Morality as Entertainment: Altruistic Friendship in the *Ku-chin hsiao-shuo*

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In the tale of Yang Chiao-ai 羊角哀 and Tso Po-t'ao 左伯桃, one of three which purport to celebrate altruistic friendship in the late-Ming-dynasty collection *Ku-chin hsiao-shuo* 古今小說,[1] there is reference in the prologue to the unshakable bond of love and trust between Kuan Chung 管仲 and Pao Shu 鮑叔, two famous figures of Chinese history. By citing Kuan Chung's description of the relationship, the narrator appears to be setting the moral theme for the story proper:

> "I once fought in three battles and retreated three times, but Pao Shu did not take me for a coward; for he knew I had an aged mother [to care for]. Three times I took an official post, and three times I was dismissed, but Pao Shu would not consider me incompetent; for he knew my time had not come. I have contended with Pao Shu in debate, and Pao Shu did not think I was foolish; for he knew that sometimes one has the advantage [in argument] and other times one does not. I have also engaged in commercial ventures with Pao Shu and have taken the larger share of the profits, but Pao Shu did not think I was greedy; for he knew I was poor. My parents are the ones who gave me life; but the one who truly understands me is Pao Shu."

This, puts in the narrator, is an example of the bonding of minds in true friendship (*chih-hsin chieh-chiao* 知心結交) demonstrated in the relationship of the two friends he will be telling us about, friends who "met by accident, became sworn brothers, each giving up his life and achieving everlasting fame."[2]

Another Kind of Friendship

A discerning reader, however, will be able to see a fundamental difference between the concept of friendship expressed by Kuan Chung and the one brought out in the main story. Pao Shu and Kuan Chung, it is related, were together from childhood, when they shared a common poverty and menial status. Kuan's declaration, derived from recorded history, appeals to the reader's reasoning and credibility: the two have known each other for a long time and have shared much together, to the extent that each can see beneath surface appearances and appreciate the other's essential worth. A friend of this sort is called *chih-chi* 知己, one who "sees through" (*chih*) to another's true "self" (*chi*). In the case of Kuan and Pao, this mutual bond is presented as rational and described in a rational manner, so that the reader can come to an intellectual understanding of the relationship.

The subsequent fictionalized account of the friendship between Yang Chiao-ai and Tso Po-t'ao, however, differs from this in a very significant way. Yang and Tso never get to know each other, as ordinary friends do; the time they spend together is far too brief. As related in the story, they are together for a total of no more than seven days, beginning when Tso happens on Yang's cottage and requests shelter from the rain. By the next morning, after discovering they have mutual interests and ambitions, they go through the ritual of sworn brotherhood. Three days after that, they set out together to seek office from the Prince of Ch'u. In another three days, Tso dies in the snow after giving up his clothes and provisions to enable Yang to complete the journey.

Despite this very brief acquaintance, Tso's ultimate sacrifice is made with neither hesitation nor qualms. The long account of it concentrates much more on providing a plausible basis for Yang's acceptance of that sacrifice: were he to refuse, they both would surely perish and a proper burial for Tso would not then be possible.[3] Later, Yang impresses the Prince with his knowledge and attains his objective of an official appointment; whereupon he returns to stage an elaborate funeral for his friend. The narrator assures us that he weeps so intently at the ceremony that all in attendance are moved to tears. The account then goes on to balance out the plot by introducing a supernatural element: Tso returns in a dream to tell Yang that he is threatened by the ghost of the famous assassin Ching K'o 荆軻 because of the proximity of their graves.[4] In the end, this brings

about the final completion of the equation: Yang kills himself in order to aid his friend in the nether world.

Symmetrical Plots in *Hua-pen*

The working out of a symmetrical plot is an important artistic feature of the majority of stories in the *Ku-chin hsiao-shuo* and in the other two collections making up the *San-yen* 三言.[5] The hundred and twenty stories in these early seventeenth-century collections have been the subject of much study because they are considered the finest examples of early Chinese vernacular fiction and because of the influence they wield over all subsequent fiction in China.

Since the stories are conveniently gathered together and have been widely read, scholars and critics have talked of them as a literary genre under the rubric *hua-pen* 話本. P.D. Hanan has shown us, in a series of rigorous studies, that *hua-pen* stories can be grouped into a rough chronological order spanning nearly four centuries, from perhaps 1250 to 1627, when the last of the *San-yen* collections was published. Moreover, the stories were written, rewritten, or edited by Feng Meng-lung 馮夢龍(1574–1646) and a prominent collaborator, from sources displaying a variety of sensibilities and styles.[6] Given his great contributions to the understanding of the *hua-pen* genre, Hanan, in his latest study on the subject, makes the somewhat startling statement that *hua-pen* stories changed so much over the centuries that any synchronic study of them would be "fruitless."[7]

This conclusion is clearly brought about by Hanan's sensitivity to the many changes of form *hua-pen* stories underwent over the Ming and Ch'ing dynasties. But because Hanan does not consider the function which determines the variations of that form, he is left more with the *hua-pen*'s surface differences than with any underlying similarity. History tells us that Chinese fiction developed and flourished because it entertained. For this reason, it would be more fruitful to consider the artistic nature of *hua-pen* fiction in terms of this primary function. For it seems that if we were to continue to talk of the *hua-pen* as a genre, we would find justification by taking this approach.[8]

For the modern critic, this means abandoning the usual focus on the author and directing attention, as recent "reader-response criticsm" suggests,

on the reader and on his reactions to the text.[9] Under this approach, the text is no longer regarded as the record of the author's self-expression alone; it also becomes a series of strategies calculated to produce a certain effect on the reader, who is indispensible to the artistic process since he recreates the author's work via the act of reading. Accordingly, by saying that *hua-pen* texts entertain, I am really saying that they are constructed not so much to stimulate the reader's intellect to a new awareness of truth or reality; rather, they aim to satisfy vicariously his basic, visceral desires.[10] *Hua-pen* stories appear to do this in a variety of ways. The most common is to balance out all equations, as the Yang Chiao-ai story does, by introducing contrived coincidences, tacked-on supernaturalism, or karmic cause and effect.

We must caution ourselves against leaping to conclusions, however. There is no single structure that can be identified as indisputably the shape of entertainment fiction. I have elsewhere argued that the symmetrical balance of many *hua-pen* plots show that they entertain because such plots are calculated to please the reader by reaffirming his sense of proportion and justice.[11] In the story of Yang Chiao-ai, for example, we can see that there is something gratifying about two friends each giving up his life for the other in turn. Yet it is not unreasonable to read a didactic sense into the identical structure, as Hanan and W.L. Idema both do. To Idema, retribution is stressed in *San-yen* stories "to convince their readers of the moral mechanics of the world they were living in . . ." Hanan notes that the concept of *Pao* 報 , or "requital," may be said to determine the structure of all stories on moral themes, since one requirement is that they be morally satisfying.[12] Of course, what is didactic and what is entertaining should not be regarded as mutually exclusive, especially since the two concepts have in common a pragmatic concern. Didactic literature seeks to convey generalized truth, sometimes by entertaining the reader. For this reason, the conclusion that a particular story primarily entertains or instructs is ultimately judgmental and hence needs to appeal to extra-textual factors, such as history or culture or psychology, for support. In positing entertainment as the basic function of the stories in the *Ku-chin hsiao-shuo,* I am doing no more than making a hypothesis. My belief, however, is that the testing out of such a hypothesis will go far in determining the nature of the *hua-pen* genre.

Tales of High Morality

Those who would object to placing all *Ku-chin* stories into the entertainment category can point to certain ones with moral concerns beyond the bantering remarks of their intrusive narrators. Aside from the story of Yang and Tso (No. 7), the *Ku-chin hsiao-shuo* contains two others which appear to stress the morality of true friendship: the stories of Fan Chü-ch'ing 范巨卿 (No. 16) and of Wu Pao-an 吳保安 (No. 8). The apparent altruism in these stories has convinced many critics that they are didactic, crafted to persuade their readers to virtue by the glorification of exemplary behavior.[13] For this reason, the stories become ideal test cases for the substantiation of the entertainment hypothesis. If they can be shown to be directed to the reader's pleasure above all else, it would lend great credence to the position that the entire collection in which they appear was put together for the same purpose. I believe that the entertainment factor, so far more or less ignored by modern critics, is the most crucial indicator of the nature of *hua-pen* stories, and that critics must take entertainment into careful account if they are to understand *hua-pen* as a literary genre.

We should begin our investigation into the nature of the moralistic tales by noting their assumed values. In the Yang story, it becomes evident that the acts of the two friends are not to be justified by rational criteria: Tso does not "know" Yang in the sense that Kuan Chung knows Pao Shu. Yet Tso is quick to give his life for his friend. In terms of common sense, this sacrifice is indeed incredible. Moreover, the author does not bother to examine Tso's mind to provide the reader with a plausible explanation; the reader's acceptance of the plot is assumed. In a type of story characterized by wordiness and expository overkill, there is nevertheless no attempt at making clear the moral fulcrum of the plot.

The situation is identical in the bizarre tale of Fan Chü-ch'ing and his friend Chang Shao 張劭, a tale paired with the Yang Chiao-ai story in an earlier collection.[14] This pairing is understandable since the two stories show an almost perfect identity of structure and theme. Both present high-minded individuals entering without rational reflection into a bond of friendship for which each eventually offers up his life. Even the mode of presentation is similar. Both stories employ a simplified classical prose and a relative tersensess of expression, with the usual narrator intrusions kept to a minimum. But because the supernaturalism in the Fan story is more centrally

integrated into the plot, it appears more unified and less contrived.

Like all other main characters in the three fictionalized tales, Fan Chü-ch'ing and Chang Shao are also historical personages and an account of their friendship is recorded in official history. It is by noting the disparities between the two accounts, in fact, that we can arrive at certain conclusions concerning the actual motives of the storyteller, who changes history to suit his own purposes. Although the historical record, in the *History of the Later Han* (*Hou Han shu* 後漢書),[15] is not altogether free from references to the supernatural (Fan learns of Chang's death through a dream), it does not deal directly with life after death. The historical Fan keeps his promise and appears in Chang's house at the appointed time, meets Chang's family, drinks with Chang and departs after an enjoyable visit. In the *Ku-chin* story, this prologue to the historical account becomes the point of focus, and the virtue of trust (*hsin* 信) is intensified beyond the bounds of common sense: Fan kills himself so that his ghost can keep the appointment. The *Ku-chin* story thus takes an act which is rationally indefensible and elevates it by dint of that very fact to a moral absolute, admirable because it stands unfettered by the prudential chains of ordinary human life.

Friendship Without Love

The claim of various critics notwithstanding,[16] the Fan Chü-ch'ing story is not really about friendship, at least not in its normal sense of mutual love and concern, or what the French essayist Montaigne describes as "the communication of all secret thoughts."[17] Rather, because of the appeal to intuitive commitment beyond reason and affection, it appears to be more of a headlong competition in which one protagonist attempts to outdo the other in virtuous sacrifice. In the end, each gives up his very life for rather contrived reasons. There is far less consideration for a friend *per se* than for him as a means to display one's great virtue: "If I do not keep the tryst," says Fan Chü-ch'ing, "*what would you think of me*?"[18] The concern for maintaining and advancing one's own reputation leaves no room even for the perpetuation of the friendship itself.[19] After all, the drastic measure which Fan takes to secure that reputation—suicide—also cuts him off from further contact with Chang. Beyond keeping his appointment, he is not even able to enjoy an extended reunion, but has to

leave his friend sprawled out, weeping alone on the mossy ground. Ultimately, under the logic of this moral scheme, Fan's death obliges Chang to kill himself also, explaining to astonished onlookers that "Since my brother has died for me, how can I live on alone?"[20]

Still, by virtue of their uncompromising adherence to a moral ideal, Fan and Chang become larger than life. Like the onlookers at Chang's suicide, ordinary folk are shown to be confounded by their ready willingness to go beyond prudential considerations. From this perspective, we can see that their obssessive quest is not for friendship so much as for fame which, in turn, assures them a certain immortality. Their story includes prominent mention of their final success. Just as Yang and Tso are honored by a prince and worshipped with uninterrupted burning of incense, Fan and Chang are said to have been given posthumous titles by the emperor himself, who orders a shrine built in front of their graves to commemorate their virtue; their sons receive imperial patronage and Fan's attains high official rank. "To the present day," the narrator notes, "vestiges of their ancient memorial remain in Shan-yang," to inspire the many who compose laudatory verses on their walls.

Such accounts are surely not intended to be exaggerations. By the time the narrator gives them, he has nearly presented his entire tale and can assume that his readers agree to the propriety of the honors. Like Yang and Tso, Fan and Chang are characters who continue to appeal to many readers. If, however, we deny that the basis of this appeal is common friendship, we must then confront the important question of what fundamentally makes them the magnetic heroes they evidently have been for so long.

The answer, I think, has to do with the storyteller's ability to recognize his readers' instincts and to provide them with visceral satisfaction beyond the working out of a moral equation. The heroes in these tales become admirable for their uncompromising pursuit of an ideal. Yet this ideal itself–even as altruistic friendship–is hardly sufficient to make the stories as gripping as they have proven to be. The point that the pursuit is really for fame, something freely admitted in each story, does not at all detract from the captive power, and it is of great importance for us who study Chinese narrative art to understand how this can be.

We have noted that the heroes consistently operate one level above the workaday world, a level justified by the transcendent morality attributed to them. It is easy to see that, by ignoring the restrictions of that world,

they pull their readers via vicarious identification to a more exhilarating one in which the doubts and compromises of the human condition are suddenly irrelevant. Absolute morality, the kind to which the heroes adhere, is not really possible within the complexities of our own everyday life. For nearly everyone who struggle with the greys of quotidian living and who must remain sensible and prudent, the simplistic world of such absolutist heroes cannot but have great appeal. For by entering this world, a reader is suddenly able to experience the unqualified joy of moral certitude, a joy crowned by the assurance that uncompromising virtue will always be rewarded with everlasting fame. The stories do not therefore basically provide examples of goodness; they would then be far more boring than they are. Much more importantly, they should be seen as vehicles of escape from the inevitable agonies and vexations associated with the uncertainties of actual human existence. For this reason, they are more accurately characterized as entertainment (rather than didactic) fiction.

Function and Art in "Wu Pao-an"

By determining their basic function, we can then proceed to consider their art. The two stories we have been discussing were selected and edited by Feng Meng-lung to suit his purposes. But he largely retained the original texts, with their relatively terse and sketchy narrative style, and the potentialities of their appeal were not developed to the fullest. The story of Wu pao-an—"Wu Pao-an ch'i-chia shu-yu 吳保安棄家贖友(Wu Pao-an abandons his family to ransom a friend)" in Chinese—shows much better Feng's artistry because he rewrote it extensively, displaying his ability to fully exploit a plot for its entertainment possibilities.[21]

By comparing the story to its historical source, we can see the vernacular author's penchant to build up his heroes by stressing the non-rational basis of their friendship. In the vernacular title, Wu Pao-an is said to leave his family for a sake of a friend, a clear indication of the transcendent course of his moral action.[22] From the outset, the reader discovers that this friend, Kuo Chung-hsiang 郭仲翔, is not a friend in the usual sense. The historical account at least makes clear that Wu does meet Kuo in person, though without previous introduction (*pu-chieh erh-chien* 不介而見).[23] In the subsequent classical-language account in the *T'ai-p'ing Miscellany* (*T'ai-p'ing*

kuang-chi 太平廣記), as well as in the vernacular *Ku-chin* story, this brief acquaintance is changed to a single piece of correspondence, a letter from Wu to Kuo, so that what the two subsequently do for each other appears all the more altruistic. Indeed, the author of the vernacular version reiterates at least five times the fact that Kuo and Wu have never met in person, beginning with the narrator's opening remarks and continuing on in Kuo's memorial to the emperor which serves to summarize the entire relationship.

Why then is Wu willing to take such extreme measures to rescue Kuo? The given answer is their intuitive recognition of each other as true friends, a situation which activates the nobler side of innately worthy individuals and removes all consideration of private needs. "The person and I have never been acquainted," says Kuo on reading Wu's letter. "And yet he entrusts me with helping him in his dire situation; he must be one who truly knows me. A man who meets a soul-mate (*chih-chi*) and does not respond on his behalf–can he avoid the burden of shame?"[24]

Far from acting out of private affection, therefore, Kuo's commitment to Wu is based on moral principle which, for the sake of public approval (i.e., to avoid "the burden of shame"), directs him to fling pragmatic considerations to the winds. On Wu's part, Kuo's willingness obliges him, under the identical principle, to match and exceed the act of faith. As Wu explains to his wife, who continues to counsel prudence, "Before this, I had sent him a simple letter, and it was sufficient to bring about his warm recommendation. Now that he is on the brink of life and death, he entrusts me with his very life; how could I bear to turn my back on him?"[25]

In order not to ignore this public call to nobility, Wu *does* turn his back on the most important of his private concerns–his family. Feng Meng-lung stresses the point by portraying this family in a far more elaborate manner than either of his story's classical antecedents.[26] Wu's willingness to abandon his family is not seen in this context as a culpable act. On the contrary, it becomes the very index of his altruistic virtue. The more details of his wife and child the story supplies, the more the reader is reminded of Wu's noble sacrifice, and what would have been a reprehensible act for an ordinary person becomes, through the legerdemain of a transcendent morality, an act of idealistic heroism. Accordingly, the vernacular storyteller is careful to give Wu's wife an identity and to tell us that his son is "not yet a year old" when Kuo is first captured. Wu's wife becomes more of a foil, to question the feasibility of his commitment and thereby to elicit his

declaration of resolve: "If I cannot bring about Kuo's return, I swear I shall not live on alone."

Because of these preliminaries, the subsequent accounting of Wu's actions on Kuo's behalf amounts to a list of marvels, designed as much to amaze the reader as to edify him. Wu sells everything in his home, leaves his wife and son, and sets out to accumulate the necessary funds for the ransom. The narrator focuses attention on the great difficulties of the task and pictures Wu "scurrying about morning and night, going now hither now thither, wearing tattered clothes and eating coarse food." For all of ten years, we are told, he forgets his own family and thinks of no one but Kuo Chung-hsiang.[27]

The point of view of the narrative then shifts to Wu's wife, but this does not lessen the stress on his heroism; it merely presents it from a different angle. She is said to have survived the decade on handouts, until all her means are exhausted and she embarks with her son, now eleven, on a journey to find her absent husband. Before she is finally rescued by the magistrate Yang An-chü 楊安居 , she is at the point of having to beg for alms and contemplating suicide. From a modern perspective, what is remarkable through all this is the utter lack of resentment on her part. Her sufferings are detailed not to question the rightness of Wu's actions, as a modern reader might expect; that would introduce an unwanted ambiguity into the story. Instead, under the story's moral scheme, her troubles only serve to bring out her husband's exemplary virtue: what a great man to be willing to put his wife through so much for the sake of someone he hardly knew! When Yang An-chü hears her story, he sighs with admiration. "This is indeed a righteous man (*yi-shih* 義士)," he says to himself. "I regret I have not had the good fortune to meet him."

The Virtue of *Yi*

The virtue of "righteousness," or *yi,* has yet to be fully examined in modern terms,[28] but it is clear that this virtue, rather than friendship as such, constitutes the real moral basis of the Wu Pao-an story, as well as of the other two stories we have been discussing.[29] Chinese righteousness, as it appears in many works of fiction, requires of its adherents an intuitive and absolute commitment not unlike the commitment of religious faith. Under

righteousness, as under faith, prudential judgments are disdained as concerns of the uninitiated and the petty-minded, and simplistic solutions are glorified and raised to heroic levels. What is important to see is that such a moral scheme becomes intensely appealing because it lifts its adherents–including, vicariously, the reader–above the little imperfections and practical compromises that always seem to cloud over man's wishes and dreams. The authors of the stories we have been considering appear to recognize this and their art consists of allowing their readers to bask in the joy of idealistic fulfillment. In this way, the stories stand the old Horacian formula of moral instruction through pleasure on its head: the reader derives the pleasure of instinctive satisfaction by means of a morality which does not compromise. It is surely because of this that righteousness is brought up so often in traditional Chinese fiction, especially in writings dealing with martial prowess, in which violence and other kinds of questionable behavior need to be made admirable.

Yang Chiao-ai, Fan Chü-ch'ing, Wu Pao-an may be considered altruistic friends, but they embed themselves in a reader's imagination and stand out as heroes mostly for their practice of righteous virtue. Their really bizarre behavior is recounted far less as a model to emulate than as a means to take the reader to an exhilaratingly simplistic and therefore emotionally appealing world. Indeed, well before the ambiguous treatment of *yi* in the novel *Water Margin* (*Shui-hu chuan* 水滸傳) brought about wide discussion on the matter of its justification of "gang morality" and misogyny, thoughtful individuals were well aware of righteousness as a two-edged sword. Sung Ch'i 宋祁 (998–1061), writing in the introduction to the "*Chung-yi* 忠義 (loyalty and righteousness)" section of the *New T'ang History* (*Hsin T'ang shu* 新唐書), the section containing the official biography of Wu Pao-an, cynically describes these virtues in pragmatic terms. "Those who give up their lives for *yi*," he writes, "generally do so because they prefer to leave behind an immortal name quickly, one which could not necessarily be achieved even with a lifetime of effort." He goes on to ask rhetorically, "Are *chung* and *yi* therefore great universal moralities? They overturn the foundations of society, enchaining people and spreading their poison without restraint."[30]

The appeal to *yi* in so much of Chinese fiction, therefore, betrays the primary entertainment function of many works in the tradition, even though many modern critics assume these works to be didactic. The so-called friendship tales in the *Ku-chin hsiao-shuo* are no exceptions, since

they use high morality as they would any other marvel, to lead their readers into the realm of the blessed where the uncertainties and the "thousand natural shocks" of human existence are shunted aside for the exhilaration of absolute moral certitude.

We have yet to determine the true nature of *hua-pen* stories; but in our eagerness to attribute serious artistic value to them, we have shown the tendency to play down or ignore their fundamental entertainment function. In part of his preface to the *Ku-chin hsiao-shuo,* Feng Meng-lung writes the following concerning the stories he collected together:

> Consider the descriptive skills of today's storytellers on stage. They can bring on gladness or astonishment, grief or tears, singing or dancing. [Their listeners] frequently feel the urge to risk their necks or part with their wealth. The timid become brave, the lecherous chaste, the superficial profound, and the dull-minded covered with sweat. Even the casual reading of the *Classic of Filial Piety* [*Hsiao Ching* 孝經] and the *Analects* [*Lun-yü* 論語] would not move move people so swiftly and so deeply. Ah! Can anything but popularized writings do all this?[31]

It behooves all students of traditional Chinese fiction to examine the reasons for its proven appeal. For in the examination lies the key to its generic unity and the modern discernment of its art.

Notes

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1. The collection contains forty stories, edited and published by Feng Meng-lung 馮夢龍 in 1621–24. Later, this collection was renamed *Yü-shih ming-yen* 喻世明言 , the title by which it is generally known in modern times. For the sake of convenience, all citations in this study will refer to the modern punctuated edition published by Chung-hua shu-chü 中華書局 in Hong Kong (hereafter to be referred to as KC).
2. KC, p. 114. All translations in this study are mine. Kuan Chung's statement is slightly altered from the one in his biography in the *Shih-chi* 史記 , *chüan* 62 (Yi-wen yin-shu-kuan *Erh-shih-wu shih* 藝文印書館二十五史 ed., 1956, Vol. 2, p. 855). The Yang Chiao-ai story has most recently been rendered into English by Professor William Dolby. See *The Perfect Lady by Mistake and Other Stories by Feng Menglong (1574–1646)* (London: Paul Elek, 1976), pp. 144–58.

3. KC, p. 117.

4. The story of Ching K'o's attempted assassination of the Ch'in-shih 秦始 emperor is extremely well-known from the account of the Han dynasty historian Ssu-ma Ch'ien 司馬遷 . For a modern English translation of the account, see Burton Watson, trans., *Records of the Historian: Chapters from the Shih chi of Ssu-ma Ch'ien* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1969), pp. 55–67. To Ssu-ma Ch'ien, of course, Ching K'o was a hero in his failure, not the threatening villain he appears here.

5. The others are *Hsing-shih heng-yen* 醒世恒言 and *Ching-shih t'ung-yen* 警世通言 , each of which contains forty stories gathered together by Feng Meng-lung. Together with the *Ku-chin hsiao-shuo* (*Yü-shih ming-yen*), they are referred to as the *San-yen*, or the *Three Anthologies of Stories.*

6. See esp. the following: "The Early Chinese Short Story: A Critical Theory in Outline," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* (hereafter, HJAS), 27 (1967), 168–207; "The Authorship of Some *Ku-chin hsiao-shuo* Stories," *HJAS*, 29 (1969), 190–200; "Sung and Yüan Vernacular Fiction: A Critique of Modern Methods of Dating," *HJAS*, 30 (1970), 159–84; *The Chinese Short Story: Studies in Dating, Authorship, and Composition* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973).

7. *The Chinese Vernacular Story* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), p. 26.

8. I make these arguments in greater detail in a recent article: "Entertainment as Art: An Approach to the *Ku-chin hsiao-shuo*," *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews,* 3, No. 2 (July, 1981), 235–50.

9. For a good introduction to reader-response criticism, see Jane P. Tompkins, ed., *Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980).

10. I am aware of the appeal to psychology of such an appraoch and of the subsequent problems, and I freely admit that I have yet to think the problems through. Vis-a-vis Western literature, however, the approach has been considered and discussed; see, for example, Simon O. Lesser, *Fiction and the Unconscious* (Boston: Vintage, 1957); Norman Holland, *The Dynamics of Literary Response* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), and *Readers Reading* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975); and cf. Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), esp. pp. 38–50.

11. "Entertainment as Art," esp. pp. 240–50.

12. W.L. Idema, *Chinese Vernacular Fiction: The Formative Period* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1974), p. 53. P. D. Hanan, *The Chinese Vernacular Story*, pp. 26–27.

13. See, for example, Idema, *Chinese Vernacular Fiction*, pp. 52–53; or Dominic Cheung, " 'Chrysanthemum Tryst' and 'Fan Chü-ch'ing's Eternal Friendship': A Comparative Study of Two Ghost-Friendship Tales in Japan and China," *Tamkang Review*, 8 (1977), pp. 121–32.

14. In Hung Pien's 洪楩 collection *Liu-shih chia hsiao-shuo* 六十家小說 (better known as *Ch'ing-p'ing shan-t'ang hua-pen* 清平山堂話本) which predates the *Ku-chin hsiao-shuo*, the Fan Chü-ch'ing story is paired with the one on Yang Chiao-ai.

In the extant text, the first pages of both are missing, but scholars have assumed that the *Ku-chin* versions are essentially identical to Hung's. See Hanan, *The Chinese Short Story*, p. 124. In theme, plot structure, and length, as well as in the classical tendencies of language, one can find great similarities between the Fan and the Yang stories which, according to Hanan, were likely to have been written by a single author. See also the facsimile rpt. of Hung Pien's collection under the title *Ch'ing-p'ing shan-t'ang hua-pen nien-ch'i p'ien* 清平山堂話本二十七篇 (Taipei: Shih-chieh shu-chü 世界書局, 1958). A convenient English translation of the Fan Chü-ch'ing story can be found in John L. Bishop, *The Colloquial Short Story in China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), pp. 88–97.

15. See *chüan* 81 (Yi-wen yin-shu kuan Erh-shih-wu shih ed., 1956, Vol. 6, p. 955). Fan Chü-ch'ing's biography is listed under his formal name Fan Shih 式. Bishop has translated the account into English in *Colloquial Short Story*, pp. 98–99.
16. For example, Dominic Cheung, "Chrysanthemum Tryst," p. 121.
17. See *The Complete Essays of Montaigne*, trans. Donald M. Frame (Stanford: Standord University Press, 1948), p. 136.
18. KC, p. 242. Emphasis added.
19. Cf. KC, p. 117, when Yang Chiao-ai is confronted with the decision to leave his dying friend. His explanation of his reluctance does not revolve around the concern for Tso's welfare: ". . . if [I allow] my brother to die in the mulberry tree and go on alone to seek career and fame, I would then become a gross violator of righteousness. I shan't do it."
20. KC, p. 245.
21. Hanan (*Chinese Short Story*, p. 77, n. 35) has concluded that the source of the Wu Pao-an story does not come from the *T'ai-p'ing kuang-chi, chüan* 166, as most scholars have believed. But he says that the actual source, the "Ch'i nan-tzu chuan 奇男子傳" in the *Ho-k'o san chih* 合刻三志, compiled in the late Ming dynasty by one Ping-hua chü-shih 冰華居士 "is minimally different" from the *T'ai-p'ing* account. English readers may therefore refer to Cyril Birch's fine translation of both this account and the *Ku-chin* story in *Stories from a Ming Collection* (New York: Grove Press, 1958), pp. 121–49.
22. Birch's reconstructed title—"The Journey of the Corpse"—unfortunately misses the point.
23. See Wu's biography in the *Hsin T'ang shu, chüan* 191 (Yi-wen yin-shu-kuan *Erh-shih-wu shih* ed., 1956, Vol. 27, p. 2179).
24. KC, p. 123.
25. KC, p. 125.
26. In the *Hsin T'ang shu* biography, Wu's wife is very briefly mentioned as looking for him in Sui-chou and then in Yao-chou before informing Yang An-chü and receiving help. The *T'ai-p'ing kuang-chi* does present her in greater detail, touching upon her poverty and giving her a speaking part. In neither case, however, is she identified by name or portrayed as a questioner of her husband's purposes. The description of her search for him, in either of the classical language versions, is also much less detailed.

27. KC, pp. 125–26.

28. For a fairly thorough discussion of *yi* as it appears in the novel *Shui-hu chuan,* see Sun Shu-yü 孫述宇, "Liang-shan ying-hsiung ti yi-ch'i 梁山英雄的義氣," *Ming Pao yüeh-k'an* 明報月刊, 13, No. 10 (October, 1978), 17–23. See also my brief article "The Virtue of *Yi* in *Water Margin,*" *Journal of Oriental Literature,* 7 (May, 1966), pp. 49–52.

29. On this point, the writers of fiction and the historians are evidently in agreement. In the *Hsin T'ang shu,* the biography of Wu Pao-an is included under "Chung-yi," the category of "Loyalty and Righteousness." In the *T'ai-p'ing Miscellany,* Wu is found in the section entitled "Ch'i-yi 氣義," or "Moral Substance and Righteousness," rather than in the section "Yu-chiao 友交" or "Friendship."

30. *Chüan* 191 (Yi-wen yin-shu kuan *Erh-shih-wu shih* ed., 1956, Vol. 27, p. 2173).

31. KC, p. 2.