

Chinese campus literature

An analysis of the genre within the literary field and of the social roles of protagonists in popular works

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Table of contents

Table of contents	2
Abstract	4
Introduction	5
Chapter 1: Chinese campus literature	7
1.1 History	8
1.2 Media and stakeholders	9
1.3 Censorship	11
1.4 Reputation and debate	12
Chapter 2: Theoretical framework	14
2.1 Theory of literary field	14
2.1.1 Literary field	14
2.1.2 Literary field of China	14
2.2 Role theory	16
Chapter 3: Methodology	17
3.1 Chinese campus literature in modern China's literary field	17
3.2 Research objectives	17
Chapter 4: Analysis	21
4.1 Surviving school	22
4.1.1 Dealing with the school system	22
4.1.2 Dealing with the teachers	23
4.1.3 Dealing with rules, punishments, and rebellion	23
4.1.4 Dealing with criminal activity	24
4.2 Negotiating hierarchies	24
4.2.1 At school	24
4.2.2 At work	25
4.2.3 Within a criminal gang	26
4.2.4 Within an online game	26
4.3 Coping with family	26
4.3.1 Parents	27
4.3.2 Parent figures	28
4.3.3 Siblings	28

4.4 Negotiating social roles	29
4.4.1 Role consensus	29
4.4.2 Role conflict	30
4.4.3 Role conformity	31
4.4.4 Role taking	32
4.5 Discovering love and sex	32
4.5.1 Violence	33
4.5.2 Choice	33
4.5.3 Author gender and bias	34
4.6 Reacting to censorship	35
4.6.1 China's politics and history	35
4.6.2 Violence and sex	36
4.6.3 Textual self censorship	37
Conclusion	39
Bibliography	42
Appendices	43
Appendix 1	43
Appendix 2	45
Appendix 3	46

Abstract

The genre of Chinese campus literature lacks both name and a foreign counterpart outside of Asia, and deserves more familiarity. The aim of this study was to make a start defining Chinese campus literature: the genre consists of works written by both elementary, high school, and university students and their teachers as well as recent graduates. The works can be found in school papers, commercial magazines and journals, online, and as printed books. The protagonists of campus literature works are usually youngsters, and the stories focus on school experiences. I used Bourdieu's theory of *capital*, Hockx's theory of *China's literary field*, and Biddle's theory of *social roles* as foundation on which to build an analysis of the content of ten popular Chinese campus literature works. I found that the genre can be defined using six themes, namely school, hierarchy, family, social roles, love and sex, and censorship. The results indicate that family often stays in the background, while school life, hierarchal relations, and sex are the most important factors within the stories. The social roles of the protagonists show how young adults are still discovering themselves and finding their way in life: they often suffer from insecurity and social pressure.

Introduction

Campus literature (校園文學 *xiaoyuan wenxue*) is a Chinese literary genre which is unfamiliar in most non-Asian countries. There has not been any English research devoted to Chinese campus literature yet; only a few Chinese studies have been written on the topic. I plan to offer the English speaking academic sphere a look into this undiscovered literature genre. Campus literature is a genre worth studying, because it combines literature and education, and encourages students of all ages to read as well as to write. Such a literary genre does not exist in other countries (except for Japan and Korea): this difference fascinates me, and urges me to find out more about this literary genre. In this research, I will examine the question: what defines the genre Chinese campus literature? Through analyzing the position of the genre within the literary field and the protagonists of ten Chinese campus literature works, I will give an indication of the genre as a whole. More specifically, I will look into remarkable aspects standing out while reading these works that might identify the genre and its position within the literary field, and I will investigate these characters' individual positions within a group on the basis of social roles.

In most scholarship, concepts of modern Western literature are used when researching China's situation.¹ The fact that literature has and for centuries has had a central position in Chinese society is indisputable.² The reading and writing of symbolically highly valued texts was daily practice of the bearers of political and cultural power in traditional China, as Hockx explains: "Text composition was a central component of the civil service examinations and there was a broad consensus about the idea that administering order and structure to texts was relevant to administering order and structure to society at large."³ Also because of the early invention of paper (first century) and typography (tenth century), this uninterrupted tradition of writing in China has thrived.⁴ The habit of frequent reading and writing is still present among Chinese today.⁵ In terms of censorship as well as instilling the conduct of self-censorship, the Chinese government – especially under Xi Jinping's rule – continues to exert much influence on the country's literature. Concerning campus literature, I expect this influence to be of minimal size. Works containing fantasy elements might show marks of self-

¹ Idema and Haft (1997), *A guide to Chinese literature*, pp. 3-10.

² *Ibid.*, p. v.

³ Hockx (1999), *The literary field of twentieth-century China*, p. 1.

⁴ Leenhouts (2008), *Chinese literatuur van nu: aards maar bevlogen*, p. 9.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

censorship, but until now there are no cases to be found within this research where stories have been deleted or websites have been pulled offline.

Some information I use for this research comes from my own experience, such as basic knowledge on China and Chinese literature, and also my year abroad at Shandong University which gave me the opportunity to talk with Chinese students and teachers, discover a Chinese university campus, and visit Chinese bookshops. Other information I use for this research is mostly found online: bookstore websites, search engines, free reading websites, etcetera. I have applied the strategy of saving screenshots when necessary, and for less important websites I provide the URL's in the bibliography and appendices. For specific lists of websites I have used for a single goal, I have created three appendices which are available after the bibliography. Of course, because website availability can change quickly and frequently, it is possible a website I refer to has changed in terms of looks and/or content since the time I consulted it. My apologies in advance; this is the risk I had to take when studying online data. Also, it has to be noted that what is a very popular website this month can have lost its momentum by next month. Some scholars have pointed at 《校园文学网站》 (www.xybook.net) as being one of the main online platforms for campus literature⁶, while the most recent articles on this website date from 2014. This goes to show how fast information can be outdated.

In the first chapter, I will attempt to define the genre of Chinese campus literature. I will summarize its history, and describe a number of its institutions and aspects. In the second chapter, I will introduce Pierre Bourdieu's theory on literary fields, whereupon I will explain Michel Hockx's ideas on China's literary field. Furthermore, I will cover B. J. Biddle's theory on social roles. In the third chapter, I will demonstrate how the application of these theories can help in further defining Chinese campus literature. I will describe the position of campus literature in China's literary field, and I will not only illustrate the strategy I have used to compose a list of ten popular Chinese campus literature works, but also state a number of conclusions based on this list. In the fourth chapter, I will analyze these ten works, relying on the theoretical framework. Defining themes in regard to the whole genre as well as the protagonists' social roles will be discussed. Lastly, the conclusion will show results of this analysis.

⁶ Chen Si 陈思, “校园文学创作与网络传播” (Creating campus literature and online spreading), p. 30.

Chapter 1: Chinese campus literature

There does not exist a clear definition of the genre of Chinese campus literature. According to Chinese academia, two different viewpoints can be used to describe the genre. One group regards campus literature in a more 'traditional' manner, consisting of fiction (mostly prose) created by both high school students and higher education students concerning campus life. These works are the result of creative writing classes or exercises in school, and the cooperation between students and teachers: groups of students come together on campus to write and organize activities to stimulate writing, and afterwards, the literary works created by them are checked by teachers and other students. Within this notion, campus literature is a combination of literature and education, and encourages writing and reading among young people.⁷ Both Wu Yanmei (吴艳梅) and Wei Lanxiang (魏兰香) underline the importance of campus literature within the education of students: writing can increase one's creativity and reading can expand one's knowledge of the world, of others, and of oneself.⁸ The second group thinks of the genre in a broader manner, and regards all literary works (mostly prose) reflecting on campus life in general as campus literature. These works are not necessarily written by students, and are not only read by students: often, writers as well as readers are graduates looking back on their campus experiences.⁹ However, when taking into account what Chinese netizens consider to be campus literature, the definition grows even wider. Works combining for example both campus life and magic, campus life and games, or young love and starting a career are also regarded as belonging to this genre. The main topic is no longer restricted only to school.¹⁰ Moreover, campus literature works are often published online. It is not easy to find out who are the writers and readers of these online creations;

⁷ Chen, pp. 30-32,

Cheng Jinjie 程金阶, "校园文学断想" (Brief commentary on campus literature), p. 13-15,

Wei Lanxiang 魏兰香, "校园文学的价值与实现途径" (The value and the way of realization of campus literature), p. 97,

Wu Yanmei 吴艳梅, "'校园文学'在中国当代文学中的作用" (The function of "campus literature" in Chinese contemporary literature), p. 281,

Zhang De'an 张德安, "'校园文学与大学发展之思考'" (Reflection on the development of campus literature and universities), p. 131-132.

⁸ Wei, p. 97,

Wu, p. 281.

⁹ Chen, p. 30,

Wei, p. 97,

Wu, p. 281.

¹⁰ Concluded from analysis top 10 (see chapter 3).

perhaps these persons are not students, teachers, or graduates. Here, the influence of Internet on Chinese campus literature becomes immediately clear, and blurs the lines of an exact definition (more on Internet literature later). While there might not be an agreement on the exact definition of campus literature, it can definitely be stated that the genre comprises a mixture of prose on campus life and young adult experiences: Wu Yanmei (吴艳梅) states that campus literature stories often describe campus life, young love, and clashes between teens and their parents and/or teachers.¹¹

In China, the term ‘campus literature’ is also used to describe the official literary works (such as translated Russian and English classics) which are compulsory readings during high school. This type of campus literature consists of completely different books, and I do not include it in this research.

1.1 History

Most Chinese scholars discussing Chinese campus literature regard Confucius (551 BC – 479 BC) to be the first writer of the genre.¹² They try to create a connection between the genre and China’s long tradition and history – perhaps to make it appear more influential – but modern campus literature works have nothing in common with ancient works such as *The Analects*. In essence, Chinese campus literature is a modern genre and has no relation with ancient Chinese philosophers, Lu Xun, and so forth. Chinese campus literature appeared amidst the opening up of the country thirty years ago. The term ‘campus literature’ was not especially assigned, but was picked up after the Taiwanese magazine “*Unitas*” (《联合文学》, *Lianhe wenxue*) published a special issue regarding the genre using this term.¹³ During the 1980s, literary groups spread all over Chinese campuses and the journal “*Chinese Campus Literature*” (《中國校園文學》, *Zhongguo xiaoyuan wenxue*), which is now still the banner for the genre, was established.¹⁴ Furthermore, the genre has come forth with a number of subgenres, such as 玄幻 (‘fantasy’ *xuanhuan*) and 都市 (‘urban’ *dushi*): this way, a story of a magical campus is labeled as ‘fantasy’ and a story of classmates enjoying life in the city is called ‘urban’. These subgenres are most distinctive online, and will therefore be further mentioned in the next paragraph (1.2).¹⁵

¹¹ Wu, p. 281.

¹² Cheng, pp. 13-14.

¹³ Wu, p. 281.

¹⁴ Cheng, pp. 13-14.

¹⁵ Concluded from analysis of websites (see appendix 3).

Since the 1990s, Chinese campus literature has also been heavily influenced by advancements in Internet technologies. In 2012, around 40% of all netizens in China used the Internet to gain access to online literature. This popularity of Chinese Internet literature (‘网络文学’ *wangluo wenxue*) has no equivalent of the same scale and scope in Western countries.¹⁶ Campus literature is one of the many genres Internet literature encompasses, and has put this media to good use. The genre has not been confined to the limits of campuses anymore, but opened itself to the whole country and world. Internet also dismissed the one-way communication between writers and readers and created a more equal relationship with room for dialogue from both sides.¹⁷

1.2 Media and stakeholders

Chinese campus literature uses several channels to reach its readers. Within educational institutions, literary works created by students are often published and spread among the student body through school papers. Besides these voluntarily student-run papers, there are also commercial and governmental magazines for sale on national and regional level, such as the above mentioned journal “*Chinese Campus Literature*”. When a student’s work is acknowledged for its quality, the piece might be selected to be published in such a large-scale magazine or journal.¹⁸

There exist many online platforms for campus literature. Most websites offer free reading of digital works (for example 《Q猪文学网》 (www.qzread.com), 《全本小说网》 (www.quanben-xiaoshuo.com), and 《努努书坊》 (www.kanunu8.com)), and their focus is clearly on Chinese youth. As explained in the previous paragraph, the websites provide a wide range of subgenres of campus literature, such as 玄幻 (‘fantasy’ *xuanhuan*), 灵异 (‘supernatural’ *lingyi*), 青春 (‘youth’ *qingchun*), 仙侠 (‘immortal hero’ *xianxia*), 军事 (‘military’ *junshi*), 都市 (‘urban’ *dushi*), and 古代言情 (‘ancient romance’ *gudai yanqing*). Some websites have divided these subgenres into sections specifically for male and female readers. It is commonplace to have websites assign a work to different subgenres, which shows how most stories contain overlapping themes and do not simply belong to one but to a variety of subgenres. Furthermore, netizens do not necessarily need to create an account to access the works, but some works are only available for paying members after a number of ‘free’ chapters. Also, the platforms do not always show where works originated. Only a few

¹⁶ Hockx (2015), *Internet literature in China*, p. 4.

¹⁷ Chen, pp. 30-32.

¹⁸ ‘中国校园文学’, *Chinese Campus Literature*.

websites give users the option of uploading their own writings (for example 《起点中文网》 (www.qidian.com), 《小说阅读网》 (www.readnovel.com), and 《纵横中文网》 (www.zongheng.com)). The process of uploading one's work takes place in practically the same manner everywhere: there are specific word limits and time spans during which the work will be evaluated. After a work has been approved and published on the site, a writer might receive a small reimbursement. At times, these websites hold contests for new writers to encourage readers to try out writing themselves.¹⁹ Michel Hockx has examined a number of these websites in detail: his book *Internet Literature in China* offers more information.²⁰

The third channel through which a campus literature work can be dispersed is the printed book. Examples of campus literature work publishers are 21世纪出版社 ('Century 21 Publishing House' *21 shiji chubanshe*), 中信出版社 ('China Trust Publishing House' *Zhongxin chubanshe*), and 湖南文艺出版社 ('Hunan Literature and Art Publishing House' *Hunan wenyi chubanshe*). A work of this genre does not often experience its beginning in the form of a traditional book: it is more likely that a literary work in a journal or on a website enjoys such popularity that the writer is offered a print publication (as is the case with all other genres within Chinese Internet literature). It is also possible that an already well-known writer publishes new work immediately in print version. Lastly, there is a current trend of turning popular campus literature works into television series, Internet series, movies, and games.

Aside from the channels through which campus literature manifests itself, it is also important to shed light upon the two main actors within this genre: writers and readers. Writers of campus literature in school papers and those whose works are chosen to be published in larger magazines and journals are mostly students with an interest in writing, but without any distinct commercial intentions. Writers of digital born campus literature can have a more anonymous identity, and could theoretically be anyone of any age. The writers about whom relatively much information is to be found online seem to be those most popular among readers or who themselves actively communicate with readers via websites and blogs.²¹ Compared to the writers, there is even less information available on the readers. The readers of school papers and commercial journals are primarily elementary, high school and university students and teachers. Sketching a portrait of the average netizen who reads online campus literature is a more difficult task, since anyone can anonymously surf on the Internet. As discussed above, by analyzing the genres available online, the platforms seem to focus

¹⁹ Concluded from analysis of websites (see appendix 3).

²⁰ Hockx (2015).

²¹ More on blogs: Chen, p. 31.

specifically on Chinese youth. However, this does still not mean only Chinese youth make use of these online spaces.²²

1.3 Censorship

Literature in China has to deal with governmental censorship, since the state continues to hold on to “[...] its self perception of arbiter of what is or is not healthy and appropriate for mass audiences to read”.²³ The regulations reflect both the state’s aim to prevent society from harmful content (mostly sex and violence) and the state’s anxiety about loss of control and citizens challenging authority.²⁴ Considering the specific topic of this research, I refer anyone interested in more information on literary control in China to chapter two of Perry Link’s *The Uses of Literature: Life in the Socialist Chinese Literary System*.²⁵

Printed Chinese campus literature works have to undergo editing and screening before being published. Secondly, Michel Hockx explains in his book *Internet Literature in China* that because online works are created outside the state-owned publishing system, they are not subjected to those levels of control by editors acting as censors.²⁶ He states: “Moreover, these works are so long, are serialized over such long periods, and appear on so many different websites, that it is physically impossible for state control mechanisms to subject them to careful scrutiny”.²⁷ However, while there is considerable room online to experiment with transgressive writing, the websites offering campus literature works are definitely influenced by state censorship.²⁸ The government has issued ‘Internet publishing permits’ to websites, encouraging them to abide by certain principles of state regulation, and also regularly publishes blacklists of banned novel titles. When sensitive content is found, the website in question will not be taken offline as a whole but will be asked to remove or edit the relevant content itself.²⁹ Hockx states: “Crucial to the success of regulation of online publishing is the willingness of web editors to ensure that the content they host remains within legal, political, and moral boundaries”.³⁰ Indeed, all this causes many websites editors to have keyword

²² Concluded from analysis of websites (see appendix 3).

²³ Hockx (2015), p. 108.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp, 117-120.

²⁵ Link (2000), *The uses of literature*.

²⁶ Hockx (2015), p. 113.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 113.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 113.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 113, 116.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 121.

screening software built into their system to prevent illegal content from being uploaded.³¹

When authors realize they cannot upload their text because of certain characters or keywords, they can choose to employ a number of avoidance techniques (more in 4.6.3).³²

1.4 Reputation and debate

While it is called literature, campus literature works do not possess high literary quality. To a certain level, they could be compared with Western ‘chick-lit’. In conversations with Chinese students at Shandong University, their light disdain for the genre became clear: in their eyes, campus literature is not to be regarded as a ‘real’ literary genre. However, this does not automatically mean the genre is not meaningful and influential.

A number of Chinese scholars have written about Chinese campus literature (in its more traditional definition) and its current situation. Regarding the connection between campus literature and the development of universities, Zhang De’an (张德安) argues that it is an obligation for universities to produce graduates with quality, substance and character. These humane qualities are directly linked to one’s capability to create, to which campus literature activities greatly contribute.³³ However, most academia agree that the genre is not developing in the way it should and could. Cheng Jinjie (程金階) thinks Chinese campus literature lacks famous authors and a solid position in literature history and debate. He states that although this conception is incorrect, campus literature works are still often recognized as children’s books. Currently, the National Campus Literature Press Association and the National Campus Literature Research Center are supporting the genre to continue its development: Cheng praises their work and urges them to enlarge their activities.³⁴ Wei Lanxiang (魏兰香) thinks the genre lacks works of quality because authors do not receive the guidance they need. He claims high school students are not yet familiar with the world and literature, so the stories they write are superficial in nature and disorderly in structure. Wei urges teachers on to help and inspire students, because they are in the position to improve the reputation of campus literature.³⁵ Finally, Wu Yanmei (吴艳梅) is certain that the genre will not develop any further until China’s education system is reformed. Education in China is primarily focused on exams and grades (more on education in chapter four), and Wu argues

³¹ Hockx (2015), p. 127.

³² Ibid., pp. 126 – 127.

³³ Zhang, p. 131.

³⁴ Cheng, p. 15.

³⁵ Wei, p. 97.

that under these circumstances students and teachers do not have the opportunity to develop their writing and reading activities.³⁶

³⁶ Wu, p. 281.

Chapter 2: Theoretical framework

2.1 Theory of literary field

2.1.1 *Literary field*

Pierre Bourdieu's ideas about the structure of a literary field contribute to understanding the relations between members of the literary community.³⁷ Michel Hockx argues such literary fields indeed do exist and are worth receiving attention because "literary success relies on skills and sensitivities that differ significantly from those needed to achieve success in other fields".³⁸ He defines the concept as such: "The literary field is an interest community of agents and institutions involved in the material and symbolic production of literature, whose activities are governed by at least one autonomous (literary) principle that is fully or partially at odds with at least one heteronomous (non-literary) principle".³⁹

Besides four categories considered to be the constitutive elements of every conceivable view of literature (namely artists, work, audience, and universe), Bourdieu's field of forces is continually influenced by the interaction of various sorts of *capital*, namely *economic capital* (value of a literary work to be found in its commercial success) and *symbolic capital* (value of a literary work not to be found in its commercial success).⁴⁰ For example, poetry is a literary form which contains much symbolic capital but little economic capital, and the position of a very popular chick-lit is exactly the other way around. The study of (the position of) literary institutions can significantly further our understanding of a certain literary field, especially in terms of the principle of capital.⁴¹

2.1.2 *Literary field of China*

In his introduction to the essay compilation *The Literary Field of Twentieth Century China*, Michel Hockx explains how to understand Pierre Bourdieu's concept of a literary field when applied to China. As mentioned in the introduction, literature has always been and still is an important part of China and its society. According to Hockx, proficiency in text composition in traditional China raised an useful form of *cultural capital*, the value of which was recognized by everyone. It was not until the sixteenth century – a time of growth for China's

³⁷ Hockx (1999), p. 3.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 5.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 9 (terms between brackets are explanatory terms I have added myself).

⁴⁰ Ibid., pp. 2-4.

⁴¹ Ibid., pp. 5-7.

population and economy - that cultural capital and economic capital started to merge: central tradition encountered financial profits and literary institutions.⁴² It is likely that during this time, tension in the literary field between an autonomous principle of literary value and a heteronomous principle of political usefulness was apparent.⁴³ Later on during the nineteenth century, because of the growing pressure of Western imperialism creating a want for a modern nation-state, even more distinctive changes occurred in the structure of China's literary field. The education system was thoroughly reformed, and in reaction the printing industry – not for the first time – grew explosively. Just before the Qing dynasty fell, the system of civil service examinations was abolished, which caused the value of writing as a social currency to fall sharply.⁴⁴ Ever since, “more men and women involved in writing, editing, publishing, selling and reading literary works searched for ways to re-establish cultural distinction for themselves and for their skills, within an environment that was more and more determined by the laws of economy and politics.”⁴⁵

Hockx points out various aspects of China's literary field's continuities, which in isolation would not be of importance but in totality are distinctively Chinese.⁴⁶ For example, he argues that modern Chinese literary practice is more complicated to schematize than for example the French literary practice, because Chinese writers consider – as part of their practice – the well-being of their country and their people.⁴⁷ Hockx: “The most acclaimed literary producers are those who seemingly effortlessly combine ‘literary excellence’ with political efficacy and economic success, while never giving the impression that they sacrificed the first principle for the other two, or the second for the third.”⁴⁸ Thus the extra force in modern China's literary field, competing with economic capital and symbolic capital, is *political capital*.⁴⁹ Hockx also states there are yet too few studies contributed to modern Chinese literary institutions and other field elements, such as language, censorship, and genre, to fit all these aspects into a accessible scheme.⁵⁰ In my research, I do not only use the concept of a literary field to define the genre of Chinese campus literature more clearly, I also

⁴² Hockx (1999), p. 2.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 9.

⁴⁴ Ibid., pp. 2-3.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 3.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 10.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 12.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 12.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 17.

⁵⁰ Ibid., pp. 10, 18-19.

attempt to contribute new information found on Chinese campus literature to China's greater literary field in return.

2.2 Role theory

Besides applying theories specifically designed for literature studies, my research also contains a more general one, namely role theory. Biddle himself describes roles as characteristic behavior patterns, and sees people as members of social positions holding expectations for their own behaviors and those of other persons. Role theory concerns "human beings behaving in ways that are different and predictable depending on their respective social identities and the situation".⁵¹ When unfolding the term 'role' literally, life is a theatrical metaphor: social behaviors are compared to parts and scripts understood by social actors.⁵² The four key concepts within role theory are consensus (agreement among the expectations that are held by various persons), role conflict (concurrent appearance of two or more incompatible expectations for the behavior of a person), conformity (compliance to some pattern for behavior), and role taking (adequate development of the self and participation in social interaction both require the person to 'take the role of the other').⁵³ Biddle's theory allows me to dive deep into Chinese campus literature stories and their protagonists. The position in society one is given or has given him- or herself can hint at various individual as well as group issues, and especially those four key concepts will prove important when observing a (fictional) character's social role(s).

⁵¹ Biddle, "Recent Developments in Role Theory", pp. 67-68.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 68.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 76-87.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Chinese campus literature in modern China's literary field

Using the concept of *capital*, a start can be made to locate the position of Chinese campus literature within China's literary field. Campus literature is moderately rich in economic capital: a number of popular works have turned into bestsellers and/or television or Internet series, but most works do not sell well. Especially online works and stories in papers and journals are not written with the purpose of profit making, and accordingly do not make much money. Moreover, popular fiction is often regarded as having little symbolic value, which is definitely the case with campus literature. The works do not contain any great literary quality; they are purely created for the enjoyment and amusement of an easy read. Lastly, referring to Hockx's political capital, the works do include political elements (more in 4.6).

To further investigate the aspects of campus literature that characterize the genre and define the genre's position within the field, I will study a number of themes that attract attention when reading campus literature works, among which 'social roles' is also gathered. The results of this study are presented in chapter four. Below (3.2), I will first present my methods of executing this study.

3.2 Research objectives

For this research to be able to have conclusions applicable not only to a number of works but to the complete genre of campus literature, I have compiled a list of ten popular Chinese campus literature works which I believe can represent the genre as a whole. Based on the lists of top ten campus literature works of six different websites and on the grading lists of Douban 《豆瓣》 (www.douban.com), I have selected ten works I will use for this research.⁵⁴ Out of all the rating lists on campus literature works I have found, not one contains the same title. Since there is no repetition to be found among popular works, I have set up my own criteria. Firstly, out of necessity, I discarded the works that were not available to read. Secondly, I tried to keep balance between subgenres, writers, and mode of publication. The ten works I selected are written by different authors, do not all belong to the same subgenre, and are alternately available only online and also in print. Thirdly, I have primarily focused on the most popular works in every list and have only afterwards added certain works for other specific reasons, such as adaption into a television series. These are the selected works:

⁵⁴ See appendix 2.

Original (Chinese) title	Translated title	Author	Type of work	Dating⁵⁵
《恶魔的法则》	<i>Demon principle</i>	郭妮 Guo Ni	print and online (Taiwanese)	2008
《潘多拉的眼泪》	<i>Tears of Pandora*</i>	胡伟红 Hu Weihong	print and online	2007
《与校草在一起的日子》	<i>Days spent together with the most handsome boy in school*</i>	鑫鑫 Xin Xin	online	2009
《校园风流邪神》	<i>A romantic but evil spirit on campus*</i>	陨落星辰 Yunluo Xingchen (meaning: falling star)	online	unknown
《腹黑大神赖上伪小白》	<i>A two faced deity relies on Xiao Bai*</i>	浅阳 Qian Yang	online	2014
《那个流氓吻过我的唇》	<i>That hoodlum kissed my lips*</i>	扬扬 Yang Yang	online	unknown
《我的极品女老师》	<i>My best female teacher*</i>	肤浅失眼中 Fuqian Shi Yanzhong (meaning: superficiality neglected in eyesight)	online	2016 (still going on)
《下班抓紧谈恋爱》	<i>Seizing the opportunity to date after work*</i>	三十 Sanshi (meaning: thirty)	print and online	2007
《最好的我们》	<i>With you</i>	八月长安 Bayue Chang'an (meaning: Chang'an in August)	print and online	2013

⁵⁵ For print publications, the date of publication is used. For online publications, the date of the latest upload is used. Some websites do not date the works at all; these works are labeled as unknown.

* Because these works do not have English titles, I have translated the titles myself.

《那些回不去的年少时光》	<i>Those times of being young to which there is no return*</i>	桐华 Tong Hua	print and online	2014
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This list of ten works gives insight into a number of aspects. The writers of these works are 60% female, 30% male, and 10% unknown.⁵⁶ They were all born between 1980 and 1992; in other words, they are between 24 and 36 years of age in 2016. Based on their background information available online, they do not appear to have been students in school when writing these works. This information confirms the difference between the traditional and the broader definition of campus literature discussed in chapter one: clearly, works written by students in school are unpopular (or perhaps unavailable) online, while works written by recent graduates and young adults online are thriving on these websites. It also means the analysis of this research will focus on the works belonging to the broader definition of campus literature, since those are the popular works online.

While all works belong to the genre ‘campus literature’, they are simultaneously labeled as the following subgenres: 25% is ‘youth’, 23,3% is ‘fantasy’, 23,3% is ‘urban’, 15% is ‘campus’, 8,3% is ‘romance’, and 5% is ‘nostalgia’. This information indeed supports the theory on online campus literature works often utilizing a variety of subgenres. Combining gender and subgenre, it becomes clear that ‘youth’ writers are all female, while ‘urban’ writers are all male. Writers of ‘campus’ are mostly female, as are ‘fantasy’ writers. There seems to be no direct link between subgenre and age, except perhaps the fact that all three ‘fantasy’ writers were born between 1981 and 1986. Furthermore, exactly half of these works is available online, the other half is also published in print. Two out of ten works are adapted into a series, namely *Seizing the opportunity to date after work* (for television) and *With you* (online).

Three works I have read in print version, the other seven I have read online. In a few cases, I switched websites due to the layout disrupting my reading comfort or due to the website’s requirement towards readers to become a VIP member after a number of chapters. Because online works are not limited in their form like printed books, they differ greatly (from printed

⁵⁶ The information on two works does not specify the gender of the writer, but according to my own interpretation I have labeled them as the gender they appear to be. The information on one writer gave no indication at all, so I labeled this writer as ‘unknown’.

books but also from each other) in structure and length. Overall, online works are divided into series (集 *ji*) or parts (部分 *bufen*), or they are not divided at all. While most online works use chapters (章 *zhang*), there are no limits to the length of a chapter and to the amount of such chapters within a work: some works consist of thousands of chapters. Due to the size of this research, I did not have the possibility to read all ten works completely. This affected the analysis of the works in the way that most stories had not officially finished when I stopped reading them.

Lastly, I have decided to apply footnotes in the same manner both in respect to printed works and online works. This means a specific event will be cited with (a) page number(s) or a (set of) chapter(s), and a more general setting will be cited with the complete work (or the work's table of contents). The details of the ten works are collected in a separate list from the bibliography and can be found in appendix 1.

Chapter 4: Analysis

After reading the ten selected works representing the genre, an extensive analysis of Chinese campus literature can be made. The genre can be described through six broad themes the protagonists are dealing with, namely ‘school’, ‘hierarchies’, ‘family’, ‘social roles’, ‘love and sex’, and ‘censorship’. Before these themes will be explained and discussed, it is relevant to first introduce the overall content of the works. Concerning the genre’s name, seven works do indeed mainly focus on school experiences. The other three works do not fit so neatly into this category: one work is about an university student playing an online game during the holidays, another is about an angel from heaven who has to live on earth (and enter high school), and the third work is about the life of an university alumnus who is working full time. In the end, all the works are in some way related to school.

Furthermore, three works use a male point of view, the other seven have female protagonists. Also, there are differences between printed works and online works. Firstly, the lack of editing of online works causes typing errors and disorderly formats of pages. Secondly, online works do not have a concrete limit like printed works do. This results in works of thousands of pages or even thousands of chapters, with stories that go on forever. Because the author continues to write, the plot is often less distinctive and clear than in a printed work. Thirdly, online works do not necessarily follow the structure of a regular printed book. Chapters can be a few paragraphs long or they can contain thousands of characters. The last notion that must be mentioned before the analysis will start is the use of stereotypes. The works often use the same strategies or plot twists, and some events or descriptions are mentioned in almost every work. For example, in seven of the ten works, the story of how the protagonist meets his or her lover starts off with a misunderstanding. They already knew each other when they were young but have not met in a long time, his new teacher is the woman who he met last night clubbing, she thinks he is a robber but he was actually practicing a play, and so forth. In three works the female protagonist buys a dog in an impulse, in five works someone ends up in the hospital or wounded or sick, in two works the female protagonist uses the excuse of being scared of thunder to crawl into her lover’s bed. These stereotypes are found within all six themes and are distinctive for Chinese campus literature.

4.1 Surviving school

The theme ‘school’ is naturally of importance in this analysis. As mentioned, all ten works are related to school. However, in *Seizing the opportunity to date after work*, the protagonist is already graduated and working full time. His university experiences are only mentioned briefly and too unclear to analyze.⁵⁷ Among the other nine works, one work is about elementary school and junior high, seven works are set in high school, and one work tells the story of a university student. In three works the protagonists live on campus, in the other six they live at home with their family or in their own apartment. The protagonist’s attitude towards studying differs greatly. In five works, there is no trace of any interest in school work. In two works, it is mentioned that the protagonists do homework and study sometimes. In two other works, the protagonists are interested in studying and work hard for school.

4.1.1 Dealing with the school system

In *With you* and *Those times of being young to which there is no return*, the Chinese education system plays a big role. Genggen and Qiqi feel the pressure of this exam-oriented system full of grades, rankings, and competition.⁵⁸ Together with *My best female teacher*, these three works also pay attention to the structure of class leaders. First, every class has one student who acts as class monitor. This student has to keep the class in check, and can take over the duties of their mentor teacher. None of the protagonists is a class monitor. The mentor teacher is responsible for one class: he or she has a special connection to the class and speaks with their family on parent night every semester. Above the mentor teachers stands the dean, who is responsible for the whole year.⁵⁹

Demon Principle’s Fenglin High School has an intriguing school system: the student board has great power, and the head of the school entrusts to them all decision making.⁶⁰ When Linxi first arrives at the school, she is surprised by the free atmosphere there. There are few rules the students have to adhere to: they can decide for themselves whether they want to go to class or not, there are no exams, and everybody can bring their pet with them wherever

⁵⁷ “下班抓紧谈恋爱” (Seizing the opportunity to date after work), *Sohu Books*.

⁵⁸ 八月张安 Ba Yue Zhang An (2013), 最好的我们 (With you), 桐华 Tong Hua (2014), 那些回不去的年少时光 (Those times of being young to which there is no return).

⁵⁹ Ba Yue Zhang An (2013), Tong Hua (2014),

“我的极品女老师” (My best female teacher), *2345 Novel Collection*.

⁶⁰ 郭妮 Guo Ni (2008), 恶魔的法则 (Demon principle), pp. 54-58, 144-145.

they go.⁶¹ However, the student board decides the reputation of the school is at stake and they implement strict rules, including not only the return of exams and obligatory presence in class but also restrictions on reading comic books, having pets, and setting up student clubs. Whenever a student breaks a number of these rules, there are severe punishments in order (more in 4.1.3).⁶²

4.1.2 Dealing with the teachers

In China, students should honor their teachers. Confucian thought prescribes this respect that disciples must have towards their mentor, which gives teachers much power over their students. The influence of teachers on a class and on individual students can either be of great help or great disturbance in developing character. Both *With you* and *Those times of being young to which there is no return* describe the situation of young mentor teachers: their youthful enthusiasm and open mindedness influences students positively, but parents often protest against them for fear of low quality education.⁶³ In *Those times of being young to which there is no return* and *My best female teacher*, teachers misuse their authority and influence students negatively (more in 4.1.3 and 4.2.1).⁶⁴ In one work, *A romantic but evil spirit on campus*, one male teacher is taken revenge on by his class for acting indecent towards female students.⁶⁵

4.1.3 Dealing with rules, punishments, and rebellion

Most works mention certain rules and punishments in school, but two works describe the methods in particular. In *Demon Principle*, thirteen strict rules are installed. When a student breaks one rule, he or she forfeits the possibility to ever join the student board. When the number of broken rules increases, the punishments get harsher: students cannot join a student club anymore and their names are published on a list so other students can publicly condemn them for their behavior (more in 4.6.1).⁶⁶ In *Those times of being young to which there is no return*, Qiqi's elementary math teacher dislikes her for being silent and dumb. She consciously bullies and humiliates Qiqi in front of her class. In junior high, a

⁶¹ Guo Ni (2008), pp. 35-40.

⁶² Ibid., pp. 54-59.

⁶³ Ba Yue Zhang An (2013),
Tong Hua (2014).

⁶⁴ Tong Hua (2014),

“我的极品女老师” (My best female teacher), *2345 Novel Collection*.

⁶⁵ “校园风流邪神” (A romantic but evil spirit on campus), *Quanben Xiaoshuo*, 第一章 - 第六章.

⁶⁶ Guo Ni (2008), pp. 54-59.

misunderstanding with her English teacher turns into a long lasting fight, and he punishes her often by making her stand during class. This time, she decides to rebel, and the fight expands until he makes her stand in the middle of campus for seven days long.⁶⁷

4.1.4 Dealing with criminal activity

In five works, criminal activity is very present within the stories. Especially in *A romantic but evil spirit on campus* and *My best female teacher*, the protagonists are constantly dealing with violence and gangsters. It is interesting that these two works are both written by male authors and both have a male protagonist (more in 4.5.3). The two works show how the gangs are in control of the city and the school, and what the rivalry between the gangs means for these high school students. The protagonists both become their class ‘boss’, which means they are the strongest in their class and will protect their classmates: this loyalty among classmates is very important. Fights are fought at agreed on times and places, in or outside campus. Both groups will assemble as many fighters as they can, to scare the other group. There is some mention of guns, but mostly fists, knives, clubs and other smaller weapons are used in fights.⁶⁸

4.2 Negotiating hierarchies

Issues of authority and popularity are visible in all ten works. Youngsters often feel as if they are already grown up and struggle with the fact that older people (family, teachers) still have control over their lives. Simultaneously, they do not yet have the self-confidence to not care about what others think of them, so they worry about making friends, finding a boy- or girlfriend, and saving face. To make this big theme accessible, it has been divided into five categories (see below). Family is very relevant when it comes to hierarchy, but will be discussed separately in 4.3.

4.2.1 At school

Most works have inserted the issue of popularity at school into the story. Often, this is a matter between students. Sometimes, it is also an issue between teachers and students. Teachers might have a good or bad reputation among their students, such as in *Those times of being young to which there is no return*, and students might or might not enjoy popularity

⁶⁷ Tong Hua (2014), pp. 24-39, 127-144.

⁶⁸ “校园风流邪神” (*A romantic but evil spirit on campus*), *Quanben Xiaoshuo*, “我的极品女老师” (*My best female teacher*), *2345 Novel Collection*.

among their teachers, such as the two popular brothers in *Tears of Pandora*.⁶⁹ Secondly, in Chinese schools, senior students are always respected by junior students. An example of this is the careful friendship between Genggeng (protagonist, junior) and Luozhi (senior) in *With you*.⁷⁰ Thirdly, in *Demon principle*, the students on the student board have a lot of power over everyone in school. Linxi rebels against their authority and tries her utmost to get the head of the board fired.⁷¹ Finally, the difficult relation between female teachers and male students is touched upon. Boys in puberty struggle with the combination of sexuality and authority and do not know how to behave towards their female teachers. In *A romantic but evil spirit on campus*, Xingchen respects and listens to his female teachers but simultaneously thinks of them as sexual objects.⁷² In *My best female teacher*, the boys' dorm is full of gossip and dirty talk about female teachers. Zhangcheng angers his mentor teacher Jiang so she seeks revenge and misuses her authority to teach him a lesson. He is interchangeably scared of her, angry at her, and attracted to her. He tries to punish her for punishing him, but he does not succeed.⁷³

4.2.2. At work

Among the ten works, only two works speak of hierarchical relations in the office. In *A two faced deity relies on Xiao Bai*, Xiaoxiao's lover Muchen has set up a company with friends. Not much is said about this company, but when he takes her to the office, he is respected by everyone there, and he is also friendly towards everyone in return.⁷⁴ The story of *Seizing the opportunity to date after work* mostly takes place in the office. Two issues of authority are touched upon. Firstly, the structure of bosses, managers, and workers is important. Xuyue used to constantly try to get promoted, but now he doesn't want more pressure and is happy with his position as a 'minor manager'. It is his responsibility when profits decrease, and he gets yelled at by his superior multiple times. His superior hires a new manager without knowledge of the work field, and the relation between Xuyue and this new manager is not good. The manager makes him work overtime every day and asks him to come into the office during weekends or leave days. Xuyue is at the mercy of his superiors, and eventually demoted when he fails to deliver better profits. Secondly, the gossip chain in the office has a

⁶⁹ Tong Hua (2014), “潘多拉的眼泪” (Tears of Pandora), *Kanunu*8.

⁷⁰ Ba Yue Zhang An (2013).

⁷¹ Guo Ni (2008).

⁷² “校园风流邪神” (A romantic but evil spirit on campus), *Quanben Xiaoshuo*.

⁷³ “我的极品女老师” (My best female teacher), *2345 Novel Collection*.

⁷⁴ “腹黑大神赖上伪小白” (A two faced deity relies on Xiao Bai), *STO*, 第四十六章 - 第四十八章.

great influence on Xuyue's state of mind. On the one hand, he fears being the subject of gossip when something goes wrong, but on the other hand, he enjoys being the center of attention when something goes right.⁷⁵

4.2.3 Within a criminal gang

Out of the five works that are full of criminal activity, three works describe the inner structure of a criminal gang. As well as in *Tears of Pandora* as in *A romantic but evil spirit on campus* and in *My best female teacher*, every member of a gang has a very clear position in the chain of power. Overall, the physically strongest are the highest ranked and have the fewest enemies. Women are often not included in any of these rankings.⁷⁶ In *A romantic but evil spirit on campus*, the gang is built around Xingchen's powerful family. Every member has a number as nickname which indicates his exact ranking and his own line of friends whom he trusts.⁷⁷

4.2.4 Within an online game

One work, *A two faced deity relies on Xiao Bai*, explains the hierarchy within the online game the protagonist is playing. Most hierarchal rules applied in criminal gangs are also valid in the game: the stronger your character is (measured in skills and level), the higher in rank you are.⁷⁸ In the story, Muchen and Xiaoxiao attack the royal family to gain those positions in the game. However, this action is not carried out because of political motives – Xiaoxiao wanted a room as big as theirs and Muchen thought killing them was the only way to make her wish come true.⁷⁹

4.3 Coping with family

Because the protagonists often are still young and have to deal with their family every day, their family situation is a big part of their life and builds their character. The family background of each protagonist is unique and relevant to his or her story, but the level of influence is not always the same. In two of the ten works, family is very important to the protagonist and the story. In six works, family is present but not the overall focus of the story.

⁷⁵ “下班抓紧谈恋爱” (Seizing the opportunity to date after work), *Sohu Books*.

⁷⁶ “潘多拉的眼泪” (Tears of Pandora), *Kanunu8*,

“校园风流邪神” (A romantic but evil spirit on campus), *Quanben Xiaoshuo*,

“我的极品女老师” (My best female teacher), *2345 Novel Collection*.

⁷⁷ “校园风流邪神” (A romantic but evil spirit on campus), *Quanben Xiaoshuo*.

⁷⁸ “腹黑大神赖上伪小白” (A two faced deity relies on Xiao Bai), *STO*.

⁷⁹ “腹黑大神赖上伪小白” (A two faced deity relies on Xiao Bai), *Zongheng (Huayu Baidu)*, 第十三章, 第二十九章 - 第三十六章.

In the other two works, family is not relevant for the storyline. There is a balance between positive and negative relations between the protagonists and their family: in five works, the relationships are good, but in the other five, they are not.

4.3.1 Parents

When Chinese students have family close to them, it does not mean those family members are automatically their parents. In seven stories, the protagonists have little or nothing to do with their parents. They live on campus, on their own, with their aunt and uncle, or with friends of their parents. Two special cases of family figures in the position of parents are discussed in the next category (4.3.2).

Not one work describes the parents in the story as very strict towards their children. They often give their children much freedom, as long as their grades are excellent: this is the standard demand among all parent figures. In two works, the power balance between the parent figures is unequal. In *Days spent together with the most handsome boy in school*, Zheyue's mother (friend of Qiqi's parents) arranges everything at home, while her husband is away working.⁸⁰ In *A two faced deity relies on Xiao Bai*, Xiaoxiao's mother is the decisive force at home, while her father stays quiet.⁸¹ Furthermore, the parent figures in *Tears of Pandora*, *Days spent together with the most handsome boy in school*, and *My best female teacher* are clearly rich, although none of the other works depicts the protagonist's family situation as especially poor.⁸² In *Demon principle*, Linxi rebels against her family's tradition of entering a certain high school. She has no choice but to oblige, and when she likes the school, she does not recollect the enforcement anymore.⁸³ In *With you*, Gengeng is struggling with her father getting remarried after he divorced her mother. When Miss Qi and her young son move into their house, she feels as if she lives together with strangers. She sleeps badly and is constantly worried about saving face. Most of all, she is scared to end up bitter and divorced like her parents.⁸⁴ Finally, the Confucian theory of children expressing filial piety towards their parents is visible in most stories. Whether it is about following their

⁸⁰ “与小草在一起的日子” (*Days spent together with the most handsome boy in school*), 69 *Shu*.

⁸¹ “腹黑大神赖上伪小白” (*A two faced deity relies on Xiao Bai*), *Zongheng (Huayu Baidu)*, 第十五章.

⁸² “潘多拉的眼泪” (*Tears of Pandora*), *Kanunu*8,

“与小草在一起的日子” (*Days spent together with the most handsome boy in school*), 69 *Shu*, “我的极品女老师” (*My best female teacher*), 2345 *Novel Collection*.

⁸³ Guo Ni (2008), pp. 21-23.

⁸⁴ Ba Yue Zhang An (2013).

traditions, getting married, being an excellent student, or taking care of your parents – this pressure is felt by almost all the protagonists (more in 4.4).

4.3.2 Parent figures

It is not unusual in China that grandparents take care of their grandchildren when their children are working multiple jobs or in another city. In *Those times of being young to which there is no return*, Qiqi is sent to her grandfather when her younger sister is born. He gives her all his attention and she feels like the most important person in the world. When she is five years old, she must go back to her parents because she has to enter elementary school. Back home, her parents are devoted to her younger sister and do not care about Qiqi. Every day, she prays she can go back to her grandfather. However, her grandfather dies when she is still in school, leaving her hopeless. The consequences of her family situation regarding her character and her relationship with her sister are discussed in 4.3.3.⁸⁵

A different parent figure is Zhangcheng's niece in *My best female teacher*. His high school is far away from his parents' village, so his father arranged that he can stay with his niece in the city during the weekends. Zhangcheng has no contact with his parents anymore, their only demand for handing him his weekly budget is good grades. However, his father has put Zhangcheng's niece in charge of that budget, and she treats him like a servant during the weekends. She makes him clean, wash, and go out with her before she gives him the money every week. His feelings towards her are complicated: he fears her, he hates her, and he is attracted to her.⁸⁶

4.3.3 Siblings

Because of China's one child policy, many Chinese families only have one child. Consequently, many Chinese children grow up without siblings. Within the ten works, five works contain siblings or sibling figures, but only in two do the protagonists have a blood related sibling. *That hoodlum kissed my lips* describes the tight friendship between Xuanxuan and her younger brother: they are best friends and tell each other everything.⁸⁷ In *Those times of being young to which there is no return*, Qiqi's relationship with her younger sister is complicated. As explained before, Qiqi lived with her grandfather until she was five while her parents took care of her sister. Because of the separation during those few years, Qiqi and her

⁸⁵ Tong Hua (2014).

⁸⁶ “我的极品女老师” (My best female teacher), *2345 Novel Collection*.

⁸⁷ “那个流氓问过我的唇” (That hoodlum kissed my lips), *Jiu Ai*.

sister have no emotional connection or natural affection towards each other. They fight over their parents' attention and start to hate each other. Qiqi feels very lonely at home and cannot wait to leave. At the beginning, the writer flashes forward to the situation now: Qiqi lives abroad and hasn't visited her family in over four years. When she comes home, her relation with her sister seems to be quite friendly but not tight.⁸⁸ Another set of blood related siblings is not part of the group of protagonists, but exists of the two brothers with whom Xiyi has a love triangle in *Tears of Pandora*. Their relationship is not described in detail but it seems that, although their personalities differ greatly, they are friends.⁸⁹

Another form of becoming siblings is Genggeng's situation with her younger stepbrother in *With you*. They both did not choose to have this new family member and they do not know each other well. However, while Genggeng is struggling with the overall situation, she is friendly and reasonable towards her stepbrother because she realizes none of her problems are his fault.⁹⁰ Finally, the story of *Seizing the opportunity to date after work* tells the friendship between Xuyue and Mi'en. Because their parents worked in the same work unit when Xuyue was young, the two families became close friends. Since the birth of Mi'en, Xuyue has regarded her as his little sister. After not seeing each other for a long time during university, they coincidentally meet again and pick up their friendship where it left off. However, because they are not blood related, there is still the possibility of a close friendship turning into love.⁹¹

4.4 Negotiating social roles

As explained in chapter two, social roles are directly related to expectations of others. Everybody experiences the gaze, the expectations and the wishes of his or her surroundings and has a reaction to it, which is revealed in his or her social role. Especially in China, the expectations of one's family have great influence on one's social role. All protagonists have their own unique circumstances and thus experience different sorts of social roles.

4.4.1 Role consensus

When a character experiences role consensus, this mostly happens unconsciously. Examples of protagonists' consent with the expectations of their surroundings are found in five works.

⁸⁸ Tong Hua (2014).

⁸⁹ “潘多拉的眼泪” (Tears of Pandora), *Kanunu*8.

⁹⁰ Ba Yue Zhang An (2013).

⁹¹ “下班抓紧谈恋爱” (Seizing the opportunity to date after work), *Sohu Books*.

Firstly, Linxi in *Demon principle* demonstrates her rebellious behavior at school and continues this way like everyone around her expects her to.⁹² Secondly, in *Tears of Pandora*, the parents of the two brothers ask them to marry the daughters of their father's business partner. While Youbin (bad guy) refuses (more in 4.4.2), Youyang (good guy) happily gives in to their request. He always helps others and seems to live to make others happy.⁹³ Thirdly, Zheyue has fallen in love with Qiqi in *Days spent together with the most handsome boy in school* just as both their parents had hoped.⁹⁴ Fourthly, in *A romantic but evil spirit on campus*, Xingchen is content with his role as gang leader and following expectations, he happily saves all the pretty girls who have run into trouble.⁹⁵ Finally, in *Seizing the opportunity to date after work*, Xuyue also gladly protects and loves his 'little sister' Mi'en like she wants him to.⁹⁶ Below, it will become clear that three of these five characters do not only experience consensus but simultaneously have other reactions and feelings.

4.4.2 Role conflict

Role conflict is experienced when a character finds him- or herself failing or refusing to live up to the surrounding expectation(s). It is also possible multiple expectations towards one person are incompatible. When such situations are not handled through role confirming, role taking, or other solutions such as compromising, role conflict arises. Firstly, Linxi's rebellious behavior in *Demon principle* might be expected by her school, it is however not accepted by her family. They demand she goes to the same school everybody in their family attended and, even though they know she does not want to go, they forcefully bring her there.⁹⁷ Secondly, in *Tears of Pandora*, Youbin does not agree to his parents' wishes as his brother does and disappoints them constantly. Also, he feels as if Xiyi is the first person who trusts him and he fears he cannot bear this responsibility.⁹⁸ Thirdly, Xingchen in *A romantic but evil spirit on campus* might be pleased to save all the pretty girls, but when they expect him to choose only one of them to be with, he experiences role conflict: he does not want to choose ("Why give up a whole forest for one tree?").⁹⁹ Fourthly, Xuyue in *Seizing the opportunity to date after work* is very concerned for his 'younger sister' Mi'en, and wonders whether he should also be

⁹² Guo Ni (2008).

⁹³ “潘多拉的眼泪” (Tears of Pandora), *Kanunu*8, 第十二章节 Vol. 04.

⁹⁴ “与小草在一起的日子” (Days spent together with the most handsome boy in school), 69 *Shu*.

⁹⁵ “校园风流邪神” (A romantic but evil spirit on campus), *Quanben Xiaoshuo*.

⁹⁶ “下班抓紧谈恋爱” (Seizing the opportunity to date after work), *Sohu Books*.

⁹⁷ Guo Ni (2008), pp. 21-23.

⁹⁸ “潘多拉的眼泪” (Tears of Pandora), *Kanunu*8.

⁹⁹ “校园风流邪神” (A romantic but evil spirit on campus), *Quanben Xiaoshuo*, 第三十四章.

so attentive towards his parents. They want him to focus on his career, and only when his mother ends up in the hospital does his father call him to come help out a few hours. He feels as though he is not a very filial son, but makes no effort to change the situation.¹⁰⁰ Two other protagonists who struggle with role conflict are Qiqi in *Days spent together with the most handsome boy in school* and Zhangcheng in *My best female teacher*. Zheyue has fallen in love with Qiqi, but she keeps telling herself she does not like him at all and this causes their parents and Zheyue to be quite upset.¹⁰¹ Zhangcheng knows his mentor teacher Jiang wants him to be obedient, but feels her behavior towards him is unfair and he refuses to listen to her.¹⁰²

4.4.3 Role conformity

Characters conform to the surrounding expectations when they handle role conflict by adjusting their own behavior to fit the wishes of others. Firstly, two protagonists choose to change their attitude towards working and studying. Xiyi in *Tears of Pandora* is a very naughty and wild girl, but she decides to become serious because she wants to excel in her job. She does so partly because her job requires it and partly because she wants to better herself.¹⁰³ Likewise, in *With you*, Genggeng tries to become the perfect student both to please her parents and to build a better future for herself.¹⁰⁴ Furthermore, the way Zhangcheng in *My best female teacher* experiences role conflict with his mentor teacher Jiang is comparable to what he goes through with his niece every weekend (explained in 4.2.1 and 4.3.2). However, while his niece bullies him constantly, he does not rebel against her. He might have decided to be compliant because he is attracted to her, but it mostly seems he fears he will not receive his weekly budget.¹⁰⁵ Lastly, Qiqi in *Those times of being young to which there is no return* confirms the most to other people's expectations. Because her parents treat her indifferently and want her to put her little sister before herself, she disappears into the background and grows silent and insecure. She feels as if she is unimportant in this world. Because she received no solid foundation of love and self confidence from her parents while growing up, she keeps conforming to everyone around her. When she finally finds friends in junior high, she copies their conduct while she actually is aware she does not like their (and thus her own)

¹⁰⁰ “下班抓紧谈恋爱” (Seizing the opportunity to date after work), *Sohu Books*.

¹⁰¹ “与小草在一起的日子” (Days spent together with the most handsome boy in school), *69 Shu*.

¹⁰² “我的极品女老师” (My best female teacher), *2345 Novel Collection*.

¹⁰³ “潘多拉的眼泪” (Tears of Pandora), *Kanunu8*.

¹⁰⁴ Ba Yue Zhang An (2013).

¹⁰⁵ “我的极品女老师” (My best female teacher), *2345 Novel Collection*.

behavior. She tries to change herself into someone she likes, but she continues to feel insecure and jealous of others. Only with her friend Xiaobo does she feel free of expectations and judgment.¹⁰⁶

4.4.4 Role taking

When characters use themselves to fill an empty spot in their social surroundings, they take over that particular social role. The ten works present two examples of protagonists taking over a role. Firstly, in *A two faced deity relies on Xiao Bai*, Xiaoxiao is a calm girl who does not often clash with her parents' expectations. However, she is disappointed when they leave again to travel. While she does not try to stop them from going away, she unconsciously misses the presence of caring parents. This becomes clear when she buys a dog and can barely part with it when she has to leave it at the hospital for one afternoon: without thinking, she takes on the care for another living being, in a way she thinks it should be done.¹⁰⁷ Secondly, in *My best female teacher*, Zhangcheng is expected by his classmates to take on the role of class boss. He is not particularly pleased, but feels it is his obligation and his destiny, so he agrees to it.¹⁰⁸

4.5 Discovering love and sex

Because most of the stories concern young people finding love, especially this theme is full of stereotypes. To find out what particular notions in these works can help define the genre, not every cliché will be discussed. To start with a general overview, in six works the love story is predictable from the start. After the first chapter(s), the reader will know who will fall in love and how. In the other four works, it does not become clear in the story whether certain characters will end up together because nothing happens between them. Furthermore, some stories are clearly more sexual than others. Not only are there differences in to what level the relationship is consumed (kissing, touching, having sex), the manner of describing what happens varies also. *A romantic but evil spirit* is the most sexual work of all ten. Xingchen flirts with every girl, he has sexual fantasies about all of them, and it is explicitly described how he has sex with a nurse he met a few minutes earlier.¹⁰⁹ Three works (*Day spent together with the most handsome boy in school*, *That hoodlum kissed my lips*, and *My best female*

¹⁰⁶ Tong Hua (2014).

¹⁰⁷ “腹黑大神赖上伪小白” (*A two faced deity relies on Xiao Bai*), *STO*.

¹⁰⁸ “我的极品女老师” (*My best female teacher*), *2345 Novel Collection*, 第十四章.

¹⁰⁹ “校园风流邪神” (*A romantic but evil spirit on campus*), *Quanben Xiaoshuo*.

teacher) are slightly less sexually tinted: the night during which the protagonist loses her virginity is only dimly remembered the next morning, the couple discusses in length when it will be time to start having sex, or the protagonist enjoys his sexual fantasies but nothing more. The other six works do not contain sexual content; their love stories are very innocent. For example, in five of these six works, not one kiss is exchanged.

4.5.1 Violence

In three works, the violent and aggressive situation displayed causes the love affairs not to be built on mutual trust and respect, but on enforcement and oppression. In *Tears of Pandora*, Xiyi and Youbin are friends turning into lovers. At one point, Youbin suddenly demands that Xiyi is his maid and she should do anything he says. She complies out of insecurity, and he uses this power quite innocently, making her carry his bag and forcing her to hang out with him. Still, there is a strong undertone of unequal power and bullying noticeable.¹¹⁰ In *That hoodlum kissed my lips*, Guanyun is very much in love with Xuanxuan but does not respect her wish to not have sex with him. He repeatedly tries to touch her inappropriately or talk her into it.¹¹¹ Finally, in *Days spent together with the most handsome boy in school*, such an unfair relationship is taken a step further. Qiqi continually claims that she does not like Zheyeye, but he threatens to tell everyone her secrets if she does not agree to do as he says. He clearly bullies her and even sexually abuses her.¹¹² However, *Those times of being young to which there is no return* shows it does not always have to be this way: the relation between Qiqi and her friend Xiaobo (member of a criminal gang) is equal and fair.¹¹³

4.5.2 Choice

Naturally, many choices concerning love and sex are made throughout the stories. Four types of choices stand out and will be discussed. Firstly, in *A two faced deity relies on Xiao Bai*, Xiaoxiao does not know that the guy she met online in a game is the same guy she likes in real life. When she must choose between them because she does not want to lie to them, she realizes she will choose the guy in real life before she knows if he likes her back or not. She senses that real life will always be more important and 'real'.¹¹⁴ Secondly, in *Seizing the*

¹¹⁰ “潘多拉的眼泪” (Tears of Pandora), *Sohu Books*, 第三章节 Vol. 04 - 第五章节 Vol. 02.

¹¹¹ “那个流氓问过我的唇” (That hoodlum kissed my lips), *Jiu Ai*.

¹¹² “与小草在一起的日子” (Days spent together with the most handsome boy in school), *69 Shu*.

¹¹³ Tong Hua (2014).

¹¹⁴ “腹黑大神赖上伪小白” (A two faced deity relies on Xiao Bai), *Zongheng (Huayu Baidu)*, 第三十章.

opportunity to date after work, Xuyue often struggles with the choice between his family and his girlfriend. He chooses his parents over his girlfriend when his mother is in the hospital. But at the same time, he chooses his girlfriend over his 'little sister' Mi'en every time he promised to help Mi'en out or spend time with her. Naturally, this causes friction between Xuyue and Mi'en, but he continues to let her down.¹¹⁵ Thirdly, both in *That hoodlum kissed my lips* and *Seizing the opportunity to date after work*, the protagonists have experienced heartbreak before and struggle with trust issues. They both stand before the choice whether to start a new relationship and enter a danger zone again, or to remain alone but safe.¹¹⁶ Lastly, in *My best female teacher*, the question what is important in a lover comes back multiple times. Zhangcheng's niece is very rich and pretty, so she has the power to decide who she chooses. In China, a suitable man is generally expected to have a house, a car, lots of money, and good looks. Zhangcheng wonders continually what kind of girl he wants, and if anybody will choose him someday.¹¹⁷

4.5.3 Author gender and bias

While the gender of the author does not have much influence in the other themes, it does make a difference in the treatment of love and sex. Two out of three works written by male authors, namely *A romantic but evil spirit on campus* and *My best female teacher*, use very aggressive and crude manners when dealing with these topics. The stories seem to be nothing more than the author's magnified personal fantasies about life in high school, revolving around popular status and casual sex.¹¹⁸ In both works, much attention is paid to virgins. Xingchen prefers to have sex with girls who are still virgins: everyone around him accepts this and arranges virgin girls for him to sleep with.¹¹⁹ Zhangcheng is often ridiculed for still being a virgin at seventeen years old.¹²⁰ In *A romantic but evil spirit on campus*, sex is even

¹¹⁵ “下班抓紧谈恋爱” (Seizing the opportunity to date after work), *Sohu Books*.

¹¹⁶ “那个流氓问过我的唇” (That hoodlum kissed my lips), *Jiu Ai*,

“下班抓紧谈恋爱” (Seizing the opportunity to date after work), *Sohu Books*.

¹¹⁷ “我的极品女老师” (My best female teacher), *2345 Novel Collection*.

¹¹⁸ “校园风流邪神” (A romantic but evil spirit on campus), *Quanben Xiaoshuo*,

“我的极品女老师” (My best female teacher), *2345 Novel Collection*.

¹¹⁹ “校园风流邪神” (A romantic but evil spirit on campus), *Quanben Xiaoshuo*, 第十三章, 第十六章 - 第十八章.

¹²⁰ “我的极品女老师” (My best female teacher), *2345 Novel Collection*, 第八章, 第十一章.

used as blackmail and compensation.¹²¹ Xingchen and Zhangcheng see women plainly as sexual objects, and think themselves superior.¹²²

4.6 Reacting to censorship

As explained in chapter one, Chinese campus literature has to deal with censorship. Sensitive content can include various topics, such as opposing the ideas and/or threatens the position of the Chinese Communist Party, as well as violence, gambling, drugs, and sex. During this research, nothing in the online works seems to have been changed by censorship. Worth examining are sensitive topics that still appear within these works and (possible) self censorship by authors. A note in advance is necessary for *Demon principle*: this work touches upon many sensitive topics (all listed below). While this work is from Taiwan (it was not screened by China before publication), its critical content is also available in China.

4.6.1 China's politics and history

In *Demon principle*, Fenglin High School works with a free school system (as explained in 4.1.1). Students can make their own choices concerning their classes and exams, and they can speak up if they want to. All students are happy with this system, which is called 'democratic' by a classmate of Linxi.¹²³ Later on, the implemented rules feel like a burden, and Linxi fights the whole story to get her freedom back.¹²⁴ Such a comparison with a democracy the protagonist wholeheartedly supports and fights for is risky. The severe punishments used on students when breaking school rules imply the rules cause the school to fall back into a Cultural Revolution like situation: the student's name will be broadcasted on campus and other students have the right to punish that student. Even more, students who call out these 'bad' students are rewarded by the student board. The board itself organizes a public event on campus to shame punished students in front of all their schoolmates.¹²⁵ This system refers strongly to family, friends, and neighbors who turned on each other to save themselves during the Cultural Revolution. Considering the history and relation between China and Taiwan, it is curious a Taiwanese work should make such a potentially subversive reference.

¹²¹ “校园风流邪神” (A romantic but evil spirit on campus), *Quanben Xiaoshuo*.

¹²² “校园风流邪神” (A romantic but evil spirit on campus), *Quanben Xiaoshuo*, “我的极品女老师” (My best female teacher), *2345 Novel Collection*.

¹²³ Guo Ni (2008), pp. 35-40.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid., pp. 109-110, 184-185, 196-200.

In *A romantic but evil spirit on campus*, the town is terrorized by criminal gang rivalry. The police force in town does not care about the violence the gangs cause, as long as there are no civilian casualties.¹²⁶ This might be a reflection of the notion that corrupt Chinese authorities allow crime to roam freely in society as long as it does not cause them any trouble. Another issue is religion within the People's Republic of China. The Communist Party is formally atheist, and religions are accepted in the country to a certain level: groups that grow too large to handle are shut down. In these works, the only religion brought up is Christianity. While a few works mention the habit of saying a little prayer or “amen”, there is much more discussion about the concept of a Christian God and heaven in *Tears of Pandora*. Xiyi is a love angel from heaven, and she is in direct contact with God who sends her to earth to experience human feelings. Angels are different from people: they do not cry, bleed, or get hurt. God can appear and use magic on earth whenever he wants. Xiyi wonders whether the destiny God has given every person is set in stone, or whether He might be wrong and destiny can be changed.¹²⁷ It is possible that this work used God to personify fate, and did not actually mean for a specific religion to play a prominent role. The last issue in this category is having progressive ideas that might clash with China's contemporary reality. An example of this issue is Linxi opposing China's education system (as explained in 4.1.1) in *Demon principle*. This system does not leave much room for children who are not good at studying, and she thinks the ability to learn should not be the most important skill to have in life. She feels the situation is unfair to people with other talents, such as creativity or organizing skills.¹²⁸

4.6.2 Violence and sex

To start with violence, in *Those times of being young to which there is no return*, some underage gambling, criminal activity, and drug and alcohol use occurs, but it is not very relevant to the main story.¹²⁹ There are two works with much violence both on campus and off campus, namely *My best female teacher* and *A romantic but evil spirit on campus*. In the first, Zhangcheng is pulled into the aggressive atmosphere at campus.¹³⁰ In the latter, the story completely revolves around cruel violence, heavy drinking, and sex. While it is all described in a light manner, disturbing details of these actions are not avoided by the author.¹³¹ Other

¹²⁶ “校园风流邪神” (*A romantic but evil spirit on campus*), *Quanben Xiaoshuo*, 第十三章.

¹²⁷ “潘多拉的眼泪” (*Tears of Pandora*), *Kanunu8*.

¹²⁸ Guo Ni (2008).

¹²⁹ Tong Hua (2014).

¹³⁰ “我的极品女老师” (*My best female teacher*), *2345 Novel Collection*.

¹³¹ “校园风流邪神” (*A romantic but evil spirit on campus*), *Quanben Xiaoshuo*.

sensitive areas related to sex are found in four other works. Relatively safe is the situation of Xiaoxiao and Muchen starting a relationship while living together without any parent (figures) in *A two faced deity relies on Xiao Bai*.¹³² In *Seizing the opportunity to date after work*, topics such as condoms and porn are mentioned but mostly in an informative manner.¹³³ In *Days spent together with the most handsome boy in school*, Qiqi has sexual fantasies and intercourse without being in a steady relationship or marriage.¹³⁴ In *That hoodlum kissed my lips* and *My best female teacher*, it is assumed every high school student has sex regularly.¹³⁵ In the latter, the sexual relationship between Zhangcheng and his mentor teacher Jiang is definitely a troublesome topic: there is little respect between teacher and student, and they both have inappropriate thoughts towards each other.¹³⁶ Finally, the ten works contain one character who might be homosexual. Zhizhao, a friend of Linxi in *Demon principle*, seems to have fallen in love with the head of the student board Shengye when Shengye was dressed up as a girl. While he is disappointed when he finds out Shengye is in fact a guy, Zhizhao continues to adore him and attaches much value to what Shengye thinks of him.¹³⁷

4.6.3 Textual self censorship

It is a difficult task to assess whether or not and in what way an author has censored him- or herself to be able to upload work and stay off the radar. This research cannot examine whether authors have avoided certain topics or thoughts in their works; it is only possible to discuss textual details. One method to evade censorship is used in *A two faced deity who relies on Xiao Bai*: a part of the story plays out in an online game. Anything sensitive censorship-wise that happens in a game is almost untouchable, because a game is not reality. In the online game in this work, except for the demolition of the standing rulers by the protagonists, no sensitive topics are mentioned.¹³⁸ Self censorship in usage of characters and symbols is more easily recognized. In the ten works, three different methods are observed. Firstly, three

¹³² “腹黑大神赖上伪小白” (A two faced deity relies on Xiao Bai), *STO*.

¹³³ “下班抓紧谈恋爱” (Seizing the opportunity to date after work), *Sohu Books*.

¹³⁴ “与小草在一起的日子” (Days spent together with the most handsome boy in school), *69 Shu*.

¹³⁵ “那个流氓问过我的唇” (That hoodlum kissed my lips), *Jiu Ai*,

“我的极品女老师” (My best female teacher), *2345 Novel Collection*.

¹³⁶ “我的极品女老师” (My best female teacher), *2345 Novel Collection*.

¹³⁷ Guo Ni (2008).

¹³⁸ “腹黑大神赖上伪小白” (A two faced deity relies on Xiao Bai), *STO*.

authors replace curses or sexual words by an asterisk (*).¹³⁹ Secondly, one author replaces certain words or meanings by codes (for example, ‘condom’ is replaced by ‘k5/muy.png’).¹⁴⁰ Thirdly, one author uses Internet slang abbreviations for curse words (for example, ‘NND’ stands for 你娘的 *niniangde*, meaning ‘damn’ or ‘fuck’) and always follows these abbreviations up with the sentence ‘注：网络词汇，请未成勿学’, meaning ‘note: this is Internet slang, underage readers are advised not to imitate this usage’.¹⁴¹

¹³⁹ “校园风流邪神” (A romantic but evil spirit on campus), *Quanben Xiaoshuo*, “与小草在一起的日子” (Days spent together with the most handsome boy in school), *69 Shu*, “那个流氓问过我的唇” (That hoodlum kissed my lips), *Jiu Ai*.

¹⁴⁰ “那个流氓问过我的唇” (That hoodlum kissed my lips), *Jiu Ai*.

¹⁴¹ “下班抓紧谈恋爱” (Seizing the opportunity to date after work), *Sohu Books*.

Conclusion

This research is aimed at finding answers to the question ‘what defines Chinese campus literature within China’s literary field, and in particular in terms of protagonists’ social roles?’.

In regard to China’s literary field (and using *capital* as reference), it can be stated that campus literature does not have much symbolic capital: the works lack great literary quality. Economic capital is present, in terms of profit raised by VIP memberships bought by readers online, sales of printed books, and turnover of copyrights for adaption into series. As for political capital, some works possess critical thinking or mention sensitive topics in subtext. Censorship is more profound on printed works because of the state-owned publishing system: while websites also often have regulations and use screening software, online works enjoy relatively more freedom. In the end, the works are mainly written and read for light entertainment and relaxation. The genre does not (yet) occupy an influential position within China’s literary field.

Before concluding the content of the ten works, there are remarks to be made about their exterior circumstances. Works written by students on campus are not featured on lists of popular online campus literature works, which means that the analysis of this research has focused on works written by young adults and recent graduates (presumably outside of campus). There is a huge online community around campus literature: authors and readers are in direct contact, and all websites have their own popular writers and offer different works to read. Chinese campus literature contains more female authors as well as protagonists than male ones: in this respect, it is a relatively feminine genre. The structure of the works is often very long and messy, especially the works that have not been published in print. Due to the lack of regular limits books are normally faced with, online works can utilize all sorts of compositions for chapters and they can continue to grow endlessly. Also, the writing style is amateurish. Self censorship in textual form is present in online works: many authors try to avoid using sexual or curse words since most websites will not allow foul words to be uploaded. Finally, it might be possible that the hype period of this genre is already over. The most recent academic articles on Chinese campus literature are published in 2015, and they mainly discuss campus literature in its traditional definition. Regarding online works, only one of the ten analyzed works is still currently being written; three works have been last updated in 2013 and 2014, the others have been uploaded before 2010.

Concerning the contents of the works, much is to be concluded. Six themes have helped to structure the analysis of Chinese campus literature and show distinct features of the genre. Firstly, while the level of importance is not always the same, school is indeed an omnipresent topic in all stories. Outstanding elements are the Chinese education system and the hierarchy structure within a school environment. With one exception, all schools use a regular school system to educate their students. The influence of teachers on the protagonists is often described in detail, including their rules and punishments as well as students' rebellion against them. Secondly, issues of hierarchy seem to be divided into two separate groups. Regarding personal relations, protagonists struggle with the bond they have with their teachers, family, fellow students, and friends. Because these figures are often role models in their lives, protagonists are constantly trying to please and imitate them. When these figures disappoint them, they have a hard time dealing with the situation. The other group consists of bosses and gang leaders: protagonists battle with underlying issues of power and the responsibility to perform their duties. Thirdly, family is mentioned in every story, but it is rarely the main focus. When parents (figures) and siblings are relevant to the story, they usually stay in the background. While they have influence on the development of protagonists' personalities, the story often concentrates on other aspects, such as school environment and young love. Fourthly, Biddle's role theory gives insight in the social roles of our protagonists. There is only one character in all the works who solely experiences role consensus. All other protagonists who are content with certain social expectations are struggling with others. The situation of role conflict is present in most stories, and is maintained by protagonists because they refuse to either acknowledge a certain problem or resolve it by taking steps towards a solution. Such problems usually have to do with family members or lovers. Role conformity and role taking are both remarkably relevant to campus literature protagonists. Young people are busy finding out who they are and what they want; they are very sensitive to people around them and their social expectations. In comparison to adults, youngsters still bend quickly, and they need strong characters around them to help them grow. Two protagonists conform themselves to reach for a better future, others change themselves because of group pressure and other social expectations. The works also give examples of protagonists taking over social roles: they fill an empty social space themselves to do a better job at it. Fifthly, there is a big difference between the works in terms of sexual innocence. Some works are very sexual, while others do not even insinuate a kiss. The importance of the author's gender in this respect is striking: compared to female authors, male authors seem to write their stories in a more sexual and violent manner. Unequal relationships between protagonists and their

lovers can be found in both male and female authored works. The love stories often revolve around discovering what you want in life and becoming acquainted with sex. Sixthly, besides textual censorship (discussed above), the works also sometimes mention sensitive topics, but they do not seem to be undergoing severe governmental observation. The works are usually not critical towards society or politics, and can thus stay off the radar.

As I expected, the stories contain many stereotypes: the love stories are predictable, cliché's are regularly inserted, and unexpected plot twists are hard to find. One aspect that surprised me is the amount of violence present. Both in the city as well as on campus, young people strongly feel the pressure of criminal gangs around them. However, while the protagonists have to deal with all sorts of obstacles and barriers, they almost never experience 'real world' problems such as living with a handicap, being raped, dealing with unplanned pregnancies, having an abortion, mourning the dead, being very poor, or reacting to crises on economic, national or global level. The works are indeed meant to be easy and entertaining reads about youngsters finding their way in life.

This research concerns merely the top of the Chinese campus literature ice berg waiting to be discovered. For a more complete and detailed description of Chinese campus literature, more studies in all sorts of directions are required. For example, my study did not have the capacity to further examine the works belonging to the more traditional definition of campus literature. Writings of students, campus literature activities in school, and magazines, papers, and journals on campus literature all deserve more attention. The comparison of campus literature to the same genre in other countries might prove significant as well: both Western countries as well as Japan and Korea have their own campus literature style. Detailed information on readers of Chinese campus literature would answer a lot of questions. Finally, it would be interesting to look closely at the many different subgenres belonging to campus literature, and the relation between original works and their adaptations into a television series.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

List of the details of the ten popular Chinese campus literature works used for the research analysis.

In print

八月张安 Ba Yue Zhang An (2013). 最好的我们(上) *Zui hao de women (shang)* (With you (first of two parts)), Changsha: Hunan Wenyi Chubanshe.

郭妮 Guo Ni (2008). 恶魔的法则 I *Emo de faze I* (Demon principle I), Taipei: Maitian Chuban.

桐华 Tong Hua (2014). 那些回不去的年少时光(上) *Na xie huibuqu de nianshao shiguang (shang)* (Those times of being young to which there is no return (first of two parts)), New Taipei City: Yeren Wenhua Gufen Youxian Gongsi.

Online

“腹黑大神赖上伪小白” *Fuhei dashen laishang wei Xiaobai* (A two faced deity relies on Xiao Bai), *STO* <<http://www.sto.cc/123291-1/>> (27-07-2016),

“腹黑大神赖上伪小白” *Fuhei dashen laishang wei Xiaobai* (A two faced deity relies on Xiao Bai), *Zongheng (Huayu Baidu)* <<http://huayu.baidu.com/showchapter/353026.html>> (25-07-2016 – 27-07-2016).

“那个流氓问过我的唇” *Na ge liumang wenguo wo de chun* (That hoodlum kissed my lips), *Jiu Ai* <<http://www.92txt.net/book/3/3344/>> (04-08-2016 – 14-08-2016).

“潘多拉的眼泪” *Panduola de yanlei* (Tears of Pandora), *Kanunu8* <<http://www.kanunu8.com/files/youth/201103/2169.html>> (29-06-2016 – 30-06-2016),

“潘多拉的眼泪” *Panduola de yanlei* (Tears of Pandora), *Sohu Books* <<http://lz.book.sohu.com/book7223.html>> (27-06-2016 – 29-06-2016).

“我的极品女老师” *Wo de jipin nv laoshi* (My best female teacher), *2345 Novel Collection* <<http://book.2345.com/chapterlist/1336966.html>> (15-08-2016 – 21-08-2016).

“下班抓紧谈恋爱” *Xiaban zhua jin tanlianai* (Seizing the opportunity to date after work), *Sohu Books* <<http://lz.book.sohu.com/book-6300.html>> (30-08-2016 – 01-09-2016).

“校园风流邪神” *Xiaoyuan fengliu xieshen* (A romantic but evil spirit on campus), *Quanben*

Xiaoshuo <<http://xiaoyuanfengliuxieshen.quanben-xiaoshuo.com/>> (19-07-2016 – 24-07-2016).

“与小草在一起的日子” *Yu xiaocao zai yiqi de rizi* (Days spent together with the most handsome boy in school), *69 Shu* <<http://www.69shu.com/692/>> (04-07-2016 – 10-07-2016),

“与小草在一起的日子” *Yu xiaocao zai yiqi de rizi* (Days spent together with the most handsome boy in school), *Read Novel* <<http://www.readnovel.com/partlist/64123.html>> (04-07-2016).

Appendix 2

List of used websites offering a top ranking list of popular Chinese campus literature works. Screenshots of these websites on the date they were consulted are available in my personal database.

‘青春校园小说排行榜’ *Qingchun xiaoyuan xiaoshuo paihangbang* (Top ranking list of youth campus novels), *Qzread* <<http://www.qzread.com/xytop.html>> (21-03-2016).

‘青春校园小说排行榜’ *Qingchun xiaoyuan xiaoshuo paihangbang* (Top ranking list of youth campus novels), *Xiaoshuo Sogou* <<http://xiaoshuo.sogou.com/top/qingchun/>> (21-03-2016).

‘校园文学的小说那些好看?’ *Xiaoyuan wenxue de xiaoshuo na xie haokan?* (Which campus literature novels are good to read?), *Baidu* <<http://zhidao.baidu.com/link?url=1rZfFyoAIzT7nhlt-QD3XT5kPzHyUY1sHurkidIwtDDcYenD8DHs5fFYGlxaRE068A9ZtRi4-mmh-TtvoS36P1sjZe0aTr1TuVVppSIpYZu>> (21-03-2016).

‘校园文学小说’ *Xiaoyuan wenxue xiaoshuo* (Campus literature novels), *2345 Novel Collection* <<http://book.2345.com/zt/xiaoyuanwenxue.html>> (21-03-2016).

‘校园小说排行榜’ *Xiaoyuan xiaoshuo paihangbang* (Top ranking list of campus novels), *Readnovel* <<http://www.readnovel.com/xytop/top.html>> (21-03-2016).

‘校园小说排行榜’ *Xiaoyuan xiaoshuo paihangbang* (Top ranking list of campus novels), *Shushu* <<http://shushu.com.cn/xiaoyuan.htm>> (21-03-2016).

‘言情’ *Yanqing* (Romance), *Douban Read* <<https://www.douban.com/tag/%E8%A8%80%E6%83%85/?focus=book>> (21-03-2016).

Appendix 3

List of used websites offering free reading and/or uploading of Chinese campus literature works.

- ‘2345 小说大全’ *2345 Xiaoshuo daquan* (2345 Novel Collection homepage), *2345 Novel Collection* <<http://book.2345.com/>> (19-04-2016).
- ‘69 书吧’ *69 Shu ba* (69 Shu homepage), *69 Shu* <<http://www.69shu.com/>> (28-04-2016).
- ‘百度’ *Baidu* (Baidu homepage), *Baidu* <<http://www.baidu.com/>> (31-03-2016).
- ‘豆瓣读书’ *Douban dushu* (Douban Read homepage), *Douban Read* <<https://book.douban.com/>> (27-04-2016).
- ‘就爱网’ *Jiu ai wang* (Jiu Ai homepage), *Jiu Ai* <<http://www.92txt.net/>> (12-09-2016).
- ‘乐文小说’ *Lewen xiaoshuo* (Lewen Novel homepage), *Lewen Novel* <<http://www.lwxiaoshuo.com/>> (28-04-2016).
- ‘梦远书城’ *Mengyuan shucheng* (My 285 homepage), *My 285* <<http://www.my285.com/>> (28-04-2016).
- ‘努努书坊’ *Nunu shufang* (Kanunu8 homepage), *Kanunu8* <<http://www.kanunu8.com/>> (27-04-2016).
- ‘书书网’ *Shushuwang* (Shu Shu homepage), *Shu Shu* <<http://www.shushu8.com/>> (12-04-2016).
- ‘思兔’ *Situ* (Situ homepage), *STO* <<http://www.sto.cc/pcindex.aspx>> (12-09-2016).
- ‘搜狐’ *Souhu* (Sohu Books homepage), *Sohu Books* <<http://book.sohu.com/>> (12-09-2016).
- ‘随便看看吧’ *Suibian kankan ba* (Have A Read homepage), *Have A Read* <<http://g.sbkk8.cn/>> (19-04-2016).
- ‘起点中文网’ *Qidian zhongwenwang* (Qidian homepage), *Qidian* <<http://www.qidian.com/Default.aspx>> (31-03-2016).
- ‘全本小说网’ *Quanben xiaoshuowang* (Quanben Xiaoshuo homepage), *Quanben Xiaoshuo* <<http://quanben-xiaoshuo.com/>> (19-04-2016).
- ‘Q 猪文学站’ *Qzhu wenxuezhhan* (Qzread homepage), *Qzread* <<http://www.qzread.com/>> (19-04-2016).
- ‘小说搜狗’ *Xiaoshuo sogou* (Xiaoshuo Sogou homepage), *Xiaoshuo Sogou* <<http://xiaoshuo.sogou.com/>> (12-04-2016).
- ‘小说阅读网’ *Xiaoshuo yueduwang* (Read Novel homepage), *Read Novel*

<<http://www.readnovel.com/>> (31-03-2016).

‘纵横中文网’ *Zongheng Zhongwenwang* (Zongheng Chinese homepage), *Zongheng Chinese*

<<http://www.zongheng.com/>> (12-04-2016).