JUDGE BAO, HAMLET AND DUPIN: WAKING DREAMERS IN CHINESE AND WESTERN DETECTIVE STORIES

by

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(Under the Direction of Karin Myhre)

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores supernatural incursions into the solving of crime cases in Yuan-Ming courtroom dramas and early Western detective fiction. Focusing on three Judge Bao courtroom dramas and incorporating analysis of the detective elements in *Hamlet* with Edgar Allan Poe's trio of Dupin tales, divergent treatments of the paranormal are examined. Taking dreams and dreaming a point of entry, the thesis delineates how workings of the extramundane engage different investigators. Despite fundamental differences in the treatment of supernatural revelation in traditional Chinese and European cultural ideologies, the conjunction of dreaming and detection provides new insights into distinct literary traditions.

INDEX WORDS: JUDGE BAO, HAMLET, DUPIN, DETECTIVE, DREAM

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my parents for their love and unceasing support while I pursued my degree.

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Is all *that we see or seem*
But a dream within a dream?

—Edgar Allan Poe, *A Dream Within a Dream* (1849)

INTRODUCTION

> Anyone weary of hearing that the Chinese invented almost everything long before the West will be dismayed to learn that the Chinese were writing detective stories at least three hundred years before Edgar Allan Poe and courtroom drama about two hundred years before that time….This is a world of crime and punishment, as viewed by the popular imagination, a world of murder and corruption and also of justice tinged with mercy (Hayden 1-2).

As early as the Song dynasty (960–1279 A.D.), the literature of crime and punishment, or *gong'an* (公案), a genre very similar to the Western detective fiction, began to emerge in China.[1] These stories first appeared in the form of *huaben* (話本), the scripts for *shuohua* (說話), a kind of rhyming verse designed to be spoken and chanted for entertainment, which were then developed into plays and short stories during the subsequent Yuan (1280–1368 A.D.), Ming (1368–1644 A.D.) and Qing (1644–1911 A.D.) dynasties.

In traditional Chinese literature, crime and punishment, as Patrick Hanan notes, was a major theme: "Crime and punishment was an important theme in traditional Chinese literature, perhaps more important than in any other of the world's literatures before the heyday of the Western detective story and crime story. Its popularity extended through all levels of Chinese society; it is found in classical, vernacular, and oral literature, and in virtually all narratives and dramatic genres" (Hayden vii). More significantly, *gong'an* is also a reflection of Chinese conceptions of justice, which naturally manifest the Chinese notion of law as embodying ethical

[1] The word, *gong'an*, can be translated as "crime case." It is a term adopted by modern Chinese literary historians, including Hu Shi (胡適) and Zheng Zhenduo (鄭振鐸), to describe this particular literary category of Chinese detective story. The word originally refers to the table, desk, or bench of a government magistrate.

norms and of crime as violating the social order and, by implication, the cosmic order as well (Hayden vii). Therefore, this thesis will focus on the comparison between the supernatural forces in three of Yuan-Ming's Judge Bao courtroom dramas—*Rescriptor-in-Waiting Bao Thrice Investigates the Butterfly Dream* (包待制三堪蝴蝶夢) by Guan Hanqing (關漢卿), *The Ghost of the Pot* (盆兒鬼) by an anonymous author, and *The Flower of the Back Courtyard* (後庭花) by Zheng Tingyu (鄭庭玉)—and Western detective fiction, particularly Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and Edgar Allan Poe's trio of Dupin tales.[2]

In his definition of the *gong'an* story, Huang Yanbo indicates that two elements—the perpetration of a crime and the solving of the crime—are necessarily involved in the plot of the story in the *gong'an* genre: "Since the depiction of the solution of the crime, including deciding the case and sentencing the criminal, will naturally involve the committing of the crime, so long as there is depiction of the solution of the crime, it is a *gong'an* story. But if only the perpetration of the crime is presented, and the solution is not included, it is not a *gong'an* story."[3] George A. Hayden further brings up the three essential elements in a courtroom drama, which are also applicable for the later Ming-Qing *gong'an* narratives:

(1) A crime, a specific infraction of the legal statutes of the approximate time in which the plays were written;
(2) The crime's solution and punishment in a courtroom situation;
(3) A judge or courtroom clerk who solves the crime and, in the case of a judge, punishes the guilty and rewards the meritorious (3).

[2] However, according to Hayden, only thirty texts of Northern drama can be assigned to the Yuan dynasty with certainty: "All of the other texts of so-called 'Yuan' drama were printed or transcribed in the late sixteenth or early seventeenth centuries i.e., the late Ming" (185). Hayden's translate "Judge Bao" as "Judge Pao" based on the Wade-Giles system. In this thesis I follow the *pinyin* system to use "Judge Bao" consistently in order to avoid confusion.
[3] All the translations in this thesis are my own except when otherwise noted. 黃岩柏《中國公案小說史》: "因為描寫斷案（包括破案和判案），其中肯定包含作案，所以只要是描寫斷案的，都是公案小說。但單寫作案，不寫斷案的，不是公案小說。"

Accordingly, the judge, like its Western counterpart, serves as the detective in *gong'an* stories to solve difficult cases. Furthermore, as the agent of justice, the judge is also the central character, and the plot of a *gong'an* story is generally designed to present the brilliance of this figure. Among a number of officials, such as Judge Di (狄公), Judge Hai (海公) and Judge Yu (于公), and their stories as detectives solving mysterious cases in folk legend and literature, Judge Bao (包公) is undoubtedly the most celebrated, long worshiped as the exemplar of Chinese judges and the symbol of justice.[4] Hu Shi has even compared him to the classic Western detective Sherlock Holmes by designating him the "Chinese Sherlock Holmes."[5]

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[4] Also translated as Judge Dee in Robert Van Gulik's *Judge Dee* series. The character is based on the Tang dynasty (618–907) official Di Renjie (狄仁傑; 630–700). He served as chancellor during the reign of the Empress Wu (武則天) and was celebrated because of his honesty.

[5] Hu Shi, *Hu Shi Wencun Sanji*, Vol. 6. Hu Shi (1891–1962) was a Chinese philosopher, writer and diplomat. He is widely considered one of the most influential advocators in China's New Culture Movement. Once a president of Peking University, Hu was nominated for a Nobel Prize in literature in 1939. Among his wide range of interests, including literature, history, criticism and pedagogy, Hu was one of the earliest scholars that gave notice to Judge Bao and Chinese detective stories. He was also a significant redologist and the owner of the famous Jiaxu manuscript of *Dream of the Red Chamber* (甲戌本紅樓夢) until his death. "In history, there are several fortunate people; one of them is the Yellow Emperor, one is the Duke of Zhou, and the other is Dragon-design Bao. Since the inventor of numerous significant creations from ancient times was unknown, later generations had to attribute the success to the Yellow Emperor. Therefore, the Yellow Emperor became the legendary sage in ancient times. The middle ancient times also had many inventions from unknown sources: later generations then gave the credit to the Duke of Zhou. As a result, the Duke of Zhou became the legendary sage in the middle ancient times…Dragon-design (Longtu) Bao—Bao Zheng—is also such a targeted figure. Down through the ages, there are many exquisite crime and punishment stories: some of them were written into the historical record, some were circulated among the people. But since most people did not know their sources, these stories were easily piled up onto one or two historical figures. Among those pure officials who act like detectives, the folk legend, without reason, picked out the Song dynasty official, Bao Zheng, to be the target and shot all the intriguing cases onto him. Dragon-design Bao thus became the Chinese Sherlock Holmes." (歷史上有許多有福之人，一個是黃帝，一個是周公，一個是包龍圖。上古有許多重要的發明，後人不知道是誰發明的，只好都歸到黃帝的身上，於是黃帝成了上古的大聖人。中古有許多制作，後人也不知道究竟是誰創始的，也就都歸到周公的身上，於是周公成了中古的大聖人。包龍圖——包拯——也是一個箭垛式的人物，古來有許多精巧的折獄故事，或載在史書，或流傳民間，一般人不知道他們的來歷，這些故事遂容易堆在一兩個人身上。在這些偵探式的清官之中，民間的傳說不知怎樣選出了宋朝的包拯來做一個箭垛，把許多折獄的奇案都射在他身上。包龍圖遂成了中國的歇洛克·福爾摩斯了)

The origin of *gong'an*, in fact, can be traced back to the Qin (221–206 B.C.) and Han (206 B.C.— 220 A.D.) dynasties. The mythology and historical documents in these two periods regarding law and upright officials may be regarded as the precursor of this genre. For example, the *Huainanzi* (淮南子) describes the legendary God of Prison (獄神), Gao Yao (皋陶), as "clear about settling the case; sensible of the human feeling" (决獄明白，察於人情).[6] Sima Qian (司馬遷) in his "Historical Records" (史記) also recorded some cases in the "Biographies of Upright Officials" (循吏列傳). Then, during the Six Dynasties (221–589 A.D.), writers of *zhiguai* (志怪) or "accounts of the strange" adapted those former records and, by enriching the plot, further developed them into short narratives. Among the more than four-hundred tales in Gan Bao's (干寶) *In Search of the Supernatural* (搜神記), for instance, fourteen stories are found relating to the theme of crime and punishment, and most of the cases are solved through supernatural means. For example, in several cases a victim's ghost appears to tearfully complain about the injustice and the culprit is thus arrested (He CH2). Many other early historical records are the forerunner of later Yuan-Ming dramas, including the Judge Bao plays. The story of *Rescriptor-in-Waiting Bao Thrice Investigates the Butterfly Dream* is derived from an account of Qi Yi's (齊義) stepmother in Volume 5 of the *Biographies of Exemplary Women* (列女傳).

[6] From the chapter, *Xiuwuxun* (修務訓), of *Huainanzi*: "若夫堯眉八彩，九竅通洞，而公正無私，一言而萬民齊：舜二瞳子，是謂重明，作事成法，出言成章；禹耳參漏，是謂大通，興利除害，疏河決江；文王四乳，是謂大仁，天下所歸，百姓所親；皋陶馬喙，是謂至信，決獄明白，察於人情；禹生於石；契生於卵，史皇產而能書；羿左臂修而善射。若此九賢者，千歲而一出，猶繼踵而生。" Gao Yao was thus recorded as one of the nine sages in ancient times according to this account. He was also an official of Yu Shun (虞舜), one of the five legendary emperors in China, and was recognized as the earliest God of Prison; the other two Gods of Prison in history are Xiao He (蕭何) and Ya Nai (亚盡).

The succeeding Tang dynasty (618–906 A.D.) was a high point in Chinese civilization. Peace and prosperity at this time brought about progress in all areas, including the arts and literature. In Tang *chuanqi* (傳奇) or "tales of strange events," the function of ghosts is relatively weakened in stories dealing with crime and punishment; the narrative instead pays more attention to the official's observations and logical analysis in the process of investigation, which laid the foundation for the later *gong'an* story (He CH2). The stories such as "Liu Chonggui" (劉崇龜) and "Su Wuming" (蘇無名) in the collection of *Tang Chuanqi* (唐傳奇), are good examples of this stage, in which officials in charge mainly rely on their intelligence to solve the case and discover the criminal. Following on the Tang dynasty, the Song dynasty was one of the most prosperous economies in the medieval world. This economic progress was marked by commercial expansion, increased foreign trade, and technological advances in agriculture, the iron industry, printing and many other fields. Furthermore, strong economic development and in particular a revolution in agricultural productivity resulted in an enormous population explosion: the population during the tenth and eleventh centuries almost doubled China's overall population compared to the Tang dynasty.[7]

As Robert Scholes and Robert Kellogg put it, "To understand a literary work, then, we must first attempt to bring our new view of reality into as close an alignment as possible with the prevailing view in the time of the work's composition" (83). Along with economic development, society in this period was also undergoing a process of urbanization. For one thing, the

[7] The Northern Song census shows that the population at that time was roughly 50 million, but the later study indicates that the number was actually around 100 million, and 200 million by the Ming dynasty. See p. 103-104, *China's Geography: Globalization and the Dynamics of Political, Economic, and Social Change* (2007) by Gregory Veeck, Clifton W. Pannell, Christopher J. Smith and Youqin Huang for more information regarding the economy of the Song dynasty.

population in urban areas increased sharply, and a vibrant social life in cities gave rise to various forms of entertainment, including the art of storytelling, or *shuohua* (說話). For another, the mobility of a huge population in the process of urbanization through the course of the Song dynasty led to a series of concerns about public order, violence and crime, which was naturally reflected in the literature at that time. This progress thus established fertile ground for the creation of detective stories. Consequently, puppetry and oral performances of crime cases by storytellers became popular amongst citizens. Thus, the genre of *gong'an* came into being.[8] Unfortunately, since no works of *huaben* from the Song dynasty are found today, the study of the Chinese *gong'an* story mainly focuses on the surviving Yuan-Ming courtroom dramas, and Ming-Qing short narratives dealing with the theme of crime and punishment.[9]

Although developing six centuries later, the context of the origin of the Western detective genre is actually very similar to its Eastern counterpart. As Philip D. Curtin remarks:

> Between [...] 960 and [...] 1127, China passed through a phase of economic growth that was unprecedented in earlier Chinese history, perhaps in world history up to this time. It

[8] An Yushi, *Bao Gong An*, p. 1: "宋王朝建立以後，在恢復和發展經濟方面采取了一些有力的措施，不僅農業出現了大豐收，而且手工業和商業也有了空前的發展。農、工、商的全面發展，促成了城市的繁榮，並產生了新興的市民階層。市民階層特有的精神生活、審美情趣，促成了包括'說話'在內的市民文藝的興起，而人際交往的頻繁化、復雜化、流動化，也帶來了一系列社會治安問題，這不能不在當時的文學作品中有所反映。作為'說話'中的一支，'說公案'受到市民階層的廣泛歡迎，而包公這一形象也在這時嶄露頭角。"

[9] Also known as "crime case drama," a category of Northern drama, or *zaju* 雜劇 (variety drama). The Yuan dynasty was a period renowned for its theatrical activity and the general format of a Northern drama contains songs, dialogue and some chanted poetry: "A typical play consists of four song sequences, or sets, each sequence containing several songs (perhaps ten to twelve) of the same musical mode and holding to a single rhyme based on northern pronunciation. Usually one actor or actress, playing a major character, sings throughout the play, although the character he or she portrays may change from sequence to sequence according to the demands of plot" (Hayden 1-2). Among the more than two hundred Yuan-Ming plays, twenty-seven of them are categorized as "courtroom drama": "Other northern plays may present characterizations that are delicately balanced and flavored with slight nuances in song and dialogue. The courtroom plays are different: they are frank and vigorous appeals to the basic emotions of fear, pity, outrage, and the delight of revenge. Avoiding inner psychological conflict or moral irony, they act out literally a life and death struggle between good and evil, a basic dichotomy that in a variety of modes forms the very essence of later popular literature" (Hayden 2-3).

> depended on a combination of commercialization, urbanization, and industrialization that has led some authorities to compare this period in Chinese history with the development of early modern Europe six centuries later (109).

During the nineteenth century—the Victorian era in Britain—major technological improvements not only generated huge economic growth but also a variety of social changes, including a burgeoning urban population. With mechanical innovation, people began to leave farms to work in factories in major cities, which gave rise to an increase in urban crime:

> Though cities throughout Britain mushroomed during the Victorian era, London, as always, led the way. In 1801 Britain's first census revealed that it had a population of one million "souls." Its size startled the British, as did its continued growth in people and sprawl throughout the century. By 1901, fed by immigration and natural growth, London's population was over six and one-half million people, occupying an area ten miles in any direction from Trafalgar Square. Karl Baedeker, in his 1902 guidebook of London, described it as "the most populous city in the world" and cautioned visitors about pickpockets, talking with strangers and visiting poor areas after dark (Hoffman 81).

The establishment of Western detective fiction as a genre is signified by the publication of Edgar Allan Poe's trio of Dupin tales, *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* (1841), *The Mystery of Marie Rogêt* (1843), and *The Purloined Letter* (1845), in which the first detective figure, C. Auguste Dupin, made his debut. Dupin's character became the prototype for later detective characters, including Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes and Agatha Christie's Hercule Poirot. Several influential works by British writers, such as Charles Dickens' *Bleak House* (1853) and Wilkie Collins' *The Moonstone* (1868), all considered pioneers in this genre, also follow the Dupin stories. In 1887 Sherlock Holmes, the most celebrated of all fictional detectives, appeared in *A Study in Scarlet*, and became the representative of this genre: "Sherlock Holmes has become a mythic icon and the most famous detective worldwide. One could argue that the detectives of the golden age of British detective writing (the detectives created by Dorothy Sayers, Agatha

Christie, Margery Allingham and Ngaio Marsh) are but children of Holmes, mere variations on his character" (Giffone 146).

In his Sherlock Holmes stories, Conan Doyle gave a vivid account of late Victorian London and acutely captured its problems during the process of urbanization, especially when the security of this city was threatened by strikes, serial murders, socialism, foreign radicals, and mass poverty caused by the depression of the 1880s (Hoffman 83). Hence, the setting of Victorian London as a foggy city full of dark secrets became the classical background for later detective stories: "Our fascination and dwelling on crime in the Victorian eras is a product of a cultural movement where crime statistics of all kinds—anonymous urban violence, family killings, mass murders in the heartland of suburban communities, which were originally conceived as defense zones against urban violence—are blossoming" (Giffone 149).

However, before Poe's creation of Dupin, certain texts in the West already exhibited the basic elements of later detective fiction, which incorporates a criminal act, a villain, a victim, and a detective. But the detective in these early cases is usually God or a form of divine intervention. For instance, in the Old Testament, Cain kills his younger brother, Abel, out of envy, so God punishes Cain because Abel's blood cried out the injustice from the ground. "The Singing Bone," a German fairy tale collected by the Brothers Grimm, tells a similar story: The older brother murders his younger brother in order to seize the king's trophy. At the end of the story, the younger brother's bone sings a song to reveal the truth since "nothing remains hidden from God," and the older brother is finally executed by drowning alive (Grimm). This story varies slightly in England, French Louisiana, Italy and other countries, but supernatural power invariably plays a role in restoring the order.

During the Renaissance period, the same mechanism of supernatural force survived in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (1603) as the melancholy prince of Denmark, Hamlet, is informed of his father's murder by the deceased king's ghost:

> My father's spirit in arms! all is not well;
> I doubt some foul play: would the night were come!
> Till then sit still, my soul: foul deeds will rise,
> Though all the earth o'erwhelm them, to men's eyes (1.2.246).

But in this case, supernatural power is no longer decisive because, for one thing, Hamlet begins to suspect his uncle's crime before the ghost's disclosure. Upon hearing the ghost's recount of the concealed murder, the prince exclaims bitterly, "O my prophetic soul! My uncle!" (1.5.54). As a result, the ghost's appearance tends to be a confirmation of his suspicion rather than a pure revelation. Moreover, after the ghost's appearance, Hamlet still performs a series of actions to collect evidence and confirm that his uncle is indeed the murderer who carried out the crime as the ghost described. Consequently, supernatural power, rather than the irrefutable source for establishing justice, was shifted now to become an inspiration to the protagonist in further investigating the situation at hand.

Although the process of verification in *Hamlet* is an indication of the prince's lack of resolution in taking revenge, it also implies that the protagonist begins to be conscious of his own observation and mental constructive faculty, which are the basic skills for a detective. Many critics have noticed that major plays in the Renaissance period are the source for detective fiction, and thus indicate that the detective narrative took form in the sixteenth century: "We could make a reasonably good case for dating the detective tale from the renaissance, but it would be a deductive one: because later writers use renaissance writers as inspiration, the detective tale must

have begun in the sixteenth century. It would also be misleading in that detective fiction did not grow out of the masterworks of Elizabeth's reign" (Panek 4).

While Hamlet's role in his process of collecting evidence and identifying the criminal resembles a detective, the plot of the play is also similar to the Chinese *gong'an* story, particularly in terms of supernatural intervention. As mentioned above, Hamlet is told about the murder by his father's ghost, thus supernatural intervention still functioned as an integral element in establishing justice during the Renaissance era. Likewise, the supernatural element is an essential ingredient in the *gong'an* stories, as Robert Van Gulik accurately points out, "[T]he Chinese have an innate love for the supernatural. Ghosts and goblins roam about freely in most Chinese detective stories; animals and kitchen utensils deliver testimony in court, and the detective indulges occasionally in little escapades to the Nether World, to compare notes with the judges of the Chinese Inferno" (II-III). One of the major supernatural elements is the judge's dream. When the judge is perplexed by cases, he is usually prompted by a dream to find the criminal, as the dream either reveals the solution by the appearance of the victim's ghost or offers him a prophetic clue in metaphorical terms. For instance, in *Rescriptor-in-Waiting Bao Thrice Investigates the Butterfly Dream*, Judge Bao dreams of three butterflies and finally settles the case based on his interpretation of the dream.

As a result, the first chapter of this thesis explores the similar functions of supernatural intervention in the plots of three Judge Bao plays as well as *Hamlet*. The chapter will then turn to the different conceptions of social and cosmic order that undergird notions of the supernatural in *gong'an* stories and *Hamlet*, especially in the context of the Neo-Confucian movement and the Renaissance period. Subsequently, the second chapter will concentrate on the comparison of the

idea of dreams. If Judge Bao is a dreamer who seeks truth in his dream, Hamlet compares himself to "John-a-dreams," a dreamy person who frequently blurs the boundary between the limited physical world and the infinite mental world.

Both China and the Western world have a rich tradition of dream culture. In the West before the scientific revolution, dreams are normally attributed to supernatural origins, as Sigmund Freud observes, "As we know, the ancients prior to Aristotle regarded the dream not as a product of the dreaming psyche, but as an inspiration from the realm of the divine.…They distinguished valuable, truth-telling dreams, sent to the sleeper to warn him or announce the future to him, from vain, deceptive, and idle dreams intended to lead him astray or plunge him into ruin" (8). This Western notion is very similar to the ancient Chinese idea that dreams can be prophetic and didactic to guide the dreamer's waking life as indicated in some Tang period dream narratives, such as "An Account of the Governor of the Southern Branch" (南柯太守傳) and "World Inside a Pillow" (枕中記). Later, the Judge Bao stories also reflect this conception of dreams. Moreover, Ming-Qing literati are inclined to share a nihilistic sentiment, which is embedded in the metaphor of dreams. For example, in Tang Xianzu's (湯顯祖) four "dream plays" (臨川四夢), Zhang Dai's (張岱) *Reminiscences in Dreams of Tao An* (陶庵夢憶) and finally, Cao Xueqin's *The Story of the Stone* (石頭記), dreams denote multiple dimensions, such as the psychic signal of presage, the religious philosophy of emptiness and illusory reality, or the implication of a character's innermost desire or inner awakening. Likewise, the dream in *Hamlet* is also endowed with manifold meanings.

Despite similar supernatural element in the Judge Bao plays and *Hamlet*, where Judge Bao was elevated to an immortal stature throughout the centuries, his Western counterpart, the detective, underwent a divergent transition. But their capabilities of solving mysterious cases still put them in a similar role. With Edgar Allen Poe's publication of the first Dupin tale in 1841, the first Western detective figure appeared who relied merely on the intellectual prowess, astute observation, and logical analysis to solve mysterious cases:

> Of course, the assurance that divine intervention will expose the likes of murderers vanished as rational skepticism eclipsed dogmatic faith. Particularly since the rise of science, the solving of clandestine crimes has become a secular enterprise, both in fact and fiction. Employing the empirical and logical analysis made prominent during the Enlightenment, detectives fulfill the profound human longing to envision our universe as one in which moral justice can be maintained and crime does not pay. This craving presumably underlies much of the popular appeal of detective fiction—regardless of its imaginary nature—and so fictional detectives sustain perceptions of an ordered universe by fulfilling a role once conceived as belonging to God Himself (Prchal 158-159).

As the founder who almost singlehandedly established the genres of mystery and detective fiction, Poe not only created the chief elements of the detective story—bumbling police, an eccentric genius detective, a naïve but forthright first-person narrator—each of his three stories more substantially builds up the basic format for later detective fiction (Pearl ix). Conan Doyle also remarks, "Each [of Poe's three detective stories] is a root from which a whole literature has developed....Where was the detective story until Poe breathed the breath of life into it?" (Knowle 67). However, as opposed to the pure rationality of his detection, Poe also suggests in the text that the intellectual prowess and intuitive comprehension that Dupin possesses are "prætернatural" (Poe 3). This description draws comparisons between Dupin and Judge Bao with regard to their transcendental ability to solve mysterious cases.

Therefore, the last chapter will examine how Poe's Dupin trilogy expels previously common superstitious phenomena, including ghosts, coincidence and luck, by explaining them with rational ideology and scientific methodology. In Ming-Qing courtroom dramas and short stories, Judge Bao is depicted as a figure with supernatural power to judge the world of light by day, and the realms of darkness at night (日斷阳，夜斷陰). Poe, nevertheless, termed the Dupin trilogy as "tales of ratiocination," which explicitly indicates the scientific nature of the Western detective fiction (Silverman 229). But the chapter will show that, similar to Judge Bao, the source of Dupin's talent is so mysterious that the narrator considers it intuitive and supernatural. Moreover, this final chapter will demonstrate that while detective fiction itself is associated with the psychological process of dreaming, Dupin's detection and seclusion denote a new dimension of the dream.

CHAPTER 1

GHOSTS IN JUDGE BAO PLAYS AND IN *HAMLET*

In *The Ghost of the Pot* (盆兒鬼) by an anonymous author, the victim's ghost rattles away his grievance in front of Judge Bao in the Kaifeng tribunal.[10] The judge, instead of being astonished at the ghost's appearance, burns paper money to the door gods in case they obstruct the ghost from gaining access to the courtroom: "Every house, large or small, has its door gods, and a murdered ghost would be blocked from entering" (Hayden 119). Moreover, Judge Bao points out that he is the only one who can see the ghost: "At the foot of the courtroom steps is the ghost of a murdered man, which no one but I can see" (Hayden 119). The ghost then tells him the plaint, and the two murderers are soon arrested. Likewise, in *Rescriptor-in-Waiting Bao Thrice Investigates the Butterfly Dream* (包待制三勘蝴蝶夢) by Guan Hanqing (關漢卿), Judge Bao solves the case based on a prophetic dream of three butterflies.

These various forms of supernatural revelation tend to be decisive in Judge Bao's detection of a crime. Furthermore, the judge tends to take the existence of supernatural force for granted such that he may even employ his supernatural power to settle the case simply by listening to a ghost's complaint without questioning its authenticity. For instance, in *The Flower*

[10] The three Judge Bao plays, *The Ghost of the Pot*, *Rescriptor-in-Waiting Bao Thrice Investigates the Butterfly Dream* and *The Flower of the Back Courtyard*, are found in Zang Maoxun's (臧懋循) *Selections of Yuanqu* (元曲選) (1615). Although *zaju* (雜劇), or Northern drama, are usually attributed to the Yuan dynasty, most of the plays are actually circulated in Ming dynasty editions, as Hayden points out: "All of the other texts of so-called 'Yuan' drama were printed or transcribed in the late sixteenth or early seventeenth centuries i.e., the late Ming." George A. Hayden, *Crime and Punishment in Medieval Chinese Drama: Three Judge Pao Plays*, p. 185.

of the Back Courtyard (後庭花) by Zheng Tingyu (鄭廷玉), Judge Bao discerns that the nature of the beautiful girl that the scholar encountered at night is actually a ghost: "Young man, she is not human, but a ghost" (162). Consequently, he directs the scholar to talk with the ghost again to find the criminal.

On the other hand, in *Hamlet* (1603), the renowned tragedy by Shakespeare, the young prince of Denmark is told by the Ghost of his deceased father to take revenge on his uncle, Claudius. Moreover, similar to Judge Bao, when the Ghost appears again in the queen's chamber to urge Hamlet to act, Hamlet is the only one who can see the Ghost; his mother, Gertrude, is incapable of discerning her late husband. Rather, she reckons her son is mad:

> This is the very coinage of your brain.
> This bodiless creation ecstasy
> Is very cunning in (Shakespeare 3.4.137-9).

While many critics note that major plays during the Renaissance era are the origin for detective fiction, *Hamlet* is often considered exemplary, as Richard Madelaine concludes, "Whereas the revenge elements in the plots of *Richard III*, *Macbeth* and *Measure for Measure* are comparatively minor, it is precisely the way in which *Hamlet* interrogates the Senecan conventions of the revenge genre that raises so centrally the issues of detection and social justice. It is salutary that modern crime fiction writers refer more frequently to *Hamlet* than to any other play of the period" (1). Indeed, Hamlet's action of sifting clues for evidence to substantiate the Ghost's words and Claudius' crime demonstrates the essential skills of a detective, including collecting information through role-playing, logic analysis, and acute observation.

Thus, since both the three Judge Bao plays and *Hamlet* integrate the supernatural and

crime detection, this chapter will explore the similar functions of supernatural revelation in the process of crime detection. Different conceptions of social and cosmic order undergird the supernatural element in both Judge Bao plays and in *Hamlet*. In part these differences are due to divergent historical and social contexts, the Neo-Confucian movement in China and a new emphasis on humanity in the Renaissance in the West.

In a *gong'an* story, the case and the murderer are usually introduced at the beginning. The plot mainly revolves around the intellectual process of how the judge finally solves the case and finds the criminal. Intellectual power is hence pivotal to settling a case in Judge Bao's investigation. For example, in *The Flower of the Back Courtyard*, after his interrogations, Judge Bao asks a yamen runner to find a suspect in the well at the suspect's home, a place Judge Bao has never been: "Go there and look around in ditches or ponds; if there is a well, go down in and drag it" (Zheng 167). The runner thus locates the man's corpse in the well as expected: "Let me have another look. Here's a well. Good old Judge Bao, he must be a magician. It's a well, sure enough!" (Zheng 166). Moreover, with the words on the peach charm left by the victim's ghost, he deciphers the riddle and arrests the criminal:

> Look at each door for "A Happy New Year";
> I have "A Rich and Long Life" in my hand.
> The language will speak of the fate of mankind,
> The peach charm heralds the tidings of spring (Zheng 171).

However, the judge's intellectual prowess is simultaneously intertwined with supernatural intervention: He is prompted by a riddle left by the victim's ghost to solve the crime.

This reliance on supernatural intervention in the Judge Bao plays and other Chinese *gong'an* stories is a reflection of the traditional Chinese cosmology of justice and morality,

particularly during the Neo-Confucian movement when the plays were written, as Hayden accurately points out:

> Chinese culture has tended to view human society as a delicately balanced organism, complex in its relationships but working always toward stability. An axiom of this view is that, as every cause has its effect, so every action results in its appropriate reaction, leading in time to a new equilibrium. This means that anything given will be replaced, and anything taken away must eventually be returned. The courtroom plays regard a crime as a taking away and even more as a debt awaiting payment by the criminal. When Confucius advocated justice rather than kindness as the reward for unkindness, he struck a note that would find its echo in courtroom drama in the proverb "As a debtor pays his debt, so a murderer pays with his life." (11)

Accordingly, the concept that justice will naturally be restored is embedded in early Confucian tradition from the Spring and Autumn period (771–476 BC) to the later Han (206 BC—220 A.D.) and Tang (618–907 A.D.) dynasties, especially after the Han dynasty established the ideology as the official state doctrine, fostering the growth of its naturalistic cosmology:

> Chinese naturalism as a primary ingredient of Confucianism in its broadest sense is characterized by an organic holism and a dynamic vitalism. The organic holism of Confucianism refers to the fact that the universe is viewed as a vast integrated unit, not as discrete mechanistic parts. Nature is seen as unified, interconnected, and interpenetrating, constantly relating microcosm and macrocosm. This interconnectedness is already present in the early Confucian tradition in the *I Ching*, or *Book of Changes*, and in the Han correspondences of the elements with seasons, directions, colors, and even virtues (Evelyn & Berthrong, 1998).

The Judge Bao plays, however, were written during the later development of the Confucian tradition. Neo-Confucianism, or the School of Principle (理學), arose in the twelfth century during the Song dynasty as a philosophical movement seeking to revive the ancient Confucian classics and doctrines, and was firmly established as the state-sponsored orthodoxy and ideological foundation of the late imperial system until the early twentieth century. Neo-Confucian ideology emphasizes morality in the context of family and society. It also believes

that human society is part of the entire cosmos, and a moral principle is operating in the universe as well as in human life to maintain harmony: "There must be a supernatural power that is good and that sets the standard of conduct. This supernatural power is variously called heaven (*tian*), Principle (*li*), Way (*Dao*), Supreme Ultimate (*tai-ji*), Great Harmony (*tai-he*), and so on" (Huang 6).

Accordingly, from the perspective of these Neo-Confucian ideas, supernatural revelation in courtroom dramas can be taken as natural, just as Judge Bao's unsurprised reaction to a ghost's appearance, for it implies that injustice must be repaid and the stability of cosmic order will be recovered. The judge, as the agent of justice, may thus play a role between Heaven and the mundane world to enforce morality with his transcendent power. As Judge Bao reveals in *The Ghost of the Pot*, "At the foot of the courtroom steps is the ghost of a murdered man, which no one but I can see. Ghost, what is your plaint? Tell it in full and I will help you" (Hayden 119).

Furthermore, Neo-Confucianism presented a new view that aesthetic experience was inferior to ethical significance.[11] Consequently, literature was considered "a vehicle for the Way": "The Neo-Confucians advanced a simple standard for 'good' literature that was intended not

[11] Neo-Confucianism pays more attention to moral education and control of human desires than classical Confucianism. Maram Epstein, "Making Sense of Bao-yu: Staging Ideology and Aesthetics," p. 320: "Neo-Confucianism was a twelfth-century synthesis of Buddhist, Taoist, and Confucian ideas that became adopted as state orthodoxy in the fourteenth century. Whereas classical Confucianism was more concerned with behavior, neo-Confucianism followed Buddhism in focusing on the interior self and the control of emotions and desires. Education was first and foremost conceived of as a moral process; most Confucian thinkers believed that the raw material of human nature needed rigorous training to achieve its full ethical potential. By the eighteenth century, study of the Confucian classics as a route to self-improvement had been eclipsed by the need to prepare for the civil service examination. This preparation involved memorizing the Four Books and the mastery of a highly structured writing form called the eight-legged essay (its eight sections were written in parallel prose). Success in the examination system was a prerequisite for appointment as an official. There was widespread acknowledgment that this educational system did not prepare examination candidates in the practical skills they would need to serve as officials, but its defenders pointed to the ways the curriculum fostered a culture of self-discipline and moral reflection."

only to rule out what they saw as the superficial and frivolous but also to deny the independence of literature from moral philosophy" (Bol 107). Driven by this principle, literary works were designed to be didactic. Therefore, Judge Bao's extreme righteousness establishes his character as a strong moral force. While criminals are usually motivated by selfish desire, a fundamental problem in humanity that Neo-Confucianism advocated should be eradicated by education and self-cultivation, Judge Bao manifests the virtue of selflessness, as Chang the Headstrong utters at the end of *The Ghost of the Pot*, after the culprits are executed:

> If it had not been for your Excellency, this crime would never have found a solution.
> Truly, your virtue is like Heaven itself, great beyond all conception!
> With these white hairs of mine
> But for a grieved ghost I would never have come.
> Judge Bao,
> Your virtue is perfection itself;
> The spirits stand in awe (Hayden 124).

Meanwhile, the figure's moral and upright character secures the judge's long-term status in popular culture over the centuries. It is Judge Bao who ultimately becomes the representative of the Chinese detective: "Playwrights of the Yuan and early Ming showed a growing interest in the character of Judge Bao, who increasingly displaced other 'pure officials' from the stage and increasingly made their feats his own" (Idema xiv).

The literary figure of Judge Bao is based on the Northern Song (960–1127 A.D.) official, Bao Zheng (包拯; 999–1062 A.D.), who was in the civil service during the reign of Emperor Renzong (仁宗) for 25 years. He was born into a scholar family from Luzhou (廬州).[12] After he passed the imperial examination at the age of 29, Bao rejected an official appointment as the

[12] Luzhou: Modern Hefei, Anhui Province.

magistrate of Jianchang in order to take care of his parents at home. Ten years later, after observing the proper funeral rites for his parents, he began his official career as the magistrate of Tianchang. Because of his probity and devotion to duty, he was then promoted to higher offices. During his career in civil service, Bao Zheng boldly criticized and sentenced a large number of officials, regardless of their status as relatives of the emperor. In spite of his various titles, he is most widely remembered as the magistrate of Bian, the capital city of Northern Song, in which position he had a reputation as incorruptible.[13] Most of the later dramas and stories are based on his tenure in this period, as the character's routine self-introduction in *The Flower of the Back Courtyard* confirms, "My surname is Bao, my given name Cheng, and my courtesy name Hsi-wen. I come from Lao-erh Hamlet, Ssu-wang Village, Chin-tou Commandery, Lu-chou. I hold the title of Academician-in-waiting of the Lung-t'u Pavilion and have just been given the post of prefect of K'ai-feng Tribunal" (Zheng 155).

Although he served in the position for a short time (1056–1058), Bao Zheng effectively changed the procedure of justice, allowing citizens to lodge complaints directly to him in order to avoid the clerks, who were believed to be corrupt and in collusion with powerful local families (Idema xii). The official *History of the Song Dynasty* (宋史) records this reformation:

> [Bao Zheng] was resolute and steadfast at court; eunuchs and relatives of the emperor all restrained themselves because of him, and everyone was in dread of him when they heard his name. People compared Bao Zheng's smile to the rare clear water in the Yellow River. Even children and women knew his name, calling him "Rescriptor-in-Waiting Bao." The saying in the capital describes him as such: "Bribery is useless because King Yama, Old Bao, is here." The former regulation stipulated that litigants could not enter the tribunal. But Zheng opened the gate so that the litigant might state the right and wrong directly to him and the clerks dared not to deceive.[14]

[13] Bian: Modern Kaifeng, Henan Province.
[14] *Songshi* (History of the Song), Vol. 316.

> (立朝剛毅，貴戚宦官為之斂手，聞者皆憚之。人以包拯笑比黃河清。童稚婦女亦知其名，呼曰包待制。京師為之語曰，“關節不到，有閻羅包老”。舊制，凡訟訴不得徑造庭下。拯開正門，使得至前陳曲直，吏不敢欺。)

The impartial image that this account portrayed, in the prime of courtroom dramas, not only built up the historical figure as influential in popular culture over the centuries, including drama, vernacular fiction, modern movies, and television series, but also established Bao as a legendary judge after his death (West & Idema 37).

As the account from *History of the Song Dynasty* indicates, Judge Bao was already associated with King Yama, the Buddhist Ruler of Hell in charge of judging the souls in the underworld, during his lifetime. In courtroom dramas he was already known for supernatural powers, as Chang the Headstrong mentions in *The Ghost of the Pot*: [15]

> Hence I make his plaint at court
> And appeal to your Honor to hear the truth.
> By day you've decided in the world of light,
> At night you've heard phantoms in the realms of the dark (Hayden 118).

In addition, he was later believed to be the incarnation of Megrez, the God of Intellectual Talent (文曲星) in folk legend, and judge of the "Court of Swift Recompense of the Eastern Mountain (Mt. Tai)" (東嶽速報司主) for Mount Tai stands for the jurisdiction of life and death in Daoist mythology:

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[15] *Songshi* was compiled near the end of Yuan, in 1343. But Judge Bao appeared in popular culture early on after his death, as Hayden points out, "Although we have no evidence from the time, his prominence in contemporary miscellanies and in later popular literature suggests that during the remainder of the Northern Sung and throughout the Southern Song and Jin periods he was a favorite topic of storytellers, chanteurs, and actors in the marketplaces and entertainment districts" (20). Moreover, Bao Zheng might have been connected with King Yama also in an earlier period, if not in his lifetime as the official document indicated. Idema, in his introduction of *Judge Bao and the Rule of Law: Eight Ballad-Stories from the Period 1250-1450*, has roughly traced the Judge Bao legend: "In the decades following his death, Bao Zheng was remembered for his probity, sternness and incorruptibility, and from early on, he was compared to King Yama, the highest judge in the underworld" (xiii).

> Who can deceive the God of Mount T'ai, the Lord of Swift Recompense,
> And Judge Bao, the magistrate of the court of K'ai-feng-fu? (Hayden 171)

This mythical fame elevated Judge Bao to the status of a god. In the later Ming-Qing short narratives in *Bao Gong An* (包公案), "The Celebrated Cases of Judge Bao," the character's legend and capability are sustained and even further promoted; he is now not only able to solve the case in the Kaifeng tribunal by listening to a ghost's entreaty as in *The Ghost of the Pot*, or having a prophetic dream as in *Rescriptor-in-Waiting Bao Thrice Investigates the Butterfly Dream*, but also competent to expel evil spirits and wander into supernatural spheres. For example, in Chapter 29, "Judge the Three Spirits in Liu' Courtyard" (判劉花園除三怪), the judge's soul departs his body to visit King Yama in Hell: "In a moment, Judge Bao's soul reached Hell; he first sent someone to notify King Yama of his arrival. Upon hearing that Megrez, the God of Intellectual Talent, has come, King Yama walked down his palace to greet him personally and they then sat in guest-host order" (移時之間，包公魂魄來到地府，先使人通報。閻王聞報文曲星官到此，遂親下殿接入，分賓主坐定) (An 63).

Many scholars attribute the popularity and development of Judge Bao's figure to Yuan literati's assaults against Mongol governance, but this argument has been questioned. For one thing, in these circumstances antagonistic portrayals of Mongols in plays were certainly dangerous. Further, some of the courtroom dramas featuring Judge Bao were written in the Ming dynasty (Hayden 5). Therefore, his transformation from a historical official to an agent of justice instead reflects a Chinese tradition of justice and cosmic order, particularly in the context of the Neo-Confucian movement.

As Judge Bao's western counterpart, the Ghost's intervention is also a decisive factor in *Hamlet's* crime detection and revenge. One of the major sources of Shakespeare's play may date back to a twelfth-century story of Amleth in the *Historiae Danicae* or *Danish History* of Saxo Grammaticus. But in this early version, the protagonist is not prompted by a ghost to seek revenge because the murder of the elder Hamlet is not a secret (Edwards 2). In *Hamlet*, nevertheless, the Ghost's revelation of the murder is a pivotal force for the prince's later action. In their first encounter, the Ghost tells Hamlet of his uncle's crime, and guides him to take action to repay the injustice:

> If thou hast nature in thee bear it not;
> Let not the royal bed of Denmark be
> A couch for luxury and damned incest.
> But howsomever thou pursues this act
> Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive
> Against thy mother aught. Leave her to heaven
> And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge
> To prick and sting her. Fare thee well at once (Shakespeare 1.5.82-88).

This request for revenge, for Hamlet, is demanded not merely by an emotional duty to avenge his father's death, because it is further strengthened when the Ghost urges him to swear an oath, as Hamlet articulates his torment:

> Why, what an ass am I! This is most brave,
> That I, the son of the dear murdered,
> Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,
> Must like a whore unpack my heart with words,
> And fall a-cursing like a very drab,
> A scullion! (Shakespeare 2.2.534-539).

Therefore, when the Ghost appears again in the queen's chamber, the prince is conscious that its purpose is to impel him to at last take action:

> Do you not come your tardy son to chide,
> That lapsed in time and passion lets go by
> Th'important acting of your dread command? Oh say! (Shakespeare 3.4.106-108).

The Ghost of the deceased king may very well seem to be a creation of the melancholy prince's delirious imagination as his mother claims in the chamber, especially as the spirit is only visible to Hamlet in this scene. However, the assumption that the supernatural is a product of subjectivity may be clearly dismissed by Horatio's witness of the Ghost. When the officers of the watch first inform Horatio of the Ghost, he also considers that it is only their imagination:

> Horatio says 'tis but our fantasy,
> And will not let belief take hold of him
> Touching this dreaded sight, twice seen of us (Shakespeare 1.1.23-5).

But as he beholds the spirit at night, the man is terrified:

> Before my God, I might not this believe
> Without the sensible and true avouch
> Of mine own eyes (Shakespeare 1.1.56-8).

Consequently, Horatio, as the one who imparts the appearance of his father's Ghost to Hamlet, confirms that the supernatural is objective.

Nonetheless, Horatio's verification of the existence of the supernatural may increase the intellectual burden of enacting revenge for the prince. The reason for Hamlet's notable lack of resolution about taking revenge before his confirmation of the Ghost's words through *The Mousetrap* has been argued for centuries. Goethe (1749–1832) claims that the prince's impotence when it comes to action is due to his sensitivity: "A beautiful, pure, noble, and most moral nature, without the strength of nerve which makes the hero, sinks beneath a burden which it can neither bear nor throw off; every duty is holy to him, —this too hard" (Edwards 33). The

same character, for Coleridge (1772–1834), is a man who so indulges in the world of the mind that his passion for acting in the external world is exhausted by infinite intellectual activity. However, Herman Ulrici (1806–1884) first turns attention to the morality of revenge in a Christian sense:

> In Hamlet, therefore, the Christian struggles with the natural man. It is his task to make the action imposed on him one that he can undertake freely and by conviction as a moral action. His "regard for the eternal salvation of his soul…forces him to halt and consider." However, he is betrayed less by his vindictive impulses than by his own creative energy in trying to "shape at pleasure the general course of things." He thus rejects the guiding hand of God, and his aspiration to be a kind of god himself is a sinful overestimate of human power. Here, I think for the first time, is the view that Hamlet errs in trying to act as Providence, a view which has been considerably developed in the twentieth century (Edwards 34).

Therefore, unlike Judge Bao's interaction with ghosts, the appearance of supernatural power in *Hamlet* has chaotic consequences.

As a matter of fact, the melancholy prince indeed indulges in the burden of mind so frequently that his sentiments severely postpone his plan of revenge, especially in contrast with the other avenger in the play, Laertes, who seeks revenge without a moment's thought. After Polonius' death, in which crime Hamlet transfers his role from an avenger to a murderer, the reaction of his son and daughter, Laertes and Ophelia, can be regarded as the doubles of Hamlet. On the one hand, without confirming the rumor, Laertes immediately raises a rebellion to attack Claudius, aiming to repay his father's death:

> I dare damnation. To this point I stand,
> That both the worlds I give to negligence,
> Let come what comes, only I'll be revenged
> Most thoroughly for my father (Shakespeare 4.5.133-136).

Claudius, in this murder, plays a role to reveal the real killer. The target of Laertes' revenge

turns, subsequently, to Hamlet: “To cut his throat i’th’church” (Shakespeare 4.7.125). Moreover, with Claudius’ instigation, the young man fulfills his action without further ado.

Ophelia, on the other hand, is stricken by insanity because of her father’s abrupt death:

> She speaks much of her father, says she hears
> There’s tricks i’th’world, and hems, and beats her heart,
> Spurns enviously at straws, speaks things in doubt
> That carry but half sense. Her speech is nothing,
> Yet the unshaped use of it doth move
> The hearers to collection (Shakespeare 4.5.3-7).

Her symptoms resemble Hamlet’s madness, although the prince’s absurd words and behaviors in front of Claudius and his followers are merely a disguise to verify the Ghost’s revelation of his father’s murder, as Polonius ponders during their conversation, “How pregnant sometimes his replies are! a happiness that often madness hits on, which reason and sanity could not so prosperously be delivered of” (Shakespeare 2.2.203-5). While Ophelia’s mental disorder leads to the innocent girl’s death, Hamlet is able to achieve his plan of corroborating his uncle’s murder and finally consummating the Ghost’s request for revenge. However, the mental impact caused by the king’s demise and the Ghost’s appearance is also remarkable on the brooding prince, which is particularly manifested in his relentless doubts about the world and his hesitancy to enact the revenge.

Upon being informed that his father’s death is unnatural, Hamlet, like Laertes, also unfolds his determination of revenge at once:

> Haste me to know’t, that I with wings as swift
> As meditation or the thoughts of love
> May sweep to my revenge (Shakespeare 1.5.29-31).

Nevertheless, after the Ghost discloses the truth and urges him to take action, the prince is not

only perturbed, but also shows reluctance to undertake the responsibility:

> The time is out of joint: O cursed spite,
> That ever I was born to set it right –
> Nay come, let's go together (Shakespeare 1.5.189-191).

Unlike Laertes, whose desire for revenge makes him disregard even eternal punishment after death, Hamlet is evidently obsessed with more subjective concerns. As A.W. Schlegel observes, "Hamlet has no firm belief either in himself or in anything else: from expressions of religious confidence he passes over to skeptical doubt" (Edwards 34). The prince's uncertainty toward himself and the external world is initially generated by his nihilistic sentiments after his father's death. Then, the Ghost's appearance overturns his former knowledge of the physical world, which strengthens his skepticism. This skepticism finally leads to Hamlet's mental conflict between revenge motive and traditional Christian morality as Herman Ulrici observes.

At first, the seeming indifference of his kin, especially his mother's swift marriage to Claudius after the old king's death is all it takes to lead Hamlet into nihilistic sentiments, which include questioning the meaning of life and the honesty of woman:

> How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable
> Seem to me all the uses of this world!
> ……
> Let me not think on't; frailty, thy name is woman –
> A little month, or ere those shoes were old
> With which she followed my poor father's body
> Like Niobe, all tears, why she, even she –
> O God, a beast that wants discourse of reason
> Would have mourned longer – married with my uncle,
> My father's brother, but no more like my father
> Than I to Hercules – within a month,
> Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears
> Had left the flushing in her galled eyes,
> She married. Oh most wicked speed, to post

With such dexterity to incestuous sheets (Shakespeare 1.2.133-157).

His later conversation with Ophelia also communicates this skepticism: “Ay truly, for the power of beauty will sooner transform honesty from what it is to a bawd, than the force of honesty can translate beauty into his likeness. This was sometimes a paradox, but now the time gives it proof” (Shakespeare 3.1.111-3). Moreover, when he is in the graveyard with Horatio, the prince’s words also reflect his questioning of the value of human life: “That skull had a tongue in it, and could sing once. How the knave jowls it to th’ground, as if ‘twere Cain’s jawbone, that did the first murder. This might be the pate of a politician which this ass now o’erreaches, one that would circumvent God, might it not?” (Shakespeare 5.1.64-7).

When, significantly, Hamlet is told the truth by a Ghost, instead of a mortal as in Laertes’ case, this new awareness of a spiritual sphere intensifies Hamlet’s inner tumult and nihilistic dubiousness, changing his previous perception of the world: “Hamlet is ‘not “a man who has to avenge his father” but “a man who has been given a task by a ghost.”’ (Edwards 40). Hamlet’s most trusted friend in the play, Horatio, conspires with him in the mousetrap play to confirm Claudius’ crime, and his bond with Hamlet originates not only from his righteousness, but also from their shared recognition of knowledge. He is Hamlet’s fellow-student in the University of Wittenberg, and as such, Marcellus implores him to talk to the Ghost, “Thou art a scholar, speak to it Horatio” (Shakespeare 1.1.42). Hamlet’s intention to return to school in Wittenburg as he told his mother and Claudius at the beginning of the play implies his pursuit of knowledge. But similar to Horatio’s reaction after meeting the Ghost, the prince reveals that his previous knowledge of the world has collapsed:

> Yea, from the table of my memory
> I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,
> All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past,
> That youth and observations copied there,
> And thy commandment all alone shall live
> Within the book and volume of my brain,
> Unmixed with baser matter: yes, by heaven! (Shakespeare 1.5.98-104).

Accordingly, on realization of the Ghost's existence, the prince's original intellectual perceptions are fundamentally challenged: "The appearance of the Ghost 'means a breaking down of the walls of the world.' Chaos supervenes: 'doubt, uncertainty, bewilderment to almost any degree is what the ghost creates'" (Edwards 40), as he confides to Horatio:

> There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
> Than are dreamt of in your philosophy… (Shakespeare 1.5.166-7).

With the awareness of a spiritual world, Hamlet is thus naturally impelled to take possible damnation after death into account. At the end of the play, Hamlet entreats Horatio to tell his story in Denmark after his death:

> O God, Horatio, what a wounded name,
> Things standing thus unknown, shall live behind me!
> If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,
> Absent thee from felicity awhile,
> And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain
> To tell my story (Shakespeare 5.2.323-8).

The prince has earnestly considered the consequence of his death in the mundane world. Noticeably, the fear of damnation is a reflection of Hamlet's religious awareness. During the long process of revenge, he once delays the murder when Claudius is praying so that his uncle's soul can be further punished in Hell:

> Up sword, and know thou a more horrid hent,
> When he is drunk asleep, or in his rage,

> Or in th'incestuous pleasure of his bed,
> At game a-swearing, or about some act
> That has no relish of salvation in't—
> Then trip him that his heels may kick at heaven,
> And that his soul may be as damned and black
> As hell whereto it goes (Shakespeare 3.3.88-94).

Therefore, proof of the Ghost's words is imperative for Hamlet because, with the Christian conviction in mind, the prince should know it would be a sin to avenge for his father's death by himself, particularly without verifying his supernatural source. Consequently, he has to rely on his own observation and action to verify that his revenge is justifiable, which thus establishes this character as a cornerstone of modern detective figures.

Although Hamlet is also the one who reestablishes justice in the play, his role is different from Judge Bao's role as the proxy of the ultimate justice in the mundane world. Hamlet's detection, aiming for revenge, is unprecedented, for judicial power was widely believed to belong to God before the Renaissance. In those earliest stories pertaining to crime and punishment, like the Biblical story of Cain and Abel, God is the absolute judge in charge of executing the murderer:

> The assurance that murder can and will be revealed through divine intervention makes detective work unwarranted, if not hubristic, in such cases. This helps to explain why, after Guinevere is exonerated, no one in King Arthur's court is reported to even attempt to solve the mystery of who had actually put poison in the fruit. While modern readers might perceive a gaping hole in the plot here, the medieval audience may well have decided that Avarlan's fate is best left to Providence (Prchal 158).

This view of divine verdict may trace its religious origin to the Bible. In the book of Romans, the text reveals explicitly, "Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: 'It is mine to avenge; I will repay,' says the God" (12:19). During the

Renaissance era, nevertheless, Providence is still conceived as the justified source to punish the culprit. In the first revenge play by Thomas Kyd, *The Spanish Tragedy* (1587), the victim's mother, Isabella, utters bitterly besides her son's corpse:

> The heavens are just, murder cannot be hid;
> Time is the author both of truth and right,
> And time will bring this treachery to light (2.5.57-59).

Simultaneously, the Renaissance marks that the focus on God's omnipotence began to shift to the significance of humanity, including the power of man's mental constructive ability, as Hamlet remarks, "What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason, how infinite in faculties, in form and moving how express and admirable, in action how like an angel, in apprehension how like a god!" (Shakespeare 2.2.286-289). Correspondingly, Isabella's husband, Hieronimo, brings about a different perspective regarding the murder, claiming that he will retaliate against the perpetrator of his son's death by himself:

> See'st thou this handkercher besmeared with blood?
> It shall not from me, 'til I take revenge.
> See'st thou those wounds that yet are bleeding fresh?
> I'll not entomb them, 'til I have revenged.
> Then will I joy amidst my discontent;
> 'Til then my sorrow never shall be spent (Kyd 2.5.51-56).

The Spanish Tragedy might be a source of inspiration for *Hamlet* as many elements in the plot parallel Kyd's tragedy, including a Ghost's request of vengeance, the revenger's deceptive madness, the play-within-a-play as a device to snare the murderer, and the revenger's final death after achieving his goal. Moreover, the brooding prince's struggle about revenge also manifests the conflict between Isabella's traditional and Hieronimo's innovative treatment of crime. Although he bears the Christian convictions in mind, Hamlet is obviously also aware of his own

intellectual faculty:

> What is a man
> If his chief good and market of his time—
> Be but to sleep and feed? A beast, no more.
> Sure he that made us with such large discourse
> Looking before and after, gave us not
> That capability and god-like reason
> To fust in us unused (Shakespeare 4.4.33-39).

In the process of corroboration and revenge, the prince tends to transform himself into a god-like figure by deploying his constructive capability in full to judge the crime. As Madelaine points out, "Hamlet has to sift clues for proof of the king's guilt, and is forced to act by acting in a different sense (role-playing) as a means of gathering information while protecting himself. He has to try and detect while avoiding being detected detecting, so his task is doubly difficult and dangerous" (Madelaine 5).

Therefore, Claudius' three attempts to verify Hamlet's madness, and the latter's intention of confirming his uncle's murder through the mousetrap play create a double plot in the play. With acute observation, Hamlet discerns Claudius' purpose and thus defends himself by poignant words, as he tells Guildenstern plainly, "You were sent for – and there is a kind of confession in your looks which your modesties have no craft enough to colour. I know the good king and queen have sent for you" (Shakespeare 2.2.264-7). On the other hand, the prince deliberately arranges *The Mousetrap*, a play mirroring the scenario of his father's death, to test his uncle's reaction, as he entrusts Horatio with the task of watching Claudius during the play:

> Give him heedful note,
> For I mine eyes will rivet to his face,
> And after we will both our judgements join
> In censure of his seeming (Shakespeare 3.2.74-7).

His uncle's expression, as a result, dispels Hamlet's doubts of the Ghost's account: "O good Horatio, I'll take the ghost's words for a thousand pound" (Shakespeare 3.2.266). His mental struggle to enact revenge is also removed by the verification, after which he completely renounces the guide of Providence, and determines to rely on his own power: "Not a whit, we defy augury. There is a special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come – the readiness is all. Since no man of aught he leaves knows, what is't to leave betimes? Let be" (Shakespeare 5.2.192-6).

Hence, supernatural intervention plays a similar role in Judge Bao and Hamlet's investigations because the two detectives are both prompted to discover the criminal through a ghost's revelation of a murder. However, while Judge Bao treats the supernatural as an embodiment as a natural part of an enduring Confucian cosmology, in Hamlet's case the Ghost's appearance results in an inner tumult. This tumult is primarily due to the prince's nihilistic skepticism, the awareness of an unknown spiritual world, and the struggle between the requirement to take revenge and traditional Christian morality. Among various forms of supernatural revelation, prophetic dreams are a crucial means for Judge Bao to solve cases, as is seen in *Rescriptor-in-Waiting Bao Thrice Investigates the Butterfly Dream*. Hamlet also compares himself to a dreamer. Accordingly, the next chapter will focus on the idea of dreams to examine their multiple implications in these two texts and make some further comparisons between dream culture in Chinese and the West.

CHAPTER 2

JUDGE BAO AND HAMLET'S DREAMS

Chapter 1 explored the function of supernatural elements and the ideological ground for supernatural revelation in three Judge Bao plays and *Hamlet*. This chapter will focus on one of the major supernatural elements in the Judge Bao plays: the prophetic dream. A recurrent motif in the Judge Bao plays is that when the judge confronts a puzzling moment in solving the case, a ghost or a sign will prompt him in his dream. The victim's ghost sometimes tells him frankly who the murderer is, but in other cases, a metaphorical sign or a word game on the criminal's name will hint at the solution of the case in the judge's dream. On the other hand, Hamlet also compares himself to "John-a-dreams," a dreamer. This chapter will thus examine the multiple dimensions of a dream in the Judge Bao plays and *Hamlet,* and further investigate the dream culture in Chinese and Western traditions.

In *Rescriptor-in-Waiting Bao Thrice Investigates the Butterfly Dream,* Judge Bao has a dream of three butterflies in a spider's web. After waking up, he conceives that the dream implies the virtuous mother's intention to forsake her own child to save the two stepsons:

> Now, I just had a dream when I took a nap. I just saw a small butterfly fall into a web and then be rescued by a larger one. The next one was just the same. But the last one fell into the net, too, and the larger butterfly didn't rescue it, even though it saw it fall. It just flew on away. I have a heart of compassion so I rescued the little butterfly from the net. This was Heaven, giving me a sign that foretold what was going to happen and that I should save this little fellow's life (Guan 61–62).

As a result, Judge Bao rescues the third son, and settles the case based on his interpretation of the dream. The prophetic dream, as Judge Bao remarks, is considered a message from heaven to inform him of the injustice. This idea is consistent with the neo-Confucian natural treatment of the supernatural as analyzed in Chapter 1. Rather than regard supernatural forces as unnatural, neo-Confucian ideology believes that injustice caused by calculated murder is aberrant, for it breaks the stability of cosmic order:

> In the enormity of his crime, the murderer pits himself not only against the laws on earth but, unknowingly, against these same laws in Heaven as well, and he is doomed from the start. As if taking their cue from the dictum of Ch'eng I, a Sung Neo-Confucian philosopher, that the extremely stupid, who destroy themselves, cannot be changed, these laws offer no hope of salvation to the killer but demand instead that his debt of blood be repaid in kind—with his own life (Hayden 11).

Accordingly, the murderer must sacrifice his life to restore the constant equilibrium of cosmic order. This standard of conduct in the universe, moreover, will be maintained through the existence of a supernormal power (Huang 6). Hence, the prophetic dream is one of the manifestations of a supernormal power that rebalances the natural order. As the agent of justice between heaven and the mundane world, Judge Bao is notified of the solution of the crime to ensure the restitution of the balance. As he proclaims in the butterfly dream, "Every life hangs in the balance, even insects or butterflies" (Guan 52).

Judge Bao is a dreamer who seeks the truth in his dream, whereas Hamlet acts like a dreamer unable to discern the boundary between his infinite subjective world and the limited physical world because of the mental chaos generated by the Ghost's revelation and the burden of revenge:

> The very faculties of eyes and ears. Yet I,

> A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak
> Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause,
> And can say nothing – no, not for a king,
> Upon whose property and most dear life
> A damned defeat was made (Shakespeare 2.2.518–523).

Dreams in *Hamlet*, therefore, tend to suggest the prince's blurred perception between illusion and reality, just as his sanity and craziness are blended in the play.

In his conversation with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, Hamlet discloses that he has bad dreams: "O God, I could be bounded in a nutshell, and count myself a king of infinite space, were it not that I have bad dreams" (Shakespeare 2.2.255). Rosencrantz and Guildenstern conclude that the dreams are symbolic, which represent Hamlet's ambition to become the king of Denmark: "Which dreams indeed are ambition, for the very substance of the ambitious is merely the shadow of a dream" (Shakespeare 2.2.245–246). But Hamlet defies this judgment by recognizing dreams as a shadow: "A dream itself is but a shadow" (Shakespeare 2.2.225). Later, in his struggle to perform the act of revenge, the prince also relates dreams to death, which denotes the connection between dreams and the spiritual sphere:

> To die, to sleep—
> To sleep, perchance to dream. Ay, there's the rub,
> For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
> When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
> Must give us pause (Shakespeare 3.1.51).

Goethe once labeled Hamlet as a kind of man whose vitality was absorbed by overindulgent intellectual activity: "Sicklied o'ver with the pale cast of thought" (Freud 204). Coleridge also argued that the character is incapable of acting because he is so obsessed by his internal world: "Hamlet knows perfectly well that he ought to do, and he is always promising to

do it, but he is constitutionally averse to action, and his energy evaporates in self-reproach. The world of the mind was more real than the external world; his passion was for indefinite" (Edwards 33). Consequently, Hamlet's dreams are associated with his infinite mental struggle and his concern for an unknown spiritual realm brought about by the ghost's appearance.

Judge Bao and Hamlet's dreams tend to be divergent at first sight, but both of them ascribe dreams to a supernatural realm, which is a reflection of the dream culture in Chinese and Western traditions. Judge Bao's awareness of linking the dream to the case in reality exhibits a fundamental notion in Chinese dream tradition that oneiric experiences can be a guide to waking life:

> Heaven caused my roaming dream soul to be first forewarned:
> Those three insects caught in the spider's web
> Equal the mother, the sons, and this official.
> Three times the stepmother has abandoned her own son:
> A perfect match to my noontime dream of butterflies (Guan 62).

In *The Ghost of the Pot*, instead of Judge Bao, the victim and the murderer have a double prophetic dream that foreshadows how Judge Bao will solve the upcoming crime: "Yesterday, after I had had a little too much to drink, I took a nap in the shade of a willow tree and dreamt that a young man came along carrying a couple of heavy bundles. I ran after him and was just about to dispose of him when some white-bearded old man grabbed my arm and yelled for me to stop" (Hayden 91). After waking up, the victim is also alert to the prophetical nature of the dream: "It's just that an unlucky dream like that one gives me a sense of foreboding" (Hayden 91).

In its three thousand years of written civilization, Chinese dream culture accumulates a diverse group of narratives. The association between dreams and their effects in waking life may find its origin in the prehistoric records. The tortoise shell and oracle bone inscriptions from the late Shang dynasty (1600 BC–1046 BC) show that kings valued the meaning of their dreams because they reckoned that dreams came from divine sources: "They thus regularly consulted their highest, ancestral gods for explanations of their dreams, as well as those of their wives and officials. These rulers demonstrated their concern as they posed questions about warfare, hunting, sacrifice, rain, travel, and health" (Strassberg 3). In the *Book of Songs* (詩經), the earliest existing collection of Chinese poetry written between seventh century and eleventh century BC, two poems also indicate the significance of dream interpretations to waking life.[16] Moreover, the poems reveal that certain officials or people of rank (大人) were in charge of dream interpretations at that time. But the most celebrated dream interpreter in Chinese history might be the Duke of Zhou (周公), the "God of Dreams" in Chinese legends who is also credited with compiling the dream interpretation dictionary *Duke Zhou's Manual for Interpreting Dreams* (周公解夢). This tradition of dream interpretation persists to the late imperial period in China. In Chen Shiyuan's (陳士元) (1516–1595) Ming period dream encyclopedia, *Lofty Principles of Dream Interpretation* (夢占逸旨) (1562), the author states explicitly, "Dreaming is spirit-wandering and a mirror for knowing the future" (夢者，神之遊，知來之鏡也) (55).

[16] These are the two poems in the *Book of Songs*:《小雅·斯干》："乃寢乃兴，乃占我梦。吉梦维何？维熊维罴，维虺维蛇。大人占之：维熊维罴，男子之祥；维虺维蛇，女子之祥"。《小雅·無羊》："牧人乃梦，众维鱼矣，旐维旟矣，大人占之；众维鱼矣，实维丰年；旐维旟矣，室家溱溱"。.

Likewise, prior to the scientific revolution in the West, it was also understood that dreams had supernatural origins that had significance to waking life: "As we know, the ancients prior to Aristotle regarded the dream not as a product of the dreaming psyche, but as an inspiration from the realm of the divine . . . They distinguished valuable, truth-telling dreams, sent to the sleeper to warn him or announce the future to him, from vain, deceptive, and idle dreams intended to lead him astray or plunge him into ruin" (Freud 8). This notion is very similar to the ancient Chinese idea that dreams can be prophetic as analyzed previously in the Judge Bao plays and other dream narratives. As a matter of fact, traditional anecdotes about Judge Bao's own life include prophetic dreams. A folk legend presents a rendition of his father's dream before Judge Bao's birth:

> One that is a favorite among storytellers relates that just prior to Lord Bao's birth his father was frightened by a disquieting nightmare. In his dream he was visited by a hideous monster. According to widely held superstitions of the time, a dream such as this was prophetic. It was a warning that the newborn babe would be an incarnation of the repulsive apparition, a harbinger of bad luck. To rid his family of danger, Lord Bao's father arranged to have his tiny son abandoned on a mountain ledge frequented by tigers. The helpless infant was rescued in the nick of time by an older brother (Chin x).

In another example, Judge Bao's future success in the civil examination also appears in the emperor's dream three years before he takes the exam:

> In front of the steps (leading up to the palace hall) Grand Tutor Black Wang stepped forward, and holding his tablet of office in front of his breast, he approached and said: "Your Majesty, what did you see in your dream last night?" "In Our dream we saw a boat that arrived in Luzhou; on that boat there was a golden peck, and in that peck appeared the character 'Bao'." The Grand Tutor replied: "If Our King arrived in Luzhou, there is a Luzhou within the passes. If there is a golden peck (*jindou*) on that boat, it is because Jindou is most powerful among the local notables. And if there is a character 'Bao' in that peck, it must mean that the student who passes when the examinations are held will be surnamed Bao." The Humane Ancestor nodded in agreement (Idema 16).

These various mythical stories regarding the association between dreams and the judge's life may be a manifestation of the character's popularity and fame as a symbol of justice over the centuries.[17]

On the other hand, in *The Ghost of the Pot*, when the spirit of the Kiln persuades the murderers to admit their crime, it says, "Man's life is but a dream, and blessings must wither away" (Hayden 100). Similarly, Hamlet also employs the metaphor of dream to point out the duality between illusion and reality, as he remarks, regarding an actor's performance in *The Mousetrap*, a play within a play to mirror his father's death:

> Is it not monstrous that this player here,
> But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,
> Could force his soul so to his own conceit
> That from her working all his visage waned,
> Tears in his eyes, distraction in's aspect,
> A broken voice, and his whole function suiting
> With forms to his conceit? And all for nothing? (Shakespeare 2.2.527)

While Hamlet's comments reflect his nihilistic sentiments, the spirit's comparison between dream and human life is an embodiment of the religious Daoist and Buddhist overtones in Chinese dream culture.

Religious Daoist and Buddhist beliefs shed another light on dream narratives that articulate the didactic purpose of oneiric experiences through advocating the illusory nature of

[17] Despite his reputation in later literary sources, there is only one example of Judge Bao investigating a crime in the *History of the Song Dynasty*: "During his tenure as the magistrate of Tianchang, someone stealthily cut a farm cattle's tongue. The owner of the cattle went to Bao Zheng and filed the case; Zheng said, 'You may go home now, kill the cattle and sell its meat.' He then looked for the person who came to him indicting that the owner killed the cattle without permission. Zheng asked, 'For what reason did you cut the cattle's tongue and then sue the owner?' The thief was astonished and convinced" (知天長縣，有盜割人牛舌者。主來訴，拯曰："第歸，殺而鬻之。"尋復有來告私殺牛者。拯曰："何為割牛舌而又告之？"盜驚服).

human life and worldly ambition: “[T]he ephemeral character of oneiric experiences proves that waking life is illusory, and that the only solution to the problem of human desire is ultimate detachment through spiritual enlightenment or transcendence” (Strassberg 9). This paradoxical relationship between dream and reality first appears in anecdotes in the early Daoist philosophical work *Master Zhuang* (莊子), such as the renowned story *Dream of a Butterfly* (蝴蝶夢). During the Tang dynasty, the religious assertion that dreams may lead to the enlightenment and disenchantment from mundane desires is expressed clearly in dream narratives, including *An Account of the Governor of the Southern Branch* (南柯太守傳) and *The World Inside a Pillow* (枕中記). In the two stories, the protagonists experience everything in life from extreme affluence to sudden downfall, but wake up only to find that all is a dream. At the end of *The World Inside a Pillow*, the conversation between Lu and the old man demonstrates the religious didactic nature of the narrative:

> He got up with a start. “Could it all have been a dream?”
> “The happinesses of human life are all like that,” the old man replied.
> Lu sat lost in thought for a long time, and then thanked the old man: “Of the ways of favor and disgrace, the vagaries of distress and prosperity, the patterns of accomplishment and failure, the emotions of life and death, I have thoroughly been made aware. In this way, sir, you have checked my desires. How could I dare fail to profit from this lesson?” (Shen 438).

In the Yuan dynasty, dramas with a similar storyline to exhort the audience to reach enlightenment are categorized as *dutuo* (度脫).

In the late imperial China, dream culture reaches its peak because of Ming-Qing literati interest in dreams, and the nihilistic sentiments caused by their autobiographical motivation to record and examine personal experiences (Strassberg 26). Wai-yee Li grasps the literature

movement at that time accurately: “To speak of the late-Ming moment in Chinese literature is to invoke several intertwined developments: a new awareness of the intensity and transcendent dimension of Ch’ing (*qing*) 情, fascination with and celebration of dreams and illusions, and a certain preciosity in refining and defining nuances of perception, experience, and expression” (50). Therefore, along with a collection of previous dream notions, manifold meanings are embedded in the metaphor of dreams in major Ming-Qing narratives such as *The Peony Pavilion* (牡丹亭) and *The Story of the Stone* (石頭記), including the psychic signal of presage, the religious philosophy of emptiness and illusory reality, and the implication of a character’s innermost desire or inner awakening.

Dreams are a recurrent motif in Tang Xianzu’s (湯顯祖) well-known *Four Dreams* (臨川四夢). The four plays deal with the idea of illusion and reality, particularly *The South Branch* (南柯夢) and *The Han-dan Road* (邯鄲記), which are rewrites of the Tang dream narratives “An Account of the Governor of the Southern Branch” and “The World Inside a Pillow.” In *The Peony Pavilion* (1598), Du Liniang also refers her dream to a “dream of Nanke, the human world in an anthill.” Later in the play, Liu Mengmei remarks before Liniang’s resurrection in scene 35, “I remember these Taihu rocks as the place I found her portrait, but all seems confused as dream, lost in uncertainty” (Tang 200). However, in addition to illusory reality, dreams in *The Peony Pavilion* also signify Du Liniang’s desire and inner awakening.

The most celebrated scene in *The Peony Pavilion* is Du Liniang’s dream of Liu Mengmei, in which the lovers consummate intimate contact. Although the lovers actually have a parallel dream on the basis of which Liu Mengmei changed his name, only Du Liniang’s dream is visible

to the audience. The intimacy with Liu in the dream shows that Liniang's passion for love had arisen earlier by the blossoms in the garden: "Passion was matched by passion, and indeed a thousand fond caresses, a million tendernesses passed between us" (Tang 52). She also craves to return to the dream: "How I long for that bygone dream in exchange for this new-found sorrow! Pursuing my thoughts through endless twistings, all night I lay sleepless" (Tang 57). The young lady subsequently dies out of lovesickness. This devotion that Liniang manifests to her love and passion establishes her as the ultimate embodiment of *qing*.[18] Tang Xianzu remarks in his own preface to the play that Liniang is the one who truly knows love: "Has the world ever seen a woman's love to rival that of Bridal Du?" (天下女子有情，寧有如杜麗娘者乎！)

Additionally, through the plot of *The Peony Pavilion*, Tang Xianzu indicates that *qing* is so powerful and intense that it transcends the boundary between dream and reality, so Du Liniang's affection for Liu Mengmei is still real in her dream: "And must the love that comes in dream necessarily be unreal? For there is no lack of dream lovers in this world. Only for those whose love must be fulfilled on the pillow and for whom affection deepens only after retirement from office, is it entirely a corporeal matter . . ." (夢中之情，何必非真，天下豈少夢中之人耶？必因薦枕而成親，帶桂冠而為密者，皆為形骸之論也) (Birch 1). Many young female

[18] In the context of the late Ming and Qing literature, *qing* does not merely stand for the romantic feeling between lovers but extends to contain all of human relations and affections, even attachment to natural entities: "*Qing* is the word I translate as 'love' in the above quotation from Tang's preface. A more extended equivalent would be 'feeling': joy and sorrow, fear and anger, desire and hate are all part of the feeling side of the dichotomy *qing* versus *li*, *qing* standing for the spontaneous effects of the heart and li for the powers of reason and the conventions of the coldly rational. For Tang Xianzu, *qing* in its highest development, as true love between man and woman, embraces sexual attraction, physical passion, but also sentiment, empathy, devotion—the virtues of that broader love that exists also outside the sexual relationship" (Swatek x). This definition of *qing* is made clear especially in *Dream of the Red Chamber* through the character of Jia Baoyu, but in *The Peony Pavilion*, the idea of *qing* still primarily concentrates on Du Liniang's love and desire.

readers in the Ming and Qing dynasties were infatuated with the love that surpasses life and death as depicted in *The Peony Pavilion*; some of them even died of lovesickness. Written by three of these women, *The Three Wives' Commentary* (1694) follows Tang's idea that if the lovers, Du Liniang and Liu Mengmei, do not regard their dreams as illusions, then the illusions can be real. This advocacy that dreams can be real echoes one of the major themes in Chen Shiyuan's *Lofty Principles of Dream Interpretation*. In the preface to his dream encyclopedia, Chen observes that dreams and reality are mingled together (何遇非夢？何夢非真？). As a result, instead of illusions, dreams are part of reality.

Consequently, comments from both Tang Xianzu and the *Three Wives* emphasize that if the power of subjectivity is strong enough, it may blur the boundary between dream and reality, which is similar to Hamlet's perception of dreams. As Wai-yee Li analyzes, "In a philosophy of radical subjectivity, the margin between dreaming and the wakeful state is immaterial, insofar as the affective power of dream images is no less than that of images from waking life" (53). Tina Lu brings up a similar notion: "[I]f indeed one might not be able to discern the difference between dream and waking, then any moment might be dreamt, and the link between one's thought and the material world might be entirely fictive" (67). As a matter of fact, the comic ending of *The Peony Pavilion* enacts reconciliation between dream and reality: "It is T'ang Hsien-tsu's dramatic genius that reconciles contradictions in a comic vision; he turns sensuality into the basis of a passionate longing that transcends life and death, and into the source of parody and laughter" (Li 57).

Du Liniang's dream as a sign of her inner sexual awakening can find its counterpart in Baoyu's dream of the Land of Illusion in *The Story of the Stone* (石頭記). In Chapter 5, Baoyu visits the Land of Illusion in his dream and meets the Fairy Disenchantment, who introduces him to a girl, Two-in-one (兼美), to be his bride: "To his intense surprise there was a fairy girl sitting in the middle of it. Her rose-fresh beauty reminded him strongly of Baochai, but there was also something about her of Daiyu's delicate charm" (Cao 1:145). This female character, combining the sensual glamour of Baochai and the spiritual allure of Daiyu, stands for the figure of an ideal lady. As the Red Inkstone observes, "It's hard to obtain the two together, marvelous!" (難得雙兼，妙極) (Cao & The Red Inkstone 47). Baoyu then consummates the marriage in his dream: "Disenchantment then proceeded to give him secret instructions in the art of love; then, pushing him gently inside the room, she closed the door after him and went away" (Cao 1:147). The dream leads to Baoyu's realization of sexual desire and his relationship with Aroma after awakening: "After much hesitation he proceeded to give her a detailed account of his dream. But when he came to the part of it in which he made love to Two-in-one, Aroma threw herself forward with a shriek of laughter and buried her face in her hands" (Cao 1:150).

As a collection of dream connotations thus far indicated by other dream narratives, *The Story of the Stone* uses the metaphor of dream to the full, as the Red Inkstone precisely observes:

> The beginning of the grand book is a dream; Baoyu's love is a dream; Jia Rui's lust is a dream; Qin Keqing's scheme for the family's future is still a dream; now the composition of the poem is also a dream, along with that A Mirror For The Romantic is obtained from a dream, the work is thus entitled *The Dream of the Red Chamber*. As I am also in a dream to write the comment, this is a dreamer within a vast dream

> (一部大書起是夢，寶玉情是夢，賈瑞淫是夢，秦氏家計長策又是夢，今作詩也是夢，一併風月鑑亦從夢中所有，故曰“紅樓夢”也。余今批評亦在夢中，特為夢中這人特作此一大夢也) (Cao & The Red Inkstone 379).

Baoyu's dream does not simply represent his sexual awakening but also signifies two other denotations: the prophecy of his family's fate, and the illusory nature of earthly life.

Before he consummates the marriage with Two-in-one under Disenchantment's guidance, Baoyu first reads the records of the girls' future in his household, and then listens to the twelve songs pertaining to the tragic ending of the girls and the Jia family in the Land of Illusion. Disenchantment's purpose of painstakingly devising these three events for Baoyu, as she states, is to wake him up from the mundane pleasure:

> My motive in arranging this is to help you grasp the fact that, since even in these immortal precincts love is an illusion, the love of your dust-stained, mortal world must be doubly an illusion. It is my earnest hope that, knowing this, you will henceforth be able to shake yourself free of its entanglements and change your previous way of thinking, devoting your mind seriously to the teachings of Confucius and Mencius and your person wholeheartedly to the betterment of society" (Cao 1:146).

As a result, Disenchantment points out the truth that the ephemeral love and pleasure that Baoyu will experience in his mortal life are no other than the illusory dream, which is also the prime theme of *The Story of the Stone*. As the author concludes that the work is a record of "past dreams and illusions" (到頭一夢，萬境皆空), the Red Inkstone also indicates that these words are the creed of the book (四句乃一部之總綱) (Cao & The Red Inkstone 4). Another major commentator, Wang Xilian (王希濂), reflects on this theme: "Life is but a dream, the dreamland is just an illusion; the separation and reunion, rise and fall, life and death are all like a vanishing dream" (人生若夢，幻境皆虛，離合盛衰，生老病死，不過如泡影電光) (23).

As examined above, the notion of mundane experiences as dreams and illusions during this period is deeply rooted in the Daoist and Buddhist philosophy of emptiness and transcendence, which implies that happiness and sadness in human life would not persist. Moreover, life experience is merely a path to reach enlightenment. In *The Story of the Stone*, the process of achieving enlightenment is stated clearly through the story of Vanitas: "As a consequence of all this, Vanitas, starting off in the Void (Which is Truth) came to the contemplation of Form (which is Illusion); and from Form engendered Passion; and from Form awoke to the Void (which is Truth)" (從此空空道人因空見色，由色生情，傳情入色，自色悟空) (Cao 1:51). Moreover, the magical monk and the Taoist's interventions in the three major characters' love relationship also tend to be a means to lead them into the path of enlightenment. In other words, the characters have to experience prosperity and downfall in the human world to finally reach enlightenment. In Baoyu's case, the unconsummated relationship with Daiyu, along with the ruin of his family, is the condition for his transcendence and reclusive ending.

For another, the idea that memories and past experiences are illusions caused by traumatic life change is very prevalent in the late Ming and Qing autobiographical narratives. For instance, born into a wealthy household, Zhang Dai (張岱) expresses this feeling in his *Self-written Obituary* (自為墓誌銘) written after the collapse of the Ming dynasty:

> Zhang Dai, a man whose family hailed from the realm of Shu, had the courtesy name Taoan. As a youth he was a real dandy, in love with the idea of excess: he loved exquisite shelter; he loved pretty maidservants; he loved handsome serving boys; he loved bright-colored clothes; he loved perfect food; he loved handsome horses; he loved colorful lanterns; he loved fireworks; he loved the theater; he loved the trumpets' blare; he loved antiques; he loved paintings of flowers and birds. Besides which, seduced by tea and ravished by oranges, poisoned by stories and bewitched by poems, he drained to the lees

> the first half of his life, which has now become just dreams and illusions. When he turned fifty, his country was obliterated, his family erased. He hid his traces by dwelling in the mountains . . . He wore cotton clothes, ate coarse vegetables, and often could not even keep his stove alight. Casting his mind back to a time twenty years before, it all seemed as if the world had been cut adrift
> (蜀人張岱，陶庵其號也。少為紈綺子弟，極愛繁華，好精舍，好美婢，好孌童，好鮮衣，好美食，好駿馬，好華燈，好煙火，好梨園，好鼓吹，好古董，好花鳥，兼以茶淫橘虐，書蠹詩魔，勞碌半生，皆成夢幻。年至五十，國破家亡，避跡山居。所存者，破床碎几，折鼎病琴，與殘書數帙，缺硯一方而已。布衣疏糲，常至斷炊。回首二十年前，真如隔世) (Spence 272–273).

Beholding the drastic contrast between his former life and the plight he suffers now, the belletrist sighs that the life of fortune and pleasure he once enjoyed are dreams and illusions.

Likewise, *The Story of the Stone* is also a semi autobiographical account of Cao Xueqin, whose sentiments are similar to those of Zhang Dai after the downfall of his family. In Chapter 29, three plays are chosen as a result of the slips picked out before the god; *The White Serpent* (白蛇傳), *A Heap of Honours* (滿床笏), and *The South Branch* (南柯夢): these plays imply the fate of the family from its rise and prosperity to its final ruin. Among the numerous scenes involving dramatic performance, this one is distinctive because, as a decision made randomly before the gods, all three plays foreshadow the fate of the family. Hence, not only the reader, but also Grandmother Jia regards them as omens and unconsciously relates them with the fate of her own family.

First of all, the story of *The White Serpent* is about Liu Bang's (劉邦, 256-195 BC) foundation of the Han dynasty, which implies the rise of the Jia family: "'What's the story?' said Grandmother Jia. Cousin Zhen explained that it was about the emperor Gaozu, founder of the Han dynasty, who began his rise to greatness by decapitating a monstrous white snake" (Cao

2:80). Furthermore, Liu Bang is the first emperor in Chinese history arisen from a lower social class. Accordingly, ancestors of the Jia family were also humble in origins and throve by means of military exploits. This background is indicated in Chapter 7 through introducing Big Jiao, an old servant in the Ningguo mansion:

> "When he was young he went with Grandfather on three or four of his campaigns and once saved his life by pulling him from under a heap of corpses and carrying him to safety on his back. He went hungry himself and stole things for his master to eat; and once when he had managed to get half a cupful of water, he gave it to his master and drank horse's urine himself" (Cao 1:181).

Then, *A Heap of Honours* suggests the prosperity of the Jia family because the play is a vivid depiction of a large aristocratic family at its height: "The second choice was *A Heap of Honours*, which shows the sixtieth birthday party of the great Tang general Guo Ziyi, attended by his seven sons and eight sons-in-law, all of whom held high office, the 'heap of honours' of the title being a reference to the table in his reception-hall piled high with their insignia" (Cao 2:81). Grandmother Jia is also aware of the connection between this play and her family: "'It seems a bit conceited to have this second one played,' said Grandmother Jia. 'Still, if that's what the gods chose, I suppose we'd better have it. What's the third one going to be?'" (Cao 2:81). But the third one, *The South Branch*, predictably shows no appeal for her: "Grandmother Jia was silent. She knew that *The South Branch* likens the world to an ant-heap and tells a tale of power and glory which turns out in the end to have been a dream" (Cao 2:81). Again, *The South Branch* appears at the end to signify the inevitable decay and the revelation that the past desires, wealth, fame, and romantic relationships are futile efforts that will eventually vanish and turn out to be emptiness.

The Story of the Stone is the pinnacle of all Chinese dream narratives. The twenty dreams in the first eighty chapters engage the diverse forms of dreams from the earlier narrative works, including Judge Bao's spirit wandering into a transcendental sphere and prophetic dreams, Du Liniang's inner awakening, and even a similar sense to Hamlet's understanding of dreams as the product of subjectivity and illusion. After the scientific revolution, the supernatural was largely replaced in the West with psychological and biological explanations (Nelson 9). Dream culture also evolved, especially with the publication of Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams* in 1899. Freud claims that dreams are a means of wish fulfillment to reflect one's thoughts and actions in waking life: "The dream cannot be compared to the random resonation of a musical instrument struck not by the hand of a player but by the impact of an external force; it is a fully valid psychical phenomenon, in fact a wish-fulfilment; it is to be included in the series of intelligible psychical acts of our waking life; it has been constructed by a highly elaborate intellectual activity" (98). This Freudian theory is also reflected in *The Story of the Stone* through Crimson's dream of Jia Yun in Chapter 24. As she hopes to develop a relationship with Jia Yun, Crimson dreams that Yun pursues her: "We have seen how Crimson, after lying a long time a prey to confused and troubled thoughts, at last dozed off to sleep; and how later, when Jia Yun grabbed at her, she turned and fled, only to stumble and fall on the threshold of her room. At that point she woke in bed and discovered that she had been dreaming" (Cao 1:488).

After the scientific revolution in the West, the kinds of supernatural phenomena familiar in *Hamlet* are displaced and become rational deductions in Edgar Allan Poe's Dupin trilogy, the foundation of the genre of Western detective stories. Thus, the next chapter will turn to modern detective fiction to examine the social grounds for this type of scientific reasoning, and how

Edgar Allan Poe's Dupin trilogy removed superstitious elements familiar in earlier narratives, including ghosts, coincidence, and luck, by explaining them with rational deduction. Moreover, the chapter will also explore how Dupin's admirable intellectual prowess is still "præternatural" (Poe 3). This is similar to Judge Bao because both detectives have transcendental capabilities when it comes to solving mysterious cases.

CHAPTER 3

DUPIN'S DREAM AND DETECTION

Chapter 2 presented Judge Bao and Hamlet as two dreamers who seek truth in their subjective spheres, further comparing the traditions of dream culture in Western and Chinese literature. This chapter will focus on modern detective fiction in an effort to establish a social foundation for scientific reasoning, and will examine how Edgar Allan Poe's Dupin trilogy rationalized superstitious phenomena—including ghosts, coincidence, and luck—in *Hamlet* and other proto-detective works by explaining them away through logical deduction. On the other hand, although Dupin and his Western detective descendants, such as Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *Sherlock Holmes*, are usually described as "emotionless reasoning machines" (Symons 39), Poe also suggests in the text that, as opposed to the pure rationality of his detection, the intellectual prowess and intuitive comprehension Dupin possesses are "prætернatural" (Poe 3). This description draws comparisons between Dupin and Judge Bao insofar as they both possess unparalleled ability in solving mysterious cases. Moreover, this chapter will demonstrate that while detective fiction itself is associated with the psychological process of dreaming as explored in Chapter 2, Dupin's detection and seclusion denote a new dimension of the dream.

Throughout the centuries, Judge Bao has been elevated from a historical official to an immortal figure. After the Ming dynasty, the Qing dynasty largely adopted the previous social and political structures and institutions, including the imperial examination system. In the 1879

novel *Three Heroes and Five Gallants* (三俠五義) by the Qing author Shi Yukun (石玉昆), Judge Bao is still depicted as a supernatural detective capable of seeing ghosts and judging the dead. Meanwhile, his Western counterparts underwent a divergent transition. With Poe's creation of the first detective figure, C. Auguste Dupin, in *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* (1841), Western detective fiction was established as a genre. Poe described his Dupin trilogy as "tales of ratiocination," a phrase that reveals the scientific nature of modern detective fiction explicitly. More significantly, the character of Dupin and the three tales featuring him, *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* (1841), *The Mystery of Marie Rogêt* (1843), and *The Purloined Letter* (1845), would become templates for the genre of detective fiction, particularly in the late nineteenth century, by articulating the significance of intellectualism and ratiocination.[19]

Western detective fiction, as mentioned in the introduction, is a product of the scientific and industrial revolutions. The process of urbanization in the Victorian cities of the nineteenth century, brought crime, violence, and other social problems, which provided literary material for the new genre. Furthermore, dramatic changes in both social and individual life also resulted in an ideological conflict between the old religious cosmic order and newly emerging science and industry:

[19] Each of the three Dupin stories has made a contribution to the genre. Christopher Pittard notes, "The first, 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue,' (1841) pioneered the sub-genre of the 'locked room' mystery by presenting a seemingly impossible crime with a surprising solution, and Susan Sweeney has discussed the theoretical significance of the locked room for narratological theory. The second story, 'The Mystery of Marie Roget,' (1843) is interesting both historically and structurally; historically, because the story is based upon the real New York murder case of Mary Rogers; structurally, because the narrative's use of newspaper reports and textual sources anticipates the kind of fragmentary structure that would be used by Wilkie Collins in *The Woman in White* (1860). 'The Purloined Letter' (1845) has become significant in terms of psychoanalytic theory, following Jacques Lacan's analysis of the story (concentrating on the different meanings of 'letter' and Lacan's comparison of the conscious/unconscious to language), and Jacques Derrida's reading of Lacan." Christopher Pittard, "Victorian Detective Fiction," http://www.crimeculture.com/?page_id=135.

> The scientific revolution was itself built on the sixteenth-century Reformation, which had imposed limits on the old Christian cosmogony that were to have far-reaching consequences. Most significantly, the new Protestant dogma had fixed the 'cessation of miracles,' in D. P. Walker's phrase—and hence the direct intrusion of the supernatural into human lives—back to the year 600 C.E. (Nelson 6).

The influence of this transformation was profound, leading to a trend of rationalization and de-supernaturalization in the British Isles and the United States up to the mid-twentieth century that consequently left its imprint on the genre of detective fiction (Nelson 80).

Hence, the ghost's revelation of the murderer in *Hamlet* is replaced by a detective's remarkable deduction of the crime at the end of a work of detective fiction. In addition, the detective is often presented as an amateur scientist to signify the character's peculiar intellectual and analytical faculty to an extreme. Watson comments on Sherlock Holmes, "All emotions, and that one particularly, were abhorrent to his cold, precise, but admirably balanced mind. He was, I take it, the most perfect reasoning and observing machine that the world has seen…" (Doyle 32). This characteristic of Sherlock Holmes is undoubtedly inherited from Dupin: "Aristocratic, arrogant, and apparently omniscient, Dupin is what Poe often wished he could have been himself, an emotionless reasoning machine" (Symons 39). As Dupin's most well-known descendant, Holmes further asserts the profession of detection as a science: "Detection is, or ought to be, an exact science and should be treated in the same cold and unemotional manner" (Doyle 145). Correspondingly, he is obsessed with his studies of detection. Stamford remarks, "He [Holmes] is a little queer in his ideas—an enthusiast in some branches of science" (Doyle 8).

The issue of objective knowledge thus arises again. Whereas Hamlet experiences the chaotic breakdown of his former knowledge with the appearance of his father's ghost, objective

knowledge serves as one of the fundamental essentials for a detective. Dupin impresses the narrator by his extensive reading: "Books, indeed, were his sole luxuries, and in Paris these are easily obtained" (Poe 6). The limits of Holmes' knowledge are introduced more specifically: "While the man is ignorant of literature, philosophy or astronomy, he is an expert in chemistry, anatomy and any other subjects pertaining to his profession."[20] He even published several technical works of detection, such as "Upon the Distinction between the Ashes of the Various Tobaccos." Watson points out regarding Holmes' unusual expertise, "His zeal for certain studies was remarkable, and within eccentric limits his knowledge was so extraordinarily ample and minute that his observations have fairly astounded me. Surely no man would work so hard or attain such precise information unless he had some definite end in view" (Doyle 15-16).

With this social and ideological background, the supernatural intervention that appears in the previous discussion of the Judge Bao plays and *Hamlet* vanishes in Poe's Dupin tales. Instead, Dupin injects rational deduction into such paranormal phenomena as ghosts, coincidence, and luck to dissipate former superstitious concepts. In *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*, for instance, Dupin and the narrator first demonstrate their contempt for superstition through the residence they move into together:

> It was at length arranged that we should live together during my stay in the city; and as my worldly circumstances were somewhat less embarrassed than his own, I was permitted to be at the expense of renting, and furnishing in a style which suited the rather

[20] Watson's list of Holmes' knowledge limits: "SHERLOCK HOLMES—his limits. 1. Knowledge of Literature. — Nil. 2. Philosophy. — Nil. 3. Astronomy. — Nil. 4. Politics. — Feeble. 5. Botany. — Variable. Well up in belladonna, opium, and poisons generally. Knows nothing of practical gardening. 6. Geology. — Practical, but limited. Tells at a glance different soils from each other. After walks has shown me splashes upon his trousers, and told me by their colour and consistence in what part of London he had received them. 7. Chemistry. – Profound. 8. Anatomy. — Accurate, but unsystematic. 9. Sensational Literature. — Immense. He appears to know every detail of every horror perpetrated in the century. 10. Plays the violin well. 11. Is an expert singlestick player, boxer, and swordsman. 12. Has a good practical knowledge of British law" (Doyle 17).

> fantastic gloom of our common temper, a time-eaten and grotesque mansion, long deserted through superstitions into which we did not inquire, and tottering to its fall in a retired and desolate portion of the Faubourg St. Germain (Poe 6).

The case in *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* is the origin of the subgenre of "locked room" mysteries in detective fiction: two victims are brutally murdered in a room with locked doors and windows, and the detective is then obliged to find the means for the killer to have entered and exited the scene. Beholding an uncanny murder, one might easily believe a supernatural explanation. However, Dupin denies this possibility decisively: "It is not too much to say that neither of us believe in præternatural events. Madame and Mademoiselle L'Espanaye were not destroyed by spirits. The doers of the deed were material, and escaped materially" (Poe 21).

Moreover, in his later detection of the mystery, Dupin says of coincidences, with regard to the theory of probabilities, "Coincidences, in general, are great stumbling-blocks in the way of that class of thinkers who have been educated to know nothing of the theory of probabilities—that theory to which the most glorious objects of human research are indebted for the most glorious of illustration" (Poe 26). This issue of coincidences is further examined in the second Dupin tale, *The Mystery of Marie Rogêt*:

> There are few persons, even among the calmest thinkers, who have not occasionally been startled into a vague yet thrilling half-credence in the supernatural, by *coincidences* of so seemingly marvelous a character that, as *mere* coincidences, the intellect has been unable to receive them. Such sentiments—for the half-credences of which I speak have never the full force of *thought*—are seldom thoroughly stifled unless by reference to the doctrine of chance, or, as it is technically termed, the Calculus of Probabilities (Poe 37–38).

At last, in *The Purloined Letter*, Dupin points out that the marvelous success of reasoning is not due to luck but the ability to identify and impersonate. In other words, an analyst is capable of discerning his opponent's thoughts by identifying that person's intellect and behaviors, including

facial expression and body language, based on the reflection of his own natural reaction toward an action: "'I fashion the expression of my face, as accurately as possible, in accordance with the expression of his, and then wait to see what thoughts or sentiments arise in my mind or heart, as if to match or correspond with the expression'" (Poe 92).

As a matter of fact, according to Poe, identification and impersonation are the two most valuable abilities of a detective, amongst other basic qualities, the significance of which is brought up by the narrator in the theoretical discussion of analysis at the beginning of *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*: "Deprived of ordinary resources, analyst throws himself into the spirit of his opponent, identifies himself therewith, and not unfrequently sees thus, at a glance, the sole methods (sometimes indeed absurdly simple ones) by which he may seduce into error or hurry into miscalculation" (Poe 4). The narrator then elaborates on this idea through a discussion of the skills of the whist player:

> Our player confines himself not at all; nor, because the game is the object, does he reject deductions from things external to the game. He examines the countenance of his partner, comparing it carefully with that of each of his opponents. He considers the mode of assorting the cards in each hand; often counting trump by trump, honor by honor, through the glances bestowed by their holders upon each. He notes every variation of face as the play progresses, gathering a fund of thought from the differences in the expression of certainty, of surprise, of triumph, or of chagrin (Poe 5).

In the comparison of chess, draughts, and whist in this discussion, the narrator considers whist superior to the other two games in respect to its utilization of players' analytical power: "Whist has long been noted for its influence upon what is termed the calculating power; and men of the highest order of intellect have been known to take an apparently unaccountable delight in it, while eschewing chess as frivolous" (Poe 4). Therefore, the tactics that a whist player manifests

in the game are a juxtaposition of the detective's performance in his detection. Indeed, Dupin's later detection exhibits his faculty of identification and impersonation explicitly.

Dupin claims in *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* that his analytical ability allows him to penetrate others' minds: "He [Dupin] boasted to me, with a low chuckling laugh, that most men, in respect to himself, wore windows in their bosoms, and was wont to follow up such assertions by direct and very startling proofs of his intimate knowledge of my own" (Poe 7). Nonetheless, this miraculous power of Dupin is not because of telepathy but his capacity for rational deduction i.e., the ability to read his opponent's mind through first identifying that person's behaviors and then associating those actions with the steps of his thought to attain accurate conclusions, as Dupin remarks after he successfully infers that the narrator is thinking of Chantilly when they are strolling: "'We will first retrace the course of your meditations, from the moment in which I spoke to you until that of the *rencontre* with the fruiterer in question. The large links of the chain run thus—Chantilly, Orion, Dr. Nichols, Epicurus, Stereotomy, the street stones, the fruiterer'" (Poe 9).

Similarly, after scrutinizing the murder scene, Dupin impersonates the criminal's idiosyncratic actions and discovers that the transgressor is in effect irrational and even "alien from humanity" (Poe 27). His technique of reproducing Mademoiselle L'Espanaye's death in a drawing, and guiding the narrator to imitate the murderer's deed of grasping the victim's throat demonstrate his application of identification and impersonation. As a result, Dupin arrives at the astonishing conclusion that the murder was committed by an ape. However, he has not yet obtained sufficient evidence to prove his theory.

Consequently, by tracing the thoughts of the ape's possessor, Dupin exploits his skills again to entrap the sailor into revealing the truth in person: "Cognizant although innocent of the murder, the Frenchman will naturally hesitate about replying to the advertisement—about demanding the Ourang-Outang. He will reason thus:—'I am innocent; I am poor; my Ourang-Outang is of great value—to one in my circumstances a fortune itself—why should I lose it through idle apprehensions of danger?'" (Poe 30). Thus, the inference is corroborated. Sherlock Holmes in fact uses the same approach to perceive that Watson has been in Afghanistan at first sight, as he clarifies Watson's amazement through recreating his mental process:

> "From long habit the train of thoughts ran so swiftly through my mind, that I arrived at the conclusion without being conscious of intermediate steps. There were such steps, however. The train of reasoning ran, 'Here is a gentleman of a medical type, but with the air of a military man. Clearly an army doctor, then. He has just come from the tropics, for his face is dark, and that is not the natural tint of his skin, for his wrists are fair. He has undergone hardship and sickness, as his haggard face says clearly. His left arm has been injured. He holds it in a stiff and unnatural manner. Where in the tropics could an English army doctor have seen much hardship and got his arm wounded? Clearly in Afghanistan.' The whole train of thought did not occupy a second. I then remarked that you came from Afghanistan, and you were astonished" (Doyle 22).

Despite the fact that Dupin's rational deduction never fails to reveal the truth or explain the case, the source of his omniscience itself is unknown for it has surpassed simple mathematical study or poetic imagination, which is even reckoned by the narrator as "prætternatural." In *The Purloined Letter*, the application of identification and impersonation becomes the only technique capable of allowing Dupin to retrieve the stolen letter. However, in this tale Dupin also challenges the conventional idea that mathematical reason leads to his talent of rational deduction: "'I dispute the availability, and thus the value, of that reason which is cultivated in any especial form other than the abstractly logical. I dispute, in particular, the

reason educed by mathematical study'" (Poe 94). As the Parisian police have exhausted their options in attempting to find the letter in the minister's house, Dupin pinpoints that the prefect's mistake is his ill admeasurement of the minister's intellect i.e., the failure to identify and impersonate: "'And the remote source of his defeat lies in the supposition that the Minister is a fool, because he has acquired renown as a poet. All fools are poets; this the Prefect feels; and he is merely guilty of a *non distributio medii* in thence inferring that all poets are fools" (Poe 94). Dupin nonetheless comprehends that the minister is both a mathematician and a poet, so he believes that his opponent's capacity to reason surpasses the prefect's: "As poet and mathematician, he would reason well; as mere mathematician, he could not have reasoned at all, and thus would have at the mercy of the Prefect" (Poe 94).

Accordingly, Dupin further articulates that mathematical study is not the single source of rational deduction because truth can be obtained through other branches of knowledge, such as rhetoric and metaphysics:

> "The material world," continued Dupin, "abounds with very strict analogies to the immaterial; and thus some color of truth has been given to the rhetorical dogma, that metaphor, or simile, may be made to strengthen an argument, as well as to embellish a description. The principle of the *vis inertiæ*, for example, seems to be identical in physics and metaphysics" (Poe 96).

With this understanding in mind, Dupin concludes that the minister would venture to put the letter in an obvious place, for he has foreseen the police's modes of investigation and thus knows how to secure the letter under the secret search.

Dupin's triumph in retrieving the letter suggests that he is similar to the minister in that the origin of his prowess of rational deduction does not lie solely in mathematical study.

Although mathematical study is likely to strengthen the ability to analyze, it is unequal to analysis, as indicated at the beginning of *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*: "The faculty of re-solution is possibly much invigorated by mathematical study, and especially by that highest branch of it which, unjustly, and merely on account of its retrograde operations, has been called, as if *par excellence*, analysis. Yet to calculate is not in itself to analyse" (Poe 3). Dupin probably also acquires his intellectual faculty from various material and immaterial branches of knowledge, since he is able to trace the minister's thought. Terry J. Martin points out that, as Dupin's prototype, Poe is influenced by the Romantics, and his perception of metaphorical levels of meaning categorizes him as none than a poet or literary critic: "Not surprisingly, Poe's analytical paradigm fits no profession quite so well as that of the poet and/or literary critic" (33). Correspondingly, Dupin exhibits both objective and subjective knowledge: "This duality is essential in Poe's 'Purloined Letter': the ingenuity of the police blocks their discovery of the truth, whereas Dupin provides instead a combination of poetic imagination and 'mathematical' reason" (Hutter 192).

However, as Dupin easily outwits the minister in the case, the source of his talent is so mysterious that the narrator considers it, as opposed to Dupin's celebrated rationality, to be intuitive and supernatural: "He is fond of enigmas, of conundrums, of hieroglyphics; exhibiting in his solutions of each a degree of *acumen* which appears to the ordinary apprehension præternatural. His results, brought about by the very soul and essence of method, have, in truth, the whole air of intuition" (Poe 3). The narrator implies that the intrinsic knowledge of an analyst does not merely lie in observation but in "*what* to observe" (Poe 5). Thus, Dupin's access to this knowledge is inexplicable because of its instinctive undertone: "All afford, to his apparently

intuitive perception, indications of the true state of affairs" (Poe 5). Besides, imagination is also an integral part of Dupin's analytical ability, according to the narrator: "It will be found, in fact, that the ingenious are always fanciful, and the truly imaginative never otherwise than analytic" (Poe 6). Therefore, although Dupin dispenses with supernatural elements and embraces his scientific ratiocination, his power of rational deduction itself is abstract and illogical, which signifies the character of Dupin as the supernatural element in the tales.

Furthermore, Dupin's supernatural inclinations are intensified through his innate enthusiasm for detection, on the one hand, and his eccentric seclusion on the other. Rather than being motivated by a sense of justice, the passion a detective shows for the study of detection is more likely born of a congenital interest in games of logic games. Just as the narrator indicates above that a man with outstanding analytical faculties is keen on intellectual activity, Dupin later frankly admits that mental games are his source of enjoyment: "He [Dupin] seemed, too, to take an eager delight in its exercise—if not exactly in its display—and did not hesitate to confess the pleasure thus derived" (Poe 7). Moreover, the primary basis for Dupin to investigate the crime in *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* is that it would afford him "amusement," which the narrator thinks very queer (Poe 17). Holmes subsequently demonstrates a similar extreme addiction to his profession; he even depends on drug use to stimulate his brain, ignoring the cost of his physical health:[21]

> "My mind," he [Holmes] said, "rebels at stagnation. Give me problems, give me work, give me the most abstruse cryptogram, or the most intricate analysis, and I am in my own proper atmosphere. I can dispense then with artificial stimulants. But I abhor the dull routine of existence. I crave for mental exaltation. That is why I have chosen my own particular profession, or rather created it, for I am the only one in the world" (Doyle 144).

[21] However, the use of drugs, including cocaine, morphine, and opium, was legal in Victorian England.

Moreover, as the narrator in *The Murder in the Rue Morgue* describes, his friend Dupin has a "freak of fancy…to be enamored of the Night for her own sake" (Poe 7). The life they lead in Paris is also reclusive:

> Had the routine of our life at this place been known to the world, we should have been regarded as madmen—although, perhaps, as madmen of a harmless nature. Our seclusion was perfect. We admitted no visitors. Indeed the locality of our retirement had been carefully kept a secret from my own former associates; and it had been many years since Dupin had ceased to know or be known in Paris. We existed within ourselves alone (Poe 6).

As a matter of fact, and notwithstanding their brilliant capabilities, Dupin and his Western detective descendants tend to maintain a delicate relationship with the government—the police or government official may seek their assistance when they are unable to solve a case, but this usually happens in secret in order to preserve their authority, whereas the detective may mock the government's incompetence. Dupin remarks, "Let him discourse; it will ease his conscience. I am satisfied with having defeated him in his own castle" (Poe 35).

This identity of the Western classic detective as a genius outside the sociopolitical system, or an "unofficial personage," as Sherlock Holmes categorizes himself, is very different from that of the Chinese judge. A Chinese judge like Judge Bao usually acts as a representative of the law and imperial power, combining multiple roles of government magistrate, detective, judge, jury, and prosecutor. Judge Bao gives his routine self-introduction in *The Flower of the Back Courtyard* as follows: [22]

[22] Characters in Yuan dramas usually introduce themselves to the audience when they first appear. See Sabina Knight, *Chinese Literature: A Very Short Introduction*, p. 77: "Using standardized symbols and formulas, they featured stock characters (sometimes played by either gender): the male and female leads, trusted servants, and various older men, including naïve pedants, bumbling physicians, swindlers, and corrupt officials. Upon their first

> With the imperial mandate I sit in my court.
> Having charge of the law, I uncover villainy and crime.
> My clothes are light fur, I ride a fine steed,
> As retainers in file clear the way up ahead.
> Because I am stubborn, because I am brusque,
> Who dares even speak of privilege or guile?
> Commoners, it goes without saying,
> And even officials of worth and of fame
> At the sight of the shadow of Bao Lung-t'u are struck with instant fear (Zheng 155).

Consequently, crime cases are directly reported to the judge, and he is then "expected to collect and sift all evidence, find the criminal, arrest him, make him confess, sentence him, and finally administer to him the punishment for his crime" (Gulik X). The most unique part in this procedure is that in traditional Chinese courts the judge had both the duties of a detective and was also responsible for questioning and punishing the culprit. These scenes of the judge sitting in the tribunal, directing the torture of a subject in order to extract a confession, and finally adjudicating punishment are integral in a *gong'an* story.[23]

Nevertheless, Dupin in his debut in *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* (1841) is depicted as a young gentleman from a once wealthy family reduced to "such poverty that the energy of his character succumbed beneath it, and he ceased to bestir himself in the world, or to care for the retrieval of his fortunes" (Poe 6). Based on Poe's depiction of Dupin's reclusive life, the character is not only independent of the government but also tends to withdraw from mundane affairs, confining himself in the mansion, indulging solely in his study and intellectual activities:

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appearance, characters often introduced themselves, related the play's backstory, or recapped the action thus far, but the drama generally centered more on emotion than action."

[23] But the official power a judge possesses does not imply that he may simply use violent means to settle a case. Instead, intellectual and supernatural powers, as discussed in previous chapters, are still the fundamental sources that Judge Bao relies on to achieve successes. Another factor that may dispel the reader's suspicion that a suspect might confess to false charges under torture relates to, again, the typical literary characterization of the judge as an embodiment of perfection.

> At the first dawn of the morning we closed all the massy shutters of our old building; lighting a couple of tapers which, strongly perfumed, threw out only the ghastliest and feeblest of rays. By the aid of these we then busied our souls in dreams—reading, writing, or conversing, until warned by the clock of the advent of the true Darkness (Poe 7).

In his article "Secular Guardians of Sacred Justice," Timothy R. Prchal argues that the detectives' seclusion implies that they are self-restrained individuals who concentrate solely on mental constructions instead of earthly pleasure: "If one is to have a disciplined mind, one must avoid the distractions of the mundane or the pleasures of the flesh. There is an implied conflict between mental finesse and worldly or corporeal experience" (Prchal 163).

Watson's observation of Holmes' behavior in *A Scandal in Bohemia* may prove this point: "Holmes, who loathed every form of society with his whole Bohemian soul, remained in our lodgings in Baker Street, buried among his old books, and alternating from week to week between cocaine and ambition, the drowsiness of the drug, and the fierce energy of his own keen nature" (Doyle 33). However, some critics also bring up a supernatural interpretation that the character of Dupin is related to "decay" and "death" (Martin 41). In addition, his seclusion and infatuation for darkness liken him to a vampire:

> They agree to take up residence together in a Gothic setting, a "time-eaten and grotesque" deserted mansion in Paris' Faubourg St. Germain, where they share "the rather fantastic gloom" of their "common temper" and "live like vampires." The narrator and Dupin both love darkness, so much so that Dupin chooses total dark for meditation, a conventional Romantic contrast between physical gloom and intellectual illumination…. The gloomy Parisian setting intensifies the story's exotic Gothic atmosphere (Brunsdale 587).

Finally, Dupin's rational detection may fascinatingly be regarded as the product of his dreams, which gives rise to another association between the Western detective and dreams. In *The Murder in the Rue Morgue*, the narrator describes the two men's intellectual activities,

including reading, writing, and conversation, in the dark mansion as "dreams" (Poe 7). He remarks again in *The Mystery of Marie Rogêt*, "Continuing to occupy our chambers in the Faubourg Saint Germain, we gave the Future to the winds, and slumbered tranquilly in the Present, weaving the dull world around us into dreams" (Poe 38). More significantly, when he performs a deduction, Dupin's facial expressions and behaviors tend to suggest that the detective is absorbed in a dreamy state: "His manner at these moments was frigid and abstract; his eyes were vacant in expression; while his voice, usually a rich tenor, rose into a treble which would have sounded petulantly but for the deliberateness and entire distinctness and enunciation" (Poe 7). Therefore, dreams in the Dupin tales imply the absolute subjective sphere of mental movements, but, distinct from Hamlet's subjective sentimental struggles, Dupin's dreams bring about the revelatory rational deduction needed to solve the mysterious cases.

In conclusion, this chapter has examined the influence of social and scientific transformations on modern Western detective fiction. As the first Western detective, Dupin explains supernatural phenomena with rational deduction, using in particular the techniques of identification and impersonation. Paradoxically, since the origin of Dupin's analytical faculty, due to its intuitive inclination, reaches somewhat beyond reason, the character is simultaneously in the shadow of supernatural interpretations. At last, dreams in the Dupin tales refer to subjective intellectual activities, which may be considered the source of the detective's remarkable deductive ability.

CONCLUSION

Working from the perspective of the dreams, this thesis compares the function of the supernatural in Chinese and Western detective stories. Focusing on Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and three of the Yuan-Ming Judge Bao courtroom dramas—*Rescriptor-in-Waiting Bao Thrice Investigates the Butterfly Dream, The Ghost of the Pot,* and *The Flower of the Back Courtyard*—the first chapter explores the functions of supernatural revelation in crime detection. Despite some similarities in the effects of extramundane, differences in ancient Chinese and European cultural ideologies undergird the different detectives' divergent treatments of the paranormal. As a proto-detective, Hamlet is informed of his father's murder by the deceased king's ghost. Moreover, the ghost is only visible to him in the queen's chamber. On the other hand, in works circulated in approximately the same era as *Hamlet*, the Chinese detective, Judge Bao, solves a case through either listening to the complaint of a victim's ghost or being prompted by supernatural signs, such as prophetic dreams. Similarly, as indicated in *The Ghost of the Pot*, the judge is also the only one who can see a victim's ghost. However, while Hamlet is bewildered by the ghost's appearance and on corroboration of the ghost's words only seeks revenge, Judge Bao relies on supernatural revelation to solve the case.

The second chapter focuses on prophetic dreams in both the Judge Bao play *Rescriptor-in-Waiting Bao Thrice Investigates the Butterfly Dream* and *Hamlet*. Examining the multiple implications of dreams in these two works, the chapter further investigates dream culture in Chinese and Western traditions. The last chapter examines the influence of social and scientific

transformations on the foundations of modern Western detective fiction, Edgar Allan Poe's trio of Dupin tales. While Judge Bao is elevated to an immortal and regularly uses præternatural powers to unravel a case, Dupin explains what might otherwise appear to be supernatural phenomena with rational deduction. Thus, the mysterious origin of aspects of his analytical faculty puts Dupin in a similar role to Judge Bao.

The thesis centers on an investigation of the prophetic dream; the epilogue will add a few further observations pertaining to the comparison between the characters of Chinese and Western detectives. As examined in Chapter 1, Judge Bao stands for the embodiment of perfection because of his virtue and vigorous enforcement of laws. In contrast, the Western detective's infatuation with detection may lead to his idiosyncrasy. As Sally Sugarman properly puts it, "Holmes is not perfect. He is not always consistent but he has integrity. He is complex and needs to be interpreted. We puzzle over his behaviors as we do that of our friends…But that is Holmes. You take him as he is, seven-per-cent solution and all" (xii). Accordingly, Holmes, commonly considered a powerful protector of the law, actually holds ambiguous views on justice and moral responsibility, particularly in the case of "Charles Augustus Milverton" (1904).

In his duel with Milverton, "the king of all the blackmailers," Sherlock Holmes suggests that the law cannot be the single solution for all crime and injustice: "'Technically, no doubt, but practically not. What would it profit a woman, for example, to get him a few months' imprisonment if her own ruin must immediately follow? His victims dare not hit back'" (Doyle 273). Consequently, in order to obtain the blackmail papers, he plans to burgle his rival's house. With this action, the detective surprisingly places himself into the role of a criminal, though with the understanding that his behavior is technically illegal, it is morally justifiable. More

significantly, when Milverton is murdered by one of his victims in front of them, Holmes prevents Watson from rescuing him because he reckons that the woman's action, in that particular context, represents justice, even though it is technically illegal, just like their burglary: "[T]hat justice had overtaken a villain; that we had our own duties and our own objects which were not to be lost sight of" (Doyle 284). However, Holmes's action in this case may still find its counterpart in one of the Judge Bao plays, *Rescriptor-in-Waiting Bao Thrice Investigates the Butterfly Dream*, in which the judge saves the murderer by replacing him with another criminal's corpse because the victim killed his father. Therefore, although both the Chinese and Western detectives are usually depicted as the defenders of law, they simultaneously show their compassion and in some cases are willing to violate laws in order to effect justice.

Finally, some critics also point out the comparison between detectives and dream interpreters because both of them are able to give those who consult them guidance and solutions to problems based on sets of clues:

> Doyle puts a totally new interpretation on the most striking of romance customs—the holding of consultations to interpret dreams: through his exposition of symbols, the hermit seer or holy man helps a character decide on a direction in life. Frequently, the noncriminal irregularities that are brought to Holmes's attention fill his clients with the same sense of foreboding as a troublesome dream (Accardo 19).

Moreover, in his revealing article, "Dreams, Transformations, and Literature: The Implication of Detective Fiction," Albert D. Hutter remarks on the resemblance between detective fictions and the psychological process of dreaming:

> Detective fiction involves the transformation of a fragmented and incomplete set of events into a more ordered and complete understanding. As such it seems to bridge a private psychological experience, like dreaming, and literary experience in general. And

> like a psychoanalysis, the detective story reorders our perception of the past through language" (191).

These engrossing reflections may shed light on further studies of the detective story in relation to dreams.

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