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The Modus Operandi of Pimping in Two *Ming* Dynasty Classic Chinese Novels

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Abstract

In Chinese literary history, Classic Chinese Novels germinated in the pre-*Qin* period and gradually developed in the form of literary sketches divided into humanity and mystery in the Western and Eastern *Han*, *Wei*, *Jin* and Southern and Northern dynasties. Classic Chinese Novels neared maturity in the *Tang* dynasty and pinnacled in late *Yuan*, *Ming* and *Qing* dynasties when full-length novels known as *Zhang Hui Xiao Shuo*—marked by a summary couplet as lead in each chapter and an ending urging readers to “read on to find out what is to develop”—succeeded. The pimping plotted in both *Jin Ping Mei* (popularly known as *The Plum in the Golden Vase* or *The Golden Lotus* in the west), a one-million-word literary product of the late *Ming*

dynasty and *Jiang Xing Ge's Reunion with His Pearl Vest*, yet another *Ming*-era creation of some twenty thousand words are found to share similar modus operandi and they are thought to be revealing and enlightening when scanned by Discourse Analysis and Speech Act theory. Nigh verbatim scrutiny of discourse and verbal utterances generated in the initiation and completion of the pimping also informs a causal relationship and it is concluded both humans' innate weakness and contextual convergence, if not retribution due to the decision made, contributed to the submission of temptations and lusts unwittingly notwithstanding the thought humans are not as puny and weak.

Keywords: Classic Chinese Novels, Discourse Analysis, Pimping, Modus Operandi, *Zhang Hui Xiao Shuo*

Introduction

Seas of ink were spilled globally on the in-depth discussion of *Jin Ping Mei* (otherwise known as *The Plum in the Golden Vase* or *The Golden Lotus*), a near one-million-word literary product of the late *Ming* dynasty over the decades (胡衍南/Hu Yan Nan, 2019; 宁宗一/Ning Zong Yi, 2018; Nam Nguyen, 2017; 张惠英及宗守云/Zhang Hui Ying and Zong Shou Yun, 2016; 郑媛元/Zheng Yuan Yuan, 2015; Peter Rushton, 2013; 田晓菲/Tian Xiao Fei, 2003; Hanan, 1961, 1962, 1963; 姚灵犀/Yao Ling-hsi, 1940, etc.), yet research interest on *Jiang Xing Ge's Reunion with His Pearl Vest* (袁莹莹/Yuan Ying Ying, 2018; 纪玟萍/Ji Wen Ping, 2014; 郑文裕/Zheng Wen Yu, 2005, etc.)—Chapter One of Feng Meng Long's *Yu Shi Ming Yan*—another late *Ming*-era contemporary creation of some twenty thousand words, is gathering pace on an accelerating momentum. But evidently, the pimping cahoots in the two novels are hardly touched on under the paradigm of Discourse Analysis as well as Speech Act theory. The lacuna in the discussion, perhaps lack of in the entire literature, as well as the prominent Chinese critic Hsia Chih Tsing's comment that the novel *Jiang Xing Ge's Reunion with His Pearl Vest* is the magnum opus of the *Ming* Dynasty (Hegel, 2014) but not others, has prompted this investigation and the research criteria in light of both Discourse Analysis and Speech Act theory which is strongly believed to be significant and insightful.

In Chinese literary history, Classic Chinese Novels germinated in the pre-*Qin* period and gradually developed in the form of literary sketches divided into humanity and mystery in the Western and Eastern *Han*, *Wei*, *Jin* and Southern and Northern dynasties. Classic Chinese Novels neared maturity in the *Tang* dynasty and pinnacled in late *Yuan*, *Ming* and *Qing* dynasties when full-length novels known as *Zhang Hui Xiao Shuo* succeeded. *Zhang Hui Xiao Shuo* is marked by a summary couplet as preamble lead prior to each chapter and an ending urging readers to “read on to find out what is to develop”. It is noted in both novels, pimping plays a skeletal role in the eventuality of the novels. Further, the pimping plotted in both *Jin Ping Mei* and *Jiang Xing Ge's Reunion with His Pearl Vest* are found to employ modus operandi with structurally identical moves, if not coincidental, and they are thought to be revealing and enlightening when approached by Discourse Analysis as well as Speech Act theory. Nigh verbatim scrutiny of discourse and verbal utterances generated in the initiation and completion of the pimping also informs a causal, or perhaps a rather formulaic relationship, and it is concluded both humans' innate weakness and

contextual convergence, if not retribution due to the decision made, contributed to the submission of temptations and lusts unwittingly notwithstanding the thought humans are not as puny and weak. This approach of verbatim decoding is not merely the intent of the author but also a positive response towards Liu's (刘少勤, 2003) call, *inter alia*, for a resumption of texts analysis in literature criticism beside prevailing overflow of framework dominated research over the decades.

That said, the main thrust of this paper is twofold: a discretionarily discourse, including Speech Act theory analysis of the initiation and completion of the pimping cahoots and the comparison of the discourses generated in the pimping of the duo for discussion. In short, each pimping discourse in the novels is analyzed to construe firstly the social conditions of production and interpretation, how the text is produced and how it in turn affects interpretation secondly, and finally how the text comments on the above embedded within the texture of the lines, so to speak.

Framework of the Investigation

In this paper, Discourse Analysis and Speech Act theory are adapted as instruments for qualitative interpretation not simply to examine the pimping cahoots but also to induce the possible embryonic model of new comparison approach beside the dominant American and French schools in Comparative Literature. As established, the French school critics view Comparative Literature as a historical and positivist discipline concerned with the study of the influence or reception to an author or authors in foreign countries. In other words, it is a branch of literary history and a study of international spiritual relations; whereas the American school sees Comparative Literature as an aesthetic discipline concerned with the study of analogies or parallels in literature, beyond the confines of any one country; meaning, they seek matters more directly concerned with literary criticism and do not highlight detective work and detailed historical investigation.

Previously, Chen Peng Xiang (陈鹏翔, 2018: i-ii) from Taiwan, among others, raised an unprecedented view on Comparative Literature only it is confined within the use of western analytical techniques or theories, etc. to "examine, adjust and apply on Chinese literature" and he formally claims it "Comparative Literature of the Chinese School". Yet the proposed model mentioned earlier by the author is not merely restricted within the use of analytical techniques or theories, etc. from the West to examine, adjust and apply on Chinese literature in a comparative approach, but an extended version broader in scope and dimension, *viz.*, the comparable entities (including literature, theories and analytical techniques, etc.) are not country confined. Put simply, it is an extended comparative approach comparing not merely parallels or analogies in literature but it also reckons common families of literature like frameworks, theories or analytical techniques as comparable entities beyond border. Having said that, the discussions in this study are in that vein administered.

Discourse Analysis is an analytic technique rather than a theory in qualitative research and ways of analyzing the data it produces. It is the method of analyzing texts qualitatively and interpretively in which interpretations are made based on the details of the material itself as well as contextual

knowledge. In short, in discourse analysis, the words, sentences, paragraphs, verbal utterances, speech acts and overall structure of the selected materials are examined for the function and meaning of the language used to generate reflection as well as relation.

Fairclough and Wodak (1997: 277) posit, "Discourse is not produced without context and cannot be understood without taking context into consideration... Discourses are always connected to other discourses which were produced earlier, as well as those which are produced synchronically and subsequently." Moreover, discourse analysis brings a multidisciplinary perspective as it has multiple disciplinary origins such as sociology, socio-psychology, anthropology, linguistics and philosophy, communications studies, and literature (Grant *et al.*, 2005).

In addition, discourses do not just reflect or represent social entities and relations, they construct or 'constitute' them. Another important focus is upon historical change: how different discourses combine under particular social conditions to produce a new, complex discourse (Fairclough, 1992).

To Fairclough (1992), the concept of discourse and discourse analysis is three-dimensional. In this framework, every communicative event comprises three dimensions, namely, a text (verbal utterances, scripts, visuals or their combination), a discursive practice (the production and consumption of texts) and finally a social practice. For him, discourse is the embodiment of social structure and a kind of social practice and thus a unity of "context, interaction and text". The result of interaction is the texts and speeches which lie at the bottom and both the process of production as well as process of interpretation rely on context (Fairclough, 1992).

Similarly, Speech Act theory is also an important part of communication. It studies how words can be used not only to present information but also to carry out actions. Austin (1975) first introduced Speech Act theory and it was later extended by Searle (2012). According to Austin (1975), they are three levels or components of utterances: The Locutionary Act refers to the literal meaning of an utterance or the actual words, such as 'it is warm here in the tropics' referring to the weather. The Illocutionary Act refers to the speaker's intention and the effect of the Locutionary Act or the function fulfilled by the locution (e.g., asking someone to sign a cheque). The Perlocutionary Act/Effect refers to the effect of the utterance on the thoughts or the actions of another person but can sometimes project a sense of fear into the audience (e.g., someone getting up and signing the cheque).

To Searle (2012), a speaker can perform by means of five types of illocutionary act as follows: (1) Representatives: swear, conclude, boast, suggest, put forward, deduce, complain; (2) Directives: invite, ask, order, command, beg, pray, entreat, invite, permit, advise; (3) Commissive: promise, plan, vow, bet, oppose; (4) Expressives: condole, apologize, deplore, welcome, thank; and (5) Declaratives: christening, declaring war, excommunicating, sentencing, pronouncing.

On *Researchgate*, Green (2016) further informs that "recent theorizing about speech acts tends to fall either into conventionalist or intentionalist traditions: the former sees speech acts as analogous to moves in a game, with such acts being governed by rules of the form 'doing A counts as doing B'; the latter eschews game-like rules and instead sees

speech acts as governed by communicative intentions only.” Larger conversational frameworks like performatives, inquiries, debates, or deliberations made in the course of planning are enriching speech act. Moreover, scholars such as Kurzon (1998) and Johnson (2015), etc. have identified a type of oppression against under-represented groups as occurring through ‘silencing’: a speaker attempts to use a speech act to protect her autonomy, but the putative act fails due to her unjust milieu (Green, 2016).

On the other hand, a pimp is defined as an individual who, for a fee, supplies another individual with a prostitute for sexual purposes. Pimping and pandering are often used interchangeably, even by prosecutors and judges nowadays. However, the two terms constitute distinguishable offenses. Pimping is more associated with receiving money, whereas pandering is more associated with convincing someone, persuading someone or directing someone to become or continue to be a prostitute and the receipt of money is not an element of pandering (<https://www.greghillassociates.com/what-is-pimping-and-pandering-punishment-defenses.html>). In this investigation, the above definition of ‘pimping’ is used to examine the cahoots between the two lady pimps and the lecherous wenchers in the novels as it is the intentional commission of an act usually deemed socially harmful or dangerous and specifically defined, prohibited, and punishable under criminal law either today or, if not against social practice, in the *Ming* era.

In criminology, the Latin term *modus operandi* (operating method) is a distinct pattern or manner of working that comes to be associated with a particular criminal. Criminologists have observed that, whatever her/his specialty—burglary, deception, or embezzling, etc.—the professional criminal is very likely to adhere to her/his particular way of operating. If, for example, a burglar begins her/his career by entering houses from the roof, she/he will, in all probability, continue this method for as long as she/he is able to work. The *modus operandi*, or method, used by a criminal to commit an offense sometimes helps to identify the suspect, as many offenders repeatedly commit offenses in similar ways (<https://www.britannica.com/topic/modus-operandi>).

On that score, the frames of the mentioned constructs (pimping, *modus operandi*) are to examine the pimping exists in the two novels. By and large, let alone an discretionarily discourse and speech acts analysis of the initiation and completion of the pimping, if not pandering, as well as the comparison of the discourse generated in the pimping presented in six moves, the pimping discourses in the two novels are likewise scanned to see if they construct or ‘constitute’ social entities and relations and combine under particular social conditions (historical change) to produce a new, complex discourse claimed by Fairclough (1992). Nonetheless, the intimation of a scope/dimension-extended comparative literature approach between the discourses in the novels and the framework of Discourse Analysis/Speech Act as analytical techniques is discussed in the forthcoming.

Application of Discourse Analysis to Classic Chinese Novels

The *Ming* dynasty ruled China from 1368 to 1644 A.D and is known for its trade expansion which established cultural ties with the West. The drama, literature and world-

renowned porcelain of *Ming* dynasty are the most remembered. Long before the earliest known version of *Jin Ping Mei* (“Newly Wood-engraving *Jin Ping Mei*”) appeared, its story (development out of *The Water Margin*) had been circulated among the academia in China for some 20 years, responsive to the adaptations of ancient story cycles that had been part of oral traditions for centuries. Feng Meng Long (born in Jiangsu Wu province), the writer of *Jiang Xing Ge’s Reunion with His Pearl Vest* was believed to own a hand-copied manuscript of *Jin Ping Mei* (胡衍南,2019: 5) among others, though surprisingly the full-length novel *Jin Ping Mei* had not a putative author then. One assumption for the reason is “probably due to the book’s sexual themes that its author never claimed public credit for his work” (Shaw, 2019).

Later, the pseudonym Lanling Xiaoxiao Sheng (The Scoffing Scholar of Lanling) was expediently accepted as the writer of *Jin Ping Mei* until today; though almost a hundred candidates were raised (胡衍南,2019: 5), hitherto who adapted the nom de plume remains a Gordian knot. What is noteworthy being, Lu Xun (1935) had claimed in the preface of his “A Brief History of Chinese Fiction” that Shandong dialect (a vernacular language used in north eastern region of China) is dominant in *Jin Ping Mei* yet in recent research done by Zhang and Zong (张惠英及宗守云, 2016: 12, 27), Wu dialect, particularly Zhejiang Wu dialect and Hangzhou dialect from the Zhejiang province (vernacular languages used in south eastern region of China) are evidently proven only not Shandong dialect.

Lu Xun (1935), pseudonym of Zhou Shuren, was a leading figure of modern Chinese literature writing in vernacular Chinese and Classic Chinese. He reckoned *Jin Ping Mei* the best of all novels in the *Ming* era, prominently in contradiction to Hsia Chih Tsing’s comment the novel *Jiang Xing Ge’s Reunion with His Pearl Vest* is the magnum opus of the *Ming* Dynasty (Hegel, 2014). In actual fact, since the late *Ming* and early *Qing* period, *Jin Ping Mei* has been enjoying the fanfare as one of the four most interesting classic novels in Chinese literature (*Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, *The Water Margin* and *Journey to the West*) and is nowadays treated as a naturalistic masterpiece which shows people and things in a realistic way notwithstanding its pornographic and erotic assertion during the *Ming* and *Qing* period or perhaps today.

In *Jin Ping Mei*, around 10,959 words are devoted to dwell on the pimping from its initiation (from the eye contact initiation onwards) until its completion (when the lady victim willingly or unwittingly copulates with the wencher), spreading across three chapters (Two to Four) among others; whereas approximately 7,765 words are counted in *Jiang Xing Ge’s Reunion with His Pearl Vest* on the account of the pimping scenarios. Pimping in this study subsumes the moment from the conspiracy agreed upon to its completion, viz., when the man sates his libido as desired.

As the discourses involved are playing central role in the novels, particularly the subsequent development of the stories, a nigh verbatim analysis and discussion of them is administrated without blinker. In each of the novels, the pimping begins immediate after the eye contact initiation, the man is then smitten with Love/desire and seeks help from a lady pimp. When a conspiracy is decided between the pimp and the wencher, *modus operandi* is immediately proposed by the lady pimp. Confirmation of possibility to

proceed is forwarded by the complicit after she has sounded out the lady victim with positive responses, then a convenient rendezvous between the man and the lady victim is arranged. In the process, the copulation urge of the lady victims is evidently aroused by fair means or foul. Finally, when everything is at play, the lady pimp proceeds to leave the scene with excuse for the wencher to hammer the final nail to the coffin.

In this research, six moves concluded by the author are rigorously scrutinized, namely, Move One: Conspiracy Agreed, Move Two: Proposal of Modus Operandi, Move Three: Confirmation of Possibility to Proceed, Move Four: Staging of Convenient Rendezvous, Move Five: Arousal of Copulation Urge, and Move Six: Excuse to Leave the Scene. However, the pimping discourse in the two novels are also analyzed to see if they construct or 'constitute' social entities and relations and how different discourses combine under particular social conditions (historical change) to produce a new, complex discourse as claimed by Fairclough (1992). Let alone the said discussion, the modus operandi of pimping in both novels are likewise compared and summarized. Moreover, though more than one version of *Jin Ping Mei* is accessible (Ci Hua version¹, Chong Zhen version² and Kang Xi version³), in this study, only Chong Zhen version is selected. It was thus decided as the author reckons the Chong Zhen version more down to earth and inspirational let alone further informed by Tian (田曉菲, 2002) that "Chong Zhen version of *Jin Ping Mei* stresses more on secular pains and emptiness aiming on one hand to arouse reflection on life and death and generate compassion and mercy towards oneself and others on the other; whereas Ci Hua version treats *Jin Ping Mei* as a preaching fable cautioning people of the eventual retribution of lust and greed". Below is the discussion proper:

The compendious account of the pimping commences with an eye contact. In *Jin Ping Mei*, when Pan Jin Lian hits Xi Men Qing accidentally with a wooden curtain support, there is an eye contact whereas in *Jiang Xing Ge's Reunion with His Pearl Vest*, the eye contact takes place the moment Chen Da Lang looks up while Wang San Qiao gawks down from her window upstairs mistaking Chen as her husband afar. In the forthcoming scenarios, both men are smitten with love/desire after the coincident encounter. For both desperate Xi Men Qing and Chen Da Lang, a Ya Po—a lady pimp, the best go-between marked by eloquent, greedy and crafty in luring (林保淳, 2003: 73-78)—is supplicated to assist.

In ancient China, women's individual social activities were strictly restricted and they were prohibited from loitering without important matters, let alone regulations like "men and women are not allowed to sit together or eat at the same table, to share the same well for water supply; women can exchange items with men only during funeral or ceremony..., etc." In matters of daily necessities like cosmetics, ornaments and jewelries, they could only count

on women in the lines for irregular supplies as the social norm permits. Attributed to social demand, an identifiable group of women emerged naturally and they were known as "San Gu Liu Po", literary, the despicable "three forms of clergywomen and six types of grandmothers". A contemporary of Ming dynasty Tao Zong Yi ever defined "San Gu Liu Po" quoted from Yuan-era's "Chuo Geng Lu: San Gu Liu Po" as follows: San Gu refers to Ni Gu (Buddhist nun), Dao Gu (Taoist nun) and Gua Gu (fortuneteller); whereas, Liu Po are Ya Po (human trafficker/jewelry, cosmetics seller), Mei Po (matchmaker), Shi Po (witch), Qian Po (procuress), Yao Po (herbal medicine seller/charlatan) and Wen Po (midwife). As a matter of fact, the Chinese proverbs "San Gu Liu Po" referring to this louché group of underclass women has been used for over six centuries in Chinese speaking communities globally.

Knowing that the lecherous men are ready to pay in taels of silver as demanded since the victim-to-be is desiderata to them, the pimps in both the novels at this stage propose their modus operandi. To them, the proposal is one of their proven approach at its crafty best.

For rendezvous, the pimp's home is utilized in *Jin Ping Mei*, whereas in *Jiang Xing Ge's Reunion with His Pearl Vest*, the house of the lady victim is unwittingly made use of.

In the forthcoming, the verbal utterances produced by the pimps from *Jin Ping Mei* and *Jiang Xing Ge's Reunion with His Pearl Vest* are broken down into six major moves decided earlier. These discourses are to be discussed in turn with the narrative texts as well as discourses produced by others in the novels not documented in the table for interpretations.

As can be seen in Table 1, the pimp Wang Po in *Jin Ping Mei* is comparatively more straightforward in reaching an agreement with Xi Men Qing (henceforth Xi) provided "she is paid" (Move One, 1a) while Xie Po in *Jiang Xing Ge's Reunion with His Pearl Vest* is rather polite in discourse when she says "she will keep the money given as requested even though she is not told of what to do but promises to return if she cannot be of service" (Move One, 2a). In both verbal exchanges, it is either explicitly requested or hinted with the pretext of being paid (illocutionary acts of the declarative mood which expects to be performed in the near future), agreement can be reached even though it is something against social norm or an intentional act usually deemed socially harmful or dangerous. To ensure the prospective business, Xi is tantalized to "go home and we may further talk about it in three to six months' time" (Move One, 1b); whereas for Chen Da Lang (henceforth Chen), "No hasty moves for this matter, for it to be fruitful, it takes time" (Move One, 2b). As manifested, the tantalizing discourses of the directive mood accelerate the deal to constitute a favorable context for success even though the men are for weeks in inconsolable.

Table 1: Conspiracy Agreed

Novels	Move One: Conspiracy Agreed
1. <i>Jin Ping Mei</i>	<p>(a) 若大官人肯使钱时·老身有一条妙计·须交大官人和这雌儿会一面。 If my lord is willing to pay in taels of silver, I do have an idea for you and the lady to meet up.</p> <p>(b) 今日晚了, 且回去, 过半年三个月来商量。 It's getting late, I would suggest that you go home and we may further talk about it in three to six months' time.</p>
2. <i>Jiang Xing Ge's Reunion with His Pearl Vest</i>	<p>(a) 大官人休得错怪·老身一身不曾要别人一例一厘一毫不明不白的钱财。今日既承大官人吩咐·老身权且留下: 若是不能效劳·依据日奉纳。 Please do not mistake me my lord, I have never received any money, not even a penny, without a reason. Since you insist, I will keep them as requested: but if I could not be of service, the money would be returned.</p> <p>(b) 此事须从容图之·只要成就·莫论岁月。 No hasty moves for this matter, for it to be fruitful, it takes time.</p>

In Move Two documented in Table 2, the story develops in such a way that the wenchers are told to get preparations. The operating method is perlocutionary informed/instructed in the verbal exchanges expecting effect: Xi is requested to buy silks and cotton and send them to the pimp (Move Two, 1a), whereas Chen is requested to meet the complicit at a

pawnshop the following day with more taels of silver (Move Two, 2a). The pimp also informs Chen if she manages to set her foot into Jiang's house (Move Two, 2a), it augurs well for the proceeding which is conveyed in an illocutionary act of the commissive type.

Table 2: Proposal of Modus Operandi

Novels	Move Two: Proposal of Modus Operandi
1. <i>Jin Ping Mei</i>	<p>(a) 大官人如干此事, 便买一匹蓝绸、一匹白绸、一匹白绢, 再用十两好绵, 都把来与老身。老身却走过去问他借历日, 央及他捡个好日期, 叫个裁缝来做。他若见我这般说, 捡了日期, 不肯与我来做时, 此事便休了; 他若欢天喜地说: 我替你做。不要我叫裁缝, 这光便有一分了。我便请他来做, 就替我缝, 这光便二分。他若.....[从略]待他吃得酒浓时, 正说得入港, 我便推道没了酒, 再交你买, 你便拿银子, 又央我买酒去并果子来配酒。我把门拽上, 关你两个在屋里。他若焦燥跑了归去时, 此事便休了; 他若由我拽上门, 不焦燥时, 这光便有九分, 只欠一分了。只是这一分倒难。大官人你在房里, 便着几句甜话儿说人去, 却不可燥暴, 便去动手动脚打扰了事, 那时我不管你。你先把袖子向桌子上抚落一双褶下去, 只推拾褶, 将手去他脚上捏一捏。他若闹将起来, 我自来搭救。此事便休了, 再也难成。若是他不做声时, 此事十分光了。 My lord, if you resolve to do so, please buy a bolt of blue thin silk, a bolt of white thin silk and a bolt of white thicken silk as well as ten- tael silver of good cotton and bring them all to me. I will then go over to her place to borrow a calendar, and ask her to pick a day for me to go for a tailor. If she knows about this and is reluctant to help me to tailor my cerement, then that is the end of it; but if she responds joyfully, "Let me do it for you," and asks me not to look for a tailor, then the first step is achieved. If I request her to help at this juncture and she agrees, then the second step is done. If she... [omission] When she is almost drunk and is in there, I will claim there is no more wine left and ask you to buy more. Then you may give me some taels of silver and beg me to get some wine and some fruits to go with the wine. I will then lock you two in the house. If she is terrified and runs out, that is the end of the matter. If she rather stays put calmly and allows me to lock the door, then the ninth step is accomplished and one last step to go. Only this is the most difficult step, my lord. You may then converse with her in candied words but must not be too aggressive to the extent of touching her abruptly. If it is so, I will not come to your rescue. At this point, you are to drop a pair of chopsticks from the table intentionally. While you are bending down for the chopsticks, try pinch her foot deliberately. If she overreacts, I will come to your rescue. But that means it will never be successful. If she remains quiet, then it is a bingo!</p> <p>(b) 只今晚来有回报。我如今乘武大未归, 过去问他借历日, 细细说与他。你快使人送将绸绢绵子来, 休要迟了。 I will tell you how it was if you come tonight. I will just take advantage of the absence of her husband Wu Da and borrows a calendar from her and carry on my mission, you just need to send the silk and cotton over to me fast, don't be late.</p>
2. <i>Jiang Xing Ge's Reunion with His Pearl Vest</i>	<p>(a) 明日不可太早, 不可太迟, 早饭后, 相约在汪三朝奉典铺中相会。大官人可多带银两, 只说与老身做买卖, 其间自有道理。若是老身这两只脚踏进得蒋家门时, 便是大官人的造化。大官人便可急回下处, 莫在他门首盘桓, 被人识破, 误了大事。讨得三分机会, 老身自来回复。 Tomorrow after breakfast, make sure it is not too early and too late, we will meet at <i>Wang San Chao Feng</i> pawnshop. My lord, I would recommend you to bring more money, it is to do business with me later and you will know why. If I manage to set my foot into Jiang's house, it is your blessing luck. Then you may hurry home and do not linger at her doorstep lest people might discover and spoil the entire matter. If there is a 30 percent chance, you will be informed right away.</p>

In *Jin Ping Mei*, the lady pimp plans to ask Pan to sew a cerement for her with the materials she will get from Xi. More precisely, the lady pimp wants Pan to sew a cerement for her at her house and Xi is told to drop by ‘accidentally’ so that they can meet in a room for further realization of her plan: such as wine session to make Pan undefended; Xi’s pinching of Pan’s foot when picking up deliberately dropped chopsticks while the pimp is out for more wine (Move Two, 1a). Deciphering further on ‘Xi’s pinching of Pan’s foot’, Grice’s (1989) Implicature theory “which denotes either (i) the act of meaning or implying one thing by saying something else, or (ii) the object of that act” reachable at <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/implicature/> is significant at this point. The original term ‘non-natural meaning’ in his Implicature theory has in recent years been replaced by ‘speaker meaning’ and certain kinds of anonymous communication may be cases of speaker meaning (Green, 2016). In that vein, ‘Xi’s pinching of Pan’s foot’ albeit wordless, will infer that he means to have some sorts of intimacy with her. Pan does not utter a word but tolerates it can be interpreted a type of oppression against under-represented groups: her ‘attempts to use a speech act to

protect her autonomy, but the putative act fails due to her unjust milieu’ as there are only two of them in the room and Xi is socially in status far well off.

While in *Jiang Xing Ge’s Reunion with His Pearl vest*, Chen is to intentionally bargain loudly for some jewelries with the lady pimp to make a fuss in front of the pawnshop opposite Wang’s second floor house (Move Two, 2a). The real virtue of it is to rise Wang’s attention hoping that she may steal a glance behind her constantly curtained window.

By all means, in *Jin Ping Mei*, to ensure the smooth flow of the modus operandi, the two have to ensure Pan’s non-resisting responses (Move Five, 1a-d). Yet the lady pimp’s operating method in *Jiang Xing Ge’s reunion with His Pearl Vest* is an otherwise approach: she is to smuggle Chen up into Wang’s room in the dark clandestinely (Move Four, 1b). Table 3 shows how the pimps get the confirmation to proceed their plan accordingly. Just like the saying “the water is very clear, but we cannot see to the bottom”, the seducers need to assure the plan can proceed so confirmation is a prerequisite. The pimp in *Jin Ping Mei* thus sounds the victim out beforehand for the next move to proceed (Move Three, 1a-1).

Table 3: Confirmation of Possibility to Proceed

Novels	Move Three: Confirmation of Possibility to Proceed
1. <i>Jin Ping Mei</i>	<p>(a)娘子怎的这两日不过贫家吃茶？ My lady, why don't you come over for tea these days?</p> <p>(b)娘子家里有历日，借与老身看一看，要个裁衣的日子。 If you have a calendar, pray, lend it to me for a read, I want to pick a day to tailor a cloth.</p> <p>(c)便是因老身十病九痛，怕一时有些山高水低，我儿子又不在家。 It is all because I am getting old and may fall sick suddenly, I am afraid I get seriously ill and what is more my son is not at home.</p> <p>(d)那厮跟了个客人在外边，不见个音信回来，老身日遂耽心不下。 That fella is out helping out his friend's business, and he never writes home. I am getting more and more worried every day.</p> <p>(e)那厮十七岁了。 That fella is seventeen years old.</p> <p>(f)因是这等说，家中没人。待老身东楞西补的来，早晚要替他寻下个儿。等那厮来，却再理会。见如今老身白日黑夜只发喘咳嗽，身子打碎般，睡不倒的，只害疼，一时先要预备下送终衣服。难得一个财主官人，常在贫家吃茶，但凡他宅里看病，买使女，说亲。见老身这般本分，大小事儿无不管顾老身。又布施了老身一套送终衣料，绸绢表里俱全，又有若干好绵，放在家里一年有余，不能够做得。今年觉得好生不济，不想又撞着闰月，趁着两日倒闲，要做又被那裁缝勒掯，只推生活忙，不肯来做。老身说不得这苦也！ It is all because there is nobody at home except me. When I am severely ill, my son will be told to come back. Once he comes back, he will take care of me. Lately asthma and coughing are besetting me. My whole body feels like falling apart and I cannot sleep properly and it is just so unbearable. That is why I need to get my cerement ready. There is this tycoon who frequents my shop for tea; whenever his family fall sick or when he needs matchmaker for new concubines, he will always come for me. Due to this bit of luck, he comes to know about my deteriorating health and that my son is not with me. He therefore generously gave me a set of materials for my cerement which consists of silks and fine cottons. These materials have been unused with me for over a year now. This year my health worsens and here comes the leap month and we can enjoy two days' rest. I went for a tailor's but he rejected with busy schedule. You can't imagine how worried I am, my lady!</p> <p>(g)若得娘子贵手做时，老身便死也得好处去。久闻娘子好针指，只是不敢来相央。 If you are willing to tailor the cerement for me, to death I will be smiling. I have long heard that you are good at tailoring, just that I dare not approach you for help.</p> <p>(h)娘子休推老身不知，你诗词百家曲儿内字样，你不知识了多少，如何交人看历日？ I also knew that you are good in reciting poems, singing and handwriting and the list goes on, why do I need to ask someone else to pick the date for me?</p> <p>(i)好说，好说。 You are too modest.</p> <p>(j)若得娘子肯与老身做时，就是一点福星。何用选日！老身也曾央人来看，说明日是个破日，老身只道裁衣</p>

	<p>日不用破日·我不忌他。</p> <p>If you are willing, it will be my blessing. We don't need to pick a date then! I actually had consulted someone for the date to tailor my cerement and he told me tomorrow would be a bad day for anything. I know that tailoring cannot be scheduled in a bad day but I am not worried at all.</p> <p>(k)既是娘子肯作成，老身胆大，只是明日起动娘子，到寒家则个。</p> <p>If you agree, forgive me for being too straightforward, how about tomorrow in my shabby house?</p> <p>(l)便是老身也要看娘子做生活，又怕门首没人。</p> <p>Because I want to see how you tailor and nobody guards my home for me if I go elsewhere.</p> <p>[那婆子千恩万谢下楼去，当晚回复了西门庆话·约定后日准来。]</p> <p>[The pimp thanks the lady and descends to ground floor. That night she informs Xi and he is asked to meet them the day after tomorrow as scheduled.]</p>
<p>2. <i>Jiang Xing Ge's Reunion with His Pearl Vest</i></p>	<p>(a)你且莫猴急，老身正要相请，来得恰好。事成不成，就在今晚，须是依我而行。如此如此，这般这般。全要轻轻悄悄，莫带累人。</p> <p>Do not be so impatient my lord, I am about to call on you and here you are. Whether it will be successful or not depends on tonight and you must observe my plan closely. Do these and those in this and that way. It must be done quietly and naturally so not to incriminate others.</p>

In *Jin Ping Mei*, the pimp approaches Pan with the excuse to pick a date to tailor her cerement and subsequently asks her if she can sew the clothing for her (Move Three, 1b). Wang Po begins with her bad health and the possibility of death in no time to seek sympathy (Move Three, 1c-f). Later, she mentions Xi, the clothing materials giver, and proceeds to speak well of him in many ways, such as in the person of a generous giver of sewing materials and an acquaintance

(Move Three, 1f). On the other hand, in *Jiang Xin Ge's Reunion with His Pearl Vest*, how it will proceed is only scripted as “do these and those in this and that way” and “it must be done quietly and naturally so not to incriminate others” (Move Three, 2a). Comparatively, *Jiang Xing Ge's Reunion with His Pearl Vest* begs more suspense than *Jin Ping Mei* in terms of presentation.

Table 4: Staging of Convenient Rendezvous

Novels	Move Four: Staging of Convenient Rendezvous
<p>1. <i>Jin Ping Mei</i></p>	<p>(a)娘子，老身大胆。</p> <p>My dear lady, sorry for the interruption.</p> <p>(b)兀的谁叫老娘？</p> <p>Who is calling me?</p> <p>(c)我只道是谁，原来是大官人。你来得正好，且请入屋里去看一看。</p> <p>I wonder who it is, it's you, my lord. What a timing, do come in for a look.</p> <p>(d)这个便是与老身衣料施主官人。</p> <p>My lady, allow me to introduce the alm giver of the clothing materials.</p> <p>(e)难得官人与老身段匹绸绢，放在家一年有余，不曾得做，亏杀邻家这位娘子出手与老身做成全了。真个是布机也似好针线，缝的又好又密，真个难得！大官人，你过来且看一看。</p> <p>[从略]</p> <p>My lord, it was so kind of you to spare me these bolts of silk a year ago, just that I haven't had them sewn into clothes. Luckily the lady next door is willing to help. She is such a sewing expert, her stitches are neat and tight, she is indeed one in a million! My lord, pray, come and take a look.</p> <p>[omission]...</p>
<p>2. <i>Jiang Xing Ge's Reunion with His Pearl Vest</i></p>	<p>(a)失落了一条临清汗巾儿。胡胡，劳你大家寻一寻。</p> <p>I have lost a handkerchief made in Ling Qing city. Hu Hu, please ask all to help me look for it.</p> <p>(b)有了，不要寻了。走熟的路，不消用火。</p> <p>I have found it, you don't have to search anymore. I know my way up, no need for torch.</p> <p>(c)酒看尽多，何不把些赏厨下男女？也叫他闹哄哄，像个节夜。</p> <p>We have excessive wine for tonight, why not spare some to the chefs? Let's enjoy it like a boisterous festive night.</p>

In Move Four of *Jin Ping Mei*, when Xi approached the pimp's house as arranged Wang Po immediately invites Xi in just as natural as any other day (Move Four, 1c). Then she introduces Xi to Pan (Move Four, 1d) and later expresses her gratitude towards Pan for her consent to tailor her cerement not forgetting to flatter Pan on her workmanship in Xi's presence (Move Four, 1e) which is illocutionary act of the expressive mood aiming for goodwill. Yet in *Jiang Xin Ge's Reunion with His Pearl Vest*, Xie Po deliberately asks the maids to look for her handkerchief (Move Four, 2a)

before she smuggles Chen up into the victim's house in the dark. When it is accomplished, she tells the maids not to light her way up saying she is familiar with the setting of the house (Move Four, 2b). Reaching Wang, she suggests that they spare the excessive wine to the chefs and enjoy that night like a boisterous festival (Move Four, 2c). Move Five in both novels finally reaches the climax. In *Jiang Xin Ge's Reunion with His Pearl Vest*, Xie Po first reminds her that night is the day when Niu Lang and Zhi Nv⁴ meet once a year in Chinese fairy tale (Move Five, 2b),

later she whets Wang with her adulterous stories in her teens and the way she deceives her husband over her virginity (Move Five, 2e-h). In between she prompts the maids to

drink more (Move Five, 2c). Taking her affairs as examples, she justifies adultery to convince Wang brazenly in a declarative mood (Move Five, 2f-j).

Table 5: Arousal of Copulation Urge

Novels	Move Five: Arousal of Copulation Urge
1. <i>Jin Ping Mei</i>	<p>(a)有劳娘子相陪大官人坐一坐。我去就来。 My lord is left to your hospitality company my dear lady, I will be back in a minute.</p> <p>(b)正是专与娘子浇手。如何却说这话！ This toast is specially arranged for your help my dear lady, you are too modest!</p> <p>(c)老身得知娘子洪饮。且请开怀吃两盏儿。 I know you can hold your liquor well my lady, do enjoy the booze.</p> <p>(d)好个精细的娘子。百伶百俐。又不枉做得一手好针线。诸子百家。双陆象棋。拆牌道字。皆通。一笔好写。.....[从略] She is such a meticulous lady, intelligent and good at sewing and embroidery; beside knowledge in Chinese philosophy and backgammon, she excels equally in word puzzle and handwriting. [Omission]...</p>
2. <i>Jiang Xing Ge's Reunion with His Pearl Vest</i>	<p>(a)官人如何还不回家？牛郎织女。也是一年一会。你比他到多隔了半年。常言一品官。二品客。做客的那一处没有风花雪月？只苦了家中娘子。 I wonder why your husband is still not coming home? Even Niu Lang and Zhi Nv meet once a year, let alone there is an excessive six months more for you two. As the saying goes, first rank official out of the nine is merely a public servant, whereas second rank official is a commercial guest. Have you ever seen any guests not seeking romances out there? Their wives at home are the pitiful most.</p> <p>(b)是老身多嘴了。今夜牛女佳期。只该饮酒作乐。不该说伤情话儿。 I regret for my outspokenness, tonight is when Niu Lang and Zhi Nv meet, we should rather drink to our hearts' content and not get too mushy.</p> <p>(c)这是牛郎织女的喜酒。劝你多吃几杯。后日嫁个恩爱的老公。寸步不离。 This is the wedding toast of Niu Lang and Zhi Nv. Have some more and I wish you would marry a loving husband in future who would never leave you alone for even a minute.</p> <p>(d)大娘几岁上嫁？ How old did you get married?</p> <p>(e)破得身退。还不吃亏：我是十三岁就破了身。 Losing one's virginity but managed to break away is not getting the short end of the stick: I lost my virginity when I hit thirteen.</p> <p>(f)论起嫁。到是十八岁了。不瞒大娘说。因是在隔壁人家学针指。被他家小官人调诱。一时间贪他生得俊俏。就应承与他偷了。初时好不疼痛。两三遍后。就晓得快活。大娘你可也是这般么？ Talking about marriage, I got married at eighteen. Frankly speaking, it was all because I was learning sewing next door when the family's young lord seduced me and I slept with him secretly as he was so good looking. At first it hurt, but after several times, I began to enjoy it. Did you feel the same, my lady?</p> <p>(g)那话儿是不晓得滋味的到好。尝过的便丢不下。心坎里时时发痒。日里还好。夜间好难过哩。 Not knowing what love making is will regret not a little, but once tried, it is constantly itchy deep down. Day time is okay but the nights will be unspeakably traumatic.</p> <p>(h)我的老娘也晓得些影像。生怕出丑。教我一个童女方。用石榴皮。生饴两味。煎汤洗过。那东西就揪疮紧了。我只做张做势的叫疼。就遮过了。 My mum got to know about my situation. To save me from disgrace, she taught me an herbal subscription: Boil pericarpium granati and potassium alum in water and use the decoction to wash 'that part' and it will turn tight. I only acted to feel painful on wedding night and my husband was deceived.</p> <p>(i)还记得在娘家时节。哥哥外出。我与嫂嫂一头同睡。两下轮番在肚子上学男人汉的行事。 I still remember when I was in my in-law's house, once my husband worked out and I slept with my aunty. We took turn to act like man sitting on each other's belly.</p> <p>(j)大娘。你不知。只要大家知音。一般有趣。也撒得火。 My lady, you might not know, it is equally fun and satisfiable if only we are bosom friend.</p> <p>(k)老身今年五十二岁了。夜间常痴性发作。打熬不过。亏得你少年老成。 I am fifty-two this year. Even at this age I always find it unbearable at night, how could you manage to sleep peacefully at your young age?</p> <p>(l)败花枯柳。如今那个要我了？不瞒大娘说。我也有个自取其乐。救急的法儿。 Who would want a faded old lady like me now? Honestly, I know how to entertain myself emergently when the urge comes.</p> <p>(m)少停到淫睡了。与你细讲。 I will tell you the details later when I go to bed.</p>

Yet in *Jin Ping Mei*, the pimp excuses herself for some more wine when she deems the time is ripe (Move Five, 1a). Before she leaves for more wine thus to leave them alone in a room, she stresses, “I know you can hold your liquor well my lady, do enjoy the booze” and flatters Pan again on her

workmanship (Move Five, 1c) targeting to ensure her illocutions to materialize into illocutionary acts, viz., Pan’s drinking on undefended. Eventually, Pan is left to Xi’s observation of Wang Po’s proposed modus operandi behind closed door.

Table 6: Excuse to Leave the Scene

Novels	Move Six: Excuse to Leave the Scene
1. <i>Jin Ping Mei</i>	<p>(a)正好吃酒，却又没了。官人休怪老身差拨·买一瓶儿酒来吃如何？ What a shame, there is no more wine left. Don’t take me demanding, how about buying another bottle of wine, my lord?</p> <p>(b)老身去那街上取瓶儿来，有劳娘子相待客人坐一坐。壶里有酒·没便再筛两盏儿·且和大官人吃着·老身直去县东街·那里有好酒买一瓶来·有好一歇儿耽搁。 Let me buy a bottle of wine from the street. My lord is left to your hospitality company my dear lady. If there is no more wine, please filter some from the pot and enjoy yourselves. I will go to Xian Dong Street for a bottle of good wine and it will take some time.</p> <p>(c)阿呀！娘子，大官人又不是别人·没事相陪吃一盏儿·怕怎的！ My goodness! My lord is no stranger my lady, there is nothing to worry about to accompany him for a few more toasts while I am out!</p>
2. <i>Jiang Xing Ge’s Reunion with His Pearl Vest</i>	<p>(a)阿呀！老身自去点灯来。 Gosh! I will go light a lamp.</p> <p>(b)忘带个取灯儿去了。 I forgot to bring along a lamp.</p> <p>(c)夜深了，厨下火种都熄了，怎么办？ It’s late at night, the tinder in the kitchen has gone out, what should we do next?</p> <p>(d)老身伴你一床睡何如？ What if I sleep with you tonight?</p> <p>(e)大娘，你先上床，我关了门就来。 My dear lady, you go to bed first, I will be right back after locking the door.</p> <p>(f)就来了。 I will be here in a minute.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(Translated by author, 2020)</p>

The pimp in *Jin Ping Mei* ever and anon reiterates her trick. She suggests to Pan that “Xi is no stranger, and there is nothing to worry about to accompany him for a few more toasts while I am out!”(Move Six, 1c) In *Jiang Xing Ge’s Reunion with His Pearl Vest*, Xie Po sits herself on Wang’s belly aping a desirous man to kindle Wang’s lusts. The ruse begins when Xie Po tells the desirous Wang that the lights are all gone and she will sleep with her after locking the door (Move Six, 2e) in a perlocutionary effect of the fear arousing type. Then in the dark, Chen is led in and pushed towards Wang’s bed for the finale to happen naturally. Lust, couples with the stimulation of wine takes over subsequently and the mission is accomplished. But the description is again only a few words ending with “the details are not to be described”, leaving more leeway for imagination.

Conclusion

To begin with, I regard it with a good deal of skepticism, differing from many scholars whom I respect in response to the approach embarked to suggest the comparable entities of Comparative Literature go beyond scope and dimension as proposed by the established French and American schools, but rather, extensively subsumes common families of literature such as frameworks, theories or analytical techniques, etc. as comparable entities not boundary confined. In that way, take for instance, it can be the use of established Japanese literary theories/analytical techniques etc. to examine Polish literature and the like. On that score, the proposed model is an extension of Comparative Literature and I term it in passing “New Comparative

Literature” as authentically demonstrated in the foregoing.

From the two full length novels, what is concluded from the discussions may be abridged. The modus operandi of pimping in the two novels shares a similar pattern and are causally broken down into six moves, namely, Move One: Conspiracy Agreed, Move Two: Proposal of Modus Operandi, Move Three: Confirmation of Possibility to Proceed, Move Four: Staging of Convenient Rendezvous, Move Five: Arousal of Copulation Urge, and Move Six: Excuse to Leave the Scene.

The pimps, taking advantage of their convenience to quench their greed at the expense of the seducers and the ladies with their eloquence and crafty operating method as revealed in the discourses. The ending of the wenchers, to put in an exhorting or perlocutionary discourse, “deserve it to the core as what they did is intentional and criminal”—Xi experienced a debaucherous death whereas Chen died tragically out of illness far from home.

Moreover, the discourses construct or ‘constitute’ social entities and relations and different discourses combine under particular social conditions (historical change) when (1) the wencher implores help from the complicit in a submissive, meek and subservient discourse (illocutionary, commissive mood) which is saliently different from his normal behavior, and (2) after the copulation is completed, the lady pimp uses either threatening/demanding or understanding/detached discourses (perlocutionary, directive, fear arousing) which essentially dominates the contextual situation to prevent repentance and thus changes/combines the social context, knowing the wencher is her complicit though. Table 7 is self-justified.

Table 7: Comparison of Discourse Change

Novels	Sequence	Corresponding Discourses
<p>1. <i>Jin Ping Mei</i></p>	<p>Before</p>	<p>Xi: ^[1] Imperious, bureaucratic (胡衍南 2019; 宁宗一, 2018), yet likable, cheerful, generous and capable of genuine feeling (Hsia, 1968, 2016)</p> <p>Pimp: ^[2] Co-operative and subservient: If my lord is willing to pay in teals of silver, I do have an idea for you and the lady to meet up (Table 1, Move One, 1a).</p>
	<p>After</p>	<p>Xi: ^[1] Submissive and compliant: 干娘放心, 并不失信。 Do not worry grandma, I will keep my words (to reward you with ten taels of silver).</p> <p>Pimp: ^[2] Threatening and demanding: To Pan— 好呀, 好呀! 我请你来做衣裳, 不曾交你偷汉子! 你家武大郎知, 须连累我。不若我先去对武大说去。 你们都要依我一件事, 从今日为始, 瞒着武大, 每日休要失了大官人的意。早叫你早来, 晚叫你晚来, 我便罢休。若是一日不来, 我便就对你武大说。 Oh, how great now! I had asked you to make a dress for me and not committing adultery! If your husband Wu Da got to know about it, I would be in grave troubles. What do you think I go and tell him in advance? Well then, you two must follow what I say. From today onwards, keep the secret from Wu Da. You, my lady, should not ignore my lord’s calling. Come either early or late when you are asked to. If you dare not to show up for a day, I will disclose the secret to Wu Da.</p> <p>To Xi— 西门大官人, 你自不用老身说得, 这十分好事已都完成, 所许之物, 不可失信, 你若负心, 我也对武大说。 Xi Men my lord, it is now done and I am sure you know what to do. You must honor your promise; if you broke your word, I would inform Wu Da.</p>
<p>2. <i>Jiang Xing Ge’s Reunion with His Pearl Vest</i></p>	<p>Before</p>	<p>Chen: ^[1] (No discourse available)</p> <p>Pimp: ^[2] Co-operative and subservient: Please do not mistake me my lord, I have never received any money, not even a penny, without a reason. Since you insist, I will keep them as requested: but if I could not be of service, the money would be returned (Table 1, Move One, 2a).</p>
	<p>After</p>	<p>Chen: ^[1] Submissive and compliant: 今番得遂平生, 便死瞑目。 Today my dream has come true, I am ready to die any minute.</p> <p>Pimp: ^[2] Understanding and detached: To Wang and Chen— 不是老身大胆, 一来可怜大娘青春独宿, 二来要救陈郎性命。你们两个也是宿世姻缘, 非干老身之事。 It is not that I am daring; firstly, it is out of sympathy towards my lady’s lonely nights at her vitality, secondly, to save Chen my lord’s life. You two are destined to be together I believed and it has nothing to do with me.</p> <p>To Wang— 此事你知我知, 只买定了暗云、暖雪两个丫头, 不许他多嘴, 再有谁漏泄? 在老身身上, 管成你夜夜欢娱, 一些事也没有。只是日后不要忘记老身。 If we keep this between ourselves and the maids Anyun and Nuanxue are made to keep tight lipped, who else will disclose the secret? You can count on me to enjoy your nights of sensuality and nothing will happen. Make sure you do not forget about me in future.</p>

In light of Speech Act theory, what is meaningful here being, when Xi says “Do not worry grandma, I will keep my words,” (Table 7, 1, After, ^[1]) he is making his utterance forceful explicitly—what Searle (1969) argued as an “illocutionary force indicator”—and is reckoned an assertion—though it has been claimed that performatives such as “I promise to ...” are neither true nor false, current scholars unanimously rejects this view. The study of ‘infelicities’ (improperness) concerns the ways in which speech acts might be either insincere or fail completely;

whereas what Chen claims, “Today my dream has come true, I am ready to die any minute” (Table 7, 2, After, ^[1]) is a mere locution (speech act) without illocutionary act as he has not the least intention to die in reality. As it flows, I take leave to doubt that Wang in *Jiang Xing Ge’s Reunion with His Pearl Vest* is a lady of lust but a victim of her own weaknesses unwittingly that leads to her submission of temptations and lust. That probably explains why, she is reaccepted finally by her former husband Jiang as concubine and Chen’s wife dramatically becomes Jiang’s

first wife after his passing. Xie Po, the lady pimp, is beaten up and her house demolished whereas the maids are sold. As for Pan in *Jin Ping Mei*, her ending is a sanguinary one when she is slaughtered by her husband's brother Wu Song and her heart pulled out as offering to her unprepossessing husband Wu Da poisoned to death by her, in her sweet and twenty (more precisely, 22). The pimp, Wang Po, is likewise brutally murdered. Here, both novels sustain critical comments of the characters in a compassionate and sympathetic tone but rarely sarcastic as noted in most Chinese literature (杨绪容, 2017: 136), yet in *Jin Ping Mei* and *Jiang Xing Ge's Reunion with His Pearl Vest*, a sarcastic tone which is collected and indifferent is conveyed in the first-person narrator through exhortations in lyric poetry excessively, sporadically, or may be irrelevantly (Hsia, 2016, 1968) to caution retribution.

Further, not to mention the erotic parts of the novels where *Jiang Xing Ge's Reunion with His Pearl Vest* comparatively less dwells in, the verbal exchanges in both the novels are filled with pains, emptiness as well as festal pomp and jollity. Suffice it to say then, the common thread running through the novels is concerned with down-to-earth secularity rather than intangible spirituality. The pornographic narratives are a cog in the wheel, not important but must have it to complete the story. Only that *Jin Ping Mei* devotes too lengthily in it. I believe, if not armchair speculation, the real virtue of it is to reflect reality of the Ming period. However, considering similar modus operandi of pimping would reappear in the changing winds and shifting sands of history thus it is herewith raised and discussed for public caution. But I also doubt whether *Jin Ping Mei* would enjoy its popularity for centuries without recourse to these pornographic and erotic narratives. Though the novels are classic in every sense as claimed by many, *Jin Ping Mei* may not be suitable for people of all ages and climes but *Jiang Xing Ge's Reunion with His Pearl Vest* obviously is attributed to its controlled length of erotic discourse and suspense built. That may well explain why Hsia Chih Tsing posit *Jiang Xing Ge's Reunion with His Pearl Vest* the magnum opus of the Ming dynasty (Hegel, 2014) rather than *Jin Ping Mei*.

In early Ming period, if not in ours, chaste widows were rewarded with official commendation as a government policy. Yet as raised by Lin (林保淳, 2003: 94), the social norm of the late Ming times to a certain extent tolerates affairs beside matrimony, due to the belief that true love hardly exists in night life and it harms little to conjugal life albeit Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism are well entrenched in the education system of ancient China. In that sense, Pan is not a pimping victim but a slut who is constantly on a look out for an outlet for her pent-up lusts and dissatisfaction in life. Wang, in comparison, is a victim of her own weaknesses as she has deep within her nature an innocent and naïve constituent. Xie Po whets Wang with erotic stories, including sexual acts demonstration and Wang falls prey to her eloquence as well as the contextual convergences such as the foretell of the return of her husband predicted by a street fortuneteller which entails the eye contact and Chen's cladding in her husband redolent clothing, etc. If not more, her months of longing for the return of her husband falls apart in her nadir of gloomy uncertainty contributes to the adultery as well.

To conclude, it would be helpful, in the space at my disposal to suggest, human innate weakness and contextual convergence, if not retribution on the decision made intentionally, play decisive role in the two novels in terms of their eventuality and most importantly, they square with life.

Notes

1. *Jin Ping Mei* Ci Hua Version appeared in the 43rd year of Wan Li period of the Ming dynasty.
2. *Jin Ping Mei* Chong Zhen Version appeared in the Chong Zhen period of Ming dynasty.
3. *Jin Ping Mei* Kang Xi version appeared in the 34th year of Kang Xi period of the Qing dynasty. It was Zhang Zhu Po's annotation of *Jin Ping Mei* Chong Zhen Version and he named it "*Jin Ping Mei*, the First Most Interesting Book".
4. The fairy tale of the Cowherd and the Weaving Girl is a classic love story of ancient China between a fairy and a human being. It is believed that on the seventh day of every seventh month of the lunar calendar is the only time when they meet and has since treated as Chinese Valentine's Day. The mythology goes that a cowherd (a human being) and a weaving girl (a fairy) fell in love with each other. They then got married and were later forced to separate and blocked by the Milky Way. Out of compassion for them, on the seventh day of the seventh lunar month each year, flocks of magpies fly to form a bridge with their bodies over the Milky Way, allowing the lovers to meet each other.

Glossary

Chuo Geng Lu: San Gu Liu Po 《辍耕录：三姑六婆》

Dao Gu 道姑

Feng Meng Long 冯梦龙

Gua Gu 卦姑

Hangzhou Dialect 杭州方言

Hsia Chih Tsing 夏志清

Jiangsu 江苏

Jiang Xing Ge's Reunion with His Pearl Vest 《蒋兴哥重会珍珠衫》

Jin Ping Mei 《金瓶梅》

Jin Ping Mei Chong Zhen Version 《金瓶梅》崇祯本

Jin Ping Mei Ci Hua Version 《金瓶梅》词话本

Jin Ping Mei Kang Xi version 《金瓶梅》康熙本

Journey to the West 《西游记》

Lanling Xiaoxiao Sheng 兰陵笑笑生

Late Yuan, Ming and Qing Dynasties 后元、明及清朝

Li Ji, Nei Ze 《礼记·内则》

Lu Xun 鲁迅

Mei Po 媒婆

Niu Lang and Zhi Nv 牛郎织女

Ni Gu 尼姑

Pre-Qin period 先秦

Qian Po 虔婆

Romance of the Three Kingdoms 《三国演义》

The Water Margin 《水浒传》

San Gu Liu Po 三姑六婆

Shan Dong Dialect 山东方言

Shi Po 师婆

Tao Zong Yi 陶宗仪

Wan Li Period 万历年间

Wei, Jin Southern and Northern Dynasties 魏晋南北朝

Wen Po 稳婆

Western and Eastern Han 西及东汉

Wu Da 武大

Wu Dialect 吴语

Wu Province 吴县

Wu Song 武松

Ya Po 牙婆

Yao Po 药婆

Yu Shi Ming Yan 《喻世明言》

Zhang Hui Xiao Shuo 章回小说

Zhang Zhu Po 张竹坡

Zhejiang Wu Dialect 浙江吴语

Zhou Shuren 周树人

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