the book for the "mode of romance," the literary mode that, according to Frye, stands at the "center of gravity for archetypal criticism."[112] Yet if Hsia finds his interest in the universal literary archetypes shared between the *Journey* and the Western romances,[113] Yu's comparison between the *Divine Comedy* and the *Journey to the West*, published a generation later in 1983, finds the two works parallel in their meaning of the "religious pilgrimage of approaching to God."[114] Citing the theological interpretations of the *Comedy* by Auerbach, Abrams, Singleton, and Charles Williams, Yu argues that the *Journey to the West*, similar to how Dante appropriates Augustine and Aquinas, and demonstrates Christian redemption in return, is indebted to the Daoist tradition and in return illustrates the Daoist redemption in pilgrimage. To introduce and articulate the unknown, such as the foreign text the *Journey to the West,* to the Western world, it seems inevitable that one should talk in comparison, draw on analogy, and bring out similarity. Behind Hsia and Yu's observations and arguments about the *Journey*, there is the unsaid task of introducing this foreign book to its American readers—to promote Chinese literature by appealing to the audience's changing appetite and curiosity. Although Plaks does not have a separate article on the comparative study of the *Journey*, he does bring up the *Faerie Queene*'s similar motifs in the enemy's sexual temptation

[112] Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1971), 116. The book was originally published by Princeton UP in 1957.

[113] Frye's "archetypal criticism," that is, his interest in the recurring images and motifs in literature that are not conditioned by time and place, is actually an attempt to overcome the "futile" allegorical readings that is determined by history, institution, and idiosyncratic preference. In the "Tentative Conclusion" in *Anatomy*, Frye writes: "One element in our cultural tradition which is usually regarded as fantastic nonsense is the allegorical explanations of myths which bulk so large in medieval and Renaissance criticism and continue sporadically to our own time. The allegorization of myth is hampered by the assumption that the explanation 'is' what the myth 'means.' A myth being a centripetal structure of meaning, it can be made to mean an indefinite number of things, and it is more fruitful to study what in fact myths have been made to mean. … Commentary which has no sense of the archetypal shape of literature as a whole, then, continues the tradition of allegorized myth, and inherits its characteristics of brilliance, ingenuity, and futility. The only cure for this situation is the supplementing of allegorical with archetypal criticism" (341-2). According to Frye, while the mode of romance-myth is at the center of gravity of "archetypal criticism," it is at the same time the "structural core of all fiction" (*Secular Scripture* 15).

[114] Anthony C. Yu, "Two Literary Examples of Religious Pilgrimage," 216; see also Yu's 2012 "introduction," 82.

and duplication, and calls for an extended examination.[115] Either self-consciously or not, these scholars were at their moments introducing the East to the West in their own best conceivable ways.

On the other hand, in American academia, the theological readings of Dante, Spenser, and Milton, though prevalent in the 50s and 60s, have since the 70s faced increasing opposition and resistance. The presence of this theological approach, to some extent, only becomes more visible in hindsight in the next generations' critiques and reflections. In his survey of the commentary tradition of the *Divine Comedy*, Hollander, for example, when describing this postwar phenomenon in American Dante studies, deplores Auerbach's (as well as Singleton's) success in directing scholarly attention to the theological borrowings, which in his eyes is "the single most negative force hindering the development of Dante Studies."[116] If Mazzotta still argues equivocally that "Dante writes in the mode of theological allegory and also recoils from it,"[117] Bloom, while highlighting Dante's bold invention of Beatrice as the key element in the Christian hierarchy of salvation, and his unprecedented rewriting of a Ulysses who refuses to settle down but chooses to journey on, becomes sarcastically severe in his rather amusing critique of Dante's theological readers:

> Almost inevitably, it is misread until it blends with the normative, and at last we are confronted by a success Dante could not have welcomed. The

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[115] Plaks, 247-9. See also Plaks's essay, "Allegory in *Hsi-yu chi* and *Hung-lou meng*" *in Chinese Narrative: Critical and Theoretical Essays*, ed. Andrew H. Plaks (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1977), 173. In her article, Levy discusses the shared motif of woman's kingdom in Book V of the *Faerie Queene* and the *Journey*, see Dore. J. Levy, "Female Reigns: *The Faerie Queene* and *The Journey to the West*." *Comparative Literature* 39 (1987): 218-236.

[116] To cite Hollander's recapitulation of this trend of theological interpretation in full: "A phenomenon that has been of great interest (and it is not only Americans who think so) in the postwar period is the emergence of American Dante studies. To be fair, the first movement came from Germany, or at least from the exiled German Jew, Erich Auerbach. It was he who successfully reshaped the argument about Dante's allegory. The misprision of that argument has been, in my opinion, the single most negative force hindering the development of Dante studies. What Auerbach proposed was that Dante's allegory should be thought of along the lines of theological allegory, namely as being figural rather than figurative, historical rather than metaphoric." See Robert Hollander, "Dante and His Commentators," in *The Cambridge Companion to Dante* (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge UP, 1993), 278.

[117] Mazzotta, Giuseppe. *Dante, Poet of the Desert: History and Allegory in the Divine Comedy*, 237.

> theological Dante of modern American scholarship is a blend of Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, and their companions. This is a doctrinal Dante, so abstrusely learned and so amazingly pious that he can be fully apprehended only by his American professors. […] My own Dante deviates increasingly from what has become the eminently orthodox Dante of modern American criticism and scholarship, as represented by T. S. Eliot, Francis Fergusson, Erich Auerbach, Charles Singleton, and John Freccero. […] If it is all in Augustine or in Thomas Aquinas, then let us read Augustine and Aquinas. But Dante wanted us to read Dante. He did not compose his poem to illuminate inherited truths. The *Comedy* purports to be the truth, and I would think that detheologizing Dante would be as irrelevant as theologizing him.[118]

In Bloom's reading, the *Comedy* is marked by Dante's pride in creating his own theological truth rather than his religious humility, his literary originality rather than his supposed theological borrowings. While the theological approach intends to explain away the strangeness of Beatrice's position by associating her with Mary, Bloom puts a spotlight on this oddity, taking it as the very proof of the triumph of literary imagination that refuses to be subordinated to the authority of Christian doctrine.

To go against the theological/ideological allegoresis, if Bloom's strategy lies in pinpointing the dominance of the author's creativity over his indebtedness to the inherited sources, Spenser readers such as Berger, Parker, and Goldberg focus specifically on the author's innovation of the overarching plot of the quest. Against the commonly-held understanding of the first Book of the *Faerie Queene*, where the journey of the dragon-slaying Red Cross Knight is taken to be the quest of Christian identity,[119] Berger, for example, in his close reading of its narrative details, (a

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[118] Harold Bloom, *The Western Canon: The Books and Schools of the Ages* (New York: Riverhead Books, 1994), 80-3.

[119] Frye, *Anatomy*, 194. See also Harry Berger, Jr., "Displacing Autophobia in *Faerie Queene I*: Ethics, Gender, and Oppositional Reading in the Spenserian Text," *English Literary Renaissance* 28 (1998): 178. My chapter's general thesis is inspired by and indebted to Berger's reading of the first book of the *Faerie Queene*. The subtitle of this chapter is directly borrowed from the title of the book: *Room for Maneuver: Reading (the) Oppositional (in) Narrative*. See Ross Chambers, who, inspired by Michel de Certeau's study of the oppositional behavior of everyday life, discusses the oppositional reading/narrative in the texts such

reading mode that he theorizes as texualization as opposed to countertextualization,[120]) underlines the hero's evasive self-correction of his susceptibility to seduction, despair, pride, and his complicity with the enemy.[121] Responding to Frye and Greenblatt, both of whom have read the book as championing the religious-political ideology propagated in Elizabethan England, Berger's resistance is determined:

> Northrop Frye argues that Spenser kidnapped erotic and chivalric formulas, and made them serve an apocalyptic discourse expressing the religious and social ideals of the Reformation state, while Stephen Greenblatt argues that the kidnapper placed those formulas in the service of the queen's colonialist discourse in order to guarantee that "reality as given by [Tudor] ideology" would remain unchallenged within the poem. These characterizations are not wrong: each describes a message the poem communicates. It is the message that is "wrong," that is, offered to the reader as a countertextual target of textual critique. Frye and Greenblatt don't sufficiently attend to textual effects that embed the kidnapped formulas in a climate of reflexive parody typical of romance.[122]

For Berger, in other words, it is not the *Faerie Queene* who kidnaps the chivalric formulas in the service of an ideological program, but it is Frye and Greenblatt, at the expense of the richness of the text—its "reflexive parody typical of romance"—that have "kidnapped" the *Faerie Queene* for their own interpretive agendas. Textual details such as the hero's persistent flaws, his lack of progress, and the repeated

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as La Fontaine's fables. This book also serves as the theoretical foundation of Berger's reading of the first book of the *Faerie Queene*, see his footnote 38 in "Archimago: Between Text and Countertext," *The English Renaissance* 43 (2003): 60.
In his study of Milton, Teskey also mentions the two incompatible features of Milton: one theoretical, the other poetic. Teskey argues that these two incompatible features have rendered Milton's writing "delirious." At the same time, Teskey also contends that the study of the poetic/creative side of Milton has been left on the margin. See Gordon Teskey, *Delirious Milton* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 2006), 7.

[120] Berger, "Archimago," 32.

[121] Berger, "Displacing," 170-7; "Archimago," 50-5.

[122] Berger, "Archimago," 29. Berger also discusses these two opposing readings with the framework of William Nelson's interpretation in "Displacing," see 178.

deferrals of the promised, ultimate success betray the narrative's deviation from the ideological agenda in which progress and fulfillment are expected.[123]

By accentuating the pilgrim Christian's repeated mistakes in being "caught up in the familiar crisis and paralysis,"[124] to employ another example, Fish suggests that this "antiprogressive nature" of *Pilgrim's Progress* reminds its reader of the illusion of progress, and subsequently the limits of human agency that can only imagine a salvation in terms of growth and progress. "In this way he (Bunyan) makes the subversion of the 'dynamics of the narrative' the subversion of the reader's understanding […]," [125] as Fish broods over the intention of the author. Not taking the quest story as an allegory of the pilgrimage to God, if both Bloom and Fish emphasize the narrative's innovation—its subversion of the traditional plotline, Berger argues explicitly that this subversion entails criticism of the traditional narrative of religious pilgrimage: "The way the poem establishes its credentials," he writes, "is to question, criticize, and parody—to try, in a word, to disestablish—the tradition of its predecessors in a particular respect."[126] In Hu Shih's rather anachronistic preface of the *Journey to the West*, while contending that the doctrinal interpretations are the "greatest enemy" that had ruined the book for over three-hundred years, he argues that the *Journey*'s literary value lies in its "ideology of playing with the world, which is fond of critiquing." If Bloom, Fish, and Berger, confine their interpretations to the framework of literary history, Hu Shih, moving in a slightly different direction, finds the journey's signification in social critique. To play with the world is to criticize the world in a playful, seemingly detached way. The "world" that Hu brings up will certainly include institutions and authorities that are reflected in both the celestial and the mundane courts, the unapologetic culture of hypocrisy that prevails in the human realm; however, will this "world" also include the "literary world" where writings on the subject of religious pilgrimage

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[123] See also Patricia A. Parker, *Inescapable Romance: Studies in the Poetics of a Mode* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1979), 76; Jonathan Goldberg, *Endless Worke: Spenser and the Structures of Discourse* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1981), 7.
[124] Stanley Eugene Fish, "Progress in "The Pilgrim's Progress," in *Self-Consuming Artifacts: The Experience of Seventeenth-Century Literature* (Berkeley: U California P, 1972), 233.
[125] Ibid., 237.
[126] Berger, "Archimago,"48.

have become a hackneyed storyline? Will this "world" include the "religious world" where the Daoist or Confucian teachings are believed to be the only path to Truth and Enlightenment? Will this "world" also include the theological mode of reading romance?

Despite the divergence in their specific interpretations, the opposition to the doctrinal reading of the early modern quest narrative, both in Chinese and in English criticism, has formed an alternative paradigm in reading the quest-romance. Prioritizing narrative details rather than intellectual principles, rhetoric rather than logos, innovation and making rather than the inherited sources, this mode of reading sees in the narrative stasis rather than progress, flaws rather than enlightenment, setbacks rather than success, and problems rather than solutions. Instead of a doctrine-oriented allegory that tries to follow, promote, and consolidate the established teachings, romance now challenges, creates, and criticizes. It entails parody rather than propaganda, originality rather than traditionalism, pride rather than humility. Under this mode of "suspicious reading,"[127] the narrative, no longer an orderly, wish-fulfilling dream,[128] is idiosyncratic, disturbing, unusual, and open-ended.

On the one hand, there is the deep-seated tradition of interpreting the quest-romance as a truth-seeking, authoritative, religious writing that teaches the secret path to transcendence; on the other hand, there is the surging opposition that is informed by close reading and the hermeneutics of suspicion. In his revision of Frye's definition of the genre of romance, Jameson suggests that its hero's dominant trait should be naiveté and inexperience, and his most characteristic posture is bewilderment, not the superhuman power that recalls that of a mythic god.[129] If this characterization is indeed one feature in romance, such naiveté and bewilderment experienced by the hero must have stemmed in part from his difficulty in reading and seeing—in discerning between the good and bad, in distinguishing the true

[127] Berger, "Displacing," 181.
[128] Frye, *Anatomy*, 186.
[129] Fredric Jameson, "Magical Narratives: Romance as Genre," *New Literary History* 7 (1975): 138-9.

from the false. It is Tripitaka's "foolish, dull eyes of flesh 肉眼愚迷,"[130] Dante the traveler's failing eyesight in the darkness of the wood, Red Cross's confusion between Una and Duessa, and the pilgrim Christian's digression from Evangelist's instruction. Perhaps this problem experienced by the hero in reading echoes the problem and challenge that every reader of romance has to encounter. Standing at the crossroad of these two oppositional approaches to the story, the reader, in their journey of reading, needs to make a decision on their own.

[130] This motif is constantly brought up in the *Journey*, see Chapter 13, 16, 25, 40, 58, and 76, for example.

IV.

BURDEN OF THE EYE/I

Poetics and interpretation of the Journey to the West.

In his study of the literary mode of Romance, Northrop Frye has made it clear that the overarching plot of Romance is adventure, and the central form of Romance is the battle between the hero and his demonic opponent.[1] Taking this mode of writing as "the structural core of all fiction,"[2] Frye further divides Romance into two subcategories: the secular romance of the chivalric knight and the religious romance of the legend of the saint.[3] If the hero in Romance, as suggested toward the end of the last chapter, is characterized by his difficulty in discernment, which will give rise to crises in adventure and the subsequent solution in the magical, outside help, another feature of Romance, which can be learned from the above discussion of the reception of the *Divine Comedy*, the *Faerie Queene*, the *Pilgrim's Progress*, and the *Journey to the West*, is that Romance invites oppositional interpretations. As the theological reading of Romance, while relying on the textual evidence in the religious-philosophical borrowings and the plot of quest/conflict, has highlighted these two main features in Romance, the denial of such a theological reading has stressed Romance's textual ambiguities. In his discussion of the readings of the *Faerie Queene*, Harry Berger has also reflected on the poem's textual characters. With the observations made by John Webster, his insight into the poem's conflicted interpretations may well contribute to the study of Romance. The theological reading of the *Faerie Queene*, as they suggest, results in part from the oral tradition in story-telling that Spenser has exploited. Berger summarizes:

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[1] Frye, *Anatomy*, 186-7.
[2] Frye, *Secular*, 15.
[3] Frye, *Anatomy*, 34.

> Webster argues that Spenser's poem invites a conflicted mode of reading. On the one hand, the looseness of construction, the fluency of line, the lulling proliferation of merely formal epithets, the ritualistic use of narrative as well as rhetorical formulas, the redundancy and interlace of narrative patterns—all these work together to encourage readers to respond as if they were an audience that "expects and appreciates only what is possible under the conditions of oral performance," which means an audience that doesn't have "time to reflect, to go back and re-read"; an audience, as Lewis might say, of youngsters around a fire listening to an old codger decanting the wisdom of the elders." But, Webster continues, on the other hand, while the narrator of *The Faerie Queene* uses rhythmic and pictorial effects to induce readers to "assume the oral mode, the poem as a written work…makes just the opposite demand, asking us to read closely, to follow ambiguities, to appreciate verbal play."[4]

If Frye's concern is Romance's formal features in its plot, what Webster and Berger here have noted sheds light on the formal features of the style of Romance. The *Faerie Queene*'s uses of platitudes and familiar rhetorical devices, its ritualistic repetition in narration, and its poetic fluency that echoes music, while lulling its readers into an inattentive condition as if they were listening half-heartedly to a hackneyed old story, call to mind the stylistic features in the *Journey to the West*. As the "structure core of all fiction," Romance seems not only to anticipate the rise of novel but also to have witnessed the decline of the oral tradition. Understandably, Romance is a combination of the past and the future: harking back to the old devices of storytelling, terms and motifs from the religious-philosophical canon, it has also experimented with the more complicated narrative details, which will later grow into the genre of the novel—the longer, more developed prose fiction that is written in the vernacular tongue. While lulling its reader into passivity in listening and even accepting the "wisdom of the elders," Romance hence at the same time demands active reading. To reiterate Berger's thesis, it is the close and active reading of

[4] Berger, "Archimago," 28.

"following the ambiguities and appreciating the verbal play" that Romance demands from its reader simultaneously.

An active reader of Romance, as discussed in the previous chapter, Berger discovers in the *Faerie Queene* the hero Red Cross's susceptibility to sin and the deferral of marriage—a token for success that is promised at the beginning of the adventure; Fish exposes the *Pilgrim*'s repeated, cyclical paralysis and loss of direction, and Bloom underlines Dante's bold appropriation of the Christian sources. For the readers of the *Journey to the West*, on the Chinese side of Romance, the text obviously does not lack for its own "ambiguities and verbal play." Despite its customary Daoist/Confucian allegoresis, discussions of the book's curious presentation of the hero, the lack of progress in the journey, and its problematic ending, which occasionally resurface in Plaks's as well as Yu's interpretations, have never ceased. As the length of this 1592 prose fiction allows a fuller display of the ambiguities of the text, and as the text of the *Journey* seems to have taken advantage of the ritualistic repetition of these ambiguities, even a reader who has been lulled into the "listening mode" may find it hard not to be distracted, and perhaps be startled by them. As we have already spent a substantial amount of time on this "listening mode" of the *Journey*'s doctrinal reading in our last two chapters, it seems appropriate now in this chapter to return to the text of the *Journey*. Let us start with the most often discussed case, the presentation of our hero, Tripitaka—

The Tang Monk, Tripitaka

"Tripitaka is much too pedantic—abominable, abominable 唐三藏甚是腐气: 可厌可厌,"[5] the 1620s edition commentator Ye Zhou writes as he begins the post-chapter commentary in Chapter 56, where Tripitaka, sticking to the Buddhist rule of not killing, is about to send away the monster-thief killing monkey for the third time. As the 17th century commentator finds this scripture-fetching monk annoyingly dogmatic, major criticisms of the *Journey* in English, namely, those of Hsia, Yu, and

[5] Post-chapter commentary in Chapter 56.

Plaks, have all pondered this curious presentation of Tripitaka. "What must be apparent to every reader of *Hsi yu chi*," as Hsia notes in his overview of this classic Chinese novel, "is that the Tripitaka of the novel, who often appears as a deliberate caricature of a saintly monk, could not have borne any resemblance to his historical counterpart."[6] Contrary to the expectation of a saintly monk who is supposed to be courageous, wise, and diligent, the fictive Tripitaka, as Hsia, Yu, and Plaks have discussed in detail, appears peevish, pusillanimous, humorless, nervous, and bad-tempered throughout his journey to the West.[7] The fictive Tripitaka, who is supposed to be committed to an ascetic life, as Yu notes in his 1977 introduction to his English translation, is on the contrary attached to bodily comforts: the slightest foreboding danger terrifies him, the most groundless slander shatters his confidence in his most helpful follower—he does not seem to have gained any moral or spiritual improvement at the journey's end.[8] Comparing Tripitaka to the Western examples of saints and pilgrims, Hsia has made some interesting comments:

> Certainly he suggests nothing of the courage of his historic namesake, nor the fortitude of Christian saints willing to undergo temptation in order to reach the higher stages of illumination. He neither withstands nor yields to the cannibalistic and sexual assault of the demons and monsters; he is merely helpless. Whereas in such Western allegories as *Everyman* and *The Pilgrim's Progress* the hero goes through a carefully charted journey to enable him to accept death or enter heaven at the end, Tripitaka shows no sign of spiritual improvement during his journey through the calamities. If anything, he gets even more peevish and ill-tempered as his journey progresses.[9]

In Hsia's reading, the literary imagination of the Western pilgrims stands in contrast to the Chinese making of a Buddhist monk. Whether or not the Western pilgrims such as the one in the *Pilgrim's Progress* has indeed undergone "a carefully charted journey" that marks his spiritual growth, Hsia's recapitulation of Tripitaka, which is

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[6] Hsia, *The Classic Chinese Novel*, 125. A revised version of this chapter on the *Journey* appears in *Finding Wisdom in East Asian Classics*, Columbia UP, 2011.
[7] Hsia, 125-6; Yu, 44, in the 1977 edition's introduction; Plaks, *The Four Masterworks*, 223, 253-4.
[8] Yu, 44 in the 1977 edition.
[9] Hsia, 126.

in line with those made by Yu and Plaks, shows a "helpless" protagonist who fails to progress in his pilgrimage.

While the fictive Tripitaka is not known for "a carefully charted progression," his weak underside and his stubborn adherence to it, as I will argue, have been carefully constructed by the author. From the first ordeal of this westward journey where he runs into a den of tigers (Chapter 13)[10] to the last one where he is thrown into the river and has to endure an overnight storm (Chapter 99), Tripitaka has displayed his fear and lack of courage in every episode of the ordeal. Tall mountains disturb his mind and paralyze his body.[11] The sight of a monster scares his spirit away, only to leave his feeble hands and feet trembling.[12] Hearing the warning of impending danger, he shakes so violently that he can hardly sit on the saddle—he then falls head over heels from his horse.[13] Despite all these misfortunes, Tripitaka, in the most unfortunate and amusing way, does not even become a bit more composed. In the midst of the second half of his westward journey, hearing the word "disaster" makes him "so terrified that the spirits of Three Cadavers left him and smoke poured out of his seven apertures— He fell to the ground at once, his body covered with sweat. All he could do was roll his eyeballs he could not utter a word. 唬得三尸神散，七窍烟生，倒在尘埃，浑身是汗，眼不定睛，口不能言" (Chapter 78). Because of his fear, he is reluctant in the end of his pilgrimage to be ferried to the Other Side where the Scripture is held, only to be pushed off the shore by his disciples.[14] When either facing a tie between the monkey and the monster, or being abducted into a cave, he will have tears flowing from his eyes like rain drops, weep

[10] This scene is similar to the beginning in the *Divine Comedy*, where the strayed protagonist, before meeting his guide, encounters wild animals such as leopard, lion, and wolf. Saved by an immortal from the den of the tiger, Tripitaka is also questioned by his saver: "This is the Double-Fork Ridge, the den of tiger and wolf. Why did you fall to this place? 此是双叉岭，乃虎狼巢穴处。你为何堕此？" See Yu, Vol. 1, 297.

[11] See Chapter 43, 80, 85, and 93: "满身麻木，神似不安," for example.

[12] Chapter 14, 20, 32, and 93: "魂飞魄散, 手软脚软," for example.

[13] Chapter 14, 15, 20, 32, and 74: "翻跟头跌下白马; 滚鞍落马; 战兢兢坐不稳雕鞍."

[14] Chapter 98. This is brought up by Plaks, 253.

in a low voice, cry out loud, and wail while rolling on the ground.[15] He even occasionally kneels down and begs for life in front of his enemies, turning the monkey in as an exchange (Chapter 56, 92). As the fear of Tripitaka, in its various expressions enumerated above, reappears in every episode of the ordeal and serves as a recurring motif throughout the novel, the author is certainly committed to presenting a Buddhist monk that is helplessly attached to his senses. On several occasions,[16] the monkey, obviously designed as an antithesis to Tripitaka, has reminded his anxious teacher of the precepts in the *Heart Sutra,* the sutra that is imparted to Tripitaka at the beginning of the pilgrimage. "Revered master," the monkey advises:

> you have forgotten the verse, "No eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, or mind." Of all of us who have forsaken the world, our eyes should not see color, our ears should not hear sound, our nose should not smell, our tongue should not taste, our body should not feel cold and heat, and our mind should not harbor vain illusions. 老师父，你忘了"无眼耳鼻舌身意。"我等出家人，眼不视色，耳不听声，鼻不嗅香，舌不尝味，身不知寒暑，意不存妄想。[17]

As the student repeatedly instructs his teacher not to be disturbed by his senses but to harbor peace in his mind, Tripitaka, perhaps becoming impatient, retorts:

> Disciple, [...] you think I don't know this? According to these four lines, the lesson of all scriptures concerns only the cultivation of the mind. 徒弟，我岂不知？若依此四句，千经万典，也只是修心。[18]

Whether or not Tripitaka here, toward the end of his pilgrimage, is questioning the precept of the cultivation of the mind, his faith in its power, or to be precise, his faith in the power of the "absence of the mind," had once won him respect and acclamation. Right before the pilgrimage starts, when he stays overnight in a temple on the border between Tang China and the West, Tripitaka, hearing the monks'

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[15] See Chapter 13, 20, 22, 25, 29, 36, 47, 48, 54, 55, 59, 64, 65, 67, 72, 75; 76, 77, 78, 80, 82, 85, and 92: "泪如雨落; 悲啼; 双眼垂泪; 悲泣之声; 嘤嘤的啼哭; 放声大哭; 睡在地下打滚痛哭."

[16] That the monkey teaches his master not to be fearful is also a recurring motif: see Chapter 14, 19, 43, 80, 85, and 93.

[17] Chapter 43. I follow Hsia's translation here, see Hsia, 128.

[18] Chapter 85. Yu, Vol. 4, 145.

discussion about the danger of the scripture-fetching journey, responds in the most composed way: "when the mind is active, all kinds of demon come into existence; when the mind is extinguished, all kinds of demon will be extinguished 心生，种种魔生；心灭，种种魔灭."[19] The mind should be "extinguished" because it is susceptible to the influence of the outside disturbance, as both the Buddhist sutra and Tripitaka teach us here. But no more than a page later when Tripitaka sees a tiger, he falls off his horse, with his soul flying away—he is dying of terror and has since then never performed better. "Actions speak louder than words," as the old saying goes. With such a deliberate contrast between Tripitaka's actions and words, and with the "ritualistic repetition" in every episode of Tripitaka's embarrassing display of fear, the author of the *Journey* probably plans his way of portraying the monk very carefully.

In addition to this motif of Tripitaka's fear, another repeating feature of Tripitaka, which may also be traced to his attachment to the senses, is his deficiency in discernment. "Your disciple, Chen Xuanzang," as he humbly confesses when his pilgrimage is about to start, "is on his way to seek scriptures in the Western Heaven. But my fleshly eyes are dim and unperceptive and do not recognize the true form of the living Buddha. 弟子陈玄奘，前往西天取经，但肉眼愚迷，不识活佛真形."[20] Despite such an upfront awareness of his own limit in discernment, Tripitaka, who never follows the monkey's advice, always falls prey to the disguise of the monsters in his journey. At the sight of women, children, monks, and old men stranded along the road, his compassion arises.[21] As if the author wants to punish this muddle-headed master, who drives away the monkey in the famous "white-bone lady 白骨夫人" episode, Tripitaka is turned into a tiger in the next ordeal, only to wait for the rescue of his sent-away disciple in silence and humiliation (Chapter 30). Always tricked by appearance, he bows down to the demon in the guise of Buddha in the

[19] Chapter 13. I have made change to Yu's translation: Yu, Vol. 1, 294. This episode is also discussed by Yu in "Two Literary Examples," 223.
[20] Chapter 13. Yu, Vol. 1, 294.
[21] Chapter 27, 32, 40, and 80.

fifth ordeal from the end (Chapter 91), but does not get off his horse when he enters the true land of the Western Heaven (Chapter 98).

"I must take due note of the author's considerable efforts to undermine the notion of a simple pattern of quest and attainment," as Plaks comments on the plot of the *Journey* from the angle of the author's writing strategy.[22] With the rhetoric of repetition and contrast, the author, perhaps in the least ambiguous way, creates a Tripitaka that is always attached to his senses. Contrasting words said by this Tang monk with his follow-up actions, the author has not only presented his protagonist overtly inconsistent, but perhaps also self-servingly hypocritical. Asking where the monkey had been during his cast-off period, Tripitaka cautions the disciple not to lie. "Those who have forsaken the world should not lie 出家人不要说谎," he demands. Yet what immediately follows this, nevertheless, is the scene in which our supposedly honest teacher lies about the magic headband and tricks his student into wearing this headache-inflicting device (Chapter 14). A man who is absolutely committed to his senses and his earthly existence, Tripitaka turns in the monkey as an exchange for his life when confronting the bandits, flees away as soon as he gets a chance, and when notified that the monkey kills the bandits, he prays to their departing souls, with no gratitude to the monkey:

> If you should protest at the Hall of Darkness/ And dig up the past, /Remember that his name is Sun/ And my name is Chen. / A wrong has its wrongdoer, / And a debt its creditor. /Please don't accuse this scripture seeker! 你到森罗殿下兴词，倒树寻根，他姓孙，我姓陈，各居异姓。冤有头，债有主，切莫告我取经僧人。[23]

As the author makes Tripitaka so extravagantly attached to his earthly existence, the Tang monk, in all his absurdities, seems to have become the personification of Self-Interest and Self-Preservation. "Pedantic and abominable"—it is here at Tripitaka's prayers where the 1620s commentator Ye Zhou bursts into his criticism of the Tang monk. Perhaps the author has already in his writing made the monkey spell out his

[22] Plaks, 243.
[23] Chapter 56. Yu, Vol. 3, 83-4.

overall design for Tripitaka: "Master," the monkey speaks to Tripitaka, "you do not seem at all like a monk who has forsaken the world 师父……全不似个出家人" (Chapter 80).

Monkey, Awakening to Emptiness

Although Tripitaka is supposed to be the central figure in this scripture-fetching journey, since it is the historical Tripitaka who had single-handedly initiated and accomplished this feat of the Westward pilgrimage, the novel doubtless prioritizes the monkey, the imaginary disciple and guide of the Tang monk, as its main character. Not only has the author dedicated the book's initial seven chapters to the monkey's rebellious past, which happens five hundred years prior to the journey, he has also made the monkey the only figure in the pilgrimage who is capable of finding solutions to subdue the demon. Despite the handful of scenes where Tripitaka is teased and tried by the temptresses,[24] the monkey is always in the spotlight: grappling with the enemies, comforting his companions, and running around for help, he is in effect the sole motivator of the journey. As the novel follows the monkey from the demon's cave to the heavenly court, it also follows the monkey off the track of the pilgrimage when he is wronged and sent away by Tripitaka, leaving the other characters, which are apparently less interesting, stuck in their "pilgrim's progress" in silence (Chapter 28, 57).

A dedicated demon-subduer whom Tripitaka can count on in every ordeal in this westward journey, the monkey is nonetheless not without his peculiar characterization. Formerly a demon, this demon-subduer in every episode of the ordeal calls attention to his demonic past—a past that had been narrated in detail in the novel's first seven chapters. Either to intimidate his demonic opponents, or to warn his companions about the tricks played by the demons, the monkey introduces himself as the "famous ranking demon of all time 历代驰名第一妖" (Chapter 17), the "well-known thief 有名的贼偷" (Chapter 24), and in the most self-conscious fashion,

[24] Chapter 54, 55, 64, 72, 80, and 93.

he acknowledges in the very first ordeal that he is no different from the demon that he is to subdue.[25] "Master, how could you discern this," as the monkey warns Tripitaka by recalling his own demonic past:

> When I was a monster back at the Water-Curtain Cave, I would act like this if I wanted to eat human flesh. I would change myself into gold or silver, a lonely building, a harmless drunk, or a beautiful woman. Anyone feeble-minded enough to be attracted by me I would lure back to the cave. There I would enjoy him as I pleased, by steaming or boiling. If I couldn't finish him off in one meal, I would dry the leftovers in the sun to keep for the rainy days. Master, if I had returned a little later, you would have fallen into her trap and been harmed by her. 师父，你那里认得！老孙在水帘洞里做妖魔时，若想人肉吃，便是这等：或变金银，或变庄台，或变醉人，或变女色。有那等痴心的，爱上我，我就迷他到洞里，尽意随心，或蒸或煮受用；吃不了，还要晒干了防天阴哩！师父，我若来迟，你定入他套子，遭他毒手！[26]

In his demonic past, the monkey had stolen peaches and wine from heaven, life-extending elixirs from Laozi; he had challenged the rule of the Jade Emperor and wreaked havoc in heaven; he had abducted men and consumed human flesh. Yet as he proudly and perhaps nostalgically boasts about his former life, with no trace of shame or embarrassment, one may wonder whether this demon-subduer will in the next second relapse into his old, demonic self. One may wonder, in other words, whether his conversion is sincere. "The ancestral home of mine, the young monk, used to be the Water-Curtain Cave of the Flower-Fruit Mountain, located in the Aolai Country. My surname is Sun, and my name is Wukong. Some years ago, I was also a demon who performed great deeds 我小和尚祖居傲来国花果山水帘洞，姓孙名悟空。当年也曾做过妖精，干过大事,"[27] the monkey introduces himself— as he introduces himself in every episode of the ordeal. While the monkey's demonic past,

[25] See Chapter 17: "Old Monkey is also a beast, and become the Great Sage, Equal to Heaven. How do I differ from him? 老孙是兽类，见做了齐天大圣，与他何异？"
[26] Chapter 27, Yu, Vol. 2, 20. The monkey's cannibalistic history is brought up by himself again in Chapter 80.
[27] Chapter 74. Yu, Vol. 3, 351.

which is retold either in monologue in poem or in dialogue in the vernacular, constitutes a persisting theme in the story of this demon-dispelling journey, his companions' nostalgic retelling of their own demonic pasts, along with their recurring proposal to "break up the group 散伙" and to return to their former lives,[28] has reinforced this motif. The prospect that the monkey may relapse into his old, demonic self, as a matter of fact, temporarily comes true when he is sent away by Tripitaka in Chapter 28.

In the most strange and paradoxical way, the demon-dispeller, previously a demon, lingers on his demonic past throughout his demon-dispelling pilgrimage, and this pilgrimage, as a result, is constantly threatened to be called off by the monkey's impending relapse. It is, in fact, never entirely clear whether the monkey's conversion is sincere or coerced. He joins the pilgrimage in exchange for his extended confinement under the mountain, and without the headache-inflicting headband that he is tricked into wearing, he might have already killed his master, since he "intends to slam his Golden-Hooped rod down on Tripitaka 望唐僧就欲下手" (Chapter 14). The monkey's submission, it seems, stems in part from his instinct to avoid punishment that could be imposed upon him. Whether or not his submission to his Buddhist subduer is sincere, the monkey's contrived performance of submission in the heavenly court, which has been brought up by Hu Shih, reveals the psychological complexity of the convert. "I'm not submitting—I just do not have my weapon now 不是前倨后恭，老孙于今是没棒弄了" (Chapter 51), the monkey explains his supplication to the Jade Emperor, whom he had tried to overthrow. The monkey's submission, as the convert seems to suggest, is contingent, superficial, and dependent on physical power, not out of reverence or a real change of faith. This motif regarding the monkey's conversion, at the same time recalls other scenes of conversion appearing in the *Journey*. No longer a demon that needs to be subdued, the monkey, now a demon-subduer, has witnessed and participated in the coerced conversion of his opponents, namely, the Black Bear (Chapter 17), the Red Child (Chapter 42), the Bull Demon King (Chapter 61), and the Great Roc (Chapter 77).

[28] See Chapter 15, 25, 27, 30, 32, 40, 55, 56, 74, 75, 81, 82, and 96.

Tenacious rebels and courageous fighters, these demons submit only because they have been overpowered so completely that they can do nothing except submit. "Don't be frightened, Big Brother," says the pilgrims' most powerful enemy, the Great Roc, at the last moment of his upheaval:

> "We'll all go forward together and use our weapons to cut down that Tathagata and take over his Thunderclap Treasure Monastery." […] Stretching out his claws, the demon drew near and tried to clutch. Our Father Buddha pointed at him with his finger and immediately the demon felt such cramps throughout his huge wings that he could not fly away. All he could do was to hover over the Buddha's head in his true form. […] Since that great roc could neither flee nor escape, though he sorely wished to do so, he had no choice but to make submission. 大哥休得悚惧，我们一齐上前，使枪刀搠倒如来，夺他那雷音宝刹！…… 妖精轮利爪刁他一下，被佛爷把手往上一指，那妖翅膊上揪了筋。飞不去，只在佛顶上，不能远遁，现了本相。…… 那大鹏欲脱难脱，要走怎走？是以没奈何，只得皈依。[29]

In the *Journey*, demons submit only because they are overpowered by their opponent's sheer force, and their conversion is a product of violence. Yet as the Roc is cramped by the wings, as the Bull is cornered by fire, and as the Red Child, who happens to be the Bull's son, is frozen with the same ache-inflicting band as the monkey has around his neck and arms, and with his hands forced together form a bowing gesture, one may wonder whether the monkey, always reminiscing about his demonic past, will become sympathetic and turn back to help his supposed enemies. "For Bull King in fact was from Mind Monkey changed. / Now's the best time for us to meet the source 牛王本是心猿变，今番正好会源流,"[30] the author reminds the reader of the resemblance between the demon and the demon-subduer. By repeating the submission scenes, is the author underscoring the problematic implications of conversion, or is he reinforcing the contrast between the demon and the demon-subduer?

[29] Chapter 77, Yu, Vol. 4, 31.
[30] Chapter 61. Yu, Vol. 3, 154.

Now a demon-subduer aspiring to "attain the right fruit by humbling himself as a disciple 做小伏低得个正果" (Chapter 80), the monkey, still critical of the competence of the Jade Emperor,[31] does not seem entirely submissive to the Buddhist gods either. While attempting to keep the Bodhisattva Guanyin's golden bells that he takes from her golden-haired wolf, the monkey, thinking about all his work in this difficult demon-ridden journey, explicitly questions the motivation of Tathagata, the Buddhist Patriarch who initiates this scripture-fetching journey:

> This has to be all the fault of our Buddha Tathagata! Sitting idly in that region of ultimate bliss, he had nothing better to do than to dream up those three baskets of scriptures! If he truly cared about the proclamation of virtue, he should have sent the scripture to the Land of the East. Wouldn't his name then be an everlasting glory? But he wouldn't part with them so readily, and all he knew was to ask us to go seek them. 这都是我佛如来坐在那极乐之境，没得事干，弄了那三藏之经！若果有心劝善，理当送上东土，却不是个万古流传？只是舍不得送去，却教我等来取。[32]

According to Tathagata, it is because of the stupidity and evildoing of the Land of the East, whose people cannot discern the wisdom of the Buddhist scriptures, that he demands a scripture-fetcher to journey to his residence.[33] But will Tripitaka's pilgrimage to the West truly make the dwellers in the Land of the East discern better and begin to appreciate the Western wisdom? With the gradual exposure of the curious relationship between the Buddhist gods and the demons encountered in the journey, the monkey's complaints here on the side are not entirely nonsensical.

In contrast to the crying Tripitaka, the monkey is known for his laughter—his laughter in contempt, in contention, in pride, in jeopardy, and also in resignation. "I have neither a plan nor an alternative at the moment. I can't cry, and that's why I am laughing 我如今没计奈何，哭不得，所以只得笑也,"[34] as he once explains his

[31] In Chapter 51, the monkey also claims: "Those warriors in Heaven whose abilities are not as good as old Monkey's are plentiful, but those just as good are few. 天上不如老孙者多，胜似老孙者少." Yu, Vol. 3, 4.
[32] Chapter 77. Yu. Vol. 4, 27.
[33] See this premise in Chapter 8.
[34] Chapter 51. Yu, Vol. 3, 6.

laughter after he is outwitted by his opponent. Once a demon, the monkey now becomes the demon's enemy through forced conversions, who constantly recalls his demonic past in his demon-dispelling mission and occasionally challenges his divine superiors. There is always some good spirit of surviving in resignation in the monkey. "How will you know?" the monkey says, laughing, "I am being the monk for a day while striking the bell for a day 你那时晓得，我这是做一日和尚撞一日钟的" (Chapter 16). This expression has now become a set idiom that means to work perfunctorily.

Bodhisattvas

Bodhisattvas are known in the popular imagination for their grace and their promise to save man from misery. Pleading to Guanyin to release him from the mountain, the monkey calls the goddess by her full name, "the Mighty Savior, the Great Merciful Bodhisattva Guanyin from the Potalaka Mountain of the South Sea 南海普陀落伽山救苦救难大慈大悲南无观世音菩萨" (Chapter 8). Though ostensibly a merciful savior, and though she has indeed saved the monkey from his imprisonment and directed him to the scripture-fetching mission, the mission that is counted as works for his salvation, Guanyin is also portrayed here as the goddess who would inflict misery and generate ordeal. As the monkey already suspects that it is Guanyin who gives Tripitaka the headache-inflicting headband (Chapter 15), and as the Bodhisattvas, turning into temptresses, seem to have created an ordeal not unlike whose created by the other temptresses in the later episodes (Chapter 23), it is shortly revealed by Laozi that he has actually been requested by Guanyin to send out his own servants in order to form obstacles. Taking back his servants turned demons at the end of the Level-Top Mountain episode (Chapter 32-35), Laozi explains to the monkey Guanyin's request:

> It's really not my affair, so don't blame the wrong person. These youths were requested by the Bodhisattva from the sea three times; they were to be sent here and transformed into demons, to test all of you and see whether master

and disciples are sincere in going to the West. 不干我事，不可错怪了人。此乃海上菩萨问我借了三次，送他在此托化妖魔，看你师徒可有真心往西去也。[35]

If creating difficulty constitutes the Bodhisattvas' way to test the pilgrim's sincerity, the goddesses also inflict suffering on those who have offended her. Immediately in the next episode of the ordeal (Chapter 36-39), while the demon turns out to be the green-haired lion belonging to Wenshu Bodhisattva, it is also revealed that this demon is sent down to punish the king of the Black Rooster Kingdom, who had once imprisoned Wenshu in water for three days. "Tathagata sent this creature here to push him down the well and have him submerged for three years," as the goddess explains the reason for the king's ordeal, "in order to exact vengeance for my water adversity of three days 如来将此怪令到此处推他下井，浸他三年，以报吾三日水灾之恨."[36] Whether or not the king's three-year water adversity is a fair exchange for Wenshu's three-day adversity, this motif of bodhisattvas taking revenge on man reappears 30 chapters later in the Scarlet-Purple kingdom (Chapter 68-71). Because he kills the Peacock Bodhisattva's daughter by accident while hunting, the king is punished with a three-year ailment and his wife abducted by Guanyin's golden-haired wolf.

Given such a repeated portrayal of the vindictive side of the Buddhist gods, one may start to wonder whether the eighty-one ordeals endured by the pilgrims should likewise be understood as the eighty-one installments of punishment for the various offences that the pilgrims had committed before. You need to "pay back all the cursed barriers 还业障" (Chapter 15) and you are "obliged to suffer misery 应该受难" (Chapter 66), as the Buddhist gods remind the pilgrims repeatedly. But aren't the pilgrims' "cursed barriers" coming ultimately from the curse of the Buddhist gods? —Are the gods using the scripture-fetching journey as revenge for the pilgrims' irreverent behavior of the past? The famous last scene of Guanyin, where she insists on completing the eighty-first ordeal despite the unanimous praise for

[35] Chapter 35. Yu, Vol. 2, 145.
[36] Chapter 39. Yu, Vol. 2, 206.

the pilgrims' commitment, reveals not only the Bodhisattva's rigidity in implementing misery but perhaps also the motivations other than "testing the pilgrims' sincerity."

"Within our gate of Buddhism," as Guanyin reasons her insistence on adding one more ordeal, "nine times nine is the crucial means by which one returns to perfection. The sage monk has undergone eighty ordeals. Because one ordeal is still lacking, the sacred number is not yet complete 佛门中九九归真，圣僧受过八十难，还少一难，不得完成此数."[37] According to Guanyin, only eighty-one ordeals will make the Buddhist salvation possible, and experiencing misery, as is fully revealed now, is the only path to salvation. If we could set aside our puzzlement over the arbitrariness of the primacy of a total number, the goddess' equation of ordeal with salvation seems nevertheless paradoxical. In Guanyin's philosophy, as she has explained to the monkey in the Scarlet-Purple kingdom episode, the calamity brought by her is to dispel the king's suffering. — "The Bodhisattva is twisting the truth!" —The monkey, hearing this, immediately points out Guanyin's self-contradiction:

> The fiend has mocked the ruler and cheated him of his queen here; he has corrupted the customs and violated the mores. He has, in fact brought calamity to the ruler. How could you say that he has helped the king to dispel calamity? 菩萨反说了，他在这里欺君骗后，败俗伤风，与那国王生灾，却说是消灾，何也？[38]

In response, Guanyin brings up the king's offense against the gods, the ordained penalty, and the fulfillment of the penalty. "His preordained chastisement has been fulfilled 冤愆满足," the goddess concludes toward the end of her answer. But since this preordained punishment has been fulfilled rather than alleviated or cancelled, why does she insist that the punishment has been dispelled? Hearing Guanyin's response, the monkey does not pursue his challenge any longer, just as he remains

[37] Chapter 99. Yu, Vol. 4, 361.
[38] Chapter 71, Yu, Vol. 3, 312.

silent at the calamity brought by Guanyin's missing goldfish—one of the few demons that has actually caused casualties of innocent people (Chapter 49).

"Recognizing that bringing calamity is dispelling calamity, one will find a world of ultimate bliss in the ocean of bitter misery 识得生灾乃是消灾，苦海中俱极乐世界也,"[39] the 1620s edition comments after the Scarlet-Purple kingdom episode. It is hard to decide whether the commentator is being sincere or ironic; but the portrayal of the Bodhisattvas, who dispel calamity by bringing calamity, has obviously diverged from the reader's usual expectation. Vindictive rather than merciful, the goddesses get angry at times (Chapter 42),[40] seem negligent occasionally,[41] and take harming as helping. In a malicious reading of this portrayal, the Bodhisattvas are the titular "saviors" who in reality inflict suffering out of personal vendetta. The monkey, the only one who has been explicitly questioning the authority, seems indeed to have nudged the reader into such an understanding of Bodhisattvas. The monkey protests:

> What a rogue is this Bodhisattva! At the time when she delivered old Monkey and told me to accompany the Tang Monk to procure scriptures in the West, I said that the journey would be a difficult one. She even promised that she herself would come to rescue us when we encounter grave difficulties, but instead, she sent monster-spirits here to harass and harm us. The way she double-talks, she deserves to be a spinster for the rest of her life! 这菩萨也老大惫懒！当时解脱老孙，教保唐僧西去取经，我说路途艰涩难行，他曾许我到急难处亲来相救；如今反使精邪捎害，语言不的，该他一世无夫！[42]

[39] Post-chapter commentary in Chapter 71.
[40] Guanyin gets angry at the Red Child's duplication of her image. In the 1620s commentary edition, the commentator writes: "This Bodhisattva also gets angry. One who gets angry will not be a Bodhisattva. 菩萨也大怒，大怒便不是菩萨。"
[41] Both the golden-haired wolf and the goldfish, animals belonging to Guanyin, come down to harm the human world due to Guanyin's negligence.
[42] Chapter 35. Yu, Vol. 2, 145-6.

"You, so-called Teacher of Seven Buddhas and the Founder of the Faith of Mercy! Why do you find all kinds of ways to harm me? 你这个七佛之师，慈悲的教主！你怎么生方法儿害我！"[43]

Tathagata, the Buddhist Patriarch

If the first half of the eighty-one ordeals have already portrayed a Bodhisattva who not only helps but also harms either deliberately or due to personal negligence, it is quite obvious that the author gives more exposure to Tathagata in the latter half of the book, with the culmination at the journey's conclusion where this Buddhist Patriarch 佛祖 discusses the monetary value of their Buddhist service (Chapter 98). After the midpoint of the journey when the demon, the "Great King of the Numinous Power 灵感大王," who requires the nearby villagers to offer him a girl and a boy every year, is revealed to be Guanyin's missing goldfish (Chapter 49), the monkey starts to frequent Tathagata's residence for help. Unable to subdue the "Great King Rhinoceros" with the help of the Jade Emperor's troops, the monkey turns to Tathagata for the first time (Chapter 50-52); when not a single god is able to differentiate between the monkey and his demonic double, the two monkeys, still fighting, fly to Tathagata's Western Heaven for judgment (Chapter 56-58); and when the monkey falls short of the power of the Great Roc, he turns to Tathagata for the third time (Chapter 74-77). Whether or not it is because the demons have become too powerful for the Bodhisattvas to handle, Tathagata's reappearances in these later episodes reaffirm his supreme power as the Buddhist Patriarch. His curious discussion about the monetary value of the Buddhist service in the end, on the other hand, is not entirely surprising since this topic of his material sufficiency has been mentioned multiple times before. In his first visit to Tathagata's residence, the monkey already accuses this patriarch of "taking bribes and playing tricks 卖放，卖法." "What sort of a place is this," the monkey shouts as

[43] Chapter 15. Yu, Vol. 2, 326.

he discovers that two arhats are missing from the eighteen arhats sent by Tathagata— "it is but taking bribes and cheating. 这是那个去处，却卖放人!"[44] In the eyes of the Great Roc, Tathagata's Western Heaven is a place of "extreme poverty and extreme hardship 极贫极苦." "In the four great continents of my domain," as Tathagata afterwards promises the Roc, "there are countless worshippers. I shall ask those who wish to do good to sacrifice first to your mouth. 我管四大部洲，无数众生瞻仰，凡做好事，我教他先祭汝口."[45] Learning that they have been given with nothing but blank paper toward the very end of their journey, the monkey again accuses the Buddha of the "guilt of solicitation for a bribe and cheating 捎财作弊之罪."[46] The reason that they were given the useless "scripture without words 无字经," as the monkey rationalizes, which has been twice repeated by Tripitaka in his retelling of the scripture-fetching pilgrimage in Chapter 99, is that they had not offered any gift. "Stop shouting!" —The Buddhist Patriarch speaks to the pilgrims with a chuckle:

> I knew already that the two of them would ask you for present. After all, the scriptures are not to be given lightly, nor are they to be received gratis. Some time ago, in fact, a few of our sage priests went down the mountain and recited these scriptures in the house of one Elder Zhao in the Kingdom of Sravasti, so that the living in his family would all be protected from harm and the deceased redeemed from perdition. For all that service they managed to charge him only three pecks and three pints of rice. I told them that they had made far too cheap a sale and that the posterity would have no money to spend. 佛祖笑道："你且休嚷，他两个问你要人事之情，我已知矣。但只是经不可轻传，亦不可以空取。向时众比丘圣僧下山，曾将此经在舍卫国赵长者家与他诵了一遍，保他家生者安全，亡者超脱，只讨得他三斗三升米粒黄金回来，我还说他们忒卖贱了，教后代儿孙没钱使用。"[47]

[44] Chapter 52. Yu translates "卖放" as "taking bribes and releasing prisoners," which is the literal meaning of this expression: Yu, Vol. 3, 26.
[45] Chapter 77, Yu, Vol. 4, 31.
[46] Chapter 98, Yu, Vol. 4, 353.
[47] Chapter 98, Yu, Vol. 4, 354.

Whether the "scripture without words" is indeed the true Scripture as is justified by Tathagata, or simply "blank paper" used to solicit gifts as is understood by the monkey, Tathagata is explicit about the desired, material offering in return for their Buddhist service. When the pilgrims are to receive the scripture for the second time, the "scripture with words" this time, the two servants of Tathagata ask again for the gift. With no further ado, Tripitaka offers his almsbowl, which is the gift from the Tang emperor. It remains a mystery that the monkey, who not long ago had promised to present to the Buddhist Patriarch a horn of the rhinoceros which he subdues, does not offer the horn here. "Why doesn't he present it afterwards? Does he lose the horn in the episode at the Bronze Estrade Prefecture? 后来何不见献出？其铜台府失去耶?" the 1663 edition asks in its double-column interlineal gloss toward the end of chapter 92. Known for saving private money in the journey, the pig, who was once tricked to hand into his collection of silver to the monkey (Chapter 76), is also quiet about their secret savings. As the monkey accuses the Buddha of cheating and asking for the bribe, the pig, the sand monk, and Tripitaka seem to have all agreed with this accusation and shown disappointment at Tathagata's "land of ultimate bliss." "O Disciples! We are bullied by vicious demons even in this land of ultimate bliss 徒弟呀！这个极乐世界，也还有凶魔欺害哩," Tripitaka exclaims.[48] "I thought that only profane people would practice this sort of fraud, […] Now I know that even the Vajra Guardians before the face of Buddha can practice fraud 只说凡人会作弊，原来这佛面前的金刚也会作弊," the pig follows suit.[49]

It is ultimately up to the reader to decide whether or not to follow the monkey's evaluation of the Buddhist realm and the Buddhist gods, but the Buddhist Patriarch does in his speech above use terms such as the "gift 人事," "selling 卖," and "money 钱." The "gift" that Tathagata requires, whose literal meaning is "human 人" "matter 事," seems to be an important material source for the sustainability of Buddhahood. But is the Buddhist Patriarch, to use his own words, "selling" his

[48] Chapter 98, Yu, Vol. 4, 353.
[49] Chapter 99. Yu, Vol. 4, 362.

service and scripture? It is after all quite strange that a non-human immortal demands money used in the human world. Commenting on this scene when Tathagata asks for the gift (Chapter 98), the 1620s edition and the 1663 edition seem to have suggested opposite interpretations. “Money is also indispensable in such a place. 此处也少不得钱,” the 1620s edition notes in the top margin of the page where Tathagata’s servants are demanding the gift for the first time. In the double-column interlineal gloss in the 1663 edition, however, the commentator denies such a literal reading of Tathagata. “Popular joke says, ‘when the monks need money, they will sell their scripture’ 俗谑云和尚要钱经也卖,” the gloss notes after the above-cited speech of Tathagata, “but is the Buddhist Patriarch truly selling the scripture for money? This is but words to illustrate how treasurable the scripture is. 其佛祖真经卖钱耶？不过设词以示珍重耳.” Unlike the 1620s edition, the 1663 commentary edition, in other words, refuses to accept that the *Journey*’s portrayal of Tathagata shares any similar implications with the popular joke. In the most malicious connotation of this popular joke, a monk who sells his scripture is a monk who not only is impious but also earns money from a profession that is supposed to be unworldly. While the 1663 edition seems reluctant to pick up on such an implication, one may still wonder why the author of the *Journey* chooses such a way to illustrate the scripture’s value. Aren’t the eighty-one ordeals and the one hundred and eight thousand miles enough to prove how much the pilgrims have cherished the scripture? The 1620s edition, on the other hand, seems quite keen on tracing this motif of the Buddha showing his interest in money. Seeing that Maitreya, the future Buddhist Patriarch, still remembers to retrieve the gold from his smashed gold cymbals in Chapter 66, the commentator remarks in the pre-chapter commentary:

> The laughing monk is only asking for gold, otherwise, he might become a crying monk. He will laugh if there is gold, and he will cry if there is no gold. Even the monk behaves like this, not to say human beings in the world! 笑和尚只是要金子，不然便做个哭和尚了。有金便笑，无金便哭，和尚尚如此，而况世人乎！

Reading the Buddhist Patriarch almost as a Mammon figure, the 1620s edition here also mentions the obsession with money in the human world. In this 1620s edition, it seems, such an avaricious representation of the Buddhist Patriarch is not at all disturbing; rather, it is a familiar stereotype that had been commonly employed.

A Buddhist Patriarch who is concerned about the material value of his service, Tathagata is also known in the *Journey* for his mysterious relationship with the demon the Great Roc (Chapter 74-77). Among the demons that have formed the eighty-one ordeals in this westward journey, while many are the subordinates either sent by the Bodhisattvas on purpose or coming down to the human world due to the negligence of the immortals, the Great Roc is not only genealogically related to Tathagata but is said to be the uncle of this Buddhist Patriarch. In Tathagata's rather succinct account of his own past, the Peacock, the twin sister of the Great Roc, who had once devoured Tathagata into her belly, is appointed in the end as the "Buddha Mother." Originally intending to kill her, Tathagata is advised to treat her as he treats his own "Mother," since she who eats him also "gives birth to him." "Tathagata," upon hearing the story the monkey says, "according to such a comparison, you are the nephew of this demon. 如来，若这般比论，你还是妖精的外甥哩" (Chapter 77). The only demon that is not subordinate to the Buddhist gods, the Roc is also one of the few demons that has actually harmed innocent human life. Before him, there is Bodhisattva's missing goldfish, who establishes the custom of the annual sacrifice of children (Chapter 47-49); after him, there is Aged Star's white deer, who is about to take the lives of the 1111 children that are already prepared in the geese cages (Chapter 78-79). The Great Roc, on the other hand, who occupies the "Lion Camel Kingdom 狮驼国," had actually devoured the entire "Lion Camel Kingdom" five-hundred years ago: the king, the officials, and the populace had all been consumed before the Roc took over the kingdom (Chapter 74). Entering the cave where the Roc resides, the monkey witnesses the most savage scene that he has ever encountered in the westward journey:

> A mound of skeletons, a forest of dead bones; human hair packed together as blankets, and human flesh trodden as dirt and dust; human tendons knotted

> on the trees were dried, parched, and shiny like silver. In truth there were mountains of corpses and seas of blood; indeed the putrid stench was terrible! The little fiends on the east gouged out flesh from living persons, the brazen demons on the west boiled and cooked fresh human meat. Only Handsome Monkey King had such heroic gall, no other mortal would dare enter this door. 骷髅若岭，骸骨如林。人头发翔成毡片，人皮肉烂作泥尘。人筋缠在树上，干焦晃亮如银。真个是尸山血海，果然腥臭难闻。东边小妖，将活人拿了剐肉；西下泼魔，把人肉鲜煮鲜烹。若非美猴王如此英雄胆，第二个凡夫也进不得他门。[50]

As with the way he responds to the children-eating goldfish, the monkey later mentions neither the disaster that the Roc brings to the human world, nor the curious negligence of those Buddhist masters. The 1663 edition, though refusing to read Tathagata as a mammon figure, seems particularly interested in the implications of this motif of the cannibalistic demon. "What kind of sins have people in this kingdom committed," its interlineal gloss in Chapter 74 exclaims, "as they suffered from the misfortune of being devoured! 此一国人，不知作何罪业，遭此吞噬之惨！" While the commentary does not blame the negligent Buddhist gods, it instead brings up the crackdown on the monkey and wonders whether the monkey, who was wreaking havoc exactly five-hundred years ago, could save the people of this Lion Camel Kingdom.[51] Whether or not Tathagata is too busy to deal with the Roc five-hundred years ago, his inattention reveals the priority of suppressing the monkey who challenges Heaven over the demon who devours a kingdom of people. Reticent to discuss the implied fault of the Buddhist Patriarch, this 1663 commentary is explicit about the sin of the Aged Star in the next episode (Chapter 78-79). "If the monkey comes late, thousands of children will die 若还来迟，千百个小儿休矣," its interlineal gloss in Chapter 79 states, "hence, the old immortal is not without guilt 老寿星不能无罪."

[50] Chapter 75. Yu, Vol. 3, 364.
[51] See the pre-chapter commentary in Chapter 76.

If the presence of the Great Roc reveals the problematic relationship between the divine and the demonic, the reappearance of Wenshu's green-haired lion in this episode, which is first pointed out in the 1663 commentary edition,[52] no doubt reinforces such a motif. The first time when the lion appears as a demon, it is sent by the Buddhist Patriarch to punish the disrespectful king (in the Black Rooster Kingdom, Chapter 36-39). The return of the demonic lion (in the Lion Camel Kingdom),[53] as we are further told, is at least the third time when the lion relapses into his demonic self. One of his minions, upon the monkey's request, tells the story of the lion's past:

> Perhaps the captain does not know that our great great king is capable of such transformation that he can be big enough to reach the celestial hall when he wants to, or he can become as small as vegetable seed. When the Lady Queen Mother convened the Festival of Immortal Peaches in a former year and did not send an invitation to our great great king, he wanted to strive with Heaven. The Jade Emperor sent one hundred thousand celestial warriors to bring him to submission, but our great king exercised his magic body of transformation and opened his mouth big and wide as a city gate. He charged at the celestial warriors, who were too terrified to battle but instead closed up the South Heaven Gate. That's what I meant when I said that he once swallowed one hundred thousand celestial warriors with one gulp. 长官原来不知，我大王会变化：要大能撑天堂，要小就如菜子。因那年王母娘娘设蟠桃大会邀请诸仙，他不曾具柬来请，我大王意欲争天，被玉皇差十万天兵来降我大王。是我大王变化法身，张开大口，似城门一般，用力吞将去，唬得众天兵不敢交锋，关了南天门，故此是一口曾吞十万兵。[54]

Warring with Heaven because of the exclusion from the peach festival, the lion, who later submits and becomes Wenshu's beast of burden, has a strikingly similar past to the monkey. While the interlineal commentary in Chapter 74 of the 1663 edition

[52] See its pre-chapter commentary in Chapter 74.
[53] As the lion reappears this time, interestingly enough, the monkey does not question about the harm it brings to the innocent people any longer. See the monkey's question in Chapter 39.
[54] Chapter 74. Yu, Vol. 3, 359.

wonders about the sequence of these two events, we may puzzle over the implications of such a recurring challenge to the established hierarchy, the unremitting emergence of the rebels, and the frequent turnaround of the converts. Why do the lion, the monkey, the roc, and the many other demons, intend to challenge the rule of the heavenly authorities? Why is the submission, which is achieved through violence, so easily revoked? The roc, unable to spread his wings, is now captured and confined over Tathagata's head. But will he one day sneak away and harass the human world again, just as the lion had done? Is the monkey's submission revocable as well? In the eons that extend beyond these fourteen years of the westward journey, what will the divine, the demon, and the convert turn out to be? The author seems to have suggested his answer in the details such as these juxtaposed pasts of the lion and the roc.

After grappling with the many demons that turn out to be related to the gods, and with the gift of the almsbowl, the pilgrims finally receive the sacred scripture—one third of the Tripitaka (Chapter 98), rather than its entirety that the reader beforehand assumed (Chapter 8).[55] In the words of Tathagata, his Tripitaka scripture will "persuade man to be good 劝人为善" (Chapter 8), will "deliver humanity from their afflictions 超脱苦恼," and will "dispel calamities 解释灾愆" (Chapter 98). Whether an incomplete Tripitaka will still have the same effect on humanity—whether Tathagata has fulfilled his promise of offering the scripture, the Buddhist Patriarch's description of the four continents in the world, which is the premise for this scripture-fetching journey to the West, seems nonsensical. The reason that Tang China, or the South Jambūdvīpa Continent, needs the salvation of

[55] The 1663 edition also mentions this incomplete nature of the Tripitaka scripture that is endowed by the Buddhist Patriarch: while the pilgrims only receive one third of the scripture, they are required to experience the 81 ordeals in the most thorough way. See the pre-chapter in Chapter 99. In her dissertation where she discusses the *Journey*'s problematic ending, Chiung-yun Liu points out that scroll number of the entirety of the Tripitaka here in the *Journey* is made deliberately twice more than the 5048 scrolls mentioned in the Yuan drama and the Song chapbook version of the *Journey*. See Liu's dissertation, "Scriptures and Bodies: Jest and Meaning in the Religious Journeys in *Xiyou ji*," 2008, 362-9. This part of her dissertation is published in Chinese in the article, "Sacred Teaching and Facetious Talk: Playing with Meanings in the Shidetang *Journey to the West*: 圣教与戏言—论世本《西游记》中意义的游戏," in *Bulletin of the Institute of Chinese Literature and Philosophy* 中国文哲研究集刊 36 (2010): 22.

the Tripitaka scripture, as Tathagata explains, is because the South Continent is the only continent that is plagued by sins and evil-doers. Flanking the westward pilgrimage at its beginning and end, Tathagata's two speeches regarding the South Continent are in effect unsparing disparagements of Tang China:

> I have watched the Four Great Continents, and the morality of their inhabitants varies from place to place. Those living on the East Pūrvavideha revere Heaven and Earth, and they are straightforward and peaceful. Those on the North Uttarakuru, though they love to destroy life, do so out of the necessity of making a livelihood. Moreover, they are rather dull of mind and lethargic in spirit, and they are not likely to do much harm. Those of our West Aparagodānīya are neither covetous nor prone to kill; they control their humor and temper their spirit. There is, to be sure, no illuminate of the first order, but everyone is certain to attain longevity. Those who reside in the South Jambūdvīpa, however, are prone to practice lechery and delight in evildoing, indulging in much slaughter and strife. Indeed, they are all caught in the treacherous field of tongue and mouth, in the wicked sea of slander and malice. However, I have three baskets of true scriptures which can persuade man to do good. 我观四大部洲，众生善恶，各方不一：东胜神洲者，敬天礼地，心爽气平；北巨芦洲者，虽好杀生，只因糊口，性拙情疏，无多作践；我西牛贺洲者，不贪不杀，养气潜灵，虽无上真，人人固寿；但那南赡部洲者，贪淫乐祸，多杀多争，正所谓口舌凶场，是非恶海。我今有三藏真经，可以劝人为善。[56]

> Your Land of the East belongs to the South Jambūdvīpa Continent. Because of your size and your fertile land, your prosperity and population, there is a great deal of greed and killing, lust and lying, oppression and deceit. People neither honor the teachings of Buddha nor cultivate virtuous karma; they neither revere the three lights nor respect the five grains. They are disloyal

[56] Chapter 8. Yu, Vol. 1, 204-5.

and unfilial, unrighteous and unkind, unscrupulous and self-deceiving. Through all manners of injustice and taking of lives, they have committed boundless transgressions. The fullness of their iniquities therefore has brought on them the ordeal of hell and sent them into eternal darkness, […]
你那东土乃南赡部洲，只因天高地厚，物广人稠，多贪多杀，多淫多诳，多欺多诈；不遵佛教，不向善缘，不敬三光，不重五谷；不忠不孝，不义不仁，瞒心昧己，大斗小秤，害命杀牲。造下无边之孽，罪盈恶满，致有地狱之灾，所以永堕幽冥，……[57]

According to Tathagata, unlike the other three continents, the South Continent is full of lechers, thieves, slaughterers, slanderers, traitors, and hypocrites that can only be redeemed by the Tripitaka scripture. While Tathagata's observation about the continent of China, which is applauded by both the 1620s and the 1663 commentary editions,[58] may not be untrue, his remarks on the West Aparagodānīya Continent, the continent where he resides and where the pilgrims have journeyed through, can never be a suitable antithesis to the avaricious, savage Tang China. "Those of our West Aparagodānīya are neither covetous nor prone to kill 我西牛贺洲者，不贪不杀," the Buddhist Patriarch describes his own Continent of the West. If we could set aside the succession of the blood-thirsty, human-devouring demons that the pilgrims have encountered as soon as the Tang monk departs the border of Tang China, ferocious demons and wily humans that the pilgrims have met toward the end of journey—the king of the "Dharma-Destroying Kingdom 灭法国" who vows to kill ten thousand monks (Chapter 84), the avaricious rhinoceroses who demand the annual sacrifice of lamp oil that is worth thousands of silver (Chapter 91-92), the thieves who raid the house of Squire Kou, and the jealous wife who falsely accuses the pilgrims of theft and slaughter (Chapter 96-97)—are all manifestations of the disorder in the West Aparagodānīya, a continent which also bears the marks of slander, slaughter, selfishness, and violence. Coming close to Tathagata's Thunderclap Temple, twice has the Tang monk Tripitaka marveled at the

[57] Chapter 98. Yu, Vol. 4, 348-9.
[58] See their interlineal commentaries in Chapter 98.

resemblance between the East and the West. "The four of them, therefore, walked up to the city streets to look around"—

> Most of the households over there, you see, were busily engaged in buying and selling. The place seemed to be densely populated, and business too seemed to be flourishing. Listen to their voices and look at their features: they seem no different from those of China. […] Secretly delighted, Tripitaka thought to himself, "I have heard people speaking of the various foreign countries in the Western Territories, but I have never been here. When I look carefully at the place, however, I find that it's no different from our Great Tang. It certainly lives up to its name of Ultimate Bliss!" 四众遂步至城边街道观看。原来那关厢人家，做买做卖的，人烟凑集，生意亦甚茂盛。观其声音相貌，与中华无异。…… 三藏心中暗喜道："人言西域诸番，更不曾到此。细观此景，与我大唐何异！所为极乐世界，诚此之谓也。"[59]

To the secret delight of Tripitaka, the Western world is as wonderful as the Great Tang of China, and both places have lived up to the name of "Ultimate Bliss." While his praise for the Great Tang stands as a stark contrast to Tathagata's appraisal of China, his admiration for the "Western Territories" quickly turns to be an illusion. "In this Buddha land of the West, there's no deception in either the foolish or the wise 西方佛地，贤者愚者俱无诈伪。那二老说时，我犹不信，至此果如其言," as Tripitaka, delighted at the hospitality of Squire Kou, further compliments the Western world.[60] Yet as the thieves soon raid the squire's house and murder the squire, and as the squire's wife accuses the pilgrims of murder against what she has witnessed, the author apparently seeks here to contradict Tripitaka's wide-eyed faith in the West. Greeting a monk in a temple that is not far from the residence of Tathagata, Tripitaka hears a Western monk's understanding of the East and the West: "Those who are inclined to virtue and read the scriptures in our place

[59] Chapter 88. Yu, Vol. 4, 191-2. Other occurrences are in Chapter 68 and 93.
[60] Chapter 96. Yu, Vol. 4, 311.

invariably hope to find incarnation at your land of China. 我这里向善的人，看经念佛，都指望修到你中华地托生."[61]

Is the land of the East inferior to the land of the West as Tathagata instructs, or is the land of the East as good as the land of the West as the Tang monk believes, or is the land of the East superior to the land of the West as the Western monk suggests? Falling short of Tathagata's praise for the West Aparagodānīya continent, this Western continent seems just as corrupt as Tang China—if we could overlook those cannibalistic beasts and demons that are packed in the way to the Thunderclap Temple. There are certainly many ways to interpret Tathagata's idealization of the West, and the idealization of his own West Aparagodānīya continent probably matches the Easterners' imagination about the West. Such an idealization of the "foreign other" is in fact also discussed in the *Journey*. Explaining why the traders would try to cross the river at the expense of their lives, the *Journey* notes:

> On the far side of the river is the Western Kingdom of Women, and these people must be traders. Things worth a hundred pennies on our side can fetch a hundred times more over there, and their things worth a hundred pennies can similarly fetch a handsome price over here. In view of such heavy profits, it is understandable that people want to make this journey without regard for life or death. Usually, five or seven people, and the number may even swell to more than ten, will crowd into a boat to cross the river. When they see that the river is frozen now, they are risking everything to try to cross it on foot. 河那边乃西梁女国。这起人都是做买卖的。我这边百钱之物，到那边可值万钱；那边百钱之物，到这边亦可值万钱。利重本轻，所以人不顾生死而去。常年家有五七人一船，或十数人一船，飘洋而过。见如今河道冻住，故舍命而步行也。[62]

As the river causes distance and unfamiliarity between the Western Kingdom of Women and its neighbor, it also raises the value of the product on both sides.

[61] Chapter 91. Yu, Vol. 4, 233.
[62] Chapter 48. Yu, Vol. 2, 340.

"Easterners want to study the West and the Westerners want to study the East: People always hate the place which they are in while desiring other places 东人要修西方，西人要修东土，总只是在境厌境，去境羡境,"[63] the commentator of the 1620s edition shares his insight into this particular aspect of human nature. Following such logic, should the Tripitaka scripture be counted as among the products that have benefited from the imagination of the "foreign other?"

Courts

In addition to the major figures such as Tripitaka, the monkey, the Bodhisattvas, the demons, and Tathagata, the *Journey* also presents a series of courts which extends from Tang China to the Heaven presided over by the Jade Emperor, and to the various courts the pilgrims have encountered in their westward pilgrimage. In Hu Shih's reading, as discussed in Chapter III, the court presided over by the Jade Emperor is "dark, corrupt, and lacking in talent" and the Jade Emperor is "good-for-nothing." Watching the battle between the monkey and the heavenly troops from a distance, Laozi, who throws down his diamond snare—the weapon that reappears in later episodes with his missing servants and here causes the monkey's first downfall—does not seem particularly honorable. While the Jade Emperor's two generals, the Heaven Marshal Holding a Tower 托塔李天王 and his son Nezha 哪吒, whose legendary enmity toward his father is recounted in Chapter 83, cannot gain the upper hand over the monkey, the Jade Emperor is advised to seek outside help from his nephew Erlang 二郎神, whose legendary enmity toward his uncle is also mentioned in Chapter 6. The *Journey,* it seems, is interested in exposing the hidden tension in the court of the Jade Emperor, and the Jade Emperor, like the Bodhisattvas, while helping the pilgrims in their pilgrimage, also leave his

[63] Pre-chapter commentary in Chapter 96.

servants unchecked (Chapter 31) and inflicted suffering on innocent people from personal vendetta (Chapter 87).[64]

If the monkey's uprising gives the heavenly court a temporary crisis, the various courts on earth are in a sense plagued by various kinds of long-term crises. Not a single kingdom that the pilgrims have passed by, it seems, is in order. With the cases of the Black Rooster Kingdom, the Cart Slow Kingdom, the Sacrifice Kingdom, the Bhiksu Kingdom, and the Dharma Destroying kingdom, it has become a recurring theme that the emperor is either manipulated by the evil Daoist practitioners or is interested in persecuting the Buddhist monks. To borrow Plaks's words regarding the *Journey*'s "undercutting" of the Daoist and the Confucian schools, these courts are filled with "heretical wizards, charlatans, medicine men, rainmakers, benighted rulers, and helpless advisers."[65] The 1663 commentary edition, while championing both the Confucian and the Daoist readings of the *Journey*, nonetheless reveals a glimpse of bewilderment at the book's enthusiastic portrayals of the evil Daoist monks. In the pre-chapter commentary in the episode in the children-consuming Bhiksu Kingdom (Chapter 78-79), the commenter notes:

> The *Journey* is a book believing that Daoism and Buddhism are of the same origin. Although demons exist in both religions, the book only criticizes the Daoist ones. Demons in the Black Rooster Kingdom, the Cart Slow Kingdom, the Child Destruction Cave, the Yellow Flower Temple, and the Pure Splendor Cave here are all evil Daoist monks. I am considering the intention of the Master Qiu Chuji—does he really regard our party as unworthy? 西游为仙佛同源之书。仙佛二教，皆有邪魔，而书中不斥妖僧，而独斥妖道，如乌鸡国、车迟国，破儿洞，黄花观，与此处之清华洞，皆妖道也。窥丘祖之意，岂真以不肖待吾党哉？[66]

It is certainly not that the *Journey* does not include a malicious Buddhist monk at all— the old monk who steals Tripitaka's cassock in Chapter 16 is a case in point.

[64] The Marshal Holding a Tower also leaves his adopted daughter unrestrained, who can be regarded as the most dangerous temptress, see Chapter 80-83.
[65] Plaks, *The Four Masterworks*, 239.
[66] Pre-chapter commentary in Chapter 78.

But compared to the handful of bad Buddhist monks, the malicious Daoist practitioners, with their appallingly savage crimes, are disconcerting. Under the influence of these malevolent Daoists, the emperors order the slaughter of the Buddhist monks, the collection of the hearts of children less than seven years old, and the capture of the Tang monk Tripitaka. Without the pilgrims' timely rectification, most of these courts would have committed hideous crimes. In comparison, the Tang court in China, which is neither supervised by the Daoist practitioners nor ruled by a benighted emperor, seems to perform much better. In the *Journey*'s four chapters involving the Tang court (Chapter 9-12), the major crisis there is the sudden death of the emperor and his own journey to Hell. Through a bribe and networking, the emperor is able to be resurrected with a twenty-year extension of life, and his experiences in Hell will lead to his interest in obtaining the Tripitaka scripture. Not dissimilar to the ordinary man Tripitaka, the Tang ruler shows understandable uneasiness at the brutal sights in Hell, and he is in the end pushed off the horse into the river to re-enter the human realm (Chapter 10). The presentation of the Chinese ruler is neither honorable nor detestable, but the wandering souls that he twice runs into on the streets of Hell probably betray the author's interest in presenting the dark side of the reign:

> As they walked along, they saw at the side of the street the emperor's predecessor Li Yuan, his elder brother Jiancheng, and his deceased brother Yuanji, who came toward them, shouting, "Here comes Shimin! Here comes Shimin!" The brothers clutched at Taizong and began beating him and threatening vengeance. […] Soon they arrived at the City of the Dead Who Dies Prematurely, where clamoring voices were heard proclaiming distinctly, "Li Shimin has come! Li Shimin has come!" When Taizong heard all this shouting, his heart shook and his gall quivered. Then he saw a throng of spirits, some with backs broken by the rack, some with severed limbs, and some headless, who barred his way and shouted together, "Give us back our lives! Give us back our lives!" In terror Taizong tried desperately to flee and hide, at the same time crying, "Mr. Cui, save me! Mr. Cui, save me!" 只见那街

> 旁边有先主李渊，先兄建成，故弟元吉，上前道：“世民来了！世民来了！”那建成、元吉就来揪打索命。太宗躲闪不及，被他扯住。……前又到枉死城，只听哄哄人嚷，分明说“李世民来了！李世民来了！”太宗听叫，心惊胆战。见一伙拖腰折臂、有足无头的鬼魅，上前拦住，都叫道：“还我命来！还我命来！”慌得那太宗藏藏躲躲，只叫“崔先生救我！崔先生救我！”[67]

Stopped by the headless souls and limbless spirits, the Tang Emperor is called by his personal name and is requested to pay back the lives that he murdered either on purpose or by accident. Here, not unlike the court of the Jade Emperor, the Tang court is revealed to be marked by hidden grudges between relatives; not unlike the blood-thirsting courts of the West, this court also takes the lives of innocent people. The macabre sight of the headless and limbless souls wandering in the City of the Dead reflects the hidden cruelty of Tang China—the nearly forgotten, muffled memories of its violent past and present that perhaps cannot and should not be mentioned in either history or poetry.

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Having made an analysis of the *Journey*'s main characters, I will briefly review the major rhetorical strategies and overall topics of interest that are explored in the *Journey.* The above analysis of *Journey*'s characterization, which is informed by the recurring themes appearing in the book, already shows the prevalent use of repetition, arguably the book's most often used rhetorical strategy. In almost every episode of the ordeal, as discussed above, the Tang monk Tripitaka panics, his disciples propose to terminate the pilgrimage, the monkey mentions his demonic past, confronts the demon, only to be defeated, the demon captures the crying Tang monk, the monkey then resorts to outside help from authorities such as

[67] Chapter 10. Yu, Vol. 1, 254; 260.

the Bodhisattvas and Tathagata, and with the revelation of its identity, the demon surrenders in the end.[68] While this series of motifs becomes the *Journey*'s narrative routine, the other recurring characterizations, the vindictive Bodhisattvas, the money-seeking Tathagata, and the malicious Daoist monks, for example, have become the persisting features of the *Journey*'s major characters. In addition to this form of repetition in the book's plot, descriptions of visuals such as the landscapes, architectures, battle scenes, weapons, and clothing, which are always in poetic form and the classical language, appear ritualistically in every episode. Scattered across the vernacular narration, these poems, whose poetic dictions seem formal and even trite in the context of the lively dialogues and narrative, have in a sense slowed down the development of story. Among the various kinds of formal and thematic repetition appearing in the *Journey*, the most obvious kind of repetition is story re-telling. The monkey, for example, reports to his master events that he has gone through in every episode of the ordeal. In retelling how he obtains the scripture, as mentioned above, Tripitaka highlights in his twice-told story the unexpected demand of the required gift for Tathagata. The author's use of repetition, to sum up, has not only established familiar patterns in the *Journey* narrative but also effectively reinforces his topics of interest.

While the use of repetition is the most prevalent rhetorical strategy employed in the *Journey*, its use of citation—the re-using of the religious sources in particular—is equally worth noting. The "massive appropriation from Chinese religious traditions,"[69] as argued in my previous chapter, not only shows the author's knowledge in the Daoist, Buddhist, and Confucian canons, but also manifests his ingenuity in rewriting these philosophical sources. Citations from the Daoist canon, such as *The Crying Crane's Lingering Sound*, are never citations without alternation.[70] Technical terms such as those from the internal alchemy, as discussed before, have acquired new layers of meaning in their appearances in the

[68] For a slightly different recapitulation of this series of recurring motifs in an episode of the ordeal, see Plaks, 252-3.
[69] Yu, "Introduction" in the 1977 edition, 36.
[70] See Yu, "Introduction" in the 1977 edition, 39-41; the 2012 "Introduction" 43-51; Xu Shuofang 徐朔方, "On Quanzhen religious school and the Novel of the Journey 评全真教和小说西游记.".

Journey narrative. The most prevalent way of the *Journey*'s rewriting of the religious tradition, which can be easily noticed in the characterizations such as Tripitaka and Tathagata, is its creation of a new set of signification and implication that runs counter to the established archetypes. In the *Journey*'s rewriting, Tripitaka, the Tang monk who is acclaimed for his courage and perseverance in completing the scripture-fetching pilgrimage, is timorous and indulges in the senses; Bodhisattvas, the goddesses who are revered as saviors and deliverers, take revenge on her human offenders; the Buddhist Patriarch Tathagata needs to earn money from his Buddhist service; and the "Western Land of Ultimate Bliss," contrary to his self-promotion, appears disordered and barbarous. In *Journey*'s rewriting, familiar convention is destabilized, disrupted, and defied. Running counter to the original intention of the citations, terminologies, and stereotypes, the *Journey* has created its own system of vocabularies and archetypes, which might catch the readers by surprise, especially those who are steeped in conventions. This is certainly not the only kind of surprise that the reader encounters in reading the *Journey*. The surprising contrast between what the reader has learned from the *Journey* and his original anticipation, which is informed by his old knowledge, has its variation in the contrast between anticipation and reality juxtaposed in the narrative. The immediate contrasts between Tripitaka's claim and action, between Tathagata's idealization of the West and the real world of the West, as we examined, for example, are showcases for the *Journey*'s ingenuity in creating the unexpected twist.

With rhetorical strategies such as repetition, citation, and contrast, the *Journey* has created a world that is uniquely its own. Founded on historical accounts and religious teachings, it breaks away from these historical and religious traditions in quite a thorough way. In the next section, I will review the recurring topics of interest in this world of the *Journey*. Since we just discussed the book's uses of rhetoric, we can start from its own meditation on the philosophy of language.

Language

Despite its virtuosity in shuttling between prose and verse, between the vernacular and the classical language, between rhetorical devices such as repetition and contrast, and between tradition and the rewritings of tradition, the *Journey* seems to be interested in exploring a skeptical view toward language—the anti-language sentiment that is certainly nourished not only by the Daoist philosophers. The two kinds of scripture ordained by Tathagata, the "true scripture without words 无字真经"—the "useless empty volume 取去何用的空本" in Tripitaka's eyes, and the "true scripture with words 有字真经" that the pilgrims eventually receive with the exchange of their gift, bespeak the *Journey*'s concern over the limit of language. Although one may blame Tripitaka for his beclouded discernment in depreciating the wordless scripture, his approval of the monkey's silence upon the request to interpret the *Heart Sutra,* which occurred five chapters earlier (Chapter 93), showcases his knowledge about the transcendent condition where language is uncalled-for. Seeing that Tripitaka is again frightened by the tall mountains, the monkey asks his master if he still remembers the precepts in the *Heart Sutra*. Tripitaka replies:

> "That *Heart Sutra* is like a cassock or an alms bowl that accompanies my very body. Since it was taught me by that Crow's Nest Chan Master, has there been a day that I didn't recite it? Indeed, has there been a single hour that I didn't have it in mind? I could recite the piece backward! How could I have forgotten it?" "Master, you may be able to recite it," said Pilgrim, "but you haven't begged that Chan Master for its proper interpretation." "Ape- head!" snapped Tripitaka. "How can you say that I don't know its interpretation! Do you?" "Yes, I know its interpretation!" replied Pilgrim. After that exchange, neither Tripitaka nor Pilgrim uttered another word. At their sides, Eight Rules nearly collapsed with giggles and Sha Monk almost broke up with amusement. "What brassiness!" said Eight Rules. "Like me, he began his career as a monster- spirit. He wasn't an acolyte who had heard lectures on the sutras, nor was he a seminarian who had seen the law expounded. It's sheer flimflam and pettifoggery to say that he knows how to interpret the

sutra! Hey, why is he silent now? Let's hear the lecture! Please give us the interpretation!" "Second Elder Brother," said Sha Monk, "do you believe him? Big Brother is giving us a nice tall tale, just to egg Master on his journey. He may know how to play with a rod. He doesn't know anything about explaining a sutra!" "Wuneng and Wujing," said Tripitaka, "stop this claptrap! Wukong's interpretation is made in a speechless language. That's true interpretation." 三藏道："般若心经是我随身衣钵。自那乌巢禅师教后，那一日不念，那一时得忘？颠倒也念得来，怎会忘得！"行者道："师父只是念得，不曾求那师父解得。"三藏说："猴头！怎又说我不曾解得！你解得么？"行者道："我解得，我解得。"自此，三藏、行者再不作声。旁边笑倒一个八戒，喜坏一个沙僧，说道："嘴脸！替我一般的做妖精出身，又不是那里禅和子，听过讲经，那里应佛僧，也曾见过说法？弄虚头，找架子，说什么晓得，解得！怎么就不作声？听讲！请解！"沙僧说："二哥，你也信他。大哥扯长话，哄师父走路。他晓得弄棒罢了，他那里晓得讲经！"三藏道："悟能悟净，休要乱说，悟空解得是无言语文字，乃是真解。"[71]

In the eyes of the laughing pig and sand monk, the monkey's silence indicates his ignorance of the sutra interpretation—his "flimflam and pettifoggery" at best—which has nothing to do with true understanding of the scripture, let alone epiphany or transcendence. The monkey, on the other hand, who is always articulate and perhaps even loquacious 嘴熟，字多话多 (see Chapter 20 and 21, for example), seems quite sincere here in his wordless response to Tripitaka. "That which is not ineffable has no importance," as they would say. But how do we distinguish between the silence that results from enlightenment and the silence due to pure ignorance? How can we know that the monkey's silence—or the wordless scripture—is not mere pretension in the guise of mysticism? Can we prove to the pig and the sand monk that the monkey's silence represents his true enlightenment? As both the monkey and Tripitaka seem to understand the value of the wordless condition, the monkey is nevertheless annoyed with Tathagata's endowment of the wordless

[71] Chapter 93. Yu, Vol. 4, 265.

scripture while Tripitaka deplores its uselessness. It might be unfortunate that the people of the East are never able to truly comprehend Tathagata's blank volumes and the monkey's wordless interpretation, but hopefully, the language used there, which is printed in the scripture that the pilgrims have in the end obtained, will be able to transmit the truth of the Buddhist wisdom.

Embarrassment

In Hu Shih's reading, the appeal of the *Journey* lies in part in its humor, and "it is an extraordinarily fun, extraordinarily interesting myth-novel—whoever reads it cannot help but laugh out loud 一篇极滑稽，极有趣，无论谁看了都要大笑的神话小说." The subsequent three examples that Hu Shih cites, as we examined in the last chapter, are three fine examples that show the *Journey*'s enthusiasm for exposing the bemused authority; the lying, fawning subordinate; and the social structure that seems to be founded on dissimulation and performance, whose absence of integrity deserves a good laugh, if not a good cry. While the *Journey* is committed to exploring these dark, embarrassing possibilities in human communities, it also takes great interest in recording embarrassment experienced by the individual characters, which seems equally laughable. Ever since the Tang monk steps out of the border of Tang China, as discussed above, he has never appeared dignified or composed. Like "a piece of meat on the chopping board," he is locked in the cabinet, washed and cooked in the steamer, thrown into the water, covered by mud that is mixed with urine, and has even undergone pregnancy and abortion. If Tripitaka, due to his perpetual fear, could be claimed as the most embarrassing character depicted in the *Journey*, the other characters, including the valiant monkey, are likewise not exempted from the *Journey*'s enthusiasm in detailing their awkward behavior in fear, defeat, and failure. Defeated, the pig "dives into a thicket of bramble bushes, lies down, and dares not to come out again, regardless of the thorns in his face and his scalp 一毂辘睡倒再不敢出来" (Chapter 29); the sand monk, along with Tripitaka and the horse, is bound hand and foot and hauled into the cave(Chapter 29); the

monkey, hurt by the demonic wind, "gropes around confusedly with his eyes closed 闭着眼乱摸" (Chapter 21); and the demon, "with a thud, falls on the ground like a spinning wheel 拍刺刺似纺车儿一般跌落尘埃" (Chapter 76).

The motif of "falling down on the ground 倒在尘埃" is probably the most widely used image in the *Journey*'s description of fear and failure. The Tang ruler Li Shimin, when pushed off the horse, falls into the river to re-enter the human realm. Seeing the unusual look of the pilgrims, emperors tumble down from their "Dragon Throne," with the courtiers falling head over heels on the ground. Even the deified Laozi falls head over heels in his attempt to capture the monkey. To be sure, the character that falls most frequently is Tripitaka: in terror, "the spirits of Three Cadavers left him and smoke poured out of his seven apertures; he fell to the ground in sweat, rolling his eyeballs and unable to utter a word. 唬得三尸神散，七窍烟生，倒在尘埃，浑身是汗，眼不定睛，口不能言" (Chapter 78). Reading these repeated, comically exaggerated depictions of such a helpless character as Tripitaka, whose paralysis will no doubt give rise to empathy, we may wonder whether we are supposed to laugh at or to grieve for this unfortunate man.[72] To conclude this section on the topic of "embarrassment," I will cite three passages at length, which not only showcases the *Journey*'s ingenuity in writing the embarrassing fall, but also may draw a good laugh from the reader. It is perhaps inevitable for everyone to trip and fall in life—to make a fool of oneself—to be afraid to get up in the face of difficulties, but through the *Journey*'s ritualistic repetition in describing the fall of

[72] Without the supernatural power of the monkey, Tripitaka can do nothing but to "submit himself to the will of heaven." Chapter 13 is explicit about this Tang monk's desperation and full resignation: "Ready to abandon his body and sacrifice his life, Tripitaka started up that rugged mountain. He journeyed for half a day, but not a single human being or dwelling was in sight. He was gnawed by hunger and disheartened by the rough road. In that desperate moment, he saw two fierce tigers growling in front of him and several huge snakes circling behind him; vicious creatures appeared on his left and strange beasts on his right. As he was all by himself, Tripitaka had little alternative but to submit himself to the will of heaven. As if to complete his helplessness, his horse's back was sagging and its legs were buckling; it went to its knees and soon lay prostrate on the ground. He could budge it neither by beating nor by tugging. With hardly an inch of space to stand on, our Master of Law was in the depths of despair, thinking that certain death would be his fate. 三藏舍身拚命，上了那峻岭之间。行经半日，更不见个人烟村舍。一则腹中饥了，二则路又不平。正在危急之际，只见前面有两只猛虎咆哮，后边有几条长蛇盘绕。左有毒虫，右有怪兽。三藏孤身无策，只得放下身心，听天所命。又无奈那马腰软蹄弯，即便跪下，伏倒在地，打又打不起，牵又牵不动。苦得个法师衬身无地，真个有万分凄楚，已自分必死，莫可奈何。" See Yu, Vol. 1, 298-9.

both the dignitaries and the nonentities, the reader might find, at least for a moment, the consolation of literature and experience good spirits in laughing out loud—

> We tell you now about those three rogues, who dashed into the hall, where they dropped their luggage and tied up the horse. There were at that time several priests in the hall reciting sutras. Sticking out his long snout, the pig shouted at them, “Hey monks! Which sutra are you reciting?” On hearing this, those monks raised their heads and all at once: They saw a visitor with long snout and huge ears, a thick frame and wide shoulders, and a voice that boomed like thunder. But the monkey and the sand Monk were in looks even uglier. Of those priests in the hall none was not in terror. They tried to keep reciting but were stopped by their leader. They left their stones and bells and forsook the graven Buddhas. The lamps were all blown out, the torches all smothered, the doorsills falling over, and they scrambled and stumbled like gourds when props were down, with their heads bumped into one another. A pure, serene plot of ritual became a cause of great laughter! When the three brothers saw how those priests stumbled and fell all over, they clapped their hands and roared with laughter. More terrified than ever, those priests banged into one another as they fled for their lives and deserted the place. Tripitaka led the old man up the hall, but the lights and lamps were completely out, while the three of them were still in guffaws. 却说那三个凶顽，闯入厅房上，拴了马，丢下行李。那厅中原有几个和尚念经。八戒掬着长嘴，喝道：“那和尚，念的是甚么经？”那些和尚，听见问了一声，忽然抬头：观看外来人，嘴长耳朵大。 身粗背膊宽，声响如雷咋。 行者与沙僧，容貌更丑陋。 厅堂几众僧，无人不害怕。 阇黎还念经，班首教行罢。 难顾磬和铃，佛象且丢下。 一齐吹息灯，惊散光乍乍。 跌跌与爬爬，门槛何曾跨！ 你头撞我头，似倒葫芦架。 清清好道场，翻成大笑话。 这兄弟三人，见那些人跌跌爬爬，鼓着掌哈哈大笑。那些僧越加悚惧，磕头撞脑，各顾性

命，通跑净了。三藏搀那老者，走上厅堂，灯火全无，三人嘻嘻哈哈的还笑。[73]

Lifting high his muckrake, our Idiot ran up to the ledge of the mountain and cried, “Monster-spirit, come out and fight with your ancestor Zhu!” The blue banner-carrier went quickly to report: “Great King, a priest with a long snout and big ears has arrived.” The second fiend left the camp at once; when he saw the pig, he did not utter a word but lifted his lance to stab at his opponent’s face. Our Idiot went forward to face him with upraised rake, and the two of them joined in battle before the mountain slope. Hardly had they gone for more than seven or eight rounds, however, when the Idiot’s hands grew weak and could no longer withstand the demon. Turning his head quickly, he shouted, “Elder Brother, it’s getting bad! Pull the lifeline! Pull the lifeline!” When the Great Sage on this side heard those words, he slackened the rope instead and let go of it. Our Idiot was already fleeing in defeat. The rope tied to his waist was no hindrance when he was going forward. But when he turned back, because it was hanging loose, it quickly became a stumbling-block and tripped him up. He scrambled up only to fall down again. At first he only stumbled, but thereafter he fell snout-first to the ground. Catching up with him, the monster stretched out his dragon-like trunk and wrapped it around the pig. Then he went back to the cave in triumph, surrounded by the little fiends all singing victory songs. 那呆子举钉钯跑上山崖，叫道：“妖精出来！与你猪祖宗打来！”那蓝旗手急报道：“大王，有一个长嘴大耳朵的和尚来了。”二怪即出营，见了八戒，更不打话，挺枪劈面刺来。这呆子举钯上前迎住。他两个在山坡前搭上手，斗不上七八回合，呆子手软，架不得妖魔，急回头叫：“师兄，不好了！扯扯救命索，扯扯救命索！”这壁厢大圣闻言，转把绳子放松了抛将去。那呆子败了阵，住后就跑。原来那绳子拖着走还不觉，转回来，因松了，倒有些绊脚，

[73] Chapter 47. Yu, Vol. 2, 320-1.

自家绊倒了一跌，爬起来又一跌。始初还跌个躘踵，后面就跌了个嘴抢地。被妖精赶上，捽开鼻子，就如蛟龙一般，把八戒一鼻子卷住，得胜回洞。众妖凯歌齐唱，一拥而归。[74]

As the elder loudly lamented in this manner, he unwittingly disturbed a temple worker who was in charge of incense and fire. When he heard someone speaking, he scrambled up, picked up a piece of broken brick, and tossed it at the bell. The loud clang so scared the elder that he fell to the ground; he struggled up and tried to flee, only to trip over the root of a tree and stumble a second time. Lying on the ground, the elder said, "O bell! While this humble cleric laments your state, a loud clang suddenly reaches my ears. No one takes the road to Western Heaven, I fear, and thus you've become a spirit over the years." The temple worker rushed forward and raised him up, saying, "Please rise, Venerable Father. The bell has not turned into a spirit. I struck it, and that is why it clanged." 长老高声赞叹，不觉的惊动寺里之人。那里边有一个侍奉香火的道人，他听见人语，扒起来，拾一块断砖，照钟上打将去。那钟当的响了一声，把个长老唬了一跌；挣起身要走，又绊着树根，扑的又是一跌。长老倒在地下，抬头又叫道："钟啊，贫僧正然感叹你，忽的叮当响一声。想是西天路上无人到，日久多年变作精。"那道人赶上前，一把搀住道："老爷请起。不干钟成精之事，却才是我打得钟响。"[75]

Discernment, or, Burden of the Eye

Reading these passages above, we may notice that these amusing embarrassments of stumbling and tumbling stem in part from the characters' loss of control of what they regard as fearful, which turns out to be misinterpretation due to their inadequacy in discernment. Tripitaka's inability to distinguish between the

[74] Chapter 76. Yu, Vol. 4, 7.
[75] Chapter 80. Yu, Vol. 4, 74.

good and the bad, as discussed earlier in this chapter, constitutes a recurring theme in the *Journey*'s characterization of this Tang monk. "O Master," the monkey exclaims toward the end of their pilgrimage, "because you could not distinguish the true from the specious, you have caused delay in our journey and wasted so much effort 师父啊，为你不识真假，误了多少路程，费了多少心力" (Chapter 92). While Tripitaka is marked by his "dim and unperceptive fleshly eyes" that fail to distinguish, other humans in the *Journey*, dignitaries and nonentities alike, seem equally imperceptive. Every time the pilgrims stumble into the human realm, they are mistaken for evil spirits due to their unusual appearances.[76] The monkey, because of his small size, is always taken as the least capable. In Tathagata's two disparaging speeches regarding Tang China, its "inability to discern 不识" the righteousness of the Buddhist teaching is foregrounded. In the world of the *Journey*, it seems, the masses do not have discerning eyes and will easily fall prey to the disguise of appearance. But as much as the *Journey* values the hidden truth of reality, which can only be accessed by the monkey's "fiery eyes," Tathagata's "Eyes of Wisdom," and the "Imp-Reflecting Mirror 照妖镜" held in the heavenly court, the book also enjoys depicting the world's sensual appearances. The formulation "then you see that 但见那," which punctuates the narrative like an incantation, is followed by the author's enthusiastic depictions, from the grandiose banquet to a tiny, flying "cicada 蟭螹虫儿," and to the beautiful temptresses.[77] Whether or not appearance deceives, our eyes are undeniably the major means that allows us humans to be connected to the world. In light of the *Journey to the West*, hopefully we can grow wiser in our faculties in discerning and interpreting this sensual world.

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[76] See Chapter 20, for example.
[77] See for example the depiction of the cicada in Chapter 32; the depictions of the dishes in banquets in Chapter 5, 54, 82, 86, 96; and the depiction of temptresses in Chapter 54, 72.

With the overview of the *Journey*'s themes, rhetorical strategies, and concerns, it is probably appropriate now to return to the interpretations of this book, and we can continue our discussion that preoccupies the previous two chapters. In Harry Berger's reading of the *Faerie Queene*—the "greatest romance in English literature,"[78] as discussed in the last chapter, the protagonist's lack of significant progress, his complicity with his opponent, and the absence of the promised conclusion in the end of Book I are evidence of Spenser's innovation in undoing the bromide of the traditional narrative. Such an interpretive trajectory, which can be found in Bloom's reading of the "traditional romance of the *Divine Comedy*" [79] and Fish's reading of the *Pilgrim's Progress*, could certainly be applied to the *Journey to the West*. The rewritings of Tripitaka, Bodhisattvas, and Tathagata, for example, would then be understood as expressions of the author's sheer originality—his audacious rebellion in the literary world. In Chiung-yun Evelyn Liu's recent study of the *Journey*, such an interpretative trajectory has been implemented. As she compares the *Journey* with its sources in detail, Liu argues that the author "alters the established literary conventions" and "subverts the key themes and motifs of the novel's literary antecedents through manipulating and twisting established religious and philosophical discourses."[80] To use Bakhtin's vocabulary and theory, one could perhaps also read this Chinese romance as a literary translation of carnivalesque subversion, a scatological challenge to hierarchy—this is the interpretive angle pursued in Zuyan Zhou's article.[81]

In Paul de Man's paradigmatic reading of a narrative, as the original thesis of the narrative, in the relay of tropes, often changes into something that contradicts the initial thesis, the narrative could turn out to be "primarily the allegory of its own reading,"[82] which narrates the impossibility of reading. In his reading of the scenes of reading in *A la recherché du temps perdu*, to use one of de Man's most eloquent

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[78] Frye, *Secular*, 187.
[79] Ibid, 157.
[80] Chiung-yun Liu, 413 and 71, in her dissertation, "Scriptures and Bodies: Jest and Meaning in the Religious Journeys in *Xiyou ji*," 2008.
[81] Zuyan Zhou, "Carnivalization in *The Journey to the West*: Cultural Dialogism in Fictional Festivity," *Chinese Literature: Essays*, *Articles*, *Reviews (CLEAR)* 15 (1994): 69-92.
[82] Paul de Man, "Reading (Proust)," in *Allegories of Reading* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1979), 76.

essays “Reading (Proust)” as an example, incompatible binaries that are initially placed under the aegis of the antithesis between the True and the False are found to converge into each other, which may yield aporia in interpretation. Applying de Man’s line of thought to the reading of the *Journey*, where the demon and the god are found to be interchangeable and the monk behaves in the least monkish way, shall we likewise read this Chinese narrative as narrating frustration and failure in understanding, with its own characters also lost in differentiating between the good and the bad? Shall we take the two opposing modes of reading discussed in the last chapter—the “aesthetically responsive and the rhetorically aware reading,”[83] to borrow de Man’s vocabulary this time—as equally compelling, and surrender ourselves to the untamable force of language which always already says something else, something other—something contradictory?

As the *Journey* thrives on the oxymoronic characterizations where the monk indulges in senses, the merciful Bodhisattvas punish, the Buddhist Patriarch requests money, the demon-dispeller retains the demonic side, and the progress does not progress, one may also wonder whether these oxymorons are in fact the *Journey*’s attempt to mirror the mystical, logic-evading equivalence between the sensory and the transcendental prescribed in the *Heart Sutra*, the sutra that is bestowed at the beginning of the pilgrimage and has been discussed on several occasions.[84] “Perceived reality is emptiness; emptiness is perceived reality 色即是空，空即是色,” the sutra describes the equivalence of the two supposedly incompatible concepts: the perceived reality of the “Se 色” that is confined to human senses, and the true reality of the “Kong 空” that transcends human senses. While the monkey, as mentioned earlier, is reticent at the request for his understanding of the sutra, this identity between “Se” and “Kong” prescribed in the sutra has nevertheless invited at least two opposing sets of interpretations in the human realm. There is the uplifting understanding where true reality is found immanent within the sensory world on the one hand, and there is, on the other hand, the

[83] Ibid., 72.
[84] See Chapter 19, 59, 85, and 93.

absolute denial of the accessibility to the true reality—even the pursuit of transcendence is regarded as some hopelessly blinding experience in this sensual world. Toward the end of his discussion of the *Journey*, Plaks, despite his endorsement of the Neo-Confucian allegoresis, seems to have come close to such a position, where he reads the *Journey*'s "manifest nonfinality" as an illustration of the illusory nature of the pursuit of transcendence.[85] But can we also understand this "nonfinality," along with the other forms of corruption depicted in the *Journey*, as the book's illustration of the immanent divine?

If Hu Shih's 1921 preface has for the first time explicitly rejected taking the *Journey* as religious propaganda since the book's debut in 1592, the series of articles published soon after the establishment of the rule of the Communist Party in the 1950s, took a further step and read the book as a social critique of the ruling class in the feudal society of the late Ming China. In the 1957 collection of essays titled "Collection of the Research Papers on the *Journey to the West* 西游记研究论文集," where about twenty articles appearing previously in journals and newspapers around 1955 were put together, the monkey's initial antagonism toward the Jade Emperor is invariably read as the determination of the ruled class of the people to resist the tyranny of the feudal governance. "The havoc that the monkey makes in heaven represents people's fire of resistance to the ruling class, which should be approved 孙悟空大闹天宫，是代表了人民对统治阶级的反抗的火焰，是应该肯定的," one of its articles reads, using Marxist vocabulary and theory of historical evolution that are typical of these essays. As the demons are taken to represent the "despotic landlords that people desire to overcome 人民要求打垮恶霸地主,"[86] and the Daoist monks, who are "incompetent, conspiratorial, and arbitrary 无能，阴谋

[85] Plaks, 274-6. Such an interpretation seems more or less in line with Tu Wei-ming's understanding of the novel, see Tu's review of the first volume of Yu's translation: "*Hsi-Yu Chi* as an Allegorical Pilgrimage in Self-Cultivation." *History of Religions* 19 (1979): 177-84.
[86] *Xiyouji Yanjiu Lunwenji* 西游记研究论文集 (Beijing: Writers Publishing House 作家出版社, 1957), 47.

，专横,”[87] are historicized as the self-serving Daoists courtiers of the Ming emperors, the Buddhist patriarch Tathagata “showcases the true face of the Buddhist monks who solicit money from the people 刻化了佛教僧侣勒索人民钱财的真实嘴脸.”[88]

It is said that a marked-up copy of this collection of the *Journey* criticism was kept on the bookshelf of Mao Zedong, the chairman of China from the establishment of the rule of the Communist Party in 1949 to 1976, when he passed away. But compared to the rather unanimous position propagated in this collection of essays, Mao’s interpretation of the *Journey* seems flexible, as he sometimes associated his party with the defiant monkey who rebels against the suppression of the Nationalist Party, while he also associated the Fascist invaders with the monkey, who would be eventually overcome by the force of righteousness. Mao’s use of this 1592 vernacular fiction, to be sure, had more to do with his reaction to the political situation than his close reading of the book. Comparing himself again to the defiant monkey as Sino-Soviet relations deteriorated in the early 60s, Mao revealed his rather ambiguous understanding of the monkey in a personal letter to his wife Jiang Qing, written in 1966, when the Cultural Revolution was about to start. “I am both confident and unconfident,” he states:

> When I was young I wrote: “confidently believing that man can live for two hundred years, / and so can swim an accumulated length of three thousand miles.” It shows my confidence and ambition. But at the same time, I am also not quite confident, always feeling that I am merely the “monkey king” in a mountain, where the “tiger” is away. This is also not eclecticism. I have some spirit of the tiger, which is the main spirit within me; I have also some spirit of the monkey, which is secondary. 我是自信而又有些不自信。我少年时曾经说过：自信人生二百年，会当水击三千里。可见神气十足了。但又不很自

[87] Ibid., 153. Gao Xiceng 高熙曾, “Daoism and Daoist monk in the *Journey to the West*, 西游记里的道教和道士” originally in the 1954 issue of the *Introduction to Literature* 文学书刊介绍.
[88] Ibid.,164. Peng Hai 彭海, “Critical Attitude toward Buddhism in the *Journey to the West* 西游记对佛教的批判态度” originally in the 1955 issue of the *Literary Heritage* 文学遗产.

信，总觉得山中无老虎，猴子称大王，我就变成这样的大王了。但也不是折中主义，在我身上有些虎气，是为主，也有些猴气，是为次。[89]

"Both confident and unconfident," Mao sees himself as the "monkey king" in a mountain where the "tiger" is away—a monkey king that is nevertheless dominated by the "spirit of the tiger." It is perhaps impossible to know whether in his writing about the inferiority of the monkey, the monkey that Mao refers to would also include the monkey who challenges the tyrannical authority—the defiant monkey which he had before related to his party as well as to himself.

Then there is the celebration of the *Journey*'s liberation from the medieval mysticism and its spirit of modernity in the 1965 Japanese introduction of the novel.[90] There is Zhu Tong's interpretation of the monkey as a Ming dynasty merchant who is in the process of becoming a landlord in the feudal society.[91] There is the millennial digital literature that explores the "unspoken rules" of the darkness in the *Journey*'s establishments.[92] And of course, there is the return of the Daoist, Confucian, and Buddhist interpretations of the *Journey*.[93]

The reason that the historical Tang monk Tripitaka journeyed all the way to India, according to the *Biography of Tripitaka of the Great Temple of Mercy* 大慈恩寺

[89] For a detailed account of how Mao comments on the *Journey* as well as the 1955 collection of *Journey* criticism, see Chapter 4 in Xu Zhongyuan 徐中远, *Mao Zedong's Commentaries of the Five Classic Novels* 毛泽东读评五部古典小说 (Huawen Publisher 华文出版社, 1997), 195-266,.

[90] I found this in Yu's introduction, 53. Tanaka Kenji 田中謙二 and Arai Ken 荒井健, "西游記の文 學 *Xiyouji*'s Literature," in 中國の八大小說 *China's Eight Novels* (Tokyo: 大阪市立大学文学部中国文学研究室 Chinese Literature Research Center of Osaka City University, 1965), 193.

[91] Zhu Tong 朱彤, "On the Monkey Sun Wukong" 论孙悟空," *Journal of Anhui Normal University* 安徽师范大学学报 1 (1978): 68-79.

[92] Tianya juwen 天涯 juwen, *Unspoken Rules in the Journey to the West* 西游记潜规则 (Ningxia People's Publisher 宁夏人民出版社, 2009).

[93] See for example: Francisca Cho Bantly, "Buddhist Allegory in the Journey to the West," in *Journal of Asian Studies* 48 (1989): 512-24; Qiancheng Li 李前程, *Fictions of Enlightenment: Journey to the West*, *Tower of Myriad Mirrors*, and *Dream of the Red Chamber*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004; Ping Shao 邵平, "Huineng, Subhūti, and Monkey's Religion in Xiyou ji." *Journal of Asian Studies* 65 (2006): 713-4; Richard G. Wang 王岗, "*The Journey to the West*: A Complete Process of the Daoist Internal Alchemy 西游记： 一个完整的道教内丹修炼过程" in *Tsing Hua Journal of Chinese Studies* 25 (1995): 51-86.

三藏法师传 (688), which was completed over twenty years after his death, lies in his confusion about the translations and interpretations of the Buddhist scriptures, and his subsequent determination to obtain the canon in its original language. Despite the portraiture of a Tripitaka who is often lost in interpretation in this 1592 version of the scripture-fetching story, (which is in a sense itself an interpretation of the historical scripture-fetching legend), he is actually called in the book by the title "loyal, valiant Buddhist Monk of the Great Interpretation 忠心赤胆大阐法师" (Chapter 13).[94] As the scripture-fetching history originates from the problem in reading and translating, its best-known literary version, the *Journey to the West* produced almost 900 years later, also turns out to be a conundrum in reading and understanding. In the designation of Tripitaka—the "loyal, valiant Buddhist Monk of the Great Interpretation 忠心赤胆大阐法师," the character that stands for "interpretation" is "Chan 阐," whose root is related to "Men 门"— the door. By explaining a text, we open the door to the text, and undeniably, there are other doors—numerous doors that remain to be opened.

I will cite Frank Kermode's last few lines in his study of illumination and illusion in biblical hermeneutics, as the conclusion for my chapters, which, to be sure, feed upon their own folly and short-lived insight, if there were any—

> World and book, it may be, are hopelessly plural, endlessly disappointing; we stand alone before them, aware of their arbitrariness and impenetrability, knowing that they may be narratives only because of our impudent intervention, and susceptible of interpretation only by our hermetic tricks. Hot for secrets, our only conversation may be with guardians who know less and see less than we can; and our sole hope and pleasure is in the perception of a momentary radiance, before the door of disappointment is finally shut on us.[95]

[94] Yu translates this title as "a loyal and valiant master," see Yu, Vol. 1, 294.
[95] Kermode, *The Genesis of Secrecy: On the Interpretation of Narrative* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1979), 145.

Afterword

CHINESE-WESTERN COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

Its Origin, Development, and Future.

The study of China in the United States can probably be traced to its ambition that was related to religious propagation. The two Protestant missionaries sent by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, Elijah Coleman Bridgman (1801-1861) and Samuel Wells Williams (1812-1884), while teaching and translating the Bible during their stay in China, had launched the monthly journal *The Chinese Repository* (1832-1851), served as founding members of the American Oriental Society that was established in Boston in 1842, and assisted in Sino-United States negotiation, which culminated in the 1844 Treaty of Wanghsia. After his return from China in 1877, Williams was appointed Professor of Chinese at Yale University—the first professor of Chinese at any American university. In 1896 the University of California (Berkeley) founded the second professorship of Chinese, followed by Columbia University in 1902 due in part to the donation of Dean Lung as well as General Marcel Carpentier, who contributed in honor of his Chinese valet, Lung. By 1931 when L. C. Goodrich, who was then a graduate student at Columbia and would later become the Dean Lung Professor of Chinese, overviewed the state of Chinese studies developed in North America, more than a hundred colleges across the nation were offering from one to five courses related to China.[1] "The United States was still, in some ways, afflicted with growing pains, and had yet to solve the problem of digesting all parts of its (China's) huge territory, and its conglomerate population," as Goodrich describes the aspiration of the discipline in the review.[2] In

[1] L. C. Goodrich, "Chinese Studies in the United States," in *Chinese Social and Political Review* 15 (1931): 75; Goodrich has referred to *China and Japan in Our University Curricula*, edited by Edward C. Carter, American Council Institute of Pacific Relations, 1929.
[2] Ibid., 73.

order to "digest" China's vast territory and population, if we continue with Goodrich's use of metaphor, Chinese studies nevertheless showed its priority of appetite and observed a sequence in its consumption. Research and curricula offerings in history, philosophy, religion, and politics, with their various ramifications in terms of period and research angle, took the lead in Chinese studies. Although fine translations of Chinese poetry and prose-fiction had been made available by Arthur Waley as well as by Ezra Pound in the first half of the 20th century, systematic study of Chinese literature did not take place until the end of World War II. It was in the 1960s, strictly speaking, when the first generation of scholars specializing in Chinese literature were hired in the East Asian departments in the United States. There were Patrick Hanan (Harvard), working on vernacular fiction, Yu-kung Kao (Princeton), on classical poetry, C. T. Hsia (Columbia), on modern novel, James J. Y. Liu (Stanford), on classical poetry and poetics, and Cyril Birch (Berkeley), on vernacular fiction and drama. In 1961, the first book-length study of the Chinese novel written in the 20th century appeared, and it is followed by the equally epoch-making survey of the premodern Chinese vernacular fiction published by Hsia in 1968. In 1975 when James Liu issued his handy introduction to the theories in Chinese poetics, *Chinese Theories of Literature*, he also overviewed the state of the study of Chinese literature in *The Journal of Asian Studies*. "The first and most obvious trend in the study of Chinese literature in the West is the remarkable growth of the field," as he notes, "whether we speak in terms of the number of scholars specializing in it; number of published and unpublished works devoted to it; or number of conferences, seminars, and workshops concerned with it."[3] The expansion of the field was fast and considerable, and what was implied in this expansion was "a growing tendency to recognize the study of Chinese literature as a discipline in itself"—"not the study of literary texts as social documents or linguistic data."[4] The lesser explored genres, namely, the vernacular prose-fiction and drama, which had not become an object of study until the New Culture

[3] Liu, "The Study of Chinese Literature in the West: Recent Development, Current Trends, Future Prospects," in *The Journal of Asian Studies* 35 (1975): 21.
[4] Ibid., 22.

Movement advanced in the 1910s in China, also began to receive scholarly attention in the 1960s in American academia.[5] In August 1979, a Conference on East-West Comparative Literature was held at the Chinese University of Hong Kong;[6] several months earlier in April, a delegation sent by the PRC government that included Qian Zhongshu, visited Columbia, Harvard, Yale, Michigan, Berkeley, and Stanford, the first time since 1949; the first journal dedicated to Chinese literature, *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews (CLEAR),* published its first issue earlier, in January 1979. A new academic field has been created.

"American interest in China seems at its peak, in need more than ever of sober and informed expositions of Chinese culture," the two editors of *CLEAR*, Eugene Eoyang and William H. Nienhauser, wrote in the opening remarks of the journal's first issue.[7] The era of "willfully idiosyncratic pedagogy—exotic matter eccentrically presented—is coming to an end," as the two editors observed, and it would be replaced by "a new generation of students of Chinese literature: heirs of nineteenth century European philology (known in its Chinese guise as 'Sinology'); protégés of Chinese *savants* who brought their personal brand of insight and instruction out of China; legatees of the tradition of literary analysis and exposition, marking the best of American academic studies of literature."[8] The 1970s and 1980s, to be sure, witnessed important anthologies and translations such as *The Journey to the West* (1977-1983), *The Dream of Red Chamber* (1973-1980), *The Peony Pavilion* (1980), and *Wen Xuan* (1982-1996), the full translation of the first anthology of poetry and history compiled in the early 6th century; publication of the ambitious encyclopedia, the *Indiana Companion to Traditional Chinese Literature* (1986); as well as the emergence of the second generation of scholars of Chinese literature: Andrew Plaks, Stephen Owen, Pauline Yu, Anthony C. Yu, Robert E. Hegel, Victor H. Mair, Wilt L. Idema, Paul W. Kroll, Stephen H. West, Ronald Egan, and Kang-

[5] Ibid., 22-3.
[6] A proceedings was compiled after this conference. See *Chinese-Western Comparative Literature: Theory and Strategy*, edited by John J. Deeney, Hong Kong: Chinese U of Hong Kong P, 1980. See also its book review by John Timothy Wixted, *The Journal of Asian Studies* 43 (1984): 312-3.
[7] "Forward," *CLEAR* 1(1979): 1.
[8] Ibid., 1.

I Sun Chang, among others. But if this 1979 statement in *CLEAR* is tinted with a streak of rosy excitement at the new field, C. T. Hsia's meditation on the reception of the pre-20th century Chinese literature ten years later, which is included in the 1988 issue of *CLEAR*, does not conceal his own disappointment at the lukewarm response of the American audience. "We cannot honestly say," Hsia writes:

> that there has ever been a general public in the West for classical Chinese literature. In the absence of a general public, classical literature has not done as well in sales. We can certainly say that reader interest has not been dramatically stimulated by the fine series of translations that have appeared in the last three decades. Once upon a time Chinese poetry as translated by Ezra Pound and Arthur Waley became news to poets and serious readers of modern poetry in England and America. […] it is my impression that, though its (the *Journey to the West*'s) cloth and paperbound editions must be doing quite well, this monumental translation remains for the time being a book read and consulted mainly by students of Chinese and Asian literature, and has made no impact on the teachers and critics of Western literature at large, let alone the general public. Despite their abundant humor and satire, the many adventures of Tripitaka and his animal disciples follow the same narrative pattern and can become tedious. In fiction as in poetry, the age of tantalizing discovery has been succeeded by one of total translation, and the once hungry reader is now overfed and appears jaded.[9]

To Hsia's disappointment, the "once hungry reader," who had shown great curiosity about Waley's abridged translations of Chinese literature, such as the *Journey to the West*, is now "overfed" and bored with the newly-released full renditions, which are supposed to be equally phenomenal, if not more. But why does Chinese literature fail to attract a larger audience in America? Hsia then sets out to track the reasons. In addition to the lack of attention from "eminent critics of poetry or scholars such as George Steiner, John Updike, and Gore Vidal,"[10] who could have reviewed and

[9] "Classical Chinese Literature: Its Reception Today as a Product of Traditional Culture," *CLEAR* 10 (1988): 136-8.
[10] Ibid., 138.

even promoted classical Chinese literature, Hsia attributes its failure largely to its own inherent value. "Even to a Chinese like myself," Hsia confesses, "Chinese literature of the imperial period suffers in comparison with European literature since the Renaissance because it is not fortified with a humanistic idealism and cultivates a selfish lyrical mode that ultimately appears tiring or cloying."[11] In Hsia's reading, the pre-20th century Chinese literature—a product of the authoritarian, misogynist premodern China—more or less mirrors the culture of that society. Themes appearing in the Chinese masterworks, such as selling the daughter or killing the wife in order to fulfill conventional expectations, while reflecting the "callous and absurd cruelty of that society," simply go against modern values that underline justice and equality.[12] "After reading more widely in Chinese history and becoming better informed about traditional Chinese society in recent years," as Hsia continues, "I find the religious messages in even the best Chinese novels and plays cowardly and depressed since the wakened heroes invariably have to give up their earlier dreams of romantic happiness or of a better world before they can supposedly find peace and enlightenment."[13] Recognizing its "apparent failure to capture a larger world-wide audience,"[14] Hsia consigns readership of the traditional Chinese literature to the field of scholarship on Chinese literature. As it does not contribute to modern thought, premodern Chinese literature, it seems, whose value is largely historical, has its future in the hands of a small circle of specialists-academics. Hsia concludes:

> More recent translators of classical literature, knowing the utter unlikelihood that their work could attract the general public, have gone to the other extreme of providing immaculate translations with ample notes and other scholarly aids for the specialists. […] Western sinologist should concentrate on scholarship and criticism and forgo the dream of cashing in on the potential popularity of classical literature.[15]

[11] Ibid., 142.
[12] Ibid., 150.
[13] Ibid., 146.
[14] Ibid., 152.
[15] Ibid., 139; 141.

Since it is no longer easy to "cash in" on the potential popularity of the novel of even an accomplished contemporary writer, and since the field of literary studies in American academia has recently been occupied by the historicist/contextualist paradigm, which is known for academic specialization,[16] Hsia's prediction of the prospects of classical Chinese literature, with the benefit of hindsight now over 30 years later, seems correct. We may object to his judgment of premodern Chinese literature, invoking the subverting force of use of irony appearing in Chinese literature and refusing to conflate aesthetic value with social significance, poets with activists, but Hsia nevertheless has raised a serious question regarding the study of Chinese literature—and Chinese studies. How do we bring Chinese literature to broader audiences, if not attract the general public? Instead of retreating into the high tower, pretending that we are recovering a corner of the past we study, which could only be communicative to a handful of specialists, do we have better means?

In a rather commonsensical way, I think that transmission of Chinese literature has everything to do with interpretation of Chinese literature. When Hsia blames the backward nature of classical Chinese literature, what he blames, after all, is his own interpretation that stands external to classical Chinese literature. As early as 1979, in an issue of *CLEAR*, Stephen Owen, while responding to Paul W. Kroll's book review of his *Poetry of the Early Tang* (1977), has suggested alternatives in presenting traditional Chinese materials. If Kroll's critique represents the old sinological approach to the Chinese text, where "full annotation and explicit presentation of all the details" are demanded,[17] what Owen tries to achieve, which should be a "genre of literary scholarship" different from the sinological-philological approach, is to include "broader contexts which are as much a part of understanding a text as the concerns of traditional annotation."[18] In Owen's eyes, traditional sinological scholarship is "doomed to a narrowness and fragmentation and will ultimately be destructive to the understanding of individual poems;"[19] his

[16] Joseph North, *Literary Criticism: A Concise Political History* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 2017), 1-2; 95.
[17] Owen, "A Defense," *CLEAR* 1 (1979): 257.
[18] Ibid., 257.
[19] Ibid., 258.

Traditional Chinese Poetry and Poetics (1985), which we examined in the first chapter, to be sure, has shown what he means by "broader contexts"—his willingness to engage with broader audiences. Owen's argument with Kroll, to put it in a broader context, is the argument between comparative literature and national literature, between comparatist and sinologist, and between generalist and specialist.[20] The primary goal of comparative literature is to break the boundaries of national languages—it "arose as a reaction against the narrow nationalism of much 19th century scholarship, as a protest against the isolation of many historians of French, German, Italian, English, etc., literature"[21] —including Chinese literature. Hsia's instinct to call for reviewers such as George Steiner, I think, is in part an instinct to call for the comparative approach to Chinese literature.

To introduce the foreign Other, the previously unknown Chinese materials, to break free of the isolation of Sinology, and to bring Chinese literature to broader audiences, the study of Chinese literature now has created a new comparative branch. One may argue that Sinology is inherently comparative because it always already involves translation; one may also invoke Hsia's pioneering study of the premodern vernacular fiction, where comparison is abundant,[22] but it is not until 1976, when Andrew Plaks's *Archetype and Allegory in the Dream of the Red Chamber* appeared, that the approach to Chinese literature with an explicit East-West comparative framework, came to the fore. In hindsight, when Plaks declares that Chinese literature does not share the same concept of "allegory" with the West—a thesis that was afterwards reaffirmed by Owen, Pauline Yu, Yeh, Liang Shi, Jullien,

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[20] These two approaches in literary studies have parallels in translation. Do we take literal translation that is close to the original language, or literary translation that stands close to the target language? Owen also discusses his disagreement with Kroll over the issue of translation, see 258-60. Kroll just published a short article on his renewed statement on translation, see "Translation, *or* Sinology: Problems of Aims and Results," in *Journal of American Oriental Society* 138 (2018): 559-65. While Kroll has retained his reservation for the so-called "literary translation," which is in his eyes imprecise, populist, and derivative (561), W. J. F. Jenner, in commenting his predecessor Anthony Yu's translation of the *Journey to the West*, writes: "The last thing it (the *Journey*) needed was the sort of laboured translation that pushed its scholarly credentials down the reader's throat. Nothing had to get in the way of its exuberant storytelling. The English had to disappear into the story." See https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/journeys-to-the-east-journey-to-the-west/

[21] René Wellek, "The Crisis of Comparative Literature" (1959), in *The Princeton Sourcebook in Comparative Literature*, 165.

[22] See my third chapter.

and the most recent *Oxford Very Short Introduction to Chinese literature*,[23] just to name a few—he is striving to join the broader trend of criticism in American academia, where the interest in "allegory" has been rekindled by Paul de Man's recurrent use of the term. When Plaks and Anthony Yu associate Dante's "allegory of theologians/allegory of poets" with the *Journey to the West*, what they intend to achieve, I think, is in part to bring this Chinese quest-romance into the world canon of theological allegory. This kind of comparative maneuver has since the 90s been under attack by the new generation of academics. It is methodically self-selective and self-serving, politically Eurocentric, enjoying an essentialist epistemology and a fake sense of cosmopolitism.[24] "Viewed from the standpoint of similarity, the examples in the catalogue would all amount to the same thing; […] Viewed from the standpoint of difference, it is likely that no two examples would reveal precisely the same set of meanings, the same implications, the same function in the work where they occur;"[25] but "rarely do critics stop and ponder what the gesture of comparing consists in, amounts to, realizes and reinforces,"[26] as the theorists say. Now comparative literature is dominated by a heightened sensibility to the too-easy pitfalls and the ineligible premises in comparing. East-West comparison, it seems, is at best commended for its good intentions and arduous effort. Younger generations may be discouraged and retreat into the safer areas of national literatures and cultural studies. But this heightened self-awareness, which is amplified in comparing yet certainly not limited to the discipline of comparative literature, should never be taken as a rationale for forfeiting the discipline; it instead should be a caution passed down from our predecessors against less refined comparative endeavor. Chinese-Western comparative study does not end here—but begins here.

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[23] Liang Shi, "The Leopard skin of Dao and the Icon of Truth: Natural Birth versus Mimesis in Chinese and Western Literary Theories," *Comparative Literature Studies* 31 (1994), 148-164; Sabina Knight, *Chinese Literature: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford UP, 2012, 4; 31.
[24] See for example, *Sinographies*, U of Minnesota P, 2008; *Comparison: Theories, Approaches, Uses,* Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 2013 (most of its articles had appeared in the 2009 issue of *New Literary History*).
[25] Haun Saussy, "Comparing Themes and Images," in *Introducing Comparative Literature: New Trends and Applications*, Routledge, 2015, 72.
[26] Rey Chow, "The Old/New Question of Comparison in Literary Studies: A Post-European Perspective," in *ELH* 71 (2004): 290.

Among the many easy pitfalls in comparison, the foremost error-prone trajectory of thought is to ask about the existence of the Chinese counterpart to a given Western idea. Does China have the Western sense of allegory? Does Chinese literature have religious elements? More often than not, such questions will reflect the current topics of interest in the Western debate, which are reminiscent of the Jesuits' puzzlement over whether or not Chinese people could comprehend the transcendental idea of God,[27] the philosopher's question concerning their capacity for logic and abstraction, and the sociologist's musing on the absence of science in China. These are valid and important questions to brood upon, even though they suffer from postcolonial criticism because of their Western perspective. But in our effort to answer these questions, we should pay attention to the ways we select and interpret our supporting evidence: Confronting the vast materials that have been accumulated for centuries, we are prone to myopia. Denying the existence of the Western sense of allegory in Chinese poetics, Plaks, for example, resorts to the Daoist monistic vision, while Owen invokes the strand of poetics informed by the Daoist vision. Affirming the presence of religious inspiration in Chinese literature, Yu traces the Daoist sources appearing in the *Journey to the West* and interprets this Chinese fiction as a religious allegory that is not unlike the *Divine Comedy*.[28] Both dramatic opposition and neat identification between two cultures incur suspicion. More often than not, similarities and differences coexist, with qualifications.

Another recent pattern that can be observed from Chinese-Western comparative studies is the implied resistance to the deconstructive (postmodern) criticism. What de Man criticizes, the mystification of language which is founded on the visionary merging of the subject and object, for example, had been perceived as a "unique" feature in the Chinese poetic imagination. Plaks's and Yu's doctrinal interpretations of the *Journey to the West*, while echoing the commentary tradition

[27] This is a point first advanced by Saussy, see Chapter I.
[28] Yu is responding to David Hawkes's denial of the "religious inspiration" in Chinese literature. See "Religion and Literature in China: The 'Obscure Way' of the *Journey to the West*," in *Comparative Journeys: Essays on Literature and Religion East and West*, Columbia UP, 2008, 117-36. (This article had also appeared in *Tradition and Creativity: Essays on East Asian Civilization*, Rutgers: State U of New Jersey, 1987, 109-53.)

of the *Journey* prior to the 20th century, seem rather anachronistic given the rise of the deconstructive readings of Dante and Spenser. The "Chinese allegory" that is exemplified by the *Journey*, I suspect, is, in Yu's and Plaks's readings, close to Singleton's definition of the "allegory of theologians," where allegory is not constructed but "comes forth with the immediacy of reality" which is beyond rhetoric—a writing mode that is not dissimilar to the symbolist aesthetics.[29] One may wonder whether it is because China attracts conservative minds, who would use the Chinese material as a veil to challenge postmodernism,[30] or it is because Chinese culture is prone to be mystified? "But," as Hsia warns his reader, "while for dealers in traditional Chinese art, it is in their interest to perpetuate the myth of a serene and aesthetically refined China so as to attract more customers, we as teachers of Chinese literature in the Western world should find it ignoble to perpetuate the myths of old China or invent new ones so as to lure more students to our subject."[31] To use the imagery in the *Journey*, although things worth a hundred pennies on this side of the river can fetch a hundred times more on the other side,[32] we serious scholars, should not be complicit in a proclivity toward idealizing the foreign Other.

In vouching for the inevitability of comparison, George Steiner writes, "to read is to compare."[33] As the discipline of Comparative Literature now boasts its self-reflexive mode of reading that underscores its own implications, blind spots, and assumptions,[34] new models of conducting East-West comparative literature have been suggested. Saussy, for example, proposes a reexamination of the

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[29] See my discussion of the theological/poetic allegory in Chapter III.
[30] See David Palumbo-Liu, "The Utopias of Discourse: On the Impossibility of Chinese Comparative Literature," *CLEAR* 14 (1992): 165-76. See also Jonathan Chaves, "Soul and Reason in Literary Criticism: Deconstructing the Deconstructionists," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 122 (2002): 828-35.
[31] Hsia, "Classical Chinese Literature: Its Reception Today as a Product of Traditional Culture," 151.
[32] See my Chapter IV.
[33] I cite from Ben Hutchinson, *Comparative Literature: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford UP, 2018, 3.
[34] For example, see Hutchinson 4; Ming Xie, "What does the Comparative Do for Theory?" *PMLA* 128 (2013): 675-82.

historical interaction between China and the West,[35] while Damrosch, taking another route, points to the circulation of masterpieces in translation in a world context.[36] Like fine translations, thoughtful comparative works may escape theoretical prescriptions, but siding with Owen, I think a fruitful study of Chinese literature, while founded in philological rigor, has to engage with the "broader contexts."[37] Following in the footsteps of Richards, Empson, Wellek, and Joseph North, I also believe that literary scholarship has its primacy in examining the aesthetic value—the "literariness" of literature. Rather than harping on literature's indebtedness to history, philosophy, and religion, shall we flip this paradigm of thinking and explore literature's rewritings of philosophy and history—history and religion's indebtedness to literature?

Toward the end of this afterword, I intend to invoke the example of I. A. Richards, the "father of academic criticism,"[38] perhaps not only in the West, but also in China. A friend of Hu Shih, though probably critical of his revolutionary outlook, Richards had taught in the English Department at Tsinghua University since the fall of 1929, the year when Qian Zhongshu was enrolled as an undergraduate majoring in English.[39] In his 1932 *Mencius on the Mind*, which was published a year after he left Peking, Richards explores the "indefinite use of language"[40] in the lines of *Mencius*, and calls for attention to the ambiguity in the overall "linguistic situations,"[41] that is not limited to the Chinese case. It is certainly not the case that Richards did not perpetuate the China-West contrast, which can be traced to Voltaire's praise or Montesquieu's condemnation of China, or the most recent

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[35] See his "Always Multiple Translation, Or, How the Chinese Language Lost its Grammar" in *Tokens of Exchange: The Problem of Translation in Global Circulations*, edited by Lydia H. Liu, Durham: Duke UP, 1999, 107. This suggestion has been implemented in his monograph, *Great Walls of Discourse and Other Adventures in Cultural China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 2002; and his edited book, *Sinographies: Writing China*, U of Minnesota P, 2007.
[36] David Damrosch, "Global Comparison and the Question of Language," *PMLA* 128 (2013): 622-8.
[37] Owen, "A Defense," 258.
[38] Q. S. Tong, "I. A. Richards and His Basic English," in *Tokens of Exchange,* 331.
[39] Li Cao, "Cambridge Critics and China: An Introduction," *The Cambridge Quarterly* 41 (2012): 10.
[40] *Mencius on the Mind: Experiments in Multiple Definition*, London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., LTD, 1932, 8.
[41] Ibid., xi.

writings of G. L. Dickinson;[42] but as Richards discusses those peculiarities in the Chinese world, he almost always returns to similar problems and situations encountered in his own culture. Before the discussion of cross-cultural comparison, transnational communication, and translation studies, what lies more fundamental and hence deserves more attentiveness is, for Richards, the problems in the semantic possibility of language and in interpretation. Let us now end here with one of his very important admonitions to Chinese students—as well as to the students in the West:

> But to judge of these possibilities a Western reader will do best to consider them in connection with those aspects of our own problems—the teaching of English at home, in our schools and universities—which show most analogy with the troubles of the Chinese student. Montesquieu, Voltaire and Goldsmith knew one way of using the East to display the West. But there are others, and the reader will have noticed that only a part of the Chinese student's or any other foreign student's difficulties with English is peculiarly his. Inability to consider meanings *critically,* lack of training in systematic comparison and discrimination, a tendency to accommodate a passage to a preformed view rather than to examine it for itself, these are not unknown anywhere. Let us then examine them in the field in which we can most hope to understand them thoroughly.[43]

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[42] For Dickinson's influence on Richards, see Jason Harding, "Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson and the King's College Mandarins," *The Cambridge Quarterly* 41 (2012): 26-42; Q. S. Tong, "I. A. Richards and His Basic English," 332.

[43] "Sources of Conflict," in *So Much Nearer*, New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1968, 236-7.

Appendix I

If Socrates-Plato privileges plain language over rhetoric, and speech over writing, both Laozi and Zhuangzi deny the value of language in total. According to Laozi and Zhuangzi, language is not only unable to articulate the truth of the Dao but is also absent in the ideal condition where the Dao dominates and things become indistinguishable and merge into One (ie., 齐物玄同). "If all is One, what need is there for speech 既已为一矣，且得有言乎," *Zhuangzi* asks.[1] While the Daoist thinkers question the use of "speech 言," Confucius, on the other hand, advocates the necessity of refining the speech. The "Wen 文" that is mentioned above in the chapter—the character that signifies the refinement in both language and behavior—is considered in the *Analects* to be a much-needed quality in becoming a gentleman. In the two places where the Wen and its antonym, the "Zhi 质" are discussed in the *Analects*, the demand for a balance between the Wen and the Zhi is called for.[2] Responding to the contention that the Zhi is in itself adequate for a gentleman, one of Confucius's students compares the Zhi to the animal body that is stripped of fur. "Refinement is equal in worth to solid qualities, and solid qualities to refinement 文犹质也，质犹文也," as he confirms the value of refinement. In the ensuing justification,[3] his invocation of the lack of difference between the tiger and the dog that are stripped of fur has more or less established the understanding of the relationship between the refinement of the Wen and the Zhi that is deprived of any modification. As both the Wen and the Zhi are indispensable, the Wen grows outside the Zhi like the fur grows outside the body. In other words, not only the Zhi—the inner intention—is by implication recognized as imperfect perhaps even

[1] *Zhuangzi*, "Working Everything out Evenly 齐物论."
[2] *The Analects* 6. 18: "The Master said, Where solid qualities outweigh refinement, you have rusticity. Where refinement outweighs solid qualities, you have the clearkly style. Refinement and solid qualities beautifully balanced—then you have the gentleman. 子曰："质胜文则野，文胜质则史。文质彬彬，然后君子。" I use Watson's translation, Watson, 44.
[3] *The Analects* 12. 8: "Strip the hide of a tiger or a panther of its [patterned fur], and it is no different from that of a dog or a goat 虎豹之鞟犹犬羊之鞟." Watson, 82.

unseemly, it is also taken as the interiority that needs to be covered by rhetoric. Such a body-fur relationship between what's meant and what's said in the use of language prescribed in the *Analects*, is then developed by important theorists such as Wang Chong 王充 (27-97), who compares the Wen-Zhi relations to those of the leaves and roots, and Liu Xie, who sees the Wen as flowers that grow on the tree of the Zhi.[4] The aesthetics that regards the best poems as those whose "meaning lies outside the words 意在言外," an aesthetics that is championed by Mei Yaochen 梅尧臣 (1002-1060), Ouyang Xiu 欧阳修 (1007-1072),[5] Sima Guang 司马光 (1019-1086),[6] and Hu Zi 胡仔(1095-1170),[7] is arguably a reiteration of the Confucian recognition of the different functions of the Zhi and the Wen. For detailed accounts of the history of Chinese rhetoric, see 汉语修辞学史 [*History of Chinese Rhetoric*], 1995; 中国历代文论选 [*Selected Poetics in Chinese History*], 2001; and 中国修辞学史 [*History of Rhetoric in China*], 1991.

[4] See the "Qingcai 情采" chapter in *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*.

[5] Ouyang Xiu, *Liu Yi's Remarks on the Poems* 六一诗话，人民文学出版社 People's Literature Publishing House, 1962, 9: Mei Yaochen once told me: "Although poets rely on the meaning, yet it is still difficult to create a poem. If the meaning is new, language delicate, and the poem says something original, it will be a fine one. But it is those who could describe the landscape as if it were in front of the eyes, and contain the inexhaustible meaning outside the words, that are the best poems." 圣俞尝语余曰："诗家虽率意，而造语亦难。若意新语工，得前人所未道者，斯为善也。必能状难写之景，如在目前，含不尽之意，见于言外，然后为至矣。"

[6] Sima Guang, 温公续诗话 *Sima Guang's Remarks on the Poem*s: "While the ancient sages were writing a poem, they privileged the one whose meaning lies outside the words—the poem that will make the reader ponder on its meaning. In such a way, the speaker is not guilty and the listener is effectively alarmed. Among our recent poets, Du Fu is the one who has grasped the most of this. For example, 'The nation is broken while the mountain and river remain, / spring in the city, grass and woods grow deep. /Feeling this moment, flowers shed tears, / parting, birds startle the heart.'—That "the mountain and river remain" illustrates nothing is left; that "grass and woods grow deep" illustrates nobody is left; "flowers and birds," pleasurable things, are crying with sorrow—and we would know what kind of situation it is. There are so many examples like this, and I will not exhaust them. 古人为诗，贵于意在言外，使人思而得之，故言之者无罪，闻之者足以戒也。近世诗人，为杜子美最得诗人之体，如 '国破山河在，城春草木深。感时花溅泪，恨别鸟惊心。' 山河在，明无余物矣；草木深，明无人矣；花鸟，平时可娱之物，见之而泣，闻之而悲，则时可知矣。他皆类此，不可遍举。"

[7] Hu Zi's comment on Du Mu 杜牧 in 苕溪渔隐丛话后集 *Anthology of Poetics by the Fisherman-Hermit in Shaoxi*: "This poem is supreme. The meaning is outside the words, and the secret regret manifests itself without being openly spoken of. Poetry is privileged because of this. If one can see through the meaning immediately, what's the point in writing it! 此绝句极佳，意在言外，而幽怨之情自见，不待明言之也。诗贵夫如此，若使人一览而尽，亦何足道哉。"

Appendix II

The Printed Preface to the *Journey to the West*
Written by Chen Yuanzhi of Moling (Nanjing)

The Grand Historian said: "The heavenly Dao is vast and all-encompassing, isn't it! Subtle, trivial speech which is aligned with the Dao also can resolve disputes."[1] Zhuangzi said: "The Dao is in shit and in piss."[2] These sentences are well-said in establishing speech. Hence, "how can the Dao go away and not exist? How can the speech exist and not be acceptable?"[3] If one imposes the rule of solemn and elegant speech, the book of the *Journey* will be lost.

Nobody knows who wrote the *Journey*. Some have claimed that it originated from the domain of a prince's household; others, from the likes of the "Eight Squires;" still others, that a prince himself created it.[4] When I look at its meaning, it appears to be a champion of unconventional wit, a composition of overflowing chatter.[5]

The old edition has a preface, which I had read once. The preface does not include the name of the author. Is it because he is not fond of the book's "vulgar speech?"[6] The preface interprets the monkey as the spirit of the Mind; the horse as the coursing of the Will; the pig (Zhu Bajie, the eight precepts) as the Wood of the Liver's vapor; the sand monk as the Water of the Spleen's vapor; Tripitaka (the Three Stores of spirit, sound and vapor) as the Master of the Mind; and the demons as the obstructions of

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[1] The sentence is directly cited from "The Biographical Accounts of the Witty Courtiers 滑稽列传" in *Shiji* 史记. Sima Qian's phrase, "vast and all-encompassing 天道恢恢" echoes the phrase "the net of heaven is vast, woven so vast and wide open nothing slips through 天网恢恢疏而不漏" in Chapter 73 of *Tao Te Ching* 道德经. I follow David Hinton's translation of Laozi here: 112.

[2] Citation from Chapter 22, "Knowledge Wandered North 知北游," *Zhuangzi*.

[3] Citation from Chapter 2, "Discussion on Making All Things Equal 齐物论," *Zhuangzi*. I have referred to Watson's translation of *Zhuangzi* here: 9-10.

[4] I use Yu's rendering in this sentence, see Yu's 2012 introduction, 26-7. Yu's translation begins from the sentence before this one to "it takes the book as a plain allegory." For the gloss of the "eight squires," see his footnote, 490.

[5] The word "滑稽" appears in this sentence: I translated it as the "witty courtiers" as the chapter title of *Shiji*, but here I translate it as "wit."
The phrase "卮言漫衍 [overflowing chatter]" first appears in Chapter 27, "寓言 [Lodged Speech]" in the "miscellaneous chapters 杂篇" (which are believed to be written by the Han Daoist thinkers,) in *Zhuangzi*. In this chapter, speech is said to be divided into three kinds: 1) yu yan 寓言 (speech that is lodged by meanings, or speech temporarily dwelled with meanings which are beyond the literal sense of the words); 2) chong yan 重言 (speech that is already said, or quotations); and 3) zhi yan 卮言 (mindless speech, overflowing chatter, which is in line with the workings of the Natural Way of the Dao). I have referred to Yu's translation in this sentence. See also Watson's translation of this chapter in *Zhuangzi*, pp. 234-8.

[6] "丘里之言 [vulgar speech]" first appears in Chapter 25, "Zeyang 则阳" in *Zhuangzi*.

the fears, distortions and fantasies produced by one's mouth, ears, nose, tongue, body, and will. Hence, the demons are born of the Mind, and they are also subdued by the Mind. Hence, to subdue the Mind is to subdue the demons, and to subdue the demons is to return to the Principle. To return to the Principle is to return to the Primal Beginning, which is the Mind without anything more to subdue.

The preface reads the book as how the Dao is achieved; it takes the book as a plain allegory (lodged speech)! The preface reads the book as ways to cultivate the Great Elixir, which is generated in the East and achieved in the West. Hence, it is the account of the West. It takes that one cannot use solemn speech in a corrupt world, and hence, he reacts perfunctorily in this transitory world.[7] Perfunctory reaction cannot teach, and hence, he uses subtle speech to convey the Dao. The speech of the Dao cannot be vulgar, and hence, he uses unbridled wit that will give rise to laughter. Wit cannot be seen by the world, and hence, he dwells on analogy to illuminate his intention. Therefore, its speeches are unusual, strange, absurd, and boundless.[8] Yet subtle trivial speech contains the author's pride and contempt for the world, and it should not be lost.

Tang Guanglu[9] purchased this book. Finding it marvelous, he asked people to edit it, put it in order, and prepare for its woodblocks. The book has twenty volumes, with over hundred-thousand words. He asked me to write a preface for it. As it follows the style of Sima Qian and Zhuangzi, and as I do not want to see the abandonment of what has been kept, (let alone the books that are in line with your thoughts,[10]) the preface I wrote takes the place the lost one. Not wanting to see the loss of the author's intention, I hope the future generations can see it, and they can "grasp its meaning while forgetting its words."[11]

Someone once said: "These are words in the wilderness, not the writings of a gentleman.[12] The book cannot be taken as history since it is not true; it cannot be taken as philosophy since it does not follow order; and it cannot be taken as talking about the Dao since it is almost false. I am ashamed of you." I say: "No, No! it's not the case. Is your history all true? Does your philosophy all follow order? Are your history and philosophy all in line with the Dao? Once there is something that either is not true or does not follow order, they are close to falsehood. If they are close to falsehood, they are not far from this book. How do I determine this?"

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[7] "委蛇 [to react perfunctorily]" echoes a phrase in Chapter 7, "Fit for Emperors and Kings 应帝王" in *Zhuangzi*.

[8] "谬悠荒唐 [absurd]" and "端崖涯涘 [boundless]" echo the phrases in Chapter 33, "The World 天下" in *Zhuangzi*.

[9] Tang is said to be the owner of the publishing house Shi De Tang 世德堂 [Hall of World Virtue], which issued the 1592 edition of the *Journey*.

[10] "中虑 [in line with one's words]" echoes a phrase from the *Analects* 18. 8.

[11] "得意忘言 [to grasp the meaning while forgetting the words]" echoes a phrase in Chapter 26, "External Things 外物" in *Zhuangzi*.

[12] "东野 [wilderness]" echoes a phrase in the *Mencius*.

Hence, from the perspective of the Great Dao, all should not have existed. From the perspective of Heaven and Earth, nothing is not included. Hence your perspective of what is false might be false; and my perspective of what is false might be false. What humans consider to be false might not be what a non-human considers to be false. What is considered to be false by human and the falsehood are hence better to be kept. As we keep them, some people may find them to be true. The woodblocks are now ready, and I wrote this preface ahead of the book. The fourth day of May (a day before the Dragon Boat Festival) in the summer of 1592.

刊《西遊記》序

秣陵陳元之撰

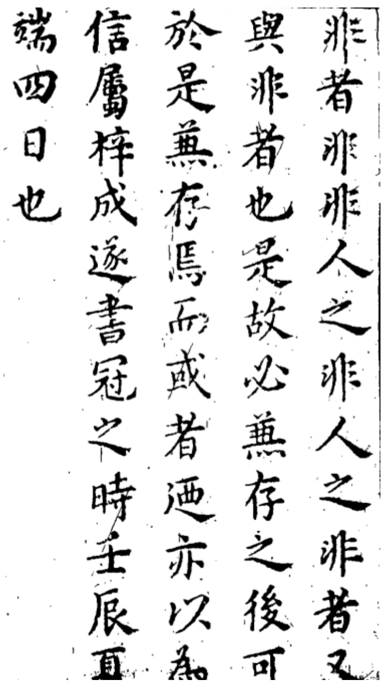
太史公曰：「天道恢恢，豈不大哉？ 譚言微中，亦可以解紛。 」莊子曰：「道在屎溺。 」善乎立言！ 是故「道惡乎往而不存，言惡乎存而不可。 」若必以莊雅之言求之，則幾乎遺。《西游》一書，不知其何人所為。 或曰出今天潢何侯王之國，或曰出八公之徒，或曰出王自製。 余覽其意近跅馳滑稽之雄，卮言漫衍之為也。舊有敘，余讀一過，亦不著其姓氏作者之名。 豈嫌其丘裡之言與？ 其敘以為猻，猻也，以為心之神；馬，馬也，以為意之馳；八戒，其所戒八也，以為肝氣之木；沙，流沙，以為腎氣之水；三藏，藏神藏聲藏氣之三藏，以為郛郭之主；魔，魔，以為口、耳、鼻、舌、身、意，恐怖顛倒幻想之障。 故魔以心生，亦心以攝。 是故攝心以攝魔，攝魔以還理。 還理以歸之太初，即心無可攝。此其以為道之成耳。 此其書直寓言者哉！ 彼以為大丹之數也，東生西成，故西以為紀。彼以為濁世不可以莊語也，故委蛇以浮世。 委蛇不可以為教也，故微言以中道。 理道之言不可以入俗也，故浪謔笑虐以恣肆。 笑謔不可以見世也，故流連比類以明意。 於是其言始參差而諔詭可觀，謬悠荒唐，無端崖涯涘，而譚言微中，有作者之心，傲世之意，夫不可沒已。唐光祿既購是書，奇之，益俾好事者為之訂校，秩其卷目梓之，凡二十卷，數十萬言有餘，而充敘于余。 余維太史漆園之意道之，所存不欲盡廢，況中慮者哉？ 故聊為綴其軼敘敘之，不欲其志之盡湮，而使後之人有覽，得其意忘其言也。或曰：「此東野之語，非君子所志。 以為史則非信，以為子則非倫，以言道則近誣，吾為吾子之辱。 」余曰：「否，否！ 不然。 子以為子之史皆信邪？ 子之子皆倫邪？ 子之子史皆中道邪？ 一有非信非倫，則子史之誣均；誣均則去此書非遠。 余何從而定之？ 」 故以大道觀，皆非所宜有矣。 以天地之大觀，何所不有哉？ 故以彼見非者，非也；以我見非者，非也。 人非人之非者，非非人之非。人之非者又與非者也, 是故必兼存之後可。於是兼存焉，而或者乃亦以為信。 屬梓成，遂書冠之。 時壬辰夏端四日也。

(Chen Yuanzhi’s preface in the 1592 edition, below)

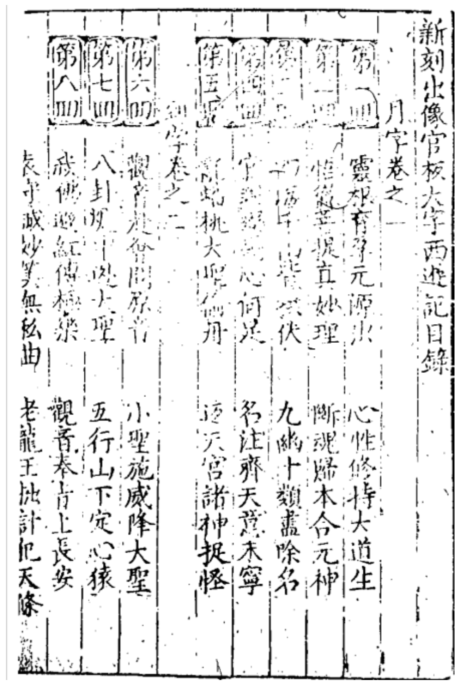
刊西遊記序

秣陵陳元之撰

太史公曰天道恢恢豈不大哉譚言微中亦可以解紛莊子曰道在屎溺善乎立言是故道惡乎往而不存言惡乎存而不可卷必以莊雅之言求之則幾乎遺西遊一書不知其何人所為或曰出今
天潢何侯王之國或曰出八公之徒或曰出
王自製余覽其意近跅弛滑稽之雄卮言漫衍之為也舊有叙余讀一過亦不著其姓氏作者之名豈嫌其丘里之言與其叙以為猻猻也以為心之神馬馬也以為意之馳八戒其所戒八也以為肝氣之木沙流沙以為腎氣之水三藏藏神藏聲藏氣之三藏以為郛郭之主魔魔以為口耳鼻舌身意恐怖顛倒幻想之障故魔以心生亦心以攝是故攝心以攝魔攝魔以還理還理以歸之太初即心無可攝此其以為道之成耳此其書直寓言者哉彼以為大丹之數也東生西成故西以為紀彼以為濁世不可以莊語也故委蛇以浮世委蛇不可以為教也故微言以中道理道之言不可以入俗也故浪謔笑虐以恣肆笑謔不可以見世也故流連比類以明意於是其言始參差而諔詭可觀謬悠荒唐無端崖涯涘而譚言微中有作者之心傲世之意夫不可沒已唐光祿既購是書奇之益俾好事者為之訂校秩其卷目梓之凡二十卷數十萬言有餘而充叙於余余維太史漆園之意道之所存不欲盡廢況中慮者哉故聊為綴其軼叙叙之不欲其志之盡湮而使後之人有覽得其意忘其言也或曰此東野之語非君子所志以為史則非信以為子則非倫以言道則近誣吾為吾子之序余曰否否不然子以為子之史皆信邪子之子皆倫邪子之子史皆中道邪一有非信非倫則子史之誣均誣均則去此書非遠余何從而定之故以大道觀皆非所宜有矣以天地之大觀何所不有哉故以彼見非者非也以我見非者非也人非人之



非者非非人之非人之非者又
與非者也是故必兼存之後可
於是兼存焉而或者洒亦以為
信屬梓成遂書冠之時壬辰夏
端四日也



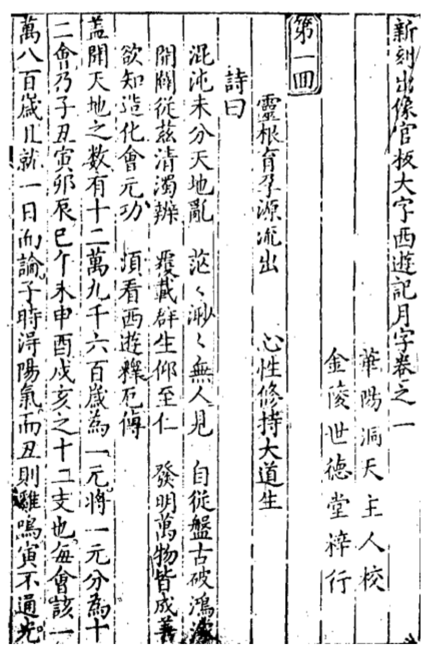
新刻出像官板大字西遊記目錄

月字卷之一

第一回 靈根育孕元源出　心性修持大道生
第二回 悟徹菩提真妙理　斷魔歸本合元神
第三回 [illegible]伏　九幽十類盡除名
第四回 官[illegible]心何足　名注齊天意未寧
第五回 亂蟠桃大聖偷丹　反天宮諸神捉怪

[illegible]字卷之二

第六回 觀音赴會問原因　小聖施威降大聖
第七回 八卦爐中逃大聖　五行山下定心猿
第八回 我佛造經傳極樂　觀音奉旨上長安
袁守誠妙算無私曲　老龍王拙計犯天條



新刻出像官板大字西遊記月字卷之一
華陽洞天主人校
金陵世德堂梓行

第一回
靈根育孕源流出　心性修持大道生

詩曰
混沌未分天地亂　茫茫渺渺無人見　自從盤古破鴻濛
開闢從茲清濁辨　覆載群生仰至仁　發明萬物皆成善
欲知造化會元功　須看西遊釋厄傳

蓋聞天地之數有十二萬九千六百歲為一元將一元分為十
二會乃子丑寅卯辰巳午未申酉戌亥之十二支也每會該一
萬八百歲且就一日而論子時得陽氣而丑則雞鳴寅不通光

Above on the right: first content page in the 1592 edition

Below: first page of Chapter 1 in the 1592 edition

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