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ARTICLE

Going Underground: The Author's Body and the Mining Workplace in the Writing about Miners in Modern China

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Abstract

This article highlights the author's body and its physical experience in labor history, by a focus on their historical implication for the emergence of writings about miners in late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth century China. Miners and their workplace entered Chinese textual and pictorial representations at the turn of the twentieth century, as a result of the growing importance of the mining industry, the dissemination of new mining knowledge, and the formation of new social groups. Later in the 1920s, literary movements tied up with the revolutionary agenda under the influence of Marxism brought new conceptualizations of miners' position in society and their relationship with intellectuals. When authors turned to write about miners in the late 1920s and early 1930s, they chose to legitimize their writing by descending into mine shafts to acquire the experience in the underground mining workplace and to incorporate the bodily experience into their writings. The mining lamp in texts and images from this period provides a prime example to illustrate how the author's experience in the underground mine was embodied in the author's and the miner's corporeal visions and contributed a new way of seeing and representing miners. Drawing upon materials about miners of various genres, this article reveals the formulation of Chinese visual modernity within Chinese social interactions and brings the author's body into labor history by calling attention to both its material presence in the workplace and its agentic power to inscribe workers.

Keywords: human body; work environment; modern Chinese literature; history of mining; the body in literature

Introduction

Ba Jin's body and his writing of miners

Émile Zola had a visible influence in twentieth-century Chinese literature through his literary naturalism, which is best illustrated by Ba Jin. In1927, still a student in France, Ba Jin read *L'Assommoir, L'œuvre*, and *Germinal*, and he found himself obsessed with Zola and was keen to imitate him.[1] Five years later, with his reputation as a writer now

established in China, his enthusiasm had not waned. In the preface to his new story *Shading* (Tin miners) he declared to "write a work like Zola's *Germinal*."[2] The following year, in 1933, he published another story about miners and paid open tribute to Zola by using the title *Mengya* (Germinal in Chinese).[3]

Zola's influence is obvious not only in the topic (miners) of the two stories and the title of one of them, but in Ba Jin's attempt to replicate the naturalism of Zola's prose style and emulate Zola's methodology,[4] i.e. gaining life experience for writing experimental novels.[5] For *Germinal*, Zola travelled through the coal mining region of northern France, attended miners' meetings, lived with them in the villages, and even descended into mine shafts.[6]

Ba Jin did the same. In 1931, he spent one week in a coal mine, an experience that contributed to his writing of *Mengya*.[7] In the 1934 preface to a revised version of *Mengya*, now retitled as *Xue* (Snow), the author announced that the story did not contain much imagined, because he had drawn on his "life experience" to write it.[8] At the mine, stated Ba Jin, he had the freedom to observe, hear, and even descend into a mine shaft regardless of dissuasions and warnings. "I did this not to collect information for stories," he maintained, "but just to experience life."[9] For Ba Jin, descending into a mine shaft was one way of experiencing life, specifically a miner's life, and this bodily experience later proved critical for his writing.

In early twentieth-century China, how novel were Ba Jin literary practices, i.e., his writings about miners, his determination to approach the miner's life, and his experience of going underground? And how to interpret the emphasis placed on his own bodily experience in his writing? Following Zola to approach reality through experience and writing, Ba Jin was one of the earliest Chinese authors to represent miners, and one of the earliest to subject their own bodies to experience the miner's life and embody the experience in writing. This article locates Ba Jin and his contemporaries within the transitional period of Chinese society and literature in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to uncover the author's body as a corporeal medium through which writers, usually intellectuals, connected with workers by experiencing and writing, a less explored issue in labor history.

The worker's and the author's body for labor history

Labor historians Ava Baron and Eileen Boris have advocated "the body" as a category useful for working-class history. They have identified three ways in which the body has been understood and deployed in historical writings: as discourse and representation, as a technology of power or site of regulation/discipline, and as corporeal or material presence.[10] Their inspiring analyses exclusively concern the worker's body, a particular common subject of research on literary and visual representations. Zola's writings, for example, have been scrutinized in this vein for their description and representation of the worker's body.[11] But "the body" in this usage often involves only the erotic and desired body of the workers as represented and viewed.[12] Peter Brooks, in a general inquiry into the connection between representing and viewing in nineteenth-century literary realism, finds that "[t]he body in the field of vision […] inevitably relates to scopophilia, the erotic investment of the gaze which is traditionally defined as masculine, its object the female body."[13] His statement encapsulates

a feature of relevant research by implying a dichotomy between the represented and viewed body and the representer's body.[14] The dichotomy often results in a history that neglects the corporeal presence of the representer and its significance for representing, as well as the shared bodily experience that connects the representer with the represented.

Historian Susan Harrow has indicated an avenue for bridging the dichotomy. In examining Zola's novels, she places "[t]he relationship between the writing of the body and the body of the writing" at the center, and extends the conception of corporeality to entail actual bodies (the body of the author and the bodies of readers) as well as fictional bodies.[15] She observes how the embodied perceptions and experiences of Zola's act of writing interplay with his representation of the body in stories (e.g. the miner's body in *Germinal*), the body of representation (the narrative corpus) of his novels, and the corporeal experience of readers.[16]

Indeed, if inquiring into the body in labor history seeks to "move away from dichotomous thinking," as Baron and Boris advocate, the dichotomy between the worker's and the author's body must also be abandoned to complicate the relationship between physical experience and discursive writings.[17] The experiments undertaken and the experience acquired by Zola and Ba Jin provide the clearest examples of the author's body at work and make us conscious that the intervention of the author's body matters for writing about the working class. The body should be more than a passive object, viewed, represented, and inscribed with discourse and power, but a tool and even an agent through which authors actively conceptualize and transform the relationships between working and writing and between workers and writers. Looking at how bodies come to matter in labor history through both "what is done to the body" and "what the body does" remains inadequate, unless the bodies in question entail the author's.[18]

The authors' body is implicated in their writings, but often in different registers. For writings about Chinese miners, this article argues over a rupture with history effected by Ba Jin and his contemporaries, and its embeddedness in the social, political, and literary transitions in the early twentieth century. During this time, new knowledge, literary movement, and revolutionary imperatives established new links between intellectual authors and the working class and between writing and working. Underlying the links was the authors' new conception of a shared corporeality between miners and themselves, which implemented both a new mode of viewing and understanding the miner's body, workplace, and mining tools, and a new convention for writing about them. The body here binding writing to working and authors to workers complements Baron and Boris' analyses and contributes another perspective to consider the body in labor history.

The emergence of miners and their workplace in modern China

A new visibility by new mining knowledge

Before the late nineteenth century, miners were almost invisible in Chinese textual and pictorial materials, i.e., their bodies, work, and workplace were rarely seen by literati authors in person, and rarely represented in texts or images.[19] Three primary reasons account for this invisibility. First, mining was segregated from populated settlements,

usually inaccessible because of inefficient transport, complex terrains, and sometimes hostile ethnic groups.[20] Second, mining was not appreciated by Confucian ideology, especially in comparison to agriculture,[21] because profit-driven miners might threaten local social stability and even the imperial rule.[22] And third, practical knowledge of mining was confined to illiterate miners, rarely textualized for reading.

Few literati left representations of mining and miners. Two notable exceptions are Wang Song's gazetteer published in the 1830s and Wu Qijun's report in 1844.[23] These writers, restricted by ideological bias toward mining and by epistemic distance from practical mining knowledge and experience, strictly maintained social, spatial, and corporeal distinctions between themselves and miners. This is best illustrated by their either explicit unwillingness to descend into the mine or tactical concealment of their descent if they ever actually did so. The authors did not see it necessary to subject their own bodies to experience for writing or to incorporate their bodily experience into their writings. Wu Qijun, for example, did not write his experience in his text, although he might have entered the mine for inspection.

Changes came in the late nineteenth century. Mining now grew in its importance for the state, improved transport made mining sites accessible, and new mining knowledge was imported from the West and disseminated in China.[24] In the process, the technological text emerged as the primary genre to expose mining and mining spaces to the public, and mining engineers emerged to connect intellectual authors and miners, which fostered a new approach to the miner's body and workplace in writings.

The role of mining knowledge in changing the representation and visibility of mining has been implicated by Rosalind Williams and Lewis Mumford. For Williams, the sudden emergence of writings involving the underground space of subways, mining pits, and tunnels in nineteenth-century England was a result of technological and engineering progress. New mining technologies exposed the mine and nurtured a new way of seeing and experiencing the underground space where miners are working.[25] Mumford relies upon Agricola's *De re Metallica* to interpret the metaphorical meanings of mining environment in early modern Europe.[26] For him, the emergence of mining texts and educated experts in the sixteenth century permitted writings about mining and even about the perception and experience of the underground mines.[27] In different contexts, Williams and Mumford both emphasize the textualization of mining knowledge, especially knowledge of constructing and maintaining the mining environment, and the formation of new professionals (i.e. geologists and mining engineers) commanding that knowledge, which bred new perceptions and visualities of mining and underground mining space.

Their insight enables us to see the technological texts that emerged after the late nineteenth century as means of instigating the visuality and representations of mining in China.[28] Most important texts were first from the Jiangnan Arsenal. Founded in Shanghai in 1864, the Arsenal was the center in late nineteenth-century China for producing weapons and military equipment as well as scientific and technological texts through translation.[29] Among the hundreds of translated books are some on mining.[30]

These translated works introduced into China Western mining knowledge. Previously, the underground mining space and mining technologies were only accessible and perceivable to miners, but now, the new texts exposed them to anyone who

read the books. The most illustrating example is *Kaimei yaofa* (Essential methods of extracting coals) published in 1870.[31] The original, *A Treatise on Coal and Coal-Mining* by the British engineer Warington Smyth, included the methods of digging, timbering, building drifts, lighting, ventilating, and dealing with potential hazards in the mine. More than 80 percent of the book is about the work underground and how to deal with the environment there. For example, volume four of the translated version scrutinizes the various methods for prospecting and digging for coals and introduces various forms of shafts and the necessity of building and supporting shafts. The next volume deals with constructing shafts and cutting coals at the seam. The translators properly summarized the original chapters in subheadings such as "building pillars with coals in shafts," "where it is convenient for building shafts" and "various instruments used for digging coals," so that the readers can immediately grasp all the points.

Besides texts, the translation has retained almost all the illustrations in the original treatise. These illustrations, of various sizes and forms, show not only how engineering and construction work should be done, but tools and miners using these tools at work. The most notable illustration is the eighteenth in the original version, captioned "Colliers holding Coleford high-delf seams, Forest of Dean."[32] While some illustrations are omitted in the translated version, this one is retained, but redrawn. In the original image the underground mine is spacious, supported by pillars and illuminated by lamps, and two miners are working and another resting beside them. The redrawn image represents only two miners working at the seam, omitting almost all the details of the environment—the pillars, the lamps, and even the coal piles.[33] The alteration orients the image to the laboring miners rather than the space, but it nonetheless shows miners holding tools, distinguished from the images in Wu's 1844 report where miners and tools are separated from each other.[34]

This book was highly respected and widely read in the mining industry in late nineteenth-century China, and was even recommended by high officials who strove to revive China by using Western science and technology.[35] Where few sources provided detailed texts or images of underground mining, it was probably the first time that the Chinese translator of this work saw the underground mine represented to him, alongside tools and technologies for mining, as well as the miners' bodies in the mine. This must have also been true for his readers.

Alongside other contemporary works, this book introduced new mining knowledge, and in an epistemic sense, by textualizing the knowledge, revealed miners' work and workplace to its readers—literati, officials, and students. For them, the mine, once hidden underground, became visible, understood as constructed and maintained with human technology. Moreover, when dealing with this environment, the book considers miners' work and experience in it. Lighting, ventilation, and coping with hazards suggest that the humans in the mine must be corporeal, and their life must be supported by technology.[36] This technological awareness of the miners' work and workplace departed from earlier writings—now, the underground mining space was visible through textualized knowledge, and, by the knowledge, it was possible to envisage a bodily experience underground. This new awareness would allow later authors to conceive of a sympathy and a corporeal connection between themselves and miners.

New intellectuals going underground

The exposition of the technological aspects of mining to the public came alongside the development of mineral industry, as mining laws were made and revised, companies were established, and mining engineers were playing a bigger role.[37] They together generated new modes of visualizing and conceiving mining, especially underground, because coal and metallic ore usually excavated from the underground were the most important for economy and politics.

Shellen Wu reveals that by the turn of the twentieth century, the Chinese government had realized the significance of the underground: Mineral deposits were regarded as separated from the land above, which was reflected in the mining laws enacted during this time.[38] The national enterprise to claim mining rights was a global trend in the nineteenth century. It was pertaining to not only state-building or nationalism but an epistemic change of the land, propelled by the rise of geology that assumed a central role for prospecting and mining. More pertinent here is Eric Nystrom's argument over the changes in mining in US in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Professional mining engineers now rose to create a visual culture, "a set of practices, artefacts, and discourses tied to visualizing underground mines." This visual culture envisioned the underground mines as spaces "more predictable, understandable, and controllable," enabling engineers to assume the authority of mining knowledge and set themselves apart from miners.[39] In this sense, the underground mine was made visible in a modern way through the eyes of mining engineers and geologists.

Nystrom's argument explains why Zola, in writing *Germinal*, relied upon mining treatises. They provided him with textualized, authoritative knowledge of mining to approach the reality of miners' work.[40] Nystrom's point may apply to China at the turn of the twentieth century, when educated engineers and geologists proved crucial for mining. Foreigners were hired from Japan, Europe, and the US; yet more Chinese engineers were educated, at either overseas or domestic universities or mining schools.[41] These professionally trained engineers and geologists formed a new social group to connect previously distinct intellectuals and miners. They were well-educated, capable of reading and writing; yet they commanded practical mining knowledge, often surveying and working underground. They served as a bridge, by which the underground space and work in mines became visible and understandable for intellectuals, albeit in an engineering and technological sense.[42]

But tensions remained between the social identity and the knowledge of mining professionals. They who possessed mining knowledge had to go underground in person to examine mineral deposits or supervise mining, and they knew clearly how it felt in the underground mines. But still, those with underground experience maintained their identification with intellectuals, distinguished from miners, in terms of their social status, as Nystrom has noted. The question is: When these professionals helped to construct, observed, and stayed in the underground mines, did their mining knowledge empower them to write about miners and their workplace, and to transgress the old social, spatial, and corporeal boundaries between those who wrote and those who were written about?

Ding Wenjiang (V.K. Ting, 1887–1936), the founding father of China's modern geology, provided a report in 1914 for probing this question. Early that year, Ding investigated the tin mining town Gejiu in Yunnan province and wrote a report on

its geology and mining. Published posthumously in 1937, it was one of the earliest geological reports written by the Chinese, with textual descriptions and geological maps demonstrating Ding's full command of the geologist's visual culture.[43] But when it comes to mining methods and procedures, Ding's tone, prose style, and language resemble the writings from the early nineteenth century.[44] Ding undoubtedly entered the mining drift for investigation, but his writing does not reveal how he descended, walked, moved, or felt in the underground space. It simply describes the miner's movement and work from the perspective of a pure observer, with only one sentence implying Ding's withholding, "[I]n the pit, [I] could hear the sound of the miners breathing, even tens of steps away [from them]."[45]

The illustrations in the report reveal more of Ding's attitude. Yin Zanxun, who documented and published the report for Ding, found Ding's original illustrations "complete and well prepared," so he included them in the final publication.[46] Besides geological maps, four other figures are hand-drawn from photos, with two representing miners.[47] Both show miners outside the mine, at the entrance of a mining drift, rather than inside. One of them captioned "miners loaded with ores coming out of the drift" represents two men, one dressed in Chinese gown and the other in a Western suit, both standing outside the drift and looking at the miners coming out. The one wearing the suit must be Ding, a Westernized professional educated in Britain. The implied viewer is not in the mine, and neither is Ding. Ding had entered the mine for investigation as a geologist, but in 1914, he did not hope to present himself along with miners underground, in either texts or pictorial illustrations.

"Go into the mine," to work and to write

Early writings about miners

While mining knowledge was disseminated, and the numbers of engineers and geologists were growing, before the 1920s, few literary or non-literary works were published about miners, and few attempted to challenge the social and spatial boundaries between miners and others.

"Kuanggong yu" (Miners' words), a short story published in 1920, is typical.[48] It relates an incident in a coal mine: The mine owners collude with mining engineers to exploit miners by seducing them into gambling and opium-smoking, and by embezzling their earnings. The opposition between miners and engineers is intriguing, yet even more is the narrator's self-identification with neither miners nor engineers, but a "young man" who visits the mine.[49] The story is told from the perspective of this visitor. His life and name are unrevealed, but he is surely not a miner, because he is accompanied by a servant.

This visitor expresses pity toward the miserable miners, but he takes no action. He does not even contact the miners, only observing them in an isolated house through glass windows—a spatial and physical separation that metaphorically reinforces his mysteriousness and upper-class status. Before leaving the mining area, he ponders that "these miners will always work for engineers like plow horses, if gambling and opium are not prohibited." The author may call for reforms to improve the miners' life, but apparently, he is uninterested in their subjectivity and does not attempt to share the life and work with them.

This separation is explicitly articulated in Yang Zhongjian's (1897–1979) poem entitled "Kuanggong" (Miners, 1921):[50]

Many cavernous paths in the deep dark underground,
A few little lamps unceasingly coming and going;
So miserable are many compatriots,
each day for twelve hours, working!

Axe-stroke by axe-stroke,
Hammer-blow by hammer-blow,
They strike down black coal,
To provide the people with life's joys,
To promote the people's material civilization.

But they suffer too much;
Obtaining nothing of human happiness,
They only serve as cattle and horses.

What a pity, even the word "big" they cannot read,
How can they understand what "sanctity of labor" means?
Alas!
To speak of Chinese miners is beyond words!

The juxtaposition of mining drift and mining lamp presents a dark underground space from which emerge the dim lights held by miners. The miners are miserable, but their work is beneficial for the "material civilization of humans." Despite the author's pity, the poem ends with a sigh, pale and powerless, divulging the author's incapacity for further conveying his emotions. But the underlying question remains: Who should speak of and for miners? And from where should that person speak?

A famous geologist in his later years, Yang composed this poem in fieldwork as a geology student at Peking University. He recognized the difference between the miners and himself: Whereas he was receiving the best education in the country, the miners were illiterate. He even asserted his superior position to speak as he wrote—the narrator gazing upon the mine and miners from above, not in the underground with the miners.

Yang, however, did enter the mine, which is told in his other poem in the same issue:[51]

Descending!
I only feel my surroundings rising quickly.
No more sunlight!
The small lamp feels so bright.

The first time going down into a mine,
I cannot help feeling scared.
But to pursue knowledge, I am eager,
so, I go down, despite my fear.

When I reach the bottom,
I feel strangely comfortable,
Having forgotten my fear.
I begin to ponder,
"How incredible that the many layered earth's crust, would let me go up and down!"

The mining lamp replaces sunlight to illuminate the underground, and indicates a spatial boundary being transgressed when Yang goes down. His first descent brings fear, which is soon overcome by his enthusiasm for pursuing knowledge. In Yang's mind, it is nature that empowers him to go into the underground, rather than the lift, the machine that brings him down alongside miners. The sense of accomplishment in conquering nature and acquiring knowledge surpasses his fear, and distinguishes, or even elevates him away from miners. Like Ding, Yang went into the underground mining workplace, but he did not see himself as one of miners.

In the mid-1920s, more literary writings about miners appeared and took up new metaphorical meanings. In 1925, for example, an anonymous poem entitled "Shengzhi kuang" (Mine of the life) was published in *Wenxue zhoubao* (Literature weekly), a prominent literature periodical in Republican China.[52] The poem opens: "We are all mining, mining with toil, from the time of Adam till now; yet no one has obtained any gold!" Without any clarification, the reader may wonder who we are and why we are all mining. The author seems to refute the assumption that only miners are mining by rendering mining as a metaphor and analogizing all humans to miners.

Whereas Yang's poems maintain the distinction between miners and authors, he now attempts to dissolve it—the plural first person pronoun includes all humans. If the work of mining is shared, the workplace, emotions, and sensibilities must be shared as well, because this mine is "gloom and dark, without light in the tunnels, but only somberness and sorrow." Moreover, in this workplace, the corporeal body is shared, too: The next stanzas narrate how the toil of mining destroys our bodies by breaking our legs and arms, and ultimately leads us to death.

This poem proclaims the subjectivity of miners in a humanistic way. Rather than providing a realist portray of miners' work, it summons a group of us and lowers us down into the mine to make miners' body, workplace, and labor sensible beyond miners. For the author, the analogy between living and mining is indisputably true. This confidence is articulated by the fact that exploitation and class struggle, typical tropes in the literature on the working class and mining, are absent from this poem.

1925: The May 30 Movement as a turning point

The May 30 Movement in 1925 brought a turn in approaching mining and miners in literature. Involving nationwide strikes and demonstrations, the movement occupies a critical position in the historiography of modern Chinese history. It was the largest anti-imperialist mass movement to date, promoted Marxism in China, and instigated the rise of the Chinese Communist Party in urban areas.[53] Besides its political significance is its influence on intellectual thinking about workers. Workers were now considered as the vanguard and backbone, distinguishing the movement from the May Fourth Movement in 1919, primarily led and supported by students.[54] More precisely, the May 30 Movement "strengthened a rendition of national identity that saw the fate of the nation as intimately tied up with the struggles of the common people."[55]

The new vision of the nation contingent on the masses was also manifested in literary writing. The Creation Society was a good example. Founded in Tokyo in 1921 and active through the 1920s, this literary society was comprised of many eminent writers. In the initial years, the society promoted a romantic approach to creating new Chinese literature against Zola's naturalism.[56] Nonetheless, under the influence of Japanese naturalist literature, the Creationist romanticism, while reacting against literary naturalism, paradoxically absorbed its scientific methods of description and observation.[57] This tendency became even more apparent in the late 1920s, when writers embraced writing about the proletariat under the impact of Marxism.[58] In 1926, exactly after the May 30 Movement, the society initiated a new periodical, *Chuangzao yuekan* (The creationist monthly), by which the Creationists turned to a revolutionary literature tied up with the worldwide proletarian movement.[59] They began to pay attention to workers and wrote about their work, toil, and life in a Marxist and proletarian way, which highlighted the educated writers and intellectuals' capacity for transcending class and social boundaries.

Among the Creationists, Gong Binglu (1908–1955) is best known for his stories about miners. His story "Yijiuerwunian de xue" (The blood of 1925), published in 1928, demonstrates the intellectual implications of the May 30 Movement.[60] It is in 1925. The narrator, a young man, is in a coal mine in Shandong, where he is separated from the world outside. One day, on a train back to the mine from a nearby town, he has a brief chat with another passenger. This fellow passenger, who he soon recognizes as a miner from the mine, tells him in a sad tone of the news he has heard about Gu Zhenghong's death in Shanghai (Gu was the communist worker whose murder triggered the May 30 Movement). As telling the news, the miner comes to realize the necessity of reacting by class struggle. Thus, the story ends with a reaffirmation of the leftist and Marxist revolutionary discourse.

In his notes after the story, Gong confesses that he took his editor's suggestion to write on this topic and structured the story following a Russian writer. However, this does not deny the story's biographical nature. It is purposefully written as a report of what happened to the narrator, and Gong deliberately provides credibility markers such as place (a mine in Shandong) and time (the summer of 1925), to make it read like a truthful record.

Christopher T. Keaveney has noticed that, unlike previous creationist stories in the shadow of the Japanese I-novel, the narrator here is not the main character.[61] The story, asserts Keaveney, is structured as a conversation between a miner and a passenger on

a train, and the main agent is the fellow passenger who tells of and dwells upon what he has heard. Keaveney is correct to note that this story does not direct the reader's sympathy to the narrator, but he misinterprets the narrator, the "I" in the story, as a miner working in the mine.[62]

In fact, all the narrator says at the beginning of the story is that he lived rather than worked in a mine. He explicitly identifies himself with the implied reader: "[t]he mine was indeed a hell, [and] in there [emphasis added], [we were] separated from our [emphasis added] world of reality." Shifting back to the mine, he continues, "[t]he current news, we would never know. What we were accustomed to see was the disabled and miserable prisoners coming from the pits." The narrator does not belong in the mining area with miners. His actual identity is not revealed. It is possible that he just visits the mine to experience life, just as what Ba Jin would do in 1931. The narrator's physical existence in the enclosed mining area demonstrates his determination to cross the spatial and social boundaries to the miners' side, although he maintains an identification with the reader and the outside.

The narrator does not attempt to draw the reader's sympathy toward himself, because he presumes that the reader shares the same world with him. But through his experience and testament as a medium, the reader can see, hear, and sympathize with the miner who is turning to a revolutionary awareness.[63] Indeed, if the May 30 Movement was a marker, it was one both for workers' political awakening and for intellectual's new view of workers.

Gong's devotion to miner stories started in 1927, when he published his first story and continued into the 1930s, when he was active in the League of the Left-wing Writers (Zuolian).[64] Among the Creationists who attempted to define revolutionary literature as "proletarian literature," Gong was junior, remaining largely neglected and mysterious. Few sources reveal his personal life, with only his miner stories suggesting his association with, or experience in, the mining industry. But Gong was not a miner, because he understood his status well when writing these stories: He never confused the narrator with miners. "Yijiuerwunian de xue" has misled Keaveney, but the above reading reveals the opposite. Other stories adopt different strategies. In *Tan kuangfu* (Coal miners, 1928), Gong's best-known work, for example, all the narratives go around the lives of miners and their families above the ground and how they are exploited and attempt to join revolutions.[65] No specific attention is paid to miners' bodily work, tools, and underground workplace. The narrator remains an observer and never intervenes in the space and work of miners.

The 1930s: The body and work in the mine

Gong Binglu was at a turning point. In the following years, more literary or journalistic works about miners appeared, and most elaborated on miners' work, bodies, and workplaces. Ba Jin's stories were among these: Narrators in the stories, albeit educated intellectuals, attempt to cross the social, spatial, and bodily separation between themselves and miners.

Ba Jin and his contemporaries in the 1930s were influenced by the "proletarian literature" propagandized by Creationists in the late 1920s and left-wing writers in the 1930s. Guo Moruo, a Creationist and a leading figure of the literary movement,

promoted "revolutionary literature" in 1926 and announced his conversion from romanticism to realism.[66] This "proletarian literature" criticized Chinese literature for its failure to associate with "life." To write real "proletarian literature," advocated Guo in his manifesto, writers, being educated intellectuals, should go into factories and mines to work as workers, and to write as and for workers.[67] Guo's avocation was championed by his colleagues and the communist party, and Chinese literature thus became more tied to a Marxist revolutionary agenda. Even the literary leaders Lu Xun and Mao Dun were denounced as petty-bourgeois writers who failed to be truly revolutionary.[68]

Ba Jin was an anarchist educated in France, but he contributed romanticist stories to Creationist journals in the early 1920s. In the 1930s, he stood close to communists and left-wing writers and shared with them concerns about proletarians, despite their divergence in ideologies.[69] His preface to *Xue* should be read as a response to Guo, in which he explains that he lived in a mine for 1 week and descended into a mine for gaining "experience." This experience secured the authenticity of writing, and through the authenticity evoked sympathy in reading.

A proliferation of writings about miners in the 1930s exhibited an enthusiasm for the miner's body, and the associated bodily work, the workplace, and tools. In 1932, a short-lived leftist newspaper, *Wenyi xinwen* (News of literature and art), published a series of reports titled "kuanggong shouji" (Miner's notes) in the section "Correspondence from underground." The section title is a pun, meaning the lower class of society and the mining tunnel. The reports are written from the perspective of a miner, who goes to a mining area after losing his livelihood in the village. He eventually finds a job in a mine through an agent. The first words he hears from the agent are "[j]ust go into the mine!"—an imperative commanding him to take a bodily action that transforms him into a miner.[70] As the reports proceed, the miner begs to change his status into an "internal worker," to be paid directly by the mine instead of agent. With his wish unfulfilled, he is only told, "[y]ou just go into your [emphasis added] mine!," where the reports end abruptly.[71] The imperative "Go into your mine!" opens and closes the report, placing the bodily action at the center to define what a miner is and where he belongs.

This metaphorical meaning of the body entering a mine is more eloquently put by a poem in *Wenxue daobao* (Literature herald) in 1936:[72]

> From the surface down the deep dark shaft my body falls;
> With a lamp,
> and an iron hammer,
> I work hidden underground.
> Foul air, blocking my breath;
> Muddy water, weighing down my cloths;
> And me, struggling and wriggling.
> Though tired in heart,
> my hands dare not stop;
> For a bloodied whip is
> Flogging me on my back and head!

With each effort,
My heart is more worried:
Afraid the ceiling above will collapse;
Wanting to live again,
I must reach the afterlife.

Although entitled "kuanggong" (Miner), the poem does not contain the word "miner" at all. The first stanza implies that a miner is nothing but a body fallen into the mine with tools (lamp and hammer) employed for working in the underground mine. The narrator, "I," who becomes a miner after falling, might have been anyone before falling. The body might have been anyone's body, but once fallen, the body must suffer the toil of mining.

In the 1930s, similar words appeared repeatedly in magazines, newspapers, and journals, in writings about miners. The space underground was recognized yet separated from the world above the ground. The boundaries between could be transgressed, and such transgression usually involved a body (usually of a non-miner) transported into a mine. The underground space was miserable and dark, a place where miners were working with tools, but others could enter. Once physically entering the mine, one would be transformed into a miner through his bodily existence in the space and his bodily use of mining tools.

Here lie the innovative and intriguing elements of Ba Jin's stories. He understands the demarcation between miners and intellectuals, but he also believes in the power the bodily experience underground possesses to transform the educated (both himself and the characters in the story) and to create a corporeal link between the author and the miner. And this bodily experience is closely tied up with the underground environment and the technologies used within the environment.

Mining lamp: The tool and the corporeal vision in the mine

How to see underground?

As the underground space and mining tools can transform a non-miner's body into a miner's, at once corporeally and discursively, the mining lamp affords an opportunity to further probe this issue. The lamp is a crucial tool used for mining underground. It is indispensable for miners, because it illuminates the environment in the mine.[73] In the light of the lamp, the dark space underground becomes visible and sensible, and so does the miner's body underground. The dual visibility by light and lamps characterizes the new corporeal connection between the author's body and the miner's body in the writings about miners in modern China.

Wang Song, one of the few authors who wrote about mining before the late nineteenth century, only mentioned the mining lamp very briefly by saying that miners can see nothing without torches.[74] He entered the mine for inspection, and, naturally, he could see nothing without a lamp, but the text mentions nothing about his visual sense—that he can see nothing without torches. Few texts in the nineteenth century touched upon underground illumination, with exceptions in the books from the Jiangnan Arsenal. Only in the early twentieth century, when mining

technologies and mining work entered the public view, did mining lamps came into view.[75]

Yang Zhongjian's poems (quoted above) are worth another examination. Yang must have used a lamp when descending into a shaft. But his poem about his descent does not reveal this fact. However, the narrator knows the necessity of the lamp for mining, only that it does not empower his corporeal senses. In the poem about the miner, the lights emerging from the darkness in the mine shaft dissolve the bodies of miners who are holding them. It is intriguing not only because the narrator deliberately keeps a distance between himself and the lights in the darkness, but that he sees nothing in the light of the lamps—not even the miners' bodies.

From the late 1920s, mining lamps were represented anew, consistent with the changing understanding of the transformative power of underground space and mining tools. Mining lamps created underground spaces and miners' bodies from the darkness by rendering them visible. For example, the poem in 1936 (quoted above) notes that a mining lamp is necessary for a miner.

Woodcut printings provide parallel yet illustrating examples. According to Xiaobing Tang, the woodcut printing brought about a new way of representing proletarians, closely related to the concurrent left-wing literature and realist art.[76] The contrast between black and white in woodcuts, notes Tang, attracted Chinese artists to use it as an ideal medium to depict proletarians.[77] Miners appeared frequently as the subjects of woodcuts. Limited by the choice of color, however, miners were more problematic than other workers for woodcuts: How to depict the miners' workplace, i.e. the underground scene where there is no natural light? The solution became obvious: The lamp. The lamp appears indispensable in almost all woodcut paintings involving mining or miners. It sheds light on the underground mine, and through the light, painting the underground becomes possible, because the light makes the scene visible to both miners and the implied viewer.

A typical example is the woodcut by Mei Changrong, published on *Xiandai banhua* (Modern engravings) in 1934 (Fig. 1).[78] Entitled *Kuangdao* (Mining tunnel), the engraving portrays two miners pushing a cart loaded with mineral ores and their hoes along a railway. The implied viewer can see this scene only because a lamp is depicted hanging on the right up-corner of the engraving. Another printing in 1936 is even more striking (Fig. 2).[79] A miner, naked and crouching in the small space in a mining drift, is working on the ores with a hammer and a chisel. He can see and can be seen because there is a lamp placed in front of him, with short dashes circling around the lamp indicating that it is shining. Serving as a tool both representational and discursive, the lamp suggests that the underground space must be supported by human technologies, i.e., the miner must rely upon lamp to work in the mine. Yet, in a phenomenological sense, this underground scene is depictable only because the lamp illuminates the space and the miner's body for the viewer. The light of the lamp channels the bodies of the miner, the painter, and the viewer by simultaneously empowering their shared corporeal visions.

The lamp and corporeal visions in Ba Jin's story

The pictorial representations should be scrutinized alongside the literature. *Xue*, Ba Jin's story in the early 1930s, is a good example. Before writing this story, Ba Jin had

Figure 1. Mei Changrong, "Kuangdao" (Mining tunnel, 1934), depicting two miners working in the mine. Courtesy of Shanghai Municipal Library.

experience in the mine and descended into a mine shaft. How did his bodily experience in the underground leave prints in his writings? Ba Jin mentions his experience from the underground only in the preface, not in the story. But I contend that he has incorporated his bodily experience underground into the story, which can be uncovered exactly by examining the use of mining lamps.

In Chapter 4 of the novel, the hero Liu, a miner, descends into a shaft for the first time with five others. The narrator notes the only tool in each miner's hand, a lamp. As they go down in a lift, the narrator remarks, "[i]t is all darkness underground, only the lamps illuminating their eyes." The reader's vision is directed to the miners' illuminated eyes, and from here, the miner's vision interposes and replaces the narrator's perspective. In the darkness, the characters see nothing, the narrator sees nothing, and the reader therefore sees nothing, until the lift lands at the bottom and a light is turned on, making visible two smiling middle-aged miners. As Liu and his fellows walk out of the lift, the narrator notes several lamps shedding light on the humid earth. Then the reader's viewpoint is constrained and guided by the light: It leads us to see the timber columns, curved because of gravity, down to the ground, where two railways stretch forward, converge into one, and disappear in the darkness.

The light eventually leads us to the carts on the railway. After a brief conversation observed from the reader' eyes, the miners proceed into the drift. Again, in the darkness, the miners' vision interposes to replace the omniscient narrator's. Miners walk along the railway, unable to see anything, but the seemingly infinite darkness; we—the miner, the narrator, the reader—can only see that on which the lamps shed light. The miners hear someone but see nothing. They just keep on walking, passing by doors,

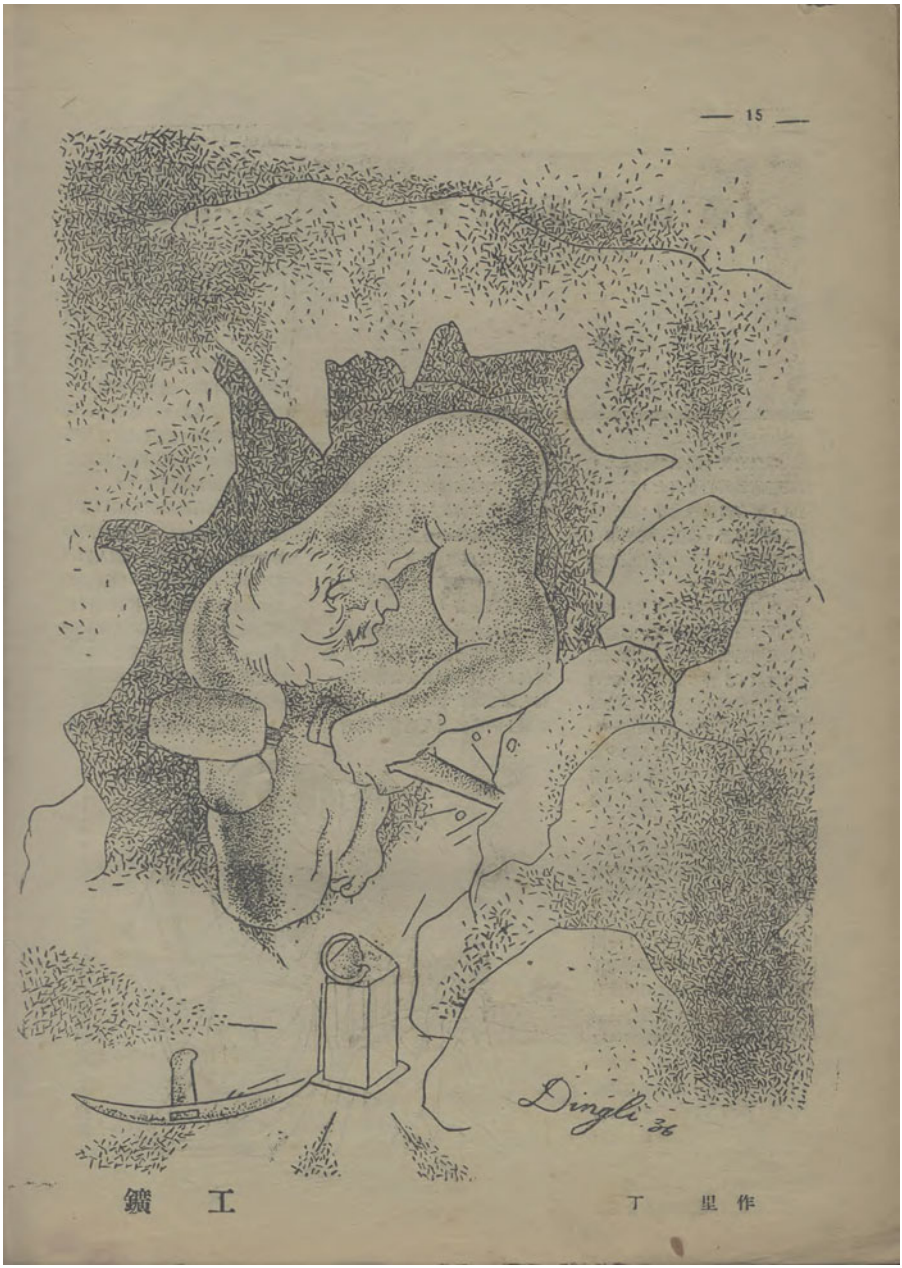

Figure 2. Dingli, "Kuanggong" (Miner, 1936), depicting a miner working in the mine. Courtesy of Shanghai Municipal Library.

darkness, and small drifts, until they arrive at their destination—a tunnel with a large space. Here, the narrator finally gives up the miners' vision and returns to his omniscient point of view, because there is another lamp hanging above to illuminate the

whole space, enabling the narrator and the implied viewer to see the whole scene where miners work.

Ba Jin's writing of miners' experience underground must have drawn on his own experience, but it was also immersed in the motifs and strategies of the pictorial and textual representations of the miner's body, workplace, and tools. Here, I want to highlight the power of the mining lamp: It is a tool that must be used for mining, thus constituting the nature and characteristics of miners' underground labor; yet for writers and painters, it is used for displaying the working condition of miners and for crafting an underground scene. The light of the mining lamp is at the center of the visibility of miners and their workplace, empowering the miner to see, as well as the narrator and the reader/viewer. By converging the characters and narrator's perspectives, Ba Jin's story suggests the convergence of their bodies where the visual ability is embedded, and through the converged visions, the miners' embodied experience is shared and perceived by the author, and consequently by the reader.

Conclusion

Ba Jin and his contemporaries presented a new literary method in China, not only in their efforts to observe and write about miners, but in their attempts to embody the miner's experience through their own physical immersion in the mine. They were empowered by the convergence of many changes in modern China: the transformation of mining knowledge that exposed mining to the public, new representational strategies that benefited from naturalism, and the new literary conventions that embraced life experience and the revolutionary agenda. They resulted in a body of work deliberately written on the basis of the bodily experience that was acquired through the author's body and its shared corporeality with the miner's body.

For historians of visual culture and literature who emphasize the cruciality of visuality in China's modernity, the visual modernity is often considered as a result of the China-West confrontations.[80] The connections between literature, technical writings, and pictorial representations about mining and miners documented in the article demonstrate the formulation of visual modernity within the Chinese social interactions. When the working class, in this case miners, was discovered and rendered as the subject of viewing and writing, their visibility was rooted in the body and bodily engagements between different social groups, i.e. mining engineers, geologists, intellectual writers, revolutionaries, and miners.

In highlighting the bodily experience and active engagement with miners, authors like Ba Jin were responding to Zola's legacy of literary naturalism and the revolutionary imperatives in modern China.[81] Zola's naturalism, suppressing imagination while entailing observing and experimenting, needs to be considered in the context of the visual culture and progressive scientific discourse of nineteenth-century Europe, which subjected the human body to scientific analysis and surveillance.[82] Ba Jin and his contemporaries, in the same vein, might try to follow, or even initiate, a similar enterprise in China to codify new understandings of workers, the working class, and proletarians by observing, experiencing, and writing.

The visuality, experience, and surveillance embodied in writing about miners complicate the body in labor history. As representation and corporeal presence, the body

analyzed by Baron and Boris entails only the worker's body. But when the miner's body patently emerged in writings and pictorial representations in early twentieth-century China, its emergence involved the active engagement of the author's body. The author's body was subjected to experience miners' work and life, and through the bodily experience the author acquired the capability of representing miners—the body held a material presence in the workplace and generated discourses through which the authors wrote. The intricacies here between working and representing and between workers and authors point to the possibility and necessity of considering the author's body as instrumental or even agentic in conceptualizing the working-class and their bodies at work in history.[83]

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Notes

1. All translations are the author's unless otherwise noted. Ba Jin, "Tan *Xinsheng* ji qita," (On new birth and others), *Ba Jin quanji.* (The complete works of Ba Jin), vol.20 (Beijing: Remin wenxue chubanshe, 1993), 398. All translations are the author's unless otherwise noted.
2. Ba Jin, preface to "Shading" (Tin miners), in *Ba Jin quanji*, vol.5 (Beijing: Remin wenxue chubanshe, 1988), 195.
3. Ba Jin, preface to "Xue" (Snow), *Ba Jin quanji*, vol.5, 276.
4. Although Ba Jin expressed his dislike of Zola's naturalism, Chih-tsing Hsia, a literary critic, contends that the two stories, especially the former, are "realistic," distinguished from Ba Jin's other stories of revolutionary romanticism. See Ba Jin, "Tan *Xinsheng* ji qita," 399; and Chih-tsing Hsia, *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction*, 3rd ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 237.
5. For Zola's experience for writing stories, see María Carmen Maritato, "Vincent van Gogh in Émile Zola's 'Germinal'," *Nineteenth-Century French Studies* 22 (1994): 505.
6. Maritato, "Vincent van Gogh," 506.
7. Ba Jin, "Tan *Xinsheng* ji qita," 411–12.
8. Ba Jin, preface to "Xue", 275.
9. Ba Jin, "Tan *Xinsheng* ji qita," 411-12; Ba Jin, preface to "Xue", 275.
10. Ava Baron and Eileen Boris, "The Body' as a Useful Category for Working-Class History," *Labor* 4 (May 2007): 23–43; Ava Baron and Eileen Boris, "In Response: Dichotomous Thinking and the Objects of History; or, Why Bodies Matter, Again," *Labor* 4 (May 2007): 61–63.
11. For example, see Sarah Richard, "Dismembering the Political Body: Women Workers in Émile Zola's 'Germinal'" (Master diss., Southern Connecticut State University, 2009).
12. For a review of studies on the body in Zola's stories, see Susan Harrow, *Zola, the Body Modern: Pressures and Prospects of Representation* (London: Legenda, 2010), 13–16; for the erotic and desired body in Zola's stories, see Raisa Rexer, "Nana in the Nude: Zola and Early Nude Photography," *Dix-Neuf* 22 (April 2018): 73–97; Kathryn Slott, "Narrative Tension in the Representation of Women in Zola's 'L'Assommoir' and 'Nana,'" *L'Esprit Créateur* 25 (1985): 93–104; Chantal Bertrand-Jennings, "Zola's Women: The Case of a Victorian 'Naturalist,'" *Atlantis: Critical Studies in Gender, Culture & Social Justice* 10 (October 1984): 26–36.
13. Peter Brooks, *Body Work: Objects of Desire in Modern Narrative* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 122.
14. For visualization and literature in Zola's works and in nineteenth-century literature, see Christopher Prendergast and Margaret Cohen, eds., *Spectacles of Realism: Gender, Body, Genre* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995); Jennifer Welch Solomon, "The Body Made Visible: Scientific Practices of Seeing and Literary Naturalism" (Master diss., University of Maryland, 2004).
15. Harrow, *Zola, the Body Modern*, 72.

16. Ibid., 73–83.
17. Baron and Boris, "In Response," 63.
18. Baron and Boris, "The Body as a Useful Category," 26; for the differentiation between these two aspects, see Nick Crossley, "Merleau-Ponty, the Elusive Body and Carnal Sociology," *Body & Society* 1 (March 1995): 43–63; Irene Costera Meijer and Baukje Prins, "How Bodies Come to Matter: An Interview with Judith Butler," *Signs* 23 (1998): 275–86.
19. Peter Goals has noted the invisibility of mining in premodern China. Peter J. Golas, *Mining*, vol. 5, part 13, of *Science and Civilisation in China*, ed. Joseph Needham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), 3. Golas is one of the few scholars who have studied the visual representation of technology and workers in imperial China, see Peter J. Golas, *Picturing Technology in China: From Earliest Times to the Nineteenth Century* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2014).
20. In Guangxi province, for example, unsatisfied ethnic miners facilitated the Taiping Rebellion, which shook the rule of the Qing in the 1850s and 1860s. Liang Renbao, "Taiping tianguo he kuanggong" (The Heavenly Kingdom and miners), *Lishi jiaoxue*, no. 5 (1957): 16–23.
21. For agriculture in the Chinese imperial ideology, see Francesca Bray, *Technology, Gender and History in Imperial China: Great Transformations Reconsidered* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2013), Chapter 7.
22. See E-Tu Zen Sun, "Ch'ing Government and the Mineral Industries Before 1800," *Journal of Asian Studies* 27 (August 1968): 835–45.
23. Wang Song, *Daoguang Yunnan zhichao* (Draft gazetteer of Yunnan in the Daoguang Reign Period) (Kunming: Yunnansheng shehui kexueyuan wenxian yanjiusuo, 1996); Wu Qijun, *Diannan kuangchang gongqi tulüe* (Illustrated gazetteer of the mines and tools in Yunnan) (n.pub., 1844).
24. Shellen X. Wu, "Mining the Way to Wealth and Power: Late Qing Reform of Mining Law (1895–1911)," *International History Review* 34 (September 2012): 581; Xi Ma, "Mineral and Mineralogy in Late Qing China: Translations and Conceptualizations, 1860s–1910s," *Annals of Science* 78 (January 2021): 64–91.
25. Rosalind H. Williams, *Notes on the Underground: An Essay on Technology, Society, and the Imagination* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008).
26. See Lewis Mumford, *Technics and Civilizations* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1946), 65–74.
27. For Agricola and mining knowledge in the intellectual context of sixteenth-century Europe, see Pamela O. Long, "The Openness of Knowledge: An Ideal and Its Context in 16th-Century Writings on Mining and Metallurgy," *Technology and Culture* 32 (1991): 318–55.
28. Golas' survey of underground mining technologies in premodern China is not all based on premodern sources. See Golas, *Mining,* 275.
29. There is a wealth of literature on the Jiangnan Arsenal and the transmission of modern science into China. For example, Yue Meng, "Hybrid Science Versus Modernity: The Practice of The Jiangnan Arsenal, 1864–1897," *East Asian Science, Technology & Medicine* 16 (January 1999): 13–52.
30. For a catalogue of books translated by the Arsenal, see Shanghai tushuguan, *Jiangnan zhizaoju fanyiguan tuzhi* (Illustrated gazetteer of the Translation Bureau of the Jiangnan Arsenal) (Shanghai: Shanghai kexue jishu wenxian chubanshe, 2011), 184.
31. Shimide (Warington Smyth), *Kaimei yaofa* (Essential methods of extracting coals) (Shanghai: The Jiangnan Arsenal, 1870).
32. Warington Wilkinson Smyth, *A Treatise on Coal and Coal-Mining* (London: Virtue Brothers, 1867), 128.
33. Shimide, *Kaimei yaofa*, 5: 6b.
34. Wu, *Diannan kuangchang gongqi tulüe*, tu: 9b–11b.
35. Liu Yinwei and Liu Fang, "Wanqing caimei jishu yinjin de ruogan wenti yanjiu" (Some issues regarding the introduction of coal-mining technologies in late Qing China), *Zhongguo kuangye daxue xuebao (shehui kexue ban)* 17 (2015): 74–77. The article documents the times when key technologies were introduced to China. For high officials' compliments to this book, see "Letters from Sheng Xuanhuai to Li Hongzhang, March 15, 1876," in *Sheng Xuanhuai ziliao dang'an* (Documents and archives of Sheng Xuanhuai), vol. 5, eds. Chen Xulu, Gu Tinglong and Wang Xi (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1981), 65.
36. Mumford, *Technics and Civilizations*, 70; Williams, introduction to *Notes on the Underground*.
37. For mining engineers in modern China, see Lei Lifang, Qian Wei, and Fang Yibing, "Jindai Zhongguo kuangye gongchengshi qunti de xingcheng (1875–1929)" (On the formation of the community of mining engineers in modern China"), *Ziran kexueshi yanjiu* 37 (2018): 55–70.
38. Wu, "Mining the Way to Wealth and Power," 581.

39. Eric C. Nystrom, *Seeing Underground: Maps, Models, and Mining Engineering in America* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2014), 3.
40. For Zola's primary sources for writing about mining, see Richard H. Zakarian, *Zola's "Germinal"; a Critical Study of Its Primary Sources* (Genève: Librairie Droz, 1972), 49–55.
41. The first school of mining and railway was founded in 1896, and thereafter main universities established mining disciplines with the help of foreign professors. Chinese students were sent overseas to study mining, and many returned to China after graduation and contributed to the mineral industry in the following decades. See Lei, "Jindai Zhongguo kuangye gongchengshi qunti de xingcheng," 59–64; for students sent to US in the late Qing, see Thomas E. La Fargue, *China's First Hundred* (Pullman: State college of Washington, 1942).
42. Another example of such texts is Baierna (Oliver Byrne), *Jingkuang gongcheng* (Mining engineering), trans. Fu Lanya (John Fryer) and Zhao Yuanyi (Shanghai: The Jiangnan Arsenal, [n.d.]), 2: 1b.
43. Nystrom, *Seeing Underground*, 3.
44. Ding Wenjiang, *Yunnan Gejiu dizhi kuangwu diaocha baogao* (Report of investigations into geology and mining affairs in Gejiu, Yunnan) (Beijing: Shiyebu dizhi diaochasuo; Beiping yanjiuyuan dizhi yanjiusuo, 1937), 6–18.
45. Ibid., 13.
46. Yin Zanxun, forward to *Yunnan Gejiu fujin dizhi kuangwu baogao* by Ding, 2.
47. Ding, *Yunnan Gejiu dizhi kuangwu diaocha baogao*, 11, 12.
48. Du Juan, "kuanggong yu" (Miners' words), *Xuezhi* 1 (1920): 60–67.
49. The story was published under the pseudonym of Du Juan (azalea). When the young man shows up for the first time, the author particularly notes that there is a bunch of azaleas on the table.
50. Yang Zhongjian, "kuanggong" (Miners), *Juewu* 4 (1921): 1. Ethan Leong Yee helped refine the translations of all the poems quoted in the article.
51. Yang Zhongjian, "Zai Liuhegou xia kuangjing" (Descending into a mine shaft in Liuhegou), *Juewu* 4 (1921): 1.
52. "Shengzhikuang" (Mine of life), *Wenxue zhoubao*, no. 225 (1925): 406.
53. For the May 30 Movement, see C. Martin Wilbur, *The Nationalist Revolution in China, 1923–1928* (Cambridge, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1984); and Hung-Ting Ku, "Urban Mass Movement: The May Thirtieth Movement in Shanghai," *Modern Asian Studies* 13 (1979): 197–216.
54. Richard W. Rigby, *The May 30 Movement: Events and Themes* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1980), 42.
55. S.A. Smith, *Like Cattle and Horses: Nationalism and Labor in Shanghai, 1895–1927* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001), 189.
56. Michel Hockx and Kirk A. Denton, eds., *Literary Societies of Republican China* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2008), 107.
57. Christopher T. Keaveney, "Shishôsetsu Theory in Japan and the Creation Society's Encounter with the Form," in *The Subversive Self in Modern Chinese Literature: The Creation Society's Reinvention of the Japanese Shishôsetsu* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 17–28.
58. Tang Qiyun, "Lun Chuangzaoshe de zhuanxiang jiqi dui xianshizhuyi wenlun de gongxian" (A study on the turning of the Creation Society and its contribution to realistic literary theory"), *Zhongguo wenxue yanjiu,* no. 1 (2024): 20–28.
59. Hockx and Denton, *Literary Societies of Republican China*, 120–21.
60. Gong Binglu, "Yijiuerwunian de xue," (The blood of 1925) in *Chuangzaoshe congshu* (Compilation of the Creation Society), ed. Huang Houxing (Beijing: Xueyuan chubanshe, 1992), 211–16.
61. Christopher T. Keaveney, "The Legacy of the Shishôsetsu in Chinese Literature," in *The Subversive Self in Modern Chinese Literature: The Creation Society's Reinvention of the Japanese Shishôsetsu*, 123–24. I-novel is a literary genre flourishing in Japan in the 1920s, whose origin can be traced to the confessional novels of Naturalist writers. See Tomi Suzuki, *Narrating the Self: Fictions of Japanese Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), chapter 3.
62. Keaveney, "The Legacy of the Shishôsetsu in Chinese Literature," 124.
63. The Creationists were aware that most of their readers were educated petty bourgeoisies, rather than proletarians. Cheng Fangwu, "Cong wenxue geming dao geming wenxue" (From literary revolution to revolutionary literature"), in *Chuangzaoshe ziliao* (Sources on the Creation Society), ed. Rao Hongjing (Fuzhou: Fujian renmin chubanshe, 1985), 164–70.

64. Gong Binglu, "Feikeng" (Abandoned mining pit), *Dazhong wenyi* 2 (1930): 905–11. *Zuolian* was an association of writers from the left-wing established in 1930. It was directed by the Chinese Communist Party and comprised of many famous writers who practiced literature writing following the Marxist principles until its dismissal in 1935.
65. Gong Binglu, "Tankuang fu" (Coal miners), *Chuangzao yuekan* 2 (1928): 38–54.
66. Guo Moruo, "*Geming yu wenxue*" (Revolution and literature), *Chuangzaoshe ziliao*,125–34.
67. Guo, "*Geming yu wenxue,*" 134.
68. Sylvia Chan, "Realism or Socialist Realism?: The 'Proletarian' Episode in Modern Chinese Literature 1927–1932," *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs* 9 (January 1983): 57–64. Mao Dun's story, *Hong*, published in 1929, in contrast, tells of how the May 30 Movement changed a female petty-bourgeois intellectual into a Marxist. See Mao Dun, "Hong" (Rainbow), in *Mao Dun quanji* (Complete works of Mao Dun), vol.2 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1984), 1–269.
69. Anarchism in early twentieth-century China was closely related to Marxism. Marxists were influenced by anarchism, and anarchists shared certain beliefs and understandings about society with Marxists. See Arif Dirlik and Edward S. Krebs, "Socialism and Anarchism in Early Republican China," *Modern China* 7 (1981): 117–51; and Peter Zarrow, *Anarchism and Chinse Political Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 174.
70. "Kuanggong shouji" (Miner's notes), *Wenyi xinwen*, April 11, 1932; April 18, 1932; April 25, 1932.
71. "Kuanggong shouji," *Wenyi xinwen*, April 25, 1932.
72. Zhang Wenlin," Kuanggong" (Miners), *Wenxue daobao* 1 (1936): 20.
73. Mumford, for instance, has noticed how the "darkness [of the underground mine] is broken by the timid flare of a lamp or a candle." Mumford, *Technics and Civilizations*, 68.
74. Wang, *Daoguang Yunnan zhichao*, 121.
75. For example, Liang Zongding, "Kuangdeng yuanliu kao jiqi zuijin zhi faming" (On the origin of mining lamps and recent innovations), *Dongfang zazhi* 9 (1913): 4.
76. Xiaobing Tang, *Origins of the Chinese Avant-Garde: The Modern Woodcut Movement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 82–88.
77. Ibid., 98.
78. Mei Changrong, "Kuangdao" (Mining tunnel"), *Xiandai banhua*, no. 1 (1934): 32.
79. Dingli, "Kuanggong" (Miner), *Shenghuo manhua*, no. 1 (1936): 15.
80. For example, Laikwan Pang identifies that the dichotomy between China and the West was crucial for China's visual modernity. Laikwan Pang, *The Distorting Mirror: Visual Modernity in China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), 11–21.
81. For an authoritative discussion of realism in Chinese modern fictions, see David Der-wei Wang, *Fictional Realism in Twentieth-Century China: Mao Dun, Lao She, Shen Congwen* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), Chapter 1.
82. Suren Lalvani, *Photography, Vision, and the Production of Modern Bodies* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 170–71; Solomon, "The Body Made Visible," 21; Émile Zola, "Human Documents," in *The Experimental Novel and Other Essays*, trans. Belle M. Sherman (New York: Haskell House, 1964), 262.
83. For workers' bodies and their experience as embodied workers, see Carol Wolkowitz, *Bodies at Work* (London: SAGE, 2006), 1–5.

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