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## The Storyteller's Manner in Chinese Storytelling

### Abstract

This study examines the concept of “the storyteller’s manner” in the Chinese vernacular novel and short story from the perspective of contemporary and premodern storytelling in China. The episode of “Wu Song Fights the Tiger” from the Ming novel *Shuihu zhuan* is analysed with a view to its narrative form as exemplified in the novel, in oral performance by the famous Yangzhou storyteller Wang Shaotang (1889–1968) and his disciples, in a book edition of Wang Shaotang’s repertoire, and in some selected examples of other oral-related storytelling genres in written form, so-called “tell-sing” (*shuochang*) literature. Against this background a set of narrative features is discussed, such as division into chapters, type of narrator, narrator’s comment and simulated dialogue with the audience, alternation of prose and verse, and stock phrases of introduction, connection, and conclusion. The author emphasizes the importance of studying the living oral traditions as performed orally in order to develop our understanding of the interplay of oral and literary elements in the existing oral traditions as well as in the vernacular literature from the medieval to the modern period.

**Keywords:** storytelling—storyteller’s manner—Chinese vernacular novel—Yangzhou storytelling—*shuoshu*—*shuochang*—Wang Shaotang—orality and literacy

THE EARLY CHINESE NOVEL (*zhanghui xiaoshuo* 章回小說) and short story (*huaben* 話本), handed down in printed editions from the Ming (1368–1644) and Qing (1644–1911) periods, are characterized by a narrative style, referred to as the “storytelling form” (*shuoshuti* 說書體),<sup>1</sup> the “storyteller’s manner,” the “simulacrum of the oral storyteller,” the “storyteller’s rhetoric,” and so on. This narrative style implies that the narrator’s persona is inevitably cast in the mold of a professional storyteller who apparently “tells” his tales for a “listening” audience: the written text incorporates a number of linguistic signals to establish a kind of pseudo-oral communication situation. This style in vernacular fiction lasted until the impact of the Western novel at the beginning of the twentieth century. Not only its literary function, subtly changing through time in the hands of different authors, but also its enduring continuance as a genre constituting framework have been explored from many angles.<sup>2</sup>

Chinese storytelling (*shuohua* 說話, *shuoshu* 說書)<sup>3</sup> as a professional oral art has existed since the Song dynasty (960–1276), and its persistence as a living social phenomenon into the twenty-first century is no less remarkable than the textual survival of the “eternal storyteller” in the novel and short story. Many of the present local genres can be traced back more than four hundred years in historical sources. Their roots must be sought in much older traditions for which the sources are unfortunately scarce and scattered. New genres keep growing out of the former, and their interrelationships are often most complicated.

In this article I want to discuss the manifestation of a “storyteller’s manner” in Chinese storytelling as performed orally and registered on audio and video recordings during the latter half of the twentieth century. Further I shall discuss the scope of the concept from the perspective of the range of possibilities that Chinese storytelling offers when we take a look at some random genres that are preserved in oral-related written versions from premodern and modern times.

The focus is primarily on a certain local genre of Chinese storytelling,





FIGURE 1. Wang Shaotang during performance. Frontispiece photo in Wang Shaotang 1985. Photographer anonymous. Photo edition by Jette Ross. Courtesy of Strange Ross.

Yangzhou storytelling (*Yangzhou pinghua* 揚州評話), and a certain performance theme, namely the opening part of the WATER MARGIN<sup>1</sup> repertoire of the Wang School in Yangzhou storytelling (*Wang pai SHUIHU* 王派水滸): The famous story about “Wu Song Fights the Tiger on Jingyang Ridge” (*Jingyanggang Wu Song da hu* 景陽崗武松打虎). The episode is well-known from the Ming novel *Shuihu zhuan* 水滸傳 as well as from drama (*xiqu* 戲曲) and the performed narrative arts (*quyi* 曲藝), also called “tell-sing” genres (*shuochang* 說唱).<sup>5</sup>

The main example is an audio recording of the great master of the Wang school, Wang Shaotang 王少堂 (1889–1968). This recording, containing the first installment of the “Ten Chapters on Wu Song” (*Wu shi hui* 武十回), that is, the first section of the tale about Wu Song and the tiger, was broadcast by Nanjing radio in 1961.<sup>6</sup> The recording is analyzed against the background of earlier research on the repertoire of the Wang school disciples, in particular a number of performances of the same tale, recorded in the 1980s and 1990s.<sup>7</sup>

Thus the “storyteller’s manner” of the novel is compared, on the one hand, to the oral performances by Yangzhou storytellers spanning the last half-century. On the other hand “the manner” is analyzed in the perspective of a sampling of oral-related “Wu Song and Tiger” texts of a variety of performance genres from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries belonging to “tell-sing literature” (*shuochang wenxue* 說唱文學) in the broad sense, that is, narrated, chanted and narrated-and-chanted forms.<sup>8</sup>

#### THE “MANNER” OF MING AND QING FICTION

In the written tradition of Chinese vernacular long and short fiction from the sixteenth to the twentieth century, the “storyteller’s manner” constitutes the general framework for the narrative space of communication (IDEMA 1974, 70; ZHAO 1995, 41–69).<sup>9</sup> The Ming novel, *Shuihu zhuan* exemplifies the idea of this “manner” to its full extent. For our present purpose the analysis of the novel is restricted to Chapter Twenty-Three.<sup>10</sup>

#### *Division into “Sessions”*

The novel is divided into “sessions” (*hui* 回), usually translated as “chapters.” The Chinese word *hui* is, in its primary sense, related to the idea of “rounds” or “returns” of oral performance rather than to sections of written materials (IDEMA 1974, 10; EOYANG 1977, 57).

Each chapter is headed by a couplet title:

- a. Chapter Twenty-Three: Chai Jin Accommodates Guests in Henghai County and Wu Song Fights a Tiger on Jingyang Ridge

*Di ershisan hui: Henghaijun Chai Jin liu bin, Jingyanggang Wu Song da hu*

第二十三回：橫海郡柴進留賓，景陽崗武松打虎<sup>11</sup>

### *Narrator's Type*

The narrator takes the stance of the oral professional storyteller, telling in the third person. The narrator is not a participant in the events he tells about:<sup>12</sup>

b. It is told that after Wu Song had taken leave of Song Jiang, he put up that night at an inn.

*Zhi shuo Wu Song zi yu Song Jiang fenbie zhi hou, dang wan tou kedian xiele.*

只說武松自與宋江分別之後，當晚投客店歇了。<sup>13</sup>

In a few rare instances the narrator points to himself as “the storyteller” (*shuohuade* 說話的), changing from being a covert to an overt narrator. In Chapter Twenty-Three we have one such instance in the form of an interruption of the tale by a remark from the audience (or the implied reader) directed to the storyteller:<sup>14</sup>

c. Storyteller, why did Chai Jin not like Wu Song?

*Shuohuade, Chai Jin yin he bu xi Wu Song?*

妳說話的，柴進因何不喜武松？<sup>15</sup>

### *Narrator's Comment and Simulated Dialogue*

Narrative passages are interrupted ever so often with narrator's comment and simulated dialogue with the audience. Apart from being a case of the narrator in the role as an *overt* narrator, example (c) quoted above is also an example of simulated dialogue. In this passage the simulated dialogue imitates a situation where someone among the audience raises a question to the storyteller. Then follows the storyteller's comment, an explanation of the question:

d. Actually, when Wu Song had first sought refuge in the house of Chai Jin, he had been treated just as well as other guests...

*Yuanlai Wu Song chu lai touben Chai Jin shi, ye yiban jienna guandai...*

原來武松初來投奔柴進時，也一般接納管待...<sup>16</sup>

*Prose and Poetry*

Rhymed and non-rhymed poetry is inserted at fairly regular intervals, but prose is the dominating style. The number of poems found in the novel varies according to the edition. Some editions have a relatively high frequency of poetry passages, while others only have a sprinkling. While the alternation of poetry and prose is a pertinent feature of the “manner,” the *frequency* of inserted poems is not. For example, the seventy-chapter edition of *Jin Shengtan* (the *Jinben*, also called the seventy-one chapter edition) has few poems, while the *Rongyutangben* has a much higher amount. In the latter edition there are six passages of rhymed poetry, inserted intermittently throughout the prose narrative of the chapter (none of them are found in the *Jinben*), for example:

- e. Of those that went before, a thousand came to grief;  
That the next will safely pass is surely beyond belief!  
In pointing out the facts nothing but kindness is meant;  
But the fool with his suspicions imagines an ill intent!<sup>17</sup>

*Qian che daoliao qian qian liang;*

*Hou che guoliao yi ru ran!*

*Fenming zhi yu ping chuan lu;*

*que ba zhong yan dang e yan!*

前車倒了千千輛;

後車過了亦如然!

分明指與平川路;

卻把忠言當惡言!<sup>18</sup>

Apart from the title couplets, two other non-rhymed couplets are found at the end of the chapter (also in the *Jinben*), for example:

- f. Blades will whistle and heads will roll,  
Bright swords be drawn and the hot blood flow.<sup>19</sup>

*Gangdao xiang chu ren tou gun,*

*Baojian hui shi re xue liu.*

鋼刀響處人頭滾,

寶劍揮時熱血流。<sup>20</sup>

Does the “manner” of the novel invite us to use the word “prosimetric” for the kind of alternation between prose and metric forms that we find here? This would depend on our approach: If we want to study “mixed forms,” that is, the various manifestations of the intermingling of prose and verse—prosimetrum as a feature of Chinese literature—the case of the Ming and Qing novels would be important.<sup>21</sup> But if we want to categorize existing gen-

res according to a tripartite division into prose, metric, and prosimetric genres, we would hardly choose to include the novel in the prosimetric group, because prosimetric features are comparatively weak in this genre. There is, on the other hand, a wealth of genres where alternation between prose and verse is fairly balanced, and this group of genres, many of them closely related to oral performance, is often referred to as prosimetric (IDEMA 1986 and MAIR 1997). While the word “prosimetric” can thus be applied according to its definitions and ambiguities, the Chinese term “tell-sing” (*shuochang*) contains a partly different spectrum of definitions and ambiguities. A translation of “prosimetric” as *shuochang* or—the other way—of *shuochang* as “prosimetric,” is therefore apt only under certain conditions. In our present discussion of the manner of the novel, we have such a case in point: the alternation of verse and prose is indeed a feature of the novel, a feature that we may consider a prosimetric or “mixed” form. But we would not consider the novel a genre of “tell-sing literature” because the novel is regarded as literature for reading, not for performance.<sup>22</sup>

#### *Stock Phrases*

Throughout the novel, chapters are frequently introduced by the phrase “The story says” (*hua shuo* 話說), and concluded by “As to whom it really was, please listen to the explanation of the next session” (*zheng shi shen ren, qie ting xia hui fenjie* 正是甚人且聽下回分解). Paragraphs are connected by the phrases “The story divides in two” (*hua fen liang tou* 話分兩頭), “Meanwhile [let’s] tell” (*qie shuo* 且說), and so on. Ellipses are marked by “The story doesn’t tell...it only tells” (*hua zhong bu shuo...zhi shuo* 話中不說...只說), “The story doesn’t go into petty detail” (*hua xiu xu fan* 話休絮繁), and so forth. Paragraphs are concluded by phrases such as: “This does not belong to the story” (*bu zai hua xia* 不在話下), among others. Chapter Twenty-Three is no exception: After a prologue poem (*shi* 詩) the chapter begins:

g. The story says that because Song Jiang had...

*Hua shuo Song Jiang yin...*

話說宋江因...<sup>23</sup>

After a few paragraphs, a description is closed with:

h. ...Chai Jin prepared a feast and had sheep and pigs butchered in order to entertain Song Jiang, but this does not belong to the story.

*...Chai Jin anpai ximian, sha yang sha zhu, guandai Song Jiang, bu zai hua xia.*

...柴進安排席面, 殺羊宰豬, 管待宋江, 不在話下.<sup>24</sup>

Again after another two paragraphs, the storyline takes a new direction:

- i.* From then on Song Jiang and his younger brother stayed in the manor of Lord Chai. Here the story divides in two...

*Song Jiang dixiong liangge, zici zhi zai Chai daguanren zhuang shang.  
Hua fen liang tou...*

宋江弟兄兩個，自此只在柴大官人莊上。話分兩頭...<sup>25</sup>

And the chapter ends on a note of suspense:

- j.* As to whom it really was that called out for Captain Wu, please listen to the explanation of the next session.

*Bijing jiaohuan Wu dutou de zheng shi shen ren, qie ting xia hui fen jie*  
畢竟叫喚武都頭的正是甚人，且聽下回分解。<sup>26</sup>

There are also other kinds of fixed phrases, serving as tags for introducing poems, such as: “indeed:...” (*zheng shi*:...正是:...), “just look:...” or “all one could see was...” (*dan jian*...但見...), “There is a saying...” (*you fen jiao*...有分教...), and so on. These expressions are regularly used also in Chapter Twenty-Three before the poems and couplets.

In Chinese literature these fixed expressions (*taoyu* 套語) are strong markers of genre, signalling that the discourse belongs to traditional vernacular fiction, just as in Western literature the expression “Once upon a time...” signals the genre of the fairy tale. Reference to oral performance instead of writing and reading is inherent in the choice of vocabulary that primarily points to the oral, aural, and visual situation of “telling,” “listening,” and “seeing.”

#### THE “MANNER” OF CONTEMPORARY YANGZHOU PINGHUA

Yangzhou storytelling (*Yangzhou pinghua*) belongs to the large family of local genres of professional storytelling (*shuoshu*) that have survived in China to the present. The storytellers tell their long tales in daily sessions in the storytellers’ house (*shuchang* 書場) during a period of two to three months at a time. How are the above-mentioned features of the “manner” manifested in the tale of “Wu Song Fights the Tiger,” as told by Wang Shaotang and his disciples Wang Xiaotang 王篠堂 (1918–2000), Li Xintang 李信堂 (b. 1935), Ren Jitang 任繼堂 (b. 1942), and Chen Yintang 陳隱堂 (b. 1951)?<sup>27</sup>

The performances are divided into “sessions,” called “one day of storytelling” (*yi tian shu* 一天書) or “one setting of storytelling” (*yi chang shu* 一場書), nowadays lasting about two hours with a short break in the middle (BØRDAHL ed. 1999, 231–32). The parts that can be told without a break are

called “rounds” (*zhuan* 轉) or “sections” (*duanzi* 段子). Most of the recordings of the Wang School storytellers’ performances of the tiger tale that I have collected, correspond to “sections” of approximately thirty to forty minutes.<sup>28</sup> The performance by Wang Xiaotang in 1992, however, had approximately the length and structure of “one day of storytelling,” and Ren Jitang told the story as two separate “sections” in 1989 and 1992, so that they in combination correspond roughly to “one day.”<sup>29</sup>

The word “return” or “chapter” is never used for oral performance. Whenever storytelling is transferred, however, into the printed medium, the Chinese editors cut the tales into chapters according to their own sense of logic and length. Such divisions may differ considerably from the storytellers’ traditional habit of intersection. Below we shall look more in detail on this.

In almost all cases the storytellers begin the tiger tale with a recitation of the couplet title that we recognize from the novel, thus:

1. Chai Jin accommodates guests in Henghai County

Wu Song fights a tiger on Jingyang Ridge.

*Henghaijun Chai Jin liu bin*

*Jingyanggang Wu Song da hu*<sup>30</sup>

橫海郡柴進留賓

景陽崗武松打虎。<sup>31</sup>

The recitation of a “title,” a couplet with obvious connection to the novel, is the only case of such a beginning in my collection of recordings by storytellers from various schools of Yangzhou storytelling. It must be remembered that this is the very beginning of the entire cycle of WATER MARGIN in the Wang School repertoire. It is, however, interesting that the couplet is used as a pure ornament with little connection to what is told afterwards. The storytellers of the Wang School never tell anything about the events at Chai Jin’s manor (the first part of Chapter Twenty-Three in the novel). They start head on with the hero Wu Song taking leave and being off on his way to see his brother.

The narrator tells his story as a third person narrator who takes no part in his own story, a similar stance to that found in the novel *Shuihu zhuan*. This is the way Wang Shaotang begins his tale, just after the previous couplet:

2. Second Brother from Guankou, Wu Song, was in Henghai County at the estate of Lord Chai when he received news from his elder brother. He bade farewell to Chai Jin, and went off to Yanggu District in Shandong to find his brother. He was not only one day on the road, he had marched for more than twenty days, and today he

had reached the boundary of Yanggu District in Shandong, more than twenty *li* from the city. It was in the middle of the tenth month, and now the sun was slanting steeply towards the west.

*Guankou erlang Wu Song zai Henghaijun Chai zhuang dezhe gege xiaoxi, cibie Chai Jin, ganben Shandong Yangguxian xun xiong. Zai lu fei zhi yi ri, zoule ershi yu tian, jinri yi di Shandong Yangguxian dijie, li cheng ershi yu li. Qishi shiyue zhongxun tianqi, taiyang da pian xi.*

灌口二郎武松在橫海郡柴莊得著哥哥消息，辭別柴進，  
趕奔山東陽谷縣尋兄。在路非止一日，走了二十餘天，  
今日已抵山東陽谷縣他界，離城二十餘里。其時十月中旬天氣，  
太陽大偏西。<sup>32</sup>

The Yangzhou storytellers, however, now and again intrude into the tale with a reference to the actual storyteller as overt narrator in the first person: “I” (*wo* 我), “I, the storyteller” (*wo shuoshuren* 我說書人), “I who tell the story” (*wo shuode ren* 我說的人) (BØRDAHL 1996, 189–94).

3. Second Master Wu deftly fished out a piece—a piece which, as I, the storyteller, may inform you, weighed more than one *tael*—and placed it on the counter.

*Wu Erye suishou nianle yikuai, zhekuai yinzi zai wo shuode ren jiaodai, you yiliang duo li, jiu chao guitaishang zhe yi fang.*

武二爺隨手拈了一塊，這塊銀子在我說的人交待，有一兩多哩，  
就朝櫃檯上這一放。<sup>33</sup>

The narrator interrupts his narrative regularly with narrator’s comment and simulated dialogue with the audience. The reason why the storyteller’s dialogue with his audience is called “simulated” is that in the traditional setting of the storytellers’ house in Yangzhou, the audience is never taking part in a real dialogue with the storyteller. The storyteller’s questions and answers are “rhetorical,” that is, “asking and answering by oneself” (*ziwen zida* 自問自答), in the sense that he never expects any actual questions or answer from his audience.<sup>34</sup>

4. The moment he glanced inside the inn, he saw brand-new tables and stools, a brand-new kitchen-range, a brand-new chopping-board, a brand-new counter and also two brand-new people. You must be joking! Other things can be “new,” but how can people be “new”? Why not?

*Zai chao dianli yi wang zhi jian cuzhanxin zhuodeng, cuzhanxin guozao, cuzhanxin andeng, cuzhanxin guitai, haiyou liangge cuzhan-*

*xin de ren...ni shuo xiaohua le, pangde dongxi you xinde, ren nali hui  
you xinde? Hechang bu de?*

再朝店裡一望只見簇嶄新桌凳, 簇嶄新鍋灶, 簇嶄新案凳, 簇嶄新櫃檯,  
還有兩個簇嶄新的人...你說笑話了, 旁的東西有新的,  
人哪裡會有新的?何嘗不得?<sup>35</sup>

Rhymed and non-rhymed poetry is inserted at fairly regular intervals. Not every performance, however, contains a poem, and poetry cannot be considered an obligatory ingredient. But some passages are usually told with a recitation of poems or couplets at certain points. Continuing from the above passage, we have an example of the shifting between prose and poetry in a narrator's comment:

5. Behind the counter sat a young innkeeper, just in his twenties. In front of the counter stood a young waiter, eighteen or nineteen. Probably young people could be called "new" people. And then it follows that old people might be called "worn" people. The proverb is right:

Wave upon wave the Yangzi River flows,  
New people overtake the elder generation.

So people can also be counted as "new."

*Guitai litou zuole ge xiao laoban, ershiwai sui, guitai waitou  
zhanle ge paotangde, shibajiu sui, dagai qingnianren jiu wei zhi xin ren.  
Guoran nian lao de ren dangran jiu cheng jiu ren le. Suyu shuode hao:*

*Changjiang hou lang cui qian lang,  
shishang xin ren zan jiu ren.*

*Zhe ye yao suande yi xin.*

櫃檯裡頭坐了個小老板, 二十外歲, 櫃檯外頭站了個跑堂的,  
十八九歲大概青年人就謂之新人. 果然年老的人當然就稱舊人了.  
俗語說得好:

“長江後浪催前浪,  
世上新人趨舊人”  
這也要算得一新.<sup>36</sup>

The stock phrases, which so conspicuously characterize the "manner" of Ming and Qing fiction, are almost absent in my corpus of oral performances. When introducing poems and proverbs, however, the Yangzhou storyteller may occasionally use short fixed phrases, the same as those common in the vernacular literature: "Indeed:..." (*zheng shi:...* 正是...):

6. Indeed:

Clearly knowing there was a tiger in the mountain,  
He obstinately climbed that tiger mountain.

*Zheng shi:*

*Ming zhi shan you hu,  
pian xiang hu shan xing.*

正是:

明知山有虎, 偏向虎山行.<sup>37</sup>

When coming to a fine description of a landscape or person, we find the expression “one only saw...,” “all one could see was...” (*zhi jian* 只見... or *zhi kanjian* 只看見...) perhaps reminiscent of the phrase “just look:...” or “all one could see was...” (*dan jian* 但見...) from the early vernacular fiction.

7. The moment he looked up, he only saw in the distance a pitch-black town.

*Tai tou yi wang, zhi jian yuanyuande wuhanhan yizuo zhenshi.*

抬頭一望, 只見遠遠的烏酣酣一座鎮市.<sup>38</sup>

In the living oral tradition of Yangzhou storytelling, we find that division into sessions and sections of the long sagas, frequent narrator’s comment and simulated dialogue as well as a certain alternation between prose and poetry are important genre conventions. The “storyteller’s stock phrases,” that is, the regular application of fixed phrases of introduction, connection, and conclusion is, however, largely absent in *pinghua* as recorded in my collection.

#### THE FORCE OF THE WRITTEN “MANNER”

In the 1950s and 1960s, a tremendous amount of work was undertaken in China to preserve the oral traditions in written form and this work was continued from the 1980s. The contribution of the Chinese folk artists and folklorists who collaborated on this enormous enterprise is of immense value for our continued enjoyment and research of the oral arts. The “translation” of oral performance into the written and printed page will always present the editor with a range of questions and choices of how to present the spoken text in the written medium. For the purpose of my research, I have often chosen other solutions of presentation than those of the Chinese editors, since my focus, aim, and potential readership is obviously very different from theirs. The ways in which editorial conceptions and principles give written shape to oral performances are of course of basic importance for the study of the performed narrative arts.

In the 1950s, half of Wang Shaotang’s WATER MARGIN repertoire was

taken down in transcription/recorded on wire and edited into two major works, *Wu Song* 1959, and, posthumously, *Song Jiang* 1985.<sup>39</sup> A comparison of the radio tape (1961) and the book version (1959) will serve as our point of departure for a discussion of the force of the written “manner.”

*The Sound of Wang Shaotang and the Published Book*

The first “session” on the radio, as reproduced on my tape copy, lasts thirty minutes, corresponding roughly to one fourth of a regular session in the storytellers’ house (BØRDAHL 1996, 23–30). The contents are, however, not altered or concentrated to fit the format of the radio, but the story is told in the usual tempo as can be inferred from performances by Wang Shaotang’s disciples (BØRDAHL 1996, 183–87). Therefore the first radio performance does not tell the entire story of how Wu Song fought the tiger, but only covers the subject matter of the first two sub-episodes inside the story, “The Inn” and “The Quarrel.”<sup>40</sup> “The Inn” is about how Wu Song, on his way to see his older brother, arrives at Jingyang Town where he stays in the local inn and drinks thirty cups of the strong house wine and—mightily drunk—pays his bill so as to continue on his journey. “The Quarrel” arises when Wu Song gives a tip to the waiter over which the young owner and the waiter argue until the old innkeeper returns to make peace. At this point the performance stops. Presumably Wu Song will, during the next three radio sessions, climb the mountain of Jingyang Ridge and engage in the life-and-death fight with the tiger. But this part of the broadcast is not available at present. The radio recording of the first two sub-episodes from “Wu Song Fights the Tiger” will serve as the main example for the analysis in the following.

Listening in 1998 to the 1961 radio tape, I was for the first time able to confirm something I had had a strong presentiment about: Wang Shaotang’s oral performance was different from the printed version in *Wu Song*, published two years earlier in 1959, and the differences were intimately connected with the editorial practice adopted for the book. Wang Shaotang performs on the radio very much in the way one would expect on the evidence of the performances by his later disciples. One can immediately establish the fact that Wang Shaotang does not read from his book when he performs on the radio. He tells his tale in the living, ever-changing language of Yangzhou *pinghua* in oral performance: what is even more significant in the context of the present study is that his performance follows the genre rules of *pinghua*, as we have demonstrated above, while the book version to some degree follows other genre conventions.



### *Division*

The text of the book is divided into chapters with numbers and titles. Thus the first chapter of the book is called “Chapter One, Fighting the Tiger on Jingyang Ridge” (*Di yi hui, Jingyanggang da hu* 第一回 景陽崗打虎). As already mentioned, “chapter” or “return” (*hui*) does not belong to the storytellers’ own terminology for their performances. They never tell “a chapter.” They tell “a day of storytelling” (*yi tian shu*), “a session of storytelling” (*yi chang shu*) or a “section” (*duanzi*). Therefore the layout of the book into *hui* is in itself an adaptation to the “manner” of Chinese “chapter-divided fiction” (*zhanghui xiaoshuo* 章回小說). In the case of the WATER MARGIN repertoire of the Wang School, there is, however, good justification for this arrangement in the storytellers’ own tradition. The four great cycles of WATER MARGIN as told by this school are traditionally named according to their main heroes, and each hero is treated in a long tale of “ten chapters” (*shi hui* 十回), thus: TEN CHAPTERS ON WU SONG (*Wu shi hui* 武十回), TEN CHAPTERS ON SONG JIANG (*Song shi hui* 宋十回), TEN CHAPTERS ON LU JUNYI (*Lu shi hui* 盧十回), and TEN CHAPTERS ON SHI HUI (*Shi shi hui* 石十回). Apart from this usage of *hui* in the naming of the saga, I have never heard this expression used by the storytellers.<sup>41</sup> The contents of the ten chapters of the book edition of *Wu Song* covers roughly the main storyline of Chapters Twenty-Three to Thirty-Two of the Ming novel, but the individual chapters of Wang Shaotang’s book not only comprise a wealth of story material that is not found in the novel, but the chapter divisions are by no means congruent with the layout of the novel. As long as we do not have access to records of the oral performances of the entire repertoire of Wang Shaotang and other Wang School performers, we cannot know how far the oral performances have been rearranged by the editors of the published book version in order to fit better with the structure or the “logic” of the novel *Shuihu zhuan*.<sup>42</sup>

The chapters of *Wu Song* are subdivided into sections, also captioned with numbers and subtitles. Chapter One contains four sections of Wu Song’s adventures: 1. Fighting the Tiger on Jingyanggang (*Yi, Jingyanggang da hu* 一, 景陽崗打虎); 2. Triumphal Procession and Chancing upon Elder Brother (*Er, You jie xun xiong* 二, 游街尋兄); 3. In Charge as a Captain (*San, Canren dutou* 三, 參任都頭); 4. Jinlian Seduces Brother-in-law (*Si, Jinlian xi shu* 四, 金蓮戲叔). The titles of chapters and sections are never used for oral performance and cannot be said to belong to the oral situation of storytelling. They are probably fashioned by the editor, according to his ideas of how to present the saga in the written medium.<sup>43</sup>

While the original meaning of *hui* may have reflected oral performance

in “returns,” the usage of *hui* in the book *Wu Song* has nothing to do with length of performances in Yangzhou *pinghua* generally, or in the Wang School in particular. Here the word carries only the sense of “chapter of a book,” and the ten *hui* are apparently arranged with a certain loose correspondence to the chapters of the Ming novel. The contents of Chapter One corresponds to about five or six sessions or “days” of normal length in the storytellers’ house. The subsections also do not correspond to “a day of storytelling” or a “section” between breaks. The narration is differently sectioned by the editors, with little regard to the dividing breaks of the oral performances and according to other principles than those governing the storytelling situation in the oral tradition.<sup>44</sup>

### *Prologue*

While the Wang School storytellers within my corpus begin their performances of the tiger tale with the couplet “Chai Jin accommodates guests in Henghai County, Wu Song fights a tiger on Jingyang Ridge”—compare examples [a] and [1] above—the book version has eliminated the couplet.<sup>45</sup> Instead a poem has been inserted at the beginning, a poem that the storytellers all recite during the performance, but not at this point. They have this poem after the tiger is killed.<sup>46</sup>

I. Second Brother Wu, his courage was strong,  
stood up and went straight to Jingyang Ridge,  
with his clever fist he killed the mountain tiger,  
since then his great fame has swept over all the world!

*Wu Er yingxiong danqi qiang,  
Tingshen zhi shang Jingyanggang,  
Jing quan dasi shan zhong hu,  
Cong ci weiming tianxia yang!*

武二英雄膽氣強，  
挺身直上景陽崗，  
精拳打死山中虎，  
從此威名天下揚！<sup>47</sup>

On Wang Shaotang’s tape we hear him begin with the couplet—not the poem—which is completely in agreement with his disciples’ spoken versions. Here we seem to find a striking example of how the editors have reorganized the storyteller’s spoken text so that it will fit the expected written genre, a “modern storyteller’s book” (*xin huaben* 新話本) with a small “prologue poem” giving anticipatory information of the heroic deed of Wu Song.<sup>48</sup>

Recitation of a couplet title from *Shuihu zhuan* in the spoken perform-

ance is only found one single time in my collection of recordings from the Wang School. No other performance begins in this way, and no other couplet from the Ming novel is found, neither as a beginning, nor at any other place. In this particular instance the title-couplet seems to function as a special ornament at the start of the entire cycle on Wu Song. In contrast to the general function of prologue poems and other prologue devices, the couplet is devoid of anticipatory comment, and moreover, the first part of the couplet, “Chai Jin accommodates guests in Henghai County,” is never given any attention or elaborated upon by the Wang school storytellers.<sup>49</sup>

*A Gradual Beginning, or “In Medias Res”?*

After the prologue poem the book continues with a couple of paragraphs introducing the subject of WATER MARGIN and the hero Wu Song. This way of beginning is strongly in opposition to the way Yangzhou storytellers use to begin their tales, and in particular the way the Wang School masters begin. They always start “in medias res,” with no explanation of setting or persons. The audience is supposed to have sufficient competence in the fictional world of their tales so that no explanations are warranted. Since the book, on the other hand, is intended for a modern readership all over China, not for the regulars of the storytellers’ house, the editors feel that they must provide a preamble to the story, an explanation of what kind of tale it is, who Wu Song is, and why he has the nickname “Second Brother from Guankou” (*Guankou Erlang* 灌口二郎). Thence the first page of the book is written in Modern Standard Chinese with no trace of Yangzhou dialect.<sup>50</sup> Nothing of this introduction is found on the radio tape, although Wang Shaotang might have felt himself pressed to make a special beginning for the audience of the new medium—the radio. His beginning is, however, completely in line with the oral performances transmitted thirty years later by Wang Xiaotang, his son, and his other disciples. He begins his tale straight away, with no explanation of the background of Wu Song or Chai Jin, and no explanation of what *Guankou Erlang* means, and so on (compare example 2 above.)

*Narrator’s Type, Comment, and Simulated Dialogue*

The narrator of the book version differs from the narrating persona of the oral performance in subtle ways that appear precisely in places where the oral text is likely to have been “corrected” (*zhengli*) by the editors. One such example is found right at the beginning of the first chapter—a passage that we have already found reasons to consider an editorial addition. After the prologue poem, mentioned above, the book version starts like this:

II. These four verse lines embody the praise of later generations for Wu Song, the hero who killed the tiger. Today I shall tell the heroic story about Wu Song, and so I shall begin from his fight with the tiger on Jingyang Ridge.

*Zhe si ju shi shi houren zanmei dahu yingxiong Wu Song de. Jinri wo jiang Wu Song de yingxiong gushi, jiu cong Jingyanggang da hu kaishi.*

這四句詩是後人讚美打虎英雄武松的。今日我講武松的英雄故事，就從景陽崗打虎開始。<sup>51</sup>

This kind of beginning is not found in any of my recordings of the tiger tale as told by Wang Shaotang and the Wang School disciples, and it is also exceedingly rare with other storytellers.<sup>52</sup> The point is that although the storyteller of Yangzhou storytelling is in principle overt as a first person narrator who tells the story (compare example 3), this feature usually only appears after some time during the performance in the form of an “aside” or comment. It is highly unusual to “declare oneself” right at the beginning. As we have seen, the performance of the tiger tale always starts as a third person narrative, impersonal and detached, a general characteristic of the performances of my studies. Therefore the edited version, which announces the first-person storyteller in the very first paragraph, seems to break a general rule of Yangzhou storytelling. This is, however, also against the style of vernacular fiction. The narrative type is, probably unconsciously, changed into a modern model, more like that expected of a person who gives a talk or the like.

As for narrator’s comment and simulated dialogue, we find these features rendered quite faithfully in the book version. But it must be added that the editors explicitly tried to remove much of this kind of narrative because they had to reduce the volume of the original spoken text. They found that comments and digressions were not only fairly easy to eliminate without disturbing the main plot line, but often the portions they wanted to remove for moral or political reasons were also found exactly in comment and digression (WANG Shaotang 1984, Postscript, 1119–20). An example of this editorial attitude is found in the fact that a storyteller’s digression about the tiger’s sexual life has disappeared in the book version. Probably it was found a bit risqué and not in good taste at that time. This episode was told by Wang Xiaotang in 1992 and it is also found in the pre-1949 stencil edition of Wang Shaotang’s performance for the book. It occurs in the second half of the tiger story as told in full, and therefore we cannot at present say if Wang Shaotang decided to include or exclude it in his radio program in 1961 (BØRDAHL 1994 and 1996, 210–11).

*Prose/Poetry and Stock Phrases*

Apart from removing the initial couplet and moving one poem from its usual place in the narrative, other poems and couplets are kept, together with fixed set-pieces in prose. These are all placed along the storyline at points corresponding to those of the oral performances at hand. The poems and couplets found in the radio tape by Wang Shaotang are also the same. The frequency and distribution of such fixed passages in metric form or otherwise marked as “set-piece” seems similar in the oral versions and the printed book.

Even here, however, the editors' polishing into “bookish” style is felt: all the poems are rendered in their most terse form, while in Wang Shaotang and his disciples' orally-performed versions the poems are often slightly modified, eventually with additional markers and particles. Here is a line from the poem describing the wonderful house wine of the inn where Wu Song takes a rest before climbing the tiger mountain, first in the oral version as found on the radio tape 8, then in the book version III:

8. The immortal loved the wine so much he never went home

*Shenxian ta ai jiu dou bu gui jia*

神仙他愛酒都不歸家<sup>53</sup>

III. For love of the wine the immortal never went home

*Shenxian ai jiu bu gui jia*

神仙愛酒不歸家<sup>54</sup>

In the published book *Wu Song* we do occasionally, though rarely, find formulas reminiscent of the formulas of vernacular fiction. In Chapter One, relevant to our focal story, no such formulas are found. Throughout the volume though, certain short sentences indicating ellipsis are used. For example:

IV. I do not need to elaborate on this.

*Wo jiu bu jiaodai le.*

我就不交代了。<sup>55</sup>

V. There is no need to go into petty detail.

*Wu yong fan xu.*

毋庸煩敘<sup>56</sup>

The tape recording by Wang Shaotang from 1961, performed a generation earlier than my recordings of his disciples (1986–1998), just like these does not contain any such stock phrases of introduction, connection, or conclu-

sion. But the lack of such expressions may be due to the restricted focus of the recordings, that is, the fact that my studies of the Wang School were concentrated on the tiger tale and a few other stories. It is hard to say whether those sprinkled around in the book version are in fact reflecting the oral performance, or how far they were added by the editors.<sup>57</sup> Whether added by the editors or not, this kind of “storyteller’s stock phrases” is highly infrequent, also in the published form of Yangzhou storytelling. This is a remarkable difference from the “manner” of the novel.

#### “MANNER” OF PREMODERN AND MODERN STORYTELLING GENRES

The “storyteller’s manner” as found in the written legacy of Chinese fiction has basic features in common with the narrative style that can be observed in present-day performance of storytelling. It is, however, noteworthy that important features of the written “manner” do not necessarily have counterparts in the oral tradition, such as Yangzhou *pinghua*, although this kind of storytelling (*pinghua* and *pingshu*) seems generically closest to the novel (*zhanghui xiaoshuo*) and short story (*huaben*). From this view, it is tempting to put the question: What is the storyteller’s manner in the performed narrative genres of present and recent time in China? Is there any such definable “manner” comparable to or compatible with the simulacrum of storytelling that is a genre-defining characteristic of Chinese vernacular fiction?

#### *Extra-Linguistic Features of Oral Performance*

Oral performance implies not only that the performance is spoken. It implies also an amount of features that belong specifically to the oral performance and cannot be transferred to paper with normal printing technique, that is, the extra-linguistic features that may accompany any oral performance, such as habitual place of performance, stage conditions, number of performers, dress, requisites, gestures, facial expressions, song, music and various techniques of voice production.

First we may consider a number of extra-linguistic features of performance, which are constitutive for various genres of Chinese storytelling in modern time. A simple outline of this aspect of Yangzhou *pinghua* as performed during the last two decades would contain the following characteristics:

- ♦ Place: storytellers’ house (*shuchang*); teahouses, recreation centers, schools, hotels; most often a special platform serving as stage
- ♦ Number and gender of performers: one male storyteller (or, more rarely, one female storyteller)<sup>58</sup>

- ◆ Dress: male: long traditional gown (*changpao* 長袍); female: no special dress
- ◆ Song and music: no singing or music, but intermittent recitation of poetry, both rhymed and non-rhymed
- ◆ Requisites: table, tablecloth, chair, teacup, “talk-stopper” (*zhiyu* 止語),<sup>59</sup> handkerchief and fan
- ◆ Gestures and mime: an essential part of the art
- ◆ Voice production: extra-linguistic voice production: such phenomena as speed, loudness, breathing and voice quality—an important inherent part of the art

Most storytelling arts in China would fit into the above pattern with variations in the number of performers, the role of music and rhythm as well as the use of requisites. The spectrum of variation in gesture, mime and voice-production is quite large. Here we shall just mention a few examples and give the barest outline of the extra-linguistic features:<sup>60</sup>

Beijing drumsong (*Jingyun dagu* 京韻大鼓) is sung by a lead performer who accompanies him/herself in standing position with two rhythm instruments, drum and clappers, to the accompaniment of two string players seated at a table (no “waking block” or other requisites).

Shandong clappertale (*Shandong kuaishu* 山東快書) is told in standing position in rhythmic sentences to the accompaniment of castanets (no table, no “waking block,” and so on).

Suzhou storytelling (*Suzhou pinghua* 蘇州評話) fits the pattern of Yangzhou storytelling, but gestures and movements are on a larger scale.

Suzhou storysinging (*Suzhou tanci* 蘇州彈詞) is alternatively sung and told by two performers who accompany themselves on string instruments when singing; they sit at a table with requisites such as “waking block,” fan, handkerchief, and teacup at hand, like performers of Yangzhou and Suzhou storytelling.

The extra-linguistic area of performance—comprising features that are only simultaneous with speech, but not pertaining to speech in the linguistic sense—is the domain where the oral traditions unfold their particular art as distinct from the written traditions. The storytelling genres show a rich spectrum of potentialities in this area, but few constants that are shared by all the

genres. Notational renderings of oral performances are mostly silent about the extra-linguistic features, but journalism, art criticism, and various kinds of eyewitness reports about storytelling are often concerned particularly with such external description.<sup>61</sup>

### *Linguistic Features of Oral Performance*

Returning to the linguistic area, we shall now approach the question of the “storyteller’s manner” in various genres of Chinese storytelling as rendered in oral-related writings with a close connection to oral performance.

The Wang Shaotang recording (1961) and Chapter One of his book *Wu Song* (1984) that we have just analysed with a view to the question of “manner” are compared in the following to a sampling of oral-related texts of Chinese “tell and sing literature” (*shuochang wenxue*).<sup>62</sup> The compared recording and texts share the same subject matter, namely the narrative of “Wu Song Fights the Tiger.”

In order to establish a first rough picture of the “storyteller’s manner” as manifested in the oral-related texts, the features already discussed above in relation to *Shuihu zhuan* and Yangzhou storytelling shall be tested and arranged in five tables:

1. Division into sessions
2. Narrator type (overt first person narrator)<sup>63</sup>
3. Narrator’s comment and simulated dialogue with audience
4. Prose and verse
5. Stock phrases of introduction, connection and conclusion.

The novel of *Water Margin* (*Shuihu zhuan*)—the oldest written text and the incarnation of “the manner” as found in vernacular fiction for reading—is placed between the bold top lines of the tables. Under this text are placed three texts that represent different performed genres of storytelling in the broad sense: A big drum text (*dagu* 大鼓),<sup>64</sup> a fast tale (*kuai shu* 快書),<sup>65</sup> and a Yangzhou ballad (*Yangzhou qingqu* 揚州清曲).<sup>66</sup> Then follow five texts that represent storytelling in the narrow sense, *pinghua* (in North China called *pingshu*) and *tanci* (also called *nanci* 南詞):<sup>67</sup> A storysinging prologue song (*nanci*),<sup>68</sup> a Fuzhou storytelling chapbook (*Fuzhou pinghua* 福州平話),<sup>69</sup> a Hangzhou storytelling popular romance edition (*Hangzhou pinghua* 杭州評話).<sup>70</sup> Finally there are our two focal texts for this article, Wang Shaotang’s written and oral version of the tiger tale in Yangzhou storytelling (*Yangzhou pinghua*), that is, a popular printed edition, and an oral sound-tape. The oral version is placed between the double lines at the bottom of the tables.

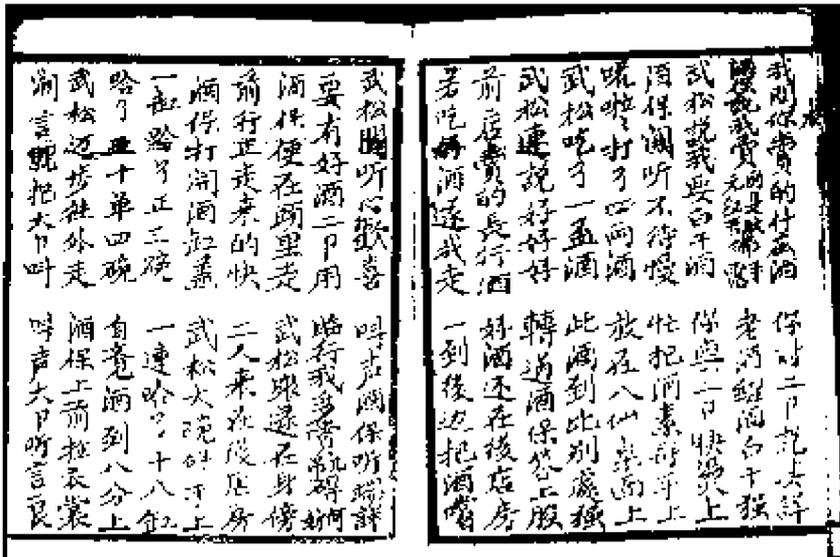


FIGURE 3. A double page from a chapbook edition of the drumtale “Wu Song Fights the Tiger on Jingyang Ridge (*Jinyanggang Wu Song da hu*), Dagushu, Baowentang kanben, Fu Ssu-nien Library, Taipei. [Ku I 9-175, keben dagu.]

### Commentary to Tables

The book edition of Hangzhou storytelling, edited into the format of romance (*yanyi* 演義), has a profile of features completely in agreement with that of the novel *Shuihu zhuan* (table 6). The book edition of Yangzhou storytelling, though not explicitly edited into romance or novel form, is also very close to the novel with respect to the tested features, but diverges in so far as the narrator is more often overt, comment and simulated dialogue with the audience is more frequent, and stock phrases are scant. The testimony of Yangzhou storytelling as performed orally, indicated by the double lines in the tables, is further removed from the novel, since comment and simulated dialogue is represented more frequently in the genuinely oral transmission than anywhere else, while stock phrases of introduction, connection, and conclusion are absent. Only in Yangzhou storytelling do we find the use of an overt narrator in the first person, “I” (*wo*), or “I, the storyteller” (*wo shuoshuren*, *wo shuode ren*), but the novel and Hangzhou storytelling in rare cases use “the storyteller” (*shuohuade*, *shuoshude*) as a reference to the narrator. What the texts mentioned so far have in common is the division into sessions or chapters, a sometimes overt narrator, and narrative prose with occasional poems.

### The storyteller's manner in “Wu Song Fights the Tiger”

Signatures: O=no instances, x=rare, X=regular, XX=often, XXX=dominant feature

TABLE 1. Division into sessions (*chang* 場, *tian* 天, *duanzi* 段子) or chapters (*hui* 回).

X=textually marked as a session or chapter of a larger narrative<sup>71</sup>

O=unmarked in this respect

|   |   |
|---|---|
| X | Novel <i>Zhanghui xiaoshuo</i>                            |
| X | Drumtale <i>Dagu</i>                                      |
| O | Fast tale <i>Kuaishu</i>                                  |
| O | Yangzhou ballad <i>Yangzhou qingqu</i>                    |
| O | Prologue poem, storysinging <i>Kaipian, Nanci</i>         |
| X | Fuzhou storytelling <i>Fuzhou pinghua</i>                 |
| X | Hangzhou storytelling <i>Hangzhou pinghua</i>             |
| X | Yangzhou storytelling <i>Yangzhou pinghua</i>             |
| X | Yangzhou storytelling <i>Yangzhou pinghua</i> <b>Oral</b> |

TABLE 2. Narrator type.

Narrator is always extradiegetic, heterodiegetic, usually covert. X marks the narrator as being sometimes overt, in the first person or named “storyteller.”

|    |   |
|----|---|
| X  | Novel <i>Zhanghui xiaoshuo</i>                            |
| O  | Drumtale <i>Dagu</i>                                      |
| O  | Fast tale <i>Kuaishu</i>                                  |
| O  | Yangzhou ballad <i>Yangzhou qingqu</i>                    |
| O  | Prologue poem, storysinging <i>Kaipian, Nanci</i>         |
| O  | Fuzhou storytelling <i>Fuzhou pinghua</i>                 |
| X  | Hangzhou storytelling <i>Hangzhou pinghua</i>             |
| X  | Yangzhou storytelling <i>Yangzhou pinghua</i>             |
| XX | Yangzhou storytelling <i>Yangzhou pinghua</i> <b>Oral</b> |

TABLE 3. Narrator's comment and simulated dialogue with audience.

|     |   |
|-----|---|
| X   | Novel <i>Zhanghui xiaoshuo</i>                            |
| x   | Drumtale <i>Dagu</i>                                      |
| x   | Fast tale <i>Kuaishu</i>                                  |
| O   | Yangzhou ballad <i>Yangzhou qingqu</i>                    |
| O   | Prologue poem, storysinging <i>Kaipian, Nanci</i>         |
| O   | Fuzhou storytelling <i>Fuzhou pinghua</i>                 |
| X   | Hangzhou storytelling <i>Hangzhou pinghua</i>             |
| XX  | Yangzhou storytelling <i>Yangzhou pinghua</i>             |
| XXX | Yangzhou storytelling <i>Yangzhou pinghua</i> <b>Oral</b> |

TABLE 4. Prose and verse.

XXX=metric throughout, XX=metric with occasional prose passages,  
 X=prosimetric, fairly balanced occurrence of prose and verse, x=prose  
 with occasional poems, O=prose with no metric poetry inserted

|     |   |
|-----|---|
| x   | Novel <i>Zhanghui xiaoshuo</i>                            |
| XXX | Drumtale <i>Dagu</i>                                      |
| XX  | Fast tale <i>Kuaishu</i>                                  |
| XXX | Yangzhou ballad <i>Yangzhou qingqu</i>                    |
| XXX | Prologue poem, storysinging <i>Kaipian, Nanci</i>         |
| X   | Fuzhou storytelling <i>Fuzhou pinghua</i>                 |
| x   | Hangzhou storytelling <i>Hangzhou pinghua</i>             |
| x   | Yangzhou storytelling <i>Yangzhou pinghua</i>             |
| x   | Yangzhou storytelling <i>Yangzhou pinghua</i> <b>Oral</b> |

TABLE 5. Stock phrases of introduction, connection, and conclusion.

|    |   |
|----|---|
| XX | Novel <i>Zhanghui xiaoshuo</i>                            |
| X  | Drumtale <i>Dagu</i>                                      |
| x  | Fast tale <i>Kuaishu</i>                                  |
| O  | Yangzhou ballad <i>Yangzhou qingqu</i>                    |
| O  | Prologue poem, storysinging <i>Kaipian, Nanci</i>         |
| XX | Fuzhou storytelling <i>Fuzhou pinghua</i>                 |
| XX | Hangzhou storytelling <i>Hangzhou pinghua</i>             |
| x  | Yangzhou storytelling <i>Yangzhou pinghua</i>             |
| O  | Yangzhou storytelling <i>Yangzhou pinghua</i> <b>Oral</b> |

TABLE 6. Profiles of tested features.

|   | Division | Narrator | Comment | Prose/poetry | Stock phrase |
|---|----------|----------|---------|--------------|--------------|
| Novel <i>Zhanghui xiaoshuo</i>                            | X        | x        | X       | x            | XX           |
| Drumtale <i>Dagu</i>                                      | X        | O        | x       | XXX          | X            |
| Fast tale <i>Kuaishu</i>                                  | O        | O        | x       | XX           | x            |
| Yangzhou ballad <i>Yangzhou qingqu</i>                    | O        | O        | O       | XXX          | O            |
| Prologue poem, storysinging <i>Kaipian, Nanci</i>         | O        | O        | O       | XXX          | O            |
| Fuzhou storytelling <i>Fuzhou pinghua</i>                 | X        | O        | O       | X            | XX           |
| Hangzhou storytelling <i>Hangzhou pinghua</i>             | X        | x        | X       | x            | XX           |
| Yangzhou storytelling <i>Yangzhou pinghua</i>             | X        | X        | XX      | x            | x            |
| Yangzhou storytelling <i>Yangzhou pinghua</i> <b>Oral</b> | X        | X        | XXX     | x            | O            |

The other genres that I have tested show less homogeneity of features. Several of them are not explicitly marked as being a “session” or part of a longer narrative, something that is most natural since some of the genres are usually not performed in installments, but are used for single events (fast tale, Yangzhou ballad); the storysinging *kaipian* is either performed as a single piece for a single event or as a prologue piece at the beginning of a series of continued sessions of storysinging (BENDER 1998, 345, 352). Both drum-tale and Fuzhou storytelling texts are printed as cheap chapbooks that contain one story per volume, with several volumes making up a set; the text is explicitly mentioned as being part of the set, and the reader is encouraged to “read on” in the following “chapter” or “collection.” While none of these texts have an overt narrator, some (for example, drum-tale and fast tale) have a few cases of narrator’s commentary and simulated dialogue, although this has not been found in Yangzhou ballad, storysinging *kaipian* or Fuzhou storytelling. Further, drum-tale, fast tale, and Fuzhou storytelling have stock phrases of introduction, connection, and conclusion, like the novel and the book editions of Hangzhou and Yangzhou storytelling, but with the exception of Fuzhou storytelling edited as a chapbook, such expressions are comparatively rare.

#### DISCUSSION

##### *The Storyteller’s Manner in Orally-Performed Storytelling from the Twentieth Century*

Wang Shaotang’s oral performance of “Wu Song Fights the Tiger” from 1961, combined with my findings concerning the performances by his disciples of the same story 1986–1998, form the basis for establishing my view of the “storyteller’s manner” within one of the most famous schools of Yangzhou storytelling. The analysis shows that the tale of Wu Song as performed during the last half-century has a narrative framework that is in most aspects close to the “manner” as deduced from the Ming novel. The only striking dissimilarity is the absence of stock phrases of introduction, connection and conclusion. The lack of this feature—generally seen as the most characteristic and ever-present feature of “the storyteller’s manner” or “rhetoric” in the novel—is an important indicator of the discrepancy between the written “simulacrum” and the bona fide storyteller’s style in oral tradition.

The comparison of the oral performance with an edited and published version of the same storyteller’s saga shows how the style of the written version is closer to the “manner” of the novel. The result of the editorial process is a version, not only more compact and logically coherent, as the editors

explicitly mention as their aim, but also more novel-like, and more in style with the “manner,” something not touched upon in the editors’ remarks. In some aspects the edited version is, however, at variance not only with the form of the spoken version, but also with that of the novel: it seems to incorporate some elements of modern informative discourse.

If we aim to study stylistic details, such as the linguistic markers of the “storyteller’s manner,” we must be extremely careful when handling apparently “oral” materials such as the *xin huaben*. The investigation shows how such editions are evidently based on direct observation and recording of oral performance, but have nevertheless passed through the editor’s refining work, leading to adaptations that stand in a more or less close relationship to the oral models, while also incorporating features from literary models.

*The Scope of the Storyteller’s Manner in Oral-Related Written Genres of Storytelling through the Last Century*

Six narratives in various oral-related genres (*shuochang wenxue*), printed during a period ranging from the late-nineteenth century to the 1980s, all taking as their theme the tale of Wu Song and the tiger, are compared to each other, to the novel, and to the above versions from Yangzhou storytelling. Testing the texts with a view to the aspects discussed above as prominent features of the “storyteller’s manner,” we find a more complex situation. Storytelling (*shuoshu*) has a wide meaning in China, comprising many genres of performed arts, including drumtale (*dagu*), fast tale (*kuai shu*), ballad singing (*qingqu*), storysinging (*tanci*), (plain) storytelling (*pinghua*, *pingshu*), and many other genres. In this sense all of the tested texts belong to storytelling. Their narrative style is, however, highly differentiated, and the overall map of tested features reveals that none of the oral-related texts have the same profile. Not even the mixing of prose and poetry is a constant feature, since some of the oral-related texts are in metrum throughout. But we might say that none of the texts are completely devoid of verse passages. If the point of departure is taken—as I have tried to do here—in the typical features of the “storyteller’s manner” of the novel, then such a “manner” cannot be said to have a counterpart in Chinese storytelling in the broad sense.

When we take storytelling, however, in the narrow sense, comprising only plain storytelling (*pinghua*, *pingshu*) and storysinging (*tanci*), we find that—apart from the question of stock phrases—the profiles are close to the “manner” of the novel, while differing more or less from other genres of performance.<sup>72</sup>

*The Oral Origin of the Storyteller's Manner in Ming and Qing Fiction*

On the question of the relationship between the form of oral Chinese storytelling and the form of the written novel, opinions have been divided. Some researchers see the “manner” of the novel and short story as a kind of residual from their origin in professional storytelling.<sup>73</sup> Others consider the “manner” a literary device, the “simulacrum of storytelling,” developed rather late in the history of the novel and short story.<sup>74</sup> This stand may also be combined with an open, inquiring attitude towards the way the “manner” might have taken form from oral models: Was there ever a kind of “notational” mirroring of early storytelling in performance?<sup>75</sup> Patrick HANAN, who was very early in establishing and analysing the “simulacrum” as a convention of written vernacular fiction, is at the same time most cautious in denying any immediate relationship to oral literature: “What complicates the hypothetical relationship between oral and vernacular fiction is the apparent tendency of some later authors to indulge in flourishes that merely suggest oral practice [...] These are to be taken as the literary man’s elaboration of features inherent in the oral model. The original model, presumably, was the professional oral fiction of the Song and Yuan periods, particularly the fictional (*xiaoshuo*) and historical (*jiangshi*) genres. This is the general opinion, and one can only echo it [...] For virtually all vernacular authors, the actual model was earlier vernacular, not oral, fiction” (1981, 21–2; see also pages 5, 9, 29, 55).

Is it possible to draw any conclusions about the written “manner” and its relationship to oral performance on the background of the kind of evidence presented here?

First, one should keep in mind that the oral genres of prose narration that we have any witness about are latecomers in Chinese literary culture. Storytelling as a professional art arrives so late on the historical scene that we can by no means treat this oral culture as a “pristine oral beginning” (PLAKS 1977, 327). Mutual interchange between oral and literary narrative is clearly documented in a number of cases,<sup>76</sup> and must be presupposed as a general condition in both spheres. There is no simple way to decide when a feature belongs to the oral and when to the written style, since borrowing and imitation between the two were and are the rule.

On the other hand, a certain autonomy of the world of oral, spoken/sung art vis á vis the world of the written and printed literature seems also a reasonable presupposition. Since storytelling has existed in China through more than a millenium, we may suppose a certain continuity and inertia also in this sphere. It would be strange, I think, if the storytellers of present time had taken over their narrative form completely from written models.<sup>77</sup> This is one of the reasons why I think it is important to investigate the oral genres in

China today: detailed studies in this field may provide evidence not only for the present state of the arts, but also for earlier oral performance practice about which the written sources are silent.

In the first place, though the general opinion has seen the storyteller style of the novel as a reflection of oral storytelling, this view has been questioned for many reasons. From my present analysis of orally performed and orally registered (audiotape) storytelling from Yangzhou, however, it appears that there is, indeed, from the overall point of view a high degree of correspondence between features from the “manner” of the novel and features from that of the recent storyteller’s performance of “Wu Song Fights the Tiger.”

On the other hand, if fixed phrases of introduction, connection, and conclusion were an indispensable ingredient in the Chinese storyteller’s oral technique, one might have expected in present-day performance a set of modern stock phrases with similar functions as those in the vernacular fiction. Furthermore, in the oral performance tradition such a standard vocabulary might well have been a particularly redundant phenomenon, used over and over again to bind the stories together—a much more frequent feature than in “the storyteller’s manner” simulated in most written fiction before the turn of the twentieth century. The stock phrases of vernacular fiction, apparently representing a most obvious evidence of a direct link between oral literature and the written novels and short stories, have little prevalence in present-day storytelling from Yangzhou. The few formulaic tags for introducing poetry may easily have found their way into the oral storytelling from the style of fiction; there is no reason to consider this part of the vocabulary a remnant of “original oral form.”

Even though one cannot argue that the stock phrases of the novel were directly mirroring the early storytellers’ style, neither can one argue that such phrases did not belong to early storytelling. All one can say on the background of the material presented here is that the stock phrases of introduction, connection, and conclusion do not necessarily belong to oral storytelling in China, as documented by present-day Yangzhou storytelling. Their presence or absence seems closely related to genre, as found in the various subgenres of storytelling/storysinging from the last century. The use of stock phrases in the texts under investigation in general, however, gives a taste of literary “flourish” to the oral style, rather than giving emphasis to the orality of the performance.

I would not pretend that the present study can give significant evidence about early Chinese storytelling, since the scope of study is much too narrow. But a broader investigation along these lines, incorporating many of the still living storytelling traditions in China, and based—not on the book edi-

tions (*xin huaben*)—but on living performance, might give us a picture that would be useful for contemporary as well as historical research.

#### APPENDIX 1

### **Wu Song Fights the Tiger Told by Wang Shaotang**

The first ten minutes of the performance by Wang Shaotang on the radio tape from Nanjing Radio, broadcast 1961. English translation by the author. The whole performance of thirty minutes is published in BØRDAHL and ROSS 2002, 170–97.

Chai Jin accommodates guests in Henghai County  
Wu Song fights a tiger on Jingyang Ridge.

Second Brother from Guankou, Wu Song, was in Henghai County at the estate of Lord Chai when he received news from his elder brother. He bade farewell to Chai Jin, and went off to Yanggu District in Shandong to find his brother. He had been not only one day on the road but had marched for more than twenty days, and today he had reached the boundary of Yanggu District in Shandong, more than twenty *li* from the city. It was in the middle of the tenth month, and now the sun was slanting steeply towards the west.

Our hero felt hungry in his stomach and wanted to take a rest. The moment he looked up, he saw in the distance a pitch-black town. Our hero shouldered his bundle and holding a staff in his right hand, he marched forwards in big strides, making his way to the gate of the town. When he raised his head again and looked up, he saw the wall piled up with flat bricks all the way to the roof and the round city gate. Above it there was a white-washed stone with three red characters: “Jingyang town”.

As he entered the gate, he saw a broad alley, neatly lined with shops on both sides, most of them thatched cottages. There were also quite a few people around. Walking along he noticed an inn to his right, a brand-new thatched cottage with three wings. Under the eaves a brand-new green bamboo pole was stuck into the ground, and hanging on the green bamboo pole there was a brand-new blue wine banner. On the blue wine banner a piece of brand-new pink paper was glued. On the pink paper were written five big brand-new characters: “Three bowls and you cannot cross the ridge!”

The moment he glanced inside the inn, he saw brand-new tables and stools, a brand-new kitchen-range, a brand-new chopping-board, a brand-

new counter and also two brand-new people. You must be joking! Other things can be “new,” but how can people be “new”? Why never ever?

Behind the counter sat a young innkeeper, just in his twenties. In front of the counter stood a young waiter, eighteen or nineteen. Probably young people could be called “new” people. And then it follows that old people might be called “worn” people. The proverb is right:

Wave upon wave the Yangzi River flows,  
New people overtake the elder generation.

So people can also be counted as “new.”

From the other side of the counter he saw the butler standing in the main room, that’s what he is called in storytelling, it’s just the waiter. He was handsome, with a clear brow and bright eyes, white teeth and red lips, a delicate mouth with thin lips: He certainly looked like he had a glib tongue. On his head he wore a soft cap, around his waist he had tied an apron as clean as can be, and down below his feet stood out in cotton socks and cotton shoes. With both hands on his hips he glanced out from the door of the inn. Why did he stand there and look? He was on the lookout for business. Suddenly he caught sight of a customer, bundle on shoulder and staff in hand, who had been approaching and came to a halt. Sure enough, this must be someone who wants to drink some wine. A businessman who sees business coming his way will always give it a warm welcome! So the young fellow, all smiles, hurriedly took a few steps forward, greeting the customer with both hands clasped and a mouthful of phrases in a so-so Beijing accent:

“Sir! Does Your Honour want to take a rest in our humble inn?  
Millet gruel, sorghum, chicken, pancakes, steamed rolls, the food is  
fine and the prices are reasonable. Please, come in and have a seat, Sir!”

“Xiao’er!”

“Yes, Sir!”

“Do you have good wine in this inn?”

Why would Wu Song pose as such a connoisseur! Even before he had entered the door of the inn, he began to ask if they had good wine. Well, he was this kind of lofty and unyielding character, not just like anybody. People of former times had four words they couldn’t do without: Wine, sex, wealth and vigor. These four words are actually not for the good. So people nowadays don’t care too much about those four words. But at that time, they didn’t have any good education, so they couldn’t do without those four words. But Wu Song only cared for two things: He was fond of drinking good wine and he was fond of using his strength on behalf of innocent people—he was so full of

vigor. These were at the same time his weak points that impeded him his whole life. He saw that the town was small and the inn was small, too, so he was afraid that they did not have good wine. He didn't care for wine that was diluted with water, for if that was the case he would rather refrain from this rest. Therefore even before Second Brother Wu had entered the door, he first asked whether they had good wine.

“Oh! Sure, Sir! In our humble inn, we wouldn't boast about other things, but the quality of the wine is amazingly good. People from afar have given our humble inn eight verse-lines in praise.”

“What eight lines?”

“It is like jade nectar and rosy clouds,  
 It's sweet bouquet and wonderful taste are worth  
 boasting about.  
 When a wine jug is opened, the flavour makes people  
 tipsy three houses away.  
 Guests passing by will pull up their carts  
 and rein in their horses.  
 Lü Dongbin once paid with his famous sword,  
 Li Bai, he pawned his black gauze hat,  
 The immortal loved the wine so much he never  
 went home...”

“Where did he go then?”

“Drunken, he tumbled into the West River embracing the moon!”

When Second Master Wu heard this, [he said]:

“Good!”

Why did he say ‘Good!’ in this way? There was a reason to it. The wine was not merely good, it was extraordinarily good! When they opened a gallon of wine, the neighbours three houses away would become tipsy, just by smelling it you would get tipsy. What else was it that was so good about that wine? Lü Chunyang [Lü Dongbin] loved this house wine so much that he drank up all the money he carried in his belt and even pawned his famous sword to pay for the wine. Li Taibo [Li Bai] also loved the wine so much that he drank up every penny he had, whereupon he tore off his black gauze hat and pawned it to pay for more wine. How could it be true that Li Taibo pledged his black gauze hat or that Lü Chunyang pawned his famous sword? No such thing ever happened. This was only flattery from the guests. But since the customers had thought out these phrases in order to flatter the wine of the inn, one can imagine that their wine was indeed good.

Highly pleased Second Master Wu followed Xiao'er to the door and stepped into the hallway of the inn. They passed through a half-door and came to the next wing with a small courtyard and a thatched hall just opposite. The thatched hall was clean and nice, with seven or eight tables. But there was not a single customer. What was the reason? It was already long past the lunchtime rush. The sun was slanting steeply towards the west.

As Second Master Wu walked inside he took down his bundle and staff, placed his bundle on the corner of a table to the right and leaned his staff against it. He brushed the dust off his clothes and sat down at the main seat of the table right in the middle. Xiao'er wrung out a hot napkin and served him a cup of tea:

“Master, what do you want to eat with the wine?”

“Good wine and good food, and be sure there is enough, too!”

“Ow!—Yes!”

Eh? How come the waiter Xiao'er had changed his accent? A moment ago at the doorway he had been talking in a so-so Beijing accent. Why did he afterwards begin to talk in the dialect from the district north of the Yangzi River? What was the reason? There was some sense in it. This young man, Xiao'er, was from the district north of the Yangzi River, he was our fellow townsman. How come he was able to speak Beijing dialect? Because he used to stand at the doorway of the inn looking out for business. The travelers from south and north were not acquainted with the dialect from north of the Yangzi River. Therefore he had made a special effort to study a few sentences of Mandarin in order to be able to deal with the customers. But he had only learnt a few phrases, uncivilized whelp as he was, and he wasn't able to get much further. At this moment he wasn't able to turn out any more phrases in a Beijing accent. It was better for him to be honest and stick to his own dialect. Therefore his pronunciation was different.

Xiao'er went to the front and took a big piece of beef, more than two pounds, and cut it into thin slices, a big plate of red-chopped fragrant meat, just the right size. Apart from that, he peeled a dozen eggs; he peeled the shells off the boiled eggs. He sprinkled [the meat] with gravy. [The eggs] were snow white and tender. He put a handful of white salt on a small plate; the salt was for the eggs. Then he filled two other plates, one with steamed rolls and another with pancakes. When he had filled a mug with wine, he arranged a cup and chopsticks on the tray and carried everything over to the thatched hall in the rear wing. He placed the tray on the table where Second Master Wu had left his bundle, and then he arranged the snacks, wine and food, beef, cup and chopsticks in front of his guest. Xiao'er removed the tray,

took up a position to the left of our hero and looked smiling at Wu the Second. Second Master Wu pushed his teacup away and reached for the wine mug:

“Get me a big cup instead of this one!”

“You are welcome!”

His wine cup was exchanged with another much bigger one. This wine cup was almost as big as a rice bowl: “Sh-sh-sh...,” he poured himself a cup: “Uh! That wine is not good. Its colour is not right and it doesn’t have any flavour. Such wine probably doesn’t have the least spirit. Let me try and have a sip! Let me see how it tastes in the mouth!” Second Master Wu took two sips of the wine: “My goodness! This wine is really bad! It is watery wine and it has no body to it. Strange, it is not in line with what the waiter told me a moment ago at the doorway. I had better ask him!”

“Xiao’er!”

“Yes, Master!”

“Is this the good house wine?”

“Oh, no! This is only a moderately good wine of our inn!”

“Ah, why do you not bring the good wine?”

“If you want the good wine, it’s surely not bad. If it’s the good wine that Your Honour wants, it’s ‘Three bowls and you cannot cross the ridge’.”

“Fine!”

## APPENDIX 2

Chinese character  
version of appendix 1

### 武松打虎

王少堂口述

橫海郡柴進留賓

景陽崗武松打虎

灌口二郎武松在，海郡柴莊得著哥哥消息，辭別柴進，奔山東陽谷縣尋兄。在路非止一日，走了二十餘天，今日已抵山東陽谷縣地界，離城二十餘里。其時十月中旬天氣，太陽大偏西。

英雄腹中飢餒，意欲打尖。抬頭一望，只見遠遠的烏泱泱一座鎮市。

英雄背著包裹，右手提著一根哨棒，大踏，前進，走到鎮門口。抬頭再望只見扁磚直砌到頂，圓圈鎮門，上有一塊白礬石，三個紅字：景陽鎮。

進著門街道寬闊，兩旁店面倒整齊，草房多。人倒有還不少，正走之間只看見右邊有家酒店，三間簇嶄新草房，檐下插了一根簇嶄新青竹竿，青竹竿上挑了一方簇嶄新藍布酒旗，藍布酒旗上貼了一方簇嶄新梅紅紙，梅紅紙上寫了簇嶄新五個大字：“三碗不過崗”。

再朝店裡一望只見簇嶄新桌凳，簇嶄新鍋灶，簇嶄新案凳，簇嶄新櫃檯，還有兩個簇嶄新的人……你說笑話了，旁的東西有新的，人哪裡會有新的？何嘗不得。

櫃檯裡頭坐了個小老板，二十外歲，櫃檯外頭站了個跑堂的，十八九歲，大概青年人就謂之新人。果然年老的人當然就稱舊人了。俗語說得好：

“長江後浪催前浪，世上新人趨舊人。”

這也要算得一新。

只看見櫃檯外頭在店堂裡頭站得這個堂官，說俗麼就是跑堂的，漂亮，眉清目秀，齒白唇紅，消嘴薄唇，一定都會說伶俐的樣子，頭上帶的把抓的帽子，身上端一圍裙頭兒系得乾乾淨淨，底下布襪布鞋，兩手叉著腰，望著店門外，見了這個做事？以備招攬買賣。忽然看見一個客家，背著包裹，提著哨棒，站下來不走了。這分明想進來吃酒的。生意人見了生意不得不個招呼，笑嘻嘻搶幾步上前雙手這一抬，一嘴的二八京腔：

“爺！爺老在小店打尖吧！粟黍，高粱，雞子，饅首，薄餅，東西又好，價錢又公巧，爺麼請進來坐吧！”

武二一望望這小二吧，很漂亮的：

“小二！”

“是，爺！”

“你店中可有好酒？”

武松好會品嘛，還沒有進酒店門就先問有好酒。他這個人啦，俠腸傲骨，有點與人不同。在過去的人呢，免不了四個字：酒，色，財，氣。

這四個字原來也是不好的，所以現時的人呢對於這四個字沒有了。

在那個時代啊，教育不良，都免不了這四個字，唯有武松了，只好兩個字：他只好貪杯好酒，他好動無辜之氣，他好著氣。

這就是他這個人一生的缺點。他看見鎮市小，酒店小，恐其沒有好酒吃，這個摻水的酒不得吃頭，莫如就不打尖，所以武二未曾進門了就先問一聲好酒。

“是，爺！小店旁的東西不敢說好，小店的酒身份怪高。外面人送小店八句。”

“那八句？”

“造成玉液流霞，  
香甜美味堪誇，  
開壇隔壁醉三家，  
過客停車駐馬。  
洞賓曾留寶劍，  
太白當過烏紗，  
神仙他愛酒都不歸家…”

“他上那裡去了？”

“醉倒西江月下！”

武二爺聽一聽：

“好！”

這樣“好！”，是何故？這樣“好！”，就有一個道理。他家這個酒啊，不但好的，太好了。開壇打酒隔壁就醉倒了三家，人聞聞就醉了。這個酒還有怎麼好？呂純陽愛他家酒好寶把腰裡錢吃完了，寶劍下下來押酒錢。李太白也愛他家酒好，把腰裡錢吃光了，把烏紗脫下來押酒錢，何說當真的李太白當烏紗，呂純陽押寶劍呢，不會有這回事，這都是吃客之恭維。這個顧客能夠想到這些來恭維他家這個酒，可想他家這個酒就像個好的。武二爺遂得意洋洋，跟隨著小二去店門，穿店堂，一到腰門，進腰門，裡頭還有一進，一個天井，上頭一座草廳，草廳上倒還乾乾淨淨，有七八張桌子。一個酒客沒得。什麼道理呢？這一刻已過中飯市太陽倒大偏西了。

武二爺走上來就把包裹跟哨棒，朝右邊桌角上把包裹放了，哨棒戩了。身上灰塵揮揮。正當中這張桌子首座坐下來，小二打把手巾，倒了杯茶：

“爺駕，用什麼酒餚？”

“好酒，好餚，多拿這麼一點！”

“嘎一哎！”

噯，這個小二回言說話怎麼變調的？將才在店門口，一嘴的二八京腔。怎麼回言到後頭來說起，說起江北話了，什麼緣故？有個道理。這個小二麼，就是江北人，是我們的同鄉。他怎麼會說京話的呢？

因為在店門口招攬買賣。

南來北往的客家對於這個江北話覺得有點不普通。

他就特為學幾句官話，專為應付客家的。就學那麼幾句，野蠻仔，再多就不行了，所以這刻到了後頭呢，不敢再玩京調了。

不如老老實實就玩本調吧，所以因此這個腔調，就，就不同了。

小二到了前頭，拿了一塊牛肉，二斤多重，切得消消薄片，紅砍砍噴香老滷子一澆，一個大盤子，將將的盤子。另外呢，剝了十幾個雞蛋呢，熟雞蛋殼子一剝，雪白粉嫩，拿個小盤抓點白鹽，這個鹽是準備沾雞蛋吃得，裝了兩盤饅首薄餅，打了一壺酒，帶來雙杯箸，一托盤，托到後進草廳，托盤就朝武二爺擺包裹的桌上一放，把點心，酒餚，牛肉，杯箸一起同上來朝武二爺面前一放。小二把托盤起去，站在英雄左邊，笑嘻嘻的望著武二。武二爺把茶杯朝前這一推，伸手就拿酒壺：

“換個大杯!”

“就是了!”

換了一只最大的酒杯。這個酒杯等於跟飯碗差不多，“沙……”，斟了一杯。‘哎呀，酒不好! 顏色不對，香味全無。這種酒何嘗沒氣! 吃吃看! 看看吃到嘴裡怎麼樣!’

武二爺把這杯酒吃下去嘴兩次：‘呷喂! 這個酒壞極了! 這就是水酒，一點口力不得，香味全無，奇怪了，和他將才在店門口說的話大不相同，到要來問問他!’

“小二!”

“是，爺駕!”

“這就是你店中的好酒?”

“哦，不是的，這是小店的中等酒”

“哦，你為何不拿好酒?”

“還要好酒啊，這個酒就不錯了，你人家如再要好酒，除非是‘三碗不過崗’”

“好!”

## NOTES

The present article is a revised version of a paper presented at the Chinese Humanities Seminar, Harvard University, 30 April 1999. The oral-related texts were mainly collected at the Fu Su-nien Library of the Academia Sinica, during a research stay in 1998 at the Center for Chinese Studies in Taipei. I would like to express my gratitude for the help I received from the library staff and the Center. Discussions with Professor Boris Rifting were also very helpful during my stay in Taipei. I also wish to thank particularly Li Xin 李新, Yangzhou Television, and Nanjing Radio for arranging my procurement of a copy of the 1961 radio broadcast of Wang Shaotang in 1997–1998. The study was completed during my research stay at the Danish Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities in 2001, and my sincere thanks go to my colleagues there for inspiring discussions.

1. In Chinese scholarship, this term seems to be coined lately on the background of Western narratology (MENG 1998, 142). The same idea is expressed by terms like “storybook fiction” (*huaben xiaoshuo* 話本小說) (HU 1980), and by giving evidence for oral origin or oral inspiration in the novels, but most often the “storyteller form” is taken for granted in the novels. The question of the style of Chinese vernacular fiction and its relationship to early oral genres of performance is a topic of much research and discussion. Chinese scholarship on the documentation of oral storytelling in various genres, contemporary and earlier, gained momentum throughout the twentieth century, and Western sinology contributed in particular by developing the narratological aspects of the discussion from the late 1960s. The various English designations of a storyteller’s style in fiction point to some of the path-breaking studies of Western scholars: “The storyteller’s manner” was coined by Wilt Idema in his study of the origins of vernacular fiction (IDEMA 1974, xii, 70). “The simulacrum of the oral storyteller” refers to the ideas of Patrick Hanan in his studies on the narrative context of the vernacular story (HANAN 1967, 1973, 1977, 1981); for this expression, see HANAN 1977, 87. “The storyteller’s rhetoric” in WATER MARGIN is studied in detail in a Ph.D. dissertation by Deborah PORTER (1989), and this expression is also preferred by Anne McLaren who has written extensively on some of the earliest printed texts with close relationship to performed oral genres (MCLAREN 1998). The bibliography of this latter work is a most useful guide into the field. After the present article went to press a new study by Liangyan GE (2001), highly relevant to this topic, has appeared. Unfortunately I was not able to see this work until my article was already in the galleys. I would, however, like to draw the reader’s attention in particular to his Chapter Four, “From Voice to Text, The Orality-Writing Dynamic.”

2. Two studies particularly devoted to these questions are ZHAO 1995 and ROLSTON 1997. See also LÉVY, in particular his ideas about an “écriture vulgarisante” (1981, 123–31).

3. For a discussion of the change of name for this genre, cf. LÉVY 1999.

4. The titles of oral story cycles are written in small capitals in order to distinguish them from book titles, written in italics as normal, i.e. the oral cycle of SHUIHU versus the printed Ming novel *Shuihu zhuan* (often shortened *Shuihu*).

5. While the word *quyi* came into current usage only in the latter half of the twentieth century, *shuochang*, combined with “chantefable” (*cihua* 詞話) into the expression *shuochang cihua*, is attested as a genre name for performance literature already in early Ming (MCLAREN 1998). In its modern usage, *shuochang* is used alone or in expressions such as “tell-sing arts” (*shuochang yishu* 說唱藝術), “tell-sing literature” (*shuochang wenxue* 說唱文學), and “tell-sing literature and art” (*shuochang wenyi* 說唱文藝). Sometimes it serves as an umbrella term covering the same meaning as *quyi*, sometimes it refers in particular to literature where telling and singing are combined and alternate in the fashion of chantefable (PRUSEK 1974b, 161–62, and LUO 1993, vol. 11, 246). In the latter usage it is regularly translated as “prosimetric” lit-

erature or “prosimetrum.” For *shuochang* as an umbrella term, however, this translation is inaccurate. We shall return to this question.

6. From the very outset, when I began to study Yangzhou storytelling in the late 1980s, I tried to obtain access to the sound tapes of Wang Shaotang’s performances from SHUIHU which were recorded and broadcast in the early 1960s. Having pestered friends and connections, however, in the storytellers’ milieu for more than ten years—without success—I had given up hope and was inclined to think the original tapes were actually not preserved in a listenable state, or they were lost. In November 1998 Nanjing Radio in collaboration with Yangzhou Television, however, presented me with a copy of Wang Shaotang’s first broadcast of 1961, i.e. the beginning part from “Wu Song Fights the Tiger” which is the traditional opening of the Wu Song saga in Yangzhou storytelling. The performance is rendered in Chinese characters and English translation in BØRDAHL and ROSS (2002, 171–98). The phonological aspects of the radio broadcast is treated in detail in BØRDAHL 2003.

7. For my previous research of the Wang School disciples, see in particular BØRDAHL 1996, and BØRDAHL and ROSS 2002.

8. In this context I prefer to speak about oral-related texts rather than “oral-derived,” because “derivation” seems to indicate a direction from oral to written medium, a line that I would prefer to understand as open to “two-way traffic.” As for the written “tell-sing” genres, I should also state the point that only some of these can be characterized as prosimetric forms, since they fall into the three categories just mentioned.

9. The “storyteller’s manner” of the Ming chapter-divided novels and short stories is deduced from these works themselves. The description of this style is not derived from external sources of knowledge about oral performance by professional storytellers who preceded the printed works or were active during Ming.

10. The various editions of *Shuihu zhuan*, divided into the “simpler texts” (*jianben* 簡本) and “fuller texts” (*fanben* 繁本), offer a spectrum of the manifestations of the “manner” inside the written tradition of one work (ROLSTON 1997, 231–38). For the present, however, I shall restrict my material to only one edition of *Shuihu zhuan* in the “fuller text” group, i.e. SHI, LUO 1997, Chapter Twenty-Three, 315–25 (shortened below as *Rongyutangben*). In a few cases I shall also refer to the seventy-one chapter version of JIN 1934, Chapter Twenty-Two, *juan* 27, 1–25 (shortened below as *Jinben*).

11. *Rongyutangben*, Chapter Twenty-Three, 315. Please note that examples from the novel are numbered with letters: *a*, *b*, *c*, and so on. Examples from the radiotape by Wang Shaotang are numbered with Arabic numerals from 1 to 7, and finally examples from the book edition of WANG Shaotang’s performances, *Wu Song* 1984, are numbered with Roman numerals: I, II, III, and so on.

12. In the terminology of Gerard Genette, the extradiegetic and heterodiegetic type of narrator (GENETTE 1980, 228–48. See also BØRDAHL 1996, 178–82).

13. *Rongyutangben*, Chapter Twenty-Three, 317.

14. IDEMA 1974, 23, considers this feature the only definite marker of a “storyteller’s manner.”

15. *Rongyutangben*, Chapter Twenty-Three, 316.

16. *Rongyutangben*, Chapter Twenty-Three, 316.

17. Translation by John and Alex Dent-Young, in SHI and LUO 1997, Part Two, 8.

18. *Rongyutangben*, Chapter Twenty-Three, 319.

19. Translation by John and Alex Dent-Young, in SHI and LUO 1997, Part Two, 17.

20. *Rongyutangben*, Chapter Twenty-Three, 325.

21. This attitude is for example adopted in a number of the studies of prosimetrum in HARRIS and REICHL, eds. 1997, see in particular the articles “The prosimetrum of Icelandic

saga and some relatives” by Joseph Harris (131–64) and “The prosimetrum in the classical tradition” by Jan Ziolkowski, (45–66).

22. Storytelling (*shuoshu*), on the other hand, is often categorized as a “tell-sing art” (*shuochang yishu*). In its function as an umbrella term for orally performed narrative arts of China, the linguistic form of the word *shuochang* [literally: “tell/sing”], (a coordinate compound VV> N, cf. CHAO 1968, 268 and 372) carries both a coordinate and a disjunctive sense, i.e. “tell and sing” and “tell or sing.” Since both meanings are embedded in the word, *shuochang* embraces, but is not identical with, the term “prosimetric.” While the expression “a prosimetric genre” would point to a genre that consists of a combination of prose and metric (verse) passages in repeated alternation (MAIR 1997, 367), this description would only fit part of the Chinese *shuochang* genres in modern as well as earlier usage. In the earliest usage of the term as a genre name, testified in the fifteenth-century *shuochang cihua* (narrated and chanted chantefables), *shuochang* is printed on pieces with alternating prose and verse, as well as on a piece consisting solely of verse narrative (MCLAREN 1998, 289). *Shuochang* encompasses a variety of possibilities: (1) telling in prose; (2) singing in metric form; (3) genres combining telling in prose and singing in metric form; (4) telling in metric form; (5) telling in alternatively prose and metric form (SUN, ZHANG 1983, 45). Since there is often no sharp distinction between singing, chanting, reciting and telling, we may even find (6) “singing in prose” as a category of *shuochang* (see for example LOU, ZHU 1963, 17, where storytelling *shuoshu*, including *pingshu* and *pinghua* in spoken prose is categorized as “singing”).

23. *Rongyutangben*, Chapter Twenty-Three, 315.

24. *Rongyutangben*, Chapter Twenty-Three, 316.

25. *Rongyutangben*, Chapter Twenty-Three, 317.

26. *Rongyutangben*, Chapter Twenty-Three, 325.

27. The analysis is based on tape recordings of the Wu Song tale by Wang Shaotang (1961) [WS], Wang Xiaotang (1992) [WX], Li Xintang (1986) [LX], Ren Jitang (1989, 1992) [RJ], Chen Yintang (1989) [CY]. The circumstances of every performance are described in detail in BØRDAHL 1996, 2003, and BØRDAHL and ROSS 2002. Henceforth these recordings are referred to by the initials of the storyteller, e.g. WS refers to Wang Shaotang’s performance of “Wu Song Fights the Tiger,” Nanjing Radio, 1961, 30 minutes, tape (copy).

28. E.g., WS, LX, RJ, CY

29. With a view to possible connections between the novel and oral storytelling, I find it interesting that JIN Shengtian in his first top-of-page note (*meipi* 眉批) to Chapter Twenty-Two, inserted at the point in the plot development where the Yangzhou Wang School storytellers traditionally begin their tale, writes: “In this scroll the wine drinking can be read as one section, the tiger killing can be read as one [another] section” (*Ci juan yin jiu zuo yi duan da hu zuo yi duan du* 此卷飲酒作一段讀打虎作一段讀) (*Jinben*, juan 27, 9). This is also the way the story is divided whenever it is told in two sections by the Yangzhou storytellers. In the radio version by Wang Shaotang we hear only the first part about the wine-drinking episode.

30. Pinyin transcription is used here and in the following examples only as a decoding of the Chinese characters. The performance of Wang Shaotang is in Yangzhou dialect, using the special registers of so-called “square mouth” (*fāngkǒu* 方口) and “round mouth” (*yuankǒu* 圓口). A discussion of the Yangzhou storytellers’ pronunciation is, however, beyond the scope of the present article. For this aspect, see BØRDAHL 1996 and in particular BØRDAHL 2003.

31. This beginning is found in WS (BØRDAHL and ROSS 2002, 171 and 189), and in WX, LX, CY (BØRDAHL 1996, 275, 302, 361). RJ 1989 is an exception to the rule, probably because the performance of 1989 took place on the spur of the moment in the home of Ren Jitang when we met for the first time. In this informal atmosphere Mr Ren chose to leave out the

couplet, (BØRDAHL 1996, 339). In later recordings of my private archive Ren Jitang, too, performs this passage with the traditional beginning.

32. WS (BØRDAHL and ROSS 2002, 171 and 189). Similar passages in WX, LX, RJ and CY.

33. WS (BØRDAHL and ROSS 2002, 184 and 195).

34. It should, however, be noted that this need not always be the case in every milieu of Chinese storytelling. In November 2000 I witnessed a very different situation in a Tianjin storytellers' house, where the audience took an active part during performance, putting forward questions, making jokes, and so on.

35. WS (BØRDAHL and ROSS 2002, 172 and 189). A similar passage is found in WX, RJ and CY (BØRDAHL 1996, 275, 339, 361). LX's performance, my first sample of this story, was recorded by him in 1986 to fit on one cassette tape, and therefore Li Xintang decided to cut out most of the first episode "The Inn" and all of "The Quarrel" (BØRDAHL 1996, 185).

36. WS, similar passages in WX, RJ, and CY.

37. Cf. Li Xintang's performance (BØRDAHL 1996, 289 and 302).

38. WS (BØRDAHL and ROSS 2002, 171 and 189). A similar passage in CY (BØRDAHL 1996, 361). For the expression "one only saw" (*zhi jian*), see also example 4 above.

39. Cf. WANG Shaotang 1984 and 1985. A new version of *Wu Song*, told by his granddaughter, WANG Litang 王麗堂 (b. 1940), was prepared for the centenary of Wang Shaotang, (WANG Litang 1989), and in 1995 the other three cycles of the Wang school WATER MARGIN repertoire were published (WANG Litang 1995 a, b, c). Recently I also obtained a set of cassette tapes with WANG Litang's radio broadcast of the Wu Song cycle for Nanjing Radio in 1998. This huge material awaits further study and analysis. Some phonological aspects of the first issue, the "Wu Song and the tiger" episode, are treated in BØRDAHL 2003.

40. The division into episodes, which are smaller than "sections," and the names of these entities are based on my own analytical work on the oral texts (BØRDAHL 1996, 182–89); the names of such sub-episodes have no direct counterpart in the storytellers' own terms or conventions.

41. None of the other sagas of Yangzhou storytelling have titles containing the word *hui*, (YANGZHOU QUYI ZHI BIANWEIHUI ed. 1993, 109–14). Some of them have also been published in chapter-divided editions, while other cycles have been published in sectionalized editions using only numbers, not *hui*, as dividing markers.

42. In the postscript to the printed edition, Sun Jiaxun 孫佳訊 and Sun Longfu 孫龍父 from the editorial group describe the principles for the undertaking, among which are the rearrangement and rewriting of longer and shorter passages to make the written version more coherent and—in particular—to bring it closer to the plot development of the Ming novel (WANG Shaotang 1984, Postscript 1130. See also BØRDAHL 1996, 42).

43. Some titles may have a relationship to names on advertisements of occasional performances (BØRDAHL 1996, 30).

44. Cf. "Storytellers' Terms" (BØRDAHL 1996, 443, 448, 465, and BØRDAHL 1999a, 231–32). Wang Shaotang's performance on the radio in 1961, a "section" of half an hour, corresponds to about one fifth of the first subsection in the book. The book has no indication of a pause at this point, not even a paragraph. But this may well be due to a different way of telling the story for the recorders of the book. More important is the fact that the first subsection of the book is considerably longer than the first "day" as performed by Wang Xiaotang in 1992 (*Zhenjiang*) (BØRDAHL 1996, 247–86), and in 1996 (Copenhagen) (BØRDAHL, ed. 1999, 255–71). This seems to be a fairly strong indication that the editors had little concern for the divisions made by the storyteller. The performances by other disciples of Wang Shaotang are all somewhat shorter, since they were not in the format of "a day of storytelling," but in the shorter format used for occasional performances (*duanzi*). The essential thing is

that the storyteller's own habitual division of the story into rounds/sections and sessions/days is not reflected in the book edition, in so far as this can be tested by existing oral sources.

45. Cf. WANG Shaotang, 1984, 1. See also note 35 above.

46. Cf. WX, LX, RJ (BØRDAHL 1996, 285, 308, 351).

47. Cf. WANG Shaotang 1984, 1.

48. As Patrick Hanan has pointed out: "Virtually all vernacular fiction has a prologue, ranging from a mere poem to a whole complex of poem, prose introduction and prologue story, all of which serve as anticipatory comment" (HANAN 1981, 20). Here we have a case in point where the actual wording of the storyteller does not quite live up to the genre expectations of the written form and is therefore changed accordingly by the editor. We are concerned here with the way an entire cycle of tales such as the WU SHI HUI is introduced, not the beginning of each individual session of the cycle. As for the methods of beginning a daily session, poems, jokes, short digressions, and anecdotes—called "opening of performance" (*shutouzi* 書頭子)—are among the devices found in the storyteller's terms (BØRDAHL 1996, 460). Such devices, however, are not used in my corpus, and they are placed at the bottom of the list of ways to begin, while the most frequent way is to start head on, and in subsequent sessions from where the last session ended.

49. Most editions of the Ming novel *Shuihu zhuan* begin Chapter Twenty-Three (or Twenty-Two)—carrying this couplet as title—with a description of the farewell ceremonies taking place between Chai Jin, Song Jiang, and Wu Song on the departure of the latter to visit his elder brother in Yanggu District.

50. Cf. Figure 2.

51. Cf. WANG Shaotang 1984, 1.

52. In my collection of recordings I only have one case of a fairly similar beginning, but the storyteller is covert and does not point to himself with the pronoun "I" (*wo*), cf. Dai Buzhang's performance from JOURNEY TO THE WEST (BØRDAHL 1996, 436).

53. BØRDAHL and ROSS 2002, 190.

54. WANG Shaotang 1984, 3.

55. WANG Shaotang 1984, 148. Variations of this sentence, such as *wo jiu wu yong jiaodai le* 我就無用交代了, *wo ye jiu bu jiaodai le* 我也就不交代了, *bu zai wo shuzhong jiaodai* 不在我書中交代, *zai wo shuzhong bu jiaodai le* 在我書中不交代了, are found in a handful of instances, pages 299, 340, 346, and 366.

56. WANG Shaotang 1984, 93. Another formula-like sentence of similar meaning is, "It is not necessary to perform this in detail" *wu xu xi biao* 無須細表 (425), with a variation *wu xu zai biao* 無須再表 (507).

57. The conventional stock phrases are eminently useful for an editor who wants to shorten a given orally-recorded text, and they are considered "in style" for such work. But this does not necessarily imply that these expressions are actually a part of the oral tradition as performed during the last half century. In Tan Daxian's book-length study of Chinese storytelling (*pinghua* and *pingshu*), there is a section on the use of stock phrases (*taoyu*). Examples are selected from, among other materials, WANG Shaotang's *Wu Song* 1984. The problem, as I see it, is that all the materials of his study are edited versions of storytelling, not transcriptions directly from oral performances. Therefore it is difficult to estimate the editors' adulteration of the texts, a phenomenon that may influence the use of stock phrases in particular (TAN 1988, 152–58).

58. Rarely two performers; such examples are not found in my corpus.

59. The storyteller's stick is a common requisite for many *shuochang* genres. It is generally known as a "waking block" (*xingmu* 醒木), but Yangzhou storytellers have their special term *zhuyu*.

60. The description is only meant to give an indication of the variation, see also STEVENS 1973 and 1997 (Beijing drumsinging, Shandong clappertale), BLADER 1999 (Suzhou storytelling), HODES 1991 and BENDER 1995, 1998 and 1999 (Suzhou storysinging).

61. A number of journalistic articles on Yangzhou storytelling are listed in the bibliography of BØRDAHL 1996. The same is also true of historical sources. The Chinese “father of storytelling” Liu Jingting 柳敬亭 (1568–c. 1670) came from Yangzhou prefecture. While we have no sources documenting his verbal performance in notational textual form, contemporary eyewitnesses have described his art from the point of view of many of the external aspects mentioned above, such as setting, outward appearance, lack of musical accompaniment, gesture, and voice production (BØRDAHL 1996, 13–15).

62. The texts are all in printed form: Woodblock, lithography, or later printed form. While they are closely related to oral performance, we must keep in mind that they are not direct transcripts from tape recordings, but versions committed to paper and print according to principles that we know little about. Among the oral-related texts, four belong to the collection of popular performance texts (*quben* 曲本) in the Fu Ssu-nien Library of the Academia Sinica, Taipei. The *quben* texts are categorized into drama (*xiju* 戲劇), storytelling (*shuoshu* 說書), song (*zaqu* 雜曲), and a few other categories. The texts collected in the Fu Ssu-nien Library are dated roughly to the period between mid-Qing and the 1920s, i.e. late premodern storytelling. For a short description of this collection (BØRDAHL 1999b). The other texts are in editions from the 1980s.

63. The overt first person narrator is the type that I investigate in particular, but other types are also involved. A detailed discussion of narrator-type is not the aim here. In this schematic survey I focus on the question whether there would be any instance of the narrator talking of him [her]self in the first person, “I” (*wo*), or in other related ways, i.e. an overt first person narrator. Example: narrator’s comment in WS: “I think there isn’t necessarily any good in it [drinking wine].” (*Wo kan ye bu jiande you haochu* 我看也不見得有好處), (BØRDAHL and ROSS 2002, 179 and 193). Cf. also example 3 above. For a discussion of narrator-type, see BØRDAHL 1996, 189–94.

64. Title: *Jingyanggang Wu Song da hu* 景陽崗武松打虎; genre: *dagushu* 大鼓書; edition: *Baowentiang kanben* 寶文堂刊本; Fu Ssu-nien Library, catalogue no. Ku I 9–175, woodcut.

65. Title: *Wu Song da hu* 武松打虎; genre: *kuaihu* 快書; edition: CHEN Ruheng 1985, 234–37, and CHEN Jinzhao 1982, 255–57, both modern printing.

66. Title: *Wu Song da hu* 武松打虎; genre: Yangzhou *qingqu* 揚州清曲; edition: WEI Ren and WEI Minghua 1985, 66–9, modern printing.

67. In the narrow sense, *shuoshu* designates only the genres of *pinghua*, *pingshu*, and *tanci*.

68. Title: *Wu Song* 武松; genre: *kaipian* 開篇/*tanci* 彈詞, also called *nanci* 南詞; edition: Ma Rufe *kaipian* 馬如飛開篇, Fu Ssu-nien Library, catalogue no. 853.4, 365, 1, woodcut. This item gives a sketch of Wu Song’s career before joining the outlaws of Mount Liang. The passage of the encounter with the tiger is only a few lines of the piece, but for our analysis the *kaipian* as a whole is considered.

69. Title: *Jingyanggang Wu Song da hu* 景陽崗武松打虎; genre: *Fuzhou pinghua* 福州平話; edition: Fu Ssu-nien Library, catalogue no. 7. Ce, 21–201, lithography.

70. Chapter title: *Toupingju Wen Kang mai jiu, Jingyanggang Wu Song da hu* 透瓶居文康賣酒, 景陽崗武松打虎; genre: 杭州評話; edition: LIU Caonan, MAO Saiyun (1980, 1–17), modern printing. The title of the book edition, “The romance of Wu Song” (*Wu Song yanyi* 武松演義), indicates the written-genre “romance” (*yanyi*), which the editor envisages as appropriate for transferring the oral tale to the written medium.

71. The chapbook version of Fuzhou storytelling is edited into booklets, called “collections” (*ji* 集); the tiger story is one of a set of four booklets on Wu Song and this text is marked

as being the first collection, the final sentence of the story being an invitation to read the following collection, *qie kan xia ji Shizipo* 且看下集十字坡, which is very close to the style of the chapter-divided novel. The oral version of Yangzhou storytelling, i.e. the radio broadcast of Wang Shaotang (1961) is not textually marked as a session, but from the conditions of the performance we know that it is a *duanzi* from the longer session of the tiger story. Since the genre of Yangzhou storytelling is usually performed as long, continued sagas lasting for months of daily sessions, we place it in the group "divided into sessions or chapters."

72. Our sample from storysing, the prologue song (*kaipian*), does not fit the pattern of *pinghua* or the novel, but this piece cannot be taken as representative of the genre of *tanci*, since it is only one kind of poetry that enters into the genre. This type of poetry is, however, used for single events, and therefore we have analysed it on a par with the other pieces.

73. Cf. LU Hsun 1964, 417: "...each chapter usually ends with the same phrase: 'If you want to know what happened afterwards, you will find the answer in the next chapter.' I think this fashion also started with the storytellers, because if they wanted the customers to come again it was necessary to leave some dramatic episode half-told to hold their interest." See also BISHOP 1965, 242: "The survival of conventions used by oral narrators is still evident in these novels. Prose is mixed with verse and dialogue is used extensively. Chapters, still called *hui*, usually end at a climax, and the reader is urged in a stereotypical formula to hear what happens in the next installment." Likewise HSIA 1968, 73: The *Water Margin*'s "indebtedness to professional storytellers," "wholesale importation of oral conventions;" and PRUSEK 1974a, 290–96, where the ideas of "storyteller" and "author" are highly blurred.

74. See IDEMA 1974, xxii, xxx, xxxiv, 23, 35, 39, 70–2, 87, 105, 110, 117. Idema concludes on page 122: "The adoption of the 'storyteller's manner' must be seen as a deliberate artistic choice which heralded a new phase of creative novel writing; the 'storyteller's manner' can on no account be viewed as a leftover from fiction's past as commercial storytelling..." See also MAIR (1989, 88): "In the very conscious effort to convey immediacy through these and other devices which constitute the 'simulated context,' the true nature of such late stories as written literature is revealed;" and ROLSTON (1997, 231): "Whatever its original relation to actual storytelling practice, by the late Ming [the "simulated context of the oral storyteller"] was a written, literary convention, and new writers learned it from earlier models, not from trips to the marketplace or the teahouse."

75. The studies of Anne McLaren on Chinese chantefable texts from Ming are highly interesting in this respect, see in particular McLAREN 1998, 192–95, 261–70.

76. See in particular BLADER 1978, 1983 and 1999.

77. This point must also be considered from what we know about the Yangzhou storytellers' education as professional performers and their declared independence of "scripts" (CHEN Wulou 1998; BØRDAHL 1996, 226–29; BØRDAHL ed. 1999, 250; and BØRDAHL and ROSS 2002 (Storytellers' life stories).

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