

Wang Gongxin's "Infant tongue" compressed a large iron cradle sited in specially created baby boudoir. The "mattress" was an iron tray containing a film of milky water. Projected one by one onto this white surface were the stereotypic faces of mother, father, and grandparents, the six adults which comprise the immediate family tree of the single child of modern Chinese families. Each of these faces was engaged in the kind of babytalk and face pulling that adults reserve for their conversations with the very young. A hole in the tray, placed exactly at the point of their mouths, drained the milk in gurgling fashion; an apt pun on the nonsensical language spouting from their lips, and the milk they themselves, were nourished on. This was a reference to the past generations that nurtured them and the perpetuation of this most fundamental of languages, yet underlying the humour this was a suggestion of the pressure that falls to the only children of recent, and foreseeable future, generations.

—by Karen smith