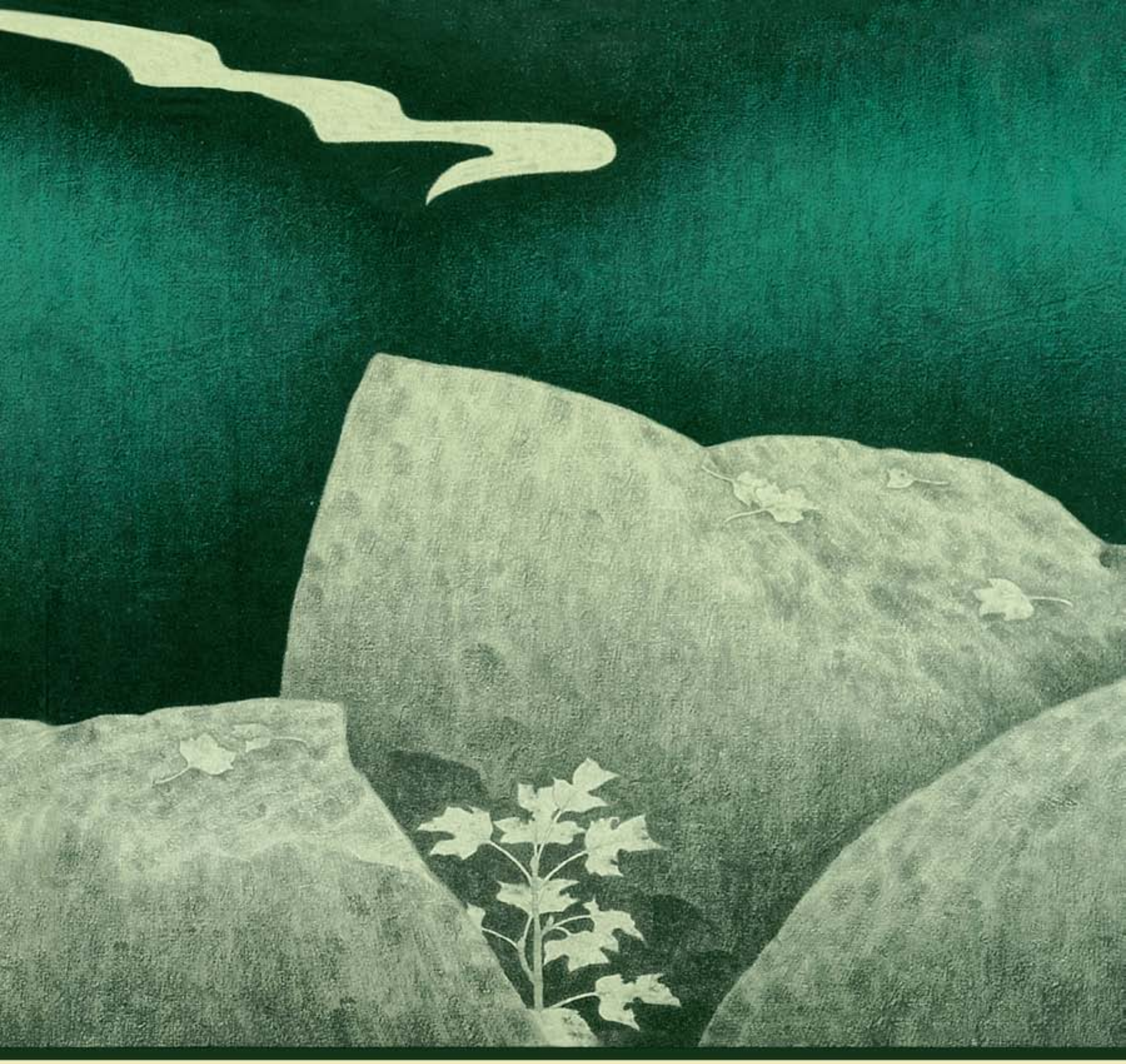

THE STORY OF STONE

INTERTEXTUALITY, ANCIENT CHINESE STONE LORE, AND THE STONE SYMBOLISM IN *DREAM OF THE RED CHAMBER*, *WATER MARGIN*, AND *THE JOURNEY TO THE WEST*

JING WANG

THE
STORY
OF
STONE

Post-

Contemporary

Interventions

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Water Margin, and
The Journey to the West

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Duke University Press
Durham and London
1992

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Printed in the United States of America
on acid-free paper ∞
Library of Congress Cataloging-in-
Publication Data appear on the last
printed page of this book.
Second printing, 2000

For
Candice Rong-Rong Wei

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Every author has his or her own moments of ecstasy and pain during the process of writing. This book opened up for me a space that gave me the pleasure of freedom, especially at those moments when I wrote about different forms of constraint in Chinese literary and cultural traditions. It is my craving for a continuous expansion of this space that underlies my double commitment to the field of classical studies: my commitment to reformulate the major theoretical issues with which sinologists of narrative fiction have dealt in the last few decades; and, no less importantly, my commitment to make classical Chinese studies relevant to contemporary theoretical concerns.

I am most indebted to Anthony C. Yu at the University of Chicago for his encouragement of my scholarly endeavors over the years, his invaluable suggestions for the revision of the manuscript, and his sharing with me his vision of "modern sinology" in labor. I remain deeply inspired by his commitment to scholarship that knows no geographical or disciplinary boundaries, and by his genuine appreciation of the clash of different ideas.

I would also like to thank Victor H. Mair at the University of Pennsylvania and Andrew H. Plaks at Princeton University for their reading of the manuscript. Professor Mair helped me fine-tune my portrayal of the "monkey king" Sun Wu-k'ung, and Professor Plaks provided constructive criticism for the revision of my first draft. Chapter 1 was written and revised in response to his criticism of the conceptual framework of this book.

I am grateful to my colleagues at Duke University for their generous collegial support and friendship: Miriam Cooke, Noriko Nagai, Hitomi Endo, Yüan Yao Lahusen, Roger Kaplan, Richard Kunst, and Yasumi Kuriya at

Asian and African Languages and Literature; Andrew Gordon in the Department of History; Mrs. Mavis Mayer at the Asian/Pacific Studies Institute; and Thomas Lahusen in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures. Special thanks are also due to Fredric Jameson in the Literature Program for his interest in my project, to Richard Kunst for letting me use his Chinese collection, and to Roger Corless in Religion for enlightening me on the concept of "karmic memory"; to Chi-sheng Kuo at the University of Maryland for providing me with bibliographical information on jade; to Hsin-yün Yeh at Mt. Holyoke College for his illuminating remarks on Lin Tai-yü's "genuine temperament"; to Ling-hsia Yeh at the University of Massachusetts for her friendship; and to Chih-p'ing Chou at Princeton University for his help in making the preparation of the final draft an easier task.

My gratitude also extends to Ch'ing-mao Cheng, Lucien Miller, William Moebius, Sarah Lawall, and Frederic Will at the University of Massachusetts (Amherst) for their guidance of my graduate work in comparative literature; to Leo Ou-fan Lee at UCLA for his unwavering support of my work and professional activities; to Hai-chün Huang, who helped in collecting materials for Chapter 2; to Yu-ch'eng Lee at Academia Sinica in Taipei for his help in locating Chinese typesetters; and to Reynolds Smith and the staff of Duke University Press for the editing and production of this book.

I would like to acknowledge the generous publication subsidy I received from the Center for International Studies at Duke and from the Pacific Cultural Foundation in Taiwan. I am also grateful to the Asian/Pacific Studies Institute for a research grant for the final preparation of the manuscript.

Mrs. Gail Woods at Asian and African Languages and Literature deserves my sincere thanks for typing part of the manuscript, copying one draft after another; for being a wonderful friend at difficult moments; and (together with Yasumi Kuriya) for being a surrogate mother to my daughter.

My affectionate thanks also go to friends in Durham—Aili Yang and Tao-shih Hsieh, Alice and Y. T. Chen, P'ing Tung, Jiahuan and Bingzhi Ding, Bibby Moore, Elmer Davis, and Xiaobing Tang.

To Professor Lin Yün of the Yün-lin Temple in Berkeley, I would like to express my appreciation of his wisdom and friendship. To Wei Young, my gratitude for his moral support.

My last word goes to my daughter Candy, who spent her childhood underneath my computer stand, and with whom I want to share the joy of "story-telling." To you, Rong-Rong, I dedicate *The Story of Stone* with love.

THE STORY OF STONE

1

INTERTEXTUALITY AND INTERPRETATION

> There was not a single thing except a stone tablet in the center of the hall. It was about six feet in height, and was resting on a stone tortoise which was almost half in the soil. On the tablet were characters of the very ancient style, and they could not make out any of them.[1]

> There was on top of that very mountain an immortal stone, which measured thirty-six feet and five inches in height and twenty-four feet in circumference. . . . One day, it split open, giving birth to a stone egg about the size of a playing ball. Exposed to the wind, it was transformed into a stone monkey endowed with fully developed features and limbs.[2]

> Long ago, when the goddess Nü-wa 女媧 [Nü-kua] was repairing the sky, she melted down a great quantity of rock and, on the Incredible Crags of the Great Fable Mountains, moulded the amalgam into three hundred and six thousand, five hundred and one large building blocks, each measuring seventy-two feet by a hundred and forty-four feet square. She used three hundred and six thousand five hundred of these blocks in the course of her building operations, leaving a single odd block unused, which lay, all on its own, at the foot of Greensickness Peak in the afore-mentioned mountains.[3]

This is how the three narratives begin: the excavation of an enigmatic stone tablet in the *Shui-hu Chuan* 水滸傳 (*Water Margin*), the miraculous birth of a stone monkey in the *Hsi-yu Chi* 西遊記 (*Journey to the West*), and the creation of a discarded sacred rock in the *Hung-lou Meng* 紅樓夢 (*Dream of the Red Chamber*). Read separately, each beginning appears to be a unique phenomenon of the fantastic, which conveys the aura of originality. Taken together, however, the three beginnings suggest a completely different strategy of reading that calls into question any appearance of the gratuitous. Take our reception of the Nü-kua stone: its seemingly idiosyncratic qualities appear less novel within the context of the image of the stone monkey. If we dig more deeply into the two narratives, we find analogies between these two stones that suggest that each text appropriates the other. Both the Nü-kua stone and the stone monkey bear the same epithet, *wan* 頑 (*wan shih* 頑石 in one case, and *wan hou* 頑猴 in another), and live up to the word's doubly shaded meaning—the spirit of "playfulness," and the qualities of "crudeness/ ignorance." Any reading of the Nü-kua stone would have to reckon not so much with its derivative nature as with the presence of the literary antecedent of *wan hou*. One may even suggest that the prior text of the stone monkey is contained within the imaginative space of the Nü-kua stone and participates in the latter's signifying practices. This interpretive strategy suggests that "no text is ever completely free of other texts,"[4] a concept best captured in the name of "intertextuality."

Although the concept of intertextuality emerges as a post-structuralist idiom in the West, it is a universal phenomenon that defines the communicative relationships between one text and another, and, particularly in the case of age-old writing traditions, between a text and its context.[5] Such intertextual relations cover the entire spectrum of permutations, ranging between the poles of convergence and reversal. Whether a text converges with or diverges from a series of prior-texts, it must communicate with them in order to signify meaningfully. Textuality suggests pluralistic composition and presupposes the encounter between multiple volumes of texts and between heterogeneous signifiers. In the Chinese literary tradition, such intertwining patterns of communication are seen to characterize the definition of *wen*—literally, the "pattern or texture of a writing"—and are sometimes portrayed in the metaphor of sexual intercourse:

> The marrying maiden describes the ultimate meaning of heaven
> and earth;
> If heaven and earth do not mate, a million phenomena in Nature
> cannot be born.[6]

In various other passages, *wen* is perceived as a motley of tissues thrown together.

> Two objects remain with each other [*wu hsiang-tai* 物相待] therefore *wen* emerges; if the two objects depart from each other, there can be no *wen*.[7]
>
> Phenomena are entangled with one another [*wu hsiang-tsa* 物相雜], this is called *wen*.[8]
>
> A single phenomenon by itself does not create *wen* [*wu i wu-wen* 物一無文].[9]
>
> [Ssu-ma] Hsiang-ju 司馬相如 once said, "Uniting multifarious compositions to make up *wen*."[10]

These passages, some dating as far back as the Period of the Warring States (480–222 B.C.) and the Ch'in (222–206 B.C.) and Han (206 B.C. to A.D. 220) dynasties, indicate that the phenomenon of "intertextuality" has long been embedded within the Chinese tradition of textuality in its broadest sense.[11] For the ancient Chinese literati, the autonomy of text is indeed an alien concept. That no text escapes the confinement of its age-old literary tradition is a truism so familiar to traditional critics that a notion such as "intertextual relationship" has long been taken for granted and needs little justification. In a culture where tradition and history hold such a privileged position, it is hardly surprising that "intertextuality" is conceived more as the relationship between a particular text and its larger cultural/historical context than as that between one text and another. Since "context" is perceived as a fixed magnetic pole toward which myriads of texts are continually drawn, traditional scholars are less interested in the study of the instantaneous movement that characterizes the intertextual communication between individual texts; instead, what defines intertextual relations in such a literary tradition is a centripetal and *retroactive* movement that seeks to bring a text to an anchored context.

Such a highly structured view of intertextuality—a clearly delineated, well-controlled, and recuperable totality of some sort—coexists with the concept of a constrained and tamed "textual essence," which characterizes the Confucian Canon. The formation of such a classical paradigm has provided traditional Chinese literature with a stable context to which later writers constantly refer and return, in the literal sense.

The preoccupation with context, whether cultural, historical, or personal[12]—particularly with a single, stable, exterior, and ultimate text that serves as the prototype for later texts—characterizes many treatises of poetics and theories of writing in ancient China. Not only do literati feel the anxiety of continuing the great heritage of the Five Classics,[13] their gaze turning backward to the past in awe and nostalgia, but in the same vein, this complex of return[14] is also one of the major characteristics of traditional evaluative criticism. Premodern commentators rely upon a small repertory of ancient texts as their aesthetic criterion, using them to assess classical and contemporary literary works. Throughout the literary history of imperial China, critics frequently return to these canonical texts, the orthodox and sacred stature of which encounters little challenge. Working in the name of evaluation, such critics are particularly fond of tracing the "source of influence" of an emerging poetic style to an older one, and in extreme cases, of identifying the moment of origination. "Source," "origin," "allusion," and "generic kinship" constitute the root concepts that permeate many evaluative poetics of greater or lesser importance.

The study of the intertextual relations of stone lore and the stone symbolism in literature recapitulates, to a certain extent, the same critical methodological assumption that privileges the notion of context in interpretation. For although it problematizes critical categories such as "source" and "influence" (categories derived from the author-centered perspective), the mechanism of intertextuality operates within a circumscribed system of signification that overlaps significantly with the idea of cultural constraint and literary tradition. Our recognition, for instance, of the referential function of stone lore in making intelligible such fictional constructs as *wan shih* ("the unknowing stone"), *san-sheng shih* 三生石 ("the stone of three lifetimes"), and the stone tablet, seems to reaffirm once more the boundary between context and text, structure and variants, the symbolic and the literal—even though "intertextuality" in theory assumes the form of boundary-crossing by challenging the notion of "generic and period distinctions."

The present book addresses both of these theoretical assumptions underlying the concept of intertextuality. On the one hand, the reconstruction of stone lore is based on the presupposition that context enjoys a boundary of its own and a certain stability that guarantees the textual intelligibility of, for instance, a particular manifestation of stone imagery. On the other hand, the study of the cross-referentiality of the stone symbolism in the *Dream*, the *Journey*, and the *Water Margin* challenges the notion of period distinctions and thus introduces the radical implication of intertextuality—namely, its potential to break down the limits between one text and another, and eventually those between text and context itself. Such a deeply subversive agenda, however, remains at best an unwarranted theoretical possibility, so long as one assumes that the meaning of a text is inseparable from its historicity. Thus within the scope of the present study, the investigation of the intertextual relationship among the three literary texts is undertaken with a view toward accounting for the local presence of each work's stone imagery, while at the same time determining the degree to which stone lore serves to constrain, if not to ground, the semantic play of stone symbolism. In other words, this book will not so much argue the priority of the contextualizing over the disseminating function of intertextuality, as it will zero in on those moments of interpretation at which an intertext intervenes to change our first reading of a given stone image and to prepare us for a second reading that will bring the historicity of such imagery into full play.

Eventually, one may argue, the challenge of intertextuality often results in a reflexive textual self-awareness that reminds us of, rather than disengages us from, our literary and cultural past. Such a textual self-reflexivity is often revealed at the very moment when the author/subject ceases to look for his or her own identity, as illustrated by a citation from Chiang K'uei (ca. 1155–ca. 1221), the famous *tz'u* 詞 poet in the Northern Sung dynasty (960–1127):

> In writing poetry, it is better to strive to be different from the ancients than to seek to be identical to them. But better still than striving to be different is to be bound to find one's own identity in them, without striving to identify; and to be bound to differ with them, without striving to differ.[15]

Chiang K'uei's remarks on the communion between the ancients and contemporaries sound revolutionary for his time. At one stroke, not only does he map out the intangible terrain of intertextuality as traces of both identity and differentiation, but, most significantly, he also challenges the notion of authorial intention ("without striving"). In so doing, he suggests the possibility of a text-oriented critical perspective that presupposes that every text, with or without the author's awareness, contains its referents elsewhere—whether these are quoted verbatim (*ho* 合, in Chiang's terms) or are already effortlessly transformed (*i* 異).

It is the subversion of the concept of the author and his or her intention that distinguishes the study of intertextuality from traditional source criticism, and that marks the viability of the term as a critical category distinct from the older term "allusion." While "allusion" occurs when an author, "recognizing the general necessity of making a literary work by building on the foundations of antecedent literature, deliberately exploits this predicament in explicitly activating an earlier text as part of the new system of meaning and aesthetic values of his text,"[16] "intertextuality" goes a step further by encompassing those traces of the past that evade authorial consciousness because of their obscurity and anonymity. Thus while one can cite the metaphor of *san-sheng shih* as an allusion that Ts'ao Hsüeh-ch'in 曹雪芹 (ca. 1715–1763)[17] consciously exploited, the status of the epithet *wan shih* cannot be so easily determined. One could, of course, force the argument that authorial intention is at work in the citation of *wan shih*—and, for that matter, of *wan hou* as well—and treat both epithets as allusions to the folk legend of *tien-t'ou shih* 點頭石 ("the stone that nods").[18] However, to recall Chiang K'uei's remarks, such an argument is quite beside the point since it is inherent in the nature of textual production that any two texts may converge without there arising the question of influence or authorial intention.

It is therefore on the ground of "intertextuality" rather than on that of "allusion" that we can undertake the study of cross-referentiality of our three literary texts without addressing the issue of linear causality introduced by the notion of source and influence. From the same perspective, the legitimacy of this project of constructing the stone lore is grounded on the premise that no conscious citation of the lore by the author is required in order to justify its presence in the literary stone symbolism. What "intertextuality" finally triggers is not only the dissolution of an anchored and identifiable authorial presence in the text, but, more importantly, the contextualizing process that our reading of such stone symbolism inevitably sets off. This is to suggest that the concept itself is as much a theoretical construct of the reader as an ideological purge of the myth of the "author." It sets the reader free, and it both invites and legitimizes the reader's self-projection into the text. The referential multiplicity of the stone symbolism in question does not so much unfold and grow out of the reader's vicarious experience of the "authorial intention"; rather, it is reconstructed through his or her own intertextual reading. It has always been the reader, rather than the author, who can activate and reactivate the intertext.[19]

When some critics cast a suspicious gaze upon the term "intertextuality" as critical jargon without substantial theoretical or ideological content, they only reveal their resistance to this new conceptual framework, which departs from the value system that has romanticized and sanctioned the concepts of "author" and "subjectivity." Indeed, any attempt to reduce "intertextuality" to a mere passing vogue misses the point entirely. The concept is hardly a value-free or innocent critical practice, whether in or out of vogue: it is an ideological instrument designed to attack the concept of the founding subject as the originating source of fixed meaning in the text.[20] Above and beyond the problem of voguishness (a stigma that the abusive citation of any critical idiom is likely to produce), the larger issue is the ideological representation that the term introduces and, no less significantly, the question of how the concept better serves the discussion of such perennial topics as "reference," "allusion," "imitation," and "parody." The emergence of the term in the general critical vocabulary within the past two decades tells us precisely that: we have found a new conceptual means to rejuvenate and reframe those topics. It is the nature of such rethinking and reframing that we will now turn to examine.

The critical issue addressed by older terms such as "allusion" and "imitation" (the relationship between a text and a prior-text) remains the fundamental locus from which the concept of intertextuality is germinated. The functional difference between the older terms and "intertextuality," as I have argued above, consists in the major shift of the privileged center of signification from that of author/subject to that of text/reader. What remains to be seen is the effect that such a shift produces on the formulation of the issue of historical consciousness (or, the role of tradition in textual production)—an issue that the older school takes to heart and emphasizes in its critical exercises. Much of the traditionalists' critique of "intertextuality," in fact, dwells on the "impending crisis" of historical consciousness to which the popularity of such a concept is said to contribute. This kind of critique delivers a double message: an objection to the so-called antihistorical drive of the new term, and a conclusion that older terms such as "allusion," "imitation," and "influence" serve a function that can by no means be replaced by "intertextuality." Any examination of the functional viability of the new term as an interpretive tool would then have to address the question of whether and how it reformulates the issue of historicity.

Instead of nullifying our sense of history, I would argue, the concept of intertextuality promises the opposite. It restructures the old agenda of historical continuity between a text and a predecessor-text by breaking down the abstract conceptual totality of "historicity" into two local manifestations: the reader's experience of his or her own contemporaneity through intertextual reading, and the text's experience of its own historicity as the rewriting and, more specifically, the recontextualization of the prior-text.

Our consciousness of our own contemporaneity is born at the moment when we encounter a certain unfamiliar sign in the text that speaks of a system of semantic, cultural, and ideological associations different from our own. While reading the *Dream of the Red Chamber*, for instance, we are perforce drawn into the myth of stone and jade, which does not agree with the reference (i.e., stone as a sterile and immobile object, and jade as an emblem of auspiciousness) presupposed by our own language. We become aware of the historicity of the text as we sense the gap that exists between the contemporary sign system of stone/jade and the system revealed in the eighteenth-century narrative fiction. Whether the reader is capable of locating and reactivating the intertext (in this case, the stone and jade lore) is not crucial. As Chiang K'uei so tellingly suggests, it is our presupposition, rather than our identification (i.e., "identity-seeking" in his terms), of intertextual homologues that makes both reading and writing possible in the first place. Our awareness of the unfamiliarity of the image of *wan shih* and that of Pao-yü's 寶玉 (Bao-yu)[21] mouth-jade already triggers our desire to decode, which instantaneously turns on the machinery of intertextual reading. Both our desire and our reading, it should be noted, presuppose that each image has a history of its own, and that its citation is never direct but is always transformed and edited in one way or another to better serve the new context—whether that context is ideological or historical.

And it is in this act of editing that we can locate the historicity of a given text. Inevitably any intertextual reference—a fragment taken out of the original context, a quotation, or the citation of a prior-text—resuscitates itself by relocating itself within another linguistic context. Even the seemingly direct quotation *san-sheng shih* falls short of faithfully reiterating the Buddhist theology of reincarnation as embodied in the temporal scheme of *san-sheng* 三生. Once contextualized, the cyclical drive underlying the original concept of "three lifetimes" is radically transformed in the *Dream* to a simple retroactive movement of returning to the past life (i.e., the source).[22] The metaphor in the *Dream* thus takes on the deceiving appearance of a verbatim quotation while it is already being tailored to reemerge as an ideological instrument serving a different context. The historicity of the metaphor of *san-sheng shih* is therefore located not so much in a recuperated fixed moment of genesis as in the rewriting and recontextualizing of the Buddhist concept of *samsara*. The concept of intertextuality argues that it is not in the recovery of its origin, but in the continual recontextualization of prior texts, that a text can ultimately claim and experience its own historicity. Our understanding of history is thus reformulated by the program of intertextuality as a transformative process rather than as an original point of departure that awaits to be retrieved.

The notion that a text can live its own historicity through recontextualization is not a familiar one to traditional Chinese writers and critics, for whom the standard practice of *yung tien* 用典, "allusive borrowings," characterizes the conceptual mode of communicative relationships between the past and the present. The act of borrowing words and phrases from the venerated diction of the literary past, when exercised merely as a tradition, is often reduced to a ritual and is rarely conscious of its own double bind—aspiring to originality while practicing the act of imitation.[23] The Chinese penchant for *yung tien*, the conscious citation of a prior source, is a rather complex phenomenon that deserves full-length treatment elsewhere. However, it needs to be pointed out that "allusions" often appear as atemporal forms, particularly in their encounter with a reader oblivious to those unfamiliar markings. Inherent in the practice of *yung tien*, therefore, is the paradox that the historical context of an allusion is often both present and concealed in the new text. Thus while the use of allusions is a self-conscious act on the part of the author, it by no means guarantees the automatic retrieval of their historicity. It then seems all too possible for us to speculate that the conceptual framework of "allusion" contains the potential, despite itself, of repressing the past, and with it, the notion of temporality, and that such a potential cannot but undermine the function of allusion as a viable link between the past and the present.

We will, however, resist the temptation of getting more deeply immersed in an argument that would lead us to a thorough review of the entire classical Chinese writing tradition. Suffice it to say that the old concept of "allusion" deviates from the seemingly unfamiliar operation of "recontextualization" in that the practitioners of the former cite the reference to the past in order to *internalize literary models* (and, more often than not, to lend prestige and authority to their own texts), rather than bringing to our consciousness the specific historicity of such models, showing off their distance (both linguistic and ideological) from the vehicle into which they are being transformed, and thus rejuvenating the monumental moments of a specific literary and cultural past. Furthermore, the more successful writers in classical Chinese literature have always practiced "recontextualization" without being fully conscious of its radical strategy of *recontaining* an old reference, rather than internalizing a model, in a new context. It is in the light of the practice of recontextualization that the double bind of originality versus "allusive borrowings" finally loses much of its paradoxical poignancy—for an eloquent quotation comes to life only when it is neither original nor located in a determined moment of genesis (i.e., the identification of an allusion), but is relocated, reappropriated, and revalorized within a linguistically and ideologically different context. The process of relocation and revalorization is what makes a new text historically specific and self-conscious of its own fictionality. Inasmuch as an allusion or an intertext always contains the energy field of undergoing another recontextualization, the past to which we feel indebted reveals its deceptive clinging to the claims of fossil-like authenticity. Like the endless series of rewritten versions of literary texts, the past too is made up of re-creative impulses and fiction-making assumptions—a copy of older copies.

These illustrations should make it clear that as an explanatory scheme, "intertextuality" does not collapse period distinctions as much as it historicizes them in its own terms. It promises to fulfill the function traditionally performed by the study of influence and allusion, and to do so no less effectively. "Intertextuality" simply redefines the locus of "historical context" by shifting the burden of proof of historicity from the conscious speaking subject/author to the reader (whose intertextual reading is simultaneously an experience of his or her own contemporaneity) and to the text itself (which comes to life through the continual rewriting of previous texts).

Indeed, issues of historicity are so intimately woven into the theoretical apparatus of intertextuality that any study undertaken in its name, the present book included, will have to address a series of questions that bring into relief the global significance of context. Most importantly, through the study of intertextuality we may eventually gain better access to the writer's moral and ideological stance. What is relevant to interpretation is not simply the identification of a particular intertextual homologue, but also contemplation on the ideological articulation that a given text involuntarily yields. Taken at its widest scope, then, this book is written to demonstrate not merely how the stone and jade lore functions as a cultural context curtailing the free play of literary stone and jade imagery, but also how such lore will help us locate the ideological centers that a given text represses.

Thus while we should recognize the functional dependence of the dual discourses of stone and jade upon each other—the "moral" discourse of jade supplementing, and sometimes destabilizing, the "metaphysical" and "mythological" discourse of stone—it is even more urgent that we note Ts'ao Hsüeh-ch'in's valorization of stone as the privileged center of significance, and more specifically as the origin and ultimate identity of Precious Jade (i.e., Pao-yü). The reversion of Precious Jade to the Nü-kua Stone at the end of Pao-yü's spiritual journey reveals nothing other than the repressed content of Ts'ao Hsüeh-ch'in's ideological discourse. Instead of subverting the concept of "beginning," as the narrator claims in the first chapter, the *Dream* betrays its own radical philosophy by predicting and dictating the resolution of the hero's identity crisis (a split between stone and jade) by means of a simple retrieval of his stony origin. If the rifts in the dialogue between stone and jade reveal the struggle of the author against the ideological enclosure imposed by such culturally sanctified concepts as "homogeneity" and "identity," it follows that Pao-yü's final transformation back into stone reintroduces the privileged content of the concept of "beginning," and with it, the cultural and ideological constraint implicit in such a concept. Seen in this light, Ts'ao Hsüeh-ch'in's iconoclastic stance appears as no more than an ideological mirage.

Similarly, in the *Water Margin*, the intertextual reading of the stone tablet that falls from Heaven foregrounds the moral paradox that the narrative represses in depicting the Liang-shan-po 梁山泊 heroes' transition from bloodthirsty insurgents to loyalists. Such a paradox inheres in the problematic conversion of the 108 rebels from morally ambiguous anarchists to law-abiding subjects subservient to the imperial order that they have earlier undermined under the code of gang morality. As I will argue in the last chapter, by recognizing that the *feng-shan* 封禪 ritual serves as an intertext of the stone tablet dispatched by Heaven, we will immediately come to view such a conversion as morally and politically motivated rather than as an expedient and contingent measure. The political symbolism enacted in the ritual and inscribed into the couplet on the stone tablet—namely, the myth of the Mandate of Heaven and the identification of the human sovereign as the Son of Heaven—provides a powerful ideological justification for the rebels' denunciation of gang morality and cancels any ambiguity that may surround their voluntary subordination to an imperial decree endorsed by Heaven itself.

The reconstruction of the stone lore will eventually lead us to locate these moments of the ideological camouflage of a given text. Only by addressing the issue of the different forms of constraint, ideological as well as structural, with which the text cannot help reckoning, can we fully utilize the interpretive possibilities provided by the concept of intertextuality. I will argue that the appropriate objective of the study of intertextuality emerges at the moment when the analysis of the semiotic nature of a particular sign system (the stone lore, for instance) merges into the discussion of its place in the ideological discourse of the text.

Intertextual Reading

Now that we have mapped out the theoretical assumptions of "intertextuality," it remains to be seen how this serves the practical purpose of interpretation—in other words, how the concept assists us, often without our awareness, in coming to terms with both the familiarity and unfamiliarity of a given textual situation. In the pages that follow, I will cite examples from the three narratives to illustrate how our reading of a text is inherently intertextual.

This brings us back to the two viable mechanisms of intertextuality, convergence and divergence, which operate simultaneously to ensure the continuity of the old and the germination of the new. History itself is characterized by the dual movement of repetition and progression. In a similar manner, writing is the perpetual citation of words that form part of a preexisting network of signification. A writer's choice of words depends upon the awareness of what they already signify. In this sense, writing is not a free creative exercise. The citation of each word in a new text not only evokes the entire spectrum of its semantic entries, it also involves the making of a decision that either deviates from or reinforces certain previously established entries.

Regarding the *Dream of the Red Chamber*, few traditional or modern Chinese readers would fail to recognize the mythical origin of the Nü-kua Stone in the well-known legend of the goddess's restoration of heavenly order. Relying on his reader's power of association, Ts'ao Hsüeh-ch'in adopted a curtain-raising technique characteristic of traditional Chinese professional storytellers, who always cited familiar poems or anecdotes at the very beginning of their storytelling sessions to settle the wandering minds of the restlessly gathering audience. The evocation of memories, whether racial or literate, seems never to fail to draw the audience into the make-believe world in which the laws of reality are temporarily rescinded and their place taken by the imaginary order of fiction. The name "Nü-kua" immediately conjures up the realm of the long-ago and the far-away when stones possessed healing powers and the broken firmament could be retrieved. Within this reactivated familiar framework, we renew our old acquaintance with the magic stones and hardly need to question how and why this block of stone has undergone the melting and moulding of a goddess.

However, the familiar traces of the mythical stone of Nü-kua become at once obscured, if not totally obliterated, when we confront the selfsame stone as it is now described: "it could move about at will and could grow or shrink to any size it wanted" (*Stone* I: 47).[24] Our attention is arrested, and we are aroused out of the comfortable lethargy resulting from a complete surrender to the composite texts of the Nü-kua myth. That this particular stone is cast aside unused by the goddess and is vested with such a delightful power of mobility and metamorphosis (as opposed to its passive attributes as a mere healing instrument in the original mythology) suggests that a radical conversion of the conventional stone imagery has taken place. It speaks of attributes of stone to which the average reader is a total stranger. Here the fictional stone seems to outgrow the mythical stone of Nü-kua and evolve into a new fictional character. At this point we are led into the unfamiliar world in which the fantastic story of the *Dream of the Red Chamber* is about to unfold. It is the natural recognition, by both the reader and the writer, of the Nü-kua myth, a corpus of extant texts from which the grand opening of the *Dream* originates and departs almost simultaneously, that allows the author-narrator to begin the narrative the way he does: he anchors the story of Pao-yü effortlessly in the mytho-logic of no known beginning and no known authorship, and in so doing he enables the reader to recognize where conventionality ends and where fiction begins. The disengagement of the Nü-kua Stone from the creation myth follows the law that intertextual divergence is not possible until the initial contact between the literary text and the composite of Nü-kua's creation myths has been established. The notion of intertextual convergence and deviation thus presupposes the existence of one or more prior-texts.

The concept of the prior-text—as either an ensemble of myths highly concentrated on a single mytheme (i.e., Nü-kua), or a myriad of texts diffused in their focus—evokes the idea of context. As mentioned earlier, "context" is a concept that transcends linguistic barriers and finds its expression in all literate cultures. Whether it is called, in structuralist terms, the "historical archive,"[25] "*déjà lu*,"[26] "sociolect,"[27] "hypogram,"[28] or "vraisemblance,"[29] or is vaguely associated with the concept of *yu-ch'ang chih-t'i* 有常之體 ("a body of constant essences")[30] and other loosely defined Chinese terms, "context" traverses the vast territory of tradition that incorporates cultural, historical, and literary paradigms regardless of the specific nature of the literate culture in which it operates. Loosely comprehended, "context" is an all-embracing term for conventions of all kinds.

It seems a paradox that some cultures, such as the Chinese, which continuously advocate the preservation and witness survival of their heritage, have taken the abstract system of "context" for granted and have devoted little effort to elaborating it in explanatory terms. Perhaps this is because the concept has always formed such an integral and significant part of the Chinese way of life that there is little need to examine its mechanism or justify its existence. Whatever the reason for this lack of interest in integrating the concept into the rich critical idiom of Chinese poetics, the notion of "context" pervades the mode of thinking and writing of traditional literati. The most articulate expression of their awareness of the relationship between context and the production of meaning can be found in the well-known aphorism about unreliable interpretation: *tuan-chang ch'ü-i* 斷章取義 ("to obtain meaning by truncating the text").[31] The aphorism, however, recognizes the fundamental working principle of contextuality—that the meaning of a word is by no means autonomous, but is generated through a complex network of reference. Throughout the literary history of China, we will find that the awareness of such a rudimentary concept of context underlies the writers' retrospective complex and continuously feeds their obsession with tradition and with the idea of *t'ung* 同, "identity," and *t'ung* 通, "continuity."[32]

The preexistent (con)texts, whether traceable or obsolete, are historical formations that make up the horizon and context of every text, often referred to as "the cultural unconscious"[33]—a reservoir of unconscious as well as conscious constraints. To comprehend a text is to bring it within the ken of those cultural constraints, to place it in contact with an order of reality that culture makes available and acknowledges as natural. When Ts'ao Hsüeh-ch'in says that Chia Cheng 賈政 (Jia Zheng) has lost much of his affection for his infant son ever since the son unwittingly picked up "women's things" at his first birthday celebration, Chinese readers (traditional ones especially) would hardly question the sensibility of such a fatherly vision. They would understand the father's lack of faith in his son at such an early stage of his development, and would take this seemingly insignificant and nonsensical ritual of "blind picking" as a powerful understatement of Pao-yü's later obsessive entanglement with his opposite sex. At the moment when Pao-yü chooses to play with "combs, bracelets, pots of rouge and powder and the like—completely ignoring all the other objects" (*Stone* I: 76), the reader could anticipate the father's disillusionment and his prediction that this unusually brilliant child would probably grow up to be a good-for-nothing. The reader would also be able to visualize the unnamed "other objects" randomly placed on the table and share Chia Cheng's disappointment when Pao-yü pays no attention to the swords, papers, ink stands, and brush pens—objects associated with the careers of knighthood and scholarship—that all Chinese parents secretly wish their children to toy with at such a ceremony. Those culturally prescribed objects are the symbols of the *ju-shih* 儒士 ("scholar-gentry"), the Confucian tradition that cultivates great men of impeccable physical stamina and moral/intellectual acumen. Chia Cheng's displeasure with his infant boy is therefore perfectly justified, for the rite of "drawing lots," superstitious as it may appear, has nevertheless become part of a collective knowledge that interprets reality, and turns the cultural and the symbolic into the natural and the real. Such a discourse requires little justification because it corresponds to a convention so completely assimilated into the Chinese mode of thinking that it is taken as "the text of the natural attitude of society (the text of *l'habitude*), entirely familiar and in this very familiarity diffuse, unknown as a text."[34]

When Pao-yü renders his first impression of Tai-yü 黛玉 (Dai-yu) as a maiden who is as still as "a graceful flower reflected in the water," and whose motion is as tender as "willow shoots caressed by the wind" (*Stone* I: 103), we do not have to rely on any specific explanation of these poetic allusions to understand that the heroine is a beautiful but physically fragile girl. The similes that evolve from the symbols of nature are made immediately intelligible because of their clichéd familiarity to the average Chinese reader. As Pao-yü continues to view Tai-yü with his inner eye,

> She had more chambers in her heart than the martyred Bi Gan 比干;
> And suffered a tithe more pain in it than the beautiful Xi Shi 西施.
> (*Stone* I: 103)

A Chinese reader would be able to conjure up the image of the heroine as a sensitive and capricious beauty of nervous debility, unaware of the operation of cultural stereotypes in construing these two comparisons. In the mind of a foreign reader unfamiliar with Chinese historical personages such as "Bi Gan" and "Xi Shi," however, the metaphors would reverberate less forcefully.

Similarly, foreign readers who have not been brought into contact with the Chinese code of heroism and the deeply rooted Confucian scorn for sexually appealing women would probably frown and feel amazed, in turn, at the outburst of excessive violence and at the ineffable contempt that the "macho" heroes in the *Water Margin* express toward women. One may suggest that the historical legends of Pao Ssu and Hsi Shih, which help perpetuate the indigenous patriarchal myth that "beautiful women are sources of evil" (*hung-yen huo-shui* 紅顏禍水), underlie the author-narrator's thoroughly unsympathetic portrayal of beautiful women. The Liang-shan heroes' repressed hatred and their willful destruction of those women whose physical attraction provokes the male paranoia about seduction can also be attributed to the prevalent folk belief that the female principle—*yin* 陰, the arch-symbol of darkness and weakness—would absorb and impair the vitality of the male principle (*yang ch'i* 陽氣) upon contact. An understanding of the popularized interpretation of the Confucian virtue *i* 義, "righteousness," should also help a reader comprehend why Wu Sung 武松 and Shih Hsiu 石秀 would act with such fierceness to avenge their sworn brothers' death in one case, and the breach of honor in another: they obey the code of *i* and act with a sense of justice. Seen in this light, most of the slaughter and lynching that takes place in the *Water Margin* would raise the spirit of Chinese readers, especially traditional ones—for nothing more than the heroic striving for righteousness and military rigor would satisfy their vision of the ideal *hsia* 俠, "chivalrous knight." In contrast, a Western reading public often experiences revulsion in the face of the graphic delineation of bloodshed and the unambiguous condemnation of almost every beautiful female character.

Underlying this reading process—of recuperating the unfamiliar and the fictional in a text by bringing them within the grasp of intelligibility—is the search for intertextual similitude that bridges the elusive distance between fiction and reality. It is very often the phenomenon of the fantastic and the radically deviant in a text that serves as the powerful stimulus necessary to trigger the interpretive mechanism of intertextuality. The *Dream of the Red Chamber* may pose a worthy challenge to critics of all persuasions because of its structural complexity and rich allegorical implications, but it intrigues the reading public of all ages for a different reason. Their fascination is certainly not ignited by the real historical identity of the author and the commentator(s) and of the heroes and heroines in the narrative,[35] by the implicit antifeudal social critique of class struggle in eighteenth-century China,[36] or by high-minded critical concerns such as the depth of the mythical framework, the intricacy of the mixed mytho-mimetic mode, and the allegory of the garden and the dream. Rather, the average reader is most fascinated by the bewitching story of the fantastic claimed as its own by a stone—a divine relic cast aside by a legendary goddess, a well-inscribed rock that professes to narrate its own story,[37] whose sphere of action encompasses both heaven and earth. It is this encounter with the enigmatic symbol of stone that captures the readers' attention, engages them in an exciting bewilderment, and then lures them to play a riddle-solving game of reading. The readers are involuntarily led into a fabulous realm of mytho-logic that endows an otherwise unknowing and inanimate object with divine intelligence and human passions. It is an unfamiliar world full of surprises that constantly thwarts our expectations and invites us to reevaluate our own sense of reality.

What does this relic of stone signify? Shall we interpret it as a token of the gratuitous, or as an invitation to a deeper meaning? Is it a whimsical flourish, or part of a grandiose scheme? In other words, is the incredible stone a marvel wrought by an individual talent, a total fabrication sprung out of the fertile mind of the author, or is it a symbol that carries its own vestiges of cultural, historical, and literary context? These are legitimate questions that the interpretation of the unfamiliar inevitably invites.

If every word extends and reactivates the history of its own meaning, the study of the meaning of the Nü-kua Stone cannot but incorporate its intertextual relations with the preexistent semantic entries that stone has generated over the centuries. At this juncture we may recall the three different beginnings described in the epigraphs of this chapter, which should foster an even more acute interest in the interpretive puzzle of the stone. The very shock that we experience in confronting the versatile stone seems to speak against its perceivable correspondence to any socio-culturally conditioned context. That a stone talks and thinks in human fashion, gives birth, and falls from heaven, completely eclipses our expectation, since our habitual mode of thinking dictates just the opposite: stone is an earthly object, mute and immutable, crystal-hard and lifeless.

Our intuitive understanding of stone will most likely bring us to a premature conclusion that the authors of the three narratives write against our conventional knowledge of stone, and that by almost completely reversing our contemporary idea of what stone stands for, they exemplify their extraordinary creative genius. It is this initial impression of the originality of the stone imagery in question that may prevent a contemporary reader from perceiving certain patterns that unambiguously point to the existence of contextual constraints. Whether it takes the shape of a mysterious tablet, a sagacious monkey, or an eloquent storyteller, such stone imagery unleashes certain recurrent motifs, the meaning of which can be partly revealed if we look into the relations of reciprocal intelligibility discerned among a variety of preexistent texts in which stone figures prominently.

The prior-texts ensemble is an intimidating concept on its own. It seems to point to a continuously expanding, and therefore forever incomplete, repertory of both traceable and untraceable old texts. For the convenience of naming such an elusive entity, I call it "stone lore"—an intertextual configuration of stone. The intertextuality of stone lore emerges not as an exterior, but as an interior reference to the stone symbolism in the *Water Margin*, *Journey to the West*, and *Dream of the Red Chamber*. It seems impossible not to acknowledge the folkloristic character of the stone images therein, but at the same time it is important not to elevate such lore to the stature of an external constraint that serves to arrest the signifying practices of the literary stone symbolism in question. Everywhere we turn, the intimate parallels between the image of the folkloric stone and that of the literary stone are intermingled with signs of transformation and accretion. Where we expect to find traces of convergence, we encounter cryptic overlays where the folkloric and the literary symbols haunt each other, generating the fleeting mirage of integration, but producing nothing short of displacement—an outcome that can be expected of any such activity of reappropriation. It is the self-generated duality of intertextual appropriation that accounts for the similitude and difference between the mythological texts of the Nü-kua myths and Ts'ao Hsüeh-ch'in's recounted story of the Nü-kua Stone. The fable of totality embodied in the perfectly restored broken heaven undergoes a transformation that produces the new myth of debris—the tale of a leftover stone.

To function at all, the symbol—or in fact, any word—must be given over to repetition, which always implies alternation or becoming other.[38] We need not ask ourselves whether the author-narrator of the *Dream* consciously or unconsciously engages himself in making such difference, for it is in the very nature of intertextuality to perpetuate continuity and discontinuity at the same time. We need to remind ourselves frequently that no matter how much the stone lore may answer for the continuous coherence of the stone symbolism in literature, there always remains something irregular that cannot be rendered into a unitary pattern even by the most ingenious scientific intelligence. The three sets of stone imagery that invoke such an aura of gratuity and originality cannot help extending, while reactivating, the history of stone lore.

The Problematics of Stone Lore

Thus far we have seen how intertextuality underlies the activities of writing and interpretation. What follows is an examination of the intertextual relationship not only between the folkloric motif and the literary topos of stone, but also among the various manifestations of the literary stone imagery. In other words, we will take into account two sets of intertextual permutations: the presence of the folkloric stone within the literary stone, and the commentary of each text of the literary stone upon the other two.

The stone images presented in the mythical frameworks of the three narratives, although thematically divergent at first sight, share the following properties, which convey a momentary impression of consistency: the divine essence of stone; its function as a mediator between heaven and earth; the bipolar nature of its symbolic attributes; and its association with verbal activities, whether written or oral. In the *Dream*, we witness the return of the stone-incarnate Pao-yü to the realm of Disillusionment, and his reversion to his previous existence as stone after a long journey in the Red Dust; in the seventy-chapter edition of the *Water Margin*, the riddle-inscribed stone tablet that opens the story of the Liang-shan heroes emerges again at the end of the narrative to reinforce the Mandate of Heaven.

In contrast to the significant role played by stone in generating the underlying thematic structure of the above two narratives, the stone imagery in the *Journey to the West* fulfills a rather peripheral function. Although born from stone, the monkey, unlike Pao-yü in the *Dream*, does not resume the physical essence of stone after his successful quest for the Sutra. The narrative logic of the *Journey*, however, sanctifies other religious forms of symbolic return (as Anthony Yu suggests), even though Monkey's entrance into Buddhist sainthood is not supplemented by a mythical return to the moment of his origin. A quick review of Yu's argument is in order, since it should serve to illustrate that the narrative logic of circularity revealed in all three texts cannot but suggest a certain intelligible correspondence between the narrative structural constraint and cultural/religious philosophy. Given that the pilgrims, including their Master Tripitaka, are "delinquents from a prior celestial existence," their pilgrimage to the west appears more than just a spiritual quest. It is significant in particular as a home-bound journey.[39] "Home" in this context, as Yu cogently demonstrates, is saturated with Buddhist and Taoist symbolism. Underlying the twin concepts of Buddhist enlightenment and Taoist physiological alchemy is the notion of return: the recovery of one's original nature in one case, and the reversal of the natural course of physical decay in another.[40] Thus the "homecoming" of Monkey and his fellow pilgrims is seen as a double blessing: they acquire longevity and enlightenment simultaneously. But this form of return is framed in the logic of redemption—not in the unraveling of problematic identity myths, as in the other two narratives; and it is the heavy and knotty intertwining of the Buddhist and Taoist religious symbolism enwrapping every pilgrim that overshadows the single issue of whether Monkey's human essence is reversible to his original stony substance.

The case of the *Journey* serves to illustrate that "a single phenomenon by itself does not create *wen*" (*wu i wu-wen*).[41] I have already suggested that Monkey's stony origin does not occupy the central stage of the *Journey*. I should also go a step further by proposing that even the symbolism of stone reveals but one facet of the complex emotional and psychic makeup of Sun Wu-k'ung 孫悟空, whose identity remains an open and controversial issue to this day. To those scholars who insist on the transparency and homogeneity of Wu-k'ung's identity, Chapter 5 will demonstrate that what makes reading and writing possible is "not a single anterior action that serves as origin and moment of plenitude but an open series of acts, both identifiable and lost."[42] Although originating from the "single anterior action" of the transformation of a stone ovum, the stony identity of the monkey is supplemented, as illustrated in Chapter 5, by "an open series" of evocative mythological personae. It is the incorporation of these other personae—the trickster and the white ape in particular—that creates the indelible image of Monkey: his playful sagacity and transformative energy. The tenuous symbolism of stone with which the *Journey* starts cannot alone account for and sustain the popular fascination with Monkey; it is the intertextual communication of the folkloric stone with various other prior-texts that makes up the complexity of his character.

But if the *Journey* serves as a less distinct example of how the stone topos generates the circularity of narrative movement, the stone imagery therein has contributed to the making of the *Dream* in more than one respect. The reincarnation of the Nü-kua Stone echoes Wu-k'ung's transformation from the divine stone. The two beginnings bear a close resemblance to each other even in the description of the physical appearance of the two stones—each narrator has chosen to dwell meticulously on their measurement with the same mathematical precision. A traditional commentary even suggests that the source of inspiration for the allegorical device of Chen-Chia Pao-yü has to be sought in the *Journey*: "[The concept of the] Chen-Chia Pao-yü, the Real and Unreal Pao-yü, is evolved from the theme of the two pilgrims [Monkeys]."[43] All the speculations about the similarities between these two miraculous stones indicate that the image of the Nü-kua Stone in the *Dream* contains the trace of the monkey-stone. This is how intertextuality operates: a word, a symbol, or a text always brings back the residual and implicit (inter)texts of the past that never cease to reverberate in its textual space. And regardless of the marginal or central position that stone occupies in each of the three narratives, it shares a certain identity that suggests the ongoing infiltration into literary stone imagery of prior codes, historical context, cultural conventions, and unconscious practices. In other words, the text of the literary stone undergoes an incessant intertextual communication with the previous lore of stone.

When it comes to establishing the vast network of such multiple intertextual references in the global name of stone lore, we encounter several problems that accompany any enterprise aiming at systematization and incorporation. To reconstruct such lore is to set a boundary to the invisible space traversed by the infinite number of texts, both identifiable and unidentifiable, in which stone has ever participated in producing meaning. It is the open-ended character of intertextual space that seems to resist any attempt at recuperation. Although to produce or to analyze a text is necessarily to situate it within an inescapable intertextual network, it seems impossible to finish compiling and thus stabilizing such an archive. History, whether cultural history or the history of stone, includes unconscious as well as conscious materials and constraints; to reconstruct all such materials and patterns would amount to enclosing history within one textbook or paradigm. It is the inherent openness of intertextuality that contradicts the working principle of context as a complete and unified frame of reference. It exposes all contextualizations as limited and limiting.

Bearing this in mind, I do not claim to reconstruct stone lore in order to grasp in one heroic venture the sum total of all the historical and cultural conventions regarding stone. What I attempt to catalogue in the next chapter is a cluster of texts illustrating certain patterns of a distinctive "stone experience"—one facet of the highly stratified but recognizable interior of the intertextual network of stone—that includes a series of recurring attributes which will help illuminate the activities of both creating and interpreting stone imagery in literature. Such stone lore has already faded from the horizon of our common knowledge. It is a system of convention, the meaning of which has escaped our conscious grasp, but which can be retrieved by collecting and explicating a body of extant stone myths and rituals. The reconstruction of the stone lore will fulfill the demand of the critic for greater objectivity and will enable the reader to achieve a fuller perception of how the system of signification works—that is, what enables stone to signify the way it does in literary texts, and to what extent intertextuality both constrains and stimulates the assimilation of the folkloric stone into a literary theme. The explanatory value of such a frame of reference can hardly be dismissed, although we cannot hope to discover the convention of stone lore in its entirety.

Ferdinand de Saussure defends the concept of totality by arguing that language as a total system is complete and self-regulating at every moment, "no matter what happens to have been altered in it a moment before."[44] One may suggest that the same holds true for the stone lore in question—that although its contents shift and evolve incessantly, like any other system of metalanguage, it nonetheless assumes an immanent and general appearance of coherence composed of its current structural properties.[45] My proposal to recompose the grammar of stone lore thus represents nothing more than an attempt to derive a recognizable, albeit tentative, "mythological pattern" from a shifting and incomplete totality.[46] The stone lore reconstructed at each historical moment reflects just that—a recognizable structure comprising its previous properties and some newly emerged heterogeneous elements that have not yet been stabilized, the latter coexisting rather incongruously with the former in a kind of deceiving totality.

The elusive totality that a reconstructed stone lore inevitably evokes may create another false expectation that what I assemble in the next chapter will serve to account for all the various guises of stone imagery in the three narratives under discussion. As I will demonstrate in Chapter 5, the stone lore does not enjoy a hegemonic hold on the image-making of stone in literature. To ascribe to the lore an absolute authority in determining the significance of every manifestation of stone imagery is to subscribe to the same fallacy of interpretation to which dogmatic structuralists are often susceptible.[47] What we should recognize is that the freshness of great literature always escapes a strictly systematic reading and the tenacious grasp of conventional context. We should therefore carefully distinguish the legitimate pursuit of constructing a metalanguage from the dogmatic structuralists' assertion that an interpretive model exercises an absolute generative power and enjoys systematic completeness. At issue is how such an incomplete system can be properly used, not how it figures as the constitutive moment in the history of a particular word or symbol. We have to keep in mind that any scientifically appealing scheme serves its own purpose—as a kind of "discovery principle." But such a scheme, and in fact any scientific diagram, "cannot be guaranteed to replace intelligence or intuition."[48] I would even go a step further by suggesting that frequently "intuition" not only has the last laugh on scientific problem-solving techniques, it also ironically participates, however modestly, in the construction of what may appear to be a perfectly scientific paradigm.[49]

It is worth noting, at this point, that the construction of stone lore posits just such a preliminary way of "intuitive" seeing, a kind of presupposition that accompanies every critical approach to literature. What guides the folklorist's excursion into the immense mass of materials, and helps to locate more efficiently certain key myths and folktales, is exactly this "preunderstanding" of certain attributes of stone, a kind of trained intuition that continually formulates hypotheses. Proceeding from this foreknowledge, the folklorist is able to discover useful data from those sources which otherwise would not have appeared to bear any relevance to the topic under discussion. For instance, a preliminary understanding of the association of stone with divine power suggests its possible linkage to the rituals of *feng-shan* and of coercing rain deities. This kind of obscure yet evocative preconception also comes to our assistance in grouping clusters of recurrent stone-motifs and prevents us from experimenting with completely irrelevant combinations.

The reconstructed stone lore with its definable boundary suggests a certain conceptual closure. But as a "discovery principle," it has the capacity to generate a wide variety of possible combinations of its lexical entries. In so doing, it provides certain vantage points for interpreting the stone imagery that emerges in literary texts. On the one hand, it enables the interpreter of a stone-text to decide when to halt the potentially self-perpetuating process of the breaking up of larger meaning-units into smaller ones; on the other, it facilitates the explanation of how some meaning-units combine to produce certain prescribed structures that allow the individual stone-texts as such to emerge, to be read, and finally to be recycled into the existing stone lore. While the decision of the first operation often relies heavily on our intuitive intelligence, that of the second—the eliciting of principal meaning-units whose frequency of recurrence demonstrates a level of coherence pointing to the definability of an intertextual network of stone—cannot be accomplished without the aid of a highly technical solution. To derive such a definable but abridged lore, I turn to A. J. Greimas's theory of structural semantics, and particularly his concept of "isotopy"—"the level of coherence in a text." It is by means of such a theoretical paradigm, the operative laws of which I will introduce in a moment, that one can arrive at the portrayal of the shifting and often contradictory identity of the folkloric stone.

Stone is seen as an entity vacillating between stasis and dynamism. Its symbolic significance and physical attributes oscillate between fertility and sterility, and between liquidity and solidity. Most importantly, it displays characteristics corresponding to the stone imagery in the three classics: it has divine attributes, it functions as fertilizer and mediator, and it is a source of a special form of utterance. What has been regarded as anomalous, unmotivated, and outlandish, and has been tolerated as the indulgence of poetic license—such as the sacred stone embryo evolving into a monkey who undergoes a spiritual quest, the Nü-kua Stone acquiring the attributes of both "stupidity" and "intelligence," and the stone tablet falling from the sky bearing the Mandate of Heaven—appears in a new light when read against the intertext of the folkloric stone.

It is our awareness of such an intertext that enables us to interpret certain recurrent phenomena of fictionality in literary stone imagery as referents to the structural constraints inevitably imposed upon later texts by the intertextual model of stone lore. In this sense, intertextuality is seen as a contextual closure that enables a literary image to enter the system of signification and fall into certain intelligible patterns. Seen in this light, the points of contact between the different manifestations of stone imagery that we spot at every historical period and in different genres of writing, which taken separately might be regarded as coincidences, appear as structural variations of certain key motifs. Both the *Journey* and the *Dream* take as their point of departure the creation myth in which stone, emerging as the life-giving principle, transforms itself from a sacred object into a mundane human creature endowed with a potential for sagehood. The two primary attributes of the folkloric stone, divinity and embryonic fertility, are instilled into the stone monkey in the *Journey* and the lovesick stone in the *Dream*, respectively. The association between stone and cosmic design in the three narratives also appears as the transformation of the message-bearing and speech-making