The Medical Casebook of *Hong Lou Meng*[1]

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ABSTRACT

Hong Lou Meng acts as a medical casebook. In some ways, it reflects influence of the new genre of medical writing, incorporating humanistic descriptions of the physical experience of disease, details of the doctor-patient encounter, and accounts of chronic and congen ital illness. In other ways, it presents the reader with selected accounts of patients categorized by symptom set, and positing patients as members of a tradition of illness, while also tacitly creating that tradition. *Hong Lou Meng* also seems to work in tandem with medical history casebooks to create a particular kind of medical knowledge through the use of narrative. An instance of this production is the gendering of certain illnesses, such as Daiyu's consumptive manifestation of liver *yin* deficiency as something that primarily affects women. This study focuses attention not just on one aspect of the "encyclopedic" nature of *Hong Lou Meng*, on its incorporation of contemporary texts, beliefs and quotidian knowledge, but focuses on the way that the novel acts as an encyclopedia and can be used as such to diagnose character types based on symptom sets, and illnesses based on character traits.

KEY WORDS

yian 醫案, illness, casebook, symptom-set, qing 情, gender

In late Imperial China, medical casebooks and fictional narratives of illness exhibit mutual influence and develop aspects of each other. In doing so, they both popularize and create medical knowledge. One example of this is the construction and exaggeration of illnesses along gender lines. A limited number of diseases affect only one sex; yet the gendering of disease and focus on gendered illnesses in fiction is an instance in which medical narrative in the casebook and the novel fabricate medical reality.[2] It is my belief that *Hong Lou Meng* acts as a medical casebook, one in which almost all of the patients are female.[3]

The medical case narrative *yian* 醫案 was not entirely new in the Ming dynasty.[4] Pre-Ming medical works commonly contained case histories to illustrate theoretical points. It was only in the Ming, however, that books containing exclusively case histories of one or more physicians began to appear.[5] Famous scholar-physicians (often identified as *ruyi* 儒醫) who published medical works such as Xu Dachun 徐大春 (1693–1771), wrote case histories and were so well known that others would later publish medical works and case histories under their names.[6] Even the term used to describe this new genre, *yian,* was new and had not been in use prior to the sixteenth century.[7] In China, the medical casebook came into being at approximately the same time as the novel.[8]

The character *an* is also seen in *gongan* 公案, meaning "legal case history" and referring to a formal statement of a legal case, also used to describe a type of fiction (and types of puppet drama and oral narrative as early as the Song Dynasty) in which a judicial solution of some crime or other social disorder is of central importance. The analogy

between legal and medical case histories is expressly drawn in early examples of the medical case history genre.[9] There is evidence of an increase in publication of both the medical case histories and the legal case histories in the early Ming.[10] This was in part a by-product of a general flourishing of "how to" books at this time, but also a response to popular court-case fiction. For the physician as author, in a time of increasing professional competition, the publication of one's own case histories would also have helped establish one's reputation. The popularity of the new genre in the late Ming reflects a concern with practice and a belief that narrative lent itself to propagating this quotidian kind of knowledge.

The analogy between the medical case and the crime case, familiar also in western literature, posited the doctor as reader (of symptoms and medical texts) and as author (of case histories).[11] Most authors of medical case histories believed that a doctor's encounter with a patient was only considered a case when it resulted in a clear outcome. Editors of casebooks reinforce this definition because they selected from the manuscript only syndromes that exhibited a "fixed pattern" of cure (*dingshi* 定式) to print as "settled cases" or "precedents" (*chengan* 成案).[12] Only cases that had been solved could serve in texts that were designed as reference books for future practitioners. This is seen in the organizational scheme of most casebooks, by diagnosis or prevailing symptom, rather than by name of the patient or date of visit.[13] This practice parallels literary archetype and allegory created through the categorizing of fictional characters under meaningful symptom sets.

Cases are a mode of knowing that depends upon linking individual instances to general patterns without abandoning the specificity of local knowledge.[14] Medical cases are literary in nature. They employ literary devices, plot, character and drama, likely in order to make their medical knowledge entertaining stories for prospective readers.[15] Cases are also social in nature. They derive their meaning and their usefulness from social interaction and they are published together to be thought about collectively.[16] A medical casebook is a cast of characters that are in constant juxtaposition with one another.

Over time, narratives of illnesses in fiction and case histories become histories of cases. Positing certain sets of symptoms as "normal" against which others would be seen as rare or strange, some medical case groupings perfectly describe symptoms displayed by famous characters from drama, notably the beautiful, frail, lonely and lovesick young woman, suffering from a wasting disease. Cases fabricate medical reality predicated on groupings by character and symptom-set. Illnesses among famous fictional women, for instance, tend to reflect medical trends that portrayed female illness as blood-based. These representations over time then gender a contagious disease like consumption as something particularly feminine.[17] Not only did medical cases "narrativize" doctor-patient dialogue, but by setting standards of repeating symptom patterns, they detailed the diseases a sort of person might be likely to contract, and provided authors of fiction with model narrative descriptions of those illnesses. *Hong Lou Meng* is a prime example of fiction that benefits from medical case narratives. It is encyclopedic in its incorporation of contemporary texts and knowledge, but also acts as an encyclopedia that allows the reader to draw on it as a manual for diagnosing types.[18]

The medical case and the fictional medical case found in novels also have significant differences. The case history was recorded in the literary language rather than the vernacular. The narrative moves quickly, and while many incorporate vivid details, the expectation was that they would circulate in sets or collections, rather than singularly, and therefore tended to be brief. Because of the short form, the case also required a quick diagnosis and quick recovery, and therefore chronic illnesses, while included in the cases, would necessarily sound less severe and the convalescences much quicker than they may have been in reality.[19] The important similarity though is on empiricism as the foundation for nosology of disease and taxonomy of characters who suffer from those diseases. Explanations of illness etiology in medical case narratives called attention to the quotidian business of living, just as focus on quotidian detail in the literati novel called attention to the etiologies of illness.

The medical casebook adopted strategies of narrative to advance

medical knowledge and the novel adopts strategies of the casebook to push medical knowledge even further. In *Hong Lou Meng,* a correct diagnosis in many instances does not lead to a cure. Lin Daiyu's illness, does, however, adhere to a fixed pattern. She is like those other wasting beauties that are fated to die. Cao Xueqin is a more skilled diagnostician than the talented doctors in his novel, for he is able to identify those rare but important cases where the patient is fated to die.[20] The author thus is like the doctor of casebooks in that he also acts as an omniscient narrator who writes about domestic matters and average people but he surpasses them in that he knows when an illness cannot be cured by worldly medicine.

An example of a medical case shows shared linguistic codes and structures with detective fiction, graphic details of a novel such as *Rou Pu Tuan* 肉浦團 *The Carnal Prayer Mat,* and the secret and miraculous events of "stories of the strange." This case comes from Xu Dachun's medical case history *Huixi Yian* 洄溪醫案 written at approximately the same time as *Hong Lou Meng*, and published posthumously in 1855, with commentary by the prominent Qing physician Wang Mengying 王孟英 (1808–1867). In this case, that of "lower chancres" 下疳, Dr. Xu serves primarily as the narrator:

> Shen Weide of Puyuan, terrible lower lesions, his penis down to the root had completely rotted off, and he urinated through a slit between bones, which caused him to cry out with pain. His anus was also festering to a depth of half an inch. He had been taken to the Yu family, where he had been told that he would be lucky if his life could be saved. [Doctor] Yu had never seen such an illness and was reluctant to try to cure it. He gave him pills to remove the poison and strengthen the blood and a topical medicine to relieve the pain. After a few applications, it got to the point where it no longer hurt. After two months, it formed a scar and [Shen] was able to walk. But all that remained of his penis was the root. [At that time] Yu by chance was reading a secret book. In it was a prescription to grow a penis. The prescription called for a dog fetus. The Yu family dog had just given birth to three puppies. They took

one, covered it in mud, and baked it. They added it to other things.

> Two years later [Weide] suddenly had a son. His entire extended family was in an uproar: without a male member, how could he conceive a son? This was probably because Weide had family wealth and the beneficiaries had covetous feelings. His parents-in-law made secret inquires to Dr. Xu. Shen said, "After I took the medicine, my member grew back, how can you doubt my having a son?" Dr. Xu then gathered Shen's family together to see it, and the penis had completely grown back, but the member only had joints and no skin [like bamboo]. After that time, he had another son. The many who heard this [story] both near and far, took it as an extraordinary event. Even today, those who hear it consider it remarkable.[21]

While Xu's role in this case is primarily to illuminate and transmit the veracity of an esoteric treatment, he employs strategies similar to those in narrative storytelling. There is direct quotation, greed, secret prescriptions, the revelations of truth, the doing of justice, and outside verification of one doctor's methods by another.[22] The discussion of medical conditions and treatments, between doctors and healers, between patient and doctor and among family members is one significant aspect of medicine in the Ming and Qing novel, and certainly one of the main features of the medical case history, both in form and purpose. Whether the genres were mutually influential, or both formed in response to similar or coincidental social and cultural forces is still a matter of debate.

In medical casebooks, some patients are seen over the course of months or years, and the record of their illness in the case history represents some of the first narratives of *chronic* illness in China.[23] In most histories and stories, if the patient suffers a long time, it is because they have not employed talented doctors, and once one is found, they are cured immediately.[24] The acknowledgement of long periods of convalescence from an illness undermined the time-honored suggestion that cure and diagnosis are the same. While it is likely that chronic

illness was recorded in case histories to posit the efficacious author against many ignorant doctors, it did provide a model of sustained diagnosis, treatment and convalescence from which authors of fiction borrow. In fact, *Hong Lou Meng* is an example of much more developed narratives of chronic illness than those found in casebooks, a development that likely led to a greater acceptance of slower convalescences, and extended periods of treatment.[25]

Cao Xueqin sounds as if he is making a case history of his own, selecting illustrative examples and telling patterns when he remarks, "faced with so exuberant an abundance of material, what principle should your chronicler adopt to guide him in his selection of incidents to record?"[26] Just as it makes use of the familiar rhetoric of oral literature, *Hong Lou Meng* makes use of the form and rhetoric of medical literature. Yet, unlike the conventional storyteller or casebook author, the narrator draws our attention to the very act of writing, editing, narrative choice, and archetypal grouping. The reader's heightened sense of self-consciousness, feeling that he is engaging in an act of decoding these patterns, makes specific illnesses in *Hong Lou Meng* conspicuously fraught with significance. The combination of the (standard) prefaces that imply that the novel has medicinal properties, with the self-conscious editorial principles suggesting an unofficial or "case" history, highlights an underlying medical significance to the novel, a meaning to which patients' symptoms point.[27]

It requires little argumentation to say that *Hong Lou Meng* is often read as a chronicle of the women in Jia Baoyu's 賈寶玉 life. Cao Xueqin suggests such a reading,

> surely my 'number of females,' whom I spent half a lifetime studying with my own eyes and ears, are preferable to [unofficial histories, erotic novels and *caizi jiaren* stories]. I do not claim that they are better people than the ones who appear in books written before my time; I am only saying that the contemplation of their actions and motives may prove a more effective antidote to boredom and melancholy.[28]

Hong Lou Meng is a catalogue of girls. The title recalls both the dwellings of rich men's daughters and the dream that Baoyu has in which he looks into the register of the ill-fated fair, the twelve beauties of Jinling and the two supplementary registers, and reads the cryptic fates of the young women in the novel.[29] One of the alternate titles "*Jinling Shier Chai* 金陵十二釵 *The Twelve Beauties of Jinling*," is even more explicit in highlighting the centrality of the fates of the women in the story.[30] Of the twelve beauties, Lin Daiyu 林黛玉, Xue Baochai 薛寶釵, Qin Keqing 秦可卿 (Qin Shi 秦氏), Xifeng 王熙鳳, Adamantina (Miaoyu) 妙玉, Yuanchun 元春, are all significantly sick, usually chronically, unto death, while Yingchun 迎春, Tanchun 探春 and Qiaojie 巧姐 are also ill at points. The three important characters mentioned in the supplementary registers, Aroma 襲人 (Xiren), Skybright 晴雯 (Qingwen), and Caltrop (Zhen Yinglian) 甄英蓮 also have karmic or structural significance to their illnesses.[31] The collection of their fates and the narratives of their illnesses make *Hong Lou Meng* read like a medical casebook.

Baochai's congenital tendency to overheat and Daiyu's congenital frailty and weakness cannot but be read as figures of karmic retribution, in which their illnesses and fates are ultimately predestined; but their illnesses and those of other characters also retain structural significance.[32] In the prefatory "How to Read *Hong Lou Meng*" essay, Zhang Xinzhi 張新之 writes, "In this book Baochai and Daiyu are presented in tandem with each other. The maids [Aroma] and [Skybright] are the "shadows" of these two characters. . . . Aroma may be used as a substitute for Baochai and Skybright may be used to substitute for Daiyu."[33] That is, some commentators read characters as "types" of other characters, and by extension their illnesses must be of a similar nature, or of a kind that affects similar personalities.

The source of illness in *Hong Lou Meng* is ultimately always *qing* 情 [emotion, desire] with absence and loss enhancing the affective power of *qing*.[34] Illness in *Hong Lou Meng* has been (rightly) discussed primarily in terms of the five phases correspondences, with Lin Daiyu identified with the "wood humor" 木氣 suffering from *yin* depletion in the liver, and dangerously encountering the "metal (or gold) humor" 金

氣 at which point wood is felled and there is a disruption in the lungs.[35] Thus, the symbols that pair Daiyu and Baoyu, wood and stone, and those that pair Baoyu with Baochai, jade and gold, play out their correspondences according to a medical theory formulary.[36] Although *Hong Lou Meng,* in its employment of five phases symbolism, is more complicated than its predecessors that primarily employ *yin-yang* correspondences in thematic discussions of health and emotion (such as *Jin Ping Mei* 金瓶梅), it is similar to them in that it bases authenticity on the ability to feel emotions and associates deficiency or weakness, illustrated by illness and the frailty of the female (particularly those from the south), with a heightened intensity of that emotion. This gendering of illness reflects the influence of the medical case book on *Hong Lou Meng*, directly, in tandem with theoretical medical texts, and indirectly, through the influence of other fiction. The influence of the medical case adds to fiction (among other concepts) the gendered notion that female sickness is a sign of feeling and repression while more masculine types fall ill from excessive expression of desire and worldly interaction.

Qing has relevance for the current discussion because it contributes to one of the earliest, and certainly the most extensive and famous depictions of chronic illness in all of Chinese fiction. The first time the reader encounters Daiyu, it is said that her mother had fallen ill and died and the strain of caring for her and mourning her death was too much for her always delicate constitution and resulted in a severe attack of a recurrent sickness.[37] This illness, the reader is already able to guess, will be related to the debt of tears, and will bring out her true identity as the Crimson-pearl Flower.[38] The first description of her in the novel identifies her as inherently ill and similar in that way to the beautiful maidens who came before her in the Chinese literary tradition, "habit had given a melancholy cast to her tender face; nature had bestowed a sickly constitution on her delicate frame. . . . Her heart was had more apertures than Bi Gan's and her illness more exquisite than Xi Shi's."[39] Daiyu's delicate beauty is wrapped up in a cultural and literary construction of illness. She, like previous beauties, is delicate, ill and glowing with a crimson hue, and she is bound both to her literary

antecedents and to her previous incarnation as the Crimson-pearl Flower though her identity as a medical case which reveals her character as much as her character is created by it. Daiyu is the type of girl who suffers from consumptive heat, liver *yin* deficiency, lung injury, excessive and unexpressed passion, manifested in a redness in her cheeks, loss of appetite, coughing and most notably, expectoration of blood.[40]

Daiyu's doctors diagnose her consistently with a deficiency of *yin* in the liver with a subsequent loss of cardiac vitality. Night sweating, loss of appetite, coughing, expectoration of phlegm and blood, tidal heat effusion and emaciation are all symptoms of consumption, which often begins with *yin* deficiency.[41] The manifestations of such a condition, likely to be mistaken for a peculiar temperament, are dizzy spells, loss of appetite, fitful sleep, a tendency to take offence for no particular reason and a generally nervous attitude towards other people.[42] The ultimate earthly cause of Daiyu's illness is over-activity of the liver, which produces heat, and lung damage, but the reader familiar with this literary/medical case understands her personality and background produce these symptoms rather than being conditioned by them. Her delicate constitution, loss of appetite and teary eyes recall her earthly origin as a delicate southerner and her heavenly origin as the Crimson-pearl Flower, but also situates her among other women in *Hong Lou Meng* as well as her literary predecessors.

The association of Daiyu's identity with her symptom set implicates those with similar pathologies, particularly women. While in fiction and drama of the Ming and earlier, consumption affected men and women equally, consistent with *yin-yang* medical theory, in *Hong Lou Meng* it is clearly a syndrome of young women.[43] It is not an innovation of the Qing novel to emphasize the blood-based nature of women's illnesses and the *qi-based* (or even *jing* 精 essence-based) natures of male maladies, but medical casebooks were partially responsible for creating separate categories of illness for men and women beyond those related to pregnancy and childbirth. Fictional narratives of medicine in the late Ming and Qing propagated that distinction. Discussions in medical texts of consumption along with

menstrual disorders as common among women patients of Ming-Qing dynasty physicians, whether indicating an epidemic or simply a growing fear among the medical community, implicitly puts them both in one nosological category. Static congestion could easily be associated with sexual frustration; blood with menstruation; fever, sweating and haptic fire with suppressed passion or lovesickness. The medical knowledge produced in medical and fictional narratives of the late Ming and Qing defined these illnesses as symptoms of being a woman.[44]

Daiyu's illness is frequently depicted as relating to blood. She coughs up blood-flecked phlegm (that itself has been congested) on a number of occasions, with more blood being associated with a more advanced state of illness.[45] For Daiyu, there is also a symbolic connection between blood and tears.[46] Tears are linked to her flushed face when, for instance, she is composing poems for Baoyu on handkerchiefs on the subject of tears. She had only half-filled the second handkerchief when she became aware that her whole body was burning hot all over and her cheeks were afire. She removes the brocade from the mirror and peers into it, seeing a face stare out at her that is "brighter than the peach-flower's hue, little imagining that what she had been witnessing was the first symptom of a serious illness."[47] Emphasis on blood and tears further heightens the femininity of consumption, created in late imperial medical casebooks

The essence of the consumptive beauty, the ailing, lovesick maiden, is her weakness, her (repressed) sexuality, her loneliness and her ephemerality. Daiyu epitomizes this archetypal case when she says of Baoyu,

> I know that my illness is gradually gaining a hold on me. (The doctors say that the weakness and anemia I suffer from may be the beginnings of consumption). So even if I am your true love, I fear I may not be able to wait for you. And even though you are mine, you can do nothing to alter my fate.[48]

She then breaks into tears. She is alone and wedded to her fate. This

tragic posture is all the more so because it happens to someone so young, so physically beautiful (frail, glowing and rosy-hued) and of such refined personality, none of which she would have were she not ill with this particular affliction. But she would not be ill were it not for these preexisting conditions. While the case of Daiyu is unique because of its karmic retribution it adheres to the case history of lovesick young women.

The narrative also implies that such a patho-condition is "improper." The illness suggested by Daiyu's symptom-set is improper because it is associated with passion and sex, through metaphors of repression and blood, although Daiyu has not engaged in any sexual behavior. Grandmother Jia says of her diagnosis, "If her illness is of a respectable nature, I do not mind how much we have to spend to get her better. But if she is suffering from some form of lovesickness, no amount of medicine will cure it and she can expect no further sympathy from me either."[49] The meaning of consumption as constructed by the traditional consumptive case casts doubt on Daiyu's character in the eyes of Grandmother Jia. Grandmother Jia says, "I know that Miss Lin's peculiar temperament is in some ways attractive. But I don't think we could possibly have her as a wife for Baoyu. Besides, I'm afraid that with such a delicate constitution she is unlikely to live to any age."[50] Consumption in *Hong Lou Meng* is constructed as a disease of women with an overabundance of repressed passion and longing, the symptoms of which cause her to be all the more desirable. Thus, while Daiyu has no power and is not sexually active, she is a threat to the family name and family line because of her sexuality, apparent in the manifestations of her illness. This is another example of *qing bu qing*: having a disease of passion without having had sex. Daiyu's case reflects the same paradox of contemporary medical casebooks, namely that women are susceptible to consumption because it is affiliated with blood (which always already recalls menstrual blood, sex, birth and contamination) and it is affiliated with repressed sentiment and unexpressed passion.[51] In medical cases it becomes the chaste, female counterpart of the male case of venereal disease.[52]

Hong Lou Meng produces medical knowledge and character

archetypes simultaneously by assigning consumption primarily to young, frail, beautiful maidens who are lovesick, and to those who owe a karmic debt.[53] It merges content and form of medical casebooks and fictional narrative. *Hong Lou Meng* is consistent in making a shift from the sexual desire found in late Ming works such as *Jin Ping Mei* to more subtle and more repressed emotions common in fiction of the Qing.[54] The depiction of consumption in *Hong Lou Meng* is significantly gendered and retains some of the taint of sex that it had in the Ming, but it also relies meaningfully on the symptoms of consumption as a chronic, wasting disease in a way that previous representations do not. Many of the sensitive young women in *Hong Lou Meng* are sick of over-heatedness, or unnamed ailments with symptoms similar to those of consumption, but it is Daiyu and Skybright who typify this traditional case.[55] *Hong Lou Meng* presents selected cases as examples of illnesses that can be avoided by the reader and explicitly posited itself as literati medicine and implicitly as warning of the dangers of repressed desire.[56] In doing so, it reproduced fabricated medical realities found in doctor's casebooks, and also joined in that tradition of medical narrative.

NOTES

[1] I would like to thank Dore Levy, Marta Hanson and Shang Wei for reading earlier drafts of this article and providing valuable comments. Responsibility for remaining errors is, of course, my own.

[2] It is common in the west to emphasize the narrative structure of the case genre, as well as the narrative structure of medical knowledge in general. See for example, Kathryn Montgomery Hunter, *Doctor's Stories: The Narrative Structure of Medical Knowledge*, Princeton UP, 1991; Julia Epstein, *Altered Conditions: Disease, Medicine and Storytelling* (New York: Routledge, 1995); Lawrence Rothfield, *Vital Signs: Medical Realism in Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, Princeton: Princeton UP, 1992). Judith Zeitlin, Charlotte Furth, Chirstopher Cullen, Xiong Bingzhen 熊秉真and Joanna Grant all have done work on the medical case in China from which this study has benefited.

[3] An important exception is Jia Baoyu, but space limitations prevent a

discussion of his case here.

[4] The writing of medical case narratives dates back at least to those of Chuyu Yi 淳于意 whose case studies were recorded around 100 B.C.E. by Sima Qian in Chapter 105 of the *Shi Ji* 史記. Doctor-patient encounters have also been recorded in the *Zhou Li* 周禮, *Rites of Zhou*, the *Zuo Zhuan* 左傳, and the *Lüshi Chunqiu* 呂氏春秋.

[5] Wang Ji's 汪機 (1463–1539) *Shishan yian* 石山醫案, Jiang Guan's 江瓘 (1503–65) *Mingyi leian* 名醫類案, and the case histories of Zhou Zhigan 周之干 and Sun Yikui 孫一奎 were all published in the sixteenth century. See also Grant, 53.

[6] Xu's medical casebook, written at approximately the time of *Hong Lou Meng*, was published posthumously in 1855 with commentaries by Wang Mengying 王孟英. The *Nüke Yian* 女科醫案, the *Huixi Yian Tangren Fa* 涸溪醫案唐人法, and the *Yean Pimiu* 葉案批謬 are falsely attributed to Xu.

[7] Cullen 297–324, 18; See also Bray 314; and Grant 53.

[8] A novel for our purposes, is a long fictional narrative with a cohesive plot that is the creation of one author, or in the case of *Hong Lou Meng,* two.

[9] Cheng Zeng 程曾 writes in his preface to the *Shishan Yian* that the use readers would make of Wang Ji's case histories was akin to that made by legal experts of settled cases *duanan* 斷案, dated 1531. Sun Yikui's 孫一奎 definition of a medical case written in a preface to his 1584 edition of *Chi shui xuan zhu* (*Pearls retrieved from the Crimson Sea* 赤水玄珠) makes a similar connection. See Judith Zeitlin, "The Literary Fashioning of Medical Authority." see also Furth 2005; Grant, 172 n. 165; and Cullen, 97.

[10] Cullen 28; Hanan 303.

[11] There is a confluence of structural conventions between medical and legal cases. For instance, a common convention of the crime case story, like that of the medical case, is for the detective or judge to come across a case only after several predecessors have accused and imprisoned the wrong man. The narrating doctor similarly encounters a case only after several other doctors have already misdiagnosed the illness and complicated it by prescribing the wrong drugs. It seems a logical form to employ by a single doctor-author if he were trying to increase his reputation by deriding the talents of his competitors.

[12] Zeitlin,"Literary Fashioning of Medical Authority," forthcoming.

[13] Most medical cases follow a general form. The sex of the patient is

listed, followed by their age, a brief description of their appearance, followed by some etiology or explanation along with resulting symptoms. Sometimes these are described in great detail, including information about a variety of bodily functions. It is common to write that the patient had previously seen a physician whose remedies were useless or hastened the course of the illness. The author of the case is then called for, takes pulses, makes a diagnosis, expounds on the syndrome or illness, its origins and treatment. He then prescribes medication, and finally relates the outcome of the treatment and whether there were any later recurrences of the illness. In most cases there is no mention of payment. The issue of money is significant, since in fiction it is only the effective, hobbyist, scholar-doctors (*ruyi*) that decline offers of payment. Quacks who precede the good doctor and worsen the illness usually accept whatever money is offered.

[14] Charlotte Furth, "Producing Medical Knowledge Through Cases."

[15] The narration of the medical cases approximates the format of fiction not only by including a surplus of detail and records of quotidian life, but also by sometimes incorporating dialogue, plot twists and background stories. These strategies display a marked self-consciousness of the physician-author of his readers. The late Ming medical casebook was both a part of and a contributor to a well-developed print culture by and for the literati, just like that of the novel.

[16] Furth, forthcoming.

[17] I use the term "consumption" for 癆, 癆瘵. It was thought to be contagious as early as the Western Jin Dynasty (265–316 C.E.), and was posited to be caused by "consumption worms" by the Song (960–1279). As in medical literature, consumption in fiction is not always differentiated from "bone steaming" 骨蒸 or "taxation cough" 勞嗽, 勞咳.

[18] *Hong Lou Meng,* along with other novels like *Jing Hua Yuan* 鏡花緣, was used by some readers to diagnose themselves. This is evidenced by the wide-spread availability in pharmacies of medicines particular to characters in those novels. See Schonebaum, 25.

[19] The narrative of *Hong Lou Meng* also admits to omitting the details of Skybright's convalescence, "不必細說," *Jin Yu Yuan* 金玉緣: 53.1b; Modern (Li Ren 里仁書局) edition: 53.819, *The Story of the Stone:* 53.556.

[20] The scholar-doctor is painted in generous strokes by Cao Xueqin, who

chose for himself or was given the familiar name 雪芹 "Xueqin." The coincidence of his name and another Cao Xueqin, 曹雪芹, the masterful doctor of Tang *Chuanqi* stories, could hardly have escaped his notice if it did escape his intention. See "Cao Xueqin diagnoses illnesses" (*Cao Xueqin Kan Bing* 曹雪芹看病) and "A Folk Remedy Saves the Locals" (*Minjian Yanfang Jiu Xianglin* 民間驗方救鄉鄰) *Zhongguo Chuanqi* 中國傳奇 283–88, 291–96.

[21] Xu, 19a-b. The case is the followed by an addendum, presumably that of Xu Dachun, of the prescription for re-growing the penis in fifty days.

[22] In addition to approximating the form of the legal case, medical cases have also been compared to *zhiguai* 志怪 "tales of the strange," and "unofficial histories" (*yeshi* 野史), characterized by brief, anecdotal accounts of events, purportedly witnessed or heard about by the author, which are written in simple prose and mainly unadorned by literary figures such as allusion or metaphor (Zeitlin 2005).

[23] One example is Joanna Grant's discussion of Wang Ji recording the case of a man suffering from recurrent swellings. His case is narrated in a chronological fashion, covering a duration of several months. The events include two visits by the physician, two letters sent to him by the patient and a number of encounters between the patient and other physicians who are trying to persuade him to abandon the course of treatment recommended by Wang Ji (Grant 74).

[24] Idema 41, identifies this same trend.

[25] Xu Dachun writes in 1757 that opposed to the *Shanghan Lun* and *Huangdi Neijing*, "in the case of illnesses affecting the source and origin [of one's existence], one must wait for the gradual recovery of the [patient's] essential spirit. There is no principle whatsoever allowing for a quick growth of one's essential spirit!" (*Yixue Yuan Liulun*, 醫學源流論, 卷下, 6b, trans. in Unschuld 285–6).

[26] *The Story of the Stone* 1:.150; *Jin Yu Yuan* ch. 6, 1b; Liren edition 1:.110.

[27] The *Hong Lou Meng* prefaces (or early parts of chapter one, depending on which text one uses), like those of other novels, claim that the text itself can relieve melancholy and protect its readers from disease by serving as an example of what not to do. See Schonebaum, "For the Relief of Melancholy: The Early Chinese Novel as Palliative," in *Depression and Narrative*, ed.

Hillary Clark, New York: SUNY Press, forthcoming.

[28] The Story of the Stone 50; Liren, 4; Jin Yu Yuan 1a.

[29] The room in which he falls asleep foreshadows the sexual implications of their and Baoyu's fates, there are ornaments from the lascivious empress Wu Zetian, and the two famous beauties who died of longing and toppled the empire Xi Shi and Yang Gueifei, respectively.

[30] That the twelve female protagonists hail from Jinling (Nanjing), and Daiyu from Yangzhou, suggests that their fates may be bound to their sensitive and delicate constitutions. See Hanson 515–50.

[31] Obviously characters other than the twelve of Jinling, notably Zhen Yinglian (Caltrop) are fated to fall ill, from karma and from a combination of her geographical and individual background (Suzhou, intellectual) and her current circumstances (persecuted by Jingui and others). See chapters 80 and 103.

[32] Dore Levy was one of the first to discuss karmic or "retributory illness" as allegory in *Hong Lou Meng*. See Levy, 67–101.

[33] *Jin Yu Yuan* 1b–2a. His studio name was Miao Fuxuan 妙複軒 (fl. 1828–50). The first printed edition of *Hong Lou Meng* to include his comments and the "How to Read *Hong Lou Meng*" essay was published in 1881. Almost all commentary editions afterward reprinted it in whole or abbreviated versions.

[34] One of the major themes in *Hong Lou Meng* is that of *qing bu qing*, 情不情, the problem of which illustrates the author's ambiguous attitude toward (excessive) emotion. *Qing bu qing* can be defined in three ways, the first of which is feeling for the non-feeling, such as flowers, stones and pictures. A second interpretation of *qing bu qing* is that it points to the breakdown between self and other, feeling one character's pain so intimately that it seems as if it is one's own. This also suggests karmic retribution in which the pain or illness suffered by a character is actually that of their own previous incarnation, and those who sympathize most deeply were related to that person in a past life. This kind of feeling without feeling is actually an extreme form of self-indulgence. A final interpretation of *qing bu qing* is that of feeling too deeply and becoming unfeeling, which seems to be ultimately what happens to Baoyu.

[35] The "five phases" medical theory is based on notions of productive and

conquest cycles. In this case, liver-wood-spring supports heart-fire-summer which supports lungs-metal-fall. One phase's deficiency effects the next in the production cycle like a domino effect, which is why Daiyu's liver deficiency can manifest in coughing and expectoration of blood.

[36] See Plaks, and Yim, 94–97.

[37] The Story of the Stone 1.70; Jin Yu Yuan 2.2a (175).

[38] 降珠草 literally "Crimson pearl grass." "Crimson" in Chinese medicine is indicative of a deep heat and thus can be read as a symbol of consumption, Liren edition 6, *Jin Yu Yuan* 3b.

[39] *Jin Yu Yuan* ch. 3, p.7a ; Liren editon 1: 53.

[40] The congenital or even pre-genital nature ("primordial spirit" *yuanqi* 元氣) of her illness is described early in the novel, "Her speech and manner already showed unusual refinement. They also noticed the frail body which seemed scarcely strong enough to bear the weight of its clothes, but which yet had an inexpressible grace about it, and realizing that she must be suffering from some deficiency, asked her what medicine she took for it and why it was still not better. 'I have always been like this,' said Daiyu. 'I have been taking medicine ever since I could eat and been looked at by ever so many well-known doctors, but it has never done me any good'" (*Jin Yu Yuan,* ch. 3, p. 2b–3b; *Story of the Stone* 1: 90–91).

[41] Ginseng Tonic Pills 人參養榮丸, Celestial Emperor Heart-Supplementing Elixir 天王補心丹, and Black Ethereal Essence, 黑逍遙, are consistent with *yin* deficiency and blood congestion.

[42] Similar lists in *The Story of the Stone* 1.102–3; 4.78; 4.342; (ch 34, ch 83, ch 97).

[43] Consider the example of Student Zhang and Cui Yingying in *Xi Xiang Ji* in which they both contract consumption from a mutual lovesickness.

[44] The Red Inkstone commentary (although not widely circulated) associated Daiyu with blood from the very beginning. When she is first described in chapter three, there is an interlineal comment that reads, "How lamentable! A passage where every word of every sentence is a drop of blood" in 35a (3.2a).

[45] *The Story of the Stone* 4.67 coughed up phlegm in which is thick wriggling strand of dark red blood. 4.68, 4.340 (vomited blood), ch 97 blood and phlegm.

[46] 'Still weeping tears of blood about our separation' (2.55) ch 28 and poem on 2.39. Daiyu also recalls the cuckoo, weeping tears of blood calling listeners home, to the land of illusion.

[47] *The Story of the Stone* 2.168. Later in the novel Nightingale runs in to find "Daiyu red in the face, the fire from her liver having risen upwards and inflamed her cheeks" (4.355) *Jin yu Yuan* 97.5b.

[48] *The Story of the Stone* 2.132 Liren 501 *Jin Yu Yuan* 32.3b. 勞怯之症 "taxation vacuity" is a pattern of symptoms indicating severe deficiency of *qi*, blood or the organs, including bone steaming and consumption.

[49] *The Story of the Stone* 4: 343; *Liren* edition 3: 1500, *Jin Yu Yuan* ch. 97, p.2a Lovesickness was primarily shameful because it was a disease that one should be able to control, before it became the more serious bone-steaming or consumption. Daiyu is told not to worry so much – that she is making herself ill on at least three occasions, *Stone* 1.410, 2.134, 4.67. It is obvious that her illness is linked to her emotions also when she resolves to commit suicide by deliberately destroying her health (*Stone* 4.210).

[50] The Story of the Stone 4: 218; Jin Yu Yuan, ch. 90, p.2b–3a.

[51] There are other mentions of consumption in *Hong Lou Meng* that contribute to the image of the wasting, lovesick, maiden. Skybright, who is identified by Zhang Xinzhi as being a shadow of Daiyu, also falls ill of consumption. She is even more obviously the beautiful, tragic dying young maiden. She is maligned by Baoyu's mother, dismissed and sent home, where the consumption she was diagnosed with earlier and had since been in remission reoccurs and from which she quickly dies. Her illness is named in chapters 53 (2.555), 61 (3.168 not in Hawkes), 69 (3.372), 78 (3.554), (3.563) and 117 (5.307). It is also suggested that Wuer, "Fivey," is a shadow of Skybright, and she is also beautiful, frail and ill, ch 109 (5.179). Shi Xiangyun's husband is also diagnosed with consumption, but the diagnosis brings relief since he is in no immediate danger. It is karmic, "only to watch him being taken slowly and inexorably by an illness whose roots must surely lie in some previous lifetime." (5.205).

[52] At the end of the novel, Zhen Shiyin explains to Jia Yucun the meaning of the illness and death encountered by so many of the stories' female protagonists, "The fact of the matter is that all these noble ladies to whom you refer hail from the Skies of Passion and the Seas of Retribution. Since olden

times their sex has been under a natural obligation to remain pure, pure from lust, pure even from the slightest taint of passion." *Story of the Stone* 5.372; *Jin Yu Yuan,* 120.7a.

[53] This is explicitly stated about Skybright when she is dismissed because of her consumption by Lady Wang, "During her latest spell of sickness, which must have been going on now for the better part of a fortnight, we've had her looked at by the doctor and he says she's got some kind of consumption – a kind that is quite common, apparently, in unmarried girls; so I've sent her back to her own people and told them that we shan't be wanting her here again if she gets better" (*Story of the Stone* 3: 554; *Jin Yu Yuan* ch. 78, 1a).

[54] For more on this shift, see Martin Huang, 57–86. The shift may be exemplified in a comparison of Li Pinger in *Jin Ping Mei* who suffers from an illness that is similar to that of Lin Daiyu at its root, but both conditions are conflated with opposite causes and display opposing symptoms. While the problem ultimately has to do with her liver producing too much heat and inflaming her lungs, just as with Daiyu, because her illness is associated with taboo sex, she bleeds from too much circulation and agitation. Daiyu's blood is congested from too much sexual and emotional repression.

[55] The unnamed ailment is virtually a female case of its own. See, for instance, Miaoyu (Adamantina) who suffers from a weak constitution and Baochai who suffers from chronic and congenital over-heatedness *redu*.

[56] Xueqin writes in the first pages of *Hong Lou Meng*, "My only wish is that men in the world below may sometimes pick up this tale when they are recovering from sleep or drunkenness, or when they wish to escape from business worries or a fit of the dumps, and in doing so find not only mental refreshment but even perhaps, if they will heed its lesson and abandon their vain and frivolous pursuits, some small arrest in the deterioration of their vital forces" (*Story of the Stone*, 50; *Jin Yu Yuan*, 1.2b).

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