

## ***Xiaoshuo yuebao* and the Introduction and Discussion of the West (1910–1914)\***

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China and the West, the clashes, responses and challenges presented by their meeting and connections have provided material for more than one study. For the Chinese, this meeting meant not only making the acquaintance of a different worldview: the physical and aggressive presence of Westerners of various nations made it necessary to come to terms with this worldview in a very direct manner. Since the middle of the nineteenth century, various official strategies had been formulated and Chinese scholars and reformers had voiced their opinions on the question of how to deal with the new situation. Studies to date have, naturally enough, tended to concentrate on these official sides of the story or on the ideas of unusually active or informed individuals. Thus central government policy or the thought of such leading figures as Yan Fu, Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao, Huang Zunxian, Zhang Jian have been investigated and portrayed, at times, in great detail.<sup>1</sup> Recently studies have been published that look into developments in the „middle realm“,<sup>2</sup> the realm of political journalism, and a new interest is developing with regard to the significance and workings of newspapers and journalists since the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>3</sup> Yet very little systematic attention

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1 See, for instance, Benjamin SCHWARTZ: *In Search of Wealth and Power: Yen Fu and the West*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press 1964; Kung-chuan HSIAO: *A Modern China and a New World: K'ang Yu-wei, Reformer and Utopian, 1858–1927*. Seattle: University of Washington Press 1975; CHANG Hao: *Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and Intellectual Transition in China, 1890–1907*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press 1971, or, more recently Xiaobing TANG: *Global Space and the Nationalist Discourse of Modernity. The Historical Thinking of Liang Qichao*. Stanford: Stanford University Press 1996; Noriko KAMACHI: *Reform in China. Huang Tsun-hsien and the Japanese Model*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press 1981; Samuel CHU: *Reformer in Modern China. Chang Chien 1853–1926*. New York: Columbia University Press 1965.

2 Joan JUDGE: *Print and Politics. 'Shibao' and The Culture of Reform in Late Qing China*. Stanford University Press 1996.

3 Professor Wagner's research group at the university of Heidelberg in Germany is carrying out very interesting and important work on the late Qing newspaper, *Shenbao* (申報). There have also been meetings at the University of Heidelberg which have discussed the development of the press and public opinion from the late Qing into the late republican era. Our own institute

has been paid to the literary magazines of the day and how they viewed and presented the West. The topic is, in itself, interesting since these magazines may well be expected to reflect the more „normal“ view of the situation, that is a view that was not particularly extreme and that was not pre-formed, or intended to be pre-formed, by any definite political tendency. Literary magazines, even despite some of their stated intentions, cannot have been conceived of first and foremost as a forum for outspoken or unusual political ideals. They may have seen and defined themselves as vehicles of social and/or political change, but they were voicing a certain consensus of opinion with regard to reform: we must not forget that they were commercial articles which were expected to sell.

This was the case with *Xiaoshuo yuebao* 小說月報, a publication of the Shangwu yinshuguan 商務印書館 or the Commercial Press of Shanghai, which was run on the basis of sound economic policy<sup>4</sup> and which, more importantly, proved to be a durable and a viable commercial product for some twenty years. This fact in itself must enable us to assume that the ideas presented to the readership did not annoy it or run desperately contrary to the ideas it was willing to consider: there are no letters of protest to the editors<sup>5</sup> and sales continue to grow. Thus contributions must have been found to be either entertaining or informative, or a mixture of both. The texts published in the magazine that touch upon matters relating to the West may well be characterised as blending these two qualities: they are seldom frivolous or of a kind that delight in making fun of the foreigner or the foreign, there is no attempt to vilify or force the foreign into any simplified or simplistic mould and thus make it a more easily assimilable entity. Discussions of foreign concepts are often linked with an appraisal of the situation at home. There is never a call for an out-and-out imitation of foreign models, but there is a regular invitation to consider and compare.

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in Marburg has been studying the early twentieth-century anarchist journal, *Tianyi bao* (天義報) and a study of the vernacular journal of Anhui, *Anhui suhuabao* (安徽俗話報), is also underway.

See also Stephen R. MACKINNON: „Towards a History of the Chinese Press in the Republican Period“, in: *Modern China*, Volume 23, Number 1, January 1997, pp.3–32. MacKinnon's bibliography, especially, offers a good survey of monographs and articles in Chinese, Japanese and in Western languages.

4 See Jean-Pierre DRÈGE: *La Commercial Press de Shanghai 1897–1949*. Collège de France, Institut des Hautes Études Chinoises 1978.

5 In the five years surveyed (1910–1914), only two instances of direct comment or, at least, editors' reactions to direct comments from the readership could be found. One is positive and the other negative. In the former case, someone appears to be commenting on how much he was touched by the publication of two stories in 1911; in the latter there had been some protest at the publication in 1913 of a travelogue, in diary form, to the western regions (*Ximeng youji* 系盟游記), a critical look at customs and education in Mongolia. See *XSYB* 4, no.10. For the positive comments, see „The Boy Who Sold Medicine“ (*Mai yao tong* 賣藥童, year 2, no. 1; „The Sparking Axe“ (*Huohua fu* 火花斧), year 2, no. 10.

The invitation to consider and compare – basically an invitation to think about oneself, the state of one's country and its institutions – can come as no real surprise if one considers those who were involved in the writing and the editing of the magazine. If one examines the lives and aspirations of these individuals, it becomes clear that they were really a quite homogenous group of politically concerned and active people who were bound together by personal, local, political or artistic ties. Their names can be associated with a large range of reform activities, with educational groups, official and informal political associations, and with the Southern Society (Nanshe 南社), a literary group whose influence can be traced throughout the world of publishing in China in the years before and after the revolution of 1911. The individuals include Zhang Yuanji (章元濟 1867–1959), Wang Yunzhang (王蘊章 1888–1942), Yun Tieqiao (惲鐵樵 1878–1935), Huang Yanpei (黃炎培 1878–1965), Lu Feikui (陸費逵 1886–1941), Meng Sen (孟森 1868–1937), Liu Yazhi (柳亞子 1887–1958), Xu Zhuodai (徐棹呆 1878–1958), Bao Tianxio (包天笑 1876–1973). The majority of these were highly regarded by their contemporaries and men of some standing.

It is not possible to go into the details of their lives and activities here,<sup>6</sup> but a study of the biographical information available on them to date shows that the links and overlapping elements in their lives are not coincidental. They worked closely together in a number of capacities. Almost all of them were from Jiangsu, all were interested in education, each of them was involved in the world of publishing and politics, and they were all regularly present at the editorial offices of the Commercial Press in Shanghai. It can come as no surprise that we find them, once again, united on the pages of a literary magazine.<sup>7</sup> How, then, did these individuals respond to Western concepts of government, life-styles, science and literature in this one particular medium of the literary magazine?

Direct references to the West are largely found in the „Translations“ („Yicong“ 譯叢) sections or in sections with travel reports such as „Information from Abroad“ („Yingtān“ 瀛談). Furthermore there are comments on translated fictional texts which hint at or explain the attitudes of the translator, and there are motifs used in creative writings which reflect and are sometimes, *expressis verbis*, intended to reflect approaches to new or different modes of thought from the West. In the following the contents and characteristics of the relevant sections and contributions will be summarised as a first step towards an appreciation of

6 For a discussion of the lives and activities of these and further contributors to *Xiaoshuo yuebao*, see Denise GIMPEL: „The Late Qing and Early Republican Fiction Magazine *Xiaoshuo yuebao* (The Short Story Magazine), 1910–1914: A Mirror of its Times“. Doctoral thesis submitted to University of Marburg, Germany.

7 Xiaohong Xiao Planes has remarked in her study of the Educational Association of Jiangsu (*Jiangsu jiaoyu hui* 江蘇教育會) between 1905 and 1914 that one frequently comes across the same individuals as the leading figures in the most disparate of institutions, educational, economic and political. See Xiaohong XIAO PLANES: „La Société Générale de Jiangsu et son Rôle dans l'Évolution Socio-politique Chinoise“. 2 vols. Paris 1997. Unpublished doctoral thesis.

this magazine's position or, more correctly, the position of the writers in question to the topic of the West. It would be unwise to assume any one approach to Western concepts. Not only was there no statement of such an attitude in the general declaration of intent in the first issue of the magazine, there is also no hint that any political bias may have been at the root of selecting contributions for publication. Thus attitudes and opinions could be freely voiced, and the spectrum of such views would also have tended to be somewhat more pluralistic than later ideologically tinged publications. Moreover, and as the list of contributors shows, there is still much detective work to be done in order to ascertain exactly what the make-up of the contributors was and, if at all, what this make-up may be able to tell us about a general consensus of opinion.

The „Translations“ section was an anonymous one. Contributions to it were normally between three and seven pages in length and the sources for the texts ostensibly translated were very seldom given. It would probably be correct to assume that these texts were selected for their informative or entertaining qualities by the editorship. It was thus clearly not a lengthy section of the magazine, which generally comprised around one hundred pages per issue, and it belonged to the more informative than literary portion. From the very first year of publication there were often articles included in this section which dealt with the question of national monarchs and systems of government. Thus the very first issue of the magazine contains a text describing the British king, Edward VII,<sup>8</sup> who had died in the May of that year, and the following issue carries a text on his successor, George V.<sup>9</sup> Such proximity of publication would seem to invite comparison and reflection. Moreover, one must remember that this was a time of great discussion of the role of the monarch in China: questions of constitutional government were being hotly debated<sup>10</sup> and preparations for local and national assemblies underway. George V is quite clearly portrayed as a man a future or present Chinese monarch might wish to emulate since he is the embodiment of all the demands that had been being made of a „modern“ ruler since the discussions of the period of the Hundred-Day Reforms. He is, moreover, described in terms that would not only have seemed familiar to the Chinese reader conversant with the debates of the day but that would also have struck a clear chord with those familiar with Chinese tradition. The almost blemish-free portrait of an hereditary, but still constitutional, monarch makes use of much traditional and modern vocabulary and approximates well to a Confucian ideal of the ruler, but, at the same time, incorporating all the modern qualities and abilities required for a new world. Thus George V is well familiar with the problems of his people both at home and abroad, he meets them directly; he is a military man with practical abilities and

8 „Yinghuang Aidehua zhi yiwen pianpian“ 英皇受德華之遺聞片片 [Some stories of Edward of Great Britain], 1910.

9 „Yinghuang Zuozhi diwu yulun zhi yibann“ 英皇左治第五輿論之一斑 [An opinion on George V of Great Britain], 1910.

10 See, for instance, the regular section on constitutional questions in the very influential and widely read journal *Dongfang zazhi* 東方雜誌 at this time.

insists on military strength at a time of international competition. He recognises the value of British expatriates for the well-being of the country, he is sound in mind and body, learned and well-informed, and he is a family man. These, in a nutshell, were very much the questions and problems that were facing China at the time. Chinese expatriates had been at the centre of attention of the Qing-government and reformers for some time, had been called upon to „promote the regeneration of their native land“<sup>11</sup> and had poured literally millions of dollars into every conceivable reform attempt on all levels.<sup>12</sup> The importance of military restructuring had been acutely apparent to Chinese leaders since the humiliating defeat at the hands of the Japanese in 1895. Under the capable direction of Yuan Shikai as Governor General of Zhili between 1901 and 1907, not a few improvements had been made and, of great importance here, there had been a general re-evaluation in a very positive sense of the worth of the military man. The military had now become an acceptable alternative to officialdom.<sup>13</sup> The pinpointing of a sense of estrangement between ruler and ruled had, of course, been a stock formulation of traditional Chinese criticism. However, traditionally, no one would have expected that the ruler go out and actually speak to and enquire of his people. First-hand information was now being demanded of a modern ruler: it had been part and parcel of the Hundred-Day Reforms and a constant topic from then on. If we, moreover, consider that these texts were published at a time when the constitutional debate was in full swing (i.e. between the second and third petitions handed in to call for an earlier convening of parliament in June and October 1910), we may imagine their impact.<sup>14</sup>

These references to the British monarchy were not isolated ones. Further issues of the magazine in the first two years mention the qualities of various foreign crowned or uncrowned heads of state as well as of various politicians. Both in the „Translations“ sections and in those containing „Snippets from Abroad“ („Haiwai zhuling“ 海外珠鈴), the reader is often reminded of the adventurous spirits of monarchs and statesmen, of their very public activities, and sometimes of their strange interests. Afensuo of Spain (Alphonso III, ruled 1886–1931) had his own strange museum that included the skin of one of his horses.<sup>15</sup> Some of these exhibits had been obtained at the risk of his own life. The Belgian king Leopold (Leopold I, reigned 1835–1909) went out amongst the simplest of his subjects

11 A call from the consul-general of Singapore put out to all educated Chinese of the area in 1898. Quoted in Michael R. GODLEY: „The Late Ch'ing Courtship of the Chinese in Southeast Asia“, in: *Journal of Asian Studies*, XXXIV: 2 (February), p.374.

12 See Huang Tongdi 黄炯第, *Huaqiao zhi* 華僑志 [Reports on Chinese Overseas], Taipei 1978, p.427.

13 See Stephen R. MACKINNON: *Power and Politics in Late Imperial China: Yuan Shi-kai in Beijing and Tianjin: 1901–1908*. University of California Press 1980, p.118.

14 For a lively impression and many details of this debate, see CHANG P'eng-yuan: „The Constitutionalists“, in: Mary Clabaugh WRIGHT (ed.): *China in Revolution: The First Phase, 1901–1913*. Yale University Press 1968, pp.143–84.

15 XSYB 1, no.5.

and exchanged jokes with them.<sup>16</sup> A witty encounter is reported between Edward VII of Britain and a short-sighted London city councillor who failed to recognise his monarch when he, quite literally, bumped into him on the street.<sup>17</sup> President Roosevelt of the United States is also depicted as not having been recognised by a negro servant, and he is explicitly said to like to get away from the White House and mix with the people of the country.<sup>18</sup> The Crown Prince of Germany is described as setting off on a world trip in order to increase his knowledge. He is also described as having had a strict education and upbringing; he had entered a military academy, studied at the university of Bonn, learned the details of the affairs of various government ministries by working in them.<sup>19</sup> August Wilhelm of Germany is said to have been the first German prince to have received a doctorate in law from a German university; his royal descent, the extract says, did not prevent him from seeking education. Neither did high position prevent President Roosevelt of the United States from paying his own travel expenses on occasion.<sup>20</sup> Such attributes and achievements are portrayed as signs of the high moral fibre of Europeans and Americans. The ruling classes are shown to have quite „normal“ pleasures: they dance and sing in public (President Tate of the United States, a British viceroy in Africa and his wife, King George of Britain, a British M.P.).<sup>21</sup> It would very likely have been difficult for the Chinese reader to imagine trusted politicians, heads of state and their wives in such situations. The emperor of China was not to be found roaming the streets and speaking to his subjects quite naturally, or, indeed, fighting fires in the national capital as Edward VII was reported as doing. Any audience the emperor may have given to ordinary mortals, even those who were of high intellect and of reforming zeal such as Kang Youwei, left a lasting impression on these individuals. This influence on Kang Youwei has been well documented and has sometimes been felt to be the reason for his loyalty to the Guangxu emperor to the last. A far cry from the impressions „mere“ heads of state made on their people in the West. Nevertheless, the texts describing Edward VII and George V do insist on the popularity of the British monarch and on the unspeakable sadness in the population on the death of Edward, a sadness that causes George to consider it his duty to be equally popular. These pieces of information – and a good many more such examples may be found within the pages of the magazine – offer a different concept of a national ruler to the Chinese readership from the one they were used to imagining. One of the stated aims of the magazine was to „introduce new concepts“ (*guanshu xinli* 灌输新理), and here, indeed, we have a good example of the kind of „new con-

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16 *ibid.*

17 *ibid.*

18 *ibid.*

19 *XSYB* 2, no.1.

20 *XSYB* 2, no.1.

21 *XSYB* 1, no.5.

cept“ the makers of the magazine may have been wanting to introduce. Such snippets of information on possible models for kingly behaviour from the West are only found in the magazine in the first two years. We may assume that, after the revolution of 1911, there was little need for such material. After this, there are one or two references to somewhat strange behaviour on the part of monarchs: Louis XIV of France, for instance, is said to have had some of his clothes tailored out of spiders webs.<sup>22</sup>

Generally in the magazine one may detect a particular interest in new roles and new possibilities for women and foreign women would appear to be used as a comparative quantity. That is, their portrayal invites consideration of their behaviour – and comparison with the portrayal of Chinese women in similar situations not necessarily imitation. Thus foreign women are often shown as resolute, patriotic, educated, self-reliant, audacious even, and, particularly, visible in public. The wife of the eldest son of the emperor of Germany, Cecilie of Mecklenburg, is portrayed as a public woman and a woman of great charity. She had sold her crown to support widows and the children of the poor. Other women go out into the world not merely in the realm of the more „feminine“ acts of charity but in direct pursuit of gain. Women are described as running goldmines in the Yukon, working beside men in the mines and becoming very rich. American women, one comment tells the readers, are unlike weak Chinese women: they need no helping hand when climbing steps, they even refuse such offers. They have bright eyes, white teeth and are perfectly healthy.<sup>23</sup> Women in Britain are said to be able to seek for divorce or separation orders, and the text states the women's variety of reasons for their actions and the costs involved.<sup>24</sup> Questions of a public life for women, self-reliance and economic independence were amongst those that occupied the minds of late Qing reformers (male and female) and they were to occupy the minds of the May-Fourth generation once again. If one scans more or less contemporary periodicals with such differing aims as the vernacular journal *Anhui suhuabao* 安徽俗話報, the anarchist journal, *Tianyi bao* 天義報, the moderate-reformist paper *Dongfang zazhi* 東方雜誌 or the educational journal *Jiaoyu zazhi* 教育雜誌, one is quite overwhelmed by the absolute presence of the „women's question“ in discussions of the day. There was interest in all aspects of women's lives (both within and without China) and the active role they could play in the strengthening of the country.

Thus it can come as no surprise that there was a wealth of strong female figures in the stories contained in *Xiaoshuo yuebao*. What is surprising is that the patriotic female figures who are successful in their pursuits tend to be foreign. Chinese women who set out to either fight for their own country or for the freedom to map out their own lives and destinies are often stymied by the social conditions that surround them. The concern with women as exemplars, or possible

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22 *XSYB* 2, no.5.

23 *XSYB* 1, no.3.

24 *ibid.*

models of behaviour, is central to the the adaptation/translation of a Polish play of 1911: „The Hero of Emotion“ („Duoqing zhi yingxiong“ 多清之英雄), which was published in the section „reform drama“ (*gailiang xinju* 改良新居). Here women are held up as the leaders of the nation in patriotic matters.<sup>25</sup> In his preface to the play, the adaptor/translator Xiao Tiansheng 嘯天生, insists that women are the basis, that is the determining element, of the nation's spirit; the character and spirit of a nation's women determines that of the population at large. Thus, this writer says, can we account for the luxury and elegance of the French, the martial spirit of the Germans, and, in particular, the weakness and cowardice of the Chinese. There can be no question, he continues, of whether women should be educated or not. Women's education is an absolute must. The play itself depicts a love story, an intrigue and plot to separate the lovers as well as a final spiritual reunion in which the heroine commits suicide but leaves behind a message for her lover to exert himself in the interests of the Polish nation. Love in this story, as in many others in *Xiaoshuo yuebao*, comes after patriotism. Moreover, and again like many other contributions, the text is full of references to the dangers facing China at the hands of imperialist powers. Many of the texts published in the magazine make use of phrases such as the fear of one's native country „being sliced up like a melon“ (*guafen* 瓜分) or „cut into two like a bean“ (*doupou* 豆剖) by other powers. These are allusions to the loss of Chinese territory at the hands of strong imperialist nations and calls for a renewal of the fighting spirit amongst the Chinese. The foreign monarchs that had been discussed or, better, portrayed had all displayed the requisite kind of spirit and activity, and these were the heads of state of strong and determined modern nations, more even, they were the leaders of the very imperialist nations threatening China's integrity. The message should have been clear to all.

The selfsame issue was taken up again, and calls for action made quite expressly, in a text from the *biji* (筆記) or „random jottings“ section of 1912 with the title „Great Generals Since the Founding of the Huai Army“ (Huaijun hou zhi mingjiang tan 淮軍後之明將談).<sup>26</sup> This text, which dwelt in depth on the achievements and bravery of a number of Chinese generals, particularly those who had defeated foreign armies, entreats the readers to re-think the Chinese situation and to realise that only by strength of mind and purpose can the foreign powers be persuaded, that is forced, to keep their hands off the territory of China.

A Chinese woman who is shown as becoming extremely active in the service of her country is Guihua, a courtesan, a scholar, and a general. The story of her successive careers and their effects on others is told in some detail.<sup>27</sup> However the author complains of the fact that, after the revolution, when men had begun

25 For the text of the play, see *XSYB* 2, no. 1. For information on Xiao Tiansheng (= Xu Xiaotian 許嘯天), see WEI Shaochang 魏紹昌: *Yuanyang hudiepai yanjiu ziliao* 鴛鴦蝴蝶派研究資料 [Research Materials on the Mandarin Duck and Butterfly School], Shanghai 1962, pp.497–8.

26 *XSYB* 3, no. 1.

27 „A Martyr at All Costs“ (Ju you huanghua 菊有黃花), *XSYB* 3, no. 4.



to disregard the demands for women's rights and freedom they had so adamantly supported prior to the successful uprising, women like Guihua did not have the far-sightedness to press their claims. Even more than far-sightedness they lacked a sense of ambition and single-mindedness that is depicted time and again in the stories published in *Xiaoshuo yuebao* which involve foreign women. These female patriots are assassins for the just cause, they will even kill their own husbands if need be.<sup>28</sup> Women also show heroism in saving others; they take the initiative and pay a visit to the President of the United States to save a brother<sup>29</sup> and they refuse to divulge secrets to their lovers, even if this will ruin their relationships.<sup>30</sup> Foreign women are very often shown to be strong and resilient and successful in their bold endeavours. Many a Chinese woman is depicted as wishing to determine her own future but ultimately failing because the conditions of the society she inhabits do not allow her to pursue her interests freely.

A short report like the present one cannot hope to do justice to the complexities and the multitude of images and symbolic uses of the female figure in the texts in the magazine. It can only point to the existence of a wealth of material that requires further research. The theme of women in society and politics was certainly a prominent one in *Xiaoshuo yuebao* during the period under review here. An individual study would probably show that this interest grew gradually until the end of 1913, when it dwindled somewhat in the face of political neglect of the women's question and a more restrictive society.

Male heroes in stories found in *Xiaoshuo yuebao* also tend to be foreigners. They include a Frenchman who is willing to burn himself and his life's work to warn his countrymen of impending attack by a foreign (Prussian) army<sup>31</sup> as well as revolutionaries who never give up the fight to free their countries from the foreign yoke such as the members of the Carbonari Party in Italy (Jiabonalidang 加波拿理黨).<sup>32</sup> Chinese heroes are a scarce commodity by comparison. They are dithering, prone to tears in difficult situations and fairly unreliable. Robert Ruhlmann has already commented upon what he calls a „morbid lack of initiative“ in many rulers and lovers in traditional stories, adding that the hero's ability to „attract devotion without apparent effort“ is a measure of his prestige.<sup>33</sup> Since the early 1910s were a time when action and change were perceived to be required, one may well understand that new heroes were required and that these were often taken from new or foreign sources. Thus two of the most impressive

28 See „The Voice of the Flower Seller“ (Maihua sheng 賣花聲), XSYB 1, no.6 and „Alas!“ (Wuhu 嗚呼), XSYB 2, no. 11.

29 A play dealing with this theme was published in XSYB 2, intercalary issue, under the title „A weak Girl Saves Her Brother“ (Ruonü jiuxiong ji 弱女救兄記). A story with the same title and the same contents was published in XSYB 5, no.2.

30 „Bohemian Fool“ (Fengliu daizi 瘋癲才子), XSYB 2, no. 8.

31 „Mofang zhuren“ [The mill owner 磨坊主人], XSYB 3, no.9.

32 XSYB 3, no.1.

33 Robert RUHLMANN: „Traditional Heroes in Chinese Popular Fiction“, in: A. WRIGHT (ed.), *The Confucian Persuasion*. p.160.

Chinese figures in the stories – impressive for their decisiveness and action – are, for one, an uneducated man of the people who, quite literally, saves the life of a traditionally educated but come-down-in-the-world individual in a story of working conditions and hardships in the foreign-owned shipbuilding industry in Shanghai.<sup>34</sup> This man realises what is required in the altered world of industrial working conditions. He is flexible and adaptable, since, it would appear from the story, he has not been contaminated by mind-numbing and initiative-killing traditional social mechanisms. The other hero, and significantly he is only named as „the hero“ (*jianer* 健兒) in the text, is a member of a *dang* (黨), a political party intent on reforming society. He can step in, much like the *deus ex machina*, at the very end of the tale and prevent the rather ineffectual young Chinese hero from hanging himself.<sup>35</sup> Political parties (*dang*) were also new and modern concepts at this period in Chinese history.<sup>36</sup> They clearly had positive connotations for the writer of the particular story.

A further aspect of the question of the introduction or discussion and depiction of foreign ideas and modes of action is the way in which relationships between individuals are shown in translated texts. The translated stories, or stories with a foreign setting, often show complex affairs and relationships that do not always work out. These foreign settings may have provided a place, a forum for the testing or projecting of new ways of organising one's life on all levels. Stories often show women who display great self-confidence in determining how their relationships with the other sex should be conducted and who fight against what they feel to be injustices in these relationships.<sup>37</sup> The texts often contain, or have appended, some kind of comment to the effect that it is perfectly normal for men and women to mix in public, in parks for example, in Europe and, moreover, such mixing is a perfectly natural matter. That this was no perfectly natural affair in China at this time – or indeed later – is reflected in a text written by the editor, Yun Tieqiao, as late as 1915, and titled „It is Better [for the Chinese] to Translate Stories of Emotion than to Write Them“ (Lun yanqing xiaoshuo zhuan buru yi lun yanqing xiaoshuo 論言情小說撰不如譯).<sup>38</sup> Here he outlines his opinion that the Chinese should translate love stories or, more precisely, stories of sentiment (*yanqing xiaoshuo* 言情小說) from foreign sources and not try to make them up themselves since China has no tradition of a meeting of the sexes in public. Chinese love stories,

34 „The Worker's Story“ (Gongren xiaoshi 工人小史), *XSYB*, 4, no.7. For a complete translation and interpretation of this story, see Denise GIMPEL: „Yun Tieqiao's „Gongren Xiaoshi“ („Geschichte des Arbeiters“): Übersetzung und Interpretation“, *NOAG* 153 (1993: 1), pp.63–112.

35 „The Jade Bracelet“ (Biyu huan 碧玉環), *XSYB*, 1, no. 1.

36 For the development of factions into political parties during the late Qing and the early republican era, see Joan JUDGE: „The Factional Function of Print: Liang Qichao, Shibao, and the Fissure in the Late Qing Reform Movement“, in: *Late Imperial China*. Vol.16, no.1 (June 1995), pp.120–40.

37 See, for instance, „Bohemian Fool“, *XSYB* 2, no.8; „Autumn Fan“ (Qiushan ying 秋扇影), *XSYB* 3, no.4.

38 *XSYB* 6, no.7.

he concludes, will thus always tend to dwell on the extreme and erotic, the forbidden, instead of looking into what is normal and natural in such relationships. Only by studying how Western authors portrayed relationships between men and women can new possibilities be seen and judged as to their merits and suitability for the Chinese situation. These stories cannot but have proffered food for thought to both the male and female readership.

The superiority of Western scientific knowledge and expertise had been a source of interest, vexation and worry to Chinese statesmen since the mid-nineteenth century when there had been a widespread belief that the acquisition of this technical knowledge could bring China into line with the foreign powers. Gradually, however, voices were heard that insisted on the practice of a new way of thinking that was at the root of Western superiority, and it was in respect of this kind of argumentation that the Chinese interest in detective stories (*zhentan xiaoshuo* 偵探小說) and stories of science (*kexue xiaoshuo* 科學小說) developed and bore fruit. Thus we must not understand the translations of Western stories of detection and mystery as catering to a need for exciting entertainment. They were translated in the hope of inculcating a new and scientific way of thinking amongst the Chinese readership, as examples of what rational thought could achieve and as antidotes to the often all-too superstitious beliefs of the indigenous population of China. Here the texts chosen for translation were admirably suited: Sherlock Holmes always surprises both his readers and his friend Watson with his acute faculties of observation, his power of rational thought and his insight based on knowledge. This, moreover, was also the aim of his creator, Conan Doyle, himself impressed by the presence of such faculties in one of his teachers at the university of Edinburgh. What is more, the Chinese were obviously not the only foreign country to be impressed by the feats of Sherlock Holmes: the stories were translated into Arabic and handed out to the Egyptian police force as an aid to crime detection and the apprehension of villains.<sup>39</sup> The situation is very similar in Poe's story, *The Gold-Bug*. The plot unravels in a quite mysterious manner, yet even those actions which, to all appearances, do not in any way seem to have been those of a human being, are shown to be just that, and Poe goes to great lengths to explain all the scientific principles and logical calculations that lie behind the protagonist's solving of the problems confronting him. In fact, very nearly half the text of Poe's story is given over to the solution of the mystery, how codes may be broken by the strict application of mathematical principles and how various chemicals change colour and under which circumstances. This was exactly the kind of reading that Chinese commentators on writing were demanding when they claimed that China had no tradition of detective stories and scientific stories based on rational thought.<sup>40</sup> A similar approach and a similar kind of thinking are

39 John Dickson CARR: *The Life of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle*. London 1949, p. 135.

40 See, for instance „Miscellaneous Notes on Fiction“ („Xiaoshuo conghua“ 小說叢話) in *Xin xiaoshuo* 新小說, 1905, no. 15. The writer comments that political fiction, detective fiction and fiction that deals with science will have to be introduced into the realm of Chinese fiction, since Chinese writings have absolutely no equivalent for these three categories. The three

also reflected in various other translated works of adventure and emotion in which protagonists are regularly shown to be considering the predicaments they find themselves in and their possible routes of escape in a logical manner.<sup>41</sup> This type of behaviour is also shown in two stories that are not translations of foreign sources but which also deal with the solving of a supposedly strange mystery and liberation from a potentially fatal situation.<sup>42</sup>

By far the greatest amount of new knowledge and scientific innovation was introduced by sections called either „New Knowledge“ („Xin zhishi“ 新智識), „Fun with Physics“ („Lixue youxi“ 理學游戲) or „News from Twentieth Century Physics“ („Ershi shiji lixuejie qitan“ 二十世紀理學界奇譚). The following examples taken from the sections and grouped according to various categories should give an impression of the breadth of interest they covered.

### 1. The military and technology

News of the Chinese inventor [sic] of the airship, Xie Zuantai (謝纘泰); the quick and widespread development of the airship since 1905; the German firm Krupp develops new guns; an exhibition of guns in London; French submarines and their speed in comparison with an American warship; an American firm's underwater ship and how long it can remain submerged; telegraph lines beneath the sea; a new and silent cannonball propelled by magnetism and electricity alone and developed by a Norwegian; an American repeating rifle; a silent and smokeless gun; Japanese developments in explosives since the war with Russia.

### 2. Machines in general and inventors

Movie cameras from France and Italy; the invention of a machine in Africa that can extract electricity out of the earth without using steam or water to propel it; an automatic moving pavement (an early escalator) in America and overhead roads to help solve traffic congestion; a money machine in America that changes notes into coins; a lamp using luminous bacteria for safety in mines; voice may now be transmitted due to a Danish man's connecting the telegraph and the telephone; a new-fangled electric lamp developed in America; a boat that is propelled by foot and how it is constructed; an automatic hat-raising machine for the lazy; a rain-making machine developed in Japan; automatic doors at an exhibition; machines replace silkworms in America; machines for processing glass fibre and making it into garments in Italy; a new and improved hearing aid; new systems

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categories themselves, the commentator continues, are the key to fiction. This typical remark, along with a number of other similar comments, is cited in Chen Pingyuan's discussion of the detective and science story. See CHEN Pingyuan 陈平原 / XIA Xiaohong 夏晓虹 (eds.): *Xiaoshuo shi: lilun yu shijian* 小说: 理论与实践 [The history of fiction: theory and practice], Beijing, 1993, pp.196–8.

41 See, for instance, „The Plant of Auspicious Union“ (Hahuan cao 合歡草, XSYB 1, nos.1–5.

42 See, for instance [Xu] Zhuodai, „The Secret Room“ (Mimi shi 秘密室), XSYB 3, no.3.

42 See, for instance The Old Zoo Keeper (Dongwuyuan sou 動物園叟, XSYB 3, no.8.

of drawing and directing water from Japan; life-saving clothing developed in Switzerland; a letter-sealing machine from America; photographs of people's insides; a blind Swiss naturalist who studied bees; new means of propulsion for steamships that will quicken Atlantic crossings.

### **3. Statistical information**

Smoking in France; how much it costs the port authorities in Britain to feed mousing cats per annum; the connection between smoking and eye affliction; statistics on fat people; how many species of flowers and animals naturalists have counted; figures for those engaged in agriculture in Britain; comparative expenditure on salt in various countries.

### **4. Experiments and new methods**

Magnetism in the human body and how it can be used to communicate with other people; scientists have shown that mosquitoes do not like the colour yellow - yellow mosquito nets are thus the best; how to tell whether silkworms are male or female; research has shown that good spirits in the morning are the result of electricity in the air and certain chemical processes; research on the construction of spiders' webs in France; camphor as a means of getting rid of rats; electricity has been found in the leaves of a tree in India; electricity is used as a fertiliser in America; how many microbes can be found on one bank note; treatment for blood ailments by sending people up in a balloon; new treatments for loss of voice; treatment for insomnia; a new kind of soft glass that can be made into a great number of things; British experiments for combatting mosquitoes; getting pure oxygen out of air in a cheap way; experiments carried out on the homing instincts of cats; how far light can penetrate water; post mortem examinations in Japan have shown that the brains of the yellow race are in no way inferior to those of the white race, nor are female brains inferior to male brains; chemical means of stopping grain going bad as a result of microscopic fungal infection.

### **5. The weird and wonderful**

A man-eating tree in Madagascar; the Tartars have the best voices, the Germans the worst; nobody knows why one ear of a horse is further forward than the other; an ant circus in Berlin; playing a flute in the cowshed will encourage the animals to give more milk; English ladies have such good skins as a result of the persistent fog in that country.

The above five categories still only contain a sampling of the information provided in the relevant sections. The interest in everything mechanical and/or electrical is striking, and it very much mirrors the Western love of this new force at the same time. The late nineteenth century and early twentieth century were, of course, the heyday of all the inventions that have come to govern our modern lives, such as the internal combustion engine, electricity, oil, petroleum, the automobile, the aeroplane, the telephone, the production of synthetic materials; and

thus it is no surprise to see this situation reflected in the magazine. It is interesting to note that a large number of inventors are mentioned, and their dedication to their work, their perseverance and their final success are described. This was also very much in keeping with the feelings of the day, a time when Samuel Smiles' bestseller, *Self-Help*, had been translated into both Japanese and Chinese and held up, as in England a little earlier, as the Bible of the self-made man. What these sections do reflect is a lively interest in the world outside China, technical progress and all fields of research. Many of these new ideas, however amusing we may find them today, would doubtless have surprised and fascinated the Chinese readership and would have opened up a means of comparison of life and developments in China and the West as well as providing some very useful information. The Chinese inventor and aviator, Xie Zuantai, may be seen as an assertion of a Chinese position within this new realm of scientific progress. The text that depicts his trials and tribulations in the development of the airship, and especially of a steering system, emphasises his working together on an international level and his great abilities. It also mentions that the Chinese had been world leaders previously: in the discovery of gunpowder, the invention of the compass and of print.

Other information on foreign customs was provided by travel reports translated into Chinese either in the sections reserved for them (Yingtān 瀛談) or in comparisons drawn by Chinese travellers in China. The direct travelogues published were all translated by the editor of *Xiaoshuo yuebao* Yun Tiejiao 惲鐵樵 and describe Korea, the Lebanon, Taiwan, the building of a railway from New York to Havana and a journey through Hungary.<sup>43</sup> The only text that Yun feels the necessity to make an explicit comment on is the one dealing with Korea. It seems that he is little satisfied with the rather haughty stance taken by the original Western observer and the insinuation of the backwardness of Korea and Koreans seems to have touched him rather directly. He does not, it should be noted in this connection, comment on the picture of backward natives drawn by a German traveller or on the impression the original German writer gives of the civilised and modern Japanese who have to fight these aborigines. No doubt his sentiments were more with the educated Koreans than with the aboriginal population of Taiwan, since the latter, unlike Korea, would have had very little affinity with high Chinese culture. Yun is, however, generally a man of tolerant mind and a man who shows respect and esteem for other cultures. In 1913 he published an account of strange marriage customs in India,<sup>44</sup> and at the end of this text, which, surprisingly, appeared as a short fictional text (*duanpian xiaoshuo* 短篇小說), he categorically states that he is not poking fun at any differences in customs. What he wishes to do by translating this text is to start a process of thought amongst Chinese readers about their own customs. Moreover he warns at the close of an earlier translation that paints the Chinese in a somewhat barbarous light that this kind

<sup>43</sup> These texts were all published in *XSYB* 5.

<sup>44</sup> *XSYB* 4, no.8.

of writing can lead to misunderstandings between the people's of different countries.

This kind of attitude is one that may be said to pervade the contributions that deal with or refer to foreign countries. There is no sense of the Chinese authors making fun or belittling foreigners, and neither is there any sense of awe and extreme admiration, that is, of an unnecessary belittling of their own culture. What does become apparent in most of the texts, and in the comments made upon them, is that the authors were certainly well aware of what was wrong in their own country; they were also aware of how some of these matters were managed in foreign countries, but they were very much in favour of asking whether the solutions found useful elsewhere were also applicable to the Chinese context. This attitude is illustrated particularly well in two quite different texts. One is purportedly a story and deals with the question of polygamy, a state of affairs that the author finds untenable for any civilised nation.<sup>45</sup> He attributes it to the autocratic power of the family. In his introduction to the story, he speaks of how all civilised countries of the world had decided upon legislation to rid themselves of such an abuse, and he calls upon the Chinese to do the same (i.e. to do away with the possibility of one man and many concubines. In China, of course, a man could also only have one legal wife at any given time). The story he uses to illustrate how terrible the state of affairs can become for a young woman forced to marry a much older man who already has numerous other wives is, however, not set in China. It is set amongst the Mormons of America. Here the question of polygamy is intricately linked with the question of religion, the exercise of power over other people and the construction of semi-religious hocus-pocus to cement such power. The hero of the piece, who, significantly, through the use of rational thought and investigation, sees through the nasty tricks of the priest-villain, is an Englishman. He exposes the villainy, wins the woman and, of course, they go off to a promising future where they can breathe the free [sic] air of Britain. At the end of the narration, the author comments that China does not have many priests of the kind described in the story, but a number of heroes of the type shown would be a desirable state of affairs. Thus he demands that individuals should take up the fight against wrongs against women, but he does not make any simple equation of a bad state in China and a much better one in foreign climes.

A similar, and equally sensible view of matters is taken by the writer Guan Daru whilst discussing the characteristics of and demands upon the kind of writings subsumed under the heading „xiaoshuo“ (小說). His lengthy six instalment consideration of the subject published in 1912<sup>46</sup> includes a section dedicated to the translation of foreign works. He, too, calls for care in deciding what should be translated. He admits that it is far easier to translate works of science and technology into Chinese and that these are very important for a people „striving to come to terms with practical studies“ who „have no leisure for running around

45 Ai Quan (愛權): „The Saviour“ (Jieling ren 海外珠鈴), *XSYB* 4, no. 11.

46 GUAN Daru (管達如): „Talking of Fiction“ (Shuo xiaoshuo 說小說), *XSYB* 2, nos. 5; 7–11.

after empty ideas“. Yet, he asserts translations of foreign fiction can, under certain conditions, make up for some deficits in Chinese writings of the past and, moreover, they can provide a detailed view of the society and the mindsets of foreign countries. However, Guan warns, care must be taken in the choice of works to translate since „each country's citizens do have a different mindset, and cultural differences can, at their worst, mean that the warnings and information inherent in foreign works cannot be understood, or may even be found boring by, the Chinese reader. Not all works that have had any effect in foreign countries can be transported directly to the Chinese situation: Chinese predilections and the Chinese mentality and socialisation will possibly bring forth a completely different reaction.

In summary, we can surely say that the presentation of Western concepts in *Xiaoshuo yuebao* was performed in such a manner as to be particularly conducive to a discussion and re-appraisal of matters in China. The West was not shown to be the home of all that was good and better; it was definitely a place where most things were different, and some of these differences, the contributors were saying to their readership, are worthy of our consideration. They do not, however, require that Chinese tradition be thrown overboard lock, stock and barrel. This manner of presentation, which was unhurried, unideological and inquisitive, reflects the period well. In particular up to the close of 1913 there would appear to be a sense of optimism within the search for a new face to China's political and social organisation. There was, as yet, no feeling of urgency. This situation was to change quickly as a result of the Yuan Shikai fiasco and warlord chaos. It may well be that contributions to the magazine then took on a different hue. This would be an interesting question for future research. In the years surveyed here, the West does not provide an exclusive role model to be copied at all cost. What it does provide is a starting point for considerations pertaining to the building of a new and better China that is attuned to the international community.