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The Poetics of Uncertainty in Early Chinese Literature

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THE POETICS OF UNCERTAINTY IN EARLY CHINESE LITERATURE

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The Poetics of Uncertainty in Early Chinese Literature

I

When the history minded scholars of early China came upon an unbelievable event or when their hero seemed to have done something unspeakable, they had recourse to the intervention of spirit forces. These forces could be used to make the strange believable and the wrong right.(1) But this was not a measure to apply constantly. Spirit power was perceived as having real and divinely mandated lineages to the social world, and it was considered impolitic to manipulate these --- at least not in a public or an official way --- for then the status of the Emperor was at stake.(2)

Spirit forces appear in official literature almost solely to camouflage or explain abnormalities or to induce or reduce the Emperor's right to rule. They were also used when necessary to help solve historical problems. These powers were invoked in private works to create a gamut of situations which often had only the most tenuous links to history as officially viewed or life as commonly known. The seemingly irregular powers of spirits were used in unofficial literature as the model and the mechanism of plot and character development. This, however, was not something to boast about. To the typical scholar it was tantamount to disrespect for the past and the existing powers; indeed, it was considered equivalent to mendacity.(3)

While the official in public used spirit forces as a means to create a credible story when there was no other evidence or only incredible evidence, the private author applied the same cosmic functions to convey the incredible whether it was readily believable or not.(4) What was presented by critics as

disagreeable about this application was that unrestrained depictions of the world showed that beneath the apparently harmonious movement of life there existed an uncontrollable and uncertain power. And such an understanding could rarely be the guiding principle of any official, at least not publicly.

"The primal force of the human patterns (ren wen zhi yuan 人文之元) emanates from the Grand Force (taiji 太極)."(5) By this the literary critic Liu Xie 劉勰 (ca. 465-522) expects the reader to understand that human creations originate as resonant articulations of the complex energy systems of nature. He also implies that the fundamental means of creation was the adaptation of natural patterns: bird tracks become Chinese characters.(6) This adaptation procedure followed the guidelines of an established cosmology that was used to understand how things were created and how they changed.

The Chinese conceived of the dynamics of nature in terms of a system of energies moving in cyclical phases. The primary cycle was typically represented by the revolving binary forces yin and yang, or the many images they evoke, such as cloudy and sunny or supple and stiff. Their central role is expressed in an appendix to the Yi jing 易經 (Book of Changes): "The stiff and the supple urge each other on and produce change and transformation."(7) Such changes occur within five interconnecting phasal constructions (water, fire, wood, metal, and earth) that represent the cyclical meta-patterns of all things.

One of the most significant characteristics of this general system is that the binary forces were not an irreconcilable duality but a reciprocating coordination of forces. When the extreme form of one side developed it had to become its opposite.(8) Such reciprocation demands that the ever-changing, relative relationships of things be considered as the basic condition for determining their values.(9) No one thing could be isolated from another. The more allusive examples of how distant phenomena interrelated were a source of contem-

plative pleasure and stimulating prophecy for generations of Chinese.(10) To cite one example of the latter type,

> When mountains silently move of themselves, everywhere under heaven will have war and its strife: the foundations of states will be destroyed.(11)

When something stimulates, whatever it stimulates responds in an affective manner to the stimulus. In the proofs cited for the above prophecy, the stimuli for the moving mountains were corrupt rulers. In addition, neither space nor time could restrain this relationship of stimulus (gan 感) with affective response (ying 應).(12)

Along with greater and more detailed phasal forms, the categories mentioned above were used to predict, catalog, and analyze the regularities and irregularities of nature. They also served as the model for how to reproduce natural and imagined phenomena in alchemical and other technical exercises and in literary creations.(13) They were the media between the patterns of nature and humanity. The fundamental application of this system in literature was in the use of ganying. New developments in a story may appear to come from nowhere but they are actually affective responses to some element, present or latent, of the preceding scene. While a story usually starts with historical data, it proceeds according to how this data was changed by spiritual forces. Hence, changes occur with or without explicit causality and regardless of any orderly linear sequence, but they always exist within a cyclical pattern of changes.(14) As in the system for nature, these changes form according to their origin from primal energy ("transformation," hua 化), their formation of complete alternating cycles ("changes," bian 變), or whether they represent both of the above

("permutation," bianhua).(15)

The application of these energetic patterns has caused much difficulty for a clear appreciation of Chinese literature in the West.(16) Andrew Plaks has defined the problem by noting that the "forward thrust" of actor and scene in Western literature contrasts with the "numerous overlapping cycles of recurrence" in Chinese fiction.(17) The operation of the cycles is especially evident in early Chinese stories. The seemingly erratic elements appear there clearly as signs of the transmutation of the world. Actor and scene shift and form uncertainly, for priming the neat cycles on which they are based was a raging chaos of energy, and it did not recognize any familiar, linear progression.

Huanghu 恍惚 was a primal generating state that fostered regular and irregular forms of life without inherent valuation.(18) It was thought that this primal energy could not be delineated because it had no order: "The image without an image,/ It is known as the primal generator (huanghu)."(19) From huanghu comes the energies called "essence" (jing 精) and "pneuma" (qi 氣) that give form to observable life. Qi had a particularly important role in aesthetics: as the impetus of yin and yang, qi was a qualification for balance, for the "hard" and "soft" and the "cloudy" and "clear" aspects of a work.(20) However, there was long recognized another energy that "could not be fathomed by yin and yang."(21) Manifestations of this energy, which do not form but which are agents of change, were called "wandering spirits" (you hun 遊魂).(22) Many commentators to Xi ci zhuan 繫辭傳 (The Great Appendix) note that when the accumulation of a thing reaches its extreme (ji 極), it is scattered --- the 'spirit wanders' --- and hence the form of a thing changes: "the living changes to the dead, the successful changes to the defeated, and things that have not died take on a different form (yi lei 異類)."(23) Positive and negative manifestations of this energy are wrought in stories to make the impossible seem

possible, the wrong right, and the forgotten remembered. They were used to create explanations for the unexplainable, and they were used to create and sustain the value of a thing when common prejudice suggested otherwise. Indeed, according to an appendix to the Yi jing, it was through the "wandering spirit" that "we know the conditions of ghosts and spirits."(24) In Chinese stories, as well as in many early sciences, this energy was physically manifested to show ghosts and dreams and conceptually manifested in abstract forms of manner and mode of development. As the Ming dynasty dream specialist, Chen Shiyuan 陳士元, noted "Dreams are the wanderings of spirits that are a mirror of foreknowledge." (Meng zhe shen zhi you zhi lai zhi jing yeh. 夢者神之遊知來之鏡也.)(25) Stories are similar to dreams in that in stories action develops as if controlled by "wandering spirits," and with the same organizing effects as such spirits were supposed to have on life itself.(26) If the order of a series of events in history was not clear, manifestations of the "wandering spirit" were used to create a naturally irregular pattern of development, or if the means were not appropriate to the end, ghosts were introduced to induce the reader to believe a primal, unknowable, yet not immoral, pattern of development. Through this mechanism, human, irregular patterns could be fashioned into imaginary patterns that seem normal for nature.

One of the most important of the devices used to bring out the primal energy huanghu was its adverbial relative hu 忽 ("suddenly"),(27) a word that precisely expresses the manner of the transformations the "wandering spirit" induced.(28) As a general concept employed in both poetry and prose, hu signifies the engagement of discrete cycles and signals the kind of unpredictable response characteristic of spirit manipulations. The way a story or an idea develops after a "suddenly" --- and, to a lesser extent, after related words, such as xuyu 須臾 ("instantly"), yanran 奄然 ("suddenly"), or shuhu 倏

忽 ("suddenly") --- almost invariably indicates that an ostensibly natural but not necessarily historical change has occurred.(29) In other words, hu notifies us that although an unusual, unbelievable, or spiritual change is being or has been enacted, yet the result of the change may be acceptable on cosmological grounds. For example, in one of the earliest local gazetteers, Chang Qu's 常璩 early-fourth-century Hua-Yang guo zhi 華陽國志 (Record of the Territories of Hua-Yang), a book that is basically orthodox in form and content, we find the following story:

> Yongchang county in ancient times was the state of Ai-lao. Ai-lao is the name of a mountain. In the beginning there was just one woman, whose name was Sand Pot. She stayed below the mountain, where she lived on her fishing. Suddenly (hu) she touched a sunken log. From the stimulus (gan) she became pregnant, and after ten months she gave birth to a boy. After ten children, the sunken log transformed (hua) into a dragon....(30)

Here one can see quite clearly that the contact of a mundane life cycle with a primal life-giving cycle alters "history" considerably. The fact that it happened "suddenly" and therefore without the need of accumulating evidence or even historic precedent gives credence to the incredible.(31)

To a degree the use of "suddenly" and related concepts in Chinese prose corresponds to the use of "Once upon a time" in Western children's literature. "By itself," says Karla Kuskin, this phrase "is sufficient to place the reader somewhere in the magical past that serves as the landscape of a story."(32)

The basic difference between the two concepts is that "suddenly" allows for the reader's acceptance of the regular transformations of the historical and natural possibilities of the story. The following typically short story may serve as a good illustration.

> During the Yixi period (405-418), a serving maid named Lan in the Xu family of Donghai suddenly (hu) became weak, and pale. But she paid more attention to her appearance than usual. The family kept a secret watch on her and saw a broom go from its corner to the maid's bed. When they burned the broom, the serving maid recovered.(33)

Here one can see how "suddenly" makes a disjunction between the historical introduction, which mimics the official history style, and the fantastic main action of the story. With the word "suddenly" a complete ontological process is subsumed, where a historical type of reality is transformed into a unique situation which may at least be acceptable on cosmological grounds.

* * *

Although the "Emperor's Chinese" (wang yan 王言) was anything but prosaic, it was used in a rather unilateral and regenerative way, one inclined more to prescription and mnemonics than creation.(34) It was commonly thought that the best way for the present was to be found only in the classics written by the "First Sages" of the golden past; it was only those ancients and those adhering strictly to the old Path who could produce works of pristine quality. Those who paid attention to the seemingly less constant and peculiar affairs could only compose aberrations, distorting the drive to moral purity.(35) In a similar

vein, there was often a predisposition to understand the cosmology as a normative order. For this reason, Joseph Needham considered the Yi Jing a "stupendous filing system" justifying the bureaucratic tendency of the Chinese state.(36) A similar bias developed in orthodox literary circles, where the disruptive potential of the primal energy --- the sudden intersection of different cycles --- was ignored unless made unavoidable by problems of a historical or a moral nature.

This normalization of an otherwise dynamic system helps account for what J. Průšek has called the "segmented progress" of Chinese narrative which is built according to hierarchical steps of social, historical, and natural categories.(37) The regenerative order is also an important element of fu 賦 ("rhyme-prose") where the technique of enumerating things at best follows a spatially articulated sequence within which things are counted out in categories.(38)

And yet there were writers who directly tapped the power of huanghu. They did this by using the notion "suddenly" and other manifestations of the "wandering spirit," such as ghosts and dreams to change the unidimensional structure of their stories. In contrast to orthodox literature, the order of private tales is frequently disrupted to make the reader conceive a cosmic order, one based in the energetic cosmos of the spectres and on the wit of the writer. Where the vision of the past presented in tales with canonical ties "must be taken as the absolute truth,"(39) readers of tales built on the nexus of huanghu move through the text in a relatively non-historical, imaginative way. Nature, not history, forms the impetus for early Chinese "recordings of wonders" (zhiguai 志怪), as these tales were called.(40)

II

The development of literature patterned after cosmological systems began with Southern Chinese poems narrating or imitating the journeys of the wu 巫, ritual specialists who communicated with spirits.(41) The fourth-century B.C. poem Li sao 離騷 ("Encountering Sorrow"), part of the "Songs of Chu" (Chu ci 楚辭) and ascribed to the statesman Qu Yuan 屈原 (343-290 B.C.), is a particularly enchanting example. What is significant to note is that, in it, the word "suddenly" is used to alert the reader to shifts between cosmic dimensions. At the beginning of the poem the author criticizes the status quo and outlines his worldly attempts to deal with it. When forced to the conclusion that nothing further can be done to improve the situation, he exclaims, "Suddenly, I turned my back and let my eyes wander./ I resolved to go and visit all the world's quarters."(42) After much travel and discourse with celestial worthies, the hero reaches the peak of his transcendent wanderings: "But when I had ascended the splendor of the heavens,/ I suddenly caught a glimpse of my old home."(43) The hero then returns to earth, and the poem is finished.

In other early poems and prose the device "suddenly" is used to convey transformations of both greater and lesser degrees than those in Li sao. Perhaps the most important is the use of the phrase "suddenly like..." (hu ru 忽如 or hu ruo 忽若) to convey graphically how the effect of an action induces an image that is perforce a simile or a metaphor. This phrase was used, for example, in the fourth of the anonymous Han dynasty (206 B.C.- A.D. 8) "Nineteen Ancient Poems" (Gu shi shijiushou 古詩十九首) where the following couplet conveys how an evening banquet changes from jolly drinking to more serious tones: "Man lives out his little sojourn,/ Scudding, suddenly like a swirl of dust."(44) This phrase became a standard form in Chinese poetry.(45) Further, "suddenly" by itself or in other combinations (huran 忽然, huhu 忽忽,

shuhu 倏忽, etc.) also had a metaphoric force. For example, in Ruan Ji's 阮籍 (210-263) "Poems of My Heart" (Yong huai shi 詠懷詩) "suddenly" is consistently used to express the mode of transferring feelings and spiritual and physical states to different figurative conditions.(46) A similar use of this concept can be seen in a poem by Tao Yuanming 陶淵明 (365-427) describing the imminent departure of friends, where he writes, "Suddenly with a cup of wine/ The day and night are glad to come embrace."(47) In whatever form, "suddenly" shows us the ways things change, and signals that a product of change will be created, whether that product takes the form of a simile or a fiction.

* * *

Nearly six hundred years after Li sao, writers again had extensive contacts with practising ritual specialists (fangshi 方士) and intensively studied the theories of the cosmic forces. With these concepts they developed the imaginative zhiguai prose.(48) Several factors were critical to the generation of these third through fifth century stories, and an analysis of these factors will help us understand how the uncertainties brought on by the "wandering spirit" became central to the development of early Chinese fiction.

Such dicta as that layed out in the "Analects of Confucius" (Lun yu 論語, 6.20) "to respect the spirits and yet be distanced from them" had become problematic. For one thing, through massive translation projects and proselytizing efforts Buddhist concepts and traditions had radically transformed much of Chinese intellectual and popular culture(49)— and the Buddhist ideas included only indistinct boundaries between spiritual and corporeal existences. Further, in South China, where most of the literary activity was taking place at that period of division, there were many groups active in the development of systems for the manipulation of spirits and other cosmic energies to gain long life and in the creation of paraphenalia to gain immortality.(50) It is in this context

that the well-known theoretical alchemist, Ge Hong 葛洪 (284-364), criticized the obscure language and mnemonic style of the classics noting that those who followed their pristine path "had ears but no eyes."(51)

Another important factor was that since the archaeological discovery in A.D. 281 of ancient books, some of which challenged traditional interpretations of classical works and some of which outlined the incredible journeys of formerly credible kings, a rigorous reexamination of past methods was the order of the day.(52)

Finally, many of the writers had been forced south by the northern non-Han rulers. While most of them were able quickly to regain a semblance of their former lives, their social world was often far different from that of their forebears. The elite "new" aristocracy met a relatively underdeveloped world that seemed to be a dream of the far distant past.(53) It was in this maelstrom of events that intellectuals began to record the unique experiences and stories of a world that was strangely and uncertainly changing before them.(54)

The Chinese of the late third to fifth centuries exhibited a similar drive for a wide spectrum of seemingly lost knowledge as was evidenced by sixteenth-century Europeans. The goal of developing an "intertraffique of the minde" (Samuel Daniel)(55) through translations and studies of incredibly diverse fields of literature was common to both peoples. Representative of this type of person in China was the diviner, lexicographer, and poet Guo Pu 郭璞(276-324), whose work attempts to illuminate how "perfect communication" (zhi tong 至通) is possible in a world of anomalies and uncertainties.(56) The philosophy for a poetics of uncertainty is originally professed in the introduction to Guo's annotated edition of Shan hai jing 山海經 (Book of Mountains and Seas):

When people of the world survey the Book of Mountains and Seas, they all take it to be a big, absurd exaggeration, full of talk about the strange and unconventional. They are all suspicious of it. Once, when I was discussing this, I said, "Master Zhuang (Zhuang Zi) has said, 'What people know is nothing compared to what they don't know.'"(57) This is my point of view toward the Book of Mountains and Seas....

What people consider alien, they do not yet know why it is so: and what people consider non-alien, they do not yet know why it is such. Why is this? Phenomena are not naturally alien; they depend on us to become thus. The alien is really in us: it is not the phenomena that are alien. For example, when a Hu man sees cloth he is dubious that it is hemp, and when a Yue man sees wool he is surprised that it is animal hair.(58)

Now, the familiar is what we frequently see and the strange is what we rarely hear; this is a regular failing in human sensibility. We may explain this by citing a few instances: Yang-fire coming out of icy water or a yin-rat emerging from a fiery mountain. When people discuss these phenomena, nobody considers them particularly strange. But when it comes to that which is recorded in the Book of Mountains and Seas, everybody considers it strange. This is to fail to consider strange that which may be considered strange and to consider strange that which may not be considered strange. To fail to consider strange that which may be considered strange is tantamount to ruling out "strangeness" altogether, and to consider strange that which may not be considered strange is equivalent to claiming that

> there really is nothing that deserves to be considered truly strange. Now, if one can affirm what is not usually considered suitable, and deny what is usually considered unsuitable to affirm, then the structures of nature (li 理) will all be affirmable.(59)

To put this theory into relief, what Guo Pu says may be compared to Aristotle's opinion in the Poetics, viz., "Probable impossibilities are to be preferred to improbable possibilities."(60) Whereas Aristotle resolves his mystery by suggesting a rational exposition of "probable impossibilities," Guo Pu seems to find the probable even in "improbable possibilities." Following the thoughts of Zhuang Zi,(61) Guo Pu maintains that there is nothing strange until it is so labelled, and such a label is pressed merely on the basis of someone's umfamiliarity with the thing.

Guo Pu's approach is a very sophisticated argument against the Confucian dicta on "respecting the spirits" but "keeping distant from them." Without a clear knowledge of what is to be respected, without getting close to what is to be respected, only a cloudy and truly distanced evaluation can be made about it.(62) This attitude was cleverly disarmed later in Guo Pu's introduction when he attacks those who refused to study the Book of Mountains and Seas and Mu tianzi zhuan 穆天子傳 (Biography of Emperor Mu --- one of the works discovered in the A.D. 281 find) simply because of their apparently odd contents. Guo Pu suggests that people in hoary antiquity had not been so troubled by the unknown: "They reflected on all things without prejudice and with all their might they deeply brooded(63) --- How could the spirits hide! How could the spirits hide!"(64) And in concluding his piece, Guo Pu indicates the conditions for studying such different things:

> Is it not possible that the affairs of all corners of the earth could be transmitted to people of later times?.... Without perfect communication under heaven, it is difficult to discuss the meanings of the Book of Mountains and Seas. Alas! The spectators with unprejudiced views of the myriad phenomena reflect this.(65)

Such a critique of the seemingly eternal restrictions of the "First Sages" was essential for the writers of the day to explore the constant variability of spirits and other anomalies. Once the negative and moralistic criteria had been suspended, the boundaries defining the study and style of representing the uncertainties of life were considerably broadened.

One of the best representatives of these zhiguai writers was Gan Bao 干寶 (ca. early 4th cent.), a noted official historian and a close friend of Guo Pu.(66) A story in Gan Bao's Sou shen ji 搜神記 (Records of Investigations on Spirits) clearly displays his attitude toward the seemingly "strange:"

> In the fourth year of the Jianxing reign of Emperor Min of Jin (A.D. 316), the Western Capital of Changan was toppled. The August Emperor Yuan began his rule as the King of Jin, and within the four seas people's hearts were calmed.
>
> On the twenty-second day of the tenth month of that year, a Miss Hu, the wife of Ren Qiao who was an officer for Xincai County, Hunan, turned 25. She bore two girls. They were joined at the center of the abdomen but were separate above the waist and below the navel. There has never been such an

unbelievable thing as this under heaven.

At the time the Minister of the Interior Lu Hui submitted a memorial which said, "In Chart of Auspicious Responses(67) we can read, 'When there are different bases but the same body it is called "interlocking branches." When there are different fields but the same stalk it is called a "wondrous rice plant."' In the categories of grasses and trees, it is considered an auspicious sign. Today, when 'two people's hearts are united,' Heaven has delivered a magical image. It is as the Yi jing says,

Two people hearts bonded
Their gains cut metal(68)

Now this beautiful marvel has been born in the land of Chen East, and it is an auspicious sign of the 'united hearts' of the people within the four seas...."

At the time there were intellectuals who sneered at this. Gentlemen have said, "The truth is difficult to know. Take someone with the abilities of Zang Wenzhong. He alone worshipped the unusual seabird called 'Yuanju.'(69) Displayed on bamboo slips, this will not be forgotten for thousands of years. Thus, the knights should always study. Ancient people had a saying: 'Trees without branches are called "rotted." People who don't study are called "blind."' When something is hidden, it is not complete. People simply must work hard (to know things)."(70)

The primal generator cannot be hidden, and its products, no matter how strange they may seem, are not to be avoided or devalued. This is the cornerstone of

the poetics of uncertainty. And it is this poetics that Gan Bao developed when he wrote Records of Investigations on Spirits, which uncovers the seemingly strange in novel ways.

In the preface to his work, Gan Bao wrote that he was attempting "to make clear that the spirit world is not a lie."(71) However, one need only take a casual glance at the prolific literature on spirits of this period to see that Gan Bao need not have disproven to his contemporaries that the spirit world was somehow untruthful. It was obvious to most everyone that the spirits were helpful if controlled or strategically employed.(72) By making this proposal, Gan Bao leads the reader to suspect that by "spirit world" (shen dao 神道) he meant not only the spirits themselves but also the ways in which people could represent them — and this was a new and controversial issue.(73)

The problem with spirits, as was noted above, is that they can create indeterminate environments that do not easily fit any normative order. Even their function within the stimulus-affective response (ganying) system is hard to settle. Although in some official writings they were used to show that the superficially wrong may actually be right, the way of the spirits was but rarely made the pivotal subject and mechanism of such literature. When they were used, however, the "facts" presented could not be affirmed in accustomed ways, for they brought the spirits too close. They presented too many disquieting factors to the normative order, and therefore these facts appeared as "lies."(74) The situation Gan Bao faced was in this respect similar to those who challenged Aristotle, such as Philip Sidney, who tried to satsify his readers that poetry cannot be said to lie since it does not affirm the "truth."(75) Guo Pu proposed a similar theory, and Gan Bao seems to have taken full advantage of it.

Both normative and uncertain cosmic orders were used to show how the spirit world — which was mostly the human world — operates. Over two hundred of the 464 stories in Records of Investigations on Spirits explicitly are concerned with ganying or the various types of changes (hua; bian; bianhua). This large percentage complements the hypothesis that these are the basic "subjects" Gan Bao wished to address.(76) However, taken together, dreams,(77) ghosts, and spirits make up one-third of the action in Gan Bao's collection. And, of these stories, many occur without either ganying or the different kinds of changes. Furthermore, if we analyze other stories for the same function of the "wandering spirit" as that provided by dreams, spirits, and other anomalies, we find that there are additional mechanisms of the same type. Drinking, for example, is also used to accomplish schemes such as transforming the unintended and unbelievable into credible, intentional activities. However, what clearly shows that the zhiguai stories are structured on cosmology is the use of "suddenly" and similar words. "Suddenly" (hu) is used 107 times in 86 stories. Considering that it is in the lengthier stories where the development of complex phases or segments of action are frequently characterized by "suddenly," and that over 140 stories are seven lines or shorter, the use of such words is extremely significant (see Table, p. 18).

Because of the "paratactic structure" of many classical Chinese narratives, the problems of transitions between scenes and plot development in general were usually manipulated by categories (see above, p. 8) and, where absolutely necessary, by conjunctions such as nai 乃 ("so"), zhi 至 ("arriving [at some time or place]"), hou 後 ("later"), or yushi 於是 ("thereupon"). As in other types of private literature of the period, these particles are used very often in Gan Bao's work.(78) But the introduction of cosmological functions as narrative mechanisms in zhiguai began to cure the paralysis of enumerating by cate-

gories as found in the old narratives. Words such as "suddenly" operate particularly well in this context because they justify almost any transition.(79) The same is true for ghosts, spirits, dreams, and drinking. It is usually

Mechanism Type	Used in No. of Stories	Percent. of Total	With Ganying or Changes	Without Ganying or Changes
Suddenly	86	19	36	50
Instantly	33	7	7	26
Quickly	34	7	13	21
Dreams	42	9	24	18
Drinking	37	8	9	28
Ghosts	73	16	22	51
Spirits	39	8	12	27
Thereupon	50	11	19	31

Table. Uses of Narrative Mechanisms in Sou shen ji

left up to the ganying formula to establish a more comprehensive order.

"Sudden" actions do not distract the reader; on the contrary, they show the world as it was thought to be constructed. Their function is similar to that of "CUT TOs" in movies. Although there are frequent radical breaks between the scenes in movies, such changes help to establish for the viewer a realistic sense of dimension, rhythm, and pace. Because a CUT TO makes a "sudden, jangled juxtaposition of images,"(80) they can establish a thinking, imaginative reality.

The following story is a short exhibit of this kind of devising on a cosmic scale. Based on historical material,(81) the normative order is often jarred to develop a reality that may not be easily understood or known by the common senses.

> When Jia Chong was attacking Wu he frequently used Xiang city (in Henan Province) as a stockade. The army suddenly lost Chong's whereabouts.
>
> General Zhou Qin, Jia Chong's Commander-in-Chief, was taking a nap when he dreamt of seeing over 100 people pick out Chong and lead him along a narrow path. Qin awoke with a start. When he heard of the loss of Chong he went out to search for him. Suddenly he spotted the path he had seen in his dream, so he went along it in search of Jia. Finally he saw him walking to an official's house. Bodyguards were everywhere.
>
> The official sat facing south, and in a fierce temper said to Chong, "You and Xun Xu are definitely the ones who have wreaked havoc on my family affairs: you have misled my children and disrupted the lives of my grandchildren. When I had the attendant Ren Kai reject you, you did not leave off,

and when the attendant Sou Chun scolded you, you did not change. Now, the Wu enemy should be pacified, but your prescription is to do away with Zhang Hua. Your closed and simple mind is always like this. If you don't repent, everyday your punishment will increase."

This caused Chong to kowtow until blood flowed down his face.

The official said, "If you draw out your days with this sort of thing, yours will be the honor of a lowly guard. In the end you will force your heir to die in a bell frame; your eldest child will die from golden wine; and you will cause your youngest children to die underneath withered trees. It will be the same for Xun Xu. As initially he had a small concentration of virtue, his fate will come after yours. Beyond a few generations, the successor to the throne is also likely to be displaced." When he finished talking he ordered Chong to leave.

Chong suddenly was able to return to his barracks. His appearance was haggard, his personality, muddled and numb. After several days he recovered.

As things went, Jia Mi died under a bell; Jia Hou passed away from drinking golden wine; and Jia Wu and Jia Kao both died from beatings with big wooden staffs. In the end, all happened as predicted.(82)

In this story, the "suddenly's" and the dream precipitate and maintain a fictive allegory, whose plot is organized generally by a relatively crude prediction mechanism. There can be no question that Gan Bao was making such an

allegory: the official is the Emperor as he faces south and orders Jia Chong as only the Emperor could. Further, his "children" and "grandchildren" were dead metaphors used by the Emperor to refer to his officials and/or the common people. The fictive allegory is then broken up in the same way it was created, with Jia Chong's "sudden" ability to return to Xiang.

With the use of cosmological functions like "suddenly," the author barely conceals the phantasia, motivating the reader to accept the unacceptable by coordinating the story's development from omniscient historicity to the timeless cosmic space of spectres. The "natural" order is disrupted to make the reader construct a cosmic order; thus, the reader moves through the text in a non-historical, imaginative way, wherein he is challenged to uncover the "hidden" aspects of life. What dominates the "text-continuum"(83) is not history, but cosmology.

III

The crucial status of the adverbial key "suddenly" and the process it represents can be seen in its use in fiction and philosophy in the centuries following the zhiguai era. Because "suddenly" is most appropriately used to show the intersection of discrete phases of the cosmology, it and related words were used by Chan (Japanese: Zen) Buddhists to show the unimpeded manner of transition from mundane to transcendent states.(84) The method of "sudden enlightenment" indicates how close the human and natural patterns could merge. It is significant that Chan Buddhism is one of the first indigenous Chinese Buddhist sects, and that the "sudden" awakening to enlightenment is one of its hallmarks.

Most of the zhiguai formula for narration continued through the early Tang dynasty chuanqi 傳奇 ("tales of wonder"). The chuanqi writers were more

aware of the potential role of narrative mechanisms in making fiction,(85) and they very skillfully blended old methods and new plots and themes. For example, "suddenly" is used very frequently --- and in coordination with dreaming --- in "Record of an Ancient Mirror" (Gu jing ji 古鏡記) by Wang Du 王度 (ca. 584-625) as well as in the anonymous "Addenda to the Tale of Jiang Zong and the White Monkey" (Bu Jiang Zong bai-yuan zhuan 補江總白猿傳). Only with the marvelous work of Shen Jiji 沈既濟 (750-800) do these devices lose, for a short while, the mechanical aspect they had gained over the intervening centuries. Except for techniques gained from Buddhist literature,(86) most classical and quasi-colloquial fiction employed the old devices with more sophisticated formulas.(87) For example, in his discussion of the "plot-centered story," Patrick Hanan notes (88) the dominance of a "'revelation' procedure," which is an expansion of the dream mechanism of zhiguai, and an "omniscient 'prediction' procedure," which allows for more suspense than the "revelation" type mechanism and is a considerable development from zhiguai prediction systems. However, the function word "suddenly" proved somewhat indomitable, for in many of the redactions of tales of the twelfth century and later by Feng Menglong 馮夢龍 (1574-1646)(89) and in short stories through the 18th century (90) we see the massive use of "suddenly" as a means of departing from one view of reality so as to adhere to another one.

The seventeeth-century literary critic, Jin Shengtan 金聖嘆, thought these old mechanisms central to the vitality of contemporaneous novels. He thought the flow of information should be disrupted to bring the reader out of the ordinary constrictions of (real or imagined) dialogue into a distinct reader-oriented point of view. One of these techniques Jin called "Clouds cutting the mountain in half" or "the technique of suddenness,"(91) which refers to the sudden introduction of new stories or sub-plots that bring the main story into

greater relief for the reader. Jin also noted the "technique of pressing the narrative" where the writer, "eager to have two people speak at once, must not let one person finish talking before the next starts, and so with one stroke presses the writing from both sides."(92) Jin Shengtan secretly employed this in rewriting the works of others(93) and, from comparisons of the texts he changed with the originals, it is clear that the narratives were "pressed" so that the dramatics of fictional encounters were brought home to the reader. In the process, narratives are "suddenly" disrupted as in the technique of "Clouds cutting the mountain in half." Thus, the requirement of "sudden" changes is also important for "pressing the narrative."(94)

* * *

After several decades of determined pursuit of "socialist realism," in the past six years Chinese have again begun to write books emphasizing more than political relations. One book that has recently brought Chinese literature new life is called Half of Man is Female (Nanren de yiban shi nüren 男人的一半是女人) by Zhang Xianliang 張賢亮.(95) The author has the complex task of developing a highly emotional world, a world filled with uncertainties and hence a long forbidden one. In the introductory chapter Zhang presents his case with great feeling and in a manner that has many connections with early Chinese literature. In a swirl of realities, the author dreams of the past. The boundaries of this state are defined by instances of discontinuity: events, in his dreams and in his conscious world, arise and break off "suddenly." The whole experience is characterized as imparting a "feeling of a blurry, scurrying energy" (mili huanghu 迷離恍惚), where in an instant eternity can exist.(96)

Reasons for the continued use of manifestations from the primal energy are not hard to find. In early China, it was an assumption that creative

processes were actually modes where phenomena stimulate people so that they respond in a reciprocating manner. Fiction is patterned after this basic ganying system, and hence it has a "spiritual semblance" (shen si 神似).

An anonymous eighteenth-century commentator on Rulin waishi 儒林外史 (The Scholars) noted: "Drawing ghosts and anomalies is easy, but drawing humans and tangible phenomena is difficult."(97) It is difficult to put the spiritual semblance common to spectres into the world everyone sees as "normal."

What abounds beneath the surface is uncertainty, and it is principally on this basis that Chinese stories were fashioned. This is one of the principal factors behind the fictive sense of zhiguai writers: they developed a way to make a point (such as proving the spirit world is not a lie), but in the process they formulated a means to express ideas without grounding them in specific and unalterable historic terms. The chief characteristic of the early stories is that from the normal and historical there is suddenly wrought a startling, and often enjoyably new, situation. The fact that these sudden, dreamy, or spiritual changes are based on a particular cosmology may weigh against our calling these works pure "fiction," but they are a start. Going against many traditional dicta, the writers examined the spiritual and cosmological world and found that what had been feared for its inconstancy should be studied and used precisely for such uncertain and unknown qualities.

What may appear rather erratically structured in Western eyes was thus a cosmological process in action to the Chinese. The stories could teach that the uncertainties caused by sudden changes were not to be judged with prejudice, but as a means to develop insight. In this respect zhiguai feed into the didactic mainstream of Chinese literature. But the greatest impact was in the use of cosmological principles as the groundwork for a poetics based on the exploration of the uncertainties and wonders that help make life interesting.

Changes in the world, although ultimately forming recognizable patterns, begin from an indeterminate source. Considering this indeterminacy as a source for showing how things develop in unique and interesting ways, the zhiguai authors created a method of writing that inspired generations of writers and readers. Although the Chinese approach is very different from the foward-driving tendency of Western narrative (see p. 4, above), the effectiveness of the use of such words as "suddenly" for narratives which do not have such a tendency is evident. In the West the primary example is in children's literature, where "suddenly" is constantly used to link the seemingly normal with the fantastic.

There may be considered two basic types of text-generating mechanisms in Western literature.(98) The first mechanism is subjected to and reaffirming of a non-linear, "cyclical-temporal motion." The texts thus made "reduced the world of excesses and anomalies which surrounded man to norm and system."(99) The second type is based on linear temporal motion and is dedicated to describbing incidents and anomalies. The two were correlated in various ways over the centuries, but rarely were the functions of the anomalies made crucial to the mechanism as they were in China. Anomalies, whose effects are sudden in appearance, are not suitable for the kind of "cyclical-temporal motion" of Western myths.(100) However, it may not be the mere appearance of anomalies but their startling effects on the narrative which were felt to be deleterious. The uncertainty engendered by such changes may be the reason that some of Dostoevski's works which develop narratives based on the "most improbable order" rely on the word "suddenly" to link episodes.(101) According to Jurij Lotman, this method enabled Dostoevski to first develop expectations for the reader only to suddenly plot out the thing least expected.(102) This kind of jarring experience for the reader is quite similar to what happens in many Chinese

stories where historical notes first establish a scene of normal reality which is transformed in unusual ways to a fantastic world. In both cases, uncertainty is used to create worlds where expectations and prejudices must be quickly altered to comprehend how things are changing. It is partially because Chinese stories have such a capacity that they were written and enjoyed by people who have often otherwise been known for ideas of balance and constancy.

NOTES*

*Unless otherwise noted, all translations are made by the author.

1. See A. Cohen, "Avenging Ghosts and Moral Judgement in Ancient Chinese Historiography: Three Examples from Shih-chi," in S. Allen and A. Cohen, eds., Legend, Lore and Religion in China, San Francisco, Chinese Materials Center, 1979, p. 101.

2. This point was first made clear very early in Chinese history. See, for example, the chapter "All Possess the Primary Power" (Xian you yi de 咸有一德) in Shu Jing 書經 (Book of Documents), Taipei, Commercial Press, 1976, pp. 27-30.

3. For prime examples of this kind of criticism, see Wang Liqi 王利器 ed., Yuan Ming Qing sandai jinhui xiaoshuo xiqu shiliao 元明清三代禁毀小說戲曲史料 (Historical Materials on the Prohibition of Fiction and Dramatic Arias in the Yuan, Ming, and Qing Periods), Shanghai, Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1981, pp. 238-239 and 391-392. The anonymous author of the 1736 preface to Rulin waishi 儒林外史 (The Scholars) still must defend the book against such notions (Wu Jingzi 吳敬梓, Rulin waishi, Beijing, Renmin chubanshe, 1975, vol. 1, Preface). It is noteworthy, however, that many early Chinese stories were actually discarded or marginal records once intended for official histories. See Kenneth DeWoskin, "The 'Sou-shen-chi' and the 'Chih-kuai' Tradition: A Bibliographic and Generic Study," Ph.D. thesis, Columbia University, 1974, Ann Arbor, University Microfilms International, 1980, pp. 275-277.

4. Ironically, those who worked hard at the latter were labelled "tare(-gathering) officials" (bai guan 稗官). See Wu Jingzi, op. cit., Preface.

5. Liu Xie 劉勰 , Wen xin diao long 文心雕龍 (Literary Mind and Carved Dragons), Wang Liqi, ed., Beijing, Longmen shudian, 1951, p. 1; cf. Vincent Yu-chung Shih, trans., The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons, New York, Columbia University Press, 1959, p. 9. Taiji is the "grand primal breath of the cosmos" from which came the yin and yang "primal breaths." See Morohashi Tetsuji 諸橋轍次 , et al., Dai KanWa jiten 大漢和辞典 (The Encyclopedic Chinese-Japanese Dictionary), Tokyo, Taishukan, 1984, vol. 3, p. 525, no. 5834.93, sense 1.

6. Liu Xie, op. cit., p. 2; Shih, op. cit., p. 10. For further examples, see Richard Wilhelm, trans., The I Ching or Book of Changes, translated from the German by Cary F. Baynes, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1972 (hereafter cited as "BC"), pp. 328-335.

7. A Concordance to Yi Ching, Beijing, Harvard-Yenching Institute, 1935 (hereafter cited as "CYC"), p. 39.

8. This was formulated by, among others, Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (179-104 B.C.). See Liu Xin 劉歆 (ca. 53 B.C.-A.D. 23), ed., Xijing zaji 西京雜記 (Miscellaneous Records of the Western Capital), Taipei, Commercial Press, 1979, ch. 3, pp. 23a-24b.

9. See the essay by Zhuang Zi (Chuang Tzu) translated by A.C. Graham, "On Seeing Things as Equal," History of Religions, vol. 9, nos. 2 and 3 (1969-70), pp. 147ff.

10. For example, the story cited by Joseph Needham (Science and Civilization in

China, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1977, vol. 2, p. 304). The interpretation of such phenomena were major tasks for diviners. See the stories of Gan Bao 干寶 (ca. 4th cent.) in his Sou shen ji 搜神記 (Records of Investigations on Spirits), Taipei, Shijie shuju, 1975 (hereafter cited as "Gan Bao"), e.g., pp. 23-24, stories 63-65.

11. Jing Fang 京房 (A.D. 78-37), Jing Fang Yi zhuan 京房易傳 (Jing Fang's Commentary on Yi Jing) cited in Gan Bao, p. 41, story 103.

12. See Manfred Porkert, The Theoretical Foundations of Chinese Medicine: Systems of Correspondence, Cambridge, MA, MIT Press, 1974, p. 19, and Yan Guocai 燕國材, Xian Qin xinli sixiang yanjiu 先秦心理思想研究 (Research on Pre-Qin Psychological Thought), Changsha, Hunan renmin chubanshe, 1981, pp. 138-140.

13. Joseph Needham, op. cit., pp. 329-335.

14. Cf. Andrew Plaks, "Traditional Chinese Fiction and Contemporary Narrative Theory," Actes du VIII^{e} Congres de l'Association Internationale de Littérature Comparée, Budapest, International Comparative Literature Association, 1980, p. 390.

15. CYC, p. 46.

16. See, for example, John Bishop, "Some Limitations of Chinese Fiction," Far Eastern Quarterly, vol. XV (1955-56). On recent trends see Winston Yang, "Western Critical and Comparative Approaches to the Study of Traditional Chinese

Fiction," Actes du VIII^e Congres de l'Association Internationale de Littérature Comparée, Budapest, International Comparative Literature Association, 1980, pp. 682-683.

17. Plaks, op. cit., pp. 388-390.

18. See the anonymous (ca. 4th cent. B.C.) Huangdi neijing suwen 黃帝內經素問 (Pristine Questions on the Yellow Emperor's Inner Classic), Beijing, Renmin weisheng chubanshe, 1978, pp. 59-60; cf. the translation of the text by Joseph Needham (Science and Civilization in China, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1977, vol. 4:1, p. 6).

19. From Lao zi 老子 (i.e., Dao de jing 道德經 [Tao Te Ching], "The Way and Its Power"), ch. 14; cf. D.C. Lau, trans., Lao Tzu: Tao Te Ching, Middlesex, Penguin Books, 1980, p. 70, and Fukunaga Mitsuji 福永光司, trans., Rōshi 老子 (Lao zi), Tokyo, Asahi shinbunsha, 1980, vol. 1, pp. 112-118. There are two variations of the first line cited: wu xiang zhi xiang 無象之象 (as translated above) and wu wu zhi xiang 無物之象 ("The image that is without substance," Lau, ibid.). According to Fukunaga (p. 116) they mean the same thing: the image of the Dao cannot be grasped or fixed by human consciousness. D.C. Lau translates huanghu as "indistinct and shadowy." As he suggests in his "Introduction" (p. 17), the term is depicting a physical state of the Dao. Further, in ch. 21 of Lao zi (Lau, op. cit., p. 78, and Fukunaga, op. cit., pp. 164-169), huanghu is stated to have phenomena and images. Huang, written as 恍 ("indistinct"), 慌 ("indistinct"), 荒 ("wild"), 芒 ("obscure"), 忘 ("forget"), 怳 ("indistinct"), and 洸 ("violent"), may be considered as "indistinct" or "flurried," but hu, whether written as 惚 ("confused"), 忽 ("suddenly"), or 芴 ("con-

fused"), is not so "shadowy" as it is scurrying. (The above variants are noted by the editors of Wang Fu's 王符 (ca. 85-163) Qianfu lun 潛夫論 (Essays of a Recluse) Shanghai, Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1978, p. 377, note 3). Fukunaga suggests (p. 167) that, besides meaning an undistinguishable state of life, huanghu may also have the senses of "unconsciousness" or "ecstasy." This, along with the suggestion that the whole of ch. 21 be interpreted in sexual terms (p. 165), seems to reflect later uses of the words.

20. See David Pollard, "Ch'i in Chinese Literary Theory," in Adele A. Rickett, ed., Chinese Approaches to Literature from Confucius to Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1978, pp. 47-54. In contrast to qi, the important aspect of huanghu is the movement between any opposing states.

21. CYC, p. 41; BC, p. 301.

22. From Xi ci zhuan 繫辭傳 (The Great Appendix); CYC, p. 40; BC, p. 294.

23. See the commentary cited in Shu Xincheng 舒新城, et al., Ci Hai 辭海 (Sea of Phrases), Hong Kong, Zhonghua shuju, 1976, s.v. youhun 遊魂, as well as those cited in Morohashi, vol. 7, p. 7019, 17792. 129 (游魂). The titles of these commentaries could not be traced.

24. CYC, p. 40; BC, p. 294.

25. Chen Shiyuan, Meng zhan yi zhi 夢占逸旨 (Additional Purport of Oneiromancy), Sibu congkan ed., ch. 1, p. 1.

26. The following noteworthy comment was made by David Knechtges ("Dream Adventure Stories in Europe and T'ang China," Tamkang Review, IV.2 (1973), p. 113) on the function of dreams in Chinese stories: "In the Chinese story the dream seems to be an integral part of the plot, and is directly related to the theme itself. Thus, it is more functional than in the European story.... The dream in fact is the only relevant part of the Chinese story."

27. Hu is cognate with the hu of huanghu (see Bernhard Karlgren, Grammata Serica Recensa, Stockholm, Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, 1972, no. 503.1). Hu by itself could also mean huanghu (see Morohashi, ibid., no. 10405.22). Another basic meaning of the word is "to be unaware" or "to forget" (wang 忘) (see Xu Shen 許慎, Shuowen jiezi 説文解字 (Explaining Words and Analyzing Characters), Beijing, Zhonghua shuju, 1965, p. 220, and W.C.H. Dobson, A Dictionary of Chinese Particles, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1974, p. 331). Hu may be seen as a venue for spontaneous, or apparently spontaneous, eruptions from the unknown or unformed.

28. It is noteworthy that an early commentary on the Xi ci zhuan defined hua ("transformation") as "There is something and there is nothing; when suddenly (hu) they are altered, it is known as 'hua.'" The commentary defines bian ("change") as "gradual movements of alterations (yigai 移改) in advance of future changes." See Shu Xincheng, op. cit., s.v. bianhua.

29. The word was also used in a similar way in the natural sciences and philosophy. Regarding the former, see, e.g., the citations in Chen Feiya 陳菲亞 ed., Zhongguo gudai dilixue shi 中國古代地理學史 (The History of Geography in Ancient China), Beijing, Kexue chubanshe, 1984, pp. 52-53); and for

the latter, see Fan Zhen's 范縝 (450-507?) Shen mie lun 神滅論 (On Soul Destruction) where it is used to show how a Buddhist theory had logical absenses (text cited in Ren Jiyu 任繼愈 Han-Tang Zhongguo fojiao sixiang lunji 漢唐佛教思想論集 〔Collected Essays on Chinese Buddhist Thought from the Han to Tang〕, Beijing, Sanlian shudian, 1963, p. 235).

30. Chang Qu , Hua-Yang guo zhi, Taipei, Chunghwa Book Co., 1978, ch. 4, p. 10b.

31. The story was suitable enough to appear in "The History of the Later Han" (Hou Han shu 後漢書) of Fan Yeh 范曄 (398-445). Fan Yeh made subtle reorganizations; he says the impregnation was "as if there were a stimulus (gan)" and reserves the magico-permutation formula "suddenly" for later in the story: after the log turns into a dragon and "suddenly speaks" to Sand Pot. See Morohashi, vol. 2, p. 1000, no. 3580.164.

32. Karla Kuskin, "The Language of Children's Literature," in Leonard Michaels and Christopher Ricks, eds., The State of the Language, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1980, p. 217. It may be noted that "suddenly" is a very common word in Western children's literature and may reinforce the magic of the stories.

33. From Yi yuan 異苑 (A Garden of Marvels) of Liu Jingshu 劉敬叔 (ca. 390-470), cited by Lu Xun 魯迅 , A Brief History of Chinese Fiction, Beijing, Foreign Languages Press, 1964, p. 54; translated from the text in the Chinese edition of Lu Xun's book (Zhongguo xiaoshuo shilue 中國小說史略 , Beijing, Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1973, p. 34).

34. The following is a good example of the kind of sleepy prose under discussion (from an untitled document, ca. 3rd cent. B.C.):

The meditations of the Holy are light.
Light, then formable;
Formable, then not forgotten;
Not forgotten, then sensible;
Sensible, then one hears the
virtuous person's Way;
Hearing the virtuous person's
Way, then Kingly speech (is obtained);
Kingly speech, then formable;
Formable, then Holiness.

Cited in Pang Pu 龐朴, Boshu wuxing pian yanjiu 帛書五行篇研究 (Research on the Five Phases Chapter of the Silk Writings), Shandong, QiLu shushe, 1980, p. 27. Parallel phrasing such as this remained a common form of writing in China. See the comment on this kind of writing by David Pollard, op. cit., p. 53.

35. See, e.g., Wang Fu, op. cit., ch. 2.

36. Joseph Needham, op. cit., vol. 2, pp. 335-338.

37. J. Průšek, Chinese History and Literature, Prague, Academica, 1970, pp. 17-34. Also see Ronald Egan, "Narratives in Tso chuan," HJAS, vol. 37 (1977), pp. 339-340; J.R. Allen, "An Introductory Study of Narrative Structure in the Shi ji," CLEAR, vol. 3 (1981), pp. 33-40.

38. David Hawkes, "The Quest of the Goddess," in C. Birch, ed., Studies in Chinese Literary Genres, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1974, pp. 62-65. The basic mechanisms for advancement of the narrative were phrases such as yushi 於是 ("thereupon") and zhi 至 or jizhi 及至 ("arriving at..."). See Xiao Tong 蕭統 (501-531) ed., Wen Xuan 文選 (Literary Selections), Hong Kong, Commercial Press, 1978, pp. 27, 92, 97, and 108.

39. Ronald Egan, op. cit., p. 339.

40. Cf. K. DeWoskin, "The Six Dynasties Chih-kuai and the Birth of Fiction," in A. Plaks, ed., Chinese Narrative: Critical and Theoretical Essays, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1977, pp. 21-52. It is interesting that huanghu is still a well-used expression in Japan, where it refers to a particular vacuous-like state of mind of old people and to ecstasy. See, e.g., Ariyoshi Sawako 有吉佐和子, Kōkotsu no hito 恍惚の人 (The Tormented Ones), Tokyo, Shinchosha, 1972. Huanghu (along with uncertainty) is also considered to be a main aesthetic cagetory of the twentieth-century writer, Dazai Osamu 太宰治. See Iwatani Daishi 巖谷大四, ed., Dazai Osamu: Kōkotsu to fuan no shō 太宰治・恍惚と不安の章 (Dazai Osamu: Selections of Ecstasy and Uncertainty), Tokyo, Bancho shoten, 1968, p. 261.

41. A lucid presentation of the cosmological framework of Chinese literature was made by Liu Xie in his Wen xin diao long. An earlier but slightly arcane treatment was made in the Xi ci zhuan; see, for example, CYC, p. 40, and BC, pp. 293-294.

42. Translation by David Hawkes in his Ch'u Tz'u: The Songs of the South,

Boston, Beacon Press, 1962, p. 26.

43. Translation by David Hawkes, ibid., p. 34.

44. For a translation of the whole poem, see Burton Watson, Chinese Lyricism, Shih Poetry from the Second to the Twelfth Century, New York, Columbia University Press, 1971, p. 24. Poem translated from Xiao Tong, op. cit., p. 632.

45. See, e.g., Itō Masabumi 伊藤正文 , trans., So Shoku 曹植 (Cao Zhi), Tokyo, Iwanami shoten, 1971, p. 140, and Ogawa Tamaki 小川環樹 and Yamamoto Kazuyoshi 山本和義 , trans., So Tōbashi shi sen 蘇東坡詩選 (Selected Poetry of Su Dongpo), Tokyo, Iwanami shoten, 1984, p. 43.

46. See, e.g., Yoshikawa Kōjirō 吉川幸次郎, Gen Seki no "Ei Kai Shi" ni tsuite 阮籍の「詠懐詩」について (Concerning Ruan Ji's "Poems of My Heart"), Tokyo, Iwanami shoten, 1983, pp. 49-50 (no.40), 54-55 (no.27), 73-74 (no.51), 75-76 (no.62), 110 (no.78), and 116-117 (no.80). It is noteworthy that Ruan Ji also used similarly unmoored phrases to set off similes; e.g.. piao ruo 飄若 ("drifting as if...") and fanfan ruo 汎汎若 ("floating as if...")(Yoshikawa, ibid., pp. 116-117 〔no.80 〕 and pp. 115-116 〔no.41 〕 , respectively).

47. Cited in Yoshikawa Kōjirō, Tō Enmei den 陶淵明伝 (A Biography of Tao Yuan-ming), Tokyo, Shinchosha, 1977, p. 164. It is noteworthy that the poems cited by Yoshikawa (in Chūgoku bungaku nyumon 中国文学入門 〔An Introduction to Chinese Literature〕 , Tokyo, Kodansha, 1984, pp. 146-150) to show the development of the ideas of "inconstancy" and "pessimism" in Chinese poetry usually contain the

word hu.

48. See Takeda Akira 竹田晃, trans., Sōshinki 搜神記 (Sou shen ji), Tokyo, Heibonsha, 1978, "Postface," p. 392.

49. See, e.g., Liang Qichao 梁啓超, "Fanyi wenxue yu fodian" 翻譯文學與佛典 (Translated Literature and Buddhist Classics), in Luo Xinzhang 羅新璋, ed., Fanyi lunji 翻譯論集 (Collected Essays on Translation), Beijing, Commercial Press, 1984, pp. 52-67. According to Liang (p. 52), between A.D. 67 and 730, 176 translators (actually translation team leaders) produced 4,507 scrolls of translation. For details see Ma Zuyi 馬祖毅, Zhongguo fanyi jianshi 中國翻譯簡史 (A Concise History of Translation in China), Beijing, China Translation and Publishing Corp., 1984, pp. 13-110.

50. See Michel Strickmann, "On the Alchemy of T'ao Hung-ching," in H. Welch and A. Seidel, eds., Facets of Taoism, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1979, pp. 123-192.

51. Cited in Huang Haizhang 黃海章, Zhongguo wenxue piping jianshi 中國文學批評簡史 (A Concise History of Chinese Literary Criticism), Guangdong, Guangdong renmin chubanshe, 1962, p. 49.

52. See L. Carrington Goodrich, A Short History of the Chinese People, London, George Allen and Unwin, 1957, p. 75, note 17.

53. See the contexts of the stories recreated by Hisayuki Miyakawa in his "Local Cults around Mount Lu at the Time of Sun En's Rebellion," in H. Welch and

A. Seidel, eds., op. cit., pp. 87-89.

54. Zhu Xiuxia 祝秀俠, Tangdai chuanqi yanjiu 唐代傳奇研究 (Research on Tang Tales of Wonder), Taipei, Zhonghua wenhua chubanshe, 1957, pp. 19-20.

55. Cited in George Steiner, After Babel: Aspects of Literature and Translation, London, Oxford University Press, 1976, p. 248.

56. Although Guo Pu's phonological and lexicographical work is still taken as authoritative, his faithful conjectures on the mysteries reported in ancient works have been seriously criticized. See, on the former work, A. Von Rosthorn, "The Erh-ya and other Synonymicons," Journal of the Chinese Language Teachers Association, vol. X, no. 3 (1975), p. 139; and on the latter work, see Rong Zhaozu 容肇祖 , "Shan hai jing yanjiu de jinzhan" 山海經研究的進展 (Development of Research on the Book of Mountains and Seas) in Ling Chunsheng 凌純聲 ed., 'Shan hai jing' xin lun 山海經新論 (New Essays on the Book of Mountains and Seas), Taipei, Oriental Cultural Service, n.d., pp. 14-15. There is also some possibility that Guo Pu wrote a collection of zhiguai stories. See Li Jianguo 李劍國, Tang-qian zhiguai xiaoshuo shi, 唐前志怪小説史 (A History Pre-Tang zhiguai Fiction), Tianjin, Nankai Daxue chubanshe, 1984, pp. 270-272.

57. A paraphrase of the following phrase from Zhuang zi (Zhuang zi yinde 莊子引得〔A Concordance to the Writings of Zhuang zi〕, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1956, p. 42): "Figuring what a person knows -- it is not as much as what they don't know; and the period of their lives -- it is not as much as the period they don't live."

58. Hu is a general term for non-Chinese peoples of northwestern China (some of whom had driven Guo Pu's family south); Yue are non-Chinese of southern China.

59. Guo Pu, "Zhu Shan hai jing xu" 注山海經叙 (Introduction to a Commentary on the Book of Mountains and Seas), in Yuan Ko 遠可, ed., Shan hai jing jiaozhu 山海經校注 (Variorum Edition of the Book of Mountains and Seas), Shanghai, Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1980 (hereafter cited as "Guo Pu"), p. 478; cf. Kōma Miyoshi 高馬三良 , trans., Sen gai kyō 山海經(Shan hai jing), Tokyo, Heibonsha, 1980, p. 456, note 5, where he suggests that the second to last negative (bu 不) be dropped.

60. See W.K. Wimsatt and C. Brooks, Literary Criticism: A Short History, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1978, p. 26, and T.S. Dorsch, trans., Classical Literary Criticism, New York, Penguin Books, 1965, p. 68.

61. See Koma, op. cit., p. 456, note 5.

62. This is not to deny that orthodox methods had not some "creativity," simply that, following the dictates of Confucius, they were methods that radically forced events to show the goodness of order over the degradation of chaos -- a moral pruning that presents a narrow (and narrowing) point of view on life. The desperation of this kind of pruning is evidenced in the need to organize chaos by measures such as the use of ghosts. On the problem in general, see William Boltz, "Kung Kung and the Flood: Reverse Euhemerism in the Yao Tien," T'oung Pao, vol. LXVII (1981), nos. 3-5.

63. See James Legge, trans., Confucius, New York, Dover Publications, 1971, p. 417, and notes.

64. An interesting allusion to the "Analects" (Lun yu, 2.10): "When you see what a person does, why he does it, and what makes him rest: How can people hide? How can people hide?" (See Legge, op. cit., p. 149).

65. Guo Pu, p. 480.

66. See Fang Xuanling 房玄齡 (ca. 635), et al., ed., Jin shu 晉書 (History of the Jin), Beijing, Zhonghua shuju, 1974, p. 1905, and R. Mather, trans., 'Shih-shuo hsin-yu': A New Account of Tales of the World by Liu I-ch'ing, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1976, p. 133.

67. Rui ying tu 瑞應圖, a book on fortune by a Sun Rouzhi 孫柔之. One chapter of the book is extant. See Takeda Akira, op. cit., p. 169, note 3.

68. A poem in the Xi ci zhuan (CYC, p. 41).

69. Zang Wenzhong 藏文忠 was a steward of the state of Lu around the end of the seventh century B.C. The story appears in several ancient works. See Takeda Akira, op. cit., p. 169, note 5.

70. Gan Bao, ch. 7, p. 64, story no. 215.

71. Gan Bao, p. 1.

72. Lu Xun, A Brief History..., p. 400; DeWoskin, The 'Sou-shen-chi'..., pp. 262f; cf. D. Bodde, "Some Chinese Tales of the Supernatural," HJAS, vol. XI (1942), p. 341.

73. The fact that some of the stories seek to disprove the existence of spirits strengthens the idea that the manner of representing them was of equal importance to showing their "truthfulness" per se.

74. See Fang, op. cit., p. 2150, and DeWoskin, loc. cit., pp. 211-212.

75. Philip Sidney, "Defence of Poesie," in F. Kermode and J. Hollander, eds., The Oxford Anthology of English Literature, New York, Oxford University Press, 1973, p. 644.

76. L. Giles, "A T'ang Manuscript of the Sou Shen Chi," The New China Review, vol. 3, no. 5 (1921), pp. 461f.

77. Through the medium of "wandering spirits" the future was constructed in dreams. See Chen Shiyuan , op. cit., ch. 1, p. 1. They played a similar organizing function in stories (see note 25). One of the most interesting treatments of this subject was made by Uchida Michio 内田道夫 ("Tōdai shōsetsu ni okeru yume to gensetsu" 唐代小説に於ける夢と幻説 〔Illusion and Dreaming in Tang Fiction〕, Tōyōgaku, vol. 1 〔1959〕) who argues that only in Tang stories were dreams consciously utilized to make fiction. In my opinion, the phenomenon appeared much earlier.

78. Nai is used 257 times, hou (and yihou 以後) 142 times, zhi (arriving at a

time) 61 times, zhi (arriving at a place) 64 times, and sui 遂 101 times. There was a tendency among many authors of this period "to make language itself a component, rather than simply a carrier, of philosophy" (Yoshikawa Kōjirō, "The Shih-shuo hsin-yu and Six Dynasties Prose Style," in J. Bishop, ed., Studies in Chinese Literature, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1965, p. 179).

79. This can also be easily seen in the good sample of stories studied by Li Jianguo (Li, op. cit., e.g., pp. 163, 177, 195, 203, 216, 217, 234, 246, 251, 255, 301-302, 413, 435, etc.).

80. Ronald Harwood, "The Language of Screenwriting," in Leonard Michaels and Christopher Ricks, eds., The State of the Language, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1980, p. 294.

81. According to his biography in Fang's history, the hero (Jia Chong 賈充) was well thought of by the Emperor (see Fang, op. cit., p. 1174). When the Emperor proposed an attack on Wu, Zhang Hua 張華 (232-300) and others followed the suggestion, whereas Jia Chong and others tried to veto it. Finally, the Zhang Hua faction won, and, after a great deal of hesitation, Jia Chong took to the battlefield. After winning several major battles, Jia Chong retired to the city of Xiang in Henan Province, where the story takes place (see Fang, p. 1169).

82. Gan Bao, pp. 72-73, story no. 248. Jia Mi was actually Chong's second daughter's son; Jia Hou, Jia Wu, and Jia Kao were Chong's daughters. Being beaten with a wooden staff was a kind of punishment. See Takeda Akira, op.

cit., p. 193, notes 9-12.

83. On this problem in Western literature, see Menakhem Perry, "Literary Dynamics: How the Order of a Text Creates Its Meanings," Poetics Today, vol. 1, nos. 1 and 2 (1979), pp. 36-37.

84. See, e.g., Sekiguchi Shindai 関口真大, trans., Tendai sho shi-kan 天台小止観 (Minor Collection on the Concentration-Contemplation Cycle of the Tiantai School), Tokyo, Iwanami shoten, 1983, pp. 54, 58, 64, 80, 132, and 134. The "Minor Collection..." (Chinese: Xiao zhi-guan 小止觀) was edited by Zhi Yi 智顗 (538-597).

85. See Uchiyama Tomoya 内山知也, "Tōdai shōsetsu no yume ni tsuite" 唐代小説の夢について (The Function of Dreams in Tang Fiction), Chūgoku bunka kenkyukai kaiho, vol. 5, no. 1 (1956).

86. Lu Xun, op. cit., pp. 58-61 (Chinese text, pp. 36-38).

87. C.T. Hsia and T.A. Hsia, "New Perspectives on Two Ming Novels: Hsi yu chi and Hsi yu pu," in Chow Tse-tsung, ed., Wen-lin: Studies in the Chinese Humanities, Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1968, pp. 352-358.

88. Patrick Hanan, "The Early Chinese Short Story: A Critical Theory in Outline," in C. Birch, ed., op. cit., pp. 323-328.

89. For example, Feng Menglong 馮夢龍 ed., Jing shi tong yan 警世通言 (Comprehensive Words to Admonish the World), Beijing, Zuojia chubanshe, 1957,

ch. 10, pp. 120-126 and ch. 20, pp. 274-286.

90. For example, Lü Guanren 呂顴仁, ed. and trans., Mafengnü chuanqi 痲瘋女傳奇 (The Romance of the Leper Woman), Harbin, Heilongjian renmin chubanshe, 1986, pp. 103-105, 112-114, and 274-279.

91. John Wang, Chin Sheng-t'an, New York, Twayne Publishers, 1972, p. 73.

92. Cited in Jia Wenzhao 賈文昭 and Xu Zhaoxun 徐召勛, Zhongguo gudian xiaoshuo yishu xinsheng 中國古典小說藝術欣賞 (An Appreciation of the Artistry of Classical Chinese Fiction), Hefei, Anhui renmin chubanshe, 1982, p. 34.

93. Lu Xun, op. cit., p. 193 (Chinese text, p. 124), and Wang, op. cit., p. 69.

94. Wang, p. 58. Even without these mature editorial methods, "suddenly" was used in its ancient capacity in the novels of the eighteenth century. For example, it is used in Sanguo yanyi 三国演義 and Hong lou meng 紅樓夢 (Jia and Xu, op. cit., p. 77 and p. 90, respectively), and on occasion it is used extensively in Rulin waishi (e.g., Wu, op. cit., ch. 6).

95. Beijing, Zhongguo wenxian chuban gongsi, 1986.

96. Zhang, op. cit., p. 3.

97. Wu, op. cit., ch. 6, p. 18a.

98. Jurij M. Lotman, "The Origin of Plot in the Light of Typology," Poetics

Today, 1:1-2 (Autumn, 1979), pp. 161-163. The following comments on Western text-generating mechanisms relies chiefly on Lotman's work.

99. Lotman, op. cit., p. 162.

100. Ibid., p. 163. On the other hand, the importance of anomalies in the text-generating mechanisms of Chinese stories may be an important reason the Chinese did not develop long myths (which are based on "cyclical-temporal motion"). Cf. Lu Xun, op. cit., pp. 19-20 (Chinese text, pp. 12-13).

101. S. Slonimskij, "Vdrug' u Dostoevskogo" ("Suddenly" in Dostoevski), Kniga i revolustsija, 8 (1922), cited by Lotman, ibid., p. 175.

102. Ibid., pp. 175-178.

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