

## **Final paper**

Course: The Practice of Relational Presence: Psychological and Spiritual Foundation

Professors: Dr. Brita Gill-Austern and Dr. Janet Surrey

Student: Xuefu Wang

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## **“Love Philosophy”—A Relational Model**

--Psychological Analysis of Bing Xin with Cultural/Relational Theory--

### **The Relational Model**

The Relational Model grows out of the work of Jean Baker Miller, whose *Toward A New Psychology of Women* signifies the commencement of the new Cultural/ Relational Psychology of women. In this book, Jean Miller shows the profound cultural concern. “A dominant group, inevitably, has the greatest influence in determining a culture’s overall outlook—its philosophy, morality, social theory, and even its science. The dominant group, thus, legitimizes the unequal relationship and incorporates it into society’s guiding concepts. The social outlook, then, obscures the true nature of this relationship—that is, the very existence of inequality.”<sup>1</sup> In relation to this, traditional psychology is so culturally embedded that its problems are often reflected as the problems of the culture. As Judith Jordan says, “Developmental and clinical theory have generally emphasized the growth of the autonomous, individuated self in such a way that early developmental milestones are typically characterized by greater separation from mother, increasing sense of boundedness, self-control, self as origin of action and intention and increasing use of logical, abstract thought.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Jean Baker Miller, *Toward A New Psychology of Women*, (Beacon Press/Boston, 1976), p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> See Judith Jordan, *Empathy and Self Boundaries*, The Stone Center Publications,

Judith Jordan calls it “particular bias” and traces its modeling forces from the culture. Such as, “Newtonian physics which emphasized notion of discrete, separate entities acting on each other in measurable ways”; “the emphasis on the sanctity and freedom of the individual”; “a culture which perceives its tasks as a weaning of the helpless, dependent infant toward greater self-sufficiency and independence”, etc. As such, the new psychology has to open up a new cultural area to lay its foundation, and the process of seeking to construct the new theory is to be paralleled with the endeavor in cultural transformation. It is right against the backdrop of the psychological bias and its cultural influence that the new theory sets out its new approach. It is never an easy task. But the predicted hardship of the new endeavor also signifies its significance. “In a context of highly individualistic values and anti-relational biases, bringing awareness to the profound importance of relationship in people’s lives could be thought of as revolutionary.”<sup>3</sup>

Revolution did not come up with a sudden emergence. Rather, it has developed step by step with the realization of the problems with the traditional psychopathological theory, and the consecutive effort in correcting them by seeking other ways. George Klein (1976) was one of the first analytical theorists to point to an imbalance in much of self theory, and he posited two major lines of development of the self. Jean Baker Miller (1978) raised the ideas of 'a set of interacting units with relationships among them' to development. Stern (1980) wrote about the coexistence of affiliative and autonomous tendencies; Pollack (1982) has studied 'we-ness' in children and their parents; Kohut

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<sup>3</sup> Judith Jordan, Ed, *Women’s Growth in Diversity*, (The Guilford Press, 1997), “Introduction”.

(1982) and Miller (1976) and Surrey (1983) have posited the special importance of what might be called a 'relational self' in women.<sup>4</sup>

The Stone Center was established with the purpose of studying the psychology of women in this cultural context. A group of women therapists, Jean Baker Miller, Judith Jordan, Irene Stiver, and Janet Surrey, who formally received traditional training in psychotherapy, but out of their own experience as women therapists, oriented “a different emphasis for understanding psychological development.” “The old and outworn theories of human psychological development have been written largely by the men of the dominant culture and have not accurately described the experience of *most* men and women in relationships.”<sup>5</sup> With many years of strenuous effort, they developed the Relational Model, which is “working in progress” in modeling a new psychology and transforming the culture into its supportive system. “The Stone Center relational model emphasizes the centrality of connection in women’s lives. Disconnection is viewed as the source of most human suffering. In particular, we suggest that women grow through growth-fostering relationships.”<sup>6</sup>

The new theological approach has become a part of the supportive system to the Relational Model. Among them, Martin Buber, for instance, has demonstrated a new philosophical/theological perspective on seeing God’s creation and human relationship. “In the beginning is the relation”<sup>7</sup> initiated a new interpretative overview. From this ontological overview, the world is seen as a relational system, in which, “the basic

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<sup>4</sup> See Judith Jordan, *Empathy and Self Boundaries*, (The Stone Center Publications).

<sup>5</sup> Samuel Shen & Janet Surrey, *We Have to Talk*, (Basic Books, 1998), p. 41.

<sup>6</sup> Judith Jordan, Ed, *Women’s Growth in Diversity*, (The Guilford Press, 1997), “Introduction”.

<sup>7</sup> Martin Buber, *I And Thou*, (Simon & Schuster, First Touchstone Edition, 1996), p. 69.

word I-You establishes the world of relation.”<sup>8</sup> Carter Heyward, who may be called the Relational theologian, demonstrates intensive concern about the cultural structure and its transformation. “To solve structural problems, we have to dig into the foundations of our common life in order to discover the rot.”<sup>9</sup> And she discovered the fact that “we are captive to social forces that are in control of our lives, including our feelings and our values.”<sup>10</sup> The social forces have formed a “a profit-consumed economic order,” in which “the value of persons is diminished.”<sup>11</sup> Carl Marx called it “alienation”, while Jean Miller called it “disconnection”, and Carol Gilligan, “losing of voice”. And so, with the same endeavor, Jean Miller advocates establishing new language to describe women’s unique experience; Carol Gilligan emphasizes “women finding their own voice in order to describe ‘ourselves as ourselves’”<sup>12</sup> They “have been traveling a similar although not identical road, pursuing new conceptions and questioning old formulations.”<sup>13</sup>

The Relational Model, as the language or voice of women, is developed from the Western cultural context, but, as it is the reflection of the genuine experience of women, it may extend to fit into women’s experience in other cultures. So far as I have learned, I find that it has provided me a broadened new perspective to see Bing Xin’s Love Philosophy, which is the overarching theme of her literary creation. The following chapters will see that the Love Philosophy is a typical Relational Model, which may

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<sup>8</sup> Martin Buber, *I And Thou*, (Simon & Schuster, First Touchstone Edition, 1996), p. 56.

<sup>9</sup> Carter Heyward, *Coming Out and Relational Empowerment*, (Work in Progress, the Stone Center Publication, Wellsley College, No. 38, 1989)

<sup>10</sup> Carter Heyward, *Coming Out and Relational Empowerment*, (Work in Progress, the Stone Center Publication, Wellsley College, No. 38, 1989)

<sup>11</sup> Carter Heyward, *Coming Out and Relational Empowerment*, (Work in Progress, the Stone Center Publication, Wellsley College, No. 38, 1989)

<sup>12</sup> Janet Surrey, *Self-In-Relation: A Theory of Women’s Development*. (Working in Progress, The Stone Center Publication)

<sup>13</sup> Jean Miller & Judith Jordan, *The Healing Connection*, (Beacon Press/Boston, 1997)), “Acknowledgements”.

contribute to the richness and diversity of the Cultural/Relational Theory with the particular experience of women from China context. And, interestingly enough, Bing Xin, as a graduate from Wellesley College, can be seen as having a special relation with the women therapists around the Stone Center. With this little paper, I intend to integrate the Relational Model into the analysis of Love Philosophy. By which effort, I am supposed to facilitate a dialogue between the two groups of women from both the West and the East, which call “Meeting at Wellesley”.

### **The Love Philosophy**

In May Fourth Literature, Bing Xin’s “Love Philosophy” gained attention at the early beginning of its emergence. Mao Dun, a literary critic as well as a writer, made the first response. In his *On Bing Xin*, three main sources of influence on Bing Xin’s life and thought are sorted out: Christian universal love extended from “Love your neighbor as yourself”, Tolstoy’s teaching on humanism with love and nonviolence, and the love philosophy of Tagore, the Indian poet, Nobel laureate in literature. In analogy, Mao Dun likens these thoughts as seeds--they cannot grow into big trees unless they are planted in the “suitable soil”. The “suitable soil”, Mao Dun indicates, is Bing Xin’s affluent experience of familial love in her early years, which acts as a nursery for nurturing her “Love Philosophy”, a grown fruitful tree that has benefited the whole generation of the May Fourth Era (roughly around 1920s).

Repeatedly and with deep feelings, Bing Xin has recalled her early experience overflowing with love and confirmed how it has profoundly affected her whole life. Her father is a high-ranking military official with accomplished intellectuality, from whom

Bing Xin received plenty of classical Chinese cultivation. Her mother is a traditional woman with profound maternal love and feminine virtues, who has become love model to Bing Xin all through her life. This is a traditional extending family with richness in both material wealth and intellectual legacy. Family members and relatives lived together to weave a matrix of relational community in which Bing Xin felt been loved by everyone. Meanwhile, the nutrition is affluent to nurture Bing Xin's intellectual mind from those rather intellectually cultivated uncles besides her father. To be sure, this environment prepares the best relational context for Bing Xin to grow into a healthy relational personality. "To little girls, assurances that they are loved and have an impact are a great source of power, sometimes surprisingly so."<sup>14</sup> The "deep fascination with early adult figures" has formed "a primary part" in Bing Xin's "construction of reality", especially her mother figure.<sup>15</sup> From this great source of power, Bing Xin has established her power generating Love Philosophy, which has well explained "how love for those near and dear can be rightly balanced with love for the stranger—the neighbor who is everyone and anyone."<sup>16</sup>

Bing Xin's growing process is not a separation or individuation from mother, but on the contrary, a gradual expansion of her connection with mother to the others. When we notice the fact that Bing Xin is one of the few modern Chinese writers who hold an universal dimension of love, we attribute this first to her rich experience of familial love, especially the maternal love, through which, other sources of influence have come to affect. Stephen G. Post articulates well,

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<sup>14</sup> Elizabeth Debold, Marie Wilson, Idelisse Malave, *Mother Daughter Revolution*, (Addison-Wesley Publishing Company), p.36.

<sup>15</sup> Janet Surrey, *Self-In-Relation: A Theory of Women's Development*. (Working in Progress, The Stone Center Publication)

I hold that human beings generally learn about love concretely in special relations, and that true love for humanity is often, though not necessarily, an expansion of this learning. Universal love for humanity is a tremendously important moral ideal, but one that for most of us must be built up step by step from what is learned in committed special relations.<sup>17</sup>

This familial love even connects to the love of God, an extended sphere of universal love. Actually, in my view, family is the fundamental metaphor of Christianity. God is the Father (and mother, as “in his image he created men and women”) and Jesus is Son (and daughter, as he represents the full humanity). The Son is sent to the world and incarnated in human form to restore the kinship between the scattered, disconnected human beings with the dyadic God. Human familial experience is important for us to understand this divine Father or Mother. Without the experience of special love, universal love (for God as well as for humanity) would be incomprehensible and unachievable. It is hard for people who grow up scorned, neglected, abused, and abandoned to accept a God with abundant parental love. The shadow of earthly “unloving” parents is easily to be projected upon God.

Bing Xin’s education is a process of collecting the “suitable seeds” for her “suitable soil”. She shared with her male peers the public education, which at that time, only girls from the enlightened wealthy families would have had the chance. The education she received can be regarded as the relational kind, which is the integration of both Chinese tradition and Western culture. At Bayman’s Middle School, Bing Xin, for the first time, contacted the figure Jesus, and was instantly drawn to him. She admired this figure with heroic deeds and profound love. Along the same like, later, Bing Xin found Tagore and felt so resonant with his thought on that the cosmos is interwoven with relationships and

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<sup>16</sup> Stephen G. Post, *Spheres of Love—Toward a New Ethics of the Family*, (Southern Methodist University

without leaking. Out of sincere admiration, she wrote a letter to this great India sage, expressing how his thinking had connected with hers and how the two have combined to form into a wonderful piece of music with spectacular harmony.

Your fantastic belief—the belief that “there is a harmony between the individual soul and the cosmic soul”, your “natural sense of beauty” that preserved in your life, expressed in your poems, all permeate into my heart and mind. Together with my original “unspeakable” thinking, one piece after another, they combined to be a string, composing the miraculous, voiceless music.<sup>18</sup>

It was not until 1923 that Bing Xin met her most admired Indian poet when he visited China to give a lecture tour to present his views on aesthetics, nonviolence, and the construction of rural communities.

May Fourth Era is an important transition (from feudalism to modernity) in Chinese intellectual history. Institutionally, the feudal system had been overthrown shortly before the May Fourth Movement, but its 2000-year-long cultural influence would require much longer time to transform. The cultural movement called the Liberation of the Mind (Chinese Renaissance), however, too promptly switched to Political Revolution and left the May Fourth generation in a state of disconnection—being detached from the old while without being attached to the new. After a gust of drastic iconoclastic attack on the Confucian tradition, the reformed-minded young intellectuals got stuck in a dilemma—neither the old was thrown away nor the new was established. The feudal influences, like ghosts, were still going rampant. Disillusion prevailed. Confusion, frustration, depression, and despair permeated the whole age like air. Under such a pressure, even Lu Xun, the leading cultural warrior, likened himself to an injured wolf, dodging deep into the woods to lick his wound, sad and alone. This was the most traumatized period especially to the

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Press, Dallas, 1994), p. 1.



young reform-minded students. Day after day, the newspapers were filled with suicide reports of these disillusioned people. As such, it is not only in an ironical sense that Bing Xin's Love Philosophy was once regarded as the first-aid therapy to the age.

Diagnosed with the Relational Theory, the youth of May Fourth youth suffered what might be called the disconnection and disempowerment. "Disempowerment', then, is difficulty in creating or sustaining a healthy relational context."<sup>19</sup> Love Philosophy, then, by providing a sustaining relational context, has served to reconnect and empower. The dominant voice at May Fourth is the "self", the big SELF, as shown in Guo Moruo's poems. The Self is proclaimed to be none less than God and the center of universe. In light of the Relational Theory, the self is not the self-in-relation, but rather, the separated one only inflated with air. When the air leaks out, the self becomes dilapidated. With the dilapidated self, the May Fourth young students either secluded themselves or went to suicide. It is right in this context that Bing Xin spoke out a different voice, which in essence, was about developing a relational self. This is the voice of "we"—to "we" with mother, with children, with nature, and with God. The Stone Center Relational Model therapists speak out a difference voice to the mainstream of their culture, while Bing Xin, in the same voice, spoke to her May Fourth Era. Both of them are in the effort to repair the damages and pains afflicted by their respective dominant culture.

Relation is healing. Relation is empowerment. That is essentially what Bing Xin's Love Philosophy is speaking about. "The power in the relation is alive."<sup>20</sup> Jesus' resurrection is the power from his relation to God. A woman who suffered the flow of

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<sup>17</sup> Stephen, G. Post, *Spheres of Love* (Dallas, Southern Methodist University Press), p. 12.

<sup>18</sup> Bing Xin, *Mailing to Indian Sage Tagore*, (1920) (my translation from Chinese).

<sup>19</sup> Judith V. Jordan, Alexandra G. Kaplan, Jean Baker Miller, Irene P. Stiver, Janet L. Surrey: *Women's Growth in Connection*, (The Guilford Press, 1991), p. 166.

blood (indicating disempowerment--power flowing away) touched Jesus (signifying the source of power) and got healed. Even a single touch with faith establishes the connection with the healing power flowing from Jesus into her leaking body.<sup>21</sup> Miracles happen in relation! Bing Xin, with many of her stories, performs the miracles about how people get healed and empowered in connection to the love of mother, of nature, of children, and, implicitly, of God, who is the divine, mysterious Sustainer of the above three. In this sense, The Love Philosophy connects well with Martin Buber's statement of relation: "Three are the spheres in which the world of relation is built. The first: life with nature, where the relation sticks to the threshold of language. The second: life with men, where it enters language. The third: life with spiritual beings, where it lacks but creates language."<sup>22</sup>

### **Relate to Mother**

Bing Xin is a wonderful story-narrator. She tells stories under the theme of Love Philosophy, which, in my view, is her Relational Model. All of her stories are relational metaphors. Most of them come out of her relationship with mother. The mother-daughter relationship, according to Janet Surrey, is "the model of relationships."<sup>23</sup> This is very true to Bing Xin who has developed a self-in-relation capacity from her relationship with her mother, and then extends this as the model of relationships. "The model of self-in-

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<sup>20</sup> Carter Heyward, *Saving Jesus From Those Who Are Right*, p.52.

<sup>21</sup> Mark 5: 25-30. "And there was a woman who had had a flow of blood for twelve years, and who had suffered much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was no better but worse. She had heard the reports about Jesus, and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his garments. For she said, 'If I touch even his garments, I shall be made well.' And immediately her hemorrhage ceased; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. And Jesus, perceiving in himself that power had gone forth from him, immediately turned about in the crowd, and said, 'Who touched my garments?'"

<sup>22</sup> Martin Buber, *I And Thou*, (Simon & Schuster, First Touchstone Edition, 1996), pp. 149; 150.

relation assumes a developmental pathway. We can explore the mother-daughter relationship as the earliest model of this kind of relationship, that is, the foundation of the core self-structure necessary for empathic development.”<sup>24</sup> In a age of disconnection, Bing Xin brought her stories to the growth-stuck young people, reminding them of the empowering resources they can attach themselves to-- mother, children, nature, and God, who is behind the scene.

*Superman*, as one her stories, demonstrates the therapeutic process of how mother connects and heals people. A young man named He Bing assumes himself a “superman.” Deeply frustrated by the social reality, he seeks consolation from the philosophy of Nietzsche. “All actual life is encounter.”<sup>25</sup> He Bing, however, by withdrawing from encountering people, has disconnected himself to the actual life. He puts on the “superman” as a shield for self-protection, presuming that he is thereby invulnerable. After a period of self-illusion, he believes that he has become a cold-hearted superman. Adopting the way of tit-for-tat, he holds an indifferent attitude towards the cold society. However, the groaning of a homeless child, who is somehow injured, gradually softened his heart presumably covered with ice. For several nights, the child whose name is Lu Er, who usually seeks shelter at downstairs of He Bing’s residence, groaned out of unbearable pain. The ice of his heart began to thaw when He Bing thought of Lu Er, who, like him, is the son of a mother. Then, regardless of his long-held Superman Philosophy, He Bing showed passionate concern for Lu Er by providing him money for the medical treatment, even though he still kept a cold face at doing this. Several days later, the

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<sup>23</sup> Janet Surrey, *Self-In-Relation: A Theory of Women’s Development*. (Working in Progress, The Stone Center Publication)

<sup>24</sup> Janet Surrey, *Self-In-Relation: A Theory of Women’s Development*. (Working in Progress, The Stone Center Publication)

healed Lu Er (not only physically) sent him a bunch of flowers. In a letter of thanks together with the flowers, Lu Er expresses how mother connects people's heart.

I want to remind you of the word "mother". We are all sons and daughters of parents, aren't we? We are born equal, aren't we? Regardless of rich or poor, high or lowly, the Creature provides everyone a mother to love him. In the very beginning there was no the rich or the poor, the high or the lowly. Such things are man-made stuff. And so, as what it was in the very beginning, human beings should live under the light of maternal love, enjoy the complete freedom and equality.<sup>26</sup>

The letter touched He Bing to tears and the parable ends with the two traumatized hearts brought together by mother love.

There is no superman. Bing Xin seems to say. Superman is the isolated and inflated self. The inventor of the superman Nietzsche himself is not a superman, but a person full of inhibited compassion. The compassion poured out when his disguised armor of superman crashed. Thus happened one day when the said insane philosopher wandered in the country, he saw a farmer harshly beating his cattle. Quickly approaching forward, Nietzsche embraced the cattle and cried out: "My brother...." At this we know that Nietzsche, who, like all of us, is none other than a human being with the innate desire for connection, the compassionate connection, the empathetic connection. When the desire is improperly inhibited, it may collapse the personality so as to seek a way out to relate—even to the cattle. In *Superman*, Bing Xin completes a healthy connection. He Bing—the superman who locks himself up in the disconnected world—connects himself to Lu Er—another human being who is abandoned and marginalized in this world. What an amazing relational analogy!

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<sup>25</sup> Martin Buber, *I And Thou*, (Simon & Schuster, First Touchstone Edition, 1996), p. 62.

<sup>26</sup> Bing Xin, *Letters to Little readers* (my translation from Chinese).

It is never an easy process. Seen from the Relational Theory, He Bing is hindered by what Shem and Surrey call “the male relational paradox”. He has to climb over it before he can step into the relationship with Lu Er.

In the “normal” development of boys there is a relational paradox: on the one hand, the boy experiences joy and love from growing in connection for several years; on the other hand, the culture demands that this yearning for connection be stifled for him to grow. The boy has powerful relational experiences of shame, humiliation, abuse, and violence when he acts on these yearnings. One fourteen-year-old boy said, “If you don’t act macho, you really get beat on. The only way to protect yourself is to pretend to be tough.” The result is that the boy disconnects from the expression of his yearnings, begins to devalue relationships and is encouraged to sacrifice relationship for his idea of self.<sup>27</sup>

To He Bing, then, what is his idea of self? It is the superman, an illusory one. In echoing the boy, he protects himself by pretending to be tough. So tough as that he pretends to be superman presumably the toughest and invulnerable to any attack. The yearning for connection is suppressed. The memory of early experience of joy and love in connection with mother is compacted deep into the unconscious chamber, which, only on special occasion, may emerge, for instance, in a dream. Yes, He Bing’s dream of his mother helped him connect to Lu Er with compassion. The mother in his dream is the anima figure, in Jungian term, coming up from the deep layer of his unconscious realm. Shaded or possessed by the outer world, He Bing has long ignored the inner voice, which we can see as the inner relation. However, one night, awakened by the groaning from downstairs, he began to listen to what his inner relational self wanted to speak to him. Then the dream came to him. The dream presents a typical anima figure, bringing to him the awakening and healing.

...Wind lamp swings, enlightening the house. Galaxy of stars drifts into the room. In the star-lit environment, a woman in white walks slowly into the room. With her left hand holding up her skirt from the ground, her right hand on

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<sup>27</sup> Samuel Shem & Janet Surrey, *We Have to Talk*, (Basic Books, 1998), P. 46.

her forehead, she walks closer to the cradle. A sweet scent flutters all over. Then she bends over to stare at the baby in the cradle—her eyes are full of love.<sup>28</sup>

Obviously, the baby in the cradle is none other than He Bing himself at infancy. Showered with plenty of mother love, a kind of warmth came up to him, melting away the coldness inflicted by the society. He Bing realized that he is not a superman, but a son of a mother. Life has afflicted him with coldness, but has also endowed him with the warmth to dissolve the coldness. The consciously devastated young man connected himself to the unconscious mother figure and then healing came over him. And the healing power transmitted from him to Lu Er and from Lu Er to all other human kind. That is the compassionate connection.

The mother is an archetypal image of meaning-making and growth-fostering connection. Consciously Bing Xin connects this image with her experience of her own mother, and extends to all the mothers, but unconsciously, the mother figures connects to the far more distant, vast collective human experience than she has ever known. That is why she feels a kind of unspeakable mystery when she tries to understand and articulate her relationship with the mother figure.

“Mother”, the word seems not a proper expression. It seems like an entanglement connected to my heart from the very beginning. At its slight move, my heart aches, my eyes turn tearful, but spirit tastes a kind of sweetness. The entanglement, nobody can decipher, neither can God—actually God is also an entanglement, which mother cannot decipher.<sup>29</sup>

Relationship with Mother and God is what Bing Xin views as “entanglement”, which implies the profound connection going far beyond our understanding and description. Actually it is in love that the Mother and the God meet, relate, interconnect, and interact.

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<sup>28</sup> Bing Xin, *Superman* (my translation from Chinese).

<sup>29</sup> Bing Xin, *The Diary of Madman* (my translation from Chinese).

“Love is the active realization of relation. God is love. Love is God. To god is to love. The lover is aware that she is not alone, but rather that she is bound from the beginning to others; and that there is no greater good than this.”<sup>30</sup> And, too, there is no greater mystery than this. That’s why Bing Xin calls the interrelatedness “luansi” (which I translate as “entanglement” or “subtle involvement”). “The other event is that unfathomable kind of relational act itself in which one has the feeling that two have become one: ‘one and one make one, bare shineth in bare.’ (Master Eckhart)”<sup>31</sup> It is amazing that I happened to find that Linzel, a German female writer, shares the similar experience and uses the same word “luansi” to describe her relationship with God and mother. God represents a kind of primitive trust, which, in her understanding, is a kind of maternal trust deep-rooted in human life.

God is always here with me. I find the maternal primitive trust to which I attach myself. Actually it is the primitive relationship which has always been there intimately relating to me.<sup>32</sup>

Religion of every kind is a formulized expression of deep-rooted human experience both of the conscious and the unconscious. According to Zhou Zuoren<sup>33</sup>, there is a religion named Hong Yang (literally, Red Sun) in North China, in which Mother Wusheng is worshipped. When people wander away from homeland and can not retrace their road back home, They may somehow hear Mother Wusheng calling their names. If they hear the voice and answer back, they would be led back home.

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<sup>30</sup> Carter Heyward, *The Redemption of God—A Theology of Mutual Relation*, (University Press of America, 1982), p.48.

<sup>31</sup> Martin Buber, *I And Thou*, (Simon & Schuster, First Touchstone Edition, 1996), p. 137.

<sup>32</sup> K. J. Kusel, *Theology and Literature—Interview with 12 German Writers on Religion and Literature* ( Hong Kong, Shan Lian Bookstore Publishing house), p. 38. (my translation from translated Chinese version)

<sup>33</sup> A major modern Chinese author who was active in May Fourth Era, Lu Xun’s younger brother.

The basic human faith is Mother-God worship, ...To be objectively, the maternal mystery is unfathomable. On the one hand, people consciously admire the love of mother; on the other, there is a kind of unconscious regret in departing from mother. The instinct wish often comes up to the surface as an inclination to go back to mother.<sup>34</sup>

Symbolically, it seems to me, the place where mother lives is what human religion postulates the heaven, which turns to be the inner voice constantly calling us back home wherever we go. Maybe it is right in this sense that Schleiermacher describes religion as the homesick feeling of the soul.<sup>35</sup> Consciously and unconsciously, the mother figure in Bing Xin's Love Philosophy is tinted with a thick layer of religion. Mother is the central relation in connection to the world. In Jesus we see the human-divine relation, and we may see the same thing in Bing Xin's mother figure. "By God, with God, for God, Jesus claims is own authority of possibility in the world. By Jesus, with Jesus, through Jesus, God acts."<sup>36</sup> At Bing Xin, the expression has implicitly been changed as "By Mother, with Mother, through Mother, God acts." If God acts in relation, Mother is the relation by which God acts. Maternal love is the actualization of relation. This has gradually formed into Bing Xin's faith or belief, as she claims,

Over and over again I have been pondering and verifying; time and time more the tide of my heart and emotion rises and ebbs, all are in response to the relationship between my self and my mother, to the connection between her mother and his mother. My long-held faith has been deeply testified. This is definitely not just out of the unconscious.<sup>37</sup>

Consciously speaking, to Bing Xin, the deification of mother is aimed at convincing the masculine dominated culture that the feminine connection is the sustaining power to the world. Bing Xin may agree with Taoist notion that water is the softest, and the most powerful, which signifies femininity. "Mother" represents the feminine power that shapes

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<sup>34</sup> Zhou Zuoren, *Letter from Mother Wusheng* (my translation from Chinese).

<sup>35</sup> Source to be checked out.

<sup>36</sup> Carter Heyward, *Saving Jesus from Those Who Are Right*, (Fortress Press, 1999), P.52.

<sup>37</sup> Bing Xin, *To Young Readers, Letter 12*, (Publications?)



the world, nurtures the world, and heals the world. Human beings should be related for growth in the core relatedness of mother. All the creatures are related because of mother. The universe is moving forward in relation and so in prosperity. Still, mother love is a mystery, which is deep-rooted in human experience, and therefore it touches human heart with profound power. That's why when Mao Dun, a rational literary critic as he was thought of, made the comments on Bing Xin's *Superman*, he couldn't help adding an underlying sentence: "Yan Bing cried when he read this story." "Yan Bing" is Mao Dun's real name. Carl Jung made a wonderful articulation,

That well-known image of the mother which has been glorified in all ages and all tongues. This is the mother-love which is one of the most moving and unforgettable memories of our lives, the mysterious root of all growth and change; the love that means homecoming, shelter, and the long silence from which everything begins and in which everything ends. Intimately known and yet strange like nature, lovingly tender and yet cruel like fate, joyous and untiring giver of life—mater dolorosa and mute implacable portal that closes upon the dead. Mother is mother-love, my experience and my secret.<sup>38</sup>

### **Relate to Children**

Together with the Movement of Liberation of the Mind, Liberation of Women from the feudal bandage was in the full swing. Some of Bing Xin's writings were products in response to the calling of that age. However, the countryside seemed impenetrable to this influence, where ugly things like "child wife" were still happening. Bing Xin's story *The Last Repose* reveals the suffering of women under this inhuman customs. Paralleled with exposing the serious social pain, Bing Xin presents love in relation as the consolation and healing. Same as He Bing and Lu Er in *Superman*, here in *The Last Repose*, Cui Er and Hui Gu are brought into relational love. The story depicts the miserable life of Cui Er,

who is sold to a family as child wife and is harshly treated by her mother-in-law. Her life is full of labor and bitterness, and never for a moment has she ever tasted love in this world. It was not until one day a bright beam of light appeared in her isolated dark life. Hui Gu (girl of kindness by implication), like an angel of love, came into relation with Cui Er (fragile little one), bringing healing to the traumatized soul.

Hui Gu comes, and Cui Er gives her common greeting. Thinking that Hui Gu comes here just for fun, and may make fun of her, Cui Er then responds to her just in a cold manner. Unexpectedly, Hui Gu stays here with her, looking at her with her eyes filled with compassion, saying that she wants to help her do something. Cui Er raises up her head toward Hui Gu for quite a while, suddenly feeling a beam of spiritual light penetrating into her heart of darkness. Her mind is filled with a kind freshness at the moment. She feels the gratitude and painful thinking flowing together, rising up like roar tiding. With one hand picking up her front cloth to cover her face, she starts weeping, and gradually, cries loudly. The wet clothes in another hand drop into the brook. Hui Gu comes closer to her, picking up the wet clothes, standing by her side, raising hands to put her dripping dry hair backward, caressing her tenderly. At this moment, Hui Gu's eyes are filled with tears. She hangs downward looking at Cui Er with kindness. With this, Cui Er feels herself shrouded in a peaceful air. The brook embraces their reflections. Though outwardly there is a world of differences between them, but the compassion and gratitude extended from their genuine heart connect their spirit, making a world of incredible peace and love.<sup>39</sup>

The above description, once again, presents the “we”. The “we” is a connection, and a “healing connection”. We see a relational picture of children in connection to friendship, love, and compassion. As Shem and Surrey postulate, “In addition to the ‘I’ and ‘you’, there is a third element in human experience called the ‘we’. This ‘we’—the connection, or the relationship—has qualities of its own that can be described and developed.”<sup>40</sup>

The ending of the story is that, due to severe beating by her mother-in-law, Cui Er is dying. Hui Gu, as always, came at her presence. She assumed that Cui Er was just falling

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<sup>38</sup> Carl Jung, *Collected Works*, (Volume 18), p.1543.

<sup>39</sup> Bing Xin, *The Last Repose*, (publication?). (my translation from Chinese)

into sleep when she died in peace and with a smile. Before she left, Hui Gu had a look at Cui Er and found that “her dreary, wounded face is radiating with a smile. Just at this moment, the bright morning glow comes through the window panel, shedding light on her face, as if to welcome her journey to paradise. Pitiful Cui Er! Her first repose turned out to be her last.” Cui Er died and she died in a relational context, and with a smile appearing on her face. This way of ending the story was once met with questioning. First Bing Xin was questioned for exposing too much social suffering, to which she explained that her aim was to draw social attention for the curing. The medicine she presented, further more, got her into reproach for intending to bring people into “religious ecstasy”, which might soften people’s class-consciousness and fighting will. As shown above, He Bing and Lu Er, though belonging to different classes, but are brought into mutual connection. Same thing happens to the relationship of Hui Gu and Cui Er. Especially several decades ago, in the view of class struggle, they should hate and fight with each other, while not love and connect to each other. Instead of separating them apart, Bing Xin has built a bridge so that they can meet in love and relation. Bing Xin does not intend to create hatred so as to separate and hurt, but to cultivate compassion so as to connect and heal. Hui Gu’s encounter of Cui Er turns to be a growth-fostering relation, by which she grows with more compassion. “She feels that Cui Er is the most lovely and the most pitiful person. From Cui Er, she relates her compassion to all the suffered. Cui Er, as the representative of the sufferers, deserves her comfort and consolation.” Bing Xin, too, in one of her poems, expresses the same compassion to relate to people.

I dreamed I was left alone and helpless,  
When woke up I was still in tears.

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<sup>40</sup> Samuel Shem & Janet Surrey, *WE Have to Talk*, (Basic Books, 1998), “Introduction”.

All through the day the deep sorrow lingers,  
For the sake of this,  
My compassion extends to all the isolated on the earth.<sup>41</sup>

In Bing Xin's writings, *Children*, in many ways, represents the healing connection to the disconnected adult world. With this, Bing Xin seems intentioned to remind the depressed May Fourth young men to look at children, hear their genuine voice, and relate to them. Like Jesus who relates children to his preach about heaven, Bing Xin brings children to the center of concern when she speaks of Love Philosophy. Yes, there are many man-made things separating children from children. But, He Bing and Lu Er are connected, Hui Gu and Cui Er are related, in spite of all those outward differences. They have formed an intimate relationship which ignores all the superficial things that are separating people.

Intimacy is the deepest quality of relation. Intimacy refers to a fundamental bonding between persons' innermost senses of identity. It is the centering of relation in the depth of human being. To be intimate is to know and to be known by others in such a way that we are assured, confident, that the mutuality of our relation is real, creative, cooperative.<sup>42</sup>

The inner connection works out transformation, while the outward political revolution, especially when going along on the sphere of material differentiation, will only create more disconnection. Children seem to know this better than us adults do, as we have been so deeply embedded in and entrenched with by the cultural divisive forces. We have been seen step by step away from the depth of our soul. Without the depth of the soul, we live more and more on the superficial level. Jesus tells us to turn to look at children. If we do not have a soul like that of the children, we may be disconnected to the heaven. Bing Xin

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<sup>41</sup> Bing Xin, *Comfort*, (poem, 1922). (my translation from Chinese)

<sup>42</sup> Carter Heyward, *The Redemption of God—A Theology of Mutual Relation*, (University Press of America, 1982), p.44.

writes, “Multitude of angers, rise up to praise children. Children, though tender-bodied, contain a great soul.”<sup>43</sup> Children appear in Bing Xin writings often in the image of angels. In *The Realization of Love*, two children, with the image of angels, bring inspiration to Jing Bo, the poet who is getting stuck in writing. In *The Last Messenger*, an angel in the image of a baby, as the messenger of hope, comes into the world. In *The world is full of happiness and bight*, children, with their angel-like image and genuine voice, save the disillusioned Ling Yu from committing suicide by drowning himself into the sea. In *The Last Repose*, too, Hui Gu is right the angel-like girl who seems like descending from heaven to connect herself to the pain afflicted Cui Er until she leaves the world.

Bing Xin has her own confusions, though, as all of us do in this so disconnected world. With confusions, she inclines to listen what children are going to tell her. In *The Ending of A Story* she expresses her confusion as:

Two things are the clearest in my heart: I love my motherland, and I love my mother. But why, Mother, there is war in the world? Is it that we have to kill people because we love our own motherland? Mother, tell me!

Then, Bing Xing turns to hear what children speak from their soul. In *Isolation*, she hears the dialogue between Xiao Xiao and his sister.

Xiao Xiao: I only love my own country...

Sister: We should also love other countries...

Xiao Xiao: I have only one heart to love my country, I do not have another heart to love another country...

Sister: One heart can be spared into many portions to love. Just like I have one heart, but I can love father, love mother, and love all others...

Many things separate human beings, but we should stay connected. Every wall erected should be pulled down, and every Babel pulled apart. Reality is often disappointing, even sometimes despairing. The roll of cannon builds up wall; the national banners estrange

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<sup>43</sup> Bing Xin, *Stars*, 35. (my translation from Chinese)

the children; many forms of prejudice, hate, and ignorance separate human beings into various circles, expelling outsiders, projecting shadow on others. What should we do? To increase separation, or to build up connection?

In *National Banner*, a group of children from different nations (Germany, America, Japan, and China) become friends. It happened one day the conflicts among the nations arose. Bing Xin, or the narrator in the story, was held in suspension when she saw the group of children (among them one is her brother) meeting together, each holding a little national banner at hand. The national banner they usually like now seemed like a blockage to their friendship. Some time later, they decided to put aside the banner while maintaining their friendship. “Institutions are what is ‘out there’”, while “feelings are what is ‘in here’ where one lives and recovers from the institutions.”<sup>44</sup> Institutions are to some degree necessary with regard to the limitation of the human world, but the friendship of children, in its real value, is above the national banner, which signifies a kind of disconnection. Bing Xin connects her confusion to a broadened divine perspective—let her faith eye see it: “So far what we know is limited.... When the Perfect One comes, all these limitations will be ended.”<sup>45</sup> Upon that time, all the present institutions dividing human feelings will no longer exist, but are transformed into the new divine world, which is the perfect Relational Model.

In May Fourth Literature, the song of love was once for a while sung by quite a few writers. Lu Xun’s “*How Now Shall We Be Father?*” for instance, calls on fathers to love and sacrifice for their children, as the loving heroic figure of a legend who saves children from a dark dungeon. According to the legend, all the people are put into a hopeless dark

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<sup>44</sup> Martin Buber, *I And Thou*, (Simon & Schuster, 1996), p. 93.

<sup>45</sup> I Corinthians, 13: 10. Bing Xin cites this biblical verse in her *National Banner*.

dungeon. The huge heavy stone door is sinking down to shut them up forever. Seeing children are among them, the hero runs forward to put himself under the sinking door, trying to prop up a space to let children out. The hero is crashed at last, but the children are let out to a spacious bright world and live there happily ever since. These are the self-willing love and sacrifice, not the forced, compulsive ones as of the feudal ethics, which, according to Lu Xu's observation, required the young to sacrifice to the old. Even, in his *Diary of a Madman*, he analogizes the feudal history as "the old eat the young", and, in the voice of a father, Lu Xun cried out: "Save our children!"

Among all the May Fourth writers, Bing Xin is the singer of the love song from the beginning to the end. With her Love Philosophy, she sings in her true voice. And her voice, in Kaethe Weingarten term, is a metaphor.

Voice is a metaphor through which some people, especially women, it seems, express their sense of who they are, what they think, feel, know, believe, and care about. Voice is what we say, but also how we say it. In the best writings authors have a distinctive voice. You can 'hear' it.<sup>46</sup>

Yes, we can hear Bing Xin out in terms of who she is, what she thinks, feels, knows, believes, and cares about. But, soon afterward, the political revolution became the dominant voice of the age and required the conformity to the one voice. Under a certain imaginable pressure, for once in time, we hear Bing Xin changing her tone by singing in a difference voice. That is *Separation*.

The story happens at the maternity ward in a hospital, where two newborn babies from two different families have a dialogue. One is the butcher's baby, possibly representing what Bing Xin understands the revolutionary; while the other is the wealthy professor's baby, spiritually tender like flower, may somewhat reflecting Bing Xin's ill-affected view

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<sup>46</sup> Kaethe Weingarten, *The Mother's Voice—Strengthen Intimacy in Families*, (The Guilford Press) p. 9.

of love at the moment. The former proclaims that he will be like his father when he grows up, only that he will not kill pigs, but kill the oppressors, who are nothing but dirty swine. With a strong gesture, he expresses a kind of blood-thirst adult cruelty: "...with a knife thrusting in white, drawing out red." The tenderhearted baby looks at him with some fearfulness and some admiration. But, obviously, he/she may go along quite a different path, but it seems that she/he feels quite puzzled at his or her future. Then, some days later, the two babies are separated, and they are supposed to go along different roads determined by their respective classes. What would that be? The story ends with this suspension.

In this story, as in many others, still, we hear two voices—love and hate—in dialogue. The difference lies in that, the voice of love seems to be convinced while not to convince. This is not Bing Xin's authentic voice, but rather, an artificial one. Bing Xin failed when she tried to follow the voice of revolution. Still, this short piece is significant in the sense of prophesying what was happening later in China. Several decades later, China was drastically separated and disconnected into pieces by class struggle. The suspension of the story has extended into the reality with the two babies growing up and fighting with each other. It developed into the extremity of the Cultural Revolution<sup>47</sup> with so many intellectuals being persecuted, families broken up. It is completely the nation's tragedy of separation. Husband and wife turned to be political enemies. Children drew demarcation line to separate themselves from their "anti-revolutionary" parents. The relational system of this nation was so very much devastatingly destroyed. Love relates, connects, heals,

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<sup>47</sup> The Cultural Revolution is a political movement initiated by Mao Zedong out of the political power struggle reason. It is not a cultural revolution in the real sense, but on the contrary, completely anti culture. Rather, it is a culture destroying movement. The devastation goes far beyond the time of 1966-1976. Some people say two periods like "Pre-Cultural Revolution" and "Post-Cultural Revolution" should be included.



while violence separates, disconnects, and devastates. And so, both the Relational Model and the Love Philosophy speak much to me in terms of bringing healing and transformation to China where many people still suffer the hidden pain caused by the national disaster of disconnection.

### **Relate to Nature**

As mentioned above, God is an unseen dimension in Love Philosophy, who especially relates to the love of nature. To Bing Xin, the universe is not an accidental existence, but is created with purpose and in relation, and the invisible Creator can be deduced from the perfect order of the universe. Out of the same experience of faith and the way of thinking, Thomas Aquinas worked out five methods to prove the existence of God, one of which is the deduction from effect to cause. In her meditation of nature, Bing Xin finds the Creator is still behind the nature or within the nature as the sustainer. Nature has deep relation with Bing Xin's thought of religion. "With regard to my thoughts on religion, all come out of my aesthetic sense of nature. At the sight of the beautiful landscape and the perfect physical body, I can't help uttering awesome praise to the creator." Thus she praised:

How amazing, you beauty of nature, my praise goes to the All-mighty God because of you; How amazing, you beauty of nature, step by step you have led me to the house of faith.<sup>48</sup>

Universal love is always related to the dimension of religion. It is based on faith or assumption that God created world and human being that we find an ontological, anthropological connection to each other. With this, Bing Xin design a comic structure of relational love.

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<sup>48</sup> Bing Xin, *Letters to Litter Readers*, No: 25.

On this vast land, not only human beings have a mother. Every kind of being with sensation and feeling has a mother. Mother plants the seeds of love everywhere in the world. Thus rivers flow, birds chirp, flowers blossom, grass turns green, animals skip about, human beings multiply, everything is in gladness and flourishing. Mothers of every kind love one another. Children of every kind love one another. Urged by compassion and mutual aid, the land that is habituated with lives of every kind is moving on and on. How amazing! It is love that has nurtured lives of every kind promotes the universe to move forward.<sup>49</sup>

This is a co-related ecopsychological picture of cosmic love. Carter Heyward call it “the holy ground on which we stand together, we people and other creatures. In the beginning is *our* relation. In this radically relational situation, I am never by myself—although I may *feel* alone, or I may be in solitude.”<sup>50</sup> In this network of co-relatedness, I am a distinct part as well as a relational part. I am distinct because I either think as a human being, or chirp as a bird, or blossom as a flower, or flow as a river; I am relational because I am connected to all of them. Together we comprise what we call the life, and without either of the parts life can not be complete. Love is the thread that weaves us together so neatly that no soul will leak out. Love is the law of gravity by which all human beings and other creatures are attracted and included. Wimala Thakar says, “As there is a Law of Gravity, so there is a Law of Love, working at the heart of the Universe.”<sup>51</sup>

Sarah A. Conn provides an ecopsychological perspective to see Bing Xin’s Love Philosophy in terms of relating to nature for the healing.

An ecopsychological perspective on health invites us to move beyond the cultural tendency to associated personal pain with individual or family pathology without attention to the larger context. When we consider the human psyche within the web of life, we can begin to view personal pain as both unique to the person and as a signal from the larger

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<sup>49</sup> Bing Xin, *Awakening*. (my translation from Chinese)

<sup>50</sup> Carter Heyward, *Saving Jesus from Those Who Are Right*, (Fortress Press, 1999), p.69.

<sup>51</sup> Cited from the front page of *We Have to Talk*, by Samuel Shen & Janet Surrey, (Basic Books, 1998).

context, as “the earth speaking through us”. Exploring the inner and the outer landscapes within which we live, and the connections between them, we look for diversity, interconnectedness and flows of nourishment in the system of which the pain is a part. Ecopsychology invites psychotherapy practice to expand its focus beyond the inner landscape, to explore and foster the development of community, contact with land and place, and ecological identity.<sup>52</sup>

Bing Xin, with her Love Philosophy, provides right what is called “the larger context” to the May Fourth pathologized youth. Still, with stories the love of nature, she suggests them to relate to nature by listening to what the universe is speaking to them and through them. As said above, the trauma or pain of the May Fourth young students is more than a personal matter or even a social matter, but a much larger interconnected system “in which the pain is a part”. And also, when people are in pain or trauma, they may project shadow from their inner landscape onto the outer system, as may be the negative way of “relating to”. And so, Sahra Conn suggests that psychotherapy “expand its focus beyond the inner landscape, to explore and foster the development of community, contact with land and place, and ecological identity.”<sup>53</sup>

*Awakening* is a philosophical fiction about the May Fourth youth seeking real meaning of life from the ontological perspective. Zhong Wu, a disillusioned college student, firmly believes that life is filled with pain, tear, and hypocrisy, and that the universe is nothing but an accidental existence.

It is only by accident that the world comes into being. By accident that the mountains grow and the rivers flow on the earth; by accident that the sun, the moon, and the stars appear in the sky; by accident that the atmosphere changes into rain, snow, and cloud; and by accident that the weather produces trees, flowers, and grass.... All are but by accident. What among all these things can prove the word “love”?

Xing Ru, who has experienced the same painful disillusion, finally, however, finds that love is the core essence of the universe. Some time before, same as Zhong Wu, he felt the

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<sup>52</sup> Sarah A. Conn, *Living in the Earth: Ecopsychology, Health and Psychotherapy*.

meaninglessness in living. But different from Zhong Wu's way of dilly-dallying through life, Xing Ru decided to commit suicide by jumping off into the sea from a high cliff. But the light of a long-lasting lamp from the window of a hut by the sea drew him into a legend about relational love. In the hut by the sea once lived a mother and her son. One day the mother was sick, and the son set out seeking medicine to save his mother despite the tumultuous sea in the storm. The son was drowned half way and never returned. The heart-breaking mother made a vow that she would never let the lamplight extinguish so as to navigate her returning son. The lamplight lasted for a hundred years after the mother died without being able to wait back her son, but, however, saved another mother's son who intended to suicide. Xing Ru continues his own story,

That was at midnight then, the scene became even more fantastic. After a bout of rain, the bright moonlight spread all over the sky. So vividly the Creator disclosed a perfect picture of "cosmic love" before my eyes. The lake and the mountain of that night were incredibly clear, beautiful, bright, and splendid. How wonderful it was that the Creator led me with his wisdom and power when I wandered astray. The awakening and confirmation happened at that moment! From the Pyramids I confirmed the King of Egypt; from the Great Wall I traced back to testify the Emperor Qin. We could even admire their great deeds by which we confirmed them without a light doubt though we never saw them. Why, then, when the universe with such clearness, beauty, brightness and splendor just spreading before our eyes, we dare say that the sky and earth are nothing but the accidental existence without the Creator's will and purpose!?

With stories and arguments like above, Bing Xin intends to lay an ontological or theological groundwork for the construction of a relational cosmic structure sustained by the Creator's purpose and connected with the mother-love. Accidental existence is a disconnected existence. Such belief may lead to a disconnected life. In Bing Xin's stories about nature, as always, we hear two voices dialoguing on human nature and the voices are always extending to the philosophical, theological, ontological, anthropological level.

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<sup>53</sup> Sarah, A. Conn, *Living in the Earth: Ecopsychology, Health and Psychotherapy*.

One voice interprets human nature and the essence of the universe as purposeless, selfish, hate, etc. These are what Jean Miller called the “strange theories”:

These strange theories are, in fact, the prevailing theories in our culture. One of those is that “mankind” is basically self-seeking, competitive, aggressive, and destructive, such a theory overlooks the fact that millions of people (most of them women) have spent millions of hours for hundreds of years giving their utmost to millions of others. While this fact has important consequences for women, in an ultimate sense, it has equally serious implications for men and for the dominant culture’s theories about the nature of human beings.<sup>54</sup>

Another voice, on the contrary, believes that the world is created with purpose, and that human nature is originally filled with and basically comprised of love, though, on various occasions, human nature is led astray by the man-made stuff. What we need to do now is to restore its original connection to nature. In connection, people see more things of hope, light, bright, warmth, and compassion, but in disconnection, people see more things just of the opposite. And so, where you stay is crucial—stay connected or stay disconnected, and the two different voices reflect just that.

*Moonlight* reflects Bing Xin’s intimate relationship with nature. This piece of writing shows that Bing Xin has gone from her philosophical thinking on nature to the state of mysterious or religious meditation. In Bing Xin’s meditation, the nature is permeated with the divine attributes. The shadow of a flower, the subtle sound from wind going through the tree leaves, all contain the mysterious meaning, all reveal the fostering love. Wei Yin in *Moonlight* shares the same intimate interconnectedness with nature. Wei Yin is a young man with a sound mind, healthy personality, and perfect physical body (Bing Xin’s animus?). He so loves the nature and is so connected to nature that he felt like entering the essence of nature that night. It was a moonlit night. He meditated by the lake under the moon. At the perfect presence of the nature, he was completely overwhelmed.

For a moment, a kind of summit feeling spread all over him and the only way to respond was to break up himself and melt into the complete reconciliation with nature. Then, at that moonlit night, a perfect physical body, in its natural form, threw into the lake under the moon. “Surrender to nature,” Wei Yin thought to himself at his perfect diving into the water.

This is a metaphor or a parable rather than a story. And the metaphorical expression of interconnectedness with nature can be understood in light of Taoist way of identification with the nature, or Christian faith of reunification with God. Wei Yin’s suicide can not be read as a social behavior, but an aesthetic, metaphorical symbol. It intends to bring out a certain experience that only when the compartment of the physical body falls apart, can the real essence of reconciliation flow through. The metaphor has flown far surpassing the scope of reality, and is no longer subject to ethical appraisal. Same metaphors like the Taoist Zhuang Zi’s dream of butterfly. When Zhuang Zi wakes up from a dream, he can not distinguish who has dreamed of whom—either I am a butterfly who dreamed of Zhuang Zi or I am Zhuang Zi who dreamed of a butterfly? It put this story under the examination common life standard, the sage of ancient China would only be ridiculed for the stupidity. However, in philosophical or aesthetic view, we see the boundary between Zhuang Zi and butterfly has completely disappeared. This may be the aesthetic state ecopsychology pursues.

Ecopsychological health requires us to us to make lively, unmediated, direct contact with the world, listening and looking and sniffing and touching and feeling our connections not only with ourselves and each other but also with the Earth, the sun and the moon and the stars, as we learn to take our place in the interdependent web of life.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Jean Baker Miller, *Toward a New Psychology of Women*, (Beacon Press/Boston, 1976), p. 69.

<sup>55</sup> Sarah A. Conn, *Living in the Earth: Ecopsychology, Health and Psychotherapy*.

Another metaphor is the story of Abraham, which Kierkegaard makes wonderful interpretation from his paradoxical perspective. Ethically we see an intended murderer father, which, obviously, is not the real meaning of the story. Seen from the religious sphere, or the divine perspective, we see the father of faith, who has surpassed the ethical sphere, the aesthetic sphere, and reached the religious sphere. It is in this sphere that the story of Abraham is endowed with the real meaning.

*Moonlight*, however, was once interpreted in the sphere of social ethics, and so Bing Xin was once accused of misleading the youth into the “religious ecstasy”, “skimming off those that are held to satire while focusing on praising ‘beauty’ (of nature) and ‘love’. Hence ‘Beauty’ and ‘love’ become the person’s ‘the escape of soul.’”<sup>56</sup> With this appraisal, Mao Dun indicates that Love Philosophy is a “raincoat” with which Bing Xin avoids the storm of the society while evading in the appreciation of beauty of nature and love. The fact is that, as mentioned above, Bing Xin has showed considerable compassion to the social suffering. Love Philosophy is not the escape from reality, but her unusual way of transforming the society. It provides an enlarged relational context for those who have been afflicted with social pain to stay connected and healed. On the contrary, if not going with the inner transformation, revolution will create more suffering despite its good intention to solve social suffering. In the excuse of uniting to fight, revolution spreads the seeds of disconnection.

Bing Xin does not take side. Each side claims of its righteousness in fighting against the other. Taking one side means reproaching the other side for doing injustice. Bing Xin stands in the middle and speaks reconciliation out of humanity, out of love. By standing in the middle, she finds that war of various kinds, in the ultimate sense, is a crime. War

destroys lives by separating people into different groups and spreading hatred among them so that they fight with each other. War destroys the web of universe and makes it the leaking one. By standing in the middle, Bing Xin prays: “God, have mercy! They are building wall! With every “bang” of cannon, the wall is strengthened. With one brick added upon another, the wall is built up. The world of love is thus separated! God, have mercy! They are building wall!”<sup>57</sup> Prayer is regarded as part of the politics.

To pray is to build your own house. To pray is to discover that someone else is within your house. To pray is to recognize that it is not your house at all. To keep praying is to have house to protect because there is only One House. And that One House is everybody's House... That is the politics of prayer. And that is probably why truly spiritual people are always a threat to politicians of any sort. They want our allegiance and we can no longer give it. Our house is too big.<sup>58</sup>

With one page after another of the calendar tearing off, the history of the world moves forward. What would be the next? Bing Xin asks, and she holds a greater expectation than the revolutionary-claimed kingdom: “God will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”<sup>59</sup>

Emma Jung says, “Where a man takes up objective problems, a woman contents herself with solving riddles; where he battles for knowledge and understanding, she contents herself with faith or superstition, or else she makes assumptions.”<sup>60</sup> Love Philosophy is Bing Xin’s “riddle”, “faith”, or “superstition”, which means something she believes, something she loves, something she wishes, not something to be explained, to be analyzed, to be philosophized, though it is called philosophy. Love Philosophy is not a

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<sup>56</sup> Mao Dun, *On Bing Xin*. (Publications?) (my translation from Chinese)

<sup>57</sup> Bing Xin, *The Night of November 11, 1922*, (poem). (my translation from Chinese)

<sup>58</sup> Source to be checked.

<sup>59</sup> Revelation, 21:4. Bing Xin cites this biblical verse in her *The Diary of an Army Official*.



theoretical design. Rather, it is a metaphor, a dream, a song. When Bing Xin narrates the metaphor, tells the dream, sings the song, she touches people, connects people, heals people, and renews people. Love has “the redemptive and innovative impact,” as William Everett says, “The love that has renewed the persons seeks to spread out and renew the earth.”<sup>61</sup> Still, concerning which is the essence of the world—love or hatred, Bing Xin concluded:

Making a further concession—to the last step, even if my theory is completely false, yours is completely right. For the sake that people may suffer no more, I would plead you abandon your truth and submit to my falsehood. Not only that you and I should believe so, but that we should also loudly appeal to the public to believe so.<sup>62</sup>

Obviously, like all true teachers, Bing Xin “wishes to teach not a view but the way.”<sup>63</sup> A view is to be argued, but a way is to be believed and set foot on.

### **Breaking over Gender Boundary into Symbolic Relation**

The Relational Theory provides a new perspective to view Christian faith. The God-created world is itself a Relational Model. In the Beginning there is relation. God created human being, because, he wanted to have relate to and to be related to. Sin goes contrary to relatedness. Death is the disconnection with God. Jesus came to relate himself to sinners so as to restore the relationship between human and God. In the end there is relation. At the end of the world, Jesus said, if you do not recognize me, you will have nothing to do with me. The legalists do not recognize Jesus because they think they are insured by relating themselves to law. Sinners recognize Jesus because they realize they can no longer relate themselves to sin. Christian faith is a relational metaphor.

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<sup>60</sup> Emma Jung, *Animus and Anima*, (Dallas, Spring Publications, Inc.) P. 16.

<sup>61</sup> William J. Everett, *Blessed Be the Bond*, (Fortress Press, 1985), p. 133.

<sup>62</sup> Bing Xin, *Meditation* (my translation from Chinese).

Bing Xin's first contact with Jesus was at Bayman Middle School in Beijing, where Bible course was offered. Bing Xin recalled this experience many years later, saying,

Our Bible class has proceeded from the Old Testament to the New Testament. From the four gospels I get to know the "person" named Jesus. Supposedly an illegitimate son from a poor carpenter's family, though, he attracted many people as his followers. But at last he was brutally crucified. Ridiculously, the accusation was that he preached 'Love your neighbor as yourself'. Truly, this is a respectable figure."<sup>64</sup>

Jesus is perceived as a respectable figure among many modern Chinese writers. Different people touch the different aspects of Jesus. As result, Jesus is reflected in various images in their mind and writings: revolutionary figure, uprising leader, spiritual fighter, friend of the poor, universal lover, wise man, great teacher, and, to few Christian writers, the Son of God. Bing Xin's view of Jesus has undergone through several changes with her relation with Jesus going deeper and deeper.

One of Bing Xin's early poems named *Vow* is an imitation from Psalms 23, in which the "God is my shepherd" is metamorphosed into a symbol of her relationship with the goddess of literature and art. God is my shepherd, in Jung's view, is the archetype of the daughter/father relationship. "As the daughter who alone understands her father (that is, is eternally right in everything), she is translated to the land of sheep, where she is put to graze by the shepherd of her soul, the animus."<sup>65</sup> In *Vow*, the Father-God, in the image of shepherd, becomes the symbol of goddess of literature and art, to whom Bing Xin commits herself as a follower. All are about the relation.

Literature and art is like a nomadic goddess, I am a tender lamb. Spring water is flowing, pasture grass is growing, and her kind eyes are gazing at me. Quiet as a lamb, I lie down under her rod and staff.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Martin Buber, *I And Thou*, (Simon & Schuster, First Touchstone Edition, 1996), p. 138-139.

<sup>64</sup> Bing Xin, *At Beiman Middle School*.

<sup>65</sup> Joseph Campbell (Edit) *The Portable Jung* (Viking Penguin Inc. 1971), P. 154.

<sup>66</sup> Bing Xin, *Vow*. (my translation from Chinese)

Emma Jung says, “To many women the Biblical Father-God meant a metaphysical, superhuman aspect of the animus image.”<sup>67</sup> But in this poem, it seems, the image has been transformed into a goddess revealing some feminine elements, though, however, with a rod or staff, we still see its masculine image, but not necessarily so.

After graduation from Bayman, Bing Xin entered Yanchen University, during which period she wrote a prose named *Painting—Poem*. It is a reflection of a painting *The Shepherd and the Lamb* she viewed at her Bible teacher Miss Ann’s house.

The background is a range of precipitous cliffs, with withered grass here and there. On the cliff climbing a shepherd. Seen from the back, he holds a rod in his right hand, and his left hand is stretching down to caress a lamb under the cliff—his fingertips are about to reach the head of the lamb. Several eagles hover in the sky...Brambles on the shepherd’s sleeves reveal his long hard journey in seeking his little lamb. Pitiful little lamb! It gets lost. Facing with branch roads on the ground, being chased by the hovering eagles in the sky—it seems to be at an impasse. Then comes the shepherd! There is no blame from the shepherd, but love is what the lamb gets. With mixed feeling of sorrow, guilt, happiness, and shyness, the lamb snuggles up to the shepherd. Raised its head, the little lamb quietly looks up at the shepherd.<sup>68</sup>

A wonderful relational description, isn’t it? The lamb and the shepherd--Bing Xin is deeply touched by the painting and gives it a vivid but subtle depiction. In a significantly symbolic way, a kind of inner relationship might have been established between her self and Jesus Christ. In comparison, Henri Nouwen’s reflection on Rembrandt’s painting *The Return of the Prodigal Son* may be a helpful reference. Nouwen focuses on the hands of the father figure under Rembrandt’s great depiction, which is said to be of significant theological insight.

Several art critics have commented that the left hand of father is masculine and probably the artist’s own, while the right hand is distinctively feminine. So the father as Rembrandt captures him is not the great patriarch but mother as

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<sup>67</sup> Emma Jung, *Animus and Anima* (Dallas, Spring Publications, Inc.), p. 6.

well, touching the son with masculine and feminine hands. Observing the actions of both hands in the painting, Nouwen adds, "He holds, and she caresses. He confirms and she consoles. He is, indeed, God, in whom manhood and womanhood, fatherhood and motherhood are fully present."<sup>69</sup>

Here in Bing Xin's depiction, it is advisable to focus also on the hands of the shepherd—one holding a staff, which is the hand of a father, signifying protection; while the other, stretching downward to caress the lamb, seems to be the hand of a mother extending the maternal love to the lost lamb.

It gives me hint, instruction, and consolation. Unable to speak out a single word, solemnly and awesomely, I stand by the side of stove place, staring at the painting. Overwhelmed by the flood of feeling from inside of me, tears are about to run out my eyes. I can not speak out why I am so touched. Are these tears out of gratitude, out of faith, or out of being consoled? It does allow me to speak, and it is unspeakable—<sup>70</sup>

This is the power of relation. It touches deeply, it brings out unspeakable feeling, it consoles, it heals, and it creates faith, which is the self-connection to divine being. Bing Xin is not an art critic. Rather than making theoretical analysis, she just let herself be immersed in a kind of sensational appreciation. Her reflection is expressed in a literary language, by which she conveys a symbolic connection—between the shepherd and the lamb—symbolizing the father/mother in relation with son/daughter, and the God, with a dyadic image, in relation with the human. In connection, again, Bing Xin cites the Bible to express: "The Lord is my shepherd, ...he restores my soul."

*My Student* is a symbolic story in which the heroine named S is a relational figure. Born in the metropolitan Shanghai, raised in Australia, and married to a distinguished ambassador, she belongs to a wealthy, honorable family. Compared with the living condition of the poverty-stricken South Yunnan where she commits herself to live and

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<sup>68</sup> Bing Xin, *Painting—Poem*. (my translation from Chinese)

<sup>69</sup> Stephen, G. Post, *Spheres of Love* (Dallas, Southern Methodist University Press), pp, 74-75.

<sup>70</sup> Bing Xin, *Painting—Poem*. (my translation from Chinese)

serve, she is none less than Jesus, who, with the heavenly origin, comes into the world to live in human form and serve human kind. Having intimately connected herself to the suffering of the local people, S is respected as “Godmother”(meaning Pastor’s wife). Here, again, are we reminded of Jesus who, due to his deeds in connecting God and human, is recognized as Son of God? In the end, for the sake of saving the life of a local people, S donated her blood and was died of the illness caused by blood transfusion. This, again, symbolizes Jesus who suffered and served, and finally was crucified, bleeding the last drop of blood on the cross. Martin Buber says, “One does not find God if one remains in the world; one does not find God if one leaves the world. Whoever goes forth to his You with his whole being and carries to it all the beings to the world, find him who one cannot seek.”<sup>71</sup> This is the life of S.

Fu He, meaning blessing and piece by name, is a figure in Bing Xin’s *An Unimportant Soldier*. He suffers as Jesus once suffered. He is despised as Jesus once was despised. He bears the beating in place of a child. He pays the repudiated debts for others. All these seem to symbolize Jesus’ atonement for human kind. The unimportant soldier died at last. With the most familiar symbol from the Bible, Bing Xin writes, after Fu He died, people “felt sick and depressed at heart, as a flock of sheep lost their shepherd.” This is the response of Jesus’ disciples when Jesus died at the cross. It is also interesting that, Fu He, as a military soldier usually thought of with masculinity, has otherwise the character rather feminine, even fragile and weak, as may be seen to readers. However, he is a hero in a spiritual sense. This is a comparison to S, who, as a woman from a privileged family, however, has a strong character, confidence, and optimism, all attributes that relate to masculinity. In S and Fu He, just as in Jesus, both the weakest and the strongest are

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<sup>71</sup> Martin Buber, *I And Thou*, (Simon & Schuster, First Touchstone Edition, 1996), p. 127.

integrated. This reminds me of K. Marttell, a female German writer, who believes that some very crucial experience of God comes out of feminine experience.

Both masculine and feminine attributes are integrated in God, both man and woman come from God—which is clearly written in the Bible. God created man in his image, in his image he created man and woman—therefore both man and woman share God's image.<sup>72</sup>

Bing Xin, in one of her lectures, expresses the same inclination for integration with Jesus. The name of the lecture is "Simon + Jesus = Peter; I + Jesus =?" by which she says, "Simon, with his courage, connected himself with Jesus in love, and then transformation happened—he became Peter, the cornerstone of Christianity. What would be the result should I have immersed myself into the love of Jesus?" She does not make direct answer to this question, but indicates that "the real meaning of life lies in that people bring whatever attribute and talent they might have into the real light of Jesus."<sup>73</sup>

### **Feminist Approach in Relational Concern**

"'The Connection Model' grew out of the work of Jean Baker Miller, who suggested that the very qualities for which women have been pathologized (emotionality, sensitivity, focusing on the well-being of others at the cost of focusing on themselves, caretaking of relationships, and so on) could actually lay the foundation for a more healthy way of living."<sup>74</sup> This statement fit well into Bing Xin's feminist endeavor in relational concern.

It is interesting that Bing Xin sometimes break across her gender boundary and tries to understand women from the other side. With what Doctor Henderson called the woman

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<sup>72</sup> K. J. Kusel, *Theology and Literature—Interview with 12 German Writers on Religion and Literature* ( Hong Kong, Shan Lian Bookstore Publishing house), p. 15. (my translation from the translated Chinese version)

<sup>73</sup> Fu Guangming, Xu Zhenglin, *Bing Xin's Prose: A Spectacular Artistic World*, (Literary Review, 1994, No. 2, Beijing). (my translation from Chinese)

<sup>74</sup> Samuel Shen & Janet Surrey, *We Have to Talk*, (Basic Books, 1998), p. 41.

with “the masculine-trained mind”<sup>75</sup> as well as the well-developed nature as a woman, Bing Xin finds a special narrative in her literary creation. In one of her early writings named *My Teacher*, Bing Xin disguises herself under the gender of a male student and tells a story possibly out of her own experience. The narrative male “I” wrote love letters to a girl student of the neighboring school by imitating *the Song of Solomon*, but he dared not send them out. It happened that one day the letters were discovered and publicly read. He was made a big fun of by his classmates. This short piece is collected into her book *About Women*, which is written under the name of “Nanshi”(meaning “Gentlemen”). In this once wide-read book, Bing Xin chooses the masculine psychological perspective to view women.<sup>76</sup> Liwies Robinson comments, “The book, with beautiful literary language, makes a high praise of women and love.”<sup>77</sup> In *About Women*, Bing Xin shares the same view with Jean Miller, as cited at the beginning of this chapter. Love is feminine. Love is maternal. Love connects the world, supports the world, and maintains the world.

It is impossible to ask woman not to love. She is created by God to love. With love, they maintain the world. In God's life-nursery factory, a woman is a “love machine.” Not only women are like this. No matter what kind of creature, if added with a feminine “she”, in the same way she loves “selflessly”, unconditionally, loves as whatever she can until death.

Hen, cow, even lioness, as you can see, with the love endowed by God, they have the same attributes of unselfishness, patience, tenderness, and the brevity that makes them even risking their own lives for the good of others.<sup>78</sup>

In contrast to Bing Xin's writing under the male gender, William Sharp, an English male writer, writes under a woman's name Fiona Macleod.

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<sup>75</sup> Carl G. Jung, *Man and His Symbols* (New York, Doubleday & Company Inc), p. 137.

<sup>76</sup> “Bing Xin” is her pen name, which might be seen as the name of a man, meaning “icy heart”. While her real name is Wan Yin, a typical Chinese female name, meaning “tender and pure”.

<sup>77</sup> Liwies Robinson, *Double-Edged Sword*, p.?.

<sup>78</sup> Bing Xin: *About Women*, (Kaiming Publishing House, Shanghai, 1943), p. 138.

When being asked why he wrote under a woman's name, Sharp replied, "I can write out of my heart in a way I could not do as William Sharp...This rapt sense of oneness with nature, this cosmic ecstasy and elation, this wayfaring along the extreme verges of the common world, all this is so wrought up with the romance of life that I could not bring myself to expression by my outer self..."<sup>79</sup>

What would Bing Xin have answered if so asked? What makes her conceal her "outer self" and let her inner self—which can be seen as "animus" by Carl Jung—come out standing in the front stage to speak? It might be out of Bing Xin's conscious feminist intention. In *About Women*, women and love are related and highly appreciated. It can be regarded as a literary eulogy to woman and love. Presumably, as a eulogy to women, if sung by men, it would be more convincing and heart-touching. The author by name of "Nanshi" may imply that men who understand women's value deserve the respectful title "gentlemen".

Love is misunderstood as the weak, feminine. This is the deep-rooted "rot" possibly in most cultures of the world. Bing Xin, however, as cited above, relates love to courage and brevity. Bing Xin may admire Tugnev's prose about how a mother bird, with the brevity, thrust herself down like an arrow to shoot the huge hunting dog who was approaching to her baby bird falling from the nestle. In the Movie called *Jesus*, one scene touched my heart—When Peter thrust out his knife intending to fight with Roman soldiers, Jesus said to him: "Peter, are you brave enough to love?" Xu Zhimo once criticized our culture as creating coward who dares not to love. When they ridicule love, they only expose their cowardice. When the dominant cultures fan the flame of war by sing eulogy to the brevity to fight, Bing Xin, together with Jesus, Tugnev, Xu Zhimo, and all the women psychologist of the Relational Model, commits herself to the brevity and

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<sup>79</sup> Emma Jung, *Animus and Anima* (Dallas, Spring Publications, Inc.), p. 6.



courage to love. She may agree with the Taoist notion of water, which is seems to be the weakest, but contains the strongest power. That is the metaphorical image of love.

On the one hand, Bing Xin relates love to women, on the other hand, she calls on people to respect women for their love and sacrifice. Love should be responded with love. Mutuality may encourage women to love as they always do, and at the same time, save women from being pathologized for committing themselves to love. In May fourth Era, feudalism, as all other power-over cultural structures, was attacked for oppressing women with “four ropes” (four “virtues”) to fasten them to the complete self-sacrifice and servility. Jean Miller and Judith Jordan are very right when they say, “All forms of oppression are also relational oppression.”<sup>80</sup> Out of their own experience and their concern about the well being of women, they begin to challenge the “truth” by looking at themselves in the cultural context, seeking new understanding of human nature, and voicing their own voice as who they are.

As with other topics we have discussed, women's experience of serving others has two sides, and each side, in turn, has its complexities. Women are taught that their main goal in life is to serve others—first men, and later, children. This prescription leads to enormous problems, for it is supposed to be carried out as if women did not have needs of their own, as if one could serve others without simultaneously attending to one's own interests and desires. Carried to it 'perfection,' it produces the martyr syndrome or the smothering wife and mother. But there is also, in this, a path for more advanced development. Women do have a much greater and more refined ability to encompass others' needs and to do this with ease. By this I mean that women are better geared than men to first recognize others' needs and then to believe strongly that others' needs can be served—that they can respond to others' needs without feeling this as a detraction from their sense of identity. The trouble comes only when women are forced to serve others' needs or when they are expected to do so because it is the only thing women are good for.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Jean Miller & Judith Jordan, *The Healing Connection*, (Publication), p. 49.

<sup>81</sup> Jean Baker Miller, *Toward A New Psychology of Women*, (Beacon Press/Boston, 1976), p.61.

All these compulsive notions are culturally imposed. Even the patriarchal elements in Christian tradition are open to be questioned. For instance, in Carter Heyward's view, "the traditional patriarchal religious institution", as part of the power-over structure, needs to be re-described and reshaped. Along with this endeavor, Brita Gill-Austern, observing much of women's suffering from this distorted notions, makes a more clear and more direct statement toward traditional Christian theology:

The Equation of love with self-sacrifice, self-denial, and self-abnegation in Christian theology is dangerous to women's psychological, spiritual, and physical health, and it is contrary to the real aim of Christian love."<sup>82</sup>

The new definition of Christian love, generally speaking, is the relational one, which emphasizes mutuality. Carter Heyward says, "I suggest here that God is our Sacred Power in the struggle to generate more fully mutual relation, in which all of us, not just a few, are empowered to live more fully just and compassionate lives."<sup>83</sup> In my view, the Relational Theory, with its emphasis of mutuality, is now leading human beings out of the traditional compulsive ethics and nurturing the new ethics with "growth-fostering relationships". Martine Buber postulated the mutuality in his book *I and Thou*. Samuel Shem and Janet Surrey, confirmed this orientation by saying, "Mutuality is central to healthy, growth-fostering relationships."<sup>84</sup>

Theologically, in Jesus' commandment of "love your neighbor as yourself", we see that the "love of neighbor" and the "love of self" are juxtaposed and related. The former is conditioned by the latter—indicating that, if you do not love yourself, how can you love your neighbor? Further, as Jesus deducts, if you do not love your neighbor whom you can see, how can you love God that is invisible? It is interesting to mention that when

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<sup>82</sup> Brita Gill-Austern, *Love Understood as Self-Sacrifice and Self-Denial: What Does It Do to Women?* (Publication to be checked)

<sup>83</sup> Carter Heyward, *Saving Jesus from Those Who Are Right*, (Fortress Press, 1999), p.55.

Christian love—interpreted as selfless love and complete obedience—was preached in China, Lu Xun, the above mentioned writer, made a reflection by connecting it to women under feudal ethical compulsion.

In China, we do not have the Jesus Christ who is under the pen of Russian writers as selfless sacrifice and complete obedience. This kind of sacrifice and obedience can only be seen in a woman whose engaged husband died when she was 17 and she then survived in chastity until died at 90.<sup>85</sup>

To connect maternal or feminine attribute to God is a feminist approach. Evidence is insufficient to testify the influence from the feminism on Bing Xin. I would rather think that her feminist approach is more out of her experience as a woman. And this experience may be the ground on which her feminist understanding of God sprouts and grows. Still, however, taking the May Fourth Era into account, we see some feminist influence on her from the West. For instance, the famous American feminist, Margaret Sanger, visited China on a lecture trip in 1922. And it is said that “Sanger’s visit highlighted the new issues that were constantly impinging on China. But she was only one of many foreigners whose visits to China in this period had enormous influence on the May Fourth thinkers.”<sup>86</sup> More influence came from the Norwegian dramatist Henrik Ibsen, whose play *A Doll’s House*, with its theme understood as women liberation, was fully translated, widely performed, and enthusiastically admired, which had caused what Lu Xun called “the Nora phenomenon”. It is said that Bertrand Russell’s companion in China, Dora Black, had been astonished that the girls she talked to in the Peking Girl’s Normal School “would put to her every kind of questions about marriage, free love, contraception, etc.”<sup>87</sup> In fact, seeing that many women wanted to liberate themselves by leaving home, Lu Xun

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<sup>84</sup> Samuel Shen & Janet Surrey, *We Have to Talk*, (Basic Books, 1998), p. 42-43.

<sup>85</sup> Lu Xun, *A Few Comments on Dostoyevsky*. (Publication to be checked). (my translation from Chinese)

<sup>86</sup> (Origin to be checked).

gave a lecture with the theme of “What Happens after Nora Leaves Home?”. What Lu Xun concerned was, seen from the Relational Theory, is the danger of disconnection.

Relational Model is the language speaks along with the cultural transformation. Lu Xun, considering the May Fourth Age, might want to remind the women of the situation in terms of social, economic transformation. The dominant language in May Fourth was about “self” liberating from the old system, but the supportive system to the liberation was far from being established. The danger is that, to young women, as well as to young men, when they have liberated themselves from the old, what would they relate to for themselves to grow into themselves? “What happens after Nora leaves home?” is the question to the whole May Fourth people. Lu Xun intended to remind people to take a serious look at where they stay and relate themselves to change of reality. “By ‘relation,’ I am speaking of the radical connectedness of all reality, in which all parts of the whole are mutually interactive.”<sup>88</sup>

Bing Xin, with her Love Philosophy, intended to tell people what they could attach themselves to—mother, children, nature, and God. But her voice was later overwhelmed by the dominant voice of revolution. It was especially heard for her to sing the song of love in this context. From the poem of *Things of the Past* I see Bing Xin’s inner struggle. In this poem, a person appears with an animus image—an old singer named Preacher. He starts to sing about the world filled with human compassion, mother love, and mutual aid. However, his song meets with indifference and ridicule from the audience. Here we see in this figure a subtle connection to Bing Xin’s own situation. Like the singer of the poem, Bing Xin is the singer of love in real life. Her song of love, too, is responded as

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<sup>87</sup> (Origin to be checked).

<sup>88</sup> Carter Heyward, *Saving Jesus from Those Who Are Right*, (Fortress Press, 1999), p.62.

“improper”, “too naïve”, “illusory”, “escaping from reality”. In a revolutionary age overwhelmed with war, blood, and hatred, Bing Xin’s song of love seems like lullaby in the sound of gun and cannon. Therefore, the Preacher, who, in a sense, representing Bing Xin’s inner voice, may channel out some of her own exhaustion and disappointment. And so, the Preacher shifts his song to expressing the meaninglessness of the world, which seems catering to the taste of the world. People responds with proclaim. But in the end, the Preacher is abandoned, even his little company, out of pressure from the audience, left him. He himself alone wanders and sings—the meaninglessness of the world.

Outwardly, we figure out that Preacher is the imitation of the Teacher in Ecclesiastes; but inwardly, we see him as Bing Xin’s inner self standing out to sing. At the same time, can we see something has been transferred from Jesus who, as a lover of the world, was ridiculed and abandoned by the world? Bing Xin, too, though reproached, mocked, still sings her song of love, singing it to the last minute of her life. She died in 1999 at the age of 99.

Note: All citations of Bing Xin’s writings are from *The Collected Works of Bing Xing* (People’s Literature Publishing House, 1987)