

**READING THE NOVEL THROUGH ODOURS:  
AN INVESTIGATION INTO CHINESE OLFACTORY AESTHETICS USING *THE  
STORY OF THE STONE* AS A CASE STUDY**

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## Abstract

By taking the mid-eighteenth Chinese novel *Story of the Stone* as a case study, this thesis aims to demonstrate that the concept of a literary “olfactory aesthetics” is a single object with two aspects: (1) authors employ odours as a *xiefa* 寫法 (narrative method) to add metaphorical, symbolic, and allegorical implications in fictional works; (2) readers (including late-imperial Chinese literary critics, as well as modern readers like me) employ odours as a *dufa* 讀法 (reading method) in interpreting olfactory narrations in early literary writings. Following an overview of several odour-related *dufa* in late-imperial commentarial history, chapter one introduces its odour-oriented *dufa*, including odour symbolism, olfactory division, odour distribution, odour cartography, and odour coordinates. Chapter two explores three ideological systems in this novel through examining the symbolic significance of odours and the mechanism of point of view in developing a framework of olfactory division. Chapter three uses odour distribution and odour coordinates to read the author’s mapping of Grand Prospect Garden.

I argue that odours can serve as an approach to writing and reading fictional works, since (1) defining odours relies less on the defined characters’ “biological” odours, but more as the symbolic extension of their invisible essence such as characteristics, temperaments, and virtues. (2) The division between fragrant and foul-smelling odours often matches the definer’s evaluation of “the self” and “the other.” The characters in this novel divide along olfactory lines to evaluate others, closely matching the three separate yet linked ideological spheres long seen by scholars as central to the novel’s meanings. That is, the immortals’ play with real and unreal, the orthodox Confucian concern with moral obligations, and the cult of *qing* among the garden-

world characters. (3) Odour overlap (and contrast) all match the close (and far) relationship between the occupants in this novel, as revealed in a four-character Chinese idiom, *qiwei xiangtou* 氣味相投 (people with similar personality and aspirations share the same odours and tastes). (4) Odours usually appear as symbolic signals of extraordinary experience, generate strong sensory atmospheres, and affectively map different spaces as overlapping zones in the literary imagination.

## Lay Summary

This work investigates the research potential of odours, odour aesthetics, and olfactory culture in premodern Chinese literary writings. Through taking the mid-eighteenth Chinese novel *The Story of the Stone* as a case study, this thesis demonstrates that odours can serve as both a crucial narrative method and a reading method in the literary imagination. To develop this argument, this thesis analyzes how the author employs odours as a narrative technique to map the olfactory world in his novel, traces the premodern odour-related commentaries on this novel, and finally develops its odour-oriented reading methods. During this process, the thesis also recalls various representative examples in premodern and late imperial Chinese literary works when odours are given symbolic meanings and allegorical implications, which eventually leads this research to a destination that is beyond its case study—odours could also be an approach in reading many other pre-modern Chinese writings.

## **Preface**

This dissertation is an original, unpublished and independent work by the author, Haoyue Li.

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## List of Abbreviations

<i>JPM</i>	<i>Jin Ping Mei</i> 金瓶梅 ( <i>The Plum in the Golden Vase</i> )
<i>STJ</i>	<i>Shitou ji</i> 石頭記 ( <i>The Story of the Stone</i> )
<i>WXLPB</i>	<i>Wang Xilian pingben xinjuan quanbu xiuxiang Honglou meng</i> 王希廉評本新鐫全部繡像紅樓夢 ( <i>The Completed Work of <i>Dream of the Red Chamber</i> with Wang Xilian's Commentaries and New-engraved Illustrations</i> )

## Glossary

This glossary section lists words, phrases, dialogues, poetic lines, literary titles, four-character Chinese idioms, place names, and character names that contain olfactory meanings found in this thesis. [“Roy” refers to David Tod Roy, “Hawkes” refers to David Hawkes, and “Li” refers to Li Xiaorong]

<i>che saodan</i> 扯臊淡	talk such stinking rot [Roy]
<i>chou</i> 臭	foul-smelling/stinking
<i>chou changgen</i> 臭娼根	stinking whore [Roy]
<i>choulanle zhekuaidi</i> 臭爛了這塊地	make a stinking mess of the place [Roy]
<i>chou maoshu</i> 臭毛鼠	stinking rat [Roy]
<i>chou pigu menzi</i> 臭屁股門子	stinking asshole of the salve [Roy]
<i>chouqian</i> 臭錢	stinking money [Hawkes] <i>or</i> foul-smelling lucre
<i>chou nanren</i> 臭男人	stinky man
<i>chou pinang</i> 臭皮囊	a bag of foul-smelling fluids
<i>chou xiaosi</i> 臭小廝 <i>or</i> <i>chou xiaozi</i> 臭小子	a nasty stinking creature
<i>dage chousi</i> 打個臭死	beat to a stinking pulp [Roy]
<i>daoxiang</i> 稻香	scent of sweet millet grain
<i>Daoxiang Cun</i> 稻香村	Fragrant-rice Village [Hawkes]
Fang Guan 芳官	Parfumee [Hawkes]
<i>fangqi xiren shi jiuxiang</i> 芳氣襲人是酒香	The fragrance of wine intoxicated the beholder with imagined flower-scents. [Hawkes]
<i>fen</i> 芬	flowery
<i>Guihai xiang zhi</i> 桂海香志	<i>The Historical Record of ‘Xiang’ in The Sea of Laurel Blossoms</i>
<i>guose tianxiang</i> 國色天香	a beauty with the extraordinary attractive appearance
<i>Hanfang Ge</i> 含芳閣	Crimson-fragrance Garden [Hawkes]
<i>hanxiang</i> 寒香	chilling fragrance
<i>Hengzhi Qingfen</i> 蘅芷清芬	The Garden of Spices
<i>hongxiang</i> 紅香	crimson fragrance
<i>Hongxiang Lüyu</i> 紅香綠玉	Fragrant Red and Lucent Green [Hawkes]
<i>Hongxiang Pu</i> 紅香圃	Crimson-fragrance Garden
<i>huaqi xiren zhi chounuan</i> 花氣襲人知晝暖	The Flower’s aroma breathes of hotter days. [Hawkes]
<i>husao</i> 狐騷	foxy smell

<i>hunpo xiang</i> 魂魄香	sweet fragrance for your soul
<i>jiupi chouqi</i> 酒屁臭氣	a heavy stink, compounded of farts and wine-fumes [Hawkes]
<i>jiuxiang</i> 酒香	the sweet scent of wine
<i>lengxiang</i> 冷香	cold fragrance
<i>Lengxiang Wan</i> 冷香丸	Cold Fragrance Pills [Hawkes]
<i>Lixiang Yuan</i> 梨香院	Fragrant-pearl Court
<i>lou</i> 漏 (the homophone of <i>lou</i> 虯)	the stench from horses
<i>Maixiang Zhong</i> 埋香冢	Fragrance's Grave
<i>mingde weixin</i> 明德惟馨	the untarnished virtue is fragrant
<i>Mingxiang-pu</i> 名香譜	<i>The Book of Famous 'Xiang'</i>
<i>nuanxiang</i> 暖香	warm fragrance
<i>Nuanxiang Wu</i> 暖香塢	Warm Fragrant Room
<i>Ouxiang Xie</i> 藕香榭	Fragrant Lotus Pavilion
<i>Qinfang</i> 沁芳	Drenched Fragrance (Pavilion/Bridge/Weir/Stream)
<i>qixiang</i> 奇香	remarkable fragrance
<i>qixiu</i> 奇臭	other strange smells
<i>sao</i> 臊	sharp
<i>shesao</i> 蛇騷	snake's foul smell
<i>She Yue</i> 麝月 (Bao-yu's maid)	Musk [Hawkes]
<i>suan</i> 酸	sour
<i>tafen</i> 獺糞	otter feces
<i>tianxiang</i> 甜香	sweet fragrance
<i>Tianxiang-zhuan</i> 天香傳	<i>The Biography of Remarkable 'Xiang'</i>
<i>Xiangcao Meiren</i> 香草美人	Fragrant Floral and Beautiful Woman [tradition]
<i>xiangche</i> 香車	a perfumed carriage
<i>xiangfeng</i> 香風	aromatic wind
<i>Xiangguan Shuo</i> 香觀說	Scent-viewing Study
<i>xianggui</i> 香閨	fragrant boudoir
<i>xianggui xiuge</i> 香閨繡閣	fragrant boudoir and embroidered room
<i>xianghun</i> 香魂	a fragrant soul
<i>Xianglian Ti</i> 香奩體	Fragrant Cosmetic Style
<i>Xiang-ling</i> 香菱 (Xue Pan's concubine)	Fragrant Caltrop
<i>xiangmeng</i> 香夢	a fragrant dream
<i>Xiangpu</i> 香譜	<i>The Book of 'Xiang'</i>
<i>xiangsai</i> 香腮	fragrant cheeks
<i>xiangyan</i> 香豔	fragrant and bedazzling [Li]
<i>xiangzhu</i> 香燭	a fragrant candle
<i>xing</i> 腥	putrid
<i>xingde choudede</i> 腥的臭的	seductive beauties with foxy and foul smells

*xiren* 襲人  
*Xiren* 襲人 (Bao-yu's maid)  
*xiuwei xiangtou* 臭味相投 or  
*qiwei xiangtou* 氣味相投  
*yaoxiang* 藥香  
*yixiang* 異香  
*yin, hui, wu, chou* 淫穢污臭  
*you* 廝  
*youxiang* 幽香  
*yu* 鬱  
*yuxiang mankou* 餘香滿口  
*zang Tang chou Han* 髒唐臭漢  
*zei shourou* 賊臭肉  
*zhizhi xinxiang* 至治馨香  
*zhuochou biren* 濁臭逼人  
*zhuokou choushe* 濁口臭舌

aroma  
Aroma [Hawkes]  
people with similar personality or aspirations share  
the same odours and tastes  
the scents of herbal medicine  
extraordinary fragrance  
lust, filth, dirt, and foul-smelling odours  
the stench from cattle  
subtle fragrance  
rotten (the decadent odour of grasses and woods)  
lingering fragrance [Hawkes]  
Filthy Tang and Stinking Han [Hawkes]  
lousy little stinker [Roy]  
fragrant scents and harmonious administrations  
disgustingly impure and foul-smelling  
coarse mouths and stinking breath [Hawkes]

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all students at the last class of her courses. I am so grateful that I could take this opportunity to listen to her genuine knowledge again, just as before. I also want to express my admiration to Dr. Rea, who teaches me so much when I took his seminar course as a first-year graduate student. During the early stage of formatting this thesis, his interest in my research topic truly gives me the courage to work on this topic that has not received much attention. His comments are so helpful and often inspire me to (re)consider my research methodology, and the way to make strong and concrete arguments.

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*For my parents, my family members, and my supervisor,*

*who are the origins of my courage*

## Chapter 1: Introduction

“[*The Story of the Stone*] is a novel with an elegant framework, and with infinite aromatic taste... [Readers] will smell its fragrance once they read it for a while.”  
([石頭記一書]味美于回, 秀骨在真... 久而聞其香).<sup>1</sup>

—from “The Preface of The Eulogy of *The Story of the Stone*”

“The investigation of the olfactory is the investigation of everything else.”<sup>2</sup>

—Hans J. Rindisbacher, 1989

“Smell is not simply a biological and psychological phenomenon, though. Smell is *cultural*, hence a social and historical phenomenon. Odours are invested with cultural values and employed by societies as a means of and model for defining and interacting with the world.”<sup>3</sup>

—Constance Classen, David Howes, and Anthony Synnott, 1994

Premodern Chinese literature is filled not only with sights and sounds, but also with odours. This literary study of odours moves beyond archaeological artifacts and the textual analysis of olfactory narrations in which odours, smells, aroma, fragrance, perfumes, spices are used, described, and given significance in premodern Chinese texts. It further engages in the investigation of social-cultural codes and symbolic-allegorical implications concealed under such invisible sensations. This introductory chapter will introduce (1) how I became cognizant of olfactory phenomena in premodern Chinese fictional writings; (2) a literature review of olfactory studies, specifically the study of odours in literary works and cultural studies, in the Sinophone

<sup>1</sup> This prefatory essay is written by an anonymous scholar (fl. 19<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup> century) and literary intellectual. The preface is collected in Chongtianzi 蟲天子, comp., Dong Naibin 董乃斌, ed., *Zhongguo xiangyan quanshu* 中國香艷全書 (Encyclopedia of Chinese Romance; Shanghai: Guoxue fulunshe, 1909-1911; reprint, Beijing: Tuanjie chubanshe, 2005), 3: 1666.

<sup>2</sup> See “The Smell of Books: A Cultural-Historical Study of Olfactory Perception in Literature,” Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 1898, p. 1. This dissertation was published with the same title, *The Smell of Books: A Cultural-historical Study of Olfactory Perception in Literature* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992). In the following discussion, the quotation from Rindisbacher’s work will refer to his book.

<sup>3</sup> See Constance Classen et al, eds., *Aroma: The Cultural History of Smell* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 3.



and global contexts, (3) the crucial literary moments when late-imperial Chinese commentators and literary critics attempt to read literary works through (olfactory) sensations in their *dufa* essays and commentaries, (4) the reason that this thesis takes *The Story of the Stone*, one of the “Six Classic Novels”<sup>4</sup> and evaluated by Sinologist Andrew Plaks as “an encyclopedic compendium of an entire tradition in a form”<sup>5</sup> as the case study, and (5) the specific research questions of this thesis, and its methodology of analyzing the author’s *xiefa* in adding symbolic and allegorical meanings in this novel through odours. By the end of this section, I wish to bring an overview of the late-imperial Chinese literary scholars’ mental threads of reading literary pieces through (olfactory) sensation, and my *dufa* or way of reading the signs odours represent.

### 1.1 Olfactory Culture—A Neglected Cultural Phenomenon

Odours are not only an invisible and intangible sense but also challenging to trace and describe due to languages’ limitations, whether in the Sinophone or the Europhone cultural contexts, whether for writers or readers. In *The Smell of Books* (1992), German literary scholar Hans Rindisbacher points out that different from colours, which have “clearcut encyclopedic entries,”

<sup>4</sup> The other five are *Shuihu zhuan* 水滸傳 (*Water Margin*), attributed to Shi Naian 施耐庵 (1296 – 1372), *Sanguo yanyi* 三國演義 (*Romance of the Three Kingdoms*), attributed to Luo Guanzhong 羅貫中 (1300 – 1400 or 1280 – 1360), *Xiyou ji* 西遊記 (*Journey to the West*), attributed to Wu Chengen 吳承恩 (1500 – 1582 or 1505 – 1580), *Jin Ping Mei* 金瓶梅 (*The Plum in the Golden Vase*), attributed to Lanling Xiaoxiao Sheng 蘭陵笑笑生, first published in 1617, and *Rulin waishi* 儒林外史 (*The Unofficial History of the Scholars*), attributed to Wu Jingzi 吳敬梓 (1701 – 1754). Andrew Plaks notes that the term “six classic novels” (*gudian xiaoshuo* 古典小說) “is a neologism of twentieth-century scholarship,” but “the view that these six works constitute a special class is reflected in a wide variety of critical writings on the novel.” Plaks also traces the history of naming this type of six-masterworks pattern such as “six works of genius” (*liu ts’ai-tzu shu* 六才子書) or four-masterworks pattern such as “four masterworks” (*ssu ta ch’i-shu* 四大奇書) during the late imperial era. See Andrew H. Plaks, *The Four Masterworks of the Ming Novel* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1987), pp. 3-6.

<sup>5</sup> Plaks phrases it as “an encyclopedic compendium of an entire tradition in a form” —“*Dream of the Red Chamber* provides in one volume a summation of the three-thousand-year span of Chinese literary civilization.” See Plaks, *Archetype and Allegory in the “Dream of the Red Chamber”* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1976), p. 11.

odours lack a “superordinated paradigm.”<sup>6</sup> In *The Cultural History of Smell* (1994), the anthropologist compilers also emphasize that odour is “a highly elusive phenomenon,” because it “cannot be named—at least not in European languages.”<sup>7</sup> In premodern Chinese writings, there are clearcut entries for odours. For examples, the “Zheng ming” 正名 (Correct Naming) chapter in *Xunzi* 荀子 names different categories of odours, as in “fragrant, foul, flowery, rotten, putrid, sharp, sour, and other strange smells” (*xiang, chou, fen, yu, xing, sao, sa, suan, qixiu* 香, 臭, 芬, 鬱, 腥, 臊, 灑, 酸, 奇臭).<sup>8</sup> But sometimes odours are concealed within lists of terminology for other sense categories. Such as “the scents of herbal medicine” (*yaoxiang* 藥香), “crimson fragrance” (*hongxiang* 紅香), “cold fragrance” (*lengxiang* 冷香), “warm fragrance” (*nuanxiang* 暖香), and “chilling fragrance” (*hanxiang* 寒香) in *The Story of the Stone*.

The first time that I noticed the olfactory phenomenon in premodern Chinese literature was on reading the late-Ming Chinese short story, “Yang Siwen Yanshan feng guren” 楊思溫燕山逢

<sup>6</sup> Rindisbacher argues that “[smell] cannot be classified in terms of clearcut encyclopedic entries. Whereas we find ‘blue’ or ‘red’ or ‘green’ in a paradigm for ‘colors,’ the ‘smell of coffee,’ ‘the scent of a rose,’ or the ‘stench of power’ have no such superordinated paradigm. The very way we talk about smells—in metonymic language, denoting the origin of the phenomenon—sends us to as many places in the encyclopedia as there are ‘smelly’ objects.” See *The Smell of Books*, p. v.

<sup>7</sup> See *The Cultural History of Smell*, p. 3.

<sup>8</sup> See Eric L. Hutton, trans., *Xunzi: The Complete Text* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), p. 238. As Hutton noted, Xunzi (Xun Kuang 荀況) is a Warring States period (403-221CE) philosopher. Qian Mu 錢穆 (1895-1990) estimates Xunzi’s dates as 340 to 245 BCE. Also, “the relation between the person Xunzi and the text *Xunzi* is a complicated issue,” since “there are indications in the text that not all of it was written by a single person, and hence that not all of it was written by Xunzi himself.” (pp. xviii-xxiii) Furthermore, some of the above-quoted smells are associated with other odours as their origins, whether from plants and animals. As in, “The word *yu* 鬱 means the decadent odour of grasses and woods. According to Yang Jing [Tang dynasty scholar], the word *sa* 灑 ought to be the word *lou* 漏, which is the homophone of *lou* 虯 (the stench from horses). The word *suan* 酸 should be the word *you* 膺, the stench from cattle.” (鬱: 草木腐朽. 灑: 當為‘漏’字(楊倞說), 通‘虯’, 馬身上的腥臭味. 酸: 當為‘膺’字, 牛身上的腥臭味). See Li Bo 李波, ed., *Xunzi zhuping* 荀子評注 (The Annotations and Commentaries of Xunzi; Shanghai: Shanghai Classics Publishing House, 2016), p. 334.

故人 (Yang Siwen Meets an Old Acquaintance in Yanshan).<sup>9</sup> It is the twenty-fourth story in *Yushi mingyan* 喻世名言 (*Stories to Instruct the World*), also titled as *Gujin xiaoshuo* 古今小說 (*Stories Old and New*), edited by Feng Menglong 馮夢龍 (1574-1646). This vernacular short story is set during the period when the Song dynasty lost Northern China and moved south, much diminished in size and power. This event is known as “The Jingkang Incident” (*Jingkang zhibian* 靖康之變) or “The Humiliation of Jingkang” (*Jingkang zhichi* 靖康之恥; 1125-1127CE). The story’s heroine, wife of a Southern Song (1127-1279CE) official, commits suicide to evade rape at the hands of her “barbarian” captor, thus preserving her chastity. However, on returning to the human realm, as a ghost, she is betrayed by her husband, who had sworn to remain faithful to her. At first glance, this story impressed me because of its strong sense of nostalgia, especially since it was only two decades after Feng re-wrote this Song classical tale that the Ming regime was conquered by another “barbarian” regime in an history irony, just as were the (Northern and Southern) Song regimes.<sup>10</sup> However, on close reading, I discovered an interesting phenomenon—on the eve of encountering the phantom heroine particular aromas and fragrant objects would appear, heralding her coming. While “aromatic wind” (*xiangfeng* 香風) and “perfumed carriage” (*xiangche* 香車) act as the extension of Lady Zheng’s beautiful appearance and sentimental personality, “incense” (*xiang* 香) and “fragrant candles” (*xiangzhu* 香燭) allude to her identity as

<sup>9</sup> See Shuhui Yang and Yunqin Yang trans., *Stories Old and New* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2000), pp. 430-49.

<sup>10</sup> See Hong Mai 洪邁 (1123-1202) comp., Xu Yimin 許逸民 ed., “Tai-yuan yiniang” 太原意娘 (Lady Yi from Taiyuan), in *Yijian zhi xuanzhu* 夷堅志選注 (The Selected Annotations of *The Record of the Listener*; Beijing: Wenhua yishu chubanshe, 1998), pp. 67-70. “Yang Siwen” was published two decades before the death of Feng Menglong, when the Manchu power was looming in the Northern borders of the Ming empire (1368-1644). This story tends to represent a sense of nostalgia for the golden era of Ming regime and a form of anxiety toward the impending fall of Ming military-political power.

another form of being—a ghost. The fragrant wind presaging the ghost’s arrival is a sensory symbol of her “fragrant soul” (*xianghun* 香魂).

The same narration of fragrant odours as the symbol of a female ghost is also found in *Mudan ting* 牡丹亭 (*Peony Pavilion*), also titled *Huanhun ji* 還魂記 (*The Return of a Soul*), by Tang Xiangzu 湯顯祖 (1550-1616). Fragrant odours symbolize the phantom heroine Bridal Du’s *qing* 情 (her passion, attachment, and desire toward the young scholar Liu Mengmei).<sup>11</sup> Phrases such as, “sweet fragrance for your soul” (*hunpo xiang* 魂魄香), “O holy ones, in your immeasurable majesty/receive this frail fragrant soul/ swiftly into Heaven’s height” (仙真呵! 威光無量, 把一點香魂), and “Ah young mistress, spirit so determined—by whose side do you walk/in fragrant dream?” (小姐呵! 你香夢與誰行?)<sup>12</sup> In these two works, *xiang qi* 香氣 (fragrant *qi*) embodies the dualism of the phantom heroines and their uncontrollable *qing* (including but not limited to sentiments, obsession, and nostalgia) to return to the human realm to (re)encounter their male lovers. While aromatic scents embody their feminine and sentimental temperament, *qi* 氣 (invisible vital energy, which also has the meaning of odours) alludes to their identities as ghosts.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Judith T. Zeitlin analyzes *qing* 情 (“sentiment, love, passion, desire”) as the enchantment helping the ghost Bridal Du cross the borders of life and death. She also examines the way in which Bridal Du embodies *qing* in the preface of *Peony Pavilion*. See Zeitlin, *The Phantom Heroine: Ghosts and Gender in Seventeenth-Century Chinese Literature* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2017), pp. 13-4. Zeitlin’s analysis in this monograph inspired me to consider the association between fragrant odours, female ghosts, femininity, *qing*, and affects.

<sup>12</sup> See “Hunyou” 魂游 (Spirit Roaming) in Li Baomin 李保民, ed., *Mudan ting* (Shanghai: Shanghai Classics Publishing House, 2016 [2017]), p. 80. English translation: see Cyril Birch, trans., *The Peony Pavilion* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2002 [1980]), pp. 149-50.

<sup>13</sup> In the above quoted lines from *Peony Pavilion*, fragrant odours appear to modify both *hun* 魂 (hun-soul) and *hunpo* 魂魄 (soul). Yu Ying-Shih notes the duality of *hun-po* 魂魄 (soul), and analyzes conceptions of the soul in early Chinese classics in detail. As he pointed out, *The Book of Rites* tells that when people die, “the breath-soul (*hun-ch’i* 魂氣) returns to heaven; the bodily soul (*hsing-p’o* 形魄) returns to earth.” He also points out that the character “*kwei* 鬼 (ghost)” in oracle inscriptions “acquired the meaning of ‘the soul of the dead’ as early as the

In fact, it is not just in the portraits of female ghosts that fragrant odours are given metaphorical, symbolic, and metaphysical meanings. The same is true in many Chinese literary writings about maidens and beauties. The delightful scent that often reminds both authors and readers of perfumed flowers is also frequently tied to the trinity of femininity, sensual pleasure, and lyrical aesthetics. There are many examples linking aromas and beauties in Chinese terminology, such as *xianggui* 香閨 (fragrant boudoir), *xiangsai* 香腮 (fragrant cheeks), *xianghun* 香魂 (fragrant soul), and *guose tianxiang* 國色天香 (the beauty with the extraordinary attractive appearances). In the work of the high-Tang poet Li Bai 李白 (701 – 762), the red peony flower with the extraordinary fragrance symbolizes the famous imperial concubine Lady Yang. It also links to sensual stimulation, sexual imagination, and erotic imagination: “There’s a perfume stealing moist from a shaft of red blossom; And a mist, through the heart, from the magical Hill of Wu.” (一枝紅豔露凝香，雲雨巫山枉斷腸。) <sup>14</sup> In addition to the erotic fantasies associated through *xiang* to femininity and sensual pleasure, *xiang* also stands for a certain kind of linguistic, lyrical, or aesthetic style. For instance, in literary writings, *xiang* is a crucial sign in the *xiangcao meiren* 香草美人 (fragrant floral and beautiful woman) tradition and *xianglian ti* 香奩體 (fragrant cosmetic style). In Rouge Inkstone<sup>15</sup>’s commentary on *The Story of the Stone*,

Shang period.” See “‘O Soul, Come Back!’ A Study in The Changing Conceptions of The Soul and Afterlife in Pre-Buddhist China”, *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 47, no. 2 (Dec 1987): pp. 363-95.

<sup>14</sup> See “Qingping yue” 清平樂 (A Song of Pure Happiness) in Guo Maoqian 郭茂倩 (1041-1099) comp., *Yuefu shiji* 樂府詩集 (The Poetry Collection of the Music Bureau; Shanghai: Shanghai Classics Publishing House, 2016), 80:971. English translation: see Jean Elizabeth Ward, *Li Bai: An Homage To* (The Lulu online bookstore, 2007), p. 20.

<sup>15</sup> Rouge Inkstone is one of the most notable commentators of *The Story of the Stone*, especially in consideration of their possible close relationship with the author. However, this commentator’s real identity in history is still a topic of debate. David Hawkes (1923-2009) estimates that Rouge Inkstone “must have died some time between 1764 and 1767.” See Hawkes, “Introduction” in *Story of the Stone* (Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1973), 1:36. Furthermore, Sun Xun 孫遜 lists four assumptions of Rouge Inkstone’s identity in history, which are (1) “Zuozhe

this mysterious commentator particularly praised the poetic languages in the novel, as “So fitting! So neatly done! The poem is elegant and gorgeous. This is exactly the ‘fragrant cosmetic style’.” (恰极, 工极. 绮靡秀媚, 香奁正体).<sup>16</sup>

In addition to the depictions of beauties, fragrant odours are also given moral messages and political implications in pre-Qin and Han texts. For example, in Qu Yuan’s 屈原 (340-278BCE) *Jiuge* 九歌 (*Nine Songs*), fragrant herbs are written as the poet’s self-imagination of his virtue: “I have washed in brew of orchid, bathed in sweet scents, Many-coloured are my garments; I am like a flower.” (浴蘭湯兮沐芳, 華採衣兮若英).<sup>17</sup> Also, in the “Bianwu” 辨物 (Discriminating Things) chapter of *Shuoyuan* 說苑 (*Garden of Talks*), compiled by Western Han scholar (202 BC-8 CE) Li Xiang 劉向 (77-6 BC), fragrant odours symbolize the virtue of a benevolent ruler, as in, “If the state is going to attain its golden era, its ruler [must] be agile and brilliant, and have upright heart... and his virtue will be revealed in fragrant scents.” (有之國將興, 其君齊明衷

shuo” 作者說 (The Doctrine of The Author Himself), first put forward by Hu Shi 胡適 (1891-1962), (2) “Shi Xiangyun shuo” 史湘雲說 (The Doctrine of [The Author’s Female Cousin,] Shi Xiangyun), first put forward by Zhou Ruchang 周汝昌 (1918-2012), (3) “Tang xiongdi shuo” 堂兄弟說 (The Doctrine of [The Author’s] Male Cousin), and (4) “Shufu shuo” 叔父說 (The Doctrine of [The Author’s] Uncle), first put forward by Yu Rui 裕瑞 (1771-1838). See Sun Xun, *Honglou meng zhiping chutan* 紅樓夢脂評初探 (The Preliminary Investigation of Rouge Inkstone’s Commentaries; Shanghai: Shanghai Classics Publishing House, 1981), pp. 53-77. Sun denies the first two assumptions and admits the plausibility of the last two assumptions.

<sup>16</sup> See *Zhiyanzhai chongping Shitou ji* 脂硯齋重評石頭記 (Repeated Commentary on the Story of the Stone by Rouge Inkstone; Shanghai: Shanghai Classics Publishing House, 1981[1985]), p. 321. This edition is the facsimile reprinting of the *jimao* 己卯 (1759) manuscript. As “Notes on the Choice of *The Story of the Stone*’s Manuscripts, English Translation, and Commentaries” (pp. viii-x in this thesis) introduced, this thesis will quote commentaries from two editions of *Zhiyanzhai chongping Shitou ji*, including this *jimao* manuscript and another edition based on the *gengchen* 庚辰 (1760) manuscript. *Jimao* and *gengchen* will be used henceforth to refer to the choice of edition.

<sup>17</sup> See “Yunzhong Jun” 雲中君 (The Lord in the Clouds) in Jin Kaicheng 金開誠 et al, eds., *Qu Yuan ji jiaozhu* 屈原集校注 (The Annotation of the Collection of Qu Yuan’s Works; Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2008 [1996]), 1:195-201. English translation: see Arthur Waley, *The Nine Songs: A Study of Shamanism in Ancient China* (New York: Grove Press, 1956), p. 27.

正...其德足以昭其馨香).<sup>18</sup> This chapter also reveals foul odours as the symbol of tyrants and their brutal politics, as in “If the state is going to reach its ruin, its ruler [must] be corrupt and unorthodox... his governance is rancid and notorious, [thus] the fragrant scents will not arrive.” (國將亡, 其君貪冒淫僻... 其政腥臊, 馨香不登).<sup>19</sup>

In contrast with fragrant odours and the lyrical narrative style, foul-smelling odours represent a vernacular, vulgar, and obscene dialogue tone that reveals the feelings of abomination, humiliation, and contemptuousness in fictional works. For example, in *The Plum in the Golden Vase*, foul odours frequently emerge in the dialogues between Ximen Qing and his concubines or servants, as in: “[I] cast myself in the role of a stinking rat” (我破著老臉做臭毛鼠),<sup>20</sup> “make a stinking mess of the place” (臭爛了這塊地),<sup>21</sup> “beat to a stinking pulp” (打個臭死),<sup>22</sup> “lousy little stinker” (賊臭肉),<sup>23</sup> “Don’t talk such stinking rot.” (沒的扯臊淡),<sup>24</sup> “no doubt he was busy boring his way into the stinking asshole of the slave” (左右是奴才臭屁股門子).<sup>25</sup> and “you shameless, stinking whore” (沒廉恥, 弄虛脾的臭娼根).<sup>26</sup>

To recap, this brief survey provides some indication of the extensive significance of odours in a wide range of texts. It was the late-Ming story “Yang Siwen” which made me realize how

<sup>18</sup> See “Bianwu” in Xiang Zonglu 向宗魯, ed., *Shuoyuan jiaozheng* 說苑校證 (The Collated Version of *The Garden of Talks*; Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1987), pp. 442-75.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., pp. 442-75.

<sup>20</sup> See David Tod Roy, trans., *The Plum in the Golden Vase* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2013 [1993]), vol. 1 (5 vols), chap. 7, p. 130.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., vol. 1, chap. 12, p. 237.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., vol. 1, chap. 18, p. 365.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., vol. 2, chap. 22, p. 34.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., vol. 2, chap. 24, p. 77.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., vol. 2, chap. 35, p. 314.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., vol. 3, chap. 57, p. 401.

pervasive and significance odours are in premodern texts. This led me to explore this cultural phenomenon that infiltrates into many corners of that past world.

## **1.2 The Study of Olfactory Culture in the Sinophone and Global Contexts**

The growing interest in the study of olfactory cultures today can be found in many research topics and disciplines, such as anthropology, linguistics, semiotics, the study of material culture, and sensory studies.

Sensory studies in the disciplines of humanities and social sciences is a new research field. In “The Expanding Field of Sensory Studies” (2013), David Howes indicates that sensory studies in history and anthropology dates from the 1980s except for a few isolated examples before this.<sup>27</sup> Later, in “The Shifting Sensorium” (1991), Walter J. Ong (1912-2003) also points out the need for a range of disciplines, including history, anthropology, aesthetics, and linguistic studies, in the investigation of sensory studies. In Chinese studies, there is increasing attention being paid to the research of sight and sound in Chinese art and literature, such as *The Double Screen: Medium and Representation in Chinese Painting* (1996), by Wu Hung, and *Sound Rising from the Paper: 19th-century Martial Arts Fiction and the Chinese Acoustic Imagination* (2015), by Paize Keulemans. Within the five senses (sights, sounds, touch, tastes, and smells), odours are generally considered as the most unnoticed one, which leaves a potential research space.

The late twentieth century and beyond has seen an increasing interest from modern Sinologists in the study of premodern Chinese olfactory culture. In “Beyond Visual and Aural

<sup>27</sup> David Howes lists a valuable bibliography of previous sensory studies in disciplines of arts and humanities, which gives a good sense of this field in the early twenty-first century. See “The Expanding Field of Sensory Studies,” <https://www.sensorystudies.org/sensorial-investigations/the-expanding-field-of-sensory-studies/> (Accessed June 14th, 2020).



Criteria: The Importance of Flavor in Chinese Literary Criticism” (1979), Eugene Eoyang notes the different interpretations of the olfactory and gustatory sensation between Western and Chinese literary criticism. He argues that both olfactory and gustatory descriptors belong to “the lower senses” in the Western cultural context. But odours and flavours are crucial in premodern Chinese literary tradition as they represent the invisible essence of a writing piece.<sup>28</sup> In this journal article, following reviewing Liu Xie 劉勰 (ca. 465- ca. 521)’s words about the flavour and fragrance of a literature in *Wenxin diaolong* 文心雕龍 (*The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*),<sup>29</sup> he argues that the “character of each work is manifest in its unique savor and in its scent.” “In other words, the uniqueness of a work can be savored: texts may echo other works, but the personality of any work is instantaneously verified by what Liu Hsieh called *wei*, flavor, and *hsiu*, fragrance.”<sup>30</sup>

In *Xiang: wenxue, lishi, shenghuo* 香:文學·歷史·生活 (*Fragrance: literature, history, and life*), Xi Mi introduces the significance of aromas, perfumes, and floral motifs in premodern Chinese literary imaginations and social lives.<sup>31</sup> In “Aromas, Scents, and Spices: Olfactory Culture in China before the Arrival of Buddhism” (2016), Olivia Milburn investigates premodern Chinese olfactory culture through three approaches, including archeological discoveries such as incense burners and spice bags, the olfactory narrations in the early philosophical and ritual-

<sup>28</sup> See Eugene Eoyang, “Beyond Visual and Aural Criteria: The Importance of Flavor in Chinese Literary Criticism”, *Critical Inquiry* 6, no. 1 (1979): 99-106.

<sup>29</sup> Eoyang quotes and translates Liu Xie’s analogue of literary works and plants: “The essence of literature may be compared to the various plants and trees...alike in the fact that they are rooted in the soil, yet in different in their flavor and their fragrance, their exposure to the sun.” See his “Beyond Visual and Aural Criteria,” p. 101.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 101. It is worth noting that flavours and odours are a two-in-one phrase in Chinese terminology, as in *xiangwei* 香味 (fragrance and flavours) and *qiwei* 氣味 (odours and flavours).

<sup>31</sup> See Xi Mi 奚密 (Michelle Yeh), *Xiang: wenxue, lishi, shenghuo* 香:文學·歷史·生活 (*Fragrance: literature, history, and life*; Beijing: Peking University Press, 2013).

religious texts before the grand unification (the Western Han dynasty, 202BCE–8 CE), and the “perfume revolution” accompanying the import of exotic spices under the reign of the Emperor Wu of the Han (r. 141-87BC).<sup>32</sup> In “Deodorising China: Odour, Ordure, and Colonial (Dis)order in Shanghai, 1840s-1940s” (2016), Xuelei Huang investigates the role of odours in the modernization of China, through examining the association between odours, modernity, and colonialism during the late-Qing and early Republican era.<sup>33</sup> Xiaorong Li’s monograph, *The Poetics and Politics of Sensuality in China: The “Fragrant and Bedazzling” Movement (1600 – 1930)* (2019), analyzes the genre as poems of sensuality written during the late-Ming and the late-Qing era when both empires were in their final stages. Li links the “fragrant and bedazzling” (*xiangyan* 香豔) poems with the late-Ming cult of *qing* 情 (love and passion, sentiment, and obsession). She argues that these *xiangyan* poems reflect a “countercultural reaction” through which poets “not only created a poetics of sensuality but also incorporated it into a textual politics—they used their writing as an overt gesture to critique the system that failed them and the ideology that condemned them.”<sup>34</sup> Li’s monograph not only defines the internal connection between *xiangyan* poems and political significance, but also inspires her readers to (re)consider the role of *xiang* in “femininity,” “sensuality,” “sexual desire and romantic love,” and “linguistic ornateness and over-aestheticism.”

<sup>32</sup> See Olivia Milburn, “Aromas, Scents, and Spices: Olfactory Culture in China before the Arrival of Buddhism”, *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 136, no. 3 (2016): 441-464.

<sup>33</sup> See Xuelei Huang, “Deodorising China: Odour, Ordure, and Colonial (Dis)order in Shanghai, 1840s-1940s,” *Modern Asian Studies* 50, no. 3 (2016): 1092-1122.

<sup>34</sup> See Xiaorong Li, *The Poetics and Politics of Sensuality in China* (Amherst, NY: Cambria Press, 2019), p. 15.

Although there has been increasing attention to the study of premodern Chinese olfactory culture,<sup>35</sup> just as Milburn summarized in her article, “such research into early Chinese olfactory culture is only just beginning.”<sup>36</sup> In addition to the above Chinese studies, this thesis is also inspired by many other disciplines, especially anthropology and Western literature. In the field of olfactory studies in Western literature, Hans J. Rindisbacher’s *The Smell of Books: A Cultural-Historical Study of Olfactory Perception in Literature* (1992) examines olfactory examples in European literature (including German, French, English, and Italian literature). He emphasizes that “a tentative olfactory aesthetics is a general *desideratum* as well as specific goal of [his] study.”<sup>37</sup> Inspired by Rindisbacher and his work, exploring the potential of olfactory aesthetics, especially in the study of Chinese fictional worlds, is in fact also the primary purpose of this thesis. *The Aroma of Righteousness* (2012), by Deborah A. Green, examines the “rabbinic imagery of fragrance and explored how the ancient rabbis employed aromatic images to propagate their social, theological, and religious claims,” such as “love, righteousness, death, the Divine, and the ‘other’.”<sup>38</sup> Catherine Maxwell’s *Scents and Sensibility: Perfume in Victorian Literary Culture* (2017) studies perfume and perfumed atmosphere, aestheticism and

<sup>35</sup> There also some other popular studies of premodern Chinese fragrant culture, such as Fu Jingliang’s 傅京亮 *Zhongguo xiangwenhua* 中國香文化 (The Chinese Fragrant Culture; Jinan: Qilu shushe, 2008), Zhou Wenzhi 周文志 and Lian Ruan’s 連汝安 *Xishuo Zhongguo xiangwenhua* 細說中國香文化 (The Elaboration of Chinese Fragrant Culture; Beijing: Jiuzhou chubanshe, 2009), and Chen Yunjun’s 陳雲君 *Zhongguo xiangwenhua baodian* 中國香文化寶典 (The Valuable Book of Chinese Fragrant Culture; Tianjin: Baihua Literature and Art Publishing House, 2010). Their writings touch the olfactory phenomenon in many fields, such as literary writings, ritual practice, religious beliefs, and material culture. It is helpful to read these works for an overview of premodern Chinese fragrant culture (including fragrance, perfumes, spices, incense, and fragrant floras).

<sup>36</sup> See Milburn, “Aromas, Scents, and Spices,” p. 441.

<sup>37</sup> See Rindisbacher, *The Smell of Books*, p. 16.

<sup>38</sup> See Deborah A. Green, *The Aroma of Righteousness: Scents and Seduction in Rabbinic Life and Literature* (University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011), p. 2.

romanticism, as well as decadence and the fin-de-siècle in Victorian literary culture.<sup>39</sup> “Magic Perfumes and Deadly Herbs: The Scents of Witches’ Magic in Classical Literature” (2019), by Britta Ager, analyzes the descriptions of scent, magic, and witchcraft in Classical literature. This article discusses the fear aroused by the aromatic charms of witches having the seductive power to bewitch men.<sup>40</sup>

In anthropological studies of olfactory culture, “The Odor of the Other: Olfactory Symbolism and Cultural Categories” (1992), by Constance Classen, analyzes olfactory symbolism and olfactory division, and their association to “oneness” and “otherness.” Classen argues that olfactory division corresponds to social-cultural conventions like genders, identities, and classes. Classen also introduced “the three-fold categorization of women” in the premodern Western tradition, as in “(1) sluts or prostitutes, (2) maidens, wives, or mothers, and (3) seductresses.”<sup>41</sup> While maidens, wives, and mothers who are morally good females and with proper social status are often labeled with the “pleasant, nonthreatening odours,” prostitutes or seductive beauties are often depicted with the “foul odours” and the “heavily sweet and spicy odours” as the extension of their “beauty and attraction,” and of course “their exotic status.”<sup>42</sup> *Aroma: The Cultural History of Smell* (1994), edited by Constance Classen, David Howes, and Anthony Synnott, investigates “the social role of smell in the West and across cultures.” In the introduction, contributors clarified their motivation in compiling this work on

<sup>39</sup> See Catherine Maxwell, *Scents and Sensibility: Perfume in Victorian Literary Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

<sup>40</sup> See Britta Ager, “Magic Perfumes and Deadly Herbs: The Scent of Witches’ Magic in Classical Literature”, *Preternature: Critical and Historical Studies on the Preternatural* 8, no. 1 (2019): 1-34.

<sup>41</sup> See Constance Classen, “The Odor of the Other: Olfactory Symbolism and Cultural Categories”, *Ethos* 20, no. 2 (June 1992): 142. There often tends to be a fourth category—that of the crone, old, past child-bearing age, and often associated with witches.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 142-43.

odours—While “smell has been ‘silenced’ in modernity,” it was “thought of as intrinsic ‘essences’, revelatory of inner truth” in premodern Western culture. They argue that “through smell, therefore, one interacted with interiors, rather than with surfaces, as one did through sight.”<sup>43</sup>

In fact, after reading the above monographs in the disciplines of anthropology and European literature, I am much more impressed by the similarities between premodern Chinese olfactory culture and European olfactory culture, rather than their differences. For example, late-Ming scholar Qian Qianyi 錢謙益 (1582-1664) evaluates olfactory sensation as the most superior sensation in reading poems—reading the invisible essences, affects, spirits, or realms in poems through applying odours as the symbolic path. Furthermore, similar to the marginalizing of “female others” with either foul-smelling odours or exotic perfumes in Western tradition, “female others” such as animal demons, female ghosts, prostitutes, courtesans, concubines, and seductive beauties with unknown identities, are labeled with foxy smells or extraordinary fragrance in many premodern Chinese literary works as well. I will analyze these olfactory phenomena in detail in the following discussions.

### **1.3 Research Methodologies, Research Purposes, and Main Arguments**

“Just as important as the actual use of odour in the ancient world; however, were its metaphorical and literary uses.”<sup>44</sup> Hans J. Rindisbacher lists four crucial aspects in the study of olfactory phenomena, including “scientific aspects,” “literary and linguistic aspects,” “philosophical and

<sup>43</sup>See Classen et al, eds., *The Cultural History of Smell*, p. 4.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

aesthetic aspects,” and “sociohistorical aspects.”<sup>45</sup> This thesis will mainly focus on literary and linguistic aspects of olfactory narrations in my case study of *The Story of the Stone*. Still, it will also touch sociohistorical aspects, as well as aesthetic and philosophical aspects.

This thesis has three research purposes:

1. Investigating the potential of olfactory aesthetics as a *xiefa* and *dufa* in literary writing and criticism.
2. Recalling the long history of olfactory phenomena in premodern Chinese (literary) writings with a focus on *The Story of the Stone*.
3. Reading *The Story of the Stone* through “olfactory aesthetics”—the influence of the late-Ming cult of *qing* 情 on mapping the olfactory world *Daguan yuan* 大觀園 (Grand Prospect Garden), especially the way in which the odours of each occupant and their garden dwellings embody different categories of *qing* in this novel.

### 1.3.1 An Olfactory-related “*Dufa* 讀法 (reading method/how to read)”

In late-imperial commentaries, several well-known commentators mentioned reading the novel through sensations in their *dufa* essays and other forms of commentaries. Following a brief review of David L. Rolston’s study of *dufa* essays in Chinese tradition, this section will introduce a sensation-related reading method in Zhang Zhupo 張竹坡 (1670-1698)’s *dufa* essay for *The Plum in the Golden Vase* and Rouge Inkstone’s commentaries for *The Story of the Stone*. The focus will then move to odour-related *dufa* in several mid-late Qing readers’ commentaries

<sup>45</sup> See Rindisbacher, *The Smell of Books*, pp. 1-26.

for *The Story of the Stone*. At the end of this section, I will discuss my odour-oriented *dufa* as the modern reader of this novel.

*Dufa* 讀法 is a two-character Chinese phrase, with a compound made from the verb “to read” (*du* 讀) and a noun meaning “law or method” (*fa* 法).<sup>46</sup> Rolston notes that although this phrase has various meanings depending on the contexts, it refers explicitly to “a kind of essay that appears in commentary editions of traditional Chinese novels.”<sup>47</sup> In printed editions of premodern Chinese fictions, there are several places for readers to place their commentaries, including “marginal comments” (*jiapi* 夾批), “interlineal comments” (*pangpi* 旁批 or *cepi* 側批), and “chapter comments” (*hui-pi* 回批 or *hui zong-pi* 回總批).<sup>48</sup> In addition to these comments for each chapter, there are also “prefatory materials (commentaries)” as frontmatter of the manuscript, such as “preface” (*xu* 序), “statements of editorial or commentarial principles” (*fanli* 凡例 or *liyan* 例言), and *dufa* essays.<sup>49</sup> *Dufa* essays are “general essay[s] dealing with the overall theme of the book”, and the same basic form of prefatory essay is also sometimes called *zong-ping* 總評 (general comments), *zongpi* 總批 (general annotations), *zonglun* 總論 (general introduction or discussion) and *zonglue* 總略 (general main summary).<sup>50</sup>

Rolston points out that although the basic organization of the *dafa* essay is loose, there are many recurring terminologies and basic principles in Ming-Qing fiction criticism.<sup>51</sup> One of such

<sup>46</sup> See David L. Rolston’s “Preface” included in his ed., *How to Read the Chinese Novel* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1990), p. xv.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. xv.

<sup>48</sup> See Rolston’s “Traditional Chinese Fiction Criticism” included in *How to Read the Chinese Novel*, pp. 53-7.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., pp. 57-65. Rolston notes that “this same basic form of prefatory essay is called *tsung-p’ing* 總評 in Wang Hsi-lien’s [commentaries for *The Story of the Stone*].” (p. 60).

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 65.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 61.

concepts is *leng-re* 冷熱 (the cold and the heat) dualism, which can be found in the works of Mao Zonggang 毛宗崗 (1632-1709) and his father Mao Lun 毛綸 (fl. late 16<sup>th</sup>-mid 17<sup>th</sup> century)’s “How to read *Romance of Three Kingdoms*” (*Sanguo yanyi dufa* 三國演義讀法) essay and Zhang Zhupo’s “How to read *The Plum in the Golden Vase*” (*Jin Ping Mei dufa* 金瓶梅讀法) essay.<sup>52</sup>

In his “*JPM dufa*” essay, Zhang Zhupo tends to employ *leng-re* as a pattern similar to the *yin-yang* 陰陽 dualistic model in reading the allegories, puns, and emotions in this novel. As he argued: “In the first half [*ch’ien-pan* 前半] of the book, the motif of ‘cold’ [*leng* 冷] is repeated so effectively that one can hardly bear to read on, whereas in the second half [*hou-pan* 後半] the motif of ‘heat’ [*re* 熱] recurs but is not readily apparent to the reader.” (前半處處冷, 令人不耐看; 後半處處熱, 而人又看不出.)<sup>53</sup> Also, in “Lengre jinzheni” 冷熱金針 (The Golden Needles of Cold and Heat) essay, Zhang argues that the words “cold” and “heat” are “demonstrated through the names of Scholar Wen and Employee Han” (在溫秀才, 韓伙計), since “Han is another name of ‘cold’, and Wen means the lingering odours of ‘heat’” (韓者冷之別名, 溫者熱之餘氣).<sup>54</sup>

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., pp. 101-2.

<sup>53</sup> See David T. Roy trans., “How to Read the *Chin P’ing Mei*” included in Rolston ed., *How to Read the Chinese Novel*, pp. 202-43. For a Chinese edition, see “Piping diyiqishu Jin Ping Mei dufa” 批評第一奇書《金瓶梅》讀法 (How to Read the Literary Criticism of The Number One Marvelous Book *Jin Ping Mei*) in Wang Rumei 王汝梅 ed al, eds., *Zhang Zhupo piping Jin Ping Mei* 張竹坡批評金瓶梅 (The Literary Criticism of Zhang Zhupo on *Jin Ping Mei*; Jinan: Qilu shushe, 1991), vol. 1 (2 vols), pp. 25-50.

<sup>54</sup> See his “Lengre jinzhen” included in *Zhang Zhupo piping Jin Ping Mei*, p.12.



Zhang Zhupo's methodology of reading *JPM* through *leng-re* dualism also sets a model for Rouge Inkstone in the commentaries of *STJ*. Like Zhang's interest in identifying the allegorical meanings of characters' names, Rouge Inkstone also pays attention to a character whose name is Leng Zixing 冷子興: "Chapter [two] is not the main text [of *The Story of the Stone*] either. This chapter mainly focuses on the person Leng Zixing, so-called 'the heat is born from the cold and the solid comes from the void.'" (此回亦非正文, 只在冷子興一人, 即所謂 '冷中出熱, 無中生有' 也.)<sup>55</sup> Also, in chapter seventeen, Rouge Inkstone notes: "It is remarkable that [the author] intensively inserts cold emotion in the narrations of extreme heat." (極熱中偏以冷筆點之, 所以為妙.)<sup>56</sup> Besides inheriting Zhang's tradition of reading the novel through (tactile) sensation, Rouge Inkstone, as well as several other mid and late Qing (r. late 18th-late 19th century) commentators of *STJ*<sup>57</sup>, also attempt to read this novel through odours and olfactory sensations.

Before discussing the commentators of *STJ* and their odour-related *dufa*, I would like to introduce Qian Qianyi and his "Scent-viewing Study" (*Xiangguan Shuo* 香觀說), since it represents a pioneer form of this odour-related *dufa* during the late-Ming and Qing literary milieu. Qian Qianyi is a late-Ming scholar-official who is also famous as a poet. According to his *Xiangguan shuo*, he evaluates olfactory sensation as the supreme sensation in reading poems. He argues that it surpasses the other four sensations (visual, auditory, gustatory, and tactile), and can bring the best experience in reading poems:

The valuation and gradation of poetry is analogous to [that of] scents. Some are first-class, some mediocre... Some are from chopping [wood], some from frying, still others from burning incense. [Our] olfactory sense registers and manifests the scent. [The

<sup>55</sup> See *Zhiyanzhai chongping Shitou ji*, the *jimao* edition, p. 19.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 325.

<sup>57</sup> The abbreviation of *Shitou ji* 石頭記 (*The Story of the Stone*). *STJ* will be used henceforth to refer the novel.

sensation] is completed the instant the scent touches the nose. The four sensations—sound, color, scent, and taste—can be encompassed in the olfactory sensation. The most effective way of reading<sup>58</sup> poetry is thus with the nose.

詩之品第, 略與香等. 或上妙, 或下中, 或斫鋸而取, 或煎竿而就, 或熏染而得. 以麝映香, 觸鼻即了. 而聲色香味四者. 鼻根中可以兼舉, 此觀詩方便法也.<sup>59</sup>

Although Qian's "Scent-viewing Study" is mainly a poem-reading methodology and more theoretical rather than practical in nature, it reveals that there was a scent-oriented approach in the late Ming and early Qing literary milieu.

Indeed, I notice a tendency of an olfactory-related *dufa* in the late-imperial Chinese studies of literature, particularly in the fiction criticism of *The Story of the Stone*. The early example that I found is in Rouge Inkstone's commentaries on this novel, in which fragrant scents reveal the heroine Lin Dai-yu's former life as a fragrant herb:

It is the same as the old saying—"people forget the air since they live in the air, fish forget the water as they swim in the water." I would like to expand this early saying—"beauties would ignore their charming appearances, and flowers would forget their scents." This is precisely the portrayal of Dai-yu, who doesn't recognize her own innate fragrance.

正是按諺雲: '人在氣中忘氣, 魚在水中忘水.' 余今續之曰: '美人忘容, 花則忘香'. 此則黛玉不知自骨肉中之香同.<sup>60</sup>

Furthermore, in "Mingzhai zhuren zongping" 明齋主人總評 (General Comments by the Master of Ming Studio), this anonymous commentator notices the pun of *xiang* 香 (fragrant odours) in

<sup>58</sup> In the above cited lines, Qian Qianyi uses "*guan* 觀," which is close to the English word "apprehending."

<sup>59</sup> See his "*Xiangguan shuo shu Xuyuan tanshi hou*" 香觀說書徐元歎詩後 (Writing Scent-viewing Study to Xu Yuan after Sighing Poems) included in Qian Zhongliao 錢仲聊 ed., *Qian Muzhai quanji* 錢牧齋全集 (Complete Works of Qian Muzhai; Shanghai: Shanghai Classics Publishing House, 2003), 6:1567. For English translation: see Cheng Jiang's "The Scent of Poetry: A Preliminary Reading of *Xiangguan shuo* by Qian Qianyi," pp. 31-2.

<sup>60</sup> See *Zhiyanzhai chongping Shitou ji*, the *jimao* edition, p. 396.

the name of Caltrop (Xiang-ling 香菱)<sup>61</sup>. He/she reads fragrant odours as the symbol of “Grand Prospect Garden”:

Although Caltrop doesn’t live inside the garden, her name reflects that she lives as the neighbour of fragrant scents.

香菱不在园中, 言与香为邻也.<sup>62</sup>

Wang Xilian 王希廉 (1805-1877), with the courtesy name of *Xuexiang* 雪香 (The Fragrance of Snow) and the poetic name *Huhua zhuren* 護花主人 (The Master of Nourishing Flowers), also emphasizes the pun of Caltrop’s name(s) in his commentary on this novel. In chapter eighty, Xia Jin-gui (she is the wife and Xiang-ling is the concubine) changes Caltrop’s name from Xiang-ling 香菱 (fragrant caltrop-flower) into Qiu-ling 秋菱 (autumn caltrop-flower), because she is jealous of the word *xiang* in Caltrop’s name. According to Wang Xilian’s commentary:

The word “autumn” is far inferior to the word “fragrant” ... and this is the omen of Caltrop’s wilting during the late autumn.

“秋”字远不如“香”字... 亦是秋老菱枯之兆.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>61</sup> Caltrop is a crucial secondary character in *STJ*, as she is the daughter of Zhen Shiyin 甄世隱, whose name implies a warning voice *or* thematic significance of the novel—the true events [are] hidden. In the story, the hero Jia Bao-yu is the only character who dreams the entire Land of Illusion, and Zhen Shiyin is the only person who dreams the half of Land of Illusion. This marvelous experience has reflected his significance in the novel. Also, after losing his daughter Caltrop at the beginning of the story, Zhen Shiyin chooses to detach from the Red Dust (the human world). His choice foreshadows Bao-yu’s fate of converting to Buddhism at the ending. As Zhen Shiyin’s daughter, Caltrop is also a key figure in the novel, as she often acts as an intermediate role. For example, she is the concubine of Xue Pan (Xue Bao-chai’s brother) but has a close relationship with Dai-yu. She is a married woman but usually described by the author as an innocent beauty who behaves like the Garden maidens. From my perspective, different from maidens (young ladies such as Dai-yu and Bao-chai) and their shadow characters (maids such as Skybright and Aroma), Caltrop is an extraordinary character who moves inside and outside Grand Prospect Garden. She is important in sewing together the worlds and plots in this novel.

<sup>62</sup> See “Mingzhai zhuren zongping” in *Zhuping ben Honglou meng* 注評本紅樓夢 (Edition of *Honglou meng* with Annotation and Commentary; Shanghai: Shanghai Bookstore Publishing House, 2014), 4:1605.

<sup>63</sup> See *Wang Xilian pingben xinjuan quanbu xiuxiang Honglou meng* 王希廉評本新鐫全部繡像紅樓夢 (The Completed Work of *Dream of the Red Chamber* with Wang Xilian’s Commentaries and New-engraved Illustrations; Taipei: Guangwen shuju, 1977), 6:2467-68.

In comparison to the other commentators of this novel, Wang Xilian is the commentator most alert to the allegorical meanings of *STJ* by taking odour symbols and odour distribution in his reading method. (I will quote more of his odour-oriented *dufa* in chapter 3.1.)

I would like to argue, following Qian Qianyi's "Scent-viewing Study" and these three Qing scholars' commentaries on *STJ*, that there appears to be an increased interest in an olfactory-related *dufa* in late-imperial literary history. This thesis attempts to follow it to introduce a new *dufa* based on "olfactory aesthetics." In order to achieve this research purpose, the primary task is to define this abstract term and its main elements. What is the meaning of "olfactory aesthetic"? What examples and models can be drawn from earlier texts? What aspects of it should modern readers pay attention to when they interpret the olfactory phenomenon in fictional works? In the introductory chapter of *The Smell of Books*, Rindisbacher mentions that attempting to establish a kind of "olfactory aesthetic" is, in fact, one of his book's primary goals.

In my understanding, "olfactory aesthetic" is a single object with two aspects. It includes:

(a.) Applying odours as a *xiefa* in adding symbolic, metaphorical, and allegorical meanings in fictional works. For example, how do authors describe odours through language? In what ways do they divide fragrant and foul-smelling odours, especially when describing fictional characters? Do authors define and divide odours according to characters' natural odours, or write them according to sociocultural or individual expectations toward the defined characters' genders, identities, and classes? How do authors apply odour (through overlap or contrast) in mapping fictional worlds and the close/distant relationships between characters?

(b.) Following the odour-related *dufa* of the late-imperial Chinese scholars such as Qian Qianyi, Rouge Inkstone, and Wang Xilian, this thesis aims to develop its own odour-oriented *dufa*. It includes odour symbolism, olfactory division (between the delightful and the foul-

smelling odours), odour distribution (odour overlap and odour contrast), applying odours as symbolic coordinates in reading the author's cartography of his fictional world, and the way in which odours appear as symbolic signals in generating sensory atmospheres such as sentimentalism, romantic feelings, and even sensuality.

### **1.3.2 Recalling the Long History of Olfactory Phenomena in Premodern Chinese (Literary) Writings**

Summarizing an evolution of premodern Chinese olfactory culture is not the purpose of this paper. But the thesis attempts to recollect representative olfactory tropes in early Chinese works, in which olfactory narrations reflect and reinforce the concept of odour symbolism and olfactory division as defined here. The examples include fragrant orchids and “gentlemen (*junzi* 君子)” in pre-Qin and Han classics, seductive creatures with extraordinary fragrance (and foxy smells) in Six Dynasties (220-589) *zhiguai* tales and Tang (618-907) *chuanqi* tales, and the cult of *xiang* among Northern Song literati. These typical olfactory examples will help us understand the olfactory world in *The Story of the Stone*.

### **1.3.3 Reading *The Story of the Stone* through “Olfactory Aesthetics” —the influence of the late-Ming cult of *Qing* on mapping an olfactory world in this novel**

*Qing* is one of the key terms in previous studies of *The Story of the Stone*.<sup>64</sup> *Qing* in the premodern Chinese social context is a complex term with constant transformations and various

<sup>64</sup> See Wai-ye Li, *Enchantment and Disenchantment: Love and Illusion in Chinese Literature*, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993); Anthony C. Yu, “Desire: The Definition of ‘Qing’,” in *Reading the Stone: Desire and the Making of Fiction in Dream of the Red Chamber* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1997), pp. 53-66; and Martin Huang’s “*Qing* and the Reluctance to Grow up in *Honglou meng*” in *Desire and*

interpretations, including *qingxu* 情緒 (emotions), *xingqing* 性情 (personal temperament), and *qingyu* 情慾 (passion and desire). Scholars have long noticed its complex connotations, constant transformations, and various interpretations in different historical periods and even in different genres or contexts.<sup>65</sup> During the late-Ming era, along with the development of the printing industry, the tea-house culture, and the philosophy of Wang Yangming 王陽明 (1472-1529) 's Neo-Confucianism and Li Zhi 李贄 (1527-1602) 's *Tongxin shuo* 童心說 (Theory of the Childlike Mind), there is the cult of *qing* in many late-Ming works of literature. It specifically refers to a series of sentimental emotions, such as sentiment, obsession, attachment, passion, and lovesickness, often written as the *zhenqing* 真情 (true feeling) between males and females.<sup>66</sup>

Right from the beginning of *STJ*, the author tells his readers that *qing* is one of this novel's major themes. The fictional author, *Shixiong* 石兄 (Brother Stone), is initially a stone from *Qing-geng feng* 青梗峰 (Greensickness Peak), the homophone for *Qing-geng feng* 情梗峰

*Fictional Narrative in Late Imperial China* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Asia Center, 2002), pp. 271-314.

<sup>65</sup> See A. C. Graham, "Appendix: The Meaning of *Ch'ing* 情" in *Studies in Chinese Philosophy and Philosophical Literature* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), pp. 59-66; Martin Huang, "Sentiments of Desire: Thoughts on the Cult of *Qing* in Ming-Qing Literature," *Chinese Literature Essays Article Reviews* 20 (1998): 153-84; Halvor Eifring, "Introduction: Emotions and the Conceptual History of *Qing* 情," in Eifring ed., *Love and Emotions in Traditional Chinese Literature* (Leiden. Boston: Brill, 2004), pp. 1-36; and Paolo Santangelo, "Evaluation of Emotions in European and Chinese Traditions: Differences and Analogies," *Monumenta Serica* 53 (2005): 401-27.

<sup>66</sup> For example, in the preface of *Peony Pavilion*, *qing* is defined as the enchantment of crossing the boundary between life and death. See Birch, *Peony Pavilion*, p. ix. Also, in the preface of *The Anatomy of Love*, Feng Menglong announces his ambition to establish the *Qingjiao* 情教 (Doctrine of *qing*): "I intend to establish a school of *ch'ing* to teach all who are living... Alas, although I have an abundance of *ch'ing*, others still lack it. I hope to reach those others who have an abundance of *ch'ing* that together we might propagate the teaching of *ch'ing*." See Hua-yuan Li Mowry, *Chinese Love Stories from Ch'ing-shih* (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Book, 1983), pp. 13-4. Feng even creates twenty-four genres of *qing* and uses these as his chapter titles in *The Anatomy of Love*. As in "chastity" (*qingzhen* 情真), "conjugal destiny and affinity" (*qingyuan* 情緣), "clandestine *ch'ing*" (*qingsi* 情私), "knightliness" (*qingxia* 情俠), "magnanimity" (*qinghao* 情豪), "passion" (*qingai* 情愛), "infatuation" (*qingchi* 情癡), "pathos" (*qinggan* 情感), "illusion" (*qinghuan* 情幻), "efficacy" (*qingling* 情靈), "transformation" (*qinghua* 情化), and "matchmakers" (*qingmei* 情媒) et al. (See Li, *Chinese Love Stories from Ch'ing-shih*, pp. 37-149.)

(Lovesickness Peak).<sup>67</sup> When Vanitas finishes his reading of this novel, he changes the names of this novel from *The Story of the Stone* to *The Tale of Brother Amor* (*Qingseng Lu* 情僧錄).<sup>68</sup> *Qing* also frequently appears as a key term in chapter titles, such as *qing gege* 情哥哥 (a passionate elder brother), *qing xiaomei* 情小妹 (a sentimental young sister), *youqing* 幽情 (innermost passion), and *qinglie* 情烈 (uncontrollable sentiment).<sup>69</sup> Furthermore, according to Rouge Inkstone's commentary, there is supposed to be a *Qingbang* 情榜 (Register of Love) at the end of the novel.<sup>70</sup>

In *STJ*, the author employs fragrant odours as the central motif of the entire Grand Prospect Garden, wherein main apartments are either given fragrant names or have fragrant connotations. Yu Ying-shih argues that the garden world “was established chiefly on the principle of ‘love [*qing*]’.”<sup>71</sup> In this fairyland of sentimental and passionate occupants, fragrant odours are a collective symbol of their inclination to *qing*. The author also employs many distinctive fragrant symbols such as “cold fragrance” (*lengxiang* 冷香), “warm fragrance” (*nuanxiang* 暖香), “chilling fragrance” (*hanxiang* 寒香), “rouge fragrance” (*hongxiang* 紅香), “extraordinary fragrance” (*yixiang* 異香), and “remarkable fragrant” (*qixiang* 奇香). These fragrant symbols map the occupants' close-distant relationships and inspire readers to reconsider their personal temperaments, especially different categories of *qing* represented by these garden occupants.

<sup>67</sup> See Hawkes, *The Story of the Stone*, vol. 1, pp. 47-9.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., p. 51.

<sup>69</sup> These in sequence allude to Jia Bao-yu, You Sanjie, Lin Dai-yu, and Golden.

<sup>70</sup> See *Zhiyanzhai chongping Shitou ji*, the *jimao* edition, p. 385. “(I later observe the ‘Register of Love,’ and comment that Bao-yu is the person who could ‘feel non-feeling’, Dai-yu is the person who could ‘feel feeling’. (後觀情榜，評曰：‘寶玉 ‘情不情，黛玉 ‘情情’).”

<sup>71</sup> See Ying-shih Yu, “The Two Worlds of ‘Hung-lou meng,’” included in *Honglou meng de liangge shijie* 紅樓夢的兩個世界 (The Two Worlds of *Honglou meng*; Taipei: Liaojing chuban shiye gongsi, 1978), p. 263.

The choice of this novel as the case study is also because it has one of the most comprehensive, systematic, and vivid narratives about characters and their odours compared to the other late-imperial Chinese works of fiction. In addition to fragrant odours, the author also coins several olfactory phrases, such as “lust, filth, dirt, and foul-smelling odours” (*yin, hui, wu, chou* 淫穢污臭), “foul-smelling man” (*chou nanren* 臭男人), “Filthy Tang and Stinking Han” (*zangtang chouhan* 髒唐臭漢), “a bag of foul-smelling fluids” (*chou pinang* 臭皮囊), and “stinking money” (*chouqian* 臭錢). These olfactory phrases once again demonstrate the symbolic significance of odours, and also lead readers to consider the importance of perspective and point of view in the division of odours. Recalling the above discussion of the first research purpose of this paper—What are the standards in dividing fragrant and the foul-smelling odours, especially in the descriptions of fictional characters? Does olfactory division match the character’s “natural odours,” or how far are the odours associated with particular characters based on symbolic divisions or sociocultural expectations of gender, class, and identity? If so, which points of view are taken by characters to define odours? As an adherent of “The Doctrine of *Qing*”? As an orthodox Confucian scholar-official? As a Buddhist-Taoist disciple?

Following the above questions, this thesis is going to be divided into two chapters. Both chapters will focus on the symbolic significance of odours in *The Story of the Stone* and some other early Chinese writings. Chapter one will examine the olfactory division and its connection to the division between “the self” and “the other.” This chapter will also take odours as a “reading method” to (re)view three major ideological systems in the novel. That is the Buddhist and Daoist play with “real” and “unreal”, the Confucian concerns with moral issues, and the late-Ming cult of the “Doctrine of *qing*” (*Qingjiao* 情教). Chapter two will start by taking odour



distribution (overlap and contrast) to read the three worlds' division in this novel. Following that, this chapter will focus on the author's cartography of his Grand Prospect Garden, including analyzing odours as metaphorical coordinates to locate the occupants' proximity, and as symbolic signals in mapping the hero Jia Bao-yu's affective map.

In sum, Chapter Two and Chapter Three examines the author's *xiefa* of enriching fictional language, constructing fictional worlds, and implying fictional themes through odours. Through analyzing the author's olfactory narrations, these two chapters also demonstrate mu odour-oriented *dufa*, including odour symbolism, olfactory division, odour distribution (overlap and contrast), odour map, and odour coordinates. I argue, olfactory aesthetics incorporates the lyrical narrative techniques employed by the author when he depicts this fictional world, and the approach in reading this epic with allegorical meanings:

(i.) Defining odours is an art, since it relies less on the defined character's "natural odours", but matches their genders, identities, and virtues. Thus, odours are often written as the symbol of the character's invisible essence, such as characteristics, personalities, and personal temperaments.

(ii.) The division between fragrant and foul-smelling odours reflects the definer's evaluation toward "the self" and "the other." The novel shows three independent evaluative standards regarding the olfactory division. But the fictional author (Brother Stone), his embodiments (Zhen and Jia Bao-yu), and main female characters (Dai-yu and other maidens in the Garden) all take *qing* as the primary standard in defining and dividing odours. They regard "great lovers or the occasion of great love in others" (*qingchi qingzhong* 情痴情种) as of the same kind and label them with fragrant odours, but regard lustful and vulgar characters as the

dangerous intruders and mark them with foul-smelling odours. This olfactory division once again reveals the influence of the late-Ming cult of *qing* on this novel.

(iii.) The author has prepared an olfactory map in mind before constructing his garden world. Different from the previous convention of writing *xiang* as a collective symbol of beauties, *xiang* in this novel are given symbolic implications as the extension of maidens' temperaments. In addition, odour overlap (and contrast) matches to the close (and far) relationship between the garden-world occupants, as revealed in the four-character Chinese idioms, *qiwe xiangtou* 氣味相投 or *xiuwei xiangtou* 臭味相投 (people with similar personality and aspirations share the same odours and tastes).

(iv.) Odours also appear as symbolic signals in foreshadowing impending marvelous experiences, developing strong sensuous atmospheres, and sometimes alluding to the temporary overlap of different locations on the male hero Baoyu's affective map.

## Chapter 2: “The Self” and “The Other”

“Humans have a strong tendency to equate good smells with morally, aesthetically, or socially good things, and bad smells with the opposite. However, the evaluation of smells as pleasant or unpleasant has little biological component and rests largely on cultural or individual preferences.”<sup>72</sup>

According to Britta Ager’s argument, the olfactory division between fragrant and foul-smelling odours in literary writings is not usually a random classification according to the physical-body dimension, but more based on social-cultural conventions. Constance Classen also indicates that the olfactory division corresponds to the division between “the oneness” and “the otherness” in many civilizations.<sup>73</sup> Also, such division between the fragrant and foul-smelling odours is often determined by conventional perceptions about social hierarchy (the upper class and the working class), gender (males and females), and identities (foreigners and the supernatural).<sup>74</sup>

In *STJ*, the fictional characters (and an omniscient storyteller narrator) employ a long list of olfactory terms to describe the other characters, such as:

“a bag of foul-smelling fluids” (*chou pinang* 臭皮囊)<sup>75</sup>

“lust, filth, dirt, and foul-smelling odours” (*yin, hui, wu, chou* 淫穢污臭)<sup>76</sup>

“disgustingly impure and foul-smelling” (*zhuochou biren* 濁臭逼人)<sup>77</sup>

<sup>72</sup> Ager, “Magic Perfumes and Deadly Herbs,” p. 2.

<sup>73</sup> Classen, “The Odor of the Other,” pp. 133-66.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., pp. 133-66.

<sup>75</sup> A “vile bag of flesh and bone” in Hawkes’s translation. (vol. 1, p. 189.) Poem in the story-teller’s voice, describing the Brother Stone and Jia Bao-yu.

<sup>76</sup> “Filthy obscenities” in Hawkes’ translation. (vol. 1, p. 50.) Brother Stone, blaming those erotic novels and historical romances written by former authors.

<sup>77</sup> “Stupid and nasty” in Hawkes’s translation. (vol. 1, p. 76.) Jia Bao-yu, speaking of males. His blame of males also tends to reflect his inferiority as a male “other” who is surrounded by girls from his youth.

“coarse mouths and stinking breath” (*zhuokou choushe* 濁口臭舌)<sup>78</sup>

“a nasty stinking creature” (*chou xiaosi* 臭小廝 or *chou xiaozi* 臭小子)<sup>79</sup>

“stinky man” (*chou nanren* 臭男人)<sup>80</sup>

“a heavy stink, compounded of farts and wine-fumes” (*jiupi chouqi* 酒屁臭氣)<sup>81</sup>

“Filthy Tang and Stinking Han” (*Zang Tang chou Han* 髒唐臭漢)<sup>82</sup>

“seductive beauties with foxy and foul smells” (*xingde choud* 腥的臭的)<sup>83</sup>

The above olfactory terminologies are rarely used to describe their targets’ actual odours but instead have a symbolic resonance. They reflect the evaluators’ division between “the self” and “the other.” In terms of “the self” and “the other,” it does not mean that the evaluators always regard themselves as fragrant beings and regard all others as foul-smelling people. For example, both (Zhen and Jia) Bao-yu show their fears of being foul-smelling males in their dreams. Jia Rong also criticized his Jia household as a continuation of “Filthy Tang and Stinking Han.” (The detailed discussion on this will be in sections 2.2 and 2.3 of this chapter.) In fact, these divisions are closer to the evaluators’ symbolic judgment in evaluating people (and objects) according to their ideologies, identities, and moral and aesthetical principles. Thus, they usually label these who fulfill their evaluating standards with fragrant scents, and mark those who fail to do so with foul-smelling odours.

<sup>78</sup> See Hawkes, vol. 1, p. 80. Zhen Bao-yu (as recounted by Jia Yucun), speaking of his pages.

<sup>79</sup> “Nasty creature” in Hawkes’s translation. (Hawkes, vol. 3, p. 85.) Maids in (Zhen and Jia) Bao-yu’s dreams, describing them.

<sup>80</sup> “Coarse man” in Hawkes’s translation. (Hawkes, vol. 1, p. 307.) Daiyu, of the Prince of Beijing.

<sup>81</sup> See Hawkes, vol. 2, p. 321. Description of Granny Liu.

<sup>82</sup> See Hawkes, vol. 3, p. 246. Jia Rong, speaking of scandals in the Han and Tang dynasties (and by extension in the Jia household).

<sup>83</sup> “Disgusting rag-tag and bob-tail” in Hawkes’s translation. (Hawkes, vol. 2, p. 378.) Grandmother Jia, speaking of the woman Jia Lian consorts with in his own rooms.

Furthermore, not all evaluators take the same standards in defining and dividing odours. This section aims to take the above olfactory terms as the visual angle to (re)read the three central ideological systems in *The Story of the Stone*, including:

- (1) Buddhist and Daoist religious beliefs, especially their concerns of “real” and “unreal,” “true” and “false,” and “dream” and “reality.”
- (2) Confucian moral principles. Although the novel depicts a morally corrupted adult world if readers judge it according to the orthodox Confucian ethical principles, the adult-world characters still utilize Confucian ideological principles in evaluating “the self” and “the other.”
- (3) The cult of *qing* among the garden-world characters. Contrasting with the adult world outside the garden, the world inside the “Grand Prospect Garden” is the pure land for Bao-yu, Dai-yu and the other maidens, who are all sentimental creatures with an innate attachment toward *qing*.

These three ideological systems are like three stone pillars that prop up the entire fictional world of *The Story of the Stone*. In this sizeable fictional world, the author depicts numerous characters with recourse to various identities and ideologies. They show different perceptions in the system of olfactory divisions—in other words, they have different evaluating standards in the division between “the self” and “the other.”

## 2.1 “A Bag of Foul-smelling Fluids”

The “real” and the “unreal” are the two most crucial keywords in [*The Story of the Stone*]. Readers should understand that the “real” is the “unreal,” and the “unreal” is the “real.” The “unreal” is in the “real,” and the “real” is in the “unreal.” [But sometimes] the “real” is not real, and the “unreal” is not unreal.

紅樓夢一書最要關鍵是真假二字。讀者需知真即是假，假即時真。真中有假，假中有真。真不是真，假不是假。<sup>84</sup>

Similar to the power dynamics between *yin* and *yang*, there are many *yin-yang* dualistic model concepts in *The Story of the Stone*, as in the “real” and the “unreal,” the “solid” and the “void,” the “orthodox” and the “unorthodox,” “attachment” and “detachment,” “enlightenment” and “illusion,” “heat” and “cold,” and the “fragrant” and the “foul-smelling.” These concepts help create the contradictory nature of this novel, and also reflect its essence as a tragedy. As Wang Xilian comments, the “unreal” is not unreal—it comes from the “real,” and sometimes equals the “real.” As early as chapter eight of this novel, the omniscient storyteller narrator has instructed readers about our hero’s dilemma. Although Jia Bao-yu is going to be the only male occupant living inside the garden world of fragrant-flower-like girls, he is no more than “a bag of foul-smelling fluids” (*chou pinang* 臭皮囊). *Chou* 臭(foul-smelling odours) symbolize illusion and the unreal, just as does the implication of his name (Jia Bao-yu 賈寶玉 suggests, a homophone of “the fake precious jade 假寶玉).”

In chapter eight, when Bao-chai is looking at the jade on Bao-yu’s padlock-shaped amulet, the storyteller narrator stresses:

“Reader, you will, of course, remember that this jade was a transformation of that same great stone block which once lay at the foot of Greensickness Peak in the Great Fable Mountains. A certain *jesting poet* has written these verses about it:

Nu-wa’s stone-smelting is a tale unfounded:

On such weak fancies our Great Fable’s grounded.

Lost now, alack! And gone *my* heavenly stone –

Transformed to this vile bag of flesh and bone [a bag of foul-smelling fluids].”

“看官們，須知道這就是大荒山中青埂峯下的那塊頑石幻像。後人曾有詩嘲雲：

女媧煉石已荒唐，又向荒唐演大荒。

<sup>84</sup> WXL*PB*, vol. 1, p. 83.

失去幽靈真境界, 幻來新就臭皮囊。”<sup>85</sup>

This poem echoes an episode in the opening chapter. After the goddess Nü-wa has repaired the sky, she leaves a stone on the “Lovesickness Peak.” This stone (also called Brother Stone in the novel) can grow and shrink to any size if he wants. It is born with Jia Bao-yu as his jade, and accompanies him during his life in the human realm. At the end of this novel, the stone returns to “Lovesickness Peak,” and finishes his book, one of whose titles is *The Story of the Stone*. The opening chapter has revealed its karmic message—the opening is going to be the ending, and the entire story is no more than an illusory journey.

*Chou pinang* refers to the human’s physical body.<sup>86</sup> *Pinang* 皮囊 is a Buddhist term that defines the body-shell of human beings. The word *chou* 臭 in front of *pinang* is to ironize those people who have no virtue and achievement except a body-shell.<sup>87</sup> In the above episode, the storyteller narrator takes the voice of a so-called “jesting poet” to criticize Brother Stone’s foolish behavior, since he abandons his identity as an “immortal stone” on the Great Fable Mountains and turns to live as a *chou pinang* in the human world. *Chou pinang* also reflects the narrator’s blame toward Jia Bao-yu (“the fake precious jade”), since he is one of Brother Stone’s three embodiments in the human realm.<sup>88</sup> Like Brother Stone’s decline from an “immortal stone”

<sup>85</sup> *WXLBP*, vol. 2, p. 222. [Hawkes’s translation, vol 1, chap. 8, p. 189.]

<sup>86</sup> “*Chou pinang* is the metaphor for the human body.” (臭皮囊: 喻人的軀體.) See Yue Guojun 岳國鈞 ed., *Yuan-Ming-Qing wenxue fangyan suyu cidian* 元明清文學方言俗語辭典 (Dictionary of Dialects and Proverbs in Yuan-Ming-Qing Literature; Gui Yang: Guizhou renmin chubanshe, 1998), p. 1230.

<sup>87</sup> “*Pinang* is the Buddhist term and refers to the human body. Before the word ‘skin,’ the word ‘foul-smelling’ is used to ridicule those who have no virtue and no achievement, except the physical body.” (皮囊: 佛教用語, 指人的軀體。‘皮囊’前‘臭’字, 嘲諷某些人無德無行, 徒有軀體。) See Yi Mengchun 易孟醇 ed., *Honglou meng shici jianxi* 紅樓夢詩詞箋析 (Interpretation of Poems and Lyrics in Honglou meng; Xiangtan: Xiangtan daxue chubanshe, 2014), p. 104.

<sup>88</sup> The other two are the jade hung around Jia Bao-yu’s neck and Zhen Bao-yu.

to “a bag of foul-smelling fluids,” Bao-yu also fails to detach from his attachment to enchantment, which is also part of the “unreal” in the eyes of this omniscient narrator.

In the above episode, foul-smelling odours form a sharp contrast with *xiang* 香 (fragrant odours, also used of incense). In Buddhism, incense symbolizes the medium in the communication between the real world and the immortal world, also the path for accessing the “real.” As the opposite of fragrance, foul-smelling odours are associated with the “unreal,” the “void,” and illusion. *Chou pinang* alludes to Brother Stone and Bao-yu’s unenlightened obsession toward the world of emptiness. Their journey in the human world is an illusion and eventually vanishes at the end of the novel. Here, the tragic nature of the novel has been undeniable—both the omniscient storyteller narrator and his readers know that the entire story is going to be a dream. Still, the dreamers (the fictional author and the male protagonist) will unavoidably fail to wake up from the unreal world until the very end of the story.

## 2.2 “Lust, Filth, Dirt, and Foul-smelling Odours”

Although the narrator criticizes each of them as a “bag of stinky fluids” who lives in the “unreal” realm, Jia Bao-yu and Brother Stone do not receive this message. In fact, the stone and his embodiments (Zhen Bao-yu and Jia Bao-yu) constantly blame “others” that would corrupt *qing* as foul-smelling things, as in “lust, filth, dirt, and foul-smelling odours,” “disgustingly impure and foul-smelling,” and “coarse mouths and stinking breath.” Their evaluation in dividing “the self” and “the other” is determined by their identities as “great lovers or the occasion of great love in others” (*qingchi qingzhong* 情癡情種).<sup>89</sup> From their perspectives, fragrant odours

<sup>89</sup> Hawkes, vol. 1, p. 78.



symbolize innocent girls, obsession, passion, and real feelings between sentimental beings. Foul-smelling odours symbolize those lustful males, desire, erotic love, and ruthless (*wuqing* 無情) nannies. Their points of view reflect another crucial ideological system in the novel—ranking people according to *qing*.

As early in the first chapter of this novel, the fictional author Brother Stone has announced his motivation of writing his *Story of the Stone*, a novel that is different from and beyond the previous “erotic novels” and “historical romances.” He criticizes those novels as the writings of “lust, filth, dirt, and foul-smelling odours,” and aims to write his own novel about his “number of females” that he observed after half a lifetime journey in the human realm. As he told to Vanitas (a Taoist immortal):

“Your so-called ‘historical romances’, consisting, as they do, of scandalous anecdotes about statesmen and emperors of bygone days and scabrous attacks on the reputations of long-dead gentlewomen, contain more wickedness and immorality that I care to mention. Still worse is the ‘erotic novel’, by whose filthy obscenities [lust, filth, dirt, and foul-smelling] our young folk are all too easily corrupted... ‘Surely my “number of females”, whom I spent half a lifetime studying with my own eyes and ears are preferable to this kind of stuff?”

“那野史中, 或訕謗君相, 或貶人妻女, 姦淫兇惡, 不可勝數, 更有一種風月筆墨, 其淫穢污臭, 最易壞人子弟... 竟不如我半世親見親聞的這幾個女子。”<sup>90</sup>

After pondering Brother Stone’s speech, Vanitas then “stood lost in thought,” and “subjected *The Story of the Stone* to a careful second reading.” Finally, he changes his name from Vanitas to *Qing Seng* 情僧 (Brother Amor, or the Passionate Monk), and changes the title of the book from *Shitou ji* 石頭記 (*The Story of the Stone*) to *Qingseng lu* 情僧錄 (*The Tale of Brother Amor*).<sup>91</sup> This opening episode reveals the thematic significance of *qing* and this fictional

<sup>90</sup> WXL*PB*, vol. 1, p. 6. [Hawkes, vol. 1, pp. 49-50.]

<sup>91</sup> Hawkes, vol. 1, p. 51.

author's emphasis of *qing* as the primary standard in ranking characters in his novel: (1) As a stone from the "Lovesickness Peak," Brother Stone is a creature with a natural attachment to *qing*. Therefore, he regards his "number of females," who are evaluated by Vanitas as someone "with *qing* or obsession" (*huoqing huochi* 或情或癡)<sup>92</sup> as of the same kind as himself.

(2) *Qing* is one of the central motifs in Brother Stone's novel. Hence, he shows his dislike for those on the *qing* polar opposite side, such as previous fictional writings about erotic love and physical lust. He defines them as foul-smelling "others" and condemns their corruptive powers.

As Brother Stone's embodiments in the human realm, both (Zhen and Jia) Bao-yus inherit his point of view—taking *qing* as the primary principle in defining and dividing odours. In chapter two, when Leng Zixing mocks Jia Bao-yu's unorthodox words, Jia Yu-cun introduces his student Zhen Bao-yu 甄寶玉 (a homophone of "a true precious jade") who has the same unusual behaviors. Jia Bao-yu labels girls as "pure" and states that males are "disgustingly impure and foul-smelling" (*zhuochou biren* 濁臭逼人):

"Girls are made of water and boys are made of mud. When I am with girls, I feel fresh and clean, but when I am with boys I feel [that they are] stupid and nasty [disgustingly impure and foul-smelling]!"

"女兒是水做的骨肉，男人是泥做的骨肉。我見了女兒便清爽，見了男子便覺濁臭逼人!"<sup>93</sup>

Similarly, Zhen Bao-yu believes that males have "coarse mouths and stinking breath" (*zhuokou choushe* 濁口臭舌):

And he would often tell the little pages who waited on him, "The word 'girls' is very precious and very pure. It is much rarer and more precious than all the rarest beasts and birds and plants in the world. So it is extremely important that you should never, never

<sup>92</sup> Hawkes's translation: "a number of females, conspicuous, if at all, only for their passion or folly." See Hawkes, vol. 1, p. 49.

<sup>93</sup> *WXLPB*, vol. 1, pp. 45-46. [Hawkes, volume I, p. 76.]

violate it with your coarse mouths and stinking breath. Whenever you need to say it you should first rinse your mouths out with clean water and scented tea.”

又常對著跟他的小廝們說：“這‘女兒’兩個字，極尊貴極清淨的，比那瑞獸珍禽奇花異草更覺希罕尊貴呢。你們這種濁口臭舌，萬萬不可唐突了這兩個字。最為要緊，若使要說的時後，必用淨水香茶嗽了口可。”<sup>94</sup>

In fact, “girls” in (Zhen and Jia) Bao-yu’s words echo “number of females” in Brother Stone’s speech, and specifically refer to a number of maidens who accompany Jia Bao-yu (and Brother Stone) during their life journey in the human realm. These female characters are mainly portrayed as passionate, sentimental, and elegant people with literary aesthetics such as poetic wisdom and painting skills. In other words, they embody those who are *qing*-obsessed in the novel. Echoing Brother Stone’s declaration of writing a novel for his “number of females” who “have *qing* or passion,” these two jades evaluate “girls” with inclination to *qing* as the most precious beings and thus worry about potential pollution from male’s foul-smelling odours. Here, foul-smelling odours are metaphors of destructive forces such as lust, filth, and marriage that will corrupt the innocence and sentimentality of maidens.

Jia Bao-yu not only loathes the other males’ foul-smelling odours, but also shows his inferiority when he is condemned by fairy maidens as a “disgusting creature” (*zhuowu* 濁物). This sense of inferiority is determined by his selfless devotion to girls. Namely, his devotion toward girls has far beyond his feeling to himself. Rouge Inkstone evaluates this sentiment as an “infatuated *qing* or *qing* obsession” (*qingchi* 情癡). In chapter five, Jia Bao-yu visits The Land of Illusion in his dream and encounters many fairy maidens. When they call him a “disgusting creature” who is going to “pollute [their] pure, maidenly precincts” (來污染這清淨女兒之境),

<sup>94</sup> WXL<sup>94</sup> PB, vol. 1, p. 50. [Hawkes, vol. 1, pp. 80-81.]

Jia Bao-yu is “suddenly overwhelmed with a sense of the uncleanness and impurity of his own body and sought in vain for somewhere to escape to” (便嚇得欲退不能, 果覺自形污穢不堪).<sup>95</sup> Regarding Bao-yu’s inferiority when he is mocked by fairy maidens as a nasty creature, Rouge Inkstone notes that “This noble master does not feel angry but turns to move back. This infatuated *qing* is truly part of Bao-yu’s congenital temperament.” (貴公子不怒而反退, 卻是寶玉天分中一段情癡.)<sup>96</sup>

Another similar dream episode is in chapter fifty-six. Both Zhen and Jia Bao-yu dream that the other’s maid call them as “a nasty stinking creature” (*chou xiaosi* 臭小廝 or *chou xiaozi* 臭小子). This dream episode is the conflation of two dreams—when Jia Bao-yu wanders into Zhen Bao-yu’s garden in his dream, Zhen Bao-yu also wanders into the Grand Prospect Garden in his dream. They fail to meet with each other until the very end of the dream when Zhen Bao-yu returns to his garden shortly before Jia Bao-yu wakes up in Grand Prospect Garden. This episode starts with Jia Bao-yu’s dream. In the dream, he wanders to the garden in the Zhen household and encounters Zhen Bao-yu’s maids. When he introduces himself by name, they laugh at him:

“*Bao-yu?...* We have Her Old Ladyship’s and Her Ladyship’s orders to use that name as much as possible as a means of bringing him luck and [Zhen] Bao-yu likes to hear us use it; but what business has a boy like you from some remote place outside to be making free with it? Don’t let them catch you doing that here [be careful of your stinking flesh], *boy*, or they’ll flay your backside for you!... Don’t let’s stand here talking to the nasty [stinking] creature... We shall be contaminated [by his stink]!”

“‘寶玉’二字, 我們家是奉老太太太太之命, 為保佑他延年消災, 我們叫他, 他聽見喜歡. 你是那裡遠方來的小廝, 也亂叫起來. 仔細你的臭肉, 不打爛了你的... 同這臭小子說了話... 把僭們薰臭了.”<sup>97</sup>

<sup>95</sup> WXLBP, vol. 1, p. 134-35. [Hawkes, vol. 1, p. 136.]

<sup>96</sup> *Zhiyanzhai chongping Shitou ji* 脂硯齋重評石頭記 (Repeated Commentary on *the Story of the Stone* by Rouge Inkstone; Tianjin: Tianjin guji chubanshe, 2006), vol. 1 (2 vols), p. 44. This edition is based on the *gengchen* manuscript. The *gengchen* edition will be used henceforth to refer to this version.

<sup>97</sup> WXLBP, vol. 4, pp. 1668-69. [Hawkes, vol. 3, p. 85.]

In his dream, Jia Bao-yu hears Zhen Bao-yu recollecting his nightmare that just happened:

“I heard Grandmother say that there is another Bao-yu in the capital who is exactly like me, but I didn’t believe her. I’ve just been having a dream in which I went into a large garden and met some girls there who called me a ‘nasty creature’ [a nasty stinking creature] and wouldn’t have anything to do with me.”

“我聽見老太太說，長安都中也有個寶玉，和我一樣的性情，我只不信。我纔做了一個夢兒，竟夢中到了都中一個花園子裡頭，遇見幾個姐姐，都叫我‘臭小廝’，不理我。”<sup>98</sup>

So far, recalling Brother Stone’s speech about “lust, filth, dirt, and stinky odours”, he and his embodiments (Zhen and Jia Bao-yu) have the same evaluating standards when it comes to dividing fragrant odours and foul-smelling odours. They all regard girls who embody passion and obsession as the purest and most fragrant creatures. In the novel, almost all of Jia Bao-yu’s close maids either have fragrance in their name or names with fragrant connotations, such as Aroma 襲人, Musk 麝月, and Parfumée 芳官. The first eighty chapters of this novel do not depict that much of Zhen Bao-yu. But we have reasons to hypothesize that he and his maids should have the same temperaments as these figures in the Grand Prospect Garden. Meantime, the stone and the two jades all consider foul-smelling odours as the embodiment of dirt, filth, lust, and male’s corruptive power, despite they are males.

In the novel, Jia Bao-yu also conveys his dislike or even hatred toward married females, especially those nannies who are often described as the stinking “intruders” or someone who are “polluted by males’ odours” (*ranle nanren de qiwei* 染了男人的氣味). In one situation, stinking odours symbolize nannies’ vulgar behaviours. For example, in chapter forty-one, Grannie Liu is drunk and mistakenly enters Bao-yu’s chamber (Fragrant Red and Lucent Green) inside the

<sup>98</sup> WXL*PB*, vol. 4, pp. 1669-70. [Hawkes, vol., 3, chap. 56, p. 86.]

garden. When Aroma finds her, she has fallen asleep on Bao-yu's couch with "a heavy stink, compounded of farts and wine-fumes" (*jiu pi chouqi* 酒屁臭氣):

Entering the main building by way of the front door, [Aroma] made her way through the complicated carved partition. A thunderous snoring could be heard coming from the bedroom at the back. She hurried though. As she entered the bedroom, a heavy stink, compounded of farts and wine-fumes, assailed her nostrils. Her eyes travelled to the bed, from which the sounds were coming, and saw Grannie Liu, spread-eagled on her back and fast asleep.

襲人一直進了房門, 轉過集錦榻子, 就聽的鼾齣如雷。忙進來, 只聞見酒屁臭氣, 滿屋一瞧, 只見劉姥姥扎手舞腳的仰臥在床上。襲人這一驚不小, 慌忙的趕上來, 將他沒死活的推醒。<sup>99</sup>

This above humorous episode is more like the author's joke toward Bao-yu. When Jia Bao-yu and the number of girls live in a life full of laughter and happiness inside the garden, the author makes fun of this only male occupant inside the enclosure by allowing a peasant-nanny to intrude into his mansion. In this episode, Grannie Liu's stinking odour reflects her vulgar conduct after drunkenness, as well as forms a sharp contrast with Bao-yu's fragrant and elegant chamber and his maid Aroma.

In another situation, nannies' stinking odours imply their loss of sexual innocence and ruthless (*wuqing* 無情) conduct in persecuting girls. Unlike humorous and amiable Grannie Liu, the crowd of real "invaders" finally pour into the garden in chapter seventy-four. By taking Lady Wang's authorization of searching the garden, these Jia-household nannies ruthlessly persecute the maids inside the garden. In chapter seventy-seven, he accuses the crimes of these nannies who "deserve to be killed" (*kesha* 可殺). But he also laments that their ruthless actions are the result of "being polluted by males' odours":

<sup>99</sup> See *WXLBP*, vol. 3, p. 1184. [Hawkes, vol. 3, p. 321.]

Bao-yu, fearing that if he said anything it would only make matters worse, glared at them in silence; but he could not resist pointing his finger at them when they had gone and – *sotto voce* -giving bitter vent to his feelings:

“Strange, the way they get like this when they marry! It must be something in the male that infects them [being polluted by males’ odours)]. If anything they end up even worse than the men!”

寶玉又恐他們去告舌, 恨得只瞪着他們. 看已走遠了, 方指着恨道:

“奇怪, 奇怪! 怎麼這些人, 只一嫁了漢子, 染了男人的氣味, 就這樣混賬起來, 比男人更可殺了!”<sup>100</sup>

Bao-yu’s complaint of these stinky nannies is crucial in understanding his unusual ideological system in evaluating “the self” and “the other.” In the early fictional works before *The Story of the Stone*, the negative portraits of older women either as nannies or go-between or brothel madams are not rare, such as Matchmaker Wang and brothel mothers in *The Plum in the Golden Vase*, and Matchmaker Xue in “Jiang Xingge Reencounters His Pearl Shirt” (Jiang Xingge chonghui zhenzhushan 蔣興哥重會珍珠衫).<sup>101</sup> However, Bao-yu’s blame is actually directed on both males and females, as he also criticizes males for polluting females.

Bao-yu’s argument is rather unorthodox during the author’s era when orthodox moral and hierarchical principles shaped society, since it challenges the conventional point of view in the dynamic relationship between the polluter (female “others”) and the polluted (innocent male scholars). In *Nü Jie* 女誡 (*Admonitions for Women*), attributed to an ideal Confucian lady Ban Zhao 班昭 (ca.45-116), women are instructed to “keep [themselves] clean and pure.”<sup>102</sup> “Purity” is also emphasized for women as the critical element to cultivate their “devotion and proper

<sup>100</sup> WXLBP, vol. 6, p. 2351. [Hawkes, vol. 3, p. 534.]

<sup>101</sup> See “Jiang Xingge Reencounters His Pearl Shirt” in Shuhui Yang and Yunqin Yang trans., *Stories Old and New*, pp. 9-47.

<sup>102</sup> See Patricia Ebrey trans., “Ban Zhao’s *Admonitions for Women*” included in Ebrey ed., *Chinese Civilization: A Sourcebook* (Buckley Ebrey. New York: The Fress Press, 1993), pp. 75-76.

demeanor.”<sup>103</sup> This emphasis reflects Han people’s fear of women’s pollutive power. Also, in *Extensive Records Compiled in the Taiping Era*, a collection of marvelous tales compiled by Li Fang 李昉 (925-996) and other Northern Song (960-1127) scholars at that time, there are abundant stories about female “others” such as animal demons with the outlook of human beauties, who alter young and innocent scholar’s heart-mind through their “extraordinary fragrance” (*yixiang* 異香). By the end of the tale, the male victims finally figure out these beautiful creatures’ “extraordinary fragrance” in fact is a “snake’s foul smell” (*shesao* 蛇騷), “otter feces” (*tafen* 獭糞), and “foxy smell” (*husao* 狐騷).<sup>104</sup> These tales once again reveal the males’ alienation, demonization, and fear of female “others” at that time. With this tradition in mind, Bao-yu’s reversal of blame from women transforming or corrupting males to the other way around is one of the most remarkable inversions in late-imperial Chinese fictional works.

Like the hero Bao-yu, the heroine Dai-yu also takes *qing* as the primary principle in categorizing things and their odours—she values fragrant odours as the embodiment of the true feeling between young males and females regards stinky odour as the extension of male’s pollution. For example, in chapter twenty-three, Dai-yu finds Bao-yu reading *Western Chamber* 西廂記 on a rock beside the *Qinfang Zha* 沁芳闌 (Drenched Fragrance Weir). This is one of the most fragrant locations in the Grand Prospect Garden, since it is surrounded by *Qinfang Xi* 沁芳溪 (Drenched Fragrance Stream), *Qinfang Ting* 沁芳亭 (Drenched Fragrance

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 76.

<sup>104</sup> *Taiping guangji* 太平廣記 (*Extensive Records Compiled in the Taiping Era*; Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1961), 10 vols. See the story “Li Huang” 李黃 (Li Huang) in “She San” 蛇三 (Snake III) (Vol. 10, pp. 3744-52), “Zhong Dao” 鐘道 (Zhong Dao) in “Shui Zu Liu” 水族六 (The Clan from Water VI) (Vol. 10, pp. 3862-69), and “Hu Daoqia” 狐道洽 (Hu Daoqia) in “Hu Yi” 狐一 (Fox I) (Vol. 9, pp. 3652-60).



Pavilion), *Qinfang Qiao* 沁芳橋 (Drenched Fragrance Bridge), and the numerous fragrant florals.

In the third month of springtime, Dai-yu takes the book of *Western Chamber* from Bao-yu's hands and starts to read it for the first time. It is as if she has inhaled the fragrance into her mouth through the process of reading:

The more she read, the more she liked it, and before very long she had read several acts. She felt the power of the words and their lingering fragrance.

(越看越愛, 不頓飯時, 將十六齣俱已看完. 但覺詞句警人, 餘香滿口.)<sup>105</sup>

Wang Shifu 王實甫 (1260-1336) rewrites *Western Chamber* from Yuan Zhen 元稹 (779-831)'s "Yingying zhuan" 鶯鶯傳 (The Story of Ying-ying). Wang's drama changes the plot from a betrayal story about an unfaithful scholar and an abandoned girl into a grand reunion account of great lovers. In the above episode, "lingering fragrance" symbolizes the invisible power of the sentences and plot in *Western Chamber*, which is the charm of passion, lovesickness, and real feelings between young males and females, that reminds Dai-yu of her and Bao-yu.

This "lingering fragrance" episode also reveals the symbolic significance of odours as an embodiment of *wenqi* 文氣 (the *qi* or the invisible spirit of literary writing). It is necessary to compare this episode with Brother Stone's argument about "lust, filth, dirt, and stinky odours", since both of these two episodes describe fictional characters (Brother Stone and Dai-yu)'s evaluation of the early literary writings' odours. While Brother Stone criticizes the previous "erotic novels" as the work of "lust, filth, dirt, and stinky odours", Dai-yu is attached to the "lingering fragrance" of *Western Chamber*. These two episodes form a pair and reveal that

<sup>105</sup> *WXLBP*, vol. 2, p. 632. [Hawkes, vol. 1, p. 464.] In this episode, Dai-yu parallels an anonymous ideal reader of *STJ*, who is also addicted to the imaginary fragrance of the literary work that he/she reads. See footnote 1.

odours symbolize the invisible essence of literary writings, such as aesthetics, themes, motifs, atmospheres, emotions, and feelings.

Recalling Qian Qianyi's "Scent-viewing Study" and Liu Xie's arguments in *The Literary Mind and the Carving the Dragons*, this symbolic use of odours as writing's invisible essence reflects post-Han (202 BCE-220 CE) scholars' aesthetic proposition of *wenqi*. In *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字 (Explaining graphs and analyzing character), *qi* is defined as "an ideographic term that simply denoted the vapor of the clouds and/vapors that became the clouds."<sup>106</sup> In "Dianlun: lunwen" 典論: 論文 (On the Codes for Discussion: Discussing Literature), Cao Pi 曹丕 (187-226) argues that "writings are mainly determined by *Qi*" (*wen yi qi weizhu* 文以氣為主).<sup>107</sup> In these two episodes of *The Story of the Stone*, odours are written as the shadow of *wenqi*. Fragrant odours symbolize the superior *wenqi* of *Western Chamber* in the eyes of sentimental Dai-yu; foul-smelling odours symbolize the inferior *wenqi* of previous "erotic love" and "historical romance" from the perspective of Brother Stone who is from "Lovesickness Peak."

Another odour-oriented episode about Dai-yu is in chapter sixteen. In this chapter, Jia Baoyu gets a rosary of fragrant Indian beads from the Prince of Bei-jing. He regards this as a treasure, and thus wants to offer it as a gift to Dai-yu. But Dai-yu refuses it, since she views it as a dangerous object from an outsider to whom she refers as a "stinky man" (*chou nanren* 臭男人):

<sup>106</sup> See Suk Gabriel Choi and Jung-Yeup Kim eds., *The Idea of Qi/Gi: East Asian and Comparative Philosophical Perspectives* (Lanham, Boulder, New York, London: Lexington Books, 2019), p. 1.

<sup>107</sup> See his "Dianlun: lunwen" 典論: 論文 (On the Codes for Discussion: Discussing Literature), included in Mu Kehong 穆克宏 and Guo Dan 郭丹 eds., *Wei-Jin-Nanbeichao wenlun quanbian* 魏晉南北朝文論全編 (Completed Collection of Essays during Wei, Jin, and Northern and Southern Dynasties; Shanghai: Shanghai yuandong chubanshe, 2012), pp. 11-14.

Bao-yu for his part hunted up the rosary of fragrant Indian beads given him by the Prince of Bei-jing and offered it as a gift to Dai-yu; but she flung it back at him disdainfully: “What, carry a thing that some coarse *man* [stinky man] has pawed over? *I* don’t want it!” So Bao-yu was compelled to take it back again.

寶玉又將北靜王所贈萼萼香串, 珍重取出來, 轉送黛玉. 黛玉說: “什麼臭男人拿過的, 我不要這東西!” 遂擲還不取. 寶玉只得收回, 暫且無話.<sup>108</sup>

In regarding this episode, Wang Xilian comments:

People all regard the Prince Bei-jing’s rosary of fragrant Indian beads as a remarkable treasure. Only Dai-yu taunts it as a stinking object. Her great moral character and profound *qing* of course go without saying.

北靜王香串, 人皆視同至寶, 黛玉獨嗔為臭物. 其品高情深, 固不待言.<sup>109</sup>

Wang Xilian also argues that “*qingchi qingzhong* [great lovers or the occasion of great love in others] are the commentaries on Bao-yu and Dai-yu” (情痴情種是寶玉黛玉品題).<sup>110</sup> Dai-yu’s *qing* is revealed through her dread of being polluted by the foul-smelling rosary of—ironically—fragrant Indian beads. This self-respect is also her sincere response to “the bond of old by stone and flower made” (*mushi qianmeng* 木石前盟) and “the allegory of returning tears” (*huanlei zhishuo* 還淚之說).<sup>111</sup>

To sum up, whether it is Brother Stone or the (male and female) protagonists, they all take *qing* as the primary standard in defining and dividing odours. Their points of view reveal the thematic significance of *qing* in *The Story of the Stone*. In addition to these main characters in this novel, Rouge Inkstone also evaluates the author (Cao Xueqin) as *qing*-obsessed: “The author regards girls as the most precious [beings], [I] don’t know whether today’s girls will be aware of [his sentiment] or not?! I [truly want] to cry for the author’s mind of obsession and feel sorrow

<sup>108</sup> See *WXLBP*, vol. 2, pp. 406-7. [Hawkes, vol. 1, p. 307.]

<sup>109</sup> See *WXLBP*, vol. 2, 429.

<sup>110</sup> See *WXLBP*, vol. 1, p. 56.

<sup>111</sup> “The bond of old by stone and flower made (*mushi qianmeng* 木石前盟)” and “the allegory of returning tears (*huanlei zhishuo* 還淚之說)” refer to Bao-yu and Dai-yu’s predestined love in their previous life.

for today's girls who are self-abandoned and self-destroyed!" (作者視女兒珍貴之至, 不知今時女兒可知? 余為作者癡心一哭, 又為進之自棄自敗之女兒一恨!)<sup>112</sup> According to Rouge Inkstone's commentaries, the author in fact was painting his self-portrait when he was depicting these *qing*-obsessed characters in this novel. His inclination to *qing* and respect for girls would also be embodied in his cartography of the garden world, where *qing* becomes its central motif. [The analysis of odours, *qing*, and the garden world will be made in chapter three of this thesis].

### 2.3 “Filthy Tang and Stinking Han”

In contrast with our sentimental protagonists, the author depicts another group of characters in the human world. Although they follow the orthodox Confucian hierarchical structure, their world is a corrupted space where its occupants fail to follow moral principles and social obligations. Jia Rong defines it as the continuation of “Filthy Tang and Stinking Han” (*Zang Tang chou Han* 齷唐臭漢). Ironically, he is one of the worst among them, despite being “the head of the most junior generation of Jia family males” (*xi zhangfang zhangsun* 系長房長孫),<sup>113</sup> a role which should necessitate Confucian orthodox standards of behaviour.

In chapter sixty-three, right after the death of his grandfather (Jia Jing), Jia Rong flirts with his “aunt” (You Er-jie, who is the concubine daughter of his concubine mother). Even the maids cannot stomach his improper sexual conduct, because he is freshly in mourning. And he will be the successor of the entire Ning-guo lineage after the death of his father (Cousin Zhen, the cousin

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., vol. 1, p. 44.

<sup>113</sup> See Hawkes, vol. 2, 571.

of Bao-yu who is from the Rong-guo lineage). But Jia Rong is not ashamed of his conduct at all. He defends his behaviour is no more than the continuation of the “Filthy Tang and stinking Han”:

“Even family history has always had its tales of venerity. Look at the stories they tell about the rulers of the Han and Tang dynasties: ‘Filthy Tang and stinking Han’ they say, don’t they? If even the families of emperors were like that, you can hardly expect ours to be any different. As for the household next door: look how strict Great-uncle She is, yet Uncle Lian still manages to get up to a few tricks with that little chamber-wife; and look what a tough nut Aunt Feng is, yet that didn’t stop Uncle Rui thinking he could settle her business. Do you imagine I don’t know what they get up to over there ?”  
“各門另戶，誰管誰的事？都彀使的了。從古至今，連漢朝和唐朝，人還說‘髒唐臭漢’，何況偕們這宗人家。誰家沒風流事？別叫我說出來！連那邊大老爺這麼利害，璉二叔還和那小姨娘不乾淨呢；鳳嬌子那樣剛強，瑞大叔還想他的賬。那一件瞞了我？”<sup>114</sup>

Modern scholars point out that this phrase refers to the scandalous anecdotes in the imperial family of the Tang (618-907) and Han dynasty (202BC-220AD).<sup>115</sup> Both of these two dynasties represent the golden era of grand unification in early Chinese civilization. But these two regimes’ royal families are also famous for their sexual scandals, such as the Emperor Gaozong of Tang (628-683, r. 647-683) and Empress Wu (624-705, r. 690-705),<sup>116</sup> as well as Emperor Xuanzong of Tang (685-762, r. 712-756) and Lady Yang (719-756).<sup>117</sup> Jia Rong criticizes the entire Jia adult family as the miniature of the “Filthy Tang and Stinking Han,” because he has been aware of many sexual scandals (especially incest and adultery) in his noble household. In the quote above, Jia Rong points out two sexual scandals, including Jia Rui and his sister-in-law (Wang Xifeng), and Jia Lian (Wang Xifeng’s husband) and his concubine mother.

<sup>114</sup> See *Wang Xilian*, vol. 5, p. 1914-15. [Hawkes, vol. 3, p. 246.]

<sup>115</sup> See Gao Gedong 高歌東 and Zhang Zhiqing 張志清 eds, *Honglou meng chengyu cidian* 紅樓夢成語詞典 (Dictionary of Idioms in *Honglou meng*; Tianjin: Tianjin shehui kexueyuan chubanshe, 1997), p. 376. Also, this four-character idiom seems to be the author’s invention in this novel.

<sup>116</sup> Empress Wu was a member of the imperial harem of Emperor Taizong of Tang (598-649, r. 626-649), but later becomes Gaozong’s empress.

<sup>117</sup> Lady Yang was Xuanzong’s daughter-in-law, but later becomes his favoured concubine.

In chapter forty-four, Grandmother Jia also blames Jia Lian's inability in discerning the "smells," because he is "forever sniffing after other skirts and brining all this disgusting rag-tag and bob-tail [*xingde choud* 腥的臭的 (seductive beauties with foxy and foul smells)] back to [his] room." (腥的臭的都拉了你屋裡去).<sup>118</sup> In fact, although Jia Bao-yu is the male protagonist and has the most prestige as Grandmother Jia's spoiled grandson, Jia Lian and Jia Rong are the *zhangsun* 長孫 (eldest grandsons) in the Rong-guo lineage and the Ning-guo lineage respectively. They will become the recognized heads of their respective lineages. Thus, their lack of virtuous behaviour reflects the moral bankruptcy of the entire Jia adult world outside the garden. Although this adult world is founded on a Confucian social-hierarchical structure, it is a morally corrupted and chaotic society according to Confucian ideological precepts. Here, foul-smelling odours are the synonym for the scandalous anecdotes, sexual pollution, and moral corruption in this adult world.<sup>119</sup>

Indeed, odours have long been given political implications and moral connotations in the orthodox Confucian tradition. While delightful odours symbolize those who fit the Confucian ideological system, such as virtuous gentlemen, benevolent rulers, and the states of harmony and prosperity, foul-smelling odours symbolize those who fail to fulfill Confucian social-moral expectations, such as vile men, sycophants, tyrant rulers, and the regimes of death and chaos.

*Xiang* 香 originally means the sweet scent of grains during the harvest season.<sup>120</sup> The oracle-

<sup>118</sup> See *WXLBP*, vol. 4, p. 1268. [Hawkes, vol. 2, p. 378.]

<sup>119</sup> Also, in chapter seven, Big Jiao (the senior servant in the Ning-guo mansion who served the father of Jia Rong's grandfather) cried and cursed when he was drunk. He cursed, "Father-in-law pokes in the ashes. Auntie has it off with nevvvy". (爬灰的爬灰, 養小叔子的養小叔子). (Hawkes, vol. 1, p. 183.) Although his accusation might not necessarily be true, it is valuable for readers to glance over this morally corrupted adult world. This is a world where fathers are not like fathers, and sons are not like sons.

<sup>120</sup> See *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字, vol. 2, edited by Zhang Zhang 張章, p. 543.

bone version of *xiang* is written in the form of wheat rice.<sup>121</sup> According to *Shuowen Jiezi*, “Fragrance means sweet scent, and includes [the character of] millet grain and [the character of] sweet. The *Spring and Autumn Annals* says that ‘millets have sweet scents.’” (香, 芳也. 從黍, 從甘. 春秋傳曰: ‘黍稷馨香.’)<sup>122</sup> Later, *xiang* is given moral connotations and political implications. As in the “Jiu Gao” 酒誥 (Announcement of Drunkenness) chapter in *Shangshu* 尚書 (*Book of Documents*), the King said: “the sweet scents are not from millets, but from [gentlemen]’s untarnished virtue” (黍稷非馨, 明德惟馨尔).<sup>123</sup> In *Shuoyuan*, the sweet scent of fragrant orchids is written as the symbol of *junzi* 君子 (gentlemen) and his moral-transformative power; the foul odour of salted fish represents immortal people and moral pollution:

Living with the virtuous men is like entering a room with fragrant herbs. [You] cannot frequently smell its fragrance. [But you] will be transformed by it. Living with unethical men is like entering a room with salted fish. [You] cannot frequently feel its foul-smelling odours. [But you] will be transformed by it as well.

與善人居, 如入蘭芷之室, 久而不聞其香, 則與之化矣; 與惡人居, 如入鮑魚之肆, 久而不聞其臭, 亦與之化矣.<sup>124</sup>

Also, in the “Bianwu” chapter of *Shuoyuan*, a specific analogy is made between sweet smells and foul odours corresponding directly to the rise of a morally-good state and the fall of a corrupt one.<sup>125</sup>

During the Northern Song era, there are a number of *xiangpu* 香譜 (rosters of *xiang*) compiled by literati around the same time. For example, *Tianxiang zhuan* 天香傳 (The

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., p. 543.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., p. 543.

<sup>123</sup> See “Jiu Gao” 酒誥 (Announcement of Drunkenness) included in Sun Xingyan 孫星衍 (Qing) comp., Chen Kang 陳抗 and Sheng Dongling 盛冬鈴 eds., *Shangshu jinguwen zhushu* 尚書今古文注疏 (Commentary on the Commentary and Early Authoritative Commentaries of *Shangshu*; Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2004), pp. 373-83.

<sup>124</sup> See “Zayan” 雜言 (Miscellaneous Talks) in Xiang Zonglu ed., *Shuoyuan jiaozheng*, pp. 410-41.

<sup>125</sup> See footnote 19 and 20.

Biography of Heavenly ‘Xiang’) compiled by Ding Wei 丁謂 (966-1037),<sup>126</sup> *Xiangpu* 香譜 (The Book of ‘Xiang’) compiled by Hong Chu 洪芻 (1066-1128),<sup>127</sup> *Mingxiang-pu* 名香譜 (The Book of Famous ‘Xiang’) compiled by Ye Yangui 葉延珪 (*Jinshi* 進士 in the fifth year of Emperor Huizong of Song, r. 1100-1126),<sup>128</sup> and *Guihai xiang zhi* 桂海香志 (The Historical Record of ‘Xiang’ in The Sea of Laurel Blossoms) compiled by Fan Chengda 范成大 (1126-1193).<sup>129</sup>

These books reflect the cult of *xiang* among Northern Song elites—similar to the traditional belief in the moral-transformation power of *li yue* 禮樂 (rites and music), *xiang* also symbolizes the invisible power in promoting self-cultivation. For example, in the preface of *Xiangpu*, Hong Chu declares his ambition of compiling this book about *xiang*:

*The Book of Documents* says, “there should be fragrance in the harmonious state,” and “[people need to understand that only gentlemen]’s untarnished virtues are fragrant.” [For those who are] on the opposite side [of gentlemen], “[you] could smell foul-smelling odours from them.” c Qu Yuan’s *Li Sao* took fragrant herbs as [the symbol] of gentlemen; took filthy soil and foul-smelling weeds as [the symbol] of [selfish characters] ... I compiled this book of *xiang* for the same reason [as these early gentlemen].

《書》稱“至治馨香”、“明德惟馨”，反是則曰“腥聞在上”，傳以“蘭芝之室”、“鮑魚之肆”為善惡之辯。《離騷》以蘭蕙、杜衡為君子，糞壤蕭艾為小人... 余之譜香，亦是意雲。<sup>130</sup>

By reviewing the examples of olfactory division in early Confucian classics, Hong Chu announces his motivation of compiling this *Xiangpu*—to instruct Confucian disciples to avoid

<sup>126</sup> See his *Tianxiang zhuan* in Gu Hongyi 顧宏義 and Tian Yuan 田淵 eds., *Xiangpu wai sizhong* 香譜外四種 (The Book of Xiang and Another Four [Relevant] Sorts; Shanghai: Shanghai Bookstore, 2018), pp. 1-5.

<sup>127</sup> See *Xiangpu* in *Xiangpu wai sizhong*, pp. 6-39.

<sup>128</sup> See *Mingxiang pu* in *Xiangpu wai sizhong*, pp. 40-7.

<sup>129</sup> See *Guihai xiang zhi* in *Xiangpu wai sizhong*, pp. 48-52.

<sup>130</sup> See *Xiangpu* in *Xiangpu wai sizhong*, p. 7.



foul-smelling odours and instead draw close to “fragrant odours,” in order to achieve self-cultivation and moral transformation.

This brief summary of the political metaphors of odours representing male virtue and corruption leads us back to the adult world outside the Garden. No matter if it is the Ning-guo lineage or the Rong-guo lineage, the heads of the most junior generation of Jia family males all fail to follow Confucian moral principles. To the contrary: they either fall into the trap of those so-called “lascivious beauties with the foxy and foul smells” or take “Filthy Tang and Stinking Han” as an excuse for unfilial conduct. In truth, this somehow chaotic, corrupted, and obscene world outside the garden provides the preconditions for the sentimental world inside the garden. At this point, criticizing the orthodox Confucian ideological thought is not the theme of this novel. Still, the author weakens the former’s world to highlight the latter’s world—the cult of *qing* in the garden-world.

To sum up, this chapter explores three contrary points of views in olfactory divisions, including from the perspective of immortals and an omniscient story-teller who focus on the play between real and unreal, the garden-world characters’ inclination to *qing*, and the orthodox Confucian expectations toward self-cultivation and moral-obligation. Through analyzing olfactory narrations in *The Story of the Stone* and reviewing odour-oriented arguments or stories in early historical and literary works, this chapter argues that defining odours is less according to the defined characters’ biological odours. It often matches to the definer’s presumption toward their invisible essence such as characteristics and temperaments. In other words, identifying odours is more like the definer’s symbolic gesture in dividing “the self” and “the other.” After discussing the olfactory-division phenomenon in this novel, there should be a clear panorama of the entire fictional world, which is founded on three ideological systems or points of views.

In the following chapter, this paper will focus on the garden world and the author's cartography of this allegorical landscape. In chapter twenty-three, Bao-yu, Dai-yu, Bao-chai and the other number of maidens and maids start to settle in Grand Prospect Garden. How does the author, who is regarded by Rouge Inkstone as a member of *qingchi qingzhong* [great lovers or the occasion of great love in others] cohort, map this lyrical garden for many other sentimental and passionate characters in this novel? In this world with aromatic scent as a central motif, how does the author employ distinctive fragrant odours as symbols of different categories of *qing*? How does he apply various fragrant odours as coordinates to locate the relationships in proximity between main occupants in this garden?

### Chapter 3: Mapping Grand Prospect Garden through Odours

Ji Wuzi said, “Who would dare to miss the right time? Now if we take our analogies from plants, our unworthy ruler is to your ruler what fragrance is to flowers and fruits.”

季武子曰：“誰敢哉？今譬于草木，寡君在君，君之臭味也。”

[Lord Xiang 8 in *Zuo Tradition*] <sup>131</sup>

Taking a bird’s eye view of the entire fictional world of *The Story of the Stone*, we find that odours divide it into three spaces, which are the world outside the Grand Prospect Garden, the world inside the garden, and the immortal realms such as Great Fable Mountains and the Land of Illusion. These three worlds, in turn, correspond to the three independent ideological systems as Chapter One laid out—the Confucian moral principles, the cult of *qing*, and the immortals’ concerns about the “real” and “unreal.” Thus, each world’s occupants adopt different standards in dividing “self” and “other,” and usually define the occupants from another world as the stinking “intruders.”

Once we take a closer look at each world, we can find that each world is labeled with distinctive set of odours. The odour contrast and overlap often allude to its relationship with the other worlds:

- (1) Although the world outside the garden still follows the Confucian hierarchical structure, it is a morally corrupted space according to Confucian moral expectations. Thus, this fallen world full of adulterous affairs and references to sexual pollution is defined by its

<sup>131</sup> See “Lord Xiang 8” in Stephen Durrant, Wai-ye Li, and David Schaberg trans., *Zuo Tradition: Commentary on the “Spring and Autumn Annals”* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2016), pp. 948-49. In regards to the above quotation, the editors note that “Our translation is based on Du Yu’s (ZZ 30.522) comment that the comparison implies that ‘both are of the same kind’—that is, the Lu and Jin rulers are related as ‘attribute’ and ‘substance’ and are inseparable.” (p.948).

head of the most junior generation among the Jia household males (Jia Rong) as the microcosm of the “Filthy Tang and stinking Han.”

- (2) Forming a sharp contrast with this world outside the garden, the world inside the garden is the fairyland of Bao-yu and his sentimental girls. Both Yu Ying-shih and Xiao Chi identify that the garden world has its ecosystem—this garden world is not “determined by social or family hierarchy” and gives “the inhabitants the freedom to live where they wish.”<sup>132</sup> Yu argues that the “order [in the garden world] was established chiefly on the principle of ‘love [*qing*].’”<sup>133</sup> In this enclosed landscape, the author employs fragrant scents as its central motif—chambers, boudoirs, pavilions, bridges, and streams are either named with fragrance in the titles or have fragrant connotations, as in Fragrant Red and Lucent Green (*Hongxiang Lüyu* 紅香綠玉), Fragrant-pearl Court (*Lixiang Yun* 梨香院),<sup>134</sup> The Garden of Spices (*Hengzhi Qingfen* 蘅芷清芬), The Naiad’s House (*Xiaoxiang Guan* 瀟湘館),<sup>135</sup> Fragrant-rice Village (*Daoxiang Cun* 稻香村), Fragrant Lotus Pavilion (*Ouxiang Xie* 藕香榭),<sup>136</sup> Warm Fragrant Room (*Nuanxiang Wu* 暖香塢),<sup>137</sup> Crimson-fragrance Garden (*Hongxiang Pu* 紅香圃),<sup>138</sup> The Fragrance Gallery

<sup>132</sup> See Chi Xiao, *The Chinese Garden as Lyric Enclave: A Generic Study of The Story of the Stone* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Center for Chinese Studies, The University of Michigan, 2012), p. 143.

<sup>133</sup> See “The Two Worlds of ‘Hung-lou meng’”, p. 263.

<sup>134</sup> “Pearl-tree Court” (Hawkes’s translation).

<sup>135</sup> A homophone for *Xiaoxiang Guan* 消香館 (The House of a Vanishing Fragrance). The name of Lin Dai-yu’s apartment alludes to her early death, as in a four-character Chinese idiom *xiaoxiang yuyun* 消香玉殞 or *xiangxiao yuyun* 香消玉殞 (the fragrance disappears, and the jade vanishes) that often alludes to the death of a maiden or a young beauty. Also, in chapter twenty-seven, Dai-yu cries and recites: “Of fragrance and bright hues bereft and bare” (*hongxiao xiangduan youshui lian* 紅消香斷有誰憐?) See Hawkes, vol. 2, p. 38. Here, Dai-yu’s pity toward the “disappearing rouge [blossoms]” (*hongxiao* 紅消) and “discontinuous fragrance” (*xiangduan* 香斷) also foreshadows her fate.

<sup>136</sup> “The Lotus Pavilion” (Hawkes’s translation).

<sup>137</sup> “Spring in Winter Room” (Hawkes’s translation).

<sup>138</sup> “Peony Garden” (Hawkes’s translation).

(*Hanfang Ge* 含芳閣), Fragrance's Grave (*Maixiang Zhu* 埋香冢),<sup>139</sup> and Drenched Fragrance Pavilion/Bridge/Weir/Stream (*Qinfang Ting/Qiao/Zha/Xi* 沁芳亭/橋/閘/溪).<sup>140</sup>

On the author's odour map, fragrant scents not only refer to a collective symbol of this lyrical landscape that is founded on *qing*, but also reflect *xingqing* 性情 (personal temperaments, usually embodying different categories of *qing*) of the main occupants and their emotional proximity to others.

(3) As part of the immortal world, the Land of Illusion is located in the Paradise of Dispatching Fragrance (*Qianxiang Dong* 遣香洞).<sup>141</sup> This thesis will analyze its interaction with the human realm, especially the garden world in the second section of this chapter.

Beyond being a spatial garden described in the novel, Grand Prospect Garden represents a coherent and systematic ecosystem with abundant aesthetic principles, philosophical principles, and allegorical meanings of this fiction as a whole. This garden is carefully constructed by the author—the internal composition of each main character's chamber (floras, the rock inside Bao-chai's mansion, and the mirror inside Bao-yu's chamber) and the architectural design (the water flowing around the garden, plus the size and distance between chambers) are mostly given symbolic significance.

Andrew Plaks traces the records of *daguan* 大觀 (total vision) in early Chinese philosophical classics such as *Yi Jing* 易經 (*Classic of Changes* or *Book of Changes*) and *Zhuangzi* 莊子 ([The

<sup>139</sup> "Flowers' Grave" (Hawkes's translation).

<sup>140</sup> "Drenched Blossoms (Pavilion/Bridge/Weir/Stream) (Hawkes's translation).

<sup>141</sup> "The Paradise of the Full-blown Flower" in Hawkes's translation. (Hawkes, vol. 1, p. 129-30.)

Writings] of Master Zhuang), and examines the garden as a component of the allegorical pattern of the novel—"the idea of vast vision within enclosed space."<sup>142</sup> Furthermore, Plaks defines it, and other gardens with similar allegorical spirits and patterns in Chinese tradition, as a "literary garden," which refers to "both written descriptions of existing gardens and examples of self-conscious garden compositions based upon conceptions drawn from literature."<sup>143</sup> When Chinese literary men map this type of "literary garden," they often apply many "abstract coordinates." As Plaks notes:

- (1) spatially conceived coordinates, such as "mountains and water" (*shanshui* 山水),  
 "hills and valleys" (*qiuhe* 丘壑), "Heaven and Earth" (*Tiandi* 天地 or *Qiankun* 乾坤)
- (2) coordinates of colour, especially red and green
- (3) pairs of coordinates involving increasingly greater degrees of abstraction, such as  
 "solidity and emptiness" (*xushi* 虛實) and "stillness and movement" (*dongjing* 動靜)<sup>144</sup>

Chapter Two of this thesis will take odour coordinates as my *dufa* to explore the composition of the garden world and its interaction with the other two worlds.

<sup>142</sup> See Andrew H. Plaks, *Archetype and Allegory in the "Dream of the Red Chamber"* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1976), pp. 178-211.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., p. 147.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., pp. 168-70. Plaks's definition of the above listed "abstract coordinates" contain his philosophical interpretation of the pattern of "bipolarity" and "duality" in Chinese tradition, as he explained: "the bipolar and cyclical coordinates according to which the phenomena of the garden are presented do not refer obliquely to analogous configurations of truth, but simply *partake* of a totality of existence within which the coordinates actually presented in the text—and all other possible coordinates—are simultaneously contained with the whole." (Plaks, p. 167). Plaks' theory of "duality" and "bipolarity" tends to link to his interpretation of the *yin-yang* model concepts as well as their association to the universal whole (or the "universe") in Chinese philosophical tradition. Although this chapter will not focus on the "polarity" aspects of fragrant and foul-smelling odours, I am very inspired by Plaks's theory of "coordinates" and will apply it as a crucial component of my own *dufa* in reading this novel through odours.

This chapter is going to be divided into two sections. Both of these sections will focus on the author's employment of odours, a crucial component of his *xiefa* in establishing this olfactory garden full of allusions. Many modern Sinologists recognize the allegorical and symbolic aspects of *STJ*. It is not only a work that reflects the early-mid Qing social, political, and cultural milieu, but also a remarkable literary piece because of its poetic and psychological narrations, abundant puns and puzzles, as well as metaphorical and metaphysical wisdom. David Hawkes (1973) argues that "devices" such as "symbols, word-plays and secret patterns with which the novel abounds seem to be used out of sheer ebullience."<sup>145</sup> Andrew H. Plaks (1976) analyzes the internal pattern of the fictional world in *SJT* and its interaction to "a broader vision of the nature of existence" through two critical concepts: archetype and allegory.<sup>146</sup> Wai-yee Li (1993) uses the word allegory "to refer to the rhetorical procedure that emphasizes the relationship between different and disjunctive levels of coherence in *Hung-lou meng*".<sup>147</sup> Anthony C. Yu (1997) also declares his purpose of investigating rhetoric, language, emplotment, themes, and topics in this novel, rather than focus on historical aspects such as textual research on the author's family

<sup>145</sup> See Hawkes, vol. 1, p. 45. He also notes that "Some scholars like Zhou Ruchang [周汝昌, 1918-2012] have strived to establish a precise parallelism between [the world of characters in this novel and world of the author's family outside the novel], but the case for this is extremely flimsy." (p. 31)

<sup>146</sup> See Plaks, *Archetype and Allegory*, p. 4. He defines these two concepts through the presence of two corresponding patterns in the text: "some times simply implicit within a given linguistic and literary heritage, while at others they appear at others they appear to be explicitly foregrounded and signposted." (pp. 3-4) In Chapter Five, "Allegory in Chinese and Western Literature," Plaks compares and contrasts allegorical patterns in Western and Chinese literary traditions. In my understanding, his arguments in this chapter echo his analysis in the following two chapters, "Western Allegorical Garden" and "The Chinese Literary Garden." While the former tends to reveal the truth through a limited phenomenon or an enclosed landscape, the latter defines it as a part of the universal whole. This also echoes Plaks's discussion of the meaning of "a total vision" (*daguan* 大觀) that appears in the title of Grand Prospect Garden (*Da-guan Yuan* 大觀園). (See Chapter Eight, "A Garden of Total Vision," pp. 178-211.)

<sup>147</sup> See Li, *Enchantment and Disenchantment*, pp. 159-63. Li defines "allegories" or "illusory allegories" as an allegorical knowledge that "cannot be considered separately from fascination with illusion or commitment to the aesthetic surface." (p. 160)

background.<sup>148</sup> Inspired by modern scholars' analysis of the allegorical and aesthetic aspects of this novel, Chapter Two of this thesis will explore the mechanism of odours in reconstructing the author's allegorical messages when he establishes this garden world, an enclosed landscape that accompanies the rise, peak, and fall of the entire fictional world.

Section One focuses on the author's olfactory cartography of Grand Prospect Garden. How do odours act as symbolic coordinates in mapping the proximity between the main occupants who live inside the garden? How does the author employ various odours as symbols of the main occupants' invisible temperaments, especially their affective situation in the world that is built on the foundation of *qing*? How do early commentators, especially Wang Xilian and Rouge Inkstone, evaluate the allegorical and symbolic meaning of odours in their *dufa* (or prefatory) essays and commentaries for this novel?

Section Two will analyze the association between odours, sensory atmosphere, and "literary topography" (the close reading of this term and its meaning will be in chapter 3.2) in fictional narration. Unlike Section One, which explores the author's odour map and his odour cartography, Section Two will use the hero Bao-yu's affective map to examine the trinity of (fragrant) odours in literary topography. By taking fragrant odours as symbolic coordinates with which to locate three fragrant boudoirs on Bao-yu's affective map or psychological journey<sup>149</sup>, this section argues, (1) fragrant odours encompass a trinity of feminine temperaments; sensuous atmospheres such as mysteriousness, sentimentality, sensuality, and perplexity; and allegorical

<sup>148</sup> See Anthony C. Yu, *Rereading the Stone: Desire and the Making of Fiction in Dream of the Red Chamber* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1997), pp. xi-xiii.

<sup>149</sup> As a stone from Great Fable Mountain (an immortal mountain), *STJ* tells a story of this stone's journey into the Red Dust (the mortal world), the world in which he observes various sentimental girls who impress him. In this journey, *qing* (both affects and sentiments, and love and obsession) is the main melody.



meanings such as puns and allusions. (2) Fragrant scents are symbols or signs that allude to the dissolution between reality and illusion, and are usually written as omens of Bao-yu's dream or dream-like experience. (3) Aromatic scents map three fragrant boudoirs (the inner chambers of Lin Dai-yu, Qin Ke-qin, and Ke-qin) that are inside, outside, and above the garden world and overlapping zones on Bao-yu's affective map. These three affective spaces cause and attest this hero's unenlightened attachment to *qing* during the first half of his psychological journey.

I argue that odours are not only symbolic coordinates in mapping the close-distant relationship between characters in literary writing (and the imagination), as revealed in the four-character Chinese idiom *qiwei xiangtou* 氣味相投 or *xiuwei xiangtou* 臭味相投 (an affinity shared between similar types of people), but also are reflections of the interrelation between affects, atmosphere, and allegories in literary topography.

### 3.1 The Author's Cartography of *Xiang-guan Yuan* 香觀園 (Scent-viewing Garden)

Yu Ying-shih argues that “not everyone was equal” in the garden world—“each character's position on the [Register of *Qing*] must be greatly affected by the degree of intimacy which she shared with Pao-yu.”<sup>150</sup> For example, he notes the “balance of power” between the two female protagonist Dai-yu and Bao-chai: “although Tai-yu and Pao-yu lived in close proximity, Pao-ch'ai and Pao-yu's residences were the equals in size.”<sup>151</sup> No matter whether in or beyond this novel, the debate on this triangular relationship (actually the debate about Bao-chai and Dai-yu)

<sup>150</sup> Yu, “The Two Worlds of ‘Hung-lou meng’,” pp. 263-64.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., p. 267.

is not rare.<sup>152</sup> Wang Xilian also emphasizes that “although *The Dream of the Red Chamber* tells the rise and fall of the entire Jia family, it is actually written for the sake of three characters alone: Bao-yu, Dai-yu, and Bao-chai.” (紅樓夢雖是說賈府盛衰情事, 實專為寶玉黛玉寶釵三人而作.)<sup>153</sup>

In my understanding, this power dynamic between Dai-yu and Bao-chai is also reflected in the author’s cartography of his “Scent-viewing Garden,” since scents reveal that these two maidens are in different categories of *qing*. The overlapping scents (floral fragrance and the scent of herbal medicines) in Dai-yu and Bao-yu’s boudoirs reveal their close relationship as *qing*-obsessed kind, as Wang Xilian argued: “*qingchi qingzhong* [*qing*-obsessed kind] are commentaries on Bao-yu and Dai-yu.”<sup>154</sup> In contrast to Bao-yu’s “warm fragrance” (*nuanxiang* 暖香), Bao-chai’s “Cold Fragrance Pills” (*Lengxiang Wan* 冷香丸) reflects her self-destruction of innate *qing*. Also, she is the only garden-world occupant that is continuously associated with “extraordinary fragrance” (*yixiang* 異香), revealing her identity as an outsider in this triangular love relationship.

<sup>152</sup> For example, in this novel, Lady Wang and Aroma are in Bao-chai’s camp; Grandmother Jia and Skybright are in Dai-yu’s camp. Beyond this novel, later scholars also debate these two female protagonists’ personal temperaments and moral characters. For instance, In “Honglou meng wenda” 紅樓夢問答 (Questions and Responses on the *Dream of the Red Chamber*), Tu Ying 涂贏 (fl. early 19<sup>th</sup> century) argues that Bao-chai “is like Emperor Gaozu of Han [256-195 BC, r. 202-195 BC]” (似漢高祖); and Aroma “is like Empress (Dowager) Lü Zhi [241-180BC]” (似呂雉). (Wang Xilian, vol 1, p. 56) He further observes that “virtuous people make friends with virtuous people; unvirtuous people make friends with unvirtuous people... I cannot know who Bao-chai is. I cannot recognize her motivation!” (君子喻君子為朋友, 小人與小人為朋友... 吾不識寶釵何人也。吾不識寶釵何心也!) (WXLBP, vol 1, p. 54)

<sup>153</sup> See “Honglou meng zongping” 紅樓夢總評 (Prefatory Essay on *Dream of the Red Chamber*) in WXLBP, vol. 1, p. 84.

<sup>154</sup> See footnote 110.

### 3.1.1 “The Sweet Scent of Flowers” and “The Fragrance of Herbal Medicine”

In chapter fifty-one and fifty-two, the author implies to his readers that Bao-yu and Dai-yu’s inner chambers share the same odours—“the sweet scent of flowers” (*huaxiang* 花香) and “the fragrance of herbal medicine” (*yaoxiang* 藥香).

According to Bao-chai’s words to Aroma in chapter thirty-six, we know that Bao-yu’s mansion is surrounded by abundant fragrant flowers and the water from Drenched Fragrance Stream. In this chapter, Bao-chai enters Bao-yu’s inner chamber and observes that Aroma has prepared “a white horse-hair fly-whisk” and is sewing “a pinafore of the kind children wears” for Bao-yu. She immediately understands that Bao-yu’s inner chamber is [in her opinion,] too fragrant:

“You’ve got water behind you here, you see; you’ve also got a lot of sweet-smelling flowers outside; and the indoors are perfumed as well. This kind of insect breeds in the insides of flowers and is attracted towards anything fragrant.”

“這屋子後頭又都近水，又都是香花兒。這屋子裡頭又香。這蟲子都是花心裡長得，聞香就撲。”<sup>155</sup>

In addition to floral scents inside and outside Bao-yu’s chamber, even several of Bao-yu’s maids are given names associated with (floral) fragrance, such as Aroma 襲人 and Parfume 芳官.

Aroma’s name is given by Jia Bao-yu, since this girl with the surname of Hua 花 (flower) reminds him of an old poem—“The Flower’s aroma breathes of hotter days” (*huaqi xiren zhi zhounuan* 花氣襲人知晝暖).<sup>156</sup>

<sup>155</sup> *WXLBP*, vol. 3, p. 1010. [Hawkes, vol. 2, p. 201.]

<sup>156</sup> Hawkes, vol. 1, p. 458.

In chapter fifty-one, the author adds the scent of boiling herbal medicine inside Bao-yu's chamber. In this chapter, Skybright (Bao-yu's maid) is sick and boils herbal medicine inside Bao-yu's room. She worries that this smell will overwhelm the room. But Bao-yu expresses his admiration for the herbal fragrance:

“The smell of boiling herbs is the finest smell in the world... far superior to the perfume of any flower. Even the Immortals are supposed to gather herbs and cook them; and gathering herbs to make medicine with is the favourite occupation of hermits and holy men. The smell of medicine: that is one aesthetic treat that has so far been missing from this apartment; and now, today, we shall enjoy it!”

“藥氣比一切花香還香得雅呢。神仙採藥燒藥，再者，高人逸士，採藥治藥，最妙的一件東西！這屋裡我正想各色都齊了，就只少藥香，如今恰全了！”<sup>157</sup>

In the next chapter, when Bao-yu visits Dai-yu in her boudoir, the author implies readers that the scents of flowers and herbal medicine in these two characters' chambers are overlapping with each other.

In chapter fifty-two, Dai-yu asks Bao-yu to do her the favour of carrying her flowers into his room, because she is afraid that the smell of medicine in her room will spoil their floral scents.

Wang Xilian comments regarding these two chapters:

Both Dai-yu and Bao-yu's inner chamber have the odours of herbal medicine and fragrant flowers. Truly, these two characters were the same kind of creatures. Such design is remarkable, and not random [*xianbi* 閒筆]!

藥氣花香，黛玉寶玉房中亦復相同。真是兩人同志，映襯有意，不是閒筆！<sup>158</sup>

Indeed, as symbols of individuals' invisible essences, odour overlaps among different people reflect their shared characteristics as human beings. This is a very ancient concept: as Ji Wuzi's words recorded in *Zuo Tradition* suggest, odours reveal the association between “attribute” and “substance.” Similar odours among different people reveal that they are people of the same kind,

<sup>157</sup> WXLBPB, vol. 4, p. 1497. [Hawkes, vol. 2, p. 529-30.]

<sup>158</sup> WXLBPB, vol. 4, p. 1553.

as in the four-character Chinese idiom, *xiuwei xiangtou* 臭味相投 (an affinity shared between similar types of people) mentioned above.

Also, a similar form of affinity can be found in examples such as the late-Ming story “Xue Lüshi yufu zhengxian” 薛錄事魚服證仙 (Magistrate Xue Proves His Divinity through a Fish), the twenty-sixth story in *Xingshi hengyan* 醒世恆言 (*Stories to Awaken the World*), the common odours among Lei Ji, Pei Kuan, and director Xue reflect that they are bosom friends:

These two county marshals, Lei Ji and Pei Kuan, like the director, were officials of absolute integrity. Sharing the same views and interests [*xiuwei xiangtou* 臭味相投 (sharing the same odours)], the three of them often got together in their spare time to talk about poetry or play chess or enjoy a cup of wine by a flowered or a bamboo fence. They saw a great deal of each other’s company and were the best of friends.  
這三位官人，為官也都清正，因此臭味相投。每遇公事之暇，或談詩，或弈棋，或在花前竹下開樽小飲，彼來此往，十分款洽。<sup>159</sup>

Returning to Bao-yu and Dai-yu, their common admiration for the herbal medicine’s scents verify their likely proximity on the “Register of Love.” As Rouge Inkstone’s commentary notes: “I later observe the ‘Register of Love,’ and comments that Bao-yu is the person who could ‘feel non-feeling’, while Dai-yu is the person who could ‘feel feeling’. (後觀情榜，評曰：‘寶玉 ‘情不情，黛玉 ‘情情’)”<sup>160</sup>

While they belong to different categories of *qing*, they recognize each other as “soul mates” according to their common characteristics as *qing*-obsessed creatures. In details, both Dai-yu and

<sup>159</sup> See “Xue Lüshi yufu zhengxian” 薛錄事魚服證仙 (Magistrate Xue Proves His Divinity through a Fish) included in Yang Xiansheng 陽羨生 ed., *Xingshi hengyan* 醒世恆言 (*Stories to Awaken the World*; Shanghai: Shanghai Classics Publishing House, 1996), p. 523. For the English translation: see Shuhui Yang and Yunqin Yang trans., *Stories to Awaken the World* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009), pp. 588-608.

<sup>160</sup> See footnote 69.

Skybright (Dai-yu's shadow)<sup>161</sup> are sick in these two chapters. They both worry about the pollution of medicine's scents. Skybright's concern is about this scent being too strong for Bao-yu's chamber. Dai-yu's anxiety is about the scent's pollution to the innocent flower. Her *qing qing* is indicative of a strong sentimental personality that often causes her tears, sorrows, and self-pity when she encounters scenes such as the fall of petals and the gathering of family members during festivals. As a maiden who has lost both of her parents lives in the household of her grandmother and has had to take pills from her youth, she is a fragile character. Her pity for her own fate often causes her bouts of uncontrollable *qing* (sorrow and sentiment) for many other similar fragile objects, just as her sorrow for flowers in this chapter. As for Bao-yu, he admires the boiling herb's odour and values it as "the finest smell in the world," because he regards it as the shadow of his (love)sick Sister Lin. Bao-yu's thoughts reflect his *qing buqing*, which Martin Huang describes as a "tremendous empathy," and almost completely selfless "devotion to all the beautiful and talented girls in his life."<sup>162</sup> But, as Li Wai-ye noted, "there is no doubt that Bao-yu's feeling for Tai-yu are deepest and most intense."<sup>163</sup>

<sup>161</sup> "Skybright is the shadow of Dai-yu" (晴雯, 黛玉之影子也). See "Hongloulou meng wenda" in *Wang Xilian*, vol. 1, p. 55.

<sup>162</sup> See Huang, "Qing and the Reluctance to Grow up in *Hongloulou meng*", pp. 272-73.

<sup>163</sup> See Li, *Enchantment and Disenchantment*, pp. 203-10. Li notes three interpretations of *qing bu-qing*, including (1) "feeling deeply even for the insentient or nonfeeling," which "embodies empathetic understanding in the traditional aesthetic ideal of 'union of self and object' (*wu-wo ho-i* [物我合一])" and "is also, paradoxically, both boundless selflessness and boundless expansion of the ego." (2) "feeling too deeply and thus becoming unfeeling (*ch'ing chi pu-ch'ing* [情之不情])" (3) a comment appears on the Mongolian Prince Palace edition (*Meng-fu pen* [蒙府本] or *Wang-fu pen* [王府本])—"Just like water being drawn always, one's feelings ebb and one lapses into a state of unfeeling [*wu-ch'ing* 無情]." (pp. 203-10.)

### 3.1.2 “Cold Fragrance” and “Warm Fragrance”

In contrast to the overlapping scents in Bao-yu and Dai-yu’s chamber, the author labels Bao-yu with “warm fragrance” and Bao-chai with “cold fragrance.” This odour contrast reflects Bao-chai’s marginalized position, as Wang Xilian’s commentary on this power dynamics suggests, Bao-yu is the “host” (*zhu* 主), Dai-yu is the “host within the host” (*zhuzhong zhu* 主中主), and Bao-chai is the “guest within the host” (*zhuzhong bin* 主中賓).<sup>164</sup>

In chapter seven, when Zhou Rui’s wife visits Bao-chai in the Fragrant Pear-tree Court, Bao-chai complains of her “old sickness”—the “congenital tendency to overheatedness” (從胎裡帶來的一般熱毒).<sup>165</sup> She has to take “Cold Fragrance Pills” to cure such “overheatedness.” Bao-chai calls the prescription of this pill as “a prescription supposed to have been handed down from the Immortals of the Islands” (一個海上方).<sup>166</sup> Through their conversation about this pill, we learnt that this prescription was given by a monk. Although Bao-chai did not know his identity, the readers surmise that he is Vanitas, who appears with a Daoist priest to chat with Brother Stone in the opening chapter. This design emphasizes this prescription’s significance, since these objects connected with the immortal figures (including Vanitas, the Daoist priest, and Fairy Disenchantment) are all given allegorical meanings, such as Bao-yu’s jade and Fairy Disenchantment’s mirror. According to Bao-chai’s introduction, we know that this pill:

“needs twelve ounces of stamens of the spring-flowering white tree-peony, twelve ounces of stamens of the summer-flowering white water-lily, twelve ounces of stamens of the autumn-flowering white lotus, and twelve ounces of stamens of the winter-flowering white plum... [when she came to live at the Rongguo mansion, she] buried them under one of the pear-trees in the garden.”

<sup>164</sup> See “Honglouloumeng zongping” in *WXLBP*, vol. 1, p. 84.

<sup>165</sup> See *WXLBP*, vol. 1, p. 189. [Hawkes, vol. 1, p. 168.]

<sup>166</sup> *WXLBP*, vol. 1, p. 189. [Hawkes, vol. 1, p. 168.]

“要春天開的白牡丹花蕊十二兩，夏天開的白荷花蕊十二兩，秋天的白芙蓉蕊十二兩，冬天的白梅花蕊十二兩... 現埋在梨花樹下。”<sup>167</sup>

“Cold fragrance” counters “overheatedness.” In the “New Analysis of Cold Fragrance Pills,” Ou Lijuan indicates that scholars used to criticize Bao-chai as a ruthless and indifferent person based on her actions and role in the novel, and her association with “cold fragrance.” But she argues that the above scenario reveals Bao-chai’s passionate inborn nature.<sup>168</sup> I agree with Ou’s interpretations and would like to further argue that “cold fragrance” and “overheatedness” not only reflect Bao-chai’s self-control (and self-destruction) of her innate passion, but also foreshadow her bitterness in the struggle between the cult of *qing* and the self-expectation as a model Confucian lady.

In fact, “cold” matches “overheated;” “fragrant pill” matches “illness.” In the novel, fragrance symbolizes lovesickness and great lovers. The essence of her “congenital tendency to overheatedness” is the “congenital tendency to lovesickness.” As in Rouge Inkstone’s commentary: “[Xue Bao-chai]’s sentiment toward the Red Dust is occasionally set alight. Thus, the unenlightened passion and attachment come into conflict with each other.” (凡心偶熾，是以孽火齊攻。)<sup>169</sup> Despite this, different from Bao-yu’s “feel non-feeling” and Dai-yu’s “feel feeling,” Bao-chai’s in-born passion gradually turns to cold under her orthodox Confucian-lady persona. Furthermore, her Cold Fragrance Pills are buried under the pear-tree in Fragrant Pear-tree Court, which implies Bao-chai’s fate of sorrow and separation. As Rouge Inkstone argued:

<sup>167</sup> WXLBP, vol. 1, pp. 189-91. [Hawkes, vol. 1, pp. 168-69.]

<sup>168</sup> See Ou Lijuan 歐麗娟, “Lengxiang wan xin jie” 冷香丸新解 (The New Analysis of Cold Fragrance Pills) included in *Honglou meng renwu liti lun* 紅樓夢人物立體論 (The Three-dimensionality of Characters in *Honglou meng*; Taipei: Wunan tushu chubun gufen youxian gongsi), 2017, pp. 187-45.

<sup>169</sup> See *Zhiyanzhai chongping Shitou ji*, the *gengchen* edition, p. 58.



“The phrase ‘fragrant pear-tree’ has its implications, not meaninglessly placed here.” (“梨香”二字有著落, 并未白白虛設.)<sup>170</sup> Wang Xilian notes that:

Xue Baochai’s ‘Cold Fragrance Pill’ experiences the four seasons (spring, summer, autumn, and winter) and the four kinds of weather (rain, dew, frost, and snow). On the eve of taking this pill, she has to swallow it with the hot water of the tincture of philodendron. Such a pill fully experiences the taste of prosperity and decline, but finally has to end with the taste of bitterness. Furthermore, the pill is constantly associated with the number “twelve.” Truly, although it had the twelve-degree of fragrance, it also had the twelve-degree of coldness. Also, the pill is buried under the Fragrant Pear-tree Court, which unavoidably foreshadows Bao-chai’s separation from Bao-yu.  
薛寶釵冷香丸經歷春夏秋冬, 雨露霜雪. 臨服用黃柏煎湯, 備嘗盛衰滋味, 終於一苦. 俱以十二為數, 真是香固香到十二分, 冷亦冷到十二分也. 又埋在梨花樹下, 不免於先合終離矣.<sup>171</sup>

“Pear” (*li* 梨) is the homophone for “separation” (*li* 離). In the novel, before Bao-chai settled there, Fragrant Pear-tree Court was the Duke of Rong-guo’s retreat during the last years of his life. This design alludes to her close relationship with the orthodox Confucian generations, as well as the adult world—none of them favoured by Bao-yu.

In chapter nineteen, there is one episode in which Bao-yu and Dai-yu have a debate about *xiang*. At the beginning of this episode, Bao-yu sits closed to Dai-yu and admires a “natural” subtle fragrance from her sleeve. But Dai-yu seems to indulge in self-pity since she is not like Bao-chai who has an elder brother to buy Cold Fragrant Pills for her. After Bao-yu realizes that Dai-yu is making fun of him (and Bao-chai), Dai-yu turns to laughs at Bao-yu again and asks him: “If I had the ‘remarkable fragrance’, will you have the ‘warm fragrance’” (我有奇香, 你有暖香沒有?)<sup>172</sup> Both Rouge Inkstone and Wang Xilian notice the implications behind this

<sup>170</sup> Ibid., p. 58.

<sup>171</sup> See *WXLBP*, vol. 1, p. 214.

<sup>172</sup> See *WXLBP*, vol. 2, p. 528. “[Dai-yu] proceeded to pat her hair into place, smilingly complacently: ‘So I’ve got an unusual fragrance, have I? Have *you* got a *warm* fragrance?... Don’t be so dense! You have your jade. *Somebody*

dialogue. Wang Xilian notes that: “[The author] depicts that Dai-yu has the natural fragrance, which implicitly contrasts with Bao-chai’s fragrance from her pills.” (寫黛玉自然有香, 正照寶釵丸藥生香.)<sup>173</sup> Rouge Inkstone comments: “‘Beauties would ignore their charming appearances, and flowers would forget their scents.’ This is precisely the portrayal of Dai-yu, who doesn’t recognize her own innate fragrance.” (“美人忘容, 花則忘香”. 此則黛玉不知自骨肉中之香同.)<sup>174</sup> Rouge Inkstone also adds the term “natural” (*ziran* 自然)<sup>175</sup> in regard to Dai-yu’s fragrance. Bao-yu and Dai-yu’s dialogue reveals three messages. Firstly, Bao-chai’s “artificial” fragrant pills contrast with Dai-yu’s “natural” fragrance. In the novel, Bao-yu often expresses his admiration for “natural flavours” (*tianran* 天然) and dislike of “artificial flavours” (*wei* 偽). For example, in chapter seventeen [on his first visit to the Grand Prospect Garden on the eve of its completion], he has a long speech to justify “natural flavours” and criticize “artificial flavours”, as he dislikes the architecture of “Fragrant-rice Village” (which later becomes Li Wan’s residence).<sup>176</sup> Applying Bao-yu’s argument into this episode, Bao-chai’s “artificial” is greatly inferior to Dai-yu’s “natural” fragrance. Secondly, Bao-chai’s “cold-

has a gold thing to match. Somebody has Cold Fragrance, *ergo* you must have Warm Fragrance to go with it!” (黛玉笑道: ‘我有奇香, 你有暖香沒有... 蠢材蠢材! 你有玉, 人家就有金來配你. 人家有冷香, 你就沒有暖香去配?!’) See *WXLBP*, vol. 2, p. 528 [Hawkes, vol. 1, p. 395.]

<sup>173</sup> See *WXLBP*, vol. 2, p. 535.

<sup>174</sup> See *Zhiyanzhai chongping Shitou ji*, the *jimao* edition, p. 396. (See footnote 59.)

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 396.

<sup>176</sup> Bao-yue argues: “But then I have never really understood what it was the ancients *meant* by ‘natural’... A farm set down in the middle of a place like this is obviously the product of human artifice... That’s why, when the ancients use the term ‘natural’ I have my doubts about what they really meant. For example, when they speak of a ‘natural painting’, I can’t help wondering if they are not referring to precisely that forcible interference with the landscape to which I object: putting hills where they are not meant to be, and that sort of thing. However great the skill which this is done, the results are never quite...” (但古人嘗云‘天然’此二字, 不知何意?... 此處置一田莊, 分明是人力造作成的... 古人云‘天然圖畫’四字, 正畏非其地而強為其地, 非其山而強為其山, 即百般精巧, 終不相宜.) (See *WXLBP*, vol. 2, pp. 447-48; Hawkes, vol. 1, pp. 336-37.) Yu Ying-shih also emphasizes Bao-yu’s criticism of Li Wan’s “Fragrant-rice Village” and speculates her low ranking on “Register of *Qing*”. (See “The Two Worlds of ‘Hung-lou meng’,” pp. 235–80.)

fragrance” forms another sharp contrast with Bao-yu’s “warm fragrance.” Thirdly, Dai-yu’s “remarkable fragrance” will contrast with Bao-chai’s “extraordinary fragrance.” These three odours contrasts all tend to reveal Bao-chai’s identity as an “outsider” or “the guest within the host” in this triangular relationship.

### 3.1.3 “Extraordinary Fragrance”

In the garden world that is determined by *qing*, Bao-chai’s Confucian ideology and self-control of *qing* mark her as an “outsider.” In the garden, she is the only occupant who is consistently associated with the fragrant-odour coordinate “extraordinary fragrance” (*yixiang* 異香). This part will investigate Bao-chai’s identity as an “alien” (*yi* 異) in the garden world by examining the implications of *yixiang*. As part of this discussion I will review the term’s links to the “alien creatures” of early Chinese writing. As I show, *yixiang* is long tied with the sense of otherness, marginalization, alienation, and even horror in the premodern Chinese socio-cultural context.

*Yixiang* appears three times in the novel, tied to Bao-chai on all three occasions. In chapter seven, when Bao-chai introduces her Cold Fragrance Pills to Zhou Rui’s wife, she explains that they are made with “a packet of powder with a very unusual fragrance which [the monk Vanitas] said was to be used as the base” ([空空道人]給了一包末藥作引, 異香異氣的).<sup>177</sup> Later, Bao-chai resettles from Fragrant Pear-tree Court to The Garden of All Spices. In chapter seventeen, when Jia Zheng, Bao-yu, and literary gentlemen inspect the garden, they have a conversation on the spices and their fragrance in The Garden of All Spices:

Jia Zheng could not help but admire:  
“Charming! But what are they all?”

<sup>177</sup> *WXLBP*, vol. 1, p. 189. [Hawkes, vol. 1, p. 168.]

“Wild-fig” and “wisteria” was all the literary gentlemen would venture.  
 “But surely,” Jia Zheng objected, “wild-fig and wisteria do not have this delectable fragrance [extraordinary fragrance]?”  
 “They certainly don’t,” said Bao-yu. “There are wild-fig and wisteria among the plants growing here, but the ones with the fragrance are polia and birthwort and—yes, I think those are orchids of some kind.”  
 賈政不禁道：“有趣！只是不大認識。”  
 有的說是薜荔藤蘿。  
 賈政道：“薜荔藤蘿那得有此異香？”  
 寶玉道：“果然不是。這眾草中也有藤蘿薜荔。那香的是杜若蘅蕪。”<sup>178</sup>

Also, in chapter forty, when Grandmother Jia and others visit Bao-chai’s All-spice Court, “a delectable fragrance [*yixiang*] assailed their nostrils as they entered” (一同進了蘅蕪院, 只覺異香撲鼻).<sup>179</sup> According to the above three examples, there should be at least three interpretations of *yixiang* in All-spice Court:

- (1) As the above discussion suggests, Bao-chai’s “extraordinary fragrance” (*yixiang* 香) forms a contrast with Dai-yu’s “remarkable fragrance” (*qixiang* 奇香). “Extraordinary/unusual/other” (*yi* 異) is often correlated with “outsider/alien/barbarians” (*yi* 夷), which reflects Bao-chai’s identity as the “guest within the host” in the triangular love relationship between Bao-yu, Dai-yu, and Bao-chai.

<sup>178</sup> *WXLBP*, vol. 1, p. 451. [Hawkes, vol. 1, p. 339-40.]

<sup>179</sup> *WXLBP*, vol. 3, p. 1148. [Hawkes, vol. 2, p. 295.]

- (2) As Bao-yu hypothesized, such *yixiang* in Bao-chai's chamber is from fragrant orchid, which is a stereotyped symbol of the orthodox Confucian gentlemen.<sup>180</sup> This corresponds to Bao-chai's Confucian-lady ideology.
- (3) In the garden, Li Wan and Bao-chai's apartments are the only two locations inside the garden without any ornamental plants, but are instead surrounded by many marketable plants. In chapter fifty-six, Tan-chun and Li Wan plan to sell the flora and agricultural products inside the garden. Li Wan particularly praises the commercial potential of All-spice Court. As she argues, "Especially All-spice Court. Half the aromatics sold in perfumers' shops and on the herb stalls at markets and temple fairs come from plants like the ones grown in All-spice. I wouldn't be surprised if there were more profit to be had out of them than out of anything else that this garden produces." (蘅蕪苑裡更厲害。如今香料舖並大市大廟賣的各處香料香草兒, 都不是這些東西? 算起來, 比別的利息更大!) <sup>181</sup> This plan to sell products from the Garden is a harbinger of the increasingly vulnerable barriers between it and the outside world. Here, both Li Wan and Bao-chai represent breaches in the Garden world of *qing*. Also, in the novel, money is regarded by one of the most vulgar things by the *qing*-obsessed characters. For example, You San-jie, who is called by the author "a lovesick little sister" (*qing xiaomei* 情小妹), defines money as "stinking

<sup>180</sup> In Qu Yuan's poems, fragrant orchids are often written as the poet's self-imagination of his virtue: "I dressed in river rush and secluded angelica, Twined autumn thoroughwort to make my girdle" (扈江離與闕芷兮, 紉秋蘭以為佩。) In regarding this poem, Wang Yi 王逸 of the Han (206 BC–220 AD) argued that "River rush and angelica are names of fragrant plants" and are employed by the poet as the metaphors "in order to address [his] self-cultivation and moral purity." See Xiaorong Li, *The Poetics and Politics of Sensuality in China*, p. 2.

<sup>181</sup> *WXLBP*, vol. 4, p. 1650. [Hawkes, vol. 3, p. 73.]

money” (*chouqian* 臭錢).<sup>182</sup> Also, except Aroma (Bao-chai’s “shadow character”),<sup>183</sup>

Bao-yu and his maids all do not know how to weigh silver.<sup>184</sup>

Whether it be the orthodox Confucian ideology or the money, both are regarded as the “others” from Bao-yu’s perspective.

Indeed, *yixiang* is long associated with the fantasy toward “otherness” in premodern Chinese writings. *Yi* 異 has the meaning of extraordinary, remarkable, unusual, strange, other, and exotic. It is also the homophone of *yi* 夷 (barbarians, non-ethnically Han people)<sup>185</sup>. In early Chinese art and works of literature, *yixiang* frequently appears on the eve of encountering the “others”:

(1) The “other” space on the margins or outside “the Central Plain” (*Zhongyuan* 中原).

“Extraordinary fragrance” 異香 (*yixiang*) and “exotic perfumes/spices” 異香 (*yixiang*) are written with the same Chinese characters and have the same pronunciation. During the reign of

<sup>182</sup> See chapter sixty-five of the novel. [Hawkes, vol. 3, p. 282] It is worth noting that the author refers to Jia Bao-yu as “a passionate young brother” (*qing gege* 情哥哥), and Dai-yu as “sentimental sister” (*qing meimei* 情妹妹). See chapter title thirty-four, “A wordless message meets with silent understanding; And a groundless imputation leads to underserved rebukes” (情中情因情感妹妹, 錯裡錯以錯勸哥哥) and thirty-nine, “An inventive old countrywoman tells a story of somewhat questionable veracity; And an impressionable young listener insists on getting to the bottom of the matter” (村姥姥是信口開河, 情哥哥偏尋根究底). The common use of *qing* among these three characters (Bao-yu, Dai-yu, and You San-jie) tends to reflect their close relationship on the “Register of Love.”

<sup>183</sup> “Aroma is the shadow of Bao-chai.” (襲人, 宝釵之影子也.) (See “Honglouloumeng wenda” in *Wang Xilian*, vol. 1, p. 55.) Also, Tu Ying argues that “You might ask: ‘Lin Dai-yu is so talented, how can she come from such family wealth and have no knowledge of it?’ I would like to say: ‘This is why Dai-yu is so praiseworthy. This is why she is recognized by Bao-yu as the same kind of creature. If for better or worse she were to cherish such great wealth, she would fall into the vulgar odours. But if Bao-chai was in Dai-yu’s situation, she will definitely be like that!’” (或問: “林黛玉聰明絕頂, 何以如許家資而乃一無所知也?” 曰: “此其所以為名貴也. 此其所以為寶玉之知心也. 若好歹將數百萬家資橫據胸中, 便全身煙火其矣. 尚得為黛玉哉? 然使在寶釵, 必有以處此!”) (See “Honglouloumeng wenda,” p. 59).

<sup>184</sup> In chapter fifty-one, Skybright is sick; thus, Bao-yu asks a doctor to cure her. However, when the doctor is leaving and requires payment, Bao-yu, and his maid Musk, have no idea of how to weigh silver. Also, through their dialogues, the author implies that Aroma is the person who is responsible for managing the financial business in Bao-yu’s chamber.

<sup>185</sup> *Yi* 夷 is a sensitive term during the Manchu’s rule of the Qing dynasty of China, since Manchu are used to viewed by the former Ming scholar-officials as the Northern barbarians.

the Emperor Wu of Han, the exotic spices and perfumes were increasingly imported into the *Zhongyuan* region. Although the exotic aromatics are not specifically recorded in the official histories, the “perfume revolution” under Emperor Wu is given prominence in several anecdotes in later fictional narratives, such as Zhang Hua 張華 (232-300)’s *Treatise on Myriad Things* 博物誌, and Ren Fang 任昉 (460-508)’s *Account Recording Strange Things* 述異記.<sup>186</sup> After the fall of the Han regime, the Tang empire (618-907) pursued a similar imperial project to that of the Han and during the High Tang (r.650-755CE) cultural and commodity exchanges between the centre and exotic peripheries expanded greatly. During the early stage of this dynasty, a number of the Central Asian kingdoms pledged loyalty to the Tang royal family and sent tribute to the imperial court. The scroll painting “Foreign Envoy and Tribute Bearers” (*Zhigong tu* 職貢圖),<sup>187</sup> painted by Yan Liben 閻立本 (601-673CE) and his elder brother Yan Lide 閻立德, is about a tributary mission from Persia to Tang China. Tribute bearers carrying many luxurious goods and remarkable treasures are depicted in the scroll. On the middle-left side of this scroll, there is a monk-like foreigner, with yellow robes, carrying a container apparently emitting a fragrant cloud of smoke. It reflects Tang people’s imagination toward the exotic perfumes and their extraordinary fragrance at that time.

- (2) Other creatures, including animals, animal demons, and ghosts (mostly beautiful female ghosts).

<sup>186</sup> See Milburn, “Aromas, Scents, and Spices,” pp. 482-62. Milburn raises the concept of “the ‘perfume revolution’ under Han Wudi, according to Ye Tingui 葉庭珪’s “Preface to *Mr. Ye’s Records of Aromatics*” 葉氏香譜序. (In *Xiangpu: wai sizhong* 香譜: 外四種, the editors use “Ye Yangui” 葉延珪 and “Yeshe xianglu xu” 葉氏香錄序.)

<sup>187</sup> “Foreign Envoy and Tribute Bearers” (*Zhigong tu* 朝貢圖), painted by Yan liben 閻立本 (601-673CE) and his elder brother Yan Lide 閻立德 (d. 656CE), (61.5 x 191.5 cm), preserved in Taipei: National Palace Museum.

In *Extensive Records Compiled in the Taiping Era*, there are abundant tales about the alien creatures and their *yixiang*, such as “Li Tao 李陶” in “Ghost XVIII,”<sup>188</sup> “Bao-yu 寶玉” in “Ghost XXVIII,”<sup>189</sup> “Zhang Geng 張庚” in “Ghost XXX,”<sup>190</sup> “Youshi Zi 遊氏子” in “Ghost XXXVII,”<sup>191</sup> “Li Lingxu 李令緒” in “Fox VII,”<sup>192</sup> and “Li Huang 李黃” in “Snake III.”<sup>193</sup> In these tales, *yixiang* appear as the warning voice of encountering the dangerous “others.” In most cases, *yixiang* symbolizes these alien creatures’ invisible magic in seducing the innocent young human males, distracting them, physically polluting their power, and even causing their illness or death.

(3) Female “others”, who are usually socially marginalized females, such as courtesans, prostitutes, fallen ladies, and abandoned women.

For example, in *The Plum in the Golden Vase*, *yixiang* appears when Ximen Qing frequently engages in sexual affairs with his numerous concubines, maids, and prostitutes. It suggests these female others’ seductive power and sexual pollution, which eventually accelerates the ruin of this master and his household.

It is not surprising that extraordinary fragrance is long associated with the female others in many civilizations. For example, in European literature, morally good females with proper social status (maidens, wives, and mothers) are often labeled with the “pleasant, non-threatening odours.” Prostitutes or seductive beauties are either marked with “foul odours” or “heavily sweet

<sup>188</sup> See *Extensive Records Compiled in the Taiping Era*, vol. 7, pp. 2642-49.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid., vol. 7, pp. 2717-22.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid., vol. 7, pp. 2730-36.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid., vol. 7, pp. 2784-91.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid., vol. 10, pp. 3699-3705.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid., vol. 10, pp. 3744-52.



and spicy odours,” to highlight their “beauty and attraction,” and of course, “their exotic status.”<sup>194</sup> Also, in Chapter Four “Spicy Ideologies” included in *The Aroma of Righteousness*, Deborah A. Green discusses the distinction of odours between “the male other” and “the female other” in the rabbinic cultural tradition. While “the male other” is described with foul-smelling odours, “the female other” is commonly associated with the extraordinary scents of spices, which alludes to their power of seduction and sexuality, such as “unbridled eroticism, cuckolding, leading young men to ruin, [and] sexual aggressiveness.”<sup>195</sup>

In *The Story of the Stone*, Bao-chai’s *yixiang* is not a declaration of an identity as the seductive female other, but nonetheless symbolizes her paradox as a Confucian maiden endowed with a self-destructive inborn-passion. In other words, *yixiang* does not represent Bao-chai’s symbolic affiliation with the dangerous and seductive “female others” in early *chuanqi* and *zhiguai* tales, but nonetheless locates her position as an ‘intruder’ in the triangular relationship (Bao-yu, Dai-yu, and Bao-chai).

This section mainly focuses on Bao-yu, Dai-yu, Bao-chai, and their corresponding scents. However, in the novel, there are many examples of the other main female characters’ odours, such as Li Wan and her “scent of sweet millet grain,” Miao-yu and her “chilling fragrance,” as well as Xi-chun and her “warm fragrance.” These olfactory phenomena are not randomly written by the author— they enrich the fictional languages and bring in another reading approach to (re)interpret these primary female characters’ temperaments. For instance, Li Wan’s “scent of sweet millet grain” coincides with her identity as a Confucian widow. It is worth noting that Li

<sup>194</sup> See Classen, “The Odor of the Other,” pp. 142-43.

<sup>195</sup> See Green, *The Aroma of Righteousness*, pp. 116-68.

Wan's "Fragrant-rice Village" and Bao-chai's "All-Spice Court" are the only two dwellings inside the garden that lack "natural" floral scents but are replete with "artificial" commercial plants' odours. Moreover, Miao-yu's "chilling fragrance" matches her self-identification as "The Dweller Beyond the Threshold" (*kanwai ren* 檻外人)<sup>196</sup>—elegant and sentimental, but sometimes also quite absurd and detached. Xi-chun lives in "Warm Fragrance Room" (*Nuanxiang Wu* 暖香塢). In the novel, both Bao-yu and Xi-chun who are associated with "warm fragrance" eventually choose to convert to Buddhism at the end of the novel. At first glance, "warm fragrance" is an irony regarding their final detachment. But this also implies their similar dilemmas as passionate characters who are struggling between attachment and detachment, enchantment and disenchantment, and unenlightened *qing* and religious enlightenment.

I argue, although fragrant scents are the central motif of this garden world and in general symbolize its occupants' attachment toward *qing*, the distinctive odour coordinate(s) locate their proximity to each other. In other words, although fragrant scent is the fundamental pillar that vertically props up this enclosed landscape, the author employs distinctive fragrant-odour coordinates with the same vertical line ("fragrance") but different horizontal line (such as "cold and warm," and "extraordinary and remarkable") to map the occupants' different aspects of *qing*.

### 3.2 Odours and Literary Topography

In *Mapping Modern Beijing: Space, Emotion, Literary Topography*, in addition to its original meaning of "the creation of a metaphorical equivalent in words of a landscape," Song Weijie also defines literary topography as "literary act of mapping," that is "produced after a subjective,

<sup>196</sup> Hawkes, vol. 3, pp. 235-36.

sentimental, and sometimes scientific journey, akin to the physical and psychological journey of a writer (or a cartographer with literary sense and sensibility) charting and exhibiting familiar or new terrains.” He further demonstrates that literary mapping is the process of “romancing, criticizing, exhibiting, familiarizing, and defamiliarizing, adding enchantment or disenchantment to the image of this literary space.”<sup>197</sup>

This section is very inspired by Song’s theories of affects, space, and topography in literary imagination. In the following discussion, I will analyze the mechanism of odours (especially fragrant scents that frequently appear in lyrical writings) as symbolic signals in generating affective atmosphere and sensory experience in literary topography. Taking *The Story of the Stone* as an example, when and how do odours appear as symbolic signals in shaping, mapping, dividing, and overlapping various episodes, locations, and terrains in this novel? How far do odours figuratively generate sentiments, feelings, and atmospheres of enchantment, romantic feeling, and obsession in this novel, especially in narrations of the hero Jia Bao-yu?

I argue that odours, typically fragrant odours and aromatic objects such as perfumes and incense, often allude to the dissolution between reality and illusion, and frequently appear as omens of a dream-journey or dream-like experience, particular on the eve of Bao-yu encountering several main female characters. In literary topography, fragrant scents are shadows of femininity and several female characters’ “fragrant boudoirs” (*xianggui* 香閨), and generate a series of bedazzling feelings such as mysteriousness, sentimentality, and even mental and physical sensuality. In the novel, the author maps three noticeable fragrant boudoirs on Bao-yu’s

<sup>197</sup> See Weijie Song, *Mapping Modern Beijing: Space, Emotion, Literary Topography* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), p. 28.

psychological journey. They (the bedrooms of Lin Daiyu, Qin Ke-qin, and Ke-qin) are respectively placed inside, outside, and above the garden world, and these three fragrant inner chambers witness Bao-yu's uncontrollable attachment to *qing* during the first half of this life journey. In these three fragrant-boudoir episodes, aromatic scents are written as figurative signs of the trinity of femininity, affective and sensory pleasure, and allegorical meanings.

Song Weijie mentions "repeated situation" (*chongfu de qingjing* 重複的情境) when he analyzes Lao She 老舍 (1899-1966)'s affective mapping of Beijing in *Tea House*.<sup>198</sup> The terminology *qingjing* 情境 (situation, or affective realm) does not appear in *The Story of the Stone*, but the novel mentions *qingjing* 情景 (affective scene) several times. For example, in chapter five, Fairy Disenchantment explains her motivation of inviting Bao-yu to the Land of Illusion: "My motive in arranging this is to help you grasp the fact that, since even in these immortal precincts love is an illusion, the love of your dust-stained, mortal world must be doubly an illusion. [How much more would this be the case for *qingjing* (affective scene) in your dust-stained mortal world?]" (不過令汝領畧些仙閣幻境之風光尚然如此, 何況塵世之情景哉? )<sup>199</sup> It is rather vivid and precise that Hawkes emphasizes "love" in his translation. As chapter 1.3.3 discussed, *qing* is a metaphysical concept with constant transformations and various interpretations during different historical moments or in different genres of texts; however, it overall includes the meanings of affects, including emotions (*qingxu* 情緒), passion

<sup>198</sup> In "A Warped Hometown," Song Weijie quotes Li Jianwu 李健吾 (1906-1982)'s analysis of *Tea House*: "there is no unified emotions or event, but repeated situations" (沒有一個統一的感情, 事件, 只有重複的情境). In *Tea House*. He further argues that "the 'repeated situations,' as well as the diversified emotions and events, bring to limelight Lao She's affective mapping of the distorted teahouse and the warped hometown." (p. 30)

<sup>199</sup> *WXLPB*, vol.1, p. 147. [Hawkes, vol. 1, p. 146.]

and desire (*qingyu* 情慾), and the late-Ming cult of *qing* (sentiments, obsession, attachments, love, and true feelings between males and females).

In the novel, the author delineates three “repeated affective realms” on the hero Bao-yu’s affective map—the fragrant boudoirs of Lin Dai-yu, Qin Ke-qin, and Ke-qin. They follow the similar sequence pattern:

- (1) When Bao-yu is near or in a boudoir, he will suddenly detect an unknown fragrance.
- (2) Although the author does not clarify its origin, readers could know this fragrance is from the female occupant’s fragrant boudoir or from the beauty herself.
- (3) Fragrant odours usually immediately catalyze Bao-yu’s unenlightened obsession, as revealed in comments such as “making a sweet stickiness inside his drooping eyelids and causing all the joints in his body to dissolve” (便覺眼錫骨軟),<sup>200</sup> and “felt a sudden yearning” (不覺心內癢將起來).<sup>201</sup>

In chapter five, after falling asleep in Qin Ke-qing 秦可卿 (also called as Lady Qin)’s fragrant boudoir, Jia Bao-yu wanders to the Land of Illusion and encounters Fairy Disenchantment in his dream. This is the first time and also his only chance to visit this mysterious space. In his dream, Fairy Disenchantment shows him several things (allegorical poems, song cycles, and perfume, tea, and wine) that foreshadow the fates of main female characters, in particular female occupants inside the garden; however, Bao-yu fails to recognize the “warning voice” behind any of them. Fairy Disenchantment laments “[my] fool dreamer, why you cannot understand” (癡兒

<sup>200</sup> Hawkes, vol. 1, p. 126.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid., p. 516.

竟尚悟),<sup>202</sup> but then turns to justify him as an innocent boy with “lust of intent” (*yiyin* 意淫) rather than one of the “fools addicted to wanton lust of the skin” (*pifu lanyin zhi chunwu* 皮膚濫淫之蠢物).<sup>203</sup> Eventually, she decides to lead him into a “fragrant boudoir and embroidered room” (*xianggui xiuge* 香閨繡閣)<sup>204</sup> and instructs her little sister whose name is also Ke-qing 可卿 to teach Bao-yu the “Art of Love.” After he wakes from this erotic dream, he cannot forget such sensual pleasure and immediately practices it again with his maid Aroma.

In the fragrant boudoir of Lady Qin (*Qinshi* 秦氏, with a similar pronunciation of *Qingshi* 情氏 (Lady *Qing*)), Bao-yu notices fragrant odours three times—“sweet fragrance” (*tianxiang* 甜香), “the sweet scent of wine” (*jiuxiang* 酒香), and “aroma” (*xiren* 襲人). Fragrant scents are omens of Bao-yu’s dream—they allude to the dissolution of the boundary between reality and illusion. Also, they map Lady Qin’s bedroom as both entrance and exit of Bao-yu’s *chunmeng* 春夢 (spring dream, an erotic dream), in which he tastes the “Art of Love” with Ke-qin in another

<sup>202</sup> “Silly Boy! You still don’t understand, do you?” (Hawkes, vol. 1, p. 145.)

<sup>203</sup> Whether Bao-yu’s *yiyin* contains and transfer into physical desire or sudden detachment tends to be a complicated issue when the author writes this “semi-biography” novel. Paolo Santangelo analyzes these three phrases in the broad context of “the cult of *qing*.” He argues “there is no clear-cut distinction between these [three] level,” and “the fascination of the novel resides therefore in the breaking of borders between physical desire and ideal level, lust and sincere affection.” [See Paolo Santangelo, “‘Wanton Lust of the Skin’ 皮膚濫淫, ‘Lust of Intent’ 意淫, ‘True Love’ 真情,” included in *From Skin to Heart* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2006), pp. 183-202.] Halvor Eifring analyzes that *pifu lanyin* and *yiyin* “more or less corresponds to the traditional distinction between *qing* ‘love, emotion’ and *yu* ‘desire, carnal lust’.” He argues that “Jia Bao-yu’s ‘lust of mind [*yiyin*]’ clearly includes an erotic component.” [See “The Psychology of Love in *The Story of The Stone*,” included in *Love and Emotions*, p. 309.] Martin Huang argues that *yiyin* “is presented in contrast to the lust of the flesh [*pifu lanyin*],” but “[the latter] is not completely excluded from [the former]” in the case of Bao-yu’s psychological situations. See *Desire and Fictional Narrative*, p. 272. I do feel there is a strong erotic implication of fragrant odours when the author depicts Qin Ke-qin’s fragrant boudoir, and the other two inner chambers. But I will not compare and contrast Bao-yu’s *qing* (idealized love) and desire (physical lust) in the following analysis of odours. I would like to view them as a two-in-one concept, which in total stands for Bao-yu’s unenlightened attachment and also selfless devotion to female characters surrounding him. In the following discussion of the three fragrant-boudoir episodes, I will apply general terms such as feelings and sentiments to embody Bao-yu’s *qing-yu* affect.

<sup>204</sup> “Dainty bedroom” in Hawkes’s translation. (Hawkes, vol. 1, p. 145.)

fragrant boudoir in the Land of Illusion. Furthermore, when mapping Lady Qin and Ke-qin's inner chambers, the author employs fragrant scents as a common motif to imply that these two locations overlap with each other.

As the entrance of Bao-yu's dream journey, Lady Qin's boudoir in the Ning-guo mansion is depicted as a mysterious space with unknown "sweet fragrance" and luxurious decorations, which immediately causes the "drunkenness" of the male visitor, Bao-yu:

In the course of this exchange the party had made its way to Qin-shi's bedroom. As Bao-yu entered, a subtle whiff of the most delicious perfume assailed his nostrils, making a sweet stickiness [*tianxiang xiren* 甜香襲人 (sweet fragrance and aroma)] inside his drooping eyelids and causing all the joints in his body to dissolve. "What a lovely smell!" He repeated the words several times over.  
說著大家來至秦氏臥房。剛至房中，便有一股細細的甜香襲人。寶玉便覺眼錫骨軟，連說：“好香！”<sup>205</sup>

Following Bao-yu's gaze, the author shows this bedroom's inner features, where many decorations would immediately recall readers' memory of several legendary beauties and female figures in early erotic anecdotes or literary romances, such as "Flying Swallow" (Empress Xiaocheng of Han) and Lady Yang (as discussed in "Filthy Tang and stinking Han" in chapter 2.3), fabulous Xi Shi and Hong-niang (Cui Yingying's maid and also her matchmaker in *Western Chamber*). Martin Huang analyzes that these "erotic images that abound in the description of Qin-shih's bedroom reinforce the possibility that she is a character associated with the lust of flesh."<sup>206</sup>

<sup>205</sup>Ibid., pp. 126-27.

<sup>206</sup> See Huang, *Desire and Fictional Narrative*, p. 288. Huang also notes "Qinshi's incestuous affair with her father-in-law." (p. 286) As Jia Rong's wife, Lady Qin's putative erotic involvement with her father-in-law embodies Jia Rong's self-irony of "Filthy Tang and Stinking Han."

Truly, abundant motifs with strong erotic implications are crucial components in visually constructing this boudoir scene. What draws my attention is the fictional narration of fragrant odours and olfactory sensations in accentuating such a sensual atmosphere, no matter for the male gazer Bao-yu or our readers who read this episode through this male voyeur's sensation. It is also interesting that the voice of the omniscient story-teller narrator seems to be less obtrusive in this particular dream episode, especially compared to his voice in other chapters. Thus, readers have to rely on Bao-yu's sensations and affects, which bring in the benefits for viewers to be even closer to Bao-yu's mental states.

To return to the analysis of fragrant odour in Lady Qin's boudoir, although the narrator does not clarify its origin, the answer is concealed in a couplet inscribed on a pair of calligraphic scrolls on the wall of this boudoir:

Inside the room there was [Tang Bohu 唐伯虎's]<sup>207</sup> painting entitled "Spring Slumber" depicting a beautiful woman asleep under a crab-apple tree, whose buds had not yet opened. The painting was flanked on either side by a pair of calligraphic scrolls inscribed with a couplet from the brush of the Song poet Qin Quan:

(on one side) The coldness of spring has imprisoned the soft buds in a wintry dream;

(on the other side) The fragrance of wine intoxicated the beholder with imagined flower-scents [*xiren* 襲人(aroma)].

入房, 向壁上看時, 有唐伯虎畫的“海棠春睡圖”, 兩邊有宋學士秦太虛寫的一副對聯云: “嫩寒鎖夢因春冷, 芳氣襲人是酒香。”<sup>208</sup>

“Crab-apple” (*haitang* 海棠) flower recalls “sweet fragrance” that appears on Bao-yu's affective map when he enters this bedroom of his nephew's wife (*zhier xifu* 姪兒媳婦). *Haitang* flower is an erotic allegory in Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037-1101)'s poem—“Eighty-year old man marrying an

<sup>207</sup> Tang Yin 唐寅 (1470-1524), courtesan name Tang Bohu 唐伯虎, is known for his painting of beautiful women, and many romantic or erotic anecdotes with courtesans and prostitutes.

<sup>208</sup> Hawkes, vol. 1, p. 127.



eighteen-year old maiden, [is truly like] a [giant] pear-flower tree holding down a [delicate and fragile] crab-apple flower.” (十八新娘八十郎 …一樹梨花壓海棠). In this episode, crab-apple flower alludes to Lady Qin’s sexual affair with her father-in-law and reveals her identity as a metaphysical figure who would enlighten Bao-yu through the “Art of Love” in his dream.

The second line of the above couplet notes “the sweet scent of wine.” Wine is often viewed as the stimulus of desire and lust in many late imperial fictional works, as “Romantic affairs are consummated over tea, and Wine is the go-between of lust.” (風流茶說合,酒是色媒人).<sup>209</sup> For example, in the famous erotic novel *The Plum in the Golden Vase*, wine is criticized as the first vice in “the four vices” (*sitan* 四貪), which are “drunkenness, lust, avarice and anger” (*jiu, se, cai, qi* 酒色財氣).<sup>210</sup> In chapter five of this novel, “the sweet scent of wine” in Lady Qin’s boudoir is a coordinate that locates her bedroom and another fragrant room on the Land of Illusion as an overlapping zone on Bao-yu’s affective map—the fragrance of wine appears in both locations and maps them as allegorical places associated with sensual pleasure in Bao-yu’s psychological journey. Furthermore, the word “aroma” in the last line of the above couplet foreshadows Bao-yu’s sexual encounter with his maid Aroma right after he awakens from this dream. So far, “sweet fragrance,” “the sweet scent of wine,” and “aroma (Aroma)” together reflect the metaphysical, sensuous, and sensual nature of Lady Qin’s boudoir, and foreshadow Bao-yu’s dream and dream-like experience on the Land of Illusion. Also, as “fragrant wind” in the story “Yang Siwen,” “A gust of fragrant wind sprang up. She disappeared as the [fragrant]

<sup>209</sup> See *The Plum in the Golden Vase*, vol. 1, p. 77.

<sup>210</sup> “Wine depletes the spiritual resources and destroys the home; It causes speech to become incoherent, makes conduct riotous. Estrangement from family, loss of friends, derive therefrom; Deeds of injustice and ingratitude are all its doing.” (酒損精神破喪家, 語言無狀鬧喧嘩. 疏親慢友多由你, 背義忘恩亦是他).” See *The Plum in the Golden Vase*, vol. 1, p. 10.

wind blew past.” (忽地又起了一陣香風，香過，遂不見了夫人)，<sup>211</sup> fragrant odours are symbolic signals of the dissolution between reality and illusion.

In his dream, Bao-yu visits the Land of Illusion and encounters Fairy Disenchantment. According to her self-introduction, Bao-yu knows that the Land of Illusion is within “the Paradise of Dispatching Fragrance” (*qianxiang dong* 遣香洞). Here, *xiang* echoes Fairy Disenchantment’s mission of “dispatching lovesickness” (*busan xiangsi* 佈散相思),<sup>212</sup> and reflects that *xiang* is a collective symbol of girls in the author’s cartography of his garden world (as discussed in the above section 3.1 “Scent-viewing Garden”). In the Land of Illusion, Fairy Disenchantment invites Bao-yu to a room, where he feels “a subtle fragrance” (*youxiang* 幽香):

[Fairy Disenchantment] led Bao-yu indoors. At once he became aware of a faint, subtle scent, the source of which he was quite unable to identify.  
說畢，攜了寶玉入室。但聞一縷幽香，不知所焚何物。<sup>213</sup>

Fairy Disenchantment explains that this scent is from a perfume called “all flowers’ marrow” (*qunfang sui* 群芳髓).<sup>214</sup> Then, she serves Bao-yu a tea called “Maiden’s Tears” (*qiankong yiku* 千紅一窟).<sup>215</sup> Its “fragrance fresh and clean and its flavour delicious” (*xiangqing weimei* 香清味美)<sup>216</sup> immediately evokes Bao-yu’s admiration. She also encourages him to taste a wine “*Lachrymae Return*” (*wanyan tongbei* 萬豔同悲),<sup>217</sup> with an extraordinary sweetness and aroma

<sup>211</sup> See “Yang Siwen yanshan feng guren” included in Han Xin 韓欣 ed., *Mingjia pingjian Feng Menglong Sanyan* 名家評點馮夢龍三言 (Feng Menglong’s *Three Words* with the Comments of Famous Scholars; Tianjin: Tianjin guji chubanshe, 2010), pp. 169-76. For the English translation: see Shuhui Yang and Yunqing Yang trans., *Stories Old and New*, p. 444.

<sup>212</sup> “Distributing a quantity of amorous thoughts” in Hawkes’s translation. (Hawkes, volume 1, p. 130.)

<sup>213</sup> Ibid., p. 137.

<sup>214</sup> “*Belles Se Fanent*” in Hawkes’s translation. (Ibid., p. 138.)

<sup>215</sup> Ibid., p. 138.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid., p. 138.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid., p. 139.

(*jiuxiang qinglie yichang* 酒香清冽異常).<sup>218</sup> Ou Lijuan notes that “the perfume, tea, and wine are a collective symbol with a tripartite nature” (香與茶、酒乃是三位一體的復合意象).<sup>219</sup> I agree and would further argue that their trinity is determined by a common “fragrant nature.” This “fragrant nature” is beyond a real fragrant odour, and indeed refers to a universal and idealized motif, that is the trinity of femininity, affective and sensory pleasure, and lyrical, aesthetical, figurative, and allegorical implications. This also echoes the author’s innovation in mapping his garden with distinctive fragrant-odour symbols (as discussed in section 3.1) —*xiang* is not merely a collective symbol of female occupants and their aspects of *qing*, but also encompasses individual symbols that embody different categories of *qing* connected with puns and puzzles in this novel.

Bao-yu is drunk after tasting wine served by Fairy Disenchantment. Thus, she leads to him to a “fragrant boudoir and embroidered room” (*xianggui xiuge* 香閨繡閣),<sup>220</sup> where he tastes the “Art of Love” for the first time with a mysterious beauty Ke-qin, whose “rose-fresh beauty reminded him strongly of Bao-chai, but there was also something about her of Dai-yu’s delicate charm” (鮮豔嫵媚, 大似寶釵, 嫵娜風流, 又如黛玉).<sup>221</sup> Even after he wakes up from this dream, he could not forget such sexual pleasure and immediately practices it again with his maid Aroma. Thus, fragrant odours dissolve the boundary between mortal and immortal spaces, locate these two boudoirs as an overlapping zone, and label them as figurative topographies of

<sup>218</sup> “Delectable bouquet” in Hawkes’s translation. (Ibid., p. 138.)

<sup>219</sup> See Ou Lijuan, “Lengxiangwan xinjie,” p. 188.

<sup>220</sup> “A dainty bedroom” in Hawkes’s translation. (Ibid., p. 145.)

<sup>221</sup> Ibid., p. 145.

enchantment, passion, sensuality, carnality, obfuscation, and obscurity in Bao-yu's affective map.

In chapters nineteen and twenty-six, Ba-yu also notices a “subtle fragrance” (*youxiang* 幽香)<sup>222</sup> when he stands outside and enters Dai-yu's boudoir. In chapter nineteen, when Dai-yu “was at that moment taking a mid-day nap [on her bed]. Her maids had all gone off about their own affairs” (彼時黛玉自在床上歇午, 丫鬟們皆出去自便).<sup>223</sup> Then, “Bao-yu lifted the embroidered door-curtain and entered... [Bao-yu and Dai-yu] then reclined, facing each other, at opposite ends of the bed” (寶玉揭起繡線軟簾, 進入裡間...二人對著臉兒躺下).<sup>224</sup> At the moment of facing each other closely on the bed, “[Bao-yu] was preoccupied with a subtle fragrance which seemed to emanate from Dao-yu's sleeve — a fragrance that intoxicated the senses and caused one to feel rather limp” (只聞見一股幽香, 慾是從黛玉袖中發出, 聞之令人醉魂酥骨).<sup>225</sup> Also, in chapter twenty-six, a “soliloquy overheard in the Naiad's House reveals unsuspected depths of feeling” (瀟湘館春困發幽情), after feeling “a subtle fragrance” outside Dai-yu's boudoir, Bao-yu hears Dai-yu's complaints, “Each day in drowsy waking dream of love” (每日家, 情思睡昏昏) and “felt a sudden yearning for the speaker” (不覺心內癢將起來).<sup>226</sup>

Overall, in three “repeated affective realms,” fragrant odours all appear as a symbolic signals before the hero enters into a mysterious space, and generate a series of bedazzling feelings such

<sup>222</sup> “A faint sweetness” in Hawkes's translation.

<sup>223</sup> Hawkes, vol. 1, p. 393.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid., pp. 393-94.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid., p. 394.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid., p. 516.

as sentimentality, romantic feeling, sensuality, nostalgia and mysteriousness, which finally map these three locations as allegorical place in Bao-yu's psychological journey.

## Chapter 4: Conclusion

This thesis investigates “olfactory aesthetics” by analyzing the association between olfactory narrations, literary cartography, and cultural traditions using *The Story of the Stone* as a case study. The introductory chapter defines two aspects of “olfactory aesthetics”: (1) the process by which the author employs odours as his *xiefa* to develop the figurative aspects of his novel (2) the way in which readers (including the late-imperial commentators of this novel and modern readers such as myself) reconstruct the author’s invention of his olfactory world through analyzing his olfactory narrations. After reviewing certain odour-related *dufa* and literary theories by late-imperial scholars such as Qian Qianyi, and several noteworthy commentators of *The Story of the Stone*, Chapter One clarifies the research purpose of this thesis—developing its own odour-oriented *dufa*. That is to employ odour symbolism, olfactory division, odour distribution (overlap and contrast), olfactory cartography or mapping, and reading the association between odours, affects, and literary spaces, as its approach to reading the thematic significances, allegorical aspects, fictional plots, and characters of the novel.

Overall, this thesis argues that odours are written as the extension or symbol of the individual character’s invisible essence, such as characteristics, personality, and personal temperament. Chapter Two focuses on olfactory division and its connection to the division between “the self” and “the other.” As a novel about the encounter, gathering, and separation between a group of “great lovers,” *qing* is one of its central themes. These “great lovers” show their distinctive perspective toward olfactory division—they recognize other sentimental creatures as the same kind of beings and label them with fragrant odours, while they regard those other lustful and vulgar figures as alien kind and mark them with the foul-smelling odours. Such olfactory

division once again demonstrates that the novel inherited the late-Ming cult of *qing*, especially Feng Menglong's aspiration in establishing the "Doctrine of *Qing*."

Chapter Two also examines the olfactory division from two other fundamental ideological systems in this novel—the immortals' play with the "real" and "unreal," and the Confucian expectation of moral cultivation. Through analyzing "a bag of foul-smelling fluids" and "Dirty Tang and Stinky Han," this chapter also reveals the paradox or dilemma that the author creates when he establishes the entire fictional world. That is, although *qing* is one of the novel's central themes and the author himself is recognized by Rouge Inkstone as a sentimental person with an unenlightened inclination toward *qing*, the author implies to his readers that the hero Bao-yu is no more than "a bag of foul-smelling fluids" and his entire family no different from "Dirty Tang and Stinky Han."

In addition, Chapter Two takes these two phrases as a visual angle to recall several olfactory-oriented perceptions in early Chinese writings. For instance, odours are given ethical implications and political connotations in Confucian elite culture. The Confucian elites mark virtuous gentlemen and harmonious regimes with the delightful scents of the fragrant orchid and the millet grain. In contrast, they label unvirtuous others and chaotic regimes with the foul-smelling odours. Furthermore, the olfactory division is also fundamental in the Buddhist disciplines. Incense is the medium of spiritual communication between the mortal and the immortal, the false and the truth, and the temporary and the infinite. The "bag of foul-smelling fluids" symbolizes human flesh in this karmic life.

Chapter Three of this thesis reads the author's cartography of the garden world. By analyzing the odour distribution (overlap and contrast) in the novel, I argue that the author had prepared an odour map in his mind before establishing the garden world. While the entire garden world

seems full of fragrant odours at first glance, the author distinguishes between several distinctive fragrant symbols, such as floral fragrance, cold fragrance, warm fragrance, and extraordinary fragrance, to create a deliberate literary design. Based on the arguments of the early commentators such as Rouge Inkstone and Wang Xilian, this chapter once again analyzes the symbolic significance of fragrant odours in this novel. At the same time, this analysis takes the olfactory symbolism and the olfactory distribution in the novel to read the personal temperament of the main female protagonists, their relationship with Bao-yu, and their status in the garden world of *qing*. For example, as *qing*-obsessed kinds, both Bao-yu and Dai-yu share the same odours in their inner chambers. While Bao-yu and Bao-chai's boudoirs are filled with fragrant plants (flowers and herbs), Bao-chai's associated odours often form a sharp contrast with Bao-yu's odours. This design implies Bao-chai's marginalized position in this triangular relationship, as well as in the garden world that is determined by *qing*.

This chapter also examines the association between affects, odours, and literary topography through reading three "affective realms" in Bao-yu's psychological journey. After analyzing these three overlapping fragrant boudoirs, this chapter argues that fragrant odours encompass the trinity of femininity, sensory delight, and allegorical and symbolic implications. This trinity also promotes fragrant odours as invisible signals on the eve of the dissolution between reality and illusion, and foreshows the imminent marvelous dream-like experiences.

The increasing interest toward odours in the disciplines of the humanities is not accidental. This lays credit to the long-term attention toward sensory studies [as chapter 1.2 discussed]. There have been pioneering studies of sights and sounds in premodern literature and art, but I hope my thesis lays the groundwork for a new sensory approach—an odour-oriented *dufa*. Through taking *The Story of the Stone* as the case study, the thesis argues that odour is an



effective reading method in reconstructing fictional plots, characters, and thematic contexts. In the process of analyzing odour symbolism, olfactory division, and odour distribution in this epic novel, this thesis also touches upon the long history of premodern Chinese olfactory culture, including Confucian elite culture, religious beliefs, and literary writings describing “female others” such as female ghosts and seductive beauties. My study only represents the beginning, even in terms of the investigation of olfactory phenomena in *The Story of the Stone*. Hence, I would like to expand this study and return to this topic in my doctoral research.

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673CE) and his elder brother Yan Lide 閻立德 (d. 656CE), (61.5 x 191.5 cm), preserved in

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## Appendices

### Appendix A The English Translations of *Xiang* 香

This appendix lists different definitions (aromas and fragrance scents, perfumes and spices, as well as incense) and multiple parts of speech (as nouns, verbs, and adjectives) of *xiang* 香, according to Lin Yutang (1895-1976)'s Chinese-English Dictionary of Modern Usage (Lin Yutang Dangdai Hanying Cidian 林語堂當代漢英詞典).

As nouns, definitions	(1) incense	(2) spices and perfumes	(3) “scent, aroma, and fragrance”	(4) the popularity of individual’s virtue or good name	(5) “a radical”	(6) “a surname”
Examples	“incense table, the altar” (香案 <i>xiang an</i> )	“perfume satchels” (香袋 <i>xiang dai</i> )	in “birds’ twitter and fragrance of flowers” (鳥語花香 <i>niao yu hua xiang</i> )	“leave a good name for posterity” (留香百世 <i>liu xiang bai shi</i> )		
As adjectives, definitions	(1) “nice-smelling, fragrant, aromatic”	(2) “richly satisfying (sleep, food)”	(3) “fond”	(4) “popular”	(5) “pertaining to woman”	
Examples	“scented tea” (香茶 <i>xiang cha</i> )	“sweet and nice-smelling; sweet” (香甜 <i>xiang tian</i> )	“they were very fond of each other” 他們原來很香	“these goods are very popular now” 這種貨很吃香”	“feminine cheeks” (香腮 <i>xiang sai</i> )	
As a verb, definition	(1) “to smell or sniff close to skin in lieu of kissing”					
Examples	“to kiss” (香香嘴 <i>xiangxiang zui</i> )					

## Appendix B Notes on the Choice of *The Story of the Stone*'s Manuscripts, English Translation, and Commentaries

*Shitou ji* 石頭記 (*Story of the Stone*; also known as *Honglou meng* 紅樓夢 [*Dream of the Red Chamber*]) is a mid-Qing (1636-1912) vernacular Chinese novel, attributed to Cao Xueqin 曹雪芹 (1715-1763). The choice of this novel is in recognition of its encyclopedic cultural resonance and its status as the most fully-worked-out examples of olfactory aesthetics in the novel form.

This thesis relies on David Hawkes and John Minford's English translation of *The Story of the Stone*, in consideration of the vivid translations of poems and songs, puns and allusions, names and dialogues in this version. In some cases where the odour-related terms are not directly translated or omitted, I add my own English translation to supplement this gap.

The decision to base my analysis of the novel on *Wang Xilian pingben xinjuan quanbu xiuxiang Honglou meng* 王希廉評本新鐫全部繡像紅樓夢 (The Completed Work of *Dream of the Red Chamber* with Wang Xilian's Commentaries and New-engraved Illustrations), a facsimile reprinting of the Daoguang 道光 (1782-1850) renchen 壬辰 (1832) edition, published by Taipei 台北 Guangwen shuju 廣文書局 in 1977, is based on two factors: (1) there is no absolute clarification of the choice of Chinese manuscript in Hawkes' translation. When I check my quotations, I notice that the *Wang Xilian* edition basically corresponds to Hawkes's English translation. (2) This thesis is indebted to Wang Xilian 王希廉 (1805-1878)'s comments on odours in this novel. The *Wang Xilian* edition includes a nineteen-page "*Honglou meng zongping*" 紅樓夢總評 (Prefatory Essay on *Dream of the Red Chamber*), and his chapter-by-chapter commentaries, both of which serve as source material for my analysis.

In addition to Wang Xilian and his commentaries, this thesis also quotes several *dufa* 讀法 (“How-to Read”) essays (or other forms of prefatory essays) and commentaries written by late-imperial Chinese commentators on *The Story of the Stone*, including Rouge Inkstone 脂硯齋 (fl. 18<sup>th</sup> century; with commentaries range from 1754 to 1784), Tu Ying 涂贏 (fl. early 19<sup>th</sup> century), Mingzhai Zhuren 明齋主人 (Master of Ming Studio; fl. 19<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup> century). By analyzing their *dufa* for examples of olfactory phenomena in this novel, I invent my own *dufa*, based on such concepts as olfactory division, odour distribution, and odour cartography.

In terms of Rouge Inkstone’s commentaries, this thesis uses two editions of *Zhiyanzhai chongping Shitou ji* 脂硯齋重評石頭記 (Repeated Commentary on *the Story of the Stone* by Rouge Inkstone) including (1) Shanghai: Shanghai Classics Publishing House, 1985 [1981]. This edition is the facsimile reprinting of the *jimao* 己卯 (1759) manuscript. In the preface to this book, Feng Qiyong 馮其庸 (1924-2017) notes, “The currently preserved *gengchen* manuscript is documented from the *jimao* manuscript...In the presently preserved manuscripts of *The Story of the Stone*, the *jimao* edition is the earliest manuscript, as well as the one that is closest [to what scholars believe might be] the original manuscript of this novel.” (現存庚辰本是據怡府過錄己卯本抄的...在目前的《石頭記》早期抄本中, 己卯本是過錄的最早的一個本子, 也是最接近原稿面貌的一個本子.) (7-8). (2) Tianjin: Tianjin guji chubanshe, 2 vols, 2006. This edition takes the *gengchen* 庚辰 (1760) manuscript as the foundation and also consults versions such as the *menggu* 蒙府 and *jiachen* 甲辰 (1754) manuscripts. This thesis also refers to the *gengchen* edition because it collects several commentaries that are not in the *jimao* edition.

This thesis also refers to Tu Ying's "*Honglou meng wenda*" 紅樓夢問答 (Questions and Responses on the *Dream of the Red Chamber*), an anonymous commentator's "Mingzhai zhuren zongping" 明齋主人總評 (General Comments by the Master of Ming Studio), and another anonymous scholar (fl. 19<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup> century)'s "*Shitouji pingzan xu*" 石頭記評讚序 (The Preface of The Eulogy of *The Story of the Stone*), since they either include odour-related comments or help us to understand the author's depiction of his olfactory world.

Finally, this paper focus only on the first eighty chapters of *The Story of the Stone*, since I notice that the olfactory narrations in the last forty chapters decrease noticeably compared to the former. In using digital word searches of odour-relevant keywords such as *qi* 氣, *wei* 味, *xiang* 香, *fen* 芬, *fang* 芳, *xiu* or *chou* 臭, *xing* 腥, and *sao* 騷. I observe that olfactory narrations (especially the characters' discussions, comments, thoughts, and poetic interpretations of odours) in the last forty chapters are far less than the first eighty. Also, after chapter eighty, the author(s)' implicit narrations of odours with symbolic meanings and metaphorical implications are much less prominent. I argue that my findings regarding this phenomenon contribute to the general presumption that Gao E 高鶚 (1758-1815) is the author of the last forty chapters and could suggest the original author's olfactory design (or *xiefu*) is either not fully developed in the final chapters or that Gao E was not fully aware of its significance, [or, perhaps, represents a signal of fading fragrance of the Garden world disappears.]

## Appendix C Notes on the Choice of Earlier Texts

In addition to the analysis of olfactory narrations in *The Story of the Stone*, this thesis also recalls several crucial historical moments when odours are given symbolic meanings and metaphorical implications in early Chinese writings. In passing, I comment on the political implications and moral values perceived to be inherent in the pre-Qin (221-206BCE) and Han (202 BCE-220CE) texts, foul-smelling odours and “female aliens” in *Taiping guangji* 太平廣記 (*Extensive Records Completed in Taiping Era*), compiled in 977-978, the symbolic use of *xiang* 香 (aromas and fragrant scents, spices and perfumes, and incense) as part of moral-cultivation among Northern Song (960-1127) elites, and writing odours as a symbolic or affective signal in late-imperial (14th-19th century) Chinese literary works. These typical olfactory examples help elucidate the olfactory world in *The Story of The Stone* (and its cultural legacies) and reinforce my arguments—applying odours, especially odour symbolism and olfactory division, as *xiefa* or *dufa* in the literary imagination.