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Binary Pairs of Yin/ Yang and Body / Soul in Xiao Yao's *Chaotic Sword God*

Azra Ghandeharion¹, Ali Eatesam²

¹ Associate Professor, Department of English, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad,
Mashhad, Iran (Corresponding author)

gbandeharioon@um.ac.ir

² MA student, Department of English, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Mashhad, Iran

Shaltook75@gmail.com

Abstract. In recent years we are faced with an ever-growing popularity of the English translation of Chinese web novels. These novels have a glamorous attraction for most readers because of the different cultural backgrounds of their writers. This paper analyzes one of the most popular Chinese web-novels in the English world, Xiao Yao's *Chaotic Sword God* (2019). The theoretical framework is informed by Derrida's (1987) views, Foucault's (1975) concepts of body/ soul, and Carrette's (2002) reorganization of Foucauldian notions of corporal soul and embodied religion. It aims to demonstrate how Xiao Yao exploits the seemingly opposing binary concepts such as yin / yang or body / soul. By dissolving the surface oppositions between the pairs, Xiao Yao introduces a state of harmony and balance which seems to be the key in understanding some of the novel's central ideas like cultivation, human, god(ly) and evil akin to many other Chinese web novels. After deciphering Xiao Yao's strategy in presenting the mentioned concepts, and demonstrating how *Chaotic Sword God* can be linked to Foucault's theories on the embodiment of religion, the main themes are revealed: the war between the Saint Universe and the Immortal World and the resulting inner conflict in the protagonist, Jian Chen. Finally, the paper concludes that the main themes of the novel, are politically significant since it is closely connected to USA- China relationship.

Key words: binary pairs, body and soul, cultivation, god(ly) and evil, Xiao Yao's *Chaotic Sword God*

1: Introduction

In 2000 online story telling was a rather new term, and it was just starting to grow popular. However, online literature in China started sometime between 1994 -7 when the



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site *Under the Banyan Tree* was first launched (Yang, 2010, p. 333). Through the years of development of online storytelling, it has taken many forms. Chinese web novels are one of them.

Fantasy fiction nowadays is one of popular genres and names such *Lord of the Rings* (1954) are familiar to many readers. Xuanhuan is a sub-genre of fantasy fiction which focuses more on Chinese mythology, martial arts and cultivation and has achieved great popularity among Chinese readers and critics (Wang, 2017, p. 1). Some of the features of Xuanhuan novels are intensity, immediacy, and gripping suspense. Because of the prevalence of these features, once online literature websites began to burgeon after 2000, Xuanhuan novels became the dominant genre; this format now attracts millions of readers alongside thousands of authors (Wang, 2017, p. 1).

Popular online novel might be usually considered as a genre of literature where higher meanings, spirituality and human existence are uncommon. However, spirituality is not new to Chinese popular culture. Even before the birth of modern China many of the religious and political schools, ideologies, and groups expressed themselves in Chinese popular novels of the time (Xun & Junwen, 2007, p. 380). On the other hand, in today's China, online writing, especially web novels, is the space and format by which Chinese readers and writers find freedom for expressing their ideas and political, or religious aspirations. Thus, it would be neglectful to dismiss Chinese web novels as mere ways for immediate entertainment.

Nowadays, Chinese web novels are becoming ever more popular among international readers, but one of the main difficulties in understanding them is rooted in diverse cultural backgrounds. Thus, many terms and concepts which are familiar for the Chinese readers are mostly vague and unknown to most international readers.

This paper aims to analyze one of the popular Chinese web novels by focusing on its text and China's cultural context to clarify some of the primary concepts which might be ambiguous for the majority of international readers who are not very familiar with Chinese culture or their online literature. The target of this paper is Xiao Yao's *Chaotic Sword God* (2019) which is an ongoing Chinese web novel (first published online in 2010 in *17k.com*). Three books of this novel have been published in 2019 and are the main text for this paper but this paper will also consist of the analysis of several later chapter which can be found in *Wuxia World* website. The story of *Chaotic Sword God* (Yao, 2019) follows the life and journey of Jian Chen who dies in the ancient China and is transmigrated to the world of saints and immortals.

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This research will apply Derrida's (1987) framework of Deconstruction to trace Xiao Yao's process of disrupting the opposition between seemingly contrasting and opposed pairs. Such as yin / yang, and body/ soul to present a state of harmony and to create new and possibly greater meanings and concepts like cultivation, which originates from a state of harmony between body and soul by following the heavenly path (Yao, 2019, chapter 378, p. 1018). Furthermore, this paper will be benefiting from Foucault's (1975) concepts and theories on body, soul and Carrette's (2002) reading of his theories on the concept of embodied religion to demonstrate how the concepts of body / soul in *Chaotic Sword God* (Yao, 2019) are linked to Foucault's redefinition and disruption of the binary opposition between body and soul, and how Xiao Yao creates his own definition of modern man through this process.

The main aims in this study are: first to clarify and explain what cultivation and several other related terms mean in *Chaotic Sword God* (Yao, 2019) as an example for Chinese Xuanhuan web novels; then it will try to analyze the theme of conflict and war between the two main universes, the Saint World versus the Immortal World, in this specific novel. It is concluded that by relying on the concept of yin and yang, Xiao Yao tries to present his unique definition of modern man. Moreover, the plot and setting of the *Chaotic Sword God* (Xiao Yao, 2019) are closely related to the political situation of China and West.

2: Theoretical Framework

For the theoretical framework, this paper firstly benefits from Derrida's (1987) concept of Deconstruction. Deconstruction has been described as "a method of critical analysis of philosophical and literary language which emphasizes the internal workings of language and conceptual systems, the relational quality of meaning and the assumptions implicit in forms of expression" (Soanes & Stevenson, 2003, p. 451). The first aim is to understand how Xiao Yao uses the same method which Derrida introduced as deconstruction to create new meanings and concepts like cultivation which will be examined in later sections. Derrida aimed to question the supposedly 'fixed' meanings by breaking the binary oppositions which were popular in the structuralist school of thought (Derrida, 1978, p. 274); this process seems to be exactly what Xiao Yao does with several of his novel's main concepts and themes, namely yin / yang, body / soul, and the novel's main conflict between the Saint World and the Immortal World.

Aside from Derrida's concept of deconstruction this paper aims to examine *Chaotic Sword God's* (Yao, 2019) concepts of body and soul by relying on Foucault's (1975)

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concept of corporal soul, and Carrette's (2002) reorganization of this concept in his notion of embodied religion. Foucault's theories can also be very helpful for this paper's arguments because of his amalgamation of spiritual and corporeal, and his linking of soul to the body. His redefinitions make it possible to create a connection between material and spiritual, and link body and soul into an embodied religion (Carrette, 2002, p. 55). As the concept of modern or corporal soul is presented in different pieces of Foucault's works, and there are some disorganizations in how he defines the same concept in different works, this paper will rely on Carrette's (2002) reading of Foucault's corporal soul in his *Foucault and Religion*.

3: Methodology

This paper benefits from Derrida's (1987) concept of Deconstruction and binary pairs to answer this question: How does Xiao Yao exploit the concept of binary pairs? First, this paper reveals how the writer introduces two seemingly contradictory and opposing concepts like yin and yang, and then dissolves the conflict between the two concepts through introducing a state of harmony and concepts like union and completion. For example, Chaos which is of a higher order than either yin or yang would be one example of Yao's New Harmony. Aside from this, the paper aims to show how Yao's definitions of body and soul can be closely examined based on Foucauldian theories of corporal soul embodied religion (Foucault, 1975; Carrette, 2002).

4: Discussion

In *Chaotic Sword God* (2019), Xin Xing Xiao Yao (1990-) also known as Xiaoming Chao (肖明超) depicts an ancient fictional world of cultivation and a post-apocalyptic universe in which mankind has abandoned or forgotten all modern technology and its over consumeristic mentality. The novel tries to convey a loop or a repeatable cycle for humanity. There are two main but subtle hints to this cycle. First, we encounter the embodiment of the evil energy near the end of the novel's first ark, which likely was supposed to be doomsday of the protagonist's Earth (Yao, 2019, Chapter 1607). Later, in the higher realms we encounter the plotline on the lost technology which is said to belong to another time (Yao, 2019, Chapter 2053). This technology and its power are feared for their mass destructive power in the world of gods and superhuman thus this novel is set in a post-apocalyptic timeline. While going through the novel, the readers follow Jian Chen's footsteps as he creates his own path which is different from both the heavenly path of classical cultivation and the modernized cultivation.



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4.1 Yin & Yang

The reason this novel is highly compatible with binary pairs is the author's cultural background. Chinese culture includes the popular belief that the Cosmos is the result of two binaries conflicting and complimenting each other, a mixture of two extreme opposites, namely yin and yang (Wong, 2011, p. 179). This novel follows the same structure: in the beginning there was just one (Chaos), and then this turned into two (yin and yang), and from this pair everything was created (Hu, 2012, p 13). Thus, it can be seen that in Chinese cosmology binaries are essential. Putting this fact together with another repeated notion in the novel, the main world view governing the novel's framework becomes clear. The second notion is that yin and yang individually are fruitless; to give birth to new life, they must be united (Yao, 2019, Chapter 202, p. 532). This unification can be inclined more towards one of either yin or yang which is the cause of difference between creatures and matters. For example, in the novel it is believed that generally men are more inclined towards yang and women leaning towards yin (p. 532). As mentioned, this inclination makes the yin / yang amalgamation different. From this concept the next idea of this world view arises: the notion of balance. For the unification to be possible and stable the two binaries must have a certain balance and the best balance creates the strongest mixture or the most perfect and stable new life. This excerpt from *Chaotic Sword God's* (Yao, 2019) clearly demonstrates the binaries: their conflict in the beginning and their balance as a way of achieving a greater state is revealed:

Although the violet and azure swords together were capable of splitting the heavens and earth. However, since the swords were Yin and Yang, they naturally fought against each other like water to fire, making it difficult for them to harmonize. If in the process of mixing the two there was an imbalance of Yin or Yang, there would be anarchy that would devour all. Not only would they harm the enemy, but the owner as well.

(Yao, 2019, Chapter 202, p. 532)

The first section of the novel shows binary opposition in two seemingly conflicting existence, then a balance is found in these two conflicting extremes. Later, when they reach this balance, they produce harmony, and a new existence / life. Also, the degree to which the final existence is inclined towards one of the binaries creates the natural characteristics of any entity. In the novel we have instances of perfect harmony between yin and yang that gives birth to an existence of higher level from either of them, namely Chaos, which is



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closest to the beginning of creation in in the theory of Yin/yang, in Chinese culture and religions, (Hu, 2012, p 13) and the novel's setting.

This concept of duality, opposition and support might seem very simple and limited to material concepts. However, it is a greatly developed and comprehensive philosophy both in Chinese culture, originating from the school of yin and yang and integrated in many of the Chinese institutional and folk religions like Taoism, Buddhism, or Falun gong etc., and the novel, *Chaotic Sword God* (Yao, 2019). In the next section, this paper will demonstrate how the concept of Yin and yang pervades many aspects, themes, and motifs of this novel.

4.2 Cultivation, God(ly) & Evil

With a single thought, Jian Chen's spirit /soul transformed into thousands of pieces as he began to reforge the fragments of his Saint Weapon... His dantian was like the cauldron and the energy was the fire that allowed for the fragments to be refined and smelted... On the verge of becoming an Earth Saint Master, his own body would also undergo a transformation... Six hours later, Jian Chen's bodily transformation was complete.
(Yao, 2019, Chapter 283, p. 727)

One of the main concepts of the novel is cultivation. To understand cultivation, we need to understand the binaries related to it. In the novel we have a certain understanding of the live beings in its setting. Supposedly each live creature has a physical body and a soul / spirit (Yao, 2019, Chapter 3, p. 8). These two oppose, compromise and complement each other. Body is a prison for soul (p. 1017). Yet body is also soul's container, vessel and protector. Likewise, soul limits the degree to which physical body can be strengthened and perfected (p. 1017). After perceiving this binary, it is much easier to understand cultivation. Cultivation is the balance between body and soul and the degree of its inclination towards either binary pairs, gives it diversity. In the novel, body act as the container which keeps and protects energy and soul inside; and soul is where personality or characteristics of each person resides (p. 1018). It is also through soul that a person can gain understanding of the surrounding world; the higher the soul's understanding of the world is, the more power and energy the body can attain from it:

A Saint Ruler's way of cultivation was not like the regular way of cultivating Saint Force to improve themselves. They walked a different path by trying to comprehend the profound mysteries of the world.



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(Yao, 2019, Chapter 378, p. 1018)

Thus, this balance between body and soul creates the system of cultivation in the novel, which is quite different from western concept of superman or super-heroes. Cultivation brings inner harmony, but also helps the person gain harmony with the world outside; because to cultivate in a world, human soul must have enough understanding of that world and this understanding leads to harmony (Yao, 2019, Chapter 202, p. 532; Chapter 378, p. 1018).

This definition is the classical idea of cultivation which can clearly be found and understood in *Chaotic Sword God* (Yao, 2019) and also the classic Chinese literature like *The Journey to the West* (Cheng'en, 2012). However, this definition of cultivation was more suitable for agrarian societies who lived in harmony with nature. As time passed, the conflict between human and nature became more apparent and hence cultivation was redefined as controlling the nature.

Both the classic and modernized idea of cultivation are depicted in this novel. In the novel, first we see the classic type of cultivation defined as following “the way of heaven” and laws of creation (Yao, 2019, Chapter 202, p. 532; Chapter 378, p. 1018). Later in the novel, the modernized cultivation, is defying spirituality and fate. In the novel, this conflict creates the concept of classic god, then mortality and finally evil (Yao, 2019, Chapter 1568). In the cultivation system, to reach the highest level, a person must abandon all worldly desires and emotions; as a result, when a person reaches this pinnacle of cultivation, s/he has abandoned human desires, and emotions. The cultivated person is the personification of ‘the Heavenly Way and laws’ (Yao, 2019, Chapter 1438). The degree to which a person has abandoned his emotions and desires show how much he remains human and similar to mortals; thus, a god in classical definition of cultivation (in *Chaotic Sword God* mainly) is a creature who has abandoned his personal emotions and desires and has reached the highest level of cultivation:

I want to break through... Today, I'll completely sever my seven emotions and six desires and complete the cultivation path I have created.

(Yao, 2019, Chapter 1438)

The second version of cultivation is quite vague and we do not have many direct references to it until the later parts of novel's first ark (Chapter 1607). Although the classical works like *The Journey to the West* (Cheng'en, 2012) beg for a modernized definition for cultivation, this notion is rather less developed compared to the classic



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concept. *Chaotic Sword God* (Yao, 2019) mostly defines this modernized way of cultivation as the extreme opposite of the first classification which means the path to godhood and classical cultivation. In other words, the modernized cultivation is an evil force seeking destruction of all creation, full of malice and dark emotions. This form is the opposing pole of classical god in Chinese literature; it is destructive, unrestricted by the Heavenly Way, full of dark emotions, and thus, called evil. 'Heavenly Way' being an English translation of a main Chinese cultural and religious term, which is known as 'Dao' or simply as 'way'. This term refers to the higher order of cosmos and the grand scheme of things (Xun & Junwen, 2007, p. 405).

This modernized definition creates a new concept: evil system of power or evil cultivation. This system is the extreme opposite of harmony with nature and classical cultivation. Interestingly, the novel's protagonist, Jian Chen, first learns the classical cultivation but later, accidentally, his body and soul are affected by the remains of an evil destructive power (Yao, 2019, Chapter 1631).

In the following part of the novel, the hero tries to keep the balance between his normal cultivation and the evil force in his body. This incident is the symbolic presentation of the conflict between god(ly) and evil; if a person can create a balance between good and evil, s/he is defined a human. The author, Xiao Yao, indirectly conveys that seeking neither pure harmony with the Dao or Heavenly Way, nor unrestrained desires, emotions, and power makes one humane. Here harmony is a form of complete obedience and subjection rather than a balance between self and the world. According to the novel, the internal conflict between these two that leads to a balance between them, is what any human being should try to achieve as cultivators with independent will.

4.3 Foucault's Body, Soul & Embodied Religion

On a further note, one can find peculiar links between these dualities of body / soul, god(ly) / evil, and cultivation with some of the concepts of the French philosopher Michel Foucault (1975). Foucault has a peculiar understanding of the concept of soul and its relation to body which seems to have interesting and thought-provoking similarities and contrasts with the definitions of body, soul and cultivation in *Chaotic Sword God*. (Yao, 2019), as a piece of literature born from China's culture and religions. Foucault did not believe in God and there is not much doubt in this claim. However, he never denied the existence of soul. In contrast, he gives his own definition for soul. For Foucault, God is assumed dead and the same can be said with regards to religious order (Carrette, 2002, p. 55). While Foucault does not directly attack religion, his theories are "a radical disruption



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of its exclusions” (p. 55). His concept of corporal soul or what Carrette termed as spiritual corporality and political spirituality seemed to dissolve the clear distinction and binary opposition that existed so clearly in many traditional religious orders. In many traditional religious schools, soul is the gate from which man can reconnect with God (Carrette, 2002, p. 70), and the link to immortality, afterlife and transcendence. However, Foucault (1975) denies the existence of all these notions but he never denies the existence of soul:

It would be wrong to say that the soul is an illusion, or an ideological effect. On the contrary, it exists, it has reality, it is produced permanently around, on, within the body by the functioning of power that is exercised on those punished—and in a more general way, on those one supervises, trains and corrects....
(Foucault 1975, p. 29)

“Foucault maps the soul onto the body” (Carrette, 2002, p. 110) and tries to break soul/body duality. This definition of a corporal soul creates the opportunity to have a new understanding of both religious (body and soul), and non-religious entities (Carrette, 2002, p. 143).

What might be most peculiar is the similarities of Foucault’s notion of a corporeal soul with *Chaotic Sword God’s* duality between yin/ yang and body/ soul. Foucault delineates the soul as a something not physical that permanently exists within and around the body. Soul which is the result of power structure, enforces the disciplinary power to shape the body in a peculiar way. One can see the way how *Chaotic Sword God* (Yao, 2019) defined the soul and its functions has many affinities with Foucault’s views. Thus, this novel presents a new manifestation of Foucault’s concepts of body and soul from a fictional and unexpected angle. In *Chaotic Sword God*, the body of a cultivator is the subject of the Heavenly Way or Dao, and as one acquires more power from the Heavenly Way, his / her body is subject to higher levels of heavenly discipline and laws. These laws are engraved into his soul permanently, and then these etched laws gradually change and reform his /her soul in accordance to the Heavenly Way. In turn, the changed soul of the cultivator influences and shapes the body in accordance to Heavenly Way or Dao. This process is empowering; yet, at the same time it makes the body / subject docile toward the Heavenly Way. The subject will become less human and more a manifestation of the Heavenly Way or Dao, which is defined as the path to godhood in the novel.

The Foucauldian concept of punishment also appears in the novel, being termed as ‘Celestial Decay’ by Xiao Yao (Chapter 378, p. 1016). As much as the cultivators gain power in the power hierarchy of Heavenly Way, they also become more docile and responsible. If a person with higher cultivation commits the same sin which someone of a



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lower rank has committed, the person with higher rank will be punished more severely: “The Celestial Decay is a law of the world that transcends time itself. It is able to eliminate or discipline those at the Saint Ruler level or higher” (Chapter 378, p. 1017).

This process, the duality between the body and soul and their interlinked development and change, is similar to what Carrette (2002) termed as embodied religion or religious practices based on Foucault’s corporeal soul (p. 127). The higher a person goes in the levels of heavenly power and the better s/he understands its discipline and dynamics, the more s/he loses the self; simultaneously, empowerment with higher amounts of the cosmos functions under the same Heavenly Way.

The novel’s stance regarding the power net and construct is clear in Jian Chen’s actions and decisions. As the reader follows the protagonist through the novel, one sees that Jian Chen has to trail the way of heaven, integrate its discipline within his soul and shape his body accordingly. However, while he chooses to incorporate the Heavenly Way in his soul, he never abandons his mortal emotions or his family to become more compatible with the Heavenly Way. While we see that many characters consciously decide to take a detour to abandon their emotions and human social ties; they try to go to higher levels of power and gain more understanding of the ways of heaven shortly (Yao, 2019, Chapter 1438).

Later in the novel’s plot, Jian Chen becomes contaminated with an evil power full of destructive will and negative emotions. However, he does not surrender to the temptation of becoming a god of Heavenly Way by abandoning his emotions and his connection with his family and friends. Furthermore, he also avoids gaining more power in a short span of time by obeying all the negative emotions which exist in the evil energy (Yao, 2019, Chapter 1607). Evil energy is the embodiment of the evil spirit, which is this novel’s version of Apocalypse (Yao, 2019, Chapter 1607). Jian Chen keeps the balance between the modernized and traditional cultivation to protect what is dear to him without losing himself in either of the two hierarchies of power. Jian Chen’s stance seems to indicate the Xiao Yao’s version of human and humanity.

Despite the systems of cultivation, depicted and introduced in this novel, are fictitious, they have their representation in the today’s China and world’s social reality. It is the case with many other successful Chinese or non-Chinese web novels like *World of Cultivation* (Xiang, 2010), *Xian Ni* (Er Gen, 2009), and *Super Gene* (Seraphim, 2016). In *Chaotic Sword God’s* case, the two main systems of cultivation represent and symbolize two great schools of thought. First, there is the path of the evil power, which is a rather



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modern concept in the historical development of the notion of cultivation. This path represents the way of ever developing social man, who rules the world without the least sympathy. He changes his environment and even destroys nature to magnetize all the power from the world around him. There is no harmony between him and nature or cosmos; there is only manipulation and destruction with little hope of recovery. That is how *Chaotic Sword God* (2019) symbolizes the modern man, although in an exaggerated manner.

On the other hand, the traditional cultivation of Heavenly Way is a window to China's cultural heritage and the extreme opposite of modernized cultivation. This branch of conventional cultivation is depicted as a possible way of great harmony and social and personal development without bringing extreme harm to the world around (Yao, 2019, Chapter 378, P. 1018). The irony is that there are many petty, cruel and selfish characters among these 'true' cultivators of the Heavenly Way which seems unexpected since they have gone through all the levels of heavenly discipline. This shows either the author's inability to integrate the concept of cultivation with human nature, or the author's belief that human nature would not be changed entirely regardless of time and place.

There is one possibly different interpretation as well: Xiao Yao depicts the Heavenly Way as having infinite branches, while many of the branches that cultivators peruse might lead to dead-ends at some point. This shows the flaws and misunderstanding of the heavenly or right path. Nevertheless, the author seems to criticize both paths because of their dehumanizing effects. Xiao Yao depicts how the extreme dependance on and pursuit of either of these paths will bring harm and destruction either to self or to the world (Yao, 2019, Chapter 1438; Chapter 1611).

4.4 Saints & Immortals, West & East

Next, we have the binary in the system of worlds in this book since Yao depicts several universes. Each universe consists of countless sub-worlds. The worlds themselves have a hierarchy, ranked from 'Mortal worlds' to 'Great worlds' (Yao, 2019, Chapter 1916; Chapter 5, p. 14). The difference in each world is because of the limitation of 'Heavenly Law' and the height of Heavenly Law determines the pick of cultivation in that world (Yao, 2019, Chapter 1666).

The two most important universes in this novel are the 'Saint World' and 'Immortal World'. We also have 'World of Gods', 'World of Demons' and 'World of Beasts' (Yao, 2019, Chapter 1666). The World of Saints seems to symbolize the western culture, history and religion; while, the Immortal World symbolizes eastern and especially Chinese religions, culture and history. There are clear references in each world relating

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them to the Western/ Eastern symbolic cultures. In the Saint World the readers see concepts of saints of Light Temple, which clearly echoes the Western Church (Chapter 11). On the other hand, the Immortal World has its own specialties like karma, chaos, yin / yang and many mythological creatures specific to eastern and Chinese culture (Chapter 2160).

In the novel's plot, the two universes are engaged in a destructive war. The conclusion is reached only when one or both are devastated. Here, the plot becomes deeper and more engaging in terms of how the readers observe Jian Chen's dilemma and sympathize with him. A dilemma which they might have personally experienced in the social reality of today's international relations, especially if one considers the unsettled sociopolitical international relations between US and China. Jian Chen and his friends like Sacred Feather and many other characters have origins from immortal universe but they are born or reincarnated in the Saint World (Yao, 2019, Chapter 1426). They live and grow up among the people of the Saint World, and shape many bounds of friendships in the first three sections. Here the greatest concern of Jian Chen is how to balance his Immortal World heritage with his relationship concerning his friends and family from the Saint World. The author indirectly points out that if balance and peace is not achieved, these two universes will be doomed to destruction similar to the destiny of the world of Gods and Beasts. Xiao Yao seems to find the answer to this hurdle in the young generation of the two parties, namely Jian Chen, and his friends and peers. The author placed the protagonist in his enemy's homeland/ universe so that Jian Chen would interact with the younger generation from the Saint World. Henceforth, the two cultures can reach a balance through their interaction. This symbolic presentation reveals the Chinese-American conflict today. Xiao Yao depicts this path as a solution for the conflict between the two cultures and countries to create a new space: the space of mutual acceptance and friendship for the next generations.

5: Results and Conclusion

This paper analyzed some of the primary concepts in Chinese web novels in *Chaotic Sword God* (Yao, 2019). It was demonstrated how Xiao Yao creates his novel's concept of cultivation in terms of reaching internal balance between body and soul. Moreover the main paths towards cultivation in the *Chaotic Sword God* (Yao, 2019) were distinguished. The classical definition as depicted in classical Chinese literature like *The Journey to the West* (Cheng'en, 2012) was based on following the Heavenly Path or Dao. It aimed to achieve harmony with nature and the world outside. However, later on, as time and human culture changed, this definition of cultivation was no longer applicable. A modernized version of cultivation was developed in which we see a strong desire for



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destruction of both nature and self. Both types of cultivation exist in *Chaotic Sword God* and Xiao Yao criticizes them as being either destructive to self and humanity, or to the world and nature. Finally, it was also mentioned how the author tries to introduce a symbolic state of modern man and the destruction he causes around and for himself. Xiao Yao sees the best state of being for mankind in achieving a balance between the traditional and modern types of cultivation.

Furthermore, *Chaotic Sword God* (Yao, 2019) seems to depict the current conflict between USA and China in the form of making two warring universes. The author seems to convey that if these countries do not reach balance and peace, their outcome will be doom and destruction. He endeavors to find solution in allowing younger generation of the two different cultures and countries to interact and befriend outside the prejudiced mindsets of the older generations.



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