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the european view on history was shaken to its foundations when missionaries in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries discovered that chinese history was older than european and biblical history with an analysis of the chinese manchu and european sources on ancient chinese history this essay proposes an early case of intercultural historiography in which historical texts of different cultures are interwoven it focusses on the ways chinese and european authors interpreted stories about marvellous births by the concubines of emperor ku these stories have been the object of a wide variety of interpretations in chinese texts each of them representing a different historical genre they are excellent case studies to illustrate how the chinese hermeneutic strategies shaped the diversity of interpretations given by europeans

in this innovative work ming dong gu examines chinese literature and traditional chinese criticism to construct a distinctly chinese theory of fiction and places it within the context of international fiction theory he argues that because chinese fiction or xiaoshuo was produced in a tradition very different from that of the west it has formed a system of fiction theory that cannot be adequately accounted for by western fiction theory grounded in mimesis and realism through an inquiry into the macrocosm of chinese fiction the art of formative works and theoretical data in fiction commentaries and intellectual thought gu explores the conceptual and historical conditions of chinese fiction in relation to european and world fiction in the process gu critiques and challenges some accepted views of chinese fiction and provides a theoretical basis for fresh approaches to fiction study in general and chinese fiction in particular such masterpieces as the jin ping mei the plum in the golden vase and the hongloumeng the story of the stone are discussed at length to advance his notion of fiction and fiction theory

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