

SUZHOU TANCI: KEYS TO PERFORMANCE

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by

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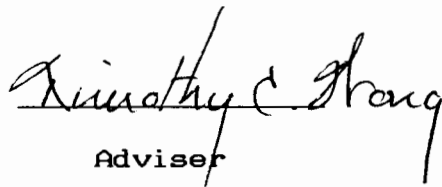
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#### FIELD OF STUDY

Chinese Literature, Folklore, and Ethnic Studies

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## INTRODUCTION

Nearly two decades ago, in the introduction to a then landmark collection of essays that would ultimately revolutionize the world of American folkloristics, Richard Bauman (1971:xi-xv) noted the shift in perspective among several young theorists from the "traditional focus upon folklore as 'item'--the things of folklore--to a conceptualization of folklore as 'event'--the doing of folklore" (1971:x). He went on to explain that,

In particular, there is an emphasis upon performance as an organizing principle that comprehends within a single conceptual framework artistic act, expressive form, and esthetic response, and does so in terms of locally defined, culture-specific categories and contexts.

He elaborates that proper attention must be carefully focused on the context of folklore

". . . given the predilection of folklorists in the past for the construction of universal systems or functional schemes without due regard for the ethnographic realities of particular cultures or awareness of the principle that the cognitive, behavioral, and functional structuring of folklore is not always and everywhere the same, but cross-culturally variable and diverse.

Bauman's essay continues with an introduction to the authors of the papers, several of whom, though then

vanguards of the new shift in focus, are now central figures in the mainstream domain of performance theory. Thus, critical attention has shifted from simply collecting and analyzing texts with little attention to cultural context to collecting and analyzing performances in situ in the context of the cultures that generate them (Hymes 1971:46). In the course of this shift, problems of oral performance as communicative event have been assessed from various angles. In one approach, Alan Dundes (1964) has suggested that the process of folklore consists of three parts, text, texture, and context. "Text," in the case of narrative (which I shall consider as discourses about "what happened"), refers to the basic story being related, in other words, the "content." The way in which the story is presented (in a certain accent, with differing pace, pauses, melody, tone, etc.) is called "texture." Finally, "context" is the cultural situation surrounding a performance. In the most immediate sense context is, to use more contemporary terminology, the "event" or scene in which the actual performance takes place (Bauman 1977:27). In a larger sense it is the community and culture as a whole.

One of the most significant aspects to draw attention in the performance-centered approach is that paid to the ways in which language and paralinguistic devices act as "cultural markers" to frame oral

performance, helping to distinguish it from other ways of speaking. Bauman (1977:9-10), drawing on Gregory Bateson and Erving Goffman, notes that a performer creates an interpretive frame of performance to distinguish what he is saying from other speech frames, the most usual being that of literal speech. Thus, by culturally comprehensible means, performance "calls forth special attention to and heightened awareness of the act of expression and gives license to the audience to regard the act of expression and the performer with special intensity" (Bauman 1977:11).

Bauman has created a novel approach to the problem of how performance is framed. In his theory, the devices which establish the performance frame are called "keys to performance." Barbara Babcock (1977), another folklorist, has dealt with with similar problems, though she employs the term "metanarration." There is significant overlap between Bauman's "keys" and what to Babcock constitute "meta-features" or "metanarrational devices." In this paper the theories of Bauman and Babcock shall be drawn upon to explore the ways in which performers of a traditional professional Chinese storytelling genre called Suzhou tanci employ a range of rhetorical conventions to create performances framed, or "keyed," by way of "culturally conventionalized and culture-specific" metacommunicative phenomena (Bauman



1977:16).

Bauman's relevant studies have been concerned primarily with the performance of tall tales and personal experience narratives in the southern United States (1986). Admittedly, in these genres the distinctions between "normal" discourse and performance are much more problematic than in a professional genre such as tanci. Nevertheless, I hope to demonstrate how his approach to the identification of keys to performance is useful in understanding in part why performances of tanci "work" for competent audiences in traditional and changing cultural contexts.

Though scholars of Chinese oral performance such as V. Hrdlickova (1968), Charles Wivell (1975), Zuo Xian (1981;1982), Tan Daxian (1982), and Susan Blader (1983) and others have made important examinations of several genres of Chinese oral performance in Suzhou (Soochow) and other areas of China, the subject of the framing devices employed in Suzhou tanci (or any other Chinese storytelling genre) has never been singularly examined. Coming closest to such an approach is Pen-yeh Tsao's recent book entitled the The Music of Su-chou T'antz'u (1988). This work is valuable in the analysis of tanci music, though it does not go very far to treat performance as a whole. (For instance, little is concretely said about the interaction between singing and

speaking roles.) Nevertheless, much of the information presented concerning musical performance is highly useful in understanding the ways in which music and singing can be viewed on certain levels as framing devices in tanci.

Aside from its immediate value in appreciating the nature of Chinese oral performance, an examination of the framing of performances made by professional storytellers offers tantalizing possibilities for elucidating the problematic relationships between storytelling and written fiction in China. Early in this century Lu Xun (Lu Hsün) put forward the notion that vernacular fiction in China derived from the promptbooks of professional storytellers (1959:141). Lu believed that the corpus of vernacular fiction known as ping-hua (not to be confused with the style of storytelling introduced in subsequent chapters) consisted of works which were originally promptbooks or works based on such texts.

Idema (1974:69-72), however, after extensive review of the literature, has concluded that "we are not in a position to explain the typical features of traditional Chinese fiction as a literary form by its origin in professional storytelling." Though he carefully suggests that "authors or compilers often looked to professional storytelling for inspiration, both in regard to materials and rhetorical formulas" he claims that

professional storytelling was "but one of many factors that helped shape the traditional novel". He explains the formal characteristics which constitute the "storytellers' manner" that appear in vernacular fiction "gradually made their belated appearance [in fiction] in the first three quarters of the 16th century", long after the supposed origins of vernacular fiction from storytellers' promptbooks. This poses at least as interesting a situation as the hypothetical origin of fiction from promptbooks:

If these compilers or authors would choose to adopt some of the storytellers' conventions, we cannot treat such elements as left-overs from the past, but we have to consider them as deliberate artistic conventions. (p. 71)

Idema has summarized the formal characteristics of the storytellers' manner as derived from the impressions of various critics. Most, if not all, of the characteristics (chapters framed by formulaic openings and closings, inclusions of poems and parallel prose, author in guise of a professional storyteller, etc.) could be classified under Bauman's and Babcock's schemes for performance framing introduced in Chapter One. Applying the criteria of performance to vernacular fiction and comparing the results with traditional professional storytelling performances of today (which, unfortunately are the closest things we have to earlier

schools of storytelling) might allow a better understanding of why writers of fiction chose to incorporate the storytellers' manner (or produce what Hanan [1977:87] has called the "simulated context" of oral storytelling) into their works. That task, however, is beyond the scope of this thesis.

In the course of this study I shall introduce in greater detail the theories of Bauman and Babcock, supply contextual information on Suzhou tanci, analyze several tanci performance scripts, and provide a brief summary. In the introduction to Bauman's "keys to performance" and Babcock's theories on "metanarration". I am indebted to lectures given in 1988 by Professor Patrick Mullen, particularly in the observations concerning the use of gestures and other paralinguistic phenomena which are hardly treated by either Bauman and Babcock.

A major drawback of the present study is the unfortunate necessity of working from written versions of performances, rather than from audio-tapes, video tapes, or live performances. I have, however, observed live tanci performances on four occasions in the Suzhou-Shanghai area in the company of a highly competent local informant, Prof. Sun Jingyao of Suzhou University. Thus, while much of the information in this paper derives from written sources, certain observations are also drawn from my own experience of tanci in typical performance

context.

It is hoped that this study shall contribute not only to a better understanding of Suzhou tanci as performance but shall also shed light on strategies for approaching other types of Chinese oral performance. A clearer perception of these arts may eventually provide insights into the nature of storytelling in China as a general phenomena as well as a better appreciation of the relations between oral performance and Chinese vernacular literature.

## CHAPTER I

### THE FRAMING OF PERFORMANCE

Two important theorists who have brought attention to the phenomena of how oral performers "frame" their performances as performance (rather than as other types of communication) are Richard Bauman and Barbara Babcock. Though employing different terminology and working towards somewhat different ends, both have drawn on similar theoretical sources (Bateson, Hymes, Goffman, Jakobson, and others) and certain aspects of their approaches to the interpretation and functions of framing devices overlap. The intent of this chapter is to present the general categories of framing devices by which Suzhou tanci shall be analyzed in Chapter Three.

Before discussing the framing of performance, however, the concept of performance must be elaborated upon. Richard Bauman is author and editor of a major work on oral performance, entitled Verbal Art As Performance (1977). In his view, "performance as a mode of spoken verbal communication consists in the assumption of responsibility to an audience for a display of communicative competence" (1977:11). Competence is the "knowledge and ability to speak in socially appropriate

ways." On the one hand, the performer assumes accountability to an audience for "the way in which communication is carried out, above and beyond the referential content." On the other hand, the audience perceives the performance "as subject to evaluation for the way it is done, for the relative skill and effectiveness of the performer's display of competence." Moreover, his act of expression is "marked as available for the enhancement of experience, through the present enjoyment of the intrinsic qualities of the act of expression itself." Further, as noted in the Introduction, performance "calls forth special attention to and heightened awareness of the act of expression and gives license to the audience to regard the performer with special intensity." Performance thus involves competence, evaluation, and enhancement.

In a chapter entitled "The Keying of Performance," Bauman draws on Goffman's term "keying" to describe the manner in which performance frames "are invoked and shifted." Bauman further foregrounds his essay with quotes from Bateson concerning "communication about communication," or "metacommunication." Bauman stresses Bateson's recognition of a "range of explicit or implicit messages which carry instructions on how to interpret the other message(s) being communicated." Stressing that communication is culturally conventionalized and keying

is culturally-specific to a given speech community,

Bauman quotes Bateson as saying:

"a frame is metacommunicative. Any message, which either explicitly or implicitly defines a frame, ipso facto gives the receiver instructions or aids in his attempt to understand the messages included within the frame."

Bauman identifies several general ways in which a performance frame is established, calling them "keys to performance." These include the use of: special codes, figurative language, parallelism, special paralinguistic features, special formulae, appeal to tradition, and disclaimers of performance (1977:16).

A common sort of special code in oral performance is the use of special language, such as words that seem poetic or archaic. Such words increase the intensity of audience interest, directing the audience to focus on the performance. However, Bauman stresses that in his ethnographic approach these special uses of language are only one sort of verbal communication available to the community, and not deviant types from a theoretical "standard" language (Bauman 1977:17).

Though stressing the complexity of addressing the question of figurative language (metaphor, simile, metonymy, synecdoche, etc.), Bauman notes that some sorts are "consistent and prominent" in verbal art and are easily noted due to semantic density. Thus, though all



instances of figurative language may not act as substantial keys to performance, when they appear in clusters, they may have a heightening and focusing effect. One important aspect of consideration is the use of readymade figures of speech. In some speech communities a performer may be appreciated by the way he employs such figures of speech in a "novel context," in other communities (or types of performance) the performer may be evaluated by the accuracy of his renditions in traditional contexts.

Parallelism "involves repetition, with systematic variation, of phonic, grammatical, semantic, or prosodic structures " which involve the combination of variant and invariant structures. The invariant elements may serve a mnemonic function in the performance of a traditional "fixed" text, or "enhance the fluency of the improvisational or spontaneous performance." The effective use of parallelism in the flow of performance is not only a framing key, but is also an index of the performer's communicative "competence."

Some of the most overlooked keys to performance are paralinguistic features, generally absent from accounts of oral performances made by traditional folklorists. Bauman stresses that such accounts usually leave out such features as "rate, length, pause duration, pitch contour, tone of voice, loudness, and stress." Other such

features would include imitations of animal noises, gestures, and facial expressions (Mullen 1988). Though Babcock (1977:65), below, focuses more on purely linguistic phenomena, she considers "gestures, laughter, applause, etc." as paralinguistic phenomena.

Opening and closing formulas are a common type of special formulae. Bauman notes that "insofar as genres are conventionally performed in a community, the formulae may serve as keys to performance."

An appeal to tradition may be made by the performer at the beginning of a performance. (Bauman gives the example of a Mandinka griot beginning a performance with the words "What I have myself heard,/What I have heard from my parents,/That is the account which I shall put before you.>"). Such appeals, aside from being a formulaic keying device, imply that the performer is taking responsibility for performing in accord to traditional esthetic standards.

In some speech communities, a performance may be opened by keying it with a phrase uttered by the performer concerning his or her lack of personal language competence. Bauman notes that the function of such disclaimers is at once a "concession to standards of etiquette and decorum [in societies] where, self-assertiveness is disvalued," thus counterbalancing the effect of performance of focusing attention on the

performer, as well as serving as a key to performance.

In a supplementary essay in Bauman's Verbal Art As Performance, Barbara Babcock suggests the use of Hendrick's term "metanarration" (1977:62), noting that the term "metacommunication" generally refers to

"framing devices and to the relationship between speaker and hearer in any speech event, I would suggest that we use the term metanarration to refer specifically to narrative performance and discourse and to those devices which comment upon the narration, the narrating, and the narrative both as message and as code." (1977:67)

In the course of her argument, Babcock cites evidence for the claim that "meta-folklore," or the "reflexive or meta-dimension of all storytelling situations, and more generally of all sign systems" is not all that new. She notes that Alan Dundes coined the term "metafolklore" in a 1966 essay entitled "Metafolklore and Oral Literary Criticism" and quotes Ben-Amos' observation that "folklore forms are, in and of themselves, the subject of folklore," being talked about in ways similar to that of other aspects of life. Though concerned more with the self-reflexive aspects of performance, some of her concepts are useful in understanding how performances are framed.

In Babcock's scheme (1977:71-75) metanarrative phenomena are either explicit or implicit. Explicit forms include opening and closing devices, such as the formulas in western fairy tales to the order of "Once

upon a time . . ." and ". . . they all lived happily ever after." Another explicit phenomena is that of narrative embedding ("placing tales within tales").

Following Todorov, she believes that the "frame tale" creates a metanarrative context for the telling of the "real" stories, calling attention to the act of narrating, as in the 1001 Nights.

Implicit forms often fall into what Dundes (1964) has called the "texture" of a text. For Babcock these devices include "naming, quoting, onomatopoeia, the use of different styles, pronoun shifts, changes in channel or media, the use of different languages or other register shifts such as the intermixture of narrative and song." (Register shifts refer to any noticeable shift in the speech register, whether it be a raised voice, an assumed accent, or, as noted, a change between mediums, such as speech to song.) Babcock notes that a shift in pronoun use (from "I" to "you," etc.) or a shift in tense "implicitly comments on the story or the storytelling by effecting a transfer from an internal point of view to an external one--i.e. from the narrated event [the event the performance is based upon] to the speech event [the performance itself]--or vice versa." She continues by saying that devices such as "quotations, parenthetical asides, and changes in channel or register make an implicit commentary through using language in an

undetermined way, i.e., through a mixture of logical types."

In concert, these implicit devices, which note certain shifts in the narration, perform metanarrational functions by "establishing the position of the narrator and the audience vis-a-vis the story, call attention to the problems and processes of narration as an act, and provide a frame for interpretation."

Though many of Babcock's metanarrative phenomena can be subsumed in Bauman's categories, she introduces the useful concepts of narrative embedding and emphasizes the implicit effects in the shifting between various modes. While admitting that his list is general (even with the addition of Babcock's categories), Bauman stresses that the key to analysis is to "determine the culture-specific constellations of communicative means that serves to key performance in particular communities" (Bauman 1977:22).

As noted in the Introduction, several scholars examining Chinese oral performance have noted aspects of performance which Bauman would identify as keying devices. Speaking of the related traditions of Japanese and Chinese professional storytelling, Hrdlickova (1969:209) speaks of the "kinetic code without which neither the artist nor audience could properly comprehend the narration. This code is based on a system of

artistic principles by which the storyteller is guided in his recital." He also notes (1969:179) that "Chinese storytellers have always stressed that a good storyteller can turn a bad story into a great one and that, on the contrary, an inexperienced artist can 'kill a good story.'" In other words, the way in which an artist employs the keys of performance can often determine his success.

Charles Wivell (1975:121-22), in an article discussing differences between oral tradition and professional storytelling in China, mentions the use of "extra-narrative aids" by performers of a style called pinghua, introduced briefly in Chapter Two. These aids include "the fan, the wooden tile [for slapping on the table], the long scholarly gown, and the use of the title hsien-sheng [mister]." He also mentions the use of various dialects used in tanci performances to "increase the evocative element."

After further investigation of contextual and textual information in the following chapters, these and other aids shall be categorized in Bauman's scheme in the Conclusion.

## CHAPTER II

### SUZHOU TANCI

#### Introduction

Suzhou tanci is a popular, but highly sophisticated, storytelling art which has been performed for centuries in the city of Suzhou, in Jiangsu province, southeast China. Normally the art features a pair of performers (typically a male and a female) who use a variety of narrative voices to combine speech and song in the telling of serial stories in special storytelling halls or teahouses. The most traditional and common stories are of circuitous romances between gifted scholars and talented beauties (caizi jiaren). Audiences in the better teahouses were normally comprised of middle to upper-class persons. Performers came by their trade by family tradition or were apprenticed at a young age to performers. This would usually entail a fee, supplied by the child's parents, though the young apprentice was expected to act as a sort of servant to the performer, taking every chance between tasks to watch his mentor perform. Eventually, after mastering the various secrets of the trade, a student might be allowed to study his master's performance sketch-book

(jiaoben), after which he might develop a new version (Tsao 1988:18-19).

In this section background information shall be presented to form a context for the examination of several sample transcriptions of Suzhou tanci in terms of keys to performance. In the following paragraphs the topics to be introduced include history, genre, the physical locus of performance, structural aspects of performance, major performance conventions, and aesthetics. Stress shall be laid on those categories which lend most to understanding how Suzhou tanci is keyed as performance, though no explicit summary of such traits shall be made until the Conclusion.

### History

Though the origins of Suzhou tanci are obscure, it is fairly certain that the art developed during the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties from earlier styles of narration involving singing, speaking, and the use of stringed instruments. Though many histories of Chinese popular literature (Zheng 1959:348) claim that Suzhou tanci evolved from the Tang (618-907) dynasty bianwen, a narrative form combining prose and verse to relate Buddhist stories, Zhao Jingshen (1947 [1936]:1-3) considered that relation to be peripheral at best, suggesting that the origin of tanci



is in the southern forms of zhugongdiao (which Zhao suggests may be an offshoot of bianwen), popular in the Song (960-1279) and Yuan (1271-1368) dynasties. Zhou Liang, in Suzhou pingtan jiu wen chao (References to Suzhou Pingtan in Old Documents, hereafter SPJWC) (1983:5-6), has recently criticized the bianwen attribution as "a creation of emptiness," meaning that since the actual genesis of tanci is unknown, it has been convenient to use bianwen as a sort of "missing link." Attempts have also been made to link tanci to a type of Song dynasty storytelling formerly existing in Hangzhou (Hangchow) called taozhen, though little is known of that tradition (Tsao 1988:2). Tsao presents a diagram in which bianwen, zhugongdiao, and taozhen influence a "native Su-chou storytelling tradition" which eventually results in Suzhou tanci by the late Ming dynasty (1988:2-3).

The term tanci (Zhao 1982:2-3; SPJWC 1983:84; Tsao 1988:2) is first encountered in a text by Tian Ruzheng dating from 1547, in the Ming dynasty. The context is a simple description of the entertainments in Hangzhou (Hangchow). Based on this and other sources, Zhou Liang (SPJWC 1983:84-85) has concluded that the term tanci was used to describe a number of similar narrative arts performed in the region of Jiangsu (Kiangsu) and Zhejiang (Chekiang) provinces in the Ming dynasty though few

texts or records concerning what are clearly Suzhou tanci performances exist before the late 18th century.

One of the earliest written versions of a Suzhou tanci story dates from 1769 (SPJWL 1983:93). The text, based on a performer's sketch-book is included in a collection of stories which are supposedly in the style of oral performances entitled Liang-Zhu gushi shuochang ji (Collection of Singing and Speaking Stories on Liang and Zhu). The text concerns versions of the popular story of a girl cross-dressing as a boy and falling in love with her classmate, ultimately resulting in an unconsummated love affair and the deaths of both young people. The tanci rendition in the collection, entitled Xin bian jin hudie quan chuan (New Edition of the Complete Legend of the Gold Butterflies), features a large percentage of spoken lines (bai), some singing roles, and a small percentage of third person narrative (biao). A later version of the Liang-Zhu story, dating from 1823 entitled Da shuang hudie (The Big Pair of Butterflies) and issued by the Wenhuitang publishing house, is also largely made up of first person speaking roles (SPJWC 1983:93-94). Importantly, several phrases of Suzhou dialect are interwoven among the first person roles and appear in some songs. Numerous styles of folksongs, aside from what appear to be "standard" tanci lyrics, which average seven characters (or

syllables) per line, are included in this version.

An early version of Baishe chuan (The Legend of the White Snake), dating from 1772, and entitled Leifeng ta gu ben xin bian baishe chuan (New Edition of the Ancient Leifeng Pagoda Version of The White Snake Legend), consists primarily of lyrics written in seven character lines (SPJWL 1983:95). Though the speaking portions are relatively few in number, they do contain some words or phrases in Suzhou dialect.

A Suzhou tanci text dating from 1869, entitled Wo pao chuan (The Japanese Cloak), indicates to Zhou Liang that by the latter 19th century tanci performance was nearly identical to that which was popular in the first half of the 20th century (SPJWC 1983:116-118). An important aspect of the history of Suzhou tanci was the formation of guilds of performers. The best known was the Guangyugongsuo (Brilliant Abundance Guild), founded in 1776 by Wang Zhoushi and others, in Suzhou. The guild took the legendary San Huang as their zhushi (ancestral craftsman). Throughout the year ceremonial observances were made to this patron god, as well as to the spirits of outstanding performers whose names were placed on a qianbei tu (records of previous generations). When a storyteller took an apprentice, the youngster had to bow before an image of San Huang. The name of the guild was changed to Guangyushe

(Brilliant Abundance Society) in 1912, six years after the its leaders started a tanci training school. In 1926 the guild held a celebration to commemorate the 150th anniversary of its founding and the 20th anniversary of the school (Chen 1958:180-181;SPJWC 1983:44-45;Hrdlickova 1965;Tsao 1988)).

In 1927 one source lists 121 members on the current roster of the Guangyushe (SPJWC 1983:77). Hundreds of students studied at the school, though it seems many also apprenticed when very young to individual performers, as had always been tradition.

Though records of women performing various singing and speaking storytelling arts go back to the Song dynasty, "female tanci" (nutanci) did not become popular until the mid-19th century (Chen 1958:205-206). Performed solely by small groups of women, the art was very popular in teahouses in Shanghai, though the performers were seldom considered as competent as their counterparts in Suzhou. Since the conservative Guangyugongsuo did not allow females to study in their school until after the Anti-Japanese War, a female tanci guild called Puyushe (Universal Surplus Society) was formed (SPJWC 1983:131). Its school trained both female and male performers. The introduction of radio shows increased the popularity of female tanci in the nineteen-twenties and thirties. During the

Anti-Japanese War in the nineteen-thirties and forties pingtan was popular among wealthy Chinese women who "sought asylum" in the foreign concessions in Shanghai (Zhu 1986).

After 1949 the first official pingtan troupe was the Shanghai shi renmin pingtan tuan (Shanghai Municipal People's Pingtan Troupe). A similar troupe called Suzhou shi renmin pingtan tuan (Suzhou Municipal People's Pingtan Troupe) was established in the early nineteen-fifties.

Since 1949 socialist views of art have prompted sometimes radical attempts at changing certain aspects of tanci and "helping" it to develop. Among these attempts are: experimentation in styles of narration, censorship or banning of traditional stories, attempts to create new stories with socialist themes, introducing new story lengths, reorganization of traditional guilds into socialist troupes, and the dropping of the traditional title of xiansheng ("mister"), by which male performers were traditionally known.

Though storytelling houses and teahouses were closed in the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), in recent years Suzhou tanci has, like other cultural activities, enjoyed a resurgence in popularity, despite competition from "dances, parties, and movies" (Zhu 1986). In the early nineteen-sixties Party standing committee member

Chen Yun, a longtime tanci fan issued a call for the preservation and "improvement" of the art (Wen 1983). In the early nineteen-eighties a pamphlet published under his name stated that many of the works banned in previous decades should again be performed, as long as the content was not salacious (Chen 1983). Though experiments involving the use of erhu (two stringed violin), pianos and other instruments date from at least the early 20th century, in recent years artists have been heartily encouraged to experiment with new manners of performance involving a variety of musical instruments and varying numbers of performers. New stories on modern themes (aside from the propoganda-laden works of the Cultural Revolution) have been performed on stage and television.

In the mid-nineteen-eighties I observed that the Suzhou Shuchang (Suzhou Storytelling House) and other storytelling houses in Shanghai and nearby towns such as Jiading have been refurbished (though not as elaborately as the Xiangyin Story House--one Jiading story house is located in an old bomb shelter). Also, the wage structure has been revised so as to give performers more incentive to improve their art. Rather than depend wholly on set salaries, part of their income comes from profits of the teahouse they perform in, as in the old days when performers received ten percent profits on tea sales. Despite efforts towards revitalization, director

of the Shanghai Municipality Pingtan Troupe, Xu Mengdan (1983), has noted that many young performers have a tendency to simply memorize story scripts and feel that improvisation (which gives tanci so much of its flavor) is wrong.

Another improvisation is the adoption of new lengths to stories. Traditionally, stories lasted weeks or months. Since the early nineteen-fifties stories have been considered as one of three types: duanpian or "short-length" which are told in one session, zhongpian or "middle-length" which last only a few sessions, and changpian or "full-length" which take days, weeks, or months to perform. Since many audience members do not have time to attend daily performances, the shorter length features have become popular. Also, because most older stories were banned in the nineteen-fifties, new stories had to be written. Certainly it is easier to write shorter works than longer ones.

Only time shall tell in what forms the art will survive in coming generations.

### Genre

The term tanci is sometimes confusing, as it is applied to two distinct, but vaguely similar types of narrative. In one of its uses, the term tanci is a general term sometimes applied to a number of oral

storytelling arts in southeast China sharing the properties of singing, speech, and instrumental accompaniment. Suzhou tanci is among these traditions and shall here be taken as representative of this group (others shall be mentioned at the end of this section). In its other broad usage the term tanci is applied to a type of lengthy romance written in a mixture of verse and prose. Since the titles of stories from both genres are sometimes randomly intermixed in bibliographies and other sources a few paragraphs shall be devoted to discussing the generic differences between the two arts.

Suzhou tanci may be referred to simply as tanci or, less correctly, as pingtan. The latter term is actually an inclusive term, adopted in the nineteen-fifties, which refers to both Suzhou tanci and a similar type of oral storytelling often featured in the same teahouses as tanci. This other art is known as pinghua. Blader (1983) renders it in English as "straight talk," while Tsao (1988:xi) describes it as "narration without music." It has a much longer history than that of tanci and is related to a number of very similar arts such as Beijing pingshu, Yangzhou pinghua, etc. (Tan 1982; Blader 1983). Suzhou pinghua is performed by one storyteller and uses no musical instruments. The most common performances concern tales of colorful, violent outlaws such as in



Shuihu chuan (Outlaws of the Marsh) or stories of battles and war heroes such as Sanguo yanyi (The Three Kingdoms) and Yuefei chuan (The Legend of Yuefei). Because of these themes (and possibly the traditional length of the stories), Suzhou pinghua is known as dashu (big story), while Suzhou tanci is called xiaoshu (little story).

The other genre with the name of tanci is actually a type of romance in verse and prose which is written to be read, rather than performed. It is sometimes called tanci xiaoshuo (tanci fiction). This type of narrative uses seven-word extended verse (in lines with between seven and ten characters) mingled with occasional snatches of prose to relate stories of up to one million words, some of the longest narratives in Chinese literature. Many of the finest tanci xiaoshuo such as Tian yu hua (Heaven Rains Flowers), Zai sheng yuan (Love Reincarnate), and Bi sheng hua (Flowers from a Brush) were written by women. These stories were popular reading fare among women of the leisured classes from the Ming up until the Republican Era (1911-1949). Popular plots concern women who escape their traditional roles by disguising themselves as men and eventually becoming zhuangyuan or top ranking imperial scholars (Zhao 1982:3). Of the hundreds of these written-to-be-read tanci, only a few, such as Zai

sheng yuan were performed as Suzhou tanci, and of these none gained the popularity of the more famous of the performed works such as the "four great stories": Zhenzhu ta (The Pearl Pagoda) examined in Chapter Three, Baishe chuan (mentioned above), concerning a supernatural snake that turns into a beautiful woman, Yu qingting (The Jade Dragonfly) about the love between a scholar and a lovely nun, and Sanxiao yinyuan (The Three Smiles), describing the escapades of the Ming dynasty literatus Tang Bohu.

Moreover, performed tanci were not always completely written down. Though some Suzhou tanci performers wrote out nearly complete versions of performances in sketch-books which were consulted before performances, many simply recorded outlines of episodes, or sometimes only the songs. Some performers simply kept their jiaoben in their heads (Fang 1986:11). Of course, tanci xiaoshuo was always written, if not formally printed.

In order to avoid confusing the two genres, Zhao Jingshen as early as the 1930's suggested the use of the term "changci" for performed Suzhou tanci and the term "wenci" for the written genre (Zhao 1947 [1936]:6-7). Zhou Liang suggests the use of the terms "Suzhou tanci" and "nitanci" (mock tanci). The latter is a term derived from Lu Xun's use of the term

nihuaben to describe huaben xiaoshuo which he took be be imitations of storyteller's promptbooks (SPJWC 1983:264).

In my opinion, the most convenient designations are "Suzhou tanci" for the tanci performed in Suzhou and "tanci xiaoshuo" for the written tanci (Bender 1984).

As for possible genetic relations between the two types of tanci, Zhao Jingshen has suggested that wenci derived rather directly from Tang bianwen, while Suzhou tanci, as mentioned, derived from southern zhugongdiao and other storytelling styles. Whatever the case, there is little reason to present the forms under the same heading as is common in most concise Chinese histories of literature. Indeed, tanci xiaoshuo is an under-appreciated type of xiaoshuo which has never been given its rightful place in Chinese literature.

As noted above the term tanci is sometimes used as a generic term for several southern storytelling styles which combine singing, speaking, and stringed-instruments. All are performed in local dialects and include (besides Suzhou tanci) nanci, popular in Hangzhou, and xianci, once common in Yangzhou (Chen 1958:182-188). To complicate the matter even more, the term is sometimes applied to even more southernly arts such as the muyushu of Guangdong

province and the pinghua of Fujian province which exist in performed and written-to-be-read genres, as well.

Within the context of this paper, the term "tanci," unless otherwise specified, refers only to Suzhou tanci.

### The Physical Locus of Performance

Suzhou tanci has traditionally been performed in teahouses (chaguan) or "story houses" (shuchang). The names for the two locales are often intermixed. Though a story house is always a place stories are told (and tea is served), a teahouse may simply be a place people congregate to drink tea or enjoy other sorts of performances. In the present discussion, the two terms are synonymous.

A print (SPJWC 1986) from the late 19th century of a "women's story house" (nüshuchang) depicts a teahouse inside a traditional Chinese garden (fig. 1). Outside the arching doorway exhibiting the words "Women's Story House" are two palanquins in which some of the more distinguished guests evidently arrived. Inside the elaborate hall, decorated with paintings, lanterns, penjing (bonsai), and wooden screens are at least two rooms packed with listeners. In the cutaway depiction only one room is depicted in full. In it are about one hundred listeners, mostly males wearing queues. At least

seven women are seated near the front on the performer's right. The performers (two women) are seated on a raised platform with a small table between them. Behind them stand two young women. The performer on stage right holds a xianzi-banjo, indicating that she is the lead performer. The other performer plays the pipa-lute, indicating that she is the supporting performer. On the wall above the performers is the character for "prosperity" (fu). In front of the performer's raised platform is a wide table (cluttered with tea mugs) surrounded by what appear to be older male listeners. This table is known as the zhuangyuan tai ("table for imperial scholars"). A source dating from 1886 notes that the zhuangyuan tai was a place reserved for older customers who were hard of hearing (SPJWC 1986:120-121; Zuo 1981:113). Against the walls are benches and throughout the very crowded room are several tables. Many people are watching the performance attentively, but some are walking around and several of the seated women are obviously carrying on a private conversation with several men (these women may be patrons or professional entertainers). At the doorway a waiter carries in a tray of tea mugs. It is obvious that the majority of patrons are of the middle- and upper-classes.

An article from 1986 (Zhu) describes the Xiangyin Story House in Shanghai as follows:

The Xiangyin House is beautifully decorated, with potted flowers dotting the latticed shelves. Not large, the theatre offers some 80 seats with teapots between the seats.

People can drink [tea] and eat melon seeds while watching the performance on the stage. In the intermission, babaofan (steamed glutinous rice pudding with bean paste, lotus seeds and preserved fruit) and red bean soup are served. Audiences are made to feel at home.

Obviously the bourgeoisie trappings of the art have managed to survive three decades of political turmoil.

I visited the Suzhou Story House twice, once in 1982 and a second time in late 1986. On my first visit I discovered that the hall consisted of a wide stage, with footlights, as for modern drama. The audience sat in folding theater seats. By 1986, however, the house had been refurbished. Gone were the wide stage and theater seats. Instead, there was the more traditional performer's platform and the audience sat at small tables arranged throughout the room. Snacks and drinks were available to the listeners. Though houses are now more traditional than a few years ago, none of the four story houses I visited in Suzhou, Shanghai, and Jiading featured a zhuangyuan tai.

#### Structural Aspects of Performance

Performances of Suzhou tanci may feature a solo performer (dandang) or small groups of up to four or

five performers. By far the most popular configuration is the pair (shuangdang). Pairs are usually male/female or female/female. The traditional name for the sexually mixed pairs was cixiong dang (SPJWL 1983:121). A typical performance features a male lead, clad in an ankle-length robe, plucking a banjo-like xianzi-banjo, and a female partner strumming a lute-like pipa-lute held upright in her lap. She is dressed in a tunic and trousers, a qipao (cheongsam), or a formal, western-style gown. Whatever the sex of the performers, the one playing the xianzi-banjo is called the shangshou (upper hand) or "first string," while the pipa-lute player is referred to as the xiashou (lower hand) or "second string."

The performers sit in high-backed chairs on a low stage or platform (shutai, story platform), with a small table between them, upon which sit a teapot and two water glasses. When performers stand to speak or gesture (though many of the spoken lines are delivered while the performers are seated) the instruments are placed on or against this table, to be picked up and played during the singing roles, which are always performed sitting down. The first string often performs the bulk of the speaking roles, sometimes portraying three characters at once. Depending on her (or his) level of accomplishment, the second string, playing the pipa, may simply strum along

with the first string, occasionally joining in the singing, or may take a more active role in the storytelling by participating in the dialogue or acting as an alternative narrative voice. In some cases, the prominence of the second string may be equal to or exceed that of the first string, though the first string always sits on the right, signifying his or her shangshou status.

In the past performances were held twice daily, in the afternoons and evenings. A source dated 1886 (SPJWC 1983:121-22) notes that the 3 to 5 pm performance was called the erdang (daytime show), while the 9 to 11 performance was called the yedang (nighttime show). Today many houses only offer either afternoon or evening performances. Between the two 45 minute performances is a short break. The performance of a full-length story may last three to four months. The technique of stretching the story by keeping the audience in suspense at the end of each episode is called maiguanzi (selling peaks of suspense).

At the start of a tanci performance the performers enter from backstage and take their places on the platform. Members of the audience, often comprised mostly of older men (though persons of all ages may be present), are engaged in conversation with friends, drinking tea, cracking melon seeds, and or smoking. In



order to shift the audiences' attention to the storytelling platform, the performers first perform a short narrative ballad or light lyric called a kaipian (opener). The kaipian not only helps the audience key in on the major story (which follows it) but allows the performers to test their voices, discern the acoustics of the hall, limber their fingers, and check to see if their instruments are in tune. The tune used to perform the kaipian is usually the same as that used in the main story. Many of the pieces included in Ma Rufei's famous collection of over 300 hundred kaipian are ballads of legendary persons such as the girl general "Hua Mulan," the military leader Liu Zhiyuan in "Baitu ji" ("Legend of the White Rabbit"), and the ancient general Zhuge Liang in the piece bearing his name, "Zhuge Liang" (Zhao 1947:136-148). Other kaipian may be short lyric poems or small episodes from other well-known tanci stories. The term Tangshi kaipian (Tang dynasty-poetry opener) refers to the more lyrical kaipian (Zuo 1981: 10; Fang 1986:25). The length of the kaipian performance is short, lasting only a few minutes.

After the kaipian, the lead performer begins the next episode of the main serial story. The new episode usually includes several sentences of foregrounding to remind listeners of what went before and to repeat the

events directly leading up to the point of suspense where the performers left off the episode before. The performance will alternate between narration in the narrator's mode, dialogue of the characters, and singing (described in detail below). As the performance progresses, a series of suspenseful peaks (guan zi) will be created, moving the audience along on a gentle emotional roller coaster.

Fang Cao (1986:27) has observed that when "presenting a character" (qi jiaose) a performer must consider his creation's status, life experience, personality, sex, and the cultural and historical background. Discussing contemporary tanci, he states that performers need to realize that: "The scholars of ancient times and today's intellectuals speak totally differently from each other." Somewhat less believably he insists that "Officials of the past and today's officials are also basically different." Moreover, the language used by a qianjin xiaojie ("a girl worth a thousand gold pieces") cannot be that of a common housewife, as it would be unsuitable to her position."

Aside from convincing characterization, two other important narrative principles are "raising the past" (guoqu cong ti) and "foretelling the future" (weilai xianshuo). Storytellers carefully manipulate the plot creating suspense by leaking bits of the past at

appropriate places and suggesting what might happen. This often is accomplished by the use of intrusive comments in the third person voice, or in the inner voices of a character.

There are two basic types of episodes: nongtangshu and guanrishu. The former are usually episodes at the beginning of a major story. Since little action has unfolded, these episodes are harder to perform. Rather than suspense, the performers must rely on carefully executed technique to enthrall the audience. Real insiders in the art (neihang) call these episodes penjingshu (bonsai-tree stories) because of their polish (Fang 1986:32-33). Guanrishu are concerned with creating the ups and downs of suspense. Thus, the more complications in a plot, the better, for the story can be stretched longer, keeping the storyteller employed. Moreover, there are big and small guanri (which can roughly be understood as suspenseful plots and subplots). A "big guanri" (daguanri) is comprised of numerous "small guanri" (xiaoguanri). For example, the story of the poverty-stricken scholar visiting his rich aunt in the selection from The Pearl Pagoda in Chapter Three. The basic theme of the visit and the scholar's loss of face is a big guanri, which is comprised of a number of smaller complications in several episodes. In theory, performers attempt to get as many guanri as possible

out of a story line, though care must be taken not to over do it (Tsao 1988:11).

In full-length tanci and pinghua it is crucial that the audience is left hanging at the end of a performance, otherwise they will not return the next day. Thus performers must know how to luohui (end the chapter). Though formulaic endings to the order of "If you want to know what happens next, come and join me tomorrow" (Tsao 1988:11) are sometimes used, very often the action will simply be cut short at a point of suspense without any explicit ending formula. This is termed jin luohui ("tense" ending). In other cases the scene may end with xue luohui (humorous ending). Here the performer makes a satirical comment on the action using the intrusive narrator's voice (though this is considered difficult).

The riskiest ending is called leng luohui ("cold" ending). An example of this rare type is best illustrated by a famous pinghua performance (Zhang 1984:85). In one picaresque narrative a gallant shoots a series of 36 arrows. For each arrow there is a suitable guanzi. At the shooting of the 36th arrow, the performer picks up his fan, calls to someone offstage, then disappears into the wings behind the platform. After a few moments the audience either acknowledges the unique "cold ending" with applause or verbal approval, or

sits in uneasy incomprehension, awaiting the final shot. The performer must be sensitive enough to judge the success of his ploy. If there is a doubt, the performer can use another character's voice to call himself back to the stage to complete the scene in a more conventional manner. Cold endings, however, are rare in both Suzhou pinghua and Suzhou tanci.

### Major Conventions

The conventions of Suzhou tanci performance can be approached through four categories formulated emically by the performers themselves (Zuo 1982; Tsao 1988): shuo (speaking), xue (satiric humor), tan (instrumental playing), and chang (singing). Shoumian (gestures) constitutes a fifth important aspect.

In tanci the spoken lines generally predominate over the singing roles. Sharing features in common with many forms of Chinese drama (for instance dialogue, soliloquy, asides, stage whispers, and the use of the second person in some speeches), tanci speech has several unique conventions.

Though there is some disagreement among artists and researchers over the exact identification of the narrative voices used in tanci, the two essential distinctions are between the narrator's voice (that is, the voice of the performer acting as narrator) and the

monologues and dialogues of the characters the performers are portraying.

The third person narrator's voice is called biao (which literally means "outside"). Using this voice the performer can narrate the events in third person, read the minds of his characters, and intrude on a character's thoughts or in dialogue, inserting remarks which manipulate the listeners response to the action (by making wisecracks or asking rhetorical questions, etc.). Though the performer sets up the illusion of a dialogue, the audience is always at his mercy if he wishes to intrude into that illusion. The biao mode also entails the use of biaochang in which the narrator's can reveal inner thoughts of a character in song.

The voices of characters performed in first person use a mode of speaking called bai, of which there are several subdivisions (Zuo 1981:20-21; Fang 1986:11-15; Tsao 1988:10-11). These include duibai (dialogue), dubai (monologue), and neixin dubai or sibai (inner monologues). The conversation of most characters is performed in guanbai (official dialogue). Guan gubai (murmuring official dialogue) is used in spoken monologues used when a character introduces himself, while si gubai (murmuring monologue) are inner monologues not explicitly framed as being spoken by the biao. Chenbai (supporting dialogue) and tuobai (lifting

dialogue) are uncommon types of bai which function to strengthen the effect of the speeches of officials by the use of more elaborate language.

While guanbai, guan gubai, chenbai, and tuobai are spoken in Suzhou dialect or in local dialects of Mandarin (zhongzhou yun) for certain upper-class characters, the inner voices in either bai or biao modes are spoken only in Suzhou dialect. Comic characters may use a sort of rustic dialect called xiangxia yu (Tsao 1976:97).

The voices of the characters are differentiated in large part by various shifts in voice register, dialect, pacing, etc., though gestures also contribute to the portrayals as discussed below. It should be noted that transcriptions of Suzhou tanci vary in the manner the narrative voices are noted. Many texts simply use the term "biao" for the narrator's voice and the inner voices of characters, while "bai" is used for the speech of characters and "biaobai" is used to note intrusive comments of the narrator. (The term biaobai is also sometimes used to collectively refer to the pingtan voices.) In some schools of Suzhou tanci, particularly the Yu style, falsetto voices are commonly employed, a feature, along with many gestures and jokes, which probably derived from Kunqu opera.

Performers are highly skilled at mimicking all

sorts of noises, such as horse hoofs clopping, rats scurrying, a fritter rolling off the table, the midnight gong, etc. Songs shall be treated below.

The use of xuetou (juetou), or humor (often in the form of biting satire), is a main reason why many traditional Suzhou tanci stories were banned in the nineteen-fifties (Zuo 1982:23-24). A commentator writing in 1916 noted that some tanci performers regularly larded their performances with salacious humor (SPJWC 1983:140). Some stories, particularly The Three Smiles concerning the scholar and painter Tang Bohu, of Suzhou, are famous largely for their use of salacious humor. Whether vulgar or not, tanci humor is divided into two sorts: "meaty" humor (roulixue) and "flowers stuck along the wayside" (waichahua). The former term refers to humor used in the dialogue of the characters, while the latter refers to occasional comments of the intrusive narrator. In a usual performance, both modes are intermixed.

As noted, tanci is usually performed with a three-stringed xianzi-banjo and a four-stringed pipa-kute. According to Tsao (1976:100-101) the music performed on the xianzi-banjo is simpler than that played by the pipa-lute, since "simultaneous singing and elaborate instrumental playing" is a difficult skill to acquire. An early twentieth century source (SPJWC



1983:144) lists eight different ways in which a pipa-lute can be picked, strummed, rapped, plucked, etc. Tsao also notes that the pipa-lute plays a "much more elaborate melodic line" than the xianzi-banjo and that the resulting blend of music and singing "is a highly heterophonic texture between the vocal part and the instrumental parts."

Rooted in gu tunes of the Tang dynasty, tanci music is directly related to musical styles in Kunqu drama, which originated in the town of Kunshan only miles from Suzhou. Today there are about a dozen styles of Suzhou tanci music. The most influential styles or diao (tunes) include some that date back to the late 18th and mid-19th centuries. Some of the more popular styles, referred to by the originator's family name, are: Yu, Ma, Ji, Chen, Xiaoyang, Xia, Li, Zhou, Qin, Yang, Xue, etc. (Zuo 1983:135-37; Tsao 1988:12-16 ). The Yu style, which dates from the eighteenth century and the Ma style, which was formed in the nineteenth century, have had great influence on the formation of other styles, and most styles owe a debt to one or the other schools. The Yu style originated with Yu Xiushan who, as noted, was instrumental in adopting falsetto singing from Kunqu drama to Suzhou tanci in the late eighteenth century. The Ma style was named for Ma Rufeï, the greatest nineteenth century performer of The Pearl Pagoda and

compiler of the above mentioned collection of over 300 kaipian. The Yu style is noted for its subtlety, while the Ma style is highly regarded for its strength in combination with narrative.

Song lyrics, sung in Suzhou dialect, feature seven character lines, though line lengths vary because of the use of the use of padding words called dianzi. According to Tsao (1976:98) these "extra" words are employed in performance so as to "increase expressiveness, to emphasize certain images, or to smooth linguistic awkwardness in the text." The words are similar to the chenzi ("non-metric words") of Yuan dynasty sangu (Sun 1976:117-119). Tsao has also studied the correspondences between speech tones in spoken Suzhou dialect and the melodic contours of lyrics in Suzhou tanci, finding that the seven tones of Suzhou dialect are somewhat modified in performance, certain tones being favored over others and some tones being "treated without discrimination" (Tsao 1988:335-337). In his summary, Tsao notes that:

The essence of t'an-tzu [tanci] lies in the interrelationships between the structural elements of the text and the music. The close correlations between the two are manifested most evidently between the relative speech-tone levels and the corresponding musical pitch-registers; the speech-tone contour movements and the corresponding melodic contour movements; and the textual unit structure and its strict adherence in t'an-tzu musical cadences. The nearly infinite variety of possible choices of speech-tone combinations, scale material and modes, modifications on the three-note

motivic germs, as well as the physiological potential of the singer (e.g., natural voice range, timbre, personal preferences, technique of modification, etc.), gives rise to the various schools of singing styles within this genre of Chinese storytelling. (1988:341)

Plays on words and "vivid reduplication" (Chao 1962:205) are common rhetorical strategies in tanci lyrics and speech. A key word may be repeated for special effects, often in emotional inner monologues of female characters. Though performers often improvise while performing the spoken roles, the song lyrics are usually memorized. Examples of various speech phenomena are given in the third chapter.

Other forms of short song lyrics include fucan (descriptive lyrics), guako (introductory lyrics), and yunbai (rhyming dialogue) (Fang 1986:18). Fu and can are used, respectively, in descriptions of characters and scenes and in the voicing of inner feelings, though the two modes are very hard to differentiate. Guako is a short song sometimes used when a character introduces himself. Yunbai are clever patterns of rhyme and parallelism which capitalize on the natural features of the Chinese language for interest value.

Some tanci performances have a high percentage of songs. For instance, renditions of The Pearl Pagoda, which have featured a great number of singing roles since

Ma Rufei's lyrical innovations in the late 19th century. Other tanci may include as few as one or two songs per episode. Since 1949 songs play a more prominent role in many tanci stories.

The most visual aspects of Suzhou tanci are the gestures executed by the performers in the course of narration, either in dialogue or in the narrator's mode. The gestures include bodily movements of the eyes, torso and limbs and particularly the hands. Though characters are differentiated by shifts in voice register, special gestures accompany certain role types. To supplement the lack of costumes, make-up, and props, the narrator introduces a character by describing his or her costume, looks, and history, often gesturing to indicate head gear, sashes, boots, unusual physical traits, modes of locomotion, etc. Thus, the portrayal of a character depends on the words of the narrator, the voice register used in portraying the character, and gestures (Zuo 1983:33). Though influenced by Kunqu drama, from which the term shoumian ("hands and face") is probably borrowed (Zuo 1983:33), tanci gestures are often less complete than those in drama. Certain movements are highly stylized. If a performer twirls his hands across his chest he may be indicating a battle with swords; if he crosses his legs and raises his torso, he is mounting a horse. Performers never touch each other on stage. If A

moves to tug at B's gown (assuming both are standing), A shall extend his hand to pull, but B shall tug her own gown as if being pulled. The performers remain several feet apart the entire time.

The storytellers' few props can be used either illustratively or representationally (Scholes 1966:84). These props include a fan, a scarf or handkerchief, and the tea set. Each item may be used to represent its self in performance (that is, a fan represents a fan), though they are commonly used to illustrate other things. For instance, a closed fan may represent a gun, spear, sword, or cudgel. An open fan raised above the head becomes a bamboo hat or an umbrella. A handkerchief may turn into a letter, book, paper money, or an article of clothing. A tea tumbler may double as a wine cup. Even the performers' gown can have an illustrative function. For example, a performer may pull out the front of his gown as if wearing elaborate official clothing.

### Aesthetics

The legendary performer Wang Zhoushi, who lived in the latter-half of the eighteenth century, credited as founder of the Guangyugongsuo guild, is said to have once performed several episodes of tanci for a Qing emperor (for which Wang was made a qipin guan, a low ranking official), is also said to be the author of Shu

ping (Storytelling Products) in which his aesthetic theory of tanci performance is formulated (SPJWC 1983:97-98). The theory is actually a rhyming list of various do's and don'ts for tanci performance, which include such admonitions as: "Fast, but not confused (kuai er bu luan), slow, but not truncated (man er bu duan) . . . cold, but not shivering (leng er bu can), hot, but not sweating (re er bu han) . . ." etc. In a related work, Shu ji (Storytelling Taboos) has similar formulations regarding mood, the use of eye contact, gestures, and execution. The famous performer Lu Ruiting, of the mid- Qing dynasty wrote of the wujue (five secrets) of tanci, which include: li (believability), xi (intricate description), qi (novelty), qu (sustained interest), and wei (flavor) (Chen 1958:176-77; Zuo 1983; Bender 1988). Depending on the storyhouse, traditional audiences seem to have been comprised largely of rather sophisticated middle to upper-class urbanites of either sex. In order to please such a crowd, the performance would have to feature the five aesthetic principles. Thus, the events in the story must occur in some sort of logical manner (though fantasy is not entirely ruled out, as in the story of the White Snake), details of costumes and scenery, the representation of inner monologues, etc. should be communicated in an intricate way, the plot must be full

of strange and surprising twists, there should be an over-all flavor to the story, and finally, all aspects of performance must meld together to create a pleasing effect.

### CHAPTER III

#### KEYS TO PERFORMANCE IN SUZHOU TANCI: ANALYSIS

##### Introduction

In this section I shall examine the manner in which several transcribed performances of Suzhou tanci are keyed. The performance texts under scrutiny include a kaipian and excerpts from several Suzhou tanci episodes. Each passage shall be followed by a commentary noting the keys to performance. General findings shall be noted in the Conclusion. (The Chinese texts appear in the appendix.)

For the sake of consistency and clarity, I have marked the narrative modes of the texts using the terminology of the Suzhou storytellers as discussed in Chapter Two and as employed in the thoroughly notated text of "The Thrice Draped Cape" (see below). Such designations include "narrator's voice" (biao), "character's name/speaks" (bai), "sings" (chang), "speaks to self" (sigubai or in some cases biao), etc. I have adopted these usages somewhat arbitrarily as some texts use a slightly different (Zhao 1947 [1936]) or simplified system (Xu 1982), or do not mark the divisions explicitly (Ji 1983). Even among performers themselves



there does not seem to be total agreement on terminology.

Aspects of the texts which are particularly noteworthy are underlined.

### Kaipian (Openers)

The sample kaipian below (Zhao 1947 [1936]:138) was originally collected by the performer Ma Rufei. It is given here only to indicate the sort of short feature which helps to key the major tanci performance. As noted in Chapter Two, the kaipian usually has seven words per line, employs rhyme and is always sung to music. Unlike most of the roles in the major stories, kaipian first person speeches are usually sung. (For samples of kaipian in IPA transcription, see Chao 1986:15-25; Tsao 1988.)

#### "Hua Mulan"

From amidst the clatter of looms rise cries of  
wrenching anguish!  
The beauty is distraught!  
She is shocked to hear the Khan's troops  
have already invaded the land.  
Reading the enlistment summons she spies her  
father's name after only ten lines!

Oh, how can my father bear the hardships of war?  
I have no elder brothers, and our family lacks  
grown sons.  
I hate that I was born a girl!  
Yet, with the whip in the south market, and  
the steed in the west market,  
I'll willingly trade my skirts for a warrior's  
tunic.  
I'll endlessly climb mountains and cross  
rivers in place of my dear father!

With a bold spirit I'll enlist.

Generals who fight many battles are destined to  
Participants in a hundred battles must eventually  
die.

Yet after ten years the troops met victory.  
On their return the Emperor sat in his bright hall  
honor the officers and soldiers who had committed  
valiant deeds.

But Mulan was reluctant to receive rank,  
she wished for "Only a camel to speed me home!"

Her parents leaned in the doorway, her sisters  
awaited inside;  
the whole family burst with joy when she returned.  
Little brother set to sharpening a blade  
to butcher swine and sheep.

Opening the east chamber, then sitting on her bed,  
Mulan donned her gown and dressed her hair.  
When she went to meet her companions, she discovered  
their surprise--  
Indeed, though they have fought for ten years  
together none could believe the general  
was in truth a girl.

Mulan was filial and valiant, a sort of person rare  
in this world, indeed!

### Analysis of Transcribed Tanci Episodes

The three Suzhou tanci episodes to be examined  
are representative of well-known stories popular in  
different eras of the art's development. Though the  
analysis is confined to published "transcriptions" that  
were made with a reading public in mind and the earlier  
works were certainly transcribed without the benefit of a  
tape-recorder, many important framing devices can be  
detected in the selections, which are worth examining to  
gain a general sense of what goes on in performance. The

most problematic aspect in examining these written transcriptions (rather than actual performances) is the use of textural features such as gestures, props, body positions, and music. Though in some cases the texts explicitly note especially dramatic gestures, as well as certain register shifts, the employment of many of the keys to performance can only be guessed at. Therefore in some cases, based on performances I have witnessed and audio tapes, I have suggested probable employment of keying devices, though I have attempted to keep such speculation to a minimum. For the sake of simplicity I have rendered the Chinese words or passages into the pinyin romanization system rather than Suzhou dialect.

"The Poor Nephew Meets His Rich Aunt"

The first episode (Zhao 1947 [1936]:81-97) to be examined is a version of a famous scene in the classic tanci The Pearl Pagoda. The story concerns the poverty-stricken scholar Fang Qing, who asks his stingy aunt's family for help, but is coldly rebuffed. On his way out of the mansion, he is given a packet of food by his female cousin. Inside is a valuable pearl pagoda. After various trials his fortunes change and he passes the imperial exams with highest honors. He then returns to his aunt's home in the guise of a Taoist priest, finally revealing his identity and marrying his cousin

who took pity on him in his time of need (Tan 1981:234-35).

The episode under consideration here is entitled "Zhi jian gu pingfu kangyan pao zhiqi," which I have loosely rendered as "The Poor Nephew Visits His Rich Aunt." This written version is based on a performance made in the early 20th century by Zhou Shushi. It is very likely that the roles of the male characters were all performed by Mr. Zhou, who was undoubtedly the lead performer. The female voices could have been performed either by Mr. Zhou, or by a female partner. Since the text was supplied with no explicit performance context, the exact nature of the performance can only be guessed.

The episode begins with the arrival of the poor young scholar, Fang Qing, at his maternal aunt's home in Xianyang. He was sent from Kaifeng by his mother in hope of borrowing money from his aunt so that he and his widowed mother could continue to survive as he studied for the imperial examinations. Unfortunately, he arrives at his aunt's home empty-handed and in rags during his uncle's birthday celebration. After being rebuffed by the servants guarding the gate, a trusted old servant, once of his own household, recognizes him and escorts him through the back door to meet his uncle, who suggests that he given nice clothes and make an entry through the

front gate. However, Fang Qing is first instructed to meet his snobbish aunt, who unexpectedly insults him in front of a maidservant because of the matron's shame over his poverty. Thus he loses face and leaves without even a meal. (In the next episode, he is discovered by his beautiful cousin, Cui E, and given a basket of food, which carries a hidden pagoda made of pearl).

Here, Fang Qing at the gate of his aunt's home:

Passage A

**Narrator's voice:** As is said, Fang Qing arrives at the Chen family mansion, where he beholds a mass of carriages and horses surrounding the gate. As he nears the entrance, a servant calls down to him.

**First servant/speaks:** Hey you! What are you up to?

**Fang Qing/speaks:** Uncle, I am of the Fang Zhiwen family in Yangfu County, Honan province. Your master and I have a close relationship. Here is my letter of introduction--please send it to him.

**First servant/speaks:** Alright.

**Narrator's voice:** The man regards Fang Qing and thinks a moment: 'Our master's wife is from Honan--might this fellow be of a prime minister's family? Yet, you see, this fellow doesn't seem of such high stock.' Don't waste words with this fellow--refuse his request.

**First servant/speaks:** Look friend, I say, our master has no time for you today--come back some other time.

**Commentary:** In the first sentence of the passage, a common formulaic beginning (underlined) is employed. The Chinese is qieshuo, which I have rendered about as "As

is said . . . ." Though this may seem like a rather simple beginning, remember that the performance has already been keyed by the performance of a kaipian and the presence of the material accoutrements of both the locus of performance and the performers. Moreover, the phrase may be considered an appeal to tradition in the sense of a traditional beginning. After the first speech, the narrative mode shifts from third person to first person dialogue (the conversation between the first servant and Fang Qing). In this shift is also implicit a series of register shifts which the performer would make when performing the various roles. In the first speeches, the performance is also keyed by the stating of a number of names ("Fang Qing" and the "Chen family") and a servant is generically identified.

The first servant's second speech provides an example of the intricate weaving of narrative voices so common in performed tanci. His speech begins with the simple word "Alright," but the performer immediately shifts into the narrator's mode ("The man regards . . . ."), which is then followed by a shift to the character's thoughts, marked by "" ("Our master's wife . . . of such high stock.") in which the audience is addressed as "you." This utterance is then followed by the intrusive narrator's command: "Don't waste words . . . ." The audience is then shifted back to the first servant's

speech ("Look friend . . ."). The servant's speech is keyed by the phrase "I say."

In Babcock's scheme (1977:73), quoted speech is an implicit metanarrational device. In a sense, the dialogue in Suzhou tanci is quoted by the storyteller, and thus can be considered a key to performance.

The second passage concerns the recognition of Fang Qing by Wang Ben, a trusted old servant who formerly worked for the young scholar's father. During much of the recognition scene, the dialogue is presented through the modes of both speech and song. Here, Wang Ben is inquiring into the health of Fang Qing's mother.

#### Passage B

**Fang Qing/speaks:** Old sir,

**(sings)** My mother is now in fine health, happily enough.

**Wang Ben/speaks:** Master, ya,

**(sings)** Are things well with your family?

**Fang Qing/sings:**

Ha! It's miserable to mention my family.  
Our property and business are in decline;  
Books and swords float in all directions.

**Wang Ben/speaks:** Wa! Master.

**(sings)** Now, who has accompanied on your journey here?  
. . . .

[The conversation continues for a few lines, then shifts to the narrator's voice. Wang Ben leaves Fang Qing to go

Speak with the master. "Guan-guan" is Fang Qing's childhood name.]

**Wang Ben/speaks:** Master Fang of Honan has arrived. Here is his letter of introduction.

**Master/speaks:** Let's see it.

**Narrator's voice:** Reading the letter, the master sees that his nephew, Fang Qing, has come to pay respects.

**Master/speaks:** Wonderful! I've had him in mind recently--how is it he's come now? Please send him in at once.

**Wang Ben/speaks:** Yes, sir, I shall.

**Master/speaks:** Te, Wang Ben why do you hesitate?

**Wang Ben/speaks:** Elder Master, I'm afraid it's not convenient for the young master and you, Master, to see each other at this moment.

**Master/speaks:** What's the matter, has he grown intolerably ugly?

**Wang Ben/speaks:** No sir, it isn't that, ya.

(sings to a gudiao tune)  
If you wish to know Guan-guan's appearance, well, it's like that of Pan-Song.

**Master/speaks:** Well, since he has the looks of a Pan An or a Song Yu, why isn't it convenient for me to meet him?

**Commentary:** Throughout this passage there are numerous shifts in narrative mode and voice register in the transitions from dialogue to song and from dialogue to the narrator's voice. Wang Ben's final song in this



section employs the use of a gudiao tune, which is a register and mode shift from normal tanci music.

In several cases the speeches of Wang Ben are keyed by the use of exclamations ("Ha!" "Wa!"). In two instances ("Te" and "ya") a verbal pause (or maze) is employed. Though many of these expressions can be rendered in English equivalents (such as "Alas!" for "Ha!" "Oh" for "Wa," "Eh" for "Te," ) many of them carry varying connotations in Chinese. Thus I have employed the original words. It is likely that all of these paralinguistic, culturally-coded expressions would be accompanied by facial expressions and shifts in voice register of the performer. The reference to the letter (and the almost ironic command "Let's see it.") also implies the use of gestures, and probably the illustrative use of a fan suggesting to the audience a letter.

There is also the use of intentional humor (xuetou) when the master asks whether Fang Qing is "intolerably ugly." Earlier, the servants guarding the door had referred to Fang Qing's appearance as that of a "watermelon" and later references to his shoddy appearance are causes for laughter, evoked by an interplay between dialogue and the narrator's snide asides. Thus, in a sense, the performance is keyed by the evoked audience laughter, much as canned laughter is

used to key television situation comedies.

The reference to Pan An and Song Yu concerns legends of handsome men who lived in the Northern and Southern Dynasties (420-550 AD) and the Warring States Period (475-221 BC). The evocation of these legendary names is a minimalist example of narrative embedding, forcing the competent listener to compare Fang Qing's looks to those of the subjects of these ancient legends. A metaphor, "Books and swords float in all directions," is employed, though it is debatable to the extent it acts as a keying device.

In the next excerpt Wang Ben informs Fang Qing that the young scholar must meet his aunt before seeing his uncle. As the inner monologue shows, Fang Qing is confused. Yet, in the context, he cannot politely question Wang Ben in a very direct manner (indeed, neither can Wang Ben truthfully explain to him what is going on!).

#### Passage C

**Wang Ben/speaks:** It's not because you cannot go this way--well, there's a reason for it--please, just come along this way.

**Fang Qing/speaks:** Yi, how odd.

**(sings to himself)**

Hearing these words I feel a bit strange--  
why wasn't I received at the guest entrance?  
Why am I invited through this back door?  
I've walked a long way to get here--

I don't know how to figure out  
what's going on with my uncle.

(**speaks**) I'll talk to Old Wang, then I'll get this straight. Old sir, (**sings**) How does the master treat you?

Commentary: In this passage a shift in register and narrative mode (from "speaks" to the secretive "sings to himself" mode of singing) which allows the audience to hear Fang Qing's inner voice, though Wang Ben cannot. The repetition of questions not only allows the performer to manipulate the audience by planting seeds of suspense, but is implicitly metanarrative by forcing the audience to reflect on and to evaluate the story in process, albeit through the eyes of Fang Qing. Fang Qing also uses the culturally-coded exclamation yi, designating amazement at the situation, thus having an implicitly reflexive function. The repetition of the word "I" in the English translation does not mirror the actual Chinese text ("I" only appears twice in the original and in no perceivable pattern), and thus cannot be considered repetition.

In the next passage Fang Qing is taken by a maid to meet his aunt. Earlier in a report to the aunt the maid had commented derisively on Fang's appearance, causing the aunt lose face. When Fang arrives for his audience, she scolds him for wasting money on travel expenses to come beg from her family. She adds that in the past when

she spoke to others of her relatives in Honan she always lied about how "poor" they were.

Passage D:

**Fang Qing/speaks:** Madame!

**(sings)**

Other things may be swept under the carpet,  
but our poverty is hard to conceal.

There is an ancient saying:

'The word poor is hardest to hide.'

**Madame Chen/speaks:** Though the word poor is difficult to hide, the word does, in general, keep rich cheats away. Since you are not in your home, you should at least pay attention to your dress and manner. Attired this way

**(sings)**

you seem to have lost  
the dignity of a minister.

**(speaks)** If you were seen by members of the Chen family

**(sings/chang)**

they would say I have boasted and lied of your  
riches--  
if they speak such words of me,  
I'm certain to blush in shame.

**Narrator's voice sings:**

Hearing the words "blush in shame,"  
Master Fang's face reddens past his eyebrows.

Commentary: The word "poor" (chong) figures in a type of play on words (in this case connected with a homily) quite common in tanci which involves parallelism. Aside from homilies, proverbs are often sprinkled

throughout tanci performances and are reflexive by nature of commenting on the action (these comments may be made in either the narrator's or the character's voices). In the final speech, a register and mode shift is made from Madame Chen's voice into the narrator's mode. Important here is how the narrator uses another mode and register to repeat the phrase "blush in shame," then directs the audience's imaginative reactions to the scene he is creating by noting Fang Qing's reaction (blushing) to the words.

In the final passage of the episode, Fang Qing is being escorted from the Chen mansion by the snooty maid, Red Cloud (Hongyun).

Passage E:

**Narrator's voice:** Red Cloud escorts the scholar through the covered walkway. Distain for him is clear on her face.

**Red Cloud/speaks:** Young Master Fang, get going--here, take this bag yourself--be careful on your way home. Looking like you do, I'm afraid the you'll meet up with bandits!

**Fang Qing/speaks:** Nonsense!

**Red Cloud/speaks:** This is as far as I'll send you off.

**Fang Qing/speaks:** You needn't bother with me any longer.

**Narrator's voice:** Red Cloud hands over the bag and turns on her heel. Scholar Fang is left to find his own way out of the mansion and sets off, alone, his steps hesitant and unsure.

Commentary: Though there is no explicit reference to an ending, the shift from dialogue into the narrator's mode and the content of his speech is in a general way formulaic. Moreover, in actual performance, it is possible that the story would be rounded off by an explicit ending formula, as in some of the following episodes. Aside from the shifts in narrative mode, the performance is implicitly keyed by Fang Qing's exclamation of "Nonsense!" which would involve facial expressions and a register shift in actual performance and Red Cloud's mocking tone of voice.

#### "The Thrice Draped Cape"

The second example of a tanci episode to be examined is "The Thrice Draped Cape" ("San gai yi") from the story Biyu zhan (The Jasper Hairclasp). The earliest known version of the tale is a Ming dynasty drama by the same title (Tan 1981:308-09). The version under consideration here, by Qiu Xiaopeng, dates from the late 1950's (Qiu 1962:20-43). This piece is an example of a short-length tanci, a form which has become popular since the 1950's and is appealing to audiences without time for the daily serial stories.

The story was chosen because of its sophisticated use of keying devices. Most strikingly it features an intricate blend of mode shifts and register shifts in the

form of inner monologue, dialogue, and the narrator's voice, as well as speaking and singing. The story would be best performed by a male/female pair of performers.

"The Thrice Draped Cape" features the classical gifted scholar, talented beauty plot. The story concerns Wang Yulin, a twenty-nine year old scholar who is still not engaged (an event which should happen by age thirty). One day he and his father visit the family of an official named Li Ting. Mr. Li is so impressed with Wang Yulin that he gives his talented and beautiful daughter, Li Xiuying, to him in marriage. On the wedding night, however, Wang discovers a letter on the threshold of the bridal chamber. Inside is a declaration of love by Li Xiuying for her jealous male cousin. Also inside is a jasper hairclasp, a symbol of the illicit lovers' eternal love. From the moment of discovery on, Wang Yulin literally "gives the cold shoulder" to Li Xiuying, who cannot understand her husband's neglect. Indeed, unaware of her vile cousin's scheming plot to disrupt her marriage, she is totally innocent of any untoward behavior.

#### Passage A

**Narrator's voice:** This is an episode from the story The Jasper Hair Clasp, entitled "The Thrice Draped Cape."

In the city of Jiaying, in Zhejiang province, lived the daughter of the minister of Personnel Affairs, named Li Xiuying. She was talented, beautiful, and

engaged to a gifted scholar of the East City named Wang Yulin. Wang had won first place in the provincial examinations and, although his family was only of moderate means, his personality and talent were indeed worthy of Miss Li Xiuying. During the Mid-Autumn festival they married, but who would expect that on their wedding night Wang Yulin would pick up a love letter just outside the wedding suite. The letter was from his bride to her cousin, and it related that she had been ordered by her father to marry Wang Yulin, "... my love for you will never be forgotten. In accord with custom, I shall return to my family at the end of our honeymoon month to visit. Then we shall speak deeply of our love again. . . . enclosed within the letter is a jasper hair clasp, which I present you as a token of remembrance." As Wang Yulin read, his eyes burned in anger. He imagined that the letter must have been given to the bridal escort by Li Xiuying to deliver to her cousin. As the escort was leaving, she must have carelessly dropped it on the doorstep.

Wang Yulin wished to speak out, but the face of each family would be lost--yet, if he kept silent, why that would be abominable. Finally, he figured that there was only one thing to do--completely ignore her. "Wait until next year when I become a high official through imperial examination; I will meet her father, and then divorce her." Thereafter, he avoided his bride; if he should meet her, he wouldn't speak to her. From the first night on, he never once entered the wedding suite.

Commentary: The episode is framed by an explicitly formulaic beginning. A second, implicit, frame is the setting of the scene, which includes naming of the place of the action and the characters, followed by an unusually long recapitulation of foregoing events in the story. The story is explicitly set in the past, though by the end of the narrator's introduction, shifts the action to the equivalent of historical present tense in English. Shifts in voice register, probably accompanied by facial expressions and gestures would certainly be



employed by the performer in the reading of the letter and in the vocalization of Wang Yulin's inner thoughts. It is interesting that the performer frames all ensuing inner monologues by his observation that Wang Yulin wished to speak his heart, but could not, due to restrictive social conditions, as will become apparent below.

As a continuation of the rather lengthy foregrounding, the narrator explicitly creates another frame, that of Babcock's "story within a story" embedded in the foregrounding frames. The tale explains the real circumstances surrounding the love letter allegedly written by Li Xiuying. (The text continues the above passage in the narrator's voice.) The creation of the various frames key this short-length tanci quite differently than normal episodes in the longer stories, which require little foregrounding.

#### Passage B

But in fact, the love letter was a false one; it was written by someone with the intention of parting them. Whom might that be? It was none other than Li Xiuying's cousin, Gu Wenyong, the wastrel son of an official. He had had his eye on Li Xiuying a long time, but she had married Wang Yulin instead of him; thus he perpetrated the following evil scheme: He bribed an old woman named Chieh who was often in and about his cousin's home, and whom he found out would be a bridal escort in his cousin's wedding. He ordered the old woman to borrow a jasper hair clasp from Li Xiuying beforehand. He then wrote the false love letter, put the jasper hair clasp inside, and instructed the old woman to place the letter outside the wedding suite

when no one was looking.

Knowing that when Wang Yulin found the letter he would assume it as real and write off Li Xiuying, Gu figured he could then get his hands on his cousin. Sure enough, Wang Yulin walked right into his trap, and the newlyweds instantly became enemies.

Commentary: The embedded tale of Gu Wenyou's deception is suggested by the narrator's question "Who might that be?" which is directed to the audience. The small narrative is also framed by two evaluative clauses made by the narrator concerning its nature (an "evil scheme") and success (it went "Sure enough" as planned).

The foregrounding framing continues with a formulaic shift into the immediate action, which entails a shift into the equivalent of historical present tense: "Today is the 15th day of the ninth month. A month has passed since the wedding, and it is the day on which Li Xiuying should visit her family. . . ." After a few more sentences explaining why Li Xiuying has returned home early from her visit, there is a shift from the narrator's voice into dialogue, in which a conversation is held between Li Xiuying, her mother-in-law and Wang Yulin, with constant shifts to the narrator's voice and the character's speech. In the course of the dialogue, Li Xiuying's unusually sympathetic mother-in-law questions her about her early return. She cannot say it is because Wang Yulin had ordered her to return the same day. Her mother-in-law does her best to get the couple to pay

respects to each other, at one point even threatening to paddle Wang with the traditional instrument of domestic discipline the jiafa or "family regulator" (a large wooden board, suggested in performance by a fan).

Finally, after forcing the couple to dine with her she locks them into the marriage suite. The couple both sink into silence on opposite sides of the room (a very convenient alignment for dramatization on the performance platform), each wanting to find out the truth about the other, but each failing to speak out. Most of the narration in this section consists of inner monologues, the most emotional delivered in song. Wang Yulin, still frustrated over his wife's supposed infidelity and nervous over the upcoming imperial examinations and his reputation, finally nods off to sleep, his head on the table, after the third watch. Li Xiuying, her head lowered in contemplation is aroused by the chill of the night, then notices that Wang is asleep. On the one hand she is moved to protect him from the night cold, but on the other she is incensed by his unjust treatment of her. Thus begins the most moving section of the episode.

#### Passage C

**Li Xiuying speaks (timidly):** Master, master . . . (she shakes her head) Ai!

**Narrator's voice:** She calls to him twice, but he doesn't stir, so she lets him sleep. Just as she thinks

to enter the bedroom by herself, a draft flickers the candle light, making her chilly as well. "If he sleeps here, he'll get a chill--ai! He treated me so horribly, why should I care about him? Chilled or not, what has it to do with me? I am going to the bedroom!" But who would guess that although she told herself to go into the bedroom, her feet wouldn't follow; still standing there, she stares at him unblinking, her tears again flowing.

**Li Xiuying sings:**

My tearful eyes look silently at my husband.  
 My heart and breast are full of sorrow and hatred.  
 You are like iron for not entering the wedding  
 suite--  
 Despite the autumn cold, the lateness of the night,  
 With such unexpected soundness, you sleep upon a  
 table;  
 Your body is thin, your clothes, too, are thin;  
 A draft blows icily,  
 You torture yourself.  
 If you are chilled and become ill--  
 I don't care--but do [care],  
 Although you act like a stranger to me, your wife.  
 All maiden's hearts are good--  
 I want to have no love for you, but do.  
 As hatred deepens, so too does love deepen;  
 I don't have the heart to see my Master  
 catch his death of cold,  
 So I shall remove my outer-garment,  
 Lightly step to his side,  
 Bashfully, fearfully, shaking--  
 Jade hands, with pointed fingertips,  
 Wipe away the tears.  
 Preparing to place the garment on his shoulders,  
 To keep him from the cold and wind--  
Who would guess that the sight would sorrow her  
so?  
She pauses a moment,  
Noiseless, wordless, silently grieving.

**Narrator's voice:** Because today is the customary day to return to her home after a month of marriage, she is wearing her red bridal clothes, including her embroidered bridal cloak. Removing her cloak, she prepares to place it on his shoulders, but seeing the peonies and butterflies embroidered on the red silk, she becomes even more broken-hearted.

**Li Xiuying sings:**

Seeing the peonies, so fresh and bright,

The paired butterflies, so real;  
 These I embroidered as I waited to wed,  
 A thousand needles, ten thousand threads,  
 Countless hours.  
 Then I was happy, expectant,  
 With a bashful face, but a heart full of joy;  
 This, just for marrying a good husband,  
 And the expectation of the wedding night.  
 Who would guess a good master would become  
 heartless,  
 That the wonderful wedding night would turn into  
 a nightmare?  
 Now such visceral sorrow, a heart broken by tears;  
 Teardrops soak my handkerchief,  
 My just-entered life, brought to an end.  
 He has no righteousness, I have no love;  
 Why should I cover him with my cloak,  
 and care for him?

Commentary: As noted, this passage is an excellent example of the interplay of narrative modes in song and speech. In Li Xiuying's first song, however, the last few lines seem to take on a second person perspective. There is a shift in pronoun usage from "I" to "her." Thus, the narrator's perspective makes its way into a character's perspective. Though this may not be typical, it indicates that the differentiation between narrative modes is sometimes problematic. This passage also contains two culturally-coded cries of dismay ("ai!"), as well as several examples of culturally-coded symbols. The red wedding cloak (probably suggested in performance by a handkerchief and/or gestures) symbolizes marital happiness. The pairs of peonies and butterflies symbolize marital bliss. These messages would be

implicitly understood by a competent audience, without explanation by the narrator's voice. If, however, the performance were made in another language to a different audience, or even to younger Chinese, the symbolism of the artifacts could easily be explained by the narrator's voice, just as other background information is conveyed. Indeed, the information explaining that Li Xiuying is wearing the red cloak because it is the traditional day for her to visit her mother for the first time after her marriage might have been unnecessary in earlier times and may have been added to this rendition for the benefit of more modern audiences.

In the first lines of the passage, the text notes Li Xiuying's manner of speaking ("timidly"), which is a shift in voice register (usually not noted in the transcriptions). In the same section, the text also notes the use of gestures (the shaking of Li Xiuying's head).

Though the songs in the passage are obviously not directed to another character, the singing modes are not noted as being in the inner voice mode. In the above context, this makes sense considering Wang is asleep. In other instances in the text, some songs seem meant to be perceived as verbalized or, more often, sung in an inner voice. A similar situation exists in Chinese drama. Audience competence is thus necessary to determine which

songs are meant for the ears of other characters and which are not.

As the story continues, Li Xiuying struggles with the Confucian concepts of filial piety instilled in her by her mother. Yet at the same time she recalls her husband's icy treatment of her earlier in the day. In the following passage, as she again hesitates to enter the wedding suite alone she sees Wang shivering in the cold while dreaming.

Passage D

**Li Xiuying speaks:** A.

**Narrator's voice:** Wang Yulin wraps his arms tightly about himself and buries his head in his arms, dropping off to sleep again.

**Li Xiuying speaks (fondly, yet with hatred):** My Master, my Hated One!

(sings)

I want to hate you wholeheartedly,  
but my heart won't let me hate;  
When your body is cold, my heart is in pain.  
I don't care for you; but still, I can't help  
caring for you--  
I shake, shake my head and sigh.  
Your breath goes xuxu as if you are dreaming,  
But in your dreams, can you know my suffering?  
I suffer to have married this unfeeling man;  
This unfeeling man, as luck would have it,  
has met me, one with so much love;  
So much love for you has wasted my heart,  
Wasted my heart, as luck would have it,  
with my heart-felt care;  
I hate the gentle, sweet love in this daughter's  
heart;  
I'd rather have no righteousness at all.  
Than have no love.

Although I have suffered one thousand injustices,  
 They cannot exclude ten thousand feelings;  
 So my tears obscure my sight, as my feet  
 move lightly forward,  
 And I place this garment on my husband's body.

**Narrator's voice:** She lightly places the garment upon him, but suddenly her nose begins to itch; indeed, she herself has caught cold. She tries to control it, but cannot, so she sneezes.

**Wang Yulin speaks (startled):** A.

**Narrator's voice:** Wang Yulin, awakened by the sneeze, opens his eyes to see Li Xiuying standing at his side, and an extra layer of clothing on his body. Removing the garment, he sees it is his wife's bridal cloak.

**Wang Yulin speaks to self:** Ya! How did this slut's clothing get on my body? I know! She is, of course, plotting against me; she knows that I will go to the capital for the examinations next year; she wants to give me bad luck, so she put this filthy woman's garment on my body so I'll fail the examination! Hei! Your heart is poison!

**Narrator's voice:** He throws the cloak to the floor, tramps on it, then spits on it.

**Wang Yulin speaks:** Pei!

**Commentary:** Here too are fine examples of shifts in register and narrative mode. This passage also contains a number of culturally-coded paralinguistic exclamations which entail register shifts. Both characters utter "A" (similar to the English "Ah") in surprise. At one point Wang Yulin exclaims "Ya!" (similar to "Hey!") in surprise, and in the last section utters two cries of



disgust and anger: "Hei!" (like "Heck!" and "Pei!" like "Damn!"). In an early speech, the text notes that Li Xiuyin's voice must convey a sense of fondness mixed with hatred (a voice register that the audience must be able to decipher!). Interestingly enough, according to the text her sneeze (which seems to be a form of comic relief) is not sounded, rather it is simply referred to by the narrator's voice. Also, Wang's action of spitting on the cloak (certainly acted out by the performer) is not simply a show of disgust. In cultural context the act is a folk method of depriving a bad luck token of its power.

Though the singing roles are obviously framed by music, a closer look at a song passage will highlight some of the common rhetorical devices in tanci song lyrics. In Li Xiuying's song in the above passage, a number of repetitions and parallel wordings key the narration. In the line "Your breath goes xuxu, as if you are dreaming" (Ni bixi xuxu ru menghun), the two identical characters xuxu comprise what Chao (1970:198-210) calls reduplicates. This is a very common feature of both speech and song in Suzhou tanci. The forms of reduplication, whether syllabic or morphemic, which concern the present study are "vivid reduplicates" (which have special "vivifying effects" and are comprised of adjectives and adverbs) and

"onomatopoeic reduplicates." An example of a vivid reduplicate is leng bingbing ("cold, icy-icy") while onomatopoeic reduplicates include dingdang ("ding dong") and the example from the text.

A more sophisticated sort of repetition is that of "phrase echoing," in which a phrase is repeated exactly or with some ironic variation late in the same sentence or in a subsequent line. In a literal translation of the first line of Li's song -- "I want to hate [you] with my heart and intestines, but it is hard to make my heart and intestines hate" (Wo yao hen xinchang nan ba xinchang hen) -- emotional tension is produced by the echoing of the first part of the line.

In a subsequent line a similar formula is used: "I don't care for you, but still, I can't help caring for you" (Wo buguanxin haishi yao guanxin). Then in the lines "So much love has wasted my heart,/wasted my heart, as luck would have it" (Wo tai duo qing you shi wangfei xin,/wangfei xin pian shi yao fei xin) two phrases repeat similar feelings, each phrase made ironic with the syntactic twist.

Line lengths show significant variation. In the above song, the line lengths (in Chinese characters) are as follows: 10, 13, 9, 6, 8, 8, 10, 10, 9, 8, 13, 10, 6, 6, 9, 10. The rhyme scheme (according to Suzhou dialect pronunciations) is A B B C B B E B B B E F E E A. The

word heart (xin) is used as a rhyme word six times, while the word love (qing) is used three times. This repetition of words associated with emotions, especially as rhymes, is quite common in the lyrics in this episode and in the fourth sample, below. The irregular line lengths and rhymes seem to allow the performer a certain flexibility in delivery and may not necessitate exact memory. Yet, irregular or not, the lyrics certainly are not normal speech, and thus help key the performance as performance.

The episode "The Thrice Draped Cape" closes with a return to the narrator's voice. Leaving Wang Yulin crying for his mother to deliver him from the "wretch," the narrator states, evaluatively, that "The situation is simply a mess." The narrator then proceeds to wrap up the entire story in a few sentences, relating how everything finally turns out well until Li's father returns from a journey and throws the evil cousin, Gu Wenyou and his accomplice, the old matron, in prison. Wang Yulin admits his mistake and begs Li Xiuying to forgive him. Though there is no explicit formulaic closure, another story in the same collection ends with the narrator's words: "'Husband and Wife Reunites' finishes here!" immediately after the final instance of dialogue. Though the possibility exists that the actual ending of the episode "The Thrice Draped Cape" may not

have been transcribed, it is likely that in general the final closure of an episode or story may be handled in slightly different ways by different performers and in different narrative circumstances.

"True Love in the Face of Disaster"

The third selection, "True Love in the Face of Disaster," ("Huannan jian jenqing") written by Xu Mengdan (1982:38-45) is the first episode of a contemporary middle-length tanci entitled Jen qing jia yi (True Love, But False Meaning), which was performed on television in the early the 1980's (Xu:1982). Since the story is set in modern times it presents some interesting theoretical problems in terms of keying. The major difficulty is the re-garbing the standard gifted scholar, talented beauty plot in the social context comprised of the semi-liberated young people in Shanghai.

The performance of the story is also experimental in that four persons perform the roles. One voice is the narrator's, which introduces and closes the episode, occasionally intruding throughout the performance. The other performers perform the lines of the various characters. Moreover, third person narrated roles (biao) are also spoken by the performer of each character for that character. Thus, a performer may portray a character one minute, and in the next, step

back and comment on the character's actions. This of course is exactly what happens in more traditional performances with one or two performers. But keying the performance with so many speakers employing so many shifts in narrative mode performing a non-traditional tale must to some extent be quite different than the effect of traditional performances. These problems shall be discussed in greater length below. Also, in this text, the biao roles include both the narrator's voice and the character's inner voices, including the sigubai (which is not explicitly noted, as explained above).

The story is set in a small city near Shanghai. The hero is a young, idealistic technician who is blinded by steel shards from a blunderbuss while attempting to stop thieves stealing from his factory. He has been dating a lovely girl from Shanghai named Dong Qinqin, who happens to have an equally lovely twin sister, Dong Peipei. Qinqin is outgoing, self-centered, and aggressive. She proudly works as an announcer in her factory, a rather glamorous position, yet one which invites gossip. Her alter-ego, Peipei, is kind, sweet, and mentally (or "spiritually," in Socialist jargon) strong. She works as a kindergarten attendant, a very feminine position. Dr. Zhang, who must break the news to Dong Qinqin that her boyfriend may be permanently blind, is a loyal Party-type who early on detects Peipei's

nurturing qualities. It is not too much of a surprise that as the story progresses, it is Peipei, in the guise of Qinqin, who administers to the blind Yu Dong, while Qinqin is off dating a young man in the film industry who invites her to watch restricted foreign films.

#### Passage A

**Narrator's voice:** Wooooo, wooooo! An ambulance flies from Min Hang No. 1 Road, suddenly turns into the gate of People's Hospital and enters the hospital grounds. As the vehicle stops at the door of the emergency room, its doors fly open and two interns emerge, carrying a white canvas stretcher and crying, "Hai-yo, hai-yo!" as they enter the building. The stretcher halts, and a young man of about thirty is lifted onto the examination table. His hands cover his eyes and blood is flowing from between his fingers. His face and clothing are covered with blood as well. What on earth has happened?

The young man is Yu Gang, a technician in the local Min Hang silk factory. Yesterday he worked until midnight designing new products. When leaving the factory he saw a man near a wall just outside the gate take two packages the size of pillows out of a heap of garbage, stuff them into a hempen bag and hurry away. Thinking the man's behaviour was unusual, Yu Gang made to follow him . . . Suddenly, the criminal slipped a blunderbuss from beneath his coat, turned, and blasted Yu Gang full in the face. The young man tried to dodge the blast, but to no avail. The metal shards drove themselves deep into his eyes. "Aaaaaa!" he cried as he fell, clutching his face in agony . . .

Commentary: As in the other episodes, paralinguistic exclamations such as "Wooooo, wooooo!" and "Hai-yo hai-yo!" are employed. What is unusual is that the narration begins with the wailing sound of an ambulance, very much like a scene in a television drama or a film. It is likely that the episode, when shown on television

would have been framed on the screen by a written title and possibly introduced by an emcee. The narration is also keyed by naming, though only the place is named in the first few lines. It is not until a suspenseful scene has been set and the narrator prompts the audience to reflect on the scene he has just set ("What on earth has happened?") that the hero of the story, Yu Gang, is named. Thus, as in "The Thrice-draped Cloak," this modern, middle-length story contains more narrative foregrounding than the more traditional episode from the full-length story, The Pearl Pagoda.

The narrator goes on to describe how Yu Gang is sent to the hospital and notes that the criminal was caught red-handed. The hospital staff discovers he has no immediate family, only a girlfriend who works in the Shanghai East Shipbuilding Yard. She is summoned, yet when the hospital door opens with a "Zaaaaaa!" two beautiful girls around 23 or 24 years old enter. Seeming to have been "cast from the same mold" Dr. Zhang is silently astonished and too embarrassed to ask who is who. (Again, each part is spoken by a different performer.)

#### Passage B

**Peipei speaks:** Are you Dr. Zhang?

**Dr. Zhang speaks:** Oh, yes, yes! And you are?

**Peipei speaks:** We have come from Shanghai. Our family name is Dong.

**Dr. Zhang, inner voice:** It really is her.

**(speaks)** Oh, here, have a seat.

**(narrator's voice)** Though the doctor has asked them to sit down, he is still unclear which one is Dong Qinqin!

**Qinqin, narrator's voice:** The girl in the beige blouse is Dong Qinqin.

**Peipei, narrator's voice:** The girl in the coffee-colored blouse is Dong Peipei.

**Qinqin, narrator's voice:** Qinqin is an announcer in the Shanghai East Shipbuilding Yard.

**Peipei, narrator's voice:** Peipei is an attendant in an office kindergarten.

**Qinqin, narrator's voice:** When Qinqin heard that Yu gang was wounded, she was very upset.

**Peipei, narrator's voice:** Peipei was concerned over her sister, so she accompanied her here.

**(speaks)** Dr. Zhang, we have talked with Secretary Li; he said you were waiting for us.

**Dr. Zhang speaks:** Oh yes, yes.

**(narrator's voice)** Dr. Zhang has discovered that the silent one is Dong Qinqin. How did he know that? Though she didn't say a word, she looks very nervous. If one of their own is suddenly sent to the hospital, all relatives look this way. Dr. Zhang is very experienced so, he greets her.

**(speaks)** You are Dong Qinqin?

**(Qinqin, inner voice)** Yi! How does she know my name is Dong Qinqin?

**Qinqin speaks:** Wa! Yes!

**Dr. Zhang, speaks:** And this is?

**Peipei speaks:** My name is Dong Peipei. She is my elder sister.



Commentary: This passage exemplifies the use of the narrator's voice (biao) by several performers in the same scene. Thus, the narrative point of view, while static in the sense of being in third person, is communicated by a number of different performers. Of course each performer naturally has his or her own style of delivery, range of voice registers, physical appearance, sex, etc. Thus, when viewing the performance, the audience must be able to comprehend the convention of multiple performers acting as both narrator and individual characters, even though the performers may differ physically. Differences in the manner of speaking (shifts in intonation, pacing, etc.) give signals as to which voice a performer is using. Since the narrative point of view is often split between two performers in more traditional configurations of performance, the notion of four or more narrator's may be a fairly easy convention for a competent audience to comprehend.

#### Passage C

**Dr. Zhang speaks:** En. (thinks deeply, then speaks) Comrade Yu Gang has suffered for the building of the Four Modernizations. We must try our best to save him.

**Peipei, inner voice (stares at her sister):** Did you hear him? He will be saved by the doctors. There's hope.

Dr. Zhang speaks: But . . .

Qinqin, narrator's voice: She glances at her sister. Don't celebrate so soon, there's still a "but." (speaks) But what?

Dr. Zhang speaks: Emotions cannot replace science. We must tell you the truth. It is very difficult to predict the results of this sort of operation. According to past cases, this case has only (pause) a three per cent chance of recovery.

Qinqin, narrator's voice: Qinqin is startled; it seems as if she has swallowed a mouthful of ice-cream, which has chilled her heart.

Peipei, narrator's voice: Peipei never imagined the diagnosis would be so serious. Her face is red with worry. Words fail her; she cannot comfort her sister.

Commentary: This passage also displays a sometimes subtle interplay between the inner and spoken voices. In particular is the play on words with "but" in Qinqin's role. The narrator's voice also evokes in the imagination a culturally-coded physical reaction by describing Peipei's face as red, signaling her worry. Facial expressions and pace of speech are noted in the roles of Dr. Zhang ("thinks deeply," "pause") and Peipei ("stares" at Qinqin). Also of interest is the use of a special code, that of socialist jargon. The audience requires no explantation of the term "comrade" and the phrase "building of the Four Modernizations" (goals for improvements in industry, agriculture, science and

technology, and the military proclaimed in the late nineteen-seventies).

Passage D

**Qinqin, narrator's voice:** Qinqin is a little upset: Is it any use to encourage and comfort him? If he is comforted, will the metal pieces fly out by themselves? She thinks: Yu Gang, Yu Gang, it's your own fault. Was it your concern that a thief was stealing from the factory? Who asked you to stick your nose into another's business? Now, you may not only have destroyed yourself, but me as well. She counts on her fingers--already she has had seven boyfriends;but only Yu Gang has managed to touch her heart. He's handsome;he's brilliant;he's diligent. I've set nearly my whole heart on him, since I first laid eyes on him in the trade fair. He seemed so handsome and genteel;he was so vivid and alive, like a movie star! Investigating more thoroughly, I discovered he was a factory technician, the first in his field. His parents were both high intellectuals. Though they've kicked the bucket, they left their only son a lot of cash. His English and Japanese are excellent;his silk designs are best-sellers on the world market;and his promotion to engineer is in sight. Finding such a boyfriend is like stumbling onto a treasure! Within China or without, he'd be any girl's envy.

I persisted on every front until I was introduced to him;and meeting him only once, I swore to chase him to the end. In order to be with him, I began to learn English--such penance, ya! From the moment I opened my eyes each morning I practiced until my tongue went sour. I knew he liked studying in the library, so I willingly gave up films to accompany him;and though I couldn't understand a word I kept reading, yawning uncountable times. Who knows how many bottles of herbal balm I rubbed on my forehead to keep awake? Things he didn't like to hear, I tried my best not to say;clothes he didn't like, I absolutely didn't wear. He hates long wavy hair, so I had an athlete's cut--promising myself that after we married I'd have curly hair once more! I persisted for months, with fantastic results! We went from teaching English to seeing films;from the movie theater to strolling in the streets;from the noisy streets to secluded corners. Recently our relationship has soared to the skies;if I don't see him at least

once a week, I can't sleep at night. I only await him to open his mouth and say the words, Marry me. Then everything would be settled. But unexpectedly, at such a critical point, this thing happens! And now Qinqin's feelings are like those of a person receiving a set of china from the Jiangxi Pottery Works (not easy!), transporting it from train, to ship, to bus--right up to their doorstep, only to stumble and smash the entire set to bits. Her heart holds so many complaints! So she says nothing, staring blankly ahead for some time . . . Suddenly she falls onto a sofa, crying (cries).

Commentary: The story of Qinqin's ensnaring of Yu Gang is an example of narrative embedding. Although it is framed in the narrator's voice, it is essentially a "personal experience narrative" (Stahl 1983; Bauman 1986:34) told by Qinqin. The passage opens with a comment on Qinqin's distress, and poses two rhetorical questions. In the third sentence, the phrase "she thinks" is used to frame a second pair of rhetorical questions.

Various forms of repetition, particularly parallelism, are important throughout the rest of the passage. In one instance she lists Yu Gang's outstanding traits in a series of phrases repeating the morpheme "tou": "He's handsome; he's brilliant; he's diligent" (Ta miankong you kantou, dupi you huatou, jishu shang you zuan tou). At one point a series of intricate grammatical and topical repetitions produces the effect of steady forward motion: ". . . from teaching English to seeing films; from the movie theater to strolling in the streets; from the noisy streets to secluded corners" (. .

. cong jiao Yingyu dao kan dianying, cong kan dianying  
dao tang malu, cong renaode malu dao lengluode difang).

A similar form of parallel structure is used in connection with the descriptions of Qinqin's strategies in capturing Yu Gang's heart: "Things he didn't like to hear, I tried my best not to say; clothes he didn't like, I absolutely didn't wear" (Ta bu'ai tingde hua wo  
jinliang bushuo, ta bu xihuande yizhang wo jianjue  
buchuan).

There are several implicit register shifts in the passage, most being in evaluative statements: "But unexpectedly, at such critical point, this thing happens!" The exclamation marks and content imply a louder, excited voicing.

Several gestures are also implied, such as when Qinqin "counts on her fingers," stares, and when she falls crying to the couch (which also implies a register shift). Though the performer would certainly not fall to the floor, the narrated action might be dramatized by a shift in posture or possibly a hand movement.

Qinqin employs several similes to describe her boyfriend and to describe her diligence in pursuing him. Yu Gang is "like a movie star" and finding him is like "stumbling onto a rare treasure." Moreover, she would study English until her "tongue went sour." A lengthy simile (complete with the intrusive comment "not easy")

is offered in the narrator's voice near the end of the passage, comparing Qinqin's feelings to someone who drops a hard-to-obtain set of china on their doorstep. Such figurative language is considered by Bauman to be an especially prominent key to performance (1977:17-18).

Finally, there is the possibility of the evocation of special codes. One is the significance of hairstyles. Besides showing Qinqin's desire to please Yu Gang, her change in hairstyle from wavy to an athlete's cut (youyong shi) portrays her as a more conservative girl that one with flowing hair. Another is the use of various slang phrases. When Qinqin recounts that Yu Gang's parents are dead ("kicked the bucket") she uses the phrase chaole bianzi (literally, their queues were "wrapped up," as was the burial custom in ages past). Yu Gang was also left with lots of piaozi (paper money or "cash"). She also uses the term "dun" (in quotation marks in the original) to describe their trips to the library. The term actually means to squat, but here implies the action of sitting a long time in the library. At one point, expressing her feelings towards studying English, she cries out "such penance, ya!" (zuonie ya), a slang expression which refers to the Buddhist concept of just retribution, particularly for evil acts committed in previous lives. There are numerous other popular expressions throughout the passage, such as

"soared to the skies" (tufei mengjin; literally, "suddenly flew forward") and "stick your nose in other's business" (duoguan xianshi).

#### Passage E

**Qinqin, narrator's voice:** . . . Who knows how terrible it might be when the bandages are removed? An image suddenly appears before Qinqin's eyes, that of Quasimodo in the movie "The Hunchback of Notre-Dame." Thinking of this, her hair stands on end. Oi-yo! It's too terrible to imagine.

**(narrator's voice sings)**

So nervous and surprised she is;  
Her thoughts nearly leave her mouth.  
The bandages cannot hide the ugliness;  
The scars are too easy to imagine--  
It's like Song Danping in "Midnight Song."

**(Qinqin, inner voice)** On the other hand, Yu Gang is very handsome; maybe he will look a bit better than Song Danping. (But she thinks again) Impossible, he could also be a Qiu Haitang!

**(inner voice sings)**

Everyone praised Qiu Haitang for his looks;  
But when his face was destroyed, everyone was shocked;  
Especially at the fact that he was blind.

**(inner voice)**

When the bandages are removed, only empty sockets will remain, and his face will be terribly scarred. And you

ask what's to be done?

(inner voice sings)

Not even to speak of being a couple,  
Just to meet him would cause my soul to leave,  
His sight gone and his face destroyed--  
A useless handicapped--  
How could he suit me, Dong Qinqin?  
I'm even a bit better than a film star;  
I'm well known for my singing--an ultimate soprano.  
He could neither design things  
Nor write papers;  
He could only go to the factory of the blind  
to make bolts.  
His bright future turns black,  
And my happy dreams become ashes.  
Happiness was nearly in my hands,  
When a gun so painfully wounded me.

Commentary: This passage exemplifies the use of singing as a register and mode shift in this particular tanci episode. The longest singing roles are in the inner voices representing the thoughts of Qinqin and Peipei. However, at one point, near the end, the inner singing roles of the doctor, Yu Gang, and Peipei intertwine. As in previous sample tanci, the line lengths (ranging from seven to thirteen characters) and rhyme schemes are irregular.

In this passage several other narratives are referred to explicitly. Yu Gang is compared to the deformed Quasimodo in Dumas' The Hunchback of Notre-Dame (a story which circulates in a variety of forms including translation, simplified English versions, and in the past, film). Qinqin also speculates over



whether Yu Gang will look like the film star from the nineteen-forties, Song Danping, whose face was splashed with acid. Mention is also made of the effeminate Peking opera performer Qiu Haitang, whose face was slashed at the behest of a brutish Nationalist official after it was discovered Qiu was having an affair with the official's young, educated wife. The names suggest other stories, and are in a metanarrative sense, "stories within stories." (In a later scene, Peipei reads Yu Gang various stories, such as the folktales "Ma Lan Hua" and "The Precious Calabash" ["Bao hulu"], and sections of longer works like The Arabian Nights and Journey to the West [Xiyouji]). In this case, rather than asking the audience to compare Yu Gang's probable deformities to those of any of the characters in the stories, references to them help characterize Peipei as a nice, somewhat intelligent girl, in contrast to the calculating Qinqin.

It remains for me to summarize the keys to performance in Suzhou tanci in the Conclusion.

## CONCLUSION

In the course of the presentation of contextual information in Chapter Two and the analysis in Chapter Three, major keys to performance used by performers of Suzhou tanci can be identified. Since the art is what Bauman (1977:19) would call an "elaborate, scheduled, public performance, involving highly marked performance forms," any strict distinction between "explicit" and "implicit" keying devices seems less useful in describing tanci than in genres less highly marked. Though the concepts have been useful on occasion in the analysis, particularly in the discussion of gestures and linguistic texture, the conventionalization of literally all aspects of performance as a professional art makes absolute distinctions somewhat artificial. I believe it is better to view the various keys on a continuum of explicitness/implicitness, with the understanding that certain keys are more explicit than others, though virtually all are conventionalized and subject to scrutiny and comment by competent listeners and other performers. For instance, somewhere in the contextual locus of performance there may be a sign (or chalkboard) with the name of the story house and an announcement of the day's performances. This is certainly a very explicit

sign that what is going on inside at the scheduled times are tanci performances. Yet the presence of the story platform and the performers is in a sense nearly as explicit a key for experienced audience members, the configuration being almost emblematic. On the level of actual performance, the switching of voice registers when portraying characters is an implicit key, though the intrusive comments of the narrator may be very explicit keys when regarded as metanarrative. To attempt to determine which keys are most significant in framing a fully conventionalized performance shall require extensive fieldwork. For this reason, I have not presented my findings in any order of importance. Rather, the results are presented in order from general context to linguistic particulars of performance.

Though a study made on live performances would definitely yield more accurate and detailed information, the following results can be regarded as a synopsis which may be used as a foundation or guide to the study of actual performances.

The keys to performance include:

1. The locus of performance, consisting of:
  - a) The story hall, with its written signs, tables and seats, decorations, tea, snacks, etc.,
  - b) The performers' platform, table chairs, and

storytelling props.

Working together, these material phenomena signal a place where stories are told.

2. The performers themselves:

- a) their gowns, light make-up, postures, etc.
- b) their positions on the storytelling platform,
- c) their names on the signs and (formerly) the use of the term "Mr. Storyteller" by audience members

Appearing in one context all serve to denote that the persons exhibiting or associated with the signs are storytellers.

3. The kaipian very explicitly opens the performance session.

4. Stories often begin and end with formulas. In some cases, however, endings are less explicit (as noted in Chapter Two).

5. Stories may include references to other stories, or may feature embedded narratives.

6. Conventionalized music and the presence of instruments are obvious markers of Suzhou tanci performances.

7. The use of various voices and manners of presentation associated with professional storytelling when in the storytelling context are important keys. (Several of the following keys could be subsumed under this category.)

8. Conventionalized gestures and props add a non-verbal, paralinguistic dimension to performance.

9. A variety of register shifts within or between communicative modes: music and speech, various exclamations and accents, shifts between voice of narrator and characters, etc. are significant keys.

10. Use of different dialects or comic speech.

11. The shifting from historical "past tense" to historical "present tense" (which equals the shift from narrated event to speech event in Bauman's schema)

12. The use of parallelism, either as rhyme, repetition of phrases, words, and musical elements, or in reduplicates.

13. The use of dense, often metaphoric language in certain tanci narrative voices and dialogue.

14. Naming of place and characters, often as a part of the foregrounding of an episode.

15. Appeals to tradition (phrases like "As is said . . .")

16. The use of humor, and the ensuing audience response (laughter).

17. Culturally-coded exclamations and speech mazes in the discourses of the performers.

In sum, the keys of performance in Suzhou tanci draw on most of the categories suggested by Bauman and Babcock. However, I was unable to find evidence of disclaimers of performance. Given the proclivity for self-effacement in Chinese culture it is likely some sort of disclaimers would be found in live performances. Also, the prominence of music (aside from lyrics) and gestures in tanci performances is far more significant than has been represented in this study. Other aspects of texture, difficult to assess from the transcriptions are para-linguistic phenomena such as pace, stress, and the way in which shifts in voice register (in complement with gestures or stances of the performer) allow the audience to distinguish between the various characters

being portrayed.

One observation that can be derived from this study is how the framing devices of tanci have remained quite consistent into modern times despite the adoption of new themes. Virtually all the traditional devices are employed in both the episode from the nineteen fifties and the contemporary story, even though in the latter case the number of performers and content of the story is not wholly traditional. It is interesting to note that the "Thrice-draped Cape," which in a sense is a classical story performed in a new form (that of the short-length tanci), supplies a great deal of context for the episode, just as does the story of Yu Gang and the twin sisters, which is also a shorter style of tanci.

In Chapter I, it was noted that for Bauman, the process of performance entails competency, evaluation, and enhancement. It can now be seen that in Suzhou tanci the professionally trained performers must display a high degree of competency in melding the skills of speech, gesture, music, and more elusive forms of stage-craft such as pacing, humor, and the manipulation of stories to please their listeners. Audience members are often highly sensitive to the execution of the performers' skills, and be may as interested in the delivery as in the development of the stories, with which they may be already familiar. Those aficiandos

particularly competent in evaluation may even be familiar with the aesthetic criteria by which performers themselves evaluate performances. Enhancement is everything in Suzhou tanci, for as mentioned above, everything about the art marks it as performance, sending meta-messages shouting "Story!"

In conclusion, Suzhou tanci is a Chinese storytelling art in which performers employ an intricate weave of keying devices to entertain sophisticated urban audiences who demand high levels of competence. Areas for future study of tanci and similar arts include:

- 1) An in-depth examination of narrative voices and their relation to the singing roles.
- 2) A survey of audience members in order to better understand the composition and sophistication of tanci audiences.
- 3) An extensive interviewing of performers so as to better comprehend emic notions of performance.
- 4) A comprehensive survey of the paralinguistic and non-verbal devices employed in tanci and how they work in concert with other keys to performance.



5) A re-exploration of the issues involved in the rhetorical relations between oral storytelling and the "story-teller's manner" in traditional Chinese fiction in light of performance theory.

APPENDIX A

FIGURE 1

女书场(《中江胜景图》插图) 蔡 雯 复制

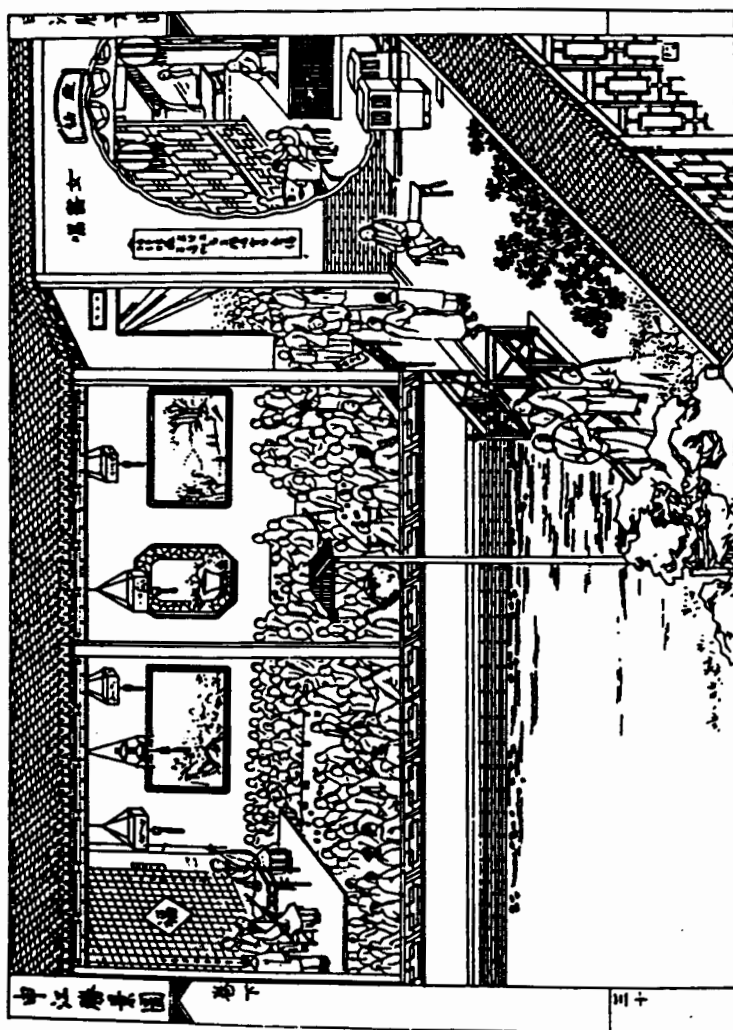


Fig. 1 Women's storytelling house in the late Qing dynasty.

APPENDIX B  
CHINESE CHARACTERS USED IN THE TEXT

<u>bai</u>	白
<u>Baishe chuan</u>	白蛇传
<u>Bai tu ji</u>	白兔记
"Bao hulu"	宝葫芦
<u>Beijing pingshu</u>	北京评书
<u>bianwen</u>	变文
<u>biao</u>	表
<u>biaobai</u>	表白
<u>biaochang</u>	表唱
<u>Bi sheng hua</u>	笔生花
<u>caizi jiaren</u>	才子佳人
<u>chaguan</u>	茶馆
<u>chang</u>	唱
<u>changci</u>	唱词
<u>changpian</u>	长篇
<u>Chen</u> 陈 ( <u>diao</u> 调 )	
<u>Chen Yun</u>	陈云
<u>chenbai</u>	村白
<u>cixiong dang</u>	雌雄档
<u>Da shuang hudie</u>	大双蝴蝶
<u>dandang</u>	单档
<u>dashu</u>	大书
<u>dingdang</u>	叮当
<u>diao</u>	调
<u>duanpian</u>	短篇

<u>dubai</u>	独白
<u>daguanzi</u>	大关子
<u>duibai</u>	对白
<u>erdang</u>	日档
<u>erhu</u>	二胡
<u>fu</u>	富
<u>fucan</u>	武赞
<u>Fujian</u>	福建
<u>guako</u>	挂口
<u>guanbai</u>	官白
<u>guangubai</u>	官咕白
<u>guanzi</u>	关子
<u>guanzishu</u>	关子书
<u>Guangdong</u>	广东
<u>Guangyugong</u>	光裕公所
<u>Guangyushe</u>	光裕社
<u>guoqu congti</u>	过去重提
Hangzhou	杭州
<u>huaben xiaoshuo</u>	话本小说
Jiading	嘉定
Jiangsu	江苏
<u>jiaoben</u>	脚本
Ji 基 ( <u>diao</u> 调)	
<u>jinluohui</u>	紧落回
<u>kaipian</u>	开篇
<u>Kunqu</u>	昆曲

Kunshan

昆山

Leifeng ta gu ben xinbian baishe chuan

雷锋塔古本新编白蛇传

leng bingbing

冷冰冰

lengluohui

冷落回

Li 丽 (diao 调)li

理

Liang-Zhu gushi shuochang ji 梁祝故事说唱集

Liu Zhiyuan

刘知远

Lu Ruiting

陆瑞廷

Lu Xun

鲁迅

luohui

落回

Ma 马 (diao 调)

"Ma Lanhua"

马兰花

Ma Rufei

马如飞

maiguanzi

卖关子

Ming

明

muyushu

木鱼书

nanci

南词

neihang

内行

neixin dubai

内心独白

nihuaben

拟话本

nitanci

拟弹词

nongtangshu

弄堂书

nushuchang

女书场

nutanci

女弹词

penjing

盆景

<u>penjingshu</u>	盆景书
<u>pinghua</u>	评话
<u>pingtan</u>	评弹
<u>pipa</u>	琵琶
<u>Puyushe</u>	普余社
<u>qi</u>	奇
<u>qianbeitu</u>	前辈图
<u>qianjin xiaojie</u>	千金小姐
<u>qijiaose</u>	起角色
Qin 琴 ( <u>diao</u> 调)	
<u>Qing</u>	清
<u>qipao</u>	旗袍
<u>qipingguan</u>	七品官
<u>qu</u>	曲
<u>qudiao</u>	曲调
<u>roulixue</u>	肉里?
<u>Sanguoyanyi</u>	三国演义
San Huang	三皇
<u>Sanxiao yinyuan</u>	三笑姻缘
Shanghai	上海
<u>Shanghai shi renmin pingtan tuan</u>	上海市人民评弹团
<u>shangshou</u>	上手
<u>shoumian</u>	手面
<u>shuangdang</u>	双档
<u>shuchang</u>	书场
<u>Shuihu chuan</u>	水浒传



<u>Shu ji</u>	书忌
<u>shuo</u>	说
<u>Shu ping</u>	书品
<u>shutai</u>	书台
<u>sigubai</u>	私咕白
Song	宋
Suzhou	苏州
<u>Suzhou shi renmin pingtan tuan</u>	苏州市人民评弹团
Suzhou Shuchang	苏州书场
<u>Suzhou tanci</u>	苏州弹词
<u>tan</u>	弹
<u>tanci</u>	弹词
<u>tanci xiaoshuo</u>	弹词小说
Tang	唐
Tang Bohu	唐伯虎
<u>Tangshi kaipian</u>	唐诗开篇
<u>taozhen</u>	陶真
Tian Rugeng	田汝成
<u>Tian yu hua</u>	天雨花
<u>dianzi</u>	垫字
<u>tuobai</u>	托白
<u>waichahua</u>	外插花
Wang Zhoushi	王周士
<u>wenci</u>	文词
Wenhuitang	文会堂
<u>wei</u>	味

<u>weilai xianshuo</u>	未来先说
<u>Wo pao chuan</u>	倭袍传
<u>wu jue</u>	五决
<u>Xiyouji</u>	西游记
Xia 夏 ( <u>diao</u> 调 )	
<u>xianci</u>	弦词
<u>xiansheng</u>	先生
<u>xianzi</u>	弦子
<u>xiangxia yu</u>	乡下语
<u>xiaoguanzi</u>	小关子
<u>xiaoshu</u>	小书
<u>xiaoshuo</u>	小说
Xiaoyang 小阳 ( <u>diao</u> 调 )	
<u>xiashou</u>	下手
<u>Xin bian jin hudie quanchuan</u>	新编金蝴蝶全传
Xue 薛 ( <u>diao</u> 调 )	
<u>xue</u>	噓
<u>xueluohui</u>	噓落回
<u>xuetou</u>	噓头
Xu Mengdan	徐 <sup>梅</sup> 丹
Yang 杨 ( <u>diao</u> 调 )	
Yangzhou	扬州
<u>Yangzhou pingshu</u>	扬州评书
<u>yedang</u>	夜档
Yu 俞 ( <u>diao</u> 调 )	

<u>Yu qingting</u>	玉蜻蜓
Yu Xiushan	俞秀山
Yuan	元
<u>Yuefei chuan</u>	岳飞传
<u>yunbai</u>	韵白
<u>Zai sheng yuan</u>	再生缘
Zhejiang	浙江
<u>Zhenzu ta</u>	珍珠塔
<u>zhongpian</u>	中篇
<u>zhongzhou yun</u>	中州韵
Zhou 周 ( <u>diao</u> 调 )	
<u>zhuangyuan</u>	状元
<u>zhuangyuan tai</u>	状元台
Zhuge Liang	诸葛亮
<u>zhugongdiao</u>	诸宫调
<u>zhushi</u>	主师

APPENDIX C  
CHINESE TEXTS

B. (pp. 84-85)

彈詞選

八四

老人家〔唱〕我慈親目下幸安康。(末白)大爺呀!〔唱〕你一向家庭景況好?〔小生唱〕咳!提起家庭倍慘傷。田園產

業蕭條盡,書劍飄零走四方。(末白)咳!大爺。〔唱〕你今朝誰人作伴同來到?

〔河南方大爺來了,有帖在此。〕〔淨白〕取過來。(表白)老爺把帖一看,寫着內姪方卿頓首拜。〔淨白〕妙哉!我正在此想他,難得他到來了,快請相見。(末白)是,曉得。〔淨白〕吓!王本,你怎麼欲行又止。(末白)老爺,只爲我家大爺,恐此時不便相見。〔淨白〕什麼緣故,想是生得貌醜不堪麼?〔末白〕老爺呀!非也。(曲調)〔唱〕若問官官貌,猶如潘宋顏。〔淨白〕既是潘安宋玉之貌,爲何不好相見?

下卷 唱詞選 步趨略

八五

C. (pp. 86-87)

彈 44 回

八六

〔末白〕老爺，不是走不得，有個緣故，且這裏走罷。

〔小生白〕噢，好奇怪！〔小生唱〕聽言語，好心惑，緣何不走儀門走小門？〔我〕程途遙遠，前來到，未知姑爹怎樣情。〔小生白〕待我試探老王，便知明白，老人家。

〔唱〕此間老爹待你如何樣？

〔小生白〕姑娘呀！〔唱〕別件都可支吾過，這窮苦，如何瞞得一般情。自古常言說得好，從來窮字最難瞞。〔老旦白〕窮雖瞞不過，但大寇可以禦強暴，既已出門，不比在家，也宜略加修飾！你這般打扮。〔唱〕似乎失了尙書體面。〔老旦白〕被我陳氏門中見了。〔唱〕只道我，平時誇富皆虛言。倘被他們說幾句，豈不使我姑娘有汗顏。〔表唱〕那方生聽得汗顏兩個字，臉上邊，一紅紅至兩眉尖。

下 卷 唱 詞 參 考 語

九

E. (p. 96)

廊下，也來輕慢小書。〔花旦白〕大爺，走罷，那點行李自家拿仔去，路上小心點，看儂臉上定要撞着強盜哩。〔小生白〕好胡說！〔花旦白〕介未弗送哉。〔小生白〕不勞你送。〔表唱〕紅雲是，交還行李忙回轉。方生是，獨行要路步徘徊。

〔旦白〕紅雲送到回

## Chinese text from "The Thrice Draped Cape" (San gai yi")

A. (p. 21)

(表)这一回书，是《碧玉簪》中的一段，书名就叫《三盖衣》。

在浙江嘉兴城内，有一位吏部尚书的小姐，叫李秀英，年方十八，才貌双全，配与东城的一个读书人，叫王玉林。这王玉林是个解元，虽然家境平常，但是论才学、人品，也确实配得上李秀英。在八月中秋，他们完婚了。哪知就在洞房花烛的时候，王玉林在新房门口拾到一封信，而且是一封情书。是新娘写给表兄的，信上说嫁给王玉林是父命难违，与你表兄的恩情，始终不会忘记的，等我满月回门，再与你重叙旧情……。信中还附有一只碧玉簪，算是赠给表兄作纪念的。王玉林看见，气得眼前发黑，心想，一定是李秀英把这封信托卖婆去送给表兄，方才卖婆要紧走，掉在此地的。要想声张，两家面子有关；不声张吧，实在可恨！思前想后，只有一个办法：冷淡她。等我明年得中功名，见了她父亲，然后休掉她。这样，他就与新娘子避不见面，见了面也不理不睬，始终不进新房。



B. (pp. 21-22)

，实在这封情书是假的，是有人存心要拆散他們的。誰呢？就是李秀英的表兄，名叫

顾文友，他是个纨绔子弟，看中了表妹好久了，可是李秀英偏偏嫁给了王玉林，所以他就想出了这样一个坏主意：买通了一个成卖婆，因为她时常在表妹家中出进的，并且知道表妹出嫁，也就是她做喜娘。先叫她向李秀英去借一只碧玉簪，然后捏造一封假情书，把簪儿放在书信中，吩咐卖婆乘别人不当心的时候，悄悄放在新房门口，让王玉林拾到，信以为真，把李秀英休掉，然后自己就可设法把表妹再弄到手中。果然王玉林钻进圈套，以至于新婚夫妻，变成冤家。

今日九月十五，李秀英满月回門，照规矩，应该小夫妻一同回去，但是王玉林推托头痛不去，李秀英只得独自回去。

C. (pp. 33-40)

(服怯地,白)官人,官人……(摇头)唉!(哀)嗷嗷叫两声,还是不醒,随便他吧。刚刚想回进去,一阵风吹进来,吹得烛光摇摇晃晃,自己也觉得很冷,他睡在此地,不要冻坏么……唉!他这样对待我,我为什么还要关心他呢?冻坏不冻坏,与我什么相干,还是进去吧。哪知她虽然自己关照自己进去,两只脚原归没动,还是立在那里,眼睛盯住了他只是呆顿顿,眼泪倒又在滚下来了。

(唱)泪盈盈默默看郎君,

恨满胸头苦满心。

你是铁铮铮不把新房进,

不顾秋凉夜又深,

竟然伏案睡昏昏。

你是身躯瘦弱衣衫薄,

颯颯凉风冷若冰,

你自家磨折自家身。

倘然受了凉,病染身,

我不担心处要担心。

虽然你对待我妻房如陌路,

但是女儿家都是好良心,

我欲要无情却偏有情,

恨至深时情亦深，  
 总不忍眼睁睁冻坏我郎君。  
 把身上衣衫来脱下，  
 轻移步，走近身，  
 羞怯怯，战兢兢，  
 玉手尖尖拭泪痕，  
 略御风寒与他披上身，  
 哪知触景伤情停一停，  
 不言不语暗伤神。

(表)因为今日归宁，穿的是新娘娘的衣服，所以外罩一件披。这件披脱下来，要想与他盖上去，但是看到这件红披上绣着的牡丹与蝴蝶，就更加伤心了。

(唱)见牡丹花，色鲜明，  
 蝴蝶双双竟似真，  
 是我待嫁的新娘亲手成，  
 千针万线功夫深。  
 当时是又是喜，又是惊，  
 羞满庞儿乐满心，  
 只为嫁得好郎君，  
 就等那洞房花烛好时辰。  
 哪知好郎君变作无情汉，  
 好时辰却是恶时辰，  
 如今愁断了肝肠哭碎了心，  
 泪珠湿尽了香罗巾，  
 惟拚一世误终身。

他无义，我无情，  
 盖什么衣来关什么心。

D. (pp. 41-42)

李秀英：啊……

(表)王玉林把肩胛抱抱紧，头埋得下一些，又睡着了。

李秀英：(仇恨交加)官人……冤家呀！

(唱)我要狠心肠难把心肠狠，

只为冷在你的身，却痛在我的心，

我不关心还是要关心。

摇摇头，叹一声，

你鼻息吁吁入梦魂，

入梦魂怎晓我伤心，

我伤心匹配了你薄情人，

你薄情人偏遇我太多情，

我太多情又是枉费心，

枉费心偏是要费心，

我恨煞了这柔情蜜意的女儿心。

宁可你无义，不可我无情，

虽有千分的怨，

挡不住万种情，

所以眼泪模糊脚步轻，

把手中衣盖上了夫君身。

(表)把衣服轻轻地与他盖上，却觉得鼻头里痒痒，

实在自己倒受了凉了。要想煞，煞不住，一个喷嚏。

王玉林：(一吓)啊……(表)王玉林被她吓醒，睁开眼睛一看，

见李秀英立在旁边，自己身上多了一件衣服，拉下来

一看，是她身上穿的一件披袄，呀！这贱人身上的衣服

怎么弄到我身上来了？明白了，她一定在暗算我，

晓得我明年要上京赶考，她就触触我树头，把这件温

温暖的女衣服盖在我身上，让我功名不第，名落

孙山，嘿！你的心好毒啊！把衣服望地上一丢，用脚

一踏，吐了口唾沫。(台)呸！

Chinese text from "True Love in the Face of Disaster"  
 ("Huannan jian jinqing")

A. (p. 38)

(表) 呜——呜——一辆救护车从闵行一号路飞驰而来，一个急转弯到人民医院，再转弯进医院，到急诊室门口，车停门开，两个医务人员抬了一副白帆布担架下汽车，“嗨嗨！嗨嗨！”进急诊室，担架停，抬下来一个三十岁左右的小伙子，放到手术台上。只见他两只手按住了面孔，血在指头缝里滴下来，面孔上，衣裳上都是血迹……怎样一桩事情呢？这个小伙子姓俞叫俞刚，是此地闵行丝绸厂的技术员。今朝在厂里设计一只新品种，搞到深夜十二点敲过，刚刚离开厂，出厂门转弯，在围墙旁边看见一个人，只见他在垃圾堆里翻出来两包东西，像枕头那样，匆匆忙忙正往麻袋里塞进去背了就走。俞刚觉得很可疑，要紧跟上来，脚里踏着软漉漉，抬起来一看：一块织锦缎。厂里的产品怎么会包包扎扎在垃圾堆里呢？很清楚，这不是一般贼偷，是一桩内外勾结的盗窃案，所以一声大喊追了上来，前面就是建筑工地，两个人距离越来越远，坏家伙发急了，摸出土枪砰就是一枪！俞刚想避已经来不及了，飞——铁屑散开来往他两只眼睛里飞了进去。“啊——”

B. (pp. 38-39)

佩 你这位是张医生么?

张 喔! 是的, 是的。你们是……?

佩 我们是上海来的, 姓董!

(张表)果然是她。

张 喔! 来来来, 请坐, 请坐。

(张表)张医生嘴里喊请坐, 心里在想, 不知哪一个董琴琴!

(琴表)穿紫绛红上装的叫董琴琴。

(佩表)穿咖啡色上装的叫董佩佩。

(琴表)琴琴是东方造船厂的广播员。

(佩表)佩佩是机关托儿所的保育员。

(琴表)琴琴得着俞刚受伤的消息急得不得了。

(佩表)佩佩不放心姐姐, 陪她一起来。

佩 张医生, 我们和李书记已经见过面了, 他说你在医院里等我们……

张 喔喔, 是的是的。

(张表)张医生看出来, 不开口的是董琴琴。

怎么知道呢? 你看她虽然不开口, 神色特别紧张, 有人生急病送医院, 家属都是这种神色, 张医生有经验的, 所以招呼一声。

张 你是董琴琴同志吧!

(琴表)噢! 他怎么知道我叫董琴琴!

琴 喔! 是的。

张 这一位是……

佩 我叫董佩佩, 她是我姐姐。

C. (p. 39)

张 嗯……(思考地)俞刚同志为了保卫四化建设而遭到不幸，我们一定要尽力抢救。

（佩表）对阿姐望望，听见没有？一定要尽力抢救，有希望的。

张 但是……

（琴表）对妹子看看，慢一点高兴，还有个“但是”呢？

琴 但是怎样……

张 感情不能代替科学，我们应该实事求是地告诉你们，手术以后的效果很难预测，根据我们过去病例的总结，像他这种情况能恢复视觉功能的……只有百分之……三！

琴 啊！

（琴表）琴琴一愣，好像一客冰淇淋囫圇咽了下去，直冷到心里。

（佩表）佩佩想不到后果这样严重，面孔急得血红，不知用什么话来安慰姐姐才好！

D. (p. 39)

(琴琴)琴琴有点反感，安慰鼓励有屁用？开刀也开不好，安慰了他铁屑就会自家跳出来了？想想，俞刚呀俞刚，都要怪你自己不好，贼骨头偷厂里的东西和你有什么关系呢？要你多管闲事！现在弄不好，非但害了自己，还要害我呢！扳了指头算算，一共轧过七个男朋友，要算俞刚顶称心。他面孔有看头，肚皮里有花头，技术上有钻头。我在他身上是着实花点心血的，在纺织品展览会上，我一眼就看中了他。长得既英俊又气派，活龙活现像电影演员，打听下来还是个技术员，厂里业务尖子，屋里独养儿子，爷娘是高级知识分子，虽然已经翘了辫子，还留下来不少票子。英语、日语讲得顶刮刮，他设计的丝绸在国际市场上销路广阔，马上就要提升工程师了。找到这种对象好像脚指头上踹着一粒金钢钻，中国外国都吃香的呀！因此，我千方百计托人介绍认识了他，见过一次面就一追到底。为了接近他，我就学英语，作孽呀，眼睛一睁开就练，舌头也弯得酸了！知道他欢喜“蹲”图书馆，我情愿电影不看陪他一淘去，看不懂也要看，呵欠打了无其数，清凉油也擦脱几瓶呢？他不爱听的话我尽量不说，他不喜欢的衣裳我坚决不穿，他讨厌长发被浪，我就剪成游泳式——反正结了婚以后好烫的呀！果然坚持几月大见成效，从教英语到看电影，从看电影到荡马路，从热闹的马路到冷落的地方。最近阶段突飞猛进，一个星期看不见我就要睡不着觉了，只要等他开口提出结婚两个字嘛，大功告成。想不到正巧在要紧关头会弄出这种事情来。这时琴琴的心情好有一比，好像从江西景德镇觅到一套烧花瓷器，好不容易。火车上、轮船上、汽车上，当当心心捧到家里大门口，拍冷汤！全敲光。心里多少怨呀！所以一句话也没有，呆了一回……往沙发背上一扑哭起来了（哭）。

(张表)张医生对佩佩看看，劝劝你姐姐呀！



纱布拆

开来不知怎样可怕呢？琴琴眼前突然出现一个形象，啥人？《巴黎圣母院》里的丑八怪！想到这里，汗毛根根竖起来，啊，吓煞人了！

(唱)又是恐慌又是惊，

几乎脱口叫出声。

这层层白纱包不住他丑陋相，

那累累伤痕我想得清，

活像那《夜半歌声》里个宋丹萍。

(琴表)不过，俞刚生得漂亮，可能会比宋丹萍好一点……再一想，不可能！秋海棠也算得漂亮了。

(唱)那秋海棠英俊人称赞，

一朝毁容吓煞人，

何况他还是个瞎眼睛。

(琴表)到那个时候纱布揭开来一看，一对眼乌珠两个潭，一面孔肉百脚，叫我怎么办？

(唱)莫说与他成一对，

就是面面相对也要吓脱魂。

他是失了光明破了相，

变成了一无所用的残废人。

如何再相配我董琴琴？

我是相貌好，年纪轻，

比那电影明星胜几分，

唱歌出名是女高音。

他是既不能搞设计，

又不能写论文，

只好到盲人工厂去车车螺丝钉。

他的锦绣前程成泡影，

我的美妙理想化灰尘，

眼看幸福将到手，

这一枪打得我好伤心。

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