

# Appropriation And Representation Feng Menglong And The Chinese Vernacular Story

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*Shuhui Yang Chlo Starr Sophie Volpp Kang Liu Halim A. Boussabaine Stephen William Schaefer Arthur James Wells Samuel L Couch*

feng menglong 1574 1646 was recognized as the most knowledgeable connoisseur of popular literature of his time he is known today for compiling three famous collections of vernacular short stories each containing forty stories collectively known as sanyan

appropriation and representation adapts concepts of ventriloquism and dialogism from bakhtin and holquist to explore feng s methods of selecting source materials shuhui yang develops a model of development in which feng s approach to selecting and working with his source materials becomes clear more broadly appropriation and representation locates feng menglong s sanyan in the cultural milieu of the late ming including the archaist movement in literature literati marginality and anxieties the subversive use of folk works and the meiren xiangcao tradition appropriating a female identity to express male frustration against this background a rationale emerges for feng s choice to elevate and promote the vernacular story while stepping back from an overt authorial role

chinese literature has traditionally been divided by both theorists and university course providers into classical and modern this has left nineteenth century fiction in limbo and allowed negative assessments of its quality to persist unchecked the popularity of qing dynasty red light fiction works whose primary focus is the relationship between clients and courtesans set in tea houses pleasure gardens and later brothels has endured throughout the twentieth century this volume explores why arguing that these novels are far from the low work of frustrated scholars but in their provocative play on the nature of relations between client courtesan and text provide an insight into wider changes in understandings of self and literary value in the nineteenth century

do the portrayals of objects in literary texts represent historical evidence about the material culture of the past or are things in books more than things in the world sophie volpp considers fictional objects of the late ming and qing that defy being read as illustrative of historical things instead she argues fictional objects are often signs of fictionality themselves calling attention to the nature of the relationship between literature and materiality volpp examines a series of objects a robe a box and a shell a telescope a plate glass mirror and a painting drawn from the canonical works frequently mined for information about late imperial material culture including the novels the plum in the golden vase and the story of the stone as well as the short fiction of feng menglong ling mengchu and li yu she argues that although fictional objects invite readers to think of them as illustrative in fact inconsistent and discontinuous representation disconnects the literary object from potential historical analogues the historical resonances of literary objects illuminate the rhetorical strategies of individual works of fiction and more broadly conceptions of fictionality in the ming and qing rather than offering a transparent lens on the past fictional objects train the reader to be aware of the fallibility of perception a deeply insightful

analysis of late ming and qing texts and reading practices the substance of fiction has important implications for chinese literary studies history and art history as well as the material turn in the humanities

stories to awaken the world the first complete translation of xingshi hengyan completes the publication in english of the famous three volume set of feng menglong s popular chinese vernacular stories these tales which come from a variety of sources some dating back centuries before their compilation in the seventeenth century were assembled and circulated by feng who not only saved them from oblivion but raised the status of vernacular literature and provided material for authors of the great ming 1368 1644 and qing 1644 1911 novels to draw upon this trilogy has been compared to boccaccio s decameron and the stories of a thousand and one nights peopled with scholars emperors ministers generals and a gallery of ordinary men and women merchants and artisans prostitutes and courtesans matchmakers and fortune tellers monks and nuns thieves and imposters the stories provide a vivid panorama of the bustling world of late imperial china the longest volume in the sanyan trilogy stories to awaken the world is presented in full here including sexually explicit elements often omitted from chinese editions shuhui yang and yunqin yang have provided a rare treat for english readers an unparalleled view of the art of traditional chinese short fiction as with the first two collections in the trilogy stories old and new and stories to caution the world their excellent renditions of the forty stories in this collection are eminently readable accurate and lively they have included all of the poetry that is scattered throughout the stories as well as feng menglong s interlinear and marginal comments which convey the values shared among the chinese cultural elite point out what original readers of the collection were being asked to appreciate in the writer s art and reveal feng s moral engagement with the social problems of his day the yangs s translations rank among the very finest english versions of chinese fiction from any period for other titles in the collection go to [washington.edu/uwpress/books/ming.html](http://washington.edu/uwpress/books/ming.html)

this collection of essays addresses the perception that our understanding of modern china will be enhanced by opening the literature of china to more rigorous theoretical and comparative study in doing so the book confronts the problematic and complex subject of china s literary theoretical and cultural responses to the experience of the modern with chapters by writers scholars and critics from mainland china hong kong and the united states this volume explores the complexity of representing modernity within the chinese

context addressing the problem of finding a proper language for articulating fundamental issues in the historical experience of twentieth century china the authors critically re examine notions of realism the self subject and modernity and draw on perspectives from feminist criticism ideological analysis and postmodern theory among the many topics explored are subjectivity in chinese cultural theory chinese gender relations the viability of a lacanian approach to chinese identity the politics of subversion in chinese reportage and the ambivalent status of the icon of paternity since mao at the same time this book offers a probing look into the transformation that chinese culture as well as the study of that culture is currently undergoing it also reconfirms private discourse as an ideal site for an investigation into a real and imaginary private and collective encounter with history contributors liu kang xiaobing tang liu zaifu stephen chan lydia h liu wendy larson theodore hutters david wang tonglin lu yingjin zhang yuejin wang li tuo leo ou fan lee

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