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## Introduction

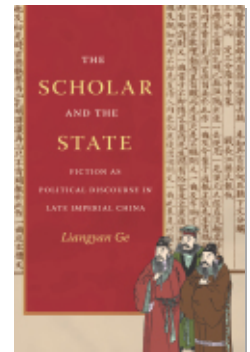
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# Introduction

“What is the political stance of this work?” “What is the writer’s relationship to political power? Is the writer an insider [*tizhinei*] or an outsider [*tizhiwai*]?” These are questions that critics of modern Chinese fiction regularly ask. In comparison, such an emphasis on politics is much less common in the field of late imperial Chinese vernacular fiction, where interpretation is usually conducted in the framework of a school of thinking, most often Confucianism, and sometimes Daoism or Buddhism.<sup>1</sup> That, of course, does not mean Chinese fiction was impervious to political reading before it entered the modern age. Premodern Chinese vernacular fiction was deeply embedded in a complex network of power relations, which inevitably instilled political meanings into it. Adopting an interdisciplinary approach and drawing on sociopolitical history, intellectual thinking, and literary studies, this book offers a reading of a number of works of vernacular fiction from the Ming (1368–1644) and Qing (1644–1911) periods in terms of the relationship between the intellectual elite and the imperial power.

On a personal level, a writer of Chinese vernacular fiction was typically someone who was disgruntled and resentful. His bitterness, according to many traditional critics, was usually rooted in his failure in the civil service examinations, which could in turn serve as a motivation for his fiction writing. The author of one of the prefatory pieces to the Rongyutang

edition of *Water Margin* (Shuihu zhuan; also translated as *Outlaws of the Marsh*), allegedly Li Zhi (1527–1602), calls the novel a work for “venting indignation” (*fafen*). And the reason for the ire, as suggested in the slightly oblique language here, was the unfairness in the imperial state’s system for selecting officials: “Nowadays, less virtuous persons dominate more virtuous ones, and the less worthy dominate the worthier. And that is the rule. If a less worthy person is the dominator and a worthier one is dominated, how can the latter be submissive without feeling humiliated? This is like a weaker person being the captor while a stronger one is the captive. How can the latter allow himself to be captured without trying to escape?”<sup>2</sup>

The late Ming critic Yang Minglang assumes a similar vein in his preface to *Registers of Heroes* (Yingxiang pu), a combination of the simplified versions (*jianben*) of both *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (Sanguo yanyi) and *Water Margin*. He asks in the preface: “Under the chilly mists and the cold moon, or amid the bitter winds and miserable rain, wouldn’t there be heroes and people of outstanding talent joining each other in chanting the stirring strains, to pour out their grievances and indignation?” The grievance over the system of official selection is only thinly veiled: “Those who are sovereigns must read this book; once they have read it, the heroes will be on the sides of the throne. Those who are prime ministers must read this book; once they have read it, the heroes will be in the imperial court.”<sup>3</sup> Likewise, in his preface to the 1658 edition of his novel *Ping Shan Leng Yan*, the pseudonymous author Tianhuazang Zhuren (Owner of the Depository of Heavenly Flowers) laments over his wasted abilities: “Facing the spring flowers and autumn moon, one cannot help being moved to tears: what is the use of my talent?” Fiction writing was thus a vent for his pent-up emotions: “One cannot do anything but project in fiction the illusory grandeur of his career. . . . All that is delightful and wonderful on the page is actually what he wanted to cry and weep for in life.”<sup>4</sup>

For many fiction writers, failure in the examinations was the most emotional setback of their personal lives. It reshaped their literary imagination and left an indelible imprint on their writings. Indeed, the topic of the examinations is ubiquitous in Chinese vernacular fiction. Among the short stories in Feng Menglong’s (1574–1645) three anthologies of vernacular tales known as *San yan*, those that deal directly with the examinations count for over forty percent.<sup>5</sup> The situation is similar with novels. In many works the topic is prominent in the foreground of the narrative;

in others, it lurks beneath the surface. One example is *Journey to the West* (Xiyou ji), a novel in which most of the characters are ostensibly supernatural beings. Through many years of diligent learning, the monkey Sun Wukong acquires magic powers unrivaled in the heavenly court, but is denied any official position above that of stable manager. Enraged with this insult and belittlement, the monkey takes revenge by wreaking havoc in heaven.

Such veiled lampoons of the perceived unfairness in official selection are also seen in *Water Margin*, where a group of aspirant warriors are forced to become bandits. They then prove their superior worth by repeatedly defeating the government forces headed by imperially appointed commanders. The warriors in the novel who become *marginalized*—as the title of the novel suggests—intriguingly parallel the historical compilers of the novel who drifted into a *marginalized* cultural zone.

Traditional Chinese fiction commentators have considered vernacular fiction a channel for venting personal grievances and frustration, despite questions of authorship in some cases and inadequate biographical information in others. However, failure to enter officialdom was more the rule than the exception for the literati in late imperial China, and what might appear to be a particular scholar's personal setback was actually a misfortune shared by thousands of his peers. So even without comprehensive biographical information, we can presume that this disposition would have been shared by the vast majority of the literati.

This collective approach is appropriate to the subject. The form of Chinese vernacular fiction, like that of the Western novel, is predominantly biographical, which gives shape to otherwise infinite and discrete material from social reality. The narrated life of the central character serves the purpose of elucidating his relationship with the “world of ideals,” which, in Georg Lukacs's words, “stands above him” but at the same time is “realized only through his existence within that individual and his lived experience.”<sup>6</sup> The central character thus becomes a “problematic individual,” and everything in the fictional world has to go through him to receive a “unified articulation.” He should therefore be considered an embodiment of a certain type of problematic in social life, rather than merely a surrogate of the author as an individual person. Indeed, as a central theme in Chinese vernacular fiction, government service is associated with communal and transpersonal imagery conglomerated and preserved through-

out the experiences of generations of literati, akin to the Jungian notion of the collective unconscious. Fundamental patterns and forms in the fictional presentation of the literati experience are thus not so much personal as, to follow the Jungian terminology again, archetypal.

Consequently, the fictional voice about official selection and government service is depersonalized, but depersonalization is only the first step in historicizing it. We may consider fiction as a reflection of the historical environment in which it was born. To do so is certainly useful, yet ultimately it may prove to discount the efficacy of literature. To consider fiction purely as a product of history is to treat history as a finished process prior to literary creation. In that view, literature is seen as a mere derivative, conceived and nurtured within the parent body of social history. This hierarchy of history over literature is a far cry from the Aristotelian view that poetry, “more concerned with the universal,” is “more philosophical and more significant than history,” which is “more with the individual.”<sup>7</sup> Modern historical criticism has taken a different understanding of the relationship of literature to history. Instead of treating literature simply as determined by history, some consider literary practices as political forces that participate in the dialectic process of history.<sup>8</sup> Others refuse to treat history as a mimetic reenacting of events that have taken place in the external world. Instead, they look at history, like literature, as a discursive practice. For them, history is not a completed story of the past but an open-ended process of getting to know the world, a world that is constantly joined by history writing itself.<sup>9</sup> In that sense, literary works are no less historical documents than history, as literature, like writing of history, attempts simultaneously to know the world and to participate in it. Citing approvingly Herder’s notion of “the mutual embeddedness of art and history,” some scholars of New Historicism argue that poetry “is not the path to a transhistorical truth . . . but the key to particular historically embedded social and psychological formations.”<sup>10</sup> As a literary work is no longer seen as a mirror passively reflecting reality but an active player in social life, it is as much an event in history as a representation of it: “If an entire culture is regarded as a text, then everything is at least potentially in play both at the level of representation and at the level of event. Indeed, it becomes increasingly difficult to maintain a clear, unambiguous boundary between what is representation and what is event. At the very least, the drawing or maintaining of that boundary is itself an event.”<sup>11</sup>

This book is an attempt to historicize Chinese vernacular fiction as a representation of as well as a participant in the sociopolitical reality of the time. It focuses on political discourse in the fictional texts, which are heavily informed by both the engagement and the tension between the interests of the intellectual elite and those of the imperial power (often referred to as *shi* 勢) during the late dynasties.<sup>12</sup> Imperial power refers to the political authority centered on the throne, but it is always a larger notion than the emperor as a person. In Chinese dynastic history there were rulers who were too weak or too young to fully exercise the imperial authority. In those cases, imperial power, completely or partially, fell into the hands of strong men (or, in some cases, women) close to the power center. Even a capable emperor would need assistance from his aides, many of whom were scholar-bureaucrats. Their dual status as both scholars and officials underscores the fact that imperial power and the intellectual elite were not completely discrete categories.

Nor was the intellectual elite, whose members were often known as *shi* 士 or *shidafu*, a homogeneous social group. Between these two terms, *shi* may be of earlier origin, with a broader semantic range: originally it referred simply to a male adult, typically one of the lowest rank of nobility, before it came to be used in pre-Qin times (prior to 221 BCE) to indicate an office holder. In the latter sense, it became largely synonymous with *shidafu*.<sup>13</sup> In the context of the late imperial times, both *shi* and *shidafu* refer to intellectuals in general, in and out of civil officialdom. According to the dictionary *Sea of Words* (Cihai), *shidafu* was a term for bureaucrats in “ancient times” (*gushi*) but came to refer to respected scholars in general in “premodern periods” (*jiushi*).<sup>14</sup> The semantic shift itself reflects a historical change in the formation of the intellectual elite that may have started prior to late imperial times. A modern historian has informed us that in the Northern Song period (960–1126) “those who called themselves *shi* still thought of themselves as people who served in government”; by the end of the Southern Song (1127–1279), however, there were as many as 450,000 examination candidates and a mere 20,000 officials.<sup>15</sup> That change continued throughout the Ming and Qing periods. While the number of the examination candidates increased steadily, the overwhelming majority of them ended up receiving no official appointments.

As the *shi* gradually evolved from a social group almost identical with civil bureaucracy into one preponderantly outside officialdom, they

drifted increasingly away from the gravity of political power. To be sure, the literati and the political authorities were never completely at odds with each other. The fact that the imperial state continued to recruit scholars to replenish civil officialdom was sufficient evidence for their interdependence. Furthermore, to maintain order in local communities, especially beneath the county level, the imperial government relied heavily on the local gentry, mostly literati.<sup>16</sup> However, the authoritarian rule of the empire and its seizure of the moral primacy from the *daotong*, or the lineage of orthodox learning, significantly reshaped its relationship to the literati.<sup>17</sup> Despite the complexities and possible ambiguities in the relationship, macrocosmically one may consider the literati and imperial state as two distinct and interacting social forces. Even in some cases of scholar-bureaucrats, their official status may not necessarily have prevented them from being considered members of the intellectual elite. In fact, because of their proximity to the center of political power, their stories might reflect the *shi* (intellectual elite)—*shi* (state power) relationship most clearly.

In Western scholarship on premodern Chinese literature and culture, the word “literati” has been treated as the standard English equivalent of *shi* or *shidafu*. This book follows that practice. However, “literati,” which literally means “men of letters” (*wenren*), may not always do full justice to *shi* or *shidafu*, who were not only culturally elites but could also be social and political activists. As Tu Wei-ming puts it, “The priestly function and philosophical role in both the public image and the self-definition of the Confucian scholar compels us to characterize him not only as a ‘literatus’ but also as an ‘intellectual.’”<sup>18</sup> In view of such semantic nuances, this book will also use terms such as “intellectuals” and “scholars,” which are considered generally interchangeable with but specifically complementary to the term “literati.”

Obviously, the match between the literati and the imperial state was never one of two equals. Most often the state was on the offensive, forcing the literati to protect or negotiate for their own interests. In Antonio Gramsci’s words, “state = political society + civil society, in other words hegemony protected by the armor of coercion.”<sup>19</sup> Yet the “cultural hegemony” of the imperial state is not to be considered here purely an external threat to the literati. Michel Foucault proposes that power should always be regarded as a relationship, as power would cease to be power if it meets no resistance: “I would like to suggest another way to go further toward

a new economy of power relations. . . . It consists in taking the forms of resistance against different forms of power as a starting point. To use another metaphor, it consists in using this resistance as a chemical catalyst so as to bring to light power relations, locate their position, find out their point of application and the methods used.”<sup>20</sup>

In a sense, Chinese imperial power could not be simply *possessed* by the throne or the state, because it could never exist as an entity or structure external to the social nexus. It would not become realized until it went into connection, collision, or confrontation with other social forces. Imperial power not only subjected Chinese literati to passivity but also spurred them to new actions. What defines that power relationship, to borrow from Foucault again, is “a mode of action that does not act directly and immediately on others” but “acts upon their actions: an action upon action, on possible or actual future or present actions.”<sup>21</sup> Indeed, while relying heavily on intellectual elites for the civil administration of the empire, imperial power also had to control them and thwart their desires and aspirations. Such “antagonism of strategies” was, perhaps more than other social relations, responsible for the particular type of cultural order in imperial China. What happened between the state and the literati was therefore not only a struggle over domination but also a catalysis generating new cultural phenomena and meanings.

The system of civil service examinations was, beyond any doubt, the most important interface between the literati and the state. Back in the Tang period (618–907), Emperor Taizong (r. 627–49) once made this outcry of joy at the sight of a long file of successful candidates of the metropolitan examinations: “All heroes of the empire have now entered my fold.”<sup>22</sup> Surely there was good reason for the emperor’s exultation. If he indeed had all men of talent under his control, he would not only be able to replenish civil officialdom but also leave little opportunity for political opposition. The emperor’s exclamation summarizes the nature of the examination system, a sociopolitical institution he himself helped to develop.<sup>23</sup> For over a thousand years since its genesis during the Sui dynasty (589–618), the examination system served as the imperial state’s primary avenue for selecting civil officials and was the most important means for political and ideological control of the literati. Starting in the Yuan period (1279–1368), when the government adopted the Cheng-Zhu school of learning as the core of the examination curriculum, the literati’s



intellectual lives were “constricted into a system of concepts, arguments, and beliefs endorsed by the state for larger political purposes.”<sup>24</sup> In the meantime, as an official appointment usually brought about enormous social prestige and abundant economic benefits, success in the examinations became for many scholars the ultimate goal of education. The examination system thus became a realm where “imperial dynasties, gentry-literati elites, and classical studies were tightly intertwined,” and when the institution was finally abolished in the early twentieth century, they all fell with it.<sup>25</sup>

One of the “larger political purposes” of imperial power with the examination system was its appropriation of the *dao* learning (*daoxue*). The rulers—especially emperors Hongwu (r. 1368–98) and Yongle (r. 1403–24) of the Ming and emperors Kangxi (r. 1662–1722), Yongzheng (r. 1723–35), and Qianlong (r. 1736–95) of the Qing—played the roles of both apostle of *dao* learning and sponsor of massive literary projects. By doing so they made themselves appear like “sage-kings,” boasting supreme authority in both state politics and moral and intellectual matters. Indeed, much more than the pristine form of Confucianism represented by Confucius and Mencius, the Cheng-Zhu school of thinking was, from its inception, a product of the power relations between the *daotong* and the *zhengtong*, or the lineage of political power. Yet the Ming and Qing rulers further tightened their ideological grip, often through their tampering with the Confucian canon and manipulation of the examination curriculum. The state’s appropriation of the *daotong* in late imperial China may be considered a good example of the symbiotic dynamic between power and knowledge. On the one hand, the Confucian orthodoxy exerted some influence on political power; on the other hand, the imperial state constantly attempted to reshape *dao* learning into a form of knowledge that could best serve its own purposes. In that sense, the Cheng-Zhu school of thought, as the state ideology and the criterion for official selection, should be considered a discourse fashioned by the joint forces of both political power and academic learning.

Confucianism, in both its pristine version and the Cheng-Zhu formulation, was a system of thinking with a strong emphasis on moral cultivation and perfection on both personal and communal levels. With their moral and intellectual superiority, leading figures in the *daotong* tradition such as Confucius and Mencius did not serve society as princes or administrators but primarily as teachers. The Confucian practice of moralizing

people's day-to-day conduct, like the Christian church's guidance of its members to salvation, was akin to a shepherd's care for his flock. Indeed, in its role of moral stewardship for the people and its rivalry and competition with political power, the authority of the *daotong* was not unlike "an old power technique that originated in Christian institution," which Foucault calls the "pastoral power."<sup>26</sup> Yu Yingshi has noted that the bifurcation of the *zhengtong* and the *daotong* in Chinese history was "not totally incomparable to that of the state and the church in the West," even though "anything resembling the church-state confrontation in the West never truly took place in China."<sup>27</sup> Foucault argues that, while the "ecclesiastical institutionalization" of the pastoral power "has ceased or at least lost its vitality since the eighteenth century," its function became integrated into modern Western state power, which is "both an individualizing and totalizing form of power."<sup>28</sup> Even though Foucault asserts that this "tricky combination" was never seen before in the history of human societies, not "even in the old Chinese society,"<sup>29</sup> a remarkable parallel is discernible between the modern Western state's adoption of the pastoral power and the state's appropriation of the *daotong* in late imperial China. By adopting pastoral power, modern Western state started to use a particular set of techniques and rationalities that had originally belonged to the church in order to "govern or guide people's conduct as individual members of a population."<sup>30</sup> Quite similarly, the state in late imperial China seized from the *daotong* the moral guardianship of its people, especially through the regime of the examinations and the education system closely geared to official selection.

The literati's frustration was thus twofold, as they were largely displaced from both their traditional profession of civil officialdom and their traditional role of moral leadership. In their power relationship with the imperial state, they were obviously at a great disadvantage. Yet, if a power relationship is a field of interactions, as Foucault insists, Chinese vernacular fiction, or at least a significant part of it, may be considered the literati's "action" upon the "action" of the state. Indeed, the popular perception of vernacular fiction as an unofficial and unorthodox discourse—suggested in such epithets as "wild" (*ye*) and "extra" (*wai*) that frequently appear in fiction titles—always cast on it a coloring of unruliness and intractability. Of course, under the threat of literary inquisition few writers would be blatantly seditious or even publicly repudiate the tenet of political loyalty.

Consequently, fictional expressions of political discontent and disillusionment are for the most part subtle and covert.

As the imperial state became the predominant voice in the public discourse of ethics and morality, the speech rights for the literati were diminished. It has been suggested that the literati in late imperial China found themselves “in a state of collective aphasia.”<sup>31</sup> Under such circumstances, they found an alternative discourse in *xiaoshuo*, supposedly an insignificant discourse on trifle matters, as the term *xiaoshuo*, literally “small talk,” suggests. The bifurcation of these two different discourses may shed light on some salient features of Chinese vernacular fiction. For instance, the fictional indulgence in *qing* as private and personal feelings might be, among other things, a counterweight to the neo-Confucian emphasis on *li* as truth in the public sphere. For fiction writers, the retreat from public discourse was therefore not really a retreat in defeat. By earning their speech rights in “small talk,” they quickly turned it into a platform on “big” issues; by seemingly pulling themselves away from politics, they found a way to reenter it.

Yet exclusive focus on concrete historical happenings in the immediate context of a literary work may result in seeing the tree while losing sight of the forest. Historicism with no vision is, in Hayden White’s formulation, “a timid historicism.”<sup>32</sup> This book aims to render fictional works intelligible in terms of their synchronic as well as diachronic meanings. For that purpose, they are viewed not merely in the context of a particular historical period—namely, late imperial dynasties—but also in the sequenced and layered history of the relationship between the intellectuals and the state since the early times of imperial China. In this more teleological approach, these works in Chinese vernacular fiction are to be considered a late chapter in a master narrative of that intricate relationship. Toward that end, chapter 1 offers a brief survey of the evolution of the *shi* (士)–*shi* (勢) relationship throughout Chinese imperial history. In particular, it discusses the implication of the literati’s alienation from their traditional identity as office-holders and the political authorities’ appropriation of the *daotong* in late imperial times, and considers the literati’s power relationship with the state a crucial factor for the general intellectual climate. In short, this chapter brings out the contours of the sociopolitical landscape for Chinese vernacular fiction.

Considering works of fiction as political acts and events, one may

realize that some of them could have been catapulted into existence by a certain political situation. A case in point is *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (hereafter *Three Kingdoms*), which will be discussed in chapter 2. The depiction of the ruler-minister and ruler-subject relationships in this historical novel demonstrates a strong affinity to the Mencian ideal of political sovereignty, which advocates reciprocity and interdependence between the ruler and the ruled and between political power and intellectual talent. This chapter offers a review of the authoritarian rule by the founding emperors of the Ming, Hongwu (Zhu Yuanzhang) and Yongle (Zhu Di), especially their suppression of the Confucian classic *Mencius* (Mengzi) and manipulation of the examination curriculum. The unwavering adherence to the Mencian view in *Three Kingdoms*, whose earliest textual exemplar may be dated to the early decades of the Ming, may be seen as a political statement by the literati. While the novelist clearly had to maintain a certain degree of allegiance to historical sources, the manners in which he selected and revised historical information signals a political stance against absolute imperial dominance, which becomes clear when viewed against the background of early Ming politics.

As one sees in *Three Kingdoms*, a man of talent in the Three Kingdoms period was in an advantageous position to select his political master. The literati in late imperial times no longer had that luxury, when highly centralized imperial power became the sole employer of talent and intelligence. Chapter 3 examines similarities between the selection of scholars for civil bureaucracy and the selection of women for the palace staff and imperial harem in late imperial China. Taking advantage of the affinities between these processes, late Ming and early Qing fictional eroticism frequently employs the civil service examinations as a metaphor for the selection of women in sexual escapades. A number of seventeenth-century erotic narratives are relevant here, including Li Yu's (1611–80) *The Carnal Prayer Mat* (Rou putuan), allowing us to read the narrated eroticism hinged upon the examination metaphor as satire and parody of the imperial state as the ultimate selector from the human resources empire-wide.

If the seventeenth-century writers of fictional eroticism turned official selection into the butt of bawdy jokes, the eighteenth-century novelist Wu Jingzi (1701–54) assumed a more somber approach in his masterwork *The Scholars* (Rulin waishi), which presents a panoramic picture of moral ills. Chapter 4 shows how the seemingly episodic narrative structure in *The*

*Scholars* veils a consistent thematic thread involving the literati's struggle to break out of the capsule of texts in which the state has entrapped them. As spiritual heirs to Wang Mian, with whom the novel begins, the four "extraordinary figures" (*qiren*) at the conclusion of the novel herald a new generation of educated men who are able to extricate themselves from the servitude to the imperial state. *The Scholars* thus presents an account of the literati's wrestling with political power and their shift from serving the state toward serving the society.

In a sense, the four "extraordinary figures" at the end of *The Scholars* herald the advent of another such figure, namely Jia Baoyu in the slightly later novel *Dream of the Red Chamber* (Honglou meng). Taking the reflexive nature of the novel as the premise, chapter 5 examines Jia Baoyu's strong aversion to a bureaucratic career and his status as the destined maker of the "Story of the Stone" (Shitou ji), the narrative text about his mundane experience that is eventually to be inscribed on the supernatural rock. The narrative account of the Stone-*baoyu* (the jade)-Baoyu trinity may be seen as a dramatic recuperation of the story of the fictionalized novelist in the prefatory piece titled "Fanli" (literally, statement of general principles), especially his conversion to fiction writing. *Dream of the Red Chamber*, in this light, can be read as a fiction about a young scholar's rethinking of the literati's long-standing political commitment to government service and all the complications surrounding his independent vocational decision.

Given the enormous corpus of Chinese vernacular fiction, the works to be discussed here are intended to be only illustrative. While the fiction writers may not have been fully aware of their historical roles, they were, after all, prepared by the ideological conditions of their times. Individual works are thus not isolated and discrete artifacts but *paroles* in the larger system of *langue*, that is, individual utterances in a collective discourse of the literati. Indeed, one may discern an attempt in Chinese vernacular fiction, even though often repressed as a "political unconscious," to redefine the literati's group identity and reassess their place in the changed power structure. In particular, Chinese vernacular fiction represents a relentless effort to destabilize the value system of the day, or the symbolic order that the state helped to sustain and bolster with the moral teachings that it had appropriated from the *daotong*, especially the teaching on government service. In doing so, the genre heralds the intellectuals' social and cultural

roles in a new age. To that extent, late imperial Chinese vernacular fiction “must be read as a symbolic meditation on the destiny of community.”<sup>33</sup>

Many works of Chinese vernacular fiction are known for their remarkable polysemy and multifariousness. They can be contextualized in multiple ways with different configurations of cultural forces of the time—the burgeoning commercial economy, rising urban culture, the booming print and publishing industry, spreading literacy, the evolving aesthetic tastes, the interfusion between elite culture and popular culture—resulting in virtually inexhaustible interpretational possibilities. The purpose of this book is a modest one, namely, to call further attention to a way of reading Chinese vernacular fiction that has not been adequately discussed. The political reading presented here complements other readings but does not aim to supersede them.

All of the works discussed here were written before the end of the eighteenth century. There is a reason for not including later works. With the intrusion of the Western powers—an intrusion that had cultural, economic, and military consequences—Qing China became significantly different in the nineteenth century. The addition of the West as a new player thoroughly changed the political landscape of the country. For that reason, nineteenth-century Chinese fiction falls out of the scope of the present book, and should be the topic for another study.