

The Innovative Representation of Romantic Love
in “The Oil-peddler Wins the Queen of Flowers”

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Abstract

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There have been numerous studies on the cult of *qing* in the late Ming. While Feng Menglong’s notion of *qing* has been well studied, its influence on the development of the characteristics of the Chinese romance genre has not been fully explored, and it is here that this thesis aims to make a contribution. My master’s thesis traces the developments in Feng Menglong’s redefinition of *qing* through an examination of his understanding of the romantic tale. I begin by looking at Feng Menglong’s revision of *The Extensive Records of the Taiping Era* and compilation of *A History of Qing*, where critical developments of his notion of *qing* and the shape of the romantic tale emerge. I then turn to a new romantic story in the vernacular, “The Oil-peddler Wins the Queen of Flowers,” in which Feng Menglong’s complex and multidimensional redefinition of *qing* comes to full fruition. Romantic love comes to be portrayed through the characterizations of affection and sympathy. This portrayal differs from that in earlier tradition and marks a major shift in the

development of the Chinese romance genre. Feng Menglong transfers affective expressions from other forms of relationships and creates a new narrative model, which turns the narrative process of courtship into the main and most important part of the romance. This process inevitably creates a fresh image of masculinity and a novel vision of romantic relationships, bringing new concepts and possibilities to the Chinese romance genre.

Introduction

Romantic love is a complicated concept and one that is particularly difficult to define within the context of Chinese literature. The late Ming litterateur Feng Menglong 馮夢龍 (1574-1646) was fascinated with the notion of *qing* 情 or “passion,” which by his time had become a central concept in philosophy and one of the most important themes of literature.¹ During the later years of the dynasty he compiled *Qingshi* 情史 [A history of *qing*] (hereafter *History*) in order to establish and propagate “a religion of *qing*” (*qingjiao* 情教).² At the same time, he was compiling the *Sanyan* 三言 [Three words] collections of vernacular stories,³ which include the tale “Maiyou lang duzhan huakui” 賣油郎獨占花魁 [The oil-peddler wins the Queen of Flowers] (hereafter “Oil-peddler”). This vernacular tale describes how an oil-peddler gradually moves the “Queen of Flowers” through various behaviors which are generated from *qing*. In this romance, romantic love is innovatively portrayed as characterized by affection and sympathy. This thesis

1. We will discuss the issue of translating *qing* as well as other affective concepts later.

2. The texts of Feng Menglong’s works quoted in this thesis, including *Taiping guangji chao* 太平廣記鈔 [Selections from *The Extensive Records of the Taiping Era*] (hereafter *Selections*), *History*, *Gujin xiaoshuo* 古今小說 [Stories old and new] (hereafter *Old and New*), *Jingshi tongyan* 警世通言 [Stories to caution the world] (hereafter *Caution*), and *Xingshi hengyan* 醒世恆言 [Stories to awaken the world] (hereafter *Awaken*), are from *Feng Menglong quanji* 馮夢龍全集 [Complete works of Feng Menglong], which was edited by Wei Tongxian 魏同賢 and published by Jiangsu guji chubanshe 江蘇古籍出版社 in Nanjing in 1993.

3. The *Three Words* collections are *Old and New* (appeared in 1620 or 1621), *Caution* (published in 1624), and *Awaken* (published in 1627). This thesis uses Shuhui Yang and Yunqin Yang’s English translation of the collections: *Stories Old and New: A Ming Dynasty Collection* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000), *Stories to Caution the World: A Ming Dynasty Collection* (2005), and *Stories to Awaken the World: A Ming Dynasty Collection* (2009). In general, I use published translations of primary works and add *pinyin* and Chinese characters for key terms.

proposes that this portrayal differs from that in earlier Chinese romantic fiction and marks a major shift in the development of the Chinese romance genre.

This thesis is not about *qing* itself, but about the ways in which *qing* shapes a particular kind of relationship and the way that relationship shapes a particular narrative pattern. There have been numerous studies on the cult of *qing* in the late Ming.⁴ While Feng Menglong's notion of *qing* has been well studied, its influence on the development of the characteristics of the Chinese romance genre has not been fully explored, and it is here that this project seeks to make a contribution. While the changing notion of *qing* is relevant, this project does not deal with philosophical or cultural trends as such; my aim is to focus on the conventions of a type of tale and a literary sub-genre. By looking into Feng Menglong's "Oil-peddler," which I see as marking a change in the development of the Chinese romance genre, this project proposes to pay attention to how Feng Menglong's concept of *qing* has provided a new notion of the romance genre and changed its narrative form.

Given that the keystone of this thesis is the examination of "Oil-peddler" as an expression of Feng Menglong's concept of *qing* and his notion of the romantic tale, it is important to ask if "Oil-peddler" is in fact "his story." Patrick Hanan has studied the problem of the correct dating and authorship of the extant vernacular stories. According to him, "Oil-peddler" qualifies as newer (after about 1550), because it "contains some songs to the *kua-chih-erh* 掛枝兒 tune which

4. Some of the main studies include Maram Epstein, *Competing Discourses: Orthodoxy, Authenticity, and Engendered Meanings in Late Imperial Chinese Fiction* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2001); Martin W. Huang, *Desire and Fictional Narrative in Late Imperial China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2001); Haiyan Lee, *Revolution of the Heart: A Genealogy of Love in China, 1900-1950* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007); Wai-Yee Li, *Enchantment and Disenchantment: Love and Illusion in Chinese Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993); Paolo Santangelo, *Sentimental Education in Chinese History: An Interdisciplinary Textual Research on Ming and Qing Sources* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2003).

became popular only in the latter part of the sixteenth century.”⁵ He deems, however, that this romantic story is hardly likely to have been written by Feng himself, given that “it is in a freer and more exuberant vernacular than his.”⁶ Feng’s comment in *History*⁷ “implies that there was no Classical version [of this tale] available,” suggesting that this romance was “either written by someone unconnected with Feng and his associates or it was not developed from a Classical source.”⁸ What, then, is the justification for studying “Oil-peddler” as an expression of Feng Menglong’s ideas? As Shuhui Yang argues, Feng “as the finalizer of the texts can be justifiably studied as an ‘author’ who appropriated their meaning to his own purposes, not so much by ‘creative writing’ (in its narrow sense) but by revising pre-existent source materials, by speaking through others’ words.”⁹ Yang sees Feng’s self-conscious editing and publishing of the stories in the *Three Words* as a form of “ventriloquism.”¹⁰ In other words, from what we know of the way Feng shaped the collections, it makes sense that he would express his ideas through materials appropriated from elsewhere. Therefore, even if “Oil-peddler” was not actually written by Feng Menglong, because of his agency in selecting, editing, and publishing the tale, it is valid to see it as a fruition of his conception of *qing* and his redefinition of the Chinese romantic tale.

Based upon the nature of my topic and the questions it broaches, my study is divided into two parts. Chapter 1 will examine how romantic love has been expressed in the earlier romance

5. Patrick Hanan, *The Chinese Short Story: Studies in Dating, Authorship, and Composition* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), 24.

6. *Ibid.*, 86.

7. Feng Menglong 馮夢龍, comp., *Qingshi* 情史 [A history of *qing*] (Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 1993), 182: “There is a vernacular tale in which an oil-peddler admires a famous courtesan.”

8. Hanan, *Chinese Short Story*, 91.

9. Shuhui Yang, *Appropriation and Representation: Feng Menglong and the Chinese Vernacular Story* (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 1998), 10.

10. Yang, *Appropriation and Representation*, 7-13.

tradition so as to prepare us for a better appreciation for the innovative representation of *qing* in Feng Menglong's "Oil-peddler." How did the Chinese romance genre form, and how has the genre mutated? A significant body of Classical tales was preserved in *Taiping guangji* 太平廣記 [The extensive records of the Taiping era] (hereafter *Extensive Records*), completed in 987. Feng Menglong edited and revised the *Extensive Records*, publishing his *Taiping guangji chao* 太平廣記鈔 [Selections from *The Extensive Records of the Taiping Era*] (hereafter *Selections*) in 1626. Not long after that, Feng Menglong began to draw stories about *qing* from other works and add introductory essays and extensive notes and comments, compiling his *History*. This chapter will trace how Classical tales about *qing* are (re)included, (re)excluded, (re)categorized, and related to one another in *Extensive Records*, *Selections*, and *History*, and thereby explore the formation of the Chinese romance genre, the characteristics of the earlier Chinese romantic fiction, and Feng Menglong's redefinition of the genre. I will demonstrate that, in part through reworking a literary heritage of tales about *qing* in *History*, Feng Menglong is seeking to redefine a genre of tales about romantic love. Furthermore, in the way that Feng Menglong reorganizes and edits and comments on these *qing* stories, we can see the emergence of some of the basic elements of a new understanding of romantic relationships.

Chapter 2 will examine how Feng Menglong's redefined *qing* is fully expressed through a new vernacular romantic story—"Oil-peddler." To set the background for a better understanding of Feng Menglong's innovative representation of *qing*, this chapter will first provide a sketch of the main characteristics of romantic stories produced in the late Ming, both Classical tales by other writers and his other vernacular stories in the *Three Words*. Then, I will look into how Feng Menglong in "Oil-peddler" creates a new narrative model with a lexicon of affective terms to represent universal *qing*. I will show that this process inevitably creates a new image of masculinity

and a new conception of what a romantic relationship might be, and that the two are inextricably linked to one another. The affective expressions, characters of behavior, personality traits, and states of mind associated with the newly imagined romantic relationship are in many cases transferred from other, previously existing forms of relationships, such as parent-child, husband-wife, friends, and strangers, and are now hybridized into an innovative representation of romantic love. Together they reconstruct the image of *youqinglang* 有情郎 [a man who has *qing*]—as *haoren* 好人 [a good person] with genuine *qing* who can bring the feeling of *nuan* 暖/煖 [warmth]—providing a fresh image of masculinity for the Chinese romance genre.¹¹ It is natural for a warm, good man with genuine *qing* to act like a hero in saving his beloved from difficulties, to act like a friend in showing deep understanding, to act like a relative in fondly taking care of her, and to sacrifice himself for her well-being before there is any formal agreement, commitment, obligation, or responsibility between them. Such a heterogeneous male-female interaction constitutes a new potential form for the romantic relationship in the Chinese romance genre.

It is important to be aware that late-Ming notions of *qing* are also expressed in and shaped by forms of literature other than prose fiction. Expressions of *qing* similar to those represented in “Oil-peddler” can be found in different literary forms such as the poetic and/or the dramatic traditions. As Sophie Volpp notes, *qing* is a “ubiquitous” theme in seventeenth-century literature.¹² For example, in an anecdote related within the prologue of “Oil-peddler,” *qing* is expressed through Zheng Yuanhe’s 鄭元和 killing his fancy horse because Li Yaxian 李亞仙 wants to eat horse-tripe soup in her illness. This scene does not appear in the Tang classical tale “Li Wa zhuan” 李娃

11. Does the new image of masculinity involve a new image of femininity as well? This question is definitely worth further investigation. That being said, we will set this issue outside the parentheses for the purpose of this project.

12. Sophie Volpp, “The Literary Circulation of Actors in Seventeenth-century China,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 61, no.3 (August 2002): 952.

傳 [Li Wa's story] by Bai Xingjian 白行簡, but rather in the Ming Southern-style drama *Xiuru ji* 繡襦記 [The story of the embroidered jacket] by Xu Lin 徐霖.¹³ Yet although *qing* is explored in a variety of different genres, each genre possesses “definite forms for seeing and conceptualizing reality, and a definite scope and depth of penetration.”¹⁴ As Paolo Santangelo argues, “There is an obvious difference between the introspective and reflective character of poetry, and the character of narrative discourse which involves the description of situations and the narration of behaviours presented objectively and externally, primarily set within the coordinates of time and space, and traditionally subjected to historical or allegorical readings.”¹⁵ For the purpose of this thesis, we will center on Chinese prose narrative, making only occasional reference to other literary forms.¹⁶

Any discussion of *qing* and other affective concepts raises the question of how to translate key terms. As several scholars have demonstrated, affective concepts such as *qing* are broad and change over time. Their implied meanings are sometimes interchangeable, sometimes associative, and sometimes contradictory. Affective terms, in Haiyan Lee's words, “appear, disappear, and reappear; they come into the arena alone or in pairs; they form alliances, break them up, and make enemies.”¹⁷ For instance, *qing* is associated with love, feeling, emotion, affection, sentiment,

13. Chen Chen-Yin 陳貞吟. “Zhu Youdun du Shi Junbao *Qujiang chi de zai chuangzuo*” 朱有燉對石君寶《曲江池》的再創作 [Investigation into Zhu Youdun's *Qujiang Pond*—A later version of *Qujiang Pond* by Shi Junbao]. *Journal of Chinese Literature of National Cheng Kung University* 31 (December 2010): 112.

14. M. M. Bakhtin and P. N. Medvedev, *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship: A Critical Introduction to Sociological Poetics*, trans. Albert J. Wehrle (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), 131.

15. Santangelo, *Sentimental Education*, 70.

16. For some of the main studies on romantic love in the poetic tradition, see Anne Birrell, *Games Poets Play: Readings in Medieval Chinese Poetry* (Cambridge, UK: McGuinness China Monographs, 2004); Anne Birrell, *New Songs from a Jade Terrace: An Anthology of Early Chinese Love Poetry*. London: George Allen and Unwin, 1982; Xiaorong Li, *The Poetics and Politics of Sensuality in China: The “Fragrant and Bedazzling” Movement (1600-1930)* (Amherst, NY: Cambria Press, 2019).

17. Lee, *Revolution of the Heart*, 20.

passion, understanding, sympathy, and compassion; while it can be related to sexual desire, it can also be separate from that concept. As Maram Epstein says, “Because of the way it was historically used to anchor a wide range of binomes in philosophical discussions,” *qing* is “extremely difficult to translate.”¹⁸ While translating these affective terms is always a work in progress, in order to remove impediments to the understanding of our discussion, I will provide tentative English equivalents whenever possible. As used in the early romance tradition, *qing* can plausibly be translated as “passion.” But in the cases where translation as “passion” might be misleading, particularly when we come to our discussion on Feng Menglong’s redefinition of *qing*, I will leave the term untranslated as “*qing*.” I will translate the key word *gan* 感 as “sympathetic response, deep feeling,” or verbally as “to move emotionally”; *ai* 愛 as “love,” or verbally as “to love”; *yu* 欲 as “sexual desire”; *se* 色 as “desirable appearance”;¹⁹ *zhi* 知 as “understanding, recognition, appreciation,” or verbally as “to rightly recognize and value true quality”; *teng* 疼 as “to feel pain/dote”; *lian* 憐 as “to sympathize, pity,” *xi* 惜 as “to care about, care for”; *en* 恩 as “kindness, favor”; *bao* 報 as “reciprocation,” also verbally as “to pay back”; and *zhengxin* 真心 as “genuine heart.”

This study traces the developments in Feng Menglong’s redefinition of *qing* and his understanding of what the romantic tale is. In Feng Menglong’s revision of *Extensive Records* and compilation of *History*, we will see certain developments of his concept of *qing* and the shape of the Chinese romantic tale. We will then see that in “Oil-peddler,” Feng Menglong’s redefined *qing*

18. Epstein, *Competing Discourses*, 64.

19. Desirable appearance conveys similar connotations of sexual desire; it refers to feminine beauty as a kind of carnal attractiveness. For instance, in Yuan Zhen’s 元稹 “Yingying zhuan” 鶯鶯傳 [Ying-ying’s story], Zhang 張 considers himself “someone truly capable of passionate desire” (*zhen haose zhe* 真好色者). Stephen Owen, trans., *An Anthology of Chinese Literature: Beginnings to 1911* (New York: Norton, 1996), 541. We will discuss this story later in Chapter 1.

comes to fruition. In this new vernacular romance, Feng Menglong creates a new narrative model to represent universal *qing*, in which a warm, good man with genuine *qing* is constructed and a new form for the romantic relationship is proposed. The new-model male's series of affectionate and sympathetic behaviors, which appears before any mutual agreement has been articulated, forms a paradigmatic process of courtship. Such abiding, unconditional affection naturally shifts the focus of the romance from the period after the commitment to the process of courtship itself. By turning the process of courtship into the main and most important part of the romance, Feng Menglong overthrows the traditional narrative structure we see in previous Chinese romantic stories. He actually creates an archetypical narrative structure: in the beginning a warm, good man with genuine *qing* unilaterally shows his *qing* for a woman through various fond behaviors, but as the story proceeds she is gradually moved by his affectionate care, and in the end she commits herself to him to reciprocate his kindness and favors. This prototypical structure creates new conventions for the Chinese romantic story, bringing new concepts and possibilities to the genre.

Chapter 1

Earlier Chinese Romantic Fiction

“Oil-peddler” portrays romantic love as characterized by sympathy and affection. This portrayal differs from that in the earlier romantic fiction and marks a major shift in the development of the Chinese romance genre. In order to better understand what is innovative in the story’s representation of romantic love, we need to know how it has been expressed in the previous romance tradition. As Hanan states, “The romance began with the Classical tales of the Tang and flourished in the Song and afterward.”²⁰ A significant body of stories, legends, and anecdotes from the Han dynasty to the early Song dynasty was preserved in *Extensive Records*, a Chinese encyclopedia anthology compiled by imperial command and completed in 987.²¹ *Extensive Records* thus can be considered a particularly good representative of the early prose narrative tradition. The collection was edited and revised by Feng Menglong in 1626. He extracted stories, edited the text, created a new categorization, and added notes and comments, compiling *Selections*. Not long after that (probably in 1631), Feng Menglong began to draw stories about *qing* from other works and add introductory essays and extensive notes and comments, compiling his *History*. By tracing how Chinese romantic stories are (re)included, (re)excluded, (re)categorized, and related to one another in *Extensive Records*, *Selections*, and *History*, this chapter explores the formation

20. Patrick Hanan, *The Chinese Vernacular Story* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), 49.

21. The text of *Extensive Records* quoted in this thesis is from Wang Shaoying’s 汪紹楹 edition, which was published by Zhonghua shuju 中華書局 in Beijing in 1961. This edition is based upon Tan Kai’s 談愷 (1503-69) block-printed edition published in 1566, which is the earliest extant edition and the one most commonly used by scholars.

of the Chinese romance genre, the characteristics of the earlier Chinese romantic fiction, and Feng Menglong's redefinition of the genre.

The Extensive Records of the Taiping Era

Extensive Records was compiled in the early Song dynasty by the members of the *Taixue* 太學 [National University] under imperial direction by Li Fang 李昉 (925-96). This work is considered an encyclopedic anthology for it not only collects *xiaoshuo* 小說 ["small talk", fiction] of the preceding millennium but also groups them into 92 *lei* 類 [categories] which are further divided into over 150 classes. As Chen Pingyuan 陳平原 points out, the phrase *leixing* 類型 [genre] is a loanword, and there was no such word in ancient China; however, the concept of category did exist, and literary works considered belonging to a group were placed into a single category according to topic, theme, character, structure, period, school, style, tone, and other criterion.²² *Extensive Records*'s classification is influenced by earlier and contemporary collections, anthologies, and encyclopedias, including *Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語 [A new account of the tales of the world] (hereafter *Tales of the World*) compiled by Liu Yiqing 劉義慶 (403-44) and *Yiwen leiju* 藝文類聚 [A categorized collection of literary writing] completed by Ouyang Xun 歐陽修 in 624,²³ and it simultaneously adopts several different classification criteria such as topics, themes, and forms. For example, the category of *furen* 婦人 [women] seems to be formed by topic; the category *qiyi* 氣義 [zealous Appropriety] seems to be formed by theme;²⁴

22. Chen Pingyuan 陳平原, *Xiaoshuo shi: Lilun yu shijian* 小說史：理論與實踐 [The history of fiction: Theory and practice] (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1993), 124-28.

23. Zhen Guofeng 張國風, *Taiping guangji banben kaoshu* 太平廣記版本考述 [A study of editions of *The Extensive Records of the Taiping Era*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2004), 101-02.

24. According to Paul W. Kroll, *A Student's Dictionary of Classical and Medieval Chinese* (Leiden; Boston: Brill), 550: *Yi* 義 means "what is right, right-principled, right-minded; proper,

the category *zazuanji* 雜傳記 [various traditions and records] seems to be formed by literary form. This inconsistency in classification criteria indicates that while the notion of genre was gradually taking shape, it was not yet fully developed when *Extensive Records* was compiled.

There is no category titled *aiqing* 愛情 [romantic love] or *yanqing* 言情 [talking about romantic love] in *Extensive Records*. However, it does have a category named *qinggan* 情感 [sympathetic responses/deep feelings aroused by “passion”] (hereafter “sympathetic responses”), which consists of eight stories: “Mai fen er” 買粉兒 [The son who buys powder], “Cui Hu” 崔護, “Wu Yansi” 武延嗣, “Kaiyuan zhi yi nü” 開元製衣女 [The seamstress of the Kaiyuan era], “Wei Gao” 韋臯, “Ouyang Zhan” 歐陽詹, “Xue Yiliao” 薛宜僚, and “Rong Yu” 戎昱. All these stories center on strong, moving romantic love between a man and a woman. The title of this category is probably borrowed from *Ben shi shi* 本事詩 [The original incidents of poems] (hereafter *Poems*), compiled by Meng Qi 孟棨 (also written 孟啟) in 886.²⁵ It is a collection of anecdotes “purporting to describe the circumstances under which then-popular poems were

propriety; dutiful(ness), esp. of responsibilities and appropriate actions owed to one’s acknowledged ‘we’ group, as function of one’s proper social relations and status.” William G. Boltz renders *yi* as “Appropriety” in *Elementary Classical Chinese*, his unpublished course packet for Chinese 451 “First-year Classical Chinese,” University of Washington, Seattle, Autumn 2016. According to Martin W. Huang, *Negotiating Masculinities in Late Imperial China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2006), 98-99: While the concept of *zhong* 忠 [loyalty] is considered more for the sake of *gong* 公 [the public], Appropriety is considered more for the sake of *si* 私 [the personal] and thus can also be seen as a kind of “personal honor.”

25. Wang Meng’ou 王夢鷗 studies on *Poems* based upon the editions of Gu Yuanqing’s 顧元慶 (1487-1565) *Gushi wenfang xiaoshuo* 顧氏文房小說 [Stories from Mr. Gu’s studio] and Mao Jin’s 毛晉 (1599-1659) *Jindai mishu* 津逮秘書 [Rare tests reached through waterways]. The text of *Poems* used in this thesis is from his *Tangren xiaoshuo yanjiu san ji: Ben shi shi jiaobu kaoshi* 唐人小說研究三集：本事詩校補考釋 [Studies on Tales of the Tang III: A collation and study of *The Original Incidents of Poems*], which was published by Yiwen yinshu guan 藝文印書館 in Taipei in 1966.

composed.”²⁶ These anecdotes are divided into seven categories, and the first one is titled “sympathetic responses,” which is identical with the title of the category about romantic love in *Extensive Records*. Furthermore, among the eight stories in “sympathetic responses” of *Extensive Records*, four stories come from “sympathetic responses” of *Poems*, making up half of the category. Note that the latter collection did not include all twelve stories from the former. The editors eliminated those focusing more on the composition of poetry and the text of the poems and classified focused on other themes into other categories. For example, the anecdote of Zhu Tao 朱滔, in which a scholar is released by Zhu Tao from military service because he can compose a set of poems for his wife and himself, was deleted. The anecdote of 顧況 Guo Kuang, in which Guo Kuang writes poems in response to a palace woman’s poem, was placed into the category *wenzhang* 文章 [literary compositions]. Through such editorial judgments and decisions, we can see that the editors of *Extensive Records* tried to group together stories centering on strong, moving romantic love between men and women into a category called “sympathetic responses aroused by passion,” providing a relatively clearer notion about what is a romantic story. From the categorization of *Poems* to that of *Extensive Records*, the notion of the Chinese romance as a genre category has gradually begun to take shape.

All eight stories in “sympathetic responses” of *Extensive Records* depict romantic love as intense, furious emotion between men and women (hereafter “passion”). One’s “passion” for the other is so overwhelming that she or he can die and be reborn for it; such “passion” is so powerful that it can move others as well as Heaven and Earth to do extraordinary favors. These strong, moving feelings in relationships that are not motivated by consanguinity are often expressed

26. Wilt Idema and Lloyd Haft, *A Guide to Chinese Literature* (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 1997), 138.

through poetic composition (six out of the eight have a protagonist who is a poet). In the story “Cui Hu,” the titular protagonist is of splendid character and intelligence and a candidate in the highest-level civil service examinations. One day when he is traveling, he asks a beautiful woman for water to quench his thirst, and they look at each other attentively for a long time. When it is time for Cui Hu to leave, the woman accompanies him to the door and enters her house “as if she cannot bear the passion [*ru busheng qing* 如不勝情],” and he also looks back at her fondly and entrancedly as he returns to his home.²⁷ After one year, Cui Hu suddenly thinks of her, and “his passion cannot be suppressed [*qing buke yi* 情不可抑].”²⁸ He goes back to find the woman but does not see her, so he writes a poem on the door. The woman reads his poem and then becomes sick and dies. After Cui Hu learns it, he is also “moved and deeply pained [*gantong* 感慟].”²⁹ He cries for her death and tell her that he is here. Consequently, the woman comes back to life again. One feature worth noting is the fact that, in all eight stories, there is barely any process of courtship described, or the protagonists fall in love with each other very quickly. This is very different from “Oil-peddler,” in which the process of courtship is the center of the story, and Sister Mei’s 美娘 *qing* for Qin Zhong 秦重 grows little by little as she is moved by his altruistic caring time after time. As Edward H. Schafer argues, the actual content of “sympathetic responses” of *Extensive Records* is “love at first sight, etc.”³⁰ These stories of “sympathetic responses” share common characteristics in their depiction and expression of romantic love as well as their character types and narrative structure, fashioning the definition of the early Chinese romantic story. We can also see the same

27. Li et al, *Taiping guangji*, 6:2158.

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid.

30. Edward H. Schafer, “The Table of Contents of the *T'ai p'ing kuang chi*,” *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews* 2, no. 2 (July 1980): 261.

characteristics in the other stories centering on romantic love in other categories of *Extensive Records*.

Not all stories focusing on romantic love are placed into “sympathetic responses” of *Extensive Records*. In fact, three of the best-known Tang *chuanqi* 傳奇 [Classical language tales] are classified into the category of “various traditions and records” on the basis of their literary form: Yuan Zhen’s 元稹 “Yingying zhuan” 鶯鶯傳 [Ying-ying’s Story], Jiang Fang’s 蔣防 “Huo Xiaoyu zhuan” 霍小玉傳 [The tale of Huo Xiaoyu] (hereafter “Huo Xiaoyu”), and “Li Wa’s Story.” The reason for this inconsistency in categorization may well have been the fact that *Extensive Records* had multiple compilers and editors, who had different classification criteria as well as editorial judgements and decisions.³¹ Therefore, even romantic stories which have very similar structure are placed into different categories. For example, “Rong Yu” and “Li Shen” 李紳 both come from *Poems* and share a structure in which a higher-class man magnanimously yields his courtesan to a lower-class man after coming to understand the lower-class man’s “passion” for his courtesan. The former story is placed into “sympathetic responses,” but the latter is placed into the category of *qiliang* 器量 [capacity and tolerance]. As we can see, while the notion of the Chinese romance genre was gradually taking shape, the boundaries of the Chinese romantic story were still very vague.

The three well-known Tang Classical language tales mentioned above share common characteristics we have seen in other romantic stories in *Extensive Records*. First, all three have a male protagonist who is a talented poet/scholar and a female protagonist who is a very beautiful woman. Second, “passion” is often expressed through poetic composition and/or exchange. Third,

31. Lin Chiu-Shuo 林秋碩, “*Taiping guangji aiqing zhuti yanjiu*” 《太平廣記》愛情主題研究 [A study of the love themes of *The Extensive Records of the Taiping Era*] (master’s thesis, National Changhua University of Education, 2016), 16-19.

the scholar and the beauty fall in love with each other very quickly. Even though presenting poetry can be considered an act of courtship, it scarcely involves a process or period of time—as soon as the scholar shows his talent, the beauty is enamored with him. Additionally, the romantic love portrayed always involves sexual desire. Because these stories primarily are devoted to the topics of talent and beauty as well as romantic love at first sight, they have often been referred to as early *caizi jiaren* 才子佳人 [talent-beauty] works by scholars.³²

In “Ying-ying’s Story,” Zhang 張 is a scholar who is going to take his literary examinations, and he falls in love with Ying-ying 鶯鶯 because her “complexion [*yanse* 顏色]” is “rare and alluring” [*yanyi* 艷異].³³ Ying-ying’s maid suggests to Zhang, “You should try to seduce her by composing poems that express your love indirectly [*yu qingshi* 喻情詩].”³⁴ He

32. There have been numerous studies on the history of the talent-beauty genre, including Richard C. Hessney’s “Beautiful, Talented, and Brave: Seventeenth Century Chinese Scholar-Beauty Romances” (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1979) and Xu Feilong’s 徐飞龙 *Wanming qingchu caizi jiaren wenxue leixing yanjiu* 晚明清初才子佳人文學類型研究 [A Study on the talent-beauty genre of the late Ming and early Qing dynasties] (Beijing: Wenhua yishu chubanshe, 2010). According to Xu Feilong, around the Ming dynasty scholars started to use *caizi jiaren* or *jiaren caizi* 佳人才子 [talent-beauty] to refer to a group of literary works centering on the romance between a talent and a beauty; Lu Xun 魯迅 may be the first one who brought up the term *caizi jiaren xiaoshuo* 才子佳人小說 [talent-beauty romances] and provided a relatively clear definition of the genre (4-11). As Xu argues, the Chinese talent-beauty story has been through a very long development period; it flourished in the Ming and Qing periods and became a genre with clear characteristics and fixed patterns (17). The narrow definition refers to talent-beauty romances of the Ming and Qing periods sharing a similar narrative structure: a talent and a beauty fall in love at first sight, then separate due to encountering difficulties, and eventually have a great reunion in the end. The broad definition includes earlier Classical stories which describe the romance between a talented scholar and a beautiful woman. As Richard C. Hessney argues, in the development of the talent-beauty tradition, “the archetype of the gifted scholar is Ssu-ma Hsiang-ju [司馬相如], court poet to Han Wu-ti [漢武帝] (r. 140-87 B.C.) and the best of the poets composing in the *fu* or rhyme-prose form in its brilliant formative years” (39), and “it is not until the middle T’ang dynasty that the beauty archetype emerges fully in the person Ts’ui Ying-ying 崔鶯鶯, the rejected heroine of Yuan Chen’s (779-831) ‘The Story of Ying-ying’ (*Ying-ying chuan*) [鶯鶯傳]” (43).

33. Owen, *Anthology of Chinese Literature*, 542.

34. *Ibid.*

then composes two “Chun ci” 春詞 [spring verses] to give to Yingying, and a few nights later, she appears in his room and sleeps with him. After Zhang writes a “Hui zhen shi” 會真詩 [meeting the holy one] to give to Yingying, she allows him to come to her every night. Here, the scholar is attracted by the beauty’s fair appearance, and right after he expresses his “passion” by composing poetry, she recognizes his talent and agrees to give herself to him.

“Huo Xiaoyu” also fits the pattern of “talent-beauty romances.” Li Yi 李益 is a successful candidate in the highest-level civil service examinations, and Xiaoyu 小玉 is a highly lettered beautiful courtesan. When they first meet each other, Li Yi describes himself and the courtesan, saying, “The young lady loves talent [*xiao niangzi ai cai* 小娘子愛才] while this humble fellow adores beauty [*bifu zhong se* 鄙夫重色]. As the two set each other off; then we will have both talent and beauty” [*cai mao xiang jian* 才貌相兼].”³⁵ In the night, they sleep together, “enjoying pleasure to their hearts’ content [*jiqi huanai* 極其歡愛].”³⁶ Then, Xiaoyu worries that one day her beauty will be gone and his “favor will shift and love move [*en yi qing ti* 恩移情替].”³⁷ Therefore, Li Yi writes a literary vow to never abandon Xiaoyu, and from then on, they cling to each other every day. Again, the talented scholar and the beauty fall in love and make a commitment in their very first meeting. The composition of poetry is more to demonstrate the scholar’s talent than to bring well-being to the beauty, and the “passion” portrayed here is closely related to sexual desire.

Like “Ying-ying’s Story” and “Huo Xiaoyu,” “Li Wa’s Story” follows the pattern of “talent-beauty romances” as well. The scholar is of outstanding literary ability, and Li Wa 李娃

35. William H. Nienhauser, Jr., trans., *Tang Dynasty Tales: A Guided Reader* (Singapore: World Scientific, 2010), 242.

36. *Ibid.*, 243.

37. *Ibid.*

is of an bewitching and exquisite beauty, such as the world has never had. When he first meets her, he stares at her, and she returns his gaze “with a look of admiration [*qing shen xiang mu* 情甚相慕].”³⁸ Henceforward, the scholar spends all his money on Li Wa, and after all his money, property, attendants, and horses are gone, Wa’s “passion [*qing* 情]” is “more devoted to him than ever [*mi du* 彌篤].”³⁹ Later on, her “mother” and Li Wa trick and abandon him, and he becomes a beggar asking for food on the street. In the end, Li Wa meets the scholar again, she gives the mother money to buy her freedom and uses the left money to support him to prepare for the literary examinations. Indeed, some sympathetic, affectionate emotion seems to be involved there, when Li Wa takes care of the scholar and accompanies him on studying. However, the focus of the story is actually more on her financial repayment for the money he has spent on her, and Feng Menglong disapproves of such a financial payback in his comments on Li Wa in *History*. We will discuss this issue further and Feng Menglong’s redefinition of *qing* later in the section on *History* in this chapter.

While many Tang Classical romances follow the formula of “talent-beauty romances,” Shen Jiji’s 沈既濟 “Ren shi” 任氏 [Ren’s story] tries to connect “passion” with the concepts of recognition (*zhi*), payback (*bao*), *jie* 節 [chastity], and Appropriety (*yi*) in addition to sexual desire.⁴⁰ As in “Ying-ying’s Story,” “Huo Xiaoyu,” and “Li Wa’s Story,” “passion” is again closely associated with sexual desire when the two protagonists first meet in “Ren’s Story.” Ren 任 is a fox and “rare beauty [*rongse shu li* 容色姝麗];”⁴¹ as soon as Zheng 鄭 sees her, he is

38. Li et al, *Taiping guangji*, 10:3985.

39. Ibid, 10:3986.

40. As another well-known Tang Classical romance, “Ren shi” is not placed into the category of “various traditions and records” but the category of *hu* 狐 [foxes], which is another example indicating *Extensive Records*’s inconsistency in categorization as well as the romance genre’s initial stage of formation.

41. Owen, *Anthology of Chinese Literature*, 519.

infatuated. Yet at the same time, “passion” is linked to the concept of recognition, to recognize one’s inner nature, not external conditions. After Zheng learns that Ren is a fox, he does not despise her: “I do know [*zhi* 知], but I don’t care.”⁴² In return for Zheng’s recognition, Ren agrees to be with him, who is not a talented scholar but one who practices martial arts. Here, “passion” is also combined with the concept of reciprocation. As Lien-sheng Yang explains, *bao* “has a wide range of meanings including ‘to report,’ ‘to respond,’ ‘to repay,’ ‘to retaliate,’ and ‘to retribute,’” and “the center of this area of meanings is ‘response’ or ‘return.’”⁴³ By saying that “I would want to serve you all my days as your wife,”⁴⁴ Ren gives her heart and body to Zheng to reciprocate his recognition. Note that Zheng’s “recognition” is still based upon his appreciation for her beauty. As the storyteller-narrator comments, “It is unfortunate that Zheng was not a perceptive man, merely attracted by her beauty [*se* 色] and not seeing the evidence of her nature [*xingqing* 性情].”⁴⁵ Wei Yin 韋峯 may be the one who can see Ren’s true quality. After he is also attracted by her beauty, he tries to force her to have sex with him. She fiercely rejects him and condemns his wrong behavior. Because “in Wei Yin’s domineering arrogance there was some sense of justice [*yilie* 義烈],”⁴⁶ after he listens to Ren’s impassioned speech of chastity and Appropriety, he hurriedly releases her and apologizes. From the point on, “Wei Yin came to love her and honor her [*ai zhi zhong zhi* 愛之重之]. He begrudged her nothing, and at very meal and every time he drank, she never left his thoughts.”⁴⁷ Indeed, like in “Li Wa’s Story,” some sympathetic, affectionate emotion

42. Ibid, 520.

43. Lien-sheng Yang, “The Concept of *Pao* as a Basis for Social Relations in China,” in *Chinese Thought and Institutions*, ed. John K. Fairbank (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), 291.

44. Owen, *Anthology of Chinese Literature*, 520.

45. Ibid, 525.

46. Ibid, 522.

47. Ibid.

is expressed together with financial support in “Ren’s Story.” However, Wei Yin is very wealthy and does not really sacrifice his welfare, so the focus is still more on financial support than affectionate emotion. More than a year later, Zheng asks Ren to travel with him. At first, she does not want to go, for a spirit-medium has told her that it is dangerous for her to travel west. However, he assiduously requests her, so she agrees to go, knowing she will die. Just as expected, Ren is killed by a dog on the road. The storyteller-narrator comments, “I am stuck that such humanity could be found in the feelings [*qing* 情] of a creature so alien. When someone used violent force on her, she did not abandon her principles, and she met her death by sacrificing herself for someone else.”⁴⁸ “Passion” is again expressed through death for one’s lover, and such “passion” is connected with chastity as a form of Appropriety and payback.

Another story in *Extensive Records*, Li Chaowei’s 李朝威 “Liu Yi” 柳毅 [The dragon king’s daughter] (hereafter “Dragon”), combines romantic love and the concept of reciprocation (*bao*) more explicitly. Liu Yi 柳毅 has failed the examinations and is returning home. On his way, he meets a beautiful girl, who tells him that she is a daughter of the Dragon King of Dongting Lake and that she is mistreated by her husband, who is a son of the god of the River Jing. The girl asks him to do her a favor by informing her family about her misfortune. Liu Yi, regarding himself as “a man who believes in honor above all things [*yifu* 義夫],”⁴⁹ helps to deliver her letter and save her from “the heartless husband [*wuqinglang* 無情郎].”⁵⁰ The girl’s uncle, Lord Qiantang, wishes to marry her to Liu Yi in return for his favor. Liu Yi sternly refuses the offer for he does not mean to take advantage for her misfortune. Using marriage as payback for one’s kindness, “Dragon”

48. Ibid, 525.

49. John Minford and Joseph S. M. Liu, ed., *Classical Chinese Literature: An Anthology of Translations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 1:1035.

50. Ibid, 1:1038.

brings the notions of reciprocation and kindness (*en*) together into romantic love. As Lord Qiantang says, “We wish to entrust her to a man of honor [*yi* 義], a man fit to be her husband and our kin. There is a way to find such a man. If we choose that way, then she who receive the kindness [*en* 恩] will know the man to whom she is to be united; and we who love [*ai* 愛] her will know whither she is destined to go.”⁵¹ The girl herself also agrees with this idea: “I promised I would reward you one day [*xian jun zhi en, shi xin qiu bao* 銜君之恩，誓心求報].”⁵² Note that Liu Yi once refuses the payback, because he saves the girl for Appropriety (*yi*), not for her beauty (*se*). As Lien-sheng Yang reveals, “According to the ethical code of genuine knights-errant, ... they would not expect any reward when they did favors to others. Many of them would even reject such a reward. This virtue is called *i* [Appropriety].”⁵³ In addition to bestowing kindness and rejecting a reward, a genuine Chinese hero is supposed to be insusceptible to beauty. As Kam Louie notices, “The Chinese warrior-fighter is often depicted as having no romantic feelings whatsoever. He is supposed to be motivated solely by worthy causes, and not by his own individual passions.”⁵⁴ As a man with Appropriety, Liu Yi should refuse any reward, not to mention a beauty as payback. It is interesting that while Liu Yi does reject the offer and is described as “not susceptible to a woman’s charms [*se* 色],”⁵⁵ he feels “a keen sense of sorrow” when the girl bids farewell to him.⁵⁶ He ends up marrying the girl without knowing her identity until after their wedding. By juxtaposing his heroic behaviors and romantic feelings as well as marrying the couple without violating the ethical code, the story mingles the notions of kindness and reciprocation with

51. Ibid, 1:1042.

52. Ibid, 1:1044.

53. Yang, “Concept of *Pao*,” 296.

54 . Kam Louie, *Theorising Chinese Masculinity: Society and Gender in China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 23.

55. Minford and Liu, *Classical Chinese Literature*, 1:1044.

56. Ibid, 1:1043.

romantic love. Such a frame in which a hero saves a beauty and she gives herself to him to pay back his kindness and favor is further developed by Feng Menglong in “Oil-peddler.”

As we can see, the notion of the Chinese romance as a genre was gradually taking shape in the early Song dynasty when *Extensive Records* was compiled. Eight stories which center on romantic love as “passion” between men and women were grouped together into a category call “sympathetic responses,” giving shape to the early Chinese romantic story. Yet, many romantic stories, including some of the best-known Tang Classical language tales, are placed into other categories, indicating that the definition of the genre was still very vague and in its initial phase of formation. In both the romantic stories inside and outside “sympathetic responses,” “passion” is often associated with sexual desire and expressed through poetry. “Passion” also can at times be connected with recognition, chastity, financial support, and sacrifice of one’s life. Additionally, the notions of kindness and reciprocation are brought together in to romantic love. These depictions are inherited and mutated in Feng Menglong’s vernacular romantic stories. In the next section, we will discuss Feng Menglong’s preliminary exploration of the Chinese romantic story by examining his revision of *Extensive Records* and his reorganization of “sympathetic responses” as well as his editing of and commentaries on the stories of “sympathetic responses.”

Selections from The Extensive Records of the Taiping Era

Although *Extensive Records* was completed in the early Song dynasty, it was not put into print for publication at that time and did not become widely circulated until the Ming dynasty. Feng Menglong was not quite satisfied with the various editions of *Extensive Records* circulating during his time, so he decided to revise it and compile his own edition titled *Selections from The*

Extensive Records of the Taiping Era.⁵⁷ In his preface to *Selections*, he explains the reasons why he wanted to revise *Extensive Records*:

Since I cursorily read *Extensive Records* when I was young, I have always liked its extensiveness and profoundness and hated its weediness and rampancy. I have eliminated its repetitions and preserved what is unique. I have weeded out the complications and turned to the simplifications. As to the categories [*lie* 類], I have joined those which can be joined together; as to the stories, I have combined those which can be combined; as to the sequence, I have reordered those whose places should reordered.⁵⁸

One of Feng Menglong's reasons for revising *Extensive Records* is that its stories are too repetitive. As we already know, *Extensive Records* was compiled by a group of *Taixue* members who sometimes work separately, and they often ended up collecting similar or almost identical stories and placing them into different categories. For example, there are two stories about Qiao Zhizhi 喬知之 whose favorite female slave is taken by a high-level, powerful official. The official does not release the female slave, so Qiao Zhizhi writes a poem to her, and after she receives it, she jumps into a well. The official is so angry that he kills Qiao Zhizhi. One of the two stories is under "sympathetic responses" with the title "Wu Yansi," in which the female slave is called Yaoniang 窈娘 and the high-level official is called Wu Yansi 武延嗣. The other one is under the category

57. Kang Yunmei 康韻梅 studies Feng Menglong's compilation of and comments in *Selections* in "Feng Menglong *Taiping guangji chao de bianzuan he pingdian*" 馮夢龍《太平廣記鈔》的編纂和評點 [The compilation and comments of Feng Menglong's *Selections from The Extensive Records of the Taiping Era*], *Lingnan Journal of Chinese Studies* 7 (May 2017): 127-70. My discussion here is built upon her studies and focuses on Feng Menglong's reorganization of "sympathetic responses" as well as his editing of and commentaries on the stories of "sympathetic responses."

58. Feng, *Taiping guangji chao*, 1:1.

of *kubao* 酷暴 [savagery and violence] with the title “Wu Chengsi” 武承嗣, in which the female slave is called Biyu 碧玉 and the high-level official is called Wu Chengsi 武承嗣. Feng Menglong eliminates “Wu Yansi” from “sympathetic responses” and preserves “Wu Chengsi” in the category of “savagery and violence,” and this is probably because the focus of the story is more on the savagery of Wu Yansi/Wu Chengsi than the “passion” between the two lovers. Later in *History*, Feng Menglong changes the title from “Wu Yansi/Wu Chengsi” to “Yaoniang” 窈娘, places the story into the category of *qingchou* 情仇 [passionate vengeance], and shifts the focus from the violence to the romantic love, emphasizing how *youqingren* 有情人 [people with *qing*] show *qing* when facing violence.

Feng Menglong’s other reason for revising *Extensive Records* is that its categorization is not appropriate. According to Kang Yunmei, Feng Menglong did not make fundamental changes to the main structure; however, he did notice some inconsistency, ambiguity, and vagueness in the categorization.⁵⁹ Therefore, he created a more detailed and clear classification system with more classes for his revision of *Extensive Records*. First, Feng Menglong provides content descriptions of the categories. If a *bu* 部 [larger category] crosses several *juan* 卷 [scrolls], he gives a description of the contents under the title of the scroll. For example, “Scroll 1 The Category of Transcendent Beings, Transcendent Beings 1: This scroll records all kinds of traces of transcendent beings from the Zhou dynasty to the early Han dynasty.”⁶⁰ These content descriptions divide the larger categories of *Extensive Records* into smaller categories with clear definitions. Second, Feng Menglong also uses *meipi* 眉批 [notes and commentary] to group stories with similar topics, creating smaller classes within a given category. For example, Scroll 19, the larger category of

59. Kang, “Bianzuan he pingdian,” 131.

60. Feng, *Taiping guangji chao*, 1:1.

zhengyin 徵應 [responses and manifestations] has four smaller categories: *xiuzheng* 休徵 [felicitous manifestations], *jiuzheng* 咎徵 [calamitous manifestations], *ganying* 感應 [sympathetic responses], and *chenying* 讖應 [prognosticative responses]. In the smaller category of “sympathetic responses,” he gives notes under some of the titles of the stories:

Emperor Wu of Han ... Note: about moving [*gan* 感] Heaven

Lady Zhouling ... Note: the following story is about moving [*gan* 感] spirits and ghosts

The young man of Hejian ... Note: the following stories are about sympathetic responses/deep feelings aroused by *qing* [*qinggan* 情感]⁶¹

The smaller category of “sympathetic responses” is further divided into three classes. Some of these classes come from *Extensive Records*, but most of them are created by Feng Menglong.⁶² Through these content descriptions as well as notes and commentary, Feng Menglong develops the categorization of *Extensive Records* into a more detailed, thorough classification system. It is worth noting that such a classification system which builds upon multilayered categories and unfolds through taxonomic notes and commentary is latter used again by Feng Menglong to construct *History*.

As we can see, the old “sympathetic responses” in *Extensive Records* was combined into the smaller category of “sympathetic responses” under the larger category of “responses and manifestations” in *Selections*: “In the old *Extensive Records*, there is another ‘sympathetic responses’ [*qinggan* 情感] which is located in the category of women. Now I have combined it within the ‘sympathetic responses’ category.”⁶³ While seeming to become a smaller one, “sympathetic responses” may actually be raised to a higher position in Feng Menglong’s

61. Ibid, 1:376-83.

62. Kang, “Bianzuan he pingdian,” 133.

63. Feng, *Taiping guangji chao*, 1:376.

classification system. As Wolfgang Bauer argues, “The ordering of the contents [of encyclopedias in general] was, aside from the selection, the only means through which the personality of the compiler, his political and religious convictions or even his criticism could be expressed.”⁶⁴ In in *Extensive Records*, “sympathetic responses” is ranked no. 58 and after the categories of bad deeds, such as *wulai* 無賴 [unreliables], *qingbo* 輕薄 [slight and shabby (acts)], and “savagery and violence.” On the contrary, in *Selections*, “sympathetic response” is raised to be a subcategory of “responses and manifestations,” which is ranked no. 10 and before the categories of good deeds, such as *mingxian* 名賢 [noted and competent (persons)], *gaoyi* 高逸 [evasive and unrestricted folks], and *lianjian* 廉儉 [incorruptible and frugal (officials)]. This rearrangement may imply that Feng Menglong values the notion of sympathetic responses arouse by *qing* much more than his predecessors. Additionally, he parallels “sympathetic responses” with the classes of “moving Heaven” and “moving spirits and ghosts,” considering *qing* as important as other significant qualities which can move Heaven as well as spirits and ghosts, including *ren* 仁 [humaneness] in “Rencheng wang” 任城王 [The King of Rencheng], *xiao* 孝 [filial piety] in “Liu Jing” 劉京, and *de* 德 [innate power] in “Cui shu” 崔恕. To Feng Menglong, *qing* between men and women is not just something trivial and related to the category of women as it is treated in *Extensive Records*; *qing* has the same power to move everything and thus is as significant as those qualities recognized by Confucianism. In fact, later in the second preface to *History*,⁶⁵ he directly links *qing* to Confucian Classics:

64. Wolfgang Bauer, “The Encyclopedia in China,” *Cahiers d’histoire mondiale* 9, no. 3 (1966): 670.

65. The compilership of *History* will be discussed later in the section on the collection in this chapter.

Six Classics all attempt to teach through *ch'ing*. For example, the *Book of Changes* esteems the relation between husband and wife; in the *Book of Songs*, the poem “Kuan-chü” is placed first; the *Book of Documents* includes a passage which describes the marriage of Yü; the *Book of Rites* carefully distinguishes *p'ing* from *pen*; and the *Spring and Autumn Annals* talks in great detail about Chi and Chiang. Now, is not all this so because *ch'ing* begins with the relations between a man and a woman; further, since *ch'ing* is the thing that everyone must learn about, has not the Sage himself chosen to guide us thereto—lest we misled by other interpretations—and will not *ch'ing* consequently flow abundantly between lord and vassal, between father and son, between elder and younger brothers, and between two friends?⁶⁶

By aligning his project of *qing* with the ultimate orthodox concerns, Feng Menglong raises the position of *qing* to the high ground of Confucianism and redefines *qing* as a universal affective power. We will look into Feng Menglong's redefinition of *qing* later in the section on *History* in this chapter.

Feng Menglong noticed that the story selection criteria of “sympathetic responses” in *Extensive Records* is not consistent. As we have seen in our previous discussion, “Rong Yu” and “Li Shen” share a structure in which a higher-class man magnanimously yields his courtesan to a lower-class man after realizing the lower-class man's “passion” for his courtesan. However, “Rong Yu” was placed into “sympathetic responses,” while “Li Shen” was placed into the category of “capacity and tolerance” in *Extensive Records*. In *Selections*, Feng Menglong took “Rong Yu” out

66. Hua-yuan Li Mowry, *Chinese Love Stories from “Ch'ing-shih”* (Hamden, Connecticut: Shoe String Press, 1983), 14. Huang also translates this passage into English in *Desire and Fictional Narrative*, 47.

of “sympathetic responses” and placed it into the category of “capacity and tolerance,” for the story also focuses more on magnanimity instead of romantic love. Furthermore, he moved stories centering on *qing* between women and men from other categories to “sympathetic responses.” “Hejian nanzi” 河間男子 [The young man of Hejian] (hereafter “Hejian”) and “Nanxu shiren” 南徐士人 [The scholar-official of Nanxu] tell a story in which sincere *qing* moves Heaven, Earth, spirits, or ghosts, and both are placed into “sympathetic responses” of *Extensive Records*. In *Selections*, after “sympathetic responses” was combined into the category of “sympathetic responses,” the two stories did not form a new class. Instead, they were placed into “sympathetic responses,” for the supernatural favors indeed happen on account of *qing*. In other words, Feng Menglong consciously regroups “sympathetic responses” according to a stricter standard, providing a refined exemplary set of what is the Chinese romantic story.

Feng Menglong’s “sympathetic responses” has five stories: “Hejian,” “Shen Shi Zhong” 神士冢 [The mounded tomb of the spiritual official] (originally titled “The Scholar-official of Nanxu” in *Extensive Records*, hereafter “Mounded Tomb”), “Mai fen er” 賣粉兒 [The daughter who sells powder] (originally titled “The Son Who Buys Powder”) and “Cui Hu,” as well as “Yu Xiao” 玉簫 (originally titled “Wei Gao”).⁶⁷ Like those in “sympathetic responses” in *Extensive Records*, all five stories in Feng Menglong’s “sympathetic responses” depict *qing* as “passion” within relations that are not motivated by consanguinity. One’s “passion” for the other is so overwhelming that she or he can die and be reborn for it, such passion is so powerful that it can move Heaven and Earth as well as spirits or ghosts to do supernatural favors. In “Hejian,” a man

67. As Kang points out, Feng Menglong changes the titles of some of the stories so as to give prominence to *qing*. For example, in “Yu Xiao,” Wei Gao fails to keep his promise to come back and marry Yu Xiao in seven years. It is Yu Xiao whose faithful and everlasting *qing* moves Heaven and Earth to bring her back to life again. See Kang, “Bianzuan he pingdian,” 143; 146.

and a woman in Hejian prefecture fall in love with each other, and they agree to match each other in marriage. After that, because the man has gone to the army for many years, the parents marry the woman to another person. The woman then becomes so mournful that she dies. The man comes back and cries for her death. He “cannot bear his passion [*busheng qi qing* 不勝其情],”⁶⁸ so he opens the tomb and the coffin, she immediately wakes up and comes back to life. A chamberlain for law enforcement reports this, saying: “Heaven and Earth were moved [*gan yu tiandi* 感於天地] by their extreme of concentrated sincerity; for this reason, the woman came back to life again after she died.”⁶⁹ Like “Hejian,” the plots of the other four stories also center on supernatural events caused by extremes of “passion” between men and women. The plots of “The Daughter Who Sells Powder” and “Cui Hu” are so similar that Feng Mengling even puts them side by side as a pair of stories and comments: “The two affairs have perfectly matched writings.”⁷⁰

There are other common characteristics in depiction and expression of romantic love among the five stories in Feng Menglong’s “sympathetic responses.” First, while the “talent-beauty” structure is not a necessity, it is still very common. Three out of the five have a male protagonist who has a scholar/official identity (“Mounded Tomb,” “Cui Hu,” and “Yu Xiao”), and three have a female protagonist who is referred to as a beautiful woman (“The Daughter Who Sells Powder,” “Cui Hu,” and “Yu Xiao”). Additionally, two involve the expression of “passion” through poetry exchange (“Cui Hu” and “Yu Xiao”). Second, like many of the stories in “sympathetic responses” of *Extensive Records*, three out of the five stories in Feng Menglong’s “sympathetic responses” also associate “passion” with sexual desire. In “Mounded Tomb,” after the girl learns that a young official has become sick from love for her, she takes off her slip and asks his mother

68. Feng, *Taiping guangji chao*, 1:380.

69. *Ibid.*

70. *Ibid.*, 1:382.

to secretly hide it under his bed. After lying on it for several days, the young official feels better as expected. In “The Daughter Who Sells Powder,” the man has been longing to be with the girl for a long time. When he finally has the chance to sleep with her, he cannot bear the pleasure. After dancing delightedly, he dies. Third, there is barely any process of courtship described, or the protagonists often fall in love with each other very quickly. We have seen the tendency to represent “passion” through “love at first sight” in *Extensive Records*, and this tendency is passed on to *Selections*. Both “Hejian” and “Yu Xiao” jump to the phase when the two protagonists have a commitment without mentioning any act of courtship. In the other three stories, when the male protagonist first sees the female protagonist, he immediately falls in love with her, and as soon as she recognizes his “passion,” she commits herself to him without hesitation. For example, in “The Daughter Who Sells Powder,” a man sees a beautiful girl who sells powder, and he is “fond of [*ai* 愛]” her.⁷¹ Every day he goes to buy powder from her in order to see her. The girl becomes suspicious and asks him about his reason. After the man expresses his “passion,” the girl is “despondently moved [*you gan* 有感]” and consequently commits herself to him in private.⁷² As we have mentioned before, when we come to “Oil-peddler,” we will see that the process of courtship becomes the center of the story, and Sister Mei’s *qing* for Qin Zhong grows little by little as she is moved by his altruistic caring time after time.

In *Selections*, Feng Menglong consciously regroups “sympathetic response” according to a more consistent and rigorous standard, providing a refined exemplary set which demonstrates the core of the Chinese romantic story. On the one hand, Feng Menglong inherits *Extensive Records*’s initial definition of *qing*: *qing* is depicted as extreme emotion between men and women.

71. Ibid, 1:381.

72. Ibid.

Qing is so overwhelming that one can immediately fall in love and die for it, and such “passion” is also so powerful that it can move the cosmos to favor the lovers. On the other hand, Feng Menglong starts to rethink the nature of *qing* as well as its other possible expressions in his revision. “Mounded Tomb” describes a man who falls in love with a woman without any reason: He sees that there is a girl in the inn, and he delights in her for no reason. “Hejian” concentrates on *qing* as emotional love and does not have any sexual description. After the woman comes back to life, the man takes her home, attends on her, and cares for her. These two stories originally belong to the old category of “sympathetic responses,” but Feng Menglong places them into his new “sympathetic responses.” By including these two different romances which do not follow the “talent-beauty” pattern, he raises the possibilities that *qing* can be asexual and unconditional, bringing different representations of romantic love to the genre. Moreover, Feng Menglong considers that *qing* should be abiding. He criticizes the intermittent *qing* in “Cui Hu.” Cui Hu does not think of the girl until one year has been passed. Feng Menglong comments, “Not until one year has passed did he think of her. How lacking in *qing* [*shao qing* 少情] the young man Cui was,”⁷³ disapproving of the fact that he has ignored her for so long. While *qing* is still typically represented through “love at first sight” and defined as extreme, intense, furious, and strong emotion as in *Extensive Records*, we can see through Feng Menglong’s own commentary that he starts paying more attention to the affectionate aspects of *qing* and forming his own definition of it in his revision.

Feng Menglong’s regrouping of “sympathetic responses” in *Selections* can be seen as his attempt to explore the nature and boundaries of the Chinese romantic story. While trying to provide a better-defined exemplary set, he also notices the problematics of categorization. He comments

73. Ibid, 1:380.

on “Yu Di” 于頔, “This story could be classified into the [category of] ‘powerful and chivalrous;’ it could also be classified into [the category of] ‘zealous Appropriety.’”⁷⁴ As Kang reveals, he is aware that some stories can be placed into more than one category.⁷⁵ He probably also notices that there are a large number of stories centering on what he considers *qing* that are put into other categories. If he wanted to create a category to fully exemplify his understanding of *qing* as he does in *History*, it would be very difficult to do so within so multifarious a system as that in *Selections*. Besides, his goal in revising *Extensive Records* is to simplify it. Therefore, a few years after he finished *Selections*, he started to compile an encyclopedic anthology of Chinese love stories, which he titled *A History of Qing*. Instead of confining himself to the narrow understanding of *qing* as private affection between women and men in *Extensive Records*, Feng Menglong includes many more stories dealing with various aspects of *qing* and structures them with a sophisticated classification system, complicating the notion of *qing* and redefining the Chinese romance genre.

A History of Qing

History is an encyclopedic anthology of Classical language tales and anecdotes about *qing*. Its compilation is attributed to a certain Zhanzhan Waishi 詹詹外史 [Hairsplitting Historian],⁷⁶ and the first preface was penned by Long Ziyu 龍子猶, “which is probably one of Feng Menglung’s pseudonyms.”⁷⁷ According to Hua-yuan Li Mowry, “Whether or not Feng Meng-lung was the sole compiler, he did play a most significant part in the compilation of the anthology.”⁷⁸

74. Ibid, 1:441.

75. Kang, “Bianzuan he pingdian,” 141.

76. This is Hanan’s translation. See *Chinese Vernacular Story*, 95.

77. Wai-Yee Li, *Enchantment and Disenchantment*, 90.

78. Mowry, “*Ch’ing-shih*,” 24.

History was completed in the final years of the Ming dynasty, when *qing* became a central concept in philosophy and one of the most important themes of literature. As mentioned in the introduction, there have been numerous studies on the cult of *qing* in the late Ming. Building upon these previous studies, I will focus on how Feng Menglong redefines *qing* by compiling *History*, and I will try to provide a concise background to better understand the innovative representation of such *qing* in “Oil-peddler.”

History collects some 850 tales and anecdotes in Classical Chinese from the Zhou dynasty to the middle Ming dynasty. According to Kim Won Hee 金源熙, about a quarter of *History* stories come from *Extensive Records* (about 220 stories), and more than half of these stories can be found in *Selections* (about 130 stories).⁷⁹ It also includes stories from various early and contemporary collections. Feng Menglong constructs *History* using a similar kind of classification system to that which he created in *Selections*. Like *Selections*, *History* also builds upon categories and unfolds through notes and commentary. The tales and anecdotes are grouped into 24 categories, and these categories are divided into about 139 smaller classes through notes and commentary.⁸⁰ In *History*, Feng Menglong states that “all the stories herein deal only with men and women.”⁸¹ Indeed, the majority of these tales and anecdotes deal with female-male relationships. Yet, there are stories featuring “same-sex affairs, liaisons between humans and fairies or inanimate objects, and mating stories of beasts and insects.”⁸² As we can see, Feng Menglong attempts to include diverse stories dealing with *qing* to expand the boundaries of *qing*. To him, *qing* is something more universal and

79. Kim Won Hee 金源熙, “*Qingshi gushi yuanliu kaoshu*” 情史故事源流考述 [A study of the sources of *A Topical Outline of Qing*] (PhD diss., University of Fudan, 2005), 39.

80. Zhao Dong Mei 趙冬梅, “Feng Menglong *Qingshi yanjiu*” 馮夢龍情史研究 [A study of Feng Menglong’s *A History of Qing*] (PhD diss., Korea University, 2004), 84-85.

81. Mowry, “*Ch’ing-shih*,” 13.

82. Lee, *Revolution of the Heart*, 39.

broader than romantic feelings between women and men. Most of the stories of “sympathetic responses” in *Poems* which are excluded by *Extensive Records* and *Selections* are reincluded within *History*. At the same time, he is aware of the nuanced differences among the representations of such *qing* in these stories, so he creates various categories and classes to present the variegated aspects of such *qing* and complicate the notion of it. The stories which originally belong to “sympathetic responses” of *Extensive Records* are placed into different classes in *History*. As Epstein indicates, Feng Menglong’s arrangement of extant materials into a compendium of *qing* suggests the concept is “polysemous.”⁸³

While the notion of *qing* is expanded and complicated, Feng Menglong does provide a portrait of himself as a *qingchi* 情痴 [*qing* fanatic] in the first preface to *History*:

As a young man, I was considered a fanatic about *qing*. I would always open my heart to my friends and colleagues and share their joys and sorrows. If I heard of someone in dire poverty of suffering a particular injustice, even if I did not know the person, I would do my best utmost to help. If I lacked the means, I would sigh over the case for days on end and toss and turn without sleep. If I met a man of *qing*, I would feel like bowing down before him.⁸⁴

To Feng Menglong, *qing* is not simply romantic feelings between men and women. Instead, *qing* is compassion and sympathy which can move a person to by all means help strangers on the street. Such a view is clearly influenced by the late Ming cult of *qing*, which privileges *qing* and associates it with sincerity, genuineness, authenticity, and spontaneity. As Hanan argues, Feng Menglong

83. Epstein, *Competing Discourses*, 114.

84. Hanan, *Chinese Vernacular Story*, 96. Mowry also translates this passage into English in “*Ch’ing-shih*,” 12.

interprets *qing* as “an ardent, selfless sympathy for others.”⁸⁵ Note such *qing* is very close to but beyond Mencius’s 孟子 *burenren zhi xin* 不忍人之心 [the heart which cannot bear to see others suffering] or *ceyin zhi xin* 惻隱之心 [the heart of grieving commiseratively], for a *qing* fanatic does not just find it unbearable to watch others suffering, but actually feels the same pain with the suffering stranger. As Lee points out, “Although Confucianism certainly encourages compassion and charitable deeds, to lose sleep over one’s inability to help out a stranger would certainly make any Confucian raise his eyebrow.”⁸⁶ In Wai-Yee Li’s words, Feng Menglong redefines *qing* “as altruistic sentiment, self-forgetfulness, and dedication to the well-being of others.”⁸⁷

As Feng Menglong redefines *qing* as altruistic dedication to the well-being of others, simple material support or equivalence repayment may not be considered behaviors representing *qing*. In our previous discussion of “Li Wa’s Story,” we mentioned that Feng Menglong disapproves of Li Wa’s financial recompense in the category of *qingbao* 情報 [passionate reciprocation] in *History*:

Those who have read “*Li Wa chuan*” all praise Wa for her righteousness [*yi* 義]. Come on! Is Wa indeed a righteous [*yi* 義] person? ... After the young man has spent all his money on her, she immediately allies herself with the procuress and plots against him. At that time she is concerned only the young man *not* leave. Is there any righteous [*yi* 義] person in the world who would behave like this? ... In the end, however, when they again encounter one another, she wraps her embroidered jacket about him—probably because she realizes, having long been a prostitute and now reflecting upon those with whom she came in contact, that no

85. Hanan, *Chinese Vernacular Story*, 96.

86. Lee, *Revolution of the Heart*, 39-40.

87. Wai-Yee Li, *Enchantment and Disenchantment*, 91.

one was ever as sincerely in love [*qing* 情] with her as Cheng had been in the past.

... Thus it is that she is prompted to take such a magnanimous step, for the young man has always be gracious to Li Wa. Although in the end he does win her reciprocation [*bao* 報], it is to be regretted that it comes so late.⁸⁸

As Mowry indicates, Feng Menglong considers Li Wa as an “insincere lover” and a “mere opportunist.”⁸⁹ Hanan also reveals that “what Feng deplores is her lack of ardor, her shallowness of commitment. If her lover had died, she would not have shed a tear. She was simply not enough of a romantic.”⁹⁰ By contrast, Zheng is the one who sincerely devotes everything he has had before receiving anything and without asking for any payback. Feng Menglong even retitles the story from “Li Wa’s Story” to “Xingyang Zheng sheng” 滎陽鄭生 [Scholar Zheng of Xingyang] to celebrate Zheng’s *qing*.

We have seen that Feng Menglong criticizes intermittent erotic passion as “lacking in *qing*” (少情) in *Selections*;⁹¹ in *History*, he goes one step further to re-characterize *qing* as abiding and distinguish *qing* from pure sexual desire. In the first preface, he claims that his intent is to “make known to men the abiding nature of *ch’ing*.”⁹² According to Epstein, Feng Menglong entitles his first section *Qingzhen* 情貞 [passionate chastity], “as if to dispel any fears that this anthology might confuse *qing* with wanton sexuality.”⁹³ As Martin W. Huang argues, “In fact, he prided himself in *Qingshi* for being able to accomplish the task of ‘spreading *qing*’ (*guang qing* 廣情) while not leading people down the path of lust (*daoyu* 導欲). Feng’s *qing* is conceived in

88. Mowry, “*Ch’ing-shih*,” 18.

89. *Ibid*, 18-19.

90. Hanan, *Chinese Vernacular Story*, 97.

91. Feng, *Tai ping guang ji chao*, 1:380.

92. Mowry, “*Ch’ing-shih*,” 12.

93. Epstein, *Competing Discourses*, 114.

opposition to *yu*.”⁹⁴ Wai-Yee Li provides a good example to support this view: “The line between *ch’ing* and desire is perhaps best illustrated by the story of Wang in the section on ‘Obsessive Love’ (Ch’ing-ch’ih).”⁹⁵ In “Luoyang Wang mou” 洛陽王某 [A certain Wang of Luoyang] (hereafter “Certain Wang”), Wang falls in love with a courtesan, but a prince takes her away. He requests to see her one last time; the prince agrees on the condition that he first self-castrates. He does. Hairsplitting Historian comments: “The purpose of mutual appreciation [*xiang ai* 相愛] is pleasure [*huan* 歡]. Having castrated himself, what use has he for the meeting? Alas, he does that for love [*qing* 情]. For love is close to desire [*qing jin yu yin* 情近於淫], but desire is really not love [*yin shi fei qing* 淫實非情].”⁹⁶ In other words, *qing* can be expressed in the form of sexual desire, but sexual desire itself cannot be regarded as *qing*.

In addition to desire, Feng Menglong distinguishes *qing* from responsibility and Appropriety as well. While *qing* can be expressed through various behaviors, from helping suffering strangers on the street to sacrificing one’s life for an acquaintance, if such a behavior is not motivated by *qing*, then it cannot be considered a representation of *qing*. Not surprisingly, Feng Menglong excludes “Yao Shen” 姚坤 from *History*. Yao Shen often buys foxes from hunters and releases them. One day, a beautiful girl shows up and wants to serve him as his wife. Later, the girl accompanies Yao Shen to take the examinations in the capital. On their way, a dog attempts to chase the girl, and she transforms into a fox and runs away. In the end, an old man transformed from a fox appears and tells Yao Shen that the girl is his granddaughter and their reciprocation is now complete. At first glance, “Yao Shen” seems to have a narrative structure similar to that of “Dragon,” in which a man saves a werewolf(s) and she marries him so as to pay back his favor.

94. Huang, *Desire and Fictional Narrative*, 70.

95. Wai-Yee Li, *Enchantment and Disenchantment*, 92.

96. *Ibid*, 92.

However, compared with the dragon girl who is depicted as being of another kind but having *xin* 心 [heart], the fox girl does not seem to have any *qing*. When she is accompanying Yao Shen, she is not happy and composes a poem about being miserable in the human world. The fox girl marries him because he saves her family, and her reciprocation is based upon responsibility and Appropriety, not *qing*. Instead of Appropriety, Feng Menglong associates *qing* with sincerity, genuineness, authenticity, and spontaneity. Lee provides a good example to support this view. The first category of *History* is “passionate chastity,” “which features a series of female suicides who use death to demonstrate sincere love and resolute loyalty.”⁹⁷ At the end of the chapter, Feng gives the following commentary: “With regard to all matters of loyalty, filial piety, chastity, or heroism, if one tries to act solely from principle, then one’s actions will certainly be forced; if, however, one tries to act on the basis of genuine *qing*, then one’s actions will certainly be sincere [*zhenqie* 真切]”⁹⁸ This notion is the key to understand Qin Zhong’s behaviors in “Oil-peddler.” He affectionately takes care of Sister Mei and saves her from the street not because of responsibility, morality, or Appropriety, but because of *qing*. It is such *qing* which motivates him as a man who has *qing* to behave in a way which a genuine Chinese hero would behave (we will discuss this issue further in the next chapter).

In this chapter, we can see from *Selections* and *History* that Feng Menglong is obviously interested in the questions of what *qing* is and is not. By (re)including and (re)excluding old materials dealing with various aspects of *qing*, he tries to establish a genre of tales about romantic love. Through reorganizing and editing and commenting on these *qing* stories, he is forming some of the basic ideas of a new understanding of romantic relationships. A person who has *qing*

97. Lee, *Revolution of the Heart*, 41.

98. *Ibid.*

(*youqingren*) would altruistically dedicate herself or himself to the well-being of others. Such universal *qing* is characterized by abiding affection and sincerity, and it is very different from sexual desire and Appropriety. From his revision of *Extensive Records* to his own encyclopedic anthology of Classical *qing* stories, we can see he is moving towards a new vision of what a new romantic relationship might be. Then, in “Oil-peddler,” we can see that he actually creates a new vernacular tale to provide an expression of his new vision, which we are going to explore in the next chapter.

Chapter 2

The Innovative Representation of Romantic Love in “Oil-peddler”

Chinese Romantic Stories around Feng Menglong’s Time

Before we move to my discussion on the innovative representation of romantic love in Feng Menglong’s “Oil-peddler,” it is necessary to examine romantic stories around his time, both Classical language tales by other writers and his other vernacular stories in the *Three Words* collections. Literary romances from the Yuan and Ming periods share several characteristics. As Huang points out, “They usually deal with romantic love between a handsome talented young man and an equally talented and beautiful young woman. The exchange of poems is almost always an important ingredient in the tale.”⁹⁹ This structure is often referred to as “talent-beauty romances.”¹⁰⁰ We have seen such structure in *Extensive Records* in the early Song dynasty, and it has been inherited by romantic stories in the Yuan and Ming dynasties. Based upon previous scholars’ studies, this section tries to provide a sketch of the main characteristics of literary romance in this period, particularly their portrayals of romantic love.

In the first century of the Ming dynasty, the Classical language tale known as *chuanqi* once again come to the fore. Yet, according to Wu Liquan 吳禮權, there are not as many Classical language tales centering on romantic love in the Ming as there were during the flourishing of Classical language tales in the Tang and Song periods.¹⁰¹ The best-known collections of this period are *Jiandeng xinhua* 剪燈新話 [New stories written while trimming the wick] (hereafter

99. Huang, *Desire and Fictional Narrative*, 207.

100. See Note 32.

101. Wu Liquan 吳禮權, *Zhongguo yanqing xiaoshuo shi* 中國言情小說史 [The history of the Chinese romantic story] (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1995), 256.

Trimming the Wick), compiled by Qu You 瞿佑 (1341-1427) and *Jiandeng yuhua* 剪燈餘話 [More stories written while trimming the wick], compiled by Li Changqi 李昌祺 (1376-1452).¹⁰² The latter is highly influenced by the former, as Li Changqi states in his preface, “A guest gave me *New Stories Written While Trimming the Wick* of Mr. Qu of Qiantang. I was very fond of it and keenly wanted to imitate it.”¹⁰³ *Trimming the Wick* contains twenty-one stories, about ten of which deal with romantic love; eight of these are included within *History*.¹⁰⁴ Almost all ten romances fit the pattern of “talent-beauty romances” we have seen in the early romance tradition. First, every tale has a male protagonist who is a scholar/official and a female protagonist who is a beautiful woman. In fact, some of the female protagonists are beautiful ghosts, as the aim of the collection is to “collect and edit peculiar and extraordinary affairs both past and present.”¹⁰⁵ Second, these tales also portray *qing* as “passion” in relationships that are not motivated by consanguinity. One’s “passion” for the other is often expressed through the woman’s serious lovesickness and death for love¹⁰⁶ or the man’s giving up career and not remarrying.¹⁰⁷ Although “passion” is still depicted as an overwhelming emotion, and “shocking and astonishing incidents” such as a visit of a ghost do occur in the stories,¹⁰⁸ supernatural events such as rebirth caused by extremes of “passion” happen

102. Idema and Haft, *Guide to Chinese Literature*, 163.

103. Li Changqi, comp., *Jiandeng yuhua*, in *Jiandeng xinhua: Wai er zhong* 剪燈新話：外二種 [New stories written while trimming the wick: And two other accounts] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1981), 121.

104. Kim, “yuanliu kao shu,” 92.

105. Qu You, comp., *Jiandeng xinhua*, in *Jiandeng xinhua: Wai er zhong*, 3.

106. “Jin fengchai ji” 金鳳釵記 [The gold phoenix hairpin], “Lianfang lou ji” 聯芳樓記 [Tower of Twofold Fragrance], “Weitang qiyu ji” 涓塘奇遇記 [The extraordinary encounters at Wei Pond], “Aiqing zhuan,” 愛卿傳 [Aiqing], “Cuicui zhuan” 翠翠傳 [Cuicui], “Lu yi ren zhuan” 綠衣人傳 [The woman in green], and “Qiuxiang ting ji” 秋香亭記 [Autumn Fragrance Pavilion].

107. “Teng Mu zui you Jujing Yuan ji” 滕穆醉遊聚景園記 [Teng Mu’s drunken excursion to Assembled Scenery Garden] and “Ji mei ji” 寄梅記 [Sending a plum blossom].

108. Qu, *Jiandeng xinhua*, 3.

less often than in *Extensive Records* and *Selections*. Compared with “sympathetic responses” of *Selections*, *Trimming the Wick* stresses the extraordinary more than the moving. Third, “passion” is often expressed through poetic composition as well. In “The Extraordinary Encounters at Wei Pond,” Wang even “modelled the literary form of Yuan Zhan and composes ‘Meeting the Holy One.’”¹⁰⁹ Fourth, “passion” is also associated with sexual desire. In about half of the ten tales, as soon as the two protagonists fall in love, they sleep together.¹¹⁰ As Qu You states in his preface, *Trimming the Wick* “approaches licentiousness [*jin yu hai yin* 近於海淫].”¹¹¹ Finally, all protagonists fall in love with one another immediately. As we have seen in many previous romances, the purpose of presenting poetry is more to show off one’s talent than to express one’s affection. Even though poetic composition can be considered an act of courtship, courtship scarcely involves a process or period of time. Almost always right after expressing her or his “passion,” one character wins a pledge of love from the other, and an agreement simultaneously forms. As the best-known collection of Classical language tales of the Ming, *Trimming the Wick* basically follows the previous romance tradition, but places more stress on the extraordinary.

There are other works which made important contributions to the development of the Chinese romance genre as well as the changing representation of *qing* in the Yuan and Ming periods. Huang, analyzing the literary romances from this period, notes that Song Meidong’s 宋梅洞 (fl. late thirteenth century) *Jiao Hong ji* 嬌紅記 [The story of the two women Jiao and Hong] “inspired many other literary romances during the Ming.”¹¹² Like *Trimming the Wick*, it is

109. Qu, *Jiandeng xinhua*, 56.

110. “The Gold Phoenix Hairpin,” “Tower of Twofold Fragrance,” “The Extraordinary Encounters at Wei Pond,” “Teng Mu’s Drunken Excursion to Assembled Scenery Garden,” and “The Woman in Green.”

111. Qu, *Jiandeng xinhua*, 3.

112. Huang, *Desire and Fictional Narrative*, 208.

also “indebted to ‘Yingying zhuan.’”¹¹³ As Huang observes, “Often there are extensive intertextual borrowings among these texts despite the fact they may have been produced a century or more apart.”¹¹⁴ By consciously linking with one another, these works keep shaping the notion of the genre as well as its definition. Qiu Jun’s 邱濬 (1421-95) *Zhongqing liji* 鍾情麗集 [A beautiful book on deep passions] “marked an important milestone in the development of the Ming literary romance.”¹¹⁵ While the novella gives unprecedented emphasis on *qing*, its descriptions of sex are relatively explicit.¹¹⁶ As Huang points out, “In *Jiao Hong ji* and *Zhongqing liji* the relationship between *qing* and *yu* is unproblematic in that the two are not presented as mutually exclusive.”¹¹⁷ This is very different from Feng Menglong’s “Oil-peddler,” in which *qing* is redefined as emotional love and represented through Qin Zhong’s sacrifice of his sexual desire.

Extant and accessible Chinese vernacular short stories written before 1628 are divided into three major periods by Hanan: “an *early* period stretching from before the Yüan to circa 1450, a *middle* period from circa 1400 to circa 1575, and a *late* period from circa 1550 to the 1620’s.”¹¹⁸ Among the thirty-five stories that he can confidently assign to the period before 1550, Hanan indicates that “there are no love stories, for example, if we except a couple of virtuoso stories; there no story that tells of love between a well-matched couple who triumph over difficulties.”¹¹⁹ In “Qian Sheren tishi Yanzi Lou” 錢舍人題詩燕子樓 [Secretary Qian leaves poems on the Swallow Tower], Zhang Jianfeng 張建封 is a secretary of the minister of rites, and Guan Panpan

113. Ibid.

114. Ibid.

115. Ibid.

116. Ibid.

117. Ibid.

118. Hanan, *Chinese Short Story*, 212.

119. Patrick Hanan, “The Early Chinese Short Story: A Critical Theory in Outline,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 27, no. 3-4 (1967): 198.

關盼盼 is a courtesan who is “a beauty matchless [*juese* 絕色] in the Xuzhou region.”¹²⁰ They “intoned poems on flowers and the moon. Pouring out words of love [*lun qing* 論情] in her exquisite boudoir, they pledged vows with pine trees as witnesses. Amid joyful songs and music, their love knew no bounds [*qingai fang nong* 情愛方濃].”¹²¹ Similarly, in “Suxiang Ting Zhang Hao yu Yingying” 宿香亭張浩遇鶯鶯 [Zhang Hao meets Yingying at Lingering Fragrance Pavilion], Zhang Hao 張浩 and Yingying 鶯鶯 are described as a “beauty and talented scholar [*jiaren caizi* 佳人才子]” as well.¹²² When they first meet, she asks him to write a poem on her scarf for a token “as a reminder of our meeting today [*xiang jian zhi qing* 相見之情].”¹²³ After one year, Zhang Hao’s “love [*qingai* 情愛] for Yingying” makes “him throw all concerns about decorum to the winds,”¹²⁴ so he sneaks into her house and sleeps with her. In the end, when Zhang Hao is engaged to another girl, Yingying presents his poems as evidence for the priority of their engagement. As Hanan reveals, “the earlier romances ... are virtually confined to heroes and heroines of the literati class and to some highly lettered courtesans. They are concerned largely with the poet as romantic subject. In most of the stories, courtship is carried on, at least in part, through poetry, a fact that sanctions the lovers’ virtuosity.”¹²⁵

The middle period romance, according to Hanan, still adheres to Classical fiction in spirit. As Hanan argues, “Although romantic comedy in the early-Ming Classical tale shows some changes from the Song—it is generally longer, more precious, more fanciful, more sentimental—

120. Yang and Yang, *Caution*, 142.

121. *Ibid.*, 144.

122. Feng, *Jingshi tongyan*, 447. This is my translation. Yang and Yang do not translate this phrase literally.

123. Yang and Yang, *Caution*, 509.

124. *Ibid.*, 512.

125. Hanan, *Chinese Vernacular Story*, 49.

it belongs recognizably to the same type.”¹²⁶ These characteristics are reflected in both “Du Liniang muse huanhun” 杜麗娘慕色還魂 [Du Liniang’s revival for adoring good looks]¹²⁷ and “Pei Xiuniang ye you Xihu” 裴秀娘夜遊西湖 [Pei Xiuniang’s night outing on the West Lake].¹²⁸ The male protagonists and the female protagonists are constructed as standard “talent and beauty,” and their “passion” is expressed through poems. “Xianyun An Ruan San chang yuanzhai” 閑雲庵阮三償冤債 [Ruan San redeems his debt in Leisurely Clouds Nunnery] tells of a clandestine affair between Ruan San 阮三 and Yulan 玉蘭. He is “well versed in poetry of every style,” and she is “as fresh as a flower and as fair as the moon.”¹²⁹ One night, Ruan San is playing bamboo flute on the street. After Yulan listens for a while, “her emotions stirred up [*sic*] [*qing buneng yi* 情不能已] by the music.”¹³⁰ She then sends her maid to give him a ring as a token and invite him to meet. Ever since he has seen her, “memory of the young lady filled him with tender longing.”¹³¹ The story culminates in their secret meeting in a temple, when Ruan San dies at the very height of their lovemaking: “At the rendezvous, he was so overcome by desire [*qing xing ku nong* 情興酷濃] that his life was put in jeopardy.”¹³² As Hanan observes, the story “contains a series of lyrics,

126. Ibid, 68.

127. According to Hanan, “Du Liniang’s Revival for Adoring Good Looks” “appears in the Ho [He Dalun 何大掄] and Yü [Yu Gongren 余公仁] versions of *Yen-chü pi-chi* [燕居筆記 (Records of living in Yanju)]. The Ho version is in the form of a vernacular short story, while the Yü version, though it makes some concession to short-story formulae, is really a Classical tale. ... The Ho version represents the earlier form of the story” (*The Chinese Vernacular Story*, 57). The Ho version is a very early Qing edition and preserved in the Naikaku Bunko (55).

128. According to Hanan, “Pei Xiuniang’s Night Outing on the West Lake” “appears in both the *Wan-chin ch’ing-lin* and the Lin [Lin Jinyang 林近陽] version of *Yen-chü pi-chi*. The latter is incomplete, lacking most of the text in the last third of the story owing to faulty printing. But the text it does have is fuller than that of the *Wan-chin*, and it clearly represents the better version” (*The Chinese Vernacular Story*, 58). The Lin version is a Ming edition and preserved in the Naikaku Bunko (55).

129. Yang and Yang, *Old and New*, 94.

130. Ibid, 96.

131. Ibid, 98.

132. Ibid, 105.

full of evocative description in the manner of the romance.”¹³³ In literary romances around Feng Menglong’s time, while changes from the earlier tradition do exist, “passion” still often follows in the “talent-beauty” formula, represented through love at first sight, and closely related to sexual desire, without a series of affective acts to form a process of courtship.

In the late period, two of the most well-known romances are “Du Shiniang nu chen baibaoxiang” 杜十娘怒沉百寶箱 [Du Shiniang sinks her jewel box in anger] (hereafter “Du Shiniang”) and “Jiang Xingge chonghui zhenzhu shan” 蔣興哥重會珍珠衫 [Jiang Xingge reencounters his pearl shirt] (hereafter “Pearl Shirt”). Indeed, there are seemingly similar expressions of *qing* in both stories, in which *qing* is represented as attentive behaviors. However, there are fundamental differences between the two and “Oil-peddler” in terms of motivation or relationship. We will compare “Oil-peddler” with these two other late-period romances in the next section.

Feng Menglong’s “Oil-peddler”: *Youqinglang/Haoren*

As we have seen in Chapter 1, Feng Menglong redefines *qing* as altruistic dedication to the well-being of others by compiling *History*, in which he includes diverse facets of *qing* and its various manifestations. As Santangelo points out, “According to Feng Menglong, it implies the mindset linking man to all beings, as well as the respect for oneself and compassion for other people’s misfortunes; it is expressed even in the animal and plant world through devotion and sacrifice.”¹³⁴ Such universal *qing* is represented in a revolutionary way in “Oil-peddler.” In this new romantic story, Feng Menglong creates a set of expressions to portray romantic love as characterized by affection and sympathy. This portrayal differs from that in earlier Chinese

133. Hanan, *Chinese Vernacular Story*, 69.

134. Santangelo, *Sentimental Education*, 236-37.

romantic tales and marks a major shift in the development of the Chinese romance genre. Based upon Santangelo's research on Ming and Qing general terms for states of mind and emotions, this section investigates what Santangelo called the "affective lexicon" in "Oil-peddler," "i.e. words that refer directly or indirectly to emotions or implicate them in a variety of ways ... and expressions, characters of behaviour, personality traits, and states of mind associated with emotions."¹³⁵ By creating a lexicon of affective expressions, this romance redefines and represents a man who has *qing* (*youqinglang*) in an innovative way, and through this innovative representation, constructs a novel model of a good person (*haoren*) in romantic relationships.

"Oil-peddler" is a mutation of the "talent-beauty romance." While Sister Mei, who is also known as the "Queen of Flowers," is a beautiful courtesan, Qin Zhong is not a talented scholar, but an oil-peddler. In this story, Qin Zhong, whose name is a homonym of *qingzhong* 情重 [(one whose) *qing* is heavy], is portrayed as a man with genuine *qing*. At the beginning of the story, he does fall in love with Sister Mei at first sight for her beauty, however, as the story proceeds, he manifests Feng Menglong's universal *qing* through warm behaviors based on a genuine heart. At the climax of the story, when Qin Zhong finally saves enough money by working very hard to buy Sister Mei for one night, his behavior radically differs from that of those talented scholars in the above romantic stories. Qin Zhong does not have sex with Sister Mei; instead, he shows affection and sympathy to her when she is suffering from her drunken state:

Qin Zhong saw that Sister Mei was fast asleep, lying on top of her brocade quilt with her face to the wall. Afraid that one in a drunken state would be susceptible to cold [*pa leng* 怕冷], he wished to do something but didn't want to disturb her lest she wake up. He saw that over the bedstead hung a scarlet silkfloss-padded and

135. Santangelo, *Sentimental Education*, 247.

brocade-covered quilt. Noiselessly he took it down and spread it over her. He then picked the lamp wick until the lamp shone brightly, took off his shoes, got into bed with the pot of hot tea [*re cha* 熱茶], and nestled up against her. With his left hand holding the teapot against his bosom and his right hand on Sister Mei, he dared not close his eyes even for one instant. Truly

He did not enjoy the clouds and rain,

But he did nestle against fragrant jade.

In the middle of the night, Sister Mei woke up and felt the power of the wine getting the better of her. Feeling on the verge of vomiting, she struggled up to a sitting position, her head hanging low, and she retched over and over again. Qin Zhong also rose quickly. Realizing that she was about to vomit, he put down the teapot and stroked her back. After a while, Sister Mei could not hold out any longer. In less time than it takes to tell, she let go of herself and threw up. Afraid that the quilt would get soiled, Qin Zhong spread out the sleeve of his robe under her mouth. Unaware of his move, Sister Mei vomited with abandon [*jingqing* 盡情]. With her eyes closed, she then asked for tea to rinse her mouth with. Qin Zhong got down from the bed, quietly took off his robe, and laid it on the floor. Finding the teapot still warm [*nuan de* 爇的], he filled a bowl with the savory strong tea and handed it to her. After finishing two bowls of the tea in quick succession, she lay down, feeling slightly better but still exhausted. Turning her face toward the wall, she went back to sleep. Qin Zhong rolled up his robe tightly around the soiled sleeve and put

the bundle by the side of the bed. He then got onto the bed again and held her in his arm as before.¹³⁶

As we can see, the storyteller-narrator devotes a great deal to text to describing in detail Qin Zhong's warm behaviors, representing his *qing* as characterized by affection, sympathy, compassion, and caring as well as sacrifice. Qin Zhong is sympathetic to Sister Mei's suffering from a hangover, so he does not take advantage of her; moreover, he takes good care of her affectionately. His *qing* is expressed through a sacrifice of his sexual desire and a series of warm behaviors, and through such an innovative representation that *qing* is reunderstood as emotional, sentimental love opposed to sexual desire. We have seen *qing* as sacrificing one's sexual desire in "Certain Wang" in Feng Menglong's *History*, in which a man castrates himself in order just to see his lover one more time. While both stories distinguish *qing* from sexual desire, Qin Zhong's sacrifice is more based upon his sympathy for Sister Mei's suffering, and his affectionate deeds bring a sense of warmth to her body as well as heart. He understands not only her physical needs but also her feelings. When he spreads the quilt over her, he is gentle because he does not want to disturb her sleep. He uses his own body to warm her so as to help her sleep well. When she is going to vomit, he comforts her by rubbing her back. He lets her vomit on his own cloth, so her bed will not be soiled. In order to take good care of his beloved, he does not close his eyes even for a moment's sleep the whole night. For Sister Mei who has not committed anything to him and has no moral obligations to, Qin Zhong not only sacrifices an impressive amount of money and the opportunity to have sex but also devotes his body and heart to make her feel better in every possible way. Through this scene, Feng Menglong redefines a man who has *qing* (*youqinglang*): a man who has *qing* is not merely a man who has "passion" for a woman as we have seen in previous

136. Yang and Yang, *Awaken*, 62.

romances; he must be a good person (*haoren*) whose *hao* 好 [goodness] is generated from sincere *qing* as we see in this new romance.

As we can see in part in the above scene, Feng Menglong forms a lexicon of affective terms to represent such *qing*. After Qin Zhong's "one night of *qing* [*yi xiao zhi qing* 一宵之情],"¹³⁷ Sister Mei considers him as "so honest and kind and considerate [*zhiqing shiqu* 知情識趣]."¹³⁸ The storyteller-narrator also cites a poem to describe his deep understanding of her: "Tender, gentle, you know my heart and mind [*zhixin zhiyi* 知心知意]."¹³⁹ Here, the notion of *qing* is combined with the concept of understanding (*zhi* 知). "That unspoken feeling," as Santangelo explains, "was based on the respect of the qualities of the loved one and on the perception of his/her real experiences."¹⁴⁰ To Feng Menglong, genuine *qing* means to understanding others' situations, perspectives, and feelings. Although the concept of understanding usually refers to sincere friendship, it can also refer to sincere romantic relationship. As Santangelo argues, "This sentiment—which expended in late Ming China—was considered the highest development in the love process."¹⁴¹ We will look into how Feng Menglong use such a companion male-female relationship to create a possible channel through which all kinds of affective love flow together and become what he considers universal *qing* in the next section.

As a good person with *qing*, Qin Zhong not only understands Sister Mei's difficult circumstances but also sympathizes with her suffering. As Santangelo indicates, "Various form of *love* and good dispositions come from a sympathetic attitude,"¹⁴² and "a category of love, very

137. This is my translation. Yang and Yang render this phrase as "last night" (64).

138. Yang and Yang, *Awaken*, 64.

139. *Ibid*, 65.

140. Santangelo, *Sentimental Education*, 315.

141. *Ibid*, 316.

142. *Ibid*, 267.

important in Chinese culture is ‘sad-love’ (*teng* 疼, *lian* 憐).¹⁴³ After the night, every time Sister Mei “got ill or woke up in the middle of the night after a wine-induced sleep to find no one there to take care of [*tengre* 疼熱] her, she would recall Young Master Qin’s kindness [*haochu* 好處] and regret that there was no way for her to see him again.”¹⁴⁴ *Teng* as a verb meaning “to dote” may come from its original meaning “pain, ache, sore”.¹⁴⁵ For example, *xinteng* 心疼 means “to feel pain because beloved things or people are hurt”; as in the pair story “Guanyuan sou wan feng xiannu” 灌園叟晚逢仙女 [The old gardener meets fairy maidens],¹⁴⁶ when Master Qiu’s 秋公 flowers are plucked, “his heart [is] aching [*xinteng routing* 心疼肉痛].”¹⁴⁷ In “Oil-peddler,” Qin Zhong can actually feel the pain Sister Mei feels. A year later, one day Sister Mei is bullied by Young Master Wu the Eighth 吳八公子, who has his men drag her out to the street, pull off her hairpins and earrings, and take off her embroidered shoes and foot-bindings. Qin Zhong happens to pass by at this moment. After Sister Mei pours out her heart to him and tells him the whole thing, “Zhu Zhong’s [Qin Zhong] heart ached [*xinzhong shifen tengtong* 心中十分疼痛],” and he cries for her.¹⁴⁸ Then, Qin Zhong again shows his *qing* through affectionate behaviors:

With tears in his eyes, he pulled out from his sleeve a white silk kerchief more than five feet in length, tore it in half, and gave her both pieces to bind her feet with. He then wiped off her tears and gathered up her hair, all the while comforting her with

143. Ibid, 268.

144. Yang and Yang, *Awaken*, 66.

145. Kroll, *Student’s Dictionary*, 447.

146. As Yang points out in *Appropriation and Representation*, 79: The stories in Feng Menglong’s *Three Words* are arranged in pairs, “with the two titles of each unit forming a parallel couplet.” As Cyril Birch notes in “Feng Meng-lung and the *Ku Chin Hsiao Shuo*,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 18, no. 1 (February 1956): 82-83, usually “the stories of a pair will be of a similar subject-type, and sometimes “two stories have been paired because of some common feature of plot.”

147. Yang and Yang, *Awaken*, 90.

148. Ibid, 69.

soothing words [*haoyan* 好言]. (*For someone truly in love [zhenzheng xiang'ai* 真正相愛], *these actions are not disgusting*.) After Sister Mei had had her cry, he hastened to hire a curtained sedan-chair [*nuanjiao* 煖轎] for her. Walking on foot, he escorted her all the way to Madam Wang the Ninth's house.¹⁴⁹

After Qin Zhong saves her from the street like an affectionate, romantic hero, Sister Mei says, “Even though I took on many patrons, they were all big spenders and libertines. They buy pleasure with money. They care [*Lianxiang xiyu* 憐香惜玉] nothing about me.¹⁵⁰ Of all the men I've met, you are the only trustworthy one [*zhicheng junzi* 志誠君子].”¹⁵¹ As Santangelo explains, “The term *lian* 憐 is manifested towards other people's difficulties together with a desire to help them, we call this compassion and pity. ... *Lian* consists of a person's participation in other's troubles accompanied by a desire to soothe them.”¹⁵² Also, sympathy “is generally followed by a practical action of assistance, and can become one of the most important premises for the establishment of a relationship of friendship or love.”¹⁵³ Through the series of affective expressions, including understanding (*zhi*), feeling pain/doting (*teng*), sympathizing (*lian*), and caring about (*xi*), Feng Menglong associates his redefined *qing* with these notions and portrays his romantic hero as one who is sympathetic and compassionate to others in a fond manner.

Qin Zhong's attentive, considerate behaviors are referred to as *bangchen* 幫襯 [attentiveness], which is a concept introduced in the prologue:

149. Ibid.

150. Yang and Yang do not translate this phrase literally. *Lianxiang xiyu de zhenxin* 憐香惜玉的真心 literally means “a genuine heart which sympathizes with and cares about women.”

151. Yang and Yang, *Awaken*, 70.

152. Santangelo, *Sentimental Education*, 322.

153. Ibid, 323.

However, there is also another attribute called “attentiveness” [*bangchen* 幫襯], which is to a girl as the lining is to a garment or the upper is to a shoe. One who otherwise doesn’t have much to be said about him will soar in the girl’s estimation if he dances attendance on her, goes to great lengths to cover up her flaws, humbly attends to her needs in weather hot or cold [*song nuan tou han* 送暖偷寒], and caters to her likes and steers clear of her dislikes. (*A list of do’s and don’ts to keep in mind.*) The object of such affection [*yi qing du qing* 以情度情] will find it unthinkable not to love [*ai* 愛] him back. This is what attentiveness can do. In the courtesans’ quarters, it is such patrons who get the best deals. What they may want in looks and money is easily made up.¹⁵⁴

“*Bangchen* is a term used to express the love ideal of the late Ming period, and is in many ways similar to *shiqu de ren* 識趣的人, ‘sensitive person’ (that is, those who know how to behave in a delicate situation).”¹⁵⁵ The phrase *bangchen* is also mentioned in “Du Shiniang.” The story derives from a late-Ming Classical tale titled “Fuqing nong zhuan” 負情儂傳 [The faithless lover] by Song Moucheng 宋楙澄 (1569-1620).¹⁵⁶ In Feng Menglong’s vernacular adaptation, a description of Li Jia’s 李甲 characteristics is added to explain the reason why Du Shiniang 杜十娘 falls in love with him: “With his handsome face, gentle temperament, free-spending habits, and eager attentiveness [*bangchen de qin'er* 幫襯的勤兒], he won her heart, and the two grew deeply attached to each other [*qing tou yi he* 情投意合].”¹⁵⁷ Here, attentiveness is displayed by Li Jia who is shown later in the story as being the one who lacks sincerity and true understanding.

154. Yang and Yang, *Awaken*, 38.

155. Santangelo, *Sentimental Education*, 304.

156. Patrick Hanan, “The Making of The Pearl-sewn Shirt and The Courtesan’s Jewel Box,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 33 (1973): 125.

157. Yang and Yang, *Caution*, 549.

Such a portrayal is totally unlike that of Qin Zhong, who has “a genuine heart which sympathizes with and cares about women [*lianxiang xiyu de zhenxin* 憐香惜玉的真心].”¹⁵⁸ By rooting Qin Zhong’s attentiveness and consideration in a genuine heart, Feng Menglong distinguishes a good man who has authentic *qing* from a faithless man who has inauthentic *qing* (*fuqingnong*).

We can find a depiction of *qing* similar to Qin Zhong’s in “Pearl Shirt.” The story derives from another classical-language tale by Song Moucheng, titled “Zhu Shan” 珠衫 [The pearl shirt].¹⁵⁹ In Feng Menglong’s vernacular adaptation, a romantic scene of Jiang Xingge’s departure is added:

At the fifth watch, Xingge rose to get ready for the journey. He handed over to his wife all his inherited pearls and other valuables, taking along for himself only enough silver to serve as business capital, the original copies of the account books, some clothes, and bedding. Gifts to be offered [*sic*] to business associates had also been packed in good order. Of the two male servants, the younger one was to follow him. The older and more mature one was to stay behind to serve the mistress, run errands, and attend to the daily needs of the household, whereas two waiting women were charged with kitchen duties. There were also two maids, one called Clear Cloud, the other Warm Snow, whose job it was to serve the mistress in her private chamber, with orders not to wander too far away.¹⁶⁰

At first glance, we might think *qing* here is expressed through financial support as in “Ren’s Story.” However, if we read closely, we can see that Jiang Xingge 蔣興哥 sacrifices his well-being for his wife’s well-being in a fond manner. He takes only the necessities with him, and he leaves the

158. See Note 150.

159. Hanan, “Making of Pearl-sewn Shirt,” 125.

160. Yang and Yang, *Old and New*, 13.

valuables, more mature servant, waiting women, and maids to take care of her. However, there is still a fundamental difference between “Pearl Shirt” and “Oil-peddler” in terms of representing *qing*. While in both stories *qing* is depicted as altruistic, affectionate dedication, the relationships which they deal with are not the same. Jiang Xingge and Sanqiao 三巧 are husband and wife, but Sister Mei and Qin Zhong “hardly knew [*mei dian xianggan* 沒點相干]” each other.¹⁶¹ As we have seen in the prefaces to *History*, Feng Menglong considers that *qing* is something more universal and broader than romantic feelings between women and men. *Qing* is compassion and sympathy which can move a person to by all means help strangers on the street. Thus, Qin Zhong is a good person who has sympathy and compassion and will kindly do favors to others in a fond manner, even if there are not established commitments or defined responsibility between them.

In “Oil-peddler,” the images of a man who has *qing* (*youqinglang*) and a good person (*haoren*) are combined. Qin Zhong is referred to as a good person several times by other characters. “The owner of the shop knew Young Master Zhu [朱小官, Qin Zhong] to be good and honest [*laoshi haoren* 老實好人].”¹⁶² When Madam Wang the Ninth 王九媽 introduces Qin Zhong to Sister Mei, she also says, “He is a good man, and very sincere [*zhicheng haoren* 至誠好人].”¹⁶³ After their first night, Sister Mei thinks, “Such a good man [*haoren* 好人] is hard to come by.”¹⁶⁴ As we have seen, this romance creates a lexicon of affective expressions, including understanding, feeling pain/doting, sympathizing, and caring about, as well as genuine heart, to represent *qing* in an innovative way. Through this representation, a man who has *qing* is redefined and reprotayed as a good person with authentic *qing*, constructing a novel model of masculinity for the Chinese

161. Yang and Yang, *Awaken*, 64.

162. *Ibid*, 51.

163. *Ibid*, 61.

164. *Ibid*, 64.

romantic story. This model of a good man who has authentic *qing* is associated with the feeling of warmth (*nuan*). For example, Qin Zhong thinks that Sister Mei “would be susceptible to cold [*pa leng* 怕冷],” so he uses his body to warm her.¹⁶⁵ He also holds a teapot against his bosom to “keep it warm [*nuan* 暖]” for her.¹⁶⁶ When he touches the tea pot, he finds it “still warm [*nuan de* 暖的].”¹⁶⁷ Later when Qin Zhong meets Sister Mei again and saves her on the street, he hastens “to hire a curtained sedan-chair [*nuanjiao* 暖轎, which is cold-proof] for her.”¹⁶⁸ Such fond deeds are described by the storyteller-narrator as “giving warmth and removing cold [*song nuan tou han* 送暖偷寒].”¹⁶⁹ By associating this novel model of a good man who has authentic *qing* with the feeling of warmth, Feng Menglong creates a fresh image of masculinity for the Chinese romantic story. A man who has *qing* should be a good person who shows universal *qing* and brings a sense of warmth to his beloved, even when no commitment or responsibility has been formed. Before we move to the discussion on how this fresh image of masculinity provides a prototypical structure for the Chinese romance genre, let’s examine how this innovative representation of *qing* is transferred from other types of stories dealing with other, previously existing forms of relationships, such as parent-child, husband-wife, friends, and strangers to have a deeper understanding of the hybrid nature of the model.

Possible Transferences from Other Types of Stories: A New Romantic Relationship

We have seen that Feng Menglong redefines *qing* as something more universal and broader than romantic feelings between women and men. As he claims in the second preface to *History*,

165. Ibid, 62.

166. Ibid, 63.

167. Ibid, 62.

168. Ibid, 69.

169. This is my translation.

“Now, is not all this so because *ch'ing* begins with the relations between a man and a woman; ... and will not *ch'ing* consequently flow abundantly between lord and vassal, between father and son, between elder and younger brothers, and between two friends?”¹⁷⁰ As Lee points out, even though a good number of stories in *History* deal with male-female relationships, Feng Menglong constantly invokes “*qing*’s indispensability to father-son, lord-subject, and brotherly relationships,” because he considers *qing* “as the best means of consolidating human bondings.”¹⁷¹ To Feng Menglong, the forms of *qing* in various relationships are very similar in nature, and are probably variational expressive forms of one universal *qing*. Because the various forms of *qing* in different relationships are interchangeable, different relationships can easily transform from one into another. For example, both “Li Xiuqing yijie Huang Zhennu” 李秀卿義結黃貞女 [Li Xiuqing marries the virgin Huang with honor] (hereafter “Li Xiuqing”) and “Liu Xiaoguan cixiong xiongdì” 劉小官雌雄兄弟 [The Liu brothers in brotherhood and in marriage] (hereafter “Liu brothers”) describe a story in which two strangers become friends and then swear to be brothers; after realizing that one of them is a woman disguised as a man, the other marries her without hesitation, and they become husband and wife in the end. In “Oil-peddler,” in order to represent what universal *qing* is in a romantic relationship, various expressions of *qing* are transferred from different forms of relationships and hybridized into an innovative representation of romantic love. This section is a preliminary attempt to study the genealogy of the novel representation of romantic love in “Oil-peddler.” It looks into the similar expressions of *qing* in other types of stories and tries to map out the possible transferences from other types of stories. I create a set of criteria based upon the best-known stories of each type and use them to show the hybrid nature of Feng

170. Mowry, “*Ch'ing-shih*,” 14.

171. Lee, *Revolution of the Heart*, 41.

Menglong's new portrayal of romantic love: obligatory/voluntary, hierarchical/relatively equal, one-way/mutual, motivation, and self-sacrifice. At the same time, given that these relationships are fluid concepts which have been continuously changing, we also pay attention to how *qing* in various relationships is depicted in the *Three Words*. Additionally, relationship by itself sometimes can also be fluid and have multiple facets. We have early stories like "Dragon," in which the relationship between two characters complicated: After Liu Yi saves Lord Qiantang's niece, they become benefactor and beneficiary; later, because they make merry in the banquets, they consequently become *zhixinyou* 知心友 [friends who understand each other's hearts], and when Liu Yi marries Lord Qiantang's niece, they are also relatives by affinity. Such a fluidity is particularly evident in Feng Menglong's vernacular stories.

If we a look at the tradition of *Ershisi xiao* 二十四孝 [The twenty-four cases of filial piety] (hereafter *Twenty-four Cases*), we will see its depiction of *qing* between parent and child is very close to what we have seen in "Oil-peddler."¹⁷² In Duan Yucai's 段玉裁 (1735-1815) *Shuowen jiezi zhu* 說文解字注 [Annotations on *Explanations of Simple and Compound Graphs*], filial piety (*xiao*) is defined as "those who are good at serving their father and mother [*shanshi*

172. The discussion of the tradition of *Twenty-four Cases* is based on Tong Ruiduan 童瑞端's "Xiaojing dui ershisixiao gushi de yingxiang" 《孝經》對《二十四孝》故事的影響 [The influence of *The book on Filial Piety* on *The Twenty-four Cases of Filial Piety*] (master's thesis, National Changhua University of Education, 2016), 1-193. According to Tong, the earliest and most influential version of *Twenty-four Cases* is *Quanxiang ershisi xiao shixuan* 全相二十四孝詩選 [A collection of poems for the twenty-four cases of filial piety with complete images], whose compilation is attributed to Guo Jujing 郭居敬 (1279-1368), and it was also the most widely circulated one in the Ming and Qing periods (50; 56). The text quoted in this thesis is from Chen Shaomei's 陳少梅 *Ershisi xiao tu* 二十四孝圖 [Illustrated version of *The Twenty-four Cases of Filial Piety*], which is published by Tianjin renmin meishu chubanshe 天津人民美術出版社 in Tianjin in 2009. It is based upon the Guo Jujing tradition and the one commonly used by scholars.

fumu 善事父母].”¹⁷³ *Xiaojing* 孝經 [The classic of filial piety] also claims, “In any case, as for filial piety [*xiao* 孝], it starts from serving the parents [*shiqin* 事親].”¹⁷⁴ According to Tong Ruiduan 童瑞端, the tradition of *Twenty-Four Cases* represents filial piety mainly through the behaviors of serving the parents.¹⁷⁵ As *The Book on Filial Piety* explains, “As for a filial child’s serving the parents [*xiaozhi shiqin* 孝子之事親], if it is daily life that we are talking about, he or she shows his or her respects to them, ... if it is in the middle of illness that we are talking about, then he or she shows concern for them.”¹⁷⁶ In *Twenty-four Cases*, “Shanzhen wenqin” 扇枕温衾 [Fanning the pillow and arming the quilt] describes the story of Huang Xian 黃香 who takes care of his father’s daily needs: “In the summer when it was hot, he fanned his father’s pillow and bamboo mat to cool them down. In the winter when it was cold [*hanleng* 寒冷], he used his body to warm [*nuan* 暖] his father’s quilt and cushion.”¹⁷⁷ This behavior is very similar to Qin Zhong’s “giving warmth and removing cold” (*songnuan touhan*) when he uses his body to warm Sister Mei. “Qinchang tangyao” 親嘗湯藥 [Personally tasting the soup medicine] describes the story of Han Wendi 漢文帝 [Emperor Wen of Han] who personally takes care of his ill mother: “The emperor’s eyelids did not touch each other, and the belt of his clothes was not loosened.”¹⁷⁸ When Sister Mei is suffering from her drunken state, Qin Zhong also takes care of her and even dares “not close his eyes even for one instant.”¹⁷⁹ In addition to physical needs, filial piety is also to

173. Duan Yucui, annot., *Shuowen jiezi zhu*, by Xu Shen 許慎 (Shanghai: shangwu yinshuguan, 1936), 3:136.

174. Xu Qinting 徐芹庭, *Xishuo Xiaojing ji Ershisi xiao* 細說孝經暨二十四孝 [Detailed narrative of *The Classic of Filial Piety* and *The Twenty-four Cases of Filial Piety*], ed. Xu Yaohuan 徐耀環 (New Taipei: Shenghuan tushu, 2011), 4.

175. Tong, “Yingxiang,” 142.

176. Xu, *Xishui*, 30.

177. Chen, *Ershisi xiao tu*, 28.

178. *Ibid*, 6.

179. Yang and Yang, *Awaken*, 62.

look after psychological needs. Wang Xiang 王祥 “lay on the ice to search for carp,” because “his mother wanted to eat raw fish.”¹⁸⁰ When Qin Zhong saves Sister Mei from the street, he also takes good care of her emotional needs. When she sees him, she feels as if she has “seen someone from her own family [*ru jian qinren* 如見親人].”¹⁸¹ Note that, filial piety is regarded as a kind of love in *A Collection of Poems for the Twenty-four Cases of Filial Piety with Complete Images*. When Guo Jujing 郭居敬 edited “Ziwen baoxue” 恣蚊飽血 [Letting the mosquitos feed on his blood], he added a sentence to comment on why 吳猛 Wu Meng lets the mosquitos bite him instead of his parents: “His heart to love his parents [*ai qin zhi xin* 愛親之心] had already reached the greatest level.”¹⁸² Such *qing* is represented through one’s self-sacrifice for the sake of her or his beloved people’s well-being,¹⁸³ affectionate care of them in daily life and in illness,¹⁸⁴ and lasting concerns of their physical and emotional needs,¹⁸⁵ and such a representation is comparable to what we have seen in “Oil-peddler.” However, there is a fundamental difference between the natures of Guo Jujing’s concept of filial piety and Feng Menglong’s concept of romantic love. That is, the former is a duty and obligation, but the latter is voluntary. Qin Zhong takes care of Sister Mei before there is any formal agreement or commitment between them. Therefore, while both *Twenty-four Cases* and “Oil-peddler” portray *qing* as hierarchical, one-way devotion, fond in manner and free of any expectation of return (though the relationship between Qin Zhong and Sister Mei changes as the romance develops), the affectionate concern, care, and sacrifice in “Oil-

180. Chen, *Ershisi xiao tu*, 38. This story is also mentioned in Feng Menglong’s “Jingyang Gong tieshu zhen yao” 旌陽宮鐵樹鎮妖 [An iron tree at Jingyang Palace subdues demons], in *Jingshi tongyan* 警世通言, 602.

181. Yang and Yang, *Awaken*, 69.

182. Chen, *Ershisi xiao tu*, 40.

183. Tong, “Yingxiang,” 124-25.

184. *Ibid*, 125-28.

185. *Ibid*, 117-25.

peddler” are voluntary, based upon free will, and motivated by the genuine heart of a man who has *qing*.

In addition to the Chinese parent-child story, stories dealing with husband-wife relationships are also a likely source of the representation of romantic love in “Oil-peddler.” We can find similar expression of “giving warmth and removing cold” (*songnuan touhan*) in the early tradition. In *Tales of the World*, “Xun Fengqian devoted himself to his wife to the extreme degree [*zhi du* 至篤]. In the winter, when his wife was ill and had a fever [*bing re* 病熱], he went out to the courtyard and absorbed the cold [取冷], then came back and used his body to cool her down [*yi shen tang zhi* 以身熨之].”¹⁸⁶ We have seen a similar portrayal of *qing* as affectionate devotion in “Pearl Shirt,” when Xingge sacrifices himself for the sake of Sanqiao by taking only the necessities with him and leaving the valuables and better servants to take care of her. It is worth noting that while the husband-wife relationship generally is relatively hierarchical and not necessarily mutual in early tradition, the relationship between Xingge and Sanqiao becomes relatively equal and mutual in a kindness-reciprocation form. As the storyteller-narrator says:

Dear audience, you may well ask how come Sanqiao was still so full of a ection [*sic, qing* 情] for Jiang Xingge, when she should have severed all emotional ties [*en duan yi jue* 恩斷義絕] with the man who divorced her. The truth is that the couple had been as loving as could be [*shifen en 'ai de* 十分恩愛的]. It was because of Sanqiao’s misdemeanor that Xingge divorced her against his inclinations. In fact, he felt so sorry that he gave her back all the sixteen trunks intact on the night of her second wedding. Just this gesture alone was enough to melt Sanqiao’s heart. Now

186. Yu Jiayi 余嘉錫, comm, *Shishuo xinyu jianshu* 世說新語箋疏 [Collated and annotated *New Account of the Tales of the World*], comp. Liu Yiqing 劉義慶, annot. Liu Xiaobiao 劉孝標 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2007), 3:1075.

that she was living in the midst of wealth and honor, and he was in distress, she could hardly do anything else than extend a helping hand. This is a case of returning kindness for kindness [*zhi en bao en* 知恩報恩].¹⁸⁷

As Santangelo indicates, “The sense of ‘conjugal love’ [in the Ming] is generally expressed by the morpheme *en* 恩 (‘feeling indebted’) and by compounds, such as *en’ai* 恩愛, *enhao* 恩好, ‘affection’, often with reference to marriage.”¹⁸⁸ The affective kindness-reciprocation relationship between Xingge and Sanqiao may be akin to companionate marriage, in which a couple treats each other with mutual affection and appreciation; when one takes care of the other’s physical and emotional needs, the other will try her or his best to match the *qing* and kindness. In “Oil-peddler,” in the beginning it is Qin Zhong who unilaterally sacrifices for Sister Mei, but as the story proceeds she is gradually moved by his affectionate care, and in the end she commits herself to him to reciprocate his *qing*. As the storyteller-narrator says:

He was a young man in his prime;

She a girl skillful in the art of love.

He had dreamed about this for three long years;

She had wished for this moment for one full year.

*She thanked him for his patronage [*bangchen* 幫襯] last time,*

*Which deepened all the more her gratitude now [*en shang jia en* 恩上加恩].*

He thanked her for obliging him tonight,

*Which added to the love he had in his heart [*ai zhong tian ai* 愛中添愛].¹⁸⁹*

187. Yang and Yang, *Old and New*, 46.

188. Santangelo, *Sentimental Education*, 311.

189. Yang and Yang, *Awaken*, 69-70.

As in “Pearl Shirt,” the relationship between the male and female protagonists in “Oil-peddler” changes from one-way to reciprocal.¹⁹⁰ Reciprocity is an important factor in companionate marriage, together with gratitude. It is possible that Feng Menglong transfers *qing* from the husband-wife relationship to male-female relationships more generally, allowing one to give kindness and favors to the other before any formal agreement is articulated.

That which allows kindness and *qing* between husband and wife to enter male-female relationships more generally is probably friendship. As Huang points out, “In traditional China, many men believed friendship was more or less a masculine relationship in that it was largely perceived to be a male privilege.”¹⁹¹ Almost no stories center on male-female friendships. If we compare the expressions of *qing* in husband-wife stories and friendship stories, we find that there are not many differences between the two types. As Norman Kutcher observes, “Throughout Chinese history, powerful friendships, particularly those involving self-sacrifice, were often labeled as Guan-Bao [管鮑] friendships.”¹⁹² In one account, for example, Guan agonizes so over Bao’s illness that he refuses to eat or drink: “Once when Bao Shu 鮑叔 was sick, Guan Zhong

190. Indeed, both stories belong to the late period, and we do not know which one came first. Yet, it is also true that “Pearl Shirt” was published in the first of the *Three Words* in 1620 or 1621 and that “Oil-peddler” was published in the third in 1627. Furthermore, my focus is that man-woman relationship becomes relatively equal and reciprocal in Feng Menglong’s romantic story.

191. Martin W. Huang, “Male Friendship in Ming China: An Introduction,” *Nan Nü* 9, no. 1 (2007): 5.

192. Norman Kutcher, “The Fifth Relationship: Dangerous Friendships in the Confucian Context,” *The American Historical Review* 105, no. 5 (December 2000): 1626. Kutcher provides a summary of the story: “Guan Zhong and Bao Shu were officials of the Zhou period. The basic account of their friendship appears in Sima Qian’s [司馬遷] *Historical Records* [*Shiji* 史記]. As childhood friends, Guan and Bao frequently got small jobs together. Because Guan’s family was poor, Bao would let him take more of their earnings. As young men, they served competing would-be rulers of the state of Qi. When Guan was imprisoned, Bao came to his help by recommending him to his own leader, the duke of Huan. Bao even went so far as to ensure that Guan was promoted above himself. With Guan’s help, the duke of Huan was able to unite the Zhou dynasty under his own leadership.”

管仲 on his account would neither eat nor take water nor broth. As a blood relative he suffered over him [*ning qi huan zhi* 寧戚患之].”¹⁹³ Guan Zhong also shows deep understanding and recognition (*zhi*) of Bao Shu’s virtues so as to match his kindness and favors (*en*) as well as *qing*. As Huang argues, reciprocity “was always an important component in Chinese conceptualization of friendship.”¹⁹⁴ Kimberley Besio observes that there is an enhanced emphasis on reciprocity in the Ming vernacular story, and Feng Menglong seems to pay particular attention to reciprocity.¹⁹⁵ In “Fan Juqing ji shu sisheng jiao” 范巨卿雞黍死生交 [The chicken-and-millet dinner for Fan Juqing, friend in life and death], Zhong Shao 張紹 risks his life to take care of a scholar who has a contagious disease, whose name is later known as Fan Juqing 范巨卿: “He himself attended to the patient’s needs, serving him medicine and porridge. (*Such devotion is hard to come by.*)”¹⁹⁶ Fan Juqing is moved by his affectionate sacrifice and sympathy, and they develop a friendship/swore brotherhood as close as flesh and blood. Later, in order to reciprocate Zhong Shao’s kindness and keep their appointment, Fan Juqing cuts his throat so that he can become a ghost and flies to him in one day. Such an affectionate kindness-reciprocation structure is comparable to that we have seen in “Oil-peddler.” To Feng Menglong, *qing* between friends and that between husband and wife are very similar in nature. As we have mentioned in the previous section, in both “Li Xiuqing” and “Liu brothers,” as soon as one finds out that the other one is a woman disguised as a man, their friendship immediately transforms into romantic love. It is difficult to distinguish the former from the latter, and the two types of *qing* are seemingly interchangeable. In “Oil-peddler,” the relationship between Qin Zhong and Sister Mei can be seen

193. Ibid.

194. Huang, “Male Friendship in Ming China,” 27.

195. Kimberley Besio, “A Friendship of Metal and Stone: Representations of Fan Juqing and Zhang Yuanbo in the Ming Dynasty,” *Nan Nü* 9, no. 1 (2007): 111-45.

196. Yang and Yang, *Old and New*, 282.

as friendship, for his *qing* is characterized by understanding and recognition. After Qin Zhong's "one night of *qing*," Sister Mei considers him as "understanding *qing* [*zhiqing* 知情]," and the storyteller-narrator also regards him as "understanding one's heart and understanding one's mind [*zhixin zhiyi* 知心知意]." ¹⁹⁷ While the husband-wife relationship is obligatory (though sometimes involves strong affection), friendship is the one special bound that is "voluntary" and "potentially subversive."¹⁹⁸ As Santangelo notes, "It contains a certain degree of independence from social conventions, and attributes more importance to affective bounds than to traditional social relations."¹⁹⁹ By setting Qin Zhong and Sister Mei in a new form of the male-female friendship, Feng Menglong creates a possible channel through which all kinds of affective love flow together and become what he considers universal *qing*. It is universal *qing* that allows one to move the other by acting as affectionately as in a husband/wife relationship, yet freely and unilaterally before any formal agreement. Such a process forms a paradigmatic courtship, and such a male-female friendship constitutes a new form of a new potential form for the romantic relationship in the Chinese romance genre.

Finally, the kindness-reciprocation structure may make us think of the stories in which a hero saves a stranger. Such stories appear in Sima Qian's 司馬遷 *Shiji* 史記 [Records of the grand historian] (hereafter *Records*) as well as *Extensive Records*, and such actions are one of the distinguishing characteristics of the type of hero known as *xia* 俠 [swordsmen/swordwomem]. As John Christopher Hamm indicates, "Literary production on the topic of *xia*—altruistic and independent individuals and the values they practice—dates at least to China's Warring States period (403-331 BC)," and "Sima Qian's narrative material and conceptual framework serve as a

197. These are my literary translations, which are indebted to Yang and Yang's.

198. Kutcher, "Fifth Relationship," 1615-16.

199. Santangelo, *Sentimental Education*, 315.

foundation of subsequent treatments of *xia* in the Chinese literary tradition.”²⁰⁰ In *Records*, Sima Qian describes *youxia* 游俠 [wandering knights] as follows: “As for the wandering knights, ... Without thinking of themselves they hasten to the side of those who are in trouble, whether it means survival or destruction, life or death. ... How then can we say that the righteousness [*yi* 義] of these knights and retainers is insignificant.”²⁰¹ This portrayal is very close to the image of the “*qing* fanatic” (情痴) in *History*: “If I heard of someone in dire poverty of suffering a particular injustice, even if I did not know the person, I would do my best utmost to help.”²⁰² Indeed, in “Oil-peddler,” when Qin Zhong sacrifices himself to help Sister Mei with her hangover on the first night, the storyteller-narrator defines their relationship as having nothing to do with each other. Moreover, the second time Qin Zhong helps Sister Mei, his act can be characterized as *yingxiong jiu mei* 英雄救美 [a hero saving a beauty]. Sister Mei is in dire straits: she is dragged out to the street; her hairpins and earrings are pulled off, and her embroidered shoes and foot-bindings are taken off. Then, Qin Zhong appears as a hero and saves her from the street. In order to pay back Qin Zhong’s favor, Sister Mei offers to marry him. As Lin Chiu-Shuo 林秋碩 indicates, romantic love is a combination of reciprocation and kindness in *Extensive Records*.²⁰³ We have seen that in “Dragon,” the daughter of the Dragon King marries Liu Yi so as to repay his saving her. However,

200. John Christopher Hamm, *Paper Swordsmen: Jin Yong and the Modern Chinese Martial Arts Novel* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2005), 11-12. Some of the main studies include on the concept of swordsmen/swordwomem (*xia*) include Chen Pingyuan 陳平原, *Qianggu wenren xiake meng: Wuxia xiaoshuo leixing yanjiu* 千古文人俠客夢—武俠小說類型研究 [The literati’s chivalric dreams: Narrative models of Chinese knight-errant literature] (Taipei: Maitian, 1995); Cui Fengyuan 崔奉源, *Zhongguo gudian duanpian xiayi xiaoshuo yanjiu* 中國古典短篇俠義小說研究 [A study of classical Chinese chivalric short fiction] (Taipei: Lianjing chuban shiye gonsi, 1986); James Liu, *The Chinese Knight Errant* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967).

201. Burton Watson, trans., *Records of the Grand Historian: Han Dynasty II*, by Sima Qian 司馬遷 (Columbia University Press, 1993), 410-11.

202. Hanan, *Chinese Vernacular Story*, 96.

203. Lin, “*Tai ping guangji aiqing zhuti*,” 128-29.

“Oil-peddler” is special and different from “Dragon” as well as other stories involving heroic people who have Appropriety. While knights-errant are also characterized by being willing to sacrifice their money and even lives to save others, Qin Zhong’s favor and kindness is full of affection and fondness. When Sister Mei “poured her heart out to him,” “he pulled out from his sleeve a white silk kerchief more than five feet in length, tore it in half, and gave her both pieces to bind her feet with. He then wiped off her tears and gathered up her hair, all the while comforting her with soothing words.”²⁰⁴ The difference may be due to the fact that knights-errant save strangers according to Appropriety, but Qin Zhong’s heroic behaviors are based upon *qing*. Liu Yi refers to himself as “a man of Appropriety [*yifu* 義夫],” but Qin Zhong is referred to as “a man who has *qing* [*youqinglang* 有情郎].” As we have discussed in Chapter 1, a genuine knight-errant would not expect any rewards, and “a truly masculine hero should not associate with any women at all,”²⁰⁵ so it is not possible for a heroic man like Liu Yi to accept marriage with a beauty as payback. As Giovanni Vitiello points out, “By the Ming the knight-errant was no longer a social type. ... the knight-errant had progressively been disconnected from his original historical and social context to become a spirit, an ideal. ... Given this hero’s cold attitude (to say the least) towards women and sex, it becomes immediately apparent the marriage between *qing* and *xia*—that is, the romantic knight as a character—is problematic, being in a way almost a paradox.”²⁰⁶ However, Feng Menglong “emphasizes that a person of *qing* is capable of heroic actions and that *qing* and heroic actions are by no means mutually exclusive.”²⁰⁷ Therefore, while Liu Yi faces a

204. Yang and Yang, *Awaken*, 69.

205. Huang, *Negotiating Masculinities*, 31.

206. Giovanni Vitiello, “Exemplary Sodomites: Chivalry and Love in Late Ming Culture,” *Nan Nü* 2, no. 2 (January 2000): 220.

207. Huang, *Desire and Fictional Narrative*, 38.

dilemma over whether or not marry the dragon girl, Qin Zhong happily marries Sister Mei without any struggle.

As we have seen, to represent universal *qing*, “Oil-peddler” transfers various expressions of *qing* from different forms of relationships, including such as parent-child, husband-wife, friends, and strangers, and hybridizes them into an innovative representation of romantic love, forming a new potential form for the romantic relationship in the Chinese romance genre.

A potential new prototypical structure for the Chinese romance genre

For Feng Menglong, “*Qing* is about building a particular kind of community, one that is based on affect, intimacy, and spontaneity rather than on austere principles and imposed obligations.”²⁰⁸ Affectionate, sentimental, sympathetic, compassionate, altruistic, self-forgetful, dedicatory, and sacrificial behaviors to the well-being of others, which usually happen in obligatory relationships such as parent-child and husband-wife, can occur between two unacquainted individuals, as long as one has *qing* for the other. In “Oil-peddler,” the relationship between Qin Zhong and Sister Mei is first set as having nothing to do with each other. But, because Qin Zhong has *qing* (sympathy, affection) for Sister Mei, it is very natural for him to act like a friend in showing deep understanding, to act like a relative in fondly taking care of her, to act like a hero in saving his beloved from difficulties, and to sacrifice himself for her well-being before there is any formal agreement, commitment, obligation, or responsibility between them. Such truly unconditional *qing* and goodness which transcend any obligatory relationship and moral rules constructs Qin Zhong as a warm, good man with genuine *qing* and this novel model provides a fresh image of masculinity for the Chinese romance genre.

208. Lee, *Revolution of the Heart*, 42.

Qin Zhong's goodness comes from his genuine *qing*, which is also characterized by duration. As Santangelo argues, "In Chinese culture there are many concepts of ideal love as opposed to lust and debauchery. The essential characteristics of this concept can be found in the ideas of 'true love' and 'sincere heart-mind', *zhenxin* 真心, *zhenqing* 真情. They correspond to the duration of love and the constancy of the feelings. This quality is the superior value referred to by an author like Feng Menglong."²⁰⁹ In the first preface to *History*, Feng Menglong stresses the duration of *qing*, "Again, my intent has been to choose the best from among the stories concerning *ch'ing*, both ancient and contemporary, and to write up a brief account for each, so that I might make known to men the abiding nature of *ch'ing*."²¹⁰ As we have seen in "Oil-peddler," Qin Zhong's goodness is expressed through two major actions. One is that he affectionately takes care of her in her suffering drunken state, and the other is that he heroically saves her from dire straits when she has been abused. A year passes between the first set of events and the second, and each event includes a series of fond behaviors. In other words, Qin Zhong's goodness cannot be simply represented through a one-time heroic feat. Instead, it is built by a succession of various sentimental acts. Qin Zhong's conditionless *qing* together with continuous goodness form a paradigmatic process of courtship. It results in an archetypical narrative structure in which a good person shows his *qing* through various affectionate behaviors to gradually move the other party; in this way, the process of courtship becomes the most important part of the romance. This prototypical structure can be seen a radical turn in the development of the Chinese romance genre.

209. Santangelo, *Sentimental Education*, 132-33.

210. Mowry, "Ch'ing-shih," 12.

Conclusion

Quite a few scholars of Chinese literature have studied Feng Menglong's concept of *qing*, and understand his universal *qing* through his compilation of *History* and his vernacular stories in the *Three Words*. However, how have the literary genes of the Chinese romance genre mutated under the influence of Feng Menglong's redefinition of *qing*?

The notion of the Chinese romance as a genre was gradually taking shape in the early Song dynasty when *Extensive Records* was compiled. Eight stories centering on "passion" as intense, furious emotion between men and women were grouped together into a category named "sympathetic responses," giving shape to the early Chinese romantic story. These stories of "sympathetic responses" together with stories about "passion" in other categories share common characteristics in their depiction of romantic love as well as their character types and narrative structure, fashioning the definition of the early Chinese romantic story: a talented scholar falls in love with a beautiful woman at first sight; his "passion" takes the form of sexual desire; as soon as he expresses his "passion" through poetic composition, she immediately commits her heart and body to him. Seeing the formation of the genre and the vagueness of its definition, Feng Menglong in his revision of *Extensive Records* consciously regroupes "sympathetic responses" according to a more consistent and rigorous standard, and establishes a refined exemplary set which demonstrates the core of the Chinese *qing* story. Feng Menglong also raises "sympathetic responses" to a much higher position in his classification system, showing his great interest of the notion of *qing*. While inheriting the initial definition of *qing*, he begins to rethink its nature and other possible expressions. Soon after finishing *Selections*, he starts to compile *History*, one of the most important encyclopedic anthologies of Classical language tales about *qing* in the history of Chinese literature.

Here he includes many more stories dealing with various aspects of *qing* and structures them with a sophisticated classification system so as to expand the boundaries of *qing* and complicate its notion. *Qing* is redefined as based upon affect and compassion for others which links one to all beings. In part through reworking a literary heritage of tales about *qing*, Feng Menglong redefines a genre of tales about romantic love. For him, a story about *qing* should represent the emotion through a character's affectionate and sympathetic dedication to the well-being of her or his beloved. I show that, in the way that Feng Menglong reorganizes and edits and comments on the earlier *qing* stories, we can see the emergence of some of the basic elements of a new understanding of romantic relationships.

Feng Menglong's redefined *qing* is fully demonstrated in "Oil-peddler," a new vernacular romantic story from the late Ming. While other romantic stories either Classical or vernacular around this time still follow the old formula, this new vernacular romantic story innovatively represents *qing* as characterized by affection and sympathy. It reconstructs the image of a man who has *qing* (*youqinglang*) through a lexicon of affective expressions, including understanding (*zhi*), feeling pain/doting (*teng*), sympathizing (*lian*), and caring about (*xi*). As opposed to a faithless man who has inauthentic *qing* (*fuqingnong*), a man who has authentic *qing* is supposed to be a good person (*haoren*) whose affectionate and sympathetic behaviors are generated from a genuine heart, not any agreement, commitment, responsibility, or personal codes. This novel model of a good man who has authentic *qing* is associated with the feeling of warmth (*nuan*), which can be seen as a fresh image of masculinity for the Chinese romance genre. In fact, the innovative representation of *qing* in "Oil-peddler" is transferred from other types of stories dealing with other, previously existing forms of relationships, such as parent-child, husband-wife, friends, and strangers. To Feng Menglong, seemingly different expressions of *qing* in different relationships

are actually variational manifestations of universal *qing*; *qing* in these relationships is interchangeable or even identical in nature. By setting Qin Zhong and Sister Mei in a new form of the male-female friendship, Feng Menglong creates a channel through which various expressions of *qing* from various relationships can hybridize. Because Qin Zhong has *qing* for Sister Mei, it is very natural for him to act like a hero in saving his beloved from difficulties, to act like a friend in showing deep understanding, to act like a relative in fondly taking care of her, and to sacrifice himself for her well-being before there is any formal agreement, commitment, obligation, or responsibility between them.

I try to show that it is in “Oil-peddler” that Feng Menglong imagines a new form for the male-female relationship in the Chinese romance genre. In the beginning of this new romantic relationship, the man and the woman are strangers. Because he has *qing* for her, he starts to fondly take care of her like a hero, a friend, a husband, and a relative. He moves her through affective favors time after time, and her *qing* for him grows little by little. As their romance goes, their relationship gradually transforms from that of strangers to one that hybridizes the relationships of friends, spouses, and relatives. In the end, she commits her heart and body to him as payback to his *qing* and kindness. In this new romance, Feng Menglong creates an archetypical narrative structure: a new-model male’s series of affectionate and sympathetic behaviors, which occurs before any mutual agreement has been articulated, forms a paradigmatic process of courtship, and the paradigmatic process of courtship becomes the main and the most important part of the romance. This prototypical structure provides a new vision of what romantic love and romantic relationships might be, one previously unseen in previous Chinese romantic stories. Thus, “Oil-peddler” can be seen as a fundamental turn in the development of the Chinese romance genre.

This study raises at least three interesting questions. First, how far-reaching and long-lasting is the change in the representation of romantic love evident in Feng Menglong's "Oil-peddler"? For example, we might be able to find a similar expression of romantic love in "Liancheng" 連城, which appears in *Liaozhai zhiyi* 聊齋誌異 [Strange stories from the Leisure Studio] by Pu Songling 蒲松齡 (1640-1715). The *qing* between Liancheng 連城 and Qiao 喬 is characterized as recognition (*zhi*). When Liancheng becomes very sick, Qiao cuts his flesh for a monk to cure her. He claims that he does it not for money or her beauty: "As long as I can make her really understand me [*zhen zhi wo* 真知我], why should I worry if we do not get married? ... When we meet with each other, should she smile for me a little bit, I would die without any regret."²¹¹ After Feng Menglong's vernacular tales and Pu Songling's Classical romantic stories, the next large body of Chinese romantic stories is the "talent and beauty" novels in the Qing dynasty. This subgenre "first came to prominence in the second half of the seventeenth century" and "continued to be written throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries."²¹² As Huang observes, "The authors of the early Qing novels *Jin Yun Qian zhuan* [金雲翹傳 (The story of one gentleman and two sisters)], *Dingqing ren* 定情人 (The worthy lovers), and *Haoqiu zhuan* 好逑傳 (The ideal mate) ... took the task of de-eroticizing *qing* by insisting on its asexual nature, ... and the emphasis is on spiritual affinity as exemplified in the idea of *zhiji* 知己 (soul mate)."²¹³ It would be worthwhile to investigate how Feng Menglong's new notion of romantic love and romantic relationships as well as his novel model of a warm, good man with genuine *qing*, his paradigmatic process of courtship, and his archetypal narrative structure have evolved through

211. Zhu Qikai 朱其铠, ed., *Quanben xinzhū liaozhai zhiyi* 全本新注聊齋誌異 [A complete version of *Strange Stories from the Leisure Studio* with new annotations notes], by Pu Songling 蒲松齡 (Beijing: Renmin wenzue, 1989), 362.

212. Idema and Haft, *Guide to Chinese Literature*, 227.

213. Huang, *Desire and Fictional Narrative*, 71.

subsequent Chinese romantic stories, creating conventions for the Chinese romance genre and shaping it into what we have today.

Second, might there be extraliterary changes in thought and society that shaped and made possible Feng Menglong's new vision of the romantic relationship for the Chinese romance genre? For instance, Dorothy Ko notices that in the late sixteenth century "a booming publishing industry" and "the presence of a critical mass of literate women" led to "the birth of the woman reader-writer—as a type."²¹⁴ In the seventeenth century, "in every Jiangnan city and in every generation there were women who wrote, published, and discussed one another's works. The growth in the number of educated women, together with expanded opportunities for them to interact with one another and with society at large, created a critical mass that had not existed before."²¹⁵ Before this period, reading and writing largely were perceived to be a male privilege. It is natural that early romances, especially those "talent-beauty romances," were created relatively more from the male viewpoint so as to fulfill male fantasies. Is it possible that this new critical mass of literate women brought the female perspective to the Chinese romantic story and directly or indirectly resulted in a fresh image of masculinity and a new potential form for the romantic relationship in the genre?

The third issue is related to the second: while there might be extraliterary changes in thought and society that shaped and made possible Feng Menglong's new vision, has his new vision influenced readers' vision of romantic love and romantic relationships outside the realm of literature? As Santangelo points out, "Language itself, as a means of communication and a social praxis, shapes emotions. In the process of learning how to manifest emotions linguistically, certain

214. Dorothy Ko, *Teachers of the Inner Chambers: Women and Culture in Seventeenth-century China* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1994), 29.

215. *Ibid.*

forms of expression and certain contents (codes, formulas, sentimental elements and all means employed in a given language to demote affective experiences) are also assimilated.”²¹⁶ Have Feng Menglong’s prototypical romance and its successors constructed models for people to imitate? Have people been attracted and affected by these models in such a way as to create a new understanding of romantic love and romantic relationships? How have this prototype and its successors influenced the way romantic love is felt and communicated? For example, today we have a neologism *nuan’nan* 暖男 [warm men], which refers to understanding, sympathetic, affectionate, and caring men who can bring a feeling of warmth to others. Does this modern image have any direct or indirect genealogical link to Feng Menglong’s novel model of a warm, good man with genuine *qing*?

As far as researching that connection—whether of cause or of effect or of negotiation between Feng Menglong’s new prototypical romance and people’s notion of romantic love—it requires an interdisciplinary research with the help of anthropological perspectives and psychological knowledge, as well as literary, cinematic, social, and historical theory. In terms of the range of literary expertise, we may be able to contribute to such a study through combining textual analysis and the concept of intertextuality with study of the social and historical contexts of cultural production. Literature is one of the best carriers of emotional experiences. As Santangelo argues, “Literature is capable of bringing the scholar face to face with the emotions both as lived experience, the unrepeatably, unique and intimate reaction of the author, and as expression, i.e. the external manifestation seen in relation to the attitudes of others.”²¹⁷ Keith McMahon also argues that “fiction can be seen as part of a broad representational system consisting

216. Santangelo, *Sentimental Education*, 23.

217. *Ibid*, 52.

of the repertoire of images and stories through which a society identifies itself and its subjects.”²¹⁸

To investigate how Feng Menglong’s new romance and Chinese society have shaped each other, one possible way may be to examine romantic fiction as well as other art forms such as poetry, drama, music, and film after “Oil-peddler,” identify what ideologies and conventions have been preserved, discarded, and changed over the development of the Chinese romance genre, and observe these romances’ connections with how the notion of romantic love has been treated in philosophical, educational, cultural, critical, and personal prose. By tracing interactions and negotiations among these materials, we may be able to see the broader intercourse of Feng Menglong’s new vision and people’s thought and behavior, and we hope to find genealogical relations among Feng Menglong’s prototype, contemporary romantic literature, and actual romantic relationships, mapping out a part of Chinese romantic culture.

218. Keith McMahon, *Misers, Shrews, and Polygamists: Sexuality and Male-female Relations in Eighteenth-century Chinese Fiction* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1995), 7.

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