2

MAPPINGS

DRAWING MENTAL MAPS OF MEMORIES

Figure 2-1 The cover of the collection City Map (middle) and two of its stories’ first publication in the journal Shanghai Literature.

For sure, I live in Shanghai, but Shanghai is just the land of my dreams. Ever since I began remembering things, she has been the land of my dreams. […] Perhaps Shanghai is big, sailing in the time and space of civilization like a giant ship. We are like passengers on this ship. Although we are familiar with the city and have been to many streets, roads and shops, we know only part of it. Or perhaps Shanghai is small, packed in our minds.

Wang Xueying 王雪瑛 (2006: 125 and 133; translation by Sylvia Yu and Julian Chen)

The cliché is that there are eight million stories in the city. But really, it’s more like there’s eight million different cities, each created within each of our memories.

Jake Barton on the City of Memory project (cited in Mooney 2008)

“Passing 97th Street in Far Rockaway still makes me hungry, and gives me vertigo.” Thus starts one of the stories on the website www.cityofmemory.org, an online community map of New York citizens’ stories. The idea is simple: people can click on a particular point of the map and upload their memory of this place, including video, audio, and photos. When browsing the map with your mouse pointer, pop-ups appear containing the opening sentence and/or a picture of the stories attached to the
places. Thus, New York’s geographical map is gradually layered with a map of the “invisible landscape,” i.e. “a world of deep and subtle meaning for the people who live there, one that can be mapped only by words,” as Kent Ryden (1993: 52) puts it in *Mapping the Invisible Landscape*:

While the modern map is a marvel of efficient geographical communication [...] in other important ways it does not tell us very much at all. The New Milford map provides an excellent example in this case, for I spent nine years of my childhood among those hills, houses, rivers, and names. The map tells me where certain hills are, but I retain in my legs the physical memory of what it feels like for a child to climb them. [...] The map reminds me of how dirt roads run off into the hills north of where I lived, but what it doesn’t tell me - what I have to superimpose on it from my own experience, my own memory - is how one sunny fall day my father and I went exploring those roads in his beat-up old convertible, how I wasn’t quite sure if he knew where he was going and didn’t really care, how I wanted that afternoon and that car and those roads to go on for ever. (20-1)

When a road is no longer just an abstract line on a map, but at the center of someone’s personal memory, space becomes place. In other words, place is the *lived* space, or as Arif Dirlik (2001:18) puts it: “time and space coincide in place, against the timelessness of space.” Whereas the road on the map consists of objective, measurable geometrical coordinates, the memory of that same road is a subjective object of *experience*, different for each person. Ryden (1993: 37-8) says:

Considered as space, the world is a blank surface on which real relationships, physical landforms, and social patterns are dispassionately outlined; it is a matrix of objective geographical facts distilled from the messiness of real life [...] When space takes on three dimensions, when it acquires depth, it becomes place. [...] The depth that characterizes a place is human as well as physical and sensory, a thick layer of history, memory, association, and attachment that builds up in a location as a result of our experiences in it.

Hence, by adding citizens’ personal recollections, the City of Memory project transforms a dry two-dimensional map of New York into a sensory three-dimensional one.

It was this same idea of drawing a ‘three-dimensional map’ of Shanghai that inspired the Chinese literary journal *Shanghai Literature* 上海文学 to initiate a series of stories under the name “City Map” 城市地图, in 2000. In the words of series editor Jin Yucheng 金宇澄 (2002b):
[The stories] transform the map, adding to the streets and neighborhoods shadow and light [...] unfolding the depth and grief of history and human relationships, giving these place names substantial symbolic connotations.

The editors invited local novelists to write ‘literary columns’ about streets or neighborhoods that held special meaning for them. For more than two years, each issue published a short story featuring personal recollections of Shanghai, illustrated by the authors themselves with hand-drawn maps of the streets that figured in the narrative. The first twenty stories were collected in book form in 2002 under the series title City Map.

An interesting feature of City Map is the fuzzy boundaries between ‘fictional Shanghai’ and ‘real Shanghai.’ In fact, they overlap: every street, building, park, river mentioned in the stories does exist, so that one actually can ‘follow’ each story on a conventional city map. This was also the intention of Jin, who had explicitly asked the contributing authors to write “non-fictional accounts in journalistic style,” although he was to be disappointed:

Since all authors I invited are fiction writers, they wrote fictional short stories instead, although the plots they narrate are real memories of their own personal experiences of Shanghai, or those of close acquaintances. (Interview with Jin Yucheng, in February 2009 in Shanghai)

This intertwining of ‘real’ and ‘fictional’ urban space and the concept of mapping a city by personal memories raises fascinating questions. How is Shanghai mapped – perceived, experienced, and remembered – by its local writers? Are there common threads that tie this collection of disparate visions together?

Since Shanghai’s geographical city map forms the basis of both City Map itself and of the tools I will use for my textual analysis, I will first give a brief overview of the city’s main districts in relation to its history. After the introduction of the collection and its authors and the ‘literary map’ and ‘mental map’ as methodological tools, I will explore spatio-temporal setting in the collection as a whole, and the role of five fundamental urban elements in two stories, followed by brief concluding remarks.

**Mapping Shanghai**

Is this a map of Shanghai? I asked. Although it is obviously the place where I live, I have never known its shape.

Mi Hong 弥红 (2002: 18), in “Fading Palace”
Benedict Anderson (1997: 5) famously defined the nation-state – or even “all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even those)” – as an “imagined community” where “the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.” Pursuing this line of thought, many urban sociologists have pointed out that Anderson’s definition can be applied to the city.\(^4\) Furthermore, Anderson (1997: 175) stated that the creation of ‘imagined communities’ became possible with the emergence of ‘print capitalism’: the mass circulation of books and media. The novel and the newspaper made people aware of simultaneous experiences that made them feel part of a common community.

Accordingly, Alexander Des Forges (2007: 30) convincingly shows in his *Mediasphere Shanghai* that this was particularly true for semi-colonial Shanghai, which was China’s center of the publishing industry: “Shanghai serves as factory of local, regional, and national identities.” In line with Anderson, Des Forges (2007: 6) also stresses the importance of novels and newspapers in creating a sense of belonging to certain ‘imagined communities,’ such as the urban community:

As Perry Link, Leo Lee, and Andrew Nathan first proposed […] there is no aspect of cultural production in the late Qing and early Republican period that can compete with fiction and print journalism in forming communities of consumers, and it is no accident that profiles of the *xiao shimin* (“petty urbanite”) class – whether in Shanghai or elsewhere in China – return so often to their reading habits as a central defining characteristic. Literary address is clearly a powerful means of writing a variety of communities into existence.

Des Forges’ (2007: 27) main focus is on the role of Shanghai installment fiction in creating a notion of ‘Shanghai identity’ that has persisted from its appearance during the semi-colonial period until today:

It is my contention that the discourse of the Szahaenin [Shanghainese] as a unique identity – which continues to function as a powerful social force in China to this day – depends in large part not only on the characters and themes articulated in Shanghai installment fiction, but at an even more fundamental level on the very skills that this fiction requires of its readers and the aesthetic experiences it gives in return.

Besides the important influence of Shanghai installment fiction on the city’s local identity, as Des Forges points out, I would like to draw attention to the role of map-
making in changing the way local residents perceive their native habitat and the notion of Shanghai, or Shanghai tan 上海滩 (the most frequent usage at the time).

Using Southeast Asia as an example, Anderson discusses how the map (together with the census and the museum) shaped the way in which the colonial state, and its residents following suit, imagined its dominion. First, the map encloses a land or nation and separates it from its newly created neighbors. The second function is what Anderson (1997: 175) calls the ‘map-as-logo’:

Its origins were reasonably innocent — the practice of the imperial states of coloring their colonies on maps with an imperial dye. […] Dyed this way, each colony appeared like a detachable piece of a jigsaw puzzle. As this ‘jigsaw’ effect became normal, each ‘piece’ could be wholly detached from its geographic context. […] In this shape, the map entered an infinitely reproducible series, available for transfer to posters, official seals, letterheads, magazine and textbook covers, tablecloths, and hotel walls. Instantly recognizable, everywhere visible, the logo-map penetrated deep into the popular imagination, forming a powerful emblem for the anticolonial nationalisms being born.

So, paradoxically it was the very maps created by Western colonizers that would later stir anti-colonial sentiments among local groups. Interestingly, the history of Western-made maps of Shanghai shows a contrary development: these maps succeeded in changing the local residents’ perception of the foreign settlements from an area outside of Shanghai to a central part of the city.

Take for example the following American and British maps, respectively:

*Figure 2-2 Library of Congress, 1919*
The most distinctive element of the above maps is the seemingly missing piece in the jigsaw puzzle: the blank circle at the location of Shanghai’s indigenous walled city. Even though this part of the city was still an important center of commercial and residential activity, novels by Western writers paint the same remote and inanimate image as these maps, as Christian Henriot (2008), for example, remarks on the novel Man’s Fate (La condition humaine, 1933) by the French novelist André Malraux:

[The walled city] stands in contrast to the foreign settlements and even offers a kind of haven. Its remoteness from the brightly lighted and noisy concessions provides the much needed tranquility for Chen to begin unwinding after the murder. “From here the rumbling waves carrying all the noises of the greatest city of Chinese sounded infinitely remote.” Even humanity seems to vanish: “it was far in the distance that men lived; here nothing remained but night.”

The first Western maps that do depict a plan of the walled city focus only on tourist attractions and/or churches. What is more, Chinese maps of this period often eclipsed the foreign settlements, in their turn.

It all shows again how maps inform us as much about the agenda of their creators, as about the places they present, as also pointed out by Yeh (2002: 168):
In their claim to truthfulness and reliability, the maps hide in their objectified language that their image of the city is a highly conscious construct, where shape and content are used to demonstrate on a two-dimensional surface very different points of view. As I will try to show, the Shanghai maps are not primarily about facts but use factual elements to build a case, including a particular view and story of the city.

In this intriguing study on the history of Shanghai city maps, Yeh (2002: 174) shows how “with the increase of Western maps of Shanghai and no Chinese reaction forthcoming, the term ‘Shanghai’ came to represent the totality of the different administrative parts rather than standing exclusively for the Chinese walled city,” also for the local people. 46

Another striking feature of the Western maps is that the walled city received the rather curious English names ‘the old city,’ ‘the walled city,’ and even ‘Chinese city’ or ‘China town,’ making it identical with other ‘China towns’ around the world. 47 This was yet another “rhetorical attempt,” to borrow DesForges’ words (2007: 41), to draw a clear distinction between concession and non-concession areas. In contrast, the former British Concession was referred to as the ‘central district,’ a custom later continued by the Chinese community in Shanghai as well, who at the time used ‘barbarian land’ 夷场, ‘ten miles of foreign land,’ and ‘leased territory’ 租界 (now generally translated as ‘concession’); a word that was not chosen arbitrary, as DesForges (2007: 40) notes, since jie 境 “indicates marking out, separation without mixing, and by extension, the categories, spaces, and worlds resulting from these distinctions”:

In other words, jie is particularly suggestive of attempts to mark out divisions in social space and subsequently naturalize such divisions.

In short, the foreign settlers’ naming of places on Shanghai maps was used as a way of claiming territory, which eventually changed what Shanghai meant.

**Upper Corner and Lower Corner**

In the semi-colonial period Shanghai residents started to make a distinction between Upper Corner 上只角 and Lower Corner 下只角 parts of the city. The terms Upper and Lower hold no connection with geographical location but have social connotations, as Gamble (2003: 111-2) points out:

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46 I am grateful to Mayfair Yang for suggesting this article by Yeh to me. For another interesting study on the subject, see also the chapter “1875: Putting the city on the map” by Wasserstrom 2009: 34-47.

47 On the first Western map (1853), however, the walled city was still conventionally called ‘Shanghai,’ while the concessions were referred to as ‘Ground’ in English (Yeh 2002: 172).
The Chinese term *shang* [上] (upper, higher) and *xia* [下] (lower, under) are used in much the same way as the socio-spatial metaphors in English. Thus *shang* indicates political superiority as in *shangji* [上级] – higher authorities – and being morally or qualitatively superior as in *shangdeng* [上等] – high, superior quality. By contrast, *xia* includes things both physically and morally base as in *xialiu* [下流] – lower reaches of a river; low-down, obscene.

Before 1949, the rent of houses in the two corners could differ by as much as four to more than ten times (Luo and Wu 1997: 6). However, the end of colonialism did not mean an end to the city’s division, as Tianshu Pan (2002: 7-9) notes:

> Even in the heyday of socialism, the residents of Shanghai still retained a sense of place embedded in the notion of *jiào* [角] ‘corner’, which enabled people to configure their spatial terrain according to the particular socio-economic echelons in which they situated themselves. […] The two echelons represented different lifestyles, local histories, native place identities, and living environments for the past one hundred and fifty years.

And even today, – regardless of the radically changed spatial configuration of the city which moved the borders of the Lower and Upper Corner somewhat – for the Shanghaiese the Lower Corner is still a symbol of backwardness, underdevelopment and unsophistication, whereas the Upper Corner stands for modernity, civilization, and cosmopolitanism, as also pointed out by Shanghai-based literary scholar Cai Xiang 蔡翔 (2005):

> [The Upper Corner] is not exclusively the concept of a natural geographic place, but also of ‘modern,’ ‘fashionable,’ ‘refined,’ ‘prosperous,’ ‘upper class,’ etc. For this reason, it often directly points to a kind of symbol or metaphor of ‘success.’

Although it is impossible to point out the exact demarcation of the Upper and Lower Corner on the city map, and the terms can refer to entire districts, small neighborhoods or even single streets (Nanjing Road, Huaihai Road), there is a broad consensus among Shanghaiese on the distinction between the two, primarily based on the city’s administrative districts, as indicated on Literary Map 1 (figure 2-5). The map is primarily based on personal interviews with Shanghai residents and Chinese online sources. Considering the derogatory connotation of the term Lower Corner, I expected a wide discrepancy between people living in these districts and Upper Corner residents. However, most interviewees seemed to be more troubled by

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the fact that the map included the outlying (industrial) districts Baoshan, Minhang and Jiading. Moreover, I noticed that people living in the Lower Corner would often dwell on the living condition of certain places, while people from the Upper Corners tended to focus on social class and ethnicity.

Taking all this into account and roughly speaking, the Upper Corner includes Jing’an, Luwan, Changning (its western part used to be considered Lower Corner, but was upgraded since major urban developments in the 1990s), and the northern parts of Huangpu and Xuhui. Definitely Lower Corner districts are Zhabei, Putuo, Baoshan and Yangpu. Many sources also include the walled city in the southern part of Huangpu (the former Nanshi district), while some include the southern parts of Xuhui, and certain parts of Hongkou. Other parts of Hongkou are considered Upper Corner or ‘neutral.’ Lastly, Pudong is generally upgraded from very Low status to Upper Corner since its development into a Special Economic Zone in 1990.

In the first story of City Map, “Yangshupu” by Cheng Xiaoying (b. 1956), the narrator tellingly reveals how the Lower and Upper Corner districts still divide the city’s residents:

I often had these visions that if there were a device recording and displaying phone calls made in this city, it wouldn’t show too many connections between Yangpu district and Xuhui district, while Yangpu would often make phone calls to Zhabei, Hongkou and Baoshan; and Xuhui would keep in touch with Jing’an and Luwan. I would then even imagine the content of these phone calls, how Yangpu would discuss re-employment, factory closures, land swaps and solutions to at-risk or dilapidated housing; Hongkou would earnestly tell Yangpu and Zhabei to come to Sichuan Road for shopping – things are cheap here; and Jing’an and Xuhui would chat leisurely about fashion, foreign capital, white-collar jobs, plazas and green space, new-generation women’s fiction, and so on.

In the sight of the ever-changing city, the distinct differences between these districts mark a curious harmony in my life; this kind of stability and perfection at life’s core. (1-2)

Interestingly, the narrator regards the differences between the districts as something positive: it is one of the few things that have not disappeared since the radical urban renewal process of the 1990s. This regret for the disappearance of parts of the city is a sentiment that is generally echoed by most stories in the collection City Map, those situated in the Lower Corner, as well as in the Upper Corner.

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49 For example, the Jiading Writers Yin Huifen and Zhang Min (included in City Map) told me that the term Lower Corner could not be used for Jiading, Baoshan and Minhang since “those districts are countryside and suburbs.” Besides they objected to the inclusion of Pudong, as it was “not considered as part of Shanghai at the time the terms Upper and Lower Corner were firstly used.” However, since other interviewees did include Pudong, I decided to keep it on the map. (Interview with Yin Huifen and Zhang Min, in June 2010 in Shanghai.)
The “City Map” series was first published in the monthly journal *Shanghai Literature*. Together with *First Growth*, *Harvest* 收获 and *Fiction World* 小说界, *Shanghai Literature* is one of the most influential Shanghai-based literary journals (Yang [Yang] 2002: 11 and 27). It was launched by Ba Jin under the name *Literature and Art Monthly* 文艺月报 in 1953, and changed its name to *Shanghai Literature* in 1959. Ba Jin served as editor-in-chief for several periods.

Starting out as a publication of the Shanghai branch of the Chinese Writers’ Association 中国作家协会 in a period when literature in the PRC was highly politicized and supposed to ‘serve the masses,’ *Shanghai Literature* was often used for CCP propaganda. In 1962, however, it published Ba Jin’s famous speech “Courage and Sense of Responsibility of Writers,” held at the Second Shanghai Municipal Congress of writers and artists. Accompanying the article was an editorial postscript, which supported Ba Jin’s demands for more freedom of speech for Chinese writers (《上海文学》1962-5: 6). This would cause both Ba Jin and the journal severe problems during the Cultural Revolution, when *Shanghai Literature* temporarily merged with *Harvest*. After the Cultural Revolution and the rehabilitation of Ba Jin in 1977, *Shanghai Literature* went its own course again and pursued more varied forms of literature than merely the then conventional, state-sanctioned socialist realist fiction. It did so once again under the leadership of Ba Jin (Chen [Sihe] 2005: 13).

*Shanghai Literature* played an important role in the development of urban fiction. At the end of the 1980s, the journal initiated Neo-Realism 新写实主义 fiction depicting the daily life of common people in the city (Chen [Huifen] 陈惠芬 2006: 192). In 1994, *Shanghai Literature* and the Guangdong-based journal *Foshan*
Art and Literature 佛山文艺 jointly introduced so-called New Urbanite Fiction 新市民小说 (also translated in English as New Urban Fiction), aiming to “publish New Urbanite stories by both Shanghainese and [Chinese] writers from elsewhere [外地] to organize discussions on themes such as ‘urban society’ [市民社会], ‘urban consciousness’ [市民意识], and ‘intellectuals and urban society’ [知识分子与市民社会].”\(^{51}\) According to a former editor-in-chief of Shanghai Literature, Neo-Realist Fiction “reveals the prologue of the city’s transformation,” but “the most important phenomenon it expresses is still the ‘worries’ within the city system,” while “in the 1990s, the city system changed again,” which produced “a new literary genre that adapted to these changes” (cited in Chen [Huifen] 2006: 192), i.e. New Urbanite Fiction:

New Urbanite Fiction emerged after the overall implementation of the socialist market economy, reflecting the changing social life and values in the domain of aesthetics and cultural imaginations. It showed that certain writers began to regard Chinese real life and culture from the standpoint of contemporary urban civilization and were no longer sticking to the standpoint of ‘rural’ civilization. (Editorial, 《上海文学》1995-2)

The most representative New Urbanite writers from Shanghai are Yin Huifen 殷慧芬 (b. 1949; see later in this chapter) and Tang Ying 唐颖 (b. 1955). Writers from other cities have also been promoted as New Urbanites, such as Qiu Huadong 邱华栋 (b. 1969) from Beijing, He Dun 何顿 (b. 1958) from Changsha, and Zhang Xin 张欣 (b. 1954) from Guangzhou.

In their discussion on New Urbanite Fiction, Lu Yuan 鲁原 and Lai Chiping 赖翅苹 (1998: 5-7) mainly relate its ‘newness’ to the “abolishment of four types of discourses” that were popular in the 1980s: political discourse, enlightenment discourse, humanistic discourse, and avant-garde discourse. Kong (2005: 166), on the contrary, argues that there is little ‘new’ about New Urbanite Fiction and merely considers the so-called “discovering” of New Urbanite Fiction and other “hot new authors and latest trends in writing” as a “common promotional technique” that many journals used in the beginning of the 1990s to improve their financial situation.

Most critics regard New Urbanite Fiction as the first school of urban fiction since the alleged disappearance of Urbanite Fiction 市民小说 at the end of the 1940s (even though there is some notable counter-evidence to this notion, as discussed in chapter 1), hence its prefix ‘new’ (e.g. Lu and Lai 1998: 4 and Chen [Huifen] 2006: 192). July 1994 – when Shanghai Literature and Foshan Art and

\(^{51}\) Cf. Qiu [Mingzheng] 2005:1069 and Zhu [Hongming] 2007: 110. I use the word ‘urban’ in my translations because that is the commonly used word for these terms in English. The accurate translation of the Chinese word 市民, however, is ‘city-dweller.’ Besides, the Chinese term 市民社会 is also used as a translation of the English term ‘civil society,’ but in the quoted text I think the author is referring to ‘the society of urban dwellers,’ which I prefer to translate as ‘urban society.’
Literature announced the existence of this new school – is therefore often mentioned as the starting date of a revival of modern Chinese urban fiction.

Shanghai as Special Topic in Shanghai Literature

Since the end of the 1990s, Shanghai Literature published several series with Shanghai as ‘special topic.’ Some series are written by one author, such as Cheng Naishan’s essays on 1930-40s Shanghai culture, entitled “Shanghai Dictionary” 上海词典 (2001-2007; the first year is published in book form as Shanghai Tango 上海探戈), and the short stories series by Zhi Bei 指北 (2002-2003). Other series are written by different authors, of which “Memory / Time” 记忆·时间 is an example, and for which the historian Chen Zishan 陈子善 invited scholars to write informal academic essays 学术随笔 about Shanghai authors from the 1930-40s (who have faded into oblivion) and foreign authors living in Shanghai or Shanghaiese authors living abroad to write literary essays about a particular experience or memory of Shanghai.³³

There are several possible answers to the question where this sudden interest in the city of Shanghai came from, to which I will return elsewhere in this study. However, in order to contextualize the “City Map” series, I will briefly sum up some of the more evident answers. Firstly, the tremendous urban renewal process caused a paradoxical response among Shanghai citizens: pride of the rising new city on the one hand, and nostalgia for the disappearing parts of the city, on the other. Both responses made the citizens more aware of their urban environment in general, and Shanghai’s unique identity in particular. Secondly, Shanghai citizens, like all metropolitan citizens, were increasingly confronted with the equalizing force of globalization that has triggered a counter-movement of searching for local roots and identity, most profoundly expressed in the cultural field. Gage Averill (1996: 219) puts it:

Globalization has resulted in a heightened or exaggerated sense of locality, local identity, and local cultural distinctiveness.

In addition, as Saskia Sassen (1991) has pointed out, nowadays cities rather than nation-states give people this sense of locality. Thirdly, as Cheng Li argues in his article on the rediscovering of subcultures in post-Mao China, Shanghai’s search for its local culture is not unique but has been a trend in the whole of China ever since the end of Maoism. Li ([Cheng] 1996: 141) remarks that China’s long history of

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³² For an extensive study on Zhi Bei’s series in Shanghai Literature (the stories “Encountering Shanghai” 上海遭遇 and “Shanghai Environment” 上海之环), see Chen [Hui] 2006 (chapter 8).
³³ The first contribution to “Memory / Time” is Leo Lee’s “A Tale of Two Cities” 双城记, which is a translation by Mao Jian 毛尖 of the epilogue from Lee’s Shanghai Modern (1999) 《上海文学》2001-1: 43-48.

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emphasizing uniformity and upholding an “authentic Chinese culture” has always discouraged the development of multiculturalism:

Just as individuals were pressured into wearing the same style and same color dress during the Mao era, people in different regions followed the cultural standards of Beijing – the revolutionary center of the country and the embodiment of the ‘authentic socialist culture.’

He does not explain, however, why this search for local identity in Shanghai did not arise right after Maoism in the 1980s, but only halfway into the 1990s.

The collective longing for a distinct Shanghainese identity also explains that, according to editor Jin Yucheng, the series “City Map” was a direct response to increasing requests by the journal’s local readers “not to neglect its own roots”.\(^5^4\) Furthermore, Jin argues that the editorial board hoped that the “literary columns triggered by a particular background” and written in a “free style” would bring forth a collection of “diversified writings” that would “expand the function of literature” (cited in Chen [Huifen] 2006: 193). Shanghai-based literary critic Chen Huifen (2006: 193), however, states in a somewhat ironic tone that “for the journal that increasingly produces ‘aesthetic fatigue’ [审美疲劳] literature,” calling it “not so much a case of endorsing diversified literature, but rather a way of ‘self-rescue’ and making it more convenient for writers to experiment loosely with country/city writing.”

The Authors of City Map

When the “City Map” series was published in book form it appeared in the City Details Book Series 城市细节丛书 together with three other collections of essays with Shanghai as ‘thematized space,’ in Mieke Bal’s (1997: 136) terms: Tender Details 温情细节 by Cheng Xiaoying (jacket material: “Tender professions of forty years of city life, true accounts of one hundred details”); Leisure City 休闲的城 by Yu Shi (“An up-to-date book with intellectual enquiries on new trends”); and Shanghai Leisure Girl 上海闲女 by the only writer who did not also contribute to City Map, Chun Zi 淑子 (“She writes the city’s wrinkles on a boudoir night robe”).

Although the best-known contemporary Shanghainese writers are not included in City Map, the contributing authors are representative of writers professionally active in Shanghai from the time the series was published until today (at the time of writing only Xiang Xuan is living in another city). As the table below (page 52) of the authors in City Map shows, most authors were born in Shanghai and are commonly labeled ‘Shanghai Writer’ (if an author received a certain label by minimally four scholarly or literary critic sources, the label is included).

\(^5^4\) Interview with Jin Yucheng, in February 2009 in Shanghai.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>C.</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Born</th>
<th>Used labels</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Cheng Xiaoying</td>
<td>1956 Shanghai</td>
<td>Shanghai Writer* New-born generation New Urbanite</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mi Hong 张红</td>
<td>1971 Shanghai</td>
<td>Post-1970 Beauty Writer</td>
<td>Real name: Jin Lei 金蕾 Currently not writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Ding Liying 丁丽英</td>
<td>1966 Shanghai</td>
<td>Shanghai Writer* New-born generation Post-1960</td>
<td>Better known as poet Nickname: ‘Shanghai’s Hermit Writer’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Yin Huifen 殷慧芬</td>
<td>1949 Shanghai</td>
<td>Shanghai Writer* Jiading Writers Worker Writer New Urbanite</td>
<td>Nickname: ‘Shanghai’s Hermit Writer’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Li Qigang 李其纲</td>
<td>1954 Shanghai</td>
<td>Shanghai Writer*</td>
<td>Also known under his pen name: Nan Ji 南极</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Shen Jialu 沈嘉禄</td>
<td>1956 Shanghai</td>
<td>Shanghai Writer* New Urbanite</td>
<td>Written on a wide area of ‘Shanghai topics’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Yu Shi 于诗</td>
<td>1976 Shanghai</td>
<td>Shanghai Writer Post-1970</td>
<td>Real name: Yu Ying 于瑛 “Three sisters” of the journal <em>Shanghai Literary World</em> 海上文坛</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Kong Mingzhu 孔明珠</td>
<td>1954 Shanghai</td>
<td>Shanghai Writer*</td>
<td>Written on a wide area of ‘Shanghai topics’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Zou Zou 走走</td>
<td>1978 Shanghai</td>
<td>Shanghai Writer Post-1970</td>
<td>Real name: Cao Ya’nan 曹亚男 “Three sisters” of the journal <em>Shanghai Literary World</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Yao Yuming 姚育明</td>
<td>1952 Jiangsu</td>
<td>Shanghai Writer*</td>
<td>Also known under her pen name: Yang Qingqing 杨青青</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Cao Mu 草木</td>
<td>1977 Shanghai</td>
<td>Shanghai Writer Post-1970</td>
<td>Real name: Huang Zhou 黄筠 “Three sisters” of the journal <em>Shanghai Literary World</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Xiao Ping 萧平</td>
<td>1968 Hubei</td>
<td>Shanghai Writer* Known for writing children’s literature</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Yang Yu 杨羽</td>
<td>1962 Jiangsu</td>
<td>Shanghai Writer*</td>
<td>Real name: Zhou Songlin 周松林</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Xiang Xuan 向轩</td>
<td>1972 Shanghai</td>
<td>Shanghai Writer*</td>
<td>Real name: Guo Xiangxuan 郭向东 Journalist; currently lives in Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Zhang Min 张旻</td>
<td>1959 Shanghai</td>
<td>Shanghai Writer* Jiading Writer New-born generation</td>
<td>Representative of Individualized Writing 个人化写作</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Nan Ni 南妮</td>
<td>1962 Shanghai</td>
<td>Shanghai Writer* New-born generation</td>
<td>Real name: Yang Xiaojun 杨晓军 Essayist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Shi Xuedong 史学东</td>
<td>1965 Shanghai</td>
<td>Shanghai Writer</td>
<td>Currently not writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Yu Tian’er 于田儿</td>
<td>1977 Beijing</td>
<td>Shanghai Writer Post-1970</td>
<td>Real name: Yu Tian 于田 Also known under the pen name: Yu Dongtian 于东田</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>He Ming 何明</td>
<td>1976 Shanghai</td>
<td>Shanghai Writer Post-1970</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Xie Jin 谢锦</td>
<td>1972 Shanghai</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>Editor Essayist</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = included in the *Dictionary of Contemporary Shanghai Writers* 当代上海作家词典 (2004)
Notably, the label ‘Shanghai Writer’ does not refer to the writers’ birthplace, but to their place of residence. According to Cai Xiang, the Chinese custom to classify writers according to the place where they live, should be placed in the context of China’s *hukou* 户口 (‘household registration’) policy that makes it difficult for people to move from one place to another: “although the system has been liberalized, there is still a strong tendency to identify people with their hukou-place.”55 Hence, a ‘Shanghai writer’ is foremost a ‘writer with a Shanghai hukou,’ as Shanghai-based cultural critic Wang Xiaoming 王晓明 defines the term.56

At the same time, however, it is often argued that the Chinese identify themselves more with their *jiaxiang* 家乡 (‘native town,’ literary ‘family-village’; also *jiguan* 籍贯) than with their place of residence. As Allen Chun (2002: 266) writes:

One’s subjective attachment to the village as *jiaxiang* is also a flexible set of conditions that cannot be defined by hard and fast rules of residence. People who are born there but later work or live elsewhere still, if they so choose, remain ‘residents’ of the village, as may their descendants who have never actually lived there. This is less a matter of rights of ownership than a function of the intention itself to identify.

Although *jiaxiang* can indeed refer to a person’s birthplace, it can also refer to the place where someone’s parents or even grandparents were born and raised. When I inquired among Shanghaiese scholars where the contributing authors were born, I regularly received answers like: “I don’t know where she/he was born, but I’m sure her/his parents are from this or that place.” Accordingly, in the *Dictionary of Contemporary Shanghai Writers* 当代上海作家词典 (2004) it is not the writer’s birthplace that defines her/him as a ‘person from X,’ but her/his *jiaxiang*. So, for example, Shen Jialu was born and raised and is living in Shanghai, renowned for his extensive publications on Shanghai history and culture, a prominent member of the Shanghai Writers Association, and uncontestedly labeled Shanghai Writer, but still called Shaoxingnese 绍兴人 in the *Dictionary of Contemporary Shanghai Writers* and other sources. In other words, for the Chinese there is no contradiction in being a ‘Shaoxingnese’ and a ‘Shanghai writer’ at the same time.

However, this is particularly so for the older generation of writers in *City Map*, whereas the younger writers are commonly referred to as Shanghaiese 上海人, regardless of the birthplace of their ancestors. This reflects the rapidly changing connotation of the term *jiaxiang*, as also observed by Andrea Louie (2004: 55-6):

In the past, the expression of hometown sentiment [乡情] was a natural, almost obligatory expression of where one’s identity was rooted. Research […]

55 Interview with Cai Xiang, in February 2009 in Shanghai.
56 Interview with Wang Xiaoming, in February 2009 in Shanghai.
indicates that people’s sense of rootedness and locality are changing as they become mobile. Interviews […] show that many urban-born internal migrants […] had never been to their native villages where their parents or grandparents had been born and raised. Many people expressed little interest in visiting these villages […]. The definitions and differentiations made by many younger Chinese, especially urban dwellers […] lack rigor. […] While most informants can name a jiaxiang, the place they name may be determined by different criteria than that of another person.

Likewise, while the stories in City Map by younger writers do not contain any references to native places outside of Shanghai, the narrator in Yin Huifen’s story remarks:

It was common to address neighbors by their native place, such as Little Ningbo, Old Wuxi, Old Shandong or Big Guangdong. (44)

Another striking feature of the authors of City Map is that fifteen out of twenty are women. This coheres with Shanghai’s literary history, in which women writers have played an important role in representing ‘Shanghai literature,’ as will be further discussed in chapter 3 (cf. Qiu [Mingzheng] 邱明正 2005: 1025-6).57 As Nicole Huang (2005: 229) notes:

Most importantly, settled comfortably within the last one hundred years of the city’s cultural history, this body of work [1940s fiction written by women writers] is labeled the quintessential Shanghai literature, and regarded as a guiding light into a past that is forever glamorous, pure, and unreachable.

The most influential writers of “this body of work,” Zhang Ailing and Su Qing, are named as the forerunners and sources of inspiration for Shanghai’s well-known female Post-1970 Authors, who are, with eight contributions, also well represented in City Map (in fact, contributors born after 1962 are all female).58

**LITERARY MAPS AND MENTAL MAPS**

Terms like ‘locality,’ ‘territory’ and above all ‘place’ have often been substituted for ‘region’ in geographical discourses both within and without the discipline. […] Sometimes the region is defined in purely materialistic terms

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57 For my definition of ‘Shanghai literature’, see chapter 1. For an extensive study on the emergence of women writers in Republican Shanghai, see Huang [Nicole] 2004 and 2005.

58 In the next chapter, I will elaborately discuss the female post-1970 phenomenon. Furthermore, chapter 3 and chapter 5 of this study deal with works by Weihui and Mian Mian, respectively, who are generally seen as representatives of the female post-1970 authors.
[...] but in others it depends on ideas, loyalties, a sense of belonging, structures of feeling, ways of life, memories and history, imagined community, and the like. In either instance it is important to recognize that regions are ‘made’ or ‘constructed’ as much in imagination as in material form and that though entity-like, regions crystallize out as a distinctive form from some mix of material, social and mental processes. The approaches to place / rationality / territory are wondrously diverse no matter where they are found.

David Harvey (2001: 225)

Nearly all writing on urban fiction draws on literary studies as well as on urban studies. However, few studies apply urban studies not only thematically, but also methodologically. The methodological tools I use for my reading of the short stories in City Map are inspired by Italian literary critic Franco Moretti and his theory of the ‘literary map,’ and by American urban sociologist Kevin Lynch and his theory of the ‘image of the city’ or ‘mental map.’

In fact, by using the literary theories of Moretti, a third discipline comes in: geography. In his Atlas of the European Novel and Graphs, Maps, Trees Moretti (1998: 3) shows that using geography – i.e. counting, graphing, and mapping – to analyze and/or historicize fiction “will allow us to see some significant relationships that have so far escaped us”:

What do literary maps do… First, they are a good way to prepare a text for analysis. You choose a unit – walks, lawsuits, luxury goods, whatever – find its occurrences, place them in space … or in other words: you reduce the text to a few elements, and abstract them from the narrative flow, and construct a new, artificial object like the maps I have been discussing. And with a little luck, these maps will be more than the sum of their parts: they will possess ‘emerging’ qualities, which were not visible at the lower level. […] Not that the map is itself an explanation, of course: but at least, it offers a model of the narrative universe which rearranges its components in a non-trivial way, and may bring some hidden patterns to the surface. (Moretti 2007: 53-4; italics and punctuation in the original.)

In short, the literary map is not a textual analysis in itself, but a form of ‘distant reading,’ as Moretti (2007: 1) calls it, a deliberate deduction and abstraction of the text: “fewer elements, hence a sharper sense of their overall interconnection.”

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59 In Graphs, Maps, Trees, Moretti actually responds to geographer Claudio Cerreti’s convincing criticism that the literary maps in Atlas of the European Novel are not objects of geographical study but of geometry. I will not engage with the discussion, but do note the questionable use of the term.

60 A notable example of an interdisciplinary study using Moretti’s work is Henriot’s (2008) intriguing article on three Republican-era Shanghai novels. The article is part of the Virtual Shanghai project, which explores alternative ways of researching and writing the history of modern Shanghai (www.virtualshanghai.net).
Even though Moretti has repeatedly claimed that his approach distances itself from the more conventional close reading, one could argue that in order to, for example, draw the maps of Mary Mitford’s *Our Village* as he did in *Graphs, Maps, Trees* Moretti had to apply close-reading techniques. Moreover, I submit that the literary map is in fact a useful method for raising close-reading questions, as I will show in this chapter: by placing certain elements from a literary text on a literary map, the resulting patterns will raise questions that require close reading to be answered. In Moretti’s (1998: 3-4) words:

> A good map is worth a thousand words, cartographers say, and they are right: because it *produces* a thousand words: it raises doubt, ideas. It poses new questions, and forces you to look for new answers.

Moretti calls his reading method ‘mapping literature,’ which can be used for two different objects of study: that of ‘literature in space,’ and that of ‘space in literature.’ The first deals with real historical space; for *City Map*, that could be a study of the book’s distribution in China, the birthplaces of the contributing writers, or the residential areas of its readers. The second research object is a fictional one, and the main focus of this study: literary imaginations of Shanghai. Where do the characters live, which activities are practiced in which parts of the city, which social groups feature in which parts of the city, how are particular parts of the city portrayed? And so on.

Drawing literary maps as analytical tools for this chapter, I will thus show which parts of Shanghai predominantly feature in the stories, and then explore if the maps reveal any patterns worthy of note. But how do we decide what to count and to map? How to avoid determining the outcome even before the research has started? Moretti’s (1998: 4) strategy to keep “changing and changing” the variables until he “had found a good answer” is open to debate. Since my focus is on the experience of the physical landscape of the city, I will make use of parameters that Lynch (1960: 46) identified as crucial reference points from which people perceive urban space: paths, edges, districts, nodes, and landmarks.

In his seminal study *The Image of the City*, Lynch did in-depth interviews with residents of three American cities (Boston, Jersey City and Los Angeles) about their images of their physical environment and asked them to draw a map of the route they took from work to home. As Lynch (1960: 46) introduces his study:

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61 In an interview on ABC Radio, for example, Moretti claims: “Close reading basically takes a text and tries to emphasize what is unique to that text, the specificity with which it uses grammar, syntax, relative clauses, whatever. Distant reading takes at times the same formal units, say, relative clauses, and says, well, why do people at a certain point start using relative clauses across the board? It’s not so much how Henry James uses them in the first page of *The Ambassadors* but why a culture goes in and out of certain... of like and dislike in using or not using certain patterns. So in a sense it’s microscope and telescope, it’s two different modes of looking at the world.” Interviewer: “But you don’t think we should give up on close reading, do you?” Moretti: “Yes, I do. I think that 99.9% of literary scholars do close reading anyway, so...” (www.abc.net.au/rn/bookshow/stories/2008/2169796.htm).
There seems to be a public image of any given city which is the overlap of many individual images. [...] Each individual picture is unique, with some content that is rarely or never communicated, yet it approximates the public image, which, in different environments, is more or less compelling, more or less embracing. [...] This analysis limits itself to the effects of physical, perceptible objects. There are other influences on imageability, such as the social meaning of an area, its function, its history, or even its name. [...] The contents of the city images so far studied, which are referable to physical forms, can conveniently be classified into five types of elements: paths, edges, districts, nodes, and landmarks.

Although Lynch’s project is almost fifty years old and cities have since changed tremendously, his urban elements are still commonly recognized as fundamental reference points of people’s mental image of urban environments.62

My readings of City Map will focus on both individual images and collective images of Shanghai, as offered by the narrators. Literary Map 1 will show which parts of Shanghai are covered by which stories; Literary Map 2 will locate districts, paths, edges, nodes and landmarks in two stories set in the Hongkou District.

**MAPPING MEMORIES: LITERARY MAP 1**

This city which cannot be expunged from the mind is like an armature, a honeycomb in whose cells each of us can place the things he wants to remember: names of famous men, virtues, numbers, vegetable and mineral classifications, dates of battles, constellations, parts of speech. Between each idea and each point of the itinerary an affinity or contrast can be established, serving as an immediate aid to memory.

Italo Calvino (1974: 15)

Literary Map 1 (see figure 2-5) shows the main settings of the twenty stories in City Map. Since in “Born on Sichuan North Road” two parts of the city are equally important it appears twice on the map. Even though the stories are spread over a relatively wide area on the map, the pattern of the numbers reveals part of the ‘mental map’ of the stories’ narrators. Since the authors were asked to write on places that held special meaning for them, it shows which parts of Shanghai play an important role in residents’ experiences of the city. In addition, these locations

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62 See, for example, Gosling 2003: 59: “The Image of the City, despite some interpretation difficulties in the graphics, was to become the most important and influential study of American urban design in the second half of the twentieth century.” And Lang ([Jon] 1994: 247): “Kevin Lynch provided the designer with a set of design principles that enhance people’s ability to organize the city into a cognitive whole in their heads [...] More recent studies have done little to change Lynch’s findings.”
Chapter Two

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<td>Yangshupu 杨树浦</td>
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<td>Ding Liying 丁丽英</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Shen Jialu 沈嘉禄</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Kong Mingzhu 孔明珠</td>
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<td>Zou Zou 走走</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Yao Yuming 姚育明</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Cao Mu 草木</td>
<td>A Record of Maojing 茅祭纪事</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Xiao Ping 萧萍</td>
<td>100 Guilin Rd or Mizi Walking 桂林路100号或走的米斯</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Yang Yu 杨羽</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>Xie Jin 谢锦</td>
<td>Grandfather’s Bao’an lane 外公的保安坊</td>
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* The title refers to the two sides of the Huangpu river. Notably, “this shore and the other shore” is also a well-known Buddhist term where crossing from this shore (of illusion, ignorance and suffering) to the other shore (of Enlightenment ) stands for “being apart from coming into being and ceasing to be” (Whalen-Bridge (ed) 2009: 33).

** The title is a reference to the opening lines of William Blake’s famous poem “Auguries of Innocence”.

Figure 2-5 Literary Map 1: The main settings of the stories in City Map.
contain important memory places for each author, so together they paint a picture of Shanghai as it is remembered by its local writers. Finally, like the old city maps made by foreign settlers, the map gives an impression of what the term ‘Shanghai’ represents for its creators. In fact, the pattern of numbers on the map shows an interesting resemblance to the foreign maps: it mainly covers the former concessions, and the old walled city is left blank again. All this implies that the colonial part of the city is more representative of Shanghai to the authors than its indigenous historical core.

If one had to point out a city center in the narrators’ mental map, it would be the districts south of Yan’an Road, i.e. the former French Concession. The former British Concession, which is generally considered the city’s most central part – i.e. the northern half of Huangpu district, stretching from the Bund, via Nanjing Road, the famous shopping boulevard, towards the People’s Park – is, with only one story, surprisingly empty. The same is true for the Pudong area; the spectacular skyline on the east of the Huangpu River, which is nowadays often called the ‘city name card,’ is also the setting of just one story.

In many stories set in the former French Concession, references are made to typical French residuals. For example, in four stories the French plane trees figure in the narrative, three stories feature coffee houses, in six stories bread (croissants, French bread, etc) is consumed, and in eleven stories the protagonists drink coffee, an exotic custom also introduced by the French colonizers. As discussed in chapter 1, in the semi-colonial period, the French Concession was the most “straightforward colonial entity” within Shanghai, in the words of Wasserstrom (2007: 210), both politically and culturally. Furthermore, many writers from that period also preferred the French Concession as setting in their stories. As Lee ([Leo] 1999: 18) notes:

It is interesting to note that whereas the International Settlement seemed to showcase the hustle and bustle of high commerce, the French Concession always conjured up an aura of culture – both high and low, but definitely French, and even more exotic than the British and American.

The French Concession is thus a potent reminder of Shanghai’s semi-colonial period, which has become a trendy subject in both ‘high’ and popular culture since the 1990s. The recurrence of the former French Concession in City Map could thus also be placed in a broader trend of ‘Shanghai nostalgia’ in Chinese cultural discourse to which I will turn in chapter 4.

Xuhui is the district that figures most often in the narratives, both the northern part with its characteristic streets lined with plane trees and urban villas that still breathes the atmosphere of French Concession times, and the middle part with its

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63 After the Treaty of Nanjing (1942) the Northern part of Huangpu formed the British Concession and the Hongkou district the American Concession, until they merged in 1863 to form the International Settlements. In 1932, the Japanese occupied the Hongkou district.
newly built shopping center in the Xujiahui area. Although the latter was not an official part of the French Concession, it was in fact under heavy French influence via the Jesuits who established a grand cathedral, orphanages, monasteries, schools, libraries and an observatory. Many of these buildings have been preserved until today, even though the area became an important industrial district with many factories after 1949. In the 1990s, the area was again drastically redeveloped into a new commercial center, which is nowadays often referred to as the ‘new city center.’

The fact that this new center is located in the far south-west of the city is in accordance with Shanghai’s developmental history, as also sketched in “Yangshupu” by Cheng Xiaoying:

As far as I can tell, modern Shanghai was developed from east to west. Many people, including foreigners, who arrived in Shanghai first settled in the industrial base next to the Huangpu River in the [north]-eastern part of town to work in a mill. In the wake of the city’s growth, their wealth accumulated and they moved [south]-westwards. The east increasingly became an industrial zone, while the west became a zone for living. If several generations failed to leave Yangshupu, it meant that most of the family worked in Yangshupu factories.

(10)

Yangshupu, where the story takes place, is the old name for the Yangpu district, the first industrial district of Shanghai (and the whole of China) and mainly known for its many cotton mills. As the Literary Map shows, only four out of the twenty stories are set in one of these Lower Corner districts. This is in accordance with the majority of contemporary Shanghai fiction, where the cityscape is commonly restricted to the Upper Corner.

**Lower Corner stories: A Yearning-for-the-Past Complex of Middle-Aged Men**

The four Lower Corner stories are situated in old (Yangpu, Zhabei, Baoshan) and new (Jiading) industrial districts. Interestingly, three of these four Lower Corner stories are written by male writers and explicitly deal with the district’s industrial history and/or the daily lives of the workers. The opening passage of the most representative Lower Corner story, Cheng Xiaoying’s “Yangshupu,” immediately sets the tone for a somewhat sentimental view of working class life in 1970s Yangpu:

This road leads all the way to the end of Shanghai’s Yangshupu […] Today, Yangshupu is a rather quiet place, like a dozing person. The streets are quite deserted. It always gives me a cold winter feeling.

It was thirty years ago, on a bright winter morning. The entrance of the factory was an archway decorated with colorful lamps, flags, and banners. The weather
was very good; there was a thick frost. When I walked into the factory, I saw women workers poking their heads out from behind a thick cotton door curtain, like a couple of birds. Some of them had just eaten in the canteen, in a single-layer top and trousers, wearing an apron and white hat, with flowery cotton-packed jackets draped over their shoulders. They were chatting, with rosy faces from the cold. (1)

Even though the worker’s simple clothes show their poor living standard, this is clearly not a picture of suffering, exploited factory workers. Instead, we see a romantic portrayal of the good times of Yangpu.

Notably, the Upper Corner stories by the other two male writers also portray childhood and/or young adult memories in a working class environment: “This Shore and the Other Shore” by Yang Yu tells the story of the son of a foundry worker who grew up in the Pudong area when it was still a poor neighborhood, and in Shen Jialu’s “Food Street” the protagonist works in a “worn-out little restaurant” called Little Shaoxing which is visited daily by dockers:

These workers speak with a thick Subeinese accent. It’s not because they all have ancestors from Subei, but because they like speaking it, in a sonorous and forceful voice. They belong to the underclass of society, but are proud of it. Besides that, they are kind of strong-minded. (79)

In *Ways of Imagining Shanghai* 想象上海的N种方法, Chen ([Huifen] 2006: 204) explains the male authors’ tendency in *City Map* to paint sentimental pictures of their poor childhoods from what she calls a yearning-for-the-past complex of middle-aged male writers:

This sentiment makes for their lived experience, whether ‘fortunate or unfortunate,’ to be covered by a layer of soft fragrant flavor. Not only do men attach more importance to experience / ‘roots’ than women, and are they incapable of being ‘historical,’ there is also a relation with these writers’ current social position and the fact that they highly value their personal history, a certain ‘successful’ ‘smugness,’ that makes them lenient to the past and makes them ignore its not so beautiful and rather awkward / embarrassing sides.

Whereas Chen ([Huifen] 2006: 204) criticizes these writers for not “rethinking the past or having a strong dialogue with reality,” Cai (2005), on the other hand, reads these stories as a Freudian “return of the repressed of Shanghai’s collective memory.” By narrating the daily lives of the city’s underclass these authors reveal “things of which it is forbidden to speak” and that are commonly absent in contemporary Shanghai fiction, Cai (2005) claims:
Some memories are deeply hidden, and other parts of Shanghai’s history have been completely deleted. In other words, these memories have become the ‘outside’ of the narrative, such as worker movements, shanty towns, contract workers, the daily life of the underclass poor people, and so on; the ‘outside’ that was once part of works like Xia Yan’s *Contract Labor* or Hu Wanchun’s *Flesh and Blood.*

In other words, in Cai’s reading the stories set in the Lower Corner are most importantly depictions of class. This recalls what Moretti (1998: 79) observes in nineteenth-century British ‘silver fork’ novels and their focus on upper-class neighborhoods:

Now, all these figures [literary maps of ‘silver fork’ novels] have one thing in common: they don’t show ‘London,’ but only a small, monochrome portion of it: the West End. This is not really a city; it’s a class. We live in so different a part of town, says Mrs Gardiner in *Pride and Prejudice.*

Furthermore, unlike Chen Huifen, Cai Xiang does not explain the different themes and styles of these stories from a gender perspective, but focuses on a generational difference. The male writers in *City Map* – born between 1954 and 1962 – do indeed belong to one generation. In addition, the female writers that are of the same generation (Yin Huifen, Kong Mingzhu, Yao Yuming) portray similar pictures of ordinary life of the less well-off in Shanghai’s back alleys. However, Chen (2006: 204) convincingly shows that their depictions are more ambiguous than those of their male colleagues:

Because of the women writers’ sensitivity, or ‘utter detestation,’ towards material deprivation, their portrayed ‘past’ is clearly not so easily shrouded in ‘a soft fragrance.’ On the contrary: the past is often called into question.

So, these stories resist both their male colleagues’ romanticized collective memory of Mao-era Shanghai and their (younger) female colleagues’ affirmation of the public image of the city as a reemerging, alluring ‘Paris of the East.’

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64 Xia Yan 夏衍 (1900-1995): writer, journalist, and playwright known for his leftist plays and films. Xia participated in the launch of the China Left-Wing Writers League and the Chinese Dramatist Union. His works include the influential play *Under the Eaves of Shanghai* 上海屋檐下, a naturalistic depiction of tenement life that became a standard leftist work. Hu Wanchun 胡万春 (b. 1929) was born in a workers family in Shanghai and received no education during his childhood. He worked in a steel-rolling mill when he started writing as a reporter for the *Shanghai Labour Journal* 上海劳动报 in 1951. Hu has published several collections of stories and reportage, such as *Flesh and Blood* 骨肉 and *People of Character* 特殊性格的人, and the movie script *A Steelmaking Family* 钢铁世家, all depicting the daily lives and struggles of the working class.
In sum, most authors born before 1965, portray a more ‘Chinese’ city in another time and/or place: here, there are no broad boulevards, colored by flickering neon lights and filled with fashionable Shanghai girls with Prada shoes and Louis Vuitton handbags, but muddy, dim alleyways where workers hurry from home to factory. By exposing less exotic sides of the city in the Mao period or darker sides of the city in contemporary times, legendary cosmopolitan Shanghai becomes merely a façade.

“Fading Palace”: A Lower Corner Story by a Female Post-1970 Author
The story “Fading Palace” is an interesting exception to Chen Huifen’s and Cai Xiang’s analysis: while set in the Lower Corner and revealing a sentimental yearning for 1970s working-class Shanghai, it is in fact written by a female Post-1970 Author: Mi Hong. The story is told by a young woman who takes a trip with her grandfather to the Wujiachang area in the center of the Yangpu district, “this strange northern corner of the city […] this chaotic northern corner of the city” (16), to visit the former City Hall where her grandfather married her grandmother. The four-story building is now the faculty office of the Shanghai Institute of Physical Education, that the protagonist’s grandfather calls “his palace” because of its special architecture in traditional Chinese style with Western influences of green tiles and red bricks, colorful paintings and ornaments, and big stained glass windows. Entering the building they notice an old map of Shanghai lying on a table and the narrator asks her grandfather where they are.
Pointing at the map, he tells his granddaughter about how the Wujiachang area was planned to become the city’s main administrative area in the Great Shanghai Plan 大上海计划 of 1929. The plan was Shanghai’s first overall urban renewal plan which was issued by the Nationalist government and would turn the city into the “first metropolis of East Asia” (Huang [Nanzhen] 2001) and, according to the China Weekly Review 中国评论周报 in January 1929, “make Shanghai the great monument to the new China and an example to the entire country” (cited in Cody 2003: 119). In less than ten years, a new town with the Shanghai Special Municipal Government Hall, Shanghai Municipal Library, and Shanghai Municipal Museum, among other buildings, was built. However, when the Japanese army bombed the area in August 1937 the plan was abruptly ended.
While grandfather’s tears fall on the cross sign indicating the Wujiachang area on the map, he laments:

In my heart tears fall endlessly for the unknown years that have gone by. This cross sign was forgotten by the citizens a long time ago. It represents the decline and awakening of the nation and the soaring aspirations of the architects and urban planners. (18)

The grandfather is referring to the architects who, after studying in the United States, returned to China and developed a unique style of traditional Chinese
architecture constructed with Western techniques, which became known as the ‘Chinese Renaissance.’ Not only did the war with Japan put an end to this modernist movement, it was not continued after the founding of the People’s Republic in 1949, confirming the often-uttered sentiment in Shanghai that the city had to wait more than fifty years before it could reconquer the nation’s ‘forerunner’ status in cosmopolitanism.

Whereas many Chinese literary scholars claim that the younger generation of writers do not have a critical attitude towards Shanghai’s semi-colonial history and tend to embrace all Western trends, this does not hold for “Fading Palace.” This becomes clear when the narrator quotes from the famous Guide to Shanghai: A Chinese Directory of the Port 上海指南 (English subtitle on the cover of the original edition, 1909), in which the Great Shanghai Plan was proudly introduced, and then writes:

The purpose of this dream plan was to build a Chinese city for our people – who suffered ‘one hundred years of humiliation’ [the often-used reference to the semi-colonial period] – next to the modern city of miracles built by the Western powers; to build a palace for our nation in this place that Westernized too fast and that had too little sovereignty. (21)

Towards the end of the story, when the narrator stands with her grandfather in front of a window and looks at the “whole new city that has arisen,” she regrets how the buildings that were part of the Great Shanghai Plan are now being demolished:

There is nothing left to remember, just like the face of my grandmother. [After the narrator’s grandmother divorced her grandfather to marry another man all contact with the family was cut off.] What can I do? Just let the ideals of these architects be in vain and disappear for yet another new building? What do I want to do for the palace of my grandfather? (24)

It seems that all she can do is write down the story of her grandfather as a way of letting the memory live on, since she anxiously wonders: “is it really all going to disappear without a trace, just like my grandmother?” (25).

Interestingly, only a few years after this story was published, the Shanghai government presented a plan on their official website (www.shanghai.gov.cn) to redevelop the Wujiaochang area under the telling title “Wujiaochang: Shanghai’s Future Upper Corner” 五角场：上海未来的上只角 and extensively referring to the Great Shanghai Plan. Although it is most likely that this indicates that the story expresses a public sentiment in Shanghai, one is tempted to picture a municipal civil servant reading this story in Shanghai Literature, and deciding to breathe new life into the aborted Great Shanghai Plan.
Portrayals of a Village in the Metropolis: Shanghai Literature?

“Fading Palace” is not the only story in City Map in which the narrator fears that with the demolishing of buildings, the lives of the people living and working in them will be forgotten as well. In fact, all Lower Corner stories seem to share this sentiment. Take for example the following passage of “Bangbeinese” by Li Qigang:

Time invokes suspicion. Its existence relies not only on our hearts, but also on our memories. And it relies on many of the people and objects we’ve been familiar with. When people are gone, they are like salt dissolving in the huge soup of this city; when objects are gone, they are replaced by the high-rises, overhead railways and highways that are irrelevant to our memories. We’re troubled by a rootless confusion: how are we supposed to prove that this all once existed? (73)

Likewise, when the narrator of Cheng Xiaoying’s “Yangshupu” goes back to the Yangpu district to visit the cotton mill where he once worked, he remarks:

The factory was in Yangshupu by the Huangpu River. Yuan Miaosheng had pointed in the right direction. It was only two stops by trolleybus from Dinghai Road. The factory was gone. The woman had been right. I saw only empty ground at the old entrance. No idea where the once buzzing seven thousand women and men had gone. There was a banner at the entrance: “Slogan for 1998 – Breaking through the rings of encirclement.” Seven thousand men and women had disappeared. (9)

As Chen ([Huifen] 2006: 197-8) remarks on this story:

The emotional coloring of “Yangshupu” is very clear, the author’s deep emotions are easy to read in all the descriptions. This is not only because the environment while one grows up always leaves a deep impression, it’s also because of ‘non-physical perceptions and qualities.’ In fact, what makes people sigh with emotion is not only the disappearance of what was once a bustling factory entrance, but also the sudden disappearance of each colored jacket behind the thick cotton door curtains and their uncertain fate. It’s not very likely that the impressions of these places and the memories of these fates come entirely from the personal experience of the author of “Yangshupu.”

Whereas in “Fading Palace” the remaining buildings of Wujiaochang also symbolized the last reminders of a “real” Chinese culture (“this is real Chinese red, made with real Chinese paint”; 24), in these passages of “Bangbeinese” and “Yangshupu” the disappearing parts of the city mainly symbolize the last reminders of Shanghai’s working class culture, as also argued by Cai (2005):
In the collective writings of Shanghai […] the memory of the city’s underclass life fades and even disappears […]. And in a stricter sense, it is class consciousness that gradually weakens until it disappears completely. However […] stories such as “Bangbeinese” and “Yangshupu” use more ‘narrative’ techniques and reveal the memories of the city’s underclass life.

Notably, the stories set in the Lower Corner not only differ in themes, but also in the sites where the action takes place. Whereas in the stories set in the Upper Corner the narrators are mostly wandering the streets or spending time and money in shops and bars, the Lower Corner stories have the home and workplace as their main locations. Furthermore, they use imagery that reminds one of rural fiction. For example, in some stories the depicted winding alleys seem more like meandering streams through the countryside. Likewise, the recurrently depicted sensory experiences, such as walking with bare feet in the slippery mud, might be an indication of the characters’ poor living condition, but can also be associated with rural life. Finally, the fact that the workers had few opportunities to leave their neighborhood and roam the city makes their stories less representative of urban fiction, considering that “movement from neighborhood to neighborhood, from scene to scene,” according to Richard Sennett (1977: 136-7), is commonly regarded the “essence of the ‘urban’ experience,” but has in fact “a class character”:

As the structure of the quartier and neighborhood homogenized along economic lines, the people most likely to move from scene to scene were those with interests or connections complicated enough to take them to different parts of the city; such people were the most affluent. Routines of daily life passed outside the quartier were becoming bourgeois experience; the sense of being cosmopolitan and membership of the bourgeois classes thus came to have an affinity. Conversely, localism and lower classes fused.

Hence, the narrated experiences in the Lower Corner have a less ‘urban’ character than those in the Upper Corner.

For these reasons Cai (2005) uses the title of the ‘fourth generation’ movie A Village in the Metropolis 都市里的村庄 – i.e. “urbanites who possessed a rural mentality” (Harry Kuoshu 2010: 3) – to characterize the content and style of Lower Corner stories:

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65 A Village in the Metropolis (1982), directed by Teng Wenji 腾文骥, tells the love story of a Shanghai shipyard worker who is elected a “model worker” for her unit, and portrays the conflict between tradition and modernity.

66 Cf. Shanghai historian Xiong Yuezhi 熊月之 (2008) who also uses the title A Village in the Metropolis to refer to the cultural influence in Shanghai of migrant workers coming from the countryside.
This rural lifestyle [in the Lower Corner stories] produces an opposition between the periphery and center of the city, and at the same time, it is also in a closed spatial condition, it preserves a continuing working-class culture, or in other words a kind of 'structure of feeling.'

Thus, the social homogeneity and physical remoteness of districts such as Yangpu and Putuo provided a possibility to develop their own culture, which was "passed on from generation to generation through family, neighborhood and the factory," to quote Cai (2005) again. This chimes in with Harvey’s (1989: 119) observation that "working-class neighborhoods [...] produce individuals with values conductive to being in the working class," and that "the stability of such neighborhoods and of the value systems that characterize the people in them have been remarkable considering the dynamics of change in most capitalist cities."

In contrast, the poor people living in the city center are scattered over different neighborhoods and no longer living and working together to the same extent as workers in the Lower Corner did, making it more difficult to unite and create one social group, both practically and in terms of ideology. Moreover, Shanghai (like most capitalist cities) has changed from being a center of production into a center of consumption, in which values such as symbolic resources, distinction and social status gained increasing importance. So, whereas the workers depicted by the older writers "view themselves as the 'producers' who built this city and therefore represent a self-respecting class," in the words of Cai (2005), the underclass living in the city center depicted by the younger writers are confronted with their inability to fully partake in the consumer society and are therefore "alienated to the Other of the city."

In the stories by the younger writers, this is reflected in the wandering young protagonists feeling lost in the city and searching for meaning in their confusing environment. Although, as Cai (2005) notes, this search for meaning is in the end merely "a desire for social climbing that the 'ideologized space' of the Upper Corner evokes in its residents." In other words, in their quest for individuality – often expressed through excessive consumption – the younger generation does not seem to be aware of the fact that this is precisely what the dominant city center-culture (i.e. global capitalism and commercialism) prescribes: to conform to the image of the 'successful person' as promoted by the media and advertisement.

Both Chen Huifen and Cai Xiang assert that in their depiction of the "Village in the Metropolis," the Lower Corner stories can neither be classified as urban fiction

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67 "[Raymond] Williams used the phrase “a structure of feeling” as a way of defining the cluster of dominant images, meanings and sentiments in a specific culture” (Clarke & Hughes 1998: 7).
69 In Sacred Memories 神圣回忆 (1998), Cai Xiang firstly analyzed the myth of the “successful person” to criticize China’s new “market ideology,” which prompted a debate among Shanghai literary scholars, and resulting in a number of articles on the subject in the issues 4 and 5 of Shanghai Literature in 1999.
nor as Shanghai fiction. Whereas Cai stresses that these stories could just as well have a rural setting, Chen maintains that the stories depict a particular time rather than a particular place. However, I would argue that the Lower Corner stories are outstanding examples of Shanghai literature, considering that the city of Shanghai functions as a thematized space. Although the Upper Corner stories by the younger writers are characteristic for urban fiction depicting modern metropolitan life, in my view, it is precisely in these stories that the city of Shanghai plays a minor role. In these stories there are no references to the city’s history and if they had not used real street- and place names, the setting could have been any big city in China or indeed abroad.

In the Lower Corner stories, on the contrary, the history of these neighborhoods is depicted at length, a history that is fully intertwined with the unique history of Shanghai as a whole: they are the birthplace of Shanghai’s industrialization, they have been under the influence of colonial powers, and they are the places where domestic immigrants usually began their new life in Shanghai. The stories show a fascinating transition area of city and country: the protagonists originally come from the countryside, their jiaxiang still marks their identity, they still practice rural customs – such as arranged marriages and homemade pickles – and they do not have the time or money for consumption. However, they do live in an urban area, work in factories and go to the city center in their spare time. Besides, the stories contain references to the political and social context of 1970s Shanghai, such as political slogans on banners hanging on factory walls. In short, the Shanghai setting is in fact most pronounced in the stories set in the Lower Corner.

A MENTAL MAP OF HONGKOU: LITERARY MAP 2

My father never realized the dream of his youth to become rich. He never left the Triangle Quarter in Hongkou, didn’t leave this street, didn’t leave this alleyway-house. While he had arrived alone in Hongkou, wearing a long gown, he left this world wearing some simple clothes.

Yin Huifen, in “Hongkou Anecdote” (2002: 58)

When time flows, at the end, a person’s childhood can be completely different from facts, a completely different thing. This is the childhood of your memory, it’s the childhood that has been ruthlessly chosen by time, it’s the childhood that has been changed by time, it’s the childhood that has been changed by life experience, it’s the childhood that has been racing against forgetfulness.

Ding Liying, in “Come Over, Someone’s Childhood” (2002: 35)
“Hongkou Anecdote” and “Come Over, Someone’s Childhood” (“Come Over” henceforth) are by women writers of two generations: Yin Huifen (b. 1949) and Ding Liying (b. 1966), respectively. The stories are set in the Hongkou district (also known as Hongkew), a district that is characterized by its very mixed nature; some parts are considered Upper Corner, others Lower Corner, or ‘neutral.’ The narrators recount childhood memories of two overlapping neighborhoods and how the district has changed over the years.

Yin Huifen and Ding Liying grew up in the Hongkou district themselves, only a few streets away from each other. When Yin Huifen was twenty years old, she moved to the Jiading district (about 20 kilometers west from downtown Shanghai, and known for its car industry) to work in a car factory for thirty years. In 1981, Yin started writing in her spare time. The fact that she lives in a far-away suburb earned her the nickname ‘Shanghai’s hermit writer’ 上海滩隐士型作家, a name she, interestingly, shares with Ding Ling who lives in the suburb Minhang (about 18 kilometers south-west from downtown Shanghai).70 According to the anthology Painting Shanghai Literature 画说上海文学 (2009: 430), however, Yin’s place of residence does not “influence her literary works”: “the pulse of transforming Shanghai insistently permeates her stories.”

In 1999, Yin published her best-selling novel Car City 汽车城, which portrays her working experiences, won several prizes, and was turned into a 22-episode television series, screened nationwide. Because of its prominent Jiading setting, the novel became known as “China’s first novel set in the car industry” and granted her the label ‘Jiading Writer’ (Zu Dingyuan 祖丁远 2006: 15-17). The Jiading district knows in fact many writers, which Yin explains from the district’s “in-between status”:71

The old part of Jiading is countryside with only farms, but other parts are entirely industrial, this is where the workers live, and yet other parts are newly built residential neighborhoods for the middleclass. So Jiading is actually not really a city, but either a suburb 郊区 or countryside 乡下. It is neither Shanghai, nor a town by itself. For this reason the people living here feel unsure about their identity, which raises many questions that are interesting for writers.

(Interview with Yin Huifen, in June 2010 in Shanghai.)

In 2008, Yin Huifen published the popular collection of short stories A Landscape Painting of Stone-gate Houses 石库门风景画, depicting the daily lives of the underclass in Shanghai. Yin’s story in City Map was republished in this collection.

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70 Another reason for Ding’s nickname ‘Shanghai hermit writer’ is that while most young writers write in their spare time, she fully devotes herself to writing.

71 For a beautiful anthology of Jiading Literature and a collection of discussions on those works, see Zhou Guandong 周关东 (ed) 2009.
Ding Liying is widely regarded as one of Shanghai’s most promising young writers. Ding writes short stories, essays, and has translated poems by Elizabeth Bishop, but she is mostly known for her poems for which she was awarded the Anne Kao Poetry Prize in 1999. Her novel *The Woman in the Clock* 时钟里的女人 (2002) was very well received. The novel is set in contemporary Shanghai and contains several passages written in the Shanghainese dialect. It recounts one day in the life of a divorced woman, narrated in stream-of-consciousness style with frequent flashbacks.

**Paths, Edges, Districts, Nodes, and Landmarks**

Literary Map 2 shows how the mental map of “Come Over” (blue 3) overlaps with the mental map of “Hongkou Anecdote” (red 4).

Ding Liying’s “Come Over” tells the story of two sisters who, together with the 11-year old son of Elder Sister, at the end of the 1990s, walk through the neighborhood where they lived as children. It is narrated from the perspective of Younger Sister, who has become a writer. At the beginning of the story, Elder Sister wants to change direction because they approach the street where her ex-boyfriend used to live and she is afraid of meeting his parents. However, she notices that the streets look completely different and realizes that “she makes the mistake of an old person” (26): ten years ago, the family had already been forced to move to Pudong because of the demolition of the area. As they walk on, they pass different buildings evoking memories of their 1970s childhoods: their old home, their school, the hospital where Younger Sister was born, and so on. The story ends when the sisters cross the Zhapu Bridge back to the city center.

Yin Huifen’s “Hongkou Anecdote” is set in the Triangle Quarter 三角地, a neighborhood within the Hongkou district. The narrator Huifen (also the given name of the author) narrates the life story of her father, who lived in Emei Road in the Triangle Quarter from an early age until his death. While recalling her father’s life, Huifen remembers her own life, and portrays the tumultuous history of the Hongkou district itself, from 1930s up until the end of the 1990s.

“Hongkou Anecdote” is centered around the triangular square east of Wusong Road, but also depicts the surrounding streets up to the Bund. “Come Over” mainly features a couple of streets to the west of the Wusong Road which form – in Lynch’s (1960: 66) terminology – the *district* of the story:

Districts are the relatively large city areas which the observer can mentally go inside of, and which have some common character. They can be recognized internally, and occasionally can be used as external reference as a person goes by or toward them.

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72 In conversations with literary critics and writers in Shanghai (February 2009), Ding Liying was most often mentioned as ‘Shanghai’s upcoming talent.’
Figure 2-6 Literary Map 2: Urban elements in “Come over” (blue 3) and “Hongkou Anecdote” (red 4).
Whereas the district of “Come Over” has only one distinct border at the south, i.e. Suzhou Creek, in “Hongkou Anecdote” two clearly bordered districts are narrated. The first is indicated by the title, i.e. the administrative district Hongkou. The second is a smaller neighborhood within Hongkou itself, the Triangle Quarter, which derives its name from the three interconnected streets Tanggu Road, Hanyang Road, and Emei Road. Both districts are mentioned as points of orientation by the narrator, and are identifiable by their characteristic mixed architecture of Cantonese- and Japanese style houses, and Shanghainese style *shikumen* 石库门 (‘Stone gate houses’). The *shikumen* are one of the more simple types of *longtang* 弄堂 (Shanghai locals’ term for *lilong* 里弄 ‘lane houses’): typical Shanghai houses that appeared in the semi-colonial period. Even though the narrator and her father lived in the *shikumen*, “Hongkou Anecdote” depicts all three types of houses, highlighting the specific topological space of the story.

In “Come Over,” in contrast, only the typical Shanghai *shikumen* houses are depicted. Since Shanghai knows many of this type of neighborhoods it is only from the street names that the reader learns in which part of the city the story takes place. Furthermore, the narrator Younger Sister never mentions the name of the Hongkou district, and neither does she make any reference to the district’s unique history. She does, however, refer to Shanghai several times and elaborately depicts the *shikumen* houses, which are both representative for the city and the ‘authentic’ Shanghai lifestyle of the common people, as I will discuss in chapter 4. Interestingly, in thirteen out of the twenty stories of City Map, *shikumen* or *longtang* are explicitly mentioned and expressions such as *longtang*-children / men / women are used to describe typically Shanghainese people.

In “Come Over,” however, the *shikumen* neighborhood is portrayed as a typical shantytown of old, shabby houses which could have been in any other (poor) city, as also pointed out by Cai (2005): “In Ding Liying’s narrative the cultural connotation of *shikumen* has disappeared, it is only the dirty ‘backyard’ of the high society.” For example, when the sisters arrive at their old home, Younger Sister observes:

> Here is the dark entrance with the stairways to a narrow living space. Here are the stairs, almost vertical […] this is the handrail of the stairs, as usual black with grime […] Ah! This is nothing like in the movie *Great Expectations*, here nothing is left of the aristocratic air of colonial times […] The style here is neither fish nor fowl, something between a poor people’s cave and a commercial flourishing district. […] Younger Sister suddenly felt very sad: they had lived in these houses without sanitation, without coal gas. She had read an article by Nobel Prize winner Günter Grass in which he wrote about his poorchildhood and how they had to share one water closet with several families. But how bad is that? What if he would know that we could still say the same

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73 In chapter 4 of this study, I will explore the history and local meaning of the *longtang* and discuss the role of these houses in Wang Anyi’s novel *Song of Everlasting Sorrow*.  
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thing about our current situation? His experience is from before World War II, while what Younger Sister and Elder Sister were looking at now was still present today, in the twenty-first century. So, Younger Sister could only feel shame. (39-41)

So, in “Come Over,” the narrated district merely functions as a memory place of the protagonist’s humble childhood, representing the continuing poverty in the city, rather than Shanghai’s local identity.

In “Hongkou Anecdote,” on the contrary, the narrated districts represent actual places and periods in Shanghai’s history. The following passage shows how the history of the Hongkou district in general, and the Triangle Quarter in particular, is foregrounded throughout the story. Huifen’s father arrived in the Triangle Quarter in the same year the Japanese occupied the Hongkou district:

When, in 1846, the American missionaries built a school in Hongkou, they chose the empty virgin land of the district. The Triangle Quarter could be seen as the embryo of the Hongkou district. When the Hongkou settlement was founded, it did not attract any foreign businesses, but countless [domestic] migrants, in an endless stream, swarmed into Hongkou along the Suzhou Creek, from Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Guangdong and Shandong. Among them were a large number of coppersmiths and blacksmiths from Wuxi, as well as radical revolutionaries, of course. Compared to the tightly governed Chinese society, the Hongkou Concession undoubtedly was a free haven. In 1931, Huifen’s eighteen-year-old father followed the Wuxi people before him and also came to Hongkou. He was wearing a long gown, so people who didn’t know him mistakenly thought he was a student. In fact, he was the son of a farmer with a tiny piece of land. He hadn’t come to join the revolution, all he wanted was to make his fortune at any price. (46)

According to the narrator, during the Japanese occupation, Hongkou became a “paradise for small businessmen” (47), including Huifen’s father, whose business thrives thanks to his many Japanese customers. After the Japanese capitulation her father first works as a ‘middleman’ to help the Japanese sell their businesses, and after that has to work in a state factory to survive. Huifen recounts how her father had three opportunities in his life to get rich and leave the Hongkou district, but failed each time. Eventually, her father dies during one of his daily showers, a custom the district’s inhabitants inherited from the Japanese occupiers. In short, the tragic life story of Huifen’s father mirrors the history of the Hongkou district.

The authors’ hand-drawn maps of the narrated districts tellingly reveal how Yin Huifen’s “Hongkou Anecdote” is narrated in a dispassionate voice, if compared to Ding Liying’s “Come Over”:
The map of “Come Over” is a vivid real-life picture of the two protagonists, carrying a sign saying ‘North,’ walking through the neighborhood. In addition, Ding Lijing has drawn a boat with a flag sailing along the Huangpu River, the slaughterhouse, the hospital, the Shanghai Mansion and the Waibaidu Bridge that figured in the story. Notably, the street names written on the map are not the real names, but the names Younger Sister mistakenly thought the streets were called when she was a small child:

Maybe I really was not so bright, I always thought these streets were called ‘Sugar Aunty’ 糖姑 Road [for 塘沽 Road]74, ‘Snake Fear’ 蛇怕 Road [for 乍浦 Road], and ‘Heaven Moves’ 天动 Road [for 天潼 Road]. (28)

Yin Huifen’s map of “Hongkou Anecdote,” on the other hand, is an abstract depiction of the main roads, enlivened only by plain drawings of a small house indicating the marketplace of Triangle Quarter, the Shanghai Mansion, and a tree in Kunshan Park. Whereas the marketplace and Shanghai Mansion are of personal and local significance in the narrative, the park is mentioned only once in the narrator’s general depiction of the neighborhood: “The longtang children loved to go to the free-entry Kunshan Park in the neighborhood (49).” In other words, the hand-drawn maps also show how Ding’s “Come Over” solely portrays the narrator’s individual memory of the neighborhood, whereas Yin’s “Hongkou Anecdote” consistently mingle individual and collective memories.

While all stories in City Map deal with memories of certain places in the city, in “Come Over” the concept of ‘memory’ itself is an important theme. Throughout the

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74 In the Shanghainese dialect these words are homophones.
story Elder Sister recalls her childhood memories of the streets they are walking, while Younger Sister consistently doubts the reliability of these memories:

Younger Sister has never believed that memories can maintain their pure character. [...] How can one be sure that here, this place where a gloomy cigarette store had placed a counter, that this was the same place where Elder Sister had once recited in a loud voice “Long Live Chairman Mao” [...] Younger Sister: “How can you be sure that this is where your primary school was?” Elder Sister: “Of course I can.” (31)

This is in fact the very reason Younger Sister became a writer. She believes that the only way to preserve the ‘authenticity’ of any memory is by recording it (30).

Even though “Come Over” and “Hongkou Anecdote” are set in the same neighborhood, their very different representations become even more evident when focusing on important paths (blue and red lines in figure 2-6), as defined by Lynch (1960: 47):

Paths are the channels along which the observer customarily, occasionally, or potentially moves. [...] For many people, these are the predominant elements in their image. People observe the city while moving through it, and along these paths the other environmental elements are arranged and related.

In both stories, the paths appear indeed to be the most important urban points of reference. Tanggu Road and Tiantong Road are two paths that figure in both stories. First, in “Come over,” in Huifen’s portrayal of these streets, the district’s unique history is again profoundly interwoven with the life story of Huifen’s father and her own memories. Take for example the depictions of Tanggu Road and the former Japanese club on this road, the very place where Huifen’s father experienced one of his three failed chances to “make a fortune”:

When the Japanese ruled Hongkou, the Japanese population swelled rapidly. The Japanese club at Tanggu Road nearby was buzzing every night; cars came and went. [...] When Huifen was small, she often walked along Tanggu Road. [...] Huifen had a close friend from school that still lived at Tanggu Road; she lived in the former Japanese club. Huifen used to ignore the place, but since hearing the story of her father, Huifen always looked up at the neo-classical Western building, each time she passed it. There was now a sign reading “Pujiang Electric Meter Factory” hanging on the building, and in front of the entrance where, in the Japanese era, luxury cars used the park, were now piles

75 Remarkably, the phrase is written in Chinese characters (喇叭狼来前门街) homophonous with the English “Long Live Chairman Mao,” which could be loosely translated as “Ah, the wolf cries out to the cat of Qianmen Gate.”
of packing chests. On the top of the building’s façade, white marble carvings adorned the high arched windows, radiating extreme luxury and mystery, whilst also exuding something slightly sinister, very different from the peaceful atmosphere of the residential Triangle Quarter. Huifen would wonder behind which window on the third floor the threatening event took place? […] Later, when Huifen fell in love, she liked meeting here with her boyfriend. (47 & 50)

Secondly, even though the streets are typical of the Hongkou district’s mixed nature – “including both slums and mansions built by foreigners,” as Farrer (2002: 61) notes – in “Come Over,” the narrator significantly only remembers the less well-off part of the streets with their worn-down houses. In “Hongkou Anecdote,” Huifen sketches a remarkably different picture of the same streets:

There were many red-walled Western-style houses on Tanggu Road and Kunshan Road close by the Triangle Quarter. There was a plaza-like lane across Huifen’s home with many nice Western-style houses. […] Huifen would dream of living in such Western houses in the future. (45-6)

It is important to note, however, that the narrator of “Hongkou Anecdote” portrays the streets in the late 1950s and 1960s when the flourishing shopping streets had just changed into a neglected residential area.76

Was it 1960? Overnight, the Emei Road of numerous shops became an ordinary residential street. The government regulated amenities, closed and merged small shops; only hot water stations, barbers, briquette stations and groceries indispensable to everyday life were allowed to remain. (53)

So, whereas Huifen also experienced the area in its heyday, in Younger Sister’s childhood it has always been in a run-down state.

Nevertheless, the portrayals of the district’s slums and the complete absence of the more luxurious Western and Japanese-built houses in “Come Over” confirm the narrator’s tendency to touch upon the “things of which it is forbidden to speak,” to borrow Cai’s words again. Different from the stories set in the Lower Corner, however, the narrator does not feel the urge to disclose this ‘other Shanghai.’ For example, when Younger Sister remembers how a foreign friend once asked her to

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76 Interestingly, according to the official website of the Shanghai government, right after the establishment of the PRC, the CCP government implemented special laws for the Hongkou district, to support private businesses: “In 1956, there were 10,541 joint state-private owned shops, 165 cooperative stores and 379 cooperative groups. After 1958, as a result of the influence of ‘leftist’ ideology, commercial establishments were reduced, goods flow channels merged, business outlets scaled down, and country fairs cancelled. By 1965, the number of commercial outlets in the district was reduced to 2,420. During the Cultural Revolution, the commercial market was devastated, the specialties of many sectors were lost and the quality of service declined.” Source: www.shtong.gov.cn → 区县志 → 区志 → 虹口区志 → 总述.
“show him every corner of Shanghai to make him understand the true life of the common Shanghai people,” she explains why she had embarrassedly refused:

No one could bear this whole situation in front of their eyes, this daily lingering suffering, this secret anguish of numbness, this helplessness, this poverty, this embarrassment. For Younger Sister it was very clear: except for the people who had lived here, absolutely no one could really understand all this, let alone a foreigner! Of course there was no way that she could guide him to all places of the city. Remembering the darkness in these houses, she doubted if she even had the strength to raise her hand and show directions. She only knew that she felt shame. And that it was a shame that was extremely difficult to talk about. (41)

In Cai’s (2005) reading of the story, he claims that the narrator’s memory of her lower class background is “deeply hidden,” until she is unexpectedly and unwillingly confronted with it. In contrast to the protagonists in the stories by the older male writers, however, this does not evoke class consciousness in Younger Sister, nor does she “raise the resistance banner of righteousness,” as Cai (2005) argues. Instead, the memory only increases her quest for selfhood and thus a desire to suppress her “class memory”:

Class memory hinders peoples’ formation of subjectivity. What we actually see here is that subjectivity, or individuality, is also derived from the construction of a ‘system.’ This is exactly society becoming stratified again and at the same time building a strong ideology, calling out to the people in some way. It further means that the ‘search for meaning’ the city invokes is actually already ideologized. […] The individual can once more differentiate her/his own identity, and try to search for her/his own place in the already ideologized space, while at the same time seeking after belonging.

I agree with Cai when he maintains that the significant difference with stories such as “Bangbeinese” and “Yangshupu” is precisely because “Come Over” is set in the city center: the citizen’s poor living conditions are in shrill contrast to the surrounding prosperity. Accordingly, it seems as if in the view of the narrator of “Come Over,” her poor background is not only forbidden to speak of, it is even forbidden to see: it is the world hidden in the back alleys, behind the splendid restaurants, clubs, shops and hotels, as Younger Sister puts it: “In the luxurious restaurants in front, public money is consumed for two- or three thousand-Yuan banquets, while in the shikumen houses at the back, people have to eat sitting on their beds (41).” And again, in the following passage:

Some small lilongs, covered and blocked by a polyester fabric, form the backyards of the high-ranking big restaurant. The slaughtering and washing of living seafood and other preparations of the restaurant’s food are all carried out
here. The ground is always wet. Everywhere is bloody mud, occasionally you can still see cut pieces of frog claws, rolled-up skins of king snakes, passengers walking by on tiptoe, because they are afraid that if they aren’t careful they will step into the intestines of a fish […] the air is full of a bloody smell, permeated with the stinking smell of a place where the garbage hasn’t been picked up for a long time; on the other end of the longtangs the wafting stench of children’s urine pools and topped cesspools mix together. It’s simply intolerable. (37)

Interestingly, there are more stories in which the same image of a luxurious restaurant with poor houses in the backyard appears, such as “Food Court” by Shen Jialu. So, whereas the stories set in the Lower Corner show another Shanghai than the booming, cosmopolitan Shanghai, these stories, albeit reluctantly, literally show the backside of that very booming, cosmopolitan city.

Unsurprisingly, Younger Sister feels no regret for the fact that the neighborhood is about to be demolished. In fact, she laments: “if only they would tear down this place a bit faster (41).” Accordingly, when Younger Sister and Elder Sister walk out of Hongkou and cross Zhapu bridge over Suzhou Creek, it is only when they see the high buildings of Pudong in the distance that Younger Sister’s “mood finally begins to calm down (41).”

Suzhou Creek 苏州河 (also called Wusong River 吴淞江) forms a clear edge for both stories, in Lynch’s (1960: 62) definition.77

Edges are the linear elements not considered paths: they are […] the boundaries between two kinds of areas. They act as lateral references. […] Those edges seem strongest which are not only visually prominent, but also continuous in form and impenetrable to cross movement.

Suzhou Creek originates in Lake Taihu near Suzhou and flows from west to east through the city, emptying into Huangpu River at the northern end of the Bund (see figure 2-6). Just like in many other big cities, such as London, Rotterdam, Budapest, and Prague, the river symbolizes the division between richer and poorer areas. In the local dialect of Shanghai there are in fact terms for the districts on both sides of Suzhou Creek: Bangbei 汀北 (‘north of Suzhou Creek’) and Bangnan 汀南 (‘south of Suzhou Creek’), that have the same social class connotations as the Lower Corner and Upper Corner. In the words of Zhang Zhen (2007: 362):

Historically, the river has served as a major divide separating the foreign concessions on the southwest side and the Chinese domains in large parts of the

77 Interestingly, Henriot (2008) observes the same ‘edge’ in the novel Shanghai (1925) by Yokomitsu Riichi that is also set in the Hongkou district: “Yokomitsu’s Shanghai appears much less sharply divided between foreign and Chinese or even Japanese. The dividing line is more about the peculiar nature of the district north of Soochow Creek where both Chinese and Japanese live in equally squalid conditions, which he counterpoints to the cultured atmosphere in the historic core of Shanghai.”
northeast, and thus also is a divide between different social classes and cultural communities. On multiple levels, the Suzhou River, far more than the Huangpu, is the artery of the city and the reservoir of its memories.

For people living north of the river, the so-called Bangbeinese (‘浜北人’), the other side was an unattainable world of glory and wealth. In some stories in City Map this is symbolized by the impossible love of a Bangbeinese for a Bangnan girl, like in Li Qigang’s “Bangbeinese,” where the character Yan Qing also falls in love with a girl living at Bangnan:

She […] lived in a typical Bangnan neighborhood, in a little Western house close to Waibaidu Bridge. What was the notion of Waibaibu Bridge to me, Yan Qing, and all the other children growing up in Sanwan Village [once a notorious area at the north coast of Suzhou Creek]? It was a bit the same as we have today when we imagine New York, imagine Manhattan. It was too remote. (66)

In both “Hongkou Anecdote” and “Come Over,” one of the Suzhou bridges symbolizes the crossing point between the two worlds. In “Come Over,” the Zhapu Bridge makes it possible for the narrator to leave her childhood neighborhood behind. In the perception of the sisters, the bridge marks the end of the run-down Bangbei area and the beginning of the prosperous Bangnan area. This is what Lynch (1960: 47) calls a node reference point:

Nodes are points, the strategic spots in a city into which observer can enter, and which are the intensive foci to and from which he is traveling. They may be primarily junctions, places of a break in transportation, a crossing or convergence of paths, moments to shift from one structure to another.

In “Hongkou Anecdote,” however, the Waibaidu Bridge connects the two worlds:

In the early colonial times, the Bund and Triangle Quarter stood facing one another at a distance, divided by the winding Suzhou Creek; it was a rural scene. As more and more residential buildings were built, the Bund gradually developed into the background of Triangle Quarter. The Bund was dear to the Triangle Quarter residents […] they would go to the Bund to take some pictures as a keepsake, and pointing at Waibaidu Bridge they would tell their friends: “there, on the other side, is our Triangle Quarter.” (57)

The Waibaidu Bridge 外白渡桥, better known as Garden Bridge outside of China, replaced the wooden Willis Bridge in 1906-7. It is Shanghai’s first iron and concrete bridge, and one of the symbols of modern Shanghai (Lu [Hanchao] 1999: 42). The narrator also recounts how her father, in retirement, crossed Waibaidu Bridge every
day to walk on the Bund. Thanks to the bridge, the Bund became part of his daily life as a Triangle Quarter resident.

In “Hongkou Anecdote” the bridge is thus perceived as a path, rather than a node. Moreover, considering its unique appearance and local importance, it is certainly also an important landmark, both conventionally and in Lynch’s (1960: 78-9) definition:

Landmarks, the points of reference considered to be external to the observer, are simple physical elements which may vary widely in scale. [...] Since the use of landmarks involves the singling out of one element from a host of possibilities, the key characteristic of this class is singularity, some aspect that is unique or memorable in the context. Landmarks become more easily identifiable, more likely to be chosen as significant, if they have a clear form; if they contrast with their background; and if there is some prominence of spatial locations.

In addition, the Shanghainese see the Waibaidu Bridge as a symbol of freedom or, contrarily, as a symbol of colonial humiliation. Firstly, because the bridge was the crossing point from the International Concessions to the Japanese occupied district, which was later predominantly associated with Japanese military aggression, such as the notorious January 28 Incident (a battle between Chinese and Japanese troops that lasted over a month in Shanghai). Secondly, because of its name that Visser (2010a: 319) explains as follows:

[Waibaidu] initially referred to its positioning as the outermost (wai [外]) ferry crossing, but later played on an alternate meaning of wai, which is exemplified in the saying ‘foreigners (wai) cross for free (baidu [白渡])’; from 1937-1941, Japanese soldiers would stop Chinese, humiliate them, and punish them if they hadn’t shown proper respect, while foreigners were allowed to ‘pass freely.’

And as an urban legend that recently reappeared in the Shanghai Daily (6 February 2008) has it:

The word ‘baidu’ 白渡 means ‘free ferry,’ a name dating from a time of discrimination when only Chinese people had to pay a toll to use an earlier bridge built in 1856 by a British businessman on practically the same site.

F.L. Hawks Pott (1928: 73) describes in A Short History of Shanghai how in fact both Chinese and foreigners had to pay toll to cross the bridge, but that the foreigners often paid on credit, giving the Chinese the impression that foreigners passed for free.  

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78 See also the article “Bridge of Misunderstanding: Shanghai’s Waibaidu Qiao” by Wm Patrick Cranley, on Shanghaiist.com (http://shanghaiist.com/2008/02/19/bridge_of_misun.php).
Remarkably, in “Come Over,” when Younger Sister and Elder Sister cross the Zhapu Bridge to walk out of Bangbei, ‘the other shore’ they refer to is not Bangnan, but Pudong, on the other shore of Shanghai’s other big river: the Huangpu River, which forms an edge for several stories in City Map. Take for example the following passage from “This Shore and the Other Shore” by Yang Yu:

In the memory of Lin Jiangguo, this river had been closely linked to their lives. The Huangpu River lies on the edge of the city, moving secretly but ceaselessly towards the center of the city. Since his youth, he had felt a mysterious charm in the way the river separated this side from the other, turning the other shore into a hazy myth, that made you want to cross the river on impulse. Lin Jiangguo had one day crossed the river many times, each time in a different way. The most amazing way was when he and Yao Weidong swam to the other side, each holding a watermelon in one arm. (209)

The Huangpu River is Shanghai’s largest river and a branch of the largest river of China: the Yangzi. The river flows from south to north (see figure 2-5) forward the East China Sea, and is used as a point of orientation: Puxi refers to the districts west of the river, and Pudong to the eastern part. Before Pudong became part of China’s Special Economic Zones in 1990, it was severely underdeveloped. There were no bridges connecting it to the rest of the city (Nanpu Bridge and Huangpu Bridge were built in the 1990s), so that it was seen as practically ‘out of Shanghai,’ and people would joke that they “would rather own a bed in Puxi than a house in Pudong,” or that “Puxi belonged to the First World, Bangbei to the Second World, whereas Pudong belonged to the Third World” (Pow 2009: 176).

Noteworthy, not only “Hongkou Anecdote” and “Come Over” reflect the impact of the development of the Pudong New Area on the urban experience of Shanghai residents. In fact, the hand-drawn maps show how the importance of the Suzhou Creek is gradually replaced by the Huangpu River. Take, for example, the maps by Kong Mingzhu (“Born on Sichuan Road”) and Li Qigang (“Bangbeinese”) that only show the Suzhou Creek, highlighting the Bangnan / Bangbei division:

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79 Another name for Shanghai is ‘Huangputan’ (黄浦滩), meaning ‘Huangpu Shore.’

80 Even though the area was severely underdeveloped, the persistent idea that Pudong was mainly farmland and countryside before 1990 is however not correct. In the Lujiazui area (the setting of “This Shore and the Other Shore”) of Pudong alone 52,000 households (approx 169,000 people) were moved from the 4-sq-km heart of Lujiazui to make way for the heart of the Pudong Special Economic Zone. (Huang [Michelle] 2004: 113.)
Whereas the maps by Mi Hong (“Fading Palace”) and Yang Yu (“This Shore and the Other Shore”) show both rivers, while drawing attention to the Puxi / Pudong orientation:

Likewise, in “Hongkou Anecdote” Pudong is never mentioned, while in “Come Over” it stands for the new Shanghai, with the Oriental Pearl TV Tower (as observed by Younger Sister from the Zhapu Bridge) exemplifying Lynch’s landmark to perfection. Or in the words of André Jansson and Amanda Lagerkvist (2009: 34):
Here [on the Pudong New Area], futuristic visions are spatialized as e.g. in the Oriental Pearl TV tower which is already the established icon of New Shanghai, embodying national and local symbols of modernity and arrival.

In “Come Over,” Younger Sister observes both the Shanghai Mansion and the Oriental Pearl TV Tower when she stands on the bridge. Before the Oriental Pearl TV Tower was built, the Shanghai Mansion used to be the symbol of Shanghai. The Shanghai Mansion (also known as Broadway Mansions) is an art-deco luxury hotel built by the British colonizers in the 1930s, when it was once one of Asia’s tallest structures. In “Hongkou Anecdote,” only the Shanghai Mansion plays an important role in both the personal memories of the narrator (her father once took her there), and the collective memory of the Triangle Quarter residents:

The Shanghai Mansion was very dear to Triangle Quarter residents. In the 1960s, its door was always shut and it had a mysterious air about it. There was an empty ground at the foot of the building where the wind blew freely, creating a wonderful place for people to enjoy the cool of a summer evening. When the sun was just setting, Triangle Quarter residents rushed there to grab places to sit. (56)

So, whereas Younger Sister fixes her eyes on the Oriental Pearl TV Tower of Pudong, for Huifen the Shanghai Mansion, Waibaidu Bridge, and the Bund are still the landmarks that mark her home. Both narrators, however, share the dream of living somewhere else. As Huifen laments:

I am still living in this world and dream of living in a Western-style house. My father cannot dream anymore - he has gone to another world. (36)

… and Younger Sister:

Younger Sister: “I don’t know why, but some people have the luck to live in a high rise building all their lives […]?”
Older Sister: “Maybe this is what’s called fate.”
Younger Sister: “How could fate be so random?” (42)
CONCLUDING REMARKS

When placing the main settings of the stories in the collection City Map on an actual city map of Shanghai, a glimpse of the city’s history is revealed: from Communist-era working class life in factories in 1970s Shanghai in the northeast, to wandering young women in the streets of 1990s commercialized Shanghai in the southwest.

Literary Map 1 shows how Shanghai’s colonial history still shapes the mental map of local writers: most stories are set in former concessions and depict a cosmopolitan and bourgeois lifestyle reminiscent of the semi-colonial period. As the rest of this study will discuss stories set in these neighborhoods, this chapter has focused on the stories that did not fit the pattern: the four stories set in the Lower Corner. Close reading reveals how these stories diverge from the Upper Corner stories, not only in location, but also in time (Mao period), themes (working class life), writing styles (rural) and even its authors (middle-aged men).

The mental maps of Younger Sister (“Come Over”) and Huifen (“Hongkou Anecdote”) in Literary Map 2 show how in Shanghai’s recent history the center of urban gravity has moved from Bangnan vs. Bangbei towards Puxi vs. Pudong. For Younger Sister, representative of the younger generation, Bangbei is mere history, only reminding her of a childhood of poverty she feels ashamed of. The feelings of older Huifen, on the other hand, are more ambivalent, both nostalgic for the Bangbei neighborhoods residuals of semi-colonial times and resentful for her father’s inability to leave the place.

Finally, by joining the city maps with mental maps and literary maps in an interdisciplinary reading, Shanghai’s urban transformation is fused with its fictional imaginings. The city’s ‘objective’ change becomes reflected in the subjective experience of its citizens, revealing a three-dimensional map in which human aspiration remains constant where surroundings are in flux.