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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Learning Morality with Siblings: The Untold Tale of a Mid-Twentieth Century Taiwanese Family*

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Abstract
This article uses a new theoretical and methodological framework to reconstruct a story of two children from fieldnotes collected by anthropologists Arthur and Margery Wolf in rural Taiwan (1958 to 1960). Through the case of a brother–sister dyad, it examines the moral life of young children and provides a rare glimpse into sibling relationship in peer and family contexts. First, combining social network analysis and NLP text-analytics, this article introduces a general picture of these siblings' life in the peer community. Moreover, drawing from naturalistic observations and projective tests, it offers an ethnographic analysis of how children support each other and assert themselves. It emphasizes the role of child-to-child ties in moral learning, in contrast to the predominant focus of parent–child ties in the study of Chinese families. It challenges assumptions of the Chinese "child training" model and invites us to take children's moral psychology seriously and re-discover their agency.

Keywords: childhood; sibling; morality; family; Taiwan

Introduction

On May 4, 1960, anthropologist Arthur P. Wolf's Taiwanese research assistant MC observed this episode[1] of a brother–sister dyad interacting with another child in a Hoklo village (Xia Xizhou下溪洲) near Taipei:

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[1]CO # 1176, 05/04/1960. Throughout this article, each episode of field-notes, an observation, an interview, or a projective test transcript, is indexed by the initials of its data type, followed by its unique ID assigned to each episode within that data type. All unique IDs were generated in Python programming environment and therefore begin with #0. "CO" refers to Child Observation.

Bai Yanyan (a seven-year-old girl) was standing in front of a rock with food on it. Lin Yikun (a seven-year-old boy) was in a hurry to go away and stuck a paper package into Yanyan's hand and said: "Here is some face powder [for pretend play]. I give this to you."
Yanyan: "Alright." She took it.
Yikun: "You have to let my [younger sister] Meiyu play with you." Yikun turned and ran off.

His sister Lin Meiyu (five-year-old): "You let me play with you, alright?"

Yanyan nodded her head. She put the powder package under the rubber band that was holding her purse closed.
Meiyu had a little cosmetic box in her hand. Yanyan took it from her and said: "We'll put this in my purse, alright? We'll put it with all my other things."
Meiyu nodded her head in agreement. (MC)

Blending elements of kinship, friendship, gender, and age, this ethnographic observation provides a glimpse into young children's moral life and power dynamics: The young boy Yikun "bribed" his peer Yanyan with the explicit goal of getting Yanyan to accept his little sister Meiyu as her playmate. Yanyan accepted Yikun's gift—a popular play object among young girls in the community—as well as his accompanying request. Perhaps benefitting from her seniority in age or her position as the desired playmate, Yanyan also took the initiative to lead the subsequent interactions, commanding the control of resources upon Meiyu's agreement. Above all, we see a little boy helping his younger sister to make friends with peers, in a social world outside the home, through exchange of gifts and favors.

This article aims to understand learning morality with siblings: How do young children learn their first lessons about relating to others and asserting oneself, about cooperation and conflict, about negotiating parental control, and about the power of authority, through interaction with their siblings, in peer and family contexts? The opening vignette is just one among nearly two thousand observational episodes about these Taiwanese children's social life in an archive left behind by the late anthropologist Arthur Wolf, which I call "the Wolf archive." Young children are "the most blatant, intellectually innocent, and professionally overlooked among the unrepresented" people in historiography.[2] As Arthur Wolf himself stated in a draft manuscript: "Until recently Chinese scholars have had no interest in writing naturalist accounts of Chinese children.[3] The older literature is entirely prescriptive in the manner of the famous *Tales of Filial Piety*. Western travelers and missionaries sometimes mention

[2]Ping-chen Hsiung, *A Tender Voyage: Children and Childhood in Late Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 261.

[3]This assessment is still largely valid: In a comprehensive literature review we see very little research focused on children, in a century-long span of sinolgoical anthropology; see Gonçalo D. Santos, "The Anthropology of Chinese Kinship: A Critical Review," *European Journal of East Asian Studies* 5.2 (2006), 275–333. In most recent edited volumes on the anthropology of Chinese families there are a few chapters on childrearing, but not on children themselves; see, for example, Gonçalo Santos and Stevan Harrell eds., *Transforming Patriarchy: Chinese Families in the Twenty-First Century* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2017), Yunxiang Yan ed., *Chinese Families Upside Down: Intergenerational Dynamics and Neo-Familism in the Early 21st Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2021).

children in relating their experiences, but these are typically brief and prejudiced."[4] His precious field-notes offer a unique opportunity to understand the lives of children in rural families at the margins, children whose stories would otherwise unlikely figure into historical sources and accounts.[5]

Examining these children's world also helps to remedy a problem in today's socio-cultural anthropology. If lack of direct access to the world of the young contributed to the relatively marginalized status of children in historical representations, the problem with anthropology is perhaps of a different nature: the reluctance to recognize children's critical role and unique capacity in the acquisition, transmission, and creative transformation of socio-cultural knowledge.[6] In the plentiful ethnographic research about "the Chinese family,"[7] anthropologists have often encountered children, especially in the past: when anthropologists were doing village ethnographies, children were running around everywhere in a village.[8] They have rarely placed children, by which I mean the *actual* experience rather than the representation or discourse of children, at the center of analysis.[9] If anything, in the eyes of anthropologists, and similarly for those adult interlocutors in anthropologists' fieldwork, young children are no more than passive objects of Chinese moral discourse,[10] especially that around filial piety.[11] One of the most visible

[4]Arthur Wolf started writing a book manuscript entitled "Chinese Children and Their Mothers" in his final years and wrote several draft chapters before he passed away in May 2015. Hill Gates holds the Wolf Archive and Arthur's unpublished writings in his private library at Santa Rosa, Northern California. With Hill's permission and generous support, I visited this library, scanned these field-notes and Arthur's draft chapters.

[5]A few anthropologists did pay attention to Chinese children's life during their fieldwork in the mid-twentieth century, but those accounts were based on anecdotal observations rather than systematic research. See for example Barbara Ward, *Through Other Eyes: Essays in Understanding "Conscious Models," mostly in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1985), 173–200; G. William Skinner, *Rural China on the Eve of Revolution: Sichuan Fieldnotes, 1949–1950*, edited by Stevan Harrell and William Lavely (Seattle: The University of Washington Press, 2017), 74–76.

[6]Lawrence A. Hirschfeld, "Why Don't Anthropologists Like Children?" *American Anthropologist* 104.2 (2002), 611–27.

[7]I use quotation marks for "the Chinese family" because the term "Chinese" has become politically controversial in the body of sinological anthropology literature: Many foundational works in this field looked at Taiwan, Hong Kong, and elsewhere to study "the Chinese society," because anthropologists could not enter the PRC for fieldwork. Therefore I use the term "Chinese" in the broad sense of cultural heritage, not national identity.

[8]See Charles Stafford's interview with James L. Watson, Rubie S. Watson, and Yunxiang Yan, "A Different Kind of Chinese Family," *Anthropology of This Century* 25 (2019), at http://aotcpress.com/articles/kind-chinese-family/. In this interview James Watson said: "Let me raise another issue, the question of children. In reading the papers and thinking about China today, one of the things that really strikes me is this: if I look at the photographs from our research in the New Territories over the long term, they are littered with children, kids, everywhere. Every ritual, every family shot, there are waves of kids. If you look at the photos we have of village events, there are rafts of children of every age. Every family had multiple kids. And there are kids managing kids. 10 year old girls carrying their brothers around, all day long." It means, at the very least, that anthropologists had convenient access and abundant opportunities to studying children's life.

[9]For an important exception see Charles Stafford, *The Roads of Chinese Childhood: Learning and Identification in Angang* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

[10]See Barbara Ward, "The Integration of Children into a Chinese Social World: A Preliminary Exploration of Some Non-literate Village Concepts," in *Through Other Eyes*, 185.

[11]See for example, the assertion that harsh discipline of children leads to respect for parents and fear for aggressive ancestral spirits, in Emily Martin Ahern, *The Cult of the Dead in a Chinese Village* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1973), 213–19.

changes in family and kinship in contemporary China is the emergency of child-centered families,[12] especially in urban China, since the One-Child Policy and, more recently, in the context of continued low fertility even after the loosening of family planning policies.[13] Childrearing has become a central topic for current ethnographic inquiries, but the majority of these works focus on the discourses and practices of "rearing," featuring the adult perspectives rather than those of the child.[14] Children's worlds are overlooked. They silently lie in the shadows of parent–child ties. This might reflect a general bias in social science, "the nurture assumption" as psychologist Judith Harris diagnosed, which overemphasizes the impacts of parenting on child development.[15] The problem is more acute in socio-cultural anthropology, though, due to its persistent hostility to psychology and the resultant unwillingness to engage with research on children's cognitive development.[16]

Lacking awareness of and attention to children's agency, and prioritizing parenting beliefs and socialization strategies, the anthropology of the Chinese family since its inception[17] has obscured an important dimension of learning: peer learning. In particular, this scholarship has neglected a crucial aspect of the peer-learning experience: sibling relations. Classic works, shaped by British anthropology's lineage studies traditions, rarely focused on siblings as children, only on brother–brother rivalry as adults.[18] Later research, inspired by the new anthropology of kinship that takes the lived experience of "relatedness," instead of formal structures, as a central concern, has still paid little attention to sibling experience.[19] There are a few exceptions, such as studies on young

[12]Yunxiang Yan ed., *Chinese Families Upside Down*.

[13]Amanda Lee, "China Population: Concerns Grow as Number of Registered Births in 2020 Plummet." *China Macro Economy*, www.scmp.com/economy/china-economy/article/3121112/china-birth-rate-population-concerns-grow-number-registered; "China Allows Three Children in Major Policy Shift." www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-57303592.

[14]A recent, exemplary ethnography is Teresa Kuan, *Love's Uncertainty: The Politics and Ethics of Child Rearing in Contemporary China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015). One caveat is that a few ethnographies did feature the world of Chinese children, but they focus either on older children, e.g. Vanessa Fong, *Only Hope: Coming of Age under China's One-Child Policy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), or on children in the school context rather than the family; see Jing Xu, *The Good Child: Moral Development in a Chinese Preschool* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2017).

[15]Judith R. Harris, *The Nurture Assumption: Why Children Turn Out the Way They Do* (New York: Free Press, 2009).

[16]Gonçalo D. Santos, "The Anthropology of Chinese Kinship," mentioned sinological anthropologists' attitudes toward psychology in the study of Chinese kinship and family (pp. 305–6, 327). For a brief history of anthropology's complicated relationship with psychology in the study of Chinese childhood, see Jing Xu, "Daode cong he erlai: Xinli renzhi renleixue shiye xia de ertong daode fazhan yanjiu" 道德從何而來：心理認知人類學視野下的兒童道德發展研究 [Where does Morality Come from? Research on Children's Moral Development from Psychological & Cognitive Anthropology Perspectives], *Shehuixue pinglun*, 2020.4, 3–19.

[17]For this predominant focus on parent–child ties, a great example is Margery Wolf, "Child Training and the Chinese Family," in *Studies in Chinese Society*, edited by Arthur P. Wolf (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1978), 221–46.

[18]Among the works about lineage and family division and unity, see Maurice Freedman, *Chinese Lineage and Society* (London: Athlone Press, 1966); Margery Wolf, *Women and the Family in Rural Taiwan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972); Myron Cohen, *House United, House Divided* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976).

[19]For a critique of the inadequate attention to sibling and other sorts of kin and fictive-kin relations, see Charles Stafford, "Chinese Patriliny and the Cycles of Yang and Laiwang," in *Cultures of Relatedness: New Approaches to the Study of Kinship*, edited by Janet Carsten (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 35–54.

adulthood, such as "same-year siblingship" (fictive kin, friendship)[20] and elder sister's sacrifice and support for younger brother in rural China.[21] This reflects a broader problem in the new anthropology of kinship—the neglect of sibling relations, a problem related to the bias in favor of the centrality of parent–child and conjugal relations.[22]

The existence and co-residence of siblings, however, has persisted over most of human history. Across many cultural communities, instead of having adults supervise and teach them, children spend a lot of time playing with and learning from other children, and siblings are important agents in such peer learning processes.[23] As cross-cultural research on child development has long demonstrated: "Siblings always matter."[24] From an evolutionary perspective, sibling experience in childhood is a key component in human kin detection,[25] of which Arthur Wolf's research on Taiwanese *sim-pu-a* 媳婦仔 ("little daughter-in-law") [26] remains a classic case. For socio-cultural anthropologists, sibling relations, especially cross-sex siblings, are constructed simultaneously as equal (shared parenthood) and as different (age, gender, birth order).[27] Exploring sibling relations in childhood can help us understand the double-edged quality of human kinship: love and control, connection and exclusion in the practice of relatedness.[28]

This article tells the story of a brother–sister dyad, the main characters in the opening vignette. Their family was featured in Margery Wolf's *A Thrice-told Tale*,[29] but what happened to the children remained a mystery. This intrigued me. Through new theoretical lenses, analytical techniques, and, inevitably, my own interpretations, I re-covered and re-discovered the once untold tale of a brother–sister dyad. Telling their story, I highlight the moral agency of the least-studied members of the human family––young children. I focus on siblings, arguably the most obscured relationship in the study of Chinese families.

[20]Gonçalo D. Santos, "On 'Same-year Siblings' in Rural South China," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 14.3 (2008) 535–53.

[21]Helena Obendiek, "When Siblings Determine Your 'Fate': Sibling Support and Educational Mobility in Rural Northwest China," in *The Anthropology of Sibling Relations*, edited by Erdmute Alber, Cati Coe, and Tatjana Thelen (New York: Springer, 2013), 97–122.

[22]Erdmute Alber, Cati Coe, and Tatjana Thelen, eds., *The Anthropology of Sibling Relations* (New York: Springer, 2013); Tatjana Thelen, Cati Coe, and Erdmute Alber, "Introduction to the Anthropology of Sibling Relations: Explorations in Shared Parentage, Experience, and Exchange," in *The Anthropology of Sibling Relations*, 1–26.

[23]Ashley E Maynard and Katrin E Tovote, "Learning from Other Children," in *The Anthropology of Learning in Childhood*, edited by David F. Lancy (Lanham: Altamira Press, 2010), 181–205.

[24]Tom S. Weisner, "Comparing Sibling Relationships across Cultures," in *Sibling Interaction across Cultures: Theoretical and Methodological Issues*, edited by Patricia G. Zukow (New York: Springer, 1989), 14.

[25]Debra Liberman, John Tooby, and Leda Cosmides, "The Architecture of Human Kin Detection," *Nature* 445 (2007), 727–31.

[26]Arthur P. Wolf, *Sexual Attraction and Childhood Association: A Chinese Brief for Edward Westermarck* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995).

[27]Thelen, Coe, and Alber, "Introduction to the Anthropology of Sibling Relations."

[28]For the double-edged quality of kinship, see Janet Carsten, "What Kinship Does–and How," *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 8.2 (2013), https://doi.org/10.14318/hau3.2.013; For these ambivalent and contradictory dimensions in cross-sex sibling relation in adulthood, see Suad Joseph "Brother/Sister Relationships: Connectivity, Love, and Power in the Reproduction of Patriarchy in Lebanon," *American Ethnologist* 21.1 (1994), 50–73.

[29]Margery Wolf, *A Thrice-Told Tale: Feminism, Postmodernism, and Ethnographic Responsibility* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992).

The wolf archive: history, theory and methods

The late sinologist and anthropologist Arthur Wolf conducted more than two years of dissertation fieldwork (1958–60), in a Hokkien-speaking village in Banqiao district 板橋鎮 near Taipei.[30] His research team included Margery Wolf and several Taiwanese research assistants, and they lived with the "House of Lim." The Lim (林 Lin, pseudonym) family was the most prestigious family in the village, and the only big, joint family compared to the rest of nuclear or stem family households.[31] The village at that time had a total population of around six hundred, including more than two hundred children. The majority of villagers descended from southern Fujian Chinese migrants who had settled in the area during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and some other villagers who had moved to the area more recently. It was during the era of KMT martial law, on the eve of massive industrialization, urbanization, and fertility decline. In the golden age of "China" ethnography, motivated by the quest of understanding "Chinese" society, the Wolfs were not concerned about their villagers' own identity.[32] But most villagers were Taiwanese 本省人, adults speaking a mixture of Japanese and Hokkien, children speaking Hokkien in the village and learning Mandarin at school as part of their compulsory education. In terms of economic prospects, most families were still poor by local standards, with a mixture of farming and factory work income: average daily earnings were 20–30 yuan (NT) for men, 15–20 for young men, and 7–10 for women. They were not equally poor though. The House of Lim (Lin) had the highest standing, distinguished by the largest house with all-brick walls and concrete floors (two rooms even with terrazzo floors), while others had smaller houses with brick-walls or mud-brick walls.[33]

Today the Wolfs' field-site is no longer a village, but part of New Taipei City 新北市. Once known under the pseudonym *Peihotien*, however, this village remains an iconic landmark in the map of sinological anthropologists,[34] thanks to the two anthropologists' seminal works on marriage, kinship, women, and gender.[35] Less known to many, however, the Wolf's Xia Xizhou 下溪洲 project was the first systematic, anthropological research on Han Chinese children and childrearing in the world. With the target population of children ages 3 to 12, it triangulated multiple research methods: 1) naturalistic observations of children's social interactions at home, inside the village, and at the elementary school outside the village, including three types, timed Child Observation, Situation-based Observation, and Mother Observation; 2) standardized interviews with children and mothers; 3) projective tests––a popular method in psychology at that time, using culturally appropriate prompts for story-telling, i.e., dolls in Doll Play, pictures in TAT (Thematic Apperception Test), to elicit children's

[30]The district name changed to 板橋區 in 2010, when Taipei County 台北縣 became New Taipei City 新北市.

[31]Margery Wolf, *The House of Lim: A Study of a Chinese Family* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1968). But even the House of Lim split into two smaller households (between two brothers' families) not long after the Wolfs returned to America.

[32]Stevan Harrell, "Lessons from the Golden Age of 'China Ethnography,'" in *Anthropological Studies in Taiwan: Retrospect and Prospect*, edited by Hsu Cheng-kuang and Huang Ying-Kuei (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 1999), 211–40.

[33]From Arthur Wolf's unpublished draft manuscript.

[34]Maurice Freedman, "Foreword." In Wolf, *The House of Lim*, xii.

[35]For a bibliographical list of research and publications by the Wolfs and their students on the Haishan area, see Arthur Wolf and Chieh-Shan Huang, *Marriage and Adoption in China, 1845–1945* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1980), Appendix B.

understandings and feelings about interpersonal relationships; 4) a survey of infant care and mother–infant interactions (Baby Survey). All the fieldnotes were indexed by the event information (date, time, location) and by the participants' ID numbers. In addition, the archive preserves comprehensive demographic and household information for all the children and their family members. As Arthur Wolf stated in his 1982 NSF project summary: "We should emerge from analyzing these data with dramatically greater systematic knowledge about Chinese childhood than we have ever had before."[36]

From the original data collection to my re-analysis and writing, this journey involves multiple layers of transcription, translation, and interpretation. Under Arthur Wolf's supervision, his two Taiwanese research assistants, initials MC and MS, collected most of the observational and interview data. In their late-adolescence, these two women lived with the Wolfs, spoke Hokkien and became children's trusted friends, which contributed to the successful and high-quality data collection.[37] During the fieldwork, the research assistants, fluent in spoken English, reported their observations and interviews in English to Margery Wolf, who typed these data into English notes. Research assistant MC and a young Taiwanese man and college student Huang Chieh-Shan 黃介山 interviewed children in each of the two projective tests, Doll Play and TAT, and these transcripts were the only Chinese documents preserved in this archive.[38] Six decades later, my team digitized all these type-written notes into readable files.

This re-analysis is animated by a new theoretical and methodological vision. In 1958, Arthur Wolf's original research purpose was to replicate the Six Cultures study of Child Socialization (SCS) in a Chinese society. Launched in the 1950s by a group of anthropologists and psychologists at Harvard, Yale, and Cornell University, SCS is a landmark project in the history of psychological anthropology and cross-cultural research on childhood.[39] Wolf's project improved on the SCS design in several respects, including a larger sample size, longer fieldwork duration, and added methods, thus yielding to a more complete, multi-faceted dataset that was larger in volume than that from the individual sites in SCS.[40] It was influenced by the behaviorist theoretical paradigm in the SCS: for behaviorists, the human mind is a black box and learning is a process of responding to external stimulus, conditioned via reward and punishment.

Significant paradigm shifts in child development research have taken place since the Wolfs' trip to Taiwan, though, most prominently, the "cognitive revolution"[41] and subsequent advancements in studying children's developing minds. Young children have a much more complex mental capacity and richer emotional life than behaviorists once

[36]Arthur Wolf, *Chinese Children and Their Mothers: Cultural and Psychological Aspects of Socialization in a Taiwanese Village*, Project Summary for National Science Foundation (1982), 4.

[37]Especially the younger research assistant MC: The children called her "older sister Chen."

[38]Phone interview with Mr. Huang, May 2021. Mr. Huang, at that time a local youth from the nearby town Shulin 樹林鎮, worked with Arthur Wolf from 1959 to 1960 in this fieldwork. He later became an important collaborator in Wolf's famous "Taiwanese household registers" project and the co-author of the book *Marriage and Adoption in China, 1845–1945*.

[39]For a comprehensive review of the Six Cultures Study, see Robert A. Levine, "The Six Cultures Study: Prologue to a History of a Landmark Project." *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* 41.4 (2010), 513–21.

[40]For a detailed comparison see Jing Xu, "The Mischievous, the Naughty and the Violent in a Taiwanese Village: Peer Aggression Narratives in Arthur P. Wolf's 'Child Interview' (1959)." *Cross-Currents: East Asia Culture and History Review* 9.1 (2020), 180–208.

[41]George A. Miller, "The Cognitive Revolution: A Historical Perspective," *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 7.3 (2003), 141–44.

assumed, and this matters for understanding the nature of social learning and the foundations of human culture.[42] As part of a synergy between evolutionary anthropology and cognitive science in exploring the origins of human cooperation,[43] research in the past few decades has pushed the ontogeny of morality into early childhood, even infancy.[44] Trained in this new, interdisciplinary paradigm of cognitive anthropology, I approach materials in the Wolf archive from a different angle: my predecessors used the framework of "child training" or "socialization,"[45] which saw the child primarily as an object being molded by external forces, especially parenting. Instead, I see children as moral agents actively navigating and making their own social world.

For observational data, the original SCS protocol prescribed nine behavioral systems in childrearing (succorance, nurturance, responsibility, self-reliance, achievement, obedience, dominance, and sociability) and a behaviorist "antecedent-consequent" hypothesis-testing procedure.[46] Instead of following that protocol, I designed a new behavioral grading system that includes about thirty social interaction themes to capture the complexity of children's experience: It is the convergence of deductive, top-down (relevant concepts in current scholarship) and inductive, bottom-up (salient topics in the corpus, features in local context) qualitative coding processes. Each theme was graded according to a binary (0.5, 1) or tripartite (0, 0.5, 1) scoring standard evaluated by its behavioral intensity, valence or frequency.[47]

Moreover, I paid close attention to projective tests data (Doll Play and TAT): children's speech and story-telling prompted by pictures or objects. General projective tests at that time, invented in Western psychology, were designed to elicit fantasy and assess personalities, and were used by anthropologists when the "Culture and Personality School" was still popular.[48] Different from standardized projective tests in the West, the Wolfs' team hired local artists to design culturally appropriate prompts. For example, instead of using the ambiguous pictures in standard Thematic Apperception Test,[49] the Wolfs' team used a series of nine drawings for their own TAT. Each drawing was a

[42]Gweon Hyowon, "Inferential Social Learning: Cognitive Foundations of Human Social Learning and Teaching," *Trends in Cognitive Science*, in press; Michael Tomasello, Ann Cale Kruger, and Hilary Horn Ratner, "Cultural Learning," *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 16.3 (2010), 495–511.

[43]Michael Tomasello, *Becoming Human: A Theory of Ontogeny* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2019).

[44]For a popular account of research synthesis, see Paul Bloom, *Just Babies: The Origins of Good and Evil* (New York: Crown, 2013); For a summary of latest research on infant moral cognition, see Kelsey Lucca, J. Kiley Hamlin, and Jessica A. Sommerville, "Editorial: Early Moral Cognition and Behavior," *Frontiers in Psychology* 10 (2019), DOI: 10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02013.

[45]See Wolf, "Child Training and the Chinese Family" and Ward, "The Integration of Children into a Chinese Social World." Among the field-notes this project focuses on, only a tiny portion was used in Margery Wolf's classic works (1972, 1978), and was presented sporadically.

[46]John Whiting, *Field Guide for a Study of Socialization* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1966).

[47]A majority of themes were graded according to a binary system, for example, dominating: a score of "0.5" means mild dominating, a score of "1" means severe or repeated dominating. A few themes that have a reactive dimension were graded according to a tripartite system, for example, sharing: a score of "0" means no sharing despite being asked to, a score of "0.5" means mild sharing, and a score of "1" means generous or repeated sharing.

[48]For a historical account, see Rebecca Lemov, "X-Rays of Inner Worlds: The Mid-Twentieth-Century American Projective Test Movement," *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Science* 47.3 (2011), 251–78. The movement certainly influenced sinological anthropologists at that time: For example, G. W. Skinner brought projective tests to his fieldwork in Sichuan as part of the plan to study Chinese social personality (Skinner, *Rural China on the Eve of* Revolution, vii).

[49]H. A. Murray, *Thematic Appreception Test* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1947).

sketch of a social scenario that involved a child figure and some other figures (children and/or adults). They also added a Doll Play task, featuring a set of six dolls in a farm-house setting, an elderly woman, an adult man, an adult woman, and three children. Contrary to the incomplete or inadequate projective tests data in the SCS,[50] the Wolfs' team managed to collect good-quality data from these tests.[51] Unlike other types of data, his team didn't translate these complete transcripts into English, and following the SCS field-guide, these data were assigned a peripheral role. I believe, however, that fine-grained analysis of children's story-telling can shed much valuable light on their inner experience and provide a rare opportunity to see the local world through the eyes of children.

At a time with no personal computers, Arthur Wolf was overwhelmed by the large amount of data: one of the reasons he turned to other projects. Re-approaching these data today, my challenge, instead, is a lack of first-person fieldwork experience. Fortunately, this archive, with its mixed-methods and systematic nature, afforded me the opportunity to triangulate multiple analytic approaches, including digital humanities methods. I took advantage of new programmatic techniques, including NLP (natural language processing) and social network analysis. These computational methods can complement ethnographic interpretation and behavioral coding to generate multiple levels of insights from this corpus, making it possible for me to re-imagine the lives of children through texts.

A marginalized family and their untold tale

The family of Lin Yukun and Lin Meiyu was featured in Margery Wolf's book *A Thrice-Told Tale: Feminism, Postmodernism, and Ethnographic Responsibility*, as well as in its shorter, article version.[52] This family "had lived in the village for nearly ten years, but by village tradition they were still newcomers."[53] In a community bonded through kinship, they didn't belong to the prominent lineage of the village, the Lin lineage (pseudonym, to be consistent with *House of Lim*).[54] At the beginning of the Wolfs' fieldwork, this nuclear family included father Lin Tianlai (#47, age 32), mother Lin Chenxin (#48, age 30), and three children: Lin Yikun (#49, age 6, boy), Lin Meiyu (#50, age 5, girl), and an infant boy Lin Jukun (#51).

> In the spring of 1960, in a then remote village on the edge of the Taipei basin in northern Taiwan, a young mother of three lurched out of her home, crossed a village path, and stumbled wildly across a muddy rice paddy. The cries of her children and her own agonized shouts quickly drew an excited crowd out of what had seemed an empty village. Thus began nearly a month of uproar and agitation as this small community resolved the issue of whether one of their residents was being possessed by a god or suffering from a mental illness.[55]

[50]Whiting, *Field Guide for a Study of Socialization*, 118–28.

[51]91 children were interviewed for TAT (in Summer 1960) and 46 for Doll Play (during the weekends in Fall 1960).

[52]Margery Wolf, "The Woman Who didn't Become a Shaman," *American Ethnologist* 17.3 (1990), 419–30.

[53]Wolf, *A Thrice-told Tale*, 95.

[54]Although Margery Wolf used the surname "Tan" for her protagonist in "Thrice-told Tale," according to the demographic data, this newly settled family actually shares the same surname as the prominent Lin lineage in the village. I use the Romanization "Lin," the equivalent of "Lim." All the names are pseudonyms.

[55]Wolf, *A Thrice-told Tale*, 93.

Margery Wolf's writing began with this story. The lady in question "was a fiercely protective mother who had quarreled in recent months with a woman from the Lim household when her young son had been slugged by a Lim boy."[56] Children's fights, not uncommon in the village, were an important factor in the onset of the lady's "erratic behavior," and her breakdown was the focus of "A Thrice-told Tale." These published works, however, gave us few clues about her children: how are these little ones coping with their life, as part of a marginalized family going through a scandalous crisis?

One episode in Child Observation[57] clearly shows that children were active participants in village gossip. One day Mother (Lin Chenxin) drew a crowd in her courtyard, dancing like a Tang-ki (spirit medium), making *bai-bai* motions. She summoned the research assistant MC, hugged her close and praised her for being kind to all the children, but the chaotic scene frightened MC. The next day, children from other families, while playing a hopscotch game, teased their observer, "Older Sister" MC.

> A boy named Lin Shihui asked MC: "Did you really cry yesterday when she (Lin Chenxin) caught you? Lin Xiuyun (a girl) told everybody that you cried loud. Did you?"
> MC (indignantly): "I did not."
> Lin Xiuyun (angrily): "Now, when did I say that? Now, when did I say that?"
> (Another girl) Lin Shuyu laughed very loud.
> (The boy) Lin Shihui: "I heard you. Don't you think I didn't hear you." Lin Xiuyun seemed quite anxious and probably did say this.

One can only imagine the kind of teasing, mocking or social exclusion Lin Chenxin's own children would have experienced. Due to their marginalized situation and the fact that this mother was very shy, Wolf's team did not conduct concentrated observation or interviews with Lin Chenxin as they did with some other mothers. But fortunately her two older children were quite visible in the Wolf archive.[58] Child Observation includes sixty-four timed episodes that involve at least one of the two children, of which seventeen episodes involve both children. Besides, eight episodes of other (un-timed) observations involve one child or both; in terms of projective tests, both children participated in TAT, and the sister also participated in Doll Play. Drawing from the core data, Child Observation, the next section explores these two children's social positioning in the context of their peer network.

Brother–sister dyad in peer network

Systematic observational data of children in naturalistic settings, with complete information of participants, provide a rare opportunity to examine children's traces and networks. Among a total of 1,678 episodes, nearly three quarters ($n = 1{,}231$) involve children exclusively (ages below eighteen), with no adults at all. Even among the remaining 447 episodes, in many occasions adults were merely present, not actually interacting with children. In contrast to the predominant focus on parent–child ties and parenting in Chinese studies, this pattern suggests the importance of peer-interaction and potentially peer-learning in children's life. Social network analysis, based on computing

[56]Wolf, *A Thrice-told Tale*, 95.

[57]CO #1009, 04/05/1960.

[58]The Wolfs' original research defined 3–11 as their target age range and they did not collect much data on infants, so Lin Chenxin's youngest child is not my focus here.

co-occurrence of people in a given observation and aggregating co-occurrence counts across all observations, confirms the primacy of child-to-child ties in this corpus.

Figure 1 depicts the entire Child Observation network and Figure 2 depicts its subset, the union network of Lin Yikun (#49) and Lin Meiyu (#50). These figures show that children occupied a central position in both networks and that adults were at the periphery. Each node in the network represents a person, each edge (line) between two nodes represents the co-occurrence of these two people; the thickness of edges is proportional to the frequency of co-occurrence observed. The number on each node represents the person ID, and the size of a node is proportional to the person's betweenness-centrality––importance as a "bridge" between other people in the network. In Figure 1, pink nodes represent children and light green nodes represent adults; In Figure 2, bright green nodes represent children and bright purple nodes represent adults.

Figure 3 omits all adult nodes and depicts children's peer network in the Child Observation corpus. Based on observed co-occurrence, children formed four "cliques," indicated by color. The brother–sister dyad, #49 and #50, belonged to the same clique (Figure 3, the right corner), suggesting that they two often played together and their playmates overlapped.

Moreover, a closer look at this brother–sister dyad's network attributes, in comparison to the respective maximum numbers observed in the child network (see Table 1), reveals these two children's social positioning in their peer world: Brother co-occurred with seventy-nine other children in the network (measured by "degree," the number of

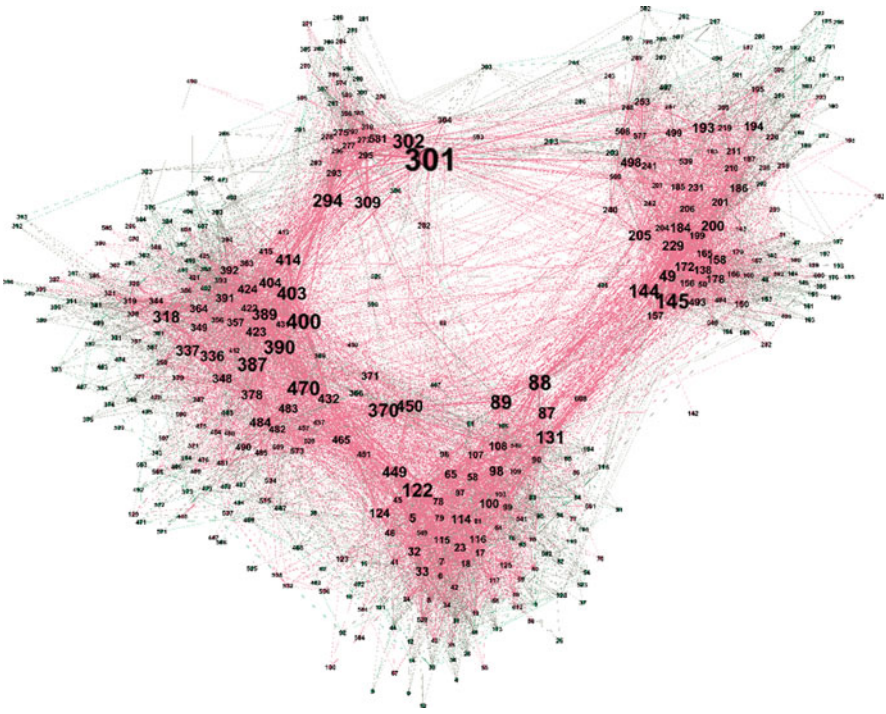

Figure 1 Child Observation entire network

Note: Analysis in Figures 1, 2, and 3 was all performed in Python programming language (packages: Pandas and NetworkX), and visualized in Gephi (layout: Force Atlas 2 algorithm).

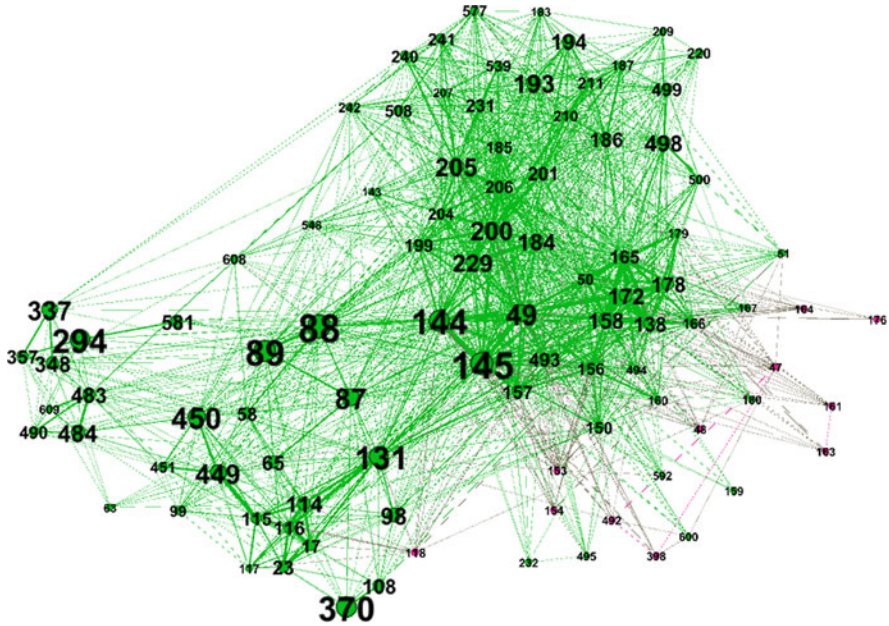

Figure 2 Child Observation subset (Child #49 and #50) union network

other nodes he is connected to), many repeatedly (total co-occurrence measured by "weighted degree"), and close to the maximum values observed; therefore he was a popular figure in the peer network. But in terms of between-ness centrality, brother was far from being the central hub of connections. Sister ranked much lower in all three attributes compared to her brother. Taken together, Brother was an active figure in the village peer network, despite his mother and family's marginal status; but Sister appeared less in the observations and was often observed overlapping with her brother in play. To understand what contributed to these patterns, age, gender, and/or personality, let's look at the content of observations.

Play, cooperation and conflict

What were Brother and Sister doing in these observations? This section first examines aggregate-level patterns of their peer-interactions through NLP (natural language processing) analysis. It then delves into the granular-level characteristics of these interactions through behavioral-grading, with a focus on cooperation and conflict, the bright and dark side of moral development.

NLP Analysis: word frequencies and clusters

NLP techniques are well suited to analyzing linguistic patterns of these systematically collected observational texts. The Child Observation texts are transformed into "clean" texts, after common preprocessing steps such as removing stop-words and lemmatizing the corpus. Figures 4 and 5 depict the global, word frequency pattern of all the words that appeared in the subset of 64 timed observations involving Brother and/or

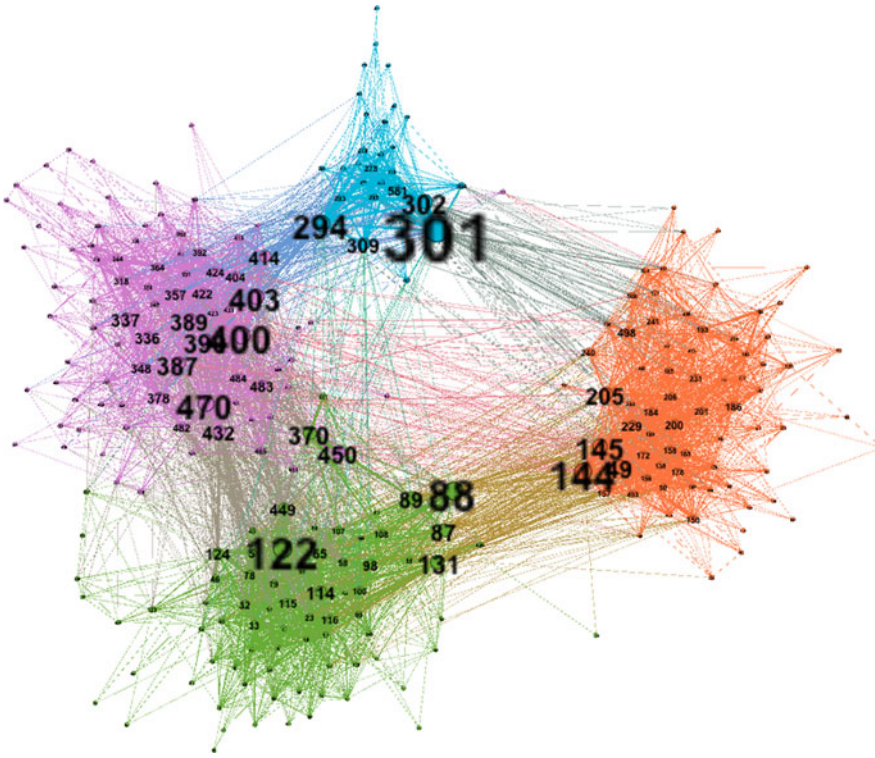

Figure 3 Child Observation child network (modularity)

Table 1 Child #49 and #50 in child network. "Max*" represents the child/node who had the highest value in each of the three network attributes. It may not refer to a single child; it just serves as a reference value for positioning Child #49 and #50 in the network

Child ID	Degree	Weighted Degree	Betweenness-Centrality
MAX*	92	424	1312
49	79	421	634
50	56	241	160

Sister, out of the Child Observation corpus. Figure 4 presents the top 100 highest-frequency words in a word cloud format, and Figure 5 presents the top fifty highest-frequency words.[59]

On the basis of these, Figure 6 depicts the word co-occurrence network: Each node represents one high-frequency word, and each edge represents co-occurrence of the two nodes/words, node size proportional to the word's frequency and edge thickness proportional to degree of co-occurrence between the two words. It examines relationships between high-frequency words in this subset. These analyses identify several notable

[59]Analyses in Figures 4 and 5 were performed and visualized in Python programming language.

Figure 4 Top 100 highest-frequency words in Child Observation subset (Child #49 and #50)

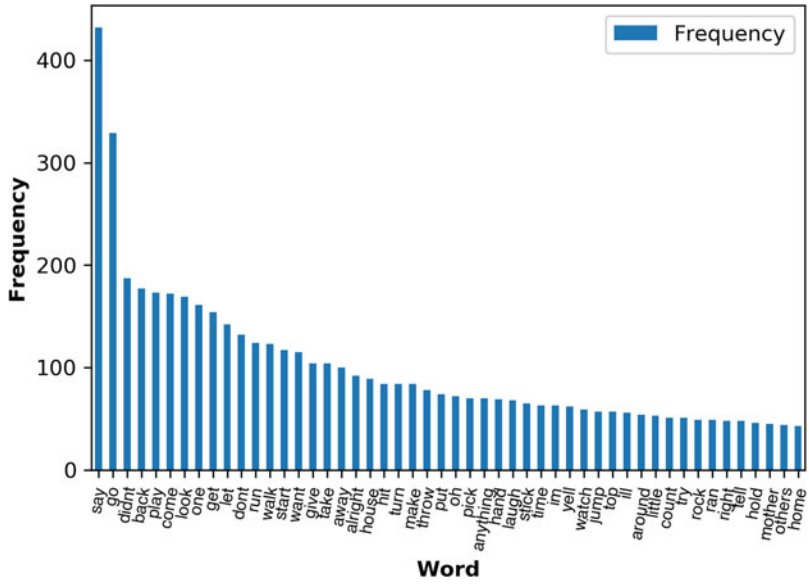

Figure 5 Top 50 highest-frequency words in Child Observation subset (Child #49 and #50)

patterns: The words "say" and "play" ranked #1 and #5, indicating the abundance of verbal interactions and the overall prevalence of play in their interactional contexts; The word "hit" ranked #21, lending additional evidence of children's fighting and conflict to support what I found previously from children's interview data;[60] The words "laugh" and "yell" ranked #20 and #34 respectively, giving us a clue of the emotional texture of children's play; Finally, co-occurrence high-frequency word pairs, such as

[60]Xu, "The Mischievous, the Naughty and the Violent."

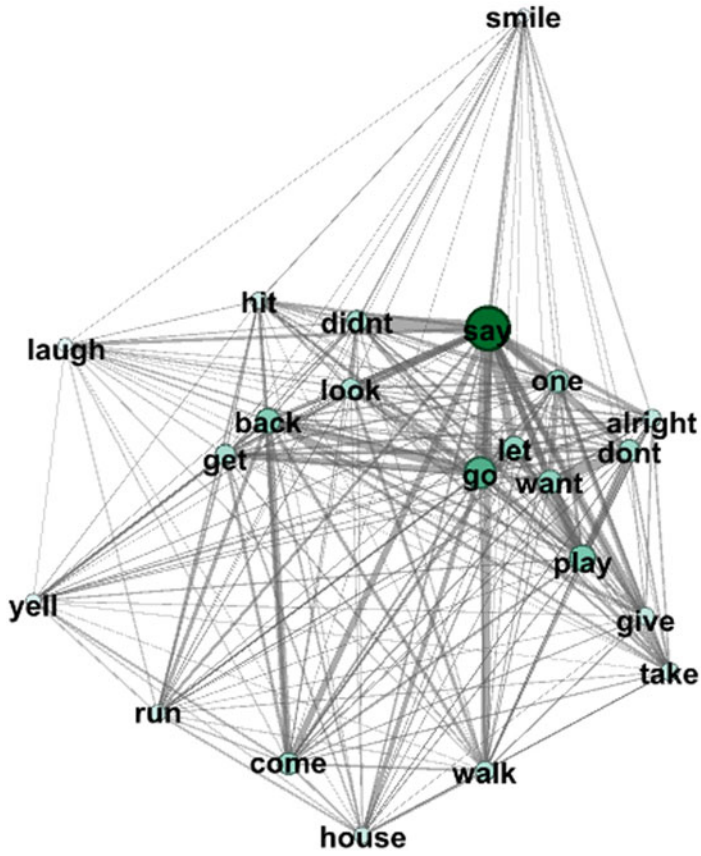

Figure 6 Word co-occurrence network (top 22) in Child Observation subset (Child #49 and #50)
Note: The word co-occurrence matrix in Figure 6 was computed in Python programming language, via word embeddings analysis, and then visualized in Gephi (layout: Force Atlas 2 algorithm).

hit-smile, hit-laugh, and hit-run provides a glimpse into how different behaviors intertwined in children's naturalistic play.

Notably, many high-frequency words such as "laugh," "smile," and "yell" occurred in various emotional tones: For example, laughing or smiling happily (joy), laughing at someone's miserable situation (teasing), smiling with a sense of embarrassment (shame), yelling angrily in a situation of aggression (anger, e.g., cursing dirty words) or yelling happily during play (joy, e.g., successfully spotting the "ghost" during hide-and-seek). Children's emotional and moral expressions are complex and ambiguous, which requires us to go beyond word-association patterns and delve into the behavioral sequences in their contexts.

Behavioral grading: cooperation and conflict

Using a fine-grained behavioral grading protocol, I analyzed all sixty-four timed Child Observation episodes as well as the additional eight episodes of untimed, situation-

Table 2 Behavioral grading results (Child #49 and #50). After grading all behaviors manually, I exported the behavioral grading data to and completed analysis in R programming language (package: dplyr)

	49 as initiator	49 as recipient	50 as initiator	50 as recipient
Number of observations	45	42	19	13
Number of behaviors	88	91	30	21
Conflict (composite score)	30	34	9	8
Cooperation (composite score)	54	40	17	13
Non-cooperation (composite score)	6	7	0	2
Teasing	7	14	13	2
Conflict per observation	0.667	0.810	0.474	0.615
Cooperation per observation	1.2	0.952	0.895	1

based observations involving the brother and/or his sister. I clustered peer-interaction behavioral themes into two main categories, cooperation and conflict. Across all observations, at least one child in the sibling dyad appeared in situations with the following forms of cooperation—collaboration, leading, following, ownership assertion, ownership acknowledgement, praising, request for help/sharing/game access/comforting, sibling care, helping/sharing/granting access/comforting—and conflict: disagreeing, physical aggression, verbal aggression, scolding, taking, competition, dominating, submitting, pleading, tattling. I created a composite score for cooperation and conflict respectively. Moreover, several themes of cooperation have a contingent nature, leading to non-cooperation (score 0), thus would be treated differently.[61] Besides, both children appeared in teasing scenarios, and teasing can be very ambiguous, from playful to aggressive, a grey area between cooperation and conflict.

Table 2 summarizes the behavioral grading results. First, in terms of absolute numbers, Brother not only appeared in a lot more observations than Sister, as co-occurrence social network analysis revealed, he was involved in many more behavioral interactions as the behavioral initiator or recipient. Moreover, in terms of ratio––conflict or cooperation composite score divided by number of observations—Brother initiated cooperative acts more frequently than sister, but the two appeared in similar ratio as recipients of cooperation; Brother initiated conflicts more frequently than sister, and he was also a more frequent recipient of conflictual behavior. In cooperation, Brother acted more as an initiator, Sister more as a recipient (including a recipient of Brother's goodwill); in conflicts, both appeared more as a recipient. Was Brother a more popular figure than Sister? Was Brother helping Sister in peer interaction, as the opening vignette portrayed? If both of them were ridiculed or bullied by peers, what were the reasons? To really understand what these quantitative patterns mean and what motivated these various behaviors, we need to explore the ethnographic details.

[61]For example, if A asked for help from B but B didn't offer help, B would get a score of 0 as an initiator of helping. In this case, B's score 0 would be treated as non-cooperation, instead of cooperation.

Coalition and rivalry: ethnographic insights

This section uses ethnographic episodes to contextualize the aforementioned textual and behavioral patterns, to flesh out these two young characters, and to demonstrate the moral lessons these youngsters learned. Brother and Sister had very different personalities, and their case invites us to reflect critically on common impressions about gender socialization in "the Chinese family," for example, boys are more aggressive than girls.[62] Observational materials suggest that the brother was a caring and protective figure. He played with many other kids. The sister was more aggressive, and she was not popular. On many occasions the sibling dyad acted in solidarity, like a small coalition facing the world outside their home. Together they learned to coordinate with peers, negotiating fairness and ownership, adapting to respect game rules, and submitting to peer leaders. But transcripts of projective tests reveal an intriguing picture of sibling rivalry, or, in the sister's eyes, bullying on the part of the brother. These complex patterns illuminate the early development of ambivalent and contradictory dimensions: love and power or care and control, in cross-sex sibling relationship.

Coalition and coordination outside the home: naturalistic observations

As behavioral grading results suggest, Brother Lin Yikun, although accused by his mother and other adults of being a trouble-maker (fighting with other children),[63] was more a cooperator than an aggressor. By the age of seven he had already mastered clever skills in negotiating rules of games and access to group play with other kids. He used the principle of reciprocity to his own advantage, reminding playmates of his previous favors he'd granted them. For example, when he saw an older girl holding sticks with feathers, he asked: "Give me one of yours, will you? You have two in your pocket." Rejected by the girl, he insisted: "I, I, I did something for you."[64] He sometimes controlled his anger and yielded to other children: Another girl (#172, a year and half older than he), a leader in their small group, bullied him, but he did not fight back. That's why a bystander boy teased him: "A boy is afraid of a girl!" On another occasion, chased, cursed, and hit by two naughty boys much younger than he, he appeared frightened. Those boys' older brother laughed: "Ha ha, the older one is afraid of the younger one."[65] Although sibling care was mainly girls' responsibility, Yikun also helped take care of his little brother (#51). In one scenario

[62]There is very little observational research in sinological anthropology about gender and children's aggression. One exception is William Jankowiak, Amber Joiner, and Cynthia Khatib, "What Observation Studies Can Tell Us about Single Child Play Patterns, Gender, and Changes in Chinese Society," *Cross-Cultural Research* 45.2 (2011), 155–57. Their research on single children in urban China found that boys displayed more physical aggression than girls during play time. In the Wolf archive, Child Interview data did not show significant influences of age or gender on peer aggression in children's answers to hypothetical questions (Xu, "The Mischievous, the Naughty and the Violent."). Observations of Lin Yikun and Lin Meiyu didn't reveal a male-biased physical aggression either. But they are just two among numerous children. Comprehensive analysis of all observations in the Wolf archive will clarify to what extent children's aggression is related to gender or age.

[63]Children's fighting was very common. See episodes of Yikun's conflicts with other children in the next sections.

[64]CO # 836, 02/21/1960.

[65]CO # 1655, 07/28/1960.

his sister Lin Meiyu called the observer MS: "See? Big brother can take care of little brother."[66]

Lin Meiyu, on the other hand, had a different personality, which helps to explain why her status in the peer network was more peripheral compared to that of her brother. She was not a popular child, even before the onset of her mother's scandalous insanity. Unlike her brother, she was not that easy to get along with. She interrupted other children's play or bullied them, including her big brother. Her brother's friends saw her as a troublemaker and were reluctant to include her during their play. She wanted to play with other children, though. Once two boys were playing a marble game—pretending little rocks were marbles. She asked to join but was bluntly rejected by one of them. She turned to the other boy, her classmate, attempting to manipulate him: "He (your playmate) doesn't want our Jung class [忠班] to play!"[67] The boy who rejected her stayed firm: "Yes, I do. I just don't want *you* to play." During a jumping rope game, one boy explicitly asked the group leader not to let Lin Meiyu play: "She hit my little brother." Meiyu walked off, looking unhappy.[68]

One day, Lin Meiyu was excluded again. Three children were playing house. She walked up to watch, but a girl shouted at her (angrily with a threatening look): "Get out of here! I don't want you to look." She looked sad and walked away. But her brother Lin Yikun happened to be there. He yelled to tattle to his mother, attempting to protect his sister.[69] Lin Yikun appeared as a brother of a caring heart: In dyadic interactions, he yielded to her many times even when she grew aggressive. In multi-person interactions, he used his social skills to help her. The opening vignette is a great example: He "bribed" a girl with face-powder so that she would agree to play with his little sister.

Sometimes help was mutual and cooperation was fruitful: Playing "house" with other children, they partnered in "crime," taking away a small boy's stones and teasing him;[70] But seeing another child cheating a younger one when playing tops, Sister echoed her brother to mock and condemn the cheater.[71] In hide-and-seek games, they two coordinated together to "cheat," sister on the watch for brother who was the "ghost" trying to catch hiding children.[72]

But since neither of them was a leader in their peer group, negotiating with peers could be difficult. In the following observation, their negotiations failed. [73]

> Children were playing "cars" on 2 seat tricycles. Lin Yikun was in the front seat and another little boy was pushing. Sister came and sat down.
> Yikun told the child who was next in line to get on the trike: "Come and get in your seat. Next time it's my sister's turn."
> An older girl (#138) disagreed: "No, it's not, it's mine. We have to line up."
> Yikun countered: "No. We pretend she (Lin Meiyu) is my daughter so I have to give her a ride first and she doesn't have to pay for a ticket"

[66]SO (situation-based observation) # 59, 08/02/1959.
[67]CO # 277, 10/29/1959.
[68]CO # 492, 12/30/1959.
[69]CO # 313, 11/19/1959.
[70]CO # 32, 08/04/1959.
[71]CO # 497, 01/01/1960.
[72]CO # 1640, 07/20/60.
[73]CO # 72, 08/13/1959.

The girl (#138) rejected: "No, you can't do that. We have to line up."
Yikun: "It's my tricycle!"

Disagreement continued, until the leader (#172) in their playgroup, a quite dominant girl, intervened and reinstated the importance of turn-taking rules. Brother attempted various methods to help his sister skip the line, improvising fictive parent–child kinship (apparently the real sibling tie was not enough) and asserting his ownership. But in the end they had to submit to more "powerful" children, even though they were playing on his tricycle. In this quite serious pretend play scenario, we not only see children's rich imaginative world––riding tricycles as "cars" and using leaves as tickets—but also how they learned to coordinate with peers and comply with rules.

Conflict and rivalry at home: story-telling in projective tests

What about life inside their family? As I mentioned earlier, because their mother was a shy figure, the Wolfs' team didn't manage to interview her or observe their family interactions at home. But, fortunately, these children participated in projective tests. These verbal communication records offer a precious window into children's thoughts and emotions. In both tests, children were asked what they thought people in the scenarios were doing. The Doll Play test in the Wolf Archive, based on localized dolls and farmhouse, featured children's spontaneous story-telling about family scenes. Some TAT drawings could be interpreted as interactions between family members too. Narratives in these two projective tests shine light on actual family dynamics inside the home.

In Lin Meiyu's Doll Play test, a salient theme is sibling rivalry or, to be more exact, brother dominating and bullying sister. At the first sight of dolls, she looked carefully, checked the dolls' clothes, and started to tell this story spontaneously[74]:

A[75]: Big sister was arguing.
Q: With whom?
A: Big brother.
Q: Why?
A: Brother ate her candy.
Q: Then they started to argue, right? How?
A: They fought on and on. Brother hit sister; he's bad.
Q: How did they fight? Can you show me?
A: Like this, like this! (Holding B-boy doll and G-girl doll, crashing them)
Q: How's the sister?
A: She cried.
Q: Did the sister hit the brother?
A: No. Sister didn't. It was brother all the time.

Meiyu was tested in two sessions. In both sessions, she spontaneously pivoted the conversation to the same topic: brother is mean to sister and he deserves to be punished. Unlike "brother eating sister's candy" or "brother hitting sister" in the above excerpt, in

[74]DP #50, Session I, 10/07/1960.

[75]In the English translation of TAT and Doll Play transcripts, "A" refers to the child's answer, and "Q" refers to the adult interviewer's question.

some other segments she didn't even articulate a specific explanation. For example, she just repeated: "He (brother) is so bad." This poses a stark contrast to the imagery of a protective brother and the pattern of brother–sister solidarity that emerged in peer play outside the home setting. One might wonder, though, if this had anything to do with Meiyu's real experience, or whether it was just purely imaginary fantasy. Yes, these utterances were a product of children's story-telling exercise, and most likely it does reflect Meiyu's self-serving bias, that Brother was always the villain. But there are several reasons to doubt that stories she told were mere fantasies: first, sibling conflict is one of the most common themes across all Doll Play transcripts (nearly fifty children), which probably reflects its prevalence in this village community. Besides, in Meiyu's two sessions, the names she gave the dolls mapped exactly onto her family's real situation. For example, she called the boy doll "big brother," the girl doll "big sister" and the baby doll "little brother."[76] Moreover, the scenario of brother–sister fighting, especially over candy, appeared not only in Doll Play. It also surfaced in Meiyu's TAT session conducted several months earlier, and in surprisingly similar ways. Compare the following two excerpts: The first one was from her Doll Play transcript, and the second was from her TAT transcript.

Doll Play excerpt:

A: Big brother wanted money for food.
Q: Who gave him money?
A: He asked her. (Pointing at M)
Q: What did the brother say to mom?
A: He said, "mom, give me one cent."
Q: What did mom say?
A: Mom said, "why did you fight."
Q: And the brother?
A: And sister came told mom brother took her candy away.
Q: What did mom say then?
A: Mom said she would not give him one cent.
Q: What did the brother do next?
A: He cried.
Q: And how's mom?
A: Mom said, "why did you take your sister's candy?" Big brother stopped crying.

The following TAT excerpt[77] is especially intriguing. The research assistant showed Meiyu the fifth drawing in the set, which featured a girl, a broken bowl on the floor, and an adult woman. Meiyu interpreted the drawing as about the girl breaking a bowl and her mom reacting to it, including beating her. When the research assistant asked what the girl in the picture would feel when her mom hit her for breaking the bowl, Meiyu went silent. Then, the research assistant repeated his question: "What will the girl feel?" Surprisingly, Meiyu pivoted her answer to an apparently irrelevant topic, big brother taking her candy:

[76]These kinship terms were translated from the Chinese transcript. Without access to the original audiotapes, unfortunately it remains unclear whether she used Taiwanese or Mandarin terms in the actual conversation. According to Mr. Huang Chieh-Shan, some children were better than others in Mandarin, and some might have spoken a mixture of both languages in projective tests.

[77]TAT # 80, P50, summer 1960.

A: She wants to fight someone.
Q: Does She want to fight someone?
A: Yes.
Q: Who did she fight with?
A: Her brother.
Q: Why her brother?
A: Because her brother took her candy.
Q: Did the brother really take her candy?
A: Yes.
Q: Why?
A: There was a lot of candy, so he took all of them.

Last but not the least, another detail in the story Meiyu told about the girl character breaking a bowl alludes to her own family's experience shown in *A Thrice-Told Tale*. Right before the above TAT segment, Meiyu mentioned that the girl's mother found out she broke a bowl. Asked what would happen then, Meiyu answered: "When mom found out, she didn't feel well." When asked why mom didn't feel well, she pivoted, again, to the topic of fighting, the girl fighting with her big brother. Children fighting and mom feeling unwell was not something portrayed in that particular TAT drawing at all, but it encapsulated what happened to Meiyu's mom: Her brother Yikun's fight with another boy (presumably from the important, "House of Lim" family), was a major contributing factor to the onset of their mother's psychiatric symptoms. Coincidentally, Meiyu's TAT session was conducted in summer 1960, just a few months after her mother's "erratic behavior." Pressed by the research assistant twice to explain why, in the drawing, the mom would feel unwell upon her children's fighting, Meiyu kept silent. This little girl's nuanced reactions, her utterances and hesitancy, hint at the lingering impacts of the chaos in the adult world on these young children's emotional and moral experience.

Taken together, Meiyu's reactions in projective tests amount to what I call "reality-based fantasy": The stories she told are closely related to, or mapped from, the reality of sibling rivalry and conflict at home, in competition for resources and parental care. These projective tests also reveal another key aspect of Yikun and Meiyu's social world, that is, fighting and punishment. The next section shifts the attention to punishment, highlighting children's agency in negotiating parental discipline and situating their experience and imaginations of authority and violence in the local context.

Punishment and (DIS)-obedience: from parenting to children's experience

The disobedient child: punishment and its discontents

Many ethnographers at that time, including Margery Wolf,[78] noticed an important parenting value in rural communities in post-war Taiwan, namely attempting to prohibit fighting among children. Parents took children's fighting seriously and did not hesitate to punish children who engaged in conflicts. Punishment includes scolding, beating, and sometimes tying up the offender with a rope. Parental punishment, especially from the mother, was a salient theme in the lives of Lin Yikun and his sister. It not

[78]Ward, "The Integration of Children into a Chinese Social World"; Wolf, "Child Training and the Chinese Family"; Ahern, *The Cult of the Dead in a Chinese Village*, 213–19; Norma Diamond, *K'un Shen: A Taiwan Village* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1969), 33.

only appeared in Meiyu's story-telling, but also recurred in several segments of Yikun's TAT transcript: For example, when shown the drawing of a girl character, a broken bowl and an adult woman character, Yikun mentioned the same scenario as Meiyu did, that mother would beat up the girl; Presented with other drawings featuring multiple children, he inferred that the children were fighting and would be punished by the mother figure.[79]

Arthur Wolf explained the rationale of this ideology in its social context, the need to maintain neighborliness in a close-knit community connected through kinship ties:[80]

> [M]ost Taiwanese mothers … were extremely anxious about their children's getting into fights with their neighbors' children. Children were never encouraged to fight back. To the contrary, they were severely punished for fighting regardless of whether or not they had instigated the fight. The most likely explanation is Minturn and Lambert's suggestion that "relative anxiety about peer group aggression is related to the intimacy of social and economic bonds among members in the community, and the degree to which children can disrupt these adult relationships."[81]

The tragic story of Lin Chenxin––Yikun and Meiyu's mother, illustrates the extent to which children can disrupt adults' relationships with neighbors. But how did these children react to parental discipline? The following is an excerpt of one episode observed right in front of their house.[82] In this scenario a little boy attempted to tattle about Yikun's misbehavior: "stealing" flowers. Yikun's mom cursed the tattler and gave the flower back to Yikun—indeed "a fiercely protective" mother.[83] But the observation also sheds light on Yikun's naughty disobedience. He ignored mom's threat and punishment.

> Lin Yikun came back with a branch with a flower on it.
> 145 (a six-year-old boy): "I know whose flower that is. I'm going to tell him. I'm going to go tell that you're stealing his flowers."
> Yikun: "I didn't steal it. I found it."
> Yikun's mom came out and asked him: "Where did you get that flower."
> When Yikun saw his mother coming, he threw the flower on the ground. 144 (an eight-year-old boy) and 204 (a ten-year-old boy) ran to get it.
> 145 was still yelling: "You stole somebody's flower. I'm going to tell somebody. Something's going to happen to you."
> Yikun's mom to 145: "Tell you're going to die! What would you get if you told? You'd get a sex organ (cursing)."

[79]TAT # 56, P49, summer 1960.

[80]Arthur Wolf, unpublished manuscript.

[81]Leigh Minturn and William W, Lambert, *Mothers of Six Cultures: Antecedents of Child Rearing* (New York: John Wiley,1964), 159. Lambert was Arthur Wolf's psychology advisor at Cornell, and this book was based on the Six Cultures Study. In a Taiwanese village with no lineages during the early 1970s, anthropologist Stevan Harrell observed that children's fights were considered relatively unimportant conflicts, see Stevan Harrell, *Ploughshare Village* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1982), chapter 4.

[82]CO # 137, 08/25/59.

[83]Wolf, *A Thrice-told Tale*, 95. Elsewhere in the Wolf archive, for example, in the episode MO (Mother Observation) #70, 09/20/1960, other adults and children complained that Yikun's mother didn't properly discipline him when Yikun was reported climbing up on the fence of someone's house.

145 stopped yelling and looked a little confused. Mom went to Yikun and said: "Where did you get it? How could it get in there. The gate is closed. If you do it again I'm going to beat you."
Mom took the flower from 204 and said to Yikun: "Go home."
Mom and Yikun walked into the house. Yikun hadn't said a word. He looked a little bewildered. As they went into the house mom said: "Next time I'm going to tie you in the house."
Mom walked into the kitchen and Yikun came out again. 145 stood and watched all this. 145 saw a dragon fly and ran to catch. Yikun ran also to get it.
145: "No. It's mine."
Yikun: "No. It's mine."
They pushed at each other. Yikun's mom had come to the door again. She yelled: "Whose? It belongs to the one who catches it."
She told Yikun: "Don't catch it. What do you want that for? If you don't have rice you can't live. If you don't have a dragonfly you'll live. Come back."
Yikun: "No!"

Children's discontent with punishment manifested in various ways, not only towards their own parents. In a Mother Observation (MO) episode, in the aftermath of a conflict with a younger boy, Yikun defiantly confronted another adult (#226) and articulated his justifications, when the adult cursed Yikun and threatened to beat him up:[84]

At that point Lin Yikun was standing about ten steps away from him.
226 scolded him loudly, "Kan[85]. Why did you hit a boy smaller than you? You should give way to a boy who is smaller than you. You should. Didn't you know it? You hit him so hard that you hurt him. I'll call the policemen and let them seize you."
Yikun held his head high up looking aimlessly around showing that he was not at all scared. 226 stopped to breathe and Yikun took the chance, saying, "He tried to take my thing away by force. He even pushed me down to eat the mud. Why shouldn't I beat him for it."
226 cursed, "Kan. If you hit him again I'll surely beat you to death. Try it and see. Kan."
Then he walked away talking to 192 (another adult), who happened to pass by, and telling the story angrily. 192 said, "He (Yikun) really is a bad boy."

Children's moral compass is more complicated than that prescribed by adults. Older children yielding to younger ones is indeed an important parenting norm in this community.[86] However, although adults judged him as a bad boy and scolded him for not yielding to the younger one, Yikun apparently did not agree with these adults. He believed hitting was justified when it was defensive and reciprocal. Not just concerned with what happened to themselves, they also talked about other children's experience in clearly normative terms, with their own sense of justice and fairness. In one observation, Yikun was playing with a six-year old girl (#178). On the way 178 said: "Beiguang (her grandfather's older brother) is very mean. One day 172 (Beiguang's granddaughter) was

[84]MO #119, 08/11/1960.
[85]A common cursing word in Hokkien, 姦.
[86]Wolf, "Child Training and the Chinese Family," 245.

just standing under the guava tree and Beiguang came and hit her." Yikun extended his moral judgment: "He shouldn't have hit her. She was just standing there. She didn't do anything." 178 agreed: "That's right. He's not supposed to hit her."[87]

Moreover, children even mocked parental discipline, turned it into their own entertainment, and enriched their creative game-play repertoire. The following episode involves the sibling dyad, Yikun and Meiyu, in a group play initiated by the leader girl (#172):[88]

> 172 was mother and running around spanking all the children. 178, 179, and Lin Meiyu were going back to 172. 172 ran out and they all ran away yelling: "Mother is coming!"
> They ran all the way to the center before they discovered 172 wasn't chasing them. They came back. Lin Meiyu didn't go all the way and just as they got back she yelled: Mother is coming! Off they went again, laughing and yelling. They returned again. 172 wasn't in sight. 178 sneaked around trying to see her.
> 179 yelled: "Mother is coming!" And 178 jerked to a stop. This was repeated several times. Finally, 172 called 178 to "come home." 178 walked over to her.
> Lin Yikun and 157 were kneeling in front of 172, laughing and moaning: "Oh mother, I don't dare do it again. Please don't spank me."
> 172 was getting some rocks from under a basket. 178 picked up a stick and walked over to the kneeling children and pretended she was striking them, saying: "Oh, you dead child. What are you kneeling here for?"
> 178 walked over to 157 and repeated this. 157 stood up (angrily) and said: "Why do you hit me?" He hit 178 back.178 just smiled. 157 knelt down again and took up his refrain of "Oh Mother, don't hit me."
> 178: "Oh, you dead child! What are you kneeling here for?"
> They both turned around and said: "Well, it's your mother that told us to." 172 came back with two rocks on a "plate" and a stick in her hand. She lifted the stick as if to hit them and they jumped up and pulled on her and said: Oh, please don't hit me. Then they each grabbed a rock and ran away. P stood laughing.
> 172: "Oh, those two dead children!" 172 put away her "plate."
> Lin Yikun and 157 came back with several children behind them, waving the stolen rods and saying: "We're here! We're here!" 172 jumped at them and they all ran away.

Ethnographic records of "the Chinese family" from the mid-twentieth century have said a lot about parental punishment and discipline, its ideology and practice.[89] Their analytical focus, nonetheless, was skewed towards the adults, the enforcers of punishment. That obscured the actual experience of the punished, the complexity of children's reactions, and their discontent with authority, hierarchy, and parental power. This hilarious episode showed us how children, arguably the least powerful members of local society at that time, channeled their discontent––a mixture of fear, anger, and perhaps also contempt––into humor, sarcasm, and amusement.

[87]CO # 69, 08/13/1959.
[88]CO # 314, 11/20/1959.
[89]I am currently preparing a manuscript on this subject.

Learning morality: through children's eyes

The lack of interest in children in the anthropology of the Chinese family makes sense if we follow behaviorist assumptions that children are mere objects of training: They get deterred, conditioned, and molded by adults' discipline such as scolding, shaming,[90] and punishment. Nevertheless, as cognitive anthropologists point out, evaluating the child as approved or disapproved of is a universal technique in shaping children into competent members of their communities, but its very efficacy is precisely predicated upon children's emotional and cognitive predispositions.[91] Once we shift our attention to children and see the world through their eyes, we are confronted with the puzzles of learning morality—puzzles that are central to understanding where norms regulating social relations come from and how they change or persist across generations.

When I read the above episodes and encountered children mimicking familiar scenes in their life, such as adult scolding "you dead child" and child pleading "mom, don't hit me," I couldn't help but wonder: What did these little ones think and feel about that, when they were punished by parents, or observed other children being scolded and shamed? When they pleaded to parents, did that deter them from misbehaving, or was that more of a negotiation strategy? Moreover, when Lin Yikun defended himself for not yielding to a younger child in front of that child's father, and expressed his dissatisfaction toward the unjust punishment forced upon another child, we are prompted to ask: how did children develop their own understanding of what is right and wrong, which might be at odds with what adults taught or demonstrated?

The socio-cultural approach to moral learning––a manifestation in sinological anthropology is the emphasis on "parenting" and "child training"––tends to omit the active role of children themselves.[92] A main reason for this is an impoverished view of learning. In his 1995 book *The Roads of Chinese Childhood*, Charles Stafford pointed out that mainstream anthropological accounts of cognitive development were psychologically implausible: "How people *actually* learn (as opposed to how societies organize learning) is scarcely understood by anthropologists."[93] It rings true even today that mainstream anthropologists don't care about learning as agentive, experiential processes—as a recent critique points out.[94] The Wolf archive provides a unique opportunity to address this problem. In a previous article I analyzed standardized interviews with seventy-nine children on questions related to aggression. I found that children's answers deviated from the parental ideal of avoiding fights and revealed, in their narratives, well-calibrated reciprocal aggression and sensitivity to others' intentions.[95] Observational and projective tests records, as demonstrated in this article, not only reaffirmed the prevalence of children's fighting despite parental admonishment and punishment, but also revealed their discontent with authority, calculation of reciprocity and reasoning of justice. These patterns defy the earlier, behaviorist explanation of

[90]Shaming is an enduring socialization technique in Chinese child socialization, as research in different time periods and regions demonstrate; see, for example, Heidi Fung, "The Socialization of Shame among Young Chinese Children," *Ethos* 27.2 (1999), 180–209; Jing Xu, *The Good Child*, 179–180.

[91]Naomi Quinn, "Universals of Child Rearing," *Anthropological Theory* 5.4 (2005), 477–516.

[92]Heidi Fung and Benjamin Smith, "Learning Morality," in *The Anthropology of Learning in Childhood*, 263.

[93]Stafford, *The Roads of Chinese Childhood*, 11.

[94]Susan D. Blum, "Why Don't Anthropologists Care about Learning," *American Anthropologist* 121.3 (2019), 641–54.

[95]Xu, "The Mischievous, the Naughty and the Violent."

reward–punishment reinforcement learning that framed the SCS study and illuminate young children's complex psychology, the capacity to construct their own moral universe.

Concluding remarks

Children matter for the human family. Human beings take an extraordinary long time to grow up; such extended period of immaturity and dependency, which prepare us for behavioral flexibility and adaptability—that is, the power of learning—is key to our species' success.[96] This paper reconstructs the story of two young children from historical field-notes that are ordinary but also extraordinary: ordinary because they are about young children's mundane life; extraordinary, because they provide a window into children's rich socio-moral world, a topic that was long obscured in studies of "the Chinese family." I traced how the brother–sister dyad navigates the social world and negotiates with peers and adults: the two helped each other in peer interactions outside the home, longing for social inclusion; they told stories of sibling conflicts at home; they maneuvered against adult punishment and mocked it in game play.

Rediscovering this story enriches historical and anthropological understanding of morality and family. First of all, going beyond a predominant focus on parent–child ties, I show that child-to-child ties constitute an important space for moral learning. In contrast to the highly mechanistic, behaviorist model of "child training," children negotiate their own social norms and create their own culture.[97] Siblings are especially important in this regard. The dualities of care and dominance, and love and power in their early form matter for understanding sibling relations in adulthood[98] and for the double-edged quality of human kinship.[99]

Moreover, sibling relationships in childhood were rarely studied in the anthropology of "the Chinese family." These ethnographic records offer precious historical insights into the roles of adult siblings in today's Taiwan.[100] Connected to the Wolfs's classic works on family and kinship more broadly, these records also provide a comparative reference to understanding family change in China: the experience of singleton children and their families in urban China over the past four decades and uncertainties about the future, as China is grappling with its stark reality of ultra-low fertility despite the promotion of the two-child policy and now three-child policy.[101]

[96]Melvin Konner, *The Evolution of Childhood: Relationships, Emotion, Mind* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011).

[97]Hirschfeld, "Why Don't Anthropologists Like Children?," 11.

[98]See Thelen, Coe, and Alber, "Introduction to the Anthropology of Sibling Relations"; Joseph, "Brother/Sister Relationships."

[99]Janet Carsten, "What Kinship Does–and How."

[100]In today's Taiwan, adult siblings play an important role in care work and emotion work, facilitating family intimacy and relationality in Taiwan. See Amy Brainer, *Queer Kinship and Family Change in Taiwan* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2019), 95–111.

[101]The experience of growing up as lonely singletons shape Chinese young adults' belief that having two children is better, see Cong Zhang, Aaron Z. Yang, Sung won Kim, and Vanessa L. Fong. "How Chinese Newlyweds' Experiences as Singletons or Siblings Affect their Fertility Desires," *The China Quarterly*, 247 (2021), 835–54. Despite some increase of second-births, however, new census data shows that China's TFR (total fertility rate) in 2020 dropped to 1.3; see Ryan Woo and Kevin Yao, "China Demographic Crisis Looms as Population Growth Slips to Slowest Ever," *Reuters*, May 11, 2021, www.reuters.com/world/china/china-2020-census-shows-slowest-population-growth-since-1-child-policy-2021-05-11/.

Last but not the least, by bringing to light young children's stories in the past from the shadow of classic works in sinological anthropology, this article looks toward the future, to envision new theoretical and methodological conversations. It is a call for ethnographers to embrace methodological pluralism[102] and engage with digital humanities techniques to examine fieldnotes old and new.[103] It also advocates an interdisciplinary, cognitive anthropology approach that takes children's psychological capacities and experiences seriously, and puts them at the center of understanding human relatedness. However remote or invisible, children are moral agents in all corners of human society.

[102]Tom S. Weisner, "Mixed Methods Should Be a Valued Practice in Anthropology." *Anthropology News* 53.5 (2012), 3–4. As Weisner postulated: "Anthropology should be at the forefront of such research and practice, not critiquing from the margins or simply ignoring important methodological and research design innovations" (p. 4.)

[103]The humanities are far ahead of socio-cultural anthropology, in using data science text-analytics, even though anthropologists also largely rely on textual records, fieldnotes, for our scholarship.

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