

**Bodyscapes: Writing Bodies in Late Imperial Fiction**  
**Paola Zamperini**  
**Amherst College**

Note: This course was offered as a graduate seminar at University of California, Berkeley in Fall 2002. The class met once a week for three hours.

It is often said that in late Imperial Chinese culture the body was invisible, and it is undeniable that, when one looks at Chinese paintings produced either during the Ming or the Qing dynasty, our eyes usually do not meet with the rosy abundance of a rubesque beauty. But absence, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder. Indeed, if one looks, for example, at works such as the meirenhua, the beautiful woman pictures, that became popular from the Ming dynasty onward, we realize that the body is all there, perhaps not immediately apparent to those not trained in the visual language of late imperial China, but quite visible for those born and raised in that culture.

In the same way, we find that late imperial Chinese vernacular literature is home to a whole array of bodies, which are in turn exposed, hidden, commodified, liberated, desired, and repressed. This course undertakes an investigation of the language and of the imagery used to represent both the female and the male body in the context of Ming and Qing vernacular fiction. How were bodies defined by the state, by law, and by established social practices such as footbinding and coming-of-age rituals? What were the spaces assigned to specific bodily practices? How does the work of contemporary Chinese and Western scholars help us literally flesh out a social, legal and medical body to contrast with its literary and artistic representations? In order to answer these and other related questions, we will engage in close readings of the primary sources, ranging in genre from romance narratives to martial adventures, from pornography to historical narratives. We will discuss how different registers of language (i.e. literary, vernacular, poetic, prose, romantic, bawdy), allowed and/or inhibited specific representations of the body, by reading a wide selection of writings and by comparing them to the vernacular sources which constitute the focus of the course. In a second moment, our textual readings of images and texts will be paired with relevant theoretical pieces, Chinese and Western, as well as at traditional and late imperial legal, medical and social definitions of "body" and at the intellectual, visual and erotic experience produced around these definitions.

**Requirements:**

- 1) Students are required to have completed the reading assignments before coming to class- including both the primary texts and the required secondary readings. Attendance and class participation are essential. Participation involves presence, preparation of readings, and contributions towards classroom discussion.
- 2) One presentation, one research paper, and two book-reviews.

a) Each student will be responsible for one presentation, on one of the texts to be discussed during the course of the semester. The presenter will be expected to present the main points of that session's readings, as well as to raise a set of pertinent questions for discussion.

b) The final paper (minimum fifteen pages) can be on any topic covered during the course. A paper outline is due November 6th. The outline must include paper title, main thesis, and preliminary. The paper is due on December 16th by 5 pm, in the instructor's office. There will be no extension on the final paper.

c) The book reviews (minimum five pages, maximum fifteen pages) can be written about any of the secondary sources for the course.

The final grade will be based on the following criteria: paper, 40%; presentation, 15%; book reviews, 15%; attendance and participation, 30%. All written work for this course must be double spaced and printed on a word processor. Written work that is not printed on a word processor or typed will not be accepted.

### **Office Hours:**

You are welcome to come to office hours. This is important time to discuss privately and more extensively the texts we are studying, the ideas we are exploring, or anything else related to the seminar. You are also encouraged to talk with the instructor about difficulties they may experience with course related material and to make suggestions, so that we can all benefit from each other's insights and comments.

### **Primary sources**

All the primary sources are on 1-day reserve at the East Asian Library. Any edition is fine, though it is preferable to read and prepare the one on reserve.

Haishanghua	海上花
He dian	何典
Honglou meng	紅樓夢
Hualiushenqingzhuan	花柳深情傳
Jinpingmei	金瓶梅
Lu Mudan	綠牡丹
Pingyao zhuan	平妖傳
Rouputuan	肉蒲團
Shidiantou	石點頭
Xin Shanghai	新上海
Xingshi yinyuan zhuan	醒世姻緣傳
Xiyoubu	西遊補
Yuguihong	玉閨紅

## **Secondary sources**

### A) Works related to China and Asia

Ahern, E., "The Power and Pollution of Chinese Women," in Wolf, M. & Witke, R., eds., *Women in Chinese Society*, 192.

Bray, F., *Technology and Gender. Fabrics of Power in Late Imperial China*, University of California Press, 1997.

Carlitz, Katherine, "Desire, Danger, and the Body. Stories of Women's Virtue in late Ming China," in Christina. K. Gilmartin, Gail Hershatter, Lisa Rofel, and Tyrene White, eds., *Engendering China. Women, Culture, and the State* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1993), 101.

Cooper, William C., and Sivin, Nathan, "Man as Medicine: Pharmacological and Ritual Aspects of Traditional Therapy Using Drugs Derived from the Human Body," in Shigeru Nakayama and Nathan Sivin, eds., *Chinese Science. Explorations of an Ancient Tradition*, MIT Press, 1973, 203.

Des Forges, A., "Street Talk and Alley Stories: Tangled Narratives of Shanghai from 'Lives of Shanghai Flowers' (1892) to 'Midnight' (1933), Ph.D., Princeton University, 1998.

Ding, Naifei, *Obscene Things. The Sexual Politics in Jin Ping Mei*, Duke University Press, 2002.

*Dreams of Spring. Erotic Art in China. From the Bertholet Collection*, The Pepin Press, Amsterdam, 1997.

Edwards, Louise P., *Men and Women in Qing China: Gender in the Red Chamber Dream*, E.J. Brill, 1994.

Elvin, Mark, "Female Virtue and State in China," *Past Present* 104 (1984): 11-152.

Epstein, Maram, *Competing Discourses. Orthodoxy, Authenticity, and Engendered Meanings in Late Imperial Chinese Fiction*, Harvard University Press, 2001.

Faure, Bernard, *The Red Thread. Buddhist Approaches to Sexuality*, Princeton University Press, 1998.

Furth, Charlotte, "Blood, Body and Gender," in *Chinese Science*.

Furth, C., "From birth to birth: the growing body in Chinese medicine," in Kinney, A., ed., *Chinese Views of Childhood*, Hawaii University Press, 1995, p. 157-91.

Furth, C., "Rethinking Van Gulik: sexuality and reproduction in traditional Chinese medicine," in Gilmartin, C. K., Hershatter, G., Rofel, L., and White, T., editors, *Engendering China. Women, Culture, and the State*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1993, p. 125-146.

Furth, C., *A Flourishing Yin. Gender in China's Medical History, 960-1665*, University of California Press, 1998.

Gilmartin, C. K., Hershatter, G., Rofel, L., and White, T., editors, *Engendering China. Women, Culture, and the State*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1993.

Huang Jinlin 黃金麟, Lishi, Shenti, Guojia. *Jindai Zhongguode shenti xincheng 1895-1937 歷史、身體、國家:近代中國的身體形成(1895-1937)*, Taipei, 2000.

Huntington, Rania, "Foxes and Sex in Late Imperial Chinese Narrative"(in *Nannu*, spring 2000).

Hu, Ying, *Tales of Translation. Composing the New Woman in China, 1899-1918*, Stanford University Press, 2000

Huntington, R., *Alien Kind: Foxes and Late Imperial Chinese Narrative* (forthcoming, East Asia Monograph series, Harvard University Press.)

Kasulis, T.P., with Ames, R.T., and Dissanayake, W., *Self as Body in Asian Theory and Practice*, State University of New York Press, 1993 .

Kieschnick, John, *The Eminent Monk. Buddhist Ideals in Medieval Chinese Hagiography*, University of Hawai'i Press, 1997.

Ko, Dorothy, "The Body as Attire. The Shifting Meanings of Footbinding in Seventeenth-Century China", *Journal of Women's History*, Vol. 8, No. 4 (Winter), 1997, 8

Ko D., "The written word and the bound foot: a history of the courtesan's aura," in Widmer, E., and Kang-i Sun Chang, eds., *Writing Women in Late Imperial China*, p. 74.

Ko, D., *Teachers of the Inner Chambers: Women and Culture in Seventeenth-Century China*, Stanford University Press, 1994.

Kuriyama, S., *The Expressiveness of the Body and the Divergence of Greek and Chinese Medicine*, Zone Books, 1999.

Liu Dalin 劉達臨, *Zhongguo xingshi tujian 中國性史圖鑒*, Shidai wenyi chubanshi, 2000.

Ma Boying 马伯英, *Zhongguo yixuewenhuashi 中国医学文化史*, Shanghai Renmin chubanshe, 1994.

Mann, S., *Precious Records. Women's in China's Long Eighteenth Century*, Stanford University Press, 1997.

Martin, Emily, "Gender and Ideological Differences in Representations of Life and Death," in James L. Watson and Evelyn S. Rawski, eds., *Death Ritual in Late Imperial and Modern China*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 177.

Martin, Emily, "The Power and Pollution of Chinese Women," in Margery Wolf and Roxane Witke, eds., *Women in Chinese Society*, 193.

McMahon, Keith, *Causality and Containment in Seventeenth-century Chinese Fiction*, E.J. Brill, 1988.

McMahon, K., *Misers, Shrews and Polygamists: Sexuality and Male-Female Relations in Eighteenth-Century Chinese Fiction*, Duke University Press, 1995.

Schipper, Kristofer, *The Taoist Body*, University of California Press, 1993.

Sommer, M. H., *Sex, Law, and Society in Late Imperial China*, Stanford University Press, 2000.

Sung, Tzu, *The Washing Away of Wrongs: Forensic Medicine in Thirteenth-Century China*, translated by Brian E. McKnight, Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 1981.

Tian Ju-k'ang, *Male Anxiety and Female Chastity A Comparative Study of Chinese Ethical Values in Ming-Ch'ing Times* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988).

Van Gulik, R. H., *Sexual Life in Ancient China: A Preliminary Survey of Chinese Sex and Society from ca. 1500 B.C. till 1664 A.D.*, E. J. Brill, Leiden, 1961.

Vinograd, R. E., *Boundaries of the Self: Chinese Portraits, 1600-1900*, Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Vitiello, Giovanni, "The Dragon's Whim: Ming and Qing Homoerotic Tales from the Cut Sleeve, *T'oung Pao* 78 (1992): 314-73.

Volpp, Sophie, "Classifying Lust: The Seventeenth-Century Vogue for Male Love," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, vol. 61, No. 1, 2001, 77.

Wang Peiqin 王佩琴, *Hongloumeng huanshijie jixi 红楼梦幻世界解析*, Taipei, 1997.

Wang Ping, *Aching for Beauty. Footbinding in China*, University of Minnesota Press, 2000.

Watson, James L., "Of Flesh and Bones: the Management of Death Pollution in Cantonese Society," in Maurice Bloch and Jonathan Parry, eds., *Death and the Regeneration of Life* Cambridge University Press, 1982, 155.

Widmer, E., and Kang-i Sun Chang, eds., *Writing Women in Late Imperial China*, Stanford University Press, 1997.

Wile, D., *Art of the Bedchamber. The Chinese Sexual Yoga Classics Including Women's Solo Meditation Texts*, State University of New York Press, 1992.

Wolf, M. & Witke, R., ed., *Women in Chinese Society*, Stanford University Press, 1975.

Wolf, Margery, "Women and Suicide in China," in Margery Wolf and Roxane Witke, eds., *Women in Chinese Society* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975), 111.

Wu Hung, *The Double Screen: Medium and Representation in Chinese Painting*, University of Chicago Press, 1996.

Wu, Kuang-ming, *On Chinese Body Thinking. A Cultural Hermeneutic*, Brill, 1997.

Zamperini, Paola, "Clothes Matter. Fashioning Modernity in Late Qing Novels," in *Fashion Theory*, Volume 5, Issue 2, 2001.

Zamperini, P., "On Their Dress They Wore A Body. Fashion and Identity in late Qing Shanghai," in the special issue "Fabrications", edited by Tina Mai Chen and Paola Zamperini, *positions*, Duke University Press, Spring 2003.

Zito, A., *Of Body and Brush. Grand Sacrifice as Text/performance in Eighteenth-century China*, University of Chicago Press, 1997.

Zito, A., and Barlow, Tani E., *Body, Subject & Power in China*, University of Chicago Press, 1994.

Zhuang Shiyi 傅世怡, ed., *Xiyoubu yanjiu 西遊補研究* Taipei, 1981.

#### B) General reference works

Bloch, Maurice and Jonathan Parry, eds., *Death and the Regeneration of Life*, Cambridge University Press, 1982.

Bronfen, Elizabeth, *Over Her Dead Body: Death, Femininity and the Aesthetic*, Routledge, New York, 1992.

Brooks, Peter, *Body Work. Objects of Desire in Modern Narrative*, Harvard University Press, 1993.

Butler, J., *Bodies That Matter. On the Discursive Limits of "Sex,"* Routledge, New York and London, 1993.

Feher, M., ed., with Naddafi, R., and Tazi, N., *Fragments for a History of the Human Body*, Zone books, New York, three volumes.

Foucault, M., *The History of Sexuality. An Introduction. Volume I*, Vintage Books, New York, 1978.

Hollander, A., *Seeing Through Clothes*, University of California Press, 1993.

Hunt, L., ed., *The Invention of Pornography. Obscenity and the Origins of Modernity, 1500-1800*, Zone Books, New York, 1993.

Laquer, T., *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1990.

Suleiman, R., S., ed., *The Female Body in Western Culture. Contemporary Perspectives*, Harvard University Press, 1985.

### **Schedule and Reading Assignments:**

Additional readings will be provided during the course of the semester, and will be available a week before class in the East Asian Library.

#### **Week 1**

8/28 Introduction to the course

The Philosopher, the Monk and the Body

Readings:

Faure, Bernard, *The Red Thread. Buddhist Approaches to Sexuality*, Princeton University Press, 1998

Kieschnick, John, *The Eminent Monk. Buddhist Ideals in Medieval Chinese Hagiography*, University of Hawai'i Press, 1997. (See also Ames, Roger, "The Meaning of Body in Classical Chinese Philosophy;" John Hay, "The Human Body as a Microcosmic Source of Macrocosmic Values," in *Self as Body in Asian Theory and Practice*, K. Schipper, *The Taoist Body*)

Wu, Kuang-ming, *On Chinese Body Thinking. A Cultural Hermeneutic*, Brill, 1997.

## Week 2

9/3        Yuguihong        玉闈紅

Suggested secondary readings:

Brooks, Peter, *Body Work. Objects of Desire in Modern Narrative*, Harvard University Press, 1993.

Ko, Dorothy, "The Body as Attire. The Shifting Meanings of Footbinding in Seventeenth-Century China", *Journal of Women's History*, Vol. 8, No. 4 (Winter), 1997, 8.

Ko, D., *Every Step a Lotus. Shoes for Bound Feet*, University of California Press, 2001.

Wang Ping, *Aching for Beauty. Foot-binding in China*, University of Minnesota Press, 2000.

## Week 3

9/10        Shidiantou        石點頭

Suggested secondary readings:

Vitiello, Giovanni, "The Dragon's Whim: Ming and Qing Homoerotic Tales from the Cut Sleeve, *T'oung Pao* 78 (1992): 314-73.

Vitiello, Giovanni, "The Fantastic Journey of an Ugly Boy: Homosexuality and Salvation in Late Ming Pornography." *positions* 4.2 (1996), 291–320.

Vitiello, Giovanni, "Exemplary Sodomites: Male Homosexuality in late Ming Fiction, Ph. D. dissertation, University of California at Berkeley ,1994.

Volpp, Sophie, "Classifying Lust: The Seventeenth-Century Vogue for Male Love," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, vol. 61, No. 1, 2001, 77.

## Week 4

9/17        Pingyao zhuan        平妖傳

Suggested secondary readings:

Huntington, Rania, "Foxes and Sex in Late Imperial Chinese Narrative"(in *Nannu*, spring 2000).



Huntington, R., *Alien Kind: Foxes and Late Imperial Chinese Narrative* (forthcoming, East Asia Monograph series, Harvard University Press.)

### **Week 5**

9/24      Selections from *Xingshi yinyuan zhuan*      醒世姻緣傳

Secondary sources:

Epstein, Maram, *Competing Discourses. Orthodoxy, Authenticity, and Engendered Meanings in Late Imperial Chinese Fiction*, Harvard University Press, 2001.

Epstein, Maram, "Inscribing the Essentials: Culture and the Body in Ming and Qing Fiction," *Ming Studies* 41 (1999): 52-66.

Carlitz, Katherine, "Desire, Danger, and the Body. Stories of Women's Virtue in late Ming China," in Christina. K. Gilmartin, Gail Hershatter, Lisa Rofel, and Tyrene White, eds., *Engendering China. Women, Culture, and the State* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1993), 101.

### **Week 6**

10/1    *Xiyoubu*      西遊補

Suggested reading:

Zhuang Shiyi 傅世怡, ed., *Xiyoubu yanjiu* 西遊補研究 Taipei, 1981.

### **Week 7**

10/8      Selections from *Jinpingmei*      金瓶梅

Suggested secondary readings:

Ding, Naifei, *Obscene Things. The Sexual Politics in Jin Ping Mei*, Duke University Press, 2002.

Furth, C., "Rethinking Van Gulik: sexuality and reproduction in traditional Chinese medicine," in *Engendering China*, p. 125.

McMahon, Keith, *Causality and Containment in Seventeenth-century Chinese Fiction*, E.J. Brill, 1988.

McMahon, K., *Misers, Shrews and Polygamists: Sexuality and Male-Female Relations in Eighteenth-Century Chinese Fiction*, Duke University Press, 1995.

Van Gulik, R. H., *Sexual Life in Ancient China: A Preliminary Survey of Chinese Sex and Society from ca. 1500 B.C. till 1664 A.D.*, E. J. Brill, Leiden, 1961.

Wile, D., *Art of the Bedchamber. The Chinese Sexual Yoga Classics Including Women's Solo Meditation Texts*, State University of New York Press, 1992.

### **Week 8**

10/15      Rouputuan      肉蒲團

Secondary readings:

Li Yu 李漁閒情偶寄, 李漁全集 108-137.

Suggested secondary readings:

Hanan, Patrick, *The Invention of Li Yu*, Harvard University Press, 1988.

Liu Dalin 劉達臨 *Zhongguo xingshi tujian 中國性史圖鑒* Shidai wenyi chubanshi, 2000.

### **Week 9**

10/22      Selections from *Honglou meng*      紅樓夢

Suggested secondary readings:

Edwards, Louise P., *Men and Women in Qing China: Gender in the Red Chamber Dream*, E.J. Brill, 1994; Wang Peiqin 王佩琴 *夢幻世界解析* 文津出版社, 1997.

### **Week 10**

10/29      He dian      何典

Suggested secondary readings:

Cohen, Alvin P., "The Avenging Ghost. Moral Judgment in Chinese Historical Texts" (Ph.D. diss., University of California at Berkeley, 1971), Ch. 2; *Tales of Vengeful Souls. A Sixth-Century Collection of Chinese Avenging Ghost Stories*, translated and annotated by Alvin P. Cohen (Taipei: Institut Ricci, 1982).

Yu, Anthony, "'Rest, Rest, Perturbed Spirit!' Ghosts in Traditional Chinese Prose Fiction," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 47, no. 2 (1987): 397-434.

Zamperini, Paola, "Untamed Hearts. Eros and Suicide in Late Imperial Chinese Fiction," in "Love and Death", edited by Paul Ropp, Harriet Zurndorfer, and Paola Zamperini, E. J. Brill, Leiden, 2001.

Zeitlin, Judith "Embodying the Disembodied: Representations of Ghosts and the Feminine," in Kang-i Sun Chang and Ellen Widmer, eds., *Writing Women in Late Imperial China*, 242.

### **Week 11**

11/5 Lu Mudan 綠牡丹

Secondary readings:

Hamm, J. Cristopher, *The Green Peony and the Fictional Imagining of the Rivers and Lakes*, unpublished paper.

### **Week 12**

11/12 Xin Shanghai 新上海  
Hualiushenqingzhuan 花柳深情傳

Secondary readings:

Ko D., "The written word and the bound foot: a history of the courtesan's aura," in Widmer, E., and Kang-i Sun Chang, eds., *Writing Women in Late Imperial China*, p. 74; Zhang Ailing, *Chinese Life and fashions*.

Zamperini, Paola, "Clothes Matter. Fashioning Modernity in Late Qing Novels," in *Fashion Theory*, Volume 5, Issue 2, 2001.

Zamperini, P., "On Their Dress They Wore A Body. Fashion and Identity in late Qing Shanghai," in the special issue "Fabrications", edited by Tina Mai Chen and Paola Zamperini, positions, Duke University Press.

### **Week 13**

11/19 Haishanghua 海上花

Assignment:

screening of the movie Haishanghua 海上花

Secondary readings:

Huang Jinlin 黃金麟, Lishi, Shenti, Guojia. Jindai Zhongguode shenti xincheng 1895-1937 歷史、身體、國家:近代中國的身體形成(1895-1937), Taipei, 2000.

Suggested secondary readings:

Leo Oufan Lee, "The Cultural Construction of Modernity in Urban Shanghai: Some Preliminary Explorations," for the relationship between popular press and modernity in Shanghai, and Yeh Wen-hsin, "Introduction: Interpreting Chinese Modernity, 1900-1950" 1-28, for an interesting discussion of the stakes involved in discussing Chinese modernity, both in Yeh Wen-hsin, ed., *Becoming Chinese. Passages to Modernity and Beyond*, University of California Press, 2000.

#### **Week 14**

11/26 The Body in the Law.

Discussion with invited speaker Professor Janet Theiss.

Readings:

Sommer, M. H., *Sex, Law, and Society in Late Imperial China*, Stanford University Press, 2000.

Sung, Tzu, *The Washing Away of Wrongs: Forensic Medicine in Thirteenth-Century China*, translated by Brian E. McKnight, Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 1981.

Theiss, Janet, *Dealing with Disgrace. The Negotiation of Female Virtue in Eighteenth-century China*, manuscript submitted for publication, University of California Press.

#### **Week 15**

12/3 Traditional Chinese Medicine and the Engendering of the Medical Body

Discussion with invited speaker Professor Charlotte Furth.

Readings:

Ahern, Emily, "The power and pollution of Chinese women;" Bray, Francesca, Chapter 7, from *Technology and Gender*; Cooper, William C., and Sivin, Nathan, "Man as Medicine: Pharmacological and Ritual Aspects of Traditional Therapy Using Drugs Derived from the Human Body," in Shigeru Nakayama and Nathan Sivin, eds., *Chinese Science. Explorations of an Ancient Tradition*, MIT Press, 1973, 203.

Furth, C., *A Flourishing Yin. Gender in China's Medical History, 960-1665*, University of California Press, 1998.

Kuriyama, S., *The Expressiveness of the Body and the Divergence of Greek and Chinese Medicine*, Zone Books, 1999.

Furth, C., "From birth to birth: the growing body in Chinese medicine".

Furth, C., "Blood, Body and Gender;"; Kuriyama, "The Imagination of Winds," 23, in *Body, Subject and Power*.

12/16 Research paper due by five PM. NO EXTENSIONS

The Philosopher, the Monk and the Body

Readings:

Faure, Bernard, *The Red Thread. Buddhist Approaches to Sexuality*, Princeton University Press, 1998.

Kieschnick, John, *The Eminent Monk. Buddhist Ideals in Medieval Chinese Hagiography*, University of Hawai'i Press, 1997 (See also Ames, Roger, "The Meaning of Body in Classical Chinese Philosophy;" John Hay, "The Human Body as a Microcosmic Source of Macrocosmic Values," in *Self as Body in Asian Theory and Practice*; K. Schipper, *The Taoist Body*)

Wu, Kuang-ming, *On Chinese Body Thinking. A Cultural Hermeneutic*, Brill, 1997.