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The Way We Weren't: Re-presenting the Past in Wang Shuo's *Dongwu xiongmeng* (Wild Beasts, 1992)

With the triumphant arrival of global capitalism in the post-socialist era, China's socialist past has been subject to forgetting and constant rewriting. In his novel *Dongwu xiongmeng* (Wild Beasts, 1992), Wang Shuo, one of the most celebrated authors of contemporary China, sets out to question the very possibility of narrating the past in a present characterized by accelerated modernization and commercialization. Without succumbing to either nostalgia or amnesia, the novel offers a complex picture of memory and fiction that rejects the straightforward recording of events. The relationship between the past and the present is characterized by a radical sense of rupture, and yet the present is inextricable from narratives of the past. This paper uses Wang's text, as well as its subsequent film adaption *In the Heat of the Sun* (1994), as entry points to examine cultural memories in the socio-historical context of post-socialist China. Paying attention to specific textual practices and cultural production, the paper discusses the way in which the socialist past is re-presented and resurrected according to the current logic of the market and consumerism.