多重媒材、地點與夢想世界：
1920 至 1930年代間上海畫報的面向

文以誠*

摘要

此篇論文是在討論上海地區於1920年代晚期至1930年代早期所出版的畫報，主要聚焦於《上海漫畫》(1928-30)及《良友》。研究旨在探索此類報刊中，有關編輯結構與讀者／觀者經驗的互動關係，以及彼此的相互斡旋。結構特徵包含封面功能、篇幅、重複性的插曲式專題、標題，以及側文本要素，例如內容目錄及編輯評論。讀者／觀者經驗則包括內容的堆疊、透過報刊引導、浮奢美感，甚至心理的視野亦取決於刊物內容與視覺圖像。《上海漫畫》中的圖畫、連環漫畫、文本以及照片等一系列多重媒材，促進了1930年代早期的《良友》邁向重視照片短文的發展。《上海漫畫》依舊對於表現形式的複雜相互作用，和特別是封面藝術的轉變，投以關注眼神，這喚醒了欲望和幻想兼具的都市夢想世界。

（翻譯：孫帝強）

關鍵字：上海、畫報、照片短文、多重媒材、夢想世界

* 作者現任職於史丹佛大學藝術與藝術史系，亞洲藝術的特聘教授。
Shanghai illustrated periodicals of the 1920s and 1930s are extraordinarily rich sources of material for social historians, literary scholars, and students of visual culture, as well as for the history of advertising, film studies, photographic history, gender studies, art history, and likely many other fields.¹ Collectively they comprise an unparalleled archive of popular and often ephemeral cultural phenomena. The sheer profusion of their content might encourage a view of the pictorials primarily as transparent cultural containers, miscellanies that harbor samples of contemporary urban life, conveyed in whatever medium is most appropriate or convenient for the topic, within the technical limits of the era. Such an approach suggests a certain passivity on the part of both the medium and the

¹ The author is the Christensen Fund Professor in Asian Art in the Department of Art & Art History at Stanford University.

audience, receptive to the cultural and urban environment in the case of the periodical, and receptive of content in the case of the audience.

More analytic treatments view periodicals, in Shanghai and around the world, as cultural objects within the publishing environment, that deploy design techniques and editorial policies in the pursuit of readership and to stimulate readers’ fantasies and desires and thereby consumption of advertisers products. This approach conveys a more active and purposeful role for publishers, editors, and advertising departments, that set editorial policies and agendas—which might take the form of explicit editorial statements of values, interests, or policies, or be left unstated or disguised—and shaped the design and contents of the periodicals to realize those motives. Periodicals are seen as a certain kind of text-image construct, with the views they offer of society and culture refracted through particular editorial lenses. The audience or viewership here

---


retains a kind of passive status, subject to the active manipulations of the editors, publishers, and advertisers.

A still more nuanced approach to periodicals understands them as sites of interactivity. This view envisions a dynamic co-participation on both the editorial and audience sides, and further demands a modification of the idea of the periodical as simply a cultural object to be purchased or consumed, along with its content. Instead pictorials are seen as arenas of cultural work and process, which their audience can incorporate into their periodic life routines, emulate, discuss, ignore, or reject and where the editorial side responds to emerging formations of interest, taste and mentality on the part of the readership. This conception does not necessarily depend on explicit feedback from the audience in the form of letters to the editor and the like, that are then incorporated into the editorial policies or contents of the periodical, though this seems often to have been the case. Instead interactivity might take place in the less direct and more unpredictable arenas of taste, response, fad and fantasy.

All three of these modes no doubt coexisted and operated to some degree in each of the periodicals, depending in part on the capabilities and interests of their readers. The dazzling profusion of

---

4 Cf. Wagner’s outline of such a project in his “Joining the Global Public,” p. 156-7.
content in the periodicals combined with their currency might also have another effect, encouraging a kind of historical amnesia about their uniqueness. Periodicals were weekly or monthly publications that traded on being up to date, not only in terms of fashion, the latest inventions, and current world events, but also in their technologies of presentation, including graphic design and their often photographic vision.

Leaving aside the particular novelty of events, inventions, and technologies, however, most of the remarkable features of the early 20th century Shanghai pictorials had precedents in publications as far back as the late Ming period. Their ambition to comprehensiveness was foreshadowed in illustrated encyclopedias such as the *Sancai tuhui* 三才圖會 (*Assembled Illustrations from the Three Realms*) of 1607 and the *Gujin tushu jicheng* 古今圖書集成 (*Comprehensive Corpus of Illustrations and Books, from Ancient Times to the Present*) of 1726.6 The novel representational technologies of the pictorials had antecedents in the multi-color prints and subtle carving techniques of late Ming pictorial manuals and catalogues. Their involvement with urban place is paralleled in compilations of texts and pictures about famous sites such as the *Jinling tuyong* 金陵圖詠 for Nanjing.7 Their interaction with foreign images, multilingual

---


7 See Richard Vinograd, “Fan Ch’i (1616-after 1694): Place-Making and the Semiotics of Sight in Seventeenth-Century Nanching,” *Mei-shu-shih yen-chiu chi-
presentation, engagement with popular culture, and even their seemingly unsystematic organization appear in early seventeenth century ink-cake catalogues such as Chengshi moyuan (Master Cheng’s Ink Garden) of 1606 (Fig. 1).⁸ Each of these features is even more outspokenly characteristic of late nineteenth century pictorials such as the Dianshizhai huabao 點石齋畫報 or its offshoot publication Feiyingge huabao 飛影閣畫報 that added a fascination with the erotic and the scandalous to their repertory of images of fashionability, novel technologies, the curious and fantastic, and the exotic and foreign, all couched within the up-to-date visual technology of lithography (Fig. 2).⁹ Dianshizhai images are replete with references to a wide range of visual media, including photography, and the standard representational mode for the late nineteenth-century pictorials might be called pre-photographic, with a seemingly mechanical and objective exactitude of line drawing, legible spaces, and sharpness of detail (Fig. 3). Moreover, the British publisher of Dianshizhai and its emulation of foreign publications such as the Illustrated London News foreshadowed the international


horizons of the early twentieth-century Shanghai pictorials. The latter not only acquired content from foreign publications, but also took part in contemporary design and presentational trends toward reliance on photo-essays, the increasing prominence of image over text, and deep engagement with popular and mass culture.\(^\text{10}\)

What we might call the ontological status of the pictorials still remains somewhat in doubt. Pictorials were cultural objects that could be sold and bought, collected or discarded. Also, we should recall, they were likely to be deconstructed—cut up, with pieces casually saved or displayed—rather than being archived in complete form. The photomontage form that came to be so characteristic of the medium in the 1930s is in that way reflective of their frequent fragmentary fate. They were more specifically print-and-image publications, a medium with a long history in China and elsewhere. Specific characteristics of some Shanghai pictorials viewed as a medium, or multi-medium, and their structural features and modes of operation are primary concerns of this essay. The present study will focus on *Shanghai Sketch* weekly (later a bimonthly, *Shanghai manhua 上海漫畫*) published only between 1928 and 1930 (April 11, 1928 to May 24, 1930) under the editorial direction of Ye Qianyu 葉淺予 (1907-1995), Zhang Guangyu 張光宇 (1904-1964), and Huang Wennong 黃文農 (d. 1934) before it was folded into a new bi-monthly publication *Shidai 時代 (Modern Miscellany)*, and on *The

\(^{10}\) See Wagner, *op. cit.*, pp. 105-26; also Lebeck and Von Dewitz, *Kiosk*, pp. 64, 112.
Young Companion monthly (Liangyou 良友) as representative publications.\(^{11}\) Young Companion had a much longer publication history, from 1926-1941, which encompasses the brief publication run of Shanghai Sketch. The emphasis here on Shanghai Sketch, which was only one of many illustrated periodicals published in China in this era, is motivated by its pivotal position in media history. Shanghai Sketch participated in the shift from a balance of substantial graphic, text, and photographic elements toward the photographic dominance of pictorial magazines such as Young Companion in the 1930s.\(^{12}\) Young Companion, in turn, is a representative lifestyle magazine that has been the focus of illuminating cultural and social historical analysis by Leo Lee and others.\(^{13}\)

The bilingual titles and international horizons of these and other pictorials remind us that along with their status as published cultural

---

\(^{11}\) For Shanghai Sketch, I have relied on the color facsimile set in two volumes Shanghai manhua, ed. Mao Zhiming (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian chubanshe, 1996), including the informative introduction and retrospective history of the publication by Ye Feng 葉風, “Zhongguo manhua de zaoqi zhenguwenxian: Shanghai manhua” 中國漫畫的早期珍貴文獻：上海漫畫, pp. 1-3 of volume 1.

\(^{12}\) See Ye Feng, op. cit. p. 1 for the involvement of prominent photographers Lang Jingshan 郎靜山 (1892-1995), Hu Boxu 胡伯詡 and Zhang Zhenhou 張珍侯 in the production of Shanghai manhua. For the role of the photographic in precedent (Zhenxiang huabao 真相畫報, The True Record, 1912-13), contemporary (Liangyou) and successor (Meishu shenghuo 美術生活 (Arts & Life), 1934-37) publications to Shanghai Sketch, see Waara, “The Bare Truth,” pp. 168-85.

\(^{13}\) Lee, Shanghai Modern, pp. 43-81.
objects, the periodicals could function as sites or places in more than one sense.\textsuperscript{14} The periodicals and their constituent pages were spaces that needed to be navigated in some kind of reading order, layered spaces that called for traversal. More potently perhaps, the periodicals offered analogues of complex places: cities like Shanghai with their arenas of leisure, pleasure, entertainment, sport, domestic life, recreation, work, high culture, monuments, and sightseeing, or even entire worlds, with their ethnographies, international politics, and violent conflicts.

Finally, pictorials might be seen as congenial to the formation of certain kinds of mentality and psychological process. Pictorials, in common with other journalistic forms but with greater force due to their high visual content, could stimulate readers’ appetites for novelty, for emotional, intellectual and imaginative captivation, and for puzzlement, wonder, and humorous surprise.\textsuperscript{15} More specifically, a pictorial like \textit{Shanghai Sketch}, with its high quotient of graphic and cartoon art, both modeled and stimulated deeper psychic processes of projection and fantasy, with specific inflections, to be discussed below, that were akin to the content and operations of dream–work.

\textsuperscript{14} \textit{Shanghai Sketch} included its English title late in its run, starting with issue 94 (February 15, 1930).

\textsuperscript{15} See Wagner, “Joining the Global Imaginaire,” pp. 136-37 for an outlined agenda of the possible impacts of illustrated journals on perception, social behavior, and cultural formations.
The Structure of the Multi-medium: Layering and the Semiotics of the Spread

Early twentieth-century Chinese pictorials employed cartoon, illustrational, fine art and advertising graphics, along with photography and text (including specifically designed and stylized fonts) as their primary media, and they are significant for participating in the history of elaborated forms such as the photo-essay. The pictorial as a whole might be considered a medium as well, perhaps better a meta-medium or multi-medium, with its own specific structures and modes of functioning. A given double-page layout of a pictorial might present photographs and line drawings, cartoons and reproductions of prints and oil or ink paintings, architectural monuments, images of sculpture, and film stills all together. The pictorials easily absorbed other media, as when lithographic images from the Dianshizhai Pictorial of 1895 representing events from the Sino-Japanese War of 1894 were juxtaposed with mixed-media photo-montages and drawings to comment on the current (1931) Japanese aggression (Fig. 3). Even if such multiple media references can be reduced to the larger categories of photography, pictorial graphics and text, their visual juxtapositions may still seem incongruous. Further, the intermingling of media types and references may have encouraged intermedia experiments, such as the pictorialized photographs of the
“photographical paintings” feature (Fig. 4) or text and image collages.\textsuperscript{16}

Along with the actual numbers of media forms included, the multi-medium effect of the pictorials derives from their aesthetic of surplus, always seeming to promise more to come in the layerings of pages. Their diverse content, multiplicity of media references, and irregularities of scale and layout all contributed to that surplus effect. Most precedent publications in China were text-and-image compilations with single medium images. Whether monochrome woodblock prints, single or multi-color woodblock prints, or lithographs, a single publication typically utilized one medium and a uniform format, though some early catalogues and manuals combined monochrome and color prints in different sizes and from diverse sources.\textsuperscript{17} The tremendous range of content in \textit{Dianshizhai huabao} or the other lithographic pictorials was generally filtered through the lens of the single rectangular lithographic composition, a framing window on the world that conveyed an effect of regularity and containment, whatever the extravagance of the scene depicted within it. The contrasting logic of the spread implies at once expansiveness, dissemination, display, and the opening of gaps and

\textsuperscript{16} See Xu Dexian 徐德先, “Photographical Paintings,” in \textit{Young Companion} 116 (May 1936), pp. 38-9. Other kinds of intermediation emerged later, as when cartoon characters from \textit{Shanghai manhua} panels became the subjects of feature films or book length collections; see Ye Feng, “Zhongguo manhua de zaoqi,” p. 2.

\textsuperscript{17} Cf. Lin, \textit{The Proliferation of Images}, pp. 30-31; 165-225; 243-51.
differences. Those gaps and differences can appear between expectations and outcome, as each layer of page and imagery offers a changing array to the reader/viewer. Layering eventually emerges as the most distinctive operation of the pictorials, in photomontages and photocollages where the temporal and spatial layering effect of separate journal pages is brought into the single visual field of a spread, in an analogue of the interferences, transparencies, and simultaneities of the urban streetscape.

Above all, a pictorial like *Shanghai Sketch* trades on an esthetic of unpredictability. Machine guns and camera, John Barrymore and a Chinese opera star, a woman painter of ink landscapes and troops in the northwest, clay sculpture, caricature, and Japanese election photographs might share a spread (Fig. 5). Unpredictability and the gap between expectation and result are also intrinsic to the economy of humor, so the esthetic of the spread was particularly fitting for a journal devoted to sketches and cartoons. The surplus effect is suitable for another kind of economy as well, the commercial economy of the advertisements and products that frame the pages of the same journal.
Structural Features

Just as jokes have structure, despite their unpredictable punch lines, so too the seeming chaos of layout and content in *Shanghai Sketch* obscures a deeper level of regular organization. Each issue comprised only eight pages, including the cover, and three of those were typically given over to cartoon sketches, including the back cover. Thus in each issue features and non-cartoon visuals were limited to two spreads, on pages 2-3 and 6-7. Some part of the effect of disorganization and profusion in *Shanghai Sketch* thus resulted from the need for compression of appealingly varied features into very limited spaces. Substantial space was also given over to advertisements for cigarettes, beer, patent medicines, fashions, cosmetics, phonograph records, restaurants and clubs, mostly in the bottom third of pages and sometimes appearing on the majority of pages, including at times the front and back covers.

*The Young Companion* was from the outset a much more substantial publication, with 24 numbered pages in the early issues, not including the front and back recto and verso cover pages. The numbered pages grew to 36 by 1927 and at times extended to between 40 and 56 pages before returning to a stable format of 36 pages excluding covers and back matter. The more generous format allowed expanded space and treatment for separate topics, and beginning with issue number 10 headers announced the categories,
such as fine arts, domestic events, foreign or world events, a women’s page, literary arts, science, education, and even baby picture competitions. *The Young Companion* generally had a clearer style of layout than *Shanghai Sketch*—less crowded, with more uniformly scaled images and clearer separation of images and topics by registers, boxes, and borders. Even so, particular spreads from the relatively early issues of *Young Companion* from the late 1920s were likely to be similar to *Shanghai Sketch* in their effects of disorganized profusion.

In the 1930s The *Young Companion* came to participate fully in the international trend in illustrated magazines toward dominance of the photograph and photographic essay:

Toward the end of the ’20s, the layout of illustrated magazines began to change. A new form of photojournalism emerged: photographs no longer simply accompanied illustrations, but became messages in their own right. This, however, also implied that it was no longer the importance of a topic that decided which photographs were chosen and published but only the attractiveness of the photograph itself. It was not the public’s desire for information but their curiosity which was satisfied...Photojournalism began to develop a metaphorical language in which different, related pictures were arranged in such a way that they told stories of
different lengths, quality, and degrees of emotionality without requiring much additional text.\textsuperscript{18}

Eventually in the 1930s the favored genre of the photomontage carried something of the same impact of visual friction and interference as some of the spreads of the 1920s, but through quite different means of imagistic overlap, non-axial orientation, and fragmentation even while devoted to a single theme such as the life of a city (Fig. 6). It may have been that the structure of systematic classification by topics and categories from the late 1920s was no longer satisfactory for urban and social worlds characterized by overlaid sensation and excess.

**Cover Functions and Paratexts**

Covers had a double role and importance for pictorials. They were oriented both outward, as a display and lure for the reader/viewer, and inward, as frontispieces or lenses for the contents of the journal. Front and back covers could frame the experience of the pictorial, at least temporally, but the frame analogy is incomplete in the sense that covers occlude the interior content as much as they set a context for it—issue no. 85 is unusual in announcing the artist’s

\textsuperscript{18} See Lebeck and Von Dewitz, *Kiosk*, p. 112.
Richard Vinograd, Multi-medium, Site, and Dream-World: 
Aspects of Shanghai Pictorials of the 1920s and 1930s

explanation of the cover image within (Fig. 11). Covers also disappear from view once the page is turned, unlike the constant constraining presence of the visual frame. The covers of pictorials might also be compared to film screens in some respects, both in their visual effect of simultaneously hiding and offering a promise of transparency, and in their role as sites of projection of social desire. Some observers have noted the relevance or influence of filmic experience to other aspects of pictorials: “Sometimes elements from film were used in the arrangement of the photographs on the pages of illustrated magazines to create dynamic sequences of pictures, whereby the leisure cult surrounding sport and movement always provided suitable sequences of photographs...By about 1930 the photographic essay—a kind of cinematic short story using static pictures—had gained acceptance as the most attractive means of expression of modern photojournalism in all leading magazines.”

This observed connection between film and periodical photo-features applies well to photo-essays and to photocollage or photomontage techniques, in which film culture additionally was often highlighted as a topic. However it overlooks the distinction between the passivity

19 See Lu Shaofei’s “Cover Explanation” in Shanghai Sketch 85 (Dec. 7, 1929), p. 3. More commonly, brief essays by the artists about their cover illustrations appear in later issues, as in no. 42 (February 2, 1929): 7, where Ye Qianyu discusses his otherwise untitled and unsigned cover from the previous issue (Fig. 14), and Lu Shaofei introduces his “Human Meat Market” cover from two issues before (see Fig. 19 below).

20 Lebeck and Von Dewitz, Kiosk, p. 112.
of the film spectator, subject to the unidirectional temporalities of the medium, and the interactive, actively selective, and sampling possibilities of the pictorial magazine format. More apt analogies to the pictorial cover and its inner content pages might be to the shop display window or to the architectural façade, since these forms similarly involved layered, exploratory, and temporal experience.

The covers of *Shanghai Sketch* formed a sub-genre unto themselves. Each was a full page colored drawing, sketch or cartoon-like, signed and often titled, with the apparatus and effect of an independent work of art. Some allude explicitly to high art traditions, variously Egyptian (no. 2), Cubist (no. 37), German expressionist (no. 82), or Han dynasty Chinese (no. 93), but the great majority suggest Art Nouveau and Art Deco references, with an Aubrey Beardsley-like sinuosity (and associated decadence) or geometric stylizations predominating. Occasionally the cover signals a dominant thematic content for an issue. For example no. 93 with its Han Dynasty style horse-drawn chariot, introduces an issue entirely devoted to horse imagery in painting and sculpture, including even the center cartoon sketch spread. Most often, the cover only set a tone for the experience of the pictorial. Socially conscious themes, evoking the suffering accompanying war, poverty, corruption and economic inequality are fairly common, but these are far outnumbered by

---

21 See *Shanghai Sketch* 2 (Egyptian style), 1 and 37 (Cubist), 82 (German expressionist) and 93 (Han dynasty Chinese).
covers that cast a more lighthearted, knowing, and satirical eye on the vanities, flirtations, indulgences, and vexations of modern urban life — from drinking and dancing to weddings and balancing a checkbook. Themes of *vanitas* or the *danse macabre*, the close linkage of sensual indulgence and sexual allure with the dangerous and morbid are the most frequent and prominent of all. The cover for no. 15, with its image of a beautiful woman in the throes of erotic pleasure stripped of her facial mask to reveal the skeletal head within, fully exemplifies the prevailing ethos of *Shanghai Sketch*, in its combination of sexual allure and morbid horror (Fig. 7). Tearing away the mask to reveal what lies within is also a perfect figure of the cover function, in its mixture of hiding and revelation. The joke, as usual, is on all of us.

*The Young Companion* covers were much more uniform, centered primarily on photographic images of contemporary beauties, with occasional paintings of attractive women—including a woman artist’s self-portrait—mixed in. Many of the models are identified, either on the cover or in the tables of contents, and the photographer is typically credited as well. The standard photographic medium and specific identifications of models both convey semiotic messages beyond their informational content. Photography was *au courant* and widely accessible, and the models include students and society wives as well as actresses. Thus the cover models project an image that the

---

22 See *Shanghai Sketch* 56, 62, 65, 85 for various examples.
reader herself could aspire to achieve. *The Young Companion* cover models, who occupied similar and contemporary social spaces to those of the readership, were at once potential young romantic companions for male readers and friendly companions for female readers. By further implication, the pictorial itself was a surrogate companion for its young or young-at-heart readership (Fig. 8).²³

*Young Companion* developed various paratextual devices to guide readers through its extensive contents. By 1927 highlights of the contents appeared for a brief period on the front cover, along with a kind of journalistic product identification of numbers of pages, numbers of images, and a word count.²⁴ The next issue divided the main table of contents on the cover between picture stories and text. A detailed table of contents inside the front or back cover or on the first few numbered pages appeared starting with issue no. 6 (July 15, 1926) and would continue thereafter.

**Episodic Narratives**

The recurrence of certain features and themes could engender a horizon of expectations on the part of readers, shaping the experience of a single issue or carrying over across an extended series of issues.

²⁴ See *The Young Companion* 14 (April 30, 1927).
None of the periodicals were static in design and content, although paradoxically *Shanghai Sketch*, which seems at first glance the most chaotically organized of the pictorials, had perhaps the most stability in terms of page length and position of recurring features. Along with the frequent cover images of decadent sexuality, *Shanghai Sketch* might highlight seasonal themes—spring travel and fashions, the New Year, or the anniversary celebrations of the Republic. Some categories of features—celebrity doings, art society exhibitions, famous scenic spots and monuments, sports competitions—made frequent but irregular appearances in almost every issue of all of the pictorials.

Two of the most prominent episodic narratives in *Shanghai Sketch* were the extended photographic series of “Comparison of Human Bodies Around the World” and the “Mr. Wang” panel cartoons, which appeared in almost every issue. Their popularity and importance to the journal was signaled by the eventual publication of “complete” collections of both features in separate book form. Ye Qianyu’s “Mr. Wang” originally appeared in the center cartoon section, but was moved to the more visible and prominent back cover location starting with issue no. 15 (Fig. 7), and remained in that position for the duration of the magazine’s publication run, with only a brief interruption in issues nos. 81 to 86 at the end of 1929. “Mr. Wang” was an episodic narrative, with recurring characters—primarily Mr. Wang, Little Chen, and their wives and other family
members—and story patterns, having to do with domestic strife, jealousy, deceit, mistaken identities and chance encounters, the lure of indulgence in urban pleasures and temptations, henpecked husbands and undisciplined children. In the representative panels illustrated here, Mr. Wang and his ever-present companion Xiao Chen are robbed of their clothing, and deprived of their liberty to be out on the prowl at night, by muggers who are doing the bidding of the protagonists’ own wives (Fig. 9).

Perhaps the most striking episodic feature in *Shanghai Sketch* was “Comparison of Human (i.e. Female) Bodies Around the World” (Fig. 10). The length of its episodic appearance in some 37 out of the total run of 110 weekly issues (between no. 11, June 30, 1928 and intermittently until no. 98, March 15 1930) testifies to the popularity and appeal of these exotic females. This feature set photographs of nude women of various ethnicities within a discourse of ethnography and pseudo-scientific comparative anatomy. Generalizations about culture, body types, and standards of feminine beauty were intermingled with references to medicine, political science, art, and psychological practices and research. Most of the images were of attractive young women, compliant to the photographer’s

---

25 Ye Feng, “Zhongguo manhua de zaoqi,” p. 1 notes that Ye Qianyu reports having seen in Shanghai a supplement to an English language weekly carrying an American cartoon series on the theme of the henpecked husband, which may have been Billy DeBeck’s “Barney Google,” which began publication in 1919.

26 See *Shanghai Sketch* 24 (September 29, 1928): 6.
arrangement, and with their sexual characteristics on full display. The framing of these images by cover art that was frequently erotically charged or sexually suggestive may have encouraged a reception of this feature as voyeuristic spectacle rather than as anthropological science. Such body comparisons might be seen as participating in an emerging indigenous discourse of primitivism in art, literature, and the social sciences.  

The ethnographic vistas opened by “Comparison of Human Bodies Around the World” are reminders that pictorials were both layered mediascapes with entrances and itineraries, and also vehicles for an ever more global spatial imaginary. Spaces require navigation aids, and those were supplied either by the implicit architecture of repeated structural features as in *Shanghai Sketch*, or by the tables of contents and department headers that emerged in publications like *The Young Companion*. At times each of these departments and their

---

social and culture arenas might be categorized as a “world” (jie 界) ─ the world of science, education, athletics or the theater world, making the spatial metaphor explicit. The world at large, and its politics, wars, personalities, and architecture, figured in extensive coverage of international and foreign news.

The notion of the pictorial as a layered space, only partly visible at any one time, with potentially variable itineraries and guides or navigation aides suggests analogies with department stores and city districts. Shanghai pictorials and department stores both belonged to the same matrix of commercialism, urbanity, advertising, display, luxury, and indulgence. Cities also had their “covers” ─ shop windows, building facades, and signage ─ their categorized neighborhoods and districts, their regular structures and their episodic, interrupted and repeated narratives. Michel De Certeau’s notion of the city as a text, legible from panoramic heights, but variably enacted by the itineraries and tactics of its pedestrians, yielding differing “spatial stories” is usefully relevant to the Shanghai pictorials.28 Cities were deeply integrated into the fabric of the pictorials, with extensive attention to Shanghai and its diverse subcultures and to cities around the world. In the first six months of 1934 alone, The Young Companion included features on “Street

Scenes During the Chinese New Year,” “Intoxicated Shanghai, (Fig. 22)” “Snow” scenes around Beijing, “The Embankment at Guangzhou,” “Hongkong the Magnificent,” “The Fukien Paper Manufactory,” “Spring Brings Crowds to Hangchow,” “The Chinese Art exhibition at Berlin,” and three versions of the “Outline of Shanghai,” including features on “Shanghai’s Height, Breadth, and Size” (Fig. 6), its “Sounds, Light, and Electricity,” and one on the “International Settlement,” Additionally there were many other space, site, or travel-based features, such as “Scenic Beauties of the Ping Stream, Kiangsi,” “Mongols Celebrate the Institution of Self-Government.” “Wonder Photographs of Sea and Land from Graf Zeppelin,” “The Ten ‘Its’ in the Filmland,” “Here and There” (News from The Four Directions), “Construction of New Railways in China.” “Marriage Customs of the World,” “Men and Women in Hitler’s Germany,” “Caverns of Yixing,” “Buddhist Carvings at Tianlongshan,” “Political Unrest in Europe,” “Wanhsian, the Beauty spot of Szechuan Province,” “Stilt Dancing in Sian, Shensi,” “Japan Paves the Way for her Iron Horses,” as well as multiple features on “News of the World,” and “Events at Home.”

Foucault’s conception of the heterotopia fits several features of the Shanghai pictorials, although his emphasis was on “real” spaces that could be physically occupied. That “the heterotopia is capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible,” is perhaps the most striking similarity
among Foucault’s heterotopic “principles,” since it perfectly describes the aesthetics of the spread.29 Heterotopias with their “systems of opening and closing that both isolates them and makes them penetrable” are reminiscent of the cover function of the pictorials, and their status as a counter-site, “where all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted,” seems a particularly apt characterization of the photo-montage, with its recognizable but fragmented and often delirious spaces (Fig. 22). 30

Magazine Mentalities: Dream-Worlds

The fragmented or delirious virtual spaces of the pictorial have some commonalities with the psychological space of the dream-world. Any kind of reading or viewing experience implies some possibility of psychological captivation, and other mental processes of decipherment, projection, and imagination are equally central to visual and textual encounters. Popular culture journals are additionally especially liable to serve as platforms for wish-fulfillment and projective fantasies involving the often exotic or luxurious products, personalities, and places represented there.

30 Ibid., pp. 350-56.
The early twentieth-century Shanghai pictorials participate abundantly in all these psychological processes, but they evoke more particular mentalities as well. These appear most strikingly in the cover illustrations and cartoons of *Shanghai Sketch*, and in the photo-collages of *The Young Companion*. The *Shanghai Sketch* cover illustrations reference many arenas of life, from poverty and war to the indulgences and frustrations of urban life. The most numerous themes, however, have to do with the association of sin, pleasure, and death (Figs. 7, 11) sexual guilt and conflict (Fig. 12), the femme fatale (Fig. 13), illicit temptations, erotic fetishism (Figs. 14, 15), voyeurism (Fig. 16), daydreaming, and sexual fantasy (Figs. 17, 18). There are frequent images of hellish underworlds, in this world and the next (Figs. 19, 20), and of the demonic and the bestial, suggesting not only a moral geography of punishment for sin, but also psychological depths of primal or unconscious desire and unbridled violence. The visual devices used to embody these themes involve unmasking (Fig. 7), Oedipal images of Amazonian women and their diminutive and infantilized male admirers (Figs. 13, 14) and the manifestation of nightmarish demonic apparitions (Figs. 11, 12, and 20). Unconscious fantasies and fears, guilt and conflict, distortions and fetishistic displacements were the staples of *Shanghai Sketch*, opening onto a dream-world of desire and anxiety. The cartoons inside the pictorial often involved similar themes of sexuality and nightmare, displaying the mechanisms of condensation and sublimated aggression that are characteristic of jokes.
The Young Companion by and large evoked an altogether sunnier and more public realm free of the guilty sexuality so pervasive in Shanghai Sketch, but occasional features such as “Life Simplified” utilize surrealistic techniques of photomontage, juxtaposing miniaturized, seemingly imaginary figures with symbolic objects to convey the shadowing of health by death and the results of sinful indulgence in lust, gambling, drinking and smoking (Fig. 21). Elsewhere the development of the photomontage genre allowed the evocation of a fragmented dream-world out of the components of urban imagery. Seen most famously in the “Intoxicated Shanghai: Stimulation in the Metropolis” feature (Fig. 22), the technique combines disorientations, overlapped and condensed images, incongruous juxtapositions, and a narrative in which each urban encounter is an incitement to desire to construct a visual realization of a deliriously stimulated mind. In the photomontage, the artists and editors of the Shanghai pictorials found a visual technology adequate to the layerings, the profuseness, the complex spatiality, and, as it were, the unconscious of the multi-medium.

31 See The Young Companion 70 (October, 1932), p. 15.
Works cited

Chinese and Japanese Languages

Mao Zhiming 毛志明 ed.
1996 (reprint) *Shanghai Sketch* 上海漫畫. Shanghai shudian chubanshe.

Wu Liande 吳聯德 ed.
1926-1945 *The Young Companion* 良友.

Ye Feng 葉風

Western Languages

Certeau, Michel de

Clunas, Craig

Foucault, Michel

Lin, Li-chiang
1998 *The Proliferation of Images: The Ink-Stick Designs and...*

Lee, Leo Ou-Fan

Lebeck, Robert and Bodo Von Dewitz

Laing, Ellen Johnston

Schaefer, William

Vinograd, Richard

Wagner, Rudolf G.
Waara, Carrie  

Ye, Xiaoqing  

Zhang, Yingjin  
Multi-medium, Site, and Dream-World: Aspects of Shanghai Pictorials of the 1920s and 1930s

Richard Vinograd *

Abstract

This essay discusses pictorial journals published in Shanghai in the late 1920s and early 1930s, with a particular focus on Shanghai Sketch (Shanghai manhua 上海漫畫, 1928-30) and The Young Companion (Liangyou 良友). The study explores the interaction of editorial structure, reader/viewer experience, and mediation in these journals. Structural features include the cover function, the spread, repeated episodic features, headings, and paratextual elements such as tables of contents and editorial comments. Reader/viewer experiences involved layering of content, navigation through the journals, an esthetic of surplus, as well as psychological horizons conditioned by journal contents and visual presentation. The full multi-medium array of Shanghai Sketch, including drawings, cartoons, text, and photographs, moved in the early 1930s Young Companion toward an emphasis on the photo-essay. Shanghai Sketch

* The author is the Christensen Fund Professor in Asian Art in the Department of Art & Art History at Stanford University, where he has taught since 1989.
remains of interest for its complex interplay of media forms, and for the particular inflections of its cover art, which evokes an urban dream-world of desire and fantasy.

Keywords: Shanghai, pictorials, photo-essay, multi-medium, dream-world