

Killing Me Softly in a Metropolis: Tales of Murder and Murderous Passion
in Republican Shanghai (1911-1937)

by

Yuchen Yan

Critical Asian Humanities
Duke University

Date: _____

Approved:

Carlos Rojas, Supervisor

Eileen Chow

Leo Ching

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Critical Asian Humanities
in the Graduate School
of Duke University

2021

ABSTRACT

Killing Me Softly in a Metropolis: Tales of Murder and Murderous Passion
in Republican Shanghai (1911-1937)

by

Yuchen Yan

Critical Asian Humanities
Duke University

Date: _____

Approved:

Carlos Rojas, Supervisor

Eileen Chow

Leo Ching

An abstract of a thesis submitted in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Critical Asian Humanities
in the Graduate School of
Duke University

2021

Copyright by
Yuchen Yan
2021

Abstract

The relationship between metropolitan cities around the world and tales of murder has encompassed the complicated nature of modern life, and such is also the case of Shanghai in the Republican era. The prosperity of the print industry in Shanghai, in the first few decades of the 20th century, has intertwined profoundly with Shanghai's reform culture that denotes different literary currents, ideological transformations and changes of everyday life, all of which pertain to cultural exchanges with the West. Such a socio-cultural context not only determines the material basis and the agencies of the production, circulation and reception of murder narratives, but also influences the cognitive and conceptual apparatuses that position murderous violence in different spectacles of political movements, social conventions and knowledge production.

In this thesis, I examine tales of murders in various literary texts in Republican Shanghai before 1937, the first metropolis in Republican China and also one of the most famous cosmopolitan cities in a semicolonial society in the first half of the 20th century. I mainly focus on murder narratives in three different forms of texts: the newspaper coverage of murder cases and their aftermath represented by reports on *Shen Bao* 申報, the detective stories in the *Huo Sang* and *Lu Ping* series written by two illustrious Shanghainese authors, Cheng Xiaoqing and Sun Liaohong, and depictions of murder and murderous violence in the works of authors that are commonly grouped as Neo-sensationalist School. Besides the issue of genre, what also matter in this categorization are the narrative techniques they deploy and the different lenses they choose in

approaching murders. Informed by Thomas de Quincey's method of examining murder as a cultural phenomenon, instead of limiting it to the field of psychiatric analyses or legal practices, this thesis also deploys theories of nationalism, sexuality, flâneurie, surrealism and psychoanalysis to unpack how the tales of murder in Shanghai project discourses of Chinese modernity as a site of contestations multilayered with different forces. I therefore argue that the tales of murder have conjured up a domain of imagination that serves as an undercurrent of Chinese cultural history. The complexity of the cultural production concerning murder encounters the complex nature of the issue of Shanghai modern ranging from female rights, national formation, the role of intellectuals and leftist turn in reform culture, and linking to this, the ambiguity of the position of literature in a modernizing society.

Key Words: Tales of Murder, Republican Shanghai, Urban Modernity, Cultural Production

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the beautiful memory of my maternal grandfather.

Contents

Abstract.....	iv
List of Figures.....	viii
Acknowledgements.....	1
Introduction.....	3
1. Fallen Lives in the Newspaper: Ethics of Reading and Writing.....	15
1.1 Printing the Blueprint, the Leisure and the Darkness.....	17
1.2 A Flower Destroyed by an Evil Man.....	22
1.3 “Murdering the Husband” (谋杀亲夫 mousha qinfu) as a Barometer.....	26
1.4 Who Murdered the New Woman?.....	30
2. Adventures of Detectives in Oriental Paris.....	36
2.1 A Brief History of Huo Sang and Lu Ping.....	38
2.2 A Poison to Swallow, A Textbook to Read, A Game to Play.....	43
2.3 “Haunted House” and Familicides: Toward an Allegorical Reading of China-West Clashes.....	49
2.4 Playing with Identity and Truth: A New Myth of the Metropolis.....	54
3. Entering the Inner World: Participation in Murder in Urban Phantasmagoria.....	59
3.1 Murder as Reading Experiences: Shi Zhecun’s Textual World.....	61
3.2 The Desire in a Prison Cell: Dancing with the Femme Fatale.....	68
3.3 The Birth of Proletarian Monsters: Gothic Marxist Reading or Marxism as Gothic.....	74
Conclusion.....	81
Works Cited.....	84

List of Figures

Figure 1: The Cover of <i>The Cat with the Telltale Tattoo!</i> (2014).....	4
Figure 2: Yan Ruisheng and Wang Lianying's photographs.....	23

Acknowledgements

First, I would like to express my greatest appreciation to my advisor Professor Carlos Rojas, who guides me with his great wisdom, patience, and academic insight. Studying with him is one of the best things that can ever have happened in my life, and it is also him who makes my experience at Duke University a magical intellectual tour and a valuable experience.

I am extremely grateful to Professor Eileen Cheng-yin Chow and Professor Leo Ching for serving on my committee. The dialog they have engaged with me, and their feedback and critiques are valuable and inspiring for my revision and in a broader sense, issues that I should pay attention to in my studies in the future.

I am thankful to Professor Roberto Dainotto and his teaching assistant, Ciro Incoronato from the Department of Literature, for offering me the opportunity to audit their undergraduate course on detective novels. This thesis, especially the second chapter, owes much to the structure of the course and the fruitful discussions we had in class.

I am deeply indebted to my friends in the US or China for encouraging me and supporting me all the time. Specifically, as this thesis was written during the global coronavirus pandemic, I appreciate my fellows at Duke University and Peking University for giving me inspiration, encouraging me, and fighting alongside me at this tough time.

I give special thanks to Shiyu Li, who has been my friend for more than 10 years and is currently working toward his doctoral degree at Jilin University, for his support in searching Chinese-language materials for me. His kind help greatly solves my problem of

the lack of access to materials and texts that are no longer available on the market or internet.

Finally, I sincerely appreciate my beloved parents, who raised me and endeavored to enable me to receive a top-level education since my formative years. Their love, kindness, and good quality make them the best teachers for me in this world.

Introduction

In 2014, a Canadian illustrator, Samuel Porteous published his first comic book, *The Cat with the Telltale Tattoo*, in his *Mee Mee Khang* detective series under the pen name of Nathaniel Scobie. Setting against the backdrop of Shanghai in the 1920s, the book features a Chinese cat detective, Constable Khang. Working for the Shanghai Public Security Bureau, he is responsible for the security of a bird and flower market in Shanghai's Chinese city. One day he receives a case report that a kitten tattooed with Chinese characters *mousha* 谋杀 (murder) appears in his market (Figure 1). Given only three days to unravel the mystery of what seems to be an international conspiracy against the wealthiest foreign family, the Ahrimans, Khang has to cooperate with the police forces from different foreign settlements and prepares to face unknown enemies. The murder investigation guides Khang out of the world he is familiar with and is turned into an adventure to the semicolonial city Shanghai. After surviving a series of attacks and overcoming difficulties that impede the investigation, Constable Khang successfully prevents an attempted murder targeting Mr. Ahriman, after which he also learns about the conflict between Mr. Ahriman and the Tus family regarding the appropriation of the Tus' family grave. Therefore, for Constable Khang, the pursuit of justice is far from coming to an end.

In his interview, Porteous highlights that he endeavors to offer accurate depictions of old Shanghai in this comic book, ranging from street landscapes to advertisements of renowned brands. His pursuit of authenticity and passion of exposing readers to a

moment when “the provincial collided with the cosmopolitan and the ancient slammed into the modern” reflect the influence of the Western lore of Shanghai to an artist, as well as other Chinese culture appreciators from the West (Yang). However, this obsession with revisiting an iconic Chinese metropolis that historically represents the collision between two civilizations is interestingly associated with imagining violence, blood, and chaos. Further, the traditional happy ending of solving the murder case is complicated by the implication of a critical inquiry of truth and legal justice in a society that has been rampant with different political forces.

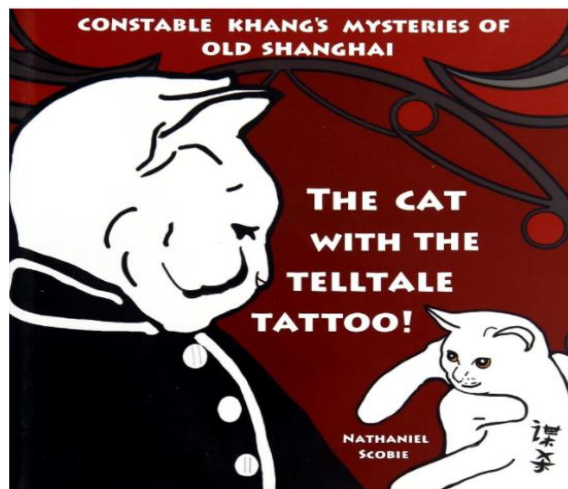


Figure 1: The Cover of *The Cat with the Telltale Tattoo!* (2014)

Mee Mee Khang’s story brings to light important questions of how the social and cultural context of Republican Shanghai, has intertwined with murders from both beyond and within the text. It reveals the significance of a broader discussion of murder as a domain of contestations and to what extent murder can be productive and serve as a lens

for us to observe how a wide variety of collective issues in Republican Shanghai are contested and responded to.

Murder is a critical concern throughout the history of human civilizations and thus, not a modern concept. Defined as taking other human's life without legal excuses, as a legal term it is first inseparable from the existence of legal apparatuses that judicially define whose life is under the legal protection and what kind of punishment should be imposed. Although the death penalty for the murderer has entered the public perception of reclaimed justice, it has established murder's status as that which "consumes the corpse of the victim and the murderer alike" (Knox 16). However, in this project I did not seek to make a commitment to how the criminal law in the Republican Era change the position of murder socially or legally. Rather, I am interested in the sparks produced by the collision between the idea of murder and a semicolonial society with a pursuit of modernization in every aspect, where the representations of murder ran through a thread and help us navigate through urban modernization as a contested site.

The theoretical underpinnings of anchoring the discussion of murder as a form of art and unpacking them through the lens of modern owe greatly to Thomas de Quincey, whose name is never absent in all kinds of scholarly accounts of detective fiction, thrillers, and even surrealistic movements in the 20th century. Showing a lifetime interest in topics concerning violence, horror, and transgressive behaviors, De Quincey published a series of provocative essays centering on his investigation of tales of murder ranging from murders recorded in the Bible to the contemporary murder case that he is most

obsessed with, “the Ratcliff Highway Murders” committed by John Williams in 1811.¹ This set of essays include “On the Knocking at the Gate in Macbeth” (1823), “On Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts” (1825), “Second Paper on Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts” (1839), and “Postscript to ‘On Murder’” (1854). In an imaginative and distorted way, De Quincey represents and reproduces murder events by accessing them from different perspectives and capturing the energy of sublime attraction that consists of thrill, excitement, and aestheticism. These aspects foreground the discussion of murder as a cultural phenomenon, and an object that can be studied, analyzed, and delighted.

For example, in his 1823 essay “On the Knocking,” his interest is mainly in the interior world of Macbeth and his wife. In a rather serious tone, he proposes that besides all the complicated ethical discourses pertaining to murder, the interior world of the murderer like Macbeth in Shakespeare’s play, can be gracious, poetic, and aesthetic (5). He emphasizes that in *Macbeth*, spectators experience a critical process of sympathizing with the murderer and stepping into another world that is beyond “the region of human purposes, human desires” (“On the Knocking” 6). From his perspective, the significance of murder is worth exploring concerning its artistic magnificence, which to a large extent relies on a thorough examination of the murderer’s inner world. The issue of varied narrative perspectives implies that it is at least questionable that tales of murder can only

¹ “The Ratcliff Highway Murders” refers to two murders committed in December 1811. Seven people in two families, the Marrs and the Williamsons were killed in their own houses in the London Docklands district of Wapping in the United Kingdom. The primary suspect John Williams committed suicide before being put on trial.

be told and read as a moral lesson, giving more fluidity to the moral implications of murder narratives. If murder necessarily connects to the empirical world through the passion of finding and reproducing truth, then De Quincey's approach indicates how the analysis could be produced and how the perception of truth, as a priori, will always be fragmented, incomplete, and contested.

If his interest in the murderer subverts previous moral consideration of tales of murder concerning the narrative perspective, then the issue of morality is further re-examined in his 1825 essay "On Murder." Recognizing and justifying the aesthetic reading of murder, he furthers his discussion on this topic by examining what an ideal murder looks like— a crime that can truly reflect the talent of the murderer and produce the strongest emotion effect. He proposes that there are three principles: (1) the murdered person must be a good man; (2) he must not be a celebrity; (3) he must not be an ill person ("On Murder" 32). Therefore, he argues that the aesthetic taste and the talent of the murderer is what the art of murder should focus on. Implied by the satiric tone in these essays, he demonstrates a new way of viewing the relationship between aesthetic pleasure and ideological and moral guilt: instead of mutually exclusive, they are in an ironic connection to each other (Morrison xvii). For De Quincey, the exaggeration of aesthetic interpretation is less a form of resistance to the moral message than a question of the practicability of moral judgment and an attempt to make the boundary between the aesthetic and the moral ambiguous. In other words, his writing has revealed how the

pleasure of appreciating the corpse and the sympathy toward the victim become two sides of one coin.

Lastly, citing materials from newspaper coverage, popular literature and fabricating dialog with other members in a fictional club in London, in his essay, De Quincey situates the cultural and aestheticized representations of murder in the public eye through the lens of media. In his discussion of the status of murder in the public interest in the 19th-century British urban society, his focuses on the public response to murder cases and the circulation of public imagination have revealed how murder is anchored in the modern context, either in the technological or ideological sense. That being said, new practices of a more complex engagement with murder as a kind of culture aside from forensic science and legal judgment, are based on the social-cultural context of the modern society through their relationship with the rapid growth of the publishing industry and mass consumption. Offering a paradigm of analyzing tales of murder in cultural production, circulation, and consumption, De Quincey's discussion is expandable to other forms of cultural products including crime films, serialized detective stories, thrillers, and noir narratives. In these inquiries, murder provides an index of blurred boundaries in the realms of ideology, temporality, and discipline, as well as the way they connect in the process of meaning making, which shows the way murder is internalized in the public's understanding of modern life.

Inspired by De Quincey's insight and taking a similar path of approaching murder as a cultural phenomenon in the context of modern life, in this thesis, I explore how tales

of murder have woven into a view of Republican Shanghai in different textual spaces. I focus on how the intersection between a modern city and murder narratives reflects the ambiguous position of Shanghai in a wide spectrum of political and cultural discourses of China between 1911 and 1937—from the foundation of the Republic of China to the Japanese invaders turned the city into an “isolated island.” Instead of interpreting Shanghai as a pure geographical concept that acting as the location of the crime scenes or the settings of tales of murder, in this thesis, Shanghai is interpreted as a space that facilitated and structured the reading, circulation, and consumption of murder.

Specifically, I seek to address the following questions: How has modernity made a difference in the idea of murder in the context of urban Shanghai? What is a rising urban culture’s response to murders and how should we understand the obsession with the idea of murder and representations of murderous passions? Additionally, in what ways are the city of Shanghai and murders mutually constitutive to each other in the understanding and consumption of murder?

The link between the city of Republican Shanghai and crime is not absent in previous treatises and historical records, and nowadays it has long been a topic that attracts scholars’ attention. From the perspective of legal practices, A. M. Kotenev provides a comprehensive record of the administration of Shanghai Municipal and criminal patterns in the International Settlement before the mid-1920s in *Shanghai: Its Mixed Court and Council* (1925) and *Shanghai: Its Municipality and the Chinese* (1927). Frederic Wakeman Jr. continues the discussion of the law and order of Shanghai after Chiang Kai-shek took control in 1927. However, he focuses on the endeavor of Chiang’s

government to establish a modern Chinese police force, which is part of the plan of ending the concession system (1). These studies offer us an insight into the urban criminality of a divided Shanghai administrated under the principle of extraterritoriality.

Studies of crime and literature in this period, however, revolve around a particular literary genre, detective fiction. In his research about the relationship between legal justice in Chinese literature, Jeffery Kinkley investigates crime literature from premodern China to the post-Mao Era, in which he pays close attention to native detective stories in the Republican Era. Indicating that the ideological message in Republican-Era detective fiction is rather complex, he argues that although Western-imposed law is defied, these stories generally show an ambivalent attitude toward cultural imperialism (Kinkley 239). Wei Yan's work *Holmes Comes to China* (福爾摩斯來中國), on the other hand, traces the history of the circulation of detective stories in China from the introduction of Sherlock Holmes stories before the 1900s to Robert van Gulik's *Celebrated Cases of Judge Dee* (大唐狄公案) published in the 1950s. Her study reveals to what extent detective fiction in China should be read as world literature and reflects the cross-cultural interactions between China and the world in different historical periods.

There are also works that explore Shanghai's cultural context and urban milieu and their roles in Chinese literary imagination. For example, Leo Ou-fan Lee offers detailed analysis about Shanghai as a matrix of literary modernism that features death, uncanniness, darkness and eroticism in his discussion of works and authors of Neo-sensationalist School (新感覺派). Yingjin Zhang, on the other hand, excavates different

figures of Shanghai from the perspective of time and gender in literary and cinematic texts, the latter of which also embodies the analysis of danger, crime, and mysteries. His concept of “configurations of the city” also contributes to the theorization of the relationship between city and literature (Zhang 5). However, these works do not offer a panoramic analysis of how tales of murder allow us to examine the formation of discourses of Shanghai modern and Chinese modernity, and more importantly, reflect on its predicament, challenges and advances our understanding of the tensions and dynamics and their links to the discourse of modern in that semicolonial contexts during the transformative years. Nor do they navigate through different textual spaces using murder as a clue and recognize their interplay with one another, combining them with a comprehensive investigation of the history of cultural production and the urban locale of Shanghai. Therefore, I attempt to fill this gap in this thesis.

This thesis is organized into three chapters, each of which explores the representations of murders in texts of a particular genre, though cases that destabilized the boundaries between literary genres are not neglected. Chapter 1 studies newspaper coverage of famous murder cases in Republican Shanghai. I begin this chapter with a brief history of the prosperity of Shanghai’s modern printing industry and a critical analysis of the crime rates and criminality in Shanghai. I seek to present how the creation of “public” interferes with the perception of murders, and how the discourse of objective reporting was complicated by various sensationalizing strategies. By studying the murder of Wang Lianying 王蓮英, Chen Ahe 陳阿鶴, and the “murder” of Ruan Lingyu 阮玲玉, I try to deeply delve into these strategies and reveal what kind of death, violence, and

vulnerability are considered ideal for the profitability for commercial newspapers. On the one hand, newspaper reports of these murder cases, as well as the discussions revolving around them, reflect that murder functioned as a comprehensive response to diverse societal forces and societal changes. On the other hand, representations of these murder cases in newspapers, as well as their “aftermath” point to the problematics in mediation and the structure of power and authority in murder narratives, which are seen in tension with the project of Shanghai’s progressive intellectuals for creating a “public sphere” in the modern sense.

Chapter 2 is centered around representations of imagined murders in a literary genre introduced to China in the late Qing period, detective stories. In this chapter, I discuss the detective fiction of two Shanghainese authors, Cheng Xiaoqing 程小青 and Sun Liaohong 孫了紅, and how detective fiction serves as an index of Shanghai’s imagined modernity. After unfolding why Shanghai would be the place of China’s encounter with detective fiction, which concerns Shanghai’s role as the center of fiction press, I then discuss the changing position of detective stories, especially their relationship with discourses of modern literary reforms ranging from Liang Qichao’s advocacy of “new fiction” to May Fourth authors’ critique of old-style popular fiction (“Mandarin Ducks and Butterflies” 鴛鴦蝴蝶派). Although solving murder cases could become the source of intellectual delight based on logical thinking and adequate scientific knowledge promoted by the May Fourth ideology, this is complicated by the fact that science and logic as something new, is equally entertaining for Chinese readers. In the

following part, I contend that the concentration on domestic homicides in Shanghai, reflects the potential of allegorical reading, wherein these stories embody a “Home” (old China) that one can never return when China and the West coexist and are seen in clashes. Finally, through analyzing the issue of identity in murder cases and the role of newspapers, I attempt to show that the pursuit of truth paradoxically ends up deconstructing a comprehensive understanding of Shanghai’s urban life. This exposes readers to the tension between “a city of rationality” and “a city of mysteries” regarding the image of Shanghai.

In Chapter 3, I examine murder narratives in works of Neo-sensationalist School authors. Different from detective stories and newspaper coverage, authors of Neo-sensationalist School approach murders from the inner world of the murderer. Exploring works such as Shi Zhecun’s “Demonic Way” (魔道 1931), “Haunted House” (凶宅 1934), Liu Na’ou’s “An Attempted Murder” (殺人未遂 1934) and Mu Shiying’s “The Man who Lost an Arm” (斷條了胳膊的人 1933). Different from detective stories and newspaper coverage, these stories usually involve first-person narratives of the protagonist involving in murders, in which violence and criminality entangle with hallucinations, daydreams, erotic obsession with female figures and abnormal psychology. The demonstration of anxiety, exhilaration, and threat in urban dwellings, as well as the characterization of urban fascination and decadence, move beyond the domain of reality and open up new cultural ground to mysteries and the criminal aura of the city. These literary practices show aspirations and concerns of literary modernism that is in a

dynamic relationship with the left turn of intellectual in the 1930s and its ramification on Shanghai reform culture.

In this project, my discussion of *murder* will focus on its definition in a narrow sense—homicides that are committed for personal motives and primarily pertain to everyday practices in urban life. That is to say, this thesis does not include murders that fall into the category of political assassination due to political concerns, which is described by another Chinese word *cisha* (刺杀), as well as the organized crime associated with gang activities. Undeniably, this way of categorization is arbitrary considering that there are so many intriguing entanglements between some of the cases and several objects in my study. Yet, this would be another thesis topic engaging with a broader range of questions, which cannot be fully addressed in this study.

1. Fallen Lives in the Newspaper: Ethics of Reading and Writing

If you read the newspaper every day, all you can see is the performance of such coldness: women murdering their husbands, daughters threatened to be prostitutes, nephews killing their aunts...As for the brothers turning into enemies, that is even more commonly seen in this world.

Jian She, "The Cold World" (*Shen Bao* 1934)

只要看每日的報紙，觸眼充滿了這種冷酷的扮演：什麼謀殺親夫呀，什麼威脅女兒為娼啊，什麼侄子斬孀母呀……置若親兄親弟之視同仇敵，那簡直是滔滔者人間皆是。

——建設《冷酷的人間》(《申報》1934)

The port city of Shanghai is the matrix of evil. You need to be careful of everything single action you take.

Hua Nu, "Fishing" (*Saturday* 1915)

上海一埠，實為萬惡之淵藪，一舉一動，處處宜慎。

——《釣上魚兒》(《禮拜六》1915)

Such are portraits of Shanghai in some of the most widely circulated newspapers in the city in the early 20th century. Due to its status as a treaty port and extraterritorial zone, Shanghai can provide shelter for outlaws from all over the world and was soon perceived as the incarnation of criminality itself. In this process, modern media has become what constantly contributes to and confirms this dark image of Shanghai as a

place of the game of survival through these texts with comments and coverage of all violent crimes, which makes murder, a shocking event that reflects private suffering available to the public eye and sets it as the locus of public attention, an object of analysis, or a topic of discussion. Although modern journalism points to a new way of connection-making among individuals and interferes with the binary opposition between the public and private, newspaper readers are participants of the murder aftermath, following and subverting, consuming and producing (Eburne 8). This practice also intersects with the development of modern Chinese print journalism and its ideological significance in the political and social context of Shanghai. Therefore, to unpack how journalistic representations of murder serve as a site of transformation and contestations, I would like to ask the following questions in this section: What are the common strategies deployed in newspaper representations of murder? What kind of asymmetry and hierarchy are subverted or repressed in the discourse of modern and reform? What are the possible ways for linking murders to the examination of social forces and violence in a broader sense? And further, how have these representations interacted with modern Chinese newspaper's project for creating what Jürgen Habermas calls the "public sphere" and thus facilitating the social transformation (Link 80)?

In this chapter, I use three real-life cases in *Shen Bao*, the largest newspaper presses in Republican Shanghai as examples to reflect on the register of murder in urban life ethics of newspaper coverage through the analysis of public scrutiny and public taste. The first, as in the case of Wang Lianying 王蓮英, a famous prostitute at that time, is in which female was a victim of male predators. The second, as in the case of Chen Ahe 陳

阿鶴 (some reports write the name as “Chen Yunhe 陳雲鶴”), is in which female acted as the murderess and conspired to murder her husband with other men. The last one, the case of Ruan Lingyu 阮玲玉, is probably the most complicated case among these three. The discussion of “who killed Ruan Lingyu” has offered a self-reflexive critique of print media as a societal, murderous force, which has reflected a twist in the understanding of “murder” itself. Although the reports of the three cases I selected involve some details that have rendered the cases more complicated than the narrative gaze of the murders themselves, another covert line in this set of analysis is that these cases also pertain to the issue of the contested perception of three types of female figure: the prostitute, the family wife and the new woman.

1.1 Printing the Blueprint, the Leisure and the Darkness

According to Christopher Reed’s study, the printing technology was introduced to China in the early 1800s, but only became widely embraced since the 1870s through a process of localization in every aspect, including the acceptance of adaptation of printing technology, the form of newspaper, as well as the cultural and historical background in China that facilitates such changes (26-27). The first Chinese-language newspaper, *Shen Bao*, was founded in Shanghai in 1872 by a British businessman Ernest Major (1841-1908). It is the best example of the change that took place in the printing press at this stage and became the most successful newspaper in Shanghai in the late Qing and Republican Era.

Although the spread of printing technology in China during the 19th century was

initiated by Western missionaries and played the role of disseminating Christian beliefs, this does not mean that the modern newspaper, exclusively serves religious purposes (Mittler 3). Instead, leading newspaper presses including *Shen Bao* and *Xinwen Bao* 新聞報—another newspaper that was established later but also played a leading role in Shanghai’s newspaper circulation—are mainly commercial newspapers that heavily rely on sales and advertising revenue. Although Shanghai’s status as a treaty port city provides a foundation for the introduction of technological innovations and new thoughts from the West, the popularity of modern newspaper media, as an imported good, meets Chinese society’s great demand for new information from across the world and a new platform for their voices and independent thoughts during a national crisis and the decline of the Qing government. This is supported by a statement of *Shen Bao* in its inaugural issue:

We seek to cover everything concerns the politics of different nations, the changing of social conventions, the diplomatic affairs between China and the foreign countries, the pros and cons of trading, as well as anything astonishing and wonderful that can renew people’s mind. We pursue the representation of truth and exclude the fabricated things, and we make the news understandable to whoever reads it.

凡國家之政治，風俗之變遷，中外交涉之要務，商賈貿易之利弊，與夫一切可驚可愕可喜之事，足以新人聽聞者，靡不畢載，務求其真實無妄，使觀者明白易曉。（“The Statement of Our Press” 1）

The focus on “renew[ing] people’s mind” (新人聽聞) shows that the significance

of commercial presses such as *Shen Bao* and *Xinwen Bao* is shown in their support of the project of enlightenment and modernizing society regarding the freedom of speech and the pursuit of knowledge, instead of showing political affiliations. The textual space in print media thus enables the dissemination of the author's opinions and concerns and further engages more related opinions into dialog with each other, which reflects what Jürgen Habermas calls the formation of the public sphere. As Habermas argues, the public sphere, being conceived in "people's public use of their reason," functions as what regulates the public authority and reflects the need of society (27-29). In the case of Chinese print media in Shanghai, the debates and exchanges of ideas enabled the progressive intellectuals, who have armed themselves with enlightenment ideologies to imagine and draw a blueprint of an alternative national community that marks a separation from Qing's feudalist political system and social conventions.

Newspaper presses in Shanghai witnessed a significant change at the beginning of the 1910s and were influenced by the Revolution of 1911. According to Perry Link's study, although the foundation of Republican government convinced many "revolutionary" newspapers with certain political stances that their advocacy for revolutions in the newspaper should be shifted to political practices during this time (113), large commercial newspapers increasingly incorporated the reformist/-nationalist temper of the time due to the critique they received since the beginning of the 20th century, which made them truly multifunctional (103). The number of the readers has also increased significantly. From 1910 to 1930, the daily circulation of *Shen Bao* has risen

sharply from around 10,000 to 150,000,² during which the population of Shanghai nearly tripled (Link 116). Because *Shen Bao* was certainly not the only newspaper press in Shanghai, these figures could provide us with an idea of to what extent a single piece of news could be available to the public in Shanghai and the intervention of these newspaper coverage in Shanghai dweller's daily life.

If the pursuit of knowledge as the primary ambition is included in “comprehensiveness” (全) in the statement, then “truthfulness” (真) embodies an ethical requirement of news reporting, which is also consistent with our present-day expectation of news media. However, as Barbara Mittler argues, the consciousness of representing truth and the distinction between objective description and subjective opinion was not widely promoted and discussed in Chinese journalism before the 1910s (96). Even so, on the practical level, the discourse of representing truth with an objective tone is complicated by the multifunction of newspaper, which seeks to juggle that which is “true” and “astonishing,” “knowledge” and “entertainment” at the same time. Although establishing a clear boundary between truths and fiction is not possible, the ethical discourse of Chinese journalism (and arguably the media coverage all over the world and in different historical periods) is still faced with the power of the narrative gaze and the critical identity and position of the readers.

The popularity and rapid growth of print media provides a way to make the

² According to Perry Link, the reading group was a lot larger than this as each newspaper could be shared by many people (151).

narratives of criminality and critiques of such phenomenon available to the reading public. As shown through the quotations at the beginning of this chapter, through putting criminality under the lens of media and sensationalizing the prevalence of violent crimes, newspaper presses establish themselves as a guide to help the newcomers establish a comprehensive understanding of the danger of living in Shanghai, but meanwhile seek to arise people's curiosity of this city of crime. Theoretically, the relationship between industrialization and urbanization in the late Qing and the Republican Era, has also been addressed by scholars like Louise I. Shelley and Helmut Thome. Shelley even discusses the impact of rural-urban transformation on the relationship between violent crime like murder and property crime (37). However, though both of them admit that society will witness a rise in crime rate in its transition toward modernization, these two phenomena are only correlated instead of maintaining a causal link. Similarly, the ratio between violent crime and property crime is also correlated to, or indicative of the existence of a transitional period, and neither the absolute value of this ratio nor the number of the criminal cases is difficult to measure or operationalize.

Nevertheless, besides some of the descriptive texts, the newspaper coverage, and the theoretical framework, what were the criminal patterns and statistics in Republican Shanghai, and can the aforementioned highly abstract generalizations or stereotypical claims find support in some empirical evidence? If we check the records of Shanghai Municipal in the International Settlement between 1910 and 1924, then we find that the crime and murder rates increased slightly from 10.4% to 10.8% and 0.0085% to 0.0118% respectively (Kotenev 354), and the most significant increase happened between 1920

and 1924. Another record shows that the number of crime records continued to rise in the Chinese city and reached around 41,000 in 1930 (Wakeman 3).

My point here is not to claim whether these statistical proofs have successfully proven that Republican Shanghai is a city of crime. Rather, what I truly would like to show that although the general increase of the crime rate and numbers of violent crimes between 1920 and 1930 may be true, the ambiguity lies in (1) the measurement of criminality, which concerns the categorization and evaluation of criminal behaviors that varied in different historical periods, (2) the accuracy of historical records, which concerns whether the crime rate is exaggerated or some crimes are underrepresented, and (3) the lack of an effective framework and the difficulty in “operationalize social disorganization with historical data” when unpacking the relationship between urbanization/industrialization and the rise of crime rate. I argue that the difficulty involved in answering these questions provides space for print journalism to operate in the gray area between representing the truths and dangers of the city and sensationalization. This, however, is also continuous with our discussion of newspapers’ debatable ethics of representing truth in the previous paragraphs.

1.2 A Flower Destroyed by an Evil Man

On June 19, 1920, *Shen Bao* published an article titled “Wanted: Yan Ruisheng who Murders for Money and A Reward will be Offered” (捉拿謀財害命兇手閻瑞生賞格). According to details released later, the corpse was only found on the morning that day. However, as the suspect has been identified soon after the police confirmed that this

was a murder case, this brief article puts Yan's name in the title of the article. Although the name of the female victim, Wang Lianying, appears in the middle, the rest of the article focuses more on the long list of luxury jewelry she was robbed of than her death. At this point, readers were only informed that the jewelry was Yan's motivation to murder. Details about Wang Lianying had not been released until June 23, when *Shen Bao* published photographs of both Wang and Yan (Figure 1) and captioned them “A Photograph of Yan Ruisheng in the Murder Case of Prostitute Lianying 謀殺妓女蓮英案中閻瑞生之小像” and “The Murdered Prostitute Lianying 被害妓女蓮英.”



Figure 2: Yan Ruisheng and Wang Lianying's photographs

Lianying's identity as a prostitute is closely related to the perception of this murder case in two ways. On the one hand, she was murdered for jewelry borrowed from somewhere else to better serve the male gaze and consumption. The jewelry ended up being what cost her life and otherwise served the male's desire for wealth; even as an object, she is less significant than that which denotes her status as a commodity. On the other hand, this practice of objectification and fetishization did not stop, even after her

death. According to Paola Zamperini's study of photography and the expressions of desire, photographs of prostitutes were only available for their customers as representations of their physical beauty, and they functioned as proof of intimate relationships (412). If Yan's photograph was provided to the public to identify the criminal, then Wang's photograph printed on *Shen Bao* played a different role. Her photograph, deploying Bazin's concept, was the "mummified beauty" that continued to circulate even after she died (5). The photograph of Lianying was even demonstrated in a way that she was still alive according to the customs of photography during the Republican period (Dikötter 246). In other words, the intimacy between Lianying and her customer was available to anyone who had purchased *Shen Bao*. More importantly, the juxtaposition of these two photographs has strategically left enough space for readers to fantasize scenarios about destroying beauty.

This blank was soon filled by fictional writings, the publications of which were announced less than two weeks later after the happening of this disturbing murder. On July 1, Xinhua Book Co. (新華書局) announced that a twenty-chapter novel would be published based on Wang Lianying's experiences ("The Murder of the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Flowers"). Promising to provide more intimate details of the personal lives of both the victim and the murderer, this announcement complicates the motivation of the murder and uses it as a selling point, "This work gives a detailed explanation about whether Lianying's death was for property or jealousy" (蓮英之斃命是否因爭風而起, 抑或謀財害命, 言之甚詳) ("The Murder of the President of the Kingdom of Flowers").

This so-called “pre-history” of Lianying also add contents like “Lianying forced into prostitution 蓮英之落塵,” “Lianying’s engagement 蓮英之訂婚,” “Lianying’s filial piety 蓮英之孝親.” It is noticeable that to attract the readers’ attention, Wang Lianying’s name was changed to “the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Flowers” (花國總理), a title that she won in 1917 in a competition held by the New World Amusement Center for prostitutes (新世界遊戲場). The word “flower” (花 *hua*) highlighted her identity and indicated both her beauty and her vulnerability.

The focus of Lianying’s death thus witnessed a shift from how she was robbed and murdered to a series of fantasies of sexual and voyeuristic interest about the life and death of a vulnerable and passive female object. Her identity as a prostitute coincides with how readers have perceived and consumed her “death aftermath” —dying a prostitute, her prostitution did not end with the end of her life. The circulation and consumption of her story reflect Mulvey’s argument that “the determining male gaze projects its fantasy onto the female figure, which is styled accordingly” (14-15). Although recreators of her story link her figure to a series of traditional values such as filial piety and obedience, and emphasize her inner conflict as a prostitute, the paradox is equally delightful and attractive to readers. Reading Lianying’s murder is thus both a process of lamenting an idealized and desirable female and experiencing the sadist fantasy of committing crimes. In an implicit way, the sufferings of Lianying confirmed the dominance of (male) “implied reader who is simultaneously fascinated with and disgusted by the pitiable fate of women” (Mittler 290).

1.3 “Murdering the Husband” (谋杀亲夫 *mousha qinfu*) as a Barometer

“Murdering one’s husband is the most appalling crime in China. Only one single case can shock the entire society (在我們中國，謀殺親夫是最駭人聽聞的罪案，只需發生一件，已足以轟動社會。)” (“A Group of Females”). Confirming the great social influence of cases in which females murder their husbands, the author ties the low frequency of such cases to the socio-cultural context of China. However, the rarity of females committing murders, especially compared to their male counterparts, contributed to the disproportionate public interest they have aroused. This is because murderous women’s transgressive acts contradict the common perception that women were too weak to actively engage in brutalities and twists the traditional perception that females are subordinate to their husbands. Thus, the figure of the murderess is not represented on a factual level. It also contributes to public conceptions of gender as “the expressions of such anxieties regarding social change or a female invasion”³ on a symbolic level (Marran xvi). In other words, in a society like Republican Shanghai, where social conventions and gender discourses have undergone changes, transgressive females can be potentially linked to feminist interpretations.⁴

The murder case of Chen Ahe happened on September 5, 1929, but a detailed coverage only of the case was only available to the public on the second day. The news

³ In Mittler’s book, there is a similar concept that connotes the same kind of anxiety called “women let loose” and she translates it into Chinese as “女禍” (272).

⁴ While Chen Ahe’s case might not be a good example for feminist readings, a more appropriate case that has received feminist readings would be “The Murder on Jiangyuan Lane” (酱园弄杀夫案) in 1944.

report summaries the case with seven brief subtitles, telling a story about how a middle-aged, honest, and generous model husband was unfairly betrayed by his credulous and immoral wife. Seduced by and maintaining an unauthorized relationship with a local rogue, Zhou Xiaobao 周小宝, Chen's young wife started to consider escaping from the confinement of family life and arranged marriage and refused to shoulder her domestic responsibilities. On the morning of September 5, a conflict among them three broke out. Later when Chen's nephew arrived at the crime scene, Zhou's house on Markham Road, he found his uncle's corpse on the floor, which was stabbed numerous times. Chen's wife, Wei, Zhou Xiaobao and their helper Ren Acheng 任阿成 were arrested soon after Chen's nephew reported the case to the police station on Gordon Road.

One week after the murderess was arrested, *Shen Bao* published her confession at court with a detailed description of the case itself. In the introduction, the writer emphasized that this murderous woman was still pregnant with her fifth child, highlighting the contrast between her transgressive act and her position and what she was supposed to be: an obedient wife and loving mother under a traditional set of values. In the following part, the report includes a self-narrative of the murderess, revealing additional details about her personal life and the process of committing the murder,

“On that day, it was me who dragged my husband's hair and laid him on the ground. Zhou grabbed his hand tightly, and it was Ren Acheng who stabbed him violently to death. I still have an old mother and several children to care so I please for leniency.

是日係我将丈夫头发拖住，掀倒于地。周紧握其双手，而由任阿成行凶，将

丈夫猛戳一刀身死。我家尚有老母及子女，皆需我抚养，请求宽。” (“Court Hearing for Murder of the Husband”)

Zhou Xiaobao, at the same time, refused to define their relationship and denied everything he was accused of.

Although this confession might be the only “voice” Chen’s wife left before she was executed in May 1930, it is unfair to assume that this was a chance for her to speak for herself in front of the public. In fact, the newspaper report of her story follows a typical narrative mode of “a murderess who killed her husband.” Firstly, newspaper reports usually caricatured them as seductive femmes fatales and use expressions that explicitly demonstrate male gaze and judgment on females such as “a middle-aged charming woman” (半老徐娘), “a woman of loose morals” (水性楊花) or “a promiscuous woman” (生性淫蕩). Although this explained why they first engaged in love affairs with others and betrayed their legal husband, this also becomes an advantage for her to find helpers considering females’ physical weakness when confronting their husbands. These depictions have linked to a set of traditional connotations of villainizing beautiful and manipulative females. Therefore, this has become the only story Chen’s wife, as well as many other female murderers could tell: the same “Pan Jinlian” story featuring a dangerous, pathological female who subverts her husband’s masculinity, which is usually mixed with the (mis)belief of the popular discourse of the “freedom love and marriage.”

Stories of transgressive females have reflected the “normative power” in media

representation. Convinced that media representations, working in a different way from the Levinasian face in which humanization operates in tandem with representations, Judith Butler points out that media condition the perception of human life (146-147). In the case of transgressive women, their figure as dangerous inhuman that would pose a threat to patriarchal social order has been reinforced by a revelation of the details of the crime they committed. Publication of such cases served as an indication and reminder of the position of females. The precarity of transgressive females has been erased by their monstrosity and would never arouse much sympathy of the public—their faces must serve as what should be excluded from society. Such exclusion further projected to the anxiety resulted from the alleged other, “women let loose,” which would symbolically be tamed by the process of villainization and dehumanization.

However, transgressive females can equally be delightful in newspaper coverage in a similar way to Wang Lianying’s story. For example, in a brief article published on the third day after the criminals were arrested, “Unofficial Coverage of the Adultery-Murder Case” (姦殺案別報), the scenario of the case was reproduced in a rather voyeuristic way. The author sensationalized the tension between Chen and Zhou when Chen caught Zhou and his wife in bed, pointing out that the whole case was instigated by a scene of “committing adultery during the daytime” (白日宣淫). The language used to strongly critique Chen’s wife and Zhou’s audacity, allegedly from Chen’s (a male) perspective, also reflects the desire of Mulvey’s gendered gaze at an erotic female body.

1.4 Who Murdered the New Woman?

“Women are good for scandals, and scandals are good for newspaper sales” (289). This quote serves as Barbara Mittler’s summary for “The New Women Incident” (新女性事件), which has directed people’s attention to the entanglement among gender, print media, and society in the 1930s. Revolving around the suicide of Ruan Lingyu on March 8, 1935, two competing voices in print media have prevailed, “Who Murders Ruan Lingyu?” and “Is it appropriate for Ruan Lingyu to kill herself?” Representing different interpretations of this case, these two voices have epitomized the public imagination of both females’ vulnerability in front of danger and brutalities and females’ ability to embrace brutalities and commit murders.

On International Women’s Day of 1935, Ruan Lingyu committed suicide when her film *The New Women* was still on show. According to the article on *Shen Bao* published the next day, she “took as many as three bottles of sleeping pills,” and “died after medical treatment” (“Ruan Lingyu Committed Suicide”). Although she was undoubtedly the one who chose to end her own life in a legal sense, her death was widely discussed and perceived as a “murder.” This voice broadens the way of the perception of murder by linking murders to a moral concern, emphasizing the importance of the driven force that pressed a person into suicide. Accordingly, suicides can also obtain meanings beyond individuality and self-destruction in a way that they “include in their web of meanings and messages a strand of protest—against having been hurt, rejected or failed by others” (Andriolo 107). In other words, the act of committing suicide implies a gesture

of resistance and a revelation of “the real murderer.”

Who could be the referred murderer of Ruan Lingyu? In his article, the director of the film *New Women*, Cai Chusheng 蔡楚生 claimed that the chief culprit was mosquito presses and “the lawsuit of the ghost” (幽魂的訟事)⁵ (“In Memory of Ruan Lingyu” 30). Cai was convinced that Ruan’s death resulted from newspaper presses’ revenge for the negative depictions of print journalism in the film. Their relentless report on Ruan’s history with two men, Tang Jishan and her ex-husband Zhang Damin, as well as the legal disputes among the three of them become the murderous gossip that leads to Ruan Lingyu’s mental breakdown. His argument again reminds us of the famous phrase that “gossip is a fearful thing” (人言可畏). However, the meaning of this phrase, allegedly Ruan Lingyu’s last words, is complicated by the mystery revolving around her suicide notes and Harris’ conclusion that “the star’s own voice was not all lost in this public theatricality” (73). Recent studies have shown that Ruan’s suicide notes, first published on *Shen Bao* on the second day after her suicide could be fabricated by Tang and his mistress (Yang). In the “original version,” Ruan primarily ascribed her suicide to Zhang’s persistence, Tang’s betrayal of her trust, and the violence Tang used against her.

Although Ruan Lingyu’s death might still be a contentious topic, it is noted that both victimizing forces are acknowledged to be male-gendered, and they continued to benefit by exploiting her fame and beauty and later, her tragedy. Although Cai’s attack

⁵ According to the context, “youhun 幽魂” refers to Ruan’s ex-husband Zhang Damin.

was against the mosquito press, mainstream print media such as *Shen Bao* cannot be exonerated from contributing to the “gossip.” For example, on January 11, 1935, *Shen Bao* once published an article titled “A Page of Ruan Lingyu’s History,” sensationalizing and dramatizing Ruan’s love story with two men. The tone of the article, arguably, was male authoritative by quoting Zhang’s accusation of Ruan, focusing on configuring Ruan’s beauty and innocence when she was young and describing how she started to “commit adultery” (姘識) with Tang.

Ruan’s “murder” was further complicated by what her name connotes: new woman, which “articulated the same public fascination” of her character, Wei Ming’s death in Cai Chusheng’s namesake film. Ruan’s death has pointed to a meta-narrative of the destiny of new women and a reexamination of the (male) victimizing forces, which according to Dai Jinha, is “a revenge taken on Nora after she left home (對出走的娜拉的卑鄙的報復)” (39). Although new women connoted both mind and career independence in urban Shanghai and represented the envisage of a unified nation, the film identifies two victimizing forces represented by two male figures, Dr. Wang and a male journalist Qi Weide (Zhang 202). In the film, Wei has endeavored to support herself and her family by working as a female author, male gaze renders her a desirable sexual object. Although a female’s public presence through representing themselves was initially considered to be desirable for the sake of facilitating gender equality and constructing national discourses (Volz 472), it received a distorted understanding and mistreatment by a patriarchal society.

In the last part of the film, Dr. Wang and Qi conspire to destroy her subjectivity, and the exploitation of her beauty and vulnerability continues when she reads about the distorted coverage of her suicide on the newspaper Qi works for. The ending of the film, in which a newspaper with the news of Wei's suicide is stepped on by a group of marching female laborers, not only suggests Wei's disappearance but female laborers, as what replace Wei to be the "new women," to combat and change this relationship between patriarchal newspaper media and representations of females.

If the discussion revolving around "The New Woman Incident" contributed to a series of reflections about the gendered violence that was inherent in media representation and critiques toward the responsibility of media, then the ensuing mania about the film could be somehow an irony. The parallel between Wei Ming's death and Ruan Lingyu's death, which destabilized the boundary between the fictional and the real, has contributed to the film's great commercial success. The film has been regularly shown in the name of "in memory of Ruan Lingyu." For spectators, the difference between film consumption and mourning Ruan Lingyu would not be clear. On the same day of her funeral, a brochure *Truths about Ruan Lingyu's Suicide* started to advertise on *Shen Bao*, emphasizing that they would include photographs of Ruan and her suicide notes (provided by Tang to *Shen Bao*) and sell at only a tenth silver dollar ("Appointment for Buying *Truths about Ruan Lingyu's Suicide*"). This echoed the paperboys' crying near the end of the film: "You only need three copper coins to see the suicide of the female writer Wei Ming" (*New Women*)!

Though I organize the analysis of these three cases in chronological order, I am

not arguing for teleology, or at least, an argument as such cannot be fully supported by only three cases. My point is that murder narratives on *Shen Bao* are anchored in the discourse of enlightenment and modernity, where the significance of crime and criminal figures are also set against a backdrop of a reexamination of social conventions and what is proper for the blueprint of a new society with order and equality. The changing role of females, in this sense, regarded as a barometer of society, was caught in the gap between the discourse of morality and emancipation.

This tension in the function of modern print media corresponds to Habermas' discussion of the distinction between "the cultural-debating public" and "the cultural-consuming public" (159). Although the transformation of the public sphere from social critique to cultural consumption embodies a sense of decadence for Habermas, these two identities of the public are not necessarily mutually exclusive when we examine the role of readers and writers in the reports of murder. In other words, the reading public's responses to these murder events have been constantly shaped by these two forces and how they push back against each other.

Although I underscore the importance of gender in this question, my discussion concerns not only the figures represented in the murder cases but also the modes of representation deployed. Therefore, the murder narratives can be viewed as a reflection of the project of journalistic modernization, as well as the narrative gaze and the power of telling the tale of murder is predominately male-gendered, rendering the females the ones who need to be saved but regulated. In this process, the transgressive narratives involving female becomes a site of contested characters: facts and fiction, villainization and

victimization, promotion and oppression, societal and individual, objective and sensational. That is why the newspaper sinking in the mud embodies both a tragic end and a new start—urban news media breaks the production and circulation cycle of male authors—female figures—male readers, and female readers and female authors in the project of modernity.

2. Adventures of Detectives in Oriental Paris

In 1896, translations of four Sherlock Holmes stories appeared in a section called “Translations from English Newspapers” in the newspaper *Shiwu Bao* 時務報 (Link 129). After the seeds were sown, detective fiction continued to gain popularity in the next few decades, marking what Jeffery Kinkley calls “the Golden Age of Chinese detective stories” (170). Wang Dungen 王鈍根, the editor of *Shen Bao*’s supplement “Unfettered Talk 自由談,” mentioned in a letter to Chen Diexian 陳蝶仙 that detective fiction was one of the two most popular genres of popular fiction (Hu 262). Later in the 1910s and 1920s, Chinese native detectives and detective series were created based on translated Western classic detective fiction, the most renowned of which were the *Huo Sang* 霍桑 series by Cheng Xiaoqing 程小青 (1893-1976) and the *Lu Ping* 魯平 series by Sun Liaohong 孫了紅 (1897-1958).

As a literary genre that focuses extensively on murder, detective fiction became entangled with the history of rapid industrialization and urbanization in the Anglo-European world since the mid-nineteenth century. Early detective fiction, from Edgar Allan Poe’s “The Murders in Rue Morgue” to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s *Sherlock Holmes* series and Maurice Leblanc’s *Arsène Lupin* series, was commonly set against a backdrop of modern cities such as London or Paris. Following a detective around the city, entering different urban spaces and collecting evidence, readers could see how modern cities profoundly serve as another character in these stories. However, on a deeper level, bustling modern cities, especially imperial cities like London, function as ideological

symbols that signify the what Richard Lehan calls “Enlightenment legacy,” which is what the Anglo-European world has depended upon to shape the entire world. According to Haycraft Howard, detective stories can be largely produced only in democracies, which prioritize the importance of evidence in their well-developed legal systems (234). Though detective fiction features events that violate taboos and jeopardize the order of a civilized society, detective fiction also culminates in a utopian ending wherein all the mysteries are safely unraveled by scientific analysis and logical thinking. While imagined murders in detective fiction, as Catherine Nickerson discusses in her essay “Murder as Social Criticism,” present an approach to social critique as they are “deeply enmeshed with most of the thornier problems” of a society (744), this narrative of darkness and danger ends up becoming a Freudian fort-da game, serving the aim of self-preservation and the growing maturity of a civilization (*Beyond the Pleasure Principle* 12).

The prosperity of detective fiction in Shanghai in the Republican era, however, seems to be a special case for this set of arguments. Pierre Bourdieu illustrates the inextricable relationship between space, the objective of position, and the expression of agents exemplified by literary and artistic productions in his explanation of the notion of “the study of the field” (104-105). His argument suggests we could draw a comparison between Shanghai and Western metropolises in producing detective fiction. On the one hand, Shanghai, as the center of a quasi-imperial society, witnessed the vitality of intercultural exchange and encounters with a wide range of modern technologies and modern material culture that were analogous to western metropolises. This analogy, according to Perry Link, reflects how Shanghai was positioned in an international context

of industrialization, allowing for an extensive production and consumption of modern fiction (8). On the other hand, Shanghai's ostensible synonymy with the West was an unfortunate result of a series of national crises since the late Qing Dynasty. In other words, the Golden Age of detective fiction in China appeared in the historical context of China's social disintegration. The prevalence of detective fiction, thus, was not preconditioned by rationality, science, laws and democracy, which for China were merely ideas that were considered desirable for a new urban culture and a new society. This case of detective fiction in Shanghai, nevertheless, challenges Lehan and Howard's assumption and reveals that Enlightenment legacy could be more important as ideals rather than as universally manifested realities. In this process, what a modern city has provided is a matrix of imagination and a stage of contestations.

This chapter mainly focuses on murder narratives in the detective fiction of two native Shanghainese authors: Cheng Xiaoqing's *Huo Sang* series and Sun Liaohong's *Lu Ping* series published before 1937. Viewing detective stories of murders as a cultural and political phenomenon and as imagined representations, all of which are deeply rooted in the context of Shanghai, I will examine how they have interacted with issues concerning Shanghai's rising urban culture, and broader concerns ranging from cultural production and consumption to the discourse of national salvation and modernization of China. Specifically, I will unpack how these narratives are generative to the imagined modernity that is charged with tensions and negotiations as well as blueprints.

2.1 A Brief History of Huo Sang and Lu Ping

The definition of "detective fiction" is rather debatable. According to Julian

Symons, for detective fiction, “any rigid classifications simply do not work in practice”

(3). Considering the object of study in this chapter, I will prioritize Cheng Xiaoqing’s definition in his essay “Different Dimensions of Detective Fiction” (偵探小說的多方面):

If we find a story that features a mysterious case and relies on the intelligence and rational thinking of a detective—the protagonist of the fiction, and scientific methods to gain an explanation of that mystery, then the first story in *Stories of Dupin*, ‘The Murders in Rue Morgue,’ should be recognized as the first detective story in the world⁶.

若要尋一篇小說，把一件疑案做一個中心問題，因著一個偵探——小說中的主角——憑著理智的活動，和科學的技術而獲到那疑問的最後解釋，那不能不把那《杜賓探案》第一篇——《麥格路的凶案》，——認做是開天闢地的第一篇。(1)

Therefore, taking this definition of the genre, we can roughly summarize the storytelling of murders in detective fiction as follows: murders appear as mysteries that remain to be solved by a detective. The focus is on how the murder represented in the fiction is solved through detection, which must be logical and scientific. At the end of the story, the mystery will be solved, and the detective will announce his victory. Also, examining murders through the lens of “mysteries,” we should not neglect the possibility

⁶ All translations are my own.

that detective fiction from time to time plays with and destabilizes the perception of murders, contrary to general readers' expectations. This possibility can be observed even in the first recognized detective story, Edgar Allan Poe's "The Murders in Rue Morgue" (1841), in which the "murderer" turns out to be an animal.

Translations of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *Sherlock Holmes* series first exposed Chinese readers to a private investigator who has no direct relationship to political authorities. This phenomenon must be situated in the cultural context of Shanghai as a part of "the outward-looking orientation of the reform culture generally, as part of its insatiable interest in new things from the West" (Link 135). In the 1910s, this enthusiasm for Western works encouraged modern presses in Shanghai to translate more of them to expand readership and make more profits. Under such circumstances, Zhonghua Book Co. (中華書局) published the first collection of the *Sherlock Holmes* series in classic Chinese in 1916. Cheng Xiaoqing, the creator of the Chinese version of Holmes, Huo Sang, was listed as one of the translators.

After publishing his first Huo Sang story in 1914 in "Forest of Happiness" (快活林), the supplement to *Xinwen Bao*, one of the largest newspapers in Shanghai, Cheng Xiaoqing continued to work on the *Huo Sang* series. He called his detective Huo Sang "the Oriental Sherlock Holmes" (東方福爾摩斯) and made Huo Sang's "Watson," Bao Lang 包朗, the narrator in his 1919 novel *Southern China Swallow* (江南燕), promoting this Chinese detective figure with the reputation of his English counterpart. Like Holmes, Huo Sang was educated at a modern university specializing in natural sciences such as

chemistry, physics and psychology (“The Childhood of the Oriental Holmes” 7).

According to Cheng’s storyline, Huo Sang and Bao Lang did not become long-term residents of Shanghai until 1922 when they moved to a small apartment on Aiwun Road 愛文路 in International Settlement (“A Prostitute from Changchun” 58)⁷. This marks the moment when Huo Sang truly becomes the protector of Shanghai, even if “the institution of private investigators was unknown there” (Wong ix).

Huo Sang’s stories have been published both in the form of offprints and in fiction magazines. Great Eastern Book Co. (大東書局) has contributed to the publication of most offprints such as *The Man Outside the Window* (窗外人 1923)⁸, *On the Railway* (鐵軌上 1923)⁹, and *Dr. Gu* (顧博士 1924)¹⁰. It is not surprising that most of these works are about murders, which involve more details and a more complicated reasoning process. Other stories were printed in popular fiction magazines that were later categorized as magazines of “Mandarin Ducks and Butterflies” (鴛鴦蝴蝶派), including *Saturday* (禮拜六), *The World of Detectives* (偵探世界), *Red Roses* (紅玫瑰) and *Violets* (紫羅蘭)¹¹. In these magazines, murder stories were usually published in a serialized form. While in practical terms, serialization is consistent with traditional novels in the

⁷ The current title is “A Flower in the Mud” (沾泥花).

⁸ The current title is “A Horrifying Live Play” (恐怖的活劇).

⁹ The current title is “Blood Under the Wheel” (輪下血).

¹⁰ The current title is “The Cry at Midnight” (夜半呼聲).

¹¹ *Red Roses* (紅玫瑰) and *Violets* (紫羅蘭) belong to the World Book Company (世界書局) and Great Eastern Book Co. respectively, and they were in severe competition in the 1920s (Link 91). While both book companies published Cheng’s work, the World Book Company focused more on his works of translation instead of *Huo Sang* series. Issues about Butterflies literature will be treated in the next section.

linked-chapter form (章回体), it also effectively serves detective fiction's need to create and maintain suspense. Moreover, Cheng Xiaoqing also wrote plays and film scripts, most of which came from his published detective novels. The most famous one was the film *Murder in the Dancing Hall* (舞女血) (1931) produced by Youlian Studio (友聯影片公司), which was adapted from his 1929 detective story *Life of a Dancing Girl* (舞女生涯)¹².

Sun Liaohong's Lu Ping, as the name indicates, is an imitation of Maurice Leblanc's Arsène Lupin, a *gentleman-cambrioleu* (gentleman-burglar 俠盜) created in 1905. Similar to Cheng Xiaoqing, Sun served as a translator for the *Arsène Lupin* series for Great Eastern Book Co. in 1923. In the same year, Sun published his first detective story "A Wooden Puppet Play" (傀儡劇) in *The World of Detectives*, featuring a Chinese gentleman-burglar Lu Ping known as "the Oriental Lupin" (東方羅蘋).

Sun was significantly less prolific than Cheng before 1937. Though there is only limited information about his life, it is said that he enjoyed frequenting teahouses and coffee shops in Shanghai and writing there, collecting material by conversing with other patrons¹³ (Kinkley 221). Lu Ping's stories often put him in competitions with Lu Lun 盧倫, another detective figure who enjoys the reputation of "the Oriental Sherlock Holmes." These stories often end with Lu Ping's victory and his mockery of other detectives. The

¹² The current title is "The Shadow of Devils in the Dancing Palace" (舞宮魔影).

¹³ This appears both on page 221 in Kinkley's book and a blog titled "A Brief History of Chinese Detective Fiction" (中国原创推理小说简史). See: www.tuili.com/blog/u/8/archives/2010/2594.html.

rivalry between “the Oriental Lupin” and “the Oriental Holmes” can be viewed not only as a series of intertextual references and works that focus exclusively on their competition, but also on the level of publication and reception. *The World of Detectives*, *Red Roses*, and *Violets* published most of the Lu Ping stories before 1937, so readers can enjoy the stories of Huo Sang and Lu Ping as these two detectives live in the same textual universe. More importantly, they inhabit the same “Shanghai,” an imagined community where these figures and readers reside through “a fixity that fuses the world inside the novel with the world outside” (Anderson 30).

Though Lu Ping defies and humiliates detectives and sabotages their plans, he is unquestionably a detective in a different way. On the one hand, he is the one who leads readers to the truth (often he himself is the creator of the mystery), resembling what a detective usually does. In terms of intellectual background, he has also received a modern education at a Chinese college, just like Huo Sang. On the other hand, though, characterized as an amoral figure, he targets only “the despicable organizers of the society 不良的社會組織者” (“A Horrifying and Interesting Night” 10). Also, Lu Ping and his henchmen never engage in murders— according to him, killing would impair his dignity.

2.2 A Poison to Swallow, A Textbook to Read, A Game to Play

While I have touched upon the association between the history of detective fiction in China and the rise of Shanghai’s modern fiction press, it is equally important to historicize the position of this genre, which inevitably influences the trajectory of

detective fiction writing. This issue also brings up questions about the perception of murder narratives in the form of detective stories.

Since the first translations of four stories from *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* were published in *Shiwu Bao* in 1896, detective fiction has enjoyed a long relationship with progressiveness and the idea of “new fiction,” coined by *Shiwu Bao*’s editor Liang Qichao 梁啟超. In his 1902 essay, “On the Relation between Fiction and Popular Sovereignty” (“論小說與群治之關係”), Liang links reading fiction to the task of strengthening the nation. This essay argues that reading fiction would renovate people’s minds and spirits and proposes an intellectual project about reading and contributing to “new fiction,” envisaging a strong nation-state consisting of “new people/people made new” (新民) (Liang 8).

His idea in this essay is consistent with his support for reading translated foreign works in *Shiwu Bao*, though in a rather indirect way. This logic implies that Liang believed that the power of the West is closely related to the prosperity of Western fiction (Link 130). An obvious tension, however, lies in his use of the word “poison 毒.” The character “poison,” a homophone of *du* in Chinese that is suggestive of “reading 讀,” appears five times in the essay to describe fiction’s effects on readers. It demonstrates two meanings that are nearly opposite to each other. On the one hand, “poison” is what leads to death and sickness, resembling an archetypal murderer’s weapon of choice. On the other hand, the word “poison” is used as nearly precisely the contrary of the first

signification¹⁴, meaning “to nurture/to mature.” The efficacy of fiction on readers can thus show a parallel to the Greek term *pharmakon*, in which “the cure against a poison is poison” (Esposito 134).

Interestingly enough, later during the May Fourth Movement, the detective genre was not subject to severe attacks from May Fourth elites (Kinkley 179), who drew a distinction between “literature for entertainment” and “literature for social reality/social progress,” labeling the former “Mandarin Ducks and Butterflies.” While in a broader sense detective fiction is believed to have a closer affiliation with Butterflies literature, this sense of ambiguity was embraced as something productive for detective novelists in both their theoretical works and their literary creations. Detective fiction writers redefined this genre in the cultural context of post-May Fourth China in different coordinate systems, which also contributed to the destabilization of the artificial boundary created by May Fourth elites.

The primary issue we encounter is the intricate link between detective fiction and science or scientific outlook. The idea of “science,” respectfully called “Mr. Science” (賽先生) since the New Culture Movement, has become one of the central values in modern China. Chinese progressive elites believe that scientific learning is effective for cultivating the minds of new people and facilitating social and economic development. In

¹⁴ The second signification of “毒” appears twice in Liang’s essay: “亭毒群倫” and “蓋百數十種小說之力直接間接以毒人”。The word “亭毒” comes from chapter 51 of *Tao Te Ching* 道德經: “For the Way gives them life; its power nourishes them, mothers and feeds them, completes and matures them, looks after them, protects them (故道生之, 德畜之, 長之育之, 亭之毒之, 養之覆之)” (Le Guin 66).

this regard, detective fiction offers a way to justify its educational value, meanwhile redefining the relationship between education and entertainment.

To better understand this relationship, I propose using George Dove's theory of "Rules of the Game." According to Dove, by configuring a case as a mystery to be solved, detective fiction presupposes that readers have an equal chance to solve the case by using knowledge and clues provided by the author (71). Publishers who paid attention to the interactions with readers also invited readers of detective fiction to guess who the murderer is, exemplified by the following excerpt from *Red Roses*:

If you are interested in knowing the answer, you can guess first and send us your answer in five days. If the answer is correct, our magazine will offer you a reward to appreciate your participation.

如有清興，不妨先行猜上一猜，盡五日內把答案寄來。倘能完全猜中，本社當略備薄酬，用答雅意。（“The Second Bullet” 1）

Thus, if we understand reading detective fiction as playing a game, then the reader requires scientific knowledge, a scientific outlook, meticulous observation, and logical thinking to be a qualified player and gain intellectual delight. Correspondingly, for readers who lack adequate scientific knowledge and such a mode of thinking, the function of detective fiction as an educational tool comes in naturally. This facilitates a smooth transition between “popular scientific textbooks in disguise (化裝的通俗科學的教科書)” (“Different Dimensions” 1) and “picture books sold at the crossroads (十字街頭的連環圖畫)” (“Living in Sympathy” 203).

Some scientific knowledge (mostly about forensic science and criminology from Cheng's own studies) is illustrated in detail, resembling textbooks *per se* printed by Shanghai's "enlightenment industry" that have disseminated scientific knowledge to the public (*Shanghai Modern* 55). For example, in "The Innocent Murderer" (無罪之兇手 1932), Huo Sang explains how a time difference caused by a chemical property of proteins, killed one of the deceased, who turns out to be the murderer. In another case, "An Heir" (一個嗣子)¹⁵, the crucial point of solving this murder is the coroner Dr. Xia's new finding that the liquid in the teacup found at the crime scene turns dark black due to a chemical reaction between the tannic acid in tea and iron. This explanation, according to Huo Sang, is a direct demonstration of "the power of science" (科學的力量) ("The Innocent Murderer").

Aside from these profound terms and principles, scientific observation and experimentation is also promoted as what leads people to the answer. Huo Sang himself is characterized as an enthusiastic explorer of science, introducing knowledge from books and experiments to the readers. For instance, in *The Window* (窗 1930), readers see him explaining why a window at the crime scene remains open by conducting and demonstrating a simple experiment about aerodynamics to other investigators on the case.

While Huo Sang introduces scientific knowledge and promotes science with great patience, the implication is that any reader, by using rational thinking and pursuing

¹⁵ The current title is "The Death of an Heir" (嗣子之死).

knowledge, could be someone as intelligent and “modern” as the detective:

Therefore, every one of us can be a detective. However, how this sense of curiosity develops varies greatly...This instinct seems to be overlooked in our tradition.

所以也可說，我們每一個人都是一個天然的偵探。不過這好奇心的發展的程
度和方向，有高有低，有正有歧……我們歷史的傳統，似乎漠視了這個本
能。（“The Man in Grey” 60).

The *Lu Ping* series, though less dense with scientific knowledge than the *Huo Sang* series, is also configured within an empirical scientific frame. This is revealed in a less didactic and serious manner in Lu Ping’s explanations of how the games he designs have successfully confused those who are subject to superstition. For example, Lu Ping takes advantage of an urban scandal about a homicidal polar bear by using an actual polar bear as a disguise for his theft (“Polar Bear” 白熊). In another story, “The Man-made Lightning” (人造雷), he punishes a man who steals a diamond ring and frames a young maiden. By first telling an old story of that whoever frames another person will be struck by lightning and then fabricating a story that the maiden committed suicide (an indirect way of committing a murder), Lu Ping tricks the true criminal into confessing after constantly exposing him to the sound of lightning created using only some simple tools.

The contrast between superstition and science is deployed by novelists to draw a clear distinction between detective fiction and court-case fiction (公案小說). Though also addressing murder cases, solving cases in court-case fiction usually relies on supernatural

elements including dreams, ghosts and gods. While Huo Sang frequently emphasizes that superstitions impede people's access to science and rationality, Lu Ping satirizes supernatural elements by dressing himself as the perceived ghost or god.

The imagined murders, which paradoxically reflect people's perception of the hidden danger, darkness and evil of the enigmatic city in these stories, can eventually be solved by the power of science and rationality. While metropolitan Shanghai offers exposure to new information, new knowledge and technological innovations from the west, the method of solving murder cases provides an entry point for readers to envision an enlightened and developed nation. One question that remains to be answered, however, is whether there is a clear boundary between education and entertainment when it comes to the idea of science. As many other things in Shanghai, science can be equally entertaining and delightful as something "new" for ordinary readers who generally lack professional training in related fields.

2.3 "Haunted House" and Familicides: Toward an Allegorical Reading of China-West Clashes

That is a western-style mansion...Now the gate is closed, and I cannot see what's happening inside. I cross the street, look inside and I see a three-floor tall house. Between the iron and the front gate of the house, there is a clear space. I believe the uncanny thing last night would set against a backdrop like this.

那是一宅西式的巨廈……這時鐵門緊閉，我瞧不見裡面的情形。我再走到街的對面，望見裡面有一宅三層樓的高屋，那前門和正屋之門，還隔著一方空地。我暗忖這樣的背景，才演得出昨夜的怪劇。（“Eighty-Four” 85）

These are Bao Lang's thoughts when he sees a mansion, a place that he believes is related to an ongoing conspiracy. From Bao Lang's words, we can observe the subtle link between enclosed houses and the imagination of crime. In fact, compared to other types of crimes, which may involve public spaces such as restaurants, dance halls or parks, detective stories set murders more commonly in domestic spaces. These fictional spaces where imagined murders happen are also connected to residential spaces in Shanghai in the Republican era: mansions for wealthy and noble families ("The Shoe" 一隻鞋), apartments for young urbanites ("Life of a Dancing Girl") and characteristic stone gate dwellings (石庫門) for ordinary citizens ("The Man Outside the Window").

While the victim's houses are usually characterized as the first crime scene, they further symbolize a sense of insecurity of urban dwelling, in which domestic spaces and even everyday details are transformed into what Vidler calls "an overwhelming aura of criminality" (*Warped Space* 129). At the same time, the alleged privacy provided by residential spaces serves not as a kind of protection, but conversely, as a cover for underlying darkness, secrecy and corruption. This paradox of homes addresses a similar question mentioned in Freud's 1919 essay "Uncanny," in which Freud discusses the ambiguity of the German word "heimlich (*homely)" and how the meaning of "unheimlich (*unhomely)" (uncanny) is inherent in the former as a form of repression (4). Later, Anthony Vidler applies this concept to his discussion of haunted houses in Gothic novels (*The Architectural Uncanny* 17).

While detective fiction differs from Gothic novels in the characterization of death, I believe this concept is inspiring in that the paradox between *heimlich* and *unheimlich*

can be unpacked from a different perspective. Instead of merely interpreting “home” as a residential space, murder cases reflect a broader concern by restoring its meaning in the scale of human society. Murder narratives not only stress the “unhomely” from a psychological perspective but also explore a series of issues related to human relationships in domestic spaces— family ties.

According to Cheng, ownership of property and sex are the two elements that the world relies on to function properly, and therefore serve as motives for murders (“Different Dimensions” 3). Accordingly, as family relationships are closely related to these two elements in the forms of love, marriage and inheritance, murders at home often speak to social crisis. For example, in *The Window*, He Meifang murders her sister and her love rival, He Xingfang; in “The Shoe,” the husband Xu Zhigao murders his wife, suspecting her of betraying him; and in “Waves of a Grieving Sea” (怨海波)¹⁶, the murderer is the victim’s younger sister, who has struggled with paternalistic oppression. Murderers in these cases usually fake evidence that will lead to a false judgment that the victims were killed by an intruder, covering that they were in fact killed by someone living under the same roof.

A more notable fact, however, is that love/marriage and property are also two primary fields in which significant changes took place in the reform discourse in early twentieth-century China. Therefore, it is understandable that Cheng, who emphasizes the

¹⁶ The current title is “The Fire of Youth” (青春之火).

link between criminal behaviors and “the post-natural and societal” (“後天的，社會的”) would characterize his detective as someone who gives long speeches and makes comments about the murders he has investigated (“Different Dimensions” 4). Specifically, Huo Sang shoulders the responsibility of “translating” the motives for murders, “property” and “love,” into rather May Fourth-style language; he critiques the long-standing paternalism that impedes the freedom of love and marriage, the old paternalistic clan concepts that make family members turn against each other and the violation of female rights and freedom of marriage. While Leo Lee regards this as a reason why Huo Sang is a less appealing figure (“Holmes in China”), in the following discussion I will consider the possibility that representations of “murders at home” can be linked to reflections on the rapid social transformation resulting from the clash between China and the West.

It is significant that Huo Sang, in these scenarios, usually ascribes murders to a kind of confusion of values and morality. Conflicts arising in the domestic sphere thus effectively serve as reflections of a changing society. In these moments, expressing his concern for a society in a transformative age and his insight into its destructive power, Huo Sang is more than an advocate for certain values and ideologies. Instead, he is an observer of a changing society that contains a murderous impulse, in which his concerns are both the making of a new urban society and the lives destroyed in the violent clashes between old and modern.

Lamenting fallen lives and broken families in an era that celebrated a rupture with the “old” China and embraced the “modern” West implies a complex attitude toward

these radical changes under the logic that the birth of the “new” must be based on eliminating the old and traditional. According to Hutters, this set of symbols and concerns can also be observed in Lu Xun’s work. In his discussion of Lu Xun’s “My Old Home” (故鄉), Hutters argues that what comes along with Lu Xun’s impulse to anatomize the old society and kill off the “old” is a sense that he eventually becomes homeless, and “simultaneously tortured by a guilt that his act of anatomizing is a kind of murder” (263-264). If detective fiction can only deal with what has already occurred (Auden 407), can a similar process of anatomization be observed in the representation of these murder cases? Accordingly, can the gesture of lamentation be connected to the role of a “murderer” in Lu Xun’s sense?

This ambiguity is amplified when Cheng/Huo refuses to idealize the Westernized worldview and society established under the western framework by critiquing what presumably stands for modern judicial justice, the legal system in Shanghai. In his works, Cheng generally holds a skeptical and critical attitude toward the power of modern law and judicial practices, regarding them as a source of suppression: “In our time, laws seem only to be the weapon of the wealthy (在这个时代，法律好像是有钱人的专有武器)” (“The Man in Grey” 66). “The White Handkerchief” (白紗巾) is another murder case wherein Huo Sang explicitly points out the difference between law and justice: “We are not abided by laws. Our ‘law’ is justice and righteousness (我们是不受法律拘束的，我们的法律，就是正义和公道)” (66).

Prioritizing justice over laws, Cheng/Huo usually arranges successful escapes

from punishment for some of the murders, which, according to Kinkley, show fewer similarities to Holmes than to judges in court-case fiction (206). For example, Huo Sang exonerates Tao Xiaodong, a revolutionary who kills an evil-minded rice seller, and the patriotic Gu couple in *On the Railway*. Moreover, people and social groups who are charged with murders often end up successfully escaping from prison. This is exemplified by Qu Gongxia, who avenged the lady dumped by Qi Jinrong in “The Lingering Charm of Romance” (浪漫的餘韻). These characters share similarities in serving as the icon of “China” in their patriotism, bravery in the face of evil, and their subtle link to the figure of the knight-errant (俠)— which “still exist in the blood of our Chinese people” (“仍存留在我中華民族的血液裡面”).

These expressions of what Kinkley calls “poetic justice,” represent an alternative way to position the unified consciousness of the Chinese nation (Home) and negotiate the tension in “haunted houses” as symbols that point to the impossibility of returning “home.” It may be true that they still cannot provide an answer to the issue of China and the West, but they suggest a way to interpret that modernization in the discourse of Shanghai’s reform culture is a gesture of exploration and negotiation

2.4 Playing with Identity and Truth: A New Myth of the Metropolis

In 1926, on the other side of the continent, a public event that involved a famous detective novelist, Agatha Christie shocked the British public. The female novelist was reported missing after disappearing in the middle of the night. While newspaper press suspected that she might have been murdered, they printed photographs of her in different

disguises. She was discovered in a hotel in Yorkshire, checking in under the name of her husband's mistress. This detail was ironic in that the event of disappearance was due to a desire for a temporary escape from her unpleasant marriage (Worsley 239).

An interesting paradox in this event is that, although the public wondered whether Christie was dead or alive, she had to be recognized first, and the photographs of her disguises would help. Therefore, "the Disappearance," a quasi-detective real-life event created by a mastermind of devising murders, reveals the complex entanglement between the issues of life, death and identity, and thus complicates the narrative and perception of murders.

In *A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism*, Benjamin relates detective interests with urban life when discussing the figure of *flaneur*. Benjamin is convinced that detective interests originated from the flaneur's desire to investigate the menacing masses in metropolises and unravel the mystery of urban life (40). In later detective fiction, the idea of the anonymity of urban life is demonstrated in various forms by creating suspense and complicating identities. While detectives themselves, like Huo Sang and Lu Ping (like Holmes and Lupin), are characterized as masters of disguise, the problem of identity constantly serves as part of the mystery that detectives often encounter when investigating murder cases.

The identity of the victim often misleads murder investigations in the *Huo Sang* series. For instance, "Blood Under the Wheel" features the alleged victim faking his death by switching his clothes with the corpse, meanwhile managing to create an alibi by making his wife dress as a young man. In "The Second Bullet," the mystery revolving

around the identity is only solved at the end of the story: the missing man, who lives in Shanghai as a novel writer, murders his guest, who could reveal his ignominious past in another city. Through these cases, Cheng critiques the fact that in Shanghai, one's identity could be reduced to one's appearance, accent or occupation, in a highly homogenized and capitalized system of recognition and evaluation.

This issue is more complicated in the case of Lu Ping, as he himself epitomizes “the paradoxes of identity and the facelessness of modern life” (Kinkley 224). For urbanites in Shanghai, he is a legendary figure who rarely shows his true appearance. In other words, existing only in tales and legends, “Lu Ping” is a symbol, which questions the perception of “life” from the beginning. What he has, instead, is his reputation for punishing immoral upper-class people, saving innocent people's lives and sticking to the bottom line of never engaging in violence. This idea is explicit in “The Scheme” (計) when he first risks his personal safety to enter an alleged crime scene to prove his innocence. The narrator reassures the reader about what life means for Lu Ping in Shanghai: if he fails to prove his innocence, his reputation would be compromised instead——“Lu Ping” would end up being the one murdered.

The plot of “The Scheme” also brings print journalism, another force that contributes extensively to the complexity of urban life into our discussion. The story begins with an article in a mosquito press about a corpse found in an old house on Xishan Road. The anonymous journalist cites an interview with Lu Ping's rival Lu Lun, which suggests that according to the clues found at the crime scene, Lu Ping has now been listed as the primary suspect. However, Lu Ping meticulously sneaks into the old house at No.

114 Xishan Road, only to find that the whole event is a trap carefully designed to arrest him:

Except for a normal murder case, every other thing is like those fiction fabricated by novelists. All the rumors circulating must be spread by Lu Lun.

其間大約除了一件絕平常的殺人案確是真的，此外一切都等於小說作家筆下的無聊產物。外界種種傳說之辭，必是盧倫故意散佈的。（“The Scheme” 16).

This quotation brilliantly satirizes both the genre and the sensationalized coverage of murders in urban news in real life.

As this story indicates, print journalism, a significant icon of “urbanism” in modern China, provides its readers with both information and misinformation. The paradox of the newspaper’s factuality and fictionality often functions in tandem with the concern of identity and truth in murder cases, one of the most appealing topics for newspapers. Like many urbanites, Huo Sang and Lu Ping keep the habit of reading newspapers, not only as a way to showcase a modern lifestyle, but more importantly, to keep up to date with coverage of their cases.

The newspapers they read serve to establish a complete narrative of the story in many cases. For example, in “The Man in Grey,” after Huo Sang reads about a gunshot in a theater to the neighbor of the victim, his investigation is led in a new direction and it inspires him to consider the possibility that the first victim might have been killed by accident. In “An Effective Alarm” (有效的警戒), Huo Sang announces his triumph after

exonerating Qin Ying'e from murdering her abductor, as he has not seen the coverage about her committing suicide. In "The Black Knight" (黑騎士), Lu Ping's victory is also represented by a newspaper report about the revelation of the dirty business in which Ma Shiji has engaged.

While all of these plots are based on an underlying assumption that newspapers represent objective facts and what is considered "public knowledge," detective fiction more commonly reflects an inverse of this understanding and makes full use of newspapers' "polygeneric text[s]" (Mittler 7). As indicated in the example of "The Scheme," newspaper reports could be manipulated to serve the competition between detectives and their rivals, and test the intelligence and discretion of both sides. For example, in "A Prostitute from Changchun," Huo Sang uses a fake name, "Mr. Xiang" (項君), when communicating with his butler Jin Shou in order to protect himself and his client from danger. Later in the story, he again fabricates a news report that detective Huo Sang is ill in the hospital, inducing his rivals to step into his trap.

These adventures in a metropolitan Shanghai, presumably adventures seeking the truth within the details of everyday life, present a complicated configuration of the city. The pursuit of truth paradoxically ends up deconstructing a comprehensive understanding of Shanghai's urban life. In this process, what readers are exposed to, is a world wherein truth and demystification co-exist with a sense of incomprehensibility, enigmatic configuration, and the new energy of fantasy and myth-making.

3. Entering the Inner World: Participation in Murder in Urban Phantasmagoria

When the Japanese author, Shōfu Muramatsu 村松梢風 (1888-1961) passed Shanghai in 1923 and included his experience in this Chinese coastal city in his collection of essays titled *Mato* (modu, “Demonic City” 1924), he probably did not expect how the concept of *mo* (魔) has dominated popular imaginaries of Shanghai in the following decades. Being endowed with different meanings in different times, “modu” nowadays has reemerged as a social and cultural connotation that is bound up with China’s booming market economy. In the Buddhist tradition, *mo* originally meant demons or devils, specifically incarnations of destructive forces that can bring disasters and bad omens to living beings. Therefore, the concept of *modu*, the demonic city, is codified with a surrealistic reading of urban experience that pertains explicitly to horror, death, and violence. Interestingly, as an extension to this, *mo* is also connected with the force itself in the word “mofa” (magic), which denotes that which is enigmatic and incomprehensible yet tempting for human cognition in a more neutral manner. These different registrations of Shanghai as the “modu” maintain an allegorical relationship with the idea of death itself as both the source of danger and allure.

If the previous chapter explores the tales of murder based on the exploration of unpacking the domain of reality/truth in urban experience, the paradigm of “demon” (*mo*) as a reflection of fantasy, confusion and incomprehensibility challenges the worldview based on logic, rationality and materialism—a theme that has been frequently revisited in the works of a group of authors that are recognized as the Neo-sensationalist School 新

感覺派 (Xin Ganjue Pai). Although the urbanism of their writing practice has been broadly addressed and their literary works are seen in a symbiotic relationship with Shanghai's urban milieu, this group's interest in criminal violence, especially murders, is worth noting. Grappling with the urban narrative of murder from another perspective, they configure murder as a result of the chemical reaction between the protagonist and a hidden domain of urban Shanghai, in which "he" (because the narrators or protagonists in these stories are predominantly male) is no longer the almighty detective who solves the mystery and makes "truth" available to readers. Instead, in many cases, he is the one who avidly pursues or commits murder, and he is an unreliable narrator either in a conscious or unconscious way from the perspective of narrativity. The motifs and rhetoric of a modern glamorous city filled with threats, therefore, intertwine with the perception of the urban reality of Shanghai being discursively represented in the context of dreams, hallucinations, perversity, (sexual) fantasies, and other forms of self-imposed constructions. According to Leo Lee, this inner tension in the perception of modernity in the Western world between the capitalist outlook and worldview featuring science, technology, and rationality, and the aesthetic modernism highlighting the irrationality, darkness, and disorder, is not split in Chinese author's exploration of modernity (146-147). The monstrosity of the cityscape is imprinted in the psyche of urbanites and contributes to a new legend of urban horror.

Although Leo Lee's claim has positioned the writings of Neo-sensationalist School authors in the larger cultural context of the global modernist literature, it directs our attention to how the experimental intellectual practices have treated modernity as a

more complicated concept as it points to the tension between ideological concerns and narrative techniques. Additionally, Shu-mei Shih has pointed out in her interpretation of Liu Na'ou's work that the initiators of Neo-Sensationalist writings in China "celebrated writing for its own sake" (940). One could argue that from the perspective of narrative techniques, this amoral and apolitical stance of Neo-sensationalist School echoes the predominance of interior monologues of the murderer and detailed depictions of violence in their works. This predilection also greatly influenced their position among Shanghai's literati and their dialog modes with the leftist turn of Shanghai's reform culture during the 1930s¹⁷.

In this chapter, I discuss characterization of murders in the works of this group of authors, who were active in Shanghai in the 1930s, including Shi Zhecun 施蛰存 (1905-2003), Mu Shiyong 穆时英 (1912-1940) and Liu Na'ou 刘呐鸥 (1900-1939). However, I would like to note that the concept of the Neo-Sensationalist School is deployed in a strategic way as my following discussion does not neglect these authors' changing focuses, oeuvres, and affiliations in different periods in the 1930s. My discussion also shows that the ideological or political implications in their works are rather complicated and cannot be viewed as simply changing over time.

3.1 Murder as Reading Experiences: Shi Zhecun's Textual World

"...The essence of things is not related to their reality, that there are encounters,

¹⁷ Even the name of the group "Neo-sensationalist School" comes from the critique of the leftist writer Lou Shiyi in his critical reading of Shi Zhecun's "Demonic Way" (1933) and "At the Paris Cinema" (Lou).

also primary, that the mind can grasp, such as chance, illusion, fantasy and dream.” (Aragon)

This question of reality posed by French poet Louis Aragon suggests the constructive nature of the perception of reality, which significantly challenges the epistemological foundation of reproducing the truths of crimes. In this sense, the revelation of psychological details of the murderer, which is made possible by the first-person narration in many Neo-Sensationalist works, cannot simply be categorized as “the motive of crime” in a legal sense. Instead, it points to a series of complicated psychic reactions result from the distorted understandings of reality that justifies seeing the world through the lens of paranoia, delusions, sleepwalking, and abnormal psychology. The multiplicity of understanding reality, and more precisely, how reality is torn apart, is given great attention in the crime writing mechanisms deployed by Shi Zhecun.

Later grouped as psychoanalytical fiction, his experimental stories in the 1930s, including “Demonic Way,” “Yaksha” and “The Haunted House” feature the chaotic inner world of male urbanites and the horror aroused by deadly events. The impulse to commit murders or encounter murder in these stories is bound up with the fear of encountering deaths that are profoundly connected to a series of supernatural motifs, such as witchcraft and ghosts. Although the alleged victim and the deadly motifs are clearly marked with genders, where “woman is a perennial figure of fascination, seduction, mystery and death” (*Translingual Practice* 135), Shi Zhecun’s stories are viewed as more ambitious in incorporating theories in literary imaginaries, especially the Freudian connotations of interiority than those of his contemporaries (Shih 355). As an avid reader of Western

literature and scholarly works, Shi's understanding of Western modernity and urban experience is deeply intertwined with his readings of the imaginative reality given to the city by a body of Western literature. In other words, for him, Shanghai is not a physical location where modern per se is visible and can provide a series of real-life counterparts to his writings, but, rather, a cultural mediation where the idea of urban life is made available through translingual reading experience and language education. Therefore, his stories remap murders in the milieu of world literature shed new light on translingual and intertextual links between Shanghai and predominately Western modernism. Through what Shu-mei Shih calls "textual dissimulation" (339) or what Lydia Liu calls "the narrative suspense in which the very notion of real hangs indecisively between psychological truth and literary truth" (137), both of which seek to account for the blurred boundary between fictional literature and real-life experience, the inter-literary connections Shi explores also demonstrate how urban experience is situated in the clashes of different bodies of knowledge and truths.

Shi's literary experiment involving supernatural territory starts with his 1931 story "Demonic Way." The male protagonist, who suffers from amnesia and neurasthenia, is traveling on a train from Shanghai to the rural area in X city to visit his friend Mr. Chen. During his journey, his mind is disturbed by the weird old lady sitting opposite him and dressed in black. Believing that she must be a witch, who would threaten the life of mentally unstable men like those in Pu Songling's 蒲松齡 *Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio* (聊齋志異), he is fascinated by the erotic images of beautiful women he develops toward different disguises of the murderous witch. After he arrives at his friend's house,

the shadow of the witch still haunts him and reappears in his fantasy of his friend's wife, Mrs. Chen, and in an unexpected way, at the end of the story when the narrator returns to Shanghai and is notified that his three-year-old daughter has died. The causal relation between his encounter with the witch and the sudden death of his daughter, however, can only be anchored in the domain of surrealism and function metaphorically as a reflection of how deadly his repressed desire could be.

Similarly, the plot of "Yaksha" follows a horrifying and erotic journey to rural Hangzhou of the narrator's friend, Bian Shiming 卞士明, who is in hospital due to his mental disorder at the beginning of the story. According to Bian, when he was taking a boat and passing a local temple in the countryside, he caught a glimpse of a woman in a white dress and later was convinced that she was the "Yaksha" in Buddhist tales. Confused by his sexual desire aroused by the dangerous devil, he later followed that "Yaksha" and strangled her to death in his discursive understanding of the situation: he actually killed a deaf-mute countryside woman who went there secretly to meet her lover. At the end of the story, Bian, in his sobriety, tells the narrator that his delusion must be a kind of repayment for the life he took.

Both "Demonic Way" and "Yaksha" concern the switch of setting, specifically between Shanghai and rural areas. For the male narrators, the journey of leaving Shanghai for some unknown rural villages parallels the journey of confronting ghosts and supernatural events. Accordingly, Shanghai, in such scenarios, is conceptualized as a place of rationality and order that could provide a shelter for mentally disturbed males. This contrast between the metropolitan city and countryside, according to Rosenmeier, is

structured as a process that “the protagonist’s modern urban rationality and logic are unraveled, replaced by fear, madness and displaced desire” (“Women Stereotypes” 51). However, the apparent irony in this argument is that the urban background does not necessarily link to the immunity to the supernatural narratives and persecutory delusions. Conversely, urban Shanghai plays the role of providing a ground for the cultural exchanges and complicated knowledge landscape of Chinese intellectuals consisting of resources of different mechanisms of approaching crime and death. The exploration or the revelation of the tension in linking reading diverse texts and enjoy the possession of cultural capital to the May Fourth ideology of enlightenment and rationality is no less than a revolutionary mode of thinking (Lee 178).

Shi Zhecun’s 1933 short story entitled “Haunted House” is an even more profound case concerning how the view of death is related to uncanny sensations. The beginning of the story features the reproduction of an event involving the death of three foreign women in a Dutch-style mansion in the International Settlement of Shanghai and making comments by nesting different newspaper reports and citing literary works. Although the involvement of supernatural imaginaries is highlighted by “Sir Conan Doyle’s existing-spirit theory” (柯南道爾勳爵有鬼論) and multiple death events that fit the territorial repossession and dispossession lead to an expectation of supernatural narrative, the preceding chapters that consist of diaries, letters, newspaper reports, and confessions of a criminal eventually subvert the theory of ghost haunting. Instead, what readers can see is how an elaborately orchestrated murder committed by the husband of the last deceased woman has taken advantage of the rumors and supernatural

imaginings revolving around the house.

Leo Lee, who explores the connection between this story and a series of Western legacies to discuss Shi's literary experiment, expresses his disappointment about how in this story Shi abandons his ambition of demonic writing and makes it a detective story that is "too concerned with solving the murder case, thus dissipating the spell of the haunted house and the intended effect of suspense" (184). Although Lee's critique is based on the assumption that "Haunted House" serves as a further extension of "Demonic Way" and "Yaksha" to a large extent, I believe it is fairer to interpret "Haunted House" as a complex work that demonstrates more than what labels such as *gothic literature* or *detective stories* imply. From the perspective of narrative technique, legal documents containing criminals' confessions, the diaries or letters, as texts in first-person narratives that imply a certain level of privacy, encourage the readers to equalize them with the truthful representation of the narrator's inner world, which meanwhile directs us to revisit the question of the reliability of the narrator. For example, the diary of Vladinski, the husband of the first female "victim," Katherine, shows that the Russian businessman is deeply troubled by the shadow of the hanging rope as he regards it as the signifier of death that can end his wife's suffering brought by the illness. In this sense, whether Katherine's death is truly a suicide is, at least, complicated by the revelation of the fact that he is delusional at times. In addition, in James' confession to murdering his fifth victim, Mary, we can see the psychological process of the murderer, which is demonstrated in a highly complex manner:

I have no idea how long I have been standing there. There's a total blank in my

mind. Knowing that I am conscious of what I am doing, I see the ghost images of the two dead women. Therefore, the blood of a matador begins to flush in every vein of mine...Mary loves me with her whole heart, and, and I do too...But why can't I just stop the evil-doing?

我不知道在床邊站立了多少時候。我心裡像一片空白，並沒有什麼思緒。知道我自己覺醒轉來，從瑪麗的天真的睡姿中看到了以前的兩個婦人的凶像，於是，一個鬥牛士的血在我每一個脈管中迸激著了……瑪麗是真心地戀愛著我，而我，……我也是，但為什麼我不能禁止我的惡行呢？（“The Haunted House” 224-225）

Here the eroticized female body reemerges in the framework of premeditated and well-calculated murder and contributes to the tension between the monstrous thirst for blood and the self-conscious inner struggle deriving from the more humane side of the murderer.

Although many scholars have noted the significance of the reading lists in these stories, it is equally important to point out that the reading materials chosen by Shi also call the separation between the supernatural characterization of murders and solving murder cases using science and rationalism into question. Besides his use of Freud, whose interpretation of “uncanny” theorizes the blurred boundary between imagination and reality (“The Uncanny”), Shi also shows great interest in Edgar Allan Poe and Sir Conan Doyle in these stories. In some cases, the characters in the story are reading their works, while in other scenarios Shi inserts representative motifs in the text such as a

black cat or comments on “Sir Conan Doyle’s existing-spirit theory,” which could immediately inform the readers of the existence of such connections. As two authors that established the paradigm of the detective genre based on logic, science, and rationalism, Poe and Doyle are also known for their extreme interest in ghost stories, gothic fantasies, and necromancy in different phases of their authorial paths. While such historical facts profoundly show that these elements may not be mutually exclusive to each other, they also question the May Fourth categorization of Chinese and Western literary legacies. In this way, Shi’s work could be seen as a Chinese narrative of a world where the Red Death and Dupin could coexist.

3.2 The Desire in a Prison Cell: Dancing with the Femme Fatale

The focus on urban modern life in the works of Neo-sensationalist School authors is inseparable from staging a certain type of female figure—the *femme fatale* who demonstrates the new mechanism of inscribing modernity onto gender issues in urban fantasy. Mary Ann Doane’s famous explanation of the status of this figure contains important information about how the elements of criminality could interfere with the figure of *femme fatale*. According to Doane, a *femme fatale* is “never really what she seems to be. She harbors a threat which is not entirely legible, predictable or manageable” (1). For the male narrator, she embodies what could perpetuate his intellectual delight of solving the mystery and the possession of knowledge/ truth, but she ultimately stands for what opposes such intellectual ideal and guides males to where they lose their grasp on leading a normal life and choose to commit murder.

Liu Na'ou 's 1934 short story "An Attempted Murder" (殺人未遂), as the name suggests, revolves around an attempted murder case targeting a female clerk working at a bank vault. The story begins with the male protagonist's fascination with a female clerk due to her silence and lack of speech. However, her figure as a "soulless statue" leaves him more space to attribute his thoughts to her, especially when he follows her on the long corridor and watches her opening the coffers for him:

That corridor looks so long and narrow, and I cannot figure out why they build it like this...I feel that a kind of pleasure strikes me, as if we have flown out of the vortex-like office and noisy world and entered a place of tranquility, and we are about to share the pleasure and the secrecy.

那條廊是那麼狹又是那麼長，我真猜不出他們為什麼造成那麼一條……我內心似乎感覺著一種歡喜，好像兩人已跳出了旋渦似的辦事間，那喧嘩的塵世，深深地探入了幽雅的境地，即將享受共同的秘密，共同的逸樂似的。（“An Attempted Murder” 14）

For the male protagonist, the corridor and the vault with the dim light that guarantee privacy for the clientele are transformed into secret spaces of romantic fantasy where the female clerk and the narrator can share utopian spatial intimacy. The enclosed corridor is characterized as the only place where her body and meaning seem available to him. Meanwhile, ideological and social constraints can be replaced by a sense of emptiness, allowing the imagination to function as an alternative universe that displaced Shanghai's capitalist urbanism. Surrounded by coffers filled with treasure, he can

exercise his act of dominance and possession as a wealthy and sexually attractive man. As a sharp contrast, after he comes upstairs, he has to return to the daily routine of an urbanite, facing his life that consists of “piles of unfinished work” and a wife who will kick him out of bed (“An Attempted Murder” 15).

The narrator’s perception of the woman, however, is challenged when he comes across the female clerk in a restaurant. This time the woman looks like a different person: she talks, laughs, and even flirts with the man sitting in front of her. Instigated by the judgment that “she is just an average modern girl in the metropolis, anything but an innocent girl, and definitely not the machine-like *dumb* girl I knew” (這證明了她是一個普通的都會產的摩登女，決非天真，更決不是我所知道的機械般的 *dumb*) (“An Attempted Murder” 16), the narrator is soon convinced that her behavior during the lunch renders her more transparent and readable than ever. Her transformation from an incomprehensible and unattainable woman to a femme fatale encourages him to resorts to violence to confirm his dominance. After nearly strangling the female to death, he is arrested but refuses to be apologetic about the crime he committed.

The attempted murder can be recognized as the male protagonist’s last desperate attempt to symbolically preserve the utopia. For the narrator, if his final encounter with the clerk (who is a modern girl according to his imagination) marks a moment that his enclosed world of fantasy is subject to the intrusion of modernity, the only way for him to address his anxiety and achieve reconciliation is to surrender to his desire.

Both Shu-mei Shih and Yingjin Zhang have accounted for the relationship between gender and modernity in Liu Na’ou’s fiction. According to Shih, the modern girl

demonstrates the ability to keep abreast with modernity, which their male counterpart in the story pursues all the time but shows a sense of lagging-behind (299). In this regard, the only way for the male narrator to pursue a utopian ending is not to reclaim the space that is impervious to time, but to “plunge oneself in the urban stream and to experience the thrill and carnal intoxications the metropolis offers to adventurers” (Zhang 145), where he decides to become a sexual-driven urban predator, who seeks to keep up with the speed by reclaiming his control over the female he fantasies. In this regard, surrendering himself to the impulse of domination, destruction, and committing murder, is a way to reconcile with the seductive but cannibalistic urban energy.

A twist appears at the end of the story when the narrator switches from the murderer, Mr. Luo, to his friend, a defense lawyer of this criminal case. It turns out that the whole story is the monologue of Mr. Luo. Shocked by his friends’ lack of a sense of guilt and the unusual excitement he demonstrates when he is telling the story, the lawyer escapes from the prison as a visitor, but in another sense, the fantasy of his friend. The characterization of the second narrator’s reaction, interestingly, invites us to investigate the narrative gaze of murder from a self-reflexive perspective. Although we also touched upon the issue of self-reflexivity in our discussion of Shi Zhecun’s experimental writings, where the idea of murder is generated through the blurring of the boundary between art and life, the narrator’s reaction poses inquires of positionality and the most profound psychological turmoil and ruptured ethical concern one experiences as a listener/ reader of the tale of murders.

This is indicated in the parallel between the interior monologue of Mr. Luo and

the lawyer in the text. The first narrator, Mr. Luo, thinks that walking out of the corridor and “seeing the light from the outside, I[he] always feel[s] that I have [he has] been rescued from a horrifying daydream” (一見外光，我總像從一個恐怖的白日夢被救了出來似的)(“An Attempted Murder” 15). The beginning of the last paragraph seems to echo the rhetoric of the fantasy and dream: “Waking up from a nightmare, I raise my head and see some shining white clouds in the sun of the autumn” (惡夢初醒般地，我舉頭在天際望見了一些在秋陽中閃爍的白雲) (“An Attempted Murder” 17). In other words, the second narrator reflects how narrating murder exercises its effects upon the narrator and receiver, where the very act of narrating/reading/listening harbors a language of eroticism and function as a prosthesis of bodies that experience sexual pleasures. The pleasure and enjoyment Luo can feel as a narrator is equally accessible to his friend, the lawyer who is supposed to represent the legal justice.

If “An Attempted Murder” jeopardizes reinforcing the stereotype of the vulnerability of women by stressing the assault on female’s body, Mu Shiyong’s “Red Diana” (紅色女獵神) published in 1933 reverses this relationship, suggesting that the sexual tension rooted in murder can be approached from a different angle. The beginning of the story seems not that different from other Neo-Sensationalist stories: the narrator, an urban man encounters a gorgeous modern girl wearing a red dress in a dog racing club in Shanghai. Tempted by her beauty, he passionately courts her and prepares to take her to his apartment. However, when the clock strikes at two o’clock, the woman suddenly ends their romantic date and asks the narrator to drive her to the suburban area, during which

she tells the narrator that she is a serial killer who has murdered 13 men. Although the narrator is confused by the message and what the female orders him to do next, he helps the woman he adores escape from the police before he faints during gunfire exchange between the two sides. When he awakens, he is told that they have been arrested and are currently imprisoned in a patrol wagon. Rather than feeling pathetic for the fact that he is regarded as a conspirator of the murderous woman, the narrator is comforted by the belief that what he has done helps him gain the love of Red Diana.

The “Diana” in this short story is anything but an object serving the male gaze and sexual desire. Unlike the female protagonist who is speechless and thus can only be configured by the male gaze in “An Attempted Murder,” the female protagonist in “Red Diana” uses criminality as an agency for her emotional and physical power and autonomy. Although the erotic potential of their relationship serves as the irony of Diana in the sense that Diana is the goddess of virginity in the ancient Greek myth, the twist of her identity parallels another identity of Diana as the goddess of hunting and killing without mercy. Comparing to males who stroll the streets and hunt for beautiful girls with the sadist and murderous impulse of “breaking her waist and ankles” (想抽斷她的腰肢, 想抽斷她的腳踝), “Diana” here unquestionably shows that she is a better hunter and a better player of the game of urban dwelling. This becomes more explicit after we see that her violence and brutality disarm his defense and tempt him to embrace the criminal aura she incarnates, after which he is still convinced that he is probably the luckiest person in the world for being her lover, despite losing his freedom. Their dialog in the patrol wagon, thus, can be read as a rather utopian one for the male narrator. His

possessive love for Diana is fulfilled after she finally is willing to admit that she belongs to him, despite in a rather ambiguous way.

Staying with her as an outlaw, the narrator, as Mr. Luo in Liu Na'ou's story, also believes that it is worthwhile to lose everything only to obtain her love and intimate physical contacts. In this sense, the shaking patrol wagon is also a utopian space where the male narrator can initiate an imagined negotiation with his destroyed life. The final lines of his inner monologue in the story are the following:

Red is truly a symbol of good luck! I win the money, lay claim to the heart of the gorgeous Diana, and I also become a prisoner. Aren't all of these things hard to achieve?

紅色真是幸運的象徵呢！我贏了錢，我獵獲了奇麗的 Diana，我也做了囚徒，不全是件很不容易做到的事嗎？（“Red Diana”）

The irony here is that there is more sense of Ah Q-ism in his claim than Mr. Luo's, as only his endeavor of obtaining the truth about her sees a total failure, his authority of narrating her story is also delegitimized. Because he is knocked unconscious and wakes up in the darkness, he is not aware of what has happened and what is waiting for them. Therefore, he is rendered an unreliable narrator of her story, symbolizing what supersedes the male gaze and male power of narrative.

3.3 The Birth of Proletarian Monsters: Gothic Marxist Reading or Marxism as Gothic

By many scholarly accounts, Mu Shiyong's career as an author can be divided into two different phases based on his relationship with the so-called leftist writing. Before

following Liu Na'ou and focusing on modernist writings about urban landscape and urban life, he is, in many ways, seen as a promising author producing so-called proletarian literature advocated by leftist authors. During this time, the interest in murder and other forms of brutalities in his work invites a kind of reading that addresses socio-historical violence and left-wing revolutionary projects. Accordingly, his shift to Neo-Sensationalist writing is critiqued as a process of moving away from the focus on capitalist society and the lumpenproletariats' struggle for life in the city and thus a process of "moral regression" (Lee 192).

However, Christopher Rosenmeier calls the way of simply applying the Marxist framework about capital and class struggle to Mu Shiyong's early works into question, arguing that some of the works previously viewed as leftist writing actually "deliberately parodies the social agenda of contemporary leftist writers" ("The Subversion of Modernity and Socialism" 1). To be more specific, Rosenmeier is convinced that the crimes represented by Mu sometimes are not justifiable by the identities of the involved as lower-class urban workers. Therefore, in this section, I would like to illustrate this inner tension in Mu's depiction of urban criminality and socialist/leftist revolutionary discourse by posing the concept of "gothic Marxism."

By bringing up "gothic Marxism," I aim to achieve two goals, which is not necessarily consistent with how it is dealt with and explained in the first work that pays closer attention to it, Margaret Cohen's *Profane Illumination* (1995). Firstly, though as a relatively contemporary concept, its components, "gothic" and "Marxism," coincide with the way we approach the subject of study in this section in a curious but meaningful way.

Although “gothic,” as Andrew Rowcroft contends, addresses the mysterious malevolent motives (195), the concept of gothic Marxism emphasizes how unconscious forces and irrationality find their surreal links to historical forces and the banality in expressions (Eburne 12), where capital is usually related to grotesque motifs such as mutilated bodies, blood, and imaginings of monsters and ghosts. Secondly, it concentrates on the productivity of the gothic haunt and those moments that reveal the disturbing situation of living with the “detritus and trivia” of the past that fails to be dispelled (Cohen 11), which one could argue is a framework that helps us think beyond Marxist itself and delve deeper into the interactive mechanisms between the past and present.

Most of Mu Shiyong’s works categorized as proletarian literature are collected in *North Pole, South Pole* (南北極), including the story that first helps him establish his reputation in proletarian fiction and social issues in city life, “Our World” (咱們的世界 1930). In the first-person narrative, the protagonist Li Er 李二 reflects on how he enters the world of the outlaws in a mixed tone of satire and excitement. Growing up in poverty, Li Er came to Shanghai to seek a better life after his parents passed away. However, he suffers from the rage of the disparity between the rich and poor, being mentally tortured by the injustice he has witnessed. In his twenties, he encounters Lao Jiang, the man who changes the path of his life and introduces him to the underworld of murder, robbery, and sexual violence. During one of their planned robberies, Lao Jiang asks Li to kill a wealthy man as a rite to officially become a member of the gang. Without any hesitation, Li Er soon indulges himself in the act of killing under the logic that wealthy people

deserve to be wiped out by “heroes” like him: “—Oh, Mister, killing a person is kind of pathetic but the pleasure I take in killing that kind of person is so great” (——啊，先生，殺人真有點可憐，可是殺那種人真痛快。)(“Our World”).

Li Er’s self-recognition as a hero and the underworld on the discourse of “brotherhood” follows the logic of peasant uprising, which from the perspective of Rosenmeier, is an imitation of that in Shi Nai’an’s 施耐庵 *The Water Margin* (水滸傳) (6-7). Ostensibly, the title “our world” points to the endeavor of dealing with injustice and stop the disadvantaged proletariat from being exploited by the upper-class. However, in the story, the act of committing murder only serves the purpose of violence in the name of bringing righteousness to society and eliminating the disparity between people from different social classes. What they do after what they believe as righteous acts of revenge is to hail their victory through appropriating the wealth of the wealthy people and raping women from the upper class. Therefore, ironically, neither will he and his gang seek to completely change the society by participating in revolutionary acts, nor will they unite with other groups of oppressed people according to socialist beliefs.

The relationship between the frustration felt by Li Er in modern urban life and his recourse to the quasi-*Water Margin* worldview is also worthy of analysis. The brutality and monstrosity of the murder committed by Li Er and members of his gang can be interpreted as a discursive form of “solidarity with the monster,” wherein the monster and horror come from the haunted, imagined past. In this way, though the story is not a villainization of Marxist narratives per se, the protagonist’s identity as an urban

proletarian receives a twisted representation and further becomes the locus of gothic imaginations that point to the pessimistic attitude toward the lower-class uprising and class struggle in the context of a modern city.

If the depictions of violence in “Our World” is Mu’s satire of leftist literature in the gothic romance-style, then another of his story “The Man who Lost an Arm” (断了条胳膊的人 1933), one of the three short stories that were included in *North Pole, South Pole* two years after the first edition in 1930, is an example that fits the framework of Gothic Marxist reading. The protagonist, whose name never appears in the story, supports his family by working in a factory in Shanghai. Although he enjoys the peaceful life at the beginning of the story, his deepest fear as a worker is that one day one or more of his limbs will be hurt by the machine in the factory and this horrible scenario repetitively appears in his nightmare:

He pays attention to that big wheel. He has seen a lot of people whose legs, arms and neck are bit off by its teeth. Therefore, he cannot allow it to get close to his body...The huge wheel howls, showing its teeth and looking at him. Hearing its click, he saw himself falling, with his arm thrown aside and cannot stop bleeding...

他留神著那大輪子，他瞧見過許多人給它的牙齒咬斷了腿，咬斷了胳膊，咬斷了脖子的。他不能叫它沾到他的身子...大輪子隆隆地鬧著，雪亮的牙齒露著，望著他。他瞧見它喀的一聲兒，他倒了下去，血直冒，胳膊掉在一邊…… (“The Man who Lost an Arm”)

In his nightmare, the machine becomes a murderous monster who creates dismembered bodies and destroys workers' life. The sense of gothic narrative peaks when the protagonist eventually loses his arm and gets fired by the exploitative factory. This somehow disturbing scene echoes the Marxist representation of "the horrifying transactions between human bodies and work" (Rowcroft 192). In his theoretical works such as *Capital*, Marx broadly deploys the aestheticized representation of capital, using expressions like "the vampire thirst for the living blood of labor" (367). The exploitation of labor and their status as disposable lives receives vivid characterizations in the male protagonist's nightmare of a cannibalistic machine that devours the life of workers.

In devastation and poverty, the protagonist loses his wife and fails to save the life of his sick child. Taking a knife with him, he decides to go to the factory to seek revenge even if he needs to sacrifice his life for it. However, the story ends with a twist when he encounters another worker who is severely wounded by the machine. It suddenly occurs to him that it is impossible to stop the endless exploitation by murdering one or two people. This scenario signifies a pessimistic outlook for the future of urban capitalism, where even the pleasure of murdering and revenging would be rendered in vain. Thus, the horror of capitalist order moves beyond the domain of dreams, hallucinations, and inescapable oracle of the individual or collective destiny to that in historiography.

The spectacle of murder, contributing to the portrayals of Shanghai's demonic landscapes, changes with the representational mode on the level of literary techniques and diverse ways of imaging to live with the modernity with the cultural-political articulations. The writings of Neo-sensationalist School authors, in this way, have

established tales of murder as an adventure into the unknown, or more critically, the repressed. Urban mysteries deeply delve into not only how a demonic city can be internalized and produce a labyrinth of criminal minds but also how the narratives of getting lost and confused legitimize murderous impulses in everyday life “in the aura of horrible and supernatural” (Eburne 133).

Conclusion

In 1940, three years after Shanghai was conquered by the Japanese colonizers, both Liu Na'ou and Mu Shiyong were murdered in a rather mysterious way. Although their murderers were never caught, the most widely accepted theory concerning their death is that they were assassinated by patriots due to their relationship with the Japanese colonizers. The unsettled cases involving the authors themselves seem to reflect that the tales of murder will continue to metamorphose and be told in a new way and continue to entangle with the destiny of Shanghai.

According to Jonathan P. Eburne, though crime itself is not exclusively a modern phenomenon, the marriage between crime and modernity has resulted in what he calls the transition “from criminology to criminography” (7). Such a transformation has shaped our way of viewing crimes as a form of art that can be consumed, studied, and aesthetically represented. In other words, the idea of modernity marks a domain that embodies the aggregation of agencies that have contributed to this transformation. In the context of China, modernity is more than a process of imitation and localization. Rather, how it is mythologized and contested simultaneously is anchored in a series of cultural reforms and dilemmas that occurred at the beginning of the 20th century. Witnessing rapid changes in every aspect, Shanghai has provided Chinese intellectuals and thinkers with a primary image of modernity, though in no way it is coherent and heterogeneous. This project, in a sense, is to establish murder narratives as an undercurrent force in modern Chinese social and cultural history.

The tales of murder in Republican Shanghai I present in this thesis have shown

how tales of murder come to the public eye in Shanghai in their marriage with mass print media, a site that enables the circulation, dissemination, and diagnosis of the idea of murder. The three forms I discussed, generally following a chronological order concerning the starting time of their proliferation, also represent three perspectives of telling and exploiting the meanings of murder in a metropolis on different levels. The modern journal, as a commodity of mass consumption that directly reflects that the reform took place in quotidian life by the imported technological innovations in the printing industry, together with its later combination with photography, shoulders the responsibility of helping foster the idea of the national community through first enabling an urban reading community, an objective that is set in the contestation between social responsibility and making profits. Based on a discourse of representing the truth, the newspaper coverage of murders establishes a basic distinction between modern ideologies and traditional thoughts that occupies a rather ambiguous position in what kind of murder narratives are emphasized and sensationalized, and what usually elude the public attention. The most obvious tension is demonstrated in the imbalance between genders and the strategies of representing gender, which makes narrating a murder a highly eroticized experience that maintains a vague relationship with the project of social transformation in a metaphorical way.

The introduction of detective stories to China and the detective stories produced by native authors promoted the power of positivist science, logical thinking, and scientific observation. Levitating solving murder cases in these stories to the level of education and renovating the mind and worldview of the readers, the detective stories

also demonstrate a complicated ideological critique in the narratorial structure of destructing the old in the pursuit of new. However, it seems that this project of knowledge production and dissemination through popular literature cannot be delineated clearly, during which the danger of murder and violence is replaced by playing the intellectual game and watching a mythologized detective walking around and exploring the mysteries of the city and enjoying the cathartic process of restoring the order.

The imagination of encountering and committing murder, as well as the attention to the unrepresentable urban phantasmagoria. Opening themselves to the disturbing chemical reactions between urbanites from different socioeconomic statuses and the metropolitan Shanghai, Neo-sensationalist School authors fused first-person murder narratives with diverse literary legacies and narrative techniques that they obtained as members of the reading community of world literature. Their exploration of the interior space touch upon the possibility that every urbanite could harbor a murderer or intoxicated murderous passions. Their practices problematize the separation between the real and unreal, the rational and irrational, individual and collective, detective and gothic, establishing sensations, dreams, desire, and hallucinations as sites for the production of meanings in the urban dwelling. Their way of using murder as a strategy and connecting it to the language of critique targeting social violence, both physically and metaphorically has also provided a new way of imagining the status of murder in Shanghai which is different from that of the dominant leftist discourses.

Works Cited

- “A Brief History of Chinese Detective Fiction” (中国原创推理小说简史).
URL:www.tuili.com/blog/u/8/archives/2010/2594.html
- “A Group of Females who Killed Their Husbands” (大批謀殺親夫者). *Shen Bao: Unfettered Talk* (申報·自由談). 7 December, 1929. p. 18.
- “An Announcement of the Publication of The Murder of the President of the Kingdom of Flowers” (花國總理蓮英被害記出版通告). *Shen Bao* 申報. 2 July, 1920. p. 15.
- Andriolo, Karin. “The Twice-Killed: Imagining Protest Suicide.” *American Anthropologist*, vol. 108, no. 1, 2006, pp. 100–13.
DOI:www.jstor.org/stable/3804736.
- “Appointment for Buying Truths about Ruan Lingyu’s Suicide.” (預約阮玲玉自殺真相一部). *Shen Bao* 申報, 11 March, 1935. p. 18.
- Aragon, Louis. “Une vague de rêves” (A Wave of Dreams), 1924. Translated by Carlos Richard Lara.
URL:static1.squarespace.com/static/54ff3f62e4b0bdc9a89e5e60/t/5b0cf53a575d1fdde9c1e1b2/1527575866736/aragon.pdf.
- Auden, W. H. “The Guilty Vicarage,” *Harper Magazine*, 1948. pp. 406-12.
- Benjamin, Walter. *Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism*. Translated by Harry Zohn. NLB, 1973.
- Bourdieu, Pierre and Loïc J.D. Wacquant. *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*. Polity Press, 1992.
- Butler, Judith. *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*. Verso, 2004.
- Cai, Chusheng 蔡楚生. *New Women* (新女性). Lian Hua Film Company (聯華影業公司), 1935.
- Cheng Xiaoqing 程小青. “A Prostitute from Changchun” (長春妓). *Saturday* (禮拜六), issue 113, 1921, pp. 76-80.
- Cheng, Xiaoqing 程小青. “The Childhood of Oriental Holmes” (東方福爾摩斯的兒童時代). *Family* (家庭), issue 1, 1922. pp. 1-8.

- Cheng, Xiaoqing 程小青. "Waves of a Grieving Sea" (怨海波). *The World of Detectives* (偵探世界), issue 5, 1923, pp. 1-9.
- Cheng, Xiaoqing 程小青. "The Second Bullet" (第二彈). *Red Roses* (紅玫瑰), vol. 1, issue 6, 1924. pp. 1-15.
- Cheng, Xiaoqing. "An Effective Alarm" (有效的警戒). *Red Roses*, vol. 4, issue 32, 1928. pp. 1-28.
- Cheng, Xiaoqing. "Life of a Dancing Girl" (舞女生涯). *Journal of Travelling* (旅行杂志), vol. 3, issue 4, 1929. pp. 53-64.
- Cheng, Xiaoqing 程小青. "Eighty-Four" (八十四). *Coral* (珊瑚), vol. 1, issue 5, 1932. pp. 1-9.
- Cheng, Xiaoqing 程小青. "The Innocent Murderer" (無罪之兇手), 1932.
URL:www.taotaodu.com/full/3/3643/1262927.shtml
- Cheng Xiaoqing 程小青. "Different Dimensions of Detective Fiction" (偵探小說的多方面). Shanghai Wenhua Art Books Co. (上海文華圖書出版公司), 1933. pp. 1- 7.
- Cheng, Xiaoqing 程小青. "Blood Under the Wheel" (輪下血). *Cases of Huo Sang: Volume 3* (霍桑探案集 3). The Masses Publishing House (群眾出版社), 1997. pp. 100-62.
- Cheng, Xiaoqing 程小青. "The White Handkerchief" (白紗巾). *Cases of Huo Sang: Volume 3* (霍桑探案集 3). The Masses Publishing House (群眾出版社), 1997. pp. 267-333.
- Cheng, Xiaoqing 程小青. "The Man in Grey" (灰衣人). *Cases of Huo Sang: Volume 5* (霍桑探案集 5). The Masses Publishing House (群眾出版社), 1997. pp. 1-68.
- Cohen, Margaret. *Profane Illumination*. University of California Press, 1995.
- "Court Hearing for Murder of the Husband" (殺害親夫案開審). *Shen Bao* 申報. 14 September, 1928. p.15.
- Dai, Jinhua 戴錦華. *Gendering China* (性別中國). Edited by David Der-wei Wang. Rye Field Publishing House (麥田出版), 2006.
- De Quincey, Thomas. "On the Knocking at the Gate in *Macbeth*." *On Murder*. Edited by Robert Morrison. Oxford University Press, 2006. pp. 1-7.

- De Quincey, Thomas. "On Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts." *On Murder*. Edited by Robert Morrison. Oxford University Press, 2006. pp. 8-34.
- Dikötter, Frank. *Things Modern: Material Culture and Everyday Life in China*. Hurst & Company, 2007.
- Doane, Mary Ann. *Femmes Fatales: Feminism, Film Theory, Psychoanalysis*. Routledge, 1991.
- Dove, George. "The Rules of the Game." *Studies in Popular Culture*, issue 4, 1981. pp. 67-72.
- Eburne, Jonathan P. *Surrealism and the Art of Crime*. Cornell University Press, 2008.
- Esposito, Roberto. *Immunitas: The Protection and Negation of Life*. Translated by Zakiya Hanafi. Polity Press, 2011.
- "Fishing" (釣上魚兒). Saturday (禮拜六). Issue 69, 1915. pp. 24-6.
- Freud, Sigmund. "Uncanny (1919)." The MIT Press.
URL: web.mit.edu/allanmc/www/freud1.pdf
- Freud, Sigmund. *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. Translated by James Strachey. W.W. Norton & Company, 1961.
- Habermas, Jürgen. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. Translated by Thomas Burger. The MIT Press, 1991.
- Harris, Kristine. "The New Woman: Image, Subject, and Dissent in 1930s Shanghai Film Culture." *Republican China*, vol.20, issue 2, pp. 55-79.
DOI:10.1179/repc.1995.20.2.55
- Howard, Haycraft. "Dictators, Democrats, and Detectives." *Murder for Pleasure*. Dover Publications, 2019, pp. 234-244.
- Hu, Xiaozhen 胡曉真. "New Aspiration, Old Form and the Amazing Society" (新理想、舊體例與不可思議之社會——清末民初上海文人的彈詞創作初探). Edited by Li Xiaoti 李孝悌. *Urban Life in China* (中國的城市生活). Linking Co. (聯經出版社), 2005.
- Huters, Theodore. *Bringing the World Home: Appropriating the West in Late Qing and Early Republican China*. University of Hawai'i Press, 2005.

- Kinkley, Jeffery C. *Chinese Justice, the Fiction: Law and Literature in Modern China*. Stanford University Press, 2000.
- Knox, Sara L. *Murder: A Tale of Modern American Life*. Duke University Press, 1998.
- Le Guin, Ursula K. *Lao Tzu Tao Te Ching: A Book about the Way and the Power of the Way*. Shambhala, 2011.
- Lee, Leo Ou-fan. *Shanghai Modern: The Flowering of a New Urban Culture in China, 1930-1945*. Harvard University Press, 1999.
- Lee, Leo Ou-fan 李歐梵. "Holmes in China" (福尔摩斯在中国). *Contemporary Writers Review* (当代作家评论), issue 2, 2004. pp. 8-15.
- Lehan, Richard. *The City in Literature: An Intellectual and Cultural History*. University of California Press, 1998.
- Liang, Qichao 梁啟超. "On the Relation between Fiction and Popular Sovereignty" (論小說與群治之關係). *New Fiction* (新小說), vol. 1, issue 1, 1902. pp. 1-8.
- Link, Perry. *Mandarin Ducks and Butterflies: Popular Fiction in Early Twentieth-Century Chinese Cities*. University of California Press, 1981.
- Liu, Lydia H. *Translingual Practice: Literature, National Culture and Translated Modernity, 1900-1937*. Stanford University Press, 1995.
- Liu, Na'ou 劉訥鷗. "An Attempted Murder" (殺人未遂). Illustrations by Guo Jianying 郭建英. *The Pictorial of Art and Literature* (文藝畫報). vol.1, issue 2, pp. 13-17.
- Mulvey, Laura. *Visual and Other Pleasures*. Indiana University Press, 1989.
- Marran, Christine L. *Figuring Female Transgression in Modern Japanese Culture*. University of Minnesota Press, 2007.
- Marx, Karl. *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*. Translated by David Fernbach. Penguin, 1993.
- Mittler, Barbara. *A Newspaper for China? Power, Identity, and Changes in Shanghai's News Media, 1872-1912*. Harvard University Press, 2004.
- Morrison, Robert. "Introduction." Oxford University Press, 2006. pp. vii-xxvii.
- Mu, Shiyong 穆時英. "Our World" (咱們的世界). *North Pole, South Pole* (南北極), 1933. URL: wap.bjhanyang.com/novel/mushiyingwenji/52032.html

- Mu, Shiyong 穆時英. "The Man who Lost an Arm" (斷了條胳膊的人). *North Pole, South Pole* (南北極), 1933.
URL:wap.bjhanyang.com/novel/mushiyingwenji/52030.html
- Mu, Shiyong 穆時英. "Red Diana" (紅色的女獵神). *The Feelings of the Virgin* (聖處女的感情), 1935. URL:wap.bjhanyang.com/novel/mushiyingwenji/52056.html
- Nickerson, Catherine. "Murder as Social Criticism." *American Literary History*, vol. 9, issue 4, 1997. pp. 744–57.
- Porteous, Samuel. *The Cat with the Telltale Tattoo!* Foreign Language Press, 2014.
- Reed, Christopher A. *Gutenberg in Shanghai: Chinese Print Capitalism, 1876-1937*. UBC Press, 2004.
- Rosenmeier, Christopher. "Women Stereotypes in Shi Zhecun's Short Stories." *Modern China*, vol. 37, issue 1, 2011. pp. 44-68. DOI: 10.1177/0097700410384575
- Rosenmeier, Christopher. "The Subversion of Modernity and Socialism in Mu Shiyong's Early Fiction." *Front. Lit. Stud. China*, vol. 7, issue 1, 2013. pp. 1-22.
DOI: 10.3868/s010-002-013-0001-8
- Rowcroft, Andrew. "The Return of the Spectre: Gothic Marxism in *The City & The City*." *Gothic Studies*, vol. 21, issue 2, 2019. Edinburg University Press. pp. 191-208.
DOI:10.3366/gothic.2019.0022
- "Ruan Lingyu Committed Suicide" (阮玲玉自殺). *Shen Bao* 申報, 9 March, 1935. p. 11
- "Ruan Lingyu Died from Injustice" (阮玲玉含冤以死). *Shen Bao* 申報, 10 March, 1935. p. 4.
- Shelley, Louise I. *Crime and Modernization: The Impact of Industrialization and Urbanization on Crime*. Southern Illinois University Press, 1981.
- Shi, Zhecun 施蛰存. "Demonic Way" (魔道). *The Evening of the Spring Rain* (梅雨之夕). New Chinese Book Co. (新中國書局), 1934. pp. 42-72.
- Shi, Zhecun 施蛰存. "Yaksha" (夜叉). *The Evening of the Spring Rain* (梅雨之夕). New Chinese Book Co. (新中國書局), 1934. pp. 137-60.
- Shi, Zhecun 施蛰存. "The Haunted House" (凶宅). *The Evening of the Spring Rain* (梅雨之夕). New Chinese Book Co. (新中國書局), 1934. pp. 187-226.

- Shih, Shu-mei. *The Lure of the Modern: Writing Modernism in Semicolonial China, 1917-1937*. University of California Press, 2001.
- Sun, Liaohong 孫了紅. “A Wooden Puppet Play” (傀儡劇). *The World of Detectives* (偵探世界), issue 6, 1923, pp. 1-24.
- Sun Liaohong 孫了紅. “Polar Bear” (白熊). *The World of Detectives* (偵探世界), issue 20, 1924, pp. 1-12.
- Sun Liaohong 孫了紅. “A Horrifying and Interesting Night” (恐怖而有興味的一夜). *Red Roses* (紅玫瑰), vol. 2, issue 5, 1925, pp. 1-13.
- Sun Liaohong 孫了紅. “The Scheme” (計). *Violet* (紫羅蘭), vol. 3, issue 19, 1928. pp. 1-17.
- Sun Liaohong 孫了紅. “The Man-made Lightning” (人造雷). *New Shanghai* (新上海), vol. 1, issue 9, 1934. pp. 107-14.
- Sun, Liaohong 孫了紅. “Living in Sympathy” (生活在同情中). *Kaleidoscope* (萬象), vol. 3, issue 2, 1943. pp. 201-5.
- Symons, Julian. *From the Detective Story to the Crime Novel*. Mysterious Press, 1992.
- “The Announcement of Our Press” (本館告白). *Shen Bao* 申報, 30 April, 1872. p. 1.
- “The Cold World” (冷酷的人間). *Shen Bao* 申報. 21 April, 1934. p. 2.
- “The Murder Case on Markham Road Yesterday in the Morning” (麥根路昨晨殺案). *Shen Bao* 申報. 6 September, 1928. p. 15.
- “Unofficial Coverage of the Adultery-Murder Case” (姦殺案別報). *Shen Bao* 申報, 7 September, 1928. p.15.
- Vidler, Anthony. *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely*. The MIT Press, 1992.
- Vidler, Anthony. *Warped Space: Art, Architecture and Anxiety in Modern Culture*. The MIT Press, 2000.
- Volz, Yong Z. “Going Public through Writing: Women Journalists and Gendered Journalistic Space in China, 1890s-1920s.” *Media, Culture & Society*, vol. 29, no. 3, May 2007, pp. 469–89, DOI:10.1177/0163443707076186.

- Wakeman, Frederic, Jr. *Policing Shanghai, 1927-1937*. University of California Press, 1995.
- “Wanted: Yan Ruisheng who Murders for Property and A Reward will be Offered” (捉拿謀財害命兇手閻瑞生賞格). *Shen Bao* 申報, 19 June, 1920. p. 1.
- Wong, Timothy C, translator. *Sherlock in Shanghai: Stories of Crime and Detection by Cheng Xiaoqing*. University of Hawai'i Press, 2007.
- Worsley, Lucy. *The Art of the English Murder*. Pegasus Crime, 2014.
- Yang, Zhang. “The Cat with the Telltale Tattoo.” *Global Times*. 26 November, 2014. : URL:www.globaltimes.cn/content/893759.shtml
- Yang, Zhenye 杨振业. “An Exclusive Interview: Newly Discovered Suicide Notes of Ruan Lingyu by Writer Shen Ji” (专访：作家沈寂新发现的阮玲玉遗书). *Xinmin Evening News* (新民晚报), July 19, 2001. Reproduced by Sina: ent.sina.com.cn/s/m/2001-07-19/50606.html.
- Zamperini, Paola 曾佩琳. “Picture Perfect. Photography, Urban Modernity and Desire in Late Qing Fiction.” (完美圖像——晚清小說中的攝影、欲望與都市現代性). *Urban Life in China* 中國的城市生活. Edited by Li Xiaoti 李孝悌. Linking Publishing Co. (聯經出版公司), 2005.
- Zhang, Yingjin. *The City in Modern Chinese Literature & Film*. Stanford University Press, 1996.