

ZHANG XIGUO'S WRITING WORLD

by

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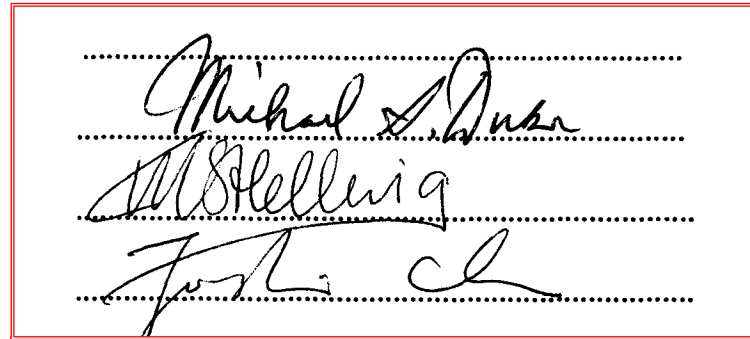
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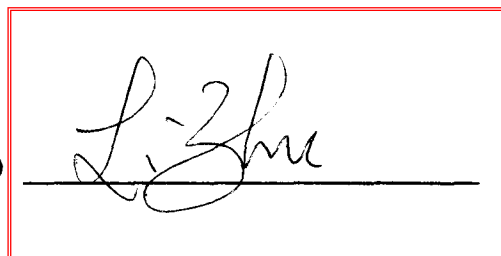
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## Abstract

In the beginning of my thesis, I give a brief introduction to Zhang Xiguo's life and his writing and a brief summary of Zhang Xiguo's humanistic concern: he writes for people.

Chapter One discusses that Zhang Xiguo has focused his writing on the physical and spiritual exile of Chinese people. He thinks that Chinese people are in a stage of change. When they cannot find their spiritual home, they become wanderers. In different situations Chinese people are suffering a similar sense of losing their identity. The image of the wanderers is related to Zhang Xiguo's other major themes, such as the issue of money and the relationships between men and women.

Chapter Two discusses the issue of money. Taiwan's economic situation has changed dramatically in the past forty years. In Zhang Xiguo's writing, both intellectuals and common people have to face the issue of money.

Chapter Three discusses peoples' compromise and action in the face of invisible power. People seek different ways to fulfil their life goals. Some of them compromise with reality; others try to achieve their purpose by manipulating others. And still others realize that the meaning of life is in action not only in achievement. Those people who have no power to act against reality and do not want to compromise become bystanders.

Chapter Four discusses the patterns of male/female relationship in Zhang Xiguo's writing. The relationship between man and woman is unstable. The conquerors, men finally are conquered by their subjects, women. Men and women have to seek a new type of relationship.

Chapter Five discusses Zhang Xiguo's writing skills.

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## Introduction

Zhang Xiguo is an interesting figure among Chinese writers: he is a scientist. He has acted as chairman and professor of Computer Departments of several universities in the United States while simultaneously being a prolific writer in Chinese. As Lee Ou-fan writes in his preface to Zhang Xiguo's *Xing yun zu qu* (The Suite of Nebula): "Among Chinese Intellectuals, people who know both science and literature are very rare, and Zhang Xiguo is probably the only one scientist who is able to write fiction."<sup>1</sup> Here, we will not discuss his scientific achievements but rather his literature. He has been writing without a break for over twenty-seven years: a scientist with a passion for literature, and a writer with a clear consciousness. His involvement in science does not hinder his commitment to literature; on the contrary, it has enhanced his belief in the value and strength of literature.

Zhang Xiguo was born on July 17, 1944 in Chongqing, Sichuan Province, mainland China during the Sino-Japanese war. He belongs to the generation born in wartime and growing up in a new land, thus witnessing many dramatic changes in political and economic circumstances.

After the war, his family moved to Taiwan. Zhang grew up in Xinzhu, a small town close to Taipei. Most of his stories use Xinzhu as a part of their background. In his last year of high school, he was recommended (baosong) for admission to university. This recommendation was a great honor for a high school student: it meant that he could go to university without taking the college-entrance examinations. Since Zhang Xiguo did not have to prepare for the examinations, he spent the rest of his time in high school watching western movies.

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<sup>1</sup>Lee Ou-fan, "Shenqi de luchen-- xingyu zuqu xuqu" (An Amazing Trip--A Brief Introduction of *The Suite of Nebula*), Zhang Xiguo, *The Suite of Nebula* (Taipei, Hongfan Co., 1980), p.1.

In 1962, he went to Taipei and enrolled in the Department of Electrical Engineering of National Taiwan University, the best university in Taiwan. During his university years, he finished his first long novel, *Pi Mushi zhengzhuan* (The Biography of Pastor Pi), and a short story collection: *Kong Fuzi zhi si* (The Death of Confucius); he translated some of Jean Paul Sartre's writings, and edited and published a booklet *Sate de zhexue sixiang* (Sartre's philosophy). The writing completed during his early years does not have too many distinguishing merits. But we can see that he sought to differ from others in his selection of subject matter, for example: the life of a pastor in *The Biography of Pastor Pi*. The topic seems too serious and mature for an eighteen year old in the second year of university. He did not write any love stories during his early stage ( a popular topic for writers of his generation). Instead, he preferred to deal with the agony of an orphan, in his short story "Da feng chui" (The Wind Blows), or an insignificant person's hesitation to compromise with reality in "Diao" (Fishing). Right from the beginning of his writing career, he was very concerned with peoples' loneliness and agony. He has all along been a realistic writer and remains one in his later works (though his science fiction is an exception). Another aspect of his life, his sense of humour, first revealed in *The Biography of Pastor Pi*, has continued to surface throughout most of his later works.

He graduated with a B.S. degree in 1966. Though he had pursued so many activities unrelated to his science major, he still passed the examination for students to study abroad and obtained a science scholarship from St.Mary's University in the United States. According to Zhang's own confession, his reason for going abroad was closely related to his passion for literature: "After graduation I went overseas for the sake of literature. I wanted to have a master's degree and find a good job. Then I would not need to worry about life, and I could write."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Zhang Xiguo, "Yige zhujia de xinli licheng" (The Spiritual Course of A Writer), *United Daily* (Lianhebao, Taipei), April 29, 1987.

In 1966, Zhang Xiguo arrived in Berkeley, California, U.S.A. At that time the American student movement against the Vietnam War was at its peak. Zhang was so attracted to its excitement that he gave up his scholarship at St. Mary's University and stayed at Berkeley. He enrolled in the Department of Computer Science at the University of California at Berkeley. A short time later, possibly triggered by the American student movement, the overseas Chinese student Baodiao (Protect Diaoyudai Island) Movement began. Zhang became involved in this movement, progressing from great expectations to disillusionment. The end of the movement saw the various Chinese political units split into different groups fighting against each other. His long novel *Zuo ri zhi nu* (Yesterday's Anger) and a short story "Hong Hai'er" (Red Child) deal with that period of history. These two works are the ones concerned directly with political issues. Maybe because of his disillusionment with the Baodiao Movement, he does not declare any political opinions in his subsequent fiction. Moreover, even when writing about political movements, he focuses on peoples' disillusionment and suffering as a result of their commitments, without giving a clear judgement on their political beliefs. Though Zhang himself might have had political interests (as shown by his participation in the aforementioned movement to the possible detriment of his scholarship), he does not mingle his political views with his writing of literature unlike many Chinese writers during the sixties. When he is writing about a political issue, he is concentrated on peoples' search for fulfilment instead of the political issue itself. He does not force readers to accept any kind of political opinion by making emotional appeals to them. This makes his works outlast the political storm which has long since passed into history. Many other Chinese writers did not survive the test of writing about political issues; they became carried away by temporary political zeal in their literary works. Their fiction is virtually unreadable now that the political turmoil has died away.

In 1969, Zhang graduated from the University of California at Berkeley with both Master's and Ph.D. degrees in Computer Science. Since then, he has lectured at Cornell



University, later becoming Professor and Chairman of the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering at the Illinois Institute of Technology, Chicago. At present, he is Chairman of the Department of Computer Science of the University of Pittsburgh. In his scientific field, he has published five books and over seventy-five papers. Though a computer scientist by profession, he has also established a name for himself in the literary field. He has published five long novels, four short story collections, two science fiction collections, four collections of prose and literary criticism, and a collection of his Chinese translations of English fiction. His writings include novels, social commentaries and science fiction, all of which are quite highly regarded.

His life experiences in some ways give the basis of his writing. He writes about Chinese peoples' lives in small towns like his hometown Xinzhu, in Taipei, where he spent his university years, as well as in the United States, where he studied and immigrated. Perhaps because of his science background, his science fiction writings are among the best of Chinese science fiction.

Basically he writes to a Chinese audience. He wrote some of his scientific papers in English but he did all his literary works in Chinese. In his fiction, the English speaking people speak Chinese in conversation. He does not supply any English words in his writing, maybe because he keeps it in his mind that he is writing for a Chinese audience.

He is not a cynical or cold-blooded critic. He is compassionate and warm-hearted towards people, especially the weak and victimized. The sources of his character can be traced back to his childhood experiences. According to Zhang, his interest in literature grew out of the unstable moods of his childhood. When he was in elementary school, he was often mocked and insulted by other fellow students in the class because of his chubby appearance and timidity. He felt lonely and humiliated, and could only find comfort in reading fiction. Zhang recalls that his habit of writing was likewise related to his unhappy childhood. He only felt comfortable and secure when alone, and would rather stay by himself and write than physically communicate with others. Even in his adulthood,

memories of the past still affect his reactions today. He always feels indignant when he sees the strong suppressing the weak. He can not help siding with the weak and giving them his sympathy and support.<sup>3</sup> So in his writing, there is more sympathy and understanding than condemnation of his characters. He is a compassionate writer. As Yu Guangzhong puts it: "What Zhang Xiguo wishes to focus on is human being's weakness not their sin. To his characters, Zhang Xiguo always gives more sympathy than judgement. He is a generous moralist; a satirical writer with a touch of humorous irony at the tip of his pen. He is mild tempered; pointing out painful areas without seeking to hurt people deliberately."<sup>4</sup>

His tone is usually mild, easy and humorous. On the one hand, he has a generous attitude towards people, thus he is compassionate and his writing does not contain any hatred and anger of his own. On the other hand, he has a realistic view of life. He does not lose his mind over certain ideals. He attempts to observe reality with a careful eye and a clear mind. He writes about peoples' daily life in a realistic way untainted by fantasy. He tells his story step by step following a tightly ordered plot scheme, rather than succumbing to uncontrolled waves of emotion. Even when the story reaches its climax, he does not lose his calm controlled writing manner.

In general, he is concerned more with peoples' struggle to survive in this changing world than with pure artistic pursuits. He writes in his postscript to *The Banana Boat*: "To me, if there is no life, no peoples' struggle, there is no fiction. Some people write purely for art's sake, and that is up to them. They are lucky. I do not write for art's sake, I write for people."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Zhang Xiguo, "Xiangjiao chuan houji" (Postscript to *The Banana Boat*), *The Banana Boat* (Hongfan, 1976), p.148.

<sup>4</sup> Yu Guangzhong, "Tianji yukui hua qiwang" (Preface to *Chess King*), *Qi Wang* (Chess King), p.9.

<sup>5</sup> Zhang Xiguo, "Postscript to *The Banana Boat*," *The Banana Boat*, p.148.

In this thesis, I will discuss Zhang Xigou's writings on the themes of peoples' search for their spiritual home, their attitude towards money, their moral principles in dealing with reality and male/female relationships.

## Chapter One

## The Souls of Wanderers

Zhang Xiguo's writing mainly deals with the lives of contemporary Chinese people (his science fiction being an exception). Most of his short stories are collected under the title: "The Souls of Wanderers." Zhang Xiguo has clear opinions on the content of his own writing. We can demonstrate this by first relating his understanding of the life of contemporary Chinese people, and then analyzing his works on the physical and spiritual exile of Chinese people.

We have to ask: what is the core of contemporary Chinese peoples' experience? Contemporary Chinese people are going through a dramatic period of change. In both Taiwan and mainland China, there are great social reforms going on. The success or failure of these reforms will have a crucial impact on the future of millions Chinese people. . . . Contemporary Chinese peoples' life experience is mainly about change. So "to *change*" is the most important archetype for today's Chinese people.(163)<sup>6</sup>

Zhang Xiguo focuses his writing on the lives of particular Chinese people during this period of change. He reiterates again and again in his article that he considers the most important experience to be change.

Our society does not stay still, it is always advancing. For this reason, the experience of contemporary Chinese people is about *changing*. . . . If we consider the situation, and we can see that the experience of contemporary Chinese people is one of "*changing*" and "*moving*." The frequency and wide range of change are evident both in the adoption of different political systems and in the development of individual lives, their joys and sorrows, partings and reunions, in times of war times of peace. The essence of these rich experiences is "*changing*" not "standstill."(164)

What Zhang Xiguo means by "changing" is both geographical and spiritual. From the geographical aspect, Zhang Xiguo considers all the changes faced by those moving from mainland China to Taiwan and from both of these areas to the West. During their move, they must deal with strange circumstances and learn to handle unfamiliar things.

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<sup>6</sup> Zhang Xiguo, "Shitan minzu wenxue de neirong he xingshi" (About the Content and Styles of National Literature, *Zhang Xiguo zi xuan ji* (Zhang Xiguo's Self-Selected Collection), Taipei, Liming Co., 1982. Page numbers in text.

From the spiritual viewpoint, even those who do not have to move from one place to another still face changes in their lives, because society itself is changing. Those people who stayed in Taiwan have been through numerous political and economical developments. Zhang Xiguo thus believes that most contemporary Chinese peoples' life experience is one of change no matter whether or not they have moved away from home.

Having summarized the life of contemporary Chinese people as consistent change, Zhang Xiguo then points out that their attitude towards these changes tends to be more positive than negative. Nevertheless, he believes that Chinese people struggle in a time of change not only to survive but also to seek some meaning in life.

If we consider their "trying to survive" to be simply "trying to stay alive whatever," such a conclusion would not apply to most Chinese peoples' life experience. But if instead we treat their "trying to survive" as "trying to change," in particular, seeking to march into a brighter world from their dark past, it would better sum up most Chinese peoples' life experience.(164)

Zhang Xiguo has an affirmative belief in Chinese peoples' struggle during a time of many changes. On the one hand, he admits that people might become confused and depressed in their search for a new future. Perhaps they do not seek change, but a changing world gives them many trials in any case. They have to make choices in order just to survive. They must change even though they may lose a sense of direction in life.

As a person, one may not know what hinders the better life, . . . He is facing a greatly changing world, no matter whether he wants to or not, he has to change to keep up with the pace of time. In general Chinese people are like this: either they seek to change or they are forced to change. Most of the time, a particular person is an ordinary member of society and hence cannot jump out of this changing world. He has his agonies and his doubts. "How to struggle with this changing world?" This is the biggest psychological crux for Chinese people. He may not want to seek change, but since everything is changing, of course he wants to change things for the better. But which direction is better? How can he find a more ideal life? He cannot help feeling perplexed and miserable.(165-166)

On the other hand, Zhang Xiguo does not consider such change necessarily to be tragic. He is an optimist about the future. He does not think that a nation going through painful changes will thereby lose its strength and spirit. Rather, he considers Chinese people to have a courageous attitude towards the changes in their lives. Only by struggling

through change will they be able to fulfil their ideals. Hence in his view Chinese people will actually become stronger as they search for a new future.

Most Chinese people are striving to find a more ideal life. Their struggle is not only for existence but for higher ideals. . . . For Chinese, this century has been one of change, an era in which to march towards a new future. . . . We have to admit that most Chinese people are forward-looking. Even though they may feel confused and uncertain about the future, and the political issues seem more obscure; they still struggle forward with great determination.(165)

Zhang Xiguo also makes another point clear, namely, that his discussion of Chinese peoples' ideals and their struggles in a time of change is not merely a political one. He is concerned more with peoples' painful quest for a better life and a brighter future than with particular political issues.

Those ideals may not in fact be political ideals, they may be just trivial personal ideals. . . . What I mean by "seeking change" is not necessarily seeking political change. Ordinary Chinese people may not be concerned about politics, but they still long for a more ideal life.(165)

We should not interpret his writing from a political point of view. As I have noted in the introduction, Zhang Xiguo does not mix up his own political opinions with his fiction. Even when a political issue emerges in the story, he emphasizes the character's suffering and searching, avoiding open declaration of particular political ideas.

Let's compare his theoretical summary to his fiction on the issue of the lives of ordinary Chinese people during times of change.

The content of his stories shows a close correlation to his summary. Thus in his stories, people clearly face both geographic and spiritual changes. For instance, when those from mainland China have settled in Taiwan, they must begin a new life, suffused though it is with lingering memories of the past. They are facing the incompetence of their traditional belief when they get involved in the economic development in Taiwan ("Earth"). Likewise, those who have gone overseas must also deal with a strange country and a different culture (*Yesterday's Anger*). Some of them suffer disillusionment. They all face both geographic and psychological changes in their lives. Even people who stay all their

lives in Taiwan cannot avoid change. Taiwan's economic condition has changed so dramatically during these past forty years that people cannot escape being affected (*Yellow River Water*, short story "Flute"). People who are struggling in poverty are frustrated by their powerless nature ("The Banana Boat"). People who are in a conflict between western economic power and traditional cultural pride are caught by anger and fear ("Our Company").

The tone adopted in most of his stories is rather sad. Similarly, the ending of most of his stories is tragic. Though he has very positive hopes about peoples' destiny in a time of change and he believes that they are ultimately struggling for a better future, the characters in most of his stories do not survive the changes. They become lost and defeated. Maybe that is why he collects most of his writings under the general heading "The Souls Of Wanderers."

People inevitably become lost during a time of change. Some must leave their homeland, others move far away from their history and tradition, and still others have become alienated from their culture without moving anywhere. These Chinese people are all faced with physical or spiritual exile. They wander in confusion and agony; they long for a better future but cannot even find their own stability in a changing life, let alone consider society as a whole. The old world has faded and they have difficulty adapting to the new one. They become confused about their own identity. Either they struggle to maintain their old identity by strictly adhering to the traditional way of life, or they must seek endlessly a new identity in order to just to survive. According to Roland Robertson and Burkart Holzner's *Identity and Authority--Explorations in the Theory of Society*:

We speak of something as having an 'identity' when it can be determined that it is the same with itself over time, or in a context of different relations.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Roland Robertson and Burkart Holzner, *Identity and Authority--Explorations in the Theory of Society* (Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1980), p.8.

During a time of change, people have to adjust themselves to the newly emerging world, and having done so, can never return to their former selves. The change or loss of their old identity is inevitable.

Zhang Xiguo describes their sense of loss. His characters wander around the spiritual and real world without finding a true home. Nevertheless, although Zhang does not give many happy endings to his stories, yet neither does he consider his characters to be just sad losers in the world. They may lose particular battles, but they maintain a certain amount of courage and beliefs. Even when admitting defeat at the hands of life, and even if their search ends in emptiness and tragedy, they always reveal some kind of decency and merit in their characters. Zhang Xiguo's positive belief in the Chinese peoples' struggle in a time of change is not reflected in his conclusions to stories but rather in his portrayal of the merits of individual characters. When we are analyzing the tragic side of his stories, we should always keep his positive attitude in mind and draw attention to the bright spots in those tragic characters.

Most of Zhang Xiguo's "The Souls of Wanderers" stories are tragic ones. His stories depict people wandering in many different situations. Wandering because they are lost.

There are two basic threads in Zhang Xiguo's stories: One, people cannot find the place they belong to. They usually believe that they belong to a certain place, a plot of land, a city, even a career, but later they find that they do not belong there, or this does not belong to them. Two, people usually believe certain ideas which give a fixed, secure meaning to life. They have faith that what they believe is true. Those ideas can be the meaning of land, the meaning of freedom, the meaning of political movement, the meaning of journalism or technology, and so on. But then they find that those ideas are not necessarily true or effective. In facing a changing life, they find in fact those ideas cannot



always bring them peace and comfort, and those ideas can even let them down. They lose faith in their old ideas and become spiritually homeless.

"Earth," finished in 1967, is an important short story of Zhang Xiguo's early period. This story should be considered as the unacknowledged beginning of his "Souls of Wanderers" series. In the story, Li Ming's father, Li Zhengzhi, is a retired military company commander who has come to Taiwan after the defeat of the KMT. His life has already undergone geographical displacement. Now he has to face a growing spiritual vacuum in a developing economic world.

Li Ming's father has always wanted to possess land of his own. "Earth" has a special meaning for him. His desire to own a plot of land is rooted in traditional Chinese thought. Even until recent times, China has always been an agricultural country. Deep in peoples' consciousness, land represents stability and fulfilment in life. Those who don't own land therefore feel homeless and insecure. Since Li Ming's father originates from the countryside of China, he believes in the traditional idea that land can give one a sense of security and bring one real wealth. So when a chance comes, he spends all his savings to buy a plot of land on a hill. His friend Zhao, a person of the same generation, agrees with his opinion: "With land of one's own, what need is there to worry about anything?" Similarly Li Ming's father, still called "captain" by his friends, declares his desires and beliefs in life to his friends:

As for me, I have been a soldier for the greater part of my life, and although I have a family, my wife and children have been on the move with me everywhere, so all this time we've never really known a settled, peaceful life. And it is I, Li Zhengzhi, whose ancestors, for generations, had farmed the land. Farming is a hard life, but after a while, a person seems to grow roots, which bind him to the very earth itself. And that's what makes him feel secure and that he belongs. I have been drudging away these many years, so now I really want to have a plot of land where I can settle down, even if it means extra work and extra sacrifice.(151)<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Zhang Xiguo, "Earth," *Unbroken Chain*. Page numbers in text.

In his speech, he recalls the changes in life he had suffered in the past and indicates his longing for a peaceful and settled life. He does not want any further changes. He has faith in the traditional idea that land will "make him feel secure," and so the earth is what he longs for. As a result he does not miss the chance to fulfil his beliefs and his longing.

At the beginning, everything seems all right. Li Ming, though representing a new generation, also agrees with his father's opinion about the meaning of land and the necessity of a peaceful life. He too wants to quit wandering around the world and accept his father's advice to settle down on the land in favour of stability. He even considers giving up his job where he is an apprentice on board an oceangoing freighter. He tells his girl friend that "the beautiful cities and ports that I'd been to did not strike me as places I could belong to at all, much less settle down for the rest of my life. My real home is there, in that small ordinary town. Back there, I feel so comfortable, so completely relaxed. I can never feel like this in any other place ... " He continues: "I am going to the countryside to take up farming." (157)

The strength of his desire to belong somewhere comes out of his talk. Li Ming and his father both have a desire for a life in which they can settle somewhere they belong. To give this idea its modern expression, the writer portrays a conversation between Li Ming and his young friend Xiao Yu regarding the meaning of land.

"Li Ming," Hsiao-yu said. "I am very much with you for coming to these hills to start a farm. There's no doubt in my mind that we are rooted in the earth. If we are away from the soil, it is impossible for us to take roots. Modern man's constant feelings of loss, frustration, and anguish can, I think, be traced to his alienation from the soil."

"That's the way my father feels . . . Of course, he can't put it the way you do, but he has lived those experiences of confusion and rootlessness that you're referring to; that's exactly the way he feels." (180)

In the story, Li Ming and his father believe that they belong to the land they now own and that finally they will have a settled life. They believe in the meaning of the land which is supposed to bring stability to their lives. At the end of the story, both their sense

of belonging and their dreams of the happiness the land should bring are destroyed. When Li Ming returns half a year later, his father has already gone bankrupt.

Times have changed. It is not like the old days back in China when they just needed to work hard without worrying about any other circumstances such as the potential of the market, the price of labour, the cost of transportation, etc. A friend of Li Ming's father, Dong, tells Li Ming:

"We didn't have the experience, and we didn't have enough help. Every time we had to do the picking, we couldn't finish the job, and of what we did manage to pick, half would have rotted before we were finished with the packing. This is for the kumquats. As for the tea, it was worse. We had to pay hired hands to help with the picking, and even then it was hopeless. The tea too, was of low quality and didn't fetch much in the market. We never made any profit. It was loss all the way."(184)

The world has changed; the traditional belief that the land itself can give people security and happiness is proven false. They have the land, but in the new circumstances, they don't know the best strategies to manage it. So, they lose it. They have no strength to maintain stability in their life. As Dong and Li Ming's father get drunk together, Dong gives his interpretation of their loss. He feels the reason is that their outdated experience cannot serve them well and they have passed the stage when they could learn something new.

"Cap . . . Captain." Lao Tung spoke with a heavy slur. "I'll be frank with you. When the farm went broke and I moved down from the hill, a lot of things suddenly became clear to me. We are like, you know what, like the monkey who's learned to play a lot of tricks. You teach the little monkey a trick and he won't take a minute to pick it up. He plays his tricks all his life, you can bet on that, but when you try to teach the old monkey--that's what he's become--a new bag of tricks, he can't, he just can't learn any more!" (Li Ming's father answered:) "We're old, that's what we are, old."(190)

They are not young any more. Worse than that, their experience of the past does not help them in this changing world. Their methods of overcoming obstacles are defeated by new conditions and they do not know how to survive successfully in modern society. They are lost, their hearts full of sorrow and despair. They speak for a whole generation of people who came to Taiwan with their beliefs and dreams of a bright future. They have

gone through many changes already and try to settle down in this new place. But in the end they still cannot find peace in their life. When they seek to fulfil the dreams rooted in their traditional beliefs, they only find defeat. Something they formerly considered real and true becomes a mere fantasy shattered by reality.

Li Ming realizes through his father's failure that the meaning of land and the possibility of a stable life are not real. He perceives that there is no stability in life to be gained by staying in his hometown, so he starts wandering around the world again. He returns back to his ship, a symbol of the wandering life. When his old friend Xiao Yu sends him a letter discussing the meaning of security and its connection with land again, Li Ming writes in a bitter tone:

"Hsiao-yu, I am very happy to have received your letter. Unfortunately, I have this piece of bad news for you. We have sold our land already, ... For people like us, a life of wandering and estrangement is our lot, we are not worthy to inherit the earth."(193)

The story indicates their loss both of the sense of belonging and their belief in certain ideals for life. Physically, Li Ming wanders about the world. He no longer feels he belongs to his hometown. Spiritually, he and his father along with his father's friends have all received a blow to their hopes in the meaning of land. They cannot keep the land, and the land does not belong to them by right. Losing the land not only brings them physical but also spiritual homelessness. They have not only lost a plot of land where they can settle down but also a belief which might have brought spiritual comfort and peace.

Similar to those who have left mainland China forty years ago, the young people who have just escaped out of mainland China are also facing the loss of their physical and spiritual home. Their old dreams and belief are destroyed by the realities of the new place. The new place used to be their dream land.

An extreme example is in the story "Lan se duo nao he-- you zi hun zhi er" (The Blue Danube -- The Souls of Wanderers II). The main character has fled to Hong Kong

from mainland China because of its political pressure and poverty. However, even in Hong Kong, she does not find salvation. While working in a bookstore, she contributes her memories of the Cultural Revolution to a German scholar doing Chinese research. To earn money, she becomes a model for a pornographic magazine. She knows that she has sold herself physically and spiritually to this new world. She comes to Hong Kong to seek freedom but ends up losing herself.

The German scholar offers her a chance to go to Germany, which is represented by the blue Danube. Her memories of the past are full of poverty and desperation; her consciousness of the present gives her shame and disillusionment, and her hope of a future seems uncertain and dreamy. She cannot go back to mainland China, and she does not want to stay in Hong Kong where she has already paid a great price for staying. It seems she can only go to Germany. But she knows that if she goes to Germany, she will still have to contribute her memories in return for money. She realizes that Germany could be another Hong Kong in which she cannot find herself a position to live decently without selling herself spiritually or physically. As the last hope seems futile, she resolves everything by cutting her wrists to commit suicide, as it seems her only way out. The blue Danube is the last comforting vision before her death.

In “The Blue Danube,” the protagonist has left mainland China where she grew up. First, she has lost her physical home. She cannot go back to mainland China, but she does not belong to Hong Kong. Second from the spiritual point of view, she comes to Hong Kong to seek freedom and a better life. But the idea of a brighter future which she used to believe in is smashed by reality. The new world does not satisfy her search; instead, it breaks her dreams and gives her shame. She becomes spiritually homeless as well. Unlike Li Ming’s resuming his wandering around the world, she finishes her hopeless wandering by choosing death.

People who have gone overseas face a similar situation. They have left their homeland, Taiwan or China, to start a better future in a place where they think they can find

freedom and happiness. They feel disillusioned. They cannot find themselves a distinguished and stable position in the new society, and they must endure their loneliness. They also have to suffer the doubts about the worthy of their tradition and culture. They cannot find a place they belong to and a spiritual home.

In *Yesterday's Anger*, from the narrator Cheng Zexong's eyes, we see a successful but depressed Chinese engineer Jin Lihe:

He (Cheng) felt that Jin Lihe had changed a lot. Jin Lihe had become a cynical person who would criticize everything. He could not understand why Jin had so many complaints. He thought Jin Lihe was a successful person of whom many people would feel envious. Jin Lihe had a Ph.D degree and had found a good paying job, but he looked depressed. . . . Jin Lihe, lying in a sofa in front of him, did not have any sign of happiness on his face. . . . Jin did not look like a young engineer who had just graduated from university and started a career in his golden age.(42-43)<sup>9</sup>

There is a difference between Jin Lihe and Li Ming's father in "Earth" or the girl in "The Blue Danube." Jin Lihe is not a loser in life. He has achieved what he was going for. He does not suffer any financial blow, on the contrary, he is living a quite good material life according to most peoples' judgement. But he is also a wanderer in the world. In terms of searching for an objective home, he does not find one. He used to think that the United States would be his dream land, but after he has been there for many years, he has not found what he was looking for. The narrator, Cheng, describes Jin Lihe's situation through a fairy tale:

The United States was a strange place. He (Cheng) remembered a fairy tale: a tired young traveller entered a cave. Inside there was a beautiful girl spinning. She asked the traveller to allow her to put threads around him, the traveller agreed. Then he fell a sleep to the girl's singing. When he woke up, the threads around his body had become ropes. He was bound tightly. The girl became an ugly witch, grinning at him.(42)

The cave represents an objective home. The young traveller, of course, indicates Jin. Jin comes to the United States to find a place where he can belong and settle down, but this

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<sup>9</sup> Zhang Xiguo, *Yesterday's Anger* (Hongfan 1978). Page numbers in text.

anticipation is proven to be false. The narrator compares Jin Lihe's old longing for the United States and Jin's present depression.

*Jin Lihe was longing to go to the United States just like him (Cheng), but Jin Lihe was luckier than him. Jin passed the going abroad examination and went to the United States right after his graduation, while Chen had struggled in Taipei for seven years before he got the chance to go to the States. But the United States in Jin Lihe's eyes now was like a beautiful girl changed into an ugly witch. Jin Lihe's mind was full of resentment and he found no way out. Why had Jin Lihe become such a different person? Whose fault is it? Was it Jin Lihe's personal problem? Or did every overseas student have the similar experience?(43)*

Jin Lihe has suffered disillusionment; he is lost in disappointment. He cannot see any happiness in his success. He cannot name his disillusionment. Even though he might be lucky and successful in other peoples' eyes, he is still not satisfied. He might have a good life in a material sense, but because he is lost spiritually, he is depressed and miserable. The writer does not give much details to explain Jin Lihe's disillusion, but he somewhat indicates that this kind of disillusion is not uncommon among overseas students.

In the same book, Shi Ping is also a young Chinese working in the United States. He graduates from a university in the United States. The education he has received in the States does not change his devotion of Chinese culture and tradition. After he has graduated from an English Literature major, he is working for a small Chinese newspaper in New York. From the geographic view, he has relocated his life from Taiwan to the United States; from the spiritual view, he is facing the doubt of his faith of Chinese tradition and the challenge of his proud cultural self-esteem.

Unlike Jin Lihe, Shi Ping has strong spiritual goals in life. He tries to find his position in this foreign country by doing something meaningful. In this foreign country, he wants to achieve certain things related to his home culture. He does not want to forget his roots and he does not want to be lost spiritually. But the real world does not give him enough opportunity to fulfil his desire. Chinese people born in this country do not have the same passion as he does for Chinese tradition and culture. "The Chinese culture, which Shi Ping treasured, in their (the young Chinese peoples') eyes might as well be

nonexistent.”(72) His culture defines him as a person who cannot totally melt into this foreign culture. Yet if he wishes to fulfil his achievement as a journalist in this foreign country, he has to give up his cultural dignity, the dignity which is exactly what he wants to propagate here. There is a contradiction between his goals and the sacrifices required for achieving them. Finally he realizes that all his efforts might be futile.

He thought it over and over, and finally figured out that it was the burden of Chinese culture (which separated him from others). But how could he get rid of his cultural burden? How could he give up that cultural dignity which he treasured so much? How could he just become a Chinese-American? He could not find any answer. So working for this Chinese newspaper made him feel both happy and depressed.(73)

Gradually, Shi Ping starts losing faith in his spiritual commitment. He realizes that the spiritual home into which he has put all his heart and passion might be just a temporary shelter. The changing times will finally shatter his efforts to spread Chinese culture in this foreign country. He is doomed to achieve nothing in his quest to fulfil his spiritual goals.

After thirty years, not only the Chinese newspaper but also he himself would be eliminated by time. . . . Sometimes Shi Ping tried to encourage himself that even during this short period of time, if he could at least do something meaningful, the effort would still be worthy. So he tried to teach young people Chinese, but when he saw how hard it was for kids to learn Chinese, he felt that this kind of effort had no hope. .... Shi Ping still taught Chinese, still wrote articles for the newspaper, and was concerned about Chinatown welfare. But at the bottom of his heart, he held to a kind of fatalism; he felt almost pessimistic and hopeless.(73)

Shi Ping cannot decide whether he should stay in the United states and work for this small Chinese newspaper or go back to Taiwan. He cannot accept the society in Taiwan, but neither can he give up his Chinese cultural dignity as the price for staying in the United States. He wants to maintain his Chinese culture in a foreign country, while at the same time his homeland seems a foreign country to him. Though he is not spiritually homeless, he realizes that he does not belong anywhere in this world. In some ways, this is precisely because he wishes to keep his spiritual commitment.



Zhang Xiguo has written several very short stories to describe peoples' loneliness and isolation in a foreign country. In "Dong ye sha shou-- you zi hun zhi san" (Killers in A Winter's Night -- The Souls of Wanderers III), an old Chinese couple who live in the States are murdered by black criminals. They die in total isolation. In contrast to his glorious past, the husband dies an unworthy death. He does not die like a hero but as a person abandoned by the world. Even though they die in their own home, by showing their isolation the writer implies that they too are wanderers in the world who have lost their past glory and present security.

The story "Shui yan Lu-er Men-- you zi hun zhi wu" (Flood Over the Lu-er Gate -- The Souls of Wanderers V) tells of a group of Polish immigrants. A Chinese student, Lin Xin, is a witness to their lives. Among those Polish immigrants, there is one called Tony. Despite being an alcoholic, he is a skilful car mechanic. He is full of contradictions. When he is drunk, he beats his wife; when sober, on the other hand, he helps others. For instance, he repairs Lin's car window for only five dollars. One day he dies on the street: suddenly he is gone without any warning. His wife cries for him the whole night then goes off somewhere. Another character is a retired professor, old and grumpy. Yet such an irritable person offers help to Tony's wife when Tony dies. Later on he is sent to a rest home against his will and loses his sanity there. These are also people who belong nowhere; they live and die in loneliness. Perhaps Zhang Xiguo wants to use these peoples as a parallel for those Chinese immigrants in foreign countries.

Sometimes people seek their identity through political movements. Many young students overseas took part in the Chinese student Baodiao Movement in the hope that they could find their spiritual home in certain political ideals. Zhang Xiguo's short story "Hong Hai'er -- you zi hun zhi liu" (Red Child -- The Souls of Wanderers VI) describes a Chinese student Gao Qiang's failed spiritual search.

"Red Child" "reveals the confusion and sorrow which overseas Chinese students have suffered for nearly ten years"(8)<sup>10</sup> over political issues. The story is a collection of letters and political declarations from Gao Qiang's parents, brother, friends and his political enemies. Gao Qiang never appears before us directly. We only know some parts of his life through other peoples' writing. We find out that his parents expect him to become a scientist to honour his family. But in spite of his loving parents' opposition, he still involves himself in a Chinese student political struggle: the "Baodiao Movement." Gao Qiang has his political zeal and ideology. He wants to raise students' political consciousness in order to construct a better society in the future. He becomes a leftist, perhaps hoping to change society in a drastic way. But soon he is condemned by other leftists for being a rightist and suffers many political insults and denunciations. He breaks up with the left wing, and then he simply disappears. Nobody knows where he is gone.

The title, "Red Child," has a double meaning. One aspect indicates Gao Qiang's political colour: red usually means communist of course; the other meaning refers to a famous character in Chinese legend. "Red Child" was a rebellious individual. He caused a lot of trouble in the Palace of the Dragon (long gong) and fought with the King of Dragons (long wang) several times, falling out with his father. Finally only the Buddha could tame him. So "Red Child" represents a rebel. In the story, the disappearance of Gao Qiang, the "Red Child," indicates not only the failure of the leftist movement but also the desperation of rebellious political search. Gao Qiang has become lost in the political turmoil. Not only has he lost his spiritual home when the ideology he believes in become blurred by various distortions, but he has also clearly lost his physical home. He cannot find anywhere to belong. "Gao Qiang suffers the heaviest mortification; his soul is buried in a distorted movement."(8)

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<sup>10</sup> Yang Mu, "Zhang Xiguo de guan xin he yi shu" (The Art and Thought of Zhang Xiguo ---Preface to *The Banana Boat*), *The Banana Boat* (Hongfan, 1976). Page numbers in text.

Gao Qiang's friends seek different ways out of this bind. For instance Chen Jigang early on becomes disillusioned about the student movement. Later on, however, he does not pass the qualifying exam for his Ph.D. degree. In his confusion and hesitation, he goes to mainland China to "serve the people." The Communist ideology motivates his choice of life, and he chooses mainland China as his place to settle. Nobody knows what happens to him from then on. Another friend Zhong Gui at first wants to convert Christians into Communists, but he himself is converted into a Christian and later on marries a Christian girl he has met in a Bible study group. He is full of gratitude towards Jesus Christ and God, because he has found his spiritual home in Christianity and managed to settle in the United States.

In "Red Child," Gao Qiang's brother, Gao Wei, represents another group of wandering people. They are caught in complicated value standards, full of inner conflicts. On the one hand, they accept Western economic power and respect the Western social system; on the other hand, they retain their traditional rejection and distrust of foreigners and their national pride.

Gao Wei is working for a company in the States. His company is laying off people; he feels very insecure working for a foreign company. "Our company has just laid off several tens of people. A whole research department has been dismissed. People who have worked for the company for more than ten years still have to go. Everyone feels very insecure. Working in the States, I have no sense of security. If they lay me off, I will go back to Taiwan to find a job. I don't want to stay here to let them oppress me." (93)<sup>11</sup> But later on, things change for the better and he forgets his complaints about insecurity and oppression: "The condition of our company is getting better. We have all received promotions and mine is the best. It is a good thing to stay in the States: if you have ability, you will get reward for it. I like America, because of its fair democratic system." (96)

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<sup>11</sup> Zhang Xiguo, "Hong Hai'er" (Red Child), *The Banana Boat*. Page numbers in text.

His spiritual home lies between two conflicting ideas. He uses a double standard in judging his situation. Because he has been wavering between two conflicting judgements, he cannot make up his mind about where his permanent physical home is. He cannot be very sure to which place he really belongs: is it Taiwan or the United States?

A similar but more vivid character is the narrator in "Ben gongsi -- you zi hun zhi si" (Our Company --The Souls of Wanderers IV). At first, we hear him boasting about his company, which is a U.S. corporation branch company based in Taiwan. But when he closes the door, we hear him complaining about how hard he has been working and how little he has gained the trust of the U.S. corporation. He is proud of his company which represents the summit of technical development, but he also feels that he is under the control of foreigners even in his own country. He is annoyed to see that his achievement has been used as a ladder for the promotion of the American president of this local company.

He recalls that Lao Song, Song Zijia his friend, first asked him to come back to Taiwan to start a new branch company for this American corporation. They had worked together, opened a new market, and made a great profit for the parent corporation. After his friend Song had returned to the United States, the narrator sets his sights on becoming president of the branch company, but never succeeded. When Song once again comes back to Taiwan to reorganize the company, Song tells him: "I know you want to be president of this branch company and I want to help you. But the parent company in the United States has a rule that local Chinese cannot be appointed as president of this branch company. . . . After I clear the accounts, I have to go back. Before they needed us, now they don't. We are useless to them. We have to surrender to our fate." (56)<sup>12</sup>

He does not believe Song's explanation. Only after Song dies in an accident and the parent corporation sends another American who is worse than the previous ones to be

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<sup>12</sup> Zhang Xiguo, "Ben Gongsi" (Our Company), *The Banana Boat*. Page numbers in text.

president of the branch company, does he realize how vain his efforts are. He has been working hard, but his work does not bring him happiness or fulfilment, only bitterness and resentment. As he tells his assistant:

The president of the East Asian Section of the corporation told me clearly that the corporation won't appoint local personnel as president of any branch company. Of course, he used his special way to say it, with one of those high-sounding excuses. But in a word, they just don't trust us. I understand now that my dream should have followed the *dong liu shui* (east flowing water) a long time ago. *What a pity that Lao Song and I have worked so hard for them for so many years. We have worked for nothing, and Lao Song even sacrificed his life.* Ah, he has really given his all till his heart stopped beating. Working for a foreign company is just like this, I tell you, don't work too hard, everything we do is just for 'others' dowry."(56)

He realizes that they cannot become the real owners or rulers of their company even though they have worked so hard to establish and expand it. They are not "foreigners" and this foreign company will not trust local Chinese.

At the end of the story, when he is speaking to an audience that has come to buy his company's products, he acts like he did at the beginning of the story. He proudly declares the power of "his" company:

*Our* company has been expanding since it was established in 1901. *We* have a well developed system and great capital. *Our* company has 5000 different products; its branch companies cover the whole world. .... Someday *our* company will become the biggest in the world.(60)

Bitter irony flows through his boasting. He does not belong to "our company." He cannot be trusted by this foreign company but at the same time he identifies himself with this company. Where does he belong? His admiration for technology does not bring him a spiritual home. He does not belong to what he has been working for. He too is a wanderer.

"(Zhang's) writing is about those wandering or disintegrating souls, about contemporary Chinese peoples' struggles in the U.S.A., in Hong Kong and in Taiwan,

about their blood and tears." (8)<sup>13</sup> Not only do people who leave their homeland face the possibility of losing their identity and self-esteem in an unfamiliar world, but also those who have never left their country puzzle over their position in contemporary life. "Flute" is a story about such "wanderers" in Taiwan.

The story is related in a series of letters from the narrator, Chu. Chu is a newspaper journalist. He used to work in Taipei, but after getting into trouble, he is sent to work in a smaller city. Chu has his own ideology. Especially, he wants to use journalism to bring about social justice and self-achievement. We will see how he loses his faith in journalism, and later how his search for a girl's identity is also a search for himself.

On the surface, the story is an accumulation of social problems. Those problems change Chu's perception of society and his approach towards fulfilment of his goal. He becomes involved in a series of incidents. In a gang fight, a young man suffers nine stab wounds, but because the assailant is the son of local governor, the news is covered up. Chu takes up the cudgel on behalf of victim and reveals the news. Later, he goes to visit a fake prodigy, the daughter of a local leader. He cannot help mocking her even though he has to write an article about her. For these two things, he is scorned by his boss. He realizes that journalists have to surrender to the authorities when it involves lying.

Since he cannot fulfil his goals through writing articles, he tries to do something more direct to gain social justice. He arranges for several young people to ambush and severely beat up two Japanese who have accidentally killed a thirteen year old prostitute. Similarly he mails photographs of one person seeing prostitutes to his family in the States in order to reveal this person's lust for immoral sexual pleasures.

Chu wants to reveal ugly realities to bring about justice. He maintains his view of what is right or wrong and he has a strong desire to correct wrongs. We might say that he

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<sup>13</sup> Yang Mu, "Preface to *The Banana Boat*," *The Banana Boat*.

has an idealistic opinion of life, and he is acting to secure his position and usefulness in this society.

Gradually, the focus of the story shifts from Chu's involvement in different social problems to his search for the identity of a dead girl. Chu sees this dead girl's body at the scene of the accident accompanied by police. The police give a verdict of suicide for love, but Chu feels there are a lot of unanswered questions about this case. He goes to investigate by himself. Later on he finds the girl's small suitcase, and inside it he finds her picture. The girl in the picture is only around seventeen years old; she has bright eyes, short hair, and wears a necklace. The picture makes a strong impact on Chu, since the girl seems so young and pure. Written on the page of a song book he finds in the suitcase is the name "Luo Dai." He does not know whether it is her name or an assumed name, but he calls her Luo Dai from then on. He is filled with great curiosity about her life, and the more he thinks about her, the closer he feels to her:

Which tribe did she belong to? Where did she live? Why did she die? It becomes more and more interesting, especially when I realize that in the whole world I am the only one who may grasp the secret of Luo Dai's life. Nobody knows about her life; nobody cares about her death. Only I can check everything out. So I feel I hold a strange responsibility for her. The secret of her life is waiting there for me to reveal.(130)<sup>14</sup>

Chu wishes to find the girl's real identity. He does not know her, and he is not even sure of her name. But because her picture represents something which Chu has always desired in his life, he develops an attraction to her more.

Along the way as he tries to find Luo Dai's *identity* (the proof of her existence), he becomes spiritually more and more close to her. He visits the singing group she used to work with and hears that she was a lonely girl, isolated from the others. She left the group to live with a trumpeter. Later on she left him too and lived instead with a business man. Finally Chu arrives at her hometown. From her elementary school teacher, he hears that Luo Dai liked to sing even since childhood, and that she was raped by her alcoholic father

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<sup>14</sup> Zhang Xiguo, "Di" (Flute), *The Banana Boat*, page numbers in text.

when he was dead drunk; after which she left home to join the singing group. Chu does not want to know any further information like this. He believes that Luo Dai is a pure girl no matter how much she has suffered in this society.

The relevance of his closeness to Luo Dai is that he starts identifying himself with her. He and Luo Dai are the same; they are both lonely in this world; they have both gone through the hurts and the disillusionments of life. They do not belong to this world, one full of disappointment: they belong to another world, a world represented by the sound of a flute and Luo Dai's picture.

Now, I hear the sound of a flute.  
I feel my chest exploding, I cannot stay here any more, I want to melt into  
this ocean of music. I want to go, I must go.

I don't know why I care so much about Luo Dai's life. I feel responsible  
for her life. . . . I have no way to withdraw, I have to face Luo Dai's life. *Her life  
has combined with my life*, I cannot forget her. Less and less do I remember the  
two dead bodies in the valley. Her bright eyes in the photo give me the sensation of  
a real world.(139-140)

His mind moves far away from the real world; deeper and deeper he sinks into his  
spiritual search for an ideal person in this changing world. Hence he does not listen to any  
more stories about Luo Dai's wandering life after he has talked with the school teacher:

I suddenly realize that I have found out too much. The Luo Dai I know is a  
seventeen year old girl, she has bright eyes, short hair and wears a necklace.  
Besides these, anything, even if it is real, is irrelevant. I don't even care whether I  
know her real name or not.(140)

Luo Dai becomes his ideal person. He even refuses to accept her death, because he  
refuses to admit the death of his spiritual ideal. He does not accept her objective death; he  
does not accept a world without his ideal light. He does not want to admit that the spirit of  
purity and freedom is dead in this world.

He believes that she is strong and nothing can defile her; this symbolizes his own  
strong ideals which cannot be destroyed by the injustice of society.

She is stronger than any of them, she belongs to the world of strong people.  
Luo Dai can wander from one side of the world to the other side, but there is



nobody, nothing which can defile her. I totally understand her, I have more right than any one in the world to understand her.(141)

He wants to keep searching for Luo Dai. He does not believe that his ideal person is already dead. He believes that physical death cannot provide the answer to his spiritual search.

I plan to maintain my pursuit of Luo Dai's whereabouts. According to some kind logic, she has already died. .... But it is only a logical assumption, and I believe Luo Dai is still alive. There is no reason for this, I just believe that she is still alive. .... Maybe she is singing in another city.(141)

Chu and Luo Dai are wanderers in the world. Through finding Luo Dai's identity, Chu becomes aware of his own life. He realizes that the world is filthy, that both he and Luo Dai have to cope with the ugliness of the world and personal loneliness. He encounters unfair social restrictions, just as Luo suffered her father's abuse and social isolation. They both must struggle to maintain their own conscience. He wants to declare justice even though it opposes him against authority, whereas she wants to be free from bondage no matter how much she has to sacrifice. He tries different ways to fulfil his goals, some of them even dishonest; she goes from man to man to maintain her independence. They are wanderers in this world; they want to find a place to which they can belong. Luo Dai moved from one city to another and Chu moves from Taipei to the small town. They are searching for their place in this changing world.

They all refuse to surrender, and refuse to admit defeat. That is another reason why Chu does not accept her death. She is alive in his heart, and so his idea of peoples' being pure and free in this filthy world can also remain alive in his heart.

I believe I can find her; for sure I can find Luo Dai. Beside a lake, I will meet her, a girl seventeen years old, with short hair, shining eyes, and wearing a necklace.(142)

The difference between "Flute" and other stories of wanderers is that "Flute" emphasizes peoples' search for identity while the other stories tend to focus on how people lose their identity, or how confused they feel when they have lost their old beliefs. From the spiritual point of view, Chu has become disillusioned with his original belief in

journalism and social justice. But his faith in the existence of a ideal person in this world is strengthened through his search for Luo Dai. Through his failure in his career, he realizes that he does not belong any where in the real world. But he still upholds his faith in an idealistic world. Though he is wandering, he is not lost. No matter how vain is the basis of his faith (a dead girl, or an unattainable dream), he does not want to give up his spiritual commitment.

Zhang Xiguo gives a systematic description of the physical and spiritual exile Chinese people have suffered in this half century. People who move from mainland China to Taiwan, or from China overseas, or who remain in fast-developing Taiwan, must all struggle through changes in their life and try to relocate their place in this unfamiliar world, to re-evaluate their beliefs and experiences, to distinguish their identity in a changing society. Some of them, like Li Ming's father in "Earth," have failed in their efforts to live out old ideas in a new society; some, like the girl in "The Blue Danube" and the professor in "Flood Over the Lu-er Gate," have buried forever their dreams and disillusionment by their deaths; others, like Gao Qiang in "Red Child," have lost themselves in political struggles; still others, like Chu in "Flute," are searching for their place in society and hoping to find confirmation of their ideals.

All have suffered disillusionment of their old beliefs, and all have had trouble finding a place to which they truly belong. Zhang's writing about wanderers records in detail the disappointment, disillusionment, confusion, loneliness and desperation of such people in the face of a changing world.

Nevertheless, we should not forget to look at the bright spots of the characters in these sad stories. As I have mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, Zhang Xiguo has stated a positive attitude towards peoples' struggle in a changing world. Thus they do not give up the search even in their bitterness. Though they are defeated, they do not surrender completely. It is true that they are fighting something beyond their strength. Times have

changed; so, too, has the world; they must try to follow suit. Their loss and wandering apparently is fated. Yet, surely their life is not in vain, since even their death acts as a sign of free will and decision. Their life may be a tragedy, but in their behaviour during difficult times they still maintain some human dignity and conscience. For example, in "Earth," Li Ming's father tries to help his old friends even when he is bankrupt. The girl in "The Blue Danube" wishes to give money to a friend to start an anti-communist magazine. Gao Qiang in "Red Child" wants to awaken young peoples' concerns about China's future. Chu in "The Flute" strives to gain justice for the weak. The old couple in "The Killer On A Winter's Night," before they are fatally wounded, fight with the strong black criminals. And even when they are dying, the old woman still urges her husband not to give up his life. Finally the man in "Our Company" gives extra money to a fired worker and helps Taiwanese customers behind the back of his foreign boss.

The image of wanderers runs right through Zhang Xiguo's writing. In fact, "The Souls of Wanderers Series" contains only the clearest examples of this important aspect of his work. The shadow of this image falls over the other two major themes of his writing: the effect of money, and the relationship between men and women. Put another way, the melody of wanderers provides the underlying theme of several variations. Subsequently, we will notice the inner link between peoples' wandering souls and their spiritual struggles, their search for a new type of male/female relationship, and their attitudes towards a changing life.

## Chapter Two

### On The Issue of Money

Taiwan's economic situation has dramatically changed in the past forty years. The island has accomplished one of the most rapid and sustained rates of economic growth in the world, producing an average annual increase of 6.2 percent in GNP per capital between 1953 and 1988. Consequently, it has been transformed from a poor agricultural economy to an industrial and urban one with per capital income jumping from \$100 to \$7,500. Apart from a short period of import substitution in the 1950s, Taiwan's development has been based on export-led growth and a gradual movement up the "international product cycle" from labour intensive goods to more sophisticated and more profitable production.<sup>15</sup>

Under such economic conditions, traditional values and life styles are inevitably facing challenges. Among the obvious clashes between the effects of dramatic economic development and traditional standards which prevailed over the past two thousand years, the issue of money provides the main focus.

In Zhang Xiguo's writing, both intellectuals and common people deal with the issue of money. He describes how the power of money has changed the lives of some intellectuals. In his stories, a few older intellectuals still keep their traditional world view and academic lifestyle, but many give up their careers in academics and become businessmen, or combine academic and business pursuits.

In some ways, we should note that the conversion from intellectual to merchant is not a totally new phenomenon in Chinese society. The famous Chinese scholar Yu Ying-shi traces the emergence of the Chinese merchant class to the Qin-Han dynasties and during the Ming-Qing dynasties tradesmen become more and more prevalent. The merchant class developed their own ideology and changed the class hierarchy from "gentlemen, peasants,

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<sup>15</sup>"Economic Growth and Popular Well-being in Taiwan," *The Western Political Quarterly* (September, 1991), p. 561.

workers and merchants" into "gentlemen, merchants, peasants and workers." During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, even some famous Chinese scholars became spokesmen for merchants. For instance, Wang Yangming and Li Mengyang wrote favourable epitaphs for merchants whom they knew. The root of the phenomenon of intellectuals giving up their studies and becoming merchants lies here.<sup>16</sup>

Though it is not new for intellectuals to become merchants, the position of merchant never surpassed the honoured status of the scholar. Neither was money regarded as very important in one's life as an intellectual. From the traditional point of view, *fu* 富 (richness, wealth) and *gui* 贵 (nobility, honourable status) are not necessarily found together. Expressed in another sentence, being noble and respectable is not necessarily equated with being rich. One's class was not merely dependent on the amount of money one possessed. The orthodox traditional principle of being a true intellectual is *junzi zhongyi qingli*

"The gentleman emphasizes righteousness but despises profit." Other sayings warn intellectuals not to *jian li wang yi* 见利忘义 "forget righteousness when seeing profit." and that *dazhangfu fugui buneng yin* 大丈夫富贵不能淫 "the true man should not be defiled by riches and honour," and finally *shen cun fugui, shi qing huangjin* 神存富贵始轻黄金 "If you are rich in your spiritual life, you will look down on gold." Many classical poems and stories praise intellectuals who are *qinggao* 清高 (aloof from politics and material pursuits) and have *qijie* 气节 (unyielding integrity to political or material solicitations). The traditional intellectuals' attitude towards money is to strive for spiritual integrity and reject material solicitation. Money should not be in a dominant position in intellectual life. *li* 利 (profit) is directly related to money and hence should be steadfastly ignored. Intellectuals should emphasize *yi* 义, the way of justice and nobility which does not expect any rewards or profits.

<sup>16</sup> Yu Yingshi, "Shi Hun Shang Cai," (The Soul of a Gentleman and The Talent of a Merchant), *Twentieth Century Magazine*, Vol. 5, June, 1991.

To do business, people need to be shrewd and tactical. But the Confucian world view which emphasizes moral righteousness and persistent self-cultivation by learning and faithfulness to principles, is not supportive of people being shrewd or cunning. Thus, the basic principles of intellectual morality are *wen liang gong jian rang* 温良恭俭让 (gentleness, kindness, humbleness, thrift and tolerance ) which are directly opposed to being shrewd. The traditional teaching also continually warned people to watch out for anything related to business. In the saying *wu jian bu shang* 无奸不商 "No craftiness, no business;" *jian* 奸 (craftiness) and *shang* 商 (business or merchant) are connected. The traditional view is also very suspicious of wealth because, it said: *wei fu bu ren* 为富不仁 "The rich have no benevolence;" *fu* 富 (wealth) is the opposite of *ren* 仁 (benevolence). This kind of thinking has its corollaries in social policies. The famous *zhong ben yi mo* 重本抑末 (emphasize the main body and suppress the extremities) was mainly a caution against business development and in favour of agriculture.

Thus, even though the phenomenon of intellectuals giving up their careers to become merchants, now in modern term "businessmen," may not be new, this kind of conversion was never very common and well-received until recent times. Yet the merchant class has finally surpassed the scholar class. Not only are merchants treated more favourably but even money has gained a position of great respect in society. The power of money has shaken the basic confidence of intellectuals who were supposed to be beyond the reach of petty material attractions. Spiritual and intellectual life has been overshadowed by financial concerns. Intellectuals, in Zhang Xiguo's stories, commonly abandon their studies and research to become merchants or businessmen due to their material needs. The motive behind their actions is not *yi* 义 (justice, righteousness) but *li* 利 (interest, profit), in a word: money. Another important fact to note is that *li* is no longer a negative word which indicates dirty business and low character; *li* 利 has become a newly respectable ideology.

Among the intellectuals in Zhang Xiguo's stories, there are a few older intellectuals who still maintain the traditional intellectual way of life. They do not care or worry about money. They are still stuck in traditional thought patterns, believing in cultural dignity and the purity of idealistic knowledge. They are concerned more about their spiritual pursuits such as writing books or discussing philosophical topics than about how much money they should make or have. By contrast, the younger group of intellectuals mainly includes professors who are not satisfied with their financial situation and young people who have received a university education and are struggling to begin their careers. They are more sensitive to the issue of money than the older intellectuals. Some of them feel quite comfortable in adjusting themselves to this new materialistic world. Others can sense friction between the attractions of money and the traditional rejection in involvement of "li" (profit). They either seek to juggle the need for spiritual freedom with the need for money or try to find a new way to free themselves from bondage to money and to pursue true art.

Intellectuals who remain faithful to the old style intellectual life are very few, but they still emerge in Zhang Xiguo's writing. They tend to concentrate on their research, ignoring the attractions of money, and refusing to involve themselves in any business which could distract them from their academic thinking.

Professor Ying in *Yesterday's Anger* is such an old style intellectual. He is short and skinny; his hair is completely white; he has stomach trouble. Physically he is always weak and sick, but as a professor of philosophy, he is full of energy especially when discussing philosophical issues. The main character in *Yesterday's Anger* Ge Rixin says of him:

Lao Ying (Professor Ying) is different from the others. He has *gutou* 骨頭 (moral integrity). He dares to speak his true heart and never compromises. I admire such a person.(101)<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Zhang Xiguo, *Yesterday's Anger*. Page numbers in text.

Later Professor Ying contracts stomach cancer and is sent to hospital. Ge Rixin goes to visit him. When he returns and talks to a friend about Professor Ying, he becomes so excited that he hits the table with his fist and says:

Last Sunday, I went back to Taipei to visit him. He still talked to me about philosophy! He is so sick, but he still cares about philosophy, about the future of China. I was so ashamed that I nearly cried.(102)

He then continues:

Lao Ying is our real model. Sometimes I think he would still *si de qi suo* , (die a worthy death) even if there were no one to sympathise with him, . At least he will uphold his beliefs to the end.(103)

Mr. Fang in *Chess King* is a similar character. At a party, Feng Wei-min, a history professor and business man, talks about Mr.Fang with the main character Cheng Ling:

I asked him what he was going to do when he retired. He said he would write. He wants to rewrite his *History of Qin Thought*. The guy is more than sixty years old, and he's planning a book! . . . We all make fun of the old style scholars: they're too conservative, they've read all the Classics, but they have no idea as to how to apply them. Well, maybe that's right. But you have to hand it to them for sticking it out. I couldn't keep up that pace, could you?"

"Times change," Cheng Ling said. "I bet Mr Feng never worries about money. He doesn't know how to make money, and he doesn't want to. That's the older generation for you. Their values are different. We have got to make money."(112)<sup>18</sup>

In order to make money, one has to struggle. One has to expend a lot of energy in business or other money making schemes rather than taking part in pure academic research, which cannot bring that much profit. It is natural that he cannot concentrate on his intellectual pursuit. Professor Feng Wei-min compares his situation to Mr. Fang's:

If I ever live to be sixty, I'll be completely washed out by then. I won't even be able to read books, much less write them. I'm already too distracted to read: too much petty business, you know. By the time I get home, I'm exhausted. My brain is obsessed with business, I can't calm down ... writing something would be even more impossible. It's as if my pen weighs a thousand pounds.

Then Feng recites a famous classical Chinese poem written by Tao Yuanming, who abandoned his humiliating job in order to maintain the intellectual integrity.

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<sup>18</sup> Zhang Xiguo, *Qi wang* (Chess King), Hong Kong, A JPC Publication Co., 1986, translated by Ivan David Zimmerman. Page numbers in text.



*Our lifespan in this world isn't long.  
Why not then follow the inclinations of the heart?  
Why be so agitated?  
Where would we go?*

The conflict between the modern concern with money and traditional standards of spiritual freedom is revealed in his speech. The old generation does not need to worry about making money and in any case old style scholars have no desire to make themselves rich either. But intellectuals like Feng Wei-min and Cheng Ling realize that they cannot live that kind of intellectual life any more. They have to make money.

Just as Cheng puts it: "Times change," and the intellectuals who face changing times must likewise undergo change. New values emerge along with economic developments, and traditional standards are challenged or betrayed. The issue of money becomes highlighted, and everyone has to give it the respect it deserves. Intellectuals cannot hide behind traditional opinions which ignore the importance of money. Money becomes appealing and dominant, with the result some intellectuals give their hearts away to it. Even though they may remain professors or scholars on the surface, they are already merchants inside. Their traditional intellectual identity has changed.

Wu Hanshan and Hong Xianzu in *Yesterday's Anger* are intellectuals who actually incline more towards the business life.

Wu Hanshan is a professor of Chinese history in an American university. When his relative Chen Zexiong, a businessman from Taiwan, asks him:

"Mr. Wu, you are teaching in such a famous university. From the Taiwanese' view, you are a real scholar. What do you want to do now?"

"Do business! ... Just like you, do business."

"Do business?" Chen laughs. "People like us who cannot read books go to do business. Why you?"

"Now it is no longer true that only learning is noble and all other occupations base." (208)

He explains the importance of money in academic life. He needs it to live a happy life. He hopes to move to a big city like Detroit where there are a lot of chances to develop one's interests. "If a good position comes up, it would be easy for me to change careers. At

least, I can open my own business. For example, open a Chinese restaurant. That would not be bad." (210) He then describes the kind of restaurant he would like to open: luxurious, comfortable and fancy in order to attract customers and make plenty of money.

Professor Wu is a scholar of Chinese history with a mind full of concerns about money. A similar character in the same novel is Dr. Hong Xianzu. He is a talented scholar but also a shrewd businessman. He is a scientist, involved in research, but he also runs factories, does trading, plays the market and gets involved in real estate business. He knows how to obtain money, how to take advantage of people and how to manipulate them in order to reach his goals. He is more like a successful businessman than a scholar.

Likewise, in *The Yellow River Water*, Li Haiwen gives up his professorial position to become a businessman. His father is a financial magnate, and Li Haiwen also desires success in business. When he is with a group of friends who happen to be children of high level governors, he realizes:

The family of great wealth is not so well liked as the aristocratic family. But now, except for Lan Qi, every one has become a businessman. *If you are in the merchant class, you have to yield to the rules of business. Who can make the most money. Who is the big brother.* <sup>19</sup>

In his heart, Li Haiwen promises himself that he must rise head and shoulders above everyone else in business, and then he can feel proud and elated. He must not let himself fall short of others. He is not ashamed to identify himself as a businessman. There is no shadow of doubt about the value of money in his mind. He is confident about his future in this new field. He wants to be the "big brother."

Some intellectuals choose to do business at first as an option to ease the financial burden, but at last business becomes their life interest and deepest commitment. The history professor Feng in *Chess King* whom we mentioned previously at first calls business his "latest game." He is still teaching in school. He feels that business is "terribly

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<sup>19</sup> Zhang Xiguo, *Huanghe zhi shui* (The Yellow River Water), p.61.

dull." By the end, however, as he is going to Europe because he has made lots of money in business, he changes his tune, declaring: "Business certainly is interesting."<sup>20</sup>

Zhang Xiguo says: "From 1972 to 1973, invited by the Academia Sinica, I went back to Taiwan and stayed more than one year. I found that many friends who originally had cultural ideals became petty merchants due to the changed social environment. I thought a lot about this problem, and as a result I wrote *Chess King*."<sup>21</sup> In *Chess King*, he describes different intellectuals coping in the face of change. There is the older intellectual, Mr. Fang, whom as we have mentioned maintains his traditional way of living, yet there is also Professor Feng who finally finds business is really his vocation in life. Thirdly there is Professor Liu, who declares that "money can buy freedom." He wants to balance the traditional intellectual concern for spiritual freedom with the practical need for money. He thinks that after one has made enough money, one can gain freedom and pursue one's true goal in life.

Professor Michael S. Duke has given a sophisticated summary of Professor Liu in his paper "Two *Chess Masters*: One Chinese Way: A Comparison of Chang Hsi-kuo's and Chung Ah-ch'eng's *Ch'i Wang*." Professor Duke believes that Professor Liu's character "best illustrates the theme of pluralism and spontaneous association in a Chinese context."

Liu Lo-yi is a self-made man, a college science professor, an entrepreneur who owns and manages several export factories, a woman chaser of sorts, and something of a braggart. He is also a gracious loser and a man who decided very early on what he wanted from life - the freedom that money brings with it - and is well on his way to achieving his every goal.

We have already discussed intellectuals who have no trouble becoming merchants or involving themselves in business. There is another group of intellectuals who are aware of their changing identity. They must seek spiritual peace as they switch from their intellectual pursuit to business manoeuvres. The main character in *Chess King* Cheng Ling can represent this group of people.

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<sup>20</sup> Zhang Xiguo, *Chess King*, p. 153.

<sup>21</sup> Zhang Xiguo, "The Spiritual Course of A Writer."

In *Chess King* Cheng Ling provides a central figure around whom a ring of different young intellectuals swim in the murky waters of business. In fact, all of Cheng's friends are doing business of some kind. History professor Feng is trying to export silverware to the Europeans; Gao Yuebai, a talented artist, is painting one hundred and one pairs of female legs because there is a market for this kind of painting. Gao Pei is playing the stock market. When they find that a wonder child can tell the future, all they want to do is use the boy to make money. Cheng Ling is no better than his friends. In spite of his wish to protect the boy, it is he who forces the boy to challenge Professor Liu, and he also leaks the secret of the Wonder Child to others. Yet the interesting thing is that ultimately he cannot forsake his artistic commitments no matter how hard he tries to neglect them and enter a world full of greed.

Cheng Ling well knows the important role which money plays in daily life. He has already accepted the real world which emphasizes peoples' materialistic needs. As he says: "Artists have to eat, too." He expresses this in a cynical way in his art: he jokes to hold an exhibition showing paintings of money.

"I've got a subject, too," Cheng Ling said. "Paintings of money. Paint what everyone likes: currency bills. All kinds of bills. You can buy whichever paintings you like with the money you have. Therefore, I consider cash as real as life itself. Money is the most real thing. Money is freedom."(108)

We can hear an echo of Professor Liu's declaration, the intention to combine the desire for spiritual freedom with acceptance of the power of money. But things are not that easy. Surrender to the power of money does not dim the passion of the artist. Thus, when he has half abandoned his artistic career by compromising the standards of art for financial gain, he is no longer satisfied spiritually. He has thrown away all his painting supplies when he decides to become a commercial agent. But he cannot totally forsake his desire of painting, he buys back his painting supplies.

He could still paint. In fact, he still wanted to. That sudden urge, that wild happiness, would now and then come and enthrall him.(95)

The desire to pursue artistic happiness juxtaposed with the need for money leads him into contradictory behaviour. This is manifested, too, in his treatment of the boy in the story. At the beginning, Cheng Ling thinks of the boy's thin figure, his big bumpy head. He is confused. "The boy is certainly extraordinary. We ought to figure out a way to protect him, to make sure no one takes advantage of him." (43) But when he finds out for certain that the boy can predict the future, first of all he uses him to challenge Professor Liu in order to release personal hostility: "since Professor Liu wanted to put on such an impressive front, if the boy won a few games of chess from him and made him lose face on TV, that might just chop him down to size." (69) This is just the beginning, for he then asks the boy to predict the stock market figures for him. "I just want a general idea of the prospects. I won't be greedy. It's just that I need a little cash." (81)

Hence, Cheng Ling is the first one to take advantage of the boy both spiritually and materially. And that is not the end of the matter. He cannot help telling others the secret of the Wonder Kid; finally all his friends find out that the boy is clairvoyant and are eager to make money out of it too. Yet in final analysis, he is not a greedy person who has the pure goal of making money. After he has bought the stocks and knows he will earn large quantities of money, he thinks again about his painting. Cheng Ling said: "I just want to paint. I can still paint." He counts up the shares and profit they can yield. It isn't much, but it will be enough to last the company a couple of years. So he can paint. (86)

On the one hand, he agrees with Professor Liu: "Professor Liu was right. Money is freedom. When you have money you don't get pushed around." (69) On the other hand, he wants to paint only according to artistic principles, not drawn by the lure of money. During a conversation with his brother, Cheng Ling says:

"All I want to do is to paint. I only wish I could still paint."

"Of course you can still paint." His brother laughed. "As long as you are willing to paint ads, you can paint to your heart's content. What's the difference to you?"

"There's still a difference."

"There's no difference. You ought to understand that. There is absolutely no difference."

"There's still a difference."

Cheng Ling's voice was very soft. He was almost talking to himself.(77)

Cheng Ling has sensed that artistic principles must remain independent from judgement of financial worth. Art is not a tool for making money. Painting ads is different from truly artistic work.

In conclusion, money has had a distinct impact on intellectuals' thinking. Many intellectuals have been forced to adjust their traditional ideals in order to survive in this changing world. Intellectuals have always believed that they belong to a higher class in society. So when their society becomes embedded more and more with materialism, they have to accept the domination of money in order to maintain a decent standard of living and social status. The traditional emphasis on spiritual life has become mixed up with acceptance of the importance of money. Nevertheless, Zhang Xiguo still depicts intellectuals who do not admit that material needs can completely replace the values of art, and he stresses the differences between being an artist and being a businessman.

If money can change the lives of intellectuals, shielded as they were from its influence, then certainly it can work even more powerfully in the lives of non-intellectuals.

According to the traditional idea: *junzi zhong yi, xiaoren zhong li* 君子重义, 小人重利, "gentlemen emphasize righteousness, common people or low class people chase after profits." In other words, gentlemen, who are mostly intellectuals, have to distinguish *yi* 义 and *li* 利, but it is tolerable for common people, "xiaoren" 小人, to chase after material gains. Thus it is not surprising that non-intellectuals have all along pursued money. But Zhang Xiguo does not treat their efforts to gain money as any kind dishonourable behaviour; he does not condemn them from the stand-point of tradition. Instead, in his writing he shows sympathy for and understanding of their struggles. He thinks the common peoples' desire for money comes not because they are greedy but

because they want to lead their families and themselves towards a happier life. Money is not their actual goal, but they pursue money because it helps them to survive.

Hence, on the issue of money, Zhang Xiguo has a tougher attitude towards intellectuals. He never shows respect for those intellectuals who forsake academic life to go after profit, and instead high-lights those who are faithful to their goals or who finally grasp the meaning of life, which is not provided by money. Probably there is still a trace of traditional thinking in his mind: he still feels that intellectuals should focus on *yi*, the spiritual quest, and that there should be a difference between intellectuals and merchants.

By contrast, when he deals with the common peoples' concerns about money, he emphasizes their sacrifice and loyalty to their families and friends. He does not treat them as *xiaoren*, low class people, according to a traditional viewpoint, but rather shows his deep sympathy for their desperate struggle.

To give some examples, in "The Banana Boat," the narrator Huang Guoquan meets a sailor on an airplane trip from the United States to Taiwan. The sailor has been expelled by the US immigration office because he has illegally entered and worked in the United States. The policemen who escort the sailor to the airplane ask the narrator to take care of him and accompany him back to Taiwan. After the airplane takes off, they start talking. The sailor tells the narrator the reason for his illegal entry and employment:

the salary for sailors is too low. It is only seventy-five US dollars a month. So when ships arrive in New York, sailors all try to leave ships as soon as they had a chance. There is a case where two third of the sailors in one ship have left.(8)<sup>22</sup>

Through his speech we can see that the main reason the sailor wants to work illegally in New York is not to make a big fortune but only to survive. The low salary of sailors combined with the rising prices of goods push him to choose this embarrassing path. His ideal in life is just to open a grocery store when he has enough money. His purpose is not only to make himself comfortable but also to give his family a better life.

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<sup>22</sup> Zhang Xiguo, "The Banana Boat," *The Banana Boat*. Page numbers in text.

When they arrive in Tokyo, they have to switch airlines. The Japanese immigration officers who are supposed to accompany the sailor on the airplane to Taiwan doesn't show up. The sailor decides to stay in Tokyo because he knows somebody there, and later on he might even manage go back to the States to work there again. He gives Huang a wad of dollar-bills and the address of his family: "This money, please give it to my wife." After he hands over the money, he disappears in the crowd. The narrator never sees him again.(13)

Later on the narrator receives a letter from a shipping company. The letter tells him that there was an accident in a banana cargo ship: a sailor fell into a deep tank while he was loading bananas. He had been killed instantly. The company denies any responsibility for his death because he was working there illegally. They could not find out his name or identity. All they discovered was the narrator's name in the sailor's notebook, so they inform him of the latter's death.

If we only look at the surface details of the sailor's death, we could say that he died for money, as in the Chinese idiom: People die for money , birds die for grain. But the sailor's purpose is to give his family and himself a better life. It is not greed which sends the sailor to his death but the struggle for a better life. He has sacrificed his life for his ideal. Zhang Xiguo's sympathetic treatment shows his understanding of the sailor's desperate efforts to survive in this changing world.

Zhang Xiguo considers common peoples' efforts, even those might appear trivial, as a decent struggle to fulfil their ideals in life. He even shows great respect for their sacrifice and suffering.

I recall some sailors who escaped from their ships, some educated youth who fled to Hong Kong from mainland China, an old woman in New York's Chinatown-- they are all in exile but their ideals of life touch me and make me feel ashamed. Of course their ideals of life are not to save the country or to save the nation, but who is living to save the country and the nation these days? They live so that their wives and children can have enough to eat, to keep warm, or to gain their personal freedom, or for their children and grandchildren's future happiness. Though their ideals of life are trivial, they dare to sacrifice their own lives to attain these ideals.



Here we can see the issue of money also related with “ the Soul of Wanderers.”

Sometimes Zhang Xiguo allows his characters to break the law in order to attain their desires. The sailor's illegal work is one example; likewise in *The Yellow River Water*, Zhao Zichao's embezzlement of the company's goods is another. Zhang Xiguo does not try to cover up these actions which violate certain laws or moral principles, but instead reveals the proper reasons for their behaviour and the basic honesty of their personalities.

For instance, in *The Yellow River Water*, Zhao Zichao is the purchasing agent of a company which is going under. He steals some goods and sells them to retailers. Yet before he goes to the south of Taiwan to hide, he does not forget to return the money he borrowed from a poor college student. Then he pays a visit to his friend, Zhou Dachuan, and gives him some money to support his family. Zhou Dachuan is portrayed as a very honest and trustworthy person. When Zhao tells him what he has done, Zhou criticizes his actions. Zhao goes on to tell Zhou the reason he has acted in this way:

When one's troops are being defeated, it happens as quickly as a mountain avalanches. In no more than a month, the company is going to be bankrupt. And if this happens, who do you think will get all the stuff? It is always those big heads which swallow all the goods. . . . Those big heads can protect themselves fine; why do they bother to trouble us poor people ? Big brother, don't worry. If a man does not look out for himself, Heaven and Earth will destroy him (everyone for himself and the devil takes the hindmost). And remember, Little Rong (Zhou's daughter) is going to take the college entrance exam in July. If you consider your own interests, you should at least think of her future. Here is ten thousand yuan that you can take for small expenses.<sup>23</sup>

Zhao Zichao does not emerge looking like a greedy and mean person; instead he is a kind, unselfish and reliable friend. He promises that “A true man accepts the consequences of his own actions.” He wants to help his friend but he does not cause them any unnecessary trouble. Later, when Zhou's daughter Rong (Little Rong) unexpectedly gets pregnant, she knows the only one who can help her is Zhao Zichao not her lover. She goes to the south to find him, and Zhao helps her raise the baby. Zhang Xiguo does not

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<sup>23</sup> Zhang Xiguo, *The Yellow River Water*, pp.36-37.

treat Zhao as someone to be blamed or to be finally humiliated because of his minor errors. Once again, he has more understanding for, rather than condemnation of, the common peoples' struggle.

On the issue of money, though Zhang Xiguo does not declare his unqualified support for the traditional rejection of money as part of the spiritual life of intellectuals, he does reveal money as something corrupting to one's intellectual integrity. In his works, intellectuals who forsake academic life or have a strong desire to change their career in order to pursue profit abound. Cheng Ling and Professor Feng Wei-min in *Chess King*; the writer and teacher Wang Peilun, professor Li Haiwen, and the artist Du Guangyu in *The Yellow River Water*; Professor Wu Hanshan and Dr. Hong Xianzu in *Yesterday's Anger*, etc. Amongst these characters Zhang Xiguo has respect for those old-fashioned intellectuals who can remain faithful to and concentrated on their intellectual life. However, he does not attempt to show a new ideal for intellectuals to aspire to in today's world. Rather he is more concerned with the intellectuals' painful struggle to encompass both material needs and idealistic pursuits in a new situation. The best he can do is refuse to admit that acceptance of the domination of money inevitably means the total loss of spiritual independence. However, spiritual freedom, as the word imply, does not depend on the accumulation of money; the obtaining of money is not a necessary pre-condition for achieving this spiritual freedom. The spiritual comforts purchased with money are in fact not real freedoms, because they involve too much of a compromise. The spiritual struggle with the issue of money is an on-going one in the intellectuals' search for a new way of life in this modern era.

Again, by contrast, though common peoples' pursuit of money is more obvious and desperate, Zhang Xiguo looks upon their struggle from a different angle. Here, his writing emphasizes ordinary peoples' selfless sacrifice and loyalty to their families and

friends; He stresses their material plight and the reasonableness of their needs, and he shows sympathy and understanding for their struggles and misfortunes.

## Chapter Three

## Compromise Or Action In The Face of Invisible Power

There are no totally evil characters in Zhang Xiguo's writing. According to his understanding, on the one hand, the power of darkness is not represented by any particular person but exists in an invisible way. People can feel the existence of darkness but cannot find a particular object to fight against. On the other hand, evil exists in the heart of everyone. Zhang Xiguo himself says:

(The action) related to the goal of "seeking changes" is to struggle with the force of evil. . . . Chinese are somehow more "sophisticated." They know that evil exists in human nature. ... The lack of successful rebels in Chinese myths is not an accidental phenomenon. It indicates that Chinese people basically understand the impossibility of conquering the force of evil, hence they are inclined to compromise. (166)<sup>24</sup>

Zhang Xiguo wrote another article "Ye shi shen hua" (Also Myth) in which he claims that compromise is a dominant component of the Chinese national character. He points out again that there are very few successful rebels in Chinese myth stories. Most of them finally compromise with the rulers they rebel against.

It is strange that we cannot find even one successful rebel in any Chinese myth stories. There are rebellious heroes in Chinese myths just as in myths of other countries, but their rebellion has never been successful. (207)<sup>25</sup>

He gives many examples. For instance, Gonggong Shi rebelled, using his head to knock down Buzhou Mountain, but he ultimately failed. Houyi shot down suns, but in the end he could not even keep his wife. The worst kind are those rebellious heroes who finally compromised with their opponents. For example, Monkey Sun declared himself "King of Heaven." He was defeated by Tathagata Buddha and was held underneath the Wuhang Mountain. This is reasonable. But later on he was tamed by Tang Sanzang and

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<sup>24</sup> Zhang Xiguo, "Talk About the Style and Content of National Literature," *Zhang Xiguo's Self-Selected Works* (Liming Culture p.publish Co., 1982). Page numbers in text

<sup>25</sup> Zhang Xiguo, "Ye shi shen hua" (Also Myth), *Zhang Xiguo's Self-Selected Works*. Page numbers in text.

became his disciple. He protected Tang when he went on a pilgrimage for Buddhist scriptures and finally became a Buddhist warrior attendant. For a "rebel," he had gone too far. In another instance, Red Child Nezha caused trouble in the Palace of the Dragon King several times and fell out with his father. He was a fairly successful little rebel. But later on he too compromised and became a little god of the "ruling group." Such instances are numerous. If even the White Lady, who just wanted the "freedom to love," was suppressed under the tower by meddling Fahai, other rebels' fates can be imagined. Zhang Xiguo compares Chinese myth with Western myth and declares that there were more successful and persistent rebels in Western myth.

It is clear that, in contrast to Chinese myths where very few successful rebels exist, Western myths portray many rebellious heroes. ... Yet it is only a difference in subjective perceptions: "fight but be defeated again" as compared to "be defeated but fight again." Although the heroes of western myths are deceived by fate time and time again, they never surrender, always challenging fate. The relationship between human beings and their fate is always an important inspirational source for Western literature. This might be the reason that rebellious heroes occupied such an important position in Western literature. (208)

However, Zhang Xiguo does not consider the Chinese to be fatalists. He explains the Chinese willingness to compromise by suggesting that the rebels could finally become members of the ruling class by compromising with rulers. He uses "Yugong yi shan" (Foolish Old Man moves the Mountain) as an example. Zhang Xiguo thinks that Yugong achieves his victory not through moving the Taihang Mountains shovel by shovel but because of God's compromise: God sends a couple of giants to carry away the two mountains. It is possible, if we allowed this story to develop reasonably, that Yugong and his descendants would really have removed the mountains. But because of God's compromise, although on the surface Yugong wins, in fact he is deprived of the chance to prove that he could be "stronger than God." So Yugong is not a successful rebel. Zhang Xiguo uses this story as a good example of compromise between God and rebels. Likewise, the Monkey King and Nezha, whom we mentioned before, actually did not totally fail.

On the one hand, the rulers in heaven accepted them and allowed them to enjoy a taste of success. This is proof of compromise. On the other hand, of course, the Monkey King had to compromise too: he had to give up his "Equal to Heaven" declaration. And Nezha had to bow his head to his father. In contrast to those weak rebels who were publicly wiped out, strong rebels virtually all found positions among the gods through compromise.(209)

Zhang Xiguo thinks that the lack of successful rebels is not to say there are no heroes "persistently choosing the right course and sticking to it." There are too many heroes sacrificing their lives to uphold "orthodox" ideas. The key is that they "uphold the orthodox," and they do not "oppose the orthodox."

Zhang Xiguo discusses how Chinese people think about the relationship between God and human beings in order to find the root of compromise in Chinese philosophy. He thinks that Chinese do not consider fate to be totally unalterable, but neither do they dare to admit that fate can be controlled by human beings. They realistically acknowledge that fate is a result of compromise between heaven and human beings. "Human beings create gods according to their own image;" Chinese are like this. The gods of the Chinese are reflections of themselves. Heaven and hell are all reproductions of the real human world.

Maybe Chinese people are too clever. They are so clever that, even while admitting "it's better to believe there are ghosts and gods rather than not to," they do not consider either ghosts or gods to be much wiser than human beings. No matter whether on earth or in heaven, "compromise" is the way to resolve problems.(209)

Zhang Xiguo thinks that the root of compromise is also in the Chinese perceptions of nature, society, the political system and human relationships. Chinese philosophy puts the survival of human beings at the centre. For thousands of years, the majority of the Chinese have used up most of their energy in struggling with the weather and the earth to make a living. The idea of compromise between heaven and human beings is based on the experience the Chinese have gained in their search to coexist with nature. If peasants do not know how to compromise with and use nature, they cannot survive. On the issue of human relationships, the Chinese always desire an ordered society. They emphasize social

equilibrium and harmony. Compromise is an essential way to achieve peace in such a complicated society.

Although Zhang Xiguo feels that compromise plays a positive role in keeping a huge country like China together in harmony, he does not favour compromise on the issue of dealing with evil forces or opponents. Because the Chinese feel that evil forces cannot be conquered or eliminated by the efforts of human beings, they choose compromise instead of fighting. Not only rebels but also rulers prefer to seek compromise. Yet evil forces keep on growing as a result of one compromise or another and can never really be exterminated. Zhang Xiguo thinks that the Chinese have traditionally always chosen such a negative way to deal with evil forces.

We must admit that there is a dark side to the Chinese national character. The shadow of tradition keeps the Chinese peoples' heads bowed. Compromise becomes the best way to resolve problems. Over the last hundred years, Chinese society has gone through many changes, and Chinese people have developed different perceptions of evil and darkness. This kind of evil and darkness exists not only in politics but also in the individual Chinese personality. ... *The force of evil exists at the bottom of almost every Chinese person's heart.* (167)<sup>26</sup>

Zhang Xiguo mentions that in recent years, he has observed the struggles between left and right wing groups among overseas Chinese. He senses that the Chinese cannot suppress the devil in their hearts. It is so easy for the dark side of their personality to take control.

Light and darkness are mingled within everyone's consciousness. Yet as we just mentioned, traditionally the Chinese are inclined to compromise with the force of evil. Hence, they never try their utmost to exterminate the devil in their hearts. So the force of evil is merely concealed there. For the Chinese, the struggle between light and darkness is not only an objective struggle but also a struggle within their hearts. (168)

Zhang Xiguo gives his understanding of what the force of evil is: the force of evil, to put it in a practical way, means "to compromise with orthodox power; not to tolerate unorthodox opinions (unless the unorthodox becomes orthodox through compromise); to bully the kind and fear the mean; to neglect human life; to be sinister and ruthless towards people,"

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<sup>26</sup> Zhang Xiguo, "Talk About the Style and Content of National Literature," *Zhang Xiguo's Self-Selected Works*.

etc. Zhang Xiguo calls on the Chinese to face these weaknesses in their national character; to try to eliminate the darkness and expand the light. (168)

From Zhang Xiguo's analysis of compromise, we discover that, first of all, darkness is not represented by any particular person(s) but exists as an invisible power in objective circumstances and inside everyone's hearts. To compromise is not only to compromise with other people or the objective environment but also to compromise with one's own subjective intentions or ideologies.

"Compromise" is a major theme in Zhang Xiguo's writing. He believes that the intention to compromise with evil forces or opposing ideologies forms part of the Chinese national personality. His writing illustrates his theoretical understanding of compromise. The main characters in his early short story "Fishing" and his first long novel *The biography of Pastor Pi* all face the necessity of compromise; whether consciously or unconsciously they all try to avoid it or give in to it. As for his other works, Ge Rixin and Shi Ping in *Yesterday's Anger* are people who clearly contemplate the possibility of compromising with circumstances and ideologies in this complicated world. But not all people seek compromise with reality. They try to cope in different ways rather than to compromise. Some of them, like Professor Liu in *Chess King* and Hong Xianzu in *Yesterday's Anger*, try to manipulate people to help them achieve their goal. And there are also people who try to find the true meaning of action.

"Fishing," (Diao) published in 1963, is one of his early stories. The plot consists mainly of a dialogue between a man and his son fishing together. The man has his own idealistic perception of life, but it is implied in the story that his attitude towards life does not accord with his wife's practical opinion. His son asks him: "Why do people say that you are afraid of Mom? Why do you never retort when she is angry but instead read books or go fishing?" The man answers: "Why do I never argue with your Mom? Because it is



not worth it. What your Mom demands is what I loathe. I have never tried to satisfy her wishes. It is natural that she gets angry with me sometimes. I don't need to lower myself to the same level as her -- but do not tell your Mom what I said." The boy then recites what his Mom would like to say: "But why don't you want to do as Mom said? Mom said if you did more socializing with your bosses and visited them more often, then we could find ways." He does not know what "find ways" means, so he adds: "Then we could have a refrigerator, a stereo ... many things. Is Mom right?" "Your Mom is right. But I ..." He sighs. "Forget about it. Now even if I told you, you could not understand. Maybe in the future you will understand. ... One day you might become the same kind of person as your Mom. But that would be fine too. Or you will be like me, unable to get along with anybody."(7-8)<sup>27</sup>

We know through their conversation that the man does not want to sacrifice his personal dignity to gain advantages. But he is also living in this society, so he cannot avoid certain demands. The story develops: they catch a fish. The man wants to set the fish free, but the boy is more realistic. He pierces the fish's gill with a long grass stalk and ties a knot; then he puts the fish back into the water to keep it alive. The man looks at his son's operation and asks: "The fish never tries to escape?" the boy answers: "No. We used the stalks to pierce the fish's gill. If it wants to escape, it has to tear apart its own gill. The stalk won't be torn."

"That means unless it dares to hurt itself it cannot escape. But if it does not escape, it is going to suffer more -- more suffering than before."

The boy says: "Dad, you are being a fool. The fish is stupid. How can it know what would happen later on? If it were smart, it would not have eaten the bait in the first place."

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<sup>27</sup> Zhang Xiguo, "Fishing," *Zhang's Self-Selected Works*. Page numbers in text.

The man smiles: "That's right. You are talking like me now." But he feels vaguely sad, since he suddenly senses that he is somewhat like that fish.<sup>(12)</sup>

Now we know what the writer wants to tell us: the man is just like that fish. The man is caught between his own idealistic perception of life and the pressures of a demanding reality. If he wants to gain material profits, he has to do what his wife suggests, which means to sacrifice his idealistic value standards, if however, he wants to maintain his integrity, he will suffer from the inconvenient consequences of his behaviour. He is that fish: if he insists on his way of life and escapes from the captivity of his objective environment, he will hurt himself. He will have to give up all possibility of a happy life. He does not expect any understanding from his wife. In fact, he cannot "get along with anyone"; he cannot benefit from this society. But if he does not escape now, he is going to suffer more. The fish will die. The man will suffer a spiritual death: finally he will have to give up his idealistic personality, his beliefs, his pride. The man feels sad. If he stays as he is without hurting himself to get away, he cannot avoid more suffering. And it seems that his hopeless struggle is doomed, that finally he will have to compromise with reality and suffer spiritual death, just like that fish: once it gets caught, it cannot get away. The man realizes that compromising with the needs of society can bring death to his spiritual dignity.

Pastor Pi in *The Biography of Pastor Pi* has also gone through a process of compromise. In the beginning, Pastor Pi is just an innocent young Christian. In order to get people to his church, he has to make compromises among different groups. His compromise to the needs of reality starts from his making alliances with people who will support his purposes and his using improper ways to get rid his rivals. After many years, Pastor Pi has gone a long way toward being an experienced pastor. In the end he is very self-satisfied:

In fact, recently he had been very happy every single day. He had regained his pastor's position and his church. . . . Now Pastor Pi was much smarter. He often went to visit and flatter Old Pastor Lin. . . . Pastor Pi obeyed Old Pastor Lin's teaching. He never tried to do anything unconventional or unorthodox again. He followed the rules and orders, and learned to conform to convention. Just as he expected, Old Pastor Lin did not get angry any more. By now Pastor Pi was slick and sly. It was obvious that his career would very soon advance rapidly.<sup>28</sup>

Pastor Pi does not sense the pain of compromise; to him, compromise opens the way to a brighter future. He knows how to deal with his life successfully by learning how to compromise. When he has finally compromised with reality, he believes he has obtained the skills to survive. He feels mature and confident having completely yielded to authority.

Ge Rixin and Shi Ping in *Yesterday's Anger* also have to face compromise. They are conscious of the crucial nature of their choices in life. They are aware of the dangers of compromise and feel sad when they are forced by reality to give up their ideals.

To Ge Rixin, on one side there are his political ideals, his perception of an idealistic life; on the other side, there are the practical needs of life. For instance, his live-in girl friend gets pregnant; and so he needs to find a good job. Earlier, Ge Rixin was a leader of the Chinese student Baodiao movement. He was very touched by the political enthusiasm people had shown during this movement. Though the movement slowly fades away, his memories of the excitement do not go away. His political enthusiasm and devotion still drive him to live an unusual life. He goes to universities to give lectures about the May Fourth Movement hoping that he can keep alive the Chinese peoples' concern for China. He cannot forsake his dreams and accept a normal life in the USA, but neither can he go back to Taiwan due to his political activities during the movement. Gradually his classmates all find good jobs or become professors, but he, a Ph. D degree holder, in order to show his rejection of individualist American life, becomes a pedlar, selling dumplings in the streets. When his girl friend tells him that she is going to have an abortion, implying

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<sup>28</sup> Zhang Xiguo, *The Biography of Pastor Pi* (Hongfan, 1975), p. 209.

that their financial condition is not good enough to have a child, Ge Rixin finally realizes that he has to compromise.

In the court house where his girl friend Wang Ya-nan is fighting with her husband for divorce and alimony, Ge Rixin goes through a spiritual crisis in deciding to compromise with reality. Yet, he recalls the splendour of the movement even as he reluctantly yields to the needs of life.

He had been thinking the matter through in the car and now he made an important decision: they must keep this baby. He hadn't told Wang Ya-nan yet. But he had already thought it over. In order to raise this baby, he had to find a proper job. A proper job? He could not help mocking himself. What would be a proper job? To produce dog food for foreigners? To research new chemical weapons? Proper jobs were actually improper jobs. Selling dumplings was a proper job! But for the sake of the baby, he had to compromise with reality. Do not compromise too much! He kept warning himself. But it was necessary to find a proper job.(159)<sup>29</sup>

At the same time he cannot help looking back to the past when the student movement was still going on. He finds support for his ideals in his memories.

The strength of the masses is amazing, Ge Rixin thought. Standing in the middle of the parade troop, you wouldn't feel at all empty and lonely. . . . Personal private desires, the wishes of the petty self all melted to nothing at the moment. You could only feel the existence of a greater self.(161)

When he comes back to reality, he finds the selfish fighting among people distasteful and feels reluctant to surrender to a reality like this.

The court is an arena of individualism. Everyone is trying his best to hurt others for his own interests. They fight against each other until they are all covered by wounds. The judge listens with indifference, and allows those selfish people to hurt each other. The secretary records their naked self exposition, yawning. Why is the small self so important? Why can selfish desires cover everything else?(163)

Ge Rixin is caught between his longing for an idealistic life and his compromise with daily life. He remembers that during the movement one's "personal future seemed unimportant." In order to protect part of his homeland, he is willing to sacrifice everything in his life. His spiritual source is in the memories of that movement:

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<sup>29</sup> Zhang Xiguo, *Yesterday's Anger*. Page numbers in text.

The Baodiao movement really touched the souls of overseas Chinese. Ge Rixin had understood the nature of the mass movement. . . . This was the greater self. This was the source of national spirit. The decent side of the human being's character could only be clearly revealed when people melted into the greater self. Such an amazing change! He had realized the precious side of human nature. Human beings had a higher goal in their life. To obtain "food and sex" is not the only purpose of life.(164)

Returning, however, to daily life, he continues:

Wang Ya-nan had said several times. "Things have gone too far; we have to be a little bit selfish now." Maybe she was right. He had to face reality and pay attention to material needs in life. What could he do? Marry Wang Ya-nan? Find a proper job? Raise the child? Become an obedient, selfish person?

Ge Rixin heaved a long sigh. No, life should not only be about this. There must be something else. There must be something else. (164)

Ge Rixin believes there is something else beyond the practical necessity of life alone. This idealistic belief gives him strength to refuse to accept the utilitarian view of life. But he has to compromise in the face of certain practical needs.

Ge Rixin knows how powerful the attraction of selfish individualism would be. Everyone was struggling to improve their own position. Theoretically he could denounce this kind of individualism. Human beings should not just live for themselves. Such a society was not a healthy one. But he could not escape the emotional pressures of his situation. Especially after he started living with Wang Ya-nan, such emotional pressures became greater than before. The presence of Wang Ya-nan kept reminding him that he already had the burden of his family. With his mean and unstable income he had difficulty even paying the rent. And now Wang Ya-nan was pregnant. What should he do? In the car, he had already decided to look for a job. But could he surrender like this? Could he compromise with capitalist society like this?(163-164)

He finds no way out of his spiritual chaos; he can only end up returning to his dreams: "If there is another mass movement . . . ."

The writer mentions later on that Ge Rixin becomes an obedient person who has a regular job and is contented with his life. Ultimately he has had to compromise with reality.

Shi Ping in the same novel is Ge Rixin's best friend. He also participated in the Baodiao movement. Like Ge Rixin, he does not want to go back to Taiwan because of his political views, neither does he want to give up Chinese culture even though he is living in a foreign country. He must contemplate making a conscious compromise with reality in this complicated world.

When Shi Ping visits Taiwan after an absence of ten years, he has to make a decision about his future because of the pressures of his immediate situation. Since his father's health is not very good; he has to consider staying in Taiwan to take care of his family. He has met an old friend, a girl named Qiu Huimei, whom he is very fond of. Having been a bachelor for so many years, he is now wondering whether or not he should settle down. He feels that Qiu Huimei is a very considerate person. Qiu Huimei also encourages him to come back and work in Taiwan because she thinks Shi Ping has a better chance than others. Though Shi Ping, on the one hand, does not want to give up his political standards and ideals; on the other hand, he cannot forsake his responsibility towards his family and affection for the girl. He faces the dilemma of deciding whether he should compromise with the demands of life. In the following passage Shi Ping is debating with himself about the meaning of compromise. The narration of the story interweaves with Shi Ping's monologue.

"At least you have a better chance than others." Maybe Qiu Huimei was right. You still have a chance. No matter what, you could always find something to do if you came back. People have to *compromise*. Haven't those who were even more leftist come back already? Haven't they climbed up one by one? Maybe it has to do with age. Before, you could be an angry youth; now you have to think about your career. As long as you achieve something, what's it matter if you *compromise*? Haven't others already *compromised*? ...

Actually, to go back cannot be called a *compromise*. It is just to work under different circumstances. But can you really feel no qualms upon self-examination? *Compromise*. ...

...*Compromise*. If you want to live, to be famous, you have to *compromise*. Lu Xun was wrong. It is not "eating people" that was hidden in the words and between the lines, it is "compromise." The doctrine of the mean. Gentle and soft, honest and sincere. Heaven knows how many words in Chinese praising compromise.

... *Compromise*. There is only *compromise*. If you want to live, you have to compromise. ...

... Anyway, life is like this. Even love needs *compromise*. *Compromise*, there is only *compromise*.. (272-278)

Shi Ping is engaged in thinking of compromise. He even compares "compromise" with Lu Xun's famous phrase "eating people." We can therefore see clearly that he does not favour compromise. For a while, he is hoping to avoid making any decision by becoming a standing observer: "I belong to a disappearing group of people. . . . Maybe I

can just become an observer and in that way make up for what we have done and atone for our faults."(288)<sup>30</sup>

Shi Ping can not make up his mind, so he remains indecisive about his choices of career and marriage. In the end he reluctantly packs and prepares to leave Taiwan. Even at the airport, he is still in a state of hesitation. Just one hour before his departure, his high school classmate Cheng Zexiong comes to him to say good-bye. He tells Shi Ping that Ge Rixin died in a traffic accident one month ago. This news shocks Shi Ping to the core; he cannot help bursting into tears: "Ge is dead!" Shi Ping murmurs. "He is gone just like that? It's unfair; he did not deserve that! I did not even know. Unfair. Really unfair." Shi Ping is in deep emotional turmoil when he notices Qiu Huimei. He embraces her in his arms and promises her: "Huimei, you must wait for me. I will be back. I will definitely come back."(294)

Ge's death finally helps Shi Ping resolve his spiritual dilemma. Probably Shi realizes that life is too short to spend on political resistance. Ge Rixin died in a foreign country where he did not belong. The price he paid for his political zeal was too high. Probably Shi Ping also realizes that he cannot afford to lose Qiu Huimei. Life can end so easily; he should treasure her love and understanding. In any case, when Shi Ping asks Qiu Huimei to wait for him to come back, he has made the decision to take Qiu Huimei as his life partner and to return to Taiwan to carry out his compromise with reality. Finally after so many spiritual debates, Ge's unfair death has freed Shi Ping from his doubts. Probably Shi Ping realizes that compared to death, compromise is not that important. People should live a happy life and enjoy relationships with those they love even despite the need for occasional compromise. Life is too short to waste. In order to live a worthy life, one can compromise to a certain extent. In the end, Shi Ping promises to come back, which means he has decided to compromise with reality and achieved maturity.

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<sup>30</sup> Zhang Xiguo, *Yesterday's Anger*. Page number in text.

Not every person in Zhang Xiguo's works yields to reality at the last. There are those characters who cope with life while simultaneously trying to fulfil their desires. But they act in different ways from those above. Thus, some of them execute their ideas by manipulating other people. Some of them realize that fulfilment consists in acting persistently no matter to what extreme they go. For these people, the meaning of life lies in their choice of action and their efforts to pursue that choice, not only in their achievements.

Representative figures who manipulate others for their own purposes are Professor Liu in *Chess King* and Hong Xianzu in *Yesterday's Anger*. First, they contemplate their strategies and only make decisions after careful consideration. After calculating all the probable facts which may lead to success, finally they choose a suitable way to reach their goals. They never give up their plans, and they do their utmost to fulfil their desires through deliberate moves.

Professor Liu, whom we have already encountered attempting to balance his longing for spiritual freedom with financial needs, is not one to make compromise. He does not deny that in life there are many obstacles, yet neither does he declare that the way to overcome them is through compromise. Instead, he believes that people can achieve their goals by manipulating others to work for them. He looks at life as a chess game in which people have to make moves. He is confident in his beliefs. He even develops a theory to support them. He declares that the route to success is always an indirect one. People have to play well and learn how to use others to help themselves. During a conversation with Cheng Ling, he explains his theory.

When you want to employ someone, you've got to understand a few things: What are his weakness? What are his strengths? Would he be of use to me? What use? How can I make him content? How can I make him work docilely for me? You probably don't have any experience of this type, Mr Cheng. If you've ever been in charge of people, you know that the most difficult thing to learn is *how to make others work for you*. The sages said that some people work with their



bodies, and others with their minds. The first type only knows how to do stupid work. That's the greatest knowledge.<sup>31</sup>

Then he draws from the ancient Chinese text, Sima Guang's *Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government* as the source of his theory and refers to Liddell Hart's strategy as its modern re-confirmation. Basically Professor Liu's theory is rooted in the classic Chinese doctrine.

If someone wants to be successful, he has to learn how to control people. The ancients all had to study the *Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government*. Do you know what it's all about? . . . All that that book records is how people relate to each other. All men's fundamental aspirations are basically the same. *If you can figure out what someone's after, you can figure out how to manipulate him, and you'll be a success. . . .*" Professor Liu laughs. "Have you read Liddell Hart's *Strategy*? His one fundamental principle is that all successful strategies must follow an indirect route. Sima Guang understood this principle a thousand years ago.(133-134)<sup>32</sup>

We can recall Zhang Xiguo's earlier statement that compromise is the way people maintain harmony in their relationships with others. Professor Liu's principle is not to compromise with but to manipulate people. It does not sound decent, but we have to consider his way as coping with reality rather than compromising. Professor Liu summarizes the purpose of his theory: "That's what I say, if you want something done, don't kill yourself doing it. It's better to get someone else to do it for you. That way, you save energy, and you don't suffer. Mental labourers spend all their time thinking of indirect routes. It's the same whether you're playing chess, or managing a business. If you know how to take the indirect route, you'll get unlimited benefits."

When Cheng Ling says: "You might be successful in your factory with that method, Professor Liu, but you can't use it in your studies." Professor Liu gives his revealing view of the academic world.

It's the same thing. Take a look at those big-name professors: one conference or lecture every alternate day, in addition to a sideline in business. Where do they get the time to do any scholarly research? Actually, they don't do any. They find some students to do the leg work for them. If anything comes out

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<sup>31</sup> Zhang Xiguo, *Chess King*, p. 133.

<sup>32</sup> Zhang Xiguo, *Chess King*. Page numbers in text.

of it, they put their own name at the top of the paper. It's the same everywhere: If you don't have to do it yourself, don't. That's the indirect route.(134)

Professor Liu thinks one's success is usually related to how well one can manipulate others to work for him. He concludes that this strategy works in playing chess, doing business and even in academic research.

Hong Xianzu in *Yesterday's Anger* is a similar kind of character. He is clever and shrewd. "There is no such word as 'failure' in his dictionary." (148)<sup>33</sup> He does not compromise with people or objective circumstances; he manages to achieve his goals purely by manipulating people. "After he had struggled in the United States for so many years, finally he learned how to manipulate people." (149) He is extremely selfish and sly. "He only did things after careful calculation. He would never do anything that did not bring him certain rewards. The United States was a country where everything had a price. He had learned to use his time properly in order to get the greatest profits." From the point of view of his wife, Wang Ya-nan, we see that Hong Xianzu spends his whole life making careful plans:

Everything he did had been carefully calculated. He used every single second of his time in a clear-minded way. He did everything according to his plans. Not only when he was working but even when he was socializing he kept his purpose in mind: to win his colleagues' approval; to draw his bosses over to his side; to get to know people who would be useful for his career.(155)

Wang Ya-nan recalls there was one time when he invited many different people over for dinner every week. She was so busy and confused; she did not know what he was trying to do. Only until one day he came back and happily told her that he had been elected as the president of an Air Association did she realize that all the dinners were parts of his scheme. Every guest was his deliberately arranged pawn.

The better she got to know him, the more she realized that he did everything according to his own purposes. Hong never invited any people for dinner without reason. Any friend who had no usefulness to him would be kicked away without mercy. He would never waste his time on useless friendships.(155)

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<sup>33</sup> Zhang Xiguo, *Yesterday's Anger*, Page numbers in text.

Certainly Hong Xianzu is not a person that could merely compromise with the pressures of reality. Instead, he would use all his energy to manipulate people in order to reach his goals.

To manipulate people is not the only way to avoid compromise. There is a more decent way to pursue the ideals of life and struggle with demanding realities. In Zhang Xiguo's writing, there are people who are committed to action and refuse to be pushed around by force. The spirit of their actions can be traced to Jean Paul Sartre's philosophy. This theme is best illustrated in Zhang Xiguo's novel *Chess King*.

*Chess King* is one of the best of Zhang Xiguo's stories. In this novel, the themes and the characters' actions are closely connected. The novel includes nearly all the thematic issues which commonly appear in Zhang Xiguo's writings. The issues of money, darkness, compromise and action are all depicted in this novel through the characters' performances. Professor Michael Duke has made a summary of the thematic patterns of *Chess King*:

The first of these (thematic patterns) is an assertion of the primacy of and absolute necessity for spiritual sustenance in a truly human life. The second is a powerful affirmation of individual human dignity, subjective autonomy, and moral choice. While not ignoring those demands that society may reasonably make on the individual, (the two Chess Master's ) extol the moral autonomy of individual choice in opposition to any form of historical determinism.

The antagonist opposing the first theme is the overall social milieu rather than any specific evil individual. The overall social milieu in Zhang Xiguo's *Chess King* is the rampant materialism of a commercial mass society that threatens to reduce every artistic endeavour to the lowest common denominator of another sort of mindless Philistinism. ... The antagonist opposing the second theme is a reigning ideology, another set of ideas, rather than a particular individual or group. The reigning ideology is "a combination of historical and scientific pessimism which add up to a concept of historical determinism in which the

individual human being's actions are believed to count for nothing in the face of the abstract law of history and physics." (48-49)<sup>34</sup>

The view of historical determinism in *Chess King* is held by the history professor Feng Wei-min and Cheng Ling's brother, Cheng Li. Cheng Ling does not believe in historical determinism but he cannot find a way to rebut it. There are several conversations which show their different understanding of the value of peoples' actions in life.

Cheng Ling says: "Yesterday I argued about it with Feng Wei-min. I don't believe in historical determinism. Those historians. They say everything has to do with the progress of history. I don't buy that line. I'm not a pawn. I do what I want. No one can predict what I'm going to do."

(His brother answers: )"You misunderstood him. Historical determinism doesn't preclude individual choice. The point is that your choice doesn't matter. . . . Historical determinism is like thermodynamics: the free movement of all bodies mutually cancel each other out. All that's left is a conglomerate which indicates direction. *No matter how you run around, the net result is still the same.*"

(Cheng Ling can only answer:)"I'm not going to discuss philosophy with you." (47-48)<sup>35</sup>

Later on Cheng Li engages in another conversation on this topic:

"I once read really strange mathematical biology thesis. All it did was analyze the formation of sunflower petals. . . . You can mathematically explain the formation of a sunflower. Even the angular measure between the petals is in a fixed proportion explainable by the golden section. Imagine, a flower is governed by all those internal laws. Do you think history doesn't have internal laws?"

Once again, Cheng Ling can only reply: "I don't want to debate with you." (77)

In the novel, compromising with the power of money has driven a group of artists to abandon their artistic pursuits and chase after the profits art can bring. We have already discussed in the previous chapter the way money occupies their minds. By contrast, here we emphasize peoples' attempts to avoid compromise with certain ideologies. Cheng Ling does not agree with historical determinism and neither does he want to abandon his artistic career. But he keeps compromising due both to his frustration at his lack of achievement in artistic pursuits and financial pressures. Not until the *shen tong* 神童 "Wonder Kid" or

<sup>34</sup> Duke, "Two *Chess Masters*: One Chinese Way."

<sup>35</sup> Zhang Xiguo, *Chess King*.

"Spirit Child"<sup>36</sup> chooses an unpredictable move in the final scene does Cheng Ling realize that the meaning of life lies in action not only in achievement.

The story starts with Cheng Ling, formerly a professional painter but now a businessman, who has his own advertising agency. Cheng Ling acts as the main thread in the novel: most characters in the story are his friends or relatives. But at centre stage where every other event finally converges, is a prodigy. The prodigy is a ten year old boy who is introduced in a TV program 'Wonder Kids' playing *Gobang* (or Five Piece Go). He has never lost in this game. Cheng Li, Cheng Ling's brother, is amazed by the boy's unbeatable performance. He watches as the boy easily defeats Professor Liu, a former Chess King, in Gobang. He plays several games with the boy but cannot win even once. He becomes suspicious. In order to prove his suspicions, he asks the boy to guess a string of random numbers given by a computer. The boy guesses them all right. The Cheng brothers finally realize that the boy is really clairvoyant.

To discourage Professor Liu's habit of boasting, Cheng Ling challenges him to play chess with the boy. At that time the boy does not know anything about chess. But Cheng Ling thinks that all they need to do is to have the boy predict what moves Professor Liu will make, and then he and his brother will figure out the counter-attack moves according to classic chess manuals, which will beat the professor and lead the boy to final victory. So the boy just needs to play according to the script during the TV show, and there will be no danger of losing. When his brother points out that it is illogical that the boy can conceivably make several different predictions about the future depending on their moves, Cheng Ling thinks it over and then gives his explanation:

"It's perfectly logical. You're just forgetting that *man is a key factor in his decision*. The boy can't simply predict the future based on nothing. First he has to weigh all the elements of fluid situation, then he can decide what the result will be. It's just like what you said yesterday about the light. If his own action is one of the elements, he naturally has to first decide what his own actions will be. Then and only then can he predict a result. If his actions change, then so will the result."

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<sup>36</sup> M. Duke's translation of "shen tong" is "Spirit Child" and D. Zimmerman's is "Wonder Kid."

His brother is stunned: "Do you know what you are saying? If what you are saying is correct, then history is not pre-determined. Our actions can influence history."

Cheng Ling answers: "Of course. I never believed in historical determinism. The kid's gift is that he can predict the outcome of given actions. But that's not to say that his actions are not a factor."(79)

The precursor of the theme that action is as a crucial factor emerges here.

The story develops: Cheng Ling cannot help asking the boy to predict one of stock-market figures for him. He believes the boy's prediction and buys in some stocks. After he has bought them, their value goes up unexpectedly. Cheng Ling cannot resist telling his colleagues about the boy. Gradually, all of his friends find out about the boy's amazing ability. They get together in Cheng Ling's home to discuss how to make money using the boy. But the boy disappears two days before the TV show. It turns out that the history professor Feng Wei-min has kidnapped him. He wants to ask the boy some questions about the future of humanity to satisfy his passion for history and his personal curiosity. When Cheng Ling finds the boy and is about to take him away, Feng still persists in asking the boy to predict the future of mankind. The boy suddenly cries out; a look of terror spreads over his countenance. His triangular face becomes all contorted. His lips turn purple. His whole body looks as if it is receiving an electric shock. He jumps into the air, then falls heavily to the floor. When the boy finally wakes up, Cheng Ling meets the boy's gaze. He knows something is wrong. The gaze is an ordinary twelve-year-old boy's gaze; that clairvoyant depth is gone. Cheng Ling understands instantly: the wonder kid is no more.

All Cheng Ling's friends are depressed about the boy's losing his mysterious power, and worse than that, the TV show cannot be cancelled at this stage. Nevertheless, since the boy has already predicted the moves the professor should make and they have figured out the right scheme to beat the professor, they believe that if Professor Liu plays according to plan, he will lose; if the boy plays according to his own predictions and the scheme, the boy will win. They finally decide to let the boy still play with the professor on TV.

The final scene approaches. During the championship, the boy plays according to the scheme in the first game, he wins easily (it only takes him twelve minutes). In the second game, however, he "deliberately lead off with a different gambit than the one he was told to use and continued to move as he wished on the basis of his own individual volition. Professor Liu moved as predicted for a while, but eventually had to abandon his game plan in the face of the child's unusual moves. In the end, relying on his superior experience Professor Liu wins the second game."<sup>37</sup>

Cheng's brothers and the TV director Zhang are shocked by the boy's change. Cheng Ling claims that the plan was useless now: the boy has already gone against his own predictions, who knows if they had any validity to them any more? Then

The boy slowly lifted up his head, and spoke, softly: "I can play myself."  
Startled, Cheng Ling looked at him. For a split second, he thought that he saw that unfathomable look flash in the boy's eyes. Cheng Ling looked again; the gaze had focused, become dull and uninspired.(171)

Does the boy still have his mysterious power? The writer does not tell us. In the third game, the final one of the championship, the boy once again moves as he wishes.

Obviously, the boy had decided to play by himself, and had completely abandoned their battle plan. Cheng Ling couldn't help admiring the boy's courage. He understood that the boy was taking on quite a challenge. He didn't want to rely on his clairvoyant power he wanted to play chess by himself! A new respect for the boy welled up in Cheng Ling.<sup>38</sup>

Now we will make use of Professor Duke's summary to conclude story: "The boy and Professor Liu played by their wits in response to completely unpredictable moves, the game went down to the wire, and, with great emotional satisfaction to the reader, the Spirit Child triumphed."(55)<sup>39</sup>

Even though the boy has a one hundred percent chance to win the game as long as he keeps playing according to the battle plan, he chooses not to do so. He forsakes a certain final victory in favour of the process of struggle. He dares to face very likely defeat

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<sup>37</sup> Duke M.S., "Two Chess Masters: One Chinese Way," p. 55.

<sup>38</sup> Zhang Xiguo, *Chess King*, p. 172.

<sup>39</sup> Duke, M. S., "Two Chess Masters: One Chinese Way." Page numbers in text.

when he could easily win. He chooses to play by his natural gifts, his wits, not by his predictions. His choice proves to us that the meaning of life is not only in the final victory but also, actually more importantly, in the process used to achieve it. The way people struggle can reveal their courage and dignity. True freedom in peoples' lives come when they dare to make their own choice of their action without worrying about fame or reward. Since they put their best efforts into struggling towards their goals; they are honored by their choices and actions not just by their final achievements.

On the one hand, the boy has shown his courage and dignity in choosing risk and challenge over safety and victory; on the other hand, he gives Professor Liu an equal chance to compete. If the boy had won by playing according to the script, he would not have the chance to use his own wisdom, and Professor Liu would have been cheated and defeated not by the boy but by a carefully calculated plan. By using his wits, the boy achieves a true victory which is based on his own efforts.

Professor Duke summarizes the final climax: "The significant point is not that the Spirit Child won and was declared a 'chess master,' but that his consciously autonomous individual actions changed the course of history, a future history believed to be already determined." (55) The boy's action gives Cheng Ling strong evidence to totally rebut "both Cheng Li's argument that the philosophical interpretation of the physical concept of entropy is that individual human behaviour is without genuine consequence or meaning and Feng Wei-min's historicist assertion that human life is determined by the laws of history." (55)

We see this in the fact that the boy's final action breaks his own prediction about the future. He predicted three games, but played only one. He himself changes his prediction -- his fixed future. Ironically, in the middle of the story, Cheng Ling and his friends had lost faith in the boy's prediction for the stocks. They sold their stocks and sacrificed the money they have could earned. As soon as they did this, the stocks went back up just as the boy had predicted. At the end, the boy himself changes his own prediction. By his alternation, the boy denies the absolute accuracy of his prediction of the future. This is a



proof of anti-determinism. According to determinism, every event has a cause; nature follows set laws. There is no conception of human free will. Depending on his choices of action, the boy can predict others' reflections and the future consequences of events. Furthermore, even when he has already predicted every one of his own and others' future steps, he can still change his action in mid-process and obtain different results according to his new choices. He makes changes by his own free will at particular moments, so his changes are unpredictable and outside the fixed certainty of the future plan. By emphasizing peoples' courageous actions, the story confirms the meaning of human free will and free choice.

The boy's actions during the TV show have a profound impact on Cheng Ling . The day after the TV show, Cheng Ling comes over to visit the boy. He asks the boy whether the boy is still clairvoyant.

The boy looked at him. Cheng Ling suddenly saw a laugh in that gaze. . . There was a warmth and tenderness in his gaze. "I don't need to be clairvoyant," the boy said. "I can play myself."

Cheng Ling relaxed. He thought of his painting. He could still paint. He hadn't given up. He said to himself: You don't have to worry about the boy. Everything's okay. As long as you do your best, you don't have to worry about anyone, Everything's okay.(181)<sup>40</sup>

He realizes that as long as he tries his best, everything is okay. The meaning of life is in his actions, in his efforts. The boy does not want to use or rely on his supernatural power to achieve his victory, but to play by his intelligence. "I can play myself." The boy wants to act, to use his wits, not his clairvoyant power. He does not care about the final victory. If he cares too much about the fame and the rewards of his playing, he might not have the courage to give up certain victory and take the risk of free action. Cheng Ling thinks of his painting. He had been worrying too much about his final achievement; he had felt ashamed that he could only be a second-rate painter no matter how hard he tried; he had compromised with the material needs of life because he lost faith about the value of his

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<sup>40</sup> Zhang Xiguo, *Chess King*.

artistic pursuit. Now he realizes that he has been worrying too much, all he can and he must do is just to try his best. Not by compromise but by his actions he can discover the meaning of life.

Professor Liu in "Chess Master" and Dr. Hong Xianzu in *Yesterday's Anger* achieve their goals by manipulating people. The boy in "Chess King" represents another way to cope with reality: to choose free action and to struggle without being concerned about final results. By making his choice, by his actions, he has already conquered reality. He has freed himself from bondage to people and to society. He chooses to carry out his own will and refuses to accept any fixed play even when it is predicted by himself and planned by others to reach an absolute victory. If we say Professor Liu's strategy is drawn mainly from traditional Chinese culture, the boy's action is a reflection of Jean Paul Sartre's philosophy. We have mentioned that Zhang Xiguo was very fond of the thought of Jean Paul Sartre. When he was attending university in Taiwan, he published his translation of some of Sartre's works. Zhang Xiguo is a writer whose works carry his philosophical messages. The traces of Jean Paul Sartre's philosophy can be seen clearly in his "Chess King."

People who do not wish to compromise but do not have the power to act either finally become bystanders. They bear the sense of guilt in their minds because of their impotence. Their friends might consider them to be traitors; they think of themselves as unfaithful too. They are powerless to fulfil their beliefs about life, and unable to remain faithful to their ideals. They can only sit there and watch. Zhang Xiguo's short story "The Bystander" (Shou wang zhe) talks about this kind of person.

"The Bystander" is divided into two kinds of narration. One part is a realistic description of certain events; the other is the protagonist's inner dialogue with himself. This dialogue reveals the inner struggles that the protagonist is going through. All of the dialogue is placed in brackets. Right from the beginning of the story, the dialogue starts.

(You should try to protect them. You should not keep silent.) ...  
 (You should not be silent. You cannot forsake them.)  
 ( But what can I do? Why don't you go to blame others? I am not a priest;  
 I am not a prophet. Why should I be the one to protect my brothers?)  
 (You have forsaken your brothers. You are cursed. Look at your hands.  
 What's in your hands? Are they rocks? How can you say you are not guilty?)  
 (No, I am not. I want to wash my hands clean.)  
 (Your hands are still dirty. You cannot keep silent.)  
 Another night without sleep.(96)<sup>41</sup>

He feels he is guilty because he is unable to help his brothers. The voice reminds him of his responsibilities. He wants to avoid taking the burden of helping his brother maybe because he thinks all actions are useless and there is nothing he can really do.

(Your brothers, can you call them your brothers?)  
 (I don't know. I have already fulfilled my duty.)  
 (What is your duty?)  
 (I don't know. I hope I can find out.)  
 ... There was a pile of old letters lying in the drawer. "Good brother, we all depend on you." It's useless. Totally useless. He cannot do anything. ... Very cold. He turned the light off, and sat in the darkness. It's useless. Totally useless. He cannot do anything.(102)

He feels so powerless and frustrated. He cannot do anything helpful. All he can do is just sit there. He knows that no matter where he goes, he cannot escape his responsibilities. Since he has no strength to carry his share, he fails to achieve anything.

(I am forever limited in my subjective existence. I cannot escape. It's useless to struggle.)  
 (But you still have responsibilities. As long as you are alive, you must carry on your responsibilities.)  
 ...  
 (Your sin cannot be atoned. You cannot forsake them again.)  
 (I tell you, there is nothing I can do.)  
 (You are a traitor. What are you afraid to lose? Your position? Your reputation?)  
 (I have nothing to lose. Let me keep watching here. The place where my brothers are is day time.) (106-107)

The writer does not give a clear explanation of what the protagonist should fulfil, he just tells us how frustrated and distraught the protagonist feels. At the end of the story, the protagonist still cannot find a way out. He can only stay awake and watch in the darkness night by night.

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<sup>41</sup> Zhang Xiguo, "The Bystander," *Zhang's Self-Selected Works*, Page numbers in text.

Another sleepless night. ... Another sleepless night. When the sky was turning grey, he was still sitting there, watching. Watching over the brothers he had forsaken. Two lines of tears dropped down his face. ...Another sleepless night.(107)

The protagonist in “The Bystander” is a bystander in life. He knows his limitations and that his efforts are powerless. He does not declare a compromise with reality, and he does not act to fulfil his goals. He just watches and confesses his guilt at being a bystander.

In the face of invisible powers, the people in Zhang Xiguo's works seek different ways to deal with reality. None of these people are totally evil, but they all have their weaknesses. Some of them compromise with or act against what they do not accept. Some of them have no strength to take any actions whatsoever, and do not want to compromise either, so they become bystanders.

The themes of Zhang Xiguo's writing focus on peoples' spiritual search for the meaning of their lives. As we have already mentioned in the first chapter, Zhang Xiguo is very concerned about human life, about peoples' spiritual commitments in a changing world. The choices and actions of his characters can be taken as possible answers to wandering people in their spiritual search. We should keep Zhang Xiguo's confession in our mind: "I write for people." His writing fulfils his original purpose of writing.

## Chapter Four

## The Conquerors Are Conquered

Zhang Xiguo does not write many articles to discuss his understanding of male and female relationships, but there are certain patterns in the relationships between men and women in his writing. In his stories, most of the time men and women do not live in harmony. The basic pattern is that men desire to conquer women by financial power and sexual seduction. But during the process of conquering, men are actually conquered by women through sex and lose control of their money as well.

The first of Zhang Xiguo's stories that should be mentioned in this context is his short story "Zheng fu zhe" (The Conquerors). The name of the story mentions some conquerors, but these obvious conquerors are conquered in the story by those whom they originally defeat. Xinchu, the protagonist in the story, is obsessed with the desire to conquer his present lover Lily. Right from the beginning of the story, sex is an important element of their relationship. The first paragraph of the story portrays their sexual behaviour.

"Let me be on top, okay?"

He lay back flat, both hands caressing her tender breasts. She sighed and closed her eyes.

He felt as if his flesh were burning. . . . he stroked her delicate skin. . . . He hugged her tightly, enjoying his fill of her perfect, sumptuous flesh. (125)<sup>42</sup>

Yet sex is not the merely enjoyable feature of their relationship that it appears in the first paragraph. Consciously, they each use sex as a weapon to conquer the other. The one who loses in sex is the one who will ultimately be conquered.

When he was about to ejaculate, she would squeeze it tightly at the base, briefly causing him to groan with pain; then she would interrogate him: "Feel good? Do you love me?" He would respond vaguely. Quite unwilling to give up, she would ask him again. He would say in a loud voice that he loved her. . . . She enjoyed, at the most intense moments of their lovemaking, pressing him to tell her whether or not he loved her. His declarations and her interrogations were equally futile, yet they never tired of the game just

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<sup>42</sup>Zhang Xiguo, "The Conquerors," *Worlds of Modern Chinese Fiction* (New York, M.E.Sharpe Inc., 1991). Page numbers in text.

the same. *Her skill could undoubtedly conquer all men.* Her fair, naked image would often appear afterwards in his memory, calling to him with open arms.(126-127)

He is attracted to her flesh. Even though he can still make objective judgements analyzing her behaviour and criticizing her manipulation, his male ego starts yielding to her feminine power. He tries to regain control by pretending that he will abandon her in the end to teach her a lesson. But he cannot help being more and more drawn towards her. Her apparent giving in sex is actually taking. She gradually takes control of their sexual relationship:

"It's all yours. We'll do it whatever way you like, okay?"

She would then close her eyes and lie languidly in his embrace as if she were indeed prepared to surrender him everything. When he became aroused, she would hug the pillow and laugh maliciously at his excited member. This was always when he felt the most uncomfortable; it was only at such time that he might wonder who was actually playing with whom. If she were ever to stop loving him, would she drop him without the slightest hesitation just like she would treat some other boyfriend? Perhaps he ought to be the first one to make move and let her have a taste of rejection for once.

...  
Anais Nin, he thought, even when she was making love she didn't forget to show off. He began to get hard again and pushed her down on the bed; she didn't offer any further resistance.(127)

He wants to conquer her physically but he cannot resist her aggressive charms. Gradually, it is as if he becomes addicted to her. He unconsciously surrenders himself to the subject he wants to control.

Gazing at her milky white flesh, he became excited again. He never ceased longing to possess her, and his desire was becoming more and more feverish. She was Salome; she was the Whore of Babylon; she was Ianthe; she was Pan Jinlian; she was lust incarnate; he had to have her. If one could destroy oneself in the flames of desire, then let those flames burn him up! Let the ashes from his bones be sprinkled all over her naked flesh, forever to lightly kiss her soft breasts, her supple skin, and the soft down between her buttocks ... he would never regret it.(128)

He is held captive both by her physical attractions and by his own desires. He is beginning to descend from his position of conqueror. It is not that he has no experience like other naive people. He has a proud past; he has conquered many girls, making them feel that they could not live without him. "Spectacles (Xin) pulled open the bottom drawer of the desk and took out several batches of old letters. Some of the letter paper had already yellowed. Already he was unable to remember clearly how many among them he had conquered."(130) Anna Chu is one of those he has conquered who is finally abandoned by him. After he announces his final farewell to

Anna Chu, Anna says softly, "She could destroy you, Xin; I feel sorry for you." (127) The echo of her prediction comes back several times when Xin is more and more attached to Lily.

Despite his past successes, Xin finally meets his match, and Lily is the one who can conquer his body and soul. He is transformed from conqueror to conquered.

At first, Lily appears sexy and weak. She surrenders her sexual body and reveals her spiritual weakness to the one who is seeks to conquer her. She tells Xin about her strong-willed mother and aunt and about her ambitious uncle. Her mother and aunt are very close, and Lily feels that neither likes her. Crying, she talks about how she failed to please. Her tears opens the door of her conqueror's heart. In fact, her weakness softens her conqueror. Lily's revelation of her weakness is really part of her power to conquer and destroy him. Lily has shown her weak spot, her pain, but it does not mean that she is conquered. On the contrary, her weakness becomes her strength. By confessing her weakness, she paves a road right into the man's heart. When they become sufficiently close, Lily starts gaining control over Xin not only by her physical attraction but also by attacking his confidence and faith. The man is sinking deeply to the bottom of a sexual trap and becomes more and more vulnerable to Lily's assault.

In the story, the woman combines the lure of sex and the image of love in a two-pronged attack.

The man worships her body:

... he now knew that what he worshipped with his whole heart and soul was in fact Lily's soft, serpentine body, and above all her tender white bosom. His entire being was submerged within it, never wanting to come to the surface.

The woman concentrates on gaining full control of the man:

But each time he finished, he could not bear her persistent asking whether or not he really loved her. She would wrap herself around him like a grapevine, not letting him get out of bed.

"That's enough now, I have to get up and do some writing."

She continued to tease him. Sometimes he would become aroused again and the tension would be temporarily relieved. Sometimes he would suddenly feel an immeasurable exasperation; she would unfortunately sense this and choose the occasion to attack his weak point.

"You don't have to put on an act for me, you can't even write good poetry anyway."

He simply could not understand why she was being so cruel. Five minutes before he had been inside her and she had been crying out his name in ecstasy. *Now she was sitting at the head of the bed, teasing him like a hunting dog guarding its prey, allowing him no chance of escape.* At least he had never criticized her poor singing. Magnanimity was not one of her virtues.

"All you know how to do is play around. There are lots of men around the West Gate area, why don't you just go and grab one?"

She shrugged her small shoulders.

"Actually, I couldn't care less. I was doing you a favour. What's wrong with coming up with another excuse for your inability to write poems?"

He fled to the study. Half an hour later she came in, her face covered in tears, and kissed him.

"We mustn't fight any more, okay? You don't know how much I'm suffering. If you don't care for me, who else will?"

She opened her night clothes and pressed her milk-white breasts tightly against him. He was compelled to open his mouth and to bite down hard on the cherry-like nipples swaying in front of him, knowing full well that it would do no good. In spite of this fact, as long as he could still do it he was secure.(130-131)

Lily's surrenders here gives him the misguided impression that though he might have fallen from the throne of spiritual conqueror, he still retains his position as conqueror in sex. As long as he can still grasp this, he feels, she might be under his control. His sense of security does not last long however. He soon realizes that sex is no longer an effective weapon for countering the woman. Rather, she takes it over as the tool used to conquer him completely.

He took her once while she was sound asleep. She woke up, and with her eyes still closed and a smile on her face, she wrapped her legs tightly around him. In that instant he knew he was finished, already beyond salvation.

'She could destroy you, Xin; I feel sorry for you.'(134)

Once again Anna Chu's weeping voice sounds in his mind just as he senses his attachment to Lily. He is attracted to Lily more and more deeply. He is conquered by her flesh. He grows weak psychologically. He starts becoming jealous and angry when he senses that he cannot keep Lily forever.(140)

Before it was always Lily who kept asking whether he loved her or not. Now Xin bitterly admits to himself that he loves Lily. Ironically, this time it is not Lily who is worried about loyalty, it is Xin. He is losing his confidence about possessing Lily, and must even face the possibility of being abandoned by her.

After Lily comes back from Singapore, they have a talk in bed. Even though they still declare their love for each other, there are distinct signs of separation in their conversation. Right



after repeating their I love you's, they both propose a split. The man's motive is to regain control of the relationship, the woman, however, is sincere: she has already planned on leaving him.(141-42) When Xin mentions that they should split up, he is playing a trick to make Lily more attached to him. But this time, Lily does not give in. Instead of begging him to stay, she reveals that she is thinking of marrying somebody else. Now it is Xin's turn to say "I love you" to Lily regardless of the fact that he is the one who first proposes the split. Lily's reaction is dramatic in some way. She cries and stops her crying all in seconds, and she does not forget to attack his weak spot one more.

Comparing himself to Lily's crazy uncle, Xin realizes that both of them are conquerors only in their dreams. Lily's crazy uncle dreams to conquer South Asia while Xin dreams to conquer women. They are fighting their enemies in their dreams. In reality, all their efforts and struggles are only in vain.(142)

Compared to the beginning when Lily opened her arms towards him, the conclusion shows a strong contrast. At the end, Lily leaves Xin. She gives him false promises of love, but even what he knows to be lies can comfort the man who is losing her.

He knew this was only a pretext: all her bags had long since been packed. Standing there in front of him, she looked so delicate, so alluring. Perhaps she may have prepared her lines beforehand, but coming from her lips, they still moved him.

"I can never be apart from you. Even though we are separating, I'll always have a part of you within me, and you'll always keep a part of me."

But there was already no traces of the enemy in Nanning.(142-143)

Just as Xin had left Anna Chu and all the other girls he had conquered, Lily left him. At the beginning of the story, Lily surrenders herself to Xin. Xin is a successful conqueror. In the end, Xin has grown attached to Lily but Lily leaves him. The conqueror is conquered and abandoned.

A similar pattern appears in "Bu xiu zhe" (The Immortals). At first, Wang Xiaoling, a thirty-four year old woman, is Lan Qi's mistress. She is in an inferior position in the relationship with Lan Qi. She has to be very considerate to avoid causing any trouble for him. In the beginning of the story, she is waiting for Lan Qi who is late.

That man still didn't come. Wang Xiaoling anxiously looked out from a window on the hotel's seventh floor. The street lights were lit one by one; the peak hours when the streets were full of people going home from work had long since passed. What would be the excuse he would use this time? She stroked her bare arms. The excessive air conditioning made her feel cold. Only a fool like her could wait for him in such a stubborn way.(128)<sup>43</sup>

Wang Xiaoling feels insecure and reluctant to accept her inferior position in her relationship with Lan Qi, but she is conquered by him. She is willing to sacrifice her pride to satisfy him.

She loved to listen to his talk. A man's voice should be like his. He did everything, including sex, in a slow and calm manner. . . . from the night in the motel for teachers, she had been giving of her own free will. She knew that he would not leave his wife. But she had made up her mind to be with him, and she would not regret it. It was useless to have regrets. There were too many other things more deserving of regret.(129)

Wang Xiaoling surrenders herself to a married man with no hope for the future. She devotes herself to Lan Qi.

Lan Qi is the conqueror at the beginning. He uses his career success and his personal charms to win Wang's admiration and love. After he has achieved his goal of conquering her, he becomes bored. He considers leaving her. This reminds us of a similar intention of Xin in "The Conquerors." Xin considered leaving Lily after the first round of their relationship.

Lan Qi tried hard not to show his bored expression and patiently listened to Wang Xiaoling's narration. Women were all like this; sooner or later they would tell you their life stories and defend their behaviour. (141)

Lan's view the relationship between men and women is like the hunter and the hunted. The aim of hunting is to conquer and later on to abandon. All separations are parts of the game. In "The Conquerors," Xin also thinks of abandoning Lily in order to "teach her a lesson;" in other words, to become the victor.

Lan Qi's experienced past echoes Xin's success in the past. Lan Qi is not serious about this relationship either. After he has conquered Wang Xiaoling, he cares more about his reputation and independence than Wang Xiaoling's affection. But Wang Xiaoling's recollections of her bitter past soften Lan's decision. He hesitates to deliver the final card and decides to hold on for a while instead of breaking up with her right now. Yet, he does not really love Wang Xiaoling and he is

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<sup>43</sup> Zhang Xiguo, "Bu xiu zhe"(The Immortals), *Bu xiu zhe* (The Immortals, Hongfan, 1983). Page numbers in text.

still afraid that Wang Xiaoling might give him trouble in the relationship.(144) On the other side, Wang Xiaoling, after she is conquered by Lan Qi's personality, also decides to conquer Lan.

She made up her mind to capture Lan Qi. . . . *She was not a woman who could admit defeat easily even though she knew that it was a war and she had no hope of victory.*  
(145)

She senses Lan Qi's intention to break up with her and feels desperate. Like any other conquered women, she begs for the conqueror's love. Her love toward Lan Qi even surpasses the love she has for her only child.(149) Wang Xiaoling also thinks of the struggle to maintain a relationship with Lan Qi as fighting a war. Relationships between man and woman are always like this. People have to try hard to keep their beloved ones. She tells herself: "It is an ancient war, there is never a winner. People fight for love but die for hate. What is the unchangeable thing?"(151) Eventually she realizes that Lan Qi has never seriously considered their relationship; she becomes angry about this unequal love.(152)

Near the end of the story, Wang Xiaoling and her sister decide to go to Los Angeles. Before Wang leaves, she considers whether she should go to talk to Lan Qi. Lan Qi is not doing well in his political career. She does not love him as she did previously. Now she thinks instead more about the price Lan Qi should pay for this relationship.

He should pay some price. Maybe the time had come to pay off his debts. But did she really want him? Or was it something else that she could not clearly articulate? Maybe she should go to meet him. But maybe her sister was right: she should let him worry for a while. While she was standing in the middle of the room which was already cleared, caressing her bare arms, her sister came over and stopped beside her.

"Sis, stop thinking, he will surrender."

Would he surrender? Did she want him to surrender? Wang Xiaoling felt confused.(155)

Wang Xiaoling's position in their relationship is improving. She starts to gain control of her own feelings. Lan Qi, on the other hand, falls from the conqueror's position. Contrasting the conclusion with the beginning, we see a similar scene happening again. There is the same hotel, same room and same window. The description is exactly the same as the one at the beginning of the story. The only difference is that now Lan Qi waits impatiently in the hotel. His mood swings

from anger and resentment at Wang's estrangement to a strong affection and longing for their past happiness, and then to a kind of love.

She still did not come. Lan Qi anxiously looked out from a window on the hotel's seventh floor. Street lights were lit one by one; the peak hours when the streets were full of people going home from work had long since passed. It used to be her who always waited for him before. (156)

Then he gets really angry about Wang's not showing up. He starts blaming those "heartless women" who do not love him but his power. He thinks he has treated Wang well enough, and she is so cruel that she abandons him when he is low. Combining his loss in political and love field, he feels he is totally defeated. In his moody self pity, he remembers how beautiful Wang looks. "Why did he not think to treasure this feeling? He felt regretful." He regrets that he did not care about the relationship enough. Although he has his glorious past, he starts having doubts about his own attraction. He senses the possibility that he might lose Wang. When he realizes that he too might get old, his final defence collapses. He thinks he has fallen in love with Wang Xiaoling. He admits his surrender.

He looked at himself in the mirror; he suddenly appeared much older than before. His hair was half white; it was not like this a few months ago. Xiaoling! He madly shouted her name in his mind. No, he could not let her go away like this. He must do something. She still did not come. Maybe she would not come at all. He must think of some plan. He could not give up like this.

So for the first time in his life, he felt he was in love.(157)

After he realizes that it might be his own fault that Wang has left him, he does not blame her any more; on the contrary, he becomes aware that he has fallen in love with her. His regrets and his confession of love indicate that he has surrendered himself to his partner. In other words, he has fallen from the position of a conqueror, and he is conquered by his former victim.

*Sha zhu chuan qi* (The Stories of Chauvinist Husbands) is a collection of short stories which mainly deal with relationships between men and women. In this book, the pattern of "the conqueror is conquered" once more appears very obviously in "Ai Nu" (The Slave of Love).

In “The Slave of Love,” as in the other stories we have mentioned, at first the male character Hu Qifeng is the conqueror in the relationship with his mistress Sha Li. He controls the pace of their relationship and decides frequency of the dating.

The story starts around Hu Qifeng's thirty-fifth birthday, when his mistress Sha Li gives him a pair of handcuffs as a birthday gift. The gift has special sexual connotations; it indicates the intimate physical relationship between Hu Qifeng and Sha Li. Sha Li's giving Hu a pair of handcuffs reveals that she is willing to surrender herself up totally to Hu's physical charm. As she tells Hu: “Last time, did you not say that you would like to tie me up and have some fun? Now you have these, you can handcuff me any time and do whatever you like.”(52)<sup>44</sup> Hu Qifeng's heart wavers at the mention of this. He could imagine how sexy she would be when he handcuffed her. But he still refuses to spend even a couple of hours with her because he has a meeting that afternoon. He is preparing for a business trip to Taiwan, so he has a lot of things to do at his company. Hu Qifeng believes that “the joys of the flesh were a great enjoyment in life, but should not hinder serious business. The trade with Taiwan was very important to him. Whether he could get a promotion would depend on his behaviour during this trip. Besides, Sha Li would always wait for him.”(55)

Hu's mind is clear and concentrated on his career. He does not take the affair with Sha Li too seriously.

It is obvious that he is the conqueror in his relationship with Sha Li. He looks down on women he has conquered. He likes to share physical pleasures with them, but when he has his own business to do, he does not hesitate to put the relationship second in his considerations. He does not want to give up his own interests to fulfil the other's demands, yet at the same time he takes her affection and devotion for granted.

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<sup>44</sup> Zhang Xiguo, “Ai Nu”(The Slave of Love), *Sha zhu chuan qi* (Stories of Chauvinist Husbands, Hongfan, 1988). Page numbers in text.

In the evening, Sha Li calls him again. After some sexual flirtation, she confesses that she is his love slave and begs him to spend time with her. Hu Qifeng insists that they wait until he finishes his business and comes back from Taiwan. Sha Li says:

"Maybe when you come back, I won't be here any more."

"Are you going on a business trip? Or is it Adam (Sha Li's husband)?"

Sha Li did not answer. Hu Qifeng could guess what she was doing.

"Don't cry. Sha Li, I will be back in two weeks."

"When I need you, you are never with me." Sha Li said, crying: "You think I only want to do that thing. Actually, if we can be together, we do not have to do anything."

Hu Qifeng comforted her for a while, then found an excuse to hang up the phone. When women started being serious, things would become complicated. It was good that he was going to Taiwan. Let it cool down for a while. Every time Sha Li threatened to leave him, he knew she would wait for him to come back anyway.(58)

Hu nearly loses patience when he is listening to Sha Li's begging. He is not moved by Sha Li's tears and sentimental pleading. He thinks those are tools that women use to control men. He does not buy those things. He is in total control of their relationship. Nothing can change his decision, not even Sha Li's crying.

Hu Qifeng recalls how he met Sha Li; he thinks he has never loved Sha Li and Sha Li is only his sexual partner. Sha Li was from Hong Kong. They met each other playing tennis together. During the time Hu Qifeng's wife was pregnant, Hu Qifeng's eyes became red due to his lack of sex. When Sha Li asked him about his eyes, he dramatically knelt down to ask Sha Li to show compassion for him. They became sexual partners. Even Sha Li's marriage did not stop her going back to Hu Qifeng.(62)

After Hu Qifeng comes back from Taiwan, he never sees Sha Li again. A similar route starts again. Like Lan Qi in "The Immortals", at first Hu Qifeng is confident of his own attractiveness and Sha Li's love; later he becomes angry about Sha Li's estrangement. Finally, when he realizes that he might lose her, just like Lan Qi, Hu starts recalling Sha Li's kindness and her devotion. He regrets that he did not care about her. In the end he thinks he has fallen in love with Sha Li.(64) In the beginning Sha Li does not call at all. Finally, Hu Qifeng cannot hold on any longer; he calls Sha Li's working place. He is told that Sha Li had left and nobody knew

where she was now. Hu Qifeng calls her at home, but there is only an answering machine. He finds out that Adam has gone to New York.

Once more, the process of the conqueror being conquered begins. Hu Qifeng becomes angry. He cannot take this challenge to his conqueror's position. He thinks Sha Li is trying to torture him. He does not believe that Sha Li would want to leave him.

Maybe she wanted to get rid of him? Hu Qifeng could not imagine how Sha Li could live without him. He remembered that she said many times she could not have any fun with Adam. . . . Sha Li said to him, embracing him tightly. "It is not like when I am with you, I never feel bored." . . . He believed that Sha Li would not want to get rid of him.(65)

Gradually, the anger passes away. He still keeps the pair of handcuffs that Sha Li has given to him for his birthday. "He never imagined that Sha Li would leave him before they had a chance to use it even once." He recalls Sha Li's pleading on his birthday. He thinks:

When Sha Li gave him the handcuffs, she was not thinking of leaving him. So, she really intended to let him handcuff and play with her. Such trust, such a sincere heart! Hu Qifeng was moved by a sudden flow of emotion. He nearly cried. He started regretting that he had lost Sha Li.(67)

This is the turning point when Hu Qifeng falls from the conqueror's throne. He remembers that Sha Li had two abortions because of him. He remembers how Sha Li has suffered.(71) Hu Qifeng has been transformed into the "slave of love." He was the recipient of the handcuffs. He was supposed to use them to control his slave of love, Sha Li. Yet, now he is planning to let Sha Li do anything she likes to him. He is totally conquered by Sha Li spiritually and physically. "He could caress the handcuffs and imagine Sha Li's charming body. Then he would masturbate." All his memories of Sha Li come back to torture him. He recalls their sexual talk and enjoyment. "Hu Qifeng's eyes were often red now. ... The trade with Taiwan came off. But it was another Taiwanese who was sent to Taiwan as president of the new branch company. Still, Hu Qifeng did not feel upset. His whole mind was set on that pair of handcuffs: the handcuffs from his slave of love; those shining steel handcuffs would never get rusty."(73) Like Xin in "The Conquerors Are Conquered," Hu loses his interests in his work which was so important to him. He does not care about the business he engaged in and the promotion he tried to get. He only thinks about Sha Li.

In the end, his wife leaves him because of his sexual abuse. After that:

Hu Qifeng did not have contacts with Chinese people any more. So nobody knew his fate. Somebody said he got married to a tall, red-haired, sexy Jewish girl and lived a happy life from then on. Someone said he remained as a bachelor. He always carried that pair of handcuffs and tried to find prostitutes who would let him to do what he wanted. And someone said he became masochistic. He went everywhere asking women to handcuff him and whip him. He would cry and shout out the name of his slave of love.(73-74)

The fate is not clear for Hu Qifeng, but we can be certain of one thing : he is no longer a conqueror. Instead he has been conquered by the sexual image of his former victim. The handcuffs which were bought for him to control Sha Li are ultimately fixed on him mentally and physically. He is now the slave of love.

Through these stories, we can see one basic thematic pattern: at the beginning, the man is the conqueror in his relationship with the woman. He plays the leading role. The woman is in an inferior position; she does not get much return for what she has given. But as the story develops, the woman gradually gains control relationship, usually through sex. At the end when she accumulates enough strength to leave the man, the man breaks down. He regrets that he has not cared enough about the relationship. He is not a conqueror any more; he is conquered by the woman.

This pattern has another form: the man intends to use the woman, but it ends up with him being used by the woman formerly under his control.

In “Jie ling zhe” (The One Who Unties the Bell), Guo, a writer, receives a letter from one of his female friends. She tells him of her disappointment about her marriage and invites him to come over. Guo thinks she wants his help. To show gratitude for her appreciation of his writings and just for a vacation, he decides to visit her. But at the end he finds out that the purpose of her invitation is to use him to stimulate her husband's jealousy. Her husband has been keeping a mistress for three years. So, she wants to show him that she has an admirer too. Guo has to play the role he is assigned. He feels angry even though he has saved her marriage. The woman uses a man to fulfil her own purposes, and the man who was so confident about his judgement of her in



fact does not perceive her intentions at all. He can only submit himself to the situation and be used by the woman.

In “Cong tianshang diao xia lai de ren”(Man Who Fell From the Sky), Zuo Pei is a bad guy, huai ren in the story. He boasts that he has conquered the most admirable girl in the school, Ding Xiaopei and tries to undermine her reputation. No-one believes him, because Ding Xiaopei is a saint-like girl. She always wears white dresses which seems to indicate her innocence, and she has a pleasant manner. Later on, Zuo Pei gets married with Ding Xiaopei, and relying on management skills, opens a school for people who have failed the college entrance exams to prepare for the coming examinations. Just at the crucial period right before the exams, Ding Xiaopei leaves Zuo Pei and goes off with a priest. The school collapses. Moreover, in the end she leaves the priest too. She has destroyed or changed two men's lives. When she then asks the narrator to work with her, the narrator refuses. The narrator thinks to himself: “No, all she really loves is the cash till. If this woman can make two men lose their reputation and position for her; then she must be the woman 'with a face that sank a thousand ships.’”<sup>45</sup>

In either form, the pattern is the same: women become the real conquerors in the end, and men, the former conquerors, are conquered or used by women.

The so called “love” in “the conquerors are conquered” pattern is not a common one. In fact, gaining the partner’s love has become a sign of a conqueror. The one who is conquered feels that she or he is in love with the other one. In some way, to love is to surrender in this pattern. Love becomes a white flag in the battle field of male and female relationships. The men who are conquered by their former victims all wave the flag of love at last. This is a bitter irony in Zhang Xiguo’s writing. He does not consider this kind of love as a romantic result of healthy relationships but rather as a surrender of former conquerors.

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<sup>45</sup>Zhang Xiguo, “Cong tianshang diao xia lai de ren” (Man Who Fell From The Sky), *Stories of Chauvinist Husbands*, p. 46.

There is another kind of pattern in the relationships between men and women in Zhang Xiguo's writing. In this pattern, the men and women become open enemies. They fight each other consciously. In the end, one of them loses and the other wins; there is no compromise. In this pattern, there is still a shadow of the first pattern. We can hear an echo of "conqueror is conquered." But this pattern shows more the hostility between men and women instead of the so called love of the first pattern. The fighting is relatively mild in "Shi qi" (Test Thy wife). Then, in *Yesterday's Anger*, the conflict between Wang Ya-nan and Hong Xianzu drives them to court. Finally, the hostility between men and women reaches a peak in "Sha qi" (Kill Thy Wife).

In "Test Thy Wife," the male/female struggle is somewhat mild and funny. The main character Zhuang Qingdian is a professor in a university in the States. After he has divorced his first wife, he goes back Taiwan, to be a guest professor in a Taiwan university. There he meets his second wife, Gu Xiuxia, who is twenty years younger than he is. He does not really love her; he is more interested in her close girl-friend. After he comes back to the States, he offers Gu and her girl friend scholarships to invite them over. But only Gu comes to his university as his student. Since he could not get the girl he wanted, he settles on his second choice. He is not very satisfied by this marriage. Every time he thinks about the girl he was fond of, he loses his temper with his wife Gu.<sup>(81)</sup><sup>46</sup> The unfulfilled longing has created a bad atmosphere in the marriage. Moreover he is a very suspicious person, so he always tries to test her.

First of all is the issue of money. He suspects that Gu saves money for herself without telling him. So he calculates all their expenses once every three to five days. To test her, he writes down the wrong number. Then several days later, he would ask "why is it one hundred dollars short?" He would wait to see Gu's reaction in order to judge whether she is guilty.<sup>(82)</sup> He also suspects that Gu is having close relationships with his American colleagues. He gives Gu a great number of rules, such as requiring her, when she is away, to call home once every hour to report her behaviour. Gu fights with him frequently, but because the house and cars are under

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<sup>46</sup> Zhang Xiguo, "Shi qi" (Test Thy Wife), *Stories of Chauvinist Husbands*. Page numbers in text.

Zhuang's name, she has no economic power. She cannot gain any control and Zhuang never changes. Finally, Gu leaves him. The fight stops, but there is no compromise.

A year later, Zhuang marries again. This time his wife is Jing Yulan who is from mainland China. She is more than twenty years younger than Zhuang, and she does not have as much education as Zhuang's other ex-wives. In this third marriage, Zhuang still performs all the tricks of his other marriages. He is suspicious and stingy. But Jing does not fight with him verbally. She corrects his miscalculations. She does not ask to learn how to drive. She walks to the shopping centre instead. She takes the bus to school to learn English. She is tender and obedient. Later on, when Zhuang is in bad physical condition and has to stay in the hospital, he puts all his property under Jing's name. But Jing passes this test too. She does not waste any money. After Zhuang leaves the hospital, he suffers a stroke. Jing invites her distant uncle over from mainland China to take care of Zhuang and she goes out to work. Zhuang dies two years later. Jing gets married with her distant uncle soon after Zhuang's death.

Suddenly there were rumours going around, that Jing's distant uncle was really her original husband and that Zhuang knew about it. . . . Other people said that Zhuang Qingdian did not know. Later on, when he found out, it was too late. All his property was already in Jing's hands. Zhuang Qingdian shot birds all his life, finally his eyes were pecked by birds. He really regretted that.(92)

The fighting comes to an end because of Zhuang's death. Yet, in fact, Jing has already defeated Zhuang's harassment by her soft approach. She has got what she wants. Zhuang lost his power and control even before his death.

In other stories, the fight between man and woman is not so mild as in "Test Thy Wife." In "Test Thy Wife," the struggle is just at the annoying stage. In *Yesterday's Anger*, the conflict between Wang Ya-nan and Hong Xianzu breaks out into a full scale war. They get married when Wang is still in her third year of university. Hong, like Zhuang Qingdian, has a doctor's degree in science. But he is not only a professor. He is also a research scholar and shrewd businessman in the United States. They divorce once and Wang goes back to Taiwan. Hong comes straight after her to try to save their marriage. He convinces her of his love, and they get married again. Later on the conflict increases, and they split up once again. Wang goes to live with a Chinese student

named Ge Rixin. To fight for the right to raise their only daughter and to settle the issue of alimony, they finally come to court. Before they come into court, both of them recall their past marriage from their own point of view.

From Hong Xianzu's eyes, it is all Wang's fault that the marriage does not work out. He thinks he has given her every thing she needs but she is still not satisfied. He has his own business to attend to, but Wang always disturbs him. He remembers that once he had an important business meeting, but Wang did not want him to go. She lay down in front of his car. All the neighbours were laughing behind their windows. At last, he had to drive out over the lawn and ruined the newly planted turf.(146)<sup>47</sup>

He had tried so hard for so long, but he still could not conquer her. Why? . . . Anger was like a snake biting Hong Xianzu's heart. He could not admit defeat. . . . He did not want to go to court. But to protect his own interests, he was determined not to withdraw even half a step. . . .

He remembers how he and Wang Ya-nan were constantly fighting a cold war. He has to put up strong defences to protect himself. Only his daughter can let him feel safe and happy, not his wife.(150)

From Wang Ya-nan's viewpoint, the divorce is Hong's fault. She recalls their married life and draws a different conclusion from Hong.

When they just get married, it is all part of her romantic dreams. But gradually, she senses the parts that do not match in their characters. She finds that he has a will as hard as steel. All things have to be done according his will. All things he does are carefully calculated. He clearly minded uses every single second of his time. Whatever he does has a purpose. The more she gets to know him, the more she realizes that all his actions fulfil his purposes. She realizes his harsh and unkind side. The longer she is with him, the more bitterly disappointed she feels. She finds that even when he takes her out he has a purpose: he wants to keep her health, her good-looks and her loyalty so she can give him good service. "She had observed him for a long time, finally she figured out that he only wanted two things: success and efficiency. Besides these two,

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<sup>47</sup> Zhang Xiguo, *Yesterday's Anger*. Page numbers in text.

he had nothing inside.”(155) In fact, she feels humiliated and ignored. She cannot accept her fate as merely a decoration in her husband’s life. She thinks her husband is like a highly efficient machine. She does not want this machine to control her life. Her romantic dreams are gone. She does not consider her husband as her life partner but an enemy that she is going to fight and destroy.

So she started causing some small frictions, putting some rocks between the wheels, to stop the machine going smoothly. . . .

The small frictions became small arguments. After they quarrelled several times, Hong Xianzu might think this was not the right solution. He would start to take her out again. But she refused to surrender and still persisted in her disobedient behaviour. Hong could not take this any longer. At last they had a big fight. Hong said something that really hurt her which she could not forget. "Fame, money, status, I give them all to you. Why are you still not satisfied? You think I have to keep you as my wife. Funny, women like you, I can pick up a dozen any time I go back to Taiwan."(156)

After that fight, they decide to divorce. But Hong Xianzu follows her to Taiwan and promises not to make the same mistakes again. Wang Ya-nan finally agrees to marry him again. But after they go back to the States, Hong's old habits show up again. The problem is that Hong controls the money. He has the financial power. Later on Wang Ya-nan meets a Chinese student, Ge Rixin, and leaves Hong to live with Ge. They finally spilt up. In the court, Wang Ya-nan wins the case. The hostility between Wang and Hong finally becomes public.

Still, the cold war or even the fight in court between Wang and Hong is just at the middle level of hostility in the male and female relationship. The hostility reaches its peak in “Sha qi”(Kill Thy Wife). There is one aspect of this story that is different from any other stories which deal with hostility in relationships. In this story, the woman has financial power. Unlike Gu and Jing in "Test Thy Wife" and Wang in *Yesterday's Anger*, Hu Yushan controls the money. She is a manager in the company for which both she and her husband work. Her husband is just an accountant. Other women we have mentioned have no financial sway; their husbands control the money in their families. In this couple Hu Yushan is in a stronger, higher financial position. She makes more money than her husband. The issue of money forms an under current of in the story. Right at the beginning of the story, the idea of killing his wife is related to Hu Yushan's party celebrating her promotion.

It had been for at least four or five years that Wu Ziqiao had wanted to kill his wife. The first time he had this idea was when she gave a party in their house right after being promoted as a manager of their company."(135)<sup>48</sup>

We should pay attention to the later descriptions of Wu's imaginary killing. The bloody and vivid images reveal his deep-seated hostility and hate towards the woman.

After the party, Wu Ziqiao looks at his chubby wife undressing then sliding into the bathtub like a white seal, and he is struck dumb. "He looked into the steam and saw his wife, her pure white flesh piled up in the bathtub like a snowy mountain. . . . Looking at that Mount Fuji, Wu Ziqiao suddenly had an idea. This idea was so ridiculous that even he himself was shocked."(136) This idea is to kill his wife. "Actually Wu Ziqiao did not really want to kill his wife. but he could not deny, the idea made him very happy."(138)

Why does he have the impulse to kill his wife? Maybe the reason is that his wife is better adjusted to Western society and more successful than he is. His wife is aggressive and talkative. She understands that to survive and success is to compete with others. Her husband is somewhat timid and withdraw. She scorns her husband:

"What do you mean a good man does not fight a woman? You are living in Western society, you have to fight. If you don't, how can you convince others? If you don't fight, how can others know your merits? If it is a man, fight that man; if it is a woman, fight the woman. 'A Good man does not fight a woman' is just an excuse. Do you even fight men? If you don't fight, you will only be an accountant for the rest of your life. Would you like that?"

Though Wu Ziqiao claimed that he did not care, of course he did not like that prospect. But he could not change his way of life. He had been casual for half of his life already. (138)

But Hu Yushan is different. "She, who terrorized others in basketball-playing by her tall and strong body and her bold aggressive style, was now using the same spirit and physical energy to deal with her job. No wonder even the white people in the company were convinced by her power."(139) Hu Yushan is vice president, while Wu Ziqiao is still just an accountant. Except that his salary is a little bit higher than before, his position remains the same as ten years ago when he had just joined this company. His wife's salary is already twice his. "The most embarrassing

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<sup>48</sup> Zhang Xiguo, "Sha qi"(Kill Thy Wife), *Stories of Chauvinist Husbands*. Page numbers in text.

thing was that the reason he introduced Hu Yushan to this company was just to entertain her by giving her something to do. He did not know that within six years, his wife would have risen to vice president, though she did not even have a Master's degree."(140)

Hu Yushan is not only more successful in her career, but also, from the physical standpoint, stronger and healthier than her husband Wu Ziqiao. "She had been an athlete before, and she was tall, even when she had put on weight, she still looked well proportioned. . . . Compared (to her), Wu Ziqiao looked like he had been shrinking."(141) And Wu has another weak point: he snores. Hu Yushan cannot stand his snoring. She finds that if Wu sleeps sitting up, he does not snore. In order to have a good sleep, she makes Wu sit up in bed throughout the night. So Wu spends many nights sitting up in bed, half alert and half asleep. "He would sleep for a while then think of something; then go back to sleep again, wake up, go back to thinking of the same thing."(142)

Most of his ideas come to him when he is sitting in bed.

Sometimes he thought about business, sometimes the skills of taking photographs, but mostly, he thought about how to kill his wife. At first, the idea of killing his wife gave him a sense of guilt. But gradually, he overcame the fear of guilt and started treating the idea purely as an aspect of photographic skill. The way he planned to kill his wife was like the way he plotted pictures in his mind. (143)

He imagines how to kill his wife in different bloody ways. There has to be a great force of hostility which can drive him into the enjoyment of the bloody killing of his life partner.

He imagined that his wife was lying in the bathtub, pure white flesh piled up above the bathtub like a snowy mountain. Anthony Perkins breaks in, stabbing the snowy mountain with his bayonet. Snowy mountain collapses, sliding to the bottom of the bathtub. When should he release his camera shutter? The moment the bayonet stabs into the flesh? Click. The moment the snowy mountain collapses? Click. Or the moment the blood oozes out? Click, click, click.(143)

Such strong hatred does not start right from the beginning. When they were young, they had a period of happiness. But as time passes by, the love fades, especially after they come to the States. Now, Wu looks back with a vicious grin:

He remembered before, during the championship final, when twelve seconds before the end, Hu Yushan jumped up and shot the ball. He pushed the shutter and caught the moment when the ball had just left her hands. That was wonderful. Click.

"If I was holding a gun, I would shoot her. Just like shooting a pheasant. Wonderful."(145)

Imagination is not enough for him, he begins to write a diary to record all the possible methods of killing. When his wife goes to a party, he stays at home, thinking how she would suffer different kinds of deaths.

Hu Yushan's car should be on the highway now. At the first turn before the bridge, she pushes the brake. The brake does not work. She screams, the BMW shoots off the bridge. Click. The BMW in the air. In the picture, on the left corner is the bridge, on the right corner small bushes. Perfect composition. Click. the front part of the car is diving straight into the water; water is splashing up. Click, click, click, click.(147)

When he imagines that his wife is in the crowd at the party, he is so engaged in his imagination that he shouts out "Killkillkillkillkill." Then he give another way of killing.

Hu Yushan drinks her cup, suddenly her face changes, the cup drops on the ground. Click. She falls in her foreign boss' arms. Click, click. A big close-up shot, she covers her throat with her hand; her lips are twitching; her face turns from white to purple. Click, click, click. . . . Hu Yushan's head drops to one side, she is dead. Click.(149)

Finally there comes the day when his wife finds the diary. His wife erupts in a storm of anger. But Wu Ziqiao declares his innocence. There is no mutual understanding between them. They are not communicating any longer, they just talk about themselves. The dialogues reveal the hatred and frustration. There is only desperation left in this relationship. His wife calls him "insane" and "senseless," she cannot help pouring her angry and frustration out by blaming and insulting him. And the husband images her death during the conversation to ease his hatred.(150-152)

During the conversation, there is no inner communication between this couple. Each of them is talking about his or her thoughts without giving any understanding to the other's logic or intentions. And there is no introspection either. Hu Yushan is too angry about her husband's spiritual cruelty to find the cause of this hostility. She does not know or understand why her husband hates her so much. Wu Ziqiao, on the other hand, while listening to his wife's complaining, is still imagining how she might suffer a horrible death. The anger inside has been



twisted into a cruel imagination which can bring pleasure over his wife's bloody death. He does not try to figure out where this hatred has its source. He does not care why the relationship which was supposed to bring happiness and stability has reached such a bitter end.

The couple separate. Hu Yushan's lawyer sends a letter to Wu Ziqiao, informing him that Hu Yushan wants a divorce. Wu Ziqiao is very angry. Traditionally, it is the man who divorces his wife, not the other way around. He speaks to his sister:

"She (his wife) learns those bad things from foreigners. She finds a lawyer. She thinks that foreign law can control me? I don't care! Divorce, she is dreaming. She and her foreign boss have something between them. She thinks that I don't know? . . . Before we came overseas, she was not like this. You know that. She had a bad temper before, but she was reasonable. Now she is unreasonable. I really regret having brought her over. After going abroad, women all change."(169)

From Wu Ziqiao's view, it is Western culture that changes his wife's nature. He refuses to admit there is anything wrong about himself and his behaviour in this relationship. He does not want to accept the divorce. He tries to be reconciled with his wife. In fact, he has never really considered whether he is at all to blame, so ironically, but quite reasonably in his eyes, he gives his diary to his wife as a guarantee of reconciliation. This triggers her anger once more, and the reconciliation fails. She threw the diary at him and left.

The reconciliation does not work out. The day after their final meeting, Wu Ziqiao is sent into the hospital. When he wakes up, he has already lost half of his stomach. He stays in the hospital for eight days. "These eight days should have been a good time for Wu Ziqiao to repent. But he did not."(177) He meets a nurse, Wendy, in the hospital. He feels affection for her. She represents a different kind of woman from his wife. She is tender and kind. After he leaves the hospital, he continues to think and dream about Wendy. His dreams are interrupted by the police. He is arrested.

His wife has been murdered. Her head was cut off. And the police have found Wu's diary beside her body. He is suspected to be the murderer because of his diary.

Wu Ziqiao's reaction is very complicated and self-contradictory. On the one hand, he does not believe that he has killed his wife; he has no memories about the killing. On the other hand, he

does not trust his own sanity. There is one moment when he breaks down. He admits to himself that writing one hundred and eight ways to kill his wife was just the prelude of the true tragedy. He has finally executed the killing. He thinks that an evil power gained control of his life and his actions.

Before considering that he might really have killed his wife, he had felt no regret for her death, even though her head was cut off.(196) Only when he thinks he might have done the horrible thing himself, does he feel extremely remorseful. In some ways we can say, he does not feel sorry about the fact that his wife has died, even though she suffered such a terrible fate; rather, he cares about his own position in her death. He feels bad because he might be the murderer. At the time he realizes that he might have killed his wife, he feels more guilt rather than human sympathy at her lost.

Nevertheless, Wu Ziqiao also realizes that separation from his wife does not bring him freedom. "Before, he hated her so much that he wanted to kill her. But now he did not taste the happiness of freedom."(187) The strength of his hatred is not as violent as before. The happy memories of the past return to him once more. He thinks that only after they had come overseas his wife's voice had changed from being kind to being disdainful. "Was she changed or was he? If they knew this would happen, they would not have come."(198) He blames Western society for his wife's alteration. In some ways he is right. His wife does change in the new society. She becomes a stronger person and gradually estranges him.

During the trial, Wu Ziqiao is under public scrutiny. His thoughts are exposed in front of every one. His ideas seem very ridiculous when they are tested by logical questioning.

"Mr. Wu, why do you want to cut off your wife's head?"

"Objection!" Wu Ziqiao's lawyer shouted again.

"Ok, I'll change the sentence. In your diary or fiction or whatever God damn name it is called, why do you want to cut off your wife's head?"

Why? Why did the murderer use such a cruel and inhumane way? Why could the police still not find the head of the victim? Why?(202)

Wu Ziqiao tries hard to answer this question. He does not think he is a cruel person. Actually, he unconsciously avoid facing this question. There is a woman in the back seat. She

wears a black veil. Wu Ziqiao suddenly comes to this conclusion that his wife is still alive and every one is fooled by her. Thus he can shout honestly "I didn't kill her at all." But when he is asked to give some features of his wife to prove that the dead body is not hers, he is speechless.

Wu Ziqiao was speechless. He thought really hard, but he could not remember any physical characteristics of Hu Yushan. It had been a long time since they parted. His memories of her were all vague. He thought for a while but could not remember anything. He felt too ashamed to show his face. The lawyer was looking at him disdainfully, and the jury was listening, but he could not say anything. He noticed the woman with the black veil walk to the door. He could not see her face but he could sense that there was unspeakable bitterness in her eyes. The woman with the black veil! Wu Ziqiao jumped up again.

"It is her! Don't let her go, she is Hu Yushan, my wife. Somebody stop her. Don't let her run away."(205)

He is seized by this idea that the woman is his wife. Every one thinks he is really insane. At the end, he is sent to mental hospital.

The conversation in the court indicates several points. One is the extent of the estrangement between husband and wife. Wu cannot remember any special things about his wife. He cannot tell what is the difference between his wife's body and any other woman's body. Second, that the hostility and suspicion still exist in Wu's mind. He does not trust Hu Yushan. It seems even her death is some kind of trick she sets up to trap him. Third is that he still refuses to admit there is anything wrong about his diary. He still considers his one hundred and eight ways to kill one's wife as fiction writing, and hence above suspicion.

To understand this story better, we have to take a look at a conversation between the writer and Li Ang regarding this story. Li Ang accuses that Zhang Xiguo of adopting a male Chauvinist attitude. She thinks that Zhang Xiguo is in a male's position giving sympathy to the male character and condemning the female character. Zhang Xiguo denies having a male chauvinist attitude but does admit having a male point of view. He analyzes his story thus: "The issue of 'killing thy wife' has several different layers. There are conflicts between man and woman, between different cultures, and there is introspection about the art of fiction."

When Li Ang asks: "Which point do you want to emphasize when you write 'Kill Thy Wife'?" Zhang Xiguo answers:

My story "Kill Thy Wife" describes a sad picture: after women have gained financial independence, their husbands' position loses its importance. Some husbands become useless. I also want to point out how the arrogance of men is defeated, and some positive results of woman's liberation. In fact, I always advocate the stand that if women cannot be liberalized, neither can men. But during the process of liberation, there would be a somewhat complicated relationship between the old masters and the old slaves. Slaves suddenly find that the masters are pitiful and start rebelling, and sometimes they might even persecute their old masters.<sup>49</sup>

From Zhang Xiguo's answer, we can draw two points relevant to the story: first, the financial independence of women plays an important role in the changing relationship. In some way, the financial independence of women has paved the way to the disintegration of the relationship. Second, women might persecute their old masters during their liberation. But if we read the story, the most impressive point is not their argument about any financial issues nor Wu's complaints about Hu Yushan's persecution. The most impressive parts of the story are Wu's cruel fantasies of killing his wife. The hostility overshadows any other voice of liberation or reconciliation. Besides (what Zhang Xiguo has mentioned in his talking) women's financial independence as an offence to male authority, besides the so called persecution which comes along with women's liberation, there is another explanation for the tragedy in the story.

We have to repeat the lawyer's question: "Why do you want to cut your wife's head off?" Why? Because she makes more money and she is more successful? Because she always orders her husband to do all the trivial things and does not show her respect and appreciation? Because she humiliates him and destroys his self-confidence? The answers seem to be both "yes" and "no." From the "Yes" side, we know that Hu Yushan does treat her husband meanly in some ways, for example, she is scornful of him for not fighting with society. But that is not the key. Even if she does not treat her husband well, she does not deserve to be killed in such bloody ways one hundred and eight times. He hates her to a degree that she is no longer his wife, rather she becomes his worst enemy. Here we find the answer: she is not his wife, she is his enemy. He does not accept her as his partner. He kills her in his imagination a hundred times because he does not feel happy with her. Ironically, even though he has written about so many ways of killing her,

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<sup>49</sup> Zhang Xiguo, "Shafu, sha qi, sha zhu (*Kill Thy Husband, Kill Thy Wife*, Chauvinist Pigs): Zhang Xiguo vs. Li Ang," *Stories of Chauvinist Husbands*, p. 220.

after his wife's death, he still believes that she has set him up; that he is defeated by his wife's strategy. So there is another key to the tragedy which lies within the male character's mind: he cannot accept her. He cannot take the fact that she is stronger and healthier than him. The tragedy has two sides, Zhang Xiguo emphasizes one side, which is the financial independence of the woman, and the other side, which attracts more readers' attention, is the male character's narrow and twisted personality and his unchangeable, stale perception of life.

Now we can draw some sort of conclusion about Zhang Xiguo's writing regarding relationships between men and women.

Having noticed the patterns of "The conquerors are conquered" and "couples become enemies," we can at least say that the positions which were traditionally assigned for men and women have changed. And the traditional definitions of the respective roles which men and women should play in their relationship are blurred by this change in their positions.

The traditional position of women can be fairly depicted in Li Yishan's words. Li Yishan, Li Ming's father in the short story "Earth," is talking to his old partner about what kind of wife his old partner should find: "Why do you need a wife who can read and write like a scholar? So long as she can look after the family properly, bear your children, continue the line of your family and pay respects to your ancestors, you've got all you want. Doesn't that make sense?"<sup>50</sup>

That does not make sense at all to the women who have grown up and received their education in this changing world. They are not and cannot be limited to a position where they are only needed to look after the family correctly, bear children, continue the family line properly and pay respects to their husbands' ancestors, they want more than those things. They want a life of their own. They seek their own careers, and eventually, gain financial power.

On the one hand, women are breaking away from the old mode which limited them in a subjective position in their relationship with men. Along with the changing world, gradually they

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<sup>50</sup> Zhang Xiguo, "Earth," p. 151.

gain their physical and spiritual independence. On the other hand, men try to linger in their old position and refuse to accept the change.

There are very few women in Zhang Xiguo's writing who have good relationships with men. In fact, among all his realistic novels, there is only one main female character has some sort of positive colour. But even she does not have a positive relationship with men. Xiang Yun in *Huanghe zhi shui* (The Yellow River Water) is a strong-willed and intelligent woman. She is a pianist. She gets married to her classmate in university; her husband, Du Guangyu is also a pianist. They go back to Taiwan after their studies in Europe. Her husband Du becomes a businessman, but she has only music in her mind. She does not like the way her husband lives or all those chattering people. She speaks straightforwardly and does not hide her feelings. Other people feel she has a weird temper. She represents the idealistic person who has not yet been polluted by a commercial atmosphere. But finally, she divorces her husband, and ironically, opens her own company.

There are some other idealistic women in Zhang Xiguo's science fiction, like Meixin in "Qing cheng zhi lian" (Love In A Falling City), and Minwen in "Qing chun quan" (The Spring of Youth). Yet, they are so idealistic they depart from normal human daily life.

In all the stories we have mentioned, the women who conquer or defeat or fight with men all belong to this new generation. In "The Conquerors," Lily is a singer. In "The Immortals," Wang Xiaoling has once gained the highest marks in the Taiwan college entrance examinations and she is a journalist. Ding Xiaopei in "Man Who Fell From the Sky" is the finance manager of a school. Gu Xiuxia in "Test Thy Wife" is a graduate student. Wang Ya-nan in *Yesterday's Anger* graduated from a university. Hu Yushan in "Kill Thy Wife" graduates from university and becomes the vice-president of her company. They have their own sense of judgement and ideals in life. They choose their life goals. They give themselves up in relationships, but when the time comes, they have the strength to leave the men whom they once loved or admired. They dare to fight with the ones they do not like. Their behaviour is totally different from traditionally passive women.

In the face of these "new style" women, men feel confused and surprised. For most of the men still maintain a comparatively traditional view point. With such a view, they take their control over women for granted. They are used to their objective roles in which they feel secure and powerful. They try to remain in their old seats in relationship. They still use old standards or methods to limit and judge women. They try to control the financial side, like Hong Xianzu in *Yesterday's Anger*, Zhuang Qingdian in "Test Thy Wife." They want to be the dominant one in the sexual relationship, like Hu Qifeng in "The Slave of Love," Lan Qi in "The Immortals," Xinchu in "The Conquerors." They emphasize their careers over and above the emotional needs of women, like Lan Qi in "The Immortals," Hong Xianzu in *Yesterday's Anger*, Hu Qifeng in "The Slave of Love." Even Wu Ziqiao in "Kill Thy Wife," the weakest one among all the male characters, is also a traditional type of man. Thus, he loves to listen to the old songs and read kungfu novels. He assumes the relationship between his wife and his boss is improper, without any grounds for proof just because his wife and his boss are close. He meets Wendy in hospital. Just because Wendy wants to keep her mother company when she is visiting, he proclaims her to be a filial daughter.

Times have changed. Women have become more active and have much greater power than previously. The traditional harmony which rests on control by men and submissive co-operation of women breaks down. Women have abandoned their former status as subjects. Yet, men, consciously or unconsciously still reject this fact. They would rather consider the problem in another way. When women leave men or achieve their goals, men tend to think that they have been deceived or used by women. They feel that women have conquered them.

Although there are clear indications of women breaking away from their traditional passive position in the relationships in Zhang Xiguo's works, most of his stories emphasize how confused and resentful men feel at the altered situation, having lost their power and control over women. Each story tells of a man's bitterness when he loses in the battle with a woman. None of the stories give the woman's opinion. In "Kill Thy Wife," there is only Hu Yushan's inner voice during the break down of their relationship. In "A Man Fell From the Sky," we simply don't

know why Ding Xiaopei marries and leaves her husband. All we are given is just a bystander's assumption. In "The Slave of Love," we don't know why Sha Li left or what her opinion is about the relationship.

Zhang Xiguo includes several stories about relationship between men and women in his "The Soul of Wanderers" series. Maybe he wishes to imply that people are also lost in their relationships. The old balance between man and woman was based on the principle that man was the object and woman was the subject. This balance has been lost, but a new equilibrium has not yet been established. Zhang Xiguo describes the confusing situation in which men are falling from their old strongholds and women are gaining control over themselves and men. Even the identities of men and women are no long the same as before. Women have similar or even higher education levels than men. They have created their own careers or gained financial independence by their own efforts. Women have entered many fields which were formerly occupied only by men. How should women behave in order to be a true women or how should men react in order to fulfil their roles? Those questions are not answered in Zhang Xiguo's stories. He does not offer any kind of new constructive relationship between man and woman. In his stories, there is more negative fighting than understanding in a relationship. There is never any realistic communication between men and women. Rather, his writing high lights men's suffering and bitterness as they adjust to a new relationship with women, without offering any positive suggestions for future improvement of that relationship.



## Chapter Five

## Zhang Xiguo's Writing Skills

Zhang Xiguo's writing style is simple and humorous. His language combines Chinese classical and westernized vernacular. On the one hand, he quotes Chinese classical poems, phrases and literary words in his stories; on the other hand, he uses peoples' spoken language and even slang. The narration and dialogues of young intellectuals indeed bear this noticeable characteristic. Professor Michael Duke summarizes some of the characteristics of Zhang Xiguo's use of language:

Chang Hsi-kuo does have an excellent ear for the colourful speech patterns of young men not too long out of the university who are engaged in various ways in the commercial world. Such language is indeed characteristic of Chang's works as a whole from the short story "Ti" [Earth, 1967] to the novel *Tso-ji chih nu* [Yesterday's Anger, 1978].<sup>51</sup>

In "Earth," dialogues between several young people are spiced with various references to famous classical Chinese literary sources. When Ling Ming and his friend Rooster, Gong Jizhong, are talking about a man Jin Zhaonian who works in Rooster's office, they use several famous scenes from the classic drama *Western Chamber* to narrate the progress of his life. And they do not forget to quote the name of this popular play as a footnote to their expressions.

"So he came to this isolated 'backyard' to recuperate. 'Shutting himself off from the world to reflect upon his mistakes, and cultivating the health of his spirit,' so to speak."

... "The story goes that as soon as our handsome young hero arrived in this rustic desolation, he picked up a 'blooming wild lily growing beside his path, young and lovelorn creature, with dreamy eyes and cool, delicate hands.' Our heroine, in the proper style of *The View From the Window*, was a grade-twelve student. Various scenes from the *Western Chamber* have been enacted already-- 'Transfixed Encountering the Beauty,' 'Serenade for Seduction,' 'Secret Betrothal in the Rear Garden.' The stage is set now, I suppose, for 'The Cross-examination.'" (165)<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Duke, M. S., "Two Chess Masters," p. 45.

<sup>52</sup> Zhang Xiguo, "Earth." Page numbers in text.

The same person, Rooster, when he hears of his friend Jumbo's failed engagement, gives his opinion both in a literary and slangy way: "How, vulgar," Gong Jizhong said. "Jumbo here can't even conduct a love affair without falling into the rut of the 'Mandarin Duck and Butterfly' school of fiction. You people who dine on the classics every day haven't got the guts to blaze a path for yourselves." (167)

When Jumbo excuses himself for going to a staff meeting, he uses a colloquial phrase combined with a famous saying from *Mengzi*, only changing the subjects. "The man of character does not look back on his past bravery," Jumbo said, with a theatrical gesture of the hands. "Talk, that's where my desire lies; meeting, that's where it does not lie. And yet, I forsake talking for meetings, why? Because I've got my rice-bowl to worry about!" (169)

Later on, five of the young friends come up to the hill "swapping memories and old dreams before each goes on their way." In their conversation, there are direct quotations from classical Chinese poems and paraphrased classical Chinese idioms. From the "Book of Songs" comes:

*"Axe on wood tap-a-tapping,  
Birds in the air chirp-a-chirping,  
Out of the silence of the dark valley  
They move to the lofty tree."*

As Jumbo was thus chanting, he suddenly broke out, "There! Watch my rook. Check!"

"No matter. To brandish the sword one great pleasure brings:/ Do not fail the valiant dreams of youth!" (178)

In their happy mood, they also recite classical Chinese poems

word for word:

On the opposite shore, Jumbo could be heard softly chanting Li Po's "Early Departure from Pai-ti City":

*I left Pai-ti in the morning swathed in the colored mists of dawn,  
Reaching Chiang-ling in but one day, journey of a thousand miles.  
On the two shores of the waterway gibbons cried ceaselessly,  
My boat sailed swiftly through the folds of ten thousand hills.* (182)

When they are making fun of each other, they use slang and a mixture of everyday spoken language and half literary allusion which indicates their education and their youthful nature.

"Mother's!" Kung Chi-chung gave a big yawn. "One point each: nineteen to six. What sort of *kiddy* game do you think you guys are playing anyway? Yelling, fighting, and grabbing each other's pieces . . . What! You dare beat the referee? Help, help!"

"We'll show you, you *foreigner's lackey*, you *turncoat*, you *comprador*, you *running-dog*!" Jumbo caught hold of one of Kung Chi-chung's leg. "Here, Lao Ch'eng, grab the other leg. Let's give him the treatment, let him taste his 'tortoise straining to look at the moon.'"

"With pleasure! Aha, Rooster, who would have known that your day would finally come?"

. . . "Now, tell us, can you see the moon?"

. . . "Hold it! I can see it now. It's square, yes, it's square."

"That's better. Okay, let's spare his *dog life* this time."

. . . "Come to think of it, the moon can be square, you know. That will make the poets mad with joy. Just think! *Won't it be exquisite fun hunting for adjectives to describe a square moon?*"(178)

We can hear the echoes of school-talk in their conversations. In *Yesterday's Anger*, the young people talk in a similar way. When they are in Taiwan, they converse about philosophy, movies and lectures. When they come overseas, they still cannot forsake Chinese culture. The main character, Ge Rixin, uses a famous piece of classical Chinese prose along with a folktale to construct his own story to please a Chinese girl. He says there was a place called "the Land of Peach Blossoms"-- a legendary land of peace, far away from the turmoil of the world depicted by the Chinese classical poet Tao Yuanming. However, people in that land were sick, so they selected seven girls to go into the world to find the cure for their sickness. The seven girls are called the Seven Fairy Maidens-- characters from a folktale. They finally found a cure for the sickness. It was salt.<sup>53</sup>

In *The Yellow River Water*, when Du Fangyu is about to quit his business and leave Taiwan, he holds a farewell ceremony. He uses four character idioms to dramatically announce his resignation. A writer in the story, Wang Peilun, writes a classical Chinese

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<sup>53</sup> Zhang Xiguo, *Yesterday's Anger*.

poem using calligraphic script to say good-bye. Du feels the poem is very appropriate for him. Wang then gives a full account of his understanding of the traditional spiritual realm of Chinese intellectuals. The language they use throughout is half classical and half vernacular.<sup>54</sup>

In the short story "Jue ce zhe" (The Decider), the narrator uses classical Chinese to express his ambition, his anger and his disappointment.<sup>(79)</sup><sup>55</sup> At the end of the story, before he leaves Taiwan, he uses a poem by Su Shi to crystallize his disillusionment. (89)

In *Chess Master*, young intellectuals' talk displays similar features. They recite classical Chinese poems and phrases to express their ideas. When Cheng Ling's brother talks with Cheng Ling about the philosophy of life, he naturally recites a sentence from Zhuangzi.

Cheng Ling says to his brother: "You talk about philosophy all day, then you close your door and listen to rock. Isn't that a little inconsistent?" His brother answers: "The Tao is in piss. Even shit has a philosophical basis. Rock is much more sophisticated than shit."<sup>56</sup>(76) The quotation is from Zhuangzi. Some phrases of classical Chinese works are so well known that they are used like spoken language by these intellectuals in their conversation. When Cheng Ling is walking back home, half drunk, he shouts: "Where's the tiger? . . . A man who's afraid of himself will never succeed."<sup>(114)</sup> This sentence is a quotation from *The Water Margin*. It is a well known allusion. The reference is to a passage in Chapter 22, in which the hero, Wu Song, is warned against crossing a ridge over the mountains alone, because of the presence of a man-eating tiger. Wu Song dismisses the warning as a ploy by the local inn-keeper to increase his business, and fearlessly sets out across the mountain after he has drunk a fair amount of alcohol. He laughs, "Where's the tiger? A man who's afraid of himself will never succeed" and lies

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<sup>54</sup> Zhang Xiguo, *The Yellow River Water*, pp. 212-213.

<sup>55</sup> Zhang Xiguo, "Jue ce zhe" (The Decider), *The Immortals*. Page numbers in text.

<sup>56</sup> Zhang Xiguo, *Chess King*.

down to rest. Suddenly a tiger appears, and in the ensuing battle, he manages to club the beast to death with his bare hands. In *Chess King*, Cheng Ling is using Wu Song's words to express his half drunk state and his high spirits.

When the history professor Feng Wei-ming and Cheng Ling are discussing the value of money and the contradictions between money and the academic spirit, Feng recites a poem by Tao Yanming to show his inner confusion and pain when he encounters commercial realities:

Feng Wei-min closed his eyes and sighed.

*Our lifespan in this world isn't long.  
Why not then follow the inclinations of the heart?  
Why be so agitated?  
Where would we go?*

The poem serves well to indicate Feng Wei-min's innate inclination towards traditional spiritual freedom. Toward the end of the story, when Cheng Ling is also going through a spiritual struggle to find a place for his artistic pursuits in commercialized society, he cannot help using classical Chinese poems as a spiritual source to ease his worries.

He (Cheng Ling) found himself reciting some lines that stuck in the back of his head:

*For the love of the Qinhuai River,  
in the old days I left home.  
I wandered up and down behind Plum Root Forge;  
And strolled about in Apricot Blossom Village;  
But now I have cast off my official's robes  
As cicadas shed their skin;  
I wash my feet in the limpid stream  
And in idle moments fill my cup with wine,  
And call in a few new friends to drink with me.  
A hundred years are soon gone, so why despair?  
Yet immortal fame is not easy to attain.  
In days to come,  
I shall stay by my medicine stove and Buddhist sutras,  
And practise religion alone.*

"Terrific! Medicine chest and Buddhist sutras!" Feng Wei-min laughed. "Since when are you into *The Scholars*"? That poem is about the most simplistic kind of nostalgia for tradition. There isn't much to it. Is that all you're up to?" (145-146)

Just as Feng Wei-min points out in the story, this poem is from the classical Chinese novel *The Scholars*. Cheng Ling recites it to recall the traditional scholar's spirit which was not moved by the pressures of money.

There is another kind of language which is closer to slang and everyday spoken language but still contains traces of classic Chinese idioms. Professor Duke points out:

Chou P'ei is perhaps the best and certainly the most colourful example in this novel. Here are just a few experts of his highly masculine speech studded with four character phrases many of which are drawn from martial arts fiction (underlined, through regrettably unmatched in effect, in my translation). Here he is explaining the background of stock market deal to Ch'eng Ling:

At that time the market was really hot, a group of stock-holders were speculating secretly, thinking that they could control the market by buying in and selling out at will. But they never imagined that just as the mantis catches the cicada the sparrow closes in from behind; somebody else was plotting behind their backs. When they finally realized the situation had turned against them, it was too late to buy back their shares. When the Board Meeting convened, the controlling power was in somebody else's hands and all they could do was obediently accept their dismissal. There's a name for this strategy; it's called ambush from all sides to capture a dragon.

Chou goes on to explain how he and Ch'eng will avoid losing on the market:

At any rate we'll wait till the price has just about peaked and then we'll bail out. We certainly won't get caught like a turtle out of water unwilling to let go. To play the stock market requires the ability to *make instant decisions at the opportune moment*; if you're too inflexible you're bound to be shot down. (111-113)

Here he is angry and hurt when Ch'eng Ling refuses to ask the Spirit Child for future stock prices again:

Fuck! You're jerking me around. I've always respected you, Fatty Ch'eng, thought of you as a good friend and never ever concealed anything from you ... I've been fair and square with you. But I ask you to help out a little today, and you come on like a cheapskate - that's really great! And I turn out to be a damned fool blind man with no pupil in his eyes. (113)<sup>57</sup>

Zhang Xiguo also uses some writing techniques to enrich the content and broaden the view of his stories.

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<sup>57</sup> Duke, Michael S., "Two Chess Masters," p. 45.

Inner shifting narrators give the different angles of a story. In *Yesterday's Anger*, the narration shifts from person to person. The shifting is distinguished by particular chapters and sections. The whole novel is a combination of different narrators recalling their life. We take the third chapter as an example.

The first section introduces the scenario from Cheng Zexiong's view. He and Hong Xianzu are waiting for Wang Ya-nan and Ge Rixin arrive at the court to settle Hong and Wang's divorce case.

The second one gives Hong Xianzu's view. He recalls his marriage with Wang. From his stand point, he blames Wang for the failure of their marriage.

The third section is from Wang Ya-nan's view. She looks back over her marriage with Hong. She perceives Hong to be an extremely selfish person. He is no better than a machine. She cannot live with such a machine.

The fourth, fifth and sixth sections show the situation from Ge Rixin's stand point. He sees the court as a place where people fight each other for their selfish personal interests. He hates this kind of fighting. He recalls the student Baodiao movement, in which people temporarily became selfless and enthusiastic. He dreams of an idealistic world in this selfish society and thinks about the compromises he can afford to make with the demands of reality.

The seventh section goes back to Wang. She recalls her first meeting with Hong and later with Ge Rixin. She thinks about their different personalities and ideals in life. She also recalls the student movement from her point of view which is darker and closer to reality than Ge's version.

The eighth returns once more to Hong Xianzu. He relates the secret of his sexual weakness and desperation.

Finally the last section of the chapter concludes where the story began, with Cheng Zexiong. He waits outside of court. He sees Hong grab his daughter Xuanxuan and run away.

Through such shifting narrators, we can get to know the events from different peoples' viewpoints instead from one side. Thus, we gain a comprehensive description of Hong and Wang's marriage through their different recall, Ge and Wang's relationship and the student movement.

In *The Yellow River Water*, we find a similar procedure making use of shifting narrators. In this novel, the narrators change by chapter instead of by section.

The different narrators take turns to describe their personal experience and opinions of certain events.

Chapter 1 and 2, the narrator is Zhan Shuren. He commences the whole novel by describing his school years in a small town. He introduces his major concerns and desires. He gives a whole description of his own personality.

Chapter 3, the narrator Zhao Zichao introduces the plight of his company from an watcher's view and the life of Zhou Dachuan's family.

Chapter 4, the narrator Li Haiwen is the son of a successful businessman. He gives up his professorial position in a university and decides to begin his business career. He gives the explanation of the plight of the bankrupt company from a manager's view and points out what should be done to save it.

Chapter 5, the narrator Zhan Shuren meets Zhou Rong, Zhou Dachuan's daughter. Their relationship develops.

Chapter 6, the narrator Li Haiwen comes to the company which is facing the danger of bankruptcy. Zhou Dachuan is also working for that company. The situation paves a way for the relationship between Li Haiwen and Zhou's daughter, Zhou Rong. Thus, the complicated relationships among Zhou Rong, Zhan Shuren and Li Haiwen start when the conditions are set.

Different narrators set up the stage for the coming events. They give information about the background from different angles. They introduce each other and themselves.



The narrators shift in turn to give successive pictures of different events and their varying opinions towards the same event. Their different views give a broad picture of the events in the novel.

Each narrator has his/her personal character; he or she tells stories through his or her personal point of view. Zhan Shuren is an idealistic person. His narrations concentrate on idealistic and philosophical issues. He is concerned about peoples' spiritual search, personal self-discipline and the sense of guilt about physical weakness. He is studying journalism in college and trying to involve himself in political campaigns. Li Haiwen is a playboy in his personal life and an ambitious young businessman. His narrations are mostly about social and economic struggles in this commercialized society, about peoples' indulgence in their personal and social life, and about his methods of achieving financial success and emotional fulfilment. He is more mature and practical than Zhan Shuren. He does not care that much about finding philosophical or political solutions; he strives merely to succeed in his business.

Zhou Rong is still a naive and romantic girl at the beginning. She argues with her mother for her daily allowance. She tortures herself spiritually by doing something she does not want to do or giving up something she wants to do. She develops an unrealistic passion for Li Haiwen and finally she gives herself up to a stranger in her emotional distress. She becomes pregnant and leaves Taipei for the South to give birth to her child. The technique of employing shifting narrators provides different tones and attitudes in the narration, but it does not break the harmony of the structure. The changes are confined within the flexibility of the structure. There are enough inner links to connect different narrators' episodes. The whole novel is a carefully arranged stage in which stories take place by turns and then move on.

With regard to the narrators, some of them can also be found in other stories and novels. So the same narrator becomes a link between different stories, providing a much broader description of a character's personality. Hun Guoquan, who is the narrator in

“The Banana Boat,” is also a character in *Yesterday's Anger*. In “The Banana Boat,” he tells a story about a sailor from his eyes, in *Yesterday's Anger*, he is a character without any sense of responsibility in his job and puts all his heart into chasing after girls.

Likewise, Lin Xin, the narrator in “Flood Over the Lu-er Gate,” is a character in *Yesterday's Anger*. In *Yesterday's Anger*, Lin Xin falls in love with Wang Ya-nan in university. When Wang leaves him and gets married with Hong, Lin Xin quits the school for two years. Later he attends a university in the States and becomes involved in the Baodiao student movement. He gives his description of the final split of the movement. In “Flood Over the Lu-er Gate,” he describes the life of a group of European immigrants in the States. The sentimental experience of his early life in *Yesterday's Anger* acts as a footnote to his sensitive description in “Flood Over the Lu-er Gate.”

Not only the narrators but also some of the main characters show up in different stories and novels. Both Wang Xiaoling and Lan Qi in “The Immortals” have played roles in other stories. In *Yesterday's Anger*, Wang Xiaoling is portrayed as a young university student. She is intelligent and active. In *The Yellow River Water*, Lan Qi is the son of a famous governor. He is the leader of a small elite group. He has made up his mind to be a politician and is trying to reach his goal. In “The Immortals,” their paths in life merge and their personalities are completed. The story tells of the miserable marriage Wang has endured after her graduation from university and her desperate affair with Lan Qi. The story also shows that Lan Qi, a remarkable young politician, is also a womanizer in his personal life. He finally suffers both the loss of his political power and the emotional support formerly offered by the women in his life.

Gao Qiang and Song Zijia are all characters in *Yesterday's Anger*. They show up briefly during the student movement. Gao Qiang takes part in the small group to discuss ways of saving China. Song Zijia wants to return to Taiwan to help the development of his homeland. He takes a political risk by participating in the movement parade. Their fates are portrayed in different short stories. Gao Qiang is the focus in the short story “Red

Child.” He is lost in the political struggle and finally disappears from the crowd. Song Zijia is a major character in “Our Company.” Through his old partner's narration, we know that he finally goes back to Taiwan to open a branch company of the firm where he works. He has fulfilled his career goals but he does not find satisfaction or happiness. He does not get credit from the foreign company. In the end, he dies in a accident at work. Their actual fates are quite far removed from their earlier intentions. The different stories give an overall picture of their lives.

In balancing the structure of the story, Zhang Xiguo usually arranges the climax of the events at the end.

In *Chess King*, the final chess competition between the boy and Professor Liu comes at the end of the story. The end of the competition brings the conclusion of the story. In “Red Child,” the disappearance of Gao Qiang; in “The Banana Boat,” the death of the sailor, in *Yesterday's Anger*, the death of Ge Rixin can each be considered as a surprising ending and a climax to the story.

The end of the story usually echoes the beginning. In *Yesterday's Anger*, the beginning and the ending both focus on Cheng Zexong's actions. At the start, he is on a train on his way to Xinzhu to inform his uncle and aunt of the news about his cousin. The story commences here. Then he goes to the States and meets his cousin, her ex-husband and the student leader Ge Rixin. At the end, after Ge's death, his cousin comes back to Taiwan. Cheng Zexong greets her at the airport and then accompanies her to the train station to send her to Xinzhu. Thus, the story ends with him too.

In *The Yellow River Water*, at the beginning, Zhan Shuren is celebrating the Chinese New Year's Eve with his friend Lin Zhengji and Lin's sister. Because Lin Zhengji says he can hear a baby's cry they think he is crazy. Zhan Shuren remembers the night he spent with Lin Zhengji on the beach. The story starts. At the end of the novel, in the night, Zhan Shuren heads for the ocean, finally reaching the beach.

In Zhang Xiguo's science fiction work "Love in a Falling City," the correspondence between beginning and end is more obvious. They contain a similar scene. In fact, the story starts and ends with exactly the same paragraph.

The flames jumped from one ridge to another, and coloured half the sky over the capital red. Soldiers were shouting and running. He was fighting a snake mutant which was climbing up the wall. The rear half of the snake mutant was curled, with a chubby tail, the front half was still struggling; its three yellow-green eyes were looking at him with hatred. He stabbed his sword into the soft part between its eyes. The snake mutant shouted in pain and could not move any more. As another snake mutant jumped over the wall, he gritted his teeth and once again wielded his sword.

"The city is fallen, let's go." a gentle voice softly murmured by his ear.

This is the beginning of the story. Wang Xin is a history student from Earth. He comes to study the history of the universe on Hu-hui planet. Once, he visits the An-liu Epoch with the purpose of observing the famous historical war when the Snake-Mutant tribe besieged Suo-lun City. The story depicts Wang going to the falling city. He chooses to go at that period just so he can take part in that event. Meixin, his girl-friend, also chooses to be with him. The end of the story is as follows:

The flames jumped from one ridge to another, and coloured half the sky over the capital red. Soldiers were shouting and running. He was fighting a snake mutant which was climbing up the wall. The rear half of the snake mutant was curled, with a chubby tail, its front half was still struggling; its three yellow-green eyes were looking at him with hatred. He stabbed his sword into the soft part between its eyes. The snake mutant shouted in pain and could not move any more. As another snake mutant jumped over the wall, he gritted his teeth and once again wielded his sword.

"The city is fallen, let's go." a gentle voice softly murmured by his ear.

He turned abruptly, there she stood right behind him.

"What are you here for?"

She then slowly took off her gown which was made of strings of jade; and he understood what it meant. It was impossible for him to turn back; and for his sake, she was not going back either. Among the innumerable stars within the cosmic universe, and over all the times in the millenium of light years, they chose only to live at this very moment, not the past, nor the future, only this moment of time.

He shifted his sword to his left hand, and grasped her hand tightly. They faced toward the blazing Suo-lun City; all the houses in the capital were on fire, roaring with flakes of flame. It was as if this golden sea of fire would burn and burn till eternity.

The beginning and the ending occur in a matching atmosphere. This correspondence gives the whole story a sense of unity.

Zhang Xiguo also uses other literary techniques in his writing. In *Chess King*, he adapts the stream of consciousness to describe the confusion and unsettled state of Cheng Ling's mind.

When Cheng Ling visits Huang Duanshu, Huang is on the phone. Cheng Ling sits in a chair waiting for her.

His eyes wandered around the room. The walls were adorned with a wonderland of travel posters: Hong Kong, Tokyo, New York, Bangkok, Sydney. One in particular caught his eye: a golden beach, a supernatural blue sea, and behind the beach were snow-capped mountains rising into the distance. The Caribbean. He suspected that no one could really afford to spend their vacation there. Not even the richest people in Taipei were wealthy enough. The beach really intrigued him. Cheng Ling thought to himself that, if he had money, that would be where he would go. The golden sands of the Caribbean didn't have any lions. No, no lions at all. The sea that Hemingway had dreamed of was along the African coast. Cheng Ling had never dreamed of Africa. He knew a girl. She went to Tanzania as a nurse. And that was the last he had ever heard of her. A single Asian girl going to Africa to be a nurse. Who knew how she was doing there? Cheng Ling thought that he still might have her address. He ought to write her a letter and ask her whether there were lions on the African coast.<sup>58</sup>

Cheng Ling's mind jumps from the golden beach to money, then to lions, Hemingway's story, Africa, a girl he knew who went to Africa. True, even the beautiful natural scene is connected with money in his mind. But on the other hand, he still has an artistic inclination. He goes on to think about Hemingway's story, the lion and the girl after considering money.

In *Yesterday's Anger*, Zhang Xiguo uses montage to put the different periods of time into a long smooth string of inner connected pictures. In the main character Cheng Zexiong's mind, memories of his cousin Wang Ya-nan flash back like pictures:

He stood in the balcony of their small apartment for a long time. He remembered the wind in Xinzhu. . . . He closed his eyes, it seemed he was back in his childhood. He and Minghui(his wife) walked in a bamboo grove, hand in hand. He turned his face to look at Minghui, no that was not Minghui's face. That was his cousin's face. He and his cousin walked in the bamboo grove, hand in hand. ....

"Ya-nan! Ya-nan!"

His cousin's mischievous face showed up somewhere and then disappeared again. He chased after her; his feet stamped on soft bamboo leaves. . . . Finally

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<sup>58</sup> Zhang Xiguo, *Chess King*, p. 56.

he was tired and sat down. His cousin suddenly showed up behind him and covered his eyes with her soft hands.

"Guess who it is?"

He pulled her hands away. The bamboo grove disappeared. He and his classmates were walking along the road. His cousin was riding a small red bicycle towards them. She was in her school uniform. . . . He wanted to say hi, but he was afraid that his classmates would make fun of him. When he was hesitating, she passed him. He looked up and saw she smiled at him.

He turned around to look at her. His cousin was standing on the top level of a diving board above the swimming pool. Her white skin was set off by her red swimming suit.<sup>59</sup>

The sentences in italics serve as conjunctions between two different time periods.

The flashbacks bring the highlights of his memories of his cousin to his mind in a fast rhythm.

We can see Zhang Xiguo consciously using varying literary techniques in his other works. For example, "Our Company" is a personal monologue. The whole story is presented through one person talking. There are no other narrators or intrusions from outside. "Red Child" is a collection of letters from different people concerning one person's life. This person never shows up in the story, but through the others' letters, we find out about his difficult political situation.

In "The Killer In A Winter's Night," Zhang Xiguo writes the story in an inverted way: from the end to the beginning returning step by step. He gives the ending of the story first. An old Chinese couple are fatally wounded and the man is dead. The story goes back to the struggle, where the man is hit on the head. Next, it introduces how the old couple hear the door bell. They have just finished supper and are trying to clean up. Their daughter's family have just finished their visit. The two kids chase each other. The story goes further back to the supper. It is afternoon, and the woman is preparing the dinner. The man watches the sky, and says "It's snowing." Noon now, and they are having lunch. Finally the story returns to the morning, when they were eating breakfast, ending with the night before, as they sleep peacefully. The event is described over and against the

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<sup>59</sup> Zhang Xiguo, *Yesterday's Anger*, pp. 17-18.

progress of time. The bloody ending of the old couple's life at the beginning sharply contrasts with the peaceful life of the couple at the end.

In "The Decider," Zhang Xiguo uses the question-answer style to write his story. He gives several questions, to each of which the narrator gives a wrong answer and the writer gives the right answer. For example, to the question: "If you had become the dean of the department in University of Oclanda thirteen years ago, what would you be doing now?" The narrator's answer is that he would be ushered to his car, with the vice president of the department saying good-bye beside him. The right answer is that he would be shopping in the store like other normal people, picking up eggs and fruit.

Zhang Xiguo is an expert at using irony in his writing. According to *A Glossary Of Literary Terms*, "In most of the critical uses of the term 'irony' there remains the root sense of dissembling or hiding what is actually the case; not, however, in order to deceive, but to achieve special rhetorical or artistic effects."<sup>60</sup> In Zhang Xiguo's writing, the most obvious ironic device is "verbal irony." "Verbal irony is a statement in which the speaker's implicit meaning differs sharply from the meaning that is ostensibly expressed. Such an ironic statement usually involves the explicit expression of one attitude or evaluation, but with indications in the speech-situation that the speaker intends a very different, and often opposite, attitude or evaluation." But we also have to keep in mind that "sometimes the use of irony . . . is very complex; the meaning and evaluations may be subtly qualified rather than simply reversed, and the clues to the ironic counter-meaning under the surface statement may be indirect and unobtrusive."<sup>61</sup>

In Zhang Xiguo's writing, especially in his short story collection *Stories of Chauvinist Husbands* and some of his science fiction, there are many examples of his use of verbal irony.

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<sup>60</sup> Abrams, M.H., *A Glossary Of Literary Terms*, p. 91.

<sup>61</sup> Abrams, M.H., *A Glossary Of Literary Terms*, p. 91.

In *Stories of Chauvinist Husbands*, there are short comments at the end of each story. Those comments are made in such an ironic way that readers know for certain that the speaker's implicit meaning differs sharply from the meaning that is ostensibly expressed. "Kill Thy Wife" is a story about the hostility between man and woman. Wu Ziqiao writes a diary to express his anger and hatred of his wife. At the end of the story, when Wu's wife is murdered, Wu is convicted of murder by the evidence of his diary and he is locked in a psychiatric hospital, and the writer gives this comment: "Another lesson of this story is: if you really want to kill your wife, make sure you don't write any diary." (210)<sup>62</sup> Of course, the meaning of this story is not as simplistic as this. In "The Slave of Love," Hu Qifeng accepts the handcuffs from his mistress but never has a chance to use them. His mistress leaves him and he is conquered by the past memories and fantasies related to the handcuffs. At the end of story, the comment is: "Another lesson of this story is: Don't accept handcuffs as a gift from others." (74) In "Test Thy Wife," Zhuang Qingdian is always suspicious about his second wife. He controls all the money and forces her to report her actions when she is not at home. When he returns to Taiwan to meet a girl he once fell for, he lets his second wife go travelling alone. She finds somebody during her travels and divorces Zhuang. Zhuang marries for the third time. The third wife treats him well and obeys all his orders. After he suffers a stroke and becomes paralysed, his third wife brings her "distant uncle" (biao shu) over to take care of him. But shortly after Zhuang's death, his third wife gets married to her "distant uncle." The comment on the story is: "The lesson of this story is: Never let your wife travel alone. Another lesson of this story is: The distant uncle is always the most suspicious person." (93) Those comments are not serious criticism, they are ironic statements giving enough space for readers to be aware of a more meaningful side.

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<sup>62</sup> Zhang Xiguo, *Stories of Chauvinist Husbands*. Page numbers in text.



There is another important literary element which we find in Zhang Xiguo's writing. It is his use of symbols in his stories.

In "The Slave of Love," the pair of handcuffs can be considered as a symbol. The handcuffs are given to Hu Qifeng as a birthday gift by his mistress. He refuses to spend much time with her because he is going to Taiwan for a business trip. After he comes back from Taiwan, his mistress has already left him. He has no chance to ever to use the handcuffs. His mind is full of his recollections of his mistress and sexual fantasies related to handcuffs. This pair of handcuffs gains control of his mind. He is spiritually handcuffed by the handcuffs. The handcuffs are made in Taiwan. "He looked again and again at the letters engraved on the handcuffs and with his fingers touched the indented letters: T, A, I, W, A, N. His thumb could cover all of the letters. The letters were so small! But when he rubbed the letters with his thumb, he could still figure out the distinct existence of each letter: N, A, W, I, A, T."<sup>63</sup> They are something more than a pair of handcuffs. The handcuffs can be interpreted as spiritual shackles which conquer peoples' minds. They can also be considered as representing an inevitable spiritual bond between Chinese people and Taiwan.

In Zhang Xiguo's science fiction work "Xiang ge li la - Xing cheng zu qu zhe er" (Sinclare--The Cosmic Dust Suite II), Mahjong is used as a symbol for money. The storyteller is an astronomer who is just back from space after twenty years of travel. He tells his friend Hang that once their space ship landed on a planet and they found that the black rocks on the surface of the planet were actually alive. The black rocks would place their black sides towards the sun during the day to absorb energy; then they would get up during the night to move around using their white sides, hidden during the day, to display signs. They would put these different pictures and signs on their white sides to communicate with and entertain each other. He calls them poets by nature. To propagate earth culture, the

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<sup>63</sup> Zhang Xiguo, "The Slave of Love," *Stories of Chauvinist Husbands*, p. 72.

astronomer and his partners play Mahjong in front of all the black rocks and leave a mahjong set on that planet before they depart. Several years later, they come back to the planet and find that the black rocks have greatly changed and developed. The black rocks have all become Mahjong pieces. They define class ranks among different rocks according to the definitions in Mahjong. They also have a great ambition to change all rocks in the universe into Mahjong pieces like themselves. They have the power to do so by touching each rock in turn. They want to conquer the whole universe by changing all rocks into Mahjong pieces in this way. His friend Hong does not believe him. That night Hong has dinner with some other friends. After dinner, he walks in the street and feels there is something wrong with the moon. He looks at it and finds in the sky:

That is a Hong Zhong (Red Middle, a Mahjong piece)!

Hang Huisheng's mouth fell open and he could not close for a long time. He heard rumbling noises beside him. The road broke open, and there was a huge black rock emerging from under. Hang Huisheng saw two big letters "Fa Cai" (Good Fortune, also a Mahjong piece) rising up from the broken road.<sup>64</sup>

Mahjong is a symbol for money. The conquest of Mahjong pieces signifies the conquest of money. The black rocks are poets of nature before they encounter Mahjong, the spirit of money. Mahjong controls and changes their minds, making them also want to conquer and control others by changing them into Mahjong pieces, into slaves of money. The power of money is signified by the power of the Mahjong set and its servants the Black Rocks. Mahjong is a symbol which indicates the dominance of money in this society and the conquest of peoples' mind by money.

In "Tong xiang cheng" (The Bronze Statue City), the bronze statue can be considered as a symbol. The epic dimension of the story focuses on the history of how a bronze statue "grows" into colossal size, at first by having it rebuilt altogether and later by a process of adding one layer after another onto the existing body. The growth of this statue is punctuated by a cycle of political turmoil and chaos touched off by the leaders of the city

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<sup>64</sup> Zhang Xiguo, "Xiang ge li la" (Sinclare--The Cosmic Dust Suite II), *Yei Qu* (Serenade), p. 36.

and exploited by various rebellious forces that plunge the city into disaster. The story relates that after each respective political coup, when the new conqueror marches into the city, his first decree would be to have the statue "embellished" with metals from the weapons and armour plundered from his enemies. The cost of rebuilding the statue gets higher and higher. Added to this are also corruption, inertia and finally rebellion, so the collapse of the empire is inevitable in the end. A new cycle starts all over again with the new conqueror rebuilding an even bigger statue. There comes a time when the statue reaches such a size that any modification by human efforts becomes impossible. The statue seems to have acquired a life of its own, growing into a mixed resemblance of all the conquerors who have contributed to its size and appearance. The bronze statue is then worshipped by hundreds of thousands of citizens, and the city state plunges into a war to force others to worship the statue. The war ends after massive destruction of lives and property, and the statue is eventually "vaporized" by the beaming gun of a fleet of space-warships sent from some superpower planets.

The statue is a successful symbol which contains rich meanings. It can be taken as the symbol of culture, tradition or history. The statue is built into its greatness by generation after generation of people adding layer upon layer of weapons to it. Finally it becomes a live thing which malevolently interferes with peoples' decisions and controls their fate. It also can be interpreted as a fame which people have no power to overcome and which finally brings disaster to its worshippers.

Zhang Xiguo is very concerned about the literary side of his stories. He consciously applies certain artistic skills in his writing. His style is simple and natural with a touch of irony. The stories are more readable because of his style.

## Conclusion

Zhang Xiguo is a scientist with a passion for literature. He has established a name for himself in the literary field. His writings is quite highly regarded.

He is not a cynical critic. He is compassionate and warm-hearted towards people, especially the weak and victimized. In his writing, there is more sympathy and understanding than condemnation of his characters. His tone is usually mild, easy and humorous.

In general, he is concerned more with peoples' struggle to survive in this changing world than with pure artistic pursuits.

Zhang Xiguo's writing mainly deals with the lives of contemporary Chinese people. Most of his short stories are collected under the title: "The Souls of Wanderers." Zhang Xiguo has clear opinions on the content of his own writing. He focuses his writing on the lives of particular Chinese people during this period of change. He writes in his articles that he considers the most important experience of Chinese to be change.

The tone adopted in most of his stories is rather sad. Similarly, the ending of most of his stories is tragic. Though he has very positive hopes about peoples' destiny in a time of change and he believes that they are ultimately struggling for a better future, the characters in most of his stories do not survive the changes. They become lost or defeated. Most of them have suffered disillusionment of their old beliefs, and have had trouble finding a place to which they truly belong. Zhang Xiguo's writing about wanderers records in detail the disappointment, disillusionment, confusion, loneliness and desperation of such people in the face of a changing world. Nevertheless, we should not forget to look at the bright spots of the characters in these sad stories. Their life may be a tragedy, but in their behavior during difficult times they still maintain some human dignity and conscience.

Taiwan's economic situation has dramatically changed in the past forty years. Under such economic conditions, traditional values and life styles are inevitably facing challenges. Among the obvious clashes between the effects of great economic development and traditional standards, the issue of money provides the main focus. In Zhang Xiguo's writing, both intellectuals and common people have to deal with the issue of money. He describes how the power of money has changed the lives of some intellectuals.

In his stories, a few old intellectuals still keep their traditional world view and academic lifestyle, but many give up their careers in academics and become businessmen, or combine academic and business pursuits. Even though the phenomenon of intellectuals giving up their careers to become merchants, now in modern term "businessmen," may not be new, this kind of conversion was never very common and well-received in China until recent times. Yet the merchant class has finally surpassed the scholar class. Not only are merchants treated more favorably but even money has gained a position of great respect in society. The power of money has shaken the basic confidence of intellectuals who are supposed to be beyond the reach of petty material attractions. Spiritual and intellectual life has been overshadowed by financial concerns. Money has had a distinct impact on intellectuals' thinking. Many intellectuals have been forced to adjust their traditional ideals in order to survive in this changing world. Zhang Xiguo is very concerned with the intellectuals' painful struggle to encompass both material needs and idealistic pursuits in a new situation.

By contrast, when he deals with the common peoples' concerns about money, he emphasizes their sacrifice and loyalty to their families and friends. He does not treat them as low class people, according to a traditional viewpoint, but rather shows his deep sympathy for their desperate struggle.

There are no totally evil characters in Zhang Xiguo's writing. According to his understanding, the power of darkness is not represented by any particular person but exists

in an invisible way. People can feel the existence of darkness but cannot find a particular object to fight against. And evil exists in the heart of everyone.

Zhang Xiguo discusses how Chinese people think about the relationship between God and human beings in order to find the root of compromise in Chinese philosophy. He thinks that Chinese do not consider fate to be totally unalterable, but neither do they dare to admit that fate can be controlled by human beings. They realistically acknowledge that fate is a result of compromise between heaven and human beings.

Although Zhang Xiguo feels that compromise plays a positive role in keeping a huge country like China together in harmony, he does not favour compromise on the issue of dealing with evil forces or opponents. Because the Chinese feel that evil forces cannot be conquered or eliminated by the efforts of human beings, they choose compromise instead of fighting. Not only rebels but also rulers prefer to seek compromise. Yet evil forces keep on growing as a result of one compromise or another and can never really be exterminated. Zhang Xiguo thinks that the Chinese have traditionally always chosen such a negative way to deal with evil forces.

"Compromise" is a major theme in Zhang Xiguo's writing. He believes that the intention to compromise with evil forces or opposing ideologies forms part of the Chinese national personality. His writing illustrates his theoretical understanding of compromise. Many of his characters seek different ways to compromise or not to compromise with society. Some of them finally compromise. Some of them try to cope in different ways rather than to surrender. They try to manipulate people to help them achieve their goals. And still others manage to find the true meaning of action. People who do not wish to compromise, but do not have the power to act either, finally become bystanders.

There are certain patterns in Zhang Xiguo's writing about the relationships between men and women. Most of the time men and women do not live in harmony. The basic pattern is that men desire to conquer women by financial power or sexual seduction. But during the process of

conquering, men are actually conquered by women through sex and lose control of their money as well. This pattern has another form: the men intend to use the women, but end up being used by the women. In either form, the pattern is the same: women become the real conquerors in the end, and men, the former conquerors, are conquered or used by women.

There is another pattern in the relationships between men and women. In this pattern, the men and women become open enemies. They fight each other consciously. In the end, one of them loses and the other wins; there is no compromise. The hostility between men and women reaches a peak in "Kill Thy Wife."

In Zhang Xiguo's writing, there are clear indications of women breaking away from their traditional passive position in relationships. Most of his stories emphasize how confused and resentful men feel at the altered situation, having lost their power and control over women. Each story tells of a man's bitterness when he loses in the battle with a woman. Almost none of the stories give a woman's true opinion.

Zhang Xiguo includes several stories about relationships between men and women in his "The Soul of Wanderers" series. Maybe he wishes to imply that people are also lost in their relationships. The old balance between man and woman was based on the principle that man was the object and woman was the subject. This balance has been lost, but a new one has not yet been established.

Zhang Xiguo's writing style is simple and humorous. His language combines classical Chinese and westernized vernacular. He quotes Chinese classical poems, phrases and literary words in his stories, and also uses peoples' spoken language and even slang.

Zhang Xiguo also uses some writing skills to enrich the content and broaden the view of his stories. Inner shifting narrators give the different angles of a story. With regard to the narrators, some of them can also be found in other stories and novels. So the same narrator becomes a link between different stories, providing a much broader description of a character's personality. In balancing the structure of the story, Zhang

Xiguo usually arranges the climax of the events at the end, and the end of the story usually echoes the beginning. Zhang Xiguo also uses other literary techniques in his writing. such as the stream of consciousness and montage. Zhang Xiguo is an expert at using irony and symbols in his writing.

In conclusion Zhang Xiguo has covered some of the most basic themes in literature: peoples' spiritual and physical exile, their behaviors in the face of outside pressure and the male-female relationship, etc. Zhang Xiguo adopts a very human approach to those themes. He shows understanding for people who are lost. Though he might use irony to make fun of their mistakes (especially in his stories about the relationships between men and women), he has never lost compassion for them.

Moreover, he tries to give some philosophical messages in his stories but without falling into the trap of becoming a lecturer or a teacher to his readers. He is a good story teller, using different styles to make his stories interesting and attractive.

Basically he writes to a Chinese audience. Almost everything he writes is about the Chinese. He is concerned with the fate of all Chinese people. His characters are Chinese, no matter where they are, in Taiwan, Hong Kong, or the United States. He writes about their struggles and searches. Although he has written many tragic stories, he has never lost his faith in a better future for the Chinese nation.

He is a very good writer, and some of his works, for example, *Chess Master*, will have lasting influence in literary world.



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Yang, Mu. "Zhang Xiguo de guan xin he yi shu," 張系國的关心和艺术 (The Art and Thought of Zhang Xiguo, The Preface to *The Banana Boat*), in *The Banana Boat*.

Yu, Guangzhong. "Tianji yukui hua qiwang" 天机欲觀话棋王 (The Preface to *Chess King*), in *Chess King*.

**Part IV Works by Zhang Xiguo**

**Novels**

**Huang he zhi shui 黄河之水 (The Yellow River Water), Taipei, Hongfan, 1979.**

**Pi mu shi zheng zhuan 皮牧师正传 (The Biography of Pastor Pi), Taipei, Hongfan, 1985.**

**Qi wang 棋王 (Chess King), Taipei, Hongfan, 1978. Trans. Zimmerman, Ivan David. Hong Kong, Joint Publishing Co., 1986.**

**Zuo ri zhi nu 昨日之怒 (Yesterday's Anger), Taipei, Hongfan, 1978.**

**Short Stories**

**Bu xiu zhe 不朽者 (The Immortals), Taipei, Hongfan, 1984.**

This short story collection contains: "Jie ling zhe" 解铃者 (The One Who Unties the Bell), "Jue ce zhe" 决策者 (The Decider), "Zheng fu zhe" 征服者 (The Conquerors), and "Bu xiu zhe" 不朽者 (The Immortals), etc.

"The Conquerors." In *Worlds of Modern Chinese Fiction*.

"Earth." Trans. John Kwan-Terry. In *Chinese Fiction From Taiwan*.

**Kong zi zhi si 孔子之死 (The Death of Confucius), Taipei, Hongfan, 1978.**

This collection includes short story "Da feng chui" 大风吹 (The Wind Blows), etc.

**Sha zhu chuan qi 沙猪传奇 (Stories of Chauvinist Husbands), Taipei, Hongfan, 1988.**

This short story collection contains: "Chong tian kong luo xia lai de ren" 从天空落下来的人 (Man Who Fell From the Sky), "Ai nu" 爱奴 (The Slave of Love), "Shi qi" 试妻 (Test Thy Wife), "Sha qi" 杀妻 (Kill Thy Wife), etc.

"Red Child" or "Red Boy," trans by Faurot, Jeannette L., in Unbroken Chain.

Xiang jiao chuan 香蕉船 (The Banana Boat), Taipei, Hongfan, 1976.

This short story collection includes: "Xiang jiao chuan" 香蕉船 (The Banana Boat), "Lan se duo nao he" 蓝色多瑙河 (The Blue Danube), "Dong ye sha shou" 冬夜杀手 (Killers in A Winter's Night), "Ben gong si" 本公司 (Our Company), "Shui yan lu-er men" 水淹鹿耳门 (Flood Over the Lu-er Gate), "Hong hai'er" 红孩儿 (Red Child), and "Di" 笛 (Flute), etc.

Zhang Xiguo zi xuan ji 张系国自选集 (Zhang Xiguo's self-Selected Collection), Taipei, Liming Co., 1982.

This collection contains: "Diao" 钓 (Fishing), "Di" (Earth), and "Shou wang zhe" 守望者 (The Bystander), etc.

#### Science Fiction Collection

Xing yun zu qu 星云组曲 (The Suite of Nebula), Taipei, Hongfan, 1980.

This collection contains: "Tong Xiang Chen" 铜像城 (The Bronze Statue City), "Qing chun quan" 青春泉 (The Spring of Youth), and "Qing cheng zhi lian" 倾城之恋 (Love in A Falling City), etc.

Ye qu 夜曲 (Serenade), Taipei, Hongfan, 1985.

This collection contains: "Xiang ge li la--xing chen zu qu zhi er" 香格里拉 -- 星尘组曲之二 (Sinclare--The Cosmic Dust Suite II), etc.

**Social Commentaries**

**Tian cheng zhi lu 天城之旅 (A Journey to Sky City), Taipei, Hongfan, 1977.**

**Ya dang de du qi yan 亚当的肚脐眼 (Adam's Navel), Taipei, Yuntian, 1971.**

**"Shi tan min zu wen xue de nei rong he xing shi"  
试谈民族文学的内容和形式 (About the Contents  
and Styles of National Literature), and "Ye shi shen  
hua" 也是神话 (Also Myth), in Zhang Xiguo's  
Self-Selected Collection.**

**"Sha fu, sha qi, sha zhu, Zhang Xiguo U. S. Li Ang--guo ji chuan  
zheng dui tan" 杀夫, 杀妻, 沙猪, 张系国 U. S. 李昂  
-- 国际传真对谈 (Kill Thy Husband, Kill Thy Wife,  
Chauvinist Husbands, Zhang Xiguo U. S. Li Ang), in  
Stories of Chauvinist Husbands.**

**"Yi ge zuo jia de xin lu li cheng" 一个作家的心路历程 (The  
Spiritual Course of A Writer), United Daily.**

# Glossary of Chinese Names and Terms

Bu zhou shan	不周山	Chen Jigang	陈纪刚
Chen Zexiong	陈泽雄	Cheng Ling	程凌
Ding Xiaopei	丁小佩	dong lui shui	东流水
Du Fangyu	杜方宇	Mr. Fang	方先生
Feng Weimin	冯为民	Ge Rixin	葛日新
Gao Qiang	高强	Gao Wei	高维
Gao Yuebai	高悦白	Gong Gong Shi	公公工
Gong Jizhong	龚继忠	Gu Xiuxia	顾秀霞
huai ren	坏人	Hong Xianzu	洪显祖
Hou Yi	后羿	Hu Qifeng	胡奇峰
Hu Yushan	胡玉珊	Hu hui	呼回
Huang Duanshu	黄端淑	Huang Guoquan	黄国权
Ji Xiangyun	季相云	Jin Lihe	金理和
Jing Yulan	景玉兰	Lan Qi	蓝齐
Li Ang	李昂	Li Haiwen	李海文
Li Ming	李明	Li Yishan	李义山
Lin Xin	林欣	long gong	龙宫
long wang	龙王	Lui Leyi	刘乐怡
Luo Dai	罗黛	Meixin	梅心
Minwen	敏雯	Minghui	明慧
Neza	哪咤	Qiu Huimei	邱慧美
Wang Peilun	王佩伦	Wang Xiaoling	王小玲
Wang Ya-nan	王亚男	Wu Hanshan	吴寒山
Wu Song	武松	Wu Ziqiao	吴子乔
Sha Li	莎莉	Shi Ping	施平

Sima Guang 司马光  
Tang Xuanzang 唐玄奘  
Xiao Yu 小禹  
Yu gong yi shan 愚公移山  
Zhang Xiguo 张系国  
Zhong Gui 钟贵  
Zhou Rong 周蓉  
Zhuang Qingdian 庄庆典

Song Zijia 宋子佳  
xiao ren 小人  
Professor Ying 应教授  
Zhan Shuren 詹树仁  
Zhao Zichao 赵子超  
Zhou Dachuan 周大川  
Zhou Pei 周培  
Zou Yue 邹野