

## Imagined Futures in Chinese Novels at the Turn of the 21st century: A Study of *Yellow Peril*, *The End of Red Chinese Dynasty* and *A Flourishing Age: China, 2013*<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** Focusing on three influential contemporary Chinese political fantasy novels, this article contextualizes the stories in the complex spectrum of contemporary Chinese political thoughts and interprets them in light of the rivaling tendencies among the Chinese intellectuals since the 1990s, regarding the issues of rising nationalism and political authoritarianism, the possibilities of fascism and federalism, the role of a strong, centralized state, and the relevance of liberal democracy in China. The article calls attention to fiction as an expression of political thought and concerns, and argues that these novels present a pessimistic and chilling view of China's political future, in contrast with the optimistic tone of novels of the same genre in the early 20th century, and also challenge an earlier cult of the Western model of liberal democracy. An earlier Chinese-language version of the paper appeared in the website "Democratic China", <http://www.minzhuzhongguo.org> 12/8/2010, entitled "Zhengzhi huanxiang xiaoshuo zhong de dangdai Zhongguo sixiang: jiedu Huang Huo, Zhongnanhai zuihou de douzheng, he Shengshi, Zhongguo 2013" [Chinese Political Thought as Reflected in Political Fantasy Novels: Interpreting *Yellow Peril*, *The End of Red Chinese Dynasty*, and *A Flourishing Age: China, 2013*]

**Keywords** Asia; China; Literature

Since the late 1980s, Chinese scholars and critical intellectuals have been engaged in a debate about how to assess China's cultural tradition, political reality, and future road. Based on their different agendas and intellectual resources, these intellectuals are roughly divided into the following schools: "anti-traditionalism," "neo-authoritarianism," "neo-conservatism," "new-leftism," and "liberalism."<sup>2</sup> This article argues that political fantasy novels appearing in late 20th and early 21st century China, though unlike straightforward polemical writings, also continue to express concerns about China's political future and reflect the writers' own political thoughts, albeit in an artistic and subtle way. By examining the three political fantasy novels, *Yellow Peril* (Huang huo), *The End of Red Chinese Dynasty* (Zhongnanhai zuihou de douzheng), and *A Flourishing Age: China, 2013* (Shengshi Zhongguo, 2013), we can decode the trend of thought among these Chinese intellectuals concerning the destiny of the Chinese nation and possible systems to be adopted, as well as the interaction between and roles of the state, elite intellectuals, and ordinary people in these endeavors. The three books chosen for analysis were all published in Hong Kong, where political opinions can be articulated in a candid way, as opposed to elsewhere in China.

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**A PESSIMISTIC VIEW**

Compared with the utopian literature appearing in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the three novels analyzed here all demonstrate sentiments of pessimism and uncertainty. The influential utopian novels in the late Qing dynasty, such as Liang Qichao's *The Future of New China* (Xin Zhongguo weilaiji), Lu Shi'e's *New China* (Xin Zhongguo), and Wu Jianren's *New Story of Stone* (Xin shitouji), all placed hope on "progress" and "future" against the background of the Industrial Revolution, the Enlightenment, and the French Revolution.<sup>3</sup> These authors were all confident about the democratic political system and China's national revival. Liang Qichao envisioned the full implementation of representative politics, and Lu Shi'e imagined a China that had implemented constitutional democracy and economic independence by 1951. In contrast, all three fantasy novels of our time imagine a disastrous crisis that China will encounter, and the plot of each work revolves around how to resolve that crisis. *Yellow Peril*, written by Wang Lixiong and first published in 1991, imagines an extremely devastating future for China, one in which Russia and the US would attack China with nuclear weapons while China was on the brink of civil war. In the aftermath of the nuclear attack, the Chinese people must migrate to other parts of the world in search of new space in which to live.<sup>4</sup> Wang Lixiong's pessimistic view is not limited to the future of China, but also extends to the future of mankind at large. Written in the third person, the narrator of the story asks at the very end of the novel: "Is human society going to extinguish, or will it regress to a thousand years ago? When will we see a new point of balance? Or will it just decline and fall to the bottom? Is this reversible at all? Or will fully new life grow out of the rotten, old body? These are questions with no answers at this moment."<sup>5</sup> Whereas late Qing writers imagined a China that stood out among the family of the nation-states, Wang Lixiong goes so far as to envision the disappearance of nation-states altogether, along with the atomization of human society, i.e. in his vision mankind will be dispersed to form small-scale, self-governed groups.

**"BITTER SEARCH FOR NEW AUTHORITIES"<sup>6</sup>**

It is notable that all three novels identify themselves with neo-authoritarianism, if only in indirect ways. Each portrays independent-thinking and reform-minded high-level party leaders in a very positive way. Significant space in each novel is dedicated to the liberal-minded communist statesmen's articulation of progressive ideas for China's future. In Wang Lixiong's *Yellow Peril* the protagonist Shi Ge has multiple identities: an independent thinker and scholar, a social activist and organizer, and a high-ranking party official. He freely moves between political dissidents and the politburo meetings. As the narrator says in the book, "How many layers are there in his identity—even he himself doesn't know." Shi Ge's political position and ideology is both complicated and ambivalent, as stated by the narrator: "Right after the passing of the Cultural Revolution's fervor, his inner heart has departed from the Communist Party; however, he has never stopped working for the governance of the CCP in the past years. The shooting of June 4th convinced him that the man-slaughtering tyranny is doomed to perish, but he was still appointed by the authorities because he was considered 'politically reliable.'<sup>7</sup> Shi never participates in any pro-democracy protest. He does not belong to any camp; he has no team to his own name, and he is against both of the two confrontational forces. Opposed to both tyrannies of the government and of the mob movement, Shi Ge proposes a new style of democratic system called "gradational election," in which elections will occur in small groups of 6-7 people where everyone knows each other, and the selected representative from each small group will participate in a higher level small group in which they will conduct the election again.

Chillingly, the implementation of the utopian system imagined in the novel needs the work of an authoritarian system on the top to oversee it. For Shi Ge, the best method of political reform in China is the “self-transformation of the rulers” because “if the big power and high efficiency of the autocratic system can be utilized to implement gradational election system from the top down, it will be a most cost-effective, most promising, most smooth and peaceful revolution that will inflict the least pain on the people.”<sup>8</sup> Here there is evidence that the author has accepted the premise that an autocracy has two distinct advantages for China over democratic alternatives, namely, concentration of power and high efficiency. It is only within the context of these assumptions that Wang envisions China’s future. This position is made clear again in another place in the novel, when Wang Lixiong makes a straightforward remark through the narrator: “Authority is the core to maintain the rule of the Chinese society in the past centuries. The loss of authority means the loss of the ruling power...the degree that the authority was damaged through ‘opening-up and reform’ is no less than the last years of the Qing Dynasty.”

While Wang Lixiong presents a broad scenario that encompasses multiple social groups and trends of thought, Li Jie focuses on high-level political struggle within the party. For Li Jie, the fate of China almost fully depends on the struggle between the reformer Li Yifeng and the fascist military leader Zhao Yibiao, plus the intervention of the United States. Through the dialogue between the characters, Li Jie conveys a message similar to Wang Lixiong’s: “Usually people who come from the old system and carry out a set of top-down reform can realize their ideal of peaceful reform; in contrast, if one rebels from the bottom up, it’s almost inevitable for him to use violence, and it’s very possible to bring about the restoration of the old system.” Here we see a deep skepticism of the outcome of a bottom-up revolution in China.<sup>9</sup>

In *A Flourishing Age*, Chen Guanzhong portrays an “alternate politburo member,” “leader of the party and the state,” He Dongsheng, who is a former Fudan University professor. He Dongsheng is a high-level political advisor, also with a dual identity as both liberal thinker and government official. His opinions can influence the decision making of the highest party apparatus, but he also maintains close relationships with non-official liberal intellectuals through the activities of a reading club that meets regularly in Beijing. According to the author, He is a “rational and deeply hidden Chinese style idealist,” but he is also a cool-headed realist. He “has been disillusioned by modern Western representative democracy...instead, he is increasingly convinced that the post-totalitarian, autocratic big government is capable of domesticating the current global financial capitalism, as long as China has a correct understanding about it.” He Dongsheng is a nationalist who attaches importance to the unique characteristic of China: “China is China. History is not a piece of blank paper that can tolerate random writing, and history can’t be restarted. Everything starts right here and right now.” He Dongsheng understands China’s future role in the world as that of regional overlord: “The Chinese century means that China can finally recover its original historical status prior to the mid-Qing time. It is sufficient for China to hold its own *tianxia* (all-under-Heaven), and it does not attempt to rule the entire world. This scheme must be known by the powers in Europe and America. China does not intend to eat all, but the West should not hinder the China-guided rise and integration of East Asia.” Yet He Dongsheng is conservative with regard to domestic political change of China. He believes that the best way forward is to maintain the status quo, because “where there is change, there is chaos.” At the same time, He Dongsheng emphasizes social security, the protection of workers and China as a country of “socialism,” which makes his listeners, Xiaoxi and Laochen, keep nodding.<sup>10</sup> Apparently, the image of He Dongsheng is its author’s idealization

of a new-style of Chinese reformer who is a nationalist, a socialist, and a strategist, and who is both open-minded intellectually and firm politically.

#### SCRUTINIZING THE WEAKNESSES OF THE MASSES AND PUBLIC INTELLECTUALS

Compared with the political maturity of the statesmen in each of these novels, political dissidents and ordinary people are portrayed in the three novels as lacking rationality, managerial ability, and moral integrity. Wang Lixiong's criticisms point to the irresponsibility and infighting of pro-democracy activists. In *Yellow Peril*, Wang Lixiong envisions a Communist-yet-liberalized China that allows the return of the exiled pro-democracy activists. However, an unproductive confrontation between the "People's Front," founded by domestic activists, and the "Democratic Front," composed of former political exiles, immediately emerges. The leaders of the People's Front suffer from a long-time imprisonment in China and thus despise the leaders of the Democratic Front, seeing the latter as opportunists who just come back to China to pick cherries. On the other hand, the exiles and their Democracy Front regard the People's Front as "short of theory, short-sighted, lacking an understanding of world trends and real experience of democratic systems," and thus "they are unable to accomplish the task of reforming China." With a strongly sarcastic tone, Wang writes that the People's Front publishes a magazine called "Digging Night Soil," which is devoted to exposing sex scandals the Democratic Front leaders engaged in while they were living overseas. At the same time, their opponents, the Democratic Front, publish the confessions of the People's Front leaders after their arrests by the Chinese police. What makes the two groups look identical is their common disposition of irrational radicalism. In the eyes of the CCP high-ranking leaders, these fighters for democracy are nothing more than hypocrites. Once one side or the other acquires power, they will discard their "ism" right away, and become an authoritarian regime just like any other. As the people see through these former activists' personal ambitions, infighting, and Machiavellian means, they will lose respect for these dissidents. Grassroots-level democracy in China is disappointing, according to the author, because the traditional morality of China has been totally destroyed after incessant revolutions and the thrust of foreign culture. This history, combined with the fact that a new moral system has not been established yet, forms the moral vacuum of the entire society.

According to Wang Lixiong, with the lack of morality among the grassroots pro-democracy activists, China needs to turn to the guidance of higher level leaders. The potential new authority will be forceful and coercive, which is based on assumptions that not only are the fighters for democracy selfish and petty, but the "masses" are also vulnerable and irrational. For the statesman Shi Ge, "The masses lack rationality. Once they are incited, their behaviors will be fraught with violence and bloodstain." The novel envisions a scenario in which the masses turn to and seek the protection of a strong government after they are scared by social chaos and fed up with the empty promises of the self-proclaimed democratic leaders. In *Yellow Peril*, after the news about the nuclear attack on China is released, the masses begin to flee, loot, and spread sensational rumors. "The masses are extremely callous to political action," the narrator writes: "Robbery is the only valid action." In *A Flourishing Age*, the debacle arises from the global financial crisis, the sudden and significant depreciation of the value of US dollars, and the subsequent panic-purchasing in China. In this novel, the statesman He Dongsheng knows very well that after six days of panic and rumors, the people will cry for government protection and beg for the state machineries to provide their salvation. He is convinced that the people are extremely vulnerable and they will "willingly

prostrate themselves before the not-lovable leviathan out of fear of anarchism and great chaos, because only this leviathan can protect their life and property.” Li Jie’s *The End of Red Chinese Dynasty* is equally pessimistic about the character of the Chinese nation, as Li Yifeng says: “Human hearts are both dark and chaotic. Though this country is still paying lip service to the great unity, as a matter of fact, human hearts have decentralized... this nation only has the form but the spirit is gone, like a dying person.”<sup>11</sup> The “masses” in Li’s novel are epitomized by a group of college students who hold dialogues with Li Yifeng. These young college students have been brainwashed by the education of xenophobic patriotism, and the pro-American, reform-minded national leader Li Yifeng is seen by the students as a national traitor. However, the book also portrays the students as hypocrites: “After they make this uproar, they will still go to the US embassy applying for visa.” Therefore, the long-extolled moral credibility of Chinese students as vanguards in national salvation and democratization since the May Fourth Movement is undermined in this novel, and students are seen as being self-serving as anyone else.

Not only college students, but the half-baked Chinese liberal intellectuals and their relevance to social governance are also under scrutiny. In *A Flourishing Age*, the long conversations between the statesman and strategist He Dongsheng and independent and Bohemian intellectuals Lao Chen, Fang Caodi, and Xiao Xi to a large extent become a metaphor for the dilemma of critical liberal intellectuals in contemporary China, caught between mature and resourceful statesmen and irrational masses. The author, Chen Guanzhong, seems to be sympathetic and even identified with the liberal intellectuals, but he also knows their weakness, which is the lack of any concrete plan to solve economic and political problems, despite their spirit of idealism, skepticism, and criticism. At the same time, He Dongsheng is given ample room to expound upon his ideas, ranging from state intervention of economy to the care of workers’ benefits, from Asia’s Monroe Doctrine to China’s position in the world. Though He Dongsheng is pessimistic and cynical about China’s prospect of democratization, he has answers for all current issues, except political reform. In contrast, liberal intellectuals know nothing except their dream of political reform, and are “tongue-tied” when He brags about state intervention of economy because they know nothing about economics. Here Chen implicitly poses a pointed question: since what China needs is continued self-strengthening to accomplish its rise, which increasingly places emphasis on knowledge of the international political economy and awareness of state security, how can “public intellectuals,” who mainly rely on the internet to express their critical opinions, prove they are still relevant and useful?

The three political fantasy novels pose an old question that has troubled the Chinese since the late nineteenth century: the relationship between political change and people’s “quality” (suzhi); and *Yellow Peril*, at least, suggests through the monologue of a main character, Xing Tuoyu, that “The quality of the masses predetermines the quality of democracy.”<sup>12</sup> Without a doubt, the three novels all rule out the sentiment of democratic populism as an option to solve China’s problems, and all instead return to a model that reinforces rather than checks elite leadership. By doing so, the authors eschew Liang Qichao’s call for refreshing the people, as well as Mao Zedong’s call for relying on the masses as a strategy of communist revolution. Despite the innovative fantasy form of these novels, each returns to a well-known Chinese pattern in which the enlightened political elites inside the current government are the only agents of change.

#### A NATIONALISTIC PERCEPTION OF THE WEST

Most Chinese political fantasy novels since the late Qing Dynasty have invariably

touched upon the theme of Chinese perception of Western civilization. As with the late Qing works, the above-mentioned three novels have an ambivalent attitude towards the United States as both a moral and political support for Chinese democratization and reorganization, as well as a target for Chinese scrutiny and transcendence. In these imaginations, the United States no longer serves as a paragon for the Chinese to emulate. In *Yellow Peril*, Shi Ge, the thinker-statesman in the central government, dismisses Western-style representative democracy as an “illusory aura,” and he says, “The fundamental flaw of the Western political system lies in its too large constituency. The limits of each individual voter will be enlarged to become overall limits.” Shi elaborates on the problem further: “The American society allows its people to elect a president who people actually have little knowledge of but will not allow them to pick the leader who rules them directly.”<sup>13</sup> As a result, Shi Ge advocates a gradational election system in which a well-informed elite leadership acts on behalf of the larger population. Similarly, *A Flourishing Age* presents the reader with a claim that China is superior to the US in coping with the global financial crisis through the articulation of He Dongsheng, and that China is entitled to a Monroe Doctrine-style position in East Asia, a resumption of the tributary system of ancient China, and a pan-Asianist Sino-Japanese alliance to drive the US force out of the West Pacific region. In Shi Ge, *Yellow Peril* demonstrates a critical attitude towards the West as the model of China’s democratization, and asserts that the Chinese might find a better alternative to overcome the shortcomings of Western democracy, while *A Flourishing Age* enhances the feeling that the most urgent task for China is not to imitate the American political system, but to struggle for its own power and status as a main rival of the US.

The ultra-nationalist theme in two of the novels is embodied by military generals and officers. At the individual level, both *Yellow Peril* and the *The End of Red Chinese Dynasty* portray ambitious military generals who harbor deep personal animosity to the US. In *Yellow Peril*, the main anti-American character is a nuclear submarine captain named Ding Dahai, a steadfast follower of the dictator Wang Feng. Ding was sent to pursue advanced study in a US military academy, but during this experience feels that he is a misfit in American society. This feeling is exacerbated by his American classmate’s contempt of him, and his frustration after a sexual encounter with an American female classmate. In *The End of Red Chinese Dynasty*, though the US seems to play a positive role in China’s democratization by backing up the hero Li Yifeng, the author also allows the villain, the fascist military leader Zhao Yibiao, to express anti-American sentiments. As with Ding Dahai, Zhao Yibiao also has the experience of studying in the US, but this did not make Zhao a friend of America, either. Instead, “[Zhao] deeply feels, as a yellow-skinned Chinese, all kinds of humiliations when socializing with Americans. Though he does not hear a single word of insult being uttered, from their eyes, expressions, or even a subtle gesture and a touch of smile he was repeatedly told a fact: he belongs to a different world from theirs.”<sup>14</sup> Again, Zhao’s sense of alienation is added to by insult when he discovers that his American girlfriend has not been faithful. At the end of the book, Zhao vows that he will let Americans know, sooner or later, how big a mistake they have made, and how high a price they will have to pay for treating him so poorly. In these two cases, individual desires of revenge are mixed with nationalism and become the strongest motivation of Anti-Americanism.

In the *New Story of Stone*, Wu Jianren imagines that China could draw upon its old morality to confront Western culture.<sup>15</sup> In later political fantasy novels, such as those discussed here, the authors have all implicitly acknowledged the futility and irrelevance of Confucianism in the age of globalization, while emphasizing the break of tradition and loss

of morality. None of the authors discussed here suggests the revival of Confucianism as a cultural resource for China's reconstruction. For them, the Chinese could regain a sense of superiority against the Americans in three aspects: institutional renovation that transcends the American system, as done by Shi Ge; the power of the current strong government, as advocated by He Dongsheng; and Anti-American sentiments and a desperate desire for revenge, as shown in Ding Dahai and Zhao Yibiao.

### THREE PROSPECTS: FASCISM, FEDERALISM, OR UTOPIA?

Both Wang Lixiong and Li Jie suggest the possibility of the rise of Chinese fascism or military dictatorship through their novels. There are two circumstances that will allow for or tolerate such approaches to China's future. The first is a crisis moment when people are too weak to protect themselves. In *Yellow Peril*, even the reformer Shi Ge admits that in crisis "the rise to power of fascism has its rationale. At the moment of life and death, only power can reconstruct a mechanism for redistribution, which will give a portion of food to each person to survive, rather than allow some to eat to his full and some to starve."<sup>16</sup> For the military dictator Wang Feng in *Yellow Peril*, the rationale for fascism is the re-establishment of authority. "The biggest danger of China is the loss of authority," Wang argues, "...authority can only build upon iron and blood. Without a natural core, then force must be used; without the prestige to subdue the people, then power must be utilized to force a submission."<sup>17</sup> When some southern Chinese provinces, under the leadership of Huang Shike, rebel against the central government and pursue independence, Wang suppresses the movement. The narrator's comments show an ambivalent attitude towards fascism in China because the "No. 16 Institute," under the supervision of Shi Ge, has concluded: "It seems that fascist rule has become the only way out to save China...but...once China has a fascist government in power, it will be the beginning of social breakdown. In other words, the general collapse will definitely be preceded by the rise of a fascist government."<sup>18</sup> Here the author, Wang Lixiong, makes explicit his claim that military intervention into domestic politics and fascist takeover in China is likely but not desirable, and in the long run will be self-defeating.

Both *The End of Red Chinese Dynasty* and *Yellow Peril* discuss the possibility of China's federalization as a means of imagining an alternative future for China. In *The End of Red Chinese Dynasty*, one character argues that "the historical development of China will naturally move towards a federal state," and "only when this grand old empire gets loose will the prosperity of economy and culture become possible."<sup>19</sup> Huang Shike, the separatist provincial governor in *Yellow Peril* cries out, "Why China fails to find a direction? Why does it always go back and forth? Where does the problem lie? It lies in the centralized Great Unity!" Huang calls for the establishment of a unified, peaceful, and reciprocal China based on local self-determination. Here the authors seem to have returned to the political ideals and experimentation of the federalist movement in 1920s China, and they see federalism and local self-government as a viable plan to bring vigor to each individual province which attempts to break away from the tight control of a centralized government.<sup>20</sup> At the same time, the tension between the central government and the separatist tendency as manifest in the novels reveals a major dilemma of China's modernity: to become a strong nation-state of the world, there needs to be a strong and centralized state government as the agent of modernization; but democracy and autonomy, as the other side of modernity, would require more respect for the vast geographical and cultural diversity of China, and the dynamics of local self-governance.

Of the three novels, Wang Lixiong's *Yellow Peril* definitely presents the most complicated

picture of the future of China, as well as the future of mankind. His novel does not end with a democratic or federalist China, but instead goes so far as to envision an anarchist utopia. The small community presented by Wang Lixiong looks like the New Village ideal prevalent in China during the May Fourth period. On the one hand, Wang Lixiong emphasizes the necessity of reestablishing political authority to address national crises; on the other hand, his ultimate dream seems to be communal utopianism for the world. The two faces of Wang's political imagination, authoritarianism and anarchism, are dialectical as well as chronological. They co-exist, but will only manifest themselves one after the other since authoritarianism is to be adopted as expediency based on cultural and political realism, but utopianism is Wang's ideal in the long run.

### CONCLUSION

The three political fantasy novels discussed here each present possibilities for China's political future based on the author's specific analysis of China's past and present. Above all, the authors share an attitude of pessimism and uncertainty towards China's future. Politically, the authors' conservative faith in an elite leadership leads them to reject the discourse of radical mass-based revolution, and instead to return to a moderate, top-down approach. The authors not only critically reflect upon the effects of radical left-wing party politics that run through the entire 20th century of Chinese history, but also criticize the radical students of the Tiananmen Square protest in 1989 for having rejected collaboration with reform-minded officials in order to chart a new course for China's future. Interestingly, collaboration between reform-minded officials and students, which is implicitly advocated for in the three novels, was openly advocated by Adam Michnik, the former Polish dissident who visited China in July 2010, and echoed by a few leading Chinese dissident intellectuals.<sup>21</sup> The three novels all mention the existence of ultra-nationalistic, anti-American political forces in China, the potential of militarization of politics, and the weakness or irrelevance of the US as a model for China's future. Though politically conservative and nationalistic, none of the three novels suggest that China's own cultural tradition and Confucianism can play any significant role in nationalist reconstruction. With a skepticism of the West and nihilism towards China's own past, the authors present dim views of China's future: realization of democratization at a high social and political cost (Li Jie), a national exodus to an unknown future while rejecting both tradition and the West (Wang Lixiong), or the passive maintenance of the status quo because there is no other viable option (Chen Guanzhong). Interestingly, a passive acceptance for elite leadership in China was recently expressed by the prominent contemporary Chinese writer and former Minister of Culture Wang Meng in an interview with Jianying Zha, a famous cultural critic: "I support [the CCP] not because it's that good, but because it would be worse without it."<sup>22</sup> If Wang Meng's remark sounds more than a little cynical, we might also think about the recent, more positive assessment of the Chinese state by Francis Fukuyama as "high-quality authoritarian government," compared with the Middle East countries that underwent Jasmine Revolutions.<sup>23</sup> The flexibility and adaptability of this "high-quality authoritarian government" of China, to be sure, awaits further observations and analysis.

### NOTES

1. *A Flourishing Age: China, 2013* is my translation of the book's title. The English translation of the book has been published. See Koonchung Chan, *The Fat Years* (Doubleday, 2011). The translations in this article are mine. I want to thank the editors and anonymous readers of *Asianetwork Exchange* for their meticulous reading and insightful comments during the process of revising this paper.



2. See Suisheng Zhao, "Chinese Intellectuals' Quest for National Greatness and Nationalistic Writing in the 1990s," *The China Quarterly*, No. 152. (Dec. 1997), pp. 725-745. Also see Kaplana Misra, "Neo-left and Neo-right in Post-Tiananmen China," *Asian Survey*, vol. 43, no. 5 (2003), 714-744. For a detailed analysis of the intellectual debate among Chinese scholars, also see Xu Youyu's article "Jinru ershiyi shiji de zuyou zhuyi he xin zuopai" [Liberalism and Neo-leftism enter the 21st century] *Dangdai zhongguo jianjiu*, no. 2, 2007.
3. For an analysis of these novels, see Geng Chuanming, "Old State and New Mission: A Survey of Utopian Literature during the Late Qing Dynasty and the Early Period of China," Wang Hui Trans. In *Frontiers of Literary Studies in China* 2010, 4 (3): 403-424. David Der-wei Wang discusses Liang Qichao's *The Future of New China* as "science fantasy" in his *Fin-de-siècle Splendor: Repressed Modernities of Late Qing Fiction, 1849-1911* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997) 301-312.
4. Wang's pessimistic tone is also pinpointed by Henry Y.H. Zhao in "A Fearful Symmetry: The Novel of the Future in Twentieth China," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London*, Vol.66, No. 3 (2003), pp. 456-471.
5. Wang Lixiong, *Huang Huo* (Hong Kong: Mirror Books, 1991), 603.
6. This phrase is taken out from Lucien W. Pye's *The Spirit of Chinese Politics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 107). Pye points out that "The Expectation that pure authority has the capacity to change everything has made the Chinese peculiarly prone to throw in their lot with any emerging authority that has seemed in any way efficient." See Pye, *The Spirit of Chinese Politics*, 107, 123. For alternate means of political authority in Communist China, see Chalmers Johnson, "Chinese Communist Leadership and Mass Responses," in Ping-ti Ho and Tang Tsou eds., *China in Crisis, Vol.1 China's Heritage and the Communist Political System* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 397-437.
7. Wang Lixiong, *Huang Huo* (Hong Kong: Mirror Books, 1991), 95.
8. *Ibid*, 104.
9. In early 2012, this skeptical attitude towards revolution was echoed by the influential and highly controversial essay "On Revolution," written by the young writer and social critic Han Han. Han argues that the final winner of a revolution will always be a selfish, vicious while seditious person. For Han's article and comments, see the Chinese website of *Financial Times*: <http://www.ftchinese.com/story/001042410>
10. Chen Guanzhong, *Shengshi Zhongguo*, 2013 (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 2009), 228-233.
11. Li Jie, *Zhongnanhai zuihou de douzheng* (Hong Kong: Mirror Books, 1999), 193.
12. Wang Lixiong, *Huang Huo* (Hong Kong: Mirror Books, 1991), 287.
13. *Ibid*, 261. Here Wang might refer to a smaller institution such as a company, a college, or a government office, rather than the local government which is elected in the US.
14. Li Jie, *Zhongnanhai zuihou de douzheng* (Hong Kong: Mirror Books, 1999), 127-128.
15. Geng, "Old State and New Mission," 415.
16. Wang Lixiong, *Huang Huo* (Hong Kong: Mirror Books, 1991), 147-148.
17. *Ibid*, 193-194.
18. *Ibid*, 255.
19. Li Jie, *Zhongnanhai zuihou de douzheng* (Hong Kong: Mirror Books, 1999), 188-189.
20. For the federalist movement, See Jean Chesneaux, "The Federalist Movement in China, 1920-1923," in Jack Gray. (ed.), *Modern China's Search for a Political Form* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 97-137, and Leslie Chen, *Chen Jiongming and the Federalist Movement: Regional Leadership and Nation Building in Early Republican China* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Center for China Studies, 2000).
21. See He Qinglian, "Taren de jingyan yu women de xianshi—youguan Miqinike Zhongguo duihua de jidian-sikao" [The Experience of the Others and the Reality of Ours---A few Thoughts on the Conversation held by Michnick in China], in *Zhongguo renquan shuangzhoukan*, 7/15/2010, no. 29. This viewpoint and its applicability was challenged by He Qinglian and Wu Guoguang. Also see "Wu Guoguang Jiaoshou Fangtan—Zhongguo zhengzhi gaige" [An Interview with Professor Wu Guoguang—Chinese Political Reform] <http://my.cnd.org/modules/wfsection/article.php?articleid=27660>
22. Jianying Zha, "Servant of the State," *The New Yorker* (Nov. 8, 2010).
23. Francis Fukuyama, *The Origin of Political Order: From Prehuman Times to the French Revolution* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011), 313.

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