INTRODUCTION

What's Love Got to Do with It?

In the first decade of the twentieth century, Liu Tie yun (aka Liu E, 1857–1909), the author of a popular picaresque novel, *The Travels of Lao Can* (1906–1907), made the puzzling choice to expatiate on weeping in the preface to what is usually considered a novel of social criticism:

> When a baby is born, he weeps, *wa-wa*; and when a man is old and dying, his family form a circle around him and wail, *hao-tao*. Thus weeping is most certainly that with which a man starts and finishes his life. In the interval, the quality of a man is measured by his much or little weeping, for weeping is the expression of a spiritual nature. Spiritual nature is in proportion to weeping: the weeping is not dependent on the external conditions of life being favorable or unfavorable. . . .
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> Spiritual nature gives birth to feeling; feeling gives birth to weeping. . . . We of this age have our feelings stirred about ourselves and the world, about family and nation, about society, about the various races and religions. The deeper the emotions, the more bitter the weeping. This is why the Scholar of a Hundred Temperings from Hongdu [author's penname] has made this book, *The Travels of {Lao Can}*. (Liu T'ieh-yün 1990, 1–2)

Before I comment on Liu's preface, let me turn to an article by the anthropologist Sulamith Potter on the cultural construction of emotion in rural China. In this article, Potter contrasts the privileged status of emotion in western societies to the Chinese devaluation of emotion as a social force. Speaking reflectively, Potter reminds us that one of "our" most basic assumptions about emotion is that it is the legitimizing basis of all social relationships and social actions. We believe that social relationships are formed and sustained on the basis of emotion, and that any relationship that is not founded on emotional authenticity is impoverished and doomed to dissolution. We therefore invest great amounts of time, money, and effort to initiate, maintain, and fortify emotional ties, and we place a high premium on the expression and enactment of personal feelings. One manifestation of this tendency is the therapeutic culture characterized by a continuous and pervasive attention to psychological processes that "must be defined, explained, expressed, analyzed, understood, and utilized" (1988, 184). We view the expression of feeling as the means by which social relationships are created and renewed. The cultural code of sincerity and authenticity makes it necessary for one to align one's inner life with the formal requirements of the social order or else face the charge of hypocrisy (see also Abu-Lughod 1986; Lutz and Abu-Lughod 1990; Sennett 1992).

Turning to Chinese culture, Potter believes the opposite is true—that is, the Chinese do not ground the social order in the emotional life of individuals. She concedes that the Chinese do have a rich emotional life and that emotions do bear a relationship to social experience. But the key is that in China, emotion is not thought of as a fundamental phenomenon of social life, or one that is capable of creating, perpetuating, injuring, or destroying social relationships. In other words, emotional experience has no formal social consequences. Chinese emotions, therefore, are understood at the level of the "twitch," not at the level of the "wink" (here Potter is borrowing Clifford Geertz's terms). An important corollary is that "sincerity" does not refer to inner feeling, but requires only the proper enactment of civility. Valid social action, then, hinges on a culturally shared code of expression and conduct and does not have to be consistent with inner feeling (Potter 1988).

Let us now return to *The Travels of Lao Can*. Critics have tried to make sense of the oddity of the author's choice to expatiate on weeping by suggesting that at a time of national crisis and social upheaval, a conscientious literatus had every reason to be sad. This explanation, though not entirely

unjustified, glosses over the fundamental connection made by the author between weeping and human nature. What Liu Tieyun insists on is precisely what Potter believes not to be the case with the Chinese: to wit, the centrality of sentiment in defining human identity and community. Liu conceptualizes humanity in terms of our innate ability to feel and react to pain, sorrow, and suffering through the gesture of weeping. As an inborn quality, sentiment puts all of humanity on a par, however divided they may be socially and politically. It is the lowest common denominator to which human beings can always appeal to argue for ultimate parity. At the same time that sentiment levels social hierarchies and distinctions, it posits a new principle of ordering human society: the degree of intensity and authenticity of feeling. Thus the more one weeps, the greater one's humanity. And because weeping is dissociated from "the external conditions of life," a happy person living a happy life in a happy time must still weep to prove his or her possession of a "spiritual nature," that is, humanity.

Potter bases her arguments on field research conducted among villagers. One can justifiably challenge her on historical as well as ethnographic grounds. Her assertion that "there is no cultural theory [in Chinese society] that social structure rests on emotional ties" (1988, 185) erases not only the cult of *qing* (sentiment) that flourished in late imperial times, but also the epochal transformations in the twentieth century in which emotion (or love) has become a keyword of social and cultural life. Liu Tieyun's preface, situated at the crossroads between the native discourse of *qing* and the imported episteme of romanticism, offers the best counterevidence to Potter's reduction of Chinese emotional life to the order of an involuntary muscle spasm, a twitch. Liu's philosophy of sentiment constituted merely one instance of multivalent, heterogeneous, and extensive discourses of sentiment encompassing a wide array of texts devoted to the subjects of love, feeling, desire, and sympathy, which form the primary subject of this study.

I begin this introduction by juxtaposing a novelist's effusive tribute to the power of tears on the one hand, and an anthropologist's reflexive observations about the state and status of emotional life among rural Chinese on the other. My purpose is not to prove one or the other wrong but to highlight a fundamental transformation of modernity: the reconceptualization of identity and sociality in emotive terms, or the signification of emotion as the legitimizing basis for a new social order. For this reason, Potter's insights into the cultural construction of emotion among rural Chinese do not lose their potency or

relevancy, for they remind us that we cannot take the question of love for granted, even if it seems familiar and natural. They also help to define the cultural context in which modern Chinese literature—and for that matter, the project of modernity—must be understood and critiqued at the most intimate level.

THE DISCOURSE OF SENTIMENT: AN OVERVIEW

From the late Qing and the early Republic (1890s–1910s) through the May Fourth and post–May Fourth periods (1920s–1940s), discourses of sentiment dominated the field of literature and popular culture. Both thematically and ideologically, sentiment figured prominently in the late Qing novels of sentiment (*xieqing xiaoshuo*), Lin Shu's (1852–1924) translations of foreign fiction, the novels of sentiment (*yanqing xiaoshuo*) of the Mandarin Duck and Butterfly School,[1] and the works of May Fourth and post–May Fourth romanticists. The idea of sentiment, a protean concept inherited from the late imperial cult of *qing*, underwent a complex process of transformation with the importation of the Romanticist ideal of free love and the Freudian theory of sexuality in the early twentieth century. This process, marked by collisions, appropriations, and repressions, was inextricably bound up with the ways in which identity and community were renegotiated and reinvented in an era of social, cultural, and political reform and revolution.

At the turn of the twentieth century, with the phenomenal rise of the popular press, sentiment for the first time became the self-conscious marker of a literary genre—the novel of sentiment. It was pioneered by Wu Jianren (aka Wu Woyao, 1866–1910), a prolific novelist and essayist best known for his exposé fiction. Wu's 1906 novella, *Henhai* (The sea of regret), and Lin Shu's classical Chinese rendition of *La dame aux camélias* (1899) became the founding texts of a popular style of romance known as Mandarin Duck and Butterfly fiction, whose influence and share of readership have only recently been seriously assessed. Xu Zhenya's (1889–1937) best-selling *Yu li hun* (Jade pear spirit, 1914) marked the high point of Butterfly romance, though sentimental novels and short stories continued to be written in both classical and vernacular prose in the following decades, cramming the space of fictional monthlies, literary supplements, entertainment magazines, and even political journals. The over-

whelming presence of sentimental fiction was certainly not lost on the newly professionalized men of letters who pontificated, in the same print media, on the craft of sentimental fiction and its social utility.

The May Fourth movement (late 1910s and early 1920s) pushed the Mandarin Duck and Butterfly School and its poetics of sentiment to the margins of culture, though by no means also of the market (indeed, the latter's tenacious grip on the readership remained a source of frustration and resentment for May Fourth writers and intellectuals). In place of the Butterfly glossing of sentiment as virtue, the May Fourth generation proposed "love" (*aiqing*) as a symbol of freedom, autonomy, and equality. Hu Shi's (1891–1962) one-act play, "Zhongshen dashi" (The greatest event in life, 1919), set the basic tone for much of the May Fourth representation of "free love" as a battle between tradition and modernity, East and West, feudalism and enlightenment, hypocrisy and authenticity, old and young. Women writers such as Feng Yuanjun (1900–1974) and Ding Ling (1904–1986) rose to national prominence for their poignant portrayals of the passion, ardor, and rebellious courage of young women in love. The intensity of feeling infusing May Fourth fiction was well matched by a new form of essay known for its searing attack on the aridity and hypocrisy of traditional Chinese culture.

The early 1920s were the heyday of free love fueled by the iconoclastic spirit of the May Fourth. Countless stories and essays lashed out against the authoritarian family system, the subjugation of women, and the lack of individual freedom and autonomy. In the late 1920s and 1930s, however, free love came under attack from radical quarters for its bourgeois limitations and from conservative quarters for eroding social morality and the institution of marriage and family. At the same time, there was a veritable explosion of social discourse in the form of psychological, sociological, and historical treatises on love, marriage, and sexuality. Here, love more or less shed its moral weightiness of the previous decades and entered the phenomenological realm of the everyday. One could be tutored in the art of courtship and conjugal love with the aid of how-to books such as *Lian'ai ABC* (Love ABC). It was also in this period that sexuality came out of the shadow of romantic love and became a bona fide social topic and vehicle for radical agendas. While a small number of anarchist thinkers saw sexuality as the means to realizing universal emancipation, more and more voices emerged to condemn the baleful impact of free love/free sex on social mores and the nation-building project. Political ideologues, in particular, called for a total commitment to the nation by subordinating the romantic imperative to that of revolution.

Why was the idea of sentiment so important in an age of enlightenment, nationalism, women's liberation, and commercial culture? By examining the discourses of sentiment in literary, intellectual, and popular writings, this study seeks to understand the conceptual as well as social issues underlying the centrality of sentiment. In particular, it seeks to address the following questions: What was the significance of grounding identity in emotion or sexual desire rather than in kinship or native-place ties—as identity had traditionally been defined in China? What ideological beliefs and values were embodied by sentiment-based subjects such as "the man/woman of sentiment" (*duoqingren*), "the romantic" (*langmanpai*), and "the heroic lover" (*ernü yingxiong*)? In what sense was the changing meaning of *qing*—from asexual virtue to romantic love, sexual desire, and patriotic fervor—part and parcel of the changing conceptions of self, gender, and community in modern China?

Early twentieth-century discourses of sentiment drew linguistic, moral, and epistemological resources from both European Romanticism and the late imperial cult of *qing*. It was declared (as well as demanded) that love was the sole principle underscoring all social relationships: between parents and children, between husband and wife, and among fellow Chinese. Any social institution that was not hinged on the existence and continued articulation of love was believed to be impoverished and illegitimate. During the May Fourth period, the Confucian family and its code of conduct thus came under relentless attack as the epitome of hypocrisy. Filial piety, in particular, was denounced for its empty formality and disregard for the psychological and emotional life of the inner self. Equally vehemently targeted was the institution of arranged marriage. For the modernizing elite endeavoring to make emotion the mainstay of personal identity and social life, it was wholly unacceptable for marriage to be dissociated from the emotional experiences of the marital partners.

The transformations of modernity in China have been extensively researched and debated by scholars across the disciplines; nationalism, civil society, and revolution have been the staple subjects of modern Chinese studies, with the field led primarily by historians, political scientists, and sociologists. Scholars in literary and cultural studies have also made significant contributions by exploring the modern experience in terms of new or hybrid genres, media, ideas, ideologies, and material cultures. In particular, *identity* has come to define an increasingly interdisciplinary mode of inquiry, threading together the methods and concerns of the humanities and social sciences around questions of gender, sexuality, race, class, and nation. But the divide between

a humanistic and social scientific approach to modernity persists, in large part due to the failure, on both sides, to theorize the linkages between modern subjectivity and modern political institutions, particularly the nation-state. One exception is John Fitzgerald's work on nationalism in modern China, in which he makes the seminal connection between the melancholy ruminations about the private self in May Fourth writing and the abiding discourse of national awakening. He contends that patriotism was not born in public debates about the political obligation between citizens and the state, but in the "self-awakenings chronicled in romantic fiction," and that romantic fiction helped to "craft and popularize a model of the relationship between self and community that supplied a model for love of nation, or patriotism" (1996, 92, 95). But Fitzgerald does not take up the questions of what this new model of self-society relationship is and why it is conducive to patriotism.

In foregrounding the centrality of sentiment in the transformations of modernity, I aim to offer an empirically as well as theoretically rigorous mapping of the relationship between the modern subject and the modern political community. To anticipate my argument, let me say that the connection resides in the fact that the modern subject is first and foremost a sentimental subject, and that the modern nation is first and foremost a community of sympathy. In dwelling on the brooding, melancholy lover, romantic fiction invents the individual as a self-centered, self-coherent, and ethically autonomous monad. It thus supplies the most ideal subjects for the nation that distinguishes itself from particularistic solidarities such as the family by subscribing to a universalist conception of humanity. In other words, the national community is where ascriptive differences and social hierarchies are, in theory at least, nullified. Everyone can claim the same equal relationship to the nation through citizenship, which is enacted again and again in the romantic motif of falling in love with and marrying *any* of one's fellow citizens regardless of genealogy or social station. The serendipity and impetuosity of the romantic heart thus lend the most compelling support to the ideals of democratic citizenship and primordial national belonging. Conversely, nationalism is also the strongest ally of the May Fourth iconoclasts who launch their assault on the Confucian family in the name of free love *and* patriotism.

Existing studies of the question of love in modern Chinese literature have generally failed to elucidate the dialectic of individualism and nationalism—beyond noting that the two discourses interrelate, and that the former is constrained or subsumed by the latter. In my view, this failure is the result of

approaching love as a transhistorical and transcultural constant rather than as a linguistic and cultural resource mobilized and mobilizable by the project of modernity. Moreover, the tendency to regard love as the most natural and time-honored motif in literature is one of the main reasons why the existing scholarship has not dealt with the preoccupation with love either structurally or historically.

To break with this intellectual inertia, I adopt the working assumption that discourses of sentiment are not merely representations or expressions of inner emotions, but articulatory practices that participate in (re)defining the social order and (re)producing forms of self and sociality. Emotion talk is never about emotion pure and simple, but is always also about something else, namely, identity, morality, gender, authority, power, and community. I build this project on the works of many scholars who have contributed to our understanding of the problem of affect in modern Chinese literature. However, given their divergent thematic and/or methodological orientations, they have generally not problematized love as a discursive technology for constructing individual and collective identities or explored how these identities changed over time in relation to the changing meanings of love. In the following sections, I lay out an analytical framework that, I hope, will enable me both to overcome the limitations of previous scholarship and to uncover new grounds of intellectual inquiry.

THE STRUCTURES OF FEELING

I conceive of my project as a critical genealogy of sentiment informed methodologically by poststructuralism. It traces the itinerary of the signifier *qing* by identifying the different points of emergence, appropriation, and interpretation. It is not a history of the idea of sentiment gradually emerging out of the shadows of delusion, miscomprehension, and repression and triumphantly unfolding its true essence under the aegis of enlightenment. Rather, it discerns the process of transformation by capturing the episodic recurrences of *qing* in the cult of sentiment, the exaltation of passionate heroism, the pursuit of free love and gender equality, the quest for national sympathy, the discovery of libido, the dream of sexual liberation, the ideology of conjugal love and middle-class domesticity, and the uneasy alliance of romance and revolution. The genealogical method enables me to overcome the limitations of

conventional literary history by first of all calling into question the periodization scheme that posits a radical break between the late Qing/early Republic and the May Fourth periods. This scheme takes May Fourth literature as the beginning of Chinese literary modernity, the moment of triumph of enlightenment thought over the "feudal" ideology of Confucianism, of individual over society, of spontaneous feeling over stultifying formalism. The genealogical method disrupts the received myth of origin by retrieving a repressed history outside of the master narrative of sentimental emancipation. Rather than the originary birthplace of everything modern, the May Fourth will be seen "in the density of the accumulation in which [it is] caught up and which [it] nevertheless never cease[s] to modify, to disturb, to overthrow, and sometimes to destroy" (Foucault 1972, 125). It is a process of appropriation, which forces earlier discourses of sentiment to participate in a different "game"—that of enlightenment, individualism, and nationalism.

The genealogical method also allows me to disentangle myself from the Chinese/western or native/foreign debates about romantic love. I take the position that love was neither wholly imported nor wholly indigenous, but was rather a hybrid signifier that came to play a significant role in the topography of emotions in early twentieth-century China. In other words, I concern myself with what Tani Barlow calls "the localization of signs" (1991). I examine the ways in which new ideas about the self and its emotions entered the local circulation of signs and meanings, clashing, negotiating, or converging with existing notions and generating new significations. I ask how the discourses of sentiment situated the individual in society, what kind of power relations they sought to undermine or reinforce, and what kind of community they endorsed and endeavored to realize.

A central thread of this study is the contradictory role that love played in the project of modernity. On the one hand, love heralded the rise of the private, the personal, and the everyday. The modern self began its career as a sentimental self, proudly parading its tears and sensibilities as the incontrovertible signs of subjectivity, perpetually looking inward, or deep down, for moral and spiritual sustenance, and forever judging and justifying social relationships and actions in reference to the heart. The modern self was also an unheroic self, prone to be suspicious of grand narratives and utopian ideals. It preferred to locate redemption and fulfillment in the quotidian world of work, commerce, and family life. It elevated the values of the everyday—affection, health, human connectedness—as hypervalues that demanded the same kind of

unconditional devotion and sacrifice and that brought the same kind of rewards as that which used to be exclusively associated with the heroic life. This is what Charles Taylor describes in his book on the making of the modern identity as "the affirmation of ordinary life." Taylor's moral philosophical framework will be central to our understanding of the persistent and expansive interest in such everyday topics as love, sex, marriage, family, and work in the social imaginary of the Republican period. The affirmation of ordinary life was necessarily accompanied by a repudiation of supposedly higher modes of activity such as civil service, military exploits, religious pietism, philosophical contemplation, aesthetic cultivation, or political activism (Taylor 1989, 70). Not surprisingly, this impulse immediately ran up against the hegemonic ideology of modern China: nationalism.

As a modern ideology, nationalism also spoke the language of love. Ideologically, the nation was organized in emotive terms, emphasizing horizontal identification, egalitarianism, voluntarism, and patriotic sacrifice. Nationalism insisted on a higher, or heroic, mode of activity—national liberation, resistance, revolution—that transcended and subordinated the everyday, and articulated the tension between the heroic and the everyday as the conflict between patriotic love and romantic love. In philosophical and social debates, this was translated into the dialectic between the greater self (*dawo*) and the smaller self (*xiaowo*). In the first half of the twentieth century, there emerged three overarching modes of response to this basic tension: the Confucian, the enlightenment, and the revolutionary. This study investigates these different modes by employing Raymond Williams's concept of the "structure of feeling."

Williams introduces the structure of feeling as an alternative to the more formal concept of "worldview" or "ideology," which, in his view, is limited to codified beliefs, formations, and institutions. The structure of feeling captures social consciousness as lived experience *in process,* or *in solution*, before it is "precipitated" and given fixed forms. Feeling here is not opposed to thought, but "thought as felt and feeling as thought." A structure of feeling refers to a "particular quality of social experience and relationship, historically distinct from other particular qualities, which gives the sense of a generation or of a period" (1977, 131). For Williams, this definition allows him to circumvent the unproductive dichotomy of base/superstructure or social/personal. It leaves open the causal relationship between the "quality of social experience and relationships" on the one hand, and formal institutions and social and economic relations on the other.

Williams uses *feeling* loosely to refer to emergent values and meanings and lived experiences. The key point is that feeling is not opposed to thought, but rather embodies thought. In other words, feeling has structures that can be subjected to rational analysis. This is precisely what concerns anthropologists and moral philosophers of emotion. Charles Lindholm, for example, complains that the dominant epistemes for romantic love—poetry and obscenity—remove the experience from rational discourse, so that "any study of romantic love appears either to be missing the point altogether, or else to be engaging in voyeurism under the guise of research" (1998, 247). In a recent book, Martha Nussbaum extensively and convincingly argues the thesis that emotion embodies thoughts and judgments of values (2001). Other philosophers such as Charles Taylor and Alasdair MacIntyre have also advanced this line of argument, though more in the context of elucidating the origins of the modern identity. The modern identity, according to Taylor, is the ensemble of largely unarticulated understandings of "what it is to be a human agent" in the modern West. It has three major facets: (1) inwardness, or the idea that the individual has "a self" with inner depths, (2) the affirmation of ordinary life, and (3) the expressivist notion of "nature" as an inner moral source (1989, ix–x). In his monumental effort to map out the connections between identity and morality, Taylor brings a philosopher's insights to bear on the Romantic movement, which, according to him, consolidated the expressivist model of self that grounded ethical subjectivity in a human nature largely defined in affective terms. The Romantics gave such "a central and positive place to sentiment . . . [that] it is through our feelings that we get to the deepest moral and, indeed, cosmic truths" (371).

In his critique of the modern identity, MacIntyre contrasts the modern "emotivist self" (unfavorably) to the traditional self (which he sometimes calls the "heroic self"): the latter is wholly defined by one's membership in a variety of social groups such as family, lineage, local community, and political institution. Beneath one's membership in these interlocking groups, there is no hidden core, or "the real me" (1984, 33). The ideas of social "roles," "masks," or "personae" are distinctly modern inventions. In the heroic society (which resembles Potter's rural Chinese society), a man is what he does; he has no hidden depths. Moral judgments are formed on the basis of the ethics of action, not on a hermeneutics of intention. The emotivist self, on the contrary, prides itself on being an autonomous moral agent freed from the hierarchy and teleology of traditional society. Its moral authority resides squarely within itself,

rather than in the external authorities of traditional morality. This newly invented interior space, or what Taylor calls "inwardness," is designated as the seat of the individual truth and the fountainhead of one's desire and action. Emotion, perceived as a quintessentially natural and private phenomenon, is thought to constitute the very essence of that interior space, the core of the self.[2]

The distinction between the modern expressivist or emotivist self and the traditional heroic self as mapped out by Taylor, MacIntyre, and other moral philosophers dovetails with what a number of anthropologists, including Potter, have said about the subject of emotion in nonwestern versus western societies. In general, these anthropologists aim to accomplish two tasks, the first of which is to treat discourses of emotion as social practices within diverse ethnographic contexts. Their second goal is to cast reflexive light on received western notions about the self and on the entrenched oppositions between emotion and reason, instinct and rationality, body and mind, nature and culture, individual freedom and social restraint, private sentiment and public morality, and inner truth and outer expression.

The two tasks are so intertwined that anthropologists devote nearly as much attention to their own "modern western" assumptions as they do to the social construction of emotion in their target cultures. Arjun Appadurai's study of praise in Hindu India, for example, begins with a reflection on the variability of the relationship between language, feeling, and what he calls "the topographies of the self" in human societies. He points out that "our" commonsense beliefs about intention and expression, about "real feelings" as opposed to "voiced sentiments," about "hypocritical" subterfuges serving to conceal actual desires and feelings, are no more than our embodied doxa misrepresented as universal truths about the relationship between affect and expression (1990, 92). Approaching praise as an "improvisatory practice," Appadurai shows that sentimental bonds can be created quite independently of the "real" feelings of the persons involved by the skillful orchestration of a shared, formulaic, and publicly understood set of codes or gestures. This conclusion casts a questioning glance at the universality of the core western topography of the "person," which, in Appadurai's gloss, features a linear narrative of progress and a spatial image of layers. The narrative (epitomized in the paradigmatic genre of bildungsroman) has it that the biologically anterior "self," through the vicissitudes of "personal development," becomes a recognizable though distinct moral unit, the "individual." The spatial image

grounds personal truth in the "affective bedrock" and holds language, particularly public expressions, suspect for its supposed distance from the somatic side of personality (93).

Researching the Bedouin culture of poetry recitation, Lila Abu-Lughod is drawn to the discrepancy between the amorous feelings expressed in poems and the rigid sense of modesty that envelops daily communications. She probes the interplay between the moral sentiment of modesty as a form of deference and an index of hierarchy tied up with relations of power on the one hand, and the poetic sentiment of love as a discourse of defiance, autonomy, and freedom on the other (1986, 1990). But she refuses to privilege the poetic sentiments as revealing a truer self because such a move would impose a characteristically western "hermeneutics of feeling" (or what Appadurai calls "the topography of self") that takes feeling as the touchstone of personal reality (1990, 24). In a more systematic and historically informed analysis of various "western" understandings of the relationship between language, emotion, and the self, Catherine Lutz points out that the concept of emotion is a master category that accentuates much of the modern essentialist thinking about self, consciousness, and society: "Emotions have always been sought in the supposedly more permanent structures of human existence—in spleens, souls, genes, human nature, and individual psychology, rather than in history, culture, ideology, and temporary human purposes" (1986, 287). Even so, as the product of a long and contested history, contemporary ideas about emotion are far from reducible to a monolith that can be facilely contrasted to nonwestern understandings.

According to Lutz, emotion has been chiefly understood in opposition to two notions: rational thought and estrangement. When opposed to rational thought, emotion is evaluated either negatively as irrational or instinctual, as biological imperatives that are precultural and potentially antisocial, or positively as natural facts, as raw, wild, and primitive forces. In this tradition women are designated as the gender of emotionality, which in turn proves their weakness and further justifies their exclusion from positions of power and responsibility. Alternatively, the Romantic tradition equates the natural with "the uncorrupted, the pure, the honest, and the original" (296). Hence things of the heart are "the true, real seat of the individual self," and things of the mind are the superficial, social self (296). To a lesser extent, emotion is also opposed to a negatively evaluated estrangement from the world, in the same way that life is opposed to death, community and connection to

alienation, commitment and value to nihilism (290). In this sense, to say that someone is "unemotional" is to suggest that he or she is withdrawn, alienated, or even catatonic. It also suggests that "to have feelings is to be truly human, which is to say, transcendent of the purely physical" (295). Paradoxically, emotion is both human beings' closest link to nature and their salvation from the brute state of nature.

Owen Lynch also explores emotion's paradoxical relationship to nature through the Enlightenment-inspired "physicalist theory," a theory that underlies much of the western commonsensical understanding of emotion. Paying close attention to the everyday language used to describe emotional experience, Lynch points out that when the verb *to feel* is extended from organic sensations to psychosomatic "feelings," emotion is reified as things and equated with physiological states. Thus, "just as one feels the heat of fire, so too one feels the heat of rage" (1990, 5). As such, emotions are always passively experienced: "they are 'things' that happen to us, we are 'overwhelmed' by them, they 'explode' in us, they 'paralyze' us, we are 'hurt' by them, and they 'threaten to get out of control' " (5). The common hydraulic metaphor vividly conjures up the image of a reservoir of brimming psychic energy ready to swell up and break the dam of rationality. It also postulates the person as a layered entity, with emotions stored in "the lower faculties of the body" and completely separate from "the higher faculty of the mind" (5). The physicalist conception shores up the Enlightenment conviction that at bottom all human beings, regardless of race, gender, and class, share common emotional attributes, even if they share nothing else (5).

Contra the physicalist theory, Lynch promotes a social constructionist approach to emotion. For a social constructionist, emotions are "appraisals" or "judgments of situations based on cultural beliefs and values" (9). As appraisals, emotions are not a natural given but rather learned behavior and inevitably implicate agent responsibility. In western societies, emotions are no less "moral judgments about prescribed or expected responses to social situations" than they are in Indian society on which Lynch focuses most of his discussion. Moreover, as Michel Foucault puts it, "our feeling" has been "the main field of morality, the part of ourselves which is most relevant for morality" (1997, 263). Foucault's later work shows that sexuality would join feeling as the part of ourselves that is most relevant for ethical judgment (Foucault 1997, 263). However, feeling or sexuality has not been the main field of morality or the primary ethical substance at all times, nor has it been universally bound up

with issues of selfhood and identity.[3] The linkage between emotion and identity, for example, is largely absent in the Confucian model of personhood. In classical Chinese narratives, as in classical western art, love as a "subjective spiritual depth of feeling"—that is, as a substance of identity—does not exist; or when it does appear, it is usually only a subordinate feature connected with "sensuous enjoyment" (Hegel 1975, 1:563). It is in this sense that I find valuable Potter's insights on the emotional life of the Chinese peasantry. At the very least, her analysis serves to alert us to those moments in the genealogy of love that disrupt the East/West binarisms (as, for instance, Liu Tieyun's preface), moments in which love is no longer mere sensuous enjoyment, but pertains to basic conceptions of human nature and basic problems of ethics.

Liu Tieyun's ode to weeping can be placed in the long lineage of the late imperial cult of *qing* that brought sentiment from the margins of the ethical field to the center and made it a foundational principle of identity. The cult enthroned the heart as an alternative moral authority, without positing a radical break between the inner self and the outer social order. It was perhaps the most radical critique of Confucian ethics on behalf of the inner self, but as I will argue in this study, it did not pit the individual against society in the manner of iconoclastic May Fourth intellectuals. The spokesmen of the cult worked within the parameters of Confucian ethics, endeavoring to reinterpret the essential Confucian virtues as homologous and substitute affective reciprocity for ritual hierarchy. For this reason, I will use the term "the Confucian structure of feeling" to characterize both the cult of *qing* and its recuperation in Butterfly sentimental fiction.

The Confucian structure of feeling is somewhat counterintuitive in that it encompasses a range of values and experiences that are critical of Confucian orthodoxy (in late imperial times) as well as modern romanticism (early 1900s). My usage is therefore intended to highlight its peculiar location in the genealogy of love as a dispersed element of modernity. The Confucian structure of feeling is an essentially modern formation in its celebration of feeling as fundamental to human existence, its rendering of ethical codes into subjectively meaningful experience, and its dramatization of what Hegel calls "love's collisions" with the interests of the state and the family (1975, 1:566). The May Fourth Movement, however, introduced "the enlightenment structure of feeling," pursuing a radical epistemic break with the Confucian structure, and rejecting Confucian values in favor of an expressivist or physicalist understanding of emotion and other universalizing norms of enlightenment

humanism and nationalism. If the Confucian structure of feeling is preoccupied with "virtuous sentiments," then the enlightenment structure is obsessed with "free love." The dispute and contestation between these two modes raged on in the 1920s but were largely overcome by a more hegemonic mode, or what I call "the revolutionary structure of feeling."

Promoted primarily by intellectuals and writers aligned with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the Nationalist Party (KMT), the revolutionary structure of feeling negates the radical implications of the enlightenment structure while recuperating elements of the Confucian structure. Its best-known literary articulation, "revolution plus romance," is an attempt to resolve the basic conflict of modernity between the heroic and the everyday as well as to address the paradoxical status of emotion in the modern episteme. Love now "supplements" subjectivity, but it is also sternly called upon to "efface its supplementary role" (Terada 2001, 8) so that it does not contest the hegemony of the collective project.

I deploy the structure of feeling to approach a complex process of hybridization whose inevitable clashes, compromises, convergences, and dispersals cannot be adequately dealt with through the anthropological mode of binary analysis. While my project has benefited a great deal from the anthropological critique of the prevailing western assumptions of emotion, I am critical of anthropologists' tendency to reduce emotion in nonwestern cultures to the ahistorical antithesis of western constructs. What they often neglect is the profound impact of colonialism on the moral and epistemological paradigms of the colonized. In the semicolonial context of China, the enlightenment project effected a wrenching transformation in social imaginaries, much of which was articulated in a language of feeling and debated as a problem of love. Writers and readers appropriated the Romanticist celebrations of passion and individual autonomy to critique or redact indigenous Confucian discourses of sentiment. The contentious relationship between romantic love and filial piety, for example, became an important site on which new modes of subjectivity and sociality were worked out. By using the structure of feeling to capture broad paradigmatic shifts, I aim to show that modern Chinese conceptions of love are not just a creation of the enlightenment project spearheaded by the modernizing elite, but a deeply historical product of colonial modernity marked by cross-hybridization, displacement, contestation, and repression. It is neither the enduring sign of universal humanity, nor the crystallization of an alien tradition taken by some anthropologists to be the ultimate site of alterity.[4]

The structure of feeling also allows me to distance my project from the narrow or exclusive focus on sexuality that has been the trend in the wake of Foucault's *The History of Sexuality* (1990a). Many studies that fold sexuality into more conventional modes of inquiry such as feminism, Marxism, nationalism, and racism have uncritically reproduced the modern biases that Foucault critiqued, thereby failing to situate sexuality within the larger problematics of the history of morals and the history of the subject. But Foucault cannot be blamed for the persistent bias against morality talk, the overt or covert preference for sexual frankness in historical materials, and the continued privileging of sexuality as a naturalized and unproblematic category of inquiry.[5] For this, we need to look no further than what Foucault himself has singled out for trenchant critique: the repressive hypothesis, a legacy of psychoanalysis and the sexual liberation movements of the mid-twentieth century.

We may all sometimes find it difficult completely to shed the peculiarly twentieth-century conviction that the Victorians and their counterparts in other cultures are hopelessly repressed and insufferably conceited. We are apt to detect hypocrisy (with all our twentieth-century assumptions about the distance between private feeling and public expression), and we are all too quick to dismiss talk of virtue as a mask of falsehood and to reduce talk of love to the subterfuge or sublimation of an ultimate reality—sexual desire. The historically important distinction of spiritual versus physical love is often brushed aside as the by-product of erstwhile naïveté or hypocrisy. Critics find themselves in search of open-minded attitudes toward sex in historical and literary archives, working with the presupposition that the more candid the description, the more enlightened and/or subversive the author, the text, or the period. The anachronistic projection of twentieth-century assumptions onto earlier discursive formations has in fact greatly contributed to the paucity of rigorous treatment of sentiment despite its centrality in modern Chinese culture. My decision to canvas the full spectrum of the discourses of sentiment, be they conservative or liberal, sexually frank or modest, as subjective technologies of individual and community is thus an attempt to overcome these biases.

The book is structured chronologically: I begin with the late Qing (Part 1), move through the Republican and, to a lesser extent, the socialist periods (Parts 2 and 3), and conclude with the reform era (Conclusion). Intersecting the chronology is the threefold scheme that registers the major shifts in the changing notion of love: the Confucian, the enlightenment, and the revolutionary

structure of feeling. However, even the necessarily sketchy summaries provided below show that the three periods do not correlate neatly with the three structures of feeling. Not only are there overlaps and recuperations between the periods, but within each period, there is no shortage of rivalries and contestations.

In Part 1, I begin with a short "prehistory" of sentiment by rereading three representative texts of the Ming-Qing cult of *qing* movement: Feng Menglong's (1574–1646) *The Anatomy of Love*, Tang Xianzu's (1550–1616) *The Peony Pavilion*, and Cao Xueqin's (1715?–1763) *The Dream of the Red Chamber*. These texts are important not only as milestones in the history of sentiment, but also because late Qing and early Republican writers of sentimental fiction self-consciously positioned themselves as the inheritors of the cult of *qing*. I then turn to a mid-nineteenth-century novel called *A Tale of Heroic Sons and Daughters*, one of the earliest texts to combine the heroic and the sentimental romance. I seek to understand why these two separate genres were brought together and to what ideological effect. My main objective in Part 1, however, is to delineate the Confucian structure of feeling as articulated in the sentimental writings of the Mandarin Duck and Butterfly School. Beginning with Wu Jianren's *Henhai* (Sea of regret, 1906) and moving among both well-known Butterfly texts such as *Yu li hun* and run-of-the-mill sentimental short stories, I show how Butterfly fiction attempts to redact the Confucian structure of feeling for the age of enlightenment.

In Part 2, I aim to show how the ascendancy of the romantic and psychoanalytic definitions of love displaced earlier cosmic-ethical definitions, and how free love—the key trope of universal subjectivity—was bound up with the iconoclastic project of overthrowing the Confucian family order. In Chapter 3, I construct a genealogy of romance both as a literary genre and as a cultural signifier. I use Charles Taylor's moral philosophical categories to examine the genealogical recurrences of romance first as *le grand amour*, then as conjugal love, and then as a game. The texts under examination include May Fourth classics such as "Regret for the Past" and "Miss Sophia's Diary" and the works of Feng Yuanjun, Ling Shuhua (1900–1990), Shi Zhecun (1905–2003), Zhang Henshui (1895–1967), and Zhang Ailing (1920–1995).

In Chapter 4, I map the social discourse of love by focusing on a series of debates wherein educators, journalists, writers, and common readers sought to reevaluate free love in an increasingly politicized climate. These debates may revolve around a well-publicized matrimonial affair, a love murder, or a provocative opinion piece. I structure the debates both topically (by the

specific agent provocateur) and ideologically (by the radical, moderate, or conservative positions taken by the participants). My primary example of topical debate is the "rules of love" debate led by Zhang Jingsheng (1888–1970) in the early 1920s. For the latter type, I outline several overlapping debates waged among conservatives, liberals, and anarchists. I link these debates to a body of texts also concerned with the nature and rules of love: self-help literature. Chapter 5 documents an important shift in the discourse of sentiment: with the introduction of Freud and the sexual sciences, sexuality acquired legitimacy apart from love and came to displace love in defining the subject. I choose three case studies to illustrate the repressive hypothesis at work in constructing the sexual subject: Pan Guangdan's psychobiography of the legendary poetess Feng Xiaoqing, Yuan Changying's Freudian feminist rewriting of the ancient ballad "Southeast Flies the Peacock," and Shi Zhecun's pathography of misogyny and perversity in his retelling of an episode from *The Water Margin*.

In Part 3, I return to a canonical moment of modern Chinese literature and focus on the nationalist definition of love that underscores literary modernity as a whole. I begin, in Chapter 6, with Lu Xun (1881–1936) and revisit some of his classic texts depicting the crowd as a countercommunity devoid of love and sympathy. Here I highlight the quest for nationhood by examining the linkage between the notion of national sympathy and the discourse of national character. I also read May Fourth polemical essays that denounce the Confucian order for its failure to achieve emotional authenticity, or its "hypocrisy." Last, I reread Yu Dafu's (1896–1945) notorious "Sinking" to expose the perverse logic of national sympathy. In Chapter 7, I examine the reformulation of the late imperial *ernü yingxiong* (love and heroism) ideal in the new genre of "revolution plus romance." I am interested in the ways in which party ideologues on both the left and right sought to discipline and appropriate this popular genre in order to reassert the priority of the collective over the individual and everyday. I read the works of Jiang Guangci (1901–1931), Ding Ling, Chen Quan (1903–1969), and others who endeavored to politicize a commercialized lifeworld preoccupied with the pleasures and anxieties of everyday life. I show that the apparently formulaic genre is in fact deconstructive in its drive to render love a supplement to revolutionary subjectivity. The variations on the formula are indeed different strategies with which the revolutionary structure of feeling attempts to conceal love's supplementarity.

The war of resistance against Japan (1937–1945) and the communist revolution dramatically reconfigured the terms and parameters of the literary and cultural fields. In the socialist period, love's many shades of meaning metamorphosed into a few bold strokes associated with radically new regimes of sanctity and exclusion. The discourse of sentiment was deployed in new games of truth to invent new subjects and communities (Chapter 7). In my concluding chapter, I attempt to draw some larger points about the trajectory of love in modern China and the role it played in the monumental reconstruction of identity and ethics.

NOTES ON TERMINOLOGY

I come to the question of terminology at the end of this introduction with considerable trepidation. If I may be allowed to speak in metaphors for a moment, I would say that the entire book is, in a sense, a sustained wrestling with an ever-shifting team of players. These players appear, disappear, and reappear; they come into the arena alone or in pairs; they form alliances, break them up, and make enemies; they wear beguiling masks and wigs, speak in borrowed tongues, and make grandiose claims. They are, of course, the family of affective terms that make up the warp of this study: *qing, ai, yu, aiqing, qingyu, xingyu, se, ganqing, qinggan, tongqing*. Their sometimes nemeses and sometimes partners—*li* (ritual), *lijiao* (Confucianism), *lizhi* (reason), *lixing* (rationality), *daode* (morality), *renge* (character), *xiao* (filiality), *yingxiong* (heroism), *geming* (revolution)—are the woof. Needless to say, translating these terms is always a work in progress, as it were. To avoid a total collapse of terminological coherence, I follow three provisional principles. First, I use "love" in both the narrow and broad senses of the English word which correlate with the Greek notions of *eros* and *agape*. When necessary, I use "romantic love" to invoke *eros*. Second, I switch to "sentiment," "feeling," or "emotion" (and their adjectival forms) when I engage relatively abstract or philosophical materials or when I need an overarching term to encompass the entire gamut of words of affect. For instance, I mostly translate *qing* as "sentiment" when it appears by itself (for example, in the late imperial cult of *qing*) or in relation to "reason" (*li, lizhi, lixing*), "ritual" (*li, lijiao*), or "virtue" (*de, daode*).

Third, in individual cases, I generally follow the conventional practice of translating *ai*, *lian'ai*, and *aiqing* as love or romantic love, *yu, qingyu,* and

xingyu as sexual desire, *ganqing* and *qinggan* as passion or emotion, and *tongqing* as sympathy or pity. These terms have complex lexicographical histories, and although my interest is not primarily philological, I do attend to their interactions with cognate Chinese (and sometimes Japanese) words and with their English translations. In translating these terms, I also bring into play the subtle differences in historical and cultural connotation among familiar emotion words in English. As Catherine Lutz notes, feeling tends to be used to refer to bodily sensations, whereas passion tends, more than emotion, to refer specifically to love or sexual desire (1986, 304–5, n2). Rei Terada makes a more rigorous set of distinctions. For her, *emotion* connotes a psychological and interpretive experience whose physiological manifestation is *affect*. *Feeling* is a more capacious term in that it encompasses both affects and emotions (2001, 4). The point in trying to distinguish these emotion words, even if it might appear to be a self-defeating task, is that they organize different lived experiences and moral visions, and are decidedly *not* a baroque collection of labels designating the same essential reality. My rule of thumb is flexible attentiveness. I try to choose English renditions most suitable for the context, taking into full consideration the ideational and ideological baggage carried over in the process. I vary my terminology according to the dictates of linguistic felicity as well as cultural sensitivity, and according to how a particular term is situated in a web of relational signs and references.