

The Propensity of Chinese Space: Architecture in the Novel *Dream of the Red Chamber*

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This article attempts to give an account of some of the discursive practices of Chinese space. It begins and ends with the interpretation of a single classic Chinese narrative work, *Dream of the Red Chamber* (*Honglou Meng*), by Cao Xue-qin. However, its scope also includes side-ventures into such diverse fields as garden aesthetics, allegory, and cosmology. Chinese culture is distinguished by an interweaving of architectural and literary-narrative space. Thus, Chinese literature often situates its narratives within architectural settings, while Chinese architecture often exemplifies experiences elucidated through literary texts. Our supposition here is that a text like *Dream of the Red Chamber* may be used to reveal the unseen workings of Chinese architecture, and so shed light on the way Chinese culture in general conceives of space.

This study begins with a conscious, strategic reading of the novel *Dream of the Red Chamber* (*Honglou Meng* — hereafter *HLM*), also known in English translation as *The Story of the Stone* (*SS*), by Cao Xue-qin.¹ The novel was written during the early Qing dynasty, circa the mid-eighteenth century.² *HLM* is today considered one of China's most prized novels, and scholars have classified it as part of the critical-realism movement in Chinese literature.³

HLM provides an impressive account of the daily affairs of the Jia family, including the love story of two protagonists, Jia Bao-yu and Lin Dai-yu. It follows the family's glory days through their final decline, all the while immersing the reader in an abundance of detail concerning daily life in China during the period. Descriptions of setting are particularly detailed, principally of the family's mansions and gardens, especially its Garden of Total Vision. Indeed, a startling number and variety of buildings are portrayed in *HLM* — along with such related aspects of traditional Chinese culture as manners, religion, philosophy, entertainment, medicine, and family values — all in an attempt to faithfully depict a microcosm of society.

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Meanwhile, through allegories, metaphors, dreams, poems, and other literary devices, the book relates itself to other important moments in Chinese literature and history.

On many levels, Cao Xue-qin wanted his text to be read as “a true record of real events” (*HLM* 1.1.6; *SS* 1.1.51). However, in the context of everyday life, such a simple proposition is ultimately quite complex. It implies that literature may serve as the vehicle for the revelation of architectural settings, and that architecture may exemplify experiences first elucidated in literature. As the reader discovers the architecture of *HLM*, he or she comes face to face with the many problems attached to this desire to transplant narrative into reality. Nevertheless, this intermingling of narrative and spatial principles does shed light on the way Chinese culture conceives of space, in particular how transformations of space may be tied to social meanings. This article uses an analysis of *HLM* to investigate characteristic qualities of the Chinese conception of space. And since the fictional spaces in *HLM* embody social and cultural phenomena, our investigation will also touch on other aspects of Chinese thought. For example, in Chinese culture, what determines the beauty of a piece of calligraphy, a painting, or a landscape?

Before we begin, we would like to stress that internal divisions of space and time are culture specific. Hence, the perceived relationship between space and time is not the same in every culture.⁴ Indeed, there may be as many forms of space as there are cultures. Multicultural consciousness, coupled with the erosion of disciplinary boundaries and the increased interest in cultural and aesthetic theories, has engendered new areas of research on the built environment. The proposition here is that each culture embodies an

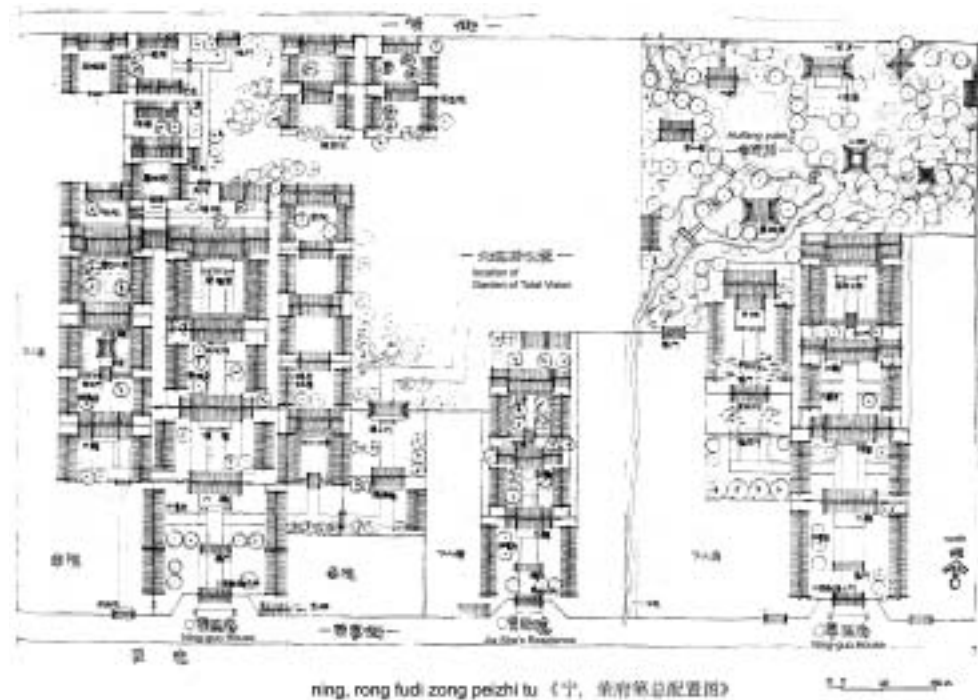
untapped spatial conception — moreover, that a significant share of this understanding has to do with “fictions.”⁵ It was this awareness of cultural difference that first led us to identify a certain fluid quality to the Chinese conception of space. And it is this propensity for spatial change that we hope to investigate through a careful rereading of *HLM*. In the process, we hope to arrive at a better understanding of the general relationship between perception and space, and of the consequences of this relationship for patterns of thought.

ARCHITECTURE IN *DREAM OF THE RED CHAMBER*

We launch directly into our analysis of *HLM*, attempting to be *au fait* with its spatial meanings, while remaining vigilant to what has been written in general about the Chinese sense of space, especially garden space.

One of the book’s most important settings is its Garden of Total Vision (*Daguan yuan*), a component of the Jia family’s mansion complex. The Garden of Total Vision is both an imperial garden built for the visit of the Royal Concubine, Yuan-chun, and a private garden. As one of the main activity spaces in the book, it is developed as a dominant image in the reader’s mind. The reader is given three different “tours” through the garden. In chapter 3, the garden is first encountered through the eyes of Dai-yu, its structure revealed slowly within the progression of narrative time as part of the entire spatial layout of the Jia mansion complex (FIG. 1). Such a treatment amalgamates architecture, characters and culture into a single scene expressing a total experience of space. The garden is then revisited in chapter 17, this time as part of an

FIGURE 1. Overall plan of the Jia mansions (Ning-guo and Rong-guo houses). Courtesy of Guan Huashan, *Honglou Meng zhong de jianzhu yanjiu* [Investigation into the Architecture of Dream of the Red Chamber] (Taipei: Jing yu xiang chuban she, 1984).



inspection tour by its owner, Jia Zheng.⁶ Here it is evaluated more as an ideal embodiment of the Qing garden, with reference to specific paradigms. In this sense, it is not only understood as a pleasure garden, but as a microcosm of nature, just as a landscape painting. Finally, in chapters 40 and 41, the garden is seen through the eyes of Grannie Liu, an uneducated peasant. Her visit enables Cao Xue-qin to describe its “superfluous” and ornate character further.

In keeping with the critical-realist style of the book, even though the garden is entirely imaginary and composed of fictional structures, actual principles of garden building have been followed in its design.⁷ For example, its datum stems from a stream that animates its spatial layout. The stream flows in a generally northeast to southwest direction after branching off from the stream that flows through the older *Huifang yuan* garden (FIG. 2). However, the reader’s encounter with the space through multiple narrations serves to emphasize its fluid spatial quality. In fact, descriptions of the entire Jia mansion complex oscillate between static and dynamic points of view.

In this regard, each “tour” of the garden may be seen to have its own emphasis. As an “outsider” (not a family member), Dai-yu’s early narration is objective and sober. Meanwhile, as the garden’s owner, Jia Zheng’s visit is one of inspection and appraisal. Grannie Liu, curious about almost everything, informs the reader of the character of the residents of the garden via a superficial yet insightful appraisal of its architecture and ornament. Through these three complementary perspectives/views, *HLM* establishes a comprehensive framework of narrative space. This, in turn, allows the imagined space and architecture to influence the time structure/sequence of the narrative.

THE KALEIDOSCOPE SPACE

One may gain a better appreciation of the use of space in the novel if one understands how *HLM* fits within broader traditions of Chinese thought. From the beginning of Chinese history, artistic pursuits have been viewed as a route to self-actualization.⁸ Thus, Chinese reasoning may appear to “weave” along horizontally, from one case to another — each case eventually leading to and merging with the next. Unlike Western logic, which seeks to establish a single commanding theoretical perspective, Chinese logic more closely resembles a journey. Thus, stages in the development of an idea may be linked in ways that do not exclude other possibilities. In fact, alternative worlds may temporarily run alongside the path one is following, or even intersect with it. Nevertheless, by the end of the journey, experience is gained, and an impression of the mental landscape is made. Along the way, not everything is visible and clear; rather, the view unfolds like the painted image on a Chinese hand-scroll, and is meant to be appreciated in a linear sequence over time.

Such a habit of mind tends to conceive of human experience in terms broader than the particular configuration of the proceedings at hand. Furthermore, everything involved in this unfolding process is permeated by a tendency toward renewal. Thus, in *HLM*, an illusory, ideal world is projected within the walls of the “kaleidoscope” garden (the Garden of Total Vision). And through contrast with its surroundings, the garden is shown to reveal the burdens of the idealized image, likened to a reduction of the cosmos.

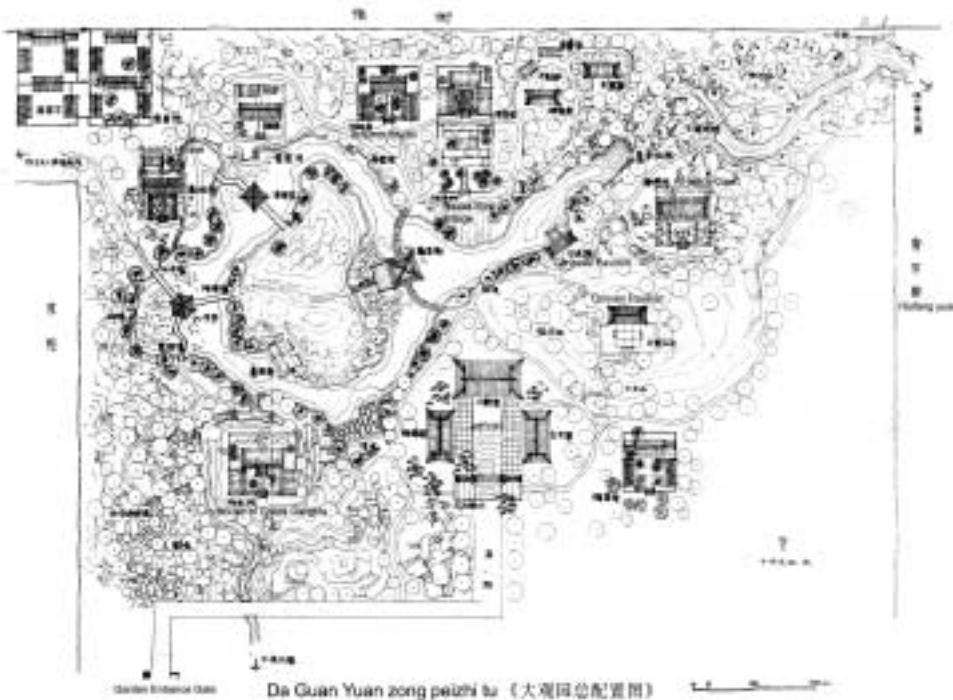


FIGURE 2. Plan of Garden of Total Vision. Courtesy of Guan Huashan, *Honglou Meng zhong de jianzhu yanjiu* [Investigation into the Architecture of Dream of the Red Chamber] (Taipei: Jing yu xiang chuban she, 1984).

TIME AND THE ABSTRACTION OF SPACE

As an expression of the above principles, the story of *HLM* takes place according to a temporal sequence that not only informs and supports the novel's spatial structure, but also stands apart as a relatively independent factor. This manifold significance of time allows the imaginary constructions of architecture in *HLM*, which pertain to space, to be distinguished from the narrative structure, which pertains to time.⁹

In general terms, spatial arts deal with entities and elements that are present simultaneously, while temporal arts deal with sequences or factors running in succession.¹⁰ However, in the case of *HLM*, objective time also acts as a spatial "stage" against which the complex narrative proceedings take place. Thus, even though the entire *HLM* is written based on a time sequence, there are only seven chapters in which time is clearly depicted. The architecture of *HLM* not only provides a backdrop to this complex narrative structure, but more importantly, it becomes the principal "image" of the narrated space. In other words, the subject matter of the novel seems to be taken over by its architecture.

Ultimately, this interrelation of time and space means that the treatment and sequencing of scenes is dictated in part by the novel's imagined spatial structures.¹¹ Within a Chinese garden, the sense of spatial structure depends to a great extent on one's route and the sequence of views it affords. In general terms, a route may be either direct or indirect, depending on the choices one makes. In this regard, the narrative of *HLM* provides two main paths of spatial interpretation: Jia Zheng's inspection visit in chapter 17 using indirect routes, and Yuan-Chun's grand visit in chapter 18 using formal pathways.¹² In a garden, a number of devices may be used to imbue such sequences of experience with resonance and rhythm: paths may deliberately wind to limit views; they may play on a sense of reality and illusion; or they may contrast such qualities as openness and enclosure. Experience of garden space may further be altered by distortions of scale, including distortions caused by the time it takes to move from one vantage point to another.

One of Cao Xue-qin's strategies in *HLM* is to set a procession of architectural images, a sort of movie presentation, before the reader. Through images, one understands. But such total immersion in architectural images also determines in part the reader's sense of narrative development. Thus, space not only forms the platform of the story, but it influences its very workings. Vice-versa, as events move from one place to another, they constantly transform space.

Such a typically Chinese perspective involves an ongoing dialogue between zones of the visible and invisible. In *HLM*, Cao Xue-qin uses this dialogue to formulate specific narrative elements and create tensions between them. Such linkages also allow the narrative to make use of the propensity of represented places for spatial change. In the Chinese conception of reality, space circulates, bestowing a particular

orientation to any composition, breathing vitality into it. This principle is here used to animate narrative references, much as garden space is animated by changing viewpoints. Cao Xue-qin can thus endow narrative elements with greater effectiveness, allowing the story to achieve maximum impact.

Another way of conceiving of the above relationship is that the narrative oscillates between "seeing" and "going," which aims to make the reader "see." However, this narrative mapping of space sometimes makes the physical space difficult to understand. A good example occurs in chapter 3:

After being carried for what seemed a very great length of time . . . the chair proceeded some distance more down the street . . . after traversing the distance of a bow-shot inside, half turned a corner and set the chair down.

(SS 1.3.87–88, HLM 1.3.37)

Such descriptions of narrative space reveal an inherent dynamism. This is further exacerbated with cartographic direction markers such as front, back, left, right, *yin* and *yang*. This sort of narration appears to describe the space with topological precision, but in effect, it makes it difficult to grasp the real physical space involved. Such a false sense of precision has led to many differences of opinion regarding the actual constructed plan of the Garden of Total Vision.

Such descriptions may be likened to a calligraphic ideogram or the spatial character of a landscape painting, especially one presented on a hand scroll. Indeed, it is quite accurate to correlate the Chinese perception of space as expressed in a garden with the shifting perspective of a Chinese landscape painting. In Chinese painting, a strictly optical perspective is rejected as a means of simulating nature, in favor of a more literary pursuit of meaning.¹³ However, unlike time-based narratives, which bring the reader from one place to another, taking account of the space between, the Chinese landscape painting may be understood to do the opposite (FIG. 3). It presents a discrete viewpoint without giving any sense of how the represented elements are joined to one another. One can make an arresting comparison here between the Chinese tradition and the work of Paul Cézanne.¹⁴ Unlike works of art based on perspectival representation (limited to presenting one moment in time from one viewpoint), the Chinese landscape painting is concerned with temporal as well as spatial relationships.

In the overall system of Chinese art, gardens may thus be understood as being designed to resemble paintings, whereas paintings are made to evoke the disposition of gardens. This reciprocal relationship highlights the discursive nature of Chinese conceptions of space. The central point, however, is that a similar conception of space impinges on all three fields of representation: literature, painting and architecture. Thus, in chapter 42 Xue Bao-chai dispenses these instructions to Xi-chun, who is charged with representing the garden in painting:



FIGURE 3. Painting of the Garden of Total Vision. Courtesy of Zengping butu shitou ji, Shanghai Library Collection, Shanghai tushu guan cang.

... the Garden itself was designed rather like a painting, with every rock, every tree, every building in it carefully and precisely placed in order to produce a particular scenic effect; ... to make them into a composition. You have to decide which to bring into the foreground and which to push into the background, which to leave out altogether, and which to show only in glimpses.

(SS 11.42.337–338, HLM 1.42.571)

PERCEPTION AND ORIENTATION OF SPACE

As already mentioned, the Chinese understand all space to be an expression of the original vitality of nature, known as *qi*. *Qi* explains how the world functions and is animated. In this way, everything in a landscape is endowed with a particular, ever-renewing propensity for change. For the Chinese, this sense of space (as forever circulating) flows through all existing things, continuously transforming the “cosmos.”

Every space may also be understood as a reflection of the culture that construes it through its interpretation and reworking of nature. One way cultures do this is by establishing boundaries to satisfy the human requirement for order. Unlike Western gardens, Chinese gardens place great emphasis on such expressions of enclosure — in essence, the physical separation of particular space from general space. In Chinese culture it is important to be able to grasp one’s position in space, time and society, and the establishment of a structure of tangible spatial references greatly facilitates this process of orientation.

In the macro view, cosmic orientation, the most primary conceptual opposition is between heaven and earth, creating the primitive experience of *being* on the earth. Understanding the paths of the sun and stars further offers a sense of direction. Meanwhile, understanding the rhythm of the seasons, of dusk and dawn, enables a differentiation of temporal experience within the same space, contrasting today’s events with “tangible” memories of the past.

A sense of orientation may also be derived from perceptible topography, the coincident sense of being in relation to near and far. In the Chinese garden, such references may be created through the use of “borrowed” scenery (FIG. 4).¹⁵ Alternatively, they may emerge from the expression of dualities, such as between center and boundary, inside and outside.¹⁶ Chinese garden design employs all these orientation strategies to establish the sense of tangible spatial form within indeterminate “natural space.” It thus makes the world comprehensible, enabling meaningful human interrelation with it, and providing an important tool to understand the concept of *qi*.

ANALYSIS OF FORMAL AND INFORMAL SPACES

As described above, since “natural space” is infinite, clear divisions and boundaries are needed to make it visible. Thus, when an interior is separated from an exterior, an abstract threshold is engendered between two worlds, which is made discernible by a physical boundary. In this regard, Guan Huashan has identified four architectural levels in the

FIGURE 4. The pagoda in the distance forms part of the composition of the garden, a typical example of “borrowed scenery.” Due to its siting, however, the Garden of Total Vision did not have this luxury. Image from the authors’ private collection (Suzhou, Zhuozheng yuan).



spatial order of *HLM*: mansion, court, room, and bay.¹⁷ This spatial order is strictly hierarchical, stemming from the teachings of Confucianism. In fact, the bay (*jian*), is the basic unit of space in Chinese architecture, defined as the space between columns.¹⁸ And the Chinese word for space, itself, *kongjian*, represents the creation and ordering of empty volumes as a result of the “enclosure,” or bounding, of three-dimensional space by architectonic elements — windows, thresholds, screens, roofs, etc.

Within the austere ceremonial atmosphere of the mansions of *HLM*, the act of entering doors or crossing thresholds is further meant to convey a sense of place with reference to an abstract matrix of family, society and country. Each such crossing reveals distinctions between layers of space, between inside and outside, reality and illusion.¹⁹ Of course, walls most clearly define the distinction between inside and outside, since they manage transitions across a threshold by means of openings that can be consciously experienced. And within a walled enclosure the tangible presence and solidity of the walls and the balance between space and mass also impart a sense of security (FIG. 5). However, not all boundaries are as clear, and in a world such as that of *HLM* one must remain always oriented to the periphery of the space one occupies.

The demarcation of inner and outer space in the world of *HLM* also separates male and female realms. Thus, the inner domain contains the living quarters of the owners, which is also the activity space of its women, who may not violate an imaginary line symbolized by the “threshold.”²⁰ Outside the imaginary line gentlemen conduct themselves in their affairs; but outsiders, especially males, are not granted access to the inner domain. Servants act as messengers between the inner and outer domain, zealously guarding this sanctified boundary.

The importance of this sense of threshold and order, and of the layering of spaces in *HLM*, is demonstrated in the narration of New Year’s Eve celebration in the Ning and Rong mansions.

... the central doors of the main outer gate, of the ornamental gate, of the outer reception hall, of the pavilion-gate, of the inner reception hall, of the triple gate dividing the inner from the outer parts of the mansion, and of the inner ornamental gate were all thrown open, so that a way was opened up from the street right through into the family hall inside.

(SS 11.63.667, HLM 1.63.724)

In *HLM* there are also a number of key terms used to describe the spatial character of rooms. Among these are “inner realm,” “outer realm,” and “hall.” The difference expressed by these terms is quite precise. For example, if a room is divided into three areas, the middle area will be known as its outer realm. If it is a main room, this central space will be known as a hall, while the side areas will be known as its inner realm (or the side spaces of the room). If a room has five bays and the middle three are joined, the central area will also be known as a hall. Such a method of spatial categorization is further determined by the way the space is being used. But the principal distinction is that the outer realm faces outside while the inner realm represents personal space.

As is evident in *HLM*, the most esteemed space within the outer realm of a room is located in its innermost area, followed by the space to its left, and then the space to the right of the original space, and so on alternating, with the space closest to the door being the least esteemed. Similarly, when seated around a table, the order of relative value starts from the left of the most esteemed space. This most



FIGURE 5. A white-washed wall may provide a blank canvas against which to contrast elements and define space. Image from the authors’ private collection (Suzhou, Liuyuan).

esteemed space is normally occupied by a guest of high social standing or an esteemed family member.²¹ Furthermore, in the novel if the social status of a seated person is venerated, daughters-in-law are expected to stand in attendance.²² There are exceptions to this rule, however, as when male family members join in for meals; at such times, daughters-in-law may partake in the feast.²³

We have already taken note of the deliberate manipulation of entry and exit in *HLM* — the notion of threshold. As the above discussion reveals, social status within *HLM* is also signaled by stylized forms of reception, seating arrangements, and a host of other matters bounded by formal rules.²⁴ In fact, daily life in the novel revolves around the punctilious observance of etiquette. One consequence is that Cao Xue-qin may use the position of characters in the fictional space of the novel to denote their status. This is especially evident with relation to the structure of the mansion complex, composed of a series of courtyards ordered through an abstract notion of hierarchy, so that small changes in position — top, bottom, left, right, inner and outer — may determine their function. Such spaces also have a propensity for linear order, reflecting differences in status from top to bottom, outer to inner realm (FIGS. 6, 7).

As the basic spatial unit of the mansion complex, the courtyard establishes the order of adjacent buildings (main, side) and open spaces. And when a series of courtyards is arranged linearly, doors or gates may replace buildings. In this way the various spaces of the mansion complex express a great variety of social distinctions. An order of cartographic directions is also created, connecting the social order to the order to cosmology. Buildings thus help define areas as sacred and the profane, while changes in their patterns of use may endow them with qualities of sun or moon, giving them further philosophic meaning (FIG. 8). As courtyards are thus

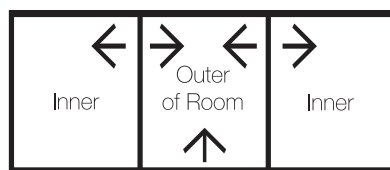
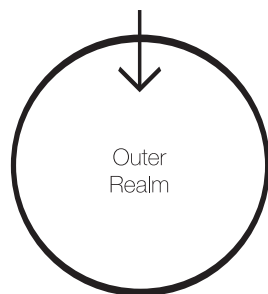
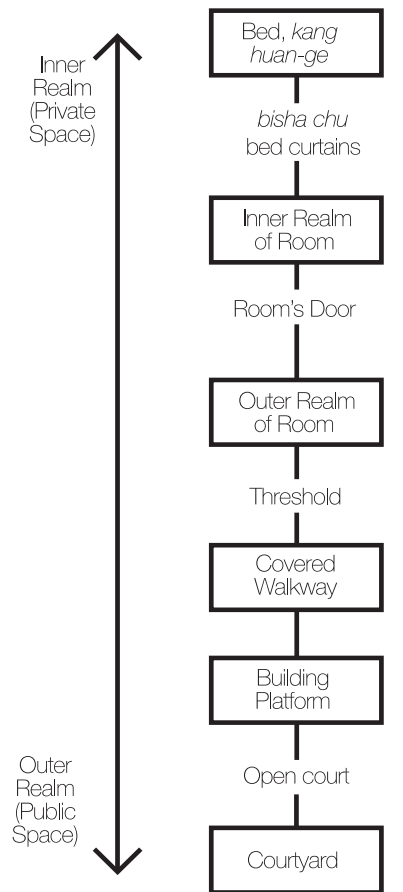


FIGURE 6. Inner and outer realm. Courtesy of Guan Huashan, Honglou Meng zhong de jianzhu yanjiu [Investigation into the Architecture of Dream of the Red Chamber] (Taipei: Jing yu xiang chuban she, 1984).



Inner and Outer Realm



Order of *jian* within space

FIGURE 7. Order of *jian* within space. Courtesy of Guan Huashan, Honglou Meng zhong de jianzhu yanjiu [Investigation into the Architecture of Dream of the Red Chamber] (Taipei: Jing yu xiang chuban she, 1984).

linked together to create a complex, they become increasingly proscribed by social conventions. This raises the social status of a mansion above that of a common person's house or that of an official. But such a mansion complex will always remain subordinate to a palace. The stability of such a social construction is ensured by the ability of its enclosing walls to maintain the sense of opposition between inner and outer worlds. In *HLM* Cao Xue-qin capitalizes on this distinction to create an allegory of the real and illusory world.

While a strict sense of order and formal spatial relationship prevails in the mansions of *HLM*, one is largely emancipated from such imperatives of formality in its gardens.²⁵ In this sense, Cao Xue-qin has inherited the literary legacy of the "traditional" romantic garden from earlier Chinese works such as *The Romance of the West Chamber*, *The Peony Pavilion*, and *The Golden Lotus*. His use of the garden topos is also similar to the centrality of the *locus amoenus* in many great passages of European allegory.²⁶ In both traditions, an enclosed landscape of secular pleasure serves as the tangible representation of the cornucopia of human experience. However, Chinese culture varies the significance it attaches to the allegorical garden by infusing it with a universality of

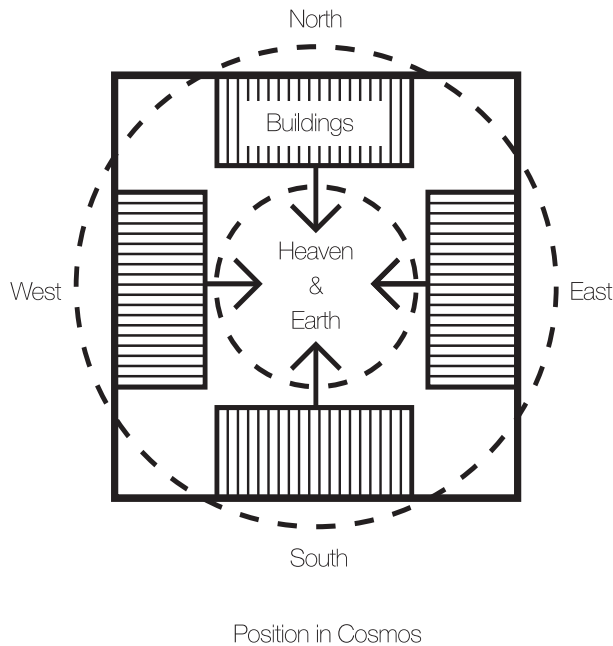


FIGURE 8. *Position in cosmos*. Courtesy of Guan Huashan, Honglou Meng zhong de jianzhu yanjiu [Investigation into the Architecture of Dream of the Red Chamber] (Taipei: Jing yu xiang chuban she, 1984).

desire and emotion. Thus, on the one hand, Cao Xue-qin uses enclosure walls, embedded with layers of symbolic meanings, to point out how the relationship between Bao-yu and Dai-yu is similar to that of Du Li-niang in *The Peony Pavilion*. Yet he also subjects the Garden to the narrative structure of *The Golden Lotus*, so alluding to love and desire. Nevertheless, the central fact is that the regulations and hierarchies of society outside are suspended once inside the garden's "safe" walls. However, Cao Xue-qin does draw a line between the innocent love within the Garden of Total Vision and the incestuous love in *The Golden Lotus* — and in the *Huifang yuan*, the older garden of *HLM*'s Rong Mansion.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE GARDEN IN THE NOVEL

The Garden of Total Vision is an imaginary garden. Why did Cao Xue-qin create this literary space, and what role does it play? Yu Yingshi has proposed that the garden in *HLM* symbolizes an ideal of duality in the relationship between reality and imagination.²⁷

Two underlying themes run throughout the novel: the rise and fall to disgrace of the family; and Bao-yu's complex love relationships. In relation to the former, the visit of the Imperial Concubine represents the pinnacle of the family's rise. The family's decay is later symbolized by the confiscation of its properties and the solitary atmosphere of its gathering in the garden's convex pavilion, *Tubi tang*. By contrast, Bao-yu's story

involves his growth in emotion and body, his knowledge of lust, his sensuous attachment, setbacks in love, self-deception, and realization and rejection of love. His story fundamentally serves as an avenue for an expression of opposition to the repression of love, and of its allegory in politics, the morals code.

It is significant that one of these narratives involves social order, the other sentimental principles. In fact, the ability of the two themes to complement and reinforce each other engenders much of the tragic aspect of *HLM*. Such a sense of opposition and complementarity is essential to the thinking of Cao Xue-qin. Throughout the novel the dualism of worlds takes many forms: Dream and Illusion; Garden and Reality; Love and Lust.²⁸ However, it is important to understand how in the world of the novel such opposed qualities may exist harmoniously and simultaneously, both in opposition and correlation. We will discuss the importance of this phenomenon of complementary bipolarity below. First, we will examine some additional ways that Cao Xue-qin uses spatial and architectural order to advance the narrative of *HLM*, and how its Garden of Total vision comments on larger issues of Chinese garden design.

ORDERING OF SPACE THROUGH SOCIAL LOGIC

A work of architecture not only produces a physical entity with a definite form, but also orders space into a social pattern. In fact, Bill Hillier and Julienne Hanson have argued that the ordering of space is as much a purpose of architecture as the construction of buildings themselves.²⁹ In this regard, garden architecture has contributed greatly to Chinese ideas of how a sense of reality emerges from a the cultural transformation of space to reflect social meanings.³⁰

Such a social conception of space underlies the imperative within the Chinese garden-design tradition to adorn major features with inscriptions that impart literary meanings. This practice has its origin in the close relationship between scholarship and architecture at aesthetic sites in China.³¹ In this way the "text" may become an integral part of a garden's visual composition, providing literary interpretation of the physical environment. As Jia Zhen says to Jia Zheng in chapter 17 of *HLM*:

All these prospects and flowers — even the rocks and trees and flowers will seem somehow incomplete without that touch of poetry which only the written word can lend a scene.
(SS 1.17.320325, *HLM* 1.17.217)

In this sense, no Chinese garden would be complete without calligraphic inscriptions to express the essence of particular scenes. Such inscriptions serve to remind viewers that the "natural" landscape owes both its existence and meaning to human consciousness. In *HLM* they further serve to carry the main message of the garden's program.

In the Chinese tradition, the pleasure garden also served as a vessel for interaction between elite members of a community. Often such visitors were engaged to memorialize the garden in verses, which might then be printed and circulated. Jia Zheng is following such a tradition when he asks his entourage of literary gentlemen and Bao-yu to compose poems, couplets or colophons on particular scenes in the Garden of Total Vision. As owner, this offers a platform for each contributor to showcase his talents, as well pay tribute to Jia Zheng.³² But the act of naming may also be seen as creating a world in which both the named and those who are able to identify with it are able differentiate their relationships. Such harmonious patterning may already be embedded in the system of language from which given names are selected.³³

As the creator of a fictional garden, however, Cao Xue-qin is able to go beyond even this relational process of naming. Throughout *HLM* he attempts to correlate certain of archetypal aspects of his characters to aspects of the environments in which they are presented. The subjective emotions and objective mannerisms of each character are thus correlated with discreet and independent views of space.

In *HLM* the reader's comprehension of the Garden of Total Vision is also affected by the nature and function of its buildings — which are either simple, elegant abodes for personal residence or enjoyment, or grand, ornamented structures for ceremonies. Especially in the case of the former, character is used to inform architecture and architecture is used to inform character.³⁴ For example, the House of Green Delights is designated for a passionate protagonist, Jia Bao-yu. It is described as a

. . . roofed gallery . . . in which a few rocks were scattered; . . . some green plantains were growing and . . . a weeping variety of Szechwan (Sichuan) crab, whose pendant clusters of double-flowering carmine blossoms hung by stems as delicate as golden wires on the umbrella-shaped canopy of its boughs. . . . [The] interior turned out to be all corridors and alcoves and galleries. . . . [Its] wooden paneling [was] exquisitely carved . . . [and] the overall effect was at once richly colorful . . . airy and graceful.

(SS 1.17.344–346, HLM 1.17.230–231)

The character of this place, like its owner, is shown to be opulent and imposing, contrasting red and green in its courtyard, containing lavish carvings in its interiors, and including *trompe l'oeil* doors and windows. Furthermore, its gigantic mirror and false openings allude to the mind's ability to delude itself. And its obscure and circuitous entrances transport residents and visitors alike to a realm where boundaries are intended to define rather than segregate. The extensive use of the color red is also analogous to a lady's room — an allusion to Bao-yu's affinity for ladies. Thus the ordering of space in buildings is really about the ordering of relations between people. According to Hillier and Hanson: "spatial organization is

a function of the form of social solidarity; and different forms of social solidarity are themselves built on the foundations of a society as both a spatial and a transpatial system."³⁵

This process of allegory extends to the plants of the garden. Thus, the bamboos in Naiad's House, the plantains in House of Green Delights, and the spices in All-Spice Court all exhibit the characteristics of their inhabitants. The allegory of plants within the garden is particularly poignant with respect to the bamboos of the Naiad's house. Bamboos were traditionally used to describe lofty aspirations and character. But the name Xaoxiang in Naiad's House reminds the reader of the allegory of Naiad's Tears, *Xiangfei zhu*, conveyed through Tan-chun:

When the Emperor Shun died, his two queens are supposed to have gone along the banks of the river Xiang looking for him. According to the legend, the two queens turned into river goddesses and grow along the banks of the river. That's why there's a kind of bamboo called "Naiad's Tears." Well now, Cousin Dai lives in the Naiad's House, and she cries so much that I shouldn't be surprised if one of these days the bamboos in her courtyard all turned out to have spots on them. . . ."

(SS 1.37.217, HLM 1.37.489)

The allegory articulated by Tan-chun has a profound significance in terms of the "affinity of stone and flower" relationship between Dai-yu and Bao-yu, her only confidant.³⁶ Such subtle allegory foretells the future of Dai-yu, through the building and environment of her residence.

PHILOSOPHY OF GARDEN ART EMBODIED IN THE NOVEL

In chapter 3, Bao-yu presents an appraisal of the Sweet-Rice Village which provides an insightful critique of trends in Chinese landscape design since the Six Dynasties period.³⁷ Like Jia Zheng, he argues, most people consider landscape design as no different from stage setting, meant only to invoke certain literary references. Hence, a portion of a mud wall, some branches from an apricot tree, and a flag fashioned like that of an inn would be sufficient to represent the famous Apricot Flower Village from the poem, "Qingming."³⁸ At one point in *HLM* Jia Zhen even suggests that some poultry should be kept to "complement" the scene — providing, in essence, stage props.

Bao-yu disagrees with such superficiality. Instead, he subscribes to the rationalistic principles of the Ming-era Neo-Confucianist Wang Yang-ming, who maintained that exquisiteness in garden design should be secondary to a holistic sense of appropriateness and harmony. According to this view, the disposition of elements in a garden must come from a feeling of natural reason. Such a view, in fact, may be the

origin of the expression *daguan*, or “total vision,” to describe the garden in *HLM*. It implies a criticism of Jia Zheng’s excessively literal interpretations as “somehow not in keeping with the broader view” (*SS* 1.17.192, *HLM* 1.17.225). Bao-yu’s assertion, that each individual scene must be named in harmony with its function and relation to the total concept of the garden would also seem to distinguish between true and false art.

Because landscape design is an imposition of human activity upon the land, the ultimate triumph of Chinese garden design was thought to be proficiency at making gardens appear “natural.” This would imply a need to be contextual and relate to the local environment. Bao-yu insinuates that the device of “following and borrowing” might be adequate to produce such a relationship. And he faults the Garden of Total vision for failing to use it. Through Bao-yu’s comments in *HLM*, however, Cao Xue-qin seems to be indicating that Chinese landscape design has always presented a “strained” interpretation of nature, and has never been “absolutely” natural. Thus, he implies that Bao-yu’s ideals are so high that they could not be met even by the theories of Ji Cheng — not to mention a design methodology such as that of Li Yu based on “visuals.”³⁹ Craig Clunas has written that such a discrepancy is partially the result of the treatment of “inner and outer, between garden and the natural landscape,” in regard to which emphasis has been placed on the former since the Ming Dynasty.⁴⁰ To be “natural,” the Chinese penchant is to seek out the *genius* of a place. The desire is to follow the *Tao* of nature, in tune with the rhythms of seasons, plants and universe, so there will be no discrepancy between inner being and outer reality.

However, simply emancipating one’s efforts from artificiality does not ensure the creation of good architecture. Feeling also must have a bearing on form. And this is the essence of Bao-yu’s critique. The aim of landscape design should then be to emulate the laws of nature, putting the *qi* of nature to work in the design of the garden. That way, even if one cannot achieve totality, one can still have exquisite architecture through prudent siting.⁴¹

COMPLEMENTARY BI-POLAR RELATIONSHIP

The story in *HLM* takes some of its cues from Chinese mythology.⁴² But the story is also influenced by issues central to the Neo-Confucian school’s attempt to integrate Taoism, Confucianism and Buddhism during the Song Dynasty.⁴³ As such, *HLM* reflects more general patterns of conceptualization within Chinese literature. One example is the belief that the patterns of flux that make up the existential cosmos rely profoundly on the principles of *yin-yang* and *wu-xing*.⁴⁴ These principles are present in one form or another in most of Confucian canon, most evidently in *The Book of Changes*, also known as *I-ching* or *Yi-jing*. In general, these principles indicate how Chinese cosmology has evolved into a representation of abstract patterns of dual interrelationship. Thus, day alter-

nates with night according to a gradual change from light to darkness, a constant transmutation between states of opposition and correlation. Andrew Plaks has used the term “complementary bi-polarity” to describe the rational relationships inherent in the *yin-yang* and *wu-xing* systems of cosmological thought.⁴⁵ Such notions of dualism should, of course, be distinguished from the Western sense, according to which oppositions may be transcended through a dialectical method.

Such complementary bi-polarity is manifested in *HLM* by means of pairs of opposing yet corresponding phenomena. Thus, the events, characters and qualities of the book are delineated and harmonized with one another, shifting the sense of inquiry to the manifold relationships between *yin* and *yang*, inner and outer, temporal and eternal, fact and fiction. Often narratives structured by bi-polar complementarity attempt to express an idealized world in which complementary actions take place at the same time. Such narratives may even be constructed of more than two intricately interwoven trajectories. Thus the idea of multiplicity, the modern concept of multiple use of space, may be understood as having long been intrinsic to traditional Chinese architecture.

OPPOSITION AND CORRELATION

For the Chinese, such formal patterns of complementary bi-polarity are more than theoretical; they are actively manifest in many facets of society, including architecture. One may find here the origin of the complementary relation between the Buddhist correlatives *se* and *kong*, which play a central role in the allegorical structure of *HLM* — for example, in the contrast between Reality and Illusion, Love and Lust, evident in the garden’s architecture. On the one hand, the Garden of Total Vision is an idealized pure world; yet on the other, it is closely related to *Huifang yuan*, that older garden space which clearly represented a tainted humanity.⁴⁶ How does one reconcile the contradiction inherent in the fact that the Garden of Total Vision is built upon *Huifang yuan*? The allusion here is to its hidden impureness. Thus, the allegory of the two gardens is not simply one of opposition, but also of correlation. The same can be said for the relationship of the Convex Pavilion and the Concave Pavilion within the Garden. Both structures were designed to view/appreciate the moon, but the convex pavilion was placed on a ridge while the concave pavilion was located within a small gorge. The experiences they provide are thus almost diametrically opposed: the former commands a breathtaking view of the surroundings, with the moon in the far distance; the latter is dominated by the sense of intimate enclosure of space by the walls of a gorge, bringing the moon closer to the viewer and distorting its scale.

In this way polarity engenders reciprocity and conversion of space: the concept of *yin-yang*. Such polarity also creates the harmonious relationship between buildings and topography in the garden. In this way the garden reflects the subtle

order and harmony of the larger cosmos, wherein the austere symmetries of Confucian society are subsumed by Taoist ideology in support of larger harmonies.⁴⁷ The opposite would seem to be true within the mansions. Here, fixity preserves social order. In garden design, *Tao* (the Way, the Order of Nature) inspires its followers to be profoundly conscious of the process of change in nature.⁴⁸ Thus, nature is clearly expressed through landscape designs that adapt buildings to their sites, with the unifying sense of contrast articulated through the interplay of light and shadow, solid and void.⁴⁹ In this way, spaces interact through contrast rather than separation. Hence, space is created by the relationship between enclosure and openness, “with a view to create a sense of infinite space within a limited area.”⁵⁰ Thus, the conscious restriction of view, through walls, screens, tracery windows, and even plants is used to distort the sense of spatial depth. And the wall may become a canvas against which to create a composition of plants and rockery, of which the latter might be intricately eroded and arranged to mimic mountains, and therefore create the effect of distance.⁵¹ Consequently, size does not really matter in architectural space; what is vital is the growth of space size.⁵² Instead of proceeding from established logical distinctions, it frequently conveyed its meanings through the interplay of parallelisms and correlations made possible by the infinitely rich evocative power of abstraction.

To the Chinese, the wall is not dominated by its periphery but by its center. Such a conception involves a set of foci which extend space ever outward from the center, allowing the wall to serve as an abstract form, an indefinable position of indefinite solidity. As with the calligraphic ideogram, the logic of this dynamic space is one of contrast and reciprocity. Of course, the principle behind all these contrasts is the opposition of emptiness and fullness. This principle is as central to Chinese aesthetics as it is to the Chinese vision of the world. According to Shi-tao: “To bring into play this opposition between emptiness and fullness will be enough to achieve *shi* . . .” (FIG. 9).⁵³

CONCLUSION

As we have seen, Chinese rarely discuss space and time in abstract terms. Instead, they utilize realistic temporal and spatial concepts close to everyday life to portray the comprehensiveness of contrasting qualities within a person, family or social division. Consequently, space cannot be delineated according to a strict linear progression of narrated events. This allows contrasting events to be observable at the same time. When progression is thus deferred, static descriptions of setting gain prominence. In this way Chinese narratives often take place simultaneously in two or more different positions in space. Such a doubling and redoubling of space replaces a strict linear progression in time, endowing space with a propensity of change. As in *HLM*, this may be realized



FIGURE 9. A tracery window used to physically delineate inner and outer space nevertheless does not limit visual interaction between these spaces. Image from the authors' private collection (Suzhou, Wangshi yuan).

through the assemblage of images into a “filmic” narrative that attempts to reveal other plausible worlds behind everyday reality. Such alternative realities are not intended to be thought of as illusions, but as a challenge to see the world differently.

In a similar way the seemingly invariable form of Chinese architecture allows contingencies and ambiguities to arise which stimulate the imagination. Thus, built form creates a stable structure within the complexity of the world, which may be used to articulate a world that is dynamic, interdependent, and open to change. No doubt, there is a specific modular order to Chinese architecture and associated spaces.⁵⁴ But through a balancing and judicious manipulation of such basic geometry, a designer might achieve the sense of poetic and free-flowing natural space. Furthermore, ordering strategies that emerge through this interplay of stability and flux may create the possibility for a pluralistic reading of space. In holistic terms, such order is not imposed during the process of creation, but is inherent in the process itself. In one way or another, the purpose of architecture arrived at in this manner is to negate the materiality of space. Thus, physical objects in one space may link with other representations from different times and spaces, depending on the input of the beholder.⁵⁵ More specifically, when internal boundaries are vague or ambiguous, time is made to stop, and space becomes limitless. In so doing, meanings emerge from a process of association, whose emphasis is on the ephemeral and transient, and on the propensity of space rather than the space itself.

The above analysis, of course, may suffer from a tendency to view Chinese culture as monolithic and timeless. No doubt, such a unified notion of heritage has been used extensively here as a basis of analysis. We acknowledge that it may not be entirely accurate to classify Chinese culture or perception in such reductive terms. And Chinese architecture today is certainly different from what it was in the eigh-

teenth century. However, we believe such an analytic posture may be justified to rediscover that era's emphasis on process rather than specific aesthetic manifestation.

However limited this article may be, the authors' intentions have been to provide a holistic understanding of the Chinese conception of space. Above all, we have tried to show how that conception embodies a sense of creation as a means to an end, not an end in itself. In that regard, we have attempted to advocate for the process of creation. In seeking to understand contemporary architecture, we suggest

it is imperative to reflect on our presuppositions, and reject a logos-centric view of cultural progress.⁵⁶ This is not to say that outcomes should be totally disregarded, but that they might be improved by better understanding the process by which they are achieved. The inherent meanings of a space emerge from the act of creating and regenerating that space. What is represented "visually" is the outcome of a creative process. Hence, invariably, "space" means cosmic space in its entirety: it actualizes itself from the depths of the void, and so opens out into infinity.

REFERENCE NOTES

1. The main reference text used in this paper is Cao Xue-qin, *Honglou Meng* (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1998), annotated by Feng Qiyong, based on *Zhiyan zhai zhongping shitou ji [gengchen (1760)] qiuyue dingben (1760)*. There are a number of translations available, which are generally abridged. The standard English translation is *The Story of the Stone*, 5 vols., D. Hawkes and J. Minford, trans. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1979, 1987).
2. The Qing dynasty lasted from 1644 to 1911.
3. For example, see Li Zehou, *The Path of Beauty: A Study of Chinese Aesthetics*, Gong Lizeng, trans. (Beijing: Morning Glory Publishers, 1988).
4. W.L. Idema, "Time and Space in Traditional Chinese Historical Fiction," *Sinica Leidensia*, Vol. XXXIII, p.362.
5. K. Shonfield, "The Use of Fiction to Interpret Architecture and Urban Space," *The Journal of Architecture*, Vol.5 (Winter 2000), pp.369-89.
6. This tour mainly depicts eight major sites in the garden: the main entrance, the Pathway to Mysteries, the Drenched Blossoms Pavilion, the Phoenix Dance (Naiad's House), the Sweet Rice Village, the Garden of Spice (All-Spice Court), *Daguan lou*, and Fragrant Red and Lucent Green (House of Green Delights). The brackets indicate places whose names are changed during the course of the novel.
7. See Wu Shichang (Wu Shih-Ch'ang), *On the Red Chamber Dream: A Critical Study of the Annotated Manuscripts of the XVIIIth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961). This depiction is similar to Li Yu's description of the rules of building. See Li Yu (Qing), *Xianqing Ouji [Occasional Footnotes to Life's Quiet Moments]* (Zhejiang: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 1999; first published in 1671).
8. The dislocation of the Han Dynasty (c. 220 A.D.) and the fragmentation of China over the next few centuries expedited the collapse of the unified system of thought that had prevailed in terms of logical, moral and political ideologies. In its place, an autonomous aesthetic mindset emerged which had been hidden in the former system. Refer to F. Jullien, *The Propensity of Things: Toward a History of Efficacy in China*, J. Lloyd, trans. (New York: Zone Books, 1995), p.75.
9. This is likened to the space-time concept as expounded by Sigfried Giedion with relation to Le Corbusier's Villa Savoie. See S. Giedion, *Space, Time and Architecture: The Growth of a New Tradition* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967; reprinted 1982), p.525.
10. The notion of the manifold significance of time may not only be used to distinguish between architecture and the novel, but between all branches of art that pertain to space (painting, sculpture, etc.) and all that pertain to time (narrative, epos, drama, music, etc.). See W. Beigel, "On the Manifold Significance of Time in the Novel," *Analecta Husserliana* (Phenomenology and Aesthetics: Approaches to Comparative Literature and the other Arts), Vol. XXXII, pp.17-19.
11. According to R. Stewart Johnston, there are a number of typical ways such structuring may be achieved in a Chinese garden. Among these are the siting of objects; the arrangement of enclosures and walled areas; and the organization of pathways to determine possible patterns of movement and act as a structural spine, linking and penetrating all parts of the garden. R.S. Johnston, *Scholar Gardens of China: A Study and Analysis of the Spatial Design of the Chinese Private Garden* (Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp.74-93.
12. See Wu Shichang, *On the Red Chamber Dream*.
13. Painting is not the only art form closely linked to the art of garden design. Nonetheless, the garden is both an art form in itself and a setting for participation in, or the display of, other art forms. Among these are poetry, music, and the archetypal Chinese arts of calligraphy and painting, which express the artist's personal idiosyncrasies and experiences in a direct and unfettered way.
14. Paul Cézanne (1839-1906), Impressionist painter. His series of still-life "inverted perspectives" challenged the notion of optical perspective. Cézanne's technique of painting variations of a landscape as he slightly changed his viewpoint was later developed by the Cubists. Sigfried Giedion has suggested that this principle of simultaneous, multiple viewpoints now allows us to explore aspects of spatial representation other than perspective. In particular, the modern dissolution or rejection of perspective has challenged the notion of space as "limited and one-sided." Things may now be viewed relatively from many viewpoints. See Giedion, *Space, Time and Architecture*, pp.434-39.

15. To “borrow” scenery means to incorporate features external to the garden in the garden’s design. In its simplest form, this may involve puncturing the walls of the garden with open tracery windows to fragment and enhance individual aspects of the view. But the idea may also be taken further, to where the window itself becomes a primary scene within the garden, making the real (surrounding) landscape visible. Li Yu conceived this as “borrowing” the view from the outside landscape, and called it an “unintentional painting,” or a “landscape window.” In this way, one space could be connected to another with mutual advantage. For example, if there was a view available of mountains in the distance, one might wish to structure a garden to frame them at the end of an open vista. Alternatively, if there was a particularly fine garden next to one’s own, a low fence rather than a high wall might be erected between them to merge views from the two gardens. See Li Yu (Qing), *Xianqing Ouji [Occasional Footnotes to Life’s Quiet Moments]*.
16. See R. Aben and S. de Wit, *The Enclosed Garden: History and Development of the Hortus Conclusus and its Reintroduction into the Present-day Urban Landscape* (Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 1999).
17. The mansion complexes, *fudi*, are divided according to units of mansion (*fu*), court (*yuan*), room (*fang*), and bay (*jian*). See Guan Huashan, *Honglou Meng zhong de jianzhu yanjiu [Investigation into the Architecture of Dream of the Red Chamber]* (Taipei: Jing yu xiang chuban she, 1984), pp.177–208.
18. The notion of bay may also be thought of as span.
19. The conception of the inner and outer is deeply entrenched in Chinese culture, going back to the Han Dynasty (206 B.C. – 220 A.D.). For example, it is manifested in the five-zone model of political order (*wufu*), which is really a focus/field distinction that delineates the relative focus of an inner-outer periphery. See D.L. Hall and R.T. Ames, *Anticipating China: Thinking through the Narratives of Chinese and Western Culture* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), p.242.
20. Although women were confined to the inner realm of the house, they were allowed restricted access to a house’s gardens. See Yi Jinsheng, *Honglou Meng: Ai de yuyan [The Dream of the Red Chamber: The Allegory of Love]* (Beijing: Beijing daxue chuban shee, 2000), p.117.
21. For example, as a guest of the Jia family, Aunt Xue shares the position of honor with Grandmother Jia. However, since Aunt Xue is from the same generation as Wang Fu-ren, her space is shifted slightly to the left. By contrast, because of her humble background, Grannie Liu, also a guest, is positioned in space after Aunt Xue’s but before Wang Fu-ren.
22. This is a custom of the Manchus. Although the Jia family is portrayed as Chinese, they inherited some Manchurian customs from the background of Cao Xue-qin, whose family were bondservants of the Qing emperor. See Hawkes and Minford, trans., *SS*, p.25. Also, see J. Spence, *Ts’ao Yin and the K’ang-hsi Emperor* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1966). In addition, see Guan Huashan, *Honglou Meng zhong de jianzhu yanjiu*, pp.152–66.
23. In the case of the Autumn Feast at the Lotus Pavilion in chapter 38, a table is also set for Li Wan and Xi-feng, but since it is there for formality, both were compelled by customs not to sit at it.
24. Ranks were also distinguishable by styles of clothing, objects for everyday use, and standard forms of address between superiors and subordinates.
25. In the seventeenth century Ji Cheng pointed out the contrast between mansion and garden: “All family seats and mansions . . . should be built in accordance with the accepted conventions. Only studios set in gardens . . . are most exquisite when built to take advantage of the seasonal scenery. . . . Family mansions are bound to be subject to general discussion, but the outlying buildings will only be right if they harmonize with the landscape.” See Ji Cheng, *Yuan Ye [The Craft of Gardens]*, first published in 1634, annotated by Huang Changmei (Taipei: Jinfeng chuban she, 1999), pp.32–37.
26. For example, Dante Alighieri’s *Inferno* and *The Divine Comedy*, Edmund Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene*, Geoffrey Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*, Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun’s *Roman de la Rose*, and John Milton’s *Paradise Lost*.
27. Yu Yingshi, *Honglou Meng de liang ge shijie [Duality of Dream of the Red Chamber]*, 1973; and *Lishi yu sixiang [History and Philosophy]*, (Taipei: Lianjing, 1976; reprinted 1999).
28. In *Honglou Meng: Ai de yuya*, Yi Jinsheng probed the inseparability of the concept of the garden setting and the dualism of love-lust.
29. B. Hillier and J. Hanson. *The Social Logic of Space* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp.1–3.
30. *Ibid.*, pp.176–97. This is a trans-cultural concept.
31. As Craig Clunas explained, this practice is not unique to China. In the West, garden inscriptions were often drawn from allusions to Roman writers like Columella or Varro. Inscriptions were also part of the Italian Renaissance landscape practice, as well as that of gardens in eighteenth-century England. C. Clunas, *Fruitful Sites: Garden Culture in Ming Dynasty China* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996), p.144.
32. See J.F.H. Smith, “Gardens in Ch’i Piao-chia’s Social World: Wealth and Values in Late Ming Kjiangnan,” *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol.51, No.1 (February 1992), pp.55–81.
33. All societies that place importance on the act of naming have shared this characteristic. See Hall and Ames, *Anticipating China*, p.125.
34. For example, the dignified entrance of the Garden of Total Vision, the grandeur of *Daguan lou*, the bustle of House of Green Delights (*Yihong yuan*), the tranquility of Naiaid’s House (*Xaoxiang guan*), the greenery of All-spice Court (*Hengwu yuan*), the capaciousness of Autumn Studio (*Qiushuang zhai*), etc.
35. *Ibid.*, p.142.
36. Accordingly, Bao-yu is understood as the transformation of a magical stone into *Tongling Baoyu*, the Precious Jade of Spiritual Enlightenment — manifest as *Shenyong shezhe*, Spiritual Stone Page. Meanwhile, Dai-yu is the transformation of a flower fairy — manifest as the *Jiangzhu cao*, the Crimson Pearl Sylph Herb.
37. This is the period of Chinese history between the fall of the Han dynasty (A.D. 220) and the unification of China under the Sui dynasty (A.D. 581). It is named for the

six successive dynasties that appeared in Southern China during the period: the Wu (222–280), the Eastern Jin (317–420), the Song (420–479), the Qi (479–502), the Liang (502–557), and the Chen (557–589). Although a time of severe political turbulence, the period was marked by much originality in art, literature, and thought.

38. The allegory of Apricot Flower Village (*Xinghua cun*) to a rustic countryside inn that sells wine comes from a famous Tang poem by Du Mu (SS 1.17.334).

‘Where’s the tavern?’ I cry,

And a lad points the way;

To a village far off in the apricot trees.

39. Li Yu was preoccupied with detailed description of nature and the slow revealing of picturesque visual scenes, denoting literary and visual references. See Li Yu (Qing), *Xianqing Ouji* [Occasional Footnotes to Life’s Quiet Moments].

40. Clunas, *Fruitful Sites*, p.161.

41. See Ji Cheng, *Yuan Ye* [The Craft of Gardens], pp.38–57.

42. One source of allegory in *HLM* is the mythic marriage of Nü wa, a Chinese goddess who, according to legend, created human beings and patched up the sky with many-colored stones, and Fu xi, a legendary Chinese ruler who taught people to fish, hunt, and raise livestock (for example, Bao-yu as one of the many-colored stones). See A.H. Plaks, *Archetype and Allegory in the Dream of the Red Chamber* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), pp.27–42.

43. Neo-Confucianism is the synthesis of Taoist cosmology and Buddhist spirituality. It emerged around a core of Confucian concerns over the state of society and government during the Song dynasty (c. 960–1279 A.D.). Historically, it represented a creative reinterpretation of the traditional Confucian canon to meet the new intellectual and spiri-

tual expectations of the time. It attempted to respond to the Buddhist notion of transcendence over mundane qualities of the world by uniting human interpersonal relationships and concern for society and government with intensified ascetic practice. There were two schools of Song Neo-Confucianism: the Cheng-Zhu School, which emphasized diligent study or “the investigation of things”; and the Lu-Wang School, which equated the mind with *li*, or “principle” (i.e., its approach was based on direct intuitive comprehension of the proper way).

44. *Yin-yang* is the union of two polarities commonly known as the masculine and the feminine. *Wu-xing*, or five-elements terminology, is based on the five basic elements of the universe, believed to be gold, wood, water, fire and earth.

45. According to Plaks: “The polarities of Chinese thought remain forever distinct, producing and destroying each other in a ceaseless process of mutual displacement.” His comments refer in particular to a passage from the *I-Ching* (*Book of Changes*): “Heaven and Earth are opposites, but their action is concerted. Man and woman are opposites, but they strive for union. All being stand in opposition to one another: what they do takes on order thereby.” See Plaks, *Archetype and Allegory*, pp.43–53.

46. One might note, for example, Jia Rui’s lust for Xi-feng in *Huifang yuan* in Chapter 11 of *HLM*. Also note Qin Ke-qing’s amorous death in *Tianxiang lou* within *Huifang yuan*, and later, her funeral ceremony held in *Huifang yuan*, and the altar set up in *Tianxiang lou*.

47. In the Confucian tradition, rules were held up as a “solution” for individual confession. Thus, Zhuxi explains, “It is only because there are times when man’s mind becomes distracted that we set up the many rules to regulate it.” See Zhuxi (Chu Hsi),

Learning to be a Sage: Selections from the Conversations of Master Chu, Arranged Topically by Chu Hsi, D.K. Gardner, trans. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), p.164.

48. It has been said that Confucianism is the dogma of the scholar when in office, and Taoism the attitude of the scholar when out of office. When out of office, or in retirement, the preferred form of escape from the mundane world for the scholar-official was the cultivation of a garden. See J. Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China. Volume 4: The Grand Titration: Science and Society in East and West* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), p.165.

49. Expressions of complementary bi-polar pairs (such as *yin-yang*, *tiandi*, *shanshui*, etc.) are part of a greater ideological thought of harmony.

50. See Chen Congzhou, *Yuan Yun* (Shanghai: Shanghai wenhua chubanshe, 1999), p.13.

51. See Ji Cheng (Ming), *Yuan Ye* [The Craft of Gardens], p.168.

52. See A. Ih Tiao Chang, *The Tao of Architecture* (Princeton University Press, 1981), p.53.

53. Shi-tao (1641–1717) was an outstanding literati painter, essayist, and a famous builder of rockeries. See Jullien, *The Propensity of Things*, pp.11–13, 267.

54. For example, the modular measurements of *jian* and *jin* were translated into buildings and courtyards, forming the basic unit of courtyard mansions.

55. See Wu Hung, *The Double Screen: Medium and Representation in Chinese Painting* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), p.239.

56. Logos-centricism conceives there is only one ultimate truth for the universe, and that it can only be discovered and demonstrated with human intelligence.