

Original Paper

Religion and Courtship Novels: A Comparison between *The Story of the Stone* and *Mansfield Park* in Spiritual Worlds and Secular Lives

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Abstract

This paper compares how the different religious traditions in China and England shaped their courtship narratives in the long eighteenth century respectively. It finds that though the courtship novels in the two countries share the theme of temptation, the hero in The Story of the Stone is tempted by general worldly pleasures, while in Mansfield Park by sexual desire. When constancy plays an important role in the Chinese context, second attachment is central to character development in English courtship narratives. The English marriage plot usually embraces worldly happiness while The Story of the Stone's tragic ending enables the hero's experience of enlightenment and becoming a monk. Although Xueqin Cao's and Jane Austen's courtship novels address similar theme, the very different Christian and Buddhist-Daoist values in China and England shape their courtship plots decisively. Courtship novels, a popular genre in the long eighteenth century that has been widely recognised as narratives focusing on secular life and marriage practice, are unable to depart from the religious tradition in each country.

Keywords

courtship novels, religion, Buddhism, Daoism, Christianity, The Story of the Stone, Mansfield Park

1. Introduction

English and Chinese courtship novels in the long eighteenth century are widely recognised by current scholarship as a genre that focuses on secular life and marriage practice, but the ongoing religious tradition of each country also plays a significant role in their formation. In the English context, for

instance, marriage was both a Christian rite and, after the *Marriage Act* of 1753, a vehicle for the state's administrative power; hence the English marriage plot, which is never fully secularised, has a noteworthy relation to questions of church and state (O'Connell, p. 7). In thematic terms, Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park* (1814) includes a clergyman hero whose marriage to the pious Fanny, according to Michael Giffin, is based on their common Christian spirit (p. 129). Religious concerns are also prominent in the Chinese courtship novel. Xueqin Cao's hero Baoyu in *The Story of the Stone* (c. 1754) becomes a monk after the death of his true love that triggers his Buddhist and Daoist awakening to the impermanence of worldly pleasures. These otherworldly concerns are essential to understanding the trajectories of each novel and the ways that their distinctive religious traditions shape their courtship plots.

In this paper, I will show that the narrative logic of English and Chinese courtship novels, for all their assumed allegiance to the secular and realist-materialist world, is unable to fully depart from religious tradition. This study offers a reconsideration of the role of religious tradition in *The Story of the Stone* and *Mansfield Park* by focusing on their shared themes of temptation and female virtue, and by comparing how their different understandings of the spiritual world shape the endings of their courtship plots. To contextualise my comparative analysis of the two texts, I will firstly provide background information about the relevant religious traditions in China and England, and the missionary work of the long eighteenth century that helped facilitate cultural and literary exchange between the two countries.

2. The Religious Tradition in China and Robert Morrison

China is traditionally under the influence of three teachings: Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism. Confucianism and Daoism originated in China before the Qin dynasty (221-206 BCE) as indigenous spiritual traditions, while Buddhism was introduced from India to China in the Western Han dynasty (206 BCE-25 CE). The correlations between the three teachings are complicated, as they work together to shape or underpin Chinese traditional society, culture and literature, but also sometimes stand in tension with each other. *The Story of the Stone* is itself a perfect example of how Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism collectively shape Chinese culture, by both coalescence and by disconnection.

As a core belief of ancient Chinese tradition, Confucianism is a system of ethics that teaches people how to fulfil their duty to family and country. Confucianism was established by Confucius (Kong Fuzi, or Master Kong), a Chinese philosopher living between approximately 551 and 479 BCE. His philosophical teachings, called Confucianism, emphasise personal, social and governmental morality and responsibility. Since then, Confucianism has long been promoted by the rulers of China across different dynasties and was crucial to the maintenance of order and stability of traditional Chinese society until its abolition in 1905 CE (Li et al., p. 2). Daoism, by contrast, praises nature and encourages people to follow their hearts and do nothing against nature. The most important canon of Daoism, *Dao De Jing* (c. 770-476 BCE), was written by Laozi. According to *Dao De Jing*, by following Daoist doctrines, people can achieve perfection, immortality and liberty (Wei, pp. 13-25; Komjathy, pp. 170-96). Buddhism

originated in ancient India and has exerted lasting influence on China since the Han dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE) (Poceski, pp. 197-198). It teaches belief in karma and reincarnation, aiming to help its followers to overcome the sufferings in the circle of death and rebirth and achieve permanent happiness and liberation in the Pure Land (Harvey, “Buddhist Visions”, pp. 66-78).

As polytheistic faiths, Buddhism and Daoism share common values, such as treasuring living, kindness, justice, sincerity, unselfishness and mercy. As early as in the fifth century, the imported Buddhism and the indigenous Daoism began to integrate with each other in China (Teiser and Verellen, p. 1). Massive Buddhist doctrines and rituals were added to the Daoist canon *Lingbao Scriptural Corpus* (Teiser and Verellen, p. 1). As Zuyan Zhou points out, when Buddhism was introduced into Chinese culture, scholars often used Daoist terminology to translate Buddhist concepts, while on the other hand, Daoist-inclined scholars also turned to popular imagery in Buddhist scriptures to project their values (p. 243). The Chinese people gradually got used to the values and doctrines of both religions. *The Story of the Stone*, written around 1300 years after the integration of Buddhism and Daoism in China, does not make a clear distinction between the two traditions. That the text belongs to “an age of philosophical syncretism” is evident in its prelude, where a Buddhist monk and a Daoist monk appear together in the Great Fable Mountains and agree to take the stone of its title into the secular world (Zhou, p. 243). In later plots, Buddhist and Daoist monks regularly appear together, signalling the integration of Buddhism and Daoism.

Confucianism has a paradoxical correlation with Buddhism and Daoism in the Chinese tradition. On the one hand, it shares Buddhism and Daoism’s teaching of virtues such as tolerance, kindness, peace and altruism. After many years of syncretistic movement, these three teachings became intertwined and coexistent in the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368). Indeed, the syncretistic movement named ‘three teachings becoming one’ marks an important milestone in the development of Chinese religious and philosophical history (Meulenbeld, pp. 135-136). On the other hand, however, Confucianism stands in opposition to some aspects of Buddhism and Daoism. Confucianism believes that people should restrain their ideas, words and deeds to comply with social norms, while Daoism advocates non-interference, suggesting people be guided by nature (Note 1). While Buddhism and Daoism aim to guide people to achieve permanent happiness in the spiritual world after death, Confucianism focuses on secular life. It advises people to maintain a respectful distance from religious and philosophical questions concerning deity, evil and the afterlife, while these questions are central to Buddhist and Daoist teachings. This difference arises in part because Confucianism is not a formal religion, but a system of philosophical thoughts and principles of conduct that aims to teach people how to perform and fulfil their duties with regard to tradition and authority (Knapp, p. 168; Clart, pp. 226-234). Confucianism has a famous saying, “emperor emperors, minister ministers, father fathers, son sons”, which means that everyone should fulfil the duty required by his position in the society, country or family (*Confucian Analects*, p. 266). Confucianism became embedded in Chinese politics and society when Emperor Yang of Sui in 605 CE invented an

education and examination system to select governors based on their understanding of Confucianism. Scholars passed the imperial exam by demonstrating their insightful understanding of Confucian thoughts, thereby taking up positions as bureaucrats and leaders within the imperial system of government. Those who failed in the imperial exam or were unable to achieve social advancement could turn to Buddhism and Daoism for comfort or inner peace through a connection with the spiritual world. In this way, Confucianism maintained a complicated correlation with Buddhism and Daoism in Chinese tradition, as well as in the eighteenth century when Cao wrote the story.

Cao's *The Story of the Stone* depicts a society dominated by Confucianism, but also offers a challenge to it. His hero Baoyu actively dislikes Confucianism because it requires male aristocratic offspring like himself to study hard and take the imperial exam regardless of their passions or interests. Their duty lies in earning honour for their families through political career advancement. From a very young age, Baoyu hates study and holds the imperial exam in contempt. Cao's own criticism of Confucianism, however, is motivated by a deeper concern about the restrictions that it places upon individual freedom. For Cao, influenced by Buddhist and Daoist thought, the Confucian emphasis upon worldly matters of social position, fame and wealth is unwise because these achievements can only ever be temporary (P. Wang, pp. 101-06). Shifang Lin's biographical study of Cao reveals his close relationship with Buddhist monks, as depicted by his friend Xuanquan Zhang's poems (p. 42). Certainly, Cao himself understood the limitations of worldly interests in personal terms. He had been born into a powerful and wealthy family that lost its social position when he was a child. His own father and grandfather had been high-ranking governors during the Kangxi Emperor's reign, but because of political battles and corruption, his father had been dismissed and the family's properties confiscated (Fan, pp. 64-111). This experience of loss and social disgrace informed Cao's disillusionment with, and rejection of, Confucianism and shaped the strong turn to Buddhism and Daoism that informed his novel.

The coexistence of the three teachings also forms an important backdrop to European missionary engagement with China, dating back to the sixteenth century. The religious encounter between European missionaries and China was initially a relatively smooth one in the sixteenth to the seventeenth century, as the important knowledge and technology brought by missionaries enabled further development of mathematics, calendar and geography in China (Pei, p. 29). While Europe was eager to send missionaries to Asia and establish influence over the world, China displayed a striking indifference to the engagement in missionary work and the process of globalisation because of its self-sustainability at that time (*Annals and Memoirs of the Court of Peking*, pp. 324-325). During this period China took no initiative to influence or convert other countries, and was relatively open to receive what was brought to it by foreign missionaries and merchants.

By the eighteenth century, however, Western missionaries had become unwelcome in China because the Qing government gradually realised that Christian doctrine is a challenge to Confucianism, and especially to the belief that Confucius was a saint and that the Chinese emperor was the "son of heaven"

(Pei, p. 30). The developing conflict between Christian missionaries and Confucianism in China was intensified by the “Chinese rites controversy”, a debate in Rome on how far expressions of Chinese culture and tradition could be compatible with Christianity (Livingstone, p. 59). Pope Clement XI made a decision in 1704 that Jesuit missionaries were forbidden to take part in honours paid to Confucius or the ancestors of the Emperors of China, and this regulation was reiterated by Pope Benedict XIV in 1742 (Thorpe, p. 28; Fattori, p. 698). In response, the Qing government prohibited the spreading of Christianity in China via legislation, and the movement of Western missionaries was restricted to a small number of cities, including Peking and Macao, where Cao lived and the influential British missionary Robert Morrison preached (Pei, p. 30; Wang, p. 63).

Robert Morrison was an Anglo-Scottish Presbyterian minister, Chinese translator for the East India Company and an agent for London Missionary Society who arrived at Canton China in 1807, before relocating to Macao the following year (Gray, p. 25). He would remain in China for twenty-seven years as a Protestant missionary, preaching the Christian gospel in an oriental country which was at that time dominated by Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism (Alcott, pp. 59-76; Meulenbeld, p. 125). During Morrison’s stay at Macao, he developed a strong interest in Chinese literature, not least because he believed that it offered foreign missionaries like himself an effective way to learn about the characteristics of the nation (Di, p. 32). As the later missionary C. F. Kupfer wrote in “Our Attitude to the Literature of China” (1894): “as the national particularities and characteristics of a people are chiefly attested through its literary products, no missionary can look upon this subject with indifference” (p. 284). In this spirit, Morrison came to understand the mastery of Chinese language, literature and culture as central to his Protestant Christian mission. On this basis Morrison is routinely acknowledged as a ‘founding father’ of the British tradition of sinology and, indeed, by some as the ‘father of Anglo-Chinese literature’ (Barrett, p. 213; Griffiths, p. 415).

Morrison’s significant contribution to English-Chinese cultural exchange in the period includes his translation of the Bible into Chinese and his compilation of a six-volume Chinese-English dictionary (Alcott, pp. 98-101). Of particular importance to my discussion is his pamphlet titled *Dialogues and Detached Sentences in the Chinese Language* (1816), a language textbook that aims to help English speakers learn Chinese. It contains thirty-one short bilingual dialogues, three of which are closely related to Chinese courtship narratives, especially *The Story of the Stone*.

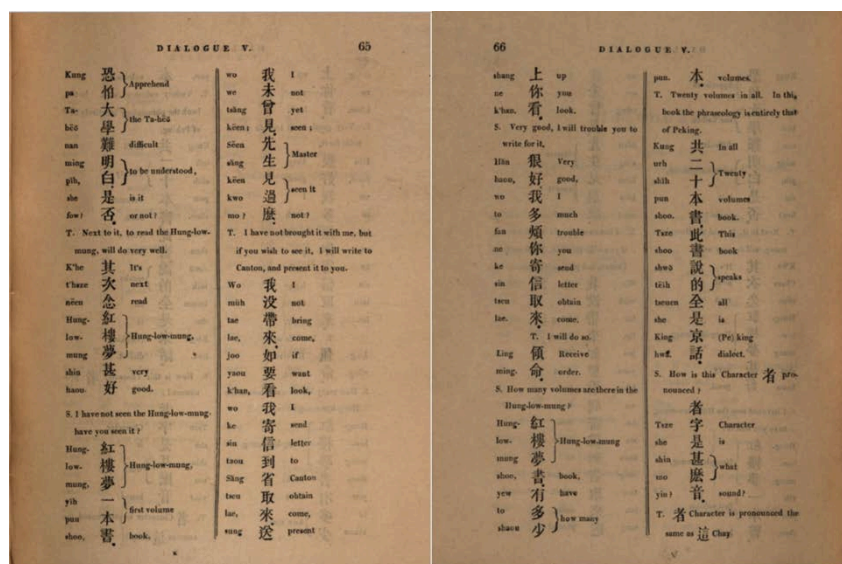


Figure 1. Robert Morrison's *Dialogues and Detached Sentences in the Chinese Language*, East India Company's Press, 1816

In the pamphlet, *Dialogue 5 With an Assistant in Learning the Language* presents an exchange between a student and a teacher. The student asks his teacher which book is good for a beginner. The teacher replies that he should first study *The Great Learning*, which is a Confucian canon written during the Spring and Autumn Period (770-476 BCE) of Chinese history that aims to teach people how to investigate things, acquire knowledge, refine one's moral self, regulate one's family and govern the country. When the student says that *The Great Learning* is difficult to understand, probably because it is written in Classical Chinese, the teacher recommends Xueqin Cao's novel: "Next to it, to read the *Hung-low-mung* (*The Story of the Stone*), will do very well. [...] In this book the phraseology is entirely that of Peking [dialect]" (pp. 64-66) (Note 2).

Morrison's fictional pedagogical dialogue implies two points about *The Story of the Stone* that I would like to discuss here. *The Story of the Stone* is a recommended novel for beginners who want to learn Chinese because first of all, as a novel of manners (similar in generic terms to Jane Austen's novels), it realistically depicts Chinese elite and upper-middle-class society, thereby providing good reading material for foreigners to become familiar with Chinese culture and customs (Benis, p. 185; Michie, p. 25). Second, the language of Cao's novel is largely vernacular, including Peking dialect and semi-Classical Chinese. Compared to the Classical Chinese of *The Great Learning*, *The Story of the Stone*'s more informal and vernacular style is much easier to read and understand. As the first novelist who widely adopted written vernacular language in China, Cao made the novel-reading experience easier and more enjoyable for both Chinese readers and English learners of the language. His innovative writing style marked an important shift in prose fiction's target readership in China from the well-educated elite to a broader public associated with the rise of a new middle class. In this respect, Cao's contribution to

Chinese fiction was strikingly similar to Samuel Richardson's own innovation in epistolary fictional writing in England, which used the low and relatively informal first-person language of a servant girl to draw new readers to the novel form and into the print marketplace (Keymer, p. 54).

The second Morrison's dialogue that I want to mention is *Dialogue 25 A Person Ill*, a translation of an excerpt of an exchange between the hero Baoyu Jia and his maid Aroma in *The Story of the Stone* (Morrison, pp. 194-200; *The Story of the Stone*, p. 566; ch. 31). Morrison's selection of this excerpt and the publication of his textbook in 1816 made him the first translator of Cao's novel into English currently known, albeit in a short and incomplete form (Gray, p. 31). In this dialogue, one of Baoyu's favourite maids, Aroma, has fallen ill, which is a circumstance that exacerbates the social divide between master and maidservant despite Baoyu's genuine concern for her recovery.

Sěih-jin [Aroma], seeing that she vomited blood on the ground, became half cold. [...] Paou-yŭh [Baoyu] wanted immediately to call a Person to warm some wine, to get some goat's blood, and some Le-tung pills. Sěih-jin shook her hand, and smiling and said, what you are alarmed about, is not of much importance; if you call a number of People, they will feel indignant at my misconduct. It will not be well either for you or me,—the right way is to send a boy for Mr. Wang, the Surgeon, and make a request to him to prepare a little medicine to take, and I shall soon be well. No Person will know,—no not the devil himself. Won't that be well? Paou-yŭh seeing that it was reasonable, could not help being satisfied. He went towards the table to pour out some tea, to give Sěih-jin to wash her mouth. Sěih-jin saw that Paou-yŭh was uneasy, forebore telling him not to serve her, for he would not comply; and another thing, she would alarm other people,—it was better to let him go. (*Dialogues and Detached Sentences in the Chinese Language*, pp. 194-200)

The social gap between Baoyu and Aroma creates an awkward and moving situation played out in the dialogue that prevents him from taking proper care of her. Morrison's choice of this passage was probably made with the knowledge that it underscored the way in which Chinese traditions of social hierarchy and Confucianism demanded that people should always behave properly and according to their social position. Baoyu and Aroma's love affair before marriage is a severe violation of Confucian etiquette. Furthermore, although she is beloved by her master, as a maidservant belonging to the lower class, Aroma can only ever become one of his concubines rather than his wife, a situation which would not change her social status significantly. As we saw in the last chapter, unlike the cross-class marriages that begin to characterise English courtship novels after *Pamela* (and which in modified form have become conventional in Austen's works), the open expression of love and desire across classes or plots of 'marrying up' can rarely be found in Chinese courtship fiction. Morrison's choice of this excerpt underscores an important difference between the two traditions and reveals to his Western readers the limited social circumstances for cross-class courtship in the Chinese case.

The last dialogue in Morrison's textbook, *Dialogue 31 Poor Woman Inviting a Person to Dinner* (pp. 221-224), is a translation of an excerpt from *Romance of the West Chamber* (c. 1295-1307), a significant early Chinese romance drama and a highly influential courtship narrative for the Chinese tradition. Written by Shifu Wang, it tells the story of a love affair between a scholar, Zhang Sheng, and an upper-class lady, Yingying Cui. Cui's mother is against their union and tries in vain to persuade her daughter to marry a man with better family connections. After Zhang leaves for the imperial examination in the capital city and obtains the title of Best Scholar, he is able to return to claim Cui in marriage. The play's themes of love and duty were updated by the later talent-beauty novel (or scholar-beauty novel) popular in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and feature prominently in *The Story of the Stone* in an emblematic scene in which Cao's hero and heroine read the play together as a symbol of their freely chosen love for each other, regardless of family expectations and demands. The scene from *Romance of the West Chamber* that Morrison chose for his language learners is one in which Cui's maid visits Zhang Sheng, to invite him to a dinner especially set for him in Cui's house (Morrison, pp. 221-224). Their simple exchange is offered as a good example of everyday dialogue. It also suggests that the practices of courtship reflect social customs in ways that underscore the courtship plot's importance both for language learning and realist literary genres like the novel of manners.

All three of the above examples from Morrison's textbook suggest that Morrison's use of courtship-relevant texts in the Chinese-language learning context rests upon an understanding of the courtship practices as suitable content, both for language acquisition for outsiders and language learners who wish to get to know a foreign culture, and for realist novels of manners that aim to depict social customs, manners and conventions for contemporary readers. In this regard, Morrison's use of *The Story of the Stone* as a vernacular language resource is also an indirect acknowledgement or a suggestion of its importance as a Chinese equivalent to the contemporary English novel of manners. Arguably, Cao's contribution to courtship fiction is similar to Austen's in the English context (Feng, pp. 84-85). And in these terms too it is feasible to compare Cao's *The Story of the Stone* with Austen's *Mansfield Park* as two novels that engage quite directly with religious belief and tradition in the context of their courtship plots.

3. The Temptation Motif

Temptation plots are common in Chinese and English courtship novels. But the male heroes of *The Story of the Stone* and *Mansfield Park* are tempted in differing ways: Baoyu by worldly pleasures in general, and Edmund by a woman specifically. Similarly, while love and constancy are central themes for both traditions, the idea of second attachment is central to Austen's narratives but not to Cao's. These differences can be traced in part to the religious values and stories that inform each narrative.

The Story of the Stone begins with a Daoist myth—Nüwa repairing the pillar of heaven. In Chinese myth and Daoist religious stories, Nüwa is a mythic mother figure who creates humans out of mud and saves the world by repairing the pillar of heaven (Ying, p. 601; Liu, p. 54) (Note 3). Cao's novel begins with a

version of this creation myth rendered as the titular “story of the stone”, which functions as a frame narrative for its central courtship plot. In Cao’s narrative, Nüwa prepares 36,501 huge blocks of stone to repair heaven’s pillar, but only uses 36,500 of them, leaving one stone remaining on the Great Fable Mountains. The stone has human intelligence and feels shame and resentment about its own uselessness (*The Story of the Stone*, pp. 1-2; ch. 1). One day, a Buddhist monk and a Daoist priest pass by, talking about prosperity in the secular world. The stone is tempted by the worldly pleasures they describe, and begs them to carry it into the secular world to experience life. They at first refuse, but at the stone’s insistence they finally agree, and transform it into a small fan-shaped pendant jade (*The Story of the Stone*, pp. 1-20; ch. 1).

Meanwhile, heaven’s “Divine Jade Attendant”, also interested in the secular world, is reincarnated there as the narrative’s hero Baoyu, who is born with the jade in his mouth (the name “Baoyu” literally means “treasurable jade” in Chinese). Baoyu carries the jade throughout almost the whole story, allowing it to witness firsthand his romantic courtship with his cousin Daiyu, which ends tragically with Daiyu’s death and Baoyu’s conversion to Buddhism and Daoism. After experiencing the ups and downs of earthly existence, Baoyu comes to recognise the impermanence of the secular world and finally chooses to become a monk. After some years pass, the huge stone reappears in the Great Fable Mountains with the story of Baoyu’s tragic courtship of Daiyu inscribed on its surface, as ‘the story of the stone’ (*The Story of the Stone*, pp. 1-20; ch. 1). Interpreted from a religious perspective, the experiences of the stone (the jade) and Baoyu (the Divine Jade Attendant) in the secular world illustrate a recurring theme in Buddhist and Daoist thought: people are easily tempted by worldly pleasures, which are ephemeral and thus unable to bring true fulfilment or happiness. Only through forms of spiritual commitment and enlightenment can true happiness be achieved.

Themes of worldly happiness, temptation and spiritual calling are also central in *Mansfield Park*’s courtship narrative, this time informed by Christian ethics. As a younger son of a gentry family, Edmund does not expect to inherit his father’s estate and so chooses to become a clergyman. He falls in love with Mary Crawford, who has little to no interest in the Church or respect for Edmund’s calling. Marvin Mudrick argues that Mary is presented as a temptress and as such is shaped as “Satan” in certain scenes in the novel (Mudrick, p. 165). Certainly, the temptation she presents is a Biblical test for Edmund along the lines of the serpent’s seduction of Eve, and Eve’s of Adam, in the Garden of Eden. Edmund is attracted by Mary’s charisma, but she looks down on his intended profession, telling him that “[s]he never has danced with a clergyman, and she never will” (*Mansfield Park*, p. 311; vol. 2, ch. 9). As their romance blossoms, she suggests that he should pursue a more lucrative career that will further her own social ambitions: “You really are fit for something better. Come, do change your mind. It is not too late. Go into the law” (*Mansfield Park*, p. 109; vol. 1, ch. 9). Unlike the situation in *The Story of the Stone* in which both the stone and the hero are tempted by general worldly pleasures, Edmund’s temptation is specifically that of the flesh, as represented by a woman. “[H]e found himself still impelled to seek her again” (*Mansfield*

Park, p. 324; vol. 2, ch. 10). He later confesses to Fanny: “I cannot give her up, Fanny. She is the only woman in the world whom I could ever think of as a wife” (*Mansfield Park*, p. 489; vol. 3, ch. 13). Edmund’s dilemma is charged with biblical significance since, in the Bible, woman is the cause of the fall of man: Satan seduces Eve who tempts Adam to eat the forbidden fruit with her (*English Standard Version Bible*, Genesis. 3: 3-7). Like Baoyu, who must gain experience in the secular world to learn the value of committing to Buddhist and Daoist faith, Edmund too must undergo a test of faith (Bowen, p. 105).

Edmund’s relationship with Mary unfolds in two distinct stages: the first, when he “cannot give her up” and the second, when “the charm is broken” (*Mansfield Park*, p. 489; vol. 3, ch. 13, 526; vol. 3, ch. 16). In the former, Edmund is willing to compromise his religious commitment to stay close to Mary. This is perhaps most evident when the young people in *Mansfield Park* plan to perform a play for amusement and choose *Lovers’ Vows* (1798), Elizabeth Inchbald’s adaptation of August von Kotzebue’s *Das Kind der Liebe* (1791). The play’s themes of unmarried love and illegitimate birth were risqué and controversial. Edmund, strongly against the play, tries in vain to persuade his siblings to give it up. When he learns that Mary will play the role of Amelia, a young noblewoman who falls in love with Anhalt, a poor clergyman, he joins the performance and takes the role of Anhalt himself (pp. 180-181; vol. 1, ch. 16). Although Edmund claims that he is in the play to protect Mary’s reputation, it is likely that his own desires are met by playing the role of Mary’s love object and the intimacy of their performance pleases him, if only subconsciously. At this stage, his attraction to Mary takes priority over his religious principles.

Later in the novel, however, the scandal caused by the elopement of Mary’s brother Henry with Edmund’s sister Maria allows Edmund to realise his blindness to Mary’s lack of moral principle and the evil that represents. Mary’s poor judgement is revealed when she criticises the couple’s folly only because it is publicly exposed and suggests that Fanny is partly to blame for their disgrace because she refused Henry’s proposal (*Mansfield Park*, pp. 526-27; vol. 3, ch. 16). In this way, Mary’s true character is revealed to Edmund and he gives up his attachment to her. As he tells Fanny, “My eyes are opened [...]. I do not consider her as meaning to wound my feelings. The evil lies yet deeper; in her total ignorance, unsuspectingness of there being such feelings, in a perversion of mind which made it natural to her to treat the subject as she did” (*Mansfield Park*, p. 527; vol. 3, ch. 16). This insight enables Edmund to overcome his own weakness in being easily tempted by a superficially charming but entirely self-centred woman. Soon after this, he realises the truth of his own longstanding love for the humble and pious Fanny. Under the auspices of that true love, Edmund symbolically overcomes temptation, confirms his calling as a clergyman, and lives his life with Fanny as a faithful Christian subject.

In *Mansfield Park*, the temptation motif is about the hero being tempted by a charming but impious woman in a triangulated relationship, but in *The Story of the Stone*, the hero is tempted by courtship itself or by the secular life, rather than by a woman. In the Chinese courtship novel, the author seldom uses the

plot of being tempted by another person as an obstacle for the courtship between the hero and the heroine. This is because under the influence of Buddhist understandings of karma and Daoist ideals of purity, Chinese authors and readers tend to view constancy as a principle of true love.

In *Mansfield Park*, the protagonists exemplify two different modes of falling in love: Fanny's love for Edmund is constant and unchanging, while it is only after realising Mary's faults that Edmund learns the value of forming a second attachment to Fanny. Austen suggests that when the young people get to know a new person, it is usually the case that they lack proper judgement and are easily misled by appearances. But as they get to know each other more thoroughly, they may change their views, and form a second attachment to a suitable person. As life is precarious, personality is complicated, and young people are unexperienced, "changing one's mind" is quite common in real life and is realistically depicted in Austen's universe. This is a pattern that is also recognisable in Austen's other novels. In *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), Elizabeth Bennet initially trusts George Wickham, but later becomes aware of his deception of the Darcy family. She also must overcome her negative first impression of Darcy, before falling in love with him. Second attachment is readily accepted by English readers as part of the education and moral development of literary characters. But it has to be admitted that while second attachment holds for Edmund and many other Austen characters, Fanny has been constant in her love for Edmund since childhood and her constancy finally wins Edmund's reciprocal feelings and love.

Themes of constancy in *The Story of the Stone* draw heavily on both Buddhist ideas of karma and reincarnation and the Daoist idea of purity. Karma is a religious concept that holds that a person's former good and evil actions and thoughts determine his destiny (Harvey, "Karma", pp. 7-28; Bronkhorst, pp. xix-xxi). It could be understood as a causal link in fate: what a person is experiencing now is due to some reasons in his past, including his many previous lives, and what he is doing now leads to some results in his future and reincarnation. This faith in karma and reincarnation is represented as 'destined love' in Chinese courtship narratives. In the case of *The Story of the Stone*, Cao traces Baoyu and Daiyu's previous lives. Accordingly, Daiyu has been Crimson Pearl Flower in heaven, while Baoyu is Divine Jade Attendant, who saves her life by watering her. When the flower knows that the attendant is going to experience life in the world below, she decides to follow him and repay him with tears shed across her whole lifetime (*The Story of the Stone*, p. 7; ch. 1). In this way, the protagonists' previous lives determine their tragic fate as earthly lovers and explain Daiyu's sadness. When they first meet, both Daiyu and Baoyu believe they have met each other before. Nonetheless, Xueqin Cao is quite restrained and realistic in his depiction of their first encounter. They may feel a sense of déjà vu, but they do not fall in love at the first sight. Instead their love for each other develops as they grow up together and this is a departure from the stereotypes of earlier talent-beauty novels, in which the hero and heroine immediately fall in love on the basis of each other's charming appearance and literary talent.

Constancy in the Chinese courtship narratives is also concerned with the Daoist value of purity. When discussing the concept of Daoist purity in *The Story of the Stone*, Zuyan Zhou argues that purity connotes

an “original state uncontaminated”, and points out that when facing temptation, Baoyu relies upon the purity of his emotion for his soulmate Daiyu (p. 232, p. 239). The love felt by the protagonists is characterised by its Daoist “purity” of emotion. It is important to note that in the Chinese context, a second attachment would “contaminate” the purity of true love, and for this reason the second-attachment plot, so important to the English courtship novel, is inimical to the traditions of its Chinese counterpart.

So the temptation theme unfolds in significantly different ways in *The Story of the Stone* and *Mansfield Park*: Cao depicts constant and destined love in the Chinese novel while Austen narrates second attachment and learning from mistakes in the English context (though the feature of constancy is remarkable in her heroine Fanny). This difference can be traced to Buddhist karma and Daoist purity in China and the Bible’s story of the Fall in the Christian context, respectively. Even though both novels were written in a globalised period that witnessed many exchanges between China and Europe via missionary work and commercial trade, the traditional belief in Buddhism and Daoism in China and Christianity in England still shaped the emphasis on constancy and second attachment that marked their different courtship narratives.

4. Virtue and the Spiritual World

While the Chinese and the English courtship novels are quite different in their approaches to the idea of temptation, they both emphasise the importance of mutual understanding between a couple in the spiritual world. Fanny and Edmund connect strongly when they share a stargazing experience together in *Mansfield Park* (though, tellingly, Edmund is soon distracted by Mary’s singing) (*Mansfield Park*, pp. 131-132; vol. 1, ch. 11). Baoyu and Daiyu’s bond is strengthened when they bury fallen flowers together in *The Story of the Stone* (pp. 420-421; ch. 23). Both couples are united in a strong sense of the power and beauty of nature, and of a spiritual world that extends from, or is connected to, nature. In these two texts, beyond talent and beauty, the most important factors that determine the hero’s sincere and lasting love for the heroine are the woman’s virtue and her spiritual world, which is closely related to her religious faith. And in each case, character contrast (between Fanny and Mary in *Mansfield Park* and between Daiyu and Baochai *The Story of the Stone*) works powerfully to foreground the heroines’ spiritual world, and we see how female virtue is consistent with Christian and Buddhist-Daoist values respectively, and distinguished from the worldly attributes of less virtuous female characters.

In *Mansfield Park*, Mary is outgoing and self-centred and values superficial pleasures and worldly interests. Fanny, by contrast is shy, retiring, considerate of others and, most importantly, cultivates a rich inner life that includes personal and spiritual reflection. This means that when Sir Thomas asks Fanny why she refuses Henry’s proposal of marriage despite his charisma and wealth, she cannot defend herself by citing her true reasons (that is, Henry’s ill principles or his open flirtation with Maria) because this would get Maria into trouble. For her cousin’s sake, Fanny painfully bears Sir Thomas’s negative opinion

of her choices (p. 336; vol. 3, ch. 1). Fanny would rather suffer herself than put other family members at risk of Sir Thomas's disapproval. By contrast, when Henry's affair with Maria is known to all, Mary Crawford blames Fanny herself for her brother's misconduct, suggesting that it was caused by her rejection of him. Once again, Mary's poor and misguided judgement only serves to reveal her limitations and the careless and self-serving nature of her friendship with Fanny.

As mentioned above, Mary's dislike of Edmund's profession as a clergyman reveals that she values worldly enjoyment over spiritual faith. At the same time and by contrast, Fanny's morality and behaviours are always consistent with Christian values. When the young people visit the Rushworth family chapel, Mrs Rushworth explains that the private chapel, which had been in constant use in the past, is now neglected. Mary regards this change as an "improvement", but Fanny remarks that "[i]t is a pity [...] that the custom should have been discontinued. It was a valuable part of former times" (*Mansfield Park*, p. 101; vol. 1, ch. 9). Through details and responses of this kind, we can see that Austen contrasts Mary with Fanny, not just in their general moral behaviour but also in their avowed attitudes to Christian worship and tradition. In this sense, Fanny's virtue is consistent with not only good sense and female modesty, but also with a commitment to Christian piety.

Within the context of a novel of manners, a genre that both implicitly and often explicitly instructs its readers how to act, *Mansfield Park* indicates that Fanny's sincere religious faith is central to her virtue and that, in the end, these qualities win her Edmund's love and a happily married future. Michael Giffin notes that the novel can be loosely read as a Christian allegory: Fanny, like Jesus, comes to Mansfield Park to serve and not to be served; she brings a "spirit of brotherly love" (first felt towards William) to the Mansfield Park estate and, significantly, wears the cross gifted by William on a chain by Edmund at the ball (p. 139). For Giffin, Fanny and Edmund's marriage unites "two people who have a strongly developed disposition", and Fanny's "authentic Christian spirit" makes her an appropriate partner for Edmund's future life as a clergyman (p. 129, p. 132). The union between the couple in *Mansfield Park* is based on their common belief in Christianity, mutual understanding of each other's spiritual world, and the virtues shaped accordingly.

Similarly, in *The Story of the Stone*, Baoyu and Daiyu's love for each other is rooted in their shared appreciation and understanding of the spiritual world. Cao also presents other female characters with different spiritual values in contrast to Daiyu's. Xiangyun is an outgoing, beautiful and talented lady who is Baoyu's relative and visits his family often. When she attempts to persuade Baoyu to pursue connections with government officers and administrators to improve his career prospects, Baoyu is displeased by her advice and shuns her. In an effort to comfort Xiangyun, Aroma explains to her that when Baochai gave Baoyu the same advice, Baoyu was also rude to her. Aroma additionally comments that Baochai is generous hearted and does not mind Baoyu's rudeness, but that Daiyu would weep and carry on if he were to treat her in this way. Hearing this remark, Baoyu immediately defends Daiyu by reminding Aroma that she never talks about that sort of "stupid rubbish", and that if she did he would

have fallen out with her long ago. Daiyu herself overhears this conversation as she prepares to enter the house. She is happy that she is not mistaken in her judgement of Baoyu. She has always thought of him as a true soulmate, and she is right (*The Story of the Stone*, pp. 588-589; ch. 32).

The difference here between Daiyu and other young ladies turns upon their beliefs in a spiritual world. Baochai and Xiangyun value worldly interests, the connections that Baoyu should cultivate with other governors, the knowledge he needs to govern, and the duty he owes his family. These ideas derive from the Confucianism that underpins mainstream Chinese traditional society. But Baoyu and Daiyu each despise the pursuit of worldly fame and wealth, and incline to the spiritualism central to Buddhism-Daoism. On one occasion, Baoyu cries out in his sleep that “I don’t believe in the marriage of gold and jade. I believe in the marriage of stone and flower” (*The Story of the Stone*, p. 661; ch. 36). Baochai has a golden locket and Xiangyun has a golden Kylin, so the “marriage of gold and jade” refers to a union with women of their kind (Note 4). “Stone and flower” refer, by contrast, to the purer and more sincere mode of love and spiritual connection shared between Baoyu and Daiyu. The symbolism of the contrast also is powerful: “gold and jade” are precious materials wrought into jewels that function socially to mark a person’s status and wealth, representing worldly interests. “Stone and flower”, by contrast, are natural forms and, most importantly, they refer to Baoyu and Daiyu’s previous lives in heaven, representing the spiritual world. When Baoyu cries that he chooses “the marriage of stone and flower” over “the marriage of gold and jade”, it implies that he values spirituality over worldly interests. While Fanny and Mary form a contrast between female virtue and its failure in *Mansfield Park*, Baochai and Daiyu function as a dyad of different kinds of virtue—the Confucian and the Buddhist-Daoist ones. Both Baochai and Daiyu are beautiful and talented elite women, but their relation to the immaterial world of the spirit sets them apart. As Zhanjiang Wu has argued, Daiyu represents the spirit of Daoism while Baochai is a typical woman of Confucianism (p. 45). Baochai, conservative in expressing emotion and very self-restrained, is somewhat like Fanny in *Mansfield Park*, and her gentle characteristics are favoured by many readers. Daiyu, by contrast, expresses emotion more spontaneously (indeed, weeping is her defining feature). While this characteristic resembles the emotional susceptibility of the heroines appearing in English fiction of the period, it finds its origins in Daoism’s embrace of the law of nature, which includes following one’s heart and pursuing liberty. In this way, Daiyu’s spontaneous displays of emotion violate the self-restraint requirements of Confucianism, underscoring the way in which Cao’s novel is to some degree written against Confucianism. His critique is embedded in his hero and heroine’s common dislike of the pursuit of worldly reputation and wealth, and their common inclination to embrace the spiritual world—these are the values that animate their courtship.

Ning Ma’s study of the novel’s development in China, England, Spain and Japan in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries argues that the rise of commercial trade in the period led to the portrayal of fictional characters as individuals focused primarily on money and sexual pleasure. She further notes that this emphasis on material wealth radically disrupted traditional values in Asia and Christian values in Europe

respectively (*The Age of Silver*, pp. 5-13). While it is certainly true that characters such as Mary Crawford and the Bertram sisters in *Mansfield Park* confirm this trend in the English context, Chinese characters such as Baochai and Xiangyun in *The Story of the Stone*, though consistent with the traditional Confucian virtues, also to some degree express their pursuit for worldly reputation and interests. However, the central characters of each novel strongly resist this materialism by valuing the spiritual world. Edmund, Fanny, Baoyu and Daiyu remain focused on what they see as the eternal values of the spirit rather than upon worldly pleasures (although it is also true to say that their courtships take for granted a certain amount of class status and material comfort). In an important scene in *The Story of the Stone*, Baoyu is momentarily sexually tempted by Baochai's snow-white arm. Admiring it, he speculates that "[i]f that arm were growing on Cousin Lin's body ... I might hope one day to touch it. What a pity it's hers" (*The Story of the Stone*, p. 525; ch. 28). Even though he feels the stirring of sexual desire for Baochai's body, Baoyu remains confident that he will not touch her. This is because he understands his pure love for his soulmate Daiyu to be infinitely stronger than his physical desire for other women's bodies. Indeed, Baoyu has sex with his housemaid Aroma and is also attached to other maids, such as Skybright, as we have seen in an earlier chapter. This is because eighteenth-century Chinese law allowed a man to keep a wife and many concubines at the same time. Crucially, however, a concubine's status is always inferior to a wife's and on these grounds Baoyu's relations with his maids do not threaten Daiyu's status as his one true love. Only other elite women such as Baochai and Xiangyun can threaten Baoyu and Daiyu's union, but as Baoyu's momentary sexual attraction to Baochai reveals, this threat is no match for the spiritual bond that unites the protagonists.

5. Happy or Tragic Endings

The Story of the Stone and *Mansfield Park* share many important plot points. Both heroines are adopted by their relatives, and develop an attachment and courtship with cousins, based on mutual understanding, as they grow up together. Both heroines face triangulated competition for the hero's love from other young women. Despite these thematic and structural similarities, a very significant difference between their plots lies in their endings—*The Story of the Stone* ends tragically when Daiyu dies and Baoyu departs to become a monk, devoting his life to spiritual contemplation. By contrast, *Mansfield Park*, in the tradition of English marriage plots, ends happily with Edmund and Fanny's union. Such a difference owes everything to the differences between the Buddhist-Daoist and Christian religious frameworks animating their plots.

Although *Mansfield Park*'s happy ending is based on Fanny and Edmund's mutual bond of love and faith, it is presented in primarily material and secular terms:

With so much true merit and true love, and no want of fortune and friends, the happiness of the married cousins must appear as secure as earthly happiness can be. Equally formed for domestic life, and attached to country pleasures, their home was

the home of affection and comfort; and to complete the picture of good, the acquisition of Mansfield living, by the death of Dr. Grant, occurred just after they had been married long enough to begin to want an increase of income, and feel their distance from the paternal abode an inconvenience.

On that event they removed to Mansfield; and the Parsonage there, which, under each of its two former owners, Fanny had never been able to approach but with some painful sensation of restraint or alarm, soon grew as dear to her heart, and as thoroughly perfect in her eyes, as everything else within the view and patronage of Mansfield Park had long been. (*Mansfield Park*, pp. 547-548; vol. 3, ch. 17)

“Earthly happiness” is exactly what Austen describes in the ending, telling her readers where the couple live, the source and amount of their income, where they move, the nature of their relationship with their original families and so on. Even as the novel’s plot draws strongly on Christian values, it finds closure in detailing the material happiness of a secular life.

By contrast, *The Story of the Stone* finds closure in a strong sense of transcendentalism. The final chapter of the novel details Baoyu’s farewell to his father Zheng Jia and to the secular world. As he departs the world, his father, while writing a letter home about his son, almost fails to recognise him when he appears:

There [...] silhouetted dimly against the snow, was the figure of a man with shaven head and bare feet, wrapped in a large cape made of crimson felt. The figure knelt down and bowed to Jia Zheng, who did not recognize the features and hurried out [...], intending to raise him up and ask him his name. The man bowed four times, and now stood upright, pressing his palms together in monkish greeting. Jia Zheng was about to reciprocate with a respectful bow of the head when he looked into the man’s eyes and with a sudden shock recognized him as Baoyu.

“Are you not my son?” he asked.

The man was silent and an expression that seemed to contain both joy and sorrow played on his face. Jia Zheng asked again:

“If you are Bao-yu, why are you dressed like this? And what brings you to this place?”

Before Bao-yu could reply two other men appeared [...], a Buddhist monk and a Taoist, and holding him between them they said:

“Come, your earthly karma is complete. Tarry no longer.”

The three of them [...] strode off into the snow. Jia Zheng went chasing after them along the slippery track, but although he could spy them ahead of him, somehow they always remained just out of reach. [...]. Jia Zheng [...] continued to follow them until they rounded the slope of a small hill and suddenly vanished from sight. [...]. Jia

Zheng wanted to continue, but all he could see before him was a vast expanse of white, with not a soul anywhere. (*The Story of the Stone*, pp. 2311-2312; ch. 120)

Baoyu's severing of his worldly ties is one of the most powerful scenes in the novel. Compared to the luxurious foreign goods that have surrounded him all his life and in particular the "peacock-gold" Russian cloak that he has worn in former times, his now "shaven head and bare feet" fully exposed in the snow underscore his transformation. On the one hand, Baoyu's plain and unadorned appearance reflects his devotion to Buddhist and Daoist teaching and a renunciation of the material world. On the other, the complexity of the relationship between Baoyu and his father encourages readers to reflect on the lived, emotional connections between people. The father is thinking about his son, but cannot recognise him. The son comes to farewell, yet cannot say a word. Their relationship is close but also distant, which is also the situation for all secular relationships, including love and courtship, according to Buddhist and Daoist values. Disappearing into the snow also refers to the concept of 'emptiness' or 'devoidness' in Buddhism and Daoism.

The sparse, transcendental ending of *The Story of the Stone* needs to be understood in light of the story of the stone that shaped the novel's beginning. At the beginning of the novel, when the stone in the Great Fable Mountain wants to experience the worldly pleasures in the secular world, the two passing Buddhist and Daoist monks try to dissuade it. Strikingly, however, the most relevant passage is missing in current English translations (Note 5). After hearing the stone say that it wants to enjoy the worldly pleasures, the two monks laugh:

"Though there is some happiness in the secular world, it cannot last long. Besides, there is a saying that 'a blemish in an otherwise perfect thing, the road to happiness full of hardships'. Happiness and sorrow are closely linked to each other. Just after a split second, the happiest becomes the saddest. Persons and properties always change. It is eventually a dream. All return to nothing. It would be better not to go". However, the stone was so eager and begged again and again. The two monks knew it was impossible to persuade it, so sighed: "It is a natural rule that at the peak of tranquillity, you would want to move. Create something when there is nothing. Since it is so, we will carry you to enjoy. But do not regret when you are not satisfied" (my trans.; *Hong Lou Meng* 紅樓夢, p. 3; ch. 1).

The important message here is that secular life is impermanent; everything changes. And this insight applies to marriage and courtship too. Indeed, the very lesson that secular courtship is impermanent is brought home in another important scene in the novel in which Baoyu dreams that he is guided by a fairy woman named Disenchantment to the Land of Illusion. Disenchantment shows Baoyu a rehearsal of *A Dream of Golden Days*, which presents "the past, present and future of girls from all over the world" (*The Story of the Stone*, pp. 85-86; ch. 5). She explains the significance of the tableau as follows:

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” (*The Story of the Stone*, p. 102; ch. 5).

Disenchantment aims to help Baoyu conquer love and lust in the mortal world by demonstrating their illusory nature. And although she states that she does this so that he can devote himself to the so-called “teachings of Confucius and Mencius”, we can confidentially assume that this is an empty nod to tradition on Cao’s part since he was a critic of Confucianism, as is made clear at the end of the novel, when Baoyu withdraws from the world to become a monk despite passing the imperial exam. The real purpose of Baoyu’s dream vision at this stage of the narrative is to prefigure his latter spiritual awakening by demonstrating Buddhist and Daoist teaching about the illusory and transient nature of romantic love. In more general terms, Buddhist teachings about impermanence advise people to let go of fleeting worldly attachments, including those of marriage and courtship, so as to pursue the immortality of the spirit. For instance, *The Diamond Sutra*, a Buddhist scripture, offers the following meditation:

Like a tiny drop of dew, or a bubble floating in a stream;
Like a flash of lightning in a summer cloud,
Or a flickering lamp, an illusion, a phantom, or a dream.
So is all conditioned existence to be seen.

(*The Diamond Sutra*, ch. 32, translated by Alex Johnson)

According to the Buddhist and Daoist values, all emotions in the secular world, including love itself, are illusionary and impermanent. This strain of thinking determines the tragic ending of *The Story of the Stone*’s courtship plot. When Baoyu learns through Daiyu’s death that love itself is impermanent, he chooses to become a monk devoted to transcendental values.

Fanny and Edmund’s relatively secularised and happily married ending in *Mansfield Park* contrasts markedly with the tragedy and transcendentalism that characterises the close of *The Story of the Stone*. And these very different marriage plot endings reflect the profoundly different conceptions of the relationship between religious faith and secular life in England and China. In the English context, Christian doctrine can broadly function as a blueprint for the conduct of love and courtship, educating people on secular moral values of love, marriage and the family. In this way, Christian values integrate well with secular life and the courtship and marriage practices that chart its reproduction. But in the Chinese context, Buddhism and Daoism exist in a relation of tension with the secular material world, emphasising instead its impermanence. The divergent understandings of secular life in Protestant Christian and Buddhism-Daoism traditions to some degree explain why eighteenth-century English

courtship novels usually end on a note of “earthly happiness” and marriage while Chinese courtship narrative embraces a tragic acknowledgement of lost love and worldly impermanence.

6. Conclusion

As mentioned above, Ning Ma argues that commercial development and global trade in the seventeenth and eighteenth century unsettled traditional morality in a way that is reflected in the novel form’s focus on worldly interests and pleasures of its upper- and middle-class characters. Indeed, both *Mansfield Park* and *The Story of the Stone* present courtship narratives in which extramarital affairs, elopements and flirtations on the part of greedy, superficial and materialist characters abound, and which to some degree reflect the moral decay that Ma notices. But *The Story of the Stone* and *Mansfield Park* are equally vehicles for their authors’ confirmation of traditional religious values against contemporary materialism. Each novel’s main protagonist values the spiritual world over worldly interests, and their heroines’ virtue is largely consistent with prevailing religious doctrines. Both Austen and Cao set their heroines apart from other female characters (like Mary Crawford and Baochai) who are tied to worldly pleasures or social conformity. This said, it is also obvious from Cao’s and Austen’s examples that Chinese and English courtship narratives treat their key themes very differently. The temptation theme turns upon the hero being attracted by worldly pleasures in *The Story of the Stone*, while it is about sexual desire (and especially Edmund’s attraction to Mary) in *Mansfield Park*. Constancy is a theme that has particular power in the Chinese tradition—Baoyu’s love for Daiyu is constant in a manner that expresses Buddhist karma and Daoist purity—while second attachment is central to character development in English courtship narratives. Finally, and most strikingly, the English marriage plot embraces worldly happiness while *The Story of the Stone*’s tragic ending enables the hero’s experience of enlightenment as he realises the impermanence of worldly pleasures through his family’s decline and his true love’s death. Cao uses this ending to inspire readers’ Buddhist and Daoist awakening to the impermanence of secular life. My analysis of these differences demonstrates that religion significantly shapes the development of courtship fiction in China and England in the long eighteenth century. Although Cao’s and Austen’s courtship novels address similar themes and embrace the forms of consumerism and individualism that were enabled by global trade and East-West exchange, their very different Christian and Buddhist-Daoist values shape their courtship plots decisively.

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Notes

Note 1. Original text in Chinese: 儒家“克己复礼”，出自论语。道家“无为而治”，出自道德经。The Confucian and Daoist ideas can be seen in *Analects of Confucius* and *Dao De Jing* respectively.

Note 2. Robert Morrison's assertion that the phraseology of *The Story of the Stone* is “entirely” Peking dialect is inaccurate. *The Story of the Stone* in fact involves Peking dialect, semi-classical Chinese and Classical Chinese. Peking dialect was widely used in the daily dialogue in the novel, which made the writing vivid and realistic. Semi-Classical Chinese is a style between daily vernacular and Classical Chinese. It was mainly used in the description of the third-person narrative in the novel. But the poetry, prose, couplets and some dialogue between scholars in the novel were still written in Classical Chinese.

Note 3. *Feng Su Tong Yi* 风俗通义 (c. 181-234 CE) depicts the details of how Nüwa creates humans: there was sky and earth, but no humans. Nüwa used her hands to shape yellow mud into human figures and gave them life. She created them one by one and became tired. Then she put a rope into the mud and raised the rope to create humans efficiently. The rich people were created by hand, and the poor people by rope (Ying, p. 601). Another myth about Nüwa repairing the Pillar of Heaven can be found in *Huai Nan Zi* (179-122 BCE), a canonical book that discusses Daoist ideology: in ancient times, the four pillars of heaven were broken; the nine provinces were in tatters; heaven could not cover the earth completely; animals and people on earth suffered. Nüwa forged together five coloured stones and patched up the sky. She cut off the legs of the great turtle to set them up as the four pillars. The world was in order again (Liu, p. 54).

Note 4. Kylin, also Qilin, is a legendary creature in Chinese mythology. It is very gentle and never hurts other creatures, not even flowers and grass. Because of Kylin's auspicious meaning, Chinese people love to use its image in daily life.

Note 5. This important paragraph is not available in current English translations, including David Hawkes and John Minford's *The Story of the Stone* (1986), Yang Hsien-Yi and Gladys Yang's *A Dream of Red Mansions* (1994), and Henry Bencraft Joly's *The Dream of the Red Chamber* (2010), because it is missing in some famous Chinese versions, such as the version with an introduction from Qi Liao Sheng [戚蓼生序本] published between 1770 and 1780. The paragraph that I translate is based on the

version re-edited by People's Literature Publishing House [人民文学出版社] in 1982, a comprehensive version with reference to multiple existing versions.