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## Gendering Other: The Representation of Foreigners in *Yesou puyan*

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# Gendering Other: The Representation of Foreigners in *Yesou puyan*

Huili Zheng

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If distant people are not submissive, cultivate civility and virtue to make them come (遠人不服, 則修文德以來之).

— Confucius

## Gendering Other

The association of gender and the construction of the Other has been widely noted since the publication of Said's influential work *Orientalism*.<sup>1</sup> While previously colonial studies had been limited largely to European imperialism, in the past decade scholars working on ethnicity and frontier studies in late imperial China have blazed new pathways in drawing our attention to the imperialistic nature of the Qing Empire. In her examination of Qing frontier travel writing on Taiwan, Emma Teng rightly points out that in limiting imperialism to its consideration as a Western phenomenon, scholars have ignored China's role as an imperialist power, and she argues for expanding colonial studies to include imperial China.<sup>2</sup> Recent scholarship on Qing frontier politics has deepened our understanding of the Qing Empire as a self-conscious expansionist and colonialist power.<sup>3</sup> What is of special interest to us is the introduction of the notion of gender and

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<sup>1</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994, rpt.).

<sup>2</sup> Emma Jinhua Teng, *Taiwan's Imagined Geography: Chinese Colonial Travel Writing and Pictures, 1683–1895* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004), 7–15.

<sup>3</sup> For discussions of the Qing Empire's military expansionism and colonialism, see Laura Hostetler, *Qing Colonial Enterprise: Ethnography and Cartography in Early Modern China* (Chicago; the University of Chicago Press, 2001); Peter C. Perdue, *China Marches West: The Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard

sexuality in studies of ethnicity in late imperial China. Gender and sexuality, the key trope in Western colonial discourse, likewise functioned as an essential rhetorical device in ethnic and colonial discourse in late imperial China. As Stevan Harrell has pointed out, sex serves as a perennial metaphor in the Chinese hegemonic definition of people of the periphery.<sup>4</sup> Much like non-European women in Western colonial discourse, non-Han women in Qing frontier travel literature and ethnographical writing also served as a stand-in for cultural and racial "Other."

While scholars have made significant inroads on ethnographical writings and frontier travel literature, critical examination of the role of Ming–Qing fictional narrative in the construction and representation of the cultural other is a fertile area yet to be explored, given the fact that fiction played a critical role as a cultural form in late imperial cultural polemics.<sup>5</sup> Inasmuch as official dynastic histories were the prominent sources of China's civilizational and nationalist discourse and thus constituted the "legal fiction" of China, in the late imperial period fiction came to substitute for historiography as a new medium in narrating "China," as attested by a large number of fictional narratives featuring encounters with racial and cultural others.<sup>6</sup> Situating fictional discourse of cultural and racial other within the late imperial cultural context,

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University Press, 2005); Joanna Waley-Cohen, *The Culture of War in China: Empire and the Military under the Qing Dynasty* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2006) — to name only a few.

<sup>4</sup> Stevan Harrell, "Civilizing Projects and the Reaction to Them," in *Cultural Encounters on China's Ethnic Frontiers*, ed. Stevan Harrell (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1995), 3–36.

<sup>5</sup> Dramatic representations of others in Ming–Qing times have drawn some critical attention, though. For a discussion on the representation of the "oceanic" others on the Ming and Qing stages, see Liana Chen, "Ritual into Play: The Aesthetic Transformation of Qing Court Theatre" (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 2009). For discussion of the significance of gender in the border-crossing drama of Ming–Qing times, see Daphne Pi-Wei Lei, "Performing the Border: Gender and Inter-cultural Conflicts in Premodern Chinese Drama (Ph.D. diss., Tufts University, 1999) and *Operatic China: Staging Chinese Identity Across the Pacific* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

<sup>6</sup> In his study of the two Qing novels *Yesou puyan* 野叟曝言 (The Humble Words of An Old Rustic) and *Sanfeng mengquan zhuan* 三分夢全傳 (Three-Tens of the Story Is a Dream), Martin W. Huang has observed that both novels show "new awareness and deepening consciousness of others" beyond China. See Martin W. Huang, "From Caizi to Yingyong: Imagining Masculinities in Two Qing Novels, "Yesou puyan" and "Sanfen meng quanzhuan," *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, and Reviews*, 25 (2003): 93.

fictional representation of aliens provides a fruitful site for examining a set of issues critical to a better understanding of the cultural politics and polemics of late imperial China: how did the educated elite imagine the world and China's position in it? What problems and anxieties concerning the Self of "China" do the authors attempt to conceal/reveal in relation to the Other? What othering strategies are employed in articulating those anxieties and problems? And how are gender relations implicated in the cultural imagination of the Other? In what follows I will focus on the representation of the other in *Yesou puyan* 野叟曝言 (The Humble Words of An Old Rustic) as a case study. As the novel invokes a vast repository of stereotyped images of the racial and cultural others accumulated in China's long literary tradition, it marks the most extensive fictional narrative on cultural and racial others in late imperial China. My primary interest is to show how the author of *Yesou puyan* imagines "China" and the world, how he appropriates the stereotyped representation of the Other and gives these stereotyped images a gendered twist by sexualizing the Other in configuring self-other positions, and what new light the obsessive preoccupation with cultural other in *Yesou puyan* can shed on issues such as ethnicity and cultural identity in a period of intensified ethnic contacts and confrontations.

Written in the late eighteenth century, the novel *Yesou puyan* is about the construction of a universal empire of Confucian orthodoxy by the protagonist Wen Suchen 文素臣 as well as his male offspring and like-minded literati friends.<sup>7</sup> Represented as a Confucian messiah, Suchen, despite his humble status as a licentiate, takes on the gargantuan mission of converting China as well as the rest of the world to Confucian dominance.<sup>8</sup> A pronounced difference between *Yesou*

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<sup>7</sup> The dating of *Yesou puyan* remains inconclusive since it was circulated mainly in hand-copied manuscript until the late nineteenth century. The earliest extant copy of the novel is a manuscript dated 1878, and the earliest extant printed copy is dated 1881. In his study of the chronicle of the life of the author, Xia Jingqu 夏敬渠, Zhao Jingshen 趙景深 suggests that *Yesou puyan* was probably completed around 1779. See Zhao Jingshen, "Yesou puyan zuozhe Xia Erming nianpu" 野叟曝言作者夏二銘年譜 ("A Chronicle of Xia Erming, the Author of The Humble Words of An Old Rustic"), in Zhao Jingshen, *Zhongguo xiaoshuo congkao* 中國小說從考 (Collected Study of Chinese Fiction) (Jinan: Qilu shushe, 1983), 445–446. For accounts in English of the extant editions of the novel, see Martin W. Huang, *Desire and Fictional Narrative* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001), 237–238.

<sup>8</sup> On the image of Suchen as a masculine Confucian hero, see Huang, "From Caizi to Yingyiong," 59–98.

*puyan* and previous fictional imagination of the world and China's position in it is that, in *Yesou puyan* China is no longer conceived as the geographical center of the world without appropriating the Buddhist cosmology.<sup>9</sup> Rather, *Yesou puyan* presents the world as a globe (*diqu* 地球) with China and Europe located in separate sectors of it. The author's notion of the world as a "globe" was apparently inspired by European cartographic knowledge introduced by the Jesuits.<sup>10</sup> Another difference worth noting is that all the foreign countries presented in *Yesou puyan* are real and historical countries.<sup>11</sup> This attention to the "real" and "factual" was an index of the eighteenth-century intellectual reorientation toward "practical learning."<sup>12</sup> But what most distinguishes *Yesou puyan* from existing fictional discourse of cultural others is the ideological politicization of foreign customs, religions and beliefs. The fantasy of Confucian imperialism is configured by way of rigid antagonism of Confucian orthodoxy (*zheng* 正) vis-à-vis heterodoxy (*xie* 邪),<sup>13</sup> a rubric that primarily refers to Daoism and especially Buddhism, but also includes

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<sup>9</sup> For instance, both *Xiyou ji* 西遊記 (Journey to the West) and *Sanbao Taijian Xiyang ji* 三保太監西洋記 (The Adventures of Eunuch San Bao in the Western Ocean) employ the Buddhist cosmology in imagining the world and China's position within it.

<sup>10</sup> For discussions of cartographic representations of China and the world from the Song to the Qing dynasties, see Richard J. Smith, *Chinese Maps: Images of "All under Heaven"* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1996); also see his "Maps, Myths, and Multiple Realities: Images of the Other in Late Imperial China," a paper for the workshop on "Images of Maps/Maps of Imagination," Oxford University, Ashmolean Museum, May 12–13, 200).

<sup>11</sup> For example, most foreign countries represented in *Xiyou ji* are mythical and imaginary. Although in *Xiyang ji* most of foreign lands are factual, the novel still includes a few imaginary foreign countries.

<sup>12</sup> On the eighteenth-century intellectual reorientation, see Benjamin A. Elman, *From Philosophy to Philology: Intellectual and Social Aspects of Change in Late Imperial China* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001). Also cf. Chou Kai-wing, *The Rise of Confucian Ritualism in Late Imperial China: Ethics, Classics, and Lineage Discourse* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1994).

<sup>13</sup> In his discussion of anti-foreignism in nineteenth-century China, Paul Cohen has pointed out that, long before the coming of Christianity, the Chinese possessed a well-established cultural category, including *xie*, which they used to label teachings and practices that deviated from the way of the sages. See Paul Cohen, *China and Christianity: The*

anything considered deviant from orthodox Confucianism, including Islam, Christianity, and various popular sectarian beliefs. What is unique about the representation of the other in *Yesou puyan* is that the encounter with the other is more often than not configured as erotic encounters as well as the extensive use of the *yin/yang* symbolism in configuring self–other positioning.

The representation of gender and sexuality in *Yesou puyan* has drawn scholarly attention since the 1990s. In his study of male–female sexual relations in eighteenth-century Chinese fiction Keith McMahon has observed that *Yesou puyan* presents a curious marriage of Confucian orthodoxy and erotic literature.<sup>14</sup> Maram Epstein, in her examination of gendered structure and the representation of desire in the Ming–Qing vernacular novel, has paid particular attention to the use of the *yinyang* iconography in *Yesou puyan*.<sup>15</sup> Martin W. Huang also has noticed the use of *yang* image associated with the image of Suchen as a masculinized sage-hero.<sup>16</sup> While inspired in my study of gender and sexuality in *Yesou puyan* by these scholars, my primary concern is with how gender and sexual relations inform the conceptualization and representation of the self–other positioning in the imperialist fantasy of *Yesou puyan*.

The primary imagery associated with Suchen is that of *yang*. The *yang* imagery of Confucian orthodoxy associated with Suchen is made clear at the beginning of the novel in the passage regarding his birth. Like the birth of any legendary figure, Suchen's birth is also marked by the fabulous dreams of his parents. On the night before his birth, Suchen's father dreams of receiving a radiant sun from none other than Confucius, the ultimate representative of *wen* 文 (civility, culture, or literature).<sup>17</sup> When a Buddhist monk and a Daoist priest come to snatch it, the

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*Missionary Movement and the Growth of Chinese Antiforeignism, 1860–1870* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963), 4.

<sup>14</sup> Keith McMahon, *Misers, Shrews, and Polygamists: Sexuality and Male–Female Relations in Eighteenth-century Chinese Fiction* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1995), 150–175.

<sup>15</sup> Maram Epstein, *Competing Discourses: Orthodoxy, Authenticity, and Engendered Meanings in Late Imperial Chinese Fiction* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2001), 13–60, 215–228.

<sup>16</sup> Huang, "From Caizi to Yingyong," 59–98. Also see Martin W. Huang, *Negotiating Masculinities in Late Imperial China* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2006), 155–185.

<sup>17</sup> While Wen Suchen's family name, *Wen* 文, refers to the Confucian cultural tradition of which Confucius is the

sun emits rays of blazing fire and scorches the two to ashes.<sup>18</sup> This hyper-masculine image of the sun, apparently referring to Confucian orthodoxy personified by Suchen, is a recurring motif exclusively associated with Suchen in the novel.<sup>19</sup> The masculine *yang* orthodoxy is literally embodied by Suchen, as he is endowed with "a body of pure *yang*" (*chun yang zhi ti* 純陽之體). The potency of Suchen's *yang* body is manifested in his extraordinary martial prowess, a crucial complementary quality to his *wen* identity, his extraordinary sexual potency, and the miraculous "healing" power of his body.<sup>20</sup> In the same vein, the "otherness" of ethnic and foreign people is epitomized primarily by the "heretical" sexuality of foreign women. In other words, the gendered positioning of masculine Self versus feminized Other dovetails with the ideological polarization of orthodoxy versus heterodoxy. In *Yesou puyan*, the foreign woman's body is not only the battleground on which the war of orthodoxy against heterodoxy is waged; it is also the site on which to authenticate the cultural identity of the orthodox Self and to demarcate the cultural boundary of Self.

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ultimate symbol, his first name, *Suchen* 素臣, meaning "unappointed minister," is certainly inspired by Confucius's appellation *suwang* 素王, "the unappointed king," a notion associated with New Text Confucianism. The invocation of this epithet aligns the author of *Yesou puyan* with this emerging intellectual trend, and Suchen's heroism anticipates the literati activism that gained momentum in the early nineteenth century. Suchen's radical reformist spirit further calls to mind the radical reformism of Kang Youwei 康有為 (1858–1927), an enthusiastic exponent of New Text Confucianism, in the late Qing period. But while Kang Youwei is radically modern, Wen Suchen is radically conservative. For a discussion of the Chinese intellectuals' emerging interest in New Text Confucianism in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, see Benjamin A. Elman, *Classicism, Politics, and Kinship: The Ch'ang-chou School of New Text Confucianism in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1990).

<sup>18</sup> Xia Jingqu 夏敬渠, *Yesou puyan* 野叟曝言 (Beijing: Renmin zhongguo chubanshe, 1993), 3. All of the following references to the novel are to this modern type edition, which includes chapter-end comments; chapter and page numbers are given in parentheses.

<sup>19</sup> For instance, the crown prince likens Suchen to the sun "which, with the rising of it, will eliminate heterodoxies of all sorts" (如旭日一昇, 諸邪皆滅, 88:1016).

<sup>20</sup> For a discussion of Suchen's masculinity, see Huang, "From Caizi to Yingyiong," 59–98. Huang rightly observes that Suchen's body of *yang* energy is "a potent symbol of the superiority of Confucian civilization" (90).



### Da Qin: Redeeming the Barbaric Other

The country of Da Qin (大秦) represented the Chinese conception of the far west, from the Han to the Ming dynasty.<sup>21</sup> Descriptions of the country of Da Qin first appeared in the *Hou Han shu* 後漢書 (History of the Latter Han). Historical and ethnographic accounts of this country have drawn much scholarly attention, although the exact identification of this country remains inconclusive. The original accounts of Da Qin in the *Hou Han shu* offer some distinctive information that had been recycled in historiography, ethical writings, and encyclopedias in the following centuries. The generally accepted idea of Da Qin is that it is a land of exotic jewels and that it produces 幻人 *huan ren* (conjurers/jugglers) who emit fire, perform acrobatics, and especially conjure up various illusions. Another stock image of Da Qin is that of inhabitants who resemble the Chinese in their appearance (or they were originally Chinese), hence the name "Da Qin" (The Great Qin). It is worth noting that, from the very first account, the image of Da Qin remained positive with some utopian elements, as the government was seen to be based on meritocracy, and the people in this foreign land were depicted as upright in their dealings. Although from the outset the accounts of Da Qin confuse fact and fantasy,<sup>22</sup> what is of interest to us is that in *Yesou puyan* the author draws on the stereotyped image of this legendary country preserved in existing sources, but gives it an explicitly gendered twist with its degenerate sexualized imagination, converting a previous utopia of social mores into a dystopia of heresy as a result of its divergence from Confucian gender ideology.

In historical and ethnographical records of Da Qin, accounts about women remained minimal;<sup>23</sup> in *Yesou puyan* the representation of Da Qin is explicitly feminized and overtly

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<sup>21</sup> For a book-length discussion and translation of the records of Da Qin in Chinese sources, see Friedrich Hirth, *China and the Roman Orient: Researches into Their Ancient and Mediaeval Relations as Represented in Old Chinese Records* (Book on Demand, 1901).

<sup>22</sup> On this point, see Edwin Pulleyblank, "Roman Empire in Han China," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 119.1 (1999): 78.

<sup>23</sup> The only mention of women in Da Qin refers to their clothing, "Women wear silk stuff beset with pearls" (婦人皆服珠錦), and this minor detail appeared only once in Du Huan's 杜還 (fl.751–762) travel record *Jingxing ji* 經行記.

sexualized. Suchen encounters two female conjurers from Da Qin, presented to him as captives upon his conquest of an island on the East Sea. Drawing on the stock image of Da Qin, the author represents the two young "barbarian girls" (*mannü* 蠻女) as skilled conjurers, but their magic is denounced as heretical sorcery by Suchen, and his encounter with the two girls is represented as a confrontation of orthodoxy and heterodoxy. Furthermore, the ideological *yin/yang* confrontation is configured as Suchen's eroticized encounter with the two foreign girls' "heretical" bodies. After their attempt to kill Suchen with their magic has failed, one of the girls says that when encountering "a man of orthodox heart" (*zhengxin ren* 正心人) like Suchen, her magic works better if she performs it with her upper body naked. In the next moment she strips off her top and caresses her breasts while chanting spells (82:945). The room suddenly turns dark, and the girl attempts to flee. As Suchen jumps up to catch the girl, the room immediately turns bright, but the girl suddenly takes off her pants and flips backward, her genitalia exposed right in front of Suchen's eyes. When asked why she has taken off her pants, the girl confesses that the purpose of stripping naked and caressing her breasts was to produce *yin* energy (*yinqi* 陰氣) so as to absorb the *yang* light (*yangguang* 陽光) emitted from Suchen's eyes. As her magic had been foiled by Suchen, she had no choice but to use her greatest weapon (*juezhao* 絕着): releasing the true *yin* energy from her genitals (*pin zhong zhen yin* 牝中真陰) to absorb Suchen's *yang* light.

Subjugated by his superior power of *yang*, the two foreign girls pledge their loyalty to Suchen and are recruited to his family troops. Here we see how the author invokes the stereotypical exotic image of the conjurer associated with Da Qin while meanwhile presenting a gendered image of exoticism with the use of the *yin* imagism and subjecting this gendered exoticism to ideological policing. The two foreign girls literally "embody" *yin* heresy as much as Suchen "embodies" *yang* orthodoxy, and Suchen's encounter with the two foreign girls is thus configured as a *yin* (heresy)–*yang* (orthodoxy) confrontation. However, Suchen's magic in

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Du Huan's travelogue is no longer extant, but the entry about Da Qin is cited in Ma Duanlin's 馬端臨 *Wenxian tongkao* 文獻通考 (Comprehensive Examinations of Administrative Documents). For an English translation of this entry, see Hirth, *China and the Roman Orient*, 83.

turning the room bright is no less "heterodox" than the foreign girls' magic in turning the room dark. The line between the orthodox Self and heretical Other is shown to be rather blurry.<sup>24</sup>

But that is not the end of the story. The high visibility of the two foreign girls' bodies is only an index of the degenerate sexuality of their country in its need to be civilized. According to one historical record of Da Qin, the people of this country are seen as observing their native customs (*xiangfeng* 乡風) until death when kept captive in foreign countries.<sup>25</sup> The erudite author exploits this information about Da Qin to magnify Suchen's orthodox moral character, while in the meantime showing the alienation of the Other. According to the two girls, once they have pledged their loyalty to Suchen, they have become Suchen's women, as prescribed by their native customs. And even if Suchen refuses to take them, he nonetheless has to "penetrate their body (*po shen* 破身)" before marrying them to other men (83:953). On more than one occasion the two girls obstinately implore Suchen to "penetrate" their bodies but are rejected by Suchen outright, although the erudite Suchen is aware of their obligation to observe their native customs. After the two girls aid Suchen in saving the emperor from being held hostage by his traitorous courtiers, the emperor, at their request, bestows the two girls upon Suchen. Suchen declines the offer, saying that he has already chosen his two male servants as their husbands. While the two girls accept the arrangement, they still hope to give their virginity to Suchen as prescribed by their "native teaching" (*benguo zhi jiao* 本國之教). When escorting the two girls to their wedding chambers, Suchen gives a harsh condemnation of their "heretical" native teaching:

What differentiates men from beasts is shame. Beasts have no shame for they have no regular spouses; women have shame therefore they cannot serve two husbands. Had you two been in your own country and followed your native customs, you would be of no shame and no different from beasts. Now you are in

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<sup>24</sup> Martin Huang has noted the tension between Suchen's image as both a hero and a sage. See "From Caizi to Yingxiong," 68–76.

<sup>25</sup> Again, the information appeared only once in Du Huan's *Jingxing ji* cited in Ma Duanlin's *Wenxian tongkao*. The original line is "或有俘在諸國，守死不改鄉風。" For an English translation, see Hirth, *China and the Roman Orient*, 83.

China, but if you still follow your native norms, then you are not only of no shame, you are even inferior to beasts. If I were to follow the heretic doctrine of your country, penetrating your body first and arranging marriage for you afterwards, I would have no face not only to see the other girls in my troops but also to see Fubo and Chengquan (the two girls' husbands). Now that you two have surrendered to me, you should follow my order; and since you have been in China for quite a while, you ought to follow Chinese norms. In the future if I had the support of the emperor, I would spread [Chinese norms] overseas and transform the barbarians into Chinese (*yong xia bian yi* 用夏變夷); and I would have all the people in Da Qin follow Chinese marriage ritual. Thereby I will not only rid you two of shame, I further will redeem all the people in your country from bestiality to humanity as well" (114:1314).

Suchen then orders his two male servants to "penetrate their bodies on behalf of me" (代我破體可也) and present to him their virginal blood afterward. The passage cited above is noteworthy in two regards. First, this condemned image of Da Qin is in sharp contrast to the positive image of Da Qin preserved in historical and ethnographic writings. Secondly, the "bestial" image of Da Qin is epitomized in the women's unchaste sexuality. Suchen's erotic encounter with the two foreign girls, his arrangement of marriages for them, and his lecturing are cited at length here to illustrate how the binary opposition of orthodoxy and heterodoxy, of civilized Chinese Self and barbarian Other, is configured in sexualized *yin/yang* dualism. The sexualized exoticism — proffering virginity as a form of loyalty — works to accentuate the uncivilized nature of foreign women's sexuality, and furthermore serves to foreground Suchen's incorruptible moral integrity as shown in his repeated resistance to the foreign girls' sexual importuning. The foreign girls' bodies are a site on which to project the "heretical" otherness epitomized by deviant female sexuality, and it is also a site where the orthodox Self is inscribed, cemented by the bodily "penetration" by the Han male Self. By assimilating foreign women's "deviant" sexuality within Confucian gender hierarchy through marriage, the feminized foreign other is domesticated, whereas the masculine position of the imperialist Self is reinforced.

Suchen's subjugation and conversion of the two foreign girls illustrate ethnic hierarchy and cultural hierarchy as configured in Confucian gender hierarchy. Ironically, the Self has to resort to the aid of the Other's "heretical" magic in subjugating his enemies.<sup>26</sup> Interracial marriage, a strategy used extensively in *Yesou puyan* which reinforces the feminization of the other, is in the meantime a strategy of appropriating the other. The Other in *Yesou puyan* not only is appropriated for self-authentication and for reinforcing cultural borders, it also serves to empower the Self which in turn points to the deficiency of the Self.

### **Miao: Civilizing the Primitive Other**

The image of the Miao is associated with the long tradition of Chinese exoticism dating back to the *Shanhai jing* 山海經 (Classics of Mountains and Seas). In this ancient mytho-geographical representation of foreign lands and peoples, the Miao were identified as a foreign tribe of a fantastical nature.<sup>27</sup> In medieval China the Miao were lumped together with many of the tribes of the south under the umbrella appellation "southern barbarians" (*nanman* 南蛮) and were associated with the sensuous southland. In Ming–Qing times the term Miao referred to a number of disparate indigenous peoples of southwest China.<sup>28</sup> As colonial subjects, the Miao in the eighteenth century were in the politico-cultural limelight.<sup>29</sup> While in official discourse the Miao

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<sup>26</sup> The two foreign girls also play a critical role in subverting the Dalai Lama's rule of the Mongolians.

<sup>27</sup> For references to "miao 苗" or "sanmiao 三苗," see Yuan Ke 袁珂, *Shanhaijing jiaozhu* 山海經校註 (Collated Annotation of Classics of Mountains and Seas) (Chengdu: Bashu shushe, 1992), 436–437. For an English translation of this entry in *Shanhai jing*, see Richard Strassberg, *A Chinese Bestiary: Strange Creatures from the Guideways through Mountains and Seas* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2002), 218, 223, and ff.

<sup>28</sup> For a discussion of the perceptions of the Miao in late imperial and modern China, see Norma Diamond, "Defining the Miao: Ming, Qing and Contemporary Views," in *Cultural Encounters on China's Ethnic Frontiers*, ed. Stevan Harrell (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1995), 92–116.

<sup>29</sup> According to Alexander Woodside, controlling the Miao indigenes became "the touchstone of several eighteenth-century educational quarrels." See his "State, Scholar, and Orthodoxy: The Ch'ing Academies, 1736–1839," in *Orthodoxy in Late Imperial China*, ed. Kwang-ching Liu (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 182. Laura Hostetler argues that the "Miao Album," the visual representation of the Miao based on direct observation,

were represented merely as passive objects of the Qing government's empire-building, in *Yesou puyan* the image of the Miao is much more complex.

The representations of the Miao in *Yesou puyan* are at once most positive and most demonized, falling in a wide spectrum ranging from demonically perverse to divinely virtuous. With its primitive wilderness, the Miao frontier on the one hand provides a site for appropriation and even rejuvenation. For instance, in his quelling of the Miao rebellion Suchen gains enormous help from fantastic animals such as a divine tiger (*shen hu* 神虎), a divine horse (*shen ma* 神馬) and especially a divine ape (*shenyuan* 神猿), a virtuous widow of a Han Chinese depicted as a Confucian matriarch living in the deep mountains.<sup>30</sup> On the other hand, the Miao frontier is also a dangerous place of monstrosity and mysterious darkness. This dark side of the Miao frontier is most evident in the demonic image of the "poisonous pythons" (*dumang* 毒蟒) characterized by cannibalistic brutality and monstrous sexuality.<sup>31</sup>

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was emblematic of the Qing government's colonial enterprise and racial thinking; see Hostetler, *Qing Colonial Enterprise*.

<sup>30</sup>The virtuous and nurturing ape woman is a stock image associated with the "barbaric" female other. For a discussion of the Chinese exile Su Wu's 蘇武 (140–60 BCE) ape-woman wife, see Daphne Lei, *Operatic China*, 115, 130. According to Lei, ape-women "embody all the freedom that a vivacious barbarian might have because they belong to a different species," and they seem to have "restorative power for men's virility" as Su Wu appears even younger after his nineteen years of hardship in the steppe. The virtuous ape woman in *Yesou puyan* is a counterpart of Suchen's mother, the Confucian matriarch Madam Shui 水夫人, on the Miao frontier. She gives Suchen indispensable guidance in his quelling of the Miao rebellion. She also sees to it that her late Han Chinese husband's family line continues and prospers.

<sup>31</sup> For an alternative reading of the image of the Miao in *Yesou puyan*, see Maram Epstein, *Competing Discourses*, 223–227. Epstein argues that the Miao, "as representatives of an explicit *yang* culture, are positively depicted as having a natural and vigorous sense of righteousness and honor." (226) While I agree that the depictions of the Miao are the most sympathetic in the representation of cultural others in *Yesou puyan*, I found Epstein's overall positive characterization of the Miao, especially her characterization of the Miao as a "*yang*" culture, a bit problematic. One of her supporting arguments for her positive evaluation of the Miao is that the poisonous pythons threatening China's sovereignty on the edge of southwest frontier are not Miao people. However, I agree with Martin Huang that these poisonous pythons are in fact part of the imagined Miao frontier. The tribal chieftains of another ethnic group

Scholars have pointed out that in Ming–Qing ethnographic representation of the Miao indigenes, Miao women’s exotic and aggressive sexuality occupies the center of ethnographic attention.<sup>32</sup> *Yesou puyan* draws heavily on the stock image of the Miao women’s promiscuous and dangerous sexuality, most evident in a group of lascivious Miao women’s use of “*gu* 蠱” poison, which causes Suchen to become ill almost to death for three years.<sup>33</sup> However, the representation of the Miao places more emphasis on the “educability” of Miao women’s primitive sexuality, and furthermore, on their “uncontaminated” primitivism, and the “educated” Other provides a site for self-critique.<sup>34</sup>

Suchen’s experience on the Miao frontier is associated with his identity as a doctor. This identity is an index of the “practical learning” that characterized the eighteenth-century intellectual reorientation, but more importantly, Suchen’s role as doctor gives him access to women’s diseased bodies; and Suchen’s “healing” of these women, Chinese or otherwise, is emblematic of the “healing” of the body politic of China, plagued as it was with heterodoxy both within and without. Suchen’s encounter with the Miao women is associated with the image of feminine excess and disorder. His encounter with Huanggu 篁姑 is a case in point. Huanggu is the daughter of a Miao tribal chieftain. When Suchen first meets her, she is a wild savage inflicted with “strange madness” (*qi feng* 奇瘋), locked by her parents in a wooden cage naked, as she has torn up all her clothes. Although both Huanggu’s madness and nakedness point up her savagery, she has, contrary to the ethnographic representation of Miao women in which their

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on the southwest frontier, the Yao 猺, are characterized as the product of human–animal sexual relations. On Martin Huang’s analysis of Suchen’s experience on the Miao frontier, see his “From Caizi to Yingxiong,” 74.

<sup>32</sup> On ethnographic representations of Miao women in Chinese sources in late imperial China, see David Deal and Laura Hostetler, trans., *The Art of Ethnography: A Chinese “Miao” Album* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006).

<sup>33</sup> According to Norma Diamond, the connection between Miao women and *gu* poison is a Han Chinese male fear and fantasy; see Diamond, “The Miao and Poison: Interactions on China’s Southwest Frontier,” *Ethnology* 27, 1(1988): 1–25.

<sup>34</sup> This positive representation of the Miao frontier can be interpreted as a literary articulation of the concept that “when ritual is lost it can be retrieved in the wilderness” (禮失而求於野), a line attributed to Confucius.

natural feet are highlighted, bound feet, the ideal marker of Han Chinese femininity. Her bound feet indicate her transformability to Confucian gender ideology while also alerting us to the Han Chinese male's projection of sexual fantasy onto foreign women. When Suchen gets into her cage he uses a piece of bedsheet to wrap up the ferocious Huanggu, then holds her underneath his crotch to absorb her struggles (94:1078). The naked Huanggu wrapped up by Suchen in a piece of bedsheet illustrates symbolically the taming of Huanggu's uncivilized sexuality. In his diagnosis, Suchen declares that Huanggu's ailment is caused not by madness but by a menstrual problem, a symptom associated with *yin* disorder in traditional Chinese medical belief.<sup>35</sup> After taking Suchen's medicine Huanggu has an enormous discharge of blood, symbolizing the "discharging" of her savage sexuality. Upon her recovery, she turns into a decorous and cultivated girl very much like a Han Chinese gentrywoman (despite the fact that her parents' behaviors are far from gentle). Amazed at seeing Huanggu's civilized behavior, Suchen cannot help but compare her with those sexually degenerate Han Chinese women he has encountered in inland China (94:1081). Represented as the image of a virtuous Confucian gentry girl, the tribal girl Huanggu testifies to the civilizing power of Chinese culture. Furthermore, the idealized image of foreign Other allows a critique of the Han Chinese Self, which is supposed to represent cultural normalcy. As Huanggu's transformation from a wild savage to a paragon of Confucian womanly virtue is predicated upon Suchen's healing of her menstrual disorder, Suchen's medical treatment of Huanggu thus is emblematic of his civilizing mission, and the Other's "diseased body" provides a site to authenticate the Self as agent of "*wen*." The "civilizing" of Huanggu's sexuality is completed with marriage. Although ethnically speaking Huanggu's fiancé is not Han Chinese, both he and Huanggu nevertheless are ardent admirers of Han literati culture and both are "fond of Chinese rituals solely and do not conform to tribal rules" (只愛華禮, 不守峒規 94:1080). Despite their parents' opposition, the marriage is carried out with Han ritual and Huanggu afterwards turns herself into a paragon of Confucian womanly virtue.<sup>36</sup> The couple treat

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<sup>35</sup> On the gendered beliefs in traditional Chinese medicine, see Charlotte Furth, *A Flourishing Yin: Gender in China's Medical History: 960–1665* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1999).

<sup>36</sup> In her investigation of Qing frontier travel writing about Taiwan, Emma Teng points out that in the Qing dynasty intermarriage was the primary means of spreading Chinese values and practices into aboriginal communities. As



Suchen as "benevolent father" (*enfu* 恩父) and receive from him instructions in poetry composition. Toward the end of the novel, in the prolonged celebration of the hundredth birthday of Suchen's mother Madam Shui, the couple write and stage a one-hundred act play on Suchen's civil and military exploits that repeats and "embellishes" his narrative representation.<sup>37</sup> While the play indicates the internalization by ethnic others of the *wen* values personified by Suchen, it also suggests anxiety over change and loss of cultural identity, inasmuch as the fixed role types of theatrical performance provide an illusion of stable and pure cultural identity. However, the theatricality of identity also points to the fictionality of the novel.<sup>38</sup>

The cultural significance of taming Miao women's deviant sexuality is most explicitly spelled out in Suchen's encounter with another Miao girl, Yu'er 玉儿. Like Huanggu, Yu'er is also afflicted with a physiological disorder of *yin*. Because of excessive *yin* the proper development of her sexual organ is severely retarded. She has no vaginal opening and has never menstruated. More than the educated Huanggu, the image of Yu'er is more closely associated with the "primitivism" of the Miao periphery: her widowed mother was raped by a divine horse in her dream and consequently became pregnant with her. Outraged by the slanders of her neighbor over the unfathered birth of Yu'er, the mother one day changed into a furious tiger and disappeared into the deep mountains after attacking the neighbor. Yu'er's bestial origin indicates that, in imagining the racial and culture other, there is a fine line between animality and humanity, a mindset that can be traced back to *Shanhaijing* 山海經 (Classic of Mountains and Seas) in which many a foreign tribes are demonized.

While investigating the Miao rebellion incognito, Suchen has to pretend to be Yu'er's husband, and he has to share the same bed with her. When in the same bed, the *yang* energy of Suchen's bodily steam warms Yu'er's pallid pure *yin* body (*chun yin zhi ti* 纯阴之體), and the

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wives, ethnic women therefore were regarded as a key vehicle for transculturation. See Teng, "An Island of Women: The Discourse of Gender in Qing Travel Writing about Taiwan," *The International Historical Review* 20. 2 (1998): 365.

<sup>37</sup> In the play many of Suchen's controversial behaviors are papered over.

<sup>38</sup> A similar strategy is also used in *Shuihu houzhuan* 水滸後傳 (A Sequel to the Water Margin), a novel featuring the "left-over" Liangshan heroes' military exploits in foreign lands.

latter is brought to her belated sexual awakening. As a result of Suchen's persistent "massage" of her genitalia, layers of skin on Yu'er's genitals "slough off" (very much like Huanggu's "discharge" of stagnated blood), and her vaginal opening is miraculously revealed, with the result that she becomes a normal woman.

Scholars of colonial studies have noted the fact that colonial expansion is oftentimes represented as a masculine quest for sexual experience. Although Suchen remains morally appropriate throughout, the physical intimacy between Yu'er and himself illustrates amply that the same rhetoric is at work in signifying colonial encounters in *Yesou puyan*, and the bodies of the foreign women hence are a site on which to project the Self's sexual desire, a desire censored and repressed by the orthodox Self, as attested by the stealthy nature of Suchen's erotic experience with Yu'er. Suchen's less-than-orthodox treatment of Yu'er, however, calls into question the orthodox *wen* cultural order he absolutely identifies with and dogmatically defends.

The symbolic cultural significance of Suchen's "civilizing" of Yu'er's body is emphasized by the author as he depicts Suchen's act as being able to "penetrate chaos and break through wilderness" (鑿混沌而破天荒, 96:1099).<sup>39</sup> The "penetrability" of Yu'er's body corresponds to the "malleability" of the Miao frontier. While in Western colonial discourse the colonized land is configured as virgin, here the trope is reversed, as the virginal body of a foreign woman comes to "embody" the colonized frontier of the wilderness.<sup>40</sup>

Even more than Huanggu, Yu'er's body provides a clear slate for cultural inscription and appropriation. Her name, "jade," reminds us of the phrase *shou shen ru yu* 守身如玉 (preserve one's body as pure as jade). Yu'er thus is emblematic of the primitively unsullied Other to be appropriated and inscribed by the Self. As with Huanggu, Yu'er's "healed" body also provides a

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<sup>39</sup> In the chapter-end comment, the commentator remarks that Suchen's massage of Yu'er's genitalia "truly is a means of boring open chaos" (真是鑿開混沌手段) and consequently "chaos is transformed into civilization" (混沌變為文明 102:1178).

<sup>40</sup> For discussions on Suchen's "healing" of Yu'er's "illness" and a different interpretation of the symbolic significance of the "healing," see Huang, "From Caizi to Yingyong," 91. Huang observes that Confucian civilization, embodied by Suchen's male body, is the "active *yang* (masculine)" whereas the Miao people are the "passive *yin* (feminine)."

site on which to inscribe Confucian gender ideology, as her bodily transformation is concomitant with her moral improvement. When caressing her body, Suchen constantly instructs Yu'er to curb her aroused sexual desire and inculcates her with Confucian sexual norms. The rectification of Yu'er's primitive sexuality is completed when Suchen arranges for her to marry the descendant of a Han Chinese general who fled to the Miao frontier seeking political refuge. With her extraordinary fecundity, an indication of her "primitive" potency marked by her bestial origin, Yu'er rejuvenates the truncated family line of the displaced Han Chinese general by giving birth to twenty-eight sons. Although both Huanggu and Yu'er are fantasized as paragons of Confucian femininity, in the final analysis, the Miao frontier as represented in *Yesou puyan* remains a place of liminality. On the one hand, as colonial subjects the Miao are malleable to the civilizing power of Confucian morality, yet as the "barbaric" Other they are never far away from bestiality.

### **Japan: Eradicating the Religious Other**

In China's long imperial history, Japan offered one of China's deepest and most frequently recurring images of the Other.<sup>41</sup> In the early medieval period the image of Japan vacillated between being a home to a monstrous race and a "fairy land" of immortality. During the Tang dynasty, when Buddhism played a central role in Tang cosmopolitanism, Japan was associated with cultivated and sagacious monks coming to China to seek Buddhist teaching. When Japanese pirates began to raid China's southeast coastline during the Yuan dynasty (1271–1368), the positive image of Japan began to be superseded by a negatively essentialized image of "dwarf pirates" (*wokou* 倭寇). These negative perceptions became fixed in both historical and literary writings by the sixteenth century, when the Japanese piracy disturbance reached its zenith. However, it was in Qing fiction that the image of Japan became most dehumanized, although by the seventeenth century, Japanese piracy had subsided considerably as a result of the "lock-in"

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<sup>41</sup> For an account of the image of Japan in premodern China, see Zhang Zhejun 張哲俊, *Zhongguo gudai wenxue zhong de riben xingxiang yanjiu* 中國古代文學中的日本形象研究 (A Study of the Image of Japan in Traditional Chinese Literature) (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2004). For an English account of Chinese perceptions of Japan in late imperial China, see Joshua A. Fogel, ed., *Sagacious Monks and Bloodthirsty Warriors: Chinese Views of Japan in the Ming–Qing Period* (EastBridge, 2002).

policy adopted by the Tokugawa Shogunate. In Qing fiction the image of Japan is characterized by merciless brutality, but the most popular image is the sexual lasciviousness of the Japanese. For instance, in the novel *Yuxian waishi* 女仙外史 (Unofficial History of Female Immortals; preface dated 1711), there are two scenes of Japanese pirates raping Chinese women within one episode.<sup>42</sup> In *Xue yue mei* 雪月梅 (Snow, Moon and Plum; preface dated 1775), a novel featuring war against Japanese pirates as its main plot, there is also an episode of Japanese gang-raping Chinese women, and the Japanese are characterized as "extremely lewd in nature" (群倭姪毒, 原屬性成).<sup>43</sup> The militaristic image of invader is hyper-sexualized, posing a threat to the centralist masculine position of the Self.

What makes the representation of Japan in *Yesou puyan* peculiar is that *Yesou puyan* draws on the hyper-sexualized image of Japan on the one hand, and, on the other, subjects the eroticized image of Japan to ideological politicization by associating the erotic image of Japan with the heretical Tantric Lamaism. This representation of Japan illustrates most clearly how the perception of racial other and that of cultural other converges. Japan is depicted as a moral dystopia due to the "absence of sagely teachings" (*Shengjiao bu xing* 聖教不行). The throne of the Genji family has been usurped by a pirate couple notorious for their "extreme lecherousness and cruelty" (*qi yin ji e* 奇姪極惡, 132:1537). This condemnable political situation is further aggravated by the popularity of Tantric Lamaism, which is known (or notorious) in popular imagination for its sexual lasciviousness, justified for religious purposes. Lasciviousness thus becomes a national custom of Japan (*guosu huangyin* 国俗荒淫, 134:1559).

The encounter with Japan is once again configured as an erotic encounter. The Chinese court dispatches a diplomatic mission, led by Suchen's servants Wen Rong 文容, who is distinguished by his feminine appeal, and Xiqin 奚勤, a Miao native with a penis of extraordinary size, to Japan for the purpose of "honorary surrender." Both Wen Rong and Xiqin immediately, once they land in the capital, fall sexual prey to the pirate couple. While Wen Rong commits suicide in resistance to the king's sexual assault, a death quite appropriate for his

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<sup>42</sup> Lü Xiong 呂熊, *Yuxian waishi* 女仙外史 (Jinan: Qilu shushe, 1995), 262.

<sup>43</sup> Chen Lang 陳朗, *Xue Yue Mei* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1986), 181, 427.

feminine appearance, Xiqin is raped to death in his forced sexual intercourse with the queen. Significantly, the hypersexualized image of Japan centers on the violent sexuality of the queen, as both the Chinese envoy and she herself die of her rape.

We have witnessed the "exposure" of foreign women's sexualized bodies in the case of the two girls from Da Qin, and here the same rhetorical device is in operation, only in a more hyperbolic fashion. The queen's naked body is appropriated to "embody" the imagined lewdness of Lamaism, as she and her sexual prey die in a locked sexual embrace, the symbol of Tantric "sexual alchemy." This grotesque death becomes the site on which Lamaism is grossly vilified. When the King asks his imperial mentor, the Great Lama (大喇嘛), to chant spells to separate the two locked bodies, the Great Lama says that the two naked interlocked bodies are the incarnations of the Joyful Buddha (*huanxi fo* 歡喜佛), and the bodies should be lacquered so that they can be preserved permanently for worship (133:1545).

The grotesque caricature of Lamaism associated with Japan warrants our attention. According to the comment at the end of the chapter comment, the gross debasement of Japan is justified for two reasons: the disasters Japanese pirates brought upon the Chinese, and, more importantly, for the purpose of vilifying Buddhism (醜倭人即以醜佛教, 133:1554). A point made by the commentator here is worthy of further consideration. According to the commentator, Japan provides a site where "what is inappropriate to say in China can be said here" (有不便放言于中國者, 則於此放言之, 133:1554). While the foreign Other serves as a dumping ground on which anything perceived to be repulsive to the Self can be thrown, the gross debasement of Lamaism alerts us to Han literati's anxiety over the cultural identity of China, insofar as Buddhism, as a foreign religion, became a convenient target on which to localize anxieties and fear in an age of heightened cultural and racial contacts and confrontations such as the eighteenth century. Furthermore, this comment drops us a clue to the officially suppressed anti-Manchu sentiments of the eighteenth century, given the fact that Tantric Buddhism was the religion endorsed by the Manchu royal house.<sup>44</sup> The comment acquires an additional meaning given the

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<sup>44</sup> As noted by Joanna Waley-Cohen, among others, the Manchu monarchy endorsed a "co-opt and control" policy regarding Tibetan Buddhism to conciliate the Mongolians and Tibetans; see Waley-Cohen, *The Culture of War*, 50–65. However, as is pointed out by Wang Xiuyu, the Manchu ties with Tibetan Buddhism went beyond the dictates of

fact that, in the novel, the Chinese emperor has been led astray by his imperial advisor, a Lamaist monk, and, while the Manchu monarchs play the role of gatekeeper of Confucian orthodoxy, in *Yesou puyan* the image of cultural authority is unequivocally associated with Wen Suchen, not the imperial ruler.<sup>45</sup> If we take into account that the major wars of the high Qing launched by the Manchu court for imperial expansion and consolidation all had a significant religious element,<sup>46</sup> in *Yesou puyan* there is also a discursive war of religion evidenced by impeccable hostility toward foreign religions.

The deaths of the Chinese envoys justify a "punitive expedition" against Japan. The image of civilized Japanese monks remained positive until the Ming dynasty, when it was replaced by the image of bellicose warriors as they launch a nationwide resistance that is quelled by the brute force of the Chinese troops — with all the monks murdered. The carnage is followed by the dissemination of Confucian orthodoxy, with all Buddhist temples in Japan converted to Confucian academies so as to spread Confucian teaching (*xing wenjiao* 興文教). The masculine imperialist position of the Self is further reinforced by sexual possession of the Other, gendered as feminine, attested by the interracial marriage between Suchen's two male servants and two young female descendants of the Genji royal family (134:1568). The marriages are consummated, however, only after the two foreign girls spend years studying Confucian teachings.

### **Central Asians: Demasculinizing the Formidable Other**

Analysis of the feminizing of the cultural Other in *Yesou puyan* would be incomplete without discussion of the images of Central Asians, the formidable nomadic foes in the history of

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political expediency. For instance, the Qianlong Emperor (r. 1736–1795) had a long relationship with high-ranking lamas, from whom he sought teaching, initiation, and advice. See Wang Xiuyu, *China's Last Imperial Frontier: Late Qing Expansion in Sichuan's Tibetan Borderlands* (Lexington Books, 2011), 8.

<sup>45</sup> The most telling example is that Suchen is worshipped as the universal cultural hero all over the world, and foreign rulers and envoys come to Suchen's residence to pay homage.

<sup>46</sup> On this point, see Joanna Waley-Cohen, "Religion, War, and Empire-building in Eighteenth-century China," *The International History Review*, 20. 2(1998): 351.

China.<sup>47</sup> The strategy of feminizing the other is not limited to configuring the other as female; it also includes strategies of emasculating the other as passive and incompetent, characterized by impotence in self-defence.

Ethnic discourse on Central Asians constituted one of the earliest representations of the Other in China's literary tradition. The fear of the masculinized Central Asians was so strong that it resulted in "self-feminization" of the Chinese Self.<sup>48</sup> While the formidable cavalry enemies were hyper-masculinized in Chinese literary and historical sources, this long-standing trope of hyper-masculinization, is reversed in *Yesou puyan*, where the formidable invaders from the steppe are instead feminized. The feminizing strategy is most evident in the hyper-eroticization of the Tibetan Lamaist monks who are too preoccupied with their pursuit of carnal pleasure to prepare a self-defence. Although the stereotype of monks symbolizing sexual license harked back to anti-Buddhist literature of the earlier period, depraved monks became a stock figure of sexual lasciviousness in Ming–Qing vernacular fiction, and foreign monks from Central Asia provided particular fodder for such collective sexual fantasy.<sup>49</sup> *Yesou puyan* exploits the stock image of oversexed foreign monks and uses this eroticizing strategy to demasculinize the masculine Central Asians.

The elimination of Lamaism in Japan is merely the first step in Suchen's worldwide cultural crusade, which is further carried out by two expeditions led by Suchen's two sons. One is the southeast seaborne expedition led by the teenage hero Wen Long 文龍, which proceeds

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<sup>47</sup> For a general study of Chinese–Nomad relations, see Thomas J. Barfield, *The Perilous Frontier: Nomadic Empires and China* (Cambridge: Basil Blackwell, 1989).

<sup>48</sup> According to Uradyn E. Bulag, the Chinese responded to the masculine Central Asians "in the form of self-feminization and male anxiety." See Bulag, *The Mongols at China's Edge: History and the Politics of National Unity* (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2002), 64.

<sup>49</sup> One such image can be found in *Jin Ping Mei* 金瓶梅 (Plum in the Golden Vase) in which a *huseng* 胡僧 barbarian monk is represented not only as a sexual master in possession of an aphrodisiac but also in the image of a huge penis when Ximen Qing encounters him. See Lanling xiaoxiaosheng 蘭陵笑笑生, *Xinke xiuxiang piping jin ping mei* 新刻綉像批評金瓶梅 (The Newly Printed Plum in the Golden Vase with Illustrations and Comments) (Taipei: Xiaoyuan chubanshe youxian gongsi, 1990), 635–639.

from Japan to other Southeast Asian countries such as Vietnam, Siam and Burma. The other expedition is an overland western enterprise led by another teenage hero, Wen Long's younger brother Wen Lin 文麟, which covers Mongolia, Xinjiang and Tibet — the vast Inner and Central Asia incorporated into the Qing Empire by the Manchu court. The western expedition led by Wen Lin receives special treatment in the novel. The Mongolians, the formidable enemy for both the Song and Ming dynasties, are depicted as a military threat to China's sovereignty, yet, like the Miao indigenes, they are represented as "educable" in response to Confucian teaching. By contrast, the policy toward Lamaist monks is "extermination" (*zhumie* 誅滅).<sup>50</sup>

The feminization strategy is most evident in the depiction of the "living Buddha" (*huofo* 活佛), the religious leader of both the Mongolian and Tibetan Buddhists. When Wen Lin's subordinates find the leader in a room crowded with naked women, the *huofo* is too fat to move and too effeminate to act (137:1619). Upon the murder of the "living Buddha," all Tibetans are converted to Confucian teachings. Given the fact that the Manchu government's administration of Inner Asia was independent of the Han literati,<sup>51</sup> this anxious cultural conquest of the newly incorporated ethnic Other suggests an implicit protest against the Manchu government's proprietary management of the Inner Asian affairs, and the exaggerated debasement of Tibetan Buddhism betrays profound anxiety toward the cultural Other with respect to the "purity" and "integrity" of the cultural order of China, which, in the author's vision, is Han China.<sup>52</sup>

The two overseas expeditions join forces in Ceylon 錫蘭, the birth place of Sakyamuni. The Chinese troops demonstrate their religious zeal in a massive killing of Buddhist monks and the destruction of monasteries, culminating in the smashing of the "true body" (*zhenshen* 真身)

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<sup>50</sup> This policy is made explicit by the commentator: the Lamaist monks are the cultural others who "deserve not teaching but extermination" (*bu dai jiao er zhu zhi* 不待教而誅之, 116:1350). The most feared Other in the novel, it seems, is the ideological Other.

<sup>51</sup> As pointed out by Matthew W. Mosca, for the Han literati, the Inner Asian affairs were, *par excellence*, the sphere of the empire's politics dominated by the bannerman insiders. See Mosca, "The Literati Rewriting of China in the Qianlong–Jiaqing Transition," *Late Imperial China*, 32.2 (2011): 89.

<sup>52</sup> It is interesting to note that the historical setting of *Yesou puyan* is in the Ming dynasty, a native Han Chinese dynasty.



of Sakyamuni. The eradication of Buddhism is followed with the extermination of Islam.<sup>53</sup> The two expeditions bring Asia under the dominance of Confucian *yang* orthodoxy, and Suchen and his descendants create a new China cleansed of heterodox forces within and without. However, the assurance of *yang* dominance is dependent on the fact that the orthodox Self has to be "othered" to secure the victory of the cultural crusade against the cultural Other, as attested by the fact that the re-masculinization of the Self is at the expense of a Self who is no less warlike, bloodthirsty, and barbaric than the stereotyped image of the "barbarian" Other. Furthermore, in making Suchen's male descendants teenage heroes,<sup>54</sup> *Yesou puyan* reveals an anxious urgency to have and fix identity. In the final analysis, the implacable fear of cultural Others in *Yesou puyan* is an index of Han fear of the loss of self-identity.

### **Europe: Idealizing the New Barbarian**

It has long been understood that although China and Europe had some idea of each other's existence dating back to the second century, it was not until the sixteenth century that significant direct encounters between the two civilizations began to take place.<sup>55</sup> The Chinese encountered the Europeans, referred to variously as *yuanyi* 遠夷 (distant barbarians), *fangu* 番鬼 (barbarian devil) or *xiyangren* 西洋人 (people from the Western Ocean), in two fields: trade and evangelism. When the European traders appeared on the southeast coast in the early sixteenth century, their exotic physical features and military weapons stirred much alarm and fear in the minds of the Chinese. The anxieties and fears aroused by the alarming appearance of the European mariners were best attested by the recurring descriptions of Europeans kidnapping and eating Chinese children. One of the earliest such depictions can be found in Yan Congjian 閩從簡's (*jinsi* 進士

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<sup>53</sup> The reason that *Yesou puyan* was banned in the Qianlong–Jiaqing period might have to do with the author's hostility toward Tibetan Buddhism and Islam, as the Manchu court patronized the former and tolerated the latter.

<sup>54</sup> All of Suchen's male offspring, numbered about five hundred by the end of the novel, achieve extraordinary exploits in both civil and martial arts when still young. For instance, Wen Long wins the first position in the palace examination at the age of ten.

<sup>55</sup> For a discussion on the mutual influences of China and Europe in late imperial China, see D. E. Mungello, *The Great Encounter of China and the West, 1500–1800* (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2009).

1559) *Shuyu zhouzi lu* 殊域周咨录 (Records of Foreign Lands, 1574), which includes a detailed and hair-raising account of Portuguese cannibalism:

These people are fond of devouring small children, but only their kings are allowed to do so; it is forbidden for ministers or anyone lower to do so. Their method is to first boil large vats of water, and then the children are hung up in iron cages over the vats and steamed so that they sweat. When their sweat is exhausted they are taken down and their skin is scraped off using iron brushes. The children are still alive. They are killed and split open so that intestines can be removed. Then they are steamed and eaten.<sup>56</sup>

Significantly, with a boom of commercial print under way in the late Ming, demonized accounts of the Europeans' cannibalism like this one were repeatedly recycled and further exaggerated in both official and private writings.<sup>57</sup>

The encounters with the Jesuits were more complicated.<sup>58</sup> When Jesuit missionaries showed up in the early seventeenth century, their interaction with the Chinese scholars marked the first extensive intellectual contact between China and Europe. Although the images of European merchants are negative and even demonic, the Jesuits left some of the most positive

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<sup>56</sup> Yan Congjian 閻從簡, *Shuyu zhouzi lu* 殊域周諮錄, ed. Yu Sili 余思黎 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1993), 324. Yan identifies the location of Portugal as being somewhere near Java, however.

<sup>57</sup> For instance, the section about Portugal "Folangji zhuan 佛朗機傳 (Records of Portugal)" in *Ming Shi* 明史 (History of the Ming) says that the Portuguese mariners "stay long and would not leave, raid travelers, and even kidnap small children to eat" (其人久留不去, 剽劫行旅, 至掠小兒為食), *Ming Shi* 明史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1982), *juan* 325. Gu Yanwu 顧炎武, regarded as the forerunner of Qing evidential scholarship, cites an account of Portuguese cannibalism from a different source in his *Tianxia junguo libing shu* 天下郡國利病書 (The Strategic and Economic Advantages of the District and States of the Empire). Gu describes Portugal as a one-time tribute state located south of Java, and its contact with China was for the purpose of studying trade routes and buying small children to cook and eat. See *ibid*, *Tianxia junguo libing shu* 天下郡國利病書 (Qing Jiaqing shiliunian fuwenge juzhen banben), *juan* 119, 54.

<sup>58</sup> On China's response to Christianity in Ming–Qing times, see Cohen, *China and Christianity*. Also see Jacques Gernet, *China and the Christian Impact: A Conflict of Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

images of foreign Other in China's history. Regarded as "Confucians from the West" (*xiru* 西儒), Jesuits like Matteo Ricci (1552–1610) and Julius Aleni (1582–1649) won high regard from some of the late Ming literati by virtue of their knowledge and moral character. Further, late-Ming Chinese intellectuals derived much of their knowledge of the outside world from geographical and cartographical works introduced by Ricci and his successors. However, the friendly relationship between some of the Chinese literati and Jesuits soured soon after Ricci's death. Following the Manchu conquest, a surge of virulent xenophobia against Christianity appeared, and Jesuits were reviled either as intellectual thieves of China's cultural traditions or threats of foreign invasion still fresh in the minds of many Chinese. This hostile attitude toward Christianity hardened in the eighteenth century when Emperor Yongzheng 雍正 (r. 1722–1735) pronounced Christianity a deviant sect.

The West and Westerners also made their way into fictional narrative. Their primary image is associated with novel technological products and luxury objects. In *Nüxian waishi* 女仙外史 (Unofficial History of Female Immortals; self-preface dated 1711), the Europeans appear as submissive tribute subjects presenting the Chinese court with Western mechanical products such as self-sounding clocks (*ziming zhong* 自鳴鐘) and armillary spheres (*huntian yi* 渾天儀).<sup>59</sup> The eighteenth-century masterpiece *Honglou meng* includes a list of luxury objects from the West. This rather neutral image of Europe coexists with that of a fearsome warlike invader equipped with advanced weaponry. In the eighteenth-century novel *Taiwan waiji* 臺灣外記 (Unauthorized Accounts of Taiwan; self-preface dated 1704), the Europeans are represented as cunning and treacherous, raiding merchant-ships on the southeast ocean with their advanced firearms.<sup>60</sup> This threatening image of the invader is most evident in the tale "Lianhua dao" 蓮花島 (Lotus Island) written by Cheng Tingzuo 程廷祚 (1691–1767).<sup>61</sup> In this tale the West is represented as having

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<sup>59</sup> Lü Xiong 呂熊, *Nüxian waishi* 女仙外史 (Jinan: Qilu shushe, 1995), 320–322.

<sup>60</sup> Jiang Risheng 江日昇, *Taiwan waiji* 臺灣外記 (Taipei: Taiwan yinhang jingji yanjiushi, 1960), 43.

<sup>61</sup> Cheng Tingzuo 程廷祚, "Lianhua dao" 蓮花島, in Cheng Tingzuo, *Qingxi wenji xubian* 清溪文集續編 (A Sequel to Collected Works of Qingxi) (*Daoguang dongshan caotang cangban*), *juan* 3. According to the subtitle, this story later was expanded into a drama, and the content is quite different (後演為傳奇, 與此頗異); however, the dramatic work is no longer extant.

expansive land and mighty military power (*diguang bingqiang* 地廣兵強). It has conquered China's neighbouring tributary countries, occupied Macau, and posed an impending threat to China.

The image of Europe and Europeans represented in *Yesou puyan* is in sharp contrast to the aggressive and even demonized images presented in then-current literature. In *Yesou puyan* Europe is the "crown colony" in the imperialist fantasy presented in the novel. Symbolizing in the author's vision the most remote area of the geographically known world, the conquest of Europe completes Suchen's worldwide cultural crusade and realizes his ambition of bringing the world under Confucian dominance.

The Confucianization of Europe is accomplished by Suchen's friend Jing Rijing 景日京, who "discovers" Europe on his seafaring expedition. In contrast to the militaristic images of the Europeans in existing literature, the Europeans in *Yesou puyan* are represented as submissive, and the military conquest is carried out without bloodshed. The military conquest is followed with Confucianization by "exterminating the heretic creed of the Lord of Heaven" (去天主邪教) and bringing everything "in conformity with Confucius" (悉尊孔氏, 147:1764). Jing's Confucian missionary effort culminates in the establishment of a kingdom called the "Civilized State of Superior Men" (*Daren wenguo* 大人文國). With the restoration of ancient Confucian rituals Europe becomes even more "Confucian" than China. "Barbaric" as they are, the Europeans still have things to offer to empower the Self. In a letter to Suchen informing him of his conquest of Europe, Jing claims that their telescopes, microscopes and spectacles are marvels of craftsmanship and "can be of assistance in gauging distance and exploring remote areas" (中國得之, 可免目廢及測遠探幽之助, 147:1764–1765). This notion of appropriating the West to empower China anticipated the self-strengthening movement in the late nineteenth century. But, more significantly, Europe presents an uncharted new world, as even the erudite Suchen has no knowledge of its location. But this uncharted new world also represents unsettling anxiety over the unknown. This explains the idealizing impulse in the representation of Europe in *Yesou puyan*.

As illustrated by the foregoing analysis, the imperialist conquest of the Other is sealed with the inscription of the Confucian gender code onto foreign women; the same rhetoric is in

operation here as well. The conquest of Europe is followed by a second episode, which features Suchen's eldest great-grandson Wen Shi's 文施 amorous encounter with European women. Although this episode also involves eroticization of foreign women, unlike the foreign women discussed above who are hyper-sexualized, the eroticizing rhetoric used here demonstrates a soft touch. But what is particularly noteworthy is that Wen Shi's foreign travel is written in the mode of "tale of the marvelous" (*chuanqi* 傳奇) and is explicitly fantastic in nature.<sup>62</sup> The episode begins with Wen Shi's fantastic travel. One day Wen Shi is carried to the royal palace of Portugal by a dragon and is dropped right in front of the princess of Portugal. While the same trope of sexual relations between Chinese men and foreign women is employed here, what is noteworthy is that the author gives this longstanding trope a twist with the rhetoric of *qing*. In a manner that is the same as the dreamed amorous encounter taking place between Liu Mengmei 柳夢梅 and Du Liliang 杜麗娘 in *Mudan ting* 牡丹亭 (The Peony Pavilion), the author presents Wen Shi and the princess of Portugal as a couple of predestination. Both have dreamed of each other for years, sharing the same bed in their dreams, despite their tender age,<sup>63</sup> and therefore the princess appears to Wen Shi as "most familiar" (*shushi buguo* 熟識不過) and even her maids look familiar to him. The "disembodied" sexual relations between Wen Shi and the foreign princess exploit the well-established trope of sex to present Wen Shi's sexual possession of the West gendered as feminine, without compromising his moral integrity. While Suchen remains a passive object of desire in his erotic encounter with foreign women, the use of the rhetoric of *qing* here in representing the new "barbarian" warrants particular attention. To the extent that the rhetoric of *qing* constitutes Wen Shi as a desiring subject, the desired (and desirable) other and the "familiarizing" strategy used here signify a desire of getting closer to the Other and in turn alerts to us the anxiety about the new "barbarian."

While in historical and ethnographical writing the Portuguese are described as most fearsome among the Europeans for their advanced weaponry of "Folangji pao 佛朗機炮"

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<sup>62</sup> Later in the novel, when Wen Shi recounts his foreign experiences to Suchen, "all people in the room are like those listening to a tale of *chuanqi*, full of gusto (滿屋人如聽傳奇小說一般, 津津有味)" (149: 1782).

<sup>63</sup> Wen Shi is about ten years old when his "fantastic" encounter with the foreign princess takes place.

(Portuguese cannon), in *Yesou puyan* the militaristic image of Portugal is replaced by the image of *wen* civility embodied by the foreign princess, who changes her name to Haowen 好文 ("loving culture," here read as Confucian culture) after Europe has been Confucianized. The princess is represented as an enthusiastic student of Confucian teachings. Ardent student of Confucian classics though she is, the princess's understanding of Confucian classics is not without errors and therefore needs Wen Shi's tutelage.

As mentioned earlier, the colonial encounter provides the colonizer with opportunities for sexual adventure. The colonized/Confucianized Europe likewise is projected as a land of sexual fantasy of the Han Chinese male Self. In addition to the princess, Wen Shi also marries her two younger sisters whose names are Zuowen 左文 and Youwen 右文.<sup>64</sup> With the three wives giving birth to sons one after another, the universal patriarch personified by Suchen is extended by Wen Shi in this newfound foreign land. The subjugation of the European new world, gendered as feminine, into tribute states cements the masculine imperialist position of the Self.

## Conclusion

While the fantasy of Confucian imperialism in *Yesou puyan* is certainly a reflection of Manchu expansionism and especially of the universalist imperial ideology of the Qianlong 乾隆 emperor (r. 1736–1795),<sup>65</sup> the implacable hostility towards other cultures and beliefs presented in *Yesou puyan* is rather curious, especially when taking into account the fact that the Manchu regime, in the face of a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural empire, endorsed a policy of cultural relativism and ethnic openness.<sup>66</sup> The hostility toward foreign cultures in *Yesou puyan* thus warrants special attention with regard to the cultural politics and polemics of eighteenth-century China.

Mary Douglas has argued that when social order and cohesion are threatened, those in

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<sup>64</sup> "Zuo" and "you" here refer to the expression "zuoyou ren," i.e., concubines.

<sup>65</sup> For a discussion of the universalist imperial ideology of the Qianlong reign, see Pamela Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror: History and Identity in Qing Imperial Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 36–52.

<sup>66</sup> As pointed out by R. Kent Guy, the Manchu rulers' capacity to hold their empire "rested on their ability to speak in the political and the religious ??? of those they ruled." See Guy, "Who Were the Manchus?" in *The Journal of Asian Studies* 61.1 (2002): 151–164.

"marginal states" become feared as a source of pollution.<sup>67</sup> Hyden White also connects the motive for the rhetoric of debasement of the other to the need for positive self-definition in times of sociocultural stress.<sup>68</sup> The obsessive preoccupation with and exaggerated debasement of the foreign Other in *Yesou puyan* thus provides us with glimpses into eighteenth-century Chinese intellectuals' perception of a changing world and China's position in it. Although the conceptual framework of orthodoxy versus heterodoxy that informs the representation of foreign Other in *Yesou puyan* is symptomatic of the promotion of orthodoxy by the Manchu court for the political legitimacy of their alien rule, as pointed out by Alexander Woodside, the Manchu court was obliged to take a comparatively lenient approach toward heterodoxy due to the "unmanageable circumstances" of a vast multi-ethnic empire. By sharp contrast, however, many Confucian scholars took a hard line toward cultural differences and diversity.<sup>69</sup> The Confucian scholars' ideological hostility toward other doctrines and beliefs was further compounded by the tensions precipitated by intensified ethnic contacts and confrontations as a result of an enormously expanded multi-ethnic empire.<sup>70</sup> *Yesou puyan*, written in the closing decades of the eighteenth century, thus bespeaks a deep angst caused by social stress and cultural change of a radically changing world. The preoccupation with cultural others and the exaggerated differences between Self and Other in *Yesou puyan* therefore can be understood as responding to a need to externalize

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<sup>67</sup> Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 95–99.

<sup>68</sup> Hyden White, *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 151.

<sup>69</sup> Alexander Woodside, "State, Scholar, and Orthodoxy," 165, 175–176. The editors of *Empire at the Margins* have pointed out that in insisting on cultural and ethnic boundaries the Han literati presented an "ironic twist" to the relativism of the Qing court. See Pamela K. Crossley, et al., *Empire at the Margins: Culture, Ethnicity, and Frontier in Early Modern China* (Calif.: University of California Press; 2006), 9–10.

<sup>70</sup> Prasenjit Duara has argued that "the Han exclusivism seems to have reached a height by the late eighteenth century, when the dominant majority confronted the non-Han minorities of China in greater numbers than ever before over competition for increasingly scarce resources." See Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 59.

anxieties generated by social stress and cultural change. The hyperbolic denigration of Tibetan Buddhism also gives us a glimpse into the mentality of the "embittered" Han literati, the author and arbiter of Chinese cultural identity, themselves living as conquest subjects under alien rulers who had arrogated their proprietary authority as custodians of China's Confucian civilization.<sup>71</sup>

The famous trial of Zeng Jing 曾靜 (1679–1735) is a case in point.<sup>72</sup> Living in a backwater of Hunan province, the frustrated licentiate Zeng Jing attempted to instigate the governor of Shanxi, Yue Zhongji 岳中琪 (1686–1754), a descendant of the patriotic hero Yue Fei 岳飛 (1103–1142), to rebel against Emperor Yongzheng 雍正 (r. 1722–1735). Inspired by the writings of the anti-Manchu diehard Lü Liuliang 呂留良 (1629–1683), Zeng proclaimed that the Manchus had no legitimacy in their rule of China due to their foreign ethnic origin. Furthermore, Zeng inveighed against the Yongzheng Emperor as the incarnation of corruption and depravity and held him accountable for all the evil forces besieging the Chinese society. Zeng Jing's fanciful scheme for rebellion, which resulted in a nationwide literary inquisition, was caused mainly by the glaring gap between the hopeless reality in which he was caught, and the ideal past presented in the Confucian canon, as indicated by his nostalgic longing for the restoration of some of the ancient Confucian institutions.<sup>73</sup> The foreign Manchus, therefore, filled in for Zeng as a convenient target for his attacks against a corrupt society very deviant from Confucian orthodoxy. Rather than resort to a drastic rebellious scheme, Xia Jingqu in *Yesou puyan* creates a Confucian superhero who saves China from corruption and depravity and recreates a new China, although, as a frustrated licentiate, Xia's own career was much less heroic. Despite their differences, both Zeng and Xia, like many of disfranchised poor Confucians of their times, were

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<sup>71</sup> On the role the Qianlong Emperor played as the custodian of China's cultural tradition, see R. Kent Guy, *The Emperor's Four Treasuries: Scholars and the State in the Late Ch'ien-Lung Era* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 1987).

<sup>72</sup> On the trial of Zeng Jing and its repercussions for eighteenth-century cultural politics, see Jonathan D. Spence, *Treason by the Book* (Penguin Books, 2001).

<sup>73</sup> The author Xia Jingqu certainly shared Zeng Jing's "reformist" spirit when he portrays Wen Suchen as an enthusiastic reformer.



struggling with alienation and deprivation, and their defence of Confucian "orthodoxy" can be seen as an attempt to reclaim and reinforce their cultural authority in a rapidly changing society.<sup>74</sup>

Here the notion of "cultural paranoia" advanced by Richard Hofstadter might help shed light on the obsessive preoccupation with the other in *Yesou puyan*. In his *The Paranoid Style of American Politics*, Richard Hofstadter redefines paranoia not as a state of mental instability but as a form of narrative — a mode of expression which emphasizes a feeling of persecution, conspiracy, and victimization by unseen forces.<sup>75</sup> Accordingly, the narrative of cultural paranoia is informed by a world view of oppositional constructions, and its style is "overheated, over-suspicious, overaggressive, grandiose, and apocalyptic in expression."<sup>76</sup> The cultural paranoid, while perceiving a conspiracy "directed against a nation, a culture, a way of life whose fate affects not himself alone but millions of others," takes onto himself the task of unmasking the secret machination of conspiracy, with the prospect of restoring and remaking the world.<sup>77</sup>

Although Hofstadter's theory of cultural paranoia is limited to the characterization of American political culture in the postwar era, *Yesou puyan* exemplifies the generic features of the narrative of paranoia. The conceptual framework of *Yesou puyan* is based upon the binary opposition of orthodoxy against heterodoxy, and the battle between these two oppositional forces unfolds within a narrative of conspiracy: the usurpation of imperial authority by various nefarious forces within China and without. The main narrative thrust of the novel revolves around Suchen's revelation of this gigantic traitorous scheme and his rescuing of China from the threat of heterodox forces, eventuating in the creation of a new China and even a new world. Parallel to this plot is the persecution and victimization of Suchen by his various enemies, as he is constantly facing life-threatening danger. The sense of cultural paranoia in *Yesou puyan* is

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<sup>74</sup>As argued by Alexander Woodside, those poor Confucian scholars "might logically be the ones most interested in unimpeachably 'orthodox' institutions." ("State, Scholar, and Orthodoxy," 175.)

<sup>75</sup> Richard Hofstadter, *The Paranoid Style in American Politics, and Other Essays* (New York: Knopf, 1965), 3–4.

<sup>76</sup> Hofstadter, *The Paranoid Style in American Politics* 4.

<sup>77</sup> Hofstadter, *The Paranoid Style in American Politics*, 4.

most evident in Suchen, the cultural paranoid, as attested by his fanatical endeavors against heterodoxy.<sup>78</sup>

More importantly, this cultural paranoia points up the paradox of the self. According to Hofstadter, the paradox of paranoid narrative is the "imitation of the enemy."<sup>79</sup> Suchen's "imitation" of his enemies brings into focus the problematic of the Self. Despite the massive evil forces he battles against, Suchen succeeds. However, in the battles against various heterodox forces, Suchen is constantly "othered." What is essential to Suchen's Confucian heroism is that he can "outdo" the heterodox others. Put differently, the triumph of the orthodox self is premised upon the fact that Suchen is capable of doing all that can be done by the heterodox others. Throughout the novel Suchen's unlikely success is mainly dependent on his supernatural prowess. The irony is that his supernatural powers are at odds with the "rational" Confucianism preached by Suchen, who condemns his enemies' supernatural powers as heretical. In many of these cases of "imitation of the enemy," the boundary separating the orthodox self and the heretical other is blurred, and Suchen is constantly pressed to defend his orthodox position. But more importantly, the boundary itself becomes problematic, as the success of Suchen's worldwide heresy hunt is predicated upon ruthless violence and large-scale carnage, which is a far cry from Confucian orthodoxy to begin with.

The fact that Suchen has to appropriate cultural others to empower the self, and even has to be "othered" so as to fulfill his Confucian mission, is an index of inadequacy and deficiency of the self.<sup>80</sup> The paranoid fear of and implacable hostility toward the cultural other in *Yesou puyan*

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<sup>78</sup> A telling example of *Yesou puyan* as a narrative of cultural paranoia comes when a guest congratulates Suchen on his remarkable cultural feats, and he says that "this globe, with you, the Duke, and the Prime Minister (Wen Suchen) on the left sphere and him (Jing Rijing, Suchen's friend who conquered Europe) on the right sphere, will be governed like iron. It won't be broken open even within a thousand or ten thousand years" (一個地球, 左面有公相, 右面有了他, 治得鐵鑄成一般, 就是千年, 萬年, 也是打不破的了。147:1759).

<sup>79</sup> According to Hofstadter, this is the fundamental paradox of paranoid narrative (*The Paranoid Style in American Politics*, 32).

<sup>80</sup> Maybe that is one of the reasons the author makes Wen Suchen at once an erudite scholar and a martial hero. Martin Huang points out the uneasy image of Wen Suchen as a *wenxia* 文俠 (a literati knight-errant); see Huang,

thus is illustrative of the fear of marginalization and by extension the fear of emasculation. And this fear finds its best expression in the sexual encounters with foreign women, the doubly marginalized other. In rectifying foreign women's deviant sexuality and containing it within Confucian gender ideology, gendered power relations are secured and reinforced via ethnic hierarchy and gender hierarchy.

Furthermore, the obsession with cultural other in *Yesou puyan* is also symptomatic of a deep anxiety over an enormously expanded world of which the Chinese intellectuals were losing their grasp. In his discussion of the ambivalent nature of stereotype, Homi Bhabha points out that as objects of anxieties, the stereotype is "at once an 'other' yet entirely knowable and visible," and thus is deprived of much of its threatening potential.<sup>81</sup> The invocation in *Yesou puyan* of a vast repository of stereotyped images of cultural others accumulated in China's long literary tradition, therefore, can be interpreted as a discursive strategy of making the unknown appear familiar.<sup>82</sup> This anxiety of affirming the centralist masculine subject position of the Self is further reinforced by gendering the other as feminine, as the feminized other appears more conquerable and receptive. Gender and sexual relations in *Yesou puyan* thus serve as familiar signs to designate the unknown and, moreover, to reassure the centralist masculine position of the Self in relation to the Other.

This deep anxiety over the unknown is most evident in the ending of *Yesou puyan*. The novel *Yesou puyan* concludes with Suchen's dream flight to Europe. In the dream Suchen is introduced by his literati friends to a Confucian shrine where he finds himself worshiped in the

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*Literati and Self Re/presentation: Autobiographical Sensibility in the Eighteenth-century Chinese Novel* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1995), 118–120. According to Yang Wangsheng 杨旺生, while in most traditional Chinese novels the author's ideals are projected onto multiple characters, in *Yesou puyan*, by projecting various ideals onto a single idealized character, Xia Jingqu at once constructs and deconstructs the ideal image of Wen Suchen. See Yang Wangsheng, *Xia Jingqu yu Yesou puyan Yanjiu* 夏敬渠與野叟曝言研究 (A Study of Xia Jingqu and The Humble Words of An Old Rustic) (Hefei: Anhui jiaoyu chubanshe, 2004), 108–121.

<sup>81</sup> Homi Bhabha, "The Other Question..." *Screen*, 24:6 (1983), 23.

<sup>82</sup> Sander Gilman has also argued that stereotyping is "a universal means of coping with anxieties engendered by our inability to control the world"; see Gilman, *Difference and Pathology: Stereotypes of Sexuality, Race and Madness* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 12.

Confucian pantheon. Given the uneasiness on the part of the Chinese intellectuals in the face of Western doctrinal and technological challenges, the location of a Confucian shrine on the other side of the globe serves as a strategy of discursive domestication and hence control of the unknown world. In making Europe the most Confucianized land in the world, the most unfamiliar becomes the most familiar. The anxious fantasy of Confucian imperialism in *Yesou puyan*, however, speaks volumes for the deep anxieties over the loss of the cultural identity of the Self epitomized in the orthodox Confucian cultural order (*wen*) in a rapidly changing world. However, this cultural order proves inadequate in sustaining itself, as is made evident by the appropriation of the Other to empower the Self.

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